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North and South Introduction

When it was first published in 1854, *North and South* was met with some pretty harsh criticism. Its editor, the super famous Charles Dickens, said the story was way longer than it needed to be. But more criticism was directed at the fact that Elizabeth Gaskell (a woman!) dared to write sympathetically about the rights of English workers. Even right up until the 1930s, critics' main view of Elizabeth Gaskell was that she "*makes a creditable effort to overcome her deficiencies [as a woman] but all in vain*".

Yeesh. Sexist much?

North and South is all about challenging authority, especially when authority tries to work against compassion and justice. Margaret Hale constantly steps beyond her boundaries as a woman in Victorian England. Her brother challenges authority by disobeying his commanding officer in the navy and causing a mutiny. The laborer Nicholas Higgins organizes workers' strikes and insists on the rights of workingmen. Anywhere you look in this book, you'll find someone fighting the power. And that was something that the stuffy Victorians were really not into. And because of this, they totally thought that *North and South* would be forgotten over time.

But more than a century and a half later, *North and South* is anything but forgotten. It endures because of its class-consciousness and its interest in labor issues. It also endures because of it contains insane family drama, a cast of memorable characters, and an awesome, *Pride and Prejudice*-style romance. *North and South* been adapted twice as a miniseries.

What is North and South About and Why Should I Care?

North and South combines all of the fascinating topics that the issues of worker/boss relations bring up, plus tons of other juicy ones. In *North and South* you get fired up over the question of how to handle striking workers... *and* what love means. You ball up your fists over the ethics of child labor... *and* learn about mutiny in the English

navy. You ponder how much responsibility an employer has toward his employees... *and* marvel at how jealous and catty people can be.

Basically, *North and South* combines the meaty political commentary of a reputable news source *and* the gossipy thrilling goodness of a tabloid. And we don't know what's better than that.

North and South Summary

Margaret Hale might not be rich, but she's very well educated and she lives a peaceful life in the hamlet of Helstone. Unfortunately, her father (a pastor) decides one day that he can no longer serve the Church of England because he doesn't agree with its views on God anymore. For the sake of his conscience, he sacrifices his family's peaceful life and moves them to the industrial Northern English town of Milton, where he gets work as a tutor. What a drag.

At first Margaret is grossed out by the filthy, smoky factory town. But over time, she learns to sympathize with its factory workers and their struggling families. She has a harder time, though, sympathizing with Mr. John Thornton, a pupil of her father's who also owns one Milton's main factories.

Thornton has made himself rich with hard work and intelligence, and he believes that he has the right to pay his employees whatever wages he wants. Margaret thinks that he has a moral obligation to pay the workers as much as he can. Conflict alert!

A workers' strike sweeps through Milton. A pack of rioting workers goes to John Thornton's house to threaten him with violence. Margaret stands up for John and uses her body to shield him when the mob starts throwing rocks. Margaret takes a rock to her dome. While she's unconscious, John realizes that he loves her—nothing like a little physical threat to awaken those passions. He proposes to her (after she's woken up) but Margaret rejects the proposal. This leads to bad blood between Margaret and John's doting mother.

Meanwhile, Margaret's mother falls terminally ill. Blame the pollution of Milton. Margaret's brother Frederick has been exiled from England for a mutinying back in his Navy days... if he sets foot in England again he risks getting hanged. Yikes. But Margaret and her father sneak Frederick back into the country to be at his mother's bedside for her death.

Once she has died, Margaret escorts Frederick to the train station to help him get back out of the country without being noticed. On their way to the station, they pass John Thornton, who jealously assumes that they're lovers. They also run into a dude named Leonards who wants to hand Frederick over to the authorities for a reward. Frederick pushes him down, and Leonards later dies. He doesn't die because of the push, though: he dies because he's a drunk and has alcoholism-related organ failure. The police come to Margaret, though, because she was seen at the train station with Leonards and a mystery man (Frederick). Margaret lies and says she was never at the train station. Way to perjure yourself, Maggie.

The police also talk to Thornton, who backs up Margaret's story about not being at the train station, even though he clearly saw her there. He does this because he doesn't want to dirty her good name: it would be assumed that Margaret was out late at night with a boyfriend, and nice girls in the 19th Century did *not* go out late at night with their boyfriends. This shows us that Thornton is super-loyal to Margaret.

Thornton has also become more of a supporter of his workers. He is trying to support their rights and starts doing things like serving lunch at the factory and eating with the workers. Margaret is starting to realize that she might be a little stuck-up.

Soon afterwards, Margaret's father dies. Margaret is taken under the wing of her godfather Mr. Bell, but she moves back to London to live with her cousin's family. Then Mr. Bell dies. Sadness. It turns out, though, that Mr. Bell was fairly well off and he left her a good chunk of money. Gladness!

Mr. John Thornton visits London later on because some bad business deals have caused him to lose his factory. He's no longer the boss and will have to go back to being a worker. Margaret offers him enough money to keep his factory afloat. And now, at the end of the book, they decide they really do love one another. They get married, even though they know their in-laws will hate them. Aww.

Chapter One: Haste to the Wedding

- Margaret Hale is trying to wake her cousin Edith from a sound sleep. The two of them have grown up together in a fancy London house.
- Edith is going to be married to a man named Captain Lennox soon. The couple will then move to the Greek island of Corfu. Margaret is sad at the thought of having her childhood friend move away.
- Margaret's parents live in a country village called Helstone. But Margaret has lived with her cousin's family in London for ten years, where she has become an educated and fashionable young woman.
- Some wedding guests have arrived, and Margaret entertains them while Edith sleeps. During their conversation, Edith's mother Mrs. Shaw complains about the mistake she made by marrying a man she didn't love: Edith's dad.
- As the guests have their conversations, a male guest named Henry Lennox arrives. He is the groom's brother and a lawyer. Margaret has a semi-private chat with Henry about what she'd like her own wedding to look like. She imagines that it would be very modest, with hardly any money spent. She'd like for it to happen out in a meadow or forest. Henry says that this kind of modest wedding suits her character. This comment makes Margaret bristle because she doesn't like being pegged down as one kind of character or another.
- She talks for a moment about her home village of Helstone. Lennox asks her to describe it to him. After she does, he accuses her of making it sound like something out of a fairy tale. She argues that she's just describing the place the way it is.
- Margaret decides that she doesn't like talking to Henry anymore, and he accuses her of being too hard on him. All he's trying to do is make small talk.
- Edith finally comes downstairs and plays piano for the guests. She stops when her fiancé Captain Lennox shows up.
- As she surveys the crowd, Margaret pays special attention to Henry Lennox. He is not handsome, but she thinks he has a keen and interesting face.

Chapter Two: Roses and Thorns

- Margaret travels home with her father, a pastor, after Edith's wedding. Margaret's mother didn't come to the wedding because she couldn't find a dress she liked. Unlike her sister Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Hale married for love when she married Mr. Hale. The problem is that a big part of her still wishes she'd married for money, since she's a lady who likes to have nice things.
- Glancing over at her father in the carriage, Margaret sees that there's something on his mind. She guesses that the marriage has caused him to think about his son Frederick, who is lost to the family for some reason. At this point, the reader is left to assume that Frederick died in the navy.
- Margaret looks forward to returning home to Helstone, where she likes to take long walks in nature and to help the village's poor residents. But she is unprepared for just how bitter her mother has become over the years about the fact that she's not wealthier.

- One of the things that bothers Mrs. Hale most about Helstone is that it doesn't offer Mr. Hale enough companionship, as he has very few friends and spends all his time in his study reading.
- Mrs. Hale mentions living closer to a family called the Gormans, but Margaret doesn't like these people because they've made their money in business instead of a leading a dignified life like her father. She's pretty haughty when it comes to this stuff.
- Margaret goes out for a walk with her father and almost faints because she loves nature so much. Back at the house, Margaret learns from her father that her brother Frederick has written letters to them. So now the reader knows he isn't dead, he just can't come back to England.
- Margaret suspects that her father has heard something about Frederick that he's been keeping from her mother.
- As the chapter draws to a close, the housemaid walks in on the Hales and announces that Mr. Henry Lennox has arrived. Funny. Margaret was just thinking about him.

Chapter Three: The More Haste The Worse Speed

- Henry Lennox has just finished seeing his brother and his new sister-in-law off on their way to Greece. On his way home, he has decided to stop off at the Hales' house. When Margaret ducks out for a moment, Henry glances around to see if Helstone really is as lovely as Margaret has described it. And it is. He's only surprised at just how modest the Hales' house is. *If you're looking for the subtext, here it is: Henry is checking out how much money Margaret has to her name.*
- Margaret returns and regrets to inform him that all she can offer for supper is some cold meat, since they don't have anything fresh. Until supper, Margaret suggests that they spend the afternoon sketching some of the villages' cottages.
- Once out in nature, Henry can really see why Margaret loves Helstone so much. While they're out, Lennox starts to pay her compliments. Margaret eventually becomes uncomfortable, sensing that this is all leading somewhere. Luckily, she gets back home before Lennox can continue.
- Later, the two of them go back out into nature. Henry apologizes for saying back in Chapter 1 that Margaret made her home village sound like something out of a fairy tale. He lapses back into an emotional, flattering way of speaking. Margaret dreads what he's going to say next. Henry Lennox wants Margaret to marry him. She turns him down though, and he's crushed. To make things even more awkward, they still have to go back to the house and have dinner with Margaret's parents and Henry needs to pretend that everything is fine.
- The two of them come upon Mr. Hale in the garden and they head inside the house. Finally, once the agony is over, Henry Lennox leaves.

Chapter Four: Doubts and Difficulties

- Henry Lennox has left the Hale house. Everyone is getting ready for bed.
- Margaret thinks about how she might have loved Henry if only he'd been a little different in some fundamental ways.
- As the evening drags on, Mr. Hale gets up from his chair and starts to sigh deeply. Margaret still can't figure out what's been bothering him so much.
- Mr. Hale asks Margaret to drop what she's doing and come speak with him in his study. Margaret assumes that he's going to talk to her about her rejection of Henry.
- Instead, Mr. Hale informs her that the family will have to leave Helstone. It turns out that Mr. Hale no longer believes in the Church of England and he can't in good conscience keep working as a pastor.
- When Margaret asks where they'll go and what they'll do, Mr. Hale informs her that he has an old friend named Mr. Bell who lives in a town called Milton in the north of England. Mr. Bell is Margaret's godfather. Mr. Hale plans on working as a private tutor up there, even though it will make them poor.
- Margaret knows that Milton is a dirty manufacturing town that doesn't have one-tenth of the dignity Helstone does. She dreads moving there.
- On top of all that, Mr. Hale hasn't told Margaret's mother yet. He was kind of hoping that Margaret could do it for him. Seeing what a worked-up emotional state her father is in, Margaret agrees to tell her mother the next day while her father is out of the house.

Chapter Five: Decision

- Margaret sits down with her mother to listen to all the plans the woman is making to improve the lives of the villagers. Margaret doesn't have the heart to tell her that none of these plans will ever be realized because they'll be moving soon.
- Margaret goes upstairs without telling her and goes to bed. Her father comes in and the two of them pray together.
- That night, the memory of Henry Lennox proposing to her haunts Margaret's dreams.
- The next morning, Mr. Hale says he's heading out for the day, leaving Margaret alone with her mother.
- Margaret invites her mother outside for a walk and blurts out the truth about them having to leave Helstone. Her mother sinks to the ground in despair. She can't believe that her husband would break from the church, or that he wouldn't tell her about his intentions. Eventually, Mrs. Hale accepts what's happening. She and Margaret start figuring out the details of how they're going to move all their stuff.
- When they get back inside, Mrs. Hale runs up to her room crying again. Margaret hears the maid Dixon come in, and she chats with her. Dixon has been Mrs. Hale's servant since before she was married, and she has always

resented Mr. Hale for not giving Mrs. Hale a richer life. As you can imagine, Dixon doesn't take the news well, either.

