

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

Coach John reviews "Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman" a novel by Thomas Hardy, the English author.



The novel initially appeared in a censored and serialised version, published by the British illustrated newspaper *The Graphic* in 1891, then in book form in three volumes in 1891, and as a single volume in 1892.

By the time I was studying English Literature at school the novel was part of the curriculum. As a teenager I **devoured** the book and fully appreciated its magnificence.

The **plot** is as **old as the hills** but the evocative writing is what sets the novel apart.

When Tess Durbeyfield, the daughter of a poor villager, learns that she might be a descendant of the ancient D'Urberville family, her family pressures her to claim **kinship** in order to seek a portion of the fortune. But when her meeting with young Alec D'Urberville does not go as planned, she returns home a ruined woman. A kinder man, Angel Clare, seems to offer Tess a more stable life—but she must choose whether to reveal her past to him and risk losing everything, or stay quiet and live a lie. Set in the rural town of Wessex, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

examines the impact of Victorian hypocrisy and societal struggles on the rural classes.

Thomas Hardy (born June 2, 1840, Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, England—died January 11, 1928, Dorchester, Dorset) was an English novelist and poet who **set** much of his work in Wessex, his name for the counties of southwestern England.

The closing phase of Hardy's career in fiction was marked by the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), which are generally considered his finest novels. *Tess* is the most richly "poetic" of Hardy's novels.

Polish director Roman Polanski made a screen version of Hardy's novel in 1979 starring Nastassja Kinski (*See photo*) The film does justice to the masterpiece and is an exquisite, **richly layered** adaptation. As in the novel, Tess is sent by her father to the estate of some local aristocrats to capitalise on a rumor that their families are from the same line. This fateful visit commences an epic narrative of sex, class, betrayal, and revenge, which Polanski unfolds with deliberation and finesse. With its earthy visual textures, achieved by two world-class cinematographers, *Tess* is a work of great pastoral beauty as well as vivid storytelling. An example of a movie being as good as the source material. Something which does not happen often enough.

by ECP Coach

John Hird



Word list

- **devoured** - *verb*
Definition: to take in eagerly with the senses or intellect
- **plot** - *noun*
Definition: the main story of a piece of writing, as a novel or movie
- **As old as the hills** - *idiom*
Definition: Extremely old
- **kinship** - *noun*
Definition: Family , also relationship because of similar nature, qualities, or characteristics; affinity
- **set** - *noun*
Definition: to put (something or someone) in a particular place or posture, such a novel or film
- **richly layered** - complicated
Definition: complicated and interesting because it has many different levels or features

Let's chat about that!

- 1. Give a summary of the text to your ECP coach and/or classmates
- 2. How did Tess of the d'Urbervilles first appear?
- 3. When and where did John first read the novel and what did he think about it?
- 4. When and where did John first read the novel and what did he think about it?
- 5. Give a brief biography of Thomas Hardy.
- 6. John states the movie is "an example of a movie being as good as the source material. Something which does not happen often enough." Have you any more examples and vice versa?

ENGLISH COACHING PROJECTS S.COOP COMING EVENTS

LITERARY DIALOGUES

REVENGE IN LITERATURE:

TESS OF THE D'UBERVILLES BY THOMAS HARDY

Jueves 14 noviembre
17:00 a 18:00. Entrada libre
C/ San Ignacio de Loyola 15

LUCKY BOOKS

English Coaching Projects

HALLOWEEN! ECP CINE NIGHT

STARRING
RICK MORANIS ELLEN GREENE VINCENT GARDENIA STEVE MARTIN

WITH A SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

ORIGINAL THEATRICAL CUT

PG

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25th at 19'00

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