

Jude the Obscure



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy was raised in a small, rural village in Dorset. His father was a stonemason and his mother educated Hardy until age eight. His family was too poor to pay for university, so Hardy became an architect's apprentice (similar to Jude) until he decided to focus on writing. His stories are generally set in the Dorset area, which he translated into the fictional county of Wessex. In 1874 he married Emma Gifford. The two were then estranged, but her death in 1912 had a profound effect on Hardy. In 1914 he married his secretary, Florence Dugdale. Hardy's first novels were unsuccessful, and even his later works were controversial and censored. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* drew such an outcry for their sexual frankness and social criticism that Hardy stopped writing fiction, focusing instead on his poetry. Hardy died at the age of eighty-seven.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Jude the Obscure takes place in England during the Victorian era, a period that lasted from 1837-1901. English society during this time was marked by sexual repression and a conservative worldview that emphasized the institution of marriage and the family unit, which Hardy criticized. Murders like those of Jack the Ripper in 1888 began desensitizing the public to violence, leading to scenes like Little Father Time's murder-suicide. The town of Christminster is based on the university town of Oxford, whose colleges were only beginning to accept working-class students during Hardy's time – Hardy himself was unable to afford a university education.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Hardy is considered a Victorian Realist like George Eliot, the author of *Middlemarch*, but he was also influenced by the Romantic poetry of William Wordsworth and the social critiques of Charles Dickens, author of *Oliver Twist* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Hardy's style prefigures Modernist works like Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and his writing influenced D.H. Lawrence, especially his books *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Emma Frances Brooke's 1894 book *A Superfluous Woman* also opposes traditional marriage and contains a child committing murder and suicide.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Jude the Obscure*

- **When Written:** 1887-1895
- **Where Written:** Dorchester, England
- **When Published:** 1895
- **Literary Period:** Victorian Realism
- **Genre:** Realist Fiction, Tragedy
- **Setting:** Southwest England, the fictional county of Wessex
- **Climax:** Little Father Time kills himself and Sue's children
- **Point of View:** Third person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Wessex. Hardy named his fictional "Wessex County" after the Anglo-Saxon kingdom that existed in southwest England in medieval times. Since his resurrection of the name, it has become a popular modern term to describe the region, and there is now even a Wessex Regionalist political party.

Autobiographical. Though Hardy has claimed that *Jude the Obscure* contains little to no biographical information, Sue Bridehead does seem to resemble Hardy's first wife, Emma, who began as nonreligious and later grew obsessively Christian. Hardy's unhappy marriage with and estrangement from Emma also contributed to his unorthodox views on marriage.



PLOT SUMMARY

Jude the Obscure takes place in Wessex, England in the Victorian era. **Jude Fawley** is a poor orphan raised by his **great-aunt**, but he dreams of studying at the university in **Christminster**, a nearby town. He is inspired in this dream by his old teacher, **Richard Phillotson**, who left with similar ambitions when Jude was a child. Jude starts teaching himself classical languages and learning stonemasonry work, but he is distracted from his studies by **Arabella Donn**, a vain, sensual young woman. Arabella pretends she is pregnant and tricks the honorable Jude into marrying her, but the marriage soon falls apart. Arabella moves to Australia and Jude finally makes his way to Christminster. At first he is enthralled by the place but he soon finds he cannot enter the university without wealth and social stature.

While in Christminster Jude meets his intelligent, religiously agnostic cousin **Sue Bridehead**. He immediately falls in love with her, though he tries to resist his feelings. He gets Sue a job with Phillotson, who has also failed to be accepted at a university and is a schoolteacher again. Sue soon gets engaged to Phillotson, but her relationship with Jude also grows stronger and the two cousins become very close. Jude loves

Sue passionately but Sue's own feelings are less clear. Sue is stung to learn about Jude's previous marriage, however, so she goes through with her marriage to Phillotson.

Jude gets depressed and turns to alcohol, and he is reunited with Arabella (who has returned from Australia) for one night. Jude and Sue keep meeting and Sue reveals that she is unhappy in her marriage, as she is repulsed by Phillotson's physical presence. Soon afterward Sue admits her feelings for Jude to Phillotson, and asks him if they can live apart. Phillotson agrees to let Sue leave him for Jude, but he suffers for this decision, which seems morally right to him, by losing his job and his social respectability.

Jude and Sue are united, but they live platonically for a while and they agree not to get married. Arabella reveals to Jude that she had a son by him while in Australia. Jude and Sue agree to take the unwanted boy in, and he arrives soon after. He has no name but is called "Little Father Time," and is a gloomy, world-weary child. Jude and Sue begin to lose work and respect because of their unmarried status, but they find they can't go through with the wedding ceremony. They become lovers and begin to lead a nomadic life, having two children of their own and caring for Little Father Time.

Jude falls ill for a while, and when he recovers he decides he wants to move back to Christminster and pursue his old dream. The family has trouble finding a room because they are unmarried and have children, and Jude has to stay separately from Sue and the children. That night Sue and Little Father Time both grow depressed, and the boy decides that he and the other children are the cause of the family's troubles. The next morning Jude and Sue find that Little Father Time has hanged himself and the other two children.

Sue breaks down at this tragedy and grows obsessively religious, believing that she is being punished for her disbelief and sexual liberties. She leaves Jude and returns to Phillotson, despite having no change in her feelings for either. Jude is soon tricked into marrying Arabella again, and both marriages are unhappy. Jude gets sick and visits Sue one last time in the rain. They kiss but then Sue sends Jude away for the last time. As "penance" for this kiss Sue begins a sexual relationship with Phillotson. Jude dies soon after, and Arabella immediately starts looking for a new husband.

regarding alcohol and women, and he allows his marriage to Arabella, even though it is unhappy, to distract himself from his dream. He shares a deep connection with his cousin Sue, but their relationship is doomed by their earlier marriages, society's disapproval, and bad luck. Jude starts out pious and religious, but by the end of his life he has grown agnostic and bitter.

Sue Bridehead – The novel's other protagonist and Jude's cousin. Sue's parents were divorced and she was raised in London and **Christminster**. She is an extremely intelligent woman who rejects Christianity and flirts with paganism, despite working as a religious artist and then teacher. Sue is often described as "ethereal" and "bodiless" and she generally lacks sexual passion, especially compared to Jude. Sue marries Phillotson as a kind of rebuke to Jude for his own marriage to Arabella, and is then repulsed by Phillotson as a husband. She is portrayed as inconsistent and emotional, often changing her mind abruptly, but she develops a strong relationship and love with Jude. Though she starts out nonreligious, the death of her children drives Sue to a harsh, legalistic version of Christianity as she believes she is being punished for her earlier rebellion against Christianity, and she returns to Phillotson even though she never ceases to love Jude.

Arabella Donn – Jude's first wife, a vain, sensual woman who is the daughter of a pig farmer. She decides to marry Jude and so tricks him into marrying her by pretending to be pregnant. Arabella sees marriage as a kind of entrapment and as a source of financial security, and she uses whatever means necessary to get what she wants. After Jude fails to provide for her, Arabella goes to Australia and takes a new husband there. She is often contrasted with the pure, intellectual Sue, as Arabella is associated with alcohol and sexual pleasure. When she wants Jude back she gets him drunk and forces him to marry her, and when he dies (or even just before) she immediately starts seeking a new husband.

Richard Phillotson – Jude's schoolmaster at Marygreen who moves to **Christminster** and fails to be accepted at the university there. Phillotson remains as a teacher, and he later hires Sue and falls in love with her. They marry, but Sue finds she cannot live with Phillotson as a husband. Though Phillotson is a conservative man, he finds that letting Sue leave him feels like the most moral decision, and he sticks by it even when he is punished by society for his disgrace and loses his job and respectability. Phillotson is a kindly, ethical man, but Sue's lack of love for him causes him great torment.

Little Father Time – Jude's son with Arabella, he was born in Australia and sent to England to live with Jude years later. The boy was never named or given love, and his nickname is "**Little Father Time**" because he seems old beyond his years. Jude and Sue christen him as "Jude," but his old nickname sticks. Little Father Time is a world-weary, depressed child who lacks any curiosity or joy. He is portrayed as a result of the divorce,



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Jude Fawley – The novel's protagonist, a poor orphan who is raised by his great-aunt after his parents divorced and died. Jude dreams of attending the university at **Christminster**, but he fails to be accepted because of his working class background. He is a skilled stonemason and a kindly soul who cannot hurt any living thing. Jude's "fatal flaw" is his weakness

lovelessness, and bad luck in his life, and in this he acts as a symbol as well as a character. Little Father Time ultimately takes Sue's depressed words to heart and kills himself and Sue's two children in order to try to free Sue and Jude from their burdens.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Drusilla Fawley – Jude and Sue's great-aunt, the woman who raises Jude. She is generally bad-natured, always warning Jude not to get married because of his family's past "curse" in marriages, and lamenting that he didn't die with his parents.

The Widow Edlin – An old woman who takes care of Drusilla and then befriends Jude and Sue. She is always looking out for their best interests and lamenting the state of marriage in modern times.

Gillingham – Phillotson's friend, a schoolteacher who usually advises him to take the most sensible and conventional route.

Physician Vilbert – A quack-doctor who travels constantly and sells false remedies to people in small towns. He tricks the young Jude into advertising for him for free, and later in life he woos Arabella as Jude is dying.

Farmer Trutham – A farmer who beats and fires the young Jude for being merciful to the crows he is supposed to be scaring.

Mr. Donn – Arabella's father, a pig farmer and then butcher who has little love for his daughter but is a willing accomplice in her attempt to "trap" Jude.

Cartlett – Arabella's second husband whom she met in Australia.

Anny and Sarah – Arabella's friends who advise her on how to "trap" Jude into marriage.

Miss Fontover – Sue's religious landlady, who smashes Sue's statues of Apollo and Venus and then kicks her out.

The Undergraduate – Sue's friend from years before, a nonreligious but moral man who was Sue's intellectual mentor and her platonic roommate. He fell in love with her but Sue rejected him.

The Composer – A man who writes the hymn "The Foot of the Cross." Jude visits him but finds that the composer is shallow and greedy.

Uncle Joe & Tinker Taylor – Two of Jude's stonemason companions in [Christminster](#).

The Christminster Landlady – A woman who takes in Sue and the children when no one else will, and then helps the family deal with their children's deaths.

Challow – A pig-killer who never shows up, forcing Jude to kill his and Arabella's pig, much to Jude's dismay.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



MARRIAGE

Much of *Jude the Obscure* consists of a critique of the institution of marriage, which Hardy saw as flawed and unjust. The novel's plot is designed to wring all the possible tragedy out of an unhappy marriage, as Jude is first guilted into marrying Arabella by her feigned pregnancy, and Sue marries Phillotson mostly to make Jude jealous. Both protagonists immediately regret their decisions, and realize how a single impulsive decision can affect their entire lives. When they meet each other and fall in love, Sue and Jude's pure connection is constantly obstructed by their earlier marriages, and Hardy even presents the tragedy of [Little Father Time](#)'s murder-suicide as a natural result of broken marriages and unhappy relationships.

In the narrator's asides Hardy also criticizes marriage, describing it as a binding contract that most young lovers are incapable of understanding. He doesn't believe that the institution is inherently evil, but that it isn't right for every situation and personality – "sensitive" souls like Jude and Sue should be able to live as husband and wife without a binding legal contract. Though he argues for this flexibility and seems to propose the couple's unmarried relationship as an ideal solution, Hardy then punishes his protagonists in his plot, ultimately driving Sue back to Phillotson and Jude back to Arabella.

The novel is not a simple diatribe against marriage, but instead illustrates a complex, contradictory situation. Sue and Jude want their love to be true and spontaneous, but also totally monogamous and everlasting. The epigraph to the novel is "the letter killeth," which comes from a quote from Jesus in the Bible: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth light." Hardy intended this quote to refer to marriage, where the contract of the institution kills joy and true love, but Hardy purposefully leaves off the optimism of "the spirit" – Jude and Sue's joy is fleeting even when they are only following "Nature's law," and in the end they find no good answer for how to properly love and live together. By the novel's tragic end Hardy still leaves the question of marriage unanswered, emphasizing only his dissatisfaction with the institution as it stands.



FATE

Throughout the book Hardy subjects his characters to many hardships and unlucky coincidences which

come to feel like fate, whether that fate is interpreted as a supernatural punishment for rebelling against religion or a fate determined by a society structured to thwart independent, sensitive souls like Jude and Sue. The novel's overarching story of fate is that Jude and Sue's family is "cursed" in marriage – both Jude's parents and Sue's parents were divorced, and they have an ancestor who was hanged for stealing his child's body from his estranged wife. This curse comes to affect the protagonists' actions, as they avoid marrying each other and possibly doubling the curse. Fate looms over the characters in other situations as well, like when Jude tries so hard to get into a college but is always fated to fail because of his poverty and class. Over the course of the book Jude, Sue, and their children are slowly crushed by their bad luck and an unfriendly society. They become depressed, and start to believe that it is better never to be born than to live in such a cruel world. The climax of the novel, **Little Father Time's** murder-suicide, is portrayed as an inevitable result of the situation in which he was raised: a product of divorce, depression, and bad luck. As with the marriage question, Hardy gives no easy answer regarding fate. He seems to imply that humans should struggle against their fate (if it's bad), but at the same time he shows just how futile this struggle usually is.



SOCIAL CRITICISM

Much of the novel serves as a vessel for Hardy's criticism of English Victorian society. Most of this critique is aimed at the institution of marriage, but

Hardy also targets education, class divides, and hypocrisy. The early part of the novel involves Jude's quest to be accepted into a college at **Christminster**, a university town based on Oxford. Jude works for years teaching himself classical languages, but he is never accepted simply because of his social class and poverty. In Jude's unjustified failures Hardy demonstrates the unfairness and classism of the educational system.

Relating to the marriage theme, Hardy also emphasizes the oppressiveness of Victorian society in dealing with any unorthodox domestic situation. Jude and Sue cannot find a room or a steady job as long as their marital status is anything but traditional, and Phillotson loses his teaching jobs because he allowed Sue to leave him. Hardy was far ahead of his time in many of his views – implying that universities should accept members of the working class, couples could live together without being married, and even that the father of a woman's child should be the woman's business alone – but Hardy's society was not ready for such criticism. The backlash against *Jude the Obscure* was so harsh that Hardy gave up writing altogether.



WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Sue Bridehead is a surprisingly modern and complex heroine for her time, and through her character Hardy brings up many gender-related issues. Sue is unique in Victorian society in that she lives with men without marrying (or even sleeping with) them, as with her undergraduate student friend. Sue is highly intelligent and very well-read, and she rejects the traditional Christianity of her society. She also works alongside both Phillotson and Jude, first marrying Phillotson partly to further her own teaching position (instead of acting as the traditional housewife).

Despite her intelligence and independence, Sue fails at her endeavors throughout the book, and through her sufferings Hardy critiques the society that punishes his heroine. Sue, like other women, is expected to be the "property" of the man she marries, so Sue is bound to Phillotson for life even after their separation. Sue is never allowed to advance in her work (despite her intelligence) because of her marital status. As an unmarried, disgraced woman she has no power in society. While Hardy was ahead of his time in creating such a strong female character, he still clings to many gender stereotypes about women: Sue is emotionally fragile and often hysterical, changing her mind at the slightest whim and breaking down in the face of tragedy. As an opposite to Sue, Arabella is greedy, sensual, and vain – the stereotype of everything Victorian society found bad and sinful in women. Though Arabella is usually the antagonist, she is also the character who ends up the most fortunate in the plot, showing just how unprepared society was for a character like Sue.



RELIGION

Along with marriage and society, Hardy spends much of *Jude the Obscure* critiquing religion and the institution of Christianity. He often portrays

Christianity as life-denying and belonging to "the letter" that "killeth" (from the novel's epigraph). In contrast, Sue is introduced as a kind of pre-Christian entity, an ethereal, pagan spirit, and she first appears buying figures of the ancient Greek gods Venus and Apollo. Jude, meanwhile, hopes to join the clergy as part of his intellectual pursuits. At a model of Jerusalem, Sue wonders why Jerusalem should be honored above Athens or Rome, but Jude is mesmerized by this city which is so important to Christianity.

As with most of his arguments, Hardy also undercuts himself and favors a nuanced approach to an issue. Even as he seems to reject Christianity, he also portrays almost all the main characters as Christ-figures at several points, even describing them with Biblical language. The "pagan joy" of Sue and Jude's unmarried, unreligious love is not actually that joyful either, and Hardy thoroughly punishes them with his plot, ultimately driving Sue to submit to a harsh, legalistic version of

Christianity. By associating Sue's turn to religion with Jude's turn to alcohol (both used as relief from the tragedy of their children's death), Hardy again adds more nuance – Christianity may be the “right” way for his country and time, but it can still be used for less-than-pure purposes. As “Nature's law” fails Sue and Jude, so “Heaven's law” also fails them, and the “letter” of the law of Christianity can seem less moral than human nature. Hardy gives many examples of this, including Sue's return to Phillotson, which is a kind of adultery even though they are legally and religiously married. As usual, Hardy ends without any clear answer. He seems to reject a Christianity that is overly concerned with laws and traditions, but he doesn't portray paganism or atheism as a particularly fulfilling alternative either.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



CHRISTMINSTER

Christminster is a fictional university town based on Oxford, England. Jude first learns of it when he is eleven years old and his teacher, Mr. Phillotson, leaves Marygreen to go there. Christminster then becomes the young Jude's goal in life, and he idealizes the place as “The New Jerusalem” and a “city of light,” watching its faint, distant glow from the roof of the Brown House. When Jude finally makes it to Christminster, he imagines the shades of dead philosophers speaking to him in the streets. In the first part of the novel Christminster symbolizes Jude's hope and idealism, and his desire to make a better life for himself despite his low social class.

The reality of Christminster soon strikes Jude (and the reader), however, as he learns that despite his hard work and natural intelligence, the colleges are only open to the upper classes. Phillotson, his predecessor, has also failed and settled back into his earlier role as a schoolmaster, and Jude likewise remains a stonemason. In this way Christminster comes to symbolize Jude's failed hopes and dreams, and Hardy's pessimistic worldview. After years of moving about nomadically, Jude returns to Christminster for one last attempt to achieve his goals. It takes him a long time to realize it, but he finally gives up Christminster as a hopeless dream. He recognizes that it would take “two or three generations” to do what he tried to do in one generation – raise his social class through his own hard work and intelligence. Because of the tragedy of Jude's situation, Christminster ultimately becomes one of Hardy's greatest critiques of the unfairness inherent in his society.



LITTLE FATHER TIME

Little Father Time is a character in the novel, but he also acts as a symbol of coming of age and Hardy's apprehensive view of the generation to come. Little Father Time lacks personality except as an excessively morbid, unexcitable child, but when he kills himself and Sue's children it is the climax of the novel. As a symbol, Little Father Time represents the depression and amorality that Hardy sees as the inevitable result of the injustices in his society. Father Time is driven to despair by how poorly Jude and Sue are treated for being unmarried, and by his lack of love from Arabella and her parents. After Little Father Time's death, the doctor actually diagnoses his murder-suicide as “in his nature” and “the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live.” In this way Hardy horrifies his readers and makes his social critiques seem that much more urgent, implying that the injustices of his generation will lead to tragedy in the next.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *Jude the Obscure* published in 1998.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

☞ As the halo had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way.

“It is a city of light,” he said to himself.

“The tree of knowledge grows there,” he added a few steps further on.

“It is a place that teachers of men spring from, and go to.”

“It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion.”

After this figure he was silent for a long while, till he added, “It would just suit me.”

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 25-26

Explanation and Analysis

Jude has been fantasizing about Christminster, asking other men about it and hoping to catch a glimpse of it from the roof of the Brown House on clear nights. Although the men have told Jude that at Christminster they read books in

languages he will never understand, Jude has resolved to make it his life's goal to attend one of the colleges there. In this passage, Jude gazes at the distant "halo" of the city while describing it to himself in positive, even holy terms. Indeed, phrases such as "city of light" and "tree of knowledge" emphasize the way in which Christminster *is* holy to Jude, and that his dedication to it has become akin to religious faith.

At the same time, the way Jude talks to himself about Christminster illustrates how isolated and uninformed he really is about his goal. The information he's received about the city has almost entirely come from other working-class men who have never been there, and this is part of the reason why Jude elevates it to mystical, unrealistic proportions. Jude's lack of realistic information also foreshadows the fact that he will ultimately fail to be admitted to the university. His final statement, "It would just suit me," is tragically erroneous. Although the ideal climate of "scholarship and religion" that Jude imagines would indeed suit him, the reality of Christminster is a place that is closed off to Jude and other men of his social class.

Part 1, Chapter 9 Quotes

☝☝ And so, standing before the aforesaid officiator, the two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore.