- Margaret isn't going to stand by and let a servant talk badly about her father. She puts Dixon in her place and sends her out of the room.
- Later on, Mr. Hale comes home to see how his wife has taken the news. Margaret says she's devastated, of course. But she has a plan that might make the transition easier. She wants to take her mother to a nice hotel in a town called Heston while a house is being set up in their new home of Milton.
- Mr. Hale is wary of the hotel's price tag, but he eventually agrees to pay whatever he needs to make things easier on his wife.

Chapter Six: Farewell

- It's the last day in Helstone. All the suitcases are packed and everyone is ready to roll out. Margaret takes one last chance to walk the grounds, devastated that she has to leave the natural beauty of her childhood home. When she returns, she worries that one of the servants will lock her out. She mentions to a servant named Charlotte how sorry she is to be leaving her behind.
- It turns out the family can only afford to bring its most senior servant, Dixon, with them to Milton.
- When she looks in on her father's study, Margaret finds him looking very depressed. She tries to comfort him and tells him she's proud that he has followed his conscience.
- The next morning, the family embarks on its journey north. Mrs. Hale cries through the first day of the journey. They decide to stop for a day in London. While there, they see Henry Lennox in the street. Margaret is glad that they don't stop to talk to him.

Chapter 7: New Scenes and Faces

- Before you know it, the Hales are only twenty miles from the northern English town of Milton. This is where Margaret and her mother separate from Mr. Hale for the sake of spending some relaxing time together while Mr. Hale makes sure the new house is set up for them.
- When they finally get to Milton, all they can see is factory smokestacks and giant clouds of black smoke hanging over the town. It all looks pretty grim compared to the beautiful, untouched nature of Helstone.
- Leaving Mrs. Hale at a hotel, Mr. Hale and Margaret go to check out some houses that they've looked up in the local newspaper ads. Truth be told, the two of them aren't impressed with any house they see. But they eventually have to settle on the least horrible one.
- Mr. Hale leaves their hotel to find the man who owns the house they're looking to rent. Margaret finds out that one of her father's acquaintances from Milton, a man named Mr. Thornton, has shown up to meet him. She decides to speak to the man until her dad comes back.

- Margaret acts with so much pride and stateliness that she intimidates Thornton. This is strange, since Thornton is much wealthier than her or her family. Thornton decides fairly quickly that he shouldn't have to put up with this kind of haughtiness.
- Just at this point, Mr. Hale returns and treats Thornton with enough respect to keep him around.
- Once Thornton leaves, Mr. Hale and Margaret return to Mrs. Hale and tell her about the house they've rented. They try to make the place sound better than it actually is.
- When they move into their new home, they find that all of the ugly wallpaper has been removed for them. The narrator informs us that the person behind this is Mr. Thornton, who has a lot of influence over the house's owner.

Chapter Eight: Home Sickness

- Margaret and the servant Dixon spend two days unpacking and arranging everything in the new house. Looking around, Mrs. Hale asks if the family truly has to live in such a miserable place.
- Mr. Hale isn't much more optimistic. He mopes about how much the house might negatively affect his family's health.
- Eventually, Margaret can't keep up her positive attitude anymore. She sinks onto her bed, alone with her misery. She reads a letter from her pretty cousin Edith, who seems to be loving life in Greece with her new husband. Margaret starts to reminisce about the luxurious life she had while living with Edith's family in London.
- Before long, Mr. Hale sets to work with his new pupils, teaching them all kinds of stuff about the classics and philosophy. The oldest of these new students is Mr. John Thornton, the wealthy factory owner who has helped get the Hales settled in Milton.
- Margaret is responsible for finding a local servant to help Dixon around the house. But she finds that most young girls prefer to work in the mills because of the better wages.
- As she walks about Milton's streets, Margaret becomes intimidated by how openly the people of the factory town, both men and women, comment on her looks or on what she's wearing. Part of her actually likes the thought that her pretty face can make some of the poorer men smile.
- One day after picking flowers, Margaret passes a poor young girl on the road and hands her the flowers as a present. The girl's father thanks her. He knows that she's not from around there and asks her all about herself. She learns that the man's name is Nicholas Higgins and his daughter's name is Bessy. She also learns that Bessy is sick and that neither she nor her dad thinks she has any chance of getting better.
- Margaret offers to visit them sometime. The Higginses aren't used to the custom of paying visits like Margaret is. Higgins admits that he's not fond of having strangers in his house, but agrees to her visit.

- When she gets back home, Margaret feels a little cheerier for having met the Higginses.

Chapter Nine: Dressing For Tea

- The day after Margaret meets the Higginses on the road, her father comes into the family drawing room and fidgets about. Margaret can tell that he's nervous about something.
- Finally, he tells Margaret that he has asked Mr. Thornton to come over for tea. Margaret informs her mother of the coming guest. Mrs. Hale can't believe that they're going to clean their house for a visit from a mere tradesperson.
- Meanwhile, over at John Thornton's house, we look in on a conversation between Thornton and his mother. When Mrs. Thornton finds out that Mr. Hale has a young daughter, she warns her son John not to get trapped into marrying a poor girl. John says she has nothing to worry about, since Margaret was very proud and standoffish the last time they met. This only annoys Mrs. Thornton.

Chapter Ten: Wrought Iron and Gold

- Mr. Thornton leaves his house for the Hales'. When he arrives, he immediately notices how modest the Hales' income must be.
- While drinking tea with the Hales, Thornton feels jealous over how wonderfully Margaret and her father get along. He wishes that Margaret would treat him as nicely as she does her father. The reader can already see the first sprout of his attraction to Margaret growing.
- Margaret drifts off into her own thoughts as Mr. Thornton chats with Mr. Hale about something from their last meeting. Mr. Hale, remember, is teaching Thornton classic literature. During this meeting, Margaret realizes that she likes the look of Thornton's smile.
- Mr. Thornton gets on a rant about a factory machine called the steam hammer, which was apparently invented by a great man in Milton. Thornton says he's very proud to be from a town where captains of industry can invent such useful things. He says it's much better than living in the south of England, with nothing but poetry and old money to live on.
- Margaret perks up at this and tells Thornton he doesn't know what he's talking about. She admits that there might not be as much industry in the south. But there isn't as much poverty and crushing despair either—and let's not forget the smoke.
- Thornton admits that this is true. But he reminds Margaret that she doesn't know the north of England like he does. Thornton gives a rundown of how the industrial revolution has completely changed life in England. People who used to be servants were able to go into business and make huge fortunes for themselves.
- Margaret, being from the south, thinks that it's undignified to measure everything according to dollars and cents the way Thornton does.

- Thornton also admits that when the Industrial Revolution first started and factories opened, the masters totally abused the workers. But as the demand for labor increased, the balance of power evened out a little. At least according to Thornton. He still feels a lot of resentment when English parliament tries to pass an act forcing employers to treat their workers better. Thornton thinks he can handle this himself.
- Deep down, Thornton is an up-by-your-bootstraps kind of guy. He thinks that poor people are poor because they don't have the talent or work ethic to raise themselves up in the world. Margaret thinks this is a terrible attitude and doesn't mind telling Thornton so.
- Thornton tells the Hales his personal story of raising himself out of dismal poverty through hard work. Thornton also admits to Mr. Hale that reading the classics has never helped him in any practical sense. He just likes feeling knowledgeable. Mr. Hale disagrees and says that knowing authors like Homer has a lot of practical value.
- After this, Mr. Thornton gets up to leave. He shakes Mr. Hale's hand and offers the same for Margaret. But she's not used to shaking hands and just answers with a bow. Mr. Thornton walks off grumbling about how stuck-up she is.

Chapter Eleven: First Impressions

- Once Mr. Thornton is gone, Mr. Hale turns to Margaret and scolds her for being so rude to a guest (and one of his students, to boot).
- Margaret says that she liked the part of Thornton's story where he talked about his own suffering. But she couldn't stand him when he started in about how great a town Milton is. She admits that Thornton has a good heart, but believes that he's totally tainted by the way he always judges everything according to money. Mrs. Hale agrees that Mr. Thornton isn't that great a guy, but for different reasons than Margaret. She simply doesn't like "new money." She thinks Thornton is too rough around the edges and not civilized enough. All in all, Margaret doesn't like Thornton and her father does. So that's that.
- A few days later, Margaret runs into sickly Bessy Higgins in the street. They make some small talk, during which Bessy keeps talking about dying. Margaret asks Bessy if she wants to die. Bessy answers by saying that Margaret would too if she'd lived such a terrible life. Margaret gives the whole necessary spiel about how it's important to keep on keeping on and all that.
- Bessy reminds Margaret that she promised to come visit the Higgins house and never did. Bessy's father Nicholas is convinced that Margaret is full of empty promises like the rest of the world. Margaret offers to go to Bessy's house right away so she can explain to Mr. Higgins that she's been busy with family stuff. Bessy warns her that her father might be a bit rude at first.
- Back at the Higgins' house, Margaret keeps talking to Bessy about how life is really worth living. Bessy's dad shows up and asks Margaret how she knows anything at all. Margaret tells him she believes in heaven and Nicholas admits that he only believes in things he can see.

- Bessy faints and Margaret lays her on the couch. Mr. Higgins can tell from the look in her eyes that there's real compassion in her.
- Once Bessy is settled, Margaret returns home and tells her mother she hasn't found a good servant to pair up with Dixon yet.
- Mr. Hale informs them that Mr. John Thornton's mother will be visiting them the next day. He warns them that Mrs. Thornton will be haughty and tough to get along with.

Chapter Twelve: Morning Calls

- Back at the Thorntons' house, John Thornton is having a tough time convincing his mother to visit the Hales's. She's not all that big into house calls, and she isn't inclined to like the Hales after hearing how haughtily their daughter Margaret has treated her son. After some bickering, John calls for some horses and packs his mother into a carriage.
- The reader learns a little bit about John's sister Fanny in this scene: a lazy young woman who doesn't really want anything more from life than pleasure. She's younger than John and doesn't remember the family's time of hardship as vividly as he does. She decides not to join her mother on the visit to the Hales's because she doesn't feel up to it.
- John isn't having any of this, though. He orders Fanny to accompany their mother on her visit.
- When the Thornton women get to the Hales's, they begin an awkward and forced conversation. Margaret and Mrs. Thornton seemingly have a "who is the proudest" competition with one another. And of course, they both get annoyed. One of the biggest points of contention is whether Milton is a good town or not.
- When the Thorntons leave, Mrs. Thornton orders her daughter Fanny to be polite to the Hales, but not to form any new friendship with Margaret.

