

**CHAPTER SIX**

**LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT**

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Mary Cavan Tyrone, fifty-four and attractive with dark large eyes, is the wife of Mr. Tyrone, an actor. Being very beautiful Mr. Tyrone loved her much and married her. Her Irish face attracted him. She was a young and beautiful figure. She was from a rich Irish family and he was a poor actor. They fell in love with each other, and decided to get married. In spite of her father's resistance she was bent on carrying out her resolve to marry him only.

When she was studying in the convent, she received a letter from her father, mentioning that he and James Tyrone had become friends. She was excited when she was introduced to him. That is because she was meeting the handsome man of her dream. She fell in love with him right then. She gave up her original plan of becoming a nun or pianist. Now all that she wanted was just to be his wife.

Whenever she reminded herself of the first meeting with James Tyrone, she used to become very happy. She told Cathleen how handsome Mr. Tyrone was. He was one of the best looking men. Women used to wait at the stage door just to see him come out.

He worked hard to earn money for her. He became a successful actor. He, in his desire of saving money for her was buying low priced things. Even on his professional tours he used to stay in second-rate hotels. As she loved him, she used to accompany him then. He was compelled to do it all only in order to make her comfortable. Though he loved her much, she was not so happy, as he expected.

The character of Mary is dominant<sup>in</sup> this play. Though in many scenes she is not actually present, it is she who dominates the scenes even by her absence. All the actions revolve around her. Throughout the play the convent girl quality of Mary is seen. She made a comparison of her life in the company<sup>of</sup> her husband and that in the company of her father.

According to Louis sheaffer, Mary Tyrone has a romantic view of life and to her eventual sorrow, overly idealized her man. She thought her husband "different from all ordinary men". But in fact he was poor. His financial condition in the beginning was poor. But later on he went on getting money necessary to enjoy the, ' finer things in life'. At the age of sixty five he looked ten years younger. He was a good looking actor, a popular actor ' a matinee idol '.

The conversation between Mary and Tyrone helps to understand them and their relationship. They were affectionate to one another.

According to her, the only factor making her life hard was the inability to forget. She gave birth to Edmund, her last son, who was always sick. Because of her bodily weakness she thought that she could not feed him properly. This constant tension of her mind made her a morphine addict. In order to escape from bitter reality she took to this addiction. Forces of heredity and environment were responsible for the suppression of Mary.

She kept herself thinking about herself and she ran away from the reality, i.e. from day into night,

The play is a journey from reality to escape from reality.

Before the long day starts, Mary is shown a drug addict. She struggled hard to overcome this habit, but it was all in vain. She was philosophical about her past grief;

MARY..           None of us can help the things life  
has done to us. They're done before  
you realise 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.<sup>63</sup>

By the memory of her past self, she was haunted, She is the victim of love-hate relationship.

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63     Long Days Journey into Night (B. I. Publications,  
New Delhi) p.53.

The unwanted responsibility of her last son Edmund, made her full of tension. This tension in her was constantly seen in her behaviour. She was always careful about her sons' health. She held herself responsible for his troubles and suffering. She could give no attention to this last son, being herself weak and she was also unable to take proper care of Edmund. This thought troubled her much.

Her son Jamie, in his pretension of sleep saw his mother around three o'clock in the morning, moving around in the room to the bathroom. She was watching the sons and her husband. He told his mother not to worry about Edmund's health.

When she told Edmund to take care of his health, he responded by asking her to be careful about her health. She replied that she had grown fat. All her dresses were let out.

Louis sheaffer puts it;

While her agony over her addiction is unmistakable, her harping on how happy she had been in her father's home and at convent school, her stubborn insistence that her ill son, who craves her solicitude, was only 'a summer cold', her constant airing of grievances against the others, like one telling her beads, all tend to limit one's sympathy for her. There is in her a largeness of suffering but no enlarging of characters for what she has endured. She is too concerned with herself to have much concern to spare for the misfortunes and sorrows of the others.<sup>64</sup>

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64 Louis Sheaffer, O'Neill, Son and Artist. (Boston : Little, Brown, 1973 ), p.516.

Living in second-rate hotels reminded her of her father's home ; the real home which she left for her husband. She thought that everyone was spying on her.

Both her sons were worried about her sleeplessness. Whenever the discussion broke she used to over hear it.