Related Characters: Jude Fawley, Arabella Donn

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 57

Explanation and Analysis

Jude has told Arabella that he thinks he should move away, and in response Arabella has lied, telling him that she is pregnant. Although Jude believes this will signal the end of his dreams of going to Christminster, he nonetheless agrees to marry her, as this is the honorable thing to do. In this passage, the narrator describes the marriage ceremony, describing it in detached language and framing it as a pact to "believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks." Although marriage was a completely normal and central institution during the Victorian era (and still is), the narrator here seeks to defamiliarize it, showing how the very concept is strange

and unrealistic.

The narrator remarks that it was "remarkable" that "nobody seemed at all surprised" by the ceremony, suggesting the reader themselves should feel surprised or alarmed by what has taken place. Indeed, the narrator's words highlight the bizarre and arguably immoral nature of marriage by describing the vows as a promise to feel the same way forever. The way Jude and Arabella have felt in the short, tumultuous weeks they have spent together is now supposedly to automatically extend for a lifetime. This is alarming not only because of its unrealistic resistance to growth, maturity, and change, but also because the "few preceding weeks" have been hardly ideal in the first place. Although sensually attracted to each other, it is clear that Jude and Arabella are not particularly compatible, and the whole reason why the marriage is taking place is because Arabella lied to Jude—a rather worrying precedent for a lifetime of marriage.

Part 1, Chapter 11 Quotes

☝☝ Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable. "Going to ill-use me on principle, as your father ill-used your mother, and your father's sister ill-used her husband?" she asked. "All you Fawleys be a queer lot as husbands and wives."

Related Characters: Arabella Donn, Jude Fawley (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 69

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Arabella's marriage is a disaster; Jude has overheard friends of Arabella's saying that she tricked him into marriage, and the couple have been arguing ferociously. In this passage, Jude comes to the realization that "their lives were ruined... by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union." Jude's thoughts frame the problem not as unique to his and Arabella's unhappy situation, but rather as a fundamental issue with the institution of marriage in general. The feelings he and Arabella had for one another were temporary, and not conducive to "life-long comradeship." Note that this kind of question remains at the heart of debates over marriage in the present day, and thus this passage reveals just how forward-thinking Hardy was for his time.

Arabella's taunts to Jude are also significant for the way that they invoke the notion of fate. Arabella suggests that unhappy marriages are a kind of curse in Jude's family, repeating within each generation in a cycle of misery. Again, consider the way in which this kind of thinking preempts 20th-century sociological and psychoanalytic discourse about cycles of trauma and abuse. Although Arabella's words seem unfairly harsh, it is nonetheless reasonable to infer that Jude's distrust of the institution of marriage originates in witnessing his parents' unhappy marriage and eventual divorce.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

☞ Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life; men who had nothing to do from morning till night but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Only a wall – but what a wall!

Related Characters: Jude Fawley

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 86

Explanation and Analysis

Jude has finally gone to Christminster, and on his first night there walks around in a rapture, feeling as if he is surrounded by the ghosts of dead writers. In the morning, however, reality begins to sink in. Jude has noticed that the buildings are decayed, and briefly considers the notion that being a stoneworker is perhaps as valuable as being a scholar. However, this thought does not last long, and Jude ponders the "wall" that separates him and the students at Christminster. These thoughts reveal Jude's insight as well as his naïveté. Of course, much more than a wall separates Jude from the Christminster students—at the same time, by exclaiming "what a wall!", Jude shows understanding of how the wall symbolizes the exclusivity and elitism of the university.

Indeed, this passage raises complex questions about the relationship between material existence and the life of the mind. As Jude rightly infers, even an elite university like Christminster relies on the work of stonemasons and other manual laborers in order to function. Ironically, it is these workers who construct the walls that then symbolize their exclusion from the institution within them.

Part 3, Chapter 1 Quotes

☞ "Cathedral? Yes. Though I think I'd rather sit in the railway station," she answered, a remnant of vexation still in her voice. "That's the centre of the town life now: the Cathedral has had its day!"
 "How modern you are!"
 "So would you be if you had lived so much in the middle ages as I have done these last few years! The Cathedral was a very good place four or five centuries ago; but it is played out now... I am not modern, either. I am more ancient than mediaevalism, if you only knew."

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead, Jude Fawley (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 135

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Sue have met in Melchester, and Jude has learned of Sue's engagement to Phillotson. Although he is devastated, Jude attempts to appear happy for Sue, and suggests that they visit the cathedral together. In this passage, Sue admits that she'd rather "sit in the railway station," as "that's the centre of the town life now." Despite this straightforwardly modern statement, when Jude remarks that Sue is "modern," she corrects him, saying she is "more ancient than mediaevalism." Why does Sue deny that she is modern, after associating herself with the train station, one of the key symbols of modernity?

Part of the reason is that Sue's wild, free spirit is associated with paganism. Her fierce character is closer to the rugged natural world than to the industrial, urban landscapes we associate with modernity. In addition, Sue's dismissal of modernity is also perhaps the result of the pessimism that defines the novel. Although *Jude the Obscure* is highly critical of Victorian culture and norms, it resists romanticizing the future as a time in which the problems of the Victorian era will be resolved. Indeed, the suicide of Little Father Time is a good indicator of the extent to which the novel presents a pessimistic view of the future.

☞ You prove it in your own person. You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning, but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons.

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker), Jude Fawley

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 151

Explanation and Analysis

Sue is staying at Jude's house, although he has had to hide her from his landlady in order to avoid a scandal. The pair have discussed their education, and Jude has realized that Sue is more widely-read than he is. Sue has described to Jude how she lived platonically with a Christminster undergraduate who was in love with her; however, she did not love him, and he died of what Sue suspects was a broken heart. In this passage, Sue tells Jude that she believes he (Jude) is "one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded," but that the original ideal of accessible education has been corrupted by exclusivity and elitism.

Once again, Sue shows a level of insight and maturity that makes Jude look naïve in comparison. She understands the paradox at the heart of Christminster and other elite educational institutions: although they have the potential to promote progressive values and social mobility, they are taken over by "the millionaires' sons" and thus remain a privilege only afforded to the wealthy. Note the similarity of Sue's critique to Christminster to critiques of the way Christianity has changed since its earliest forms in the centuries after Christ's death. It is certainly possible to draw a parallel between the way that both religious and educational institutions have egalitarian ideals at their core, but are corrupted by elitism, exclusion, and the desire for power.

Part 3, Chapter 7 Quotes

☹☹ I have been looking at the marriage service in the Prayer-book, and it seems to me very humiliating that a giver-away should be required at all. According to the ceremony as there printed, my bridegroom chooses me of his own will and pleasure; but I don't choose him. Somebody gives me to him, like a she-ass or she-goat, or any other domestic animal. Bless your exalted views of woman, O Churchman!

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 170

Explanation and Analysis

Sue has sent Jude a rather formal letter informing him that she will soon marry Phillotson. She then sends another letter asking if, as her only male relative who is married, Jude will "give her away" at her wedding. She adds that she finds the concept of being given away "very humiliating," and objects to other parts of the marriage service, such as the notion that the bridegroom chooses the bride, but the bride herself is passively given "like a she-ass or she-goat." Once again, Sue has revealed a kind of proto-feminist consciousness and affinity with contemporary critiques of the institution of marriage. Her intelligence leads her to understand that even seemingly innocuous elements of the marriage ceremony fundamentally belittle women.

Furthermore, Sue is unequivocal in her condemnation of the sexism of religion. She exclaims sarcastically, "Bless your exalted views of woman, O Churchman!" Note that, once again, this criticism coheres with contemporary feminist critique of the sexism within organized religion. Although this critique is rather common now, it would have been highly scandalous at the time *Jude the Obscure* was written.

Part 4, Chapter 2 Quotes

☹☹ Jude, before I married him I had never thought out fully what marriage meant, even though I knew... I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one has done so ignorantly. I daresay it happens to lots of women; only they submit, and I kick... 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!

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker), Jude Fawley, Richard Phillotson

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 215

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Sue's aunt has died, and they have met in Marygreen for the funeral. Sue has confessed that she likes Phillotson as a friend but finds him repulsive as a husband. She tells Jude that she wishes it were possible "to undo what one has done so ignorantly," and that she believes people in the future will look back on marriage as a "barbarous custom." Although Sue has previously claimed to be more pagan than modern, in this passage she strongly identifies herself with a more enlightened, fair, and rational future that she imagines will follow the era in which she

lives. Note the similarity between Sue's objection to marriage and that expressed by Jude; both point to the absurdity of committing forever to feelings that can change so quickly.

Part 4, Chapter 3 Quotes

☝☝ “What is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances,” she burst out, “if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin?”

“But you are committing a sin in not liking me.”

“I *do* like you! But I didn't reflect it would be – that it would be so much more than that... For a man and woman to live on intimate terms when one feels as I do is adultery, in any circumstances, however legal. There – I've said it!... Will you let me, Richard?”

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead, Richard Phillotson (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 222

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Sue have parted ways, kissing passionately before doing so. Jude has decided that, since he loves Sue so fiercely, he cannot join the clergy; meanwhile, Sue is tormented by her feelings for Jude, and hides from Phillotson in a closet. Phillotson confronts her, and Sue tells him vaguely that she is "miserable" and that living intimately with him would constitute "adultery... however legal." Sue's words reveal her strong opposition to legalistic understandings of morality. Rather than judge her own behavior against moral rules and societal norms, Sue evaluates her situation as individual and unique. At the same time, it is clear that she is very much concerned with morality, a concern made evident by her reference to adultery and "sin."

Part 5, Chapter 3 Quotes

☝☝ Jude, do you think that when you *must* have me with you by law, we shall be so happy as we are now? The men and women of our family are very generous when everything depends upon their good-will, but they always kick against compulsion. Don't you dread the attitude that insensibly arises out of legal obligation? Don't you think it is destructive to a passion whose essence is its gratuitousness?

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker), Jude Fawley

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 272

Explanation and Analysis

Sue has spoken with Arabella, who advised her to marry Jude. However, this has only further convinced Sue that marriage is a "vulgar institution." In response, Jude has remarked that Sue seems more like someone from an ancient civilization than the Christian era in which she lives. Yet Sue continues to confess her doubts about marriage, asking Jude if he thinks he would continue to love her if they got married, and reminding him that there is a history of resistance to "compulsion" within their family. Once again, Sue raises the notion that the legalistic nature of marriage can destroy "passion," happiness, and love. Although she conveys a more generous view of hers and Jude's family than Arabella, she clearly feels concerned about the familial legacy of divorce and how it might influence her own fate.

☝☝ What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. That excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people's, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-soul-ism and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom.

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 274

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Sue have been living happily together, having put aside their concerns about marriage. Meanwhile, Arabella has written a letter telling Jude that she has given birth to his son in Australia, and asks if Jude and Sue can take the boy in. Although Jude is not certain that the child is his, in this passage he asserts that it doesn't matter; adults have a responsibility for all children "of the time," and to artificially prefer one's own children to others is immoral in the same way as "class-feeling, patriotism, [and] save-your-own-soul-ism." Having presented radical views on love and marriage, the novel now undermines traditional notions of the family.

Jude's thoughts equate focusing on the blood relation between parents and children as exclusionary and unjust. Indeed, his statement about caring for all children "of the time" suggests a communalist ideology that conflicted with the Victorian Christian focus on the patriarchal, nuclear family unit.

difficulty of negotiating a life that runs counter to societal norms and expectations.

☞ I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow, and have forgotten what twenty-five centuries have taught the race since their time, as one of your Christminster luminaries says...

Part 5, Chapter 4 Quotes

☞ "Nobody thought o' being afeared o' matrimony in my time, nor of much else but a cannon-ball or empty cupboard. Why when I and my poor man were married we thought no more o't than of a game o' dubs."

"Don't tell the child when he comes in," whispered Sue nervously. "He'll think it has all gone on right, and it will be better that he should not be surprised and puzzled. Of course it is only put off for reconsideration. If we are happy as we are, what does it matter to anybody?"

Related Characters: The Widow Edlin, Sue Bridehead (speaker), Little Father Time

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 288

Explanation and Analysis

Jude and Sue have adopted Little Father Time, and begun the process of getting married; however, the Widow Edlin has told a story about an unhappy marriage in their family that causes them to doubt whether they should proceed, and eventually they decide to postpone the wedding. In this passage, the Widow Edlin comments that nobody was afraid of marriage in the old days, and treated the whole matter casually. This illustrates the way in which Sue and Jude are distinctly modern figures, representing a new era. Unlike the Widow, they place a great deal of emphasis on the emotional aspect of marriage, and how it might change their relationship.

Meanwhile, Sue pleads that the Widow not mention the fact that she and Jude did not go through with the marriage to Little Father Time. Although she strives to live freely and unconventionally in her own life, Sue is evidently concerned with how this lifestyle will affect her adopted son. While she claims that "If we are happy as we are, what does it matter to anybody?", it is evident that Sue realizes that it *does* matter, even if she disagrees with the logic people use to judge unmarried couples. Overall, this passage confirms the

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 297

Explanation and Analysis

Jude, Sue, and Little Father Time are at the Wessex Agricultural Show, along with Arabella and her husband Cartlett. Jude and Sue seem incredibly happy together, and have even reached a point where they can communicate without speaking. Arabella, meanwhile, has grown to resent Cartlett, and looks on at Jude and Sue with a mix of envy and disdain. In this passage, Sue describes her happiness with Jude, saying that they have "returned to Greek joyousness," meaning that they have managed to conduct their lives with a kind of pagan freedom and joy, free from the constrictions of Victorian social codes and Christian morality. The contrast between Sue and Jude and Arabella and Cartlett supports Sue's view, suggesting that marriage truly does often destroy couples' feelings for one another.

Sue's statement that she and Jude have "forgotten" the lessons of the past twenty-five centuries suggests that they have returned to a more innocent, joyful state of existence. However, Sue's happiness seems almost too good to last, as the rest of the narrative will prove. Although it may indeed be the case that people's lives are happier without marriage and other legalistic social customs, the novel also shows how difficult--even impossible--it is to live against the dominant norms of one's era.

Part 5, Chapter 8 Quotes

☞ “She’d have come round in time. We all do! Custom does it! it’s all the same in the end! However, I think she’s quite fond of her man still – whatever he med be of her. You were too quick about her. I shouldn’t have let her go! I should have kept her chained on – her spirit for kicking would have been broke soon enough! There’s nothing like bondage and a stone-deaf task-master for taming us women. Besides, you’ve got the laws on your side. Moses knew... ‘Then shall the man be guiltless; but the woman shall bear her iniquity.’ Damn rough on us women; but we must grin and put up wi’ it – Haw haw! – Well; she’s got her deserts now.”

“Yes,” said Phillotson, with biting sadness. “Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can’t get out of it if we would!”

Related Characters: Arabella Donn, Richard Phillotson (speaker), Jude Fawley

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 318

Explanation and Analysis

Arabella has run into Phillotson on the road and introduced herself to him. Phillotson reveals that he was disgraced as a result of divorcing Sue, and Arabella tells him that Sue is now unhappy and that Phillotson should have stayed with her. Arabella’s words present a bleak, depressing view of gender, marriage, and indeed human existence in general. She compares women to horses that need to be tamed, and says that Sue has got what she deserved. Phillotson is not as harsh, but seems lost and defeated by the tragic circumstances of his life, exclaiming that “cruelty is the law pervading all of nature and society.”

In many ways, this statement can be interpreted as the main message of the novel. Regardless of the choices one makes—whether one chooses to pursue individual happiness and freedom or succumbs to societal expectations—life is ruthless and most people are miserable. Arabella’s claim that “it’s all the same in the end” resonates with this bleak view of humanity. No matter how hard people try to find happiness, they are inevitably broken down by the cruelty of life.

Part 6, Chapter 2 Quotes

☞ “It would almost be better to be out o’ the world than in it, wouldn’t it?”

“It would almost, dear.”

“’Tis because of us children, too, isn’t it, that you can’t get a good lodging.”

“Well – people do object to children sometimes.”

“Then if children make so much trouble, why do people have ‘em?”

“O – because it is a law of nature.”

“But we don’t ask to be born?”

“No indeed.”

“And what makes it worse with me is that you are not my real mother, and you needn’t have had me unless you liked. I oughtn’t to have come to ‘ee – that’s the real truth! I troubled ‘em in Australia; and I trouble folk here. I wish I hadn’t been born!”

Related Characters: Little Father Time, Sue Bridehead (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 333

Explanation and Analysis

In Christminster, Sue, Jude and the children have been refused lodging because of the fact that Sue and Jude aren’t married. Sue is deeply depressed, and in this passage talks to Little Father Time about the difficulty of life. Although she doesn’t mean to, Sue inadvertently confirms Little Father Time’s suspicions that she and Jude would be better off if the children didn’t exist. (This will eventually lead to Little Father Time’s horrific murder-suicide.) The boy’s world-weary personality suggests that, despite his young age, he understands the world better than the adults around him. Aspects of life that adults don’t question—such as why people have children, given that life is so hard—trouble Little Father Time. His philosophical reflections on these matters show both his intelligence and his deep pessimism about life.

☞ “No,” said Jude. “It was in his nature to do it. The doctor says that there are such boys springing up amongst us – boys of a sort unknown in the last generation – the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live.”

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker), Little Father Time

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 337

Explanation and Analysis

The day after Sue and Little Father Time's conversation about life, Sue goes to bring the children breakfast only to discover all three children hanged--Little Father Time has murdered the others before killing himself. Though all three are dead, Jude summons a doctor anyway, who confirms that there is no hope for them and adds that Little Father Time was in some sense predestined to commit suicide. The doctor even suggests that Little Father Time's actions were representative of "the coming universal wish not to live." This remarkable statement is surprising given the shocking nature of the murder-suicide. Little Father Time's actions completely contradict the way children are expected to behave, and thus the doctor's words indicate the boy's total dissimilarity from traditional ideas of childhood innocence.

Indeed, as Jude stresses in this passage, Little Father Time seems to have bypassed this state of innocence altogether, arriving at a sorrowful, pessimistic view of the world before he is old enough to be able to properly cope with suffering. The doctor's suggestions that Little Father Time is representative of a more general "wish not to live" emphasizes Little Father Time's association with a bleak, cruel future. At the same time, this death-drive itself is a cancellation of futurity, suggesting that even as Little Father Time symbolizes the coming of modernity, this future world is just darkness, nihilism, and death.

- The boy's face expressed the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term. For the rashness of those parents he had groaned, for their ill-assortment he had quaked, and for the misfortunes of these he had died.

Related Characters: Little Father Time, Jude Fawley

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 337

Explanation and Analysis

Little Father Time has hanged his siblings and then himself in a horrifying murder-suicide. A doctor has told Jude and Sue that Little Father Time's nihilistic view of the world is symbolic of a new desire for death among the younger generation. Jude and Sue go to see the children's bodies, and feel that Little Father Time's face "expressed the whole tale of their situation." This passage utilizes the language typically used to describe parental love for children in positive terms, while twisting it in a decidedly sinister way, suggesting that Little Father Time has paid for his parents' "accidents, mistakes, fears, [and] errors." Once again, Little Father Time is represented less as an individual character than a symbol for some of the novel's key themes—a kind of Christ figure of modernity, who dies without reason or hope because of the sins of the world.

- We said – do you remember? – that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention. Nature's law and *raison d'être* that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us – instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!

Related Characters: Sue Bridehead (speaker), Jude Fawley

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 339

Explanation and Analysis

Following Little Father Time's murder-suicide, Jude and Sue have gone to view the children's bodies. They hear an organ playing a hymn, and Sue comments that it feels as though a force is punishing them for the way they have behaved. In this passage, Sue continues to fixate on the idea that "Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools." This is a crucial turning point in Sue's attitude toward faith, freedom, and morality. Whereas before the children's deaths Sue staunchly associated herself with a kind of "ancient," pagan atheism, the trajectory of her life has caused her to experience a crisis in which she believes she is

being punished by God.

This passage displays not only Sue's sudden turn to religiosity but also her newfound sense of pessimism. In previous years, Sue justified her nonconformist lifestyle by claiming that she was living according to natural instincts. Now, however, she suddenly sees nature as deceitful and cruel, and exclaims in shame about the "dreadful things" she used to think.

“I see marriage differently now!... My babies have been taken from me to show me this! Arabella's child killing mine was a judgment; the right slaying the wrong. What, what shall I do! I am such a vile creature – too worthless to mix with ordinary human beings.”
 ...He returned vehemently... “You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond – whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of, if they could have known you – should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity – damn glad – if it's going to ruin you in this way!”

Related Characters: Jude Fawley, Sue Bridehead (speaker), Arabella Donn, Little Father Time

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 350

Explanation and Analysis

Following the children's deaths, Sue and Jude and have moved to Beersheba, where they live in a state of depression and despair. Sue has declared that they are being punished by God, and thus have "no choice" but to "conform." In this passage, Sue explains her dramatic change of heart, telling Jude that she interprets Little Father Time killing her children as "the right slaying the wrong." Jude responds by telling Sue that she makes him "hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism," and feel glad that he's not religious. Jude's reply is interesting, as it highlights the fact that he has now taken on Sue's previous beliefs wholeheartedly, and is indeed defending them from Sue herself. Jude and Sue have switched places, and Jude is now the one speaking with Hardy's skeptical and pessimistic but defiant voice.

