



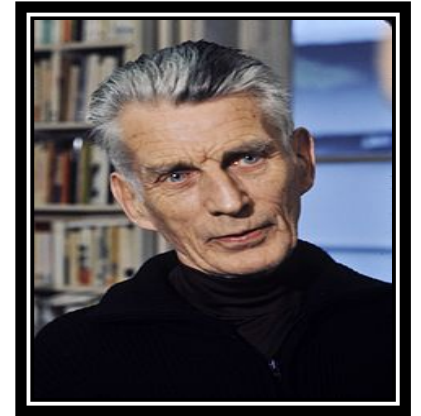
LECTURES

Prepared by
Lect. Huda Abdullah Abdulateef

WAITING FOR GODOT
BOOK BASICS & CONTEXT



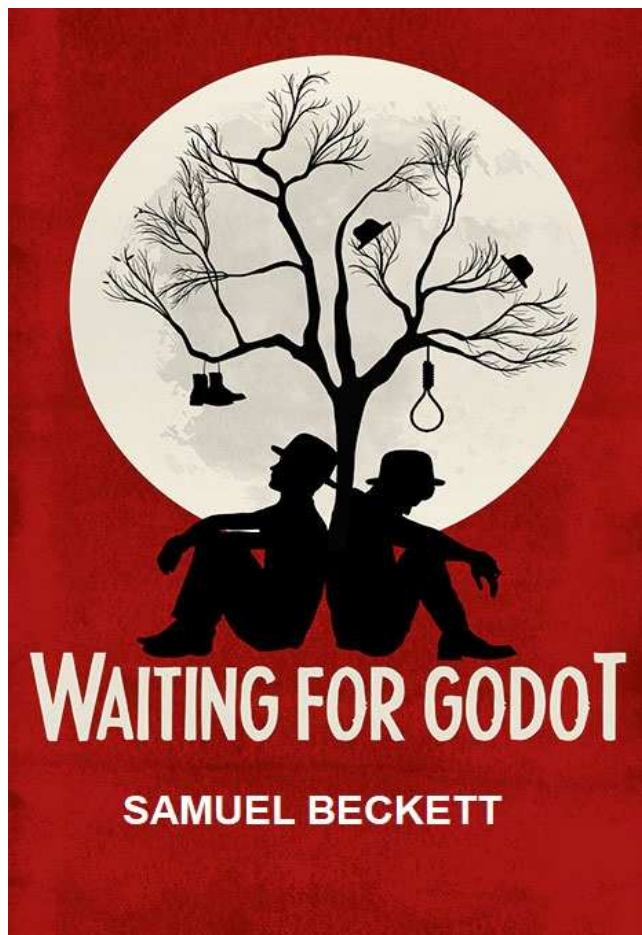
SAMUEL BECKETT



Name: Samuel Barclay Beckett
Born: 13 April 1906 - Foxrock, Dublin, Ireland
Died: 22 December 1989 (aged 83) - Montparnasse, Paris, France
Occupation: Novelist, playwright, poet, theatre director, essayist, literary translator
Language English, French
Nationality & Citizenship: Irish \ Ireland
Education: Portora Royal School
Alma mater: Trinity College Dublin
Genres: Drama, fiction, poetry, screenplays, personal correspondence
Notable works: (*Murphy, Watt, Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable, Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape, How It Is, Happy Days*)
Notable awards: (Croix de Guerre (1945), Nobel Prize in Literature (1969))
Years active: 1929–1989
Spouse: Suzanne Dechevaux-Dumesnil
(m. 1961; died 1989)



BOOK BASICS



- **AUTHOR :** Samuel Beckett
- **FIRST PERFORMED:** 1953
- **GENRE:** Drama
- **SUB-GENRE:** Tragicomedy (Two Acts)
- **THEMES:** Absurdity of Existence, Purposelessness of Life, Folly of Seeking Meaning and Uncertainty of Time
- **MOTIFS:** Duality & Hats
- **SYMBOLS:** Leafless Tree, Lucky's Baggage and Pozzo's Rope



ABOUT THE TITLE

- The two central characters, **Vladimir** and **Estragon**, wait for someone named **Godot**, who, as a stand-in for God, never arrives.
- The title focuses the audience on **the futility of human existence**.
- The meaning of the name Godot is debated among scholars.
- Although Beckett wrote in French, it is possible that he wanted his audiences to consider the presence of the **English word God** in the name of the character who never shows up.

