**Answer NO-02**

Desire Under the Elms is a play. It was written in 1924. It was written by  [Eugene O'Neill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_O%27Neill). Who was an American writer. It is a modern tragedy. It’s in three parts. It produced in 1924 and published in 1925. The last of O’Neill’s naturalistic plays and the first in which he recreated the starkness of Greek tragedy. It opened at the Greenwich Village Theatre on November 11, 1924 and ran for 420 performances which including using the Earl Carroll Theatre, George M. Cohan's Theatre and Daly's 63rd Street Theatre. The play was revived in 2009. Like [Mourning Becomes Electra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mourning_Becomes_Electra), Desire Under the Elms signifies an attempt by O'Neill to adapt plot elements and themes of [Greek tragedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_tragedy) to a rural [New England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England) setting. It was inspired by the myth of [Phaedra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaedra_%28mythology%29), [Hippolytus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolytus_%28son_of_Theseus%29) and [Theseus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus). A [film version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desire_Under_the_Elms_%28film%29) was produced in 1958 and there is an [operatic setting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desire_Under_the_Elms_%28opera%29) by Edward Thomas. Desire Under the Elms draws from [Euripides](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Euripides)’ [Hippolytus](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hippolytus-Greek-mythology) and [Jean Racine](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Racine)’s [Phèdre](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Phedre), both of which feature a father returning home with a new wife who falls in love with her stepson. Its setting is a New England farmhouse in 1850.

[Eugene O'Neill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_O%27Neill) is a gifted writer in American Literature. He is today considered one of the greatest American playwrights of the 20th century. As one of the first writers to think of the stage and plays as literature, he was awarded the Nobel prize for Literature in 1936 and won the Pulitzer Prize four times in his career. Though several of his plays were not produced in his lifetime, he was recognized then and today as one of the most influential writers in American theatre, transforming plays into more than just diversions or entertainment. His full name **Eugene Gladstone O’Neill.** He was born on October 16, 1888, in a hotel room on Broadway in New York City. His parents, Ella Quinlan and actor James O'Neill, took their son with them as his father toured with his theatre company. While being exposed to the theatre and literally growing up backstage, he received a strict Catholic upbringing and eventually attended Princeton University. However, by this time, O'Neill was already heavily involved with prostitutes and developed alcoholism. He left Princeton without earning his degree and moved to New York City. He eventually travelled to Honduras in 1909 on a prospecting expedition. While abroad, he contracted malaria. His drinking worsened during this time and he attempted suicide. In 1912, he developed tuberculosis and was taken to a sanatorium for treatment. His time in recovery, however, kickstarted his writing career. With his father's aid, five of his one-act plays were published in 1914. O'Neill then joined George Pierce Baker's playwriting class at Harvard University in Massachusetts. O'Neill planned to return to Harvard in the fall of 1915 but ended up instead at the "Hell Hole," a hotel and bar in New York City, where he drank heavily and produced nothing. He next joined the Provincetown Players in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, whose productions of his plays about the sea, including Bound East for Cardiff, made him well known by 1918 also in 1918 O'Neill married Agnes Boulton. With whom he had a son and a daughter. Beyond the Horizon was O'Neill's first play to premiere on Broadway, in 1920, and won the Pulitzer. That same year, he wrote [The Emperor Jones](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-emperor-jones), which premiered to great acclaim. His other plays include Anna Christie, [Desire Under the Elms](https://www.gradesaver.com/desire-under-the-elms), [The Iceman Cometh](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-iceman-cometh), Long Day's Journey into Night, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Strange Interlude, [Mourning Becomes Electra](https://www.gradesaver.com/mourning-becomes-electra), and Ah, Wilderness!, a comedy. In spite of his success, O'Neill had an unhappy personal life, with marital struggles and estranged relationships with his children. Additionally, he suffered from alcoholism and depression. In 1936, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1953, he died at the age of 65 in a hotel in Boston.

In Desire Under the Elms play Act 1, Scene 1, The play opens at the exterior of a farmhouse in New England. It is sunset on an early summer day in 1850. Eben Cabot enters and walks to the edge of the porch. He rings a bell to call in his half-brothers, Simeon and Peter, who emerge soon after Eben goes back inside. The two brothers begin to talk about gold in the west and the risk of leaving everything they have worked for here. Eben sticks his head out the window as the two brothers speculate over their father's disappearance to the west, saying that he hasn't left the farm in 30 years or more. They decide they can't go west until their father dies. Eben reveals himself then by saying he prays his father were dead. With one last look at the setting sun and the promise of the west, the brothers retreat inside for supper.

