
REBECCA



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*Manderley*

CHAPTER 1

Last night I dreamed that I went to Manderley again. I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, but I could not enter, for the gates were closed. Then suddenly I passed through the gates and started walking up the twisting path that led to the house. Everything seemed different. Then I **realized** what had happened. The dark woods had grown. The path was narrow and messy. The plants had grown to monster heights and looked black and ugly.

I kept walking, surprised that the way was so long. Then suddenly I reached it. My heart started beating fast, and tears flooded my eyes. There it was—Manderley, our Manderley.

It looked **mysterious** and silent like it had always been. The grey stone walls shone in the moonlight. Time had not **destroyed** them. For a moment I thought the house was unchanged. Then, I looked at the garden. It was covered with wild, evil plants. The ivy¹ had covered the house. It was on the terrace and on the windows, too. I kept walking.

Then I stopped and looked at the house. Moonlight was playing tricks on me. The house now looked as alive as it used to be. Light came from the windows, and the curtains blew softly in the night air. Then, a cloud hid the moon, and suddenly the lights in the windows **disappeared**. The house was once again dark and empty.

When I woke up, I knew that I dreamed. In real life I was a hundred

¹ ivy: a climbing plant

miles away from Manderley, in a hotel room on a foreign island. I opened my eyes and looked at the shining sun and the clean sky. It was very different from my dream. I knew we were going to have a peaceful and quiet day. We would not talk of Manderley. I would not tell Maxim my dream. Manderley was not ours any longer. Manderley was no more.

* * *

We can never go back again. There are many things we have tried to forget. Maxim is very **patient**. He never complains, not even when he remembers. I can tell by the look on his face that he remembers. He looks lost and puzzled sometimes. A cold mask appears on his face. I have heard people say that we get stronger after **suffering**. We must suffer pain to become better people. This is what Maxim and I have done. We have both known fear and loneliness and pain.

Our life in this little hotel is dull, and every day is the same. But we **prefer** it that way. In the big hotels we would meet too many people he knows. We like our simple life here, and we like to be bored because boredom is the cure for fear. In the morning, we read the English newspapers and follow the sports. In the afternoon, we have tea.

Here, on this white balcony, I think of half past four tea at Manderley. The tables would be ready in front of the library fireplace. The door opened at the same time every day, and the tea was brought in a silver tray.

There was always so much food that we never ate all of it. I always wondered what happened to the leftovers. But I never asked Mrs

Danvers. She would have looked at me with hate. I would think, ‘She is comparing me to Rebecca,’ and I would feel pain.

Well, it is over now. I do not feel pain any longer. On this balcony, I feel happy and calm. I am not quiet and shy with strangers anymore. I am very different from that person who went to Manderley for the first time. I am no longer that **awkward** girl who was **desperate** to please. I can see my old self now, with short straight hair, a young face without makeup, wearing badly-fitting clothes, and walking shyly behind Mrs Van Hopper.

* * *

Mrs Van Hopper was not a pleasant person. She would enter the restaurant, and I would follow her. Her short body trying to walk on high heels, in her frilly blouse, and her new hat with a huge feather on it.

Mrs Van Hopper would spend her winters at the Hotel Cote d’Azur, the most expensive hotel in Monte Carlo. She loved to talk about others. She loved to say that she was friends with important people, even if she had seen them only once at the post office. Somehow, she would always find a way to introduce herself to people. She would attack them so quickly that they would have no chance to run away.

That day, she walked to her usual table, put on her glasses, and looked around the room. ‘There’s not one well-known person at lunch today,’ she said in her loud voice.

We ate in silence, for Mrs Van Hopper liked to concentrate on food. I lost my appetite just by watching her eat. Looking away from her, I

saw that a new guest had arrived and was sitting down at the table next to ours.

Mrs Van Hopper put down her fork and **stared** at him. I felt **embarrassed** while she stared. She turned to me with excitement.

‘It’s Max de Winter,’ she said loudly. ‘The man who owns Manderley. You must have heard of it, of course. He looks ill, doesn’t he? They say it’s because of his wife’s death.’

* * *

Mrs Van Hopper had a favourite sofa in the lounge of the hotel, between the reception and the door to the restaurant. After meals, she had coffee there and watched the people who passed by.

