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Quotes by Cheever, John

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John Cheever (May 27, 1912June 18, 1982) was an American novelist and short story writer, sometimes called "the Chekhov of the suburbs." His *The Stories of John Cheever* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1979.

Strange and predatory and truly dangerous, car thieves and muggers -- they seem to jeopardize all our cherished concepts, even our self-esteem, our property rights, our powers of love, our laws and pleasures. The only relationship we seem to have with them is scorn or bewilderment, but they belong somewhere on the dark prairies of a country that is in the throes of self-discovery.

- Cheever, John

People named John and Mary never divorce. For better or for worse, in madness and in saneness, they seem bound together for eternity by their rudimentary nomenclature. They may loathe and despise one another, quarrel, weep, and commit mayhem, but they are not free to divorce. Tom, Dick, and Harry can go to Reno on a whim, but nothing short of death can separate John and Mary.

- Cheever, John

I do not understand the capricious lewdness of the sleeping mind.

- Cheever, John

The organizations of men, like men themselves, seem subject to deafness, near-sightedness, lameness, and involuntary cruelty. We seem tragically unable to help one another, to understand one another.

- Cheever, John

A lonely man is a lonesome thing, a stone, a bone, a stick, a receptacle for Gilbey's gin, a stooped figure sitting at the edge of a hotel bed, heaving copious sighs like the autumn wind.

- Cheever, John

My veins are filled, once a week with a Neapolitan carpet cleaner distilled from the Adriatic and I am as bald as an egg. However I still get around and am mean to cats.

- Cheever, John

Wisdom we know is the knowledge of good and evil -- not the strength to choose between the two.

- Cheever, John

The task of an American writer is not to describe the misgivings of a woman taken in adultery as she looks out of a window at the rain but to describe four hundred people under the lights reaching for a foul ball. This is ceremony.

- Cheever, John

We praise Him, we bless Him, we adore Him, we glorify Him, and we wonder who is that

baritone across the aisle and that pretty woman on our right who smells of apple blossoms. Our bowels stir and our cod itches and we amend our prayers for the spiritual life with the hope that it will not be too spiritual.

- Cheever, John



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