

THOMAS HARDY

**The Return of
the Native**

HEINEMANN GUIDED READERS
UPPER LEVEL

THOMAS HARDY

The Return of the Native

Retold by
MARGARET TARNER

*Illustrated by
Jenny Thorne*



HEINEMANN

Heinemann International
A division of Heinemann Educational Books Ltd
Halley Court, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8EJ

OXFORD LONDON EDINBURGH
MELBOURNE SYDNEY AUCKLAND
SINGAPORE MADRID IBADAN
NAIROBI GABORONE HARARE
KINGSTON PORTSMOUTH (NH)

ISBN 0 435 27061 3

This retold version for Heinemann Guided Readers
© Margaret Tarner 1979

This version first published 1979
Reprinted 1982, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988

Cover photograph by Chris Gilbert

Set in 10 pt Plantin

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Richard Clay Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk

HEINEMANN GUIDED READERS

UPPER LEVEL

Series Editor: John Milne

Readers at *Upper Level* are intended as an aid to students which will start them on the road to reading unsimplified books in the whole range of English literature. At the same time, the content and language of the Readers at Upper Level are carefully controlled with the following main features:

Information Control As at other levels in the series, information which is vital to the development of a story is carefully presented in the text and then reinforced through the *Points for Understanding* section. Some background references may be unfamiliar to students, but these are explained in the text and in notes in the *Glossary*. Care is taken with pronoun reference.

Structure Control Students can expect to meet those structures covered in any basic English Course. Particularly difficult structures, such as complex-nominal groups and embedded clauses, are used sparingly. Clauses and phrases within sentences are carefully balanced and sentence length is limited to a maximum of four clauses in nearly all cases.

Vocabulary Control At Upper Level, there is a basic vocabulary of approximately 2,200 words. At the same time students are given the opportunity to meet new words, including some simple idiomatic and figuratively English usages which are clearly explained in the *Glossary*.

Guided Readers at Upper Level

- 1 Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
- 2 Money for Sale by Michael Hardcastle
- 3 The Man of Property by John Galsworthy
- 4 The Story of Pop by John Byrne
- 5 The Olympic Games by Bruce Tulloh
- 6 Bleak House by Charles Dickens
- 7 The Great Ponds by Elechi Amadi
- 9 Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier
- 10 Our Mutual Friend by Charles Dickens
- 11 The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
- 12 The Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy
- 13 The Story of Money by Robin Frampton
- 14 The Creative Impulse and Other Stories
by W. Somerset Maugham

Glossary

The Glossary at the back of this book is divided into four sections. A number beside a word in the text, like this . . .³, refers to a section of the Glossary. The words within each section are listed in alphabetical order. But *Section 1* – terms to do with life on Egdon Heath – and *Section 2* – terms to do with life in nineteenth-century England – begin with a General Note. The page number given beside a word in the glossary refers to its first occurrence in the text.

Section 1 – terms to do with life on Egdon Heath

Section 2 – terms to do with life in nineteenth-century
England

Section 3 – terms to do with emotions and personal relationships

Section 4 – general

Contents

	<i>Glossary Note</i>	vi
1	On Egdon Heath	1
2	Thomasin Comes Back Home	2
3	The Meeting by the Fire	7
4	A Meeting on Rainbarrow	11
5	Tamsie's Friends Try to Help Her	15
6	Clym Yeobright's Return	18
7	The Mummers' Play	23
8	Clym's Plan	27
9	The Meeting at the Well	30
10	Love Grows	34
11	Clym Makes Up His Mind	38
12	Lost and Won	40
13	'I Will Never See Your Mother Again!'	45
14	The Furze-cutter	49
15	The Closed Door	53
16	A Broken-hearted Woman	57
17	'You Sent Her Away to Die!'	62
18	The Last Fire	65
19	The Sixth of November	67
20	Afterwards	73
	<i>Points for Understanding</i>	78
	<i>Glossary</i>	83

ONE

ON EGDON HEATH

It was a Saturday afternoon in early November – November 5th 1842. The day was ending. The sky over Egdon Heath was grey. The land below was dark.

