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BEASLEY, BLAIR EDWARD, JR. Long Day's Journey Into Night. (1972)
Directed by: Miss Kathryn England. Pp. 165.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One deals with an analysis of Long Day's Journey Into Night in the light of historical and stylistic considerations, an analysis of the characters according to their functions in the play and in relation to their real-life counterparts, an analysis of the function and mood of the setting, a justification of this director's choice of the script, and his interpretation of it.

Chapter Two contains the prompt book for the production, performed January 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1972, in Taylor Theatre at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Notations included are: (1) movement, composition, and picturization, (2) details of characterization, (3) stage business, (4) rhythm and tempo, (5) sound cues, (6) lighting cues, and (7) curtain cues. Four production photographs and four diagrams showing movement patterns are included.

Chapter Three contains the director's introspective criticism of the production through the discussions of four areas; they are: (1) achievement of the interpretation for the production, (2) actor-director relationships, (3) audience reaction, and (4) personal observations.

5

A PRODUCTION OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S

//
LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

by

Blair Edward Beasley, Jr.
'''

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
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Approved by

Kathryn England

Thesis Advisor

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of
the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro.

Thesis Advisor Katheryn England
Oral Examination Herman Middleton
Committee Members Thomas L. DeFord

January 10, 1972
Date of Examination

DEDICATION

To my wife, Dottie.

A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me . . . faith . . .

Eugene O'Neill, Dedication,
Long Day's Journey Into Night.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The director wishes to express his appreciation to the members of his thesis committee with special appreciation to his thesis advisor, Miss Kathryn England. The director is most grateful to all of those people who contributed their time and energies to the success of Long Day's Journey Into Night.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S <u>LONG DAY'S</u> <u>JOURNEY INTO NIGHT</u>	1
Background Analysis	1
Stylistic Analysis	6
Character Analysis	9
Mary	12
James	18
Jamie	24
Edmund	26
Cathleen	29
Setting Analysis	30
Justification	33
Interpretation	34
II. PROMPT BOOK	38
Act One	38
Act Two, Scene One	63
Act Two, Scene Two	77
Act Three	95
Act Four	112
III. CRITICAL EVALUATION	146
Achievement of Interpretation for the Production	146
Actor-Director Relationships	155
Audience Reaction	159
Personal Observations	161
BIBLIOGRAPHY	164

413031

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1	.....	39
2	.....	41
3	.....	72
4	.....	79
5	.....	81
6	.....	103
7	.....	128
8	.....	142

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHTBackground Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the autobiographical nature of Long Day's Journey Into Night and to relate fact to fiction as it pertains to the development of the characters, plot, setting, and the establishment of mood in a performance of the play. In this chapter the director will also discuss the reasons for the selection of this play for production as well as his interpretation of the script for performance. The first elements to be discussed will be those of the historical background that led to the writing of the play and the style in which it was written. A complete character analysis of all the characters in the play will form the second element of discussion. The characters will be analyzed in relation to their real-life counterparts and their purpose within the dramatic functions of the play. The setting for the play will also be analyzed as it relates to its function in the play and the moods that it should create. The final elements under discussion in this chapter are those of script selection and interpretation.

Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night is a fictionalized autobiographical account of his life during the summer of 1912. The play is autobiographical in the sense that all of the characters are founded on their real-life counterparts and two of them, James Tyrone and Jamie,

retain the real first names of O'Neill's father and brother. O'Neill is represented by Edmund, the name of a younger brother who died in infancy. The play is fictional in that all of the action in the play is carefully constructed for dramatic effect. In this writer's opinion, the emotional impact of Long Day's Journey Into Night's psychological action is as strong or stronger than that in any of O'Neill's earlier plays.

O'Neill, whom George Bernard Shaw once described as ". . . a banshee Shakespeare . . .,"¹ began his career at the age of twenty-four while he was in a sanatorium recovering from pulmonary tuberculosis during the years 1912 to 1913.² During this period, O'Neill became concerned with the darker aspects of human life;³ this concern found its expression in his plays.

In the dedication of Long Day's Journey, O'Neill wrote that he was at last able to ". . . face my dead . . . and write this play--write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones."⁴ But even at fifty, O'Neill could not entirely forgive his family. Although he and his father became close, O'Neill pictures his father as a miser in the play. O'Neill's mother is pictured as a drug addict, which she was at the time the play takes place, but who later overcame her addiction, and his brother, Jamie, as the alcoholic

¹Joseph Wood Krutch, More Lives Than One (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1962), p. 14.

²Edwin A. Engel, The Haunted Heros of Eugene O'Neill (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 5.

³Krutch, More Lives Than One, p. 297.

⁴Eugene O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 7.

he was. Even as O'Neill completed the play, he was still torn between love and hate for the members of his family.⁵

The whole truth of O'Neill's life is not presented in the play; for example, O'Neill does not mention that at this time in his life his first marriage had already ended in divorce,⁶ nor that at the time of the action of the play, Jamie was in a sanitarium for one of his many cures for alcoholism.⁷ What is important is that Long Day's Journey presents the truth as seen by O'Neill, even though some of the facts are distorted and others ignored.⁸ In this sense, the play is an epilogue to O'Neill's life and the various themes he expressed in his other plays.⁹ This director believes that while O'Neill described the lives of the "four haunted Tyrones," he was also asking the dead for forgiveness for his failure for not having understood his family when they needed his understanding the most. Long Day's Journey Into Night premiered in Stockholm, Sweden, and then opened in New York in 1956, for its American premiere on O'Neill's sixty-fifth birthday.¹⁰

⁵Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 3-4.

⁶Frederic Ives Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), p. 19.

⁷Gelb, O'Neill, p. 214.

⁸Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 19.

⁹Doris V. Falk, Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 171.

¹⁰Croswell Bowen, The Curse of the Misbegotten (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 366.

For the most part, Long Day's Journey is plotless, but at the same time it is an experience¹¹ which is built on psychological action rather than physical action,¹² because O'Neill was interested in the motives behind the actions of his characters.¹³ The play is primarily one of character, ". . . involving complete alternation in moral character, brought on and controlled by action, and made apparent in itself and in thought and feeling."¹⁴ In Long Day's Journey, O'Neill was able to achieve a quality of absolute humanity in his characters and form them into a strong artistic power;¹⁵ this power can be found in the thoughts of the characters which develop around four facts: (a) Mary's illness, (b) Edmund's illness, (c) the profligacy of Jamie, and (d) the miserliness of Tyrone.¹⁶ The aforementioned factors cause the play to turn into a psychological "free-for-all" of overpowering love which arises from a lack of stability in relationships between the characters and causes their relationships to alternate continuously between love and hate.¹⁷ The following lines in Act IV help to illustrate how fast the alternations between love and hate are:

TYRONE: Listen to me! I've put up with a lot from you because from the mad things you've done at times I've thought you

¹¹Ibid., p. 273.

¹²Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 160.

¹³Gelb, O'Neill, p. 5.

¹⁴Chester Clayton Long, The Role of Nemesis in the Structure of Selected Plays by Eugene O'Neill (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 207.

¹⁵Jack Kroll, "American Classic," Newsweek, May 10, 1971, p. 122.

¹⁶Long, Nemesis, p. 206.

¹⁷John Henry Raleigh, The Plays of Eugene O'Neill (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), p. 134.

weren't quite right in your head. I've excused you and never lifted my hand to you. But there's a straw that breaks the camel's back. You'll obey me and put out that light or, as big as you are, I'll give you a thrashing that'll teach you--!
 (Suddenly he remembers Edmund's illness and instantly becomes guilty and shamefaced.)
 Forgive me, lad. I forgot--you shouldn't goad me into losing my temper.

EDMUND: Forget it, Papa. I apologize too. I had no right being nasty about nothing. I am a bit soused, I guess. I'll put out the damned light.

TYRONE: No, stay where you are. Let it burn.¹⁸

Long Day's Journey Into Night reveals how love becomes an unresolved tension between tenderness and hate, sentimentality and irony.¹⁹

As previously stated, Long Day's Journey is an autobiographical play, and while the drama does not usually lend itself easily to the autobiographical form (because the actor is required to impersonate the author and the audience tends to grow skeptical of the spoutings and recitations of the characters),²⁰ one must recognize the fact that any work is a reflection of the author, and that Long Day's Journey can be no different. Unlike other autobiographical works, this play has a ". . . sense of immediacy that helps to lift the basic domestic framework to the level of a tragedy, even in the absence of a conventional overt act of tragic nature."²¹

¹⁸O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, pp. 127-128.

¹⁹John Henry Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night and New England Irish Catholicism," in O'Neill, A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by John Gassner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 133.

²⁰Clifford Leech, Eugene O'Neill (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 109-110.

²¹"Long Day's Journey Into Night," Theatre Arts, January, 1957, p. 25.

Stylistic Analysis

Long Day's Journey is a four act quatrologue with standard, middle-class American speech²² which places the emphasis on dialogue rather than physical action. Each group of speeches is built around a theme such as Mary's hate of doctors, Tyrone's stinginess, Jamie's failures, or Edmund's illness and love of the sea. O'Neill takes each theme separately and builds it to a climax²³ while he constantly overlaps and interlaces each character's separate themes. In this manner, each protagonist makes a journey into the hell of truth which eventually reveals the loss of his own identity.²⁴

Although the play is autobiographical in its nature, one must realize that O'Neill's memories do not constitute a personal autobiography but rather a spiritual and psychological autobiography.²⁵ Therefore, Long Day's Journey could be considered a tragedy because it pictures its characters in a true dilemma,²⁶ and approaches classic purity and directness.²⁷ As witnessed by its recent New York revival, the play also illustrates its timeless and universal appeals. Carrying the stylistic implications of tragedy further, Brustein believes that Long

²²Raleigh, Eugene O'Neill, p. 154.

²³Timo Tiusanen, O'Neill's Scenic Images (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 291.

²⁴Raleigh, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 19.

²⁵Robert Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p. 339.

²⁶Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 195.

²⁷Kroll, "American Classic," p. 122.

Day's Journey is an existential tragedy because of its lack of physical action and its emphasis on the play's tragic tone and atmosphere.²⁸

Care must be taken, however, to point out that although Long Day's Journey is tragic as it relates to the nature of the people involved, it is not a tragedy in the true classical sense of the term. What is important, and what will guide the director in this production, is O'Neill's concept of truth.

In Long Day's Journey, O'Neill describes the truth as he believed it to be,²⁹ a concept founded in the expressionistic movement. Expressionism presents reality, i.e., truth, as seen through the eyes of the protagonist and thereby explains the subjective nature of the autobiographical form in drama. Since expressionism was highly popular as a dramatic style during the early 1900's, it is only logical to assume that the young O'Neill retained some of its influence later in life. O'Neill's subjectivity makes the play ". . . excruciatingly painful because it [Long Day's Journey] is so painfully and consistently realistic."³⁰

O'Neill's use of subjective realism to reveal the truth as he believed it to be is justified by Edmund in Act IV through the following lines:

. . . I couldn't touch what I tried to tell you just now. I just stammered. That's the best I'll ever do, I mean, if I live. Well, it will be faithful realism, at least. Stammering is the native eloquence of us fog people.³¹

²⁸Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 29.

²⁹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 22

³⁰Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 180

³¹O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 154.

With elements of the autobiography, existentialism, tragedy, expressionism, and the dominant element of realism all mixed together, O'Neill made revelation and analysis of character the synthesizing principle of the play.³² In this manner, he was able to replace the element of suspense with the cumulative revelation of character.³³ The characters themselves reveal their individual tragedies which have been caused by the forces of heredity and environment.³⁴ Each of the four protagonists is in some way partially to blame for his own destruction while, at the same time, being an unwitting tool of fate.³⁵ As Mary Tyrone says in Act II, scene 1:

. . . But I suppose life has made him like that, and he can't help it. None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done, they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.³⁶

It is this basic principle of individual helplessness ". . . in the midst of unstable human relations . . . [that is the] basic principle underlying the structure . . ." ³⁷ of the play.

Because Long Day's Journey is a play of character rather than one of physical action, O'Neill has structured the play in such a manner that Acts I and II are largely introductory and are built carefully and logically to prepare for the powerful confrontations of Acts

³²Long, Nemesis, p. 206.

³³Ibid., p. 210.

³⁴Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 24.

³⁵Falk, Tragic Tension, pp. 194-195.

³⁶O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 61.

³⁷Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 69.

III and IV.³⁸ O'Neill's use of slang was an important factor in the structure of the play; it becomes ". . . the language of hatred, cynicism, and nihilism."³⁹ Through his subjectivity, O'Neill becomes a lens through which we see the characters⁴⁰ and the author as they reveal their humanity through art.⁴¹

When Long Day's Journey Into Night opened at the Helen Hayes Theatre in New York in 1956, it featured Florence Eldridge and Frederic March as Mary and James Tyrone and Jason Robards, Jr. and Bradford Dillman as their sons Jamie and Edmund. Director José Quintero emphasized the characters' humanity and their search for the unknown.⁴² In the latest revival at the Promenade Theatre, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Robert Ryan, Stacy Keach, and James Naughton were featured as the "four haunted Tyrones."⁴³

Character Analysis

Since Long Day's Journey stresses character rather than plot, all characters are drawn with sympathy and as much objectivity as possible within the subjective autobiographical form of the play;⁴⁴

³⁸"Long Day's Journey Into Night," p. 26.

³⁹Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 317.

⁴⁰Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 339.

⁴¹Kroll, "American Classic," p. 122.

⁴²John Chapman, "Long Day's Journey Into Night," in Playwrights Progress: O'Neill and the Critics, ed. by Jordan Y. Miller (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1965), pp. 133-134.

⁴³Kroll, "American Classic," p. 122.

⁴⁴Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 110.

because of this, O'Neill's characters are dissected in great detail and with extreme honesty.⁴⁵ The characters, founded on memory, have their names partially changed by O'Neill. The family surname is changed from O'Neill to Tyrone, O'Neill's mother's maiden name is changed from Ellen Quinlan to Mary Cavan, the character of Edmund, the young Eugene O'Neill, takes his name from the O'Neill brother who died in infancy. O'Neill retains the real first names of his father and older brother for the characters of James Tyrone, Sr. and James Tyrone, Jr., who is called Jamie.⁴⁶ The name Tyrone was chosen by O'Neill because of his pride in his Irish ancestry; it is derived from the word Tir-eoghain which means the land of Owen, which was a section of Ulster and later called County Tyrone. The name Cavan, his mother's fictional maiden name, comes from Cavan County in Ulster.⁴⁷

The O'Neill family could be characterized as people with close and obsessive intensity which enabled the characters in the play to establish the tensions and rage that are revealed through the dialogue of each.⁴⁸ The self-revealing dialogue of each character enables him to theatricalize his own personality, which is logical considering that the father and both sons have had theatrical backgrounds and the mother had to have been influenced by the theatrical environment in which she

⁴⁵"Long Day's Journey Into Night," p. 25.

⁴⁶Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 108.

⁴⁷Gelb, O'Neill, p. 8.

⁴⁸T. E. Kalem, "Doom Music," Time, May 3, 1971, p. 62.

lived.⁴⁹ But, as critic Giles Fowler of the Kansas City Star states, O'Neill presents ". . . a loving family, involved in the furious ritual of its own destruction . . ."⁵⁰

The characters seem to wound and destroy each other with bickerings and conflicts⁵¹ because they fear madness, death, and most of all, death by suicide (the play makes reference to suicide attempts by both Edmund and Mary).⁵² For the Tyrone men, drinking is a form of suicide without death because it drowns out the laughter in the background.⁵³ But, as Doris Falk states,

All the Tyrones are doomed to destroy and be destroyed, to be victimized not only by each other but by the dead, for the dead have willed them a heritage of disease, alcoholism, and drug addiction, and have cursed them with the deeper ills of alienation, conflict, and self-destructiveness.⁵⁴

She further states that the characters strip away the protective illusion from each other and at the end of the play are left to face self and each other without hope, all that is left them is tolerance and pity.⁵⁵ Eugene M. Waith had the concept of illusion in mind when he said that O'Neill presents the same basic ideas he used in The Great

⁴⁹Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 108.

⁵⁰Giles M. Fowler, "Fury and Tenderness Ride Together During O'Neill's 'Journey Into Night,'" Kansas City Star, September 15, 1963, sec. 4, p. 3D.

⁵¹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 24.

⁵²Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," pp. 140-141.

⁵³Ibid., p. 141.

⁵⁴Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 182.

⁵⁵Ibid.

God Brown by referring to the contrast between ". . . the mask and the face, with an ultimate 'discovery' of the face."⁵⁶

In Act IV, all of the characters confess their inner feelings. Tyrone confesses his ambitions and his failures; Edmund, his need for freedom and his oneness with the sea; Jamie confesses his feelings of love and hate toward Edmund, while Mary finally escapes through her dope dreams into her past.⁵⁷ But as Long points out, ". . . the most poignant effect of the play is the counter-movement by which the mother retreats into illusion while the others move to a clear sight of truth."⁵⁸

Being a memory play, the characters of Long Day's Journey are the focal point; it is the character's conflicts and contrasting journeys (Mary's journey into dope dreams; Jamie's, into cynicism and despair; James Tyrone's journey away from earlier triumphs; and Edmund's, away from night) that provide the essence of the play.⁵⁹

Mary

Mary Tyrone is closer to truth than any of the other characters in Long Day's Journey because O'Neill kept her character in line with his mother's real-life character. Ellen Quinlan O'Neill was raised in the Victorian tradition, schooled in a convent, and developed into an innocent and unworldly young woman who was the complete opposite of the man she married. Ellen's marriage to the actor James O'Neill was

⁵⁶Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 105.

⁵⁷Tiusanen, Scenic Images, pp. 297-299.

⁵⁸Long, Nemesis, p. 207.

⁵⁹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, pp. 162-163.

disapproved of by her family and friends who looked down on the theatre as improper and objectionable.⁶⁰

Ellen was described by one who knew her as being very beautiful and a person who was looked up to by her fellow students at the convent and by her teachers as being a very pious young woman.⁶¹ Physically, she was five feet, six inches tall and slender; her skin was pale and smooth, her mouth wide and tremulous and she spoke in a low-pitched voice; her laughter was quick and shy. Ellen had a high forehead and wore her long reddish to dark brown hair knotted at the back of her head.⁶²

The name Mary was chosen by O'Neill to represent his mother because it suggests the innocence typical of nineteenth century womanhood and because it serves as an example of the Christian belief in the Virgin Mary.⁶³ O'Neill places great emphasis on Mary's Catholicism because she used it as an escape from reality, as a way back to a world of innocence and peace.⁶⁴ Preoccupation with the Virgin Mary is a motivating force in the play as an example of the Irish concept of sexual chastity and hope is Mary's way of getting back to her virginal childhood and her days at the convent.⁶⁵ Her name is also symbolic of her desire to have been a nun and not a wife and mother.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶¹ Barrett H. Clark, Eugene O'Neill (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1947), p. 11.

⁶² Gelb, O'Neill, p. 13.

⁶³ Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 160.

⁶⁴ Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 149.

⁶⁵ Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," p. 135.

⁶⁶ Gelb, O'Neill, p. 11.

Mary Tyrone was, as was Ellen O'Neill, shy, romantic, innocent, and mystic in her view of life. She was never able to forgive James for her exposure to the roughness of the world, and James could not forgive her her pride; for these reasons, they felt a continual need to torment and pardon each other.⁶⁷ Marriage for Mary, and Ellen, was a refuge after her family and friends cut her off from their companionship after her marriage to an actor.⁶⁸ Mary also blamed James for her not becoming a nun, for ruining her music career as well as causing her to lose her friends.⁶⁸ Raleigh points out that Ellen was attractive, flirtatious, and not as nun-like as the character of Mary would have the world believe. Mary cannot adjust, Raleigh says, to the difference between her life as a girl at the convent and an adult married to a man who has had a mistress, drinks, and makes her live in cheap hotel rooms.⁷⁰

Mary Tyrone is constantly in a state of bewilderment and submissiveness because she is continually torn between feelings of love and hate, the need for companionship and privacy, and the frustration that results from the need for sexual fulfillment and the desire for purity.⁷¹ In Long Day's Journey, Mary becomes lost and alienated ". . . between the self that limits and the self that aspires."⁷² In essence, Mary's

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 9.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 535.

⁶⁹Olivia Coolidge, Eugene O'Neill (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 31.

⁷⁰Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," p. 135.

⁷¹Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 185.

⁷²Ibid.

masks of self-confidence and nervousness are in conflict and lead her back to her use of drugs which is the reason for the change in the family situation. As the play progresses, Mary goes deeper into the world of the drug addict. Her feelings of guilt and fear surface from behind the mask of detachment as she returns to the past. The masks show the conflicts between temptation and resistance, drugged and normal states, and youth and old age.⁷³

The reasons for Ellen O'Neill's drug addiction are uncertain because at the time she started using morphine, little was known about its dangers. One possible cause could be related to her operation for breast cancer; the operation, performed by a famous specialist in Europe, was successful,⁷⁴ but as Mary says in Act II, scene 2:

. . . But bearing Edmund was the last straw. I was so sick afterwards, and that ignorant quack of a cheap hotel doctor--All he knew was I was in pain. It was easy for him to stop the pain.⁷⁵

O'Neill was convinced his birth made his mother a drug addict and this is most evident in the play when Mary blames Edmund for her ill health; the following statement by Mary explains why O'Neill was not able to escape his feelings of guilt.⁷⁶ "MARY: . . . I never knew what rheumatism was before you were born! Ask your father!"⁷⁷

The doctor that Mary refers to in the play could have been a doctor that James O'Neill met in a bar; it was this doctor who delivered

⁷³Tiusanen, Scenic Images, pp. 285-287.

⁷⁴Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 21.

⁷⁵O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 87.

⁷⁶Gelb, O'Neill, p. 55.

⁷⁷O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 116.

Eugene and who did prescribe morphine for Ellen's pain.⁷⁸ There was also a doctor in New London who, because he opened boils with a penknife and caused children to die of ruptured appendixes, was considered to be a quack. It is conceivable, but unlikely, that Ellen got her morphine prescriptions from him.⁷⁹ Mary's addiction to morphine provided her with an escape device that enabled her to forsake reality and retreat into her own never-never land. Modern doctors point out that addiction to morphine is unusual unless one wishes ". . . to sustain the sense of unreality that it provides . . ."⁸⁰ and Mary had that desire.

When Geraldine Fitzgerald, who played the role of Mary in the recent revival of Long Day's Journey, asked doctors about morphine addiction, she was told that an addict like Mary Tyrone ". . . gets what's called the 'cat reaction' to the drug, she gets more and more excited, not depressed . . ."⁸¹ While under the influence of the drug, Mary becomes a figure of power; it is she who determines the course of action the others in the play will follow.⁸² It is Mary's return to drugs that ". . . sets off the family's crossfire of antagonisms and leads all combatants, at length, to expose the most vulnerable depths of their personalities."⁸³ As the girl-woman, Mary was what she was and what her

⁷⁸Gelb, O'Neill, p. 58.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 215.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 59.

⁸¹Tom Burke, "Geraldine's Long Journey," New York Times, June 13, 1971, sec. 2, p. D7.

⁸²Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 109.

⁸³Fowler, "Fury and Tenderness," sec. 4, p. 3D.

sons wanted her to be; their type of internal conflict could only have increased her desire to escape reality and to return to her girlhood days of an uncomplicated life at the convent.⁸⁴ This dual facet of Mary's personality helps to set the mood of the play by progressing from the sunlight and laughter of Act I to the depths of gloomy despair in Act IV.⁸⁵

By the end of Act IV, Mary has withdrawn into the dream world of the past as symbolized by her hunt for her wedding dress which helps her to avoid the present and the nonexistent future.⁸⁶ Although the tableau at the end of the play has an air of tragedy, Geraldine Fitzgerald sees Mary's last speech as a song of joy rather than one of doom because Mary is at last free from all of her present worries⁸⁷ and therefore seems to be saying, ". . . I am released! And I'm not without some hope."⁸⁸ Because of this ray of hope, Miss Fitzgerald sees Mary as hard and tough and the possessor of a sly gallows humor,⁸⁹ as when she tells James, "You're welcome to come up and watch me . . ."⁹⁰ Mary's toughness is illustrated by the ease with which she takes her drugs.⁹¹ As

⁸⁴Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 183.

⁸⁵Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 353.

⁸⁶Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 323.

⁸⁷Burke, "Geraldine's Long Journey," sec. 2, p. D7.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 75.

⁹¹Burke, "Geraldine's Long Journey," sec. 2, p. D7.

Edmund says, she does it ". . . Deliberately, that's the hell of it! You know something in her does it deliberately--to get beyond our reach, to be rid of us, to forget we're alive! It's as if, in spite of loving us, she hated us."⁹²

Mary has been portrayed by many actresses and has received many different interpretations that ranged from the absent-minded and scatter-brained approach of Florence Eldridge to the deeply disturbed and confused approach of Geraldine Fitzgerald.⁹³ Miss Fitzgerald makes a valid point when she says that "Mary is no loser, she only has the look of one."⁹⁴ Mary is stolid, sardonic, and consummately Irish; she is not a victim.⁹⁵ She is, however, "spoiled, sharptongued, she has refused to mature, has turned her husband into her father, and that's been a large part of . . . [her] problem."⁹⁶

James

Although Mary Tyrone is the most biographically correct character in the play, James Tyrone is the most successful. All the characters "live" in the play,⁹⁷ but with Tyrone, O'Neill has presented a ". . . coherent picture of a man who has paid for his rise from poverty . . . and must at all costs keep what he has won."⁹⁸

⁹²O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 139.

⁹³Kalem, "Doom Music," p. 62.

⁹⁴Burke, "Geraldine's Long Journey," sec. 2, p. D7.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 110.

⁹⁸Ibid.

Physically, James O'Neill and James Tyrone are very similar. James O'Neill was a big-chested man with heavy features. At the time the action in the play occurs, he was sixty-seven years old, but still walked with an erect, military carriage. The senior O'Neill had a fine profile, light brown, deep set eyes, and iron-grey hair. Off stage, James O'Neill traded his dignity for the coarse manners of an Irish peasant.⁹⁹

O'Neill made Tyrone almost a carbon copy of his father; both men were deserted by their fathers and were forced to work hard as boys and as a result, learned the value of money at an early age; both O'Neill's father and Tyrone were able to overcome their humble beginnings to become successful actors and rise to the top of their profession. In portraying the character of James Tyrone, O'Neill used the exact names and dates of his father's career, even to the point of having Tyrone admit that he prostituted his artistic career, as had James O'Neill, by settling for the easy profits of The Count of Monte Cristo.¹⁰⁰

TYRONE: The time came when that mistake ruined my career as a fine actor.

(Sadly.)

I've never admitted this to anyone before, lad, . . . That God-damned play I bought for a song and made such a great success in--a great money success--it ruined me with its promise of an easy fortune.¹⁰¹

It is in the preceding speech that Tyrone looks into himself and realizes that he has lost his real self; Tyrone illustrates this when he says,

⁹⁹Bowen, Curse, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 20.

¹⁰¹O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 149.

In 1874 when Edwin Booth came to the theatre in Chicago where I was leading man, I played Cassius to his Brutus one night, Brutus to his Cassius the next, Othello to his Iago, and so on. The first night I played Othello, he said to our manager, "That young man is playing Othello better than I ever did!"
(Proudly.)

That from Booth, the greatest actor of his day or any other! And it was true!

.....
What the hell was it I wanted to buy, I wonder, that was worth--
Well, no matter. It's a late day for regrets.¹⁰²

Unfortunately, James Tyrone still struts on an imaginary stage;¹⁰³ it is this attitude that causes his sons to make remarks like "Interrupting the famous Beautiful Voice! She should have more respect."¹⁰⁴ It is Tyrone's vanity that has caused him to sacrifice his wife and family for the security of wealth, and therefore, he is partially to blame for most of the family problems.¹⁰⁵ Tyrone has "sold his soul for the illusion of success."¹⁰⁶ Although O'Neill exaggerated his father's miserliness in the character of James Tyrone, the fact is that the tragedy of Long Day's Journey is caused by the father's miserliness and materialism. In this respect, James O'Neill is almost like Tyrone.¹⁰⁷

James Tyrone is proud, exploitive, grasping, self-deluded, pitiable, and unable to escape the past;¹⁰⁸ these qualities give him

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁰³Fowler, "Fury and Tenderness," sec. 4, p. 3D.

¹⁰⁴O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 60.

¹⁰⁵Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 186.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 21.

¹⁰⁸Falk, Tragic Tension, pp. 185-186.

the appearance of a petty dictator, but he is also human and understandable,¹⁰⁹ and as a result, he is not a figure for contempt.¹¹⁰

James O'Neill was always in conflict with two feelings: to hoard money because of poverty during his youth, and to appear generous to his friends by buying drinks and to his wife by buying her jewelry and building her a beautiful home.¹¹¹ At home, however, his frugality made him the object of much abuse which he bore in silence.¹¹²

According to many of James O'Neill's New London friends, he was not a miser;¹¹³ however, in A Moon for the Misbegotten, Eugene O'Neill revealed his father's tightness through the following dialogue:

JOSIE: He wasn't! He was one of the finest, kindest gentlemen ever lived.

TYRONE: (Sneeringly). Outside the family, sure. Inside, he was a lousy, tightwad bastard.¹¹⁴

One of O'Neill's cousins, Bessie Sheridan, said that the miserliness of Tyrone was not like James O'Neill at all. She said the sons wore only tailor-made suits, and, that the family had a chauffeur and a coachman.¹¹⁵ If both of these previous statements are true, one must suppose that it was not the financial habits of James O'Neill that angered his sons, but rather a lack of emotional openness that aroused their scorn.

¹⁰⁹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 160.

¹¹⁰Leech, Eugene O'Neill, p. 115.

¹¹¹Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 43-44.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 83.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 97.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 93.

James O'Neill's relationship with his family illustrates the idea of the artist in conflict with the philistine. Tyrone believed, as did James O'Neill, that his sons should work for a living; but, Jamie does not enforce his father's beliefs; with Eugene, O'Neill believed one should work physically to earn money. Eugene and his father became reconciled after O'Neill won the Pulitzer Prize; this reconciliation is evident in Long Day's Journey. Therefore, in its comparison of James O'Neill and Tyrone, the play is true in spirit if not in fact.¹¹⁶

With Tyrone, as well as with Mary, religion becomes an important factor. Unlike Mary, Tyrone uses his religion in such a way that it becomes mechanical and dogmatic.¹¹⁷ The following dialogue in Act IV helps to illustrate this point.

EDMUND: Yes, facts don't mean a thing, do they? What you want to believe, that's the only truth.
(Derisively.)
Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic, for example.

TYRONE: So he was. The proof is in his plays.

EDMUND: Well he wasn't, and there's no proof of it in his plays, except to you!
(Jeeringly.)
The Duke of Wellington, there was another good Irish Catholic!

TYRONE: I never said he was a good one. He was a renegade but a Catholic just the same.

EDMUND: Well, he wasn't. You just want to believe no one but an Irish Catholic general could beat Napoleon.¹¹⁸

Because of the low opinion which the public held for his profession,

¹¹⁶Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, pp. 22-23.

¹¹⁷Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 149.

¹¹⁸O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 127.

Tyrone allowed his Catholicism to mask his ". . . feelings of social inferiority."¹¹⁹

In Long Day's Journey, O'Neill distorted the truth about his father in several instances and, for the most part, these distortions were not favorable. One favorable distortion of the truth, however, is in relation to O'Neill's stay in the sanatorium. In the play, Tyrone agrees to send Edmund to a good sanatorium; the fact of the matter is that O'Neill spent two days at the state hospital prior to going to a private sanatorium. James O'Neill possibly believed, like Tyrone, that tuberculosis was fatal and that money spent for a cure was money wasted; in 1912, 204 patients per 100,000 died from tuberculosis. This fear of death coupled with the fact that his big money days were over and, even though his wealth was estimated at over one hundred thousand dollars, that he was scared of living out his days in the poorhouse, may have influenced Tyrone to seek the less expensive cure for Edmund.¹²⁰

Tyrone's relationship with his wife is a key to understanding some of the conflicts in Long Day's Journey. Tyrone was, like James O'Neill, faithful to his wife and tried to protect her from the roughness of the life of the theatre; he tried to give her comfort and security.¹²¹ Tyrone loves Mary, but he is also hurt by her withdrawal and contempt, even though he cares for her like a child and tries to save their lives.¹²² In his attempts to protect, Tyrone takes over the

¹¹⁹Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 149.

¹²⁰Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 219-220.

¹²¹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 23.

¹²²Gelb, O'Neill, p. 10.

functions of the mother;¹²³ this greed causes his disintegration as well as that of each member of the family.¹²⁴

Jamie

The character of Jamie Tyrone was based on O'Neill's older brother, James, Jr. Jamie, who was an alcoholic and died in a sanitarium at the age of forty-five,¹²⁵ is both a loved and hated antagonist; he is ". . . a symbol of the potentially fine soul grown stunted and envious and destructive, . . ."¹²⁶ Jamie is representative of the poor little rich boy who is in constant conflict with his father's mores and beliefs due to the separation between the two generations.¹²⁷ In the play, as in life, Jamie is ". . . a sad and roistering lush [who is] a disappointment to his father, [and] a secret enemy of himself."¹²⁸ Jamie's need for liquor was a constant source of argument and because Jamie would steal a drink and replace the missing liquor with water, Tyrone, like James O'Neill, kept the liquor locked up in the basement.¹²⁹

In Long Day's Journey, Jamie is realistically portrayed as an alcoholic who tries to escape the inadequacies and guilt caused by his

¹²³Long, Nemesis, p. 212.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 208.

¹²⁵Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 30.

¹²⁶Gelb, O'Neill, p. 579.

¹²⁷Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 22.

¹²⁸Fowler, "Fury and Tenderness," sec. 4, p. 3D.

¹²⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 99.

feelings toward his brother and his mother.¹³⁰ In life, James O'Neill, Jr. was responsible for the death of Edmund, age one, and as punishment, his mother, who felt the primary guilt, sent him to a boarding school six months later. A visit by his father to the school raised Jamie's popularity, but he began to resent his father's overpowering nature; this resentment gradually turned into open rebellion.¹³¹ Jamie's need for love and control caused him to take revenge on the world, and, in the play, on Edmund, for what his parents did not give him.¹³² In Act IV, Jamie confesses that the reason he tried to corrupt Edmund was that ". . . [I] never wanted you to succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet!"¹³³

The conflict between Jamie and Edmund is due to jealousy; Jamie has tried to destroy Edmund's life-giving dreams.¹³⁴ Jamie was jealous and envious of Edmund's promise and became cynical and dissipated and tried to pass it off as sophistication and adventure in order to impress Edmund and destroy Edmund's future.¹³⁵ Jamie also reinforces O'Neill's belief that O'Neill was responsible for his mother's drug addiction by saying ". . . It was your being born that started Mama on dope. I know

¹³⁰Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 171.

¹³¹Gelb, O'Neill, pp. 53-54.

¹³²Long, Nemesis, p. 209.

¹³³O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 165.

¹³⁴Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, pp. 160-161.

¹³⁵Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 193.

that's not your fault, but all the same, Godamn you, I can't help hating your guts--!"¹³⁶ The conflict between Jamie and Edmund is the conflict between ". . . the cynical negations preached by Jamie and the tragic transcendence of these negations . . . [that is] the subject finally illuminated by Long Day's Journey."¹³⁷

Edmund and Jamie, at the time of the play, are ages twenty-three and thirty-three respectively, have both left home at one time or another, but both have always returned;¹³⁸ this could account, in part, for their feelings of guilt, failure, and despair.

Edmund

Edmund Tyrone is the autobiographical protagonist of Long Day's Journey, but O'Neill has chosen not to include all the truth about himself.¹³⁹ He does not mention his marriage to and divorce from Kathleen Jenkins or the child that resulted from that marriage;¹⁴⁰ nor does he mention that he attempted suicide prior to the summer of 1912.¹⁴¹ O'Neill chose to emphasize instead ". . . his own somber, brooding and poetic side, to the exclusion of his extroverted, bawdy, outgoing

¹³⁶O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 166.

¹³⁷Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 161.

¹³⁸Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," p. 130.

¹³⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 235.

¹⁴⁰Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 29.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 32.

side . . ."142 He presents himself as a figure of pathos and as the young poet on the edge of extinction.¹⁴³

O'Neill suffered from a depression and rage over what his family had done to each other; to forget, he drank heavily to try to blot out his misery, but even the alcohol was not always enough.¹⁴⁴ Dr. Louis Bisch, a psychiatrist who did not psychoanalyze O'Neill personally but did analyze him through his plays, states that Eugene O'Neill was emotionally starved and that he hated his mother and loved his father as a result of this starvation. The love for his father materialized in O'Neill's drinking and in his entering the theatre for his profession. Because his mother had failed him, O'Neill believed all women would fail him and that all women had to be punished. The second psychological impression of O'Neill was provided by Dr. Gilbert V. Hamilton, who did analyze O'Neill. Hamilton says that O'Neill loved and hated his father and had an Oedipus Complex toward his mother. This second view of O'Neill seems to be in keeping with the characters O'Neill presented in Long Day's Journey. Hamilton's most interesting observation is that O'Neill had a strong death wish.¹⁴⁵ The death wish is illustrated by O'Neill's representing himself as Edmund--the name of his dead brother--and calling Edmund, Eugene.¹⁴⁶ O'Neill represented the manifestation of his family's fate through Edmund's drive toward self-destruction.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴²Raleigh, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 92.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Gelb, O'Neill, p. 186.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 595-596.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁴⁷Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 165.

