



## Long Day's Journey Into Night

*Eugene O'Neill*

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## Long Day's Journey Into Night Eugene O'Neill

Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical play *Long Day's Journey into Night* is regarded as his finest work. First published by Yale University Press in 1956, it won the Pulitzer Prize in 1957 and has since sold more than one million copies. This edition includes a new foreword by Harold Bloom.

The action covers a fateful, heart-rending day from around 8:30 am to midnight, in August 1912 at the seaside Connecticut home of the Tyrone family - the semi-autobiographical representations of O'Neill himself, his older brother, and their parents at their home, Monte Cristo Cottage.

One theme of the play is addiction and the resulting dysfunction of the family. All three males are alcoholics and Mary is addicted to morphine. They all constantly conceal, blame, resent, regret, accuse and deny in an escalating cycle of conflict with occasional desperate and half-sincere attempts at affection, encouragement and consolation.

## Long Day's Journey Into Night Details

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## From Reader Review Long Day's Journey Into Night for online ebook

### Aleksandar Šegrt says

odličan prikaz savršeno sjebane porodice, koji kulminira jednim danom orgija izbacivanja prljavog veša skuplanog godinama.

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### Nikos Tsentemeidis says

Χαρακτρες βγαλμενοι απο τη ζωη. Σο εξελισσεται το ργο, η τραγικη τητα τους ανενεται. Ευθυτητα και κυνισμος τους χαρακτηρεζει.

Σπουδασιο. Δυσκολευματα να γρψω καπι παραπνω.

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### Brian says

“None of us can help the things life has done to us.”

“Long Day’s Journey into Night” is considered a classic of American drama, and it deserves that distinction. This text is a searing look into the intricacies of family, addiction, jealousy, work, health, poverty, wealth and love. It has something to say about all of those topics and doing all that successfully is a monumental task in and of itself. To do all of that well is astounding.

The play follows a day in the life of the Tyrone family. Husband and wife Mary and James, and their two adult sons, Jamie and Edmund. Although the play is certainly no comedy there is a black Irish sense of humor that pervades the piece. At times, it is unnerving. The family is currently living together although each member is very isolated and hiding behind the lies that we all tell ourselves in order to gloss over our weaknesses or failures. Every reader will recognize themselves in the denial and lack of self-awareness that all humans suffer from to some extent. The Tyrone family just happens to be in the nexus of a perfect storm of all of these elements in the moment of the play’s action.

A huge element of this text are the stage directions and notes, which compose a large part of the play and are massively important to its success as a piece of literature and drama. At times, they convey more meaning than some of the dialogue, and that is not a criticism. In fact the note/stage directions are almost narrative at times, and while reading this play it can feel like a novel.

Eugene O’Neill never intended for this semi-autobiographical play to be performed (it was not even published until after his death) but we are lucky that it was. Its portrait of four people is unnerving in its depth of characterization and just plain ole humanness. We will find bits of ourselves in the Tyrone family. For good or ill, it is there.

As one character says—“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.” That is a plea all of us could make at one time or another.

The universal tragedy (or power) of this play is its exploration of the things that we say (and sometimes don’t say) to the people we love the most.

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## George K. says

Βαθμολογία: 9/10

Υλό να κλασικό και πολυδιαβασμένο θεατρικό ργο που διαβίζει τον τελευταίο καιρό. Προκειται για να πραγματικό πολύ σπουδαίο και δυνατό ργο, γεμάτο τραγικής τητα και κυνισμό. Η αλληλεία εννοιών τι σαν θεατρικό ργο εννοιώσεως το πιο σκοτεινό και απαισιδοξό από αυτό που χωρίζει μερικά στιγμές (δεν εννοιώνται πολλά, αλλά εννοιώνται καλά!), συγουραδενός εννοιώνται ργο για να "περισσεις καλά?". Οι χαρακτήρες εννοιώνται τραγικοί και θα λεγεις κανείς χτυπημένοι από τη μορφαλλή και τις κακές τους επιλογές, οπωσδήποτε εννοιώνται βγαλμένοι από τη ζωή. Με το θεατρικό αυτό ργο, ο Ευγένιος Ο'Νιλ βίζει τον αναγνωστη/θεατρό να σκεφτεί καποια πρόγματα για την οικογένεια και τις επιλογές του σε αφορμή των τρεπέλων. Οι διλογοί εννοιώνται φυσικοί και ανθρώπινοι, γεμάτοι κυνισμό και περικρά. Μου μαρισε λόγω της ψυχής σε καποια σημεία, αλλά ξειζε τον καπό.