Perhaps as we couldn't conscientiously marry at first in the old-fashioned way, we ought to have parted. Perhaps the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as ours! Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers!

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 352

Explanation and Analysis

Sue has grown increasingly religious, obsessed with the idea that the children's deaths were God's punishment for the fact that she and Jude lived together despite being unmarried. Jude is horrified by Sue's sudden religiosity, though in this passage he too concedes that perhaps they shouldn't have been together considering they "couldn't conscientiously marry at first in the old-fashioned way." Note the stark difference in the way Jude and Sue interpret the "mistake" of their relationship: whereas now Sue believes that marriage is important because it is part of the natural law of God, Jude believes that it is simply too difficult to "act as pioneers" and live against the rules and conventions of society. Despite everything, Jude infers that their way of life was an "illuminated... experiment" in a backwards world.

Part 6, Chapter 5 Quotes

It was like a re-enactment by the ghosts of their former selves of the similar scene which had taken place at Melchester years before. When the books were signed the vicar congratulated the husband and wife on having performed a noble, and righteous, and mutually forgiving act. "All's well that ends well," he said smiling. "May you long be happy together, after thus having been 'saved as by fire.'"

Related Characters: Richard Phillotson, Sue Bridehead

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 369

Explanation and Analysis

Sue has decided to remarry Phillotson, although she is still physically repulsed by him, panicked about the prospect of being married, and in love with Jude. Even Phillotson begins to doubt whether the marriage is a good idea, but eventually decides that they must go ahead with it in order to conform to societal expectations. This passage describes the ceremony, during which the priest's positivity contrasts

distinctly with the doubt, misery, and fear felt by the bride and groom. The priest's declaration that "all's well that ends well" is devastatingly ironic considering all that has happened and how unhappy an "ending" this is. This confirms the notion that societal conventions such as marriage are not designed with people's best interests at heart, but rather function as a way to force people to conform to legalistic understandings of religion and morality.

Part 6, Chapter 8 Quotes

☹☹ We've both re-married out of our senses. I was made drunk to do it. You were the same. I was gin-drunk; you were creed-drunk. Either form of intoxication takes away the nobler vision. Let us then shake off our mistakes, and run away together!

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker), Sue Bridehead

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 390

Explanation and Analysis

Both Jude and Sue have remarried their original partners, Arabella and Phillotson, although they secretly remain in love with one another. Jude has developed a respiratory illness and, knowing he will soon die, travels to Marygreen to see Sue. They meet in the church and argue at first, before kissing passionately. In this passage, Jude tells Arabella that they were both "drunk" when they got remarried; Sue was drunk on religion, and Jude on gin. He suggests that he and Sue run away together, showing that despite everything that has happened, Jude has still not relinquished his desire to be with Sue and live against societal customs.

Indeed, this passage shows that despite his nihilistic

cynicism, Jude simultaneously remains a romantic idealist. His dream of running away with Sue is hardly realistic, especially considering Jude is extremely sick and was barely able to make the journey to Marygreen. Furthermore, Jude seems to believe that Sue's conversion to a dogmatic, legalistic strain of Christianity is a temporary state of being, like getting drunk. He refuses to accept that Sue will never go back to the version of herself Jude used to know.

Part 6, Chapter 10 Quotes

☹☹ As for Sue and me when we were at our 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. And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in her, and recklessness and ruin on me!

Related Characters: Jude Fawley (speaker), Sue Bridehead

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 400

Explanation and Analysis

Time has passed, and Jude's illness has abated, before returning. Arabella has told Jude that she will allow Sue to come and see him, but Jude responds that he doesn't wish to see her. Jude then reminisces about his time with Sue, reflecting that "our minds were clear, and our love of truth fearless," but that society was not ready to handle such courage and independence. Although undeniably tragic, Jude's thoughts in this passage also contain a note of optimism. His assertion that he and Sue were "fifty years too soon" suggests that more honest and free ways of living may be possible in the near future. Unlike Sue, he also refuses to blame himself for the events that befell him, but understands that they were the result of terrible luck and a harsh, oppressive society.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

In the small town of Marygreen, everyone is upset because the schoolmaster, Richard Phillotson, is leaving. He is moving to **Christminster**, which is a university town about twenty miles away. Phillotson has a piano that he is unsure of how to move or store. An eleven-year-old boy named Jude Fawley, who is helping Phillotson pack, suggests that his aunt could store the piano in her fuel-house.

Jude is sad that Phillotson is leaving, as he has been Jude's best and closest teacher. Phillotson reveals his secret ambitions to Jude, saying that he wants to go to **Christminster** so he can try to get into a university there. Phillotson rides off on his cart and Jude is left feeling melancholy and melodramatic. The narrator describes Marygreen briefly – it is a small, old-fashioned town in North Wessex. Though it is old, its original church has been torn down and a new one of “modern Gothic design” has been built in its place.

These scenes are a sort of prequel in which Hardy lays the foundation for the rest of the novel. Marygreen is a small, pastoral town in Hardy's fictional Wessex county, which is based on the county of Dorset. The college town of Christminster, immediately appears as an idealized destination.



Phillotson first acts as Jude's idol and his precursor in the dream of attending the university. Hardy hasn't yet revealed how impossible it is for working class people of places like Marygreen to ever be accepted in Christminster. Hardy throws in a critique of modernity for modernity's sake – he is often calling for social reform, but regarding architecture Hardy is old-fashioned.



PART 1, CHAPTER 2

Jude returns home. He lives with his great-aunt, Drusilla Fawley, who is a baker, as both his parents are dead. Drusilla is talking to some neighbors when Jude walks in, and she mentions aloud that it would have been better if Jude had died with his parents, as he is a “poor useless boy.” She tells Jude that he should have gone with Phillotson to **Christminster**, as Jude is “crazy for books” just like his cousin Sue, who lives elsewhere. Drusilla says that Jude's parents had divorced, and she advises the young Jude to never marry, as marriage always goes badly for Fawleys.

Jude feels uncomfortable at all the attention and goes off to the bakehouse to eat breakfast. Then he goes to his job, which is scaring crows away from a cornfield with a clacker. As he clacks, Jude muses on the crows and decides that they deserve some food too, as the farmer has plenty to spare. He lets the crows eat, feeling that they alone understand his plight of living in a world where he is unwanted.

Hardy lays out all his themes from the start, as this novel will be very open in its social critiques and pessimistic worldview. Jude is first presented as unwanted and unloved, and also cursed regarding marriage. Divorce was rare and frowned upon in Victorian times. Drusilla first presents Christminster as an ideal for Jude, and associates the town with both his love of learning and his cousin Sue – Hardy foreshadows heavily.



Hardy immediately begins portraying Jude as a sympathetic, kindly character, one who is very sensitive to the suffering of others but who is doomed to experience great suffering of his own. Jude's first job is basically a living scarecrow, showing just how poor and alone he is.



Farmer Troutham, the owner of the cornfield, catches Jude “idling” and beats him with his own clacker. He fires Jude and sends him home, telling him never to return. Jude goes back to his aunt’s house, ashamed, and carefully avoids stepping on any earthworms on the way. He has always been unable to hurt any living things, which the narrator calls a potential “weakness of character” that will cause him to suffer greatly in his life.

Hardy often portrays the natural world as more sympathetic than human society, and Jude finds kinship with the crows and earthworms in his innocence. We are already aware that tragedy lies in wait for Jude, we just don't know what form it will take. He is too sensitive for the harsh, unjust world that Hardy wants to critique.



Jude goes back to his aunt, who is disappointed that he has been fired. She tells him again that he should go to **Christminster**. Jude asks her about it and whether he could visit Phillotson there, but Drusilla says that the people in Marygreen and Christminster never associate with each other. Jude goes out, feeling depressed that “mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another.”

Drusilla encourages Jude to go to Christminster, but then immediately informs him that it is hopeless. Many characters will lament the “mutual butchery” inherent in existence, which is part of Hardy’s pessimistic view of fate. No matter how good one’s intentions are, every action causes suffering to someone or something.



Later that day Jude goes into town and asks a man where **Christminster** is. The man points north-eastward, and Jude sets out in that direction even though he has to pass through Farmer Troutham’s field. The forbidden aspect of this path seems to make Christminster more appealing.

Marygreen is set in opposition to Christminster – the unlearned, poor, working class against the wealthy, well-born upper class with the leisure to study. Jude is trying to move from one class to another, which is nearly an impossible feat in his world.



PART 1, CHAPTER 3

Jude walks a few miles north and comes to an old barn called the Brown House. He climbs a ladder onto the roof, where two men are working. He tells them he is trying to find **Christminster**, and they say it is sometimes visible from the roof, but not today. Jude decides to wait until the weather clears, hoping to catch a glimpse of the city – which he thinks of as “The Heavenly Jerusalem” – before going home.

Jude shows his tendency for melodrama, idealism, and using Biblical language to describe earthly things. He builds up Christminster as his lifelong dream based only on hearsay and Phillotson’s presence there, so it is almost inevitable that he will be disappointed someday.



Dusk falls and Jude prays to see **Christminster**, and eventually he sees distant lights and spires, “either directly seen or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere.” Then he goes home, trying not to be afraid of the dark. In the following weeks Jude dreams of Christminster, romanticizing not just the beautiful city but the “mentally shining ones therein.”

It is significant that Jude may not actually be seeing Christminster itself, but perhaps an imagined halo of light or another distant town. He has no idea about the real Christminster, but builds up a specific image in his mind.



One day Jude returns to the Brown House at dusk and waits for night to fall, watching for **Christminster** from the roof. Instead of seeing individual lights he sees a vague glow this time, but he imagines Phillotson in the light like a holy figure. Jude then imagines a sound of bells, or the voice of the city saying “We are happy here.” Jude sees some men carrying coal pass by on the road, and he asks if they are coming from Christminster. They say they aren’t.

Christminster is a fictional town, but it is based on the university town of Oxford, England. Hardy himself was too poor to attend the university there, so in this way Jude’s struggles are semi-autobiographical. It is ironic, considering Phillotson’s later presence in the novel, that he starts out as a “holy figure” for Jude.



The men tell Jude that the people of **Christminster** read books in languages that he will never understand, and it is “nothing but learning” there. A man goes on to describe the religion, music, and beauty of the city, though he admits that he has never been there. Jude heads home alone, suddenly feeling older and deciding that Christminster will be the goal of his life. He declares to himself that it is a “city of light” where “the tree of knowledge” grows, and decides that it will suit him perfectly.

This is a comedic moment as the man goes into great detail about Christminster despite never having been there, but it is also tragic for Jude, as he is now orienting his life around secondhand information. Jude seems already well-versed in Biblical language, and again he associates Christminster with a holy city, a kind of “Heavenly Jerusalem.”



PART 1, CHAPTER 4

On his way home Jude runs into Physician Vilbert, an itinerant quack-doctor who travels constantly and sells false remedies to people. Jude asks him about **Christminster**, and Vilbert says that even the old washerwomen there speak Latin. Jude affirms his desire to learn Greek and Latin and go to Christminster one day, and Vilbert offers to sell Jude his old grammar books if Jude will advertise for his medicines at every house in the village for two weeks. Jude agrees, and he upholds his end of the bargain.

Vilbert is quickly revealed to be liar, but Jude believes him when he affirms his idealism of Christminster. This is a relatively harmless example of what will become a tragic pattern later – Jude is too high-minded and sensitive to properly survive a society that takes advantage of him.



Two weeks later Physician Vilbert returns and Jude gives him the orders for medicines he has taken. Vilbert is pleased, but he says he has forgotten his grammar books (and he seems to have forgotten about Jude as well.) Jude is disappointed, and realizes what “shoddy humanity” Vilbert is made of. Soon afterwards Phillotson sends for his piano, and Jude hides a note inside the instrument requesting any old copies of grammar books Phillotson can spare.

The world of the novel is very small, and Vilbert will return years later to “defeat” Jude again. In Hardy’s worldview, English society rewards the vain and narrow-minded at the expense of the pure, innocent idealists.



After a few weeks Phillotson sends Jude two grammar books. Jude begins to read them excitedly, but then he is overwhelmed by the difficulty of learning a new language and memorizing thousands of words. He thinks this is beyond his intelligence, effectively crushing his dream. Jude grows depressed and wishes he had never been born.

This is the first disappointment Jude feels regarding his dream and its extreme difficulty. Many characters get depressed and wish they had never been born, illustrating the novel’s pessimistic outlook and the seemingly unavoidable hand of tragic fate.



PART 1, CHAPTER 5

In the following years Jude starts helping his great-aunt at the bakery, and he delivers her bread via horse-drawn cart to the areas surrounding Marygreen. Jude studies Latin while he drives the cart, leaving the horse to find its own way. Once he is rebuked by a policeman for this, but afterwards the officer doesn’t give him any trouble.

Jude becomes more sympathetic in his struggles to reach beyond his allotted station in life. He has to do all the work of a normal man of his class, but also study in every available second to try and reach the university.



One day the sixteen-year-old Jude is passing by the Brown House in his cart. He notices the beautiful sunset and he dismounts in a kind of daze, reciting a pagan hymn in Latin. Afterwards he is ashamed, and decides to read the Bible more instead of “heathen works.” He procures a New Testament in Greek and begins studying that on his rides.

Jude thinks more practically about moving to **Christminster**, and he decides to take up stoneworking as a way to earn money. He apprentices himself to a stone-mason in Alfredston (a town near Marygreen), and he keeps lodgings there during the week, returning to Marygreen on weekends. Jude passes the next three years working and studying.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6

One weekend the nineteen-year-old Jude is walking to Marygreen from Alfredston. He feels optimistic about reaching **Christminster** soon, and he recites aloud his accomplishments in learning Greek and Latin. He declares that once he saves enough money, a college is sure to accept him. He even dreams of becoming an archdeacon or bishop one day.

Jude is suddenly struck on the ear by a piece of pig’s flesh (genitalia, though the narrator never explicitly names it), interrupting his speech. He hears laughter and sees three young women washing “chitterlings” in a nearby stream. The girls tease Jude about the pig’s flesh, and one girl in particular gets his attention.

The girl introduces herself as Arabella Donn, the daughter of the pig farmer, and she boldly separates herself from the group to talk to Jude. She produces dimples in her cheeks at will, and Jude is struck by her prettiness, having never really noticed a woman before. He asks if he can see her the next day (Sunday), and Arabella agrees.

Jude leaves in a daze, suddenly feeling like his studies and work are not so important. Jude’s intellectual side recognizes his foolishness, but then it is overwhelmed by thoughts of Arabella’s charms. Meanwhile Arabella talks to her friends about “catching” Jude.

Hardy often seems to endorse a pagan closeness to Nature over the strict Christianity that was ubiquitous in his time. Jude flirts with the kind of “Greek joyousness” that he will later experience again with Sue, but for now Jude takes the orthodox path.



Jude’s struggle to enter Christminster involves double work because of his situation – he has to constantly labor to save up money (and survive), but he must also teach himself Greek and Latin. Hardy himself worked as an architect, as he also was too poor to afford university.



This is Jude’s high point just before his loss of innocence, when it seems that he might actually be able to achieve his dream of Christminster. He dreams of joining the church, but mostly as an afterthought to his intellectual and scholastic desires.



Because of the repressive viewpoint Victorian society took toward sex, Hardy can never mention anything sexual outright, and even pregnancy is only talked around. The pig’s flesh introduces Arabella as a sensual, worldly woman distracting Jude from his lofty dreams.



Jude is a “tragic hero” because it is not only his external situation that leads to his downfall, but also a “fatal flaw” within himself – mostly his weakness regarding women. Arabella’s practiced dimples immediately show her artificiality. For her, Jude is a prize to be won by any means necessary.



Hardy begins his critique of marriage by showing how the institution can be abused. Arabella doesn’t really love Jude, she just wants a husband, and through the conventions of marriage it is easy to entrap him and distract him from his dream.



PART 1, CHAPTER 7

The next day Jude considers studying his Greek and ignoring Arabella's invitation, but then he decides it would be rude not to call on her. It is as if an external force casts aside his "elevated intentions" and sends him off to Arabella. Jude arrives at her house and takes her for a walk, talking with her about the "commonest local twaddle" as if it were his beloved Latin or Greek.

Arabella and Jude see a fire in the distance and they run off to investigate it. It gets late and they are far from home, so they stop at a bar where a picture of Samson and Delilah is hanging on the wall. They drink a beer and Arabella shows her surprising knowledge of liquor. They walk home in the dark and Jude kisses Arabella several times.

When they enter Arabella's house Jude is surprised that her family thinks of him as a serious suitor. Jude returns to his own home and starts to wonder if he is "wasting" his life on books instead of loving a woman. The next day Jude returns to Alfredston for work, romanticizing the night before but keeping his romance a secret.

An hour later Arabella passes by the same spot (the scene of their kiss) with her two friends, recounting all the details of the previous night and declaring that she wants to marry Jude. Her two friends, Sarah and Anny, propose that Arabella try a special trick to "catch" Jude, if he is an honest man. Arabella is confused at first but her friends explain it, saying that "lots of girls do it" and it is the cause of many marriages, and Arabella decides to try it.

PART 1, CHAPTER 8

Jude and Arabella's romance progresses, and one weekend they chase a lost pig through the village together, ending up alone on a hill. Arabella tries to lure Jude into lying down next to her, but he innocently doesn't notice her tricks. The next day Arabella tells her parents to leave for the evening, as she wants the house to herself to successfully trap Jude. That night Jude (who hasn't studied in weeks) comes to Arabella's house, and she lures him upstairs and seduces him.

The narrator pulls no punches in disparaging Jude's distraction from Christminster for Arabella's sake. Though Christminster is perhaps an idealized, impossible dream, Jude's fatal flaw is casting aside his future and "higher nature" for worldly pleasures.



The picture of Samson and Delilah is an obvious warning for Jude – Samson was a Biblical man of incredible strength who was seduced by Delilah, who cut off his hair, the source of his power. Arabella also becomes associated with alcohol, Jude's other sensual weakness.



In this society there is no "casual" dating, but only wooing with the intent to marry or else a scandalous, sinful affair. Jude still tends towards melodrama and romance, while Arabella is narrow-minded and greedy.



It is telling that Jude passes by the spot of their kiss and cherishes the memory, while Arabella passes by without even noticing. Hardy can never state it outright, but it becomes clear that Arabella's plan is to seduce Jude, get pregnant (or seem to), and then guilt him into marrying her. In this society, sex outside of marriage is a great sin, and can only be rectified by a wedding.



Jude is innocent regarding anything sexual, as Arabella is the first woman he has ever even considered romantically, and it is almost comedic how he accidentally resists Arabella's advances. Arabella's parents clearly share her mindset, as they vacate their own house to condone their daughter's illicit relations – as long as it leads her to "trap" a man.



PART 1, CHAPTER 9

Two months later Arabella meets with the quack-doctor Vilbert, who tells her something that cheers her up. That evening Jude tells Arabella that he should probably move away, but Arabella cries and tells him (in roundabout language) that she is pregnant. Jude is shocked but he immediately offers to marry Arabella. He admits that it is a “complete smashing up” of his dreams of **Christminster**, but he decides to do the honorable thing.

That night Jude starts to realize that Arabella will not make a good wife, and the townspeople gossip about how Jude’s lofty ideals have fallen. The two are soon married, and the narrator comments on the ceremony where they swear to feel exactly the same way for the rest of their lives, and where no one is surprised by such an oath. As a wedding present Jude’s great-aunt sends him a cake and another declaration that it would have been better if he died with his parents.

The couple settles in together in a small cottage between Marygreen and the Brown House. On their wedding night Arabella reveals that she has been wearing an extra bundle of hair that is not her own (to make her own hair look bigger), and also that she used to be a barmaid in Aldbrickham, a nearby town. Jude realizes that Arabella has a kind of “artificiality in [her] very blood.”

The couple is satisfied for a few weeks, and one day Arabella meets her friend Anny in town. Arabella reveals that she isn’t actually pregnant, and Anny congratulates her on “shamming it.” One night Jude asks Arabella about the pregnancy, and she says she “made a mistake.” Jude is shocked, and suddenly sees his situation differently – he feels trapped by the marriage, condemned by one impulsive action (marrying Arabella) for the rest of his life.

PART 1, CHAPTER 10

Autumn comes and Jude and Arabella wait for the pig-killer Challow to come slaughter their pig. Challow never shows up, so Jude and Arabella have to kill the pig themselves. Jude tries to kill it quickly, despite Arabella’s demands that it “must die slow” so the meat will be more valuable. Jude is very distraught by the process, and he laments over the snow “stained with the blood of his fellow-mortal.”

Hardy can’t even mention pregnancy, especially if it occurs outside of marriage. Jude continues to be high-minded even to his own detriment, as he chooses to stick to the honorable path even though it destroys his dreams of Christminster. He is now idealizing both Arabella and marriage instead of the university.



