

# **Jude the Obscure Study Guide**

## **Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy**

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# Plot Summary

Jude the Obscure is the final novel written by novelist Thomas Hardy. This novel is the story of Jude Fawley, a young man who craves education like others might crave food or drink. Jude decides he wants to go to university and he works toward that goal until at the age of nineteen he is sidelined when the girl he has been courting tells him she is pregnant. Jude marries this girl, but, the pregnancy having been a lie to trap him, the marriage quickly fails and the girl leaves. Jude moves to the university town a short time later and meets his soul mate in his cousin, Sue Bridehead. However, Sue refuses to love him and instead marries another. In time, Sue comes back to Jude, but tragedy steals her away once more. Jude the Obscure is a novel of tragedy, of the war between a man's desires, and of the world he lives in.

Jude Fawley is told by the departing school teacher in his tiny village that education is the only way a man can improve himself. Unhappy in his situation and his life, Jude focuses on learning. He begins with some grammar books in Latin and Greek from his old teacher and teaches himself to read these languages. There is a town not far from Jude's small village where there are multiple universities. Jude decides he would like to move there to attend classes, but realizes he must learn a trade so that he might be able to pay for his living there. Jude becomes apprenticed to a stonemason.

As Jude works toward his goal, he is forced to walk the long road between his village and a nearby town twice a week. One afternoon, while making this walk Jude meets a young woman named Arabella. This girl likes Jude's looks and decides she will make him her husband. Arabella seduces Jude and then tells him that she is pregnant even though she knows she is not. Jude marries Arabella, but when he learns the truth about her pregnancy, they begin to argue. Finally Arabella leaves, choosing to move to Australia with her family.

Several years later Jude decides he has saved enough money and he moves to his beloved university town of Christminster. Although more fascinated with the universities than before, Jude focuses on finding a job first. At the same time, Jude has learned of a cousin who lives in Christminster and he seeks her out. Jude does not speak to Sue Bridehead at first, but watches her from a distance because he is enamored of her beauty. In time, however, Sue learns that he is in the city and she seeks him out. They become friends, but when Jude learns she is to go to London because she has had a falling out with her landlady and employer, Jude convinces his old schoolteacher to take her in as a student teacher.

As Jude and Sue become closer friends, Jude turns his attentions to entering one of the universities. Unfortunately the universities are very expensive and they have no program to make the accessible to the working poor. Jude writes to the headmasters of several of the schools, but he only receives on reply that recommends he continue on his current path of stone work. Deeply depressed by this, Jude gets drunk and shows up at Sue's house. Embarrassed the following morning, Jude goes home to his home village.



Sue writes to Jude and tells him that she is going to another village where she will attend a teachers college. Jude moves there to be close to her, but a misadventure on a day out causes the leaders at the school to believe Sue is without moral conscience. Sue is punished, so she runs away. Now Sue has been deemed immoral and banned from the school. Sue feels that she should marry to spare her reputation, but Jude tells her that he is already married. For this reason, Sue marries the old schoolteacher, Robert Phillotson. Jude is heartbroken and returns to Christminster. However, a short time later Sue convinces Phillotson that it would be the moral thing to do in letting her go to live with her lover.

At first Sue and Jude live without intimacy. However, when Arabella comes back into Jude's life and tells him that they have a son whom Jude must take custody of, Sue becomes jealous and assents to becoming Jude's lover. However, she thrice refuses to marry him. Several years later they have two children and a third is expected. They move back to Christminster after several years on the road because Jude has become ill. The move is made difficult when they cannot find lodging due to the children. For this reason, Jude's child with Arabella decides to take the children out of the equation by hanging himself and his two younger siblings. The stress of this tragedy causes Sue to deliver a premature infant who also dies.

Sue turns to the church for solace and realizes that she has been punished for living in sin with Jude. Sue leaves Jude and returns to Phillotson, remarrying him. Jude begins to drink and this leads to Arabella tricking him into marriage. Jude goes to Sue and begs her to run away, but she refuses. Sue then gives herself to Phillotson as his lover. Jude dies a short time later.



# Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 1-4

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 1-4 Summary

Thomas Hardy published this book in 1896, the last of his novels that are richly about what he referred to as character and environment. This novel is the most tragic, telling the story of the impact of environment on one man's desires.

Chapter 1. The schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson, is leaving the village of Marygreen in order to pursue his education in Christminster. Everyone has come to say goodbye, including Jude Fawley, who was a night student of the schoolmaster. When Jude asks Mr. Phillotson why he is leaving, the schoolmaster explains that the measure of a man is his level of education.

Chapter 2. Jude returns to the bakery where he lives with his aunt, a woman who laments the fact that he did not die with his father or go to Christminster with the schoolmaster. Jude is then sent to his job, scaring away the birds in a farmer's field. However, Jude is caught feeding the birds instead and fired. These two things leave Jude feeling unwanted.

Chapter 3. Jude climbs to the roof of an old barn known as Brown House and tries to see Christminster over the horizon. Jude stops a workman and asks where the city is and is pointed toward a distant light that he imagines to be the city. Over the next few months, Jude works in his aunt's bakery during the day and goes to Brown House at night.

Chapter 4. Jude meets Dr. Vilbert on the road from Christminster and asks him if he has been to Christminster. When Dr. Vilbert says he has, Jude asks if he could help him learn Latin and Greek. The doctor agrees to bring Jude some of his old grammar books if Jude will find him new customers. Jude does this, but the doctor has forgotten his promise. About this same time, Mr. Phillotson sends for his piano. Jude sneaks a note to the teacher in the crate that asks for some grammar books. A short time later, Jude receives his books and begins his studies alone.

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The reader is introduced to Jude Fawley, a young child of ten or twelve, who has been orphaned and left to live with his aunt, a kind woman who is nevertheless unhappy with her new burden so late in her life. The aunt often tells Jude he would be better to be dead beside his father than still living as a burden in her bakery. This causes Jude to feel unwanted and worthless, so he finds himself focusing on the parting words of his schoolmaster, telling him that a man's worth is measured by his level of education. Jude begins to fantasize about moving to Christminster, a large city that has multiple universities. However, Jude does not have access to basic education and finds a way to

educate himself. This shows the reader how determined Jude is to become educated despite his situation.

In these early chapters, the reader is also introduced to the setting of the novel. The novel takes place in the late nineteenth century in Hardy's fictionalized area of Wessex. The novel begins in a small village, Marygreen, where Jude has gone to live with his aunt. However, Jude dreams of going to Christminster where there are many universities that he hopes to one day attend. The setting of this novel is important to the overall plot of the novel because Christminster plays a huge part in Jude's dreams, as does the time period play a part in Jude's home life and his future.



# Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 5-8

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 5-8 Summary

Chapter 5. Three or four years later Jude has begun delivering his aunts goods from the bakery in a cart. While driving the cart between customer's homes, Jude reads his books. However, some of the villagers have noted this habit and tell the police about it, leaving Jude vulnerable to trouble with them. Jude has no choice but to read in the cart, however, and continues to do so, he just hides it better. Jude decides what he really wants to do is go to Christminster; therefore, he decides to apprentice himself to a stone-mason so that he might learn skills to make a living when he goes.

Chapter 6. While walking one Saturday, Jude comes across a group of girls on a farm cleaning pig intestines. One of the girls throws a piece at Jude to get his attention. The girl then asks for the piece back, so she and Jude meet on a small bridge so that he might return it to her. The girl asks Jude to call on her the following day and he agrees.

Chapter 7. Jude is reluctant to leave his studies the next day because the weekend is the only time he has a chance to study. However, he has given his promise to the girl, Arabella Donn. Jude picks Arabella up at her father's home and walks with her to Brown House. From there they can see a fire burning, so they decide to walk toward it. The fire is further than they expected and they soon find themselves in Alfredston. Jude takes Arabella to a tavern where they have beer. Arabella seems to know that the beer has been altered, but it does not occur to Jude to ask how she knows. Arabella talks with her friends the next day about Jude and asks their advice on how to get Jude to marry her. One of them suggests that she trap him by getting pregnant.

Chapter 8. As he is walking home, Jude comes across Arabella struggling to recapture three pigs her father recently purchased. Together they are able to recapture two, but a third gets out of the yard. Arabella and Jude follow the third until Arabella finally tells him to give up. They stop in a field and lie under a tree. Arabella tries to get Jude to lie close to her, but he misunderstands her intention and she becomes frustrated. The next day Arabella talks her mother into leaving the house so that Arabella and Jude might be alone after their walk. That night Arabella seduces Jude.

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Jude has continued with his solitary studies and decides to apprentice himself to a stone-mason in order to make the money he will need to survive in Christminster when he goes there to attend college. This shows the reader the depth of Jude's commitment even as the next chapter shows Jude distracted by a very pretty young woman.

