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Hard Times door Charles Dickens

anoniem

Background to the story

Place: The story plays in Coketown, an industrial town. Especially in the house and the school of Mr. Gradgrind.

Time

I think that the story plays in the 50's. I conclude that out of the fact in the book that says that the river in Coketown is full of red pigment. In this time the industry isn't allowed to dump waste products.

Win

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ontdek de leukste studentenstad van het zuiden!

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Aangeboden door: **NHTV** internationaal hoger onderwijs Breda



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Background main characters (social group, ethnic group, family circumstances)
Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby are rich men. Mr. Gradgrind worked as intermediate trader and is the owner of a school now. Mr. Bounderby has a cotton mill.

Genre (detective, ghost story, adventure story, SF, historical story, thriller, love story)

The book 'Hard times' is an adventure and love story.

Is the story realistic?

Yes, the story is realistic although I doubt some times. For example: old Mr. Bounderby married with the forty years younger daughter of Mr. Gradgrind.

Characters

Give a description:

Mr. Gradgrind: He works as a teacher in Coketown. He is severe and he want only 'facts'. He has a private school at home for his children.

Mr. Bounderby: He works at a bank and is very rich. Mr Grandgrind's son works for him at the bank.

Louisa Gradgrind: She has to learn at her fathers private school. She hates it and when father isn't in the classroom she's talking with het brother. She had to marry with Mr. Bounderby because father wanted so.

Tom Gradgrind: He also has to learn at the private school. He got a nice job at the bank because Mr. Grandgrind is a good friend of Mr. Bounderby

Name a character you would like to know

Cecilia , because she seems to me a very interesting person because of her past.

Name a character you wouldn't like to meet

Mr Gradgrind, because you aren't allowed to do normal things as other children do. You must learn hour after hour, day after day.

Summary of the story 150 words

Mr Grandgrind geeft les op school en leert de leerlingen alleen feiten. Hij geeft zijn kinderen, Louisa en Tom thuis priveles. Cecilia heeft haar vader verloren en Gradgrind neemt haar in huis waar ze nu ook priveles krijgt. Mr Bounderby, een

vriend van Gradgrind, heeft een katoenweverij in Coketown en werkt op de bank waar ook Tom nu werkt. Gradgrind vindt dat Louisa de leeftijd heeft gekregen om te trouwen en hij wil dat ze met Bounderby trouwt. Bounderby en Louisa maken een huwelijksreis en kopen een tweede huis. Louisa gaat weer bij haar vader wonen omdat ze bij Bounderby ongelukkig is. De bank wordt beroofd en een werknemer uit de weverij wordt verdacht. Het wordt onderzocht en het blijkt dat Tom het heeft gedaan. Hij vlucht naar de VS en sterft daar in het ziekenhuis.

Title

Do you think the title is well chosen? Why?

I think the the title is well chosen because life in Coketown is very hard. Especially for the pupils and workers it were hard times.

Think of another suitable title:

I can't think up for another title because this title refer to almost all the characters in the story.

Your personal opinion

Did you enjoy reading the story?

Yes, I enjoyed reading the book because there is much variation in the story.

What did you like?

The book described the life of many people, from poor to rich. The job they had was well described too and I liked that.

What didn't you like?

I didn'y like the way how Mr. Gradgrind teaches his pupils. He humiliates one pupil for the whole class.

Does this story remind you of any other story? If so, what story?

The story doesn't remind me of an other story.

Would you recommend this story to others? Why (not)?

I would recommend the story to other because it seems boring but it isn't. There is much variation in the story. At the time you think it is going to be boring the story change to an other subject.

Did you learn anything from the story? What?

I haven't learnt anything from the story, maybe because story is very old.

Plot

Tom Gradgrind tries to educate his children only with Facts and not with feelings. His to eldest children have finished their education nearly when the book begins.

Tom adopts a girl, Sissy Jupes, whose father runs away. Her father was a clown in a circus, but he wasn't good enough.

When Tom, the son, has finished his education, he goes to the bank of Mister Bounderby. Bounderby is a friend of his father. Bounderby is fallen in love to Tom's older sister, Louisa. Louisa marries Bounderby to escape her father and to see her brother Tom. Mr Bounderby doesn't know how to tell his house-keeper that he marries, because they are very familiar to each other. But his housekeeper takes it easy. But when Louisa has come, she tries to get her away.

