

# **The Warden Study Guide**

## **The Warden by Anthony Trollope**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Warden Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 1, Hiram's Hospital—Chapter 2, The Barchester Reformer.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3, The Bishop of Barchester—Chapter 4, Hiram's Beadsmen.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5, Dr. Grantly Visits the Hospital—Chapter 6, The Warden's Tea-Party.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7, The Jupiter—Chapter 8, Plumstead Episcopi.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9, The Conference—Chapter 10, Tribulation.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 11, Iphigenia—Chapter 12, Mr. Bold's Visit to Plumstead.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 13, The Warden's Decision—Chapter 14, Mount Olympus.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 15, Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment—Chapter 16, A Long Day in London .....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 17, Sir Abraham Haphazard—Chapter 18, The Warden is Very Obstinate.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 19, The Warden Resigns—Chapter 20, Farewell.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 21, Conclusion.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>



# Plot Summary

A man named John Hiram establishes a charitable hospital for the poor men of the nearby town of Barchester. Four hundred years later, the estate is making enough money that the warden of the hospital has a high salary. When a local man decides to uproot what he sees as corruption, a legal battle rages, with the result that many are hurt, and no one is helped.

Hiram's Hospital houses twelve charity cases, old men from Barchester who have no one to care for them in their old age. Mr. Harding, a priest, is the warden assigned to look after the men. He receives a salary based on the value of the land, and after so many years, the land has become very valuable. Mr. Harding is a kind man, and gives extra money from his own pocket to the men assigned to his care. He spends most of his time playing his violoncello, either for the beadsmen (residents), or by himself, but enjoys taking care of the men. He is a widower, and his older daughter Susan is married to Dr. Grantly, the archdeacon. His other daughter, Eleanor, is in love with a local surgeon named John Bold. John Bold sees himself as a reformer, and is determined to stop corruption anywhere he sees it. John begins stirring up dissension, talking to lawyers, and telling the beadsmen that Mr. Harding's pay should be split up among them. Dr. Grantly counters by going to his own lawyers, and by telling the beadsmen that they should be grateful for what they receive, and that they have no right to ask for more. Meanwhile, Mr. Harding is shaken as he thinks about whether or not he deserves all this money.

The situation gets uglier, and Eleanor decides that she can not think about marrying John Bold when he is prosecuting her father. Both sides get more and more followers. The case is important to many clergymen, since this can set a legal precedent concerning the role of the Church of England. Tom Towers, a reporter for the newspaper the Jupiter, writes several slanderous editorials about Mr. Harding. Eleanor, worried for her father, goes to John and begs him to stop the lawsuit. Overwhelmed by love and guilt, he agrees, and the two get engaged. John tells his lawyers to withdraw the suit. Mr. Harding is horrified by the newspaper articles, and decides that he can not handle such public persecution. He tells his lawyers that he does not want to press his case, and resigns from the wardenship. Dr. Grantly and Sir Abraham are dismayed. Eleanor, however, is happy that her father has acted with integrity according to his conscience.

Mr. Harding takes a huge pay cut and becomes the priest of a tiny parish. Eleanor and John get married, and John Bold becomes friends with Dr. Grantly. Sadly, the bishop decides not to hire anyone to replace Mr. Harding, and the beadsmen live out the rest of their lives with no warden to care for them. They are worse off than before.



# Chapter 1, Hiram's Hospital—Chapter 2, The Barchester Reformer

## Chapter 1, Hiram's Hospital—Chapter 2, The Barchester Reformer Summary

The narrator begins by telling the reader that he has made up the name of the cathedral town Barchester. He does not wish anyone to think he is attacking any specific community or person, so he has not used the name of any existing area in England. Centuries before the story opens, a man named John Hiram wills his land to the local church as a home for the old and destitute men of Barchester. What begins as a modest enterprise for the keeping of twelve old men grows over the years. Hiram's Hospital, as it is called, becomes a valuable piece of property. This is not a medical hospital, but a charitable home for old men, called beadsmen, to live in. The revenue of the property goes to the warden, the man in charge of the hospital, who pays for the expenses of its inmates out of a stipend. Usually the warden is also the precentor, who leads worship in the cathedral. As the story begins, Reverend Septimus Harding is both precentor and warden. Mr. Harding tries to do a good job, giving the residents extra income out of his own pocket, because he wants to take care of them.

Unfortunately, John Bold, a young surgeon living in Barchester, has taken on the role of reformer, and is determined to expose corruption wherever he finds it, including abuse of Church funds. John thinks that Mr. Harding should be giving more of his income to the residents of Hiram's Hospital. Hearing about agitation and reforms in other churches, some of the old men at the hospital begin to grumble that their standard of living should increase, since the money is available.

Mr. Harding does what he can to care for the hospital residents, but he thinks it is entirely appropriate to use the income generated by the land to publish lavish hymnals, and do other beautiful, expensive projects. He hopes that he can remain friends with young John, because John is in love with Mr. Harding's daughter Eleanor, and she loves him too. The archdeacon, Dr. Theophilus Grantly, is married to Mr. Harding's other daughter, Susan, and he cannot stand John Bold. He worries that Eleanor and John will get married, and he insists that she should only be allowed to marry a clergyman. In the Church of England, clergy are allowed to marry. Dr. Grantly also opposes John's reforms in general, feeling that church matters should be handled by church personnel, not by an outsider.



## Chapter 1, Hiram's Hospital—Chapter 2, The Barchester Reformer Analysis

These chapters establish the situation of the hospital and its money. "From that day to this the charity had gone on and prospered—at least, the charity had gone one, and the estates had prospered" (10). This sums up the central conflict of the story: what to do with the prosperity of the estate, not foreseen by John Hiram? It also hints that John Bold will act too boldly, as though he personally must reform all corruption he can find.

While John looks carefully at the spirit of Hiram's will, Dr. Grantly looks at the letter of it, and sees himself as ruthlessly guarding the church's interests. Since both men are very stubborn, it is clear that some ugly conflict will follow, when they decide to oppose one another. Dr. Grantly in fact considers anyone who does not trust the church's integrity with money to be a heretic. Even before the lawsuit, Dr. Grantly looks down on John as not being good enough to marry Eleanor, who is Dr. Grantly's sister-in-law.



