

---

## Lamb To The Slaughter: Analysis Of Mary

In *Lamb to the Slaughter*, the peace of Mary's home life as a wife and soon-to-be mother is destroyed because of her husband's wish to divorce her. The beginning of this story sets up Mary as a picturesque wife back in the 40s, a wife back then seemed to only exist to serve her husband and only do housework. Indeed, she is given no interests or thoughts outside of caring for her husband and waiting for him to arrive, as she notices every move her husband makes. Then her husband tells her to sit down when she goes to make him some dinner. Eventually, when Mary sits down, her husband tells her about his plan of divorcing her. This causes Mary to go into a daze and her husband kept on talking about the divorce.

As Mary's husband tells her that he is going to leave her, Mary acutely observes several changes in his usual actions and the way that he carries himself. Like a predator that obsesses over its prey, she notices even the smallest details like her husband drinking his beverage too fast. Mary does not see this, but hears it, as the ice hits the bottom of the glass. She then notices 'the light from the lamp beside him [falling] across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in the shadow'. This light casts her husband ominously, and I noticed that this darkness the fell upon her husband's lips was like a foreshadowing of the things that were to come from his lips.

Mary changes almost instantly, as she moves unconsciously while she walks down to the freezer, picks out the leg of lamb, and kills her husband with it. Murdering her husband only requires one big blow to the head, and with that blow, Mary's transformation from perfect wife to the calculating murderer is immediate. Mary's previous daze is replaced by a feeling of 'cold and surprise,' and mental clarity that allows her to think quickly. The shift into cold and surprise sort of symbolizes Mary's rebirth as a calculating killer, as Mary devises a plot to clear herself of any suspicion.

The story establishes Mary as someone whose only thought is to care for her husband, her inability to access emotion naturally after her murder, to the extent that she must practice her expressions in the mirror, shows her external and internal transformation. This was that her husband treated her and her plan for revenge changed her greatly. As Mary returns to her home and calls the police, she reassures herself that she does not have to act.

Mary's final murderous act, her decision to feed the detectives the leg of lamb that she used to kill her husband. After devoting herself to her husband patiently, she is dumped by him while she is six months pregnant. Killing her husband was a response to him metaphorically killing their marriage. This act, though insidious, allows her to break from her obedience. When she feeds the police officers the murder weapon, she again unsettles the expectation that she will be a good wife. Indeed, her act of hospitality, an expectation from a good housewife, is instead an act of her trying to become innocent, as she removes the evidence and any chance that she will be convicted.