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Rebecca

A Play in Three Acts

Daphne du Maurier

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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REBECCA

First performed on March 11th, 1940, at the Opera House, Manchester, with the following cast:

FRITH	*Clive Woods.*
MRS. DANVERS	*Margaret Rutherford.*
BEATRICE LACY	*Edith Sharpe.*
GILES LACY	*George Thorpe.*
FRANK CRAWLEY	*Raymond Huntley.*
ROBERT	*Peter Hicks.*
FIRST MAID	*Grace Denbeigh-Russell.*
SECOND MAID	*Isolde Denham.*
MAXIM DE WINTER	*Owen Nares.*
MRS. DE WINTER	*Celia Johnson.*
JACK FAVELL	*Ronald Ward.*
SECOND FOOTMAN	*Theodore Meade.*
MR. COLEMAN FORTESCUE	*Ernest Hare.*
MRS. COLEMAN FORTESCUE	*Dorothy Lane.*
COLONEL JULYAN	*C. V. France.*
WILLIAM TABB	*Richard George.*

Play directed by GEORGE DEVINE.

The action of the play takes place in the Hall at "Manderley," the home of Maxim de Winter.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

SCENE 1.—Evening of May 7th.
SCENE 2.—Six weeks later. Morning of June 23rd.

ACT II

SCENE 1.—9.30 p.m. The same evening.
SCENE 2.—Early the next morning, June 24th.

ACT III

SCENE 1.—Afternoon of the same day.
SCENE 2.—Evening, two days later, June 26th.

REBECCA

ACT I

SCENE 1

The SCENE *is the Hall of Manderley,* MAXIM DE WINTER'S *country seat.*

The furnishing and appointments are not ultra-modern, but convey an atmosphere of quiet elegance.

On L., *a wide sweeping staircase leads to an upper landing, through an arch. Another arch slightly below and to* L. *leads to another landing.*

At the back, C., *double doors lead to an outer hall, beyond which can be seen other doors leading to the ballroom. The main entrance is stage* R. *of the outer hall.*

French windows up R. *(see Ground Plan) lead to a terrace and the gardens. A balustrade and laurel bushes are visible between the windows and the distant scene.*

Down C. *is a large settee, and above it a table. There are armchairs* R., R.C. *and down* R. *below the fireplace.*

At L.C., *somewhat above the* C. *table is a grand piano. Above it is a tallboy, and below it a low harp stool.*

There is a handsome bureau bookcase back R.C., *and a semi-circular table against the* R. *wall, above the fire.*

Other properties are set out in the Property Plot at the end of the book.

A Ground Plan of the Scene can be found at the end of the play.

It is early evening on May 7th. Soft light filters through the windows. The lamps are not yet lit.

As the CURTAIN *rises, the hall is empty. The stable clock strikes six. Then the door-bell rings off in the direction of the kitchen (up stage* L.) *and* FRITH *crosses the outer hall to the front door. Voices are heard off.*

BEATRICE (*off stage*). Any idea what time they are arriving, Frith ?

(*Enter* BEATRICE, GILES *and* FRITH.)

FRITH (R. *of the door*). Mr. de Winter said on the telephone this morning we were to expect them any time after six, madam. The stable clock has just struck.

BEATRICE (*crosses to the glass—takes off her hat and puts it on the table by the fireplace*). We shall certainly wait, then ; it would be such a pity to miss them now.

FRITH. Have you had tea, madam ?

Beatrice. Yes, thank you, Frith. (*She moves towards the fireplace.*)

Frith. Whisky and soda, sir? (*To* Giles.)

Giles. It's not a bad idea. (*He puts his hat and gloves on the piano.*)

Beatrice (*ignoring him*). The Major will wait until Mr. de Winter arrives.

(Giles *shrugs his shoulders and picks up some magazines from the stool below the piano.*)

Frith. Very good, madam. I expect Mr. Crawley will be up from the office directly. I will tell him you have called.

Beatrice. All right, Frith.

(*Exit* Frith. Beatrice *continues standing.*)

Giles. I suppose you haven't forgotten we're dining with the Cartwrights?

Beatrice. I don't care a damn about the Cartwrights. I want to see the bride.

Giles. Do you think we shall be popular? (*He crosses to the front of the settee.*)

Beatrice (*by the fireplace*). What do you mean by popular?

Giles. Well, Maxim's a funny old devil, isn't he? He may not thank us particularly for barging in on him, his first evening at home.

Beatrice. Well, I don't care. I am curious. Maxim of all people throwing his cap over the mill in this extraordinary way. (*Thoughtfully.*) People always say there is something about the South of France.

Giles. The golf's damn good, I believe. (*He sits on the settee with the magazines.*)

Beatrice. Oh! don't be such an idiot! What has golf to do with Maxim's getting married again?

Giles. Might have a lot to do with it. They may have met in a bunker.

Beatrice. Maxim said she paints. I wonder if she's frightfully intense. I can't cope with that.

Giles. You don't have to, old girl. I say, Bee, why on earth must I wait for that whisky and soda?

Beatrice. It's good for you to practise a little self-restraint sometimes. You're getting so horribly gross. Don't you want to make a good impression on the bride?

