

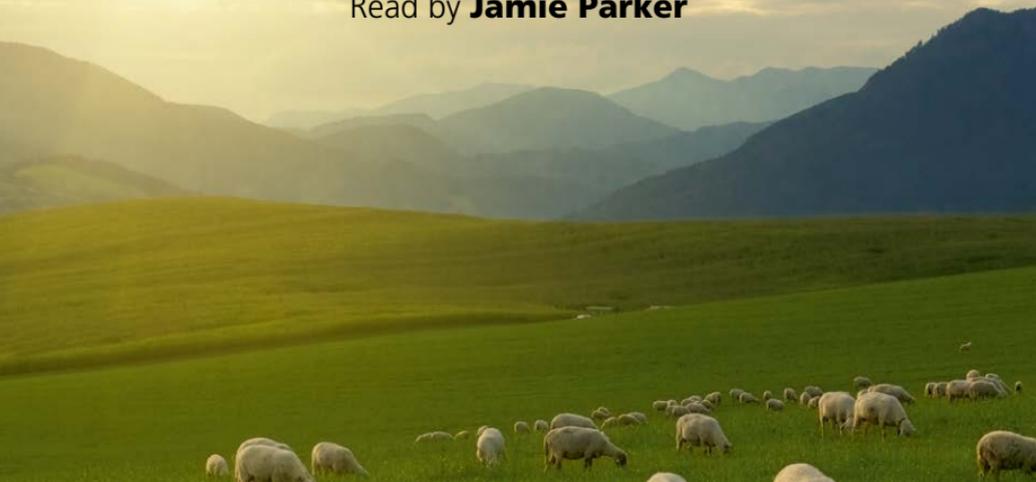
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Thomas Hardy

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Read by **Jamie Parker**



1	Chapter 1	6:01
2	The field he was in this morning...	7:55
3	Chapter 2	7:33
4	Oak's motions, though they had a quiet-energy, were slow...	6:14
5	Farmer Oak went towards the plantation...	4:48
6	Chapter 3	7:29
7	'I wanted my hat this morning,' she went on.	5:02
8	'Whatever is the matter?' said Oak vacantly.	5:13
9	Chapter 4	6:04
10	A voice came from behind some laurel-bushes...	5:38
11	He went forward and stretched out his arm again.	8:39
12	Chapter 5	4:35
13	Gabriel then remembered that he had left the two dogs on the hill...	7:26
14	Chapter 6	5:51
15	The road stretched through water-meadows...	6:21
16	Gabriel again mounted the gate, and, leaping down...	4:45
17	Oak seized the cut ends of the sheaves, as if he were going...	4:44
18	Chapter 7	7:52
19	Chapter 8	9:00
20	Having at this moment reached the end of a wistful gaze into mid-air...	8:03

21	'We d' know little of her – nothing.'	6:01
22	'He got so much better, that he was quite godly in his later years..'	6:06
23	'Ye be a very old aged person, malter,' attested Jan Coggan...	5:53
24	A few minutes later, when the remaining ones were on their legs...	6:39
25	Chapter 9	5:59
26	The door opened, and a deep voice said – 'Is Miss Everdene at home?'	6:35
27	Chapter 10	5:24
28	Joseph Poorgrass, in the background twitched...	3:47
29	But perhaps her air was the inevitable result of the social rise...	4:09
30	Chapter 11	4:53
31	At this time some words were spoken aloud...	6:60
32	Chapter 12	3:41
33	Strange to say of a woman in full bloom and vigor...	4:36
34	The information was put in this form...	2:37
35	Chapter 13	5:41
36	'What fun it would be to send it to the stupid old Boldwood...'	3:09
37	Chapter 14	7:04
38	Boldwood was listlessly noting how the frost had hardened...	2:34
39	Chapter 15	5:35
40	'I wonder what a farmer-woman can want with a harpsichord...'	2:41