Stephen Blackpool, a worker of Mr Bounderby has a wife who is often drunk. And he loves another woman, Rachael. She works by Mr Bounderby too. He goes to Mr Bounderby, to ask help, because he wants to divorce. But Mr Bounderby says that when you marry you take your wife for better and worse, so Stephen hadn't to complain. Stephen meets a strange woman, who adores Mr Bounderby. She comes once a year to Coketown to see Mr Bounderby, but Mr Bounderby don't may see her.

A year later Stephen has to come again to Mr Bounderby, and he loses his job. When he walks back to his home he sees Rachael and the strange woman. They go with Stephen to his house. When it's evening Louisa and her brother Tom go to Stephen Black-pool, because Louisa finds that her husband hadn't to reject Stephen. She wants to give him money, but he only want to take two pounds. Tom says to Stephen, when his sister can't hear him, that he has to wait before he goes away in front of Mr Bounderby's Bank. Tom will see what he can do.

Stephen waits in front of the bank, but nothing happens. Then he goes away. That evening the bank is robbed. The thief is gone, but every one suspected Stephen, because he is seen by the bank and he is gone away. Only Rachael and Louisa don't suspect Stephen.

A friend of Mr Bounderby comes and he loves Louisa and Louisa loves him. They go away for one day, and Mr Bounderby's house-keeper follows them, because she doesn't trust it. She sees everything and goes to Mr Bounderby. Louisa goes to her father, because she doesn't know what to do. And she wants to tell her father that she isn't happy with her education only with Facts. Her father is first confused, but later he understands her. Then Mr Bounderby comes to tell him that his daughter has deceived him. Mr Gradgrind knows the story and says that Mr Bounderby has to give Louisa time. Mr Bounderby doesn't want to give time. He gives Louisa till 12 o'clock the next day to come back. Louisa doesn't go back to her husband and stay with her father.

Rachael has to write a letter to Stephen Blackpool that he has to come back in order of Mr Bounderby. Stephen doesn't come back, but one day, when Sissy and Rachael walk outside Coketown, they see Stephen lying on the ground. They go away to get help, and Stephen stays alive. Then Mr Tom Gradgrind jr disappears. He has robbed the bank. Louisa and Sissy go to find him to help him to go away.

They find Tom in the old circus of Sissy's father and help him.

Characters

Louisa Gradgrind: Her father tries to educate her without feelings, but she stays sensitive for the feelings of other people. She is very clever. She loves her brother very much. And she can forgive people their faults.

Tom Gradgrind (father): (book page 47)"The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellar-age in to dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square shoulders - nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was - all helped the empha-sis."

Thomas Gradgrind is a man of fact and calculations. When his eldest daughter says that she isn't happy with her education, he accept that, and changes. Then he sees feelings are impor-tant too. He is honest.

Mr Bounderby: Mr Bounderby is the friend of Tom Gradgrind. He is a boasting person. He says that he is an orphan, and he is grown up by an drunk grandmother. The end of the book shows that he has a mother, and that his mother loves him. And Mr Bounderby knew that. Mr Bounderby is a very rich banker. He is egoistic.

Title

The book is called 'Hard Times', because it is about the difficult times of Stephen Blackpool, Louisa and her brother Tom.

Time and place

The scene is laid in Coketown. Coketown is an industrial place in Lancashire. The story plays in the 1840s.

Style

The writer writes very describing (see characters Tom Gradgrind). He uses when he let one of workmen speaks a lot of commas to express the accent. That reads difficult. He uses long and short sentences.

The writer's view of life

He wants show how bad and egoistic rich people are. And that know everything

doesn't make happy. He shows that poor and unschooled people can be honest and well-schooled people can steal. And he wants to explain that unschooled people can give a helping hand in difficult situations.

The writer's life

Charles Dickens was born at Portsmouth on 7 February 1812. He was the second of eight children. Dickens's childhood experiences were similar to those depicted in *David Copperfield*. His father was imprisoned for debt and Charles was sent to work at the age of twelve. That was a very difficult time. He taught himself shorthand and became a reporter of parliamentary debates for the *Morning Chronicle*. He began to publish sketches in various periodicals, which were subsequently republished as *Sketches by 'Boz'*. The *Pickwick Papers* were published in 1836 and after a slow start became a publishing phenomenon and Dickens's characters the centre of a popular cult. Part of the secret of his success was the method of cheap serial publication, which Dickens used for all his novels. In 1841 Dickens set off for America; he went full enthusiasm for the young republic but, in spite of a triumphant reception, he returned disillusioned. In his later work Dickens's social criticism became more radical and his comedy more savage. Dickens died on 9 June 1870.