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Department of English
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**CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF DONALD FARFRAE IN *THE
MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE***

Farfrae, the young Scotchman, serves as a foil (a character whose actions or emotions contrast with and thereby accentuate those of another character) for Henchard. Whereas will and intuition determine the course of Henchard's life, Farfrae is a man of intellect. He brings to Casterbridge a method for salvaging damaged grain, a system for reorganizing and revolutionizing the mayor's business, and a blend of curiosity and ambition that enables him to take interest in—and advantage of—the agricultural advancements of the day (such as the seed-sowing machine).

Although Henchard soon comes to view Farfrae as his adversary, the Scotchman's victories are won more in the name of progress than personal satisfaction. His primary motive in taking over Casterbridge's grain trade is to make it more prosperous and prepare the village for the advancing agricultural economy of the later nineteenth century. He does not intend to dishonour Henchard. Indeed, even when Henchard is at his most adversarial—during his fight with Farfrae in the barn, for instance—the Scotchman reminds himself of the fallen mayor's circumstances, taking pains to understand and excuse Henchard's behaviour. In his calm, measured thinking, Farfrae is a model man of science, and Hardy depicts him with the stereotypical strengths and weaknesses of such people. He possesses an intellectual competence so unrivalled that it passes for charisma, but throughout the novel he remains emotionally distant. Although he wins the favour of the townspeople with his highly successful day of celebration, Farfrae fails to feel any emotion too deeply, whether it is happiness inspired by his carnival or sorrow at the death of his wife. In this respect as well he stands in bold contrast to Henchard, whose depth of feeling is so profound that it ultimately dooms him.

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