

Elizabeth Bowen

Quotes

Writing, People, Character, Literature, Thinking, Children, Book, Two, Should, Real, Art, May, Reading, Silence, Ideas, Passion, Stories, Mean, Firsts, Littles

One can live in the shadow of an idea without grasping it.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Silences have a climax, when you have got to speak.

~Elizabeth Bowen

When you love someone all your saved up wishes start coming out.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Jealousy is no more than feeling alone against smiling enemies.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Some people are molded by their admirations, others by their hostilities.

~Elizabeth Bowen

We are minor in everything but our passions.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Pity the selfishness of lovers: it is brief, a forlorn hope; it is impossible.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Fate is not an eagle, it creeps like a rat.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Disappointment tears the bearable film off life.

~Elizabeth Bowen

It is not helpful to help a friend by putting coins in his pockets when he has got holes in his pockets.

~Elizabeth Bowen

somehow at parties at which one stays standing up one seems to require to be more concentratedly intelligent than one does at those at

which one can sit down.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Certain books come to meet me, as do people.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Illusions are art, for the feeling person, and it is by art that we live, if we do.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Autumn arrives in early morning, but spring at the close of a winter day.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Chance is better than choice; it is more lordly. Chance is God, choice is man.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Intimacies between women often go backwards, beginning in revelations and ending in small talk.

~Elizabeth Bowen

we can surmount the anger we feel. To find oneself like a young tree inside a tomb is to discover the power to crack the tomb and grow up to any height.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Autumn arrives in the early morning.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Spoilt pleasure is a sad, unseemly thing; you can only bury it.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Silences can be as different as sounds.

~Elizabeth Bowen

No, it is not only our fate but our business to lose innocence, and once we have lost that, it is futile to attempt a picnic in Eden.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Jane Austen, much in advance of her day, was a mistress of the use of the dialogue. She used it as dialogue should be used-to advance the story; not only to show the characters, but to advance.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Mechanical difficulties with language are the outcome of internal difficulties with thought.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Nobody can be kinder than the narcissist while you react to life in his own terms.

~Elizabeth Bowen

A romantic man often feels more uplifted with two women than with one: his love seems to hit the ideal mark somewhere between two different faces.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Characters are not created by writers. They pre-exist and have to be found.

~Elizabeth Bowen

She walked about with the rather fated expression you see in photographs of girls who have subsequently been murdered, but nothing had so far happened to her.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Who is ever adequate? We all create situations each other can't live up

to, then break our hearts at them because they don't.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The wish to lead out one's lover must be a tribal feeling; the wish to be seen as loved is part of one's self-respect.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Only in a house where one has learnt to be lonely does one have this solicitude for things. One's relation to them, the daily seeing or touching, begins to become love, and to lay one open to pain.

~Elizabeth Bowen

If you look at life one way, there is always cause for alarm.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The heart may think it knows better: the senses know that absence blots people out. We really have no absent friends.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Art is one thing that can go on mattering once it has stopped hurting.

~Elizabeth Bowen

But complex people are never certain that they are not crooks, never certain their passports are quite in order, and are, therefore, unnerved by the slightest thing.

~Elizabeth Bowen

All your youth you want to have your greatness taken for granted; when you find it taken for granted, you are unnerved.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The importance to the writer of first writing must be out of all proportion of the actual value of what is written.

~Elizabeth Bowen

What's the matter with this country is the matter with the lot of us individually - our sense of personality is a sense of outrage.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The innocent are so few that two of them seldom meet - when they do meet, their victims lie strewn all round.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The best that an individual can do is to concentrate on what he or she can do, in the course of a burning effort to do it better.

~Elizabeth Bowen

We have really no absent friends.

~Elizabeth Bowen

It is not our exalted feelings, it is our sentiments that build the necessary home.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Nothing can happen nowhere. The locale of the happening always colours the happening, and often, to a degree, shapes it.

~Elizabeth Bowen

I think the main thing, don't you, is to keep the show on the road.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Experience isn't interesting until it begins to repeat itself. In fact, till it does that, it hardly is experience.

~Elizabeth Bowen

What is being said is the effect of something that has happened; at the same time, what is being said is in itself something happening, which will, in turn, leave its effect.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Reason can never reconcile one to life: nothing allays the wants one cannot explain.

~Elizabeth Bowen

...the power-loving temperament is more dangerous when it either prefers or is forced to operate in what is materially a void. We have everything to dread from the dispossessed.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The story must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough to have made the writer write. It should magnetize the imagination and give pleasure.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Good-byes breed a sort of distaste for whomever you say good-bye to; this hurts, you feel, this must not happen again.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Fantasy is toxic: the private cruelty and the world war both have their start in the heated brain.

