

My Lost Prize

By

Neil Harris

Based On:

"Providence and Mr. Hardy" - Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman

"The Life of Thomas Hardy" - Florence Emily Hardy

Numerous other sources

33 poems published by Thomas Hardy OM

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INT. THOMAS HARDY'S STUDY, MAX GATE, DORCHESTER. 1890.

Aged 50, Thomas Hardy is completing the manuscript in longhand of "Tess of the d'Urbervilles". He is working at a creaky, rather small, old table. A grandfather clock ticks loudly. His dress is smart late-Victorian, his moustache neatly clipped.

In CU he completes the final paragraph:

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: 'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had finished his sport with Tess.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

I/V: Well that will get them going. "Does he mean 'God'?", they'll wonder. "Is he being pessimistic again?"

He removes his glasses, wipes them with a cloth and smiles ruefully. He stares into the middle distance.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: They'll never accept her as a pure woman. But that's what she is. Pure. Woman. A child among pleasures and a woman among pains. Just like the one that's gone now. Oh Triffie, you'll never read this one. Did you read any of the others? And did you recognise anyone, I wonder?

He places the final page of the manuscript at the bottom of a thick pile of paper, with his hand-drawn title, "Tess of the d'Urbervilles - The Story of a Pure Woman" uppermost. He rises stiffly from the desk and walks over to a large set of shelves with cupboards beneath. Rootling through one of the cupboards, he draws out a well-worn notebook with "Westbourne Park Villas - 1866" written on the front. Opening it, he walks back to the old table and replaces his spectacles. He starts to recite:

THOMAS HARDY (50)

I/V: I lingered through the night to break of day, nor once did sleep extend a wing to me, intently busied with a vast array of epithets that should outfigure thee.

He pauses, raises his eyebrows and looks quizzically at the poem. He continues:

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: Full-featured terms - all  
fitless - hastened by, and this  
sole speech remained: "That  
maiden mine!" Debarred from due  
description then did I perceive  
the indefinite phrase could yet  
define.

AS HE CONTINUES READING LONG DISSOLVE THROUGH TO THOMAS  
HARDY AGED 27 TRAVELING ON A STEAM TRAIN FROM LONDON TO  
DORCHESTER. HE LOOKS PALE AND EXHAUSTED, HIS CLOTHING IS  
CLEAN THOUGH WORN MID-VICTORIAN. THE YOUNGER HARDY IS  
READING THE SAME POEM FROM THE SAME (LESS-WORN) NOTEBOOK.  
CROSS-FADE V/O:

2 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE, 1867.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

V/O: As common chests encasing  
wares of price are borne with  
tenderness through halls of  
state, for what they cover, so  
the poor device of homely wording  
I could tolerate, knowing its  
unadornment held as freight -

THOMAS HARDY (27)

I/V: The sweetest image outside  
paradise!

The passenger opposite, a traveling salesman, looks up  
from his penny dreadful and leers at Hardy. Hardy averts  
his gaze and stares out at the Dorset countryside, steam  
billowing past the window. He looks back at the poem,  
closes the notebook and replaces it in his portmanteau  
lying on the seat beside him.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

V/O: That last line is good, but  
the rest - it really is a bit  
clumsy. No wonder nobody wants to  
publish my poetry. I'll have to  
stick to architecture, but please  
God no more church restoration.

DISSOLVE FROM CU HARDY'S FACE REFLECTED IN THE CARRIAGE  
WINDOW TO NELLIE BROMELL'S COTTAGE NEAR DARTMOOR IN DEVON.

3 EXT. NELLIE BROMELL'S COTTAGE, 1959.

Nellie Tryphena Bromell and Lois Deacon are walking  
through the garden. It is a warm sunny day in late spring  
and they admire the flowers as they pass.

(CONTINUED)

LOIS DEACON

Can you remember what your mother told you about Hardy, Nellie?

NELLIE BROMELL

You mustn't forget I'm nearly eighty, Lois. My dear mother died when I was eleven, so it's a long time ago. But I do remember she read all his books and was glad he became so successful as a writer. One thing she did say to me, I remember quite clearly, she said "They're all real people", the characters in his books, she meant.

LOIS DEACON

All from around where he grew up, near Dorchester?

NELLIE BROMELL

I suppose so, but I've never been there, I don't know anyone from those parts. You know, she didn't say it exactly at the time, but I think she meant herself. I think she saw herself in his books, and Tom too, as well as others from round there.

LOIS DEACON

Did she mind, that he'd put her in his books for everyone to read?

NELLIE BROMELL

Well I don't think anyone knew, no-one except Father, and he wouldn't say, obviously.

LOIS DEACON

Why not?

