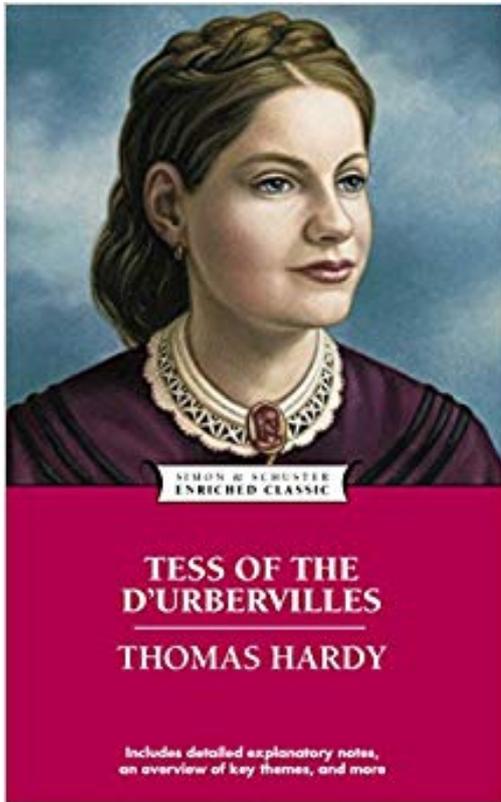


# Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Enriched Classics) by Thomas Hardy



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# Reviews of the **Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Enriched Classics)** by Thomas Hardy

- **Rainshaper**

...for one US Dollar.

Arrrrgh. What a beautifully frustrating and revealing book. And impossibly well crafted. I want to slap all of the principals, and then hug them, and then get everyone a therapist. I can't possibly have anything new to add to Criticism of Thomas Hardy--threats of bodily harm do not in my view qualify--but his ability to pick out the things we experience as tragic, or joyful, or melancholy, or triumphant and then describe those things poignantly is perhaps unsurpassed. It seems he alone has access to some previously-unknown API that precisely resonates on every page. (Dare I recommend Tess to fans of Neal Stephenson?)

I laughed, I cried...okay, fine, maybe I didn't laugh.

But I was transported.

- **Alsanadar**

Reading Tess's story is a good reminder of how the prospects for women's lives have improved dramatically over the ~140 years since it's setting in the 1870's. Raised in an impoverished family, Tess Durbeyfield is sent to spend time with the D'Urbervilles in hopes that she can lay claim to some of the family's wealth. She finds that she is not related to that family, and in her innocence of the ways of the world (and of men), she is taken advantage of in the worst way. Returning home with her reputation in shambles, she decided to eventually leave home once again to go to a place where no one knows her so she can start over. She becomes a dairymaid at a remote farm and makes friends with several of the other maids, as well as a devout young man, Angel Clare. Tess' sordid past continues to haunt her, and she struggles to find a safe place in the world where her past secrets can be left behind.

Hardy's stilted, occasionally flowery and overly verbose language sometimes makes it difficult to discern exactly what is going on, but the cloak of bad luck and misery never seems to be far from Tess. Her hopes and dreams are constantly dashed, and it is difficult for her to know who to trust.

I know that this novel is frequently assigned to high school students, which seems surprising due not only to the mature content, but also the length of the novel and the antiquated language. However, there are a number of strong themes throughout the novel that still resonate today, particularly the double standards that apply to women: a pure woman faithfully presented.

- **Ce**

I read this in a book club and it's not something I would typically read but I am glad I did.

This is the story of Tess Derbyfield. When we first meet her she is 16 years old living in poverty with her alcoholic parents. Her father has just learned that he has lineage dating back to the dUrbervilles, a royal family. Upon hearing this, they want to send their oldest daughter, Tess, off to a neighboring town where a family lives that has the d'Urberville name to become a servant and perhaps claim title to the d'Urberville name and even marry a wealthy gentleman. What they do not know is this family only adopted the d'Urberville name to further their business endeavors.

Upon first meeting Alec, the sham d'Urberville, Tess's life just goes from bad to worse. She meets one tragedy after another, some caused by fate, some caused by bad decisions.

This book leaves you feeling sad and hopeless but is a critique on the way women were treated in 1890's Victorian England.

This book had good characters but I thought the development was weak. Hardy uses great description of land and locations to where you feel fully immersed in the world of his creation.

This story is not for everyone. There are points where you will cry and there are points where you are on the edge of your seat just hoping that the stars will align and fate will come through for Tess.

- **Vudogal**

"Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is Thomas Hardy's most famous protagonist and one of literature's most tragic heroines. At first, she reminded me very much of Ibsen's Nora, but as the book came to a close I came to realize that Tess is far more emotionally complex than Nora: much moodier, much prouder, much more romantic, and ultimately much more tragic.

The story is pretty well-known to most people. Tess is a young beautiful maiden who has a lazy drunk for a father and a manipulative opportunist as a mother. At a young tender and naive age she is essentially raped by her well-to-do cousin, and it's a stigma that haunts her in the small-minded provincial town where she lives. She soon meets the man of her dreams, a clergyman's romantic son who finds a kindred soul in Tess, and while Tess does her best to maintain her distance eventually she gives way to her passion, and marries Angel Clare. Though she has lost her virginity to another man Tess remains pure and free, and against the warnings of her mother she forces herself to tell her new husband of her past. And because her husband is very young, very proud, and ultimately constricted and contained by the conservative pettiness of the people around him he decides to flee from Tess. And this sets the stage for Tess's ultimate downfall.

The themes and plot of this novel have been copied copiously in Western culture, but what makes this novel such a masterpiece is the emotional force and beauty of Tess's characters, and it would be almost impossible for anyone else to replicate the sincere sympathy Hardy has for his most famous heroine. Literary critics can always point to the depth in meaning and symbolism of the novel -- the themes of innocence, spirituality, and romantic passion course wildly throughout the novel -- but it's Tess's sense and pursuit of love, her utter and pure and completion to the man she loves, that will continue to move readers for centuries to come.

- **Uthergo**

I love the way authors wrote novels over a century ago. There is something so eloquent and intelligent in the prose and narrative.

I saw the Roman Polanski film adaptation years ago, so I always wanted to read the source novel. Tess is a classic, and rightly so. It is also not a happy novel. The syntax, grammar, and sentence/paragraph structure are difficult at times, so you'll need to concentrate while reading this novel, but in the end, it is quite rewarding.

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