

## Investigate!

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume I (chapters 1-20)*❖ **Hardy's Wessex**

- What is the significance of horses in *Tess*?
  - What power do the people who own them have?
- Are Tess's journeys on foot happy?
- When Tess uses a horse to travel, how often does she achieve her destination?
- Two places lie outside South Wessex in the story: Sandbourne and Stonehenge
  - What do they represent?

❖ **Chapter 1**

- First chapters are always very important and need studying closely.
  - What are your first impressions of the characters in chapter 1?
  - What events might be anticipated?
- What is the effect of the Bible quotation?
- Hardy may be thinking of some of his own forbears as having done well here, for example, Captain Hardy who was with Lord Nelson at Nelson's death
  - How does Tess's father react to the news of his more famous ancestors?
- What does this chapter tell us about the English class system and nineteenth century class consciousness?
- How does the chapter lead us in to the story?
  - Think in terms of plot, setting and character.

❖ **Chapter 2**

- From what perspectives does Hardy describe the Vale of Blackmoor?
  - What are the significant

features of each perspective?

- What do you understand by fertility?
  - What seem to be the most significant features of the Vale?
- Is there any significance in Hardy mentioning the legend of the White Hart?
- What are your first impressions of Tess?
  - It would seem she is 16 or perhaps just 17 at this stage. Do you feel able to *visualise* her, or do you rather get an *idea* of her femininity?
  - Are the narrative descriptions more sensuous, psychological, or moral in their emphasis?
    - Are any parts of her body emphasised more than others?
- What is our first impression of Angel?
  - What associations do you have with his name?
- Why does Hardy introduce comments from Angel's brothers?
- Angel and Tess almost meet
  - What do we anticipate from this?
- Tess's father appears briefly in the chapter
  - What point does the narrative seem to be making?
- How does the chapter convey the idea of change in what could otherwise seem a timeless and ideal pastoral world?
- Hardy uses colour symbolism frequently:
  - List the colours described in this chapter, especially those applied to Tess.

❖ **Chapter 3**

Hardy focuses on the social dimensions of Tess's family

- List some examples of the family responsibility and organisation Tess undertakes.
- Hardy stresses the use of dialect and received pronunciation in Tess's family
  - What points do you think he is making?
- How does the modern sit with the traditional in the chapter?
- Compare the folk-song at the beginning of the chapter and Hardy's reference to Wordsworth's poem at the end
  - With which does he seem more sympathetic, and why?
- Think about the metaphor he uses of 'the Durbeyfield ship'
  - What is the force of the image?
- What further do we learn about Tess in this chapter?
  - How does it complement what we learned from the previous chapter?

❖ **Chapter 4**

- Colour symbolism plays an important part in the novel
  - Begin to construct notes on the colours Hardy uses in his descriptions of people and episodes
- Look at the description of Marlott
  - What does its layout suggest about the sort of place it is?
- In what ways is the thinking behind Joan's 'project' naive?
- Examine the conversation Abraham and Tess have together

- What does it show of Tess's philosophy

of life?

- What perspective does it introduce?
  - Do you think Hardy putting his own views into Tess's mouth?
- How else does Hardy show Tess' spiritual side?
- In many novels, certain episodes are used to prefigure significant happenings later on
  - What does Prince's death prefigure?
- Mark the phrases that show Tess' sense of responsibility
  - How might this sense of responsibility influence her decisions?

❖ **Chapter 5**

- How does Hardy use geography to describe Tess's awareness of the world?
- What is Tess's second journey a journey towards?
- Hardy makes a great deal about layers of time
  - Collect together the references to time and history in this chapter and arrange into:
    - Pre historical time
    - Historical time
    - Modern time (modernity)
  - In what ways does Hardy suggest modernity and falsity run together?
- Compare the names Durbeyfield and d'Urberville
  - Can you see anything significant in the differences?
- What parts of Tess's and Alec's bodies are described?
  - What is the significance?
- How does Hardy make us aware that Alec is a threat to Tess?

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## Volume I (chapters 1-20)

- Notice Tess went about 'as in a dream'
  - What does this suggest to you about Tess's state of mind?
- Look at Hardy's comments in the last few paragraphs
  - Hardy often does stop to comment on his story, nearly always at the end of a chapter. Consider:
    - What the remarks say about Hardy's method of plot construction
    - How they help readers to anticipate how the plot will develop
    - How this anticipation helps create a sense of impending doom or tragedy
  - From these remarks, does Hardy seem to believe in progress?
- Think about the phrase 'not by a certain other man'
  - Who would be meant here?
  - Does he actually turn out to be the 'exact and true one'?

### ❖ Chapter 6

- What do you think is 'prefigurative' about the rose-thorns piercing Tess's chin?
- What is it that makes Tess so indecisive?
- Why is Joan described as 'witless'?
- In what ways does Hardy continue to undermine the d'Urbervilles' credibility?

### ❖ Chapter 7

- List the references in this chapter to margins and borders
  - Which are symbolic?

- Pick out words and phrases that have to do with passivity
  - Does Hardy seem to suggest this is a dangerous attitude?
- A great deal is made about the clothes Tess and Alec are wearing
  - What do you think Hardy is trying to establish?
- What do you think are Tess's 'bitter sentiments' that she does not utter?
- From whose perspective do we see much of the chapter?
  - What is the effect of Hardy shifting the perspective?
- What would you say are the ultimate failures of Tess's parents towards her?

### ❖ Chapter 8

- What could you see the bird's eye view at the beginning of the chapter as symbolising?
- 'It was my fate':
  - Is it really 'fate' or is it Alec's character?
    - What does the whole chapter show us of Alec's character?
- How does Hardy create a sense of danger for Tess?
- Discuss the meaning of the sentence: 'This dressing her up so prettily by her mother had been to lamentable purpose'?
- Hardy writes that Tess was 'hardly yet aware of her own modesty':
  - How does his description stand in opposition to what Alec thinks of 'cottage girls'?
- How physically possible is it to undo a kiss?
  - How does this attempt anticipate other acts of Tess later on?

