

### Love, the Quiet Thief

The story was about how innocent-looking people in the country were manipulated by romantic love. As the title *Far From the Madding Crowd* suggests, life in the country should be peaceful and noiseless. On the contrary, country people passionately fell under the spell of love, the quiet thief.

Adorable and independent, Bathsheba Everdene could have anything she wanted, and refuse anyone she did not feel for, such as Gabriel Oak, the sensible and hardworking farmer. Gabriel had asked Bathsheba to marry him initially but he was rejected. Although his mind was filled with disappointment, he still respected Bathsheba's opinion, not asking her for marriage anymore. In my opinion, Gabriel was too honest and silly to stay alive in the love battle. One flat refusal led him to regard himself as a loser that would never win Bathsheba's heart. Despite this, I appreciate what he did for Bathsheba. All he knew was no matter how uncertain the future might be, he would love her and remain her life-long genuine friend. As he told her, "Whenever you look up, there I shall be." Actually, with his touching commitment, he ended up winning her heart. At first, Bathsheba failed to tell who cared for her the most. Fortunately, love, the quiet thief, had stolen Gabriel's heart. He was attached to every move Bathsheba made and every breath she took. I identified with him for his considerable patience and unconditional friendship. Love gave him courage to face the challenges and overtook the frustration. Indeed, love conquers all sorts of obstacles.

The villain, Sergeant Troy, was a stark contrast with Gabriel. We can see how Sergeant Troy hurt the two women that had loved him fanatically. Fanny Robin, the young woman who was pregnant with his illegitimate child, awaited him until passing away. He had promised to marry her. Nevertheless, she went to the wrong church on the wedding day. She was desperate to undo her mistake, but Troy, humiliated at being left waiting at the church, angrily canceled the wedding. On the other hand, Bathsheba, the woman who had been cheated by his handsome face and clever tricks, wasted her beauty and big part of youth in sadness he had inflicted upon her. Troy had never loved her for a second. He just coveted a life of ease and comfort. What a shameless and cold-blooded womanizer! All he pursued was not the well-being of people around him but his own arrogance and interest. I had the urge to expose his scheme, hoping Bathsheba would wake up to the fact that Gabriel was the one for her. Luckily, love, the quiet thief, made him suffer the fatal consequence of his wrongdoing. I learned the cruel rule that although good coexists with bad, the latter is doomed to defeat in the long run.

Of all the characters, I found William Boldwood the most pathetic. Neither honest nor evil, he chased Bathsheba in an entirely insane way. The latter's Valentine's joke contributed to the former's incurable obsession with her. He relentlessly gave her marriage offers, emphasizing that she shouldn't refuse him because it was she that fired his flame of love. Unfortunately, love, the quiet thief, drove him to kill Troy in sudden anger and was therefore put to jail for life. I could feel Boldwood's strong love for Bathsheba. However, it is completely wrong to beg or threaten the object of your affection. Even if Bathsheba would bow to his insistence, they would never have a desirable life. They would be bonded with each other in guilt and obligation. Their marriage would be a drama and Boldwood was the only character and audience who was satisfied with their tie.

At first glance, I view this book as a love story. But after finishing the last page, I experienced another aspect of country people's life and witnessed how they approached the quiet thief, love.