## Chapter 3, The Bishop of Barchester— Chapter 4, Hiram's Beadsmen

### Chapter 3, The Bishop of Barchester—Chapter 4, Hiram's Beadsmen Summary

John Bold, hoping to demand a detailed statement of the hospital's accounts, goes and visits Mr. Harding. He finds Mr. Harding happily playing his violoncello for the old men, as he often does. Mr. Harding greets him warmly, but is disappointed when he hears the reason for John's coming. John lets him know that there will probably be legal action soon, and instead of being angry at the betrayal, Mr. Harding is deeply troubled by his conscience. He worries that John may be right, and that he has been receiving 800 pounds a year unjustly.

Mr. Harding pays a visit to his closest friend, the bishop of Barchester. The bishop is also Dr. Grantly's father. Mr. Harding and the bishop have been lifelong friends, and their friendship has been made stronger by the marriage of their children. Mr. Harding explains the situation to the bishop, and tells him of his doubts. He also reveals that until now he has been considering the possibility that Eleanor could marry John. The bishop sympathizes with his friend, but counsels that he put the matter into Mr. Grantly's hands. Both men know that Mr. Grantly always defends the side of the Church, and that he is a formidable opponent. Mr. Harding is hesitant to do so, partly because he likes John, but mostly because, if in fact he has no right to his income, he wants to give it to the poor men. He knows that Mr. Grantly will attack the issue without worrying about whether he is right.

Soon the lawyers are trying to convince the beadsmen to sign a petition saying that they deserve a much bigger share of the hospital's money. The beadsmen argue among themselves whether or not to sign. One of them, Abel Handy, keeps telling the others how wonderful 100 pounds a year will be, and insisting that the only thing keeping them from having it is Mr. Harding, the warden. Another of the beadsmen, old Bunce, is the sub-warden. He is a firm supporter of orthodoxy in general, and Mr. Harding in particular. Bunce finds out that most of the beadsmen have already signed the petition, and he angrily confronts them about it. He asks them what they, who live on charity, have done to deserve 100 pounds? Bunce also points out that until now, their treatment has been excellent, and Mr. Harding has always taken good care of them. He tells them that even if Mr. Harding's income is taken from him and split up, it is unlikely that the money will go to the beadsmen.



## Chapter 3, The Bishop of Barchester—Chapter 4, Hiram's Beadsmen Analysis

The bishop is a very different man from his son, Dr. Grantly. Although he has the authority, the bishop rarely tells his son what to do. The narrator shows how kind and gentle a man the bishop is when he points out that, if bishops were able to whistle, this one certainly would. Even though the bishop is a nice man of principles, he also recognizes that he must act in a way befitting a bishop.

The narrator foreshadows how the beadsmen will lose something valuable when he says, "Poor old men; whoever may be righted or wronged by this injury, they at any rate will assuredly be only injured; to them it can only be an unmixed evil" (37). They end up losing contentment, part of their allowance, and a warden who takes care of them and loves them.

John Bold is very self-righteous, thinking that he is the only one who can fix a problem, even if it requires attacking his friend. He is thinking less of the beadsmen than of his own role as a crusader for justice, thinking that it is vitally necessary that justice prevail in the world, and also thinking that he is the only one who can bring justice.



# Chapter 5, Dr. Grantly Visits the Hospital —Chapter 6, The Warden's Tea-Party

## Chapter 5, Dr. Grantly Visits the Hospital—Chapter 6, The Warden's Tea-Party Summary

Mr. Grantly and his lawyer, Mr. Chadwick, decide that they had better prepare for the possibility that the beadsmen will take legal action. They plan to get Sir Abraham Haphazard, the attorney-general, to represent them. Sir Abraham has argued similar cases in court, and they agree that he is the best man for the job. They know that they must act quickly, worried that if John Bold approaches Sir Abraham first, he may side with John instead. Knowing that any legal action must come from the beadsmen, Dr. Grantly decides to nip their rebellion in the bud. He visits Mr. Harding at the hospital, and insists on addressing all of the beadsmen together.

Mr. Harding has decided that he will not oppose either party, but he submits to Dr. Grantly's bullying and allows him to talk with the beadsmen. Dr. Grantly angrily reminds them of the true purpose of John Hiram's will, which is to take modest care of twelve otherwise helpless and destitute men. While he is haranguing the men, Mr. Harding interrupts to tell them that he will never change their situation for the worse, even after they have signed the petition against him. The men answer that in fact, he has always been a loving friend to them. Later, Mr. Harding thinks about how much he would be willing to give to keep this from becoming a scandal.

Determined not to be enemies with John Bold, Mr. Harding plans an evening of music and relaxation, and invites John Bold and his sister Mary to the party. When they receive their invitations, John tells Mary that he can not go, explaining the situation to her. Mary is very disappointed, and begs John to reconsider his actions, sure that his reforms can only bring misery to all involved. John is resolute and tells her that his love for Eleanor and Mr. Harding can not stand in the way of doing the right thing.

Eleanor is sad that John does not show up to the party, and she talks a lot with Mary, who explains what she knows of John's motivation. Afterward, Eleanor asks her father what is going on. Mr. Harding confronts Eleanor and asks her if she loves John. Then he confesses all that is troubling him. A few days later, John approaches Eleanor as she is on a walk. He apologizes for missing the party, and asks Eleanor if she bears him any ill feeling. She answers that as far as she is concerned, anyone who opposes her father is her enemy.





## Chapter 5, Dr. Grantly Visits the Hospital—Chapter 6, The Warden's Tea-Party Analysis

The reader gets a glimpse of the cold, cruel spirit of Dr. Grantly. "As the indomitable cock preparing for combat sharpens his spurs, shakes his feathers, and erects his comb, so did the archdeacon arrange his weapons for the coming war, without misgiving and without fear" (45). Dr. Grantly does not realize that the ones he is really about to attack are the Hardings and the Beadsmen.

When Mary and John are talking, she gives a foreshadowing of the events to come when she warns him that only misery will come of his lawsuit. She sees that John can only cause problems by stirring things up. She is correct in predicting that the lawsuit will not help the beadsmen in any way.

The narrator indicates that John knows, deep down, that what he is doing is wrong, by comparing him to Brutus. This points out how John wants to believe he is righteous, but he is a traitor, just like Brutus betrayed Julius Caesar.



