



Rebecca's Tale

By Sally Bauman
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Introduction

Rebecca's Tale works well as a stand-alone novel, while its highly skillful references to Daphne du Maurier's famous novel *Rebecca* make it a deeply satisfying reading experience. Sally Bauman comes up with a moving and exciting vision of what might have happened at Manderley. There are always at least two sides to any story, and Bauman has mined du Maurier's novel for many points of view, without ever distorting or disrespecting the original novel. Her story in no way cancels out the first novel; rather it adds to it, deepens its possibilities, and perhaps humanizes the characters of Maxim, Rebecca, and the young narrator to whom everything in the past is so frightening and unclear. The Rebecca of Bauman's story is very believable, a fully rounded, human woman, with both strengths and faults. The story of Manderly and its ill-fated inhabitants now has a new volume, fully worthy of the first, and definitely just as suspenseful.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the important ways in which Bauman's Rebecca differs from Du Maurier's? Is she portrayed simply as a good woman instead of a bad woman?
2. Similarly, what changes or complications does Bauman add to the character of Maxim? How does this change the whole atmosphere of the story?
3. What is it about the young Mrs. deWinter that makes her attractive to Maxim?
4. Bauman makes clear her respect of du Maurier's original novel in her first sentence, which is the first sentence of the original novel, "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." (Page 3) What are some of the elements of the first novel that might make the idea of a "sequel" so inviting to a writer?
5. Whereas in du Maurier's novel, the character of Rebecca remains mysterious and is seen mainly through the eyes of her husband, Bauman has filled in the details of her life leading up to her time as mistress of Manderly. Do you find the story believable and consistent with a character like Rebecca?
6. Do you find Bauman's narrative style consistent with du Maurier, who wrote her novel in the 1930s? How important is this kind of consistency?
7. What do the new characters of Tom and Ellie add to the story of "the Manderley mystery?"
8. Did you find yourself identifying with any of the characters in this novel? Which one, and why?
9. Some readers question the idea of current writers choosing to write new "sequels" to classic novels by writers who are now dead. What is your opinion?
10. Do you consider Bauman's version of Rebecca herself a more feminist interpretation? Why or why not?

About the Author

Sally Bauman graduated from Girton College, Cambridge. As a journalist, she has worked for *New York* magazine and has written for the *New Yorker*. In England, she worked for the *Daily Telegraph* and *Vogue* and was editor of *Queen* magazine. She has published two works of nonfiction, including *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*. Her novels have been translated into more than 20 languages and have been bestsellers worldwide. She lives with her family in London and Gloucestershire.