

THE MOON IS DOWN

A Dramatic Reading

by
John Steinbeck



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The scene is the drawing room of the tiny palace of Mayor Orden. The locale, a small town in a democratic European country invaded by the enemy. As the curtain rises, Dr. Winter, the town's physician, is sitting on the sofa, rolling his thumbs.

The door opens and Mayor Orden, a dignified, fine-looking man of sixty-five enters. Behind him comes Madame Orden. She is small and fierce and very proprietary.

MADAME: He won't let me fix his eyebrows, Doctor.

MAYOR: It hurts.

MADAME: Very well, if you want to look like that.--I wonder how many officers will come?--I don't know whether it would be correct to offer tea, or wine. It is so difficult to plan, when you don't know, Doctor.

DR. WINTER: (Mock seriousness) It's been so long since we've been invaded, or invaded anyone else. I just don't know what's correct.

MAYOR: Madame, I think with your permission we will not have wine. Six town boys were murdered this morning.--Sara, I can't understand you. I can't see how you can rattle on--the house--the servants--

MADAME: Dear--there must be some to do the regular daily thing. When there is a funeral some people mourn and there are some women in the kitchen cooking. Do you think they feel death less or do you think they know that life goes on in death, that life balances death?

MAYOR: (In wonder) And you do know what you are doing! (In understanding, takes her hand) My dear--my very dear--

MADAME: I will go now. (Straightens his hair) You need never worry about me. (Looking down, touches a button on his coat) You're going to lose this button. I'll sew it back tonight. (Exits)

MAYOR: (Looking at watch) Five of eleven.

DR. W: And they'll be here, too. A time-minded people--they hurry to their destiny as though it wouldn't wait. Do you want me to go?

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---