

English Department  
Victorian Novel  
Third Stage

## **A brief introduction about Victorian novel:**

Victorian novels, which were written during the reign of Queen Victoria in the 19th century (1837-1901), exhibit several distinctive features and characteristics. These novels played a crucial role in shaping the literary landscape of the era and continue to be influential in the world of literature. Here are some of the main features of Victorian novels:

1. **Realism:** Victorian novels are known for their commitment to portraying the real world and human experiences in a detailed and realistic manner. Authors aimed to depict the everyday life of their time, including social, economic, and political issues.
2. **Moral and Social Commentary:** Many Victorian novels are characterized by a strong sense of moral purpose. They often explore complex moral dilemmas and societal issues, such as class struggles, industrialization, poverty, and the impact of technology on society.
3. **Complex Characters:** Victorian novels typically feature well-developed and multi-dimensional characters. Authors delve into the psychology and motivations of their characters, exploring their inner thoughts and emotions.
4. **Narration and Point of View:** First-person and third-person omniscient narrators are common in Victorian novels. Authors frequently use multiple perspectives to provide insight into different characters and their viewpoints.
5. **Lengthy and Detailed:** Victorian novels are often quite long and detailed, with intricate plots and subplots. Authors had the freedom to explore their themes and characters in depth, sometimes resulting in sprawling narratives.
6. **Serial Publication:** Many Victorian novels were initially published in serialized form in magazines or newspapers. This allowed authors to engage with their readers over an extended period and respond to feedback and suggestions.
7. **Social Class and Morality:** The Victorian era was marked by significant social stratification, and this is often a central theme in these novels. Authors frequently explore the divide between different social classes and the moral implications of such divisions.
8. **Setting and Atmosphere:** Victorian novels often feature vivid and detailed descriptions of settings and atmosphere. These descriptions help transport readers to the time and place in which the story is set.

9. Strong Female Characters: Victorian novels sometimes feature strong and independent female characters who challenge societal norms and expectations. These characters often grapple with issues related to gender and identity.

10. Symbolism and Allegory: Symbolism and allegory are common literary devices in Victorian novels. Authors use symbols and allegorical elements to convey deeper meanings and themes.

11. Influence of Romanticism: While Victorian literature is often associated with realism, it also carries traces of the earlier Romantic movement. This can be seen in the emphasis on emotions, nature, and individualism.

12. Social Reform: Many Victorian novelists were engaged in social and political reform movements of their time. Their works often advocated for change and raised awareness of pressing issues.

Notable Victorian novelists include Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Ann Evans), and Thomas Hardy, among others. These authors produced some of the most enduring and influential works of the 19th century, and their novels continue to be studied and appreciated for their rich characterization, social commentary, and storytelling.

In summary, the Victorian novel is a rich and diverse literary genre that emerged during a transformative period in British history. It remains a significant part of the literary canon, offering readers a glimpse into the complexities and concerns of 19th-century society

### **Literary Background about Emily Bronte:**

Emily Brontë was born in 1818 into a clergyman's family of five girls and a boy. The family lived in Haworth, a moorland village in West Yorkshire, northern England. Their mother died in 1821 and four of the sisters, including Emily, aged 6, were sent away to a boarding school, where conditions were so bad that two of them died. After this, the remaining children stayed at home, where the girls largely educated themselves. They all read widely and invented stories to amuse themselves in the remote area in which they lived. Emily was especially fond of the moorlands, which have a powerful presence in her writing. Emily's sisters Anne and Charlotte also wrote, and together they published a book of poems in 1846, using male pseudonyms as writing was not considered a suitable activity for women. Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847, and Emily's *Wuthering Heights* came out the same year. She died the year after, shortly after the funeral of her brother, Branwell, whose problems and drug habits had caused the sisters much distress. Charlotte described her sister as independently minded and courageous, especially during her last illness. Though she only wrote one novel, Emily is

recognized to be one of the most important figures in nineteenth century English literature.

### **Summary of the plot:**

The story took place in 1801 when Mr. Lockwood was trying to find peace, lived in the south of England. He met his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff who lived in a remote land in his own farmhouse, Wuthering Heights. There Lockwood found strange things. He found Mr. Heathcliff to be a gentleman with a very poor and rather a very aggressive person, Joseph, an old servant with very ill-temper, a mistress in her mid-teens and a man looks like a family member yet dressed and spoke like a servant. It was snowing outside, so Mr. Heathcliff agreed to let Mr. Lockwood spent a night with them. Everything was going well. After dinner when he entered his room, he saw a few graffiti and books. Later he found that it was left there by a former member of the family, Cathrine. That night when he went to sleep, he dreamt about Cathrine. It was not like some other regular dreams. What he dreamt was that the spirit of Cathrine was trying to enter his room through the window. He woke up in fear and screamed and was gasping for air. Mr. Heathcliff came down and he uncomfortably opened the window in the hope to let Cathrine enter through the window. Mr. Heathcliff showed his room to Mr. Lockwood and he stayed in that room for that night.

The next morning, Heathcliff took Lockwood to Thrushcross Grange. After he visited Wuthering Heights, Mr. Lockwood fell ill and stayed there for a few days. He was also provided with a maidservant, Nelly Dean. Later Nelly told the whole story of both families of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. From here we will see the actual story and history of both the families. Mr. Lockwood wrote everything in his diary that Nelly told him. From there we get the story. Actually, it is a story told to us by Mr. Lockwood. As we see that Lockwood has already become frightened so much that he becomes ill due to it. So, basically the story has already got spooky. Let's what happens next!!! From here we will basically read Mr. Lockwood's diary. Everything started about thirty years ago. Then the owner of Wuthering Heights was Mr. Earnshaw. He lived with his son Hindley, his daughter Cathrine and young Nelly Dean who was Hindley's servant as well as at his age. On his visit to Liverpool, Mr. Earnshaw found a little homeless boy and felt pity for him. So, he took the boy and brought him to his home and named him Heathcliff. As the day passed, the bond between Mr. Earnshaw and Heathcliff grew stronger and stronger. This made Hindley very jealous of him. Cathrine and Heathcliff also became closer. They played together and started to spend time together. When Mr. Earnshaw came to know about Hindley's jealousy, he sent Hindley to study at university. After three years Mr. Earnshaw passed away.

Now Hindley became the legal owner of Wuthering Heights. He returned to his home with his wife, Frances. He agreed to let Heathcliff stay in that house as a servant. He not only did that but he regularly misbehaved with him too. After a few months of Hindley's arrival, Heathcliff and Cathrine started to spy on the Lintons' of Thrushcross Grange. Lintons' were brother and sister, Edgar Linton and Isabella Linton. When they were caught, they tried to flee but were caught. Cathrine was bitten by the guard dogs and was taken into house whereas Heathcliff was sent home. Lintons' were known as gentlemen at that time. They were very influential and belonged to the elite society.

While Cathrine was in the Lintons' house, she was groomed as a girl and how to behave like one. So, when she came back to Wuthering Heights, almost all her behaviors had changed and became more girly. To Heathcliff, she was a completely new girl. She even laughed at Heathcliff because of his untidy clothing and stuff. Next day, when Heathcliff came to know that Lintons' were coming to Wuthering Heights, with the help of Nelly's advice he dressed at his best to impress Cathrine, but everything was ruined when Heathcliff and Edgar started arguing themselves and as a result of that Hindley locked Heathcliff in the attic. Out of anger and pain, he vowed to take revenge on everyone who was responsible to ruin his life.

### **Major Characters:**

#### ***Heathcliff***

*Wuthering Heights* centers around the story of Heathcliff. The first paragraph of the novel provides a vivid physical picture of him, as Lockwood describes how his "black eyes" withdraw suspiciously under his brows at Lockwood's approach. Nelly's story begins with his introduction into the Earnshaw family, Mr. Earnshaw introduces him to his new family by saying that he is "as dark almost as if it came from the devil" (4.45), and he is called a "gipsy", "wicked boy," "villain," and "imp of Satan." by several different characters. His vengeful machinations drive the entire plot, and his death ends the book. ***The desire to understand him and his motivations has kept countless readers engaged in the novel.***

The novel teases the reader with the possibility that Heathcliff is something other than what he seems—that his cruelty is merely an expression of his frustrated love for Catherine, or that his sinister behaviors serve to conceal the heart of a romantic hero. We expect Heathcliff's character to contain such a hidden virtue because he resembles a hero in a romance novel. Traditionally, romance novel heroes appear dangerous, brooding, and cold at first, only later to emerge as fiercely devoted and loving.

Heathcliff's desire for revenge against Hindley, Catherine, Edgar, etc., can't be explained. As he himself points out, his abuse of Isabella is purely sadistic, as he amuses himself by seeing how much abuse she can take and still come more.

The reader may sympathize with him when he is powerless, as a child tyrannized by Hindley Earnshaw, but he becomes a villain when he acquires power and returns to Wuthering Heights with money and the trapping of a gentleman. This corresponds with what the upper classes felt toward the lower classes—the upper classes had charitable impulses toward lower-class citizens when they were miserable, but feared them.

**Catherine:** Catherine is an unruly and adventurous rebel, nature-loving wild child. Catherine is also a status-conscious social climber whose marriage destroys Heathcliff.

There are basically two sides to Catherine: Catherine Earnshaw and Catherine Linton. (She also fantasizes about a third, Catherine Heathcliff [3.3]—which her daughter will eventually become.) These two Catherines are very different: one is Heathcliff's Catherine and the other is Edgar's. But even when Catherine Earnshaw becomes Catherine Linton, she still maintains traces of her former self. Heathcliff longs for Catherine Earnshaw.

The location of Catherine's coffin symbolizes the conflict that tears apart her short life. She is not buried in the chapel with the Lintons. Nor is her coffin placed among the tombs of the Earnshaws. Instead, she is buried with Edgar on one side and Heathcliff on the other, suggesting her conflicted loyalties. Her actions are driven in part by her social ambitions, which initially are awakened during her first stay at the Lintons', and which eventually compel her to marry Edgar. Though Catherine is important to the story, she's only around for about half of the novel. She is more of a ghost, and a memory than a character we get to know well. Buried between Edgar and Heathcliff, Catherine is in death, as she was in life, stuck between two lovers

**Isabella Linton**— Edgar Linton's sister-- Catherine's sister-in-law and Heathcliff's wife. She falls in love with Heathcliff and marries him. She sees Heathcliff as a romantic figure, like a character in a novel. Heathcliff treats her as a mere tool in his quest for revenge on the Linton family. Isabella stands in sharp contrast to Catherine and serves as Catherine's foil. The two women's parallel positions allow us to see their differences with greater clarity. Catherine represents wild nature, in both her high, lively spirits and her occasional cruelty, whereas Isabella represents culture and civilization, both in her refinement and in her weakness.

**Edgar:** Just as Isabella Linton serves as Catherine's foil, Edgar Linton serves as Heathcliff's with " a blue-eyed golden hair and a fair skin" (7.41), Edgar is well-dressed, well-behaved, and rich. Edgar is born and raised a gentleman. He is graceful, well-mannered, and instilled with civilized virtues. These qualities cause Catherine to choose Edgar over Heathcliff and thus to initiate the conflict between the men. Edgar's inability to counter Heathcliff's vengeance makes him a weak, if sympathetic, character.

**Hindley Earnshaw** - Catherine's brother, and Mr. Earnshaw's son. Hindley resents it when Heathcliff is brought to live at Wuthering Heights. After his father dies and he inherits the estate, Hindley begins to abuse the young Heathcliff, terminating his education and forcing him to work in the fields. When Hindley's wife Frances dies shortly after giving birth to their son Hareton, he lapses into alcoholism and dissipation.

**Young Catherine** - Catherine's daughter. The mother and the daughter share not only a name, but also a tendency toward headstrong behavior, impetuosity, and occasional arrogance. Catherine Linton is a kinder, gentler version of her mother, due to her relationship with Edgar, an extremely dedicated father. Edgar's influence seems to have tempered young Catherine's character, though she can be peevish and snobbish, Catherine's generosity and kindness toward Hareton—not to mention her love of the simpering Linton Heathcliff—demonstrate a kind of compassion and selflessness that her mother never had

**Hareton Earnshaw** - The son of Hindley and Frances Earnshaw, Hareton is Catherine's nephew. After Hindley's death, Heathcliff assumes custody of Hareton, and raises him as an uneducated field worker, just as Hindley had done to Heathcliff himself. Thus, Heathcliff uses Hareton to seek revenge on Hindley. Illiterate and quick-tempered, Hareton is easily humiliated, but shows a good heart and a deep desire to improve himself.

In a sense, Hareton redeems the Earnshaw family by breaking the pattern of abuse, earning back the property, and just being an all-around decent guy. Cathy Heathcliff falls in love with him because she senses that underneath his rough exterior, Hareton feels sympathy. The nature of their love is quite different from Catherine and Heathcliff's. It is characterized not by drama and abuse, but by kindness and serenity. At the end of the novel, he marries young Catherine.

**Linton Heathcliff** - Heathcliff's son by Isabella. Weak, sniveling, demanding, and constantly ill, Linton is raised in London by his mother and does not meet his father until he is thirteen years old, when he goes to live with him after his mother's death. Heathcliff despises Linton, treats him contemptuously, and, by

forcing him to marry the young Catherine, uses him to cement his control over Thrushcross Grange after Edgar Linton's death. Linton himself dies not long after this marriage.

**Nelly Dean** - Nelly Dean (known formally as Ellen Dean) serves as the chief narrator of *Wuthering Heights*. A sensible, intelligent, and compassionate woman, she grew up essentially alongside Hindley and Catherine Earnshaw and is deeply involved in the story she tells. She has strong feelings for the characters in her story, and these feelings complicate her narration.

**Lockwood** - Lockwood's narration forms a frame around Nelly's; he serves as an intermediary between Nelly and the reader. A somewhat vain and presumptuous gentleman, he deals very clumsily with the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. Lockwood comes from a more domesticated region of England, and he finds himself at a loss when he witnesses the strange household's disregard for the social conventions that have always structured his world. As a narrator, his vanity and unfamiliarity with the story occasionally lead him to misunderstand events.

**Mr. Earnshaw** - Catherine and Hindley's father. Mr. Earnshaw adopts Heathcliff and brings him to live at Wuthering Heights. Mr. Earnshaw prefers Heathcliff to Hindley but nevertheless bequeaths Wuthering Heights to Hindley when he dies.

**Mrs. Earnshaw** - Catherine and Hindley's mother, who neither likes nor trusts the orphan Heathcliff when he is brought to live at her house. She dies shortly after Heathcliff's arrival at Wuthering Heights.

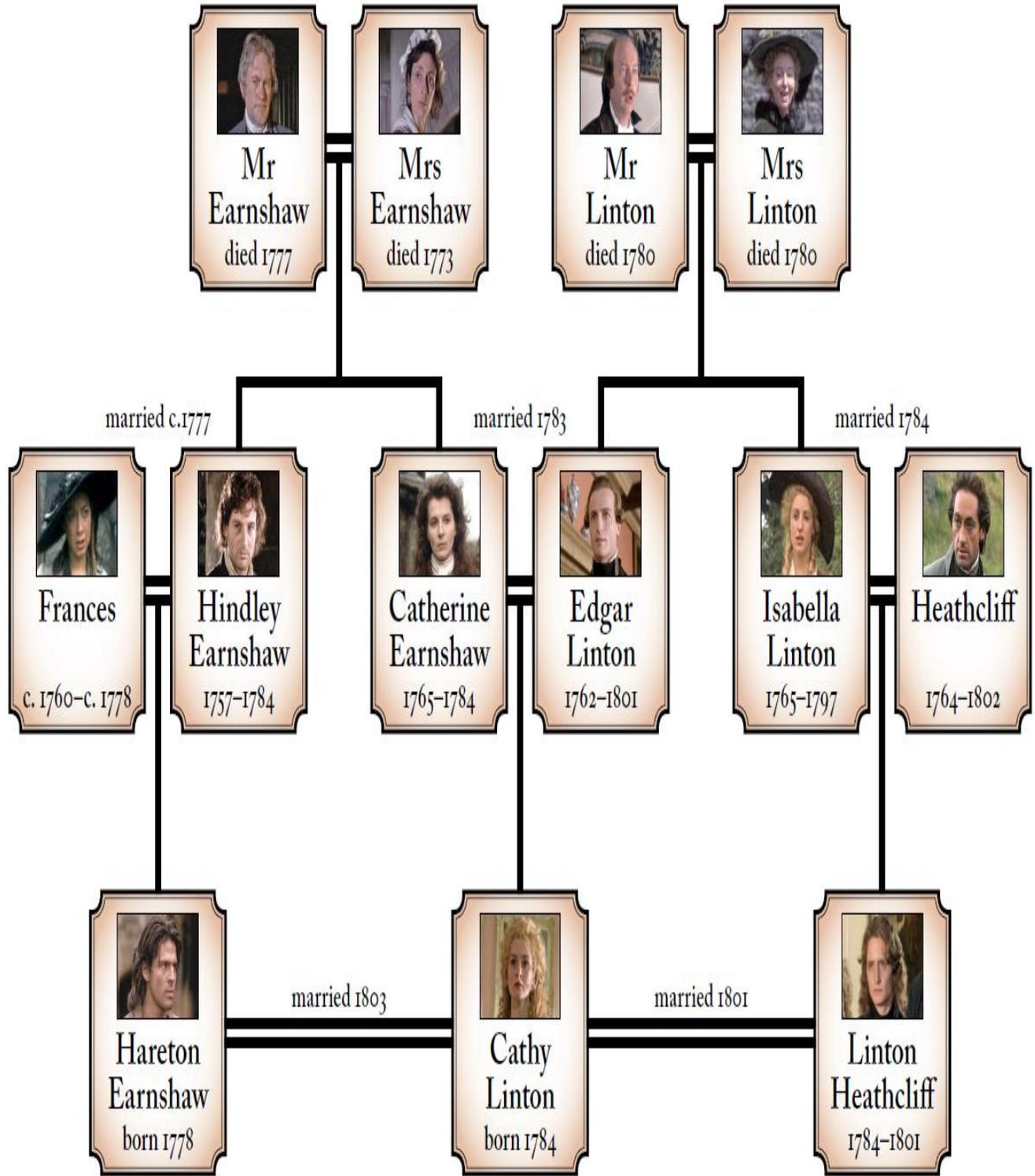
**Joseph** - Along-winded, fanatically religious, elderly servant at Wuthering Heights. Joseph is strange, stubborn, and unkind, and he speaks with a thick Yorkshire accent.

**Frances Earnshaw** - Hindley's silly wife, who treats Heathcliff cruelly. She dies shortly after giving birth to Hareton.

**Mr. Linton** - Edgar and Isabella's father and the proprietor of Thrushcross Grange when Heathcliff and Catherine are children. An established member of the gentry, he raises his son and daughter to be well-mannered young people.

**Mrs. Linton** - Mr. Linton's somewhat snobbish wife, who does not like Heathcliff to be allowed near her children, Edgar and Isabella. She teaches Catherine to act like a gentle-woman, thereby instilling her with social ambitions.

# The Genealogy of Wuthering Heights



## **Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights**

### **Summary: Chapter I**

Writing in his diary in 1801, Lockwood describes his first days as a tenant at Thrushcross Grange, an isolated manor in Yorkshire. After arriving at the Grange, he pays a visit to his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, a surly, dark man living in a manor called Wuthering Heights—"wuthering" is a local adjective used to describe the fierce and wild winds that blow during storms on the moors. Heathcliff doesn't trust Lockwood, and leaves him alone in a room with a group of fiercely barking dogs. Lockwood is saved from the hounds by the housekeeper. When Heathcliff returns, Lockwood is angry, but eventually warms toward his taciturn host. Though he hardly feels that he has been welcomed at Wuthering Heights, he volunteers to visit again the next day.

### **Chapter 2:**

On a chilly afternoon not long after his first visit, Lockwood plans to make the four-mile walk to Wuthering Heights, arriving just as a light snow begins to fall. He knocks, but no one lets him in, and Joseph, an old servant who speaks with a thick Yorkshire accent, calls out from the barn that Heathcliff is not in the house. Eventually a rough-looking young man comes to let him in, and Lockwood goes into a sitting room where he finds a beautiful girl seated beside a fire. Lockwood assumes she is Heathcliff's wife and that the young man who let him in must be Heathcliff's son. When Heathcliff arrives, he corrects Lockwood: the young woman is his daughter-in-law, the widow of Heathcliff's dead son and the young man, Hareton Earnshaw, is not his son. The snowfall increases, and when Lockwood is ready to leave, he is forced to ask for a guide back to Thrushcross Grange but no one helps him. He takes a lantern and says that he will find his own way, promising to return with the lantern in the morning. Joseph, seeing him make his way through the snow, assumes that he is stealing the lantern, and loses the dogs on him. This makes Lockwood grow furious, and begin cursing the inhabitants of the house. He is forced to stay at Wuthering Heights, the housekeeper, Zillah, leads him to inter.