(The similarity between the words Godot and God does not exist in the original French, in which God is Dieu.)

- It is possible, however, that Beckett named the character for a French bicyclist called Roger Godeau—or for a French slang word for boots.



IN CONTEXT

- *Waiting for Godot*, like most of Samuel Beckett's works, contains little in the way of historical context.
- He wanted his audience to experience the play without the expectations and assumptions attached to a particular people, place, or time.
- The play is not entirely free from cultural context, however, containing references to the Bible, Shakespeare, and ancient Greek mythology, as well as a number of allusions to Christianity.



WORLD WAR II

- Beckett wrote *Waiting for Godot* shortly after World War II ended, and the conflicts and horrors of the war were fresh in his memory.
- He lived in occupied Paris, working with the French Resistance until he and his companion, Suzanne Déschevaux-Dumesnil, had to flee to avoid being arrested by the Germans.
- He and Déschevaux-Dumesnil spent the remainder of the war in a region of the French countryside not under German control.
- After the Allied victory in Europe, Beckett volunteered for the Red Cross, witnessing firsthand the consequences of war and the results of Nazi brutality.



MODERNISM & POSTMODERNISM

Modernism

The **modernist period** in literature, which began around the turn of the 20th century, saw writers respond **negatively** to the **Industrial Revolution** and the horrors of World War I.

Modernism's goal—to create something completely new—sparked much **experimentation by merging psychological theory with the creation of many new forms and styles.**

Postmodernism

Postmodernism, which arose after World War II, turned away from modernism's insistence on entirely new literary forms.

Instead, postmodern art, including literature, often **reflected numerous traditional styles within one work**



CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERNISM & POSTMODERNISM

Modernism

- focus on the inner self or consciousness.
- concern with the decline of civilization and the effects of capitalism.
- characterization of technology as cold and unfeeling.
- alienation and loneliness of the individual.
- first-person narrators.
- stream of consciousness style.
- deviation from traditional plot structures.

Postmodernism

- parody, paradox, or pastiche (imitation of another work).
- Fragmentation.
- interest in flattened emotions.
- focus on an anonymous or collective experience.
- self-reference or recursion (the use of repeating elements).
- unreliable narrators.

Both modernist and postmodernist works reject traditional values and generally accepted meanings for texts.



THE THEATER OF THE ABSURD

- *Waiting for Godot* was a defining work in what came to be known as the Theater of the Absurd, plays in which a lack of purpose and logic create uncertainty, hopelessness, ridiculousness, and humor.
- The absurdity of characters' words and actions reveals the absurdity of human existence.
- The characters may call one another by childish, almost clownish, nicknames and engage in conversations and interactions straight out of slapstick comedy.
- Though not a formal movement, the absurdist plays of Beckett, along with those of Eugène Ionesco, Harold Pinter, and some other playwrights of the mid-20th century had in common a pessimistic view of an essentially purposeless human existence.
- As in *Waiting for Godot*, absurdist plays break with traditional structures and use of language to convey images and ideas that have no clearly defined meaning or resolution.



ABSURDITY IN *WAITING FOR GODOT*

- In *Waiting for Godot*, the human condition is depicted as ridiculous and without purpose. Beckett labeled the play a "**tragicomedy**," emphasizing both the humor to be seen in the absurdity of existence and the anxiety and hopelessness resulting from a lack of purpose.
- Many also see the play as an illustration of the views of **existentialism**, especially the philosophy of French writer **Jean-Paul Sartre**, whose proposition that humankind "**first surges up in the world—and defines [itself] afterwards,**" argues that there is no inherent meaning in human existence.
- **Beckett** warned audiences, however, against making religious or philosophical deductions, saying, "**the key to the play was the literal relations among its surface features not any presumed meanings that could be deduced from them.**"