NELLIE BROMELL

Because Tom Hardy and my mother were lovers. They were engaged, too. That's not something a husband is going to talk about, is it?

LOIS DEACON

Are you sure they were engaged, Nellie? They were cousins, after all.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE BROMELL

There's nothing that says cousins can't be married. It used to happen a lot in those days. Yes, they were engaged. She told me he gave her a ring, but that she sent it back. That was after Father started courting her when she moved to Plymouth to become a headmistress. He did tell me he had quite a job to persuade her, even after Hardy married someone else.

LOIS DEACON

His first wife, Emma?

NELLIE BROMELL

Yes, that was her. A lady, so I understand. I used to ask Mother why Tom wouldn't come to visit us, and she said "Oh, he won't come to see us, Nellie, he's married a lady".

REVERSE SHOT OF THE TWO WOMEN AS THEY REACH THE END OF THE GARDEN. DISSOLVE THROUGH TO STEAM AND SMOKE FROM TRAIN ENGINE OBSCURING THE PLATFORM AT DORCHESTER SOUTH STATION. THOMAS HARDY (27) DISEMBARKS.

4 EXT. THOMAS HARDY (27) WALKS HOME FROM THE RAILWAY STATION, 1867.

He walks along South Street, Dorchester, then past St. George's Church, Fordington. He crosses Grey's Bridge and then cuts through the water-meadows of the Frome Valley to Stinsford. On his way he sees and greets people who are recognisable from his novels by their occupations: shepherd, clergyman, dairymaid, tranter, labourer, raddler and furze-cutter.

A MUSIC sequence, eg *Celtic Symphony* by Granville Bantock.

He approaches the Hardy family home at Higher Bockhampton as the light begins to fade.

5 INT. HARDY COTTAGE, HIGHER BOCKHAMPTON, NR. DORCHESTER.

Thomas Hardy's younger brother, Henry (16), and his Father, Thomas Snr (56), are working on building plans laid out on the table. His Mother Jemima (54) is working in the kitchen with sister Mary (26). The youngest sibling, Kate (11), is sitting on the window-seat, waiting for Thomas' return.

(CONTINUED)

KATE HARDY

He's back! He's back! It's Tom!

Thomas' brother and two sisters rush to open the door as Tom is seen walking up through the carefully-tended vegetable garden. Kate flies out to greet him and almost knocks him over as she flings her arms around him. Much commotion ensues as Tom enters the house and greets his parents.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

Good journey, boy? Come in, come in - Kate, Mary, leave him alone, can't you see he's worn out!

JEMIMA HARDY

Tom, you look terrible. So pale! You haven't been looking after yourself, have you?

Thomas reacts with an indulgent smile.

KATE HARDY

Yes! He's like a ghost! Just like the ghosts he told me he's seen in Stinsford churchyard in the middle of the night!

She wheels around with her arms out like a phantom, groaning loudly.

JEMIMA HARDY

Oh shush, Kate, stop fooling around. Tom, sit down at the table immediately. Mary, make yourself useful, take his bag upstairs. Henry, pour him a glass of your Father's beer, I'm sure he won't mind, will he?

Thomas Snr. doesn't mind and goes to pour the beer himself. Henry starts to clear away the plans from the table. Thomas sits down and picks one up, casting a professional eye over it. Kate sits by the window, legs swinging, gazing fondly at her brothers. Jemima Hardy returns to the kitchen.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Another terrace of railway cottages for Dorchester, Henry? Is business looking up for you and Father?

HENRY HARDY

We're trying to get them costed up, Tom. But since the banking crash last year times are hard.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HENRY HARDY (cont'd)

The money's there, but the developers don't like to part with more than they can help. Perhaps you can give us a hand, now you're back.

THOMAS HARDY

I don't think so, Henry. You know I'm not a practical man. But I see the plans are Hicks's. I've an appointment to see him, in the way of work, so maybe I can gauge the competition for you, at least.

Thomas Hardy Snr. returns with three glasses of beer, which he places on the table.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

That would be useful, son. It's cut-throat out there at the moment. Any inside knowledge would help. Now Tom - it's good to see you back! Cheers!

The Father and two sons take a long swig from their glasses and toast each other. Kate walks over, holding out her hand.

KATE HARDY

Oh please, Tom, let me have a sip!

The men laugh at the child and as Tom leans down with his glass towards her Jemima Hardy returns from the kitchen as Mary comes downstairs, carrying a washing basket full of laundry.

JEMIMA HARDY

None of that, young lady. You go off to the kitchen and help Mary bring the food in, after she's put someone's laundry in the scullery. Henry, lay up please. It's a pot roast, Tom, I hope you're hungry. I don't think you've washed your hands since you arrived.

