

The background features a complex network of white nodes and lines, resembling a constellation or a data network. The nodes are of varying sizes and are connected by thin white lines. The overall color scheme is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The text is centered and in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

# Orley Farm

Written by Anthony Trollope

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# Orley Farm

By Anthony Trollope

## Orley Farm Trollope

This is perhaps the most unusual of all Trollope's books. The ending is quite extraordinary, morally outrageous even today or perhaps especially in this day and age, just absolutely disgusting.

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The plot seems to have been written about in just about every review so there is no point in the artificial drama of putting a 'spoiler' here, although personally I really am not keen on reviews that are more synopses of the book. I like to read what people thought of a book more than what the book was about. This is perhaps the most unusual of all Trollope's books. The ending is quite extraordinary, morally outrageous even today or perhaps especially in this day and age, just absolutely disgusting.

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A young man comes of age and takes control of the property he inherited away from his mother who has been in control until then. He isn't a bad lad but he thinks he knows more about business than he does and his first action is to evict the tenant farmer so that he might put the land to more profitable use himself.

The impetuous young lad's father who had owned the land had dispossessed his eldest son and left it to his son by his second wife by means of a codicil to his Will, signed by a couple of servants. This Will had been tested in court by the eldest son, the rightful heir, but he had lost.

The farmer had known that the codicil was not genuine but since he was benefiting from the land, had said nothing for all these years. Now, though, enraged by his summary eviction, he goes after revenge.

Lady Mason, the beautiful, relatively young widow, marshalls all possible support, legal and otherwise for the defence of the Will and her good name, but eventually confesses to a friend that she did indeed forge both the codicil and the signatures which were on a completely different legal document.

The case comes to court, the lawyer makes a total fool of one of the witnesses to the codicil, as lawyers

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do, and the Lady Mason wins the case. The eldest son naturally would have had to pay costs and his name would be quite damaged bringing two cases calling an aristocratic lady, his stepmother, a forger and a perjurer.

However, since quite a few people now know that she is indeed a criminal she cedes the land to the rightful inheritor, her stepson, and then, with her son, goes abroad to live a life of ease and luxury, keeping both her money and her good name.

Outrageous!

But an excellent book, perhaps the best of Trollope's marvellous stories. I so enjoyed reading it and was so furious at the end my son said, 'What are you shouting at?'

Recommended for classics fans and those who think they are deadly dull, all Dickens paid-for-by-the-word boring or sly romances like Austen (which I love). This is something else, a brilliant read. ...more

## Orley Farm Anthony Trollope

Hefty but not heavy: love, loss, iron furniture, legal shenanigans, humour, guilt, revenge, redemption, rat-catching, misunderstanding, a 'moulded wife' and more.

This is a standalone Trollope novel, originally published in instalments of two or three short chapters: the 800+ pages race by. Further page-turnability comes from numerous characters and sub-plots, coupled with quite a gossipy tone, and occasional catty asides. It was his most celebrated novel in his lifetime, but sadly, it is less well-known now. Hefty but not heavy: love, loss, iron furniture, legal shenanigans, humour, guilt, revenge, redemption, rat-catching, misunderstanding, a 'moulded wife' and more.

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### Plot

The basic plot is explained at the outset, and I expect most readers guess the gist of the outcome quite early on. Lady Mason was the young second wife of an old land-owning widower; they lived at Orley Farm, while the adult son (Joseph Mason) lived in the main family estate, Groby. Shortly after their son Lucius was born, the old man died, and contrary to what he'd told his elder son, a codicil to his will left Orley Farm to his infant son. The will was challenged, but the codicil upheld. Twenty years later, when this book is set, it is challenged again: Lady Mason may be charged with forgery or perjury.

It's not quite 'fiction' as Oscar Wilde's Miss Prism defined the word, but nearly so.

### Justice and The Law

The law is at the heart of the book (Trollope's father was a lawyer), along with the idea that it does not necessarily equate with justice. The process is explained clearly enough, and the courtroom scenes have the dramatic tension of the best TV dramas.

'We have retained a system which contains many of the barbarities of the feudal times; we teach him [the defendant] to lie in his own defence.'

Trollope's concerns are moral, channelled mainly through Lucius Mason ('lawyers are all liars') and young lawyer Felix Graham. In particular, is it ethical to defend someone if you think (or even know) they are guilty, and to what extent does payment cloud that, especially when it means the rich can buy justice that the poor can't (as they can also buy warmer winter coats)?

