



# Two Stories From DAPHNE du MAURIER

*Simplified By* ELIZABETH TOMBS BA(OXON); MA

World Publishing Corp  
*shinglee publishers pte ltd*



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## **PREFACE**

The Classics to Remember series of English Literature books is a collection of readers for pupils at secondary levels.

The series is a selection of abridged and simplified classics in the English language, designed to appeal to the average reader. Whilst retaining the original feel of the book, these shorter versions offer fewer obstacles to pleasure and immediate understanding.

Each book includes an introduction giving details about the individual author, plus a suggestion of the plot and themes of the story. Character notes are included, and at the end of the story there is a glossary and a series of questions on each chapter, designed to ensure that the pupil has grasped the essentials of the plot.

Above all, we hope that the reader will enjoy these classics made available in such an accessible form. The series includes adventure and mystery novels, detective, science fiction and love stories: a whole range of well-written and enduring classics in English.

# CONTENTS

## **Jamaica Inn**

Introduction	1
Character Notes	3
The Book	7
Glossary	46
Questions	49

## **Frenchman's Creek**

Introduction	54
Character Notes	54
The Book	57
Glossary	103
Questions	107

# JAMAICA INN

## INTRODUCTION

Daphne du Maurier has written many novels and short stories set in Cornwall, where she herself has chosen to live. Disliking city life, it is in the country that she spends her time walking and writing.

Her imagination favours mystery, romance and adventure stories set in the historical past, such as her most famous books 'Jamaica Inn' and 'My Cousin Rachel'. 'Jamaica Inn' is most remarkable for its haunting setting. The moorland is a desolate open country stretching for miles, and the action of the book takes place here between Bodmin and the wild sea coast. No trees grow here as the wind and rain are too savage; the land consists of black wet peat or heavy soil, rivers and gullies or narrow valleys, marshes in which men can sink and drown as Joss Merlyn's brother did, and huge foreboding granite rocks known as tors. These are Mary's landmarks when she is struggling over the moors whether in pursuit of her uncle or in forced flight with Francis Davey.

Jamaica Inn itself is a lonely Inn some twelve miles out of Bodmin and it is to this grey stone building with its blank windows that Mary comes to be looked after by her Aunt Patience when her mother has died. She has left behind her the safety of her peaceful farm in rural Helford and is told by the coach driver that no-one ever stops at the Inn. It requires all her bravery to face an unknown future.

She gets a strange welcome from her uncle, Joss Merlyn, who is a grim and bullying drunkard with black brow and powerful hands. Patience has become a nervous wreck and Mary is worried she might be mad. What secrets is she hiding?

Mary learns gradually that some kind of smuggling is going on, and that Joss is a desperate man capable of murder. Waggon carrying mysterious boxes and packages come and go in the night and Mary observes all from her window, trying to piece together the mystery and listening to the drunken gatherings of tramps, thieves and rogues in the bar downstairs.

The plot deepens when she meets the landlord's brother Jem Merlyn; can she trust him or not? He is a likeable and self-confessed horse thief with a streak of devilry in him. How can she resist her liking for him? And then the strange albino vicar Francis Davey appears with his haunting stare and flapping black cloak, troubling Mary with his promise of help.

Gradually Mary is drawn further into a web of intrigue whose full horror is revealed on the night of the wrecking. But being a young woman of spirit, she decides on action. It almost involves her own destruction, but after a chase across the moors with the fanatical Francis Davey, she is freed from the game of chance she has been playing.

One final choice remains: she has to decide between a return home to the peace of Helford, or accompanying Jem as he resumes his wandering life with all its risks and excitements. You will have to read the novel to find out what she will do.

## CHARACTER NOTES

### MARY

Mary is at first an innocent girl who is leaving the safety and security of her mother's farm for an unknown place; she is fearful and does not want change.

But she is also strong-minded and brave and she faces the future courageously. She is determined in standing up to her uncle's bullying and drunken threats, and in deciding that even if she is miserable she must stay at Jamaica Inn to protect her aunt.

She wants things her own way however and Joss admires the spirit in her. She is frightened when she realises Joss is a murderer and a smuggler, but refuses Jem's offer of friendship even though she is drawn to him. She is passionate but guarded and will not lose her independence easily. She is aware that the vicar Francis Davey has a compelling effect on her but confesses her knowledge of the smuggling to him because she needs someone to share it — her one misjudgement.

Gradually she is drawn more to Jem. Though she resists her love for him, she knows it is healthy — it gives her life and pleasure. She is equal to him. She knows he is a thief but she now has a passion for him.

