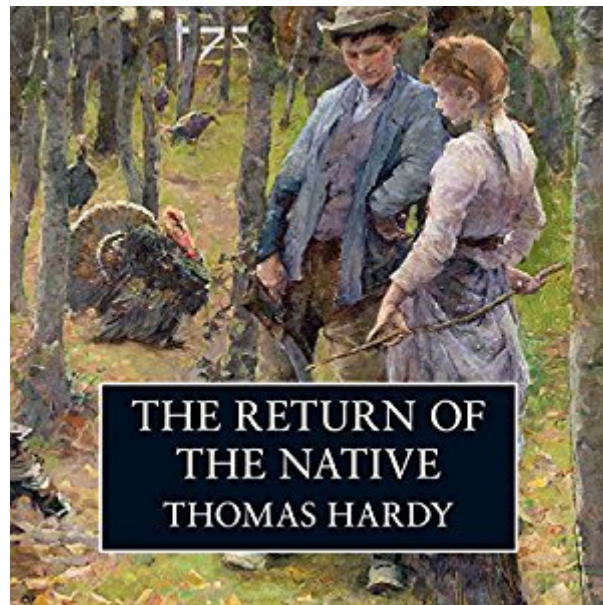


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The Return Of The Native



Synopsis

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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy. Recommended. In Egdon Heath, Thomas Hardy creates an otherworld consisting of the elements earth, wind, fire, and water, populated by a witch condemned by a pious woman's spell, a Christian ruled by pagan beliefs, an assortment of other odd characters, and the native of the title whose return precipitates a series of tragic events. The Return of the Native is centered around Eustacia Vye, a beautiful outsider wrenched from the society she craves by orphanhood and exiled to live on Egdon Heath with her maternal grandfather. Spoiled, vain, fickle, and selfish, Eustacia is not a sympathetic heroine. Although she claims to belong to Damon Wildeve ("body and soul" in one uncensored version), she really belongs to whomever can grant her what she desires and, in her mind, deserves. While Wildeve is a step above the local rabble, Eustacia can never fully commit herself to him. Each time she considers it, she is held back by the thought that even he lacks something and that surely she can do better. "He's not great enough for me to give myself to—he does not suffice for my desire! . . . If he had been a Saul or a Bonaparte—ah! But to break my marriage vow for him—it is too poor a luxury!" In another place, like the Paris Eustacia longs for, she would have become a mistress or a courtesan—the consort of a powerful man or men. On Egdon Heath, however, there are neither powerful men nor courtesans. There is only Damon, an equally fickle young man who hotly desires that which he cannot have—sometimes Eustacia, sometimes the naïf Thomasin Yeobright. To complicate matters, Thomasin's cousin Clym returns from Paris, where he has a financially rewarding and spiritually stifling career.

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