

Iris Murdoch

Quotes

*Art, Love, Literature, People, Self, Secret, Men, Philosophy, Marriage, World,
Soul, Hate, Real, Inspirational, Writing, Life, Thinking, Lying, Artist, Sleep*

It is not enough that I succeed, everyone else must fail.

~Iris Murdoch

Every man needs two women: a quiet home-maker, and a thrilling nymph.

~Iris Murdoch

A bad review is even less important than whether it is raining in Patagonia.

~Iris Murdoch

We can only learn to love by loving.

~Iris Murdoch

We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task in life is to find reality.

~Iris Murdoch

Perhaps when distant people on other planets pick up some wavelength of ours all they hear is a continuous scream.

~Iris Murdoch

He was a sociologist; he had got into an intellectual muddle early on in life and never managed to get out.

~Iris Murdoch

Our actions are like ships which we may watch set out to sea, and not know when or with what cargo they will return to port.

~Iris Murdoch

The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart.

~Iris Murdoch

I feel half faded away like some figure in the background of an old picture.

~Iris Murdoch

Writing is like getting married. One should never commit oneself until one is amazed at one's luck.

~Iris Murdoch

People from a planet without flowers would think we must be mad with joy the whole time to have such things about us.

~Iris Murdoch

Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real.

~Iris Murdoch

Between saying and doing, many a pair of shoes is worn out.

~Iris Murdoch

There is no beyond, there is only here, the infinitely small, infinitely great and utterly demanding present.

~Iris Murdoch

Happiness is a matter of one's most ordinary everyday mode of consciousness being busy and lively and unconcerned with self.

~Iris Murdoch

Jealousy comes from self-love rather than from true love.

~Iris Murdoch

In philosophy if you aren't moving at a snail's pace you aren't moving at all.

~Iris Murdoch

Freedom may be a value in politics, but it is not a value in morals.

~Iris Murdoch

Every book is the wreck of a perfect idea.

~Iris Murdoch

Literature could be said to be a sort of disciplined technique for arousing certain emotions.

~Iris Murdoch

All art is the struggle to be, in a particular sort of way, virtuous.

~Iris Murdoch

The most essential and fundamental aspect of culture is the study of literature, since this is an education in how to picture and understand human situations.

~Iris Murdoch

Art is the final cunning of the human soul which would rather do anything than face the gods.

~Iris Murdoch

Love is the last and secret name of all the virtues.

~Iris Murdoch

The absolute yearning of one human body for another particular body and its indifference to substitutes is one of life's major mysteries.

~Iris Murdoch

The cry of equality pulls everyone down.

~Iris Murdoch

We shall be better prepared for the future if we see how terrible, how doomed the present is.

~Iris Murdoch

Our destiny can be examined, but it cannot be justified or totally explained. We are simply here.

~Iris Murdoch

I think being a woman is like being Irish. Everyone says you're important and nice, but you take second place all the same.

~Iris Murdoch

The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man.

~Iris Murdoch

Falling out of love is very enlightening. For a short while you see the world with new eyes.

~Iris Murdoch

I just enjoy translating, it's like opening one's mouth and hearing someone else's voice emerge.

~Iris Murdoch

There is no substitute for the comfort supplied by the utterly taken-for-granted relationship.

~Iris Murdoch

Most real relationships are involuntary.

~Iris Murdoch

We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central.

~Iris Murdoch

All art deals with the absurd and aims at the simple. Good art speaks truth, indeed is truth, perhaps the only truth.

~Iris Murdoch

But fantasy kills imagination, pornography is death to art.

~Iris Murdoch

One should go easy on smashing other people's lies. Better to concentrate on one's own.

~Iris Murdoch

The chief requirement of the good life, is to live without any image of oneself.

~Iris Murdoch

Marriage isn't a tram. It doesn't have to get anywhere.

~Iris Murdoch

Anything that consoles is fake.

~Iris Murdoch

The sin of pride may be a small or a great thing in someone's life, and hurt vanity a passing pinprick, or a self-destroying or ever murderous obsession.

~Iris Murdoch

A middling talent makes for a more serene life.

~Iris Murdoch

All our failures are ultimately failures in love.

~Iris Murdoch

Art and psychoanalysis give shape and meaning to life and that is why we adore them, but life as it is lived has no shape and meaning.

~Iris Murdoch

Words are the most subtle symbols which we possess and our human fabric depends on them.

~Iris Murdoch

I daresay anything can be made holy by being sincerely worshipped.

~Iris Murdoch

Possibly, more people kill themselves and others out of hurt vanity than out of envy, jealousy, malice or desire for revenge.

~Iris Murdoch

For most of us, for almost all of us, truth can be attained, if at all, only in silence. It is in silence that the human spirit touches the divine.

~Iris Murdoch

Jealousy is the most dreadfully involuntary of all sins.

