

P. D. James

Quotes

People, Writing, May, Men, Believe, Children, Secret, Want, Order, Past, Thinking, Mind, Political, Long, Tragedy, Two, Sex, World, Childhood, War

It was one of those perfect English autumnal days which occur more frequently in memory than in life.

~P. D. James

I don't think writers choose the genre, the genre chooses us. I wrote out of the wish to create order out of disorder, the liking of a pattern.

~P. D. James

Write what you need to write, not what is currently popular or what you think will sell.

~P. D. James

I believe that political correctness can be a form of linguistic fascism, and it sends shivers down the spine of my generation who went to war against fascism.

~P. D. James

Not so much two ships passing in the night as two ships sailing together for a time but always bound for different ports.

~P. D. James

We can experience nothing but the present moment, live in no other second of time, and to understand this is as close as we can get to eternal life.

~P. D. James

What the detective story is about is not murder but the restoration of order.

~P. D. James

I knew the facts of death before I knew the facts of life. There never was a time when I didn't see the skull beneath the skin.

~P. D. James

When I heard, Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, I thought, Did he fall or was he pushed?

~P. D. James

Every island to a child is a treasure island.

~P. D. James

We who write in English are fortunate to have the richest and most versatile language in the world. Respect it.

~P. D. James

A politician is required to listen to humbug, talk humbug, condone humbug. The most we can hope for is that we don't actually believe it.

~P. D. James

The modern holy trinity is money, sex and celebrity.

~P. D. James

Don't just plan to write - write. It is only by writing, not dreaming about it, that we develop our own style.

~P. D. James

What a child doesn't receive he can seldom later give.

~P. D. James

The world is changed not by the self-regarding, but by men and women prepared to make fools of themselves.

~P. D. James

Man is diminished if he lives without knowledge of his past; without hope of a future he becomes a beast.

~P. D. James

If this were fiction, could even the most brilliant novelist contrive to

make credible so short a period in which pride had been subdued and prejudice overcome?

~P. D. James

Authors always take rejection badly. They equate it with infanticide.

~P. D. James

Work did bestow dignity, status, meaning. Wasn't that why people dreaded unemployment, why some men found retirement so traumatic?

~P. D. James

however long we have to live, there are never enough springs.

~P. D. James

Charm is always genuine; it may be superficial but it isn't false.

~P. D. James

Open your mind to new experiences, particularly to the study of other \hat{A} -people. Nothing that happens to a writer - however happy, however tragic - is ever wasted.

~P. D. James

Books of quotations ... afford me one of the most undemanding but satisfying forms of reading pleasure.

~P. D. James

Feel, he told himself, feel, feel, feel. Even if what you feel is pain, only let yourself feel.

~P. D. James

If from infancy you treat children as gods, they are liable in adulthood to act as devils.

~P. D. James

The equally is a political theory, but no a practical politics.

~P. D. James

Human kindness is like a defective tap, the first gush may be impressive but the stream soon dries up.

~P. D. James

Any visitor to an historic country town or city quickly becomes aware in his or her peregrinations that the most attractive houses in the centre are invariably the offices of lawyers.

~P. D. James

What was so terrible about grief was not grief itself, but that one got over it.

~P. D. James

Publishers don't nurse you; they buy and sell you.

~P. D. James

It is always easy to question the judgement of others in matters of which we may be imperfectly informed.

~P. D. James

There comes a time when every scientist, even God, has to write off an experiment.

~P. D. James

We English are good at forgiving our enemies; it releases us from the obligation of liking our friends.

~P. D. James

Perfect love may cast our fear, but fear is remarkably potent in casting out love.

~P. D. James

First-class travel, provided one hasn't to pay for it oneself, is the most insidiously addictive of life's luxuries.

~P. D. James

It's possible to fight intolerance, stupidity and fanaticism when they come separately. When you get all three together it's probably wiser to get out, if only to preserve your sanity.

~P. D. James

Increase your word power. Words are the raw material of our craft.

~P. D. James

But what do you believe? I don't just mean religion. What are you sure of?" "That once I was not and that now I am. That one day I shall no longer be.

~P. D. James

Time didn't heal, but it anesthetized. The human mind could only feel so much.

~P. D. James

A man who lives with nature is used to violence and is companionable with death. There is more violence in an English hedgerow than in the meanest streets of a great city.

~P. D. James

Read widely and with discrimination. Bad writing is contagious.

~P. D. James

A nation that can't remember its dead will soon cease to be worth dying for.

~P. D. James

Creativity doesn't flourish in an atmosphere of despotism, coercion and

fear.

~P. D. James

Daniel supposed he had a secret life. Most people did; it was hardly possible to live without one.

~P. D. James

Absolute nakedness was intrusive, confusing to the senses. Paradoxically, it both revealed and diminished identity.

~P. D. James

[My father and his friends] believed in equality for women without troubling to acquire the basic domestic skills which would have made that equality possible.