# Chapter 7, The Jupiter—Chapter 8, Plumstead Episcopi

## Chapter 7, The Jupiter—Chapter 8, Plumstead Episcopi Summary

After Eleanor reproaches John, both of them feel bad about it and want to go back to one another. John tells himself that it is too late for that, since so many people are now involved. Indeed, Mr. Harding's greatest fears come to pass, and there is a scandal. Not only is everyone in town talking about it, but *The Jupiter*, the biggest newspaper in England, prints an article about Barchester. The article viciously attacks Mr. Harding, portraying him as a greedy, lazy man who eagerly holds out his hand to receive church funds, while doing nothing to earn them. Mr. Harding is absolutely horrified. He asks Dr. Grantly what answer he should give *The Jupiter*, and Dr. Grantly tells him that he must not give any kind of answer. He explains that any answer Mr. Harding gives will be twisted by the newspaper into a condemnation.

Meanwhile, John feels a little guilty about skewering his friend, but is excited about the article and the way things are taking shape. The beadsmen, when the article is read to them, think that this proves that they are right to demand more. The clergymen eagerly await word from Sir Abraham Haphazard, but at the moment he is tied up with an anti-Catholic bill.

At Plumstead Episcopi, Dr. Grantly's home, Susan reproaches her husband for his part in the legal matter. She tells him that all would be better if Dr. Grantly had just allowed John Bold to marry Eleanor, since it is unlikely John would attack his own father-in-law. Dr. Grantly tries to ignore her warning, especially when she points out that Sir Abraham will no doubt charge a large fee for his services.

After spending the morning reading, Dr. Grantly receives Sir Abraham's reply. Sir Abraham assures Dr. Grantly that John and the beadsmen have no case, because technically Mr. Harding is a servant of Hiram's Hospital. John would only have a case that could stand up in court if he had instead attacked the bishop himself, or the town of Barchester. Dr. Grantly promises that he will keep this a secret, lest other people hear of the loophole and use it in future cases. He does not mind that he and his father will surely have to pay huge legal fees, because he knows that his opponents can not afford to do the same.



## Chapter 7, The Jupiter—Chapter 8, Plumstead Episcopi Analysis

By this point, there is no way to back out of this fight. Mr. Harding is absolutely mortified by what the Jupiter prints about him. He will do almost anything to clear his name. Although Mr. Harding is a kind, generous man, his beadmen quickly change their minds about him, even though they cannot even read the newspaper. It is enough that they have heard that everything printed in the Jupiter is true.

The description of Plumstead Episcopi tells the reader a lot about Dr. Grantly's true motives. His house is uncomfortable, ugly, and expensive. "The apparent object had been to spend money without obtaining brilliancy or splendour" (77). This shows that he is not especially concerned about the poor. He pretends to be zealously dedicated to Christianity, yet he surrounds himself with riches. He does not even take enjoyment from his great wealth, and though the Grantlys live in luxury, it does not bring them happiness.



# Chapter 9, The Conference—Chapter 10, Tribulation

## Chapter 9, The Conference—Chapter 10, Tribulation Summary

The next morning Mr. Harding goes to the bishop's palace, where Dr. Grantly also is spending time with the bishop, his father. They tell Mr. Harding that Sir Abraham has said that the case is in their favor. Mr. Harding wants to know more, and in fact wants to see a copy of Sir Abraham's response. They agree that he can look at it later, and explain the technicality to Mr. Harding. He asks what should be done about the slander the *Jupiter* published against him, and the bishop tells him not to worry about that, but to do what seems right to him. Dr. Grantly interrupts and tells Mr. Harding that he must not write to the newspaper, and must not give up either his position or his income, which Mr. Harding has been considering doing. He points out that if Mr. Harding loses all his money, he will have no way to take care of Eleanor. Dr. Grantly says that if Mr. Harding gives anything up, it will set a legal precedent, by indicating that it is in fact wrong for Mr. Harding to receive the money. Dr. Grantly warns that if this were to happen, all the other churches would be similarly sued, and the Church of England would go bankrupt.

Mr. Harding is shaken and distraught by Dr. Grantly's words. He tells the men that he will not give an answer just yet as to what he will do, but he has to think about it for a while. He values his reputation highly, and dearly wants to clear his name. When he gets home, Eleanor can tell he is very upset. She asks what is wrong, and he tells her to go for a walk and leave him alone. She goes over to Mary Bold's house, knowing she will not run into John. John, caught up in the legal affair, has begun spending most of his time in London with lawyers and other reformers.

Eleanor returns home and finds her father practically catatonic. She begs him to tell her what is troubling him, but he just cries. She tells him that if he is worried that about giving her a comfortable life, he need not worry. She would be happy in a tiny cottage if Mr. Harding were happy. Finally he breaks down and tells her everything. She responds by telling him everything about how she feels about John Bold. The two spend hours discussing what they should do. When Eleanor describes John as her enemy, Mr. Harding tells her not to let go of her love over all this, and that he would rather see the whole church fall than see her with a broken heart.

## Chapter 9, The Conference—Chapter 10, Tribulation Analysis

In "The Conference," the narrator shows the extreme contrast between the attitude of Dr. Grantly, and that of the bishop and Mr. Harding. The bishop and Mr. Harding have



soft hearts, and will do what they can to ease the suffering of others. Even though they have quite different statuses in the church, they are both referred to as "priests." Dr. Grantly, the archdeacon, however, is cold, and does not care how his father and Mr. Harding feel. "The poor warden groaned as he sat perfectly still, looking up at the hard-hearted orator who thus tormented him, and the bishop echoed the sound faintly from behind his hands; but the archdeacon cared little for such signs of weakness and completed his exhortation" (90).

Here is another example of foreshadowing, when the bishop contemplates the damage that will be caused by the lawsuit. He knows that this lawsuit will destroy his happiness and follow him the rest of his life.



# Chapter 11, Iphigenia—Chapter 12, Mr. Bold's Visit to Plumstead

## Chapter 11, Iphigenia—Chapter 12, Mr. Bold's Visit to Plumstead Summary

Eleanor decides that the best course of action is for her to go see John Bold and beg him to stop persecuting her father. Inspired by the mythical Iphigenia, she feels that she must sacrifice herself in order to save her father, so she concludes that she must tell John that they can never get married. Eleanor goes over to John's house, and learns from Mary that he should be back in a few hours. While they wait for John, Eleanor tells Mary of her resolution, but Mary does not understand why Eleanor and John can not get married, and encourages her to rethink her decision. Eleanor cries and makes Mary promise to stay in the room with her when John is there.