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## Geri says

"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." - Baudelaire

You know that feeling when words become inadequate and cannot even begin to sum up how you feel about something? This is precisely how I feel right now. There is just so much going on in 'one day' and so many emotions...!

If you are someone who believes in and chases after the American Dream, then this is not the play for you. This play is an elegy, a funeral for, and the death of all hopes and dreams. O'Neill illuminates to us how even love and hope - the only things that ultimately make us want to continue to live - cannot save or heal an utterly broken family, who despite everything still loves each other. The four main characters in the play are so flawed, and yet we sympathise with them so, so much because they are what their pasts have made them become. This play highlights how the past will always haunt us to the present, and therefore also dictate our future, and thus we can never truly escape from the very things that make us so incredibly miserable.

This play is frighteningly accurate in its portrayal of a dysfunctional family and their despairing lives. The fact that this is also an autobiography makes the entire play so much more heart-wrenching. This play will force you to reflect on your own family life, and you will be surprised by how many parallels there are between the characters in the play and the people you know.

As Harold Bloom puts it, "the helplessness of family love to sustain, let alone heal, the wounds of marriage, of parenthood, and of sonship, have never been so remorselessly and so pathetically portrayed, and with a force of gesture too painful ever to be forgotten by any of us."

In fact, the cover of this play is a picture of a glass of whiskey. What do you expect?

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## **Sabrien Abdelrahman says**

Why did this feel like rereading The Glass Menagerie?

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## **Simona says**

Eugene O'Neill scrie *"Lungul drum al zilei c?tre noapte"* pentru a se elibera în primul rând pe sine de amintirile chinuitoare, de repro?urile trecute, de lupta morbid? dus? cu boala ?i alcoolul în tinere?ea sa. Prin aceast? pies? î?i m?rturise?te iertarea pentru ai s?i, încercarea de a se ierta pe sine însu?i ?i pe cei cu care ?i-a dus via?a în chinul viciului, neîn?elegerii, minciunii ?i indiferen?ei din familie.

Drama urm?re?te -pe parcursul unei singure zile, din zori ?i pân? la miezul nop?ii - distrugerea familiei Tyrone, o familie întemeiat? pe premise gre?ite, ce tr?ie?te din conflicte, sus?inut? iner?ial de minciuni ?i pref?c?torie: mama narcoman?, tat?l ?i fiii - alcoolici.

Fiecare personaj le îvinuie?te pe celelalte ?i î?i justific? decaderea ?i viciul prin scuza rat?rii, însigur?rii, bolii sau neîncrederii celor din jur. P?rin?i sau copii, nu se simt în siguran?? atunci când sunt ei în?i?i ?i nu se simt proteja?i decât când trupurile le sunt îmbibate cu alcool sau morfin?. Fiecare are ?i nu are dreptate, de aceea empatizezi cu ei chiar ?i f?r? s? îi aprobi.

O drama zguduitoare despre oameni dispera?i, prin?i în ghearele unei sor?i care d? cu o mâ?i? i ia cu cealalt?.

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## **Laura Leaney says**

The first time I ever saw Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* I could not quite believe that people could drink that much and live. And I thought this despite the fact that I come from a drinking family. The alcohol in Albee's play operates not so much as a numbing agent, but as an alchemic incendiary to the verbal abuse that transforms four intelligent people into harpies of the worst kind.

In O'Neill's play, the focus is also on four people, members of an Irish-American family – a father, mother, and two grown sons (although there is also a slack-jawed servant). All the dialogue and action take place in the family's summer house, and the time (occurring in a single day) can be measured by the diminishing level of the whiskey bottle. Make that bottles, plural. The drinking is breathtaking, horrible, and cruel. The pendulum that swings between love and hate, forgiveness and acid recrimination, past and present, only stops when all the men in the family - nearly annihilated with booze – stop to watch mother and wife slip into a morphine induced fugue about the sweetness of her fantasized past.....before her husband and sons ever came into her life. She's awful. All passive aggressive nasty sweetness.