~P. D. James

A regime which combines perpetual surveillance with total indulgence is hardly conducive to healthy development.

~P. D. James

I can understand the poor and stupid voting for Marxism or one of its fashionable variants. If you've no hope of being other than a slave, you may as well opt for the most efficient form of slavery.

~P. D. James

For me, the dead remain dead. If I couldn't believe that, I don't think I could go on living.

~P. D. James

It shows considerable wisdom to know what you want in life and then to direct all your energies towards getting it.

~P. D. James

It's easy to get a reputation for wisdom. It's only necessary to live long,

Speak little and do less.

~P. D. James

Old age makes caricatures of us all.

~P. D. James

If you are proposing to commit a sin it is as well to commit it with intelligence. Otherwise you are insulting God as well as defying Him, don't you think?

~P. D. James

Great literature cannot grow from a neglected or impoverished soil. Only if we actually tend or care will it transpire that every hundred years or so we might get a Middlemarch.

~P. D. James

The greatest mystery of all is the human heart.

~P. D. James

You never forget the people who were kind to you in childhood, do you, sir?

~P. D. James

I learned early and at that kitchen table that there are ways of avoiding, without guilt, the commitments of love.

~P. D. James

Most of my life I have needed more time to be on my own.

~P. D. James

Generosity is a virtue for individuals, not governments. When governments are generous it is with other people's money, other people's safety, other people's future.

~P. D. James

Death ... obliterates family resemblance as it does personality: there is no affinity between the living and the dead.

~P. D. James

The great tragedy of Alzheimer's disease, and the reason why we dread it, is that it leaves us with no defence, not even against those who love us.

~P. D. James

People were excited by violence. What, after all, was the sexual act but a voluntarily endured assault, a momentary death?

~P. D. James

Childhood is the one prison from which there's no escape, the one sentence from which there's no appeal. We all serve our time.

~P. D. James

the unforgivable was usually the most easily forgiven.

~P. D. James

Suicide is the most private and mysterious of acts, inexplicable because the chief actor is never there to explain it.

~P. D. James

It is difficult to be generous-minded to those we have greatly harmed.

~P. D. James

No literary form is more revealing, more spontaneous or more individual than a letter.

~P. D. James

Youth goes caparisoned in immortality.

~P. D. James

I don't want anyone to look to me, not for protection, not for happiness, not for love, not for anything.

~P. D. James

I still occasionally need to struggle but I now fear it less. The weapons I fight it with are also my consolations: books, music, food, wine, nature.

~P. D. James

Wars may be fought by decent men, but they're not won by them.

~P. D. James

Love, always love. Perhaps that's what we're all looking for.

~P. D. James

History, which interprets the past to understand the present and confront the future is the least rewarding discipline for a dying species.

~P. D. James

you'd like the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That must be the most futile oath anyone ever swears.

~P. D. James

If all power corrupts, then a doctor, who literally holds life and death in his hands, must be at particular risk.

~P. D. James

No government can act in advance of the moral will of the people.

~P. D. James

The secret of contentment is never to allow yourself to want anything which reason tells you you haven't a chance of getting.

~P. D. James

Murder is the unique crime, the only one for which we can never make

reparation to the victim.

~P. D. James

gossip ... was like any other commodity in the marketplace. You received it only if you had something of value to give.

~P. D. James

Unnatural death always provoked a peculiar unease, an uncomfortable realization that there were still some things that might not be susceptible to bureaucratic control.

~P. D. James

There are few couples as unhappy as those who are too proud to admit their unhappiness.

~P. D. James

we can forgive anything as long as it isn't done to us.

~P. D. James

Perhaps it's only when people are dead that we can safely show how much we cared about them. We know that it's too late then for them to do anything about it.

~P. D. James

Crime fiction confirms our belief, despite some evidence to the contrary, that we live in a rational, comprehensible, and moral universe.

~P. D. James

The tragedy of loss is not that we grieve, but that we cease to grieve, and then perhaps the dead are dead at last.

~P. D. James

Metaphysical speculation is about as pointless as a discussion on the meaning of one's lungs. They're for breathing.

~P. D. James

Of all the things that human beings did together, the sexual act was the one with the most various of reasons.

~P. D. James

We are often more merciful to our animals than we are to each other.

~P. D. James

Ambition, if it were to be savored, let alone achieved, had to be rooted in possibility.

~P. D. James

We live in a society which salves its conscience more by helping the interestingly unfortunate than the dull deserving.

~P. D. James

the most successful marriages were always based on both partners feeling that they had done rather well for themselves.

~P. D. James

I don't see why escapist literature shouldn't also be a work of art.

~P. D. James

All fiction is largely autobiographical and much autobiography is, of course, fiction.

~P. D. James

Can we ever break free of the devices and desires of our own hearts?
Might not our conscience be telling us what we most want to hear?

~P. D. James

I love the idea of bringing order out of disorder which is what the mystery is about. I like the way in which it affirms the sanity of human

life and exorcises irrational guilts.

~P. D. James

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