Edmund, who has the free and easy morals of the theatre, is very much like his father. Edmund drank too much and had a drinking problem much of his life; however, O'Neill eventually overcame this problem.¹⁴⁸ O'Neill's moral habits were the outgrowth of his conflicting feelings of love and hate toward his father. In Long Day's Journey, O'Neill also presents his great love for his mother. Because O'Neill was somewhat morally corrupt, he portrayed his mother in a manner that placed emphasis on her image of purity and revealed the love he had for her.¹⁴⁹ It is because of his conflicting images of his mother and father that Edmund tried to lose himself in dreams, drunkenness and death.¹⁵⁰ This point is strengthened in Act IV when Edmund quotes from a poem by Dowson.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses;
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.¹⁵¹

Religion held little for either O'Neill or Edmund; both of them were highly disillusioned by Catholicism, primarily because Catholicism represented their parents.¹⁵² The principal reason Edmund rejects the Catholic Church is because of his father's dogmatic and meaningless use of Catholicism.¹⁵³ As a result, both Edmund and O'Neill were influenced

¹⁴⁸ Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, pp. 29-30.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 189.

¹⁵¹ O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 130.

¹⁵² Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 149.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 191.

by the transcendental philosophy of Nietzsche as it was presented in Thus Spake Zarathustra.¹⁵⁴ In Act II, scene 2, Edmund expresses his rejection of his father's faith by saying, "Then Nietzsche must be right. 'God is dead: of his pity for man hath God died.'"¹⁵⁵

Although Edmund's illness is the spark that ignites the explosive nature of Long Day's Journey, it is Edmund's conflicts that yield an understanding of his father and brother, and when the play ends, he is the only one clear-headed and emotionally stable. His commitment to the sanatorium gives him a way out of torment and sends him toward freedom.¹⁵⁶ Edmund's desire to understand is a continuing and positive force in the play.¹⁵⁷

Cathleen

The Irish maid, Cathleen, is an ignorant, cheerful type, and is somewhat bumptious, like Shaughnessy, Tyrone's tenant farmer, who is mentioned in Act I.¹⁵⁸ Her purpose is primarily one of nostalgic comedy. Through her use of brogue-larded phrases, she is a thorn in the side of Mary Tyrone.¹⁵⁹ She serves as a major source of what little comic relief there is in the play as well as serving as Mary's confidant in Act III. As a confidant, Cathleen functions as a Greek chorus by reflecting

¹⁵⁴Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, pp. 32-33.

¹⁵⁵O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, pp. 77-78.

¹⁵⁶Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 160.

¹⁵⁷Long, Nemesis, p. 209.

¹⁵⁸Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," p. 129.

¹⁵⁹Gelb, O'Neill, p. 85.

opinions outside the Tyrone family and by expressing the irony surrounding the family¹⁶⁰ through such remarks as, "He's a fine gentleman [James Tyrone] and you're a lucky woman."¹⁶¹

Setting Analysis

Just as important as the characters is the environment in which they live. The Tyrone New London home is referred to by everyone in the play, except Tyrone, as being cheap when, in fact, the real O'Neill home was an expensive two-story house, set back from the road and surrounded by open porches, shrubbery, flowers, and a well-kept lawn.¹⁶² Factually speaking, James O'Neill spent more on his wife than he could often afford which could be, this writer believes, the reason he chose financial success over artistic success. According to a report in the Boston Times, the O'Neill home cost forty thousand dollars when it was built in 1883; the Times report said that only the finest materials were used in its construction.¹⁶³ Therefore, if the play is true, the family's unhappiness with the home could not be blamed on Tyrone's miserliness.

The interior of the home was comfortable and each room seemed to have a comfortable corner. The rooms were filled with photographs of famous actors, valuable paintings, rare books, and play scripts. There was a large picture of Edwin Booth sitting on an easel in the

¹⁶⁰Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 295.

¹⁶¹O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 106.

¹⁶²Gelb, O'Neill, p. 84.

¹⁶³Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 21.

living room. The house had solid doors and sturdy window frames and a beautiful staircase leading to the rooms upstairs. According to friends, the house was very comfortable and attractive; those who were rich, however, would refer to the house as being ordinary.¹⁶⁴

The setting should indicate desolation¹⁶⁵ and the spiritual homelessness which was a source for the Tyrone's tragedy.¹⁶⁶ Since O'Neill set the action of Long Day's Journey in the living room of his home, to help convey accurately the atmosphere that gave rise to the play, the room should contain a round table with a chandelier above it. The floor should be covered by a rug that is inoffensive in design and color;¹⁶⁷ there should be two openings in the up stage wall, one leading to the dining room and the other to the hallway that leads to the other ground floor rooms of the house and to the front door; a stairway should be positioned between the two openings and lead up and off stage to the upstairs rooms. All of these elements should blend so the feeling that the house was equal to, as Mary describes it, a hovel.¹⁶⁸

Because the house is more of a prison for Mary than the others,¹⁶⁹ the areas near the stairway should be partially in shadows, so as to emphasize the fact that the upstairs becomes the place where Mary lives in the minds of the audience; more important is that the audience realize

¹⁶⁴Gelb, O'Neill, p. 83.

¹⁶⁵Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 251.

¹⁶⁶Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 61.

¹⁶⁷Gelb, O'Neill, p. 83.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 291.

that upstairs is the place where Mary gets her drugs. The mood surrounding the stairway area should prepare the audience for Mary's entrance toward the end of Act IV; at this point in the play Mary has regressed to her childhood while under the heavy influence of drugs.¹⁷⁰ The stairway becomes Mary's escape from the "real" world.¹⁷¹

The setting must function as a passage between the little-used front parlor which serves as a mask to society and the dark back areas of the house. The room in which the action occurs must serve as a mid-region between ". . . the bright formality of the exterior front parlor, the mask, and the little-known dark . . ." ¹⁷² of the remainder of the house; the living room is the mid-region where the family lives.

The word Night in the title of the play was chosen by O'Neill because, perhaps, it represented the abstract, foreboding atmosphere of the unused front parlor, the unseen upstairs of Mary's drug world, or because it was a time for the fog¹⁷³ that hides a soul from itself. O'Neill uses the fog to create an environment of ignorance and fear¹⁷⁴ that surrounds all of the Tyrones. The fog helps to show the split world of the Tyrones who live in a real world of whiskey, curses, illness, and doctors and the unreal world of those who move psychologically into a grey area between night and day, past and present, and the living and the dead.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 292-293.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 209.

¹⁷²Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 181.

¹⁷³Raleigh, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 19.

¹⁷⁴Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 19.

¹⁷⁵Raleigh, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 151.

Brustein points out that Long Day's Journey is partially existential in its outlook. As has been previously mentioned, O'Neill was profoundly influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy; and like Nietzsche's Underman, who is never able to climb out of the pit and is rarely able to see the light of day, the Tyrone family is swallowed up in fog.¹⁷⁶ Fog, serving as a backdrop for tragedy, provides the family, except for Tyrone, with the loss of identity that they are seeking.¹⁷⁷ As Mary Tyrone says in Act III, "It hides you from the world and the world from you. You feel that everything has changed, and nothing is what it seemed to be. No one can find or touch you any more."¹⁷⁸

Justification

The reasons this director has chosen Long Day's Journey Into Night for production as his thesis date back to the first time he read the script as an undergraduate, but at that time he was not fully aware of the play's value as a masterpiece of modern American drama. As a teacher, this director was again drawn to the script through lesson planning, but this time he felt he did not have sufficient background as a director to attempt a production. The play is a challenge for directors as well as for actors because of the almost classical use of conflict generated between its characters and the intense emotions that appear as a result. The psychological implications become even more emotionally shattering because of the autobiographical nature of the

¹⁷⁶Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷⁷Raleigh, Plays of Eugene O'Neill, p. 24.

¹⁷⁸O'Neill, Long Day's Journey, p. 98.

play. In Long Day's Journey, O'Neill has presented a picture of personal torment based on borderline feelings of love and hate. The aforementioned factors, plus an intuitive emotional reaction to the script, have led to this director's decision to direct Long Day's Journey Into Night for his thesis production.

Interpretation

One of the outstanding qualities of Long Day's Journey is not the four hours usually given to the performance of the total script, but the success with which a play with little action can be a ". . . simple domestication of both tragic emotion and . . . human insight."¹⁷⁹ The length of the play has been criticized by many; however, the play in this director's opinion is not too long from either an aesthetic or cultural point of view. As Raleigh points out, O'Neill believed in the motto of the drinking Irish that ". . . a thing is not said unless it has been repeated almost ad infinitum."¹⁸⁰ In a verse written by an Irish medieval monk about his cat, the Irish love of conversation is summed up in two lines: "Hunting mice is his delight/Hunting words I sit all night."¹⁸¹

Because of its repetitive nature, the length of Long Day's Journey is relative. O'Neill establishes two different movements in the play that occur simultaneously; as the play progresses in time, it moves backward in memory, thereby accounting for the slowing down of

¹⁷⁹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 159.

¹⁸⁰Raleigh, "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey," p. 130.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 31.

the action after Act I and becoming less extroverted and more introspective as the play progresses.¹⁸² Since Long Day's Journey is void of outer action, O'Neill must speak through form to place the emphasis on the inner action of the characters as they change their masks.¹⁸³

Edmund's illness is the spark for the action, but it is Mary's drug addiction that becomes the dramatic focus of Long Day's Journey. Her addiction helps to emphasize the fact that the characters are the victims of their fate and that there are no controls over the forces that shape their destinies; therefore, a sense of doom emerges from the story.¹⁸⁴ The main problem of interpretation becomes that of character and character relationships because of the figurative use of masks.

The masks worn by each of the characters in the play are visible in dialogue as well as in changes in vocal tones, facial expressions, and in movement. Each of the character's masks is worn in relation to the other members of the family and results from the dominant conflict of love and hate.¹⁸⁵ These conflicts are the result of O'Neill's act of personal exorcism¹⁸⁶ and combine with feelings of guilt and accusation to make Long Day's Journey a tense and exhausting play.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸²Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 31.

¹⁸³Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 300.

¹⁸⁴Bowen, Curse, p. 366.

¹⁸⁵Tiusanen, Scenic Images, pp. 286-288.

¹⁸⁶Kalem, "Doom Music," p. 62.

¹⁸⁷Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 182.

O'Neill's nemesis is that of continual pain¹⁸⁸ and is illustrated in the play through the repetitions of the themes of love, hate, guilt, accusation, dream, drunkenness, and death.¹⁸⁹ O'Neill handles his various themes like motives in a composition¹⁹⁰ to establish the theme of cycles. Long Day's Journey is a play made up of a chain of circles

. . . all touching the areas of mutual sympathy and antagonism, all obeying the mechanics of defenses, accusations, and counter-accusations. On the stage, the circles are drawn by the actors: their positions, gestures, vocal and facial expressions.¹⁹¹

The characters overlap each other so closely because they are like one body with four branches; whenever one acts, there is an instant reaction by the others.¹⁹²

As Long Day's Journey progresses, another repetitive element evolves, that of the fog and the sounds of the foghorn. While the fog may be equated with life, the foghorn is used purely for effect.¹⁹³ Fog may also represent man's inability to know either himself or his destiny. As the fog settles on the action, the foghorn and ship bells serve as warnings whenever one of the characters attempts to assert his fate.¹⁹⁴

In the final analysis, it is the pity of understanding that comes from the knowledge of the characters that moves us when we

¹⁸⁸Long, Nemesis, p. 215.

¹⁸⁹Carpenter, Eugene O'Neill, p. 85.

¹⁹⁰Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 221.

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁹²Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, pp. 350-351.

¹⁹³Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 17.

¹⁹⁴Falk, Tragic Tension, p. 181.

recognize the waste of human capabilities.¹⁹⁵ The final tragic fact of Long Day's Journey Into Night is that ". . . unqualified love destroys innocence, the moral integrity of each of us as autonomous beings . . ."¹⁹⁶ This fact is the reason the play ends in ". . . night, fog, ghosts, sleep, the past, dreams, elegy, [and] loneliness . . ."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵Long, Nemesis, pp. 210-211.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 212.

¹⁹⁷Tiusanen, Scenic Images, p. 311.



Figure 1

CHAPTER II

PROMPT BOOK

ACT ONE

THE STAGE CURTAINS ARE OPEN AND ARE NEVER CLOSED. HOUSE LIGHTS DIM TO HALF. FADE IN MUSIC (A CHOPIN NOCTURNE) AT TWO MINUTES BEFORE CURTAIN. FADE OUT MUSIC AS HOUSE LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE: THE ENTIRE ACTION OF THE PLAY OCCURS IN THE LIVING ROOM OF THE TYRONE SUMMER HOME. (FIGURE 1.)

TIME: 8:30 A.M. ON A DAY IN AUGUST, 1912.

AT RISE: IT IS AROUND 8:30 A.M. SUNSHINE COMES THROUGH THE BAY WINDOWS AT RIGHT. THE FAMILY HAVE JUST FINISHED BREAKFAST. AS MARY AND JAMES TYRONE ENTER FROM UP RIGHT AND CROSS DOWNSTAGE TO BAY WINDOWS AT RIGHT, LAUGHTER IS HEARD OFF STAGE UP RIGHT IN THE DINING ROOM. THE LAUGHTER IS FOLLOWED BY COUGHING. MARY TURNS NERVOUSLY TO LEFT AND CROSSES TO CHAIR AT LEFT OF SOFA AS THE LAUGHTER RESUMES. MARY TURNS HER HEAD, SMILING.

MARY

What's the joke, I wonder?

TYRONE

(GRUMPILY.) It's on me. I'll bet that much. (CROSSING TO TABLE AT BAY WINDOW AND GETTING A CIGAR.) It's always on the Old Man.

MARY

(TEASINGLY.) Yes, it's terrible the way we all pick on you, isn't it? You're so abused! (SHE LAUGHS--THEN WITH A PLEASED, RELIEVED AIR.) Well, no matter what the joke is about, it's a relief to hear Edmund laugh. He's been so down in the mouth lately.

TYRONE

(IGNORING THIS--RESENTFULLY.) Some joke of Jamie's, I'll wager. (LIGHTING A CIGAR.) He's forever making sneering fun of somebody, that one.

MARY

Now don't start in on poor Jamie, dear. (WITHOUT CONVICTION.) He'll turn out all right in the end, you wait and see.

TYRONE

He'd better start soon, then, He's nearly thirty-four. (CROSSES TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE CENTER STAGE.)

MARY

(IGNORING THIS.) Good heavens, are they going to stay in the dining room all day? (SHE GOES TO THE BACK PARLOR DOORWAY AND CALLS.) Jamie! Edmund! Come in the living room and give Cathleen a chance to clear the table. (EDMUND CALLS BACK, "WE'RE COMING, MAMA." SHE GOES BACK TO THE TABLE.)

TYRONE

(GRUMBLING. SITTING IN CHAIR LEFT AT TABLE CENTER.) You'd find excuses for him no matter what he did.

MARY

(SITTING IN CHAIR UP STAGE AT TABLE CENTER.) Shush. (THEIR SONS JAMES, JR. AND EDMUND ENTER TOGETHER FROM THE BACK PARLOR. THEY ARE BOTH GRINNING, STILL CHUCKLING OVER WHAT HAD CAUSED THEIR LAUGHTER, AND AS THEY COME FORWARD THEY GLANCE AT THEIR FATHER AND THEIR GRINS GROW BROADER. JAMIE CROSSES TO THE UP STAGE END OF THE SOFA STAGE RIGHT AND EDMUND CROSSES TO THE BOOKCASE UP STAGE AT THE STAIRCASE.) (FIGURE 2.)

MARY

(TURNS SMILINGLY TO THEM, IN A MERRY TONE THAT IS A BIT FORCED.) I've been teasing your father about his snoring. (TO TYRONE.) I'll leave it to the boys, James. They must have heard you. (TO JAMIE.) No, not you, Jamie. I could hear you down the hall almost as bad as your father. You're like him. As soon as your head touches the pillow you're off and ten foghorns couldn't wake you. (SHE STOPS ABRUPTLY, CATCHING JAMIE'S EYES REGARDING HER WITH AN UNEASY, PROBING LOOK. HER SMILE VANISHES AND HER MANNER BECOMES SELF-CONSCIOUS.) Why are you staring, Jamie? (HER HANDS FLUTTER UP TO HER HAIR. TURNS FULL FRONT.) Is my hair coming down? It's hard for me to do it up properly now. My eyes are getting so bad and I never can find my glasses.

JAMIE

(LOOKS AWAY GUILTILY.) Your hair's all right, Mama. I was only thinking how well you look.

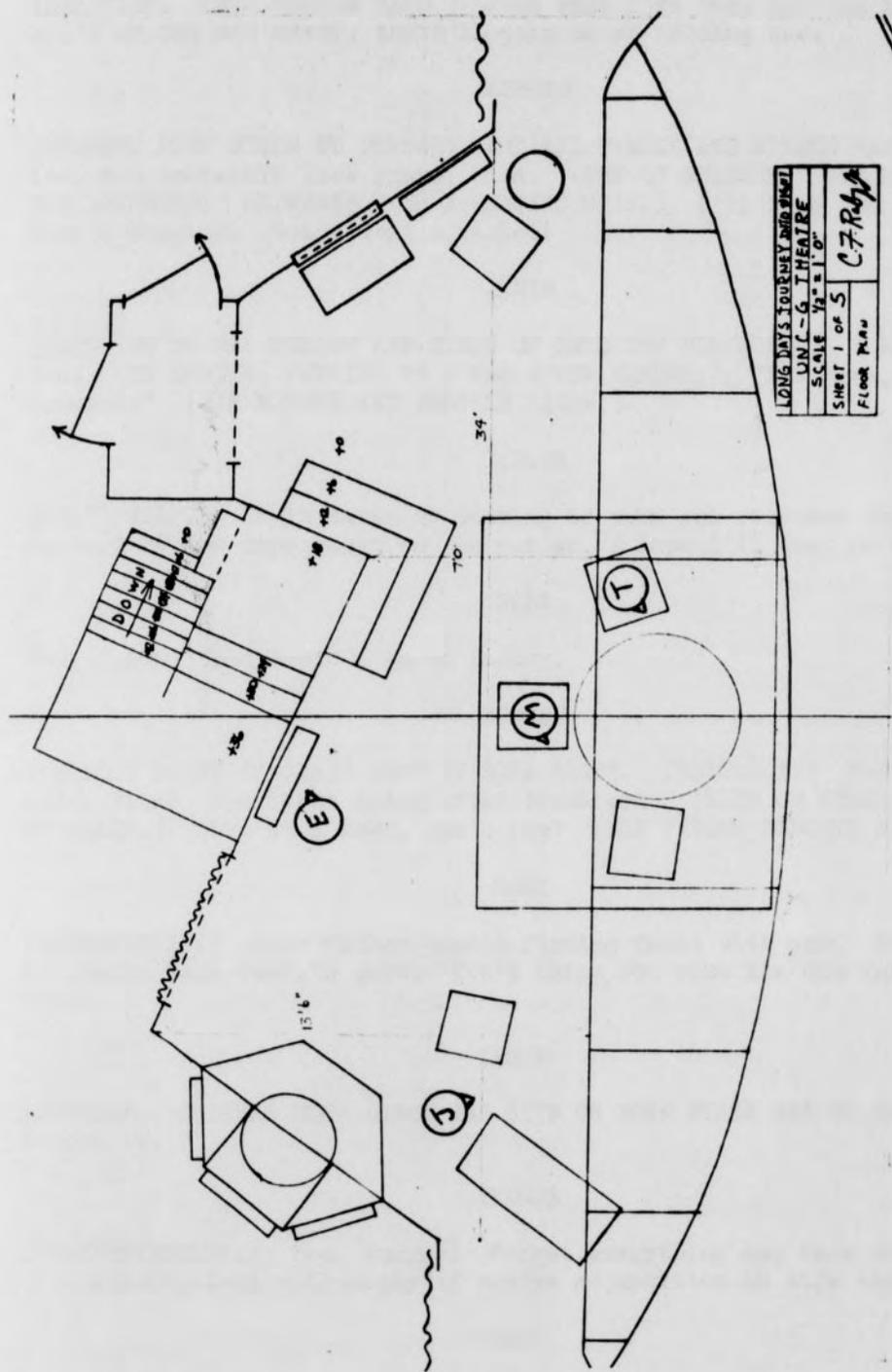


Figure 2

TYRONE

(HEARTILY. PATS MARY'S HAND.) Just what I've been telling her, Jamie. She's so fat and sassy, there'll soon be no holding her.

EDMUND

(CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO BETWEEN MARY AND TYRONE AND KISSES MARY ON CHEEK.) Yes, you certainly look grand, Mama. (SHE IS REASSURED AND SMILES AT HIM LOVINGLY. HE WINKS WITH A KIDDING GRIN.) I'll back you up about Papa's snoring. Gosh, what a racket!

JAMIE

(CROSSING TO BAY WINDOW AND STEPS UP ONTO THE PLATFORM.) I heard him, too. (HE QUOTES, PUTTING ON A HAM-ACTOR MANNER.) "The Moor, I know his trumpet." (HIS MOTHER AND BROTHER LAUGH.)

TYRONE

(SCATHINGLY.) If it takes my snoring to make you remember Shakespeare instead of the dope sheet on the ponies, I hope I'll keep on with it.

MARY

Now, James! You mustn't be so touchy.

EDMUND

(CROSSES RIGHT TO CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA RIGHT. IRRITABLY.) Yes, for Pete's sake, Papa! The first thing after breakfast. (SITS ON STAGE LEFT ARM OF CHAIR.) Give it a rest, can't you? (HIS FATHER IGNORES HIM.)

MARY

(REPROVINGLY.) Your father wasn't finding fault with you. You don't have to always take Jamie's part. You'd think you were the one ten years older.

JAMIE

(BOREDLY. CROSSES DOWN STAGE AND SITS ON DOWN STAGE END OF SOFA.) Let's forget it.

TYRONE

(CONTEMPTUOUSLY.) Yes, forget! Forget everything and face nothing! It's a convenient philosophy if you've no ambition in life except to--

MARY

James, do be quiet. (SHE PUTS AN ARM AROUND HIS SHOULDER--COAXINGLY.)

TO THE BOYS, CHANGING THE SUBJECT.) What were you two grinning about like Cheshire cats when you came in? What was the joke?

TYRONE

(WITH A PAINFUL EFFORT TO BE A GOOD SPORT.) Yes, let us in on it, lads.

EDMUND

(GRINS AT HIS FATHER PROVACATIVELY. RISES AND CROSSES TO CHAIR RIGHT AT TABLE CENTER.) Well, you remember, Papa, the ice pond on Harker's estate is right next to the farm, and you remember Shaughnessy, your tenant, keeps pigs. Well, (SITS) it seems there's a break in the fence and the pigs have been bathing in the millionaire's ice pond.

MARY

(SHOCKED AND AMUSED.) Good heavens!

EDMUND

The poor pigs, Shaughnessy yelled, had caught their death of cold. Many of them were dying of pneumonia, and several others had been taken down with cholera from drinking the poisoned water. He told Harker he was hiring a lawyer to sue him for damages. And he wound up by saying that he had to put up with poison ivy, ticks, potato bugs, snakes and skunks on his farm, but he was an honest man who drew the line somewhere, and he'd be damned if he'd stand for a Standard Oil thief trespassing. So would Harker kindly remove his dirty feet from the premises before he sicked the dog on him. And Harker did! (HE AND JAMIE LAUGH.)

MARY

(SHOCKED BUT GIGGLING.) Heavens, what a terrible tongue that man has!

TYRONE

(ADMIRINGLY BEFORE HE THINKS.) The damned old scoundrel! By God, you can't beat him! (HE LAUGHS--THEN STOPS ABRUPTLY AND SCOWLS.) The dirty blackguard! What a tenant he is, he'll get me in serious trouble yet. I hope you told him I'd be mad as hell--

EDMUND

I told him you'd be tickled to death over the great Irish victory, and so you are. Stop faking, Papa.

TYRONE

Well, I'm not tickled to death.

MARY

(TEASINGLY.) You are, too, James. You're simply delighted! (EDMUND AND JAMIE LAUGH.)

TYRONE

What are you laughing at? There's nothing funny--A fine son you are to help that blackguard get me into a lawsuit!

MARY

Now, James, don't lose your temper.

TYRONE

(TURNS ON JAMIE. TYRONE HALF RISES.) And you're worse than he is, encouraging him. (SITS.) I suppose you're regretting you weren't there to prompt Shaughnessy with a few nastier insults. You've a fine talent for that, if for nothing else.

MARY

James! There's no reason to scold Jamie. (JAMIE IS ABOUT TO MAKE SOME SNEERING REMARK TO HIS FATHER, BUT HE SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS. HE RISES AND CROSSES UP STAGE AND OVER TO THE BAY WINDOW AT RIGHT.)

EDMUND

(WITH SUDDEN NERVOUS EXASPERATION. HE RISES AND CROSSES UP CENTER TO STAIRWAY.) Oh, for God's sake, Papa! If you're starting that stuff again, I'll beat it. I left my book upstairs, anyway. (STOPS ON STAIRS.) God, Papa, I should think you'd get sick of hearing yourself--(EXITS.)

MARY

(RISES AND CROSSES UP CENTER TO BASE OF STAIRS.) You mustn't mind Edmund, James. Remember he isn't well. (TURNING TO TYRONE. EDMUND CAN BE HEARD COUGHING AS HE GOES UPSTAIRS. LOOKING UP STAIRS, SHE ADDS NERVOUSLY.) A summer cold makes anyone irritable.

JAMIE

(GENUINELY CONCERNED.) It's not just a cold he's got. The Kid is damned sick. (HIS FATHER GIVES HIM A SHARP WARNING LOOK BUT HE DOESN'T SEE IT.)

MARY

(TURNS ON HIM RESENTFULLY.) Why do you say that? It is just a cold! Anyone can tell that! You always imagine things!

TYRONE

(WITH ANOTHER WARNING GLANCE AT JAMIE--EASILY.) All Jamie meant was Edmund might have a touch of something else, too, which makes his cold worse.

JAMIE

Sure, Mama. That's all I meant. (TURNS RIGHT AWAY FROM MARY.)

TYRONE

Doctor Hardy thinks it might be a bit of malarial fever he caught when he was in the tropics. If it is, quinine will soon cure it.

MARY

(A LOOK OF CONTEMPTUOUS HOSTILITY FLASHES ACROSS HER FACE. SHE CROSSES DOWNSTAGE TO UPSTAGE SIDE OF TABLE CENTER.) Doctor Hardy! I wouldn't believe a thing he said, if he swore on a stack of Bibles! I know what doctors are. They're all alike. Anything, they don't care what, to keep you coming to them. (SHE STOPS SHORT, OVERCOME BY A FIT OF ACUTE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AS SHE CATCHES THEIR EYES FIXED ON HER. HER HANDS JERK NERVOUSLY TO HER HAIR. SHE FORCES A SMILE.) What is it! What are you looking at? Is my hair--?

TYRONE

(RISES AND CROSSES TO MARY. PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER--WITH GUILTY HEARTINESS, GIVING HER A PLAYFUL HUG.) There's nothing wrong with your hair. The healthier and fatter you get, the vainer you become. You'll soon spend half the day primping before the mirror.

MARY

(HALF REASSURED. SHE CROSSES TO CHAIR AT RIGHT OF TABLE AND SITS.) I really should have new glasses. My eyes are so bad now.

TYRONE

(WITH IRISH BLARNEY; HE CROSSES TO RIGHT TO BEHIND MARY.) Your eyes are beautiful, and well you know it. (HE GIVES HER A KISS. HER FACE LIGHTS UP WITH A CHARMING, SHY EMBARRASSMENT. SUDDENLY AND STARTLINGLY ONE SEES IN HER FACE THE GIRL SHE HAD ONCE BEEN, NOT A GHOST OF THE DEAD, BUT STILL A LIVING PART OF HER.)

MARY

You mustn't be so silly, James. Right in front of Jamie!

TYRONE

Oh, he's on to you too. He knows this fuss about eyes and hair is only fishing for compliments. Eh, Jamie?

JAMIE

(HIS FACE HAS CLEARED, TOO, AND THERE IS AN OLD BOYISH CHARM IN HIS LOVING SMILE AT HIS MOTHER.) Yes. You can't kid us, Mama.

MARY

(LAUGHS AND AN IRISH LILT COMES INTO HER VOICE.) Go along with both of you! (THEN SHE SPEAKS WITH A GIRLISH GRAVITY.) But I did truly have beautiful hair once, didn't I, James?

TYRONE

(CROSSING TO LEFT CENTER.) The most beautiful in the world!

MARY

It was a rare shade of reddish brown and so long it came down below my knees. You ought to remember it, too, Jamie. It wasn't until after Edmund was born that I had a single grey hair. (THE GIRLISHNESS FADES FROM HER FACE.)

TYRONE

(QUICKLY, AS HE CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT TO ROCKING CHAIR.) And that made it prettier than ever.

MARY

(AGAIN EMBARRASSED AND PLEASED. SHE RISES AND CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO TYRONE LEFT AT ROCKING CHAIR.) Will you listen to your father, Jamie-- after thirty-five years of marriage! He isn't a great actor for nothing, is he? What's come over you, James? Are you pouring coals of fire on my head for teasing you about snoring? Well then, I take it all back. It must have been only the foghorn I heard. (SHE LAUGHS, AND THEY LAUGH WITH HER. THEN SHE CHANGES TO A BRISK BUSINESSLIKE AIR. CROSSING DOWN CENTER.) But I can't stay with you any longer, even to hear compliments. I must see the cook about dinner and the day's marketing. Bridget is so lazy. And so sly. She begins telling me about her relatives so I can't get a word in edgeways and scold her. (CROSSING UP RIGHT TOWARD DINING ROOM.) Well, I might as well get it over. (SHE GOES TO THE DOORWAY, THEN TURNS, HER FACE WORRIED AGAIN.) You mustn't make Edmund work on the grounds with you, James, remember. (AGAIN WITH THE STRANGE OBSTINATE SET TO HER FACE.) Not that he isn't strong enough, but he'd perspire and he might catch more cold. (SHE DISAPPEARS THROUGH THE BACK PARLOR. TYRONE TURNS ON JAMIE CONDEMNINGLY AND CROSSES IN TOWARD HIM.)

TYRONE

You're a fine lunkhead! Haven't you any sense? (CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT TO ROCKING CHAIR.) The one thing to avoid is saying anything that would get her more upset over Edmund.

JAMIE

All right. Have it your way. I think it's the wrong idea to let Mama go on kidding herself. It will only make the shock worse when she has to face it. Anyway, you can see she's deliberately fooling herself with that summer cold talk. She knows better.

TYRONE

(SITS.) Knows? Nobody knows yet.

JAMIE

(CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.) Well, I do. I was with Edmund when he went to Doc Hardy on Monday. I heard him pull that touch of malaria stuff. He was stalling. That isn't what he thinks any more. You know it as well as I do. You talked to him when you went uptown yesterday, didn't you?

TYRONE

He couldn't say anything for sure yet. He's to phone me today before Edmund goes to him.

JAMIE

(SLOWLY.) He thinks it's consumption, doesn't he, Papa?

TYRONE

(RELUCTANTLY.) He said it might be.

JAMIE

(MOVED, HIS LOVE FOR HIS BROTHER COMING OUT. TURNS TO DOWN RIGHT AND CROSSES TOWARD DOWN RIGHT.) Poor kid! God damn it! (STOPS AND TURNS ON HIS FATHER ACCUSINGLY.) It might never have happened if you'd sent him to a real doctor when he first got sick.

TYRONE

What's the matter with Hardy? He's always been our doctor up here.

JAMIE

(CROSSES TO STAIRS UP CENTER AND ONTO FIRST STEP.) Everything's the matter with him! Even in this hick burg he's rated third class! He's a cheap old quack!

TYRONE

That's right! Run him down! Run down everybody! Everyone is a fake to you!

JAMIE

(CONTEMPTUOUSLY.) Hardy only charges a dollar. That's what makes you think he's a fine doctor!

TYRONE

(STUNG. HE RISES AND CROSSES UP STAGE AND STOPS OPPOSITE JAMIE.) That's enough! You're not drunk now! There's no excuse--(HE CONTROLS HIMSELF-- A BIT DEFENSIVELY. HE TURNS AND CROSSES TO LEFT CENTER.) If you mean I can't afford one of the fine society doctors who prey on the rich summer people--

JAMIE

Can't afford? You're one of the biggest property owners around here.

TYRONE

That doesn't mean I'm rich. It's all mortgaged--

JAMIE

Because you always buy more instead of paying off mortgages. (CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO TABLE CENTER.) If Edmund was a lousy acre of land you wanted, the sky would be the limit!

TYRONE

(TURNING TO JAMIE, HE CROSSES TOWARD HIM.) That's a lie! (CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO LEFT OF TABLE.) And your sneers against Doctor Hardy are lies! He doesn't put on frills, or have an office in a fashionable location, (CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) or drive around in an expensive automobile. That's what you pay for with those other five-dollars-to-look-at-your-tongue fellows, not their skill.

JAMIE

(WITH A SCORNFUL SHRUG OF HIS SHOULDERS. HE CROSSES RIGHT TO DOWN STAGE OF THE SOFA.) Oh, all right, I'm a fool to argue. You can't change a leopard's spots.

TYRONE

(WITH RISING ANGER.) No, you can't. You've taught me that lesson only too well. I've lost all hope you will ever change yours. (CROSSES DOWN CENTER.) You dare tell me what I can afford? You've never known the value of a dollar and never will! You've never saved a dollar in your life! At the end of each season you're penniless! You've thrown your salary away every week on whores and whiskey!

JAMIE

(CROSSES IN TO TYRONE.) My salary! (CROSSES UP STAGE TO CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA.) Christ!

TYRONE

(TURNS TO LEFT AND CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) It's more than you're worth, and you couldn't get that if it wasn't for me. If you weren't my son, there isn't a manager in the business who would give you a part, your reputation stinks so. As it is, I have to humble my pride and beg for you, saying you've turned over a new leaf, although I know it's a lie!

JAMIE

(CROSSES TO UP STAGE BEHIND CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA.) I never wanted to be an actor. You forced me on the stage.

TYRONE

(TURNING TO JAMIE.) That's a lie! You made no effort to find anything else to do. (CROSSES UP STAGE TO LEFT OF TABLE CENTER.) You left it to me to get you a job and I have no influence except in the theatre. Forced you! You never wanted to do anything except loaf in barrooms!

JAMIE

(CROSSING TO DOWN TO RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER AND OPPOSITE TYRONE.) I earn my board and lodging working on the grounds. It saves you hiring a man.

TYRONE

Bah! You have to be driven to do even that much! (HIS ANGER EBBS INTO A WEARY COMPLAINT.)

JAMIE

(WRYLY.) That's not true, Papa. You can't hear me talking to myself, that's all.

TYRONE

(STARES AT HIM PUZZLEDLY, THEN QUOTES MECHANICALLY. HE SITS IN THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) "Ingratitude, the vilest weed that grows"!

JAMIE

I could see that line coming! (TURNS RIGHT AND CROSSES TOWARD BAY WINDOW AT RIGHT.) God, how many thousand times--! (HE STOPS, BORED WITH THEIR QUARREL, AND SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS. BOREDLY, THEN CONTINUES TO CROSS TO BAY WINDOW AT RIGHT.) Let's forget me. I'm not interested in the subject. Neither are you. (TYRONE GIVES UP. JAMIE GOES ON CASUALLY. HE CROSSES TO CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.) What started us on this? Oh, Doc Hardy. When is he going to call you up about Edmund? (SITS.)

TYRONE

Around lunch time. (HE PAUSES--THEN DEFENSIVELY.) I couldn't have sent Edmund to a better doctor. Hardy's treated him whenever he was sick up here, since he was knee high. He knows his constitution as no other doctor could. It's not a question of my being miserly, as you'd like to make out. (BITTERLY.) And what could the finest specialist in America do for Edmund, after he's deliberately ruined his health by the mad life he's led ever since he was fired from college? Even before that when he was in prep school, he began dissipating and playing the Broadway sport to imitate you, when he's never had your constitution to stand it. You're a healthy hulk like me--or you were at his age--but he's always been a bundle of nerves like his mother. I've warned him for years his body couldn't stand it, but he wouldn't heed me, and now it's too late.

JAMIE

(SHARPLY.) What do you mean, too late? You talk as if you thought--

TYRONE

(GUILTILY EXPLOSIVE.) Don't be a damned fool! I meant nothing but what's plain to anyone! His health has broken down and he may be an invalid for a long time.

JAMIE

(STARES AT HIS FATHER, IGNORING HIS EXPLANATION.) I know it's an Irish peasant idea consumption is fatal. It probably is when you live in a hovel on a bog, but over here, with modern treatment--

TYRONE

Don't I know that! What are you gabbing about, anyway? And keep your dirty tongue off Ireland, with your sneers about peasants and bogs and

novels! (ACCUSINGLY.) The less you say about Edmund's sickness, the better for your conscience! You're more responsible than anyone!

JAMIE

(STUNG.) That's a lie! I won't stand for that, Papa!

TYRONE

(SITS FORWARD.) It's the truth! You've been the worst influence for him. He grew up admiring you as a hero! A fine example you set him! If you ever gave him advice except in the ways of rottenness, I've never heard of it! You made him old before his time, pumping him full of what you consider worldly wisdom, when he was too young to see that your mind was so poisoned by your own failure in life, you wanted to believe every man was a knave with his soul for sale, and every woman who wasn't a whore was a fool!

