

# The Ultimate Study Guide for Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure by Course Hero

This comprehensive study guide will provide you with everything you need to know about Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure, including a detailed summary, character analysis, and discussion of the novel's themes and symbols.



## Study Guide for Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure (Course Hero Study Guides) by Morgan Rice

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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## Summary

Jude the Obscure is a novel by Thomas Hardy that was first published in 1895. The novel tells the story of Jude Fawley, a young stonemason who dreams of becoming a scholar. However, Jude's ambitions are thwarted by a series of misfortunes, including the death of his first wife, the failure of his marriage to his second wife, and the death of his children.

Jude the Obscure is a tragedy that explores the themes of love, loss, and the struggle for social mobility. The novel is also known for its controversial portrayal of religion and sexuality.

## Character Analysis

- **Jude Fawley:** Jude is the protagonist of the novel. He is a young stonemason who dreams of becoming a scholar. However, Jude's ambitions are thwarted by a series of misfortunes, including the death of his first wife, the failure of his marriage to his second wife, and the death of his children.
- **Arabella Donn:** Arabella is Jude's first wife. She is a beautiful but shallow woman who is not interested in Jude's intellectual pursuits. Arabella eventually leaves Jude and marries another man.
- **Sue Bridehead:** Sue is Jude's second wife. She is a sensitive and intelligent woman who shares Jude's intellectual interests. However, Sue is also plagued by a tragic past, and she eventually leaves Jude and returns to her former lover.
- **Richard Phillotson:** Phillotson is a schoolmaster who is Jude's friend and mentor. Phillotson is a kind and supportive man, but he is also a traditionalist who does not understand Jude's unconventional views on religion and sexuality.

## Themes

- **Love:** Jude the Obscure is a novel about love in all its forms. The novel explores the love between men and women, the love between parents and children, and the love of God.
- **Loss:** Jude the Obscure is also a novel about loss. The novel explores the loss of love, the loss of innocence, and the loss of hope.
- **Social mobility:** Jude the Obscure is a novel about social mobility. The novel explores the struggle of a working-class man to rise above

his station in life.

- **Religion:** Jude the Obscure is a novel about religion. The novel explores the conflict between traditional religious beliefs and modern scientific thought.
- **Sexuality:** Jude the Obscure is a novel about sexuality. The novel explores the taboo subject of premarital sex and the consequences of sexual promiscuity.

## Symbols

- **The Jude the Obscure stone:** The Jude the Obscure stone is a physical representation of Jude's ambition to become a scholar. The stone is a large, uncarved block of marble that Jude is given by Phillotson. Jude vows to carve the stone into a work of art, but he is never able to complete the project.
- **The pig:** The pig is a symbol of Jude's poverty and social status. Jude is forced to work as a pig-keeper, and he is often treated with contempt by his fellow villagers.
- **The hanged man:** The hanged man is a symbol of Jude's despair. Jude is hanged in effigy by the villagers after he is accused of having an affair with Sue. The hanged man is a reminder of Jude's tragic fate.

Jude the Obscure is a complex and challenging novel that explores some of the most fundamental questions of human existence. The novel is a tragedy, but it is also a story of hope and resilience. Jude Fawley is a flawed character, but he is also a sympathetic one. His story is a reminder that even in the face of adversity, we must never give up on our dreams.



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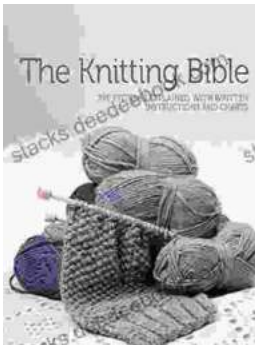
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