Egdon Heath was wild, lonely and beautiful. People had always lived on Egdon Heath, but it had never changed.

The small round hills of the heath climbed higher and higher, to the highest hill of all. This was Rainbarrow, the highest point on Egdon Heath. On top of this hill was an old burial-place⁴ which had been there for hundreds of years.

A narrow road crossed the heath at its lowest point. A man was walking slowly along the road, leading a horse and van².

The man came slowly nearer. He was young and good-looking, but his face, clothes and hands were completely red. This strange traveller was a reddleman. He sold a red dye called reddle to the farmers who used it to mark their sheep. The reddleman was marked by the red dye too. His life was very lonely. All the children on the heath were afraid of this strange, red man.

The reddleman stopped after a time. He fed his horse and sat down by the side of his van. It was darker now. The reddleman looked across the heath. His eyes moved up its slopes to the highest hill of all, Rainbarrow.

A young woman was standing alone on the top of Rainbarrow. She was tall and she stood very still.

Then suddenly, the woman turned and moved away. She was soon out of sight behind the hill.

As the reddleman watched, he saw other figures, climbing slowly to the top of Rainbarrow. They were all carrying wood. When they reached the top of the hill, they threw the wood onto the ground.

Very soon, a big fire was burning on Rainbarrow. As the reddleman turned his head, he could see other, smaller fires.



On November 5th every year, the villagers of Egdon Heath lit these fires. It was an old custom¹. Perhaps they were trying to forget the darkness of winter.

The reddleman stood up. It was almost night now. He brought out a lantern² from the van and lit it. The reddleman and his van moved slowly on.

TWO

THOMASIN COMES BACK HOME

On the road below Rainbarrow stood an inn¹. It was called the Quiet Woman. A light was shining from one window.

The reddleman and his van were now near the inn. Looking

up, the reddleman saw an elderly woman. She was hurrying along a path which led down to the road. The reddleman stopped his horse. He held up his lantern to see the woman's face.

'Aren't you Mrs Yeobright of Blooms-End, ma'am?' the reddleman called. 'Do you remember me?'

'You must be Diggory Venn, the reddleman,' Mrs Yeobright answered, coming nearer. 'I remember your father. What are you doing here, Reddleman, at this time of night?'

'I was on my way to see you, ma'am. I've something to tell you about your niece, Miss Thomasin. It's bad news, I'm afraid.'

'Bad news about Thomasin? Where is she?'

'Miss Thomasin's here in my van, ma'am,' the reddleman answered slowly.

'What new trouble is this?' Mrs Yeobright cried, putting her hand over her eyes. 'Thomasin went to Budmouth to get married. Where is her husband?'

'I don't know, ma'am. I was near Anglebury this morning. A short way out of the town, I heard someone following me. It was Miss Thomasin, as white as death. "Oh, Diggory Venn, please help me," she said. "I'm in trouble."

'And then she fainted. So I picked her up and put her in my van. She's in there now, asleep.'

The reddleman held up his lantern as Mrs Yeobright hurried up the steps of his van.

At the far end of the van lay a young girl, fast asleep. The light of the lantern shone on her sweet face and long, brown hair.

'Oh, aunt!' cried Thomasin, sitting up. 'We couldn't get married. I am so unhappy.' And her soft, brown eyes filled with tears.

'Couldn't get married? Tamsin, Tamsin, what has happened?' Mrs Yeobright asked.

'I'll tell you everything, aunt,' said the girl, standing up. 'Thank you, reddleman, for bringing me home.'

When the two women were outside the van, Mrs Yeobright looked up at the dark sky. The fires on the hills were nearly all out now. Mrs Yeobright watched the reddenman's van move slowly down the road.

Then she turned to her niece and said angrily, 'Now, what is the meaning of this, Thomasin? Why are you alone?' Thomasin began to cry softly.

'It means that I am not married, aunt,' she said. 'But it's nobody's fault.'