Chapter Thirteen: A Soft Breeze in a Sultry Place

- As soon as the Thorntons are gone, Margaret runs out to see whether Bessy Higgins has recovered from her fainting spell.
- Turns out that Bessy is even weaker than the day before, and things aren't looking great. Bessy asks Margaret where she lived before moving to Milton. Margaret describes how beautiful a place her former village of Helstone is. Bessy takes comfort in thinking of such a peaceful place.
- Bessy mentions that her lungs have been ruined by all the cotton she's inhaled while working in one of the Milton mills. She also wishes her father had more faith in God than he does. She likes to think that she'll go to a better place when she dies.
- Margaret promises to come back again.
- As the weeks go by, Margaret's mother gets weaker and weaker, although her husband Mr. Hale is in denial about it. He can't handle the guilt of knowing that their move to Milton might be the cause of her illness.

- The truth is that Mr. Hale is very insecure about his wife's condition. He gets more and more worried as the days go by.

Chapter Fourteen: The Mutiny

- In her increasing sickness, Margaret's mother acts more tenderly toward Margaret than she has in years. During these days, Mrs. Hale also talks a lot about her son Frederick, worrying about how his life is going.
- Margaret takes this opportunity to ask why Frederick can't come back to England. It turns out Frederick was in the English navy and he helped start a mutiny against a ship's captain who was cruel to his men. Many of the people who mutinied with Frederick ended up getting hanged, and he'd no doubt suffer the same fate if he ever showed his face in England again.
- Mrs. Hale shows Margaret a bunch of the letters Frederick has written home during his travels around the globe and wishes that she could see her darling son one more time before she dies.
- Margaret wonders whether there might be some chance to have Frederick's sentence appealed in court. But Mrs. Hale says there's no way.

Chapter Fifteen: Masters and Men

- Mr. Hale informs Margaret that they need to return Mrs. Thornton's visit, since it's only polite to do so.
- While they're en route to the Thorntons', they discuss Mrs. Hale's health. Margaret says she hopes it'll improve.
- When they get to the Thorntons' house, a servant shows them inside. They're both struck by how well kept and clean the house is, especially since they do not like the Thorntons and their 'new money'.
- When Mrs. Thornton shows up, she and Mr. Hale make some small talk about John, who wasn't able to stay for this visit. Mrs. Thornton admits that she doesn't think John should be studying the classics with Mr. Hale, but that he should instead devote all of his energies and thoughts to business.
- Margaret argues that a mind can get stiff and rigid if it becomes obsessed with only one thing for too long. Mrs. Thornton curtly answers that she doesn't know what this is supposed to mean.
- Margaret tries to appease the woman by saying that her son has a great reputation, but Mrs. Thornton immediately wants to know who's been talking about her son. Turns out that she doesn't take compliments well if they're coming from Margaret.
- Mrs. Thornton says she was suspicious of Margaret at first because she thought Margaret was trying to get John to marry her. Margaret laughs. This relieves Mrs. Thornton, but also annoys her. Who's Margaret to think she's too good for John?
- Finally, the conversation turns to the subject of the latest workers' strike starting up in Milton. Mrs. Thornton dismisses the strike as nothing but the action of a

bunch of ungrateful workers. She's confident that her son will crush them if they dare to strike.

- Later that night, John Thornton visits the Hales's, sorry that he has missed their earlier visit. The conversation comes back around to the subject of a strike.
- Thornton knows the workers will lose because they don't realize that trade isn't as good as it was a few years ago. There isn't the same demand for labor and employers can't afford to pay the wages of three years earlier.
- Margaret asks him why he can't just explain this fact to the workers. Mr. Thornton says that he's not going to ask his employees permission whenever he makes a business decision. Margaret thinks this is cold-hearted and she tells him so. She thinks it's silly for workers and employers to always be at each other's throats when they're so clearly dependent on one another.
- Mr. Thornton finally comes out and says that workers are basically like children who need a firm hand to guide them.
- Margaret gives Thornton a speech, telling him that he has great power as an employer, and that with great power comes great responsibility. John Thornton demands that when workers are on his time, he is their unquestioned leader. On their own time, they can do whatever they want. It's clear that Margaret's arguments are frustrating him. After being short with her, he apologizes and she smiles at him before he leaves.

Chapter Sixteen: The Shadow of Death

- A doctor from Milton named Donaldson visits Mrs. Hale. After he's done his examination, Margaret wants to know what's wrong. But Donaldson has promised Mrs. Hale not to say anything. Margaret eventually gets the truth out of him. Mrs. Hale is very ill and doesn't have long to live. There's nothing to be done.
- Margaret runs up to her mother's room and tells her she knows everything. Mrs. Hale curses the doctor for telling. She is also devastated to think that she'll die without ever seeing beautiful Helstone again. Then, as she falls into a swoon, Mrs. Hale starts screaming about how she wants to see her son Frederick again before she dies.
- Before finishing their conversation, Margaret promises not to tell her father until the time is right.
- Afterward, Margaret speaks with the servant Dixon and realizes that Dixon has known about the illness for weeks. She apologizes for any time she's been short with the servant, having not known what a terrible secret Dixon has been keeping.

Chapter Seventeen: What is a Strike?

- Margaret leaves her house with a heavy heart. She winds up at the Higginses' to check on Bessy. It seems like death is the main theme of her life lately.
- They talk a bit about the workers' strike. As you can imagine, Nicholas Higgins supports the workers' side of things in contrast to Mr. Thornton's perspective.

- Margaret plays devil's advocate and asks Nicholas what the good of striking is. He insists that it's to get a good wage for workers. She reminds him that the strike will hurt business and affect the whole town negatively.
- Margaret insists that the workers in the south of England never strike. Higgins argues that this is because they have no backbone. Margaret repeats what Mr. Thornton told her about trade being down this year. Higgins insists that this is all made up to keep wages low.
- This whole time, Bessy just sighs from the couch, wishing that all the conflict would be over.
- Higgins steps out for a moment to finish smoking his pipe. While he's gone, Bessy mentions to Margaret that her father is too easily tempted by tobacco and alcohol, and that she wishes he'd stop.
- After another sigh, Bessy says that she often believes that she was born to suffer. Margaret tells her to have hope. Margaret tells Bessy that there's plenty of suffering in the world, and she mentions how her own mother is dying.
- Margaret gets up to leave. Once she's gone, Bessy thinks to herself about how Margaret's company is like a breath of fresh air.

Chapter Eighteen: Likes and Dislikes

- When she gets back from the Higgenses, Margaret finds two letters waiting on her family's table. One is a note from her mother and the other has foreign postage on it.
- Her dad walks in and asks what the doctor had to say about Mrs. Hale. Margaret lies and says it's nothing to worry about. He notices that Margaret is sad as she says this, but just pinches her cheek and tells her to cheer up.
- Meanwhile, over at the Thornton house, John Thornton is asking his mother about which families have accepted their invitation to come over for dinner. She reads them out and he takes special interest in the Hales. He knows that Mrs. Hale won't be able to make it and feels bad that she is so ill.
- Mrs. Thornton and Fanny (John's sister) take the chance to talk badly about the Hales for being so poor and haughty. John scolds them and tells his mother he wishes she'd like Margaret more. She wants to know if he's asking this because he wants to marry her. John replies that even if he wanted to, Margaret would never accept him. That being said, Mrs. Thornton agrees to make more of an effort to get along with Margaret.
- The conversation turns to business. It seems that some workers have already started walking out of their factories. Thornton mentions that if the workers insist on striking, he's going to bring in cheap immigrant labor from Ireland—people who'll work for a fraction of what the local workers demand. Sounds familiar? This sort of thing is definitely still going on today.
- Thornton closes the chapter by vowing that his workers will learn a lesson if they try to tangle with him.

Chapter Nineteen: Angel Visits

- Mr. Hale and Margaret are preparing to go to the Thorntons' party. Mrs. Hale can't go, but she likes talking with Margaret about what Margaret plans on wearing.
- Earlier in the day, Margaret visits Bessy and tells her about going to the Thorntons' for the party. Bessy is impressed. Margaret seems to be tight with people on both sides of the workers' strike. Like Margaret's mother, Bessy also wants to talk with Margaret about what she'll wear.
- Bessy tells Margaret that she had a dream about her even before they ever met. Margaret thinks this is silly, but Bessy insists that it's true.
- They start talking about the strike, which is now in full swing. Nicholas Higgins comes in and hears them. He starts railing against the bosses and their greed. Margaret can tell from his slurred speech that he's been drinking. He also finds out that Margaret is going to dinner at Thornton's and tells her to deliver a message for Thornton to stop being such a jerk.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Hale learns about the suffering of Milton's workers from some friends he's made in town and he mentions the suffering to Thornton. Thornton, though, says that their suffering is inevitable if they're going to insist on defying their masters. For him, it's all free market, free market, free market. Human beings don't decide what's good and moral; the laws of supply and demand do.
- Back at the Higgins' house, Margaret sees Nicholas with a man named Boucher who has a huge family that he can't support. Nicholas has a soft spot for this man and tries to help him whenever he can.
- Turns out that Bessy's health is getting worse, and Nicholas swears that if she dies he'll blame the bosses who made her work in unsanitary factory conditions. For him, that's why she has always had problems with her breathing. It's all the cotton dust she's been inhaling over the years.
- When Nicholas and Boucher step out for a moment, Margaret takes the opportunity to press some money into Bessy's hand. Bessy thanks her for the generosity.

Chapter Twenty: Men and Gentlemen

- Margaret goes home feeling terrible about the suffering she's seen at the Higgins' house. She chats with her mother about Bessy's illness and mentions her plan to bring the Higginses some food.
- Mr. Hale comes in and tells them that it looks like Thornton has decided to bring in cheap Irish laborers to replace his workers. Hale also promises Margaret to seek out Boucher and find out what can be done for him.
- The next day, Margaret puts on her dress for the Thorntons' dinner party and shows it off for her mother. It cheers the old woman up. Mrs. Hale makes Margaret promise to pay attention so she can come home with lots of details to tell her.
- When Mr. Hale and Margaret get to the Thorntons', they find that Mr. Thornton has to finish up a few business things before joining them. To make

conversation, Margaret asks Mrs. Thornton whether she minds living so close to a noisy factory. Mrs. Thornton insists that the sounds of productivity make her feel great.

- Eventually, the guests start showing up. Thornton spends as much time as he can with the Hales because they don't know anyone at the party, but time and again he needs to join some of his business friends.
- Margaret and John Thornton briefly talk about what makes a man a "true" man. Before she can get her final word in, though, John is called away to speak with an associate. It's clear that they're talking about issues with the labor strike.
- It seems that the other bosses are worried about blowback for hiring Irish workers. John Thornton is the only one who decides to go ahead with it anyway.
- Meanwhile, some other businessmen talk about Margaret and her dad, wondering who they are. Word soon gets around that Mr. Hale is John's tutor. The businessmen can't believe that John spends his free hours learning ancient Greek poetry, especially with a strike going on.

Chapter Twenty One: The Dark Night

- After the Thorntons' party, Margaret and her dad decide to walk home. They chat about how Thornton is put off about the strike. They agree that deep down, Thornton wants his workers to like him. But he's also very stubborn when it comes to getting his own way.
- Margaret confesses that she feels like a hypocrite for attending a fancy dinner party when she claims to be on the side of the working poor.
- When they get home, Dixon comes running up to them and says that the doctor is there. Mrs. Hale has almost died from her illness while they were out at the party. Mr. Hale almost faints on Margaret's arm when he hears the news. The doctor takes him into see Mrs. Hale.
- Mr. Hale gets mad at Margaret for not telling him about his wife's illness.
- The doctor informs Mr. Hale that the best thing they can do is make Mrs. Hale comfortable, since they won't be able to cure her disease.
- Mr. Hale goes in to see his wife, who dreams of the days when their family lived at Helstone. Of course, this just makes Mr. Hale feel worse for making them move.
- When Mrs. Hale reawakens the next day, she has no memory of how sick she was the night before.
- Margaret asks Dr. Donaldson what more they can do for her mother, and he recommends a waterbed. The Hales don't have one but the Thorntons do, so Margaret decides to go out and ask Mrs. Thornton for one.
- While she walks to the Thorntons' house, Margaret realizes that the people in the streets seem restless. When she arrives at the Thorntons', the man at the gate is quick to lock the gate behind her. It seems like everyone is on edge.
- Margaret enters the house, realizing that she can't hear any noises coming from the factory as she goes in. It looks like Thornton's men are on strike.