### **MARY**

*[. . .]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? And this town's not so bad. I like it well enough. I suppose because it's the only home we've had.*

### **MARY**

*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. I'd be ashamed to have them step in the door.....*

O'Neill's play is an extraordinary disturbing family tragedy where love – and it's surely there – cannot be kept alive. The deep animosity between the family members undercuts any affection they feel for each other at every turn. It's a blame game. Not a single one of them is willing to acknowledge their own part in the emotional violence. Jamie, the eldest son, is a failure at being the actor his father once was and has descended into alcoholism and whoremongering. He spends his last borrowed dime on "Fat Violet" while his brother and Father futilely hope he won't come home. The father, accurately accused of being cheap, is willing to save a buck by sending his ailing son to a public sanitorium. The younger son Edmund, busy aggravating his Shakespeare-loving father by quoting Beaudelaire and Rossetti, is listless and pathetic. The family is a Freudian delight. Each character has a central core of anger so deep that it's become the only emotional security they know. Not one of them is willing to give it up. Instead, in order to feel something, anything, they drink to intensify the joy they feel in blaming someone else for their pain.

When the curtain falls on the night's end, I know that the morning will be the same. I can see the influence O'Neill must have had on Edward Albee, especially in *Virginia Woolf*. Is it a particularly American story? Perhaps. O'Neill is, after all, described as the "father of American drama," and this is his most autobiographical play. But the family dynamics are profoundly human, and I would guess that somewhere in its pages a human being anywhere in the world might recognize one or more of his/her own worst traits.

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### **Carol Storm says**

It's really sad to think that kids in high school are forced to read junk like *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* and *THE CRUCIBLE* when a great play like this one is almost forgotten.

The thing I love the most about this play is that it really feels like the story of a family where there is no hope. I know just what it's like when one parent is permanently checked out on drugs, or alcohol, and the other parent is trying to keep up a false front, and the kids are always either acting out or just pretending nothing is wrong. I grew up in a house just like this and I would give everything to be able to put these feelings into words the way Eugene O'Neill does in this play. There's nothing depressing about reading it because every word just feels honest and natural and there's never any sentimentality.

I'd also like to point out that the characters in this play are all very well educated and the father is a great Shakespearean actor, so the language they use is much more emotional and expressive and even poetic, compared to the drab, flat, lifeless conversations in *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*, or the unbearably artificial Puritan dialogue in *THE CRUCIBLE*.

Who put the fix in to make Arthur Miller the "official" American playwright? Eugene O'Neill could kick him deaf, dumb, and blind.

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## Hailey (HaileyinBookland) says

\*Read for class\*

Nope not a fan

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## Jasmine says

*"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings."*

*Long Day's Journey into Night* was a story about a family, James Tyrone (father), Mary (mother), Jamie (elder son), Edmund (younger son) and Cathlyn (second daughter), and their typical day. I've always thought it'd be hard to read a play but it turned out just the opposite! Well, at least for this one, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is surprisingly easy to read and grasp its meaning. As short as the story is, I'm amazed by how well-written it is. There are four acts in the play, dividing one of the family's ordinary days into four time sections. It begins with the family's ordinary morning at 8:30 and then ends with the family's approaching bedtime at roughly 23:30.

Before you read the following summary, I'd want to clarify that it's my **personal interpretation** of the book so it may or may not be the original idea the author wanted to convey.

James Tyrone is a successful landlord who earns a great amount of money but is so stingy that he'd rather let his sick son, Edmund, go see a quack. Since James is rich and apparently, the family doesn't seem to need another salary, Jamie doesn't see the point to keep pursuing his actor career. Therefore, he stays at home in the daytime and goes on drinking spree at night. Obviously, having fun and flirting with girls are way more exciting than working hard.

### 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.*

**What's all the fuss about? Let's forget it.**

### TYRONE

*Contemptuously.*

**Yes, forget! Forget everything and face nothing! It's a convenient philosophy if you're no ambition in life except to—**

### MARY

**James, do be quiet.**

*She puts an arm around his shoulder—coaxingly.*

As an American middle class, it's almost intolerable for your kids to idle away their time when they're supposed to get a job, make both ends meet and take good care of themselves as well as their parents. I can totally imagine the frustration James feels when seeing one of his sons fooling around and the other

bedridden with deteriorating health.

We all know that misfortunes never come singly, thus, when Mary finds out she has arthritis, she can't stop reminiscing about her once young and beautiful self, which bothers James even more. She can no longer stand the ugliness of her (still-prefect) hair, the wrinkles on her face and the severity of her paranoia. However, the negativity is all in her head! James never thinks less of Mary, but somehow she just can't wrap her mind around his thoughtfulness.