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WAITING FOR GODOT CHARACTERS



WAITING FOR GODOT
CHARACTERS



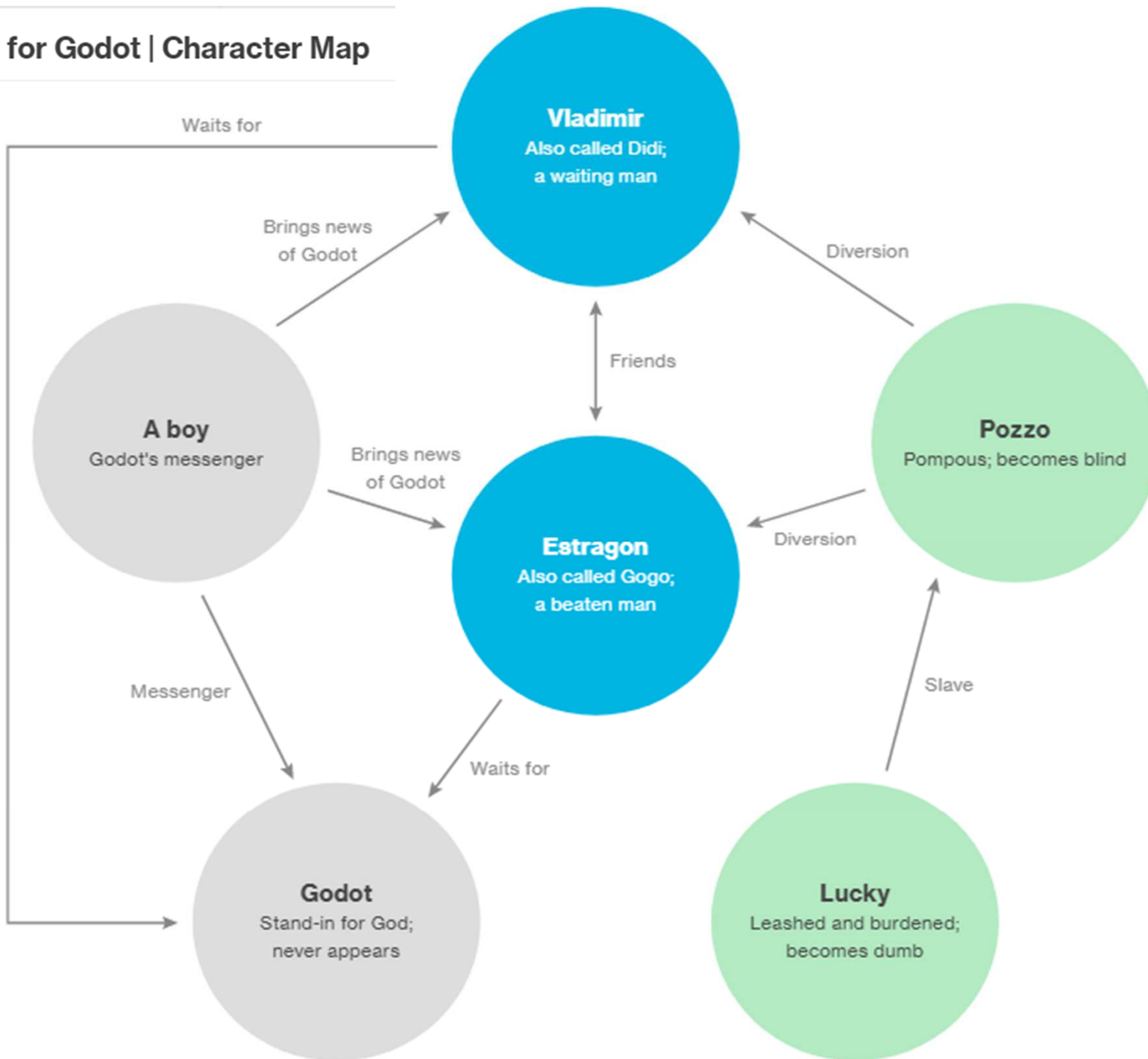
CHARACTERS

CHARACTER	DESCRIPTION
Estragon	Estragon, called "Gogo" by Vladimir, is a man who is beaten every night.
Vladimir	Vladimir, called "Didi" by Estragon, is a man trying to make sense of the world.
Pozzo	Pozzo is a pompous man who believes he is in control.
Lucky	Lucky is Pozzo's leashed and burdened slave.
Godot	Godot, a possible stand-in for God, is the titular character of the play, yet he never appears on stage.
A boy	A boy comes twice (or perhaps two boys come, once each) as a messenger from Godot.