Chapter Twenty Two: A Blow and its Consequences

- Fanny greets Margaret at the front door and apologizes that her mother isn't ready to speak yet. While they wait, Fanny tells her that Mr. Thornton has indeed imported cheap labor from Ireland to run his mill, and this has angered his regular workers.
- When Mrs. Thornton comes in, her face is dark with anger. She calls for the servants to barricade all the gates to the house, saying that the workers are about to attack.
- Sure enough, a huge pack of workers shows up outside the house. The women gather at the windows and peek out to see the crowd.
- Soon after, Mr. Thornton comes in. He apologizes to Margaret, saying that she can't go home now until the angry mob outside has gone. It turns out that he has already sent word for the British army to send troops to break up the mob. They won't arrive for at least another ten minutes, though.
- Glancing back out on the crowd, Margaret spots a man named Boucher, whom Nicholas Higgins has always tried to help, because the man has a large family and no special skills. This man seems to be one of the main agitators in the group.
- Margaret is mortified to learn that the soldiers are going to use force to break up the mob. She calls Mr. Thornton a coward and tells him to go down among the men and reason with them.
- Mr. Thornton is visibly angry at getting called out like this, but he goes downstairs anyway and Margaret runs after him.
- Once outside, Thornton talks sternly to the mob and tells them to go away. He isn't the most charming of dudes, so the mob just gets angrier. Eventually, they move forward to jump him, but Margaret jumps in the way and hangs her arms around his neck. She even gets hit in the head with a rock that was meant for Thornton.
- Seeing that a lady has been hurt, the mob gets timid and ashamed and they eventually break up and go away. Meanwhile, John Thornton holds a half-conscious Margaret in his arms, thinking that she has just risked her life for him. He tells her that he is in love with her and will do anything to be with her, although it doesn't seem like Margaret can understand him.
- After he brings Margaret into the house, Mrs. Thornton comes in and sees her son moaning over Margaret's body. He tells her that Margaret has been hurt and that she needs help.
- Margaret regains her senses and insists on heading straight home in case anything has happened to her mother while she's been out. Mrs. Thornton advises against it, but she has already decided.

Chapter Twenty Three: Mistakes

- Mr. Thornton goes back into the house after Margaret is gone. He's annoyed with his mother for letting her go, but his mother reminds him that Margaret insisted on it.

- Mr. Thornton mentions Margaret's act of bravery—stepping in front of the crowd and taking a rock in the head for him—to his mother. Mrs. Thornton is convinced that this gesture means Margaret is in love with John. This claim sends John into a deep passion.
- After making arrangements for the police to protect his house, Mr. Thornton decides to visit the Hale house to see if Margaret is okay. His mother knows that he has other reasons for going, though. She gets him to spend the night with the promise that he'll go to the Hales' tomorrow.
- She also tells John that she knows that the real reason he's going there is to ask Margaret to marry him. She doesn't like it one bit, but she knows she can't do anything about it.
- Once she goes to her bedroom, Mrs. Thornton starts crying.
- Meanwhile, Margaret Hale returns home to find her mother and father sitting together. They tell her that Bessy Higgins wants her to visit, but she says she's too tired and that she'll go the next day.
- Once she's alone again, Margaret thinks about what a fool she just made of herself by hugging John Thornton in front of the mob. She knows that everyone will now think she loves him. Then again, she knows that she would do it again if given the chance. She detests violence and will do anything to prevent it.
- Margaret goes to bed and dreams about hundreds of workers staring at her and thinking that she loves Mr. Thornton. She burns with shame.

Chapter Twenty Four: Mistakes Cleared Up

- Margaret wakes up and finds everything in her household fairly peaceful, but she isn't up for long before the servant Dixon tells her that Mr. Thornton has come to the house and is waiting for her in the drawing-room.
- Thornton begins by thanking her for putting herself in harm's way for him. She quickly answers that she would have done it for anyone. This comment slows Thornton down, but doesn't stop him from getting to the point.
- Thornton asks Margaret to marry him. She rejects him immediately and he goes from smitten to angry. He can tell that she's offended by the very thought of someone like him loving her.
- Before Thornton leaves, Margaret thinks she can see tears in his eyes. The final thing she tells herself is that she has nothing to feel bad about. Thornton is the one who thought he saw love where there was none.

Chapter Twenty Five: Frederick

- After John Thornton's botched proposal, Margaret sits alone and thinks about Henry Lennox for the first time in ages. Henry, if you remember, is the lawyer from London who proposed to her back in Chapter 3. That's twice now that Margaret has rejected a marriage proposal.

- With Thornton, though, it's been different. Margaret has always felt like they were slight enemies, not even friends. That's part of what makes it so weird that Thornton would propose to her.
- Eventually, Margaret decides to get up and visit Bessy Higgins. Bessy is glad to see her and asks if she'd mind reading to her for a bit.
- They speak for a moment about the riot outside Mr. Thornton's house. Margaret asks whether Bessy's dad Nicholas was there, hoping he wasn't.
- Bessy assures her that her father didn't go. The man has no time for riots and disorderly conduct. He wants his men to strike respectfully. He is one of the Union labor leaders and he plans on telling the police who it was that organized the riot—his neighbor Boucher. But when he told Boucher what he'd do, Boucher begged him for mercy. Bessy also begged, and Higgins eventually relented.
- Margaret then reads to Bessy until the girl falls asleep.
- Back home, Margaret meets up with her mom. They get to talking about Frederick, and Mrs. Hale reminisces about what a wonderful son he was when he was still around.
- Finally, Mrs. Hale begs Margaret to find a way of getting Frederick back into the country. The woman absolutely must see her son again before she dies.
- Margaret promises to write a letter to Frederick that very night and to tell him everything about what's going on to see if he'll come home. Margaret then goes to send the letter.
- When Mr. Hale comes home, Margaret tells him everything that's happened. He says they should have waited to ask him first, since they'll be putting Frederick in danger of being executed.
- In the end, though, Mr. Hale is glad they wrote the letter. He agrees that it's worth the risk to let Mrs. Hale see her son again before she dies.

Chapter Twenty Six: Mother and Son

- Now we join Mr. Thornton leaving the Hale house, having just been devastated by Margaret's rejection of his marriage proposal. He runs his mind over the whole thing again and again, realizing how obvious it was that Margaret would reject him.
- Meanwhile, back at the Thornton house, Mrs. Thornton is waiting for John to come home.
- She takes some old cloth napkins she was given for her own wedding and starts unstitching them with the thought of putting her son's and Margaret's initials on them. She knows that she's losing her son to another woman.
- Finally, she can hear her son's steps coming up to the house. When he comes in, she asks how it went, and he replies that no one in the world will ever love him except her, his mother. On the one hand, she's happy that John won't be marrying Margaret. On the other hand, she's furious that Margaret would have the nerve to reject her perfect son.

- Very quickly, though, John deflects their conversation toward the workers' strike. It looks like the riot outside his house has helped to break up the strike.

Chapter Twenty Seven: Fruit-Piece

- Mr. Thornton plunges back into all his regular business and makes sure that the local authorities keep a close eye on the striking workers. When he walks through the streets, he barely recognizes anyone because he's so caught up in his own thoughts.
- He runs into Dr. Donaldson, who informs him that Mrs. Hale probably doesn't have very long to live. Even though he's mad at Margaret, Thornton is still concerned by this. He asks if there's anything special he could get for Mrs. Hale. The doctor tells him that fruit would make a nice gift.
- He goes to the Hale house to drop off the fruit and leaves without a word or even a look in Margaret's direction.
- After Thornton has left, we stick with Margaret, who is embarrassed to see him. Her embarrassment doesn't last long, though, before Dixon comes to her and tells her that little Bessy Higgins has passed away. It turns out that her consumption has finally gotten her.
- Margaret runs downstairs to meet Bessy's sister Mary at the door. She agrees to visit the Higgins' house before tea-time that day.

Chapter Twenty Eight: Comfort in Sorrow

- Margaret walks quickly to the Higgins' house. She visits Bessy's body, which is still laid out on the couch. At the center of the room, Nicholas Higgins stands in shock at his daughter's death. Bessy has been sick for so long that he's convinced himself that she'd never die.
- When he finally realizes what's happened, he curses and stomps around and cries. Finally, he makes to leave. His daughter Mary begs him not to go out and get drunk. But it seems like this is exactly what he wants to do.
- Margaret forces him to come look at Bessy's body. While they stand over it, Margaret tells Higgins that Bessy's last request to Mary was for her father not to drink. Higgins isn't swayed by this, though. He seems dead set on drinking.
- Finally, Margaret asks Higgins to come to her house with her and speak to her father. Higgins is reluctant at first, but he eventually agrees.
- Before leaving, Higgins bends down and kisses Bessy one last time.
- When they get to the Hale house, Margaret runs ahead to tell her father about what's up. He's caught off-guard by the sudden need to talk sense into a drunken man in the middle of the day. But he eventually agrees.
- While Mr. Hale speaks with Higgins, Margaret visits her mother and promises her that she mailed the letter to Frederick the day before. She and Dixon both promise Mrs. Hale that she'll see her son again before she dies.
- When she returns to the other room, Margaret is happy to find her father in deep conversation with Higgins. Higgins insists to Mr. Hale that he can't bring

himself to believe in anything he can't see with his own two eyes. This goes for the idea of God especially. He has a tough time believing that God exists when a girl like Bessy can live such a terrible life from start to finish.

- Finally, Higgins gets around to the fact that the workers' strike is over because the riot at Thornton's has turned everyone's opinions against the workers.
- While this is going on, Mr. Hale offers to read from a book about how workers' wages should always be determined by the free market and the laws of supply and demand. Higgins says he's more or less heard this argument before and doesn't buy into it. For him, employers have a moral obligation to their workers.
- Higgins then goes on about how the whole strike has been ruined because of Boucher's hasty actions. Margaret asked him why he let Boucher into the union in the first place if he's always been such a wild card. Higgins replies that he took pity on Boucher.
- Margaret then criticizes the union for the harsh way it treats all non-union workers. Higgins argues that this is necessary in order to preserve good wages for everybody.
- Higgins gets up to leave, but in order to keep him from drinking, Margaret invites him to stay and pray for a while with her and her dad. Higgins is again reluctant, but he eventually gives in.

Chapter Twenty Nine: A Ray of Sunshine

- The morning after her meeting with Higgins, Margaret gets a letter from her cousin Edith. The letter mostly brags about how beautiful Edith's new baby is. The letter also criticizes Mr. Hale for plunging his family into such a poor life just because he had a heavy conscience.
- Mrs. Hale comes into the room and listens to Margaret read the letter aloud. After that, she mentions how fond she is becoming of Mr. Thornton. She also asks Margaret to request a visit from Mrs. Thornton, too. Mrs. Hale would like to speak with her before dying. Margaret is reluctant to do this, but in the end she wants to help her dying mother.
- At this moment, Mr. Hale comes in with Mr. Thornton in tow. Mrs. Hale decides to ask him directly if his mother could come and visit her. It looks like she plans on entrusting Margaret to the guidance of Mrs. Thornton once she (Mrs. Hale) is gone. Can you say awkward?

