



*The
Dead
Ghost*

The Dead Ghost

Dramatization in one scene of Daphne du Maurier's novel "*Rebecca*"

by Christian Lanciai (2005,
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The characters:

Maximilian de Winter, called 'Maxim'

Lee, his young wife

Mrs Danvers, housekeeper

Frith, servant

other servants

Beatrice

Frank

Jack Favell

a captain

Rebecca

a magistrate

guests

The action takes place in 1937 by Kerrith, Cornwall.

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The scene is the central hall in a sumptuous manor with a dining-hall, library, a group for sitting around a fireplace with sofas and a broad staircase leading up to the second floor. Old grand family portraits adorn some walls. Maxim carries his young wife across the threshold through the door and enters.

Maxim At home at last! Welcome home to the world that henceforth is your own, my girl!

Lee O Maxim, you carry me straight into the delights of paradise with an abundance of sumptuous wealth! Never in my life could I guess that I would be hauled into a world such as this!

Maxim Everything is yours without any reservations. You are now the ruling mistress of the house with all the property of the heritage. I arranged for you the room that faces the rose garden, so that you always can feel the fragrance from there.

Lee These last few weeks have been like a reeling merry-go-round of turbulence of overwhelming experiences. I hardly had time to digest the first strong overwhelming impressions before there were new floods of them with double strength.

Maxim I am like that. Get used to it. I was brought up a patron with an abundance of wealth around me that I was free to handle as I wanted but with discipline and responsibility if it were to work at all. I always succeeded in making everything work. That's why I can now hand it all over to you.

Lee It will take time for me to grow into a role that I never was tested in before. It feels like having to start at a mature age at school from the beginning since I never learned anything before.

Maxim You will learn quickly. You are not stupid or naïve no matter how innocent you are. Fortunately you are young enough to quickly get used to things and fit in. Or else I would never have proposed to you.

Lee Your proposal came so suddenly and unexpected that I was taken aback.

Maxim That was intentional. It was natural and spontaneous, which always comes on as a surprise. Or else it wouldn't have come.

Lee Who is this? (*A slender dark woman has quietly entered. Not until now Lee has noticed her with almost some apprehension.*)

Maxim (without explaining) Yes, Mrs Danvers?

Danvers The servants are ready to greet and meet their mistress.

Maxim I never asked for their compliments, and neither did my wife.

Danvers Still they are all ready. They should at least be permitted to see what the new Mrs de Winter looks like.

Maxim Well then, let them come. (*Danvers leaves as quietly as she came.*)

It's Mrs Danvers, the driest possible human being but efficient as a housekeeper. She manages all things practical connected with the household and has unfortunately made herself indispensable with the years although I would have preferred to do without her especially after the death of Rebecca.

Lee I have nothing against her, but she appeared all of a sudden so quietly.

Maxim I didn't notice either when she entered. She is a sphinx who is never noticed except when she does what must be done. That's why I kept her. Nothing is ever missing in the house and everything works perfectly although I have been gone for ten months.

Lee Since the death of your former wife?

Maxim Yes.

(*Enter Mrs Danvers with the servants, Frith, kitchen staff, gardeners and others. The girls curtsy while the male servants bow when she offers them her hand.*)

Frith Welcome to Manderley, Madam.

Lee Thank you.

Maxim It's Frith, the indispensable factotum of the property. You can trust him with anything.

(When they all have greeted her and bowed and curtsied they all retire at a sign from Mrs Danvers.)

Danvers This was a necessary introduction to make all cooperation work smoothly from the beginning.

Maxim That's all right, Mrs Danvers. You may leave now. *(She leaves.)*

Lee There is something forbidding about her.

Maxim She is like that. Don't mind her. She is part of the furniture. That's all.

Lee She must know a great deal about the house.

Maxim She knows everything but doesn't say anything until what she knows comes useful. She never bothers about anything unnecessary.

Lee The perfect housekeeper.

Maxim Mildly speaking. A well trained dinosaur.

Lee Does anybody like her?

Maxim All depend on her. She was never loved by anybody.

Lee One could think that you kept her only because she belonged to the days of Rebecca.

Maxim (hard) Stop bringing up Rebecca!

Lee (frightened) I am sorry. I never wished to rekindle your grief. It's just that I know so little about your marriage and what you actually went through. Sometimes I wish that Rebecca could instruct me, but she isn't here. Still the entire house is still breathing of her memory.

Maxim Let's now leave the past in the past and devote ourselves to the present and future instead. I only wish you to be happy, so that I might be happy with you.

Lee I am only happy if you are happy. And I am only happy with you if you are happy with me.

Maxim At least I waged everything on the possibility of getting there, and I intend to win that bet.

Lee Then I am safe and feel that I cannot lose.

Maxim What we need now is something to eat. What about some real afternoon tea with scones and muffins?

Lee We could both do with that.

Maxim It should all be served now. Frank and Beatrice will come any moment. We might as well take our seats, which might bring them on.

(They move over to the table where everything is arranged and served.)

Are you happy with your new life, Lee? I so much wish for you to be so.

Lee I can't be any happier, and still I get happier all the time.

Maxim Do you know why I dared to propose and wage my life on you?

Lee I have no idea.

Maxim Unfortunately I am all too good at getting to understand a human being and seeing her mind. I immediately got the insight of you that nothing ever could run away with you, that you could never lose your mind or let yourself be carried

too far. Then I decided to dare give you everything, and I don't think I will ever have to regret it.

Lee Mrs Hopper was of the opposite idea. When she learned that you had proposed and that I had accepted, she said I had made a mistake and would probably regret it.

Maxim The dirty old envious hag! I almost pulled you out of the gutter, and it was lucky that I did, or else you would have been stuck as a companion for old gossiping spinsters and become one yourself.

Lee She meant no harm. She just had some difficulty accepting that she would have to do without me.

Maxim Of course. She thought she owned you and had you stuck. No human self-deceit is worse than to believe that you have other people in your control. All politicians live and perish by that illusion.

Lee I am afraid Mrs Danvers somewhat lives by that illusion.

Maxim At least she does it then with some self-control and detachment, so let's grant her that illusion as long as she guards it well. You should not get rid of politicians that behave.

Lee What was it between her and Rebecca?

Maxim They went well together. It was Rebecca who brought her here. The dinosaur was almost her nanny.

Lee I see. (*The door bell.*)

Maxim Here they are. (*gets up. Mrs Danvers receives Frank and Beatrice.*)

Beatrice Welcome home, dear Lee, to your own residence forever! How do you feel? Have you been able to make yourself at home yet?

Lee I am trying to.

Frank Don't stress her, Beatrice. She is only a child.

Lee I actually thought I was grown up at least.

Beatrice The last thing I wish to do is to stress you, dearest Lee. I am just concerned about that you will get through the first ordeals all right. Then everything will get settled. (*more tenderly*) I would have wished you to do without Mrs Danvers, though. She always gives me a nasty impression and feeling that her wardrobe is full of skeletons, that she has the keys and is ready to let them out at any time.