The older Furnival's conscience is more easily accommodated than that of the idealistic Graham: "He had learned as lawyers do learn to believe his own case."

Powerful barrister Chaffinbrass thinks it's fine to acquit the guilty if they can support themselves, because it saves the crown money (I assume he wouldn't extend that to rape or murder): "He was always true to the man whose money he had taken."

Image: Scales of justice, and shadow. Source.

"No amount of eloquence will make an English lawyer think that loyalty to the truth should come before loyalty to his client."

But is that good or bad? The guilty still need someone to plead for them. You could insert a religious analogy here, but in this novel, the message of Christian repentance and forgiveness comes instead from Lady Mason's friend, Mrs Orme. In fact, in some ways, this book has a stronger Christian message than the Barchester novels with their overtly church-related themes.

Putting aside the rules of law, moral justice is harder to define: doing the wrong thing, to selflessly right a wrong may still be wrong, but how much leniency, if any, should there be? How does the passage of time affect guilt, punishment and restitution? What does the innocent beneficiary of a crime owe the victim? If the victim is unpleasant and vindictive, how does one cast that bias aside?

Trivia: Even those who support the death penalty for crimes such as murder might be shocked to learn that forgery was a capital offence until 1830, only a few years before this was written and set!

### Comical Commerce

Despite some dubious ethics, most of the lawyers are likeable, and for contrast, there are some commercial travellers. They provide plenty of humour (especially when explaining the etiquette of the "Commercial (Dining) Room" in an inn), as well as examples of ethical quandaries of a less intellectual kind.

### Characters and their Names

Trollope is good at drawing characters of all sorts: rich, poor, aspirant, falling, male, female, young and old. He sometimes comes close to caricature, but knows where to draw the line. There are some good names, and unlike some of his Barsetshire novels, they're not quite ludicrous.

It's no surprise that Samuel Dockwraith is angry about his loss; that Round and Crook are lawyers, as are Slow and Bideawhile; Kantwise is quick-witted salesman; an apothecary is called Balsam; Mary Snow is on a pedestal; Bridget Bolster is made of stern stuff, and Chaffinbrass is good in court interrogation.

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## Women

For a Victorian man, Trollope can be surprisingly insightful about women – though he’s not afraid to portray nasty ones either. Those of most interest here include:

– Lady Mason is the central character, and unlike Lily Dale (*The Small House at Allington*), she is plausibly complex, as is her situation. The reader’s feelings towards her vary, which is a compliment to the writing.

– Mrs Orme is, like Lady Mason, a woman in her early forties, widowed for around twenty years. Her situation is rather different (she lives with her father-in-law, Sir Peregrine Orme, and son Perry) but her love and loyalty – practical and emotional – are beautiful.

– Sophia Furnival is a fascinating young woman: fiercely intelligent, but born a few generations too soon to follow her father into the law – something she would undoubtedly be good at.

– Mrs Furnival loves her husband, and is proud of his success but she struggles with the price of that success. Her husband is often away, so she suspects infidelity. She doesn’t find solace in her new social position either: she can’t butter toast on her lap, and tea is made in the kitchen, poured by servants.

– Mary Snow was the motherless daughter of a feckless father, adopted as a ward by a benefactor, who then trained her up to be a –moulded wife– ! It’s described as if this was a known idea at the time. The complications of this arrangement are explored.

Lucius Mason is forward thinking; he declares that women –have minds equal to those of men– , though in an earlier chapter, Trollope suggests that Joseph Mason would be justified in deserting, beating or locking up his awful wife!

It may be relevant that although Trollope’s father was not very successful, his mother was a celebrated novelist who was able to support the family.

## Parenting

Law may be the overt theme, but relationships between parents and young adult children are really the core of most of the plots and sub-plots, and as a parent of a young adult, they were what chimed most with me:

– Old Joseph Mason’s provision for his two sons caused problems. Death and money are often troublesome companions; we should strive to bequeath peace and harmony in how we leave our affairs.

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“Lady Mason’s court cases affect her relationship with her son and his position in society. Everything she does, she does for him, and he loves her unquestioningly. But.

“Mary Snow’s father virtually sells her, but is her benefactor-cum-suitor any better? Distasteful as this is in modern times, I think his motives were honourable, albeit very misplaced.

