

THE WITHERED ARM

Now that you have read 'The Withered Arm' you must decide how you can turn it in to a film. You are going to prepare a presentation for the rest of the group in the hope of winning the contract to release this potential blockbuster.

Firstly you must decide on a name for your film production company and assign each person a role within the company. Be democratic when choosing a role for each person, don't just let one person dominate the rest of the group; perhaps a vote would be a good idea.

The role you are assigned will not define your tasks for the rest of the project; you are expected to collaborate and cooperate with your colleagues. Your title will reflect the part of the project of which you will be in charge but you are expected to work as a team to produce the best project and presentation.

You need:

**Managing Director:** Needs to be organised, diplomatic, sensitive to others' opinions and overall a leader. This person will make the decisions about the way the group operates together and if there are disagreements this person will have to intervene and make the final decision.

**Script Director:** Needs to be able to read a text closely to see what is essential and what is not so important as they will have the final say on which parts of the story will be filmed and which will be omitted. This person must be able to delegate as they are not expected to produce all the script alone.

**Set Designer:** Ultimate decision on the contents and presentation of the storyboard and setting of the film.

**Casting Director:** Responsible for confirming characters' appearances and personalities.

**Technical Director:** Responsible for costume choice and deciding on viability of scenes. Is in charge of overseeing the choice of opening scene of the film.

Once you have decided on the roles, you must start work on the following eight tasks in order to produce your presentation:

1. Write down your initial (personal) response to the story and then discuss your impressions with your group.
2. Which part of the story was the most memorable? Write down your choice and reasons and then discuss it with your group.

## THOMAS HARDY – SHORT STORIES

3. How will the film open? Re-read the beginning of the story in your group. Will this be a suitable opening or will you have a character telling the story in retrospect (as the old woman did in *Titanic* for example)? Will your film start earlier than the story, to show the relationship between Rhoda and Farmer Lodge? Hardy's stories often suggest that people's lives are controlled by fate. If you come to the conclusion that events are controlled by fate you may want to suggest the outcome of the film at the beginning. Under the guidance of your Technical Director you must choose an opening for your film. Write down your group's decision and reason for your choice.
4. Come to a unanimous decision about which is the best part of the story. Write down why your group chooses the part. Now, under the guidance of your Set Designer you need to pick three other important moments so that you have four key or pivotal moments and draw and label them to summarise what happens in each scene.
5. Using the above as a basis devise a storyboard of the main action of the film. You need to consider your film location; will it all be filmed in the studio or will you go 'on location'?
6. Under the guidance of your Casting Director decide what characteristics and personality traits each character should have; you must use the text carefully to help you come to a decision. Remember, the characters' behaviour will determine with whom the audience's sympathies lie. You should draw the major characters in the story (stick figures will do) and label them with appropriate words and phrases.
7. Under the guidance of your Technical Director decide on costumes for each character. Draw a sketch of the costumes and explain how their clothes reflect their status, personality and behaviour.
8. Under the guidance of your Script Director choose one of the scenes from the story and write out a script. Remember to include stage directions. You will have to act out this extract in your final presentation so make sure everyone participates and has a copy available.