JAMIE

(WITH A DEFENSIVE AIR OF WEARY INDIFFERENCE AGAIN, HE RISES AND CROSSES UP RIGHT.) All right. I did put Edmund wise to things, but not until I saw he'd started to raise hell, and knew he'd laugh at me if I tried the good advice, older brother stuff. (CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO LEFT OF COUCH.) All I did was make a pal of him and be absolutely frank so he'd learn from my mistakes that--(HE SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS--CYNICALLY.) Well, that if you can't be good you can at least be careful. (HIS FATHER SNORTS CONTEMPTUOUSLY. SUDDENLY JAMIE BECOMES REALLY MOVED. HE CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT CENTER.) That's a rotten accusation, Papa. You know how much the Kid means to me, and how close we've always been--not like the usual brothers! I'd do anything for him.

TYRONE

(IMPRESSED--MOLLIFYINGLY.) I know you may have thought it was for the best, Jamie. I didn't say you did it deliberately to harm him.

TYRONE

(WITH A TOUCH OF PRIDE.) Whatever Edmund's done, he's had the guts to go off on his own, where he couldn't come whining to me the minute he was broke.

JAMIE

(STUNG INTO SNEERING JEALOUSY, HE CROSSES TO STAIRS UP CENTER.) He's always come home broke finally, hasn't he? And what did his going away get him? Look at him now! (HE IS SUDDENLY SHAMEFACED.) Christ! That's a lousy thing to say. I don't mean that.

TYRONE

(DECIDES TO IGNORE THIS.) He's been doing well on the newspaper. I was hoping he'd found the work he wants to do at last.

JAMIE

(SNEERING JEALOUSLY AGAIN. CROSSES DOWN TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) A hick town rag! Whatever bull they hand you, they tell me he's a pretty bum reporter. (TURNING TO TYRONE.) If he weren't your son--(ASHAMED AGAIN, HE TURNS AWAY AND CROSSES TO DOWN STAGE OF CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE.) No, that's not true! They're glad to have him, but it's the special stuff that gets him by. Some of the poems and parodies he's written are damned good. (GRUDGINGLY AGAIN.) Not that they'd ever get him anywhere on the big time. (HASTILY.) But he's certainly made a damned good start. (SITS IN CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.)

TYRONE

Yes. Edmund's made a start. (STARES AT HIM--THEN LOOKS AWAY--AFTER A PAUSE.) It's damnable luck he should be sick right now. It couldn't have come at a worse time for him. (PAUSE. HE ADDS, UNABLE TO CONCEAL AN ALMOST FURTIVE UNEASINESS.) Or for your mother. It's damnable she should have this to upset her, just when she needs peace and freedom from worry. She's been so well in the two months since she came home. (HIS VOICE GROWS HUSKY AND TREMBLES A LITTLE.) It's been heaven to me. This home has been a home again. But I needn't tell you, Jamie. (HIS SON LOOKS AT HIM, FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH AN UNDERSTANDING SYMPATHY. IT IS AS IF SUDDENLY A DEEP BOND OF COMMON FEELING EXISTED BETWEEN THEM IN WHICH THEIR ANTAGONISMS COULD BE FORGOTTEN.)

JAMIE

(ALMOST GENTLY.) I've felt the same way, Papa.

TYRONE

(CROSSING TOWARD WINDOW UP LEFT.) Yes, this time you can see how strong and sure of herself she is. She's a different woman entirely from the other times. She has control of her nerves--(AT LEFT OF STAIRS.) or she had until Edmund got sick. Now you can feel her growing tense and frightened underneath. (AT WINDOW UP LEFT.) I wish to God we could keep the truth from her, but we can't if he has to be sent to a sanatorium. (CROSSES TOWARD DOWN RIGHT TO UP CENTER OF TABLE AT CENTER.) What makes it worse is her father died of consumption. She worshiped him and she's never forgotten. Yes, it will be hard for her. (TURNS TO DOWN LEFT AND CROSSES DOWN THREE OR FOUR STEPS.) But she can do it! She has the will power now! We must help her, Jamie, in every way we can!

JAMIE

(MOVED.) Of course, Papa. (HESITANTLY.) Outside of nerves, she seems perfectly all right this morning.

TYRONE

(WITH HEARTY CONFIDENCE NOW.) Never better. She's full of fun and mischief. (SUDDENLY HE FROWNS AT JAMIE SUSPICIOUSLY.) Why do you say, seems? Why shouldn't she be all right? What the hell do you mean?

JAMIE

Don't start jumping down my throat! God, Papa, this ought to be one thing we can talk over frankly without a battle.

TYRONE

(CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE CENTER.) I'm sorry, Jamie. (TENSELY.) But go on and tell me--

JAMIE

There's nothing to tell. I was all wrong. It's just that last night-- (HE RISES AND CROSSES TO LEFT OF TABLE.) Well, you know how it is, I can't forget the past. I can't help being suspicious. Any more than you can. (BITTERLY.) That's the hell of it. And it makes it hell for Mama! She watches us watching her--

TYRONE

(SADLY, AS HE SITS IN CHAIR LEFT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) I know. (TENSELY, TURNING TOWARD JAMIE.) Well, what was it? Can't you speak out?

JAMIE

Around three o'clock this morning, I woke up and heard her moving around in the spare room. Then she went to the bathroom. I pretended to be asleep. She stopped in the hall to listen, as if she wanted to make sure I was.

TYRONE

(WITH FORCED SCORN.) For God's sake, is that all? She told me herself the foghorn kept her awake all night, and every night since Edmund's been sick she's been up and down, going to his room to see how he was.

JAMIE

Yes, that's right, she did stop to listen outside his room. (HESITANTLY AGAIN, AS HE CROSSES UP STAGE AND ONTO STAIRS.) It was her being in the spare room that scared me.

TYRONE

Where else could she go last night to get away from my snoring? (HE GIVES WAY TO A BURST OF RESENTFUL ANGER.) By God, how you can live with a mind that sees nothing but the worst motives behind everything is beyond me!

JAMIE

(STUNG. HE MAKES A DIAGONAL CROSS TO DOWN RIGHT AND LEFT OF THE SOFA.) Don't pull that! I've just said I was all wrong. Don't you suppose I'm as glad of that as you are!

TYRONE

(MOLLIFYINGLY.) I'm sure you are, Jamie. (A PAUSE. HIS EXPRESSION BECOMES SOMBER. HE SPEAKS SLOWLY WITH A SUPERSTITIOUS DREAD.) It would be like a curse she can't escape if worry over Edmund--It was in her long sickness after bringing him into the world that she first--

JAMIE

She didn't have anything to do with it!

TYRONE

I'm not blaming her.

JAMIE

(BITINGLY. HE CROSSES TO RIGHT TO THE TABLE CENTER OPPOSITE TYRONE.) Then who are you blaming? Edmund, for being born?

TYRONE

You damned fool! No one was to blame.

JAMIE

The bastard of a doctor was! From what Mama's said, he was another cheap quack like Hardy! You wouldn't pay for a first-rate--

TYRONE

(RISING.) That's a lie! (FURIOUSLY, AS HE CROSSES DOWN STAGE OF TABLE CENTER TOWARD JAMIE.) So I'm to blame! That's what you're driving at, is it! You evil-minded loafer! (JAMIE AND TYRONE STARE AT EACH OTHER. AS JAMIE LOWERS HIS EYES, TYRONE TURNS AWAY AND STARTS TO CROSS TOWARD DOWN LEFT; JAMIE CROSSES TOWARD UP RIGHT.)

JAMIE

(WARNINGLY AS HE HEARS HIS MOTHER IN THE DINING ROOM.) Ssh! (JAMIE

SPEAKS WITH A COMPLETE CHANGE OF TONE AND CROSSES TO UP LEFT.) Well, if we're going to cut the front hedge today, we'd better go to work.

TYRONE

(HEARING MARY APPROACHING FROM THE DINING ROOM, HE CHANGES HIS TONE AND CROSSES TO BAY WINDOW RIGHT.) Yes, it's too fine a morning to waste indoors arguing. (MARY ENTERS UP RIGHT FROM DINING ROOM. TYRONE TURNS TO HER.) Take a look out the window, Mary. There's no fog in the harbor. I'm sure the spell of it we've had is over now.

MARY

(GOING TO HIM.) I hope so, dear. (TO JAMIE, FORCING A SMILE AS SHE CROSSES IN TOWARD CENTER.) Did I actually hear you suggesting work on the front hedge, Jamie? Wonders will never cease! You must want pocket money badly.

JAMIE

(KIDDINGLY.) When don't I? (WITH A DERISIVE GLANCE AT HIS FATHER, HE CROSSES THREE OR FOUR STEPS DOWN STAGE.) I expect a salary of at least one large iron man at the end of the week--to carouse on!

MARY

(DOES NOT RESPOND TO HIS HUMOR--HER HANDS FLUTTERING OVER THE FRONT OF HER DRESS AS SHE CROSSES TOWARD JAMIE AND HOLDS UP STAGE OF TABLE.) What were you two arguing about?

JAMIE

(SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS.) The same old stuff.

MARY

I heard you say something about a doctor, (TURNS TOWARD TYRONE) and your father accusing you of being evil-minded.

JAMIE

(QUICKLY. HE CROSSES DOWN TO LEFT OF THE TABLE AT CENTER.) Oh, that. I was saying again Doc Hardy isn't my idea of the world's greatest physician.

MARY

(KNOWS HE IS LYING--VAGUELY. SHE CROSSES TO UP STAGE BEHIND CHAIR LEFT OF THE SOFA.) Oh. No, I wouln't say he was, either. (THEN WITH NERVOUS IRRITATION. SHE MOVES AROUND TO RIGHT OF THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE SOFA.) Well, if you're going to work on the hedge why don't you go? (HASTILY.) I mean, take advantage of the sunshine before the fog comes back.

(STRANGELY, AS IF TALKING ALOUD TO HERSELF. SHE CROSSES TO DOWN CENTER.) Because I know it will. (SUDDENLY SHE IS SELF-CONSCIOUSLY AWARE THAT THEY ARE BOTH STARING FIXEDLY AT HER--FLURRIEDLY, RAISING HER HANDS.) Or I should say, the rheumatism in my hands knows. It's a better weather prophet than you are, James. (SHE STARES AT HER HANDS WITH FASCINATED REPULSION.) Ugh! How ugly they are! Who'd ever believe they were once beautiful? (THEY STARE AT HER WITH A GROWING DREAD.)

TYRONE

(HE CROSSES TO MARY AT DOWN CENTER, TAKES HER HANDS AND GENTLY PUSHES THEM DOWN.) Now, now, Mary. None of that foolishness. They're the sweetest hands in the world. (SHE SMILES, HER FACE LIGHTING UP, AND KISSES HIM GRATEFULLY. TO JAMIE AS HE CROSSES TO DOORWAY UP LEFT.) Come on Jamie. Your mother's right to scold us. The way to start work is to start work. The hot sun will sweat some of that booze fat off your middle. (HE PAUSES, LOOKS AT MARY, THEN JAMIE, AND THEN EXITS THROUGH FRONT DOOR UP LEFT.)

JAMIE

(WITH AN AWKWARD, UNEASY TENDERNESS, HE MOVES DOWNSTAGE TO MARY.) We're all so proud of you, Mama, so darned happy. (SHE STIFFENS AND STARES AT HIM WITH A FRIGHTENED DEFIANCE. HE FLOUNDERS ON AS HE TAKES MARY'S HAND.) But you've still got to be careful. You mustn't worry so much about Edmund. He'll be all right.

MARY

(WITH A STUBBORN, BITTERLY RESENTFUL LOOK.) Of course, he'll be all right. And I don't know what you mean, warning me to be careful.

JAMIE

(REBUFFED AND HURT, SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS.) All right, Mama. I'm sorry I spoke. (EXITS THROUGH FRONT DOOR UP LEFT. MARY WAITS UNTIL JAMIE HAS GONE THEN CROSSES UP CENTER TO THE CHAIR CENTER AT THE TABLE AND SITS, HER FACE BETRAYING A FRIGHTENED, FURTIVE, DESPERATION, HER HANDS ROVING OVER THE TABLE TOP, AIMLESSLY MOVING OBJECTS AROUND. SHE HEARS EDMUND DESCENDING THE STAIRS AND SPRINGS TO HER FEET AND QUICKLY CROSSES TO STAGE RIGHT TO THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE SOFA. SHE IS LOOKING OUT THE BAY WINDOW AT RIGHT, APPARENTLY CALM, AS EDMUND ENTERS DOWN THE STAIRS UP CENTER; HE IS CARRYING A BOOK IN ONE HAND. AS MARY TURNS TO HIM, HE STOPS ON THE STAIRS AND HOLDS.

MARY

Here you are. I was just going upstairs to look for you.

EDMUND

I waited until they went out. I don't want to mix up in any arguments. I feel too rotten.

MARY

(ALMOST RESENTFULLY.) Oh, I'm sure you don't feel half as badly as you make out. (SHE CROSSES UP TO EDMUND WHO HAS STEPPED OFF THE STAIRS.) You're such a baby. You like to get us worried so we'll make a fuss over you. (HASTILY.) I'm only teasing, dear. I know how miserably uncomfortable you must be. But you feel better today, don't you? (WORRIEDLY, TAKING HIS ARM.) All the same, you've grown much too thin. You need to rest all you can. Sit down and I'll make you comfortable. (MARY LEADS EDMUND TO ROCKING CHAIR AT LEFT. AS EDMUND SITS, MARY STEPS BEHIND ROCKER AND PUTS A PILLOW BEHIND HIS BACK.) There. How's that?

EDMUND

Grand. Thanks, Mama.

MARY

(KISSES HIM--TENDERLY.) All you need is your mother to nurse you. Big as you are, you're still the baby of the family to me, you know.

EDMUND

(TAKES HER HAND--WITH DEEP SERIOUSNESS.) Never mind me. You take care of yourself. That's all that counts.

MARY

(EVADING HIS EYES.) But I am, dear. (FORCING A LAUGH AS SHE MOVES TO IN FRONT AND RIGHT OF EDMUND.) Heavens, don't you see how fat I've grown! I'll have to have all my dresses let out. (SHE TURNS AWAY AND GOES TO THE WINDOW AT UP LEFT. SHE ATTEMPTS A LIGHT, AMUSED TONE.) They've started clipping the hedge. Poor Jamie! How he hates working in front where everyone passing can see him. (LOOKING OUT OF WINDOW.) There go the Chatfields in their new Mercedes. It's a beautiful car, isn't it? Not like our secondhand Packard. (SHE TURNS BACK FROM THE WINDOW AND CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) Not that I want anything to do with them. I've always hated this town and everyone in it. You know that. I never wanted to live here in the first place, but your father liked it and insisted on building this house, and I've had to come here every summer.

EDMUND

Well, it's better than spending the summer in a New York hotel, isn't it?

MARY

(SHE CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO RIGHT OF DOWN CENTER.) I've never felt it was my home. It was wrong from the start. Everything was done in the cheapest way. Your father would never spend the money to make it right. It's just as well we haven't any friends here. (CONTINUING TO PACE, SHE MOVES UP STAGE TO RIGHT OF UP CENTER.) I'd be ashamed to have them step in the door. But he's never wanted family friends. He hates calling on people, or receiving them. All he likes is to hobnob with men at the Club or in a barroom. (SHE MOVES DOWN TO CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE CENTER.) Jamie and you are the same way, but you're not to blame. You've never had a chance to meet decent people here. I know you both would have been so different if you'd been able to associate with nice girls instead of--

EDMUND

(IRRITABLY.) Oh, Mama, forget it! Who cares? Jamie and I would be bored stiff. And about the Old Man, what's the use of talking? You can't change him.

MARY

(MECHANICALLY REBUKING.) Don't call your father the Old Man. You should have more respect. (THEN DULLY.) I know it's useless to talk. But sometimes I feel so lonely. (HER LIPS QUIVER AND SHE KEEPS HER HEAD TURNED AWAY.)

EDMUND

Anyway, you've got to be fair, Mama. It may have been all his fault in the beginning, but you know later on, even if he'd wanted to, we couldn't have had people here--

MARY

(WINGING--HER LIPS QUIVERING PITIFULLY.) Don't. I can't bear having you remind me.

EDMUND

(RISES AND CROSSES RIGHT TO TABLE CENTER.) Don't take it that way! Please, Mama! I'm trying to help. Because it's bad for you to forget. The right way is to remember. So you'll always be on your guard.

MARY

(STRICKENLY.) Please, dear. I know you mean for the best, but--(A DEFENSIVE UNEASINESS COMES INTO HER VOICE AGAIN. SHE MOVES TOWARD DOWN RIGHT AND STOPS BETWEEN THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE SOFA AND THE CHAIR RIGHT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) I don't understand why you should suddenly say such things. What put it in your mind this morning?

EDMUND

(EVASIVELY, AS HE MOVES THREE OR FOUR STEPS TOWARD DOWN LEFT.) Nothing. Just because I feel rotten and blue, I suppose.

MARY

(MOVES INTO RIGHT CENTER.) Tell me the truth. Why are you so suspicious all of a sudden?

EDMUND

I'm not!

MARY

(MOVING QUICKLY DOWN STAGE TO A LITTLE RIGHT OF DOWN CENTER.) Oh, yes you are. I can feel it. Your father and Jamie, too--particularly Jamie.

EDMUND

Now don't start imagining things, Mama.

MARY

(HER HANDS FLUTTERING. STARTING TO PACE AGAIN, SHE TURNS AND CROSSES TO UP CENTER.) It makes it so much harder, living in this atmosphere of constant suspicion, knowing everyone is spying on me, and none of you believe in me, or trust me.

EDMUND

That's crazy, Mama. We do trust you.

MARY

(CROSSING DOWN STAGE TO LEFT CENTER.) If there was only some place I could go to get away for a day, or even an afternoon, some woman friend I could talk to--not about anything serious, simply laugh and gossip and forget for a while--someone besides the servants--that stupid Cathleen!

EDMUND

(GETS UP WORRIEDLY AND PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER.) Stop it, Mama. You're getting yourself worked up over nothing.

MARY

(BREAKING AWAY FROM EDMUND, SHE CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) Your father goes out. He meets his friends in barrooms or at the Club. You and Jamie have the boys you know. You go out. But I am alone. I've always been alone.

EDMUND

(SOOTHINGLY.) Come now! You know that's a fib. One of us always stays around to keep you company.

MARY

(BITTERLY.) Because you're afraid to trust me alone! (SHE TURNS ON HIM--SHARPLY. SHE CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO LEFT OF DOWN CENTER.) I insist you tell me why you act so differently this morning--why you felt you had to remind me--

EDMUND

(HESITATES--THEN BLURTS OUT GUILTILY.) It's stupid. It's just that I wasn't asleep when you came in my room last night. You didn't go back to your and Papa's room. You went in the spare room for the rest of the night.

MARY

(CROSSING TO DOWN RIGHT.) Because your father's snoring was driving me crazy! For heaven's sake, haven't I often used the spare room as my bedroom? (SOFTENING HER TONE, TRYING TO GAIN CONTROL OF HERSELF, SHE TURNS TOWARD EDMUND.) But I see what you thought. That was when--

EDMUND

(TOO VEHEMENTLY. HE TURNS AWAY FROM MARY AND CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) I didn't think anything!

MARY

(NERVOUSLY AS SHE CROSSES TO EDMUND AT DOWN LEFT.) So you pretended to be asleep in order to spy on me!

EDMUND

No! I did it because I knew if you found out I was feverish and couldn't sleep, it would upset you.

MARY

(SHE MOVES QUICKLY UP STAGE TO STAIRS UP CENTER.) Jamie was pretending to be asleep, too, I'm sure, and I suppose your father--

EDMUND

(CROSSING QUICKLY TO MARY AT STAIRS UP CENTER.) Stop it, Mama!

MARY

Oh, I can't bear it, Edmund, when even you--! (HER HANDS FLUTTER UP TO PAT HER HAIR IN THEIR AIMLESS, DISTRACTED WAY. SUDDENLY, A STRANGE UNDERCURRENT OF REVENGEFULNESS COMES INTO HER VOICE. SHE CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO TABLE.) It would serve all of you right if it was true!

EDMUND

(CROSSING DOWN TO LEFT OF MARY.) Mama! Don't say that! That's the way you talk when--

MARY

Stop suspecting me! (CROSSES TO EDMUND.) Please, dear! You hurt me! I couldn't sleep because I was thinking about you. That's the real reason! I've been so worried ever since you've been sick. (SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM AND HUGS HIM WITH A FRIGHTENED, PROTECTIVE TENDERNESS.)

EDMUND

(SOOTHINGLY, AS HE MOVES AWAY TWO OR THREE STEPS DOWN LEFT.) That's foolishness. You know it's only a bad cold.

MARY

(MOVES TO DOWN RIGHT CORNER OF TABLE CENTER.) Yes, of course, I know that!

EDMUND

But listen, Mama. I want you to promise me that even if it should turn out to be something worse, you'll know I'll soon be all right again, anyway, and you won't worry yourself sick, and you'll keep on taking care of yourself--

MARY

(FRIGHTENEDLY, AS SHE CROSSES TO DOWN RIGHT.) I won't listen when you're so silly! There's absolutely no reason to talk as if you expected something dreadful! Of course, I promise you. (TURNS TOWARD EDMUND.) I give you my sacred word of honor! (THEN WITH A SAD BITTERNESS. SHE MOVES IN TOWARD DOWN CENTER TWO OR THREE STEPS.) But I suppose you're remembering I've promised before on my word of honor.

EDMUND

No!

MARY

(HER BITTERNESS RECEDING INTO A RESIGNED HELPLESSNESS. CROSSING TO DOWN

CENTER.) I'm not blaming you, dear. How can you help it? How can any one of us forget? (STRANGELY.) That's what makes it so hard--for all of us. We can't forget.

EDMUND

(HE CROSSES TO MARY AT DOWN CENTER AND GRABS HER SHOULDER.) Mama! Stop it!

MARY

(FORCING A SMILE.) All right, dear. I didn't mean to be so gloomy. Don't mind me. Here. (TOUCHES EDMUND'S FOREHEAD.) Let me feel your head. Why, it's nice and cool. You certainly haven't any fever now.

EDMUND

Forget! It's you--

MARY

(TURNING AWAY FROM EDMUND, SHE CROSSES UP STAGE TO CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA.) But I'm quite all right, dear. (WITH A QUICK, STRANGE, CALCULATING, ALMOST SLY GLANCE AT HIM, AS EDMUND MOVES TO LEFT OF TABLE.) Except I naturally feel tired and nervous this morning, after such a bad night. I really ought to go upstairs and lie down until lunch time--and take a nap. (HE GIVES HER AN INSTINCTIVE LOOK OF SUSPICION--THEN, ASHAMED OF HIMSELF, LOOKS QUICKLY AWAY. SHE HURRIES ON NERVOUSLY. CROSSES TO CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE.) What are you going to do? Read here? It would be much better for you to go out in the fresh air and sunshine. But don't get overheated, remember. Be sure and wear a hat. (SHE STOPS, LOOKING STRAIGHT AT HIM NOW. HE AVOIDS HER EYES. THERE IS A TENSE PAUSE. THEN SHE SPEAKS JEERINGLY.) Or are you afraid to trust me alone?

EDMUND

(TORMENTEDLY, HE CROSSES TO MARY.) No! Can't you stop talking like that! I think you ought to take a nap. (HE GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR--FORCING A JOKING TONE.) I'll go down and help Jamie bear up. I love to lie in the shade and watch him work. (HE FORCES A LAUGH IN WHICH SHE MAKES HERSELF JOIN. THEN HE GOES OUT ON THE PORCH AND DISAPPEARS DOWN THE STEPS. HER FIRST REACTION IS ONE OF RELIEF. SHE APPEARS TO RELAX. SHE SITS DOWN IN THE CHAIR AT REAR OF TABLE AND LEANS HER HEAD BACK, CLOSING HER EYES. BUT SUDDENLY SHE GROWS TERRIBLY TENSE AGAIN. HER EYES OPEN AND SHE STRAINS FORWARD, SEIZED BY A FIT OF NERVOUS PANIC. SHE BEGINS A DESPERATE BATTLE WITH HERSELF. HER LONG FINGERS, WARPED AND KNOTTED BY RHEUMATISM, DRUM ON THE ARMS OF THE CHAIR, DRIVEN BY AN INSISTENT LIFE OF THEIR OWN, WITHOUT HER CONSENT. MARY TURNS AND LOOKS UP THE STAIRS. AS SHE TURNS BACK TOWARD A FULL FRONT POSITION, THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE INTO A BLACKOUT.)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

THERE IS A TEN SECOND BLACKOUT BETWEEN ACT ONE AND ACT TWO, SCENE ONE.

SCENE: THE SAME AS ACT ONE.

TIME: AROUND 12:45 P.M. THE SAME DAY.

AT RISE: AS THE LIGHTS COME UP, NO SUNLIGHT COMES INTO THE ROOM THROUGH THE WINDOWS AT RIGHT OR LEFT. OUTSIDE THE DAY IS STILL FINE BUT INCREASINGLY SULTRY, WITH A FAINT HAZINESS IN THE AIR WHICH SOFTENS THE GLARE OF THE SUN. EDMUND IS SEATED IN THE ROCKING CHAIR AT LEFT CENTER READING A BOOK. HE IS TRYING TO CONCENTRATE BUT CANNOT. HE SEEMS TO BE LISTENING FOR SOME SOUND FROM UPSTAIRS. HIS MANNER IS NERVOUSLY APPREHENSIVE AND HE LOOKS MORE SICKLY THAN IN THE PREVIOUS ACT. FINALLY HE RISES AND CROSSES TO THE STAIRS AND STARTS UP. HE STOPS, RETURNS TO THE ROCKER AND SITS. AS HE RESUMES HIS READING, CATHLEEN ENTERS FROM UP RIGHT CARRYING A TRAY ON WHICH THERE IS A BOTTLE OF BONDED BOURBON, SEVERAL WHISKEY GLASSES, AND A PITCHER OF ICE WATER.

CATHLEEN

(WHEN SHE SEES EDMUND, SHE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER AND PUTS DOWN TRAY. WITH GARRULOUS FAMILIARITY.) Here's the whiskey. It'll be lunch time soon. Will I call your father and Mister Jamie, or will you?

EDMUND

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP FROM HIS BOOK.) You do it.

CATHLEEN

It's a wonder your father wouldn't look at his watch once in a while. He's a divil for making the meals late, and then Bridget curses me as if I was to blame. But he's a grand handsome man, if he is old. You'll never see the day you're as good looking--nor Mister Jamie, either. (SHE CHUCKLES.) I'll wager Mister Jamie wouldn't miss the time to stop work and have his drop of whiskey if he had a watch to his name!

EDMUND

(GIVES UP TRYING TO IGNORE HER AND GRINS.) You win that one.

CATHLEEN

And here's another I'd win, that you're making me call them so you can sneak a drink before they come.

EDMUND

Well, I hadn't thought of that--

CATHLEEN

(TAKING THREE STEPS TOWARD DOWN RIGHT.) Oh no, not you! Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth, I suppose.

EDMUND

But now you suggest it--

CATHLEEN

(SUDDENLY PRIMLY VIRTUOUS.) I'd never suggest a man or a woman touch drink, Mister Edmund. Sure, didn't it kill an uncle of mine in the old country. (RELENTING. SHE CROSSES UP CENTER OF TABLE AT CENTER.) Still, a drop now and then is no harm when you're in low spirits, or have a bad cold.

EDMUND

Thanks for handing me a good excuse. (THEN WITH FORCED CASUALNESS. CATHLEEN LAUGHS AND STARTS TO EXIT UP LEFT.) You'd better call my mother, too. (CATHLEEN STOPS AND TURNS TO EDMUND.)

CATHLEEN

What for? She's always on time without any calling. God bless her, she has some consideration for the help.

EDMUND

She's been taking a nap.

CATHLEEN

She wasn't asleep when I finished my work upstairs a while back. She was lying down in the spare room with her eyes wide open. She'd a terrible headache, she said.

EDMUND

(HIS CASUALNESS MORE FORCED.) Oh well then, just call my father.

CATHLEEN

(GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR, GRUMBLING GOOD-NATUREDLY.) No wonder my feet kill me each night. I won't walk out in this heat and get sunstroke. I'll call from the porch. (SHE GOES OUT ON THE SIDE PORCH, LETTING THE SCREEN DOOR SLAM BEHIND HER, AND DISAPPEARS ON HER WAY TO THE FRONT PORCH. A MOMENT LATER SHE IS HEARD SHOUTING.) Mister Tyrone! Mister Jamie! It's time! (EDMUND, WHO HAS BEEN STARING FRIGHTENEDLY BEFORE HIM, FORGETTING HIS BOOK, SPRINGS TO HIS FEET NERVOUSLY. HE CROSSES TO LEFT OF TABLE.)

EDMUND

God, what a wench! (HE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TABLE. HE GRABS THE BOTTLE AND POURS A DRINK, ADDS ICE WATER AND DRINKS. AS HE DOES SO, HE HEARS SOMEONE COMING IN THE FRONT DOOR. HE PUTS GLASS BACK ON TRAY AND CROSSES BACK TO CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE AND SITS, PRETENDING TO READ HIS BOOK. JAMIE ENTERS, SEES EDMUND AND CROSSES IN TO UP CENTER OF THE TABLE; HE TAKES ONE LOOK AT THE BOTTLE AND GLASSES AND SMILES CYNICALLY.)

JAMIE

Sneaking one, eh? Cut out the bluff, Kid. You're a rottener actor than I am.

EDMUND

(GRINS.) Yes, I grabbed one while the going was good. Why don't you sneak one while you've got a chance?

JAMIE

I was thinking of that little thing. (HE GOES QUICKLY TO THE WINDOW AT LEFT.) The Old Man was talking to old Captain Turner. Yes, he's still at it. (HE COMES BACK AND TAKES A DRINK.) And now to cover up from his eagle eye. He memorizes the level in the bottle after every drink. (HE MEASURES TWO DRINKS OF WATER AND POURS THEM IN THE WHISKEY BOTTLE AND SHAKES IT UP.) There. That fixes it. (HE POURS WATER IN THE GLASS AND SETS IT ON THE TABLE BY EDMUND.) And here's the water you've been drinking.

EDMUND

Fine! You don't think it will fool him, do you?

JAMIE

Maybe not, but he can't prove it. (HE SITS IN CHAIR AT RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER. IRRITABLY.) I hope he doesn't forget lunch listening to himself talk. I'm hungry. (ABRUPTLY.) Where's mama?

EDMUND

Upstairs.

JAMIE

(LOOKS AT HIM SHARPLY.) When did she go up?

EDMUND

Oh, about the time I came down to the hedge, I guess. She said she was going to take a nap.



JAMIE

You didn't tell me--

EDMUND

(DEFENSIVELY.) Why should I? What about it? She was tired out. She didn't get much sleep last night.

JAMIE

I know she didn't. (A PAUSE. THE BROTHERS AVOID LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.)

EDMUND

That damned foghorn kept me awake, too. (ANOTHER PAUSE.)

JAMIE

She's been upstairs alone all morning, eh? You haven't seen her?

EDMUND

No. I've been reading here. I wanted to give her a chance to sleep.

JAMIE

Is she coming down to lunch?

EDMUND

Of course.

JAMIE

(DRYLY. RISES AND CROSSES UP CENTER ONTO STAIRS.) No of course about it. She might not want any lunch. Or she might start having most of her meals alone upstairs. That's happened, hasn't it?

EDMUND

(WITH FRIGHTENED RESENTMENT. HE OVERLAPS JAMIE'S LAST SENTENCE.) Cut it out, Jamie! Can't you think anything but--? (PERSUASIVELY.) You're all wrong to suspect anything. Cathleen saw her not long ago. Mama didn't tell her she wouldn't be down to lunch.

JAMIE

Then she wasn't taking a nap?

EDMUND

Not right then, but she was lying down, Cathleen said.

JAMIE

In the spare room?

EDMUND

Yes. For Pete's sake, what of it?

JAMIE

(BURSTS OUT. HE CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) You damned fool! Why did you leave her alone so long? Why didn't you stick around?

EDMUND

Because she accused me--and you and Papa--of spying on her all the time and not trusting her. She made me feel ashamed. I know how rotten it must be for her. And she promised on her sacred word of honor--

JAMIE

(WITH A BITTER WEARINESS.) You ought to know that doesn't mean anything.

EDMUND

It does this time!

JAMIE

That's what we thought the other times. (TURNING TO EDMUND.) Listen, Kid, I know you think I'm a cynical bastard, but remember I've seen a lot more of this game than you have. You never knew what was really wrong until you were in prep school. Papa and I kept it from you. But I was wise ten years or more before we had to tell you. (CROSSING TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) I know the game backwards and I've been thinking all morning of the way she acted last night when she thought we were asleep. I haven't been able to think of anything else. And now you tell me she got you to leave her alone upstairs all morning.

EDMUND

She didn't! You're crazy!

JAMIE

(PLACATINGLY.) All right, Kid. Don't start a battle with me. I hope as much as you do I'm crazy. I've been as happy as hell because I'd really begun to believe that this time--(HE STOPS--LOOKING UPSTAIRS--LOWERING HIS VOICE, HURRIEDLY.) She's coming downstairs. You win on that. I guess I'm a damed suspicious louse. (THEY GROW TENSE WITH A HOPEFUL, FEARFUL EXPECTANCY. JAMIE MUTTERS.) Damn! I wish I'd grabbed another drink.

EDMUND

Me, too. (JAMIE CROSSES RIGHT TO CHAIR AT SOFA. EDMUND COUGHS NERVOUSLY AND THIS BRINGS ON A REAL FIT OF COUGHING. JAMIE GLANCES AT HIM WITH WORRIED PITY. MARY ENTERS FROM UPSTAIRS. AT FIRST ONE NOTICES NO CHANGE EXCEPT THAT SHE APPEARS TO BE LESS NERVOUS, TO BE MORE AS SHE WAS WHEN WE FIRST SAW HER AFTER BREAKFAST, BUT THEN ONE BECOMES AWARE THAT HER EYES ARE BRIGHTER, AND THERE IS A PECULIAR DETACHMENT IN HER VOICE AND MANNER, AS IF SHE WERE A LITTLE WITHDRAWN FROM HER WORDS AND ACTIONS.)

MARY

(GOES WORRIEDLY TO EDMUND AND PUTS HER ARM AROUND HIM.) You mustn't cough like that. It's bad for your throat. You don't want to get a sore throat on top of your cold. (SHE KISSES HIM. HE STOPS COUGHING AND GIVES HER A QUICK APPREHENSIVE GLANCE, BUT IF HIS SUSPICIONS ARE AROUSED HER TENDERNESS MAKES HIM RENOUNCE THEM AND HE BELIEVES WHAT HE WANTS TO BELIEVE FOR THE MOMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, JAMIE KNOWS AFTER ONE PROBING LOOK AT HER THAT HIS SUSPICIONS ARE JUSTIFIED. HIS EYES FALL TO STARE AT THE FLOOR, HIS FACE SETS IN AN EXPRESSION OF EMBITTERED, DEFENSIVE CYNICISM. MARY GOES ON, HALF SITTING ON THE ARM OF EDMUND'S CHAIR, HER ARM AROUND HIM, SO HER FACE IS ABOVE AND BEHIND HIS AND HE CANNOT LOOK INTO HER EYES.) But I seem to be always picking on you, telling you don't do this and don't do that. Forgive me, dear. It's just that I want to take care of you.

EDMUND

I know, Mama. How about you? Do you feel rested?

MARY

Yes, ever so much better. I've been lying down ever since you went out. It's what I needed (JAMIE TURNS AND LOOKS AT MARY.) after such a restless night. I don't feel nervous now.

EDMUND

That's fine. (HE PATS HER HAND ON HIS SHOULDER. JAMIE GIVES HIM A STRANGE, ALMOST CONTEMPTUOUS GLANCE, WONDERING IF HIS BROTHER CAN REALLY MEAN THIS. EDMUND DOES NOT NOTICE BUT HIS MOTHER DOES.)

MARY

(IN A FORCED TEASING TONE.) Good heavens, how down in the mouth you look, Jamie. What's the matter now.

JAMIE

(SITS IN CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA. WITHOUT LOOKING AT HER.) Nothing.

MARY

Oh, I'd forgotten you've been working on the front hedge. That accounts for your sinking into the dumps, doesn't it?

JAMIE

If you want to think so, Mama.

MARY

(KEEPING HER TONE.) Well, that's the effect it always has, isn't it? What a big baby you are! Isn't he, Edmund?

EDMUND

He's certainly a fool to care what anyone thinks.

MARY

(STRANGELY.) Yes, the only way is to make yourself not care. (SHE CATCHES JAMIE GIVING HER A BITTER GLANCE AND CHANGES THE SUBJECT.) Where is your father? I heard Cathleen call him.

JAMIE

(HE RISES AND CROSSES TO BAY WINDOW AT RIGHT.) She's down there now. (SNEERINGLY.) Interrupting the famous Beautiful Voice! She should have more respect.

MARY

(SHARPLY--LETTING HER RESENTMENT TOWARD HIM COME OUT.) It's you who should have more respect! Stop sneering at your father! I won't have it. You ought to be proud you're his son! You, who, thanks to him, have never had to work hard in your life! (STUNG, JAMIE HAS TURNED TO STARE AT HER WITH ACCUSING ANTAGONISM. HER EYES WAVER GUILTILY AND SHE ADDS IN A TONE WHICH BEGINS TO PLACATE.) You really ought to show more consideration.

JAMIE

I ought to?

