“Lamb to the Slaughter”
by Roald Dahl
http://www.roalddahl.com/

**Brief Biography and Historical Context**

Dahl began writing in 1942 with a story about being shot down while fighting in North Africa.

**Violence**, whether associated with warfare or with crime, continued to fascinate Dahl and was a focus even in his children’s stories.

“Lamb to the Slaughter” was written in 1953, the Post-War period.

**The Post-War period**
- Began the *sociological and cultural transformation* of the Western world and took hold as strongly in the United States, where Dahl had come to live.
- There was rapid **growth in cities**.
- There was a **rise in urban tension**.
- There was the **initial liberation of women, young people, and minorities**
- The traditionally agriculturally based America prior to the nation’s involvement in World War II was ending.
- **Divorce**, formerly rare in the statistics of American life, began to rise.

**Satire**: writing or art which ridicules its subject (individuals, governments, organizations, etc.) as an intended means of provoking or preventing change while using heavy irony and often hyperbole.

“Lamb to the Slaughter” and much of Dahl’s work is considered to be **black comedy**, also known as black or dark humor, a
subgenre of comedy and satire that deals with "serious" subjects like death, divorce, drug abuse, etc. in a humorous manner.

**Allegory**: a symbolic work in which characters, settings, events, etc. are representative of larger groups or issues, creating a deeper, wider reaching meaning.

**Idiom**: an expression—typically involving an implied figurative comparison—that is used traditionally (repeatedly to the point of losing sight of its origins) by a group and is not literally deducible by anyone not linguistically and/or culturally connected to that group.

   Examples: “see the light,” “the tables have turned,” “on the rocks,” and the other one that inspired this whole page… (it’s on this page as well, repeatedly).