I remember that afternoon as if it was yesterday. Mrs Van Hopper sat at her sofa, thinking about how to introduce herself to Mr de Winter. Suddenly, she turned to me, her small eyes shining.

‘Go upstairs quickly and find the letter from my nephew,’ she said. ‘You remember, the one with the photographs. Bring it to me.’

I hated this. I felt that this man would not like to be disturbed. But Mrs Van Hopper was not a **sensitive** person. I went upstairs and found the letter. I wanted to go to the restaurant first and warn him, but I did not have the courage to do this.

When I came back with the letter, I saw that Mr de Winter was already sitting next to Mrs Van Hopper on the sofa. I walked towards them and gave her the letter. He stood up at once.

‘Mr de Winter is having coffee with us. Go and ask the waiter for another cup,’ Mrs Van Hopper said to me.

‘No,’ he said to her. ‘You are both my guests.’

Before I knew what had happened, he was sitting in my hard chair, and I was on the sofa beside Mrs Van Hopper.

She looked **annoyed** for a moment. She leant forward to his chair and started talking loudly.

‘You know I saw you in the restaurant,’ she said. ‘I thought, there’s Mr de Winter, my nephew Billy’s friend, and I must show him Billy’s photographs with his new wife. They are in Florida. I met you at his party in London. But you don’t remember an old woman like me.’

‘I remember you very well,’ he said.

I looked at him. He had a handsome, sensitive face. He looked like man who belonged to a **distant** past, a knight from the fifteenth century.

‘If Billy had a home like Manderley, he would not go to Florida,’ Mrs Van Hopper said, and she laughed. ‘I’ve heard it’s one of the most beautiful houses in England.’

She paused, **expecting** him to smile but he did not.

‘I’ve seen pictures of it, of course,’ she went on. ‘It looks **fascinating**. How can you leave it?’

His silence was now painful, but she continued.

‘You Englishmen, you don’t want to show off, so you don’t like talking about your homes.’



Before I knew what had happened, he was sitting in my hard chair, and I was on the sofa beside Mrs Van Hopper.

She turned to me. 'Mr de Winter is so modest he won't **admit** it. But his family has had that lovely house for centuries.'

He did not reply and gave her a disgusted look. I waited for her to change the topic, but she continued. As she asked more questions, I felt my face go red with embarrassment.

I think he realized this, for he leant forward in his chair and spoke to me in a gentle voice, asking if I would have more coffee. I refused and shook my head.

'What do you think of Monte Carlo?' he asked me. I was young and immature and did not know what to say.

As I was about to reply, Mrs Van Hopper **interrupted**. 'I like Monte Carlo. The English winter makes me depressed. What brought you here? You don't usually come here. How are you going to spend your time here?' she asked him.

'I don't know yet,' he said. 'I came in a hurry.'

He must have remembered something because his face changed, and he frowned slightly.

Mrs Van Hopper then began her usual gossip about the people in Monte Carlo. She went on and on, talking about people that he did not know. He grew colder and more silent. He did not interrupt her or look at his watch. Finally, the waiter came and said that Mrs Van Hopper's dressmaker was waiting for her.

He got up at once, pushing back his chair. 'Don't let me keep you,' he said. 'Fashion changes so quickly.'

'It was so nice seeing you, Mr de Winter,' Mrs Van Hopper said as

we walked towards the lift. ‘I hope I will see you again. I’m having some people in my room tomorrow evening. Why not join us?’

‘I’m sorry,’ he said. ‘I will be away all day tomorrow.’ And without waiting for an answer he turned and left us.

‘That was strange,’ said Mrs Van Hopper as we went upstairs in the lift. ‘He left so suddenly. Men do strange things. By the way, dear. You were a little talkative this afternoon. You tried to control the conversation, which embarrassed me.’

I said nothing. The lift stopped. We arrived at our floor.

Mrs Van Hopper was soon with the dressmaker in her bedroom. I sat on the window seat and looked out. The sun shone brightly, and there was a wind. In half an hour, her friends would arrive to play bridge². I would be talking to them, serving tea, clearing ashtrays and tidying the room.

There was a knock on the door. The lift-boy came in with a note. ‘Madame is in the bedroom,’ I said to him, but he said it was for me. I opened it and found a small piece of paper with a few words written.

