

# [How does hardy present rhoda and gertrude in the withered arm essay](https://assignbuster.com/how-does-hardy-present-rhoda-and-gertrude-in-the-withered-arm-essay/)

Hardy presents Gertrude Lodge as the Farmers young wife who is very attractive ‘ Tisty-Tosty’, she has clear blue eyes, soft fresh skin, light hair, white teeth, a red mouth but short.

This shows that she is young. When Gertrude sat down in the church her silk dress ‘ whistled so loud when it rubbed against the pews’ and as this happened her face blushed, ‘ the lady coloured up more than ever for very shame at the noise’. This proved that she wasn’t used to being posh and sophisticated with the farmer otherwise she wouldn’t have blushed, it would have been normal and not embarrassed by the noise. On the night of Gertrude’s wound, Rhoda and Gertrude had the same dream that they were both in a strange place but the image of Gertrude that Rhoda had gathered from her son the specific information she wanted from spying on Gertrude. She used her memory and created an image in her head of Gertrude.

‘ Rhoda Brook could raise a mental image of the unconscious Mrs Lodge that was as realistic as a photograph.’As the incubus of Gertrude lay down on top of Rhoda, ‘ it was suffocating her with pressure’ and it shined the wedding ring in her face. When Rhoda grabbed its arm ‘ in a last desperate effort, swung out her right hand, seized the confronting spectre by its obtrusive left arm, and whirled it backward to the floor.’ The next morning she went out to do some milking of the cows but she didn’t realise that she looked more ‘ pale and haggard’ after the dream.

Her son asked her what the noise was, that must have been a sign that it actually happened, and her son said the noise happened at two in the morning. Later on in the day Gertrude goes to Rhoda’s hut to give the boy his new shoes, and Gertrude said ‘” I have one little ailment which puzzles me. It is nothing serious, but I cannot make it out.’ ‘” I was sound asleep, dreaming I was away in some strange place, a pain suddenly shot into my arm”.’ She had changed from being sweet and charitable to obsessive, unloved by her husband and miserable.

All because of her arm she changed ‘ her grace and beauty was contorted and disfigured’. The wound Rhoda caused was making the farmer’s relationship to Gertrude weaker and he eventually stopped liking her. She got so obsessed with trying to heal her wound and to get the farmer to like her again, she changes from being ‘ there is no such thing’ of the supernatural and if she was ill she would go and see a medical doctor, to a more of a ‘ I believe in it’, ‘ I want to see Conjuror Trendle but don’t let my husband know’ and this proves she has changed. Conjuror Trendle asked Rhoda to wait outside to talk to Gertrude on his own but Rhoda was looking in the window while he put the eggy water mixture on the window sill.

And Rhoda’s reflection was caught in the glass, when Gertrude saw it she thought ‘” Enemy, what enemy?”, when Mrs Lodge came out, and her face was met by the light, it appeared exceedingly pale- as pale as Rhoda’s. Rhoda had perceived that her companion had quite changed. “ Was it you who first proposed to coming here?” Mrs Lodge suddenly inquired, after a long pause. “ How very odd if you did!”‘ After she sees him, she believes all of it and tried for the cure…

The cure was shocking but she still went ahead on it. ‘ You must touch with the limb, the neck of a man who’s been hanged’. After six years she had waited quite a long time for the hanging to happen, her prayers changed, there was a hanging of a man but she was too late. So she had to wait longer ‘ instead of her formal prayers each night, her unconscious prayer was, “ O Lord, hang some guilty or innocent person soon!” And the most ironic part was how the person hanged was Rhoda and the farmer’s son.

Rhoda Brook was presented by Hardy as a lonely old white haired milkmaid and an outsider to her nearest parish because she had got pregnant with the farmer and had a son but they weren’t married and that made her an outsider. Rhoda had a pale face from milking the cows all day long, she had dark eyes because she was old and she worked from the early hours of the day to late in the evening, she was not ‘ handsome’ and she was tall but Gertrude is short. Rhoda finds out after seeing Conjuror Trendle with Gertrude, she’s a witch meaning an outsider of a parish. She knew other milkmaids gossiped about her and other village rumours that she was being called a ‘ witch’ since she got pregnant.

Rhoda’s home was isolated, the only animals nearby were cows. Rhoda was a low status worker, who has signs of work and had fallen. But Gertrude the farmer’s wife had a high status but she became irritable and superstitious, she had gotten a low status and no child. She is also quite gullible because anything the farmer said she believed and didn’t question anything. The farmer said before he went to see Rhoda and his son ‘” I take these in case I shouldn’t get back to-night from the person I am going to visit.

Don’t be alarmed if I am not in by ten, and close up the house as usual. I shall be home tomorrow for certain.” She meant then to tell her husband.’The only time that Rhoda and her son got attention from the farmer is when his son gets hanged. Gertrude died on the way back ‘ she never reached home alive’ and the farmer died a few years later but when the story ended Rhoda was the last of the main characters still alive, she lived the longest.