John comes home while Eleanor is trying to stop crying. She washes away the tears, and begs him to stop hurting her father. He feels terrible, and is overwhelmed by her beauty, and tells her that he thinks very highly of Mr. Harding. Eleanor says that if things continue as they are, her father will die from it. She starts crying again, and begs John to promise that he will stop the legal proceedings. John pours out his heart, declaring his love for her, and agrees to do what he can to clear Mr. Harding's name. Unfortunately, by this point so many people are involved that he may not be able to stop them. Eleanor informs John that they can not love each other any more. John vows his undying love for her, and breaks down all her defenses. Eleanor finally gives in and agrees to love him.

John goes over to Plumstead, the home of Dr. Grantly. He informs Dr. Grantly that he will no longer be proceeding against Mr. Harding. Dr. Grantly assumes that this is because John has heard about the latest opinion from Sir Abraham, which is that John and the beadsmen definitely do not have a case. Dr. Grantly says that it is too late now, and after this insult has been done to Mr. Harding and the church, they are not willing to back out. He calls John a coward, saying that John only wants to back out because he can't win. Dr. Grantly threatens that the lawyers' fees are going to be very expensive, and that John himself will have to pay the expenses. John is enraged, and Dr. Grantly throws him out. John heads off to London trying to figure out what to do. He chides himself for making a promise to a pretty woman, but he still plans to do what he can to keep his promise.



## Chapter 11, Iphigenia—Chapter 12, Mr. Bold's Visit to Plumstead Analysis

Through Eleanor's dramatic gestures, the narrator pokes fun at his characters, and also points out that almost everyone has mixed motives. Although Eleanor is determined to tell John that he can no longer court her, she still plans on using her beauty to win him over. She manages to fool herself into believing that she is thinking only of her father when she fixes her hair and pinches her cheeks. By comparing herself to Iphigenia from mythology, Eleanor is unwittingly placing herself in the role of a romantic heroine, and she behaves like a stereotypical heroine. Not only that, but the narrator repeatedly makes references to the way characters behave in novels, as though *The Warden* itself were not a novel.



## **Chapter 13, The Warden's Decision— Chapter 14, Mount Olympus**

### **Chapter 13, The Warden's Decision—Chapter 14, Mount Olympus Summary**

Eleanor arrives home and tells her father that the lawsuit will be dropped. He does not respond as she is hoping, and shows her the newspaper. On the front page of the *Jupiter* is a slanderous article that mentions Mr. Harding by name and says that he should be used as an example, and not allowed to fall through the cracks. Someone has found out that Dr. Grantly's defense is to list Mr. Harding as a servant. The article condemns such a defense, and states that certainly John Hiram's will never intended the warden to make so much money. In fact, the article suggests that it is wrong for Mr. Harding to even be employed there, asking why the men need a warden.

Mr. Harding says that he is going at once to London, to set things right. He feels that the newspaper's accusations are unbearable, and he plans to tell his superiors that he gives up the position of warden. He plans to leave as soon as possible, so as to arrive in London before Dr. Grantly can stop him from his plan. He and Eleanor agree that they will move to Crabtree Parva, the little cottage that they lived in before he was warden. She finally gets a chance to tell him of her conversation with John, and father and daughter go to bed happy, glad to have washed their hands of the whole mess.

John arrives in London at the office of his friend Tom Towers. Tom is a head reporter for the *Jupiter*, but John is not sure whether or not Tom is behind the scathing articles about Mr. Harding. He has reason to be suspicious, though, since it is likely that John's own confessions to Tom may have fueled some of the writing.

The *Jupiter* is such an important paper that it holds in England the same weight that the Vatican holds in Italy. When John and Tom were young, Tom would never have dreamed he would occupy such a position at the paper. Although Tom never brags about it, he considers himself one of the most powerful men in all Europe, because of the mouthpiece he has, that can influence practically everyone in England. He enjoys exercising his power over great men, with no regard for the consequences of his words. The articles are not directly attributed to him, so no one can hold him accountable for his actions.

### **Chapter 13, The Warden's Decision—Chapter 14, Mount Olympus Analysis**

As Mr. Harding agonizes over what to do, Eleanor also tries to act with pure motives. As far as she is concerned, she has fixed the situation, and she finds it frustrating that her





father will not accept her sacrifice. "One may work, and not for thanks, but yet feel hurt at not receiving them; . . . one may be disinterested in one's good actions and yet feel discontented that they are not recognized. Charity may be given with the left hand so privily that the right hand does not know it, and yet the left hand may regret to feel that it has not immediate reward" (125). This reference to Eleanor's feelings also sums up some of the problems with charitable giving, which is the main conflict of the story.

The statue in Tom's office symbolizes the futile fight which is raging. It is a woman standing with her neck bent at an awkward angle so that it gives the impression of pain without grace, and abstraction with no cause. These both describe the path that John's reform ends up taking.



# Chapter 15, Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment—Chapter 16, A Long Day in London

## Chapter 15, Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment—Chapter 16, A Long Day in London Summary

John tells Tom that he is dropping the lawsuit, and why. He then asks Tom to make sure that the *Jupiter* also stops covering the issue, or at least leaves Mr. Harding's name out of it. Tom replies that he has no real power to change things, and furthermore, he can't play favorites without compromising his journalistic integrity. He shows John a pamphlet, fresh off the presses, by Dr. Pessimist Anticant. It condemns Mr. Harding harshly. John leaves angrily.

On the way home, John buys a magazine called *The Almshouse*, by Mr. Popular Sentiment, recommended by Tom. It turns out to be a ridiculous caricature of Mr. Harding, painting him as a greedy, gluttonous, lazy villain, and the beadsmen as starving saints. John feels so guilty that his hasty actions have led to this point. He reassures himself with the thought that at least this magazine is too far-fetched for anyone to believe, but the narrator says that John is wrong to think so.

Mr. Harding hurries to London, terrified that Dr. Grantly will somehow intercept him and stop him. He goes to see Sir Abraham Haphazard, and sends him a note saying that he wishes an audience with Sir Abraham. Eventually Mr. Harding receives a reply stating that he can see Sir Abraham the following evening. Mr. Harding hopes that he will get the chance to talk to Sir Abraham before Dr. Grantly can find him.

Mr. Harding does not want to stay at his hotel the next day, since Dr. Grantly will probably look for him there. He wanders around London killing time, spending most of the day in Westminster Abbey. He knows that Dr. Grantly will never look for him there. After dinner in a pub, Mr. Harding passes time in a cigar house, where he takes a nap. He wakes up just in time for his appointment with Sir Abraham.

