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**محاضرات مادة الرواية للمرحلة الثانية - قسم الترجمة**

**STUDY GUIDE**  
**TO**  
**THOMAS HARDY'S *THE RETURN OF***  
***THE NATIVE***

**BY**  
**DHEYAA W. GHAFEEER**

This work is totally based on:  
BRIGHT NOTES: The Return of the Native  
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## **LECTURE 6: CHAPTER 3: THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY**

The “burdened figures” swarming over the top of Rainbarrow are men and boys, each carrying on his shoulder a long pole sharpened at both ends and strung with furze-faggots. The effect is as if an acre of bushes has sprouted legs and is invading the barrow-top. As the men deposit their burdens, the furze-faggots are loosened, spread, and piled into a pyramid thirty feet around. Matches light the driest tufts, and a huge bonfire blazes up into the sky. Almost immediately similar fires burst out all over the expanse of the heath as far as an eye can see. As this fire burns, we become conscious of the country folk as individuals. (Women and children have now reached the top to join their men.) The oldest man, Grandfer Cattle, begins to jig and sing “in the voice of a bee up a flue.” Someone, calling attention to “a dim light in the direction of the distant highway” asks, “And how about the new-married folks down there at the Quiet Woman Inn?”

The question starts a flurry of village gossip. We learn of Mrs. Yeobright, the young bride’s aunt: that her son Clym is expected home to keep her company now her niece has left her; that she had at first forbidden the banns but has since “come around.” The

bride's name is revealed to be Thomasin Yeobright. Her husband, Damon Wildeve, an engineer by profession, "threw away his chance" and is now keeper of the village inn. The couple (they think) has been married this very afternoon. Some complain because the wedding did not take place in the village where they could all make a merry celebration. The men plot to give "the new man and wife a bit of a song tonight. . . when the womenfolk and youngsters have gone home. . . . Strike up a ballet in front of the married folks' door." There is talk of ghosts. Timothy Fairway speaks of a strange one that has been seen lately: "A red one. Yes, most ghosts be white; but this is as if it had been dipped in blood." The big bonfire and the other fires over the heath begin to flicker out - all except one, which is the nearest of any to Rainbarrow. "It lay in a direction precisely opposite to that of the little window" at the Quiet Woman-Inn. Comment about it puts it at about a mile and a half off, near Captain Vye's house of Mistover Knap. Some guess that it is being kept by his granddaughter, since "Cap'n Vye has been for a long walk today and is quite tired out." The dying embers of the Rainbarrow fire give an eerie light. As a last jolly spurt, Timothy Fairway seizes Susan Nunsuch round the waist and whirls her off to "the site of the fire . . . now merely a circle of ashes flecked with red embers and sparks . . . . Once within the circle he whirled her round and round in a dance . . . . The turfcutter seized old Olly Dowden . . . . The young men . . . seized the maids; Grandfer Cantle and his stick jiggled in the form of a three-legged object among the rest. . . . The chief noises were women's shrill cries, men's laughter, Susan's stays and pattens, Olly Dowden's ('heu-heu-heu!') and the strumming of the wind upon the furze-bushes."

They are all startled to a standstill by a voice from the darkness: "Hoi-i-i-i!" Fairway answers with a "Halloo-o-o-o." As the stranger approaches, the men light a few stray bits of furze to see his face. It is the reddleman. He inquires if there is a wagon track across to Mrs. Yeobright's house. They give him directions, and with thanks, he starts back to his van which is "in the bottom, about half a mile back." Hardly has he disappeared, when another person appears. "Why, 'tis Mis'ess Yeo-bright," says Timothy Fairway in recognition, and he tells her a reddleman has just been asking for her. Mrs. Yeobright explains that she is crossing the heath to her niece's new home and came up hoping that Olly Dowden would "walk with me, as her way is mine." Olly agrees and points out the "light shining from your niece's window. . . . It will help us

keep the path.” The two women start on their way together, leaving the others to take a rougher short-cut through the furze-bushes.

## **Comment**

Here we are given a vivid country picture of the English custom of celebrating Guy Fawkes Day. (Guy Fawkes was the “fall guy” in the famous “Gunpowder Plot” against Parliament in 1605. The plot was organized by Roman Catholics against James I and his Parliament who were reviving anti-Roman Catholic laws. A ton of gunpowder was concealed in the basement of the House of Lords. This was to be set off by Guy Fawkes on November fifth when Parliament was in session. The plot was discovered and Guy Fawkes was executed. Present day Englishmen celebrate November fifth with bonfires or fireworks.) Hardy uses this special fall celebration to introduce us to the humble folk of the heath in their jolliest mood. Through them we hear gossip about the novel’s major characters. Hardy has a masterly way of building up his main characters bit by bit. In this chapter, they are not “on stage,” but we learn a lot about them and the events which have led up to the present. In addition, we find ourselves acquainted with loveable country folk: Grandfer Cantle with his jigs and jokes; his simple son, Christian, who touches us with his frantic fears; plump Susan Nunsuch “whose stays creak like shoes”; Olly Dowden, the humble broom maker; Timothy Fairway, the general leader of the villagers. By the speeches he gives to each. Hardy makes these people alive personalities for us, like people we have known.