

Wide Sargasso Sea

Jean Rhys

Reviewed by: Antonella Risi, 17

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Wide Sargasso Sea is a response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* that was published in the 1960s, which follows Antoinette Cosaway, a Creole woman who was known as Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette is the daughter of ex-slave owners, and because of this, those who live in the same town as her and her mother despise them, and Antoinette's home and family is in shambles. After they are driven out of the town they lived in, Antoinette goes to stay in a convent for years without having any visits from her family members until she is of age to be "presented" to society. She is then sold to an Englishman for her to marry, who is, in actuality, Mr. Rochester from *Jane Eyre*. Mr. Rochester then continues to manipulate Antoinette, cheat on her, and change her name to Berta to disconnect her from her roots. This causes Antoinette to go crazy, as well as the insanity that runs through her family. The end then follows her as she goes insane and burn down the mansion she was physically chained to.

Wide Sargasso Sea is an interesting book and one that has many literary devices to understand, so I would recommend it to teenagers and older. This book, while it can be read by itself, is better when read after *Jane Eyre*, so I would recommend reading that first as well. It is a great anti-colonialist and femenist response that I believe many should read after *Jane Eyre*.

Recommended Titles

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

Good Morning, Midnight by Jean Rhys

The Madwoman in the Attic by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar