

What is City Reads?

Imagine sharing a book with your neighbour; with your hairdresser; with your bus driver, and with your friends. Having one book for one city brings readers together.

Last year Brighton & Hove celebrated Whitbread-winning author Ali Smith's *Hotel World* with three packed months of events, debates, discussions and collective reads.

Now City Reads 2007 invites you to join us in a citywide read of Daphne du Maurier's classic gothic mystery *Rebecca*. From World Book Day on March 1 to the closing event on May 26 at Charleston Festival, there will be a host of special events, workshops, chat forums, reading groups and film showings all focusing on *Rebecca*.

Rebecca was beautiful, scared of nothing, indiscreet and a bit wild. We like to think she would have liked Brighton & Hove.

Who is it for?

City Reads is for everyone: whether you're an occasional reader or a confirmed bibliophile. It doesn't matter what you do, where you live or what you read: City Reads is about opening up the world of words and ideas to everyone.

How does it work?

It couldn't be simpler. The idea is to get the whole city reading Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* between now and the end of May. All you need to do to get involved is pick up a copy from your local library, bookshop or book drop point and start reading ...

The guide

This guide provides everything you need to know about City Reads. It also takes you on a whistlestop tour of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, providing background information, reading hints, biographical facts and ideas for further reading. For more up-to-the-minute information visit **www.cityreads.co.uk**

Book release

Throughout the reading period free copies of *Rebecca* will be released all over the city. Look for them in cafes and launderettes, on buses and benches.

Book groups

If you're part of a book group, or would like to set one up, the City Library Service can arrange for you to borrow a set of *Rebecca* books to read. Contact the Reader Development librarian on **01273 294073**, or e-mail: **libraries@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

'It was an extraordinary experience, having a book featured in City Reads... it felt, for a writer, astonishing to have this proper space with readers and audience.'



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l've been a du Maurier fan since I read *Frenchman's Creek* when I was 13 years old... I can still remember the breathless excitement with which I read *Rebecca'*.

Minette Walters



About Rebecca

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again...

The first line of *Rebecca* has slipped into conversation culture, but how many of us know the final line? Some of us remember the story from the classic Hitchcock movie (1940). Others from a host of theatrical, screen and TV adaptations. Others still from acclaimed sequels by Susan Hill and Sally Beauman. Whichever way we come to *Rebecca*, it remains one of the best-loved and most widely read novels of the 20th century over seven decades after it first burst onto the bestseller lists alongside Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* in 1938.

In this, du Maurier's centenary year, *Rebecca* is still pulling readers into its darkly loving embrace.

Isn't it time we went back to Manderley again for a proper visit?

The Rebecca files, Rebecca was:

- First published in 1938 by Victor Gollancz and has never been out of print since;
- · Du Maurier's fifth novel;
- Partly written in Alexandria, Egypt, where du Maurier was stationed with her husband:
- Originally promoted and sold as a gothic romance;
- Altered substantially from du Maurier's first draft in which Maxim was originally Henry, Beatrice, Barbara, and Favell, Paul Astley. In this initial working Manderley escaped death by fire to live out its days as a bland hotel complex;
- · An instant best-seller in the US and the UK;

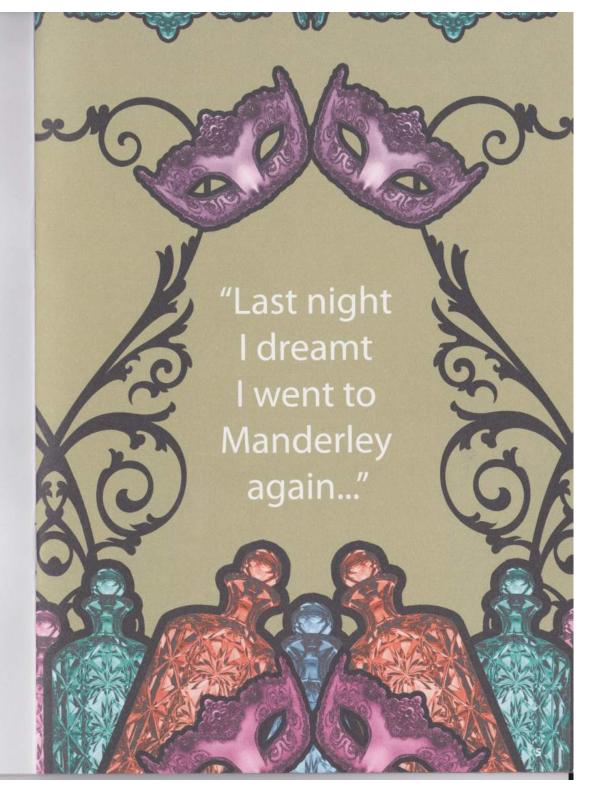
- First broadcast on radio in December 1938 by its star and director Orson Welles;
- First dramatised for the stage by du Maurier herself in 1940;
- Reputedly read by Neville Chamberlain on the plane journey which led to Adolf Hitler signing the Munich agreement;
- Voted one of the top 10 most popular titles in the Women's Watershed Fiction campaign on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour.
- A prize commodity in Edna O'Brien's native West Ireland. Books were rare and the one copy in the village was shared among its covetous readers page by page, though not necessarily in the right order!

