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英语简易读物

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远离尘嚣

Far from the Madding Crowd

托马斯·哈代 著

THOMAS HARDY



北京)

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外文出版社 ● FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

远离尘嚣:英文/(英)哈代著.

—北京:外文出版社,1996

ISBN 7-119-01833-7

I. 远… II. 哈… III. ①言情小说-英国-当代-英语

②英语-语言读物 IV. ① I 561.4② H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(95)第 18626 号

英国企鹅出版集团授权外文出版社

在中国独家出版发行英文版

企鹅文学经典

英语简易读物

(阶梯三)

远离尘嚣

托马斯·哈代 著

责任编辑:余军

外文出版社出版

(中国北京百万庄路 24 号)

邮政编码 100037

煤炭工业出版社印刷厂印刷

1996 年(32 开)第一版

(英)

ISBN 7-119-01833-7/I·407(外)

著作权合同登记图字 01-95-484

定价:3.40 元

GLOSSARIES

waggon	四轮运货马车
lambs	羊羔
shepherd	牧羊人
farmyard	农场的庭院
straw	稻草
corn	小麦
stared	注视着(stare 的过去式)
shook	颤抖着(shake 的过去式)
admired	羡慕、赞美、欣赏(admire 的过去式)
St Valentine's Day	情人节(每年2月14日)
sheep-shearing	剪羊毛
hay-making	翻晒干草
sword	剑
harvest	收割
workhouse	贫民救济院
buried	被埋葬(bury 的过去分词)
coffin	棺材
passion	激情, 热情
faithful	忠诚的, 忠实的

* 注: 以上所列单词为书中黑体字

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远离尘嚣

Far from the Madding Crowd

拔示巴·艾娃蒂娜是个风姿秀逸的姑娘。有三个男子同时向她表达了爱慕之情。后来她嫁给了其中的一位,然而她的婚姻生活并不如意。这个故事发生在英国南部一个风景美丽的村庄,这个充满了人世间悲欢离合的故事,读来催人泪下。

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

外文出版社

Far from the Madding Crowd

AS ~~H~~ARDY

Retold by Jennifer Bassett
Series Editor: Derek Strange



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

PENGUIN ENGLISH

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England

Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2

Penguin Books(NZ)Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England

Far from the Madding Crowd was first published in 1874

This adaptation by Penguin Books in 1991

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Published by arrangement with the Penguin Group

27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England

Reprinted in the People's Republic of China

by the Foreign Languages Press 1996

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

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ISBN 7 - 119 - 01833 - 7

Not for sale outside the People's Republic of China

Far from the Madding Crowd



The girl held up the mirror to look at her face. Unseen in his field, Gabriel Oak smiled to himself in amusement.

CHAPTER ONE

Farmer Oak was a strong, well-built man, with a wide smile that reached from ear to ear. His first name was Gabriel, and his comfortable old clothes and quiet way of walking about his fields showed him to be a calm, sensible man. He was hard-working, had intelligent opinions, and went to church on Sundays. His neighbours generally thought well of him.

He was at the best age for a man. The confused feelings and thoughts of a very young man were behind him, and he had not yet arrived at the time when he had to carry the heavy responsibilities of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight and unmarried.

On a sunny morning in December, Oak was walking across one of his fields. Next to the field was a road, and Oak could see a **waggon** moving slowly along. The waggon was full of furniture and boxes, and on the top of all these things sat a woman, young and attractive. As Oak watched, the waggon came to a stop.

'One of the boxes has fallen off, Miss,' said the waggoner.

'Oh, then I think I heard it fall not long ago,' the girl said.

The waggoner ran back to find the box and for a few minutes the girl sat without moving. The only sounds were birds singing. Then she suddenly picked up a small paper packet, opened it, and took out a mirror. She quickly looked round to see if she was alone, then held the mirror up to look at her face. As she looked, her lips moved, and she smiled.

