



COMPLETE
CLASSICS
UNABRIDGED

Jude the Obscure

Thomas Hardy

Read by **Neville Jason**

CD 1

1	Jude the Obscure	5:47
2	The cart creaked across the green...	3:51
3	Chapter 2	6:21
4	The boy stood under the rick before mentioned...	6:26
5	On entering the cottage...	5:34
6	Chapter 3	5:53
7	Some way within the limits of the stretch of landscape...	6:00
8	He had become entirely lost to his bodily situation...	7:15
9	Chapter 4	6:01
10	'Well, my boy?' said the latter abstractedly.	7:09
11	Chapter 5	5:44
12	On a day when Fawley was getting quite advanced...	6:00
13	Chapter 6	5:28

Total time on CD 1: 77:38

CD 2

1	In his deep concentration on these transactions...	8:33
2	By this time she had managed to get back one dimple...	3:55
3	Chapter 7	6:33
4	They reached the brown house barn...	8:16
5	When he got back to the house his aunt had gone to bed...	6:09
6	Chapter 8	7:18
7	On Sunday morning...	6:24
8	Chapter 9	8:09
9	A new-made wife can usually manage to excite interest...	7:47
10	Chapter 10	8:05
11	Suddenly they became aware of a voice at hand.	6:14

Total time on CD 2: 77:31

CD 3

1	Chapter 11	9:21
2	All the next day he remained at home...	7:34
3	Part Second: At Christminster	5:29
4	It was a windy, whispering, moonless night.	7:30
5	Jude went home and to bed...	4:59
6	Chapter 2	6:43
7	For many days he haunted the cloisters and quadrangles...	5:21
8	At this time he received a nervously anxious letter.	8:50
9	Chapter 3	8:29
10	When they were paid for, and the man had gone...	7:07
11	Chapter 4	7:33

Total time on CD 3: 79:03

CD 4

1	A cold sweat overspread Jude at the news...	6:57
2	They entered the parlour of the school-house...	6:30
3	Chapter 5	6:00
4	Jude started up from his reverie...	7:57
5	Chapter 6	7:45
6	Still, the remark was sufficient to withdraw Jude's attention...	8:09
7	He always remembered the appearance of the afternoon...	7:59
8	Chapter 7	5:44
9	The barmaid concocted the mixture...	6:14
10	Almost immediately he fell into a heavy slumber...	6:46
11	Part Third: At Melchester	8:18

Total time on CD 4: 78:25

CD 5

1	He went down the broad gravel path towards the building.	4:43
2	She had touched the subject at last.	6:57
3	Chapter 2	8:38
4	Chapter 3	7:34
5	They went and looked at the empty room...	8:06
6	Chapter 4	7:52
7	Jude looked round upon the arm-chair and its occupant...	8:14
8	'Jude,' she said brightly...	6:44
9	Chapter 5	4:21
10	After the lapse of a few days he found himself hoping...	8:31
11	Chapter 6	7:02

Total time CD 5: 78:50

CD 6

1	Such silent proceedings as those of this evening...	6:32
2	The schoolmaster rose.	6:53
3	When she saw how wretched he was, she softened...	5:02
4	Chapter 7	6:03
5	She arrived by the ten o'clock train on the day aforesaid...	7:26
6	Jude soon joined them at his rooms...	4:36
7	Chapter 8	6:28
8	Jude went on to the stone-yard where he had worked.	5:55
9	The compartment that she served emptied itself of visitors...	9:00
10	Chapter 9	6:08
11	They looked away from each other to hide their emotion...	8:15
12	When they reached the lone cottage under the firs...	6:06

Total time on CD 6: 78:32

CD 7

1	He passed the evening and following days...	2:15
2	Chapter 10	6:15
3	Jude accordingly rang the bell, and was admitted.	4:43
4	Part Fourth: At Shaston	7:33
5	Jude went into the empty schoolroom and sat down...	7:10
6	There was a momentary pause, till she suddenly jumped up...	7:38
7	Chapter 2	8:02
8	Jude threw a troubled look at her.	8:57
9	Instead of replying she rose quickly...	7:32
10	Chapter 3	4:29
11	At dusk that evening he went into the garden...	5:15
12	After tea that evening Phillotson sat...	8:23