Arabella is an interesting character. She is young and beautiful, but she also seems to be a girl who knows how to get what she wants. Arabella sets her sights on Jude and she sets out to catch him. Arabella is a girl who is used to getting what she wants;



therefore, she decides not to take any chances with Jude. Arabella sets out to deceive him. This shows the reader that Arabella is not of moral character. When the reader also notes that Arabella seems to know more about beer than a good girl ought to, it begins to be apparent that Arabella is not what Jude believes she is. This spells trouble for Jude's future and his dreams.





# Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 9-11

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 9-11 Summary

Chapter 9. Two months later, Arabella consults Dr. Vilbert and then tells Jude that she is expecting his child. Jude immediately agrees to marry her and the announcement is made the following Sunday. Jude's aunt warns him against marriage, telling him that people in their family do not do well in marriage. Jude then rents a small cottage on the road to Albertson and buys a pig for Arabella to raise. Their first night as man and woman, Jude is shocked to discover that Arabella's long braid of hair is not her own. Jude also learns that Arabella once worked in a public-house as a barmaid. A short time later, Jude learns that Arabella's pregnancy was fictional.

Chapter 10. It is the day set aside to kill the pig Arabella has raised, but a recent snow storm appears to have kept the butcher from their home. Jude makes a mess of killing the pig and Arabella becomes angry with him.

The following day Jude is walking home from Alfredston when he comes behind two of Arabella's friends and hears them discussing her false pregnancy. One of them suggests that Arabella had known there was no pregnancy from the very start despite her protest that she had truly believed herself pregnant when they married. When Jude gets home, he confronts Arabella with this information. Arabella denies it.

Chapter 11. The next morning Arabella is melting pig fat when she becomes annoyed with Jude for assuming that she purposely trapped him. Arabella begins throwing his books off the table in a rage. Jude becomes angry and forces her to stop, accidentally pulling her fake hair out of its braid. Arabella goes outside and begins screaming that Jude is a slave driver and abusive. Jude leaves the home and visits his aunt, who tells him about a fight between his parents that caused them to live separate lives for most of their marriage. The same happened to his father's sister and her husband. From his aunt's house, Jude goes to a public-house and has a few drinks. When he returns home, he finds that Arabella has left him.

Arabella comes to Jude and tells him that she wants to go to Australia with her parents. Jude gives her all the furnishings from the house, the money from the sale of the pig meat, and all his savings. A short time later Jude discovers that a great many of their shared furnishings, including a picture of himself he gave to Arabella as a wedding gift, were sold to a broker's shop. Jude decides to leave Arabella in the past and to focus on his desires to go to Christminster.

## Part First, At Marygreen: Chapters 9-11 Analysis

Arabella takes her friend's advice and traps Jude into marriage by telling him that she is pregnant. After their wedding, Jude learns that Arabella's hair is fake and that she spent time working as a barmaid in a public-house. This completely alters who Jude thought



Arabella was, but he decides to try to make the marriage work because of the child they are expecting. However, Jude soon learns that this child was fictional as well. Suddenly Jude finds himself in a marriage with a woman he barely knows and would not have sought out if he had known the few facts he has learned about her since they took their vows. In the end, Arabella leaves Jude when she realizes he cannot give her what she thought she wanted. This shows the reader the type of person Arabella is, a woman who only wants what she cannot have.

These chapters are the first to explore the theme of marriage. Marriage and its social expectations are a large part of the novel. The author has introduced in these chapters that marriage is not always what those who enter into it think it should be. Not only that, but the stories Jude's aunt tells him suggests that many marriages will end in unhappiness, forcing the two people bound to one another to forever remain so even if they cannot get along and do not want to be with one another. These suggestions and the disaster of Jude's first marriage suggest to the reader that there will be further exploration of the theme of marriage as the novel continues to develop.



# Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 1-3

## Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 1-3 Summary

Chapter 1. Jude, three years after his marriage to Arabella, finally finds himself walking into Christminster. Although Jude has always wanted to come to Christminster, the thing that finally pushed him to go was a picture of his cousin Sue Bridehead that he saw in his aunt's house. The picture of this beautiful woman inspired Jude to go to Christminster where she lives so that he might seek her out. However, as he arrives, Jude's only thought is to the beauty and intelligence represented by the many churches and colleges that populate the city. Jude spends his first day there exploring the college campuses and the architecture of this great city. Being in the city makes Jude feel almost one with all the great minds that once populated the great city.

Chapter 2. The following day Jude goes to a stone-mason he was told of from his previous employer to ask for a job. It takes several days, but Jude eventually gets word that he is being offered a job. Jude has no savings; therefore, he will be forced to work for a time before he might be able to afford tuition at one of the schools. This does not upset him at the moment because he is just so awed with being in Christminster.

Jude decides to seek out his cousin even though he has gotten a letter from his aunt asking him to stay away from her. Jude finds her working in a religious store creating religious art right in the main shop room. Jude watches her, but he does not approach her out of respect for his aunt. A short time later, Jude is working when he sees Sue come to the stoneyard. Again he does not speak with her.

Chapter 3. Jude goes to the church he knows his cousin Sue attends. Jude watches her and thinks about her, but again he does not approach her. On that same day, Sue Bridehead goes for a walk after church and comes across a man selling statues. Fascinated with one of Venus and Apollo, Sue buys them. However, Sue knows that this type of object is not appropriate for her room in her employer's house, so she covers them up and tells the woman that they are statues of saints.

## Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Jude finally goes to Christminster and falls in love with the architecture and the history of the old town. Jude desperately wants to go to school here in the hopes of becoming an educated member of the church. However, Jude knows that tuition is high and that he will have to work for some time to make enough money to pay for it. For this reason, Jude immediately seeks work as a stone-mason. This shows the reader how responsible Jude is despite his deep desires. It also reveals a deep religious side to Jude that the reader might have suspected but not known at this point in the novel.



At the same time, Jude has fallen in love with his cousin, a woman he has not even met yet. Jude stalks this woman, watching her at her work and in her church. Jude sees this woman as a religious woman who is pious and kind. However, the author reveals that this woman, despite her job as a religious art creator, is not deeply religious. In fact, she buys two statues that are often considered sacrilege by the deeply devoted. The reader should note this at this point in the novel because these statues will soon get Sue in trouble with her landlady.



## Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 4-7

### Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 4-7 Summary

Chapter 4. At work, Jude learns that Sue has come to the stoneyard looking for him. When Jude arrives home that night he finds a note from Sue waiting for him. Jude arranges to meet Sue in a public place. Jude tells Sue how he came to Christminster and mentions his old schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson. When Sue mentions that she knows where Mr. Phillotson lives, they decide to walk to his home.

They have a nice visit with Mr. Phillotson, even though he does not recall Jude as he promised he would. They learn that Mr. Phillotson is looking for a pupil-teacher. Later, as Jude walks Sue home, she tells him that she is about to go back to London because she had a disagreement with her landlady and employer over some statues she bought and the landlady destroyed. Jude does not want her to go and suggests that she become a pupil-teacher with Mr. Phillotson based on a previous experience teaching. Mr. Phillotson quickly agrees and Sue is moved to the small village of Lumsdon.

Chapter 5. Mr. Phillotson takes Sue on as his student as well as a pupil-teacher, spending his evenings in her company. A few weeks after they begin working together, they take the children on a field trip to see a model of Jerusalem in Christminster. Sue argues that no one could possibly know what Jerusalem really looked like and that they should not be so intrigued with it since they are not Jewish. As Sue discusses this religious symbol in such frank tones, much to the embarrassment of Mr. Phillotson, Jude comes in and shows great interest in the model. However, Jude agrees with Sue's assessment.

Jude walks into the village early for a planned visit. Jude sees Mr. Phillotson put his arm around Sue's waist as they walk across the yard to Sue's boarding house.

Chapter 6. Jude goes to visit his aunt, who has become ill. While there, Jude asks many questions about Sue, only to be chastised once more to stay away from her. Jude's aunt tells Jude that getting involved with Sue will only bring him unhappiness. As Jude leaves the village someone stops him and asks if he is studying at university. When Jude explains that he cannot yet afford it, the man laughs and suggests that university learning is not for the likes of Jude. For this reason, when he returns to Christminster, Jude writes letters to five university headmasters to ask for advice and help in becoming a student. Jude receives only one answer, a headmaster who not unkindly suggests that Jude continue on his current path rather than aspire to an education. This upsets Jude and he gets drunk at a local tavern.

Chapter 7. Jude spends the next few days getting drunk rather than returning to his work. At the bar, Jude gets involved with a group of drinkers and fellow masons. One of



them encourages Jude to recite the Creed in Latin. Everyone is greatly impressed with Jude's education. Later, very drunk and unhappy, Jude goes to Sue's boarding house. Sue lets him in and settles him down on the couch for the night. When Jude wakes the next morning, he is so mortified to his behavior that he leaves before Sue wakes. Jude returns to his room only to learn he has been fired from his job. Jude packs his things and returns to Marygreen. At his aunt's house, Jude speaks with the new minister and learns that he might be able to enter the church as a licentiate instead of a university graduate.

