

Far from the Madding Crowd

by Thomas Hardy

Summary: After **inheriting** her uncle's farm, Hardy's heroine, Bathsheba Everdene, becomes an independent woman. Her beauty attracts many admirers: farm worker Gabriel Oak, landowner William Boldwood, and handsome soldier Frank Troy, whom she later marries. However, Troy is a selfish and **evil** man who allows his earlier love, Fanny Robin, to die in poverty while giving birth to his child. Boldwood hates Troy, and later in the novel he kills him in a jealous **rage**. Gabriel asks for **mercy** to be shown him, and Boldwood escapes death but is sent to prison instead. The novel ends with Bathsheba marrying Gabriel.

Commentary: **Incidents**, such as Fanny's **pregnancy** and her terrible death, and Boldwood's act of murderous violence, **convey** Hardy's growing taste for **tragedy**. But unlike Tess in the later *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, **fate** still favours Bathsheba, as she finally finds happiness with Gabriel, who **embodies** the best qualities of the rural community in its fight against industrialization*, which Hardy found so **alien**.

Hardy **exposes** the dangers **inherent** in romantic love: relationships based on romantic love are by nature **irrational**, unstable and at risk of **betrayal**. In contrast, he **implies** that the true basis of a happy marriage is **companionship** and a common interest.

For some it is also an early example of **feminist** literature. Bathsheba is **portrayed** as an independent woman with the courage to **defy convention** and run a farm by herself. Her passionate nature leads her into errors of judgement, but Hardy gives her the qualities of strength, intelligence and good luck to overcome the mistakes of youth.

***industrialization** = the development of new manufacturing processes in Britain from the late 18th century into the 19th century

GLOSSARY

inherit	receive property, money, etc, from sb who has died inheritance <i>n</i>	expose	tell the true facts about sth and show it to be bad or wrong
evil	morally bad; causing harm to people evil <i>n</i>	inherent (in sth)	If sth is inherent in sth, it is a natural part of it and cannot be removed from it.
rage	a feeling of violent anger that is difficult to control	irrational	not logical or sensible OPP rational
mercy	a kind or forgiving attitude towards sb you have the power to harm or the right to punish	betrayal	the act of being disloyal to sb who trusts you betray <i>v</i>
commentary	a written explanation or discussion of sth such as a book	imply	suggest sth in an indirect way without actually saying it implication <i>n</i>
incident	sth that happens, especially sth that is unusual or unpleasant	companionship	a friendly and comfortable relationship between people
pregnancy	the state of being pregnant (= expecting a baby)	feminist	having the belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men
convey sth (to sb)	communicate ideas and feelings to sb	portray	describe sb/sth in a piece of writing SYN depict
tragedy	a very sad event, especially one that often involves death	defy	refuse to obey a law, a rule or a person defiant <i>adj</i>
fate	a power that is believed to control everything and that cannot be changed	convention	the behaviour and attitudes that most people consider to be normal and right conventional <i>adj</i> ; OPP unconventional
embody formal	be a good example of sth		
alien	strange, difficult to understand, and often unacceptable		

1 Mark the stress on these words. Use the **APP** to help you.

expose imply defy convey portray embody inherit inherent

2 Add the related words.

betray _____ n	inherit _____ n	pregnancy _____ adj
portray _____ n	defy _____ adj	convention _____ adj
imply _____ n	evil n _____ adj	_____ adj

3 Circle the correct answer.

- 1 A commentary on a novel is **a summary / an explanation** of the main events.
- 2 If something is alien to you, it is **easy / difficult** to understand.
- 3 Unconventional beliefs are considered to be **strange / normal**.
- 4 Fate is considered to be **within / beyond** our control.
- 5 If you expose someone, you tell **the truth / lies** about them.
- 6 If you inherit something, it usually comes from someone you **know / don't know**.
- 7 An implication is **a direct / an indirect** way of saying something.
- 8 If you are defiant, you **agree / refuse** to do something.

4 Replace the underlined word(s) with a word (or words) that has a similar meaning.

- 1 She is portrayed as a very honest character. _____
- 2 Martha is expecting a baby. _____
- 3 The best man's speech is one of the traditional parts of a wedding. _____
- 4 You could see he was full of violent anger. _____
- 5 She is able to communicate a lot of feeling through her gestures. _____
- 6 His attitude is not logical or reasonable. _____
- 7 She is a good example of optimism and positive thinking. _____
- 8 She misses the enjoyment of being with Ellen. _____

5 Complete the dialogues with a suitable word.

- 1 Did he say Callum was responsible? ~ He didn't actually say it, but he _____ it.
- 2 Do you often wear black? ~ No, but it's fairly _____ to wear black at funerals.
- 3 How did you feel living in New York? ~ At first it felt very _____.
- 4 Did she write about the rights of women? ~ Yes, she wrote some of the earliest _____ literature.
- 5 What's the book about? ~ Basically it's about the conflict of good and _____.
- 6 Did her parents leave her the house? ~ Yes, that was part of her _____.
- 7 Is there a risk with this kind of company? ~ Yes, there's an _____ risk with any new business.
- 8 Are there any evil characters? ~ Yes, and she _____ their evil and cruelty throughout the novel.
- 9 Was the _____ a surprise? ~ Yes, nobody knew they wanted a baby.
- 10 Was he ever violent? ~ Yes, I remember one _____ when he attacked somebody.

6 Complete the summary of the novel with words from the box, in the correct form.

fate	tragedy	mercy	portray	
embody	convey	defy	betray	embodiment

Tess is the heroine of Hardy's novel that bears her name: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. She is (1) _____ in the novel as a daughter of nature, and (2) _____ many noble qualities that make her such a sympathetic character. But time and again she has to endure suffering from the brutal Alec D'Urville, who is the (3) _____ of evil in the novel. The other man in her life is Angel Clare, an intelligent young man who (4) _____ convention and is happy to work on a farm rather than go to university. He and Tess fall in love and marry, but when Tess tells him that she has previously had a child by Alec, Angel feels (5) _____ and leaves her. (6) _____ is sometimes kind to Hardy's heroines, but not in this case. Tess goes back to Alec, but when Angel returns from Brazil and forgives her, she stabs Alec to death. Unlike Boldwood at the end of Hardy's earlier novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Tess is shown no (7) _____. She is executed for her crime, although the final (8) _____ is only (9) _____ to us by a black flag being waved over the prison.



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