## Chapter 15, Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment—Chapter 16, A Long Day in London Analysis

When the narrator is describing Dr. Anticant, he says that it is too bad that Dr. Anticant does not recognize that all things contain a seed of good and evil. This sums up one of



the main themes of the book: often people have mixed motives. Some things seem like righteous acts to one person, and evil to another. This does not mean that one person is completely right.

Once again the narrator calls attention to the fact that this is a novel, saying, "Ridicule is found to be more convincing than argument; imaginary agonies touch more than true sorrows, and monthly novels convince when learned quartos fail to do so" (148). This hints that perhaps Trollope wants to get out an important message with *The Warden*, and that he thinks that he will reach the most possible people by writing a novel, and moving his readers with imaginary agonies.



# **Chapter 17, Sir Abraham Haphazard— Chapter 18, The Warden is Very Obstinate**

## **Chapter 17, Sir Abraham Haphazard—Chapter 18, The Warden is Very Obstinate Summary**

Mr. Harding waits for a little while in the chambers of Sir Abraham Haphazard. Sir Abraham shows up and apologizes for having the meeting so late. He is busy every waking minute in his duties as attorney-general. Sir Abraham assumes that Mr. Harding is excited that the suit against them has been dropped. Mr. Harding says that he hasn't heard about that, but that he is shaken by the newspaper article against him. Sir Abraham feels some contempt for someone who is so easily shaken by public opinion, but Mr. Harding explains that it is more than his reputation that he is worried about. His conscience will not let him rest, as long as he thinks he is taking money that belongs to the poor. He feels bad that it takes a newspaper article to make him realize the situation. Mr. Harding tells Sir Abraham that the next day he will resign, and that he doesn't care if he and Eleanor have to be paupers, as long as he is doing the right thing. Sir Abraham cautions him to reconsider, but Mr. Harding is resolute. He walks back to his hotel, bracing himself for the confrontation he fears with Dr. Grantly.

In the hotel, Mr. Harding finds Dr. Grantly and Susan waiting for him. He tells them that he has told Sir Abraham that he is resigning. Dr. Grantly says that nothing is official yet, and lectures Mr. Harding on why he should remain warden. Mr. Harding explains that Sir Abraham can not definitively state that John Hiram's will entitles him to his income. He tells them of his plan to live at Crabtree. They scoff and point out that he will have about half as much money to live on as he thinks, but this does not change his mind. They ask him what will become of Eleanor, and predict dire poverty and a ruined life. Dr. Grantly is astounded that for once, Mr. Harding stands up for himself and will not give in. They angrily go to bed.

## **Chapter 17, Sir Abraham Haphazard—Chapter 18, The Warden is Very Obstinate Analysis**

Sir Abraham does not appear to be fully human, but rather, some sort of perfectly-run machine. Few people would expect a machine to have a strong grasp on morality, and this shows what happens when moral questions are determined by technicalities. Sir Abraham does not care at all what will become of the beadsmen. He is primarily concerned with the amount of court costs.



Even though Sir Abraham has no natural human kindness, he does at least see things logically, which most of the characters have trouble doing. When Mr. Harding expresses his concerns, Sir Abraham points out that such institutions are never run perfectly ethically. Sir Abraham is the only character shrewd enough to realize that it is impossible to carry out John Hiram's will perfectly.



# Chapter 19, The Warden Resigns— Chapter 20, Farewell

## Chapter 19, The Warden Resigns—Chapter 20, Farewell Summary

The next morning, Susan and Dr. Grantly try to convince Mr. Harding to put off going back to Barchester for at least another day. He surprises them again by insisting that he will take the afternoon train home. He sits down and writes his letter of resignation to the bishop. He catches his train, and Eleanor meets him at the train station. When he tells her that he is definitely resigning, she says that she is so glad that he is doing the right thing. They both try to adjust to the idea of living in poverty. Mr. Harding gets the furniture ready to sell, so that he can use the proceeds to pay Sir Abraham for his consultation.

Meanwhile, Dr. Grantly goes to see his lawyers and ask them what he can do. They agree that Mr. Harding is crazy to throw away a position where he makes a lot of money and doesn't have to do anything for it. They suggest that Mr. Harding can just switch jobs with another clergyman who makes a lot less than he does. The other clergyman has 12 children, so he would certainly be happy to double his income, and Mr. Harding would not need to feel guilty. Dr. Grantly agrees that this plan just might work.

The bishop tells Mr. Harding that he understands why he is resigning. He offers Mr. Harding a few jobs that will keep him close by, with less money, but Mr. Harding feels like accepting such an offer would defeat the purpose of resigning. He also soundly rejects the idea of switching jobs with the man with 12 children. Fortunately, he doesn't have to pay the legal fees after all, since Dr. Grantly charges them to the church's account. While their furniture is being sold, Mr. Harding and Eleanor move into a boarding house, waiting for Crabtree to be vacated. Most of the townspeople admire Mr. Harding's integrity and courage, but the lawyers and clergy think he is a ridiculous coward.

Mr. Harding gathers the beadsmen for a farewell meeting. He tells them that he does not blame them in any way, but that he can not stay on as their warden. They feel terrible about getting him to leave, and they start to remember what a kind friend he has always been to them. Mr. Harding asks them to please be good for the next warden and not worry about how much money he makes. He also tells them that now that he is leaving, they will no longer get the extra money each day that he has been giving them out of his own pocket. They are now worse off than they started. Mr. Harding pours a glass of wine for each of them, so that they can part as friends. Mr. Harding goes to the bedside of a beadsman who is dying, to give him some wine. The dying man's final lucid words are to ask if he will now receive the money. After all the beadsmen have gone, Mr. Harding cries.



## Chapter 19, The Warden Resigns—Chapter 20, Farewell Analysis

In a strange contrast, Mr. Harding is fighting, not to gain something, but to be able to give something up. He has become like a tame animal that is cornered, and sees no option but to fight. Finally, Mr. Harding takes a stand for what he thinks is right, even though almost everyone tells him he is a fool.

After Mr. Harding says goodbye to the beadsmen, they sadly remember their own happy state before John Bold stirred up so much trouble. After demanding so much from Mr. Harding, they feel terrible that they have hurt him so much, and it is even harder for them to receive his good wishes. "The others followed slowly and bashfully—the infirm, the lame, and the blind, poor wretches!—who had been so happy, had they but known it! Now their aged faces were covered with shame, and every kind word from their master was a coal of fire burning on their heads" (192). This is a reference to a Bible verse that says that a good strategy is to say kind words to one's enemies, for in doing so one will heap hot coals on their heads.