Giles. One whisky and soda might make me more amusing.

Beatrice. Believe me, it doesn't. (*She strolls towards the table and begins to arrange some roses that are drooping, bends down and smells them.*) Heavenly! Lord, how it takes me back across the years. The Manderley roses. Mother coming in with arms full of them, and Maxim running along the terrace in a

sailor suit. (*She wanders about.*) Nothing changes, does it? *Not even the funny musty smell and the silence.*

(*There is silence for a moment.* BEATRICE *glances across at* GILES, *who is lighting his pipe.*)

(*In a low voice.*) Giles.

GILES (*not looking up*). H'm?

BEATRICE. What do you suppose Mrs. Danvers feels about it?

GILES. Feels about what?

BEATRICE. About Maxim's marrying again.

GILES (*still not looking up*). I haven't the slightest idea.

BEATRICE. I wonder if it was a frightful shock to her?

GILES. Why should it be?

BEATRICE (*another pause*). After all, it has been rather sudden, hasn't it? Barely eleven months since—since Rebecca was drowned.

GILES. A very good thing for Maxim that he has married again. Shows he's got over it.

BEATRICE. Yes. One hopes so. (*A pause.*) You know—just at first after it happened, I thought for one frightful moment, he was going off his head.

GILES. He ought to have gone away at once. The mistake he made was living on here alone. Enough to turn anyone crazy, especially a temperamental bloke like Maxim. Poor devil, what he must have gone through.

BEATRICE. His white, strained face—oh, damnable! (*She walks to the window on the terrace and looks out.*) Funny how it gets one, this place, whenever one comes home. Never changes, never lets one down. No wonder Maxim worships every stick and stone.

(*A pause; she continues looking out of the window.*)

GILES. I wouldn't say it hadn't changed. What about when your father was alive? All the Victorian furniture and those ghastly flower-beds on the lawns.

BEATRICE. Yes, Rebecca got rid of them. She did wonders with the garden and the house. My heavens, she was clever. . . . When Frith showed us in just now, it was the first thing that struck me. Everything just the same, as though she were still here, as though—if one looked up—she would come running down those stairs.

GILES (*shocked*). Bee!

BEATRICE (*abruptly*). Sorry—I was getting morbid.

(FRANK CRAWLEY *comes into the room.*)

Hullo, Frank! I thought you would probably turn up. Are you as curious as I am?

FRANK. How do you do, Mrs. Lacy. I was down in the

office. (*He shakes hands.*) I didn't realize you were here. (*Down to* R. *of the settee.*)

GILES (*gets up*). How are you, Crawley? (*He shakes hands.*)

FRANK. Don't either of you want a drink? (*He turns up to the table* C.)

BEATRICE. We're waiting till Maxim arrives. You haven't answered my question, Frank. Aren't you burning with curiosity to see her?

FRANK (*rather taken aback*). Well—I . . . (*He gets the cigarettes from the* C. *table and offers them to* BEATRICE, *who takes one.*)

BEATRICE. Of course you are. Don't pretend to me.

(FRANK *lights* BEATRICE'S *cigarette.*)

GILES. Stand up to her, Crawley. She's been like a cat on hot bricks all day and thinks everyone must be as jumpy as she is.

(FRANK *lights a cigarette.*)

BEATRICE. Do you know anything about her at all, Frank? All we had from Maxim was a laconic wire the day he got married, and a postcard from Venice a fortnight ago, saying she was twenty-one and paints. Has he been more forthcoming to you?

FRANK. He wrote me a line or two—yes. Didn't say very much, but then he never does.

BEATRICE. Are you pleased?

FRANK. Why, yes, aren't you?

BEATRICE. Yes—yes, I suppose so. It depends on the girl rather, doesn't it?

FRANK. Yes, of course. (*He replaces the cigarette-box on the table.*)

GILES (*crosses to the foot of the stairs and turns*). I think it's rather a pity he brought her back here so soon. They ought to have gone round the world or something. Gone on a cruise.

BEATRICE. My dear Giles, can you see Maxim on a cruise? What nonsense!

GILES. Hang it all, why not? See Florida, Honolulu, all those places. And a young wife as well.

BEATRICE. Can't he make love to the girl in his own home? Much more comfortable than rocking about in the Pacific. Don't you agree? (*To* CRAWLEY.)

FRANK (*embarrassed*). Well, really, Mrs. Lacy, I don't know.

BEATRICE. Speaking as the world's worst sailor, I can't say a honeymoon at sea would appeal to me. Giles and I went to Switzerland and then we had twelve hours on end in a wagon-lit. Remember, Giles?

GILES. Am I likely to forget?

(FRANK CRAWLEY *looks ill at ease.*)

BEATRICE. However, don't let's reminisce, we're making Frank blush. (*She sits* R.C.) Well, my theory is that she's either a dazzling beauty or a blasted blue-stocking. She might possibly be an ex-chorus girl. Monte Carlo is lousy with 'em.

FRANK. I can satisfy your mind on that. Maxim did tell me in his letter she had no relatives and was acting as companion to an American woman.

