

Don't Look Now and other stories
(first published 1971 as *Not After Midnight*)

This has been published as different editions, some of which don't contain the same stories!
It's as well to check that everyone is reading the same text.

Women want love to be a novel, men a short story (DdM)

A short story must have a single mood and every sentence must build towards it. (Edgar Allan Poe)

Du Maurier is a brilliant master of the uncanny in her short stories, but they are often very different from her novels.

- How do du Maurier's short stories differ from her novels? How are they similar?
- How do the short stories work together? Are there common approaches or themes?

My suggestions are:

- Sight and blindness
- Grotesques/the uncanny/sense of claustrophobia
- Fear
- Unorthodox desires
- How is it we can tell it's her writing?! And yet we just can. What aspects of her language and style give it away?

The name of the collection was changed for the second publication, from *Not After Midnight* to *Don't Look Now*. The book was reviewed as 'five uneasy pieces'.

- Which title do you prefer? Why?

Below I have picked out some themes and made some comments about each of the stories which you can use to guide your discussion.

Don't Look Now

Themes of sight and looking.

Claustrophobia and enclosure. Her writing about places other than Cornwall is often uneasy or uncomfortable.

Grotesques/uncanny children.

Psychic/supernatural.

Not After Midnight

Originally named after this story.

Again about seeing (the jug) and lack of insight/understanding.

Use of myth. Dionysus.

What actually happens?

A Border-line Case

What we choose not to see – from her father's death to the revelation at the end.

Queasy...Eyepatch and seeing (metaphor?)

Family history – naval aspects etc plus she knew someone involved with the IRA.

Could almost be a romance novel, and yet it really isn't. Dorothy Eden!

Gender and deception and what we see – Viola/Cesario.

The Way of the Cross

Power of place – literally. Quickly becomes clear that characters have been brought there for a reason – all undergo some kind of transformation, and not necessarily in the way they expected

History of the place combines with their own histories to make them experience their own Gethsemane – only Robin unscathed, perhaps because of his youth and peculiar faith?

The Breakthrough

Greek references – maybe point to hubris, or the idea of messing with the gods...?

Interesting in the context of AI developments (quote)

Place is significant here again

Sci-fi story but ultimately it's about humans, human life, suffering, cost...

About the *unseen* rather than seeing, perhaps.