

## The Blessed Damozel Themes

### Love

Love is an important theme many of Rossetti's poems, and it is especially so in "[The Blessed Damozel](#)." The love found in the lines of this poem is a love of longing and heartache. Both the damozel and her lover are in an impossible situation: they are in love with someone who exists in an entirely different realm than their own. Additionally, the damozel's uncertainty as to whether her lover will join her in Heaven complicates the love that the damozel and her lover share for each other, since her wish for him to join her may never be realized. In this way, the damozel may never achieve romantic love in Heaven and may be destined to wait for her lover for eternity.

In "[The Blessed Damozel](#)," love allows the damozel and her lover to connect with each other in ways that defy the laws of physics, space, and time. Not only is the damozel's lover haunted by her—he hears her voice in birdsong and her footsteps in the chiming of bells—but he also sees her, for just a moment, at the end of the poem: "Her eyes pray'd, and she smil'd / (I saw her smile.) But soon their path / Was vague in distant spheres: / And then she cast her arms along / The golden barriers, / And laid her face between her hands, / And wept. (I heard her tears.)" (138-44).

### Hope

Like love, hope is another happy-turned-sad theme in "The Blessed Damozel." It is the damozel's hope that keeps her pacing at the edge of Heaven, waiting for her lover to join her in the skies. She is hopeful for most of the poem and makes plans as to what she will do with her lover when he finally arrives. However, as the poem continues and the damozel comes to the realization that she may never see her lover again, her hope turns to despair.

### Christianity

Christianity provides the basis for the characters, moral code, logic, and setting for "The Blessed Damozel." The poem as a whole is deeply enmeshed in Christianity, even including references to Bible verses and the Bible's most well-known figures ([Mary](#) and Jesus Christ). The way that religion is portrayed in this work is interesting because the damozel feels a need to be fulfilled romantically even though she is in literal paradise. Ultimately, Rossetti is a romantic: he writes of a love so strong it makes Heaven seem not enough. In this way, the sentiment of love almost trumps religious faith in this poem.

### Virginit

A latent theme throughout "The Blessed Damozel" is that of virginity. The damozel herself is a virgin—we know this because of what she is called in the poem, "damozel," which is an archaic spelling of "damsel," which means unmarried woman. Mary gave the damozel a white flower when she got to Heaven to commemorate her virginity and her continued faith and devotion to the Virgin Mary: "Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem, / No wrought flowers did adorn, / But a white rose of Mary's gift, / For service meetly worn" (7-10). The damozel's purity and virginity align her with Mary, who spends her time in Heaven making clothes for babies who have died right after birth.

The damozel's purity and virginity are complicated a bit when we consider her relationship with her lover. First, the damozel looks forward to having a bodily reunion with him once he finally ascends to heaven: "When round his head the aureole clings, / And he is cloth'd in white, / I'll take his hand and go with him / To the deep wells of light" (73-5). The damozel is interested in her lover's body—how he will be dressed and how he will look. She also looks forward to touching his hand with her own. Similarly, the next two stanzas are introduced with the same line: "We two will lie i' the shadow of" (79, 85). With the expectation that they will "lie" together with her lover, it is implied that the damozel and her lover will enjoy an intimate moment together once he is able to ascend.