

## **Summary**

The story "The End of the Party" has two protagonists, Peter Morton and Francis Morton who are both nine-year-old identical twins. Peter is the elder child by a few minutes and is shown to be a healthy child with a protective attitude towards his brother. Francis, the younger child, is shown to be troubled with anxiety. The story is seen through the eyes of a narrator. The narrator speculates that the younger brother suffered major psychological trauma when he was briefly separated from Peter during the birth process.

During the birthday party of a family acquaintance, they play a game of hide-and-seek. The home of the Mortons, where the game happens is that of the English upper class and the setting is that of between the two World Wars.

When they begin to play hide-and-seek, the adults turn out the lights and the children run to hide. Peter senses his brother's terror and is able to guess where Francis has hidden. He touches his younger brother and then grasps his hand and crouches close to him, attempting to provide a continuing presence of reassurance. The two brothers hide successfully.

Finally, the game is over when the light comes on, the party's hostess begins to scream with horror. The younger brother lies down dead, terrified by the hand that touched him. The young boy was terrified and startled beyond endurance by the touch of a human hand in the dark. The story's ironic ending makes clear that the nine-year-old did not live long enough to realize that the fingers descending upon his face were those of his protective brother. Their separation would now be permanent.

## **Analysis**

### **1. Exploration of Innocence:**

The story centers around a young boy, Francis, who overhears a conversation between his parents about his upcoming birthday party. Francis's innocent perspective serves as a lens through which the reader experiences the unfolding events. Greene adeptly captures the fragility of childhood innocence and the abrupt confrontation with reality.

### **2. Perception and Reality:**

The narrative skillfully plays with the theme of perception versus reality. The discrepancy between what Francis believes to be true and the actual events at the party creates tension. The story challenges the notion of trust and highlights the limitations of one's understanding, especially in the realm of adult complexities.

### **3. Existential Dread:**

Greene introduces a sense of existential dread as Francis becomes aware of his own mortality during the party. The contemplation of death and the transient nature of life add depth to the narrative, showcasing Greene's ability to infuse philosophical elements into his storytelling.

### **4. Emotional Isolation:**

The story subtly explores emotional isolation within a family. Despite the physical closeness, the characters, particularly Francis's parents, exist in separate emotional spheres. This theme of isolation contributes to the overall melancholic atmosphere of the narrative.

#### **5. Symbolism of the Shadows:**

The shadows in the story serve as a powerful symbol, representing the hidden aspects of life and the secrets that individuals keep from each other. The gradual revelation of these shadows contributes to the narrative's intensity and provides a metaphorical layer to the story.

#### **6. Moral Ambiguity:**

The characters in "The End of the Party" grapple with moral complexities. The parents' discussions about Francis's awareness of their secrets raise questions about the ethics of keeping certain truths concealed. Greene subtly examines the gray areas of human morality and the impact of such moral decisions on relationships.

#### **7. Foreshadowing and Irony:**

Greene employs foreshadowing to build tension throughout the narrative. The revelation of what the parents are discussing adds an ironic twist to the story, as the reader becomes aware of the true nature of the situation while Francis remains in the dark. This creates a sense of dramatic irony and underscores the theme of innocence lost.

#### **8. Atmosphere and Setting:**

The atmospheric portrayal of the party and the dimly lit house contributes to the story's overall mood. The setting becomes a reflective space, amplifying the emotional and psychological dimensions of the characters' experiences.