Frank Don't gossip now, Beatrice. You are only making things worse for her. How is it, Maxim? You have been married for three months and seem to manage all right.

Maxim None of us has so far complained of the other. Have a few scones.

Frank Are they not Mrs Danvers' special treat that Rebecca loved so passionately?

Beatrice When Rebecca loved she always did it passionately, Frank.

Frank Especially scones.

Maxim Please leave Rebecca in peace now. I have another wife now.

Beatrice And so different from the other. One could almost suspect you of having deliberately selected Rebecca's opposite.

Maxim Perhaps I did. Maybe that is what I needed.

Frank I am sure you chose the right one, Maxim. You always had the right taste.

Maxim Anyone can make mistakes, but I never do it repeatedly.

Lee How was Rebecca really?

Beatrice Your contrary in most things but for the better. You would have complimented each other.

Lee In what way was she my contrary?

Frank She was dominating. You are not.

Beatrice I don't think Maxim likes our bringing her up.

Lee He doesn't want me to speak of her, but I must learn to succeed her in the right way. And the more I breathe in this house, the more I feel that I have much to learn from her.

Beatrice Just don't summon her spirit. Mrs Danvers is quite enough for unblessed spirits in this house.

Maxim Don't talk of her.

Beatrice Mrs Danvers?

Maxim Yes.

Beatrice But we may talk about Rebecca?

Maxim I would rather not. She is dead.

Frank And buried.

Maxim I identified her myself. She was almost dissolved in atoms. One arm was missing. She is definitely a finished chapter, and if only she could remain that way... *(rises suddenly and walks out)*

Frank He is upset.

Lee How did she die?

Frank She sailed out alone and met with a storm. The sailing-boat was never found. After a long time the body was found. Nobody could identify it, but Maxim had to do it.

Lee No wonder he was upset. Was she very beautiful?

Frank She was supreme in beauty, Lee. She outshone everybody else. She was superior in everything. Nothing could beat her in anything.

Lee And I am the contrary?

Beatrice A likeable contrary. You have much of what she lacked, for example prudence and humility.

Frank There is nothing wrong with you, Lee, and if Maxim is a bit noxious sometimes it's just his way. He never means any harm.

Beatrice He only has some difficulty with getting rid of his dead wife.

Frank Lucky for him, he has a living one.

Lee Lucky for him also to have friends like you and that I havet hem as well.

Frank We will never let him down or whoever he is married to.

Beatrice Here h e is again.

Maxim (returning) I only had to smoke a cigarette.

Frank We understand you, Maxim.

Maxim Don't be so comforting, Frank.

Frank I am only trying to make the best of it.

Beatrice He is doing his best, Maxim.

Maxim Yes, I know, as long as no one tries coddling me I am content.

Beatrice Now as Lee is established here and holds all the keys you start to miss the good old days when there were parties almost every month.

Frank Yes, Rebecca was hard on parties. Your first years, Maxim, I remember as just one long party that you never tired of celebrating.

Maxim Yes, I really loved her.

Lee Not that I wish to enter her clothes, but what is stopping us from having a small party, just to mark the continuity?

Beatrice I was just longing for you to come with a suggestion like that, Lee. That's why I boldly ventured to give you a cue.

Frank The idea is not so bad. That would definitely confirm Lee's position as the new mistress of Manderley in the eyes of the local people.

Beatrice Since Lee suggested it herself I think it's a wonderful idea. Let's turn it into a historical masque in the grand old style!

Frank What do you say, Maxim?

Maxim No problem. We could leave the entire organization and preparations to Mrs Danvers. Being used to it, she would welcome it, I am sure.

Beatrice And would gladly resume that activity. I am sure of that.

Maxim Then it's settled.

Beatrice A commendable initiative, Lee. You will be a success.

Frank We must go now, Beatrice. Thanks for the tea.

Maxim We'll continue when you return.

(Frank and Beatrice break up.)

Lee I hope my suggestion only was received well.

Maxim It was, Lee. On the other hand, you hardly had any choice after Beatrice's push.

Lee But what on earth should I wear?

Maxim Check with Mrs Danvers. She is the best expert and always finds solutions.

Lee Good for me to have her in situations like this. I went into deep water at once.

Maxim That was very brave of you.

Lee I hope I will not have to regret it.

Maxim No risk. The first step is the only difficult one, and you already made it. The rest will manage by itself.

Lee You always make me feel so safe and secure.

Maxim That's intentional. I wish you all the safety in the world.

Lee Thanks, Maxim. Then we will probably manage a simple masquerade.

Maxim You usually get through parties alive even if they sometimes may need some endurance.

Lee Do you suffer in them?

Maxim I did so sometimes, but this one should be different. Mrs Danvers! (*She enters.*) We have made up our minds to celebrate the new mistress of the house with a party masquerade in the good old style. Surely you still know the old routines?

Danvers Of course, Mr de Winter. You could as usual leave everything to me. (*scrutinizes Lee's simple figure*) But how will our lady dress up?

Maxim Suggest something that will suit her. I am sure you will find out something between yourselves. I leave you to the preparations of your female planning and know that I can fully rely on you.

Danvers I never let you down, Mr de Winter.

Maxim I know. That's why I kept you here. That's good, Mrs Danvers. Keep it up. (*leaves*)

Lee Have you any suggestion, Mrs Danvers? A costume for a masquerade demands some meticulous preparations.

Danvers What about copying some historical painting in the gallery?

Lee Not a bad idea. There are many beautiful costumes to choose from.

Favell (shows up in the window) Tst! (*Mrs Danvers startles.*)

Lee Who is that? Do you know him?

Favell (enters shamelessly) Pardon my impertinence, but I just happened to pass this way. I am actually the cousin of the former Mrs de Winter, Jack Favell, at your service, Mrs de Winter.

Danvers Mr Favell, Rebecca is dead, and you know that you haven't been welcome here since then.

Jack That's why I burst in while Max is gone. Is it dreadfully impertinent of me, Mrs Danvers? I actually only wished to drop by to see the new mistress of the place. I hope you'll excuse my impoliteness, Mrs de Winter? Rebecca and I were more than cousins. We were best friends.

Lee Of course you are welcome, Mr Favell, if only you escape before my husband sees you, if he actually forbade your presence here. Would you like some tea?

Jack I never refuse any invitation. It's just like in the old days, isn't it, Danny? You only miss the constant party.

Lee We will actually give a party in a few weeks. I and Mrs Danvers were just about to start discussing the details.

Danvers You can't come, Jack.

Jack I understand that. Well, the new mistress has at least not turned me down. I hope you will not report me to Max. He could be offended.

Danvers You had better leave at once, Mr Favell.

Jack Thanks for your kindness to offer me a smart retreat, Danny. We'll meet again some other time. I really hope to see you again, Mrs de Winter.

Lee (not equally enthusiastic) Thank you.

Danvers Go now.

Jack I will. (*leaves the same way he got in.*)

Lee Why didn't Maxim like him?

