

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Rebecca (1940)

Alfred Hitchcock

OVERVIEW

Director Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *The Birds*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Rear Window*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

Film *Rebecca* was Alfred Hitchcock's first American film. Despite this, the film often appears on lists of the greatest British films for its English setting and actors. The film was incredibly popular upon release, earning \$3 million in the US and Canada. Critics praised *Rebecca* but some were concerned that the story might be too dark for many viewers. They were quickly proven wrong. Over 500 critics selected *Rebecca* for Film Daily's year-end poll as Best Movie for 1940, and Kinematograph Weekly called it Britain's most popular film in 1940. While not as popular as some of Hitchcock's late British films, *Rebecca* remains fairly popular today with a Metacritic score of 86/100 and an average rating of 8.9/10 on Rotten Tomatoes.

Background *Rebecca* wasn't Hitchcock's first Daphne du Maurier adaptation, but it is his most faithful. Based on the 1938 novel, all but a handful of details were transferred from the book to the movie. These changes were forced upon the film by the Hayes Code and other censorship regulations. One of the minor changes was the omission of Mrs. Danvers' lesbian-coded obsession with Rebecca (although some of this still bleeds through). The most important change is Rebecca's death. In the book, Maxim shoots her with a gun. In the film, however, he accidentally commits manslaughter by pushing her, causing her to fall into an anchor and hit her head. The Hayes Code specifically states that all murderers in film and television must receive punishment on screen, and this minor change allowed the rest of the film to remain unchanged.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

Rebecca utilizes the full power of Hollywood in the Golden Age to create an impressive story with expansive sets. Using his trademark voyeuristic styling and smooth camera movements, Hitchcock keeps the viewer at the center of the action as this high-society psychological thriller unfolds. Multiple effects are used, including outstanding models and an actual fire in the film's final scene. There isn't much in the way of experimentation in *Rebecca*, but we can see the director finding his stride, utilizing and expanding on techniques he developed in the silent film era.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Mrs. de Winter – A young woman who marries Maxim and becomes the second Mrs. de Winter

George Fortescue Maximilian "Maxim" de Winter – A rich widower and owner of Manderley

Mrs. Danvers – housekeeper of Manderley and primary maid of the first Mrs. de Winter

Mrs. Edythe Van Hopper – A British socialite, employer of the second Mrs. de Winter

Frith – The oldest butler at Manderley

Frank Crawley – Maxim's friend and estate manager at Manderley

Beatrice Lacy – Maxim's sister

Major Giles Lacy – Beatrice's husband

Jack Favell – Rebecca's first cousin and lover

Colonel Julyan – Chief constable of the town near Manderley

Rebecca – The first Mrs. de Winter, who allegedly died at sea

Jasper – Maxim's dog

SYNOPSIS

An older socialite, Mrs. Van Hopper, and her personal assistant enjoy a vacation in the south of France. There, the young assistant sees a man looking at the sea from a cliff. It is Maxim de Winter. She shouts at him not to jump, and he wanders away. They meet the next evening at the hotel and strike up a relationship. Some weeks later, Mrs. Van Hopper must leave to attend her relative's wedding in America, and Maxim proposes to the young woman, unwilling to let her leave. The woman accepts and becomes Mrs. de Winter. Maxim introduces her to his famed mansion, Manderley, and the life of a noble. Mrs. de Winter is uncomfortable but she adapts and tries to do her best to manage the household as the first Mrs. de Winter, named Rebecca, had. The longer she lives with Maxim, the more she learns about his life with Rebecca before their marriage. Talking to Maxim's sister and Mrs. Danvers, the housekeeper, Mrs. de Winter learns of the dark secrets Maxim tries to hide. After narrowly dodging a potentially scandalous embarrassment at a costume party, Maxim is drawn to the seaside to help with a rescue operation when a ship runs aground nearby. His wife seeks him out, worried about his safety. In the little cottage by the beach, he confesses his dark secret to the new Mrs. de Winter: he is responsible for Rebecca's death when she fell onto a pile of sailboat tackle. His wife recoils at first but promises to help protect him, learning more about Rebecca's abusive relationship with Maxim. She had been sleeping with her first cousin, Jack Favell, and potentially others while keeping up appearances with Maxim. When Rebecca's body and boat are found and examined by the authorities, they re-open her case and bring Maxim and those involved to court. Jack Favell attempts to blackmail Maxim at one point in the investigation, leading to the discovery of Rebecca's secret doctor in London. When they track the man down, he doesn't recognize Rebecca or her case at first, but when Maxim recognizes the name 'Danvers' in the doctor's log, they discover Rebecca had been using an assumed name. To everyone's surprise, she had inoperable cancer. This is enough proof to the court of her motive for suicide, and they close the case. Back at Manderley, Mrs. Danvers is unable to accept the truth surrounding Rebecca's death. In one last spiteful act, she burns the building to the ground so that the new Mr. and Mrs. de Winter cannot live a happy life inside it. She dies in the blaze, but luckily she is the only victim of her arson.

PLOT

The Dream- The film opens on an ornate stone and wrought iron gate while a woman speaks: "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." The gate bars the camera's passage for a moment as she describes, their uncanny ability to float and pass through solid objects. Then the camera passes through the bars unimpeded and meanders down a winding drive bordered by bushes and trees. The woman's voice muses about nature's slow and steady encroachment on the man-made path. The camera continues, with fog pooling along the ground as it sweeps up the hill. A large English manor graces the screen. "And finally," the voice continues, "there was Manderley. Manderley – secretive and silent. Time could not mar the perfect symmetry of those walls." A burnt-out and overgrown ruin of a once opulent manor takes the screen as the clouds part and moonlight pours over the scene. "We can never go back to Manderley again," the voice concludes. "That much is certain."

The South of France- Waves churn and crash on the rocks below a cliff. The camera slowly shifts its gaze upward while dramatic music plays. At the edge of the cliff stands a man. He looks down towards the waves as if hypnotized by them. Little by little, he edges closer to the cliff's edge. "NO!" a woman cries. "STOP!" The man is shocked to be caught in such a vulnerable moment and becomes indignant: "Who are you? What are you staring at?" he shouts. "I didn't mean to stare," the woman apologizes, "But I... I only thought –" The man interrupts her, demanding to know why she's there. She replies she was only out for a stroll, and he tells her to keep walking; "Don't hang about here screaming." She leaves, and after one last glance at the ocean, the man walks away.



Monte Carlo Hotel- The night lights of Monte Carlo appear. Then the camera finds its way to a luxurious hotel bustling with activity. Inside the lobby, the woman from the cliff sits near an older woman. The older woman looks around the lobby, using a pair of spectacles hanging from her neck to get a better look at passers-by. "I'll never come to Monte Carlo out of season again," she complains. "Not a single well-known personality in the hotel." She's upset by her cold coffee and turns to complain to a passing waiter when she sees a well-dressed man. "My," she coos, "it's Max de Winter." The man from the cliff stops and stares at the younger woman, shocked recognition on his face. His face softens, and he greets the two women. The older woman introduces herself as Mrs. Edythe Van Hopper.

Coffee with Max- She claims to know Mr. de Winter, although he doesn't betray signs of recognizing her. After a lengthy hello, Mrs. Van Hopper turns to the young woman and mutters for her to fetch a waiter and another cup for Max's coffee. "I'm afraid I must contradict you," says Max. "You shall both have coffee with me." He sits and then orders a coffee from a passing waiter while lighting a cigarette for Mrs. Van Hopper. They talk about gambling --Mrs. Van Hopper met him in a Palm Beach casino years before--and the conversation moves to the famous manor he owns, Manderley. With brash decisiveness, Mr. de Winter addresses the young woman, "What do you think of Monte Carlo?" "Oh, well, I think it's rather artificial," she admits. Mrs. Van Hopper admonishes her before trying to convince Max to have a drink in her suite. He declines briskly and leaves, shocking Mrs. Van Hopper with his rudeness. On their way to the elevator, Mrs. Van Hopper chastises her paid companion for her embarrassing "effort to enter the conversation," saying Max probably didn't notice as "he just can't get over his wife's death."



Lunch- Mrs. Van Hopper's paid companion enters the hotel dining room and is seated quickly. She seems accustomed to such affluent surroundings and accidentally knocks over the table's ornate floral arrangement. While she apologizes to the waitstaff, Mr. de Winter approaches and asks them to set a place for her at his table. She declines at first but doesn't take much convincing to join the dashing man at his table. She orders scrambled eggs before Max asks about Mrs. Van Hopper. "She's in bed with a cold," the young woman explains. Max then apologizes for his rudeness the evening before, but the young woman assures him that she understands—her employer can be overbearing. She says her position is as a 'paid companion,' to which Max remarks, "I didn't know companionship could be bought." The young woman then tells Max of her childhood, losing her parents, and watching her father paint. As she eats her eggs, he invites her on a seaside stroll.



Seaside sketch- On a scenic overlook outside the city, Max leans on a railing looking out at the sea. He looks over his shoulder, down at the young woman and her sketchbook. “You’ve taken long enough for that sketch,” he remarks. “I shall expect a really fine work of art.” She looks embarrassed and begins erasing her work but stops when he chuckles and insists on seeing it. “It’s the perspective,” she explains before showing him the sketch. “I never can get it right.” He chuckles again and asks if he’s hard to sketch. She says that he is, owing to his constantly changing expression. Max responds that she should be looking at the scenery anyhow before comparing it to the coasts of Cornwall. The young woman then relives a vacation she took once to Cornwall when her father was still alive: She saw a postcard of Manderley on the trip. Max muses about his familial home. The subject changes to swimming, and Max shows concern about drowning. “I never have any fear of drowning,” the young woman says proudly. Max’s mood turns dark and suggests that he drive her back to the hotel.



Van Hopper’s gossip- The young woman enters Mrs. Van Hopper’s room and overhears a conversation she has with a private nurse: “I know Mr. de Winter well. I knew his wife too,” she says. “Before she married, she was the beautiful Rebecca Hildreth, you know. She was drowned, poor dear, while she was sailing near Manderley. He never talks about it, of course, but he’s a broken man.” The nurse gives her a spoonful of medicine and Mrs. Van Hopper reacts with comic revulsion, shoving bonbons into her mouth. Then she lays eyes on her paid companion and chastises her for being late. Later that night, the young woman tosses and turns in bed, Mrs. Van Hopper’s words repeating in her dreams: “Broken Man,” “Beautiful Rebecca Hildreth,” “Can’t get over his wife’s death.”



Tennis lessons- “Where are you going?” Mrs. Van Hopper asks when the young woman enters her room with a tennis racket the next morning. Her companion says she wants to take a tennis lesson, and Mrs. Van Hopper chuckles about her probably having developed a “schoolgirl crush” on some “desperately handsome” instructor. “All right, go ahead,” she says. “Make the most of it.” Downstairs, the young woman heads outside when a voice makes her jump: “Off duty?” Max strolls into shot when she turns to face him. “Mrs. Van Hopper’s cold has turned into flu,” the young woman explains, “so she’s got a trained nurse.” “I’m sorry for the nurse,” he quips before inviting the young woman on a drive. A slow montage follows, showing the car ride and some events during the following week, including Mrs. Van Hopper complaining about Mr. de Winter ignoring her letters and calls.

