



Thomas Hardy: Behind the Mask

Andrew Norman

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The first biography to explain the anguish of his personal life and how it influenced such masterpieces as *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Piercing the veil of secrecy which Thomas Hardy deliberately drew over his life, this book seeks to determine why he was filled with anguish, and to discover how this led to the creation of some of the finest novels and poems in the English language. Shy to a fault, Hardy surrounded his house with a dense curtain of trees, shunned publicity and investigative reporters, and when visitors arrived unexpectedly he slipped quietly out of the back door in order to avoid them. Furthermore, following the death of his first wife Emma, he burned, page by page, a book-length manuscript of hers entitled *What I think of my husband*, together with letters, notebooks, and diaries—both his and hers. This behavior begs the question: did he have something to hide, and if so, did this "something" relate to his relationship with Emma? This biography puts forward evidence that she may have suffered from schizophrenia, and identifies an "other man" with whom she was in love.

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