



## Sons and Lovers

*D. H. Lawrence (1885 – 1930)*

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Read by:	Mark F. Smith	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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*Sons and Lovers* tells the story of Paul Morel, the son of a rough coal miner father and a genteel mother who has married beneath her class. As the marriage deteriorates Mrs. Morel shifts her affections to her two sons, who love and admire their mother but experience conflicts as they come of age and try to establish relationships with women. Lawrence himself summarized the plot in a letter to editor Edward Garnett in November 1912: “It follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, so her children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers — first the eldest, then the second. These

sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother — urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can’t love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them.” The book met with a lukewarm reception and insinuations of obscenity when it was initially published in 1913. Lawrence went through four drafts, and yet Garnett removed about 10% of the text in the first edition to make it more palatable to the market. Over time it has come to be seen as an important work in Western culture. The Modern Library ranked *Sons and Lovers* ninth on its 1999 list of the 100 best novels in English of the 20th century.

**David Herbert “D. H.” Lawrence** (September 11, 1885 – March 2, 1930) was an English writer and painter whose work focused on the dehumanizing effects of modern life and whose views were often unorthodox and controversial. He was the fourth son of a coal miner and a teacher and raised near Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire. He earned a scholarship to Nottingham High School and later a teaching certificate from University College. He moved to London in 1908 to write and teach and published short stories and a novel, *The White Peacock*. He suffered from bouts of pneumonia and in 1911 chose to write full time. In 1912 he met German aristocrat Frieda Weekly, mother of three and wife of a former professor, and married her in 1914 after her divorce. They spent much time traveling and living abroad, eventually becoming voluntary exiles, settling on a ranch in Taos, New Mexico after journeying through Ceylon and Australia. Lawrence published several travel books and works of criticism. His best known works are *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) *Women in Love* (1920) and a censored version of *Lady Chatterly’s Lover* (1928). The unexpurgated version published in 1960 was the subject of a famous obscenity trial that enabled publication if literary merit could be shown. Painting became increasingly important to Lawrence in his later years. He exhibited a collection in 1929 that met with a controversial reception in spite of praise from fellow artists and resulted in the confiscation of 13 of the 25 paintings, which he recovered after promised never to exhibit them in England again.