



Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Illustrated)

Thomas Hardy

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“Her affection for him was now the breath and life of Tess's being; it enveloped her as a photosphere, irradiated her into forgetfulness of her past sorrows, keeping back the gloomy spectres that would persist in their attempts to touch her—doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light, but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection there.”

Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented was a controversial work when it first appeared in the early 1890s. The serialized version of 1891 was heavily censored and the full novel of 1892 received mixed reviews, largely because it challenged the sexual morals of late Victorian England. The book's reputation has since grown considerably and it is now routinely cited as Thomas Hardy's masterpiece. Roman Polanski's 1979 film version (*Tess*) boosted world-wide interest in the novel and it has remained widely read now for over a century.

The richly descriptive narrative is rife with unforgettable vignettes of rural life in late 19th-century England - the slow death of a flock of wounded pheasants, the monotony of field labor under a gunmetal gray sky, the itinerant farm worker's seasonal round – but the story's timeless power stems from its heart-wrenching romance and the tragic experiences – or fate, as Hardy might have put it - of the eponymous heroine.

*Includes image gallery and link to free audio recording of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

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