

Goblin market..role of lizzie essay



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Goblin Market has many recurring themes within its context. Perhaps one of the most prominent ones is that of sisterly comradery and love. From the beginning of the poem, it is evident that Lizzie and Laura's relationship is close.

Laura looks up to Lizzie, and Lizzie is very protective of her younger sister. The relationship they share is reflective of the friendships shared between women during Christina Rossetti's lifetime. Lizzie, being the wiser, older sister knows already the wiles of the worldly goblins, which represent the men of Rossetti's life, perhaps even her brother's company themselves. As Lizzie warns her sister, " Their offers should not charm us / their evil gifts would harm us" (65-66).

Clearly Lizzie believes the goblins enticements to be no more than lures to seduce the naive and eager Laura. As most younger siblings do, Laura does not listen to her sister. Instead she listened to goblin men " cooing all together" and followed their song. Much like Little Red Riding-Hood, Laura falls in with the wrong crowd.

Rossetti makes sure to portray Laura as the completely innocent child who longed to know what she was not supposed to yet know. She was " like a rush-imbedded swan, / Like a Lily from the beck, / Like a moonlit popular branch, / Like a vessel at the launch / When its last restraint is gone" (82-86). And when that last restraint, perhaps referring to Lizzie, Laura succumbs to the goblin men's seductions. She has no money so instead she sells the only thing she has, her virginity, to get the fruit she craves. Laura could be compared to the first woman, Eve. Just like Laura desired the fruit offered to

her by the Goblin men, Eve craved the fruit from the one tree she was forbidden to eat from.

Laura was warned by Lizzie not to eat the fruit just like Eve was warned by God not to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And just like Eve, Laura wanted what she was told she could not have. Perhaps it was the excitement of knowing it was wrong and doing it anyway that caused both Eve and Laura to finally succumb. And for a short span of time both enjoyed the taste of the fruit.

In lines 129-131 the fruit is described as “ sweeter than honey from the rock. / Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, / clearer than water flowed that juice. The “ honey from the rock,” “ man-rejoicing wine,” and “ water” could be references to Christ himself. Laura thought the fruit was the most wonderful thing she had ever tasted and all sense of reason abandoned her as she basked in her corruption.

Her moment of moral abandonment at the loss of her virginity lasts only briefly as she begins to crave more and more but can no longer hear their voices calling her to “ come buy. ” Only Lizzie, who is still virginal, can hear their voices as they try desperately to seduce her as well. It breaks the older sister’s heart as she watches her sister pine away, yearning for the fruit. It is here the reader sees the true depth of Lizzie’s love for her sister as she is willing to sacrifice what she holds most dear to save her sister.

She goes and willingly sacrifices herself to gain the fruit that will save her sister’s life. In her sacrifice Lizzie can be compared to Christ in His sacrifice for humankind. As Lizzie took the fruit to save her sister’s life, so did Christ

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offer himself to take our place. He faced what He despised most, sin, as Lizzie faced what she had avoided all her life, the goblin-men. And like Christ, Lizzie saves her sister and is not destroyed by eating the fruit, but instead conquers evil with her virtue and purity.

After Laura kisses her sister, the taste of fruit “ was wormwood to her tongue. ” She realizes the wrong she has done, and despises the fruit. Much like a Christian repenting of their sin, so does Laura “ rent all her robe / and wrung her hands in lamentable haste. ” And like a Christian relieved of their guilt, so is Laura relieved of her shame as she is redeemed by her sister’s love. Lizzie’s love for her sister is admirable and rare. If it were not for her agape love for Laura, then Laura would be completely lost to the world.

Goblin Market is a poignant reminder of humanity’s frail condition and the need to be accepted without perquisite. Whether it be by a spouse or a sister, every human individual needs to know they are loved. Perhaps in Rossetti’s opinion though, a sister’s love is something slightly more rare and more precious. As the closing lines of the poem say, “ For there is no friend like a sister In calm or stormy weather; To cheer one on the tedious way, To fetch on if one goes astray, To lift one if one totters down, To strengthen whilst one stands. ”