Long Day's Journey Into Night

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PRESENTS

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

by Eugene O'Neill

Directed by Paul L. Soper

CAST

JAMES TYRONE Paul Soper

MARY CAVAN TYRONE Elizabeth Broyles

JAMIE TYRONE, their elder son Robert Mashburn

EDMUND TYRONE, their younger son Sanford Schwalb

CATHLEEN, a maid Cynthia Waugh

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. SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The entire action takes place in the living room of the Tyrones' summer home, on a day in August, 1912.

ACT I

Scene 1. 8:30 A. M.

Scene 2. Around 12:45.

ACT II

Scene 1. About a half-hour later.

Scene 2. Around 6:30 that evening.

ACT III

Around midnight.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO WUOT FOR ARRANGEMENTS OF SOUND EFFECTS, TO EUNICE MILLER INTERIORS, FOR TWO ANTIQUE TABLES, AND TO BAUM'S HOME OF FLOWERS, INC. FOR THE GREENERY, USED IN THIS PRODUCTION.

COMING EVENTS

February 12-15: *Henry IV* Part I. U.T. Theatre at Carousel. Directed by Thomas Cooke.
February 26-March 5: *Anniversary Waltz*. Carousel Theatre. Directed by Robert Mashburn.

March 13-14: *Hedda Gabler*. Maryville College Playhouse. Directed by Tom Jones.

THE CURRENT EXHIBIT OF PAINTINGS

The current exhibit of paintings is by Carl Sublett. Mr. Sublett attended Western Kentucky State College and studied art at the University Study Center in Florence, Italy, and with Professor C. Kermit Ewing at The University of Tennessee. His works are included in numerous public collections and many private collections here and abroad. He is the recipient of many awards and has received nine prizes and honors in 1963.

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Lighting	Fredric Blumberg
Sound Effects	Guy Keeton
Make-up and Costume Supervision	Helen Soper
Scenery	Elizabeth Broyles, Guy Keeton, Paul Meacham
Box Office	Nancy Donaldson
House Manager	Barry Sobral

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We believe that the members of our audiences enjoy the convenience and protection of the parking lot adjacent to the theatre. Since the successful operation of this facility requires the services of two police officers, who not only control traffic into and out of the lot but also clear the space for use by our customers, the Carousel Theatre must carry a considerable financial burden. The annual expense amounts to approximately \$1,700.00.

In the belief that those who use the parking lot would be glad to share in meeting this expense, we respectfully request that they place 25¢ in the receptacle provided for this purpose in the foyer.

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In recent years the Carousel Theatre has not conducted a campaign to secure theatre patrons. Nevertheless, a few generous supporters of our program have continued to pay more than the regular price for season tickets. We are sincerely grateful to these patrons, who this fiscal year include: Mr. and Mrs. Elliott D. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Orville DeView, Mr. J. A. LeBow, Mr. and Mrs. Julian Morton, Mr. Charles E. Hickman, Mr. and Mrs. Kent Withers.

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Seldom has the appearance of a new play aroused more interest than did the publication and New York production, in 1956, of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. And this interest has been renewed by the recent release of the play for staging by college and community theatres throughout the country. The play compels attention both as autobiography and drama. It also challenges the hitherto generally negative answer to the question whether a play may be both pure biography and effective drama.

I. As Autobiography

Long Day's Journey into Night is perhaps the most thoroughly and authentically factual autobiography ever cast in dramatic form. The persons of the play (with the possible exception of Cathleen, the maid) are precisely as O'Neill remembered them: his father and mother, his older brother, and himself. Only some of the names are changed. The surname O'Neill becomes Tyrone, but two given names remain the same—James and the older son Jamie (James O'Neill II, there having been an illegitimate son known as James O'Neill, Jr., who died in early childhood). Ella Quinlan O'Neill, the author's mother, becomes Mary Tyrone, and—in a spookily transparent gesture toward anonymity—the author switches names with a brother Edmund who had died of measles as a baby, so that the Edmund of the play is actually Eugene O'Neill and the dead Eugene of the play is actually Edmund (named after Edmond Dante, the leading role of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, in which the father James O'Neill had toured for many years and made a fortune).

