

**NKR GOVERNMENT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, NAMAKKAL**

**E-CONTENT**

**II B.A. ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**III SEMESTER**

**DRAMA**

**THE SILENT WOMAN OR EPICOENE**

**BY BEN JONSON**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Ben Jonson** (11 June 1572 – 16 August 1637) was an English playwright and poet, whose artistry exerted a lasting influence upon English poetry and stage comedy. He popularised the comedy of humours. He is best known for the satirical plays *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), *Volpone, or The Fox* (1606), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and for his lyric and epigrammatic poetry. "He is generally regarded as the second most important English dramatist, after William Shakespeare, during the reign of James I.

Jonson was a classically educated, well-read and cultured man of the English Renaissance with an appetite for controversy (personal and political, artistic and intellectual) whose cultural influence was of unparalleled breadth upon the playwrights and the poets of the Jacobean era (1603–1625) and of the Caroline era (1625–1642).

**DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**

- **Morose:** A gentleman that loves silence
- **Sir Dauphine Eugenie:** A Knight, Morose's nephew
- **Ned Clerimont:** A Gentleman, Dauphine's friend
- **Truewit:** Dauphine's other friend
- **Epicoene:** A young Gentlewoman, supposedly the silent woman
- **Sir John Daw:** A Knight, Epicoene's servant
- **Sir Amorous la Foole:** A Knight
- **Thomas Otter:** A land and sea Captain

- **Cutbeard:** A barber, also aids in tricking Morose
- **Mute:** One of Morose's servants
- **Madame Haughty:** Ladies Collegiates
- **Madame Centaure,** Ladies Collegiates
- **Mistress Mavis,** Ladies Collegiates
- **Mistress Trusty,** The Lady Haughty's woman
- **Mistress Otter,** The Captain's wife
- **Parson**
- **Pages**
- **Servants**

### ANALYSIS OF THE DRAMA:

The play takes place in London, primarily in the home of Morose. Morose is a wealthy old man with an obsessive hatred of noise, going as far as to live on a street too narrow for carts to pass and make noise. Act I Scene I begins in a room in Clerimont's house where the owner of the house enters with his page, talking about the perfect song. The page starts singing but not before talking about a woman who threw herself at him. The woman is described as wearing too much make-up, a criticism addressed by the author of the play towards the women of the time. Truewit enters the room as well and they talk about the way men stay idle all day and leave their life to go by them.

This is another important idea presented, showing how the people who had the means, spend their lives doing nothing, just spending the money they inherited. This type of idleness is called as being the "common disease", something which affects everyone everywhere. The characters mock the former ideas about living a chaste and simple life and claim instead that they must do everything they can to find happiness.

The shift then moves to an all women-collage recently opened and run by a lady named Haughty. This is a sign that times are evolving and women slowly become more involved in what was considered until then as being a man's world. The men are surprised to hear about this and while they are shocked, the actions of the women do not make them have more love for them.

A man named Dauphine Eugenie enters the stage, claiming he was disinherited by his uncle. To stop him from getting anything when he dies, the uncle planned to get married. To achieve this, the uncle, who had an immense hatred for any loud noise, sent someone to find him a suitable wife, someone who would be always silent. The man sent to find the woman is the uncle's barber, a man named Cutbeard.

Dauphine's friends try to convince him to do everything he can to make sure his uncle never finds a suitable match by this, making himself the only heir to the uncle's fortune. The reason why Dauphine is so desperate to stop his uncle from marrying is that if that were to happen, his fortune would have dwindled considerably. A wife could inherit her husband's fortune even if they had no children together and for people like Dauphine' who depended on the possible money, this represented a serious problem which had to be resolved, no matter what.

The first act of the second scene starts with Morose, having a conversation with his servant about the things he did to make sure no sound will ever disturb him. The silence which existed until then was suddenly disrupted by a horn and Truewit entered who then urged him to rather kill himself than to marry and become unhappy. Truewit tries to convince Morose that marrying would be the biggest mistake he were to make and Morose promises to think about what he was told.

Cutbeard, the barber, enters the room then. Upon seeing him, Morose feels a sense of calm engulf him and insists that Cutbeard stays by his side and tells him what to do and how to act.

The second scene takes place inside Sir Jon Daw's house where Daw, Clerimont, Dauphine and Epicoene are all sitting and talking. The men in the room try to praise Epicoene and to make her feel as if she is the most intelligent person alive. The ancient philosophers are all criticized for their view and the idea transmitted is that they have no value when compared with Epicoene's writings. Truewit enters the room as well, bragging about his success and how he managed to make Morose rethink his idea of getting married.

Cutbeard then enters the room and announces to everyone that Truewit's words had the exact opposite effect, in the sense that now, Morose was even more keen to get married, willing to accept the woman Dauphine will present to him.

The third scene of the act take place in Morose's house where Epicoene and Cutbeard are. Cutbeard presents Epicoene as a suitable match for Morose whom is very happy to see she does not talk excessively. Morose decides to marry Epicoene and thus sends Cutbeard to find someone to marry them. When Morose is left alone, he speaks to himself about the luck he had to meet someone as quiet and obedient as Epicoene, showing thus that for the men of the time, the most important thing in a woman was to be quiet and to not meddle into men's affairs.

When Cutbeard comes with a pastor, Morose and Epicoene are married at once. Soon after they are declared married, Epicoene starts

criticizing her husband and this makes Morose extremely angry, cursing Cutbeard and calling him cunning for bringing him a woman who has a mind of her own. What is more, the women who set up a collage seem eager to make Epicoene one of their own, something which makes Morose fear he will have no control over his wife. Little by little, Morose's house gets filled with visitors and even more noise which enrage the master of the house even more.

During this scene, it is also revealed that Mrs. Otter is a collegiate as well and so the negative characteristics given to the women are all attributed to their passion for learning. This does nothing more but to transmit the idea that women who study and who have a mind of their own are extremely dangerous to the men around them who try to control them. The reason why this is true is because knowledge and education makes a woman to be less prone to being controlled by her husband since she is well aware of her rights and the power she possess.

After the two are married, a party takes place in Morose's house, a party of which he had no knowledge of. As the party progresses and gets louder, Morose becomes willing to do anything to make the noise stop. Dauphine seizes the opportunity to offer Morose a way out, a divorce, but only if Morose will make Dauphine his heir once more.

