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## SYNOPSIS

The sun is shining into the living room of a summer home as James and Mary Tyrone enter it together, having just come from breakfast. James Tyrone gives Mary 'a playful hug', says that she is 'a fine armful now', because she has gained twenty pounds. Mary replies that if she is not careful she will get too fat and teases him about the enormous breakfast he just ate.

From the dining room, the voices of their sons, Jamie and Edmund, are heard. Mary comments that the hired girl, Cathleen, must be waiting to clear the table. Tyrone comments that they are probably having some scheme to get money from him. They discuss his real estate ventures, but, hearing a fit of coughing, the conversation turns to Edmund's 'summer cold'.

When Jamie and Edmund enter together, Edmund tells a humorous experience involving Shaughnessey, one of the Tyrone's tenants, and then leaves to get a book. Mary comments that his summer cold is making Edmund irritable, but Jamie blurts out that the 'Kid is damned sick'. Receiving a warning look from his father, he softens his statement for the benefit of his mother, who becomes hostile and nervous at mention of Doctor Hardy.

But flattering talk about her hair and a kiss from Tyrone bring her back to 'the girl she has been', then she goes out to talk to the cook.

As soon as the mother leaves through the back parlor, Jamie and Tyrone begin to argue about Edmund's tuberculosis. Jamie blames his brother's tubercular condition on Tyrone's stinginess. Tyrone then blames Jamie for Edmund's condition and mentions Jamie's bad influence on Edmund. Tyrone also mentions Mary, who will be affected by Edmund's illness; she had been doing so well since she came home from sanatorium two months ago.

Hearing Mary coming, Tyrone and Jamie quickly change the subject. They tell her they are going to cut the hedge. When the two men just leave the house, Edmund descends the stairs in a fit of coughing. To Edmund, Mary expresses her feelings about the house which she does not like, her loneliness, and Tyrone's miserliness. Edmund suggests that people could not come to the house because of her condition. Knowing that they suspect the truth—she is again using drugs—she becomes more bitter and resentful than before. Then, she says she must go upstairs to lie down before lunch. Edmund knows that Mary is returning to her dope addiction. He goes to join the others, leaving her alone.

In the afternoon of the same day, Edmund is sitting

alone in the living room when Cathleen, the hired girl, enters carrying a tray on which is a bottle of Bourbon, whiskey glasses, and ice water. They make small-talk, then she leaves to call the others to lunch. While Edmund is sneaking a drink, Jamie comes in, and he has one with him. They fill the bottle with water so the father will not know. They discuss Edmund's illness and the mother's actions and comments that morning. Hearing her coming downstairs they grow tense with a hopeful, fearful expectancy.

Mary enters the living room, seemingly less nervous but detached in her voice and manner and somewhat withdrawn. Jamie and Edmund suspect the worst, although they attempt to act and speak as if everything is all right. When Jamie makes a sneer at his father, Mary lets her resentment toward him come out; he should have more respect to his father.

Cathleen tells them that lunch is ready, then Edmund goes out to call Tyrone for a moment. Jamie insinuates that the mother has broken her promise again, and Edmund curses Jamie for his accusation. Tyrone comes in while Mary is in the kitchen. He comes to the table and is about to drink when Edmund suggests they all should have a drink. Then each of them pours a big drink and makes a toast.

When Mary returns, she prattles on about the lunch, and the house, and their life together, and the past. Because they look at her accusingly, she fusses with her hair self-consciously. When Jamie and Edmund leave, Tyrone remarks that he has been a fool to believe she could stop using drugs.

Having finished lunch, the family returns to the living room. Mary comes first, then Tyrone and the boys. Mary talks in an informal manner about unimportant matters which none of them care about. When Dr. Hardy telephones, Mary remarks that it was exactly the same type of cheap quack who first gave her the 'medicine', and she never knew what it was until too late.