BEATRICE. My God! She probably wears spectacles and trims her own hats.

FRANK. I don't see why. My sister was a companion to an old lady for many years.

BEATRICE (*taken aback*). Oh! (*She makes a face at* GILES, *who frowns and shakes his head.*) Well, whatever she's like, let's hope to heaven she doesn't sail. (*A pause.*) What's Maxim done about the boathouse in the cove? Is it still shut up?

FRANK (*quietly*). Yes.

BEATRICE. Does he never go near it?

FRANK. Never to my knowledge.

(*Enter* FRITH.)

FRITH. They've rung up from the lodge, sir, to say the car has just passed through the gates. (*He looks pleased, rather excited.*)

FRANK. Thank you, Frith. (*He crosses to the window and out on to the terrace; puts out his cigarette.*)

(*They all get up.* BEATRICE *puts out her cigarette, then goes to the looking-glass and begins powdering her nose.* GILES *knocks the ash out of his pipe into the ashtray on the piano.* FRITH *is straightening chairs, patting cushions.*)

BEATRICE (*glancing at* FRITH). I believe you're as excited as I am, Frith.

FRITH (*straightening himself*). It is rather an event, madam.

BEATRICE. Are the staff pleased about it?

FRITH. Oh yes, madam. We all like a wedding.

BEATRICE. It's an excellent thing for Mr. de Winter.

FRITH. Yes, madam.

(*He looks round, sees everything is in order. He goes to the door* C. *and flings it open wide.* BEATRICE *then exits into the hall to reappear, followed by* ROBERT *and two maids. They cross the hall towards the front door and* GILES *joins* FRANK *on the terrace. The noise of a car arriving is heard.* MRS. DANVERS *comes to the top of the stairs.*)

GILES. Here they come.

(*The noise of a car drawing up. The car door slams.* FRANK, BEATRICE *and* GILES *all come into the room and stand grouped round the window.*)

Maxim's Voice (*sounds off*). Well, here we are, Frith. It was raining when we left London. You don't seem to have had it here. Everyone well?

(Mrs. Danvers *exits along the passage at the top of the stairs.*)

Frith (*off*). Yes, sir, thank you. Glad to see you home, and Madam, too. Hope you had a good journey down?

Maxim (*off*). Not so bad; both rather tired.

Frith (*off*). Major and Mrs. Lacy are here, sir.

Maxim. What?

(*A note of irritation is in his voice, which he tries to conceal, as he enters through the door, followed by* Frith *on his* L. Beatrice *and* Giles *advance to meet him,* Frank *keeping in the background, above the* R. *armchair.*)

Good Lord, Bee, I didn't expect to see you. Hullo, Giles! How nice of you both to come over. (*He tries to sound genial. He kisses* Beatrice *and pats* Giles *on the shoulder. He sees* Frank.) Hullo, Frank! Quite a party, eh? (*He starts taking off his coat and hat and gives them to* Frith.)

(Robert *crosses the hall, with two large suitcases, towards* L., *followed by the* Second Maid *carrying a small valise, a rug and a mackintosh. The* First Maid *is empty-handed.*)

Beatrice. Well, where is she?

Maxim (*who has been glancing round the hall as he takes off his things*). Who? Oh! (*He laughs.*) Too scared to come in, I expect. (*He moves back to the door.*) Come on in. It's only Bee and Giles. They won't eat you up.

(*As he reaches the door* Mrs. de Winter *enters. She is very young, very plainly dressed in grey flannel coat and skirt. No hat. Her hair a long bob. She clasps a pair of gauntlet gloves and an enormous handbag.*

Frith, *standing* L. *of the door, bows.* Mrs. de Winter *glances round at all of them.* Maxim, *half-laughing, steers her by the shoulders to each one in turn.*)

First of all, say how do you do to Frith, who has known me since I was five years old, and used to put me across his knee and spank me.

Mrs. de Winter. How do you do? (*She shakes his hand.*)

Frith. Very glad to see you, madam.

(*He exits with* Maxim's *hat and coat.*)

Maxim. Here is Bee, my one and only sister, who is so itching with curiosity to see you that she's motored fifty miles.

(BEATRICE *moves* C. *to* MRS. DE WINTER. *They shake hands,* BEATRICE *staring hard.*)

Giles, my brother-in-law—

(MRS. DE WINTER *drops her glove*—GILES *picks it up and shakes hands with her.*)

—and Frank Crawley, who thinks he runs the estate, but actually I do the whole thing myself.

(MRS. DE WINTER *shakes* FRANK'S *hand.* BEATRICE *moves down* C. *a little. The* SECOND MAID *passes along the passage at the head of the stairs carrying the small valise, the rug and the mackintosh.*)

BEATRICE (*very downright; crosses to the fireplace*). Well, I must say, you're entirely different from what I expected.

MAXIM. What did you expect?

GILES. A blasted blue-stocking. (*He crosses to* L.C., *above the table behind the settee.*)

(*More laughter.* MRS. DE WINTER *tries to smile.*)

MAXIM (*smiling, to his wife*). You mustn't mind Bee. (*He leads her to* R. *of the settee.*) She believes in speaking her mind. If she doesn't like you, she'll tell you so to your face. One of your most endearing habits, isn't it, Bee?