'Nobody's fault? What do you mean? I have never wanted you to marry Damon Wildeve. I have never liked him. But you went to Budmouth together. You must marry him now.'

'Mr Wildeve says we can marry in a day or two,' Thomasin answered.

'Then we'll go to the inn now and talk to him,' said Mrs Yeobright, looking across at the lighted window.

'Must I see him too, aunt?' Thomasin asked.

'Of course you must. I don't trust³ him to tell me the truth.'

Damon Wildeve was a young man from the big seaside town of Budmouth. He had not been successful there. He was now living on Egdon Heath. He was the landlord⁴ of the Quiet Woman.

Mrs Yeobright and Thomasin walked through the open door of the inn. Mrs Yeobright knocked at a door at the end of a passage and went into the room.

Damon Wildeve was standing in front of the fire. He turned gracefully⁴ to face the two women. He was a tall young man, with a handsome face. His thick, fair hair curled down over his neck.

'You've come home then, darling,' Wildeve said to Thomasin, who was standing behind her aunt. 'Why did you leave me like that?'

'I want to know why you and Thomasin are not married,' said Mrs Yeobright. 'Why have you disgraced³ my niece, and me too?'



Mrs Yeobright was a proud woman. Although her dead husband had been a farmer, she had come from a good family¹. Mrs Yeobright did not think that Damon Wildeve was good enough for her niece. At first, she had tried to stop the marriage, but then she had finally agreed to it.

'Please sit down and I'll explain,' said Wildeve. 'It's no disgrace, only a stupid mistake. Thomasin and I planned to marry in Budmouth, then we changed our minds. We decided to go to Anglebury and get married there. I found out, too late, that we couldn't use the marriage licence⁴ in Anglebury.'

'Then you are both to blame,' said Mrs Yeobright angrily. 'You have insulted³ my family and everyone will laugh at Thomasin.'

Thomasin's large eyes looked from one face to another.

'Please leave us for five minutes, aunt,' she said. 'I want to talk to Damon alone.'

'Of course, dear,' said Wildeve quickly. 'If your aunt will excuse us . . .'

'Oh, Damon, all this trouble is killing me,' Thomasin said sadly, when they were alone together. 'My aunt is so angry.'

'She is an unpleasant woman,' said Wildeve. 'I know she doesn't like me.'

'But what are we going to do, Damon?' Thomasin asked. 'You do want to marry me, don't you?'

'Of course I do. We can go to Budmouth on Monday and get married at once.'

'Then let us go. Oh, Damon,' Thomasin said, hiding her face. 'I am begging you to marry me! And I always dreamed that you would beg me to marry you.'

'Life is never like our dreams,' said Wildeve with a smile.

'Give me your hand, Damon,' Thomasin answered sadly.

As Wildeve took Thomasin carelessly by the hand, there was a loud knock at the back door. Wildeve went to answer it. When he came back a few minutes later, Thomasin and her aunt had gone.

Wildeve laughed quietly. Then he went to the front door

and looked up at Rainbarrow. The big fire had gone out now. But as Wildeve turned his head, he saw a smaller fire. It was burning on a hill called Mistover Knap.

'You are calling me, are you, my lady?' Wildeve said quickly, as he looked at the fire.

About half an hour later, Wildeve left the inn, locking the doors carefully behind him. He stood for a moment, looking towards Mistover Knap.

'Yes, she is calling me. I must go to her, I suppose.'

And Wildeve began to walk quickly towards the fire.

THREE

THE MEETING BY THE FIRE

The tall young woman was standing again on Rainbarrow. She stood very still, listening. But all she could hear was the wind blowing across the heath.

After a time, the woman gave a sigh^a. Far away down the valley, she could see a light. It was shining from the window of the Quiet Woman inn.

She brought out a small telescope^a and looked through it. Then she looked at her watch. She had been waiting an hour. The woman sighed again.

Moving quickly, she began to follow a narrow path across the heath. She knew the way well. She was going towards the small, bright fire that Wildeve had seen from the inn.