Divorcing someone is presented as being a complicated process, needing a lot of arguments. Two people are called in to officiate the divorce, namely a lawyer and a priest. Two male characters in the audience try to help Morose divorce his wife by claiming they had slept with Epicoene, meaning that she was no longer a virgin before she married. Still, because Epicoene allegedly slept with the two men before she was married, the judge could not grant a divorce on bases of infidelity.

Morose then comes forward, claiming he is unable to perform his duties as a husband. This could mean that he was not in the state to take care of Epicoene or maybe that he was impotent and thus unable to perform his duty as stated in the law.

Dauphine then comes forwards, secure now that the inheritance will be his, claiming that no divorce will be needed because Epicoene is a man. Morose, instead of feeling betrayed, is relieved to be free from a woman he despised from the bottom of his heart. After this revelation, the characters leave the stage one by one until only Truewit is left. The play ends with a short monologue from Truewit, analyzing the absurdity of the whole situation.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS:**

### **EPICOENE OR THE SILENT WOMAN:**

Mistress Epicoene, the supposed silent woman. Actually a clever boy and a gifted actor, he fools Morose with his well-acted silent modesty, then plays a strident termagant. All are taken in by his performance except Sir Dauphine, whom he aids. At his unmasking, which releases Morose from his immediate torment, embarrassment descends on Sir John, Sir Amorous, and the three ladies collegiate. Even Clerimont and Truewit are astounded.

### **MOROSE:**

Morose, an unbalanced man with a horror of any noise except the sound of his own frequently exercised voice. He is given to outbursts of violent temper when disturbed. His servants are trained to wear tennis shoes, answer as much as possible in sign language, and to speak—if speak they must—in a whisper through a trunk to deaden the sound. A constant victim of noisy practical jokes, he believes his nephew to be the cause of many of the disturbances; consequently, he determines to disinherit him and to marry a silent woman found for him by a silent barber. After the wedding, harassed to the limit by his far from silent bride and her stentorian companions, he signs over his property to his nephew in return for rescue and goes into disgruntled retirement.

### **Sir Dauphine Eugenie:**

Sir Dauphine Eugenie, Morose's nephew, a pleasant and intelligent young man. He succeeds, in spite of complications brought on by his friends, in tricking his uncle first into marriage with the supposed silent woman, then into signing over his estate to the nephew. He is somewhat bashful with the ladies collegiate but is later overwhelmed by their attentions.

### **Truewit:**

Truewit, an officious, argumentative, and witty friend of Sir Dauphine. He argues with his friends about the propriety of the use of all possible beauty aids by ladies. He stoutly defends a lavish use of cosmetics. He sets up a series of small plots to annoy Morose, whom he finds both ridiculous and irritating. He also maneuvers the three collegiate ladies into their love of

Sir Dauphine, arranges the discomfiture of Sir John and Sir Amorous, and provides the divine and the canon lawyer for the further torment of Morose.

## **A DOLL'S HOUSE**

### **BY HENRIK IBSEN**

**Henrik Johan Ibsen** ( 20 March 1828 – 23 May 1906) was a Norwegian playwright and theatre director. As one of the founders of modernism in theatre, Ibsen is often referred to as "the father of realism" and one of the most influential playwrights of his time. His major works include *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *When We Dead Awaken*, *Rosmersholm*, and *The Master Builder*. He is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare and *A Doll's House* was the world's most performed play in 2006.

#### **DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**

- **Nora Helmer** – wife of Torvald, mother of three, is living out the ideal of the 19th-century wife.
- **Torvald Helmer** – Nora's husband, a newly promoted bank manager.
- **Dr Rank** – a rich family friend.
- **Kristine Linde** – Nora's old school friend, widowed.
- **Nils Krogstad** – an employee at Torvald's bank, single father.
- **The Children** – Nora and Torvald's children: Ivar, Bobby and Emmy.
- **Anne Marie** – Nora's former nanny.
- **Helene** – the Helmers' maid
- **The Porter** – delivers a Christmas tree to the Helmer household.

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE DRAMA:**

When the play opens, we find that Nora has been leading the life of a pet in her husband's home. There is no doubt that her husband is very fond of her, but the loving expressions that he employs when addressing her clearly shows that he regards her as a kind of pet. He addresses her as "my little squirrel", "little skylark" etc.

The play takes place in Helmer's residence. It is in the eve of Christmas in which Nora, Torvald's wife is making arrangements. As she ate macaroons, Dr. Rank accompanied with Mrs. Linde visits. The former seeks to go and see and probably talk to Nora's husband as the later talks to Nora. She makes Nora aware that since the passing on of her husband, who left her no saving, life has become difficult and she is looking for a job; (McFarlane 42) with this conversation, Nora gave in to talking to her husband to offer Linde a job in the bank. Continuing with the conversation, Nora late Linde know that she borrowed the money that financed her husband treatment in Italy and Torvald is not aware of this.

Dr. Rank leaves the study and talks to the two ladies about the issue of corruption. The man who Nora borrowed money, Krogstad enters and goes to speak with Torvald in the study concerning keeping his job. He later leaves shortly and Dr. Rank asserts that Krogstad is one of the morally corrupt individuals in the society. Rank and Linde later leaves and Krogstad comes again. He blackmails Nora to that he will tell her husband of her forgery if she will not convince her husband to retain him in the bank. He leaves after saying this, Nora's husband comes and he is confronted by what she had discussed with Krogstad. Torvald stood his grounds that Krogstad must be fired due to his dishonesty so that Linde gets the job; he goes back to the study (Ibsen 5-20).

Ann, the nurse enters giving Nora ball gown, she make a statement that explains her leaving her kids to take care of Nora, she later leaves. Linde comes back and helps Nora in stitching her dress, both talked about Dr. Rank. With the entrance of Nora's husbands, Linde leaves and goes to the nursery. His wife asks her for the second time not to fire Krogstad of which he does not accept. He gives a pick slip to the maid so that it can be mailed to Krogstad and leaves his study.

Dr. Rank enters and tells Nora about his worsening health conditions; the two flirt and Rank confesses that he loves Nora making her say that she never loved him but liked having fun with him. With his departure comes Krogstad, he is very furious about his dismissal and he leaves a letter explaining Torvald's wife crime, this makes Nora very worried. Nora then tells Linde what has transpired and the later assured Nora that she will set things straight by talking to Krogstad. Linde left and Dr. Rank and Nora's husband come to the stage from the study (Ibsen 87). The two assisted Nora in her dance practice and later left.

