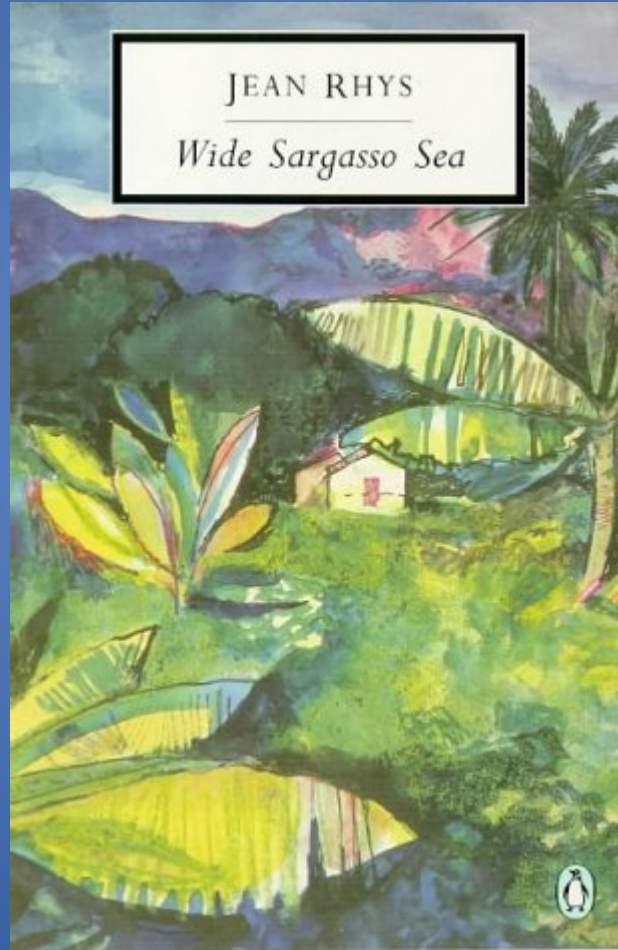


Wide Sargasso Sea

a novel by Jean Rhys



Jean Rhys



- Born August 24, 1890 in Roseau, Dominica.
- Daughter of a Welsh doctor and white Creole mother.
- Young white girl in a predominantly black community.
- Came to England in 1907, drifted into a series of jobs-- chorus girl, mannequin, artist's model—after the death of her father.
- She began to write when the first of her three marriages broke up.
- In 1966 she made a sensational reappearance with *Wide Sargasso Sea*
- Died in 1979

Inspiration for *Sargasso*

- Wanted to personify the symbol of Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*
- "I thought I'd try to write her a life."
- Wanted to restore the voice of Bertha Mason
- Challenge to *Jane Eyre* rather than a true prequel.

Antoinette Cosway

- 1st and 3rd parts are told in her perspective
- Grows up feeling isolated
- Rejection throughout life
- Ultimately goes mad

Annette Cosway

- Mother of Antoinette
- Burning down of her house and death of her son drive Annette into madness
- Sent away to live in the country
- Died year before Antoinette visits the convent

Mr. Rochester

- 2nd part told in his perspective
- Never named in the book
- Selfish and dishonest
- Married Antoinette for money
- Controlling of Antoinette

Tia

- Daughter of Christophine's friend
- Friendly with Antoinette until their fight
- Throws rock at Antoinette (in Part 1)
- In Antoinette's imagination (end of Part 3)

Richard Mason

- Stepbrother of Antoinette
- Arranges financial settlement between Antoinette and Mr. Rochester
- Visits Antoinette in England and she attacks him

Christophine

- Servant for the Cosway family
- Loyal and independent
- Practices magic
- Caregiver for Antoinette

Identity Struggle

- Antoinette associates her identity with three things:
 - Racial Identity
 - Name
 - Place

Racial Identity

- Racial Identity
- Too light for Jamaica and too dark for England
- Pg. 25,
- “As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on her. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass”(27).
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Name

- She associates herself with the name Antoinette
- However, Mr. Rochester imposes the name Bertha on her to further break down her identity and how she views herself
- Bertha is the maiden name of her mother and therefore it makes Antoinette feel uncomfortable seeing as her mother goes mad----- does not want the same outcome for herself
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- “He hates me now. I hear him every night walking up and down the veranda. Up and down. When he passes my door he says, ‘Good-night, Bertha.’ He never calls me Antoinette now. He has found out it was my mother’s name. ‘I hope you will sleep well, Bertha’ —it cannot be worse” (68).

Place

- When Antoinette's mother, Anette, is taken from Coulibri, Antoinette immediately links this with her mother's madness.
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- "She was part of Coulibri, that had gone, so she had gone, I was certain of it" (28).
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- Mr. Rochester takes her away from the honeymoon house. It kills Antoinette's mentality.
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- "I was tired of these people. I disliked their laughter and their tears, their flattery and envy, conceit and deceit. And I hated the place... Above all I hated her" (103).

Wide Sargasso Sea 1993 part 1 of 10



YouTube

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