



The Old Wives' Tale: (A Modern Library E-Book) (Modern Library 100 Best Novels)

Arnold Bennett

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The Old Wives' Tale: (A Modern Library E-Book) (Modern Library 100 Best Novels) Arnold Bennett
Selected by the Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of all time

'[Arnold Bennett's] superb *Old Wives' Tale*, wandering from person to person and from scene to scene, is by far the finest 'long novel' that has been written in English and in the English fashion, in this generation.'

--H. G. Wells

First published in 1908, *The Old Wives' Tale* affirms the integrity of ordinary lives as it tells the story of the Baines sisters--shy, retiring Constance and defiant, romantic Sophia--over the course of nearly half a century. Bennett traces the sisters' lives from childhood in their father's drapery shop in provincial Bursley, England, during the mid-Victorian era, through their married lives, to the modern industrial age, when they are reunited as old women. The setting moves from the Five Towns of Staffordshire to exotic and cosmopolitan Paris, while the action moves from the subdued domestic routine of the Baines household to the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War.

'Like Wordsworth, [Arnold Bennett] has triumphed over the habitual; he has not let it disguise the particle of beauty from him.'--Rebecca West



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