Autobiographically the play is unique in depicting a single day as a fated focal

point of relentlessly converging causes beginning with the childhood days of Eugene O'Neill's parents. It is a disarmingly frank and deeply personal revelation of the intimate facts that shaped the first twenty-four years of America's greatest playwright and brought him to that "darkest night" just prior to his decision to make a career of writing.

No theme or issue of conflict or action of the play is fictitious; all are documented in O'Neill biographies and the author's own recollections. The only major modifications of events consist in certain omissions and compressions, notably the collapsing of time actually involved between the appearance of Eugene's (Edmund's) illness and his consignment to a place of treatment. He did not in fact enter a sanatorium until December following the summer of the play. Moreover, Jamie was in fact in a sanatorium for alcoholics at the time it was confirmed that Eugene had consumption.

The inter-woven reminiscences of earlier events which, in their impact on the present, supply the inner action of the play, are in no way altered except for minor simplifications (and some distortions reflecting the author's bias against his father and toward his mother). It is strictly factual that James O'Neill went to work at ten years of age to help support the remnants of the Irish immigrant family left destitute when his father, Thomas O'Neill, deserted his wife and children and returned to Ireland. While working as a machinist, James in his late teens began playing small parts with a theatre company in Buffalo, soon distinguished himself as a naturally gifted young actor, educated himself, and within a few years became one of the most prominent performers of Shakespearean and romantic leads in America. It is also strictly factual that James and Ella (daughter of a wealthy merchant in Cleveland, where the young actor was for a time leading man in a resident theatre company) fell passionately and romantically in love, and that they remained entirely devoted to one another, despite her extended illnesses and the bruising effects of years of touring and "living in cheap hotels," until Jamie's death in 1920. (Although not specified in the play, Ella O'Neill's periods of suffering included an extended illness from cancer of the breast, surgery for which was one of the earliest to be successfully attempted.) Entirely accurate is the play's account of the remorse Ella O'Neill suffered over having betrayed her "calling" to become a nun and her share of the guilt in the death of her second son, as well as her being brought to her "incurable" affliction through the carelessness and ignorance of attending physicians.

The author touches briefly on most of the crucial events of his own early life: his lonely boyhood "on the road" with his parents and at various private schools; his unstudious year at Princeton (1906-07); his occasional carousing with Jamie; his gold-prospecting junket to Honduras, where he contracted malaria; his working as a seaman on voyages to South America and South Africa; his being at several times on these journeys down-and-out, ill, and despondent to the point of suicide—which he actually attempted at Jimmy the Priest's bar and lodging house in New York; and finally the breakdown of his health and his coming home to New London, Connecticut, to work on a newspaper, where we find him at the opening of the play. He omits mention, however, of his brief and ill-fated marriage, shortly after his year at Princeton, to the beautiful and patrician Kathleen Jenkins, who bore his first son, Eugene O'Neill, Jr.

Long Day's Journey into Night is not, however, a representation of mere circumstances and events. Like all good naturalism, it is a dramatic illustration of the inexorable causal connection between past and present. But it is also—in some ways not intended by the author—a fascinating case study in psychoanalysis. As such, the play is far less simple than at first appears. O'Neill suggests in his dedication of the play that it is an exorcism "of old sorrows," written "with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness" for the four misbegotten O'Neills. He also indicates that not until a quarter century after the events of the summer of 1912 did he have the courage to "face my dead at last and write this play." The writing of it was certainly an act both of forgiveness of his parents and brother and of penance for his own guilt. But evidence internal and external to the play suggests that old anger, contempt, and bitterness still remained. In fact, the ego-centered playwright seems generally to have exaggerated the faults of others and minimized his own. The representation in the play of his father's miserliness appears to be a case in point. According to biographer Crosswell Bowen (*The Curse of the Misbegotten*), O'Neill never admitted his error (into which he was led by Jamie) of scornfully underrating the very reputable state sanatorium to which his father sent him. Similarly, O'Neill never got over his bitterness toward his father for not acting sooner to alleviate the affliction of his mother (to whom both Eugene and Jamie were passionately devoted) and for never providing a normal home life for his family. This bitterness may explain the misrepresentation in the play of the O'Neill house in New London, which Eugene's mother stubbornly refused to regard as a home. The "shabby"

house of gloom so much complained of by Mary Tyrone had in fact, according to biographer Doris Alexander (*The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill*), considerable elegance, and had been built by James O'Neill with "loving care" at a cost of \$40,000, a fortune at the time.