EDMUND

(UNEASILY.) Oh, dry up, Jamie! (JAMIE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AGAIN.) And for Pete's sake, Mama, why jump on Jamie all of a sudden?

MARY

(BITTERLY.) Because he's always sneering at someone else, always

looking for the worst weakness in everyone. (THEN WITH A STRANGE, ABRUPT CHANGE TO A DETACHED, IMPERSONAL TONE, NERVOUSLY TOUCHING EDMUND.) But I suppose life has made him like that, and he can't help it. None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.

EDMUND

(ATTEMPTING UNEASILY TO LOOK UP IN HER EYES.) What makes you ramble on like that, Mama?

MARY

(QUICKLY CASUAL--PATTING HIS CHEEK.) Why, nothing in particular, dear. It is foolish. (AS MARY FINISHES SPEAKING, CATHLEEN ENTERS FROM DINING ROOM UP RIGHT AND CROSSES INTO ROOM THREE STEPS.)

CATHLEEN

(VOLUBLY.) Lunch is ready, Ma'am, I went down to Mister Tyrone, like you ordered, and he said he'd come right away, but he kept on talking to that man, telling him of the time when--

MARY

(INDIFFERENTLY.) All right, Cathleen. Tell Bridget I'm sorry but she'll have to wait a few minutes until Mister Tyrone is here. (CATHLEEN MUTTERS, "YES, MA'AM," AND GOES OFF UP RIGHT, GRUMBLING TO HERSELF.)

JAMIE

Damn it! Why don't you go ahead without him? He's told us to.

MARY

(WITH A REMOTE, AMUSED SMILE.) He doesn't mean it. Don't you know your father yet? He'd be so terribly hurt.

EDMUND

(RISES AND CROSSES UP LEFT TO FRONT DOOR AND EXITS. MARY RISES AND CROSSES TO BEHIND CHAIR.) I'll make him get a move on. (A MOMENT LATER HE IS HEARD CALLING FROM THE PORCH EXASPERATEDLY.) Hey! Papa! Come on! We can't wait all day! (MARY'S HANDS PLAY RESTLESSLY OVER THE BACK OF THE CHAIR. SHE DOES NOT LOOK AT JAMIE, BUT SHE FEELS THE CYNICALLY APPRAISING GLANCE HE GIVES HER FACE AND HANDS.)

MARY

(TENSELY.) Why do you stare like that?

JAMIE

You know. (HE TURNS BACK TO THE WINDOW.)

MARY

I don't know.

JAMIE

Oh, for God's sake, do you think you can fool me, Mama? I'm not blind.

MARY

(LOOKS DIRECTLY AT HIM NOW, HER FACE SET AGAIN IN AN EXPRESSION OF BLANK, STUBBORN DENIAL.) I don't know what you're talking about.

JAMIE

(HE TURNS TO MARY.) No? Take a look at your eyes in the mirror!

EDMUND

(ENTERING FROM UP LEFT AND CROSSING TO RIGHT OF UP CENTER, STOPS.) I got Papa moving. He'll be here in a minute. (WITH A GLANCE FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, WHICH HIS MOTHER AVOIDS--UNEASILY.) What's happened? What's the matter, Mama?

MARY

(DISTURBED BY HIS COMING, GIVES WAY TO A FLURRY OF GUILTY, NERVOUS EXCITEMENT.) Your brother ought to be ashamed of himself. He's been insinuating I don't know what.

EDMUND

(TURNS ON JAMIE AND TAKES A STEP RIGHT TOWARD JAMIE.) God damn you! (FIGURE 2.) (JAMIE TURNS HIS BACK WITH A SHRUG AND LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.)

MARY

(CROSSES TO EDMUND, MORE UPSET, GRABS HIS ARM--EXCITEDLY.) Stop this at once, do you hear me? How dare you use such language before me!

EDMUND

(FRIGHTENEDLY--WITH A DESPERATE HOPING AGAINST HOPE.) He's a liar! It's a lie, isn't it, Mama?

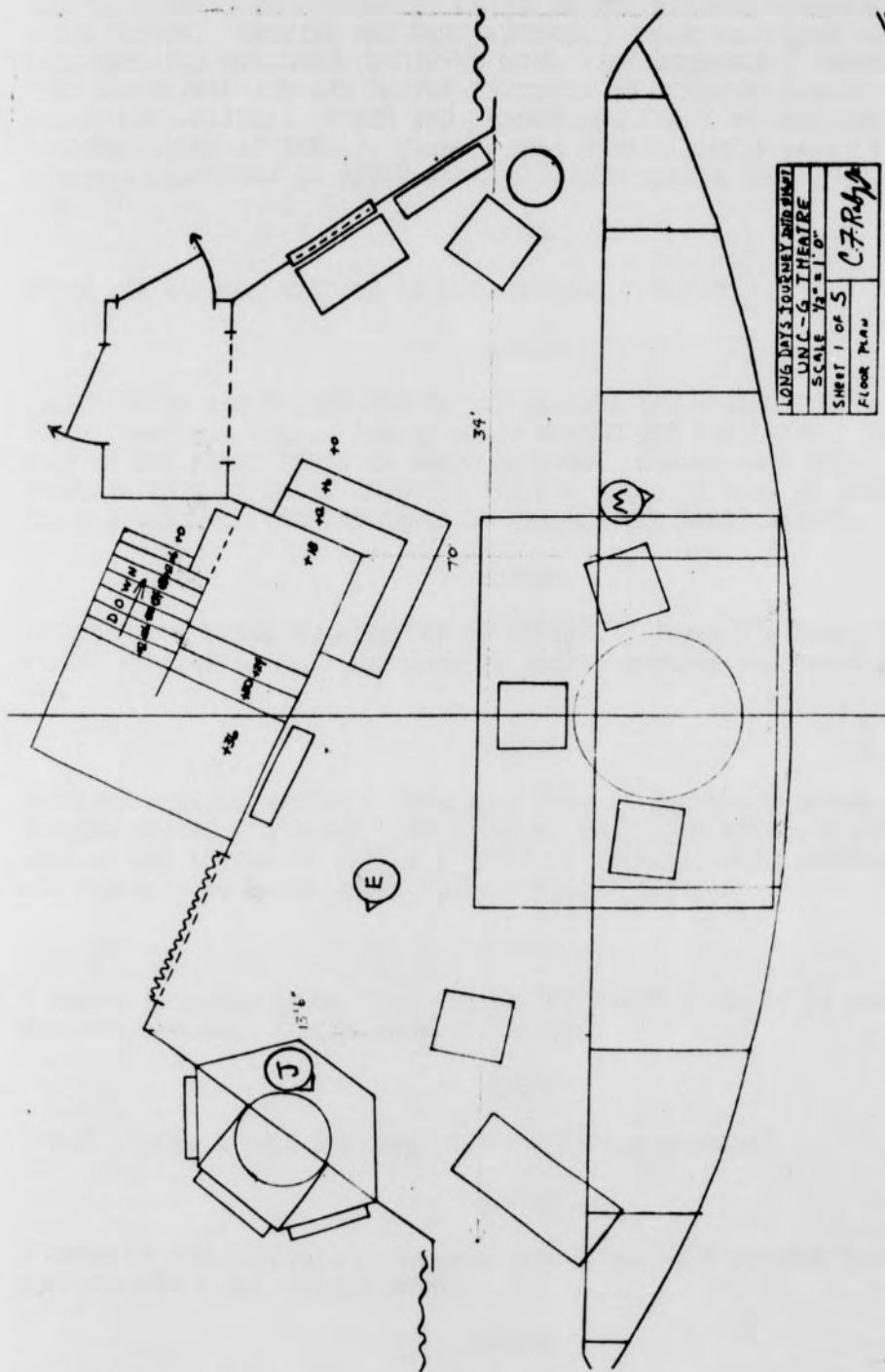


Figure 3

MARY

(ABRUPTLY HER TONE AND MANNER CHANGE TO THE STRANGE DETACHMENT SHE HAS SHOWN BEFORE. KEEPING HER EYES AVERTED.) What is a lie? (THEN HER EYES MEET HIS STRICKEN, ACCUSING LOOK. SHE STAMMERS.) Edmund! Don't! (SHE LOOKS AWAY AND HER MANNER INSTANTLY REGAINS THE QUALITY OF STRANGE DETACHMENT--CALMLY. TURNS AND CROSSES TWO STEPS TO LEFT AND GLANCES THROUGH WINDOW AT LEFT.) There's your father coming now. I must tell Bridget. (CROSSES UP RIGHT AND EXITS INTO DINING ROOM.)

JAMIE

(FROM THE WINDOW, WITHOUT LOOKING AROUND.) Well?

EDMUND

(REFUSING TO ADMIT ANYTHING TO HIS BROTHER YET--WEAKLY DEFIANT.) Well, what? You're a liar. (JAMIE AGAIN SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS. THE SCREEN DOOR ON THE FRONT PORCH IS HEARD CLOSING. EDMUND SAYS DULLY AS HE CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT AT TABLE CENTER.) Here's Papa. I hope he loosens up with the old bottle. (TYRONE COMES IN THROUGH THE FRONT PARLOR. EDMUND SITS.)

TYRONE

(CROSSING UP STAGE TO RIGHT OF UP CENTER.) Sorry I'm late. Captain Turner stopped to talk and once he starts gabbing you can't get away from him.

JAMIE

(WITHOUT TURNING--DRYLY.) You mean once he starts listening. (HIS FATHER REGARDS HIM WITH DISLIKE. HE COMES TO THE TABLE WITH A QUICK MEASURING LOOK AT THE BOTTLE OF WHISKEY. WITHOUT TURNING, JAMIE SENSES THIS.) It's all right. The level in the bottle hasn't changed.

TYRONE

I wasn't noticing that. (HE ADDS CAUSTICALLY.) As if it proved anything with you around. I'm on to your tricks.

EDMUND

(DULLY.) Did I hear you say, let's all have a drink?

TYRONE

(FROWNS AT HIM.) Jamie is welcome after his hard morning's work, but I won't invite you. Doctor Hardy--

EDMUND

To hell with Doctor Hardy! One isn't going to kill me. I feel--all in, Papa.

TYRONE

(WITH A WORRIED LOOK AT HIM--PUTTING ON A FAKE HEARTINESS.) Come along, then. It's before a meal and I've always found that good whiskey, taken in moderation as an appetizer, is the best of tonics. (EDMUND GETS UP AS HIS FATHER PASSES THE BOTTLE TO HIM. HE POURS A BIG DRINK. TYRONE FROWNS ADMONISHINGLY.) I said, in moderation. (JAMIE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TABLE. TYRONE POURS HIS OWN DRINK AND PASSES THE BOTTLE TO JAMIE, GRUMBLING.) It'd be a waste of breath mentioning moderation to you. (IGNORING THE HINT, JAMIE POURS A BIG DRINK. HIS FATHER GROWLS-- THEN, GIVING IT UP, RESUMES HIS HEARTY AIR, RAISING HIS GLASS.) Well, here's health and happiness! (EDMUND GIVES A BITTER LAUGH. THEY DRINK. JAMIE MOVES TWO STEPS TOWARD DOWN RIGHT AND EDMUND MOVES TWO OR THREE STEPS TOWARD LEFT. TYRONE IS BECOMING AWARE OF THE ATMOSPHERE.) What's the matter here? There's gloom in the air you could cut with a knife. (TURNS ON JAMIE RESENTFULLY.) You got the drink you were after, didn't you. Why are you wearing that gloomy look on your mug?

JAMIE

(SHRUGGING HIS SHOULDERS AND CROSSING TO DOWN RIGHT.) You won't be singing a song yourself soon.

EDMUND

(TURNS TO JAMIE AND CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT AT TABLE.) Shut up, Jamie. (EDMUND SITS.)

TYRONE

(UNEASY NOW--CHANGING THE SUBJECT.) I thought lunch was ready. I'm hungry as a hunter. Where is your mother?

MARY

(ENTERING UP RIGHT.) Here I am. (SHE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TYRONE. SHE IS EXCITED AND SELF-CONSCIOUS. AS SHE TALKS, SHE GLANCES EVERYWHERE EXCEPT AT ANY OF THEIR FACES.) I've had to calm down Bridget. She's in a tantrum over your being late again, and I don't blame her. If your lunch is dried up from waiting in the oven, she said it served you right, you could like it or leave it for all she cared. (WITH INCREASING EXCITEMENT, SHE CROSSES DOWN STAGE AND THEN TO DOWN LEFT.) Oh, I'm so sick and tired of pretending this is a home! You won't help me! You won't put yourself out the least bit! You don't know how to act in a home! You don't really want one! You never have wanted one-- never since the day we were married! You should have remained a bachelor and lived in second-rate hotels and entertained your friends in barrooms! (AT DOWN LEFT, SHE ADDS STRANGELY, AS IF SHE WERE TALKING ALOUD TO HERSELF RATHER THAN TO TYRONE.) Then nothing would ever have happened. (THEY STARE AT HER. TYRONE KNOWS NOW. HE SUDDENLY LOOKS A TIRED, BITTERLY SAD OLD MAN. EDMUND GLANCES AT HIS FATHER AND SEES THAT HE KNOWS, BUT HE STILL CANNOT HELP TRYING TO WARN HIS MOTHER.)

EDMUND

Mama! Stop talking. (RISES AND TURNS TO MARY. JAMIE MOVES UP STAGE BETWEEN SOFA AND CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA.) Why don't we go in to lunch.

MARY

(STARTS AND AT ONCE THE QUALITY OF UNNATURAL DETACHMENT SETTLES ON HER FACE AGAIN. SHE EVEN SMILES WITH AN IRONICAL AMUSEMENT TO HERSELF.) Yes, it is inconsiderate of me to dig up the past, (CROSSES TO EDMUND.) when I know your father and Jamie must be hungry. (PUTTING HER ARM AROUND EDMUND'S SHOULDER--WITH A FOND SOLICITUDE WHICH IS AT THE SAME TIME REMOTE.) I do hope you have an appetite, dear. You really must eat more. (CROSSES TO DOWN CENTER. HER EYES BECOME FIXED ON THE WHISKEY GLASS ON THE TABLE BESIDE HIM--SHARPLY.) Why is that glass there? Did you take a drink? (MOVES TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) Oh, how can you be such a fool? Don't you know it's the worst thing? (SHE TURNS ON TYRONE.) You're to blame, James. How could you let him? Do you want to kill him? (CROSSES TO DOWN RIGHT.) Don't you remember my father? He wouldn't stop after he was stricken. He said doctors were fools! He thought, like you, that whiskey is a good tonic! (A LOOK OF TERROR COMES INTO HER EYES AND SHE STAMMERS. CROSSES HURRIEDLY TO EDMUND LEFT OF TABLE.) But, of course, there's no comparison at all. I don't know why I--Forgive me for scolding you, James. One small drink won't hurt Edmund. It might be good for him, if it gives him an appetite. (SHE PATS EDMUND'S CHEEK PLAYFULLY, THE STRANGE DETACHMENT AGAIN IN HER MANNER. HE JERKS HIS HEAD AWAY. SHE SEEMS NOT TO NOTICE, BUT SHE MOVES INSTINCTIVELY AWAY. SHE PULLS TWO STEPS TOWARD DOWN LEFT.)

JAMIE

(ROUGHLY, TO HIDE HIS TENSE NERVES, HE COMES AROUND IN BACK OF TYRONE, NOT LOOKING AT MARY, AND GRABS EDMUND'S SHOULDER.) For God's sake, let's eat. Come on, Kid. Let's put on the feed bag. (EDMUND DOES NOT LOOK AT MARY. HE AND JAMIE CROSS TOWARD UP RIGHT.)

TYRONE

Yes, you go in with your mother, lads. I'll join you in a second. (THEY STOP, LOOK AT MARY. SHE STARTS TOWARD THEM. TYRONE'S EYES ARE ON HER, SAD AND CONDEMNING. SHE FEELS THEM AND TURNS TO HIM. EDMUND AND JAMIE EXIT TO DINING ROOM.)

MARY

Why do you look at me like that? (HER HANDS FLUTTER UP TO PAT HER HAIR.) Is it my hair coming down? I was so worn out from last night. I thought I'd better lie down this morning. I drowsed off and had a nice refreshing nap. But I'm sure I fixed my hair again when I woke up. (FORCING A LAUGH.) Although, as usual, I couldn't find my glasses. (SHARPLY.) Please stop staring. One would think you were accusing me--(THEN PLEAD-INGLY.) James! You don't understand!

TYRONE

(WITH DULL ANGER.) I understand that I've been a God-damned fool to believe in you!

MARY

(AGAIN SHE BURSTS OUT PLEADINGLY. SHE MOVES TO BETWEEN CHAIR LEFT OF TABLE AND ROCKER AT LEFT.) Oh, James, please! You don't understand! I'm so worried about Edmund! I'm so afraid he--

TYRONE

I don't want to listen to your excuses, Mary.

MARY

(STRICKENLY.) Excuses? You mean--? Oh, you can't believe that of me! You mustn't believe that, James! (THEN SLIPPING INTO HER STRANGE DETACHMENT--QUITE CASUALLY. CROSSES TO UP RIGHT.) Shall we not go into lunch, dear? I don't want anything but I know you're hungry. (TYRONE GOES TO MARY. HE WALKS LIKE AN OLD MAN. AS HE REACHES HER SHE BURSTS OUT PITEOUSLY.) James! I tried so hard! I tried so hard! Please believe--!

TYRONE

(MOVED IN SPITE OF HIMSELF--HELPLESSLY.) I suppose you did, Mary. (THEN GRIEF-STRICKENLY.) For the love of God, why couldn't you have the strength to keep on?

MARY

(HER FACE SETTING INTO THAT STUBBORN DENIAL AGAIN. SHE TURNS AWAY FROM TYRONE.) I don't know what you're talking about. Have the strength to keep on what?

TYRONE

(HOPELESSLY.) Never mind. (HE TURNS MARY TO HIM.) It's no use now. (TYRONE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND MARY. THEY TURN AND EXIT SLOWLY INTO THE DINING ROOM. AS THEY EXIT THE LIGHTS FADE INTO A BLACKOUT.)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

THERE IS A TEN SECOND BLACKOUT BETWEEN SCENES ONE AND TWO.

SCENE: THE SAME.

TIME: ABOUT A HALF HOUR LATER.

AT RISE: AS THE LIGHTS COME UP, THE FAMILY ARE RETURNING FROM LUNCH. MARY IS THE FIRST TO ENTER AND CROSSES TO LEFT OF THE TABLE AS SHE TALKS. TYRONE FOLLOWS HER IN AND CROSSES TO THE BAY WINDOW AND GETS A CIGAR FROM A BOX ON THE TABLE IN THE BAY WINDOW. HE AVOIDS TOUCHING OR LOOKING AT HER. THERE IS CONDEMNATION IN HIS FACE, MINGLED NOW WITH THE BEGINNING OF AN OLD WEARY, HELPLESS RESIGNATION. JAMIE AND EDMUND FOLLOW THEIR FATHER. JAMIE CROSSES TO BOOKCASE AT THE STAIRS LOOKING FOR HIS PIPE; UNABLE TO FIND IT HE CROSSES TO TABLE AT WINDOW LEFT, GETS A PIPE FROM RACK AND BEGINS TO FILL IT. EDMUND GOES TO CHAIR LEFT OF TABLE AT CENTER. MARY PULLS OUT CHAIR FOR EDMUND TO SIT. HE SITS WITHOUT LOOKING AT HIS MOTHER.

MARY

It's unreasonable to expect Bridget or Cathleen to act as if this was a home. They know it isn't as well as we know it. It never has been and it never will be.

TYRONE

(BITTERLY WITHOUT TURNING AROUND.) No, it never can be now. But it was once, before you--

MARY

(HER FACE INSTANTLY SET IN BLANK DENIAL.) Before I what? (THERE IS A DEAD SILENCE. SHE GOES ON WITH A RETURN OF HER DETACHED AIR.) No, no. Whatever you mean, it isn't true, dear. It was never a home. You've always preferred the Club or a barroom. And for me it's always been as lonely as a dirty room in a one-night stand hotel. In a real home one is never lonely. You forget I know from experience what a home is like. I gave up one to marry you--my father's home. (A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. THERE IS ANOTHER PAUSE OF DEAD SILENCE. THEN THE TELEPHONE IN THE FRONT HALL RINGS AND ALL OF THEM STIFFEN STARTLEDLY.)

TYRONE

(HASTILY, AS HE CROSSES UP LEFT AND DISAPPEARS INTO FRONT HALL.) I'll answer. McGuire said he'd call me. Hello. (WITH FORCED HEARTINESS.) Oh, how are you, Doctor? (JAMIE TURNS FROM WINDOW. MARY IS NERVOUSLY TOUCHING EDMUND'S HAIR AND THE BACK OF THE CHAIR. TYRONE'S VOICE, TRYING TO CONCEAL, REVEALS THAT HE IS HEARING BAD NEWS.) I see-- (HURRIEDLY.) Well, you'll explain all about it when you see him this

afternoon. Yes, he'll be in without fail. Four o'clock. I'll drop in myself and have a talk with you before that. I have to go uptown on business, anyway. Goodbye, Doctor.

EDMUND

(DULLY.) That didn't sound like glad tidings. (FIGURE 4.) (JAMIE GIVES HIM A PITYING GLANCE--THEN LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AGAIN. MARY'S FACE IS TERRIFIED AND HER HANDS FLUTTER DISTRACTEDLY. TYRONE COMES IN. THE STRAIN IS OBVIOUS IN HIS CASUALNESS AS HE ADDRESSES EDMUND.)

TYRONE

(CROSSING TO DOWN LEFT.) It was Doctor Hardy. He wants you to be sure and see him at four.

EDMUND

(DULLY.) What did he say? Not that I give a damn now.

MARY

(BURSTS OUT EXCITEDLY.) I wouldn't believe him if he swore on a stack of Bibles. You mustn't pay attention to a word he says, Edmund.

TYRONE

(SHARPLY.) Mary!

MARY

(MORE EXCITEDLY, AS SHE CROSSES TOWARD TYRONE.) Oh, we all realize why you like him, James! Because he's cheap! (TURNS AND CROSSES TO RIGHT OF DOWN CENTER AND PACES IN A CIRCLE.) But please don't try to tell me! I know all about Doctor Hardy. Heaven knows I ought to after all these years. He's an ignorant fool! There should be a law to keep men like him from practicing. He hasn't the slightest idea-- When you're in agony and half insane, he sits and holds your hand and delivers sermons on will power! (HER FACE IS DRAWN IN AN EXPRESSION OF INTENSE SUFFERING BY THE MEMORY. FOR THE MOMENT, SHE LOSES ALL CAUTION. WITH BITTER HATRED.) He deliberately humiliates you! He makes you beg and plead! He treats you like a criminal! He understands nothing! (CROSSING TO RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.) And yet it was exactly the same type of cheap quack who first gave you the medicine--and you never knew what it was until too late! (PASSIONATELY, AT CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.) I hate doctors!

EDMUND

Mama! For God's sake, stop talking.

TYRONE

(SHAKENLY.) Yes, Mary, it's no time--

MARY

(SUDDENLY IS OVERCOME BY GUILTY CONFUSION--STAMMERS.) I--Forgive me, dear, You're right. It's useless to be angry now. (THERE IS AGAIN A PAUSE OF DEAD SILENCE. WHEN SHE SPEAKS AGAIN, HER FACE HAS CLEARED AND IS CALM, AND THE QUALITY OF UNCANNY DETACHMENT IS IN HER VOICE AND MANNER.) I'm going upstairs for a moment, if you'll excuse me. I have to fix my hair. (SHE ADDS SMILINGLY AS SHE CROSSES UP CENTER TO STAIRS.) That is if I can find my glasses. I'll be right down.

TYRONE

(CROSSING TO LEFT OF TABLE AS SHE STARTS UP THE STAIRS--PLEADING AND REBUKING.) Mary!

MARY

(STOPS AND TURNS TO STARE AT HIM CALMLY.) Yes, dear? What is it?

TYRONE

(HELPLESSLY.) Nothing.

MARY

(WITH A STRANGE DERISIVE SMILE, SHE TURNS TO TYRONE.) You're welcome to come up and watch me if you're so suspicious.

TYRONE

As if that could do any good! You'd only postpone it. And I'm not your jailor. This isn't a prison.

MARY

No. I know you can't help thinking it's a home. (SHE ADDS QUICKLY WITH A DETACHED CONTRITION.) I'm sorry dear. I don't mean to be bitter. It's not your fault. (MARY EXITS UP STAIRS. THE THREE IN THE ROOM REMAIN SILENT. IT IS AS IF THEY WERE WAITING UNTIL SHE GOT UPSTAIRS BEFORE SPEAKING.) (FIGURE 5.)

JAMIE

(CYNICALLY BRUTAL. HE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TABLE CENTER.) Another shot in the arm!



Figure 5

EDMUND

(ANGRILY.) Cut out that kind of talk!

TYRONE

Yes! Hold your foul tongue and your rotten Broadway loafer's lingo! Have you no pity or decency? (LOSING HIS TEMPER.) You ought to be kicked out in the gutter! (PAUSE.) There's little choice between the philosophy you learned from Broadway loafers, and the one Edmund got from his books. They're both rotten to the core. You've both flouted the faith you were born and brought up in--the one true faith of the Catholic Church--and your denial has brought nothing but self-destruction. (HIS TWO SONS STARE AT HIM CONTEMPTUOUSLY. THEY FORGET THEIR QUARREL AND ARE AS ONE AGAINST HIM ON THIS ISSUE.)

JAMIE

(SITS IN CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE.) We don't pretend, at any rate.

EDMUND

(BITINGLY.) Do you pray for Mama?

TYRONE

I do. I've prayed to God these many years for her.

EDMUND

Then Nietzsche must be right. (HE QUOTES FROM THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA.) "God is dead: of His pity for man hath God died."

TYRONE

(IGNORES THIS.) If your mother had prayed, too--(THEN DULLY RESIGNED, HE CROSSES DOWN LEFT.) But what's the good of talk? We've lived with this before and now we must again. There's no help for it.

EDMUND

(DEFIANTLY.) She's just started. It can't have got a hold on her yet. She can still stop. I'm going to talk to her.

JAMIE

(SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS.) You can't talk to her now. She'll listen but she won't listen. She'll be here but she won't be here. You know the way she gets.

TYRONE

Yes, that's the way the poison acts on her always. Every day from now on, there'll be the same drifting away from us until by the end of each night--

EDMUND

(MISERABLY.) Cut it out, Papa! (HE RISES AND CROSSES UP TO STAIRS.) I'm going to get dressed. (BITTERLY, AS HE GOES.) I'll make so much noise she can't suspect I've come to spy on her. (HE EXITS STAMPING NOISILY UPSTAIRS.)

JAMIE

(AFTER A PAUSE.) What did Doc Hardy say about the Kid?

TYRONE

It's what you thought. He's got consumption.

JAMIE

God damn it!

TYRONE

There is no possible doubt, he said.

JAMIE

He'll have to go to a sanatorium.

TYRONE

Yes, and the sooner the better, Hardy said, for him and everyone around him. He claims that in six months to a year Edmund will be cured, if he obeys orders. (HE SIGHS--GLOOMILY AND RESENTFULLY AND CROSSES IN TO LEFT OF TABLE AT CENTER.) I never thought a child of mine-- It doesn't come from my side of the family. There wasn't one of us that didn't have lungs as strong as an ox.

JAMIE

Who gives a damn about that part of it! Where does Hardy want to send him?

TYRONE

That's what I'm to see him about.

JAMIE

Well, for God's sake, pick out a good place and not some cheap dump!

TYRONE

(STUNG.) I'll send him wherever Hardy thinks best!

JAMIE

Well, don't give Hardy your old over-the-hills-to-the-poorhouse song about taxes and mortgages.

TYRONE

(CROSSES DOWN LEFT.) I'm no millionaire who can throw money away! Why shouldn't I tell Hardy the truth?

JAMIE

Because he'll think you want him to pick a cheap dump, and because he'll know it isn't the truth--especially if he hears afterwards you've seen McGuire and let that flannel-mouth, gold-brick merchant string you with another piece of bum property!

TYRONE

(FURIOUSLY.) Keep your nose out of my business!

JAMIE

This is Edmund's business. What I'm afraid of is, with your Irish bog-trotter idea that consumption is fatal, you'll figure it would be a waste of money to spend any more than you can help.

TYRONE

You liar!

JAMIE

(RISES AND HIS WORDS CHALLENGE TYRONE.) All right. Prove I'm a liar. That's what I want. That's why I brought it up.

TYRONE

(HIS RAGE STILL SMOULDERING.) I have every hope Edmund will be cured. And keep your dirty tongue off Ireland! You're a fine one to sneer, with the map of it on your face!

JAMIE

Not after I wash my face. (CROSSES TO STAIRS UP CENTER, PAUSES, AND TURNS TO TYRONE.) I'd better go uptown with Edmund. The bad news coming on top of what's happened to Mama may hit him hard. I'll get dressed. (AS HE STARTS UPSTAIRS, MARY COMES DOWN AND STOPS IN FRONT OF HIM. HER EYES LOOK BRIGHTER, AND HER MANNER IS MORE DETACHED. THIS CHANGE BECOMES MORE MARKED AS THE SCENE GOES ON.)

MARY

(VAGUELY.) You haven't seen my glasses anywhere, have you, Jamie? (JAMIE DOESN'T ANSWER AND EXITS UPSTAIRS. SHE COMES FORWARD, ADDRESSING HER HUSBAND WITHOUT LOOKING AT HIM.) You haven't seen them, have you, James?

TYRONE

(TURNS TO LOOK OUT THE SCREEN DOOR.) No, Mary.

MARY

(CROSSING RIGHT TO BAY WINDOW.) What's the matter with Jamie? Have you been nagging at him again? You're not much of a weather prophet, dear. See how hazy it's getting. I can hardly see the other shore.

TYRONE

(TRYING TO SPEAK NATURALLY.) Yes, I spoke too soon. We're in for another night of fog, I'm afraid.

MARY

Oh, well, I won't mind it tonight.

TYRONE

No, I don't imagine you will, Mary.

MARY

(FLASHES A GLANCE AT HIM--AFTER A PAUSE.) } Where did Jamie go? (YACHT
WARNING BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

TYRONE

He's going with Edmund to the Doctor's. He went up to change his clothes. (THEN, GLAD OF AN EXCUSE TO LEAVE HER, HE TURNS AND CROSSES TOWARD STAIRS.) I'd better do the same or I'll be late for my appointment at the Club.

MARY

(A NOTE OF PLEADING IN HER VOICE, MARY CROSSES UP CENTER TOWARD STAIRS. TYRONE STOPS LEFT OF TABLE.) Don't go yet, dear. I don't want to be alone. (VAGUELY.) There is something I wanted to say. What is it? I've forgotten. (CROSSES TO TYRONE LEFT OF TABLE. AGAIN SHE REACHES OUT AND GRASPS HIS ARM--PLEADINGLY.) Please wait a little while, dear. At least, until one of the boys comes down. You will all be leaving me so soon.

TYRONE

(WITH BITTER SADNESS.) It's you who are leaving us, Mary.

MARY

(TURNING TO DOWN RIGHT.) I? That's a silly thing to say, James. How could I leave? There is nowhere I could go. Who would I go to see? I have no friends.

TYRONE

It's your own fault-- (HE STOPS AND SIGHS HELPLESSLY--PERSUASIVELY.) There's surely one thing you can do this afternoon that will be good for you, Mary. Take a drive in the automobile. (CROSSING DOWN LEFT.) Get away from the house. Get a little sun and fresh air. (INJUREDLY, TO MARY.) I bought the automobile for you. You know I don't like the damned things. I'd rather walk any day, or take a trolley. (WITH GROWING RESENTMENT, HE CROSSES IN TOWARD MARY TWO STEPS.) I had it here waiting for you when you came back for the sanatorium. I hoped it would give you pleasure and distract your mind. You used to ride in it every day, but you've hardly used it at all lately. I paid a lot of money I couldn't afford, and there's the chauffeur I have to board and lodge and pay high wages whether he drives you or not. (BITTERLY.) Waste! The same old waste that will land me in the poorhouse in my old age! What good did it do you? I might as well have thrown the money out the window.

MARY

(WITH DETACHED CALM, SHE CROSSES RIGHT AROUND TABLE TO DOWN CENTER.) Yes, it was a waste of money, James. You shouldn't have bought a second-hand automobile. You were swindled again as you always are, because you insist on secondhand bargains in everything.

TYRONE

It's one of the best makes! Everyone says it's better than any of the new ones! You're as bad as Jamie, suspecting everyone!

MARY

(CROSSES LEFT TOWARD TYRONE THREE STEPS.) You mustn't be offended, dear. I wasn't offended when you gave me the automobile. I knew you didn't mean to humiliate me. I knew that was the way you had to do everything. I was grateful and touched. I knew buying the car was a hard thing for you to do, and it proved how much you loved me, in your way, especially when you couldn't really believe it would do me any good.

TYRONE

Mary! (HE CROSSES TO MARY AND SUDDENLY HUGS HER TO HIM--BROKENLY.) Dear Mary! For the love of God, for my sake and the boys' sake and your own, won't you stop now?

MARY

(STAMMERS IN GUILTY CONFUSION FOR A SECOND.) I-- James! Please! (HER STRANGE, STUBBORN DEFENSE COMES BACK INSTANTLY AS SHE PULLS AWAY FROM TYRONE.) Stop what? What are you talking about? (HE LETS HIS ARM FALL TO HIS SIDE BROKENLY. SHE IMPULSIVELY PUTS HER ARM AROUND HIM.) James! We've loved each other! We always will! Let's remember only that, and not try to understand what we cannot understand, or help things that cannot be helped--the things life has done to us we cannot excuse or explain.

TYRONE

(AS IF HE HADN'T HEARD--BITTERLY.) You won't even try?

MARY

(HER ARMS DROP HOPELESSLY AND SHE TURNS AWAY--WITH DETACHMENT. SHE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF DOWN CENTER AND BEGINS TO CIRCLE THE TABLE TOWARD STAGE LEFT. TYRONE COUNTERS TOWARD ROCKING CHAIR AT LEFT.) Try to go for a drive this afternoon, you mean? Why, yes, if you wish me to, although it makes me feel lonelier than if I stayed here. There is no one I can invite to drive with me, and I never know where to tell Smythe to go. If there was a friend's house where I could drop in and laugh and gossip awhile. But, of course, there isn't. There never has been. (AT UP CENTER, HER MANNER BECOMING MORE AND MORE REMOTE.) At the Convent I had so many friends. Girls whose families lived in lovely homes. I used to visit them and they'd visit me in my father's home. (HAS CIRCLED TABLE TO LEFT OF TABLE.) But, naturally, after I married an actor--you know how actors were considered in those days--a lot of them gave me the cold shoulder. And then, (YACHT WANRING BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.) right after we were married, there was the scandal of that woman who had been your mistress, suing you. (CONTINUES TO CIRCLE TABLE.) From then on, all my old friends either pitied me or cut me dead. I hated the ones who cut me much less than the pitiers. (STOPS LEFT OF TABLE.)

TYRONE

(WITH GUILTY RESENTMENT. HE SITS IN ROCKING CHAIR.) For God's sake, don't dig up what's long forgotten. If you're that far gone in the past already, when it's only the beginning of the afternoon, what will you be tonight?

MARY

(STARES AT HIM DEFIANTLY NOW AND TURNS TOWARD DOWN RIGHT.) Come to think of it, I do have to drive uptown. There's something I must get at the drugstore.

TYRONE

(BITTERLY SCORNFUL.) Leave it to you to have some of the stuff hidden, and prescriptions for more! I hope you'll lay in a good stock ahead so we'll never have another night like the one when you screamed for it, and ran out of the house in your nightdress half crazy, to try and throw yourself off the dock!

MARY

(TRIES TO IGNORE THIS, SHE OVERLAPS TYRONE'S LINE AND CROSSES TO DOWN CENTER AND FACES DOWN RIGHT.) I have to get tooth powder and toilet soap and cold cream-- (SHE BREAKS DOWN PITIABLY.) James! You mustn't remember! You mustn't humiliate me so!

TYRONE

(ASHAMED, HE RISES AND GOES TO MARY. SHE TURNS TO HIM.) I'm sorry. Forgive me, Mary!

MARY

(PAUSE. DEFENSIVELY DETACHED AGAIN, SHE CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) It doesn't matter. Nothing like that ever happened. You must have dreamed it. (HE STARES AT HER HOPELESSLY. HER VOICE SEEMS TO DRIFT FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY.) I was so healthy before Edmund was born. You remember, James. There wasn't a nerve in my body. (SHE MOVES TOWARD DOWN RIGHT TO RIGHT OF THE TABLE AND TURNS UP STAGE AND CROSSES UP TO CHAIR RIGHT AT TABLE.) Even traveling with you season after season, with week after week of one-night stands, in trains without Pullmans, in dirty hotels, eating bad food, bearing children in hotel rooms, I still kept healthy. But bearing Edmund was the last straw. I was so sick afterwards, and that ignorant quack of a cheap hotel doctor-- All he knew was I was in pain. It was easy for him to stop the pain.

TYRONE

(HE SITS IN CHAIR LEFT AT TABLE.) Mary! For God's sake, forget the past!

MARY

(MOVES UP CENTER. WITH STRANGE OBJECTIVE CALM.) Why? How can I? The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too. We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us. (GOING ON.) I blame only myself. I swore after Eugene died I would never have another baby. (CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) I was to blame for his death. If I hadn't left him with my mother to join you on the road, because you wrote telling me you missed me and were so lonely, Jamie would never have been allowed, when he still had measles, to go in the baby's room.