Total time on CD 7: 78:17

CD 8

1	'I am bound in honesty to tell you...'	9:29
2	Chapter 4	7:57
3	Though well-trained and even proficient masters...	9:36
4	Gillingham accompanied his friend a mile on his way...	9:35
5	Chapter 5	8:37
6	Even at this obvious moment for candour...	9:14
7	When Jude came back and sat down to supper...	8:16
8	Chapter 6	6:28
9	All the respectable inhabitants and well-to-do fellow natives...	8:02

Total time on CD 8: 77:19

CD 9

1	It grew dusk quickly in the gloomy room...	7:27
2	Part Fifth: At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere	5:11
3	They rambled out of the town...	8:44
4	Chapter 2	8:48
5	There was that in his manner...	9:09
6	She walked along the muddy street...	6:58
7	Chapter 3	6:44
8	<i>The Three Horns, Lambeth.</i>	8:22
9	He was Age masquerading as Juvenility...	9:02
10	Chapter 4	7:57

Total time on CD 9: 78:29

CD 10

1	A small slow voice rose from the shade of the fireside...	8:02
2	They stepped in, and entered a back seat...	7:16
3	Chapter 5	8:07
4	All continued to move ahead.	8:11
5	The trio followed across the green and entered.	7:51
6	Chapter 6	6:33
7	Next day Jude went out to the church...	7:19
8	Sue and Jude, who had not stopped working...	7:51
9	They soon found that, instead of the furniture...	7:55
10	Chapter 7	8:36

Total time on CD 10: 77:47

CD 11

1	'Perhaps my husband has altered a little since then.'	4:50
2	Chapter 8	5:56
3	The wayfarer faced round and regarded her in turn.	6:27
4	They had now reached the low levels bordering	5:24
5	Part Sixth: At Christminster Again	5:12
6	While they waited big drops of rain fell...	8:10
7	As a sort of objective commentary on Jude's remarks...	6:10
8	They found a second place hard by...	6:13
9	Chapter 2	9:13
10	Half-paralyzed by the strange and consummate horror...	4:30
11	When the house was silent...	8:02
12	The jury duly came and viewed the bodies...	5:22
13	Chapter 3	3:11

Total time on CD 11: 78:46

CD 12

1	'I have seemed to myself lately,' he said...	8:14
2	'There is a strange, indescribable perfume or atmosphere...'	8:32
3	Jude's former wife had maintained a stereotyped manner...	9:36
4	He flung his arms round her and kissed her passionately...	9:40
5	Chapter 4	6:19
6	Meanwhile Phillotson ascended to Marygreen..	5:38
7	A few days after a figure moved through the white fog...	8:23
8	Chapter 5	8:57
9	Phillotson in the interval had gone back to his friend...	6:30
10	When Mrs. Edlin had gone back to her cottage...	6:01

Total time on CD 12: 77:56

CD 13

1	Chapter 6	9:32
2	Arabella, meanwhile, had gone back.	8:48
3	Chapter 7	8:01
4	Another man they knew, Tinker Taylor...	6:38
5	When Arabella, Jude, and Donn had disappeared...	4:55
6	Chapter 8	6:22
7	She did not come...	3:58
8	A light footstep...	9:20
9	Chapter 9	5:58
10	It was night at Marygreen....	5:56
11	Sue unlatched the other chamber door...	7:46

Total time on CD 13: 77:21

CD 14

1	Chapter 10	9:29
2	Chapter 11	6:28
3	Meanwhile Arabella, in her journey...	8:57
4	Two days later...	3:45

Total time on CD 14: 28:43

Total time on CDs 1–14: 17:24:37

Thomas Hardy

(1840–1928)

Jude the Obscure

Why 'the obscure'? The first published editions of the story appeared in serial form in Harpers Magazine, under the titles *The Simpletons* and *The Hearts Insurgent*. But these were bowdlerisations of Hardy's original text, amended to suit the wide readership of a popular periodical, with sexual references omitted or blunted; the softer more romantic titles reflect this literary castration. When Hardy later re-worked the text in order to return it to its original state, he gave it a title that reflects the obscurity of Jude's beginnings – his mysterious parentage, his humble background, his seemingly unremarkable life. But there is a measure of irony in the title; Hardy understood that no life, however obscure, is unremarkable, and he understood that the joys and sorrows of all living creatures are important. The story of a seeming 'nobody' is the story of Everyman.

