

UNIT-III

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES : A PURE WOMAN FAITHFULLY PRESENTED

STRUCTURE

- Learning objectives
- Overview
- Justification of Title
- Introduction of the Novel
- Plot
- Biography of the Author
- Themes and Symbols and Motifs
- Characters
- Analysis of main characters
- Summary and Analysis of Chapters
- Quotes
- Summary
- Key words
- Review questions
- Further reading

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to :

- ❖ Summarize of the novel *Tess of D'urberville*.
- ❖ Describe the literary career of Thomas Hardy.
- ❖ describe about the main characters of the novels.
- ❖ Write about the various themes in the novel.
- ❖ Explain important quotes in the novel.

• OVERVIEW

Full Title: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*

When Written: 1887-1891.

Where Written: Dorchester, England.

When Published: 1891.

Literary Period: Victorian Realism.

Genre: Realist Fiction.

Setting: Southwest England, the fictional county of Wessex.

Point of View: Third person omniscient, but generally follows Tess.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure
Woman Faithfully Presented*

• JUSTIFICATION TO THE TITLE

"Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is the name of the heroine while D'Urbervilles is the sir name of an aristocrat family in London. The title shows that a common girl Tess has high moral virtues. There's a lot of discussion about what Tess should be called, and the change in her last name from the common-sounding "Durbeyfield" to its nobler original, "D'Urbervilles," is what sets the tragedy in motion.

Tess is a common, country girl. So to call her "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," as though she were a great aristocratic lady, is ironic and tongue-in-cheek.

The subtitle "A Pure Women..." was cruelly criticized by some critics but in the end when Hardy was revising the novel for its publication as a single volume in 1891, he felt the need to defend his heroine and her inherent purity—so his addition of the subtitle, "A Pure Woman" can be read with a tone of defiance. He's insisting that Tess is "pure" despite the fact that she has a child out of wedlock. She's still the moral center of the novel.

• INTRODUCTION OF NOVEL

Hardy began *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in 1888-89 and considered such names as Love, Cis/Cissy, and Sue, for the title character. Eventually, he decided on Tess. Hardy had been working on this manuscript with the intention of submitting it for serial publication, in which only a few chapters would be released at a time; depending on the material's reception and the publisher's willingness, these chapters would then later be combined in book form. Hardy contracted with W. F. Tillotson & Son in 1887 for a serialized story to be delivered in four installments between 1887 and June 30, 1889. Hardy also negotiated with *Harper's Bazaar* in America for the story at about the same time.

The publishers suggested revisions of certain scenes and complete deletions of others, but Hardy refused leaving the book unpublished. Fortunately, Hardy had an offer to publish the serial in the *Graphic (London) Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*. After much revision, the novel appeared as a serial on July 4, 1891, in England (in the *Graphic* and the *Nottinghamshire Guardian and Midlands Counties Advertiser*) and Australia (the *Sydney Mail*). It appeared on July 18 in America in *Harper's Bazaar*.

After a successful reception as a serial, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was published in book form and consisted of three volumes. In late 1892, the entire set was combined into one volume and sold well.

Historical Context

The Victorian Era when Hardy lived was a time of great change. Queen Victoria ruled England from 1837 until her death in 1901. During her 63-year reign, England became the most powerful and wealthiest country in the world through its colonial acquisition and by harnessing the power of the Industrial Revolution.

Victoria, interested in the welfare of her people, worked hard to pass meaningful reforms, and she earned the respect of her subjects. Her prime ministers were her greatest assets, and with them, Queen Victoria decreased the powers of the monarchy to empower the members of the prime minister's cabinet.

The changes that occurred during the Victorian era affected the lives of every person living in England in both great and small ways. The balance of traditional class distinctions shifted as more people prospered, amassing wealth and power that had been unthinkable in the years prior to this era. These tumultuous changes resulted in an examination of the traditional ways of thinking and acting, and the foundations of English society — family, religion, class divisions, and so on — came under increasing scrutiny. One area that was particularly affected by the changes in England was religion.

Literary Context

The body of Victorian literature is tremendous and would be difficult to categorize with only a few authors. Hardy's contemporaries included the likes of Charles Dickens, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, E.M. Forester, and Joseph Conrad. Each contributed his or her work to the body of general human knowledge and, to one degree or another, considered the issues that had become a part of the English "discussion."

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is one of Hardy's Wessex novels, so called because the action in each story takes place in the Wessex region. Other of the Wessex novels include *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). In each, the main characters are dealt a cruel fate that they must overcome or be crushed by.

• PLOT

Tess Durbeyfield lives in the rural village of Marlott in southwest England. She first appears performing the May-Day dance, where she exchanges a meaningful glance with a young man named Angel Clare. Tess's family is very poor, but her father learns that he is descended from

the d'Urbervilles, one of the oldest, noblest families in England. Although the d'Urbervilles have no wealth or power anymore, the Durbeyfields feel that this will improve their fortunes. When Tess mistakenly causes the death of Prince, the family's horse, she feels guilty enough to try and "claim kin" from some wealthy d'Urbervilles nearby, unaware that they aren't actually related.

Alec, the libertine son of old, blind, Mrs. d'Urberville, becomes infatuated with Tess and repeatedly tries to seduce her, but she rebuffs his advances. He gives her a job tending the fowls, and Tess feels that she can't refuse for her family's sake. One night after a dance in the local town Alec tricks Tess into accepting a ride home with him. He gets lost in the woods and leaves to find the path. When he returns he finds Tess asleep, and he rapes her.

Tess then returns to Marlott, and later gives birth to Alec's child. She avoids the other townspeople out of shame. Her baby soon gets sick, and Tess worries about his soul. She baptizes him herself, and names him Sorrow before he dies.

After a while Tess gets worn down by her community's judgment and decides to look for work elsewhere. She becomes a milkmaid at Talbothays dairy farm, and enjoys a time of contentment. She befriends three other girls, Izz, Retty, and Marian, and discovers that the man from the May-Day dance, Angel Clare, is also working there. He is the son of a parson, but is at Talbothays to learn about farming methods. All four women soon fall in love with him, but he chooses Tess and they begin a period of courtship. Angel asks her to marry him, but Tess refuses, feeling that she is not worthy of marriage. She is afraid to tell him the details of her past.

Angel returns home briefly and finds that his brothers, who are becoming parsons or deans, have grown more narrow-minded and disapproving. Strengthened in his convictions, he goes back and renews his proposal to Tess. She finally accepts, but is in constant turmoil. On their wedding night Angel admits that he had an affair with a woman in London, so Tess feels able to tell the truth about Alec. Angel is shocked and unforgiving, and he becomes distraught thinking of what his family and society would say if they found out. He gives Tess some money and leaves to clear his mind. He decides to seek his fortunes in Brazil, and asks Tess to not follow him.

Tess's money soon runs out and she feels ever more guilty and depressed. She works at a bleak starveacre farm with Marian, who has started drinking since Angel rejected her. Tess randomly meets Alec d'Urberville again, but now he has become an evangelical preacher, converted by Angel's father. When he sees Tess he becomes enamored once more, and quickly gives up Christianity to try and seduce her. Tess goes home to care for her mother, but soon afterward her father dies. The family is then evicted, and Alec offers to help them if Tess will return to him.

Meanwhile Angel, who has grown sick in Brazil, decides to come home and forgive Tess. When he finally finds her she is in a fancy boardinghouse, and she says it is too late for her, she has relented to Alec. Angel leaves, stricken, and Tess argues with Alec, ultimately stabbing him to death. Tess and Angel then escape together, with Angel unsure if Tess actually committed murder.

They hide in an empty mansion and have a few happy days, but then move on. One night they stop at Stonehenge, and Tess falls asleep on a monolith. At dawn the police arrest her. Later Angel and Tess's sister, Liza-Lu, hold hands and watch the black flag, the sign that Tess has been executed.

• BIOGRAPHY OF THAMAS HARDY

Early Years

Thomas Hardy was born in Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, England on June 2, 1840, the eldest son of Thomas Hardy and Jemima (Hand) Hardy. His father was a stonemason and builder; his mother passed on her love of reading and books to her son. Hardy had somewhat of an isolated life on the open fields of the region. He grew up living and examining rural life, which figures prominently in many of his novels. His primary school education lasted until he was sixteen, at which time he was sent to an apprenticeship with John Hicks, a local architect.

Early Career

By 1862, when he was 22, Hardy left for London to work as a draftsman in the office of Arthur Blomfield. While in London, Hardy was influenced by the works of Charles Swinburne, Robert Browning, and Charles Darwin (the author of *Origin of Species*, 1856). Poor health forced Hardy to return to his native region in 1867, where he worked for Hicks again and for another architect, G.R. Crickmay.

Hardy's education was interrupted by his work as an architect. He had wanted to attend the university and become an Anglican minister, but lack of funds and his declining interest in religion swayed Hardy away from that avocation and more toward a self-study of poetry and writing. Hardy tried his hand at writing when he was 17 and wrote for years while he was a practicing architect. His first novel manuscript, *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867-68), was rejected by several publishers, but one editor, George Meredith encouraged him, and so Hardy set out to refine his style. A second story, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), was accepted and published. His next novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), demonstrates a more polished Hardy now coming into his own style.

By 1870, Hardy was sent by his employer to begin a restoration project of the St. Juliot Church in Cornwall. Here he met his first wife, Emma

Lavinia Gifford, whom Hardy married in 1874. Emma encouraged Hardy to write, and by 1872, Hardy left architecture to devote his time to his literary career.

Literary Work

When Hardy left his career as architect, he did so with a contract for 11 monthly installments of a tale, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, in the *Cornhill Magazine*. His reputation as one of England's newer novelists sustained the Hardy family from that time on. The next novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), introduced the Wessex area setting, which also is the setting for *Tess*. The next two novels, *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), established Hardy as a formidable writer.

Hardy published two more novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), which were his last long fiction works. The last novels challenged the sensibilities of Victorian readers with situations that ruffled many a Victorian feather: immoral sex, murder, illegitimate children, and the unmarried living together. Heated debate and criticism over these two books helped Hardy decide that he would rather write poetry. In fact, so stung was he by the criticism of his works that Hardy did not write another novel.

Hardy wrote short stories, poems, and plays for the rest of his life. Two further volumes of poetry and short stories appeared, *The Dynasts: A Drama of the Napoleonic Wars* (1903-08) and *Winter Words* (1928), a volume of verse. Hardy was quite prolific during this period, writing some 900 poems on a variety of subjects. In 1912, Hardy's wife, Emma, died, ending 20 years of "domestic estrangement." In 1914, Hardy married Florence Emily Dugdale, with whom he lived until his death on January 11, 1928.

Hardy's body was buried at Westminster Abbey in Poet's Corner, while his heart was buried in Stinson, England, near the graves of his ancestors and his first wife, Emma. His second wife was later buried near her husband.

• THEME

Injustice and fate

The cruel hand of fate hangs over all the characters and actions of the novel, as Tess Durbeyfield's story is basically defined by the bad things that happen to her. Thomas Hardy himself, as the author of the novel, obviously causes the many unfair coincidences and plot twists that beset Tess, but as narrator he also manages to appear as her only advocate against an unjust world. Tess's hardships are described as mere sport for the "President of the Immortals," which contrasts with the Christian idea of a God who has a benevolent plan for everyone, and connects with the notes of paganism throughout the novel. Hardy points out and emphasizes the multiple

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

unhappy coincidences that take place, like Tess overhearing Angel's brothers instead of meeting his father. The novel basically keeps asking the age-old question “why do bad things happen to good people?” Hardy even muses over the possibility that Tess's sufferings are a punishment for her ancestors' crimes, or else that some murderous strain is in her blood, foreshadowed by the d'Urberville coach.

The “justice” meted out by the society around Tess is just as cruel as the “President of the Immortals.” Both her community and Angel condemn Tess for her rape, which was not her sin but Alec's. She is seen as someone to be criticized and cast aside because of a terrible thing done *to* her, rather than something she did herself. Her final execution emphasizes the feeling that society, circumstance, and some external force, whether Thomas Hardy or a god, have been working against her the whole time.

Nature and Modernity

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is set in both a time and place of societal transition from the agricultural to the industrial. The rural English towns and farm women often represent Hardy's idea of Nature, while machines and upper class men are associated with the modernizing forces of industrialization. Many of the descriptions and situations of the novel focus on the way that the characters and society are being separated from a more ancient lifestyle, “the ache of modernity” that Hardy felt as a loss of innocence.

The plot sets Tess, who is associated with purity, fertility, unfallen Eve (i.e. Eve as she was in the Garden of Eden), and innocent paganism against the judgmental world of contemporary society. The farming machines are described with ominous imagery that contrasts sharply with the Eden-like Froom Valley. Alec and Angel, who are both well-educated and ranked socially higher than Tess, act as despoiling and condemning influences upon her rural innocence. Prince the farm horse is gored to death by a modern mail cart, and the dairy workers have to water down the milk so the townspeople can drink it without getting sick. The feeling throughout is of nostalgia for an idealized past; a kind of innocence that has been lost along with the coming of the modern age.

Social Criticism

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Paganism and Christianity

Thomas Hardy struggled with his own religious beliefs, and that struggle comes through in his work. He idealized the paganism of the past but was also attached to his family's Christianity, and generally he accepted some sort of supernatural being that controlled fate. Tess herself is usually portrayed as an embodiment of that pagan innocence, a sort of English Nature goddess. She first appears performing the fertility ritual of May-Day, then bedecked in flowers from Alec, whistling to Mrs. d'Urberville's birds, and mercifully killing the wounded pheasants. Angel describes her as a "new-sprung child of nature" and compares her to mythical women like Eve, Artemis, and Demeter. There is another side of Tess's "divinity" as well, however: the role of sacrificial victim, which is a figure associated with both paganism and Christianity. Like Jesus, Tess is punished for the sins of another, assuming the weight of guilt for Alec's crime. When the police finally come to arrest her for murder, she is lying asleep at Stonehenge like a sacrifice on an altar. Stonehenge was thought at Hardy's time to be a heathen temple.

The Christian end of the spectrum is particularly associated with the Clare family and Alec d'Urberville. Each character seems to have a different form and expression of faith, and Hardy critiques them all with empathy from his own religious wrestling. Most of his respect goes to the intense but charitable Mr. Clare, while Alec's conversion is depicted more as a product of his fickle thrill-seeking than any deep emotion, and the conformist Clare brothers are mocked for blindly following every fashionable doctrine. Angel's skepticism and Tess's vague beliefs take the most prominence, and neither moves much past Hardy's own state of doubt.

Women

Hardy muses a lot about Tess's status as a woman and the various roles women assume in society. Tess often plays the part of a passive victim, falling asleep and inadvertently killing Prince, falling asleep before her rape, and falling asleep at Stonehenge where she is arrested. She and many of the other female characters also act as symbols of fertility, nature, and purity. They are linked with the lushness of Talbothays and the

bleakness of Flintomb-Ash, as well the fertility ritual of May-Day. Hardy also places a lot of emphasis on the power of men over women, in terms of both society and strength. Alec obviously dominates Tess in many terrible ways, but Angel also wields power over the women at the dairy, driving Retty and Marian to a suicide attempt and alcoholism. Tess finally assumes the role of an active agent in her own life when she writes angrily to Angel, and her final murder of Alec takes it to the extreme, underscoring Hardy's critique of the oppression of women in Victorian society. Tess is only able to actively change her life and escape her male oppressor by murdering him, which then leads to her own execution. There is no place for a woman in her position to escape.

But while Tess and the other female characters represent many things in the novel, Hardy ultimately celebrates the individual woman over a symbolic whole. Tess is not an “everywoman” or a symbol of fertility, passivity, or oppression, but a unique individual. Angel's relationship with Tess shows this tension between idealized image and living reality. He falls in love with *his* version of Tess, which is the Nature goddess and symbol of innocence, but when the real Tess reveals her troubled humanity and becomes truly alive for him, Angel rejects her. For Hardy, however, Tess remains both a symbol of many things and an individual soul, and it is because of this that she is so successful and sympathetic as a character.

• SYMBOLS

Prince the Horse

Prince is the Durbeyfield family horse, and their principal means of livelihood. When Tess accidentally causes his death, she feels guilty enough to go work for the d'Urbervilles, which begins the action of the story. Prince acts as a symbol of the d'Urberville family, in that he has a noble name but is reduced to menial labor to survive. His death is also a symbol of the theme of Nature versus modernity, as Prince the rural horse is gored to death by a modern mail cart. The death by stabbing and his blood spreading over Tess's white dress foreshadows Alec's murder as well.

Seal and Spoon

The seal and the spoon with the d'Urberville crest are the only things the Durbeyfields have left from their noble heritage. The smallness and uselessness of the items is a symbol of how the d'Urberville name means nothing anymore in terms of real wealth or influence. Tess thinks angrily of them as essentially causing her misfortunes by proving her kinship to the wealthy d'Urbervilles. They are also associated with the old tombs of the d'Urberville knights, which again seem grand but are in effect worthless, full of nothing but the dead.

Brazil

Brazil, where Angel goes to seek his fortunes after rejecting Tess, is a symbol of Angel's idealized vision of the world. Brazil is an exotic, far-off fantasy land to the 19th century English characters, and Angel thinks of it as an unspoiled place to practice his agricultural skills. When he actually gets there, however, he becomes sick and weak, and all his farming endeavors fail. Angel's experience in Brazil is symbolic of his relationship with Tess; it is romanticized and idealized, but then the stark reality appears and destroys his fantasy.

The D'Urbervilles Coach

The d'Urberville coach is an old legend of the family which Angel mentions and Alec later explains to Tess. It concerns some ancient d'Urberville who abducted a beautiful woman and then inadvertently killed her when she tried to escape his coach. Whenever a d'Urberville hears the sound of an invisible coach it is supposed to be a bad omen, or even to forebode that murder is about to be committed. The coach is a symbol of foreshadowing and the theme of fate that looms over all the characters in the novel. Tess cannot escape the cruel things that happen to her, no matter how "pure" she remains at heart. The coach also symbolizes the ancient idea of being punished for one's ancestors. This is pointed out by the narrator when the Durbeyfields are evicted from their home, perhaps because of the many houses the old d'Urbervilles had taken from peasants. Tess's murder of Alec is also associated with this legend, as the symbol of the fateful coach implies both that she is the woman capture in Alec's "coach" and that, as a d'Urberville she always had an inescapable murderous strain in her blood.

• MOTIFS

(Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.)

Birds

Images of birds recur throughout the novel, evoking or contradicting their traditional spiritual association with a higher realm of transcendence. Both the Christian dove of peace and the Romantic songbirds of Keats and Shelley, which symbolize sublime heights, lead us to expect that birds will have positive meaning in this novel. Tess occasionally hears birdcalls on her frequent hikes across the countryside; their free expressiveness stands in stark contrast to Tess's silent and constrained existence as a wronged and disgraced girl. When Tess goes to work for Mrs. d'Urberville, she is surprised to find that the old woman's pet finches are frequently released to fly free throughout the room. These birds offer images of hope and

liberation. Yet there is irony attached to birds as well, making us doubt whether these images of hope and freedom are illusory. Mrs. d'Urberville's birds leave little white spots on the upholstery, which presumably some servant—perhaps Tess herself—will have to clean. It may be that freedom for one creature entails hardship for another, just as Alec's free enjoyment of Tess's body leads her to a lifetime of suffering. In the end, when Tess encounters the pheasants maimed by hunters and lying in agony, birds no longer seem free, but rather oppressed and submissive. These pheasants are no Romantic songbirds hovering far above the Earth—they are victims of earthly violence, condemned to suffer down below and never fly again.

The Book of Genesis

The Genesis story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is evoked repeatedly throughout *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, giving the novel a broader metaphysical and philosophical dimension. The roles of Eve and the serpent in paradise are clearly delineated: Angel is the noble Adam newly born, while Tess is the indecisive and troubled Eve. When Tess gazes upon Angel in Chapter XXVII, “she regarded him as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam.” Alec, with his open avowal that he is bad to the bone, is the conniving Satan. He seduces Tess under a tree, giving her sexual knowledge in return for her lost innocence. The very name of the forest where this seduction occurs, the Chase, suggests how Eve will be chased from Eden for her sins. This guilt, which will never be erased, is known in Christian theology as the original sin that all humans have inherited. Just as John Durbeyfield is told in Chapter I that “you don't live anywhere,” and his family is evicted after his death at the end of the novel, their homelessness evokes the human exile from Eden. Original sin suggests that humans have fallen from their once great status to a lower station in life, just as the d'Urbervilles have devolved into the modern Durbeyfields. This Story of the Fall—or of the “Pure Drop,” to recall the name of a pub in Tess's home village—is much more than a social fall. It is an explanation of how all of us humans—not only Tess—never quite seem to live up to our expectations, and are never able to inhabit the places of grandeur we feel we deserve.

Variant Names

The transformation of the d'Urbervilles into the Durbeyfields is one example of the common phenomenon of renaming, or variant naming, in the novel. Names matter in this novel. Tess knows and accepts that she is a lowly Durbeyfield, but part of her still believes, as her parents also believe, that her aristocratic original name should be restored. John Durbeyfield goes a step further than Tess, and actually renames himself Sir John, as his tombstone epitaph shows. Another character who renames himself is Simon Stokes, Alec's father, who purchased a family tree and made himself Simon Stoke-d'Urberville. The question raised by all these cases of name changing, whether successful or merely imagined, is the extent to which an altered

name brings with it an altered identity. Alec acts notoriously ungentlemanly throughout the novel, but by the end, when he appears at the d'Urberville family vault, his lordly and commanding bearing make him seem almost deserving of the name his father has bought, like a spoiled medieval nobleman. Hardy's interest in name changes makes reality itself seem changeable according to whims of human perspective. The village of Blakemore, as we are reminded twice in Chapters I and II, is also known as Blackmoor, and indeed Hardy famously renames the southern English countryside as "Wessex." He imposes a fictional map on a real place, with names altered correspondingly. Reality may not be as solid as the names people confer upon it.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

• CHARACTERS

Tess (Teresa) Durbeyfield The main character and heroine of the novel. She is beautiful and irresistible to men. She is also young, innocent, and uneducated — unaware that the world is rife with lust, cruelty, and vanity.

Alec d'Urberville Heir to d'Urberville fortune who has Tess brought to The Slopes with the hope of seducing her. He is the consummate playboy, who knows no bounds to debauch women. He ruins Tess and does not know that she has had his child until much later. He convinces Tess that Angel, her husband, will not return from Brazil, and he finally pays for his deceit with his life.

Angel Clare Youngest son of Parson Clare of Emminster, who becomes Tess' husband. After the wedding, when he finally learns of Tess' past with Alec and her son Sorrow, he leaves her and spends the next year in Brazil. Angel eventually returns to England to reclaim Tess but finds her with Alec. After Alec's murder, Angel remains with Tess until her arrest and agrees to take Liza Lu as his wife after Tess meets her fate on the gallows.

Alec d'Urberville

The principle antagonist of the novel, the handsome, libertine son of the wealthy d'Urberville-Stokes. He is fickle and impetuous by nature, but his infatuation with Tess seems more lasting than his feelings for other girls... read analysis of Alec d'Urberville

Angel Clare

The intelligent, idealistic son of the parson James Clare. He rejects his father's and brothers' profession to instead study agriculture, and remains skeptical of religion. Tess, Izz, Retty, and Marian all... read analysis of Angel Clare.

John Durbeyfield

Tess's father, a peddler with a bad heart condition and a love of alcohol. The novel begins with Durbeyfield learning that he is the last descendent of

the ancient d'Urberville family. The news immediately... read analysis of John Durbeyfield

Joan Durbeyfield

Tess's mother, a housewife with many children and responsibilities. She loves to sing and is very superstitious, often consulting her book the *Compleat Fortune-Teller*. She likes to make matches for Tess and first... read analysis of Joan Durbeyfield

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IzzHuett

One of the Talbothays dairymaids who befriends Tess and falls in love with Angel. She is heartbroken when Angel rejects her, but never grows bitter towards Tess. When Angel is leaving for Brazil he... read analysis of IzzHuett

Minor Characters

Reverend James Clare

Angel's father, a parson with a very strict moral code and intense religious fervor. He can be severe but is also extremely charitable, especially towards hopeless cases, and he manages to convert even Alec d'Urberville with his patience and fortitude.

Marian

Another of the Talbothays women who loves Angel. Marian responds to his rejection by turning to alcohol. She later gets Tess her job at Flintcomb-Ash.

RettyPriddle

The third of Tess's Talbothays friends. Retty is also descended from an ancient, noble family, but they, like the d'Urbervilles, have lost all power and wealth. Retty reacts to Angel's rejection by attempting suicide and then leaving the farm.

Mrs. Clare

Angel's mother, a pious woman who is also concerned with upholding social conventions.

Eliza Louisa Durbeyfield

"Liza-Lu," Tess's younger sister. Tess describes her to Angel as "all the best of me without the bad of me" and asks him to marry her once she is dead.

Abraham Durbeyfield

Tess's inquisitive younger brother. She sends him to fetch their parents from Rolliver's, and later asks him to accompany her on her trip to the Casterbridge market.

Mrs. d'Urberville

Alec's mother, a blind, eccentric old woman who owns a huge estate but spends most of her time tending to her birds. She disapproves of her son's behavior but cannot control him.

Sorrow

Tess's baby from Alec. He only lives a few weeks, and Tess has to baptize and bury him herself.

Felix Clare

One of Angel's brothers, the curate of a nearby town who follows all the latest fashions in dress and doctrine.

Cuthbert Clare

Angel's other brother, a Fellow and Dean of Cambridge University, also unoriginal in his beliefs.

Mercy Chant

The pious woman that the Clares hope Angel will marry. Cuthbert ends up marrying her instead.

Dairyman Richard Crick

The master-dairyman of Talbothays farm. A kind employer who is fond of telling rambling, humorous stories.

Farmer Groby

A man who makes a reference to Tess's past and is struck by Angel. Later he employs Tess at Flintcomb-Ash, but remains an antagonistic character.

Car Darch

"The Queen of Spades," a girl from Trantridge who was one of Alec's favorites before Tess.

Parson Tringham

The man who first discovers that the Durbeyfields are related to the d'Urbervilles. His revelation to John Durbeyfield on the road begins the plot of the novel.

Mrs. Brooks

Landlady of "The Herons" boarding house, who spies on Tess and Alec arguing and then raises the alarm when she sees a bloodstain spreading across her ceiling.

Mrs. Crick

Dairyman Crick's wife, who makes Angel sit at a separate table from the rest of the workers because of his gentility.

Jack Dollop

An acquaintance of Dairyman Crick's and a character in his stories, whose escapades relate coincidentally with Tess's life.

Jonathon

A worker at Talbothays.

Simon Stoke

The ancestor of Alec d'Urberville, who generated the family's wealth as a merchant and changed the family name from Stoke to d'Urberville (somewhat randomly picking d'Urberville) as a way to give his new-money wealth a sense of old-money history.

Hope

A younger sister of Tess.

Modesty

A younger sister of Tess.

• CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF MAIN CHARACTERS

Tess Durbeyfield

Tess is one of Hardy's most sympathetic protagonists. She is as likeable as a literary character found in all of English literature. Readers come to understand her plight and her acceptance of the seemingly inevitable things that happen to her. Not once during the novel does Tess exhibit any traits that take away from Hardy's portrayal of her as a good person. As a result, by the end of the novel, we wish for a happy ending for Tess and Angel, but we know that not all stories end on a positive note.

Although overly happy endings were typical of some of Hardy's contemporaries, such as the Brontë sisters and Jane Austin, with *Tess*, Hardy attempted to infuse into the literature more earthy characters and a story that belies the notion of a happy ending.