**TYRONE**

**Mary! For God's sake, forget the past!**

**MARY**

*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.**

The most special part in this book is that there's no twist in the story at all. Like I said earlier, this book depicts a very ordinary, run-of-the-mill American lifestyle back in the '40s/'50s so I believe it's the relatability of the story that draws our attention from the first page. At the end of the book, the Tyrone Family appears to be exhausted due to the occasional argument about life, love, job, nothing and everything during the day, so I think James gives up lecturing on Jamie's unpromising behavior, or further worrying about his paranoid wife. Perhaps he later realizes it's so much easier to just join his son for a drink and simply "forget" everything.

Who knows? This doesn't sound like a bad idea, does it?

***"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."***

All in all, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is a rather interesting read for me because what happens in the Tyrone Family may or may not occur in real life. Again, I'm fascinated by the super-ordinary-yet-original concept this play conveys and would like YOU to read it someday. I hope you'll find it relatable the way I do and maybe, you'll get inspired by the characters after reading this because, YOU NEVER KNOW!

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**Suvi says**

This has been in my reading list for ages, and now that I finally managed to grab the thing for a reading challenge, it couldn't fly any faster to my list of absolute must-sees. With the likes of **Jeremy Irons**, **Lesley Manville**, and **Hadley Fraser** starring, the adaptation at the Bristol Old Vic would be a dream, but the circumstances are what they are, so this will just have to wait.

Reading a play instead of seeing it performed can be complicated and underwhelming. No such problem here. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* comes from an extremely dark place and lays bare the tragedy of not wanting to live in the world as it is, but it's also an incredibly moving and beautiful piece of drama. The

power of the dialogue combined with O'Neill's unusually specific stage directions (including the appearance and facial expressions of the actors) creates a very tangible atmosphere, one that is heightened even further from the knowledge that the family's struggles were once real for O'Neill, and that due to the autobiographical content he didn't want it to be published until 25 years after his death.

In 1912, a day in the Tyrone family consists of them escaping their guilt and frustration. Mary's morphine addiction has created a protective cocoon, where she can remember her happy pre-marriage years, when she still felt like she had a real home. Her absolute denial of the negativity around her, like Edmund's illness, is slowly destroying her personality and strength, making her even more discontent and lonely. Meanwhile, James Tyrone and sons Eugene and Jamie detach themselves from reality with whiskey.

There's palpable tension from the start, when suspicious glances are thrown in all directions. If noticed, they contribute to a mutual feeling of distrust. True meaning of words shows on embittered faces, and the indirectness and failure to address the problems in a constructive way, the men resorting instead to childish name-calling and criticizing, further worsens the atmosphere of the day.

The Tyrones suck you into their vortex. The fleeting moments of sincerity and affectionate tears sink into the darkness of the house, a house that becomes more and more surrounded by the fog and the sounds of the foghorn, closing it into its own world of bitterness. The ending is dream-like and suffocating, leaving the audience uncertain about the family's future yet also feeling like it's the death of everything. The future wasn't all happy (eleven years later, Jamie drank himself to death), but Mary's fight with her addiction led to victory two years later, so at least there's some glimmer of hope.

A deeply personal project for O'Neill, I'm not surprised about his decision about the publication. I'm also not surprised that Sweden, the land of **Ingmar Bergman**, appreciated his works more than any other country, and was also the first to produce it on stage. The list of actors involved in productions all over the world since the 1950s is impressive: **Laurence Olivier, Jack Lemmon, Kevin Spacey, Jessica Lange, Bibi Andersson, Peter Stormare** (the latter two directed by no other than Ingmar Bergman in 1988) etc. Let's just hope the next production will be more accessible to me.

*"MARY. 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 for ever."*

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### Danae says

Long Day's Journey into Depression.

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### Jennifer says

You know when you're reading something and think, "Damn, this is good," and then you look up the playwright and realize he won 4 Pulitzers and the Nobel Prize? Yeah. O'Neill sort of knows what he's doing. This play is the emotional equivalent of picking a scab. All four characters are seared on my brain, and the detailed, beautiful stage directions make this an especially good reading experience. Recommended if you like family dramas steeped in hopelessness.

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## Jason says

From Act 1 Eugene O'Neill jerks away the patchwork veil from the face of a family to reveal the anatomy of the skin, every pustule, all the carbuncles, discoloration and scars, the embarrassing halitosis, wax and hairs—the attributes that, up close, make us ugly human beings. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is a naked insight to the brutal, unyielding properties that trap families into dysfunctional, vengeful, malignant relations.