Thomas walks into the kitchen and returns as the meal is presented.

SLOWLY FADE SOUND OVER MONTAGE OF THE FAMILY MEAL. CAMERA PANS AND TRACKS FROM WINDOW OVERLOOKING FRONT ROOM DOWN GARDEN PATH TO THE WICKET-GATE. FX LIGHT TRIPPING FOOTSTEPS AND A RUSTLING DRESS.

6 EXT. TRYPHENA SPARKS' ARRIVAL AT HARDY'S COTTAGE.

BCU long white fingers turning the latch of the gate. A young female form in neat mid-Victorian dress passes through frame and the gate swings back, rattling as it closes.

From the end of the garden we see the figure walking purposefully up the path towards the front door.

At the window lit from within we see Kate jumping up and peering through.

7 INT. HARDY COTTAGE.

Kate turns her face from the window:

KATE HARDY

It's Triffie! I wonder what she's doing here at this time.

FX quiet firm knock on the door. Henry leaves the table to answer it. As he opens the door Tryphena Sparks (16) tilts her head birdlike and smiles at the Hardys. Her very dark hair is tied up under a summer hat. She has lobeless ears. Her eyebrows point upwards like musical accents. Her face falls as she realises they are still eating.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

Oh Aunt Jemima, I'm so sorry, I've disturbed your meal. I thought you'd have finished by now.

JEMIMA HARDY

Don't worry, Tryphena, come in, we've nearly finished. We're later than usual because a special guest has just arrived.

She motions towards Thomas. Thomas is staring, almost transfixed, at the young woman, still framed in the doorway. Henry ushers Tryphena inside. She moves towards the window-seat, glancing back at Thomas as she sits down.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

I've just brought some muslin from my Mother, Aunt. She said you're jam-making tomorrow and had run out, so I thought I'd bring it over tonight.

As she finishes speaking she opens her carrying box and produces some muslin for Mrs. Hardy. She cannot help looking at Thomas, who has been staring at her continuously. His Mother looks at him quizzically.

(CONTINUED)



JEMIMA HARDY

That's very good of you Tryphena,  
I will need some tomorrow. Now  
Tom, have you forgotten yourself?  
You don't have to stare at your  
cousin quite like that.

Tom frowns, shakes his head slightly, trying to look away.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

But it can't be Triffie, can it?  
I mean, she must be much smaller!

General amusement.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

Yes Tom, that is your cousin  
Tryphena. It's five years since  
you've seen her. And, if I may  
say so, she's turned into a fine  
young woman since you left us for  
London. She's a well-regarded  
pupil-teacher now at the  
Puddletown School.

Tryphena blushes and smiles at Thomas, tilting her head slightly in acknowledgement. Thomas blushes as well and tries to continue eating.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

Come along Katie, if you've  
finished eating, and sit on my  
lap. Tell me what you've been up  
to today.

Kate gains permission from her Mother to leave the table and runs over to Tryphena. They chat away in the b/g as the Hardys finish their meal.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

When are you due to see Hicks,  
son?

THOMAS HARDY (27)

I think I should go in tomorrow.  
He wrote to Blomfield in London,  
saying that the gout was making  
it impossible for him to travel.  
He has more church restoration to  
conduct, I fear.

JEMIMA HARDY

It's honest work, Tom. Why do you  
say "I fear"?

THOMAS HARDY (27)

It may be legal and honest, Mama,  
but it's destructive, and to me  
soul-destroying. I want to write.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

Now Tom I don't want to stop you  
writing, but I must make one  
thing clear. Times are hard, your  
brother and I are working our  
socks off to keep the family  
going as best we can. If you're  
not going to contribute I shall  
have to ask you to seek  
accommodation elsewhere.

Tryphena and Kate stop talking. A silence descends. Jemima  
Hardy looks upset.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Oh, you don't have to worry,  
Father. I'll earn an "honest"  
penny from Hicks, I'm sure. I'll  
find time to write in the  
evenings and weekends. By the  
way, I'm reading Thackeray and  
Browning as well. So when I'm not  
eating Mama's delicious food I'll  
be busy!

Everyone smiles as Tom defuses the situation and takes his  
Mother's hand. Thomas Hardy Snr looks a bit embarrassed.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Well Mother, if you'll excuse me,  
I think I should walk young  
Tryphena home.

Henry Hardy starts, as if to say he usually does that, but  
one look from his older brother stops him in his tracks.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

I think I can manage on my own,  
thank you Tom.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

I'm sure you can, but I'd like to  
see if I can remember the way to  
Puddletown in the dark, after all  
these years.

KATE HARDY

Can I come too, Tom - please!

