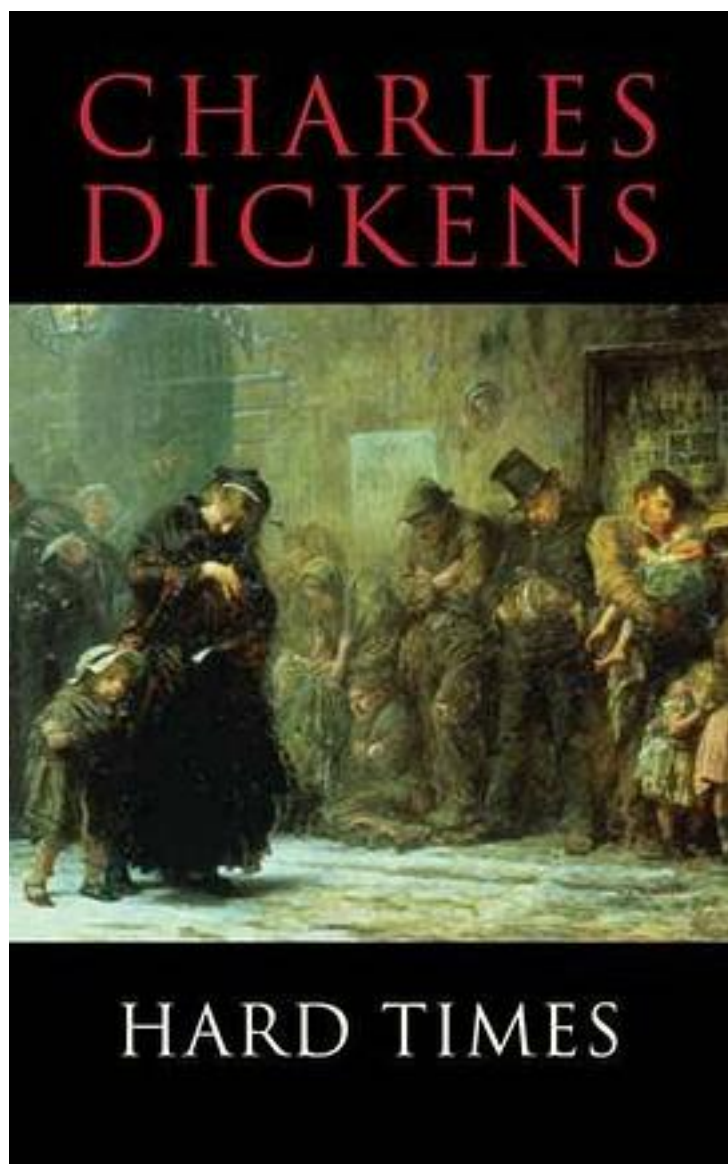


Hard Times



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"The road will be red with monstrous martyrdoms, but we shall win." Oscar Wilde wrote these words at the end of the nineteenth century after serving two years at hard labor for the crime of being homosexual. This modern martyrdom is the subject of "Lord Alfred's Lover," Eric Bentley's Brechtian dramatization of Wilde's last days. "H for Hamlet" is another variation on the modern martyr play, this time in homage to Pirandello. The protagonist thinks, or once thought, he was Hamlet. Fantasy? Perhaps. But, to paraphrase Marianne Moore, there was a real toad in the imaginary garden--a real martyr in the toy theatre. In German Requiem, Bentley takes inspiration from Heinrich von Kleist's play "The Schroffenstein Family," which in turn is a version of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," The young star-crossed lovers in his play are martyrs of an internecine conflict much like those seen in recent history in Ireland and the Middle East.

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