Car ride- On another drive sometime after their first, Max and the young woman gaze around the countryside as the car zips around corners. The young woman smiles broadly while Max looks quite serious. "I wish there could be an invention," says the young woman, "that bottled up the memory like perfume." When she finishes her musing, Max asks, "And what particular moment in your young life would you want to keep?" The young woman replies, "These last few days." After a few more moments of her musing, Max warns her that some of the hypothetical bottles would contain demons. Eventually, the conversation takes a turn when the young woman asks, "Would you please tell me, Mr. de Winter, why you asked me to come out with you?" Max stops the car. He replies that she has been excellent company and helped him to forget his past. "But if you think I just asked you out of kindness or charity," he continues, "you can leave the car now and find your own way home." The young woman begins to cry, and the man offers an apology, telling her to call him 'Maxim' like his family does.



Voyage to New York- The scene opens with a letter from Maxim; "Thank you for yesterday." The young woman hums happily while she arranges the large gift bouquet in a vase. "For the love of Pete!" cries Mrs. Van Hopper from the other room. "Come here!" She announces that her daughter is going to be married and says they must leave for New York immediately. The paid companion looks startled as Mrs. Van Hopper begins yelling at her to pack and get ready to leave. The young woman scampers to her bedroom where she tries to phone Maxim. The front desk informs her that he's gone out, and the young woman becomes frantic. Still, she asks for a porter to take a note to Maxim's room. With time running out, Mrs. Van Hopper and her young companion stand among their cases and trunks while porters ferry their luggage outside. She quickly excuses herself to her room, to check for any forgotten belongings, where she phones Maxim one last time. This time, the man at the desk connects her, much to her relief.



Maxim's room- Mrs. Van Hopper haughtily marches into the room used by her paid companion. Before she can talk to Maxim, the young woman is forced to hang up, being led away by her employer. The phone rings in the empty room. In front of the hotel, a car is loaded and ready for the two women. Mrs. Van Hopper waits for a driver to open her door while her companion fidgets nervously. The young woman excuses herself to "leave a forwarding address," dashing back inside the hotel. She is unable to phone Maxim and cannot find him in the dining room, so she makes her way to his room. Maxim greets her, confused. "I've come to say goodbye," she says. "We're going away." Maxim walks away to dress, and the young woman tries to say goodbye. When she does, Maxim gives her an ultimatum: "Either you go to America with Mrs. Van Hopper, or you come home to Manderley with me." After clarifying that he is asking her to marry him, she sinks into a chair, shocked.



Breakfast conversation- A knock comes on the door, and a porter wheels a cart in, with Maxim's breakfast. He says he's famished as he finishes dressing and enters the sitting room. In a gentlemanly fashion, he offers the young woman a seat at his breakfast table before eating. He smirks, seeing the look on her face: "Ah, my suggestion didn't seem to go at all well. I'm sorry." She says the proposition threw her, "I don't belong in your sort of world." "Well, I'm the best judge of whether you belong there or not," Maxim replies. They confess their love for one another and the young woman accepts his proposal, becoming the new Mrs. de Winter.



Call downstairs- "Who's going to break the news to Mrs. Van Hopper?" Maxim asks while he butters his toast. The young woman reacts with fright, saying, "She'll be so angry," and asking Maxim to tell her. He phones downstairs, asking the bellhop to retrieve Mrs. Van Hopper from her car outside. She doesn't take any convincing, thinking the man is finally responding to her letters. "This isn't at all your idea of a proposal," Maxim laughs as he holds his bride-to-be. He paints a picture of their wedding night, and they smile together. There is a knock, and Maxim assures her that she won't have to speak. Mrs. Van Hopper enters the room, proudly proclaiming her departure to attend the wedding of her daughter in New York. "That's rather a coincidence," says Maxim. "I asked you up here in order to tell you of my engagement." Mrs. Van Hopper reacts with elation, asking who the lucky woman is. Maxim gestures to the young woman behind her. Mrs. Van Hopper's smile fades. "I apologize for depriving you of your companion in this abrupt way," Maxim says. "I do hope it won't inconvenience you too greatly."



Busybody- Mrs. Van Hopper looks serious for a moment, but she breaks out in a smile learning the proposal happened just moments before. She says she ought to reprimand the bride-to-be but grins instead, saying, "I shall give you both my congratulations and my blessings." Maxim tells her the wedding will be "as soon as possible." "A whirlwind romance! Splendid!" cries Mrs. Van Hopper. She begins saying she can cancel her plans to sail to New York. Then she continues, elbowing in on their plans, saying she'll give her paid companion away and take care of the catering and other arrangements. Seeing his bride-to-be's discomfort, Maxim interrupts her: "We're most grateful, Mrs. Van Hopper. But I think we'd both prefer to have it as quiet as possible. And I couldn't possibly allow you to change your sailing plans." He leaves the room to secure his fiancé's luggage.



Alone with Van Hopper- “So this is what's been happening during my illness. Tennis lessons, my foot,” scolds Mrs. Van Hopper. She gossips for a moment about the “strange tastes” of Englishmen before talking about her position as lady of the house. “You certainly have your work cut out as mistress of Manderley,” she continues. “To be perfectly frank with you, my dear, I can't see you doing it.” She suddenly turns spiteful: “You haven't flattered yourself that he's in love with you. The fact is, that empty house got on his nerves to such an extent he nearly went off his head.” The young woman asks Mrs. Van Hopper to leave, and she does. When she exits, she looks the young woman up and down and scoffs, “Mrs. de Winter.”



Mistress of Manderley- Outside a French courthouse, life continues as usual. A policeman walks his beat while children play and old women gossip. Cars pass by with their roaring engines. Mr. and Mrs. de Winter walk down the stairs, hand in hand. An older gentleman pokes his head out a window, shouting in French after them and waving a piece of paper. Maxim chuckles and translates for his wife: “He says I've forgotten the proof that we're married.” The scene changes to England, where a car rolls up to the gates of the Manderley. The horn sounds and a butler opens the gates. “Welcome home, Mr. de Winter!” the butler calls when the car rumbles past. “There's no need to be frightened, you know,” Maxim reassures his uneasy-looking wife. “Just be yourself, and they'll all adore you.” It begins to rain as the car winds up the long drive, and, unable to raise the convertible top, Maxim passes his coat to his wife.



The Staff- An older butler meets them by the door with an umbrella, shielding Mrs. de Winter from the worst of the downpour. Calling him Frith, Mr. de Winter asks him about the staff while he rushes inside. Mrs. de Winter takes a moment to shake Frith's hand in a proper greeting, an awkward motion showing just how out of place she feels. Frith reports all is well in the household, and the staff is prepared to meet his new wife. Both of the de Winters are shocked by the sheer number of people in attendance. “Mrs. Danvers' orders, sir,” Frith mutters to Mr. de Winter. Maxim reassures his wife that it shouldn't take long as they approach the several dozen servants lined up in the grand foyer.

Mrs. Danvers- The newlyweds approach the house staff, and a dour-looking woman steps in front of them. Maxim introduces her as Mrs. Danvers. "How do you do?" Mrs. de Winter asks breathlessly. "I have everything in readiness for you," Mrs. Danvers replies. By the cold look on her face, she seems unimpressed. Mrs. de Winter thanks her, saying she didn't expect anything from the staff. Nervously fidgeting, she drops her glove. Both she and Mrs. Danvers stoop to pick it up, and Mr. de Winter calls from another room for his wife to join him for tea. Distaste subtly spreads across Mrs. Danvers' face after the new Mrs. de Winter leaves the room.



First impressions- The rain keeps falling as the evening creeps in. In her room, Mrs. de Winter dresses for dinner with the help of a maid. A knock comes on the door and she calls out excitedly for Maxim. To her disappointment, Mrs. Danvers enters. The housekeeper shoots a commanding look at the maid, who collects a bundle of clothing and exits, leaving Mrs. de Winter and Mrs. Danvers alone. Mrs. Danvers asks Mrs. de Winter if the young maid was satisfactory, explaining that she is a parlor maid. "She'll have to look after you until your own maid arrives," she continues. "Oh, but I haven't a maid," replies Mrs. de Winter. "I'm sure Alice will do very nicely." Mrs. Danvers says it won't do, politely but coldly explaining that aristocratic ladies have personal maids. She then asks if the room is to Mrs. de Winter's satisfaction; it was previously used for guests. "Then it wasn't Mr. de Winter's room originally?" asks Mrs. de Winter. Mrs. Danvers explains that Maxim's rooms are in the West Wing and discusses some of the history of the house. Mrs. de Winter then apologizes for her lack of experience and asks for patience, saying that Mrs. Danvers may run the household however she sees fit. "Mr. de Winter has never complained," the housekeeper replies coldly.



Dinner- Mrs. de Winter tries to excuse herself, but she's startled to find Mrs. Danvers following her. As they walk downstairs, Mrs. Danvers points out the former Mrs. de Winter's room. She becomes lost in thought, describing the room's beauty. A dog lies in front of the door. The camera pans in and dramatic music swells. The music becomes romantic as a dining room scene fades in. Napkins with 'RdeW' monogrammed on them rest on the table. The camera pulls away, revealing the new Mrs. de Winter smiling, seated at a dinner table. The smile fades when she grows overwhelmed by the opulence of her surroundings. Down the long, ornately set table sits Maxim. Two butlers serve them.



Crawley- The early morning sunlight beats down on Manderley. Mrs. de Winter opens a large door inside the mansion and is surprised to find a pipe-smoking man seated at the breakfast table. "Good morning," they greet each other. The man introduces himself as Crawley, Maxim's estate manager. "There's a fearful lot of stuff piled up while Maxim was away," he says. Mrs. de Winter wishes there was some way she could help when Maxim enters the room. "Oh, no," says Maxim. "Frank never allows anybody to help him. He's like an old mother hen with his bills and rents and taxes." The two men leave after Maxim instructs his wife to eat all the breakfast, "or cook will be mortally offended," and tells her his sister and her husband will be visiting for lunch. Mrs. de Winter looks frightened, but Maxim comforts her as he leaves.



Quantities of breakfast- Mrs. de Winter turns her attention to the breakfast arranged in a neat buffet along one of the room's walls. Dissatisfied with the food, she simply takes a cup of tea and returns to her toast at the table. She looks down the long, empty table with a sad look on her face while the music swells sorrowfully. Frith enters the room and bids Mrs. de Winter good morning before checking the breakfast buffet. He looks concerned when he approaches the breakfast table: "Isn't there anything I could get you, madame?" Mrs. de Winter replies that she isn't hungry. She gets up to leave, uncomfortable about the constant presence of the house staff. She doesn't seem to enjoy being waited on, and she longs for Maxim's companionship. She trips on her way out of the room, frightening the old butler.