Tess is the archetypal anti-heroine. That is, she does not win major battles or influence political decisions; instead, she inhabits her own small world and tries to cope with the fate that life has dealt her. By the end of the novel, she is a complete, whole character, but the scale of her influence in her own world, Wessex, is small indeed. Nonetheless, Tess has heroic qualities that make her worthy of our admiration. These qualities are most evident in the following scenes: when she baptizes her infant son, Sorrow; when she endures the tortures of Alec's violation and Angel's abandonment;

and when she finally and irrevocably rids herself of Alec's influence. Thus, Tess is a heroine, but on an everyday, ordinary scale.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

Tess is a simple country girl/woman who had a basic education growing up, but had little exposure to the wiles of the world outside Marlott. She has curiosity that goes beyond her basic education, as demonstrated when she debates religious and moral issues with both Angel and Alec. Her weakness is her innocence; she is unschooled "in the ways of the world" and therefore unable to protect herself. Tess chides her mother for not telling her full truth about a less-than-kind world: "Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk?"

Throughout the novel, Hardy develops Tess as a character and describes her simple beauty. She is attractive to all men, and even her attempts to change her appearance are not enough to hide her natural beauty. Further in the story, Tess is depicted as a person of near divine qualities when she baptizes Sorrow before he dies. Hardy calls the effect on her siblings as a "transfiguring effect" and that she looked "with a touch of dignity which was almost regal." Tess' beauty is balanced by her earthy elegance, and this is especially evident when she is being courted by Angel at Talbothays:

Minute diamonds of moisture from the mist hung, too, upon Tess' eyelashes, and drops upon her hair, like seed pearls. When the day grew quite strong and commonplace these dried off her; moreover, Tess then lost her strange and ethereal beauty; her teeth, lips, and eyes scintillated in the sunbeams and she was again the dazzlingly fair dairymaid only, who had to hold her own against the other women of the world.

However, behind that beauty Hardy paints a picture of a tortured mind. Tess could not be described as an exuberant person, she seems to border between marginal happiness to deep depression. And her personality is hidden, like an enigma, even from those close to her. Joan, her mother, says in response to a question Angel asks, " . . . I have never really known her." Early in the novel, we see that this statement is foreshadowed when John remarks about Tess, "Tess is queer."

Fate plays a predominate role in what happens to Tess. The acknowledgement of the role of fate is summed up by the locals in the small town as "It was to be." Even Tess realizes that she and her family are in a tough spot when Prince, the family horse, is killed and she must go to the Stoke-d'Urbervilles for financial recovery. Joan, Tess' mother, realizing that her daughter has suffered several devastating blows by Alec says, "Well, we must make the best of it, I suppose." Tess is resigned to accept Alec's proposal near the end of the novel when she tells Angel, "I don't care what he [Alec] did wi' me!" Her own safety and happiness are of no consequence to her. Even when she must atone for murdering Alec, she accepts the inevitable as she is arrested for Alec's death — "It is as it should be." That

is, she knows her attempt to avoid prosecution and ultimate death are futile, and she must accept her fate. She does so willingly.

Tess is able to bear great burdens placed upon her at a young age. She is between the ages of 16 and 23 when we read her tale. This ability to undergo so much at such a young age builds her character so that we see her as a powerful force in the novel. She accepts blame for Prince's death; the death of her infant son, Sorrow; the loss of Angel and the destruction of her marriage; as well as her killing Alec with her own hands and leaving home three times in her life to "test the waters of the world" outside her village.

She is unselfish in her actions towards others, as when she suggests to the other milkmaids at Talbothays and Angel, that Izz, Retty, and Marian are all more acceptable for marriage to Angel than she is. The other milkmaids at Talbothays cannot harbor any ill feelings toward Tess, as she is the one bound to marry Angel. Thus, she becomes a character with no discernable negative qualities.

Also, Tess is passionate in her love for Angel and her hatred of Alec. She strays from her marriage only when it appears that Angel may not return to her from South America and when there is no other way to help her destitute family. When she discovers Alec's duplicity, she makes her mind up that this will be his final deception of her.

The martyr-like passion of Tess engenders the readers' sympathy. She makes several attempts to rectify her "mistakes": the vow to Angel to end their marriage; her offer to kill herself to free Angel from their marriage; and, her refusal to ask Angel's parents for any additional money during Angel's sojourn to Brazil. She is determined to be self-sufficient and willing to sacrifice her well being for the good of others. This makes her selfless and on a morally higher ground than other characters in the novel.

Tess' greatest weakness is for her family, particularly her brothers and sisters, and it is this weakness that Alec exploits to great effect. Her journey to The Slopes, at the beginning of the novel, and her subsequent return to Alec near the novel's end, are all predicated on her willingness to undergo great pains to make her family's life better. Alec promises financial aid to the Durbeyfield family several times, to which Tess cannot object. He has ulterior motives, however: to subdue Tess and make her his own. In the end, Alec fails. Thus, Hardy paints a grand portrait of a well-rounded character in Teresa Durbeyfield.

Angel Clare

Angel Clare is the youngest son of the Reverend and Mrs. Clare. He goes against what the family had intended for him, a career in the ministry, like his father and brothers. Instead, Angel pursues a career that seems opposite of what his family would like for him — farming. His education comes from his schooling and from his personal experiences. He seems more

in tune to the true nature of religion, but in a more practical sense, unlike his university-educated brothers. Farming puts Angel on a level with the common folk who inhabit the rural English countryside. He even rejects the popular notion of farm folk as "Hodge," or — as Hardy describes it — "the pitiable dummy" portrayed in the newspapers. Angel arrives at Talbothays to educate himself in the workings of a farm and falls for an unpretentious dairymaid, Tess.

Angel enters the novel at the very beginning, as the nameless young man who dances with the girls of Marlott and then disappears, nameless to the girls and readers. He reappears at Talbothays, when he is 26 and Tess is 20.

Angel is a good man. He begins his relationship with Tess by offering to tutor her in history or any subject of her choosing, to make up for her lack of higher education. She gently refuses, but he cannot help but fall in love with a gentle girl. His gentlemanly ways also come to the fore when he offers to carry all four dairymaids over a swollen creek when the girls are on their way to church. It is a perfect excuse for all of the girls — Izz, Retty, Marian, and Tess — to get closer to their desire, Angel Clare himself. He is sincere in his search for a good, hard working woman who will be a help to him on his own farm. His choice of Tess seems an obvious one to him. However, his family has chosen Mercy Chant, a fine lady and woman, to be his bride. He is disappointed in their choice because he has no need for a frilly lady on a farm; instead, he must have a wife willing to work the same jobs and hours as himself. Angel chooses Tess without ever having his family meet her.

Angel detests old families and makes his views known to others. Tess hears of his views and thinks that her future with Angel may be cut short if he learns of her ancient lineage. When he does learn of her family history, he does not make a big issue of her heritage. He seems likely to have more of an issue with his own views of love and marriage. Angel adheres to Tess' wishes when she asks him to leave her. He observes her from a distance, not making any overtures that could be misleading. He waits several chapters to proclaim his love for Tess and waits for her response. He finally convinces her of his intentions to marry her, but his views of love and marriage seem to have very little flexibility: "Yet Clare's love was doubtless ethereal to a fault, imaginative to impracticability." His weakness is his impractical, idealistic love of Tess. He later regrets his rashness and quick decisions and strives to make up to Tess.

Like Tess, Angel has a past, when he was nearly lead into a relationship with a woman in London. When Tess relates her own tale, he seems to have forgotten his own lurid tale and denies Tess the forgiveness that she so willingly grants him, thus indicating a flaw in Angel's character: his intractability. This flaw sets up the reason for Angel to reject Tess as a wife and begin his excursion to Brazil.

Angel's life is characterized by quick decisions that are not well thought out. He seems reasonable but makes decisions based on impulse, not rational thinking: his quick proclamation of love for Tess, his intent to go to Brazil, and his asking Izz to accompany him to South America. He sees the errors of his ways and regrets his past declarations: "Viewing her [Tess] in these lights, a regret for his hasty judgment began to oppress him." He seems to have thought out the association with Tess, and the loss of a future life with Mercy Chant. He later asks Tess for forgiveness — "Tess! Can you forgive me for going away?" But he exhibits the kind of decisions that ordinary people make in everyday situations. He promises to take care of Tess after she kills Alec and to make Liza-Lu as his wife after Tess is gone, and he lives up to that promise. Thus, Angel is a character likeable to most readers.

Angel is Hardy's voice of agnosticism and the views of religious "freethinkers," those who reject of "the tenets and traditions of formal religion as incompatible with reason." The movement looks to associate with religion but without its formal ties to a church *per se*. Angel could be construed as a deist; that is, he sees God as a creative, living force, but he rejects formal religion. We see this when Hardy writes, "Angel preferred sermons in stones to sermons in churches and chapels on fine summer days." He chose Tess for her ability to be a good wife for a farmer, not for her religious views. Says Hardy, "Angel never would have made orthodoxy a condition of his choice." When describing Tess to his parents, Angel makes a point to tell his parents that Tess is a good Christian woman:

Angel waxed quite earnest on that rather automatic orthodoxy in his beloved Tess which he had been prone to slight when observing it practised by her and the other milkmaids, because of its obvious unreality amid beliefs essentially naturalistic.

Angel has cleared the last obstacle with his parents and returns to Talbothays to convince Tess to marry him. Thus, Angel represents the practical, no-nonsense facet of religion that Hardy himself would have championed.

Alec Stoke D'Urberville

In reality, Alec is not a d'Urberville at all; instead, his family was named Stoke, then Stoke-d'Urberville, and later just d'Urberville. His father had made a fortune in north England and had settled in the southern region of the island. He adopted a local name to blend in with the historical association of place.

Alec woos Tess with his suave talk and conspicuous wealth. Alec's motives are clear from the beginning: to seduce Tess for his own gain. It could be argued that even after seducing Tess, Alec does indeed fall in love with her and makes his plans to have her as his own a second time.

Alec is friendly at first, using his charms to lure Tess back to The Slopes for a second visit. When she returns to become the keeper of Mrs. d'Urberville's poultry collection, Alec uses scare tactics to force Tess to plead to him for relief. The wild ride to Trantridge in the cart is indicative that he will use any means to convince her of his power.

The scene of Tess' first visit, with Alec feeding Tess strawberries (Chapter 5) is very sensual and suggestive. A scene like this would have caused more than a few Victorian eyebrows to be raised. Hardy made a point to include such a scene early in the novel to pique the reader's response to the novel. Sex was not a usual subject for a book, and Hardy delivers in his first section lust, sex, and seduction.

Tess is no match for Alec. Whereas she is naïve and inexperienced, he is worldly and sophisticated. While she is burdened with the responsibility of providing for her family, he feels an obligation to no one but himself. Alec wears the young girl down to take advantage of her, but she continues to rebuff his advances at every opportunity. It is not until he rescues her from a fight, in Chapter 10, with other Trantridge workers that her fate is sealed. Sensing a chance to have Tess, Alec purposefully becomes lost in a trek through the woods. He rapes Tess while she sleeps awaiting his return.

Alec does not appear in Chapters 12-43. Nevertheless, we cannot say that he doesn't impact the story during these chapters. First, his earlier actions (specifically the rape) impact everything that follows. But his impact is not simply confined to the readers' understanding of the part he has played in Tess' current situation. Hardy brings Alec back to the story through Reverend Clare, who shares with his son (who later shares with Tess) Alec's conversion and ministry. Alec returns physically to the book in Chapter 44 as a street minister.

Alec is a "sunshine convert," renouncing his newfound faith as soon as he sees Tess again. Using twisted logic, Alec accuses Tess of causing him to stray from his ministry, "But you have been the means — the innocent means — of my backsliding, as they call it." He soon cannot suppress his passion for Tess, calling her a "temptress." Hardy notes that "The corpses of those old fitful passions which had lain inanimate amid the lines of his face ever since his reformation seemed to wake and come together as in a resurrection." Tess feels some guilt for Alec's plight, and he uses the situation to his advantage again, making her swear to leave him alone at a place called "Cross-in-Hand," the scene not of religious conversion, but of conversion to the ways of the dark side, with Satan. Cross-in-Hand is a symbol of evil, not good, "'Tis a thing of ill-omen," Tess is warned.

Alec further lures the unsuspecting Tess by talking her out of remaining true to her marriage to Angel. He will not accept her rejection of him. He is relentless, and in Chapter 50, he is able to finally sway Tess by catering to her poor family. Alec takes full advantage of Tess at this point, and he convinces her to live with him as a d'Urberville. Thus, Alec has

persuaded Tess to live a life of sin. This deception results in his death when Tess, enraged, stabs him.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1

On his way home from haggling, a peddler named John Durbeyfield meets Parson Tringham, who surprises Durbeyfield by addressing him as “Sir John.” The parson then reveals his recent discovery that the Durbeyfields are descended from the ancient, knightly d'Urberville family, which has since fallen from prominence and gone extinct. Durbeyfield is flattered and amazed by this information. After the parson leaves, Durbeyfield boasts to a boy from town about his lineage and sends for a carriage to take him the rest of the way home.

ANALYSIS

This offhand revelation about the d'Urberville name is the impetus for the rest of action of the book. Durbeyfield's excitement and feeling of entitlement over a name with no real wealth or power behind it begins Hardy's satire of English Victorian society, starting with the emphasis on ancient names, but also commenting on how the mighty have fallen in modern times.

CHAPTER 2

In the small English village of Marlott, which lies in the fertile, pastoral Vale of Blakemore, the women are performing the May-Day “clubwalk,” a tradition descended from a pagan fertility ritual. Tess Durbeyfield, a beautiful, fresh-looking girl, is one of the walkers. She sees her father riding by in a carriage, drunk and rambling about his family's vault. The other women make fun of him, but Tess comes to his defense. When the women reach the village green they begin to dance. They are watched by three Clare brothers, Angel, Cuthbert, and Felix, who are students and members of a higher social class. The two older brothers scorn the ritual and the rural town and soon continue on their way, but Angel can't resist joining in the dance. He chooses a partner other than Tess, and she is quietly disappointed. Eventually he has to leave with his brothers. As he departs, Angel turns back, sees Tess, and wishes briefly he had chosen her as his dance partner instead.

ANALYSIS

The description of the village and valley shows a part of society that is more in tune with Nature and seems to exist in a pre-industrial era. Tess herself is first revealed at the fertility ritual of May-Day, which begins her portrayal as a Nature goddess, and the rural women as symbols of pagan innocence. The scorn of Cuthbert and Felix is a symptom of their middle-class separation from rural life and the natural, pre-Christian innocence of the Marlott women. Angel's shared glance with Tess foreshadows much of

what is to come, especially the fact that his spontaneous action has such a lasting effect on her spirits.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

CHARACTER 3

Tess leaves the dance and returns to her small, sparse home. She finds her mother, Joan Durbeyfield, doing housework and singing. She surprises Tess with two pieces of news: John Durbeyfield has been diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart condition, and their family is descended from the lordly d'Urbervilles. Tess's father is at Rolliver's pub "getting up his strength," but probably celebrating his newfound pedigree. Joan has been consulting the *Compleat Fortune-Teller*, a book of old superstitions, and she asks Tess to return it to the outhouse because she is afraid of keeping it inside overnight. Tess guesses that Joan has been asking about their ancestry.

Joan goes off to fetch her husband, and Tess is left with her siblings, of whom she is the oldest. Four years younger is Liza-Lu, then Abraham, Hope, Modesty, and an unnamed three-year-old and baby. The narrator wonders if they would have chosen to be born into such a poor household. It starts to get late and Joan still hasn't returned. The narrator speculates that she is lingering at the bar with her husband to take a break from her duties as a mother. At Rolliver's she can pretend she is young and free of responsibility again. It gets even later and Tess sends Abraham to retrieve their parents. After another half hour no one has returned from Rolliver's, so Tess starts up the dark and winding path to find them.

ANALYSIS

The satire of the Durbeyfields/d'Urbervilles continues with the rest of the family celebrating a name with no real meaning or advantages attached to it. John Durbeyfield's bad diagnosis is a reminder to Tess that his days are numbered, and introduces the theme of inevitable doom. Joan's faith in the fortune-telling book is a sign of both the pagan superstitions and belief in the power of fate that still lives in the Vale of Blakemore.

The narrator's musings about the fate of the Durbeyfield children continues the theme of an inevitable destiny that the characters are born into, rather than choosing for themselves. Joan's pleasure at Rolliver's helps to humanize a sometimes farcical family.

The description of the twisting road to Rolliver's builds a sense of foreboding for Tess's future.

CHAPTER 4

Rolliver's doesn't have a liquor license, so its patrons have to either drink outside or in a bedroom upstairs. Joan Durbeyfield finds her husband and tells him her plan to profit from their newfound ancestry. There is a family of wealthy d'Urbervilles nearby, and Joan wants to send Tess to "claim kin" and ask for work, but she also hopes that a wealthy gentleman

will end up marrying Tess. She says that the *Compleat Fortune-Teller* confirmed it. John worries that “queer” Tess might not like the plan.

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They hitch up Prince the horse, who is as old and rickety as their cart. Abraham is still half-asleep. Once he starts waking up he quickly reveals Joan's plan to marry Tess off to a gentleman. Tess gets impatient with her family's new preoccupation with the d'Urberville name. Abraham asks if the stars are all worlds just like theirs, and if some are “blighted” and some are “sound.” Tess says they live on a blighted star, and that is why their lives are so hard.

Tess falls into a reverie and starts to think of her father's newfound vanity and hopes for social ascension, and she imagines an unpleasant gentleman suitor mocking her and her family. She falls asleep. She is then awakened suddenly to find that Prince has been gored to death by the shaft of the swift and silent morning mail-cart. Tess, despairing, puts her hand on his wound and the blood splashes her face and white dress.

The mail-cart man complains that Tess was on the wrong side of the path, and says that he has to go on and deliver the mail. Tess is left behind, and she watches Prince's blood congeal and feels extremely guilty for his death. She is ashamed that the day before she had danced and been happy, when today she has committed such a blunder. She wakes up Abraham and he asks if this happened because they live on a blighted star.

Another farmer hitches up to their cart and delivers the beehives, and that evening a wagon comes by to bring Prince's body back to Marlott. Tess returns to find her parents already know what happened. They aren't angry, but it is out of indifference rather than kindness. Tess blames herself. When no one will buy Prince's body for more than a few shillings, Durbeyfield proudly invokes his heritage and vows to keep Prince by his side. They bury him the next morning, Durbeyfield working harder than he has all month, and the children weep. Prince was the family's means of income, so everyone is worried and Tess sees herself as a murderer.

ANALYSIS

This is the first mention of the wealthy d'Urberville branch who are soon to take a major role in the plot. The discovery of why Joan had been consulting her fortune-telling book, combined with her plan for Tess's

marriage, emphasizes the theme of fate and makes Tess's future seem unavoidable.

Another mention of Durbeyfield's bad health is a reminder of unhappy fate. Tess's worries about the beehive delivery emphasizes the poverty of the family, and her pride in not asking for help is similar to her father's. The family's farcical walk home and their constant financial concerns contrast starkly with the Durbeyfields' new delusions of grandeur.

When Tess hears of her mother's plan, it is in some ways a prophecy of her future. Abraham's questions about the blighted stars reinforce the theme and bring up the idea that one's fate is preordained by circumstance or destiny, and cannot be escaped.

Tess's dream is vaguely prophetic, and her falling asleep before a tragedy is the beginning of her role as the woman as passive victim. The death of Prince is the start of Tess's misfortunes, and his bloody death both foreshadows her later crime and symbolizes a blow to the idea of Nature, as the farm horse is killed by the sleek modern mail-cart.

The pool of Prince's blood foreshadows the bloody ceiling at the novel's climax. Tess feeling guilty for something that was only partly her fault begins a recurring plot point, and Abraham's question seems to affirm the preordained injustice of fate.

Durbeyfield's pride is a defense against the hard economic realities his family faces. The sad burial of the nobly-named animal is symbolic of how far the once-great d'Urbervilles have fallen, and how an ancient name doesn't mean anything anymore in their modern world. Tess regarding herself as a murderer is more foreshadowing.

CHAPTER 5

The family is in bad economic straits now, but Durbeyfield is still too lazy to work much. Joan fatalistically downplays the disaster and proposes her plan to Tess. Tess protests at first, but feels so guilty about Prince's death that she agrees to see Mrs. d'Urberville. She warns her mother to not think of marrying her off, though.

Tess sets out the next morning for the village of Trantridge. As she walks she turns back and looks at the Vale of Blakemore, and feels that she is leaving her childhood behind. She has always been the parental figure in the family, even to her mother, so she feels she is once again shouldering the burdens of the Durbeyfields and taking care of them.

The d'Urberville mansion of the Slopes lies on the edge of an ancient, primeval forest called The Chase, but the estate itself looks very modern and well-kept. The narrator reveals that these d'Urbervilles are not d'Urbervilles at all, but Stokes. The now-deceased Simon Stoke procured his wealth as a merchant, and when he settled in the area he somewhat randomly picked "d'Urberville" as an old and venerable name to make his

family seem more respectable. The Durbeyfields are sadly unaware of this, however.

Tess is approached by the bold, handsome Alec d'Urberville. He tries to flirt with Tess but she rebuffs him shyly. She wants to meet Mrs. d'Urberville, but Alec says she is unwell and cannot see her. Eventually Tess explains her purpose to Alec, describing her family's crest-inscribed seal and spoon as proofs that they are true d'Urbervilles. Alec lies and says that he has the same family crest.

Alec convinces Tess to linger with him until her ride home returns. He shows her the grounds and tries to feed her a strawberry. She protests but relents. Alec keeps feeding Tess berries and adorning her with flowers as they walk, and she feels overwhelmed.

They sit to have lunch and Alec watches Tess. She looks more mature than she is, and her appearance fascinates Alec. It is hinted that he is to be the “tragic mischief” of her story. Tess blurts out her guilt over Prince's death, and Alec promises to find a place for her on their estate. He says for Tess to not call herself d'Urberville in front of his mother.

Tess turns to go and Alec considers kissing her, but refrains. The narrator laments the cruel chance of these two meeting at this precise time. Nature hardly ever offers happy coincidences, but instead prefers disasters and tragic destinies. Alec goes back to his tent and laughs, pleased with the situation.

ANALYSIS

Prince's death and Tess's own ideals set her along the inevitable path of her destiny, despite her protests. The economic woes of the once aristocratic family are again emphasized, and seem almost a force of fate itself, pushing her forward. And poverty *is* often a condition from which people can't escape, leading them to disaster.

Tess's rural homeland is a symbol of the old agricultural society, and her journey into the harsh world beyond represents the new woes of modernity. Her role as the bearer of burdens hints at the theme of Tess as sacrificial victim.

The Chase acts as a symbol of ancient Nature and pagan powers, while the history of the d'Urberville-Stokes offers a sharp critique on society's emphasis on old, respectable names, and the inherent valuelessness of those names themselves. The unhappy coincidence of the Stokes choosing the d'Urberville name instead of another to burnish their reputation is also pointed out.

Alec appears as the novel's antagonist, a figure of corruption set against Tess's female innocence and modesty. The seal and spoon are brought up as symbols of the essentially worthless inheritance left to the Durbeyfields by their ancestors.

Alec begins his disastrous attempted seduction. Tess covered in flowers offers a picture of her as an innocent child of Nature, or a sort of pagan fertility goddess.

Tess is presented as an unintentionally seductive figure, her beauty making her the innocent object of men's lust. Alec's tragic role in her fate is prophesied, and his appeal that she not mention her name highlights both their differences in social standing and the fact that he doesn't want her to know for as long as possible that he isn't actually a d'Urberville.

The narrator fully introduces the theme of injustice and fate, and laments the tragic story that is about to unfold for Tess. She is trapped by the circumstance of this meeting, and cannot escape her future. Alec, meanwhile, likes being in control—a typically masculine way of being.

CHAPTER 6

Tess feels dazed as she rides away from Trantridge. Another passenger comments on her appearance, and she remembers that she is covered in flowers. She tries to remove most of them, and the thorn of a rose pricks her chin, which she considers a bad omen. She spends the night in Shaston and goes home the next day.

Tess enters the house to find her mother triumphant. They have already received a letter asking Tess to come look after the birds at the d'Urberville estate. She will be paid well and the family is gleeful with the news. Tess feels uncomfortable, however, and doesn't wish to return to the Slopes, but she won't explain why.

A week later Tess returns home from job searching to find the family rejoicing again. Alec d'Urberville has ridden by and asked in person if Tess would come manage the fowls. Joan exclaims over his handsomeness and the diamond ring on his finger. John thinks that Alec wants to marry Tess to improve his own bloodline. Tess is again reluctant and wishes she had met with Mrs. d'Urberville instead.

After thinking again of Prince's death and being teased by her younger siblings, Tess finally agrees to go. She warns her mother that she only wants to earn money, not get married. She writes to the d'Urbervilles and receives a response, but notices that Mrs. d'Urberville's handwriting seems masculine. Joan is offended that they are only sending a cart for Tess instead of a carriage. Once she has made her decision Tess feels less restless, and she can accept that fate does not want her to become a schoolteacher as she had once hoped.

ANALYSIS

Tess bedecked in roses offers another image of her as a fertility goddess or a symbol of Nature. Tess still has some of her mother's superstitions, and can't help but give weight to bad omens.

Tess is going to look after the birds, which is again a position related to the natural world. Her employment seems like a stroke of good fortune to the family, but Tess's encounter with Alec forebodes future unhappiness.

Alec's reappearance confirms his interest in Tess and that she cannot escape his role in her destiny. The family's delight over his wealth, combined with Durbeyfield's vanity, show the farcical disparity between the two families, and the idea of respectable names versus real wealth. It also shows how the family relies on Tess to support them, whether through work or, hopefully, marriage to a rich man.

It is finally Tess's own guilt and selflessness that lead her to accept her fate and go to the other d'Urbervilles. Here again she acts as a religious figure, sacrificing her future for her family's well-being. She imagines that she has decided her path now and so is more at peace, although she cannot know the misfortunes to come.

CHAPTER 7

Tess prepares to leave for the Slopes and allows her mother to dress her up. Tess looks older than she actually is, and Joan is delighted with her appearance and the effect she imagines it will have on Alec. Tess says goodbye to her father, who takes a break from his nap to say he will sell his title to Alec. He starts by asking for one thousand pounds, but beats himself down to twenty. Tess leaves with her mother and sisters, full of emotion.

The family goes to wait for the cart to Trantridge, all of them looking innocent and beautiful. The cart appears and Tess says goodbye and walks up the hill. Joan watches the cart approach and sees with delight that it is driven by Alec d'Urberville. Tess hesitates to go with him, but then strengthens her resolve and leaves. The children and Joan start to cry.

That night as they are lying in bed, Joan voices her misgivings to her husband. She says she wishes she had found out if Alec was a good man or not before letting Tess go with him. But then Joan consoles herself that if Tess plays her "trump card," her beautiful face, then Alec is sure to marry her.

ANALYSIS

The description of Tess's appearance shows her as a physically desirable woman who is still an innocent girl at heart. Durbeyfield's comical goodbye satirizes both his delusions of grandeur and his poor understanding of money, although there is also a tragic note because of his many young children.

The Durbeyfield family appears as an image of agricultural innocence and a purer past. We are suddenly given Joan's point of view at the point when Tess truly accepts her fate and gets onto the wagon with Alec, putting herself in some way under his control. Joan seems to cry both from sadness

at seeing her daughter leave but also perhaps joy at what she thinks will lead to her daughter's marriage to a wealthy man.

