

Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

Study Guide

Assignment: Read the novel and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Phase the First: The Maiden

Chapter 1

1. What news does Parson Tringham give John Durbeyfield?
2. How does Durbeyfield react to the parson's news? How does the Parson respond to Durbeyfield?
3. What can you infer about Durbeyfield from his actions?

Chapter 2

4. Describe the area that surrounds the village of Marlott.
5. Describe Tess's initial appearance and actions.
6. What brings Angel to Marlott? What happens during his brief visit to the village?

Chapter 3

7. Characterize Joan Durbeyfield. How is Tess different from her mother?
8. Why does Tess feel the need to look after her father?

Chapter 4

9. Why do Tess and Abraham end up driving the beehives to market?
10. What are Tess's feelings about her family's past?
11. Tess tells Abraham that they live on a "blighted world." What happens to Tess and Abraham to emphasize that point?
12. What **red** images does Hardy include in the description of Prince's death?
13. Why does Tess consider herself a "murderess"?

Chapters 5-6

14. What reasons does Joan Durbeyfield have for sending Tess to the d'Urbervilles? What are Tess's feelings about going there?
15. Describe The Chase.
16. Briefly describe the family history of Simon Stoke.
17. Describe Alec d'Urberville's physical appearance and personality.
18. What do the last 4 paragraphs of Ch. 5 tell you concerning Hardy's beliefs about people's ability to find happiness?
19. Identify 2 more examples of **red** imagery in Ch. 5.
20. What is Joan Durbeyfield's reaction when she learns of Tess's employment at the d'Urbervilles?

Chapters 7-9

21. Describe the interaction between Tess and Alec in the cart. How does it contrast with their first meeting?
22. What does Tess do (work-wise) at the d'Urbervilles?
23. Describe the relationship between Alec and his mother?

Chapters 10-11

24. Who is Car Darch? How does she indirectly contribute to Tess's "seduction" by Alec?
25. Why is it significant that Tess's "seduction" occurs in The Chase?

Phase the Second: Maiden No More

Chapters 12-13

26. What occurs when Alec overtakes Tess on the road home? Do you interpret it as a seduction or a rape? Why? What clues can you find?
27. What purpose does the man painting the religious messages serve?
28. How does Tess's mother react to her daughter's return and the news of her seduction? How does Tess respond to her mother's criticisms?

Chapters 14-15

29. What does Tess's attitude seem to be about her status as an unwed mother and about the baby himself?
30. Why is Tess forced to baptize Sorrow herself?
31. What is Hardy's comment on religion, based on Tess's exchange with the vicar?
32. Why does Tess leave home?

Phase the Third: The Rally

Chapter 16

33. What is Tess's mood as she journeys to Talbothays?

Chapters 17-18

34. Why is Angel Clare living at Talbothays? Why did he reject a vocation in the church?

Chapters 19-20

35. What impressions do Angel and Tess take away about each other after their conversation in the garden?

Chapters 21-22

36. Who are the other dairymaids who sleep in the dairy-house? How is Tess different from them?

Chapter 23

37. What is the importance of the scene in which Angel carries the dairymaids across the pool of water?

Chapter 24

38. What finally leads Angel to declare his love for Tess?

Phase the Fourth: The Consequence

Chapters 25-26

39. Describe Angel's family.
40. Who is Mercy Chant, and how does she differ from Tess?
41. What story does Angel's father relate about Alec d'Urberville?

Chapter 27-28

42. When Angel returns to Talbothays Dairy, he asks Tess to marry him. What reason does Tess give for refusing him? What is her real reason?

Chapter 29-30

43. On the way back from the station, Angel once again asks Tess why she will not marry him. What does Tess tell Angel and why? What is the result of her "confession"?

44. Why is it ironic that Angel had seen Tess at the May-Day dance but had not spoken to her?

Chapter 31

45. When Tess writes to tell her mother about her engagement to Angel, what question does Tess ask her? Why is Mrs. Durbeyfield's response?

46. How do the other milkmaids at Talbothays react to the news of Tess's engagement to Angel?

Chapters 32-33

47. Why is Tess still reluctant to set a wedding date, even after she has agreed to marry Angel?

48. Where do Angel and Tess go for their "last jaunt" before their wedding? What unpleasant incident happens there?

49. What is the fate of Tess's letter?

50. The legend of the d'Urberville coach emphasizes the symbolic importance of the carts and carriages in the novel. What other important scenes have taken place in carts or coaches and how are they related?

