

WARM UP

1 Match the following words with their Italian meaning.

- 1 edifice
- 2 joint
- 3 moulding
- 4 colossal
- 5 pillar
- 6 roofless
- 7 tower-like
- 8 surface
- 9 slab

- a giuntura
- b superficie
- c cornice
- d pilastro
- e simile a una torre
- f lastra
- g privo di tetto
- h colossale
- i costruzione

GLOSSARY

- gropingly:** *a tentoni*
- sheer:** *dritta*
- hums:** *ronza*
- hearken:** *ascolta*
- one-stringed:** *con una corda*
- adjoining:** *vicino*
- rustle:** *fruscio*
- uncompromising:** *irremovibile*
- heathen:** *pagano*
- bide:** *aspettare*
- folk:** *persone, gente*

Stonehenge in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

The following passage is taken from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, a novel by Thomas Hardy. The protagonist, Tess, is now with her lover, Angel Clare, they are running away as Tess has killed her husband. They arrive at Stonehenge.

They had proceeded thus gropingly two or three miles further when on a sudden Clare became conscious of some vast erection close in his front, rising sheer from the grass. They had almost struck themselves against it.

'What monstrous place is this?', said Angel.

'It hums,' said she. 'Hearken!'

He listened. The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp. No other sound came from it, and lifting his hand and advancing a step or two, Clare felt the vertical surface of the structure. It seemed to be of solid stone, without joint or moulding. Carrying his fingers onward he found that what he had come in contact with was a colossal rectangular pillar; by stretching out his left hand he could feel a similar one adjoining. At an indefinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast architrave uniting the pillars horizontally. They carefully entered beneath and between; the surfaces echoed their soft rustle; but they seemed to be still out of doors. The place was roofless. Tess drew her breath fearfully, and Angel, perplexed, said: 'What can it be?'

Feeling sideways they encountered another tower-like pillar, square and uncompromising as the first; beyond it another and another. The place was all doors and pillars, some connected above by continuous architraves.

'A very Temple of the Winds,' he said.

The next pillar was isolated; others composed a trilithon; others were prostrate, their flanks forming a causeway wide enough for a carriage and it was soon obvious that they made up a forest of monoliths grouped upon the grassy expanse of the plain. The couple advanced further into this pavilion of the night till they stood in its midst.

'It is Stonehenge!', said Clare.

'The heathen temple, you mean?'

'Yes. Older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles! Well, what shall we do, darling? We may find shelter further on.'

But Tess, really tired by this time, flung herself upon an oblong slab that lay close at hand, and was sheltered from the wind by a pillar. Owing to the action of the sun during the preceding day the stone was warm and dry, in comforting contrast to the rough and chill grass around, which had damped her skirts and shoes.

'I don't want to go any further, Angel,' she said, stretching out her hand for his.

'Can't we bide here?'

'I fear not. This spot is visible for miles by day, although it does not seem so now.'

'One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home.'

He knelt down beside her outstretched form, and put his lips upon hers.

'Sleepy are you, dear? I think you are lying on an altar.'

'I like very much to be here,' she murmured. 'It is so solemn and lonely – after my great happiness – with nothing but the sky above my face. It seems as if there were no folk in the world but we two.'

From *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by T. Hardy



Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=PshZcHEO1lo for a video version

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the passage and answer the following questions.

- 1 The action takes place at night, and the description of Stonehenge is given through other senses as well as sight. Find words or sentences referring to each of the following senses:
 hearing: _____
 touch: _____
 sight: _____
- 2 The presence of the structure is not exact or clear: Tess and Angel cannot understand what it is. This uncertainty is underlined by some expressions, find them.
- 3 In which part of the building are Tess and Angel when they realise that the place is Stonehenge?
- 4 What does the author say about the place where Tess lay?

3 Complete this summary of the text.

Tess and Angel arrive in the evening at (1) _____. They don't (2) _____ where they are, but feeling around they (3) _____ they are in a circle of upright stones, some of which serve as (4) _____ for the others. Tess stretches out upon one of the (5) _____ which is still (6) _____ from the sun, even if it's (7) _____ now. She (8) _____ as if she is at home and she says she feels as if there (9) _____ no people in the world but them.

4 After Angel has called the place 'a Temple of the Winds', there is an objective description. Translate it into Italian.

'The next pillar was isolated; others composed a trilithon; others were prostrate, their flanks forming a causeway wide enough for a carriage and it was soon obvious that they made up a forest of monoliths grouped upon the grassy expanse of the plain.'

WRITING

5 Go to pages 92 and 180 of your coursebook, look at the pictures of Stonehenge and write your own description of the place.

MORE ABOUT...

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was an English novelist and poet, belonging to Naturalism, a literary movement. His novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, published in 1891, tells a tale of seduction, love, betrayal and murder. The novel revolves around a young woman who struggles to find her place in society.

