



University: University of Anbar
College: College of Arts
Department: Translation
Stage: Two
Subject: Novel
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Specialty: English Language – Literature

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الكلية: كلية الآداب
القسم: قسم الترجمة
المرحلة: الثانية
اسم المادة: الرواية
استاذ المادة: ضياء وحيد غفير
اللقب العلمي: مدرس مساعد
المؤهل العلمي (الشهادة): الماجستير
التخصص: اللغة الإنجليزية - الأدب

محاضرات مادة الرواية للمرحلة الثانية - قسم الترجمة

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

BY
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This work is totally based on:
BRIGHT NOTES: The Return of the Native
www.BrightNotes.com



LECTURE 10: CHAPTER 7: QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

Eustacia Vye is “the raw material of a goddess.” With “the new moon behind her head” and “an old helmet upon it” she resembles the Greek goddess Athena. Her long thick hair has the blackness of night. Her strong temper can always be softened by brushing her hair. Her eyes are languid, with oppressive lids and lashes, making her seem to be in a reverie. Her soul might be said to be the color of flame. “Celestial imperiousness” and “smoldering rebelliousness” combine to make her a woman of caprice. She was born in Budmouth, a fashionable seaside town. Her father, a native of Corfu, was a bandmaster and a fine musician, while her mother was of a good English family. Her girlhood memories are of “sunny afternoons on an esplanade, with military bands, officers, and gallants around.”

After the death of her father and mother, Eustacia has come with her grandfather to live on Egdon Heath. “To be loved to madness” is her great desire - a longing for passionate love consumes her soul. But here on the heath, far from the glitter of the town, she has come to feel that nothing is worthwhile. She idealizes Wildeve because there is no better man available. She herself knows this, and at times she rebels against her passion. Her spirits are depressed, but she often takes long walks on the heath, carrying her “grandfather’s telescope and her grandmother’s hourglass”. When she decides to scheme she can use the strategy of a general.

Comment

Hardy now paints in words a portrait of Eustacia Vye. Her passionate, fiery nature she inherits from her father, who was a native of Corfu - that island, west of Greece, where Italians and Greeks have bred a people of fiery Latin temperament. Eustacia’s great pride is inherited from her mother, who is indicated as a woman of middle-class, snobbish gentility. Swayed by great passion and by great pride, Eustacia is a victim of moods and whims. She pursues a man ruthlessly, only to cast him off when he becomes her slave. Perhaps Hardy’s most famous description of her comes in these lines: “The only way to look queenly without realms or hearts to queen it over is to look as if you had lost them.” Proud, she scorns anything easily attainable or common to others. “She only valued rest to herself when it came in the midst of other people’s labor.” She can hardly be happy unless others are unhappy.