Even Joan, who pushed this plan so hard, has doubts now, but in the end she trusts that fate will work itself out. She keeps believing that “what will be will be,” but for Joan that is an optimistic idea. Joan also sees beauty as a strength for Tess, but in many ways Tess's beauty functions as a kind of weakness, attracting predatory men.

CHAPTER 8

Tess and Alec ride away from the green Vale and into the gray unknown. Alec drives recklessly and Tess is still wary since Prince's death, so she asks him to slow down. He responds by teasing her with stories that his horse has already killed one man. Alec goes downhill at a terrifying gallop, and Tess clings to his arm. He asks her to hold onto his waist instead, as he is using the reins. When they reach the bottom Tess lets go and gets angry when she realizes how he has tricked her.

They start to go down another hill but this time Tess won't hold onto Alec. Instead he asks if he can kiss her. When she refuses he makes the horse go faster, and finally she agrees, looking like a frightened animal. Alec slows the cart and tries to kiss her, but she unconsciously avoids him again. He curses and Tess starts to cry, pleading that she doesn't want to be kissed. Alec gives her “the kiss of mastery” anyway.

Unconsciously Tess wipes her cheek with her handkerchief, which makes Alec angry. He insists that she has undone the kiss, and he must have another one. At that moment Tess's hat blows off, and she makes him stop the cart. Once she retrieves her hat she refuses to get back on, saying that she will walk the rest of the way. Alec realizes she has tricked him and starts to curse at her.

Tess yells an insult back at Alec and his anger suddenly dissolves. He tries to convince her to get back on the cart but she will not, even though now he feels ashamed and would not have tried any more seduction. Tess wishes she could return home, but reminds herself that she is doing this for her family. Finally the Slopes and the poultry-farm appear in the distance.

ANALYSIS

They leave behind the agricultural past and drive into the troubles of the modern age. Alec uses his natural recklessness to his advantage, but he does not yet understand just how inexperienced and modest Tess really is. They come from two different worlds, and he cannot comprehend her innocence.

“The kiss of mastery” prefigures the terrible act to come—Alec's rape of Tess—and shows Tess as a victim of male dominance. Tess is portrayed as

an animal being teased by a cruel human, and so again stands as an image for the purer natural world.

That the kiss can be “undone” resonates tragically with Alec's later assault, which leaves permanent damage. By leaving the cart Tess is able to achieve some agency in the situation and retain her dignity, even though it means walking for miles.

Alec's fickle nature is revealed in his swift emotional shifts. Tess continues her proud walk apart from Alec's cart, innocently asserting her independence from his wealthy male authority. Her trials have begun now, so she is fully acting as a sacrificial figure for her family's benefit.

CHAPTER 9

The chickens Tess is supposed to care for live in a cottage that was once someone's home but is now overgrown with ivy. She works for a while and is then told to bring the birds to Mrs. d'Urberville. Tess learns for the first time that Mrs. d'Urberville is blind, and again feels uneasy.

Mrs. d'Urberville is waiting in an armchair, and she speaks to Tess but makes no mention of the d'Urberville name. She takes each fowl in her lap and checks it over with her hands. They go through all of the chickens in the cottage, and the process reminds Tess of a religious Confirmation ceremony, in which Mrs. d'Urberville is the bishop, Tess is the parson, and the fowls are the children being presented.

Mrs. d'Urberville asks Tess if she can whistle, and Tess admits that she can. Mrs. d'Urberville asks her to whistle songs to the bullfinches every day. The maid mentions that Alec has been whistling to them lately, and Mrs. d'Urberville reacts negatively to his name. Tess has not yet noticed that there was no mention of her kinship, but she now sees that the mother and son d'Urberville do not get along.

Tess feels better the next morning and starts to practice her whistling. Alec suddenly appears, complimenting her beauty and sarcastically calling her “Cousin.” He offers to help her, and avoids her refusal by promising to stay on the other side of the fence. Tess laughs and blushes but finally manages to produce a clear note. Alec says that Tess is a “temptation as never before fell to mortal man,” but that he won't try to seduce her again. He warns that his mother is a strange woman, and tells Tess if she has any trouble to come to him.

Tess begins to adjust to her position and to Alec's presence. He teases her carefully and she gradually becomes less shy, but Alec is also in an extra position of power because Tess is basically his employee. Whistling to the bullfinches becomes a pleasurable job, and Tess can practice songs she learned from her mother. The birds share the same room as Mrs. d'Urberville. One day Tess is whistling and suspects that Alec is watching

her from behind the bed curtains. Since then she always checks the curtains, but Alec does not try this scheme again.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure
Woman Faithfully Presented*

ANALYSIS

Tess's job as a caretaker of birds fits with her image as both a symbol of the natural world and a pagan Nature goddess. Mrs. d'Urberville's blindness means that she too is probably helpless to control Alec.

Relating the odd ceremony of the chickens to a religious rite explicitly brings up the theme of Paganism and Christianity. Tess's frame of reference is a Christian ceremony, but the fact that it is taking place with birds recalls a religion more in touch with nature.

Tess whistling to the bullfinches is another example of her oneness with the natural world, and the beginning of her association with bird imagery. Mrs. d'Urberville's reaction to Alec's name seems to confirm the suspicion that she disapproves of his actions but has little control over them.

Alec again draws attention to the disparity of power in their interactions. When he calls Tess a "temptation" it again frames her in religious terms, but also places her in an unwilling and passive role. She does not intend to be a temptation, but he sees her as such and holds it against her. This foreshadows her later forced "sins."

The circumstances of society, wealth, and gender all work in Alec's favor against Tess. She is essentially powerless, and must rely totally on his whims and good humor. Yet she still manages to stay hopeful in her innocence, and is able to take pleasure in working with the birds.

CHAPTER 10

The people of Trantridge love to drink, and go every Saturday to get drunk in nearby Chaseborough. Tess avoids going for a while, but she finally agrees and then has a good time, finding the other women comical and refreshing. She keeps going back, sometimes alone, but always returns in the safety of a group. One night she starts out later than usual and then encounters Alec at a street corner. Tess tells him she is just waiting to leave. He says they will meet again, and walks away.

Tess finds all the villagers at an eerie outdoor dance, lit by hazy candles in an outhouse. The atmosphere is smoky and the dancing figures appear unreal or mythical. When they leave the haze they seem to transform back into common village-folk. Tess asks if any are leaving and a bystander says the dance is almost over.

The dance keeps going for a while, and Tess is too afraid to walk home alone. A man asks her to dance but she refuses. People start pairing off and then falling together into the dirt. Tess hears a laugh behind her and meets Alec again. She explains her situation and he offers to take her

home, but she still distrusts him and refuses. Alec's presence makes the dancers begin to recollect themselves and head home, however, so Tess starts to walk with them.

Tess observes that many of her companions are staggering drunkenly, and the experience reminds her unpleasantly of her father. She sees that one of the women is Car Darch, the “Queen of Spades,” who was recently a favorite of Alec's. They come to a gate and Car goes first with her heavy basket on her head. The rest of the group notices something dark trickling down her back, and they realize that it is treacle from a smashed jar in the basket. Everyone laughs as Car rolls around on the ground, trying to clean herself off.

Tess can't help joining in the laughter, and Car hears her and becomes enraged, as she was already jealous of Tess for Alec's attentions. Tess apologizes while Car strips off her bodice and prepares to attack. Tess magnanimously refuses to fight, but accidentally insults the whole group. All the other women start yelling at her as well, and Tess feels guilty and angry. She tries to escape the crowd, but at that moment Alec appears on his horse and demands to know what the trouble is, although he has already overheard enough. He offers Tess a ride home and a means of escaping the situation.

Tess feels so distressed that she accepts Alec's offer, although at almost any other moment she would have refused. The other women watch them ride off, laughing at the trouble Tess has now landed herself in. They start walking again, and the dew and their misty breath seems like halos around their heads.

ANALYSIS

The drunk and rowdy women of Trantridge contrast with the innocent, superstitious women of Marlott. Almost all the set-up of this scene, and the first mysterious encounter with Alec, serve as foreshadowing for the events to come. The emphasis on traveling home in a group will also come back to haunt Tess.

The dance seems like a sort of bacchanal, or pagan orgy, with the ordinary folk becoming larger-than-life or somehow inhuman. This is an aspect of ancient paganism that is not associated with the pure and innocent Tess, and it makes her uncomfortable.

The dance grows even wilder and more primal, and Alec's enjoyment of it highlights his own essentially bestial nature. The atmosphere is now quite foreboding, and the feeling is that something bad is about to happen.

The dark trickle down the Queen of Spades' back is reminiscent of blood, and though this then turns into a slightly comic scene, the initial shock lingers, and the tone remains ominous. The fact that Car is a recently discarded favorite of Alec's says a lot about his nature and the unhappiness that awaits Tess.

Car Darch appears here as a foil for Tess, violent and passionate against Tess's modesty and innocence, and shows a type of woman not yet seen in the novel. This scene is another example of a situation where Tess is condemned for something that was only barely her fault. In this case the anger of the others seems to do with their jealousy of her beauty and the attention she gets from Alec—attention she doesn't even want.

The fact that only at this precise moment Alec happens to arrive emphasizes the injustice of Tess's fate. This is perhaps the unhappiest coincidence of her story, and the mockery of the other women once Tess has accepted Alec's offer to take her home only heightens the apprehension.

CHAPTER 11

Alec and Tess ride away, and Tess starts to feel uncomfortable. Alec asks why she is not more grateful to him and avoids his kisses, and Tess admits that she does not love him. He asks if he has offended her with every flirtation, and she does not deny it. They keep riding and the sleepy, distracted Tess does not notice that they passed the road to Trantridge long before. She has been awake since five and it is now one the next morning. She starts to lean against Alec and he puts his arms around her. This immediately makes her pull away again.

Alec gets angry at her constant distrust and invokes his superiority over her, calling Tess a “mere chit.” Then he compliments her again, and convinces her to let him put his arm around her. A long time passes and Tess finally realizes that they should be home by now. She asks where they are and Alec dodges the question. Then he confesses that they are in The Chase, “the oldest wood in England,” and that he has been prolonging their ride.

Tess grows angry again and pulls away. She demands that he let her walk home, but Alec says they are miles from Trantridge and the forest is foggy. Alec lets her dismount but he offers to find the path home while she waits with the horse, as even he is a bit lost. He steals a kiss and ties up the horse. He makes a nest of dead leaves for Tess, and mentions that he has bought a new horse for Durbeyfield and some toys for Tess's siblings. Tess is grateful but conflicted, and when she realizes the depth of Alec's passion for her she starts to cry.

Alec tries to comfort her and wraps her in his overcoat. Then he goes off into the wood. Tess starts to fall asleep. Alec takes his time but gets his bearings, and then goes back for Tess. The moon has gone down and The Chase is black and foggy. Alec stumbles over Tess in the dark, and sees that she is asleep with tears on her face. She appears as a pale shape against the blackness. He presses his cheek against hers.

The dark ancient trees are all around, and birds and rabbits, but the narrator wonders where Tess's guardian angel is this night. He wonders if

the god of her faith is distracted, and why such female innocence should be doomed to violation in this way, and why these injustices happen so often. The narrator hypothesizes that probably many d'Urberville knights had been even more cruel towards peasant girls of their day, and perhaps Tess is being punished for this. But he admits that humans find this kind of justice unsatisfying, and finally he retreats to the saying of the rural folk, "It was to be." There is no good explanation, but after this she is to be a different woman altogether.

ANALYSIS

Tess and Alec finally speak plainly to each other, and Tess's true modesty and innocence are made clear to Alec. He begins to realize that his flirtations are not working. Tess falling asleep recalls her reverie before Prince's death, and her taking on again of the role of the sleeping victim of catastrophe.

Alec angrily reminds her of his power over her, both as a stronger man and as her wealthy employer. Faced with the inevitable, Tess must submit a little. The setting of the dark Chase builds up even more the sense of foreboding, and the feeling that they are among ancient powers that do not care about human happiness.

Tess tries to assert her independence again, but now the situation has become impossible, and she must depend on Alec. He mentions her family as a reminder of yet another form of control he wields over Tess, as her ideals keep her bound to sacrifice herself for her family's well-being. The reality of her situation finally hits her in a heartbreaking way.

Tess falls asleep and again becomes the passive victim. The primeval powers of The Chase take over in the night, and Tess is presented as a figure of tragic innocence, light set against the dark. This is the last action described of the rape scene, and even this was too explicit for critics and many readers at the time of the novel's publication.

Hardy invokes Nature as Tess's element, but her pagan purity is defenseless against the cruelty of modern man and unjust fate. His meditation on why bad things happen to good people leads to no satisfying answer, just the fatalism of the simple townspeople, as all possible explanations seem unfair. Tess is a "Pure Woman Faithfully Presented," and her rape is not her own sin but something unfairly enacted upon her. The language of this scene emphasizes that fact in the face of society's criticism.

CHAPTER 12

The section begins a few weeks after the scene at The Chase. Tess is walking the twenty miles back home to Marlott, carrying a heavy basket but looking like her burden is an emotional one instead. She climbs the hill that Alec had ridden so recklessly down four months before, and sees the

beautiful, familiar Vale of Blakemore. She can hardly bear to look at it, as her view of life has been so corrupted since she last left. Alec approaches her from behind and wonders why she slipped away so stealthily. He offers to drive her the rest of the way, and she passively accepts. She is not afraid of him anymore.

They drive the rest of the way making small talk, and Tess sits “like a puppet” replying shortly. When she sees Marlott she starts to cry a little, and says she wishes she had never been born. Alec downplays her sorrow and asks why she came to Trantridge if she did not love him. Tess says she did not understand his intentions. Alec says “that's what every woman says,” and Tess flies into a rage, threatening to strike him for his insensitivity.

Alec laughs and admits he has done wrong, but he wants to make amends by giving Tess money. Tess scorns the offer and refuses to take anything from him, lest she should be his “creature.” Alec confesses he is “a bad fellow,” but says he was born bad and can't help it. He offers again that if Tess finds herself in a time of need she should call on him. Tess gets out of the cart and passively lets Alec kiss her goodbye, admitting hollowly that he has mastered her. She looks away at distant trees as he kisses her.

Alec laments that Tess will never love him, and Tess affirms it. Alec sighs and downplays her melancholy, complimenting her beauty again and asking her to return to him someday. Tess says she will never return, and Alec rides away. The sun and the season seem to mourn with Tess as she walks.

A man approaches Tess from behind and they converse. He is religious, and spends his Sundays painting Bible quotes on fences. Tess watches him paint “THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT” and feels that the words accuse her personally. She asks about what if the sin was not of your own making, and man says he is not sure. He says he has even more crushing quotes that would be good for “dangerous young females” like Tess to see. He wants her to read his next one, which is going to be about adultery, but Tess refuses and walks on. As she leaves the man shouts that she should speak to a Reverend Clare if she wants explanations for her theological questions. Tess doesn't believe that God would say such things.

The sight of her house makes Tess's heart ache. Her mother greets her excitedly until she hears what has happened. Tess also reveals that they were not actually related to those d'Urbervilles. Joan gets angry that Tess didn't get Alec to marry her, and guilts her with the family's hardships. Tess had never even considered marriage, and Alec never mentioned it. Joan continues to berate her for not being more careful until Tess breaks down and weeps. Joan had never warned her about the dangers of men, and she had no experience in the matter. Joan feels bad, but says they must “make the best of it.”

ANALYSIS

Tess is a new woman now, one no longer innocent and naïve but broken by the harsh world. It hurts her to even look at Marlott, the site of her old self, the symbol of agricultural purity. She does not fear Alec anymore because he can't do anything worse to her than he already has, so in a way she has achieved a new strength through her tribulations.

Tess has been reduced in her humanity by Alec's continued dominance, but finally her independent spirit flares up again and she takes control briefly within her anger. This flare-up is foreshadowing for her later, more dangerous act of rage against Alec's blithe cruelty.

The way Alec talks about the rape only makes it seem more horrible, as if his money and flippant apologies could undo it. Alec claims it is fate that he should be bad, but he was the one with the agency in the deed. Tess gazes out at Nature as he kisses her, but her old, familiar world gives her no comfort now.

Tess is able to retain a little dignity still by refusing to give in to Alec when she is awake. She again symbolizes Nature as all her surroundings seem to grieve alongside her.

This begins Tess's unfair condemnation by Christianity and English Victorian society. She asks the question that seems to hold her destiny: what if the sin was not hers, but inflicted upon her? It makes no difference to the world, for now she is a “fallen women,” and Hardy's tragic critique of the sexual double standard and the hypocrisy of society begins. Tess believes in a simpler, purer religion that is not this kind of harsh Christianity, but an innate and innocent faith. Angel's father is first mentioned here as well.

Joan blames Tess for not holding up her end of the plan, despite the many sacrifices Tess has already made for her family. Even her mother did not realize the extent of Tess's innocence. Tess is able to retain at least a little dignity by showing no regret for not getting married. Joan quickly jumps to a similar conclusion that the narrator reached, the simple fatalism of the rural townspeople.

CHAPTER 13

The people of Marlott hear about Tess's return, and many of her old friends come by to visit her, as fascinating rumors about Alec's nature have reached even Blakemore. Joan is able to satisfy her pride by implying a “dashing flirtation” to the visitors. After a while Tess cheers up a little, but the next morning is again lonely and depressing. She sees her fate as inexorable and unsympathetic, and often wishes she was dead.

After a few weeks Tess goes back to church, as she likes the singing and chanting. She tries to stay unnoticed, and so goes early and sits in the back. But soon the churchgoers start to look back at her and whisper, and after

that Tess does not go to church anymore. She stays in her room most of the time, or walks alone at dusk, shunning other humans. She seems to become a natural part of the gray, bleak scenery, and the weather reflects her emotions.

The narrator points out the unfairness of Tess's plight; she feels herself as guilty, but it is really another who is guilty. She feels like an intruder among the animals, but really she is as innocent as they are. It is not Tess that is in the wrong, but society. To the natural world she has committed no sin.

ANALYSIS

The envious reception and Joan's boasting are especially tragic compared to the reality of Tess's situation. Once the first hopeful night wears away, she is left alone and friendless in a condemning, unsympathetic society, and there is no escape from this fate.

Tess likes the singing and chanting most, and these have the most in common with ancient pagan religions. This is the first concrete example of people judging Tess negatively for her rape. She learns to avoid people and return to the natural world, where she is most at home. Nature seems to reflect her sadness now as it reflected her purity before.

This is Hardy's explicit critique of the unfairness of Victorian society and the modern world. Tess is still in accord with nature and morality; it is only the arbitrary rules of society that she has broken.

CHAPTER 14

It is August, and the sun looks like an ancient god. Illuminated are the red arms of a reaping-machine in a field of corn. The machine starts to tick and then three horses move forward, and the machine revolves. The animals in the cornfield retreat before it, but their refuge gets smaller and smaller and doom inevitably finds them. In the wake of the machine women bind up the corn, and they seem an integrated part of nature.

One woman is described in particular, as she has the most beautiful figure, but a bonnet is pulled low over her face and she never seeks attention. She binds corn monotonously, and at last her beautiful face is revealed as that of Tess. Much time has passed and she has changed. She is now working the land in the Vale of Blakemore.

After breakfast they go back to work, but now Tess glances off at the hills until a group of children arrive. The oldest girl carries an infant in her arms. When Tess finally takes a break the girl, who is Liza-Lu, brings the baby to her and Tess nurses it. The other workers look away politely.

Tess holds her child indifferently for a while, but then suddenly kisses it fiercely. The other women discuss her seemingly conflicted feelings, and

the rumors of “a sobbing one night last year in The Chase,” and they lament that this should happen to the prettiest girl.

After many months of regret, Tess had finally decided this week to go out into the fields and work. She tries to put the past behind her and take comfort in the beauty of nature, which no longer reflects her pain. It has been so long that her community has mostly forgotten about her scandal, or hardly gives it a thought, but to Tess it is still constant suffering. Yet her suffering only comes from the expectations of convention, and no longer from her inner emotions.

Tess works until evening and then is cheered by her lively female companions. But when she returns she finds that her baby is sick. The child is technically an “offence against society,” but Tess forgets all that in her desire to save his life.

The child gets rapidly worse and Tess despairs that he hasn't been baptized. She has accepted that she might go to Hell, but she cannot let her child die unsaved. She asks her father to send for a parson, but Durbeyfield is feeling especially proud of his heritage and scornful of Tess's shame, so he refuses.

The child gets worse, and Tess feverishly imagines him being tortured in Hell. She decides to baptize him herself, hoping it will be “just the same” as a parson. She fills the washing-stand with water and her siblings gather around, awed. She takes up the child and her sister holds open the Prayer-Book.

In the candlelight Tess is transformed into an “immaculate,” “regal” figure in white. She names the child “Sorrow” after a Biblical phrase, and she sprinkles water on his head, and they pray, and the children say “Amen.” Then Tess recites the thanksgiving words, and so sincere is her faith that her face appears transfigured and purified. To her siblings she doesn't look like Tess anymore, but “a divine personage with whom they had nothing in common.”

The next morning Sorrow dies, and the siblings cry but Tess remains serene, feeling that if God won't accept her child then he is not a God she wants to believe in. Tess then wants to give Sorrow a Christian burial, so she goes to a parson. She asks if her baptism was the same as if he had done it, and the parson is impressed with her dignity and takes pity on her, and says (untruthfully) that it was. But then he refuses to let the baby be buried in the churchyard, until again Tess convinces him with her sympathetic pleas.

That night Tess buries her child by lantern-light, having bribed the sexton to get into the churchyard, and she constructs a small cross and lays flowers on the grave. It is a makeshift memorial, but made complete by her maternal love.

ANALYSIS

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure
Woman Faithfully Presented*

Hardy first invokes the ancient sun-worshipping religions, and compares that with the ominous industrial reaping machine. It emotionlessly kills the creatures of the field and its turning arms are those of inexorable fate. Again the rural women are portrayed as being at one with Nature.

We are reintroduced to Tess, as she has changed so much from the innocent girl of the novel's start. She is again representing the older world of agriculture and simple nature, and is placed next to the industrial machine to emphasize the contrast.

Hardy breaks the news of Tess's child slowly, avoiding dramatics. Alec's rape could never be undone emotionally, but now his child acts as a physical proof for all society to see and condemn.

Most everyone knows what happened by now, and Tess cannot avoid her past in Marlott. She has unwillingly taken on the role of a mother, and her actions toward the child show her inner turmoil—both anger and love.

Tess is once more among Nature where she belongs. Hardy emphasizes again the arbitrary rules of society that condemn her. If she was going by her own moral compass, she would not be suffering as greatly as she is now. It is the judgment of others, which Tess even emphasizes in her own mind, that cause her pain now.

The child is perhaps doomed from the start because of its unhappy birth. Despite all of society's judgment, Tess instinctively assumes the role of mother when her child is ill.

It is now revealed how much Tess has thought about her own damnation. She accepts that she is bound for Hell—thereby accepting society's unfair condemnation of her—but selflessly wants to save the baby. Even her own father is affected by the general condemnation of Tess.

This act makes sense as the last desperate hope of a young girl, but Tess also now begins to assume her position as a religious figure, appearing like a priestess as she acts out her own version of a baptism.

Tess fully becomes a priestess or goddess here, some holy figure between paganism and Christianity, and even the children can see the change in her. Tess does not need a parson to perform this rite, as she has been purified by Nature and the sincerity of her own faith.

Tess is still filled with the calm dignity of assuming her religious role, and so is able to make independent and potentially blasphemous decisions for herself. The parson is also affected by her state, and he goes against the technicalities of his religious position and acts as a sympathetic man. Hardy clearly values the spirit over the letter of the law.

Tess has found this religious role as a strength within herself, and here she completes her own version of the Christian burial, acting in the face of society's condemnation.

CHAPTER 15

The narrator muses on Tess's plight. She has finally found maturity, but her path to it has rendered her crippled for a life in society. She would be right to be angry at God for placing her in such a harsh situation. Tess spends the winter doing housework and making clothes out of Alec's old gifts.

Tess muses on the important dates in her life, and realizes that she cannot know the last important date, the day of her death. With such thoughts she grows into a “complex woman,” with a tragic and wise demeanor. She has remained so aloof for so long that most of her community has forgotten about her scandal, but Tess still feels uncomfortable in Marlott. She thinks she could be happy somewhere else where she could escape the past, though, and that far away she could somehow regain her chastity.

Tess waits a long time for an opportunity, until in May she gets a letter that a milkmaid is needed at a dairy called Talbothays, many miles away. Tess resolves to no longer dream of d'Urbervilles and castles, but to accept her role as a worker. She cannot help but be intrigued by Talbothays proximity to the ancient d'Urberville estates, though. The thought of being in her ancestral land seems like a good omen, and gives her hope for the future.

ANALYSIS

Again Hardy as narrator complains about the injustice of Tess's fate. He acts as her only advocate against an unfair god or destiny, and an unnecessarily judgmental world.

Tess joins in the narrator's musings and puts her life in perspective. She knows the day of her death is inevitable, as were perhaps the misfortunes that have already befallen her. Society's judgment of her is ingrained within Tess as much as it exists in the external community, so she will not be free until she can forgive herself as well as physically escape.

Despite the bad things that have happened to her, Tess can't help feeling optimistic when the future means Spring and a place far from her troubles. She has grown from an innocent girl to a complicated woman, and found great fortitude in her trials, but Tess still has enough youth to feel hopeful.

CHAPTER 16

It is more than three years since *The Chase*, and Tess leaves her home once again. She looks back at her house and can't help regret leaving it. Her

family will soon move on with their lives without her. Tess has decided that the young children might be hurt by her example if she had remained.

After a while Tess accepts a ride from a farmer who finds her attractive. She walks the rest of the way on foot. She has never been to this area before, but she already feels “akin to the landscape.” Tess can see the distant place where the tombs of the d'Urbervilles lie, but she has no respect for them anymore, as they in some way caused her misfortunes and left her only a seal and spoon.

At last Tess reaches the Valley of the Great Dairies, which is much larger and more fertile than her homeland. Cows are everywhere she can see. There is a clear river like the “River of Life,” and the air is light, sunny, and full of birdsong. Tess feels hopeful.

The universal desire to be happy has finally reached Tess. She is still only twenty, and so her spirits can rise above her dark past. She starts to sing a Christian chant, but then feels guilty. The narrator muses that her rhapsodic song is probably more pagan than Christian, as Tess is a woman more in touch with Nature than God, but she only knows how to express her sentiments in the Church's language.

Tess descends into the vale, still full of the joyful energy of her surroundings. She looks around at the green fields and a heron lands nearby and watches her. Then Tess hears the call for milking-time, and she follows a herd of cows into a dairy farm. As the cows wait to be milked everything about the place shines brilliantly and overflows with fertility.

ANALYSIS

Tess is moving for her own well-being, but in another way sacrificing herself for her family again. They will be freer without her presence bringing shame into the house.

Tess begins to reconnect with Nature in her new environment. The d'Urberville tombs are just as worthless as the seal and spoon, and their dark images contrast with the bright natural beauty all around.

“The River of Life” again introduces religious imagery, and Tess's natural purity reacts positively to the outdoor environment. She finds joy in the agricultural world.

Here Hardy begins to explain the theme of paganism and Christianity. Tess is technically a Christian, and she believes the religion she has been taught, but the purer nature of her faith and her affinity with the outdoors are more in the spirit of the ancient pagan religions of the land.