The sun shone down on the girl's bright face and dark hair, and the picture was certainly a pretty one. But it was an odd thing to do when travelling on an open waggon. The girl did not tidy her hair or do anything; she just looked at her own face. Still unseen in his field, Gabriel Oak smiled to himself in amusement.

When the waggoner came back, the girl put away her mirror and the waggon moved on down the road. He followed it slowly, and when he came near the gate at the bottom of the hill, he heard the girl arguing with the gatekeeper. She was refusing to pay the extra twopence that the gatekeeper asked for, and after a few minutes the girl won the argument. The gate was opened, and the waggon drove on. The gatekeeper watched it go.

'That's a handsome girl,' he said to Oak.

'And she knows it - too well,' said Gabriel, thinking of the mirror.



In the next few weeks, Oak saw the girl again several times. She had come to live with her aunt in the village, and was often in the field next to Gabriel's, milking her aunt's cow. Once, Gabriel found her hat for her when it had blown off in the wind. She spoke a few words to him then, and after that meeting Gabriel found that the girl's lovely face was often in his mind.

It was the time of year when the sheep had their lambs, and Gabriel spent a lot of time in the fields, looking after his sheep and the new lambs. This was his first year as a farmer; before that he had worked on other people's farms, as a ~~shepherd~~ or a farm manager. He had worked hard and borrowed money to start his own farm with two hundred sheep, so it was an important time for him.

But although he was busy with his sheep, Gabriel watched every morning for the girl's visit to the fields. He learnt that her name was Bathsheba Everdene, and her bright eyes, her long black hair and her quick laugh became more attractive to him every day. In fact, love - that quiet thief - was slowly beginning to steal young Farmer Oak's heart. And one day he said to himself, 'I'll make her my wife. I'll never be happy without her.'

So a few days later, he put on his best clothes, and went down to the village. When he got to the house, only the aunt was at home, but as he came away from the village, he met Bathsheba coming down the hill. They stopped, and looked at each other.

Farmer Oak had had no practice in asking girls to marry him, and he did not quite know how to begin.

'I've just been down to your house, Miss Everdene,' he said. 'I came to ask if you'd like to marry me.' He paused. 'But perhaps you've got a young man already.'

'Oh no!' The girl shook her head quickly. 'I haven't got a young man at all.'

Gabriel looked pleased. 'I'm truly glad to hear that,' he said, smiling one of his long, special smiles. He held out his hand to take hers, but she hurriedly put her hand behind her back.

'I'm not sure if I want to marry anyone,' she said, her face a little pink.

'Come,' said Gabriel quickly, 'think a minute or two. I love you dearly, Bathsheba, and I'm sure I can make you happy. I have a nice little farm, and when we are married, I'll work twice as hard as I do now. And in a year or two you can have a piano . . . And a nice little waggon to go to market.' He watched her hopefully.

'Yes, I would like that.'

'And you'd have chickens,' continued Gabriel, as the ideas came to him. 'And a little garden for flowers and vegetables.'

'I'd like that very much.'

'And at home by the fire, whenever you look up, there I shall be . . . And whenever I look up, there you will be.'

'Wait, wait! You're in too much of a hurry, Farmer Oak!' Bathsheba stared thoughtfully at a small tree. Then she turned to Gabriel.

'No, it's no good,' she said at last. 'I don't want to marry you. A wedding would be nice, it's true. But a husband . . . Well, he'd always be there, as you say. Whenever I looked up, there he would be.' She shook her head. 'No, I don't think I want a husband, so I won't marry – not yet.'

'That's a silly thing to say!' said Gabriel quickly. 'But my dear,' he continued sadly, 'why won't you have me?'

'Because I don't love you, Mr Oak.'

'But I love you,' said Mr Oak, very seriously. 'And one thing is certain. I shall go on loving you until the day I die.'

'I'm very sorry,' Bathsheba said. She looked sad for a moment, then she gave a little laugh. 'No, Mr Oak, I'm not the right wife for you. I'm too independent, and you wouldn't like that, you know.'

Oak heard the decision in her voice, and felt that his chances were finished. 'Very well,' he said quietly. 'Then I'll ask you no more.'



