

English Department Key Stage 5 Knowledge Organiser – Tess of the D'Urbervilles

| Tess of the D'Urbervilles | | | |
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| Key Concepts | AO3: Context | Subject Specific Vocabulary | Tragedy Terminology |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fate and inevitability.Death.Religion.Love.Society and its conventions.Nature.Guilt and redemption.The nature of sin.Sacrifice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The class divide (middle class and working class) – laissez faire economy/society.Heritage and birth – the social importance of where you are from.Masculinity – Alec vs Angel (but also her father?).The role of women.Marriage, the fallen women and prostitution.Religion – a shift away from organised religion?The impact of industrialisation.Rural vs Municipal – linked to the above.Science and nature – Darwin and the Origins of the Species.Social mobility. | Symbolism Modernism Victorianism Omniscient narrator Pastoral Verisimilitude Nostalgic Humour / comic moments Pathos | Heroine (worthy?)/ Status (daughter of Nature?) Flawed / Resolution Pride Villain (pantomime? Two dimensional?) Tragic path Inevitable Reversal of fortune Wheel of fortune Choric function Aristotealean pattern (?) Aggrandisement Catharsis |
| The Phases | | AO2 Formal and Structural Features / Language | |
| <p>Phase the First: The Maiden - Catalyst – the chance encounter with the elderly parson – ‘Sir John’ leans of his ‘nobility’. Marlott introduced as significant setting. Symbolic death of Prince (old way of life?). Tess feels guilty and so seeks help for her family with Alec (flaw?). Alec drives recklessly and frightens Tess, demanding a kiss from her. On returning from Chaseborough Tess is caught up in an argument and Alec ‘rescues’ her. She is taken to the Chase and possibly raped.</p> <p>Phase the Second: Maiden No More - Tess spurns Alec and goes home. She is guilty and ashamed and hides inside, only going out at dusk – there is something animal like in this – she is wounded and vulnerable. Tess goes to work. Sorrow is weak and dies soon after a personal baptism. She buries Sorrow and decides to move away from Marlott.</p> <p>Phase the Third: The Rally – Tess moves to be a milkmaid at Talbothays, enjoying her work. Angel Clare is introduced – Tess is entranced. They begin to fall in love. There is a brief moment of happiness for Tess, but this doesn’t last for long as she is reminded of her past. Self-sacrificing, Tess tries to get Angel to take note of other girls. Angel saves the girls from the flooded road. Angel confesses his love for Tess.</p> <p>Phase the Fourth: The Consequence – Title gives a sense of inevitability. Angel visits family to discuss marrying Tess. He returns, proposes, Tess refuses. She refuses again. Finally she accepts (Biblical echo?). Her mum tells her to keep silent about her past. She tries to confess in a letter but he never receives it. They are married but bad omens abound. Angel divulges a moral misdemeanour to her, and as a result she tells him her story. Phase the Fifth – The Woman Pays – inevitability increases, sounds more sinister. He rejects Tess. Rich in foreshadowing, Angel carries Tess to a stone coffin in his sleep. Angel abandons Tess and so she is impoverished. Tess works hard as a field hand. Seeking help from Angel’s parents (the vicarage is empty) she sees Alec preaching. Angel has fallen ill. Phase the Sixth: The Convert - Alec asks Tess to marry him; he fears she will tempt him. She tests his faith. He tries to persuade her to go with him and returns to offer to help Tess’s family. Meanwhile, Angel is a changed man. Tess leaves Flintcombe-Ash and goes to care for her parents. She spurns Alec who has turned up again but then finds her father has died; they lose their home. Tess writes angry note to Angel. The family lodgings have fallen through. Tess’s friends write to Angel to tell him to come home. Phase the Seventh: Fulfilment – The title has suggestions of prophesy. Angel returns to find Tess – she is staying in a lodging house with Alec. The Landlady overhears Tess and Alec arguing and then sees the bloodstain on the ceiling. Tess seeks out Angel and they run northward, hiding in an empty house. They are discovered a week later. At Stonehenge, an appropriately paganistic setting, the police surround them. Tess is hung and Angel walks off with Liza-Lu.</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Omniscient narrator (sympathetic to her suffering?).* Male narrator (the gaze upon Tess?).* The phases (titles significant) – rhythmic – link to inevitability?* Cliffhangers – end of each phase.* Novel of manners / morality (link to morality plays?).* Use of the seasons to reflect Tess’s harmony with nature and her changing fortunes.* Shifts in settings to reflect the phases of Tess’s life / journey.* Epistolary form used in places (exposition / variation of voice / verisimilitude / empathy / positioning of reader).* Tragic patterning and conventions.* Voices in the text – accent/dialect – verisimilitude / heightens tragedy.* Colour imagery – patterning of red and its various connotations.* Moments of comedy / humour, to heighten the pathos / provide relief.* Symbolic realism.* Bildungsroman. | |
| Key Extracts for Analysis | | | |
| Tragic Focus | | Extracts | |
| Inevitability | | The Pastor, the D’Uberville Carriage, the red Biblical graffiti, the letter, the pheasants, the white hart. | |
| Fatal flaw | | Tess tells Angel, Tess’s guilt over Prince, Tess’s murder of Alec. | |
| Settings | | Marlott, The Slopes, the nest, The Valley of the Great Dairies, Flintcomb Ash, Stonehenge. | |
| Moments of happiness | | The Rally – Talbothays and Stonehenge. | |
| Status | | The Pastor meets John Durbeyfield, Tess visits The Slopes, Alec’s abuse of Tess, Angel’s rejection of Tess. | |
| Catharsis | | Alec’s murder, Stonehenge. | |
| Antagonist | | The Slopes, the convert, the justice system(?) as seen in Wintonchester, Angel’s rejection. | |