Again birds, in this case the heron, are associated with Tess (like Mrs. d'Urberville's bullfinches and chickens), and she naturally follows the cows home. The language describing the animals and landscape emphasizes the tone of joyful natural abundance.

CHAPTER 17

The men and dairymaids all rush out and start to milk the cows. Richard Crick, the master-dairyman, is slightly better dressed than the rest, and Tess seeks him out. He greets her kindly and mentions the old d'Urberville race from the area, but Tess changes the subject. He asks about her milking skills and then she gets right to work.

Tess drinks a little milk as she works, which surprises Dairyman Crick, whose stomach can't handle it. It is a large farm, and some cows are harder to milk than others. They work in silence, and then some of the workers complain of less milk than usual. They speculate about Tess's arrival and various folk superstitions, but then decide to sing to comfort the cows.

After many verses a worker and the dairyman address an unseen male milker as "sir," asking him to play his harp. Crick tells a story about a man who had to play his fiddle to keep a bull from goring him, and finally perform a Christmas song so the bull would kneel and he could escape. The unseen milker remarks on the fascination of the story in a detached, curious manner.

Tess becomes intrigued by the man, though she still can't see him behind his cow. The dairyman gives him tips on milking. Finally the man stands, and Tess sees that he has a different look from the rest of the workers. Tess also recalls that she has seen him before, at that May-Day clubwalk long ago when he did not dance with her.

Remembering the past upsets Tess for a while, and she fears the man knows her story and will recognize her. He has matured and grown more handsome and thoughtful since they last met, and is well-dressed under his work clothes. She can tell he is inexperienced at milking. Meanwhile many of the other dairymaids comment on Tess's beauty.

Tess is one of only a few girls who sleep and eat at the farm. She goes to bed and tries to sleep, but another girl keeps talking, and eventually reveals some information about the mysterious man; his name is Angel Clare, he is a parson's son, and he is at Talbothays to learn one of the many aspects of farming. His father is Reverend Clare, whose name Tess recognizes as the earnest preacher. All of his sons except Angel are becoming parsons as well.

ANALYSIS

Despite her hopefulness and totally new surroundings, Tess is immediately reminded of the past. She can never truly escape it, as it is tied also to her future.

Tess is more in accord with Nature than even the dairy farmer, whose stomach can't digest the raw milk. Tess is where she belongs now, outside, among animals, and singing.

There is a build-up to introducing this character that shows he will be important to the story. His comments about Crick's tale show him to be of a different class, and not at home among the rural superstitions and legends.

Again Tess's past jumps out at her again, but this time it is an innocent past, before she knew she was a d'Urberville. There is still hope that she can recapture that time in this agricultural setting.

The man differs from the rest of the workers in both his manner and attire, as he is from a higher social class. He wants to join the agricultural aspect of society but is both not naturally a part of it and still inexperienced.

There is already a small coincidence with the mention of Reverend Clare, whom the quote-painting man recommended. It is noted that Angel has broken away from his family's tradition and is studying farming instead.

CHAPTER 18

Angel is the youngest son of Reverend Clare, and the only one without a University degree, despite being the brightest. One day his father found that Angel was reading philosophy books, which made the Reverend indignant. Then Angel declared that he did not intend to become a parson. He had great affection for the Church, but could not make himself believe, and so could not properly take the oaths.

Reverend Clare was shocked and grieved at this news, and finally decided that if Angel was not going to serve God he had no need of a Cambridge education. Angel accepted this, and then began a long period of trying out different studies and occupations. He went to London and had a short affair with an older woman, but escaped and ultimately decided his temperament favored the rural life and intellectual freedom. He chose to become a farmer in America, the colonies, or England, and he began his apprenticeship of agriculture's many branches, and so ended up living and working at Talbothays.

Angel stays in the largest room in the attic, and at first he liked to read and strum his harp in the evenings, but soon came to enjoy eating with the rest of the workers downstairs. His preconceived image of the farm-worker, characterized by newspapers as "Hodge," was destroyed by the unique realities of each person, who were as varied in intelligence, experience, and personality as any group.

Clare then begins to enjoy his outdoors work more, and feels more liberated in Nature than among books. He starts to grow familiar with the seasons, the weather, and the landscape.

Angel usually sits apart from the mess table, and the churn turns on the other side, pulled by a horse. For a few days Angel has been occupied

with reading, so he hasn't noticed Tess's appearance yet. Then one day he is imagining a piece of music and notices a new, flute-like voice from the table. Tess is talking about how she can look at the stars and feel her soul leaving her body. When the attention turns to her she blushes and diverts it.

Angel keeps watching Tess, and remarks to himself what an innocent “daughter of Nature” she seems. Then she suddenly feels familiar to him, and he thinks he has seen her before. Angel does not give it much thought, but it is enough to make him keep noticing Tess among the other women.

ANALYSIS

Angel is revealed as a man trying to be independent from his family and society, and this manifests itself in rejecting his father's religion. His disbelief in Christianity is entirely intellectual, and he lacks Tess's instinctual nature.

Reverend Clare cannot even conceive of his son disbelieving, so deep is his own faith. Hardy portrays his sincere convictions positively, in a similar way to Tess's instincts. Angel's path from the city and the intellect to the country and farming predicts his relationship with Tess, although he is not yet at home in the agricultural world, and still an outsider among the rural folk.

Angel's tendency to idealize and stereotype foreshadows the appearance of his later faults. He is able to accept the farm workers as unique individuals after a while, however. This relates to Hardy's emphasis on regarding Tess as a person rather than just a symbol or ideal.

Angel finds some of the life and freedom in Nature that Hardy has been celebrating through Tess's character.

It is notable that Tess remembers their brief meeting but Angel does not, and also that his intellectual pursuits distract him from first noticing her. Tess unwillingly reveals some of her complex religious depth and her troubled soul, which seems out of place among the other table conversation.

Here Angel begins his idealization of Tess as a pure, mythical Nature symbol. He knows he has met her before, but cannot remember the details like Tess can, which foreshadows how his soon-forgotten whims will affect her.

CHAPTER 19

Certain cows prefer certain milkers, so Dairyman Crick regularly rotates them in case a worker left and a cow refused to give milk. Tess has her favorite cows, but takes them as the rotation delivers. Soon she keeps getting her favorite cows, however, and then notices that Angel is in charge of arranging the rotation. They talk coyly and Tess implies that she might

not always be around to milk the cows, but she feels ashamed of her words afterward.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

One evening Tess is in the garden, enjoying the silence, when she hears Angel playing the harp. She is transfixed “like a fascinated bird,” though in reality his playing is clumsy. She approaches him slowly, keeping hidden behind a hedge.

Tess sneaks through the edge of the garden, which is full of wet grass and infested with colorful, foul-smelling weeds, and plants and snails stain her arms. She loses herself in the music and starts to cry. Angel stops and then comes around the fence, and Tess unsuccessfully tries to sneak away.

Angel asks Tess what she is afraid of, and she says she has no fears when outside, but indoors she has fears of life in general. Angel is surprised at her sorrow, and asks her to confide in him. Tess describes her depression and sense of the gloomy future, and Angel is again shocked that she has such pessimistic feelings, what he calls “the ache of modernism.”

Angel muses that it is strange that Tess should have these ideas at such a young age, although they are actually ancient troubles. Tess finds it strange that a man in such a good position as Angel should be depressed. He is an outsider at Talbothays, but only by his own choice, and he has money and education. They are both puzzled and intrigued by each other.

They slowly learn more of each other. Tess first regards Angel as a pure intelligence, and she feels inferior. One day she laments that she knows so little in comparison to him, and Angel offers to teach her. First he proposes a history lesson, but Tess says she avoids history. To her it is like learning that she is only one in a long line of similar lives, and her fate is predestined by her ancestors, and nothing is unique about her actions or experiences.

Angel is again surprised, as he has had similarly troubled thoughts. He leaves and Tess stands peeling flowers, finally throwing them all to the ground. She is embarrassed by her conversation, and feels that Angel must think her stupid. She wonders if he would be impressed by her d'Urberville ancestry.

Tess asks the dairyman if Angel respects old families, and Crick warns her that Angel hates the idea of them. He feels that their descendants are inferior, as they had their greatness used up early. The family of another dairymaid, Retty Priddle, used to own lots of land in the area, and Angel scorned her for it. Tess is glad she asked, and realizes that it is her “supposed untraditional newness” that interests Angel.

ANALYSIS

Angel first shows his interest in Tess through this subtle and roundabout way, which contrasts sharply with Alec's bold flirtations. The

women and their relationships with the cows again symbolize rural innocence and a connection with Nature.

Tess is compared to an animal, specifically a bird, continuing the series of images. She seems even more pristine in this situation, enchanted by human music.

The vivid description of the garden again associates Tess with fertility and abundance. Here she appears fully as a Nature-girl, sneaking through weeds and smeared with dirt.

Angel has his ideal of Tess and here she starts to break it, though he keeps being surprised when she does. Her actual trouble is a purer, rawer one than Angel's personal "ache of modernism," which is linked with his education, maleness, and higher social status.

The disparities of their class and past experiences are emphasized in the nature of their sorrows. For now, though, this difference is intriguing to both, as each idealizes the other; Tess as Nature, Angel as Intellect.

Tess's wise, pessimistic views on history show her maturity and how her past has affected her. She already understands the power of fate and being punished unfairly. She also hints at the idea that her place in this society is a predetermined role which she must act out, a role that was inflicted upon her, not chosen.

Tess is associated with plant imagery again. She is embarrassed by the same musings that intrigue Angel. Angel can pursue negative thoughts at his leisure, while Tess has no choice in the matter.

Angel's ideas reflect some of the narrator's earlier musings, that people can be punished for their ancestors, or that bloodlines carry inherent traits within them. Retty is another example of a once-great family laid low, and the changing social order. Tess realizes how she is being idealized by Angel.

CHAPTER 20

Time goes on, and new birds and plants appear. The dairy workers are happy and content, at the level above neediness but below stifling high society. Tess and Angel remain in a state of limbo, but it is inevitable that they will come together soon. Tess is the happiest she has ever been. Both she and Angel enjoy their state of pleasant attraction without complicated commitments. Angel imagines that his preoccupation with her is merely philosophical.

Tess and Angel meet often, as they both rise earlier than the other workers. When they are alone in the gray dawn they seem like the first people on earth, like Adam and Eve. Tess seems to Angel to take on a mythical significance and an unearthly beauty. He imagines her as Mary Magdalene, or the "visionary essence of woman." He teasingly calls her

Artemis or Demeter, but she wants to be called Tess. Then the sun rises and she seems to lose her divinity.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

On these early mornings herons approach them, and Tess and Angel watch the fog cover the fields. Drops of dew cling to Tess's face and she gains a fantastical beauty that fades later in the day, in the heat of the sun and the everyday talk and activity of the farm.

ANALYSIS

Birds and plants are again associated with the state of the women at the dairy, and Hardy portrays the workers as a sort of social ideal. Fate now seems to be working in Tess's favor. Angel is again idealizing Tess and trying to treat her as part of his agricultural study, but he cannot repress his true feelings.

Here the image of Tess and Angel as Adam and Eve is first revealed. Tess now becomes to Angel not just a symbol of Nature, but a mythical or religious figure. She takes on the archetype of pure Woman for him. For her part, Tess wants to be treated as an individual, not a symbol of a generalized whole.

Birds again appear, here as good omens. Tess is still an unreal figure to Angel, and as such easier for him to love. Her midday self is less goddess-like, but has more of the true, human Tess.

CHAPTER 21

One morning the butter churn is not working right, and no butter will come. All the workers gather around. Dairyman Crick complains that there are no good "conjurers" left who could fix it if it breaks. Mrs. Crick proposes that someone is in love, making the machine not work.

Crick tells a story of a man, Jack Dollop, who had courted and "deceived" a young woman, and then one day her mother showed up to attack him. Dollop hid in the butterchurn while the old woman raged about and the young woman cried. Finally the old woman found him and turned the butterchurn with Dollop inside until he agreed to marry her daughter. Tess is struck by this story, which was intended to be comedic, and Crick asks concernedly about her. She says she will feel better outside. At that moment the churn starts to work again.

Tess is depressed all afternoon at the thought that none of her companions saw the sadness in the story. The sun seems ugly to her now, and a sparrow's voice "machine-made." That night she goes first to bed of all her roommates, but wakes up when they enter.

Her roommates Retty Priddle, Marian, and Izz Huett stand by the window and watch someone in the garden. Soon they start to tease each other about being in love, and at last they all admit that they are, and reveal that Angel is the object of their devotion. Then Marian says that their love is in vain, because Angel likes Tess best. Izz declares that he won't marry Tess or any of them, but someone of his own social class. All three start to cry and eventually fall asleep.

Tess lies awake, upset. She knows that Angel prefers her, and that he had even asked Mrs. Crick about hypothetically marrying a farm-woman, but Tess feels unworthy of marrying anyone because of her past. She feels guilty for drawing his attention from the other, “purer” girls of Talbothays.

ANALYSIS

This is another example of folk-superstitions, but the nature of it seems to implicate Angel and Tess's relationship. Also the idea that love could break a machine is similar to Hardy's theme of modernity versus Nature.

The story is humorous to the rest of the workers, who have never had Tess's sad experiences. The weeping girl is only a side character in the tale, but Tess strongly relates to her. This is perhaps one of her “indoor fears,” and she can only feel better by going back outside. It is also notable that when Tess loses her vitality the machine regains its own.

The other women are actually more of Angel's pure ideal than Tess. Even Nature brings her no comfort now, and just seems like another aspect of the harsh modern world.

This infatuation is first portrayed as innocent and foolish, but the women's tears at the end start to show how deep it really runs. Their final admission that Angel is from a different society altogether, and none of them have a chance with him, seems to make their rural world hopelessly small.

Tess can't help following Angel's line of thinking and associating all the dairymaids with purity and Nature, but now she feels excluded from that symbolic community by her past troubles.

CHAPTER 22

The next morning Dairyman Crick is upset because a customer had complained of the butter's taste. They try it, and Crick decides that it is a garlic plant in the meadow. All the workers form a line and walk slowly across the fields, looking for garlic shoots. Tess and Angel walk side by side, but speak perfunctorily.

Tess and Angel break from the line, and Tess tries to turn his attention to Izz and Retty, as she has decided they are more worthy of marrying Angel than she. She compliments their beauty and agricultural skills, and the fact that they blush when he looks at them. After that she makes herself avoid Angel, and tries to give her three friends every opportunity to be near him. She realizes that all the dairymaids love him, and it is admirable that he shows such self-restraint.

ANALYSIS

The uniform line of farm workers is reminiscent of the generalized stereotype of “Hodge,” or that of simple rural folk following blindly along with their heads down.

Tess again shows her self-sacrificing spirit, denying herself joy because she feels she is unworthy of it. Angel's restraint in taking advantage of the women's affections is a pleasant contrast to Alec's aggressiveness in pursuing whatever pleasure he wants.

CHAPTER 23

It is Sunday morning, and Tess, Izz, Retty, and Marian have decided to go to the church a few miles away. It is Tess's first time away from Talbothays since she got there. It stormed the night before, and the river is high but the air is clear. Soon they come to a part of the road that is flooded, and they can't wade through it in their nice Sunday clothes.

Angel comes wading around the corner, dressed in his work clothes. He now prefers the outdoors to church, and today is checking on the flood's damage to the hay. He had seen the girls from far away and hurried to help them, particularly Tess. The four of them look very pretty clinging to the bank, with flies and butterflies trapped inside their dresses.

Angel offers to carry them one by one through the pool, but he avoids looking at Tess. All of them blush at his offer, and he starts with Marian. Izz builds up the moment before he comes for her, and when he gets Retty he finally looks at Tess. He returns for her and she is ashamed of her excitement.

Angel starts to carry her, and compares her to Rachel from the Bible. Tess tries to compliment the other women, but Angel admits he carried them only to get to her. He exclaims her name and they both blush, but Angel realizes he is in a position of power and goes no further. He walks slowly to prolong their time.

The others watch Tess, and then Marian blurts out that Angel likes Tess best. Their good moods have vanished, but they do not blame Tess, as they have the fatalism of their people and accept things as they are. Tess realizes then that she loves Angel as well.

Tess declares that she would refuse Angel if he asked her to marry, but she also doesn't think he will marry any of them. The other women decide to befriend Tess again, but they are deeply upset and suffer with emotions that "cruel Nature" has thrust upon them. They can see the logical futility of their passion, considering their social class, but they can't help it.

That night the four discuss Angel again, and say his family has picked out a doctor's daughter for him to marry. They talk and weep late into the night. Tess then gives up hopes of marriage. She knows Angel has chosen her above the rest, but compared to them she is inferior in the "eyes of propriety."

ANALYSIS

It is telling that Tess hasn't left the farm since she got there, as it has become her whole world now, a comfort against outside society and strangers who might recognize her.

Angel is in some ways Hardy's experiment of an upper-class intellectual trying to get back to his roots in Nature. The girls with insects trapped in their church dresses is an interesting image of the forces of Nature and Christian convention fighting within them.

Here Hardy presents the women as helpless objects of beauty, waiting for a man to carry them across the water. This is a very conservative image and contrasts with his usual scenes.

This “rescue” is a contrast to Alec's. Angel realizes Tess is at a disadvantage in clinging to him, and he does not abuse his power. Again he compares Tess to a religious figure, this time Rachel (Jacob's favorite of the two sisters he married. Yet in some ways Angel will come to see Tess as the other sister, Leah, when he feels that Tess has tricked him into marriage just as Jacob was tricked).

The other dairymaids have a similar mindset to Joan Durbeyfield – what will be will be. They are able to accept that Tess has “beat” them without hating her.

Hardy criticizes the arbitrary rules of society that make Angel “unavailable” to the dairymaids, while their emotions are pure and in accord with Nature. Tess again tries to suppress her passion as a kind of sacrifice for Angel's and her friends' sake.

The mention of Angel's other possible wife makes Tess realize that he still cares for social conventions, and it is basically impossible that he should marry Tess because of both her class and her past.

CHAPTER 24

It is the season of fertility and “oozing fatness” in Froom Valley, and it seems inevitable that passion should grow there. It is very hot outside, and the warmth echoes Angel's feelings. All the workers, birds, and cows constantly seek shade or breeze.

One afternoon Tess starts milking one of her favorite cows, with her head resting meditatively in profile. Angel watches her, and her face is “lovable” to him, no longer otherworldly but real and vital, and her lips impossibly beautiful. Tess then realizes he is watching her but does not change her position. Angel is overcome by passion, all his prudent logic disappears, and he embraces her.

Tess is surprised, but accepts his action with “unreflecting inevitableness” and gives a cry of joy. Angel again almost kisses her, but then apologizes for not asking Tess's permission, and declares his devotion to her.

The cow grows restless and Tess moves to save the milk. They sit together and Tess starts to cry. Angel worries that he has been too forward

and taken advantage of her innocence. Crick comes by again, but now something has changed between Angel and Tess, something impractical but leading to a new perspective and future for them both.

ANALYSIS

Hardy again associates fertility and abundance with Tess, and here with her and Angel's passion. Her happy times coincide with the vitality of Nature.

In one sense Tess is becoming more of a unique person for Angel and less of an ideal, but in many ways he has just exchanged the ideal of essential female/goddess for innocent maid/pure child of Nature.

Tess accepts her fate yet again, but this time it is one she actually desires. Angel contrasts with Alec in the chasteness and hesitation of his advances.

Tess grieves her unavoidable situation in a society that would condemn her love and good fortune. A wall has been broken between her and Angel, and their destinies are now inexorably bound together.

CHAPTER 25

That evening Angel is still restless, so he goes outside. He is surprised by his own burst of passion, and wonders how they should act before others now. He had planned to come to Talbothays for a brief episode of education and observation, but now the outside world has become dull to him and the farm is transformed by Tess's personality into a wonderful, abundant, homelike place.

Even apart from Tess the dairy has become important to Angel. He realizes that his experiences here are as important as elsewhere, and that Tess is not a doll for his temporary pleasure but a human with her own "precious life." This life is her only chance in this world, a chance given her by an "unsympathetic First Cause," so Angel must be careful in dealing with it.

Angel realizes he should probably avoid Tess for a while, but the thought is repulsive to him. He decides to go home and ask his family and acquaintances if it doesn't make sense for a farmer to have a farm-woman for a wife.

At breakfast the four women discover that Angel is gone, and they try to hide their despair. Dairyman Crick blithely discusses his eventual leaving, and guesses that Angel has about four months left at Talbothays.

At that time Angel is riding home to Emminster with some pudding and mead from Mrs. Crick. He watches the road and thinks about his potential future with Tess, and what his family and community would think if he married her.

Angel passes by his father's church and sees some school-girls, and among them is Mercy Chant, the pious woman his parents want him to marry. Angel thinks of the fertile valley and Tess, and tries to avoid Mercy.

Angel has come home on an impulse without warning his family, and he arrives at breakfast. Both his brothers, Felix and Cuthbert, are home from their respective positions. Their father, Reverend Clare, is an “honest, God-fearing man.” He is one of a dying breed of clergymen who is extreme and conservative in his views but wins everyone's admiration for his sincerity and fervency.

Angel imagines his father uncomprehending and condemning of the “aesthetic, sensuous, pagan pleasure in natural life and lush womanhood” that Angel has lately enjoyed. Clare cannot accept his son's skepticism, but his heart is so kind that he feels and acts no differently towards Angel.

Angel sits down and again feels that he has changed while his family remains the same. His brothers notice that he behaves with the passionate freedom of a farmer, and has perhaps “lost culture.” Later Angel walks with them; they are both educated men who wear the glasses that are in fashion, read the poets in fashion, and believe the doctrines in fashion. Angel notices their recent “mental limitations” as they settle into their respective mindframes of the Church and University. Both are somewhat inferior in spirit to their father, and they have little curiosity for life or sense of the wider world beyond.

Felix comments on Angel's farming future and advises him to not drop his morality and thought, as in his latest letters he seemed to be losing intelligence. Angel disparages Felix's fixed ideas of dogma. They return home and Angel is hungry, but neither parent returns until much later.

Angel looks around for his gifts from Mrs. Crick, but his mother has given the puddings to the poor and put the mead in the medicine cabinet, as they never drink alcohol. Angel uses a rural expression and then feels ashamed of his family's stiffness.

ANALYSIS

Tess brings out Angel's more liberated inner nature, but his repressed conventionality quickly returns. Tess has the power to affect Angel's mindset and seemingly the entire environment, although it may be that she is just perfectly aligned with Nature instead.

Angel has many wise and admirable observations here that contrast with Alec's carelessness. It seems that he shares Hardy's idea of a compassionless God or predestined fate.

Angel is constantly trying to reign in his emotions, and his return home symbolizes the importance he places on the opinions of others, despite what his inner nature feels.

The date is set at which everything will change again, so they have something to both hope for and despair of. The dairyman is humorously blind to his workers' passions.

Angel tries to reconcile his innate, natural love for Tess with the opinions of society and his family. In his passion, such reconciliation still seems possible.

Mercy is herself a unique woman, but the story is Tess's, so here she represents the upper-class properness and repression, and contrasts with wild, natural Tess.

Reverend Clare gets the most respect among the Christians Hardy portrays, but it is his sincerity and passion that are portrayed positively more than the specifics of his religious beliefs. His whole nature leans in this one way, and he remains true to it despite the fashions of the church and society.

Angel admits the pagan nature of his current rural life, and contrasts it with his father's austerity. The Reverend's kindness makes his harsh religious beliefs more human.

Hardy disparages the older brothers for their unoriginality and lack of conviction. They are more socially proper than Angel, Tess, or Reverend Clare, but they have lost their sense of wonder in the world and can no longer empathize with other points of view. Hardy's social and religious critique is at its sharpest here, and the perfectly conventional Clare brothers seem like lifeless cutouts of what their society wants them to be.

The brothers' worlds collide but they have little to say to each other, so lost are they in their own states of mind. Angel is used to the hearty meals of a farmer, and finds his family's austerity stifling.

The contrast between meals at Talbothays and in the Clare household is emphasized. The farmers embrace their appetites and pleasures while the Clares deny themselves.

CHAPTER 26

That night after prayers Angel finally summons the courage to discuss his situation with his father. He talks of his plan to set up a farm in either England or the Colonies, and Reverend Clare reveals that he has been saving up money for Angel's future land expenses. Angel is touched, and so he brings up the subject of marriage. Mr. Clare insists his wife be at least a good Christian woman, and mentions Mercy Chant.

Angel argues that he ought to marry someone who could help him with farming, but Mr. Clare is still caught up on the details of Mercy's beliefs. Angel says that Providence has given him a woman just as pure and faithful as Mercy, but with skills in agriculture instead of religion.

Mrs. Clare interrupts to ask about Tess's family. Angel admits that she is not a "lady," but downplays the importance of ancestry when one is working the land. He compliments Tess for living what poets can only write about, and highlights her Christian faith, which before he had scorned as a façade for her more pagan, naturalistic lifestyle.

Considering his other rebellions, the Clares are pleased that Angel has at least chosen a Christian girl, and they offer to meet her. Angel doesn't give many details, as their middle-class prejudices might make his parents biased against Tess as she is. In discussing her, Angel realizes that what he loves about Tess is not her skill or intelligence but her inherent vitality, and he sees that there is little difference in the range of spirits in women across different social classes.

He departs in the morning, avoiding traveling with his brothers and eager to return to Tess. His father rides with him a while, discussing problems of the parish. Reverend Clare mentions a particular young sinner named d'Urberville. Angel knows about the old family, but Mr. Clare says this young man is no relation. He had sought out the young d'Urberville, who had a reputation for sins of passion, and preached to him. The man responded with angry and insulting remarks to the Reverend.

Angel feels saddened that his father subjects himself to such attacks, but Mr. Clare brushes it off. He says he has been struck by sinners before, but if he was able to save them then it was worth it. Angel does not agree with his father's views but respects his conviction, and admires that the Reverend never asked about Tess's wealth. Angel feels closer to his father than his brothers are.

ANALYSIS

Again Reverend Clare's kindness is emphasized over the harshness of his beliefs. He too is lost in his own world, though, and sees true Christian doctrine as the most important part of marriage. Angel has to translate his life into his father's religious language, but for now he is good at existing in two worlds at once.

Angel frames his meeting with Tess as the work of God, and he tries to emphasize her Christianity. The Reverend is still lost in his specific preferences.

Mrs. Clare seems more worldly than her husband, and concerned with their social class. Angel has to downplay the part of Tess that he loves the most, which is her ancient pagan spirit and natural purity.

Angel understands the deep divide between his family's world and Tess's, and knows that they might disapprove of her because of external circumstances alone. For now he is blinded by love and so can look beyond the strict roles of convention, but he is still wise to prepare his austere family for the Nature-child Tess.

The hint of Alec brings up the dark past and shows that Tess is never really free; her past can always rise up and work against her. Even just the mention of d'Urberville implies that her happiness cannot last. The Reverend is contrasted with Alec in his beliefs, but especially in the endurance of his convictions.

Again Mr. Clare shows admirable sincerity. Angel realizes that his father is so immersed in his beliefs that he does not care about Tess's worldly situation, but only if her faith is pure. Angel recognizes that this seems like a better way of being than that of his brothers, who are little more than servants to society's whims.

CHAPTER 27

Angel goes down into the damp, fertile Froom Valley, and feels like he is experiencing life more fully than he did at home. He loves his family but he feels freed from a burden in returning to Talbothays. Everyone is napping at the dairy, but then the bell rings and Tess appears first.

Tess does not know Angel is back, and he admires the exuberance of Nature within her unconscious self. She suddenly notices Angel and then remembers their new relationship. Angel puts his arm around her and her heart beats excitedly, but she has to go to work soon.

