



Morningside Heights: A Novel

By Cheryl Mendelson

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Morningside Heights: A Novel By Cheryl Mendelson

Following the tremendous success of her first book, a nonfiction work on housekeeping that became a surprise bestseller, Cheryl Mendelson brings to her debut novel the same intensely readable style that made **Home Comforts** so popular. In the spirit of Anthony Trollope, she roots her story very much in a specific time and place—1999, in an old-fashioned New York City neighborhood that's becoming rapidly gentrified—and the enormously engaging result resembles a twentieth-century version of **The Way We Live Now**.

Anne and Charles Braithwaite have spent their entire married life in a sedate old apartment building in Morningside Heights, a northern Manhattan neighborhood filled with intellectual, artistic souls like themselves, who thrive on the area's abundant parks, cultural offerings, and reasonably priced real estate. The Braithwaites, musicians with several young children, are at the core of a circle of friends who make their living as writers, psychiatrists, and professors. But as the novel opens, their comfortable life is being threatened as a buoyant economy sends newly rich Wall Street types scurrying northward in search of good investments and more space. At the same time, the Braithwaites weather the difficult love lives of their friends, and all of the characters confront their fears that the institutions and social values that have until now provided them with meaning and stability—science, religion, the arts—are in increasing decline. Though the group clings to the rituals and promises of such institutions, the Braithwaites' imminent departure sends shock waves through their community. As the family contemplates the impossible—a move to the suburbs—their predicament represents the end of a cultured kind of city life that middle-class families can no longer afford.

This intelligent and captivating social chronicle is the first of a trilogy of novels about Morningside Heights; readers sure to be drawn in by Mendelson's habit-forming prose have much more to look forward to.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The busy, intersecting lives of a group of Manhattanites living in the staid but rapidly changing Upper West Side neighborhood of Morningside Heights near Columbia University are the focus of this talky, occasionally stilted debut novel by Mendelson (*Home Comforts: The Art and Science of Keeping House*). Opera singer Charles Braithwaite; his wife, Anne, a pianist; and their three (soon to be four) children are the novel's ostensible protagonists. The book's real hero, however, is their beloved neighborhood, which they fear they will soon have to leave, unable to afford their cramped apartment. They are surrounded by a large cast of the sort of people commonly found on Manhattan's Upper West Side-independent scholars, professors, eccentric neighbors, with rich stockbrokers invading the haunts of the original residents. Narrative drama, such as it is, is provided by the death of an elderly resident of the Braithwaite's building. What were the true circumstances of her death, what role was played by her shifty trustee-and most importantly, who will get her apartment? The incorporation of neighborhood history and description is sometimes a bit stiff, and Mendelson's tone can be stuffy-as befits her subjects-but the accumulation of day-to-day detail, social commentary and emotional insight eventually yields a consistent picture of a rarefied milieu.

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From [Booklist](#)

In the first entry in a projected trilogy set in the Manhattan neighborhood of Morningside Heights, first-novelist Mendelson homes in on a charmed and charming circle of friends with the zeal of an anthropologist. For the first time in their placid marriage, the Braithwaites are experiencing serious tension. The overambitious gentrification plans of their co-op's new board of directors and the impending birth of their fourth child have pushed the couple's precarious finances past the breaking point. Charles, an opera singer, and Anne, who has turned domesticity into a deeply creative act, must now seriously consider a dreaded move to the suburbs. In addition, they are concerned about their best friends, a brilliant but lonely scientist and an acclaimed writer still reeling from yet another disastrous relationship. Readers will find it hard to resist Mendelson's radiant optimism, for she creates a world in which people naturally find and follow the arc of their true talents, lovers' defenses miraculously melt away, and decency and compassion are richly rewarded. This is one seductive novel. *Joanne Wilkinson*

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Review

Praise for Cheryl Mendelson and **Home Comforts**

“Cheryl Mendelson is the author of the strangely compelling new book **Home Comforts**, [which contains] as promising a germ of a domestic novella as might be found anywhere.”

—*The New Yorker*

“It’s an extraordinary achievement that has no peer in this century and may well have none in the next. A lawyer with a degree in philosophy, Mendelson writes with grace, wit, and exactitude on a staggering range of material.”

—*Newsweek*

“Although it’s a reference work, **Home Comforts** packs the punch of a major novel.”

—*Brill’s Content*

“Wildly comprehensive...full of revelations...What is most interesting about this book is Ms. Mendelson’s point of view.”

—*The New York Times*

“Not only illuminating and practical but also, most surprisingly, crisply entertaining.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brandy Hagaman:

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Ramiro Alvarez:

Why? Because this Morningside Heights: A Novel is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will surprise you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such incredible way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

Donna Bohannon:

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Peggy Dunn:

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