TYRONE

(WITH BITTER SADNESS.) Are you back with Eugene now? Can't you let our dead baby rest in peace?

MARY

(AS IF SHE HADN'T HEARD HIM.) It was my fault. I should have insisted on staying with Eugene and not have let you persuade me to join you, just because I loved you. I was afraid all the time I carried Edmund. I knew something terrible would happen. I knew I'd proved by the way I'd left Eugene that I wasn't worthy to have another baby, and that God would punish me if I did. I never should have borne Edmund.

TYRONE

(WITH AN UNEASY GLANCE TOWARD THE STAIRS.) Mary! Be careful with your talk. If he heard you he might think you never wanted him. He's feeling bad enough already without--

MARY

(VIOLENTLY. SHE MOVES IN TO LEFT OF TYRONE.) It's a lie! I did want him! More than anything in the world? You don't understand! I meant, for his sake. (MOVES TO LEFT CENTER.) And now, ever since he's been so sick I've kept remembering Eugene and my father and I've been so frightened and guilty--

TYRONE

(HE RISES AND CROSSES TO MARY. TYRONE STARES AT HER AND SIGHS HELPLESSLY. HE TURNS AWAY TOWARD THE STAIRS AND HEARS EDMUND COMING DOWN THE UPSTAIRS HALL, THEN TURNS TO MARY. SHARPLY, IN A LOW VOICE.) Here's Edmund. For God's sake try to be yourself--at least until he goes! You can do that much for him! (HE WAITS, FORCING HIS FACE INTO A PLEASANTLY PATERNAL EXPRESSION. SHE WAITS FRIGHTENEDLY, SEIZED AGAIN BY A NERVOUS PANIC, HER HANDS FLUTTERING OVER THE BOSOM OF HER DRESS, UP TO HER THROAT AND HAIR, WITH A DISTRACTED AIMLESSNESS. THEN, AS EDMUND APPROACHES, SHE CANNOT FACE HIM. SHE GOES SWIFTLY AWAY TO THE WINDOW AT LEFT AND STARES OUT. EDMUND ENTERS. WITH AN ACTOR'S HEARTINESS.) Well! You look spic and span. I'm on my way up to change, too. (HE STARTS UPSTAIRS.)

EDMUND

(DRYLY.) Wait a minute, Papa. I hate to bring up disagreeable topics, but there's the matter of carfare. I'm broke.

TYRONE

(STARTS AUTOMATICALLY ON A CUSTOMARY LECTURE.) You'll always be broke until you learn the value-- (CHECKS HIMSELF GUILTILY, LOOKING AT HIS SON'S SICK FACE WITH WORRIED PITY.) But you've been learning, lad. You worked hard before you took ill. You've done splendidly. I'm proud of you. (HE PULLS OUT A SMALL ROLL OF BILLS FROM HIS PANTS POCKET AND CAREFULLY SELECTS ONE. EDMUND TAKES IT. HE GLANCES AT IT AND HIS FACE EXPRESSES ASTONISHMENT. HIS FATHER AGAIN REACTS CUSTOMARILY--SARCASTICALLY, AS EDMUND CROSSES TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) Thank you. (HE QUOTES.) "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is--"

EDMUND

"To have a thankless child." I know. Give me a chance, Papa. I'm knocked speechless. This isn't a dollar. It's a ten spot. (HE IS GENUINELY PLEASED AND GRATEFUL FOR A MOMENT--THEN HE STARES AT HIS FATHER'S FACE WITH UNEASY SUSPICION.) But why all of a sudden--? (CYNICALLY.) Did Doc Hardy tell you I was going to die? (THEN HE SEES HIS FATHER IS BITTERLY HURT AND CROSSES TO TYRONE.) No! That's a rotten crack. I was only kidding, Papa. (HE PUTS AN ARM AROUND HIS FATHER IMPULSIVELY AND GIVES HIM AN AFFECTIONATE HUG.) I'm very grateful. Honest, Papa.

TYRONE

(TOUCHED, RETURNS HIS HUG.) You're welcome, lad.

MARY

(SUDDENLY TURNS TO THEM IN A CONFUSED PANIC OF FRIGHTENED ANGER.) I won't have it! (SHE STAMPS HER FOOT.) Do you hear, Edmund! Such morbid nonsense! Saying you're going to die! You'd think you didn't want to live! A boy of your age with everything before him! It's just a pose you get out of books! You're not really sick at all!

TYRONE

Mary! Hold your tongue!

MARY

(INSTANTLY CHANGING TO A DETACHED TONE AS SHE CROSSES DOWN TO LEFT OF TABLE.) But, James, it's absurd of Edmund to be so gloomy and make such a great to-do about nothing. (TURNING TO EDMUND BUT AVOIDING HIS EYES--



TEASINGLY AFFECTIONATE.) Never mind, dear. I'm on to you. (SHE COMES TO HIM AT UP CENTER AND TYRONE COUNTERS LEFT.) You want to be petted and spoiled and made a fuss over, isn't that it? You're still such a baby. (SHE PUTS HER ARM AROUND HIM AND HUGS HIM. HE REMAINS RIGID AND UNYIELDING. HER VOICE BEGINS TO TREMBLE AS THEY CROSS TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) But please don't carry it too far, dear. Don't say horrible things. I know it's foolish to take them seriously but I can't help it. You've got me--so frightened. (SHE BREAKS AND HIDES HER FACE ON HIS SHOULDER, SOB-BING. EDMUND IS MOVED IN SPITE OF HIMSELF. HE PATS HER SHOULDER WITH AN AWKWARD TENDERNESS.)

EDMUND

Don't, mother. (HIS EYES MEET HIS FATHER'S.)

TYRONE

(HE FUMBLES WITH HIS WATCH.) By God, look at the time! I'll have to shake a leg. (TYRONE EXITS UPSTAIRS. MARY LIFTS HER HEAD. HER MANNER IS AGAIN ONE OF DETACHED MOTHERLY SOLICITUDE. SHE SEEMS TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE TEARS WHICH ARE STILL IN HER EYES.)

MARY

How do you feel, dear? (SHE FEELS HIS FOREHEAD.) Your head is a little hot, but that's just from going out in the sun. You look ever so much better than you did this morning. (TAKING HIS HAND. EDMUND SITS IN CHAIR AT RIGHT AT TABLE AND MARY SITS ON UP STAGE ARM OF CHAIR.) Come and sit down.

EDMUND

(STARTS TO BLURT OUT THE APPEAL HE NOW FEELS IS QUITE HOPELESS.) Listen, Mama--

MARY

(INTERRUPTING QUICKLY.) Now, now! Don't talk. Lean back and rest. (PERSUASIVELY.) It's such a tiring trip uptown in the dirty old trolley on a hot day like this. I'm sure you'd be much better off here with me.

EDMUND

(TRYING AGAIN TO GET HIS APPEAL STARTED.) Listen, Mama--

MARY

(QUICKLY.) You can telephone Hardy and say you don't feel well enough. (SHE GIVES A HARD SNEERING LITTLE LAUGH.) The old idiot! All he knows about medicine is to look solemn and preach will power!

EDMUND

(TRYING TO CATCH HER EYES.) Mama! Please listen! I want to ask you something! You-- You're only just started. You can still stop. You've got the will power! We'll all help you. I'll do anything! Won't you, Mama?

MARY

(STAMMERS PLEADINGLY.) Please don't--talk about things you don't understand!

EDMUND

(DULLY.) All right, I give up. I knew it was no use.

MARY

(IN BLANK DENIAL NOW. SHE RISES AND CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO LEFT OF THE TABLE.) Anyway, I don't know what you're referring to. But I do know you should be the last one-- Right after I returned from the sanatorium, you began to be ill. The doctor there had warned me I must have peace at home with nothing to upset me, and all I've done is worry about you. (THEN DISTRACTEDLY, CROSSING TO UP CENTER OF TABLE.) But that's no excuse! I'm only trying to explain. It's not an excuse! (MOVES QUICKLY TO BEHIND EDMUND IN CHAIR RIGHT AT TABLE AND HUGS HIM TO HER-- PLEADINGLY.) Promise me, dear, you won't believe I made you an excuse.

EDMUND

(BITTERLY.) What else can I believe?

MARY

Nothing, I don't blame you. How could you believe me--when I can't believe myself? I've become such a liar. I never lied about anything once upon a time. Now I have to lie, especially to myself. But how can you understand, when I don't myself. I've never understood anything about it, except that one day long ago I found I could no longer call my soul my own. (SHE PAUSES--THEN LOWERING HER VOICE TO A STRANGE TONE OF WHISPERED CONFIDENCE AS SHE SITS ON THE UPSTAGE ARM OF EDMUND'S CHAIR.) But some day, dear, I will find it again--some day when you're all well, and I see you healthy and happy and successful, and I don't have to feel guilty any more--some day when the Blessed Virgin Mary forgives me and gives me back the faith in Her love and pity I used to have in my convent days, and I can pray to Her again--when She sees no one in the world can believe in me even for a moment any more, then She will believe in me, and with Her help it will be so easy. I will hear myself scream with agony, and at the same time I will laugh because I will be so sure of myself. (THEN AS EDMUND REMAINS HOPELESSLY SILENT, SHE ADDS SADLY.) Of course, you can't believe that, either. (SHE RISES FROM THE ARM OF HIS CHAIR AND GOES TOWARD THE WINDOWS AT RIGHT WITH HER BACK

TO HIM--CASUALLY.) Now I think of it, you might as well go uptown. I forgot I'm taking a drive. I have to go to the drugstore. You would hardly want to go there with me. You'd be so ashamed.

EDMUND

(BROKENLY.) Mama! Don't!

MARY

I suppose you'll divide that ten dollars your father gave you with Jamie. You always divide with each other, don't you? Like good sports. Well, I know what he'll do with his share. Get drunk someplace where he can be with the only kind of woman he understands or likes. (SHE CROSSES BACK TO EDMUND AND SITS ON THE UPSTAGE ARM OF HIS CHAIR, PLEADING FRIGHTENEDLY.) Edmund! Promise me you won't drink! It's so dangerous. You know Doctor Hardy told you--

EDMUND

(BITTERLY.) I thought he was an old idiot.

MARY

(PITIFULLY.) Edmund! (JAMIE ENTERS UP CENTER AND COMES DOWN STAIRS, CROSSES TO FRONT DOOR.)

JAMIE

Come on, Kid, let's beat it.

MARY

(HER MANNER AT ONCE BECOMES DETACHED AGAIN.) Go on, Edmund. Jamie's waiting. (TYRONE ENTERS UP CENTER, COMES DOWN STAIRS, CROSSES TO FRONT DOOR.) There comes your father downstairs, too.

TYRONE

(CALLS.) Come on, Edmund.

MARY

(MARY AND EDMUND RISE. SHE KISSES HIM WITH DETACHED AFFECTION.) Good-bye, dear. If you're coming home for dinner, try not to be late. And tell your father. You know what Bridget is. (HE TURNS AND HURRIES AWAY. TYRONE CALLS FROM THE HALL, "GOODBYE, MARY," AND THEN JAMIE, "GOODBYE, MAMA." SHE CALLS BACK.) Goodbye. (THE FRONT SCREEN DOOR IS HEARD CLOSING AFTER THEM. SHE COMES AND STANDS BY THE TABLE, ONE HAND DRUMMING ON IT, THE OTHER FLUTTERING UP TO PAT HER HAIR. SHE STARES ABOUT THE ROOM WITH FRIGHTENED, FORSAKEN EYES AND WHISPERS TO HERSELF.)

It's so lonely here. (THEN HER FACE HARDENS INTO BITTER SELF-CONTEMPT. SHE CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE. THE CHOPIN NOCTURNE IS HEARD VERY FAINTLY UNDER THE SCENE.) You're lying to yourself again. You wanted to get rid of them. Their contempt and disgust aren't pleasant company. You're glad they're gone. (SHE GIVES A LITTLE DESPAIRING LAUGH. SHE CROSSES TO BEHIND ROCKING CHAIR AT STAGE LEFT.) Then Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely? (THE MUSIC BUILDS TO A CRESCENDO AS THE LIGHTS FADE SLOWLY TO A BLACKOUT.)

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

THERE IS A TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACTS TWO AND THREE.

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM TO HALF AT TWO MINUTES BEFORE BEGINNING OF ACT THREE.

SCENE: THE SAME AS ACTS ONE AND TWO.

TIME: IT IS AROUND 6:30 P.M. THE SAME DAY.

AT RISE: DUSK IS GATHERING IN THE LIVING ROOM, AN EARLY DUSK DUE TO THE FOG WHICH HAS ROLLED IN FROM THE SOUND AND IS LIKE A WHITE CURTAIN DRAWN DOWN OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS. FROM A LIGHTHOUSE BEYOND THE HARBOR'S MOUTH, A FOGHORN IS HEARD, MOANING LIKE A MOURNFUL WHALE IN LABOR, AND FROM THE HARBOR ITSELF, INTERMITTENTLY, COMES THE WARNING RINGING OF BELLS ON YACHTS AT ANCHOR.

THE TRAY WITH THE BOTTLE OF WHISKEY, GLASSES, AND PITCHER OF WATER IS ON THE TABLE, AS IT WAS IN THE PRE-LUNCHEON SCENE OF THE PREVIOUS ACT.

MARY IS STANDING AT THE BAY WINDOWS AT RIGHT. THE STRANGE DETACHMENT IN HER MANNER HAS INTENSIFIED. HER EYES SHINE WITH UNNATURAL BRILLIANCE. SHE HAS HIDDEN DEEPER WITHIN HERSELF AND FOUND REFUGE AND RELEASE IN A DREAM WHERE PRESENT REALITY IS BUT AN APPEARANCE TO BE ACCEPTED AND DISMISSED UNFEELINGLY--EVEN WITH A HARD CYNICISM--OR ENTIRELY IGNORED. THERE IS AT TIMES AN UNCANNY GAY FREE YOUTHFULNESS IN HER MANNER LIKE THE NAIVE, HAPPY, CHATTERING SCHOOLGIRL OF HER CONVENT DAYS. CATHLEEN IS STANDING AT THE RIGHT OF THE TABLE CENTER. SHE HOLDS AN EMPTY WHISKEY GLASS IN HER HAND AS IF SHE HAS FORGOTTEN SHE HAS IT. SHE SHOWS THE EFFECT OF DRINK. MARY TALKS TO CATHLEEN WITH A CONFIDING FAMILIARITY, AS IF CATHLEEN WERE AN OLD INTIMATE FRIEND. A MOAN OF THE FOGHORN IS HEARD.

MARY

(AMUSED--GIRLISHLY.) That foghorn! Isn't it awful, Cathleen?

CATHLEEN

(TALKS MORE FAMILIARLY THAN USUAL BUT NEVER WITH INTENTIONAL IMPERTINENCE BECAUSE SHE SINCERELY LIKES HER MISTRESS.) It is indeed, Ma'am. It's like a banshee.

MARY

(GOES ON AS IF SHE HADN'T HEARD. IN NEARLY ALL THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE THERE IS THE FEELING THAT SHE HAS CATHLEEN WITH HER MERELY AS AN EXCUSE TO KEEP TALKING.) I don't mind it tonight. Last night it drove me crazy. I lay awake worrying until I couldn't stand it any more.

CATHLEEN

Bad cess to it. I was scared out of my wits riding back from town. I thought that ugly monkey, Smythe, would drive us in a ditch or against a tree. You couldn't see your hand in front of you. I'm glad you had me sit in back with you, Ma'am. If I'd been in front with that monkey-- He can't keep his dirty hands to himself. Give him half a chance and he's pinching me on the leg or you-know-where-- asking your pardon, Ma'am, but it's true.

MARY

(DREAMILY.) It wasn't the fog I minded, Cathleen. I really love fog.

CATHLEEN

They say it's good for the complexion.

MARY

(CROSSES UP STAGE TO ROCKING CHAIR AT STAGE LEFT.) It hides you from the world and the world from you. You feel that everything has changed, and nothing is what it seemed to be. No one can find or touch you any more.

CATHLEEN

I wouldn't care so much if Smythe was a fine, handsome man like some chauffeurs I've seen--I mean, if it was all in fun, for I'm a decent girl. But for a shriveled runt like Smythe--! I've told him, you must think I'm hard up that I'd notice a monkey like you. I've warned him, one day I'll give a clout that'll knock him into the next week. And so I will. (A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

MARY

(STEPPING DOWN STAGE TO A LITTLE DOWN LEFT OF ROCKING CHAIR.) It's the foghorn I hate. It won't let you alone. It keeps reminding you, and warning you, and calling you back. (SHE SMILES STRANGELY.) But it can't tonight. It's just an ugly sound. It doesn't remind me of anything. (SHE GIVES A TEASING, GIRLISH LAUGH. CROSSES TO ROCKING CHAIR.) Except, perhaps, Mr. Tyrone's snores. (SHE LAUGHS AND SITS IN ROCKING CHAIR.) Well, I suppose I snore at times, too, and I don't like to admit it. So I have no right to make fun of him, have I?

CATHLEEN

Ah, sure, everybody healthy snores. It's a sign of sanity, they say. (GLANCES UP RIGHT TOWARD DINING ROOM, THEN WORRIEDLY.) What time is it, Ma'am? I ought to go back in the kitchen. (SHE PUTS HER GLASS ON THE TABLE AND MAKES A MOVEMENT TOWARD THE DINING ROOM.)

MARY

(WITH A FLASH OF APPREHENSION.) No, don't go, Cathleen. I don't want to be alone, yet.

CATHLEEN

You won't be for long. The Master and the boys will be home soon.

MARY

I doubt if they'll come back for dinner. They have too good an excuse to remain in the barrooms where they feel at home. (CATHLEEN STARES AT HER, STUPIDLY PUZZLED. MARY GOES ON SMILINGLY.) Have another drink yourself, if you wish, Cathleen.

CATHLEEN

I don't know if I'd better, Ma'am. I can feel what I've had already. (REACHING FOR THE BOTTLE.) Well, maybe one more won't harm. (SHE POURS A DRINK.) Here's to your good health, Ma'am. (SHE DRINKS WITHOUT BOTHERING ABOUT A CHASER.)

MARY

(DREAMILY.) I really did have good health once, Cathleen. But that was long ago.

CATHLEEN

(WORRIED AGAIN.) The Master's sure to notice what's gone from the bottle. He has the eye of a hawk for that.

MARY

(AMUSEDLY.) Oh, we'll play Jamie's trick on him. Just measure a few drinks of water and pour them in.

CATHLEEN

(DOES THIS--WITH A SILLY GIGGLE.) God save me, it'll be half water. He'll know by the taste.

MARY

(INDIFFERENTLY.) No, by the time he comes home he'll be too drunk to tell the difference. He has such a good excuse, he believes, to drown his sorrows.

CATHLEEN

(PHILOSOPHICALLY.) Well, it's a good man's failing. I wouldn't give a trauneeen for a teetotaler. They've no high spirits. (THEN, STUPIDLY PUZZLED.) Good excuse? You mean Master Edmund, Ma'am? I can tell the Master is worried about him.

MARY

(STIFFENS DEFENSIVELY--BUT IN A STRANGE WAY THE REACTION HAS A MECHANICAL QUALITY, AS IF IT DID NOT PENETRATE TO REAL EMOTION.) Mr. Tyrone never is worried about anything, except money and property and the fear he'll end his days in poverty. I mean, deeply worried. Because he cannot really understand anything else. (SHE GIVES A LITTLE LAUGH OF DETACHED AMUSEMENT.) My husband is a very peculiar man, Cathleen.

CATHLEEN

(VAGUELY RESENTFUL, AS SHE CROSSES UP STAGE OF TABLE TO MARY AT LEFT IN ROCKER.) Well, he's a fine, handsome, kind gentleman just the same, Ma'am. Never mind his weakness, for any fool can see he worships the ground you walk on. (PAUSE. FIGHTING THE EFFECT OF HER LAST DRINK AND TRYING TO BE SOBERLY CONVERSATIONAL.) Speaking of acting, Ma'am, how is it you never went on the stage? (A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

MARY

I? What put that absurd notion in your head? I was brought up in a respectable home and educated in the best convent in the Middle West. Before I met Mr. Tyrone I hardly knew there was such a thing as a theatre. I was a very pious girl. I even dreamed of becoming a nun. (RISES.) I've never had the slightest desire to be an actress.

CATHLEEN

(BLUNTLY, AS SHE CROSSES UP CENTER BEHIND TABLE CENTER.) Well, I can't imagine you a holy nun, Ma'am. Sure, you never darken the door of a church, God forgive you. (A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

MARY

(CROSSES TO WINDOWS LEFT.) How thick the fog is. I can't see the road. All the people in the world could pass by and I would never know. I wish it was always that way. It's getting dark already. It will soon be night (PAUSE.), thank goodness. (SHE TURNS BACK--VAGUELY.) It was kind of you to keep me company this afternoon, Cathleen. I would have been lonely driving uptown alone.

CATHLEEN

Sure, wouldn't I rather ride in a fine automobile than stay here and listen to Bridget's lies about her relations? It was like a vacation,

Ma'am. (SHE PAUSES--THEN STUPIDLY, AS SHE CROSSES LEFT TO MARY.) There was only one thing I didn't like.

MARY

(WITH A FORCED CHEERFULNESS, SHE GUIDES CATHLEEN DOWN STAGE TO RIGHT OF ROCKING CHAIR.) What was that, Cathleen? (A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.)

CATHLEEN

The way the man in the drugstore acted when I took in the prescription for you. (INDIGNANTLY.) The impudence of him!

MARY

(A FOGHORN IS HEARD. THEN, WITH STUBBORN BLANKNESS, SHE STEPS TOWARD DOWN LEFT.) What are you talking about? What drugstore? What prescription? (THEN HASTILY, AS CATHLEEN STARES IN STUPID AMAZEMENT.) Oh, of course, I'd forgotten. The medicine for the rheumatism in my hands. What did the man say? (THEN WITH INDIFFERENCE.) Not that it matters, as long as he filled the prescription.

CATHLEEN

It mattered to me, then! I'm not used to being treated like a thief. He gave me a long look and says insultingly, "Where did you get hold of this?" and I says, "It's none of your damned business, but if you must know, it's for the lady I work for, Mrs. Tyrone, who's sitting out in the automobile." That shut him up quick. He gave a look out at you and said, "Oh," and went to get the medicine.

MARY

(VAGUELY, AS A FOGHORN SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE.) Yes, he knows me. (SHE ADDS IN A CALM, DETACHED VOICE AND CROSSES TO THE ROCKING CHAIR.) I have to take it because there is no other that can stop the pain--all the pain--I mean, in my hands. (SHE RAISES HER HANDS AND REGARDS THEM WITH MELANCHOLY SYMPATHY. THERE IS NO TREMOR IN THEM NOW.) Poor hands! You'd never believe it, but they were once one of my good points, along with my hair and eyes, and I had a fine figure, too. (HER TONE HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE FAR-OFF AND DREAMY.) They were a musician's hands. I used to love the piano. I worked so hard at my music at the Convent--if you can call it work when you do something you love. Mother Elizabeth and my music teacher both said I had more talent than any student they remembered. My father paid for special lessons. He spoiled me. He would do anything I asked. He would have sent me to Europe to study after I graduated from the Convent. I might have gone--if I hadn't fallen in love with Mr. Tyrone. Or I might have become a nun. I had two dreams. To be a nun, that was the more beautiful one. To become a concert pianist, that was the other. (SHE PAUSES, REGARDING HER HANDS FIXEDLY. CATHLEEN BLINKS HER EYES TO FIGHT OFF DROWSINESS

AND A TIPSY FEELING.) I haven't touched a piano in so many years. I couldn't play with such crippled fingers, even if I wanted to. (SHE STARES AT HER HANDS WITH FASCINATED DISGUST.) See, Cathleen, how ugly they are! So maimed and crippled! You would think they'd been through some horrible accident! (SHE GIVES A STRANGE LITTLE LAUGH.) So they have, come to think of it. (A FOGHORN IS HEARD. SHE SUDDENLY THRUSTS HER HANDS BEHIND HER BACK.) I won't look at them. They're worse than the foghorn for reminding me--(THEN WITH DEFIANT SELF-ASSURANCE.) But even they can't touch me now. (SHE BRINGS HER HANDS FROM BEHIND HER BACK AND DELIBERATELY STARES AT THEM--CALMLY.) They're far away. I see them, but the pain has gone.

CATHLEEN

(STUPIDLY PUZZLED, AS SHE MOVES TO MARY.) You've taken some of the medicine? It made you act funny, Ma'am. If I didn't know better, I'd think you'd a drop taken.

MARY

(DREAMILY.) It kills the pain. You go back until at last you are beyond its reach. Only the past when you were happy is real. (SHE PAUSES--THEN AS IF HER WORDS HAD BEEN AN EVOCATION WHICH CALLED BACK HAPPINESS SHE CHANGES IN HER WHOLE MANNER AND FACIAL EXPRESSION. SHE LOOKS YOUNGER. THERE IS A QUALITY OF AN INNOCENT CONVENT GIRL ABOUT HER, AND SHE SMILES SHYLY. A CHOPIN NOCTURNE IS HEARD VERY SOFTLY UNDER THESE LINES. MARY BEGINS TO ROCK SLOWLY AND AS SHE TALKS, HER SPEECH AND ROCKING BECOME MORE RAPID.) If you think Mr. Tyrone is handsome now, Cathleen, you should have seen him when I first met him. He had the reputation of being one of the best looking men in the country. You can imagine how excited I was when my father wrote me he and James Tyrone had become friends, and that I was to meet him when I came home for Easter vacation. I showed the letter to all the girls, and how envious they were! My father took me to see him act first. It was a play about the French Revolution and the leading part was a nobleman. I couldn't take my eyes off him. I wept when he was thrown in prison--and then was so mad at myself because I was afraid my eyes and nose would be red. My father had said we'd go backstage to his dressing room right after the play, and so we did. (SHE GIVES A LITTLE EXCITED, SHY LAUGH, ATTEMPTS TO RISE AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR. WITH A TOUCH OF IRONY IN HER VOICE.) I guess my eyes and nose couldn't have been red, after all. (CATHLEEN GIVES A DRUNKEN, EMBARRASSED LAUGH.) I was really very pretty then, Cathleen. And he was handsomer than my wildest dream. He was different from all ordinary men, like someone from another world. I fell in love right then. So did he, he told me afterwards. I forgot all about becoming a nun or a concert pianist. All I wanted was to be his wife. (CATHLEEN GIGGLES. MARY RAISES UP ON ONE ARM. SHE PAUSES, STARING BEFORE HER WITH UNNATURALLY BRIGHT, DREAMY EYES, AND A RAPT, TENDER, GIRLISH SMILE.) Thirty-six years ago, but I can see it as clearly as if it were tonight! We've loved each other ever since. And in all those thirty-six years, there has never been a breath of scandal about him. I mean, with any other

woman. That has made me very happy, Cathleen. It has made me forgive so many other things. (MUSIC FADES OUT.)

CATHLEEN

(FIGHTING TIPSY DROWSINESS--SENTIMENTALLY.) He's a fine gentleman and you're a lucky woman. (THEN, FIDGETING.) Can I take the drink to Bridget, Ma'am? It must be near dinnertime and I ought to be in the kitchen helping her. If she don't get something to quiet her temper, she'll be after me with the cleaver.

MARY

(WITH A VAGUE EXASPERATION AT BEING BROUGHT BACK FROM HER DREAM.) Yes, yes, go. I don't need you now.

CATHLEEN

(WITH RELIEF, SHE CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) Thank you, Ma'am. (SHE POURS A BIG DRINK, TURNS RIGHT, AND EXITS THROUGH THE DINING ROOM CURTAINS.)

MARY

(BITTERLY, AS SHE PULLS HERSELF UP FROM THE FLOOR ON THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE CENTER.) You're a sentimental fool. What is so wonderful about that first meeting (FOGHORN SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE.) between a silly romantic schoolgirl and a matinee idol? You were much happier before you knew he existed, in the Convent when you used to pray to the Blessed Virgin. (LONGINGLY, AS THE FOGHORN SOUNDS AGAIN.) If I could only find the faith I lost, so I could pray again! (SHE PAUSES--THEN BEGINS TO RECITE THE HAIL MARY IN A FLAT, EMPTY TONE AS SHE STANDS BEHIND THE CHAIR LEFT OF TABLE AT CENTER.) "Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with Thee; blessed art Thou among women." (SNEERINGLY.) You expect the Blessed Virgin to be fooled by a lying dope fiend reciting words! You can't hide from her! (LOOKING TOWARD THE STAIRS, HER HANDS FLY UP TO PAT HER HAIR DISTRACTEDLY.) I must go upstairs. I haven't taken enough. When you start again you never know exactly how much you need. (SHE CROSSES TO STAIRS UP CENTER, THEN STOPS, AS SHE HEARS THE SOUND OF VOICES FROM THE FRONT PATH. SHE STARTS GUILTILY.) That must be them-- (SHE QUICKLY CROSSES DOWN TO THE TABLE CENTER AND SITS IN CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE. HER FACE SETS IN STUBBORN DEFENSIVENESS--RESENTFULLY.) Why are they coming back? They don't want to. And I'd much rather be alone. (SUDDENLY HER WHOLE MANNER CHANGES. SHE BECOMES PATHETICALLY RELIEVED AND EAGER.) Oh, I'm so glad they've come back! I've been so horribly lonely! (THE FRONT DOOR IS HEARD CLOSING AND TYRONE CALLS UNEASILY FROM THE HALL.)

TYRONE

Are you there, Mary?

MARY

(RISES FROM HER CHAIR, HER FACE LIGHTING UP LOVINGLY--WITH EXCITED EAGERNESS.) I'm here, dear. In the sitting room. I've been waiting for you. (TYRONE COMES IN THROUGH THE FRONT PARLOR. EDMUND IS BEHIND HIM. TYRONE HAS HAD A LOT TO DRINK BUT BEYOND A SLIGHTLY GLAZED LOOK IN HIS EYES AND A TRACE OF BLUR IN HIS SPEECH, HE DOES NOT SHOW IT. EDMUND HAS ALSO HAD MORE THAN A FEW DRINKS WITHOUT MUCH APPARENT EFFECT, EXCEPT THAT HIS SUNKEN CHEEKS ARE FLUSHED AND HIS EYES LOOK BRIGHT AND FEVERISH. THEY STOP IN THE DOORWAY TO STARE APPRAISINGLY AT HER. WHAT THEY SEE FULFILLS THEIR WORST EXPECTATIONS. BUT FOR THE MOMENT MARY IS UNCONSCIOUS OF THEIR CONDEMNING EYES. SHE CROSSES TO TYRONE AND KISSES HIM. THEY CROSS DOWN STAGE TOWARD DOWN LEFT, BUT STOP LEFT OF TABLE. EDMUND CROSSES TO CHAIR RIGHT OF TABLE.) (FIGURE 6.) I'm so happy you've come. I had given up hope. I was afraid you wouldn't come home. It's such a dismal, foggy evening. It must be more cheerful in the barrooms uptown, where there are people you can talk and joke with. No, don't deny it. I know how you feel. I don't blame you a bit. I'm all the more grateful to you for coming home. I was sitting here so lonely and blue. Come and sit down. (TYRONE SITS LEFT AT TABLE, MARY SITS AT CENTER, AND EDMUND SITS AT RIGHT.) Dinner won't be ready for a minute. You're actually a little early. Will wonders never cease. Here's the whiskey, dear. Shall I pour a drink for you? (WITHOUT WAITING FOR A REPLY SHE DOES SO. A FOGHORN IS HEARD.) And you, Edmund? I don't want to encourage you, but one before dinner, as an appetizer, can't do any harm. (SHE POURS A DRINK FOR HIM. THEY MAKE NO MOVE TO TAKE THE DRINKS. SHE TALKS ON AS IF UNAWARE OF THEIR SILENCE. THE FOGHORN SOUNDS AGAIN.) Where's Jamie? But, of course, he'll never come home so long as he has the price of a drink left. (SHE REACHES OUT AND CLASPS HER HUSBAND'S HAND--SADLY.) I'm afraid Jamie has been lost to us for a long time, dear. (HER FACE HARDENS.) But we mustn't allow him to drag Edmund down with him, as he's like to do. He's jealous because Edmund has always been the baby--just as he used to be of Eugene. He'll never be content until he makes Edmund as hopeless a failure as he is.

TYRONE

(PUSHING BACK FROM TABLE.) Oh, for the love of God! I'm a fool for coming home! (TYRONE IS ABOUT TO BURST OUT IN ANGRY DEFENSE OF HIS FAMILY BUT EDMUND INTERVENES.)

EDMUND

(SHARPLY.) Papa! (CHANGING THE SUBJECT.) Are we going to have this drink, or aren't we?

TYRONE

(CONTROLLING HIMSELF--DULLY.) You're right. I'm wrong to take notice. (HE PICKS UP HIS GLASS LISTLESSLY.) Drink hearty, lad. (EDMUND DRINKS BUT TYRONE REMAINS STARING AT THE GLASS IN HIS HAND. EDMUND AT ONCE REALIZES HOW MUCH THE WHISKEY HAS BEEN WATERED. HE FROWNS, GLANCING

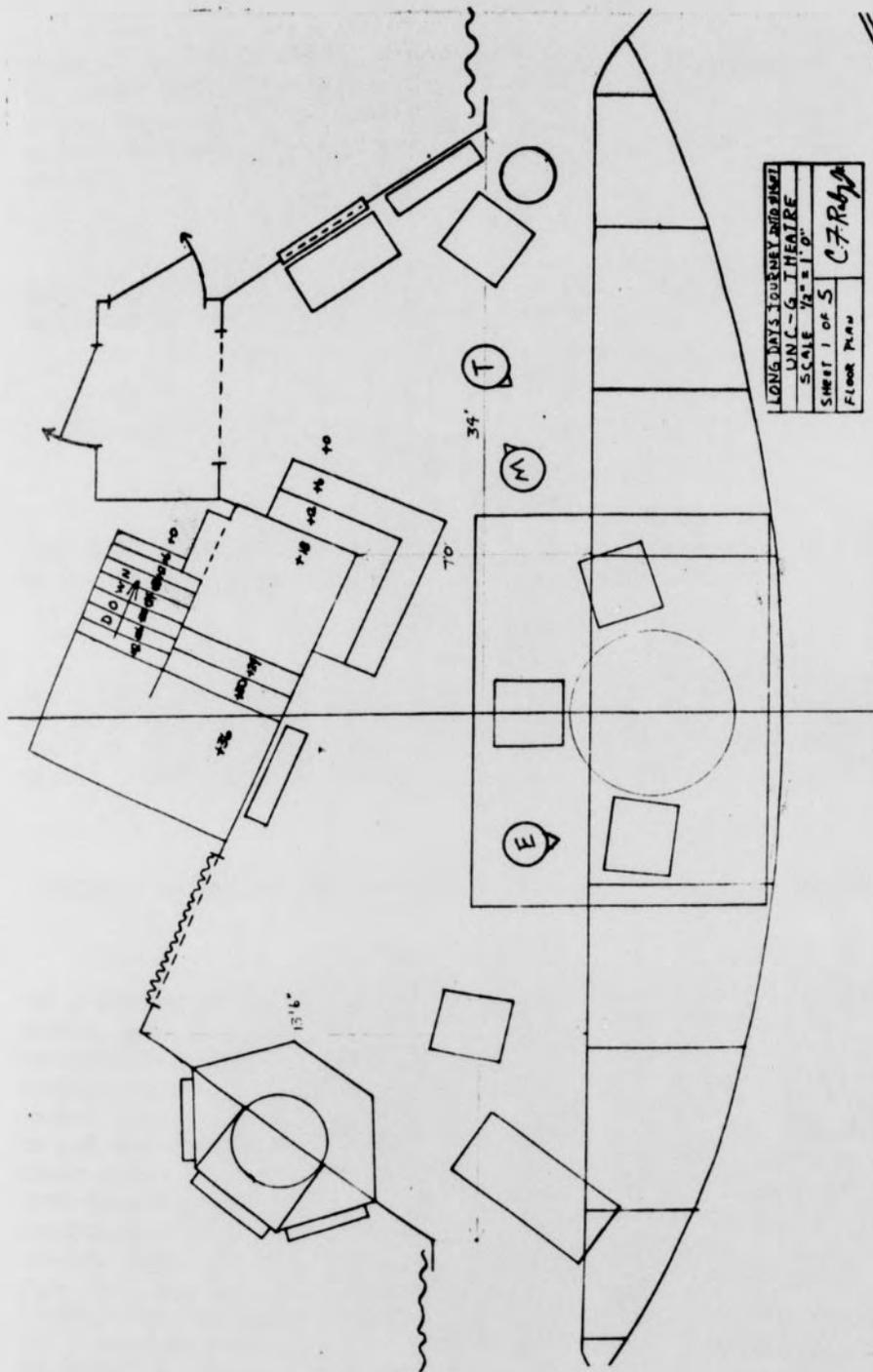


Figure 6

FROM THE BOTTLE TO HIS MOTHER--STARTS TO SAY SOMETHING BUT STOPS.)

MARY

I was so lonesome I kept Cathleen with me just to have someone to talk to. (HER MANNER AND QUALITY DRIFT BACK TO THE SHY CONVENT GIRL AGAIN.) Do you know what I was telling her, dear? About the night my father took me to your dressing room and I first fell in love with you. Do you remember?