THOMAS HARDY (27)

No you can't, it's getting on for  
your bedtime, Katie. If you're

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS HARDY (27) (cont'd)  
 still awake when I return, I'll  
 tell you some London stories -  
 Palmerston's funeral and the  
 wonderful new underground  
 railway. If not, tomorrow.  
 Promise.

TRYPHENA SAYS GOODBYE TO THE HARDYS AND LEAVES WITH THOMAS  
 HARDY. AS MARY AND HENRY CLEAR OFF THE DISHES FROM THE  
 TABLE, MR. AND MRS. HARDY EXCHANGE A CONCERNED LOOK.

8 EXT. MOONLIT WALK TO PUDDLETOWN

Thomas and Tryphena walk from Hardy's Cottage, Higher Bockhampton, to Sparks' Corner in Puddletown. (The Sparks' house no longer exists. In those days the route was through heathland and eweleaze (sheep pasture), later called "Egdon Heath" by Hardy in his novels. Since then it has been planted with conifers by the Forestry Commission, although some areas are now being clear-felled. The locations Rushy Pond, Rainbarrow and the Roman road (now a footpath of varying width) still exist.)

Make use of the moonlight to film the pair mainly in silhouette, in line with Hardy's preference for form over colour in his narrative descriptions.

TRYPHENA SPARKS  
 So you want to be a writer, not  
 an architect, Tom?

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
 It's been a dream of mine for  
 years, Triffie, ever since I  
 learnt to read. But as my dear  
 Papa has just reminded me, it's a  
 very risky way to earn a living.  
 I've written an essay, which won  
 a prize, and several poems I  
 can't get anyone to publish. So I  
 shall go to see Hicks tomorrow as  
 I promised.

TRYPHENA SPARKS  
 Some writers make a lot of money,  
 though. Dickens, Wilkie Collins,  
 George Eliot, Thackeray - and now  
 Thomas Hardy!

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
 I hardly think, Triffie, that I  
 can hope to join such exalted  
 company.

(CONTINUED)

TRYPHENA SPARKS

Why ever not? What's the point of writing, anyway, if not to make lots of money? Now, what do you want to write about?

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Well, I've had an idea for a novel, called "The Poor Man and the Lady". It's about a struggling architect, who falls in love with a woman of far superior social class.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

So it's about you. With whom, may I ask, have you fallen in love?

THOMAS HARDY (27)

It's not about me, and I haven't fallen in love with anyone. You see, it's a work of fiction, Triffie. A writer makes things up, which may or may not bear any resemblance to real life.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

I had worked that out, Tom. I think it would be more interesting to write about the people around here.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Why on earth do you think anyone would be interested in the rural people of deepest Dorsetshire? Anyway, George Eliot has tried it, though the characters don't seem like real country people to me.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

There you go, then. If George Eliot has tried it, so can you, only you will do it better.

They reach Rushy Pond. The moonlight glints on the water. Thomas edges closer to Tryphena and tentatively puts his arm around her. She looks up at him, smiling. He leans over, as if to kiss her. She giggles, spins away and runs towards the Roman road.

TRYPHENA SPARKS

Come on, race me to Rainbarrow!

Tryphena runs surprisingly quickly eastwards along the old Roman road in her neat Victorian dress. Thomas has to

(CONTINUED)

exert himself to catch up. Tryphena's hat falls back onto her neck and her dark hair starts to untie itself and stream behind her. She runs off the road onto a path that leads to Rainbarrow, an ancient tumulus that lies at the end of a crag overlooking the Frome valley. Thomas catches up as they arrive and they both fall onto the top of the mound completely out of breath.

Pull back in LS to reveal Thomas Hardy (50) observing the pair as they recover their breath and embrace.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: In years defaced and lost,  
two sat here, transport-tossed,  
lit by a living love the wilted  
world knew nothing of. Scared  
momently by gainsgivings, then  
hoping things that could not  
be...

CU the couple becoming more passionate.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: Of love and us no trace  
abides upon the place. The Sun  
and shadows wheel, season and  
season sereward steal. Foul days  
and fair here, too, prevail - and  
gust and gale as everywhere.

Jump cut FULL DAYLIGHT. The couple have gone, though echoes of their voices can be heard. Thomas Hardy at 50 stands on the spot they occupied. Tracking pan around Hardy, revealing the rolling Dorset countryside, and Dorchester, visible from Rainbarrow. Hardy is looking down at the ground.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: But lonely shepherd souls,  
who bask amid these knolls, may  
catch a fairy sound on sleepless  
noontides from the ground.

CU Thomas Hardy (50), tears in his eyes:

THOMAS HARDY (50)

I/V: O not again, till Earth  
outwears, shall love like theirs  
suffuse this glen!

