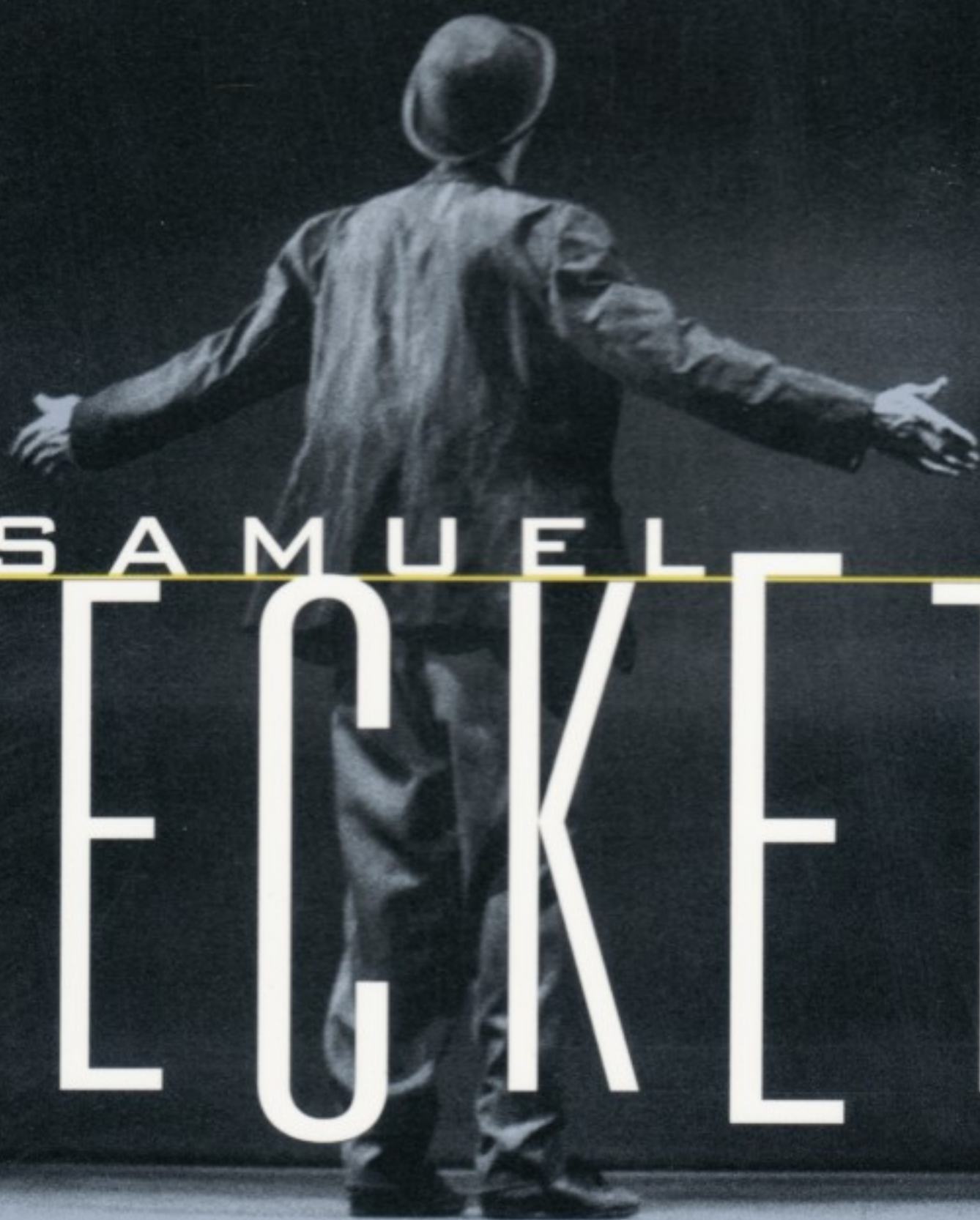


# WAITING FOR GODOT

A TRAGICOMEDY IN TWO ACTS



SAMUEL

BECKETT

"One of the true masterpieces of the century."  
—Clive Barnes, *The New York Times*

*Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before.*

*Enter Vladimir.*

ESTRAGON: *(giving up again)*. Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR: *(advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart)*. I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. *(He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.)* So there you are again.

