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'Urbevilles*, **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** *n*	**expose**	tell the true facts about sth and show it to be bad or wrong
evil	morally bad; causing harm to people **evil** *n*	**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** *v*
commentary	a written explanation or discussion of sth such as a book	**imply**	suggest sth in an indirect way without actually saying it **implication** *n*
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** *adj*
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** *adj*; OPP **unconventional**
embody *formal*	be a good example of sth		
alien	strange, difficult to understand, and often unacceptable		

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

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'Urbeville, 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.

TEST YOURSELF

LIVEWORKSHEETS