



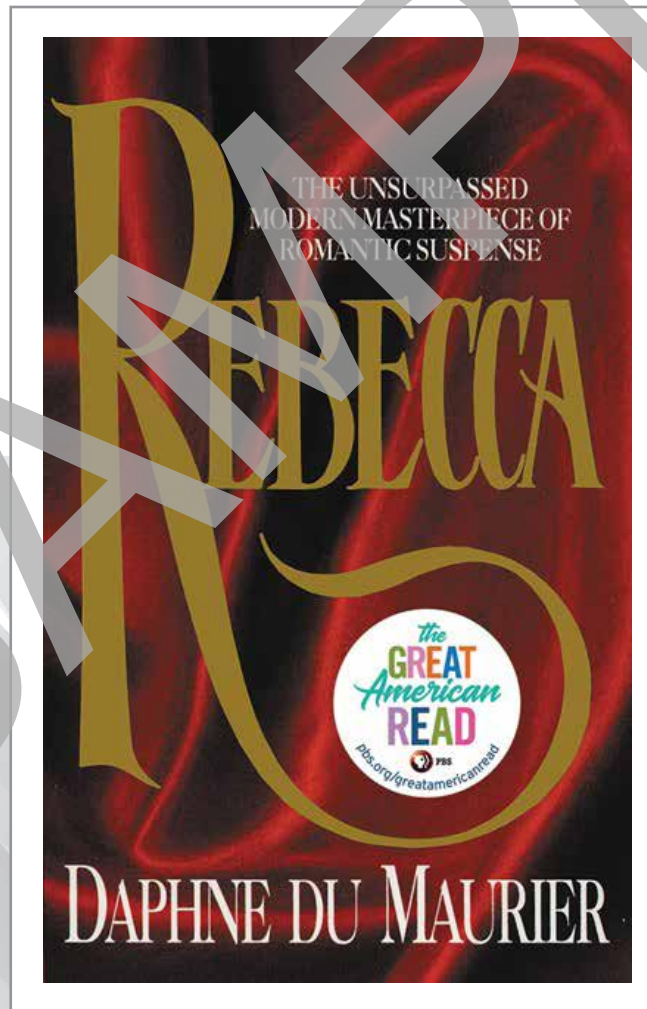
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Rebecca

Daphne Du Maurier



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Rebecca

Daphne Du Maurier

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying attributes,
brainstorming, research,
analysis, compare and contrast

Comprehension

Predicting, summarization,
cause and effect, inference,
main idea

Vocabulary

Target words, context clues

Writing

Descriptive, letters, ballads,
essay, poem

Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, discussion,
presenting articles, drama,
role play

Literary Elements

Characterization, symbolism,
plot development, similes,
metaphors, allusions, irony,
personification, foreshadowing

Background Information

Genre: Fiction—Gothic novel

Setting: Manderley estate in England

Point of View: First-person narrative

Themes: fear, love, trust, reality vs. unreality

Conflict: person against person; person against self; person against phantom

First Publication: ©1938 by Daphne du Maurier Browning, published by Doubleday, Doreen

Summary

"Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." Thus the new Mrs. de Winter, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, begins her narrative and sets the stage for the suspense and mystery of this classic Gothic novel. Maxim de Winter brings a new and naive bride home to Manderley, his English estate. She encounters the "Other Woman," the dead Rebecca, and her living surrogate, the evil Mrs. Danvers, who conspires to destroy her mistress' rival. The plot development includes the lingering doubts about Rebecca's death and the new Mrs. de Winter's struggle to understand and completely trust her husband. A murder trial and the uncovering of hidden information heighten the suspense.

Rebecca can be viewed as a version of the "Cinderella" story: a nameless heroine marries the handsome hero and is thus saved from a life of drudgery.

Note: Three *Rebecca* movies are available: (1940), starring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontain, Alfred Hitchcock's Academy Award winning adaptation, 125 minutes, black and white; (1978), starring Jeremy Brett, Joanna David, and Anna Massey, BBC-TV series, 205 minutes, color; (1996), starring Charles Dance, Diana Rigg, Geraldine James, Jean Anderson, Emilia Fox, and Faye Dunaway, a Portman Production for Carlton UK TV (in association with WGBH in Boston), 180 minutes, color.

About the Author

Daphne du Maurier, an English writer, was born May 13, 1907, in London, England. She died in 1989. She was the daughter of a famous actor-manager, Gerald du Maurier, and Muriel (Beaumont) du Maurier. Her grandfather, George du Maurier, was a well-known English writer. She received her education in private schools and spent much of her youth traveling, sailing, and writing stories. Du Maurier married Sir Frederick Browning in 1932, and they had two children, Tessa and Flavia. Their mansion, Menabilly in Cornwall, served as the model for Manderley in *Rebecca*. Her husband died in 1965. She was made Dame Commander in the Order of the British Empire in 1969.

Du Maurier's first novel was published when she was in her early twenties, and she subsequently became one of the best-known authors in the world. She was a member of the Brontë Society and the Royal Society of Literature. She received the National Book Award in 1938 for *Rebecca*; this novel has sold over 1,000,000 copies. Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 film based on *Rebecca* contributed to

Story Map

Directions: Fill in each box below with information about the novel.