“Forgive me. I was very rude this afternoon.” That was all. No signature, and no beginning. But I knew it was from Mr de Winter.

‘Is there an answer?’ asked the boy.

‘No,’ I said. ‘There isn’t any answer.’

After he left, I put the note away in my pocket.

* * *

The next morning, Mrs Van Hopper woke up with a sore throat and

² bridge: a card game

a fever. I called the doctor, who came at once. He said she had the flu.

‘You are going to stay in bed until I allow you to get up,’ he said to her. ‘I don’t like the sound of your heart.’

Then he turned to me and said, ‘And I’d like her to have a trained nurse. You cannot lift her. It will only be for a few weeks.’

To my surprise, she agreed with him. I think she enjoyed the attention of the people, the visits, the messages, and the flowers.

When the nurse arrived, I went downstairs to the restaurant for lunch. It was before one o’clock, so I expected it to be empty. Only the table next to ours was taken. I was surprised because I thought Mr de Winter would be out of town.

I went to our table and sat down. As I unfolded my napkin, I knocked over the vase on the table. The water covered the tablecloth and ran down my lap. Immediately Mr de Winter was at my side.

‘You can’t sit here,’ he said. He began to mop the cloth, and the waiter saw what had happened and came.

‘I don’t mind,’ I said. ‘It doesn’t matter.’

He said nothing. The waiter removed the vase and the flowers.

‘Leave that,’ he said suddenly. ‘Lay another place at my table. Mademoiselle will have lunch with me.’

‘Oh no,’ I said. ‘I couldn’t.’

‘Why not?’ he said.

I tried to think of an excuse. I knew he did not want to have lunch

with me. He was just being polite. I decided to be brave and tell him the truth.

‘Please, don’t be polite,’ I said. ‘It’s very kind of you. But I will be all right.’

‘But I’m not being polite. I would like you to have lunch with me. I would have asked you even if you hadn’t knocked over that vase.’ He smiled. ‘You don’t believe me,’ he said. ‘Never mind, come and sit down. We don’t have to talk unless we want to.’

We sat down, and he gave me the menu and went on eating. I ordered, and we sat in silence.

‘What’s happened to your friend?’ he asked. I told him about the flu.

‘I’m so sorry,’ he said. After a pause he added, ‘I suppose you got my note. I felt **ashamed** of myself. I was very rude yesterday. I’ve become like this because of living alone. It’s very kind of you to have lunch with me today.’

‘You were not rude,’ I said. ‘She is always so curious. She does it to everyone of importance.’

‘Why would she think I am important?’ he asked.

I **hesitated** a moment before replying.

‘I think because of Manderley,’ I said.

He did not answer, and I felt the discomfort again. He did not want to talk about his home, and I wondered why. We ate for a while without talking.

‘Your friend,’ he said. ‘She is very much older than you. Is she a relative?’

‘She’s not really a friend,’ I told him. ‘I work for her. I travel with her, and she pays me money.’

‘Don’t you have any family?’

‘No. They’re dead.’

‘You have a lovely and unusual name.’

‘My father was a lovely and unusual person.’

I did not normally tell people about my father, but I found myself talking to this stranger about him and my family history. For some reason I felt like I could speak. My shyness disappeared, and soon I had told him about my childhood. I told him about my father’s lively personality and my mother’s love for him, and how she too had passed away five weeks after he died. I realized that we had been sitting at the table for more than an hour, and only I had been talking. I apologized.

‘I’ve enjoyed this hour with you more than I’ve enjoyed anything for a very long time,’ he said.

I looked at him and believed he was telling me the truth.

‘You know,’ he said. ‘We are similar in some ways. We are both alone in this world. I have a sister, but I don’t see her very often. I also have a grandmother whom I visit only three times a year.’

‘You forget,’ I said. ‘You have a home, and I don’t have one.’

I immediately **regretted** my words because the secret look came back to his eyes.

‘An empty house can be as lonely as a full hotel,’ he said.

I thought he was going to tell me about Manderley, but something stopped him.

‘So, you are on holiday this afternoon. How are you going to spend it?’ he asked.

I told him that I wanted to draw a picture of a house in Monaco. I could be there by three o’clock if I took the bus.