Angel offers to help her, so it only they two skimming the milk. Tess experiences the afternoon as a hazy, joyful dream. Angel at last asks her to marry him, but frames the question in logical terms as a farmer needing a farmer's wife.

Tess suddenly seems to grow old and tired, and she says she can never be Angel's wife. Her refusal breaks her own heart. Angel is amazed, and wants to know why she cannot marry him. She admits that she loves him, but gives the excuse that she is too low-born and his parents would disapprove. Even when Angel says he has already spoken to them she refuses, and he fears he has been too sudden in his proposal.

They go back to milk-skimming but Tess begins to cry. Angel tries to reassure her about his parents' compassion, and asks about Tess's religious beliefs. Her response is vague and sorrowful, but Angel thinks she is sincere enough that even his father could not disapprove.

Angel talks more about his visit, and then brings up his conversation with his father. He retells the story of the insulting young skeptic, and gives enough information that Tess can tell it is Alec. The reminder of her past hardens her in her refusal, but Angel does not notice her expression.

Tess runs back into the open field as if trying to escape her sadness. Now that Angel is back in the valley, marrying a dairymaid seems much more natural than marrying a woman like Mercy Chant.

ANALYSIS

Again the purity and freedom of agricultural life is praised over religious repression or upper-class prudishness. Angel is also a young man rebelling against his parents' world, but Hardy echoes his preference.

The comparison of his stifling hometown to Tess's unencumbered natural purity reinforces his conviction to marry her.

This afternoon is one of the pinnacles of Tess's happiness, before the realities of her own past and the condemning structures of society take control of their relationship.

Finally reality catches up and again Tess must sacrifice her own happiness because of something that was not her fault. Angel still idealizes her, and so he cannot imagine his innocent Nature-girl having any kind of real objection to their marriage.

Tess represents an innate, naturalistic religion. She follows Christian traditions because that is what she was taught, but her inner faith is purer and more amorphous. Angel correctly connects her sincerity with his father's.

Again the timing is bad for Tess, and even at the peak of her happiness Alec's ghost comes back to haunt her. She can never escape her destiny, and hopelessly tries to push away her own happiness.

Tess once more returns to Nature to escape her troubles. Angel is ignorant of her inner turmoil, and still enchanted by his own romantic ideas about her.

CHAPTER 28

Angel is not upset by Tess's refusal, and he is reassured that she already let him court her, although he doesn't realize that flirting in the fields is much freer and more common than in stifled middle-class homes.

Angel asks again about her refusal, and Tess repeats that she is not good enough for him. She affirms that she loves him, and enjoys being with him, but says it is for Angel's own good that they cannot marry. Angel thinks she is just being self-deprecating, so he compliments her all the more, which just makes her sadder once she is alone again.

Tess struggles within herself now, shaken by Angel's persuasive words. She had decided before Talbothays that she would never marry, as she might cause pain to her husband. Tess wonders why no one has told Angel her history, as she lived not so far away. Her roommates look at her sadly but without bitterness.

Tess has never experienced such simultaneous extremes of pleasure and pain before. Mr. Crick and his wife seemed to have figured out the relationship, so they leave Angel and Tess alone often. One day they are breaking up cheese curds and Angel takes her hand and kisses her arm. She flushes, pleased at his declaration of love but upset at his renewed proposal.

Angel begins to grow frustrated and compares her to a fickle city girl, but then he says he knows how pure and innocent she is. Tess almost

breaks under her own desire, and she promises to tell Angel about her past. Angel condescendingly compares her experiences to a flower's. Tess agrees to tell him everything Sunday.

Tess runs off and throws herself into a willow thicket. She feels both joyful and miserable, and realizes that her natural passions are overcoming her intellect, and it is almost inevitable that she will succumb.

Tess is too agitated to go to work, as she will be teased for being in love. In the evening the trees and moon seem monstrous. The days pass, and it is Saturday, and Tess cries out to herself that she will let Angel marry her, but at the same time she can't bear the guilt of hurting him when he finds out her story.

ANALYSIS

Angel still condescends to Tess, presuming he knows her line of reasoning, and in doing so once again his social background contrasts itself with Tess's.

Tess determinedly keeps sacrificing herself, trying to make her natural inner passions subject to her social guilt. Angel cannot even conceive of his ideal woman having any kind of hidden flaws, which of course makes it all the harder for her to reveal them.

Her inner turmoil continues. It is only convention and Angel's preconceived notions that inspire her guilt. Again, if all was in accord with Nature she could love the man she loves and be unaffected by society's judgment.

A romantic scene that should be straightforward and sweet, but is instead complicated by all the issues bubbling beneath the surface of both lovers' emotions.

Again Angel's idealized version of Tess subsumes the real Tess standing before him. She has to fit his idea of the pure Nature-goddess, and so couldn't possibly have an unhappy past or inner anguish.

Tess seeks out Nature again in her sadness. She sees the hand of fate pushing her forward, and knows that she cannot escape.

This outburst is the essence of Tess's pain at this point. The oppressive hand of Victorian society works against her even in her anonymity and rural freedom. She still is not free to follow her heart without guilt.

CHAPTER 29

At breakfast Dairyman Crick tells some news he has heard of Jack Dollop, the man from his butterchurn story. Dollop did not actually marry the girl he had wronged, but instead married a rich widow for her pension. But after they were married the widow revealed that she had lost her pension by marrying him. The table discusses whether it would have been

better for the widow to tell Dollop the truth before they were married, even if it meant losing him. Again the workers find the story funny while to Tess it is tragic. To her it is like people laughing at a martyr.

Angel approaches and again proposes, and Tess refuses. He had planned to kiss her, but his surprise at her refusal stops him. It is only the recent story of Jack Dollop that makes Tess refuse this time. A few weeks pass of Angel's persuasive wooing, and Tess knows her resolve will soon break.

One dark, early morning Angel begs Tess to speak clearly at last, or he will have to leave. She asks for more time again, but agrees to call him "Angel dearest." Angel kisses her for the first time upon the cheek, and Tess runs quickly downstairs.

Later Tess and Angel follow Marian, Retty, and Izz out and Angel remarks how different they are from he and Tess. Tess denies it and again says any of them would make a more proper wife for him than she would. Then she feels she has done her duty.

That afternoon the time passes faster than usual, and Dairyman Crick declares that someone needs to take the milk straight to the station. Angel volunteers and asks Tess to come with him. She is not dressed for cold, but agrees.

ANALYSIS

Again Dollop appears at an instructive time for Tess, paralleling her own story. She is reminded that she is an outsider from the other dairymaids, who are actually as pure and honest as Angel thinks Tess is. She can understand the pain of telling the painful truth to someone you love, even within the context of a humorous anecdote.

Tess starts to accept the inevitable and realizes she cannot escape her own passion. The only question for her is how to spare Angel pain, and how to summon the courage to potentially push him away.

Tess all but agrees to marriage by accepting his kiss and his pet name, but technically she maintains her position.

Tess again feels duty-bound to push Angel towards her more innocent friends, despite her heart's desire. Angel betrays his naiveté by generalizing the other women together.

The end of the chapter, in which Tess once again is about to go on a wagon ride alone with a man (last time she did this was when Alec raped her), suggesting that the next chapter will be more decisive than the couple's many previous interactions.

CHAPTER 30

The cart moves onto Egdon Heath, and the two are silent for a long time. It starts to rain, and Tess's hair comes undone. The evening gets cold and she and Angel huddle close under a sailcloth. He asks her for an

answer sometime before they get home. At that moment they drive by an old mansion, and Angel says it once belonged to the d'Urberville family.

They reach the railway station, which is the point where modern society daily touches their "secluded world." They unload the milk, and Tess looks totally out of place among the machinery.

They start to ride back and discuss who will drink the milk far away in London. The city people have to water it down before they can stomach it. Angel changes the subject to his proposal, and again tries to clarify Tess's objections.

Tess begins to tell her history, but Angel dismisses her worries or possibly troubled past. Tess reveals that she is actually a d'Urberville, not a Durbeyfield, and pretends that this was the truth she had been withholding, because she heard Angel hated old families.

Angel laughs at her and says the history of ancient families is interesting to him. Tess realizes she has failed in her conviction, and feels she acted selfishly. Angel says he would have liked her to be truly a child of the soil instead of corrupt aristocrats, but Tess herself has now disabused him of his prejudice.

Angel asks that Tess call herself d'Urberville now, and thinks his mother will be impressed. Tess would rather not, and then Angel mentions the young man who abused his father, and the coincidence that he was a false d'Urberville. Tess gets upset and says the name is unlucky. Angel says she should take his name instead, and so escape the d'Urbervilles. Then Tess finally accepts and Angel kisses her. She immediately starts crying, both out of gladness and for having broken her promise to never marry. She says sometimes she wishes she were dead. Angel is slightly offended, but then Tess kisses him of her own volition, and he truly believes she loves him.

Angel says she should take his name instead, and so escape the d'Urbervilles. Then Tess finally accepts and Angel kisses her. She immediately starts crying, both out of gladness and for having broken her promise to never marry. She says sometimes she wishes she were dead. Angel is slightly offended, but then Tess kisses him of her own volition, and he truly believes she loves him.

Nature always wins against the weak and arbitrary rules of society, so it was inevitable that Tess should have agreed eventually. Tess asks to write to her mother in Marlott, and finally Angel remembers where they met. Tess hopes that his first refusal of her is not a bad omen.

ANALYSIS

The d'Urbervilles always seem to pop up at bad times, reminding Tess that she cannot escape the past and is perhaps always doomed. It is again a gray hour like their many pre-dawn meetings.

Tess is explicitly contrasted with the industrial machinery and held up as an example of ancient Nature and purity.

The milk becomes another symbol of modern life's separation from Nature. The dairy workers drink the raw, pure milk, while the city people have to water it down.

Angel again condescends and assumes he knows Tess's past. This is the moment of truth, and Tess slips up in her conviction. This is possibly the only selfish decision she has made, but note that it is only a big deal because of social conventions. She doesn't actually have anything to be guilty about, as she did nothing wrong.

Tess immediately feels guilty, although truthfully her history shouldn't even be an issue. She can cure Angel of his small prejudice against old families, but not of the large one he and society hold against women like her (who were, in fact, brutally harmed).

Alec again intrudes on Tess's happiness, even from far away, and the d'Urberville name seems like a bad omen. Mrs. Clare's concern with social norms is made more explicit.

Another major turning point in Tess's life, this one potentially for the better, but she still can't escape her guilt and inner turmoil. She takes a little agency and kisses Angel herself, actively showing love instead of being always the object of desire.

Hardy explains how this result was unavoidable from the beginning, that "what will be will be" despite our feeble social rules. Yet another mention of the past seems like an omen for the future.

CHAPTER 31

Tess writes a letter to her mother, and soon gets a response. Joan writes in a rustic, uneducated manner, congratulating Tess's marriage but warning her to not mention her past "Trouble." She knows it is in Tess's nature to be honest, but says she would be a fool to talk about her past to Angel.

Tess realizes that to Joan her past horrors were but a fleeting trouble, but that she might be right about keeping silent. Tess is somewhat calmed by the letter. That autumn is one of the happiest times of her life. She loves Angel with perfect trust bordering on worship, assured that he is the ideal of goodness and intellect. She tries to dismiss the past altogether.

Tess is constantly surprised by Angel's chivalry and thoughtfulness. In reality she exaggerates his qualities, but he is a good, spiritual man, and loves with his mind as much as his heart. This especially pleases Tess in comparison with her past experiences.

Tess seeks out Angel whenever they are outdoors, which seems presumptuous and immodest to him until he realizes it is the country way. They walk together by brooks and through fogs, and watch men digging in the rich, fertile soil.

Angel keeps his arm around Tess as they walk, and Tess asks if he would be ashamed if his Emminster friends found out about it. Angel jokes that a Clare could never be ashamed of a d'Urberville, and says that he does not care what they think, since they will probably move to another part of England or another country altogether. Tess is overcome with emotion at this idea of their future. They stand on a bridge with a river and many animals passing below.

They walk also in the evenings, and the other workers note the excited change in Tess's voice as they talk, and her gait which is like a bird about to land. Her love for Angel begins to envelop every aspect of Tess's personality, but she never forgets the darkness lurking beyond her happy bubble.

One evening they are at home alone when Tess again protests that she is unworthy. Angel responds that being honest and true is better than fitting any convention of society. Tess wishes he had stayed long ago at the May-Day dance and married her then. Angel feels she is being moody and asks why she so strongly regrets such a thing. Tess deflects by saying they would have had more time together then.

The narrator points out that Tess is still a girl and not yet mature despite her dark past. She leaves for a while to calm down, and when she finally returns Angel says she has been acting capricious. Tess agrees, but promises it is not in her nature.

Angel wants to set a wedding date, but Tess delays, hoping to linger as they are. Angel is concerned with his future as a farmer, and wants Tess to help him starting out. The potential nearness of the wedding strikes Tess and she realizes again that it is real.

At that moment the Cricks and two milkmaids enter, and Tess pulls away from Angel, denying that she was sitting on his knee. Dairyman Crick says he wouldn't have noticed if she hadn't said anything. Angel declares their betrothal, and Crick congratulates him. Tess had disappeared at the look of the dairymaids.

After dinner Tess's roommates confront her and she admits they are getting married. The three gather around Tess and lay hands on her in awe. They want to dislike her, but cannot. Tess again says they are all better than she is, and bursts into tears.

The women comfort Tess and put her in bed, and then Marian asks her to think of them when she is with Angel, and to remember how they loved him and could not hate her. Tess cries and resolves again to tell Angel the truth, as her silence seems an offense against these honest women.

ANALYSIS

Tess finally gets some outside advice, but while this advice may be clever, it is at odds with Tess's natural sincerity. Her mother's dialect seems foreign to her life now that she is used to Angel's educated manner.

Tess is finally able to make some sort of decision, and immediately the happiness her spirit has desired overtakes her. She idealizes Angel as much as he does her, and cannot see any of his flaws in her image of a godlike man.

Angel's delicacy is again contrasted with Alec's bestial nature. This mutual idealization on the part of both lovers can lead to nothing good, however.

Angel shows his ignorance of another rural custom. Images of fertility and natural beauty again accompany his and Tess's happiness.

Angel displays an admirable sentiment of independence from convention here, but he cannot maintain it in the face of a real trial. Tess is offered the escape from the past she has been dreaming of, and her joy is heartbreaking. More descriptions of nature are emphasized alongside their relationship.

Tess is again compared to a bird. Her personality starts to be subsumed by her passion, but she still has enough wisdom to remember the depression of her past.

Angel still cannot understand her turmoil, and Tess again avoids being honest. The thought of her younger, more innocent self upsets her. Her guilt threatens the happiness she has sacrificed so much for, and the tragedy is that it is guilt for a sin Tess did not commit.

Hardy reminds us of Tess's age to put this in perspective. She does not have the maturity to deal with all that has happened to her. Angel makes more mistaken observations.

The nebulous engagement offers an escape from the past for Tess, but setting a date for the wedding (like her musings on the date of her death) makes it frighteningly real.

Their secluded relationship finally starts to come up against the outside world, starting with their comfortable Talbothays home. Already there is trouble with Tess's roommates.

Tess becomes transformed for the women when they learn of her betrothal, and they lay hands on her as if she had suddenly become a saint or goddess.

Tess is still eaten away with guilt. She thinks again that Retty, Marian, and Izz are more like the pure, innocent female ideals that Angel really loves.

CHAPTER 32

Tess's guilt and joy in the engagement keeps her from naming a date. Angel keeps asking her at tempting times, surrounded by natural beauty or among the cows. One night they are alone beside the river and

Angel mentions that Dairyman Crick doesn't need much help for the winter. He had suggested that Tess leave when Angel did, around Christmas.

Tess feels bad at being asked to leave but then is caught in a dilemma. She has to really set a date or else find a new and foreign farm without Angel. He reminds her that they cannot continue as they are forever, and though Tess wishes that they could, she promises to pick a day.

They tell the Cricks, who congratulate them and lament losing Tess. Mrs. Crick swears that she always knew Tess was meant for great things. They really set a date and Tess accepts it with the fatalism of her people. She writes again to Joan, reminding her that Angel is a gentleman, and of a different and more discerning society.

Angel had emphasized the practicality of their marriage, but really he is still enjoying the recklessness of this time of his life, and his love for Tess remains naïve and fanciful, unsuspecting that she could have any troubled history.

Angel has begun to influence Tess's way of speaking and thinking, and he fears to leave her to revert to rustic ways. He will present her to his parents, but then wants her with him wherever they venture next. But first he wants to ready Tess for a few months before she meets his mother.

Angel also plans to spend a while learning about flour-mills at Wellbridge, and he is greatly influenced by the fact that their lodgings would be in an old d'Urberville mansion. He decides to go there right after the wedding, but keeps his plans vague to Tess.

Tess contemplates the date (December 31) in wonder. Izz asks her if Angel will follow the customs and ask her parents for permission, but Angel explains he wants to get a quiet wedding license, much to Tess's relief. She feels that her good fortune now will mean bad luck later, as that is how God works.

Angel buys her new wedding clothes, and Tess is overcome with delight. She tries on the dress and then thinks of an old nursery rhyme about an impure bride, and wonders if the dress will betray her and turn red.

ANALYSIS

Setting a wedding date would be like submitting to fate for Tess, so she avoids it. She is most vulnerable and passionate in nature, as Angel has learned. Finally reality starts to catch up with their fantasy.

Tess finally gives in to the inevitable future and accepts that this time of easy happiness cannot last. She must face both the past and the future at some point.

Despite the many bad things that have happened to her, Tess still has some of her mother's ability to accept harsh realities and move on. She has to remind Joan of the disparities of class between her and Angel, and how judgmental his community is.

Angel also experiences this time as dreamlike, avoiding the realities of his life. His love for Tess comes from a similar state of mind, which will lead to disastrous consequences.

Angel plans out their future but fears to startle Tess. He wants to “train” her to meet his mother, so she doesn't embarrass him. Angel still cares more for other's opinions than he thinks.

Angel makes more decisions based on whims and sentiments that will have lasting effects on Tess. He unknowingly dredges up her past just at the start of her new life.

Tess's experience of fate is harsh and pessimistic; she does not expect any happiness to last in her life. At the same time she cannot help enjoying her present happiness and taking this temporary reprieve from revealing her history.

Tess is still steeped in both her mother's superstitions and the judgments of Victorian society. The song and the dress seem like bad omens, and she feels impure again.

CHAPTER 33

Angel wants to spend a last romantic day with Tess before their wedding. On Christmas Eve they go out shopping as a couple, and Angel returns to the society he had been avoiding for so long.

They return to their inn and as two men are leaving the parlor, one recognizes Tess and makes an insulting remark about her past. Angel hears and strikes him in the face. The man apologizes and pretends it was a mistake. Angel gives him some money for his trouble.

As they ride away Tess asks again about postponing the wedding, as she is upset by the incident. She comforts herself with the thought of moving very far away.

That night Angel dreams he is fighting the insulting man and lashes out in his sleep. This is the last straw for Tess, and she decides to confess everything in a letter. She writes it all down and slips it under Angel's door. The next morning Tess is distraught but Angel acts normally. She wonders if he got the note, but feels comforted that he will forgive her either way.

On their wedding day they sleep late, and then find that Dairyman Crick has cleaned and decorated the kitchen in their honor. No guests from either family arrive, as Tess invited no one and Angel's family is displeased

with his hasty decision. He would be more upset if he did not know the secret of Tess's ancestry, which he exaggeratedly assumes will win his family's hearts.

Tess is still unsure if Angel read her note, so she checks his room and finds it hidden under the carpet, still sealed. She destroys it. She knows there is still time to confess, but the house is busy with wedding preparations and they only have a minute alone.

Tess tries to bring up the subject lightly, but Angel dismisses it and says he will confess his sins as well, later when they are settled and need entertainment. The remaining hours are a whirlwind, and her excitement temporarily drowns out any apprehension.

They go to the church in an ancient carriage driven by an ancient man. It is just the couple and the Cricks. Angel wishes his brothers had come, but thinks they would have been out of place among the dairy workers. Tess experiences the ride in a bright haze, and feels like one of the divinities Angel used to compare her to.

The ceremony passes in a blur, and once Tess reaches out to assure herself of Angel's reality. He does not yet appreciate the depth and purity of her love for him. They come out of the church and when the bells die away Tess again returns from her sublime mental state.

Angel remarks on her expression, and Tess says she feels she has seen the old carriage before. Angel mentions the legend of the d'Urberville coach, but doesn't want to tell the story then as it is too morbid, involving a d'Urberville committing a crime in the family coach.

By the time they reach home Tess is depressed, and wonders if she is rightfully Alec's wife instead of Angel's. When she is alone she prays to both God and her husband, and laments that Angel does not love *her*, but the person she might once have been.

They leave for the flour-mill, and Tess asks Angel to kiss Marian, Retty, and Izz once for her, as they look so very sad. Angel obeys, and as they leave Tess looks back and sees the kiss has affected them all deeply.

Angel bids farewell to the Cricks, but at that moment a cock crows. They hear someone mutter about a bad omen, and the bird crows twice again. Tess wants to hurry away, and the dairyman and his wife reassure themselves that it only means a change of weather and "not what you think."

ANALYSIS

They are still trying to prolong this episode of unreality, and play-act as a married couple among Angel's society that will later judge them.

Another unhappy coincidence where Tess's past comes up at the peak of her happiness. Angel can physically strike it—just as he has always stopped Tess from admitting it to him—but Tess cannot escape its reality.

Tess's thought is again of putting many miles between her and her history, and so somehow escape the hand of fate.

When Tess realizes the strength of Angel's love, her guilt overwhelms her. She is still too weak to say it out loud, but here at last she makes her painful sacrifice. Her reward is even more confusion.

The ceremony is small and focused on the future rather than on family and the past. Angel fears facing his family's scorn, and wants to delay until he has to. In his passion Angel puts too much stock in the d'Urberville name, which has already been the downfall of many.

Tess is given another painful reprieve, which makes confessing even harder. She chooses to delay the inevitable again.

Angel still assumes he understands the nature of Tess's life. It is notable that he brings up his own faults on their wedding day, framed as an amusing story for later.

The description of the carriage lends a somewhat ominous tone to the ride. Angel's conformist brothers clearly would disapprove of Tess. Tess briefly sees herself as others do, as a goddess or symbol larger than her individual self.

Angel's love is still naïve, but Tess's has been matured and strengthened by the pain of her past. He still does not realize how deeply everything he does affects her.

Hardy here introduces the symbol of the coach, which is itself a foreshadowing of murder. The full legend is not told yet, but it does seem like another bad omen on their wedding day.

Tess's religion comes from the strength of her passion, and so her prayers are aimed mostly at Angel. She can see now that he loves an idealized version of Tess, not the real Tess.

Tess's good intentions do more harm than good, but again the four women remain free of bitterness in their honest country hearts, and also because of Tess's own sincerity.

This is another bad omen with its own sense of urgency in ending the chapter. This is also another bird associated with Tess's fate, and the image recalls the story of the Biblical Peter denying that he knew Jesus, like Tess betraying Angel with her silence.

CHAPTER 34

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure
Woman Faithfully Presented*

They arrive at the farm with the ancient d'Urberville mansion and see that they have the place to themselves. The moldy house upsets Tess, and she is still worried about the crowing rooster. On the walls are portraits of old, cruel-looking d'Urberville women, and Angel can't help noticing how Tess resembles them.

The sun is low, and they share their first tea together as husband and wife. Angel wonders if he can appreciate yet the power Tess has now placed in his hands, that her future depends on his. He vows to himself to never neglect her.

They wait for their luggage but it gets dark and then starts to rain. Angel sees Tess is upset and regrets bringing her to this old house. He decides she is stressing about their luggage. There is a knock, but it is not their luggage, and instead a package for Tess from the Clares.

Tess makes Angel break the grave-looking seal, and inside is a note for Angel from Mrs. Clare. It explains that these are the jewels his godmother left him for his future wife. They spread them out and Tess cannot believe they are hers now. Tess puts them on and she appears like an exquisite lady in a ballroom, although Angel decides he prefers her simple farm-clothes.

Tess leaves the jewels on, hoping they will help her cause later, and they start to eat supper. Finally the door opens and Jonathon (a worker from Talbothays) brings in their luggage. He looks downcast, and reminds them of the cock's crow, and says that he is late because RettyPriddle had tried to drown herself in the river, and Marian was found passed out drunk. Izz alone remained in the house, although depressed. Jonathon leaves the luggage and goes out.

Angel expects Tess to be happy about their luggage, but she is upset by the girls. She feels less worthy than they are, and yet they had to suffer unrequited love and she did not. Tess decides to tell the truth at last and make amends. She stares into the fire for a long time.

Angel interrupts her reverie and reminds Tess that he had something to confess. Tess is surprised and relieved. Angel says he did not mention it before because he was afraid of losing her affection. He is not a religious man anymore, but still believes in good morals. He confesses that in London he spent two days with an older woman, before realizing his sin and fleeing. He asks Tess to forgive him, and she squeezes his hand to affirm that she does.

Tess is relieved and now ready to tell her story, although Angel still can't believe it could be anything bad. Tess feels her sin is the same as his, so Angel will surely forgive her as she forgave him. They hold hands and

press their heads together, her diamonds gleaming ominously, and Tess tells the whole story of Alec d'Urberville.

ANALYSIS

Even their first day as husband and wife is shadowed by the specter of the past. The old house also provides a gloomy setting for what should be a happy occasion. The portraits hint that Tess cannot escape her cruel blood and the fate that comes with it.

Only now does Angel start to realize the depth of Tess's selfless devotion and his own power as husband. He basically holds her life in his hands now.

Once again Angel's spontaneous decision (to stay in this mansion) leads to Tess's lasting sorrow. He really doesn't know her inner life well at all if he thinks she is so upset over luggage.

The Clares at least approve enough to send this gift, and Tess realizes again the disparity of their wealth. Angel finds her beautiful, but prefers his idealized version of Tess the innocent dairymaid. He is still trying to keep the fantasy alive.

The dairymaids' earlier infatuation turns tragic and intense. It turns out Angel's last kiss was indeed destructive to their inexperienced hearts. This news is surely worse than any of the other bad omens, and it casts even more gloom over the couple's first night.

Angel again attributes his idea of shallow female concerns to Tess. Tess's guilt returns stronger than ever, and she decides to sacrifice her own happiness just so she cannot enjoy what she feels her friends deserve.

Hardy reveals that Angel has been in almost the same situation as Tess this whole time. He also had a sexual past to confess but waited until they were married in case Tess rejected him. His sin is actually greater than Tess's, as his was voluntary and hers was forced upon her. This surprise confession makes the ultimate result much more tragic.

Tess feels (rightly) that their "sins" are almost the same so she should have nothing to fear. In her joy she forgets the cruel conventions of society and Angel's own upbringing and strict ideals. The gloomy diamonds forebode that her hopes will be dashed.

CHAPTER 35

Tess finishes her story, and the "essence of things" seems to have been transformed by it. Angel cannot yet comprehend the truth, and asks if Tess is lying or crazy, and why she did not tell him before. Tess begs him to forgive her, as she forgave him for "the same."

Angel says forgiveness does not even apply here, that Tess is now an entirely different person than he had thought. He laughs hollowly and Tess

cries out for mercy, and reveals the depths of her love. Angel repeats that he has not loved *her*, but another woman he *thought* was Tess. Tess suddenly comprehends his point of view and is terrified.

