



LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

EUGENE O'NEILL

CRITICAL EDITION

Edited by William Davies King
Foreword by Jessica Lange

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Foreword

Jessica Lange

I had the opportunity of doing a production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in London some years ago. There are roles that arrive like gifts. Given and received. Mary Tyrone was that. No part I have played on stage or in film has ever captured me more. Actors can fall in love with characters they play, obsess over them, cling to them . . . sometimes we're haunted by them.

I loved Mary Tyrone. I longed to get to the theater each evening so I could experience her. So I could lose myself in her. The part of Mary Tyrone is a bottomless well. Impossible to exhaust.

We went into rehearsals in late fall and played through the long winter of 2000–2001. London is the perfect setting to experience this masterful play. The gloom and dampness, the fog and the grayness mirror the atmosphere of the play.

Our set was more dreamlike than what O'Neill describes in the stage directions. It had a ghostly feel, more memory than reality. As the light moved east to west across the stage during the course of the long day, the fog seemed to seep through the walls. The foghorn a constant reminder of old sorrows . . . a plaintive, haunting refrain.

“Why is it fog makes everything sound so sad and lost, I wonder?”

Memorizing lines proved difficult at first. I found I would often lose track of where I was in the play. I came to understand it was due to the circular nature of the play, which is structured like a piece of music where the composer creates a melody and then repeats it again and again in altered forms. Theme and variations. The cycles of punishment and forgiveness, recriminations and excuses. A tragic score of love and hate.

It is linear only in the passage of time, morning to night, and the effects of the morphine increasing steadily as the day wears on.

Mary's addiction has been singled out in the family as the greatest transgression. But there are four addicts living in that house. The men are alcoholics. Morphine is less acceptable, less social, more mysterious, and therefore more isolating. It sets Mary apart, separating her even more from the rest of them.

One heroin addict I talked to when I was preparing to do the play described how it felt like being wrapped in a warm blanket. I imagine that's what Mary is looking for.

But like many addicts, she is a master of deceit, a champion liar.

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

Mary is also a master of manipulation. She controls every moment she is on stage, and at the same time she is barely in control of herself. Her innocence and helplessness and, in the next moment, her capacity for cruelty, to wound those she loves the dearest. Her shifting alliances, her need to lay blame, to accuse and then excuse. To punish and then forgive. She is the most complex and fully realized character I have ever played.

Mary is torn between her love and her need for her husband and sons and her desire to lose herself in the morphine: to disappear.

“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. Then Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?”

It is these contradictions and the layering of emotions—woven into a patchwork pattern of sorrow

grief, guilt, anger, blame, love, desire, hate—that make Mary a profound and fascinating character. Playing multiple emotions in the same moment is exciting. Her elusiveness and quicksilver shifts are thrilling. The fluidity and velocity are staggering but feel inevitable. In a single page of dialogue with James, O’Neill describes some of these shifts: “*forcing a laugh . . . sharply . . . then pleadingly . . . with dull anger . . . in stubborn defiance . . . then accusingly . . . bitterly . . . pleadingly . . . strickenly . . . slipping away into her strange detachment—quite casually . . . piteously . . . into that stubborn denial again.*”

I have always considered this play a great love story. Mary and James share a deep and abiding devotion to each other. The memory of their passion and romance is so close to the surface. Those memories are in their fingertips when they touch.

When she tells Cathleen of their first meeting, you hear the girl—her sensuality, her sexual discovery. She loves this story. How, in her innocence and beauty, she won the most handsome, famous man of the day. How they fell deeply in love and couldn’t bear to be separated. The evocation of that moment transports her out of this place she despises. It is a classic sense-memory exercise for an actor.

But it is a story of a great love damaged by loneliness and despair, by disappointment. Those romantic stories exist hand in hand with the most grievous memories.

“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.”

Mary speaks of that night on her honeymoon—an innocent young bride waiting in an ugly hotel room, hour after hour, terrified that something has happened to James. How his barroom friends brought him home and deposited him drunk outside the hotel room door. She goes on to say that many more of those nights were to come.

James, overwhelmed by shame, asks her, “Mary! Can’t you forget—?” And she answers: “No, dear. But I forgive. I always forgive you.”