Nevertheless, there is throughout the play evidence of the author's effort to understand and forgive—and to surmount the old scorn and anger of his early years. Showing through most of the scenes is a brutal exposure of James O'Neill's captious provincialism and penury; but there is infused a sense of the author's remorse over his resentment of his father. We are also made aware of the disturbing ambivalence, admitted by O'Neill, of his feeling toward the outwardly sneering but inwardly affectionate and pitifully lost Jamie, whose alcoholism, failures, and cynicism had deeply infected the young Eugene.

II. As Drama

Written in 1940-41, toward the end of O'Neill's active writing career, *Long Day's Journey into Night* marks a return, following experimentation in new modes, to the stark realism in which from the beginning he had felt most at home. Like Strindberg, O'Neill's chief model, he scorned the drama of intrigue, artificially induced events, and romantically happy endings which, with few exceptions prior to the impact of O'Neill's work in the 1920's, was the only native dramatic fare known to the American theatre. Deficient both in humor and (despite his longing to be a poet) the poetic diction needed as "the language of passion" of the tragic content of his plays, O'Neill nevertheless conveyed a sense of power and truth. He had a burning passion to portray life as he saw it, without compromise. Above all things, he hated hypocrisy and despised affectation. He could scarcely bear to leave anything hidden—even his own private grief and torment, as *Long Day's Journey into Night* bears ample witness. Knowing only a life of almost unrelieved personal stress, he departed only rarely from his resolve, despite popular objection to the gloom of his plays, never to portray a happiness he had never found in life. His notable departure was *Ah, Wilderness!* (staged at the Carousel in the spring of 1958), which he wrote as a nostalgic comedy of the boyhood he "would like to have had."

Although not distinguished as an original philosopher or subtle psychologist, O'Neill had nevertheless learned well the lessons taught by the Continental naturalists and Freud that human motives are never single or simple, and seldom entirely transparent, and that the patent rules of conventional morality do not adequately measure the hidden wells of good and evil in human character. Like Ibsen and Shaw, he had a Puritan conscience while scorning Puritan dogma. Although his writing was usually intimately personal, his characters are not merely idiosyncratic. He wrote of and for all men. It is permissible to regard even *Long Day's Journey into Night* as a representation not only of the private anguish of his own family, but of the tormented, submerged reality of the lives of people everywhere about us.

Long Day's Journey into Night is, with the exception of *Strange Interlude*, O'Neill's most introspective play. In this respect, as in its appeal to pity and understanding, it bears a striking resemblance to the dramas of Chekhov (to whom O'Neill never admitted an affinity). But O'Neill could not accept the "people as will-less pawns" concept of naturalism. *Long Day's Journey into Night* contains, as do his other works in his best vein—e. g., *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Desire under the Elms*, *Beyond the Horizon*, and *Emperor Jones*—a classically tragic pattern that balances irrevocable fate with man's free will and moral accountability.

However darkly foreboding and guilt-tortured the long day of the O'Neill family's journey into night, the play is not without a hopeful gleam of the light that was to shine for three decades in the creative achievement of Eugene O'Neill. It is somewhat cheering to regard the play as a prologue—the essential crucible of anguish—to the author's fulfillment as a creative writer. It may also be legitimate to keep in mind that the consumptive Eugene (Edmund) responded at once to rest and treatment at the excellent Gaylord Sanatorium to which he was sent; within a few weeks had gained considerable weight; looked and felt well; even enjoyed the freedom, friendship and "time to think" that he found there, and was released as cured at the end of the minimum term of six months. Most important of all, it was "in this enforced period of reflection," said O'Neill, "that the urge to write first came to me." Within a few months he had begun his first play, *The Web*. During the next year, 1914-15, he attended Professor Baker's famed Harvard 47 Workshop in playwrighting. In 1916 he helped organize and became the leading figure of the Provincetown Players; and only four years later, in 1920, his first long play, *Beyond the Horizon*, was professionally produced. It received the Pulitzer Prize, the first of a long series of awards to be won by O'Neill, culminating in the Nobel Prize in 1936.

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