"Big, isn't it" - Frith follows Mrs. de Winter, explaining the historical importance of a room open to the public weekly. Mrs. de Winter seems intimidated by the statement and wanders away. She enters a chilly, unlit study, rubbing her hands together for warmth while the music plucks out a tense tune. She looks at the unlit fireplace, confused. Frith approaches from behind: "I beg pardon, madam. I'm afraid the fire is not usually lit in the library until the afternoon. But you'll find one in the morning room." He makes a suggestion as Mrs. de Winter leaves, informing her that the late Mrs. de Winter did her correspondence in the mornings and that perhaps the new Mrs. de Winter should adopt a similar schedule. She wanders away, lost, and Frith dutifully assists her in finding the morning room. He watches her enter the room from the staircase, a bemused look on his face.



A lady's duties- Inside the morning room, Mrs. de Winter surveys her surroundings as if she has entered a crypt. The room is well-kept and friendly but foreboding music plays when she approaches the crackling fire. The dog, lying in front of the fire, leaves as if offended by Mrs. de Winter's presence. Neatly arranged binders with monogrammed 'R's rest atop the desk flanked by expensive china figures. Mrs. de Winter opens the address book to find Rebecca's signature inside. When she sits, she is startled by the phone ringing. She answers, saying, "Mrs. de Winter's been dead for over a year," before hanging up. She quickly realizes her mistake, but it's too late. Mrs. Danvers watches from the doorway, matronly and cold. "That was the house telephone, madame," she says, "Probably the head gardener wishing instructions." They discuss the upcoming luncheon, Mrs. Danvers making her obsession with the late Mrs. de Winter known further with her strange demands and back-handed 'considerations.'



Broken figure- After informing Mrs. de Winter that another servant will take her letters for postage, Mrs. Danvers leaves. Mrs. de Winter turns her attention to the address book once more. She opens it to find the names of high-ranking nobles and aristocrats, leaving her shaken. This is not her world. When she opens another binder, she accidentally knocks over one of the china figurines, sending it tumbling to the floor. It shatters, and Mrs. de Winter looks stunned for a moment. She picks up the pieces of the figure but is unsure what to do. In a panic, she stuffs the shards of china into the back of a desk drawer, hiding them behind wadded paper and envelopes.



Lunch guests- Frith meets two people at the front door while the camera looks down from atop the stairs. Frith greets the woman by name: "Good morning, Mrs. Lacy." She asks where Maxim is, and Frith replies that he went with Mr. Crawley to the farm. "How tiresome of him not to be here when we arrive, and how typical," she responds while the butler takes their coats. The camera pans to the right, revealing Mrs. de Winter spying from above, hidden behind a pillar. She creeps downstairs, trying to remain unheard and out of sight. She listens to the Lacy's gossiping about her, finding mirth in Mrs. Danvers "taking orders from a chorus girl." Mrs. de Winter steps into the room silently, waiting to be seen before she greets her guests. They become suddenly cordial, asking her how she likes Manderley and how she gets along with Mrs. Danvers. Mrs. de Winter responds politely, but Mr. Lacy prods: "You mean she scares you. She's not exactly an oil painting, is she?"



Maxim's sister- Mrs. Lacy insists that her husband 'make himself useful' by finding Maxim, and he leaves. She tells Mrs. de Winter that there's no reason to fear Mrs. Danvers and asks to sit down. Once seated, Mrs. Lacy continues speaking about Mrs. Danvers, saying, "You see, she's bound to be insanely jealous at first, and she must resent you bitterly." Mrs. de Winter is confused. "She simply adored Rebecca," Mrs. Lacy explains. Mrs. de Winter looks incredibly concerned as tense music plays. Now seated at the luncheon table, the Lacys, de Winters, and Crawley exchange conversation while several butlers serve their meal. Mr. Lacy comically quizzes Mrs. de Winter on her hobbies; it seems she doesn't have a single one he can name.



The old days- Mrs. Lacy pesters Maxim about having a party "like in the old days." He makes a noncommittal comment and his sister persists, saying that "everyone's dying to see you and –" Maxim chuckles, "I bet they are." Mrs. de Winter's first name still eludes the audience. Mrs. Lacy suggests a masquerade ball while Mr. Lacy quizzes Mrs. de Winter about any dance styles she might know. He finally asks Mr. de Winter what it is his wife likes to do, and he answers that "she sketches a little." "Not this modern stuff," scoffs Mr. Lacy. "You don't sail, do you?" he asks as a joke, responding to her saying no with, "Thank goodness for that." Immediately, he regrets this when Maxim's mood shifts towards despair.

Maxim and his moods- Mrs. Lacy and Mrs. de Winter stand together in a parlor. "You're very much in love with Maxim, aren't you?" Mrs. Lacy asks, continuing before Mrs. de Winter can answer, "Yes, I can see you are." She begins nitpicking her appearance, telling her to do something about her hair and style of dress, but Mrs. de Winter says Maxim never seems to notice or complain about her appearance. "Well, he must have changed," Mrs. Lacy. "You mustn't worry about old Maxim and his moods," she continues while they exit the parlor together. "Often he gets into a terrible rage, and when he does... *whistle* But I don't suppose he'll lose his temper with you. You seem such a placid little thing." The de Winters bid the Lacys farewell on the steps outside Manderley, Mrs. Lacy telling Mrs. de Winter she hopes her marriage is happy. While this pleases Mrs. de Winter, Mrs. Lacy's next words leave her confused: "We were very worried about him this time last year. But then, of course, you know the whole story."



Opinions about the Lacys- Waving goodbye as the Lacys pull away, Maxim suddenly pulls his wife in close. "Well, thank heavens they've gone," he says. "Now we can have a walk about the place." After asking a butler to fetch his wife a coat, Maxim holds Mrs. de Winter by the waist while they descend the steps. "What did you think of Beatrice?" he asks her. She replies that she liked her, but "she kept saying that I was quite different from what she expected." "What the devil did she expect?" Maxim asks. "Someone smarter and more sophisticated, I'm afraid," replies his wife. She begins asking about her appearance, but his answer is somewhat lackluster. He's focused on the walk. Maxim yells for his dog, Jasper, "Come take some of that fat off." The dog trots down the steps after them.



The cove- The de Winters walk briskly, arm in arm when Jasper, the dog, runs off in another direction. Mr. de Winter whistles after him, "Not that way!" The dog has different plans, taking a set of stairs down to a nearby cove. "Where does that lead to?" asks Mrs. de Winter. "It leads to a little cove where we used to keep a boat," replies Maxim. When his wife asks to go down, he refuses, but after some prodding, he agrees to go with her. Jasper barks in the distance, and Mrs. de Winter is worried. Maxim, however, won't let her go after the dog. He shouts after her when she eventually runs after the dog, frustrated. "Jasper!" Mrs. de Winter calls when the dog barks somewhere off-screen. She finds him seated and barking outside a small cottage.



The man in the cottage- When she approaches the cottage to retrieve Jasper, a man opens the door, staring at Mrs. de Winter. His blank look brightens when he looks down at Jasper: "I know that dog," the man grins. "He comes for the house." Mrs. de Winter says Jasper belongs to Maxim before asking for a rope to use as a leash. Not getting an answer, she steps inside the cottage, shocked at the disrepair of the little beach house. There's plenty of rope inside, and after selecting a length, Mrs. de Winter goes back outside. The man stares at her wide-eyed while she ties up Jasper. "You won't tell anyone you saw me in there, will ya?" he asks. Mrs. de Winter asks if he is a servant and he responds, saying, "I weren't doin' nothin'. I was just puttin' my shells away." He mentions the late Mrs. de Winter's passing and Mrs. de Winter leaves with the dog.



Maxim's anger- Mrs. de Winter can't find her husband at the landing where she left him, so she trots up the stairs after Jasper. Maxim sees her and begins walking away quickly. His wife calls out to him, but he ignores her. "I'm sorry I was such a time, but I had to find a rope for Jasper," Mrs. de Winter explains. Maxim snaps in reply, and she asks why he is so upset. "You knew I didn't want you to go there, but you deliberately went." When she says she went inside, he says, "Don't go there again! Do you hear?" "Well, why not?" Mrs. de Winter asks. "Because I hate the place" he sputters. Mrs. de Winter begins to cry, begging for forgiveness. Maxim apologizes, holding Mrs. de Winter until she calms down. They walk back to the house together, smiling.



The run of things- Sometime later, Mrs. de Winter enters Crawley's office. He stands in greeting, smiling, but she tells him not to get up. "I was just wondering if you meant what you said the other day about showing me the run of things?" she asks. Crawley says he was being genuine, explaining his day's work of notifying Maxim's tenants and servants about their celebratory bonuses concerning his marriage. Mrs. de Winter finds this very generous and offers to do anything to help, even licking the stamps. When they begin working, Mrs. de Winter brings up the cottage on the beach and the man living there. Crawley calls him 'Ben,' saying he gives the man some odd jobs occasionally. Mrs. de Winter keeps pressing him for information about Rebecca after learning the cottage was hers. He explains that she was drowned when her ship capsized. "Wasn't she afraid to go out like that alone?" the woman asks. "She wasn't afraid of anything," Crawley replies.



Comparisons- After talking about Maxim having to identify his wife's body, Mrs. de Winter says: "Mr. Crawley, please don't think me morbidly curious. It's just that I feel at such a disadvantage. All the time, whenever I meet anyone, Maxim's sister or even the servants, I know they're all thinking the same thing. They're all comparing me with her, with Rebecca." Crawley reassures her that she's done Maxim good, and that his love seems genuine. Mrs. de Winter compares herself to Rebecca once more, saying she lacks the late Mrs. de Winter's beauty, wit, and grace. Crawley says she makes up for that with her sincerity and kindness. She thanks Crawley for his patience and reassurance but requests one more question about Rebecca: "What was she really like?" "I suppose she was the most beautiful creature I ever saw," he responds.



A new dress- A magazine showing an ad for a dress rests on a table before the camera finds Mrs. de Winter wearing the same dress, walking with purpose towards a room. She seems self-conscious about her movement, trying to sway her hips. "Good evening, Maxim," she says in a sultry voice when she reaches the study that serves as their theater. Maxim is busy working on a film projector, saying the films from their honeymoon had just arrived. He is shocked when he looks up: "What on earth have you done to yourself?" Mrs. de Winter is disappointed at his reaction but explains that she thought he would like the new look. Maxim catches himself and reassures his wife that she looks lovely. Mrs. de Winter sits while Maxim begins the film. A series of shots play of the duo partaking in various activities, talking to each other or waving at the camera. They laugh and joke about the events on screen before the film comes to a sudden end. Maxim frustratingly tries to fix the reel so they can continue.