Hardy begins his explicit criticism of marriage. His main complaint is that it is a contract binding people for life (divorce was rare and frowned upon), but is usually made by young, innocent people in the grip of hormones – the people least qualified to make such a huge decision. Drusilla acts as the voice of fate and tragedy.



Arabella is further associated with alcohol, another “sinful” pleasure that is also Jude’s weakness. Arabella is the opposite of Sue and an example of all that Victorian society found sinful and bad about women – she is greedy, narrow-minded, tempting, and artificial.



Hardy never relents in his (often heavy-handed) condemnation of marriage. Hardy himself was estranged from his first wife, and so his arguments here are personal. He feels that one impulsive decision should not be able to ruin a young person’s life, especially as the contract of that decision is totally determined by society.



Jude has not lost his sympathy for all living creatures. This scene shows just how incompatible he and Arabella are – she is concerned only with how much money they can get for the meat, and cares nothing for the pig’s suffering. The blood on the snow is a stark image of lost innocence.



One day Jude is walking off to Alfredston when he hears some of Arabella's friends talking about how Arabella tricked him into marriage. Jude returns home and argues with Arabella about how he wishes they had never married. Arabella, who is melting the pig's fat, says the pregnancy was her own risk and right.

Hardy begins with this example of a bad marriage, and then shows how it will continue to haunt Jude for his whole life. Jude and Arabella are clearly wrong for each other, but they are now bound together by law and religion because of one impulsive act.



PART 1, CHAPTER 11

The next morning the couple argues again, and Arabella throws Jude's books onto the floor. Jude gets angry and pulls her away. Jude suddenly realizes that his life has been ruined by this "fundamental error of their matrimonial union." Arabella taunts him about the divorce that runs in his family and then storms off.

The nature of the couple's fight drives home how marriage to Arabella is the opposite of Jude's dreams of scholarship. Jude recognizes the tragedy of his own situation, a tragedy that Hardy has purposefully drawn out to show just how bad a bad marriage can be.



Jude goes to see his great-aunt and asks her about his parents and his aunt and uncle, and Drusilla admits that both couples divorced. Jude's parents broke up near the Brown House and then Jude's mother drowned herself. Drusilla declares that Fawleys aren't meant for marriage, as there is something in their blood that revolts against being sworn to love.

Hardy's characters often seem trapped in an inescapable, tragic fate, and for Jude this fate involves the divorce that runs in his family. This is another aspect of the "fatal flaw" that leads to his downfall – he cannot escape his own blood, which always leads to failure in marriage.



On his way back to his cottage Jude walks out onto a frozen pond and tries to break the ice (and kill himself) by jumping on it, but he fails. Then he goes off to get drunk at the inn with the picture of Samson and Delilah on the wall. Jude gets very drunk and returns home to find Arabella's note that she is staying with friends.

Jude now succumbs to the depression that accompanies his recognition of his tragic fate. He sees the symbolism of the Samson and Delilah picture now, and surrenders to his other great weakness, drunkenness.



Arabella doesn't return for a few days, and then Jude gets a letter from her saying that her parents are moving to Australia, and she is going with them. After she has sold their possessions at auction Jude finds a photo of himself in a broker's shop, which was his wedding present to Arabella. Jude buys the photo and burns it, feeling the "death of every tender sentiment in his wife." Arabella and her family leave a few days later.

Australia was an English colony at this time, so Arabella's exit is not as random as it might seem. Jude again sees how different he and Arabella are. Jude is a romantic, while Arabella is only concerned with getting the most for herself at the expense of others.



Now that he is alone, Jude returns to his dreams of **Christminster**. He passes by a milestone where his sixteen-year-old self had carved "Thither, J.F." and a hand pointing towards Christminster. Jude then decides to "battle with his evil star" and keep pursuing his dream, despite all his obstacles.

It seems like Jude has escaped his disastrous marriage and can now return to his dream, though Hardy will later show that Jude can never be truly free of Arabella. Hardy seems to propose that we should battle against our tragic fates, but at the same time he shows how futile this resistance usually is, as Jude will ultimately succumb to his "evil star." This signpost becomes a potent image of Jude's youthful dreams.



PART 2, CHAPTER 1

Three years after his marriage, Jude finally goes to **Christminster**. He has grown skilled at his craft of stoneworking, and marches into town with his tools. He was partly motivated to move by seeing a portrait of his cousin, Sue Bridehead, at his aunt's house. Sue lives in Christminster, though he doesn't know where.

Jude enters the town and takes lodgings in an area called Beersheba. He goes out at night and passes by the ancient, ornate college buildings. He wanders the empty streets and imagines the shades of dead philosophers and writers around him. He converses aloud with them until a policeman comments on his odd behavior. Jude returns to his room and as he falls asleep he hears more quotations from the "spectres" of different writers. The next morning he remembers that he is here to find Mr. Phillotson and his cousin Sue.

PART 2, CHAPTER 2

That day Jude goes out into the streets again to find **Christminster** looking much less romantic – "What at night had been perfect and ideal was by day the more or less defective real." All the buildings seem pompous and decayed. Jude wanders around looking for work, and for a moment he feels that his stonework could be just as valuable as being a scholar, but then he returns to his old dream.

Jude is discouraged and asks his aunt to send the portrait of Sue. Drusilla does so, but she warns Jude not to try to find Sue. Jude decides to wait until he is more settled before finding Phillotson, whom he assumes is now a parson. Jude wanders about the colleges for days before realizing how far he still is from his dream of studying at a university. Though he shares the students' mental life, he is still a poor working-class man who cannot afford the colleges.

Jude finally gets a job offer from a stonemason and he accepts, deciding that his first priority should be to save up money. His aunt sends another letter warning about Sue, but Jude decides to go see Sue anyway. He learns that she works as a designer at a shop and he goes there. He watches the beautiful Sue illuminating the word "Alleluja" on a scroll, and he decides that she is innocent and saintly. Jude leaves without revealing himself.

Arabella temporarily leaves the novel as Hardy continues to foreshadow the approach of Sue Bridehead, his other protagonist and progressive female character. Jude seems on the right track to achieving his dream now – the distant halo of Christminster has become a real city.



Though Jude has reached the real Christminster, he is still seeing it through the haze of his own idealism. As a stonemason, Jude is able to admire the beautiful old stonework and add it to his idolization of Christminster, imagining the wondrous scholarship that must dwell inside the magnificent buildings. Jude's interior life is so overwhelming that he can become almost delusional.



This sentence sums up much of the tragedy of Jude's life – the contrast between his idealized reality and his harsh actual fate. Hardy begins his critique of the educational system. The narrator offers some external criticism, implying that Jude has over-romanticized Christminster's intellectual life.



As usual Drusilla acts as the voice of Hardy's pessimism, trying to warn Jude to avoid his tragic fate but not really expecting him to do so. Jude extends his idealism to Phillotson, assuming that the schoolteacher already achieved the goal that Jude is now striving for. In his new vision of the "defective real" Jude can see reality better.



Jude's first perception of Sue is that she is religious and pure, though we will soon learn otherwise. He puts her on a pedestal – a common way of viewing women in Victorian times – but is also ensnared by her beauty. His fate is already sealed, as the only way to avoid it was to take Drusilla's advice and never see Sue.



Afterwards Jude often follows Sue or seeks out her presence, but she doesn't notice that he is there. He admires her beauty and refined nature, which he assumes she acquired in London, and wonders how one of his "almost accursed stock" could have reached such "niceness." He begins to fall in love with her, but recognizes that they could never marry because he is already married, it is bad luck for cousins to marry, and they are both of the same family which is cursed regarding marriage. Jude resolves to think of Sue only as a cousin and friend.

Jude has taken the "curse" of the Fawleys more to heart since his own bad marriage, and because Sue is his cousin she also falls under the same curse. Jude's tendency towards idealism is now focused on Sue, as he prefers observing and romanticizing her from afar instead of actually talking to her – like he longed for Christminster for years before actually going there.



PART 2, CHAPTER 3

Jude learns that Sue goes to the church services of the Cardinal College, and he goes there to find her. He watches her and listens to the choir singing "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" This reminds him of his disastrous marriage, which he now wishes he could undo. Again Jude refrains from approaching Sue.

Jude is reinforced in his idea of Sue as a conventional, religious woman. Jude and Hardy both seem to think in Biblical language, showing the ubiquity of Christianity even as Hardy critiques it.



The narrative jumps back a few days, when Sue had a holiday and was walking through the country. She comes across a man selling sculptures of pagan gods, and she buys one of Venus and one of Apollo. Sue nervously wraps them up and brings them back to **Christminster**, "the most Christian city in the country." She takes them up to her room and is then approached by Miss Fontover, her elderly landlady.

The book now expands to include its second protagonist, the fascinating character Sue Bridehead. Contrary to Jude's first impression of her, we first see Sue rebelling against the Christianity of her surroundings by buying pagan statues and secreting them into her room.



Miss Fontover asks Sue about the package she is carrying, and Sue lies and says she bought statues of St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalene. After Miss Fontover leaves Sue unwraps the statues and places them on her dresser with a candle between them. A picture of Jesus on the cross ironically hangs over the idols. Sue reads some poetry (about Jesus's breath turning the world gray) and then falls asleep.

We see that Sue is anything but conventional already, as she is well-read, rebellious, and religiously unorthodox. At the same time Hardy still lets her slip into some Victorian female stereotypes – he makes her very emotional, high-strung, and inconsistent.



PART 2, CHAPTER 4

Jude works a while refinishing old buildings and lettering tombstones. One day he is on a ladder working at a church, and he sees Sue with Miss Fontover at the service inside. His passion for Sue grows stronger in the following days, though he tries to resist it. Jude recognizes that by law he is obligated to love Arabella forever, despite the reality of his feelings.

Hardy furthers his critique of marriage, lamenting that the institution puts a contract on love, which is a fickle, voluntary feeling. Jude is obligated to love Arabella because of one act (their mistaken marriage), and his whole lifetime of feelings following that act are then invalidated by his religion and society.



One afternoon Sue comes to the stonemason's yard while Jude is away, and she asks for Jude Fawley. One of Jude's coworkers mentions the visit, and Jude recognizes Sue by her description. He then finds a note from her at his lodging, saying she will be leaving **Christminster** soon. He immediately writes back to her and proposes to meet Sue outside. Sue agrees, but finds the particular place Jude chooses to be "gloomy and inauspicious in its associations." They greet each other bashfully.

Jude asks Sue if she knows Mr. Phillotson (whom he assumes is a parson), but she says she only knows a schoolmaster of that name in nearby Lumsdon. Jude suddenly realizes that Phillotson has failed in his ambitions of attending a university. Jude invites Sue to come with him to visit Phillotson, and they set off.

They find Phillotson, and his "homely complexion" destroys the idealized vision Jude had had of him. Phillotson doesn't remember Jude, but he vaguely remembers sending him the Greek and Latin grammar books. Phillotson admits that he gave up his lofty goals long ago. He is comfortable as a schoolmaster again, though he is in need of a pupil-teacher. The three talk for a while and then Jude and Sue return to **Christminster**.

As they walk home Jude is struck by "what a revelation of woman" Sue is, and he realizes he is even more in love with her than before. Jude asks why Sue is leaving **Christminster**, and Sue says it is because she had argued with Miss Fontover, who broke her statues when she saw them. Jude proposes that Sue work for Phillotson as a teacher, and she agrees to consider it. The next day Jude visits Phillotson and he agrees to hire Sue, though he says the job is low-paying and so would only be useful to her as an apprenticeship for a teaching career.

PART 2, CHAPTER 5

Sue starts working for Phillotson right away. It is part of his responsibility to give her private lessons, but according to the law they have to have a chaperone with them during these. Phillotson thinks this is unnecessary because of their age difference, but he still finds himself growing attracted to Sue. A few weeks later they go to visit a model of Jerusalem in **Christminster**, which their students are to visit.

We don't learn this until later, but Sue associates their meeting place with the curse of the Fawleys regarding marriage. She also has grown up a child of divorce, and heard the same advice to never marry. Sue breaks through Jude's idealism by coming to see him herself, instead of acting as a distant, almost holy figure.



The "defective real" returns again, now crushing Jude's hopes for Phillotson. Phillotson's failure is also a blow to Jude's own hopes of raising his social station.



Phillotson was Jude's precursor and idol, and his failure to be accepted at Christminster does not bode well for Jude. Phillotson is still relatively successful as a schoolmaster – he lacks Jude's fierce, hopeless ambition, and is willing to settle for something less than ideal.



Hardy can build a complicated world with only a few characters, and Phillotson returns to play a completely different role than before. We learn that Sue has grown bolder in pushing against Christianity and authority, as she is leaving Christminster because Miss Fontover broke her pagan statues.



Hardy offers another subtle critique of Victorian views of sexuality. The law cannot conceive of a man and woman studying together in private without also having sex, so they must have a chaperone. This is unjust both for denying the potential for sexuality and assuming that humans cannot be anything but slaves to their desires.



They examine the model and Sue wonders why Jerusalem should be so honored over Athens, Rome, or Alexandria. Suddenly she notices Jude, also watching the model and enthralled by it. He compliments the model but then tries to agree with Sue when she criticizes it. They agree to all meet that Friday.

On Friday Jude goes out to meet Sue and Phillotson, but as he (unseen) watches them approaching he sees Phillotson put his arm around Sue's waist. She removes it, but then Phillotson puts it back and she lets it remain. Jude is distraught by this and he hides from them as they pass by. He realizes he wants to interfere and pursue Sue himself, but he still technically belongs to Arabella and can do nothing.

Sue expands a bit on her unorthodox religious views. She is intellectual and detached from any kind of religious fervor, and so doesn't see why Jerusalem should be elevated over other places that contributed more to culture and literature.



Jude realizes the tragic irony of the situation, as he introduced Phillotson to Sue in an attempt to keep Sue near himself. In contrast to Arabella Sue is almost asexual, and hardly ever reciprocates affection. Though Arabella is absent, Jude can never escape his bad marriage.



PART 2, CHAPTER 6

Jude's great-aunt grows ill and Jude returns to Marygreen to visit her. Drusilla is angry that Jude has been visiting Sue, and tells Jude some stories about how immodest and precocious Sue was as a child. After his visit Jude meets some villagers, who are surprised that he hasn't gotten into college yet. They remind him of his old dreams and worship of **Christminster**, and say that they were confirmed in their suspicions – colleges are only for the rich.

Jude is struck by their words and he resolves to renew his attempts to enter a college. He writes letters to five influential professors, explaining his circumstances and requesting advice. Jude waits a long time with no response, and he starts to despair of ever achieving his goal. One day he "awakens" from his dream and recognizes that the privileges of university are not for people like him, but only for the luck upper classes. Jude wishes he could at least have Sue to console him in his depression.

Jude finally receives a response from a professor at Biblioll College. The professor recommends that Jude remain in his "own sphere" instead of trying to study at a college. Jude's depression deepens at this and he gets drunk and wanders the streets. He starts to realize that the "reality of **Christminster**" is all the working folk who don't study or become famous. Jude writes a quote from the book of Job on a wall with a piece of chalk, declaring that he is "not inferior."

Jude has become distracted by a woman again, though Sue is much more worthy of his devotion than Arabella was. Drusilla acts as the foreboding prophet, reminding Jude to struggle against his "evil star." The people of Marygreen are basically right, but Jude can never give up his dream.



Christminster is Hardy's great symbol of the unfairness in his society, especially regarding education. The university should be a place encouraging new ideas and fresh intelligences, but instead it has limited itself to the upper classes and whoever can buy their way in. Jude recognizes his fate, but he will continue to long for Christminster.



The "defective real" of Christminster is made explicit in the professor's letter. Jude is punished for trying to push against his social role and change his status for the better – a pattern that will repeat itself later with his domestic situation. Hardy critiques religion, but he also identifies most of his characters with Biblical figures. Jude is often compared to Christ or Job, both of whom suffered for seemingly no reason.



PART 2, CHAPTER 7

The next day Jude feels like a fool. He thinks that Sue is the only soul he truly has an affinity with, but she is forever cut off from him by his disastrous marriage. Jude goes to a tavern that night where some other masons are drinking too. They start talking about the colleges, and Jude curses the professors for rejecting him, claiming that he is smarter than most of them.

Uncle Joe, one of Jude's companions, challenges Jude to recite the Nicene Creed in Latin to prove his academic prowess. Jude recites it all, but then he gets angry when everyone applauds him and he storms out of the bar. Jude, still drunk, walks to Lumsdon and knocks on Sue's door. Sue lets him in and calms him down, putting him to bed and promising him breakfast in the morning.

Jude wakes up at dawn and is ashamed that Sue has seen him in this state, so he slips out of the house without waking her. Jude returns to **Christminster** and finds a note from his employer dismissing him for missing work. He walks to Marygreen, feeling miserable and downtrodden but a "poor Christ" figure. Jude meets his great-aunt by the town well and then goes to stay with her in his old room.

Jude wakes up feeling that he is a failure "both in ambition and in love." Jude wanders about the town and meets a clergyman, Mr. Highridge. Jude confesses his plight and failed dreams, and Highridge says that Jude could perhaps enter the church as a licentiate if he gives up drinking.

PART 3, CHAPTER 1

Jude decides to follow the clergyman's advice and pursue the church separate from a scholarly life. He decides to become a low-ranking clergyman and try to do some good in the world and to his soul. Jude is slightly cheered by this decision. He gets a letter from Sue, who tells him that she is going to enter a Training College in the town of Melchester. Jude knows there is also a Theological College there, so he decides to move to Melchester too.

The great tragedy of the marriage-centric aspect of the novel is that Jude and Sue are truly compatible and seem to be "soulmates," but they are prevented from being together by the rigidity of the institution of marriage. Jude again turns to alcohol in his depression.



All of Jude's hard work and study is only good for impressing people at a bar, people who have no idea if he is speaking Latin correctly or not. It is ironic that Jude recites the traditional declaration of faith even as he seems to have lost faith in everything he previously believed in.



Jude is again compared to a Biblical figure, this time Jesus himself, though Jude feels he has degraded himself (by drinking) during his "martyrdom." It was unjust that Christminster didn't accept him, but Jude also hurts his cause by turning to alcohol when he faces failure.



Jude seems to be following in Phillotson's footsteps again, giving up the dream of Christminster but still hoping to be successful within his own social sphere. The problem is that Jude's religious faith is not as strong as his idealistic ambition and tendency towards sensual pleasures.



This seems like a good plan for Jude and a chance to improve his station in an achievable way, but his fate will lead him down a more tragic path. Hardy arranges the parts of the novel around the different towns Jude and Sue live, as they seek to find their place in a world that does not accept them.



Jude postpones his move for a few weeks, waiting for the days to grow longer after the first of the year, as he will have to find stonemasonry work in Melchester. One day Sue writes him a letter saying that she is “lonely and miserable,” and she asks Jude to come immediately. Jude gladly does so. He arrives in Melchester and sees that the cathedral there is undergoing restoration, a good sign for his job prospects.

Jude finds Sue and they greet each other. She looks more prim and disciplined than before, but still beautiful. Jude takes her to dinner and she tells him about the strictness of the Training College, which she finds abrasive. She mentions that Phillotson might find her a teaching job after she graduates. Jude asks about Phillotson’s romantic interest in her. Sue at first dismisses this, saying Phillotson is too old, but then she confesses that she had promised to marry Phillotson in two years and then teach jointly with him at a school in a larger town.

Jude is upset but he tries to congratulate Sue. She recognizes his distress and tries to downplay the marriage. Jude suggests they go sit in the Cathedral, but Sue says she would rather sit in a train station, as “the Cathedral has had its day.” Jude calls her “modern,” but Sue says she is “more ancient than mediaevalism.” They part ways.

Jude begins finding piecemeal work and then is employed to work at repairing the Cathedral, whose stonework is being completely overhauled. He reads books of theology in his spare time, preparing himself for his new career. When he needs relief he reads modern, nonreligious authors though.

PART 3, CHAPTER 2

One day both Jude and Sue have a day off, and they decide to take a trip together. Jude wants to visit some Gothic architecture, but Sue wants to see Corinthian instead. They take a train and visit an old castle, and Sue watches Jude examining the pictures of saints on the wall. She is clearly intrigued by his religious faith, which she herself seems to have moved beyond.

After the castle they go for a walk in the country, and they get lost in the expanses. They find a shepherd who invites them to spend the night at his cottage, as it is too late to return to Melchester that night. Sue comments that she enjoys the shepherd’s simple, naturalistic life, and especially his great freedom. Jude dismisses this, calling Sue a “product of civilization” and an “urban miss.”

Sue has tried to suppress her intellect and independent nature and submit to the strict, religious Training School, but this has clearly made her unhappy. Though Jude already loves Sue, Sue begins by seeing Jude as a kind of protector and confidant, as she recognizes the affinity between their natures.



