

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Thomas Hardy

Why does Tess call herself a murderess when the people around her do not?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Tess assumes more guilt than anyone assigns her
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Phase the First · Prince's death
START	Something terrible had happened.
END	Her face was dry and pale, as though she regarded herself in the light of a murderess.
PASSAGE ID	sec-tess-01

THE MOVE

Separate causal responsibility from moral self-condemnation

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Tess is causally involved in Prince's death because she was responsible for the journey, but the accident is not intentional. Calling herself a murderess converts responsibility for circumstances into total moral condemnation.

MARK

Underline the chain of events that actually causes Prince's death. Circle Tess's language about herself afterward. Write CAUSAL beside what she contributed and MORAL JUDGMENT beside what she concludes.

NOTICE

- What responsibility does Tess reasonably bear for the accident?
- What would have to be true for 'murderess' to be an accurate description?
- Why does self-blame expand beyond the evidence of intention?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does Tess call herself a murderess when the people around her do not? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does Tess call herself a murderess when the people around her do not? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	Tess has causal responsibility for circumstances leading to Prince's death but no murderous intention. Calling herself a murderess expands accident and guilt into total moral self-condemnation.
EVIDENCE	Use the actual sequence causing the accident and contrast it with Tess's later label for herself.
WATCH FOR	Do not absolve Tess of every responsibility or accept 'murderess' literally. Distinguish kinds of responsibility.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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Why does Tess call herself a murderess when the people around her do not?

START ANCHOR	Something terrible had happened.
END ANCHOR	Her face was dry and pale, as though she regarded herself in the light of a murderess.

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline the chain of events that actually causes Prince's death. Circle Tess's language about herself afterward. Write CAUSAL beside what she contributed and MORAL JUDGMENT beside what she concludes.
2. NOTICE - What responsibility does Tess reasonably bear for the accident? What would have to be true for 'murderess' to be an accurate description? Why does self-blame expand beyond the evidence of intention?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why does Tess call herself a murderess when the people around her do not?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.