Chapter Thirty: Home at Last

- When Mrs. Thornton comes to visit Mrs. Hale, she finds that Mrs. Hale's health has taken a turn for the worse. The woman really looks like she could die at any moment.
- While she's floating in and out of consciousness, Mrs. Hale asks Mrs. Thornton to offer guidance and friendship to Margaret if she (Mrs. Hale) dies. Mrs. Thornton isn't going to indulge her, though. She promises to give Margaret guidance if she thinks Margaret is acting inappropriately, but she can't promise

that she'll be kind to the girl. This is just asking too much. Mrs. Thornton then leaves.

- Later that night, there's a knock at the door. Margaret answers it and finds a young man on the front step, asking whether he is at Mr. Hale's house. Margaret instantly recognizes the young man as her brother and hugs him, pulling him inside the house.
- After showing Frederick into the house, Margaret runs into her bedroom and allows herself to cry for the first time since her family's troubles began.
- Everything is great at first. But the reality soon sets in that Frederick is now in a lot of danger.
- Doctor Donaldson shows up at the house, and the family hides Frederick away while he's there. Once he's gone, though, they bring Frederick to his mother's room.
- It's the end, though. No sooner is Frederick in the house than his mother takes her cue to die.
- Once she's gone, the whole house goes into mourning. Margaret is stuck with the terrible job of telling Frederick not to cry so loudly because the neighbors might hear the wails of a young man and wonder who he is.

Chapter Thirty One: Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot?

- As much as Margaret wants to mourn, she has to keep her composure and figure out the family's plans, since Mr. Hale and Frederick aren't being much help.
- She speaks to her father about funeral arrangements. He tells her to contact his friend, Mr. Bell, who was Mr. Hale's best man at his wedding a long time ago. Mr. Bell is also the man responsible for hooking Mr. Hale up with some tutoring in Milton. Margaret just nods and writes to Mr. Bell.
- Later, Margaret gets some unpleasant news from Dixon. Dixon tells her that Mr. Hale has been sitting next to Mrs. Hale's bed and speaking to her as if she were alive. Worse yet, she recently ran into a young man named Leonards whom she recognized from their days in the south of England. He was actually one of the men on board Frederick's naval ship when Frederick helped organize a mutiny.
- Dixon spoke to Leonards at the time and he immediately asked about how Frederick was doing, going on to say that there was a valuable reward out for anyone who captured Frederick. He also let slip to Dixon that he was in Milton on secret business, and now Dixon is afraid that Leonards somehow knows that Frederick is in town.
- Before leaving Dixon, Leonards apparently told her that he'd give her half the reward if she ever helped him capture Frederick.
- The story is enough to spook the family. They decide that Frederick needs to leave immediately. But just then, they wonder if it would ever be possible to clear Frederick's name. Margaret settles on the possibility of contacting Henry Lennox in London and seeing if there's any way Frederick could make a case.

- Frederick also tells Margaret that he is engaged to a beautiful young woman from Spain. He asks whether Mr. Hale and Margaret would move to Spain with him, but Mr. Hale refuses, saying he's had enough moving for one life.
- Margaret advises Frederick to go to London the next evening by train. Then he can meet up with Henry Lennox in London to discuss his case and see if he has any chance of clearing his name. Frederick's new job is to write down the names of as many men as he can remember from his time in the navy. Some of them can be used as witnesses in his defense.
- With this decided, Margaret writes a note to Mr. Lennox. While writing, we are reminded that this is the first contact between them since Margaret rejected his marriage proposal.
- When she's finished the note, Frederick takes it from her and puts it in his pocket book. While doing this, a lock of black hair falls from the pocket book. Frederick promises Margaret that some day, she'll have to meet his fiancée Dolores.

Chapter Thirty Two: Mischances

- All the next day, Frederick, Margaret, and Mr. Hale sit together. It is settled that Margaret will walk to the train station with Frederick that evening to make sure he gets away safely.
- That night, Margaret and Frederick go to the train station. On their way there, they pass Mr. Thornton, who is riding by in a carriage. Margaret knows that he has seen them together, and she also notices that he is wearing a big scowl. Frederick notices it, too, and asks what the man's problem is. Margaret simply answers that something has happened to make the guy angry.
- They hang around the train station for a while and get their tickets. Before they can get Frederick on the train, though, that Leonards guy shows up from out of nowhere and grabs Frederick. The guy is totally drunk. He knows that it's Frederick and plans on handing him over to the cops.
- Frederick shoves the guy away though, causing him to tumble off the railway platform. It's not a bad fall, though. Only a few feet. Frederick is also able to jump on the train and speed away before Leonards can get his bearing again.
- Five minutes later, Margaret can overhear two railway workers talking about Leonards. He's been stumbling around drunk and talking about how he's going to settle someone's hash. Turns out, though, that the guy has decided to go for a drink at the local pub before getting the next train to London in pursuit of Frederick.
- Margaret makes sure not to let anyone see her as she catches a ride back home.

Chapter Thirty Three: Peace

- Back home, Margaret finds the place pretty peaceful. She tells her father that she'd like to go to her mother's funeral. Her father says that it's not

appropriate though, since funerals are no place for women. (Yeah, this was actually a rule back in Victorian English society.)

- Later on, they find out that Mr. Bell cannot come to Mrs. Hale's funeral because he has a bad case of gout that keeps him from getting around.
- Margaret asks her father not to ask Mr. Thornton to come to the funeral. She doesn't like the idea of him being there.
- On top of that, Margaret receives a letter from Frederick saying that Henry Lennox won't be back to London for a few days. Frederick is going to have to run the risk of sticking around to meet with him.
- Margaret ends up going with her father to the funeral. She sees Nicholas Higgins at the funeral, too, though her father is too broken up to notice anything at all.
- Mr. Thornton shows up, too, even though no one asked him to come. He asks Dixon how Margaret and her father are holding up. She says that Margaret is taking it fairly well, which annoys Thornton. He'd rather see her show her emotional pain.
- Thornton, you see, is tortured by the idea that there's another handsome young man in Margaret's life. He thinks this because he saw her walking late in the evening with her brother, Frederick. Remember that Mr. Thornton doesn't know that Margaret has a brother.
- Thornton asks Dixon if he might call on the Hales the next day to give his condolences. Dixon says it'll be fine, though she never mentions this conversation to Margaret, and Margaret never ends up hearing that John Thornton was at her mother's funeral.

Chapter Thirty Four: False and True

- Days go by after Mrs. Hale's funeral with no word from Frederick, which is a great concern for Margaret. She's actually thankful when Dixon announces Mr. Thornton's visit, hoping that the man will be able to distract her father from his grief.
- While Mr. Thornton is there, Dixon tells Margaret that she is wanted at the door.
- Turns out that a police inspector is looking to speak with Margaret. He informs her that a man named Leonards has recently died in the street after leaving one of the town's pubs. The doctors have later found out that the man's liver was completely destroyed by years of alcoholism, but there are questions about whether the guy's death was caused by a fall he took earlier that night at the train station. If so, then the man who pushed him might be on the hook for manslaughter.
- The inspector has come to ask Margaret about it because one of the workers at the train station claimed that they saw her there with a young man.
- Margaret, though, flat out lies and denies that she was ever at the train station on the night in question. She can't run the risk of the police finding out that Frederick is in England. If only she knew whether he was out of the country. But she hasn't received any letters from London saying so.

- The inspector shuts his pocket book and tells her that she might still have to swear in court that she was not at the train station.
- Once the inspector is gone, Margaret goes into the study alone and falls onto the floor in a swoon.

Chapter Thirty Five: Expiation

- Mr. Thornton sits with Mr. Hale having some conversation, totally unaware that Margaret is lying unconscious in the other room.
- Slowly but surely, Margaret recovers and gets back up off the floor. Now she needs to play out all of the ways her current situation could unfold, especially now that she has lied to the police to protect her brother.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Thornton takes his leave from Mr. Hale and goes out into the street. He bumps into the police inspector, who actually owes his job to Mr. Thornton. Mr. Thornton put in a good word for him when he joined the service.
- Since Mr. Thornton is also a local magistrate, he will need to oversee the investigation into the death of Mr. Leonards. The inspector fills him in on all the details, and Mr. Thornton is stunned when he hears that Margaret denies ever being at the train station on the night in question. Remember that he actually saw her heading there that night, so he knows she's lying.
- So what does Mr. Thornton do? Does he turn Margaret in or lie for her? You got it. He totally lies for her.
- Then Mr. Thornton tells the inspector to come see him at his factory in one hour before taking any more steps with the investigation. The dude agrees. Thornton spends the next hour playing through all the ways he could deal with his current situation. He finally decides that no matter what, Margaret must be kept from the shame of publicly admitting that she was walking alone at night with a young man.
- He suddenly decides that he won't face the inspector directly. Instead, he leaves a note for him saying that there's not enough evidence to justify an inquest and that the inspector should stop his investigation immediately. Thornton himself takes responsibility for anything that comes out of this decision.
- Truth be told, the inspector is relieved by the note, since he's spared from having to ask for Margaret's testimony again.
- That said, the inspector heads to Margaret's house to apologize and to tell her that everything's resolved with the Leonards case. While explaining, he lets slip that Mr. Thornton is the man who has called off the investigation. Margaret knows that Thornton saw her at the train station with Frederick. So now she's ashamed and mortified to think that Mr. Thornton knows she lied to the cops about not being there.
- She feels degraded in the eyes of Mr. Thornton, and goes to bed totally stressing out about it.
- The next morning, Dixon pokes her head in Margaret's room and gives her a letter from Frederick. After sending Dixon away, Margaret opens the letter.

- The letter says that Frederick has met with the London lawyer Henry Lennox, who says that there might be a slim chance of Frederick getting off the hook for his mutiny.
- In the final lines of his letter Frederick asks Margaret not to tell anyone that he has been in England.
- Looking over the letter, Margaret is frustrated to know that Frederick has been out of England (and out of danger) for more than thirty hours, while it's only been seventeen hours since she lied to the police. Had she gotten this letter sooner, she wouldn't have had to lie.
- She gets out of bed and walks around the house in a fog. Seeing that she's out of sorts, Mr. Hale makes her lie down on the couch and nurses her until she feels better. She wonders whether she should tell her father all her troubles, but knows that she can handle it all better than him.
- The two of them chat about Frederick's engagement to his Spanish fiancée. Margaret asks her father if they could visit Frederick in Spain some time. He says maybe, but reminds her that they can never leave Milton now. For him, it would be unfair to Mrs. Hale if they moved away from the city that killed her. He finally settles on the idea that Margaret can go visit Frederick herself and bring word of him back to her father.
- Margaret won't go without her dad, though, and in the end she decides that she'll stay hopeful about Mr. Lennox's chances of getting Frederick's charges dropped.
- Mr. Hale looks at his watch and says that he expected Mr. Thornton to come over that day. Margaret knows why the guy might not show up, though. It's because he knows she lied to the police and he doesn't want to face her. As she wonders about him, she actually enjoys the experience of realizing how much she respects his opinion of her. This is the first warm feeling she's had toward Thornton in quite a while.
- Over the next couple of days, Mr. Hale falls back into mourning for his wife. Margaret stays down in the dumps, too.