Chapter 34

51. What does Angel confess to Tess? How does Tess react?

Phase the Fifth: The Woman Pays

Chapter 35

52. What explanation does Angel offer for his inability to forgive Tess when she has forgiven him?

53. How does Tess react to Angel's rage? When has she acted in a similar way?

Chapter 36

54. What did Tess contemplate doing the night before? Why didn't she carry through with the plan?

55. In the days following Tess's confession, Angel offers several different explanations as to why he cannot live with Tess. What are some of these reasons?

56. What solution does Tess finally offer which Angel finds acceptable?

Chapter 37

57. What does Angel's sleepwalking reveal about his true feelings for Tess?

58. What is the significance of Angel putting Tess in the coffin?

Chapter 38

59. How do Tess's parents react to the news of her estrangement from Angel?

Chapter 39

60. Angel plans to travel to _____ to work as a farmer.

Chapter 40

61. What offer does Angel make to Izz? How does she react? Why is this offer ironic on Angel's part?

62. What causes Angel to reconsider his offer to Izz?

Chapter 41

63. Whom does Tess meet on the road as she is traveling to Chalk-Newton? What happens?

64. What is the significance of the scene in which Tess kills the wounded pheasants she finds on the ground?

Chapters 42-43

65. Why does Tess decide to make herself as unattractive as possible?
66. Where does Tess eventually go to seek work?
67. Besides Marian, what other people from Tess's past does she meet at the farm?

Chapter 44

68. Why does Tess decide to visit Angel's family in Emminster? Why has she not gone before?
69. Describe the incident involving Tess's boots. Why is it ironic? What decision does Tess make based on the incident?
70. Upon Tess's way back, she hears an evangelist preaching. Who is he? Why is his reappearance shocking and significant?

Phase the Sixth: The Convert

Chapter 45

71. How does Tess react to Alec's story of conversion?
72. What news does Tess give Alec that he didn't know before?

Chapter 46

73. A few days later, Alec pursues Tess to Flintcomb-Ash to make a request. What is that request? What is Tess's response?

Chapter 47-48

74. What does the red threshing machine represent?
75. When Alec returns to speak with Tess, what does he tell her? How is his demeanor different from the last time he spoke with Tess?

Chapter 49

76. How has Angel's attitude toward Tess changed?
77. Why does Tess return to Marlott?

Chapters 50-51

78. How has John Durbeyfield remained true to his character?
79. Under what circumstances does Tess see Alec in Marlott? What does Alec offer Tess?
80. What is surprising about John Durbeyfield's death? What effect does it have on the rest of the family?
81. Describe Tess's change in attitude towards Angel in Chapter 51. Does her opinion of Alec change also?

Chapter 52

82. What misfortune occurs to the Durbeyfields when they reach Kingsbere?
83. How does Tess's confrontation with Alec at the family vault affect her?
84. How do Marian and Izz try to help Tess?

Phase the Seventh: Fulfilment

Chapter 53

85. Describe Angel's appearance upon his return to England.
86. What does Angel learn about Tess from Joan Durbeyfield?
87. What factors encourage Angel to search for Tess despite not knowing where she is?

Chapter 54

88. As he leaves Marlott, Angel sees John Durbeyfield's gravestone. What biblical passage is inscribed on it? Why is this a fitting epitaph for Durbeyfield?
89. What is suggested by the fact that Angel finds Mrs. Durbeyfield living in a house of her own?

Chapter 55

90. Describe what happens during the scene in which Tess and Angel first see each other at Sandbourne. How are they affected by this meeting?

Chapter 56

91. What does Tess tell Alec after Angel's visit?
92. How is Alec's murder discovered? (**Blood (red) imagery again!)

Chapter 57

93. Why has Tess killed Alec?
94. What is ironic about the reconciliation between Tess and Angel?
95. Where do Angel and Tess find refuge after being reunited? What earlier scene does this recall?

Chapter 58

96. After leaving the mansion, where does Angel decide he and Tess must go? Where do they end up that night?
97. What does Tess wish Angel would do after she dies? Why does she want him to do this?
98. How does Tess react when the authorities come for her? Is this reaction consistent with her character? Explain.

Chapter 59

99. Why do Angel and 'Liza-Lu pause outside Wintonchester and look back? What does their presence together hint at?
100. Why is this section called "Fulfilment?"