That being said, this is the story of a particularly unfortunate Everyman, who suffers the world's apparent withholding of its benefits and multiplication of its blows against him. Jude, an innocent, kindly, loving man, is submitted to trials and disappointments at every turn. He is thwarted in his wish to study, in his religious and scholastic ambitions, and in his desire for physical love and familial happiness.

That the book was met with extreme hostility in some quarters on its publication is not surprising. In the unfolding of the tragic story, neither the Church, the educational establishment nor society come out well. All stand indicted as enemies of progress and individual thought. Christminster, Hardy's fictionalised Oxford, refuses entrance to Jude, despite his love of learning, because he lacks the required financial and social

background; the Church condemns Jude and Sue's union of true love but blesses their return to ill-matched partners; and society hounds to destruction those who refuse to live conventional lives.

Although Hardy was not writing a polemical work, he reveals clearly through his characters his opposition to the cruelly oppressive attitudes of Victorian society. He objects bitterly to the observance of the letter of the law rather than the spirit; as Jude says in objection to Sue's return to Phillotson: 'We are acting by the letter, and "the letter killeth!"'

Hardy was evidently aware that his attitudes were ahead of their time. Sue says: 'When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what will they say?' Jude complains, looking back on his life: 'As for Sue and me when we were at our own best, long ago – when our minds were clear, and our love of truth fearless – the time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us.' Some readers today may feel, despite the advances in social attitudes,

that Hardy's estimate of fifty years was too optimistic.

And yet it cannot be denied that huge changes have taken place in the last hundred years. Attitudes to sex, to education, and to the role of women have altered vastly except within the narrowest, most restrictive communities: society today accepts pre-marital or non-marital sex; the education of women has long been taken for granted and women now have the opportunity to lead independent lives; and gender equality, though perhaps not yet perfectly achieved, is an accepted goal. Although Oxford and Cambridge may still be accused of elitism, universities throughout the nation are filled with young people from every kind of background, and poverty or class need no longer be a barrier to academic achievement.

But the tragedy of *Jude the Obscure* is more particular than general. Divorce laws had already been passed by the time the book was written, and although divorce was not universally accepted, it was possible to escape a bad marriage. Indeed, both Jude and Sue might have

benefited from their legal opportunity to do so. But this does not take into account the personal and circumstantial way in which fate is against them.

Jude and Sue may be soul mates, but they are not suited to be bed mates. Sue is not completely asexual, but on the scale of sexual desire she is at the opposite end from Jude. She would prefer to live a platonic life, and only gives in physically to Jude when she comes to love him and to pity his predicament. Arabella is opposite to Sue in character: where Sue is sensitive, brilliant and self-educated, Arabella is coarse, carnal and self-centred. She uses her sexual magnetism to manipulate men to her advantage. However, neither is to blame for the eventual tragedy as both act according to their natures.

Jude reflects:

Strange that his first aspiration – towards academical proficiency – had been checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration – towards apostleship – had also been checked by a woman. ‘Is it’ he said, ‘that the women are to blame; or is it the

artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress?’

If there is a villain in the story it is society, with its hypocrisy, entrenched values and insistence on a literal interpretation of the law. Sue, the brilliant philosophical freethinker and atheist is eventually pressured into conforming to society’s rules and accepting its religious beliefs. Jude’s loss of faith and his acceptance of Sue’s attitude to marriage are punished by lack of employment, poverty, suffering and death. In allowing Sue her freedom, Phillotson is condemned by society for his compassion, and he is only forgiven once he agrees to re-instate a conventional relationship:

To indulge one’s instinctive and uncontrolled sense of justice and right, was not, he had found, permitted in an old civilization like ours. It was necessary to act under an acquired and cultivated sense of

*the same, if you wished to enjoy
an average share of comfort and
honour, and to let crude loving
kindness take care of itself.*

The vituperative reviews in the press on the book's publication, and the reaction of those such as the Bishop who threw the book into the fire, resulted in Hardy's decision to write no more novels. Like his characters, their author had been duly called to order and punished by society for his honesty, independence, and compassion.

