



Hard times book 2



Chapter 1

- Mrs. Sparsit with a new responsibilities in the **Bonderby's factory** chats Bitzer, now a young man and the Bank's porter. In their conversation, they discuss what a lazy young man Tom Gradgrind is.
- In addition, Mrs. Sparsit sits for many hours, thinking and thinking about something ill-intentioned towards Louisa.



Chapter 2

- ▶ The young gentleman Mr. James Harthouse, usually called Jem, hoping to find work with Mr. Bounderby. It was James' brother who recommended that he go work for Bounderby, he mention them (bonderby and grindgland , "Hard Fact fellows". Mr. Harthouse and Mr. Bounderby meet, and then Bounderby takes Harthouse home to be introduced to Louisa.
- ▶ he meets handsome, proud, cold Louisa. But when Tom comes home, Louisa's impassive face breaks into a warm, beautiful smile. Harthouse inwardly takes note of this; apparently Tom is the only one she loves.



Chapter 3

- After dinner, Jem Harthouse takes Tom back to his hotel, and handing him a drink and a cigar, converses about Louisa. He learns that Louisa married Bounderby not out of love but for Tom's sake, to help him advance and to ensure that she could help him out financially given his frequent money troubles. Tom adds that Louisa would probably do anything for him.
- The narrator's comment after Harthouse's interest in Louisa's lack of love with Bounderby forebodes that Harthouse will see this as an opportunity to gain her love. (In Victorian England, a woman who had an affair would be ruined, shunned by society).



Chapter 4

- ▶ the workers at Bounderby's factory in Coketown have had enough of their bad working conditions. They meet in a hall somewhere in the town, where a speaker named Slackbridge incites their rage against the cruelty of the industrial system and insists they must form a union to protect themselves from the manufacturers. The men agree. Stephen however, for a mysterious reason he won't name, says he cannot go along with them in forming the union. So the workers wanted him to leave the factory as a punishment. On that time, Bitzer comes up to him and asks him to accompany him to Bounderby's house.



Chapter 5

- ▶ Bounderby demands that Stephen reveal details of the newly formed union. Though Stephen does not believe the union, he refuses to act as a spy.
- ▶ Stephen goes on to explain reasonably that it's only realistic to expect worker uprisings, because it simply isn't natural for one person to hold power over all the rest. Mr. Bounderby is angered by his words, and fires Stephen, telling him to leave the factory at once.

Chapter 6

- Stephen steps out of Mr. Bounderby's house into the dark evening, and runs into Rachael and the old woman he met the last time he was at Bounderby's house, whose name is Mrs. Pegler.
- the old woman is revealing that she had a son who she lost, when suddenly there is a knock at the door. Louisa and Tom Gradgrind enter. Louisa is shocked by the poverty of Stephen's rooms. She then does what she had come to do: offer Stephen some money to aid his search for new employment. Though reluctant to accept money, Stephen is grateful for Louisa's genuine kindness, and takes some, which he promises to pay back.
- Tom also tells him (in a whisper so no one can hear) that something good may come to him if he hangs around the Bank within the sight of Bitzer every night until the night he leaves to find work elsewhere.
- Stephen hangs around the Bank for about an hour every night before he leaves town but nothing happens

Chapter 7

- Mr. Harthouse begins gaining Louisa's favor without her even realizing it. He "accidentally" comes across her while she is walking alone in the country, and deftly manipulating her feelings for her brother and their mutual knowledge of his ungratefulness for all she's done for him, he pledges to try and help Tom out for Louisa's sake.
- Later, Harthouse meets Tom, and genially tells him that he ought to be more grateful to his sister for all the financial help she's given him (which is considerable). Tom then reveals that the debt he's gotten himself into is yet more considerable. Mr. Harthouse tells him that he'll help him, if only he'll act more affectionately toward his sister. Tom agrees. As Tom's behavior improves, Louisa smiles upon Mr. Harthouse, thinking gratefully of him as her brother's benefactor.

Chapter 8

- The narrator reveals Mr. Harthouse's inner thoughts about this step in his relationship with Louisa.
- Harthouse encounters an upset Bounderby, who reveals that the Bank has been robbed! Only 150 pounds have been stolen, which is very little compared to Bounderby's wealth. Harthouse and Louisa both instantly suspect Tom. Mr. Bounderby, Mrs. Sparsit, and Bitzer suspect Stephen Blackpool, who was observed lurking around the Bank multiple times at night for no apparent reason.
- Mrs. Sparsit claims that her nerves have been shocked by this event. She also takes to calling Louisa "Miss Gradgrind" instead of "Mrs. Bounderby". That night, while Mrs. Sparsit comforts Bounderby at home, Louisa and Mr. Harthouse go for a walk outside.
- Tom finally returns. He hints that Louisa should mention neither the visit they paid Stephen, Rachael, and the old woman, nor the conversation that Tom had with Stephen that night. Louisa sorrowfully leaves after Tom refuses to say anything more, and upon her departure, Tom cries tears of guilt and self-pity...but he is not penitent.

