



Sons and Lovers

David Herbert Lawrence

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Sons and Lovers David Herbert Lawrence

The refined daughter of a "good old burgher family," Gertrude Coppard meets a rough-hewn miner, Walter Morel, at a Christmas dance and falls into a whirlwind romance characterised by physical passion. But soon after her marriage to Walter, she realises the difficulties of living off his meagre salary in a rented house. The couple fight and drift apart and Walter retreats to the pub after work each day. Gradually, Mrs. Morel's affections shift to her sons beginning with the oldest, William. As a boy, William is so attached to his mother that he doesn't enjoy the fair without her. As he grows older, he defends her against his father's occasional violence. Eventually, he leaves their Nottinghamshire home for a job in London, where he begins to rise up into the middle class. He is engaged, but he detests the girl's superficiality. He dies and Mrs. Morel is heartbroken, but when Paul catches pneumonia she rediscovers her love for her second son. Both repulsed by and drawn to his mother, Paul is afraid to leave her but wants to go out on his own, and needs to experience love. Gradually, he falls into a relationship with Miriam, a farmer's daughter who attends his church. The two take long walks and have intellectual conversations about books but Paul resists, in part because his mother disapproves. At Miriam's family's farm, Paul meets Clara Dawes, a young woman with, apparently, feminist sympathies who has separated from her husband, Baxter. After pressuring Miriam into a physical relationship, which he finds unsatisfying, Paul breaks with her as he grows more intimate with Clara, who is more passionate physically. But even she cannot hold him and he returns to his mother. When his mother dies soon after, he is alone.

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Review

The jaunty miner who proud Mrs Morel married has become a boorish drunk, so she devotes herself to her sons, particularly Paul. The suppressed sexuality of this intense relationship prevents Paul from choosing a wife. The mute yearning of the dark and brooding Miriam eventually repels him, nor can he give himself wholly to the over-demanding Clara. The cloying love between mother and son borders on the repellent, but the sympathetic narration rescues it, making the web of emotions startlingly real. The narrator is a Nottingham man and his presentation of the dialect is skilful. Mr Morel gains in humanity, emerging as emotionally wounded as his wife. --Rachel Redford

Slack's reading of Lawrence's classic novel portrays, with clarity, the class differences between Walter Morel and his wife, Gertrude, in the tough world of coal mining. Gertrude's middle-class background and her husband's working-class origins are clearly indicated in Slack's varied accents and tones. But it is the mother's relationship with her children, especially William, the eldest, and Paul, after William's death, that is most lyrically and elegiacally relayed. Slack's rendering of Paul's obsessions and preoccupations is sympathetically handled. Gertrude's aloofness is icily portrayed. Walter, despite his drunkenness and coarseness, seems far more sympathetic in audio. Paul's relationship with Miriam Leivers is pivotal, and the tensions that their relationship causes between Gertrude and her favorite son are central to the story. Slack underscores her maternal jealousy, showing it in sharp contrast to Gertrude's cold manner with her husband. Lawrence's central themes are heightened through the marvelous British-laced reading. --Mary McCay, Booklist Synopsis

This is the unexpurgated version of "Sons and Lovers". It contains the full role of William as Paul Morel's elder brother (justifying the plurals of the title), more detailed scenes between his warring parents and the full sexual encounters which place Lawrence so far ahead of his time. Synopsis

Now printed in full for the first time, Sons and Lovers is D. H. Lawrence's most widely read novel and one of the great works of twentieth-century literature. In 1913, at the time of its first publication, Lawrence reluctantly agreed to the removal of no fewer than eighty passages which until now have never been restored. This edition presents the novel in the form that Lawrence himself wanted - about one tenth longer than the incomplete and expurgated version that has hitherto been available. The introduction of this edition relates much new information about Lawrence's two-year struggle to write his autobiographical masterpiece. The notes document many previously unknown sources, and indicate Lawrence's preoccupation with key contemporary issues such as women's rights, and the impact of evolutionary theory on religion and ethics. Published in two volumes.

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