

What Does the Poet Pray to God in the Poem "A Prayer for My Daughter"?

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What does the poet pray to God and why in the poem?

W.B. Yeats (1865–1939) wrote "A Prayer for My Daughter" (1921) after his daughter, Anne, was born. The poem reflects his deep love and concern for her future. Yeats prays to God for her happiness, good character, and a peaceful life. He expresses his hopes in these three ways:

Beauty with Kindness: Yeats wishes his daughter to have beauty but not too much. He fears excessive beauty may make her vain or attract unwanted attention. He prays that her beauty will be balanced with kindness and good nature. This will help her make true friends and live a fulfilling life. He says,

*"May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught."*

Inner Peace and Innocence:

The poet wants his daughter to be free from hatred and intellectual arrogance. He believes hatred destroys the mind and ruins happiness. He prays she will keep a pure and innocent heart. He hopes she finds joy in her own thoughts and remains content no matter what happens around her.

A Secure and Traditional Life: Yeats prays for his daughter to marry into a stable and traditional family. He values custom and ceremony, as they create a sense of security and order. He believes this will bring her lasting happiness and protect her from the chaos of the world. He writes,

*"Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree."*

Through this poem, Yeats shares his love and dreams for his daughter. He prays for a life full of kindness, peace, and stability.

LxNotes