

Reading responses of long day's journey into night by o'neill, copyright 02

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Long Days Journey into Night by O'Neill O'Neill's Long Day into the Night is an emotional masterpiece depicting several predicaments in an already estranged house. What makes the piece so touching is the fact that the hard-hitting situations presented in the play are a reflection of the author's life. It is a form of autobiography that leaves the lovers of Eugene O'Neill's works feeling sorer for his last days on earth than entertained. Other than the contents of the book illustrating occurrences of a single day, the fact that the author instructed that the book be published 25 years after his death is a saddening dead man's wish.

Most prominent in the book is the theme of addiction and drug abuse. The man of the family, James Tyron, is a worried man about his sons and wife. Mary, the wife is nursing morphine addiction as Edmund and Jamie struggle with alcohol addiction. In addition to these struggles, James has financial problems despite being a considerably wealthy man. All his wealth is tied up in assets. These tribulations befalling a man at the same time would make the strongest of men to crumble.

Further, Tyron's family is in chaos with itself. Everyone has problems and no one is willing to take responsibilities for anyone's muddle. Act II begins as Jamie and Edmund taunt each other over stealing their father's liquor. The two sons steal their father's wine and top it up with water so that their father does not realize. Jamie is suspicious over everything. Edmund has an involving task of supervising his mother not to resume abusing morphine despite his addiction. He cares for his mother and is worried about her condition despite himself. Edmund is reluctant to take a test to ascertain his health condition for the fear of traumatizing his mother. He suffers but

perseveres it for his mother's sake. He says: promise not to worry yourself sick and to take care of yourself (O'Neill, 23).

O'Neill's work is full of tension. James's house is full of suspicion. In Act II, Edmund accuses his brother of being suspicious over everything. The characters in the play contribute to the dissonance. Jamie's suspicion causes tension in the house. He complains that he had been put in the dark for 10 years about his mother's addiction. He, therefore, trusts no one in the family. To him, everything that goes on is akin to a scheme.

Moreover, the two sons are not sure of their mother's morphine addiction state. When Mary left the main bedroom to go sleep in a spare bedroom due to her husband's snore, Edmund suspected she was up to using some more morphine. This is because it was the same spare bedroom she used to consume the drug before her rehabilitation. In Act three, Mary reveals to Cathleen how much she regrets meeting and loving her husband. The two live as a couple but there is tension due to lost love between them. O'Neil writes; " She is a buxom Irish peasant," O'Neill writes, " in her early twenties, with a red-cheeked comely face, black hair and blue eyes—amiable, ignorant, clumsy, and possessed of a dense, well-meaning stupidity." (O'Neill, 43). When Mary finally decides to get back to using morphine, the rest of the family other than Cathleen was not aware. This creates tension until Edmund and his father realize this fact after a drinking spree.

Some fundamental questions come to a discerning reader's mind after a keen read of this play:

1) Why do you think O'Neill wanted this play published after his demise? Is he ashamed of anything?

2) If O'Neill keeps so much of the aspect of this play the same as his life, why does he change his name?

3) How does the relationship between Tyrone's family members illuminate their characters?

Work Cited

O'Neill, Eugene. *Long Days Journey into Night*. London: Royal National Theatre, 1991.

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