The arrival of Linde make Nora aware that Krogstad has left town and she left him a note, Nora asserts that only miracle can help the situation.

During the dance, Linde conversed with Krogstad and made him understand that she left him for money but still loves him, they reconciled and Krogstad forgot the whole issue of Nora borrowing him money. Linde masked Krogstad not to demand for his letter since Torvald need to know of it. The two leaves and comes the Helmers, the husband goes to the mail box where he finds letters some being business cards from Rank having black crosses, Nora mean while was contemplating to committing suicide (Ibsen 105). She was confronted by her husband who requests what the black meant, Nora tell him that it is Ranks announcing his fatality.

The content of Krogstad letter made Torvald to say that his wife is unfit to raise his kids as he calls her dishonest and immoral and their marriage will be referred to a matter of appearance. A letter brought by the maid coming from Krogstad. The content made Nora's husband asks back his harsh words that he had lied on his wife. He tries to convince her but she seems to have made her mind to leave. Nora left her wedding rings together with the keys, leaving her husband completely surprised with what had transpired.

The play deals with the problem of marriage, of husband-wife relationship. It deals with the condition of a married woman under the excessive control of a husband, and shows the method which the woman employs in order to get out of that predicament. The play's central idea is that a woman is not given to a man as a commodity but as a human being to be respected and treated affectionately by her husband.

The main themes in the play are parental and filial obligations, unreliability of appearance, marriage and sacrificial role of women. All these have been brought out clearly through use of characters as well as other skills such as use of symbolism.

The play thus deals with the problem of feminine liberty. A woman after her marriage does not lose her identity and individuality. She can maintain her freedom as an individual and can refuse to act as a slave to her husband. Ibsen championed for the right of women. Hence, without doubt, "A Doll's House" can be called a feminist play. It advocates the rights of the women, and especially of wives in relation to their husbands.

Thus, by the end of the play Nora becomes an independent individual, to discover her own potentialities and achieve self-awareness and self-reliance. Though she will be facing an uncertain future yet she is ready to take the risk. She has now matured. She has achieved self-confidence.



Hence, "A Doll's House" is a suitable title thematically and structurally. The play deals with the making and unmaking of a woman as a doll.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS:**

### **NORA HELMER:**

The play's protagonist and the wife of Torvald Helmer, Nora has never lived alone, going immediately from the care of her father to that of her husband. Inexperienced in the ways of the world as a result of this sheltering, in 19th century life the role of the woman was to stay at home, raise the children and attend to her husband. Nora is reckless and materialistic. But the play questions the extent to which these attributes are mere masks that Nora uses to overcome the injustice she faces every day.

In the beginning of the play, Nora is shown as rather a submissive, childish woman, who enjoys being patronized, pampered and treated like a defenseless animal. She seems happy and doesn't seem to mind her husband calling her a "little featherbrain", "squirrel", "skylark" and other similar condescending nicknames. In fact, she also seems to enjoy the treatment Torvald gives her. However, along with this, one sees a certain defiance, rebelliousness and impulsiveness in her character. In spite of being forbidden from eating sweets, she eats macaroons without the knowledge of her husband, and even lies to him about it, saying "I wouldn't do anything that you don't like." Nora is also manipulative, and often plays dumb to get her way with her husband. When attempting to convince Torvald not to dismiss Krogstad, she says "Your squirrel will scamper about and do all her tricks, if you'll be nice and do what she asks."

However, as one enters deeper into the plot of the play, one realizes that Nora is not as deceptive and selfish as she first seems to be. Despite her seemingly cunning nature, she also possesses a certain innocence and vulnerability. She is, in reality, naïve and inexperienced about the outside world. Nora also displays a bit of self-doubt, which is largely due to her being treated like a doll all her life. She is continuously reminded by Torvald that she is a "prodigal", a spendthrift, "just like your father". She expresses her lack of self confidence when she says to her husband, "I wish I had inherited more of papa's good qualities." Her insecurity is also evident by her eagerness to provide Mrs. Linde a beautiful and perfect picture of her life, by immediately telling her that she has three beautiful children, and that her husband now has a magnificent position at the bank. At the same time, she

also believes that that she is not given the credit she deserves. "You none of you think I could do anything worthwhile..."

At first our protagonist, Nora, seems like a bit of a ditz. When her husband, Torvald, calls her things like his "little squirrel," his "little lark," and, worst of all, a "featherhead," she doesn't seem to mind. In fact she seems to enjoy and even play into it. Nora is most child-like when she interacts with her husband. She behaves playfully yet obediently in his presence, always coaxing favors from him instead of communicating as equals, values love over the law.

When Nora's old friend Christine arrives, Nora reveals a little secret. that she saved his husband's life. Unbeknownst to Torvald, Nora borrowed money so that they could afford a year-long trip to Italy. Doctors said that Torvald would die without it. Rather than being the spendthrift that both Torvald and Christine accuse her of, she's actually quite thrifty indeed. She's been secretly working odd jobs and even skimming money from her allowance to pay back the debt. so we know that Nora was so determined to save her husband that she committed fraud to do so.

### **Nora's Clever Side:**

Nora has been leading a double life, she has not been thoughtlessly spending their money. Rather, she has been scrimping and saving to pay off a secret debt. Years ago, when her husband became ill, Nora forged her father's signature to receive a loan to save Torvald's life. The fact that she never told Torvald about this arrangement reveals several aspects of her character.

### **Desperation:**

When the Krogstad threatens to reveal the truth about her forgery, Nora realizes that she has potentially scandalized Torvald Helmer's good name. She begins to question her own morality, something she has never done before. Did she do something wrong? Were her actions appropriate, under the circumstances? Will the courts convict her? Is she an improper wife? Is she a terrible mother?

### **Nora's Transformation:**

Nora is eventually brought out into the open. final blow is Torvald's reaction when he finds out the truth. When the wonderful thing doesn't happen, when Torvald fails to attempt to sacrifice himself for her, Nora realizes that their relationship has been empty. The love she imagined never

existed. There was never any chance of the wonderful thing she'd hoped and feared. She tells her husband, "Our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child". In the end, Nora has a sort of spiritual awakening . she exits and slams the door , symbolizing the finality of their relationship. She walks out into the night alone but, for perhaps the first time in her life, she's on the path to becoming a fully realized, fully independent human being.

