

In ""rebecca"" What Does Mrs. Danvers Trick Mrs. De Winter Into Doing?.

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The novel *Rebecca*, written by Daphne du Maurier, is a timeless Gothic tale filled with mystery, suspense, and complex characters. One of the most intriguing aspects of the story is the manipulative and haunting presence of Mrs. Danvers, the devoted and sinister housekeeper of Manderley. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Danvers exerts a subtle yet powerful influence over the young Mrs. De Winter, leading to a series of psychological manipulations. Among these, the most pivotal is how Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. De Winter into confronting her fears and ultimately making decisions that deepen her entrapment within the oppressive shadows of Rebecca's memory.

In this article, we will explore the specific ways Mrs. Danvers manipulates Mrs. De Winter, the context behind these actions, and their significance within the narrative.

Understanding Mrs. Danvers' Character and Motivations

The Role of Mrs. Danvers in Manderley

Mrs. Danvers is depicted as a devoted, loyal, but profoundly sinister character who has served the Manderley estate for many years. Her unwavering loyalty to Rebecca, the former mistress of Manderley, shapes her interactions with others, especially her subtle antagonism towards Mrs. De Winter. Mrs. Danvers harbors an obsessive admiration for Rebecca, which manifests in her attempts to keep Rebecca's memory alive and to maintain the estate in her image.

Mrs. Danvers' Psychological Manipulation

Her manipulative tactics are rooted in her desire to preserve Rebecca's legacy and her own sense of purpose. She uses psychological tricks, emotional intimidation, and subtle coercion to influence Mrs. De Winter's thoughts and actions, often playing on her insecurities and fears.

The Key Manipulation: Tricking Mrs. De Winter into the

Fireplace Scene

The Context of the Scene

One of the most critical moments where Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. De Winter is during the climactic scene at Manderley's burning estate. Earlier in the novel, Mrs. Danvers tries to convince Mrs. De Winter to emulate Rebecca's elegance and confidence, often planting ideas that deepen her insecurities.

The Trick in the Fireplace

In the final confrontation, Mrs. Danvers deliberately manipulates Mrs. De Winter into a dangerous situation involving the estate's old fireplace. She subtly encourages her to examine and interact with the fireplace, implying that Rebecca might have used it or that it holds some significance. Mrs. Danvers's purpose is to unsettle Mrs. De Winter and evoke feelings of guilt and fear about Rebecca's presence.

What Does Mrs. Danvers Trick Mrs. De Winter Into Doing?

Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. De Winter into approaching the fireplace and, ultimately, into setting fire to the estate. Her manipulative intent is to evoke Rebecca's memory and to destabilize the young wife, making her feel as if she is reliving Rebecca's influence and perhaps even to emulate her.

Specific Ways Mrs. Danvers Uses Psychological Tricks

Playing on Insecurity and Self-Doubt

Mrs. Danvers constantly reminds Mrs. De Winter of her inadequacies, making her doubt her own worth and beauty. By doing so, she encourages Mrs. De Winter to seek approval or validation through dangerous actions, such as trying to emulate Rebecca or taking control of the estate.

Creating a Sense of Guilt

Mrs. Danvers subtly hints or alludes to Rebecca's tragic fate, which instills guilt in Mrs. De Winter about her own perceived shortcomings. This guilt is exploited to manipulate her into actions that align with Mrs. Danvers' desires.

Use of Suggestion and Ambiguity

Mrs. Danvers often speaks in suggestive and ambiguous phrases, planting ideas without outright commands. This indirect form of manipulation is effective in influencing Mrs. De Winter's subconscious mind.

The Impact of Mrs. Danvers' Tricks on Mrs. De Winter

Emotional and Psychological Consequences

The manipulations lead Mrs. De Winter to become increasingly insecure, anxious, and confused. Her self-confidence diminishes, and she begins to feel haunted by Rebecca's presence and influence.

Decision-Making and Actions

Under Mrs. Danvers' influence, Mrs. De Winter makes critical decisions, such as her hesitance to confront her feelings, her avoidance of the estate's past, and her ultimate decision to burn down Manderley. These actions are, in part, the result of the psychological tricks played upon her.

The Climax: Mrs. Danvers' Role in Burning Manderley

Mrs. Danvers's manipulation culminates in her inciting Mrs. De Winter to set fire to Manderley, which symbolically destroys Rebecca's lingering presence and the oppressive hold of the past. She cleverly uses Mrs. De Winter's fears, guilt, and insecurities to push her towards this destructive act.

This pivotal moment underscores the extent of Mrs. Danvers' psychological control and her desire to see Rebecca's memory eradicated, even if it means destruction.