TYRONE

(DEEPLY MOVED--HIS VOICE HUSKY.) Can you think I'd ever forget, Mary? (EDMUND LOOKS AWAY FROM THEM, SAD AND EMBARRASSED.)

MARY

(TENDERLY.) No. I know you still love me, James, in spite of everything.

TYRONE

(HIS FACE WORKS AND HE BLINKS BACK TEARS--WITH QUIET INTENSITY.) Yes! As God is my judge! Always and forever, Mary!

MARY

And I love you, dear, in spite of everything. (THERE IS A PAUSE IN WHICH EDMUND MOVES EMBARRASSEDLY. THE STRANGE DETACHMENT COMES OVER HER MANNER AGAIN AS IF SHE WERE SPEAKING IMPERSONALLY OF PEOPLE SEEN FROM A DISTANCE. WITH DETACHED PITY.) I haven't been such a bad wife, have I?

TYRONE

(HUSKILY, TRYING TO FORCE A SMILE.) I'm not complaining, Mary.

MARY

(AS A SHADOW OF VAGUE GUILT CROSSES HER FACE.) At least, I've loved you dearly, and done the best I could--under the circumstances. (THE SHADOW VANISHES AND HER SHY, GIRLISH EXPRESSION RETURNS.) Do you remember our wedding, dear? I'm sure you've completely forgotten what my wedding gown looked like. Men don't notice such things. It was nearly the death of me and the dressmaker, too! (SHE LAUGHS.) I was so particular. It was never quite good enough. At last she said she refused to touch it any more or she might spoil it, and I made her leave so I could be alone to examine myself in the mirror. I was so pleased and vain. I thought to myself, "Even if your nose and mouth and ears are a trifle too large, your eyes and hair and figure, and your hands, make up for it. (SHE RISES.) You're just as pretty as any actress he's ever met, and you don't have to use paint." (SHE PAUSES, WRINKLING HER BROW IN AN EFFORT OF MEMORY.) Where is my wedding gown now, I wonder. (CROSSING LEFT TOWARD ROCKING CHAIR.) I kept it wrapped up in tissue paper in my

trunk. I used to hope I would have a daughter and when it came time for her to marry-- She couldn't have bought a lovelier gown, (TURNS TO TYRONE.) and I knew, James, you'd never tell her, never mind the cost. You'd want her to pick up something at a bargain. It was made of soft, shimmering satin, trimmed with wonderful old duchesse lace, in tiny ruffles around the neck and sleeves, and worked in with the folds that were draped round in a bustle effect at the back. The basque was boned and very tight. I remember I held my breath when it was fitted, so my waist would be as small as possible. My father even let me have lace on my white satin slippers, and lace with the orange blossoms in my veil. Oh, how I loved that gown! It was so beautiful! (LOVING TO TYRONE.) Where is it now, I wonder? I used to take it out from time to time when I was lonely, but it always made me cry, so finally a long while ago-- (SHE WRINKLES HER FOREHEAD AGAIN.) I wonder where I hid it? (SHE CROSSES UP TOWARD STAIRS.) Probably in one of the old trunks in the attic. Some day I'll have to look. (SHE STOPS, STARING BEFORE HER. TYRONE SIGHS, SHAKING HIS HEAD HOPELESSLY, AND ATTEMPTS TO CATCH HIS SON'S EYE, LOOKING FOR SYMPATHY, BUT EDMUND IS STARING AT THE FLOOR.)

TYRONE

(FORCES A CASUAL TONE.) Isn't it dinner time, dear? (WITH A FEEBLE ATTEMPT AT TEASING.) You're forever scolding me for being late, but now I'm on time for once, it's dinner that's late. (SHE DOESN'T APPEAR TO HEAR HIM. HE ADDS, STILL PLEASANTLY.) Well, if I can't eat yet, I can drink. I'd forgotten I had this. (HE DRINKS HIS DRINK. EDMUND WATCHES HIM. TYRONE SCOWLS AND LOOKS AT HIS WIFE WITH SHARP SUSPICION--ROUGHLY.) Who's been tampering with my whiskey? The damned stuff is half water! Jamie's been away and he wouldn't overdo his trick like this, anyway. Any fool could tell-- Mary, answer me! (WITH ANGRY DISGUST.) I hope to God you haven't taken to drink on top of--

EDMUND

Shut up, Papa! (TO HIS MOTHER, WITHOUT LOOKING AT HER.) You treated Cathleen and Bridget, isn't that it, Mama?

MARY

(WITH INDIFFERENT CASUALNESS, SHE TURNS TO EDMUND AND TYRONE.) Yes, of course. (SHE CROSSES DOWN TO RIGHT OF TABLE AND STOPS UP STAGE OF EDMUND.) Besides, I wanted to treat Cathleen because I had her drive up-town with me, and sent her to get my prescription filled.

EDMUND

For God's sake, Mama! You can't trust her! Do you want everyone on earth to know?

MARY

(HER FACE HARDENING STUBBORNLY. SHE CROSSES IN BETWEEN CHAIR CENTER AND

TABLE.) Know what? That I suffer from rheumatism in my hands and have to take medicine to kill the pain? Why should I be ashamed of that? (TURNS ON EDMUND WITH A HARD, ACCUSING ANTAGONISM--ALMOST A REVENGEFUL ENMITY.) I never knew what rheumatism was before you were born! Ask your father! (A FOGHORN IS HEARD AS EDMUND LOOKS AWAY, SHRINKING INTO HIMSELF.)

TYRONE

Don't mind her, lad. It doesn't mean anything. When she gets to the stage where she gives the old crazy excuse about her hands she's gone far away from us.

MARY

(TURNS ON HIM--WITH A STRANGELY TRIUMPHANT, TAUNTING SMILE.) I'm glad you realize that, James! Now perhaps you'll give up trying to remind me, you and Edmund! (ABRUPTLY, IN A DETACHED, MATTER-OF-FACT TONE, AS SHE CROSSES BEHIND EDMUND TO DOWN RIGHT IN FRONT OF SOFA. A FOGHORN SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE.) Why don't you light the light, James? It's getting dark. I know you hate to, but Edmund has proved to you that one bulb burning doesn't cost much. There's no sense letting your fear of the poorhouse make you too stingy. (FOGHORN AND WARNING BELLS ARE HEARD.)

TYRONE

(REACTS MECHANICALLY. RISES AND STANDS IN HIS CHAIR AND TURNS ON ONE BULB IN THE CHANDELIER OVER THE TABLE.) I never claimed one bulb cost much! It's having them on, one here and one there, that makes the Electric Light Company rich. But I'm a fool to talk reason to you. (GETS DOWN. FOGHORN AND BELLS CONTINUE. TO EDMUND.) I'll get a fresh bottle of whiskey, lad, and (CROSSES UP RIGHT TO DINING ROOM AND EXITS.) we'll have a real drink.

MARY

(WITH DETACHED AMUSEMENT, SHE CROSSES UP TO BAY WINDOWS AT RIGHT AND LOOKS OUT. BELLS CONTINUE.) He'll sneak around to the outside cellar door so the servants won't see him. He's really ashamed of keeping his whiskey padlocked in the cellar. Your father is a strange man, Edmund. It took many years before I understood him. You must try to understand and forgive him, too, and not feel contempt because he's close-fisted. His father deserted his mother and their six children a year or so after they came to America. He told them he had a premonition he would soon die, and he was homesick for Ireland, and wanted to go back there to die. So he went and he did die. (CROSSING BACK TO THE CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE.) He must have been a peculiar man, too. Your father had to go to work in a machine shop when he was only ten years old . . .

EDMUND

(PROTESTS DULLY.) Oh, for Pete's sake, Mama. I've heard Papa tell that machine shop story ten thousand times.

MARY

Yes, dear, you've had to listen, but I don't think you've ever tried to understand.

EDMUND

(IGNORING THIS--MISERABLY.) Listen, Mama! You're not so far gone yet you've forgotten everything. You haven't asked me what I found out this afternoon. Don't you care a damn?

MARY

(SHAKENLY.) Don't say that! You hurt me, dear!

EDMUND

What I've got is serious, Mama. Doc Hardy knows for sure now.

MARY

(STIFFENS INTO SCORNFUL, DEFENSIVE STUBBORNNESS AND CROSSES QUICKLY TO LEFT CENTER.) That lying old quack! I warned you he'd invent--!

EDMUND

(MISERABLY DOGGED.) He called in a specialist to examine me, so he'd be absolutely sure.

MARY

(IGNORING THIS, SHE PACES DIAGONALLY BETWEEN LEFT CENTER AND DOWN CENTER.) Don't tell me about Hardy! If you heard what the doctor at the sanatorium, who really knows something, said about how he'd treated me! He said he ought to be locked up! He said it was a wonder I hadn't gone mad! I told him I had once, that time I ran down in my nightdress to throw myself off the dock. You remember that, don't you? And yet you want me to pay attention to what Doctor Hardy says. Oh, no! (STOPS DOWN LEFT IN FRONT OF ROCKING CHAIR, TURNED AWAY FROM EDMUND.)

EDMUND

(THEN WITH A BITTER, STUBBORN PERSISTENCE, HE RISES AND CROSSES TO MARY. HE TAKES HER BY HER DOWN STAGE ARM AND TRIES TO TURN HER AROUND. SHE REFUSES TO TURN TO HIM.) Listen, Mama. I'm going to tell you whether you want to hear or not. I've got to go to a sanatorium.

MARY

(DAZEDLY, AS IF THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO HER. THEN SHE TURNS TO EDMUND VIOLENTLY AND SLAPS HIM ACROSS THE FACE.) No! I won't have it. How dare Doctor Hardy advise such a thing without consulting me! (TURNS AWAY AND STEPS TOWARD DOWN LEFT.) How dare your father allow him! What right has he? You are my baby! Let him attend to Jamie! (MORE AND MORE EXCITED AND BITTER, SHE CROSSES BACK TO EDMUND.) I know why he wants you sent to a sanatorium. To take you from me! He's always tried to do that. He's been jealous of every one of my babies! He kept finding ways to make me leave them. That's what caused Eugene's death. He's been jealous of you most of all. He knew I loved you most because--

EDMUND

(MISERABLY.) Oh, stop talking crazy, can't you, Mama! Stop trying to blame him. And why are you so against my going away now? I've been away a lot, and I've never noticed it broke your heart!

MARY

(BITTERLY, AS SHE CROSSES TO DOWN CENTER.) I'm afraid you're not very sensitive, dear. (SADLY.) You might have guessed that after I knew you knew--about me--I had to be glad whenever you were where you couldn't see me.

EDMUND

(BROKENLY, HE CROSSES TO MARY.) Mama! Don't! (HE REACHES OUT BLINDLY AND TAKES HER HAND--BUT HE DROPS IT IMMEDIATELY, OVERCOME BY BITTERNESS AGAIN.) All this talk about loving me--and you won't even listen when I try to tell you how sick--

MARY

(WITH AN ABRUPT TRANSFORMATION INTO A DETACHED BULLYING MOTHERLINESS, SHE TURNS TO HIM.) You're so like your father, dear. You love to make a scene out of nothing so you can be dramatic and tragic. (WITH A BELITTLING LAUGH.) If I gave you the slightest encouragement, you'd tell me next you were going to die--

EDMUND

People do die of it. Your own father--

MARY

(SHARPLY. SHE STEPS AWAY TOWARD DOWN RIGHT TWO STEPS.) Why do you mention him? There's no comparison at all with you. He had consumption. (ANGRILY.) I hate you when you become gloomy and morbid! I forbid you to remind me of my father's death, do you hear me?

EDMUND

(HIS FACE HARD--GRIMLY.) Yes, I hear you, Mama. I wish to God I didn't! It's pretty hard to take at times, having a dope fiend for a mother! (WARNING BELLS AND A FOGHORN ARE HEARD. SHE WINCES--ALL LIFE SEEMING TO DRAIN FROM HER FACE, LEAVING IT WITH THE APPEARANCE OF A PLASTER CAST. INSTANTLY EDMUND WISHES HE COULD TAKE BACK WHAT HE HAS SAID. HE STAMMERS MISERABLY. HE STEPS IN TO MARY.) Forgive me, Mama. I was angry. You hurt me. (THERE IS A PAUSE IN WHICH THE FOGHORN AND THE SHIPS' BELLS ARE HEARD AGAIN.)

MARY

(GOES SLOWLY TO THE WINDOWS AT RIGHT LIKE AN AUTOMATON--LOOKING OUT, A BLANK, FAR-OFF QUALITY IN HER VOICE.) Just listen to that awful foghorn. And the bells. Why is it fog makes everything sound so sad and lost, I wonder?

EDMUND

(BROKENLY, HE EXITS UP LEFT THROUGH FRONT DOOR.) I--I can't stay here. I don't want any dinner. (BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. SHE KEEPS STARING OUT THE WINDOW UNTIL SHE HEARS THE FRONT DOOR CLOSE BEHIND HIM. THEN SHE COMES BACK AND SITS IN HER CHAIR, THE SAME BLANK LOOK ON HER FACE.)

MARY

(VAGUELY.) I must go upstairs. I haven't taken enough. (SHE PAUSES--THEN LONGINGLY.) I hope, sometime, without meaning it, I will take an overdose. I never could do it deliberately. The Blessed Virgin would never forgive me, then. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS. SHE HEARS TYRONE RETURNING AND TURNS AS HE COMES IN THROUGH THE DINING ROOM WITH A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY HE HAS JUST UNCORKED. HE IS FUMING.)

TYRONE

(WRATHFULLY, AS HE HOLDS UP RIGHT.) The padlock is all scratched. That drunken loafer has tried to pick the lock with a piece of wire, the way he's done before. (WITH SATISFACTION, AS IF THIS WAS A PERPETUAL BATTLE OF WITS WITH HIS ELDER SON. CROSSES IN TO RIGHT OF TABLE.) But I've fooled him this time. It's a special padlock a professional burglar couldn't pick. (HE PUTS THE BOTTLE ON THE TRAY AND SUDDENLY IS AWARE OF EDMUND'S ABSENCE.) Where's Edmund?

MARY

(WITH A VAGUE FAR-AWAY AIR.) He went out. He said he didn't want any dinner. He doesn't seem to have any appetite these days. (THEN STUBBORNLY.) But it's just a summer cold. (TYRONE STARES AT HER AND SHAKES HIS HEAD HELPLESSLY AND POURS HIMSELF A BIG DRINK AND DRINKS IT. SUDDENLY IT IS TOO MUCH FOR HER AND SHE BREAKS OUT AND SOBS.) Oh, James,

I'm so frightened! (SHE GETS UP AND THROWS HER ARMS AROUND HIM AND HIDES HER FACE ON HIS SHOULDER--SOBBINGLY.) I know he's going to die!

TYRONE

Don't say that! It's not true! They promised me in six months he'd be cured.

MARY

You don't believe that! I can tell when you're acting! And it will be my fault. I should never have borne him. It would have been better for his sake. I could never hurt him then. He wouldn't have had to know his mother was a dope fiend--and hate her! (SHE TURNS QUICKLY AWAY FROM HIM. A MOMENT LATER CATHLEEN APPEARS IN THE BACK-PARLOR DOORWAY. SHE IS UNCERTAIN IN HER WALK AND GRINNING WOOZILY.)

CATHLEEN

(STARTS GUILTILY WHEN SHE SEES TYRONE--WITH DIGNITY.) Dinner is served, Sir. (RAISING HER VOICE UNNECESSARILY.) Dinner is served, Ma'am. (SHE FORGETS HER DIGNITY AND ADDRESSES TYRONE WITH GOOD-NATURED FAMILIARITY AS SHE CROSSES DOWN TO RIGHT CENTER.) So you're here, are you? Well, well. Won't Bridget be in a rage! I told her the Madame said you wouldn't be home. (THEN READING ACCUSATION IN HIS EYE.) Don't be looking at me that way. If I've a drop taken, I didn't steal it. I was invited. (SHE TURNS WITH HUFFY DIGNITY AND EXITS UP RIGHT INTO THE DINING ROOM.)

TYRONE

(SIGHS--THEN SUMMONING HIS ACTOR'S HEARTINESS.) Come along, dear. Let's have our dinner. I'm hungry as a hunter.

MARY

(COMES TO HIM--HER FACE IS COMPOSED IN PLASTER AGAIN AND HER TONE IS REMOTE.) I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me, James. I couldn't possibly eat anything. (TURNS AND CROSSES UP ONTO THE STAIRS.) My hands pain me dreadfully. I think the best thing for me is to go to bed and rest. Good night, dear (STARTS TO EXIT UP STAIRS.)

TYRONE

(HARSHLY, AS HE CROSSES UP STAGE TOWARD MARY.) Up to take more of that God-damned poison, is that it? You'll be like a mad ghost before the night's over!

MARY

(SHE STOPS AND TURNS BLANKLY TO TYRONE.) I don't know what you're talking about, James. You say such mean, bitter things when you've drunk too much. You're as bad as Jamie or Edmund. (SHE EXITS UP STAIRS. HE STANDS A SECOND AS IF NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO. HE IS A SAD, BEWILDERED BROKEN OLD MAN. HE WALKS WEARILY OFF THROUGH THE DINING ROOM AS THE LIGHTS DIM SLOWLY TO A BLACKOUT.)

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

THERE IS A TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACTS THREE AND FOUR.

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM TO HALF AT TWO MINUTES BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF ACT FOUR. A MINUTE AND A HALF BEFORE THE ACT BEGINS, THE CHOPIN NOCTURNE PLAYS AS PRE-ACT MUSIC.

SCENE: THE SAME.

TIME: AROUND MIDNIGHT.

AT RISE: THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THE LIVING ROOM OTHER THAN ONE BULB BURNING IN THE CHANDELIER OVER THE TABLE AT CENTER. THE FOG IS DENSER THAN EVER; THE FOGHORN IS HEARD, FOLLOWED BY THE SHIPS' BELLS FROM THE HARBOR.

TYRONE IS SEATED LEFT AT THE TABLE PLAYING SOLITAIRE. HE HAS TAKEN OFF HIS COAT AND HAS ON AN OLD DRESSING GOWN. THE WHISKEY BOTTLE ON THE TRAY IS THREE-QUARTERS EMPTY. THERE IS A FRESH FULL BOTTLE WHICH HE HAS BROUGHT FROM THE CELLAR SO THERE WILL BE AMPLE RESERVE AT HAND. HE IS DRUNK AND SHOWS IT BY THE DELIBERATE MANNER IN WHICH HE PEERS AT EACH CARD TO MAKE CERTAIN OF ITS IDENTITY AND THEN PLAYS IT AS IF HE WASN'T CERTAIN OF HIS AIM. BUT DESPITE ALL THE WHISKEY IN HIM, HE HAS NOT ESCAPED AND HE LOOKS AS HE APPEARED AT THE CLOSE OF THE PRECEDING ACT, A SAD, DEFEATED OLD MAN, POSSESSED BY HOPELESS RESIGNATION. HE FINISHES A GAME AND SWEEPS THE CARDS TOGETHER. HE SHUFFLES THEM CLUMSILY, DROPPING A COUPLE ON THE FLOOR. HE RETRIEVES THEM WITH DIFFICULTY, WHEN HE HEARS EDMUND ENTERING THE FRONT DOOR.

TYRONE

(HIS VOICE THICK.) Who's that? Is it you, Edmund? (EDMUND'S VOICE ANSWERS CURTLY, "YES." THEN HE EVIDENTLY COLLIDES WITH SOMETHING IN THE DARK HALL AND CAN BE HEARD CURSING. A MOMENT LATER THE HALL LAMP IS TURNED ON. TYRONE FROWNS AND CALLS.) Turn that light out before you come in. (BUT EDMUND DOESN'T. HE IS DRUNK NOW, TOO, BUT LIKE HIS FATHER, HE CARRIES IT WELL, AND GIVES LITTLE PHYSICAL SIGN OF IT EXCEPT IN HIS EYES AND A CHIP-ON-THE-SHOULDER AGGRESSIVENESS IN HIS MANNER. TYRONE SPEAKS, AT FIRST WITH A WARM, RELIEVED WELCOME. EDMUND SITS ON DOWN STAGE END OF TABLE LEFT AT WINDOW LEFT.) I'm glad you've come, lad. I've been damned lonely. (THEN RESENTFULLY.) You're a fine one to run away and leave me to sit alone here all night when you know-- (WITH SHARP IRRITATION.) I told you to turn out that light! We're not giving a ball. There's no reason to have the house ablaze with electricity at this time of night, burning up money!

EDMUND

(ANGRILY, HE CROSSES TO RIGHT OF THE CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE CENTER.) Ablaze with electricity! One bulb! Hell, everyone keeps a light on

in the front hall until they go to bed. (HE RUBS HIS KNEE.) I damned near busted my knee.

TYRONE

The light from here shows in the hall. You could see your way well enough if you were sober.

EDMUND

If I was sober? I like that! (INDICATES BOTTLES ON THE TABLE.)

TYRONE

I don't give a damn what other people do. If they want to be wasteful fools, for the sake of show, let them be!

EDMUND

One bulb! Christ, don't be such a cheap skate! I've proved by figures if you left the light bulb on all night it wouldn't be as much as one drink!

TYRONE

To hell with your figures! The proof is in the bills I have to pay!

EDMUND

(SITS DOWN OPPOSITE HIS FATHER--CONTEMPTUOUSLY.) Yes, facts don't mean a thing, do they? What you want to believe, that's the only truth! (DERISIVELY.) Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic, for example. (HE SITS BACK IN THE CHAIR.)

TYRONE

(STUBBORNLY.) So he was. The proof is in his plays.

EDMUND

Well he wasn't, and there's no proof of it in his plays, except to you! (JEERINGLY.) The Duke of Wellington, there was another good Irish Catholic!

TYRONE

I never said he was a good one. He was a renegade but a Catholic just the same.

EDMUND

Well, he wasn't. You just want to believe no one but an Irish Catholic general could beat Napoleon.

TYRONE

I'm not going to argue with you. I asked you to turn out that light in the hall.

EDMUND

(SWINGING HIS DOWN STAGE LEG OVER THE ARM OF HIS CHAIR.) I heard you, and as far as I'm concerned it stays on.

TYRONE

None of your damned insolence! Are you going to obey me or not!

EDMUND

Not! If you want to be a crazy miser put it out yourself!

TYRONE

(WITH THREATENING ANGER.) Listen to me! I've put up with a lot from you because from the mad things you've done at times I've thought you weren't quite right in your head. I've excused you and never lifted my hand to you. (RISES SLOWLY WITH MOUNTING ANGER.) But there's a straw that breaks the camel's back. You'll obey me and put out that light or, big as you are, I'll give you a thrashing that'll teach you--! (EDMUND BEGINS TO COUGH AND SUDDENLY TYRONE REMEMBERS EDMUND'S ILLNESS AND INSTANTLY BECOMES GUILTY AND SHAMEFACED.) Forgive me lad. I forgot-- You shouldn't goad me into losing my temper.

EDMUND

(ASHAMED HIMSELF NOW.) Forget it, Papa. I apologize, too. I had no right being nasty about nothing. I am a bit soused, I guess. I'll put out the damned light. (HE STARTS TO GET UP.)

TYRONE

No, stay where you are. Let it burn. We'll have them all on! (STANDS UP IN HIS CHAIR.) To hell with them! (BEGINS TO TURN ON THE REMAINDER OF THE BULBS IN THE CHANDELIER WITH A CHILDISH, BITTERLY DRAMATIC SELF-PITY.) The poorhouse is the end of the road, and it might as well be sooner as later! (HE FINISHES TURNING ON THE LIGHTS.)

EDMUND

(HAS WATCHED THIS PROCEEDING WITH AN AWAKENED SENSE OF HUMOR--NOW HE GRINS, TEASING AFFECTIONATELY.) That's a grand curtain. (HE LAUGHS.) You're a wonder, Papa.

TYRONE

(STEPS DOWN SHEEPISHLY--GRUMBLES PATHETICALLY.) That's right, laugh at the old fool! The poor old ham! But the final curtain will be in the poorhouse just the same, and that's not comedy! (SITS IN THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE. THEN AS EDMUND IS STILL GRINNING, HE CHANGES THE SUBJECT.) Well, well, let's not argue. You'll live to learn the value of a dollar. You're not like your damned tramp of a brother. I've given up hope he'll ever get sense. Where is he, by the way?

EDMUND

How would I know?

TYRONE

I thought you'd gone back uptown to meet him.

EDMUND

No. I walked out to the beach. I haven't seen him since this afternoon.

TYRONE

Well, if you split the money I gave you with him, like a fool--

EDMUND

Sure I did. He's always staked me when he had anything.

TYRONE

Then it doesn't take a soothsayer to tell he's probably in the whorehouse.

EDMUND

(STARTS TO GET UP.) Oh, for Pete's sake, Papa! If you're going to start that stuff, I'll beat it.

TYRONE

(PLACATINGLY.) All right, all right, I'll stop. God knows, I don't like the subject either. Will you join me in a drink?

EDMUND

Ah! Now you're talking!

TYRONE

(PASSES THE BOTTLE TO HIM--MECHANICALLY.) I'm wrong to treat you. You've had enough already. But, if you walked all the way to the beach you must be damp and chilled.

EDMUND

Oh, I dropped in at the Inn on the way out and back.

TYRONE

It's not a night I'd pick for a long walk.

EDMUND

I loved the fog. It was what I needed. (HE SOUNDS MORE TIPSY AND LOOKS IT.)

TYRONE

You should have more sense than to risk--

EDMUND

To hell with sense! We're all crazy. What do we want with sense? (HE QUOTES FROM DOWSON SARDONICALLY.)

"They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream."

(A FOGHORN AND SHIPS' BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. EDMUND SITS BACK IN THE CHAIR AND STARES BEFORE HIM.) The fog was where I wanted to be. Halfway down the path you can't see this house. You'd never know it was here. Everything looked and sounded unreal. It was like walking on the bottom of the sea. As if I had drowned long ago. As if I was a ghost belonging to the fog, and the fog was the ghost of the sea. It felt damned peaceful to be nothing more than a ghost within a ghost. (HE SEES HIS FATHER STARING AT HIM WITH MINGLED WORRY AND IRRITATED DISAPPROVAL. HE GRINS MOCKINGLY. SHIPS' BELLS SOUND IN THE DISTANCE.) Don't look at me as if I'd gone nutty. Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it?

TYRONE

(IMPRESSED AND AT THE SAME TIME REVOLTED.) You have a poet in you but it's a damned morbid one! (FORCING A SMILE.) Devil take your pessimism. I feel low-spirited enough. (HE SIGHS.) Why can't you remember your

Shakespeare and forget the third-raters. You'll find what you're trying to say in him--as you'll find everything else worth saying. (HE QUOTES, USING HIS FINE VOICE.) "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

EDMUND

(IRONICALLY.) Fine! That's beautiful. But I wasn't trying to say that. We are such stuff as manure is made on, so let's drink up and forget it. That's more my idea.

TYRONE

(DISGUSTEDLY.) Ach! Keep such sentiments to yourself. I shouldn't have given you that drink.

EDMUND

It did pack a wallop, all right. On you, too. (HE GRINS WITH AFFECTIONATE TEASING.) Even if you've never missed a performance! (AGGRESSIVELY.) Well, what's wrong with being drunk? It's what we're after, isn't it? Let's not kid each other, Papa. Not tonight. We know what we're trying to forget. (HE PAUSES, FINISHES HIS DRINK, AND RECITES, AND RECITES WELL, WITH BITTER, IRONICAL PASSION, THE SYMONS' TRANSLATION OF BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE POEM.)

"Be always drunken. Nothing else matters: that is the only question. If you would not feel the horrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and crushing you to the earth, be drunken continually.

Drunken with what? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will. But be drunken.

And if sometimes, on the stairs of a palace, or on the green side of a ditch, or in the dreary solitude of your own room, you should awaken and the drunkenness be half or wholly slipped away from you, ask of the wind, or of the wave, or of the star, or of the bird, or of the clock, of whatever flies, or sighs, or rocks, or sings, or speaks, ask what hour it is; and the wind, wave, star, bird, clock, will answer you: 'It is the hour to be drunken! Be drunken, if you would not be martyred slaves of Time, be drunken continually! With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will.'"

(HE GRINS PROVACATIVELY AT HIS FATHER.)

TYRONE

(THICKLY HUMOROUS.) I wouldn't worry about the virtue part of it, if I were you. (THEN APPRECIATIVELY.) But you recited it well, lad. Who wrote it?

EDMUND

Baudelaire.

TYRONE

Never heard of him. (THICKLY, AS HE RISES AND CROSSES TO THE BOOKCASE UP RIGHT OF CENTER NEXT TO STAIRS.) Where you get your taste in authors-- That damned library of yours! (HE INDICATES THE SMALL BOOKCASE.) Voltaire, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ibsen! Atheists, fools, and madmen! And your poets! This Dowson, and this Baudelaire, and Swinburne and Oscar Wilde, and Whitman and Poe! Whoremongers and degenerates! Pah! When I've three good sets of Shakespeare there (HE INDICATES BOOKCASE IN THE STAIRWELL AS HE CROSSES TWO STEPS TO THE LEFT.) you could read.

EDMUND

(PROVOCATIVELY.) They say he was a souse, too.

TYRONE

They lie! I don't doubt he liked his glass--it's a good man's failing-- but he knew how to drink so it didn't poison his brain with morbidity and filth. Don't compare him with the pack you've got in there. (STEPPING IN, HE INDICATES THE SMALL BOOKCASE AGAIN.) Your dirty Zola! And your Dante Gabriel Rossetti who was a dope fiend! (HE STARTS AND LOOKS GUILTY.)

EDMUND

(WITH DEFENSIVE DRYNESS.) Perhaps it would be wise to change the subject. (A PAUSE. A FOGHORN IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.) Besides, you can't accuse me of not knowing Shakespeare. Didn't I win five dollars from you once when you bet me I couldn't learn a leading part of his in a week, as you used to do in stock in the old days. I learned Macbeth and recited it letter perfect, with you giving me the cues.

TYRONE

(APPROVINGLY.) That's true. So you did. (HE SMILES TEASINGLY AND SIGHS. HE CROSSES BACK TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE CENTER AND SITS.) It was a terrible ordeal, I remember, hearing you murder the lines. I kept wishing I'd paid over the bet without making you prove it. (HE CHUCKLES AND EDMUND GRINS. THEN HE STARTS AS HE HEARS A SOUND FROM UPSTAIRS-- WITH DREAD.) Did you hear? She's moving around. I was hoping she'd gone to sleep. (THEY DRINK. TYRONE AGAIN LISTENS TO SOUNDS UPSTAIRS-- WITH DREAD.) I hope to God she doesn't come down.

EDMUND

(DULLY.) Yes. She'll be nothing but a ghost haunting the past by this time. (HE PAUSES--THEN MISERABLY.) Back before I was born--

TYRONE

(SIGHS SADLY. THEN WITH A PATHETIC ATTEMPT AT HEARTINESS.) What do you say to a game or two of Casino, lad?

EDMUND

All right.

TYRONE

(SHUFFLING THE CARDS CLUMSILY.) We can't lock up and go to bed till Jamie comes on the last trolley--which I hope he won't--and I don't want to go upstairs, anyway, till she's asleep.

EDMUND

Neither do I.

TYRONE

(KEEPS SHUFFLING THE CARDS FUMBLINGLY, FORGETTING TO DEAL THEM.) As I've said, you must take her tales of the past with a grain of salt. The piano playing and her dream of becoming a concert pianist. That was put in her head by the nuns flattering her. She was their pet. They loved her for being so devout. (DEALING WITH VERY UNCERTAIN JUDGMENT OF DISTANCE.) And the idea she might have become a nun. That's the worst. Your mother was one of the most beautiful girls you could ever see. She knew it, too. She was a bit of a rogue and a coquette, God bless her, behind all her shyness and blushes. She was never made to renounce the world. She was bursting with health and high spirits and the love of loving.

EDMUND

For God's sake, Papa! Why don't you pick up your hand?

TYRONE

(PICKS IT UP--DULLY.) Yes, let's see what I have here. (THEY BOTH STARE AT THEIR CARDS UNSEEINGLY. THEN THEY BOTH START. TYRONE WHISPERS.) Listen!

EDMUND

She's coming downstairs.

TYRONE

(HURRIEDLY.) We'll play our game. Pretend not to notice and she'll soon go up again.

EDMUND

(STARING AT THE STAIRS--WITH RELIEF.) I don't see her. She must have started down and then turned back.

TYRONE

Thank God.

EDMUND

Yes. It's pretty horrible to see her the way she must be now. (WITH BITTER MISERY.) The hardest thing to take is the blank wall she builds around her. Or it's more like a bank of fog in which she hides and loses herself. Deliberately, that's the hell of it! You know something in her does it deliberately--to get beyond our reach, to be rid of us, to forget we're alive! It's as if, in spite of loving us, she hated us! (HE PLAYS A CARD.)

TYRONE

(PLAYS MECHANICALLY--GENTLY REPROACHFUL.) Don't be too hard on her, lad. Remember she's not responsible. Once that cursed poison gets a hold on anyone-- (THE FOGHORN SOUNDS.)

EDMUND

(HIS FACE GROWS HARD AND HE STARES AT HIS FATHER WITH BITTER ACCUSATION.) It never should have gotten a hold on her! I know damned well she's not to blame! And I know who is! You are! Your damned stinginess! If you'd spent money for a decent doctor when she was so sick after I was born, she'd never have known morphine existed!

TYRONE

(IN DEFENSE.) What did I know of morphine? It was years before I discovered what was wrong. I thought she'd never got over her sickness, that's all. Why didn't I send her to a cure, you say? (BITTERLY.) Haven't I? I've spent thousands upon thousands in cures! A waste. What good have they done her? She always started again.

EDMUND

Because you've never given her anything that would help her want to stay off it! No home except this summer dump in a place she hates and you've refused even to spend money to make this look decent, while you keep buying more property, and playing sucker for every con man with a gold mine, or a silver mine, or any kind of get-rich-quick swindle! You've dragged her around on the road, season after season, on one-night stands, with no one she could talk to, waiting night after night in dirty hotel rooms for you to come back with a bun on after the bars closed! Christ, is it any wonder she didn't want to be cured. Jesus, when I think of it I hate your guts!

TYRONE

(WITH DEFENSIVE ANGER.) Will you stop repeating your mother's crazy accusations, which she never makes unless it's the poison talking? I never dragged her on the road against her will. Naturally, I wanted her with me. I loved her. And she came because she loved me and wanted to be with me. That's the truth, no matter what she says when she's not herself. And she needn't have been lonely. She had her children, too, and I insisted, in spite of the expense, on having a nurse to travel with her.

EDMUND

(BITTERLY.) Yes, your one generosity, and that because you were jealous of her paying too much attention to us, and wanted us out of your way! It was another mistake, too! If she'd had to take care of me all by herself, and had that to occupy her mind, maybe she'd have been able--

TYRONE

(GOADED INTO VINDICTIVENESS.) Or for that matter, if you insist on judging things by what she says when she's not in her right mind, if you hadn't been born she'd never-- (HE STOPS ASHAMED. THE FOGHORN SOUNDS.)

EDMUND

(SUDDENLY SPENT AND MISERABLE. SHIPS' BELLS ARE HEARD FROM THE HARBOR.) Sure. I know that's what she feels, Papa.

TYRONE

(PROTESTS PENITENTLY. THE SHIPS' BELLS CONTINUE.) She doesn't! She loves you as dearly as ever mother loved a son! I only said that because you put me in such a God-damned rage, raking up the past, and saying you hate me--

EDMUND

(DULLY.) I didn't mean it, Papa. (HE SUDDENLY SMILES--KIDDING A BIT. DRUNKENLY.) I'm like Mama, I can't help liking you, in spite of everything.

TYRONE

(GRINS A BIT DRUNKENLY IN RETURN. THE BELLS STOP.) I might say the same of you. You're no great shakes as a son. It's a case of "A poor thing but mine own." (THEY BOTH CHUCKLE WITH REAL, IF ALCOHOLIC, AFFECTION. TYRONE CHANGES THE SUBJECT.) What's happened to our game? Whose play is it?

EDMUND

Yours, I guess. (TYRONE PLAYS A CARD WHICH EDMUND TAKES AND THE GAME GETS FORGOTTEN AGAIN.)

TYRONE

(THE FOGHORN SOUNDS.) You mustn't let yourself be too downhearted, lad, by the bad news you had today. Both the doctors promised me, if you obey orders at this place you're going, you'll be cured in six months, or a year at the most.

EDMUND

(HIS FACE HARD AGAIN. THE FOGHORN SOUNDS.) Don't kid me. You don't believe that. You think I'm going to die.

TYRONE

That's a lie! You're crazy!

EDMUND

(MORE BITTERLY.) So why waste money? That's why you're sending me to a state farm--

TYRONE

(IN GUILTY CONFUSION.) What state farm? I'ts the Hilltown Sanatorium, that's all I know, and both doctors said it was the best place for you.

EDMUND

(SCATHINGLY.) For the money! That is, for nothing, or practically nothing. Don't lie, Papa! You know damned well Hilltown Sanatorium is a state institution! Jamie suspected you'd cry poorhouse to Hardy and he wormed the truth out of him.

TYRONE

(FURIOUSLY.) That drunken loafer! I'll kick him out in the gutter! He's poisoned your mind against me ever since you were old enough to listen!

EDMUND

You can't deny it's the truth about the state farm, can you?