Notes by Neville Jason



Neville Jason trained at RADA where he was awarded the diction prize by Sir John Gielgud. His first appearance in the theatre was in Peter Brook's production of *Titus Andronicus* starring Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. He is a former member of the Old Vic Company, the English Stage Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Birmingham Repertory Company. Roles include John Worthing in *The Importance of Being Ernest*, Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Robert Browning in *Robert and Elizabeth*. He is a trained singer and has

appeared in numerous musicals including *The Great Waltz*, *1776*, *Ambassador*, *Lock Up Your Daughters*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Irma La Douce*, *Robert and Elizabeth* and *Mutiny*.

Television appearances include *Maigret*, *Dr Who* (The Androids of Tara), *Hamlet* (Horatio), *Crime and Punishment* (Zamyatov), *Emergency Ward Ten*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, *When the Boat Comes In*, *Angels*, *Minder*, *Dempsey and Makepeace*, *The Richest Woman in the World*, *The Dancing Years*, *The Magic Barrel* and *Windmill Near a Frontier*. Films include *From Russia with Love* and *The Message*. He has been a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company three times, and may be heard in radio plays, documentaries and arts programmes. For Naxos AudioBooks his readings include Vasari's *Lives of the Great Artists*, *Freud*, *War and Peace*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Favourite Essays*, *The Once and Future King*, *Evgenii Onegin*, *Wessex Tales* and *Remembrance of Things Past*, both unabridged and abridged. He plays Antonio in *The Tempest*, and has directed productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a director he was awarded Talkies awards for *Great Expectations* and *Poets of the Great War*. As a reader he won AudioFile Earphone awards for *The Captive*, *Time Regained*, *The Once and Future King* and *War and Peace* (Best Audiobooks of the Year 2007 and 2009).

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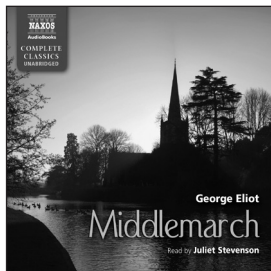
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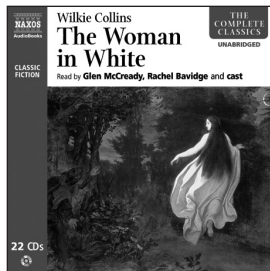
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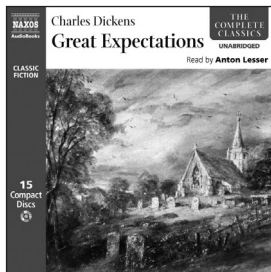
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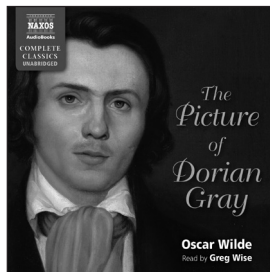
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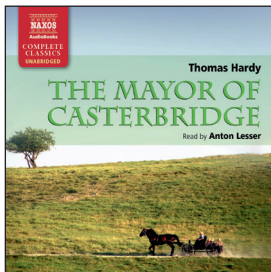
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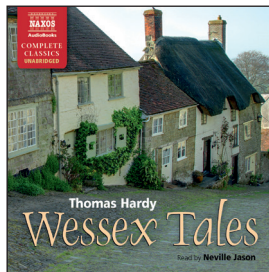
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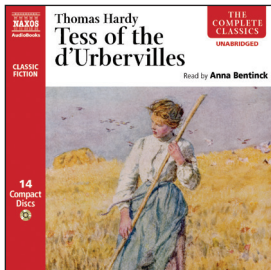
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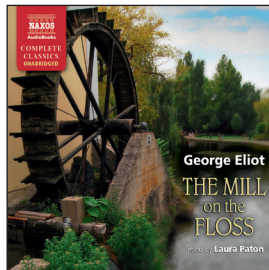
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