### **Chapter 3:**

Zillah leads Lockwood to a room from which Heathcliff has forbidden all visitors. He notices that someone has scratched words into the paint on the ledge by the bed. Three names are inscribed there repeatedly: *Catherine Earnshaw*, *Catherine Linton*, and *Catherine Heathcliff*. He also finds a diary written approximately twenty-five years earlier which belong to Catherine Earnshaw. Lockwood falls asleep. He awakes from a nightmare when the cone from a fir branch begins tapping on his window. Still half asleep, he attempts to break off the branch by

forcing his hand through the window glass. But instead of a branch, he finds a ghostly hand, which seizes his own, and a voice, sobbing the name Catherine Linton, demands to be let in. To free himself, Lockwood rubs the ghost's wrist on the broken glass until blood covers the bed sheets. The ghost releases him, and Lockwood cries out in terror. Heathcliff rushes into the room, and Lockwood cries out that the room is haunted. Heathcliff curses him, but, as Lockwood flees from the room, Heathcliff cries out to Catherine, begging her to return. There are no signs that the ghost was ever at the window. In the morning, Heathcliff accompanies Lockwood home, where the servants, who believed their master dead in the storm, receive him with joy.

#### **Chapter 4:**

Having rejected human contact the day before, Lockwood now becomes lonely. When his housekeeper, Nelly Dean, brings him his supper, he asks her about the history of the people at Wuthering Heights. She clarifies the family relationships, explaining that the young Catherine whom Lockwood met at Wuthering Heights is the daughter of the Catherine who was Nelly's first mistress at Wuthering Heights, Hareton Earnshaw is young Catherine's cousin, the nephew of the first Catherine. The first Catherine was the daughter of Mr. Earnshaw. Now young Catherine is the last of the Lintons, and Hareton is the last of the Earnshaw. Nelly continues by telling the story of her early years at Wuthering Heights. When Catherine and Hindley are young children, Mr. Earnshaw takes a trip to Liverpool and returns home with a scraggly orphan whom the Earnshaw christen "Heathcliff." *Mr. Earnshaw announces that Heathcliff will be raised as a member of the family.* Both Catherine and Hindley resent Heathcliff at first, but Catherine quickly grows to love him. Catherine and Heathcliff become inseparable, and Hindley continues to treat Heathcliff cruelly. Mrs. Earnshaw continues to distrust Heathcliff, but Mr. Earnshaw comes to love the boy more than his own son. When Mrs. Earnshaw dies only two years after Heathcliff's arrival at Wuthering Heights, Hindley is left without an ally.

#### **Chapter 5:**

Time passes, and Mr. Earnshaw grows frail and weak. Disgusted by the conflict between Heathcliff and Hindley, he sends Hindley away to college. Soon, however, Mr. Earnshaw dies, and it is now Catherine and Heathcliff who turn to religion for comfort. They discuss the idea of heaven while awaiting the return of Hindley, who will now be master of Wuthering Heights.

## **Chapter 6:**

Hindley and his new wife, a simpering, silly woman named Frances, return to Wuthering Heights in time for Mr. Earnshaw's funeral. Hindley immediately begins to take his revenge on Heathcliff, declaring that Heathcliff no longer will be allowed an education and instead will spend his days working in the fields like a common laborer. But, for the most part, Catherine and Heathcliff are able to escape Hindley's notice, and when Heathcliff is free from his responsibilities, they go off onto the moors together to play. One evening, when Heathcliff and Catherine disappear, Hindley orders that the doors be bolted and that the children not be allowed into the house. Nelly receives a shock when Heathcliff returns alone. He tells her that he and Catherine made the trip to Thrushcross Grange to spy on and tease Edgar and Isabella Linton, Mr. Linton's children. Before they could succeed in their mission, the Lintons' guard dog, took them by surprise and chased them, biting Catherine's ankle. Unable to return home, Catherine was taken inside Thrushcross Grange by a servant. However, the Lintons, repelled by Heathcliff's rough appearance, prevent him staying with her. The following day, Mr. Linton pays a visit to Wuthering Heights to explain matters to Hindley.

## **Summary: Chapter 7**

Catherine spends five weeks recuperating at the Grange. Mrs. Linton determines to transform the girl into a young lady and spends her time educating Catherine in manners and social graces. Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights at Christmastime, wearing a lovely dress. Hindley says that Heathcliff may greet Catherine "like the other servants," and, when he does so, *she says he is dirty* in comparison with the Linton children, to whom she has grown accustomed. *Heathcliff's feelings are wounded, and he storms out of the room, declaring that he will be as dirty as he likes.* The Linton children come for dinner at Wuthering Heights the next day. Nelly helps Heathcliff to wash himself and put on suitable clothes after the boy declares his intention to be "good," but Mrs. Linton has allowed Edgar and Isabella to attend under the condition that Heathcliff be kept away from them. Accordingly, Hindley orders that Heathcliff be locked in the attic until the end of dinner. Before the boy can be locked away, however, Edgar makes a comment about Heathcliff's hair. Catherine clearly appears unhappy with Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff, and after dinner she goes to see him. Nelly frees the boy and gives him some food in the kitchen. *Heathcliff confides to Nelly that he'll seek revenge on Hindley.* At this point, Nelly interrupts her narrative and rises to go, remarking that the night is growing late. Lockwood says that he intends to sleep late the next day and wishes to hear the rest of her story now. He urges her to continue in minute detail.

### *Summary: Chapter 8*

Nelly skips ahead a bit in her story, Frances gives birth to a baby boy, Hareton, but she dies. Hindley assigns Nelly the task of raising the baby, as he takes no interest in the child. Miserable at Frances's death, Hindley begins to drink excessively and behaves abusively toward his servants—especially toward Heathcliff, who takes great pleasure in Hindley's steady decline. Catherine continues to spend time with Edgar Linton, and she behaves like a proper lady while with him. However, when she is with Heathcliff, she acts as she always has. One afternoon, when Hindley is out of the house, Heathcliff declares to stay home from the fields and spend the day with Catherine who apologizes because Edgar and Isabella are planning to visit. Heathcliff confronts her about the amount of time she spends with Edgar, she says that Heathcliff is ignorant and dull. At that moment, Edgar enters—without Isabella—and Heathcliff storms away. Catherine asks Nelly to leave the room, but Nelly refuses, having been instructed by Hindley to act as Catherine's chaperone in Edgar's presence. Catherine pinches her and then slaps her, and when Hareton begins to cry, she shakes him. Edgar, terrified of Catherine's behavior, attempts to restore order, and Catherine boxes his ears. Edgar is unable to cope with Catherine's unladylike temper and hurries out of the house. On his way out, however, he catches a last glimpse of Catherine through the window; lured by her beauty, he comes back inside where they have confessed their love for one another. Nelly interrupts them only to tell them that Hindley has arrived home, drunk and in a foul temper. Edgar hurries home to avoid Hindley, and Catherine goes to her chamber. Nelly goes to hide little Hareton and takes the shot out of Hindley's gun, which he is fond of playing with in his drunken rages.

### *Summary: Chapter 9*

That evening, Catherine seeks out Nelly in the kitchen and confides to her that Edgar has asked her to marry him, and that she has accepted. Unnoticed by the two women, Heathcliff listens to their conversation. Heathcliff hears Catherine tell Nelly that she cannot marry him because Hindley has cast him down so low; to marry him now would be to degrade herself. Heathcliff withdraws in a rage of shame, humiliation, and despair, and thus is not present to hear Catherine say that she loves him more deeply than anything else in the world. She says that she and Heathcliff are such kindred spirits that they are essentially the same person. Nonetheless, she insists, she must marry Edgar Linton instead.

That night, *Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights*. Catherine spends the night outdoors in the rain, sobbing and searching for Heathcliff. She catches a fever, and soon she nears death. The Lintons take her to Thrushcross Grange to recuperate, and Catherine recovers.

However, both Mr. and Mrs. Linton become infected and soon die. Three years later, Catherine and Edgar marry. Nelly transfers to Thrushcross Grange to serve Catherine, leaving Hareton in the care of his drunken father and Joseph, the only servant now remaining at Wuthering Heights. Noticing the clock, Nelly again interrupts her narrative, saying that it is half past one, and that she must get some sleep. Lockwood notes in his diary—the same book in which he has set down Nelly’s story—that he, too, will go to bed now.

***Summary: Chapter 10:***

Lockwood becomes sick after his traumatic experience at Wuthering Heights, and—as he writes in his diary—spends four weeks in misery. Heathcliff pays him a visit, and afterward Lockwood summons Nelly Dean and demands to know the rest of her story. How did Heathcliff, the oppressed and reviled outcast, make his fortune and acquire both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange? Nelly says that she does not know how Heathcliff spent the three years that he was away and that it was at this time that he apparently acquired his wealth. Nelly continues her narration. About six months after Catherine’s marriage to Edgar Linton, Heathcliff returns home, surprising Nelly at Thrushcross Grange. When he comes indoors, Catherine becomes very happy at the sight of him, and their obvious affection for one another makes Edgar uncomfortable and jealous. Heathcliff has grown into a polished, gentlemanly, and physically impressive man, though some hint of savagery remains in his eyes. He announces that Hindley has invited him to stay at Wuthering Heights. This surprises both Catherine and Nelly, but Heathcliff tells Catherine that when he sought Nelly at Wuthering Heights earlier that day, he came across Hindley in a card game with his rough friends. Heathcliff joined them in the gambling, and, Hindley excitedly invited him to return because he is rich now. Catherine and Isabella begin to visit Wuthering Heights quite often, and Heathcliff does the same at the Grange. Isabella begins to fall in love with Heathcliff, does nothing to discourage her sister-in-law’s affections. Nelly suspects that he harbors wicked and vengeful motives, and vows to watch him closely.

***Summary: Chapter 11***

Nelly travels to Wuthering Heights to talk with Hindley, but instead she finds Hareton, who throws stones at her and curses. Nelly learns from Hareton that Heathcliff has taught the boy to swear at his father, Hindley, and has forbidden the curate, who offered to educate Hareton, to set foot on the property. Heathcliff appears, and Nelly flees.

The next day, at the Grange, Nelly observes Heathcliff embracing Isabella, so she told Catherine at once. Catherine demands that Heathcliff tell her his true feelings about Isabella. She offers to convince Edgar to permit the marriage if Heathcliff

truly loves the woman. Heathcliff scorns this idea, however, declaring that Catherine has wronged him by marrying Edgar, and that he intends to exact revenge. Nelly informs Edgar of the encounter occurring between Catherine and Heathcliff, and Edgar storms in and orders Heathcliff off of his property. When Heathcliff refuses to leave, Edgar summons his servants for help. However, Catherine locks herself and the two men inside the kitchen and throws the key into the fire, forcing Edgar to confront Heathcliff without the help of additional men. Overcome with fear and shame, Edgar hides his face. Still, Catherine's taunts goad Edgar into striking Heathcliff a blow to the throat, after which Edgar exits through the garden. In terror of the larger and stronger Heathcliff, Edgar hurries to find help, and Heathcliff departs because he cannot fight three armed servants. In a rage, Edgar declares that Catherine must choose between Heathcliff and himself. Catherine refuses to speak to him, locking herself in a room and refusing to eat. Two days pass in this way, and Edgar warns Isabella that if she pursues Heathcliff, he will cast her out of the Linton family.

### ***Summary: Chapter 12***

At last, Catherine permits the servants to bring her food. Hysterical, she believes that she is dying, and cannot understand why Edgar has not come to her. She rants about her childhood with Heathcliff on the moors, and speaks obsessively about death. Catherine manages to stumble to the window and force it open; from the window, she believes she can see Wuthering Heights. Catherine says that if she will die, her spirit will never be at rest until she can be with Heathcliff. Edgar arrives and is shocked to find Catherine in such a weak condition. Nelly goes to fetch a doctor. The doctor professes himself cautiously optimistic for a successful recovery. That very night, Isabella and Heathcliff elope. Furious, Edgar declares that Isabella is now his sister only in name. Yet he does not disown her, saying instead that she has disowned him.

### ***Summary: Chapter 13***

Edgar and Nelly spend two months nursing Catherine through her illness in addition to being pregnant, however she never entirely recovers. Six weeks after Isabella and Heathcliff's marriage, Isabella sends a letter to Edgar begging his forgiveness. When Edgar ignores her pleas, she sends a letter to Nelly, describing her horrible experiences at Wuthering Heights. In her letter, she explains that Hindley, Joseph, and Hareton have all treated her cruelly, and that Heathcliff declares that since he cannot punish Edgar for causing Catherine's illness, he will punish Isabella in his place. Isabella also tells Nelly that Hindley has developed a mad obsession with Heathcliff, who has assumed the position of power at Wuthering Heights. Hindley has shown Isabella the weapon with which he hopes

to kill Heathcliff—a pistol with a knife attached to its barrel. Isabella admits her terrible mistake, and she begs Nelly to visit her at Wuthering Heights, where she and Heathcliff are now living.

***Summary: Chapter 14***

Nelly grants Isabella's request and goes to the manor, but Edgar continues to refuse his sister's appeals for forgiveness. When Nelly arrives, Heathcliff presses her for news of Catherine and asks if he may come see her. Nelly refuses to allow him to come to the Grange, however, and, enraged, Heathcliff threatens that he will hold Nelly a prisoner at Wuthering Heights and go alone. Terrified by that possibility, Nelly agrees to carry a letter from Heathcliff to Catherine.

***Summary: Chapter 15***

Four days after visiting Wuthering Heights, Nelly waits for Edgar to leave for church, and then takes the opportunity to give Heathcliff's letter to Catherine. Catherine has become so weak that she cannot even hold the letter, but nearly as soon as Nelly tells her that it is from Heathcliff, Heathcliff himself enters the room. Heathcliff and Catherine enter into a dramatic, highly charged conversation during which Catherine claims that both Heathcliff and Edgar have broken her heart. She says that she cannot bear dying while Heathcliff remains alive, and that she never wants to be apart from him. She begs his forgiveness. He says that he can forgive her for the pain she has caused him, but that he can never forgive her for the pain that she has caused herself—he adds that she has killed herself through her behavior, and that he could never forgive her murderer- a hint for Edgar.

Edgar comes back, but Catherine pleads with Heathcliff not to leave, so he promises to stay. As Edgar hurries toward Catherine's room, Nelly screams, and Catherine collapses. Heathcliff catches her, and forces her into Edgar's arms as he enters the room, demanding that Edgar see to Catherine's needs before acting on his anger. Nelly takes Heathcliff out of the room, promising to send him word about Catherine's condition in the morning. Heathcliff swears that he will stay in the garden, wanting to be nearby.

***Summary: Chapter 16***

At midnight, Catherine gives birth to young Catherine two months prematurely. She dies within two hours of giving birth. Nelly solemnly declares that her soul has gone home to God. When Nelly goes to tell Heathcliff what has happened, he seems to know already. He curses Catherine for the pain she has caused him, and pleads with her spirit to haunt him for the rest of his life. She may take any form, he says, and even drive him mad—as long as she stays with him. Edgar keeps a

vigil over Catherine's body. At night, Heathcliff lurks in the garden outside. When Edgar leaves, Nelly permits Heathcliff a moment alone with the body.

Hindley is invited to Catherine's funeral but does not come, while Isabella is not invited at all. To the surprise of the villagers, Catherine is not buried in the Linton tomb, nor by the graves of her relatives. Instead, Edgar orders that she be buried in a corner of the churchyard overlooking the moors that she so loved. Nelly tells Lockwood that now, years later, Edgar lies buried beside her.

### *Summary: Chapter 17*

Not long after the funeral, Isabella arrives at Thrushcross Grange, out of breath and laughing hysterically. She has come at a time when she knows Edgar will be asleep, to ask Nelly for help. Isabella reports that the conflict between Hindley and Heathcliff has become violent. Hindley, she says, tried to stay sober for Catherine's funeral, but could not bear to go. Instead, he began drinking heavily that morning. While Heathcliff kept a vigil over Catherine's grave, Hindley locked him out of the house and told Isabella that he planned to shoot him. Isabella warned Heathcliff about Hindley's plan, and when Hindley aimed his knife-gun out the window at Heathcliff, the latter grabbed it and fired it back at its owner's wrist, wounding Hindley. Heathcliff forced his way in the window, then beat Hindley severely. The next morning, Isabella reminded Hindley what Heathcliff had done to him the previous night. Hindley grew enraged, and the men began fighting again. Isabella fled to Thrushcross Grange, seeking a permanent refuge from Wuthering Heights.

Soon after her visit to Nelly, Isabella leaves for London, where she gives birth to Heathcliff's son, Linton. Isabella corresponds with Nelly throughout the following twelve years. Heathcliff learns of his wife's whereabouts, and of his son's existence, but he doesn't pursue either of them. Isabella dies when Linton is twelve years old.

Six months after Catherine's death, Hindley dies. Nelly returns to Wuthering Heights to see to the funeral arrangements, and to bring young Hareton back to Thrushcross Grange. She is shocked to learn that Hindley died deeply in debt, and that Heathcliff, who had lent Hindley large amounts of money to supply his gambling addiction, now owns Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff does not allow Hareton to return to Thrushcross Grange with Nelly, saying that he plans to raise him on his own. He also intimates that he plans to recover his son Linton at some point in the future. And so, Nelly tells Lockwood, Hareton, who should have lived as the finest gentleman in the area, is reduced to working for his keep at Wuthering Heights. A common, uneducated servant, he remains friendless and without hope.

### ***Summary: Chapter 18***

Young Catherine grows up at Thrushcross Grange, and by the time she is thirteen she is a beautiful, intelligent girl, but often strong-willed and temperamental. Her father, mindful of the tormented history of the neighboring manor, does not allow young Catherine off the grounds of Thrushcross Grange, and she grows up without any knowledge of Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff, or Hareton. She longs to visit the fairy caves at Penistone Crag, but Edgar refuses her request. He receives word one day, however, that Isabella is dying, and he hurries to London to take charge of young Linton. While he is gone, Catherine is left in Nelly's care, and she is able to escape the confines of the Grange.

She travels toward Penistone Crag but stops at Wuthering Heights, where she meets Hareton and takes an instant liking to him. She and Hareton spend a delightful day playing near the crags. Nelly arrives in pursuit of her charge, and tries to hurry her back to Thrushcross Grange. But Catherine refuses to go. Nelly tells Catherine that Hareton is not the son of the master of Wuthering Heights—a fact that makes the girl contemptuous of him—but she also reveals that he is Catherine's cousin. Catherine tries to deny this possibility, saying that her cousin is in London, that her father has gone to retrieve him there. Nelly, however, explains that a person can have more than one cousin. At last, Nelly prevails upon her to leave, and Catherine agrees not to mention the incident to her father, who might well terminate Nelly's employment in rage if he knew she had let Catherine learn of Wuthering Heights.

### ***Summary: Chapter 19***

Edgar brings young Linton to the Grange, and Catherine is disappointed to find her cousin a pale, weak, whiny young man. Not long after he arrives, Joseph appears, saying that Heathcliff is determined to take possession of his son. Edgar promises that he will bring Linton to Wuthering Heights the following day.

### ***Summary: Chapter 20***

Nelly receives orders to escort the boy to the Heights in the morning. On the way, she tries to comfort Linton by telling him reassuring lies about his father. When they arrive, however, Heathcliff does not even pretend to love his son—he calls Linton's mother a slut, and he says that Linton is his property. Linton pleads with Nelly not to leave him with such a monster, but Nelly mounts her horse and rides away hurriedly.

### ***Summary: Chapter 21***

Young Catherine despairs over her cousin's sudden departure from Thrushcross Grange. Nelly tries to keep up with the news of young Linton, quizzing the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights whenever she meets her in the nearby town of Kimberton. She learns that Heathcliff loathes his sniveling son and cannot bear to be alone with him. She also learns that Linton continues to be frail and sickly.

One day, when young Catherine is sixteen, she and Nelly are out bird-hunting on the moors. Nelly loses sight of Catherine for a moment, then finds her conversing with Heathcliff and Hareton. Catherine says that she thinks she has met Hareton before and asks if Heathcliff is his father. Heathcliff says no, but that he does have a son back at the house. He invites Catherine and Nelly to pay a visit to Wuthering Heights to see the boy. Nelly, always suspicious of Heathcliff, disapproves of the idea, but Catherine, not realizing that this son is her cousin Linton, is curious to meet the boy, and Nelly cannot keep her from going. At Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff tells Nelly that he hopes Catherine and his son will be married someday. For their part, the cousins do not recognize one another—they have changed much in three years—and because Linton is too sickly and self-pitying to show Catherine around the farm, she leaves with Hareton instead, all the while mocking the latter's illiteracy and lack of education. Heathcliff forces Linton to go after them.

At Thrushcross Grange the next day, Catherine tells her father about her visit and demands to know why he has kept her relative's secret. Edgar tries to explain, and eventually Catherine comes to understand his disdain for Heathcliff. But although Edgar gently implores her not to have any contact with Linton, Catherine cannot resist exchanging letters with the boy covertly. Nelly discovers the correspondence, and, much to Catherine's dismay, destroys Linton's letters to her. She then sends a note to Wuthering Heights requesting that Linton desist in his part of the correspondence. However, she does not alert Edgar to the young people's relationship.

### ***Summary: Chapter 22***

Edgar's health begins to fail, and, as a result, he spends less time with Catherine. Nelly attempts in vain to fill the companionship role formerly played by the girl's father. One winter day, during a walk in the garden, Catherine climbs the wall and stretches for some fruit on a tree. In the process, her hat falls off her head and down to the other side of the wall. Nelly allows Catherine to climb down the wall to retrieve it, but, once on the other side, Catherine is unable to get back over the wall by herself. Nelly looks for the key to the gate, and suddenly Heathcliff appears, telling Catherine that it was cruel of her to break off her correspondence with Linton.