ESTRAGON: Am I?

VLADIMIR: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone for ever.

ESTRAGON: Me too.

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? *(He reflects.)* Get up till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: *(irritably)*. Not now, not now.

VLADIMIR: *(hurt, coldly)*. May one inquire where His Highness spent the night?

ESTRAGON: In a ditch.

VLADIMIR: *(admiringly)*. A ditch! Where?

ESTRAGON: *(without gesture)*. Over there.

VLADIMIR: And they didn't beat you?

ESTRAGON: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.

VLADIMIR: The same lot as usual?

ESTRAGON: The same? I don't know.

VLADIMIR: When I think of it . . . all these years . . . but for me . . . where would you be . . .  
*(Decisively.)* You'd be nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present minute, no doubt about it.

ESTRAGON: And what of it?

VLADIMIR: *(gloomily)*. It's too much for one man. *(Pause. Cheerfully.)* On the other hand what's the good of losing heart now, that's what I say. We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties.

ESTRAGON: Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.

VLADIMIR: Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. *(Estragon tears at his boot.)* What are you doing?

ESTRAGON: Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you?

VLADIMIR: Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?

ESTRAGON: *(feebly)*. Help me!

VLADIMIR: It hurts?

ESTRAGON: *(angrily)*. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

VLADIMIR: *(angrily)*. No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.

ESTRAGON: It hurts?

VLADIMIR: *(angrily)*. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

ESTRAGON: *(pointing)*. You might button it all the same.

VLADIMIR: (*stooping*). True. (*He buttons his fly.*) Never neglect the little things of life.

ESTRAGON: What do you expect, you always wait till the last moment.

VLADIMIR: (*musingly*). The last moment . . . (*He meditates.*) Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?

ESTRAGON: Why don't you help me?

VLADIMIR: Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. (*He takes off his hat, peers inside it, feels about inside it, shakes it, puts it on again.*) How shall I say? Relieved and at the same time . . . (*he searches for the word*) . . . appalled. (*With emphasis.*) AP-PALLED. (*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it.*) Funny. (*He knocks on the crown as though to dislodge a foreign body, peers into it again, puts it on again.*) Nothing to be done. (*Estragon with a supreme effort succeeds in pulling off his boot. He peers inside it, feels about inside it, turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, finds nothing, feels inside it again, staring sightlessly before him.*) Well?

ESTRAGON: Nothing.

VLADIMIR: Show.

ESTRAGON: There's nothing to show.

VLADIMIR: Try and put it on again.

ESTRAGON: (*examining his foot*). I'll air it for a bit.

VLADIMIR: There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet. (*He takes off his hat again,*

**"One of the most noble and moving plays of our generation, a threnody of hope deceived and deferred but never extinguished; a play suffused with tenderness for the whole human perplexity; with phrases that come like a sharp stab of beauty and pain."—*The Times* (London)**

A seminal work of twentieth-century drama, *Waiting for Godot* was Samuel Beckett's first professionally produced play. It opened in Paris in 1953 at the tiny Left Bank Théâtre de Babylone, and has since become a cornerstone of twentieth-century theater.

The story line evolves around two seemingly homeless men waiting for someone—or something—named Godot. Vladimir and Estragon wait near a tree on a barren stretch of road, inhabiting a drama spun from their own consciousness. The result is a comical wordplay of poetry, dreamscapes, and nonsense, which has been interpreted as a somber summation of mankind's inexhaustible search for meaning. Beckett's language pioneered an expressionistic minimalism that captured the existentialism of post-World War II Europe. His play remains one of the most magical and beautiful allegories of our time.

SAMUEL BECKETT was born in Dublin in 1906 and graduated from Trinity College. He lived most his life in Paris, where he died in 1989. *Waiting for Godot* (En Attendant Godot) was originally written in French and was translated by the author. One of the most important writers of our time, Samuel Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969.

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Cover art direction by C. Rue Woods  
Cover photograph by John Lawlor  
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Grove Press books  
are distributed by Publishers Group West

[www.groveatlantic.com](http://www.groveatlantic.com)

Printed in the U.S.A. 0499

Drama \$13.00

ISBN-13: 978-0-8021-3034-1

ISBN-10: 0-8021-3034-8



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