

10th Standard - English

The Dear Departed Summary

Introduction

'The Dear Departed' shows the hollow relations between two daughters and their aged father. These relations are purely governed by selfishness and greediness of the daughters. How the old father neutralises their designs to grab his items is the climax of the play. The play, thus, reveals the breaking of human and familial relationships in the modern world.

Mrs. Slater's rebuking Victoria

Mrs. Slater rebukes her daughter Victoria that she should not go about seeking pleasure in the street when her grandfather is lying 'dead'. She asks her to change her dress before her aunt Elizabeth and uncle Ben come. She tells her that they are coming to talk over grandpa's affairs.

Mrs. Slater's telling about Elizabeth and Ben

Mrs. Slater says to her husband Henry that they'll outshine her sister Elizabeth and her husband Ben in mourning dresses. Henry wonders if they'll come at all. But Mrs. Slater says that Elizabeth will come at once after her share of what grandfather has left.

Mrs. Slater's greediness in grabbing grandfather's things

Mrs. Slater asks Henry to wear grandfather's new slippers so that these could be theirs and will not be divided. She tells him that she always wanted to have grandfather's bureau after his death. When Henry says that Elizabeth will raise a noise over it, Mrs. Slater says that they could put the old chest of drawers at the place of the bureau. Elizabeth could have that chest of drawers as her share. So she asks Henry to help bring down the bureau and the clock. She asks Victoria to close the door, and not to open the door if they come. Victoria calls it 'pinching' grandpa's things.

Mrs. Jordan (Elizabeth) and Ben come

Before Elizabeth and Ben come, Mrs. Slater has brought down the bureau and taken the clock. Now Mrs. Jordan and her husband come. Mrs. Jordan says that finally grandfather has been dead. She also says that they couldn't start early

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as they had been waiting for their mourning dresses. She asks Mrs. Slater what the doctor said about grandfather.

Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan talk about father

Mrs. Slater tells her that Dr. Pringle was sent for but he was out. When Mrs. Jordan said that it was a fatal mistake, Mrs. Slater asks her not to talk silly. Both start talking hot on how grandfather should have been taken care of. Mrs. Slater tells her that father had been 'merry' that morning. He had gone to pay his insurance. She further told that he must have gone to 'Ring-O'-Bells' afterwards.

Both continue their arguments on father

Mrs. Slater further told them that she went to him with something to eat in a tray. She put the tray down on the 'bureau'. She then corrected herself at once and said on 'the chest of drawers'. She asked if she would go to him. But she preferred to go to 'dead' grandfather after tea.

Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan discuss how to announce father's death in the press

Now Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan talk about how to announce father's death in the press. Mrs. Jordan favours a poem but Mrs. Slater says it will cost much. Then they come to talk about dividing jewellery etc. Mrs. Jordan tells that father promised his gold watch for Jimmy. This amazes Mrs. Slater. Ben refers to father's insurance money. Victoria informs that grandpa didn't go to pay his insurance that morning. Mrs. Slater accuses the widow of John Shorrocks who runs 'Ring-O'-Bells' where father usually went.

Mean nature of both the sisters revealed

At this, Ben calls father as 'drunken old beggar'. Mrs. Slater calls it 'swindling' when she kept him for three years.

Mrs. Jordan accuses him saying she kept him for five years. Mrs. Slater asks to check if father has kept the insurance receipt in the bureau. Both the sisters 'fight' over taking the bureau.

Grandpa rises up

At this, Victoria tells that grandpa is getting up. All are amazed at this because they had thought him to be dead. Father Abel asks how Mrs. Jordan and Mr.

Jordan came there. When they whisper, he feels irritated. Mrs. Jordan asks if he is well. Abel sees his slippers being worn by Henry and says it is not good. He asks them why they are in mourning dress. Victoria says that she is happy that he is not dead.

Grandpa's queries

Grandpa asks who is dead that they are wearing mourning dresses. Mrs. Slater lies that Ben's brother is dead. Mrs. Slater gives some pie to him to eat. Grandpa tells that he simply felt dazed in the morning. He looks at his bureau and asks why it has been taken from his bedroom. Then he recognises his clock. When both his daughters argue he asks what has been going on among them. Mrs. Jordan tells him that he was thought to be dead and Mrs. Slater and Henry stole his things.

Grandfather understands everything, talks about his will. Now grandpa has understood everything. He wonders that they didn't take long to divide his things. Henry asks him if he has made a will. He replies that the will is in the bureau. Mrs. Slater asks him not to be hard on her. E Grandpa tells that he shall make a new Will leaving all his things to whomever he was living with at the time of his death.

Both sisters want to keep him but grandpa thinks differently. Both the sisters get ready to keep him with them. But Mrs. Slater tells that Mrs. Jordan has had enough of him. Grandfather tells them that they have no cause to feel proud of how they have treated him in the past. Ben asks him that he should live with one of his daughters.

Grandpa's future plan—tit for tat

Grandpa surprises all. He tells all that on Monday next he would do three things. One, he would go to the lawyer and change his will. Second, he would pay his insurance premium. Three, he would get married with Mrs. John Shorrocks, the owner of 'Ring-O'-Bells'. He thanks Mrs. Slater that it was good she brought the bureau downstairs. It would be easy to cany it from there.