

Title: novel/ *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy

General objective : To enable the students to master English literature.

Behavioral Objective :

- 1- To enable the students to understand all the important events in the Novel .
- 2- To focus on the main idea of the novel .
- 3- To understand the plot and learn the educational lessons in the novel.

Educational methods:

- 1- lecturing
- 2- Questioning and answering

### **plot**

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* is one of Thomas Hardy's pessimistic novels. The novel was published in 1886 in the Graphic magazine. The subtitle of the novel is 'A Story of a Man of Character' which mainly emphasizes the role of single character, Michael Henchard.

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* is one of Hardy's Wessex novels. It tells the story of Michael Henchard who is a hay-trusser travelling with his wife, Susan, and young daughter, Elizabeth-Jane. In a feat of drunkenness he sells his wife and daughter to a sailor, Newson. Next day, he repents over his misdeed and takes an oath that he will stop drinking all liquor for the next twenty-one years. Then, he starts searching for his wife and daughter. Later, he learns that the sailor, Susan, and Elizabeth-Jane have emigrated. He gives up the search

and goes to Casterbridge. He works very hard and becomes the mayor of the town.

After some years, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive in Casterbridge. They learn that Michael Henchard has become the mayor of the town. They are united again. He marries Susan for the sake of his daughter.

Henchard takes help of Donald Farfrae for the growth of his business. Farfrae's charm impresses all the town people and he gains the affection of Elizabeth-Jane. Later, Farfrae and Michael Henchard become rivals. Michael Henchard hires Joshua Jopp as his general manager. He orders Jopp to do all he can to throw Farfrae out of business.

Susan dies leaving a letter for Michael Henchard that is not to be opened until Elizabeth-Jane's wedding-day. The letter reveals that Michael Henchard's own daughter died, and this Elizabeth-Jane is the child of Newson. When Newson comes to enquire about his daughter, Henchard lies to him that his daughter is dead, and the sailor accepts this. Later, Michael Henchard constantly worries about Newson's return. Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae get married and the sailor comes back. Henchard has no option but to leave them. Later, Elizabeth-Jane realizes that Michael Henchard wanted to make peace with her, and she sets out to find out him. Abel Whittle, the man whom Michael Henchard wanted to fire once, looks after him in his last days. He tells Elizabeth-Jane that Michael Henchard is dead.

Tragedy is one of the concerns in this novel and it results from the fact that characters are victimized. However, the complete title of the novel is 'The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge', which justifies the tragic pathos of the characters.

It also gives an indication that there are some specific factors which play a vital role in bringing the rise and fall of the characters. These factors are the social, political, economic, industrial environment, and the psychological background of the characters. Chance, coincidence, fate, and the unpredictable power of nature also play a significant role in victimizing the characters.

The Mayor of Casterbridge describes Thomas Hardy's perception by his excessive use of victimization between man in relation to man, and between man in relation to his fate which is characterized by the negative role of society, the action of the characters, and nature. For instance, Henchard becomes a victim because of his action of selling his wife to the sailor.