41	'We've no lambing-hut here, as I used to have at Norcombe,'...	5:52
42	'And how Farmer James would cuss, and call thee a fool...'	5:37
43	The door was hurriedly burst open again...	3:39
44	Chapter 16	6:07
45	Chapter 17	5:34
46	Chapter 18	6:10
47	Boldwood, looking into the distant meadows, saw there three figures.	4:38
48	Chapter 19	4:39
49	Boldwood came close and bade her good morning...	3:43
50	Bathsheba's momentary impulse at hearing this...	5:04
51	Chapter 20	4:08
52	Cain departed, and Bathsheba took the handle.	5:06
53	In an instant Bathsheba's face coloured...	3:36
54	Chapter 21	5:22
55	One of the ewes here contracted its muscles horribly...	7:54
56	Chapter 22	5:57
57	Here the shearers knelt, the sun slanting in...	6:21
58	But heartless circumstance could not leave entire Gabriel's happiness...	4:30
59	'That means matrimony,' said Temperance Miller...	7:33
60	Chapter 23	6:23

61	The sun went down in an ochreous mist...	5:33
62	At this time of departure, when nothing more was visible...	3:05
63	Chapter 24	5:52
64	'I'll unfasten you in one moment, miss,' he said...	8:03
65	Chapter 25	8:04
66	Chapter 26	6:44
67	'How – indeed?' she said, opening her eyes.	7:34
68	'It is an unusually good one for a man like me to possess,'...	5:18
69	Chapter 27	6:51
70	Chapter 28	4:51
71	'Now just to learn whether you have pluck enough...'	7:21
72	Chapter 29	7:05
73	The other day they said you were trifling with him...	4:43
74	Oak's allusion to his own love for her lessened, to some extent...	4:02
75	Chapter 30	5:03
76	Liddy went towards the door.	4:38
77	Chapter 31	5:49
78	'I am beyond myself about this, and am mad,' he said.	4:49
79	'I did not take you up – surely I did not!' she answered...	5:44
80	'Then curse him; and curse him!' said Boldwood...	5:02

81	Chapter 32	5:51
82	'What's the matter?' said Gabriel.	5:38
83	'We thought – ' began Gabriel.	6:24
84	Chapter 33	5:36
85	'For my poor self, I always say "please God" afore I do anything,'...	5:06
86	'Miss Everdene and the soldier were walking about together, you say?'	5:50
87	Chapter 34	8:21
88	In making this statement Boldwood's voice revealed...	5:19
89	'Shall I tell her I have come to give her up and cannot marry her?'	8:08
90	Chapter 35	5:40
91	'Oh, Coggan,' said Troy, as if inspired by a recollection...	3:20
92	Chapter 36	3:58
93	So the dance began.	3:06
94	Bathsheba indignantly left the barn...	3:29
95	This complication of weathers being uncommon...	3:34
96	Gabriel glanced hopelessly at the group...	5:36
97	Chapter 37	6:17
98	'Hold on!' said Gabriel, taking the sheaf from her shoulder...	6:03
99	'I did at last – not at first,' he answered, somewhat surprised...	3:54
100	Chapter 38	5:20

101	It is difficult to describe the intensely dramatic effect...	3:15
102	Chapter 39	5:34
103	The woman, on hearing him speak, quickly looked up...	3:11
104	Chapter 40	4:40
105	The crutches answered well.	5:11
106	Never was ingenuity exercised so sorely...	4:48
107	On this much-desired spot outside the town...	2:41
108	Chapter 41	3:51
109	She gave a sigh of resignation.	4:13
110	'Until to-day, when I took it from a drawer...'	4:32
111	She saw coming up the road a man like Mr Boldwood.	5:09
112	She turned herself away from him...	4:09
113	Chapter 42	3:44
114	The air was as an eye suddenly struck blind.	6:09
115	'Well, I must be on again,' said Poorgress.	6:11
116	Coggan looked up indefinitely at Oak...	6:14
117	Gabriel had his reasons for thinking the latter...	3:38
118	Chapter 43	5:46
119	She suddenly felt a longing desire to speak to some one...	6:54
120	'Oh-h-h!' she said, and the silent room added length to her moan.	6:09

121	So still he remained that he could be imagined...	6:29
122	Chapter 44	4:10
123	The fungi grew in all manner of positions from rotting leaves...	5:29
124	Liddy vanished, and at the end of twenty minutes returned...	6:40
125	Chapter 45	4:01
126	Within were lying about stones of all sizes and designs...	6:17
127	Chapter 46	2:31
128	The lower row of teeth was quite washed away...	6:05
129	Sanguine by nature, Troy had a power of eluding grief...	5:54
130	Not being able to read, think, or work, Bathsheba asked Liddy to stay...	4:25
131	Chapter 47	6:53
132	Chapter 48	6:36
133	Being hardly in a condition to drive home as she had driven to town...	5:24
134	Chapter 49	7:09
135	To the eyes of the middle-aged, Bathsheba was perhaps...	5:25
136	Chapter 50	6:23
137	'That's the great ruffen pushing me!' screamed a woman...	6:12
138	And now the mild autumn sun got lower...	5:32
139	She looked so charming and fair that his cool mood...	6:27
140	The largest refreshment booth in the fair...	4:57

