

## *Frenchman's Creek*

This is both one of her more popular novels (classed as one of the 'Cornish novels' which are usually slightly more popular) and also critically overlooked.

- How do you feel about the novel/where would you rank it in her novels?

It has been defined as a romantic novel, or worse, a pirate romance! (one reviewer called it a Mills and Boon throwaway romance!) I think this does it a disservice.

- What genre is the novel?
- How does the setting, in time and place, affect it? Could it be a modern novel set in Yorkshire or the Caribbean and have the same effect?
- What about Navron? Is this a house that transforms its inhabitants, like Manderley?
- Is this more of a woman's novel? It is sometimes described as such.
- What themes do you see in the novel? There are (in my view) some big philosophical themes about freedom, society, love, women's lives, motherhood, etc, which make the novel much more than a 'pirate romance'!

What do you think of Dona?

- How does she change over the novel?
- Does the ending change how you see her? How do you feel about the ending?
- Is she a likeable character?
- Like some of du Maurier's other novels, has a heroine who wants to be a boy. Why is this?

The novel begins and ends with the sun over the river, bookending the events of the novel. The woods and land around Navron, and the sea, play an important part in the novel.

- What role does the natural world play here? Is it more than just setting?

An online comment says:

"Harry was a character to be laughed at rather than with. I don't think he is destined to a long life, he will probably fall off of his horse while drunk and break his neck leaving Dona free to follow Aubery (once the children are grown up)".

- Do you feel sorry for Harry?
- What about Rockingham, and Lord Godolphin? Do they deserve or inspire any pity for their fates?

The Frenchman is in some ways quite a stereotypical romantic hero, and seems less developed as a character than Dona.

- Do you agree? And if so, why is this the case?
- Do you think the novel could have had a different ending – could Dona and her Frenchman have been happy forever?
- How do you feel about the ending?