Danvers He was closer to Rebecca than ever Mr de Winter was. Jack was always the natural leader and centre of all her parties. They grew up together as children.

Lee And you were her nanny?

Danvers Not directly, but I was closer to her than anyone else. I loved her. I adored her. And I was probably the only one who really did.

Lee Why did she go out alone in her boat in full storm?

Danvers That question has never been answered. She just disappeared, and after a month Mr de Winter could identify her body. Now she is dead and buried in the crypt of the church, where all de Winters lie buried. But she is still the ruler of this house. She has never given up her fight.

Lee What fight? Was she ill?

Danvers Her fight for her freedom and independence although she was married. She loved the sea, where she always could feel completely free in her loneliness. Now the sea has released her, but she still has something to settle here ashore. I can feel it.

Lee Is she haunting the place?

Danvers (somewhat superior) Maybe, madam. She could have some reason for it.

Lee You are not telling me the whole truth.

Danvers No one will ever know the whole truth. That's why it still lingers like the veil of an unblessed spirit over the entire house.

Maxim (enters suddenly) Danvers! I must speak with you! Alone!

Danvers Yes, Sir.

Lee I have my garden to attend to. (*leaves*)

Maxim I have heard that Jack Favell was here and that you let him in.

Danvers No, he importuned himself, and I could not stop him.

Maxim Why didn't you show him off at once?

Danvers I tried to.

Maxim Why didn't you succeed?

Danvers He came to pay the new mistress his respects, and she did not turn him out. So I couldn't either.

Maxim (calmer) I see. And she didn't of course know who he was.

Danvers No.

Maxim Very well. But never again, Mrs Danvers. Do you hear? Never again!

Danvers Yes, Mr de Winter.

Maxim Naturally he saw his opportunity when he knew that I would not be at home, the shameless rogue. Or else he would have met with violent adversity. Well, I really hope we will be rid of that ghost from the past in the future.

Danvers He caused no harm, Sir.

Maxim Yes, I know, not this time, but he has caused enough harm in the past. Enough is enough.

Danvers Yes, Sir.

Maxim I count on you that it will not happen again. (*leaves*)

Danvers Who could have informed him? It must have been the new wife. She didn't like him. But he is the only link left for me with Rebecca. I must not lose him. Well, if the new wife chooses to sabotage me, I should be able to help her on in her career.

Lee (enters) Mrs Danvers, I have studied the portraits in the gallery, but there are so many of them. Is there any special among them that you would recommend?

Danvers Why not the lady in white? She was one of Mr de Winter's ancestors while she was still virgin before she married.

Lee The one in the beautiful simple dress in the big white hat? I like that portrait.

Danvers She liked it very much herself.

Lee An excellent idea.

Danvers I know exactly what tailor in London could manufacture precisely that dress.

Lee How very helpful you are, Mrs Danvers. I am really most grateful.

Danvers Anything to help you on your way.

Lee I have all my measures in my head. All we have to do is to contact the tailor.

Danvers Let's do that at once, then. Trust me, madam.

Lee Yes, I think I can do so from now on. *(leaves)*

Danvers It will be a party that never will be forgotten in the good old style, which in glory will reintroduce the good days of the great parties here in the house and restore Rebecca, the only true mistress of the house, back at the centre of everyone's attention, so that her old Danny may triumph in her pride of her. As usual I will handle it all with the utmost perfection. *(leaves)*

(The guests begin to arrive, well dressed up, masked, on a regular stylish level, Frank as a pirate captain, Beatrice sweeping in a crinoline, Maxim in a simple but tailored smoking, and so on. Only about half are dressed up and masked. All mingle together, and the servants are busy serving drinks.)

Beatrice She promised it would be a surprise beyond Maxim's imagination.

Frank Surely then she has arrived at some great ingenuity.

Guest 1 Everyone is so excited about how she will look like. So few of us have seen her at all.

2 They say she is small and simple.

3 A definite contrast to Rebecca then.

2 *(lower)* Yes, they say he chose her just for being the opposite of Rebecca.

3 What then could he object against Rebecca?

2 Nothing except her domination and grand airs. But above all he had reasons enough for jealousy.

3 Her parties in the fisherman's cottage gave rise to incredible rumours.

2 Yes. They are still livid today. Poor Ben is still afraid of her.

3 Although she is dead?

2 You never can be quite sure of that.

Maxim Serve yourselves with drinks. We are only waiting for my wife who will be present at any moment.

1 But why doesn't she come then?

Beatrice Surely you must know that new dresses always take their time. There is always something getting stuck.

Frank The guests are so well prepared that they could accept anything.

2 As it is her introduction party it must be vital for her to make a good impression.

Frank I am sure she is waging on that. She does have taste, you know.

Beatrice Frank!

Maxim Fortunately she lacks Rebecca's taste.

Beatrice You mean Rebecca's knack for always excelling herself?

Maxim She was always reckless in her exaggerations.

Beatrice I think she is coming out now.

(Lee appears by the banisters on the upper floor, exquisitely beautifully dressed in white of early 19th century with a wonderful white hat, like a virgin too obvious to be true.)

Frank It cannot be true.

Beatrice It is she herself.

1 But that is...

2 Who could believe it?

3 It's like a revelation. I never thought I would see her again.

Danvers (discreetly, from a corner) Let her triumph. I almost succeeded in bringing her back to life.

Maxim (stunned at first, then in a burst of anger, throwing his cigarette on the floor) What the devil have you done? Go back at once and change!

Lee (stopping in the middle of the stairs, shocked) But what have I done?

Beatrice The ppor thing! She didn't know what she was doing! *(hurries up after Lee, who retreated in a panic)* Lee! Lee!

Maxim (calming the guests) Just a short interlude. She got the wrong dress. Beatrice will help her with the right one. A mistake. The party continues. Frith! Nore drinks! *(Frith gets busy, the guests have new drinks and start mingling again, and the hum of voices rises again as if nothing had happened.)*

Lee (has stumbled and fallen. Beatrice catches up with her.) But what did I do wrong? What's the mess I have created?

Beatrice The dress, my dearest. You could not know.

Lee Know what? It was copied from a picture in the gallery...

Beatrice Rebecca was wearing that precise dress on her last party.

Lee (understands, devastated) Oh! *(Beatrice helps her on her feet.)*

Beatrice We must get you back to your room. You must have other dresses? Anyone is better than the only impossible one.

Lee Mrs Danvers! She tricked me! But why?

Beatrice We will investigate that later. Now you must change. So that you can meet the guests.

Lee Not after this. It's impossible.

Beatrice Pull yourself together, child. Don't give up at once.

Lee Who can fight ghosts? My predecessor has triumphed over me, I am overreached by a deceased, and she is laughing at me from the other side of the grave!

Beatrice Don't take it so hard, my dear. It was just a brief and passing moment's crisis.

Lee I am not so sure of that. I am beaten in the first round.

Beatrice Nonsense, dearest. You will always manage, if you only will persist in getting up again.

