

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Rebecca

by Daphne Du Maurier

Copyright © 2003 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-60389-630-6

Item No. 202173

CHAPTER ONE

1. “Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again” is *Rebecca’s* famous first line.

Some psychologists believe that through our dreams we are able to resolve our problems. What problem do you think the narrator is able to resolve by dreaming about Manderley? Write a dialogue between the narrator and her psychologist in which they discuss the meaning of her dream.

2. The narrator describes how, in her dream, she is able to pass through the locked gate leading to Manderley:

“Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me.”
(Pg. 1)

Write about a dream you have had in which you were “possessed” with special or supernatural powers. If you cannot remember having one, write about which supernatural power you would choose if you were able to have one, and why.

Response Journal

CHAPTER TWO

3. The narrator frequently breaks away from the story to state a generalization about life that can apply to humanity at large. For example, after mentioning that she and Maxim can never go back to Manderley because the memories there are too painful, she states:

I believe there is a theory that men and women emerge finer and stronger after suffering, and that to advance in this or any world we must endure ordeal by fire. (Pg. 5)

Write a letter to the narrator letting her know that you understand what she means by this generalization. Include an example of an ordeal in your own life that has in some way made you stronger.

4. The narrator pushes her bad memories out of her mind by reading a practical article about cricket instead of one about wood pigeons that reminds her of Manderley. Write a paragraph explaining what you do to deal with painful thoughts and memories
5. When they first meet, Mrs. Danvers makes the narrator feel uncomfortable and out of place. In the narrator's mind, Mrs. Danvers is unfavorably comparing her to Rebecca. Write about a time when someone in your life seemed to be comparing you to another person and finding you lacking. Did you think the comparison was fair?
6. When *Rebecca* begins, the events at Manderley have already occurred, and the narrator is already a changed person for having endured them:

At any rate I have lost my diffidence, my timidity, my shyness with strangers. I am very different from that self who drove to Manderley for the first time, hopeful and eager, handicapped by a rather gaucherie and filled with an intense desire to please. (Pg. 9)

Write a one-paragraph character sketch of the narrator as she was before she went to Manderley.

Rebecca

7. Based on the information given in this chapter, write a one-paragraph character sketch of the narrator as she is today.
8. One recurrent observation in *Rebecca* is that servants provide their best service only to those they consider socially superior. On page 10, for example, a waiter senses that the narrator is “inferior and subservient” to Mrs. Van Hopper and serves the narrator a bad piece of meat.

Write a paragraph about a time when you received poor service in a restaurant or store. Give details and speculate as to why you were treated poorly. Do you think the server or salesperson slighted you for a discriminatory reason or is there another explanation?

9. Mrs. Van Hopper uses her lorgnette to stare openly at Max de Winter, embarrassing the narrator. The narrator does not say or do anything to stop Mrs. Van Hopper’s behavior. Write about a time when the actions of someone you were with embarrassed you. How did you react to the situation?

CHAPTER THREE

10. In the first line of this chapter the narrator writes, “I wonder what my life would be to-day, if Mrs. Van Hopper had not been a snob.” (Pg. 13) If it was not for Mrs. Van Hopper’s embarrassing behavior, the narrator might never have received her first note from Max de Winter. Write about a person whose presence in your life has changed your life considerably. Describe the ways your life might be different if you had never met this person.

CHAPTER FOUR

11. While the narrator describes herself as a private person who does not normally like to talk about herself, she talks openly with Max de Winter for an hour and a half at lunch. She describes Max as “my friend of many years, the brother I had never possessed.” (Pg. 28) Write a paragraph about a time when you felt this kind of close connection to someone you had just met. If you prefer, write about a time when you felt an instant revulsion to someone that you had just met. In either case, explain how it felt to have such strong feelings about a relative stranger.
12. Madame Blaize offers the narrator a hundred-franc commission because the narrator directed Mrs. Van Hopper to Madame Blaize’s dress shop. The narrator is confused by the offer and refuses it. As Madame Blaize, write a diary entry describing the incident. Include how you (as Madame Blaize) feel about the narrator’s refusal to take the money.
13. DuMaurier often describes flowers and shrubs as having human qualities. For example, on page 31, she writes

There was something rather blowsy about roses in full bloom, something shallow and raucous, like women with untidy hair.

Choose a flower or tree and write a one-paragraph description in which you give it human-like characteristics, such that the description could also apply to a person.

Rebecca

14. Assume that you are an expert at analyzing handwriting. Based on the description of Rebecca's signature, what conclusions can you draw about her character? Write a dialogue between yourself and the narrator in which you discuss Rebecca's signature. The dialogue might begin as follows:

Narrator: What can you tell me about Rebecca from her signature on the title page of this book of poems?

You: First of all, she is not a patient woman. Just look at the
....

CHAPTER FIVE

15. The narrator knows that she will never feel comfortable telling Mrs. Van Hopper about her outings with Maxim because she is sure that Mrs. Van Hopper would find a way to make her feel unworthy of his attention. Assume that Mrs. Van Hopper finds out about her meetings with Maxim. Write a dialogue between the narrator and Mrs. Van Hopper discussing the matter. The dialogue might begin as follows:

Mrs. Van Hopper: My dear child, whatever were you thinking?

Narrator: Excuse me?

Mrs. Van Hopper: So Mr. de Winter takes you driving. He is just being ...

16. The narrator tells Maxim that she would like to relive special moments from her past. He disagrees, saying:

I'm afraid I think rather differently from you. All memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them. (Pg. 39)

Select a moment from your past that you would like to relive. In one paragraph, describe the moment and why it was special for you.