



# The Woodlanders

Thomas Hardy



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INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

THOMAS HARDY

# The Woodlanders

Retold by Margaret Turner



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*Founding Editor: John Milne*

The Macmillan Readers provide a choice of enjoyable reading materials for learners of English. The series is published at six levels – Starter, Beginner, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate and Upper.

### **Level control**

Information, structure and vocabulary are controlled to suit the students' ability at each level.

### **The number of words at each level:**

Starter	about 300 basic words
Beginner	about 600 basic words
Elementary	about 1100 basic words
Pre-intermediate	about 1400 basic words
Intermediate	about 1600 basic words
Upper	about 2200 basic words

### **Vocabulary**

Some difficult words and phrases in this book are important for understanding the story. Some of these words are explained in the story and some are shown in the pictures. From Pre-intermediate level upwards, words are marked with a number like this: ...<sup>3</sup>. These words are explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.

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## *A Note About the Author*

Thomas Hardy was born on 2nd June 1840, at Higher Bockhampton. This small village is near Dorchester, in Dorset – a county in the south of England. Hardy's parents were poor, working people.

Thomas went to a school in Dorchester and he studied Latin, French and German as well as literature, science and art. At the age of 16, he began studying architecture. When



he was 22, he went to London and worked for an architect. He returned to Dorset in 1867, and in the same year he began to write his first novel. At this time, Hardy fell in love with Tryphena Sparks. Their romance continued during the summer of 1869 until, in 1870, Hardy went to work in the county of Cornwall. There, he met Emma Gifford, the daughter of a rich lawyer.

Hardy's first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, was published in 1871. Between 1871 and 1895 he wrote 15 other novels, some short stories and poems. In 1874, Hardy married Emma Gifford, and he stopped working as an architect. He and Emma went to live near Dorchester in 1887. Hardy designed their large house himself. He called it Max Gate.

Hardy became rich and famous and many important visitors came to meet him at Max Gate. But his marriage to Emma was not happy. When she died in 1912, the writer was very upset and from that time he wrote no more novels. Instead, he wrote poetry. Many of his poems were sad.

Most of Hardy's novels were about the countryside and the people in the south-western counties of Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Hampshire. Hardy called this area Wessex, a very old name for this part of England. Some of Thomas Hardy's most popular novels are: *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1877), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *The Trumpet-Major* (1880). Films have been made of many of Hardy's books.

Thomas Hardy married his second wife, Florence Dugdale, in 1914. They lived quietly in Max Gate. Hardy was given honorary degrees from Oxford and Cambridge universities and the Gold Medal from the Royal Society of Literature. He died on 11th January 1928. His body was buried in Westminster Abbey, in London. His heart was buried in a small churchyard in Dorset.



## *Little Hintock in Winter*

It was a cold winter evening in 1855. Most of the people of Little Hintock had stopped work for the day, and they were all in their homes. It was late, but lights were shining from the windows of a few of the houses and cottages.

The village of Little Hintock lay in a small valley near the edge of a large area of woodland. There were trees of many kinds in these woods – oaks, elms, ashes, hazels<sup>1</sup> and many others. The people who lived in the little village earned their living<sup>2</sup> from the trees.

Every kind of tree had a use. Big old oaks were cut down and their thick trunks were sold. The timber was used for building houses and for making furniture. The timber from the hazel trees was used to make hurdles<sup>3</sup> for fences and for thatching<sup>4</sup> roofs.

Between the village and the woodland there were apple orchards. The apple trees had a use too. Their fruit was used to make cider. The villagers drank some of the cider themselves and they sold the rest at the market at Sherton Abbas. Sherton Abbas, which was ten miles from the village, was the nearest town.

In front of one of the cottages in Little Hintock, there was a tall elm tree. On this winter evening, light was shining from the windows of this cottage, and from its open door. It was late, but inside the cottage a young woman was working. She worked by the light of a small fire and of one candle.

The young woman wore a leather apron and she had a big leather glove on her left hand. In this hand, she held a long piece of hazel wood. With a heavy knife, the woman cut the wood into four thinner pieces. She sharpened the ends of

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