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#### *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Volume I (chapters 1-20)

- What is the implication behind Tess agreeing to ride with Alec, then refusing to?
  - Is there an inner conflict, and if so, what exactly is it?
    - How does this situation anticipate future events?

#### ❖ Chapter 9

- Why does Tess have misgivings when she hears Mrs d'Urberville is blind?
- List the different ways in which Hardy shows Tess's powerlessness?
- What adjectives would you use to describe Mrs d'Urberville's relationship with her son?
- How would you characterise Tess and Alec's relationship?

#### ❖ Chapter 10

- Compare the description of the villagers at the beginning of the chapter with that at the end
  - Do you see any significant difference in Hardy's attitude towards them in the two descriptions?
  - Can you account for any such difference?
- The poet Wordsworth had a great admiration for country people as being close to nature, a closeness which gave them a certain 'sublimity'
  - How does Hardy depict them in terms of their sublimity?
- Why do you think Hardy uses so many classical mythological references in his descriptions of the barn dance and walk home?

- N.B. Make sure you understand who Pan and Dionysius are
- Compare the barn dance here with the club walking dance in chapter 2.
  - What significant differences do you see?
- Examine Tess's isolation
  - What causes it?
- Is there any significance in the nicknames given to the two Darch girls?
- What causes Tess to accept Alec's help at the third offer?

#### ❖ Chapter 11

- Gather up all the references to Tess's powerlessness.
  - Are they balanced by anything that suggests she has any control?
- List the geographical features that act as symbols
  - What do they symbolise?
- Look at Tess's behaviour towards Alec
  - Does Hardy suggest she is actively encouraging or discouraging him?
- How is Tess described physically?
  - Look at the colours and parts of the body described
- On this third journey, how is Tess's vulnerability brought out and her danger?
- Look at Hardy's comments at the end of the chapter
  - Collect words that have to do with higher powers
    - Do they suggest protection, enmity or indifference?
  - To what extent is Hardy suggesting some external force is to blame and to what extent Alec himself?
  - Does he ever suggest Tess must bear some blame?

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- 'There lay the pity of it.'
  - Do we know what is to be pitied?

### ❖ Chapter 12

- Look at the journey home:
  - Gather up words of ascent and descent
  - How does Hardy characterise this journey?
  - How does it compare with previous journeys?
- List the colours mentioned
  - Can you see any significant patterns?
- Why is the landscape 'terribly beautiful to Tess'?
- How does Hardy describe Tess's behaviour and attitude when she meets Alec again?
  - What are the biggest differences from her previous encounters?
- Do we get any clues to the sort of relationship Tess and Alec had over the past few weeks?
- Look at the condemnation and blame Tess is given
  - How much is given by people and how much is self-condemnation?
    - Which is worse for Tess?
- How does Tess defend herself from others' condemnation?
  - Are we sympathetic to her reasons?
- What is the significance of her mother's final remark?

### ❖ Chapter 13

- Go through the chapter and list words and phrases that show Tess's isolation
  - How does Hardy show Tess is living on the margins or borders of her society?

- Is this isolation self-induced or the result of society ostracising her?
- What inner resources does Tess seem to have?
  - What hinders her from drawing upon them?
- Explain the sentences beginning:
  - 'She had no fear of the shadows...'
  - 'A wet day was the expression....'
- Do we believe Hardy when he says Tess's feelings of guilt have come from social convention?
  - If not, where else might they have come from?
- Should a novelist just *tell* us about important states of mind of his main characters, or should he actually *show* it?
  - Does Hardy really *show* us that Tess is not a 'figure of Guilt', or just tell us?

### ❖ Chapter 14

- Hardy delays introducing Tess in this chapter.
  - What does he open the chapter with?
  - What is the effect of delaying Tess's appearance?
  - Is the introduction of Tess's baby surprising?
- Examine words and phrases that suggest mechanisation.
  - To what extent is Tess included in this language?
- How does Hardy distinguish between the men and women labourers?
- How do the labourers relate to Tess?
  - How does she relate to them?

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*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume I (chapters 1-20)*

- Pick out the colour words
    - Do you notice any significance?
  - Pick out words and phrases that suggest borders and marginalisation
    - In what way are these words connected with victimisation and entrapment?
  - In ch. 10, Tess is described as 'on the momentary threshold of womanhood'. She is now 18, an age when many girls did get married and have babies.
    - Why do you think Hardy insists she is still a girl?
  - How are Tess's younger siblings described?
  - What does Hardy achieve in the baptism scene?
  - In what way is formal religion characterised in the chapter?
  - What qualities does Tess display in the chapter?
  - Hardy suggests Tess has 'a slight incautiousness of character'
    - Is this fair?
  - Is Hardy laughing a little at Tess when he mentions the marmalade jar at the end?
- ❖ **Chapter 15**
- What is Hardy's attitude about learning through experience?
    - Does Hardy make it sound possible that Tess can recover from her bad experience?
    - In the phrase 'but for the world's opinion', which world is Hardy talking about?
      - Are you inclined to believe him?
  - Weigh Tess's thoughts of death against her hope of something springing from working near to the d'Urbervilles
    - Does one outweigh the other?
    - Are they passing moods or real emotional attitudes?
  - Hardy is very interested in Tess crossing various borders
    - What border does she finally cross here?
      - What has been the crucial factor to thrust her over?
  - Collect together references to memory and bygone.
    - What questions does Hardy shape from them?
    - What sort of answers can we anticipate?
- ❖ **Chapter 16**
- What does Hardy suggest about this new journey in terms of:
    - Previous journeys?
    - Tess's emotions and attitudes?
    - What she sees on the way?
  - Collect Hardy's comments throughout the chapter that suggest Tess's absence or presence will not be noticed
    - How does this stand in contrast to our seeing this new landscape through Tess's eyes?
  - Compare the two valleys that Hardy mentions
    - In what ways is the contrast symbolic?
  - Compare the bird's-eye and the worm's-eye view of the Frome Valley
    - What significant differences are there?
  - As if you were a film director, mark the chapter with the different types of camera shots

