

Thomas hardy



Thomas Hardy, born June 2, 1840, was a novelist and a poet. His mother, who was well read, educated him until he went to school at age eight. He went to Mr. Last's Academy for Young Gentlemen in Dorchester where he learned Latin, and showed academic potential. His formal education ended at age sixteen however because his family's social position lacked the means for a university education. He was apprenticed to James Hicks, a local architect. In 1862, Hardy moved to London where he enrolled at King's College where he won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association.

He hated London though, because he was aware of the class divisions and his own social inferiority. He was, however, interested in the works of John Stuart Mill, Charles Fourier and Auguste Comte. Five years later, he moved back home and decided to dedicate himself to writing. His first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, was finished in 1867, but he couldn't find a publisher. He showed it to his best friend who thought the novel was too politically controversial and could damage Hardy's ability to publish in the future. Hardy listened to him and destroyed it so that no copies exist anymore.

After that, he published two novels anonymously. They were *Desperate Remedies*, and *Under the Greenwood Tree*. In 1873, he published *A Pair of Blue Eyes* under his own name. The term "cliffhanger" is considered to have originated in the serialized version in which one of the protagonists is left literally hanging off a cliff. His next novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, was successful enough for him to quit architectural work and pursue a literary

career. He wrote ten more novels in the next twenty-five years. The most famous of Hardy's works is probably *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

It was published in 1891 and originally appeared in a censored version, published by the British illustrated newspaper, *The Graphic*. The book received mixed reviews when it first came out because it challenged the sexual mores of the day. The original copy is on display at the British library with its original title, *Daughter of the d'Urbervilles*. A lot of people criticized Hardy's work as being too promiscuous during his day, but he ignored them and continued writing. Hardy became ill with pleurisy in December of 1927 and died at his home at Max Gate just after 9 pm on January 11th, 1928.

His work was admired by many writers of a younger generation including D. H. Lawrence, John Cowper Powys, and Virginia Woolf. A poor man, John Durbeyfield finds out that he is descended from an ancient, noble family, the d'Urbervilles. Meanwhile, his eldest daughter Tess, joins the rest of the village girls in the May Day dance, where Tess exchanges looks with a mysterious guy. Tess' parents decide to send her to the d'Urberville Mansion, where they hope Mrs. d'Urberville will make Tess a fortune. In reality, Mrs. 'Urberville has no relation to Tess at all. Her husband, a merchant by the name of Simon Stokes, changed his name to d'Urberville after he retired. Tess does not know this however, and when Alec d'Urberville, their son, gets Tess a job working with the birds on the estate, she has no choice but to accept since she blames herself for an accident involving her family's horse, their only source of money. Tess spends several months at this job, resisting Alec's attempts to seduce her. Eventually, Alec gets tired of waiting for her and after a fair, he rapes her in the woods.

She gets pregnant, but she knows she does not love him. She goes home and gives birth to Alec's child and names him Sorrow. He dies very soon after he is born and Tess spends a year at home where she is sad and miserable. She then gets a job as a milkmaid at the Talnothay's Dairy. While working there, she is happy and makes friends of three other milkmaids—Lizz, Retty, and Marian. She also meets a man named Angel Clare. He turns out to be the guy that she locked eyes with at the May Day dance. Tess and Angel slowly start to fall in love and she eventually accepts his marriage proposal. She starts to feel guilty about the rape however and feels she should tell Angel about her past so she writes him a note and slips it under his door. He never sees it though because she slid it under the carpet. After their wedding, Angel and Tess both come clean about their past indiscretions. Angel tells Tess about an affair he had with a woman who was older than him while he was in London, and Tess tells him about her past with Alec. Tess is able to forgive Angel, but Angel cannot forgive Tess.

He gives her some money and gets on a ship to Brazil to establish a farm. He tells Tess he will try and accept her past, but tells her not to come after him until he comes for her. Tess is heartbroken and struggles to find work. She takes a job at a terrible, unproductive farm. She tries to visit Angel's family, but she overhears his brothers talking about Angel's poor marriage and leaves. She goes to church and hears a preacher speak and she is stunned to find out that it is Alec d'Urberville, who was converted to Christianity by Angel's father, the Reverend Clare.

Alec and Tess are both freaked out, and Alec begs Tess to never tempt him again, but then soon after that he begs her to marry him, claiming that he

turned his back on religion. Tess finds out from her sister that her mother is near death and she has to go back home and take care of her. Her mother recovers, but her father dies unexpectedly soon after. Their family is evicted from their home and Alec offers to help, but Tess doesn't accept because she knows Alec is just trying to get on her good side. Finally, Angel decides to forgive Tess and leaves Brazil to find her.

Instead he finds her mother, who tells him that Tess has gone to a little village called Sandbourne. There, he finds his wife in an expensive boarding house called the Herons, where he tells her he has forgiven her and pleads with her, trying to get her to take him back. She tells him he has come too late however. She says that she was unable to resist Alec d'Urberville. Angel leaves somewhat dazed and Tess is heartbroken into madness. She goes up the stairs and stabs Alec to death. When the landlady finds his body, she raises alarm, but Tess had already run away to find Angel.

Angel agrees to help Tess, although he cannot believe she has actually murdered Alec. They are hiding in an empty mansion for a few days before they leave for Stonehenge. Tess asks Angel to marry her sister when she dies, then goes to sleep. Alec soon realizes that they are surrounded by a search party, and asks them not to take her until she wakes up. When she does, they arrest her and sentence her to death. She is relieved because she feels unworthy of Angel's love. Later, Angel and Liza-Lu watch as a black flag is raised above the tower. Tess has been put to death.