The Rebecca files, Rebecca is:

- A perennial book group favourite, still stimulating debate and discussion across the country;
- One of the most frequently borrowed 20thcentury classics from UK lending libraries;
- A variety of female knit jacket in Spain, named after the one worn by Joan Fontaine in Hitchcock's 1940 film;
- Currently getting the musical treatment in Francesca Zambello's Viennese production;
- The name of Antonia Fraser's eldest daughter, named after du Maurier's eponymous heroine;
- Alan Titchmarsh's favourite read he championed Rebecca in BBC2's 2003 Big Read.

'Rebecca is one of the most atmospheric books I know... you're instantly transported to Cornwall, you can smell the azaleas with the rain on.'

Alan Titchmarsh, BBC's Big Read



Synopsis - A Bluffer's Guide to Rebecca

Who did what to whom, where, when and why? Want to join in the fun without the bother of reading the book? We don't recommend it, but in exceptional circumstances we forgive! So for all *Rebecca* bluffers out there read on. For dedicated readers look away now!

The full bluff

An anonymous young narrator dreams of Manderley from her European exile. The clock turns back and she is a paid travelling companion to the incorrigible snob Mrs Van Hopper. Rescued from a life of service and tedium by the recently bereaved aristocratic loner Maxim de Winter, she leaves Monte Carlo, marries on the hoof, and retreats to England and the mysterious Manderley.

The young narrator is all at sea in her new-found role as the second Mrs de Winter, a situation exacerbated by the hostile housekeeper Mrs Danvers. Maxim becomes cold and detached – apparently still grieving for his first wife Rebecca who was tragically drowned in a sailing accident the previous year. Rebecca's presence haunts Manderley and begins to obsess the diffident young bride. Though befriended by Maxim's sister Beatrice and the loyal estate manager Frank Crawley, she feels alone and unloved.

At the annual masquerade ball – a Manderley institution – Maxim's new wife determines to break the spell. Spurred on by the devious Mrs Danvers she makes her grand entrance as a de Winter ancestor, unaware that she has committed a major faux pas, having taken the same inspiration for her costume as the former Mrs de Winter. Shocked at seeing his second wife transformed into a vision of Rebecca, Maxim is furious and the ball is a disaster. In her despair, the narrator confronts Mrs Danvers who reveals her devotion to her former mistress, and contempt for her successor. A ship, run aground in the bay, rallies her spirits, however, as Manderley becomes poised for action. Beneath the waves another wreck is discovered, and after much speculation it is revealed to be that of the late Rebecca.

Aware that he is about to be found out, Maxim confesses that he murdered Rebecca after being taunted by her infidelity and devilish duplicity. The myth of Rebecca is broken and the young heroine finds new strength in this revelation, deciding to collude with her guilty husband in covering up the crime. The body is raised from its watery grave and identified. The ensuing inquest hangs in the balance between a verdict of suicide and foul play.

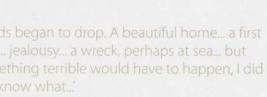
Finally, suicide is decreed, and the de Winters appear home and dry. However, with the reappearance of Rebecca's playboy cousin and former lover Favell, the discovery of a damning note, and a mysterious appointment, the tide seems certain to turn again. In a last unforeseen twist, it is revealed that Rebecca had been terminally ill, and the suicide verdict stands. However, as the reconciled couple make an early-morning return, a blood red sky above Manderley spells out a final tragedy as the ancient family seat is razed to the ground.

As the narrative returns full circle to an anonymous exile, a 'damaged' Maxim and resigned young wife spin out their days in sterile contemplation of cricket scores and hotel breakfasts.

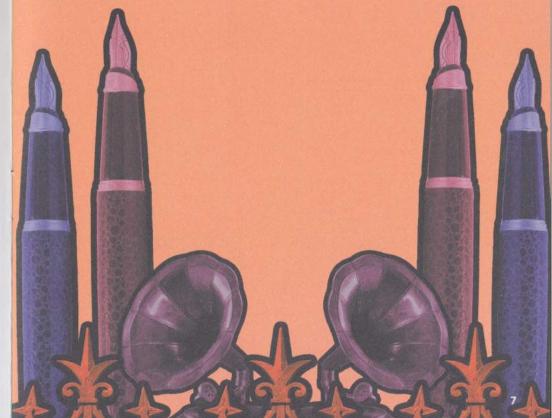
Extreme bluffing

Really pressed for time? Read on for a short, sharp learning curve ...