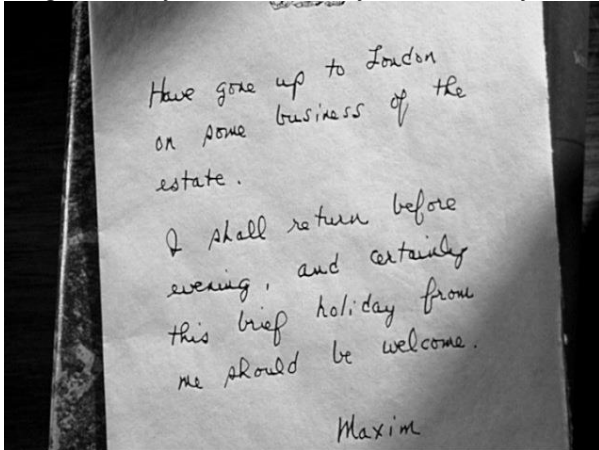
"A slight unpleasantness"- Frith enters the study looking concerned. Mr. de Winter invites him further into the room where the butler says, "It's about Robert, sir. There's been a slight unpleasantness between him and Mrs. Danvers." "This is trouble," mutters Maxim as he sits on the arm of Mrs. de Winter's chair, listening to the butler explain. "It appears that Mrs. Danvers has accused Robert of stealing a valuable ornament from the morning room," says Frith, continuing that the other butler denies the accusation and names the missing ornament: a china cupid. Mrs. de Winter looks shocked because it is the statue she broke earlier. After Frith has gone, Mrs. de Winter admits breaking and hiding the figure. "You broke it?" Mr. de Winter explodes. "Now, why on earth didn't you say something about it when Frith was here?" Mrs. de Winter explains that she didn't want to appear foolish, but Maxim chastises her, saying she'll have to tell Mrs. Danvers. "Don't be such a little idiot, darling," Maxim says when she asks him to tell Mrs. Danvers. "Anybody would think you were afraid of them."



Doubt- Frith returns with Mrs. Danvers. Mr. de Winter explains hastily while Mrs. de Winter begins to apologize for not telling anyone about her mistake. "Well, it looks as though Mrs. de Winter were afraid you were going to put her in prison, doesn't it, Mrs. Danvers?" Maxim smiles before asking that the figure's pieces be taken to a china-mender for an assessment. "Perhaps if such a thing happens again, Mrs. de Winter will tell me personally –" Mrs. Danvers begins only to be cut off and dismissed by Maxim. They start the film again, but instead of enjoying it, Mrs. de Winter goes on a self-deprecating tirade. She mentions gossip, earning Maxim's anger and suspicion. "I wonder if I did a very selfish thing in marrying you," says Maxim after he calms down. Mrs. de Winter pleads with him to say they have a happy marriage, but he refuses to answer.



Away on Business- "Have gone up to London on some business," reads a note left by Maxim for his wife. "This brief holiday from me should be welcome." The scene fades away to Mrs. de Winter seated in a parlor in Manderley, holding a handkerchief and crying. After the camera pulls back, a maid enters carrying a tray. "Is there anything I can do for you?" she asks politely. Mrs. de Winter says no and the maid leaves to fetch the sandwiches for her tea. Forlornly, the young woman wanders across the room. Tears still in her eyes, she parts the curtain to look out of a window on the other side of the room. Tense music plays while Mrs. de Winter looks toward the sea. An unknown man peeks from one of the West Wing's windows. He closes the window and disappears behind the curtain. Mrs. de Winter is frightened, questioning the maid when she returns, "The west wing – nobody ever uses it anymore, do they?" "Not since the death of Mrs. de Winter," the maid replies.



Mr. Favell- Mrs. de Winter wanders from her sitting room into the foyer beneath the staircase. She jumps at the sound of a door latch and hides in a nearby room. Jasper enters the foyer and begins barking at Mrs. de Winter. A man speaks, and Mrs. Danvers replies, calling him 'Mr. Jack.' The voices become more distinct as they descend the stairs. "We must be careful not to shock Cinderella, mustn't we?" jokes Mr. Jack. "I feel a little like the poor relation, sneaking around through back doors." Jasper whines at Mrs. de Winter when a door closes. Mrs. de Winter quietly hushes the dog when Mr. Jack speaks from behind her: "Looking for me?" After apologizing for startling her, Mr. Jack begins some small talk, lighting a cigar. Jasper rushes to him, jumping up and whining happily. Mrs. Danvers appears, looking especially stern. "Danny," Mr. Jack mockingly scolds, "all your precautions were in vain." He asks to be presented to the bride, and Mrs. Danvers introduces him as 'Mr. Favell.' Before leaving, Mr. Favell asks Mrs. de Winter not to mention his presence to Maxim, and she agrees. "Fare thee well," he says while he climbs out of the window and walks away.



The West Wing- Eerie music begins to play when Mrs. de Winter realizes Mrs. Danvers has left. She leaves the study and walks up the stairs, looking intently at the door to the West Wing. The music grows tenser still when she reaches the door and grasps the knob. Entering, she sees a dark but elegantly decorated room. A portrait of some 17th-century nobles stares down at Mrs. de Winter as she walks to the curtains. By the bed, she finds the pull and lets some light into the room. The music becomes romantic momentarily. She begins looking over Rebecca's belongings. A bang startles her, then Mrs. Danvers speaks: "Do you wish anything, madam?" Her silhouette stands menacingly behind the curtain that divides the private sitting room from the bed. Her eyes stare coldly at Mrs. de Winter when she walks into the light. Mrs. de Winter lies about finding the window open, and Mrs. Danvers sees right through it.



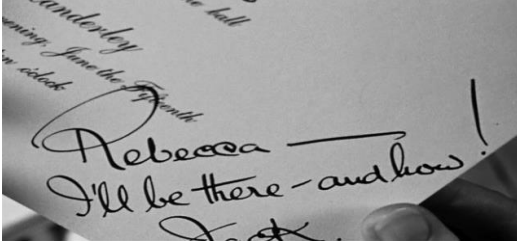
Lovely room- "You've always wanted to see this room, haven't you, madam?" Mrs. Danvers asks coyly while she closes the window Mrs. de Winter had opened. "Why did you never ask me to show it to you?" Pulling another curtain rope, the other wall of curtains flies open, revealing the full splendor of the West Wing. "It's a lovely room, isn't it?" asks Mrs. Danvers. "The loveliest room you've ever seen." She claims that nothing has changed since the night of Rebecca's death as Mrs. de Winter looks around in awe. Mrs. Danvers' obsession becomes clear when she shows Mrs. de Winter the wardrobe containing all of Rebecca's clothes. After showing her the fur coats and dresses Rebecca used to wear, Mrs. Danvers opens a drawer: "I keep her underwear on this side. They were made specially for her by the nuns in the Convent of St. Claire."



Obsession- Mrs. Danvers looks dazed, wandering around the West Wing in a nearly trance-like state while she recalls her memories of Rebecca. "Sometimes she and Mr. de Winter didn't come home until dawn," Mrs. Danvers recalls while she leads Mrs. de Winter back toward the bedroom. "While she was undressing, she'd tell me about the party she'd been to. She knew everyone that mattered, and everyone loved her." She notices Mrs. de Winter has touched the brush and frustratedly repositions it before picking it up and brushing Mrs. de Winter's hair as if she were Rebecca. After showing off the bedroom and embroidered pillowcases, Mrs. Danvers gets caught in another trance: "Sometimes when I walk along the corridor, I fancy I hear her just behind me. That quick, light step." She turns to Mrs. de Winter, asking, "Do you think the dead come back and watch the living?" Mrs. de Winter leaves while Mrs. Danvers' mental state continues to degrade. Mrs. Danvers stares out the window, asking empty air to listen to the sea.



Too many reminders- In her morning room, Mrs. de Winter cries, staring at the 'R' monogrammed binders on her desk. Suddenly, she reaches for the phone and asks the person on the other end to send Mrs. Danvers to her immediately. She hangs up and begins shoveling all of Rebecca's old correspondence onto the table, noticing a note from Mr. Favell among them. She wipes away her tears just as Mrs. Danvers enters the room. "You sent for me, madame?" She asks calmly. "I want you to get rid of all these things," she says, pointing to the letters. "These are Mrs. de Winter's things," Mrs. Danvers protests. "I am Mrs. de Winter now," Mrs. de Winter says proudly. Mrs. Danvers agrees, but her voice betrays her sadness. A car horn honks outside and Mrs. Danvers turns to leave, but Mrs. de Winter stops her, assuring her that she won't mention Mr. Favell to Maxim. "I'd prefer to forget everything that happened this afternoon," she says before leaving the room.



Warm Welcome- "Oh, Maxim, Maxim," cries Mrs. de Winter when she runs across the foyer, "you've been gone all day!" Maxim complains jokingly while his wife throws her arms around his neck and clings to him. She leads him into the study. Romantic music begins to play when Mrs. de Winter makes a request: "Darling, could we have a costume ball just as you used to?" Maxim looks unsure, "Has Beatrice been at you?" "I feel that we ought to do something to make people feel that Manderley is just the same as it always was," replies Mrs. de Winter. "You would have to be hostess to hundreds of people, all the county," Mr. de Winter cautions. "And a lot of young people would come up from London and turn the house into a nightclub." "I could learn what to do," replies Mrs. de Winter, "And I promise you, you wouldn't be ashamed of me." Wanting to see his wife happy, Maxim agrees, asking her to coordinate with Mrs. Danvers. Mrs. de Winter disagrees, saying she'll do all the party planning herself.



Designs- A drawing of Joan of Arc appears on screen. The disgruntled artist scribbles over the design and tears it from the notepad before placing it atop a pile of several other discarded sketches. Now on her bed, Mrs. de Winter works hard on a 15th-century-style costume when a knock comes on the door. Mrs. Danvers enters with her pile of rejected sketches, asking if Mrs. de Winter intended to discard them. Mrs. de Winter says she wants to surprise her husband, and Mrs. Danvers has a suggestion. She leads Mrs. de Winter to one of the gigantic portraits in the foyer, saying the 19th-century dress in it was "meant for her," and could be easily reproduced by a tailor. "I've heard Mr. de Winter say that this is his favorite of all the paintings," Mrs. Danvers adds. Mrs. de Winter thanks her for her assistance, but Mrs. Danvers doesn't stick around to hear it.



The Night of the Ball- Manderley is surrounded by a heavy fog as the first guests for the costume ball begin to arrive. Crawley looks around the foyer, walking briskly towards the servants making preparations. He asks Frith if things are going to plan, and the old butler says they are. Then he gives Crawley a weird look, asking if he's meant to be dressed as a schoolmaster. Crawley replies that he's just put on his old graduation cap and gown, and Frith cracks a smile: "Certainly makes a very nice costume, sir, and economical too." Crawley seems to understand the covert insult clearly, looking offended. More guests begin to enter Manderley. The Lacys arrive and take off their coats. Mrs. Lacy is dressed as a Valkyrie and Mr. Lacy a weight-lifter, complete with a plastic dumbbell. Maxim greets them, and they marvel at the buffet and decorations while they wonder about Mrs. de Winter's secret costume.



Last Touches- Beatrice excuses herself to go and assist Mrs. de Winter with the last touches of her costume. She's disappointed when Mrs. de Winter turns her away, but she walks away to join the party. In Mrs. de Winter's room, a maid assists her in fitting the ornate 19th-century dress. They're both excited to see a real Manderley ball and talk giddily with one another. "You're sure I look alright?" Mrs. de Winter asks before taking her fan and leaving. She hurries from the room, stopping in front of the portrait Mrs. Danvers showed her to compare the dresses. They match perfectly. Adopting the same stance as the woman in the portrait, Mrs. de Winter slowly descends the stairs, keeping a smile painted on her face and waiting for Maxim to notice her. When Maxim does turn to face her, his smile fades.



