Lorna Doone: A Romance of Exmoor

R. D. Blackmore · *1869 · original English text*

John Ridd, a big, plain Exmoor farmer's son, tells how the outlaw Doones killed his father, and how as a boy he met a little girl in their valley, Lorna. Their love grows through a hard winter, the Monmouth rising, a Court of Chancery and the king's favor. The Doones are destroyed in the end, and Carver Doone is swallowed by the Wizard's Slough.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Can a gentle man stand against a violent clan, and what can love and patience do in a time of lawless men?

Blackmore's answer is a country romance with a Christian ear. John is strong, but he is patient, loyal and honest, and he keeps his vow for justice for twenty years. Love, family and the moor are the book's strengths, and the Doones' cruelty is set against the plain goodness of the farm. The ending is a happy household, with the wicked Carver brought down by the land itself.

KEY CHARACTERS

John Ridd
A big, honest Exmoor farmer and the narrator.

Lorna Doone
A girl raised among the Doones.

Carver Doone
The cruelest of the Doones.

Sir Ensor Doone
The old head of the Doones, Lorna's grandfather.

Tom Faggus
A highwayman and John's cousin.

Annie Ridd
John's sister.

Jeremy Stickles
The king's messenger.

Ruth Huckaback
A girl of the farm.

Parson Bowden
The local clergyman.

Grades 8–12

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01

The Death of John's Father

CHAPTERS I–VII

In 1673 the Doones kill John Ridd's father on the road home from Tiverton. John, then a schoolboy, grows up on the farm at Plover's Barrows, vowing to see justice done.

- John goes to school at Blundell's.
- The Doones kill his father on the road.
- He grows up on the family farm.
- He vows to see justice done.

02

A Boy and a Girl

CHAPTERS VIII–XIX

As a boy John climbs the water-slide into the Doone valley and meets a little girl, Lorna. Years later he finds her again, and they fall in love in secret.

- John climbs the water-slide into the valley.
- He meets the child Lorna.
- Years later he finds her again.
- They fall in love in secret.

03

Lorna's Story

CHAPTERS XX–XXVI

Lorna tells John of her life as Sir Ensor Doone's grandchild and of her fear. John meets the highwayman Tom Faggus and the king's messenger Jeremy Stickles, and goes to London, where he meets Judge Jeffreys.

- Lorna tells her story.
- Tom Faggus is a highwayman and John's cousin.
- Jeremy Stickles is the king's messenger.
- John goes to London.
- He meets Judge Jeffreys.

04

The Great Winter

CHAPTERS XXVII–XLIV

Sir Ensor dies, and the cruel Carver Doone grows dangerous. In a hard winter John carries Lorna out of the valley to the safety of his mother's farm.

- Sir Ensor dies.
- Carver Doone grows dangerous.
- The great winter shuts in the moor.
- John brings Lorna home to the farm.

05

Chancery and Rebellion

CHAPTERS XLV–LXIV

Lorna is found to be a noble heiress, and the Court of Chancery places her in London. Tom Faggus joins the Monmouth rising, and John follows him and sees the slaughter at Sedgemoor.

- Lorna is found to be an heiress.
- The Court of Chancery takes charge of her.
- Tom Faggus joins the Monmouth rising.
- John sees the slaughter at Sedgemoor.

06

The Doones Destroyed

CHAPTERS LXV–LXXII

Rewarded by the king and made a knight, John leads the farmers against the Doones and destroys the stronghold. Only the Counsellor and Carver survive.

- The king rewards John.
- John is made a knight.
- The farmers rise against the Doones.
- The stronghold is destroyed.
- Only the Counsellor and Carver survive.

07

The Wedding and the Slough

CHAPTERS LXXIII–LXXV

John and Lorna marry, and Carver shoots Lorna at the altar steps. John pursues him to the Wizard's Slough, where Carver sinks. Lorna recovers.

- John and Lorna are married.
- Carver shoots Lorna at the altar steps.
- John follows him to the Wizard's Slough.
- Carver sinks.
- Lorna recovers, and the household is happy.

Justice | Love and patience | Family and the farm | The moor | Rebellion

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 8–12

1. How John's father dies and what John promises.
2. How John and Lorna first meet.
3. What Lorna tells John of her life among the Doones.
4. How Carver Doone meets his end.

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