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## Volume I (chapters 1-20)

- you would use to represent the different perspectives Hardy conveys
- Look at Hardy's comments about women. Discuss whether they are:
    - Sympathetic?
    - Patronising?
    - Chauvinistic?
      - Do you think Hardy's attitudes are valid?
  - Make notes on the colour symbolism in this chapter
  - Note words that suggest fertility
    - Why should Hardy be stressing this?
  - What to you are the most significant images in the chapter?
  - Why does Hardy think that Tess is pagan at heart?

### ❖ Chapter 17

- What is the first impression Tess makes on the others?
  - How much of it is to do with her looks?
- What are the grounds for Tess's optimism?
  - Do you think they are well-founded?
- Collect together the remarks about the past
  - Does Hardy seem to view the past positively?

### ❖ Chapter 18

- Look at Hardy's description of Angel
  - How does the physical description give insight into Angel's character?
  - What changes in Angel's character does Hardy suggest he has undergone?
- How does Hardy portray Angel as someone also on the

margins of his society?

- In what ways can he be compared to Alec and to Tess as outsiders to the farming community?
- What does Angel Clare's name suggest symbolically?
- What is it about Tess that first draws Angel's attention to her?
  - What, by contrast, does Alec first notice about her?
- What more do we learn about Tess' spiritual experiences?
  - How is her 'otherness' highlighted?

### ❖ Chapter 19

- What do Tess and Angel notice about each other physically?
  - What attracts them to each other?
- Look carefully at the garden episode
  - How does Hardy present Angel to us?
  - How does Tess perceive him?
    - What are Tess' sensations at hearing and seeing him?
  - What can you see that is symbolic in the episode?
    - Consider the place, the fruit, the colours, the harp, the imagery
  - How does Hardy bring a double perspective to the scene?
- How does Angel undermine the authority of the dairy?
- What do these phrases mean:
  - 'Tess's passing corporeal blight had been her mental harvest'?
  - 'she little recked the strength of her own vitality'?
    - Does Hardy mean these ironically?

- Give some illustrations of Tess's apparent pessimism
  - How deeply do you think she means them?
- Consider the views of history and the past that both Angel and Tess express
  - Can we anticipate future difficulty from them?

#### ❖ **Chapter 20**

- How does Hardy continue to stress:
  - The fertility of the dairy and the surrounding countryside?
  - The dairy as ideal community?
- Examine again Hardy's use of borderline states of being. How does this apply to
  - The relationship of Angel and Tess?
  - The time of day when they are most together?
    - How does Hardy describe this early morning state?
    - What does he achieve by such detailed descriptions of the early light?
- Pick out words and phrases to show how Angel sees Tess.
  - How does Hardy produce tension for his readers regarding these perceptions of Angel?
- What are the implications for the novel of the phrase 'under an irresistible law'?



❖ **Chapter 21**

- What purpose is served by introducing the butter-turning incident?
  - What does it show us about the community?
  - What does it show us about Tess?
- Look at the description of the sun and the bird song as examples of the pathetic fallacy
  - What does it show about Tess's emotional state?
  - How does this description compare to previous descriptions of sunrise and sunset?
- How does Hardy distinguish the three dairymaids?
  - In what ways are they all set apart from Tess?
  - What does the phrase 'more woman than either' mean?
  - What dilemma is Tess now faced with, having overheard the dairymaids' conversation?

❖ **Chapter 22**

- What do you think is the point of this little episode?
  - Do you think the discovery of garlic is symbolic in any way?
- Compare Angel's attitude to the dairymaids with Alec's attitude to farm girls
  - Why is Tess so surprised at it?
  - How does it make her feel about Angel?
- Explain the term 'heroically' in this context.

❖ **Chapter 23**

- With which earlier journey

could the journey in chapter 23 be compared?

- List the main similarities and differences
- Look at the various images of entrapment in the chapter
  - How do these images correlate with the clothes and social position of those concerned?
- Compare the way the four girls react to being carried by Angel
  - In what other ways is Hardy beginning to distinguish them?
- Explain the phrase 'there was an understanding between them'
- Hardy is building up a community of suffering within the larger dairy community
  - How does he set this smaller community apart from the larger?
  - What are the main features of the smaller community?
  - What words and phrases does Hardy use to characterise the girls' passion for Angel?
  - What is Tess's special 'thorny crown'?
    - Does she realise it?
- Is Hardy's reference to 'cruel Nature's law' consistent with remarks at the end of chapter 13?

❖ **Chapter 24**

- Collect together words and phrases that suggest sexuality and sexual passion
  - What is Hardy seeking to emphasise with these terms?
- Do Angel and Tess have any control over their feelings or their behaviour at this stage?

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*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume II (chapters 21-39)*

- How does Hardy present the forces acting on them?
- How is the geography of place and time symbolic?
- What parts of Tess's body are emphasised?
  - How does this compare to similar attention given to her body previously?
  - Why does Hardy stress 'there was nothing ethereal about it'?
- Again, Hardy implicitly compares Angel's behaviour to Tess with Alec's
  - What are the differences?
- How serious is Angel about Tess?
  - What evidence do we have one way or the other?
- What other thoughts and attitudes of Angel about Tess are given in the chapter?
- Look back at the previous references to Angel's family in chapter 2 and chapter 12
  - How much do these earlier references anticipate this chapter?
- How sympathetic do you think Hardy is to Mr. and Mrs. Clare?
  - Give examples of his judgements on them
  - Are these judgements ambivalent?
- Find examples of the different language registers in the two parts of the chapter
  - Why do you think Hardy switches register?