‘I’ll drive you there in my car,’ he said. ‘Go upstairs, and put your hat on, and I’ll have the car ready.’

I was in a happy mood that afternoon, and I remember it well. The blue sky, the white clouds, the white sea, the boats, and the smiling people. I can feel the wind on my face again and hear our laughs. I had never looked so young and felt so old. Mrs Van Hopper and her flu, and her cocktail parties were forgotten. I was a person of importance. I was grown up at last.

We reached the house that I wanted to draw, but it was too windy, so we went back to the car. We started driving and went up a twisting mountain road. We drove on like a bird in the air. Then suddenly we reached the top of the hill. Looking at him, I realized he was not laughing anymore; he was silent and distant again.

He stopped the car at the very edge of the road. We got out and looked beneath us. We were only a few steps away from the edge of the cliff. Far below us lay the sea. The houses looked tiny. The wind dropped, and it grew cold.

‘Do you know this place?’ I asked. ‘Have you been here before?’

He looked at me without **recognizing** me. I knew he had forgotten about me and was lost in his own thoughts. He had the face of a sleepwalker.

‘It’s getting late? Let’s go home,’ I said smiling.

‘I’m sorry,’ he said as he came back from his dream. ‘I shouldn’t have brought you here.’

We went back to the car.

‘Don’t be frightened. The road down is easier than it looks,’ he said.

‘Have you been here before?’ I asked.

‘Yes,’ he said after a pause. ‘Many years ago. I wanted to see if it had changed.’

‘Has it?’

‘No, it has not changed.’

We went down the twisting road without saying a word. Then he began to talk about Manderley. He did not talk about his life there, but he told me how the sun set there. He told me about the sea, cold and still, and how from the terrace of the house you could hear it. He told me about all the flowers. He told me about the wild flowers in the woods. He told me about the little pathway down the valley to the bay and the flowers that covered it.

Then we were back in Monte Carlo. I noticed the sun was setting. Soon we would come to the hotel. As I was looking for my gloves in the pocket of the car, I found a slim book. It was a book of poetry.

‘You can take it and read it if you like,’ he said.

I was glad. I felt that I wanted something that belonged to him.

‘Jump out,’ he said. ‘I must park the car now. I won’t see you in the restaurant this evening. But thank you for today.’

I walked up the hotel steps alone. I thought of the long hours to bedtime. I did not want to answer Mrs Van Hopper's endless questions. I sat down in the lounge and ordered tea.

I picked up the book of poems he had given me. It was an old book that had been read many times. I opened the front page and found some writing: "*Max – from Rebecca. 17 May*". The name Rebecca stood out black and strong. The "R" was tall, much bigger than the other letters. I shut the book quickly and put it away. I remembered what Mrs Van Hopper had told me about Mr de Winter's wife.

'It was a terrible tragedy. It was all in the newspapers. He never talks about it. She was drowned you know, in the sea near Manderley.'

* * *

It was my first love. I was twenty-one, and I was not strong or brave. Today, as a middle-aged woman, I can easily **ignore** the many small worries of life. But then, I would easily get hurt by a careless word.

'What have you been doing this morning?' asked Mrs Van Hopper. She had been in bed for over a week now and was short-tempered.

'I've been playing tennis with the professionals,' I lied in panic.

'The trouble is you don't have enough to do,' she said. 'I don't know what you do all day. You never have any new drawings to show me. And when I ask you to do some shopping for me, you forget. I hope your tennis is getting better. A bad player is boring to play with.'

'Yes,' I said, hurt by her words and thinking she was right. I could not tell her that I was spending my mornings with Mr de Winter.

I still remember the excitement of those mornings. I would run down the stairs because the lift was too slow. He would be there in the driver's seat reading a newspaper. He would smile at me, put away the paper, and open the door.

I did not care where we went. I was happy to be sitting beside him. We went through many villages, but I remember none of them today. I remember sitting with the map on my lap and the wind in my hair. Looking at the clock in the car I thought, 'This moment now must never be lost.'

'I wish there was an invention,' I said to him one day. 'A scent in a bottle that we could keep our memories in. We could open the bottle whenever we wanted and live the moment again.'

I looked up at him. He went on watching the road.