When a man has begun to love, it is not easy to stop loving. Soon after, Gabriel heard that Bathsheba had left the village and gone to live at Weatherbury, twenty miles away. But this news did not put out the slow-burning flame of love in Gabriel's heart.

CHAPTER TWO

Two months had passed, and Gabriel Oak was in the market-place in the town of Casterbridge, looking for work as a shepherd. He was Farmer Oak no longer. One disastrous night a young dog had driven his sheep over the edge of a very steep hill, and most of the sheep and their lambs had fallen to their deaths below. Oak was just able to pay back

the money he had borrowed to start his farm. After that, he was a free man with the clothes on his back, and nothing more.

Although he smiled less often now and his eyes were sadder, he was a man of quiet good sense and showed a calm face to the world. But that day in Casterbridge the world had no job to offer him, and at nightfall Oak set off on the road towards Weatherbury to visit another market the next day. The name of Weatherbury had some magic for him, since that was where Bathsheba Everdene now lived.

After a time, Oak stopped to rest, and as he sat on a gate, he saw a red light in the night sky across the fields. He watched, and the light grew brighter. Something was on fire. He jumped down from the gate and ran across the fields towards the fire.

When he arrived, he saw that the fire was in a **farmyard**. A tall pile of new-cut **straw** was burning wildly, flames shooting into the sky. It was too late to save that pile, but through the clouds of smoke Oak saw that there were several more straw-piles nearby. All the **corn** of the farm was there – and in great danger of burning. Already tongues of flame were beginning to reach out greedily towards the next pile.

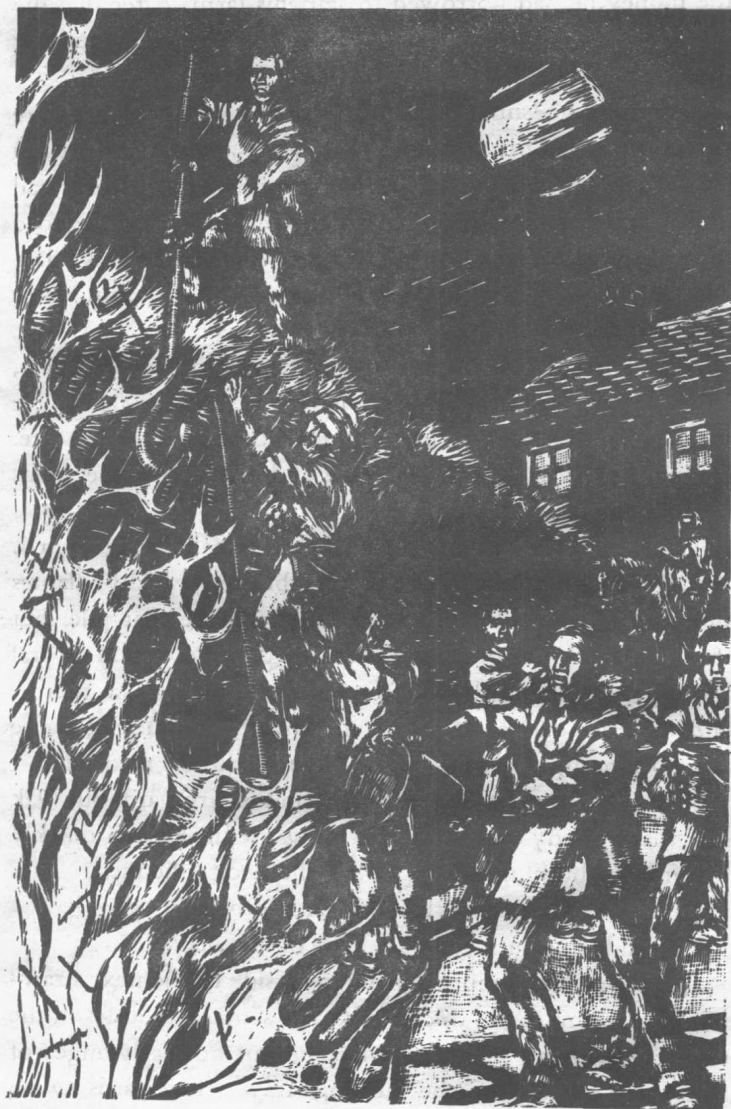
Men were running here and there in the farmyard, but Oak saw that nobody was doing anything useful. He ran quickly towards the burning straw-pile and shouted to the men.

