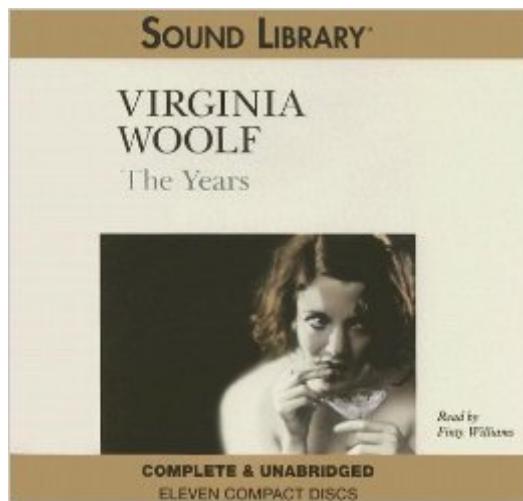


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# The Years



## Synopsis

The most popular of Woolf's novels during the author's lifetime, this book tells the story of a family, the Pargiters, and is a savage indictment of British society at the beginning of the 20th century.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audio CD

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## Customer Reviews

The Years is the story of three generations of the Pargiter family. Stretching from 1880 to the 1920s, it follows the Pargiters through the tumultuous historical events and social changes of that era. Abel Pargiter is a retired civil servant; his daughter Eleanor is interested in social work; his son Edward becomes an academic; his grandson North is a veteran of the Great War. Their interactions and reflections comment upon their experiences in their always changing world. In my opinion, The Years ranks with as one of Woolf's greatest novels. It shows that Woolf was more than a feminist and more than a stylist--she was also a perceptive critic and observer of her society. She shows the plight of "the daughter of educated men" in a world that denies them education and careers; she shows the effect of the Great War on its survivors. And all the while, she writes her typical lyrical prose she writes about the passage of time: "Slowly wheeling, like the rays of a searchlight, the days, the weeks, the years passed one after another across the sky." It is interesting to note that Woolf originally planned to write The Years (with Three Guineas) as a novel-essay called The Pargiters. The writing of this novel was extremely difficult, and it is much longer than most of her novels. In some ways it is much less experimental in form than The Waves, yet Woolf herself worried that the monologues of The Waves left too much of the external world out--The Years

is, in part, an answer to that sentiment. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading Woolf or modern fiction. It probably isn't the best starter novel for Woolf (*Mrs Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse* are better introductions to her style), but it's a beautiful piece of work.

But Eleanor was standing with her back to them. She was watching a taxi that was gliding slowly round the square. It stopped in front of a house two doors down. "Aren't they lovely?" said Delia, holding out the flowers. Eleanor started. "The roses? Yes..." she said. But she was watching the cab. A young man had got out; he paid the driver. Then a girl in a tweed travelling suit followed him. He fitted his latch-key to the door. "There," Eleanor murmured, as he opened the door and they stood for a moment on the threshold. "There!" she repeated, as the door shut with a little thud behind them. [...] The sun had risen, and the sky above the houses wore an air of extraordinary beauty, simplicity and peace. ===== These are the last few lines (with one small omission) of Virginia Woolf's last major novel, *THE YEARS*, which I find to be at the same time Woolf's most approachable work and also her most original. Were this a normal novel, I would not dream of quoting the closing lines without spoiler alerts. But no spoilers are possible here, because Woolf avoids the normal narrative chain of cause and effect. The couple entering their house in the early morning are people we have not seen before, and probably would not see again even if the book were twice as long. The beauty of the passage is in the moment, one small example of life going on in an entire book about life going on, fleeting moment after fleeting moment.

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