

Q. What is conveyed about the position of women in Victorian society through "Goblin Market"?

"Goblin Market" has been analyzed from many different perspectives, including that of a feminist. One of the most famous feminist critic who have made analysis of this poem is Barbara A. White. She believes that "Goblin Market" is a "Great allegory about the 'wages of sin' and women's traditional place in Victorian culture." She believes that the poem was written with a deep "sense of personal history, [and] particularly Rossetti's relationship with her own sister". In this poem Rossetti reflects on her very personal experience as an older sister, and asks what it is like to be young when one's elder sister is in control.

Goblin Market focuses on a world of women to reflect the potential power females could have when they really support each other. In the poem, these goblins are forever trying to tempt the sisters, and Laura falls victim to their schemes.

While some see the goblins as men who inflict unwanted sexual advances on women, it can also be argued that the goblins are symbolic of all of the evil of the world and that the real theme lies in the power of women to bravely overcome it together. It speaks of the unity of women and of the sacrificial love that women hold for each other.

Q. How does the prisoner manage to escape from the ceremony in "The Three Strangers"?

It is a wet night on the downs in Thomas Hardy's story "The Three Strangers," and in the midst of a christening celebration, three strangers knock on Shepherd Fennel's door. Shepherd Fennel, a hospitable man, welcomes each of them in.

The first man is gaunt with dark eyes and hair, and he takes a place in the chimney corner. The second man is dressed in cinder-gray and turns out to be an executioner on his way to Casterbridge to execute Timothy Summers, a prisoner who has stolen a sheep to feed his starving family. The third man is a small, nervous fellow who stands in the doorway shaking in terror and then dashes away.

Shepherd Fennel and his guests then hear the alarm sounded that means a prisoner has escaped, and they assume that the fearful man is that prisoner. The executioner organizes a search party, and the men all head out into the wet night with their lanterns and pitchforks. Pretty soon, though, two men circle back to the house. One is the gaunt man who had sat in the chimney corner. The other is the executioner. Both agree that there are enough people out searching for the prisoner, and they are not needed. The gaunt man helps himself to some cake and a bit more mead, and then he tells the executioner that he is heading for home. The executioner says that he will head on to Casterbridge. They shake hands, wish each other well, and go their separate ways.

The frightened man is caught, but the jail officers who soon arrive say that he is certainly not the escaped prisoner. The man himself explains that he is actually the prisoner's brother, and he became terribly scared when he entered the house and saw his brother sitting in the chimney corner next to the executioner. The escaped prisoner, then, is the gaunt man, the first of the three strangers to enter the house. He is never caught and never seen again.

In "The Three Strangers," the prisoner escapes from the christening celebration by going out with the search party and then doubling back to the house, eating and drinking a bit more, and then leaving for "home," as he tells the executioner. No one realizes that this gaunt man in the chimney corner is actually the escaped prisoner until he is long gone.