In Act 1, Scene 2, This scene opens at twilight in the kitchen of the farmhouse. As the three brothers eat dinner, Simeon and Peter reprimand Eben for speaking ill of their father. Eben then unloads his hate for his father because Eben blames him for his mother's death. He denounces his father saying he is his mother through and through. Eben also reveals his grudge against his half-brothers for not helping or protecting his mother. He then leaves to visit Min, his local prostitute. As Eben leaves, his brothers remark on how like his father he is.

In Act 1, Scene 3, Eben comes home late and wakes his brothers. He informs them that their father has remarried a 35-year-old woman and is on his way home. When Simeon and Peter realise the farm will go to her, they decide to go west. Eben desperately wants the farm because it belonged to his mother and he wishes to honor her memory. He offers to buy his brother's shares of the farm for $300 each. They tell him they will think about it, waiting to decide until they see their father's new wife and can see the money in person. However, as soon as Eben leaves the room, they decide to stop working the farm.

In Act 1, Scene 4, The brothers reveal to Eben they won't be working on the farm anymore, so Eben goes to milk the cows while Peter and Simeon get drunk. Eben returns to the house after seeing his father and his new wife on the horizon. Peter and Simeon decide to leave the farm and sign the papers for Eben. They walk outside; taunt their father, Ephraim, and his new wife, Abbie; and then leave for California. Abbie begins to explore the house and runs into Eben. They are attracted to one another but fight over the future possession of the farm. The scene closes with harsh words between Ephraim and Eben.

In Act 2, Scene 1, This scene takes place outside the farmhouse two months later. Abbie catches Eben on the way to visit Min, his choice prostitute. She tries to seduce him, but he has only a mind for owning the farm and leaves her. Ephraim enters and is transformed. He is now gentle and is coming around to the idea of Eben owning the farm. Abbie gets upset at possibly losing the farm to Eben and claims he was lusting after her. Ephraim wants to throw Eben off the farm, but Abbie convinces him that Eben is needed to do the farm work. She then suggests they have a son, and Ephraim promises to give her the farm if she does.

In Act 2, Scene 2, Ephraim and Abbie sit in their bedroom talking about having a son. Ephraim tells the story of how he made the farm when he was only 20 years old and the terrible loneliness he has experienced with his wives. Abbie has no interest in his story, and he leaves. Abbie then goes to Eben's room and kisses him. He kisses her, but then, confused, pushes her away. However, caught in her power, he agrees to court her in the parlor that has been closed since his mother's death.

In Act 2, Scene 3, Eben meets Abbie in the parlor where Eben talks about his mother, beginning to cry. Abbie comforts him, saying that she could be a new mom to him and asks him to kiss her. Eventually Eben gives in and admits he loves her and has since the first hour he met her.

In Act 2, Scene 4, Abbie bids Eben goodbye as he heads for work. She makes him re-swear his love and then goes to get some sleep. Eben runs into his father and asks for their feud to be over. He believes his mother's soul is now at rest because he has taken revenge on his father and goes off to work laughing.

In Act 3, Scene 1, Ephraim throws a party for the birth of what he considers his new son. Abbie sits in a chair, pale and unmoving. She keeps asking where Eben is. The party guests keep hinting that they know the son is Eben's but neither Abbie nor Ephraim catch on. Abbie goes upstairs and finds Eben, they kiss, and she says the baby looks just like him. Ephraim goes outside for air, and with a feeling that something's not at rest, goes to sleep with the cows.

In Act 3, Scene 2, Ephraim runs into Eben later that night and tells him he will not have the farm now that Ephraim has a son. Eben becomes convinced that Abbie has been using him and confronts her about its once Ephraim goes inside and Abbie comes out. He says that he is going to leave, that he doesn't love her, and that she is a lying whore. Hysterical, she asks that if there is any way to prove that she didn't have a son with him to steal the land from him, would he ever love her again? He says yes, but that she isn't God, so there is no way. She promises that there is and Eben goes inside to get drunk.

In Act 3, Scene 3, It is the morning after the party and Eben sits in the kitchen with his bag packed. Abbie comes downstairs and tells him what she has done to prove she loves him and wasn't lying. She has killed their son. Enraged, Eben condemns her and runs out to get a sheriff to take her away. Abbie faints.

