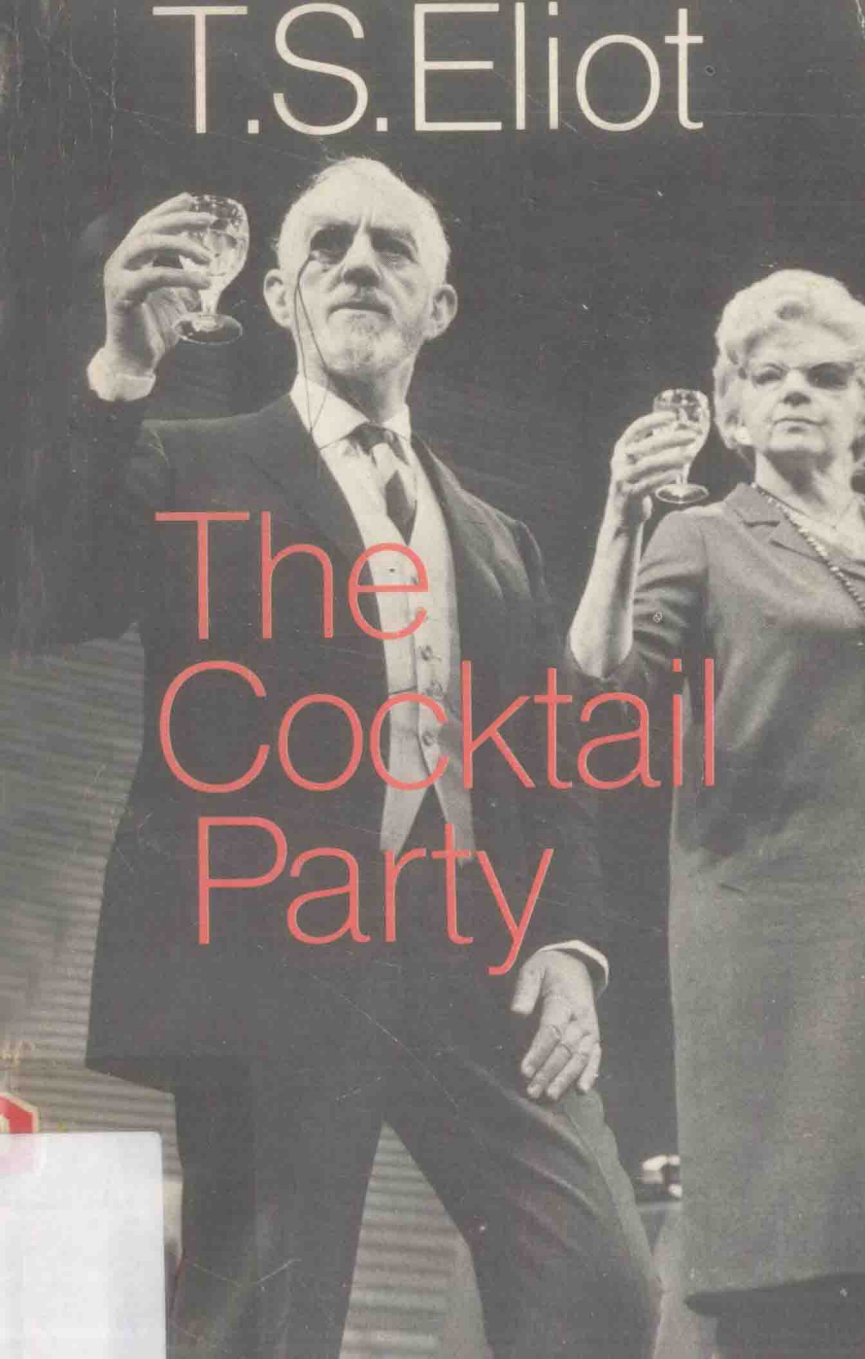


T.S. Eliot

The Cocktail Party



T.S.Eliot

The Cocktail Party



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The Cocktail Party

... Obviously somewhat is the
practical demonstration ... dramatic
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The Times Literary Supplement

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Observer

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THE CRITERION 1922-1939

(EDITED BY) 18 VOLS. A REISSUE

T. S. Eliot's
The Cocktail Party

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THE LEAGUE OF DRAMATISTS

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I WISH to acknowledge my indebtedness to two critics. To Mr. E. Martin Browne, who was responsible for the first production of this play at the Edinburgh Festival, 1949: for his criticism of the structure, from the first version to the last; for suggestions most of which have been accepted, and which, when accepted, have all been fully justified on the stage. And to Mr. John Hayward, for continuous criticism and correction of vocabulary, idiom and manners. My debt to both of these censors could be understood only by comparison of the successive drafts of this play with the final text.

T. S. E.

November 1949

IN addition to some minor corrections, certain alterations in Act III, based on the experience of the play's production, were made in the fourth impression of the text.

T. S. E.

August 1950

Persons

EDWARD CHAMBERLAYNE

JULIA (MRS. SHUTTLETHWAITE)

CELIA COPLESTONE

ALEXANDER MACCOLGIE GIBBS

PETER QUILPE

AN UNIDENTIFIED GUEST, *later identified as*

SIR HENRY HARCOURT-REILLY

LAVINIA CHAMBERLAYNE

A NURSE-SECRETARY

TWO CATERER'S MEN

The scene is laid in London

1 *The Cocktail Party*

Act One. Scene 1

The drawing-room of the Chamberlaynes' London flat.
Early evening. EDWARD CHAMBERLAYNE, JULIA
SHUTTLETHWAITE, CELIA COPLESTONE, PETER
QUILPE, ALEXANDER MACCOLGIE GIBBS, *and an*
UNIDENTIFIED GUEST.

ALEX

You've missed the point completely, Julia:
There *were* no tigers. *That* was the point.

JULIA

Then what were you doing, up in a tree:
You and the Maharaja?

ALEX

My dear Julia!

It's perfectly hopeless. You haven't been listening.

PETER

You'll have to tell us all over again, Alex.

ALEX

I never tell the same story twice.

JULIA

But I'm still waiting to know what happened.
I know it started as a story about tigers.

ALEX

I said there were no tigers.

CELIA

Oh do stop wrangling,

Both of you. It's your turn, Julia.

Do tell us that story you told the other day, about Lady
Kloutz and the wedding cake.

PETER

And how the butler found her in the pantry, rinsing her
mouth out with champagne.

I like that story.

CELIA

I love that story.

ALEX

I'm never tired of hearing that story.

JULIA

Well, you all seem to know it.

CELIA

Do we all know it?

But we're never tired of hearing *you* tell it.

I don't believe everyone here knows it.

[*To the UNIDENTIFIED GUEST*]

You don't know it, do you?

UNIDENTIFIED GUEST

No, I've never heard it.