“Judge Stavely and his wife are very liberal in how much freedom they give their daughters in choosing who to marry. They believe a child “should be allowed, as far as was practical, to do what they liked” because the child “if properly trained, would like those things which were good for them.” I broadly agree, but there’s no guarantee.

“The Stavelys’ freedom even allows a game of Blind Man’s Buff where “you can feel, you know” .

## Marriage

You could write a lengthy essay comparing the huge variety of marriages “ and potential ones “ portrayed here.

We see a wealthy man, living in virtual poverty because of his stingy wife (who makes sure she does not go without herself), the corrosive effect of suspicion, a dubious form of well-intentioned grooming, sacrificial love, the pressure of having 14 children, and a commercial traveller who likes to keep his wife on her toes by not telling her when he’ll be home:

“He might keep her always on alert and ready for marital inspection.”

There is a gentleness in the way even the unhappy ones are rendered that avoids conjuring prurience, and a light joy in the happy couples. Social boundaries are challenged: some characters bow to them, and some do not.

It illustrates that there is no single template for marriage that works for all, and that what works for one couple at one stage in their lives, may need changing later on. I was reminded of a recent radio interviewee who was asked about how he and his wife had been happily married for over 30 years. He said he’d actually been married three times (the interviewer sounded flustered) and then explained that he’d only ever been married to the same woman, but that their relationship had evolved, so it was almost like three different marriages.

The permutations of courting couples, and the way some of them play one off another lend a Shakespearean air at times: different combinations of who might end up with who, and various impediments (some of which vanish without further explanation).

Tome, Language, and Grammar



Trollope quite often addresses the reader directly, giving his reasons for why he's telling the story in the way he is. For example, "The heroine must by a certain fixed law be young and marriageable" and promises that at least one such will be forthcoming. He also contradicts himself, to mildly comic effect. For instance, saying "it would be needless to tell" and immediately telling it.

The occasionally gossipy tone is sometimes used, conspiratorially, to the reader, but is also demonstrated by Martha Biggs in particular. She takes a salacious interest in the troubles of her friend's marriage, and wants to know more: her "soul sighed for a tale more piquant than one of mere general neglect". It could not be expected that she would sympathise with generalities for ever. When she can't hear the argument she expects, she "let the battle rage in her imagination". She has some succour, and later, "her mind deliciously filled with the anticipation of coming catastrophes". Some friend!

It's instructive to read period literature and be reminded how language has changed. Constructions and spellings that some abhor as shocking modern errors or Americanisms are common in respected British books of the past:

"all of them do not have.."

"gotten" (relegated to American English nowadays).

"stept across" (yet we do still use burnt, spilt, spelt etc).

"insure" and "intrust", where we would now use "ensure" and "entrust".

Hyphenation changes: now-a-days, some one, to-night, to-morrow.

"Stupid is as stupid does" may have been famously said by Forrest Gump's mother, but it's said by a sharp-tongued salesman here (Kantwise).

"not so cute in the ways of having much to say"

## Other Quotes

"He looked as though a skin rather too small for the purpose had been drawn over his head and face. His nose seemed to have been compressed almost into nothing by that skin-squeezing operation; it had all the properties of a line; length without breadth."

"Mrs Mason is comically mean, even to guests. A servant serves lunch: the covers were removed; with a magnificent action of his arm which I am inclined to think was not innocent of

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ironyâ€¦ a large dishâ€¦ selected by the cook with some similar attempt at sarcasmâ€• and bearing â€œthree scraps, as to the nature of which Mr Dockwraith, though he looked hard at them, was unable to enlighten himself.â€•

â€œA frustrated husband, â€œInstead of counting up her virtues, he counted up his own.â€• Trollope observes that failing to love and cherish a spouse is as much a breaking of marriage vows as the betrayal he is suspected of.

â€œan intermeddling little busybody.â€•

â€œSince the domestic rose would no longer yield him honey, he would seek his sweets from the stray honeysuckle on which there grew no thorns.â€•

â€œLegal gentlemen areâ€¦ quite as often bought off as bought up.â€•

â€œMrs Mason would not on any account have missed churchâ€¦ It was a cheap duty and therefore rigidly performed.â€•

â€œHe must now either assure her by a lie or break down all her hopes by the truthâ€• .