(FRANK, *who has been watching keenly, comes over and offers* MRS. DE WINTER *a cigarette.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*smiles, shakes her head*). No, thank you, I don't smoke. (*She crosses below* MAXIM *and sits on the settee.*)

(*Enter* FRITH *with sherry and* ROBERT *with whisky, and hands round the tray.* BEATRICE, MRS. DE WINTER *and* FRANK *take sherry.* GILES *takes a whisky and soda and sits on the stool* L.)

BEATRICE. You must forgive us for thrusting ourselves upon you so soon, old boy, but we really couldn't resist it. If you will go and get married in this hole-and-corner fashion, you'll have to put up with a certain amount of curiosity. You're looking better, thank goodness. I suppose we've got you to thank for that. (*She nods at* MRS. DE WINTER, *then sits in the armchair down* R.)

MAXIM (*shortly*). You imagine every one ill who doesn't look as bloated as Giles. (*He sits on the* R. *arm of the settee.*)

BEATRICE. Bosh! You know perfectly well you were a perfect wreck six months ago. I thought you were in for a breakdown. Giles, bear me out. Didn't Maxim look perfectly ghastly last time we came over?

GILES. I must say, old chap, you're looking a different person. Damn good thing you went away.

(MAXIM *is no longer smiling. His wife realizes* BEATRICE *has been tactless.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. Maxim's sunburnt. We used to have breakfast every morning on the balcony of our room, looking over the canal. The sun rather went to our heads. I had to stop Maxim from shooting tangerine pips on to the faces of the gondoliers.

(MAXIM *crosses up to the window.*)

FRANK (*to* R. *of the settee*). It must have been wonderful in Venice this time of the year.

MRS. DE WINTER. It was heavenly. We found something different every day, a bridge, or a church, or the wall of an old house. I wanted to paint them all, and there was never time. Have you been there, too ?

FRANK. No, unfortunately.

BEATRICE. I say, your horses need exercising.

MAXIM. What ?

BEATRICE. They're getting much too fat.

MAXIM. My dear girl, they have the same routine as yours. Don't show off and pretend you know more about horses than I do.

BEATRICE. Dear old boy, how can you know if they are exercised when you're away ? They haven't had a gallop for weeks. I can tell by the condition of their coats.

MAXIM (*crosses back to the fireplace*). I'd rather they looked colossal than half starved like that idiot mare of yours.

BEATRICE (*rises, puts her glass on the stool*). Not a very intelligent remark when Lioness won a first at Olympia last year.

(MRS. DE WINTER *sees the atmosphere is becoming strained.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. How far away do you live ? Did you really have to motor fifty miles ?

BEATRICE (*crosses to* L. *of* MRS. DE WINTER). All of that, my dear. We live the other side of Launceston, in Devon, the hunting is so much better with us. You must come over one day when Maxim can spare you. We can mount you. (*She sits on the settee by the side of* MRS. DE WINTER.)

MRS. DE WINTER. I'm afraid I don't ride.

BEATRICE Oh, you must take it up. You can't possibly live in the country and not ride. You won't know what to do with yourself. Maxim says you paint. That's very nice, of course, but there's no exercise in it.

(FRANK *sits on the chair* R. *of the settee.*)

MAXIM. My dear Bee, we're not all such fresh air fiends as you and Giles.

BEATRICE. I wasn't talking to you, old boy. We all know you are perfectly happy slopping about the Manderley gardens and never breaking out of a slow walk.

(MAXIM *crosses to the window again.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. I'm very fond of walking, too. I'm sure I shall never get tired of wandering about Manderley. I can bathe, too, when it's warmer.

BEATRICE. My dear, you are an optimist. The water is far too cold and the beach is shingle.

MRS. DE WINTER. I don't mind that, as long as the currents are not too strong. Is the bathing safe in the bay?

(*A silence.* GILES *coughs and puts his glass down on the stool.* BEATRICE *stares at the floor.* MAXIM *turns to the fireplace.* MRS. DE WINTER *realizes her faux pas.*)

GILES (*after a minute, rising*). I say, Bee, we shall have to be hitting the road.

MAXIM. Oh, must you go? (*He turns to* GILES.)

BEATRICE. Yes, we're dining with the Cartwrights.

(FRANK *rises.*)

GILES. We shall be infernally late as it is.

BEATRICE. Suppose you go and do something about the car then?

GILES (*moves up to get his hat and gloves from the piano*). Got a new bus, Maxim. Rather pleased with it. One of those four-and-a-half-litre Lagondas. Complete cad's car.

MAXIM. They're damn good, aren't they?

GILES. Come and look at it.

(*They wander towards the door.* FRANK *hesitates, then follows them.*)

BEATRICE. Dear Maxim. He's aching for us to go. I know the signs so well. I'm devoted to him, you know, although we always bicker like cat and dog when we meet. I congratulate you on his looks. We were all very worried about him last year.

(MRS. DE WINTER *says nothing.* BEATRICE *swings round and faces her.*)

You know you mustn't mind me saying so, but you're even younger looking than I expected.