Chapter Thirty Six: Union Not Always Strength

- Mr. Hale and Margaret set out to visit Nicholas Higgins and his remaining daughter Mary. After a quick chat, they find out that Nicholas is out of work because he's been blacklisted by Milton's factory owners. Or in other words, he has a reputation for standing up for workers' rights, which means that none of the factories want to hire him.
- Some factory owners have said they'd give him a little work if he swore never to give a penny to the local workers' union, but he flat-out refused.
- Higgins blames his neighbor Boucher for ruining everything for the workers in town. Public opinion was totally on the workers' side until Boucher went around and started causing trouble and doing illegal things.

- And of course, once the strike was over, Boucher went to one of the factory owners and totally agreed to leave the union in order to get work. So once again, he's betrayed his fellow workers.
- It didn't even matter, though, since the factory owners still kicked him to the curb. Now word is that Boucher is running around town crying like a baby and looking for handouts.
- Margaret thinks that Higgins is being way too harsh on Boucher. For her, everyone deserves compassion.
- As they speak about Boucher, they hear some action going on out in the street. They all look out and see a team of policemen carrying a person down the street. They're carrying the dead body of Boucher, as it turns out that the guy felt so much despair over being unemployed that he drowned himself in the nearby brook.
- People from the crowd recognize Higgins standing out on his front step and ask him to go tell Boucher's wife the terrible news. Higgins says he can't do it, though.
- Margaret asks her father to go give the news, but this man isn't up to the task, either. So she does it. Margaret gets all the dirty jobs, jeepers.
- As you can imagine, Boucher's wife is crushed. She's already poor. But without her husband doing a little work, her family is going to be totally destitute. She'll probably have to give most of her children up for adoption. Ugh.
- Margaret holds Mrs. Boucher in her arms and tries to comfort her. After the woman has settled down, Margaret learns from Higgins that a bunch of neighbors have taken the children to their homes and given them supper.
- Mrs. Boucher, though, is furious with her husband for killing himself and for leaving her all alone with the children.
- When everything has calmed down, everyone just wants to be alone, including Margaret.

Chapter Thirty Seven: Looking South

- Margaret and Mr. Hale pay another visit to the Boucher house to help Mrs. Boucher in any way they can. But all Mrs. Boucher can do is throw down blame upon anything that could have contributed to Boucher's death. She especially blames the union and Mr. Thornton, whose mill Boucher attacked.
- Margaret finds that she can't get through to Mrs. Boucher at all. Afterward, she tells her father that she blames city living for the way that people in Milton can't seem to deal with anything. All of their nerves are frayed from all the hustle and bustle.
- Once again, Margaret's thoughts turn to how ashamed she'll be if she ever has to face John Thornton again.
- There's a knock at the door, and Margaret is afraid that it's Thornton. It's actually Higgins, though, and he comes marching right into the house. He says that he feels like it's his duty to help support Boucher's family in addition to his own. He says he plans on moving south to see if he can find work in a town where he

doesn't have a reputation as a labor agitator. Margaret advises against it, saying that he's not young enough to handle the strain of the labor he'd have to do down there.

- After some back and forth about whether Higgins should go, Margaret asks him if he has gone to Mr. Thornton's factory looking for work. Higgins assures her that he indeed has, and that one of Thornton's servants told him to get lost. Margaret insists that he might get a different answer if he speaks to Thornton directly, though.
- Finally, Higgins agrees to go find Thornton and speak to him personally.
- After Higgins is gone, Mr. Hale says that it finally seems as though Margaret is doing Mr. Thornton justice by assuming he can be kind. Thinking about this, Margaret realizes that she does think Mr. Thornton is a good man. It might have something to do with him letting her off the hook about lying to the police.

Chapter Thirty Eight: Promises Fulfilled

- The narrator reminds us that Margaret might realize that Mr. Thornton knows she lied to the police. But what she doesn't realize is that he thinks the young man she was walking with to the train station is her lover, instead of her brother.
- This thought, of course, weighs heavily on Thornton's mind and puts him in a grumpy mood.
- One day, while he's storming around the house, his mother sits him down and tells him that they'll need a new cook, since their current one is leaving. On top of that, the cook has told Mrs. Thornton something about Margaret Hale that she (Mrs. Thornton) thinks her son would want to hear. She repeats to her son the story of Margaret being seen at the train station walking alone with a young man in the evening. This is absolutely scandalous to Mrs. Thornton.
- Mr. Thornton tells his mom he's heard the whole story and that there will be no investigation into the death of Leonards.
- Mrs. Thornton stays on the topic of Margaret, though, while Mr. Thornton tries to get her to drop it.
- The reason Mrs. Thornton keeps asking is because she promised Mrs. Hale before she died that she would offer advice to Margaret if she ever saw the young lady going astray. As you can imagine, Mrs. Thornton relishes her chance to go tell Margaret off for being an irresponsible woman.
- Thornton admits that Margaret was probably at the train station with her lover and that some guidance from Mrs. Thornton might do her good. He adds, though, that there must be some sort of secret that's torturing Margaret. Mrs. Thornton wants to know what he's talking about, but he won't say anything more.
- Mrs. Thornton heads over to the Hales' house, where she finds Margaret sitting alone and writing a letter to her cousin.
- Mrs. Thornton announces that she has come as an act of duty to Margaret's dead mother. She tells Margaret everything she knows about the train station

and advises her not to do anything more that could damage her reputation as a chaste young woman.

- Margaret is totally mortified to be talked to this way. She says she can't handle the thought of being insulted like this. Mrs. Thornton is totally confused, since she assumes that Margaret won't deny being at the train station.
- Margaret does everything but say that the young man at the station was her brother. But because she never says this directly, Mrs. Thornton doesn't know what to make of her.
- While they talk, Margaret learns that Mr. Thornton has never breathed a word about the train station to his mother. It was rather her cook who told her the rumor. She also says that she understands there might be some special circumstances that make Margaret's actions more forgivable than they appear, but Margaret won't give her any more details. Instead, she leaves the room.
- Meanwhile, we join Mr. Thornton. He's back at home, and when he goes out, he finds Nicholas Higgins waiting to speak with him. Thornton says he doesn't have time and walks past, while Higgins says he'll just wait until he comes back.
- When Thornton finally returns, he's amazed to see Higgins still standing near his doorway. One of Thornton's servants tells him that Higgins is one of the union men who helped organize the recent labor strike. This info doesn't make Thornton a fan. He pretty much laughs in Higgins' face when the guy asks for work.
- Mr. Thornton goes inside to his table and grabs a letter off of it. When he looks up, he sees that Higgins is still there and he tells him he's never going to work in Milton again.
- Higgins keeps at Mr. Thornton and says he (Higgins) is an experienced worker and he'd be happy to offer Thornton advice about his labor relations and to tell him what's what. As you can imagine, this is a really bold thing to say, considering Thornton's pride and the situation they're in.
- Higgins says he also needs the work to help out a widow and her children. He means Mrs. Boucher.
- Finally, Higgins relents and leaves, saying that the only reason he has asked Thornton is because a young woman said Thornton would be generous. Mr. Thornton tells Higgins to tell this woman to mind her own business.
- After Higgins has left, though, Thornton keeps thinking about him. He goes to one of his servants and asks how long Higgins was waiting to speak with him. The guard tells him that Higgins waited for more than five hours. Thornton is impressed by the man's patience and determination.

Chapter Thirty Nine: Making Friends

- Now we're back with Margaret Hale, who shuts herself up in her room as soon as she leaves Mrs. Thornton standing in her drawing room. She waits until she hears Mrs. Thornton leave to come back out. She reminds herself that she's innocent of what Mrs. Thornton's accused her of doing (walking out at night with

a man, ooooooh), but she still hates the fact that someone would think badly of her.

- She reflects back on the past year of her life and thinks about how horrible everything has been since her family moved from Helstone.
- She resolves to avoid Mr. Thornton as much as possible from now on.
- After a long walk in the country, Margaret comes home to find out that the widow Mrs. Boucher is very sick. Well that's just great.
- To find out more, Margaret goes to the Higgins' house. She also wants to know how things went between Nicholas and Mr. Thornton. When she gets there, she's sorry to hear that Mr. Thornton turned Higgins down. Higgins also passes on Thornton's message for her to mind her own business.
- While they're chatting, they hear a noise at the door and turn to find Mr. Thornton standing there. He's surprised to see them together, and he instantly figures out that Margaret would have been the one who sent Higgins to him. At this moment, he realizes that Margaret has a better opinion of his kindness than he first thought.
- Thornton sees the little Boucher children playing around the house and asks if they are Higgins'. Higgins replies that they aren't, but that he has to take care of them.
- Thornton admits that at first, he thought Higgins was making up the story about the Boucher kids. He apologizes to Higgins and offers him a job. Now it's Higgins' turn to act proud. He pauses for a long time before answering, saying that he doesn't like being called the terrible things Thornton called him to his face.
- Eventually, the two men shake hands and agree on their new arrangement. Higgins reminds Thornton that he will continue to fight for workers' rights from the factory floor.
- After Higgins leaves the room, Thornton speaks to Margaret about how he has lied in order to keep her from dealing with the police about Leonard's death. He admits that he'd like to know more about the young man he saw her walking with, but when she refuses to answer, he lets the matter go. He tells her not to worry about him ever making a romantic advance on her again, and he turns to go.
- Margaret stands alone, sad that she has lost Mr. Thornton's good opinion. She wishes that he still saw her the way he used to.
- She goes home and acts overly cheery in front of her dad, who is surprised at how weirdly happy she's acting.
- Just when things seem too miserable to bear, Mr. Hale gets the happy news that his good ol' buddy Mr. Bell will come to visit them from Oxford.
- Margaret also gets a letter from her cousin Edith expressing sadness over Mrs. Hale's death. Also, it looks like Edith and Captain Lennox will be moving back to England. Margaret looks forward to the thought of going to London and staying with the Lennoxes.

Chapter Forty: Out of Tune

- Margaret doesn't necessarily expect much happiness from Mr. Bell's visit. But when he comes, she is surprised to find just how much he cheers her up. He is her godfather, after all, and he and Margaret like to kid around with each other.
- Margaret finds out that Mr. Thornton will be coming over to see Mr. Bell, since the two of them are friends and business associates.
- When Mr. Thornton shows up, he sees Margaret and Mr. Hale looking at a letter, which Margaret quickly puts out of sight. They explain to Mr. Thornton that the letter is from Henry Lennox in London, and that it has made Margaret very hopeful. We of course know that they're talking about Frederick's lawsuit. Mr. Thornton, though, can only assume that Margaret is waiting for a marriage proposal from this Lennox fellow.
- Mr. Bell starts joking about how all the men from Milton want to make more money without ever wondering about why they want it in the first place. Mr. Thornton insists that money isn't what he's after. When asked what he really wants, he says he'd rather not say.
- Mr. Bell mentions that in their previous conversation, Margaret was saying really nice things about Milton and its manufacturers. This comment surprises Mr. Thornton, who has always thought Margaret looked down on him and his kind.
- Mr. Thornton then gives a little speech about how the men of Milton like to be left to their own devices, and to manage their factories whatever way they wish. They like to make decisions for themselves rather than having the government impose things on them.
- He admits, though, that the most recent workers' strike has been a respectable one. Mr. Bell is astounded to hear Mr. Thornton refer to any strike as respectable, since he has always known the guy to hate organized labor.
- Margaret tries to divert the conversation onto more trivial subjects. But Mr. Thornton makes a sarcastic remark that keeps her silent for the rest of the conversation. He instantly feels bad about it, and leaves.
- After he is gone, Mr. Bell talks about how touchy Mr. Thornton is. The guy can't handle being contradicted by anyone. His money has made him too proud.
- Margaret insists, though, that there must be something particularly bothering Mr. Thornton. She knows what it is, but won't get into details.
- After Margaret leaves, Mr. Bell asks Mr. Hale whether Margaret and Thornton have a special affection for each other.
- Mr. Hale is amazed at this idea. He says that if there is any affection, it must be on Thornton's side only.
- Mr. Bell drops the subject and goes to bed. Mr. Hale, on the other hand, lies awake that night thinking about Mr. Bell's theory.
- When he leaves the next day, Mr. Bell promises that he'll always look out for Margaret. He even promises that when he returns, he'll bring a young man who'll be a great match for Margaret in marriage. Mr. Hale tells him not to bother, though, since he wants Margaret to stay at his side.

