

Rebecca theme analysis essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Insecurity, or self-doubt, is a powerful force that prevents a person from allowing him or herself to find true happiness. In Daphne du Maurier's novel, *Rebecca*, the protagonist is filled with insecurities due to the haunting memories of her husband's ex-wife, Rebecca. Examples of this are when the protagonist thinks Maxim does not truly love her, when the narrator wears the same dress that Rebecca did for the ball, and when the protagonist has a talk with Frank Crawley. After returning from their honeymoon, Maxim and his new bride finally settle in Manderley, his home.

A day or two later, Maxim's sister, Beatrice, and her husband come to visit and welcome Maxim's wife to the family. The foursome enjoys tea out in large lawn of Manderley and all share amusing stories. "I listened to them both, leaning against Maxim's arm, rubbing my chin on his sleeve. He stroked my hand absently, not thinking, talking to Beatrice. 'That's what I do to Jasper,' I thought. 'I'm being like Jasper now, leaning against him. He pats me now and again, when he remembers, and I'm pleased, I get closer to him for a moment. He likes me in the way I like Jasper'" (p. 88 pp. 4).

The protagonist feels that Maxim only married her for the company, and compares herself to her dog. She feels that he does minor things to keep her happy and nothing more. Her insecurities tell her that he simply did not want to live in an empty house anymore. Later, after unknowingly wearing the same dress Rebecca did to a ball at Manderley, the Narrator is almost positive that Maxim does not love her. She believes, now, that their marriage was doomed from the start. "I was too young for Maxim, too inexperienced, and, more important still, I was not of his world.

The fact that I loved him in a sick, hurt, desperate way, like a child or a dog, did not matter. It was not the sort of love he needed. He wanted something else that I could not give him, something he had had before. I thought of the youthful almost hysterical excitement and conceit with which I had gone into this marriage, imagining I would bring happiness to Maxim, who had known much greater happiness before” (p. 199). After the mess up with the dress, the protagonist is beyond distressed. She regrets ever coming to Manderley, and her whole marriage.

She thinks of leaving Maxim because her insecurities are telling her that he cannot love her anymore. The narrator had wanted to make a good impression and surprise everyone with the dress she chose to wear, to the ball at Manderley. When she shows off the dress on the night of the ball, Maxim tells her to change right away. She learns that Rebecca wore the same dress at the last ball. Horrified she then refuses to come down for the pre-ball dinner after being asked by Beatrice. “ She had not understood. She belonged to another breed of men and women, another race than I.

They had guts, the women of her race. They were not like me. If it had been Beatrice who had done this thing instead of me she would have put on her other dress and gone down again to welcome her guests. She would have stood by Giles’s side and shaken hands with people, a smile on her face. I could not do that. I had not the pride, I had not the guts. I was badly bred” (p. 187). The protagonist is mortified and cannot face Maxim and everyone else, knowing what she just did. She feels like if Maxim did not love her before, he sure will not love her now.

She wishes she could be strong like Beatrice, but her insecurities convince her that she is not as good as anyone else because she was not born and raised for these types of situations. While staring out the window on the night of the ball, the protagonist sees women and men walking into Manderley, and her mind makes up a dialog for them. She imagines that the people say rude things and compare the narrator to Rebecca. “ ‘ What’s wrong with the maid, is she bad? ’ ‘ No, sulky I reckon. They say her dress didn’t please her. ’ A squeal of laughter and a mummer from the little crowd. ‘ Did you ever hear of such a thing? It’s a shame for Mr. de Winter. ’ ‘ I wouldn’t stand for it. Not from a chit like her, ’ ” (p. 188 pp. 3). Her insecurities are causing her to imagine some of the horrible things people could say. She lets her fear of failing society cause her to cower in her room instead of going down to the dining room and putting on a brave face. One last example of insecurities ruling the protagonist’s life is when she has a conversation with Frank Crawley, Maxim’s agent and a growing friend of the narrator.

While coming back home from a get together with one of the local women, the protagonist feels a bit saddened after hearing how wonderful Rebecca was. The narrator spots Frank Crawley walking on the side of the road and decides to walk with him, and ask him about Rebecca. After talking to Frank, the protagonist tells Frank her dilemmas. “ ‘ I can imagine them saying, ‘ What on earth does Maxim see in her? ’ And then, Frank, I begin to wonder myself, and I begin to doubt, and I have a fearful haunting feeling that I should have never married Maxim, that we are not going to be happy.

You see, I know that all the time, whenever I meet anyone new, they are all thinking the same thing-How different she is to Rebecca,' " (p. 113 pp. 2).

The narrator's insecurities are taking over. She is constantly worrying if she is good enough. During the same conversation with Frank, the protagonist expresses more concerns. " ' And I realize, everyday, the things I lack, confidence, grace, beauty, intelligence, wit-Oh, all the qualities that mean most in a woman, she possessed,' " (p. 113 pp. 5). The protagonist simply states everything that she believes is wrong with her.

Frank tries to tell her differently, but fails. She thinks she is not as good as anyone, and her insecurities have made her worry about that. Everyone has insecurities, but some people choose to let them rule their lives. The protagonist lets her self-doubt dictate her life and thoughts. She allows herself to be bullied by her mind. Though people try and tell her that she is good in her own way, she cannot stop comparing herself to Rebecca. du Maurier proves that, if not conquered, insecurities can ruin a person's outlook on life.