MRS. DE WINTER. I'm twenty-one.

BEATRICE. An absolute child. (*She takes a cigarette from the box on the table behind the settee and lights it.*) When I heard MAXIM had picked you up in the south of France, I must admit

it gave me a bit of a shock. I expected a social butterfly. (*She continues to look at her critically.*) What were you doing down there? Companion to some ghastly American or something. What on earth for?

MRS. DE WINTER. Well, I had to earn my living.

BEATRICE. Hadn't you any family?

MRS. DE WINTER. No.

BEATRICE. I see. (*She pauses.*) We are all delighted and I do so hope you'll be happy. (*She rises and crosses towards the fireplace.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. Thank you.

BEATRICE. Poor Maxim, he went through a ghastly time, you know. (*She turns to* MRS. DE WINTER.) Let's hope you've made him forget about it. Of course he adores Manderley. (*She pauses again.*) We're not a bit alike, Maxim and I. I lose my temper on the slightest provocation. He loses his about twice a year. I don't suppose he ever will with you. I should think you're a placid little thing. (*She smiles.*) Don't mind me saying so, but I think you ought to do something to your hair. Why don't you have it waved? It's so lanky, isn't it? Must look awful under a hat. Try sweeping it behind your ears.

(MRS. DE WINTER *does so.*)

(*She shakes her head.*) No, that's worse. Too severe. What does Maxim say? Does he like it bobbed?

MRS. DE WINTER. I don't know. He's never talked about it.

BEATRICE. Oh! Well, perhaps he likes it. Don't go by me. Tell me, did you get any clothes in Paris or London? (*She crosses up to the* R. *table and picks up her hat, returns and fixes it in front of the glass.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. No, we hadn't any time. (*She rises.*) Maxim wanted to come home to Manderley.

BEATRICE. I can tell by the way you dress you don't care a hoot what you wear.

MRS. DE WINTER. I do. I'm fond of nice things. I never had much money up to now.

BEATRICE. I wonder Maxim didn't stay a week or so in London to get you something decent to wear. He's always so particular.

MRS. DE WINTER. Is he? He never seems particular to me. I don't think he notices what I wear at all.

BEATRICE. Oh? Oh, he must have changed, then. (*Another pause.*) D'you suppose you'll have a lot of people down to stay?

MRS. DE WINTER. I don't know. Maxim hasn't said.

BEATRICE. One never could get a bed in the old days. Tremendous parties. Somehow I don't quite see you . . . (*She stops and pats her arm.*) Oh, well . . . it's a pity you don't

ride or shoot. You must miss a lot. You don't sail, by any chance, do you ?

MRS. DE WINTER. No.

BEATRICE. Thank God for that !

GILES (*calls from the hall*). Bee, come on !

BEATRICE. I must be off. (*She crosses to the door.*) What do you want for a wedding present ? We must give you something, of course.

MRS. DE WINTER. Oh, please don't bother. (*She follows up a little* R.C.)

BEATRICE. Nonsense ! I'm not one to grudge you a present even if we weren't asked to your wedding.

MRS. DE WINTER. I hope you didn't mind. Maxim wanted it to be abroad and absolutely quiet.

BEATRICE. Of course not. Very sensible. After all, he had a terrific show last time. (*She realizes her lack of taste.*) Sorry, my dear. I didn't mean to be rude. I suppose I've said all sorts of things I shouldn't. And, as I told you just now, you're not a bit what I expected. (*She looks at her. Slowly.*) You see—you are so very different from Rebecca. (*She crosses and puts out her cigarette in the ashtray on the piano during this line*).

(*They stand looking at each other.* GILES *comes in at the door.*)

GILES. What are you doing ? We shall have to drive like stink to make it. (*He moves down* C. *towards* MRS. DE WINTER.) Good-bye, I'm damn glad you married Maxim. Come and stay with us whenever you want to, and bring your paint-box. Heaps of horses in the stables and I'd like pictures of all of 'em.

MRS. DE WINTER (*smiles and shakes hands*). Good-bye, Giles.

(GILES *turns into the outer hall.* BEATRICE *moves to* MRS. DE WINTER)

BEATRICE. Bye-bye, my dear. (*She shakes hands.*) Look after Maxim. And if you do go up to London to buy clothes, I'll give you the address of my woman . . . (*She puts on her gloves during this line.*)

GILES. Come on, Bee !

BEATRICE. She has very good taste, and she doesn't rook you.

(*Exit* BEATRICE *and* GILES. *A pause.* MRS. DE WINTER *stands rather dejected in the middle of the room. She is obviously worn out. She wanders slowly towards the window—looks out. The sound of a car starting and the engine "ticking over."* MRS. DE WINTER *leaves the window and crosses towards the foot of the stairs.* FRANK *comes in from the door ; realizes the situation*)

FRANK (*above the table behind the settee*). Have some more sherry ?

MRS. DE WINTER (*turning*). No, thank you.

FRANK. Tired ?

Mrs. de Winter. Yes—rather. (*She smiles, then crosses to the fire.*)

Frank. This must have been an ordeal for you. I'm so sorry.