However, Nora has been leading a double life. She has not been thoughtlessly spending their money. Rather, she has been scrimping and saving to pay off a secret debt. Years ago, when her husband became ill, Nora forged her father's signature to receive a loan to save Torvald's life. The fact that she never told Torvald about this arrangement reveals several aspects of her character

Nora's climactic transformation into a matured, bold, courageous and independent woman forms a crucial part of her personality. When she realizes that her husband is not the protector or savior he claimed himself to be, and opens her eyes to his blatant hypocrisy, she immediately gives up playing the role of his little "doll". She realizes that she has been "dreadfully wronged", first by her father and then by Torvald. She tells him, with blunt directness, that "You don't understand me" and that "You never loved me, you only found it pleasant to be in love with me." She decides to leave the house, to fulfill her duty to herself; to gain experience, to develop her own personality and to understand the world she lives in. She admits to Torvald , "I realized that for eight years I'd been living here with a strange man, and that I'd borne him three children." She thus leaves the house with her husband desperately trying to stop her, and hoping she would return.

Nora's character is thus a very complex one. She is cunning yet innocent, timid and insecure yet extremely courageous, defenseless yet fiercely independent and manipulative and secretive in the beginning but bold and direct towards the end.

However, till her transformation, she seems to be playing two roles- one of her true self and another of her husband's doll. Thus, the weak, unassertive, dependent and secretive part of herself is in reality her character as the doll, which she forsakes as soon as she realizes that being Helmer's doll is serving her no purpose, and doing her more harm than good. Nora is a symbol for feminism, and for every oppressed woman who is patronized and denied her independence and self-identity. She thus represents the right of every woman to personal freedom and identity, and

breaks the stereotype that a woman's only duty is towards her children and her spouse.

### **TORVALD HELMER:**

Torvald Helmer, one of the main characters in the story, is Nora Helmer's husband. He may be described as one of the antagonists of the story, and plays the role of a controlling, dominating man in Nora's life. Torvald Helmer is Nora's husband. He is a barrister, or lawyer, and he was recently promoted to manager at the bank where he works. Torvald prides himself on being a model husband and citizen. Despite the Helmers' previous financial difficulties, he has steadfastly refused to take out any loans. He feels that debt is "ugly" and scolds Nora for suggesting the possibility, even in jest. However, despite Torvald's frequent moralizing, he is superficial and prideful. His superficiality leads him to fire Krogstad and, after finding out about her loan, reject Nora.

Torvald is introduced to the audience as rather a condescending man who sees himself as superior to Nora intellectually, emotionally and morally. He calls her with 'affectionate' terms like "little featherbrain", "little squirrel", "little skylark" and "little scatterbrain". The repetitive use of the word "little" to describe Nora shows that he sees her more as a child than a wife or an equal. He greatly enjoys his position as a protector, a guide and an instructor to Nora, and likes to be completely in control of her. This is seen in his eagerness to teach Nora the tarantella dance. Torvald seems to be in charge of every aspect of her life, and makes decisions with respect to what she should eat, how she should walk, and the like. He sees his wife Nora as an object of his desire; a property that he has his complete right over. He envisions himself as a savior to Nora, and says to her, "I've often wished that you could be threatened by some imminent danger so that I could risk everything I had- even my life itself- to save you." Some portion of Torvald's need to maintain appearances likely stems from the same place as Krogstad's desperation to keep his job. Torvald knows that without a good reputation, his ability to provide for his family will be compromised. However, his obsession with appearances also seems rooted in vanity. Torvald enjoys having Nora perform at parties because other people are impressed by her. He views her beauty and her dancing abilities as a reflection of his own status as a husband. He also states that he likes having Dr. Rank around, because Dr. Rank's gloominess makes Torvald and Nora's life seem happier. For Torvald, the appearance of success and happiness take precedence over genuine human connection. Dr. Rank is Torvald's best friend, but Torvald's aversion to ugliness is so strong that Dr. Rank declines

to tell him about his impending death. Similarly, Torvald's "doll wife" and "doll children" are fun to show off, but when it comes to actually caring for Ivar, Bob, and Emmy, the house transforms into a scene only "bearable by a mother."

Another important character trait in Torvald is his exalted sense of self. He sees himself as an idealistic, morally upright individual whose morals are unquestionable. He dictates the same morals to his wife, and also to his friends. "A songbird must have a clear voice to sing with-no false notes." He is extremely conscious of his position in the society, and seems to have a great need for social acceptance and approval. He is seen telling Nora, "There's something constrained, something ugly even, about a home that's founded on borrowing and debt." Torvald is also a blatant hypocrite, and jumps to conclusions about people's characters. Throughout the play, he keeps reassuring Nora that he will protect her and be a savior to her, that he is "man enough to take it" but when he learns about her deception, he chides her for it, calling her a liar, a hypocrite and a criminal. He is quick to judge people, as is seen from his judgment of Krogstad. "An atmosphere of lies like that infects and poisons the whole life of a home." He also immediately blames Nora's deceit on her father's character, and remarks that he cannot allow her to bring up the children. "I shouldn't dare trust you with them. "

Torvald also has an inflated sense of masculine pride in himself, and is portrayed as a chauvinist who believes that a woman must ideally be restricted to her house. His behavior towards Nora shows that he sees her more as a decorative item meant to beautify the house, than his wife. He demeans his wife and blames her mistakes on her gender. "Nora, Nora, just like a woman!" When he claims to forgive Nora for her deception, he remarks, "I shouldn't be a proper man if your feminine helplessness didn't make you twice as attractive to me." To Torvald, Nora's feelings, her thoughts and opinions do not really matter. He has a strong sense of entitlement and assumes that Nora must conform to whatever he says, or do as he pleases, simply because he is her husband. He believes that a woman's "most sacred duties" are her duties towards her husband and her children. He also believes that he is entitled to openly express his opinions on what a woman can or cannot do.