- Mr. Bell offers for Mr. Hale and Margaret to come live with him, but Mr. Hale refuses, saying that he must live out his life in the town where his wife has died.
- So the narrator tells us that Mr. Hale and Margaret have fallen back into their regular, boring life.
- Over this time, Margaret hears about Mr. Thornton from Higgins, who says that Mr. Thornton is a coin with two sides. One is a hard-nosed businessman and the other...well...isn't. Higgins insists that he's never afraid to speak his mind to Mr. Thornton.
- Over time, Mr. Thornton comes less and less often to the Hales' house for lessons. Mr. Hale is sad not to see him as much, since he was Mr. Hale's favorite student.
- One evening Mr. Hale repeats Mr. Bell's guess and asks Margaret whether she thinks Mr. Thornton has a special liking for her. Margaret is totally blindsided by the question.
- She admits that Thornton proposed to her and that she refused him. She admits that she is probably the reason Mr. Hale has lost Mr. Thornton as a student.
- Mr. Hale is shocked to find Margaret crying as she says this. She changes the subject by talking about how her cousin Edith will be returning to London the next day.
- Mr. Hale suggests a change of scenery to help Margaret feel better. He thinks she should visit the Lennoxes for two weeks in London and talk directly to Henry Lennox to see what Frederick's chances of being acquitted are.
- Margaret says she won't go anywhere without her father, though. She also says she's losing hope about Frederick's chances.
- The chapter ends with the narrator telling us about how the Hales don't really have anyone in Milton whom they can speak to about important spiritual things.

Chapter Forty One: The Journey's End

- As winter comes, Mr. Thornton visits the Hales' every so often. But his attention is always on Mr. Hale and he barely acknowledges that Margaret is there. It seems that his business affairs have gotten complicated since the workers' strike and he's in worse shape than he first thought.
- Margaret tries to pass her time teaching the younger Boucher children. In March, she and her father get word of Frederick's marriage in Spain. It turns out that his wife is from a wealthy family and that Frederick is now a totally rich dude in Spain.
- Margaret also receives a letter from Henry Lennox saying that Frederick has little to no chance of ever being acquitted in England. It's just become too hard to track down any reliable witnesses from an incident that happened so long ago.
- Mr. Hale, meanwhile, starts to have some difficulty breathing as the next spring comes along. Let's hope it's just a case of bad allergies.

- After getting an invitation in the mail, Mr. Hale travels to visit Mr. Bell in Oxford. Alone for the first time in years, Margaret feels a wave of freedom and relief, feeling like there's no one to take care of. Finally, she has a chance to reflect on all the difficulties she has faced over the past few years.
- As she reflects, Margaret realizes that the one virtue she has always lacked is humility. She has always been too proud and haughty for her own good. She immediately takes more of an interest in the people around her, and starts by asking her servant Martha about her life. Martha only really perks up when the subject turns to Mrs. Thornton. Martha says that Mrs. Thornton and her son John took care of her when she was sick and paid for all of her treatment.
- Martha also lets slip that Fanny Thornton (Mr. Thornton's sister) is going to be married soon.
- Later on, Margaret visits Mr. Higgins to see how he's doing. He gets one of the Boucher children to sing some songs for her.
- Back at the house, Margaret feels ashamed for being so relieved at the absence of her father. While she sits, she feels as though she sees her entire life differently now that she's not so proud. She wishes badly that she and Mr. Thornton could be friends again.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Hale sits with Mr. Bell in Oxford and says that if he had it all to do over again, he would still leave Helstone rather than pretend to agree with the Church.
- Mr. Bell agrees that God has given Mr. Hale the strength to act according to his conscience even when it isn't convenient to do so.
- Mr. Hale then turns to the subject of Margaret, telling Mr. Bell that if he dies, he wants Mr. Bell to take care of her. Mr. Bell says that talking of death is nonsense, since he (Mr. Bell) is actually ten years older than Mr. Hale.
- As the narrator tells us, Mr. Hale dies in his sleep that very night. Yup, that's one more death, which gives us a grand total of... (Mrs. Hale, Boucher, Bessy Higgins, Leonards, Mr. Hale)... five people kicking the bucket.
- Mr. Bell boards a train to Milton. On the way there, he sees Mr. Thornton on the train and informs him that he's on his way to break the terrible news to Margaret. Mr. Thornton is stunned at Mr. Hale's sudden death, and he wants to know immediately what will happen to Margaret.
- Mr. Bell says that he wants to take Margaret into his care. But it's also likely that the Lennoxes in London will want her to live with them. He mentions that Henry Lennox will no doubt have his eye on marrying Margaret.
- Mr. Bell also mentions that Margaret will get all of his money when he dies, as he plans to make her the sole beneficiary of his will.
- As soon as Margaret sees Mr. Bell step out of a carriage outside her house, she knows what's up. She is devastated.

Chapter Forty Two: Alone! Alone!

- Margaret lies on her sofa with her eyes shut, struggling to understand what has happened. Her father is dead and she is now alone in the world. Mr. Bell stays by her side until she's able to regain her composure.
- Mr. Bell has a brief word with the servant Dixon, who says that Margaret's aunt, Mrs. Shaw, will no doubt come to console her and try to take her back to London. Mr. Bell writes to her with the news, and she packs her bags and heads for Milton. Before she leaves, her daughter Edith insists that Margaret come back with her.
- After Mrs. Shaw has arrived, Mr. Thornton shows up at the Hale house, too. Mr. Bell waves him into a smaller room and says that Margaret and her aunt must have the main drawing room to themselves. Since Mrs. Shaw is now taking up the rooms in Margaret's house, Mr. Bell will have to go stay with Mr. Thornton.
- It turns out that Mrs. Shaw is eager to get back to London ASAP and she wants Margaret to go with her. Mr. Bell, though, isn't sure if Margaret is fit for traveling.
- When Mr. Thornton gets home, he finds his mother and sister Fanny going through fancy materials for Fanny's wedding dress.
- Mr. Bell comes over to the Thorntons' later on while Mrs. Shaw and Margaret are asleep. Mrs. Thornton greets him with generosity, since he's a business friend of her son's. He tells her of Margaret's current situation, and Mrs. Thornton wonders where her London relatives have been the past year, when Margaret would have needed their support. In this instance, it sounds as though she actually feels some sympathy for Margaret.
- While they converse, Mr. Bell mentions Margaret's brother Frederick. Mr. Thornton overhears this and asks who Frederick is, since he had no clue that Margaret had a brother. After hearing an explanation, Thornton asks whether Frederick ever comes to England. As you can imagine, he's starting to figure out that Frederick might have been the young man at the train station with Margaret on the night Leonards died.
- Mr. Bell assures Thornton that the man with Margaret at the train station must have been Henry Lennox.
- At this point, Mr. Bell turns secretively to Thornton and tells him that at one time, he used to think Thornton had the hots for Margaret. Mr. Thornton gives him a total poker face on this one, though, and shows no trace of emotion.
- Mr. Bell can hear some construction going on nearby and asks about it. Mr. Thornton says that he (Thornton) is building a large dining room onto his factory so that his workers can all eat large dinners together. It just goes to show that the guy is becoming a lot nicer to his workers. And according to Thornton, it's all thanks to the advice of Nicholas Higgins, who is always bugging Thornton about what would make the workers happier.
- Thornton also mentions that he eats dinner with his workers, and that he also provides all of the food. He feels that nothing puts men on the same level more than eating together.
- Mr. Thornton also mentions, though, that his workers pay a share of the cost for food and the dining room. He doesn't want the whole thing to turn into a

charity. After all, he wouldn't be putting himself on the same level as his workers if he merely gave them charity.

- Mr. Bell warns Thornton that the other factory owners might not like him for getting so chummy with his workers.

Chapter Forty Three: Margaret's Flittin'

- Margaret's aunt, Mrs. Shaw, has no time for the town of Milton. She finds the whole place noisy, smoky, and dirty. She is certain that Margaret will never be healthy again until she leaves Milton behind and comes down to London. Margaret agrees and leaves Dixon in charge of paying the bills, shutting up the house, and getting rid of all the furniture.
- Before she leaves, though, Margaret gets a letter from Mr. Bell. In the letter, he tells her that if he ever dies, she'll get all his money and property.
- When Margaret is done reading, her aunt comes in and orders the servants to make Margaret more comfortable.
- Margaret gets up and goes through her stuff, sorting out what she wants to take to London and what she doesn't.
- The next day, Margaret says she wants to go wish a friend goodbye before she leaves Milton. Her aunt objects though, saying she wants to get going as quickly as they can.
- Margaret goes to the Higgins' house anyway and finds that Nicholas isn't at home. She's sad to leave Milton without saying goodbye to him, but she tells his daughter Mary to say that she stopped by. Before she leaves, Mary gives her the cup that Bessy Higgins always used to drink from.
- Next, Margaret goes to visit Mrs. Thornton. While they say goodbye, Margaret assures Mrs. Thornton that she (Margaret) is not guilty of anything that Mrs. Thornton might have once suspected her of. Aunt Shaw invites Mrs. Thornton to visit her in London sometime, but Mrs. Thornton tells her it's not likely they'll be meeting again. She's not trying to be harsh—just honest.
- At this moment, Mr. Thornton enters the room. He and Margaret say goodbye to one another. Thornton is visibly upset. While he escorts Margaret and her aunt to their carriage, he thinks about asking Margaret again about marriage. But then draws back and promises himself he'll never ask again.
- Before leaving, Margaret is able to meet with Nicholas Higgins, who expresses his sadness over the death of Mr. Hale. Margaret gives Nicholas her father's Bible, hoping that he'll be able to find his faith by reading it. She also gives him some money to spend on Boucher's children.

Chapter Forty Four: Ease Not Peace

- It turns out that Margaret's journey to London is just what she needed, because her cousin Edith has just had a baby and the whole house is quiet and resting.