The fire on Mistover Knap had been built high up on a bank which surrounded a house and garden. Behind the fire was a small pool.

The young woman walked quickly up the bank and looked at the bright fire. Sitting next to the fire was a small boy. From time to time, the boy threw a piece of wood on the fire.

The boy looked up at the dark-haired woman and said, 'I'm glad you have come back, Miss Eustacia. I don't like being here by myself.'

'You are a lucky boy to have a fire of your own,' the young woman replied. 'Has anyone been here while I've been away?'

'Only your grandfather, Miss. He's coming out now.' An old man was standing by the door of the house.

'When are you coming inside, Eustacia?' he asked. 'You are too old to be playing with fires. And you're burning my best wood.'

'It's Johnny's fire. He doesn't want to go yet,' Eustacia replied. 'Go to bed, grandfather, I'll be in soon.'

The old man turned and went inside without a word.

'Now Johnny,' Eustacia said to the boy, 'if you stay a little longer, I'll give you a lucky sixpence. I'm going for a walk, but I'll be back soon. Put a piece of wood on the fire every two or three minutes. And if you hear a frog jump into the pool, run and tell me. It's a sign⁴ of rain.'

'Yes, Eustacia.'

'You must call me Miss Vye.'

'Yes, Miss.'

Eustacia stood on the high bank and listened. It was a lonely place. She could see the whole valley, down to the stream behind Wildeve's inn. On the right, Rainbarrow rose up against the dark sky.

The young woman looked down at the heath impatiently. Twice, she went back to the fire.

'Has a frog jumped into the pool yet, Johnny?'

'No, Miss Eustacia,' the boy replied.

'Wait a little longer. Next time I come back, I'll give you the lucky sixpence.'

Eustacia went again to the end of the bank and stood with her back to the fire.

Suddenly the boy jumped up and ran towards her.

'A frog jumped into the pool, Miss. I heard it!'

'Then it is going to rain. Run home, now, Johnny. Here's your lucky sixpence. Run this way, through the garden. Hurry!'

Eustacia turned quickly back to the fire. She stood in silence, listening.

In a few moments, there was another splash in the pool. Eustacia moved nearer the fire.

'Yes?' she said quietly.

A man was standing on the other side of the pool. He climbed quickly up the bank and stood beside Eustacia. She laughed quietly. The man was Damon Wildeve.

'I have come,' he said. 'I knew your fire was for me.'

'You knew it was for you? But I have not spoken to you once since you chose her and left me.'

Eustacia turned away. Then she said, 'Yes, it was for you. You remembered our old sign⁴. You have not married Thomasin. You love me. That is why I called you.'

'How do you know I am not married?'

'My grandfather heard about it. You do love me, don't you?'

'If I didn't, I wouldn't be here now. God knows⁴, you have completely changed my life.'

Eustacia smiled and moved into the firelight. She took the shawl² away from her face and said, 'Have you ever in your life seen anything more beautiful than that?'

'No.'

'I am more beautiful than Thomasin.'

'Thomasin is a sweet and gentle woman,' Wildeve replied.

'Forget her, Damon,' Eustacia answered proudly. 'You have made me very unhappy,' she added. 'But perhaps I shall always be unhappy. I hate this wild heath. But at least you have come back to me.'

'Have I?' Wildeve said quietly. 'I came here tonight to say goodbye.'

'Thank you!' said Eustacia, turning away angrily. 'And I thought you loved me. I can never give myself to you again.'

'You have said that before, my sweet. And I have changed your mind. We'll meet again on Rainbarrow, as we used to.'

Wildeve moved nearer and held out his arms.

'Oh, no, don't kiss me!' Eustacia cried.

'Can I kiss your hand?'

'No.'

'Couldn't I hold your hand before I go?'

'No.'

'Goodnight then, Eustacia. Goodbye.'



In a moment, Wildeve had gone. Eustacia sighed and looked down at the dying fire. She knew that Wildeve did not love her. But she did not want to stop loving him. Who else could she love on Egdon Heath?

★ ★ ★