Young girl meets man, marries, moves to Manderley. Man mopes for drowned wife, new beau gets mean reds. Drowned wife rules roost, new girl makes bad show. Wrecked ship spells trouble as first wife raised. Man admits foul play, first wife gets bad press. Girl loves man, helps hide truth. Devilish blackmail defeated. Man and girl go scot-free. Manderley scorched in final fury. Girl gets man back, but price perhaps too high!



Daphne du Maurier



Routes into Rebecca

Grappling with a literary classic (even a gripping page turner like *Rebecca*) can sometimes seem an uphill struggle, with the sheer weight of history and expectation. Depending on your end goal – from a leisurely low altitude stroll to a full north face assault on the summit – there are always alternative routes to follow. To help you on your way, here's a selection of well trodden paths to choose from. Watch out for frostbite and enjoy the view!

ROUTE 1

A Fine Romance?

Daphne du Maurier is one of the most successful and enduring writers of the 20th century. Yet throughout her career she has often been woefully misinterpreted, cast in the mould of the 'romantic' writer, a long shadow from which she struggled to escape. Nevertheless du Maurier openly admired and repeatedly referenced the works most commonly associated with the birth of the English Romantic novel and held up, by many, to be classics of the genre: Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre. So how does Rebecca stand up to the rigours of the romance?

The romantic novel has its own conventions, some of which derive from the gothic genre and others from a mediaeval tradition of the 'heroic' or 'chivalric' epic.

In its strictest sense, the rules of romantic engagement are threefold:

- Your novel should focus on the romantic love between two consenting adults.
- The story must have an 'emotionally satisfying and optimistic' ending. *Crime and Punishment* need not apply!
- Preferably there should be no extracurricular hanky-panky!

On close inspection *Rebecca* would seem to fall rather short. First, Maxim's marriage to Rebecca is little more than a convenient lie founded on infidelity and deceit. Hardly the stuff of romance! His second fairs little better – at best a one-sided adulation, at worst, a severe case of self-denial and misplaced wish-fulfilment.

So far, so much for romance!

As for 'emotionally satisfying and optimistic' how does murder, collusion and an eternity of ennui fit the picture? Du Maurier was fairly unequivocal on that score: 'Romantic love? If so, a bloody business, with only unhappiness for all.'

A fine romance indeed!

There is no such thing as romantic love. This is a statement of fact, and I defy all those who hold a contrary opinion."

Daphne du Maurier

'[Daphne du Maurier's] *Rebecca* no longer seems to be seen as a 'romance' at all. Her work looks increasingly rich and dark.'

Sir Christopher Frayling

ROUTE 2

Dreams, Schemes and Fairytale

Though on one level *Rebecca* is 'realist' in its contemporary setting, dialogue and closely observed social mores, it is also a novel shrouded in dreams with loud echoes of fairytale, fantasy and mythmaking.

You shall go to the ball

Rebecca opens in dreamtime as our anonymous narrator imagines herself back to an enchanted Manderley – wild in nature like Sleeping Beauty's dream-bound tower. The illusion is broken as the dreamer awakes and Manderley is revealed momentarily in its forlorn dereliction before it is cloaked once more in the garb of nightmarish unreality. It is to this unfamiliar lair that the Cinderella-like narrator is whisked away, rescued from a life of servitude by her mysterious saviour. Complete with wicked fairy godmother (Mrs Danvers), the ghostly presence of the bewitched beauty Rebecca, and the masquerade ball, Manderley's fairytale furniture seems firmly in place.

Davdream believe

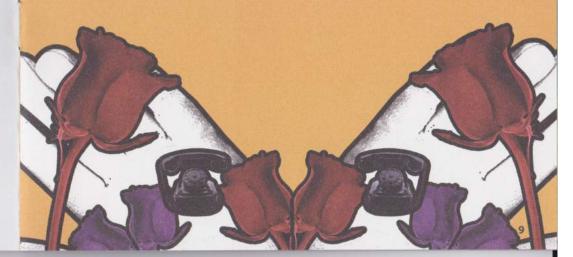
Yet this is more *Bluebeard's Castle* than *Cinderella* as our heroine becomes trapped in a world of deadly secrets and locked rooms. It is in the refuge of daydreams and illusion that she now seeks sanctuary as she summons forth the 'myth' of Rebecca and imagines a whole back story of quiet conspiracies. Just as Maxim's marriage to Rebecca is revealed as a lie, the narrator's own wedlock seems built on the shifting sands of fantasy.