According to Falk Mary is ;

Mary is also the inverse image of the Earth Mother for when her sons long. Her hair was once the same 'rare shade of reddish-brown', which symbolized parental freedom, security, and warmth in Mourning Becomes Electra, but Mary cannot give her sons this peace and her hair is white. She is aware of her failure and constantly apologizes for the whiteness and disorder of her hair. It represents not only age but guilt, for the graying began with her drug addiction.<sup>65</sup>

She was guilty conscious. Long Day's Journey into Night, meant, much that happened, but that moved into the dark night - All these past, unwanted and painful events Mary tried to ignore. She tried to divert her mind elsewhere. In the play fog is used to hide this bitter reality.

Jamie told Edmund that he was only mama's baby and papa's pet. He was just an overgreen kid. Edmund saw his mother moving sleepless and he says ;

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65 Doris Falk, Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension,  
(New Branswick, N.J.: Rutgers Uni., Press, 1958 ), p.122.

Edmund ( dully ) yes. She will be nothing but a ghost haunting the past by this time.<sup>66</sup>

Mary's actions and attitudes indicated that under the influence of narcotics, she was withdrawing more and more into herself. Her continued attachment to the past and her desire to run away from it were woven together to develop this character.

She was always in the world of her own. She was reminded of the days she had spent in the secondrate hotel rooms with her husband. She utters no word to disturb her sons or her husband, but still it disturbed her much. She says;

MARY. (With strange Objective calm.) why ?  
How can I ? The past is the present,  
is n't it ? It's the future too. We all  
try to lie out of that but life won't  
let us. I blame only myself.<sup>67</sup>

In her mental tension she told her sons and husband to watch her. But to this Tyrone replied that he was not a jailor and the house was not a prison. But ironically that was a prison for all of them because they are caught in a web of circumstances.

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66 Long Day's Journey into Night (B. I. Publications,  
New Delhi), p. 118.

67 Ibid., p. 75.

To Mary, Fog was like narcotics, because both kept her away from the bitter past realities.

The remarkable thing in the play is, the same things are looked at differently by Mary and James Tyrone. Mary considered her former home 'Wonderful', her father, 'noble', her convent days 'the happiest', her piano playing' outstanding 'her desire to be a nun' sincere'. But Mr. Tyrone says, 'She didn't understand or see the things as they actually were.'

Mary, though suffered mentally, never lost her balance. Thoughtfully she behaved with her sons and her husband.

James Tyrone was a whiskey addict but Mary was against it. She told her husband not to have too much drinks. She told in a very soft tone of love. She says;

MARY . You always drink too much - when you go to the club, don't you ? ... Don't think I am finding fault, fear, you must do as you please, I won't mind.<sup>58</sup>

Such an understanding, even in such a mentally tortured state, Mary has. She is nothing but the combination of different moods of human nature. She tried to understand her sons and husband but she tried to treat them differently.

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68 Long Days Journey into Night ( B.I. Publications, New Delhi.), p.71.



To Edmund she says;

MARY ( her hands fluttering ). 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.<sup>69</sup>

At times, like this, she used to be very frank to her sons. She always needed company to talk to, simply gossip and laugh and forget the boredom of her life for a while.

In all the thirty six years there had never been any scandal about James Tyrone with any other woman. It made Mary very happy. It had made her forgive so many other things of Mr. Tyrone.

As it always happens, the world of dream is different from the actual world. Here also, she got the handsome young actor as her husband. She also got the wealth, she was the happiest wife. But still she had to forgive so many other things.

It is suggestive that somewhere there was a painful side to it all like Mr. Tyrone's interest in the cheaper things. In fact buying low priced things, was a deliberate act to save money for her happiness. But still that cheap quality disturbed her.

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69 Ibid., p.40.

In spite of all this, he was a fine gentleman and she was a lucky woman. She wanted to remember only the happy part of the past. Her father told her to buy anything she wanted. He told her not to mind its cost. Her mother used to grumble. She was very pious and strict.

Mary's mother told her father ;

You never tell me, never mind what it costs,  
when I buy anything You've spoilt that girl  
so, I pity her husband if she ever marries.  
She'll expect him to give her the moon. She'll  
never make a good wife.<sup>70</sup>

As it was told by Mary's mother  
Mary in her home remained fettered.

Somewhere in the corner of Mary's mind that sadness lingered, but in her home, chosen by her, she was very happy. This mixing of two different emotions together is the key to human life. She was always pained by something therefore, she could realize the need of seeking pleasure in something else.

Her inability to face the realities of life as well as to fulfil her role as a mother and a wife, disturbed her constantly. Her death is suggested only at the end.

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70 Ibid., p.99.