

Johnston Middle School
Johnston, IA

Dear Daphne du Maurir,

Want of acceptance; to some it's an obsession, to others, it's a subtle longing. But no matter how we've felt it, we've all felt it. Many times this desire to belong, to fit in, has driven our actions, transforming us into complete strangers. What is it about this desire to be accepted that makes us question ourselves and our worth?

Although on any other occasion I would deny it, I must be completely truthful with you. Fitting in with the crowd like a puzzle piece, had, for a great length in time, been my top priority. My mind was consumed with this yearning to belong, I watched my peers obsessively trying most desperately to decipher what exactly made them so acceptable. Like a blind fool I mimicked those who I thought were everything I longed and hoped to be. But this only made me look ridiculous. Never had the idea that by being myself I would actually find more happiness crossed my stubborn mind. There were no options proceeding "Fit in." That was my philosophy, until, that is, I came across your truly inspiring novel, *Rebecca*.

It was almost alarming how well this feeling of coveted acceptance was represented in your novel. Quite honestly, I had never before come across a book that mirrored the emotions I felt so fervently toward this subject. Connecting to the main character was simple for she resembled me almost to exactness. She, like so many of us, including myself, ventured past her true self in attempt to become someone else.

As I read this novel I felt as if it was I who was walking down the long corridors of Manderly, bewildered but its many mysteries and belittled by the constant comparison to Rebecca. Captivated was I by the atmosphere of Manderly. This discreet sense of loneliness seemed to seep through the pages, like a musky odor, and invade my mind. Escape from this rather depressing feeling was impossible. It consumed me, engulfed me, and denied me freedom from its grasp. But what is truly daunting is that life, the life we live outside of literature, can be just like this; lonely and almost depressing. Especially when we become consumed by the need to transform ourselves into another, only to find minimal happiness in the process.

So concerned was I to fit in, to be someone else, that ironically I isolated myself. The protagonist of *Rebecca* had a similar dilemma. She felt exclusion strongly, most likely due, I think, to her obsession with becoming Rebecca. I blamed my isolation on not belonging, but in all reality, the exclusion I endured was self-inflicted. If I had spent more time trying to understand myself, and less time trying to be like everyone else, my life would have been more favorably spent.

Reading *Rebecca* has helped me grasp the concept of "be yourself." Never had those two simple words meant more to me. I realized that being accepted is not worth jeopardizing who I really am. With this hard learned lesson in mind, I was able to rid myself of those impulses to fit in that had for so long driven me. Being myself has provided me with more satisfaction than acceptance ever could. And I am most grateful to you and your novel *Rebecca* for guiding me to that realization.

Sincerely,

Azra Beganovic