â€œNovels are the only chance a man has when heâ€™s laid up like that.â€•

â€œa solitary candle, which only seemed to make the gloom of the large room visible.â€•

â€œShe did wander about the house, as though there were something always to be done in some place apart from that in which she then was.â€•

â€œHaving dressed his face with that romantic sobriety he had been practising.â€•

â€œHe was a man who looked his best when under a cloud, and shone the brightest when everything about him was dark.â€• (Lucius Mason) ...more

Did Lady Mason forge her late husband's will?

We learn the answer to that question early enough, but that is not the point to this story. Her guilt or innocence is beside the point. We must hear from the British class system. And, of more consequence, what of the British system of justice?

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Another lawyer is Solomon Aram, highly skilled, acutely aware; but a Jew. Trollope deals with the anti-Semitism matter-of-factly. It made me wince for all the Realism of it, but made me also think of more Then, now, here, there.

One witness tried to tell the truth but he was spectacularly no good at it, so bad in fact that the trial judge charged the jury that they could take it as a given that the witness was stupid. With friends after the trial, the poor witness hangs his head, as despondent as a soul can be. One friend, in a fortified attempt at commiseration, says "what does it matter if all the judges in the land was to call him stupid." To which another friend solemnly intones, "Stupid is as stupid does." So, do not believe that Forrest Gump said it first.

This will not be my last Trollope.

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"I told the truth about it. You can make it look any which way now, but I told how it happened.

Seagraves said, "That's what we called the jury for, to decide."

She turned then, looking directly at them. "They don't decide what happened," she said. "It's already done. All they decide is if they gone do something about it." ...more

## Orley Farm Term Dates

When people ask me, "David, you're obviously a complete nut when it comes to Trollope. I've never read one of his novels, and he wrote so damned many. Which one should I try?", this is the one I recommend. Some in the Barsetshire and Palliser series may be better, but the first book in each of those series is below standard for Trollope; I don't want anyone to embark on those until they know Trollope can deliver the goods. And deliver the goods he does in Orley Farm.

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The plot revolves around a will. Sir Joseph Mason dies with a will that leaves everything to his second son, the son of his second wife, the much younger, beautiful Lady Mason, and nothing to his son by an earlier marriage. Did Lady Mason forge this will?

Trollope early on lets us know the answer to this question. It's typical of his approach to narrative. He almost disdains plots and twists, or says he does, and seems to want to be rid of any reader who is reading just to find out the answer to what could have been a mystery, saying in effect: "If this is the only reason you're reading this, here's the answer. Satisfied? Now please go away."

Anyone who has come to love Trollope knows that the joy of reading him has nothing to do with twists and turns of plot. If you're the type for Trollope, you'll stay to the end, even when you know the answer to the forgery question.

Trollope's father was a barrister, although an utter failure at the bar, and Trollope's lawyers are wonderful. The much feared Chaffanbrass, whom Trollope introduced in *The Three Clerks* and who will appear again in *Phineas Redux*, appears here in all his glory. His skill at cross-examination lies not so much in wringing the truth from liars as in making the most innocent and honest of witnesses come across as the sneakiest of perjurers.

Also representing Lady Mason in the will contest is Sir Thomas Furnival. The portrait of the Furnival marriage, and its gradual disintegration as Sir Thomas becomes smitten, almost innocently, with Lady Mason, is Trollope at his best. ...more

The plot of *Orley Farm* is as complex and multilayered as we have come to expect from the pen of Anthony Trollope. And the narrative is as filled with authorial asides and conversations between Trollope and his readers as we have come to enjoy. This is a book to be read in a leisurely manner, without any urgency or rushing. Characterizations are brilliant and individual, and plot lines interweave

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Early in the novel a destabilizing event occurs. Twenty years after a dispute about property has apparently been resolved in the courts, a new document is found that triggers a reprise of old contentions and events with results that are unclear until near the very end. The reader is left guessing and hypothesizing at every turn. Told in the third-person omniscient voice, the story winds and meanders, many characters developing and changing over time, none entirely admirable, few entirely despicable. Trollope's obligatory fox hunt makes its predictable appearance. Descriptions are delightful, names are clever, diction and syntax please the ear. Trollope takes the opportunity in this novel to explore the ethics and mores of the legal profession and the justice system even as he indulges himself in the unraveling of love triangles among several families. There is a rhythm to his writing that carries the reader along endlessly, and subtexts, hidden motives, and secrets abound.

