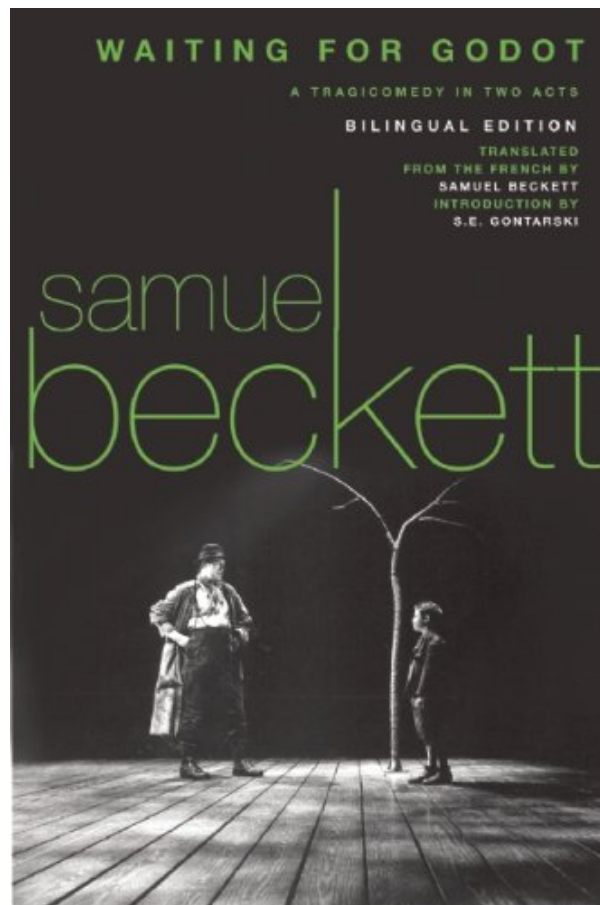
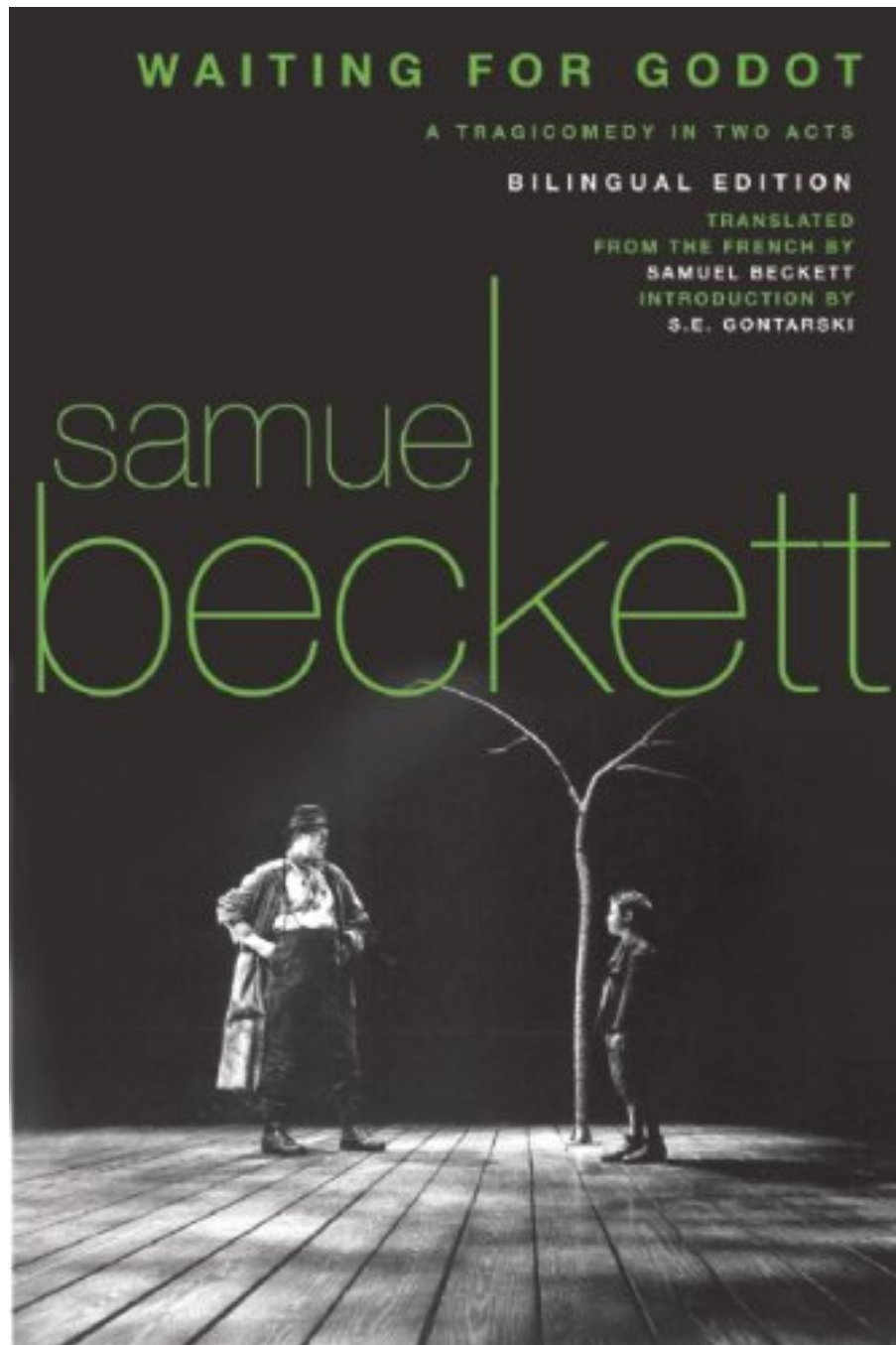


