

- Home
- Reading notes
- Good Poems
- Media Diary
- Photos
- Live Blogs
- Links

Dear Hemlock

All quotes from *My Dear Hemlock* by Tilly Dillehay

4 - "In her teens [the tempter] called her attention to every possible hypocrisy in the church and in her family but carefully guarded her from glimpsing her own."

5 - "although she hadn't quite gotten to the bottom of his opinions, a bit more time would reveal them"

10 - On newlyweds: "They're still amazed at being allowed to just hang around alone together, with or without clothing"

11 - "Humans are always uncomfortably aware of their own dissatisfaction with another person-and they like to wait for that discomfort to clear so that they can be "perfectly honest" when they offer positive feedback." I took this to mean that you must be fully satisfied before you can offer criticism, but I think she means the opposite: that you must be fully satisfied before you can offer praise.

12 - "One word of praise would do much more to 'improve' him than a hundred critical words ever could."

13 - "This dangerous principle is the same principle that-writ large-could really lose a crucial piece of ground for you. So take care that you start with disapproval of the husband and expand it. You want her to look at the Enemy and say exactly the same thing that she says to hubby: *Until You please me, I will not praise you. Until You make my life easier, I will not give thanks. Until You give me joy, I will not be so dishonest as to sing a psalm.*"

14 - "When there is trouble, humans always prefer a huge overhaul or a complicated theory to a simple task."

14 - A human tendency to "learn a new obedience one moment and then, in the exact next moment, look angrily around at people who don't seem as obedient about the same thing."

18 - "You've probably heard that we don't know precisely how confession works. In most cases, everyone involved already knows about the sin. The Enemy certainly does- He doesn't need the human creatures to tell Him. They themselves know (at least vaguely) — how else could they confess it? And the other people closest to them, the ones harmed by the sin— they usually know as well.

So the procedure is not, apparently, about the passing of information. It's not a memo. It's another kind of transaction entirely. Some kind of hateful ritual the Enemy has dreamed up.

Research is still working on the exact method He uses to unlock the cages around human hearts. But that is what confession does, that much we know. It is a horrible, spiteful trick on His part, a key by which the rodents break out of the most well-defended personal cages we construct! I have had patients escape a five-year steel trap of depression and despair, many feet thick, by the simple discovery that they could confess specific sin, right when it happened, to the Enemy and to the people they sinned against.

It's deceptively simple, and wildly frustrating."

20 - "If she must confess, let her do the first (to the Enemy) without doing the second (to another person), or the second (to another person) without doing the first (to the Enemy)."

32 - "The Book makes believers; prayer seems to make radicals."

38 - A little aside: usually the only person poring over a social media account is the one who owns it.

50 - "Women are very much like men, only more so"

54 - "Even her highest affections are not so high. She loves, not believes itself, but

54 - "Even her highest affections are not so high. She loves, not holiness itself, but the idea of holiness. She loves the idea of becoming more respectable, more knowledgeable, more fruitful, more righteous. It's a love of progress, of dignity, of potential, of "growth." She still rarely fixes her thoughts on Him. At her best, she is engrossed with the idea of herself being more engrossed with Him."

61 - "While online, the humans experience an existence that has much in common with our own. They become avatars of themselves, wandering around in an aphysical world, occasionally bumping into avatars of other people to enjoy muted versions of fellowship, discussion, or conflict. They whirl through the ether, stupefied and mostly unguarded. Put simply, the internet disembodies and removes them from Time. Time, as the Enemy created it, is like a road stretching out in front of them. They can only pass over it on the ground, one foot in front of the other. Sometimes their pace feels quick, and sometimes slow, but they can only pass through the moments singly. When they are working hard, or in pain, their pace feels burdensome. They count every inch, every second. When they are on a pleasurable stretch of road, the time practically skips for them. They look up and say something like, "What, ten o'clock already?" And we know, with a cringing feeling of loss, that they have actually experienced every one of those moments with no skipping, no hitchhiking-and yet enjoyed the feel of them, swum through them, as it were, even though they were trapped in a place and time of HIS choosing!

However, the mirrors in their pockets and on their TV stands do something that only mind-altering substances could do before now.

They lift them right out of time completely.

The Enemy, of course, is outside of time as well. But He's outside of it in a different way; He flies overhead and manages to be in every place and every time simultaneously. To Him, a thousand years are as a moment because He is simply taking advantage. He plays nasty tricks on us all, dodging about while we are forced to stay on the track of His making, keeping both hands inside the vehicle at all times, as it were.

And then in His "above the rules" relationship with time, He always finds a way to work out His own dastardly intentions.

He keeps us at a disadvantage in all of this. Let me tell you, if I had a tenth of His abilities, what I could do with them! But He will never share. Some humans have called Him the Lord of Time, but we know that He is actually the Despot of Time. He takes what He wants at every turn.

The humans live in His Time. But some of them find ways to escape it, and in this, they have the opportunity to become more like us.

We are proud to have rejected the tyranny of time, with all its crushing restrictions. You may have noticed one side effect of this: we always seem to be losing a clear sense of WHEN we are. A pleasant haze thickens our sense of time's passing. You know, Hemlock, how you can never quite tell how long it's been since you last experienced a victory, a meal? How you can never quite remember how long it's been since we took our first Great Stand by the side of Our Father Below? How sometimes you feel an unbearable eagerness to escape from the present moment, because of your hunger?

But you don't know WHEN you want time to move to?

Some have ventured to say this semi-drunken state is a retaliation from the Enemy. (There was one heretic writer you may have learned about in school; he was rightly removed from the reading lists after he said something about "the unintended obscurities of rebellion"). But for me, I have always seen it as an advantage, a blessing in disguise, a natural result of our freedom from Him. Do we really want to know how much time is passing in this war? Do we really want to know how long we wait from one meal to the next?

Do we really want to have our senses sharpened and tuned to the awful anxieties of each defeat, the ear-rattling sounds that escape our notice because we are floating in a relief of cool, dark independence from His Time?

This is what the screen gives the humans. It gives them the same escape. They don't know when or how they came to be on their phones. They only know they are freed from the plodding, repetitive step of moment after moment. The joys and sorrows of life are muted for them, and they are carried down the road of time without knowing or caring." #time

77 - "Because it's pleasurable, gardening will cause an hour to ease by, but she will be utterly present for every second of it. She will not lose the time at all. You will not have stolen anything. She will come to the end of that time with a full awareness of

have stolen anything. She will come to the end of that time with a full awareness of where she has walked, and her soul will be more ready for the next stretch of road, not less." [#time](#)

123 - "Confuse her by making her suspect that the [spiritual] aroma in those homes arises out of peripheral comforts, *comforts she could never imitate.*"

130 - Danger of measuring your faithfulness by comparing it to others', instead of to the commands.

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