As Sue’s character is developed, it becomes clear just how revolutionary she is for her time. She agrees to marry Phillotson mostly to further her own career – instead of acting as a traditional housewife, she wants to keep teaching alongside her husband. Like Jude before Arabella, Sue is ignorant regarding sexuality and the tragic possibilities of a bad marriage.



Sue is extremely intelligent, so she clearly recognizes Jude’s romantic interest in her. Sue is in a strict Training College, but she can’t help still critiquing religion and alluding to her own affinity with both modernity and pagan culture.



As a former architect, Hardy throws in some obscure critiques of modernity in stonework, as he usually disparages restoration for restoration’s sake. Jude began with “pagan” writers, and so he still finds comfort and solace in a lack of Christianity.



Corinthian architecture is associated with Rome, while Gothic is associated with the Christian mediaeval period, so this discussion of architecture reflects Sue and Jude’s respective religious beliefs. It becomes more clear that Sue has reasoned herself beyond religion.



Jude is still thinking of his idealized Sue illuminating the word “Allelujah,” as the real Sue has not yet stepped off her pedestal and shown how unique she is. Though in many ways she is modern and revolutionary, Hardy also associates Sue (like many of his heroines) with a pagan freedom and closeness to Nature.



PART 3, CHAPTER 3

The women of Sue's strict Training College see that she has not returned at night, and they gossip about her. In the morning Sue returns and the administration decides to punish her, confining her to a solitary room for a week. The other girls find this punishment harsh and protest against it, but then they find that Sue has escaped her room through the window. They worry that she might have drowned in the river below, but the mistress is mostly worried about the scandal this would bring to the school.

Meanwhile Sue arrives at Jude's lodgings, freezing and soaked through from crossing the river. Jude is reading when she tosses some gravel at his window. He takes Sue in and hides her from his landlady. Sue admits that she was angered at the injustice of her punishment and so she ran away from the Training School, but she doesn't want them to find her.

Jude feels that he and Sue are "counterparts," as she came to him in her time of need. He gives her some of his own clothes and some brandy. Sue falls asleep by the fire and Jude watches her, seeing her as "almost a divinity."

The Training College is the epitome of the Victorian prudishness that Hardy mocks. Sue is basically imprisoned for going out with her cousin on her day off, and the only way she can escape this repressive environment is by risking her life. It is also telling that the school's mistress is more concerned about being respectable than about Sue's possible drowning.



Jude is delighted that Sue came to him first, but Sue is still trying to keep their relations platonic. She recognizes Jude's protective nature, and knows he will be more sympathetic towards her than anyone else.



Hardy begins to develop an idea that Jude and Sue are almost twins, having similar natures or as separated parts of one soul. This makes their inability to be together all the more tragic. Jude's love for Sue has become his new Christminster.



PART 3, CHAPTER 4

Jude's landlady comes upstairs to ask about dinner, and Jude hides Sue from her. He offers that Sue stay the night. They eat supper and Sue reminds Jude of his earlier comment about her as a "product of civilization," and she describes herself as instead a "negation of it." The two discuss their educations, and Sue says that she knows Latin and Greek grammar. She lists some of the authors she has read and Jude realizes that she is much more well-read than he is.

Sue tells Jude that she used to live platonically with an undergraduate, who lent her books. She says that he wanted to be her lover, but she did not love him. They still lived together as friends, but the undergraduate died a few years later. Sue thinks he may have died because she broke his heart.

Sexuality is so taboo in Victorian society that Jude could be evicted just for having his cousin in his room alone. In this conversation Sue finally presents herself as the unique, unorthodox woman she is, and we see that she is the most intelligent character of the book. Most of Hardy's ideas come through in her voice.



Sue is especially progressive (for her time) in that she lived with a man without marrying or sleeping with him. Yet from her comment it is clear that the undergraduate would have wanted their relationship to be something more than platonic. In other words, society doesn't support her views, and those views cause harm—the undergraduate dies. The undergraduate seems to foreshadow Jude's fate.



Afterwards Sue had lost her money and then moved to **Christminster** to the design shop. Jude calls her innocent and unconventional, and Sue declares that she is still a virgin. Jude grows depressed by this conversation, and they start to discuss religion. Jude says he assumed Sue was a Christian because she was working in Christminster. Sue says she was cured of religion by the undergraduate, who was both irreligious and very moral. Sue mocks Christminster with Biblical quotes, saying it is decaying.

Jude is stung by Sue's criticism of his ideal, but Sue says that he is the kind of person who most deserves to be accepted by the colleges, and it is unfair that he was "elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons." Sue offers to make Jude a "new" New Testament by cutting up the books and arranging them in the order they were probably written, with the gospels last. She then comments on the Song of Solomon, mocking how the clergy try to make a love poem into a metaphor for the church.

Jude calls Sue "Voltairean" (thinking like the philosopher Voltaire), and is struck by her unorthodox ideas. They argue further but then make up, and Sue says that she wants Jude to be her intellectual comrade. Jude feels closer to her than to anyone before, and he feels that they will never be divided. Sue falls asleep and Jude goes out to the yard to wash.

Though Sue is revolutionary in her religious and social ideas, sexually she is still the "pure woman on the pedestal" that is the stereotype of Victorian times. Sue speaks with Hardy's voice, claiming that morality can be disassociated from religion and mocking the pompous, self-congratulatory university system. Sue, like Jude, can speak with Biblical language, but she turns it on its head to critique Christianity itself.



Sue also clarifies Hardy's argument against the university – Jude was the ideal candidate for Christminster, but it rejected him in favor of wealth and intellectual stagnation. Sue offers a very unorthodox idea about the New Testament, treating the Bible as a historical document instead of the infallible word of God.



Voltaire was a famous philosopher who mocked and satirized the Catholic church and religious and political intolerance. Jude uses a Biblical quote about him and Sue never being divided – it originally referred to a Christian never being separated from Christ's love.



PART 3, CHAPTER 5

Jude returns to his room to find Sue dressed and ready to leave. She is suddenly worried what Phillotson will think of her for running away from the Training College. Sue decides to take a train to stay with a friend at Shaston until the scandal of her exit dies down. Jude accompanies her to the train station, and as she leaves Sue says she knows Jude is in love with her, but he is only allowed to *like* her, not love her.

Jude goes home, depressed, but the next morning he gets a letter from Sue saying that he *can* love her if he wants to. Jude is greatly encouraged by this, and he writes back to Sue but receives no answer. He gets worried and goes to visit Sue in Shaston. He finds her and she tells Jude that the Training College won't take her back, and that there are "vulgar" rumors about their relationship. The administration had suggested that Sue marry Jude to save her reputation.

Sue is brilliant and progressive, but Hardy still indulges some stereotypes about women in her characterization. She is very fickle, emotional, and changes her mind seemingly at random. This is bad news for Sue when an institution like marriage can turn an impulsive decision into a lifetime of suffering.



This will become a pattern where Sue immediately changes her mind after speaking with Jude, and then informs him of her new decision by letter. As a further critique of marriage, Hardy shows how society presents this supposed lifelong declaration of love as a kind of apology for a scandal.



Jude discusses his forbidden love for Sue, and the narrator comments that he ought to kiss her, but he does not. Jude instead chooses to “dwell upon the recognized barriers between them.” Sue says that they ought not to see each other anymore, and Jude leaves unhappily. The next morning Sue apologizes in another note, saying that she acted cruelly and wants to meet with Jude again.

Jude's heart is now wholly in Sue's hands, and he will suffer greatly (like the undergraduate before him) because of her fickle nature. Hardy heightens the tragedy of his story by both emphasizing how Jude and Sue are “meant for each other” while also reinforcing the many barriers between them—they are meant for each other but society makes it impossible for them to be together.



PART 3, CHAPTER 6

Meanwhile Phillotson is thinking about how he has abandoned his earlier plans for Sue's sake. One day he sets out to visit her at the Training School, but when he gets there he learns all the circumstances of her scandalous departure. Phillotson is shocked, and he goes into the cathedral. He notices Jude is there too, working, and Phillotson approaches him.

Phillotson now enters the story as a major character, and we see another point of view regarding the novel's events. Phillotson, like Jude, has abandoned certain ambitions for the sake of love and marriage.



Phillotson asks Jude about Sue, and Jude assures him that nothing has happened between them, though he hints that he does love Sue. Phillotson believes Jude that Sue is innocent, and the two men part. Later that day Jude sees Sue, who is coming to fetch her belongings from the Training School.

Phillotson is a very ethical man, but in the situation Hardy creates he is just as harmful to Jude and Sue's love as the purposefully antagonistic Arabella. It is fate and the injustice of society that are to blame more than any one person.



Sue acts coldly towards Jude, and he remarks that she is nicer in her letters than in person. Jude then confesses his own history to Sue, including his marriage to Arabella. Sue is upset at him for withholding this information, and she wonders how Jude can reconcile his religion and the supposed sanctity of marriage with his own life. They both grow miserable, trapped in their confused feelings.

Even though it is eternal in the sight of God and the law, Jude feels that his first marriage is a kind of adultery when compared to his pure love for Sue. Sue rightfully calls Jude out on the disparity between his life and the religion he professes – the strict Victorian Christian view of marriage is unrealistic for people like Jude and Sue.



Jude and Sue walk around town, and Jude says that Arabella is the only obstacle between them. Sue argues that her own lack of love is another obstacle, and also the fact that they are cousins. Sue then mocks the people of the Training School, who can only perceive men and women as having relations based on “animal desire.” Jude tells Sue about the curse on their family regarding marriage, and Sue says she had heard the same thing. The two decide to act like friends and cousins, nothing more, and they part ways.

This parting dialogue condenses many of the novel's themes. Jude and Sue discuss the unhappy fate of their family, the many obstacles society has placed between them and their pure fellowship, and the repression and condescension inherent in Victorian laws about sexuality and marriage.



PART 3, CHAPTER 7

Two days later Sue sends Jude a letter saying that she is marrying Phillotson in a few weeks. She signs the letter formally, with her full name. Jude is crushed by this news, and he wonders if he drove Sue to this rash action by revealing his own marriage. Sue then sends another letter asking if Jude will “give her away” at the wedding, as she is his only male, married relation. In the letter she also comments on how this tradition makes the bride into a mere piece of property to be passed from one man to another.

Jude agrees to give Sue away, and offers that she and Phillotson stay at his lodgings in Melchester. Sue arrives ten days before the wedding and has breakfast with Jude, both of them sensitive and nervous. Jude feels that he is committing a sin by not warning Sue about the oppressive institution of marriage she is about to subject herself to, but he says nothing.

Jude takes Sue to visit the church where she is to marry Phillotson, and she walks down the aisle holding Jude’s arm, play-acting at a marriage in her curiosity for “a new sensation.” Jude almost breaks down at this, and Sue apologizes. Jude then leaves her with Phillotson. Jude recognizes that Phillotson will be a kind husband, but Sue clearly doesn’t love him.

Jude is struck again by the cruelty of having him give Sue away to Phillotson, and he wonders why Sue keeps inflicting pain on herself and others on a whim. Sue and Phillotson marry in a simple ceremony, and as they walk away Sue looks back, suddenly looking frightened. Jude wonders if she now realizes what she has done for the sake of a small revenge and assertion of independence.

PART 3, CHAPTER 8

Jude grows depressed after the wedding, and finds that he can’t stand staying in Melchester any longer. He learns that his great-aunt is ill again, and he returns to Marygreen to see her. Jude writes to Sue, as Drusilla is her relation as well, and he suggests that they meet in Alfredston, as Jude plans to visit **Christminster** and look for work again.

Sue repeats Jude’s mistake, though she has different reasons for rushing into marriage with someone she does not love. She is more intelligent and well-read than Jude, but just as innocent regarding marriage as he was when he first met Arabella. Even in her heartbreaking letter Sue (and Hardy) can’t help throwing in a critique of the sexism in the marriage ceremony.



Hardy creates situations where what is usually the legal and religious “right” action actually becomes the ethically wrong option. Jude has experienced the lasting effects of a bad marriage, but he does not properly warn Sue, as she is already distancing herself from him via the marriage itself.



Sue can’t help continuing to be unorthodox even as she tries to conform to society. In a similar way she keeps causing pain to the men who love her when she indulges her spontaneous whims. In another situation Sue’s marriage to a basically good man like Phillotson might have been tolerable, but for such a sensitive nature as hers it will be disastrous.



In his pain Jude finally sees some of Sue’s flaws, but he still can’t help loving her and continuing in his tragic fate of pursuing their doomed romance. Society and religion see marriage as rectifying earlier mistakes, but Hardy creates a situation where the marriage itself is clearly wrong, and we see Sue making the same mistake Jude did.



Jude doesn’t turn to alcohol this time, but he still lets Sue’s decisions stifle his own life. Even though Christminster has rejected him, Jude can never stay away for long. The novel is divided by different settings, but Christminster never disappears.



The next day Jude goes to **Christminster** and is haunted by Sue's "phantom" presence there, which affects him much more than the philosophers he used to imagine. He suddenly feels that he doesn't want to find work in Christminster after all, and he visits the old tavern where he once recited the Creed in Latin.

Jude then notices that Arabella is one of the barmaids, and he gets her attention. Arabella is surprised, as she thought Jude had died long ago. She says she returned from Australia three months before. She makes Jude wait and meet her at nine, after she gets off work. Jude misses his train and his meeting with Sue, but he recognizes that his lawful duty is to show preference to Arabella over Sue, despite his real feelings. Jude and Arabella drink together and then spend the night at an inn in Aldbrickham.

PART 3, CHAPTER 9

The next morning Arabella tells Jude that she had married a hotel manager in Australia, and she asks Jude to keep this a secret, as it is a crime. Jude is upset but agrees to keep his silence. The two part ways and Jude wanders around **Christminster**, waiting for the train. He feels "degraded" by having resumed his relations with Arabella.

Jude returns to the station and encounters Sue, who is distraught. She thought that Jude had missed their meeting because he was drinking away his sorrow. Jude feels whole again in Sue's presence, and he compares her "ethereal" spirit to Arabella's low worldliness. Again he feels ashamed of sleeping with Arabella.

Sue and Jude ride the train to Alfredston together, and Jude asks her about her marriage to Phillotson. Sue deflects the question for a while, claiming to be a "happy wife," but finally admits that she is unhappy. They visit Drusilla, who laments that Sue has gotten married just like Jude. Sue is upset by this, and she tells Jude that she does indeed regret her marriage.

Jude takes Sue to the train station so she can return to Melchester. He asks if he can visit her sometime, but Sue says he can't yet, and she rides off. Afterwards Jude devotes himself to his religious studies. He gets a letter from Arabella, who says that her Australian husband has come to England for her, and they have gone to London to run a bar. Arabella says that she feels she "belongs" to her second husband more than to Jude, and now she has a chance at a better life.

Because he met Sue in Christminster, the place is now doubly haunted by her (unmarried) presence and the ghosts of Jude's failed dreams of scholarship. Jude finally succumbs to temptation and goes off to drink.



Arabella returns as an agent of discord, antagonizing Jude and Sue's relationship for her own personal gain. At the same time she is still sympathetic and human, though of a very different character type from Jude and Sue. She returns to his life at a low point, and seduces him through alcohol and his own despair.



Arabella is also inconvenienced by her first marriage, but she has remarried for respectability and comfort instead of true love. In a great irony, Hardy convincingly portrays Jude's lawfully and religiously-sanctioned wedded relations with Arabella as a kind of adultery against Sue.



Jude has succumbed to his lesser nature in returning to both Arabella and alcohol. Though she is forbidden to him by society and fate, Sue is just as lofty a dream for Jude as studying at the university was. This begins many descriptions of Sue as a kind of unearthly spirit – holy, but also asexual.



Sue is reluctant to admit it, but she has made the same mistake Jude did, and created a lifetime of misfortune through one act of bad judgment. Sue has also succumbed to the "Fawley curse" despite Drusilla's many warnings.



Arabella seems to be gone again, but in the novel's world the binding contract of marriage never really lets someone go. Even as Hardy calls for progressive changes, the language of marriage is still inherently sexist – the wife is always spoken of as "belonging" to the husband, just as she must be "given away" by a male relation.



PART 3, CHAPTER 10

Jude returns to Melchester and throws himself into his religious studies. He starts to worry that he isn't fit for the priesthood because of his tendency towards liquor and sexual desire. He develops an interest in music and starts singing in a local church choir. One day he is especially moved by a hymn called "The Foot of the Cross," and he learns that it was written by a man from the nearby town of Kennetbridge. Jude resolves to find this composer, as he surely would understand his plight.

Jude travels to Kennetbridge and visits the composer, but soon discovers that the man wrote music only for money, and is now going into the wine business instead. Jude leaves, feeling ashamed, and when he returns to Melchester he finds a note from Sue apologizing and inviting him to dinner. Jude writes back and they agree to meet a few days later, on Good Friday.

This chapter contains a small side venture where Jude's idealism is again punctured by cruel reality. Jude tries to forget Sue by studying religion just as he tried to forget her by getting drunk. Hardy never wholly condemns Christianity, but he does show how people can come to religion for all the wrong reasons, which invalidates the religion even if it is the "correct" path.



The composer is another example of religion gone about in the wrong way. In Hardy's world, unique and sensitive characters like Jude and Sue will be eventually crushed by society and fate, and the greedy, narrow-minded characters (like the composer and Arabella) will thrive.



PART 4, CHAPTER 1

The narrator describes the town of Shaston, where Sue now lives, as a place of worldly pleasures. Jude arrives there and comes to the schoolroom where Sue teaches, but he finds it empty. Phillotson's old piano is there, and Jude sits down and plays "The Foot of the Cross." Sue appears behind him and says that she also has been recently affected by that hymn.

They have tea and discuss their relationship, and again both are struck by the similarity of their natures. They spontaneously hold hands several times. Jude accuses Sue of being a flirt sometimes and she is offended by this, but she admits that she does love being loved. Sue calls Jude a "tragic Don Quixote" and compares him to St. Stephen the martyr, and then she muses about society's pigeonholing of individuals – she is called "Mrs. Phillotson" now, but she is still a lonely, inconsistent woman.

Sue tells Jude to come back the following week and she sends him away. Jude wanders about town, waiting for the train, and he passes by Sue's house. Through the window he sees her looking at a photograph, and Jude wonders if it is a picture of himself. Jude leaves, planning to resist his feelings for Sue but already recognizing that "the human was more powerful in him than the Divine."

The setting changes again as Jude and Sue keep searching for a new place to call home in a world that does not want them. They show their perfectly attuned natures by the fact that they have both been affected by the same hymn at the same time. Even the piano becomes a recurring character.



Jude and Sue's relationship constantly shifts between argument and affection, as they are both extremely intelligent, sensitive, and inconsistent. Sue calls Jude "Don Quixote" (a delusional romantic) and also "St. Stephen" (a martyr killed for his faith) in an exaggerated but apt characterization. Sue is again the mouthpiece for Hardy's social criticism.



Sue does have passion and love in her, though it rarely appears and it tortures Jude with its infrequency. We never know if she is actually looking at a photo of Jude or not, or even just how strong her romantic feelings for Jude are. Jude starts to recognize that his professed Christianity is growing more hypocritical.



PART 4, CHAPTER 2

The next morning Sue sends Jude a letter retracting her invitation for the following week, saying they were “too free” before. Jude writes back and agrees. The next day, which is Easter, Jude learns that his aunt is dying. He goes to Marygreen and meets the Widow Edlin, who had tended to Drusilla in her illness. Mrs. Edlin says Drusilla is already dead, and Jude writes to Sue to deliver the news.

Sue arrives in Marygreen for the funeral a few days later. After the ceremony Jude and Sue discuss their tragic family and their unhappy marriages. Sue muses on how divorce should be easier if a marriage is unhappy, especially if marriage is only a social agreement and not a religious one. Sue hints that she finds Phillotson’s presence repulsive, and she can’t bring herself to sleep with him. She says she must return to Shaston that evening, but Jude convinces her to stay at the Widow Edlin’s house instead.

Jude apologizes to Sue for not warning her about marrying Phillotson. Jude and Sue vaguely discuss their relationship, and then Jude reveals that he saw Arabella again. Jude pretends that they are living together now, and Sue starts to cry. She goes into more details about her relationship with Phillotson – she likes him as a friend, but not as a husband, and she hates the “dreadful contract” (marriage) that binds her feelings.

Jude pushes his face against Sue’s cheek and asks if she would have married him if not for his first marriage to Arabella. Sue walks out without answering. Jude tries to sleep but he is awakened by the cries of a rabbit in pain. He goes outside and finds the creature, which is stuck in a trap and dying. Jude mercifully kills it, and then notices that Sue is looking out her window at him.

Jude talks to her, and Sue admits that she was already sleepless worrying about her marital troubles. Jude says that he may be starting to lose his religious faith, and so he won’t judge her for making him her confidant. Suddenly he kisses her hand and promises to give up all religion for her love. Sue stops him, but then she wishes aloud that she could undo an impulsive mistake like her marriage. She thinks that people of the future will look at marriage as a “barbarous custom.” Sue kisses Jude on top of the head and shuts her window.