Led Astray- "What the devil do you think you're doing," growls Mr. de Winter. "Rebecca," Mrs. Lacy gasps. "But i-it's the picture." Mrs. de Winter pleads. "The one in the gallery." Maxim covers his face with his hand, seething. "What is it? What have I done?" Mrs. de Winter asks frantically. "Go and take it off," Maxim snaps. "It doesn't matter what you put on. Anything will do." The young woman is stunned, but a shout from Maxim sends her running. She scampers up the stairs and out of sight just as the first couple is announced by a butler. At the gallery, Mrs. de Winter stops to look at the painting when she sees Mrs. Danvers walking into the West Wing.



“He doesn’t love you”- Mrs. de Winter rushes to the West Wing to confront Mrs. Danvers. “I watched you go down,” the housekeeper says calmly, arranging flowers, “just as I watched her a year ago.” “You knew that she wore it, and yet you deliberately suggested I wear it,” Mrs. de Winter is horrified. “Why do you hate me?” “You tried to take her place,” Mrs. Danvers replies coolly. She goes on, telling Mrs. de Winter she knows Maxim will never get over the loss of Rebecca. “You thought you could be Mrs. de Winter,” Mrs. Danvers says while Mrs. de Winter pleads with her to stop. “She’s too strong for you. No one ever got the better of her, never, never.” Mrs. de Winter falls on Rebecca’s bed sobbing, and Mrs. Danvers casually opens a window, saying, “A little air will do you good.” After a moment, Mrs. de Winter stands and tries to leave, but she’s overcome with tears once more. “He doesn’t love you,” Mrs. Danvers spits. “He wants to be alone again with her.” In an act of intense hatred and cruelty, Mrs. Danvers attempts to convince Mrs. de Winter to jump from the window and kill herself.



Seaside rescue- An explosion interrupts the tense scene. The two women look into the distance where flares burst and light up the night sky. Along the shore, a ship has run aground. “Shipwreck!” a guest cries. “Ship on the rocks!” shouts another. “Come on, everybody,” yells a man. “Down to the bay!” Frith throws a coat over Maxim’s shoulders before he runs after the others toward the sea. Mrs. de Winter calls after her husband, but he’s already out of earshot. She rushes away from Mrs. Danvers, who looks worriedly at the rush of bodies below her. The fog lays thick along the shoreline while men bustle about with ropes and boats. Mrs. de Winter approaches a man she recognizes as Ben and asks after Mrs. de Winter. “She won’t come back, will she?” Asks Ben in reply. “You said so.” Frightened by his strange answer, she walks away.



The diver’s discovery- After wandering through the fog for some time, Mrs. de Winter runs into Crawley, who reports he hasn’t seen Maxim in about half an hour. Crawley looks concerned when Mrs. de Winter says Maxim isn’t at home. “The diver who went down to inspect the bottom of the ship came across the hull of another boat – a little sailboat,” Crawley says reluctantly. It was Rebecca’s boat he tells her. “It’ll be so hard on poor Maxim,” Mrs. de Winter says. “Well, I’d better get along and arrange some breakfast for the men,” Crawley says before departing. Mrs. de Winter continues her search for Mr. de Winter.

Light in the cottage- Mrs. de Winter notices a beam of light coming from Rebecca's cottage. Thinking it could be her husband, she walks towards the house, carefully so as not to trip in the dense fog. Inside, it is much as it was before, but Maxim sits against a wall, his gaze a thousand miles away. "Have you forgiven me?" Mrs. de Winter asks. "What have I got to forgive you for?" Maxim asks in reply. Mrs. de Winter mentions her faux pas with the costume. "I was angry with you, wasn't I?" Maxim says groggily. She asks if they can have a fresh start and he stands, holding her and looking into her eyes. "You love me very much, don't you?" says Maxim. "But we've lost our little chance of happiness."



"Rebecca has won"- "It's all over now," Maxim continues while he paces, sounding increasingly frantic. "The thing's happened. The thing I've dreaded day after day, night after night." He sinks into an old armchair, saying, "Rebecca has won. She knew that this would happen." Mrs. de Winter kneels before him, clutching his hands. She tries to comfort him when he reveals something, "The diver made another discovery. He broke one of the ports and looked into the cabin. There was a body in there." He goes on to explain that he knew it was Rebecca's body. The woman he identified a year ago was not his wife, and he knew, he says. "How did you know, Maxim?" Mrs. de Winter asks. Maxim looks guilty while he speaks, "Because I put it there."



"No secrets, no shadows"- "Will you look into my eyes and tell me that you love me now?" Maxim asks his wife. Mrs. de Winter recoils at first, causing Maxim to despair. She quickly returns to him after recovering her composure, promising that her love is true: "We can't lose each other now. We must be together always, with no secrets, no shadows." Maxim says the time they have together may be short. "How could I even ask you to love me when I knew you loved Rebecca still?" Mrs. de Winter continues. "I knew you were thinking, 'This I did with Rebecca, and this and this.' Oh, it's true, isn't it?"

“Breeding, brains, and beauty”- “You thought I loved Rebecca?” Mr. de Winter asks, surprised. “I hated her.” He walks away from his wife and lights a cigarette, telling her about his early romance with Rebecca. He was charmed by her at first, but it didn’t last. “‘She’s got the three things that really matter in a wife,’ everyone said. Breeding, brains, and beauty. And I believed them, completely,” Maxim explains, puffing on his cigarette. “But I never had a moment’s happiness with her.” He asks Mrs. de Winter if she remembers the cliff where they first met. It was there Rebecca revealed their marriage to be a sham.



The truth about Rebecca- Maxim begins telling Mrs. de Winter what Rebecca had said in the South of France: "You'd look rather foolish trying to divorce me now, after four days of marriage, so I'll play the part of a devoted wife, mistress of your precious Manderley. I'll make it the most famous showplace in England if you like, and people will visit us and envy us and say we're the luckiest, happiest couple in the country. What a grand joke it will be! What a triumph!" He admits wanting to kill Rebecca then. Mrs. de Winter lets slip that Mr. Favell was at the house. Maxim chuckles sardonically before telling Mrs. de Winter the whole truth about Rebecca. Maxim believed Rebecca had been sleeping with Favell, her first cousin. He came down to the cottage the night Rebecca died, expecting to find them both there, but it was only Rebecca. She told him she was pregnant with Favell's child and Maxim shoved her in anger, knocking her down. She died from hitting her head against a spare anchor. Then he staged her drowning death, and her body still rests inside the boat.



The woman in the crypt- “Maxim, does anyone else know this?” asks Mrs. de Winter. Maxims says only she and he know the truth. Mrs. de Winter suggests that he claim Rebecca’s body is someone else, but Maxim replies, “They’re bound to know her.” He predicts the worst outcome: They’ll realize his original misidentification was a lie. Mrs. de Winter tries to reassure him, feeding him the lines to say to investigators. “Rebecca’s dead,” she concludes. “She can’t speak. She can’t bear witness. She can’t harm you anymore.” “I told you once that I’d done a very selfish thing in marrying you,” Maxim replies. “You can understand now what I meant.” The couple hold each other for a moment before a telephone begins ringing. He hangs up after a short conversation, telling his wife that the chief constable has called him to the morgue to make an identification.



Morgue- Several men and police officers flank Mr. de Winter while he looks down at a body in the morgue. He turns around, and two men follow. As they walk down the hall, the camera pans down to Maxim's feet. A streetlight casts the shadows of the window panes against the hall, making the scene resemble a prisoner's march to a cell. "Well, Colonel Julyan," Maxim says sheepishly, "apparently I did make a mistake about that other body." Crawley says the mistake is understandable given the circumstances, saying Maxim was sick. Maxim loudly denies this. The Colonel reassures Maxim, saying, "Nobody can blame you for making a mistake. The pity is, you've got to go through the same thing all over again." There is to be another inquest. Maxim barely contains his fear of the publicity while the Colonel hypothesizes about Rebecca's death at sea.



The News- Moonlight beams down on Manderley. Inside the mansion, Frith approaches Mrs. de Winter with the latest newspaper. She says she'd prefer if no one troubled her or Maxim about the news for a moment. "I understand, madam," Frith says sympathetically. "Permit me to say that we're all most distressed outside. I'm afraid the news has been a great shock to Mrs. Danvers." They discuss the upcoming inquest for a moment, Frith offering his and the staff's testimony should it prove useful. Mrs. de Winter thanks Frith, then turns and leaves the foyer. In a nearby study, Maxim stands before a fire, looking defeated. He forces a smile when he sees his wife. She approaches, cooing his name sympathetically.



"Gone forever"- The couple holds each other while Mrs. de Winter worries: "Oh, Maxim, I'm... I'm worried about what you'll do at the inquest tomorrow. You won't lose your temper, will you?" Maxim promises not to. Mrs. de Winter asks to come to the inquest, promising not to be any trouble. Maxim agrees, moving closer to his wife. "I don't mind this whole thing, except for you," Maxim says, looking deeply into his wife's eyes. "I can't forget what it's done to you. It's gone forever. That funny, young, lost look I loved... won't ever come back. I killed that when I told you about Rebecca." "Oh, Maxim," Mrs. de Winter cries as she presses herself against him. They kiss passionately, and the camera draws back as if giving them a moment of privacy.



The inquest- A street marker appears reading “Kerrith Board School.” Beneath the sign, a police officer addresses a group of people. “Black Jack Brady, was his name,” he says, spinning a yarn. “The most important arrest I ever made.” The group of people before him shuffle their feet when the policeman proudly proclaims they hung the man a month after he’d caught him. A crowd murmurs from behind the door he guards, and he turns around to take a peek. “They’ve got old Barmy Ben up now,” the policeman reports. Inside the makeshift courtroom, Ben stands before the judge. “You remember the late Mrs. de Winter, don’t you?” the judge asks. “She’s gone,” Ben replies. When the judge presses further about the night of Rebecca’s death, the man replies, “I didn’t see nothin’. I don’t want to go to the asylum. Them cruel folks there.” Despite reassuring the man he’ll be safe from the asylum, they can’t get him to talk and he is dismissed.