9

INT. HICKS'S OFFICE, SOUTH STREET, DORCHESTER. LATE AFTERNOON.

Thomas Hardy and Mr. Hicks, a prematurely aged architect, are studying drawings of St. Juliot church in Cornwall. Hardy is looking much better than when he arrived home.

(CONTINUED)

MR. HICKS

There's nothing else for it, Tom. The tower will have to go. The stonework is in terrible condition. The roof has to be replaced, the interior needs a complete refit.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

If there's no way it can be saved, why not leave it as a wonderful ruin and build a new one elsewhere?

Mr. Hicks smiles ruefully.

MR. HICKS

I know your views, Tom, and I share them, to a certain extent. But that's not what the Church wants. As you know, it wants its old churches restored. The original features are to be replaced with modern work, more in line with the times.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

I wouldn't mind so much if it was willing to pay for decent craftsmanship. Instead we rip out beautiful masonry and woodwork and replace it with mass-produced, soulless - nothing!

MR. HICKS

It's a question of money, Tom. And I think we can agree that, for all our progress, we lack the craft skills of our medieval forebears. We cannot recreate the past.

As Hardy gazes sadly at the drawings, FX footsteps climbing the staircase outside the office. After a brisk tap, the door flies open to reveal Horace Moule (35, pronounced "Mole"), with full mutton-chop whiskers.

HORACE MOULE

Ah, Mr. Hicks, Tom, I hope I'm not disturbing anything?

MR. HICKS

No, no, Mr. Moule, we were just finishing for today. Go on Tom, I'm sure Mr. Moule wants to go for a pint of beer with you. I'll

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. HICKS (cont'd)  
see you tomorrow, at the usual  
time.

MOULE AND HARDY LEAVE THE OFFICE IN SOUTH STREET. THEY  
TURN INTO THE TREE-LINED SOUTH WALKS.

10 EXT. SOUTH WALKS, DORCHESTER.

HORACE MOULE  
So you're back with dear old  
Hicks again in Dorchester. It's a  
pity you left town, I must say.  
But then I should also say that  
you look much better after your  
return to the country. Fresh air  
and good food have done wonders  
for you, Tom.

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
You're looking well yourself,  
Horace. Yes, I'm back with Hicks.  
He's got the gout, you know, and  
needs a young pair of legs to run  
around for him. I'm grateful he's  
taken me on, as my Father made it  
quite clear that I should  
contribute to the family  
finances.

HORACE MOULE  
Ah yes, fathers. I'm in deep  
trouble on that front. My attempt  
to smuggle in the latest edition  
of Darwin's "Origin of Species"  
to the family home failed. Pater  
is appalled that I should bring  
such blasphemy to the rectory of  
St. George's, Fordington. He told  
me to get rid of it or never  
darken his door again. So here  
you are, dear boy - take it from  
me.

Moule withdraws the book from his jacket pocket and hands  
it to Hardy.

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
I have read it, Horace, but thank  
you very much. Why have you  
bought this latest edition - you  
read the first one, over seven  
years ago, and then made me read  
it. It's rather long, I remember.

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HORACE MOULE

You see, Tom, leaving London means you're missing the latest news. Darwin's changed the language - he uses the word "evolution" now, following Herbert Spencer. It's an improvement on "descent by modification".

THOMAS HARDY (27)

So he now means that we're evolving, not descending?

HORACE MOULE

Species, Tom, species evolve. Not us as individuals, though we can adapt. Societies can evolve too, talking of which - have you heard what Disraeli's up to with the new Reform Bill? Come on, let's have a pint...

THEY ENTER THE BLUE RADDLE, ACLAND STREET, DORCHESTER.

11 INT. BLUE RADDLE PUBLIC HOUSE.

Moule and Hardy carry their pints of beer to a table in the corner.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Cheers, Horace. Now tell me all about Disraeli. The last I heard, £10 rate-payers would get the vote.

HORACE MOULE

No Tom, it's everyone!

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Everyone?

HORACE MOULE

Yes - you, your brother Henry, when he's twenty-one, your Father - providing you're all responsible for paying the rates, you get the vote. There will be a million more voters at the next election. The franchise has just doubled.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

But how's he done that? It's much more than the Liberals failed to achieve a couple of years ago.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



THOMAS HARDY (27) (cont'd)  
Disraeli's Conservatives don't even have a majority and didn't want to extend the franchise anyway.

HORACE MOULE  
Well, he put up the £10 ratepayer qualification, the Liberal opposition kept proposing amendments to lower it, assuming the Conservatives would vote them down: but lo and behold - Dizzy accepted them! Gladstone was furious, but trapped by his own party. The only amendment rejected was Mill's, to include women.