And they all lived happily ever after...

If Rebecca – at least in its symbolic structure – is the stuff of fairytale, then du Maurier is playfully subversive with the medium. For Rebecca has no fairytale ending. The 'evil princess' and her earthly ambassador (Mrs Danvers) may have been vanquished and the spell of Manderley sent up in flames, but there is no sweet reconciliation, just a long and loveless exile with Cinderella cast once more as the humble servant.

'She trafficked in dreams...
the roots of her success lay
in the almost universal appeal
of fairytales.'

Daily Telegraph 1989



ROUTE 3

Murder, Mystery and the Art of Subterfuge Rebecca, is, if nothing else, a superbly crafted murder mystery novel, full of secrets, lies, narrative cul-de-sacs and startling revelations. Its very structure is carefully framed to thwart our expectations and keep the reader on his toes. Working backwards from the novel's denouement we are seduced into accepting the Rebecca myth' as the narrator builds a composite picture of the novel's eponymous heroine.

About turn!

However, with Maxim's brutal revelation everything is turned upside down and we realise we have been thrown a curve ball. With the flick of a narrative switch, the grieving husband becomes murderer and perjuror, his young wife an accessory after the fact, and we are forced to make a swift handbrake turn in our judgments. From this moment on, the novel shifts gear to become a sort of detective novel in reverse. Suddenly we know the facts of the crime and can begin to make sense of everything that has come before - all the hints, suggestions and conspiracies that we and our 'unreliable' narrator have failed to pick up along the way - Frank Crawley's caution, Ben's fear, Beatrice's friendship, Maxim's coldness.

Guilty as charged

Du Maurier's masterstroke is that we, as readers, also become complicit in the protagonists' collusion as they fight to cover their tracks. As a series of twists and counter turns – the discovery of the body, the boat builder's testimony, Favell's blackmail, and Rebecca's mysterious appointment – seem destined to thwart their cover up, du Maurier reels in our sympathies, hook, line and sinker.

Character assassination

Good, bad or just plain ugly? The jury is out on du Maurier's richly complex characters. Where do your loyalties lie and who would you invite to your literary dinner party?

Rebecca – arch minx or early case of girl power struck down in its prime?

Mrs de Winter – innocent victim or compulsive self-deluder with severe Electra complex?

Maxim de Winter – romantic antihero or cowardly misogynist with blood on his hands?

Mrs Danvers – devli's accomplice with bad complexion or love's last great martyr?

You decide!

'It is a sinister tale about a woman who marries a widower... psychological and rather macabre...'

Daphne du Maurier

ROUTE 4

Rebecca - Taking the Gothic Test

Since its first outing in 1938 *Rebecca* has been dealt the gothic card for good or bad. So what's the verdict?

The evidence

Traditional gothic is best recognised by its furniture, which should include:

- Dark, ominous landscapes and at least a suggestion of the supernatural
- · A healthy dose of mystery and suspense
- A large secluded house or castle
 preferably haunted
- A young innocent heroine seduced by a mysterious older male – see Jane Eyre
- · Bad weather and lots of it
- A deadly family secret involving violence, madness or obsession – preferably all three
- Some form of transgression, which upsets the moral order/balance of power
- A pervasive sense of repression and simmering sexual tension
- The destruction of the family home, preferably by fire, and leading, hopefully, to redemption or reconciliation, though inevitably at a high price

The scenario

Young female ingenue (Mrs de Winter) meets inscrutable older male (Maxim), obviously burdened by past history. She is transported to the cold and repressive Manderley where she is haunted by the ghostly presence of the 'other woman'. She is helped along the road to ruin by the 'mad woman in the attic' a.k.a. the dastardly Mrs Danvers. A sinister secret is revealed – accompanied by violent storms and rolling fog. A dark past of murder, betrayal and obsession is unveiled. Ghosts of the past are laid to rest in a raging fire and the rational order of things is restored, at least on the surface...

The verdict

Daphne du Maurier borrows wholesale from the gothic tradition – with a large debt to *Jane Eyre* – in order to symbolise the psychological torment of her main protagonists. She does so with a masterful touch and modern sensibility.

'The author saw the Brontë sisters as her closest literary forebears and her best work is steeped in a similar gothic romanticism.'

The Guardian



Top 10 Gothic Tales

1 Matthew Lewis - The Monk (1795)

Any novel with a bleeding nun's ghost has to be worth a look. Still bone-chilling after 200 years.