Mrs. de Winter. It's nice of you to realize it. (*A pause, then she turns to him.*) Do you live quite close?

Frank. Yes. I have a small house on the estate, which we use as an office. Maxim and I do all our work there.

Mrs. de Winter. You must be a great comfort to him.

Frank. I don't know about that. I love my job, you know. And I'd rather work for Maxim than anyone in the world.

(Maxim *comes in by the door. He looks rather tired and jaded.*)

Maxim. Thank God they've gone. I find a little of my family goes a very long way. What did you think of Bee?

Mrs. de Winter. I like her. I think she's sincere. (*She sits in the chair below the fire.*)

Maxim. Sincerity's her strong point. It generally rubs me up the wrong way. Damn them, I wanted to take you round the garden, and now it's too late. God, it's good to be home again. (*He crosses to the fire—looks around him, smiling.*) Anything happened, Frank, since I've been away?

Frank (*sits on the* R. *arm of the settee*). No, I don't think so. Young Mitchell has settled down at Tregaminion all right. He'll farm that place fifty times better than old Liddicoat ever did.

Maxim. Yes, I always thought he would. Did you get the roof done for him?

Frank. Yes—managed to pick up some really good slate at Delabole. I think you'll like it. Hasn't spoilt the farmhouse a bit.

Maxim. We'd better use it here on the Long Barn in the autumn.

Frank. Yes, that's what I thought. (*He smiles at* Mrs. de Winter *and rises.*) You won't be interested in all this. I'll see Maxim in the morning.

Maxim. What? (*He half smiles at his wife.*) Nonsense. She's got to get used to it.

Mrs. de Winter (*anxiously*). Of course.

Frank (*pauses*). By the way, Maxim, you're going to be faced with a demand.

Maxim. What?

Frank. They want you to revive the Fancy-Dress Ball.

Maxim. Oh, hell!

Frank. Yes, I know.

Mrs. de Winter. What's that, Maxim?

Maxim. Oh! One of those infernal institutions that we started some years ago on Midsummer Eve . . . and I've been expected to play up ever since. The locals look upon Manderley

as if it were a pavilion on the end of a pier, and one's supposed to put up stunts for their benefit.

FRANK (*smiles at her*). Well, they were done out of a wedding, you know, and they do love a show of some kind or another. But of course it's up to you, Maxim. If you don't feel like facing it——

MAXIM. Why the devil shouldn't I face it? As long as I don't have to dress up for the damned thing I don't mind. If we've got to be on show, let's do it properly. Invite the whole county and have the place full of press photographers and gossip-writers. It will all be most tremendous fun. (*He speaks bitterly, then crosses to the whisky on the table and pours himself a drink.*) We've only got a bare month before Midsummer Eve, haven't we? Let's start writing out invitations to-night.

(FRANK *says nothing, but looks upset.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*anxious to please*). Can I help at all? I can type, you know.

(FRANK *smiles.* MAXIM *laughs.*)

FRANK. Don't you worry. It can all be done at the office. Licking stamps is the longest job.

MAXIM. Yes. We'll give that to her.

FRANK (*crossing down* R. *to* MRS. DE WINTER *who rises*). Well, I'm not going to worry you any more to-night. You must be longing for a rest. Good night. (*He shakes hands.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*smiling gratefully*). Good night.

(FRANK *turns up* R.)

MAXIM. Hang on. I'll walk down with you. I want to stretch my legs. (*To* MRS. DE WINTER.) You don't want to come?

MRS. DE WINTER (*unconvincingly*). No—no, I don't think so.

(*Exit* FRANK *through the window.*)

MAXIM. I won't be long.

(MRS. DE WINTER *looks anxious.* MAXIM *moves towards her.*)

Don't look so sad. You won't have to worry about the house, you know. Mrs. Danvers runs it all; food, staff, every damn thing. You've only got to be yourself. They'll all adore you. (*He laughs and pats her face.*)

(*He turns up* R. *and goes out of the window calling* "Frank."

MRS. DE WINTER *is left alone. She must give the impression of being rather crushed, rather overwhelmed. She goes over to the mirror and looks into it anxiously. She feels her long bobbed hair as though noticing its unfashionable length for the first time. As*

she looks in the looking-glass Mrs. Danvers *appears at the head of the stairs. She walks slowly down the stairs.* Mrs. de Winter *sees her in the mirror and turns round. They face each other in silence.* Mrs. de Winter *then moves awkwardly forward. She is aware of her clumsiness. There is a little smile of scorn on* Mrs. Danvers' *lips.*)

Mrs. de Winter (r.c., *near the coffee-stool*). How do you do?

Mrs. Danvers. Good evening, madam. (*At the foot of the stairs.*)

Mrs. de Winter. You are Mrs. Danvers, of course. Mr. de Winter has told me about you. He said you—you are a very wonderful person, you do so much for Manderley.

(Mrs. Danvers *doesn't reply.* Mrs. de Winter *struggles on, at a loss for words.*)

It all seems very big to me, you know. You will have to show me round when you are not too busy.

