

# Robertson Davies Quotes

*People, Men, Book, Thinking, Art, Writing, Life, Love, Children, World, Reading,  
Wise, Giving, Important, Mind, Mean, Looks, Country, Happiness, Past*

Extraordinary people survive under the most terrible circumstances and they become more extraordinary because of it.

~Robertson Davies

There is no nonsense so gross that society will not, at some time, make a doctrine of it and defend it with every weapon of communal stupidity.

~Robertson Davies

The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.

~Robertson Davies

I cannot imagine any boy of spirit who would not be delighted to play a drunkard even to vomiting in front of his Sunday school. Indeed, the vomiting might be the chief attraction of the role.

~Robertson Davies

A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight.

~Robertson Davies

The world is full of people whose notion of a satisfactory future is, in fact, a return to the idealized past.

~Robertson Davies

Art is wine and experience is the brandy we distill from it.

~Robertson Davies

A man must be obedient to the promptings of his innermost heart.

~Robertson Davies

Conversation in its true meaning isn't all wagging the tongue; sometimes it is a deeply shared silence.

~Robertson Davies

The dog is a yes-animal. Very popular with people who can't afford a yes man.

~Robertson Davies

A happy childhood has spoiled many a promising life.

~Robertson Davies

All mothers think their children are oaks, but the world never lacks for cabbages.

~Robertson Davies

This is the Great Theatre of Life. Admission is free, but the taxation is mortal. You come when you can, and leave when you must. The show is continuous. Goodnight.

~Robertson Davies

Love affairs are for emotional sprinters; the pleasures of love are for the emotional marathoners.

~Robertson Davies

On the whole, we treat the Devil shamefully, and the worse we treat Him the more He laughs at us.

~Robertson Davies

He types his labored column - weary drudge! Senile fudge and solemn: spare, editor, to condemn these dry leaves of his autumn.

~Robertson Davies

Authors like cats because they are such quiet, lovable, wise creatures, and cats like authors for the same reasons.

~Robertson Davies

The love of truth lies at the root of much humor.

~Robertson Davies

Pornography is rather like trying to find out about a Beethoven symphony by having somebody tell you about it and perhaps hum a few bars.

~Robertson Davies

When irony first makes itself known in a young man's life, it can be like his first experience of getting drunk; he has met with a powerful thing which he does not know how to handle.

~Robertson Davies

Fanaticism is overcompensation for doubt.

~Robertson Davies

The book forces itself into my mind when I am lugging furniture, or pulling weeds.

~Robertson Davies

What we call luck is the inner man externalized. We make things happen to us.

~Robertson Davies

We mistrust anything that too strongly challenges our ideal of mediocrity.

~Robertson Davies

Students today are a pretty solemn lot. One of the really notable achievements of the twentieth century has been to make the young old before their time.

~Robertson Davies

There is absolutely no point in sitting down to write a book unless you feel that you must write that book, or else go mad, or die.

~Robertson Davies

The great charm of cats is their rampant egotism, their devil-may-care attitude toward responsibility, their disinclination to earn an honest dollar.

~Robertson Davies

The love that dare not speak its name has become the love that won't shut up.

~Robertson Davies

There are times when I think that the reading I have done in the past has had no effect except to cloud my mind and make me indecisive

~Robertson Davies

The Alexander Technique keeps the body alive, at ages when many people have resigned themselves to irreversible decline.

~Robertson Davies

Never harbor grudges; they sour your stomach and do no harm to anyone else.

~Robertson Davies

May I make a suggestion, hoping it is not an impertinence? Write it down: write down what you feel. It is sometimes a wonderful help in misery.

~Robertson Davies

No one needs a word processor if he has an efficient secretary.

~Robertson Davies

The young are often accused of exaggerating their troubles; they do so, very often, in the hope of making some impression upon the inertia and the immovability of the selfish old.

~Robertson Davies

Only a fool expects to be happy all the time.

~Robertson Davies

Few people can see genius in someone who has offended them.

~Robertson Davies

To be a book-collector is to combine the worst characteristics of a dope fiend with those of a miser.