No one in this play is ever allowed to forget.

The end of act 4, midnight of this long and harrowing day, brings Mary back onstage. In our production she seemed to appear out of nowhere—a spectral presence trailing her wedding dress behind her. “The Mad Scene, Enter Ophelia!” Jamie says.

The Chopin waltz and the wedding dress illuminate how far back in time she has retreated. How far out of their reach. More past than present. “The past is the present, isn’t it?”

It is the most beautiful scene to play. The image is heartbreaking and the language, so simple, yet so powerful. She speaks of looking for something she lost. The word *lost* is repeated many times, her sad refrain in the closing moments. At the final curtain, we have the tableau of a family trapped by one another and their shared history. Doomed to repeat their chorus of love, pity, hate, blame, guilt. Forgiving but never forgetting.

Mary’s curtain speech is one the great moments in the theater for an actress. The simple truth that she speaks to the quiet tragedy of her life.

“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.”

The four actors onstage, absolutely still, all lost in Mary’s sad dream. You could hear a pin drop in the audience. It is a sublime moment to play. Unforgettable.

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

EUGENE O'NEILL

Publisher's Note, 1989

Since its first publication in February 1956, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* has gone through numerous reprintings. With this printing, the sixty-first, we have taken the opportunity to correct several errors recently reported by scholars who have made careful examinations of final typescripts of the play. It has been discovered that Carlotta O'Neill, retyping from a previous version heavily edited by O'Neill, accidentally dropped lines in several places.

We wish to take note first of a correction that was silently made in the fifth printing after Donald Gallup called our attention to missing lines on page 170. The dialogue and stage directions restored were those beginning with "Kid" in line 22 and ending with "old" in line 24.

For the corrections made in this printing, we thank the following: Michael Hinden (for pointing out missing lines on pages 97, 106, and 167 and errors on page 158), Judith E. Barlow (for missing lines on page 97), and Stephen Black (for an error on page 111). On page 97 a sentence ("Anyway, by tonight, what will you care?") has been added to Edmund's dialogue at lines 18–19. On page 97 lines 29–33 are printed for the first time. On page 106 a sentence ("It's a special kind of medicine.") has been restored at line 1. The errors corrected on pages 111 and 158 were minor, although puzzling, misprints (e.g., "fron" for "front," "subject" for "subject"). On page 167 a sentence ("No one hopes more than I do you'll knock 'em all dead.") has been restored in line 20.

For Carlotta, on our 12th Wedding Anniversary

Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. 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 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.

These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light—into love. You know my gratitude. And my love!

Gene

Tao House

July 22,1941.

Characters

JAMES TYRONE

MARY CAVAN TYRONE, *his wife*

JAMES TYRONE, JR., *their elder son*

EDMUND TYRONE, *their younger son*

CATHLEEN, *second girl*

Scenes

ACT 1

*Living room of the Tyrones' summer
home 8:30 A.M. of a day in August, 1912*

ACT 2, SCENE I

The same, around 12:45

ACT 2, SCENE 2

The same, about a half hour later

ACT 3

The same, around 6:30 that evening

ACT 4

The same, around midnight

Act One

SCENE

Living room of James Tyrone's summer home on a morning in August, 1912.

At rear are two double doorways with portieres. The one at right leads into a front parlor with the formally arranged, set appearance of a room rarely occupied. The other opens on a dark, windowless back parlor, never used except as a passage from living room to dining room. Against the wall between the doorways is a small bookcase, with a picture of Shakespeare above it, containing novels by Balzac, Zola, Stendhal, philosophical and sociological works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, Max Stirner, plays by Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, poetry by Swinburne, Rossetti, Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Kipling, etc.

In the right wall, rear, is a screen door leading out on the porch which extends halfway around the house. Farther forward, a series of three windows looks over the front lawn to the harbor and the avenue that runs along the water front. A small wicker table and an ordinary oak desk are against the wall, flanking the windows.