Lee I will try.

Beatrice That's better. (*walks out with her*)

Frank A most unexpected incident. Who could believe that Rebecca would walk around in someone else's body?

Maxim She continues persecuting me as she always has persecuted me since we buried her. She will never leave me in peace. And then this: a new version of her in the only one I thought was clinically free from her! It's too much!

Frank I am sure it was absolutely unintentional.

Maxim That's just the terrible thing! The dead outwits the living!

Frank Have a drink, Maxim. Lee will surely come back here again.

Maxim How could I ever see her again as Lee when Rebecca has taken charge of her?

Frank Don't imagine things. Look, here is Beatrice.

Beatrice (*coming down*)

1 Well, how is our hostess?

Beatrice She will join us. She is just changing. She got the wrong dress from London.

2 The gods will testify to that.

Maxim Frith, I think the guests will need another round of cocktails. Refill their drinks. (*Frith gets busy.*)

Maxim (*aside*) How could I ever look into her eyes again without imagining myself seeing Rebecca's scorn in them? Why do ghosts grow more alive the more you try to get rid of them? Rebecca, you keep going on to extremes and shocking us when you should be dead! (*vanishes out in a panic*)

Beatrice He is just going out for another cigarette.

Frank Here she is.

(*Lee comes down again in a very simple blue dress to join the people.*)

3 At last, my lady! We are all so happy to see you!

Lee Thank you. I am also happy. Where is Maxim?

Frank He will be here presently.

Beatrice Mingle with the guests in the meantime. Let them get to know you, so that they understand that you are real.

Lee Beatrice, you saved the whole evening for us all and for me. I am just worried about Maxim.

Beatrice He will manage, my dear. He has been through worse trials.

Lee I believe you. But where is he?

Beatrice I wish I knew.

Frank He has probably just gone out for a smoke as usual.

1 After the death of his former wife he used to lock himself up in the library and just sit there for hours smoking.

2 Perhaps his housekeeper knows.

Lee Mrs Danvers?

2 Yes, the inscrutable Mrs Danvers.

Lee Where is she?

Beatrice I thought I saw her shadow somewhere.

Frank I think she is haunting the second floor.

Lee (discovers Mrs Danvers almost hidden on the second floor) Take care of the guests in the meantime, Beatrice. You are the real star of the evening and its angel of rescue. I must speak with Mrs Danvers. *(walks up)*

2 Mrs Danvers knows many things that not even Maxim knows.

Frank She is almost spooky by her ability to penetrate everyone without anyone being able to penetrate her. In her practical perfection she commands everyone without giving anything of herself away, so that you might suspect her of the most terrible knowledge and secrets.

3 But without Mrs Danvers both Maxim and Manderley would have gone to ruin.

2 That's what's so suspiciously dangerous about her, that she has managed to make herself indispensable to everyone.

3 You mean, what will happen if she bails out?

2 Then anything might happen and considerably worse things than so far.

Lee (upstairs) Mrs Danvers, I must speak with you.

Danvers What can I do for you?

Lee Where is my husband?

Danvers He has locked himself up in the library for the time being to devote himself only to smoking, as he always used to do as a fresh widower. As long as he is occupied with that, nothing can disturb him, and he refuses to answer if anyone knocks.

Lee Why did you trick me into dressing up as Rebecca?

Danvers Why did you tell Mr de Winter about Jack's visit here?

Lee I didn't.

Danvers Who did it then?

Lee Beatrice happened to see his car here.

Danvers I understand. Then I have committed a mistake. I wanted to make Mr de Winter suffer for keeping Jack away from me, and I wanted to revenge myself on you for daring to take Rebecca's place.

Lee Mrs Danvers, I knew absolutely nothing about Rebecca when I arrived here and hardly anything about her husband either.

Danvers You must have been aware, though, that he was old enough to be your father?

Lee 46 is no age, and I am older in my soul than in my outward appearance, but I never aged and matured so quickly as by the crisis of your practical joke.

Danvers You have no right to be here. This is Rebecca's house, and she is still ruling here. No one can replace her and you least of all. Why did you come here? Why don't you leave? You must realize that you can never become happy here. You are awkward and a failure making a constant fool of yourself. After this evening's spectacle I guess your captured husband never again wants to see you.

Lee You haven't won, Mrs Danvers. You have only revealed yourself as my enemy and completely without any reason.

Danvers I am not the one who is your enemy, Mrs de Winter. It is Rebecca. And you stand no chance against her. She was superior to everyone and will remain so after her departure.

Lee Do you suggest that you are in touch with her?

Danvers Not at all. She did as she pleased as long as she lived, and she will continue doing so from the other side. No one can resist her, she commands us all completely with her entire world, and she will continue doing so. You least of all will be able to resist her.

Lee I am not inclined to give up.

Danvers You should before it's too late and you regret it.

Lee Are you threatening me?

Danvers No, Mrs de Winter, I strictly adhere to facts.

(A sudden explosion. All startle and become even more upset when there is a second explosion. Suddenly Maxim comes rushing in.)

Maxim It's rockets of distress. A ship has foundered in the bay. I must contact the authorities at once. *(rushes on and out)*

1 That was a long time ago.

2 It must have been the extreme fog. Sometimes it comes on so suddenly and treacherously that ships have to approach the coast to understand where they are.

3 No, this one must have simply navigated wrong and gone up the wrong bay. They knew well enough their destination, but the fog makes the whole coastal landscape look different.

Lee (comes rushing down) Beatrice! What were those explosions? Has anything happened?

Beatrice Obviously some ship has foundered in the bay.

Lee Where is Maxim?

Beatrice He is in his right element. He is just the right man for situations like this. He is already organizing the entire rescue operation.

Lee Could there be a matter of – casualties?

Beatrice Hardly.

Frank (coming in from outside) The ship has not gone down, and the boats are safe. Everyone is being brought ashore.

Lee They must be frozen and hungry. We must take care of them.

Beatrice Maxim was always at his best in those things. It happened more often before, and it's now many years ago, but the routines are still there.

Lee Naturally Manderley must provide all the necessary resources. We have any amount of space and can provide for a company. It's important for the wrecked to immediately be warmly taken care of.

Captain (enters from outside, doffs his cap) I am looking for the master of the house.

Lee He is busy with the rescue operation.

Captain Yes, on occasions like this Mr de Winter could always work around the clock. I must nevertheless add to his troubles.

Beatrice Is it anything serious?

Captain Yes, I am afraid it is. The boat of the late Mrs de Winter has been found beside the wreck.

Lee Rebecca's?

Captain Yes, Rebecca de Winter's sailing boat, the smartest yacht that ever sailed in these waters.

Beatrice Then it's no longer lost. But what is then the problem?

Captain The problem, which I must discuss with Mr de Winter, is that the yacht was not abandoned. A diver who went down to examine the wreck found a body on board.

Frank A body? Could it be identified?

Captain Of course not. It was entirely dissolved. But it was locked up in the galley.

