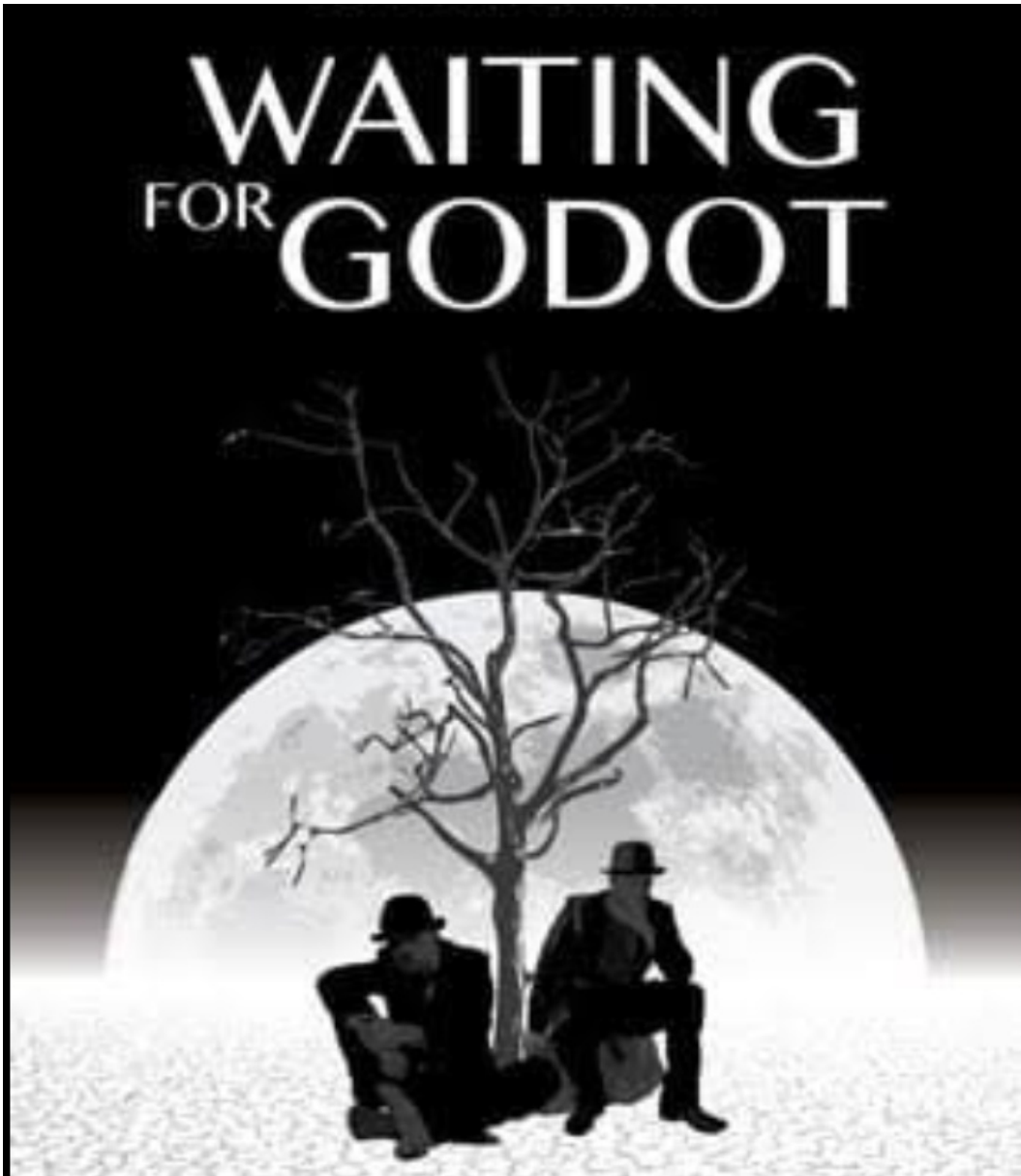
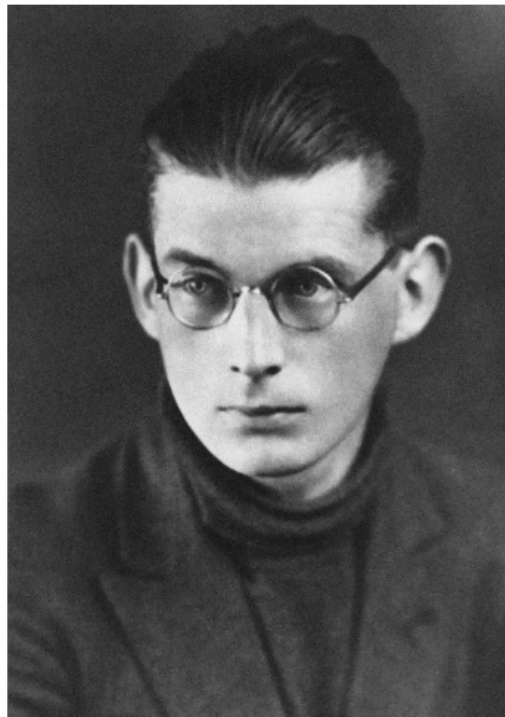



