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Barchester Towers

Anthony Trollope · *1857* · *original English text*

In the latter days of July, a most important question is asked hourly in the cathedral city of Barchester: who will be the new bishop? Trollope's 1857 novel is the great comic struggle of Mrs Proudie, Mr Slope, and a milder set of lives that still have to be lived. The hosted text is the Standard Ebooks edition.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

In a fight over a bishopric and a pulpit, what becomes of ordinary goodness, and who is left standing as a good man without guile?

"a good man, without guile, believing humbly in the religion which he has striven to teach, and guided by the precepts which he has striven to learn."

The novel's last description of Mr. Harding

The war is ecclesiastical and social: a new bishop, a chaplain who means to rule, a proud bishop's wife, a widow, and the old high-and-dry party of Plumstead. Trollope is funny and exact about ambition in holy places. The hosted English is the Standard Ebooks text (the catalogue names no other source). In this file the year is printed with a dash, 185–, and "Mr. Slope" may appear with a non-breaking space after the period; both match after ordinary quotation. The close praises Mr. Harding as a good man without guile. For a wide older band: courtship, clerical intrigue, no need to sensationalize.

KEY CHARACTERS

Mr. Harding
The former warden, the book's conscience, named at the end as a good man without guile.

Mrs Proudie and Mr. Slope
The bishop's wife and the chaplain whose ambition starts the war.

Eleanor Bold
Mr. Harding's daughter, a widow whose hand and fortune draw the city's eyes.

Mr. Arabin and the Grantlys
The old high-church party and the serious ally who helps turn the tide.

WITHOUT GUILE

> *"a good man, without guile, believing humbly in the religion which he has striven to teach, and guided by the precepts which he has striven to learn."*
>
> The last description of Mr. Harding

Grades 11–12

Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Question in July

THE OPENING

For ten days the cathedral city asks who will be bishop. The answer will set the book's war in motion.

- A clean stretch in this edition is: 'a most important question was for ten days hourly asked in the cathedral city of Barchester.'
- The year is printed with a dash (185–); quote around it, or quote the question itself.
- The old bishop's death is the first door.

> *"a most important question was for ten days hourly asked in the cathedral city of Barchester"*
>
> The opening

02

Mrs Proudie and Mr Slope

THE NEW PALACE

The new bishop arrives with a wife who means to rule and a chaplain who means to rise. Barchester has not had this kind of war before.

- 'Mr. Slope' in the Standard Ebooks file may use a non-breaking space after Mr.; it still quotes as Mr. Slope.
- The comedy is moral: ambition in a pulpit is still ambition.
- Do not make Slope only a clown; he is dangerous in a small way.

03

Eleanor, and a Widow's Fortune

THE COURTSHIP PLOT

Mr. Harding's daughter, now a widow, becomes the prize and the rumor of half the city. Suitors gather for reasons both tender and calculating.

- The love-plot is the other half of the war for the hospital and the pulpit.
- Eleanor is not a cipher; her dignity is part of the book's measure.
- Trollope tells you more than a mystery would, and the pleasure is in how it unfolds.

04

Arabin, and the Old Party

THE MIDDLE AND THE TURN

The high-church reinforcement arrives. Parties form, dinners become battles, and a few private hearts get clearer than the public fight.

- Mr. Arabin is a serious man; the book needs him.
- The Thornes, the Stanhopes, and the signora are comic and also a test of charity.
- Keep the clerical politics readable without making the map a party chart only.

05

A Good Man without Guile

THE CLOSE

The war ends as Trollope's wars often end: some ambitions fall, some marriages are made, and Mr. Harding is left as a good man without guile, believing what he has taught.

- The last description is exact in this English.
- It is a comic novel with a real moral center, not a jest at faith itself.
- This Standard Ebooks text is complete. The Warden is a separate, earlier book; keep the two distinct.

Ambition in Holy Places · A Cathedral City · Courtship · Comedy and Charity · A Good Man

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text is the Standard Ebooks edition of Trollope's original English (the catalogue names no Gutenberg number). Quote this page. The opening year is printed with a dash (185–). "Mr. Slope" may use a non-breaking space after the period in the file; it still matches as Mr. Slope after ordinary quotation.
2. The close is exact: "a good man, without guile, believing humbly in the religion which he has striven to teach, and guided by the precepts which he has striven to learn."
3. This is the sequel to The Warden (also in this wave). Keep the plots distinct. A clerical comedy for a wide older band.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Standard Ebooks (English original), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/barchester-towers/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.