Tess sits down and finally takes pity on herself and starts to weep. She asks if they can ever live together now, and Angel says he has not decided yet. Tess despairs and says she will obey like a servant, and not do anything that Angel doesn't command her to. Angel points out how her present self-sacrifice does not fit with her earlier self-preservation, and Tess takes this like a beaten animal.

Angel cries a single tear. His whole universe has been changed by her confession. He leaves the house to think, and their twin wine glasses stand tragically full. Tess follows him out into the clear night. Angel's figure looks black and ominous, and he crosses a bridge without acknowledging her presence.

Tess follows Angel for a long time. The night clears his mind and he can think logically and coldly about her, as if her spell over him has broken. Tess pleads that her sin was nothing she intended, and it makes no change in her personality or love, but Angel rebuffs her.

Angel admits that the sin was not her fault, but says Tess does not understand his society and manners. He cannot help but think that her ancestry makes her weak-willed, and it betrays his idea of her as a "new-sprung child of nature." They walk on in sad silence, and a cottager notices them passing as if in a funeral procession.

Tess offers to drown herself in the river to spare Angel his pain. Angel calls her absurd and says their trouble is more satire than tragedy. He sends her home to bed. Everything about the house is the same, and Tess notices sadly the mistletoe that Angel had hung over the bed as a surprise. She feels empty and dull and soon falls asleep.

Angel returns later and is both relieved and bitter that Tess is asleep. He almost enters her room, but then looks again at the d'Urberville portraits and their sinister faces strengthen his resolution. His own face is cold, unhappy, and free of passion. Angel feels that Tess's appearance deceived him of her inner self, and she has no advocate in his mind to defend her.

ANALYSIS

The sharp contrast between Tess's reaction to Angel's confession and Angel to Tess's emphasizes the unfairness of the sexual double standard. He should treat her past as lightly as she did his.

Angel's image of Tess comes crashing down, and they both realize how naïve he has been. Tess's love is still mature and deep, but Angel only loved an ideal, and that ideal has now been broken.

Angel can be unkind to her now without feeling bad, as he is freed from passion and sees with the world's condemning eyes (even though he has long prided himself as someone not blinded by the conventions of society). Tess is again compared to an animal, innocent and now broken by a human's cruelty.

Angel's tears are much less sympathetic than Tess's. His distress is mostly caused by his concern for society's opinion of *him* and his scorn for Tess's own reduced image in his eyes.

Tess follows blindly like a dog and over-pleads her case in her distress. She makes arguments that would again seem logical to Nature's laws, but don't fit with Victorian conventions.

Angel is finally conscious of their class difference and how much he values the opinion of polite society. His prejudice against old families is renewed without Tess's pleasant spell over him. He cruelly echoes the idea that she is punished for her ancestors' sins.

Tess falls into dramatics while Angel is coldly unemotional. The mistletoe comes as another reminder of the magical, natural world they had enjoyed just moments earlier. Tess is reinforced in her idea that she does not deserve happiness, and that nothing good can last.

Angel's colder, more impersonal nature takes over. He no longer feels the abundance of life and Nature that he did at Talbothays, but has reverted to his repressed, judgmental, middle-class self. The old, dead d'Urberville women watch the unhappy scene.

CHAPTER 36

Angel wakes up and the room seems like the scene of a crime. He makes breakfast and calls for Tess, and her morning hopes die at the sight of Angel's face. The couple is as cold and ashen as the dead fire from the night before.

Tess looks purer and more innocent than ever, and Angel almost can't believe that her story is true, but Tess reaffirms it. Angel asks for the first time about Alec and the baby, and is distraught that Alec is alive and still in England. He states his position that he had decided to not take a wife of high society, but thought that he was getting "rustic innocence" in Tess.

Tess says he could still divorce her, but Angel calls her crude and not understanding of the law. She feels even more guilty, and reveals that she considered suicide under his mistletoe the night before. She only decided against it as it would have caused a scandal for Angel. Angel is shaken and makes her promise to never think of killing herself again.

They eat breakfast mechanically and then Angel goes off to study with the miller. Tess watches him disappear over the bridge and then cleans and waits for his return. At lunch he discusses the mill, which is very old

compared to most modern machinery, and then leaves again, returning at night. Tess busies herself in the kitchen the whole time.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

Angel finds her and says to stop working, that she is not his slave but his wife, and Tess says she thought she was not respectable enough for him. She starts to cry and any other man but hard, skeptical Angel would have had mercy, but he rejects her like he rejected the Church. He says it is not a matter of respectability, but of principle. Tess takes his condemnation meekly and makes herself pathetically subservient to him. She is like Charity personified returning to the cruel modern world.

More days pass in the same manner, and one morning Tess offers her face to kiss, but Angel ignores it. She is crushed by his rejection, and he says that they have been living together so far for form's sake only, but it cannot last. More days pass, and Tess no longer hopes for forgiveness.

Angel spends all his time trying to figure out what to do next, and tells Tess he cannot live with her without despising both of them. He cannot accept that Alec still lives as her "husband in nature," and that nowhere on earth is far enough away to escape the past, and their future children would suffer for it.

Tess had hoped that she could wear down Angel's resolve just by being close to him, but when she sees how far he has thought ahead she despairs. Experience has taught her that life itself is a penalty, no matter how well you try to live it.

Tess still might have used her own beauty and the image of a far-off land to persuade him, but she is too crushed to even try. The narrator muses that if Angel had a more animalistic nature he might have acted more justly, as here his idealism works against Tess.

Tess suggests that they part and she return home, but she is upset when Angel quickly agrees. He is still determined to submit his emotions to his ideals, and decides that he will leave too and write to her when he has cleared his mind.

They pack with an air of finality, and both know that it is unlikely that their passion will return, as other things will fill their lives while they are apart.

ANALYSIS

The cold gray morning reflects their emotions, and the feeling of criminality foreshadows later disasters. It is ambiguous who has committed the crime, though, Tess or Angel.

Angel had not even considered to ask about the baby before, showing how wrapped up he was in his own idea of Tess's unfaithfulness. He is finally clear about how he had idealized her, and now he feels he has been cheated by her lack of "innocence."

Angel again draws attention to her lower class and lack of understanding of his society. The mention of her suicidal thoughts seems to make the power of his actions real to him, but Angel still plows determinedly forward in his decision.

They act out their planned future with no feeling behind their performance. Even the mill here is of no use to Angel, as it is too old and cannot connect with the modern, industrial world he helplessly belongs to.

Angel clings to his principles and beliefs even in the face of others' pain. He has just as much power over Tess now as Alec did, and he also abuses it, although in a very different way. Tess is compared to a Christian virtue taken human form and beaten down by modernity. This image leaves Angel and Victorian society looking very bad.

Their parting is not real until Angel agrees to it and Tess's final attempt to cling to the fantasy fails. Angel has only been acting with society's conventions in mind, and when Tess sees this she accepts that she cannot persuade him.

The concept of natural laws versus societal ones is used against Tess here, although by the same logic Angel's true wife is a woman in London. He also crushes Tess's dream of escaping the past by traveling far away.

Tess had not realized how stubborn Angel could be. After her brief period of happiness she is reinforced in her conception of the cruel injustice of fate.

Angel is on the opposite extreme from Alec; he is so concerned for his own moral uprightness that he ends up being as unfair and hurtful to Tess as Alec was.

Their parting is now real, and Tess starts to understand some of her husband's terrifying, unsympathetic firmness. He is like society itself, unwilling to be merciful no matter the special circumstances.

They prepare for a new stage in their lives, one which is sure to bring as much pain as the last one brought pleasure.

CHAPTER 37

Late that night Angel sleepwalks into Tess's room and begins to grieve that she is dead. Tess knows that in times of great stress he does things like this, but she does not wake him up. She trusts him so much that even when he is acting unconsciously she feels safe.

The sleeping Angel picks up Tess in her sheet and murmurs endearing words that bring her joy. She is not afraid, as she would not care if she died in his arms this way. He kisses her lips and then carries her outside, towards the river.

Tess is pleased that Angel's subconscious self still regards her as his wife, and then she thinks he is reenacting the day he carried the girls through the flood to church. He stands at the edge of the deep, fast river. The bridge across is only one narrow plank, but Angel starts to cross anyway, and still Tess would prefer to drown together than be separated tomorrow. She almost makes a movement to upset his balance, but she values Angel's life too much to sacrifice it alongside her own.

They reach the Abbey where a stone coffin stands open against the wall. Angel lays Tess inside and kisses her, and then he stretches out on the grass and keeps sleeping. The night is cold enough to be dangerous for them to stay out in the open, but she is ashamed to wake Angel up and reveal what happened. She tries to persuade him to walk on, and he obeys. Tess leads him across the stone bridge, into the house, and back onto the sofa.

The next morning it is clear that Angel remembers nothing of the incident. His resolve to leave Tess remains after his sleep, so he does not hesitate. Tess wants to tell Angel what happened but knows it would anger him that he showed a passion his reasoning did not approve of. A carriage picks them up and they go to bid farewell to the Cricks.

They walk through all the places of their courtship and the green fertility has turned to gray coldness. The other workers tease the couple, who pretends that nothing is wrong. Retty and Marian have left the farm. Tess bids farewell to her favorite cows and they go. Mrs. Crick remarks that Tess and Angel seemed dreamlike and strange.

They drive farther and come to the spot where Tess must turn towards Marlott. Angel assures her he is not angry, but they cannot be together right now. He says he will write to her, but to not come to him unless he tells her. Tess feels these conditions are harsh but she accepts them, and does not make a scene that might have persuaded him. Her pride plays a small factor in this, perhaps as an old d'Urberville fault.

Angel gives Tess some money and takes her jewels to keep safe in the bank, and then they part. Angel hopes she will look back, but Tess is so distraught that she cannot. He remarks on the inherent wrongness of the world, and as he turns away he "hardly knew that he loved her still."

ANALYSIS

As when he sleep-fought the man who insulted Tess, Angel's nobler nature comes out in his subconscious. When he is awake he represses himself with his strict ideals.

Again Tess becomes a sort of sacrificial figure, one willing to die for love or to spare her loved one pain. Angel shows that he has not quelled all his passions yet.

They both strongly desire to return to the fantasy world of their courtship, and that desire leads to this strange nighttime ritual. Tess's mental state is emotionally dramatic, but she has enough experience of harsh fate to care very little for her own life, as God or destiny seems not to care either.

Angel's repressive society and mindset makes his true feelings show themselves in this strange way. Tess knows he would be angry to find that he had betrayed his own ideals while asleep, so she keeps painfully silent.

Angel is much more in touch with his own whims and morals than he is with those of other people. He lacks the empathy to see the situation from Tess's point of view, or even that her only sin is one arbitrarily attributed to her by society, and which in fact was committed against her.

The fertile imagery has disappeared with Tess's depression. The natural world is no comfort to her now, or else has become weak along with her own weakness.

Tess accepts her unjust fate yet again, having internalized society's view of her own guilt and wrongdoing. Despite this self-loathing she retains enough d'Urberville pride to not beg, but not so much to stand up for herself against Angel's unfair condemnation.

Angel too now sees the cruel injustice of fate, and reaffirms his belief that there is no compassionate God taking care of everyone. The necessary exchange of money makes their goodbye all the more tragic, as it contains no love and is just a transaction.

CHAPTER 38

Tess returns again to her home valley and asks the turnpike-keeper for news. The only news he has is of Tess herself and how proud her parents were of her wedding. Tess feels ashamed and decides to return home as secretly as she can. She meets one old friend but diverts her inquiries.

Tess enters through the back door and her mother is shocked to see her. Joan interrogates her about Angel, and Tess breaks down weeping and admits that he left her because she told him her past. Joan calls Tess a fool and says it was already a sin to marry him, so she might as well have carried on silently. Joan almost immediately comforts herself with "what's done can't be undone," but she worries her husband will be upset, as he has been boasting of the wedding.

John Durbeyfield returns. Joan has quickly taken the news in stride as if it were no more than a rainy day. Tess goes upstairs and sees that her bed belongs to other siblings now. She overhears her father hoping that Angel would take Tess's superior name instead of vice versa. Joan tells him the news and he is crushed, mostly thinking of how he will be made fun of at the bar. He implies that maybe Tess never married at all, and Tess is so upset she decides not to stay long.

Tess gets a letter from Angel saying he is in North England, and she pretends she is going to meet him. She also gives some of his money to her mother to imply that she is living well now. Once she is gone Joan reassures herself that the couple will surely reunite through their strong passion.

ANALYSIS

It is another coincidence that the only news in Marlott is of the Durbeyfield family, but Tess is at least warned not to enter publicly and shame her parents.

As when she returned from Alec, Joan berates Tess but then quickly accepts the news with her optimistic fatalism. Their main concern is not Tess's well-being so much as their own pride and social standing in Marlott; this is the Durbeyfields at their lowest.

There is no room for Tess in her home anymore and even her parents disbelieve her story. She has changed too much for this place, and if she remained it would be once more a constant reminder of her shame.

Tess has her own form of d'Urberville pride which prevents her from revealing her true troubles to her parents. Because of this Joan can dismiss her unhappiness even more easily.

CHAPTER 39

Three weeks after the wedding Angel returns home. He is a changed man, and thinks he can see life practically now, free from romantic ideals. He has been troubled in his thoughts lately, often dwelling on the fact that Tess is a d'Urberville, as if that was the cause of all the trouble. He feels he should have abandoned her when he discovered her ancestry, in accordance with his principles. Other times he feels he has been unfair to her.

In his wanderings Angel noticed a sign advertising Brazil as a place to pursue agriculture. The idea attracts him, and he imagines Tess joining him there later. He now readies to tell his parents his plan and downplay his separation from Tess.

Again Angel arrives without warning, and his mother is surprised Tess is not with him. He tells them about Brazil but they question him about Tess. They are not angry at Angel for his marriage, but wish they could have met his wife first. Angel minimizes her absence by saying he didn't want to bring Tess until she could properly impress the family, and that she will remain at her mother's while he is in Brazil.

Mrs. Clare is still disappointed and asks Angel to describe Tess. She imagines how beautiful and pure Tess must be, and how inexperienced with other men. She has finally accepted Angel's original argument that a farmer should have a farming wife.

Mr. Clare asks no questions, but he does read a verse from the Bible about the “virtuous woman” and how valuable she is to her husband. Mrs. Clare points out that the Biblical woman was also a worker, and so Angel has surely found the perfect wife. Angel gets upset and flees to his room.

Mrs. Clare asks Angel what is wrong, and quickly figures out that they have quarreled over something in Tess's past. Angel argues that she is innocent, and feels he would suffer Hell to keep telling that lie. Mrs. Clare assures him that any disagreement will be solved by Tess's purity, as that is the most important thing.

All these sentiments convince Angel that he has ruined his life with this marriage, and that he will appear as a failure to his family. He grows angry with the absent Tess for causing him such despair.

That same night Tess is thinking of how good Angel is. Neither of them perceive that the real trouble lies in Angel's faults. He is intelligent and tries to be independent, but is still actually trapped in conventionality. He cannot see that Tess is in fact the “virtuous woman” his mother imagines, and that her “sin” was only circumstance, not intention. She is still just as pure as before she ever met Alec.

ANALYSIS

Angel has not yet had the epiphany he imagines, and his obsession with the d'Urberville name echoes many of the other characters' thoughts. Though the name has lost all practical value, it can still affect Tess's fate by the power of suggestion. Tellingly, Angel does not dwell so long on his fear that he has been unjust.

Brazil is introduced as a symbol of an exotic land where Angel can escape his troubles. It is also something new for Angel to idealize now that Tess has, for him, fallen off her pedestal.

Angel's earlier arguments have finally convinced his parents in favor of Tess, but their praise comes at this painful time for him. He is forced to lie to maintain the status quo and not bring shame to his family.

Mrs. Clare seems to say all the wrong things, and accidentally reaffirms Angel in his decision to reject Tess as an “impure woman.”

This all becomes too much for Angel. Truthfully the Bible verse does describe Tess, but to Angel the words seem hollow and condemning in his current state of being ruled by society's convictions regarding what makes a woman “pure.”

Angel belies his own actions by arguing so strongly for Tess's purity. He still clings to his old idealized dairymaid. Mrs. Clare again emphasizes the idea of purity, which in Victorian society means condemnation for Tess.

Angel is at the peak of his unfairness here, no different from Alec accusing innocent Tess of tempting him.

Hardy gets to the point here in his criticism of Angel and Victorian society. There is absolutely nothing impure about Tess, as she did nothing wrong (and in fact was herself wronged); it is only arbitrary convention that says so, and Angel is still too weak-willed to go against that convention. Hardy is Tess's only advocate against the world's judgment.

CHAPTER 40

After breakfast Angel meets Mercy Chant in town. She approves of him going to Brazil, but her mind is solely occupied with religious matters. Angel whispers some blasphemous ideas to her but then immediately begs forgiveness. She thinks he is crazy.

Angel arranges for a stipend to be sent to Tess later, and hopes she will ask his father for money in an emergency, but he avoids telling his parents her address.

Angel then returns to the d'Urberville house where they had their unhappy wedding night. He stands sadly by the gate, wondering if he has done the right thing. At that moment IzzHuett appears, as she had been hoping to visit Angel and Tess there.

Izz says she has left Talbothays because it was too sad for her, and Angel offers her a lift home. As they ride together Angel admits he and Tess are apart right now, and he is going to Brazil alone. Izz says that Retty has had a nervous breakdown, and Marian drinks so much that Mr. Crick fired her. Izz herself is okay, but still depressed.

Angel presses her and Izz admits she was in love with him, and can't believe he didn't realize it until now. They reach her home and Angel, feeling suddenly rebellious against society, asks Izz to come with him to Brazil. He claims he has been betrayed and needs relief, and Izz immediately accepts, despite Angel's admission of his offer's immorality.

They keep riding, and Angel asks if Izz loves him more than Tess does. Izz cannot help but say that she does not, that Tess would have "laid down her life" for him. Angel is upset by this and he changes his mind, offering to take Izz home. She breaks down weeping, and Angel apologizes, asking if she wishes she had not been so honest about Tess.

Angel tries to downplay his request as a joke, but it is clear that it was deadly serious to Izz. Even so she forgives him. Angel praises her for her generous honesty that saved them both. They part on good terms, but when Angel leaves Izz throws herself down in despair.

Angel is still troubled by Izz's words and wonders again if he is making a mistake. But he decides to stick to the choice he already made, comforting

himself that he can send for Tess soon. He takes the train to London and from there boards a ship.

ANALYSIS

Mercy again acts as a foil for Tess. Angel is feeling especially nihilistic in his despair, and bitter against the judgments of Christianity.

Angel does not understand the nature of Tess's pride. He still wants to keep Tess and his family separate to avoid scandal.

The setting taunts Angel like the ruined mansion first taunted Tess. Meeting Izz is another coincidence that makes Hardy's Wessex seem very small.

Angel's decision has had terrible consequences for others, but he still can't comprehend the power he wielded over the dairymaids. He exists in his own head to a selfish degree.

Angel again makes a rash decision that leaves others very hurt. He is willing to defy society's codes in his request to Izz, but still not enough to accept Tess in her innocence. Angel is a very unsympathetic character at this point.

Izz again shows the generous honesty of the rural women. The phrasing of "laid down her life" once more portrays Tess in sacrificial religious terms, as a character like Jesus: the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep.

Angel only sees his own side of the interaction, and not the devastating effects his decisions can have on others, especially the women who place their hopes in him.

Angel goes with inertia and sticks to his decision despite misgivings. The decision is now irrevocable, and his and Tess's destinies are parted for now.

CHAPTER 41

Eight months have passed and Tess is again poor and laboring. She has worked occasionally at other dairies and farms in the spring and autumn. Angel's money has all gone to her family's broken roof and Tess's own needs, and she is both too proud and too ashamed to ask Mr. Clare for money as Angel had suggested. She does not disturb her own parents' notion that she and Angel are happily reconciled, as admitting the truth would destroy her own hopes as well.

At the same time Angel is sick with fever in Brazil, and has found that the paradise he expected is in fact harsh and not at all inclined to English agricultural methods.

Tess needs another job, but she prefers rural, outdoors work, as her only experiences with society have been negative. She could have returned

to Talbothays but could not bear it for many reasons. She decides to go to a farm recommended by Marian, who is working there now.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

Tess begins to lose hope and rambles onward as thoughtlessly as a “wild animal.” She often draws unwanted attention from men because of her beauty, but the worst incident occurs one afternoon, when a man greets her on the road and then recognizes her from Trantridge. It is the same man that Angel struck for insulting her. He mocks her again and Tess runs away into the woods. She makes a nest of leaves and falls asleep.

Tess thinks of Angel far away and feels that she is the most unhappy thing in the world. She repeats “All is vanity” to herself, but then sees that it is worse, there is injustice and important things that are taken away, and Tess wishes she was dead.

Tess starts to hear a strange sound, but when she realizes it is coming from animals she is not afraid. Dawn breaks and she sees that around her are pheasants, some dead, some injured and in pain, that a hunting party must have shot the day before and left behind. Tess has always been afraid of hunters, as she could not understand their desire to kill those creatures weaker than themselves.

Tess feels akin to the pheasants in their suffering and she breaks the necks of the wounded ones to end their misery. She then feels guilty that she had been so depressed the night before, as at least she has not been shot and left for dead, and the shame that tortures her is based only on an arbitrary social convention, not any inherent law of Nature.

ANALYSIS

Angel has left Tess in just as bad a state as Alec did. She is much older now but essentially back to where she started, unfairly used by a man and forced to sacrifice herself to take care of her poor family. Her d'Urberville pride and the shame that society has bred in her are almost her undoing.

Just like with Tess, Angel finds that his agricultural wonderland is not as he expected. He also sickens away from Tess, like modern man when removed from Nature.

The outdoors life is the only one Tess knows, and she knows she would suffer even more if kept inside and stifled by humanity's unfairness.

She seems to be returning to wild nature in her depression, reverting to the primitive pagan state of the ancients and fleeing from humanity into the forest. Her “nest” again associates Tess with birds, but it also recalls the bed of leaves Alec made for her that night in The Chase.

One of her lowest moments, when she can truly appreciate the cruelty of her fate. Vanity would not be so bad, but instead there is love, and then love ruined and taken away.

Tess only fears humans now. She is again associated with birds, this time united with them in their sufferings at the hands of unsympathetic men. The hunters recall Alec and the other men that have abused their power over helpless Tess.

Tess appears as a benevolent, godlike figure, mercifully ending the pheasants' misery. (Later she herself will welcome death as an escape from misery.) She now realizes that most of her suffering comes from her society's condemnation of her. She knows she is at heart still innocent.

CHAPTER 42

Tess returns to the road feeling strengthened, but she still cannot be happy as long as Angel condemns her. More men flirt with her, so she puts on her oldest clothes, covers her face, and cuts off her eyebrows. She resolves to be ugly for all other men except Angel. She walks on as a simple fieldwoman, at one with the landscape.

Tess keeps asking for employment at farms on her path, as she has heard that Marian's farm is especially harsh, but no one has any positions open. She reaches a plateau where the land is cold and unfriendly-seeming, and before her is dreary Flintcomb-Ash, the farm where Marian works. Tess accepts that she is doomed to work in this rough land, and looks for shelter against a warm wall.

The village is empty until one woman approaches, and Tess sees that it is Marian. Tess slowly reveals how unhappy she is, and that Angel is abroad, but she asks Marian not to question her any further. Marian says the place is a rough starve-acre (poor soiled) farm, and her only comfort here is in alcohol. She is sure that Tess is only unhappy because Angel is away, but she agrees to speak his name no more.

Tess agrees to work until the holiday of Lady-Day, and they are happy to hire her because women's field labor is cheaper than men's. Tess writes to her parents with her new address, but does not tell them how bad her situation is, as it might reflect poorly on Angel.

ANALYSIS

Tess makes herself ugly and wanders the road like an ancient pilgrim or martyr. Her beauty she now sees as a kind of curse, bringing only misfortune. She has become the image of the rural woman, no longer standing out from the rest but entirely blending in with her surroundings.

Flintcomb-Ash, with its bleak name and landscape, is the opposite of Marlott or Talbothays, and fits well with Tess's unhappiness and lost innocence. Once again she has only been delaying the inevitable by asking for work elsewhere – she must come to this dreary farm as a sort of punishment for her bliss at Talbothays.

Things have really gone downhill since the dairy-farm days. Tess still idealizes Angel and depends on him for happiness, but cannot bear the shame of discussing their situation in detail with someone who knew them both before – just like she could not remain in Marlott.

Hardy again notes the sexual double standard, this time with regards to pay. Women can do the same work as men but get paid less, and no one questions the system's unfairness.

CHAPTER 43

Flintcomb-Ash is a dreary place not even cared for by its residents, but Tess sets to work hacking at turnips in a field of rocks. The earth and sky are both colorless and she and Marian seem alone on earth. It starts raining but they keep working, as otherwise they won't be paid. Tess becomes colder and wetter than she has ever been before. They escape the present by talking of green Talbothays and the past.

Here too there is the human desire for pleasure doing battle with circumstances that deny pleasure. Marian drinks as she works, and finds her enjoyment there. Tess's power of dreaming is enough for her.

The mornings are frosty and the afternoons rainy, and Tess works constantly, but still she hopes for Angel's forgiveness. Marian wishes more friends from Talbothays would come, so she writes to Izz and Retty, and Izz agrees to come.

The winter is a bad one, and strange birds from the Arctic arrive at the farm, birds that have seen the wonders and horrors of the far North, and they land near to Tess and Marian. One day it starts to snow, and so they have to trudge off for reed-drawing. Izz shows up, along with Car Darch and her sister from Tantridge so long ago, but they do not recognize Tess.

They start to work and then the owner, Farmer Groby, arrives. Tess recognizes him as the man from Trantridge she had run from on the highway. He remembers Tess and says now he has "got the better" of her at last. She realizes he is not a threat anymore, and at least he doesn't try to seduce her, but he does belittle her day's labor. Tess can't imagine a worse place to work.

Izz and Marian remain with Tess to finish the reed-drawing, and they start to reminisce. Tess again asks to not discuss Angel, but Izz presses on with questions. Finally Tess collapses from distress and weariness for a while, but resumes when she hears the other two gossiping. Izz breaks down next, and then it is Tess and Marian.

Marian immediately reveals what Izz just told her, which is the story of Angel asking her to come to Brazil with him. Tess goes white and then starts to cry. She resolves to write to Angel, feeling that she has neglected him somehow. That night she tries to write a letter but is disturbed by the image of Angel propositioning Izz so soon after their separation.

ANALYSIS

Flintcomb-Ash is the polar opposite of Talbothays, reflecting the stark change in the dairymaids' moods, so once again they seem integral to the landscape. Their idealized memories of Talbothays offers them escape from the unhappy, uncomfortable present.

Hardy frames the struggle of life as people wanting to be happy and fate wanting people to be unhappy. They can only escape fate as best they can.

Again the cast of characters is set to reunite in different combinations. All their destinies are inextricably linked. Tess is doing penance for her perceived sins.

More birds connect to Tess, but these ones are foreign and wild, symbolic of Hellish horrors and sublime Nature. Tess can never escape Trantridge it seems.

More coincidental meetings of characters. The farmer also wields power over Tess, but he is only interested in getting the most work out of her as possible. She finds this at least simpler and easier to deal with than the sexual desires of Alec or even the romantic interest of Angel.

The past Tess is trying to avoid once more returns to her. Too much talk of Angel combines with her many labors and her body cannot stand the unfairness of fate anymore.

