

Explain the Central Theme of the Poem “A Prayer for My Daughter”.

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Explain the central theme of the poem “A Prayer for My Daughter”.

W.B. Yeats's (1865–1939) “A Prayer for My Daughter” (1921) is a heartfelt poem written for his newborn child. In the poem, Yeats expresses his hopes and fears for her future. He uses simple wishes and deep reflections to show a father's love and care. The central theme revolves around Yeats's desire for his daughter to grow into a kind, strong, and wise woman. Below are the main points that explain the theme:

Balance in Beauty and Kindness: Yeats prays that his daughter will have beauty but not too much. He believes too much beauty can distract a person and lead to pride. The poet fears that,

“Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught”

This might lead his daughter to become proud. Instead, he wishes for her to be kind and warm-hearted. For him, inner beauty and good character are more important than physical beauty.

A Calm and Stable Life: Yeats wants his daughter to grow like a strong tree rooted in one place. He hopes she will live a peaceful life filled with happiness and not be carried away by chaos. Stability and simplicity, in his eyes, are the keys to a happy life.

Freedom from Hatred and Arrogance: The poet warns about hatred and strong opinions, which can harm the soul. He prays his daughter avoids such negativity. He says,

“An intellectual hatred is the worst.”

Yeats values innocence, calmness, and love over arrogance or anger. He believes these qualities lead to true happiness.

The poem beautifully highlights a father's timeless wishes for his child's bright future.