WAITING FOR GODOT CHARACTER MAP

Waiting for Godot | Character Map



- Main Character
- Other Major Character
- Minor Character



WAITING FOR GODOT CHARACTER ANALYSIS



ESTRAGON

- Both Estragon and Vladimir are essentially Everymen, representing all of humanity, but they also contrast in some ways.
- Estragon is primarily concerned with feelings, particularly his own suffering, rather than intellectual thoughts, and he has trouble understanding much of Vladimir's logic and philosophy.
- He displays intuitive leaps, however, that go deeper than Vladimir does with his logic.
- If the two primary characters represent two parts of a person, Estragon is the body.
- The beatings Estragon says he receives represent the suffering that afflicts and traps humanity.
- There is nothing noble about this suffering—Estragon's complaints about it are self-pitying, and the fear of another beating keeps him locked in the endless waiting.



VLADIMIR

- Vladimir is the more logical and intellectual of the two primary characters.
- He is the only character who remembers most events from one day to another, and he works the hardest to fit those events into a logical time frame, despite conflicting evidence.
- He tries to explore philosophical ideas logically, but often misses deeper truths Estragon seems to grasp instinctively.
- If Estragon represents the body, Vladimir represents the mind, with all its ability to deceive itself.



POZZO

- In contrast to the other characters, Pozzo is a wealthy landowner with power and resources.
- He clearly sees Vladimir and Estragon as beneath him but condescends to talk with them anyway.
- His concern with appearances and social conventions is ridiculous, pointing out their meaninglessness.
- Pozzo uses his power over Lucky to abuse him horribly.
- But his power and resources are ultimately useless—they don't give his life meaning or protect him from misfortune.
- When he becomes blind, he must rely on his slave, Lucky (who was previously merely a convenience and for entertainment) to help him navigate life, becoming pitiful in a single stroke of fate.



- As Pozzo's slave, he must constantly carry burdens that are not his own.
- His body is constrained, much like his free will.
- This might be why he seems not even to consider leaving when Pozzo becomes blind, losing most of the power he had wielded over Lucky.
- However, Lucky demonstrates some willpower during his long speech in Act 1, and he is upset by the prospect of Pozzo selling him, which suggests he may choose to remain in his role.
- There is a dependency between Lucky and Pozzo that seems related to, but not limited to, their inequality.



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WAITING FOR GODOT

PLOT



WAITING FOR GODOT PLOT DIAGRAM

Waiting for Godot Plot Diagram





WAITING FOR GODOT PLOT STRUCTURE



PLOT STRUCTURE

Introduction

- 1 Estragon and Vladimir arrive to wait for Godot.

Rising Action

- 2 Pozzo stops to talk to Vladimir and Estragon.
- 3 Pozzo has Lucky dance and think.
- 4 A boy arrives with a message: Godot will not come tonight.
- 5 Vladimir and Estragon arrive again to wait for Godot.
- 6 Pozzo and Lucky fall down as they arrive.

Climax

- 7 Vladimir and Estragon help Pozzo get up.

Falling Action

- 8 A boy arrives with a message: Godot will not come tonight.

Resolution

- 9 Vladimir and Estragon decide to wait for Godot tomorrow.