Guilt, criticism, paranoia, competition, blame, hate, distrust, addiction. This family is like all others! The play exposes a painful calculus between characters, alliances form then change, issues smolder, and rage and reaction to past events is way out of proportion to the origin and manner in which they occurred. The family—like yours or mine—is stuck in a ritual of manuevers around each other's accusations. Truths are distorted; responsibility shrugged; failures are indiscriminately attributed. O'Neill shows us one day, in a single room, the complex lives in a family. Like real life it's hard to uncover single events that started the cascades of destructive family behavior. It's the paradox of the chicken or the egg.

What originally infected the marriage? Was it James's miserliness or Mama's weakness to morphine? Was it James's drinking or Mama's nervousness? Was there, at first, moderation in James's drinking, or did Mama drive him to alcohol? Why did the second child die? Was it a jealous sibling, a frugal father, or a forgetful mother; betrayal, inaction or negligence? Who's the sucker? A tight-wad ninny that repeatedly falls for real estate scams, a neurotic mother that hides from neighbors, or a prodigal son who drops career for drink?

O'Neill uses 4 characters, 16 hours, and a parlor to compress the story. There's rising tension from page 1. The characters are trapped, and with years of pent up emotion and issues that perhaps can never be resolved, they become embroiled in a replay of the most painful and explosive vindiction. I think a normal person would have walked away in a shout. But no, the strength of the play is that O'Neill takes it farther. He explores the human threshhold and tries to discover an end, if there ever was such a thing. It takes the reader past a point of retreat, and plows into unknown places where we would never go in real life. This is more than a family fight. This is the brink. You don't come back from this place unchanged. There are charges that once delivered, can never be unsaid. Distilled to its essence, *Long Days Journey Into Night* says this: I hate you; I tried to kill you; we're all mucked up because of you and you and you; I no longer love you; you can die; you've destroyed my dreams.

After reading, I could only side with one character, Edmund, the youngest son, the least hateful, the least repugnant, the shortest in this life to really become mean. Yet, ironically, he'll most likely die from consumption. Perhaps the irony was O'Neill's construction. I'm left realizing that the most precious in life is fleeting. The world is hard, life is harsh. And yet, from this 23 year old I get the most beautiful image of life:

*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 of 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 above me. 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.*

James Tyrone-dad  
Mary-mom  
Jamie-son, 33  
Edmund-son, 23  
1912

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### **Kenny says**

***“How could you believe me—when I can’t believe myself ? I’ve become such a liar.”***

**Mary Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT (IIii)**

I believe **Eugene O'Neill's LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT** to be the greatest American play ever written, as well as the greatest play of the 20th century. It fascinates me that as most playwright's talents wane as they age, O'Neill's grew stronger with each passing year. To have written **LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, THE ICEMAN COMETH, A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN, and HUGHIE** at the end of his life is a testament to his talent. Writing these plays must have been pure hell for O'Neill. He wrote in longhand, suffering a severe Parkinsons-like tremor in his hands which was extremely painful. It was impossible for him to write during the last 10 years of his life. I can only imagine the works he would have produced had this affliction not robbed us of his talent.

**LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT** focuses on James Tyrone, an aging actor, Mary, his morphine-addicted wife, Edmund and Jamie, their two adult sons, both alcoholics.

Random thoughts ~~

**LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT** is a ghost play; it is more memory than reality.

As the light moves from day to night during the course of this long painful day, the fog seems to seep through the walls.

The foghorn a constant reminder of old sorrows. As Mary says, ***“The past is the present, isn’t it? It’s the future, too.” (IIii)***

**LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT** is not a linear play. Yes, the action moves from day to night, but as the dialogue becomes fueled more and more by whiskey and morphine, the past is repeated over and over again, becoming more vicious, more accusatory.

There are four addicts living in this house, not one. But Mary's addiction leaves her isolated. Drinking is socially acceptable, drug addiction is not. Drug addiction is mysterious. Morphine separates Mary from her family. Mary's addiction is dirty.

Mary is a master of deceit. She even acknowledges this.

Everyone of the Tyrones is fascinating and each is brilliantly written, complex and real. We know these people. Again, the past is the present.

Mary is the most fascinating of the Tyrones. She controls and manipulates every moment she is on stage. Yet, Mary is barely in control of herself.

Mary is cruel in the others are not. She attacks like a cornered feline.

O'Neill's language, so simple, so powerful. As James says, Edmund does have a touch of the poet in him.

At the close of the play, all four of the Tyrones are still on stage lost in the past, Mary's past.

*"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."* (IV) It is one of the most beautiful moments in the history of theatre.

