



Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Thomas Hardy

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Tess Of The d'Urbervilles - A Story About Struggle, Suffering And Faith


While it has received mixed reviews and little attention when first published, Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented is considered to be one of the most important novels of the 19th century and perhaps Thomas Hardy's masterpiece.


Tess Durbeyfield is the daughter of simple uneducated peasants. They live in an impoverished rural area of England where life is harsh. However, Tess' father John hears from someone that their name might be a corruption of d'Urbeville - a noble Norman family who appears to have gone extinct.

Soon after Tess participates in the May Dances to meet the son of a reverend called Angel Clare. She doesn't get a chance to dance with him, and she will be driving the horse to the market instead of her inebriated father. The horse is fatally wounded by a speeding wagon and dies, leaving the family without a means to earn money. Tess also gets blood on her white dress, marking the starts of unfortunate events to come.

Tess is sent to a nearby rich widow called d'Urbeville. However, Tess learns that she is not a real d'Urbeville and that her husband has adopted the surname. She soon meets her son Alec, who will take advantage of her, resulting in her taking refuge in her parent's home and giving birth to a son who will live just for a few weeks. She baptizes the child Sorrow, another omen signaling things that are about to unfold.

Thomas Hardy has managed to depict an accurate portrayal of a mistreated and wronged woman in the Victorian England. While the novel has been heavily censored and serialized when first published, nowadays it is considered an important milestone in that era, showing normal lives in the rural environment and how they are so corrupted by stronger forces.

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