WAITING FOR GODOT - BILINGUAL: A BILINGUAL EDITION BY SAMUEL BECKETT



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From an inauspicious beginning at the tiny Left Bank Théâtre de Babylone in 1953, followed by bewilderment among American and British audiences, *Waiting for Godot* has become one of the most important and enigmatic plays of the past fifty years and a cornerstone of twentieth-century drama. As Clive Barnes wrote, “Time catches up with genius. . . . *Waiting for Godot* is one of the masterpieces of the century.” Beckett wrote the play in French and then translated it into English himself. In doing so he chose to revise and eliminate various passages. With side-by-side text, the reader can experience the mastery of Beckett’s language and explore its nuances. Upon being asked who Godot is, Samuel Beckett told director Alan Schneider, “If I knew, I would have said so in the play.” Although we may never know who we are waiting for, in this special edition we can rediscover one of the most poignant and humorous allegories of our time.

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Most helpful customer reviews

19 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF WAITING: BILINGUAL BECKETT

By Love Thy Enemy

This review refers to the recent and very welcome bilingual edition of *En attendant Godot*.

Originally written in French as a break while Mr. Beckett tackled his obscure and thick novel writing in exile within southern France from occupied Paris (where he served in the Resistance until directly threatened; please see the excellent biography *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*), *Waiting for Godot* became one of the most influential plays of the Twentieth Century.

Grove Press early cornered the American market for Beckett, its wisest and most respected publications. Here Grove Press and Les Editions de Minuit graciously combine copyrights to publish this important bilingual edition.

This edition contains only the barest of introductions, basically the English textual genesis with little background. For instance we do not read in this introduction how barely authorized, if at all, was the Miami production with the great Bert Lahr, a production one wishes deeply might have been recorded in some media, yet we read the cast of characters twice. We do not read of several other influential and important productions, including the full story of those directed by Mr. Beckett himself, not the prison productions. I certainly wish this play could be produced as written with a quartet of sextagenarians.

We have here in this introduction only the barest of bones of some textual variants, with a very brief bibliography.

Yet not much more is needed. The history and meaning have been deeply discussed in other publications, including several available here upon the Amazon. For those who wish to learn the "back story" of Didi and Gogo, we may read the entertaining Beckett novel *Mercier and Camier*; also recommended for beginners is his intriguing first novel *Murphy* by Samuel Beckett.

What counts here is this bilingual edition, presenting face to face, line by line, the two languages, English and French, in which this play was written by Beckett.

The left hand page presents the original French text; the right hand page presents what the introduction indicates is the most authentic English translation available. This presents us with several advantages, and not only in bilingual education or second language instruction. We see here more broadly the intent of the author.

This therefore is a very important copy to have and to study, in this generous and easily readable Grove bilingual edition, durably hardcovered.

We each of us wait for Godot. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe we will forget.

Read here and remember.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

One of the masterworks of the 20th century - but should be seen as well as read

By Robert Moore

First, a word about editions. This edition of *Waiting for Godot - Bilingual: A Bilingual Edition* replaces the earlier English-only edition of *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (Beckett, Samuel). The latter, though with occasional changes of covers, has long been the standard edition of the play in English. It features Beckett's translation of the play in English, and nothing else. But Grove is replacing it with this parallel version, which will feature the French original alongside Beckett's translation into English. This new edition also features an introduction, which the earlier edition lacks.

Too many people forget that this is a PLAY, i.e., something that provides words for actors on a stage. It is not primarily intended to be read in a book. Unfortunately, this is how most people experience the play, therefore depriving them of most of elements of the performance. Therefore, I am going to make a recommendation for a way of increasing the richness of your performance of the play. Too many people forget that this is a PLAY, i.e., something that provides the words for actors on a stage. It is not primarily intended to be read in a book. Unfortunately, this is how most people experience the play, therefore depriving them of most of elements of the performance. Therefore, I am going to make a recommendation for a way of increasing the richness of your performance of the play.