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WAITING FOR GODOT

ACT 1



CONTENTS

- ACT 1 - (ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR)
- ACT 1 - (LUCKY & POZZO ARRIVE)
- ACT 1 - (LUCKY THINKS)
- ACT 1 - (A BOY WITH A MESSAGE)
- GENERAL QUESTIONS



WAITING FOR GODOT
ACT 1 (ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR)



ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR

- The tone of *Waiting for Godot*
- Estragon says, "Nothing to be done"
- What do Estragon and Valdimir represent as characters?
- The setting
- *Valdimir* and "APPALLED"
- Suffering is indifference in *Waiting for Godot*. How?
- "blaming on his boots the faults of his feet," (Valdimir)
- Estragon and "REPENTING"
- Estragon says, "People are bloody ignorant apes"
- "kind of prayer,"



ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR

- Vladimir "breaks into a hearty laugh" and stifles it, "his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted."
- Religious allusions and symbols
- Absurdity



ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR - QUOTES

“We can't ... We're waiting for Godot.”

- *Vladimir, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)*

“What exactly did we ask [Godot] for? ... A kind of prayer.”

- *Estragon, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)*

“We got rid of them.”

- *Vladimir, Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)*



WAITING FOR GODOT

ACT 1 (LUCKY AND POZZO ARRIVE)



LUCKY & POZZO ARRIVE

- Distraction and the confusion of Pozzo's Name
- Lucky's "sloober" and Lucky's "goggling" eyes
- The Absurdity of Social Status
- The character of Pozzo
- Symbolism (the relationship between Lucky and Pozzo)
- The motif of duality
- how do the chicken bones help illustrate differences between Estragon and Vladimir?
- Carrot and Pipe (Symbols)
- Pozzo's vaporizer



LUCKY & POZZO ARRIVE

- Lucky & the burdens (bags and luggage)
- The absurdity of human conventions
- Pozzo and the Greek gods
- Pozzo says that Lucky drives him mad. Significance
- “The tears of the world are a constant quantity,” *Pozzo, Act 1 (Lucky and Pozzo Arrive)*



WAITING FOR GODOT
ACT 1 (LUCKY THINKS)



LUCKY THINKS

- Time, or lack thereof
- Pozzo's view of life
- The names given to Lucky's dance
- Lucky's hat
- Lucky's speech, "Given the existence ... of a personal God" and "considering ... that as a result of the labors left unfinished." echo structures of academic language (Parody)
- Lucky's speech, "Given the existence ... of a personal God,"
- Why does Lucky's speech upset the other characters?
- What is the unusual about Estragon's and Vladimir's names ?
- Pozzo's watch



LUCKY THINKS

- Lucky's voice as a slave
- Lucky's description of God "divine apathia, divine athambia, divine aphasia"
- Lucky's speech on destruction
- "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" *Estragon, Act 1 (Lucky Thinks)*



WAITING FOR GODOT
ACT 1 (A BOY WITH A MESSAGE)



A BOY WITH A MESSAGE

- The boy & Vladimir and Estragon's uncertainty
- Have Vladimir and Estragon met Lucky and Pozzo before Act 1?
- Biblical allusion
- Existentialism & Godot
- The rising of the moon
- Estragon abandon his boots
- Estragon's comparing himself to Christ/ Estragon says, "Christ did."
- Estragon & Vladimir are entrapped
- "They all change. Only we can't," *Estragon, Act 1 (A Boy with a Message)*



WAITING FOR GODOT
GENERAL QUESTIONS



GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What are some elements of metafiction, in which the characters are aware that they are in a work of fiction, in *Waiting for Godot*?
- Negative reactions tend to follow acts of affection in *Waiting for Godot*. Why?



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WAITING FOR GODOT

ACT 2



CONTENTS

- ACT 2 - (VALDIMIR AND ESTRAGON RETURN)
- ACT 2 - (CONVERSATION KILLS TIME)
- ACT 2 - (LUCKY AND POZZO RETURN)
- ACT 2 - (DIFFERENT BOY, Same MESSAGE)
- GENERAL QUESTIONS



WAITING FOR GODOT

ACT 2 - (VALDIMIR AND ESTRAGON
RETURN)



ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR RETURN

- The motif of duality embedded in the structure of the play
- Valdimir's song "recursive" (entrapped)
- Repetition, lack of meaning
- Estragon says, "the best thing would be to kill me." (the relationship between Estragon and Valdimir)
- Estragon's conversation (decay & death)
- Estragon says, "everything oozes? Instead of "changes"
- The conversation about "thought" is absurd " What is terrible is to have thought," Valdimir
- Estragon's nightly beatings in *Waiting for Godot*?
- How do Vladimir's and Estragon's memories of Lucky and Pozzo differ in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2



ESTRAGON & VALDIMIR RETURN

- “All my lousy life I've crawled about in the mud!
And you talk to me about scenery!” *Estragon, Act 2*
(*Vladimir and Estragon Return*)



WAITING FOR GODOT

ACT 2 - (CONVERSATION KILLS TIME)



CONVERSATION KILLS TIME

- The significance of the bowler hats in *Waiting for Godot*?
- The significance of Lucky's name in *Waiting for Godot*?
- “We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?” Estragon, Act 2 (Conversation Kills Time)
- Symbols of tree , hats, boots.
- The question of time remains unresolved and uncertain.
- "Do you think God sees me?", existence may not be provable (Estragon and Valdimir)



WAITING FOR GODOT
ACT 2 - (LUCKY AND POZZO
RETURN)



LUCKY AND POZZO RETURN

- Lucky wears a different hat, and Pozzo's rope shorter in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2 .
- Lucky and Pozzo return (again) significantly changed since their appearance in Act 1.
- Pozzo's relationship with time in *Waiting for Godot*. Act 1 (Lucky and Pozzo Arrive) \ Act 1 (Lucky Thinks)\ Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- The significance of the loss of Lucky's voice in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2? Act 1 (Lucky Thinks)\ Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- Estragon calls Pozzo "Abel" and Lucky "Cain" in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- Vladimir plays on Shakespeare in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)?



LUCKY AND POZZO RETURN

- Vladimir's answers to Pozzo about **what time it is** in *Waiting for Godot*. Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return) suggest about Vladimir's viewpoint on life and death.
- The significance of the Latin phrase *Memoria praeteritorum bonorum*, used by Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- In *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2 what does Lucky's bag of sand say about life?
- When Estragon notices a cloud above them, he asks, "Let's pass on now to something else, do you mind?" comment
- Pozzo's cries for help are made to "all mankind," and here and now "all mankind is us, whether we like it or not."



LUCKY AND POZZO RETURN

- *“But at this place, at this moment ... all mankind is us, whether we like it or not.”* Vladimir, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- *“We are all born mad. Some remain so.”* - Estragon, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- *“They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.”* - Pozzo, Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)
- *“The air is full of our cries. ... But habit is a great deadener.”* - Vladimir, Act 2 (Different Boy, Same Message)
- *“They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.”* This picture of birth leading directly to death.



WAITING FOR GODOT
ACT 2 - (DIFFERENT BOY, SAME
MESSAGE)



DIFFERENT BOY, SAME MESSAGE

- Act 2 - how are Vladimir and Estragon similar to the two thieves crucified with Christ?
- Why doesn't the boy see Lucky and Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2?



WAITING FOR GODOT
GENERAL QUESTIONS



GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What is the significance of the changed tree in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2?
- How do Vladimir's and Estragon's memories of Lucky and Pozzo differ in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2?
- Are Estragon's boots different in *Waiting for Godot*, Act 2?
- What do Estragon's nightly beatings suggest in *Waiting for Godot*?
- What does the boy represent in *Waiting for Godot*?
- Why do characters wonder if they're asleep or dreaming in *Waiting for Godot*? Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir) \ Act 2 (Vladimir and Estragon Return)\ Act 2 (Lucky and Pozzo Return)\ Act 2 (Different Boy, Same Message)
- What is the significance of the bowler hats in *Waiting for Godot*? Act 1 (Lucky Thinks)\ Act 2 (Conversation Kills Time)



GENERAL QUESTIONS

- The significance of Estragon's dreams and nightmares in *Waiting for Godot*? Act 1 (Estragon and Vladimir)\Act 2 (Conversation Kills Time)\Act 2 (Different Boy, Same Message)
- What is the significance of Lucky's name in *Waiting for Godot*?
- What might Godot represent in *Waiting for Godot*?



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