This should be a revelation for Tess of Angel's many flaws, but once again she takes the burden of guilt first onto herself and refuses to let go of her idealized image of her husband. It is only later that Izz's tale starts to trouble her, that he was apparently willing to sin with Izz so soon after condemning Tess for the same.

CHAPTER 44

Tess wonders if she should ask the Clares for Angel's address. She has been too independent and proud to appeal to them for assistance so far, but now she wants to send a letter to Angel. She has heard that Reverend Clare is a good man, and hopes he will take pity on her. She has to walk to Emminster, so she can only go on a Sunday and has to leave before dawn.

On the day she decides to leave Izz and Marian dress her up and sincerely wish her the best, despite their own passions. It has been a year since the wedding. Tess feels hopeful that she can win Mrs. Clare over. She passes by the Vale of Blakemore and feels sad, and then goes near a stone monolith called "Cross-in-Hand," which marks "a miracle, or murder, or both." As she gets nearer her confidence fades.

She reaches Mr. Clare's stern-looking church and takes off her walking boots before entering the town. Tess looks for a good omen but none appears. She calls at Angel's house but no one is there – they are all at

church. A bloody piece of paper blows down the road. Just as Tess reaches the church the congregation emerges. Everyone stares at her, so she tries to escape, but two young men walk closely behind her.

Tess realizes the men are Angel's brothers, and she dreads meeting them. They see a young woman and name her as Mercy Chant. Tess recognizes her significance. Tess then overhears the brothers' conversation. They lament Angel's foolish marriage and lack of communication, and then find Tess's walking boots. The brothers assume they belong to some treacherous person, and they take them to give to charity.

Tess despairs and starts to weep. She cannot help but see the scene as a bad omen and condemnation of her journey. She cannot bear to return to the Clares' house. The narrator muses that if she had met Mr. Clare first instead of Cuthbert and Felix, things would have gone better. The brothers are more liberal but lack the Reverend's charitable heart.

Tess dissolves into self-pity and starts the long walk back to Flintcomb-Ash. She does not realize what a mistake this is, as Mr. and Mrs. Clare would surely have taken her in as a lost soul.

Her journey back is sorrowful and slow, and she does not stop until she reaches a barn with a fiery Christian preacher giving a service. Tess can hear his words as she passes, and he describes how he was once a great sinner, but then was touched by the patience of a parson he had insulted, and so became converted. Tess recognizes the preacher's voice, and she nervously enters the barn to see that he is none other than Alec d'Urberville.

ANALYSIS

Tess finally decides to act towards achieving her goals of reconciliation. So powerless is she in the relationship that she does not even know where Angel is, and has to walk miles through ice just to entreat his parents. But at least she is taking some agency in her fate now.

Izz and Marian again show their honest hearts, or else it is just impossible for anyone to hate Tess (which seems plausible, too). Cross-in-Hand will become important later, but for now it is just a vague reminder of the primal pagan forces of the land.

Fate again treats Tess cruelly, as the bloody paper seems like a bad omen arriving at this vulnerable time. She has experienced the judgmental eyes of churchgoers before, and she flees from the memories as much as the people.

More coincidental meetings – the world of the novel is small and interlaced. Angel's brothers are again portrayed negatively. They judge Angel for marrying a dairymaid and judge the boot-wearer without even knowing who it is. They symbolize the part of society Hardy dislikes the most.

Tess can't help her ingrained superstitions, and her journey was already tenuous. Fate again deals cruelly with her, and Hardy points out the unhappy coincidence that she meets the brothers instead of the father.

Hardy emphasizes the misfortune of her decision, drawing out the tragedy of circumstance once again.

Things just keep getting worse for Tess as everyone from her past eventually returns, culminating with this encounter. It is an elegant plot twist that the antagonist should become a Christian, converted by Angel's father to repent his sins against the heroine, but surely this will lead to more turmoil for Tess.

CHAPTER 45

Tess cannot help being afraid when she sees Alec, and it feels grotesque to watch him speak the words of Scripture. His passion and sensuality seem to have been transformed into religious devotion, although faithfulness looks unfitted for his bestial features. Tess thinks of other great sinners that have been converted, and tries not to feel angry.

Tess decides to leave immediately, but when she moves again Alec notices her. The passion of his sermon is suddenly extinguished, and he hesitates. Tess keeps walking, thinking how unfair it is that now God is on the side of her attacker, while she remains “unregenerate.” She can feel the physicality of the past following her as she walks.

She hears footsteps behind her and Alec approaches, agitated. Tess wishes he had not followed her, and speaks to him with scorn. Alec disparages his former self and tells the story of his conversion by Reverend Clare, who bore his insults with such grace that Alec began to reconsider his life, especially after his mother died.

He tries to both apologize and preach to Tess, who becomes enraged, pointing out the horror that Alec should be able to use her as he did and then just change his mind and have everything forgiven. She won't accept that Alec has really been converted because “a better man” than he is does not believe. Tess says that Alec's fickle passions don't usually last.

Alec asks Tess to put down her veil, as she is tempting him, and she can't help feeling her old guilt just for existing as she does. Alec does not want to remember his old ways. They walk together and pass more fences painted with Bible quotes, and Alec says the man who paints them works with him.

They reach “Cross-in-Hand” again, which is a bleak land with a single stone monolith carved with a human hand, rumored to once have held a cross. The place seems ancient and sinister. Alec says he has to leave and asks Tess about her new way of speaking, and the trouble she had mentioned. She tells him about the baby, and he is distressed.

Alec says they will meet again, but Tess warns him not to come near her. Alec says he fears Tess now, and he asks her to place her hand upon the stone hand and swear that she will not tempt him again. Tess is offended, but complies. Alec says he will pray for her and leaves. He is disturbed as he walks, and often rereads a letter from Reverend Clare to give him strength.

Tess meets a shepherd and asks him about Cross-in-Hand. He says it is haunted, a place where a criminal was tortured long ago. Tess later approaches a young couple, and then sees that the girl is Izz. She says the man is from Talbothays, and followed her here, but she hasn't answered his proposal yet.

ANALYSIS

This is another brutal plot twist for Tess. According to society, Alec is in the right now as a Christian. She cannot even see him as a villain, but must now think of him like this, and feel confusion instead of hate.

This really is terribly unfair, as it seems cruel to protest someone's conversion, but now Alec has eluded condemnation yet again while Tess is left to suffer. Even though she is the victim, she is technically "worse" than Alec now because of her religious doubt.

She cannot escape the past, and it keeps returning in grotesque ways like this. Their closely interwoven lives are shown by the connection to Reverend Clare. Tess's dignity at least shines through in this meeting, and she is cold and scornful to waffling Alec.

Tess again loses her temper with Alec (entirely justifiably), which foreshadows the novel's climax. No matter how angry she becomes or how she tries to flee, she still cannot escape the persistent presence of this man who ruined her life.

More horrible unfairness of the double standard. Tess must feel guilty just for being attractive to men, as if her very existence was inherently sinful, when really the sin is in Alec for his lack of morals, decency, or self-restraint.

The sinister monolith foreshadows Stonehenge and makes the tone of their meeting seem more portentous. It is also a reminder of ancient pagan powers, contrasted with Alec's quick and easy Christian conversion.

This oath summarizes well the novel's themes. Tess is seen as actively "tempting" the cruel, dominant man just by existing, and the idea is so ingrained in her by society that she can't help believing it. She swears the oath on an ancient paganistic monument, alone in the bleakness of Nature.

Again Tess finds a murderous, spiritual past lurking behind seemingly commonplace things, as in the d'Urberville coach. There is hope that the dairymaids can move on with their lives after Angel's rejection.

CHAPTER 46

A few weeks later Tess is in the field with a male worker throwing turnips into a slicing machine, when Alec d'Urberville appears in the distance. Tess repeats her demand that he not come near her, but Alec says he wants to help her in her bad economic state. Tess keeps working, trying to stay detached.

Alec blames himself for corrupting Tess's innocent life, but also her parents for not warning her of men like him. He plans to sell his estate and become a missionary in Africa, and he asks Tess to come with him as his wife. When she refuses, his disappointment shows that his old desires have reawakened.

They step away from the other worker to talk. Alec is shocked when Tess says she loves someone else, and he calls her improper. Finally Tess reveals that she is married, but she won't say Angel's name. Alec is distressed and begins to return to his old ways, admitting he has fallen back in love with Tess.

Alec says he at least wants to help her financially, and is surprised to hear that Tess's husband is far away. She says it is because he found out about Alec. He calls her a “deserted wife” and tries to take her hand, but she cries out and begs him to leave her alone.

At that moment Farmer Groby rides up, mad that Tess isn't working. Alec defends her angrily but finally leaves. Tess is almost relieved at Groby's reprimands, as they have nothing to do with sexuality. She considers for a second how much her life would be improved by Alec's money, but she still finds him repulsive and frightening.

That night Tess writes another, more desperate letter to Angel, but again she remembers the episode with Izz and her uncertainty returns, so she doesn't send it.

On the Candlemas holiday Alec shows up at her lodgings. He is agitated and admits that he can't stop thinking about Tess since he saw her. He asks her to pray for him, but Tess says she cannot pray because her husband has taught her to disbelieve in an active God. They have a theological discussion where Tess says she believes in the spirit of Christianity, but nothing supernatural.

Alec scorns her for parroting her husband's beliefs, and Tess defends Angel with a faithfulness he doesn't deserve. She repeats some of his arguments to Alec. Alec says that he still believes, but he is slipping, and that at that moment he was supposed to be preaching. He loves Tess once more and could not stay away despite his commitments.

Alec gets angry at Tess for tempting him and causing him to backslide, comparing her to Eve or a “witch of Babylon,” but then he seems to wake up and apologizes again. He tries to embrace her, but she invokes Angel's

reputation and again Alec is ashamed. He leaves, and Tess's recitation of Angel's logical arguments begin to wear at his emotion-based faith. His passions reawaken, and he scorns Angel for unwittingly making him return to Tess.

ANALYSIS

Again Tess is made powerless by her situation, and her antagonist does not respect her wishes. Alec has all the advantages, and she cannot escape – once more she is dependent on his whims.

Alec's Africa dream sounds like Angel's Brazil – an idealized place far from the troubles of England, and also associated with some kind of frustration regarding Tess. His faith is just as fickle as his other passions.

Despite everything he has done, Alec dares to judge Tess through society's and religion's eyes. No one, not even her “reformed” rapist, sympathizes with her unfair situation.

Alec brings up his financial superiority again, this time intending charity but actually emphasizing how bad Tess's situation really is. She still can't see Angel's faults.

Farmer Groby's antagonism only has to do with work and money, which is much more straightforward than the other more complicated and infuriating judgments of Alec, Angel, and Victorian society in general.

Tess is still unsure if Angel really loves her, and cannot yet see how he unfair he has been to her.

Alec's religious fervor falls from him as quickly as his passion for Tess reignites. She is again shown as a temptress, a role women are often accused of by super-religious men. This makes her “sinful” through no action of her own. It allows the sinning man to pin the blame for his sin on her. Tess clarifies her vague, Naturalistic beliefs.

Tess still idealizes Angel, especially when comparing him to Alec. Alec's old ironic nature starts to return along with his infatuation with Tess.

Tess is again compared to Eve, but this time the religious figure is a “temptress” and “fallen woman” that society sees Tess as. Religious shame is the only defense she has against Alec now, and even that is quickly becoming useless as his religious faith fails in the face of his powerful passions and jealousy.

CHAPTER 47

It is threshing day at Flintcomb-Ash, and all the women gather around the sinister red threshing-machine. Nearby is a black, smoking engine, tended to by an engineer who serves its fire and industry and looks out of place in nature. He is strange and Northern and seems like a servant of Hell.

The women start to work, feeding the ravenous machine with corn. Old men talk of the hand-labor of the old days, which got better results. Tess does not even have time to talk, she must work so fast to satisfy the machine.

Tess doesn't notice that Alec d'Urberville has arrived and is watching her. He is dressed fashionably now, no longer like a preacher, and Izz and Marian can't believe he is the same man. Tess takes a break and is surprised to see him. It is clear from his appearance that he has returned to his old libertine ways.

Tess asks why he keeps bothering her, but Alec accuses her of bothering *him* by haunting him with her eyes and ruining his faith. He has entirely given up religion, and blames Tess for taking his innocence as revenge for him taking hers. He says no saint could have kept the faith either if tempted by her face.

Alec admits that Angel's arguments have convinced him, and Tess asks that he keep the religion of kindness and purity, if not doctrine. But Alec says if he has no one telling him what to do then he will do what feels good – he has no inner moral compass.

Alec emphasizes how Angel has abandoned Tess, and again he propositions her, implying that he is closer to her than her mythical husband. He reaches for her and Tess slaps him in the face with her glove. Alec jumps up, bleeding from the mouth, and Tess invites him to attack her, because “once victim, always victim.”

Alec does not retaliate, but he does threaten Tess that he will be her master again, and if she belongs to anyone it is to him, not Angel. He leaves and the machine starts up again, and Tess keeps working, stunned.

ANALYSIS

Hardy is at his most explicit here in portraying modern industry as Hellish and destructive, a fiery intrusion on Nature. The engineer seems similar to the eerie Arctic birds.

Hardy empathizes with the old men in his nostalgia for the agricultural past. The machine is never satisfied, and the work becomes unbearable for the innocent, rural women.

Alec has totally reverted to his original ways. Tess doesn't even have his own shame protecting her from his advances now. He also comes upon at her at her weakest, when she is made vulnerable by the terrible machine.

Again Tess is accused of sinning just by existing as she is. She has no agency to take revenge and no power over Alec, but *he* still plays the victim and pretends they are equally powerful.

Tess's religion is clarified as the morality behind Christianity without the dogma. Alec doesn't have the capacity to live in this way without acting reckless.

The social law that makes Alec seem like her “natural husband” is again invoked. Tess's violent outburst is finally some action on her part, and foreshadows the future. She sees how unjust her position as constant victim is.

There is no more pretense as Alec again abuses the power he wields over Tess. Everything she tries fails, and she cannot escape him.

CHAPTER 48

Farmer Groby makes them keep working by moonlight, and Alec returns to watch Tess. The work seems endless and the threshing-machine insatiable. The machine shakes her into a reverie. The other women keep going by drinking ale, but Tess still abstains because of her childhood experience of her drunken father. The work is terrible, but less terrible than facing Alec again. Finally they catch the rats under the sheaves and are finished.

Alec approaches Tess again and offers to help her. She tries to give him the benefit of the doubt but is still wary. Alec mentions her family, and Tess gets upset. She still refuses to take anything from Alec, and he finally departs.

That night Tess writes a passionate letter to Angel, begging that he return because she is so terribly tempted and oppressed. She says her punishment is just, but asks him to have mercy and come home. She still loves him purely and entirely, and is the same woman he fell in love with, only now much more unhappy. She does not value her beauty except for Angel's sake, and she would willingly be his servant if only she could be near him. She warns that there is something terrible threatening her, and she fears she will succumb to it if he doesn't return.

ANALYSIS

This is one of Tess's lowest moments, as she is caught between wearily serving an industrial master and seductions and antagonism from her rapist. Alec is no longer her employer, but she is just as vulnerable to him now as when she lived at the Slopes. The machine is again described negatively.

Tess still is able to be independent of his financial aid, but he uses her family's hardships to again wield power over her through her own morality and guilt.

Tess finally takes some action with regards to Angel, but she still hopelessly idealizes him and sees herself as the guilty one in the matter. All of her most submissive, self-deprecating feelings come out in this letter, and it seems like a step backward in terms of her independence and happiness.

CHAPTER 49

The Clares receive Tess's letter and hope that it will make Angel hurry home. Mrs. Clare's only complaint to her husband is that Angel wasn't

given the chance to attend Cambridge like his brothers. Mr. Clare still feels justified in his decision, but he prays for Angel and misses him. They wonder what went wrong with his marriage and blame themselves.

At that moment Angel is in the interior of Brazil, riding towards the coast. He has had a hard time in Brazil, as have all the hopeful farmers and their families from England. His moral sense has also matured, and he now considers intentions more important than results. This makes him start to feel guilty about how he has treated Tess. He wonders why she doesn't write, and assumes she is doing well.

On one of his journeys Angel rides with another depressed Englishman, and tells him all the details of his marriage. The stranger has traveled in many cultures and remarks how limited Angel's views are. Tess's past should be nothing compared to her present, and Angel was wrong to reject her.

The next day the stranger gets a fever and dies, making his words feel more important. Angel begins to realize how narrow-minded he has been, all while thinking he was being so philosophically open. He had chosen Paganism over Christianity, but Pagan culture would never punish someone for being raped.

Angel thinks again of Izz's words and of Tess's faith in him on their wedding day. Slowly he becomes Tess's advocate against himself, and withdraws his criticisms. Her d'Urberville name starts to appeal to him, as it has no economic value but much sentimental interest in terms of the fallen mighty ones.

Angel also realizes that despite her "impure" past, Tess is still the ideal of purity and freshness that he had loved, and so his feelings begin to return, though he is too far inland to receive the letter yet.

Tess meanwhile fluctuates in her hopes of Angel's return. She decides to learn to sing some of the songs Angel had played on his harp, and she cries as she practices them alone in the cold fields.

Lady-Day and the end of her employment approaches, and one day her sister Liza-Lu appears at the door, looking much more mature. She says that their mother is dying, and their father is also ill, and he still won't work because of his high ancestry. Tess decides to leave the farm early and start home that night.

ANALYSIS

The Reverend still stands by his convictions, but also remains strong in his love for Angel. The Clares' kindness is one of the good example of Christianity in the novel, and emphasizes the tragedy that Tess never meets them.

Angel has experienced another ideal being ruined for him, and it finally matures him some. He still doesn't realize Tess's proud streak, or how

devoted she was to his instructions to not write unless he asked for her. Away from the narrow Victorian society he can begin to expand his idea of morality.

This stranger seems almost like a stand-in for Hardy, telling the harsh truth to Angel about how unfair he has been, and complaining about how foolishly stifling the conventions of Victorian England are.

Angel had rejected the doctrines of Christianity but still kept the judgmental mindset, and now finally can step outside of his society and religion and see how unjust he was.

Distance finally makes the heart grow fonder, and his rigorous ideals start to give way to emotion. Hardy uses the d'Urberville name in the same way – it has no real wealth attached, but lots of symbolic and dramatic value.

Angel's idealized version of Tess returns, but he now realizes that in many ways she lived up to the ideal – he just has to widen his narrow parameters in order to be able to see it.

Tess at her most heart-wrenching. Her portrayal here emphasizes how harshly she has been treated by fate, society, and men.

Another unhappy twist of fate for Tess, although at least she gets out of Flintcomb-Ash. She will now be even more vulnerable, especially to Alec's offers of wealth in her family's time of need.

CHAPTER 50

Tess walks under the stars and finally reaches the heavy soil of Blackmoor, and the forests still alive with old pagan superstitions. She reaches home the next day to find her mother sleeping. The children have grown, and Durbeyfield is also ill, but excited by his new scheme of asking historians to pay for his well-being.

Tess begins to work in the garden, as no one has tended to it lately, and she prefers the outdoors work to staying in her mother's sickroom. One evening she and Liza-Lu are working as other farmers start burning their grass piles, sending up eerie plumes of smoke and making the atmosphere hazy and dreamlike. Tess works into the night, comforted by her own labor.

She is so absorbed that she doesn't notice the man working next to her for a long time, but he approaches the fire and she sees it is Alec d'Urberville. He looks grotesque in the dim light and peasant's clothes, and he laughs at Tess's shock and compares her to Eve, and himself to Satan. He quotes Milton to her.

Alec says he has come entirely for Tess, and offers to help her family out of love for her. He mentions her young siblings, and wonders what would happen if her mother dies. Tess is upset but still refuses his help. Alec leaves angrily.

Tess starts home and is met by one of her sisters who says that their father is dead. Tess rushes home. Joan is out of danger, but John suddenly fell dead of his heart condition. The news means that the Durbeyfields will be evicted, as John was the lease-holder. The narrator muses that their fate is now the same as those of many peasants whom the ancient d'Urbervilles once displaced long ago.

ANALYSIS

She is back in her fertile native land, among the pagan spirits of Nature. Durbeyfield has reached new heights in his laziness and farcical pride, but now his shiftlessness is really putting his family in danger.

As always, Tess prefers the outdoors to the indoors. The smoky atmosphere is reminiscent of the Trantridge dance so long ago. Tess is able to find a little solace in her solitary labors, untroubled for a while by external society.

Alec in peasant clothes seems like a mockery of Tess's class. She is again compared to Eve, although this time as the innocent girl suffering the serpent's temptation. Alec embraces his role as villain.

Alec again presses her at her most vulnerable spot – the Durbeyfield children. She is helpless to assist them, but still asserts her independence against Alec.

Another sudden tragedy for Tess, this one compounded by their impending eviction. Hardy again brings up the idea that perhaps Tess is being punished for the sins of her cruel ancestors, although he knows how unfair this seems.

CHAPTER 51

Old Lady-Day arrives, and everyone is changing farm locations. The Durbeyfields, though slightly above the peasant class, are now looked down on because they don't directly work their land. The village also disapproves of the household's shiftlessness, drunkenness, and Tess's scandals, so no one will help them from being evicted.

The night before they depart, Tess is home alone, feeling guilty for her part in the family's situation, as some villagers had recently shamed her mother for “harboring” her. She is so absorbed that she doesn't notice Alec until he knocks at the window.

Tess says she thought he was a carriage passing by, and Alec tells her the story of the d'Urberville coach. Some past d'Urberville supposedly kidnapped a beautiful woman in his coach, and as she was trying to escape he accidentally killed her, or else she killed him. Since then it is a bad omen if a d'Urberville hears a phantom coach.

Tess admits that her family is being kicked out because she is not a “proper woman,” and Alec is enraged at the villagers. Tess says they are

going to Kingsbere where the d'Urberville tombs lay, and Alec offers that they stay at his estate instead. He says he will clean the house and expect their coming, as he owes her for the past and also for curing him of Christianity. Tess says she has money if she asks for it from her father-in-law, but Alec knows she will never ask. As he leaves he passes the man who paints Bible quotes, and curses at him.

Tess suddenly feels the injustice of her situation, and realizes how harsh Angel has been to her. She has never intended to do wrong, and yet she has been condemned so many times for sins that were not her own.

Tess writes a sudden, passionate letter to Angel, lamenting how badly he has treated her. She says she can never forgive him for his cruel and unjust actions, and she will try to forget him. She hurriedly delivers it to be mailed and does not feel guilty.

The children gather around and Tess reminds them that this is their last night at home, and they sing a song about the harsh world and hope for a better heaven. Tess wishes she could believe the words of the song, but to her life has been nothing but an ordeal and no afterlife could undo her suffering.

Joan returns and hears that a gentleman has been by. She thinks it was Tess's husband, but Tess says he will never return. She cannot help but feel that Alec is more truly her husband than Angel is.

ANALYSIS

Tess would have already had a hard life based only on her family's faults. The community's judgment of her troubles adds on to the general feeling that Marlott would be better off without the Durbeyfields.

Earlier the villagers seemed to have forgotten her shame, but now she has a reputation as a "fallen woman" and so they bring real suffering upon her family with their judgment.

The story Angel alluded to regarding the d'Urberville coach is finally finished, and the legends itself foreshadows the novel's final murder. Alec laughs it off, but he is not a true d'Urberville and cannot know his own fate.

Alec is upset at her misfortunes that he himself caused. Tess's dignity and loyalty again do battle within her, as she wants to be independent of Alec but her family's situation keeps getting worse. It seems only a matter of time before she gives in to the inevitable, just like she helplessly accepted Angel's marriage proposal despite her qualms.

Tess finally begins to see clearly in her sadness, and she gains Hardy's perspective on the unfairness of fate, society, and Angel.

Tess takes up agency in her life as a victim and as a wife, finally refusing to submit to her husband and no longer accepting constant shame for a sin she did not even commit.

The children are still full of hope that even if the world is cruel, God will reward them later, but Tess has lost that innocence. Even if there is a heaven, it would only be a bandage for her wounds.

Tess is still troubled by the idea that Alec “owns” her, but it makes sense in a society where a woman's "purity" and therefore her ability to marry is wholly dependent on whether or not she has had sex (even if she didn't want or intend to have sex and was raped). In such a society, the man who rapes her becomes her "husband" because society won't let her have any other.

CHAPTER 52

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They meet other moving wagons on the road, and Tess sees Marian and Izz among them. They have fled Flintcomb-Ash, and warn her that Alec is looking for her. They also ask about Angel.

The family reaches Kingsbere very late, and are met by a man saying the rooms they rented aren't available anymore. Joan is upset at such an ignominious entrance to their ancestral land, but pushes on into the town. There are no rooms anywhere and the wagon they rented has to leave, so they unload their things next to the church.

Tess looks sadly at the familiar pile of belongings. They set up their bed outside, next to the part of the church where the d'Urberville vaults lie. The stained glass windows are marked with emblems like those on the family's seal and spoon. Joan and Liza-Lu go looking for food and encounter Alec on horseback. They reluctantly tell him where Tess is.

Tess meanwhile enters the church and walks among her family's tombs. Everything about them is ancient and broken, a reminder of their extinction. Suddenly one of the effigies moves, and she almost faints before she realizes it is Alec d'Urberville.

Alec apologizes for interrupting her reunion, and stamps ironically on the vaults. He says he, the sham d'Urberville, can do more to help her than all these dead knights and famous ancestors. He leaves, and Tess wishes she were dead, on the other side of the vault door.

Meanwhile Izz and Marian ride on, talking of Tess, Angel, and Alec. They are worried that Tess will succumb to Alec if Angel does not return, and they want to help her. A month later they hear of Angel's approaching return, and so write a letter to him asking that he save his wife from the enemy that is near to her, as even a diamond can be worn down eventually. Afterwards they feel both generous and agitated.

ANALYSIS

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure
Woman Faithfully Presented*

No good has come to the Durbeyfields so far, especially considering their lofty past, so there is no reason to hope that things will get better in a new town.

Another chance meeting of characters. Wessex is apparently very small, as there are so many dramatic coincidences among people.

They reach the ancient d'Urberville land at a symbolically low point in their lives. They once owned this town but now can't even find a room. Hardy lays on the situational irony pretty heavily here.

The useless seal and spoon are finally reunited with the useless d'Urberville tombs. The family legacy has left Tess nothing but bad omens and a painful destiny, and possibly punishment for their ancient sins.

More heavy symbolism, as Alec lies satirically atop a tomb pretending to be a d'Urberville, just like his father did in buying the name.

The contrast is clear between the grandiose but worthless tombs and the false d'Urberville who has real wealth. English society has changed, and the old families are dead and buried.

The dairymaids again show their simple generosity in pleading to Angel on Tess's behalf despite their own reawakened passions. It is interesting that Hardy cuts away from Tess at this point, potentially the climax of Alec's seduction, so the reader never sees what actually happens.

CHAPTER 53

At Emminster Vicarage the Clares are nervously waiting for Angel's arrival. The man who comes to the door is unrecognizable, so thin and aged does he seem. Mrs. Clare weeps to see his state but feels more deeply affected by his return than any religious experience. Angel looks like a corpse, and he admits he has been ill. He asks if any more letters have come from Tess.

Angel reads Tess's second, angry letter and despairs that she will never forgive him. Mrs. Clare disparages her as a "mere child of the soil," and Angel wearily reveals her d'Urberville heritage.

Angel decides to break the news of his return slowly in case Tess is still angry. He assumes she is still living in Marlott under his allowance, and so sends a letter there. Joan responds immediately saying Tess is gone away, but she cannot tell him where. Angel is relieved that Tess is well but fears they are all angry with him. He feels guilty for how he treated his wife, and wonders why he did not judge her by will instead of deed from the first.