~Robertson Davies

A Librettist is a mere drudge in the world of opera.

~Robertson Davies

Their very conservatism is secondhand, and they don't know what they are conserving.

~Robertson Davies

The drama may be called that part of theatrical art which lends itself most readily to intellectual discussion: what is left is theater.

~Robertson Davies

Imagination is a good horse to carry you over the ground - not a flying carpet to set you free from probability.

~Robertson Davies

To be apt in quotation is a splendid and dangerous gift. Splendid, because it ornaments a man's speech with other men's jewels; dangerous, for the same reason.

~Robertson Davies

The pleasures of love are for those who are hopelessly addicted to another living creature.

~Robertson Davies

If we seek the pleasures of love, passion should be occasional, and common sense continual.

~Robertson Davies

Many a promising career has been wrecked by marrying the wrong sort of woman.

~Robertson Davies

If you are not happy you had better stop worrying about it and see what treasures you can pluck from your own brand of unhappiness.

~Robertson Davies

I do not 'get' ideas; ideas get me

~Robertson Davies

I see Canada as a country torn between a very northern, rather extraordinary, mystical spirit which it fears and its desire to present itself to the world as a Scotch banker.

~Robertson Davies

The greatest gift that Oxford gives her sons is, I truly believe, a genial irreverence toward learning, and from that irreverence love may spring.

~Robertson Davies

Although I am almost illiterate mathematically, I grasped very early in life that any one who can count to ten can count upward indefinitely if he is fool enough to do so.

~Robertson Davies

Inactivity and deprivation of all accustomed stimulus is not rest; it is a preparation for the tomb

~Robertson Davies

You never see what you want to see, forever playing to the gallery.

~Robertson Davies

Secrets are the blood of life. Every big thing is a secret, even when you know it, because you never know all of it. If you can know everything about anything, it is not worth knowing.

~Robertson Davies

I think of the author as somebody who goes into the marketplace and puts down his rug and says, 'I will tell you a story' and then he passes the hat.

~Robertson Davies

Every man is wise when attacked by a mad dog; fewer when pursued by a mad woman; only the wisest survive when attacked by a mad notion.

~Robertson Davies

She has been kissed as often as a police-court Bible, and by much the same class of people.

~Robertson Davies

In my collection, to me at least, the theatre of the past lives again and those long-dead playwrights and actors have in me an enthralled audience of one, and I applaud them across the centuries.

~Robertson Davies

The wit of a graduate student is like champagne. Canadian champagne.

~Robertson Davies

The clerisy are those who seek, and find, delight and enlargement of life in books. The clerisy are those for whom reading is a personal art.

~Robertson Davies



The nature of happiness is such that happiness retreats the more intensely you pursue it.

~Robertson Davies

One learns one's mystery at the price of one's innocence.

~Robertson Davies

A big man is always accused of gluttony, whereas a wizened or osseous man can eat like a refugee at every meal, and no one ever notices his greed.

~Robertson Davies

Happiness is always a by-product. It is probably a matter of temperament, and for anything I know it may be glandular.

~Robertson Davies

He was a genius - that is to say, a man who does superlatively and without obvious effort something that most people cannot do by the uttermost exertion of their abilities.

~Robertson Davies

It seemed to me as if the stones sang, in the strangest voices, in the language of Ultima Thule.

~Robertson Davies

No people in the world can make you feel so small as the English.

~Robertson Davies

The quality of what is said inevitably influences the way in which it is said, however inexperienced the writer.

~Robertson Davies

Boredom and stupidity and patriotism, especially when combined, are three of the greatest evils of the world we live in.

~Robertson Davies

Curiosity is part of the cement that holds society together.

~Robertson Davies

Fiction is not photography, it's oil painting.

~Robertson Davies

The problem for a Paracelsian physician like me is that I see diseases as disguises in which people present me with their wretchedness.

~Robertson Davies

The people who fear humor - and they are many - are suspicious of its power to present things in unexpected lights, to question received opinions and to suggest unforeseen possibilities.