The diagram consists of five rectangular boxes arranged in a staggered, overlapping fashion. The boxes are labeled as follows:

- Main Characters** (top left)
- Setting (time and place)** (top right)
- Main Conflict** (middle left)
- Summary of Major Story Events** (center)
- Climax** (bottom left)
- Resolution of Conflict** (bottom right)

Dashed arrows indicate the relationships between the boxes:

- An arrow points from **Main Characters** to **Setting (time and place)**.
- An arrow points from **Setting (time and place)** to **Summary of Major Story Events**.
- An arrow points from **Main Conflict** to **Summary of Major Story Events**.
- An arrow points from **Summary of Major Story Events** to **Climax**.
- An arrow points from **Climax** to **Resolution of Conflict**.
- An arrow points from **Summary of Major Story Events** to **Resolution of Conflict**.

A large, diagonal watermark reading "SAMPLE" is overlaid across the center of the diagram.

Note: The novel presents an excellent study for literary devices: simile, metaphor, allusion, and personification. Many of these are given in the Supplementary Activities section for each chapter. Guide students as they learn to detect and identify these devices; in addition, help students develop the skill of writing their own.

Chapter One, pp. 1-4

The narrator alludes to the deterioration of Manderley. In a dream, she sees the estate grown up in weeds and hints at the fear that gripped her while she lived there. She and a companion (at present, unnamed) are in an alien land hundreds of miles away from Manderley.

Vocabulary

tenacious (1)

labyrinth (2)

malevolent (3)

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss what the narrator's dream reveals about Manderley and the narrator. (*pp. 1-4, The estate has now grown up in foliage; she once lived there in fear; the house is an empty shell; some places, such as Happy Valley, hold good memories. She and a companion are now in an alien land hundreds of miles away.*)
2. Speculate on the significance of Manderley and the narrator's departure from it.

Supplementary Activities

1. Note the unanswered questions: Who is the narrator? Where is she? Who is with her? What happened to Manderley?
2. Literary devices—**similes:** branches...making a vault like the archway of a church (p. 1); gnarled roots looked like skeleton claws (p. 2). **metaphors:** site: jewel (p. 2); house: sepulchre (p. 3). **personification:** Nature (p. 1); ivy had thrown her tendrils, house lived and breathed (p. 3).

Chapter Two, pp. 5-11

The narrator and Maxim de Winter are living in a hotel on an island because of a self-imposed exile, and yet they experience pangs of nostalgia for England. She mentions the scornful Mrs. Danvers and Rebecca and begins a flashback of events that brought her to this point.

Vocabulary

furtive (5)

impunity (9)

panacea (5)

diffidence (9)

ennui (6)

gaucherie (9)

ablution (7)

subservient (10)

Discussion Question

Discuss what is now revealed about the characters. (*pp. 6-9, She and Maxim de Winter are in a hotel on an island; they enjoy news from England, and their exile is self-imposed. The narrator was youthful, shy, and awkward when she first went to Manderley where she felt she lived under the shadow of Rebecca, the first wife. Maxim is patient and never complains, and his dependence on her has made her bold at last.*)

Chapter Twelve, pp. 135-148

Mrs. de Winter breaks a valuable china cupid and hides it. Mrs. Danvers blames a member of the staff and, when Mrs. de Winter admits she broke the cupid, Mrs. Danvers chides her. Maxim and his wife argue. The specter of Rebecca is always present.

Vocabulary

impassive (138)

paltry (141)

gauche (146)

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the incident involving the broken china cupid and what this reveals about Mrs. de Winter. *(pp. 139-142, She breaks the cupid while placing books on the desk, and, because she feels guilty, hides the pieces. Mrs. Danvers blames a member of the staff. Mrs. de Winter confesses to Maxim, and Mrs. Danvers makes her feel like a guilty child. Mrs. de Winter attempts to tell Maxim about her fears of Mrs. Danvers and her feelings of inadequacy.)*
2. Discuss the quarrel between Maxim and his wife. *(pp. 143-148, The cupid incident leads to their quarrel but involves far more than the broken cupid. He assures her he doesn't care about the cupid, but she accuses him of marrying her because she is dull and no one will gossip about her. He becomes dark and cold and questions whether or not he was selfish in marrying her. She assures him she has no regrets and that they are happy. The quarrel ends in an impasse, with the specter of Rebecca present as always.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Analyze the simile: Maxim and his wife...like two people in a play (p. 146).
2. Analyze the universality of their quarrel: hidden things are revealed, the quarrel turns from the initial cause to other hurts, and it ends in an impasse.

Chapter Thirteen, pp. 149-163

Maxim is gone for two days, and Mrs. de Winter returns to the boat house where she again sees Ben. She returns to find Jack Favell at Manderley and suspects something is wrong about his visit.

Vocabulary

supplication (154)

disquiet (162)

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Mrs. de Winter's second visit to the boat house. *(pp. 152-155, She enters the cabin and finds Ben there. He repeats that he did nothing and told no one. He reveals that Rebecca threatened to put him in an asylum and his fear of that happening. He obviously likes Mrs. de Winter. She is filled with apprehension.)*
2. Discuss what happens after Mrs. de Winter returns from her visit to the cove and the effect this has on her. *(pp. 156-163, Someone is standing at the window in the west wing; Mrs. Danvers' arm reaches out to close the shutters. Mrs. de Winter overhears Mrs. Danvers talking*

Interaction Frame
Conflicting Characters

Character's Actions

Character's Actions

How do the characters interact?

Source(s) of Conflict

How do they compromise?

How do they cooperate?

Who demonstrates control and when?

Identify results of the conflict.