Frank Rebecca is back haunting us again.

Beatrice It's getting worse and worse.

(Suddenly Maxim appears in the doorway.)

Captain (sees him and rises immediately) Mr de Winter, unfortunately I have a matter of the utmost importance to discuss with you.

Maxim I know. I heard. Beatrice, get rid of the guests. The party is over. It could only have been Rebecca's corpse, couldn't it, captain?

Captain There must be a new investigation.

Maxim Yes. That is inevitable.

Beatrice But you already identified her once, Maxim.

Maxim Yes, I did, but I could have been mistaken. That one-armed body was half of it all rotten and utterly unrecognizable as a human being. I identified her as Rebecca in an effort to rid myself of her presence. Now she is returning. Of course it must be the right body this time, and that will bring out all the questions.

Captain I am sorry, Mr de Winter.

Maxim Me too. There is nothing to do. This way, captain. We must discuss the details.

Lee Is there anything I can do, Maxim?

Maxim Yes, Lee. You can keep still and stay close in the vicinity and not let me down. That's all you can do. *(leaves with the captain)*

Beatrice So the whole heart-rending process must be endured with difficulty again.

Frank And this time it will not just be an issue of a burial.

Beatrice Lucky for us that you are here, Lee. He will need you.

Frank Yes. Suddenly he needs a real wife and not just to get away from the old one.

Beatrice Frank.

Frank Yes, Beatrice. We had better leave. The guests have gone home, the party is over, and now begins the process. Call on us any time, Lee. We were always on Maxim's side.

Lee Thank you. Suddenly it feels as if I and Maxim at last are married.

Beatrice Not even Rebecca can separate you. *(leaves with Frank)*

Lee (alone in the great house) Come, storms, and attack us; come, ghosts, and terrorize us for being alive and staying alive, I challenge you, Rebecca, dead or alive, active or buried, whether you are watching us and trying to manipulate us or really have left us, for physically you are gone in spite of all. This is a strict fact that not even Mrs Danvers can overlook or deny. It is I, Rebecca, who now am his wife!

(Maxim in the doorway, devastated.)

Maxim! *(runs up to him, embraces him)* What has happened?

Maxim Do you love me, Lee?

Lee What a question! That's the last thing you may doubt, Maxim.

Maxim Rebecca has won, Lee.

Lee She is dead, Maxim.

Maxim It doesn't matter. She has won nevertheless.

Lee What makes you say that?

Maxim There will be a thorough investigation this time of the entire boat and of the skeleton that I hoped never more would surface. Now all graves are opened wide and all phantoms let out at large, and there is nothing we can do. We are defenceless against the dead, Lee.

Lee What is it you are trying to tell me?

Maxim I killed her. I shot her there in the fisherman's cottage in the bay and put her in the galley, had the boat brought out and had it sunk where it now has been found. I not only murdered her but also tried to bury her alive. How could you love me then? What is it that I have dragged you into, Lee?

Lee Whatever it is it was not voluntary on any part, and the least thing we can do is to try to work ourselves out of it together. But in that case I must know everything. We have been married for four months, and not until now you have opened your mouth.

Maxim I wanted to leave you untouched by my memories. When you never asked anything I thought you were happy as you were and wanted to stay that way.

Lee I never dared. I suspected all kinds of monsters in the wardrobe, and Mrs Danvers by her mere presence of being gave me enough creeps to keep as quiet and closed up as possible. But why did you kill her? Didn't you love her?

Maxim Never! How could you believe it?

Lee Everyone gave me the impression that she was the perfect ideal of a woman and that your marriage if anything was the total success. That's also why I

didn't dare to ask any questions since I thought that you still loved her and more than me and that you all the time compared me with her to my disadvantage...

Maxim By God what misconceptions you lost your way in without even anyone wanting to bring you there!

Lee Maxim, I must know everything. Or else we have no chance.

Maxim You are right. She was the most voluptuous monster dressed in the loveliest womanhood you could ever imagine. All praised me as the luckiest man in the world when I married her, and already after five days everything broke down when I learned the truth about her.

Lee What was the truth?

Maxim That she was utterly unscrupulous on all fields and could take any liberties with anyone she liked. She demanded absolute freedom although we were married, and in return she promised to take care of Manderley and pull the place together, which she did with great honour, while at the same time behind the mask of her brilliant image as the perfect lady of the manor she had an apartment in London by the water where she escaped to be gone for a week or a month to only wallow in what cannot be described in words. Our arrangement was that I would allow her to indulge in whatever she fancied in London on condition that she managed Manderley as the perfect hostess. I had no chance to a divorce. We were already established in the gossip weekly press as the perfect couple. All I could do was to keep up appearances and accept her conditions as long as she respected them herself. But when she brought people here to Manderley to sleep with them in the fisherman's cottage down there she went too far and trampled on our agreement, and there was nothing I could do. The only thing was to forbid her outrageous lover, that Jack Favell, to come here.

Lee Wasn't he a cousin of hers?

Maxim Yes, and lover. But she had many others as well. She tried with Frank, but Beatrice saw her through and stopped visiting us as long as she lived except at open parties. She was probably the only one in our vast acquaintance who guessed the truth about our marriage, which only was a morbid farce from beginning to end, a morbid, humiliating, degrading farce of hell, and poor Frank never got over Rebecca's overwhelming invitations. No one could resist her. She lived on and enjoyed her superiority and used it in an abominable sport for using and enslaving, consuming and wasting anyone who crossed her path. I was only the hundredth one among two hundred.

Lee Was it then from jealousy that you murdered her?

Maxim Not at all. She forced me to it by provoking me to extremes.

(gets up and walks to a door, opens it, and the wall glides away to expose the interior of the fisherman's cottage, where Rebecca lies in sumptuous leisure on a couch smoking.)

(astonished) What are you doing here? And all alone?

Rebecca Max, don't be so stupid. Why would I not be alone in my own cottage?

Maxim But you went to London yesterday. You never returned so quickly, and never alone.

Rebecca Maybe it's time for me to start a new life. What about that, Max?

Maxim I don't believe it. You are stuck in your vices like an alcoholic. You used to have only one lover at a time, then two, then four, and then all at once...

Rebecca Don't mock me for my puritanism, Max. Even a sinner could repent.

Maxim Not you ever, for your entire life consists only of indulgence and debauchery.

Rebecca You don't have to inform me of that. We knew about that both from the beginning. Still you try to preach. Don't you know there are no more ridiculous people than preachers?

Maxim We had an arrangement from the beginning, Rebecca, which you always devoted yourself to constantly violate. You never even tried to keep it.

Rebecca And what will you do about that? File for a divorce? All England would laugh you to scorn. You have nothing to hold against me, Max, no evidence, no nothing, just your gossip and your own prejudicial conclusions. Admit that your only fault from the beginning was your completely blind and bolting jealousy.

Maxim You think you are smart when you consistently keep your lovers out of sight to everyone including your husband, but don't you think I know you and what you are up to? Your relationship with your own first cousin stinks all over Manderley even if only I feel the stench and dare to talk about it.

