



“Absolute darkness.”

“[...]a garment of that innocence of mine for  
which he had lusted fell away from me.”

“[...]I was almost consoled, then, and almost  
persuaded myself that I might have stumbled  
only upon a little museum of his perversity.”



The word “museum” is used as a euphemism because it first suggests the instruments torture are “only” to be collected and looked at, but the phrase “almost persuaded myself” demonstrates that this is not true

## Evaluation

6. Re-read the extract from the part of “The Bloody Chamber” which is referenced by Prof. Mulvey-Roberts [5.37-6.16] as a passage which characterises the Bride’s mother in a way which subverts traditional gender roles. Answer the question below.

You never saw such a wild thing as my mother, her hat seized by the winds and blown out to sea so that her hair was her white mane, her black lisle legs exposed to the thighs, her skirts tucked round her waist, one hand on the reins of the rearing horse while the other clasped by father’s service revolver and, behind her, the breakers of the savage indifferent sea, like the witnesses of a furious justice. And my husband stood stock-still, as if she had

been Medusa, the sword still raised over his head as in those clockwork tableaux of Bluebeard that you see in glass cases at fairs.

And then it was as though a curious child pushed his centime into the slot and set all in motion. The heavy, bearded figure roared out aloud, braying with fury, and, wielding the honourable sword as if it were a matter of death or glory, charged us, all three.

On her eighteenth birthday, my mother had disposed of a man-eating tiger that had ravaged the villages in the hills north of Hanoi. Now, without a moment's hesitation, she raised my father's gun, took aim and put a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head.

**How does Carter use language and structure to subvert traditional representations of a female, mother figure in literature?**

You might consider:

- The description of her physical appearance and actions
- The perspective/narrative voice of her daughter
- The response of the husband character
- How Carter uses other stylistic features in the passage (e.g. syntax, literary allusions, symbolism, figurative language, animal imagery).

You can use the sentence starters below to help you structure an analytical paragraph:

The characterisation of the protagonist's mother in "The Bloody Chamber" by Angela Carter subverts

Carter utilises...

This is initially evidenced when...

In particular, the verb/adjective/noun \_\_\_\_\_ implies...

This supports Carter's intention to challenge...

Challenge: Psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote about the mother archetype and its significance across time. Consider the extent to which the Bride's mother in "The Bloody Chamber", fulfills the traditional archetypal characteristics, in order to support your answer.

<https://knowyourarchetypes.com/mother-archetype/>

**Glossary**

- **subvert (verb)** – [in the context of literary criticism] to challenge or undermine a conventional idea, form, genre, etc. by using or presenting it in a new or unorthodox way.

*e.g. Buffy the Vampire Slayer simultaneously embraces and subverts the conventions of the horror subgenre.*

- **evokes (verb)** – to encourage the reader to remember an event, idea or person, or feel a particular emotion.
- **desecration (noun)** – to damage or show no respect towards something holy or very much respected.
- **predestination (noun)** – [in the context of Christian theology] the set of beliefs that God has already decided all that will happen, especially with regard to the salvation of some people and not others.
- **indelible (adjective)** – the nature of stains or marks that cannot be removed.
- **imprudent (adjective)** – unwise or reckless, due to one's failure to consider the consequences of one's actions.
- **Indochina** – the countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia formerly associated with France, first within its empire and later within the French Union.