~Robertson Davies

We live in a world where bulk is equated with quality.

~Robertson Davies

In my experience tact is usually worse than the brutalities of truth.

~Robertson Davies

I just am a Canadian. It is not a thing which you can escape from. It is like having blue eyes

~Robertson Davies

You're all mad for words. Words are just farts from a lot of fools who have swallowed too many books. Give me things!

~Robertson Davies

Women tell men things that men are not very likely to find out for themselves.

~Robertson Davies

And why should it not be terrifying? A little terror, in my view, is good for the soul, when it is terror in the face of a noble object.

~Robertson Davies

Childhood may have periods of great happiness, but it also has times that must simply be endured. Childhood at its best is a form of slavery tempered by affection.

~Robertson Davies

Several children present me with scraps of paper for autographs: obviously don't know who I am and don't care. I sign "Jackie Collins" and they go away quite content.

~Robertson Davies

After all, we are human beings, and not creatures of infinite possibilities.

~Robertson Davies

Comparatively few people know what a million dollars actually is. To the majority it is a gaseous concept, swelling or decreasing as the occasion suggests.

~Robertson Davies

My dear fellow, my whole life is moved by the principle that the one thing which is more important than peace is music. It is because I believe that I am poor.

~Robertson Davies

There can be no doubt that Samuel Marchbanks is one of the choice and master spirits of this age. If there were such a volume as *Who Really Ought To Be Who* his entry would require several pages.

~Robertson Davies

here are some homosexuals whom we would do well to take seriously.

~Robertson Davies

Let people alone. Let them find their way. Let them find their level and you may sometimes be delighted and astonished at the extraordinary high level to which they'll rise if they're let alone.

~Robertson Davies

Women always think that if they tell a man not to be pompous that will shut him up, but I am an old hand at that game. I know that if a man bides his time his moment will come.

~Robertson Davies

Canada is not really a place where you are encouraged to have large spiritual adventures.

~Robertson Davies

All real fantasy is serious. Only faked fantasy is not serious. That is why it is so wrong to impose faked fantasy on children.

~Robertson Davies

In India it is regarded as a good idea to dart in front of an oncoming car, for the car is sure to kill the evil spirits who are pursuing you, and all the rest of your life you will have good luck.

~Robertson Davies

Very few [doctors] are men of science in any very serious sense; they're men of technique.

~Robertson Davies

One can always tell it's summer when one sees school teachers hanging about the streets idly, looking like cannibals during a shortage of missionaries.

~Robertson Davies

Aristocrats need not be rich, but they must be free, and in the modern world freedom grows rarer the more we prate about it.

~Robertson Davies

Anybody who has had experience of poetesses knows that they may forgive a punch on the jaw, but never a suggestion that they would be wiser to give up versifying.

~Robertson Davies

Canada was settled, in the main, by people with a lower middle-class outlook, and a respect, rather than an affectionate familiarity, for the things of the mind.

~Robertson Davies

I have no skills with machines. I fear them, and because I cannot help attributing human qualities to them, I suspect that they hate me and will kill me if they can.

~Robertson Davies

A great many complimentary things have been said about the faculty of memory, and if you look in a good quotation book you will find them neatly arranged.

~Robertson Davies

Nobody who looks as though he enjoyed life is ever called distinguished, though he is a man in a million.

~Robertson Davies

I don't suppose God laughs at the people who think He doesn't exist. He's above jokes. But the devil isn't. That's one of his most endearing qualities.

~Robertson Davies

The critic is the duenna in the passionate affair between playwrights,

actors and audiences - a figure dreaded, and occasionally comic, but never welcome, never loved.

~Robertson Davies

**Related Links:**

- People Quotes
- Men Quotes
- Book Quotes
- Thinking Quotes
- Art Quotes
- Writing Quotes
- Life Quotes
- Love Quotes
- Children Quotes
- World Quotes
- Reading Quotes
- Wise Quotes
- Giving Quotes
- Important Quotes
- Mind Quotes
- Mean Quotes
- Looks Quotes
- Country Quotes
- Happiness Quotes
- Past Quotes