‘Bring a ladder – quick! And buckets of water.’

‘The ladder is burnt,’ shouted one of the men.

Quickly, Oak climbed up the steep side of the next straw-pile. Coughing in the thick smoke, he sat dangerously on the top, and with his shepherd’s stick he put out each finger of flame that came from the burning straw a few yards away. Soon buckets of water were passed up, and slowly Oak and the other men began to win the fight against the fire.

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At one end of the farmyard, away from the smoke and confusion, were two women, one of the women was on horseback.

At one end of the farmyard, away from the smoke and confusion around the fire, were two women, watching with worried faces. One of the women was on horseback, the other on foot.

'He's a shepherd, I think,' said the woman on foot. 'He's a fine young man, Miss!'

'I wonder whose shepherd he is,' said the woman on horseback. She called to a man who was passing. 'Jan Coggan! Who is the shepherd?'

'I don't know, Miss. He's a stranger,' replied Jan Coggan. 'But he's a brave man. He's saved your corn for you.'

'Yes. And I'm very grateful to him,' said the rider. 'Ask him to come and speak to me.'

The fire was beginning to die now, and Gabriel had climbed down. He thought of asking for a job here – he had learnt from one of the villagers that the farmer was a rich young woman. Her uncle had died recently and the farm was now hers.

Jan Coggan led Gabriel over to the woman on horseback. Gabriel's clothes were burnt into holes, and his face was tired and dirty, but he lifted his hat politely and looked up at the woman.

Then his eyes opened wide in surprise. The woman **stared** down at him, equally surprised. Gabriel Oak and his cold-hearted love, Bathsheba Everdene, were face to face.

Bathsheba did not speak, and after a moment Gabriel said, in a quiet, sad voice, 'Do you want a shepherd, Miss?'

Bathsheba was not embarrassed, but she was certainly surprised. Life had clearly been unkind to Gabriel Oak, and she felt sorry for him.

'Yes,' she said slowly, 'I do want a shepherd, but . . .'

One of the villagers spoke up warmly for Gabriel. 'He's just the man you need, Miss. Look how he fought that fire!'

‘Very well,’ said Bathsheba. ‘Then tell him to speak to my farm manager.’ She nodded to Gabriel in a businesslike way, and then rode off into the darkness.

The farmworkers began to return to the village. Gabriel talked to the farm manager about his new job, then he too followed the road to the village. As he walked, he thought with surprise about Bathsheba. How she had changed! She was no longer a shy young girl, but the proud and independent owner of a large farm.

Deep in his own thoughts, he did not at first notice a young girl waiting quietly on the road just outside the village. The girl seemed a little nervous, and Gabriel stopped and spoke kindly to her for a few moments. The girl replied shyly, in a soft, attractive voice, but when Gabriel gently advised her to go home, she said quickly, ‘Oh no! Thank you, but I must wait . . . Please don’t say anything about me in the village. I don’t want people to know anything about me.’

Gabriel felt sorry for her, and although he had very little money himself, he gave her a few pence, which she took gratefully.

Gabriel spent the evening in the village pub with the other farmworkers. He listened with interest and amusement, mixed with a little sadness, to the talk about Miss Everdene, the farmer. He was too sensible to think that Bathsheba would ever marry him now, but his heart told him that she was still the woman he loved.



The next morning, the first day of Gabriel’s new job as a shepherd, there was great excitement in Weatherbury. Everybody was talking about two pieces of news. First, Miss Everdene had discovered that her farm manager was a thief. She had sent him away, and intended to manage the farm herself. The old men in the village shook their heads doubt-