Mrs. Danvers. It's for you to make your own time, madam. (*She crosses to below the left end of the settee.*)

(Mrs. de Winter *looks taken aback by* Mrs. Danvers' *manner.*)

Of course I don't know what you and Mr. de Winter have arranged. The house has been in my charge now for nearly a year, and Mr. de Winter has never complained. It was very different when the late Mrs. de Winter was alive . . . there was a lot of entertaining then, and she liked to supervise things herself.

Mrs. de Winter (*quickly*). You must run the house as it has always been run. I don't want to make any changes.

Mrs. Danvers. Very good, madam. Then I can give orders for things to continue as usual. Breakfast in the dining-room at nine, and the fire lit in the morning-room when cold. Mrs. de Winter always did her correspondence in the morning-room after breakfast. On cold days the fire is lit here in the afternoon just before tea. If you wish it lit earlier, I will give orders for it to be done.

Mrs. de Winter. Oh, no. I'm sure I shan't need it any earlier.

Mrs. Danvers. Alice is unpacking for you now and will look after you until your maid arrives.

Mrs. de Winter (*awkwardly*). I haven't got a maid.

Mrs. Danvers. It's usual, madam, you know, for ladies in your position, to have a personal maid.

Mrs. de Winter. If—if you think it's necessary, perhaps you would see about it for me.

Mrs. Danvers. Just as you wish. It's for you to say, madam.

MRS. DE WINTER. Thank you.

(*She knocks against the stool.* MRS. DANVERS *crosses, picks up the glass from the stool and puts it on the tray on the table.*)

Thank you. I suppose you have been here at Manderley for many years, longer than anyone else ?

MRS. DANVERS. Not so long as Frith. Frith was here when Mr. de Winter was a boy.

MRS. DE WINTER. Oh ! really. So you didn't come till after that ?

MRS. DANVERS (*pause*). I came here when the late Mrs. de Winter was a bride. (*She looks at her with a curious mixture of pity and scorn.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*shocked, a little scared*). Oh ! . . . Oh, I see.

(*Another long pause.*)

MRS. DANVERS (*speaking a little faster than hitherto*). If Mr. de Winter doesn't like the arrangement of the new wing, he must tell me.

MRS. DE WINTER. I had no idea Mr. de Winter was having anything changed. He shouldn't have done it—for me.

MRS. DANVERS. Mr. de Winter said he would prefer it.

MRS. DE WINTER. Oh ! Do we see the sea from our rooms ?

MRS. DANVERS. No. And from your wing you can't even hear it, either. You wouldn't know the sea was anywhere near, not from your wing. (*Her manner is peculiar.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*senses it*). I'm sorry about that. I like the sea.

(*A pause.*)

MRS. DANVERS (*she watches* MRS. DE WINTER *intently*). They used to live in the west wing when Mrs. de Winter was alive, but those rooms haven't been used since she was drowned. (*A pause. In a bright, hard voice.*) Would you like me to show you your rooms ?

MRS. DE WINTER. I think perhaps I'd rather wait till Mr. de Winter comes back. He said he wouldn't be long. (*She glances half-heartedly towards the window and the terrace.*)

MRS. DANVERS. Very good, madam. (*Moving to the foot of the stairs. Rather desperately.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*crosses to* MRS. DANVERS). Mrs. Danvers, I hope we shall be friends. This sort of life is new to me. And I do want to make a success of it, and above all to make Mr. de Winter happy. You will help me, won't you ?

MRS. DANVERS. I shall try and see that everything runs smoothly, madam. Naturally, it is a little difficult for me and

the rest of the staff. We were all very devoted to the late Mrs. de Winter.

Mrs. de Winter (*her voice almost a whisper*). Yes—I understand.

Mrs. Danvers. When we heard that Mr. de Winter was to marry again, we could hardly believe it at first, but Mr. Crawley explained to us how it was. He said he supposed the empty house had got on Mr. de Winter's nerves, and he could not go on living here alone. (*There is a world of malice behind the words.*) If there is nothing more at present, I will go and see if Alice has finished unpacking your clothes. Dinner is at eight o'clock. (*She turns to mount the stairs.*) Good night, madam.

Mrs. de Winter. Good night.

(*Exit* Mrs. Danvers *upstairs.* Mrs. de Winter *is left alone. She goes forward slowly to the settee and sinks down. She gets her handkerchief out of her handbag. The clock strikes seven.* (*Stable clock.*) *Perhaps she cries very unobtrusively. A whistle is heard on the terrace. She quickly wipes her eyes with her handkerchief.* Maxim *comes in from the terrace with some letters.*)

Maxim. Hullo! What are you doing huddled there? You're surely not cold, are you? Regretting Italy already? (*He crosses to below the* r. *end of the settee.*)

Mrs. de Winter. No, no, of course not. (*She catches hold of his hand.*) Where did you go?

Maxim. Only across the lawn to the park. Why—my poor lamb, you've been crying.

Mrs. de Winter. No, I haven't. I swear I haven't.

Maxim. You're tired. It's been a long day. You want your dinner. That's what it is, isn't it?

Mrs. de Winter. Yes, yes, I expect so.

