



Hard Times (Macmillan Collector's Library Book 57)

Charles Dickens

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A novel of social and moral themes, *Hard Times* is the archetypal Dickens novel, filled with family difficulties, estrangement, rotten values and unhappiness. Published in 1854, it is set in the imaginary Coketown, an industrial city inspired by Preston, and tells the story of the family of Thomas Gradgrind, a man obsessed with misguided 'Utilitarian' values that make him trust facts, statistics and practicality over emotion. Based on James Mill (the Utilitarian leader), Gradgrind raises his own children, Louisa and Tom, in line with these same views, forcing an artless existence on them. Contemporary critics such as Macaulay savaged the book for its supposed 'sullen socialism' but it has become well regarded since earning the favour of George Bernard Shaw.

This Macmillan Collector's Library edition is illustrated by Harry French, with an afterword by David Stuart Davies.

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