

Tess of the d'Urbervilles:
Worksheet (f)i A tragic tale?

A. 'A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavourable circumstances.'

(Answers.com)

B. 'The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means.'

(Tom Stoppard)

C. 'A plot, or tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices and ambitions, by reason of the character taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices and ambitions.'

(Thomas Hardy)

D. 'A tragedy is a story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high estate.'

(C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*:1904)

E. 'The conflict between an individual and the forces that destroy him.' This includes: 'order and accident; the destruction of the hero; the irreparable action and its connections with death; and the emphasis on evil.'

(Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy*)