Maxim (*crosses to the bureau and looks at the letters*). You mustn't mind, you know, if I'm out a good deal. Running an estate like Manderley is a full-time job. I don't loaf here like I did in the south of France and in Italy.

Mrs. de Winter. No, of course not.

Maxim. It's a confounded nuisance about the Fancy-Dress Ball.

(*A pause.*)

Mrs. de Winter. I wish I were older, more experienced! Beatrice said I was younger than she expected.

Maxim. Beatrice can mind her own business.

Mrs. de Winter. I shan't know what to say to all your friends. They'll say I don't belong to your world.

Maxim (*looks up*). What do you mean . . . my world?

Mrs. de Winter. You know what I mean. This—Manderley.

MAXIM (*crosses down to* R. *of the settee*). What do you know *about Manderley? I'm the best judge, aren't I? I wouldn't* have asked you to marry me if I hadn't been certain about it, would I?

MRS. DE WINTER. I—I don't know.

MAXIM. What do you mean, you don't know? (*He sits by* MRS. DE WINTER *on the settee.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. I wish I was ten, fifteen years older. I wish I was dark, and clever, and amusing.

MAXIM. You wouldn't be with me here now if you were! And stop biting those nails, they're ugly enough as they are.

MRS. DE WINTER. It's all very well for you. You know everything there is to know about me, but I—why, I scarcely know anything more about you than the day we met.

MAXIM. And what did you know then?

MRS. DE WINTER. Well—that you lived at Manderley and—and that you had lost your wife.

(*As soon as she says this she regrets it.* MAXIM'S *face is very hard. A long pause.* MAXIM *rises, then crosses to the fireplace.*)

MAXIM. I told you in Monte Carlo I didn't want to discuss the past. Something happened a year ago that altered my whole life. Those days are finished. I've got to begin all over again. (*He sits in the armchair above the fire.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. Maxim, I'm sorry. (*She rises.*) I'm sorry. Please forgive me. (*A pause.*) Don't be angry with me, Maxim.

MAXIM. I'm not angry with you.

MRS. DE WINTER (*goes to him*). Yes. I've made you unhappy. I can't bear to see you like this. I love you so much. (*She kneels by him.*)

MAXIM. Do you, do you? (*He holds her tight suddenly.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. What is it, darling? Why do you look like that?

(FRITH *comes in and brings the evening paper and letters. She moves away from* MAXIM *and sits* R. *end of the settee.* FRITH *lights the table lamp by the fire and by the piano. When* FRITH *makes his exit* MAXIM *has recovered.*)

MAXIM (*rises*). Sorry, I was a bear to you just now. (*He crosses to her.*) Having that crowd to meet us was the trouble. I had hoped we should be quite alone. And we could have gone round the garden together. Nothing ever happens exactly as one plans it, ever. (*He goes to the window and stands looking out.*) Our bedroom looks out on the rose garden, not this way. It's my favourite view. The first thing I remember is trotting along after my mother, while she nipped off the dead roses.

There's something peaceful and happy about that view, and it's quiet, too. You can't hear the sea from there.

MRS. DE WINTER (*slowly*). Yes, that's what Mrs. Danvers said.

MAXIM (*comes away from the window and asks abruptly*). Have you met old Danvers? How did you get on? (*To* R.C.)

MRS. DE WINTER. Oh, all right. She was just a little stiff. Perhaps she thought I was going to interfere with the running of the house.

MAXIM. I don't think she would mind your doing that. (*A pause.*) Don't worry about her. She's an extraordinary character. Very efficient though.

MRS. DE WINTER. I expect we shall get on very well when she knows me better. After all, it's natural enough that she should resent me a bit at first.

MAXIM. Why the devil should she resent you? (*Down to* R. *of the settee.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. What I mean is, it must be much easier for a housekeeper to look after a man on his own. I daresay she has got used to doing it, and perhaps she's afraid I might be very overbearing.

MAXIM. Overbearing— You . . . (*He stops, then kisses the top of her head.*) Let's forget about Mrs. Danvers. She doesn't interest me very much. (*He turns up to the* C. *table.*) What about a bath before dinner? The dressing-gong will be going in a minute. I'm infernally hungry. (*He picks up the newspaper* FRITH *put on the table—stands* R. *of the table looking at it.*)

MRS. DE WINTER (*kneeling on the settee, facing* MAXIM). Maxim —do you remember—only forty-eight hours ago we were having dinner in that funny little restaurant by the Grand Canal. And afterwards we leant over the bridge together and watched the lights, and do you remember the man singing in the square? You gave him all the change in your pockets, and he wished us luck and happiness, and many, many bambini, Maxim—darling —do you remember?

MAXIM. Yes. How he stank of garlic, too. (*He moves away to* R.) I don't know which was worse. That or the drains in the canal. (*He laughs.*) Gosh! It's good to be home again. (*He doesn't realize she meant the exact opposite. He sits in the armchair.*)

(*She draws away and stands up slowly. She picks up her bag and gloves, then goes slowly to the foot of the staircase. She pauses there.*)

MRS. DE WINTER. I don't know the way.

MAXIM (*absently*). What? Straight through the archway. The first corridor on the right. All right. I'm just coming.

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