

# *Waiting for Godot* (1955)

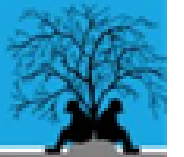
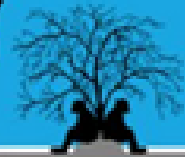
by Samuel Beckett



"Let's go"

"We can't"

"Why not?"



"We're

**Waiting for Godot"**

Samuel Beckett

Residenztheater München

*Waiting for Godot* is a play in which two characters are waiting for someone who never comes. We can say that *Waiting for Godot* is a play that explores themes of existentialist philosophy. The sheer emptiness and randomness of the plot causes the audience (or reader) to wonder if anything is going to happen, and whether there is any meaning in anything in the play (or in life...).



Beckett originally wrote the play in French, with the title *En attendant Godot*. The work was revolutionary for what it lacked: real plot, discernible character development, and any sort of adherence to dramatic traditions. It was a hit and the play became a cornerstone of "Le Théâtre de l'Absurde" (the Theatre of the Absurd).

Beckett himself translated the play into English – his first language – shortly after, and the play's success continued.

# PLOT OF THE PLAY





*Waiting for Godot* begins with two men on a barren road by a leafless tree. These men, Vladimir and Estragon, are often characterized as "tramps," and we soon see that the world of this play is operating on its own set of rules, its own system where nothing happens, nothing is certain, and there's never anything to do.



Vladimir and Estragon, we soon learn, are waiting for Godot, a man or perhaps a deity. The tramps can't be sure if they've met Godot, if they're waiting in the right place, if this is the right day, or even whether Godot is going to show up at all.

While they wait, Vladimir and Estragon fill their time with a series of mundane activities (like taking a boot on and off) and trivial conversations (turnips, carrots) interspersed with more serious reflection (dead voices, suicide, the Bible).



The tramps are soon interrupted by the arrival of Lucky, a man/servant with a rope tied around his neck, and Pozzo, his master, holding the other end of the long rope. The four men proceed to do together what Vladimir and Estragon did earlier by themselves: namely, nothing.

Lucky and Pozzo then leave so that Vladimir and Estragon can go back to doing nothing by themselves. The nothing is interrupted by the arrival of the Boy, who reports to Vladimir that Godot isn't coming today, but will be there tomorrow.

Estragon and Vladimir talk about suicide some more and then resolve to leave the stage, since it's nightfall and they no longer have to wait for Godot. Of course, having resolved to leave, neither man moves, and the curtain closes on Act I.



VLADIMIR: Well? Shall we go?

ESTRAGON: Yes, let's go.

*[They do not move.]*

The curtain opens for Act II... which is like Act I! The men still sit around waiting for Godot and try to fill the idle hours in the meantime.

Lucky and Pozzo show up: this time Lucky has gone mute and Pozzo is blind.