'What moment would you keep in that bottle?' he asked.

'I'm not sure,' I replied. And then I said, 'I'd like to keep this moment.'

He laughed and said, 'So, you like my driving.'

I became silent. I felt very young and silly. 'I wish,' I said angrily. 'I wish I was an older woman wearing a beautiful black dress and a pearl necklace.'

'You would not be in this car with me if you were,' he said.

'Why do you ask me to come out in the car every day?' I asked him. 'I know you are being kind. You know everything about me. I am young, and I don't have much experience in life. But I know almost nothing about you. I only know...'

‘What do you know about me?’

‘That you live at Manderley and... And that you have lost your wife.’

I had said the words at last: your wife. Your wife. I could not take it back. ‘He will never forgive me,’ I thought. He stopped the car by the side of the road. Then he turned to me and spoke.

‘You talked about an invention, something to keep your memories in. I think differently from you. To me, all memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them. A year ago, something happened that changed my life, and I want to forget every moment of my life until that time. The day I met you met, I finished that part of my life. But sometimes the memories are too strong. Remember the first time we drove together? When we climbed the hills and looked down over the cliff. I was there with my wife in the past. It was the same place, but I did not feel like I was in the past. It was because of you. You have erased the past for me. I ask you to come with me not because of kindness. I ask you because I like you, and I like to be with you. If you don’t believe me, you can leave the car now.’

I sat still, my hands in my lap, not knowing what to do. I felt tears coming into my eyes. ‘I want to go home,’ I said.

He started the car, and we drove on. The tears began to run down my cheeks. I could not control them. Suddenly he took my hand and kissed it. He gave me his handkerchief. I felt young and small and very much alone.

‘Oh, I’m fed up with this,’ he said suddenly. He put his arm round my shoulders. ‘You are very young, and I don’t know how to talk to you. You can forget everything I told you. My family call me Maxim. I’d like you to do the same.’

He kissed the top of my head. I smiled, and he laughed back at me. The morning was happy again.

* * *

I was playing cards with Mrs Van Hopper that afternoon when she said, 'Tell me, is Max de Winter still in the hotel?'

'Someone has told her,' I thought. 'Someone has seen us together.' I waited for more questions. But she yawned and put the cards into the box.

'He's an attractive man, but difficult to understand,' she said. 'I never saw his wife, but I heard she was beautiful. Perfect in every way. They used to give wonderful parties at Manderley. Her death was very sudden and tragic. I heard that he adored her.'

I did not answer. I was thinking about Rebecca, beautiful and perfect. She was unforgettable.

I thought about the book. Rebecca had held it in her hands. I could see her turning the first page and writing, 'Max from Rebecca.' She called him Max. His family called him Maxim. Grandmothers, aunts, and people like me. I had to call him Maxim.

* * *

Two days later, we were having breakfast when Mrs Van Hopper showed me a letter she had received from her daughter.

'Helen is sailing to New York on Saturday. Her daughter is ill. We're going too. I'm tired of Europe, and we can come back in fall. How do you like the idea of seeing New York?'

The thought of leaving Monte Carlo was painful. She must have **noticed** the unhappiness in my face.

‘How strange you are. I don’t understand you. I thought you didn’t like Monte Carlo.’

‘I’ve got used to it,’ I said.

‘Well, you’ll get used to New York, too. We’re going on the same boat as Helen. Go down to the reception office and get the tickets.’ She laughed and went to the telephone to call her friends.

I could not go to the office right away. I went to the bathroom and locked the door. I wanted to be alone and think. Tomorrow evening I would be on the train with Mrs Van Hopper, holding her suitcases like a maid. The train would carry me away from him. He would be sitting in the restaurant of the hotel, at his table, reading a book, not thinking.

I would say goodbye to him in the lounge before we left. A quick goodbye, a smile, a pause, and words like, ‘Yes of course, write to me,’ and ‘Send me the photographs.’ We would become strangers.

Mrs Van Hopper knocked on the bathroom door. ‘What are you doing?’

‘All right. I’m sorry, I’m coming now,’ I said. I opened the door.

‘You have been in there a long time. You don’t have time for daydreaming today, you know. There’s too much to be done.’

