



FAR FROM THE
MADDING CROWD

A novel by Thomas Hardy



BACKGROUND

- ❖ Published by 1874
- ❖ Written by Thomas Hardy (prior to being a writer was an architect)
- ❖ Was originally published in installments, or as a series.
- ❖ His 4th novel, and turning point – dedicated himself to writing after this.

SERIAL STORIES

- ❖ Stories published in installments, or episodes – tells one story, but is published section-by-section
- ❖ Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy wrote stories in this way – *FFMC* is a serial
- ❖ Thrived during Victorian England

Modern day version of a serial: “Serial” podcast – Sarah Koenig, the creator and teller of the story of a young man convicted of murdering his girlfriend in high school said this: “this is not an original idea. Maybe in podcast form it is, and trying to do it as a documentary story is really, really hard. But trying to do it as a serial, this is as old as Dickens.”

TITLE

“Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" 1750

Elegy: serious,
reflection poem,
often written to
honor the dead



The poem is a reflection on what becomes of a person after they are dead – what are they remembered for? What remains? ...he thinks about the individuals buried in the churchyard.

MAP OF “WESSEX”

“Wessex” refers to the Southwestern area of England – a fictional term made up by Hardy in *FFMC* that is now used today to designate a real location.





CHARACTER LIST

❖ Bathsheba Everdene

❖ Gabriel Oak

❖ Farmer Boldwood

❖ Sargeant Troy

❖ Fanny Robin

Minor Characters:

- Jan Coggan
- Liddy

...function as Gabriel and Bathseba's friends, confidants, and sidekicks



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

❖ Bathsheba Everdene:

- Biblical allusion to 2 Samuel 11, in which King David sees a woman bathing from his rooftop. He takes her to bed, but she is married to another man. He sends that man to war, to the front lines, and he is killed in battle
- In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan is sent from God to teach King David that his way was wrong. He tells him a parable about a poor man with only one ewe, who nurtures this lamb, and treats it as family. A rich man with many sheep takes the poor man's ewe to sacrifice for a guest, instead of one of his own. This rich man represents King David, and how he with much, took from one who had little.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

“...I rediscovered Hardy, and consumed four of his novels in a row. Katniss Everdeen owes her last name to Bathsheba Everdene, the lead character in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. The two are very different, but both struggle with knowing their hearts.”

Suzanne Collins (“Suzanne Collins on the books she Loves”

Entertainment Weekly)



NAME SYMBOLISM

- ❖ Bathsheba – taken from the biblical story
- ❖ Gabriel (Farmer) Oak – a very strong, tough wood used for building
- ❖ Farmer Boldwood –
- ❖ Sargeant Troy –
- ❖ Fanny Robin –

GENRE

❖ **Pastoral** – the pastoral literary tradition involved poetry written about shepherds in the country, and their sheep, and the idealization of this life. The themes generally had to do with love, and death.

❖ **Tragicomedy** – both comedy and tragedy elements. The comedic included plots where the good end up happily, and the characters triumph over the chaos of fate. The tragic genre mainly focuses on death, and has no redeeming success stories. Tragicomedy blends this so that there is a bit of both



CHAPTER 1

- ❖ How is Gabriel Oak described?
- ❖ How is Bathsheba described?

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in white, framing the central text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral motif at the top and bottom.

CHAPTER 2

“To persons standing alone on a hill during a clear midnight such as this, the roll of the world eastward is almost a palpable movement.”

“Being a man not without a frequent consciousness that there was some charm in this life he led, he stood still after looking at thy sky as a useful instrument, and regarded it in an appreciative spirit, as a work of art superlatively beautiful.”



CHAPTER 3

“The adjustment of the farmer’s hazy conceptions of her charms to the portrait of herself she not presented him with was less a diminution than a difference....”

“It was not exactly the fault of the hut...”

What do we learn about Bathsheba from these passages?



CHAPTER 4

“Farmer Oak – I – “ she said, pausing for want of breath pulling up in front of him with a slanted face and put her hand to her side....”



CHAPTER 5

❖ The fall of the sheep