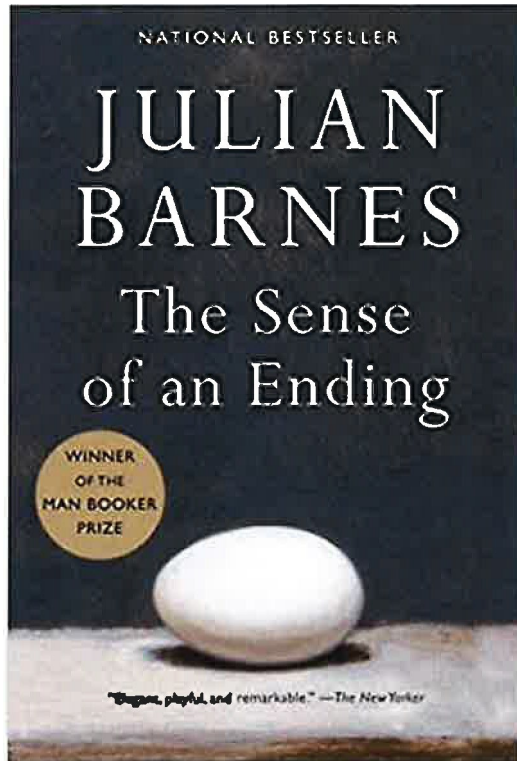


## Great Books, Level 9 (W234439)

### The Sense of an Ending, Julian Barnes

ISBN-13: 978-0307947727



"Beautiful... An elegantly composed, quietly devastating tale." -Heller McAlpin, NPR

A novel so compelling that it begs to be read in a single setting. This intense novel follows Tony Webster, a middle-aged man, as he contends with a past, he never thought much about - until his closest childhood friends return with a vengeance: one of them from the grave, another maddeningly present. Tony thought he left all this behind as he built a life for himself, and his career has provided him with a secure retirement and an amicable relationship with his ex-wife and daughter, who now has a family of her own. But when he is presented with a mysterious legacy, he is forced to revise his estimation of his own nature and place in the world.

How certain are the "facts" of history? Can we trust the memories we have of things that happened in our own lives? What are we left with when we try to grasp the truth of events that are in the past? *The Sense of an Ending* draws the reader into these questions and challenges us to see them anew.

Carefully read **and annotate** the novel. When you finish reading, compile a list of **three to five questions** the book poses but does not provide enough evidence to answer. Additionally, **reflect** on your feelings about the open-ended nature of the novel and of this assignment. Can we become comfortable with ambiguity, with texts that resist us, with life which bears elusive truths?

Please have your book, questions, and reflection on the first day of class. You'll be handing them in.

**Trigger warning:** This story includes references to two suicides. There are no graphic descriptions, but if needed, contact [zwirnere@newtrier.k12.il.us](mailto:zwirnere@newtrier.k12.il.us) for an alternate text.