# ENGLISH LITERATURE (HONS)

SEM: 5 . CC : XI



# Biography of Samuel Beckett, Irish Novelist, Playwright, and Poet



 Samuel Beckett, circa 1920. Heritage Images / Getty Images

## Fast Facts: Samuel Beckett



- **Full Name:** Samuel Barclay Beckett
- **Known For:** Nobel Prize-winning author. He wrote the plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Happy Days*
- **Born:** April 13, 1906 in Dublin, Ireland
- **Parents:** May Roe Beckett and Bill Beckett
- **Died:** December 22, 1989 in Paris, France
- **Education:** Trinity College, Dublin (1927)



- **Published Works:** *Murphy*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Happy Days*, *Endgame*
- **Awards and Honors:** Croix de Guerre, Nobel Prize (1969)
- **Spouse:** Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil
- **Children:** none
- **Notable Quote:** "No, I regret nothing, all I regret is having been born, dying is such a long tiresome business I always found."

# Themes and Related Quotes From "Waiting for Godot"

Samuel Beckett's Famous Existential Play

"Waiting for Godot" is a play by Samuel Beckett that premiered in France in January 1953. The play, Beckett's first, explores the meaning and meaninglessness of life through its repetitive plot and dialogue. "Waiting for Godot" is an enigmatic but very significant play in the absurdist tradition. It is sometimes described as a major literary milestone.

Becket's existential play centers around the characters Vladimir and Estragon who are conversing while waiting beneath a tree for a someone (or something) named Godot. Another man called Pozzo wanders up and talks with them briefly before venturing off to sell his slave Lucky. Then another man comes with a message from Godot saying he will not be coming that night. Though Vladimir and Estragon then say they will leave, they do not move as the curtain falls.

## Theme 1: Existentialism



#### Quote 4:

VLADIMIR

He didn't say for sure he'd come.

ESTRAGON

And if he doesn't come?

VLADIMIR

We'll come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON

And then the day after tomorrow.

VLADIMIR

Possibly.

ESTRAGON

And so on.

VLADIMIR

The point is—

ESTRAGON

Until he comes.

VLADIMIR

You're merciless.



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You're merciless.

ESTRAGON

We came here yesterday.

VLADIMIR

Ah no, there you're mistaken.

**Quote 5:**



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VLADIMIR

That passed the time.

ESTRAGON

It would have passed in any case.

VLADIMIR

Yes, but not so rapidly.

**Quote 6:**

POZZO

Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.



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## **Theme 3: The Meaninglessness of Life**

One of the central themes of "Waiting for Godot" is the meaninglessness of life.

Even as the characters insist on staying where they are and doing what they do, they acknowledge that they do it for no good reason. The play confronts the reader and audience with a void of meaning, challenging them with the blankness and boredom of this situation.

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## Quote 7:

VLADIMIR

We wait. We are bored. No, don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it. Good. A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste. ...In an instant, all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness.

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## Theme 4: The Sadness of Life

There's wistful sadness in this particular Beckett play. The characters of Vladimir and Estragon are grim even in their casual conversation, even as Lucky entertains them with song and dance. Pozzo, in particular, makes speeches that reflect a sense of angst and sadness.

## Quote 8:

POZZO

The tears of the world are a constant quantity. For each one who begins to weep somewhere else another stops. The same is true of the laugh. Let us not then speak ill of our generation, it is not any unhappier than its predecessors. Let us not speak well of it either. Let us not speak of it at all. It is true the population has increased.

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## **Theme 5: Witness and Waiting as a Means to Salvation**

While "Waiting for Godot" is, in many ways, a nihilistic and existential play, it also contains elements of spirituality. Are Vladimir and Estragon merely waiting? Or, by waiting together, are they taking part in something bigger than themselves? Several aspects of waiting are invoked in the play as containing meaning in themselves: the togetherness and fellowship of their waiting, the fact that the wait itself is a kind of purpose, and the faithfulness of continuing the wait—of keeping the appointment.

### **Quote 9:**

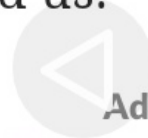
VLADIMIR

Tomorrow when I wake or think I do,  
what shall I say of today? That with  
Estragon my friend, at this place, until the  
fall of night, I waited for Godot?

### **Quote 10:**

VLADIMIR

...Let us not waste our time in idle  
discourse! Let us do something, while we  
have the chance....at this place, at this  
moment of time, all mankind is us,  
whether we like it or not. Let us make the  
most of it before it is too late! Let us  
represent worthily for once the foul  
brood to which a cruel fate consigned us!  
What do you say?



## Quote 11:

VLADIMIR

Why are we here, that is the question?  
And we are blessed in this, that we  
happen to know the answer. Yes, in this  
immense confusion one thing alone is  
clear. We are waiting for Godot to come.  
...We are not saints, but we have kept our  
appointment.

Sri Manorath Das. ( Guest Lecturer. Dept Of English.  
J.L.N COLLEGE CHAKRADHARPUR. KOLHAN  
UNIVERSITY)

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