## **Part Second, At Christminster: Chapters 4-7 Analysis**

Jude finally meets Sue only to learn that she is about to leave Christminster. Sue's statues were found by her landlady and employer, causing a great deal of friction between them when the woman crushes the statues under her foot. Sue has decided to go to London where her father lives, but Jude talks her into staying near Christminster as a pupil-teacher with his old schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson. This introduction is ironic because the reader can see almost immediately that Mr. Phillotson is just infatuated by Sue as Jude. Not only this, but Jude sees Phillotson place his arm around Sue's waist, a gesture that is inappropriate unless a promise of some sort has been made between the two.

Jude tries to find a quick way to get into university and is basically told that university is not for a person like him. This again causes Jude to feel the worthlessness and sense of being unwanted that he felt in his childhood. Jude once again turns to drink like he did when his marriage to Arabella failed. Jude begins drinking so often that he loses his job for not turning up when he should have. Not only this, but Jude embarrasses himself with Sue by showing up at her house in the middle of the night drunk. This causes Jude to run away and hide at the only home he has ever known, his aunt's. There Jude is told there are other avenues if he truly wants to become a part of the church, giving Jude hope for a future that had appeared bleak.



# Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 1-5

## Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 1-5 Summary

Chapter 1. The idea of becoming a licentiate cheers Jude and he begins to make plans to this end. Jude learns that Sue has decided to enter a training school at Melchester and she writes to ask him to come to the city to be near her. Jude goes immediately, even though it is a bad time for him to find work. When Jude meets Sue in Melchester, he finds her much more subdued than before from the restrictions of the school. As they talk, Sue tells him about the school and strings Mr. Phillotson pulled to get her in. Jude asks Sue if there is some romance between her and Mr. Phillotson and she reluctantly tells him that she is to marry Mr. Phillotson as soon as she earns her certificate. Sue then suggests they not see one another anymore, but Jude insists that her engagement does not change anything between them.

Chapter 2. Jude takes Sue to a museum in a nearby town. When they are ready to leave there is a long time until the train will come, so they decide to walk up the rail and catch it closer to Christminster. However, when they stop at a shepherd's hut, they learn that they have missed the final train because they did not follow the tracks properly. They decide to spend the night and return to Melchester the next day.

Chapter 3. The pupils and teachers at Sue's school miss her immediately and begin to gossip about her absence. One of the teachers looks at the pictures on Sue's dressing table and asks if it is one of these men who came for her. However, the pictures are of Mr. Phillotson and an unknown young man, not Jude. Jude returns Sue to the school early the next morning and Sue is immediately sent into isolation for her actions. Despite the fact that the other students protest this punishment, the teachers do not waver. Sue, however, escapes out a window and swims across a deep stream behind the school. Sue goes quickly to Jude's lodging and he quickly encourages her to put on his good suit while her clothing dries.

Chapter 4. Jude's landlady comes to the door to ask about his supper and sees Sue, but she believes her to be a male acquaintance of Jude's. Jude and Sue talk and Sue tells Jude about a student she once knew who was in love with her and wanted her to become his mistress. Sue refused, but she lived with the man platonically until his death of an illness some time later. This act has caused Sue's father to disown her and explains why she went to Christminster to live on her own. Jude tells Sue that he wants to be a priest and they argue the value of religion. Jude is surprised by some of Sue's views against religion, and becomes deeply troubled. Sue is saddened that Jude is not open to some of her ideas.

Chapter 5. Sue leaves early the next morning to go to the home of a school friend's sister in Shaston. Jude walks her to the train station and attempts to confess his love, as well as his marriage, but Sue will not allow him. A few days later, Sue sends Jude a letter confessing that she knows he loves her and that he may if he wants. Jude goes to



visit Sue and learns that the school refuses to take her back. Not only this, but her all night outing with Jude has become such a scandal that they recommend they marry immediately. Jude feels guilty and suggests it might blow over, but Sue is rude to him in her concern for her own reputation. A short time after this visit, Jude receives an apology and notice that Sue is coming to Melchester to retrieve her belongings.

## **Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 1-5 Analysis**

Cheered by the idea of becoming a licentiate, Jude quickly goes to Melchester when Sue asks for him. Jude believes that Sue's request for him to come to her is based out of affection for him, but he quickly learns that her affection is platonic because she is engaged to Mr. Phillotson. Deciding he would rather be her friend than to have no contact with her at all, Jude brushes the idea of her engagement aside. This leads to a disastrous outing that causes Sue a great deal of distress at her school.

The reader must recall how much Sue dislikes the school and must wonder if her decision to run away has more to do with her own selfishness than with the punishment she receives for her actions. At the same time, the reader learns about Sue's long term platonic relationship with a scholar that caused her relationship with her father to be irreparably altered. This relationship is important for two reasons. First, it is important because it shows Sue's selfishness in living with a man, but not giving him the intimate contact that he so desperately desires from her. Second, this is important because it sets up a precedent in which Sue lives with a man who loves her but she does not return his love in the form of sexual intimacy.

This section of chapters ends with Sue upset about her ruined reputation. Sue had wanted to be a teacher and no school will take a teacher with questionable morals. Despite the fact that Sue has already displayed a lack of religious convictions, she is deeply concerned about her reputation as a moral woman. Sue has been told she should marry Jude to fix things, but she rejects that idea out of hand when Jude does not make the gesture himself. Perhaps Sue does love Jude, but the reader finds that hard to discern at this point in the novel because of Sue's inconsistency with Jude.





## Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 6-10

### Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 6-10 Summary

Chapter 6. Mr. Phillotson has taken on a large school in Shaston with the hope of teaching side by side with Sue once she becomes his wife. To keep himself distracted from Sue, Phillotson has begun studying Roman-Britannic antiquities in the hopes of one day writing a book about them. However, Sue's lack of communication with him and request that he not visit leaves him distracted with anticipation anyway. When Phillotson learns of Sue's troubles, he goes to Melchester and seeks out Jude. Despite the fact that he has the opportunity to lie and cause Phillotson to break his engagement to Sue, Jude tells him the truth about the scandal. A short time later, Sue comes to Melchester to see Jude. Jude tells Sue about Phillotson's visit and they exchange cross words. Jude then takes Sue to a quiet marketplace and tells her about his marriage to Arabella. Sue is outraged and quickly denies any affection for Jude.

Chapter 7. A short time later Jude receives a letter from Sue informing him that she is to marry Mr. Phillotson in a few weeks time. Despite the heartbreak this brings Jude, he not only agrees to walk her down the aisle but suggests they come to Melchester and marry there. On the morning of the wedding, they walk to the church and walk down the aisle as though they are the betrothed. Jude then buys Sue a veil to wear in the ceremony and watches as she commits herself to Phillotson.

Chapter 8. Jude sits in the sitting room he rented for Sue's use and wonders if she was honest in her emotions toward him. When a short time later Jude gets a job offer from his old boss in Christminster and word that his aunt has taken a turn for the worse, Jude decides it is time to leave Melchester. Jude goes to Christminster to check on the job offer after sending Sue word on their aunt and suggesting he meet her at the train station in Alfredston. However, on the night he is to catch the train, Jude stops in at a tavern and discovers that Arabella is working as a barmaid there. Jude reveals himself to Arabella and she asks him to wait for her to get off work so that she might tell him some things she feels he needs to know. Arabella and Jude take a train to Aldbrickham so that they might talk without being overheard by someone who knows either of them. Jude agrees even though he knows it will mean missing his meeting with Sue.

Chapter 9. The next morning, Jude returns to Christminster with Arabella and learns that she married another man in Australia from whom she is separated. Arabella wants Jude to keep quiet about their marriage because she does not want anyone to know she is a bigamist. Arabella tells him there is something else she wants to tell him, but does not. After Arabella leaves, Jude walks into Sue. Sue has come to Christminster because she was afraid his failure to show up at the Alfredston train station meant he was drinking again. Jude does not tell Sue, however, about his meeting with Arabella.

Sue and Jude travel to Marygreen together and discuss her level of happiness. Jude does not believe she is happy and Sue does not deny it, but she refuses to discuss



details of her new life with him. Later, at Marygreen, Jude's aunt once again talks about the dangers of marriage for members of their family. When it appears the aunt will recover, Sue returns to Phillotson. A short time later, Jude gets a letter from Arabella telling him that her new husband has come to London and he wants her to help him run a public-house he has recently bought.

Chapter 10. Jude returns to Melchester because it is close to Sue and because he has decided to renew his efforts to become a priest. To this end, Jude joins the church choir. Around Easter, the choir begins to practice a song that touches Jude deeply. When Jude learns that the author of the song lives in a nearby village, he decides to go meet him because he feels this man could understand him and become a good friend. However, Jude is deeply disappointed to discover this man is not as insightful and caring as he had thought. When Jude arrives home, he finds a letter from Sue asking him to come to dinner that night, but it is already too late.