~Elizabeth Bowen

No object is mysterious. The mystery is your eye.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Nobody speaks the truth when there's something they must have.

~Elizabeth Bowen

I became, and remain, my characters' close and intent watcher: their director, never. Their creator I cannot feel that I was, or am.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Someone soon to start on a journey is always a little holy.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Dialogue in fiction is what characters do to one another.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Dialogue should convey a sense of spontaneity but eliminate the repetitiveness of real talk.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Language is a mixture of statement and evocation.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Never to lie is to have no lock on your door, you are never wholly alone.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Ghosts seem harder to please than we are; it is as though they haunted for haunting's sake -- much as we relive, brood, and smoulder over our pasts.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Also, perhaps children are sterner than grown-up people in their refusal to suffer, in their refusal, even, to feel at all.

~Elizabeth Bowen

There is no end to the violations committed by children on children, quietly talking alone.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The most steady, the most self-sufficient nature depends, more than it knows, on its few chosen stimuli.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Dogs are a habit, I think.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Exhibitionism and a nervous wish for concealment, for anonymity, thus battle inside the buyer of any piece of clothing.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Meeting people unlike oneself does not enlarge one's outlook; it only confirms one's idea that one is unique.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Ireland is a great country to die or be married in.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Not only is there no question of solitude, but in the long run we may not choose our company.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Some ideas, like dandelions in lawns, strike tenaciously: you may pull off the top but the root remains, drives down suckers and may even sprout again.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Nothing arrives on paper as it started, and so much arrives that never started at all. To write is always to rave a little-even if one did once know what one meant

~Elizabeth Bowen

What I have found is, anything one keeps hidden should now and then be hidden somewhere else.

~Elizabeth Bowen

That is partly why women marry - to keep up the fiction of being in the hub of things.

~Elizabeth Bowen

To walk into history is to be free at once, to be at large among people.

~Elizabeth Bowen

My writing, I am prepared to think, may be a substitute for something I have been born without - a so-called normal relation to society. My books are my relation to society.

~Elizabeth Bowen

We desert those who desert us; we cannot afford to suffer; we must live how we can.

~Elizabeth Bowen

I can't see or feel the conflict between love and religion. To me, they're the same thing.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Art is for [the Irish] inseparable from artifice: of that, the theatre is the home. Possibly, it was England made me a novelist.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The silence of a shut park does not sound like country silence: it is tense and confined.

~Elizabeth Bowen

one should discuss one's difficulties only when they are over.

~Elizabeth Bowen

...there must be something she wanted; and that therefore she was no lady.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Forgiveness should be an act, but this is a state with him.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Young girls like the excess of any quality. Without knowing, they want

to suffer, to suffer they must exaggerate; they like to have loud chords struck on them.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Proust has pointed out that the predisposition to love creates its own objects; is this not also true of fear?

~Elizabeth Bowen

Good general-purpose manners nowadays may be said to consist in knowing how much you can get away with.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Plot is the knowing of destination.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Dialogue should show the relationships among people.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Sacrificers ... are not the ones to pity. The ones to pity are those that they sacrifice. Oh, the sacrificers, they get it both ways. A person knows themselves that they're able to do without.

~Elizabeth Bowen

writers do not find subjects: subjects find them. There is not so much a search as a state of open susceptibility.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The child lives in the book; but just as much the book lives in the child.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Habit, of which passion must be wary, may all the same be the sweetest part of love.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Habit is not mere subjugation, it is a tender tie; when one remembers habit it seems to have been happiness.

~Elizabeth Bowen

But in general, for the purposes of most novelists, the number of objects genuinely necessary for. . .describing a scene will be found to be very small.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Temperamentally, the writer exists on happenings, on contacts, conflicts, action and reaction, speed, pressure, tension. Were he acontemplative purely, he would not write.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Art, at any rate in a novel, must be indissolubly linked with craft.

~Elizabeth Bowen

very young people are true but not resounding instruments.

~Elizabeth Bowen

I know that I have in my make-up layers of synthetic experiences, and that the most powerful of my memories are only half true.

~Elizabeth Bowen

The craft of the novelist does lie first of all in story-telling.

~Elizabeth Bowen

[A writer] should try not to be too far, personally, below the level of his work.

~Elizabeth Bowen

memory is to love what the saucer is to the cup.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Wariness had driven away poetry; from hesitating to feel came the moment when you no longer could.

~Elizabeth Bowen

Solitary and farouche people don't have relationships; they are quite unrelatable.

~Elizabeth Bowen

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