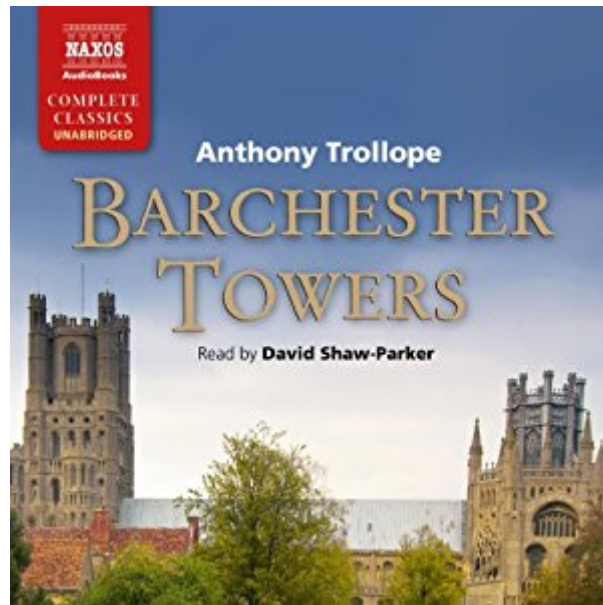


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Barchester Towers, Book 2



Synopsis

Barchester Towers, the sequel to *The Warden*, is the second novel in Trollope's major series, the *Chronicles of Barsetshire*. It focuses on the power struggle between Archdeacon Grantly, Mr. Slope and the Proudies as they fight for control of the diocese of Barchester. Meanwhile, another struggle is taking place for the heart of Eleanor Bold. Who will win her? The vile Mr. Slope, the idling Bertie Stanhope or someone else entirely? This is a witty and sparkling novel about greed, hate and love; Trollope captures the intricacy of human emotion and character with warmth, humor, wonderful characterization and, of course, perfect dialogue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the second of the six *Barsetshire* novels, and the first great novel in that series. *THE WARDEN*, while pleasant, primarily serves as a prequel to this novel. To be honest, if Trollope had not gone on to write *BARCHESTER TOWERS*, there would not be any real reason to read *THE WARDEN*. But because it introduces us to characters and situations that are crucial to *BARCHESTER TOWERS*, one really ought to have read *THE WARDEN* before reading this novel. Trollope presents a dilemma for most readers. On the one hand, he wrote an enormous number of very good novels. On the other hand, he wrote no masterpieces. None of Trollope's books can stand comparison with the best work of Jane Austen, Flaubert, Dickens, George Eliot, Tolstoy, or Dostoevsky. On the other hand, none of those writers wrote anywhere near as many excellent as Trollope did. He may not have been a very great writer, but he was a very good one,

and perhaps the most prolific good novelist who ever lived. Conservatively assessing his output, Trollope wrote at least 20 good novels. Trollope may not have been a genius, but he did possess a genius for consistency. So, what to read? Trollope's wrote two very good series, two other novels that could be considered minor classics, and several other first rate novels. I recommend to friends that they try the Barchester novels, and then, if they find themselves hooked, to go on to read the Political series of novels (sometimes called the Palliser novels, which I feel uncomfortable with, since it exaggerates the role of that family in most of the novels). The two "minor classics" are *THE WAY WE LIVE NOW* and *HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT*.

Superb. One of the finest novels I've read. Trollope's most popular work and the second in the Chronicles of Barchester series. I never read the first one "The Warden" and didn't feel like I needed to, the first couple chapters of *Towers* supply enough background to know what happened in the first book, at least in a broad sense. Initially, the backdrop of a looming clerical power struggle in the pastoral English town of Barchester and environs is convincingly weighty. However, as this power struggle plays out it becomes apparent that Trollope is for the most part poking fun at players on both sides of the battle. He reminds us that despite the detachment and solemnity that such a conflict deserves, it's only human to be looking out for one's own interests as most of the characters end up doing. Trollope accomplishes this through brilliant characterization and a rich plot that keeps the reader interested and never bogs down. *Towers* is incredibly humorous, both in the dialogue of the characters and in Trollope's third person omniscient narration. There were so many scenes of dumbfoundingly witty humor that if I didn't have other books to move on to I'd go back through and catalog all of the humorous bits for posterity. Dickens' "Pickwick Papers" is just as humorous, but it's more slapstick and deals more with situations. Trollope's humor is in wordplay and hyperbole. For example, when the awkward and unattractive Mr. Slope is soon to declare his love for the stunningly beautiful Signora Neroli, he takes her hand and this is how Trollope describes it: "Mr. Slope was big, awkward, cumbrous, and having his heart in his pursuit, was ill at ease."

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