❖ **Chapter 25**

- Explain 'feeling had smothered judgement that day'
- What does Angel feel it best to do now he has declared his love?
  - Does the reader get the sense that this will help the situation?
- Angel is shown as living between two worlds: that of the farm and that of his family
  - How do they contrast with each other?
  - Do we sense there is anything in common between them at all?
- Look at the paragraph beginning 'This consciousness...'.
  - Is it Hardy or Angel who is commenting?
- How does Angel's attitude to Tess differ from Alec's?

❖ **Chapter 26**

- What are Angel's main obstacles in persuading his parents that Tess would be a suitable wife?
- What does 'amid beliefs essentially demonistic' mean?
- Why does he not even mention Tess to his brothers?
- How does Angel explain how he and Tess have been brought together?
  - How clear is this explanation?
  - Is this explanation likely to appeal to his father?
- Look at the comments made about education and about women and class.
  - To what extent are they Angel's views and to what extent Hardy's?
  - How far do you think Angel is in danger of becoming Hardy's mouthpiece at times?
- What is Hardy's attitude to Mr. Clare?

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## Volume II (chapters 21-39)

- Why does Angel think he is more like his father than either of his brothers?
- List the references in the chapter by which Hardy reminds us of Tess's past
  - What effect do these references have on the reader?
- ❖ **Chapter 27**
  - Collect together words and images to do with fertility
    - Compare these with similar words and phrases in chapter 20
      - What do you notice?
  - Compare Angel's approach to Talbothays with Tess's in chapter 16.
  - What parts of Tess's body are emphasised?
    - What are the images Hardy uses of them?
      - What is their significance?
  - Examine the sentence beginning 'It was a moment when a woman's soul...'
    - What does it mean?
    - Discuss whether you think there is a possibility of conflict between body and soul
  - What does the simile 'like a plant in too burning a sun' suggest of their relationship?
  - Does Tess's inability to skim have any symbolic significance?
  - What does the mention of Alec do to Tess?
    - Why do you think that Hardy introduces this note into the chapter?
- ❖ **Chapter 28**
  - Consider Angel. He has some experience and knowledge of women, but a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing
    - What is his experience 'great enough' for him to know?
    - What is his experience 'little enough' for him not to realise about Tess?
    - In what ways is this dangerous?
  - Reflect on Tess. She is experiencing a conflict between natural instincts, the desire for a man, and her conscience
    - Trace the progress of this conflict through the chapter, perhaps as a graph
    - How does she try to resolve it?
    - Do we have any sense that she is in control of the outcome of the conflict?
      - Are there any significant words or phrases that are clues to this?
  - In what way could it be said that nature is Fate here?
  - In what other ways is it suggested Tess is changing as a result of her relationship with Angel?
  - How is the landscape a projection of Tess's inner state?
    - What images do you find particularly powerful here?
- ❖ **Chapter 29**
  - Work out the parallels between the Jack Dollop story and Tess's situation
  - Compare Alec and Angel in terms of their behaviour towards Tess, when Tess is forced to be always near them through her employment

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*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume II (chapters 21-39)*

- For all his sensitivities, is Angel being as predatory as Alec?
- How does Hardy handle the supposed 'day of truth' his readers were led to expect at the end of the previous chapter?
  - Do we sense there will be a day of truth at all?
- Explain:
  - 'she coveted the recantation she feared'
  - 'our tremulous lives are so different from theirs'
- Trace the sequence of Tess's acquiescence to Angel.
  - To what extent is Tess trapped?
  - By what?
    - Does Hardy really allow Tess any power over her own life at this stage?

❖ **Chapter 30**

- Which previous journey would be the best one to compare this journey with?
  - What would be the similarities and what the differences?
- List the images and symbols used by Hardy to describe the landscape and geographical features of the journey
  - What sort of atmosphere do they produce?
  - What can the reader discern in them?
- Look especially at the juxtaposition of the old house and the railway station
  - What is Hardy saying about history and modernity, and how does this relate to Tess and Angel?
- Study the paragraph beginning 'Then there was a

hissing of the train...'

- What different perspectives of Tess does the reader get?
- Examine the dialogue between Tess and Angel as she attempts to reveal her past.
  - Can you trace the dynamics of it?
  - Is there anything in these dynamics which prevents Tess from saying what she means to say?
- Look at how Hardy combines purity and passion in his heroine in this chapter
- List Hardy's examples of dramatic irony (irony of circumstances) in the section
- How does Hardy indicate to his readers that all will not be well for Tess?

❖ **Chapter 31**

- In what ways does Joan's letter help Tess?
  - Is it good advice, suited to her character?
- Look at the way Hardy portrays Tess and Angel in love
  - Examine the descriptions, images and the language he gives to the lovers
  - What are the main differences between their two approaches?
- Collect together images of light, shadow, and darkness
  - What emerges from Hardy's use of them?
- What other symbols do you see in Hardy's landscape descriptions?
- What does Hardy mean to convey by his description of the dairymaids' 'thin white nightgowns'?
  - 'which seemed a wrong to these'

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## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume II (chapters 21-39)*

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## Volume II (chapters 21-39)