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
But the Conservatives don't want to give the working class the vote. Why have they changed their mind?

HORACE MOULE  
This is where it gets interesting. By giving the vote to the industrious, thrifty part of the working-class, the Tories reckon they'll act as a bulwark against all the socialist agitators and radicals. In return, the Conservatives will retain the loyalty of the grateful newly-enfranchised voters for generations to come! The Liberals could be doomed, or "dished", as Lord Derby put it.

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
And what does the reverend Henry Moule think of that?

HORACE MOULE  
I haven't dared ask. It was bad enough when someone showed him that book. I don't know what the Church fears more - democracy or evolution. Now - it's your round, Tom, I have a great thirst.

Moule has already downed his pint whilst Hardy is less than halfway through his. A shadow of concern flashes over Hardy's face as he rises to go the bar.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Of course, Horace. I'll just get myself a half. Then I must be off - I don't want to miss Mama's cooking.

CU ON MOULE WATCHING AS HARDY WALKS PAST CAM. MOULE'S FACE DISPLAYS A MIXTURE OF SADNESS AND LONGING.

12 INT. THOMAS HARDY'S STUDY, MAX GATE, DORCHESTER. 1890.

Thomas Hardy aged 50 at his desk as before. He holds a photograph of Horace Moule in both hands and slowly places it on the table before him. He finds another poem from his Westbourne Park Villas 1866 notebook - "Confession to a Friend in Trouble". He reads it to the picture of Moule:

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: Your troubles shrink not, though I feel them less here, far away, than when I tarried near. I even smile old smiles - with listlessness - yet smiles they are, not ghastly mockeries mere. A thought too strange to house within my brain, haunting its outer precincts I discern:

THOMAS HARDY (50)

I/V: That I will not show zeal again to learn your griefs, and sharing them, renew my pain.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

V/O: It goes, like murky bird or buccaneer, that shapes its lawless figure on the main. And staunchness tends to banish utterly the unseemly instinct that had lodgement here.

He places his hand on his heart.

THOMAS HARDY (50)

I/V: Yet, comrade old, can bitterer knowledge be than that, though banned, such instinct was in me!

END ON CU OF HARDY'S FACE AS HE REMOVES HIS SPECTACLES AND BRUSHES A TEAR FROM HIS EYE. LONG DISSOLVE THROUGH TO CU HARDY (27)'S FACE IN RAPTURE.

13

EXT. A SHEEP-PASTURE (EWELEAZE) NEAR PUDDLETOWN. DUSK. (A CORNER OF COOMBE EWELEAZE, A PASTURE NEAR BEACON CORNER, PUDDLETOWN FOREST, NOW THOUGH A CORNFIELD.)

Pull back to reveal Thomas Hardy (27) lying on his back. Astride him is Tryphena Sparks. They are making love. Film mainly in silhouette as before. CU Tryphena Sparks:

TRYPHENA SPARKS

V/O: The years have gathered  
grayly, since I danced upon this  
leaze, with one who kindled gaily  
love's fitful ecstasies! But  
despite the term as teacher, I  
remain what I was then, in each  
essential feature of the  
fantasies of men. Yet I note the  
little chisel of never-napping  
time, defacing wan and grizel the  
blazon of my prime. When at night  
he thinks me sleeping I feel him  
boring sly within my bones, and  
heaping quaintest pains for  
by-and-by.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

V/O: Still, I'd go the world with  
Beauty, I would laugh with her  
and sing. I would shun divinest  
duty to resume her worshiping.  
But she'd scorn my brave  
endeavour, she would not balm the  
breeze, by murmuring -

TRYPHENA SPARKS

I/V: Thine for ever!

THOMAS HARDY (27)

V/O: As she did upon this leaze.

THEY BOTH CLIMAX. FADE TO BLACK AS THEY LIE SLUMPED ON THE  
PASTURE.

14

EXT. HARDY COTTAGE, HIGHER BOCKHAMPTON. DAYLIGHT.

A horse and cart pull up at the rear entrance of the cottage. Rebecca Sparks (37, Tryphena's oldest sister) holds the reins. Tryphena rides next to her. Tryphena jumps into the back and starts to lift a small writing-table down. Thomas Hardy (27) and his Mother Jemima emerge from the house.

JEMIMA HARDY

Why Tryphena, Rebecca, whatever  
is this? We do have sufficient  
furniture, you know.

(CONTINUED)

## TRYPHENA SPARKS

It's for Thomas, Aunt Jemima.  
It's for his writing. I bought a  
small one to fit in the bedroom  
he shares with Henry.

Thomas Hardy helps Tryphena lift the table out of the  
cart. Rebecca climbs down from the seat and walks towards  
her Aunt.