## **Part Third, At Melchester: Chapters 6-10 Analysis**

Mr. Phillotson is deeply in love with Sue, but he is not willing to overlook an affair with Jude if the rumors he hears from the training school are true. However, Jude refuses to lie to him and reassures him that Sue has done nothing wrong. Sue is annoyed by this and attempts to get Jude to confess that he loves her. Instead Jude tells her that he is legally married even though his wife has left him. The next thing that Sue does shows the reader where her affections really lie. Sue decides to marry Phillotson; however, it is clearly not out of love but out of a sense of revenge on Jude for not telling her the truth of his marriage before she fell in love with him. The reader has been unclear on Sue's feelings up to this point, but it finally seems clear that she is in love with Jude, but she simply is too young and immature to respond to his difficulties with honesty.

Jude, on the other hand, shows a great deal of maturity when he not only consents to walking Sue down the aisle, but he hosts her wedding. Jude, however, is deeply heartbroken over this change of events and allows it to force him out of the town where he has made his life over the past few months. This leads to a surprise meeting with Arabella. For the reader who thought Arabella would be gone from the plot permanently when she went to Australia, this is a shocking turn of events. Arabella, however, confesses to Jude that she remarried in Australia even though their marriage continues to be a legal one. Arabella also tries to tell Jude something else, but never does. This is important because this other confession will prove to be life changing for Jude. Finally, the reader should note the fact that Jude spent the night with Arabella in a hotel and she was his wife at the time. This will also become important later in the novel.



# Part Fourth, At Shaston: Chapters 1-6

## Part Fourth, At Shaston: Chapters 1-6 Summary

Chapter 1. Jude comes for a visit one day and finds Sue in the schoolhouse. Mr. Phillotson is gone for the day, so Sue suggests they have their tea in the schoolhouse. Jude plays for Sue the song that so impressed him on the piano. Then they begin to talk and Jude accuses Sue of treating him in the same flirtatious way she treated her scholar. Sue asks Jude to leave. However, once he is outside, she speaks kindly toward him because she feels safer having him at a distance. Jude goes to the train station but learns that the train will not come for a while, so he walks around the village, finding himself standing outside Sue's house and wondering if it is him she is thinking of.

Chapter 2. Sue writes to him and asks him to not come see her anymore because it is too difficult. A short time later, Jude learns that his aunt has taken a bad turn. Before Jude can get to Marygreen, his aunt has died. Jude writes to Sue and she comes to the funeral alone. After the funeral, Jude tells Sue that he wishes she had not married Mr. Phillotson. Jude then admits that Arabella came back and he saw her. Sue becomes upset and they have a long discussion about their feelings for one another. However, when Jude comes to embrace Sue, she pushes him away and leaves the house. During the night, Jude hears a rabbit caught in a trap and goes to put it out of its misery. Sue tells him if he had not done it, she would have. It is then that Sue admits she did not fully understand what marriage would mean and that she wishes she had not married Mr. Phillotson.

Chapter 3. Jude thinks about Sue's confession all night. When Jude walks Sue to the train station, she allows him to kiss her. This changes everything and Jude decides to burn his religious books. Jude has come around to Sue's way of thinking about the church and their stand on marriage, causing him to turn his back on the religion he thought would be his salvation. At the same time, Sue returns to Phillotson and tells him that she let Jude hold her hand. Mr. Phillotson is not angry with her. However, that night Sue sits down in the kitchen rather than sleep in the same bed with Phillotson. The following night Sue makes herself a bed in the downstairs closet. Finally Sue asks Phillotson if he would consider allowing her to leave the marriage and live with Jude. At first Phillotson thinks she is joking and then he becomes saddened. However, Phillotson agrees to allow Sue to live separate from him in the house, but not to go to her lover.

Chapter 4. One night Phillotson stays up late and forgets that he no longer sleeps in the master bedroom with Sue. Phillotson goes into the room where Sue lies sleeping and begins to undress. Suddenly Sue leaps out of bed and jumps out of the window. Phillotson finds her and discovers that she is not injured. Sue tries to spare his feelings by suggesting she jump out of the window in her sleep, but he knows the truth. The following day Phillotson visits a friend to tell him that he is going to allow Sue to live with her lover so that at least one person might understand his motives. This man disagrees with his decision and warns him that he could place his position with the school in



danger. Phillotson insists it is the moral thing to do, however, to make his wife happy. Phillotson tells Sue the news and arranges for her to go to Melchester. Phillotson wants to give her money and furniture, but Sue insists on only taking her few belongings.

Chapter 5. Jude meets Sue at the train and boards it again quickly to travel with her to Aldbrickham so that they will not run into anyone who knows them. When Sue learns that Jude has taken a single room in an inn, she is scandalized and insists that they not share a room. For this reason, when they reach the station at Aldbrickham, they ask a young man to show them to an inn that is still open that late at night. They are taken to the same inn where Jude stayed with Arabella, but he does not realize it until after the maid has told Sue of his previous visit there. Sue becomes angry and accuses Jude of terrible things even though he was legally Arabella's husband at the time. Jude pledges his love for Sue before leaving her for the night.

Chapter 6. When word gets out of what Mr. Phillotson has allowed his wife to do, a meeting of the school managers is called. Mr. Phillotson is asked to resign, but he refuses. They tell Mr. Phillotson he is fired, but he protests and a public meeting is called. Many in the town feel that Mr. Phillotson does not have the moral character to teach their children, but many of the itinerants support Mr. Phillotson, causing a fight to break out between the two sides. Afterward, Phillotson becomes ill and his friend sends for Sue. Sue arrives and visits with him. Phillotson asks Sue to come back to him after she tells him that Arabella has asked for a formal divorce from Jude. Sue refuses. A short time later, Mr. Phillotson decides to obtain a divorce from Sue as well.

## **Part Fourth, At Shaston: Chapters 1-6 Analysis**

Jude finally confesses his love to Sue and she admits to being unhappy in her marriage. Sue allows Jude to kiss her, but she returns to her husband with every intention to be a good wife. This breaks Jude's heart and he turns on his religious teachings, teachings he has always held dear, because they appear to be what has led Sue directly into this unhappy life. Sue has always been against religion and has always tried to turn Jude to her way of thinking and now she finally has. Now Jude has no future but a future filled with loneliness as he pines after the woman he loves.

Sue returns to Phillotson and confesses her unhappiness, asking him to allow her to live with Jude. Phillotson at first refuses, but soon sees how unhappy Sue is and agrees to allow her to leave. This, however, changes Phillotson's life because it makes the people in his village believe he is not moral enough to teach their children. For this reason, Phillotson loses not only his wife, but his job as well. Phillotson has done what he thinks is a moral thing, but it turns out to be the worst thing he could do for himself.

Sue goes to Jude, but she refuses to share a room with him despite a fit of jealousy when she learns that he shared a room with Arabella the night of their chance encounter. This is important because the reader already knows that Sue lived with a man for more than a year without becoming intimate with him; therefore, the reader is left to wonder if Sue will do the same to Jude. This will cause some friction between

them despite the fact that they are finally now together. At the same time, Arabella asks for a divorce and Phillotson decides to offer one, a fact that could leave both Jude and Sue free to marry one another.



# Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 1-4

## Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1. Sue and Jude are living in a house just outside of Aldbrickham and Jude is working as a tombstone maker. They receive the news that both their divorces have come through and Jude suggests they get married. Sue refuses, however, suggesting that marriage would alter their relationship and they would come to dislike one another. Jude is frustrated because Sue refuses to become intimate with him and they sleep in separate bedrooms still even though it has been many months since she left her husband.

Chapter 2. Jude comes home and learns that Arabella has been to the house to speak with him. Sue is threatened by this; therefore, when Arabella returns later that night she begs Jude not to speak to her. Jude goes after Arabella anyway, but returns because he was unable to find her. Sue begs Jude not to go out again and tells him that she will become his lover if he does not. The next morning, Jude begins planning their wedding. Sue feels guilty over refusing to allow him to speak to Arabella, so she goes to her hotel to make sure she is okay. Arabella tells Sue she should marry Jude so that she should have the protection of the law should he beat her or leave her.

Chapter 3. Jude is waiting for Sue when she returns home and they begin to walk to the parish clerk to register to be married. However, Sue tells Jude that Arabella's talk of the law made her wonder if marriage was not unfair to men and if it would be better for them to remain as they are. They decide to think on it for a while. As they are thinking, Jude receives a letter from Arabella telling him that she had a child eight months after leaving their marriage and that the child, a boy, has lived with her parents since birth. However, the parents no longer want the child and are sending him to England. Arabella does not want to take the child, so she asks Jude if he will. Both Sue and Jude decide they will take the child and that they should marry before his arrival. However, the child arrives that same night.