Though an Irishman, Beckett originally wrote the play - as he did with almost all of his works - in French first and then later translated them himself into English (in contrast, Vladimir Nabokov after moving to the United States wrote his books in English, and then translated them into French and Russian, his wife doing the translations into German). The play was originally performed in Paris, while the English-language premiere took place in Ireland. The American debut was not on Broadway, but in Miami, Florida, with Bert Lahr and Tom Ewell.

Instead of merely reading the play, read it while listening to a recording of the original Broadway production of *Waiting For Godot*, which starred Bert Lahr (best known as the Cowardly Lion in *THE WIZARD OF OZ*) as Estragon and E. G. Marshall as Vladimir. While you still wouldn't get the visual dimension of the play, hearing the actors bring the characters to life adds new layers to the play that you would never get merely by reading it. Lahr was an unexpected choice to star in the play, given that he wasn't an actor so much as a vaudevillian comedian. His acting style was too over-the-top to be convincing in film (though perfect for the Cowardly Lion); I read somewhere - I don't recall where - that he was more like a cartoon character incarnated than a human. He nonetheless gives a marvelous performance here. Marshall was one of the most distinguished stage actors of his generation and more than holds his own with Lahr while acting as more the straight man.

If you listen to the recording while reading the book, the performance that will most come to life is that of Lucky. I'd read the play 2 or 3 times over the years and seen it once on the stage in which I now realize was a rather tame production, but had not really paid much attention to Lucky. His main contribution was a single, very long speech (not terribly unlike the long speech given by The Fireman in Ionesco's *THE BALD SOPRANO* in terms of length and its absurdity - a speech that I gave in a college performance of the play).

Read on the page it can seem interesting and silly, but hearing the actor (though it wasn't indicated in the recording, Alvin Epstein played Lucky in the original Broadway production and it is almost certainly him here) perform the speech is revelatory. He doesn't say the words so much as shriek, yelp, gasp, bark, and screech them. Hearing Lucky's speech performed by a talented actor transforms your appreciation of both the speech and the play.

This is one of the truly great works of the 20th Century, one of the key plays making up what Martin Esslin dubbed The Theatre of the Absurd, but it is not best experienced by reading it on the page. Try to see it performed instead, or at bare minimum in the Bert Lahr/E. G. Marshall version noted above. You wouldn't think that you had experienced a Bob Dylan song merely by reading the lyrics, and so also you won't experience WAITING FOR GODOT unless you hear or see it performed.

20 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Waiting and Waiting and Waiting and ...

By Stephen Williams

Waiting and Waiting and Waiting and ...

Review of Play: Waiting for Godot - A Tragicomedy in Two Acts

Written in: 1949

Premiere in: 1953

By: Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989)

Originally written in French and translated to English by the author himself.

This play takes place on a desolate road next to a barren tree. There are two aimless men loitering and passing the time in discussion. They are soon joined by two others. The first act of the play lasts through one evening. The second act lasts through a second evening almost identical to the first. When ever the subject of leaving their spot arises, we learn that they can't leave because they are "Waiting for Godot" and need to stay at this particular spot on the road.

There is a sense of timelessness. The second evenings (second act) seems to be slightly altered copy of the first evening (first act). The characters are "Waiting for Godot" and for salvation. Their wait for salvation might well be endless since all of them are loath to face their true motives, their real needs, their personal wants and honest desires. They don't seem to know why they are "Waiting for Godot" or what Godot (God?) will bring them. When they mention suicide they flippantly dismiss the subject. One time they say they can not hang themselves because they have no rope when in fact there is a rope lying on the stage as one of the few props.

They appear to have voluntarily subjected themselves to a purgatory and don't have the courage or initiative to even question their situation.

The discussion ranges from an inane account of boots being too tight to sophistic meanderings on the purpose of life. The characters seem to relentlessly keep talking to avoid facing something. We are not privy to any of their pasts or in fact any personal information about any of the characters. They might have been meeting on the desolate road for an endless time, so that any past that they had is lost in the mist of their memories.

The nearly barren tree reminds them of a hanging tree and by implication a crucifixion cross. The tree dominates the stage background just as Godot dominates the lives; free choice and every expression of the four main characters. Does the milieu force the characters to think of salvation to the exclusion of a meaningful life? Could their need for salvation keep them trapped in a purgative existence where escape would be a form of condemnation which none of them could tolerate?

The play "Waiting for Godot" forces the reader to ask questions of himself/herself.

Waiting for Godot

Krapp's Last Tape

Endgame and Act Without Words

I completely enjoyed and highly recommend this book.

See all 13 customer reviews...

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