The seacocks- The courtroom murmurs for a moment when the next witness is sworn in, Mr. Tabb, the shipbuilder. Mr. Tabb is asked about his history working for the late Mrs. de Winter. “I often said Mrs. de Winter was a born sailor,” he says when asked if Rebecca ever had any accidents. The judge floats the capsizing hypothesis and Mr. Tabb corrects him. The judge asks for more specificity, and Mr. Tabb obliges: “Oh, well, the seacocks are the valves to drain out the boat, and they’re always kept tight closed when you’re afloat. Yesterday when I examined that boat, I found they’d been opened.” The judge is shocked, asking what Mr. Tabb means. “I know it’s a terrible thing to say, sir,” the shipbuilder says confidently, “but in my opinion, she was scuttled.” He adds the additional evidence that there were holes made on the inside of the cabin which aided the sinking.



de Winter takes the stand- Before being dismissed, Mr. Tabb is asked if he believed Mrs. de Winter capable of suicide, and he denies this. Mr. de Winter is called to testify. Maxim looks nervous when he approaches the makeshift bench. The judge is apologetic: “I’m sorry to drag you back for further questioning, Mr. de Winter. You’ve heard the statement of Mr. Tabb. I wonder if you can help us in any way.” Maxim says he doesn’t know how the seacocks could have come to be unplugged and denies knowledge of the holes made in the cabin. The judge presses harder, demanding to know if Rebecca could have been driven to suicide. “Were relations between you and the late Mrs. de Winter perfectly happy?” the judge asks. When Maxim stammers, the judge asks the question again. Mr. de Winter begins to shout, but the attention turns to Mrs. de Winter, who slumps forward onto the ground.



Favell butts in- The judge calls for a recess for lunch and dismisses the court. "I told you you should have had some breakfast," Maxim says while he helps Mrs. de Winter out of the makeshift courtroom. "You're hungry. That's what's the matter with you." Their driver meets them outside, and Maxim asks for him to drive somewhere a bit more private. Away from the crowd, Mr. de Winter tends to his wife, checking on her and pouring her some brandy before leaving to find Crawley. Mrs. de Winter tries to drink the liquor when Mr. Favell appears at the window. "Hello," he says when he enters the car. "How does the bride find herself today?" He keeps talking even though Mrs. de Winter asks him to leave. Maxim returns, brusquely asking Favell what he wants. Favell begins rummaging through the de Winter's picnic lunch, chewing on a chicken leg while he blackmails Maxim. "I have a strong feeling," he says cooly, "that before the day is out somebody's going to make use of that, uh, rather expressive, although somewhat old-fashioned term 'foul play.'"



Private room at the inn- Mr. Favell reveals a note Rebecca sent him the night of her death. Maxim moves to take it, but Favell snatches it away. "I can assure you that it is not the note of a woman who intends to drown herself that same night," he teases before insinuating that Maxim should buy him an expensive car or plot of land to keep his mouth shut. Mr. Crawley shows up, joining the four of them in the rear when Maxim asks for a private place where he and Mr. Favell can discuss a 'business deal.' Crawley points him to a nearby establishment, and Maxim leaves with Favell, muttering that Crawley should bring Colonel Julyan as quickly as possible. Mr. de Winter is greeted warmly by the innkeeper, who shows him to a private room immediately. Favell orders drinks, mocking Maxim by treating him to a drink: "I feel I can afford to play host." Colonel Julyan enters with Mrs. de Winter and Crawley, surprising Favell. Maxim exposes Favell's withheld evidence. Favell, not wanting to be held in contempt of court, passes the note to the Colonel.



“Grounds for Suspicion”- Colonel Julyan puts on some reading glasses and begins reading the note aloud:

"Jack, darling,

I've just seen the doctor and I'm going down to Manderley right away. I shall be at the cottage all this evening and shall leave the door open for you. I have something terribly important to tell you.

Rebecca."

Mr. Favell asks if the note sounds like someone about to commit suicide before chipping away at the theory Rebecca would take her life by destroying her boat. "Come, Colonel," Favell finishes, "as an officer of the law, don't you feel there are some slight grounds for suspicion?" "Of murder?" the Colonel responds, shocked. "What else?" says Favell before calling Maxim an 'old-fashioned type' who would kill to defend the family honor. Crawley accuses Favell of blackmail, and the Colonel agrees. "Be careful, Favell," he warns when Favell accuses him of corruption. "You've brought an accusation of murder. Have you any witnesses?" Favell claims Ben saw the whole thing. Then he begins insulting Mrs. de Winter's loyalty to her husband, driving Maxim to strike him.



Motive- Frustrated at Mr. Favell's theatrical attitude towards the situation, the Colonel demands a motive. "I've read enough detective stories to know that there must always be a motive," says Mr. Favell before leaving the room. He returns with Mrs. Danvers in tow. "Danny, who was Rebecca's doctor?" Favell asks when Mrs. Danvers doesn't answer the Colonel. "Mrs. de Winter always had Dr. McClean from the village," she replies quickly. She claims she doesn't know anything when Mr. Favell suggests Rebecca's doctor in London, but she speaks up when he mentions Rebecca being in love with him. "Love was a game," she says, wringing her hands, "She used to sit on her bed and rock with laughter at the lot of you." The Colonel asks if there is any reason Rebecca might have committed suicide. "No, no, I refuse to believe it," Mrs. Danvers says. "I knew everything about her, and I won't believe it." Using this statement, Mr. Favell and the Colonel are eventually able to pry the name of Rebecca's doctor in London from the housekeeper: "Dr. Baker, 165 Goldhawk Road, Shepherd's Bush." Mr. Favell proposes that Rebecca had learned from this doctor that she was pregnant with his child, and in a jealous rage, Maxim killed her. The Colonel, Mr. Favell, and Maxim decide they must go to question Dr. Baker.



Dr. Baker- The men sit with Dr. Baker in his little London office. “Dr. Baker, you may have seen Mr. de Winter's name in the papers recently,” says the Colonel, and the doctor offers his condolences to Maxim. “We're trying to discover certain facts concerning the late Mrs. de Winter's activities on the day of her death,” the Colonel continues. Dr. Baker says he's never had a patient named de Winter. He offers to confer with his record book, but still, there is no Mrs. de Winter. Listed on that day, however, is a ‘Mrs. Danvers.’ When Dr. Baker describes the woman, he describes Rebecca. “The lady must have used an assumed name,” concludes the Colonel. “This is a surprise,” says the doctor. “I'd known her a long time.”



Rebecca's illness- “What was wrong with her?” Mr. Favell demands. The doctor refuses to answer, citing medical confidentiality, but with accusations of murder and suicide, the doctor concedes. “The woman who called herself Mrs. Danvers was very seriously ill,” says the doctor. Maxim mentions pregnancy. “That was what she thought,” Dr. Baker replies, “but my diagnosis was different. I sent her to a well-known specialist for an examination and X-rays.” “What was wrong with her?” Maxim asks softly. “Cancer,” the doctor replies. “The growth was deep-rooted. An operation would have been no earthly use at all.” Mr. Favell looks particularly shaken. The men thank the doctor and leave to return home and report their findings to the Inquest. Rebecca's death will be ruled a suicide in light of the new evidence of her terminal illness.



“Thank heaven we know the truth”- “Thank heaven we know the truth,” Mr. Crawley says to Maxim outside the doctor's office. “Dreadful thing,” the Colonel mutters, “dreadful. A young and lovely woman like her. No wonder –” “I never had the remotest idea,” Favell interrupts. “Neither did Danny, I'm sure.” The Colonel dismisses them all, saying he'll take the information home and conclude the inquest. Favell leaves after receiving one last scolding about blackmail, and Maxim thanks the Colonel for his kindness. With everyone else gone, Maxim turns to Crawley. “I didn't kill her,” he says. “But I know now... she wanted me to kill her. She lied on purpose [about her pregnancy]. She foresaw the whole thing. That's why she stood there laughing.” “Don't think about it anymore,” Crawley says, clapping his arm across Maxim's back.



Something Wrong- “Hello, Danny?” Mr. Favell says in a phone booth. “I just wanted to tell you the news. Rebecca held out on both of us. She had cancer. And now Max and that dear little bride of his will be able to stay on at Manderley and live happily ever after.” The scene fades to Maxim and Crawley driving along toward Manderley. “When you phoned,” Crawley asks, “did she say she’d wait up?” Maxim replies that he told her to go to bed. “I wish I could get some more speed out of this thing,” he complains after a moment. “Is something worrying you, Maxim?” says Crawley. “I can’t get over the feeling something’s wrong,” Maxim replies. A light passes the front windows of Manderley. Mrs. Danvers walks with a candle while string music plays. She approaches Mrs. de Winter, asleep on a couch by the fire. She turns to face the camera, her face filled with grief. She looks to the side as if formulating an idea.



Manderley ablaze- Maxim’s car comes flying around a curve but suddenly comes to a stop. “Frank,” Maxim says, jostling Crawley. He wakes, confused when Maxim asks him the time. “It must be 3:00 or 4:00. Why?” “That can’t be the dawn breaking over there,” Maxim replies. Crawley suggests the aurora borealis. “That’s not the Northern Lights,” says Maxim. “That’s Manderley!” The mansion is engulfed in flames. He pulls the car up the drive as quickly as he can and jumps out, calling for Frith. His loyal butler is there and assures him that Mrs. de Winter is alright. Husband and wife embrace. “Mrs. Danvers,” Mrs. de Winter says, “She’s gone mad. She said she’d rather destroy Manderley than see us happy here. Look! The west wing!” The flames grow ever brighter as the camera zooms in on one of the windows. Mrs. Danvers stumbles away from the flames for a few moments but finds herself trapped. She looks up at the burning ceiling, and the roof collapses, crushing her. Rebecca’s bedroom burns, the flames licking across her monogrammed pillowcase as the film ends.



THEMES

SOCIETY

Gender Gender is on display in some surprising ways in *Rebecca*. The thing that sticks out most is the strange way Mrs. de Winter is treated: Even before their marriage, she is only an extension of her husband. Frustratingly, we never learn her maiden name, first name, or even nickname. She is 'girl' to Mrs. Van Hopper, and 'darling' to Maxim. The 'paid companion' has no stated name until she becomes Mrs. de Winter. Another surprise is Maxim's sensitivity and compassion for his wife. Maxim maintains his gentlemanly qualities even at his angriest. He never threatens to strike Mrs. de Winter, nor does he let his outbursts go unforgiven. Rebecca, though she never appears on screen, is a muse for many characters. They are all struck by her grace, beauty, and intelligence. Little do they know, it is all an act. Rebecca revels in privately eschewing the expectations of her peers and servants, confiding only in Mrs. Danvers and Mr. Favell. Even they don't know the depths of Rebecca's mind, shown most clearly when Dr. Baker reveals the truth of Rebecca's illness. Although we never see Rebecca, she is easily the most scandalous of all Hitchcock's female antagonists.

Class Class is a driving aspect of this romantic thriller. Mr. de Winter is an obvious aristocrat, accustomed to the presence and behavior of servants. Mrs. de Winter is lower class and has trouble adapting to such an opulent lifestyle. This major difference between the husband and wife causes Mrs. de Winter to become even more self-conscious. Mrs. Danvers, seeing Mrs. de Winter's discomfort, takes advantage of the unwitting young woman on multiple occasions. This comes to a head when she reveals that she believes Mrs. de Winter will never come close to the class of Rebecca. She thinks Mrs. de Winter is unworthy of both Maxim and Manderley, especially when compared to the woman she is obsessed with. Class plays a comic aspect as well, especially in the beginning. Mrs. Van Hopper shows how wealth can be an insult to the point of dismissing reality. Van Hopper never catches on that Mr. de Winter has no interest in her because she surrounds herself with servants, and they never tell her what she doesn't want to hear. She is also oblivious to the soon-to-be Mrs. de Winter's love affair with Maxim during her illness, more concerned with gossiping to the private nurse she's hired to deal with her flu.