This is a delightful book, one of many by this prolific Victorian novelist.

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## Orley Farm School Fees

In a word, wow! Dare I say it? Yes, I prefer Trollope to Dickens - less sentimental and more fully formed characters. Another novel about the machinations of the legal system and how reputations are made and lost with honor and integrity making merely a cameo appearance. Trollope confirms the protagonist's guilt in the first few pages so the question to be answered is whether she'll get off or not. I really should go back and read Bleak House again to compare and contrast the two.

Loved this book.

Even though we know the outcome Trollope just draws you in.

Found this utterly compelling.

Wonderful characters some to love and some to hate.

Is Lady Mason guilty?

You will have to read to find out!

## Orley Farm Firefly

Did Lady Mason forge her late husband's will?

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The plot (did Lady Mason forge her husband's will to gain his estate for her infant son?) covers familiar Trollope territory: the promptings of conscience versus financial safety. Trollope's most interesting characters are those for whom the question is never clear cut. Here's Lady Mason, considering how a possible second marriage could affect the forgery case being brought against her.

Then she sat herself down, and began to look her future world in the face. Two questions she had to ask. Would The plot (did Lady Mason forge her husband's will to gain his estate for her infant son?) covers familiar Trollope territory: the promptings of conscience versus financial safety. Trollope's most interesting characters are those for whom the question is never clear cut. Here's Lady Mason, considering how a possible second marriage could affect the forgery case being brought against her. Then she sat herself down, and began to look her future world in the face. Two questions she had to ask. Would it be well for her that this marriage should take place? and would it be well for him? In an off-hand way she had already answered both questions; but she had done so by feeling rather than by thought.

No doubt she would gain much in the coming struggle by such a position as Sir Peregrine would give her. It did seem to her that Mr. Dockwrath and Joseph Mason would hardly dare to bring such a charge as that threatened against the wife of Sir Peregrine Orme. And then, too, what evidence as to character would be so substantial as the evidence of such a marriage? But how would Mr. Furnival [her lawyer] bear it, and if he were offended would it be possible that the fight should be fought without him? No; that would be impossible. The lawyer's knowledge, experience, and skill were as necessary to her as the baronet's position and character. But why should Mr. Furnival be offended by such a marriage? "She did not know," she said to herself. "She could not see that there should be cause of offence." But yet some inner whisper of her conscience told her that there would be offence. Must Mr. Furnival be told; and must he be told at once?

That deep character POV is another Trollope speciality and a way of bringing his readers into a reluctant sense of sympathy with his flawed "heroine". But it's also a way of showing moral development: every time we are taken into Lady Mason's POV, although superficially she appears to be going over the same points again and again, in fact her position shifts imperceptibly each time. So when finally (view spoiler)[ she admits the forgery (hide spoiler)] we feel that we have been on the journey with her.



I love that Trollope uses such simple language and situations: he doesn't use any of Dickens' flowery rhetoric, melodramatic flourishes or OTT characters. His "drama" is forged from everyday incidents, and presented with a deceptive simplicity. The following scene is ostensibly about hunting; Trollope uses no stage directions in the scene, there's no physical description at all - but for all that, there's a strong sense not just of the characters but of a parallel unspoken conversation that's happening at the same time.

"May we go as far as the wood?" said Miss Furnival to Augustus [Staveley]. "Without being made to ride over hedges, I mean."

"Oh, dear, yes; and ride about the wood half the day. It will be an hour and a half before a fox will breakâ€"even if he ever breaks."

"Dear me! how tired you will be of us. Now do say something pretty, Mr. Staveley."

"It's not my mÃ©tier. We shall be tired, not of you, but of the thing. Galloping up and down the same cuts in the wood for an hour and a half is not exciting; nor does it improve the matter much if we stand still, as one should do by rights."

"That would be very slow."

"You need not be afraid. They never do here. Everybody will be rushing about as though the very world depended on their galloping."

"I'm so glad; that's just what I like."

"Everybody except Lord Alston, Miss Tristram, and, the other old stagers. They will husband their horses, and come out as fresh at two o'clock as though they were only just out. There is nothing so valuable as experience in hunting."

"Do you think it nice seeing a young lady with so much hunting knowledge?"

"Now you want me to talk slander, but I won't do it. I admire the Miss Tristrams exceedingly, and especially Julia."