Rebecca We grew up together, Jack and I. It's like between a brother and sister. Not even a husband can sever such a bond.

Maxim He is an abominable playboy with only wrecks of shameful relationships behind him stinking in his tracks. He is overflowing from disgust. And let's not mention your associates in London. You promised not to bring them here, and yet you always did.

Rebecca Not to Manderley, only here to my private little playhouse. Don't you grant your wife a small playhouse in the country?

Maxim Don't provoke me.

Rebecca You have no case against me, Max. Judicially I am spotfree and untouchable, and if needed, Danny would testify for me. You never succeeded in taking me by surprise with a lover since I was always careful and discreet. I never brought them into your house up there. I stand above all suspicion in the eyes of all your servants. Here you come now and quarrel with me for having caught me without a lover yet another time. In which wardrobe could I have hidden him? There are no wardrobes and even less any of your imagined lovers. What I do in London is no business of yours according to our arrangement from the beginning, which I have kept, for I have raised Manderley to be the finest manorial estate in the country. Before me it was a neglected rookery with the garden grown into a jungle of weeds. Now it is a castle with a botanical garden. So what is your complaint? Well, I will give you a reason, since you are so eager to complain and wallow in the wild ravings of your jealousy. I never gave you any children, for I never wanted to ruin my figure by getting children. Well, what if I now changed my mind and made a child anyway? You are the only one in that case to know that it isn't yours. But it is your duty as a

legal father to see it born and grown up to become your only heir, who when you are gone will take over all Manderley and your family fortune. Who knows, maybe both I and Danny will still be alive then to all alone be able to care for and bring up your little boy, who will be the only righteous owner of the most beautiful family estate of England...

Maxim Stop it!

Rebecca What about that? And you will never be able to find out who your son's and heir's real father was, for that secret will only live and die with the mother. Perhaps it even was that by you so highly esteemed Jack Favell, my amiable cousin...

Maxim Stop it! (*pulls a gun*)

Rebecca Don't make yourself more ridiculous than you already are.

Maxim Ever since you told me what you really were you have consistently devoted yourself to drag my marriage deeper down into the stinking swamp of humiliation, dirt, vulgarity and disgust, and with the years you have constantly grown more careless about concealing your true private life. Both Beatrice and Frank have seen you through, and they are only the first ones. Finally everyone will know what a nasty filthy failure our so glorified marriage really was, and then it will be too late, then my name can never be brought up again from the abyss of dishonour, and I do not intend to let it go that far. I do have a right after all to some human dignity and instinct for self preservation!

Rebecca You were always splendid as an angry husband, and the more ridiculous and funny the more serious you were in the blind madness of your raving jealousy. Think of your poor little son who you never could beget yourself...

Maxim Stop it!

Rebecca I never stop, Max. You know that.

Maxim (*shoots her straight in her heart. She drops down with still an angelical smile. Maxim retires in a state of shock backwards out through the door, drops the gun, the door is closed, and the walls glide together again to close the scene.*)

Maxim (*returning to Lee*) No one had seen me going down to the cottage. Everybody thought I was asleep. She had returned from London so late, almost after bedtime, and it was her early return after only one day in London that had woken me up. I just had to go down there for a final settlement. So it was premeditated murder and nothing else, no alleviating circumstances, no *crime passionel*. I brought my gun with me in the intention to kill her if she didn't change her course. Instead of changing course she confirmed it, and then I had nothing else to do but to execute her. There had to be very much cleaning and washing afterwards, since her blood was all over the place. Then I put her in the sailing-boat, brought it out and had it sunk. As if by order there was a gale blowing up. Or else I would have brought the boat further out to never be found again. It was not possible in the storm, so I used hammer and nails to break the bottom of the boat and let it sink and returned ashore with the dinghy. I knew that she would sooner or later return anyway. It was just a matter of time. I was never rid of her. And now she is back.

Lee Thank you, Maxim. I think there is a way out.

Maxim No, there is not. The corpse is there even if it is only a skeleton with her rings and will be identified as hers while the other corpse will be proven false. And then the question will arise in everyone's minds: Why did he identify the wrong woman as his wife? And other questions: How could she lock herself up in the galley if she wasn't already murdered? If the storm was so heavy and the boat was at great risk, why didn't she save herself in the dinghy but lay down on the floor in the galley? And all such questions will only give one possible answer: Because she had been murdered by her husband.

Frank (enters) They are here, Max.

Maxim Who?

Frank The vultures. The questioners. The journalists. The public.

Maxim I see.

Frank I tried to avert all that could be averted, but I can't stop the magistrate from doing his job.

Maxim Of course not.

Frank He is here now. Are you ready to receive him?

Maxim Yes.

(Frank lets the magistrate in.)

Lee Some tea?

Magistrate Thank you, I would love to. Mr de Winter, this is a delicate issue, and I have tried to handle it with a maximum of discretion. I hope we shall be able to avoid a public trial. Therefore I ask you to answer my questions as honestly and truthfully as possible.

Maxim Of course.

Magistrate I have interrogated all relevant witnesses in a similar way, and a few remarkable facts have appeared, that must be subjected to deeper scrutiny. The most remarkable facts come from the constructor who managed your wife's boat and had it put in order every season. He tells me that the boat was practically unsinkable and that it easily could resist much worse weather than that tempest that night. Could it have been like that?

Maxim He knows what he is talking about. It was his responsibility to keep the boat in constant perfect order.

Magistrate When the boat had been brought up from the bottom of the sea, he examined every detail of it to find out if he had committed any mistake. He found the boat perfect to the minutest detail. It hadn't even been damaged by the rocks but foundered and went down to a bottom of sand. Further on, he found that three holes had been driven through it by a spike and that the valves had been opened, which would indicate that the boat was sunk on purpose. What have you to say to this?

Maxim What do you think yourself?

Magistrate These proofs are undeniable. She must have taken her own life or been murdered.

(Lee entering with a tray of tea faints and falls with the entire set. Frank rises immediately.)

Maxim Help her up, Frank.

Frank (helping her) How is it, Lee?

Maxim You had better take her out.

Magistrate I regret the inconvenience, but we have to go to the bottom of this. My next question, which you must answer, is whether your marriage really was as happy as it appeared.

Maxim (waits until Frank has walked out with Lee. Danvers is seen listening attentively from the second floor but without being seen by the actors.) What marriage is perfectly happy?

Magistrate What I mean is, could your wife have had any reason for committing suicide?

Maxim Certainly not. She was the very element of sound good health and had everything to live for.

Magistrate And you of course had no reason or motive for wishing to get rid of her?

Maxim What would that have been?

Magistrate So someone else must have done it. Can you think of anyone?

Maxim No, not directly.

Magistrate Then we must continue the investigation. There is no other way.

Maxim I will of course give any support you need and cooperate the whole way.

Magistrate I am grateful for that. I hope we will be able to find the truth.