Chapter 9

- Mrs. Sparsit continues to pay so much attention on Mr. Bounderby in his bad condition of being robbed of 150 pounds, in contrast, how cold Louisa is to him (which is no change from her previous behavior). Mrs. Sparsit does whatever she can to further this sense of alienation between Mr. Bounderby and Louisa, while Louisa and Mr. Harthouse silently draw closer together in their contempt of Bounderby.
- In this time, Bitzer brings Louisa a note telling her that her mother is dying. Louisa immediately departs for her old home. Stone Lodge holds no happy memories for her, and when she arrives she finds that her mother and her younger sister, Jane, rely very much on kind Sissy. She notices Jane is a happier, more sympathetic girl than Louisa ever was thanks to Sissy's influence in the Gradgrind household.



Chapter 10

- ▶ In one of their conversations, Mr. Harthouse manages to persuade Louisa that Stephen, whom she thought to be a just man, perhaps is the one who steal the money. Louisa allows herself to be persuaded by him, which makes her feel bad.

Chapter 11

- Mr. Bounderby informs Mrs. Sparsit that he will have to be away from home for three to four days on business. Mrs. Sparsit then invites Tom over to her place for lunch that day, and asks Tom to tell Louisa that Bounderby will not come back home that night, because she believes the two of them (Louisa and hardhouse) will have a meeting.
- She thinks about Louisa's ruin because she sees both walks in wood. Although Louisa orders him to leave her; but he refuses. Finally, Louisa agrees to meet him elsewhere later that night—but Mrs. Sparsit can't quite hear the location because it has begun to rain heavily.
- Mrs. Sparsit follows her and, guessing her destination to be Coketown so she takes the train after her. Both get out of the train at Coketown, but in a moment , Mrs. Sparsit loses Louisa.

Chapter 12

- Mrs. Sparsit was wrong: Louisa has not gone to Coketown to meet Mr. Harthouse, but rather to Stone Lodge to see her father. As it continues to storm outside, Louisa enters her father's study. Louisa declares him for never allowing her or Tom to exercise their fancy and imagination, which set them up for their current unhappiness. Mr. Gradgrind groans in sadness to see her present state.
- Louisa then reveals to him that Mr. Harthouse has declared his love for her, and she doesn't know if she loves him or not—all she knows is that he was the first person to ever show her any affection. She asks him to save her by some other means than his philosophy and education of facts. She then sinks into a dead faint on the floor.

Theme 1: Femininity

- ▶ The best, most good characters of *Hard Times* are women. Stephen Blackpool is a good man, but his love, Rachael, is an "Angel". Sissy Jupe can overcome even the worst intentions of Jem Harthouse with her firm and powerfully pure gaze. Louisa, as disadvantaged as she is by her terrible upbringing, manages to get out of her crisis at the last minute by fleeing home to her father for shelter, in contrast to her brother, Tom, who chooses to commit a life-changing crime in his moment of crisis. Through these examples, the novel suggests that the kindness and compassion of the female heart can improve what an education of "facts" and the industrialization has done to children and to the working middle class.
- ▶ Still, not all the women in the novel are paragons of goodness. Far from it. Mrs. Sparsit is a comic example of femininity gone wrong. She cannot stand being replaced by Louisa when Bounderby marries, and Stephen Blackpool's wife, meanwhile, is bleakly portrayed as a hideous drunken prostitute.
- ▶ Women in the novel seem like a potential cure to the perils of industrialization, but also the most at peril from its corruption.

Theme 2 : Unhappy Marriages

- ▶ There are many unhappy marriages in *Hard Times* and none of them are resolved happily by the end.
- ▶ **1-Mr. Gradgrind**'s marriage. In fact, complaining wife is not exactly a source of misery for either of them, but neither are they or their children happy.
- ▶ 2- The main unhappy marriage showcased by the novel is between **Louisa Gradgrind** and **Mr. Bounderby**. Louisa marries him not out of love but out of a sense of duty to her brother, **Tom**, the only person in the world she loves. The only solution to this bad marriage, once Louisa has escaped the hands of **Jem Harthouse**, is for Louisa to live at home the rest of her days. She will never be happy with another man or have the joy of children, though Dickens hints she will find joy in playing with Sissy's future children.
- ▶ **3- Stephen Blackpool**, too, is damned to unhappiness in this life as a result of his marriage. The girl who seemed so sweet when he married her many years ago becomes, by a gradual process, a depraved drunk who is the misery of his life.
- ▶ **4- Mrs. Sparsit** (an elderly lady who lives with Mr. Bounderby for some time) was also unhappily married, which is how she came to be Mr. Bounderby's companion before he marries Louisa.

Theme 3 : Fact vs. Fancy

- Dickens depicts a terrifying system of education where facts, facts, and nothing but facts are pounded into the schoolchildren all day, and where memorization of information is valued over art, imagination, or anything creative. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind believes completely in this system.
- As a result, things go very badly for his children, Tom Gradgrind and Louisa Gradgrind. Since they, as children, were always treated as if they had minds and not hearts, their adulthoods are warped, as they have no way to access their feelings or connect with others. Tom is a sulky good-for-nothing and gets involved in a crime in an effort to pay off gambling debts. Louisa is unhappy when she follows her mind, not her heart, and marries Mr. Bounderby, her father's friend.
- Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe was encouraged when she was little to dream and imagine and loved her father dearly, and therefore she is in touch with her heart and feelings, and has empathy and emotional strength the other children lack.