In Act 3, Scene 4, Ephraim wakes up, and Abbie tells him she has murdered the baby and that it wasn't his. He becomes detached and says he is going out to work. Before he leaves, Ephraim says she should have loved him and he would have protected her no matter what. Eben comes back and professes that he still loves her but that he told the sheriff. He demands to take some fault for murder. Abbie doesn't want him to, but he blurts it out the moment the sheriff arrives. The two get taken away together.

Here we can see the use of “Symbolism”. Symbolism (SIM-buh-liz-uhm) is a literary device. That refers to the use of symbols in a literary work. A [symbol](https://literarydevices.net/symbolism/) is something that stands for or suggests something else; it represents something beyond literal meaning. In literature, a symbol can be a word, [object](https://literarydevices.net/object/), action, [character](https://literarydevices.net/character/) or concept that embodies and evokes a range of additional meaning and significance. Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols, be they words, people, marks, locations or abstract ideas to represent something beyond the literal meaning. The concept of symbolism is not confined to works of literature: symbols inhabit every corner of our daily life. For instance, the colours red, white and blue typically symbolize patriotism in America at least, which is why they’re the favoured hues of political yard signs. Colours like orange and brown connote fall, which is why they adorn so many Thanksgiving decorations. Road signs, logos, and emojis are other examples of symbolism the visuals correspond to ideas, companies, or moods. In the literary world, many authors use symbolism to give their story greater complexity, depth and lasting impact. Understanding what symbolism is and the various types of symbolism that authors use can help you better appreciate this literary technique. Symbolism describes the use of concrete images to convey abstract ideas. Because this [literary device](https://writers.com/common-literary-devices) is widely open to interpretation and because many readers form different relationships to concrete objects, this is one of the more slippery elements of literature to both understand and convey to an audience. Nonetheless, understanding symbolism, and knowing what is a symbol, are crucial to mastering both poetry and prose. Everyday words, objects and even concepts often have more than a single meaning. Across time, certain aspects of everyday life and experience evolve in meaning and associated significance, making them symbols of something besides what they actually are. Here are some common examples of symbolism in everyday life:

* rainbow–symbolizes hope and promise
* red rose–symbolizes love and [romance](https://literarydevices.net/romance/)
* four-leaf clover–symbolizes good luck or fortune
* wedding ring–symbolizes commitment and matrimony
* tree blossoms–symbolize [spring](https://literarydevices.net/spring/) season
* red, white, blue–symbolizes American patriotism
* green traffic light–symbolizes “go” or proceed
* dollar sign–symbolizes money, earnings, wealth
* image of shopping cart–symbolizes online purchases