- Why does Tess's silence seem a wrong to the dairymaids?
  - By the end of the chapter, what has the reader been led to anticipate?
- ❖ **Chapter 32**
- Look at the paragraph beginning 'The meads were changing now...'
    - What is the symbolism in the landscape?
    - How in particular is Tess symbolised in the gnats?
  - Gather words and phrases that describe Tess's state of mind in this chapter.
    - What tensions or conflicts are evidenced?
    - What particular state seems predominant?
      - Does this correspond to her emotions?
  - To what extent does Tess seem a free agent?
    - What are her deepest fears?
      - How are they expressed?
  - Does Angel seem as ideal a lover to you as Tess thinks he is?
    - How practical is Angel being?
    - Angel seems to be making Tess an educational project. What does this say of his attitude to her?
  - Explain the phrase: 'been made to miss his true destiny through the prejudices of his family'.
    - Is Angel being fair here?
- ❖ **Chapter 33**
- What questions does Hardy raise by the episode with the man from Trantridge?
- How would you interpret the letter-writing and the pushing under the carpet situation?
  - Are Angel's reasons for not minding the absence of his family at the wedding justifiable?
    - The reader can understand Tess wanting a small and private wedding - can Angel's reasons be understood?
  - Hardy spends more time on describing the coach and the old legend than on the wedding ceremony.
    - Why do you think that he considers it significant?
  - Explain 'to call him her lord, her own - then, if necessary, to die'
    - Regarding the whole novel, in what way does this seem a piece of dramatic irony?
    - What other phrases and words suggest Tess's extreme emotional attitudes in this chapter?
  - Look at the overall shape of the chapter
    - What is the effect on the reader of the chapter taken as a whole?
    - How does Hardy undermine any feelings of joy the reader may have for Tess?
- ❖ **Chapter 34**
- With which aspects concerning her ancestry is Tess confronted?
    - How do Tess and Angel differ in the way they see these ancestral manifestations?
  - Tess is also presented with an heirloom. This is her first taste of being in another social class.

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## Volume II (chapters 21-39)

- Why does she think immediately it should be sold?
  - Does this heirloom do any more for her than the d'Urberville 'heirlooms'?
  - How do your observations tie up with what Hardy has previously said about the past and Tess's family history?
  - Collect together images and words Hardy uses to create atmosphere.
    - What is their overall impression?
    - Would you say Hardy is being rather too 'Gothic' or melodramatic here, or would you say the images mirror Tess's state of mind exactly?
  - In what ways are both Angel and Tess marginalised, especially in terms of their class status?
  - In what ways is Angel still labouring under a sense of failure?
    - How does Hardy show this?
  - Why do you think Angel starts using learned words and quotations when he comes to confess?
    - How differently does Hardy present Tess's confession?
  - Explain 'had the effect upon her of a Providential interposition'.
  - Looking at this section as a whole, how far does Hardy really show what 'the consequence' is?
- ❖ **Chapter 35**
- Hardy turns from gothic to grotesque. Study the second paragraph
    - How does Hardy express the grotesque here?
    - What other parts of the chapter fit into the category of the grotesque?
  - Explain 'the perfunctory babble of the surface while the depths remained paralyzed'
    - What other words and phrases express this paralysis in the characters?
  - Look closely at Angel's explanations for his rejection of Tess
    - Why does he have problems with her identity?
      - Are they his problem or are they caused by Tess, do you think?
    - What are the conflicts going on within him?
    - Look at the words, his choice of vocabulary:
      - Would Tess understand them?
      - What do you think the words show about him?
    - Explain 'initiated into the proportions of social things'
      - What does the statement show about Angel?
  - Look closely at the way Tess tries to defend herself
    - Could she have said or done more?
      - Is she too passive?
    - Why do you think she is unable to persuade Angel to change his attitude?
  - Is Hardy pointing up a difference between men's love and women's love in general, or is this just a case of two individuals and their reaction to a crisis of trust?
  - Look at the paragraph beginning 'The cow and gorse-tracks...'

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Volume II (chapters 21-39)

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume II (chapters 21-39)

- Look at the perspectives (bird's eye or worm's eye) gained here.
- What function do these perspectives have?
- Can you find another example of a shift of perspective?
- What other images or episodes in the chapter help to bring out the pathos of the situation?
- Analyse the symbolism of the walks taken by Tess and Angel
- List the descriptions of the lovers' faces and facial gestures
  - What do these descriptions reveal about their states of mind?
  - What effect do they have on the reader?
  - Where else has there been a reference to a 'little round hole'?
- In what ways does Hardy contrast the indifference or even hostility of natural forces to the intense personal emotions of his human characters?

### ❖ Chapter 36

- How does the opening paragraph incorporate devices used in the previous chapter?
- In what ways do the couple act out their marriage roles?
  - What effect does this have on the reader?
- How does Hardy seek to show that Tess is indeed 'a pure woman'?
- Where anger might be expected to predominate, there is a marked absence of it
  - What emotions does Hardy substitute between

- the couple?
- Do these other emotions make us feel the situation is more - or less - tragic?
- List the reasons Angel gives for discontinuing the marriage
  - Against which does Tess offer a defence?
  - Do you think any of the reasons hold water?
    - Give your reasons.
  - Do any of the reasons prefigure what will happen in the novel?
- List phrases that suggest Tess's state of mind
  - Are they associated with images or symbols in any way?
  - What aspects of Tess have you not seen before?
- In what way does Hardy link Angel's loss of faith in Tess with his loss of faith in Christianity?
- What is Angel's problem with her presence?
- Look at the last sentence.
  - What does it suggest might happen in the novel?
    - Does it?

### ❖ Chapter 37

- What does the sleepwalking incident reveal about Angel?
- How does Tess respond to the incident, and what does this show about her?
- Look particularly at references to death and dying
  - What, in fact, has really died?
- What does Hardy emphasize in the visit to the dairy?
- Look at Tess and Angel's farewell
  - What are the terms and conditions Angel lays down?

### Investigate!

#### *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume II (chapters 21-39)*

- Hardy seems to suggest that if Tess had tried harder, she may have been able to make Angel change his mind. Would you agree?
- What chances do you think exist for the marriage at this point?
- Is Angel's behaviour here any different from Alec's in chapter 12?
- Hardy also suggests there is a fatal family flaw
  - What is this?
  - Is Hardy being fair to Tess here?

