

MASTERPIECE

THE FORSYTES



PREMIERES
SUN MARCH 22 9/8c



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The Forsytes, airing on PBS MASTERPIECE Sundays at 9/8c from March 22 to April 26, chronicles the trials and triumphs of a wealthy Victorian stockbroking family—inspired by John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* novels.

Enjoy some read-alike fiction or select nonfiction to better understand the world of *The Forsytes*.

FICTION

***The Elopement* by Gill Hornby**

A sparkling Regency-era novel centered on the scandalous elopement of Maria Dorothea Knatchbull and the ripple effects it creates. As relatives scramble to manage reputation, money, and emotion, the novel reveals the quiet dramas and constraints shaping women's lives. Hornby draws on a Jane Austen-esque world with wit, emotional depth, and sharp social observation. (Pegasus Books, 2025)

***Fayne* by Ann-Marie MacDonald**

A sweeping, gothic-tinged historical novel set in the late 1800s on the border between England and Scotland. The story follows Charlotte Bell, a heroine who defies social and moral convention, uncovers family secrets, and discovers her own identity. Richly atmospheric and ambitious in scope. (Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2022)

***American Duchess* by Karen Harper**

Based on the true story of Consuelo Vanderbilt, this novel follows a wealthy American heiress forced into a loveless marriage with an English duke. Confronting rigid expectations, she discovers her own strength, becoming a respected figure in society and an advocate for women's suffrage. A compelling exploration of money, power, and personal freedom. (HarperCollins, 2018)

***Cavendon Hall, The Cavendon Women, The Cavendon Luck, & Secrets of Cavendon* by Barbara Taylor Bradford**

Spanning the 1910s through WWII, the *Cavendon* novels follow the aristocratic Ingham family and their loyal Swann servants as social hierarchies, traditions, and fortunes are tested. Across generations, war, ambition, romance,

and long-buried secrets reshape both families. The series explores class, resilience, loyalty, and the enduring power of legacy. (St. Martin's Press, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)

***Spoils of Time Trilogy* by Penny Vincenzi**

Vincenzi's sweeping trilogy—*No Angel* (2000), *Something Dangerous* (2001), and *Into Temptation* (2002)—follow the powerful Lytton family, whose wealth and influence in publishing are tested by love, ambition, and political upheaval between the World Wars. Personal choices reverberate across marriages, friendships, and class divides, shaping private lives and public legacies in this richly dramatic saga of power, passion, and loyalty. (The Overlook Press, 2000, 2004, 2005)

***The Cazalet Chronicles* by Elizabeth Jane Howard**

The Cazalet Chronicles—*The Light Years*, *Making Time*, *Confusion*, *Casting Off*, *All Change*—follow an upper-middle-class British family across three generations exploring love, duty, and resilience before, during, and after WWII. Through war, infidelity, ambition, and personal loss, the saga examines loyalty, the clash between personal desire and societal expectation, and the enduring bonds of family as the Cazalets struggle to preserve their ancestral estate amid change and grief. (Open Road Media, 2016)

***The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton**

The House of Mirth follows Lily Bart, a socially ambitious woman navigating wealth, gossip, and expectations in New York high society. Struggling to secure independence and a suitable marriage, she faces financial and moral pressures. The novel is a tragic exploration of social constraint and the precarious role of women. (Scribner, 1905)

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NONFICTION

Heirs and Graces: A History of the Modern British Aristocracy by Eleanor Doughty

This book explores the British aristocracy, revealing the lives, personalities, and traditions of a tiny elite that continues to fascinate the public. It highlights privilege, duty, social change, contrasting public image with private reality from childhood to adulthood. Doughty traces their evolving roles as estate guardians, financiers, and social figures, balancing glamor with challenges. (Hutchinson Heinemann 2025)

The Women of Rothschild: The Untold Story of the World's Most Famous Dynasty by Natalie Livingstone

This book explores how women in the Rothschild family shaped the dynasty's legacy despite exclusion from the patriarchal banking world. It examines themes of gender, power, and social influence showing how these women navigated Judaism in a Christian society and forged roles as diplomats, cultural patrons, and political advisors. Livingstone presents a story of resilience, privilege, and transformative impact. (St. Martin's Press 2022)

The Age of Decadence: A History of Britain: 1880-1914 by Simon Heffer

This book explores Britain at its imperial height in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, exposing political, social, and cultural tensions beneath a façade of confidence. Key themes include power and decline, reform and resistance, and tradition versus modernity through imperial crises, labor unrest, women's suffrage, constitutional conflict, and elite scandal, portraying a nation dazzled by progress yet destabilized by unresolved contradictions. (Windmill 2018)

Fortune's Many Houses: A Victorian Visionary, a Noble Scottish Family, and a Lost Inheritance by Simon Welfare

Not every British aristocrat was decadent in the late 19th century. This unique look at Victorian society follows the enlightened, philanthropic Marquess and Marchioness of Aberdeen, who tried to change the world but paid a heavy price. A true tale of love and loss, fortune and misfortune--an inspirational feast for history lovers. (Atria, 2021)

The House of Morgan: An American Banking Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance by Ron Chernow

Awarded the National Book Award in 1990, this work traces four generations of the Morgan family, showing how their banking empire shaped modern finance from Victorian London through the 20th century. Themes of wealth, power, and influence reveal elite financiers' intersections with politics, industry, and society on both sides of the Atlantic. (Grove Press, 2010)

The Strange Death of Liberal England by George Dangerfield

This book examines early 20th-century England, a nation outwardly powerful yet facing political, social, and economic upheaval. Themes of reform, civil unrest, and tradition versus change are explored through women's suffrage, labor strikes, and challenges to parliamentary authority. It portrays a society on the brink, revealing the fragility of liberal institutions before WWI. (Capricorn 1961)

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