## REBECCA SPARKS

Tryphena has this notion that  
cousin Tom is going to be a great  
writer, Aunt. And once Triffie is  
set on something, there's no  
stopping her.

## JEMIMA HARDY

I know, dear, I know. But Tom is  
supposed to be working for Mr.  
Hicks, though his attendance at  
the office is erratic to say the  
least.

Thomas is carrying the table with Tryphena into the house.  
He is walking backwards and looks over to his Mother.

## THOMAS HARDY (27)

We've talked about this, Mother.  
Hicks is not a great time-keeper.  
As long as I complete the work in  
time, he doesn't mind. I think  
Triffie is exaggerating my  
prospects, but now I have a  
writing-table, well, all I have  
to do is...write, I suppose.

He grins at Tryphena, who gazes back at him with a cool  
penetrating stare. Mrs. Hardy takes both of Rebecca's  
hands in hers, looks concernedly into her eyes and then  
shifts her gaze to Thomas and Tryphena as they enter the  
house.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO THOMAS HARDY (80) SITTING AT THE SAME  
WRITING-TABLE IN THE STUDY AT MAX GATE.

15 INT. THOMAS HARDY'S STUDY, MAX GATE, DORCHESTER. 1920.

Now an old man, Thomas Hardy is assembling poems for the  
"Late Lyrics and Earlier" collection. He draws out the  
manuscript of one of them, "The Little Old Table".

## THOMAS HARDY (80)

I/V: Creak, little wood thing,  
creak, when I touch you with  
elbow or knee. That is the way

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS HARDY (80) (cont'd)  
 you speak of one who gave you to  
 me!

He runs his fingers over the table's surface and nudges it gently. It creaks.

THOMAS HARDY (80)  
 V/O: You, little table, she  
 brought - brought me with her own  
 hand. And she looked at me with a  
 thought that I did not  
 understand. Whoever owns it anon,  
 and hears it, will never know  
 what a history hangs upon this  
 creak from long ago.

DISSOLVE BACK TO THOMAS HARDY (27) WORKING AT THE  
 WRITING-TABLE IN A BEDROOM AT HARDY'S COTTAGE,  
 BOCKHAMPTON. THE WIND IS RUSTLING AS A SUMMER STORM  
 APPROACHES.

16 INT. HARDY COTTAGE, HIGHER BOCKHAMPTON. CANDLE-LIGHT.

Hardy is working on the script for "The Poor Man and the Lady". The table creaks as he writes. He checks the time on his fob-watch, packs up his writing materials and goes downstairs, carrying the candle-stick. His younger sister Kate tip-toes behind him, and sits a few stairs from the bottom, out of sight.

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy are in the front room. Mrs. Hardy is knitting, Mr. Hardy re-stringing his fiddle. They look up as Thomas enters the room.

THOMAS HARDY SNR  
 How's the writing going, son?

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
 Very well, thank you Father. I'm  
 on chapter eleven, a scene set in  
 Hyde Park - Rotten Row. I thought  
 I would go out for a walk on the  
 heath, before this storm sets in.

JEMIMA HARDY  
 Are you meeting Tryphena, Tom?

THOMAS HARDY (27)  
 Um, well, yes, she may be out  
 walking too.

He walks towards the kitchen.

JEMIMA HARDY

Tom, Tom, I must say this. Wait, please. Tryphena is a lovely girl, I know that, but she is your cousin, Tom.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

That's not an objection, Mama. It is not forbidden for cousins to marry.

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy start and look worriedly at each other and Tom.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

That's not what your Mother and I want, Tom. We think you can do better than that. And if you're going to be a writer, you'll need to marry well, like Mr. Disraeli. His wife's fortune helped to establish his career as a novelist and politician.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

"Better"? "Mr. Disraeli"? I beg your pardon, but I cannot bear to hear such dreadful talk about the woman I love.

He strides out, slamming the door behind him. A heavy silence descends on the room.

THOMAS HARDY SNR

This is what happens when we try to keep a secret, my dear. You are going to have to tell him the truth, however shameful it may be. I just hope things haven't gone too far. I forgave you long ago - but will he now?

MRS. HARDY LAYS DOWN HER KNITTING AND HOLDS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS, WEeping. SHE GROANS SOFTLY. CU KATE ON THE STAIRS, LOOKING CURIOUS AND WORRIED.

17 EXT. RAINBARROW, PUDDLETOWN HEATH. NIGHT, A STORM BREWING.

Thomas Hardy waits on the mound, looking around anxiously. The lights of Dorchester can be seen in the distance as clouds scud overhead. FX footsteps approaching, mixed in with the wind.