He accuses her of toying with his son's affections, and he urges her to visit Linton while he is away the following week. He claims that Linton may be dying of a broken heart. Catherine believes him and convinces Nelly to take her to Wuthering Heights the next morning. Nelly assents in the hope that the sight of Linton will expose Heathcliff's lie.

***Summary: Chapter 23***

The following morning, Catherine and Nelly ride in the rain to Wuthering Heights, where they find Linton engaged in his customary whining. He speaks to Catherine about the possibility of marriage. Annoyed, Catherine shoves his chair in a fit of temper. Linton begins to cough and says that Catherine has assaulted him and has injured his already fragile health. He fills Catherine with guilt and requests that she nurse him back to health herself. After Nelly and Catherine ride home, Nelly discovers that she has caught a cold from traveling in the rain. Catherine nurses both her father and Nelly during the day, but, by night, she begins traveling in secret to be with Linton.

***Summary: Chapter 24***

After Nelly recuperates, she notices Catherine's suspicious behavior and quickly discovers where she has been spending her evenings. Catherine tells Nelly the story of her visits to Wuthering Heights, including one incident in which Hareton proves to her that he can read a name inscribed above the manor's entrance: it is his own name, carved by a distant ancestor who shared it. But Catherine asks if he can read the date—1500—and he must confess that he cannot. Catherine calls him a dunce. Enraged, Hareton interrupts her visit with Linton, bullying the weak young man and forcing him to go upstairs. In a later moment of contrition, he attempts to apologize for his behavior, but Catherine angrily ignores him and goes home. When she returns to Wuthering Heights a few days later, Linton blames her for his humiliation. She leaves, but she returns two days later to tell him that she will never visit him again. Distressed, Linton asks for her forgiveness. After she has heard Catherine's story, Nelly reveals the girl's secret to Edgar. Edgar immediately forbids her from visiting Linton again, but he agrees to invite Linton to come to Thrushcross Grange.

***Summary: Chapter 25***

At this point, Nelly interrupts her story to explain to Lockwood its chronology: the events that she has just described happened the previous winter, only a little over a year ago. Nelly says that the previous year, it never crossed her mind that she would entertain a stranger by telling him the story. But she wonders how long he will remain a stranger, speculating that he might fall in love with the beautiful young Catherine. Lockwood confesses that he might, but says that he doubts his

love would ever be requited. Besides, he says, these moors are not his home; he must return soon to the outside world. Still, he remains enraptured by the story, and he urges Nelly to continue. She obliges.

Young Catherine agrees to abide by her father's wishes and stops sneaking out to visit Linton. But Linton never visits the Grange, either—he is very frail, as Nelly reminds Edgar. Edgar worries over his daughter's happiness, and over the future of his estate. He says that if marrying Linton would make Catherine happy, he would allow it, despite the fact that it would ensure that Heathcliff would inherit Thrushcross Grange. Edgar's health continues to fail, as does Linton's. Eventually, Edgar agrees to allow Catherine to meet Linton, not at Wuthering Heights, but on the moors, not realizing that the young man is as close to death as he is himself.

### ***Summary: Chapter 26***

When Catherine and Nelly ride to their meeting with Linton, they do not find him in the agreed-upon spot—he has not ventured far from Wuthering Heights. He appears frail and weak, but he insists that his health is improving. The youth seems nervous and looks fearfully over his shoulder at the house. At the end of their visit, Catherine agrees to meet Linton again on the following Thursday. On the way home, Catherine and Nelly worry over Linton's health, but they decide to wait until their next meeting before coming to any conclusions.

### ***Summary: Chapter 27***

During the next week, Edgar's health grows consistently worse. Worried for her father, young Catherine only reluctantly rides to her meeting with Linton on the moors. Nelly comes with her. The cousins talk, and Linton seems even more nervous than usual. He reveals that his father is forcing him to court Catherine, and that he is terrified of what Heathcliff will do if Catherine rejects him. Heathcliff arrives on the scene and questions Nelly about Edgar's health. He says that he worries that Linton will die before Edgar. Heathcliff asks Catherine and Nelly to walk back to Wuthering Heights, and, though Catherine reminds him that she is forbidden to do so by her father, she agrees because she is afraid of Heathcliff. Heathcliff seems full of rage toward Linton, who is practically weeping with terror. Once he has Nelly and Catherine inside Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff locks them inside the house and refuses to allow them to leave until Catherine has married Linton. He allows Catherine to leave the bedroom in which they are locked, but he keeps Nelly imprisoned there for five days. During this time, the only soul Nelly sees is Hareton, who is ordered to guard and attend her.

### ***Summary: Chapter 28***

At last, the housekeeper, Zillah, frees Nelly from her imprisonment, telling her that the villagers in Kimberton have spread the news that both Nelly and Catherine have been lost in Blackhorse Marsh. Nelly searches through the house until she finds Linton, who tells her that Catherine is locked away in another room. The two are now husband and wife. Linton gloats over this development, claiming that all of Catherine's possessions are now his, as Edgar is dying quickly. Fearing discovery by Heathcliff, Nelly hurries back to Thrushcross Grange. Here, she tells the dying Edgar that Catherine is safe and will soon be home. She sends a group of men to Wuthering Heights to retrieve Catherine, but they fail in their task. Edgar plans to change his will, placing Catherine's inheritance in the hands of trustees and thus keeping it from Heathcliff. He summons Mr. Green, his lawyer, to the Grange. Nelly hears someone arriving and believes it to be Mr. Green, but it is Catherine. Thus Edgar sees his daughter once more before he dies, believing that his daughter is happily married to Linton, and knowing nothing about her desperate circumstances. Shortly after Edgar's death, Mr. Green arrives, and dismisses all of the servants except Nelly. He tries to have Edgar buried in the chapel, but Nelly insists that he obey Edgar's will, which states that he wishes to be buried in the churchyard next to his wife.

### ***Summary: Chapter 29***

Heathcliff appears at Thrushcross Grange shortly after the funeral in order to take young Catherine to her new home. He tells her that he has punished Linton for having helped her escape, and says that she will have to work for her keep at Wuthering Heights. Catherine angrily retorts that she and Linton are in fact in love, despite Linton's bad-temperedness, while Heathcliff has no one to love him. Thus, no matter how miserable Heathcliff makes the young couple, Catherine says, they shall have the revenge of knowing that his cruelty arises from his greater misery.

As Catherine is packing her things, Nelly asks Heathcliff for Zillah's position at Wuthering Heights, desperate to remain with Catherine. But Heathcliff interrupts Nelly to tell her his astonishing deed of the day before. While the sexton was digging Edgar's grave, Heathcliff had him remove the earth from his beloved Catherine's, and he opened her coffin to gaze upon her face, which he says is still recognizable. Heathcliff asserts that Catherine will not crumble to dust until he joins her in the ground, at which point they will share the transformation together. He says that he forced the sexton to remove one whole side of her coffin—the side not facing Edgar—and that when he dies, he will require in his will that the corresponding side of his coffin be removed, so that he and Catherine might mingle in the earth. Nelly chastises him for disturbing the dead, and Heathcliff tells

her that Catherine's ghost has tormented him every night for the last eighteen years. He explains that he has felt her presence without being able to reach her. As they leave, Catherine asks Nelly to visit her soon, but Heathcliff tells Nelly that she must never call at Wuthering Heights, noting that if he wishes to see her he will come to Thrushcross Grange.

### ***Summary: Chapter 30***

Nelly has not seen Catherine since she left, and her only source of information about her is Zillah. Zillah says that Heathcliff refused to allow anyone at Wuthering Heights to be kind or helpful to Catherine after her arrival, and that Catherine tended to Linton by herself until the day he died. Since Linton's death, Catherine has remained aloof from Zillah and from Hareton, with whom she has been in constant conflict. Desperate to help her, Nelly tells Lockwood that she has taken a cottage herself and wants to bring Catherine to live with her, but she knows that Heathcliff will not allow it. The only thing that could save Catherine would be another marriage, says Nelly, but she does not have the power to bring about such a thing.

Writing in his diary—where all of Nelly's story has been recorded—Lockwood says that this is the end of Nelly's story, and that he is finally recovering from his illness. He writes that he plans to ride out to Wuthering Heights and to inform Heathcliff that he will spend the next six months in London, and that Heathcliff may look for another tenant for the Grange. He emphatically states that he has no desire to spend another winter in this strange company.

### ***Summary: Chapter 31***

Lockwood, true to his word, travels to Wuthering Heights to end his tenancy at the Grange. He brings young Catherine a note from Nelly. Hareton first appropriates the note, but when Catherine cries, he gives it back to her. He has been struggling to learn to read and to acquire an education. Meanwhile, Catherine has been starving for books, as Heathcliff confiscated her collection. Catherine mocks Hareton's struggles to learn, angering him, but she admits that she does not want to hinder his education. Still, Hareton feels humiliated, and he throws his books into the fire. Heathcliff returns, and on entering the house, he notes that Hareton has begun increasingly to resemble his aunt Catherine—so much so that he can hardly bear to see him. Lockwood passes a cheerless meal with Heathcliff and Hareton, and then departs the manor. As he leaves, he considers what a bleak place it is, full of dreary people.

### ***Summary: Chapter 32***

About six months later—Lockwood remained at the Grange until late winter, 1802, and it is now September, 1802—Lockwood writes in his diary that he has traveled again to the vicinity of the moors. There, he tries to pay a visit to Nelly at Thrushcross Grange, but discovers that she has moved back to Wuthering Heights. He rides to the manor, where he talks to Nelly and hears the news of the intervening months. Zillah has departed Wuthering Heights, and Heathcliff has given the position to Nelly. Catherine has admitted to Nelly that she feels guilty for having mocked Hareton's attempt to learn to read. One day, Hareton accidentally shoots himself, and is forced to remain indoors to recuperate. At first, he and Catherine quarrel, but they finally make up and agree to get along. To show her good will, Catherine gives Hareton a book, promising to teach him to read and never to mock him again. Nelly says that the two young people have gradually grown to love and trust each other, and that the day they are married will be her proudest day.

### ***Summary: Chapter 33***

At breakfast the morning after Catherine gives Hareton the book, she and Heathcliff become embroiled in an argument over her inheritance and her relationship with Hareton. Heathcliff seizes her and nearly strikes her, but, looking into her face, he suddenly lets her go—apparently having seen something in her eyes that reminds him of her mother. Nelly speculates to Lockwood that so many reminders of the dead Catherine seem to have changed Heathcliff. In fact, he has confided to Nelly that he no longer has the desire to carry out his revenge on young Catherine and Hareton.

### ***Summary: Chapter 34***

As time passes, Heathcliff becomes more and more solitary and begins to eat less and less, eventually taking only one meal a day. A few days after the incident at breakfast, he spends the entire night out walking, and he returns in a strange, wildly ebullient mood. He tells Nelly that last night he stood on the threshold of hell but now has reached sight of heaven. He refuses all food. He also insists that he be left alone—he wants to have Wuthering Heights to himself, he says. He seems to see an apparition before him, and to communicate with it, though Nelly can see nothing. Heathcliff's behavior becomes increasingly strange; he begins to murmur Catherine's name, and insists that Nelly remember his burial wishes. Soon, Nelly finds him dead. She tells Lockwood that he has since been buried, and that young Catherine and Hareton shall soon marry. They will wed on New Year's Day and move to Thrushcross Grange.

The young lovers now return to the house from outside, and Lockwood feels an overpowering desire to leave. He hurriedly exits through the kitchen, tossing a gold sovereign to Joseph on his way out. He finds his way through the wild moors to the churchyard, where he discovers the graves of Edgar, Catherine, and Heathcliff. On his way back, he talked to some villagers who claimed that they have seen Heathcliff's ghost wandering about in the company of a second spirit.

### **Analysis: Chapter 1-5**

This chapter introduces the reader to the frame of the story: Lockwood will gradually discover the events which led to Heathcliff —now about forty years old—living with only his servants at Wuthering Heights, almost completely separated from society. Here, Heathcliff is characterized by casual violence and lack of concern for manners or consideration for other people. This is only a hint of the atmosphere of the whole novel, in which violence is contrasted with more genteel and civilized ways of living.

Brontë begins to develop the natural setting of the novel by describing snowstorms and the moors, and it becomes clear that the bleak and harsh nature of the Yorkshire hills is not merely a geographical accident. It mirrors the roughness of those who live there: Wuthering Heights is firmly planted in its location and could not exist anywhere else. Knowing Emily Brontë's passionate fondness for her homeland, we can expect the same bleakness which Lockwood finds so disagreeable to take on a wild beauty. Its danger cannot be forgotten, though: a stranger to those parts could easily lose his way and die of exposure. Heathcliff and the wind are similar in that they have no pity for weakness. The somewhat menacing presence of the natural world can also be seen in the large number of dogs who inhabit Wuthering Heights: they are not kept for pets.

The power dynamics that Lockwood observes in the household of Wuthering Heights are extremely important. The girl is evidently frightened of Heathcliff and scornful of Hareton; Hareton behaves aggressively because he is sensitive about his status; Heathcliff does not hesitate to use his superior physical strength and impressive personality to bully other members of his household. The different ways in which different characters try to assert themselves reveal a lot about their situation. Most notably, it is evident that in this house, sheer force usually wins out over intellectual and humane pretensions. The girl is subversive and intellectual, an unwilling occupant of the house, but she can achieve little in the way of freedom or respect.

Lockwood continues to lose face: his conversational grace appears ridiculous in this new setting. Talking to Heathcliff, for example, he refers to the girl as a "beneficent fairy," which is evidently neither true nor welcome flattery.

This chapter might be seen, then, as a continuation of the strict division between social ideals (grace, pleasant social interactions, Lockwood) and natural realities (storms, frost, dogs, bluntness, cruelty, Hareton, Heathcliff). If the chapter was taken by itself, out of context, the reader would see that while social ideals are ridiculed, it is clear that the cruel natural world is ugly and hardly bearable. However, these depictions will change and develop as the novel continues.

It is very important that the ghost of Catherine Linton (who is more than just a figment of Lockwood's imagination) appears as a child. Of course, Lockwood thinks of her as a child, since he has just read parts of her childhood diary, but Heathcliff also seems to find it natural that she appeared in the form she had when they were children together. Rather than progressing from childhood on to a mature age with its different values, Heathcliff and Catherine never really grew up. That is to say, the most emotionally important parts of their lives either took place in childhood or follows directly from commitments made then. They never outgrew their solidarity against the oppressive forces of adult authority and religion that is described in Catherine's diary. Thus, the ghost of Catherine Linton (that is her married name) tries to return to her childhood sanctuary, which Heathcliff has kept in its original state. This challenges the dominion of linear time.

In this chapter, the narrative turns to the past: from now on, Lockwood will gradually lose importance as the story of Heathcliff and Catherine's childhood becomes more and more vibrant. However, we cannot entirely neglect the role Ellen Dean plays as a narrator: her personality means that the events she recounts are presented in a unique style. She is practical and, like a good housekeeper, tends to incline to the side of order. Even when she was young, she did not really participate in the private lives of the children of Wuthering Heights, and has little access to the relationship of Heathcliff and Catherine. Brontë demonstrates her versatility by using different points of view, faithfully recording each character's distinctive style of speech. Considering character development, it is interesting to know what Heathcliff and Catherine were like as children since, as we have seen in the previous chapter, their essential natures remain very much the same. Like her mother, Catherine Linton was willful and mischievous and Heathcliff was uncomplaining but vindictive.

The extremely close and entirely sexless relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy already manifests itself in an opposition to the outside world of parental authority and religion. Cathy is already charming and manipulative, though her love for her father is real. Joseph's false, oppressive religious convictions contrast with the pure, selfless thoughts of heaven of the grieving children.

Earnshaw's decline and death highlights the bond between the physical body and the spirit. The old man had formerly been charitable, loving, and open, but his physical weakness makes him irritable and peevish: the spirit is corrupted by the body's decline. One might remember that Emily Brontë watched her brother Branwell die wretchedly of alcohol and drug abuse, having had his youthful dreams of gallantry and glory disappointed.

### **Analysis: Chapters 6-9**

In this section, Nelly brings to conclusion the story of Heathcliff and Catherine's childhood, with Heathcliff leaving Wuthering Heights the night Catherine decides to marry Edgar Linton. In the climactic scene in which Catherine discusses with Nelly her decision to marry Edgar, Catherine describes the conflict between her love for Heathcliff and her love for Edgar. She says that she loves Edgar because he is handsome, rich, and graceful, and because he would make her the greatest lady in the region. However, she also states that she loves Heathcliff as though they shared the same soul, and that she knows in her heart that she has no business marrying Edgar. Nevertheless, her desire for a genteel and socially prominent lifestyle guides her decision-making: she would marry Heathcliff, if Hindley had not cast him down so low.

Heathcliff's emotional turmoil is due in part to his ambiguous class status. He begins life as a lower-class orphan, but is raised to the status of a gentleman's son when Mr. Earnshaw adopts him. He suffers another reversal in status when Hindley forces him to work as a servant in the very same household where he once enjoyed a life of luxury. The other characters, including the Lintons and, to an extent, Catherine—all upper-class themselves—prove complicit in this obliteration of Heathcliff's hopes. Inevitably, the unbridgeable gap in Catherine's and Heathcliff's social positions renders their fervent romance unrealizable on any practical level. Nevertheless, the passion between the two lovers remains rooted in their hearts, impervious to external contingencies. The text consistently treats the love between Catherine and Heathcliff as an incontestable fact of nature. Nothing can alter or lessen it, and the lovers know this. Heathcliff and Catherine know that no matter how they hurt each other, they can be sure of never losing their shared passion and ultimate mutual loyalty.

Catherine can decide to marry Edgar, certain that this outward act will have no effect on her and Heathcliff's inner feelings for one another. Similarly, it is in the knowledge of their passion's durability that Heathcliff later undertakes his cruel revenge.

### ***Analysis: Chapters 10-14***

Heathcliff, who seemed an almost superhuman figure even at his most oppressed, emerges in these chapters as a demonically charismatic, powerful, and villainous man, capable of extreme cruelties. Tortured by the depth of his love for Catherine, by his sense that she has betrayed him, and by his hatred of Hindley and the Linton family for making him seem unworthy of her, Heathcliff dedicates himself to an elaborate plan for revenge. The execution of this plan occupies much of the rest of the novel.

Though Heathcliff's first reunion with Catherine seems joyful, Nelly is right to fear his return, for he quickly exhibits his ardent malice, first through his treatment of the pathetic wretch Hindley, and then through his merciless abuse of the innocent Isabella. But ***though his destructive cruelty makes him the villain of the book, Heathcliff never loses his status as a sympathetic character.*** Although one can hardly condone his actions, it is difficult not to commiserate with him.

This ambiguity in Heathcliff's character makes readers debate whether his role in the novel is that of hero or villain. In some sense, he fulfills both roles. He certainly behaves cruelly and harmfully toward many of the other characters; yet, because he does so out of the pain of his love for Catherine, the reader remains just as attuned to Heathcliff's own misery as to the misery he causes in others. The love between Catherine and Heathcliff constitutes the center of *Wuthering Heights* both thematically and emotionally, and, if one is to respond at all to the novel, it is difficult to resist sympathizing with that love. Correspondingly, as a participant in this love story, Heathcliff never becomes an entirely inhuman or incomprehensible character to the reader, no matter how sadistically he behaves. Heathcliff suffers the ill treatment of characters who seem his intellectual and spiritual inferiors; thus, when he seeks revenge on a brute such as Hindley, the reader secretly wishes him success. As a result, once again, Brontë's strong characterization of Heathcliff undermines any possible intent she might have had to warn her readers about the perils of an overly intense love.

### ***Analysis: Chapters 15-20***

In this chapter which presents readers with a grim picture of Wuthering Heights. Isabella Linton, once the embodiment of youthful romanticism, now lives a life of torment and isolation under Heathcliff's tyranny. Brontë masterfully depicts the deterioration of Isabella's physical and emotional well-being, serving as a haunting commentary on the destructive power of obsession and revenge. As Isabella gives birth to her and Heathcliff's child, Linton, the novel continues to explore the theme of neglect and its consequences. Linton's frailty and weakness contrast starkly with the harsh, unforgiving environment of Wuthering Heights.

Heathcliff's disinterest in his own son emphasizes the extent to which he has become consumed by his obsession with Catherine. Brontë introduces Catherine, the daughter of Cathy and Hareton, who serves as a symbol of innocence amidst the chaos of Wuthering Heights. Yet, she is raised in ignorance and subjected to abuse, highlighting the cyclical nature of suffering in the household. This chapter underscores how the sins of the past continue to impact the younger generations.

Edgar Linton, a character often associated with gentleness and refinement, attempts to rescue his sister Isabella from the horrors of Wuthering Heights. However, he is met with hostility from Heathcliff and is confronted with the shocking reality of the household. The stark contrast between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights is a testament to the novel's exploration of social class and its consequences. As Isabella returns to Thrushcross Grange with her brother, Edgar, her state of brokenness is heart-wrenching.