- Edith knows that Margaret is sad, and she says that there's reason to cheer up because soon enough, the dinner party season will start. Then she and Margaret will be able to pick out fancy dresses and stuff.
- Margaret looks forward to the return of Dixon, who is still in Milton wrapping up the family's affairs.
- One night, while reading Dixon's letters, a servant comes in and announces that Mr. Bell has arrived. Margaret jumps out of her chair to meet him.
- Margaret asks how the Thorntons are, since Mr. Bell has been staying with them. He mentions that Mrs. Thornton doesn't seem especially fond of Margaret.
- Their tea arrives from another room, and trailing behind it is Mr. Henry Lennox. Margaret thanks him for all the work he has done on Frederick's behalf. He says it's no trouble at all. While they chat, it comes out that Frederick has been to England within the past year. This news stuns Mr. Bell.
- Mr. Bell gets up and heads home, feeling that it's getting late. After saying goodbye to Margaret and the rest of the folks, Mr. Bell leaves. Henry Lennox joins him, since they're walking in the same direction.
- While they talk, Henry lets slip a harsh comment about what Margaret's father put their family through. Mr. Bell jumps to defend his dead friend, and Lennox backs off.

Chapter Forty Five: Not All A Dream

- After his walk with Mr. Lennox, Mr. Bell finds himself thinking about Helstone, which is where he originally comes from like Margaret and her family. Realizing that most of his friends are dead, he suddenly feels very old and lonely.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Lennox slowly spells out for Margaret that there will never be any chance of Frederick getting back into England without being tried for treason. This is just one more nail in the coffin of Margaret's happiness.
- Mr. Bell shows up at breakfast and asks Margaret to accompany him on a visit to Helstone. She agrees, even though the thought of going there makes her cry with nostalgia.

Chapter Forty Six: Once and Now

- Margaret and Mr. Bell get on a train and set out for their home village of Helstone. Before leaving, Margaret takes some time to cry at the thought of seeing her old home again, especially since this was the last place that she and her parents were together and happy.
- During their trip, Mr. Bell stays quiet because he has some idea of all the intense feelings that are going through Margaret's head.
- When they get to Helstone, some of the villagers recognize Margaret and are happy to see her. They all say they've missed her terribly. They ask how things are with her father, since they already know that her mother has passed away. They're very sorry when they find out that Mr. Hale is dead, too.

- She and Mr. Bell stop to chat with an old friend of Margaret's family. When Margaret asks how one of the villager's friends is doing, the villager responds that they aren't friends anymore because the other person stole her cat and burned it in a pagan ritual. Seriously, that's what happened. This is one of the weirdest parts of this entire book.
- Finally, Margaret and Mr. Bell visit the old school house, where a group of children that Margaret used to teach are all attending class. The teacher gets the students to recite a few lessons for Margaret. Once the class is over, Margaret goes around and talks to a few of her old students.
- Margaret also goes to meet the new couple that has moved into her family's old house. The new pastor is named Mr. Hepworth. His wife, Mrs. Hepworth, gives Margaret a tour of the house to show off all the improvements she and her husband have made to it. It's a little insensitive, but oh well.
- Margaret leaves the house feeling sad. Seeing Helstone so drastically changed since she left makes her feel old and alone. Mr. Bell can certainly relate.
- Margaret brings up Frederick to Mr. Bell and says that he (Freddy) was indeed in Milton when their mother died. She is surprised that her father never told Mr. Bell about it.
- The time has come for Margaret to confess. She tells Mr. Bell everything about how she and Frederick went to the train station and got confronted by Leonards. She also tells about how she lied to the police and how Mr. Thornton covered for her, although he also assumed that the man with her at the train station was her sweetheart.
- When she's done, Mr. Bell insists that she has done nothing wrong. He even says that he'd do everything the same if he were in the same position.
- Finally, Margaret asks Mr. Bell to explain everything to Mr. Thornton the next time he sees the guy. Mr. Bell agrees like the nice dude he is. We can see here that Margaret still cares deeply about what Mr. Thornton thinks of her.
- Margaret and Mr. Bell spend the night at Margaret's old home—now the Hepworth house.
- The next morning, they get an invitation to dinner but Margaret declines, saying she wants to get back to London.
- Before they leave, Margaret runs around the back of the house and takes a few flowers so that she can take the feeling of Helstone with her.
- Leaving Helstone feels terrible. But a few days later, she looks back and is glad that she went.

Chapter Forty Seven: Something Wanting

- Finally, Dixon finishes up with the family business in Milton and joins Margaret in London. She brings with her all kinds of news from Milton about Fanny Thornton's marriage and how grand and tacky it was. She also says that Mr. Thornton bid on some of Margaret's furniture at the town auction just to help drive the price up.

- All this time, though, Margaret can only wonder whether Mr. Bell has told Mr. Thornton the truth about her situation at the train station.
- Over the next little while, Margaret gets it into her head that she would like to visit her brother Frederick and his new wife in Spain. Her cousin Edith gets upset, thinking that Margaret never wants to hang out with her, but Margaret calms her down.
- Dixon isn't the biggest fan of going to Spain with Margaret, though. She's afraid that "Spanish papists" will try to convert her to Catholicism.
- One of Margaret's biggest pleasures during this time is playing with Edith's baby son. She gets the sense that holding the baby boy gives her a kind of pleasure that she'll never have again. In other words, she's worried that she'll never have a baby of her own.
- All the while, Margaret can tell that she has once again caught the eye of Mr. Henry Lennox. And she doesn't particularly mind it.

Chapter Forty Eight: Ne'er to be Found Again

- We look in on one of Mrs. Shaw's dinner parties, where Captain Lennox and his brother Henry are basically holding court. Margaret can't help but feel though that these parties are superficial. When people talk about art, for example, they only focus on things like prettiness or ugliness, not the deeper substance of the paintings.
- Sensing that Margaret isn't pleased, Henry Lennox tries to strike up conversation with her by asking for her true opinions of things. All Margaret can think of is whether Mr. Bell has delivered the truth of her train station trip to Mr. Thornton.
- Sensing what's on her mind, Henry Lennox says that Mr. Bell seems somewhat ill from his letters these days. This info worries Margaret, whose loved ones don't have a great track record with illness.
- Henry is worried about Margaret going to Spain, because he thinks she'll meet someone there and get married. Margaret responds by saying she'll never ever get married, which of course bums Henry out.
- Mr. Bell is supposed to show up in London, but he doesn't come. Something seems wrong. And of course, Margaret soon gets word that Mr. Bell has had a stroke and probably won't survive another night.
- Margaret immediately packs her bags for Oxford, hoping to see Mr. Bell before he passes away. She gets caught up with her cousin Edith though and misses her train. She eventually gets a later train, but when she arrives in Oxford, she hears that Mr. Bell is already a goner. Tack one more onto the total death count in this book.
- At this point, Margaret realizes she has bigger things to worry about than whether Mr. Bell ever told Mr. Thornton the truth about her. She even feels selfish for worrying so much about this only a few days earlier.

Chapter Forty Nine: Breathing Tranquility

- We join Edith Lennox and her husband, the Captain, who are talking about the inheritance that Margaret has gotten from Mr. Bell. Since the guy is a teacher, no one would have assumed that he had a lot of money to leave. But it turns out that the guy has a lot of business investments that will make Margaret a very wealthy woman. It's so much money, in fact, that Margaret needs Henry Lennox to become her legal and financial adviser. This is just the kind of opening Henry's been looking for...
- Margaret takes a trip to the seaside to take stock of her life once again. Why does everyone she knows keep dying? Yeah, we'd be pretty angsty too if we were Margaret.

Chapter Fifty: Changes at Milton

- Now we're looking back in on Milton, where the chimneys are smoky and the skies are...uh...well they're smoky, too. The narrator puts us into a pretty grey mood by talking about how industry and business are always going through the same cycles over and over without any real purpose.
- The truth is, though, that things have changed since Margaret Hale left town. Mr. Thornton, for one, is in pretty dire straits. It turns out that the workers' strike took a bigger toll on his business than he first thought, and now the guy doesn't have much in the way of moolah.
- While Thornton walks around town moping, he runs into Nicholas Higgins, who has turned into something of his right-hand man. Higgins asks Thornton whether he's heard anything lately from Margaret Hale, and the very mention of her name actually brightens Thornton's mood.
- Things get worse, though, when Higgins brings up the rumors about Margaret maybe marrying Henry Lennox. Ouch.
- Just at this moment, Higgins brings up the fact that Margaret's brother Frederick was in Milton when their mother died. Of course, this changes everything for Thornton. Now he knows that the young man at the train station with Margaret wasn't Henry Lennox at all, but Margaret brother.
- As much as this new info cheers him up, though, Thornton realizes that his business is not looking good. He has the opportunity to make a risky investment with the money he has left, but in the end, he refuses to do it out of principle. If he ended up losing on the investment, it's not his own money he'd be losing, but that of people who've made loans to him.
- In the end, the investment that Mr. Thornton has passed up pays huge dividends. It would have made Thornton rich beyond belief, but he still feels like he did the moral thing by not risking other people's money.

Chapter Fifty One: Meeting Again

- Edith comes into Margaret's bedroom and tells her that Henry Lennox will come to the next family dinner party with a certain Mr. Thornton. It turns out that since

Mr. Thornton lives in a house that was owned by Mr. Bell, Margaret is now his landlord. Huh. How about that role reversal?

- Margaret asks what business has brought Mr. Thornton to London. Edith answers that his business has failed and he needs to get rid of some of his assets and sublet his house to pay his debts. It looks like Mr. Thornton will no longer be a boss, but will have to look for work as someone else's employee.
- That night, Mr. Thornton comes to the Lennoxes' house. While the party is going on, Margaret can hear snatches of Mr. Thornton's conversation with a man named Mr. Colthurst, who keeps talking about Thornton's reputation as a great friend of the workers and a kind, compassionate boss. This knowledge makes Margaret like Mr. Thornton all the more.
- She also hears Thornton admit that he will have to give up his business because he is out of money.
- Margaret finally walks over to Mr. Thornton and tells him that she thinks he is a good man for taking care of his workers, who are now so loyal to him that they've promised their service if he ever runs a business again.
- Margaret ends her conversation with Thornton and turns to Mr. Lennox. She asks him with a blush whether she can speak with him again the next day.
- Lennox is overjoyed, thinking that he has finally gotten Margaret to love him.

Chapter Fifty Two: Pack Clouds Away

- The morning following the Shaws' dinner party, Edith Shaw finds Henry Lennox and asks him how things are going with Margaret. She keeps tiptoeing around the question of whether Henry is engaged to Margaret yet, but Henry tells her to mind her own business. Edith wants very badly for all of them to be family so they'll be together forever.
- For one reason or another (the narrator doesn't specify), Henry Lennox doesn't keep his appointment with Margaret that morning. Margaret does meet up with Mr. Thornton, however, to talk about his plans to sublet his house in Milton.
- Margaret spills her guts and tells John that she totally admires his new approach with his workers.
- She offers to loan him all the money he needs to pay his creditors and keep his business afloat. John realizes at this moment that Margaret is basically declaring her love for him, so he takes her in his arms.
- Margaret murmurs that she is not good enough for him. So much for all that pride she showed earlier in the book. Aside: so romantic. Swoon!
- Mr. Thornton then takes out some roses he picked on a visit to Helstone and gives them to Margaret. Aside: Swoon!
- The two of them agree to get married, although they know that Aunt Shaw and Mrs. Thornton will both have fits.
- Yeah, this ending is kind of tacked on and it kind of comes out of nowhere. But oh well, it still does a nice job of wrapping up all the personal growth Mr. Thornton and Margaret have experienced in this book. Thornton is now a more

patient, compassionate man and Margaret is more humble and less judgmental.

- Oh yeah, and let's not forget that their marriage symbolizes a union of England's North (Thornton) and South (Margaret). See how we brought the title back in there?

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