# Chapter 21, Conclusion

## Chapter 21, Conclusion Summary

Mr. Harding and Eleanor leave the hospital without ceremony. They do not end up living at Crabtree, but instead Mr. Harding becomes the priest of a tiny parish very nearby. He remains the precentor of the cathedral, and continues to visit the bishop every other day. Eleanor soon marries John Bold, and Mr. Harding spends most of his time at their house. Eventually, John even becomes friends with Dr. Grantly.

The beadsmen are surprised that the bishop does not appoint anyone to replace Mr. Harding as warden. He feels that, considering the controversy surrounding the position, that it would not be fair to put someone else up to such scrutiny. Instead, the hospital falls into disrepair. The beadsmen miss Mr. Harding, and as they die off one by one, they begin to see how lonely a place the hospital will be with no warden to care for them.

## Chapter 21, Conclusion Analysis

The story has a somewhat happy ending for everyone except the beadsmen. The main characters are reconciled to one another, and John and Dr. Grantly lose some of their prejudice. They have all learned to be happy with what they have and not go looking for trouble. Sadly, John Hiram's will is not carried out in the end, and Hiram's Hospital becomes a place of death.





# Characters

## Reverend Septimus Harding

Mr. Harding is a kind, mild priest of the Church of England. He has two daughters, one who is married to Dr. Grantly. Mr. Harding is the precentor of the parish, and also the warden at Hiram's Hospital. He loves playing his violoncello, and whenever he is thinking, he likes to play an imaginary violoncello. Although Mr. Harding doesn't try terribly hard in his priestly duties, he is a man of integrity, who listens earnestly to his own conscience. When most of his superior clergy urge him to remain warden, and squelch the lawsuit, Mr. Harding instead worries about whether he is stealing bread from the poor. Although he has submitted to bullying most of his life, he decides to take a stand and abandon his comfortable position, just because he thinks it is the right thing to do. He is willing to face poverty in order to have a clear conscience. This is quite a contrast from the attitudes of most of the clergy and lawyers around him, who worry that the church will lose power or funds.

Mr. Harding is also a loving, forgiving man. When he is persecuted from one side by John Bold, and on the other side by Dr. Grantly, he does not get angry or try to hurt either of them. Instead, he does whatever he can to maintain their friendships. When most of the beadsmen betray him, Mr. Harding gives them wine, so they can remain friends. When John first brings the lawsuit against him, Mr. Harding's first response is to throw a party and invite John, to erase any bad feelings between them.

## Dr. Theophilus Grantly, Archdeacon

Dr. Grantly is the archdeacon of the parish. He is married to Mr. Harding's daughter Susan, and they have five children. Dr. Grantly is extremely legalistic, and any rules that he notices, he always obeys. He is much more concerned with the letter of the law than the spirit of the law. Hardly anyone ever goes against Dr. Grantly, because he always thinks he is right, and he loves imposing his will on others. The only person he is willing to listen to is his wife. Not only does Dr. Grantly carefully observe every possible rule, but he always carries himself like a deacon, making sure that every gesture is serious and prudent.

Even though Dr. Grantly considers himself to be very righteous, he is cold-hearted, and cares much more for rules than for love. He does everything he can to keep the lawsuit going, excited about smashing the opposition. He is horrified when Mr. Harding finally stands up to him, and angrily threatens dire times, instead of trying to help. He has such a high opinion of himself that he has trouble trying to sympathize with anyone.



## **John Bold**

John is a Barchester surgeon who decides he must reform the corruption at the hospital.

## **Mary Bold**

Mary is John's sister, a very sweet, kind girl, who encourages him to withdraw from the lawsuit.

## **Eleanor Harding**

Eleanor is Mr. Harding's daughter, and in love with John.

## **Susan Grantly**

Susan is Mr. Harding's older daughter, and married to Dr. Grantly. They have five children.

## **The bishop**

The bishop is Dr. Grantly's father, and Mr. Harding's best friend. Dr. Grantly likes to bully the bishop.

## **Old Bunce**

Old Bunce is the sub-warden, the most loyal of the beadsmen. He refuses to sign the petition.

## **Sir Abraham Haphazard**

Sir Abraham is the attorney-general, who advises the Queen, and helps Dr. Grantly with the lawsuit.

## **Tom Towers**

Tom is the star reporter for the newspaper the Jupiter, and good friends with John.



## Objects/Places

### Hiram's Hospital

Hiram's Hospital is a charitable institution. Twelve poor old men from the town of Barchester live there, watched over by the warden.

### The Jupiter

The Jupiter is the most widely-read newspaper in England. They begin printing slanderous articles about Mr. Harding.

### Church of England

Also called the Anglican Church, the Church of England was founded by King Henry VIII as an alternative to Catholicism. One major difference is that the Church of England allows priests to marry.

### Barchester

Barchester is a fake name the narrator assigns to a cathedral town in England. It is not clear whether it is a real or fictional town.

### London

Most of the faster-paced action happens in London. It is the location of the Jupiter, and many of the lawyers.

### Mr. Harding's violoncello

Mr. Harding loves playing his violoncello for anyone who will listen. When he is thinking, he pretends he is playing it.

### Crabtree Parva

Crabtree Parva is a small country estate owned by Mr. Harding. This is where he plans to live after resigning.



## **John Hiram's Will**

This will assigns a certain amount of money to the beadsmen, and states that the rest of the money generated by his estate should go to the warden. After four hundred years, this causes a lot of controversy.

## **Plumstead Episcopi**

Plumstead Episcopi is the lavish home of Dr. Grantly. It is filled with expensive objects.

## **The beadsmen's quarters**

The beadsmen live together in a dormitory situation, with modest yet comfortable rooms. They share much communal living space.

## **The bishop's palace**

The bishop offers Mr. Harding a home in his palace, which Mr. Harding declines. However, the two often eat together at the palace.



# Themes

## Ancient Greek Gods and Goddesses

It is interesting that Trollope makes repeated references to Greek Gods and Goddesses, since the story is about members of a different religion. This could indicate that all religions face the same problems with applying ancient ideas to modern situations. When Eleanor decides that she must sacrifice herself for her father's sake, she is inspired by the myth of Iphigenia, who sacrificed herself for her father. Tom Towers sees his office at the Jupiter (which is another name for Zeus, the Greek king of gods) as Mount Olympus, as though ordinary mortals can not enter, and he sees himself as a god, shaping the reality of all the people.