In the left wall, a similar series of windows looks out on the grounds in back of the house. Beneath them is a wicker couch with cushions, its head toward rear. Farther back is a large, glassed-in bookcase with sets of Dumas, Victor Hugo, Charles Lever, three sets of Shakespeare, The World's Best Literature in fifty large volumes, Hume's History of England, Thiers' History of the Consulate and Empire, Smollett's History of England, Gibbon's Roman Empire and miscellaneous volumes of old plays, poetry, and several histories of Ireland. The astonishing thing about these sets is that all the volumes have the look of having been read and reread.

The hardwood floor is nearly covered by a rug, inoffensive in design and color. At center is a round table with a green shaded reading lamp, the cord plugged in one of the four sockets in the chandelier above. Around the table within reading-light range are four chairs, three of them wicker armchairs, the fourth (at right front of table) a varnished oak rocker with leather bottom.

It is around 8.30. Sunshine comes through the windows at right.

As the curtain rises, the family have just finished breakfast. MARY TYRONE and her husband enter together from the back parlor, coming from the dining room.

Mary is fifty-four, about medium height. She still has a young, graceful figure, a trifle plump, but showing little evidence of middle-aged waist and hips, although she is not tightly corseted. Her face is distinctly Irish in type. It must once have been extremely pretty, and is still striking. It does not match her healthy figure but is thin and pale with the bone structure prominent. Her nose is long and straight, her mouth wide with full, sensitive lips. She uses no rouge or any sort of make-up. Her high forehead is framed by thick, pure white hair. Accentuated by her pallor and white hair, her dark brown eyes appear black. They are unusually large and beautiful, with black brows and long curling lashes.

What strikes one immediately is her extreme nervousness. Her hands are never still. They were once

beautiful hands, with long, tapering fingers, but rheumatism has knotted the joints and warped the fingers, so that now they have an ugly crippled look. One avoids looking at them, the more so because one is conscious she is sensitive about their appearance and humiliated by her inability to control the nervousness which draws attention to them.

She is dressed simply but with a sure sense of what becomes her. Her hair is arranged with fastidious care. Her voice is soft and attractive. When she is merry, there is a touch of Irish lilt in it.

Her most appealing quality is the simple, unaffected charm of a shy convent-girl youthfulness she has never lost—an innate unworldly innocence.

JAMES TYRONE is sixty-five but looks ten years younger. About five feet eight, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, he seems taller and slenderer because of his bearing, which has a soldierly quality of head up, chest out, stomach in, shoulders squared. His face has begun to break down but he is still remarkably good looking—a big, finely shaped head, a handsome profile, deep-set light-brown eyes. His grey hair is thin with a bald spot like a monk's tonsure.

The stamp of his profession is unmistakably on him. Not that he indulges in any of the deliberate temperamental posturings of the stage star. He is by nature and preference a simple, unpretentious man, whose inclinations are still close to his humble beginnings and his Irish farmer forebears. But the actor shows in all his unconscious habits of speech, movement and gesture. These have the quality of belonging to a studied technique. His voice is remarkably fine, resonant and flexible, and he takes great pride in it.

His clothes, assuredly, do not costume any romantic part. He wears a threadbare, ready-made, grey sack suit and shineless black shoes, a collar-less shirt with a thick white handkerchief knotted loosely around his throat. There is nothing picturesquely careless about this get-up. It is commonplace shabby. He believes in wearing his clothes to the limit of usefulness, is dressed now for gardening, and doesn't give a damn how he looks.

He has never been really sick a day in his life. He has no nerves. There is a lot of stolid, earthy peasant in him, mixed with streaks of sentimental melancholy and rare flashes of intuitive sensibility.

Tyrone's arm is around his wife's waist as they appear from the back parlor. Entering the living room he gives her a playful hug.

TYRONE

You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gained.

MARY

Smiles affectionately.

I've gotten too fat, you mean, dear. I really ought to reduce.

TYRONE

None of that, my lady! You're just right. We'll have no talk of reducing. Is that why you ate so little

breakfast?

MARY

So little? I thought I ate a lot.

TYRONE

You didn't. Not as much as I'd like to see, anyway.

MARY

Teasingly.

Oh you! You expect everyone to eat the enormous breakfast you do. No one else in the world could without dying of indigestion.

She comes forward to stand by the right of table.

TYRONE

Following her.

I hope I'm not as big a glutton as that sounds.

With hearty satisfaction.