#### ❖ Chapter 38

- List references to Tess's loss of identity and place
  - Why does she sense she has no place at Marlott any more?
  - At the end of the chapter, do we have any indication where Tess is going and where she belongs?
    - Has she become a wanderer?
- Compare Tess's return with her previous return from Trantridge (chapter 12)
  - How does her mother come to accept the new situation so quickly?
  - Does Tess's family benefit from the gifts provided for them, either from Alec or Angel?
- List some of the ironies Hardy creates in the chapter
  - Which seems to you the most poignant?
- How does Hardy continue to stress Tess's purity?

#### ❖ Chapter 39

- Compare the present visit

with Angel's previous one to his parents

- What do you notice about how Hardy has structured each visit?
- Tess's ancestry keeps coming up in Angel's thoughts as well as in Hardy's comments
  - Connect ancestral references to themes of:
    - The purity of Tess's character
    - The past and the destiny of history
    - Class consciousness
- For the first time, there is a full description of what Tess looks like physically
  - Why do you think Hardy has delayed so long in giving a complete picture of her, instead of just partial references to face or figure?
- What effect do the Clares' naivety and piety have on Angel?
- Look at the last paragraph
  - Do Hardy's comments add anything to what we have already realised?
  - Is Hardy being overanxious to establish Tess's purity, do you think?



## Investigate!

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*❖ **Chapter 40**

- What does Angel mean by 'snaps the continuity of existence'?
  - What particular 'snapping' has he been guilty of?
- Hardy creates two encounters with women in the chapter
  - What is Hardy's purpose?
  - How does he portray Angel's emotional state?
  - Does Angel treat the two women well and in character?
    - How is it that Angel manages to do so much harm to the women with whom he comes into contact?
- Look at Angel's 'if only' ('If you had only told me sooner')
  - Does this stand up to close examination?
  - In what ways is Angel trying to make himself a victim?
  - Are you convinced by these efforts?
- What positive thing emerges for Angel out of the temptation to take Izz with him?
  - What does the encounter fail to do?

❖ **Chapter 41**

- 'whatever it may be called': Hardy is not usually so lost for a precise meaning when it comes to describing Tess and her motives
  - What do you think it is that prevents Tess from contacting Angel's parents?
  - Would you say this is a character defect?
- Why does Tess not seek work:

- As a domestic servant?
- At Talbothays?
  - What do these reasons show about her character?
- Tess's journeys continue to expose her to danger
  - What point is Hardy making about her chance encounter with the man from Trantridge?
  - Compare this with the chance encounter with Alec in chapter 45
- What is the symbolic significance of the pheasant incident?

❖ **Chapter 42**

- In what ways has Tess become 'a figure which is part of the landscape'?
  - What is the significance of Hardy's phrase?
- Make sure you understand the symbolism of the landscape
  - What are the main features of the landscape, and how do they match up to Tess's inner state of being?
- A sort of destination has been reached at the end of this journey
  - How would you characterise it?

❖ **Chapter 43**

- List the main difficulties or tests that Tess faces in the chapter
  - How does she cope with them?
  - Which one affects her most deeply?
- Do you think Hardy designed this chapter to describe a place of testing or not?

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Volume III (chapters 40-59)

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- If not, what other reason do you feel the chapter serves in the novel?
- If you do, what sort of testing is it?
  - What does it achieve for Tess?
- What qualities emerge in Tess?
- Look at the paragraph beginning 'The swede field...'
  - What are the images that strike you most forcibly?
  - Compare it with the description of the valley in chapter 16.
  - Compare the image of flies in both
  - What else forms a contrast and what else is similar?
- Look at the paragraph beginning 'After this season...'
  - How does this compare with the previous paragraph studied in terms of Hardy's use of the bird's-eye perspective?
  - What is the point Hardy is making about grandeur and awareness?
  - Do you see the birds as symbolic of Tess?
    - If so, in what way?
  - Who else are 'temporary sojourners'?
- What images does Hardy use to describe entrapment in this chapter?
  - Has he used similar images previously?
- ❖ **Chapter 44**
  - How does the first paragraph establish Tess's independence?
    - Why does she decide to visit Angel's parents?
      - Does she herself think she will succeed?
        - What does Hardy suggest are her chances of success?
      - What does Hardy suggest would work in her favour?
        - Does she realise this?
    - List all the things that prevent Tess's mission from succeeding.
      - Looking at the list, is there a bias towards either of:
        - A particular character flaw?
        - A malevolent fate, working against Tess?
    - Would you say Hardy is manipulating the plot too arbitrarily against Tess, or has he carefully prepared us to expect the outcomes?
      - Do you feel Tess has still some control over her fate, or that whatever she does is bound to turn out badly?
        - What gives you your impression?
      - Do you get a sense of 'if only' in this chapter?
        - If so, where exactly is this focused?
    - Discuss whether you think Tess is a pilgrim or a victim?
    - Explain the sentence beginning 'Then she wept for...'
      - What exactly does this sentence show the reader?
    - What plot elements does Hardy tie together in the last two paragraphs?
      - In what ways is there a reversal of Alec and Angel?
    - Looking over the Phase the Fifth chapters, list the ways in which Tess has 'paid.'

## Investigate!

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*❖ **Chapter 45**

- Look at the description of Alec
  - Pick out words and phrases that emphasise contrast or contradiction.
    - What is the main thrust of such contrasts?
  - Is the reader meant to trust Alec any more now than before?
    - Does Tess?
    - What are her reasons?
- What do words like 'her seducer' (end of chapter 44) and 'her old lover' tell us about their previous relationship?
  - Why does he now say he is afraid of her?
- Look at the use of 'paralysing', 'paralysis', 'atrophy' to describe both Tess and Alec.
  - Has Hardy used similar terminology before?
  - What does his usage say about their relationship and behaviour?
- What are Tess's first feelings when she confronts Alec again?
  - Do you notice any significant change in her behaviour or words when she talks to Alec compared to the early part of the novel?
  - What is Tess particularly bitter about in speaking of Alec's conversion?
    - Do you think she is justified?
- Look at the sentence 'And there was revived in her...'.
  - What does it say about Tess's feelings of guilt?
  - How does Alec try to blame her?