"And which is Julia?"

"The youngest; that one riding by herself."

"And why don't you go and express your admiration?"

"Ah, me! why don't we all express the admiration that we feel, and pour sweet praises into the ears of the lady that excites it? Because we are cowards, Miss Furnival, and are afraid even of such a weak thing as a woman."

"Dear me! I should hardly have thought that you would suffer from such terror as that."

"Because you don't quite know me, Miss Furnival."

"And Miss Julia Tristram is the lady that has excited it?"

"If it be not she, it is some other fair votary of Diana at present riding into Monkton Wood."

"Ah, now you are giving me a riddle to guess, and I never guess riddles. I won't even try at it. But they all seem to be stopping."

"Yes, they are putting the hounds into covert. Now if you want to show yourself a good sportsman, look at your watch. You see that Julia Tristram has got hers in her hand."

"What's that for?"

"To time the hounds; to see how long they'll be before they find. It's very pretty work in a small gorse,

Orley Farm

but in a great wood like this I don't care much for being so accurate. But for heaven's sake don't tell Julia Tristram; I should not have a chance if she thought I was so slack."

Lovely subtle stuff.

...more

## Orley Farm School Vacancies

This isn't one of Trollope's best-known novels (though it's hardly obscure), but I think it's one of his best. Years ago, when Sir Joseph Mason died, there had been some question about his will, which left most of his property to his eldest son but included a codicil leaving Orley Farm to his youngest, Lucius, son of his second wife. When the case came to trial, the authenticity of the will was apparently proved, and Lucius inherited. Now, though, an enemy of Lady Mason has uncovered evidence wh

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The plot revolves around the doubtful will and possible forgery, but Trollope isn't really interested in creating suspense around whether or not Lady Mason is guilty; he makes that clear early on, and it's her fate, whether guilty or innocent, and the outcome of the second trial that provides the suspense. There are romantic subplots, of course, and to me, easily the most interesting one is the moving, poignant relationship between Lady Mason and old Sir Peregrine Orme. In fact, the older people are generally more interesting here than the younger, especially Lady Mason, whose richer personality and experience make her a far more complex heroine than the more typical young women. If you've never read Trollope, I think this would be a good place to start.

...more

A most excellent novel! Like Dickens, Trollope goes after a particular facet of English life in most of his novels and makes you understand why you should care, or be concerned. In this instance, it is the legal profession and the right and wrong decisions that people make. There's something about every Trollope novel that I've read that just slowly but surely draws me in until I simply can't put the book down. This guy is so underrated by many, and I just can't--for the life of me--understand w

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## Orley Farm Open Day

This is my tenth Trollope, if I'm counting right and while I have really enjoyed reading them all, this one had me literally hooked right from the beginning and I couldn't wait to get back to it, each time I put it down (at about 700 pages, no way this could be read in one go). Trollope shows once again that he knows people and aspects of life and relationships—love, friendship, jealousy, the zealousness of youth and its tendency to see things much more in black and white, and follies (of the young and the old). And he certainly also knows how to tell a story or, in this case several interwoven stories—all of which hold one's interest, but particularly the central tale of the Orley Farm case in which while the "did she do it?" does not remain a mystery for long, the outcome of the trial does till almost the end. An excellent read. ...more

I have long been a fan of Anthony Trollope and decided to read this one because I wanted to write a Trollope TV adaptation. I hoped this novel would lend itself to that.

It did. Since I write crime fiction, I really enjoyed the criminal aspect of this compelling legal drama. Although the story took some time to get rolling, once it did, Orley Farm became a page-turner.

One of the reasons I enjoy Trollope so much is his complicated female characters. He has a real gift for making his women characters multi-dimensional and interesting. In addition, the book has many characters, male and female, who seem as real as people you'd meet today.

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Trollope also offers wonderful insights into the human condition as well as observations on class and gender in Victorian England. The book is witty, romantic, and tragic--and well worth your time. ...more

## Orley Farm School Reviews

Like every Trollope book I read right after I read it, this was my favorite. One of the best legal suspense thrillers, where you can't help but love the wrong-doer and hope for her to get off the hook, but will she? Oodles of good characters, irony, tension, and plenty of pages to get into it. And then there's Sir Peregrine who makes you want to spend your days espousing honor and good character, sipping claret and eating mutton, playing whist and petting your dogs.