But thank God, I've kept my appetite and I've the digestion of a young man of twenty, if I am sixty-five.

MARY

You surely have, James. No one could deny that.

She laughs and sits in the wicker armchair at right rear of table. He comes around in back of her and selects a cigar from a box on the table and cuts off the end with a little clipper. From the dining room Jamie's and Edmund's voices are heard. Mary turns her head that way.

Why did the boys stay in the dining room, I wonder? Cathleen must be waiting to clear the table.

TYRONE

Jokingly but with an undercurrent of resentment.

It's a secret confab they don't want me to hear, I suppose. I'll bet they're cooking up some new scheme to touch the Old Man.

She is silent on this, keeping her head turned toward their voices. Her hands appear on the table top, moving restlessly. He lights his cigar and sits down in the rocker at right of table, which is his chair, and puffs contentedly.

There's nothing like the first after-breakfast cigar, if it's a good one, and this new lot have the right mellow flavor. They're a great bargain, too. I got them dead cheap. It was McGuire put me on to them.

MARY

A trifle acidly.

I hope he didn't put you on to any new piece of property at the same time. His real estate bargains don't work out so well.

TYRONE

Defensively.

I wouldn't say that, Mary. After all, he was the one who advised me to buy that place on Chestnut Street and I made a quick turnover on it for a fine profit.

MARY

Smiles now with teasing affection.

I know. The famous one stroke of good luck. I'm sure McGuire never dreamed—

Then she pats his hand.

Never mind, James. I know it's a waste of breath trying to convince you you're not a cunning real estate speculator.

TYRONE

Huffily.

I've no such idea. But land is land, and it's safer than the stocks and bonds of Wall Street swindlers.

Then placatingly.

But let's not argue about business this early in the morning.

A pause. The boys' voices are again heard and one of them has a fit of coughing. Mary listens worriedly. Her fingers play nervously on the table top.

MARY

James, it's Edmund you ought to scold for not eating enough. He hardly touched anything except coffee. He needs to eat to keep up his strength. I keep telling him that but he says he simply has no appetite. Of course, there's nothing takes away your appetite like a bad summer cold.

TYRONE

Yes, it's only natural. So don't let yourself get worried—

MARY

Quickly.

Oh, I'm not. I know he'll be all right in a few days if he takes care of himself.

As if she wanted to dismiss the subject but can't.

But it does seem a shame he should have to be sick right now.

TYRONE

Yes, it is bad luck.

He gives her a quick, worried look.

But you musn't let it upset you, Mary. Remember, you've got to take care of yourself, too.

MARY

Quickly.

I'm not upset. There's nothing to be upset about. What makes you think I'm upset?

TYRONE

Why, nothing, except you've seemed a bit high-strung the past few days.

MARY

Forcing a smile.

I have? Nonsense, dear. It's your imagination.

With sudden tenseness.

You really must not watch me all the time, James. I mean, it makes me self-conscious.

TYRONE

Putting a hand over one of her nervously playing ones.

Now, now, Mary. That's your imagination. If I've watched you it was to admire how fat and beautiful you looked.

His voice is suddenly moved by deep feeling.

I can't tell you the deep happiness it gives me, darling, to see you as you've been since you came back to us, your dear old self again.

He leans over and kisses her cheek impulsively—then turning back adds with a constrained air.

So keep up the good work, Mary.

MARY

Has turned her head away.

I will, dear.

She gets up restlessly and goes to the windows at right.

Thank heavens, the fog is gone.

She turns back.

I do feel out of sorts this morning. I wasn't able to get much sleep with that awful foghorn going all night long.

TYRONE

Yes, it's like having a sick whale in the back yard. It kept me awake, too.

MARY

Affectionately amused.

Did it? You had a strange way of showing your restlessness. You were snoring so hard I couldn't tell which was the foghorn!

She comes to him, laughing, and pats his cheek playfully.

Ten foghorns couldn't disturb you. You haven't a nerve in you. You've never had.

TYRONE

His vanity piqued—testily.

Nonsense. You always exaggerate about my snoring.

MARY

I couldn't. If you could only hear yourself once—

A burst of laughter comes from the dining room. She turns her head, smiling.

What's the joke, I wonder?