Hardy positions both Drusilla’s death and the blossoming of Jude and Sue’s romance around Easter, the time of Christ’s resurrection. This is a cynical irony in that the situation involves death and nonreligious, illicit love, the opposite of Christianity’s most important day.



Sue speaks with Hardy’s voice again, musing on possible solutions to the marriage problem. Hardy is clearly dissatisfied with the institution as it is, but he never comes to a definite conclusion about the best way to fix it. Making divorce easier and less socially suicidal is one of his most reasonable, achievable solutions. Sue shows herself again as a kind of “bodiless,” spiritual intelligence who resists sexual lust.



Sue’s initial feelings for Jude are as much about jealousy against Arabella as they are about real attraction. Sue has succumbed to her inevitable fate, and now she and Jude are both trapped. Hardy never relents in his criticism of the institution of marriage, and now Sue can more eloquently elaborate on his ideas.



Just as Sue resists the “dreadful contract” of marriage, so she also resists Jude’s persistent need for her to clarify her feelings. We are reminded that Jude is still a compassionate, sympathetic man living in a harsh world. The rabbit is like Jude himself, but with no one to put him out of his misery.



In his love for Sue, Jude lets himself be more easily swayed by her beliefs, and he is now rapidly approaching Sue’s own religious agnosticism. Jude has also realized that the Christianity he professes exists in opposition to the way he wants to live his life. Hardy speaks through Sue as usual, looking forward to a more progressive time when his ideas will be accepted.



PART 4, CHAPTER 3

The next day Jude and Sue part ways in the road, go a few yards, and then run back to each other and kiss passionately. Then they separate for good, both of them flustered. After this Jude decides that he cannot become a clergyman as long as he loves Sue so passionately and has an estranged wife living apart from him. Jude notes that his ambition towards the clergy has been checked by Sue just like his ambition for **Christminster** was checked by Arabella.

Jude gathers up his theological books and pamphlets and burns them behind his aunt's house. Jude feels cleansed by this, like "an ordinary sinner, and not as a whited sepulchre." Meanwhile Sue weeps on the train to Shaston, promising to herself to break off all contact with Jude.

Phillotson meets Sue at the station, and Sue admits to him that she held Jude's hand, but says nothing about the kiss. Phillotson seems unperturbed. That night Phillotson wakes up and notices Sue still isn't in bed. He finds her hiding in a closet under the stairs. He pulls the door open and Sue pleads with him to leave her alone. Phillotson says it is cruel for her to avoid him so, as he is a kind husband, but Sue says it is just the cruel universe that determines her feelings. Phillotson agrees to leave her in peace, but the next morning she asks if she can live apart from him.

Phillotson is surprised and questions Sue's reasons, and she explains how she felt forced into the marriage by the opinion of society and the Training College. Phillotson says that this behavior is "irregular," and Sue says she wishes domestic laws could be changed "according to temperaments," as the laws are failing if they make her miserable for committing no sin. She feels that it is "adultery" for them to live together without love, even if they are legally married.

Phillotson asks if Sue plans to live alone, and she admits that she wants to live with Jude. Phillotson accuses her of being in love with Jude, but Sue denies it. The couple then goes off to teach at the school, but they continue their debate by writing notes that they pass to each other through their students. Finally Phillotson agrees to live in the same house but in separate rooms.

This is the largest display of passion from Sue yet, and makes her into a more human, sympathetic character. Now that he has some reciprocation in his love, Jude decides to fully give up his pretensions at religiosity and embrace his "sinful," progressive lifestyle.



Jude still thinks in Biblical language – the "whited sepulchre" was a phrase Jesus used to describe the hypocritical Pharisees – but Jude is now turning that language against Christianity itself.



Sue is still innocent of worldliness in many ways, so she makes the bold request to live apart from Phillotson when such an idea would be scandalous and unthinkable to anyone else. For someone as sensitive and idealistic as Sue, a marriage (especially involving physicality) to anyone she does not love is unbearable. Though Phillotson is a kind man, he can't help causing Sue torment by his mere presence.



Hardy suggests again that divorce could be made easier or that marriage laws could be relaxed. Sue's statement that her married relations with Phillotson would be "adultery" is especially potent – it overturns all conventions of law and religion, but Hardy has managed to create a situation where we are sympathetic to Sue's case.



Though she is emotionally inconsistent, Sue is usually incapable of lying, so it may be that she doesn't actually love Jude yet. She is still looking for an intellectual, platonic "soulmate" in a world that only recognizes sexual relations and legal marriage contracts.



PART 4, CHAPTER 4

One night Phillotson stays up late and accidentally returns to the room he shared with Sue out of habit. Sue is so distraught by his sudden appearance that she jumps out the window. She isn't badly hurt. She pretends that she was asleep when she did it, but Phillotson feels "wretched" about the situation.

One day Phillotson goes to see his friend Gillingham, who is a teacher in a nearby town. Phillotson explains his marital troubles and the fact that his wife is repulsed by him. He describes Jude, saying that Jude and Sue "seem to be one person split in two." Phillotson says that Sue's intellect is far superior to his own, so he cannot answer her arguments. He is almost ready to let Sue leave him for Jude.

Gillingham is shocked that he would even consider this option, but Phillotson feels that it might be the most moral thing to do, though it goes against law and tradition. Phillotson again describes Jude and Sue's relationship, comparing them to characters in a poem by Shelley (lovers who are also siblings), and he admits that he finds himself taking their side.

Gillingham argues that such action threatens the social unit of the family, but Phillotson says he is just trying to do what he personally feels is right. As Phillotson leaves, Gillingham advises him to hold on to Sue no matter what, but Phillotson is not convinced.

The next morning Phillotson tells Sue that she is free to leave and do as she pleases. She is very grateful and proposes that they still be friends, but Phillotson asks that she truly separate herself from him and keep all her actions to herself. She mentions Jude's name and Phillotson says he doesn't want to know anything more about Jude. Sue feels a real compassion and gratitude towards Phillotson for his actions, but she still cannot bring herself to love him.

Phillotson sends Sue off to the train station and pretends to kiss her as they part. Later that day Gillingham comes to visit Phillotson, and Phillotson admits that he has let Sue leave him for Jude. Phillotson says that he thought he was an "old-fashioned man" regarding marriage, but in such a situation he simply acted as he saw fit.

Sue has such a natural aversion to Phillotson, especially sexually, that she leaps out the window as a first reaction to his sudden entrance. She still likes him as a person and a friend, but she can't help hating him as a husband.



Phillotson becomes a very sympathetic character now, as he is trapped in a tragic situation through little fault of his own, just like Jude and Sue. Phillotson gives voice to Hardy's ideas about Jude and Sue as natural "twins" who are meant to be together.



Under the law Phillotson has the right to confine Sue to his room and even make her have sex with him, but he is a moral man and recognizes (like Hardy hopes his readers will) just how terrible and unethical such actions would be.



Gillingham acts as the voice of Hardy's critics, and indeed Jude the Obscure was viciously attacked as trying to undermine the sanctity of marriage and the family.



Hardy creates a situation where the morally right thing to do is to free a woman from a confining marriage, but his critics disagreed with this view and held the strict rules of tradition over personal morality. Hardy was so overwhelmingly criticized for the content and ideas in his novel that he gave up writing fiction after Jude the Obscure.



Phillotson is an elderly, conservative man, but in following his moral compass he has suddenly found himself as revolutionary and unorthodox as the agnostic Sue. Hardy uses such an extreme situation to show just how corrupted social rules can become when left unchecked by personal morality.



PART 4, CHAPTER 5

Jude meets Sue at the train station in Melchester, and he tells her that they are traveling on to Aldbrickham, a larger town where no one knows them. Sue feels bad for ruining Jude's work with the Church, but Jude declares that he has lost his religious faith and now lives only for Sue. They take the train and Sue describes how kind Phillotson was to her. Jude tells her that Arabella wrote requesting a formal divorce.

As they approach Aldbrickham Jude reveals that he has booked one room for them at the Temperance Hotel, and Sue is upset by this. She hints that she doesn't want to have a sexual relationship yet, which saddens Jude. Sue still can't say outright whether she loves Jude or not. For now she says that out of respect for Phillotson she would prefer that she and Jude remain platonic. Sue also comments that in a "proper state of society" the father of a woman's children will be her own business and not judged by all.

Jude shows Sue a note he received from Phillotson, asking that Jude be kind to Sue and affirming that the two are "made for each other." Jude tells Sue that he fears she is incapable of loving anyone. Sue is offended by this and describes her love as a "supremely delicate kind" that doesn't involve sexual relations. Jude still worries that Sue is tricking him, but he believes her when she pleads with him.

Sue then asks Jude if they can stay at a different hotel, and Jude accuses her of being a slave to social conventions despite all of her unorthodox ideas. Still he affirms his love for her, using a Biblical quote to emphasize how they can never be divided.

They reach Aldbrickham and decide to stay at a different hotel. It is the one Jude stayed at with Arabella, though he doesn't notice this. When Jude is out of the room, a maid tells Sue that she saw Jude there with a different woman a month or two earlier. Sue immediately accuses Jude of deceiving her with Arabella. Jude doesn't deny it, but he reminds Sue that Arabella is his legal wife.

Sue breaks down crying, saying that *she* jumped out the window rather than sleep with Phillotson. Sue is clearly jealous, so Jude tells her that Arabella has taken a second husband. He vows to never inform against Arabella, but he assures Sue that Arabella is truly no longer his wife. Jude says that he is still "comparatively happy" just to be in Sue's presence, as she is such a beautiful, "tantalizing phantom." Sue is pleased and she lets Jude kiss her cheeks.

Jude thinks that Sue has come to him as a wife of sorts, but Sue is still trying to think of Jude as a protector and intellectual companion, and she is still distraught by the horrors of being trapped in a marriage. Jude embraces his loss of faith and makes Sue his new ideal.



Sue's statement about who fathers a woman's children is one of Hardy's most revolutionary ideas, but he only mentions it here as a sort of side-note. Sue remains emotionally inconsistent and sensitive – though she is basically a feminist before her time, she still has many of the weaknesses that Victorian men associated with women.



Phillotson affirms that Jude and Sue are "made for each other," which means that their inevitable separation is all the more tragic. Sue's feelings remain unclear. Part of Hardy's critique of marriage is that it is too heavy-handed for "delicate" natures like Sue's.



Though they have both given up religion now, Jude and Sue continue to speak in the language of Christianity, and in this way Hardy never totally rejects religion.



Though Sue is rebellious and unorthodox, she is still nervous in the face of society's scrutiny. Even though Jude and Arabella are legally married, it was emotional adultery for Jude to sleep with Arabella. Jude's argument is hypocritical, as he has been previously denying the validity of his first marriage.



The world of the novel is small, and Jude and Sue suffer many bad coincidences like returning to this specific hotel. Sue affirms her love for Jude in this roundabout way, by lamenting that she would rather jump out the window than sleep with her husband, but Jude easily succumbed to his wife.



PART 4, CHAPTER 6

Back in Shaston, Phillotson is the subject of much gossip from the townspeople. Soon the chairman of his school summons him to ask about his marriage. Phillotson admits to letting Sue leave with her lover, as he was “not her gaoler.” Afterward Phillotson is asked to resign for condoning adultery. He refuses to resign, as that would be an acknowledgment of guilt and he still believes he has acted rightly.

Despite Gillingham’s advice Phillotson continues stubbornly forward, and he calls a public meeting to defend himself. All the “respectable inhabitants” of the town are against him, but he also has many surprising allies. The meeting soon devolves into a brawl, and Phillotson falls ill afterward.

Gillingham convinces Phillotson to write to Sue about his illness, and a few days later she visits him. Their reunion is painful, and Phillotson asks Sue once more to stay with him, saying that he will forgive everything if she does. Sue again refuses, and she tells Phillotson that Jude is seeking a divorce from his first wife. They part ways and Phillotson tortures himself imagining Sue returning to Jude’s embrace.

Afterwards Gillingham visits Phillotson, and Phillotson tells him that he has decided to formally divorce Sue. He recognizes that he probably can’t teach anymore because of his disgrace, but he might as well endure the rest of his life alone and truly free Sue to marry Jude. Gillingham disagrees with Phillotson’s motives, but thinks it is a good plan.

PART 5, CHAPTER 1

A few months later Jude and Sue are still living in separate but adjacent rooms in Aldbrickham. They get a letter saying that Sue’s divorce has been finalized, just a month after Jude’s divorce from Arabella was officially concluded. Jude comments on Sue’s new freedom, but Sue feels that her freedom was unfairly got – the divorce would not have been approved if the authorities knew the real situation. Jude says that this is an advantage of being “poor obscure people,” that no one cares too much about them.

Jude and Sue walk about together for a while, and then Jude asks Sue if she will marry him after a suitable length of time. Sue says that she is worried marriage will harm their relationship. She would rather go on as unmarried lovers, considering how badly marriages go in their family. She brings up her old arguments that the institution means putting a contract on what should be voluntary love.

Phillotson becomes another victim of society’s unfairness. Phillotson’s companions (like Hardy’s critics) are unwilling to examine how unethical it would have been to imprison Sue – they are only concerned with sticking to the status quo. Phillotson shows himself a man of stubborn morals.



There is no justice for Hardy’s characters, and he plays up their misfortunes to show how corrupt society can be. Phillotson is a totally sympathetic character, but all his neighbors turn against him.



Sue cannot help being honest and continuing to break Phillotson’s heart. Phillotson has been publicly condemned and scorned for letting Sue leave him, and he gets little relief in his private life. Even Gillingham, seemingly his closest friend, remains disapproving.



Phillotson’s whole future is ruined because he made one compassionate choice that happened to go against the status quo. Again Hardy creates a situation where he shows just how flawed Victorian society can be.



Jude and Sue are now officially “free” of their first marriages, and so could marry each other. Sue knows that she could never have obtained a legal divorce if the authorities knew about her “sinful” present lifestyle. Hardy refers to the novel’s title with “obscure,” a word that appears several times and can mean inscrutable, unknown, and covered in darkness.



Marriage is the only respectable option for any kind of relationship in Victorian times, but both Jude and Sue have already had bad experiences with the institution. This conversation condenses many of Hardy’s critiques of marriage, and returns to the idea of the “Fawley curse.”



Jude responds that this might do for the “phantasmal, bodiless” Sue, but ordinary folk like him sometimes need marriage. He then says that Sue still hasn’t declared her love for him, and he criticizes her inconsistency. This upsets Sue, but they make up and agree not to discuss marriage for a while. Jude starts working at lettering headstones, and Sue helps him by marking out and blacking in the letters. This pays less than Jude’s earlier jobs, but it is the only work where they can both be independent and work together.

Jude wants to marry Sue because he feels she is his true “soulmate,” but he too is wary of the effect of a binding contract on voluntary, delicate love. Sue is especially sensitive and rebellious against anything that tries to “tame” her, and her romantic feelings are weaker. Sue again shows herself a “modern woman” by working alongside Jude as an independent individual.



PART 5, CHAPTER 2

One night Jude returns home and Sue tells him a woman came to ask for him. Sue thinks that it was Arabella, and she gets very upset. Later that night there is a knock on the door and Sue says it is Arabella again. Jude opens his window and asks Arabella what she wants. Arabella says she needs help, and that she hasn’t gotten married after all. She wants Jude to come see her at her lodgings to discuss something important.

Sue’s feelings of jealousy often seem stronger than her feelings of love. Arabella returns again to disrupt Jude’s life. By now she is the main “antagonist” of the story, though sometimes a sympathetic character as well. Sue and Arabella are now in the same place at the same time, and so their opposite natures are juxtaposed.



Sue begs Jude not to go, but Jude feels his usual sympathy for Arabella. They argue for a while, during which Arabella disappears. Sue grows so upset that she promises to marry Jude if he will stay at home. She declares that she loves him, and apologizes for being so “cold-natured” in comparison to the coarse Arabella. Jude agrees not to go.

Jude’s sympathy for wild animals got him into trouble at his crow-scaring job, and Arabella knows how to exploit this sympathy for her own gain. Sue’s love often seems less than genuine, as she agrees to marry Jude only to keep him away from Arabella.



The next morning Sue feels guilty for having treated Arabella so badly, and she wants to go find her at her inn. Sue kisses Jude passionately and then remarks that “the little bird is caught at last.” Sue goes off and finds Arabella in a room at a public-house. Arabella treats Sue rudely, saying that Jude isn’t really “hers.” While Sue is there Arabella gets a telegram saying that her second husband will take her back.

Throughout the novel Sue has always been associated with the concept of freedom – she rejected the confines of the Training School and her marriage, and is often referred to as a “bird.” Arabella represents all the sordid, unromantic aspects of marriage, the way it functions more as an economic transaction than a conjoining of two loving souls.



Before leaving, Arabella advises Sue to marry Jude, listing all the practical ways that marriage will help her properly ensnare him. Sue gets upset at Arabella’s words. Arabella says that she will write to Jude about the important matter she wanted to discuss, and she leaves.

Arabella seems to sense Sue’s aversion to marriage and so she lists all its legalistic and mundane aspects to try and keep Sue from marrying Jude. Arabella and Sue are polar opposites, especially regarding their positions on marriage.



PART 5, CHAPTER 3

Sue returns to Jude and tells him that her conversation with Arabella has further convinced her what a “vulgar institution” marriage is. Jude remarks that Sue seems like a woman of “some grand old civilization.” Sue says that marriage adds a sense of compulsion to a relationship that should be inherently voluntary. Jude agrees to postpone any thoughts of marriage for a while, and the couple lives on in a “dreamy paradise.”

One day Jude gets a letter from Arabella, whose last name is now Cartlett. In the letter Arabella says that she had given birth to a child by Jude after she moved to Australia. She left the boy with her parents in Australia after she moved back to England, but her parents can’t take care of him any more and the boy is “of an intelligent age” now. Arabella asks if Jude and Sue will take the child in, as Arabella and her new husband (Cartlett) don’t want him.

Sue is upset by the plight of the unwanted child, and she asks Jude if they can take him in. Jude agrees, saying it doesn’t matter whether the child is truly his or not – he is entitled to adopt the unwanted boy. Jude and Sue decide to get married before the child arrives, so as to provide a more stable home for him. Jude writes Arabella to send him the child.

The “small, pale child” arrives earlier than expected, so no one is there to meet him at the train station. Arabella had sent him on to Jude immediately without a kind word at all. The boy looks constantly depressed and weighed down by the sorrows of the world, like “Age masquerading as Juvenility.” The child walks mechanically all the way from the station to Jude’s house, ignoring all his surroundings.

The child reaches the house just as Jude and Sue are going to bed, and they are surprised to see him. They apologize for not meeting him at the station, and they immediately take him in. Sue is shocked to see Jude’s likeness in the boy, but is jealous to see Arabella’s as well. Jude wonders if he will be able to pass on his dream of studying at **Christminster** through this boy, and if the boy will have more success if Jude can provide him with a better life than he himself had.

Sue is again associated with a pre-Christian, pagan world, and now Jude has given up religion and succumbs to this “dream.” Hardy seems to propose this nonreligious, nonlegal monogamy as an alternative to the institution of marriage, but he will soon show that such a solution cannot exist in the society of the time.



Arabella overturns the “dreamy paradise” of Jude and Sue’s relationship with her revelation. This is another example of how Jude is never really free of his first marriage, though he is now legally divorced. Arabella has never cared for her son and now wants to shunt him off on Jude.



Jude and Sue were both children of divorce and then orphans, so they sympathize with the child’s plight. The only way they can provide a “respectable” home for the boy is to get married, despite their reasonable misgivings. Hardy adds his idea that all children are the general responsibility of all adults, no matter one’s blood relation.



Arabella treats the child with total callousness, using him to add discord to Jude and Sue’s relationship. The boy will function less as a character and more as a symbol of his hardships and the faults of society. Hardy lends an urgency to his social criticism by showing the effects of injustice on the next generation.



The boy seems used to being totally unwanted. Sue feels an immediate bond with the child, but her strong jealousy again troubles her as the boy reminds her of Jude’s relations with Arabella. Jude gets a glimpse of hope and possibility in his son, and he immediately returns to his dream of Christminster.



The child immediately asks Sue if he can call her “mother,” and the two strike up a quick affection for each other. After the boy goes to bed Sue declares that she and Jude must be strong for his sake, and go get legally married.

Though the child is aged and world-weary in many ways, he still shows his youth (and the tragic lack of love in his upbringing) by immediately calling Sue “mother.” The cerebral Sue experiences the sudden appearance of mothering instincts.



PART 5, CHAPTER 4

The next morning they ask the child his name, and he says he has no name, though his nickname is “**Little Father Time**” because he seems so aged and world-weary. Jude is disturbed by this, but he decides to christen the boy “Jude” when he and Sue are married. Jude and Sue go to the office that day and fill out the marriage form. They are both upset by the “sordid business” of describing their relationship in such a way, and Sue can’t even look at the contract.