The comparison of the characters to heroes and heroines from ancient myths hints at the cruel, detached nature of most gods and goddesses of old. Often in Greek myths, the gods seem to be playing games with mortals, or betting on the outcomes of events. Sometimes gods would stir up trouble among happy people, just to win a bet, or out of spite. The way the conflict seems to come out of nowhere indicates that perhaps immortals (or even authors) are playing games. Even though none of the characters intend to harm one another, they are driven apart by their own foolishness, and a good man is punished in the end. This is similar to the plight of many Greek heroes like Oedipus and Hercules, characters who, through no fault of their own, committed serious offenses against the gods, and were severely punished for it. When Mr. Harding squanders church funds on a fancy hymnal, he is just as innocent as Oedipus when he unknowingly marries his own mother. Another common theme in Greek mythology is that gifts from the gods may be taken away, and this is exactly what happens both to Mr. Harding, and to the beadsmen. Mr. Harding loses his position, and his reputation. The beadsmen lose a caretaker and friend.

## Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth

All of the conflict in the book is caused by people not knowing what to do with their bounty. When John Hiram's will is written, he has a little bit of resources to leave to the poor, and they receive it thankfully. After so many years, the poor still receive the same amount of money, but the resources have greatly increased. Mr. Harding is glad to share his wealth, and gives money freely from his own pocket to the beadsmen, just so that their lives will be a little more comfortable. John Bold decides that Mr. Harding has no right to have the money at all, and gets excited about a chance to look like the good guy. The beadsmen are satisfied with their lot, enjoying their old age, and the pleasant atmosphere of Hiram's Hospital. After the beadsmen are stirred up, they become jealous of the warden's money and want it for themselves. These simple men, who have been poor all their lives, are no longer happy to be taken care of modestly. Rather than being thankful for the extra money Mr. Harding gives them each day, the beadsmen want to take all of his money away from him, so that they can live like gentlemen. If all



the characters had simply been happy for their good fortune, they could have saved themselves a lot of trouble and infighting. The disputed money, after the lawsuit is dropped, does not go to charity once it is taken from Mr. Harding. Instead it is put into a bank account with no specific beneficiary, so it ends up helping no one. Because of greed, friends of many years stab one another in the back, and one of them is even transformed by greed during his dying breath.

## **Hasty Words Can Have Unexpected Consequences**

At the beginning of the book, most of the main characters are friends, and have no intention of hurting one another. Mr. Harding truly cares about the beadsmen. John Bold truly cares for Mr. Harding, and of course his daughter Eleanor. Dr. Grantly and Mr. Harding truly care for one another, especially because Dr. Grantly is married to Mr. Harding's daughter Susan. Through words hastily spoken, all of these characters are pitted against each other. John and Dr. Grantly are both so determined to stop sin as soon as possible, that they do not take the time to imagine where all of this may go. Neither of them wants to hurt Mr. Harding, Eleanor, or the beadsmen, but that is exactly what happens. Susan Grantly and Mary Bold both do their best to make their men see reason and drop the fight before someone gets hurt, but the men are too proud, and too determined to see the other one grovel. Eleanor tried a last-ditch effort to use hasty words and her beauty to win John over and make him drop the lawsuit. In this case, her words have the unexpected consequence of a marriage proposal from John.

When John and Mr. Harding decide that they want to end their feud immediately, they find that too many people have gotten involved. This should come as no surprise to them, since they have spent the first half of the book trying to recruit people to get involved. Instead of finding a way to take better care of the poor, John's reforms end up humiliating Mr. Harding, and actually depriving the beadsmen of money and care. The words John tells in confidence to Tom Towers end up being twisted and printed as a malicious tale, splashing Mr. Harding all over the tabloids, and painting him as an evil usurer. The more people who try to hurt one another, the uglier it gets, and the harder it gets for them to forgive one another. At the beginning, no one wants to abolish the warden's position or make Mr. Harding a pauper, but that is what happens.

# Style

## Point of View

The Warden is told in third person by a narrator. Often the narrator seems to be omniscient, revealing many characters' innermost thoughts. Once in a while, however, the narrator speaks conversationally to the reader, as though the reader and narrator are sitting together telling a story. At times like these, the narrator may ask the reader's forgiveness, or even offer extensive geographical details, so that the reader does not confuse fictional places with real locations in England. Once, however, the narrator makes open reference to himself as a person in the story. He is describing breakfast at Dr. Grantly's home, and goes on to say that he himself, the narrator, does not like visiting there. He then describes a scene where the narrator stops a quarrel between two of Dr. Grantly's children, and how from then on, Dr. Grantly's son has not spoken to the narrator. This sudden switching of the point of view has the strange effect of making the reader wonder whether these events actually happened. Yet the account still seems fictional, since the narrator knows things that no casual acquaintance could know.

The narrator also calls attention to himself by making fun of novels, in his own novel. He often, in a tongue-and-cheek way, points out that if the reader has read many novels, the reader can certainly guess what is coming next. When Mary and Eleanor have a heart-to-heart talk, the narrator says, "It is indeed a matter of thankfulness that neither the historian nor the novelist hears all that is said by their heroes or heroines, or how would three volumes or twenty suffice!" (64). Even this is ambiguous as to the nature of the narrator, since he could be calling himself a historian or a novelist.

## Setting

The story takes place in a small cathedral town called Barchester. This is a fictional name, so that no one can guess where the story really takes place. When it was written, it was set in modern day, which was 1855. The small town of Barchester is near enough to London that the townspeople often go to London for business.

Most of the action centers around Hiram's Hospital, which is not a hospital for the sick, but a charitable home for poor old men to live in, if they have no family. The hospital has an area for the inmates, called beadsmen, to live comfortable but modest lives, with a communal eating area, and various places for the beadsmen to walk and rest. There is also a nice house for the warden and his family to live, with a garden.

In stark contrast to the humble, Christian symbolism of Barchester, is the office of the Jupiter in London. The narrator compares the newspaper office to Mount Olympus, saying that lofty decrees are handed down from the offices, and obeyed or believed by all mortals who hear them. The narrator juxtaposes religious imagery with Tom Towers,



who is anything but pious. This is interesting compared to the lack of religious imagery used to describe the clergymen.

## Language and Meaning

There is a lot of terminology that refers to the Anglican Church, such as precentor, vestry, litany, and archdeacon. Although many of these terms, and other old-fashioned words in the book, may seem confusing and outdated, this is appropriate. This book deals with the issue of what to do when moral codes seem confusing and outdated, whether referring to biblical commands, or how to interpret a 400-year-old will. Sometimes, understanding an ancient issue requires using old words.