2 Mary Shelley - Frankenstein (1818)

19th-century gothic milestone served with a side order of sci-fi. Not bad for a 19-year-old!

3 Edgar Allen Poe - The Fall of the House of Usher (1839)

Aristocratic decay, a dead woman, and madness. So contemporary!

4 Charlotte Brontë - Jane Eyre (1847)

One persecuted heroine. One brooding malcontent. One dark secret. Douse with flames for *Rebecca's* literary forebear.

5 Emily Brontë - Wuthering Heights (1847)

Ghostly apparitions, windswept moors and Kate Bush waiting in the wings. What more could you ask for!

6 Henry James - Turn of the Screw (1898)

Creepy house, and creepier children. Madness or possession? It's your call!

7 William Faulkner - Absalom Absalom (1936)

Decadence, decay and dark family secrets underpin this intense 'Southern gothic'.

8 Shirley Jackson - We Have Always lived in the Castle (1962)

Two sisters. One old house, One unspeakable truth. Soak up the dreamy paranola in this classic contemporary chill-fest.

9 Poppy Z Brite - Lost Souls (1993)

An amalgam of true and wannabe vampires abound in this savage and loving modern gothic.

10 Mark Z Danielwski - House of Leaves (2000)

Endless staircases and corridors engender death and madness in one of the strangest gothic mysteries ever written.

Rebecca/Jane Eyre - separated at birth?

Du Maurier was deeply indebted to the Brontës, whose dark feminised take on the gothic tradition she admired and adapted. They informed her own 20th-century brand of gothic romance, which she endowed with a powerful psychological realism. The parallels with Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre are particularly resonant: a young governess – self

doubting and inexperienced – is drawn into the orbit of a brooding older man, with whom she falls in love. He harbours a deadly secret, which, when revealed, becomes a turning point in the protagonist's destiny. His country mansion is destroyed by fire and ghosts of the past are finally vanquished. Redemption and reconciliation are achieved, but at what price? Ring any bells?

ROUTE 5

Snobbery and Cigarettes

Romance? Gothic? Fantasy? Rebecca may borrow unashamedly from all of these traditions but what is often overlooked, yet seems to jump out from the page, is its meticulously observed and subtly satirised social realism.

Guilty parties

From Mrs Van Hopper's society power games to Maxim's aloof aristocratic detachment; from Beatrice and Gilles' vacuous frippery to Mrs de Winter's social alienation, *Rebecca* places the English chattering classes under the literary microscope and finds them wanting.

Manderley - history and hypocrisy

Behind its routines, rituals and polite codes of social etiquette Manderley is seething with secrets, lies and a liberal dose of repression. It takes the arrival of the young Mrs de Winter – a fish out of water if ever there was – with all her crashing faux pas to highlight the absurdities of it creaking hierarchies and endemic class snobbery.

'The Englishness of *Rebecca* lies not only in its overt references to the charismatic and intimidating power of class, but its chafing against the social virtue of reserve.'

Alison Light

Girl power

This is a world in which a woman is defined by her husband, in which he is shaped by his social standing and property, and in which the unbending line of male descent is the code of inheritance. It is only Rebecca, transgressive, rebellious and 'frightfully modern' who challenges these constructs and threatens to upset the society apple cart even from the grave.

Five handy hints for a better life

Follow these five essential rules of etiquette and improve your lot in the world ...

'A father should never utter an immoral thought or a profane word in the home circle...'

'Never present yourself at table with soiled face and hands or uncombed bair.'

'Make it a rule of your daily life to "dress up" for the afternoon...'

'A lady should always walk in an easy, unassuming manner, neither looking to the right or to the left...'

'HUSBANDS, BE POLITE. A chivalrous regard for a wife and a deference to her wishes and comfort, is a sure indication of refinement...'

Taken from: Youth's Educator fo Home and Society, 1896



ROUTE 6

What's in a Name?

The most frequently asked question about Rebecca is: Why did du Maurier not give her narrator a name? The author's answer – that 'I could not think of one, and it became a challenge in technique' – seems somewhat disingenuous. So why the cloak of anonymity?

Self, self, self!

At its deepest level of enquiry *Rebecca* is a probing novel about psychological identity and the struggle to define one's true self. At the heart of this struggle is the narrator – undemonstrative and nameless. Her marriage to Maxim de Winter bestows upon her various new identities – wife, mistress of Manderley, society hostess – none of which sits comfortably with the new bride.

