

Life test of the
d'urbervilles, the
pride of



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Life in Vain is no Life At All Often in life personal flaws can be projected to seem as other's, when in fact it is one's own traits being viewed from the third person. One of the easiest traits to recognize in others is pride. Pride is a very important motivator in life. It propels us to be the best and conditions us to take the blame for the worst. As we see in Thomas Hardy's novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the pride of one young woman influences her decisions, and eventually brings about her death. This young woman, Tess Durbeyfield, goes through many trials in which her pride gets in the way. The fate which befalls Tess is not one of injustice, but is simply a manifestation of her indubitable pride; consequently, the choices which she believes to be just inevitably bring pain not only to herself, but also to those around her.

When one looks at a friend and sees something wrong with the way they act it is generally as if he or she is looking in the mirror. We see this when Tess is riding with her brother in the beginning of the novel. She is thinking about her own life when all of a sudden " she seemed to see the vanity in her father's pride;"(23). Tess manages to pass off her hubris onto her father, who is really not a prideful man at all.

Her lack of respect for her father fails to let her see that he is but a simple man lost in his own oblivion. When Tess is at a point of humility, it is almost as if she refuses to be humbled. She is telling Angel Clare about how to lay on one's back, and look straight up at the stars, and to feel detached from the body. By doing this one can not help but feel small and insignificant in the world, yet it is obvious that Tess does not feel this. At this point though Angel must think that she is in fact a humble maiden, and falls in love with

her. Unfortunately, future choices that will be made by Tess will hurt both her and Angel a great deal.

Many times we have to make very important decisions that effect others indirectly. Everything Tess does effects another character. Early on in the novel Tess is raped by Alec d'Urberville, a so-called relative, and Tess' hubris takes the blame.

When it is time for her to marry Angel she must make a decision whether or not to tell him about her past. Her mother suggests that she let the past remain and not tell, but Tess' bit of integrity shows through and she does confess. Because she tells, Angel can not stand the sight of her; her natural husband is still living. This is the beginning of a large downfall for Tess and her husband Angel. His pride can not let him look at her, and she is therefore left alone. Consequently, Tess' infelicitous decision leaves her in ruins. Being a good man, Angel tells Tess that if she needs anything while he is away from her that she can go to his father for money.

This shows his love for her is not vanquished, but is merely in a state of delusion. Tess, even though her pride is great, travels all day to ask Mr. Clare for assistance; yet, when she gets to the house she can not manage to go through with it. Once again her hubris has won. Her selfishness not only affects her though, her family suffers from it also.

Her parents become ill, her father dies shortly after, thus leaving the children and her mother without a home. What can be done to take care of the poor things? Feeling obligation to take care of her family Tess does the only thing imaginable. She lets Alec d'Urberville back into her life. Alec, the man who

has taken her very innocence from her and stripped her of any respect she might have had from the people around her, realizing that he has a bit of responsibility for the position she is in is more