He waits a while at home but Joan does not write again. Angel rereads Tess's first letter and decides to find her immediately. Mr. Clare says she never asked him for money, and Angel finally understands

that Tess was too proud to do so, so she has probably been suffering financially.

The Clares figure out the reason for the couple's separation, and they take even more pity on Tess because of her past sin. As Angel is packing up his things he gets the letter from Izz and Marian.

ANALYSIS

Hardy shifts the point of view away from Tess and lets the reader discover her fate through Angel's eyes. Angel too has done his penance during their separation. Mrs. Clare loves her child more than she loves God, relating to Hardy's idea that women's religion is more instinctive and emotional.

Angel can finally see with clear eyes that Tess is not an idealized Nature-girl or a cruel, doomed d'Urberville, but a unique woman.

Hardy breaks the news slowly and painfully, not yet revealing where Tess is but implying through Joan's evasive letter that she has succumbed to Alec. Angel knows nothing of this, and can only regret the unfair judgment he made when he held all the power over Tess.

Angel was too busy with his idealized Tess to realize that the real Tess had too much pride in her own independence to ask the Clares for money, especially after Angel had rejected her.

The Clares are again examples of pure Christian charity. Everything starts coming together for Angel, but he is far too late.

CHAPTER 54

Angel sets out to find Tess. He passes by Cross-in-Hand, the sinister stone where Tess swore to never tempt Alec again, and continues on to Flintcomb-Ash. He finds that she is not there, and that when she was she never called herself "Mrs. Clare," but only went by her maiden name. Angel begins to appreciate the hardships Tess has endured alone.

Angel next goes to Marlott to find out where the Durbeyfields are. Spring has hardly begun in the Vale of Blakemore. There is a new family in the Durbeyfield house who lives happily in their place, and Angel cannot help but hate the place for not containing Tess. The children tell him that the Durbeyfields intended to go to Kingsbere.

On his way out of town Angel passes by the field where he first saw Tess at the May-Day dance, and he sees John Durbeyfield's grave marked with "How Are The Mighty Fallen." A stranger approaches and says that the headstone has not even been paid for, and Angel finds the mason and pays the debt.

Angel goes next to Kingsbere and finds Joan's house. She is unwelcoming to him and won't tell him where Tess is. The children ask if this is the man come to marry Tess, but Joan shoos them away. She says Tess would not want Angel to find her, but he begs until she finally reveals

that she is at Sandbourne. Angel asks if they need anything, but Joan says they are well taken care of. Angel catches the train to Sandbourne.

ANALYSIS

Angel makes a quick tour of all the sites of Tess's trials. Cross-in-Hand once again darkens the mood of his journey, and Tess's old oath becomes cruelly ironic in light of what has probably happened to her.

Nature reflects the mood of the story, as winter has dominion but spring is tentatively approaching. The happy new family in the Durbeyfield house shows just how quickly people can be forgotten, and makes Tess's story seem tragically small.

All the past images start to coincide as the novel approaches its climax. Angel is faced with the full weight of his guilt. Durbeyfield's grandiosity helped him just the same as it did his ancestors – not at all.

It is finally made clear to the reader, though not to Angel, what has happened – Tess is gone and the Durbeyfields have money, so Alec must have won. The suspense builds for the inevitable reveal to Angel and whatever tragic climax Hardy has prepared.

CHAPTER 55

That night Angel walks through Sandbourne, a fashionable pleasure city on the English Channel, and wonders what possibly could have drawn Tess here. There are no cows or farms, but only mansions. He goes restlessly to sleep.

The next morning Angel asks a postman for information. He has never heard of a Mrs. Clare or a Ms. Durbeyfield, but he knows there is a d'Urberville staying at a place called The Herons. Angel is excited and goes there to find it is a luxurious lodging-house. He fears Tess is working there.

The landlady says there is a Mrs. d'Urberville there, which slightly confuses Angel, but he asks her to tell Tess that he has come. He waits among flowers, wondering if Tess sold her jewels to afford the place.

Tess appears dressed in expensive, elegant clothes. She stands still on the threshold, and Angel begs her forgiveness. Tess's eyes appear strange, and she says it is too late, to not come near her. She says that she waited and suffered for so long, and then Alec appeared, and helped her family, and convinced her that Angel would never return, and at last he won her back.

Angel understands the terrible truth. Tess says Alec is upstairs, and that she hates him now, but Angel must leave and never return. She disappears and Angel walks blindly through the streets.

ANALYSIS

It is tragic to watch Angel slowly discover the truth. Tess is completely out of her element here – she has sacrificed everything in her despair and need.

The shifting names of the novel come together here, as all the different “Tesses” are named, each with her own history and misfortunes. She has become a Tess unknown to Angel now.

He cannot conceive of her infidelity, so pure was her love. The inevitable finally approaches among bright Nature.

Hardy reveals Tess through Angel's eyes to show how much she has given up of herself, totally sacrificing her integrity for her family's needs. This fully emphasizes her tragic state and how truly trapped she is now. Angel finally matured in his love, but too late.

Alec holds her in complete dominion now – even though she hates him she is still dressed in his clothes.

CHAPTER 56

Mrs. Brooks, the landlady of The Herons, grows curious about the aftermath of Angel's visit to the d'Urbervilles so she eavesdrops at their door. She hears moaning, and through the keyhole sees a woman kneeling in despair. A man asks what the matter is.

Mrs. Brooks hears snatches of a lament from the woman. She says that the man never relented in his cruel persuasion, and used her family's needs against her, and mocked her that her husband would never return. She finally believed him, but now her husband *has* returned, and she has lost him again because of the man, and she fears her husband is ill and will die for *her* sins. Mrs. Brooks sees that her lips are bleeding from clenching her teeth, and then an argument starts and Mrs. Brooks runs downstairs.

She enters her own room which is directly below the d'Urbervilles'. She hears nothing through the ceiling, so she finishes her breakfast and knits. Then she sees Tess passing outside and into the street with a veil over her face. Mrs. Brooks goes back to knitting, wondering about the couple, but then she notices a red spot on the white ceiling. It grows quickly until it looks like an ace of hearts. Mrs. Brooks touches it and sees that it is blood.

She goes upstairs and listens through the door, but can only hear an ominous dripping. She runs out for help and then returns with a man and enters the apartment. The man looks in the back room and comes back shocked, saying there is a dead man who has been stabbed with a knife. They raise the alarm and later the surgeon finds that the small wound touched the man's heart, and the news of the murder spreads through the village.

ANALYSIS

Hardy again changes perspective for the climactic action. This helps build up the suspense, but it also echoes the switch to Angel's perspective earlier, which avoided describing Alec's victory.

Tess finally lists all of her grievances against Alec and all the ways he controls her. This is her final outburst before the climactic action (which Hardy never actually describes), and almost justifies the murder as the only way she can escape her rapist's terrible influence on her life. Her bloody mouth also recalls Alec's after Tess struck him with her glove.

The red spot against white echoes Prince's blood on the innocent Tess, and is also a symbolic image of the original rape. The "ace of hearts" also recalls Car Darch, the "Queen of Spades," and suggests that Alec is the red card finally laid low. Hardy never shows us the actual murder.

Hardy adds another layer of remove from the climax by not even having Mrs. Brooks see the body, but only another man describe it. The stabbing is similar to Prince's goring. Tess is like the small wound that touched Alec's heart, or else her d'Urberville blood is the small murderous flaw in her own heart.

CHAPTER 57

Angel sits at breakfast and stares blankly forward, then suddenly packs up and leaves his hotel. Just before he goes out he gets a telegram saying his brother Cuthbert is engaged to Mercy Chant. Angel goes to the train station and then starts walking out of town, heartbroken. A force impels him to turn around and he sees someone pursuing him. Finally he realizes it is Tess.

Tess says she has killed Alec, and she smiles. Angel thinks she is delirious. She says she feared it would happen eventually, and she never loved Alec, and he ruined her life with Angel. She hopes Angel will forgive her again now that she has killed him.

Angel embraces Tess and says he does love her, but he still isn't sure if she has actually killed anyone. She weeps happily, and Angel sees that her love for him has eclipsed her other moral senses. He wonders if this murderous strain comes from her d'Urberville blood, and he thinks briefly of the legend of the d'Urberville coach, but then reassures himself that Tess is probably just delirious with grief.

Whether the murder is a hallucination or not, Angel sees he needs to take care of Tess, and finally he kisses her and promises to never leave her again. They walk together and Tess looks at Angel as if he were Apollo or the man she first loved, and not the thin and sickly man he is now.

They feel intoxicated being together and can momentarily forget the murder, although Angel instinctively leads them further into the woods and away from civilization. They ramble about in random paths like children. Angel enters an inn for food but he makes Tess stay outside, as she is still dressed in noticeable finery.

They eat and Angel forms a vague plan to lie low in central England until the crime has been forgotten. They walk through the green forest and

come to an empty mansion, and after walking farther decide to turn back and stay there. They learn that the place only has an old woman caretaker, and they enter through an open window. The place is large and grand and they are glad to rest. They sit in silent darkness once the caretaker shuts the windows.

ANALYSIS

Cuthbert has become the man Angel was supposed to be in terms of vocation and marriage, but it still seems like Angel is the favorite son. The force of destiny or the finger of God turns him back to Tess. The murder has been committed; now only Tess's inevitable doom remains.

Without Alec, Tess has become like an innocent girl again. She is finally free, and she experiences that freedom—at least for the moment—as if it did not come by murder.

Their happy reunion is surreal and corrupted by all the horrors of the past. Angel wonders, with Hardy, if murder was always in Tess's fate simply because she is a d'Urberville. The old coaches throughout the novel suddenly seem ominous in retrospect.

They tragically return to their old state of blissful lovers, each idealizing the other as godlike figures. However, the only way this dream could become real was through a murder which itself makes the dream impossible.

The fantasy continues, but Angel also starts to accept that the murder is real. They cannot be both careless lovers and cautious fugitives – their dream world will be their undoing.

They finally start to make plans, but it is inevitable that Tess cannot escape her doom. They are at least able to walk through Nature in the spring together, as again the landscape reflects Tess's brief happiness. The abandoned mansion recalls their wedding night and the d'Urbervilles' lost glory and terrible fate.

CHAPTER 58

That night Tess tells Angel the story of his sleepwalking episode, but she begs him not to talk about the past – she is only going to enjoy the present. The next day they explore the house and Angel only leaves to get food. Five days pass and they are isolated but for the forest birds. They never speak of the past, and Tess doesn't want to leave. She accepts her fate but wants to keep the cruel world outside while she can. She also fears that Angel will despise her later, and she wants to die before that happens.

The next morning the caretaker comes early to open the windows, and she sees the sleeping couple in the house. They look so peaceful and idyllic that she does not disturb them, but leaves to tell the neighbors.

Tess and Angel awake uneasily and decide to leave. Tess says goodbye to the happy place, and admits that she will not live much longer, but Angel won't accept it and wants to keep moving. Later she rests hidden among some trees while he buys food.

They decide to cross the open country at night. The moon is covered by clouds and they are alone. Suddenly a huge stone monolith rises up out of the darkness and they can hear the wind humming through other pillars. Angel realizes that they are at Stonehenge, the ancient heathen temple.

Tess lies down on a slab of rock and does not want to go further. Angel urges her on, but Tess decides she is at home among the heathen stones and wants to stay. Angel says she is lying on an altar.

Tess feels solemn and peaceful, and suddenly she asks Angel if he will marry her sister Liza-Lu once she is gone. She says Liza-Lu is like the best part of her without the bad, and if they married it would be like she and Angel were not separated at all.

Tess asks if they sacrificed to God at Stonehenge, but Angel says it was to the sun instead. Tess asks if he thinks they will meet again when they are dead. Angel kisses her and Tess starts to cry, begging him to say they will meet again, but he is silent. After a long while she falls asleep, and dawn starts to break on the horizon.

A man walks up the hill and approaches them in the dim light. Angel stays quiet, but then realizes there are more men all around them. He suddenly realizes that Tess has truly committed murder, and he readies himself to fight. There are too many men though, and he begs them to at least let Tess finish resting. They oblige, and Angel holds her hand as she sleeps.

The sun rises and its light awakens Tess. She knows immediately what has happened, and she feels almost glad, as their happiness could not have lasted. The men come for her and she says she is ready.

ANALYSIS

Tess has accepted her fate, and accepted that the fantasy is a fantasy, but she still wants to enjoy it while she can. This is almost Hardy's metaphor for life – no one can escape their doom, so they should live and love as best they can before death. Birds again keep Tess company. Fate has taught her that no happiness can last, so she does not hope for much.

Tess and Angel have become the innocent lovers of Talbothays again. The mansion is like their wedding night as it should have been.

Tess can see her fate and accepts it like a martyr or Christ-figure. Again the woods provide a nest for the Nature-girl.

The monolith recalls Cross-in-Hand, and The Chase, and the ancient pagan powers of the land. They are outside of time now, and the modern world is far away. Stonehenge was thought at Hardy's time to be a place of ancient pagan sacrifice.

Tess fully accepts her fate as a sacrificial victim, lying down on the altar like a d'Urberville on his tomb or Christ on his cross.

Liza-Lu seems to symbolize Tess as she should have been, or would have been if she had never heard the name of d'Urberville. If Liza-Lu marries Angel they can have the happiness Tess deserved.

Hardy returns again to the pagan sun-gods and powers of Nature. Tess tragically needs this last comfort but Angel still cannot betray his intellectual ideals. Tess falls asleep as before Prince's death, and before her rape, passively accepting her fate.

The fantasy is suddenly broken and the truth strikes Angel. The policemen give Tess this one last kindness at least, and she is allowed to dream a little longer before her doom.

Tess wakes up among Nature and accepts her fate as the sacrifice for sins not her own. She has tragically learned that no happiness lasts, and so is glad to end this way.

CHAPTER 59

It is July in the city of Wintoncester. Two people walk up the road away from town, moving quickly as if fleeing something. They are young but their heads are bowed by sadness. One is Angel Clare and the other is Liza-Lu, who has become the image of a young Tess. They hold hands as they walk.

When they reach the top of the hill they turn helplessly back and wait beside the milestone. They can see everything from their position – the brilliant sun, the cathedral, and the College. The only stain is a large prison tower partly disguised by trees. Angel and Liza-Lu gaze fixedly at a pole on the tower's corner. After the clock strikes eight a black flag rises.

“The President of the Immortals” has finally ended his game of Tess's fate, and the world has carried out its justice. Angel and Liza-Lu fall to the ground, but after a while they stand up, take hands once more, and keep walking.

ANALYSIS

Hardy again removes the narration from the climactic action, just like with the rape and Alec's murder. It is ambiguous if they hold hands for comfort or if Angel is following Tess's last request.

The milestone becomes another sinister monolith foreboding doom. All of Nature is beautiful except the place of human condemnation. Hardy at least spares us a view of Tess imprisoned and trapped indoors. The black

flag rising indicates that she has been executed. Society has enacted its punishment of her, though it never examines its own brutal role in forcing Tess to commit the murder she did.

There is no benevolent God in Hardy's world, but only a cruel being using human lives for sport, and the justice of the world is harsh and unfair. Tess has reached the only fate possible in her situation as the innocent victim and unfairly persecuted woman. There is the possibility that she has gotten the one fleeting hope she continued to be able to hold after all her misery—that Angel and Liza-Lu would marry—but even that is uncertain.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

• QUOTES

1. *Don't you really know, Durbeyfield, that you are the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles ... ?*

Parson Tringham, Phase the First, Chapter 1

Parson Tringham's revelation of the family lineage is the start of everything that goes wrong for Tess Durbeyfield. Her father's drinking to celebrate means Tess must take the hives to market, even though she has not slept. The ill-fated trip leads to the death of the horse, which leads to Tess's parents sending her off in hopes of her marrying well or gaining money from the d'Urbervilles.

2. *'But I don't want anybody to kiss me, sir!' she implored, a big tear beginning to roll down her face, and the corners of her mouth trembling in her attempts not to cry.*

Tess Durbeyfield, Phase the First, Chapter 8

Alec d'Urberville regularly accuses Tess Durbeyfield of being a temptress, and later, she is accused by Angel Clare of being a flirt. However, Tess is neither. At the time of Alec's initial interest, she is a teenager. Only 16 years old, Tess was not prepared to handle Alec's advances, nor was she doing anything to encourage them.

3. *I was born bad, and I have lived bad, and I shall die bad in all probability. But, upon my lost soul, I won't be bad towards you again, Tess.*

Alec d'Urberville, Phase the Second, Chapter 12

Alec d'Urberville admits he was in the wrong, but his admission does not change anything practical. In fact when Tess Durbeyfield encounters him several years later, he again pursues her. His integrity is absent, even after he has found religion. Alec's "badness" is oddly conditional, however: although his attempt to pressure her by offering to provide for her family is appalling, he actually remains steadfast toward her—unlike Angel Clare, who deliberately abandons her.

4. *Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me?*

Tess Durbeyfield, Phase the Second, Chapter 12

In this moment Tess Durbeyfield is aware her mother—and likely her father—knew the danger of her going to work for Alec d'Urberville. Her mother's desire to find a quick way to money meant she chose not to prepare Tess. Would such warnings have mattered? Perhaps not with a man like Alec. However, Joan Durbeyfield sent her daughter out to the wolves with no defenses at all.

5. Suppose your sin was not of your own seeking?

Tess Durbeyfield, Phase the Second, Chapter 13

Tess Durbeyfield is asking the question many thinkers were asking—and one modern readers often struggle with. How can she be judged when she did not choose to sin? She did not seek out or consent to sex outside of marriage. The decision was not hers, and yet she is considered guilty of it all the same.

6. *The baby's offence against society in coming into the world was forgotten by the girl-mother; her soul's desire was to continue that offence by preserving the life of the child.*

Narrator, Phase the Second, Chapter 14

Initially Tess Durbeyfield was unhappy about her son, for obvious reasons. However, it was not the child's fault. Tess's love for her baby starts to outweigh the circumstances of his birth and proof of her status as "fallen"; she wants him to thrive. But he does not, and she finds herself choosing to act heretically to save his soul.

7. 'Was once lost always lost really true of chastity?' she would ask herself.

Tess Durbeyfield, Phase the Second, Chapter 15

Tess Durbeyfield, for all of her simple upbringing and age, is contemplating a complex question. Is she irredeemably impure since she is "fallen"? This is, in essence, the question Hardy is asking by writing the novel. Moreover, he has answered it by choosing "A Pure Woman" as the subtitle.

8. *All the while they were converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale.*

Narrator, Phase the Third, Chapter 20

Despite Tess Durbeyfield's decision never to marry, she is drawn to Angel Clare, and he to her. Hardy's wording here ties that attraction to fate as well as to nature. Some things are, simply put, unavoidable in the fatalistic logic espoused in the novel.

9. *It is that this sound of a non-existent coach can only be heard by one of d'Urberville blood, and it is held to be of ill-omen to the one who hears it. It has to do with a murder, committed by one of the family, centuries ago.*

Alec d'Urberville, Phase the Fourth, Chapter 33

The legend of the d'Urberville coach is one of the superstitions in the novel. This one ties directly to the idea that there was a murder by a d'Urberville, and the novel ends with a murder by another d'Urberville. This story, as well as those told by Dairyman Crick, is not simply a story but foreshadowing in the novel and lessons within the story for Tess Durbeyfield herself.

10. *You were more sinned against than sinning, that I admit.*

Angel Clare, Phase the Fifth, Chapter 35

Angel Clare acknowledges Tess Durbeyfield is a victim. In this he agrees with a segment of society that says a victim ought not to be held to the same censure as a woman who "fell" on purpose. Despite this affirmation, however, Angel rejects and abandons Tess.

11. How can we live together while that man lives?—he being your husband in nature, and not I. If he were dead it might be different.

Angel Clare, Phase the Fifth, Chapter 36

This comment foreshadows the novel's conclusion. Angel Clare has plainly stated he cannot live with Tess Durbeyfield—although they are married—because of Alec d'Urberville. He subscribes to the idea that marital relations are what make Alec, the man who raped her, her husband. To modern readers this idea of sex and marriage may seem extreme, but it is biblically accurate, which may factor into Angel's thinking.

12. O, will you go away—for the sake of me and my husband—go, in the name of your own Christianity!

Tess Durbeyfield, Phase the Sixth, Chapter 46

Tess Durbeyfield is well aware Alec d'Urberville is relentless when he wants something. She has experienced it firsthand. It is the reason she lost her husband (theoretically), and it has haunted her for years. Tess is four years older now, and she appeals to his recent religious conversion in the hope it will make him go away.

13. The oblong white ceiling, with this scarlet blot in the midst, had the appearance of a gigantic ace of hearts.

Narrator, Phase the Sixth, Chapter 51

The stain of Alec d'Urberville's blood is heart shaped. This detail is somewhat melodramatic, but readers should keep in mind Hardy's novels were initially published as serials. Although the novel was not serialized in

full, some sections were. This image also underscores the color symbolism of red and white. The red stain on a white background echoes the red ribbon in Tess's hair when she first appears as an innocent teenager in a white dress.

14. *Never in her life—she could swear it from the bottom of her soul—had she ever intended to do wrong; yet these hard judgments had come.*

Narrator, Phase the Seventh, Chapter 57

Thinking Angel Clare has judged her as so many others have, Tess Durbeyfield faces the reality that her actions are not responsible for the wrongs she has been judged for committing. She has been judged repeatedly despite her innocence. Her family has judged her, as have townsfolk. The parson has judged her and refused to give her son a Christian burial. Even after professing love, Angel has judged her. Through it all Tess has continued to try to do right, but her actions have not changed the way others see her.

15. I do love you, Tess—O, I do—it is all come back!

Angel Clare, Phase the Seventh, Chapter 57

Angel Clare can forgive murder, but he cannot forgive Tess Durbeyfield for having been raped. The importance of physical purity is clear—it is more important even than an act that causes genuine harm. However, Angel also has expressed more than once that Tess regarded him as if he were godlike. She has just killed a man to be with him.

• SUMMARY

The poor peddler, John Durbeyfield is stunned to learn that he is the descendent of an ancient noble family, the d'Urbervilles. Meanwhile, Tess, his eldest daughter, joins the other village girls in the May Day dance, where Tess briefly exchanges glances with a young man. Mr. D'Urbeyfield and his wife decide to send Tess to the d'Urberville mansion, where they hope Mrs. D'Urberville will make Tess's fortune. In reality, Mrs. d'Urberville is no relation to Tess at all; here husband, the merchant Simon Stokes, simply changed his name to d'Urberville after he retired. But Tess does not know this fact, and when the lascivious Alve d'Urberville, Mrs. d'Urberville's son, procures Tess a job tending fowls on the d'Urberville estate. Tess has no choice but to accept, since she blames herself for an accident involving the family's horse, its only means of income.

Tess spends several months at this job, resisting Alec's attempts to reduce her. Finally, Alec takes advantage of her. In the woods one night after a fair, Tess knows she does not love Alec. She returns home to her family to give birth to Alec's child, whom she christens. Sorrow. Sorrow dies soon after he is born, and Tess spends a miserable year at home before

deciding to seek work elsewhere. She finally accepts a job on a milkmaid at the Talbothays Dairy.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

At Talbothays, Tess enjoys a period of contentment and happiness. She befriends three of her fellow milkmaids—Izz, Retty, and Marian—and Meets a man named Angel Clare, who turns out to be the man from the May Day dance at the beginning of the novel. Tess and Angel slowly fall in love. They grow closer throughout Tess's time at Talbothays, and she eventually accepts his proposal of marriage. Still, she is troubled by pangs of conscience and feels she should tell Angel about her past. She writes him a confessional note and slips it under his door, but it slides under the carpet and angel never sees it.

After their wedding, Angel and Tess both coinfect indiscretions. Angel tells Tess about an affair he had with an older woman in London, and Tess tells Angel about her history with Alec. Tess forgives Angel, but Angel cannot forgive Tess. He give her some money and boards a ship bound for Brazil, where he thinks he might establish a farm. He tells Tess he will try to accept her past but warns her not to try to join him until he comes for her.

Tess struggles. She has a different time finding work and is forced to take a job at an unpleasant and unprosperous farm. She tries to visit Angel's family but overhears his brothers discussing Anigel's poor marriage, so she leaves. She hears a wandering preacher speak and is stunned to discover that he is Alec d'Urberville, who has been converted to Christianity by Angel's father, the Reverend Clare. Alec and Tess are each shaken by their encounter, and Alec appallingly begs Tess never to tempt him again. Soon after, however, he again begs Tess to marry him, having turned his back on his religious ways.

Tess learns from her sister Liza-Lu that her mother is near death, and Tess is forced to return home to take care of her. Her mother recovers, but her father unexpectedly dies soon after. When the family is evicted from their home, Alec offers help. But Tess refuses to accept, knowing he only wants to obligate her to him again.

At last, Angel decides to forgive his wife. He leaves Brazil, desperate to find her. Instead, he finds her mother, who tells him Tess has goes to a village called Sandhourne. There, he finds Tess in an expensive boardinghouse called The Herons, where he tells her he has forgiven her and begs her to take him back. Tess tells him he has come too late. She was unable to resist and went back to Alec d'Urberville. Angel leaves a daze, and heartbroken to the point of madness, tess goes upstairs and stables her lover to death. When the landlady finds Alec's body, she raised an alarm, but Tess has already fled to find Angel.

Angel agrees to help Tess, though he cannot quite believe that she has actually murdered alec. They hide out in an empty mansion for a few days,

then travel farther. When they come to Stonehenge, Tess goes to sleep, but when morning breaks shortly thereafter, a search party discovers them. Tess is arrested and sent to jail. Angel and Liza-Lu watch as a black flag is raised over the prison, signaling Tess's execution.

• KEY WORDS

1. Wessex Poems

In 1898 Hardy published his first volume of poetry. *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over 30 years.

2. Neutral tones and broken appointment

"Neutral Tones" and "A Broken Appointment" deal with themes of disappointment in love and life.

3. Reverend Felix Clare

Angel's brother, a village curate.

4. Reverend Cuthbert

Clare Angel's brother, a classical scholar and dean at Cambridge. Cuthbert who can concentrate only on university matters, marries Mercy Chant.

5. Eliza Louisa Durbeyfield

Tess's younger sister. Tess believes Liza-Lu has all of Tess's own good qualities and none of her bad ones, and she encourages Angel to look after and even marry Liza-Lu after Tess dies.

• REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Write down the detailed summary of the novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.
2. Sketch the character of the protagonist of the novel.
3. Describe the important themes of the novels of Thomas Hardy.
4. Discuss the various motifs and symbols used in this novel.
5. Explain the following quotations :

1. "Don't you really know, Durbeyfield, that you are the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles, who derive their descent from Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, as appears by Battle Abbey Roll?" "Never heard it before, sir!"

2. "Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess. And the d'Urberville knights and dames spelt on in their tombs unknowing. The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained

there a long time, absolutely motionless: the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented

6. Write about the religious beliefs of Hardy.
7. What are the divisions of Hardy's Novels ?
8. Name some short stories of Hardy.
9. What is the name of the village, where Tess has gone finally?
10. Sketch the character of Alec d'Urberville.

• FURTHER READINGS

1. Thomas Hardy – Blunden, Edmund
2. The Life of Thomas Hardy – Jr. Ernest Brennecke
3. Thomas Hardy : A Life in Pictures – Jr. Draper
4. "Thomas Hardy" in The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry
– Ellman, Richard & O'Clair