Torvald is often seen to be selfish, and even cruel. This is seen in his attitude when he realizes Dr. Rank is dying. Despite sharing a supposedly

close bond with him, he shows little remorse at the revelation. On the other hand, he expresses a hint of relief on getting Dr Rank 'out of the way'. He says "Well- perhaps it's all for the best-for him at any rate. And maybe for us too, Nora, now that you and I have no one but each other." Torvald is highly egoistic, and all his actions and words revolve around himself. When the truth about Nora's crime is finally revealed, his immediate fear is of losing his self-reputation. However, as soon as they receive Krogstad's letter of apology, his attitude completely changes as he is no longer under risk. He then remarks, "There's something indescribably sweet and satisfying for a man to know deep down that he has forgiven his wife- completely forgiven her- with all his heart" ,again displaying the same self- conceited attitude.

However, in reality, Torvald seems to be weaker than Nora, and also dependent on her. Despite his attitude towards Nora, he seems to rely on her to tend to his ego and provide emotional support. When Nora expresses her decision to leave, he first tries to blackmail her, calling her a "blind, inexperienced creature" and reminding her of her "sacred duties" towards her children and husband, but when he realizes that Nora's decision is final and unshakable, he shows evident desperation. "But to lose you- to lose you, Nora! No, no, I can't even imagine it. "He also goes to the extent of suggesting that they could live together "as brother and sister".

Thus Torvald Helmer is a dominating, egoistic, proud, judgmental and hypocritical individual with an exaggerated sense of pride in himself.

For all that Torvald dreams of playing the hero, he is ultimately just as naive as Nora, if not more so. Dr. Rank claims that Torvald has an aversion to all things "ugly." As the play progresses, it becomes clear that "ugliness" refers to any of the harsher realities of life. Death, disease, crime, and even traditionally feminine activities, like dressmaking and childrearing, are to be kept out of Torvald's sight. Though Nora claims that her father and Torvald have sheltered and restricted her, Torvald himself has also been sheltered.

The ending of the play showcases a dramatic change in Torvald's character. For the first time, he is not the one in control of his marriage. As a result, he becomes desperate, begging Nora not to leave him. He goes so far as to suggest that he can become a "different man." Ibsen leaves open the possibility—slim though it may be—that "the most wonderful thing of all" can truly happen now that Nora has revealed the problems in their marriage. Ultimately, the real villain of *A Doll's House* is neither Krogstad nor Torvald, but rather a society that restricts the rights of married women

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**DR.RANK:**

Dr. Rank, a minor character in the Ibsen drama "A Doll's House," appears to be an extraneous supporting character. He does not further the plot the same way Krogstad or Mrs. Linde do: Krogstad initiates the conflict by attempting to blackmail Nora Helmer, while Mrs. Linde gives Nora an excuse to leap into the exposition in Act One and tames the heart of the antagonistic Krogstad.

The fact is that Dr. Rank does not have much to do with the play's narrative. On different occasions throughout Henrik Ibsen's play, Dr. Rank visits with Torvald Helmer in his office. He flirts with a married woman. And he is slowly dying of an unnamed illness (he does hint at his disintegrating spine, and most scholars suggest he is plagued with tuberculosis). Even Dr. Rank believes himself to be easily replaceable:

"The thought of having to leave it all...without being able to leave behind even the slightest token of gratitude, hardly a fleeting regret even...nothing but an empty place to be fulfilled by the first person that comes along." (*Act Two*)

Dr. Rank does add to the somber mood of the play, even if he is not essential to the conflict, climax, or resolution. He chats with the other characters, admiring them, all the while knowing he will never be important to any of them and expresses that. Many scholars give Dr. Rank a stronger role by seeing him as a symbol of moral corruption within society. However, because of the many sincere aspects of his character, that view is debatable.

Dr. Rank's Relationship With Torvald and Nora:

When the Helmers find Dr. Rank's letter that indicates he has gone home to await death, Torvald says:

"His suffering and his loneliness seemed almost to provide a background of dark cloud to the sunshine of our lives. Well, perhaps it's all for the best. For him at any rate. And maybe for us as well, Nora. Now there's just the two of us." (*Act Three*)

It doesn't sound like they will miss him too much. Believe it or not, Torvald is the doctor's closest friend. When students first read the play, some feel immense sympathy for Dr. Rank. Other students are disgusted by him—they believe that he fits his name, which is defined as "highly offensive, disgusting, vulgar, or indecent." But does Dr. Rank really fit those negative descriptions? That depends on how the reader interprets Dr. Rank's affection for Nora. He says:

"Nora...Do you think he's the only one who...? Who wouldn't gladly give his life for your sake. I swore to myself you would know before I went. I'll never have a better opportunity. Well, Nora! Now you know. And now you know too that you can confide in me as in nobody else." (*Act Two*)

One could view this as an honorable love-from-afar, but it is also an uncomfortable situation for Nora. Most actors portray Dr. Rank as soft-spoken and well-meaning—he does not mean to be vulgar but instead confesses his feelings for Nora mainly because he only has a few days left to live. Sadly, Nora responds to his forwardness by summoning her maid, turning up the lights, stepping away from him, and quickly dismissing the conversation. When Dr. Rank suggests that his love is just as strong as Torvald's, Nora recoils from him. She never again looks to him as a possible solution to her problem. The fact that she would consider suicide before accepting Dr. Rank's endearments speaks volumes about the way the poor doctor is perceived by others.

An Example of Early Realism in Theater:

More than any other character in the play, Dr. Rank reflects the dawning of Modern drama. (Consider that Torvald and Krogstad could just as easily appear in a sappy melodrama.) However, Dr. Rank might well fit into one of Anton Chekhov's plays. Before Ibsen's time, many plays focused on characters facing and solving problems. Then, as plays became more realistic, characters began spending more time being reflective than getting caught up in convoluted plot lines. Dr. Rank, like characters found in the works of Chekhov, Brecht, and other modern dramatists, ponders aloud about his inner misgivings.

## **WAITING FOR GODOT**

**BY SAMUEL BECKETT**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Samuel Barclay Beckett** (13 April 1906 – 22 December 1989) was an Irish novelist, playwright, short story writer, theatre director, poet, and literary translator. A resident of Paris for most of his adult life, he wrote in both French and English.

Beckett's idiosyncratic work offers a bleak, tragi-comic outlook on existence and experience, often coupled with black comedy, nonsense and gallows humour. It became increasingly minimalist in



his later career, involving more aesthetic and linguistic experimentation. He is considered one of the last modernist writers, and one of the key figures in what Martin Esslin called the "Theatre of the Absurd". His best-known work is his 1953 play *Waiting for Godot*.