141	'Excuse me, ma'am,' said Pennyways...	4:23
142	Chapter 51	5:22
143	'I, too, am very sorry,' she said, and then checked herself.	5:34
144	Bathsheba was in a very peculiar state of mind...	4:08
145	'Well, your want of love seems to me the one thing...'	4:11
146	Chapter 52	4:07
147	III: Boldwood was dressing also at this hour.	4:51
148	IV: Troy was sitting in a corner of The White Hart tavern...	4:16
149	V: 'How do I look to-night, Liddy?' said Bathsheba...	5:31
150	VII: 'How does this cover me?' said Troy to Pennyways...	3:37
151	Chapter 53	4:09
152	'I hope to God she'll come, or this night will be nothing but misery...'	5:55
153	So the men entered the hall, which was the room selected...	4:34
154	The trimmings of her dress, as they quivered against the light...	4:28
155	'Do you know what they mean?' the farmer asked Bathsheba...	3:13
156	Nevertheless, she did not move.	2:50
157	Chapter 54	5:55
158	Mr Aldritch drove at once back again up the hill to Bathsheba's.	3:42
159	Chapter 55	4:25
160	These somewhat pathetic evidences...	5:51

161	Chapter 56	6:27
162	'And have they done it as you wished?' said Oak.	4:21
163	On examining her heart it appeared beyond measure strange...	4:48
164	'I am not going to emigrate, you know...'	5:41
165	Chapter 57	4:29
166	'Liddy.' said Bathsheba, on going to bed that night...	2:50
11	Repose had again incarnadined her cheeks...	4:07

Total time: 14:52:33

Thomas Hardy

(1840–1928)

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Thomas Hardy was born near Dorchester on June 2nd 1840. It was in 1862, when he moved to London to pursue a career in architecture, that he began to write, but he did not begin his first novel until he moved back to Dorset in 1867 to become assistant to John Hicks, an architect and church restorer. Only fragments survive of this first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, but he continued to write and in 1871 *Desperate Remedies* was published, followed by *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). In 1874 Hardy married his first wife, Emma Gifford, and in the same year *Far From the Madding Crowd* was published to considerable acclaim. Four years later he moved back to London; *The Return of the*

Native was published in the same year and he became a prominent figure in literary circles. Returning again to Dorset in 1885, Hardy continued his regular output: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887) and a collection of short stories, *Wessex Tales* (1888). *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was published in 1891 and his last novel, *Jude the Obscure* appeared in 1895. Towards the end of his life Hardy turned to the writing of poetry. Emma died in 1912 and in 1914 he married his secretary, Florence Dugdale, with whose help he began his autobiography, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*. This was published posthumously, as he died on January 11th, 1928. His ashes were laid in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey and

his heart was buried in the grave of his first wife at Stinsford, next to the tomb of his parents.

Hardy believed the purpose of writing fiction lay in giving pleasure to the reader by expressing rare events whilst 'disguising' their 'unlikelihood' within a strongly naturalistic style. Such a view was partly conditioned by the demands of the monthly magazines in which Victorian novels often made their first appearances. The idea of narrative subterfuge was vital as writers were forced to try to communicate plots and ideas forbidden by the rules of these delicate publications. It is partly for this reason that Hardy's work is so remarkably multilayered. Comedy hides tragedy, love and violence.

Characters also represent an elaborate weaving of styles. Gabriel, who represents the archetype of The Faithful Shepherd, blends in with the landscape; Troy appears as an outsider whose red coat stands out in contrast against the greenery of the village. Gabriel is a bringer of life, saving the lives of the bloated sheep; Troy is a destroyer, using his sword primarily to impress and seduce Bathsheba. She, of

course, is the most fluid character of them all. She is a shimmering creation that, by turns, represents sex, property, authority, vulnerability. Our perception of her constantly shifts as we see her through the eyes of her three different suitors, until we become a suitor ourselves, fascinated and compelled by this most complex of literary creations.