Little Father Time will act as a symbol of fate and time itself, as his depressive character is the inevitable result of the divorce, injustice, and bad luck of his upbringing. Jude and Sue are again disturbed by the unromantic, legally binding aspect of the marriage contract, this supposed declaration of love.



Jude asks the Widow Edlin to attend the “ceremony” the next day, and she comes and spends the night at their house. She tells the couple more about the bad luck in their family, and about one of their relatives who was hanged near the Brown House. This man divorced his wife, and she left with their child. The child died, and then the husband came to steal the child’s coffin and was arrested for burglary. After this story **Little Father Time** advises Sue not to marry.

The Widow Edlin becomes a sort of sympathetic replacement to Drusilla. We learn more about the “fatal flaw” in the Fawley blood, which now concerns children as well as marriage. In another unhappy coincidence, these tragic occurrences took place at the Brown House, where Jude first conceived his futile dream of Christminster.



The next day Sue feels even more of a sense of “tragic doom,” as if the Fawleys were like the cursed house of Atreus in Greek mythology. She and Jude are both unhappy about the marriage, but they go on to the office. It is a dreary day, and the couples in front of them include a reluctant soldier with his pregnant bride. Sue is so upset by the atmosphere of the place that Jude agrees to postpone the wedding again, and perhaps try it in a church instead.

The succeeding generations of the house of Atreus all experienced horrific tragedies, often through no fault of their own. Both Jude and Sue are very sensitive, so the foreboding weather and their prosaic companions in line are enough to scare the couple away from the marriage.



Sue apologizes for her inconsistency, and they go to the parish church where a wedding is already taking place. Jude and Sue are just as upset by this wedding, as watching the ignorant, innocent bride repeat her vows reminds them of their earlier bad marriages. Jude and Sue decide that they are too “sensitive” in their natures for marriage, as the institution always snuffs out the delicate spontaneity of their love. Sue compares the flowers in the bride’s hand to a garland decorating a sacrificial cow.

It is not just the lack of romance and grandiosity that upsets Jude and Sue, but the binding nature of the institution itself. They decide (probably rightly) that marriage is not for personality types like theirs, but Victorian society allows for no exception to its rules – any relationship outside of marriage is seen as sinful and is punished. Sue sees the ceremony as a funeral or sacrifice more than an affirmation of love.



Sue and Jude return home, having failed to actually get married. The Widow Edlin comments on what a big deal marriage is nowadays – in her time no one thought much of it. They decide not to tell **Little Father Time** that they didn't go through with it, and declare that they will put their own happiness over society's opinion.

The Widow Edlin gives voice to another possible solution to Hardy's marriage problem – in earlier generations English society was not so oppressive and judgmental of others, and so marriages could be less binding and “eternal.” Jude and Sue's optimism is tragically naïve.



PART 5, CHAPTER 5

For a while Jude and Sue are happy together, though **Little Father Time** remains gloomy and world-weary. One day there is an agricultural show in the town of Stoke-Barehills, and Arabella arrives there with her husband Cartlett. She soon notices Jude and Sue with Little Father Time, though they don't see Arabella. Cartlett has clearly grown less enamoured of Arabella, and he points out how happy Jude's family looks.

Arabella continues to illustrate the negatives of marriage, and her discontented, pragmatic marriage to Cartlett is contrasted with Jude and Sue's romantic love. Jude and Sue seem to have found a lifestyle that suits them, but Little Father Time is a constant reminder of their past mistakes and their tragic fates.



Arabella scornfully says that **Little Father Time** can't be Sue's child, as Sue and Jude haven't been married long enough. Cartlett still has no idea that Arabella has a child at all, and she remains silent about it. Meanwhile Jude and Sue are at the fair to try and inspire some curiosity and happiness in Little Father Time, but the child remains glum. By now Jude and Sue are so in sync that they can communicate almost without speaking.

With her comment Arabella vaguely claims motherhood over Little Father Time, but Cartlett doesn't notice this. Jude and Sue are affirmed as “twins” who are meant to be together despite the obstacles of law and religion.



Arabella follows the couple, noting that they must not be married because they are still so enamoured of each other. Cartlett grows bored, so Arabella leaves him and keeps following Jude. She runs into her old friend Anny and then Physician Vilbert, and they all discuss Sue and Jude.

Arabella seems to agree with Sue about how marriage kills romance, but Arabella is more concerned with personal financial security and comfort than with preserving true love, so she always tries to “trap” her targets with marriage.



Arabella watches Sue and Jude observing a model of **Christminster** that they themselves built, and Arabella mocks Jude's love for that town. Anny and Vilbert comment on Arabella's renewed interest in Jude, and Vilbert offers her a love potion. After a while Arabella, now in a bad mood, leaves to find Cartlett. The narrator calls Arabella and Cartlett “the average husband and wife of Christendom.”

Vilbert returns, and his “love potion” will lead to him taking advantage of a powerless Jude later. Hardy's statement about Arabella and Cartlett is heavy-handed and supremely sarcastic, but is a good summation of his criticism that marriage prohibits voluntary love and leads to stagnation.



Meanwhile Jude and Sue keep admiring things at the agricultural show and commenting on their own happiness. Sue is reluctant to say that she is happy because she and Jude are a couple now, but Jude declares that he feels they have “returned to Greek joyousness” and have forgotten all the gloom of Christianity. The only stain on their happiness is **Little Father Time**, who apologizes for his pessimism – he likes the flowers at the fair, but can only think of how they will soon wither.

Though Jude and Sue seem to have found true joy, they also seem to comment on or look forward to their own happiness rather than simply experience it. Their “Greek joyousness” is only temporary, as all the legalistic, life-denying aspects of Christianity (and little else) reign supreme in Victorian society. Little Father Time now offers a voice for Hardy's moments of extreme pessimism.



PART 5, CHAPTER 6

Jude and Sue's private life becomes more of a subject for gossip, and soon everyone in town knows that they aren't really married. The couple pretends to go off to London and get married, but people still want the scandal to continue so they disbelieve it. An "oppressive atmosphere" develops around the couple and they feel unwelcome and condemned.

One day Jude is hired to reletter the Ten Commandments at a nearby church, and Sue comes along to help him. While they are working **Little Father Time** comes in, crying that other children mocked Sue in front of him. Jude and Sue then overhear some church members discussing their marital status and telling condemning stories. Sue finally breaks down, as she cannot understand why people hate them for choosing to "live their own way." Soon afterward the contractor fires the couple, wishing to avoid a scandal.

Later Jude is nudged out of a workers' union, and the couple decides to move away. They sell all their furniture at auction, and Jude and Sue remain upstairs with **Little Father Time**. They overhear all the townspeople discussing their personal lives. Jude and Sue decide where to move next, recognizing that Jude will now be unable to find church-related work.

Jude and Sue leave the house just as the auctioneer is selling two pigeons Sue kept as pets. A poulterer buys them to use for pies, which greatly upsets Sue. Later that evening Sue passes the poulterer's shop and sets the pigeons free.

Afterwards Sue feels guilty and confesses to Jude, and she laments aloud that the law of Nature is "mutual butchery." **Little Father Time** asks if this is true, and Sue affirms it. Jude lists all the towns where they cannot go, as they are known and condemned there, though they have "wronged no man" but only "done that which was right in our own eyes."

PART 5, CHAPTER 7

After leaving Aldbrickham Jude and Sue lead an almost nomadic lifestyle, moving from town to town and working. Almost three years pass by in this way. Jude comes to reject any church-related work, as he recognizes that it would be hypocritical considering his current situation, and he wants nothing to do with those who condemn him. By now he has lost all religious faith.

The couple's "dreamy paradise" finally comes up against the harsh reality of a cruel, judgmental society, and the delicate and sensitive Jude and Sue cannot stand up against their neighbors' condemnation.



Hardy now delves into more specific, heart-rending tragedies – he has shown how innocent and justified Jude and Sue are in living the way they do, and now he will illustrate how society unjustly tramples over them for daring to live in an unorthodox way. The cruelty of others is especially hurtful to Little Father Time, who is a blank canvas being filled with unfairness.



Though sexuality is never mentioned in "respectable" society, it is everywhere under the surface. Judgment runs so deep that seemingly secular activities like a workers' union are affected by someone's harmless personal decisions.



Sue is again associated with freedom and birds, as she takes this small action against the injustice of her surroundings. She also shows her affinity with Jude in her sympathy for animals.



Sue repeats Jude's childhood revelation (while doing his job scaring crows) as the couple grows more depressed and pessimistic. This last statement is a sort of thesis for the novel – people should not be punished or condemned for living in an unorthodox manner, as long as they cause no harm to anyone.



In contrast to the extended settings of earlier sections, Jude and Sue are now forced to wander about in search of places that will accept them. As soon as someone learns of their "sinful" lifestyle they are unwelcome in that town. Jude has now fully reconciled his religious beliefs with his actions by giving up his Christian belief.

One day Arabella arrives at the Kennetbridge spring fair dressed in mourning. She sees Sue there selling cakes with **Little Father Time**, and Arabella approaches them, saying that she is mourning her husband Cartlett. Arabella questions Sue about Jude, and Sue reveals that they are still living together. They have two children and Sue is pregnant with another, though she feels almost guilty for this, as it is a “terribly tragic thing to bring beings into the world.”

Sue says that Jude became ill doing stonework, so now he makes cakes in the shape of colleges – which they call **Christminster** cakes – and Sue sells them. Arabella comments that Jude can never let go of Christminster. Sue says that though they are scorned by society, their lives were happy until Jude’s illness. Arabella says that she has started going to church, and has found comfort in religion.

PART 5, CHAPTER 8

That afternoon Arabella sings in the choir at a church and then leaves with Anny. On the way back to Alfredston Arabella reveals that her talk with Sue has made her very jealous. After passing the house where she lived with Jude, Arabella quickly convinces herself to give up religion and try to win Jude back. She flings her religious pamphlets out into a hedge.

Later in the journey Arabella comes across Mr. Phillotson in the road. She recognizes him and introduces herself. Phillotson reveals that he has been disgraced because of the circumstances of his divorce, but he still thinks he did the right thing. He says he is the schoolmaster at Marygreen again. Arabella tells him about her meeting with Sue, and she says that Sue is unhappy and that he never should have let her go. Arabella advises using harsh discipline to tame a wife, and then she and Phillotson part ways.

Meanwhile Sue goes home, where the Widow Edlin is tending to the sick Jude. Sue tells Jude that she sold all the **Christminster** cakes, which excites him, but then she describes her meeting with Arabella. Jude decides that they should move again, and he requests that they return to Christminster. He knows that the town has rejected and despised him, but he still can’t let go of his old dream, and he hopes at least to die there if possible.

Arabella has lost her husband now, so she is a free agent who can return to antagonize Jude. Though Jude and Sue have continued in their convictions, their “Greek joyousness” has been crushed by Victorian society to the point that they are pessimistic about bringing children into such a cruel, judgmental world.



Jude still has not escaped his fascination with Christminster, though he has returned to Drusilla’s occupation of baking. Sue speaks of the couple’s happiness, but never seems to have fully experienced it. Hardy now starts to show how religion can be used for less-than-holy purposes – in Arabella’s case, it is a quick balm for her grief.



Arabella gives up religion like Jude and Sue did, but her reasons have to do with lust and greed instead of love and intellectual doubt. Arabella now fully accepts her role as an antagonist to Jude and Sue’s romance, primarily because she is jealous of their seeming happiness.



Phillotson is far more compassionate and sympathetic than Arabella is, but he is capable of doing just as much damage to the protagonists’ relationship. Arabella sows the seeds of discord. She is a condensation of the worst things Victorians thought about women, and she also seems to support the sexism of her society.



Jude and Sue might have somehow been successful in their unorthodox romance, but fate strikes them again through Jude’s sickness. Meanwhile, idealism and ambition are part of Jude’s nature, so he can never truly give up the dream of Christminster, no matter how its “defective real” has disappointed him.



PART 6, CHAPTER 1

Three weeks later Jude and Sue arrive at **Christminster** with their two children and **Little Father Time**, who has been officially christened “Jude” but still goes by his nickname. They arrive on Remembrance Day, a day when honorary degrees are given to benefactors of the colleges, and they go to see the procession before looking for lodgings. The procession depresses Jude, reminding him of his failed dreams.

In the large crowd Jude sees his old companions Tinker Taylor and Uncle Joe. They ask him if he ever became a scholar, and Jude delivers a speech to a gathering crowd about how he failed. He tried to do in one generation what society only allows to be done in several – raise his social class by his own hard work and intelligence.

Jude confesses that his desires were too strong and distracted him from his dream, but he is still worthy of pity. He hopes that he can serve as an example of how not to live, as his ambitions were too high and now he is only a sick, poor, unhappy man. Jude perceives “that there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas” for him to be rewarded like this, but he doesn’t know where. The crowd applauds Jude’s speech.

It starts to rain and Sue, who has grown emotional at Jude’s words, wants them to go look for lodgings. Jude wants to keep watching the processing Doctors and Heads of Houses. He declares that he is still an outsider, and then finally agrees to leave with Sue. Sue says that she saw Phillotson in the crowd opposite them.

Jude and Sue wander about looking for lodging, but they are turned away. **Little Father Time** declares that he doesn’t like **Christminster**, and he doesn’t want to ever go to a college there. Finally the family finds a woman who will rent them a room if Jude stays elsewhere.

After Sue and the children enter, the landlady asks Sue about her marital situation. Sue admits that she and Jude are not officially married, but that they live together as husband and wife. The landlady immediately tells her husband this, and he says to kick them out, as he didn’t want any children staying there anyway. The landlady tells Sue that they can only stay for a week. Sue and **Little Father Time** wander about looking for a different room, but they are unsuccessful. Little Father Time says that he should never have been born.

Sue’s two children are never given names or personalities. Jude purposefully returns on Remembrance Day, hoping that the festivities will be hopeful, but they only remind him that men less worthy than he is have gotten the advantage of education simply through their wealth and class.



Jude has given up hope, but he is still drawn inevitably to Christminster, if only to make a spectacle of his failure there. His speech condenses much of Hardy’s criticisms – in a fair society, Jude should have been able to raise his social position through work and intelligence.



Jude recognizes his own “fatal flaws.” He is not wholly innocent, but he still doesn’t deserve the cruel fate society has condemned him to. Like Jude, Hardy clearly recognizes the many flaws in society, but he can find few clear solutions to its complex and far-reaching problems. Jude achieves a kind of fame as a melodramatic failure.



The novel’s climax approaches as all the protagonists’ misfortunes start to converge. Jude and Sue are now both being physically haunted by their bad first marriages, and they are experiencing the judgment of the society at the same place where Jude was already rejected long ago.



Little Father Time immediately rejects Christminster and claims he doesn’t want to study there. In a way this means Jude has failed at his dream yet again, as he can’t even succeed through his son.



Sue remains honest and idealistic – even after so much discrimination, she still naively reveals her “sinful” situation and gives the landlord an excuse to kick her out. Little Father Time starts to echo Jude and Drusilla’s sentiments at the beginning of the novel. He has been unwanted for most of his life, and now that he has experienced the cruelty of the world he wishes he had never entered it.



PART 6, CHAPTER 2

They return to their room and Sue is in a deep depression, looking out the window at Sarcophagus College and wondering at the strength of Jude's dream that he should have brought them to dreary, unfriendly **Christminster**. **Little Father Time** is also upset, and he worries about where they will stay the next day.

Little Father Time questions Sue about life, and she affirms that everything is trouble and suffering. She says it would almost be better to not be born than to live in such a cruel world. Little Father Time asks if they can't find a room because of the children's presence, and Sue doesn't object. Sue tells him that she is pregnant, and Little Father time grows angry and distressed, as the family is in such dire straits already. Before going to bed Little Father Time says "If we children was gone there'd be no trouble at all!"

Sue wakes up early the next morning and goes to find Jude, who has found a passable inn. They have a quick breakfast together and then return to Sue's lodgings. They make breakfast for the children, who seem to still be sleeping, and then Sue goes to wake them. Jude hears her shriek and he rushes in. Sue has fainted and the children are gone. Jude opens the closet door and finds all three children dead, hanging from clothes hooks. An overturned chair is near **Little Father Time's** feet.

Jude immediately cuts the children down and lays them on the bed, and then he runs off to find a doctor. When he returns he finds Sue and the landlady trying to revive the children, but they are all dead. On the floor they find a note from **Little Father Time** saying "Done because we are too menny." Sue feels that this is her fault and she breaks down into "convulsive agony." They put her to bed and the landlady tries to comfort her.

Jude talks to the doctor and then informs Sue that there is no hope for the children. The doctor had said that it was in **Little Father Time's** "nature" to commit this act, and acts like this have been springing up among the next generation. He said it is the "beginning of the coming universal wish not to live." Then Jude too breaks down.

Hardy unsubtly names one of his fictional colleges "Sarcophagus" – a stone coffin. This alludes to the earlier Biblical quote about "whited sepulchres," as Hardy is basically saying Christminster is a pretty place filled with dead ideas.



In her own depression Sue talks to Little Father Time as if he was an adult. She gives voice to all of Hardy's most pessimistic, depressed sentiments and Little Father Time absorbs them without any age or wisdom to put them in perspective. The theme of fate seems to culminate here, as the novel's climax is set up by such a dreary worldview.



Little Father Time's hanging of the children and then himself is the novel's terrible climax, and takes the story's tragedy to a new level. Jude and Sue have been so wrapped up in their own problems that they didn't realize how their depression and society's injustice was affecting their children. It is significant that because of Victorian morals Hardy can describe such a gruesome death in the novel but cannot ever explicitly mention sex or pregnancy.



This disaster is the turning point for Jude and Sue. Before this they still had potential to make their way in the world and find a place for themselves, but now Sue will be emotionally broken by the tragedy and lose all faith in her own judgment.



Hardy clearly doesn't have much hope for the next generation. By portraying Little Father Time's murder-suicide as inevitable, Hardy shows how the injustices of the present lead to horror in the future.



They go to see the children's bodies, and on Little Father Time's face they seem to see the expression and condensation of all Jude's bad luck and failures. They hear an organ in a nearby church playing "Truly God is loving unto Israel." Sue breaks down again and declares that there seems to be an external force punishing them for trying to live in their own way.

Sue weeps and tells Jude about her conversation with **Little Father Time** the night before. She feels that her relationship with Jude is now "stained with blood," and she regrets all her rebellious thoughts of the past. She remembers how they sought to "make a virtue of joy" and follow only Nature's law, but surely they are now being punished for that. Jude quotes from the play [Agamemnon](#), by Aeschylus: "Things are as they are."

Sue stays in bed while the children are buried, but she appears at the burial's end and frantically tries to uncover the coffins. Sue weeps, begging to see her children one last time, but Jude shepherds her home. That night Sue gives birth to a premature, stillborn baby.

PART 6, CHAPTER 3

Jude and Sue find lodgings in the Beersheba district, and Jude finds some stonemasonry work. They spend much of their time sitting silently together, both in anguish. Sue declares that they "must conform," as they have tried to fight God and have failed. Jude accuses himself of being a "seducer," a man who corrupted Sue's inherently pure nature.

Sue is fixated on the idea that they are being punished, and she decides that she still rightfully belongs to Phillotson, as she and Jude never really married. She feels that she has sinned against God by leaving Phillotson, and her children's death was the result. In the following weeks Sue grows more obsessively religious and concerned with "mortifying the flesh," while Jude remains agnostic, feeling he is battling only humanity and blind chance.

In this tragic, dramatic scene Little Father Time truly becomes the symbol of all the hardships and bad luck the protagonists have faced. There is even a church playing a joyful song nearby to heighten the melodrama and show how religion is no comfort in such grief.



The nature of the tragedy would be enough to make anyone break down, but Hardy has already made Sue into an emotional, sensitive character, so her grief totally breaks her intellect and judgment. With the children's death Hardy shows how Sue and Jude's experiment in unmarried love also failed – until society changes, there is no good solution to the problem of marriage. [Agamemnon](#) concerns a cursed family (part of the house of Atreus).



Hardy keeps adding on more tragedy, burying the characters in death and grief. Sue and Jude harmed no one and tried only to "live in their own way," but they have been punished for this with horror upon horror.



Hardy seems to want us to see the children's deaths as a result of society's failures, but Sue sees the tragedy as punishment from an angry, legalistic God whom she had denied. Jude indulges some Victorian sexism in putting Sue back on a pedestal, claiming all the agency in their fate for himself.



When the couple was strong they could stand up against society's insistence that their relationship was invalid without marriage, but Sue has been weakened and broken by tragedy, and she starts believing the condemnation she has received. The tragic close now begins to fall into place.



Sue says she wishes she could take back all her unorthodox views and formidable intellect. Jude is upset by this, and he asks Sue to marry him if that will satisfy her new fear of the law. Sue refuses. She says that she has started going to church in secret, and she thinks she must leave Jude and return to Phillotson. Jude realizes that he and Sue are switching places in terms of religious belief.

