

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

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TOPIC – **FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD**

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## **PLOT CONSTRUCTION / STRUCTURE OF THE NOVEL, “FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD”**

The plot of a literary work has great significance. A novel must have a plot to create a certain unity and purpose in the action. It must be possible to draw a line of progress towards some conclusion. In a great literary work the action is the logical outcome of the central characters. “Far from the Madding Crowd” by Hardy is also no exception.

The novel begins in the town of Norcombe, where Gabriel Oak is a young farmer. One day, he makes the acquaintance of Bathsheba Everdene, who is staying with her aunt nearby, when she saves him from accidental suffocation. He

quickly falls in love and asks her to marry him; however, she rejects his proposal and soon moves away to nearby Weatherbury. Shortly thereafter, Gabriel's sheepdog in training mistakenly drives his entire flock over a cliff, bankrupting Gabriel.

Some months later he is travelling to look for work when he finds himself in Weatherbury. Spotting a barn on fire, he leaps to save it. The barn consequently belongs to Bathsheba, who inherited her uncle's farm. The townspeople, unaware of their history, call for Bathsheba to hire the heroic Gabriel as a shepherd, to which she assents. Gabriel finds lodging and becomes a reliable worker of Bathsheba, their relationship remains professional.

One Valentine's Day Bathsheba decides to send a valentine in jest to her neighbor William Boldwood, a wealthy local farmer, because he never takes notice of her in the markets or in church. Boldwood, a very serious man, believes the valentine to be a true declaration of love and becomes infatuated with Bathsheba. He pursues her until she finally relents and agrees to consider marrying him in five or six weeks if he agrees to leave her alone until then.

In that time, Bathsheba happens to run into Sergeant Troy, a young military man from the area home on leave. Troy is

charming and passionate, and when he pursues Bathsheba, despite the warnings of those around her, she falls in love with him. They marry secretly in Bath. Boldwood is distraught and falls into a deep depression, to the point of neglecting his crops, and he loses the majority of yield to a heavy storm.

Following the marriage, however, Troy becomes more interested in drinking and gambling than settling down, and Bathsheba quickly grows to regret marrying him. Further, Troy still has feelings for an old girlfriend. Surprising Bathsheba, Troy's old girlfriend was Fanny Robin, a former servant of Bathsheba, who had mysteriously disappeared. When news arrives that Fanny has died in a poorhouse in nearby Casterbridge, Bathsheba takes charge of collecting the body and arranging the burial. In the process she figures out Troy's connection to Fanny, which is confirmed when Troy returns and finds Fanny in the coffin. He tells Bathsheba that he had only ever truly loved Fanny, and that Bathsheba means nothing to him.

After arranging for a headstone for Fanny, Troy walks off toward Budmouth. He goes swimming in a nearby cove and is swept out to the sea. The town presumes him dead. Boldwood, reinvigorated, renews his pursuit of Bathsheba, finally convincing her to promise at his Christmas party that she will marry in six years, once an appropriate amount of time has passed since

Troy's disappearance. However, just then, Troy arrives at the party, demanding that, Bathsheba live with him. When Troy becomes rough with Bathsheba, Boldwood shoots him, then he turns himself in. He is eventually sentenced to indefinite imprisonment.

Then, it is the turn of Gabriel, who firmly stands by Bathsheba, serving as her constant worker and friend. She finally comes to realize that she loves him, at the end of the novel, a little more than one year after Troy's death, Bathsheba and Gabriel marry.

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