~Iris Murdoch

Mathematics is good for the soul, getting things right enlivens a sense of truth, efforts to understand automatically purify desires.

~Iris Murdoch

Most of our love is shabby stuff, but there is always a thin line of gold, the bit of pure love on which all the rest depends -- and which redeems all the rest.

~Iris Murdoch

Upon the demon-ridden pilgrimage of human life, what next I wonder.

~Iris Murdoch

Philosophy! Empty thinking by ignorant conceited men who think they can digest without eating!

~Iris Murdoch

Perhaps misguided moral passion is better than confused indifference.

~Iris Murdoch

Moralistic is not moral. And as for truth - well, it's like brown - it's not in the spectrum. Truth is so generic.

~Iris Murdoch

In almost every marriage there is a selfish and an unselfish partner. A pattern is set up and soon becomes inflexible, of one person always making the demands and one person always giving way.

~Iris Murdoch

No love is entirely without worth, even when the frivolous calls to the frivolous and the base to the base.

~Iris Murdoch

Every artist is an unhappy lover. And unhappy lovers want to tell their story.

~Iris Murdoch

Only lies and evil come from letting people off.

~Iris Murdoch

Falling out of love is chiefly a matter of forgetting how charming someone is.

~Iris Murdoch

Bereavement is a darkness impenetrable to the imagination of the unbereaved

~Iris Murdoch

The human soul is not framed for continued proximity, and the result of this enforced neighbourhood is often an appalling loneliness for which the rules of the game forbid assuagement.

~Iris Murdoch

Remember that the secret of all learning is patience and that curiosity is not the same thing as a thirst for knowledge.

~Iris Murdoch

It is difficult in life to be good, and difficult in art to portray goodness. Perhaps we don't know much about goodness.

~Iris Murdoch

Real misery cuts off all paths to itself.

~Iris Murdoch

Learning philosophy is learning a particular kind of intuitive understanding.

~Iris Murdoch

All artists dream of a silence which they must enter, as some creatures return to the sea to spawn.

~Iris Murdoch

Only the very greatest art invigorates without consoling.

~Iris Murdoch

Not to have been born is undoubtedly best, but sound sleep is second best.

~Iris Murdoch

The entry of a child into any situation changes the whole situation.

~Iris Murdoch

Starting a novel is opening a door on a misty landscape; you can still see very little but you can smell the earth and feel the wind blowing.

~Iris Murdoch

Human affairs are not serious, but they have to be taken seriously.

~Iris Murdoch

People have obsessions and fears and passions which they don't admit to. I think every character is interesting and has extremes. It's the novelist privilege to see how odd everyone is.

~Iris Murdoch

Being good is just a matter of temperament in the end.

~Iris Murdoch

The notion that one will not survive a particular catastrophe is, in general terms, a comfort since it is equivalent to abolishing the catastrophe.

~Iris Murdoch

Dogs are very different from cats in that they can be images of human virtue. They are like us.

~Iris Murdoch

It's easier to sell junk when you're known than works of genius when you're unknown.

~Iris Murdoch

Of course reading and thinking are important but, my God, food is important too.

~Iris Murdoch

There is nothing like early promiscuous sex for dispelling life's bright mysterious expectations.

~Iris Murdoch

Nothing is more beautifully and acceptably self-assertive than good singing.

~Iris Murdoch

Music relates sound and time and so pictures the ultimate edges of human communications.

~Iris Murdoch

In a happy marriage there is a continuous dense magnetic sense of communication.

~Iris Murdoch

Being in love is an exhausting business.

~Iris Murdoch

Only love has clear vision. Hatred has cloudy vision. When we hate we know not what we do.

~Iris Murdoch

youth is a marvelous garment

~Iris Murdoch

The best thing about being God would be making the heads.

~Iris Murdoch

My heart was beating like an army on the march.

~Iris Murdoch

Every artist is an unhappy lover.

~Iris Murdoch

We defend ourselves by descriptions and tame the world by generalizing.

~Iris Murdoch

True love gallops, it flies, it is the swiftest of all modes of thought,

swifter even than hate and fear.

~Iris Murdoch

Oh the piercing sadness of life in the midst of its ordinariness!

~Iris Murdoch

As we live our precarious lives on the brink of the void, constantly coming closer to a state of nonbeing, we are all too often aware of our fragility.

~Iris Murdoch

Coffee, unless it is very good and made by somebody else, is pretty intolerable at any time.

~Iris Murdoch

We re all muddlers. The thing is to see is when one's got to stop muddling.

~Iris Murdoch

We are all prisoner, but the name of our cure is not freedom

~Iris Murdoch

Language is a machine for making falsehoods.

~Iris Murdoch

Another person's illness is often harder to bear than one's own.

~Iris Murdoch

The bereaved cannot communicate with the unbereaved.

~Iris Murdoch

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