Beckett was awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his writing, which—in new forms for the novel and drama—in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation." He was elected Saoi of Aosdána in 1984.

### **DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**

**Vladimir (Didi)** An old derelict dressed like a tramp; along with his companion of many years, he comes to a bleak, desolate place to wait for Godot.

**Estragon (Gogo)** Vladimir's companion of many years who is overly concerned with his physical needs, but is repeatedly told by Vladimir that, above all, they must wait for Godot.

**Pozzo** A traveling man dressed rather elaborately; he arrives driving another man (Lucky) forward by means of a rope around the latter's neck.

**Lucky** The "slave" who obeys Pozzo absolutely.

**Boy Messenger I and Boy Messenger II** Each is a young boy who works for "Mr. Godot" and brings Vladimir and Estragon news about "Mr. Godot"; apparently he takes messages back to "Mr. Godot."

**Godot** He never appears in the drama, but he is an entity that Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**

Vladimir and Estragon wait at the side of a road, near a tree, agreeing that there is "nothing to be done." Estragon struggles to take off one of his boots. Vladimir asks if Estragon has ever read the Bible. Estragon says all he remembers are some colored maps of the holy land. Vladimir tells Estragon about the two thieves crucified along with Jesus. One of the gospels says that one of the thieves was saved, but Vladimir wonders if this is true. Estragon wants to leave, but Vladimir reminds him that they have to wait here for Godot. Estragon and Vladimir debate whether they are in the right place and whether it is the right day for Godot to come. Estragon falls asleep and Vladimir immediately wakes him, saying he was lonely without him.

Estragon starts to describe his dream, but Vladimir angrily stops him and tells him to keep his nightmares to himself.

Vladimir wonders what he and Estragon should do, and Estragon says they should continue to wait. While waiting, Estragon suggests they hang themselves on the tree. The two disagree over who should hang himself first, though, and Vladimir concludes that they should just wait for Godot. Estragon asks what Vladimir asked Godot for and Vladimir says that he made a vague sort of prayer. Estragon is hungry, and Vladimir offers him a carrot. All he can find in his pockets, though, are turnips. Finally, he finds a carrot and gives it to Estragon. Estragon asks if they are "tied" to Godot and Vladimir says that they are. The two are interrupted by a loud scream off-stage.

Pozzo and Lucky enter. Pozzo drives Lucky forward with a whip like a pack animal, with a rope tied around his neck. Lucky is forced to carry Pozzo's things. Estragon asks if this is Godot, but then Pozzo introduces himself. He jerks the rope that is around Lucky's neck and calls him "pig." Lucky brings him his stool and some food. Pozzo eats some chicken and Estragon begs him for the leftover bones. Pozzo gives him the bones. Vladimir is outraged at Pozzo's horrible treatment of Lucky and wants to leave. Pozzo tells him to stay, though, in case Godot should show up. Estragon asks why Lucky doesn't put down his bags. Pozzo says that Lucky has the right to put them down and be comfortable, so he must be carrying them because he wants to. He says that Lucky is trying to impress Pozzo so he won't get rid of him, because Pozzo has plenty of slaves. Pozzo says he plans to sell Lucky at a fair. Lucky begins to cry and Pozzo gives Estragon a handkerchief to bring to him. Estragon approaches Lucky and Lucky kicks him violently in the shin.

Pozzo then begins to cry, saying that he "can't bear it." Vladimir scolds Lucky for making his master cry. Pozzo collects himself and looks for his pipe, which he has misplaced. He makes a speech about night and twilight, then asks if there's anything he can do for Estragon and Vladimir, since they have been nice to him. He offers to make Lucky dance, recite, sing, or think for their entertainment. Lucky dances and his hat falls off. Pozzo says that Lucky needs his hat to think, so Vladimir places it back on Lucky's head and Lucky launches into a long, rambling monologue. Pozzo prepares to leave and says goodbye to Vladimir and Estragon, but doesn't move.

Pozzo and Lucky eventually leave, and Estragon wants to leave as well, but Vladimir tells him they need to stay and wait for Godot. A boy comes onstage, bearing a message from Godot. He says Godot will not come today, but will come the next day. He tells Vladimir that he works for Godot, minding his goats, and says that Godot is a good master. The boy

leaves and Estragon and Vladimir are ready to leave for the night. They say they are going to leave, but stay still. The first act ends.

The second act begins the next day, in the same location and at the same time. Vladimir enters and sings. Estragon enters and tells Vladimir that he was beaten the previous night for no reason. Vladimir and Estragon embrace, happy to see each other again, and Estragon asks what they should do. Vladimir tells him they should wait for Godot. Vladimir mentions Pozzo and Lucky, and Estragon doesn't remember who these people are. He also doesn't recognize the place where they are waiting from the day before. Vladimir says that he and Estragon picked grapes for the same man a long time ago in "the Macon country," but Estragon doesn't remember this, either.

After a long silence, Vladimir asks Estragon to talk about anything to fill the silence, but the two struggle to find something to talk about. Vladimir asks if Estragon really doesn't remember Lucky and Pozzo. Estragon remembers someone kicking him and remembers the chicken bones he got from Pozzo. Vladimir offers Estragon a radish or turnip, because he has no carrots. Estragon falls asleep but then wakes up startled. He begins to tell Vladimir about his dream but Vladimir interrupts him and tells him not to describe the dream. Estragon wants to leave, but Vladimir reminds him that they have to stay and wait for Godot. Vladimir notices Lucky's hat lying on the ground and tries it on. He and Estragon trade their hats and Lucky's hat back and forth, trying different ones on. Vladimir wants to "play at Pozzo and Lucky," and he and Estragon pretend to be the two characters.

Estragon leaves the stage for a moment and then returns and says that "they" are coming. He and Vladimir hold lookouts at either end of the stage. After insulting each other, they make up and embrace. Pozzo and Lucky enter. Pozzo is now blind, following closely behind Lucky. Lucky stops when he sees Vladimir and Estragon, and Pozzo bumps into him. They both fall to the ground and Pozzo cannot get up. Vladimir and Estragon consider trying to get something out of Pozzo for helping him up. Pozzo cries out for help and offers money in return for any assistance. Vladimir decides to help Pozzo up but falls over himself in the process. Estragon tries to help Vladimir up, but falls down in the process. None of the characters are able to get up for a while, but Estragon suddenly suggests that he and Vladimir try to stand up and they are able to get up easily.