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### **Laura says**

Eugene O'Neill is a strong writer. Long Day's Journey into Night is probably one of the deepest plays I have read having read it at a young age. I would really like to see a production of this. My favorite part was the monologue about the fog. "The fog was where I wanted to be" is not a meaningless quote at all. It is about reality, solitude, and fear. I love this monologue because there is so much to say about solitude and reality together. The play is no light read and it deals with very serious topics. I love O'Neill's strategies in this play. I look forward to reading his other works.

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### **Connie says**

The epigraph of Eugene O'Neill's semi-autobiographical play says it was a 12th anniversary gift to his wife: "I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play--write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones." The play was published in 1956, three years after O'Neill's death.

As the day turns into night, the four characters in the Tyrone family reveal more and more about their past. The major problem is addiction to alcohol by the father and two sons, and addiction to morphine by the mother. Drugs erase reality, just as the fog that surrounds their home reduces visibility. Mary says, "I really love fog....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."

Each of the family members has repeatedly failed in life, and is carrying guilt. But they have also faced challenging times that have molded them into the people they are now. Although they care about their family, they blame each other for the problems they face. Mary especially looks back to her youth when life was uncomplicated. The troubles of their past seem to be determining their future in an endless cycle.

This is a very powerful play that won the 1957 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It is especially tragic since it mirrors the lives of Eugene O'Neill's own dysfunctional family.

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## Emily M says

*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!*

^ These words are spoken by Edmund (O'Neill's autobiographical stand-in) in the late pages of the play. And I think they very much capture the mood and tension that so densely fog the lives of the Tyrone -- and the resentment and feelings of homelessness that are such common side effects of living in a dysfunctional family.

I live in New London, Connecticut -- aka, Eugene O'Neill, Connecticut -- and I read my way through high school via cheap, used editions of his plays. I've been meaning to turn back to them for awhile now, and I'm glad I started with Long Day's Journey, which is considered both his opus as well as his "New London play."

Thinly veiled, Long Day's Journey is a look into O'Neill's own life via a single day spent in the family's summertime cottage in New London. The cottage still stands and is staged for summertime visitors, just as it might have been on the day recounted by O'Neill in this play.

In rereading this play, what I get all nerdy about are the not-so-subtle references to the nearby O'Neill landmarks. There is the "inn," also known as the "club" -- where the men do their drinking and Tyrone pursues his bum real estate ventures. Many years ago, awhile after this play was written in 1940, the inn was turned into an apartment building, a building I currently call home. There is also much talk of the writing Edmund (aka, Eugene) contributes to the local newspaper, which is a reference to The New London Telegraph, which no longer exists in such a form, but the building is currently occupied by my go-to bar.

Maybe I'm biased, but I sometimes wonder why so many of O'Neill's great plays are ignored by high school reading curriculums. In my opinion, these plays -- and especially this one -- hold up very well against drama that is much more ubiquitously read in this context.

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## Paolo del ventoso Est says

Mi ero ripromesso di lasciar decantare un po' questa lettura pazzesca prima di scrivere un commento. Poi mi sono ricordato che ho la memoria di un lepidottero contuso\* e vabbè ormai il tram è passato ma ci provo lo stesso a riprenderlo in corsa. Una densa nebbia avvolge la magione estiva dove è riunita la famiglia Tyrone; la madre Mary è appena uscita da un periodo di disintossicazione dalla morfina, di cui è dipendente, e la tensione nei rapporti col marito e i due figli si taglia col coltello. O'Neill esplora il suo vissuto familiare, tale e quale senza troppi ricami, e ne plasma un dramma tagliente, di mortificante ineluttabilità. I dialoghi sono un capolavoro di sofferenza, ciascuno col suo portato; moglie e marito lottano verbalmente per ribadire il loro diritto all'essere vittima della situazione, madre e figlio minore (la personificazione dell'autore) biasimano e blandiscono le reciproche autodistruzioni, il figlio maggiore innesca il proverbiale parricidio (solo verbale). Tra le mille sfumature di questa pièce emerge soprattutto la cappa di commiserazione intorno alla donna, che poi diventa autocommiserazione e feroce giudizio maschile, solo un po' attutito dall'affetto familiare, per l'incapacità a risollevarsi, la debolezza di quella che avrebbe dovuto essere la "regina della

casa". Bisogna leggere O'Neill per rileggere anche un po' sè stessi.

\* a riprova di ciò, se un giorno mi incontrerai e mi chiederai "Scusa com'è che si intitolava quell'opera di O'Neill?" io probabilmente ti risponderò: "The Long Travel... no no... The Long Journey Through the... no aspe... The Journey from the Day to...ok un attimo che google"

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