TYRONE

It's not true the way you look at it! What if it is run by the state? That's nothing against it. The state has the money to make a better place than any private sanatorium. And why shouldn't I take advantage of it? It's my right--and yours. We're residents. I'm a property owner. I help to support it. I'm taxed to death--

EDMUND

(WITH BITTER IRONY.) Yes, on property valued at a quarter of a million.

TYRONE

Lies! It's all mortgaged!

EDMUND

Hardy and the specialist know what you're worth. I wonder what they thought of you when they heard you moaning poorhouse and showing you wanted to wish me on charity!

TYRONE

It's a lie! All I told them was I couldn't afford any millionaire's sanatorium because I was land poor. That's the truth!

EDMUND

And then you went to the Club to meet McGuire and let him stick you with another bum piece of property! (AS TYRONE STARTS TO DENY.) Don't lie about it! We met McGuire in the hotel bar after he left you. Jamie kidded him about hooking you, and he winked and laughed!

TYRONE

(LYING FEEBLY.) He's a liar if he said--

EDMUND

(RISES.) Don't lie about it! (WITH GATHERING INTENSITY, HE CROSSES TO DOWN RIGHT.) God, Papa, ever since I went to sea and was on my own, and found out what hard work for little pay was, and what it felt like to be broke, and starve, and camp on park benches because I had no place to sleep, I've tried to be fair to you because I knew what you'd been up against as a kid. I've tried to make allowances. (CROSSES TO RIGHT OF UP CENTER.) Christ, you have to make allowances in this damned family or go nuts! (TURNS AND CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO BEHIND THE CHAIR RIGHT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) But to think when it's a question of your son having consumption, you can show yourself up before the whole town as such a stinking old tightwad! Don't you know Hardy will talk and the whole town will know! Jesus, Papa, haven't you any pride or shame?

(BURSTING WITH RAGE, AS HE STEPS IN BETWEEN THE CHAIR AND THE TABLE.) And don't think I'll let you get away with it! I won't go to any damned state farm just to save you a few lousy dollars to buy more bum property with! You stinking old miser--! (HE CHOKES HUSKILY, HIS VOICE TREMBLING WITH RAGE, AND THEN IS SHAKEN BY A FIT OF COUGHING AND SITS.)

TYRONE

(HAS SHRUNK BACK IN HIS CHAIR UNDER THIS ATTACK, HIS GUILTY CONTRITION GREATER THAN HIS ANGER. HE STAMMERS.) Be quiet! Don't say that to me! You're drunk! I won't mind you. Stop coughing, lad. You've got yourself worked up over nothing. Who said you had to go to this Hilltown place? You can go anywhere you like. I don't give a damn what it costs. All I care about is to have you get well. Don't call me a stinking miser, just because I don't want doctors to think I'm a millionaire they can swindle. (EDMUND HAS STOPPED COUGHING. HE LOOKS SICK AND WEAK. HIS FATHER STARES AT HIM FRIGHTENEDLY.) You look weak, lad. You'd better take a bracer.

EDMUND

(GRABS THE BOTTLE AND POURS HIS GLASS BRIMFULL--WEAKLY.) Thanks. (HE GULPS DOWN THE WHISKEY. THE FOGHORN SOUNDS.)

TYRONE

(POURS HIMSELF A BIG DRINK, WHICH EMPTIES THE BOTTLE, AND DRINKS IT. HIS HEAD BOWS AND HE STARES DULLY AT THE CARDS ON THE TABLE, AS THE FOGHORN SOUNDS AGAIN. VAGUELY.) Whose play is it? (HE GOES ON DULLY, WITHOUT RESENTMENT.) A stinking old miser. Well, maybe you're right. Maybe I can't help being, although all my life since I had anything I've thrown money over the bar to buy drinks for everyone in the house, or loaned money to sponges I knew would never pay it back-- (WITH A LOOSE-MOUTHED SNEER OF SELF-CONTEMPT.) But, of course, that was in barrooms, when I was full of whiskey. I can't feel that way about it when I'm sober in my home. It was at home I first learned the value of a dollar and the fear of the poorhouse. I've never been able to believe in my luck since. (ABRUPTLY HIS TONE BECOMES SCORNFULLY SUPERIOR.) You said you realized what I'd been up against as a boy. The hell you do! How could you? You've had everything--nurses, schools, college, though you didn't stay there. You've had food, clothing. Oh, I know you had a fling of hard work with your back and hands, a bit of being homeless and penniless in a foreign land, and I respect you for it. But it was a game of romance and adventure to you. It was play.

EDMUND

(DULLY SARCASTIC.) Yes, particularly the time I tried to commit suicide at Jimmie the Priest's, and almost did.

TYRONE

You weren't in your right mind. No son of mine would ever-- You were drunk.

EDMUND

I was stone cold sober. That was the trouble. I'd stopped to think too long.

TYRONE

(WITH DRUNKEN PEEVISHNESS.) Don't start your damned atheist morbidness again! I don't care to listen. I was trying to make plain to you-- (SCORNFULLY.) What do you know of the value of a dollar? When I was ten my father deserted my mother and went back to Ireland to die. Which he did soon enough, and deserved to, and I hope he's roasting in hell. He mistook rat poison for flour, or sugar, or something. There was gossip it wasn't by mistake but that's a lie. No one in my family ever--

EDMUND

My bet is, it wasn't by mistake.

TYRONE

More morbidness! Your brother put that in your head. The worst he can suspect is the only truth for him. But never mind. My mother was left, a stranger in a strange land, with four small children. There was no damned romance in our poverty. Twice we were evicted from the miserable hovel we called home, with my mother's few sticks of furniture thrown out in the street, and my mother and sisters crying. I cried, too, though I tried hard not to, because I was the man of the family. At ten years old! There was no more school for me. I worked twelve hours a day in a machine shop, learning to make files. A dirty barn of a place where rain dripped through the roof, where you roasted in summer, and there was no stove in winter, and your hands got numb with cold, where the only light came through two small filthy windows, so on grey days I'd have to sit bent over with my eyes almost touching the files in order to see! You talk of work! And what do you think I got for it? Fifty cents a week! It's the truth! Fifty cents a week! And my poor mother washed and scrubbed for the Yanks. Well I remember one Thanksgiving, or maybe it was Christmas, when some Yank in whose house mother had been scrubbing gave her a dollar extra for a present, and on the way home she spent it all on food. I can remember her hugging and kissing us and saying with tears of joy running down her tired face: "Glory be to God, for once in our lives we'll have enough for each of us!" (HE WIPES TEARS FROM HIS EYES.) A fine, brave, sweet woman. There never was a braver or finer.

EDMUND

(MOVED.) Yes, she must have been.

TYRONE

Her one fear was she'd get old and sick and have to die in the poorhouse. (THE FOGHORN SOUNDS. HE PAUSES--THEN ADDS WITH GRIM HUMOR.) It was in those days I learned to be a miser. A dollar was worth so much then. And once you've learned a lesson, it's hard to unlearn it. You have to look for bargains. If I took this state farm sanatorium for a good bargain, you'll have to forgive me. The doctors did tell me it's a good place. You must believe that, Edmund. And I swear I never meant you to go there if you didn't want to. (VEHEMENTLY.) You can choose any place you like! Never mind what it costs! Any place I can afford. Any place you like--within reason.

EDMUND

(AT THIS QUALIFICATION, A GRIN TWITCHES EDMUND'S LIPS. HIS RESENTMENT HAS GONE. CHANGING THE SUBJECT.) How about our game? Whose play is it?

TYRONE

(MECHANICALLY.) I don't know. Mine, I guess. No, it's yours. (EDMUND PLAYS A CARD. HIS FATHER TAKES IT. THEN ABOUT TO PLAY FROM HIS HAND, HE AGAIN FORGETS THE GAME.) Yes, maybe life overdid the lesson for me, and made a dollar worth too much, and the time came when that mistake ruined my career as a fine actor. (SADLY.) I've never admitted this to anyone before, lad, but tonight I'm so heartsick I feel at the end of everything, and what's the use of fake pride and pretense. That God-damned play I bought for a song and made such a great success in--a great money success--it ruined me with its promise of an easy fortune. I didn't want to do anything else, and by the time I woke up to the fact I'd become a slave to the damned thing, and did try other plays, it was too late. They had identified me with that one part, and didn't want me in anything else. They were right, too. I'd lost the great talent I once had through years of easy repetition, never learning a new part, never really working hard. Thirty-five to forty thousand dollars net profit a season like snapping your fingers! It was too great a temptation. Yet before I bought the damned thing I was considered one of the three or four young actors with the greatest artistic promise in America. I'd worked like hell. I'd left a good job as a machinist to take supers' parts because I loved the theatre. I was wild with ambition. I read all the plays ever written. I studied Shakespeare as you'd study the Bible. I educated myself. I got rid of an Irish brogue you could cut with a knife. I loved Shakespeare. I would have acted in any of his plays for nothing, for the job of being alive in his great poetry. And I acted well in him. I felt inspired by him. I could have been a great Shakespearean actor, if I'd kept on. I know that! (HE RISES SLOWLY AND CROSSES TO DOWN RIGHT.) In 1874 when Edwin Booth came to the theatre in Chicago where I was leading man, I played Cassius to his Brutus one night, Brutus to his Cassius the next, Othello to his Iago, and so on. The first night I played Othello, he said to our manager, "That young man is playing Othello better than I ever did!" (PROUDLY.) That from

Booth, the greatest actor of his day or any other! And it was true! And I was only twenty-seven years old! (CROSSES TO BEHIND EDMUND.) As I look back on it now, that night was the high spot in my career. I had life where I wanted it! And for a time after that I kept on upward with ambition high. Married your mother. Ask her what I was like in those days. (CIRCLES UP STAGE OF TABLE TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE.) Her love was an added incentive to ambition. But a few years later my good bad luck made me find the big money-maker--and then life had me where it wanted me--at from thirty-five to forty thousand net profit a season! A fortune in those days--or even in these. (TURNS TOWARD DOWN LEFT. BITTERLY.) What the hell was it I wanted to buy, I wonder, that was worth-- Well, no matter. It's a late day for regrets. (LOOKS BACK AT HIS CARDS ON THE TABLE AND CROSSES TO TABLE AND PICKS UP THE CARDS. HE GLANCES VAGUELY AT HIS CARDS.) My play, isn't it? (PLAYS A CARD.)

EDMUND

(MOVED, STARES AT HIS FATHER WITH UNDERSTANDING--SLOWLY.) I'm glad you've told me this, Papa. I know you a lot better now.

TYRONE

(WITH A LOOSE, TWISTED SMILE.) Maybe I shouldn't have told you. Maybe you'll only feel more contempt for me. And it's a poor way to convince you of the value of a dollar. (THEN AS IF THIS PHRASE AUTOMATICALLY AROUSED AN HABITUAL ASSOCIATION IN HIS MIND, HE GLANCES UP AT THE CHANDELIER DISAPPROVINGLY.) The glare from those extra lights hurts my eyes. You don't mind if I turn them out, do you? We don't need them, and there's no use making the Electric Company rich.

EDMUND

(CONTROLLING A WILD IMPULSE TO LAUGH--AGREEABLY.) No, sure not. Turn them out.

TYRONE

(CROSSES TO FRONT HALL AND TURNS OUT HALL LIGHT.) No, I don't know what the hell it was I wanted to buy. (CROSSES TO STAIRS AND TURNS OUT WALL SCONCES.) On my solemn oath, Edmund, I'd gladly face not having an acre of land to call my own, nor a penny in the bank-- (CROSSES TO CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE, STANDS UP IN IT AND BEGINS TO TURN OUT ALL BUT ONE OF THE BULBS IN THE CHANDELIER.) (FIGURE 2.) I'd be willing to have no home but the poorhouse in my old age if I could look back now on having been the fine artist I might have been. (AS FOGHORN SOUNDS, EDMUND SUDDENLY CANNOT HOLD BACK A BURST OF STRAINED, IRONICAL LAUGHTER. TYRONE IS HURT, GETS DOWN AND CROSSES TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE.) What the devil are you laughing at?

EDMUND

Not at you, Papa. At life. It's so damned crazy.

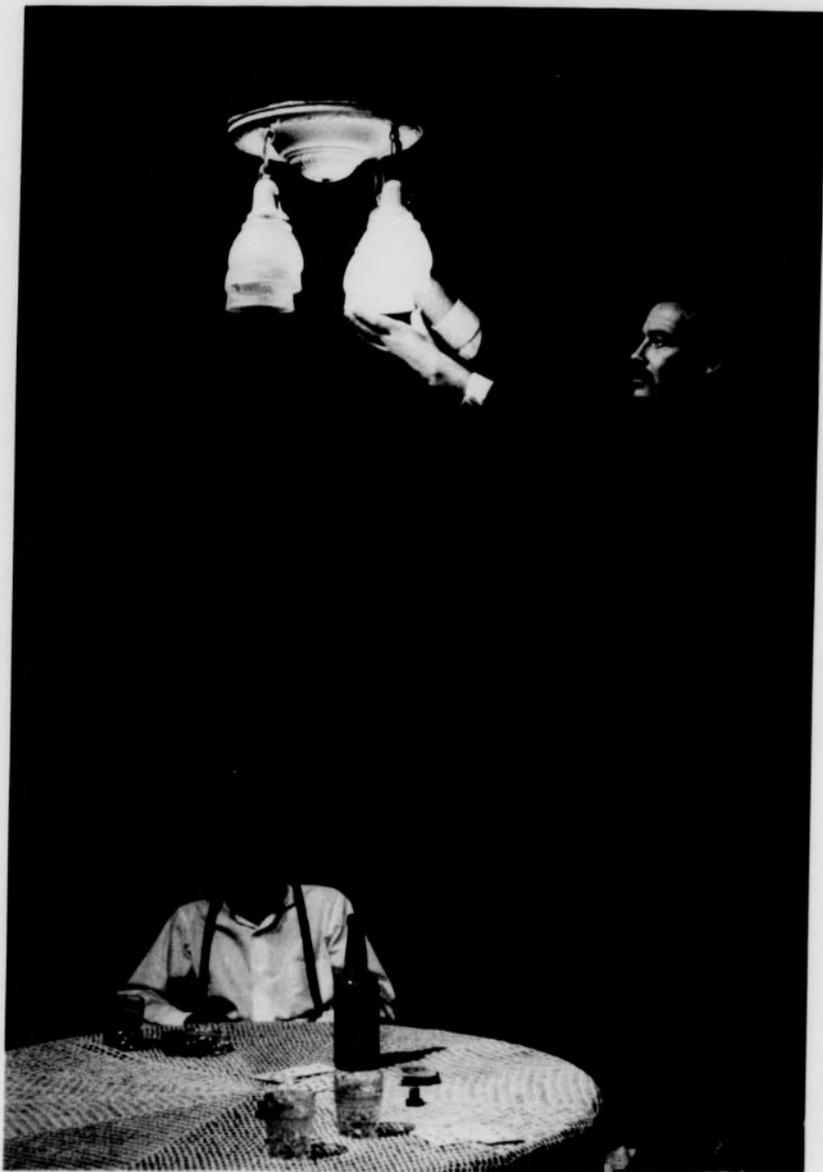


Figure 7

TYRONE

(GROWLS.) More of your morbidness! There's nothing wrong with life. It's we who-- (HE QUOTES.) "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings." (HE PAUSES--THEN SADLY.) The praise Edwin Booth gave my Othello. I made the manager put down his exact words in writing. (SITS IN CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE.) I kept it in my wallet for years. I used to read it every once in a while until finally it made me feel so bad I didn't want to face it any more. Where is it now, I wonder? Somewhere in this house. I remember I put it away carefully--

EDMUND

(WITH A WRY IRONICAL SADNESS.) It might be in an old trunk in the attic, along with Mama's wedding dress. (THEN AS HIS FATHER STARES AT HIM, HE ADDS QUICKLY.) For Pete's sake, if we're going to play cards, let's play. (HE TAKES THE CARD HIS FATHER HAD PLAYED AND LEADS. FOR A MOMENT, THEY PLAY THE GAME, LIKE MECHANICAL CHESS PLAYERS. THEN TYRONE STOPS, LISTENING TO A SOUND UPSTAIRS.)

TYRONE

She's still moving around. God knows when she'll go to sleep.

EDMUND

(PLEADS TENSELY.) For Christ's sake, Papa, forget it! (HE REACHES OUT AND POURS A DRINK. TYRONE STARTS TO PROTEST, THEN GIVES IT UP. EDMUND DRINKS. HE PUTS DOWN THE GLASS. HIS EXPRESSION CHANGES. WHEN HE SPEAKS IT IS AS IF HE WERE DELIBERATELY GIVING WAY TO DRUNKENNESS AND SEEKING TO HIDE BEHIND A MAUDLIN MANNER. HE LAUGHS WITH MAUDLIN APPRECIATION. THEN WITH ALCOHOLIC TALKATIVENESS.) You've just told me some high spots in your memories. Want to hear mine? They're all connected with the sea. Here's one. When I was on the Squarehead square rigger, bound for Buenos Aires. Full moon on the Trades. The old hooker driving fourteen knots. I lay on the bowsprit, facing astern, with the water foaming into spume under me, the masts with every sail white in the moonlight, towering high above me. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS.) I became drunk with the beauty and singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself--actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! To God, if you want to put it that way. For a second you see--and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning! Then you are alone, lost in the fog again, and you stumble on toward nowhere, for no good reason! (HE GRINS WRYLY.) It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!

TYRONE

(STARES AT HIM--IMPRESSED.) Yes, there's the makings of a poet in you all right.

EDMUND

(SARDONICALLY.) The makings of a poet. No, I'm afraid I'm like the guy who is always panhandling for a smoke. He hasn't even got the makings. He's got only the habit. (LEANS IN TO TYRONE.) I couldn't touch what I tried to tell you just now. I just stammered. That's the best I'll ever do I mean, if I live. Well, it will be faithful realism, at least. Stammering is the native eloquence of us fog people. (A PAUSE. THEN THEY BOTH JUMP STARTLEDLY AS THERE IS A NOISE FROM OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, AS IF SOMEONE HAD STUMBLERD AND FALLEN ON THE FRONT STEPS. EDMUND GRINS.) Well, that sounds like the absent brother. He must have a peach of a bun on.

TYRONE

(SCOWLING.) That loafer! He caught the last car, bad luck to it. (HE GETS TO HIS FEET, GRABS THE NEARLY EMPTY WHISKEY BOTTLE AND CROSSES TO DINING ROOM.) Get him to bed, Edmund. I'll go out on the back porch. He has a tongue like an adder when he's drunk. I'd only lose my temper. (TYRONE EXITS UP RIGHT THROUGH DINING ROOM AS THE FRONT DOOR IN THE HALL BANGS SHUT BEHIND JAMIE. EDMUND WATCHES WITH AMUSEMENT JAMIE'S WAVERING PROGRESS. JAMIE COMES IN. HE IS VERY DRUNK AND WOOZY ON HIS LEGS. HIS EYES ARE GLASSY, HIS FACE BLOATED, HIS SPEECH BLURRED, HIS MOUTH SLACK LIKE HIS FATHER'S, A LEER ON HIS LIPS.)

JAMIE

(SWAYING AND BLINKING IN THE DOORWAY--IN A LOUD VOICE.) What ho! What ho!

EDMUND

(SHARPLY.) Nix on the loud noise!

JAMIE

(BLINKS AT HIM.) Oh, hello, Kid. (WITH GREAT SERIOUSNESS AS HE LEANS AGAINST THE DOORFRAME.) I'm as drunk as a fiddler's bitch.

EDMUND

(DRYLY.) Thanks for telling me your great secret.

JAMIE

(GRINS FOOLISHLY AND CROSSES TO THE TABLE AT THE WINDOW LEFT.) Yes. Unnesheary information Number One, eh? (HE BENDS AND SLAPS AT THE

KNEES OF HIS TROUSERS.) Had serious accident. The fron steps tried to trample on me. Took advantage of fog to waylay me. Ought to be a light-house out there. Dark in here, too. (SCOWLING, AS HE CROSSES TO CHAIR CENTER AT THE TABLE CENTER.) What the hell is this, the morgue? Lesh have some light on sibject. (CLIMBS ONTO CHAIR AND FUMBLES AT THE CHANDELIER AND MANAGES TO TURN ON THE BULBS.)

"Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!

Keeping the crossing-stakes beside you, an' they will surely guide you
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark."
(STEPS DOWN.) Thash more like it. To hell with old Gaspard. Where is the old tightwad?

EDMUND

Out on the back porch.

JAMIE

(TURNS AND CROSSES TO UP RIGHT, SHOUTING.) Can't expect us to live in the Black Hole of Calcutta. (HIS EYES FIX ON THE FULL BOTTLE OF WHISKEY.) Say! Have I got the d.t.'s? (CROSSES TO CENTER OF TABLE REACHING OUT FOR THE BOTTLE AND GRABS IT.) By God, it's real. What's matter with the Old Man tonight? Must be ossified to forget he left this out. Grab opportunity by the forelock. Key to my success. (HE SLOPS A BIG DRINK INTO A GLASS.)

EDMUND

You're stinking now. That will knock you stiff.

JAMIE

Wisdom from the mouth of babes. Can the wise stuff, Kid. (CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT AT TABLE.) You're still wet behind the ears. (HE LOWERS HIMSELF INTO A CHAIR, HOLDING THE DRINK CAREFULLY ALOFT.)

EDMUND

All right. Pass out if you want to.

JAMIE

Can't, that's trouble. Had enough to sink a ship, but can't sink. Well, here's hoping. (HE DRINKS.)

EDMUND

(REACHING FOR THE BOTTLE.) Shove over the bottle. I'll have one, too.

JAMIE

(WITH SUDDEN, BIG-BROTHERLY SOLICITUDE, GRABBING THE BOTTLE.) No, you don't. Not while I'm around. Remember doctor's orders. Maybe no one else gives a damn if you die, but I do. My kid brother. I love your guts, Kid. Everything else is gone. You're all I've got left. (PULLING BOTTLE CLOSER TO HIM.) So no booze for you, if I can help it. (BENEATH HIS DRUNKEN SENTIMENTALITY THERE IS A GENUINE SINCERITY.)

EDMUND

(IRRITABLY.) Oh, lay off it.

JAMIE

(IS HURT AND HIS FACE HARDENS.) You don't believe I care, eh? Just drunken bull. (HE SHOVES THE BOTTLE OVER.) All right. Go ahead and kill yourself. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS.)

EDMUND

(SEEING HE IS HURT--AFFECTIONATELY.) Sure I know you care, Jamie, and I'm going on the wagon. But tonight doesn't count. Too many damned things have happened today. (HE POURS A DRINK AS THE FOGHORN SOUNDS AGAIN.) Here's how. (HE DRINKS.)

JAMIE

(SOBERS UP MOMENTARILY AND WITH A PITIYING LOOK.) I know, Kid. It's been a lousy day for you. (THEN WITH SNEERING CYNICISM, HE RISES AND CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO DOWN RIGHT CENTER.) I'll bet old Gaspard hasn't tried to keep you off booze. Probably give you a case to take with you to the state farm for pauper patients. The sooner you kick the bucket, the less expense. (WITH CONTEMPTUOUS HATRED.) What a bastard to have for a father! Christ, if you put him in a book, no one would believe it!

EDMUND

(DEFENSIVELY.) Oh, Papa's all right, if you try to understand him--and keep your sense of humor.

JAMIE

(CYNICALLY, AS HE CROSSES UP CENTER BEHIND THE CHAIR CENTER AT THE TABLE.) He's been putting on the old sob act for you, eh? He can always kid you. But not me. Never again. (LOOKS UP THE STAIRS. THEN SLOWLY.) Although, in a way, I do feel sorry for him about one thing. But he has even that coming to him. He's to blame. (HURRIEDLY.) But to hell with that. (HE CROSSES TO LEFT OF THE TABLE AND GRABS THE BOTTLE AND POURS ANOTHER DRINK, APPEARING VERY DRUNK AGAIN.) That lash drink's getting me. This one ought to put the lights out. Did you tell Gaspard I got it out of Doc Hardy this sanatorium is a charity dump?

EDMUND

(RELUCTANTLY.) Yes. I told him I wouldn't go there. It's all settled now. He said I can go anywhere I want. (HE ADDS, SMILING WITHOUT RESENTMENT.) Within reason, of course.

JAMIE

(DRUNKENLY IMITATING HIS FATHER, CROSSES TO RIGHT CENTER BEHIND EDMUND.) Of course, lad. Anything within reason. (SNEERING AS HE CROSSES TO UP RIGHT.) That means another cheap dump. Old Gaspard, the miser in "The Bells," that's a part he can play without make-up.

EDMUND

(IRRITABLY.) Oh, shut up, will you. I've heard that Gaspard stuff a million times.

JAMIE

(SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS--THICKLY.) Aw right, if you're shatisfied--let him get away with it. It's your funeral--I mean, I hope it won't be.

EDMUND

(CHANGING THE SUBJECT.) What did you do uptown tonight? Go to Mamie Burns?

JAMIE

(VERY DRUNK, HIS HEAD NODDING, HE CROSSES TO RIGHT CENTER BEHIND EDMUND.) Sure thing. Where else could I find suitable feminine companionship? And love. Don't forget love. What is a man without a good woman's love? A God-damned hollow shell.

EDMUND

(CHUCKLES TIPSILY, LETTING HIMSELF GO NOW AND BE DRUNK.) You're a nut.

JAMIE

(CROSSES TOWARD DOWN CENTER.) Guess which one of Mamie's charmers I picked to bless me with her woman's love. It'll hand you a laugh, Kid. I picked Fat Violet.

EDMUND

(LAUGHS DRUNKENLY.) No, honest? Some pick? God, she weighs a ton. What the hell for, a joke?

JAMIE

No joke. Very serious. By the time I hit Mamie's dump I felt very sad about myself and all the other poor bums in the world. Ready for a weep on any old womanly bosom. (CROSSES TO DOWN LEFT.) You know how you get when John Barleycorn turns on the soft music inside you. Then, soon as I got in the door, Mamie began telling me all her troubles. Beefed how rotten business was, and she was going to give Fat Violet the gate. Customers didn't fall for Vi. Only reason she'd kept her was she could play the piano. (CROSSES BACK TO DOWN RIGHT CENTER.) Lately Vi's gone on drunks and been too boiled to play, and was eating her out of house and home, and although Vi was a goodhearted dumbbell, and she felt sorry for her because she didn't know how the hell she'd make a living, still business was business, and she couldn't afford to run a home for fat tarts. Well, that made me feel sorry for Fat Violet, so I squandered two bucks of your dough to escort her upstairs. With no dishonorable intentions whatever. I like them fat, but not that fat. All I wanted was a little heart-to-heart talk concerning the infinite sorrow of life.

EDMUND

(CHUCKLES DRUNKENLY.) Poor Vi! I'll bet you recited Kipling and Swinburne and Dowson and gave her "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my fashion."

JAMIE

(GRINS LOOSELY.) Sure-- She stood it for a while. Then she got good and sore. Got the idea I took her upstairs for a joke. Gave me a grand bawling out. Then she began to cry. So I had to say I loved her because she was fat, and she wanted to believe that, and I stayed with her to prove it, and that cheered her up, and she kissed me when I left, and said she'd fallen hard for me, and we both cried a little more in the hallway, and everything was fine, except Mamie Burns thought I'd gone bughouse.

EDMUND

(QUOTES DERISIVELY.) "Harlots and
Hunted have pleasures of their own to give,
The vulgar herd can never understand."

JAMIE

(NODS HIS HEAD DRUNKENLY. A FOGHORN SOUNDS.) Egzactly! Hell of a good time, at that. (HE PAUSES--THEN WITH MAUDLIN HUMOR, IN A HAM-ACTOR TONE, AS HE CROSSES LEFT TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE.) This night has opened my eyes to a great career in store for me, my boy! I shall give the art of acting back to the performing seals, which are its most perfect expression. By applying my natural God-given talents in their proper sphere, I shall attain the pinnacle of success! I'll be the lover of the fat woman in Barnun and Bailey's circus! (EDMUND LAUGHS. JAMIE'S MOOD

CHANGES TO DISDAIN AS HE TURNS AND STEPS TOWARD DOWN LEFT.) Pah! Imagine me sunk to the fat girl in a hick town hooker shop! Me! Who have made some of the best-lookers on Broadway sit up and beg! (HE QUOTES FROM KIPLING'S "SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL" AND CROSSES TOWARD THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE TABLE.)

"Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all,

The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world."

(WITH SODDEN MELANCHOLY, HE STEPS INTO THE LEFT OF THE TABLE AND LEANS OVER IT TOWARD EDMUND.) Not so apt. Happy roads is bunk. Weary roads is right. Get you nowhere fast. That's where I've got--nowhere. Where everyone lands in the end, even if most of the suckers won't admit it.

EDMUND

(DERISIVELY.) Can it! You'll be crying in a minute.

JAMIE

(STARTS AND STARES AT HIS BROTHER FOR A SECOND WITH BITTER HOSTILITY--THICKLY.) Don't get--too damned fresh. (THEN ABRUPTLY.) But you're right. To hell with repining! Fat Violet's a good kid. Glad I stayed with her. Christian act. Cured her blues. Hell of a good time. You should have stuck with me, Kid. Taken your mind off your troubles. (CROSSES UP STAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS.) What's the use coming home to get the blues over what can't be helped. All over--finished--not a hope! (HE STOPS, HIS HEAD NODDING DRUNKENLY, HIS EYES CLOSING--THEN SUDDENLY HE LOOKS UP, HIS FACE HARD, AND GOES UP THE STAIRS TO THE LOWER LANDING. QUOTES JEERINGLY.)

"If I were hanged on the highest hill,

Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

I know whose love would follow me still . . ."

EDMUND

(VIOLENTLY. RISES AND CROSSES TO DOWN RIGHT CENTER.) Shut up!

JAMIE

(CROSSES DOWN STAGE TO EDMUND. IN A CRUEL, SNEERING TONE WITH HATRED IN IT.) Where's the hophead? Gone to sleep?

EDMUND

You dirty bastard! (HE PUNCHES HIS BROTHER IN THE FACE, A BLOW THAT GLANCES OFF THE CHEEKBONE, BUT KNOCKS JAMIE TO THE FLOOR. EDMUND STANDS THREATENINGLY OVER JAMIE.)

JAMIE

(FOR A SECOND JAMIE REACTS PUGNACIOUSLY, BUT SUDDENLY HE SEEMS TO SOBER UP TO A SHOCKED REALIZATION OF WHAT HE HAS SAID. MISERABLY.) Thanks,

Kid. I certainly had that coming. Don't know what made me--booze talking-- You know me, Kid.

EDMUND

(HIS ANGER EBBING, HE RELAXES AND STEPS BACK.) I know you'd never say that unless-- But God, Jamie, no matter how drunk you are, it's no excuse! (HE PAUSES--MISERABLY. CROSSES TO CHAIR LEFT OF SOFA AND SITS.) I'm sorry I hit you. You and I never scrap--that bad.

JAMIE

(HUSKILY, AS HE PULLS HIMSELF UP ONTO THE SOFA.) It's all right. Glad you did. My dirty tongue. Like to cut it out. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS. HE HIDES HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS--DULLY.) I suppose it's because I feel so damned sunk. Because this time Mama had me fooled. (HIS VOICE FLUTTERS.) I suppose I can't forgive her--yet. It meant so much. I'd begun to hope, if she'd beaten the game, I could, too. (HE BEGINS TO SOB, AND THE HORRIBLE PART OF HIS WEEPING IS THAT IT APPEARS SOBER, NOT THE MAUDLIN TEARS OF DRUNKENNESS.)

EDMUND

(BLINKING BACK TEARS HIMSELF.) God, don't I know how you feel! Stop it, Jamie!

JAMIE

(TRYING TO CONTROL HIS SOBS.) I've known about Mama so much longer than you. Never forget the first time I got wise. Caught her in the act with a hypo! Christ, I'd never dreamed before that any women but whores took dope! (HE PAUSES.) And then this stuff of you getting consumption. It's got me licked. We've been more than brothers. You're the only pal I've ever had. I love your guts. I'd do anything for you.

EDMUND

(REACHES OUT AND PATS HIS ARM.) I know that, Jamie.

JAMIE

(HIS CRYING OVER--DROPS HIS HANDS FROM HIS FACE. HE RISES AND CROSSES DOWN STAGE OF EDMUND TOWARD DOWN LEFT. WITH A STRANGE BITTERNESS.) Yet I'll bet you've heard Mama and old Gaspard spill so much bunk about my hoping for the worst, you suspect right now I'm thinking to myself that Papa is old and can't last much longer, and if you were to die, Mama and I would get all he's got, so I'm probably hoping--

EDMUND

(INDIGNANTLY.) Shut up, you damned fool! What the hell put that in your nut? (HE STARES AT HIS BROTHER ACCUSINGLY.) Yes, that's what I'd like to know. What put that in your mind?

JAMIE

(CONFUSEDLY--APPEARING TO BE DRUNK AGAIN, HE TURNS TO EDMUND.) Don't be a dumbbell! What I said! Always suspected of hoping for the worst. I've got so I can't help-- (THEN DRUNKENLY RESENTFUL, HE CROSSES IN TO LEFT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) What are you trying to do, accuse me? Don't play the wise guy with me! I've learned more of life than you'll ever know! Just because you've read a lot of highbrow junk, don't think you can fool me! (CROSSES TO ROCKING CHAIR AT LEFT.) You're only an overgrown kid! Mama's baby and Papa's pet! The family White Hope! You've been getting a swelled head lately. About nothing! About a few poems in a hick town newspaper! Hell, I used to write better stuff for the Lit magazine in college! You better wake up! You're setting no rivers on fire! You let hick town boobs flatter you with bunk about your future-- (ABRUPTLY HIS TONE CHANGES TO DISGUSTED CONTRITION. EDMUND HAS LOOKED AWAY FROM HIM, TRYING TO IGNORE THIS TIRADE. JAMIE CROSSES TOWARD UP CENTER.) Hell, Kid, forget it. That goes for Sweeny. You know I don't mean it. No one is prouder you've started to make good. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS. DRUNKENLY ASSERTIVE.) Why shouldn't I be proud? Hell, it's purely selfish. You reflect credit on me. I've had more to do with bringing you up than anyone. (AT UP CENTER.) I wised you up about women, so you'd never be a fall guy, or make any mistakes you didn't want to make! (STEPS IN TO BOOKCASE RIGHT OF UP CENTER.) And who steered you on to reading poetry first? Swinburne, for example? I did! And because I once wanted to write, I planted it in your mind that someday you'd write! (CROSSING DOWN TO BEHIND EDMUND.) Hell, you're more than my brother. I made you! You're my Frankenstein! (HE HAS RISEN TO A NOTE OF DRUNKEN ARROGANCE. EDMUND IS GRINNING WITH AMUSEMENT NOW.)

EDMUND

All right, I'm your Frankenstein. So let's have a drink. (HE LAUGHS AND RISES AND CROSSES TO RIGHT OF THE TABLE.) You crazy nut!

JAMIE

(THICKLY, HE CROSSES BEHIND THE TABLE, GRABS THE BOTTLE AND STOPS TO FACE EDMUND ACROSS THE TABLE. TAKES A DRINK FROM THE BOTTLE, THEN SPEAKS TO EDMUND WITH A STRANGE, CONVINCING SINCERITY.) I'll have a drink. Not you. Got to take care of you. Listen, Kid, you'll be going away. May not get another chance to talk. Or might not be drunk enough to tell you the truth. So got to tell you now. Something I ought to have told you long ago--for your own good. (HE PAUSES--STRUGGLING WITH HIMSELF. EDMUND STARES, IMPRESSED AND UNEASY. JAMIE BLURTS OUT. HE LEANS OVER

THE TABLE AND PLACES THE BOTTLE NEAR EDMUND.) Not drunken bull, but "in vino veritas" stuff. You better take it seriously. Want to warn you-- against me. Mama and Papa are right. I've been rotten bad influence. And worst of it is, I did it on purpose.

EDMUND

(SITS IN CHAIR RIGHT AT TABLE. UNEASILY.) Shut up! I don't want to hear--

JAMIE

Nix, Kid! You listen! Did it on purpose to make a bum of you. Or part of me did. A big part. That part that's been dead so long. That hates life. My putting you wise so you'd learn from my mistakes. (CROSSING TOWARD LEFT CENTER.) Believed that myself at times, but it's a fake. Made my mistakes look good. Made getting drunk romantic. Made whores fascinating vampires instead of poor, stupid, diseased slobs they really are. (STEPS DOWN LEFT.) Made fun of work as sucker's game. Never wanted you succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet! (HE STARES AT EDMUND WITH INCREASING ENMITY AND CROSSES BACK TO LEFT OF THE TABLE CENTER.) And it was your being born that started Mama on dope. I know that's not your fault, but all the same, God damn you, I can't help hating your guts--!

EDMUND

(ALMOST FRIGHTENEDLY.) Jamie! Cut it out! You're crazy!

JAMIE

(CROSSES QUICKLY TO BEHIND EDMUND AND GRABS HIS SHOULDERS.) But don't get the wrong idea, Kid. I love you more than I hate you. My saying what I'm telling you now proves it. I run the risk you'll hate me--and you're all I've got left. But I didn't mean to tell you that last stuff--go that far back. Don't know what made me. What I wanted to say is, I'd like to see you become the greatest success in the world. But you'd better be on your guard. Because I'll do my damndest to make you fail. Can't help it. I hate myself. Got to take revenge. On everyone else. Especially you. (CROSSES TOWARD UP RIGHT TO UP STAGE OF THE CHAIR AT LEFT OF THE SOFA.) The dead part of me hopes you won't get well. Maybe he's even glad the game has got Mama again! He wants company, he doesn't want to be the only corpse around the house! (HE GIVES A HARD, TORTURED LAUGH.)