- Is he justified?
- Is Tess's loyalty to Angel something to be commended in her?
  - Is it part of her purity?
- Look at Hardy's use of the Cross-in-Hand
  - What purposes does it serve?
  - Is it in any way a sign of the future?
- Compare the two journeys which occur in chapter 12 and this chapter
  - What would be the biggest similarity and the biggest difference?

❖ **Chapter 46**

- Look at the paragraph beginning 'For hours nothing relieved...'.
  - What characterises agricultural labour here?
  - How does this work compare to that at Talbothays?
  - Are such differences symbolic in any way?
- How is Alec's approach described?
  - What effect does such a description achieve?
- In what ways does Alec's proposal of marriage seem incongruous? (If you have read Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, you may like to compare St. John River's proposal to Jane.)
- What is the nature of Tess's 'faith'?
  - Would you say the naivety of her belief in Angel is a strength or a weakness?
- How does Hardy present Tess as being pure at this stage?
  - How much of her situation is down to her naivety?

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- List the words and phrases by which Alec seeks to excuse his behaviour.
  - In what ways could it be said that he is victimising Tess?
- Are you convinced by Hardy's explanation at the end of the chapter concerning the shallowness of Alec's conversion?
  - Give your reasons
- What seem to you the main ironies of the chapter?

### ❖ Chapter 47

- Go through the chapter picking out images or references to hell or the underworld
  - How does this tie up with chapter 43 and its discussion of 'places of testing'?
  - In what ways could Alec be seen as devilish?
- List Alec's arguments that he is indeed Tess's first husband
  - How valid do you consider them?
  - How do the arguments add to Tess's torment?
- Look closely at the way Tess is made to take the blame by Alec
  - What does this show about him?
  - In general, how has Alec deteriorated from the previous chapters of this phase?
- In what ways does the chapter promote the view of Tess as a victim?
  - Consider particularly Tess's vulnerability, her lack of protection, and her exposure.
  - Collect images of entrapment

- Look at Hardy's explanations of why Tess is unable to argue with Alec
  - Is he being fair to her, or is there a hint of male chauvinism?
- How does Hardy portray nature and agriculture in this chapter?
  - How does this compare with the Talbothays chapters?
  - What do you think Hardy is conveying by juxtaposing two such different accounts?

### ❖ Chapter 48

- Select the images Hardy uses to describe the machine.
  - What seems to be the main picture that emerges of it?
    - To what extent does the machine symbolise Fate?
- List words and images relating to colour
  - In what way do they fit with previous patterns of colour images and descriptions?
- Investigate the interplay of power and powerlessness in this chapter and the previous one
  - To what extent is Tess trapped into the situation?
  - Where does her letter fit into this interplay?
- Is Alec now a better or worse man than in the first chapters?
  - Do Jesus' words of Luke 11: 24-26 refer to him rather than to Tess?
  - How genuine do you think his offer of help is?
- Look closely at Tess's letter
  - She often uses religious language. In what does she place her faith?

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- If the letter arouses pathos, what does this centre on?
  - What other responses do you think Hardy is trying to create in the reader?
- ❖ **Chapter 49**
  - What more does the chapter tell us about the relationship of Angel's parents with him?
  - In what ways does Angel go through a purgatorial experience whilst in Brazil?
    - Is his suffering and re-education in any way comparable to Tess's?
    - Does the reader at any time get the experience of this change being too late?
  - Explain 'not among things done but among things willed'
  - Look at the paragraph beginning 'But the reasoning is somewhat musty....'
    - Is this Hardy's commentary or Angel's thinking?
      - Whose voice is it?
      - If it is Hardy's, what does it say about Hardy's philosophy of life?
      - What would this suggest about the outcome of the novel?
  - Explain the distinction Angel makes between the 'political value' and the 'imaginative value' of Tess's family line
  - Hardy is fond of personifying time
    - How would you explain 'So does Time ruthlessly destroy his own romances'?
- In what ways does Tess rehearsing the folk-songs evoke pathos?
- ❖ **Chapter 50**
  - Examine the description of Tess's night journey
    - What seem to you to be the most striking images?
    - Do you see any clusters of images or diction that could have symbolic significance?
  - Collect references to Tess helping her family both earlier in the novel and here.
    - What benefit has been derived from her help?
    - What benefit will Tess's preparation of the ground for planting be to them?
      - What do your answers suggest about the family and any future efforts to help them?
    - In what way are future efforts likely to be dangerous for Tess?
      - Do you see anything ironical in all this?
  - Does Hardy set up any parallels in this chapter between Alec, his words and his actions, and Angel, his words and his actions?
  - Were you expecting Alec to re-appear?
    - What is your reaction to his re-appearance and the form it takes?
  - What does Hardy lead us to expect to happen at this juncture?
- ❖ **Chapter 51**
  - What is the full significance of Old Lady-Day for the Durbeyfields?

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- Consider their past and their future. How are these changing?
- Consider their security and support network. What will happen to these?
- Why does Joan choose to relocate to Kingsbere?
  - Do you think it is a wise choice?
  - Make a list all the repercussions arising out of Parson Tringham's discovery in chapter 1.
- There seems to be some discrepancy about whether the family has to move out at once or whether they could have been allowed to stay on a while longer.
  - Can you explain the discrepancy?
- For what does Tess still blame herself?
  - Is she justified?
  - For what does she now refuse to take any further blame?
- In what way is the spider symbolic?
- How is the coach story prophetic or anticipatory?
- Look at the paragraph beginning 'To her and her like....'
  - What does it mean?
  - Is it true to the story?
    - Is this really what Hardy has shown us about Tess?
  - What seems to be at the heart of Hardy's protest?