Her narrative reveals the extent of her regret and misery, serving as a poignant reminder of the choices made by the characters and the inexorable consequences they face. Heathcliff's malevolence has left a trail of broken lives in his wake. Isabella's letter to Nelly provides a first-person account of her tormented existence at Wuthering Heights. Her words resonate with despair, regret, and the sense of being trapped in a living nightmare. Brontë uses this chapter to underline the destructive power of Heathcliff's vengeance and the toll it takes on those ensnared in his web.

### ***Analysis: Chapters 21-26***

As Nelly tells Lockwood, her story has now nearly caught up with the present. Hareton was born in the summer of 1778; the first Catherine married Edgar in 1783 (a fact that can be extrapolated from Nelly's claim in 1801 to have been living at Thrushcross Grange for about eighteen years); and young Catherine was born in 1784, first met her cousins in 1797, and carried on her romance with Linton in the winter of 1800–1801, just over a year ago (see "Chronology"). The realization that Nelly has been narrating recent events should come as something of a surprise to the reader, to whom these events have seemed strange and distant. Now, both the reader and Lockwood realize that the story he has been hearing is not remote history, but bears on the present. Indeed, the events that Lockwood has just heard recounted may partially explain the interactions of the characters at Wuthering Heights when he first visited.

Apart from supplying important chronological information, these chapters largely help to further the generational drama, illustrating the similarities and differences between the first and second generations of main characters. Young Catherine's taunting of Hareton for his ignorance directly parallels the first Catherine's

taunting of Heathcliff, just as Heathcliff's oppression of Hareton parallels Hindley's oppression of Heathcliff. In addition, these chapters demonstrate that Heathcliff accomplishes his revenge methodically, punishing his dead contemporaries by manipulating and bullying their children. By this point in the novel, revenge has supplanted love as the main force bearing upon Heathcliff's behavior. His acts take on a sense of urgency as he hurries to have young Catherine married to Linton before the boy dies. This plot evidences the way that Heathcliff makes a pawn of everyone—even his own son. Indeed, Heathcliff may despise Linton more than any other character in the novel. Worried that Linton will not outlive Edgar, Heathcliff hastens to secure his claim on Thrushcross Grange by uniting his son with Edgar's daughter.

***Analysis: Chapters 27-30***

As Edgar Linton grows weak and dies, Heathcliff's cruelty rages unchecked. Without fear of repercussion, he abuses the other characters mercilessly, kidnapping Nelly and young Catherine. With no one left who is strong enough to counter Heathcliff, the course of events in these chapters seems inevitable. Heathcliff easily succeeds in marrying his son to young Catherine, and in inheriting Thrushcross Grange. However, a new force begins to rise up against the tyrant. Catherine shows a defiant spirit, and she triumphantly declares that the love between her and Linton will save them from misery and make them superior to Heathcliff. This foreshadows her eventual strong-willed rebellion against Heathcliff—and her redemption of her oppressed predecessors through her love for her other cousin, Hareton Earnshaw.

The young Catherine's manifestation of her mother's boldness, as well as Heathcliff's progressing revenge, bring to mind the older Catherine and the defiant marriage to Edgar with which she first sparked Heathcliff's wrath. Indeed, perhaps because of young Catherine's behavior, Heathcliff himself seems to become increasingly preoccupied with thoughts of the late Catherine. The horrifying spectacle of Heathcliff uncovering her grave and gazing upon her corpse's face, as well as his intense concern about the fate of Catherine's body, testifies to the extreme depth of his obsession. In a sense, Heathcliff's interest in the decomposition of his beloved is quite in keeping with the nature of their relationship. The text consistently describes their love not only in spiritual terms, but in material ones. Thus, Catherine declares in Chapter IX, "Whatever souls are made of, his and mine are the same." Moreover, the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine has come to be associated with the soil where it has been conducted; its fate becomes intertwined with that of the earth, as the narrative repeatedly links both Heathcliff and Catherine to the severe and wild moors, which frequently symbolize the unruly nature of their love.

These chapters give us insight not only into the story's main characters and their relationships, but also into the story's narrator, Nelly Dean. First, Nelly chooses to lie to Edgar about his daughter's condition as Edgar lingers near death, a well-meaning untruth that resembles her earlier lie to Linton, which she told en route to deliver him to Heathcliff. Just as she declared to Linton that his father was kind and generous, she now tells Edgar that his daughter is happily married. Nelly thus shows herself willing to lie and distort the truth in order to spare feelings and ease social situations. Nelly again displays a certain manipulative quality in a statement she makes outside the story, to Lockwood. She tells him that the young Catherine's last hope for salvation would be a second marriage, but that she, Nelly, is powerless to bring about such a union. This remark seems intended to express more than idle wishfulness. As the reader may recall, Nelly insinuates in Chapter XXV that Lockwood might fall in love with Catherine himself. At the time, the comment seemed nothing more than speculation. Yet now the reader can see that Nelly may be pursuing a plot to rescue her former mistress.

Indeed, Nelly's willingness to narrate the story to Lockwood in the first place may stem from this notion of saving Catherine. Nelly paints a far more flattering picture of young Catherine than she does of the girl's mother, even when they exhibit similar traits. Nelly frequently emphasizes young Catherine's beauty, and she may subtly frame her story in a certain way so as to pique Lockwood's interest in the girl. Of course, this is merely one possible interpretation of the text, but again, it is extremely important to consider the motivations and biases of the character who narrates the story. One of the most impressive aspects of Emily Brontë's achievement in *Wuthering Heights* is her ability to include such finely drawn, subtle psychological portraits as that of Nelly Dean—many of whose most fascinating human qualities emerge only when one reads between the lines of her narration.

### ***Analysis: Chapters 31-34***

Unlike most Gothic romances, *Wuthering Heights* does not build to an intense, violent climax before its ending; rather, its tension quietly unravels as the inner conflict within Heathcliff gradually dissipates, his love for Catherine eroding his lust for revenge. Although the novel's happy ending is not possible until Heathcliff's death, his influence has become an ever less menacing one in the preceding days, and thus his demise does not constitute a dramatic reversal of the book's trends. As time passes, Heathcliff becomes increasingly obsessed with his dead love, and he finds reminders of her everywhere. He begins conversing with her ghost, and, after his climactic night on the moors—a night that we do not see or hear anything about, because Nelly was not there—a strange cheer comes over him, a happy premonition of his own impending death.

Because he rejects all religious notions of the afterlife, Heathcliff does not fear death. Although the text frequently likens him to the Devil, he does not believe in hell, and his forced religious education as a child has caused him to deny the existence of heaven. His lack of religious belief leads him to refuse to allow Nelly to Christianize his death by calling for a priest. Rather, for Heathcliff, the end of life can mean only one thing: the beginning of his reunion with Catherine.

As Heathcliff anticipates a union in the afterlife, young Catherine and Hareton look forward to a shared life. Their love for one another seems not only to secure happiness for the future, but to redeem the miseries of the past. When young Catherine regrets aloud her mockeries of Hareton, she redeems not only her own past sins, but those of her mother, who behaved similarly toward Heathcliff—though without remorse. For his part, Hareton represents a final renewal for the manor of Wuthering Heights. He stands poised to inherit the estate, where his name is carved over the entrance, inscribed there by an earlier Hareton over three centuries before.

Hareton's appropriation of the manor will signify the end of one cycle and the beginning of another, his very name marking the entry into a new era for Wuthering Heights. Finally, Catherine and Hareton together, as a unit, represent a resolution of past troubles. Together, they seem to manifest all of the best qualities of their parents and merge the various conflicting aspects of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange into a stronger whole. In essence, they embody the strength and passion of Wuthering Heights without its doomed intensity, and the civility and kindness of Thrushcross Grange without its cowardly snobbishness. Joined through their loving bond, the two estates will constitute a haven of warmth, hope, and joy.

## **THEMES OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS:**

### **1. Love and Marriage**

Catherine and Heathcliff's passion for one another seems to be the center of Wuthering Heights, given that it is stronger and more lasting than any other emotion displayed in the novel, and that it is the source of most of the major conflicts that structure the novel's plot. As she tells Catherine and Heathcliff's story, Nelly criticizes both of them harshly, condemning their passion as immoral, but this passion is obviously one of the most compelling and memorable aspects of the book. It is not easy to decide whether Brontë intends the reader to condemn these lovers as blameworthy or to idealize them as romantic heroes whose love transcends social norms and conventional morality. The book is actually structured around two parallel love stories, the first half of the novel centering on the love

between Catherine and Heathcliff, while the less dramatic second half features the developing love between young Catherine and Hareton. In contrast to the first, the latter tale ends happily, restoring peace and order to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The differences between the two love stories contribute to the reader's understanding of why each ends the way it does.

The most important feature of young Catherine and Hareton's love story is that it involves growth and change. Early in the novel Hareton seems irredeemably brutal, savage, and illiterate, but over time he becomes a loyal friend to young Catherine and learns to read. When young Catherine first meets Hareton he seems completely alien to her world, yet her attitude also evolves from contempt to love. Catherine and Heathcliff's love, on the other hand, is rooted in their childhood and is marked by the refusal to change. In choosing to marry Edgar, Catherine seeks a more genteel life, but she refuses to adapt to her role as wife, either by sacrificing Heathcliff or embracing Edgar. In Chapter XII she suggests to Nelly that the years since she was twelve years old and her father died have been like a blank to her, and she longs to return to the moors of her childhood. Heathcliff, for his part, possesses a seemingly superhuman ability to maintain the same attitude and to nurse the same grudges over many years.

Moreover, Catherine and Heathcliff's love is based on their shared perception that they are identical. Catherine declares, famously, "I am Heathcliff," while Heathcliff, upon Catherine's death, wails that he cannot live without his "soul," meaning Catherine. Their love denies difference, and is strangely asexual. The two do not kiss in dark corners or arrange secret trysts, as adulterers do. Given that Catherine and Heathcliff's love is based upon their refusal to change over time or embrace difference in others, it is fitting that the disastrous problems of their generation are overcome not by some climactic reversal, but simply by the inexorable passage of time, and the rise of a new and distinct generation. Ultimately, *Wuthering Heights* presents a vision of life as a process of change, and celebrates this process over and against the romantic intensity of its principal characters.

## **2-Revenge and Humiliation**

Even though the novel is a great (if twisted) romance, Brontë doesn't follow the strict guidelines of the genre: the revenge plot is just as powerful—if not more so—than the love that pulls Catherine and Heathcliff together. Without revenge as such a predominant theme, *Wuthering Heights* would just be another thwarted love story.

When Heathcliff can't have the woman he loves, he turns his attention to getting revenge on his childhood tormenter, Hindley. The fact that Hindley already drinks like a fish and gambles to excess makes Heathcliff's vengeance all the easier.

### **3-The influence of Social Class**

As members of the gentry, the Earnshaw and the Lintons occupy a somewhat precarious place within the hierarchy of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British society. At the top of British society was the royalty, followed by the aristocracy, then by the gentry, and then by the lower classes, who made up the vast majority of the population. Although the gentry, or upper middle class, possessed servants and often large estates, they held a nonetheless fragile social position. The social status of aristocrats was a formal and settled matter, because aristocrats had official titles. Members of the gentry, however, held no titles, and their status was thus subject to change. A man might see himself as a gentleman but his neighbors might not share this view. A discussion of whether or not a man was really a gentleman would consider such questions as how much land he owned, how many tenants and servants he had, how he spoke, whether he kept horses and a carriage, and whether his money came from land or "trade".

Catherine's decision to marry Edgar so that she will be "the greatest woman of the neighborhood" is only the most obvious example, while, as she tells Nelly:

"Did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise and place him out of my brother's power." (9.99). The Lintons are relatively firm in their gentry status but nonetheless take great pains to prove this status through their behaviors. The Earnshaw, on the other hand, rest on much shakier ground socially. They do not have a carriage, they have less land, and their house, as Lockwood remarks, resembles that of a "homely, northern farmer" and not that of a gentleman. The shifting nature of social status is demonstrated most strikingly in Heathcliff's trajectory from a homeless waif to a young gentleman-by-adoption to common laborer to gentleman again (although the status-conscious Lockwood remarks that Heathcliff is only a gentleman in "dress and manners").

### **4- Self-depend**

Heathcliff is made to feel like an outsider by his own adoptive family, which fuels his desire for revenge. *Wuthering Heights* never makes it clear where he is originally from, although Mr. Earnshaw says he picked him up in the streets of Liverpool... a port town where immigrants entered England. A ton is made of Heathcliff's appearance; the contrast between his swarthy, brooding looks and Edgar Linton's creamy, soft skin is dramatic.

So Heathcliff is a double outsider: not only is he not related to anyone at Wuthering Heights, but he is also marked as racially different. He is described dozens of times as a "dark-skinned gipsy" (1.15). Nelly basically sums up the regional biases of the Yorkshire inhabitants when she says, "We don't in general take to foreigners here, Mr. Lockwood, unless they take to us first" (6.7). But Heathcliff's foreign appearance might partially explain why Catherine thinks he's so hot.

## **SYMBOLS IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS:**

### **1-Moors**

The landscape in Wuthering Heights has a symbolic importance. It is comprised primarily of moors: wide, wild expanses, high but somewhat soggy, and thus infertile. Moorland cannot be cultivated, and its uniformity makes navigation difficult. It features particularly waterlogged patches in which people could potentially drown. (This possibility is mentioned several times in Wuthering Heights.) Thus, the moors serve very well as symbols of the wild threat posed by nature.

To Catherine and Heathcliff, the moors exist as a supernatural, liberating, and boundary-less region. For them, the ultimate freedom is associated with wandering on the moors. They often describe their love and their own individual identities through metaphors of nature.

Catherine's dying wish to be released onto the moors reinforces Heathcliff's analogy of Catherine as an oak contained by the strictures of Thrushcross Grange:

"I wish I were out of doors—I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy [...] I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide [...]." (Bronte, Wuthering Heights, Chapter-12:46)

2-Ghosts: Ghosts appear throughout Wuthering Heights, as they do in most other works of Gothic fiction, yet Brontë presents them in such a way that whether they really exist remains ambiguous. Certain ghosts—such as Catherine's spirit when it appears to Lockwood in Chapter III—may be explained as nightmares. The villagers' alleged sightings of Heathcliff's ghost in Chapter 34 could be dismissed as unverified superstition. Whether or not the ghosts are "real," they symbolize the manifestation of the past within the present, and the way memory stays with people.

### **3-The Weather:**

The weather symbolizes how the characters are at the mercy of forces they cannot control. At the beginning of the novel, Lockwood thinks he can travel through the storm, and he ends up failing. The term "wuthering" describes a fierce wind that blows through the moors. Changes in the weather are constant throughout the novel, and it is a physical manifestation of the turmoil that surrounds the characters.

### **4-The Windows:**

In his first descriptions of the house, Lockwood observes the windows:

Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, the corners defended with large, jutting stones.(1.12)

The window in the oak-paneled bed is symbolizing a space of violation and violence. Even though Catherine's name is scratched on its surface, the window doesn't provide entry for her wailing ghost—thanks in large part to Lockwood's lack of sympathy. The bloodshed from Catherine's wrist "rubbed [...] to and fro" on the pane suggests that there is some serious violence involved in crossing thresholds.

In the novel, the young Cathy escapes Heathcliff from the same window:

She dare not try the doors, lest the dogs should raise an alarm; she visited the empty chambers, and examined their windows; and luckily, lighting on her mother's, she got easily out onto the ground by means of the fir tree, close by. (28.66)

Throughout the novel, characters gaze and spy through windows, open or break windows. The large drawing room window of Thrushcross Grange appears ample and cheery compared to windows at Wuthering Heights. Rather than being "narrow" and "deeply set," it provides accessible views out onto the garden and green valley and, conversely, into the home's interior.

When Catherine and Heathcliff venture out to spy on Edgar and Isabella, the drawing room window provides a view onto a different world—one that eventually welcomes Catherine but rejects Heathcliff. Thrown out of Thrushcross Grange (as he will be many more times), Heathcliff is left to make his observations through the glass partition:

"I resumed my station as a spy, because, if Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million fragments unless they let her out." (6.39)

The many symbolic meanings of windows extend even to Heathcliff's appearance, as Nelly describes his eyes as "a couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly" (7.42). Again, windows prevent rather than provide access.

#### 5-The Houses:

Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are in many ways set in opposition to each another. The Heights lacks hospitality and domestic comforts. Even the name is gloomy. "Wuthering," as Lockwood tells us, is "descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather" (1.12).

Thrushcross Grange, on the other hand, represents refinement, class, cultivation, and propriety. It's the house Catherine aspires to socially, the house that will make her a "lady." The Heights sits exposed on a stormy hilltop, but the Grange is calm and protected down in the valley. When the novel opens, we learn that Heathcliff owns both houses. But when Lockwood notices that the inscription over the doors reads "Hareton Earnshaw," we know that the family has lost the house; the laws of inheritance have been violated.

#### 6- DOGS:

There are dogs running all over this novel, they figure in several major scenes and tend to be symbolically linked to Heathcliff. For example:

1-When Lockwood tries to enter Wuthering Heights at the beginning of the novel, he finds not only several locked gates but also a pack of dogs preventing entry. "Two hairy monsters" (3.101) with the names Gnasher and Wolf attack Lockwood, and their lack of hospitality seems to reflect that of their master. But Lockwood doesn't get the hint.

2-When Catherine and Heathcliff take their pivotal journey down to Thrushcross Grange, they share a glimpse of the sniveling Linton children fighting over a dog (6.37). When Catherine is bit by Skulker, one of the Lintons' dogs, she is compelled to stay at the Grange to recuperate, which changes her relationship with Heathcliff forever.

3-Finally, let's not forget Heathcliff's treatment of Isabella's dog, Fanny. As they elope from Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff uses a handkerchief to hang the dog by his neck on a bridle hook—foreshadowing the treatment his new bride will receive.

## **MOTIFS IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS:**

### **Doubles**

Brontë organizes her novel by arranging its elements—characters, places, and themes—into pairs. Catherine and Heathcliff are closely matched in many ways, and see themselves as identical. Catherine's character is divided into two warring sides: the side that wants Edgar and the side that wants Heathcliff. Catherine and young Catherine are both remarkably similar and strikingly different. The two houses, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, represent opposing worlds and values. The novel has not one but two distinctly different narrators, Nelly and Mr. Lockwood. The relation between such paired elements is usually quite complicated, with the members of each pair being neither exactly alike nor diametrically opposed. For instance, the Lintons and the Earnshaws may at first seem to represent opposing sets of values, but, by the end of the novel, so many intermarriages have taken place that one can no longer distinguish between the two families.

### **Repetition**

Repetition is another tactic Brontë employs in organizing *Wuthering Heights*. It seems that nothing ever ends in the world of this novel. Instead, time seems to run in cycles, and the horrors of the past repeat themselves in the present. The way that the names of the characters are recycled, so that the names of the characters of the younger generation are the same of the names of their parents, leads the reader to consider how plot elements also repeat themselves. For instance, Heathcliff's degradation of Hareton repeats Hindley's degradation of Heathcliff. Also, the young Catherine's mockery of Joseph's earnest evangelical zealotry repeats her mother's. Even Heathcliff's second try at opening Catherine's grave repeats his first.

### **The Conflict Between Nature and Culture**

In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë constantly plays nature and culture against each other. Nature is represented by the Earnshaw family, and by Catherine and Heathcliff in particular. These characters are governed by their passions, not by reflection or ideals of civility. Correspondingly, the house where they live—Wuthering Heights—comes to symbolize a similar wildness. On the other hand, Thrushcross Grange and the Linton family represent culture, refinement, convention, and cultivation.

When, in Chapter VI, Catherine is bitten by the Lintons' dog and brought into Thrushcross Grange, the two sides are brought onto the collision course that structures the majority of the novel's plot. At the time of that first meeting between

the Linton and Earnshaw households, chaos has already begun to erupt at Wuthering Heights, where Hindley's cruelty and injustice reign, whereas all seems to be fine and peaceful at Thrushcross Grange. However, the influence of Wuthering Heights soon proves overpowering, and the inhabitants of Thrushcross Grange are drawn into Catherine, Hindley, and Heathcliff's drama. Thus, the reader almost may interpret Wuthering Heights's impact on the Linton family as an allegory for the corruption of culture by nature, creating a curious reversal of the more traditional story of the corruption of nature by culture. However, Brontë tells her story in such a way as to prevent our interest and sympathy from straying too far from the wilder characters, and often portrays the more civilized characters as despicably weak and silly. This method of characterization prevents the novel from flattening out into a simple privileging of culture over nature, or vice versa. Thus, in the end the reader must acknowledge that the novel is no mere allegory.

### **Some Important Quotations:**

*1-Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, the corners defended with large, jutting stones. (Ch.1)*

Mr. Lockwood describes Wuthering House. Constructed in 1500, this home is clearly *designed to be impenetrable*. The window in the oak-paneled bed is a critical boundary in the novel, symbolizing a space of violation and violence. Even though Catherine's name is scratched on its surface, the window doesn't provide entry for her wailing ghost. The bloodshed from Catherine's wrist "rubbed [...] to and for" on the pane suggests that there is some *serious* violence involved in crossing the thresholds.

The many symbolic meanings of windows extend even to Heathcliff's appearance, as Nelly describes his eyes as "a couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly" (Ch.7.42). Again, windows prevent rather than provide access.

