



Tess of the d'Urbervilles (Vintage Editions)

Thomas Hardy

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Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented is a novel by Thomas Hardy. It initially appeared in a censored and serialised version, published by the British illustrated newspaper The Graphic in 1891 and in book form in 1892. Though now considered a major nineteenth-century English novel and possibly Hardy's masterpiece, Tess of the d'Urbervilles received mixed reviews when it first appeared, in part because it challenged the sexual morals of late Victorian England. Lecherous Alec d'Urberville arranges a job for Tess on his family's estate. While Tess is reluctant, it is her only income and she feels guilty about an accident involving the family's horse. But sex pest Alec repeatedly tries to seduce Tess, finally taking advantage of her one night in the forest. Tess gives birth to his child and christens the boy Sorrow. Shortly after the birth, however, Sorrow dies. Tess is forced to seek work again, this time as a milkmaid at the Talbothays Dairy. It is during this happy period that Tess befriends three fellow milkmaids and a man named Angel Clare. Tess falls in love with Angel and they soon marry, but it is not until after the wedding that Tess confesses she has a past and lost her son: Rather than forgive her, Angel gives Tess money and boards a ship bound for Brazil. Once again Tess is faced with life on her own, forced to fight for her survival.

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