

ENG-103

Literature

27 lines poem divided into 3 nine-line stanzas

published in 1633

Go and Catch a falling Star

Text: (by John Donne)

Go, and catch a falling star, ^{1. Im} ^{metaphysical poet}
Get with child a mandrake root; ^{2. a plant which root is similar to a man}

Tell me where all past years are, ^{3. finding with past}
Or, who cleft the devil's foot, ^{4. to divide in two pieces (satan) (slit in ball an pol)}

Teach me to hear mermaids singing, ^{5. hearing mermaids singing}

Or to keep off envy's stinging,

And find

What ^{6. me} find ^{7. tracing creativity}

Serves to ^{8. tracing creativity} advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,

Things invisible to see,

Riden ten thousands days and nights,

Till age snow white hairs on thee,

Old English word (You)

Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,

All strange wonders that befell thee,

And swear,

No where

Lives a woman true, and fair.

If thou ^(you find) find'st one, let me know,
Such a ^{travel (religious significance)} pilgrimage were sweet;
Yet do not, I would not go,

Though at next door we might meet;
Though she were true, when you met her,
And last, till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two, or three.

Introduction :-

The poem "Go and Catch a falling star" is written by John Donne. He was a metaphysical poet and is famous for his use of the metaphysical conceit. His poem "Go and Catch a falling Star" is published in 1633. This poem is about the inconsistency of women nature. He says that finding an honest and beautiful woman is impossible. Beauty & honesty can never go ahead. This poem was published under the

title 'Song'.

Summary of the 'poem'

In this poem, the writer is trying to put forward his opinion about the woman that every impossible thing can be made possible but we cannot find a faithful woman. The poem can be divided into three stanzas.

In the first stanza, the poet gives seven impossible tasks to someone like to ¹ catch a falling star, to get a ² human child, from the root of the ³ mandrake plant, to tell where the ⁴ past years have gone, or to tell who split the ⁵ Devil's foot, to listen the ⁵ music of the mermaids, to change human nature so as not to feel the painful ⁶ stings of envy, to find out the ⁷ climate which can make a man more honest.

The poet says that All these things can be made possible but to find a fair and faithful woman is impossible.

In the second stanza, the poet says that if you are born with the power to see **strange sights** and even **invisible objects**, you may **ride** for **10 thousand days and nights** and travel all over the world till your hair turn grey. Then, ^{on} your ~~return~~, you will tell me about all the wonders you have seen during your journey and that time you will swear that you never found a woman who is fair as well as faithful.

In the last stanza, the poet says that if you find a woman who is both fair and true, I would go to her, as if on a pilgrimage to some holy place. Such a woman would be worthy of worship. The woman might have been faithful ~~at~~ the time when you meet her, but she could not be faithful to you for long. By the time, you write your letter to her, she would have been false to you.

Themes of the poem "Go & catch a falling star"

- 1- Love and Relationships
- 2- The Unattainable
- 3- Inconstancy of women
- 4- Impossible tasks

1- Love and Relationships :- ✓

The poem is primarily a love poem, in which the speaker is searching for a woman who is faithful and true. The poem suggests that finding such a woman is impossible, and that women are fickle and untrustworthy.

2- The Unattainable :-

The theme of the unattainable is central to the poem. The speaker is on a quest to catch a falling star, which is a metaphor for something that is impossible to attain.

3- Inconstancy of women :-

In this poem, the poet has expressed his feelings about the women in general.

According to the poet, all women are unfaithful or infidel. The poet believes that it is impossible to find out a woman in this world who is both beautiful as well as faithful.

Donne explains many impossible tasks. Then he says, that these tasks may be possible but finding a beautiful and loyal woman is highly impossible. Thus, he concludes that poem with the theme of unfaithfulness of women.

4. Impossible Tasks:-

In this poem, poet describes many impossible tasks like to catch a falling star, to impregnate a mandrake root, to find what happens to time that has passed, to discover who divided the devil's foot, to teach him to hear the song of mermaid or to avoid ever feeling envy.

Symbols of the poem:-

- Falling star
- Mandrake root

1. Falling Star :-

The falling star is the central symbol in the poem. It represents the impossible tasks that the speaker is asking his audience to perform. Catching a falling star is impossible, and the speaker uses this symbol to suggest that the task he is asking for is equally impossible.

2. Mandrake root :-

The speaker suggests that if his audience can find a woman who is both true and fair, they should bring her to him using the root of the mandrake plant. The mandrake root is symbol of magic and mystery, suggesting that the task of finding such a woman is beyond the realm of possibility.

Literary Devices used in the poem:-

— Metre —

1st six lines of each stanza is written in Trochaic Tetrameter. 7 and 8 line is single iambic.

→ Epiphora
last

— Anaphora —

Beginning of two or more than two lines with the same word.

Though at next door we might meet;
Though she were true, when you met her,
(Line 22-23)

— Alliteration —

Beginning of two or more than two words in the same line, with the same letter or sound

Me. Mermaids (Line no 5)

Be'st . Born. (Line no 8)

Strange . Sights. (Line no 8)

Such. Sweet. (Line no, 20)

Might . Meet (Line no 22)

Last . Letter (Line no 24)

— Consonance —

"The use of same consonant letter in two words in the same line." (can be in mid or end)

Cleft - Foot (Line 4)

And - Find (Line 7)

Next - Might - Meet (Line 22)

— Assonance —

"The use of same vowels."

All - Are. (Line 3)

Cleft - Devil. (Line 4)

Or - Off. (Line 6)

When - Met. (Line 23)

— Apostrophe —

"Direct address"

Go and Catch a falling star, (Line 1)

— Enjambment —

"If we study a line and didn't understand, need to read (report) next line"

And find
what wind
Serves to advance an honest mind. (Line 5 & 6)

And swear,
No where
Lives a woman true, and fair (Line 16 & 17)

Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two, or three (Line 25 & 26)

— Allusion —

Reference

Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids singing, (Line 4 & 5)

— Satire —

And find
what wind
Serves to advance an honest mind (Line 7-9)

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