*2-Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire [...] (1.15)*

These are Lockwood's words (in his dairy) when he met Heathcliff at Wuthering Heights. There is endless speculation and fascination about Heathcliff appearance. He tries to explain the mysterious figure of [Heathcliff](#), his character and motivations. Heathcliff ethnic background presents a strange contrast with being the house master. Though he acquires the property, he can never change his appearance and what it implies socially. Heathcliff is still dark, but embodies the social status that he has gained over the last twenty-five years. Heathcliff is a

double outsider: not only is he not related to anyone at Wuthering Heights, but he is also marked as racially different. He is described dozens of times as a "dark-skinned gipsy"

3- "*Come in! come in!*" he sobbed. "*Pls, do come. Oh, do--once more! Oh! my heart's darling!*" Ch-3

Heathcliff to the ghost of Catherine. Whether or not Catherine's ghost appears to Lockwood the night he stays at Wuthering Heights or if it's just a nightmare is ambiguous. It is apparent, however, that Heathcliff senses that Catherine's ghost appears from time to time. This becomes evident as the novel progresses. Despite obtaining wealth and charisma, Heathcliff remains haunted by the past and his longing for Catherine. It's a haunting he requests and one that causes a frenzied desire for revenge on all whom he suspects of not allowing his and Catherine's love to gain its fullness while Catherine lived.

4- "*I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do! God won't have the satisfaction that I shall,'* he returned. '*I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain.*" Chapter 7

Heathcliff is talking to Nelly when Hindley punished him and prevented him from attending dinner with Cathy, Edgar and Ezabella. It's hard not to see a lot of Heathcliff's flaws as the direct result of Hindley's abuse. As child he calls Heathcliff an "imp of Satan" and after Mr. Earnshaw dies, Hindley seeks to degrade Heathcliff by turning him into a servant and deprived him from education. Later, Hindley tries to unite the Earnshaw and the Lintons by marrying Catherine to Edgar.

5- "*It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now*" Chapter 9

Catherine's speech to Nelly about her acceptance of [Edgar](#)'s proposal, in Chapter 9 forms the turning-point of the novel plot. It is at this point that Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights, after he has overheard Catherine say that it would "degrade" her to marry him. Social ambition motivates many of characters. Catherine's decision to marry Edgar Linton out of a desire to be "the greatest woman of the neighborhood" exemplifies the effect of social considerations on the characters' actions. To Catherine Edgar is a blue-eyed golden boy who represents a chance for social elevation. After all, he's rich, a gentleman, a magistrate, and willing to adore her.

Catherine describes the conflict between her love for Heathcliff and her love for Edgar. She says that she loves Edgar because he is handsome, rich, and graceful,

and because he would make her the greatest lady in the region. However, she states that she loves Heathcliff as though they shared the same soul, and that she knows in her heart that she has no business marrying Edgar.

*6-" I am Heathcliff—He's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself—but as my own being—so, don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable. He shall never know how I love him . . . he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same. . . .(Ch.9)*

This confession is one of the novel's most famous lines, because it so poignantly expresses the nature of Heathcliff and Catherine's love: this love is beyond the physical, transcending all else. Heathcliff and Cathy see themselves as one and the same, which is very interesting. Catherine's affirmation - "*I am Heathcliff*" is the cry of every woman in love that surrenders her identity for his identity and her world for his world; she becomes the incarnation or embodiment of the man she loves, his reflection and his double. Catherine considers Heathcliff to be a part of her, she does not see her marriage to Edgar as a separation from Heathcliff. Catherine's assertion that Heathcliff is "more myself than I am" is generally read as an expression of elemental passion. She is using Heathcliff as a symbol of their childhood, where their identities are merged by nature.

*7-"I wish I were out of doors—I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy [...] I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide."(Ch.12)*

This is Catherine's dying wish (talking to Nelly) to be released onto the moors. To Catherine and Heathcliff, the moors exist as a supernatural, liberating, and boundary-less region. For them, the ultimate freedom is associated with wandering on the moors. They often describe their love and their own individual identities through metaphors of nature. *Also*, the window is a symbol of communication and escape physically and emotionally. To say "*open the window*" reflects her inner desire to break through the wall and free herself from mental agony.

*8- I forgive what you have done to me. I love my murderer—but yours! How can I?*  
Ch-14

Heathcliff to Catherine. The passion between the two lovers remains rooted in their hearts. They blame each other but nothing can alter or lessen it, and the lovers know this. Heathcliff and Catherine know that no matter how they hurt each other, they can be sure of never losing their shared passion and ultimate mutual loyalty. Moreover, Heathcliff promises that he'll never forgive Catherine's murderer, a hint to her husband, Edgar.

9- "*Misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—you have broken it—and in breaking it, you have broken mine.*" (Ch.15)

*Heathcliff to Catherine.* In *Wuthering Heights* many characters suffer from physical and emotional trauma, and many of them even *die* from it. Heathcliff & Catherine's love causes an extraordinary suffering and misery to both of them. By getting married to Edgar, Catherine commits romantically to another man, she also leaves *Wuthering Heights* and raises her social status far beyond Heathcliff's reach. While the essence of their love does not change, Heathcliff sees the marriage as a rejection of him and an embrace of an entirely new life. Even in death, buried between Edgar and Heathcliff, Catherine is, as she was in life, in conflict between two lovers.

10- "*I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing. I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don't care for striking. In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day, I am surrounded with her image!*" (Ch.33)

Heathcliff is talking to Nelly explaining that his love for Catherine erodes his lust for revenge. By the end of the novel Heathcliff admits to Nelly that he no longer has any interest in violence. Heathcliff wants to believe in ghosts and the afterlife because that means Catherine will still be around. In many ways the ghosts in *Wuthering Heights* symbolize a lack of closure for the lovers. Heathcliff becomes increasingly obsessed with his dead lover, and he finds reminders of her everywhere. He begins conversing with her ghost, for Heathcliff, the end of life can mean only one thing: the beginning of his reunion with Catherine.

***Q-Wuthering Heights* has all the elements of a Gothic novel, but the characters are a lot more complex than average Gothic protagonists/antagonists.**

*Wuthering Heights* has plenty of Gothic features, like imprisonment, dark stairways, stormy weather, nightmares, extreme landscapes, ghosts, moonlight and candles, torture and excessive cruelty, madness, communication between the living and the dead—also the symbolic association with the unruly pack of dogs (with names like Throtler and Skulker) and other things.

Also, in *Wuthering Heights* people and ghosts are always trying to climb in or out, people are getting locked in and out, doors are slammed, keys are hidden, and so forth.

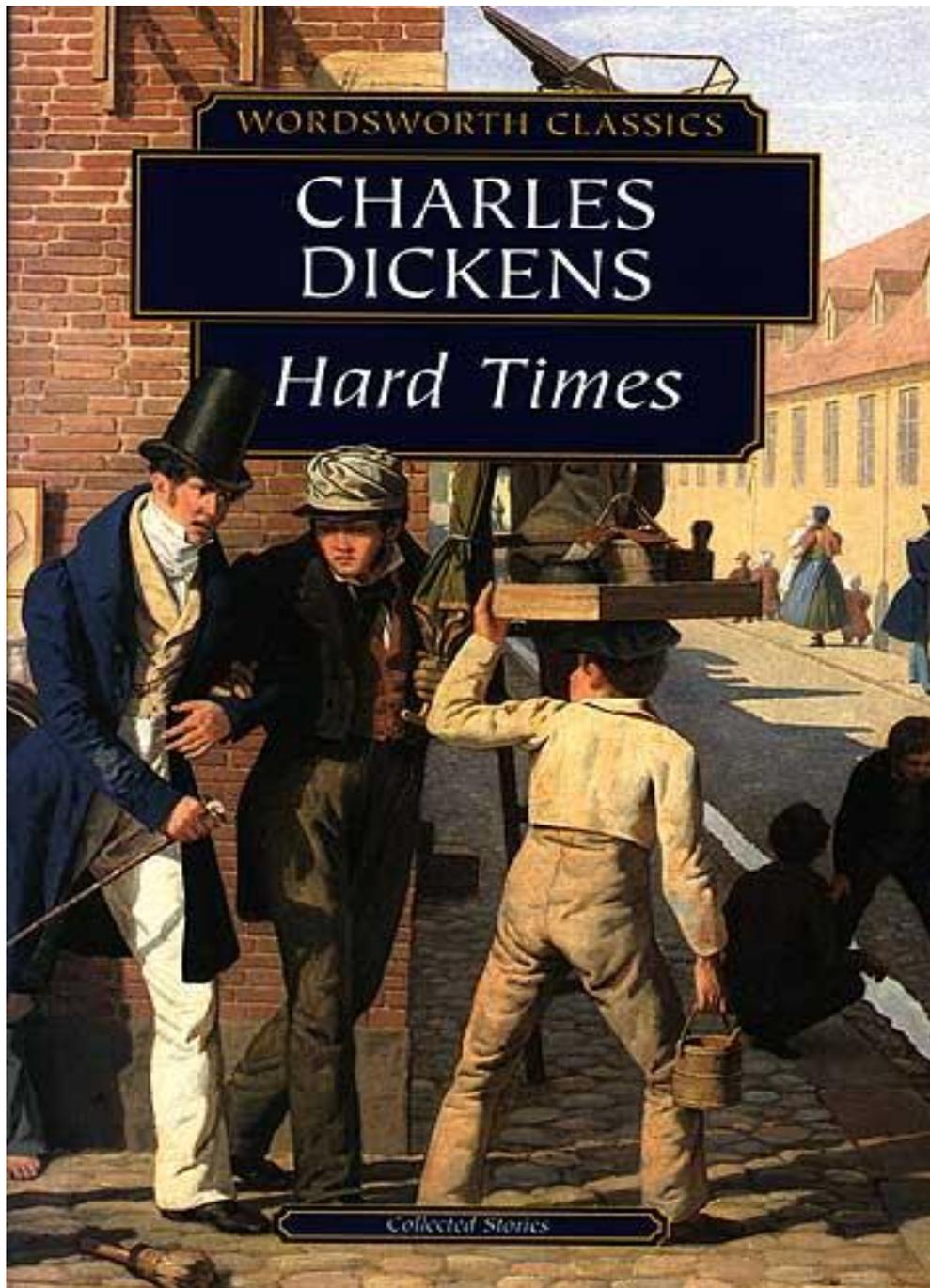
Brontë features how the threat comes from a foreign presence in the house, Heathcliff, the outsider and the so-called "gypsy", who causes the disaster by

usurping the family line and taking all of its property. Heathcliff can be a real beast, which comes across through his numerous threats, violent acts. Though Heathcliff often enacts violence against just about everyone in the two houses, he would never hurt Catherine. However, his love for her is violent in the sense that it's passionate and stirs a brutal defensiveness.

**Q-The role of the narrator in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights makes the novel's unique narrative structure. Discuss.**

The double narrative of this story allows the existence of a narrator (Mr. Lockwood) who is also a character in **the outer story** and serves to be the receiver of **the inner story**. Mr. Lockwood, is a tenant who arrives on the scene many years later than when the central conflicts happened in the moorland farmhouse "Wuthering Heights" and is exposed to the evidence of the mysterious past of this house both in his room as well as from the odd and unusual characteristics of Heathcliff. His mistaken assumptions about who is who in Wuthering Heights reveals that he is an unreliable source of information. He then seizes an opportunity to inquire into the history of Wuthering Heights from the housekeeper Nelly Dean, who becomes the narrator of the inner story. As the inner narration begins, Mr. Lockwood's role automatically switches to a narrator, the receiver of Nelly's story.

Nelly, then, is our eyes and ears on the ground. Elly Dean has the inside scoop on the Earnshaw-Linton melodrama. She is trusted by the members of both houses, so she is a pretty good source for the story. At the same time, Nelly has been excommunicated from Wuthering Heights at least two times that we know of. She is flawed, biased, and overly identified with the Linton, Earnshaw, and Heathcliff families. This suggests that the very person we rely upon for the facts was a witness for many events took place at the two houses. Another issue to consider is Nelly's reliance upon several other narrators to piece together the story—Isabella, Dr. Kenneth, gossipy villagers, and others.



English Department  
Victorian Novel  
Third Stage

### **Summary of Hard Times:**

Hard Times, a novel by Charles Dickens, was published in serial form (as Hard Times: For These Times) in the periodical Household Words from April to August 1854 and in book form later the same year. The novel is a bitter indictment of industrialization, with its dehumanizing effects on workers and communities in mid-19th-century England.

Louisa and Tom Gradgrind have been harshly raised by their father, an educator, to know nothing but the most factual, pragmatic information. Their lives are devoid of beauty, culture, or imagination, and the two have little or no empathy for others. Louisa marries Josiah Bounderby, a vulgar banker and mill owner. She eventually leaves her husband and returns to her father's house. Tom, unscrupulous and vacuous, robs his brother-in-law's bank. Only after these and other crises does their father realize that how he raised his children has ruined their lives.

"Hard Times" by Charles Dickens revolves around Thomas Gradgrind's strict utilitarian education in Coketown. His children, Louisa and Tom, face challenges, including Sissy Jupe's influence from Sleary's circus. Stephen Blackpool seeks an escape from his troubled marriage, while Tom's gambling leads to debt. The narrative unfolds with a bank robbery, Louisa's unhappy marriage to Bounderby, and the revelation of Bounderby's true background. Stephen is suspected in the robbery, but dies in a mine accident. Louisa escapes her troubled marriage, and Tom, implicated in the robbery, flees with Sissy's help. The story concludes with Gradgrind embracing "Faith, Hope, and Charity" over strict utilitarianism.

In "Hard Times," Charles Dickens presents the character of Louisa Gradgrind as a symbol of the emotional and moral struggles within the upper-class society of Victorian England. Louisa's interactions with the lower classes, particularly with Sissy, highlight the humanity and richness present in their lives. Despite societal expectations, Louisa breaks free from upper-class norms, showing empathy by financially supporting a lower-class individual. Her marriage to Mr. Bounderby, driven by social acceptance, leads to a loveless union, contributing to her emotional emptiness. Louisa's desire for a more emotionally charged and balanced life reflects the dissatisfaction of the upper class. The contrast between her idealized childhood and the reality of her upbringing emphasizes the numbness and discontent resulting from wealth and knowledge. Louisa's family dynamics further portray the emotional void in upper-class societies. Her conflict with her brother Tom illustrates her struggle against emotional disconnection. Gradgrind's

realization of Louisa's inner turmoil suggests the inevitable downfall of an upper-class life devoid of true self-awareness. Dickens uses Louisa's character to advocate for a more enriching and experiential approach to life, challenging the shallow nature of upper-class Victorian society.

## **BOOK ONE:**

### **Summary — Chapter 1: The One Thing Needful**

In an empty schoolroom, a dark-eyed, rigid man emphatically expresses to the schoolmaster and another adult his desire for children to be taught facts, saying that “nothing else will ever be of any service to them.”

### **Summary — Chapter 2: Murdering the Innocents**

In the industrial city of Coketown, a place dominated by grim factories and oppressed by coils of black smoke, the dark-eyed, rigid man—Thomas Gradgrind—has established a school. He has hired a teacher, Mr. McChoakum child, whom he hopes will instill in the students nothing but cold, hard facts. Visiting the school, Gradgrind tests a pair of students by asking them to define a horse. Sissy Jupe, the daughter of a horse-riding circus entertainer, is unable to answer, but a pale young man called Bitzer gives a cut-and-dried definition that pleases Gradgrind.

### **Summary — Chapter 3: A Loophole**

While walking back to his home, appropriately named Stone Lodge, Gradgrind catches his two eldest children spying on the circus through a peephole in the fence. Having raised his children according to his philosophy of fact and having permitted them no imaginative entertainment, Gradgrind becomes furious. He drags the young Tom and sixteen-year-old Louisa home. Louisa admits that curiosity drew her to the circus and tries to defend her brother by saying she dragged him there, but all Gradgrind can do is ask angrily what Mr. Bounderby would say.

### **Summary — Chapter 4: Mr. Bounderby**

This same Mr. Bounderby—a wealthy, boastful industrialist who owns factories and a bank—is at that very moment in the drawing room at Stone Lodge, pontificating to the pallid and lethargic Mrs. Gradgrind about his poverty-stricken childhood. Bounderby never fails to talk at length about this subject.

He reminds Mrs. Gradgrind that he was born in a ditch, abandoned by his mother, and raised by a cruel, alcoholic grandmother. At this point, Gradgrind enters and tells Bounderby about his children's misbehavior. Mrs. Gradgrind scolds the children halfheartedly, admonishing them to "go and be something logical." Bounderby theorizes that Sissy Jupe, the circus entertainer's daughter who attends Gradgrind's school, may have led the young Gradgrinds astray. Gradgrind agrees, and they set out to inform Sissy's father that Sissy is no longer welcome at the school. Bounderby demands a kiss from Louisa before they leave.

### **Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 1–4**

Dickens was concerned with the miserable lives of the poor and working classes in the England of his day, and *Hard Times* is one of several of his novels that addresses these social problems directly. *Hard Times* is not Dickens's most subtle novel, and most of its moral themes are explicitly articulated through extremely sharp, exaggerated characterization, and through the narrator's frequent interjection of his own opinions and sentiments. For instance, in the opening section of the book, a simple contrast emerges between Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of fact and Sissy Jupe's frequent indulgence in romantic, imaginative fancy. While Gradgrind's philosophy includes the idea that people should only act according to their own best interests, which they can calculate through rational principles, the actions of the simple, loving Sissy are inspired by her feelings, usually of compassion toward others. The philosophy of fact is continually shown to be at the heart of the problems of the poor—the smokestacks, factory machines, and clouds of black smog are all associated with fact—while fancy is held up as the route to charity and love between fellow men. Philosophically, this contrast is a drastic and obvious oversimplification. Clearly, a commitment to factual accuracy does not lead directly to selfishness, and a commitment to imagination does not signify a commitment to social equality. But for the purposes of *Hard Times*, these contrasting ideas serve as a kind of shorthand for the states of mind that enable certain kinds of action. Cold rationalism divorced from sentiment and feeling can lead to insensitivity about human suffering, and imagination can enhance one's sense of sympathy.

Gradgrind's philosophy of fact is intimately related to the Industrial Revolution, a cause of the mechanization of human nature. Dickens suggests that when humans are forced to perform the same monotonous tasks repeatedly, in a drab, incessantly

noisy, and smoky environment, they become like the machines with which they work—unfeeling and not enlivened by fancy.

The connection between Gradgrind’s philosophy of fact and the social effects of the Industrial Revolution is made explicit by two details in the first section of the novel. First, the narrator reports that when Gradgrind finds his children at the circus, “Tom gave himself up to be taken home like a machine.” By dulling Tom’s feelings and his sense of free will, his education has rendered his thoughts and actions mechanical. The second detail illustrating the connection between Gradgrind’s philosophy and the process of industrialization is the choice of names for Gradgrind’s two younger sons, Adam Smith and Malthus. These children play no role in the plot, but their names are relevant to the novel’s themes. Adam Smith (1723–1790) was a Scottish economist who produced the theory that the economy is controlled by an “invisible hand,” and that employers and workers do not control the fluctuations of supply and demand. Malthus (1766–1834) was an economist who argued that poverty is a result of overpopulation and that the poor must have smaller families in order to improve the general standard of living in society. Both of these writers addressed the poverty of mind and body that accompanies industrialization. Through these two names, Dickens suggests that the philosophy of fact to which Gradgrind subscribes and the deleterious social effects of the Industrial Revolution are inextricably related.

This first section serves mainly to introduce the contrast between fact and fancy and to establish the allegiances of the main characters. From the very first paragraph, Mr. Gradgrind is established as the leading disciple of fact, but he is also shown to be a loving, if deluded, father. The real villain of the novel is Mr. Bounderby, who seems to share Mr. Gradgrind’s love of fact but has no difficulty lying about himself, as later events show. Sissy is clearly on the side of feeling and fancy, as are all the circus performers. Louisa seems torn between the world of her upbringing and a deep inner desire to experience imagination and feeling—a desire that she lacks the vocabulary even to name. Her unhappy status, lost between the worlds of fact and fancy, combined with Bounderby’s obvious attraction toward her, serves as the catalyst for the principal conflict in the novel.

### **Summary — Chapter 5: The Key-note**

On their way to find Sissy’s father, Gradgrind and Bounderby walk through the dark, smoky streets of Coketown, passing a number of identically shaped buildings made from identical dirty red bricks. Soon they meet Sissy Jupe herself, who is

being chased by the bullying Bitzer. Sissy, a dutiful and loving daughter, has been out buying oils for her father's aches and pains. The two men follow her back to the dwelling place of the circus performers.

### **Summary — Chapter 6: Sleary's Horsemanship**

Sissy stops at an inn called the Pegasus Arms, where Bounderby and Gradgrind are introduced to the lispng circus master, Mr. Sleary. Sleary informs Gradgrind that, unbeknownst to Sissy, her father has lost his ability as a performer and has abandoned her in shame. Gradgrind decides to take Sissy into his home and raise her according to his philosophy of fact. Sissy agrees to the arrangement, principally because she believes her father will come back for her—an idea that Bounderby and Gradgrind find fanciful and ridiculous. A strange assortment of circus folk gathers to wish Sissy well in her new home. She is sorry to leave them, because these entertainers have been like a family to Sissy during her childhood.

