

A Prayer for My Daughter Summary

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The Storm and the Sleeping Baby

The poet is walking. Outside, the wind is howling loudly, and the sea is rough. But inside the house, his newborn baby daughter is peacefully sleeping in her cradle. The storm outside becomes a symbol of the troubles and confusion that will come into the world as his daughter grows up. Yeats walks up and down and prays for his daughter. He feels worried about the future. He wishes for his child's safety and happiness in such a world.

Yeats Prays for a Balanced Beauty

Yeats's first prayer for his daughter is about beauty. He hopes she will be beautiful, but not too beautiful. He believes that extreme beauty can bring problems. Sometimes, very beautiful women become too proud or selfish. They may think beauty is everything. They forget to be kind or wise. They may not find real love or true friendship.

The poet remembers the Greek story of Helen of Troy. Her beauty caused a great war and brought her unhappiness. He also mentions Aphrodite, the goddess born from the sea. She chose a lame (瘸子) god, Hephaestus, as her husband. Yeats says that beautiful women often **"eat a crazy salad with their meat."** It means they make foolish choices in love. So he prays that his daughter's beauty will be simple, and she may have kindness and wisdom.

Kindness and Modesty/Courtesy

Yeats wants his daughter to be courteous and kind. He says that real love and respect must be earned through good character. Even people who are not very beautiful can attract love with their kindness and honesty. He wishes she will attract good people around her because of her inner goodness, not outer beauty. He wants her not to become proud or hateful.

A Hidden Tree and the Linnet

He prays that his daughter may grow like a strong, hidden tree. A tree that would flourish quietly in one place. Her thoughts should be like a happy linnet bird, always singing sweetly and spreading joy. She should not waste her time in quarrels. The poet hopes she does not chase after unnecessary things. He wants her to be calm and peaceful.

Warning Against Hatred and Pride

Yeats now prays that his daughter will never have hatred in her heart. He says that hate is the worst enemy of the human soul. Even strong winds cannot harm a tree that has no hatred.

He also warns her against intellectual pride — the pride of thinking her opinions are always right. He gives an example of a woman (**here, Yeats is alluding to Maud Gonne**) who lost all her happiness and blessings because she was full of strong opinions and anger. He prays that his daughter stays free from hate. If she avoids hatred, her soul will remain innocent and full of joy. She will find happiness in her own heart, no matter what is happening around her. Even if the world is full of anger, she can stay calm and happy inside.

A House of Tradition and Ceremony

Finally, Yeats prays that when his daughter marries, may her husband take her to a house where traditions and customs are followed. He believes that innocence and beauty are born from proper habits and ceremonies. He says, just like the laurel tree is strong and the Horn of Plenty brings blessings, a house with values and culture will help his daughter live a full and happy life.

In Short, Yeats deeply loves his daughter and is worried about the future world. He prays that she grows up to be:

- Moderately beautiful
- Kind, humble, and wise
- Free from hatred and pride
- Emotionally strong and peaceful
- Rooted in tradition, custom, and good values