Not fade away

And then there is Rebecca, who even in death has a more palpable sense of self. Her very name is a constant refrain. And as her ghostly form – almost willed into existence by Mrs de Winter – becomes a stronger reality, so the narrator slips further into the shadows. Even Mandereley becomes a symbol of her dislocation: she may be its mistress in name, but its routines and rituals remain those of Rebecca. Manderley's physical symmetry – Rebecca's west wing, the narrator's east – mirrors this 'divided self', and as she becomes lost in its corridors and backrooms, her failure to negotiate her own identity is painfully apparent.

Myth, masquerade and meltdown

The masquerade ball – Mrs de Winter's chance to assert her'self' – is in reality the defining moment of Rebecca's victory. All that remains for absolute dominion is the annihilation of her physical body, which Mrs Danvers attempts as she lures her towards suicide.

It is only as the 'truth' about Rebecca – or at least Maxim's version – emerges and the spell is broken, that the tables begin to turn. As the physical Rebecca emerges from her watery grave, the narrator begins at last to feel grounded. Typical of du Maurier, there is no simple resolution here, however. For what sort of hollow victory has Mrs de Winter achieved? Rebecca's hold may have diminished, yet in her ensuing exile the narrator returns full circle: from paid travelling companion to Maxim's personal handmaid and a life of bland anonymity.

'Rebecca is a profound and fascinating study of an obsessive personality, of sexual dominance, of human identity and of the liberation of the hidden self.'

Daily Telegraph

Top 10 Unnamed Narrators

- 1 Jeffrey Eugenides Virgin Suicides
 Five anonymous boys recall five dead sisters as the Greek chorus gets a macabre makeover,
- 2 Joseph Conrad Heart of Darkness
 Charlee Marlow goes loco in the Congo, set adrift by an unnamed storyteller.
- 3 Patricia Duncker Hallucinating Foucault
 Anonymous graduate student trails fictional French writer in sexual and textural literary thriller.
- 4 Haruki Murakimi Dance, Dance, Dance Murakami's unnamed narrator learns to dance, dance, dance to the warped music of time.
- Unnamed, unhinged and insomniac narrator on crash course with apocalypse.
- 6 HG Wells The War of the Worlds
 The granddaddy of all alien invasion stories revealed by anonymous observer.
- 7 Diane Schoemperten Our Lady of the Lost and Found
 A miraculous visitation disturbs the quiet repose of Schoemperten's unnamed narrator.
- 8 Gabriel García Marquez Memories of My Melancholy Whores
 An unnamed nonagenarian embarks on a last-ditch adventure in amorous passion.
- Two decades on, Austerlitz recounts his remarkable life to Sebald's anonymous narrator.
- 10 W Somerset Maugham The Moon and Sixpence
 An unnamed writer traces the artistic impulse of a boorish'hero' in this moody classic.

haring the literary limelight

On publication, *Rebecca* shared the literary limelight with some of the big guns of British and US fiction.

The following were all published in 1938: Elizabeth Bowen – Death of the Heart Graham Greene – Brighton Rock Evelyn Waugh – Scoop Henry Miller – Tropic of Capricorn William Faulkner – The Unvanquished JB Priestly – The Doomsday Men Agatha Christie – Death on the Nile Eric Ambler – Epitaph for a Spy



ROUTE 7

Putting Daphne in the Picture

Ever since its first publication, readers have attempted to assign *Rebecca*'s themes of fractured identity and marital stasis to du Maurier's own life. So how does it all stack up?

Hung up and homesick

Though never overtly stated, *Rebecca's* dramatic landscape is obviously du Maurier's beloved Cornish coast. However, she began plotting the book while stationed in Alexandria, Egypt, with her husband Tommy 'Boy' Browning. Thoroughly unsuited to the role of officer's wife and all that came with the territory, she pined for home. The overpowering sense of social discomfort that pervades the novel was no doubt a by-product of a troubled and restless exile.

Manderley/Menabilly - house of secrets

Manderley – so central to du Maurier's novel (indeed Hitchcock felt it the 'dominant presence') – was firmly based on du Maurier's own home, her much prized Cornish hideaway Menabilly. On first discovering the empty and abandoned house, she became obsessed with its unknowable past, christening it her 'house of secrets' and determining to make it her own.

'Here was a block of stone, even as the desert Sphinx, made by man for his own purpose – yet she had a personality that was hers alone... the house possessed me from that day, even as a mistress holds her lover.' Daphne du Maurier

Two's company

Take one Mrs de Winter – rebellious, promiscuous and flighty. A second – shy and diffident. Mix in multiple metaphors of doubling and mirroring and you have yourself a first-class case of split personality. Could *Rebecca*'s opposing forces of womanhood reflect du Maurier's own battle to reconcile her divided loyalties – writer/celebrity versus loyal family wife; rebellious bohemian versus quiet conservatism?