Desire Under the Elms is an excellent representative of artistic works of O’Neil in his middle period, in which rich symbolism is used. Many critics think the symbolism use of O’Neil is just in a bold exploration and experiment stage because it is not full and mature. However, it cannot be denied that O’Neil dares to innovate and change in the artistic creation technique. Hegel said: “Symbolism is a kind of existing outward thing directly presented in the perceptual view and the outward thing should be seen from its universal meaning implied by it, rather than itself. Therefore, symbolism has two factors: meaning and expression of the meaning. So, let’s appreciate the embodiment of symbolism use in Desire Under the Elms. Symbolism in Desire Under the Elms by Eugene O’Neill is a tragedy. That is full of symbolism. The themes of the drama are brought about through the use of symbols that exist within various elements of the play, especially in the setting and the plot. Such themes include a power struggle among the major characters, human greed and humanity being controlled by the fates. Ultimately, however, symbols such as the elm trees, the farm, the parlor and the baby help characterize the protagonists, provide tone, explain the conflict and expose the characters’ weakness as humans who fall to their emotions. The first major symbols, described in the introduction of the setting, are the two massive elm trees. These trees are symbolic of the two dead wives of Cabot. Their omnipresent location looms over the house, signifying that the deaths of the two women still affect the lives of those living in the house. Aside from establishing a conflict for the characters of dealing with accepting the loss of the wives, the elm trees establish a gloomy tone right from the play’s commencement. Eben mourns his mother throughout the play and is sour towards Cabot for working her to death. His objective of inheriting his mother’s farm, and his internal struggle of whether to be with Abbie are influenced by whether he feels his mother’s presence in the house. His primary objective is to win back his mother’s farm, and he becomes blinded by his ambitions; so much that he is quick to accuse Abbie, the woman he loves, of plotting to steal his mother’s farm. Similarly, Cabot is affected by the memory of his dead wives. A central theme of the drama is being powerless to the fates, and for Cabot, his fate is the product of killing his first two wives. There is an element of karma in the conclusion of the drama, in which Cabot reflects on his loneliness; however, it was his own doing that caused him his loneliness. Aside from the elms, the farm itself is a symbol of security and possession. The struggle over ownership of the farm is the most prominent conflict in the play. For Cabot, the farm symbolizes his supremacy and life’s purpose. It is very significant that he controls the farm, for it means that he controls the lives of those who live on it. To Cabot, as long as he is in possession of the farm, there will be people around working on it, and waiting to inherit it. It is also symbolic of his legacy, and what he worked in his life for. The farm symbolizes his sense of ignorance, for never changing his way of life. It reflects his primitiveness, or his lack of wanting change, and for making his life and the lives of those working on the farm stagnant. His control of the farm is significant, as it means no one else, like Abbie and Eben, has control of their own fate. For Eben, the farm is symbolic of the love of his mother, and of getting what is rightfully theirs. Therefore, it is ultimately a symbol of Eben’s pride and independence. By inheriting the farm, Eben is avenging his mother’s memory and establishing himself as an individual with property rights. His possession would show that he is a man good for the word he gave his mother, and a good son to his father; in spite of the fact that Cabot himself never showed Eben affection. For Abbie, the farm is security, and something she can call her own. Because she had never had control of anything that was hers, the farm is a tangible representation of herself. It is also a manipulation tool for Abbie to get her way with Eben and Cabot, and is physically something she controls. Her need to control something that is hers, whether it is the farm or Eben, is the objective for Abbie throughout the play. Similarly, to both the trees and the farm itself, the parlor is also a symbol. Where the elms symbolize the presence of the dead wives, and the farm symbolizes possession, the parlor is symbolic of Eben’s mother and her control over the farm. Because it was where she was laid after her death, the room had been considered her room, the room itself is characterized with a mood of fear, vulnerability and gloom, as it is a room that is filled with the presence of Eben’s mother. The scene in the parlor is the climax, as it is symbolic of a power struggle between Abbie and the mother. Abbie uses the parlor as a manipulation tool to control the entire house. Eben himself struggles to let Abbie into his life, because he does not want to upset his mother by having Abbie replace her. In the scene, Eben continually pleas to his mother and asks her if he should submit to Abbie’s seduction. Therefore, when Abbie successfully seduces Eben in the parlor, she achieves her objective in controlling Eben. At the climax, the room changes from being the mother’s room to being Abbie and Eben’s room. During the falling action, Eben no longer strives to fulfill his mother’s dying wish, as even in the resolution of the play, Eben goes with Abbie to jail and does not stay to inherit the farm. The last major symbol in the drama is Abbie and Eben’s baby. It is symbolic of the love of Eben and Abbie. Theirs was a love that could never live; a love that was doomed to end. The baby is a tangible representation of what was theirs. Just as their love could not grow in the traditional sense of a relationship: for example, no courting, no marriage, or no public affection, the baby could not grow to its full potential. The baby is also a representation of the battle over property between Cabot, Eben and Abbie. Such a power struggle is evident in the lack of O’Neill providing it with an identity: the baby remains nameless throughout the duration of the part three. Therefore, the baby was merely an object to the three characters. The baby, for Cabot, represents his heir and the means by which his legacy and name would carry on after his death. For Abbie, the baby was symbolic of her hold over Eben. Because it was Eben’s child, she had a physical way to prove that Eben did love her. However, for Eben, the baby was just a tool to get back at Cabot for his mistreatment of Eben through the years. It was his revenge for Cabot stealing his mother’s land and for Cabot working her to death. The symbols in the drama Desire Under the Elms serve many purposes; most prominently, to bring about themes, characterization, conflicts and tone. The symbols of the two elm trees, the farm, the parlor and the baby all help to establish that Abbie, Cabot, and Eben strive to have ownership and control of the things and people in their lives. However, their lives are ultimately controlled by their fate and their power struggles are deemed futile.

This is the use of Symbolism in Desire Under the Elms by [Eugene O'Neill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_O%27Neill).