### **Summary — Chapter 7: Mrs. Sparsit**

The next day, Bounderby discusses Louisa with his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit, who is connected to the prominent aristocratic Powler family. After falling on hard times, the aristocratic Mrs. Sparsit has accepted employment with Mr. Bounderby, but she constantly reminds him of her family connections. Bounderby worries that the fanciful Sissy will be a bad influence on Louisa, whom he already regards as his future wife. Gradgrind informs Sissy that she may continue to attend his school and that she will care for Mrs. Gradgrind in her free time.

### **Summary — Chapter 8: Never Wonder**

Later that same day, Louisa talks with her brother about her father's plan to apprentice Tom at Mr. Bounderby's bank. Both Louisa and Tom are depressed by the colorless monotony of life at Stone Lodge, but Louisa, attempting to cheer up Tom, reminds him of her affection for him. She seems to feel that something is missing from her life, but when she wonders what it might be, Mrs. Gradgrind warns Louisa never to wonder—wondering contradicts the philosophy of fact, and it also makes Mrs. Gradgrind wish she had never been cursed with a family.

## **Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 5–8**

In Dickens's novels, characters' names often reveal details about their personalities. For instance, Mr. Gradgrind's name evokes the monotonous grind of his children's lives, as well as the grinding of the factory machines. Similarly, the title of each chapter in *Hard Times* can be helpful in interpreting the movement of the plot. For example, the first chapter is titled "The One Thing Necessary," and in this chapter we learn that Mr. Gradgrind believes the one thing necessary for a fulfilling existence is fact. The meaning of the title of Chapter 5, "The Key-note," is not so immediately obvious. However, its meaning is clarified at the beginning of Chapter 8, when the narrator declares, "Let us strike the key-note again before pursuing the tune." He then describes how, as a child, Louisa was inclined to wonder about the world around her, to ask questions, and to imagine. Not surprisingly, her father quickly suppressed this inclination, telling Louisa that she must "never wonder." In Chapter 5, the narrator also draws our attention to the need for wonder and imagination when he compares the Gradgrind children to factory workers. He explains that both the children and the workers "have Fancy in them demanding to be brought into healthy existence." From these passages, we can conclude that the conflict between fact and fancy is the "key-note," or the key theme, that the narrator will continue to bring up throughout the novel. Fancy, the narrator implies, is at least as important as fact in a balanced, fulfilling existence.

Chapters 5 through 8 thus serve to reinforce the relationship between fact and fancy. In this section, the circus entertainers are the most obvious representatives of fancy, and Gradgrind accordingly finds them rather distasteful. The entertainers possess the ability to transform the colorless, humdrum world into a place of magic and excitement simply by using their imaginations. This transformation is illustrated by Kidderminster, a gruff young boy who plays the role of Cupid in the circus. In real life, Kidderminster is cheeky, loud, and temperamental, but in the circus ring he is adorably sweet and wins the spectators' hearts. Through fancy, the circus entertainers not only find happiness themselves, but also bring pleasure to others.

In Chapter 8, Dickens draws attention to another mode of fancy that brings pleasure to others: fiction, and in particular, novels. The narrator relates that, much to Mr. Gradgrind's dismay, factory workers flock to the Coketown library "to read mere fables about men and women, more or less like themselves, and about children, more or less like their own."

The workers are drawn to these stories because they stimulate their imaginations, causing them to wonder about “human nature, human passions, human hopes and fears, the struggles, the triumphs and defeats of common men and women.” Novels provide a much-needed escape from the drab, mechanical factories in which these workers spend most of their days. In describing the workers’ reading habits, Dickens draws attention to the fact that his own readers are in fact reading a novel about, more or less, ordinary men and women. Thus, he presents his novels as a way to counteract the dehumanizing effects of the Industrial Revolution. Significantly, the Coketown workers read what is known as realism, or fiction that attempts to represent real life accurately, and which often describes the lives of common people rather than those of kings, queens, and other aristocrats. In his focus on the common man and the social conditions of Victorian England, Dickens himself is a realist writer. In this passage, he reminds us that even realism is a form of fancy and that even realist novels can both teach us about real life and awaken our imaginations. The realist novel, he suggests, combines fact and fancy. In Victorian England, the novel was often considered a dangerous genre precisely because it was accessible to the working and middle classes. Many people feared that novels would corrupt the minds of these readers by making them too fanciful and even by giving them immoral ideas. By suggesting that realist novels can both teach and entertain, Dickens defends his novel against these charges

### **Summary — Chapter 9: Sissy’s Progress**

Sissy Jupe does very poorly at the school because she is simply unable to adopt the cold, hard devotion to fact that is demanded of her. Instead, she continues to cling to what Mr. Gradgrind thinks of as ridiculous, fanciful notions, such as the idea that her father will come back for her. One day, Louisa convinces Sissy secretly to talk about life with her father. Louisa, raised to never feel strong emotion, finds herself very moved by Sissy’s deep feelings. During the conversation with Sissy, Tom frequently reminds Louisa to watch out for Bounderby, in case he should catch her “wondering” about Sissy’s past.

### **Summary — Chapter 10: Stephen Blackpool**

One night, in the most hardworking, grimy district of Coketown, a simple and brutally poor man named Stephen Blackpool goes home from his job as a power loom operator in Mr. Bounderby’s factory. Stephen is a Hand, one of the lowest menial laborers in Coketown.

He talks briefly in the street to Rachael, the pure, honest woman he loves, then goes home, where he is stunned to find his wayward, immoral, and generally absent wife lying in his bed. In order to soothe the misery of poverty, his wife has become an alcoholic, and although Stephen wishes to divorce her, he nevertheless pities her.

### **Summary — Chapter 11: No Way Out**

Disturbed by his wife's sudden reappearance, Stephen visits Mr. Bounderby the next day to ask humbly if he has any legal recourse and any possibility of obtaining a divorce. Arrogantly, and with many references to his own impoverished childhood, Bounderby explains that only the wealthy can obtain divorces and that Stephen would be better off accepting his miserable situation.

### **Summary — Chapter 12: The Old Woman**

Outside Bounderby's house, Stephen meets a strange old woman who has traveled into the city from the country. She tells Stephen that every year she saves enough money to make the long journey into Coketown for a single day, just long enough to catch a glimpse of Mr. Bounderby. She fears that Bounderby will not come out of his house that day and says that seeing Stephen just after he saw Bounderby must satisfy her for this year. The old woman follows him to Bounderby's grim factory and inexplicably praises its beauty. After work is over for the day, Stephen wanders the streets, trying to avoid going home to his drunken wife. As he wanders, Stephen imagines the pleasant, happy home he could share with Rachael if only he were free to remarry.

### **Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 9–12**

With the introduction of Stephen Blackpool, the novel delves into the world of the Hands, the working-class, horribly impoverished denizens of Coketown whom Dickens uses to represent the plight of the poor. Stephen, with his simple honesty and love for the angelic Rachael, is shown to be a good character despite his horrible marriage. He immediately contrasts with the blustery, self-obsessed Bounderby, a difference hammered home when Stephen visits his employer to ask about the possibility of divorcing his wife. Having heard that there is a law permitting divorce under certain circumstances, Stephen inquires into the details of this law. However, Bounderby makes it clear that there are no laws to help Stephen—all laws are made by the rich, for the rich.

Bounderby callously tells Stephen that, as a poor man, he has no recourse but to accept his lot. Furthermore, Bounderby reminds Stephen that “[t]here’s a sanctity in the relation” of marriage that “must be kept up.” Although he shows no pity for Stephen’s misery, these words later come back to haunt Bounderby when his own marriage becomes troubled.

On top of his utter lack of pity, Bounderby then accuses Stephen of wanting to eat turtle soup with a gold spoon. This accusation results from Bounderby’s belief that all Hands are improvident, -dishonest cretins who simply want to get ahead, when in reality Bounderby, who very well could eat turtle soup with a gold spoon, is the only character guilty of fitting that description. His belief that Hands are lazy good-for-nothings is part of his rhetoric of the self-made man. As he constantly reminds us, he managed to rise from his humble beginnings to become the wealthy owner of factories and a bank. If the Hands were not so lazy, he implies, surely, they could do the same.

While Stephen and Rachael are the only Hands who become fully developed characters in the course of the novel, Dickens provides many generalized views of the Hands and their working conditions. Like the novel itself, these impressions are structured through the contrast between fact and fancy. For instance, at the beginning of Chapter 11, the narrator describes the awakening of the Coketown factories: “The Fairy palaces burst into illumination before pale morning showed the monstrous serpents of smoke trailing themselves over Coketown.” The fairy palaces are, in fact, simply the factories bursting with light as the fires are lit inside them. While Dickens suggests that fancy can make even Coketown beautiful and magical, the image is ironic because these palaces house the poorest segment of society and are filled with noise, grime, and smoke. While the description of Coketown does not specify the horrors of the Hands’ working conditions, it does create a general impression of filth and noise.

Dickens has been criticized for not developing his working-class characters fully, or not depicting them in as much detail as his -middle-class characters. For instance, when the narrator describes the Hands at work, he merely states: “So many hundred Hands in the Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power.” The term “Hands” itself depersonalizes the workers by referring to them by the part of their body that performs their tasks in the factories. Much of *Hard Times* is devoted to pointing out how the middle classes ignore the poor.

Perhaps, then, Dickens is calling for a more sympathetic and insightful examination of the working and living conditions of poor people in Victorian England. The narrator implies as much when he declares that “not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil . . . in one of these its quiet servants.” The narrator thus points out how little is known about the poor and how little interest society shows in their thoughts, feelings, and problems. *Hard Times* does not fully answer the question of how the poor live, but instead tries to impel us to start asking this question for ourselves.

### **Summary — Chapter 13: Rachael**

When Stephen finally returns to his room, he is shocked to find Rachael sitting next to his bedridden wife, tending to what appears to be a serious illness. Rachael tells Stephen to go to sleep in the chair. Stephen falls asleep, but wakes up just in time to see his wife about to swallow a lethal amount of one of her medicines. Stephen is unable to act, but Rachael awakens suddenly and seizes the bottle from the sick woman, thereby preventing her death. Ashamed of his inability to bring himself to stop his wife’s attempted suicide, Stephen looks upon Rachael as an angel.

### **Summary — Chapter 14: The Great Manufacturer**

Time passes, moving relentlessly like the machinery of a factory. Mr. Gradgrind tells Sissy that she is hopeless at the school but that she may continue to live at Stone Lodge and care for Mrs. Gradgrind. Gradgrind has become a Member of Parliament, and he spends much of his time in London. Tom, now a dissipated, hedonistic young man, tells Louisa that her father intends to arrange a marriage between her and Mr. Bounderby, with whom Tom, as an apprentice in the bank, now lives. He encourages Louisa to accept, so that they might live together again, and tells her that she is his best defense against Mr. Bounderby’s authority.

### **Summary — Chapter 15: Father and Daughter**

When her father raises the prospect of marriage, Louisa seems puzzled—she does not understand why she is being asked to love the fifty-year-old Bounderby. Although she is sure that she does not love him, she agrees to marry him, asking, “What does it matter?” Louisa realizes that she does not, in fact, know how to love, but she is anxious to please her father by marrying his friend.

## Summary — Chapter 16: Husband and Wife

Bounderby tentatively mentions his marriage to Mrs. Sparsit, suggesting that she should take a position keeping the apartments at Bounderby's bank after he and Louisa get married. Mrs. Sparsit evidently disapproves of the marriage, stating ambiguously that she hopes Bounderby is as happy as he deserves to be. Bounderby attempts to show his affection for his bride-to-be by showering her with jewels and fine clothes, but she remains impassive. At the last moment, however, Louisa clings to Tom in fear, feeling that she is taking a drastic and perhaps irrevocable step. Nevertheless, Bounderby and Louisa are united in matrimony, and they set out on a honeymoon trip to Lyons, as Bounderby wants to observe the operations of some factories there.

## Analysis — Book the First: Sowing: Chapters 13–16

The question of how women, marriage, and the home fit into an industrialized, mechanized society now comes to the forefront. During the Victorian Era, the home was widely regarded as a place of relaxation and pleasure and as an escape from the moral corruption of the business world and from the grinding monotony of factory life—in short, as a refuge from the working world. In *Hard Times*, however, the distinction between home and workplace begins to dissolve.

For instance, the Gradgrind household is almost as mechanized as a factory. Similarly, when Stephen's drunken wife suddenly returns, his home no longer provides a refuge from the misery of his factory work, so he resorts to wandering the streets rather than returning home after work.

In both of these instances, the home fails to serve as a refuge from the working world. The homes presented in *Hard Times* derive their tone from whatever female inhabits them. For instance, Gradgrind's wife, who is too complacent to argue with her husband over his mechanistic ways, allows him to determine the fact-heavy tone of the home. Stephen's wife, the lascivious drunk, makes their home a wanton den to which Stephen is reluctant to return. In contrast to Stephen's wife, Rachael embodies the qualities that make home a happy place—she is compassionate, honest, sensitive, morally pure, and generous. She represents the Victorian ideal of femininity. Because of these qualities, Stephen frequently refers to her as his angel. Through her own virtues, Rachael inspires him to maintain his personal integrity, and when she cares for his ailing wife, Rachael lightens the tone of the previously dismal residence.

The other women in the novel also play an important role in the quality of the home. Mrs. Sparsit, in contrast to Rachael, is proud and manipulative—because she is motivated solely by self-interest, she has no desire to waste her time bringing happiness to others. Although Louisa loves her brother Tom, her education prevents her from developing the qualities that Rachael embodies. Only Sissy shares Rachael’s compassionate, loving nature. For most of the nineteenth century, a woman’s job was to care for the home and children, and to make home a happy, relaxing place. By depicting women who not only deviate from the Victorian ideal of femininity, but also fail in their jobs as homemakers, Dickens suggests that industrialization threatens to dissolve the boundaries between workplace and home, without the stabilizing force of femininity.

This section of *Hard Times* depicts two marriages that are unhappy because the couples are badly matched. Stephen’s hardworking integrity contrasts sharply with his wife’s dissolute drunkenness, but despite realizing that his marriage was a mistake, Stephen has no alternative but to put up with his wife. Louisa and Bounderby’s marriage threatens to be unhappy because they are separated not only by an age difference of about thirty years, but by their inability to communicate with each other. While Louisa does not know how to recognize and express her feelings, Bounderby is only interested in his own feelings and does not really care about hers. Through these mismatched couples, Dickens suggests that a happy marriage must be founded upon mutual love and respect. Mr. Gradgrind, however, tries to reduce marriage, and indeed love itself, to a question of logic. When Louisa asks his advice about whether she should marry Bounderby, her father tells her “To consider this question as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of Fact.” Gradgrind believes that the question of whether marrying Bounderby would be the best course of action for Louisa can be decided by looking at empirical evidence.

Thus, he cites some statistics about the relative ages of husbands and wives to show that a young wife and an older husband can have a happy marriage. Based on these statistics, and on the fact that she has received no other proposals of marriage, Gradgrind calculates that it would be in Louisa’s best interest to marry Bounderby. The fact that Bounderby takes Louisa to observe the factories in Lyon for their honeymoon further emphasizes the lack of romance in their relationship, which is purely a marriage of convenience and practicality. Through Louisa’s marriage, Dickens again depicts the mechanization of family life.

By negating the importance of love, Gradgrind's philosophy of fact turns humans into machines and the home into a veritable factory.

## **BOOK TWO:**

### **Summary — Chapter 1: Effects in the Bank**

On one of Coketown's rare sunny days, Mrs. Sparsit sits in her apartment in the bank and talks to Bitzer, a former pupil at Gradgrind's school, and now a porter at the bank. The two are discussing the young Tom Gradgrind, who, although he still works at the bank, has become a "dissipated, extravagant idler." A very well-dressed young gentleman interrupts their conversation by knocking at the door. The stranger explains that he has come to Coketown to enter politics as a disciple of Gradgrind. His suave manner and genteel appearance please Mrs. Sparsit, and she attempts to flatter him. The young man inquires about Louisa Bounderby, of whom he has heard intimidating reports: he imagines that she must be middle-aged, quickwitted, and formidable. When Mrs. Sparsit assures him, that Mrs. Bounderby is simply a lovely young woman, he seems very relieved and interested.

### **Summary — Chapter 2: Mr. James Harthouse**

We learn that the strange visitor's name is James Harthouse and that he is a disingenuous, wealthy young man who is only interested in Gradgrind's politics because he hopes they will alleviate his pervasive boredom. He does not really share Gradgrind's philosophy of fact, but he is prepared to pretend that he does in order to pass the time. Harthouse goes to dinner at Bounderby's, where he is very intrigued by Louisa.

### **Summary — Chapter 3: The Whelp**

After dinner, Harthouse takes the caddish young Tom—who is highly impressed with his new acquaintance's amoral worldliness—back to his apartment. Harthouse plies Tom with wine and tobacco and then coaxes the story of Louisa's marriage out of him. The drunken Tom claims that Louisa only married Bounderby for Tom's sake, so that she could use Bounderby's money to help her brother with his own financial difficulties. Once Harthouse learns that Louisa does not love her husband, he privately resolves to seduce her.

## **Summary — Chapter 4: Men and Brothers**

Elsewhere in Coketown, the factory Hands, who have decided to unionize in an attempt to improve their wretched conditions, hold a meeting. An inflammatory orator named Slackbridge gives an impassioned speech about the necessity of unionizing and of showing their sense of fellowship. The only Hand who remains unconvinced is Stephen Blackpool. Stephen says he does not believe that the union will do any good because it will only aggravate the already tense relationship between employers and workers. After he voices this opinion, he is cast out of the meeting. The other Hands—his longtime friends and companions—agree to shun him as a sign of their solidarity. Stephen asks them only to allow him to continue working. He endures four days of ostracism before Bitzer summons him to Bounderby's house.

## **Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 1–4**

At the beginning of Book the Second, Dickens displays his knack for using characterization to articulate his moral themes with the character of Mrs. Sparsit. If Stephen represents the poor and Bounderby and Gradgrind represent the wealthy middle class, Mrs. Sparsit and Harthouse are satires of the aristocracy. Dependent on Bounderby for her well-being, Mrs. Sparsit is adept at manipulating her circumstances around her belief that she is a great lady wronged by others. Much as Bounderby takes pride in his humble origins, Mrs. Sparsit frequently brings up the fact that she descends from one of the best families in the kingdom. Dickens often satirizes her by describing her control over her features, claiming that she makes her aristocratic Roman nose “more Roman” in a moment of outrage. In this section, she uses Bitzer to gain useful information about the other bank employees. She is clearly spying, but pretends to be too ladylike to want to hear their names. Nevertheless, she manages to ascertain that Bitzer believes young Tom to be a horrible employee.

The two main events in this section are the arrival of James Harthouse, with his menacing amorality and his desire to seduce Louisa, and the union meeting, with Stephen's expulsion from the company of his fellow Hands. Harthouse, with his worldly cynicism and sophisticated boredom, is immediately presented as a foil to the more provincial characters in Coketown. He is neither committed to the philosophy of fact nor capable of any fancy; rather, he is simply looking out of his aristocratic haze for something to pass the time.

He is perfectly equipped to capitalize on Louisa's inner confusion and capable of awakening her feelings without caring about the result. Harthouse is a stereotypical aristocratic dandy—he is not motivated by the desire for wealth or power, but rather by boredom and the desire for some new form of entertainment. Louisa presents a special source of interest because he has never met anyone like her before and cannot fully understand her.

The union meeting takes us deeper into the world of the Hands and allows Dickens to satirize the everyday, agitating spokesman with the harshly drawn caricature of Slackbridge. The narrator informs us that Slackbridge differs from the other Hands in that he is “not so honest, he [is] not so manly, he [is] not so good-humored.” His primary intention is apparently to stir up the workers' feelings until they are in an impassioned frenzy against their employers. Dickens's own feelings about labor unions, and about any attempt to right wrongs through hostility and conflict, are expressed through Stephen's views. Stephen immediately recognizes that Slackbridge does not care so much about creating unity among workers as he does about creating tension between employers and employees. This tension, Stephen believes, will do nothing to aid the workers in their desire for better working conditions and pay. Thus, Stephen asks only to be allowed to make his living in peace: “I mak' no complaints . . . o' being outcasten and overlooken, fro this time forrard, but I hope I shall be let to work.” Stephen is unwilling to sacrifice his belief in what is right, even if he will be made a pariah. With his hardworking integrity, Stephen represents a very sentimental and idealized portrait of a poor worker, which Dickens wields to arouse our sympathy. Through the contrast between Slackbridge and Stephen, however, Dickens suggests that the working class contains both good and bad individuals, just like the rest of society.

### **Summary — Chapter 5: Men and Masters**

Bounderby attempts to cajole Stephen into telling him what went on at the union meeting, but Stephen refuses to be used as a spy. He says that Slackbridge is no more to blame for the desire of the workers to unionize than a clock is to blame for the passing of time, but he repeats his belief that the union will do no good. When he refuses to spy on the other Hands, Bounderby angrily dismisses him from the factory. Because his fellow Hands have ostracized him, Stephen will have to leave Coketown in search of work.