Maxim Thank you, your honour.

(Frank has entered again and helps the magistrate out.)

Maxim (alone) There is only one way out, and it leads straight through hell. Only I can do it alone and manage it. Only if others meddle and mess things up could it go wrong.

Lee (returning) I am sorry that I fainted.

Maxim It would have been odd if you hadn't. We can make it, Lee. Nothing in the investigation indicates any crime. The skeleton was intact, the bullet had passed between the ribs and left no trace, and there was no motive. The only crux could be that neither was there any motive for suicide.

Lee It was suicide. She more or less forced you to execute her. The question is why.

Maxim There are many questions around this that probably never will be answered.

Frank (comes back) Maxim, you have a visitor.

Maxim (irritated) Who is it this time? The public prosecutor?

Frank No, it's even worse.

Maxim Could there be anyone worse than my hangman?

Jack (entering audaciously) Pardon me for entering without asking your permission. But you must understand that I as Rebecca's closest relative has a certain interest in the investigation.

Maxim (furious but controls himself) It would be wisest of you to remove yourself immediately.

Jack Just wait a minute until you have listened to me. Perhaps I could provide some new complimentary facts in the case.

Maxim Frank, recall the magistrate at once.

Jack Don't you want to know first what it is?

Maxim Jack, we have no secrets to each other and never had. We mutually despised each other so deeply that we never even honoured the other with a challenge to a duel, but you have nothing more to bring after Rebecca died. Now she has even died for the second time.

Jack I know, poor Max, and I understand fully that you are upset and more irritated than normally, but you should know that Rebecca wrote me a letter the day before she died.

Maxim So what?

Jack When the investigation leans towards suicide, the letter has suddenly acquired some actuality, since you hardly write such a letter if you intend to dispose of yourself.

Maxim What did she write?

Jack I have it here. In brief: "Jack, I go back to Manderley now but hope you will join me there as soon as this has reached you, since I have some important news for you," signed Rebecca. You may examine it if you doubt its genuineness, but I will never part with it.

Maxim I am sorry that you never learned her secret, but on the other hand neither did anyone else. The letter is probably quite genuine. What is your angle?

Jack We know, Max, that Rebecca never could have committed suicide. We both know that her marriage was an entirely different story from the positive star chronicles in the weekly press. You knew all the time that I was her lover although I was her cousin. What more do we know? You know what I know, but I have no interest in making life for you more bitter than it already is, which brings me to propose a settlement. I am not very well off at home. A monthly contribution would improve my position most considerably.

Maxim Frank, call the magistrate at once or I will do it myself. He can be here in ten minutes.

Frank Maxim, wouldn't you consider Jack's offer? How much would you ask, Jack, for a one time settlement to let Rebecca be dead once and for all?

Jack Three thousand pounds.

Lee Maxim, it could be worth the price for being rid of Jack forever.

Jack Suddenly I have two lawyers. I commend you. You, my young sweet Lee, so delicate and different to my domineering and well-shaped cousin, has conducted yourself admirably in this intricate complication. So Danny fooled you into dressing up as Rebecca? You must forbear her little caprices. She was almost as fond of Rebecca as I.

Maxim (has seized the telephone) I ask you to return at once. New facts in the case have turned up. *(hangs up)* The magistrate will be here in a moment.

Jack How thoughtless, Jack. We could have reached a conclusion without him, especially with my two lawyers backing us up.

Maxim If Rebecca had anything more to say before her death, the magistrate must be informed about it.

Jack I am sorry. That cancels my offer.

Maxim I have never given way to blackmail and never will. I would rather be executed as an innocent.

Jack You will be executed, my boy, the way you handle it.

Maxim That will be another issue.

(The doorbell)

Frank It must be the magistrate. *(goes to let him in)*

Magistrate Well, what is it all about?

Maxim This is Rebecca's cousin Jack Favell, your honour. He appears to have received a letter from the deceased shortly before she died which according to his notion excludes the suicide possibility.

Magistrate May I see the letter?

Jack Only if I get it back. It's a woman's last words and from the woman I loved more than Max did, her husband, and you can see for yourself, your honour, that these words are hardly the words of a dying or suicidal woman. She actually dates me.

Magistrate (has read the letter) What was the news she was going to tell?

Jack That's what I never learned since she died before I reached her since her husband came between and murdered her.

Magistrate A rude accusation, Mr Favell, which must be met with some scepticism since it is rather obvious that you have been drinking.

Jack Your honour, anyone could see from this letter how obvious it is that she didn't kill herself. So she was murdered. By whom? Then I must ask: Could there be any other possible murderer than her husband?

Magistrate You have no evidence at all and not even any motive. Without evidence anyone could have done it and even I. There are hundreds of residents and killer candidates here in Kerrith. Without evidence your accusation is just a stroke in the air. The possibility also remains that she might have committed suicide with an unknown motive. Your letter clearly indicates that she brought some secret with her into the grave.

Jack There must be some evidence. There must be witnesses.

Magistrate What we need is a motive for either murder or suicide. If we find the motive the riddle will be solved.

Jack Mrs Danvers could know something that we don't know. She was closer to Rebecca than anyone else. Rebecca told her everything. Danny!

Magistrate (to Maxim) That's your housekeeper, isn't it?

Maxim Yes. *(She enters.)*

Jack Danny, as you know, Rebecca's death has become actual again by Max having identified the wrong body while the right corpse now suddenly has surfaced

and presented some problems, especially since she appears not to have met with any natural death.

Danvers She can't have committed suicide. That is out of the question.

Magistrate Why?

Danvers She had everything to live for and was the very element of perfect health. She told me once that she wanted it to happen quickly when she had to die one day. The only thing she feared was to become ailing and bedridden.

Magistrate Could you think of anyone who could have had any reason to murder her?

Danvers No. Whoever could that be?

Magistrate Then we are getting nowhere.

Jack Danny, her last day alive she wanted to see me and tell me something. She wrote to me that she had some news and wanted me to come at once. Do you know anything of what it could have been?

Danvers On her last day she came home unusually early from London. She had used to stay away longer, but this time she came home directly. I only learned that afterwards when she was dead. I was gone myself all that afternoon and evening, which I afterwards never could forgive myself.

Magistrate So you have no idea what was on her mind the last day?

Danvers She told me everything. Had I been at home she would have told me. But I still have her agenda. It might provide a lead.

Magistrate At last a straw in the stream. Did she make a note of everything she did?

Danvers She was very systematic, wrote down all schedules and ticked them off when they were completed. I will fetch it at once. *(leaves)*

Magistrate We are searching for a needle in a haystack, which doesn't exclude the possibility that the needle might be found.

Jack You will have to content yourself with lying on the rack in the meantime, Max, until the fire under you is lit for real.

Maxim The one who is turned on is you, Jack, who doesn't know what you are talking about.