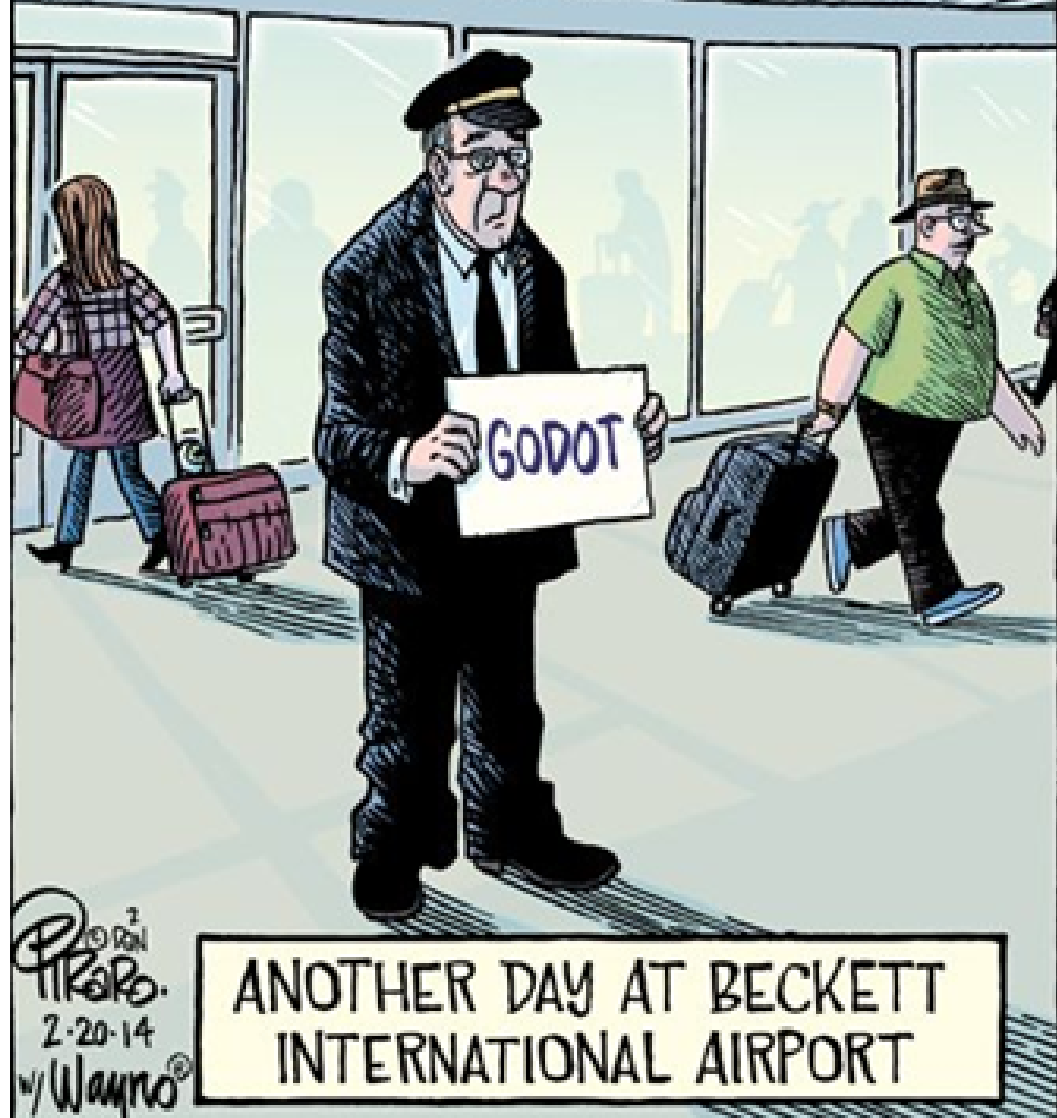
Vladimir agrees with Pozzo's claim that life is fleeting. Pozzo and Lucky leave again, just in time for the Boy to show up and tell Vladimir that Godot isn't coming today, but will be there tomorrow.

Vladimir and Estragon contemplate suicide, but have no rope.

The men resolve to leave, since it's nightfall and they no longer have to wait for Godot, but neither man moves.

And the play ends.

**DEAR SAMUEL  
BECKETT,  
GODOT IS STUCK  
IN TRAFFIC.**



ANOTHER DAY AT BECKETT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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2-20-14  
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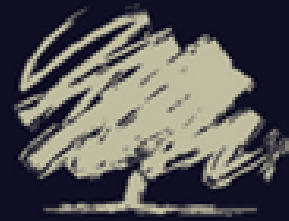
**The whole play is a symbolic representation of the human condition.**



The two characters hope and wait for a sign ("Godot"...), but their "metaphysical anguish" is never extinguished because **that is the human condition.**

**There aren't any social or political reforms that could cure man of his intrinsic loneliness.**

Non-communication is his destiny,  
as is the anguish of his uncertainty  
of actually existing.



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
WAITING  
FOR GODOT**