Three's a crowd

It has been argued that the triangular relationship between du Maurier's main protagonists reflects the often unconventional bond with her own parents; particularly that of her beloved yet fiercely possessive father. Or her own relationship with her husband Tommy, whose previous engagement to a beautiful socialite lingered long in the mind of an author prone to jealousy.

'She gave her own shyness and social awkwardness to Mrs de Winter. She gave her independence, her love of the sea, her expertise as a sailor, her sexual fearlessness and even her bisexuality to Rebecca.'

Sally Beauman

Prequels, Sequels and the Rebecca Legacy

"We can never go back again, that much is certain."

So concludes Rebecca's anonymous narrator from her European exile as she and Maxim flee a desecrated Manderley. Yet back we have gone and continue to go in our droves as a stream of prequels, sequels, homages and companion pieces dream us back to Manderley once again for unfinished business....

Susan Hill - Mrs de Winter

The ghost of Rebecca continues to cast a long shadow over Mrs de Winter and Maxim in this, the most literal sequel to du Maurier's original.

Sally Beauman - Rebecca's Tale

Sally Beauman's acclaimed 'companion' novel is a rallying cry for du Maurier's eponymous heroine, reassessing her life and death through multiple narrators.

Stephen King - Bag of Bones

Stephen King makes no bones of his debt to du Maurier as the spectral presence of Mrs Danvers haunts this horror-romance hybrid.

Ken Follett - The Key to Rebecca

Ken Follett's *The Key to Rebecca* recounts a little-known piece of World War II espionage in which du Maurier's novel becomes a covert code between Rommel's headquarters and German agents infiltrated in Cairo.

Mary Wings - Divine Victim

Two dead Rebeccas for the price of one in this subversive lesbian gothic inspired by Hitchcock's 1940 film.

Maureen Freely - The Other Rebecca

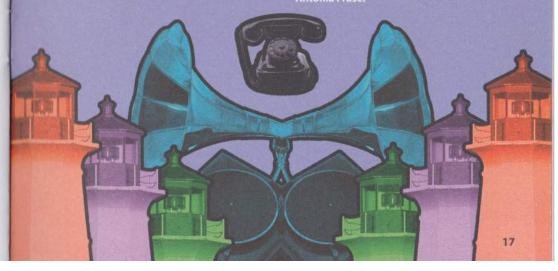
A post-modern, post-feminist mix of gothic, satire, literary thriller and family romance.

Antonia Fraser - Rebecca's Story

Rebecca finally gets her say as du Maurier's much maligned heroine is resurrected in this short story, first published in *Harpers & Queen* in 1976. Now published in *The Du Maurier Companion*, Virago, 2007.

I have always been fascinated by Daphne du Maurier's famous bestseller, *Rebecca*. In fact I called my eldest child after the book.'

Antonia Fraser



Events

City Reads celebrates *Rebecca* in a series of special readings, debates, discussions and film screenings. For further details of what's on when and how to get involved visit: www.cityreads.co.uk

Rebecca Film Screenings

Don't miss these special screenings of Hitchcock's 1940 film starring Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier. Also look out for an open-air *Rebecca* as this Academy Award-winning classic gets the big screen treatment outside Jubilee Library in May. Running time 126 mins.

Sat 3 March, 10.30am; Wed 11 April, 6.30pm, FREE Jubilee Library, Tel: (01273) 294071



City Reads Coffee Mornings with Peta Taylor

There will be readings and opportunities for readers to share their thoughts on *Rebecca* at these FREE library coffee mornings throughout March. Actress Peta Taylor brings the novel to life with carefully selected extracts.

March: Sat 3 (Patcham), 10 (Moulsecoomb), 17 (Saltdean), all 11am

City Reads Writing Workshop

Writing gothic suspense with Liz Jensen In this special workshop novelist Liz Jensen explores the gothic suspense genre and offers practical tips and exercises on how to master the form. Her most recent paperback, *The Ninth Life of Louis Drax*, is being adapted for film by Anthony Minghella.

DAPHNE

DU MAURIER

Sat 14 April, 10.30am, £10 Jubilee Library, Tel: (01273) 294071

Whose Reading is it Anyway?

One of the delights of reading novels is the variety of meanings different readers can create from them.

But which reading of Rebecca will hit the right

note? Five panellists: one academic, two students, and two non-campus participants go head to head with five short, sharp readings of *Rebecca*. The audience then votes for their favourite in this interactive panel event.