Thus Hardy transcended the demands of literary subterfuge to create a world in *Far From the Madding Crowd* that by its pluralist nature comes close to matching our own. Like Shakespeare, Hardy understood that the world is best expressed as something rich, varying and surprising, and that the best kind of art disguises as it reveals.

Notes by Heather Godwin



Jamie Parker is best known for his roles in the films *The History Boys* and *Valkyrie* and the television drama *Van Gogh: Painted with Words*. He has also performed in the television series *Foyle's War*, *The Hour*, *Parade's End*, *The Politician's Husband*, *Silent Witness* and *Silk*. His theatre credits include *Henry IV Parts I & II* and *Henry V* at Shakespeare's Globe and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* at the Haymarket Theatre.

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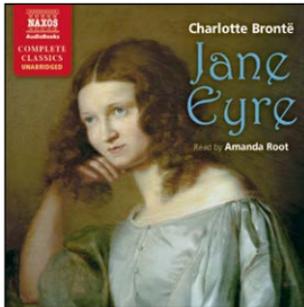
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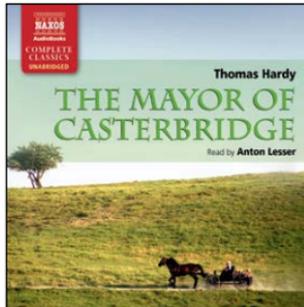
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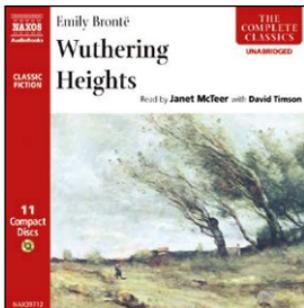
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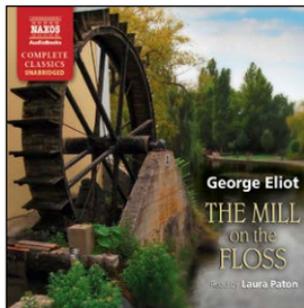
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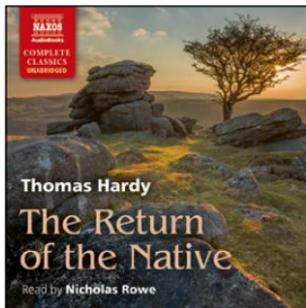
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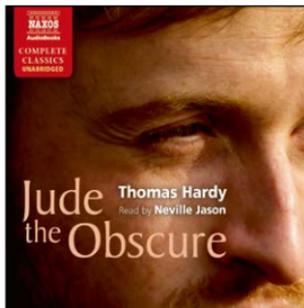
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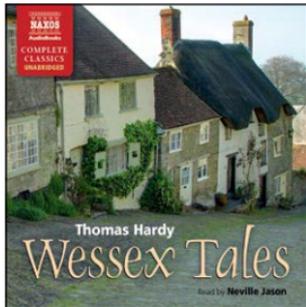
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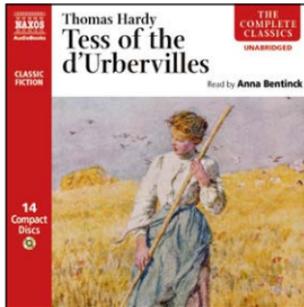
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Thomas Hardy

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Read by **Jamie Parker**

In a remote corner of early-Victorian England, where traditional practices remain untouched by time, Bathsheba Everdene stands out as a beacon of feminine independence and self-reliance. However, when confronted with three suitors, among them the dashing Captain Troy, she shows a reckless capriciousness that threatens the stability of the whole community.

Published in 1847, and an immediate best-seller, *Far From the Madding Crowd* established Thomas Hardy as one of Britain's foremost novelists.



Jamie Parker is best known for his roles in the films *The History Boys* and *Valkyrie* and the television drama *Van Gogh: Painted with Words*. He has also performed in the television series *Foyle's War*, *The Hour*, *Parade's End*, *The Politician's Husband*, *Silent Witness* and *Silk*. His theatre credits include *Henry IV Parts I & II* and *Henry V* at Shakespeare's Globe and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* at the Haymarket Theatre.


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