Chapter 4. Jude and Sue decide to marry immediately and to have the child christened with Jude's name. They register to marry, and on the appointed day, they go to the clerk's office with Widow Edlin as their witness. However, when they arrive and Sue sees the type of woman who marries there, women who are pregnant and women who trap drunk men, she begins to get cold feet. She and Jude talk and decide to put off the marriage until they can do it properly in a church.



## Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Sue and Jude are now living together, but Sue continues to keep Jude out of her bed. However, when Arabella comes back and Sue begins to fear that she will seduce Jude, she decides to let Jude make her his true lover. Sue clearly is in love with Jude, but her immaturity led her to believe that she could keep him with her without giving him all, but Arabella's continual reappearance in Jude's life leaves her feeling threatened. When they become lovers, Jude wants to marry her, but the theme of marriage comes again as the reader learns that Sue believes marriage is a contract that has the power to change the relationship, to give one partner power over the other and therefore create a situation that is not conducive to love.

Arabella once again shows her own personality when she announces in a letter to Jude that he has a child who must be five to seven years old by now. The reader now knows what it was that Arabella had wanted to tell Jude before, but she did not do it and now the announcement is quite a surprise. Not only this, but Arabella waits until the last minute to tell Jude so that the child arrives the same day he learns about his existence. This is an awkward situation, but Jude and Sue handle it with class. The reader can only hope that motherhood will help Sue grow up a little.



# Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 5-8

## Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 5-8 Summary

Chapter 5. There is a fair at Stoke-Barehills. Sue and Jude take the child to the fair. At the same time Arabella and her husband arrive at the fair and see Sue and Jude in the crowd. Arabella becomes fascinated with them and follows them from exhibit to exhibit. Arabella runs into one of her old friends and complains to her about Jude and Sue. Arabella then meets with Dr. Vilbert and he gives her a potion that is supposed to make a man fall in love with a woman.

Chapter 6. Sue and Jude go to London on a trip that is meant to make it appear they have gotten married, but this does not stop the rumors that build around them. People talk and this talk is overheard by the children who use it to tease their son at school. Jude entertains the idea of moving again, but he is offered a job in a church that he does not want to pass up. However, Jude has Sue help him in the church and when they are spotted by church officials they are asked to leave because of the rumors that they are living in sin. For this reason, they decide to sell their furniture and become more mobile.

Chapter 7. Sue and Jude travel around for three years, taking odd jobs here and there as well as adding two children to their family with a third on the way. At the spring fair at Kennetbridge, Arabella recognizes Sue, where she is selling cakes with little Jude. Arabella speaks to her and learns that Jude has been sick. However, they have been living a happy life on the road. Sue tells Arabella that she and Jude are married, but this proves to be untrue. Sue also learns that Arabella's husband has died and she has turned to religion to console her.

Chapter 8. On the way home in Alfredston, where Arabella is now living with her friend Anny, she talks about Jude and expresses a desire to have him back. Anny accuses Arabella of always wanting what she cannot have. They come upon a man walking on the road and pick him up. The man turns out to be Mr. Phillotson, who has recently returned to teaching at Marygreen because of a sympathetic cleric there. Arabella tells Phillotson about seeing Sue and chastises him for not trying harder to force her to submit to the boundaries of marriage. At the same time Sue returns home and tells Jude about running into Arabella. Jude tells Sue that he thinks it is good they have decided to move on and that they should return to Christminster.





## Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Jude and Sue begin to have trouble in the town where they live because it is public knowledge that they are not married. The arrival of Jude's young son only causes this to be even more difficult. Jude begins losing work over it, so he decides they should sell their furniture and adopt a more temporary lifestyle. This seems to work for them because they do not stay in one place long enough for people to learn they are not married. The reader sees this situation and understands that if the morals of the time were strong enough to cause a teacher to lose his job because he allowed his wife to leave him, then they are strong enough to ostracize a couple who refuses to marry. Sue's reasons for not wanting to marry are strong. Sue believes marriage will take the romance out of their relationship. However, it seems it would be much simpler to just marry and avoid the disapproval of those around them. These two are strong in their beliefs, however, and it is this that spells trouble for them now and possibly in the future.

Arabella sees Jude and Sue at a fair and is jealous not only of their close relationship, but of their relationship with her child, a child she never truly wanted. This leads to Arabella's desire to steal Jude back when she sees them again after her husband has died. This could mean trouble for Jude and Sue, especially since Arabella has been known to use tricks to get what she wants. However, Jude and Sue have decided to return to Christminster, a move that might take them out of Arabella's way.



# Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 1-4

## Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1. When Sue, Jude, and the children arrive at Christminster, they discover that it is Remembrance Day, a day of celebration and ceremony. Instead of looking immediately for lodging, Jude takes the family to see the arrival of the new bishops. Someone in the crowd asks what the plague written in Latin on the wall means and Jude explains. Someone else recognizes Jude and asks him about his desire for education. This causes Jude to make a loud speech about how education should be available to all men, not just the wealthy. Sue keeps trying to keep Jude quiet, but he refuses to listen. Later Jude learns that Sue spotted Phillotson in the crowd and did not want him to notice them.

After the procession, Jude takes the family to a neighborhood that is sandwiched between two universities to look for lodging. Unfortunately, each home they go to refuses to give them a room when they see the children and Sue's condition. They finally find one home willing to take Sue and the children, but not Jude. They agree to it for a week, but when the husband returns home he becomes angry and insists that they leave the following day.

Chapter 2. Young Jude becomes distressed by this situation and worries about what they will do without a place to live. Sue tries to be honest with him by telling him she is pregnant and that there will be another child to worry about. Young Jude becomes agitated with her and begs to know how she could let such a thing happen. Sue sends the child to bed and his final words before sleep is that they should never have been born. The next morning Sue goes early to tell Jude about their situation. Jude insists they have breakfast together before returning to retrieve the children and look for other lodging.

When Sue goes to wake the children, she discovers that Young Jude has hung the two younger children and himself. Sue and Jude are both devastated by this. Jude attempts to console Sue, but her grief consumes her. After the coroner's inquest, Jude attends the funeral. When he returns home, Sue is missing. Jude finds her inside the children's grave begging to see them one last time. Jude takes her home and calls for a doctor. Later that night Sue gives birth to a premature baby, who also dies.

Chapter 3. Sue recovers her health, but turns to the church in her grief. Sue comes to believe that she is being punished for not honoring her marriage vows to Phillotson. Jude and Sue argue often about this. Sue also begins to attend church once again. Jude tries to talk sense into her, to remind her of her own beliefs that she made his as well. Sue will not listen. Arabella comes to visit them and tells them that she is living with



her father now. As they talk, Sue insists that she is not Jude's wife and will not allow Arabella to refer to her in that way.

Later one night Jude finds Sue in a nearby church. Jude speaks to her and learns that she has decided that they should separate. Sue asks Jude to find another place to live. Sue insists that she is still in love with Jude, but that she cannot live in sin with him any longer. Jude is beaten down and finally agrees to leave.

Chapter 4. Arabella seeks out Phillotson and tells him about the deaths of Sue's children and her desire to separate from Jude. Arabella encourages Phillotson to contact Sue. Phillotson writes to Sue and tells her that he would be willing to take her back if she so desired. Sue tells Jude of Phillotson's letter and informs him that she plans to return to Phillotson. Sue believes that by remarrying Phillotson she will correct the wrong that caused the deaths of her children. Phillotson believes he can reinstate his career with a return of his wife. Jude is simply left alone.

## **Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 1-4 Analysis**

Sue and Jude return to the place where it all began, Christminster. Jude is still fascinated with the universities he will never be allowed to study inside of, but he has let go of his dream and now focuses on his growing family. However, that family finds it difficult to find the lodging that was once so easy for Jude as a single man to find. This leads to tragedy when Young Jude comes to the conclusion that children are all unwanted and simply get in the way. This feeling is similar to the one Jude once had that led him to come to Christminster in the first place. Young Jude reacts differently, however, killing his half brother and sister before killing himself.

The devastation of losing her children causes Sue to turn to the church, an entity she once mocked. Sue has decided that she is being punished for living in sin with Jude and that the only way to fix what has happened is to return to her husband despite the fact that they are now divorced. Jude fights for Sue but is forced to let her go when she fails to respond to his arguments. In the end, Phillotson sees Sue's grief as a way to regain all he lost in allowing her to go to Jude in the first place. It is a sad situation in which two people are using each other for all the wrong reasons, symbolizing all that is wrong with marriage as Sue once pointed out. In the end, Jude is left alone with his grief and without the religion that once would have been a solace to him.



# Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 5-11

## Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 5-11 Summary

Chapter 5. Sue goes to Marygreen where she stops by Phillotson's home the night before their wedding. Sue reacts badly when she sees the marriage license, a reaction that makes Phillotson question his own motives. Widow Edlin also questions this marriage after Sue destroys a pretty nightgown she once bought for Jude. Widow Edlin to encourage Mr. Phillotson to call off the wedding, but he refuses. They marry early in the morning and afterward Mr. Phillotson promises to allow Sue her own bedroom.

Chapter 6. Arabella comes to Jude late one evening and tells him that her father has thrown her out of his house and she is in need of a place to sleep. Jude reluctantly allows her to stay with him in his new lodgings. The next day Jude pays for Arabella to go to Alfredston to retrieve some items she left there. When she returns, she comes with the news that Phillotson and Sue are married. Arabella takes Jude to a tavern where she buys him a few drinks. Arabella encourages Jude to drink heavily and eventually he is drunk enough that she is able to take him to her father's new pork shop where she plans to seduce him.

Chapter 7. Arabella tells her father that she plans to keep Jude drunk until he agrees to marry her. Three days later Arabella and her father throw a party. The party lasts all night. In the morning, Arabella's father accuses Jude of promising to marry his daughter, seducing her, and then backing out. Jude becomes annoyed and marries Arabella just to prove he is an honorable man.

Chapter 8. Jude and Arabella move into lodgings of their own. Jude becomes ill and cannot work. One afternoon he asks Arabella to write to Sue and ask her to come. Arabella claims she has, but Sue never appears. Convinced that Arabella did not send the note, Jude decides to go to Sue. Jude hides in the church and waits for Sue to come inside. They speak for a few minutes and Sue allows Jude to kiss her, telling him that her marriage is in name only, that she still loves Jude. Jude asks her to run away with him, but she refuses on the same grounds that led her to remarry Phillotson in the first place. Jude returns to Christminster sicker than before.

Chapter 9. Jude returns to Arabella and she becomes convinced he will soon die. Back in Marygreen, Sue decides she should give herself to her husband completely to repair the sins she has committed. Sue hesitates, taking longer with the dishes than necessary and then asks Widow Edlin to stay the night. Finally Sue goes to Phillotson and he takes her into his bed.



Chapter 10. Jude briefly recovers, but then becomes ill again. Jude is often delirious and one day he becomes vulgar with Widow Edlin when she tells him of Sue's decision to be a true wife to Phillotson. Later Dr. Vilbert arrives to check on the patient and Arabella comes onto him, suggesting she fed him his own love potion.

Chapter 11. It is Remembrance Day and Arabella is anxious to join the festivities. Her father is supposed to come sit with Jude, but he has not arrived. Arabella goes out for a short time, leaving Jude alone. When she returns, some of his old friends come by and ask Arabella to join them at the boat races. Arabella goes upstairs to tell her father where she is going, but finds he has not returned. Not only this, but Jude has died in Arabella's absence. Arabella leaves him alone to go to the boat races, flirting with Dr. Vilbert the whole time, before she finally returns to call the coroner for Jude. Widow Edlin comes and sits with Jude before the funeral with Arabella. They discuss Sue and come to the conclusion that she has many miserable years ahead of her.

## **Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chapters 5-11 Analysis**

Sue remarries Phillotson even though she clearly does not want this life for herself. Phillotson sees Sue's unhappiness and promises they will have separate bedrooms. This lasts for a few weeks, but after Jude comes and begs Sue to run away with him one last time, she becomes a complete wife to Phillotson in the hopes that it will wash away all her sin. Sue has allowed the beliefs of a religion to lead her into a miserable life with a man she never loved while the man she does love finds himself tricked into remarrying his own ex-spouse and committed to a life of unhappiness.

Jude slowly wastes away as Sue lives a miserable life with Phillotson. In the end, Arabella, who so desperately wanted Jude back, is already on the hunt for a new man despite the fact that Jude is still alive. When he dies, callous, selfish Arabella leaves his dead body undiscovered so that she can go to the boat races. Jude, a man who once had great dreams and hopes, a man who once loved with his entire soul, dies alone without anyone to even notice his passing. Jude has truly become obscure in his death because of the strict beliefs of an entire society of people who have forced their beliefs on the one woman who could have made Jude something more than what he was.



# Characters

## Jude Fawley

Jude Fawley is a young orphan who has recently come to Marygreen to live with his aunt when the novel begins. Jude's aunt often tells him he should have died with his father; therefore, Jude grows up feeling unwanted and in the way. For this reason, Jude focuses on his future with the hopes of one day gaining an education like Mr. Phillotson, a teacher he once admired. Jude works hard toward his goal, but is sidelined when a young woman he has courted tells him she is pregnant. Jude does the proper thing and marries this girl, but soon learns she is not who he thought she was and that she was never really pregnant. Jude attempts to make the marriage work, but in the end his wife decides that marriage is not what she thought it would be.

Jude gets to his beloved university town only to discover that he is too poor to become a student. At the same time Jude falls in love with his cousin, Sue Bridehead. However, Sue has no intention of allowing Jude into her heart because he is her cousin. When she finally does admit to loving Jude, she learns of his first marriage. Out of disappointment and anger, as well as a need to repair her reputation, Sue turns to Mr. Phillotson. Sue is married with Jude's consent. However, Jude is left heartbroken and lost as to what he should do next. In a short time, Sue confesses her love to Jude and leaves her husband to be with him.

Jude and Sue find happiness for a short time, but tragedy pulls them apart. Sue returns to her first husband and Jude seeks comfort in alcohol, an act that leads him into a second marriage to his first wife. Jude soon becomes ill and the end of his life comes quicker than anyone had imagined. Jude dies alone, abandoned by the woman he loves and the woman who twice tricked him into marriage.

## Arabella Donn Fawley Cartlett

Arabella is the daughter of a pig farmer who lives on the road between Alfredston and Marygreen in the beginning of the novel. Arabella sees Jude walking to and from his apprenticeship in Alfredston every week and finally stops him by throwing a piece of pig intestine at him. Arabella convinces Jude to begin calling on her. In a short time, Arabella seduces Jude and convinces him she is pregnant, tricking him into marrying him.

Arabella is young and selfish; therefore, marriage to a poor man does not keep her interested for long. Arabella leaves the marriage and goes to Australia with her parents. A falling out with her parents causes Arabella to come back to England, where she makes her living as a barmaid. Jude runs into her and Arabella tells him that she married another man in Australia despite their marriage never having been ended legally. In time, Arabella asks for a divorce, freeing Jude to take another wife. About the



same time, Arabella tells Jude that she had his son and that the child is coming to England. Arabella waits until the last minute to tell Jude about this child so that the child shows up at his house the same day he learns of him.

Arabella witnesses Jude and Sue's happiness and begins to wish she had not left Jude. Arabella schemes to get Jude back by encouraging Sue's ex-husband to take her back after she turns to religion in the aftermath of the deaths of her children. Arabella then consoles Jude and gets him drunk, keeping him that way for three days until he finally agrees to marry her. In the end, however, Arabella grows bored with Jude again when he becomes sick and needs her to care for him. Arabella begins seeking out her next husband while Jude is lying on his deathbed.

## **Sue Bridehead Phillotson**

Sue Bridehead is Jude's cousin. When Jude sees a picture of Sue and learns that she lives in Christminster, he decides it is finally time to move to Christminster as he has hoped to do since he was a child. When he sees her for the first time, Jude does not tell Sue who he is, but instead watches her for several weeks without her knowledge. Finally, Sue learns that Jude is in Christminster and she seeks him out. They become friends, but Sue is aware that Jude is in love with her almost from the first time they meet.

Jude arranges to have Sue work as a pupil-teacher with his old schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson when he learns that she will be leaving Christminster because of a falling out with her employer. This is a mistake because Mr. Phillotson quickly falls in love with Sue, offering her a life of respectability. Sue falls in love with Jude and wants to marry him, but after learning he is already married and finding herself in a scandalous situation, Sue decides to marry Phillotson. It is a mistake, however, and Sue quickly asks Phillotson to let her go so that she might be with Jude. Thinking he is doing the moral thing, Phillotson eventually agrees.

Jude and Sue live happily together for several years, but Sue refuses to marry him. Sue has different views of religion and some of these opinions spill into her belief in marriage. Sue thinks that marriage gives a man undo influence over a woman and a woman undo power over a man when the law becomes involved. This causes Sue to refuse to marry Jude all the time they are together, even though they have three children together. In the end, Sue turns to religion for solace, going against everything she has always believed in, and decides she must return to her true husband, Mr. Phillotson, to atone for her sins.

## **Mr. Richard Phillotson**

Mr. Phillotson is the schoolmaster at Marygreen when the novel begins. Mr. Phillotson tells Jude that the measure of a man is his level of education, prompting Jude to look to education to improve his life and to prove he is worthy. Later, when Jude arrives in Christminster, the same college town where Mr. Phillotson went to continue his



education, he looks up his old teacher and discovers he never attended university as he had planned.

