THE TIGER’S BRIDE
[THE BLOODY CHAMBER WEEK]

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The heroine is also a liminal being she is part human and part tiger, the liberating image of the tiger licking of her skin to reveal her ‘beautiful fur’ proves that she was always a tiger she just had to ‘learn to run with the tigers’ to release her inner tiger.

Like most of Carter’s heroine, the young girl is in a liminal stage in her life, not quite adult yet not quite child. ‘[She] was a young girl, a virgin, and therefore men denied [her] rationality.’
Like many traditional gothic females, the heroine is a beautiful girl, ‘Christmas rose’, for that and her gender she is objectified. She is treated as some sort of commodity rather than a human being.

The story is told in a first person, giving her the power to control the discourse of the narrative, this allows her to take control of her own destiny, instead of being persecuted and oppressed by men.

The heroine is not afraid of La Bestia as she lets out a ‘racous guffaw’ when asked to strip naked. She refuses to be objectified and judged by patriarchy.

The heroine is empowers herself by making changes in her life, she refuses the diamond earrings, because she understand in accepting the gift she will become a slave to the patriarchal capitalist system which has always subordinated her.
Entrapment

- The heroine is entrapped in a patriarchal system, she is an object that is passed from one man to another. She describes ‘how [she] has been sold, passed from hand to hand’. The heroine sees herself as a pawn in a system that she is unable to escape from.
- The heroine is trapped by societal rules and obligation, her human skin acts as mask stopping her from revealing her true identity. It is possible to argue that her metamorphosis allows her to escape from the claustrophobic confines of society. She is no longer a pawn in patriarchy but a ‘tiger’ a member of the animal kingdom, where there are no social constructions.
- “The reverberations of [the Beast’s] purring” causes the palazzo to collapse, the run down palazzo being the very last bit of patriarchy that the heroine and the Beast were confined by.

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Sexuality

- The beast is the first to strip after the heroine refuses to strip, in doing so Carter reverses the role and it is the beast that is subjected to the “male gaze”, the female has the power and protection of clothing whilst the beast is vulnerable and naked.

- Perhaps Carter is encouraging women to take control of their sexuality, the metamorphosis at the end of the text, may reflect a sexual liberation much like how the contraceptive pill gave women sexual freedom in the 1970s.

*Haha (thanks York Notes)
Transgression

- The heroine is quite transgressive in her relationship with the beast.
- The sensual encounter at the end proves to be quite shocking, she challenges societal rules about female sexuality, the female is liberated at the end. She chooses to become a tiger, rather than tame the beast’s heart like the heroine in ‘The Courtship of Mr. Lyon.’

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The automaton acts as a doppelganger. The doppelganger allows Carter to criticise the shallow roles in society that are created for women.

The automaton is described as having ‘rosy cheeks’, sound familiar? That’s because it’s appearance is very similar to our ‘Christmas rose’ heroine.

The robot allows her to see how the rest of the world see her, only in freeing herself from the limitations of the patriarchal world does she begin to notice a difference between herself and the robot, “hollow eyed girl [she] scarcely recognised.”

Carter criticises the heroine’s father who will fail to acknowledge the automaton is in fact a robot and not his own daughter, suggesting that beauty is a mask which deters people from actually knowing someone.
Key Quotes

- “Racous Guffaw”
- “My father lost to me to The Beast in cards;
- “rosy cheeks” “Christmas Rose”
- “My master says if you are careless with your treasures you should expect them to be taken away from you”
- “My father valued me at less than a king’s ransom; but, at no more than a king’s ransom”
- Automaton “nut-brown curls, rosy cheeks, blue rolling eyes”
- “She carries a looking glass in one hand and a powder puff in the other”
- “The reverberations of his purring rocked the foundations”
- “The walls began to dance”

- “Each stroke of his tongue ripped of skin”
- “Nursery fears ... most archaic of fears, fear of devourment”
- “La Bestia”
- “He will gobble you up”
- “imitative life”

Critical Quotes:
- “To be beast-like is to be virtuous; to become ‘manly’ is to be vicious.” S. ROBERTS