She never gives into weakness. When she has been forced to witness the wrecking, she feels despair and pain, but decides on action: she will risk her own skin by going to Squire Bassat to betray Joss. She is very loyal to her aunt. When she is dragged onto the moors by Francis Davey, she knows 'she must play this game of chance through to the end'. She has been uneasy about the vicar from her first meeting with him, though mistakenly trusting him with her secrets.

Her final decision to go with Jem in his cart and start a wandering life rather than go back to Helford is typical of her strength of character, her impulsiveness and willingness to take risks. She has recognised her chance of happiness.

### JOSS MERLYN

Joss is in some ways similar to his more likeable brother: his hands have the same power. But he has turned out badly and has all the

negative aspects of his family which was apparently wild and undisciplined from the start.

He is a powerful, ugly man who has reduced his wife to a submissive wreck, and seems to take delight in bullying her. He is at first angry then interested in Mary's refusal to give in to him; he grudgingly admires her spirit but warns her he will break her.

He is a drunkard and when he has been drinking for too long he betrays his secrets and nightmares: he is tormented by the murders he has committed and knows his drinking is a curse. He also seems to be frightened of something else. He betrays his agitation when Squire Bassat calls. But he is capable of manic wildness in the wrecking scene when he seems to go mad with destructiveness. Later he tells Mary he is frightened of 'footsteps in the night'.

It is revealed he has been taking orders from Francis Davey, at whose hands he eventually meets his death: a shameful end to a shameful life.

## AUNT PATIENCE

Mary's mother remembers Patience as a pretty girl in silk and ribbons, but ten years of marriage to the landlord of Jamaica Inn have destroyed her looks and her mind. She is terrified of her husband but devoted to him and will do anything he orders.

She knows his secret, that he is a murderer and wrecker, but she will do anything to protect him from being found out. She is weak in everything else; her greeting to Mary is to throw herself weeping into her arms. Her mind wanders feebly as she potters aimlessly about the house. Mary gets angry with her from time to time, but it is to save her that Mary rushes back from Squire Bassat's house to Jamaica Inn. But she is too late: Patience has been murdered. Mary can only pray that she finds peace in death.

## JEM MERLYN

When Jem Merlyn first comes to Jamaica Inn, he is insolent to Mary and accuses her of being Joss's 'maid', but he soon apologises, and asks her to buy a horse from him as he is a horse thief.

He is good-humoured and likeable, a more attractive version of his brother, though he continually breaks the law. Mary is drawn to

him perhaps because of his roguishness. He is casual with her but still offers her friendship.

When Mary stumbles upon his cottage he jokes and banters with her and hungrily eats the meal she cooks, asking her to stay. He has a taste for living alone, away from neighbours, as he is independent. His cottage is a mess and his childhood was obviously wild. He warns Mary she should not be living in such a place as Jamaica Inn; he has real concern for her and a dislike for his brother, whom he knows will come to trouble in the end. Though he is a thief he would never take part in the wrecking and murders.

He invites Mary to come to Launceston Fair on Christmas Eve but is as proud as she and never loses his independent spirit. They are happy together at the Fair and he sells a stolen horse back to its owner with great daring. He has a vital sense of humour and is never gloomy. When he is apprehended by Squire Bassat and is told of the wrecking, he is so appalled that he betrays Joss; when it comes to murder he has a strong moral sense.

His courtship of Mary is proud and casual; he takes risks and warns her at the end that his wandering life has its hardships. She chooses to go with him because she is attracted by his free spirit. He has a high chance of happiness wherever he chooses to go.

## FRANCIS DAVEY

Francis Davey the albino vicar has a strange, inhuman appearance that frightens Mary. He speaks gently, almost hypnotically, and appears at times when Mary is most vulnerable and in trouble. He first meets her when she is lost on the moors. He seems to compell her to speak, to confess the secrets she knows about Joss's activities.

Mary feels very uneasy with him and is suspicious that his house lacks the books and pictures she expects in a vicar's house. The first painting of his that she sees has an eerie power and seems sinister; he has a warped view of nature. He stares at her constantly. We sense that he is hiding something. He is persuasive and manipulative. When he rides on the moors with his cloak flying behind him he is animal like: something dark and even evil in his soul responds to the bleakness of the moors.

He seems to offer help to Mary, meeting her again when she is alone in the cold and rain at Launceston. He tells her she will forget

Jem: he is detached and cynical. However, when Mary decides to betray Joss she sends to ask for help from the vicar: he is so cunning that Mary does not understand his real nature.

When she is brought to his house to recover after her ordeal he traps her and reveals his true soul. The painting of the preacher with a wolf's head and the congregation as sheep shows his contempt for religion. He is a pagan and now he means to be free, casting himself adrift from Christianity and dragging Mary with him. It is fitting that his evil is destroyed at the end of the novel by Jem, who despite his petty thieving is a force for good.

