

Tess of the d'Urbervilles Quotes

Writer: Thomas Hardy | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Quotes

1. ***"You are the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles..."***

Exp:

Parson Tringham tells John Durbeyfield that they are actually from a noble family called the d'Urbervilles. After hearing this, he becomes proud and lazy. Later, Tess's parents send her to Alec d'Urberville's family to seek help.

2. ***"'Tis all my doing—all mine!"***

Exp:

Here, Tess is blaming herself for the accidental death of the family horse, Prince. Her sense of guilt leads her to go to the nearby d'Urbervilles to seek help.

3. ***"SORROW, I baptize thee in the name of the Father (God)..."***

Exp:

This is a very sad moment. Tess is baptizing her baby, Sorrow, herself. The local priest refused to baptize the baby because the baby was born out of wedlock.

4. ***"What a fresh... daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!"***

Exp:

At Talbothays Dairy, Angel calls her the

"daughter of Nature."

Angel thinks that Tess is pure and beautiful like nature.

5. ***"The new air was clear... The river itself, which nourished the grass and cows..."***

Exp: Talbothay Dairy is full of fresh air, green fields, and a flowing river. Tess feels peaceful there.

6. ***“Here the landscape was whitey-brown...”***

Exp:

At Flintcomb-Ash, the land is dry and rough. There is no greenery, no beauty. This shows the hard and colorless life Tess now has.

7. ***“O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case!”***

Exp:

Tess tells Angel everything about her past. Angel becomes shocked. He thinks Tess is no longer a pure woman. Though Tess forgives him, he does not. This is unfair because Angel had an affair and spent two nights with a lady. But the society does not blame him or consider him impure.

8. ***“You were one person; now you are another.”***

Exp:

Angel says this after knowing about Tess’s past. It means Angel did not love this Tess. He loved an idealized version of her, who was pure. Now, he thinks Tess is no longer pure.

9. ***“Once victim, always victim--that's the law!”***

Exp:

Tess says this sadly. With this line, Hardy is telling us that Tess did not do anything wrong. She is the victim of society’s harsh judgment.

10. ***“O, will you go away—for the sake of me and my husband...”***

Exp:

Tess tells this to Alec when he returns in her life. Tess knows Alec has ruined her life. This line also shows that Tess loves her husband, Angel, very much, even though he left. Tess also hates Alec. She has no intention to keep in touch with Alec.

11. ***“Did they sacrifice to God here?”***

Exp:

In the end, Tess asks this to her husband, Angel, at Stonehenge. Tess is lying on a stone that looks like an altar. It foreshadows Tess's tragic death. She is arrested and hanged for murdering Alec.

12. ***"'Justice' was done..."***

Exp:

When the law hangs Tess for the murder, Hardy writes this. This is ironic. It was not justice for Tess. Tess's death is the result of the cruelty of Alec, Angel, and society itself.

LxNotes