There is an obvious difference in the way the clergymen talk, and the way the beadsmen talk, and this shows the difference in their positions. In England in the 1800s the distinction between gentlemen and commoners was thought to be very important, a line that should not be crossed. The beadsmen use a lot of slang, and mispronounce words. On the other hand, the more important a clergyman thinks he is, the more carefully and precisely he talks. Dr. Grantly, especially, always speaks with the utmost dignity, except when he is alone with his wife. Then he is willing to talk like an ordinary man, feeling that fastidious speech is required of him as an archdeacon.

## Structure

The book is divided into 21 short chapters. Each chapter has a title summing up the story developments that happen. "Chapter 1: Hiram's Hospital" sets the scene, introducing Mr. Harding and several family members, and explaining the origin of the hospital. "Chapter 2: The Barchester Reformer" begins the conflict, revealing how passionate John is about reform. This sows some seeds of doubt as to the legitimacy of the warden's position. "Chapter 3: The Bishop of Barchester" through "Chapter 6: The Warden's Tea-Party" show that, though some men certainly want a fight, Mr. Harding is not going to be very good enemy, because he is too good a man. Throughout most of the middle of the book, there are many instances of foreshadowing, with characters urging others not to fight, that such fighting for justice can only end in tragedy.

From "Chapter 7: The Jupiter" through "Chapter 10: Tribulation," John Bold's side grows in their prosecution, and things begin to spiral out of control. Many characters put pressure on Mr. Harding to do what they tell him. In "Chapter 11: Iphigenia" through "Chapter 15: Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment," it begins to appear that there is no way out of this mess, and that there is nothing John can do to undo the wrong he has done to Mr. Harding. In "Chapter 16: A Long Day in London" through "Chapter 20: Farewell," the action winds down, with the warden finally resigning and leaving the hospital. The anticlimactic ending reflects the fact that the court case never was decided. "Chapter 21: Conclusion" reveals that life does go on after exciting events, and the dull events come to overshadow the past battles. Perhaps most importantly, all



the main characters, who have fought so valiantly against one another, are friends in the end.



## Quotes

"In bad times the poor men had had their due, and therefore in good times they could expect no more." (12)

"Nevertheless, John Bold is a clever man and would with practice be a clever surgeon; . . . he has declined to subject himself to what he calls the drudgery of the profession." (18)

"He is a moral man, believing the precepts which he teaches, and believing also that he acts up to them, though we cannot say that he would give up his coat to the man who took his cloak or that he is prepared to forgive his brother even seven times. He is severe enough in exacting his dues. . . ." (22)

"It was amusing to see the positions and eager listening faces of these well-to-do old men, I will not say that they all appreciated the music which they heard, but they were intent on appearing to do so" (26)

"Did any of us ever do anything worth half the money? Was it to make gentlemen of us we were brought in here, when all the world turned against us, and we couldn't longer earn our daily bread?" (43)

"I know well that no duty can require you to do this mad, this suicidal thing." (60)

"He felt he would give almost anything—much more than he knew he ought to do—to relieve himself from the storm which he feared was coming." (54)

"Those who casually met Mary Bold thought little of her; but those who knew her well loved her well, and the longer they knew her the more they loved her." (57)

"He conquered enemies by their weakness rather than by his own strength, and it had been found almost impossible to make up a case in which Sir Abraham as an antagonist would not find a flaw." (82)

"Oh, it's all very well, archdeacon, and of course you're right; I don't for a moment think you'll ever admit that you could be wrong . . ." (75)



"Had Bold been judging of another lover and of another lady he might have understood all this as well as we do; but in matters of love men do not see clearly in their own affairs. They say that faint heart never won fair lady; and it is amazing to me how fair ladies are won, so faint are often men's hearts!" (68)

"Other boys would fight while they had a leg to stand on, but he would fight with no leg at all . . . while other boys were happy in the number of their friends, he rejoiced most in the multitude of his foes." (75)

". . . he was doing nothing, thinking of nothing, looking at nothing; he was merely suffering." (94)

"Was he to be pointed at as the consumer of the bread of the poor and to be allowed no means of refuting such charges, of clearing his begrimed name, of standing innocent in the world, as hitherto he had stood?" (88)

"You might pass Eleanor Harding in the street without notice, but you could hardly pass an evening with her and not lose your heart." (107)

"It is probable that Tom Towers considered himself the most powerful man in Europe; and so he walked on from day to day, studiously striving to look a man but knowing within his breast that he was a god." (137)

"Everyone knows where his own shoe pinches!" (126)

"Velvet and gilding do not make a throne, nor gold and jewels a sceptre. It is a throne because the most exalted one sits there, and a sceptre because the most mighty one wields it." (130)

"There are some points on which no man can be contented to follow the advice of another, some subjects on which a man can consult his own conscience only." (155)

"What on earth could be more luxurious than a sofa, a book, and a cup of coffee?" (162)

"The fire has gone too far to be quenched . . . the building must go now; and as the timbers are all rotten, why, I should be inclined to say the sooner the better." (144)

" . . . he never had time to talk, he was so taken up with speaking." (165)

"My God knows whether or no I love my daughter, but I would sooner that she and I both beg than that she should live in comfort on money which is truly the property of the poor." (168)

"He knew that the attorney-general regarded him as little better than a fool, but that he did not mind; he and the attorney-general did not have much in common between them; he knew also that others whom he did care about would think so too; but Eleanor, he was sure, would exult in what he had done, and the bishop, he trusted, would sympathize with him." (170)

"God, that feeds the young ravens, will take care of me also," said Mr. Harding with a smile, as though afraid of giving offense by making his reference to scripture too solemn." (174)

## Topics for Discussion

Is Mr. Harding right to give up his position as warden?

What other solutions for this problem could there be? Are there any other logical ways to divide up the money?

Why does the author make so many references to novels when talking about Eleanor and John?

Who is a better person: Mr. Harding or Dr. Grantly? Who has better motives?

Why do the beadsmen agree to sign the petition?

The narrator indicates that anything printed in the Jupiter is automatically true. What would you do if a newspaper printed a slanderous article about you?

John Bold is motivated by a desire for reform. Does he accomplish this? Does reform have to be turbulent?

Mr. Harding is upset because he has no way to clear his name after the newspaper articles about him. What is the value of a good reputation? Does reputation matter?