## CHAPTER ONE

It was a cold grey day in late November, and Mary Yellan had never felt so lonely and miserable in her life. It was now only just after two o'clock in the afternoon but the sky was wild with rain, the air cold and clammy. The leather seats of the coach were damp with rain which dripped sullenly through a crack in the roof. The wind whistled over the moor as the driver huddled over the reins of the horse. Gusts of wind shook the coach as it swayed round corners, sometimes with such force that it trembled and rocked as if it would overturn. By four it would be dark.

Mary sank back into the corner of the coach as the mud splashed up the windows and the clouds grew heavier and darker; her courage sank. She had patiently endured her mother's illness and death, but the contrast of this cold barren land near Bodmin with the sun and shining river of her own village Helford, was too much for her.

Here on the desolate moorland the few trees that could survive were crooked and black like iron. She couldn't see much for the driving rain, which had got into people's clothes and thoroughly chilled her fellow passengers. The soil was black, hard and barren, and there were no hedgerows or fields. Only stones, black heather and twisted broom.

How different this desolation was from the childish memories she had of summer in Helford, which had been her home for twenty-three years. Her father had died a few years ago and her mother had toiled on, keeping up the work of the farm alone. She went to market summer and winter to sell the hens, eggs and butter. It was a hard life, but Mary had been a happy child, playing by the sweet river that ran through Helford.

But times had gone bad and though Mrs Yellan worked endlessly, prices were falling and a sickness killed all the farm animals. Mrs Yellan fell ill herself and the doctor said, 'Her body and spirit are broken down.' Before she died, her mother told Mary to go to her Aunt Patience up in Bodmin.

'Don't you remember her, ten years ago before she got married, so pretty and delicate in her ribbons and silk?'

Mary promised, but her heart was heavy at the thought of an unknown future, far away from familiar things.

After her mother's death a strange man bought the farm and it

was clear he wanted to get rid of her. She read the letter her Aunt Patience had sent to her: 'There have been changes here, I now live twelve miles outside Bodmin, in a wild and lonely spot. I should be glad of your company: your uncle says you can come and work in the bar, provided you are quiet. Your uncle is now landlord of Jamaica Inn.'

A strange welcome. But Mary faced the future bravely, and set out for Jamaica Inn.

The coach driver was surprised when they set out for the twenty mile ride beyond the town of Bodmin, which now seemed a place of warmth and safety to her.

'Are you sure you want to go to Jamaica Inn?' he said. 'It's terrible lonely. The Inn's got a bad name. Respectable folk don't stop there anymore, they're frightened.'

But Mary was determined, even when she had left behind the lights of the town, and the grim moorland stretched around her. Mud splashed her cloak and she knew she was in the wildest country she had ever seen. None of her fellow passengers spoke to her.

It was dark by then and she gathered her cloak around her as the horses stopped and she dismounted at a lonely grey building. Nothing else was visible except the dark shape of the moors and the rocks that erupted out of them. She turned to the Inn. The blank windows winked at her and the rough stone scoured by wind increased her anxiety. What had she been expecting?

She was alone, until a man roughly pulled open the door and swung a lantern in her face. 'I'm your uncle, Joss Merlyn. Welcome to Jamaica Inn!'

## CHAPTER TWO

Joss Merlyn was a huge man with dark skin and thick black hair and a mocking sneer. He stood in the dark passage of the house and laughed, then roared upstairs, 'Patience, come down, my own niece is frightened of me.'

A candle flickered and then a woman came slowly down the narrow staircase, hiding her face. Her hair was thin and grey where it had once been curled, and her clothes were faded and ragged. Once



*The blank windows winked at her ...*

she had been so young and beautiful. Suddenly she buried her head on Mary's shoulder and began to sob.

Her husband growled at her, 'Stop that. Get out to the kitchen and give the girl some supper.'

He lifted Mary's box to his shoulder as if it weighed nothing, and Aunt Patience blinked nervously, leading Mary to the kitchen. A peat fire filled the room with smoke as Aunt Patience put out bread and cheese.

'Don't mind your uncle Joss,' she said. 'He's a good man. You know, we're very busy here. And we're much respected. The squire himself takes off his hat to us.'

Mary was distressed: was her aunt mad? Patience fell silent again when her husband appeared and said, 'You think Mary believes you?' He offered Mary a drink of brandy but she asked for tea instead. He laughed, 'You'll need brandy in a month or two.'

Mary had caught her aunt's nervousness but she stood up as he shouted at her, 'I'm master in this house and if you ever tell people what goes on here I'll break your spirit.'

'And if you ever hurt my Aunt, I'll hand the matter to the law.'

