

A Prayer for My Daughter Key Facts

Writer: William Butler Yeats | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

"[A Prayer for My Daughter](#)" is a famous poem by [William Butler Yeats](#). Look at the key facts of the poem to get a quick conception.

Title: A Prayer for My Daughter

Poet: William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

Written Date: 28 February 1919, two days after the birth of his daughter, Anne

Publication Date: In Yeats's 1921 collection *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*

Form: Lyric Poem (personal, emotional, prayer from a father to his daughter)

Meter: Mostly iambic pentameter (five beats/iambes per line/10 syllables per line), but not strictly regular

Rhyme Scheme: The poem is written in 8-line stanzas. In each stanza, the first two couplets rhyme AABB, and the remaining quatrain (4-line) rhymes CDDC. It means the rhyme scheme of each stanza is AABBCDDC.

Total Lines/Stanza: 10 stanzas, 8 lines each (total: 80 lines)

Tone: Worried, Protective, Hopeful (a father's love mixed with fear about the future world)

Setting: During a violent storm outside Yeats's home at the seashore (Thoor Ballylee, Ireland)

Speaker: The poet himself, as a father praying for his newborn daughter

Point of View: First-person (the poet speaks directly about his hopes and fears for his child)

Famous Lines:

"May she be granted beauty and yet not

Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught."

Summary in Short: During a storm, the poet prays for his baby daughter's future. He wishes she will be beautiful, but not too beautiful. He wishes her a life of kindness and manners. He

fears that the world is full of hatred, pride, and confusion. So, he prays that his daughter may avoid vanity and grow with a pure heart.

Key Notes

Helen of Troy: Helen was a woman from Greek mythology. She was said to be the most beautiful woman in the world. Her beauty caused the Trojan War when she eloped with Paris, the prince of Troy. Yeats uses her example to show that great beauty can lead to trouble, destruction, and sorrow. He wants his daughter to have kindness and good manners, not too much beauty like Helen's.

Aphrodite: Aphrodite is the Greek goddess of love and beauty. According to myth, she was born from sea foam. Although she was very beautiful, she married a lame or **"bandy-legged"** husband, Hephaestus. Yeats mentions her to show that too much beauty can make people foolish and unwise. He means that beauty alone is not enough for a happy life. Wisdom, kindness, and goodness are more important than physical beauty.

Maud Gonne: Maud Gonne (1866-1953) was a very beautiful Irish woman whom W. B. Yeats loved deeply. She was also a political activist who fought for Ireland's freedom. She was angry and proud. Yeats's love was unrequited (□□□□). He proposed to her many times, but she never married him. Later, Maud Gonne married the Irish nationalist Major John MacBride. However, Gonne's marriage was unhappy, and they separated. In *"A Prayer for My Daughter,"* Yeats alludes to Maud Gonne to say that too much beauty, anger, and pride can make someone unhappy.