Jack We both know what we are talking about, my friend. Our friend Frank probably knows it as well. He also learned what Rebecca was good at. And then we have the innocent here who was placed among the lions in this cage green and unsuspecting, but she at least has endured the thrusts and managed them well. She might even end up a new Rebecca but in that case without you, Max, the murderer who didn't get rid of his wife although he buried her twice and both times alive, it seems, since you still never got rid of her.

Maxim Enough! *(hits him hard in a sudden knockout that floors him)*

Magistrate Gentlemen, please, not in the presence of ladies!

(enter Danvers)

Danvers I have her agenda here.

Magistrate Let's see. Anything about the last day? Yes, here it is. Hairdresser. Lunch at the club. Baker. Who is Baker?

Danvers Baker?

Maxim I know of no Baker.

Jack She didn't know any Baker. Does it really say Baker?

Magistrate Yes, it says Baker. Two o'clock. The last item of the day. Ticked off with force, as if she wanted to break the pen.

Jack According to the porter she left me her letter at three o'clock. Then she must have gone here directly.

Maxim Nothing more about Baker? No lead? No address or telephone number?

Danvers There is an address register in the beginning.

Magistrate Here it is actually, but it's only a telephone number.

Frank May I see. We could make a call at once.

Magistrate We are moving into constantly deeper waters, but even on the other side of the deepest waters there is land.

Frank (calling) Yes, hallo? We are looking for a Baker on this telephone number. I see. Yes, I understand. *(makes a note)* Very well. Thank you so much. *(hangs up)*

Maxim Well?

Frank A doctor. A rented clinic, which he shut down half a year ago.

Danvers Mrs de Winter has never been ill. Why would she have visited a doctor?

Magistrate I find many visits to him here in her agenda.

Frank It's a gynaecologist. I had his new address. We could call him at once.

Maxim Then do it!

Jack So impatient, Max? Are you longing for your rope? Aren't you afraid of what her doctor might have told her? Perhaps that she was pregnant with my son who would be born your heir?

Maxim Do you wish for another?

Magistrate Gentlemen, save your settlements for the trial, if there has to be one.

Jack Thank you, Max, but your first one will last for long. I need no more, but thank you for the offer. Slug your wife instead, like you murdered Rebecca.

Maxim (wants to give him another but is checked by the others)

Danvers Now I see what it is all about. But why would Mr de Winter have killed Rebecca, Jack? It doesn't make sense.

Jack That doctor Baker probably knows the answer and could even be able to deliver it in a written document. Rebecca maybe expected Max' heir who was my child, Danny, and he maybe knew about it. She might even have told him.

Magistrate You are drunk, Mr Favell. Your condition ruins your credibility.

Jack Yes, I am drunk, for I have been drinking whisky all day since Rebecca returned to life as a fresh dead body with a riddle for all of us to solve which I can only understand as murder while you desperately try to pervert it to a suicide although Rebecca, my beloved cousin, the most beautiful woman in the world, was the least suicidal being in existence. Ask anyone. Ask Beatrice. Ask Frank. You have asked Danny, and she confirms the impossibility, which you ignore, because Max is

the lord of the manor and an important man as the owner of Manderley and richest in the county. The case is self-evident, but in the lack of evidence you dare not breathe a bubble of what you all know and especially Max himself and maybe his initiated new wife, Rebecca's substitute.

Maxim Don't you dare insult Lee!

Magistrate It's actually most improper in your condition, Mr Favell.

Frank (has called) I have reached him. He remembers Rebecca well, but he had her as a patient under the name of Danvers. The time and date is fitting. He is now going to look up the journal.

Jack What do you think, Max? The last person she met in life was maybe this gynaecologist who now will reveal her life's secret to us. Isn't it exciting? What kind of a secret? The long longed for pregnancy? The final heir at last? Her blood cousin's son begot without your help but for security reasons in your name? Isn't it intriguing?

Frank Mr Favell, your conduct honours neither you nor your deceased cousin.

Jack I know. That's why I sustain the act. While I am at it I might need another drink. Frith, you know what I want. The usual thing. Like when Rebecca was here. She mixed my drinks like no one else.

Frith (gives Maxim a questioning glance)

Maxim Give him what he can take, Frith, and make him drink himself under the table so that he shuts up. *(Frith leaves)*

Jack Thanks for your assistance, old partner. You always stood by me and Rebecca. Of course you couldn't at length accept being more and more trampled under the slipper, and when she mentioned her expected child with me you lost your head. How did you do it? Did you batter her to death, or did you shoot her?

Frank (on the phone) Here it comes. You had better take it, your honour.

Magistrate (takes the phone) I see. *(Everyone is breathless in silent expectation of what the magistrate gets to know)* So that's it. Of course. Please send a copy. Then it's all clear. We are most obliged. *(hangs up)*

Maxim (finally breaking the silence) Well? What could the doctor tell?

Magistrate (very calmly) Mrs de Winter consulted him under the name of Mrs Danvers concerning some alien symptoms. Doctor Baker took some x-rays, and it was the result of these she came the last day to him to know. She could not have any children because of an anomaly in her uterus. But she had got a malignant cancer which could not be treated and which after only a few months must result in consistent morphia anaesthetics until the end.

Frith (when all stand benumbed, enters to bring Jack's drink) Your drink, Sir.

Jack (takes it and sweeps it) What was that you said, Danny? The only thing she was afraid of was to become ill and bedridden, and then she was struck with that very fate, the healthiest and soundest human being on earth, an aesthetic artist of life out to her fingernails, who turned her entire life to just a smashing sport all around, where love and lovers was just one of her pleasures...

Danvers She never loved any one of you. She despized and laughed at you. She thought love was ridiculous and meaningless unless you could gain something from it. She won everything with Mr de Winter while no one else gave her anything except reasons for disgust, mockery and contempt. De Winter was a cuckold, whom she liked best when he was angry, while you, Jack, were never anything else than something for her to dry her feet on. She was sovereign and stood far above you all. *(turns her back on them all and leaves.)*

Magistrate There is nothing you can do, Mr Favell, but to sober up. The case is solved. The motive is waterproof and, to use your own words, self-evident. All you can do is to go home.

Jack It doesn't look any better, does it? *(rises)* But you and I, Max, know better, and we will never be rid of her. She will go on laughing us to scorn forever. *(removes himself)*

Frank (to Maxim and Lee) Perhaps you may now at last be left in peace by her.

Maxim That remains to be seen.

Lee She has already come back too many times for us to be able to believe that she really is dead.

Magistrate I would think there is no longer any doubt about it.

Maxim It is late, your honour. Would like to stay the night here?

Magistrate I almost think so. If your ghosts can leave me in peace.

Maxim They will only leave us in peace if we leave them in peace.

Magistrate At last life should now begin for you, shouldn't it?

Maxim At best, yes. It feels as if I still hadn't carried my bride across the threshold.

Lee I haven't forgotten that you did so, but not until now I start feeling at home.

Maxim Is dinner ready, Frith?

Frith It is served, Mr de Winter.

Maxim Then I suggest that we all be seated at table.

(They break up. Maxim takes care of his wife and leads her to the table.)

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