Conclusion: The Significance of Mrs. Danvers' Manipulation

Mrs. Danvers' trickery in Rebecca is a masterful example of psychological manipulation. By exploiting Mrs. De Winter's insecurities, guilt, and fears, Mrs. Danvers effectively controls her actions and

decisions throughout the novel. Her manipulative tactics serve to highlight themes of identity, memory, and the destructive power of obsession.

Understanding these manipulations provides deeper insight into the novel's complex characters and the Gothic atmosphere that Daphne du Maurier masterfully creates. Mrs. Danvers remains one of literature's most compelling villains, illustrating how psychological tricks can wield immense influence over others, especially in environments fraught with emotional and historical turmoil.

Keywords: Rebecca novel, Mrs. Danvers, Mrs. De Winter, psychological manipulation, Gothic fiction, Manderley, Daphne du Maurier, Rebecca's legacy, psychological tricks, novel analysis, literary villains

Frequently Asked Questions

What specific trick does Mrs. Danvers use to manipulate Mrs. De Winter in 'Rebecca'?

Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. De Winter into wearing the revealing green dress at the Manderley ball, knowing it will embarrass her and undermine her confidence.

How does Mrs. Danvers' manipulation impact Mrs. De Winter's relationship with Maxim?

Her manipulation causes Mrs. De Winter to feel insecure and anxious, straining her relationship with Maxim and making her more susceptible to Mrs. Danvers' influence.

Why does Mrs. Danvers want Mrs. De Winter to wear the green dress?

Mrs. Danvers aims to humiliate Mrs. De Winter and undermine her self-esteem, reinforcing her control and dominance over her.

What role does Mrs. Danvers play in the psychological manipulation of Mrs. De Winter?

Mrs. Danvers employs psychological manipulation by planting doubts, encouraging her to wear revealing clothing, and creating situations that make Mrs. De Winter feel insecure and subordinate.

Is Mrs. Danvers' trick at the ball a turning point in 'Rebecca'?

Yes, it marks a significant moment where Mrs. De Winter's confidence is shaken, highlighting the ongoing power struggle and setting the stage for further revelations and conflict.

How does Mrs. De Winter ultimately respond to Mrs. Danvers' manipulation?

Initially, Mrs. De Winter feels humiliated and insecure, but over time she gains confidence and begins to resist Mrs. Danvers' influence, leading to her personal growth and asserting her independence.

Additional Resources

In "Rebecca" What Does Mrs. Danvers Trick Mrs. De Winter Into Doing?

In Daphne du Maurier's timeless novel *Rebecca*, the character of Mrs. Danvers embodies the sinister and manipulative force that shadows the life of the new Mrs. de Winter. One of the most compelling aspects of their relationship revolves around the manipulative tactics Mrs. Danvers employs to undermine and control her young mistress. Among her many cunning strategies, the most chilling involves tricking Mrs. de Winter into a series of actions that ultimately serve her own dark purposes. This article explores in detail what Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. de Winter into doing, the psychological underpinnings of her manipulation, and the broader implications for the narrative and character development.

Understanding Mrs. Danvers: The Antagonist's Persona and Motivations

Before delving into the specific manipulations, it is essential to understand Mrs. Danvers's character. She is the devoted, yet deeply sinister housekeeper of Manderley, whose unwavering loyalty to Rebecca, the former mistress of the estate, blurs into obsession. Her motivations are rooted in her admiration and envy of Rebecca, which manifests as an almost malignant desire to preserve Rebecca's memory and influence at Manderley.

Mrs. Danvers's manipulative tendencies stem from her deep-seated insecurity and her desire to control her environment—particularly Mrs. de Winter, the naïve newcomer. Her tactics are psychological and emotional, designed to destabilize Mrs. de Winter and maintain her own dominion over the estate's atmosphere. Recognizing her background and motivations helps clarify her methods of manipulation.

The Trick: Inducing Mrs. de Winter to Burn the Portrait of Rebecca

The Context and Significance of the Portrait

One of the most pivotal manipulations occurs when Mrs. Danvers persuades Mrs. de Winter to burn the portrait of Rebecca. The portrait, a large and commanding depiction of Rebecca in her prime, symbolizes the lingering presence and influence of Rebecca at Manderley. Mrs. Danvers's obsession with Rebecca makes this image a focal point of her emotional landscape.

The Manipulative Strategy

Mrs. Danvers cunningly tricks Mrs. de Winter into destroying the portrait by appealing to her feelings of inadequacy and her desire to prove her loyalty to Manderley and her husband, Maxim de Winter. She presents the act as a way for Mrs. de Winter to rid the estate of Rebecca's oppressive memory and to forge her own identity free from Rebecca's shadow.