I've been longing to review this wonderful book and it's taken me too long to get to it and it's just not as fresh on my mind as it was. More's the pity.

This was an incredibly powerful book! Truly another Trollope masterpiece. Actually, Mr. Trollope mentioned during his lifetime that this was his favorite creation. He felt like it was a perfect mix of sensation and politics (or truth about humanity)â€”a book with a fascinating and fast-paced story no one could put down paired with political talk. I've been longing to review this wonderful book and it's taken me too long to get to it and it's just not as fresh on my mind as it was. More's the pity.

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I can hardly tell anything about the story without giving the plot away, so that makes reviewing a little bit difficult. The story centers around a very wealthy man who lost his first wife early in life (leaving a few children), and then married again late in life. He and his second wife had a son, to whom the man supposedly left one small part of his property. This infuriated his eldest son, who caused the will to be contested. The son lost the suit, but never got over it. The young wife and son lived on at the property in question, Orley Farm, until years later when circumstances occurred which caused this eldest son to again contest the will in court.

The politics of the work revolve around how Mr. Trollope felt about the judicial courts of England at the time. He wondered at the way lawyers/attorneys/barristersâ€”many of them good menâ€”could confidently and vigorously defend a guilty person while retaining a clear conscience, under the impression that such was the way of the world, and it was their profession. The question still remains, and Mr. Trollope puts his own unique stamp, and his own credulity at how that could be, on it, of course.

The characters were wonderful, particularly the Orme and Staveley familiesâ€”every one of them. The

Orley Farm

devotion and true, honest, loving, respectful relationships in both families was breathtaking. Madeline Staveley's respect for her parents (and theirs for her) was model. Judge Staveley and Sir Peregrine Orme were each adorable men in different ways. The honesty and good judgment of the first and the chivalry, loyalty and charity of the second was, again, model.

There were more unlikeable characters in this book than in other Trollopes I've read. Usually Mr. Trollope tried to show an understandable and therefore sympathetic side to most of his villains but there wasn't much in the Joseph Mason family or for Mr. Dockwraith to find worthy of sympathy.

And the side characters like the Moulder and the Furnival families made the story even more rich.

That's about all I have time and thought for, and I'm sure none of what I said made anyone want to spend the time on this almost 900 page book. So I'll finish with the thought that it's been a while since I spent that much time with what is really, truly a GREAT book. The entire moral fibre was outstanding. The more time I spend with Trollope, the more I respect his work and the man he must have been to create the body, type and quality of work he did. I would have loved to have been able to look inside his head—the sheer amount of thought, and the important, applicable character of his thought is almost overwhelming for a person like me who spends the most of my daily life thinking of such mundane things. He's become a serious rival in my affections alongside Mr. Dickens—and for those of you who know how I love Dickens, that's great praise indeed.

...more

## Orley Farm Twitter

Did Trollope need an editor? On one hand, this is a long book and sometimes the leisurely pace makes you wish he would skip quickly to more exciting subplots. On the other hand, maybe you should just relax and enjoy the ride. And I did! The book is filled with suspense, great characters, interesting historical observations and a surprising number of laugh-out-loud moments (The battle of the 'mercial room! Dinner at Groby Park! The demise of Martha Biggs! The ever mercenary Miss Furnival!). That Did Trollope need an editor? On one hand, this is a long book and sometimes the leisurely pace makes you wish he would skip quickly to more exciting subplots. On the other hand, maybe you should just relax and enjoy the ride. And I did! The book is filled with suspense, great characters, interesting historical observations and a surprising number of laugh-out-loud moments (The battle of the 'mercial room! Dinner at Groby Park! The demise of Martha Biggs! The ever mercenary Miss Furnival!). That said, I'm not sure I'll be tackling another Trollope any time soon. So to answer the initial question: yes, Trollope probably could've used an editor (von Bauhr's dream!?) but one with a light touch.

...more

This was the first (but hopefully not the last) Trollope book I have read. I thought the writing, so personal as if directed solely at me was exceptional. It was easy to follow the life and times of the characters as they ranged between love and the law. It was an all inclusive book that covered so many aspects of Victorian life and answered the question of what makes one a noble person.

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I enjoyed all the characters and thought the author did a wonderful job of making them real and ever so vulnerable. This was said to be Trollope's favorite book. ...more