Estragon again wants to leave, but Vladimir tells him to keep waiting. He suggests they help Pozzo to get up in the meantime. They stand Pozzo up, and he asks who they are, not remembering either of them from the previous day. Pozzo asks what time it is and Estragon thinks it's morning, while Vladimir is sure that it's evening. Vladimir asks when Pozzo went blind, and Pozzo says that "the blind have no notion of time." He asks Estragon to

check on Lucky. Estragon goes over to Lucky and kicks him repeatedly. Pozzo shouts, "Up pig!" and yanks on Lucky's rope. The two leave the stage, as Estragon falls asleep. Vladimir wakes Estragon, saying he was lonely.

Just like the day before, a boy enters with a message from Godot, that he will not come this day but will certainly come the next. Vladimir asks the boy what Godot does and the boy says Godot does nothing. Vladimir asks the boy to tell Godot that he saw Vladimir. The boy leaves. Estragon wants to go far away, but Vladimir says they can't go far, as they have to come back here tomorrow and wait for Godot. Estragon suggests they hang themselves on the tree using his belt, but when they test the belt's strength by pulling on either end, it breaks. Vladimir and Estragon prepare to leave for the night. They say they are going to leave, but neither moves.

### **THEME OF THE PLAY:**

The main themes in *Waiting for Godot* include the human condition, absurdism and nihilism, and friendship.

- **The human condition:** The hopelessness in Vladimir and Estragon's lives demonstrates the extent to which humans rely on illusions—such as religion, according to Beckett—to give hope to a meaningless existence.
- **Absurdism and nihilism:** Faith seems meaningless to Beckett and his characters, who pin their hopes on a God-like figure called Godot who ultimately does not come.
- **Friendship:** Vladimir and Estragon care deeply for each other, and their relationship highlights the importance of support from friends in life.

### **CHARACTER ANALYSIS:**

#### **VALDIMIR:**

The character of Vladimir is basically the main character, and the one who basically moves the plot forward, in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.

Vladimir is the strongest man in the Vladimir-Estragon relationship. He is assertive, clearly an initiator, and he is the one character which is most hopeful for the entrance of Godot in the play. He consistently motivates Estragon to continue waiting. He also protects Estragon, has the leading role

in the relationship, watches after Estragon's smelly shoes, and seems to have quite a sentimental and emotional nature. This latter characteristic is a result of his consistent pondering in what is fair and unfair. He is the philosopher of the play and, literary speaking, the voice that expresses the existentialist stream of the play.

Physically speaking, we know that Vladimir and Estragon both wear bowler hats and suits, but they are in a lower social status than Pozzo. For this reason, they are described to us as "tramps" who are untidy and on dire straits. Vladimir is sickly, and he is known to have bad breath. His kindness seems to make up for his weaknesses and downfalls. In all, he is basically a good guy.

Intellectually, Vladimir is smarter and more aware of his surroundings than Estragon. This advantage allows him to perceive the nature of Pozzo and his injustice with Lucky. Vladimir seems to be an idealist that honestly believes the things that he has been taught to believe, such as the existence of Godot. His existential analysis of life and fate are the pivotal elements that move the play forward. He is undoubtedly the main character in right and essence.

Socially, we know that Vladimir is an idealist and wishes for people to treat each other as they should: Fairly, humanely, respectfully. He detests Pozzo's abusive ways with Lucky and, perhaps for this reason, he is even more protective of Estragon. In all, Vladimir is a born philosopher.

In all, Vladimir is the heartbeat of the play. He is Estragon's and Pozzo's foil in that he is both thoughtful and kind, respectively. He represents the stratus of society that believes in something and lives by it. In modern terms, he may represent us all: The people who dream, the people believe, and the people who aspire. However, as in every absurdist play, we will see that Vladimir will not go too far, unfortunately, as Godot never really shows up.

In any comic or burlesque act, there are two characters, traditionally known as the "straight man" and the "fall guy." Vladimir would be the equivalent of the straight man. He is also the intellectual who is concerned with a variety of ideas. Of the two, Vladimir makes the decisions and remembers significant aspects of their past. He is the one who constantly

reminds Estragon that they must wait for Godot. Even though it is left indefinite, all implications suggest that Vladimir knows more about Godot than does Estragon, who tells us that he has never even seen Godot and thus has no idea what Godot looks like.

Vladimir is the one who often sees religious or philosophical implications in their discussions of events, and he interprets their actions in religious terms; for example, he is concerned about the religious implications in such stories as the two thieves (two tramps) who were crucified on either side of Jesus. He is troubled about the fate of the thief who wasn't saved and is concerned that "only one of the four evangelists" speaks of a thief being saved.

Vladimir correlates some of their actions to the general concerns of mankind. In Act II, when Pozzo and Lucky fall down and cry for help, Vladimir interprets their cries for help as his and Estragon's chance to be in a unique position of helping humanity. After all, Vladimir maintains, "It is not everyday that we are needed . . . but at this place, at this moment in time," they are needed and should respond to the cries for help. Similarly, it is Vladimir who questions Pozzo and Lucky and the Boy Messenger(s), while Estragon remains, for the most part, the silent listener. Essentially, Vladimir must constantly remind Estragon of their destiny — that is, they must wait for Godot.

In addition to the larger needs, Vladimir also looks after their physical needs. He helps Estragon with his boots, and, moreover, had he been with Estragon at night, he would not have allowed his friend to be beaten; also, he looks after and rations their meager meals of turnips, carrots, and radishes, and, in general, he tends to be the manager of the two.

Vladimir is most easily distinguished from Estragon by his somewhat more elevated perception and intellect. While Estragon laments his physical limitations, Vladimir can be found musing over the struggle in which he is trapped. He enjoys discourse about mental and emotional dilemmas, occasionally referring to his limited memories of the Bible in an attempt to make sense of his life. He is pragmatic and philosophical in regards to the troubles that plague he and Estragon. He exercises almost absolute control over Estragon and asserts his supremacy very subtly.

When Estragon is beaten for the second time and blames Vladimir for not saving him, Vladimir responds that if Estragon was beaten, it was because he had done something to deserve it. He further admits that if he had been around, he would have kept Estragon from doing that bad thing, and therefore saved him from his beating. In a sense, he takes responsibility for being Estragon's conscience. He is confident that without him, Estragon's existence is incomplete. Even in his position of limited superiority, Vladimir

asserts his dependence on Estragon, saying "You're my only hope" and fearing that a suicide attempt would leave one of them alone.