RELATIONSHIP

Loyalty Loyalty and lack of loyalty play a major role in *Rebecca*. Mrs. de Winter's loyalty to Maxim begins before she is ever named. During their whirlwind romance in the South of France, Mrs. de Winter takes every chance she can to be with Maxim. When Mrs. Van Hopper says they must leave for New York, Mrs. de Winter's only thought is contacting Maxim. Likewise, Maxim shows incredible loyalty to his new wife. Whereas most easy-to-anger men portrayed in media of the time are unrepentant or uncaring, Maxim's irascibility is tempered by loyalty to his values and a love of his wife. While he does display great anger at several points in the film, he always manages to rein himself in and apologize for his behavior before comforting his wife. Crawley, Frith, and the other house staff show unshakable loyalty to Mr. & Mrs. de Winter, most clearly when Frith offers up his or any of the staff's testimony for the inquest. Mrs. Danvers' loyalty to Rebecca is immense, becoming an outright obsession after her mistress' death. Mr. & Mrs. de Winter cement their loyalty to one another during the inquest. Despite Maxim's concern about how his wife will be affected, she demands to stay by his side, helping however she can. Mrs. Danvers' final act is one of loyalty to Rebecca. Knowing just how much her mistress hated Maxim, Mrs. Danvers does everything in her power to make sure the two can never be happy in Manderley.

Love Love is a key theme in this film. It is used in complex, twisting ways that add additional thrilling enjoyment to *Rebecca*. Because we piece together the story of Rebecca's death through the experiences of the new Mrs. de Winter, we are led to believe that she and Maxim were quite happy together. Others talk about the late Mrs. de Winter with such warmth and admiration that it's hard to believe she could have been anything other than a loving wife. This causes a good bit of tension between Mrs. and Mr. de Winter as Mrs. de Winter constantly compares herself to Rebecca. During the film's first major twist, we learn that Maxim is the one who killed Rebecca and that their marriage was a sham from the beginning. Misled by others, Mrs. de Winter tries to show and obtain Maxim's love by becoming a copy of the woman he hated. Despite this rather dramatic conflict, Maxim and Mrs. de Winter show a lot of love for one another. It seems whenever they are on screen together, they are holding each other and kissing. They are always concerned about the other's well-being, spending much of the film talking to one another about their feelings or missteps. Even though they struggle to accept each other's love at points, in the end, they repair their relationship and show authentic love and concern for one another during the inquest and the eventual burning of Manderley. In their own ways, Mr. Favell and Mrs.

Danvers show their love for Rebecca. Mr. Favell's expression is a bit more understandable, as he goes to great lengths to show that Mr. de Winter killed his lover and unborn child. He is the one most affected by the truth about Rebecca's cancer, his mind having been set on the pregnancy story for so long. Mrs. Danvers' obsession and eventual arson are bizarre acts of love for Rebecca.

Marriage There are two main marriages in *Rebecca*: Maxim's marriage to Rebecca and his new marriage to the young Mrs. de Winter. The first marriage was fraught with intrigue and hatred, with Rebecca toying with Maxim and treating their entire relationship as a cruel joke. She would often sleep around with others, notably her cousin, Favell. Desperate to save face, Maxim agreed to keep up the facade of their marriage, although he was far from happy being Rebecca's plaything. Maxim's second marriage is based on love and admiration, but it isn't successful due to the long-term effects of his relationship with Rebecca. Events such as cheating can be especially traumatic, and Maxim's rage is sympathetic once its root cause is revealed. He also mourns his part in Rebecca's death. Despite this, he cannot tell anyone without risking a renewed investigation into his late wife's death. During the inquest, Maxim's worst fears come to life, but his new wife stands by him, helping in whatever way she can be it simple comfort or feinting in the courtroom as a distraction when Maxim nearly loses his head on the stand.

JUSTICE

Murder Murder and what constitutes murder is a central theme in *Rebecca*. This theme arises at the film's midpoint when Maxim confesses his role in Rebecca's death. Before that, it is assumed and reinforced that Rebecca died an accidental death at sea. Confronted with the evidence of his crime resurfacing, Maxim tells all, hoping his wife will understand. Although she recoils at first, she returns to his side, ready to cover up what could be considered murder to save their love. In the novel, Mr. de Winter shoots Rebecca, an act of obvious murder under British and American law. Under the Hayes Code used in Hollywood, any murderer in a film would have to face on-screen punishment in some form. To keep the rest of the plot from being altered, in the film Maxim merely strikes or pushes Rebecca, causing her to fall and fatally hit her head on an anchor. Under US law, this is manslaughter, and thus, as per the Hayes Code, Maxim avoids punishment. The inquest, too, looks at what counts as murder in their investigation into Rebecca's death. There is reasonable doubt about whether or not Maxim had something to do with her death given the state of the sailboat discovery. Further, a note sent by Rebecca to Mr. Favell on the night of her death suggests she had no motive for suicide. However, Dr. Baker's information about Rebecca's health provides the inquest with enough evidence to accept the state of the boat as proof of suicide. These complicated issues remain at the film's end. Some still might believe Maxim to be a killer while others will feel sympathetic for how Rebecca used his emotions to end her life.

APPEARANCE

Appearance vs. Reality Perceptions -and in many cases, preconceptions- drive the major action in *Rebecca*. Mrs. Van Hopper begins this theme when she introduces the future Mrs. de Winter to Maxim. Her assumption that Maxim is a broken man, deeply in love with his dead wife, imprints onto the future Mrs. de Winter before their relationship ever begins. With this background reinforced by some of Maxim's statements in the South of France, they travel to the Manderley where Maxim's sister and Mrs. Danvers begin speaking vaguely about Rebecca's and Maxim's relationship with Mrs. de Winter. Pushed by seemingly everyone's belief that Maxim is still madly in love with his late wife, Mrs. de Winter begins dressing and acting more like Rebecca. This backfires, playing into Mrs. Danvers' secret plan to sabotage Maxim's happiness. Maxim is enraged to see his new wife wearing the same dress Rebecca had a year earlier. Soon thereafter, we learn Maxim's dark secret: his marriage to Rebecca was a sham. Further still, he hated her, and this led to his part in her death. This theme reverses during the second half of the film when Maxim's secret is discovered. Rebecca's body is found in the cabin of her sailboat at the bottom of the sea, and the local shipbuilder finds evidence of sabotage. During the inquest and when Mr. Favell tries to blackmail him, the tables are turned on Maxim. It appears to many that he had something to do with his wife's death. Dr. Baker's statement about Rebecca's health changes the appearance of the situation again. Assuming everything has been solved and Rebecca really did commit a complicated suicide to avoid dying of cancer, the inquest is called off, helping Mr. & Mrs. de Winter to keep Maxim's involvement in Rebecca's death a secret.

SEARCH

Investigation There is a surprising amount of investigation in this romantic thriller. No one will tell Mrs. de Winter exactly what has happened in Maxim's past. Nearly half the film passes before she is able to get some

straight answers from Mr. Crawley. He tells her about Rebecca dying at sea a year before and Maxim identifying the body. Others speak vaguely or stop themselves from saying too much, driving Mrs. de Winter to push people for information. Similarly, no one seems to help Mrs. de Winter acclimatize to her new, high-society life. While Frith does give her some direction, he seems amused at her ignorance more than anything. The young woman must repeatedly seek assistance and information about her duty as the lady of Manderley. While most of the investigation has to deal with Maxim's past in the first half of the film, the second half introduces us to Rebecca's past. Through Mrs. Danvers' and Maxim's confession, we are given a complex although incomplete picture of the late Mrs. de Winter, learning she took pleasure in misleading and hurting people. The investigation aspect changes as the inquest begins eyeing Maxim as a suspect in Rebecca's death. Mr. Favell seems to have been doing his own investigation, as he attempts to blackmail Maxim with a letter from Rebecca proving she wasn't suicidal. In London, Dr. Baker reveals Rebecca's medical history, concluding the investigation when they assume she was suicidal after receiving a terminal cancer diagnosis.

Past A previous marriage greatly influenced Maxim, causing him to be unhappy. He is very tense with the present marriage because of his unhappy memories and the fear that others will learn his secrets. His involvement in Rebecca's death creates the possibility of going to jail, causing him further unease. Maxim's past also makes his new wife unhappy, feeling unsatisfactory in comparison with his beautiful and well-respected first wife. Past events influence the psyches of the main characters, and the plot is often driven by past events unseen by the viewer. Mrs. Danvers' obsession with Rebecca and desire to see her will done even after death attempts to preserve the past by maintaining Rebecca's belongings as if she will walk back through the door any moment. With the appearance of the new Mrs. de Winter, Mrs. Danvers begins toying with her and Maxim as Rebecca would have if she were still alive.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Maxim de Winter

Maxim is a British nobleman whose family owns and maintains Manderley and its land holdings. During a vacation in the South of France, he meets a young woman and makes her his wife. When her self-consciousness about his first wife makes the new Mrs. de Winter act and dress like Rebecca, Maxim becomes distant and angry, eventually revealing a dark secret.

Moody Maxim's moodiness is apparent from his first appearance. He rebukes the future Mrs. de Winter for yelling when she believes he is about to commit suicide, caught in his memories of Rebecca that fuel a subtle rage. He is moody during his introduction (or reintroduction if she's to be believed) to Mrs. Van Hopper, leaving brusquely when he feels that Mrs. Van Hopper is too much of a busybody. His moodiness has a less angry side as well, for he marries a young woman on a whim. Although their love grows to be true during the film, his desire to marry her comes from an unwillingness to let her leave with Mrs. Van Hopper for New York more than anything. Back at Manderley, his joyous mood after his marriage leads him to offer double pay and vacation time for the house staff, and leniency on rent for the people living on his estate. His moody attitude is almost his undoing at the inquest. He is saved only by Mrs. de Winter fainting in the front row before he admits his part in Rebecca's death because he is annoyed by the judge's persistent questioning.

Thoughtful Mr. de Winter is often thoughtful. He is slow to act and is often seen deep in thought. His consideration shows in his treatment of his wife. Although he can be driven to angry or frustrated outbursts, he always shows his softer side afterward, apologizing or comforting Mrs. de Winter when she is hurt by his anger. This sensitivity continues even in the tensest romantic moments of the film. When he calls himself selfish for marrying Mrs. de Winter, he is thinking of her well-being after Rebecca's death is eventually discovered. Similarly, when he tries to push Mrs. de Winter away after he reveals his secret to her, it is to keep her safe from the legal repercussions. One of his more thoughtful acts is giving his renters a break from their financial obligations and his house staff bonus pay and vacation time upon his marriage. A complicated character, his thoughtful actions mark him as repentant and worthy of forgiveness.