A few days later Arabella visits the couple. She says she visited the children's graves but didn't feel comfortable coming to the funeral. Arabella offhandedly describes Sue as Jude's wife, but Sue denies this and leaves. Arabella tells Jude that her father has returned from Australia and she is living with him now. She departs after a respectable amount of time.

Meanwhile Sue has disappeared, and Jude goes to look for her at the church, though it is nighttime. He finds Sue there sobbing and prostrating herself. Sue rebukes Jude for coming, but tells him that she sees the children's tragedy as a sign and punishment from God – Arabella's child, who was born in wedlock, killed Sue's children, who were born out of wedlock.

Jude responds by lamenting that the once brilliant, wise Sue has so degraded herself, and he tells her that she is making him hate religion. Jude asks Sue to come home with him, as they are husband and wife according to "Nature's law." Sue refuses, saying that they are not married under "Heaven's law." Later she laments that the world was not ready for such "pioneers" as they tried to be, but that she is now totally broken and ready to submit to society.

Jude accuses Sue of never having really loved him. She says she does love him, but she started out merely desiring to be loved by him. She begs Jude to leave her, as she is now convinced that she must return to Phillotson. Jude pleads with Sue but finally relents, saying that their "highest and purest love" is now ruined, and declaring "let the veil of our temple be rent in two." Jude kisses Sue's face as she weeps, and then he departs in silence.

Sue's loss of spirit and intelligence is as heartbreaking as any tragedy the couple has experienced. Sue turns to religion like Jude turns to alcohol, in a spirit of depression and shame. Sue's extreme, legalistic version of Christianity shows how even if a religion is correct or useful, it can still be used for negative reasons.



The couple now lacks the strength to stand up to Arabella's tricks. Jude and Sue both got legal divorces from their spouses, but it is now clear that they can never escape their bad first marriages. Sue was once proud to be unmarried, but now as her guilt pushes her back toward religion she sees her "pagan" relationship as sinful.



Little Father Time did act as a symbol of bad marriage and foolish decisions (Jude and Arabella) killing true love and brilliant idealism (Jude and Sue). Sue becomes obsessed with the idea of punishment and strict religious rules, as she needs some order in her world after all the horror (and perhaps to punish herself for her previous ideas by now believing their opposite).



Jude and Sue have switched places in terms of religious belief, and now it is Jude who speaks with Hardy's skeptical voice. Jude and Sue were indeed "pioneers" not just in the novel but also as characters, as Hardy was almost universally attacked for their unorthodox actions and especially Sue's ideas.



Sue now admits that even their pure love began for her as jealousy and vanity. Jude still speaks in Biblical language and now compares both himself and Sue to Christ – when Jesus was crucified, the veil of the temple was torn in two. Sue clearly still loves Jude and has no feelings for Phillotson, but she has now chosen law over emotion.



PART 6, CHAPTER 4

Meanwhile Phillotson is at Marygreen ruminating on his encounter with Arabella. He reads about the deaths of Jude and Sue's children in the newspaper. Later he meets Arabella again, as she has moved back to Alfredston. Arabella tells Phillotson that Sue has left Jude and become religious as a way of dealing with the tragedy. She says that Sue now considers herself belonging only to Phillotson. Arabella gives Phillotson Sue's address and then leaves, practicing making dimples in her cheeks as she walks.

Phillotson writes to Sue and asks her to come to Marygreen. He also writes that he has suffered for his decision to divorce her, as their society does not allow one to act according to one's own moral compass, but then he removes this paragraph.

One day Sue comes to Jude's lodgings and asks him to come out and meet her. They go to the cemetery together and Sue tells Jude that Phillotson has agreed to take her back and marry her again. Jude begs her to reconsider, again citing their own love, but finally he weeps that Sue's "once keen vision was dimmed." He calls her return to Phillotson a "fanatic prostitution." Sue admits that she doesn't love Phillotson, but she feels this is her duty.

They reach the graves of their children, and Sue says that they died to show her the error of her ways. She tells Jude that she will marry Phillotson at Marygreen, and asks him to send her her belongings. Then she bids Jude farewell, calling him her "fellow-sinner, and kindest friend," and Jude calls her his "mistaken wife."

PART 6, CHAPTER 5

The next day **Christminster** is covered in fog and Jude is too depressed to go to work. Meanwhile Sue takes the train to Marygreen and arrives like a suppliant at Phillotson's house. Phillotson welcomes her, but when he tries to kiss her Sue shrinks back. She pretends this is because of the cold, and asks about the marriage. Phillotson says that the vicar said this second marriage would undo all their previous sins, and they can be married tomorrow morning.

Phillotson is still a kind, sympathetic character, but he will continue to cause more accidental torment to Sue. Arabella acts as a true antagonist and hurries the innocent Phillotson along this path. Arabella returns to her old dimple-making practice, a sign of her artificiality and also a foreshadowing that she intends to seduce Jude again.



Phillotson's statement is a good thesis for Hardy's social critique – the rigid laws concerning marriage (among other things) can often run contrary to personal morality and individual situations. Hardy in general advocates for flexibility over rigidity, for the complexity of life over the cruel simplicity of rules.



Hardy again creates a situation where what is legally and religiously "right" is ethically very wrong. The church will see Sue's remarriage of Phillotson as a correction of past errors, when in reality she is marrying him as a kind of self-punishment for disasters forced upon her by society.



Sue's mental decline is evident not just in her new religious fanaticism but also in her paranoid self-centeredness, making even her children's deaths about her. In their parting words the couple seems to acknowledge that they were meant for each other, but they could never be happy together in such a cruel, unjust world.



Sue is still physically repulsed by Phillotson, but now she embraces her unhappiness as a punishment for her past "sins." The vicar knows nothing of Sue's real feelings, so he delivers the verdict of the religious status quo – marriage is always the best path. As the whole novel is a rebuttal to this mindset, the vicar's statement is unwittingly ironic.



Sue catches sight of the marriage contract on a desk, and she inadvertently cries out in panic. She tries to laugh this away too. Sue goes off to stay at the Widow Edlin's house, and as she unpacks her things Sue finds a nightgown she had bought to impress Jude. She burns it, despite Mrs. Edlin's protests. Mrs. Edlin begs Sue not to marry Phillotson, as she is still clearly in love with Jude.

Meanwhile Gillingham congratulates Phillotson on winning Sue back. Phillotson has second thoughts, recognizing Sue's reluctance, but then he decides that he too ought to submit to society's will and go through with the marriage, and then be more strict with Sue afterwards. Mrs. Edlin comes to visit Phillotson that night and begs him not to marry Sue. She laments the state of marriage these days, saying it was more "careless" in her time.

The next morning Sue looks small and tired, but she goes with Phillotson to the church. They go through with the marriage, but Phillotson feels like he is doing something immoral. After the contract is signed the vicar says "all's well that ends well," and tells the couple that they have undone their past sins and saved themselves from Hell. Phillotson and Sue return home, and Phillotson tells her that he doesn't intend to intrude on her – this marriage was mostly for society's sake – which lessens Sue's worries.

PART 6, CHAPTER 6

Meanwhile Arabella comes to Jude's lodgings, telling him that her father has kicked her out and she has no money or shelter. Jude is unable to be cruel to her, so he takes her in and his landlord lets her stay in the attic. Arabella tells Jude that Sue went through with her marriage to Phillotson. A few days later Jude is still depressed, and Arabella offers to go visit Anny at Alfredston and get any news about Sue.

Arabella goes and returns that same day, practicing making dimples on the train ride. She tells Jude that Sue went through with the marriage, though part of her seemed against it. Arabella admits to a similar feeling to Sue's – Arabella says she feels like she is still Jude's wife. Jude brushes this off, but then he goes to a tavern for the first time in many months.

Sue panicked at the sight of the marriage license even with Jude, her true love, so she is all the more horrified by the sight of the document linking her name back with Phillotson's. The Widow Edlin takes on a larger role now as the voice of reason.



Gillingham is again the voice of society and Hardy's critics, rejoicing in the failure of Jude and Sue's "experiment." Hardy has clearly condemned many of the aspects of traditional marriage, but he also showed how Jude and Sue's relationship was not an ideal solution. He now seems to lean more towards Mrs. Edlin's laxity regarding the institution, and regarding laws and rules in general.



Phillotson felt sure in his decision to let Sue leave him, even though it went against society and religion. Now he is following the status quo but his personal morality is troubled. Hardy ramps up the irony, as Sue has "saved" herself from a theoretical Hell punishing her for following her heart, but she is about to return to the living Hell of a destructive marriage.



Arabella now returns to her old tricks, and she knows Jude has no strength to stand up against her. She begins by playing to his natural sympathy for the downtrodden and unwanted, and rubbing salt in the wound of his break with Sue.



Arabella is single again, and she decides (with a total lack of love or anything other than jealousy and greed) that she wants Jude back, so she piggybacks on Sue's new theory about returning to their first marriage.



Jude stays out late, and Arabella goes to her father's house and tells him to leave the door unlocked that night, as she has a chance to win Jude back again. Arabella then finds Jude drunk at a tavern, and she buys him more drinks. Jude laments his loss of Sue, and says that no one understands him like she did, though she has now ruined his soul to save her own. Arabella takes the drunk Jude back to her father's house and leads him upstairs.

Arabella's father (Donn) is just as callous as she is, and he is willing to indulge her tricks if it will get Arabella out of his house. Arabella is once again associated with alcohol and all the worst parts of Jude's nature. In his despair he is an easy target, as he feels he has nothing left to live for.



PART 6, CHAPTER 7

The next morning Arabella's father, Mr. Donn, goes to work at his pork-shop and Arabella tells him that she has "a prize upstairs" – Jude. She says that they must keep Jude in the house for a while until they are married again. Arabella goes upstairs and wakes Jude, "her shorn Samson." He gives her money to pay for his lodgings, and she returns bringing all his possessions.

Sue was worried that marriage might wound her delicate feelings, but Arabella uses marriage as a weapon to hunt down a husband. Hardy alludes to the portrait of Samson and Delilah at the inn on Jude and Arabella's first date. Jude has truly been shorn of any power he had by now.



Jude is sick with a bad hangover. Arabella tells Donn that he must provide a steady flow of liquor for a while, and that she will pay him back. Arabella and Donn keep Jude drunk for a few days, and they have a continuous party with guests like Uncle Joe and Tinker Taylor.

Jude turns to alcoholism again in his despair, and Arabella is willing to take advantage of even this. Donn is just as greedy and amoral as his daughter.



Finally one early morning Arabella convinces Jude that he promised to marry her in his drunken state. Jude denies this, but Donn calls his honor into question and Jude is unwilling to sacrifice his honor, no matter what. Arabella, Jude, and Donn head off to the church, as Arabella has already prepared the wedding license.

Jude's last weakness is his sense of honor – Arabella guilted him into marrying her the first time by pretending she was pregnant, and now she guilted him again by pretending he made a promise of marriage. Sue feared the wedding license, but Arabella gladly uses it as a tool.



Arabella returns victorious, and tells her guests that the parson found this marriage to be an amendment of past errors. The parson said that "the Church don't recognize divorce in her dogma," so now all was right with their relationship. Meanwhile Jude asks for more alcohol, laughing bitterly at the sacrifices he has made for his honor, and noting that he has done just as Sue requested in her new "true religion."

Once again the church finds this return to a bad marriage to be a great virtue and forgiveness of past "sins." Jude (and the reader, Hardy hopes) recognizes that these new marriages are abominations and forms of spiritual adultery.



PART 6, CHAPTER 8

Jude and Arabella get their own lodgings, but Jude soon grows sick with a respiratory illness. Arabella feels she has gotten a bad bargain in the marriage, as Jude now gets a free nurse instead of herself getting a husband to make money for her. Jude says he wishes he could be mercifully killed, just as he killed that pig long ago. Their landlord, who had doubted that the couple was really married, hears their arguing and recognizes “the note of genuine wedlock.”

Jude’s condition worsens, and he asks Arabella to write Sue about his illness. Arabella protests that this is a disrespecting of the “rights and duties” of marriage, but Jude declares that he has no shame anymore. He tells Arabella that he loves Sue, and he recognizes that he is about to die so he wants to see her. Arabella calls Sue a “strumpet” and Jude threatens to kill her if she insults Sue again. He immediately admits that he couldn’t go through with this, though.

Arabella estimates Jude’s life “with an appraiser’s eye” and agrees to write to Sue. After a few days without Sue appearing, Jude suspects that Arabella never sent her a letter (which is true). One day when Arabella is away Jude goes himself to Marygreen, despite his illness and the fact that it is raining hard.

Jude grows weaker on his journey, but he reaches Sue’s school and sends for her. She meets him in the church. Jude begs her to stay, as he is dying. He says “we are acting by the letter; and ‘the letter killeth.’” Sue agrees to talk to him, and she congratulates Jude on doing the right thing in marrying Arabella. Jude is enraged by this, and calls his marriage to Arabella “degrading, immoral,” and “unnatural.”

They argue again, but suddenly Sue asks Jude to kiss her and they kiss passionately. Sue declares that she does love Jude still, but then she immediately draws back and feels she has sinned. Jude tells her that in these new marriages he was “gin-drunk” and she was “creed-drunk,” so they should ignore them and run away together. Sue refuses and begs Jude not to tempt her. She kneels and puts her hands over her ears until Jude leaves.

In the last few chapters Arabella has thought of marriage as a kind of hunt, a game, and now a business transaction. Hardy offers another biting sarcastic comment on “traditional” marriage, which he defines by a sense of discontent and discord between the man and woman.



After all her lowly tricks and total lack of love and scruples, Arabella still has the law and supposed “sanctity” of marriage on her side. Hardy has led us to such an extreme situation to show just how empty and cruel the legal and religious “rights and duties” of marriage can be. All that Jude has left is his hopeless love for Sue.



Arabella seems to grow even more cold and cruel as she rejects Jude’s dying wish and looks at him like a piece of livestock. Jude is basically committing suicide by traveling in the rain, but he has nothing else to live for.



Hardy references the novel’s epigraph, which is half of a Biblical quote: “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth light.” Sue and Jude’s love was “the spirit,” but it ultimately failed and “the letter” – the strict rules of society, religion, and fate – were victorious. In a way Hardy is arguing that Victorian Christianity has strayed from true Christianity, that it has shifted from a focus on the “spirit” to a focus on the “letter.”



Jude, like Hardy, associates Sue’s newfound “religion” with the lack of judgment brought about by drunkenness. Sue at least has this last glimmer of her old self before she succumbs to her fanatical guilt and self-punishment. This is the couple’s heartbreaking final goodbye, and the ultimate victory of the harsh world over idealism and innocent love.



Jude walks back to Alfredston, freezing in the wind and rain. He passes the Brown House, and the stone where he had carved the finger pointing to Christminster, and the gibbet where his and Sue's ancestor was hanged. Then he takes the train back to Christminster.

The objects of Jude's past go by, haunting him in succession. They remind him both of his failure and of how he was fated to fail because of the "curse" in his Fawley blood.



PART 6, CHAPTER 9

Arabella meets Jude at the platform, and he admits both that he has seen Sue and has basically committed suicide by traveling in the wind and rain. He is now ready and eager to die. As they walk home Jude sees the spectres of the philosophers and writers he saw on his first night in **Christminster**, but now they seem to be mocking him. He lists their names to Arabella, but she is bored by them and asks him to stop.

Hardy drives home the tragedy by reminding us how brilliant and well-read Sue was, and how she was the only one who truly understood Jude and vice versa – as compared to Arabella, who doesn't even want to hear the philosophers' names.



That night in Marygreen the Widow Edlin goes to Sue's house to help her with her domestic duties. Sue confesses that she saw Jude and still loves him "grossly." Sue has decided to do a "penance" for this act by making herself sleep with Phillotson, though he hasn't asked her. Mrs. Edlin tries to dissuade her, but Sue declares that she must do her duty.

Sue is still trying to suppress and kill her true self, and she has moved beyond sanity and the Widow Edlin's reasonable arguments. This tragic situation is one of the few times that Sue actually admits a passionate, sexual love for Jude.



When Mrs. Edlin is about to leave to go to bed Sue seems terrified, but then she steels herself and goes to Phillotson's room. Sue tells Phillotson about her meeting with Jude and their kiss. Phillotson is slightly upset and makes her promise not to do it again. Sue then offers to share his bed. Sue is still physically repulsed by Phillotson's touch, but she submits to his kiss. Meanwhile Mrs. Edlin muses that "Weddings be funerals" nowadays.

This horrifying scene is the last we see of Sue. Phillotson remains generally sympathetic, but Sue's innate nature and her terrible guilt make him seem a monster to her, and, in his ignorance, a monster in action. The Widow Edlin's final sentiment is a pithy summary of Hardy's condemnation of Victorian marriage.



PART 6, CHAPTER 10

Months pass and Jude's illness decreases but then returns. He muses on his old dream of **Christminster**, and says that he hears the universities are growing more accepting of lower-class students now. Arabella says she will allow Sue to come see him, but Jude says he doesn't want to see Sue again.

Jude has some closure with Sue and is ready to die, but his suffering is drawn out by this reprieve in his illness. Hardy sees the beginnings of educational reform, but it clearly isn't enough yet.



One day the Widow Edlin visits Jude, and she tells him that Sue and Phillotson have consummated their marriage, though Sue only made herself do it as a punishment. Jude laments how far Sue has fallen, and he praises her former genius. He says that their "ideas were fifty years too soon," and that because society was not ready for such truth and love as theirs it ruined them.

Hardy is lamenting his own situation through Jude – he feels that he is progressive and prophetic, but the world is not ready for his ideas yet and so critics attack him. Hardy is mostly right about all of this, which only heightens the tragedy of his, Jude's, and Sue's plight.



Physician Vilbert arrives and Arabella flirts with him downstairs, offering him some wine and pretending to slip him the love potion he sold her long ago. Vilbert kisses Arabella and she coyly sends him away, thinking that “weak women must provide for a rainy day,” and she needs a new husband if Jude dies.

The quack physician Vilbert finally returns to take advantage of a helpless Jude again, just as he did when Jude was a naïve child. Arabella continues to reach new levels of callousness.



PART 6, CHAPTER 11

More months pass and summer arrives, and Jude nears death. One afternoon he falls asleep as Arabella is getting ready to go out. She hears a festival outside, and she leaves Jude even though Donn hasn't arrived to watch him yet. It is Remembrance Week again, and all the college dons and undergraduates are being celebrated. Arabella joins the festivities.

Hardy builds up the melodrama, as Jude spends his dying day listening to those lucky, conventional, upper-class men celebrate the university education that Jude deserved but was denied.



Jude wakes up alone and asks for some water. He calls for both Arabella and Sue, but no one comes. He hears the festival outside and recognizes that it is Remembrance Week, and remembers that “Sue is defiled.” He quotes from the book of Job in the Bible, lamenting that he was ever born, and then Jude dies.

Jude is associated again with the Biblical Job, who is an archetypal figure of an innocent man who suffers for no reason. Jude has been abandoned by his wife and his true love, rejected by his dream university, and left alone to die.



Meanwhile Arabella flirts with men, and tells Jude's fellow stoneworkers that he is at home sleeping. They ask her to come with them to see the boat races. Before going Arabella hurries home to check on Jude, and she sees that he is dead. She curses his bad timing, and decides to go enjoy the festival before raising the alarm of his death.

Hardy reaches new levels of pessimism with the situation of Jude's death. For Arabella, who is supposed to be eternally and sacredly bonded with Jude through marriage, Jude's death is nothing but an inconvenience to her on a fun day.



Arabella goes back out and tells the men that Jude is still asleep. They go and watch the boat races, and Physician Vilbert approaches her and puts his arm around her waist. After a while Arabella feels awkward and decides to leave, though she is trapped by the crowds for a while. She informs an undertaker of Jude's death before even going home.

Arabella still has a small bit of guilt amid all her heartless actions of late, and she at least leaves Vilbert until she has dealt with Jude. Note how she is trapped by the crowds as she tried to do what's right; Jude and Sue also were metaphorically trapped by the “crowd” of society. The festivities of Remembrance Week go happily on, blind to the tragedy unfolding nearby.



Jude's funeral is two days later, and it takes place as distant crowds cheer for illustrious men receiving honorary degrees. Arabella asks the Widow Edlin (the only other attendee) if Sue is coming. Mrs. Edlin says that Sue swore to never see Jude again, and that Sue looks "tired and miserable" all the time now and still can't stand Phillotson's company. Mrs. Edlin says she hopes Sue has found some forgiveness and peace, but Arabella declares that Sue won't know peace until she has joined Jude in death.

Arabella is clearly an unreliable source, but she does seem to speak the truth here – Sue might have punished herself enough to satisfy her sense of guilt, but she still has to live the rest of her life with a man she can't stand. Hardy melodramatically juxtaposes the cheering crowds of Christminster with Jude's lonely funeral. Hardy seems to advocate struggling against the "evil star" of fate, but with such an ending he shows how futile the struggle usually is. He finds few answers to the novel's large questions and critiques, and the only conclusion he can offer is the peace of death.





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