THOMAS HARDY (80)

V/O: I could hear a gown-skirt rustling before I could see her

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS HARDY (80) (cont'd)  
 shape; rustling through the  
 heather, that wove the common's  
 drape, on that evening of dark  
 weather when I hearkened, lips  
 agape. And the town-shine in the  
 distance did but baffle here the  
 sight, and then a voice flew  
 forward:

TRYPHENA SPARKS  
 Dear, is't you? I fear the night!

THOMAS HARDY (80)  
 And the herons flapped to norward  
 in the firs upon my right.

A flock of birds scatter out of the neighbouring trees. Tryphena and Hardy embrace, huddled together. She looks up at him, fearful and trembling.

THOMAS HARDY (80)  
 There was another looming, whose  
 life we did not see. There was  
 one stilly blooming, full nigh to  
 where walked we. There was a  
 shade entombing all that was  
 bright of me.

FX THUNDER RUMBLING IN THE DISTANCE. A LIGHTNING FLASH AS  
 CU THE LOVERS EMBRACE. TILT DOWN AND HOLD ON TRYPHENA'S  
 BELLY.

18 INT. HARDY COTTAGE, HIGHER BOCKHAMPTON, NR. DORCHESTER.

Thomas Hardy enters the rear door of the cottage. A violent gust of wind blows through, flickering the candle by his Mother's side. She wakes with a start.

JEMIMA HARDY  
 Tom, is that you?

Tom enters the room, removing his coat. He is wet and bedraggled.

JEMIMA HARDY  
 Oh Tom, you're soaked through.  
 Hang your coat up in the kitchen  
 and take off your boots. Dry your  
 hair with the towel.

Tom goes back into the kitchen and returns a moment later, wiping his head with a towel.

(CONTINUED)

JEMIMA HARDY

Sit down, Tom, a moment. Your Father's gone to bed, but I've waited up for you. Tom, there's something I have to tell you. This is very difficult for me.

She pauses after a bright flash illuminates the inside of the cottage and a giant clap of thunder follows almost immediately.

JEMIMA HARDY

You know I've always said, Tom, that my family is cursed. Cursed by a man standing ahead, holding his arm up and blocking our path when we make any progress.

Tom nods in assent.

JEMIMA HARDY

Now, Tom, you are not my first child. No, no, wait, let me tell you. My first child is your cousin Rebecca Sparks. She's not your cousin, dearest, she's your half-sister.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

My half-sister? So who was the Father?

Another flash of lightning and thunderclap, further apart as the storm moves away.

JEMIMA HARDY

That needn't concern you. He left these parts years ago and played no part in her upbringing. Don't tut like that: he said he loved me, but could not bear the thought of being married. He said it would chain and doom him. Your Father knew about this before we married.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

So what has this to do with me and Tryphena? I assume Aunt Maria and Uncle James agreed to take Rebecca and bring her up as their own child. Tryphena's oldest sister is my sister - what is the problem?

Mrs. Hardy gazes at her son sorrowfully. A terrible realisation grows over Tom's face.

(CONTINUED)



THOMAS HARDY (27)

You mean - no, it cannot be,  
please!

JEMIMA HARDY

Yes, Tom. Rebecca fell into the  
same trap as me. Tryphena is her  
daughter. She is your niece!

Tom holds his head in his hands and sways from side to side, sobbing. A faint lightning flash, followed by more distant thunder rumbling around the hills. Heavy rain sets in, rattling the house.

JEMIMA HARDY

And I can tell you who the Father was in this case. You remember when you left the school in Bockhampton and went to Dorchester instead? It upset poor Julia Augusta Martin, who doted on you, but we had to remove you from her school. Rebecca's seducer was her husband, "Squire" Martin, as he liked to be called. It cost your Father the works contract at Kingston Maurward, but we had to do it. What a wretch, preying on a young country girl who knew no better!

Tom stops sobbing, lifts his head and glares at his Mother.

THOMAS HARDY (27)

Why was I not told this? Couldn't you trust me to keep a secret?

JEMIMA HARDY

We never thought you'd fall in love with your cousin! Trust didn't come into it. Now, Tom, I must ask you - how far has it gone, between you and Tryphena?

THOMAS HARDY (27)

We are lovers, Mama. I cannot lie to you, at least. I love her, and she loves me. That's all there is.

JEMIMA HARDY

Oh Tom, I pray that is all there is. You should have taken warning - love is a terrible thing. Sweet for a space, and then all mourning, mourning!

(CONTINUED)

TS TWO-SHOT, BOTH HEADS BOWED. THE RAIN FALLS STEADILY.  
FADE TO BLACK, CROSS-FADE FX RAIN TO A CRACKLING FIRE.