EDMUND

Jesus, Jamie! You really have gone crazy!

JAMIE

(CROSSES DOWN TO THE CHAIR LEFT OF THE SOFA.) Think it over and you'll see I'm right. Think it over when you're away from me in the sanatorium. Make up your mind you've got to tie a can to me--get me out of your life. (STEPS IN TOWARD EDMUND.) Think of me as dead--tell people, "I had a brother, but he's dead." And when you come back, look out for me. (CROSSES RIGHT TO SOFA.) I'll be waiting to welcome you with that "my old pal" stuff, and give you the glad hand, and at the first good chance I get stab you in the back.

EDMUND

Shut up! I'll be God-damned if I'll listen to you any more--

JAMIE

(AS IF HE HADN'T HEARD, HE SINKS ONTO THE SOFA. STARTING TO LIE DOWN WITH HIS HEAD ON THE UP STAGE ARM OF THE SOFA.) Only don't forget me. Remember I warned you--for your sake. Give me credit! Greater love hath no man than this, that he saveth his brother from himself. (VERY DRUNKENLY.) That's all. Feel better now. Gone to confession. Know you absolve me, don't you, Kid? You understand. You're a damned fine kid. Ought to be. I made you. So go and get well. Don't die on me. You're all I've got left. God bless you, Kid. (HIS EYES CLOSE. HE MUMBLES.) That last drink--the old K.O. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS AS HE FALLS INTO A DRUNKEN DOZE, NOT COMPLETELY ASLEEP. EDMUND BURIES HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS MISERABLY. TYRONE COMES IN QUIETLY THROUGH THE DINING ROOM, HIS DRESSING GOWN WET WITH FOG, THE COLLAR TURNED UP AROUND HIS THROAT. HIS FACE IS STERN AND DISGUSTED BUT AT THE SAME TIME PITYING. EDMUND DOES NOT NOTICE HIS ENTRANCE.)

TYRONE

(IN A LOW VOICE.) Thank God he's asleep. (EDMUND LOOKS UP WITH A START.) I thought he'd never stop talking. (HE TURNS DOWN THE COLLAR OF HIS DRESSING GOWN.) We'd better let him stay where he is and sleep it off. (EDMUND REMAINS SILENT. TYRONE REGARDS HIM--THEN GOES ON. CROSSING TO UP STAGE OF THE CHAIR CENTER AT THE TABLE.) I heard the last part of his talk. It's what I've warned you. I hope you'll heed the warning, now it comes from his own mouth. (EDMUND GIVES NO SIGN OF HAVING HEARD. TYRONE ADDS PITYINGLY.) But don't take it too much to heart, lad. He loves to exaggerate the worst of himself when he's drunk. He's devoted to you. It's the one good thing left in him. (HE LOOKS DOWN ON JAMIE WITH A BITTER SADNESS, TAKING THREE STEPS RIGHT TOWARD JAMIE.) A sweet spectacle for me! My first-born, who I hoped would bear my name in honor and dignity, who showed such brilliant promise!

EDMUND

(MISERABLY.) Keep quiet, can't you, Papa?

TYRONE

(CROSSES BACK TO UP STAGE CENTER AT TABLE. POURS A DRINK.) A waste! A wreck, a drunken hulk, done with and finished! (HE DRINKS. JAMIE HAS BECOME RESTLESS, SENSING HIS FATHER'S PRESENCE, STRUGGLING UP FROM HIS STUPOR. NOW HE GETS HIS EYES OPEN TO BLINK UP AT TYRONE. THE LATTER MOVES BACK A STEP DEFENSIVELY, HIS FACE GROWING HARD.)

JAMIE

(SUDDENLY POINTS A FINGER AT HIM AND RECITES WITH DRAMATIC EMPHASIS.)

"Clarence is come, false, feeting, perjured Clarence,
That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury.

Seize on him, Furies, take him into torment."

(THEN RESENTFULLY.) What the hell are you staring at? (MARY APPEARS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS WEARING A DRESSING GOWN OVER HER NIGHTDRESS AND CARRIES AN OLD FASHION WHITE SATIN WEDDING DRESS CARELESSLY AT HER SIDE. QUIETLY, SHE COMES DOWN THE STAIRS AND GOES OUT INTO THE FRONT HALL AND EXITS INTO THE FRONT PARLOR. AS SHE EXITS, THE MEN NOTICE HER AND REACT WITH SORROW AND PITY. TYRONE CROSSES TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE AND SITS, HE EYES AVERTED, HIS HANDS GRIPPING THE ARMS OF HIS CHAIR. EDMUND SITS FORWARD TENSELY AND JAMIE BURIES HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. IN A MOMENT, THE CHOPIN NOCTURNE CAN BE HEARD, PLAYED WITH A FORGETFUL, STIFF-FINGERED CROPPING, AS IF AN AWKWARD SCHOOLGIRL WERE PRACTICING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE MUSIC CONTINUES FOR TWENTY SECONDS, THEN STOPS SUDDENLY. MARY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY. HER FACE IS PALER THAN EVER. HER EYES LOOK ENORMOUS. THEY GLISTEN LIKE POLISHED BLACK JEWELS. THE UNCANNY THING IS THAT HER FACE NOW APPEARS SO YOUTHFUL. OVER ONE ARM, CARRIED NEGLECTFULLY, TRAILING ON THE FLOOR AS IF SHE HAD FORGOTTEN SHE HELD IT, IS STILL HER OLD WEDDING GOWN. SHE HESITATES IN THE DOORWAY, GLANCING AROUND THE ROOM, LIKE SOMEONE WHO HAS COME TO A ROOM TO GET SOMETHING, BUT HAS BECOME ABSENT-MINDED ON THE WAY AND FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS. THEY STARE AT HER. SHE SEEMS AWARE OF THEM MERELY AS SHE IS AWARE OF OTHER OBJECTS IN THE ROOM, THE FURNITURE, THE WINDOWS, FAMILIAR THINGS SHE ACCEPTS AUTOMATICALLY AS NATURALLY BELONGING THERE BUT WHICH SHE IS TOO PREOCCUPIED TO NOTICE.)

JAMIE

(SITS UP. BREAKS THE CRACKING SILENCE--BITTERLY, SELF-DEFENSIVELY SARDONIC.) The Mad Scene. Enter Ophelia! (HIS FATHER AND BROTHER BOTH TURN ON HIM FIERCELY. EDMUND IS QUICKER. HE RISES AND CROSSES TO JAMIE AND SLAPS HIM ACROSS THE MOUTH WITH THE BACK OF HIS HAND.)

TYRONE

(HIS VOICE TREMBLING WITH SUPPRESSED FURY.) Good boy, Edmund. The dirty blackguard! His own mother!

JAMIE

(NUMBLES GUILTILY, WITHOUT RESENTMENT.) All right, Kid. Had it coming. But I told you how much I'd hoped-- (HE PUTS HIS HANDS OVER HIS FACE AND BEGINS TO SOB.)

TYRONE

I'll kick you out in the gutter tomorrow, so help me God. (BUT JAMIE'S SOBBING BREAKS HIS ANGER, AND HE TURNS AND SHAKES HIS SHOULDER, PLEADING.) Jamie, for the love of God, stop it! (EDMUND SITS IN THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE SOFA. THEN MARY SPEAKS, AND THEY FREEZE INTO SILENCE AGAIN, STARING AT HER. SHE HAS PAID NO ATTENTION WHATEVER TO THE INCIDENT. IT IS SIMPLY A PART OF THE FAMILIAR ATMOSPHERE OF THE ROOM, A BACKGROUND WHICH DOES NOT TOUCH HER PREOCCUPATION; AND SHE SPEAKS ALOUD TO HERSELF, NOT TO THEM.)

MARY

(CROSSING DOWN STAGE TO LEFT CENTER.) I play so badly now. I'm all out of practice. Sister Theresa will give me a dreadful scolding. She'll tell me it isn't fair to my father when he spends so much money for extra lessons. She's quite right, it isn't fair, when he's so good and generous, and so proud of me. I'll practice every day from now on. But something horrible has happened to my hands. The fingers have gotten so stiff-- (SHE LIFTS HER HANDS TO EXAMINE THEM WITH A FRIGHTENED PUZZLEMENT.) The knuckles are all swollen. They're so ugly. I'll have to go to the Infirmary and show Sister Martha. (WITH A SWEET SMILE OF AFFECTIONATE TRUST.) She's old and a little cranky, but I love her just the same, and she has things in her medicine chest that'll cure anything. She'll give me something to rub on my hands, and tell me to pray to the Blessed Virgin, and they'll be well again in no time. (SHE FORGETS HER HANDS AND COMES INTO THE ROOM, THE WEDDING GOWN TRAILING ON THE FLOOR. SHE GLANCES AROUND VAGUELY, HER FOREHEAD PUCKERED AGAIN. SHE CROSSES TOWARD DOWN RIGHT AND STOPS TO THE RIGHT OF DOWN CENTER.) Let me see. What did I come here to find? It's terrible, how absent-minded I've become. I'm always dreaming and forgetting.

TYRONE

(WITH A STIFLED VOICE, HE RISES AND CROSSES TO MARY.) Here, let me take it, dear. You'll only step on it and tear it and get it dirty dragging it on the floor. Then you'd be sorry afterwards. (FIGURE 8.) (SHE LETS HIM TAKE IT, REGARDING HIM FROM SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY WITHIN HERSELF, WITHOUT RECOGNITION, WITHOUT EITHER AFFECTION OR ANIMOSITY.)

MARY

(WITH THE SHY POLITENESS OF A WELL-BRED YOUNG GIRL TOWARD AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN WHO RELIEVES HER OF A BUNDLE.) Thank you. You are very kind. (SHE REGARDS THE WEDDING GOWN WITH A PUZZLED INTEREST, AS SHE CROSSES



Figure 8

TOWARD DOWN RIGHT AND THEN UP STAGE TO BEHIND EDMUND AND THEN ACROSS TO CHAIR CENTER AT TABLE. TYRONE CROSSES BACK TO THE CHAIR LEFT AT THE TABLE AND SITS AS MARY MOVES AWAY FROM HIM.) It's a wedding gown. It's very lovely, isn't it? I remember now. I found it in the attic hidden in a trunk. But I don't know what I wanted it for. I'm going to be a nun-- that is, if I can only find-- (SHE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, HER FOREHEAD PUCKERED AGAIN.) What is it I'm looking for? I know it's something I lost.

TYRONE

(IN HOPELESS APPEAL, AS THE FOGHORN AND SHIPS' BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.) Mary! (BUT IT CANNOT PENETRATE HER PREOCCUPATION. SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO HEAR HIM. HE GIVES UP HELPLESSLY, SHRINKING INTO HIMSELF, EVEN HIS DEFENSIVE DRUNKENNESS TAKEN FROM HIM, LEAVING HIM SICK AND SOBER. HE SINKS BACK ON HIS CHAIR, HOLDING THE WEDDING GOWN IN HIS ARMS WITH AN UNCONSCIOUS CLUMSY, PROTECTIVE GENTLENESS.)

JAMIE

(DROPS HIS HAND FROM HIS FACE. HE HAS SUDDENLY SOBERED UP, TOO--DULLY.) It's no good, Papa.

MARY

(LOOKING AROUND HER.) Something I miss terribly. It can't be altogether lost.

JAMIE

(TURNS TO LOOK--AND CANNOT HELP APPEALING PLEADINGLY IN HIS TURN.) Mama! (SHE DOES NOT SEEM TO HEAR. HE LOOKS AWAY HOPELESSLY.) Hell! What's the use? It's no good.

MARY

(A FOGHORN SOUNDS AS SHE LOOKS AROUND HER.) Something I need terribly. I remember when I had it I was never lonely nor afraid. I can't have lost it forever, I would die if I thought that. Because then there would be no hope.

EDMUND

(RISES AND CROSSES SLOWLY TO MARY. HE TAKES HER HAND GENTLY. AS HE PLEADS HE HAS THE QUALITY OF A BEWILDEREDLY HURT LITTLE BOY.) Mama! It isn't a summer cold! I've got consumption!

MARY

(FOR A SECOND HE SEEMS TO HAVE BROKEN THROUGH TO HER. SHE TREMBLES AND HER EXPRESSION BECOMES TERRIFIED. SHE CALLS DISTRACTEDLY, AS IF GIVING

A COMMAND TO HERSELF.) No! (AND INSTANTLY SHE IS FAR AWAY AGAIN. SHE MURMURS GENTLY BUT IMPERSONALLY.) You must not try to touch me. You must not try to hold me. It isn't right, when I am hoping to be a nun. (EDMUND DROPS HER HAND.)

JAMIE

(GIVES EDMUND A STRANGE LOOK OF MINGLED PITY AND JEALOUS GLOATING AND RISES.) You damned fool. It's no good. (HE RECITES FROM THE SWINBURNE POEM, "A LEAVE-TAKING," AS HE CROSSES TOWARD CENTER TO CHAIR RIGHT AT TABLE. EDMUND CROSSES UP STAGE BEHIND MARY TO LEFT OF HER AND UP STAGE OF TYRONE.)

"Let us go hence, go hence; she will not see.
Sing all once more together; surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see."

(JAMIE SITS IN THE CHAIR RIGHT AT THE TABLE.)

TYRONE

(TRYING TO SHAKE OFF HIS HOPELESS STUPOR.) Oh, we're fools to pay any attention. It's the damned poison. But I've never known her to drown herself in it as deep as this. (THE SHIPS' BELLS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. GRUFFLY.) Pass me that bottle, Jamie. (JAMIE PUSHES THE BOTTLE TOWARD HIM. HE POURS A DRINK WITHOUT DISARRANGING THE WEDDING GOWN HE HOLDS CAREFULLY OVER HIS OTHER ARM AND ON HIS LAP, AND SHOVES THE BOTTLE BACK. JAMIE POURS HIS. TYRONE LIFTS HIS GLASS AND JAMIE FOLLOWS SUIT MECHANICALLY, BUT BEFORE THEY CAN DRINK MARY SPEAKS AND THEY SLOWLY LOWER THEIR DRINKS TO THE TABLE, FORGETTING THEM.)

MARY

(STARING DREAMILY BEFORE HER. HER FACE LOOKS EXTRAORDINARILY YOUTHFUL AND INNOCENT. THE SHYLY EAGER, TRUSTING SMILE IS ON HER LIPS AS SHE TALKS ALOUD TO HERSELF. SHE SITS IN THE CHAIR CENTER AT THE TABLE.) I had a talk with Mother Elizabeth. She is so sweet and good. A saint on earth. I love her dearly. It may be sinful of me but I love her better than my own mother. Because she always understands, even before you say a word. Her kind blue eyes look right into your heart. You can't keep any secrets from her. You couldn't deceive her, even if you were mean enough to want to. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS. SHE GIVES A LITTLE REBELLIOUS TOSS OF HER HEAD--WITH GIRLISH PIQUE.) All the same, I don't think she was so understanding this time. I told her I wanted to be a nun. I explained how sure I was of my vocation, that I had prayed to the Blessed Virgin to make me sure, and to find me worthy. I told Mother I had had a true vision when I was praying in the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, on the little island in the lake. (THE CHOPIN NOCTURNE BEGINS TO PLAY VERY SOFTLY UNDER THE DIALOGUE.) I said I

knew, as surely as I knew I was kneeling there, that the Blessed Virgin had smiled and blessed me with her consent. But Mother Elizabeth told me I must be more sure than that, even, that I must prove it wasn't simply my imagination. She said, if I was so sure, then I wouldn't mind putting myself to a test by going home after I graduated, and living as other girls lived, going out to parties and dances and enjoying myself; and then if after a year or two I still felt sure, I could come back to see her and we would talk it over again. (SHE TOSSES HER HEAD--INDIGNANTLY.) I never dreamed Holy Mother would give me such advice! I was really shocked. I said, of course, I would do anything she suggested, but I knew it was simply a waste of time. After I left her, I felt all mixed up, so I went to the shrine and prayed to the Blessed Virgin and found peace again because I knew she heard my prayer and would always love me and see no harm ever came to me so long as I never lost my faith in her. (THE MUSIC FADES OUT. SHE PAUSES AND A LOOK OF GROWING UNEASINESS COMES OVER HER FACE. SHE PASSES A HAND OVER HER FOREHEAD AS IF BRUSHING COBWEBS FROM HER BRAIN--VAGUELY.) That was in the winter of senior year. Then in the spring something happened to me. Yes, I remember. I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time. (A FOGHORN SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE. SHE STARES BEFORE HER IN A SAD DREAM. TYRONE STIRS IN HIS CHAIR. EDMUND AND JAMIE REMAIN MOTIONLESS. THE CHOPIN NOCTURNE COMES IN AGAIN AND BUILDS TO A CRESCENDO AS THE LIGHTS FADE TO A BLACK-OUT.)

CURTAIN

CHAPTER III
CRITICAL EVALUATION

Four areas of evaluation will be discussed in this chapter; they are: (1) the relationship of interpretation to the actual performance, (2) an evaluation of actor-director relationships through an analysis of specific problems that occurred during the rehearsal and performance periods, (3) an evaluation of audience reaction to the production, and (4) an evaluation of the total production based on pertinent personal observations by the director.

Achievement of Interpretation for the
Production

Long Day's Journey Into Night was given four performances in the W. Raymond Taylor Drama and Speech Building January 6 through 9, 1972. The final performance on Sunday afternoon, January 9, 1972, was attended by Mr. José Quintero, director of the 1956 American premier of Long Day's Journey at the Helen Hayes Theatre in New York City. The director was fortunate in having two interviews with Mr. Quintero and in receiving Mr. Quintero's permission to use his recorded comments in this thesis.

As stated in Chapter I, Long Day's Journey is an autobiographical quatrologue in four acts with its emphasis on dialogue and character development rather than on physical action. To achieve this interpretation, the director made use of the high degree of contrast that is written into the script. For example, Act I is bright, light, and relatively fast

moving; however, as the complications begin to arise, the physical action begins to slow down as the emotional stress of the characters intensifies. By Act IV, the physical action is static and the emotional action is intense. Mr. Quintero's reaction to the approach was generally favorable, but he did state that he believed the production could have been served better by making the daylight of Act I brighter so as to better establish the idea that the play is ". . . a long day's journey into night."¹ Mr. Quintero believed that a brighter Act I ". . . would have helped them [the Tyrones] to be more like a family."² For this reason, he had more windows in his set because they helped to establish the light and warmth of the family so the contrast would be greater at the end of the play; however, he did state that this director's basic interpretation was very similar to his.³

In retrospect, the director believes that the intensity of the production developed too rapidly. The anger between Tyrone and Jamie in Act I, for example, was too intense. What this director failed to realize was that Tyrone and Jamie were always arguing with each other and that their confrontation in Act I was just one more episode in their continuing battle. According to Mr. Quintero, "It [the play] began too strong for me; we were almost in the middle of the play. [You] should start much lighter, otherwise you get to the end too soon."⁴ Contrast

¹ José Quintero, interview held at The Jokers Three, Greensboro, N.C., January 10, 1972.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

was better established in Acts III and IV. It was in these acts that the physical action slowed down and was gradually replaced by psychological action.

Because of the autobiographical nature of Long Day's Journey, the director made every effort to provide the actors with background material so they could faithfully interpret their roles. During the early stages of rehearsals, a good deal of time was spent in conference with the actors discussing their individual characters and their relationship to themselves and the other characters in the play. This was necessary if the actors were to portray a closely knit family that was torn between extremes of love and hate.

Long Day's Journey Into Night, uncut, is generally four hours long, including intermissions. The director's cut version was three hours and fifteen minutes, including intermissions; the time did not vary more than a minute on any given performance. Because the play is constructed in a series of cycles, there is a great amount of repetition; this fact makes cutting extremely difficult. The director was concerned about the cuts he made because he did not want to destroy the structure of the play. That material which was cut was of a repetitive nature and did little to advance the plot or enhance the psychological action. Generally, the cuts were effective and went unnoticed by the audience. There were no noticeable gaps in the flow of the dialogue or in the development of character or plot.

In spite of the success of the cuts, one serious mistake was made--the first four pages of the script should have been included in this production. The original purpose in cutting them was to eliminate

remarks in the exposition that were repeated through the play and thereby to save time. Of this Mr. Quintero said, "I would have cut [the repetitions] later, not at the beginning."⁵ His justification was that by cutting so soon, this director did not establish family relations solidly enough.

Stylistically, Long Day's Journey contains elements of the autobiography, existentialism, tragedy, expressionism, and the dominant element of realism. The director used the concept of subjective realism to describe his basic concept because, as was stated in Chapter I, O'Neill revealed the truth as he believed it to be and in so doing, employed a high degree of selectivity. In Act IV, Eugene states, "Well, it will be faithful realism, at least. Stammering is the native eloquence of us fog people."⁶ By mixing various elements of style, O'Neill replaced suspense with the revelation of character. The realistic approach was applied throughout the production in line interpretation, costumes, make-up, movement, and in all elements of scene design. Because the play was staged in modified proscenium, the concept of the fourth wall was used to help enhance the realistic qualities of the play.

The use of period costuming also enhanced the realistic nature of the play. The costume worn by Mary in Acts I and II was made at the turn of the century and was quite fragile because of its age, but the costume fit both the actress and this director's purpose and was used with highly beneficial effects.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Eugene O'Neill, Long Day's Journey Into Night (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 154.

Based on remarks by Mr. Quintero and on his own intuitive feelings, the director believes that the basic style of the play is realism with symbolism occurring through the use of foghorns, ships' warning bells, music, and lighting intensity. Expressionism is found in O'Neill's expressing truth as he believed it to be. The characters' many references to fate illustrate O'Neill's influence by existentialism; the elements of tragedy are experienced more through mood than through form, but the unities of time, place, and action, character development, reversals, and conflict all aid in the creation of the play's tragic flavor.

Mood was successfully achieved, the director believes, through the proper use of music, sound effects, lighting effects, movement, and area usage. A Chopin "Nocturne" was selected as the music for Long Day's Journey because of its quiet, dreamy effect, which helped to underline Mary's withdrawal from reality into a narcotic dream world. Since Mary's drug addiction is one of the two causes for the action in the play (the other being Edmund's illness) and is the factor that unites the father and sons, the director had the same piece of music recorded in two different styles. The first style was clear, melodic, and polished; it was used as pre-curtain music before Act I, as under-the-scene music at the end of Act II, scene 2, then again as pre-curtain music before Act IV, and as end-of-show music at the conclusion of Act IV. The second recording was played in a stiff, awkward, and very poor style; this recording was used in Act IV when Mary tries to play the piano in the front parlor. The first style was used as "Mary's Theme" and served to illustrate her girlhood when she studied music at the convent. It functioned

as a fantasy in Mary's mind--an example of what she might have been. The second style served as a painful reminder of reality and of what Mary had become.

The director believes that the multiple uses of the same piece of music helped to heighten the mood of the scenes in which it was used. The director maintains that the earlier uses of the Chopin piece are justified as mood enhancers and do not build expectancy on the part of the audience. The structure of the play is such that the audience can in no way be certain of any of the characters' future actions.

Two lighting effects were essential if the production was to succeed. First, the lighting must show that the play is indeed a long day's journey into night. The progression from bright morning sunlight, to the afternoon fog, and finally the blackness of midnight had to be smooth if the mood was to be established and maintained. Second, the lighting effect at the end of the play must be subtle and powerful; these two effects were highly successful. The first effect was the result of constant communication between the designer and the director. It was necessary for the director and the designer to have a lighting technician who was sensitive to both the feel of the lighting control panel and the mood of the play in order to gauge the lighting effect by the mood of the scene; this type of response helped to heighten the mood of each scene.

At the end of the play, all of the principle characters were grouped around the table at center stage; all but Edmund were seated. Edmund stood up stage and a little left of Mary and looked in on the final scene as an observer from outside. The stage was in absolute darkness

except for those lights focused on the table area. As the lights faded out at the end of Act IV (the light that was focused on Mary was on a dimmer that was three seconds behind the others), the dimming effect created an after-image of Mary, thereby strengthening her as a focal point, creating an eerie effect and thereby heightening mood.

Sound effects also helped to heighten mood. There were only three different sound effects used in the production; they were (1) foghorns, (2) ships' warning bells, and (3) telephone rings. The foghorns and warning bells were used repeatedly in Acts II, III, and IV whenever reality came to the surface and the characters were faced with undeniable truths. These sound effects served as punctuation for the emotional impact of the lines. The telephone was used only once in the play and that was in Act II, scene 2. Although the place for the ringing of the telephone was predetermined by O'Neill, the effect of the ringing was very important. In this cue, as well as in the cues for the foghorns and bells, reality was driven home by very pointed dialogue. It is the director's opinion that all of the sound cues added substantially to the tragic mood of the play.

If there was a shortcoming in the use of sound effects, it was in the selection of the effects. The only effects available to the director were those of electrical foghorns and very sharp sounding ships' bells. Both effects were difficult to mute and to be made to sound distant. This problem was solved by lowering the volume on the various cues and by covering the speakers with heavy material. Ideally, the director would have preferred the old fashioned vacuum type of foghorn and a smaller, more distant sounding bell.

Movement patterns also helped to establish mood in the production. There were four primary patterns; they were (1) horizontal, (2) diagonal, (3) circular, and (4) subtly curved. The director was deeply concerned by what he believed to be over-use of horizontal movement. This type of movement was dictated to a great extent by the set itself. In the early stages of blocking, the director discovered that his actors were being lost up stage of the table and that he was using the stairway levels too much; therefore, any mood that he wanted to create was being lost through an overconcentration of movement in the up stage areas. The problem was solved by making greater use of the down left, down right, and down center areas of scenes that required isolation and introspection of the characters. Horizontal movement then added great strength to many of the crosses in scenes of conflict and introspection.

Diagonal crosses provided nice contrast to the horizontal movements when a decision was reached or a conflict was resolved. They also helped to shift focus and to force the audience's attention on particular action. Many of the diagonal crosses were between the up right and down left areas, which, when coupled with the proper lighting and sound effects, helped greatly in enhancing mood. The director believes, intuitively, that these two areas carry great psychological importance and that a diagonal cross between these two areas is very strong. The isolation of characters down right, down center, down left, up left, up center, and up right also helped to enhance mood by balancing the actor against both mass and space.

Circular movement patterns were used only with Mary and only in scenes of great emotional stress. The circular pattern helped to show how Mary was being closed in and trapped by reality. Through such pacing movements, Mary was seeking escape, much as a caged animal in a zoo paces seeking its escape from confinement.

Finally, subtly curving crosses were employed when a character, particularly Mary, was trying to be evasive. In the director's opinion, such moves helped to create suspense.

Rhythm, tempo, and pace in a play like Long Day's Journey must be exact if the production is to succeed. Since the emphasis is on character and psychological action rather than on physical action, the director's task is to keep the show moving and the audience interested through long periods filled with monologues and static action.

The rhythm is irregular throughout the entire play because of the structure of the English language and the nature of drama as opposed to the nature of comedy (which depends on the regular beat for the contrast of comic effect). Tempo in Long Day's Journey varied according to the moods of the various scenes and could be best described as being similar to the beat of the human heart during periods of calm, anger, and hypertension. The pace of the production was smooth and even as was evidenced by the consistency of its running times for the four performances.

The comment was made to the director that the pace was too rapid in Act I, that it did not allow enough attention for the exposition. This director contends that exposition would have gotten in the way of character development and plot advancement if it had been presented in

the style of Chekhovian Naturalism as was suggested. According to Mr. Quintero, the Chekhovian style "would have killed it [the production]." ⁷ In justifying the use of a more rapid pace, Mr. Quintero said ". . . start with the idea of a happy family . . ." ⁸ The director did just that and let that idea set the pace.

Actor-Director Relationships

The relationships between the director and his cast were always excellent and there were never any really serious problems that developed. However, when working with non-professionals who have varying degrees of experience, a director will generally encounter a few minor problems, such as one actor "helping" the other actors do a scene a different way through new blocking or a new interpretation. The director encountered such an actor in the early stages of rehearsal. The actor in question had "fixed" a scene that the director had been working with. The actor believed that what he had done was right, as did several other cast members. The director pointed out the flaws in their "improvements" but did agree to employ those improvements that worked. Finally, the actors agreed to consult with the director before making any major improvements in their blocking or line interpretations and the director agreed to consider their suggestions and use them if they worked. As a result, harmony was the keynote in all rehearsals.

The cast was composed of three graduate students and two undergraduate students. Drama graduate students played the roles of Mary and

⁷Quintero, interview.

⁸Ibid.

Jamie; a post-graduate student from the School of Education played the role of Tyrone and two undergraduate students in drama played the roles of Edmund and Cathleen. The director believes that he had the best cast that he could have possibly acquired in this area. All of the cast members worked together well and, even more important, they respected each other and responded with enthusiasm to direction.

Probably the single most difficult problem the director faced was with the actor playing the role of Jamie. This actor was highly inventive and creative and was very easy to work with except for his inability to be consistent in his performance; he never did a scene twice in the same way. By changing his approach each time he did a scene, he would change his blocking and his interpretation. The director made numerous comments in private and in the presence of other cast members about the actor's inconsistency but with little effect. The role of Jamie was at times overacted, most noticeably in Act IV, and at other times underplayed, especially in Act II, scene 1. In spite of his general inconsistency, the actor playing the role of Jamie turned in acceptable performances. In retrospect, the director believes he should have been more insistent in dealing with this actor's inconsistencies, perhaps to the point of dictating each and every movement and inflection; but, this would possibly have had a very undesirable effect on the actor playing Jamie as well as on the other cast members.

James Tyrone was played by a non-drama major from the School of Education. This actor had limited experience on stage, but turned in a highly effective performance. The major problem the director experienced with this actor was one of physical stiffness due to a lack of experience.

Since the stiffness could not be overcome in the allotted rehearsal period, the director attempted to work the actor's problem to an advantage. Since James Tyrone was a student of the romantic style of acting, the director tried to get the actor to affect the mannerisms of the style. This approach was not completely successful because, as Mr. Quintero pointed out, Tyrone never quite projected the image of the matinee idol that he should.⁹

Another problem concerning the actor playing the role of Tyrone was that in Act IV, when he took Mary's wedding dress, he should not have folded it up. Mr. Quintero pointed out that Tyrone should have held the dress like he was ". . . holding a bride, [because the dress represented] . . . the young girl that was. [Tyrone] would not fold [the dress], but [would carry it across his arms] like it was the girl."¹⁰ This was more of an oversight on the part of the director rather than a fault of the actor.

The actress playing Mary Tyrone gave a nearly faultless performance. Her primary problem was vocal because she was recovering from a case of influenza. The actress had been using a lower tone of voice to help establish the age of the character and to provide a contrast for the girlish voice she was to use in Act IV. So the actress would not hurt her voice, the director told her not to force her voice into the physically uncomfortable lower register. Another vocal problem was the requirement for constant vocal variety. The only problem the actress had with this was one that was solved through practice. Because of the

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

constant emotional stress of the character, many vocal changes were required. Fortunately, the actress had the ability to "hear herself" and was aware of improper inflections and corrected herself. The director considered himself very fortunate to have had such a gifted actress in the role of Mary Tyrone.

The actor playing the role of Edmund was highly creative and exceptionally well disciplined. The director found this actor very cooperative and easy to work with.

Inexperience caused only minor technical problems with the actress playing the role of Cathleen. These problems in technique were rapidly overcome after several brief coaching sessions with the actress. The Irish accent used by the actress was generally successful and was the product of her own research and work outside of rehearsals.

The director employed the concept of ensemble acting in his working with the cast. All cast members were made to feel equally important to the success of the production. This ensemble approach was used in working with the cast and crew. As a result, Long Day's Journey Into Night was our show, not my show. All of those connected with the production were instilled with a feeling of interdependence which served to unite the production and give it the energy and creative efforts needed for a successful production. The director did not dominate anyone connected with the production; therefore, everyone was receptive to direction. There were never any ill feelings between the director and his cast and crews or between any members of the entire production company. In the director's opinion, this approach was, in part, responsible for the effectiveness of the production.

One very important source of stimulation for the cast was the popularity of the script. All of the cast were excited about the script and with the challenge that their particular roles offered. The cast's professional attitude toward the play and their friendship toward and respect for the director stimulated them to be original and creative in their work.

Audience Reaction

The production of Long Day's Journey Into Night was favorably received by the audiences as can be witnessed by the attendance of approximately two thousand people for the four performances. Each performance was sold out and the production grossed over sixteen hundred dollars¹¹ at the box office.

Further evidence of the impact of the production is based on the attentiveness of the audience during the performances. One audience member told the director that he was not aware of the length of the play because his attention was held by the actors from the outset of the action.

Tony Bengel, staff writer for The Greensboro Record, wrote in his review:

Director Blair Beasley has staged a finely-honed production that, if a little stiff at first, quickly establishes a natural pace and holds our attention to the end. That is no mean feat, since the play, even though judiciously cut, runs to nearly three hours.¹²

¹¹This figure does not include attendance on season membership tickets.

¹²Tony Bengel, "Production Serves O'Neill," The Greensboro Record, January 7, 1972, sec. A., p. 11.

Mr. Bengel further stated:

Indeed, the entire performance serves O'Neill well. And since he is probably America's premier playwright, that is more than sufficient reason for praise--and for seeing this production.¹³

Joe Knox of The Greensboro Daily News wrote in his review:

The UNC-G Theatre scored a brilliant success Thursday night with the opening of Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night."

"Journey" is one of O'Neill's long heavy tragedies, extremely difficult to do well, but this production under the direction of Blair Beasley, Jr. was simply superlative.

I think it was one of the finest dramatic presentations I have ever seen on stage in Greensboro, New York or anywhere else.¹⁴

Mr. Knox went on to say:

There are not many opportunities to see a Eugene O'Neill play these days, certainly not one of such memorable qualities as this production. If you enjoy fine theatre, you will be greatly rewarded by seeing "Journey."¹⁵

The reviews, while extremely favorable, did not mean as much to this director as did the following remark by Mr. José Quintero:

I have seen no other [production of Long Day's Journey], and I didn't think I was going to be able to stand it, because it brings [back] so many memories, and I thought I was going to be seeing [haunting visions] . . . but I didn't; I was engrossed with the people.¹⁶

The director was able to achieve the desired audience response as is proven in the following statements by Mr. Tony Bengel and Mr. Joe Knox. Mr. Bengel stated:

Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night" probes the haunted world of a family driven to drunkenness, disease and drug addiction by the tangled forces of hope and despair, love and hate.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Joe Knox, "O'Neill's 'Journey' Success." The Greensboro Daily News, January 8, 1972, sec. A., p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Quintero, interview.

That the family was O'Neill's retains a certain controlled distance, as if O'Neill could purge his memories only by eschewing dramatic excess and presenting his characters in an almost objective manner.¹⁷

In his review, Joe Knox pointed out that,

There is little plot to "Journey." Its sole excuse for being is the revealing of character, and this comes with chilling subtlety. In the course of one day in the life of the Tyrones, one becomes intimately aware of the great personal tragedy that affects them as a family and as individuals.¹⁸

Comments by other audience members merely served to reinforce statements by Mr. Knox, Mr. Bengel, and Mr. Quintero.

Personal Observations

No really serious problems developed during the entire rehearsal period or during the production of Long Day's Journey. Those problems that did arise were quickly overcome through the total efforts of all concerned. The one problem the director anticipated that would create extensive difficulties never materialized.

The Christmas holidays ended three days before opening night, but the cast not only agreed to cut their vacations short in order to return early, they wanted an earlier return than did the director. Although the theatre was not available, rehearsals were held in the home of a cast member and the time was spent achieving more satisfactory rhythm, tempo, and pace. Lines were not forgotten during the vacation period; if anything, they were improved. The layoff had not hurt the production, as the director had feared, but had actually improved it.

¹⁷Bengel, "Production Serves O'Neill," sec. A., p. 11.

¹⁸Knox, "O'Neill's 'Journey' Success," Sec. A., p. 9.

Another fear the director held as early as the primary planning stages was that O'Neill's appeal to the general theatre audience would be extremely limited. This fear was dispelled opening night by a Standing Room Only audience; each successive performance was played to full houses with people having to be turned away at the box office.

After four weeks of intensive rehearsals, the director felt that he had lost a certain amount of objectivity toward the final days of the rehearsal period. The director found that much of his criticism was aimed at "splitting hairs" over actions of the cast and crews. When asked if he ever lost his objectivity, Mr. Quintero replied, "Yes, you do, but you do keep objectivity, you really do. At the end, one thing I do is to focus on the small things, because for the big things, it's too late."¹⁹ In retrospect, the director realizes that he was doing nothing out of the ordinary in experiencing this feeling.

After working so closely with this production, the director expressed the feeling that he doubted that he would ever do another production of Long Day's Journey. To this, Mr. Quintero advised, "Forget about it; that's Long Day's Journey just the beginning."²⁰ Mr. Quintero agreed that it was difficult to escape the influence of O'Neill and to support this point, he recalled a conversation he had with Charlie Chaplin and Oona O'Neill Chaplin. "Mrs. Chaplin knocked on the table and said, 'Thank God. I have escaped the O'Neill curse.' Well, I thought, it ain't that easy."²¹ Mr. Quintero then said,

¹⁹Quintero, interview.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

And I'll tell you one thing. Once you touch the man, like when you touch genius, any kind of genius, they never let you go. This will never let you go; like you say "I'll never do it again," but it will never let you go; genius will never let you go.²²

²²Ibid.

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