Tues 24 April, 6.30pm, FREE (including refreshments). Admission by ticket only. CCE, University of Sussex, Tel: (01273) 877888 or email si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk



Brighton Festival City Reads Event Sally Beauman, Sarah Dunant and Helen Taylor

Sally Beauman

– author of the highly acclaimed 'companion'

novel' Rebecca's Tale – joins novelist, critic and broadcaster Sarah Dunant and renowned du Maurier scholar Helen Taylor for a timely reappraisal of this 20th-century classic as part of this year's Brighton Festival.

Sun 20 May, 7.30pm, £7.50 Corn Exchange, Tel: (01273) 709709 www.brightonfestival.org

Charleston Reads: The Rebecca Workshop

Revisit Daphne du Maurier's Manderley in the equally evocative atmosphere of Charleston.

A one-day guided workshop to explore the enduring appeal of *Rebecca*. Led by Dr. Sue Roe, Lecturer in Creative Writing and author of *The Private Lives of the Impressionists*. All participants should be ready to discuss *Rebecca* plus one other book by Daphne du Maurier. Places strictly limited on a first-come, first-served basis.

Wed 23 May, 10am-4pm, £50 (incl tea & coffee) Charleston Festival, Charleston, nr Firle, Tel: (01323) 811 626 www.charleston.org.uk

'She was the first novelist I'd encountered who seemed to delve into the darkest stirrings of the human heart – its monstrous passions, its most restless yearnings...'

Julie Myerson



Charleston Festival City Reads Event: After Rebecca

Is there a woman who does not desire to be Rebecca rather than the virtuous second Mrs de Winter, or a man who would not prefer a liaison with her? Why has du Maurier's

work entered the popular imagination and inspired so many artists? A discussion with Justine Picardie, author of *Daphne*, a new novel based on du Maurier's life; Nicholas Roeg, iconic director of *Don't Look Now*, and Nell Leyshon, whose drama, stemming from the same short story, premieres this year.

Sat 26 May, 5pm, £9 Charleston Festival, Charleston, nr Firle Brighton Dome Box Office Tel: (01273) 709709 www.charleston.org.uk



Rebecca on Film

For many, the first foray into du Maurier's world is through one of the numerous film adaptations of her best-selling novels or short stories. Hitchcock alone made three: Jamaica Inn (1939), Rebecca (1940) and The Birds (1963). There was Frenchman's Creek (1944) with Joan Fontaine, My Cousin Rachel (1952) with Olivia de Havilland, and later Nicholas Roeg's claustrophobic chiller Don't Look Now (1973), based on du Maurier's macabre short story.

Like du Maurier's novels, the touchtone is *Rebecca*. Hitchcock's Academy Award-winning expressionist masterpiece starred the young Joan Fontaine (who also took the lead role in the 1944 *Jane Eyre*) and Laurence Olivier. It marked the British director's Hollywood breakthrough and was the only Hitchcock film to win an Academy Award for best picture. Of all the film adaptations in the oeuvre only this and Roeg's *Don't Look Now* met with du Maurier's approval.

'The best movies show how Daphne du Maurier could take ordinary nervousness and build it into... dread!

David Thomson

Film fact

- In Hitchcock's 1940 Rebecca, the murder was downgraded to 'accidental death', as the moral ambiguity was deemed unsuitable for the Hollywood production code of the day.
- On its release in 1940 the film was reviewed by the New York Times as an altogether brilliant film, haunting, suspenseful, handsome and handsomely played.
- The original script for the screenplay of Hitchcock's Rebecca referred to the anonymous Mrs de Winter as Daphne, after the novel's author.
- Hitchcock reputedly taunted Joan Fontaine, telling the young and inexperienced actress that she was disliked on set in order to magnify her sense of inferiority.
- The tagline for the original film was: 'The Shadow of This Woman Darkened Their Love'.
- Rebecca has been filmed no less than seven times including a 1947 BBC TV production with Michael Hordern, a US NBC version with James Mason (1962), a 1979 BBC addition with Jeremy Brett, and a 1997 Carlton production with Charles Dance and Diana Rigg.



Other du Maurier Resources

Festivities

Annual Daphne du Maurier Festival of Arts and Literature, Fowey, Cornwall May 10-19

Web sites

www.dumaurier.org

The official Daphne du Maurier web site.

www.virago.co.uk

Publishers of the Daphne du Maurier backlist in stunning new editions.

www.rebeccas-tale.co.uk

The official web site for Sally Beauman's acclaimed companion novel.

www.mercurytheatre.info

Listen to Orson Welles' original 1938 radio adaptation of *Rebecca* online.

'So there it was. A finished novel. Title, Rebecca. I wondered if my publisher would think it stupid, overdone. Luckily for the author, h did not. Nor did the readers when it was published.'

Daphne du Maurier

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With special thanks to Dymphna Flynn, Producer, BBC Radio 4 Bookclub