I had not seen Maxim that day. He had told me he would be out of town all day. Mrs Van Hopper and I spent the day packing, and in the evening people came to say goodbye. We had dinner upstairs, and she went to bed afterwards. I went down to the lounge at half past nine and he was not there. The receptionist saw me.

‘Mr de Winter will not be back before midnight,’ he said.

So, I was not going to see him that evening. I cried that night. In the morning I woke up with a headache and red eyes. I was afraid Mrs Van Hopper would understand.

‘You haven’t got a cold, I hope,’ she said at breakfast in her room.

‘No, I don’t think so.’

‘I hate waiting around when everything is packed,’ she said. ‘I wish we had gone on the earlier train.’ She looked at her watch. ‘Perhaps they could change the reservations. Go down to the office and ask.’

I went to my bedroom and got dressed. I hated her now. I would not even have ten minutes to say goodbye to Maxim. Suddenly, I made up my mind. I left the room and ran up the stairs. I knew the number of his room. I knocked on the door.

‘Come in,’ he shouted, and I opened the door. He was shaving by the window. I felt awkward and foolish.

‘What do you want?’ he said. ‘Is something wrong?’

‘I’ve come to say goodbye,’ I said. ‘We’re leaving this morning.’

He stared at me, then put the razor down. ‘Shut the door,’ he said.

I closed it behind me and stood there.

‘Why didn’t you tell me about this before?’ he said.

‘Mrs Van Hopper only decided yesterday. Her daughter is going to New York on Saturday, and we are joining her in Paris. I don’t want to go. I’ll hate it.’

‘Why are you going with her then?’

‘I have to. You know that. I work for her.’

‘Sit down. I’ll be ready in five minutes,’ he said as picked up his clothes and went into the bathroom.

I sat down and began biting my nails. I wondered what he was thinking, what he was going to do.

He was ready in five minutes. ‘I’ll have breakfast on the terrace. Sit with me while I eat,’ he said.

‘I can’t. I don’t have time,’ I said. ‘I should be in the office changing the reservations now.’

‘Never mind that,’ he said. ‘I want to talk to you.’

We walked to the lift and went to the terrace.

‘I can only stay for a few minutes,’ I said.

He ordered his food, then looked at me.

‘So, Mrs Van Hopper is tired of Monte Carlo and she wants to go home. So do I. She to New York. I to Manderley. Which one do you prefer?’

‘Don’t make a joke about it,’ I said. ‘I have to go and take care of the tickets. I must say goodbye now.’

‘I’m not joking,’ he said. ‘I repeat. The choice is yours. You can go to America with Mrs Van Hopper, or you can come home to Manderley with me.’

‘Do you need me as a secretary or something?’

‘No. I’m asking you to marry me, you little fool.’

‘You don’t understand,’ I said. ‘I’m different from you. I don’t belong to your world.’

‘What is my world?’

‘Well...Manderley. You know what I mean.’

‘What do you know about Manderley? I’m the person to say if you belong there or not. You think I ask you to marry me because I want to help you, don’t you? To be kind.’

‘Yes,’ I said.

‘That’s not why I want to marry you. I’m not such a kind-hearted person. You haven’t answered my question. Are you going to marry me?’

I sat there, **confused**, even shocked. It was as though the King was asking me. And he went on eating his marmalade like everything was normal.

‘The idea doesn’t seem to please you,’ he said. ‘I’m sorry. I thought you loved me.’

‘I do love you,’ I said. ‘Very much. I’ve been crying all night because I thought I would never see you again.’

He laughed when I said this.

I was angry with him for laughing. Was it a joke to him? He saw the look on my face.

‘I’m being rude, aren’t I? This isn’t your idea of a marriage proposal. You should be in a white dress with a rose in your hand. There should be a violin playing a waltz. And I should be on my knees asking you the question. Poor darling,’ he said and laughed again. ‘Never mind. I’ll take you to Venice for our honeymoon. But we won’t stay too long because I want to show you Manderley.’

He wanted to show me Manderley. Suddenly I realized that it would happen. I would be his wife. We would walk in the garden together. We would walk through that path in the valley together. I would be Mrs de Winter.

‘Am I going to tell Mrs Van Hopper the news, or are you?’ he asked.

‘You tell her,’ I said. ‘She’ll be so angry.’