### **Summary — Chapter 6: Fading Away**

Outside Bounderby's, Stephen encounters Rachael with the old woman he met once before, who introduces herself as Mrs. Pegler. Stephen takes the pair back to his room for tea, telling Rachael the news of his dismissal. In spite of Stephen's misfortune, they pass an enjoyable evening and are surprised by the appearance of Louisa and Tom at Stephen's door. Louisa was impressed with Stephen's refusal to help her husband break up the union, and she offers him money to help him on his way. Deeply touched, Stephen agrees to accept only two pounds, which he promises to pay back. Tom summons Stephen outside and makes him another offer of help. Tom tells Stephen to wait outside the bank late at night for the next few nights, and if all goes well, someone will appear with assistance. Stephen spends the next few days preparing to leave Coketown, and he waits outside the bank each evening, following Tom's instructions. He notices several people observing his loitering, including Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer, but no one comes to offer him help. Finally, one morning, Stephen walks by Rachael's house one last time, then sets out down the road out of Coketown, the trees arching over him, his own heart aching for the loving heart of Rachael that he is leaving behind.

### **Summary — Chapter 7: Gunpowder**

As James Harthouse begins to enjoy some political success, he also begins to plan his seduction of Louisa. He and Louisa spend a lot of time together at Bounderby's country estate near Coketown, and through their private conversations he learns how to manipulate the emotions that Louisa herself does not know she has. Realizing that her brother is the only person for whom she truly cares, Harthouse uses his influence over Tom to make him act more kindly to Louisa—and he makes sure she knows who is responsible.

### **Summary — Chapter 8: Explosion**

One morning, Bounderby charges in upon Harthouse and Louisa, announcing that the bank has been robbed of roughly 150 pounds. The only suspect is Stephen Blackpool, who was seen loitering outside the bank late at night, shortly before fleeing from Coketown. Mrs. Sparsit, whose nerves have been shocked by the event, temporarily moves in with the Bounderby's, where she begins to spend more and more time with Mr. Bounderby, and insists upon referring to Louisa as "Miss Gradgrind." Knowing that her brother is deeply in debt, Louisa suspects Tom of stealing the money.

She confronts him about it one night, and he protests his innocence. However, as soon as she leaves his room, he buries his face in his pillow and begins to sob guiltily.

### **Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 5–8**

Thus far, *Hard Times* has consisted of two seemingly separate plot strands—the first involving Louisa and Bounderby’s loveless marriage, and the second describing Stephen’s ostracism from his fellow workers. In this section, however, these plots begin to converge. This interweaving of the previously separate plot strands is illustrated by Stephen and Louisa’s meeting in Chapter 6, a meeting that brings Louisa into contact with a person of the working class for the first time in her life. This meeting illustrates that Louisa is not entirely without compassion or feeling, and it serves to further awaken her latent emotions. Previously, Louisa had known the Hands only as “something to be worked so much and paid so much,” but in going to Stephen’s room, she sees for the first time the suffering that these individuals experience.

The meeting at Stephen’s room is also important because it sets the stage for the bank robbery. While Louisa shows her ability to feel compassion, Tom reveals his self-interested, manipulative side when he tells Stephen that help may come to him if he waits outside the bank for several consecutive nights, since Tom is the person who robs Bounderby and frames Stephen. The weaving together of the two plots signifies that the narrative is approaching its climax, the moment when the conflict erupts.

This section of the novel also reveals changes in Tom and Louisa’s relationship. Ever since Tom asked Louisa to marry Bounderby for his sake, he has been growing increasingly distant from his sister. While he formerly confided in her and treated her affectionately, Tom now becomes sulky, refusing to answer her questions regarding his knowledge of the bank robbery. Indeed, Louisa is beset by problems on all sides. Not only must she contend with Tom’s sulky silence and his requests for money, but she is also prey to Mr. Harthouse’s advances. Meanwhile, Bounderby remains oblivious to her precarious situation, as he is concerned only with the bank robbery. Again, Louisa’s problems point toward the approaching climax of the novel. The reappearance of the mysterious Mrs. Pegler in Chapter 6 illustrates the important role that seemingly minor characters play in Dickens’s novels.

Characters such as Bitzer, Mr. Sleary, and Mrs. Pegler serve to draw together the many divergent plot strands, thereby moving the narrative forward. With Mrs. Pegler's second appearance, we begin to realize that she must be somehow important to the plot. While Dickens keeps us in suspense about who she is and why she is important, he does provide some significant clues. For instance, when Stephen asks her if she has any children, Mrs. Pegler does not say that her son is dead, but instead replies, "I have lost him." Furthermore, when Mrs. Pegler believes that Bounderby is about to enter Stephen's room, she becomes extremely agitated and looks for a means to escape. From these details, and from the fact that she journeys to Coketown each year simply to catch a glimpse of him, we can infer that Mrs. Pegler is in some way connected to Bounderby.

### **Summary — Chapter 9: Hearing the Last of It**

Mrs. Sparsit continues to lurk around the Bounderby estate, flattering Bounderby's pride and worming her way into his good graces. She also observes shrewdly that Louisa spends a great deal of time with James Harthouse. It is not long, however, before this new pattern is interrupted: Louisa receives a letter from Stone Lodge, telling her that her mother is dying. Louisa rushes to her mother's side and sees that her younger sister, Jane, who is being raised primarily by Sissy, seems happier and more fulfilled than Louisa felt as a child. Before her death, Mrs. Gradgrind calls Louisa to her, explaining that she feels like she has missed or forgotten something and that she wants to write a letter to Mr. Gradgrind asking him to find out what it is. After a whining farewell, Mrs. Gradgrind dies.

### **Summary — Chapter 10: Mrs. Sparsit's Staircase**

Even after Mrs. Sparsit leaves the Bounderbys, she continues to visit very frequently. Thinking about Louisa's burgeoning relationship with Mr. Harthouse, Mrs. Sparsit begins to imagine that Louisa is on a giant staircase leading into a black abyss. She pictures Louisa running downward and downward, and she takes great pleasure in imagining what will happen when she reaches the bottom and falls into this abyss.

### **Summary — Chapter 11: Lower and Lower**

One day, Mrs. Sparsit discovers that Tom has been sent to the train station in Coketown to wait for Harthouse and that Louisa is at the country estate, all alone. Suspecting a ruse and ignoring a driving rain, Mrs. Sparsit hurries to the country, where she heads into the forest and discovers Louisa and Harthouse in an intimate

conversation. Harthouse professes his love for Louisa and states his desire to become her lover. Louisa agrees to meet him in town later that night but urges him to leave immediately. He does so, and Louisa at once sets out for Coketown. Scrambling to follow her, Mrs. Sparsit gleefully imagines Louisa tumbling off the precipice at the bottom of her imaginary staircase. However, she loses track of Louisa before Louisa reaches her ultimate destination.

### **Summary — Chapter 12: Down**

Contrary to Mrs. Sparsit's expectations, Louisa does not go to meet James Harthouse but instead goes to Stone Lodge, where she rushes into her father's study, drenched to the bone and extremely upset. She confesses to her father that she bitterly regrets her childhood and says that the way he brought her up exclusively on facts, without ever letting her feel or imagine anything, has ruined her. She claims that she is married to a man she despises and that she may be in love with Harthouse. Consequently, she is thoroughly miserable and does not know how to rectify the situation. Gradgrind is shocked and consumed with sudden self-reproach. Sobbing, Louisa collapses to the floor.

### **Analysis — Book the Second: Reaping: Chapters 9–12**

After a great deal of buildup, this section constitutes the climax of the story, in which the primary conflicts erupt into the open. Louisa's collapse gives Dickens a chance to show the damaging consequences of Gradgrind's method of raising his children. Deprived of any connection with her own feelings, Louisa is empty and baffled. When she suddenly discovers her own emotions, the pain of the discovery overwhelms her. Gradgrind, formerly the most potent believer in the philosophy of fact, also sees how his philosophy has warped his daughter, and he begins to reform.

Significantly, Mrs. Gradgrind also realizes before her death that something, although she does not know what, has been missing from her family's life, something that she can recognize in Sissy Jupe. Even though Mrs. Gradgrind is unable to communicate this revelation to her husband, he learns through Louisa's collapse that his philosophy has deprived his family of the happiness that only imagination and love can create. Mrs. Sparsit's imaginary staircase symbolizes the standards of social conduct during the Victorian era. If a woman spent time alone with a man who was not her relative, her behavior was considered morally suspect, or a sign of her possible mental, if not physical, unchasteness.

If Louisa had indeed eloped with Harthouse, her reputation would have been ruined irreparably—as it is, her character has merely fallen under Mrs. Sparsit’s suspicion. Mrs. Sparsit’s mental staircase also emphasizes the manipulative and even vicious side of her own personality. While pretending to be a model of virtue, Mrs. Sparsit secretly takes pleasure in the idea of Louisa’s fall. Structurally, this section marks the moment in the novel in which the villains stand most triumphantly over the good characters: Harthouse and Mrs. Sparsit have destroyed Louisa emotionally; Bounderby and Tom, who is, of course, the real bank robber, have ruined Stephen’s good name; and Gradgrind is devastated by Louisa’s collapse.

The third section of the novel affords the good characters an opportunity to improve these miserable conditions, largely with the aid of the purest, most innocent, and most fanciful character of them all: the once-maligned Sissy Jupe. In general, the structure of *Hard Times* is extremely simple, but it is also important to the development of the action. The novel is divided into three sections, “Sowing,” “Reaping,” and “Garnering”—agricultural titles that are ironic alongside the industrial focus of the novel. In the first section, the seeds are planted for the rest of the novel—Sissy comes to live with the Gradgrinds, Louisa is married to Bounderby, and Tom is apprenticed at the bank. In the second section, the characters reap the results of those seeds—Louisa’s collapse, Tom’s robbery, and Stephen’s exile. In the third section, whose title, “Garnering,” literally means picking up the pieces of the harvest that were missed, the characters attempt to restore equilibrium to their lives, and they face their futures with new emotional resources at their disposal.

The titles of the sections, however, refer not only to the harvesting of events, but also to the harvesting of ideas. In the first chapter of *Hard Times*, Gradgrind declares his intention to “plant” only facts in his children’s minds, and to “root out everything else,” such as feelings and fancies. This metaphor returns to haunt him when, just before her collapse, Louisa points to the place where her heart should be and asks her father, “[W]hat have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?” Louisa implies that by concentrating all his efforts on planting facts in his children’s minds, Gradgrind has neglected to plant any sentiments in their hearts, leaving her emotionally barren.

## **BOOK THREE:**

### **Summary — Chapter 1: Another Thing Needful**

In her bed at Stone Lodge, Louisa recuperates from her trauma. Her father remorsefully pledges his support but acknowledges that he does not really know how to help her because he himself has never learned “the wisdom of the Heart.” Sissy lovingly vows to help Louisa learn how to feel and how to find happiness.

### **Summary — Chapter 2: Very Ridiculous**

The day after Louisa’s arrival, Sissy takes it upon herself to visit James Harthouse, who has been in a nervous state since Louisa’s failure to appear at their tryst in Coketown. Sissy tells Harthouse that he will never see Louisa again and that he must leave Coketown and swear never to return. Baffled and feeling very ridiculous, Harthouse is able to resist neither Sissy’s simple, persuasive honesty nor her beauty; he grudgingly agrees to leave Coketown forever.

### **Summary — Chapter 3: Very Decided**

At the same time, Mrs. Sparsit, now stricken with a bad cold caught from her drenching in the rain, tells Bounderby what she witnessed between Louisa and Harthouse. Bounderby furiously drags Mrs. Sparsit to Stone Lodge, where he confronts Gradgrind about Louisa’s perceived infidelity. Gradgrind tells Bounderby that he fears he has made a mistake in Louisa’s upbringing, and he asks Bounderby to allow Louisa to remain at Stone Lodge on an extended visit while she tries to recover. He reminds Bounderby that as Louisa’s husband, he should try to do what is best for her. Bounderby, enraged, threatens to send back all of Louisa’s property, effectively abandoning her and placing her back in her father’s hands if she is not home by noon the next day. Gradgrind does not budge, and Louisa remains at Stone Lodge. Bounderby makes good on his threat and resumes his life as a bachelor.

### **Summary — Chapter 4: Lost**

Bounderby diverts his rage into the continuing efforts to find Stephen Blackpool. Slackbridge gives a speech blaming Stephen for the robbery, and the Hands are roused to track him down. One day, Louisa is paid a visit by Bounderby, her brother, and a sobbing Rachael, who protests that Stephen will return to clear his good name.

Although she is loath to suspect Louisa of deceit, Rachael fears that Louisa's previous offer of money was merely a cover for her plan to frame Stephen for the robbery. Rachael has sent Stephen two letters explaining the charges against him, and she claims that he will return to Coketown in one or two days. But a week passes, and still, he does not return. His continued absence only increases suspicion against him.

### **Analysis — Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 1–4**

At the beginning of Book the Third, Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind begin a process of emotional healing and discovery. The title of Chapter 1, "Another Thing Needful," echoes the title of the first chapter of Book the First, "The One Thing Needful," revealing that Gradgrind has realized that fact alone cannot sustain a happy and fulfilling existence. However, the healing process is very slow. Because Louisa and her father are so accustomed to living their lives according to the philosophy of fact, learning how to change their mode of thinking is difficult at this point. Thus, Mr. Gradgrind declares to Louisa: "The ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet." Although he no longer believes that fact alone is necessary, he does not know exactly what else is needed to make Louisa happy. Recognizing that he is not a fit teacher for his daughter, Gradgrind hopes that Sissy will be able to help her. While Louisa fears that Sissy must hate her for her former coldness, Sissy is understanding and forgiving, as usual. Together with Louisa's loving younger sister Jane, Sissy undertakes to restore happiness to Louisa's life.

The meeting between Harthouse and Sissy indicates the importance of a character who has remained in the background for much of the novel. Through this meeting we are reminded of the values that Sissy represents—compassion, forgiveness, and joy. The narrator establishes a contrast between these values and the sophisticated Harthouse's self-centered manipulation of other people. Indeed, the narrator relates that Sissy's good-natured reproach touches Harthouse "in the cavity where his heart should have been." In suggesting that Harthouse has no heart, the narrator suggests that he has not been motivated by evil intentions but rather by a lack of good intentions—HARTHOUSE is amoral rather than immoral. Harthouse himself acknowledges that he had "no evil intentions" toward Louisa but merely "glided from one step to another" without realizing the emotional havoc that his seduction might cause.

Like Bounderby, Tom, and Mrs. Sparsit, Harthouse is motivated only by his own interest and does not consider how his actions might impact other people. Through these characters, Dickens again illustrates the moral dangers of a society that values fact more than feeling. Ultimately, Harthouse, the worldly cynic, is completely overpowered by Sissy Jupe, the loving innocent; he is easily sent away from Coketown, never to threaten Louisa again.

In this section of the novel, Dickens returns to the issue of the Hands' unionization, again suggesting that unionization does not in fact unite individuals, but divides them, turning one person against another. While Slack bridge repeatedly addresses the other Hands as "fellow countrymen," "fellow-brothers," "fellow-workmen," and "fellow-citizens," he ironically encourages them to exclude Stephen from their fellowship. Rather than supporting their fellow worker in his time of need, they disown him. Rachael sums up Stephen's predicament when she declares despairingly: "The masters against him on one hand, the men against him on the other, he only wanting' to work hard in peace, and do what he felt right. Can a man have no soul of his own, no mind of his own?" In his unfailing integrity and his desire for peace and harmony, Stephen becomes a martyr. He suffers not only for what he believes in but also for another person's crime.

### **Summary — Chapter 5: Found**

Sissy visits Rachael every night as they wait for news of Stephen. One night, as they are walking past Bounderby's house, they see Mrs. Sparsit dragging Mrs. Pegler into the house. Mrs. Sparsit tells Bounderby she has found the old woman, who was seen in Blackpool's apartment before the robbery, and has brought him the possible accessory to the crime for questioning. But far from being pleased, Bounderby is furious: Mrs. Pegler is his mother, and as their encounter falls out, it becomes clear to the assembled company that she did not abandon him in the gutter, as he had claimed. Rather, she raised, educated, and loved him. He abandoned her, refusing to allow her to visit him now that he has become wealthy and successful. The myth of Bounderby, the self-made man, is exploded, and he refuses to offer an explanation for his former lies about his past.

### **Summary — Chapter 6: The Starlight**

Stephen still fails to appear. One morning, Sissy takes Rachael for a walk in the country to restore her strength, and they discover Stephen's hat. Rachael instantly fears that he has been murdered, but, after walking on a little farther, they discover that he has fallen down an old mining pit called Old Hell Shaft and is still clinging

to life. The women seek help, and a large crowd assembles around the pit. A rescue team manages to lift Stephen out, and a doctor attends to his injuries. Nonetheless, after bidding a loving farewell to Rachael and telling Louisa to have Gradgrind ask Tom for the information that will clear his name, Stephen dies.

### **Summary — Chapter 7: Whelp-hunting**

When the crowd disperses, Tom is missing. Back at Stone Lodge, Gradgrind and Louisa feel that their fears are confirmed: Tom robbed the bank. Louisa reveals that Sissy encouraged Tom to seek refuge with Mr. Sleary's circus, currently camped near Liverpool. From there, Tom might leave England on one of the many boats sailing for South America or the Indies. Relieved that Tom might escape prison, Sissy, Louisa, and Gradgrind set out in two separate coaches for Mr. Sleary's circus, hoping to send Tom safely out of the country. Louisa and Sissy travel all night and reunite with Sleary, who tells Sissy that Tom is safe. Gradgrind arrives not long after. They are joined by the sullen Tom, who has been participating in the circus performance dressed up in blackface. They agree to send him up the coast to Liverpool, where he can book passage out of the country. Tom is rude to Louisa, blaming her for his predicament because she refused to finance his gambling habit, but she cries out that she forgives him and that she loves him still. Suddenly, the pale-faced Bitzer appears and says that Tom cannot leave, for he intends to take him back to Coketown and hand him over to the police.

### **Summary — Chapter 8: Philosophical**

With the assistance of some of Sleary's circus people, Bitzer takes Tom to arrange rail passage back to Coketown. However, Sleary double-crosses Bitzer with a trick involving madly barking dogs and dancing horses, which enables Tom to escape aboard ship after all. The next morning, Tom's family learns that he is safely away from England. Sleary has one more surprise in store: he confides to Gradgrind that Merrylegs, Sissy's father's dog, has unexpectedly returned alone to the circus, a sure sign that her father is dead.

### **Summary — Chapter 9: Final**

In the aftermath of the incident with Mrs. Pegler, Bounderby fires Mrs. Sparsit and sends her away to live with her unpleasant relative, Lady Scadgers. Looking proudly at his portrait, Mr. Bounderby does not guess that he will die from a fit in the streets of Coketown in a mere five years' time. The narrator reveals that in that future, Gradgrind will cease serving fact and will instead devote his skills and

money to faith, hope, and charity. He will also publish writings exonerating the name of Stephen Blackpool. Furthermore, the narrator discloses that Louisa will never marry again. Tom will soon repent of his hostility toward his sister, and he will die abroad longing for a last look at Louisa's face. Rachael will go on working and continue in her sweetness and good faith, and Sissy will have a large and happy family. Louisa will be deeply loved by Sissy's children, through whom she will vicariously experience the joy and wonder of childhood. And Louisa will always strive to understand and improve the lives of her fellow human beings.

### **Analysis — Book the Third: Garnering: Chapters 5–9**

In this section, everyone gets their just desserts. The narrator demonstrates his omniscience and his moral authority by assigning futures to the main characters according to each of their situations and merits. In other words, the characters who are clearly good are rewarded with happy endings, while those who are clearly bad end up miserable. Bounderby is exposed as a fraud with the revelation that his life story is a lie designed to cover up his wretched treatment of his kindly mother. Mrs. Sparsit is packed off to Lady Scadgers, having ruined her own chances with Bounderby through her excessive nosiness. Tom manages to escape but realizes the guilt of his awful behavior after it is too late to make amends with Louisa, and he dies, missing her terribly. Sissy, of course, ends up happy. The one exception to this general rule of poetic justice is the death of Stephen Blackpool. While Stephen seems to look forward to death as a release from his miserable existence, he leaves Rachael bereft and alone after he dies. Rachael's misery and Stephen's undeserved death are perhaps a part of Dickens's intent to rouse sympathy for the poor.

Unlike Bounderby and Sissy, some of the characters in *Hard Times* cannot be clearly labeled as either good or bad. The narrator assigns ambiguous futures to these characters—they are not simply rewarded, but neither are they simply punished. Of these ambiguous futures, Mr. Gradgrind's fate is perhaps the most ironic of all. At the beginning of the novel, he reviles the circus troupe and accuses it of corrupting his children. At the end, he is forced to depend on the troupe to save one of his children. After that, he behaves morally, devoting his political power to helping the poor, but is in turn reviled by the fact-obsessed politicians whose careers he helped to create.

Louisa is the most ambiguous character in the novel, and she faces an equally mixed fate: free of Bounderby and free of Harthouse, she is loved by Sissy's children, but she never has a family of her own.