When Mary goes upstairs, Jamie cynically remarks, "Another shot in the arm!" His father and Edmund angrily reprimand him, but they all agree that she has started again. Disgusted with the constant bickering and fighting, Edmund goes out. After Edmund leaves, Tyrone tells Jamie that Edmund has got consumption and will have to go to a sanatorium. Jamie suggests him to send Edmund to a good place and not some 'cheap dump'.

As Jamie leaves, Mary comes in and remarks on the weather; it is getting hazier out so they have another night of fog. Tyrone tries to excuse himself to go to the Club, but Mary whines that she will be alone again.

Bitter at her relapse, Tyrone remarks that he spent a lot of money he could not afford to help her. Then she mentions that she was healthy before Edmund was born.

Edmund comes into the living room before going to see the doctor. Tyrone astonishes him in the act of giving him ten dollars. After the father leaves, Edmund appeals the mother to stop while she still has a chance, but she again denies her relapse. When Edmund goes out to meet his father and Jamie, Mary stands by the table and whispers to herself that she is glad they are gone, but she feels so lonely.

It is around half past six in the evening. Dusk is gathering in the living room, and the fog is rolling in from the Sound. Mary is accompanied by Cathleen in the living room, talking about herself, her early life, the family, and Cathleen prattles on about the chauffeur and the cook and her own concerns. But either does not know and understand what the other has said.

Cathleen leaves to help dinner with the cook and Mary sits alone—an old, cynical, embittered woman—and tries to pray. Hearing Tyrone and Edmund coming, she becomes at the same time resentful and relieved. The father and son realize at once that the mother has drifted further away from reality. When Tyrone leaves to get another bottle of whiskey, Edmund tells his mother

he has to go to a sanatorium. She refuses to listen to him, thus, heartbrokenly Edmund rushes from the room.

It is around midnight. Outside the windows the wall of fog appears more crowded than ever. The foghorn is heard, followed by the ships' bells in the distance. Tyrone sits playing solitaire. He is drunk and shows it by the deliberate manner in which he looks very hard at each card to make certain of its identity. Edmund enters, having stumbled on a hat stand in the dark hall, and they argue about the father's cheapness. Remembering Edmund's illness, the father becomes less severe and then turns on the three bulbs in the chandelier overhead.

Edmund tells the father he walked out to the beach to be alone with himself. He recites poetry which expresses his beliefs and feelings. Tyrone comments that Shakespeare said everything worth saying. They talk about Jamie, and Edmund recites from Symons' translation of Baudelaire's *Epilogue*. Tyrone comments that Edmund's taste in literature is for 'filth and despair and pessimism'; he even calls the authors in Edmund's library 'whoremongers and degenerates'.

Hearing the mother moving around upstairs, Tyrone tells Edmund he should not pay too much attention to her tales of the past. The father says, "She's been terribly



frightened about your illness, for all her pretending. Don't be too hard on her, lad. Remember she's not responsible." Edmund replies that she is not to blame, but the father's stinginess is to blame. Later on, each tries to counter the charge of the mother's sickness.

The allegation ends as Edmund reminds the father that he can't help liking him, in spite of everything. Then they talk of the son's adventures and the father's early life. Tyrone tells Edmund that the play that brought him such great financial success ruined him. Edmund admits that he is happy and free only when he forgets his fears and hopes and dreams and belongs to Life itself. Hearing Jamie coming, Tyrone goes out on the porch.

Jamie comes in, but apparently very drunk. He falls on the front steps, then turns on the three bulbs in the chandelier. He recounts his evening with Fat Violet in Mamie Burns' whorehouse. Then Jamie confesses why he had tried to make a bum out of Edmund. When Tyrone comes back in, he and Jamie begins to argue. Suddenly all five bulbs of the chandelier in the front parlor are turned on, and the three of them hear the mother playing the piano. In a short time, she comes in, trailing her old wedding gown.

Mary has completely gone back to the past; she

remarks Sister Theresa will scold her because she has not practiced her piano lessons. She speaks to Tyrone but gives no sign of recognizing him. She is looking for something, but she does not know what. She talks to herself about her life in the convent and the fact that she left to marry James Tyrone and was 'so happy for a time'.