



The Return of the Native (Oxford World's Classics)

By Thomas Hardy

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In Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Eustacia Vye criss-crosses the wild Egdon Heath, eager to experience life to the full in her quest for "music, poetry, passion, war." She marries Clym Yeobright, a native of the heath, but his idealism frustrates her romantic ambitions and her discontent draws others into a tangled web of deceit and unhappiness. Early readers responded to Hardy's "insatiably observant" descriptions of the heath, a setting that for D. H. Lawrence provided the "real stuff of tragedy." For modern readers, the tension between the mythic setting of the heath and the modernity of the characters challenges our freedom to shape the world as we wish; like Eustacia, we may not always be able to live our dreams.

This edition has the only critical text based on the manuscript and first edition, and without the later changes that substantially altered Hardy's original intentions. The new introduction by critic Margaret R. Higonnet is the most critically up-to-date discussion of the novel available and considers the mythic nature of the heath opposed to the modernity of the characters, the economic vocabulary of value and investment, the novel's classical structure, and Hardy's cinematic techniques.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is the quality Hardy shares with the great writers...this setting behind the small action the terrific action of unfathomed nature."

--D. H. Lawrence

From the Publisher

This fine novel sets in opposition two of Thomas Hardy's most unforgettable creations: his heroine, the sensuous, free-spirited Eustacia Vye, and the solemn, majestic stretch of upland in Dorsetshire he called Egdon Heath. The famous opening reveals the haunting power of that dark, forbidding moon where proud Eustacia fervently awaits a clandestine meeting with her lover, Damon Wildeve. But Eustacia's dreams of escape are not to be realized--neither Wildeve nor the returning native Clym Yeobright can bring her salvation. Injured by forces beyond their control, Hardy's characters struggle vainly in the net of destiny. In the end, only the face of the lonely heath remains untouched by fate in this masterpiece of tragic passion, a tale that perfectly epitomizes the author's own unique and melancholy genius.

From the Inside Flap

This fine novel sets in opposition two of Thomas Hardy's most unforgettable creations: his heroine, the sensuous, free-spirited Eustacia Vye, and the solemn, majestic stretch of upland in Dorsetshire he called Egdon Heath. The famous opening reveals the haunting power of that dark, forbidding moon where proud Eustacia fervently awaits a clandestine meeting with her lover, Damon Wildeve. But Eustacia's dreams of escape are not to be realized--neither Wildeve nor the returning native Clym Yeobright can bring her salvation. Injured by forces beyond their control, Hardy's characters struggle vainly in the net of destiny. In the end, only the face of the lonely heath remains untouched by fate in this masterpiece of tragic passion, a tale that perfectly epitomizes the author's own unique and melancholy genius.

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