In wrapping up the plot, Dickens strays from his concern with social problems in favor of a focus on the inner lives of his characters. The book does not offer any resolution to the situation of the Hands beyond advocating love and fellowship among men, and the end of the novel is designed to let us know how each character will fare in the future, rather than how larger social issues will be addressed. At the heart of Dickens's writing, social protest and satire are almost always secondary to the more fundamental issues of character and story. *Hard Times* is remarkable among Dickens's fiction in that the focus on social ills is prominent throughout the novel, but in the end, Dickens's attention for his characters prevails.

### **Characters list:**

**1-Thomas Gradgrind:** A wealthy, retired merchant in Coketown, England; he later becomes a Member of Parliament. Mr. Gradgrind espouses a philosophy of rationalism, self-interest, and cold, hard fact. He describes himself as an “eminently practical” man, and he tries to raise his children—Louisa, Tom, Jane, Adam Smith, and Malthus to be equally. Practical by forbidding the development of their imaginations and emotions.

**2-Louisa:** Gradgrind's daughter, later Bounderby's wife. Confused by her coldhearted upbringing, Louisa feels disconnected from her emotions and alienated from other people. While she vaguely recognizes that her father's system of education has deprived her childhood of all joy, Louisa cannot actively invoke her emotions or connect with others. Thus, she marries Bounderby to please her father, even though she does not love her husband. Indeed, the only person she loves completely is her brother Tom.

**3-Thomas Gradgrind, Jr:** Gradgrind's eldest son and an apprentice at Bounderby's bank, who is generally called Tom. Tom reacts to his strict upbringing by becoming a dissipated, hedonistic, hypocritical young man. Although he appreciates his sister's affection, Tom cannot return it entirely—he loves money and gambling even more than he loves Louisa. These vices lead him to rob Bounderby's bank and implicate Stephen as the robbery's prime suspect.

**4- Josiah Bounderby:** Gradgrind's friend and later Louisa's husband. Bounderby claims to be a self-made man and boastfully describes being abandoned by his mother as a young boy. From his childhood poverty he has risen to become a banker and factory owner in Coketown, known by everyone for his wealth and power.

His true upbringing, by caring and devoted parents, indicates that his social mobility is a hoax and calls into question the whole notion of social mobility in nineteenth-century England.

**5- Cecelia Jupe:** The daughter of a clown in Sleary's circus. Sissy is taken in by Gradgrind when her father disappears. Sissy serves as a foil, or contrast, to Louisa: while Sissy is imaginative and compassionate, Louisa is rational and, for the most part, unfeeling. Sissy embodies the Victorian femininity that counterbalances mechanization and industry. Through Sissy's interaction with her, Louisa is able to explore her more sensitive, feminine sides.

**6- Mrs. Sparsit:** Bounderby's housekeeper, who goes to live at the bank apartments when Bounderby marries Louisa. Once a member of the aristocratic elite, Mrs. Sparsit fell on hard times after the collapse of her marriage. A selfish, manipulative, dishonest woman, Mrs. Sparsit cherishes secret hopes of ruining Bounderby's marriage so that she can marry him herself. Mrs. Sparsit's aristocratic background is emphasized by the narrator's frequent allusions to her "Roman" and "Coriolanian" appearance.

**7- Stephen Blackpool:** A Hand in Bounderby's factory. Stephen loves Rachael but is unable to marry her because he is already married, albeit to a horrible, drunken woman. A man of great honesty, compassion, and integrity, Stephen maintains his moral ideals even when he is shunned by his fellow workers and fired by Bounderby. Stephen's values are similar to those endorsed by the narrator.

**8- Rachael:** A simple, honest Hand who loves Stephen Blackpool. To Stephen, she represents domestic happiness and moral purity.

**9- James Harthouse:** A sophisticated and manipulative young London gentleman who comes to Coketown to enter politics as a disciple of Gradgrind, simply because he thinks it might alleviate his boredom. In his constant search for a new form of amusement, Harthouse quickly becomes attracted to Louisa and resolves to seduce her.

**10- Mr. Sleary:** The lispng proprietor of the circus where Sissy's father was an entertainer. Later, Mr. Sleary hides Tom Gradgrind and helps him flee the country. Mr. Sleary and his troop of entertainer's value laughter and fantasy whereas Mr. Gradgrind values rationality and fact.

**11- Bitzer:** is one of the successes produced by Gradgrind's rationalistic system of education. Initially a bully at Gradgrind's school, Bitzer later becomes an employee and a spy at Bounderby's bank. An uncharacteristically pale character and unrelenting disciple of fact, Bitzer almost stops Tom from fleeing after it is discovered that Tom is the true bank robber.

**12- Mr. McChoakumchild:** The unpleasant teacher at Gradgrind's school. As his name suggests, McChoakumchild is not overly fond of children, and stifles or chokes their imaginations and feelings.

**13- Mrs. Pegler:** Bounderby's mother, unbeknownst as such to all except herself and Bounderby. Mrs. Pegler makes an annual visit to Coketown in order to admire her son's prosperity from a safe distance. Mrs. Pegler's appearance uncovers the hoax that her son, Bounderby has been attesting throughout the story, which is that he is a self-made man who was abandoned as a child.

**14- Mrs. Gradgrind:** Gradgrind's whiny, anemic wife, who constantly tells her children to study their "ologies" and complains that she'll "never hear the end" of any complaint. Although Mrs. Gradgrind does not share her husband's interest in facts, she lacks the energy and the imagination to oppose his system of education.

**15- Slackbridge:** The crooked orator who convinces the Hands to unionize and turns them against Stephen Blackpool when he refuses to join the union.

**16- Jane Gradgrind:** Gradgrind's younger daughter; Louisa and Tom's sister. Because Sissy largely raises her, Jane is a happier little girl than her sister, Louisa.

### Themes of *Hard Times* Novel:

1-The Mechanization of Human Beings: *Hard Times* suggests that nineteenth-century England's overzealous adoption of industrialization threatens to turn human beings into machines by thwarting the development of their emotions and imaginations. This suggestion comes forth largely through the actions of Gradgrind and his follower, Bounderby: as the former educates the young children of his family and his school in the ways of fact, the latter treats the workers in his factory as emotionless objects that are easily exploited for his own self-interest. In Chapter 5 of the first book, the narrator draws a parallel between the factory Hands and the Gradgrind children—both lead monotonous, uniform existences, untouched by pleasure. Consequently, their fantasies and feelings are dulled, and they become almost mechanical themselves the mechanizing effects of industrialization are compounded by Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of rational self-interest.

Mr. Gradgrind believes that human nature can be measured, quantified, and governed entirely by rational rules. Indeed, his school attempts to turn children into little machines that behave according to such rules. Dickens's primary goal in *Hard Times* is to illustrate the dangers of allowing humans to become like machines, suggesting that without compassion and imagination, life would be unbearable. Indeed,

Louisa feels precisely this suffering when she returns to her father's house and tells him that something has been missing in her life, so much so that she finds herself in an unhappy marriage and may be in love with someone else. While she does not actually behave in a dishonorable way, since she stops her interaction with Harthouse before she has a socially ruinous affair with him, Louisa realizes that her life is unbearable and that she must do something drastic for her own survival. Appealing to her father with the utmost honesty, Louisa is able to make him realize and admit that his philosophies on life and methods of child rearing are to blame for Louisa's detachment from others.

**2-The Opposition Between Fact and Fancy:** While Mr. Gradgrind insists that his children should always stick to the facts, *Hard Times* not only suggests that fancy is as important as fact, but it continually calls into question the difference between fact and fancy. Dickens suggests that what constitutes so-called fact is a matter of perspective or opinion. For example, Bounderby believes that factory employees are lazy good-for-nothings who expect to be fed "from a golden spoon." The Hands, in contrast, see themselves as hardworking and as unfairly exploited by their employers. These sets of facts cannot be reconciled because they depend upon perspective. While Bounderby declares that "[w]hat is called Taste is only another name for Fact," Dickens implies that fact is a question of taste or personal belief. As a novelist, Dickens is naturally interested in illustrating that fiction cannot be excluded from a fact-filled, mechanical society. Gradgrind's children, however, grow up in an environment where all flights of fancy are discouraged, and they end up with serious social dysfunctions as a result. Tom becomes a hedonist who has little regard for others, while Louisa remains unable to connect with others even though she has the desire to do so. On the other hand, Sissy, who grew up with the circus, constantly indulges in the fancy forbidden to the Gradgrinds, and lovingly raises Louisa and Tom's sister in a way more complete than the upbringing of either of the older siblings.

Just as fiction cannot be excluded from fact, fact is also necessary for a balanced life. If Gradgrind had not adopted her, Sissy would have no guidance, and her future might be precarious. As a result, the youngest Gradgrind daughter, raised both by the factual Gradgrind and the fanciful Sissy, represents the best of both worlds.

**3-The Importance of Femininity:** During the Victorian era, women were commonly associated with supposedly feminine traits like compassion, moral purity, and emotional sensitivity. *Hard Times* suggests that because they possess these traits, women can counteract the mechanizing effects of industrialization. For instance, when Stephen feels depressed about the monotony of his life as a factory worker, Rachael's gentle fortitude inspires him to keep going. He sums up her virtues by referring to her as his guiding angel. Similarly, Sissy introduces love into the Gradgrind household, ultimately teaching Louisa how to recognize her emotions. Indeed, Dickens suggests that Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of self-interest and calculating rationality has prevented Louisa from developing her natural feminine traits. Perhaps Mrs. Gradgrind's inability to exercise her femininity allows Gradgrind to overemphasize the importance of fact in the rearing of his children. On his part, Bounderby ensures that his rigidity will remain untouched since he marries the cold, emotionless product of Mr. and Mrs. Gradgrind's marriage. Through the various female characters in the novel, Dickens suggests that feminine compassion is necessary to restore social harmony.

### **Motifs:**

**1-Bounderby's Childhood:** Bounderby frequently reminds us that he is "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown." This emphatic phrase usually follows a description of his childhood poverty: he claims to have been born in a ditch and abandoned by his mother; raised by an alcoholic grandmother; and forced to support himself by his own labor. From these ignominious beginnings, he has become the wealthy owner of both a factory and a bank. Thus, Bounderby represents the possibility of social mobility, embodying the belief that any individual should be able overcome all obstacles to success— including poverty and lack of education— through hard work. Indeed, Bounderby often recites the story of his childhood in order to suggest that his Hands are impoverished because they lack his ambition and self-discipline. However, "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown" is ultimately a fraud. His mother, Mrs. Pegler, reveals that he was raised by parents who were loving, albeit poor, and who saved their money to make sure he received a good education.

By exposing Bounderby's real origins, Dickens calls into question the myth of social mobility. In other words, he suggests that perhaps the Hands cannot overcome poverty through sheer determination alone, but only through the charity and compassion of wealthier individuals.

**2-Clocks and Time:** Dickens contrasts mechanical or man-made time with natural time, or the passing of the seasons. In both Coketown and the Gradgrind household, time is mechanized—in other words, it is relentless, structured, regular, and monotonous. As the narrator explains, “Time went on in Coketown like its own machine.” The mechanization of time is also embodied in the “deadly statistical clock” in Mr. Gradgrind's study, which measures the passing of each minute and hour. However, the novel itself is structured through natural time. For instance, the titles of its three books— “Sowing,” “Reaping,” and “Garnering”— allude to agricultural labor and to the processes of planting and harvesting in accordance with the changes of the seasons. Similarly, the narrator notes that the seasons change even in Coketown's “wilderness of smoke and brick.” These seasonal changes constitute “the only stand that ever was made against its direful uniformity.” By contrasting mechanical time with natural time, Dickens illustrates the great extent to which industrialization has mechanized human existence. While the changing seasons provide variety in terms of scenery and agricultural labor, mechanized time marches forward with incessant regularity.

**3-Mismatched Marriages:** There are many unequal and unhappy marriages in *Hard Times*, including those of Mr. and Mrs. Gradgrind, Stephen Blackpool and his unnamed drunken wife, and most pertinently, the Bounderbys. Louisa agrees to marry Mr. Bounderby because her father convinces her that doing so would be a rational decision. He even cites statistics to show that the great difference in their ages need not prevent their mutual happiness. However, Louisa's consequent misery as Bounderby's wife suggests that love, rather than either reason or convenience, must be the foundation of a happy marriage.

### **Symbols:**

**1-Staircase:** When Mrs. Sparsit notices that Louisa and Harthouse are spending a lot of time together, she imagines that Louisa is running down a long staircase into a “dark pit of shame and ruin at the bottom.” This imaginary staircase represents her belief that Louisa is going to elope with Harthouse and consequently ruin her reputation forever.

Mrs. Sparsit has long resented Bounderby's marriage to the young Louisa, as she hoped to marry him herself; so, she is very pleased by Louisa's apparent indiscretion. Through the staircase, Dickens reveals the manipulative and censorious side of Mrs. Sparsit's character. He also suggests that Mrs. Sparsit's self-interest causes her to misinterpret the situation. Rather than ending up in a pit of shame by having an affair with Harthouse, Louisa actually returns home to her father.

**2-Pegasus:** Mr. Sleary's circus entertainers stay at an inn called the Pegasus Arms. Inside this inn is a "theatrical" pegasus, a model of a flying horse with "golden stars stuck on all over him." The pegasus represents a world of fantasy and beauty from which the young Gradgrind children are excluded. While Mr. Gradgrind informs the pupils at his school that wallpaper with horses on it is unrealistic simply because horses do not in fact live on walls, the circus folk live in a world in which horses dance the polka and flying horses can be imagined, even if they do not, in fact, exist. The very name of the inn reveals the contrast between the imaginative and joyful world of the circus and Mr. Gradgrind's belief in the importance of fact.

**3-Smoke Serpents:** At a literal level, the streams of smoke that fill the skies above Coketown are the effects of industrialization. However, these smoke serpents also represent the moral blindness of factory owners like Bounderby. Because he is so concerned with making as much profit as he possibly can, Bounderby interprets the serpents of smoke as a positive sign that the factories are producing goods and profit. Thus, he not only fails to see the smoke as a form of unhealthy pollution, but he also fails to recognize his own abuse of the Hands in his factories. The smoke becomes a moral smoke screen that prevents him from noticing his workers' miserable poverty. Through its associations with evil, the word "serpents" evokes the moral obscurity that the smoke creates.

**4-Fire:** When Louisa is first introduced, in Chapter 3 of Book the First, the narrator explains that inside her is a "fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow." This description suggests that although Louisa seems coldly rational, she has not succumbed entirely to her father's prohibition against wondering and imagining. Her inner fire symbolizes the warmth created by her secret fancies in her otherwise lonely, mechanized existence.

Consequently, it is significant that Louisa often gazes into the fireplace when she is alone, as if she sees things in the flames that others—like her rigid father and brother—cannot see. However, there is another kind of inner fire in *Hard Times*—the fires that keep the factories running, providing heat and power for the machines. Fire is thus both a destructive and a life-giving force. Even Louisa’s inner fire, her imaginative tendencies, eventually becomes destructive: her repressed emotions eventually begin to burn “within her like an unwholesome fire.” Through this symbol, Dickens evokes the importance of imagination as a force that can counteract the mechanization of human nature.

### **KEY FACTS:**

**FULL TITLE:** *Hard Times for These Times*

**AUTHOR:** Charles Dickens

**TYPE OF WORK:** Novel

**GENRE:** Victorian novel; realist novel; satire; dystopia

**LANGUAGE:** English

**TIME AND PLACE WRITTEN:** 1854, London

**DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION:** Published in serial installments in Dickens’s magazine *Household Words* between April 1 and August 12, 1854

**PUBLISHER:** Charles Dickens

**NARRATOR:** The anonymous narrator serves as a moral authority. By making moral judgments about the characters, the narrator shapes our interpretations of the novel.

**POINT OF VIEW:** The narrator speaks in the third person and has a limited omniscience. He knows what is going on in all places and at all times, but he sometimes speculates about what the characters might be feeling and thinking, suggesting, at those times, that he does not actually know.

**TONE:** The narrator’s tone varies drastically, but it is frequently ironic, mocking, and even satirical, especially when he describes Bounderby, Harthouse, and Mrs. Sparsit. When describing Stephen and Rachael, his tone is pathetic, evoking sympathy.

**TENSE:** The narrative is presented in the past tense; however, at the end, the narrator reveals what the future will bring to each of the main characters.

**SETTING (TIME):** The middle of the nineteenth century

**SETTING (PLACE):** Coketown, a manufacturing town in the south of England

**PROTAGONIST:** Louisa Gradgrind

**MAJOR CONFLICT:** Louisa Gradgrind struggles to reconcile the fact-driven self-interest of her upbringing with the warmth of feeling that she witnesses both in Sissy Jupe and developing within herself. As this attitude changes, Louisa is caught between allegiances to her family and loveless marriage and her desire to transcend the emotional and personal detachment of her past.

**RISING ACTION:** Sissy joins the Gradgrind household, and Louisa marries Mr. Bounderby unwillingly, only to satisfy her father's sense of what would be most rational for her.

**CLIMAX:** Mr. Harthouse joins Gradgrind's political disciples and attempts to seduce Louisa. Louisa, confused, leaves Bounderby and returns to her father's house, where she collapses.

**FALLING ACTION:** Sissy informs Harthouse that Louisa will never see him again, and Louisa attempts to amend her life by appealing to her father and offering assistance to the alleged perpetrator in Bounderby's bank robbery.

**THEMES:** The mechanization of human beings; the opposition between fact and fancy; the importance of femininity.

**MOTIFS:** Bounderby's childhood; clocks and time; mismatched marriages.

**SYMBOLS:** Staircase; pegasus; fire; smoke serpents.

**FORESHADOWING:** Stephen's claim that factory Hands have only death to look forward to foreshadows his own death in the mine shaft. Bitzer's run-in with Mr. Gradgrind at the circus at the beginning of the novel, when he has been taunting Sissy, foreshadows his run-in with Mr. Gradgrind at the circus at the end of the novel, when Tom is fleeing the country.

## STUDY QUESTIONS & ESSAY TOPICS

### Study Questions

**1. *Hard Times* is a novel about the social condition of poverty, but very few of its major characters are actually poor and comparatively little time is spent with the poor characters. With that in mind, do you think the book does an effective job of shaping our view of poverty? Why or why not?**

It may be that Dickens chose to center his novel on the wealthy -middle class rather than on the lower classes he sought to defend because he realized that most of his Victorian readers would come from the middle classes and that very few of his readers would come from the lower classes. By centering his book on characters with whom his readers could identify, he was better able to awaken their feelings for characters with whom they might otherwise be unable to identify—namely, the poor of Coketown and of England in general. In that sense, the book does its job. Of course, the contrary argument could also be made that the novel simply reinforces comfortable middle-class stereotypes about the noble poor, and it offers no real solution or possibility for change.

**2. *Mrs. Sparsit* is a fairly minor character in *Hard Times*. What themes does she illustrate? Why is she important in terms of plot development?**

Although Mrs. Sparsit is a relatively minor character, her pride drives much of the action in the second half of the novel. Originally from an aristocratic background, Mrs. Sparsit has fallen on hard times, and she must work as Bounderby's housekeeper for a living. Because she wants to marry Bounderby so that she can share his wealth, Mrs. Sparsit secretly connives to destroy his marriage to Louisa. Yet even while she panders to Bounderby, Mrs. Sparsit considers him an upstart "Noodle," and considers herself his superior because of her aristocratic blood. Although she is a proud aristocrat, Mrs. Sparsit shares the calculating self-interest of capitalists like Bounderby. Thus, Mrs. Sparsit illustrates the transition from a social hierarchy in which aristocrats hold the power to one in which the wealthy middle class holds the power. In her attempt to retain her power within a new social order, Mrs. Sparsit simply ends up looking ridiculous.

**3. Think about the character of Bounderby. How might this character fit with Dickens's social program to explode the myth of the self-made man?**

One defense of the new economic conditions created by the Industrial Revolution was its expansion of individual opportunity. The wealthy could justify the condition of the poor by pointing out that if the poor worked industriously, they could work their way into a fortune. Dickens implicitly mocks that idea by presenting one such supposed self-made man as a blundering braggart. By exposing Bounderby as a fraud who did not actually start from nothing, as he so often claims, Dickens questions the validity of that entire justification for poverty. If the self-made man is a lie, then what can the poor hope to achieve? Moreover, Dickens raises the question of whether the self-made man owes anything to the rest of society. Are the wealthy under any obligation to help the poor? Or must the poor help themselves?

**Suggested Essay Topics**

1-What is the significance of the book's structure? What does each of its three parts represent? Why are the different sections given agricultural titles when the book is about industrial England?

2-Does *Hard Times* have a protagonist? Does it have a main character? What makes you think so, and who might the main character be?

3-*Hard Times* begins and ends with a meeting between Mr. Sleary and Mr. Gradgrind. How are the meetings different? What changes in Mr. Gradgrind's character and values do we see between his first and last encounter with the circus folk?

4-Discuss the character of Stephen Blackpool. How does he represent the poor Hands in *Hard Times*? Do you think it is an accurate representation? Is it meant to be?

5-*Hard Times* is built around a few simple, contrasting thematic ideas. What are some of them, and how do they function in the book? How does Louisa fit among these ideas?

6-As a child, Bitzer is a model pupil at Gradgrind's school. How does his conduct as a porter at Bounderby's bank reflect his early education? Would you consider him a "success" according to Gradgrind's criteria? Why or why not?