

'The Bloody Chamber' Key Quotations

- "he'd bought me ... are you sure you love him?" - (marriage about wealth and status over emotion - critical as the mother asks the question 3x and we respect her)
- "shot a man-eating tiger with her own hand" - (independence of the mother conflicts with her daughter, we look up to the mother so respect her views)
- "defiantly beggared herself for love" - (honourable choice made for love, contrast to her daughter, foreshadows conclusion)
- "the wedding night, which would be voluptuously deferred until we lay in his great ancestral bed" - (sexual imagery, desire/lust, image of what she expects over reality)
- "leonine shape of his head" "dark mane" "seemed to me like a mask" - (beastly characteristics)
- "he seemed to me like a lily" - (represents death - foreshadows/forebodes)
- "a choker of rubies ... slit throat" - (foreshadowing her death)
- "reflected more white lilies than I'd ever seen before in my life" - (death imagery)
- "a ritual from the brothel" "my purchaser unwrapped his bargain" - (wealth and status > emotion)
- "her cunt a split fig" "knotted tails of the cat" "Reproof of curiosity" - (violence and sexual imagery closely linked, short sharp words to show aggression - global taboo)
- "My little nun has found the prayer books" "Baby mustn't play with grown-ups toys" - (paedophilic language, we feel disgusted by the Marquis and vulnerable for the childish girl)
- "a dozen husbands impaled a dozen brides" - (violent and aggressive language - seems like a spectacle, ceremony rather than heart-felt like she anticipated)
- "my little love, my child" "perch on his knee" - (paedophilic language)
- "the one who had inflicted the pain could comfort me" - (naïve girl reader becomes frustrated)
- "whose keyring was as crowded as that of a prison warder" (controlling Marquis)
- "this lovely prison of which I was an inmate" - (controlling Marquis - juxtaposed shows her internal confusion between wealth and false love)
- "the very first key I picked out of that pile" - (supernatural influence?)
- "outlines of a rack ... a great wheel ... the Iron Maiden" "bowls of incense" - (torture devices, we feel scared for the vulnerable girl)
- "catafalque ... four-foot-high jar [of lilies]" - (foreshadows death)
- "he had embalmed her" "the Iron Maiden emitted a ghostly twang" "the candles flared" - (supernatural and necrophilic suggestion)
- "forming pool of blood" "the door of hell" - (satanic image and impending death of the girl)
- "Saint Cecilia ... my music room seemed the safest place" - patroness of music (beheaded)
- "might not the police ... even the judge be in his service" - (corruption of society through wealth)
- "Castle of Murder" "black car" - (death imagery)
- "a dozen vulnerable appealing girls reflected in as many mirrors" - (magnifies her vulnerability)
- "he half-snarled" - (beastly imagery - beast within)
- "he was in despair" "absolute despair" - (shows his human side and emotion, some sympathy)
- "my great-grandfather's ceremonial sword" - (past and inheritance - gothic ideas)
- "coiled like a snake about to strike, lay the ruby choker" - (vulnerability)
- "her black skirts tucked up around her waist" - (practical clothing for the job, independent woman)
- "the revolt of his pawns" "a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head" - (turning point in the plot, downfall of the villain)
- "mark of Cain ... he sees me clearly with his heart ... it spares my shame" - (religious imagery, prevents relationships? criticism? - but an emotional view of people is good)