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**For U.G SEM-IV**

Book The Second: Reaping  
Chapter-I : Effects in the Bank

Mr. Bounderby, having sowed seeds of unkindness, reaped an unhappy marriage and the loss of his wife. Mr. Gradgrind's seeds of logic and Fact led to disillusionment and destruction; Louisa Gradgrind Bounderby, sowed with the seeds of Fact, reaped unhappiness; for Tom, the seeds of dishonesty produced a harvest of loneliness and destruction; Stephen planted seeds of discontent and reaped ostracism by his kind. Each character reaped a harvest of his own making.

Apparent immediately is Dickens' satire, setting the tone for this chapter and the entire book. It begins, "A sunny midsummer day. There was such a thing sometimes, even in Coketown." Even in Coketown, the rays of sunlight, or reforms, penetrated the smoke and the fog – mistreatment of the workers and the duping of the factory owners. Even in Coketown there had come a time when the labouring class united for self-preservation and education for their children. Not only the workers but also the entire town "seemed to be frying in oil": Bounderby, in the oil of Mrs. Sparsit's pity; young Tom, in the oil of her suspicions; Bitzer, in the oil of her disdain; Louisa, in the oil of destruction. Guardians of the bank by night and spies by the day, Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer were ill-matched companions; nevertheless, they were bound together by Fact. Bitzer, grown from the brilliant student of Fact into a cold young man of self-interest, shared not only tasks in the bank with Mrs. Sparsit but also the desire to undermine the position of young Tom. In this chapter, the reader learns that Mr. Gradgrind has reared a son who is an idler and a parasite.

Introduced in this chapter is another character who is going to be influential in helping Louisa reap unhappiness and in helping Bounderby gather the just harvest of his pretensions. By mistake he meets Mrs. Sparsit first and inquires about Louisa; Mrs. Sparsit's replies pique his interest.

Chapter II: Mr. James Harthouse

James (Jem) Harthouse, a young man bored with all of his travels and education, comes to work in the service of Gradgrind's political party. Upon first meeting Bounderby, Harthouse is unimpressed by the "self-made man" story or by the pride of Bounderby – the smoke that is the "meat and drink" of Coketown. Here Dickens subtly lets the reader know that this "meat and drink" to Bounderby is the death and destruction of the workers.

Bounderby takes Mr. Harthouse home for dinner in order to meet Louisa. Harthouse is singularly struck by the bareness of the room that he enters, which, devoid of a woman's touch, is a symbol of the sterility of the life that exists there. Intrigued by Louisa's detachment and the withdrawn expression of her eyes, Harthouse decides that his next challenge is to arouse some response in those eyes. When introduced to Tom whom he immediately nicknames the "whelp" because of the younger man's manners and attitude. Harthouse sees the first flicker of emotion in Louisa's face

and realizes that she lavishes upon her brother all of the love of which she is capable. Carefully, by encouraging Tom's friendship, Harthouse plants the seeds that will win Louisa's confidence.

### Chapter III: The Whelp

The seeds of Facts planted by Thomas Gradgrind in his son have become a harvest of deceit and hypocrisy. Flattered by Harthouse's interest, Tom reveals the circumstances of Louisa's marriage to Bounderby. Bragging that he was the only one who could influence her, Tom, while he drinks Harthouse's liquor and smokes his cigars, discusses Louisa's having never loved. Harthouse leads Tom on until he learns all that he wishes to know about Bounderby, Mrs. Sparsit, and Louisa. More and more Harthouse becomes enchanted by the prospect of the "chase." Dickens concludes the chapter by philosophizing that Tom is so ignorant that he does not realize the damage he has done

### Chapter IV: Men and Brothers

Dickens pictures the workers seeking to lessen the burdens of their lives. The labour-union agitator, Slackbridge, is the supposed "saviour" for the workers as they make their voices of protest heard. Dickens shows that the labour leaders may be as corrupt as the employers; he depicts the labouring class grasping at straws and led by a Judas or a false prophet. Of the labouring group, Stephen is the only one who cannot agree with Slackbridge's ideas; consequently, Slackbridge uses him as an example and turns the other workers against Stephen. When Stephen announces his decision not to join the union, the workers are convinced that "private feeling must yield to the common cause." Ostracized by his fellow workers, Stephen walks alone, afraid even to see his beloved Rachael. At the conclusion of the chapter, Bitzer comes to him and tells him that Bounderby wishes to see him.

### Chapter V: Men and Masters

Stephen defends the workers against Bounderby, who calls them the "pests of the earth." Stephen says that he has not refused to join the union because of his loyalty to Bounderby but because he has made a promise. Although his own fellow workers distrust him, he is faithful to them and gives his reasons for needed reform, thus infuriating Bounderby, who dismisses him from his job in the factory. Dickens' philosophy is expressed in the conversation as Stephen tells Bounderby that men are not machines, that they do have souls. After Bounderby, who cannot bear to hear any truth except his own, fires him, Stephen leaves the large "brick castle" saying, "Heaven help us in this world." The discussion between Bounderby and Stephen has made a deep impression upon Louisa.