Jude arranges for his cousin to work with Mr. Phillotson because it is the only way he can stop her from returning to London. However, this introduction proves to be fatal for Jude because Sue, the love of his life, marries Phillotson to repair her reputation and to retaliate against Jude for not telling her about his first marriage.

After they marry, Phillotson discovers that Sue is in love with Jude and that she is repulsed by the idea of sleeping with him. For this reason, Phillotson allows Sue to leave and move in with Jude. However, this decision ruins Phillotson's career and makes him unable to find work for several years. Finally, when Phillotson learns that Sue has lost her children and turned to the church for solace, he asks her to return to him so that he might repair his career. Sue agrees and soon becomes his wife once more.

## **Drusilla Fawley**

Drusilla Fawley is Jude's elderly aunt. Jude's aunt is a bitter woman who has been hurt by life. Jude's aunt often tells him he would be better off dead, and when she learns that he wants to marry, tells him that Fawleys should never marry because they have bad luck at it. Later, when Jude sees a picture of Sue and expresses a wish to meet her, Jude's aunt begs him to never talk to Sue. Jude's aunt is afraid that Jude will fall in love with Sue and this will lead to disaster for them both. In the end it this prediction proves to be true.

## **Widow Edlin**

Widow Edlin is the elderly lady who lives next door to Drusilla Fawley and cares for her in her final illness. Widow Edlin becomes good friends with Sue and Jude; therefore, when they attempt to marry, she comes to be their witness. Later, Widow Edlin lives with the family while Jude is sick to help care for the two young children. After the death of her children, Widow Edlin is the only one besides Jude who tries to talk sense into Sue, tries to convince her not to marry Mr. Phillotson. Unfortunately, no one listens to her.

## **Young Jude or Little Father Time**

Young Jude, called Little Father Time until his christening, is the child born in from the union of Jude and Arabella. Young Jude is born in Australia and raised there by Arabella's parents until she remarries Mr. Cartlett. Arabella's parents then send the child to England to be with his mother, but she does not want him because she is afraid his presence will put a strain on her new marriage. For this reason, Arabella tells Jude about the child and asks him to take custody of him.





Young Jude lives with Sue and Jude for three or four years. When the family goes to Christminster to make their home and cannot find a place to live because of the children, Young Jude, who has always felt unwanted, decides to murder his young half siblings and himself to remove the burden of them from his parents.

## **Mr. Cartlett**

Mr. Cartlett is Arabella's second husband. Arabella meets Cartlett in Australia and marries him without getting a divorce from Jude. Arabella and Cartlett have a falling out so she returns to England, but he soon follows. Eventually Arabella asks Jude for a divorce so that she might marry Cartlett legally. In the end, Arabella spends several years married to Cartlett as his legal wife and works with him in his public-house, but Cartlett dies and leaves Arabella on the mercy of friends and family who are willing to take her in until she marries Jude again.

## **Anny**

Anny is one of Arabella's young friends. Anny is one of the friends who advises Arabella on how to catch a young man, but is shocked when she realizes that Arabella was not really pregnant when she married Jude. Later Anny and Arabella find one another again and move in together for a time after Cartlett's death.

## **Dr. Vilbert**

Dr. Vilbert is a traveling salesman who sells tonics meant to repair a person's health. Dr. Vilbert first comes into the novel when Jude runs into him on the road and asks him for help in learning to read and write Latin and Greek. Dr. Vilbert pledges his help, but quickly forgets. Later, Dr. Vilbert speaks with Arabella and appears to confirm her pregnancy, but this turns out to be false. At the end of the novel, Arabella turns to Dr. Vilbert for help with her sick husband. At the same time, Arabella seduces Dr. Vilbert with an eye to making him her third husband.



# Objects/Places

## Books

Jude teaches himself Latin and Greek from books he received from Mr. Phillotson. Later, Jude teaches himself great literature and religion from books he saves up to buy.

## Bread Cart

Jude drives a bread cart for his aunt's bakery during his teen years, but he spends the whole time reading instead of paying attention to where the horse is going.

## Trains

Jude and Sue travel frequently between towns on the train. At one point, a porter mistakenly takes them for lovers and gives them a compartment all their own.

## Closet

When Sue and Jude return to Christminster with their children, Sue finds a room at a private home near two universities. The children sleep in a closet in this room. Sue finds the children hanging by their necks in this closet the following morning due to a misunderstanding between her and Young Jude.

## Graves

Sue stands on her children's coffins and refuses the caretaker to fill in their graves until she has been allowed to see them again. Jude coaxes her out of the grave only to have her give premature birth to their final child who also dies.

## Training School

Sue attends a training school in Melchester that is to help her get her certificate in teaching. However, Sue dislikes the discipline instituted there and eventually runs away, only to be refused reentry. This leads to the scandal that causes Sue to marry Phillotson.

## Marygreen

Marygreen is the small village in North Wessex where Jude lives as a child.



## **Alfredston**

Alfredston is a small town five miles from Marygreen where Jude is apprenticed to a stone-mason.

## **Christminster**

Christminster is a university town just outside of North Wessex. It is thought that Christminster is a fictional town that is a fictionalized version of Oxford. Jude dreams of studying in Christminster his entire childhood and is devastated to learn he cannot because of his lack of wealth. Later, Jude brings his family here only to have his eldest child hand himself and his siblings because of the burden he believes them to be.

## **Melchester**

Melchester is another university town where Sue goes to get her teaching certificate. Jude follows in hopes of becoming a licentiate in the church, but fails to follow through when Sue breaks his heart by marrying Phillotson.

## **Aldbrickham**

Aldbrickham is a town east of Marygreen where Jude and Sue live in the early days of their intimate relationship. It is here from which Jude and Sue flee when people begin to ostracize them for not being married.

## **London**

Arabella lives in London during the majority of the novel. Sue also once lived in London with a young scholar with whom she refused to have sexual relations even though they shared the same apartment.



# Themes

## Religion

Religion plays a big role in this novel on two levels. First, the universities in Christminster mostly cater to those who want to enter the church as learned men, bishops. As Jude becomes an adult and studies the Latin and Greek texts, he comes across he comes to believe that he wants nothing more than to become a bishop in the church. This also stems from Mr. Phillotson's parting words to Jude that studying to enter the church is the best a man can hope to aspire. Even when Jude discovers that his poverty will keep him from entering one of these universities, he continues to hope to enter the church through a less prestigious program that will help him become a priest.

Sue does not believe in the teachings of the church. From the beginning of the novel, Sue questions the law of the church and the hypocrisy that allows the church to believe it knows all about the time of Christ, even the layout of a city that does not even truly exist in her times as it did in Christ's time. Sue's beliefs include the idea that marriage is simply a contract designed to give two people power over one another, a system that removes romance from the equation. Sue refuses to marry Jude on three occasions for this reason, because she is afraid it will change the way Jude feels about her.

The second way in which religion impacts the plot of the novel is not only Sue's beliefs against religion, but later her changing attitude in which she decides her children have been murdered because she has chosen to live in sin with Jude. This embrace of religion leads Sue to believe that in order to atone for her sins she must leave Jude and reunite with her husband. Sue thinks that God is punishing her for her happiness and the only way to atone is to be unhappy for the rest of her life. For this reason, Sue leaves the man she loves and gives herself, body and soul, to another whom she does not love.

## Love

Love comes in many forms. In this novel it comes between family members and between lovers. Jude is the child of a broken marriage before it was common for people to divorce. Jude's father dies, leaving him to the mercy of an aunt who, while not outright cruel, has little interest in raising a child. This leaves Jude feeling unloved and unwanted, leaving him vulnerable to falling for the first girl who crosses his path. This girl is Arabella, a young pig farmer's daughter who traps Jude into marriage because she believes it would be fun to have a man take care of her. However, Arabella soon grows tired of Jude and throws him over, leaving him feeling once again as though he does not matter to anyone.



Jude moves to Christminster and falls deeply in love with Sue Bridehead, his cousin. This relationship takes a rocky path as Sue first refuses to love Jude and later punishes him for his marriage by marrying another man. Eventually Jude and Sue find happiness together, but their happiness is short lived. Jude's child from his first marriage, a child who has also always felt in the way and unwanted, takes his own life and the lives of Jude and Sue's children in order to make life easier for his parents. Rather than make life easier, however, Young Jude's actions sever their relationship for good.

Jude has struggled to find love all his life, but when he finally finds it it is with a woman who is not prepared to love another person. Jude struggles to find happiness, struggles to convince his soul mate that they are meant to be together whether or not the church or society agrees. In the end, however, Jude loses against society and dies in obscurity, one more lost soul for whom no one is willing to lose their own soul for.

