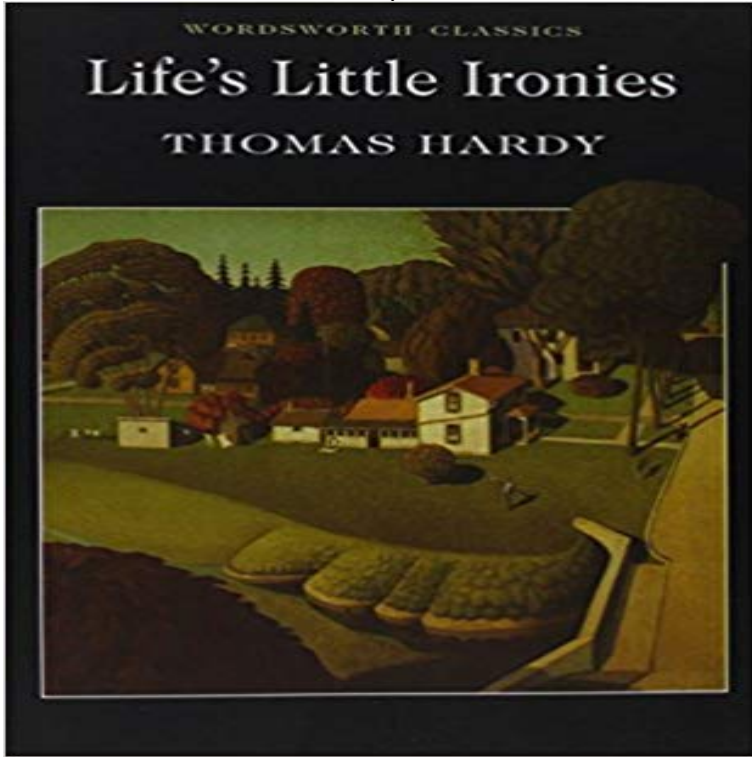


Lifes Little Ironies (Wordsworth Classics)



Introduction and Notes by Dr Claire Seymour, University of Kent at Canterbury
The proverbial phrase life s little ironies was coined by Hardy for his third volume of short stories. These tales and sketches possess all the power of his novels: the wealth of description, the realistic portrayal of the quaint lore of Wessex, the Chaucerian humour and characterisation, the shrewd and critical psychology, the poignant estimate of human nature and the brooding sense of wonder at the essential mystery of life. The tales which make up Lifes Little Ironies tenderly re-create a rapidly vanishing rural world and scrutinise the repressions of fin-de-siecle bourgeois life. They share the many concerns of Hardys last great novels, such as the failure of modern marriage and the insidious effects of social ambition on the family and community life. Ranging widely in length and complexity, they are unified by Hardys quintessential irony, which embraces both the farcical and the tragic aspects of human existence.

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