



# The Mayor of Casterbridge

*Thomas Hardy*

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## **The Mayor of Casterbridge** Thomas Hardy

Late one night at a local fair, Michael Henchard, blinded by alcohol and foolish bravado, trades away his wife and daughter to a visiting sailor. Nineteen years later the two women return to Casterbridge and the now-sober Michael, who has gained power and influence in his role as the mayor, must confront his past. As his life begins to collapse, Henchard realizes that it is his treatment of others has been his greatest downfall. Burdened by guilt and stripped of his status and money, Henchard succumbs once again to drink.

*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, like *Jude the Obscure* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, is set in Hardy's fictional county of Wessex. It is regarded as Hardy's greatest "Novel of Character and Environment." As in his other novels, Hardy's characters struggle to console their passions with their social circumstances. A version of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* called *The Claim*, starring Sarah Polley, Wes Bentley and Milla Jovovich, was filmed in 2000 with the setting changed to the prospecting northwest of the nineteenth century.

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