Joss smiled and lean back in his chair. 'One day, my dear, I'll have work for you. I think we understand each other.' Patience gave a sigh of despair and left the room, and Joss's voice sank to a whisper. 'There's things that go on here ... matters of life and death. And there's been one weakness in my life, and that's drink. It's a curse. Sometimes I'll drink for days, and let out all my secrets. But I'll not tell you why I'm landlord of Jamaica Inn. Some nights there'll be men here drinking and the noise can be heard for miles; then you'll be serving in the bar and you'll find out what sort of company I keep. And sometimes I shall want you to stop in your room, when coaches come and stop in the yard. You'll stay away for fear of your life. Do you understand?'

Mary ran upstairs to her own room, which was bare and rough. There was no basin for washing. She decided to lie down in her travelling clothes. In the middle of the night she heard a creaking: it was only the old signboard in the yard.

She decided she must leave at once. But when she got into the corridor she heard someone crying; it was Aunt Patience. And Mary knew that she would have to stay, and have the courage to fight whatever evil there was in this lonely house.

## CHAPTER THREE

When she awoke the next day her Uncle had gone from home and she was alone with Aunt Patience who seemed eager not to talk about the night before.

She went about the kitchen getting breakfast, trying to be cheerful, but years of anxiety had changed her so that Mary did not know her.

Mary went to explore the house. Everywhere was neglected and dirty and the guest rooms were stored with boxes, obviously never used by travellers. Beneath her own room was another that was locked. From the outside in the yard, the window was boarded up so she could not see inside. Beyond the farm the road stretched to the horizon as far as the eye could see and the moorland was brown from weeks of rain. The granite rocks called tors were sinister and dark, but there was a challenge in the cold air that gave Mary spirit.

She felt stronger, and over dinner she took courage to question her aunt. 'Why is my Uncle the landlord of Jamaica Inn?' she began. 'Why does no one ever stay here?'

Aunt Patience blushed scarlet and muttered, 'Your Uncle has a strong temper. He doesn't like interference.'

'Nonsense,' said Mary. 'Why does the room at the end of the passage stay locked?'

Aunt Patience looked at her. 'Mary, I must warn you. There are terrible things that happen here. Your Uncle mixes with strange men. When you hear them here at night, keep in your room, or your hair will go grey like mine did and you will lose your youth.'

## CHAPTER FOUR

Joss Merlyn was away for a week and during that time of freedom Mary wandered over the moors and came to know the wildness of the place.

Then one day Joss Merlyn returned and Aunt Patience lost her little freedom from care and began to look haunted and nervous again. 'Tonight,' said Joss, 'There'll be company at Jamaica Inn.'

People came from the moors as if in fear, shading their lanterns,

but once in the bar there was singing and shouting as they began to drink. Mary stood behind the bar washing glasses and watched them. They were dirty and ragged, tramps, thieves, cattle stealers, and farmers who had lost their land through dishonesty. One of them was a poor idiot with a purple birthmark on his face. The others were tormenting him as they got drunk. The leader seemed to be a man who had once worked in a mine and was now a pedlar selling goods from village to village. He was getting noisy and when he started to pull the clothes off the poor idiot's back, Joss Merlyn took a whip and lashed the boy over the shoulders. Mary told her uncle she was not going to stay and watch anymore. Her uncle turned on her in anger, 'You're not easily scared, are you? And you're clever. But I warn you, if you're too curious, I'll break you in two. Now get to bed.'

She fell asleep straightaway but suddenly in the middle of the night she was awoken by sounds in the yard beneath her window. She peeped out: strangers were dragging boxes and parcels along, unloading a cart whose horses were steaming. They had come a long way. The pedlar seemed to be directing the movement of boxes into the room with locked door and barred windows which stood beneath Mary's own. Then off the visitors went, all carrying with them their reward — different shaped bundles from the cart.

Mary sat on her bed. What she had seen was smuggling. Joss must be moving stolen goods from the coast to the River Tamar. So this was why her uncle was here. Smuggling on such a grand scale must need careful planning and secrecy. Joss Merlyn must have agents and spies all over the countryside. He was more cunning than she thought. But she must show courage.

To overcome her terror, she crept downstairs and hid behind the door of the parlour. In the bar she could hear men arguing, and a man saying to her uncle and the pedlar, 'No, I'll not do it! This is murder you're asking me to do, Joss Merlyn!'

Then she heard the man groaning as if he had been hit, and the pedlar came out of the bar and set loose the man's horse. Mary felt sick and knew she was going to faint.

When she came round, she heard the floorboards creaking above her head; someone had been hiding upstairs all the while! A friend of her uncle's? Then she heard her uncle's voice and the pedlar saying, 'We'll do it between us.'

Mary crept back to her room feeling very alone and helpless. She