We got up and walked to the lift. We went up in the lift to our floor. He held my hand as we walked along the corridor.

‘I’m forty-two. Does it seem too old to you?’

‘Oh no,’ I said.

We came to the door.

‘I think I’ll talk to Mrs Van Hopper alone,’ he said. ‘I’ll tell her we’ll get married soon. Do you mind if we do it soon? I can **arrange** it in a few days.’

‘No white wedding dress? No bells? What about your relatives?’

‘You forget. I had that kind of a wedding before.’

We were still standing in front of the door.

‘So, what do you think?’ he asked.

‘I was thinking maybe we could get married at home,’ I said, and smiled.

He had already opened the door, so we entered.

‘Is that you?’ called Mrs Van Hopper from the sitting room. ‘Where have you been all this time?’

I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I had a strange pain in my stomach.

‘I’m afraid it’s all my fault,’ said Maxim as he walked into the sitting room. He shut the door behind him.

I went into my bedroom and sat down. I could not hear them. I wondered what he was saying to her. Perhaps he said, ‘I fell in love with her.’ I smiled to myself thinking how happy I was going to be. I was going to marry the man I loved. There was no reason for the pain in my stomach. ‘It must be because I’m nervous,’ I thought. We’re going to be married, and we’re in love.

Love. Maxim had not said anything about love. He had had no time. He had been in a hurry. Breakfast, marmalade, coffee. No time. He had loved Rebecca. I must never think about that. He loves me.

The book of poems was there on my bed. I opened the first page again. “*Max from Rebecca.*” She was dead, but her writing was alive. I took a pair of scissors and cut the page out of the book. The book looked white and clean when the page was gone. I tore the page up into tiny pieces and threw them into the waste basket. I lit a match and set fire to the pieces. The pieces turned to ashes. The letter “R” was the last to go. I washed my hands. I felt much better.

The door opened, and Maxim came in. ‘Everything’s all right,’ he said. ‘She was shocked at first, but she is all right now. I’m going downstairs to make sure she catches the train. Go and talk to her.’

He smiled and waved his hand. I went into Mrs Van Hopper’s room. She was standing by the window.

‘Well, I should congratulate you. You are more clever than I thought.’

I did not know what to say.

‘It was lucky for you that I had the flu. Tennis lessons! You could have told me.’

‘I’m sorry,’ I said.

‘You realize he’s very much older than you? You don’t have the experience. You don’t know these people. How are you going to have parties at Manderley? You can’t even put two words together? What are you going to say to his friends?’

I could not reply.

‘I’m sorry, but I think you’re making a big mistake. You will regret it.’

She looked at me. Perhaps she was being sincere for the first time, but I did not want it. Of course I was inexperienced, of course I was shy and young. I knew that. But I did not care. I would forget her and her hurtful words. I was going to be Mrs de Winter. I was going to live at Manderley.

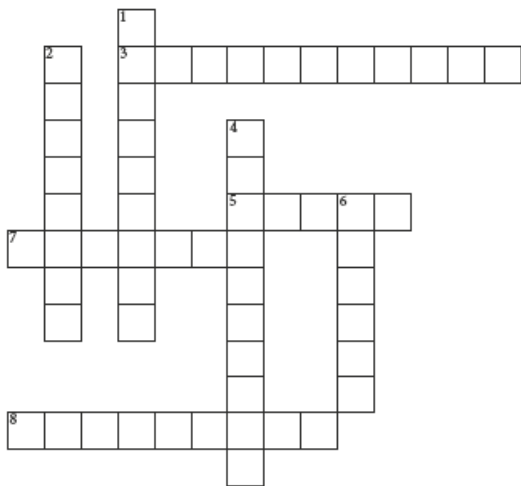
‘Of course,’ she said. ‘You know why he’s marrying you, don’t you? He’s not in love with you. He’s so lonely in that empty house that he’s nearly gone mad. He just can’t live there alone.’



ACTIVITIES

NOTE: In the book, the story is told by a woman whose name is never given. Therefore, we are going to refer to the story teller as the narrator.