TYRONE

Grumpily.

It's on me. I'll bet that much. 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. 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.

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.

You'd find excuses for him no matter what he did.

MARY

Sitting down beside him, pats his hand.

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, the elder, is thirty-three. He has his father's broad-shouldered, deep-chested physique, is an inch taller and weighs less, but appears shorter and stouter because he lacks Tyrone's bearing and graceful carriage. He also lacks his father's vitality. The signs of premature disintegration are on him. His face is still good looking, despite marks of dissipation, but it has never been handsome like Tyrone's, although Jamie resembles him rather than his mother. He has fine brown eyes, their color midway between his father's lighter and his mother's darker ones. His hair is thinning and already there is indication of a bald spot like Tyrone's. His nose is unlike that of any other member of the family, pronouncedly aquiline. Combined with his habitual expression of cynicism it gives his countenance a Mephistophelian cast. But on the rare occasions when he smiles without sneering, his personality possesses the remnant of a humorous, romantic, irresponsible Irish charm—that of the beguiling ne'er-do-well, with a strain of the sentimentally poetic, attractive to women and popular with men.

He is dressed in an old sack suit, not as shabby as Tyrone's, and wears a collar and tie. His fair skin sunburned a reddish, freckled tan.

Edmund is ten years younger than his brother, a couple of inches taller, thin and wiry. Where Jamie takes after his father, with little resemblance to his mother, Edmund looks like both his parents, but is more like his mother. Her big, dark eyes are the dominant feature in his long, narrow Irish face. His mouth has the same quality of hypersensitiveness hers possesses. His high forehead is hers accentuated, with dark brown hair, sunbleached to red at the ends, brushed straight back from it. But his nose is his father's and his face in profile recalls Tyrone's. Edmund's hands are noticeably like his mother's, with the same exceptionally long fingers. They even have to a minor degree the same nervousness. It is in the quality of extreme nervous sensibility that the likeness of Edmund to his mother is most marked.

He is plainly in bad health. Much thinner than he should be, his eyes appear feverish and his cheeks are sunken. His skin, in spite of being sunburned a deep brown, has a parched sallowness. He wears a shirt, collar and tie, no coat, old flannel trousers, brown sneakers.

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. 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.

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.

TYRONE

Heartily.

Just what I've been telling her, Jamie. She's so fat and sassy, there'll soon be no holding her.

EDMUND

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

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.

Jamie shrugs his shoulders and sits down in the chair on her right.

EDMUND

Irritably.

Yes, for Pete's sake, Papa! The first thing after breakfast! Give it a rest, can't you?

He slumps down in the chair at left of table next to his brother. 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.

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've no ambition in life except to—

MARY

James, do be quiet.

She puts an arm around his shoulder—coaxingly.

You must have gotten out of the wrong side of the bed this morning.

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. I told your mother I knew damned well it would be one on me, but never mind that, I'm used to it.

JAMIE

Dryly.

Don't look at me. This is the Kid's story.

EDMUND

Grins.

I meant to tell you last night, Papa, and forgot it. Yesterday when I went for a walk I dropped in at the Inn—

MARY

Worriedly.

You shouldn't drink now, Edmund.

EDMUND

Ignoring this.

And who do you think I met there, with a beautiful bun on, but Shaughnessy, the tenant on that farm of yours.

MARY

Smiling.

That dreadful man! But he is funny.

TYRONE

Scowling.

He's not so funny when you're his landlord. He's a wily Shanty Mick, that one. He could hide behind a corkscrew. What's he complaining about now, Edmund—for I'm damned sure he's complaining. I suppose he wants his rent lowered. I let him have the place for almost nothing, just to keep someone on it, and he never pays that till I threaten to evict him.

EDMUND

No, he didn't beef about anything. He was so pleased with life he even bought a drink, and that's practically unheard of. He was delighted because he'd had a fight with your friend, Harker, the Standard Oil millionaire, and won a glorious victory.

MARY

With amused dismay.

Oh, Lord! James, you'll really have to do something—

TYRONE

Bad luck to Shaughnessy, anyway!

JAMIE

Maliciously.

I'll bet the next time you see Harker at the Club and give him the old respectful bow, he won't see you.

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