Mrs. Danvers subtly encourages Mrs. de Winter to take the matches and set the portrait ablaze, framing it as an act of liberation. She emphasizes that Rebecca's presence is a burden, and that destroying her image will bring peace to Manderley. The emotional pressure, coupled with Mrs. Danvers's insistent persuasion, leads Mrs. de Winter to act impulsively, burning the portrait.

Consequences of the Manipulation

This act is a turning point in the novel, symbolizing Mrs. de Winter's initial attempt to assert her independence but also marking her vulnerability to Mrs. Danvers's psychological manipulation. The destruction of the portrait signifies her surrender to the oppressive influence of Rebecca's memory and Mrs. Danvers's control.

The Psychological Underpinnings of Mrs. Danvers's Manipulation

Mrs. Danvers's tactic of tricking Mrs. de Winter into burning the portrait reveals her understanding of her victim's psyche. Several psychological themes underpin this manipulation:

- **Projection and Identification:** Mrs. Danvers's obsession with Rebecca leads her to project her feelings onto Mrs. de Winter, attempting to draw her into Rebecca's world and identity.
- **Guilt and Anxiety:** Mrs. de Winter's feelings of inadequacy and her desire to please her husband make her susceptible to guilt-induced compliance.
- **Power and Control:** By convincing Mrs. de Winter to destroy the portrait, Mrs. Danvers reasserts her dominance over the estate and her subordinate role in the household hierarchy.

This manipulation exemplifies classic psychological control tactics, where the victim's emotional vulnerabilities are exploited to serve the manipulator's ends.

Additional Instances of Manipulation by Mrs. Danvers

While the burning of Rebecca's portrait is the most prominent example, Mrs. Danvers employs other manipulative tactics throughout the novel:

- **Planting Doubts About Mrs. de Winter's Worth:** Mrs. Danvers subtly undermines Mrs. de Winter's confidence by highlighting her inadequacies—such as her appearance and social standing—and implying that she is unworthy of Maxim's love.
- **Fostering Fear and Suspicion:** She hints at Rebecca's secret life and possible scandals, creating an atmosphere of paranoia and insecurity for Mrs. de Winter.
- **Encouraging Dangerous Situations:** Mrs. Danvers manipulates Mrs. de Winter into exploring dark places in the estate, such as the attic and the mysterious west wing, to unearth Rebecca's secrets and destabilize her further.

The Broader Significance of Mrs. Danvers's Manipulations

Mrs. Danvers's manipulative tactics serve multiple narrative and thematic functions:

- **Reinforcing the Gothic Atmosphere:** Her psychological manipulation amplifies the novel's gothic tone, emphasizing themes of obsession, identity, and the haunting power of the past.
- **Highlighting the Power Dynamics:** The interactions between Mrs. Danvers and Mrs. de Winter exemplify the struggle for control within the household, reflecting larger themes of dominance, submission, and the influence of the past on the present.
- **Driving Character Development:** Mrs. de Winter's response to these manipulations—initially obedient, then increasingly assertive—traces her journey from insecurity to independence.

Conclusion: The Impact of Mrs. Danvers's Manipulative Tactics

In Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, Mrs. Danvers's act of tricking Mrs. de Winter into burning Rebecca's portrait epitomizes her broader strategy of psychological manipulation. This act is not merely about destroying a picture but is a symbolic gesture that signifies the suppression of Rebecca's memory and Mrs. de Winter's submission to Mrs. Danvers's influence.

Mrs. Danvers's manipulations reveal her deep-seated obsession, her mastery of psychological control, and her desire to maintain the status quo—shaped by her reverence for Rebecca and her own

insecurities. For Mrs. de Winter, falling prey to these manipulations is a rite of passage, illustrating her evolution from a passive, insecure bride to a more confident individual unshackled from the oppressive shadows of the past.

Ultimately, these manipulative tactics underscore one of the novel's central themes: the destructive power of obsession and the importance of confronting and overcoming the past to forge one's own identity. Mrs. Danvers's role as the master manipulator serves as a chilling reminder of how psychological control can influence and transform the characters and the narrative's gothic landscape.

In summary, Mrs. Danvers tricks Mrs. de Winter into burning Rebecca's portrait as a means of exerting control, manipulating her emotionally and psychologically to serve her own obsessive attachment to Rebecca and to maintain her dominance within Manderley. This act encapsulates the novel's exploration of obsession, identity, and the haunting influence of the past.

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