A. Do the puzzle.



ACROSS:

- upset and ashamed
- look at for a long time
- calm and tolerant, willing to wait
- break into a conversation

DOWN:

- know smt because you have seen it before
- pause because of uncertainty
- strange and unknown
- feel sorry about past action

B. Mark the words in column B as synonyms (S) or antonyms (A) of the words in column A.

A	B
1. admit	deny ____ agree ____
2. expect	wait for ____ wish for ____
3. fascinating	interesting ____ boring ____
4. ignore	notice ____ avoid ____
5. prefer	choose ____ select ____
6. realize	comprehend ____ understand ____
7. suffering	comfort ____ pain ____

C. True or False?

- _____ 1. The narrator's dream in the beginning of the story was very similar to her real life.
- _____ 2. Mrs Van Hopper did not care much about other people's feelings.
- _____ 3. The narrator believed that Mr de Winter invited her to lunch at his table out of politeness.
- _____ 4. Mr de Winter was very cheerful when they drove up the hill and looked down the edge of the cliff.
- _____ 5. The narrator was not surprised that Mr de Winter asked her to marry him.

D. Who said this? Match the names with the sentences.

1. 'An empty house can be as lonely as a full hotel.' _____	a. The narrator
2. 'I've been playing tennis with the professionals.' _____	
3. 'I wish there was an invention. A scent in a bottle that we could keep our memories in.' _____	b. Mr de Winter
4. 'To me, all memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them.' _____	
5. 'I'm sorry, but I think you're making a big mistake. You will regret it.' _____	c. Mrs Van Hopper

E. Discuss the following questions.

1. Why do the narrator and Maxim prefer to stay at a little hotel rather than a big hotel?
2. How does the narrator describe herself as a young woman?
3. How did the narrator feel when she went out with Mr de Winter for the first time?
4. Does the narrator think she is different from the young woman she was?
5. Why did the narrator cut out and burn the first page of the book of poems?
6. The narrator decided to marry Mr de Winter. Do you think she had a happy marriage? Why/Why not?

GLOSSARY

Chapter 1

admit (v) to agree, often unwillingly, that something is true

annoyed (adj) slightly angry

annoy (v)

arrange (v) to plan, prepare for, or organize something

arrangement

ashamed (adj) feeling bad because others know that you have done something wrong or embarrassing

awkward (adj) lacking social skills or manners

confused (adj) unable to think clearly or to understand something

desperate (adj) needing or wanting something very much

desperately (adv)

destroy (v) to damage something so badly that it can no longer be used or no longer exists

distant (adj) 1. far away in space or time; 2. (of people) cold and unfriendly

embarrassed (adj) feeling ashamed or shy

expect (v) to look forward to or be waiting for

fascinating (adj) extremely interesting and attractive

fascinated (adj)

hesitate (v) to pause before doing something, especially because you are nervous or not certain

hesitation (n)

ignore (v) to pay no attention to something

interrupt (v) to stop a person from speaking by something you say or do

mysterious (adj) difficult to understand or explain; strange

notice (v) to see or hear somebody/something; to become aware of somebody/something

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dame Daphne du Maurier (1907-1989) was an English writer and playwright. She was a popular novelist known for her suspenseful, romantic, and sometimes supernatural plots.

She belonged to a creative family. Her father and mother were actors, her uncle was a magazine editor, and her grandfather was a writer. She started writing when she was very young.

Du Maurier had a very creative imagination and a deep love for writing and reading. Her first novel *The Loving Spirit* was published in 1931. This was followed by many successful, usually romantic tales set on the wild coast of Cornwall. Some of these include *I'll Never Be Young Again* (1932), *Jamaica Inn* (1936), *Rebecca* (1938), *Frenchman's Creek* (1941), *Mary Anne* (1954), *The Scapegoat* (1957), and *The Glass-Blowers* (1963). She also wrote many short stories, three plays, and a travel guide.

Du Maurier was made a "Dame Commander in the Order of the British Empire" in 1969. Later in her life Du Maurier also wrote some non-fiction work. She published an autobiography, *Growing Pains*, in 1977; the collection *The Rendezvous and Other Stories* in 1980; and a memoir, *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories*, in 1981. Many of her works were made into film adaptations such as 'Rebecca', 'My Cousin Rachel', 'The Birds', 'Jamaica Inn', 'Hungry Hill' and 'Frenchman's Creek'.

Sources:

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