Secretive Although prone to outbursts and thoughtfully communicative in other ways, Maxim has a dark secret. For the past year, he's told no one about his involvement in Rebecca's death. While certainly one of Maxim's more minor traits, he is shown to have exhibited it long before Rebecca's death. During his confession about his role in Rebecca's death, he gives a long explanation of her manipulations and infidelities. So as not to appear foolish, Maxim agrees with Rebecca's plan to stage their marriage in public while the two would have nothing to do with one another in private. His secretive nature and involvement in Rebecca's death show just

how far Maxim would go to defend his family's name and honor.

Mrs. de Winter

Mrs. de Winter begins the story as a young woman working as a 'paid companion' for Mrs. Van Hopper. When Mrs. Van Hopper comes down with the flu, Mrs. de Winter spends all her time with Maxim, leading to their marriage. Now the lady of the Manderley, Mrs. de Winter finds herself unprepared for the duties of an aristocratic woman.

Self-conscious Mrs. de Winter's self-conscious attitude creates much of the conflict between herself and Maxim. It also makes her easy to manipulate. Mrs. Danvers takes advantage of this several times purposefully and Maxim's sister does so subconsciously, judging Mrs. de Winter's ignorance of popular fashions. She is so self-conscious about entering the world of nobility that she fears the house servants of Manderley, especially Mrs. Danvers. She attempts to prove herself by organizing a costume ball "just like in the old days," but her self-consciousness strikes again. Mrs. Danvers suggests a reproduction of a dress in a portrait, not revealing that it was the last costume Rebecca wore before her death. After this faux pas, Mrs. de Winter learns the truth of Rebecca's death from Maxim, and she seems to throw off some of her self-judging behavior. Maxim says he has aged her and, at least in this way, he's correct.

Naïve Young and dazed by the opulence of life at Manderley, Mrs. de Winter is portrayed as naïve. She rushes into a marriage with an older widower with little thought, her doubts easily soothed by his reassurances. She shows little understanding of the world, let alone Maxim's world of aristocrats. Many of the servants around the household find humor in instructing Mrs. de Winter on life at Manderley but happily assist her. Mrs. Danvers, however, takes advantage of the young woman's naiveté at several points, causing tension between the newlyweds as Mrs. de Winter attempts to imitate Rebecca. Although her self-consciousness disappears when Maxim reveals his accidental killing of Rebecca, her naïve attitudes remain. Despite her remaining fear of Mrs. Danvers and intimate knowledge of her obsession, Mrs. de Winter still feels safe enough to fall asleep on the couch when Maxim and the others leave for London to speak to Mr. Baker. Mrs. Danvers then lights a massive fire, burning down the house. It seems naïve to dismiss Mrs. Danvers' potential for such action after repeated cruelties, such as urging Mrs. de Winter to commit suicide on the night of the costume ball.

Loyal Mrs. de Winter is unshakably loyal to Maxim. She exhibits this behavior early on, most clearly in her multiple attempts to contact him when she learns of her imminent departure for New York. It doesn't take much convincing from Mr. de Winter for the young woman to become his wife because they have bonded so quickly, due in part to her loyalty. At Manderley, it becomes Mrs. de Winter's goal to make Maxim as happy as he was with Rebecca. The joke is on her, though, as she comes to learn that Rebecca's and Maxim's marriage was far from happy. Despite learning of Maxim's role in Rebecca's death, she stands by him, doing everything she can to protect him during the inquest. We also see her standing by her word with other characters, too, even after Mr. Favell and Mrs. Danvers make her life difficult. Mrs. Danvers takes advantage of her loyalty, tricking her into committing a faux pas at the costume ball by suggesting she make a reproduction of a costume Rebecca wore a year before. In the end, Mrs. de Winter's loyalty helps Maxim see that her love is true, and, despite everything, the couple remains together and unharmed at the end of the film.

Mrs. Danvers

Mrs. Danvers was originally Rebecca's personal maid but since her death has become the head housekeeper of Manderley. She has an obsession with Rebecca, keeping her room in the West Wing in perfect condition as if the late Mrs. de Winter will return any minute. The differences between the new Mrs. de Winter and Rebecca fuel Mrs. Danvers' hatred of the new Mrs. de Winter.

Critical Mrs. Danvers is incredibly judgmental and vocal, especially for a servant. Instantly upon meeting her, Mrs. Danvers deems Mrs. de Winter as unworthy of her name and title. Her comparisons to Rebecca are as ceaseless as they are cruel. Mrs. Danvers is openly critical of several of Maxim's orders, whereas every other servant and employee at Manderley obeys his orders without comment. We see Mrs. Danvers at her most critical when she shows Mrs. de Winter into Rebecca's room. During the scene, she notices Mrs. de Winter has moved Rebecca's brush, showing how her critical eye can be used constructively, but she soon turns back to passive-aggressive showing Mrs. de Winter how she fails to measure up to her former mistress.

Obsessive Mrs. Danvers has an obsession with Rebecca. In the novel, this obsession has lesbian connotations, but these references were removed to help the film comply with Hayes Code censorship. Despite this, some of the lesbian-tinged obsession bleeds through. For example, it's hard not to read a sexual motive into Mrs. Danvers' collection of Rebecca's underwear, which she specifically points out to Mrs. de Winter. We see Mrs. Danvers lose herself in her obsession several times. This has certainly happened before the events of the film, as Rebecca's room is kept in the same state it was on the night of her death. She loses her sense of reality when showing Mrs. de Winter Rebecca's room, fading into a trance when she brushes the young woman's hair. Her obsession comes to a deadly head when she decides to burn down Manderley to ensure that Maxim and his new wife cannot be happy there. Because Rebecca believed they didn't deserve it.

Cruel Mrs. Danvers shows a penchant for cruelty. Most of what we see is aimed at Mrs. de Winter, but we see glimpses of her treatment of the house staff too. Mr. Lacy jokes that "she's not an oil painting" when Mrs. de Winter shows some hesitation in expressing how she feels about the housekeeper. We see her express admiration for Rebecca's cruelty at the film's end before she admits to knowing Rebecca's secret doctor in London. She holds Rebecca in a god-like position in her universe because of the cruel way she lived her life. Like she says to the new Mrs. de Winter, "No one ever got the better of her, never, never. She was beaten in the end, but it wasn't a man, it wasn't a woman. It was the sea!" To Mrs. Danvers, Rebecca was a force of nature. Her own cruelty becomes all too clear when Mrs. de Winter confronts her in Rebecca's room at the beginning of the costume party. She continues telling Mrs. de Winter all the ways she'll never measure up to her late mistress while Mrs. de Winter begs for her to stop. This comes to a climax when Mrs. Danvers attempts to convince Mrs. de Winter to take her own life, as Maxim will never love her the way she loved Rebecca. This is doubly cruel, for if she succeeds, she'll also deny Maxim a happy life with his new wife. In a final act of cruelty, she burns down Manderley to deny Maxim and Mrs. de Winter a happy life there.

Rebecca Rebecca is never seen in the film but is often mentioned. She was Maxim's first wife, who is reported to have drowned at sea. While many people remember her fondly, we learn that she was a manipulative and cruel woman who enjoyed toying with people and their expectations.

Misanthropic Rebecca takes a special joy in manipulating and insulting others. Her entire marriage to Maxim was a fraud. She manipulates Maxim into keeping up the facade so that he won't face any public embarrassment, but in private, she tortures Maxim with her lack of affection and not-so-clandestine affairs with her first cousin, Favell. She seems to take special joy in cuckolding Maxim in this fashion and is said by Mrs. Danvers to brag about tricking all of high society about her marriage. It's unknown what drove Rebecca to this behavior, but she uses it in her final act, causing Maxim to strike her with a vicious lie. Saying she's pregnant with Favell's child and that she will raise it as the next de Winter heir leads to her death, a plan she hoped would bring Maxim even more pain after her passing.

Deceitful Rebecca is deceitful in many obvious ways. Her behavior towards Maxim and society as a whole uses deceit to manipulate others' perceptions about the quality of her marriage. We learn about her infidelity and misanthropic attitudes from Mrs. Danvers and Maxim, but we don't see her full capacity for deceit until the end of the film. Even those who believed themselves to be in on the joke were taken aback when Rebecca's doctor reveals a secret even they didn't know. Inoperable cancer led her to a vengeful, hurtful attempt at suicide by enraging the moody Maxim. Mr. Favell shows to be visibly stung by Rebecca's final lie, and the deception causes Mrs. Danvers to finally go over the deep end. In an act of insanity, the housekeeper commits arson to ensure that Maxim cannot be happy at Manderley with his new wife, something she believes to be her late mistress' final request.

Mrs. Van Hopper

Mrs. Van Hopper appears heavily in the first scenes of the film. She is Mrs. de Winter's employer and a rich socialite. She leaves for New York to attend a wedding, spurring Maxim to propose to Mrs. de Winter to keep her with him.

Critical Much like Mrs. Danvers, Mrs. Van Hopper is incredibly critical. This skill is essential for a busybody like her, nosing her way into every little conflict and creating drama from the mundane. She uses it to deflect any instances of self-reflection as well. This shows most clearly when she scolds her paid companion for 'elbowing into the conversation' when Maxim tries to include the young woman in their conversation over coffee. She is seemingly unaware that it was her faux pas of mistreating the young woman that offended Maxim, blaming his departure on the future Mrs. de Winter. Similarly, Mrs. Van Hopper's butting into the wedding plans when Maxim

tells her of his proposal quickly becomes a negative tirade against the soon-to-be Mrs. de Winter. She mentions her lost parents and lack of status before Maxim cuts her off and declines to listen further.

Unaware Mrs. Van Hopper seems oblivious to the distaste others show for her and her behavior. Repeatedly, she complains that Maxim isn't returning her calls or letters. Never once does it occur to her that he could be completely uninterested. Even when she learns of Mrs. de Winter's engagement, she still believes Maxim to simply have 'strange tastes' in women. This is especially comic given that at least two weeks have passed since Maxim and the future Mrs. de Winter have begun seriously seeing one another. Somewhat self-obsessed, Mrs. Van Hopper never so much as asks her paid companion what she had been up to in that time.

Mr. Favell

Jack Favell is Rebecca's first cousin and extramarital lover. He appears during the inquest to blackmail Maxim with proof that Rebecca didn't plan to kill herself. A brash man, his plan brings out the shocking truth about Rebecca's last days.

Unscrupulous/Intrusive Mr. Favell shows a noted lack of scruples. The first thing we learn about him is that he sneaks into Manderley from time to time to visit the West Wing with Mrs. Danvers. We then learn that he was sleeping with Rebecca, his first cousin. Even though such instances used to be more common, this was frowned upon, especially since their affair was extramarital. When Favell reappears, he attempts to blackmail Mr. de Winter with a note left to him by Rebecca that casts doubt on her death being a suicide. This ploy is quickly countered and brought to the attention of the Colonel, a local judge. Using his quick tongue, Mr. Favell narrowly escapes charges. The initial act of blackmail is incredibly intrusive: He enters the de Winter's vehicle and begins eating their picnic lunch after being asked to leave at least twice. Similarly, he butts his way into the inquest, determined to find Mr. de Winter responsible for Rebecca's death. His attitudes, actions, and behavior throughout the film display why Mr. Favell is the black sheep of the family.