## Education

Jude dreams of moving to Christminster and becoming an educated man all throughout his childhood. To make this happen, Jude begins studying every book he can get his hands on, teaching himself to read, write, and speak both Latin and Greek. Jude is clearly a very intelligent man to be able to teach himself these difficult languages without any help. However, Jude is not a wealthy man and he cannot afford to attend university. The idea that he will never achieve his desired goal leaves Jude devastated.

At the same time, Jude befriends his old schoolmaster, a man who spends his life educating young minds but also could not afford to get into university. These two men have the same ruined dream and these two men also fall in love with the same woman. The schoolmaster loses his right to teach when he allows his wife to live with Jude, her lover. However, the realization that this simple thing, this less than thing, is all he has the schoolmaster is willing to do anything to get it back, including marrying a woman who does not want him.

Education is important to Jude and it makes a statement about who a man is in this novel. The fact that something so fundamental is kept out of reach for Jude simply underscores the desires of a man's heart and the society that keeps it from him, making the love story that much more pronounced to the reader. It is a parallel desire, a parallel story that reinforces all the themes of the novel for the reader.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view. The narration remains with Jude throughout most of the novel, but occasionally moves into the minds of one of the three other main characters. However, the point of view lacks the omniscient characteristic that most modern readers are accustomed to. While the reader is privy to the main character's thoughts and desires, the reader is kept at something of a distance due to the authorial voice that often intrudes on the narration.

The point of view of this novel struggles to recall whose mind it is inside of at certain points of the novel. In fact, some chapters begin in such a way that the reader does not know who the narrator is until several pages into it. This tends to cause a little confusion on the part of the reader. However, the point of view does tend to remain with Jude during most of the plot, telling the story in such a way that the reader sympathizes with him more than any of the other three main characters. At the same time, the author allows the reader peek into the thoughts and actions of the other characters as well to explain how certain things happen to impact Jude's life. While the point of view is difficult at times for the reader, it tells a powerful story with little distraction from sentimentality.

## Setting

The novel is set in the fictionalized area of Wessex in England. The author has created his world from an ancient kingdom of Wessex in English history. The author takes many known cities and towns in eastern England and changes their names to create a world that is a thinly veiled copy of the England that existed at the time the novel was written.

The setting of the novel is important more because of when it is set rather than where. The novel is set during the late 1800s in a world where education was still a luxury of the wealthy. This is important to the plot because Jude desperately wants an education, but he is an orphan who must live off of what he makes as a stone-mason. This prevents Jude from getting his education. The time of the novel is also important because it is a time when religion and a sense of morals had an impact on the actions of society. In Jude's world, the idea that a man and woman could live together without the benefit of marriage was never heard of, therefore when Jude and Sue do just that they are ostracized and forced to hide their choice not to be married. For these reasons, the time period of the setting is very important to the overall plot of the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The novel is written in formal English. The author is clearly an educated man and his language reflects that in his writing. Not only this, but the novel was written in the late



1800s, a time period when language was still an important aspect of everyday speech and writing, keeping slang a thing of the poorly educated and out of literature. The language of this novel tends to be much more formal than language that modern readers might be accustomed to for this reason.

The language of the novel is not difficult to understand, but some modern readers might have trouble with words and phrases that are unfamiliar because they have fallen out of common usage. The novel also includes many phrases in Latin because Latin was still the language of the church and a language that Jude felt he needed to learn in order to get the university degree he so desperately desired. These phrases are not always explained in the text, but readers familiar with the church will understand their intention. However, understanding these phrases is not important to the overall understanding of the novel.

## Structure

The novel is divided into six sections, each denoted by the location in which most of the scenes in those sections take place. Within each section, the author has written numerous chapters, each section with its own set of numbered chapters. The novel is written in both exposition and dialogue, but there is much more exposition in the novel as dialogue is often brief and used only when it is important to draw out the minutia of a scene.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot is the story of Jude Fawley and his desire to find acceptance in the world. At first, Jude turns to an education for this acceptance, but when that fails, he turns to love. One subplot of the novel centers around Sue Bridehead and her strange ideas of religion and marriage, ideas that get her into trouble until tragedy causes her to completely abandon her ideas and embrace religion. Another subplot focuses on Arabella Donn, Jude's first wife, and her attempts to have everything she wants, including Jude. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

"The schoolmaster was leaving the village, and everybody seemed sorry."  
Part First, At Marygreen: Chap. 1, p. 3

"He knew well, too well, in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind. Yet, such being the custom of the rural districts among honorable young men who had drifted so far into intimacy with a woman as he unfortunately had done, he was ready to abide by what he had said, and take the consequences."  
Part First, At Marygreen: Chap. 9, p. 55

"The next noteworthy move in Jude's life was that in which he appeared gliding steadily onward through a dusky landscape of some three years' later leafage than had graced his courtship of Arabella, and the disruption of his course conjugal life with her. He was walking towards Christminster city, at a point a mile or two to the south-west of it."  
Part Second, At Christminster: Chap. 1, p. 89

"This terribly sensible advice exasperated Jude. He had known all that before. He knew it was true. Yet it seemed a hard slap after ten years of labor, and its effect upon him just now was to make him rise recklessly from the table, and, instead of reading as usual, to go downstairs and into the streets."  
Part Second, At Christminster: Chap. 6, p. 138

"He considered that he might so mark out his coming years as to begin his ministry at the age of thirty—an age which much attracted him as being that of his exemplar when he first began to teach in Galilee."  
Part Third, At Melchester: Chap. 1, p. 155

"When they had passed up the church and were standing in their places Jude found that the antecedent visit had certainly taken off the edge of this performance, but by the time they were half way on with the service he wished from his heart that he had not undertaken the business of giving her away."  
Part Third, At Melchester: Chap. 7, p. 209

"'Whose photograph was she looking at?' he said. He had once given her his; but she had others, he knew. Yet it was his, surely?"  
Part Fourth, At Shaston: Chap. 1, p. 248

"The next morning came, and at breakfast Phillotson told Sue: 'You may go—with whom you will. I absolutely and unconditionally agree.'"  
Part Fourth, At Shaston: Chap. 4, p. 280





"After this the subject of marriage was not mentioned by them for several days, though living as they were with only a landing between them it was constantly in their minds."  
Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chap. 1, p. 314

"I can't bear that they, and everybody, should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way! It is really these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral!"  
Part Fifth, At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere: Chap. 6, p. 365

"At the back of the door were fixed two hooks for hanging garments, and from these the forms of the two youngest children were suspended, by a piece of box-cord round each of their necks, while from a nail a few yards off the body of little Jude was hanging in a similar manner."  
Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chap. 2, p. 405

"She may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true! said Arabella. 'She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!'"  
Part Sixth, At Christminster Again: Chap. 11, p. 494



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Jude? Why does his aunt tell him he would be better off dead? How does this make Jude feel? Does the aunt mean to be cruel to Jude? What does the aunt tell Jude about marriage and the people in his family? How does this foreshadow trouble for Jude in the future? Does Jude listen to his aunt's advice? Why or why not?

Who is Arabella? Why does she want to marry Jude? How do her friends tell her to convince Jude to marry her? Why does Arabella seduce Jude? What does she do to make Jude marry her? How does Jude feel when he learns the truth about Arabella? What does this do to their future together? How does marrying Arabella stall out Jude's plans to go to university? Does Jude ever get to Christminster?

Who is Sue Bridehead? Why does Jude begin going to places where he knows Sue will be? Why does Jude not tell Sue who he is at first? How does Jude know he is in love with Sue? Why does Jude introduce Sue to Mr. Phillotson? Why does Jude arrange for Sue to work with Mr. Phillotson? How is this introduction ironic in the long run?

Why does Sue go to Melchester? Why does Sue ask Jude to join her there? What does Jude think this means about their relationship? What was Sue's intention? Is Sue leading Jude on? How does Sue get in trouble while out with Jude one night? Why does she run away? How does this lead to scandal? Did Sue do what people say she did? Who is it recommended Sue marry? Who does she marry? Why?

Who is Mr. Phillotson? How does he feel about Sue? Why does Phillotson go to Jude to ask about the rumors about Sue's behavior? What could Jude have said to change Phillotson's relationship with Sue? What does he say instead? Why does Phillotson marry Sue? Why does Phillotson later decide to allow Sue to leave him and marry Jude? Why does Phillotson give Sue a divorce? What impact do these decisions have on Phillotson?

What secret did Arabella keep from Jude for the many years after their separation? Why does she keep this a secret? When does Jude learn the truth? What does Jude do about this situation? How does this situation impact Jude's life in the immediate aftermath? How does it impact him three years later when he moves his family to Christminster? Could this have been prevented? Explain.

Why does Sue turn to religion after many years of scorning it? Why does Sue believe she is being punished? What does Sue decide to do about it? How does this reflect Sue's views of religion and marriage before and after her change of opinions? Could religion really mean that a person has to be miserable in order to live sin free? Is marriage really sanctioned by God? Are people who live without marriage sinful? Explain.