

Desire Under the Elms Themes

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Themes

Greed and Possession: In *"Desire Under the Elms,"* greed for land destroys peace in the Cabot family. Ephraim Cabot loves his rocky farm more than his own sons. To him, the land is like God. His sons—Simeon, Peter, and Eben—also dream of owning it because they worked hard on it for years. Abbie marries Cabot only to get this farm for herself. Everyone's mind becomes filled with greed. They forget love and kindness. O'Neill shows that when people value property over human feelings, their lives become empty and tragic.

The Destructive Power of Desire: This play shows how uncontrolled desire can ruin lives. Abbie's desire for love and Eben's desire for revenge pull them into a forbidden relationship. Their love turns into madness when Abbie kills her own baby to prove her love to Eben. Their passion blinds them to right and wrong. On the other hand, Simeon and Peter control their desires and live freely. O'Neill warns that when desire becomes stronger than reason, it leads not to happiness but to tragedy and suffering.

Faith and Suffering: Ephraim Cabot's strong faith in God becomes a reason for his endless pain. He believes that God wants life to be hard and full of struggle. So, he works day and night on his stony farm. He also forces his family to do the same. His belief makes him cruel, lonely, and bitter. Notably, he does not go to the west because the land there is soft. He believes God wants him to suffer. His false belief makes his life miserable. O'Neill shows that blind faith without understanding can mislead people.