### ❖ Chapter 52

- Look at the two letters mentioned in the chapter.
  - In what way do they fit into the pattern of previous letters?

- The family has returned to their ancestral home, completing a process that began in chapter 1.
  - What do they find when they get there?
  - In what way is this fall in circumstance centered on Tess?
- What does Tess mean when she cries, 'Why am I on the wrong side of this door!'
- If Alec represents the new and the modern, what does Hardy seem to be saying about that?
- What to you seems the most tragic element or episode of the whole chapter?
- The name of this phase, 'The Convert', suggests it has been largely about Alec
  - Summarise the main features of his progress (or regress)
  - How has this affected Tess?
  - Would you say Alec is on a pilgrimage, or are his actions more like those of a raiding party?

### ❖ Chapter 53

- How does Hardy further demonstrate that Angel's experiences have been a form of purgatory?
- What is the irony in Angel's mother saying 'It is not my son...'?
- Examine the order of the letters Angel receives:
  - How does it determine his actions?
  - Do you think Hardy means the reader to feel it is all going to be too late?
- What is the effect of Hardy shifting the perspective over to Angel and the Clare family?

# Investigate!

## *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Volume III (chapters 40-59)

# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- What is the irony of Angel telling his parents about Tess's ancestry at this moment?
- Explain the long sentence at the end beginning 'From his remarks his parents ...'

### ❖ Chapter 54

- What does Angel learn about Tess on his journey?
  - When Angel claims to Joan 'I know her better than you do', would you agree with him?
- The family in the old Durbeyfield cottage 'had never known her'.
  - What point is Hardy making here?
- It appears the Durbeyfields never make it to Kingsbere, either dead or alive.
  - Again, what point is Hardy making here?
- What do we know about Tess that Angel still has not discovered by the end of the chapter?
  - What clues are we given that Alec has had his way and that Angel is too late?
  - Find examples of how Hardy uses dramatic irony in the chapter.

### ❖ Chapter 55

- Examine the detailed contrast between the modern city and the ancient heathland surrounding it.
  - What points is Hardy trying to make through this contrast?
  - How do Hardy's comments on modernity tie in with previous comments on this subject?

- Find one or two examples of dramatic irony in the chapter.
  - Can you say exactly what is ironic about them?
- Compare the physical descriptions of Tess and Angel at their meeting.
  - In what ways do they contrast?
  - In what ways are their roles reversed?
  - How has Hardy prepared us for Tess's new appearance?
- Discuss whether it really is 'too late'.
  - What makes Tess think it is?
- Explain what Hardy means by the sentence beginning, 'But he had a vague consciousness of one thing ...'

### ❖ Chapter 56

- Make notes on the colour symbolism in the chapter.
  - Comment particularly on the shape of the patch of blood on the ceiling.
- 'The wound was quite small': where else in the novel has this been the case?
- Can you anticipate exactly why Tess has killed Alec?
  - Why did she not just walk out on him?
- Do you feel horrified by the murder?
  - How does Hardy lessen its immediate impact?

### ❖ Chapter 57

- 'of something seemed to impel him to the act': what is being suggested by the 'something'?
- Discuss the use of coincidence in the chapter, and the forces working in Angel and Tess' favour

## Investigate!

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Volume III (chapters 40-59)*

- How is this chapter different from the last number of chapters?
  - Do you feel this is the tide turning in Tess's favour, or is it only a temporary reprieve?
  - What, in Hardy's writing, gives you the feeling?
- 'a moving spot, 'a white vacuity': where else have you come across these phrases?
- What is the significance of perspective here?
- Examine Hardy's references to purity in the chapter
  - How do they add to the ideas you have already gained from Hardy?
- How does Hardy create an other-worldly feeling, a removal from everyday reality, within the chapter?
- In what ways is the first night at the house a redemption of their abortive wedding-night?

❖ **Chapter 58**

- Hardy sets up a strong contrast between outside and inside as Tess speaks
  - List phrases that convey this
    - What seems to you the most striking feature about how Tess speaks?
    - How does her 'inside' language relate to time?
- In what way does the mention of the stone coffin episode anticipate future events?
- The reader sees the lovers from an outside perspective just once
  - Why do you think Hardy chooses to use this perspective?

- What is particularly significant about Stonehenge, that Hardy should climax his story there?
  - What do you see as symbolic in the landscape and their journey to Stonehenge?
- What do you make of Tess's request for Angel to marry Liza-Lu?
- Notice the perspective of the officers' approach
  - In which other situations has Hardy employed this perspective?
- What is Tess's consolation in dying?
  - And what is she denied?
- Do you think that the climax of the novel is marked more by a sense of fulfilment or by a sense of loss?

❖ **Chapter 59**

- Compare the beginning of chapter 1 with this chapter in terms of perspective and the direction of the pedestrians.
  - What are the cinematographic qualities of Hardy's description here?
- In what sense are the two pedestrians 'pilgrims'?
  - Are they returning from a holy place or are they still seeking for some destination?
- How does Liza-Lu differ from Tess, and in what ways is she the same?
  - In the previous chapter, Tess claimed she had, 'All the best of me without the bad of me'
    - What 'bad' qualities has she not got, do you think?
- What does Hardy *not* tell the reader about Tess and Angel?



# Investigate! *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

## Volume III (chapters 40-59)

Investigate!

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Volume III (chapters 40-59)

- Why does Hardy put quotation marks round 'Justice'?
  - Do you think Hardy meant to connect this phrase with that about 'ended his sport'?
- What is the impact on you of words 'not knowing' and 'speechless' at the end?
- What is the effect of 'and went on' right at the end?
- Discuss whether you find the ending convincing and satisfactory
- In what sense is the Phase a 'Fulfilment'?