Apart from a stronger sense of moral judgment than the other characters, Vladimir is still bestowed with a sense of indecisiveness. His constant peering into the hat and his walking back and forth are indications of his restless spirit and a longing for stability. At one point he becomes so frustrated with his lack of action that he nearly despairs.

Vladimir is the most committed, the most constant. He reminds Estragon that they must wait for Godot. Perhaps this is simply because his memory is sharper; he remembers many things that Estragon seems to have forgotten. In a sense, Vladimir becomes the conscience of mankind, where his friend Estragon is the body.

### **ESTRAGON:**

One of the two main characters of the play, along with Vladimir, Estragon is rather helpless on his own. In the beginning of the play, he struggles just to take off his boots, for example. Unlike Vladimir, he has no grasp of time, and is confused as to whether it is evening or morning in act two. Along similar lines, he has a poor grasp of people's identities. He doesn't recognize Lucky and in act two, and at one point thinks Pozzo's name is Abel. He cannot even remember his own past, and tells Pozzo his name is Adam. Estragon repeatedly wants to leave, but each time Vladimir reminds him that they must stay and wait for Godot. While he often forms the dull-minded counterpoint to the more cerebral Vladimir, Estragon is still able to match Vladimir's verbal wit and once claims that he used to be a poet.

Estragon is a portrait of physical pain and need. He is first seen complaining of a sore foot. His hunger and thirst never seem to stop or end. He is physically beaten every night. His corporeal suffering seems unending and he is trapped in the moment, with no memory of yesterday and no hope for tomorrow. He is only kept going by the fact that Vladimir remembers yesterday and hopes for tomorrow.

If it is true that Vladimir represents the soul and Estragon, the body, then it is clear that the two men are truly inseparable. Hence they embrace warmly after their periods of separation. They must be inseparable for existence to be certain. One cannot live without the other in the ever-moving drama of life.

Since, in "Waiting for Godot", Samuel Becket has portrayed a dismal and shocking condition of man; therefore, it was mandatory for him to

create the exact and shocking parallels to his theme. The character of Estragon and Vladimir suits the theme though both of them appal us all with their image of man as well as mankind. Estragon is the real lost one who receives the blows regularly and spends the night in some ditch and begins a new the next day. There seems no change of routines for him throughout the play. He is dependent upon Vladimir for everything including his defence and survival but he still unable to bear the conversation of Vladimir: " Don't touch me! Don't question me! Don't speak to me! Stay with me!" There is no sense of time and place to especially to the character of Estragon. He remembers nothing at all. He doesn't recall of having reached the placed yesterday. He can't even recollect of having left his shoes. He does not even remember Bible. While Vladimir is referring to the incident of two thieves and being saving of the one, Estragon is unable to understand the meaning of what Vladimir says. He asks for details but finding no answer thinks it is about their birth. Vladimir laughs and asks if he ever read Bible and the reply is:

"I must have taken a look at it". They discuss about Gospels and Estragon remembers nothing about the book except the map of the holy city. The loss of memory is accompanied by excess of fear for Estragon. He is always afraid and in a sense of pain. Through the mocking episodes of pain and fall of man's glory what we feel for Estragon is the image of human decadence and deteriorating complexities of man's being. Even existence loses meaning in all such circumstances: "We always find something to give us the impression we exist". Well, there is just impression and what about reality! The character of Estragon helps in building the theme of association and society. He cannot survive alone. It is unbearable to be lonely and without society. The role of society, in the form of Vladimir, encourages him to exist and survive though in the words of Vladimir: "To every man his little cross. Till he dies. And is forgotten." So, they are born to die with no purpose and no meaning to their life at all. This is the dilimma and tragedy of modern man.

### **POZZO:**

Pozzo runs into Vladimir and Estragon while journeying along the road in both acts. He abuses Lucky and treats him as a slave, pulling him around with a rope tied around his neck and having him carry all his things. While he exercises some relative power and authority over Lucky and acts superior to the other characters, he is nonetheless far from powerful himself. He panics when he loses things like his watch and is doomed to repeat his wandering every day, just as Vladimir and Estragon repeat their waiting



for Godot. He is particularly helpless in act two, when he is inexplicably struck blind and is unable to get up after falling to the ground.

Pozzo appears on stage after the appearance of Lucky. They are tied together by a long rope; thus, their destinies are fixed together in the same way that Pozzo might be a mother figure, with the rope being the umbilical cord which ties the two together.

Everything about Pozzo resembles our image of the circus ringmaster. If the ringmaster is the chief person of the circus, then it is no wonder that Vladimir and Estragon first mistook him for Godot or God. Like a ringmaster, he arrives brandishing a whip, which is the trademark of the professional. In fact, we hear the cracking of Pozzo's whip before we actually see him. Also, a stool is often associated with an animal trainer, and Pozzo constantly calls Lucky by animal terms or names. Basically, Pozzo commands and Lucky obeys.

In the first act, Pozzo is immediately seen in terms of this authoritarian figure. He lords over the others, and he is decisive, powerful, and confident. He gives the illusion that he knows exactly where he is going and exactly how to get there. He seems "on top" of every situation.

When he arrives on the scene and sees Vladimir and Estragon, he recognizes them as human, but as inferior beings; then he condescendingly acknowledges that there is a human likeness, even though the "likeness is an imperfect one." This image reinforces his authoritarian god-like stance: we are made in God's image but imperfectly so. Pozzo's superiority is also seen in the manner in which he eats the chicken, then casts the bones to Lucky with an air of complete omnipotence.

In contrast to the towering presence exhibited by Pozzo in Act I, a significant change occurs between the two acts. The rope is shortened, drawing Pozzo much closer to his antithesis, Lucky. Pozzo is now blind; he cannot find his way alone. He stumbles and falls. He cannot get along without help; he is pathetic. He can no longer command. Rather than driving Lucky as he did earlier, he is now pathetically dragged along by Lucky. From a position of omnipotence and strength and confidence, he has fallen and has become the complete fallen man who maintains that time is irrelevant and that man's existence is meaningless. Unlike the great blind prophets of yore who could see everything, for Pozzo "the things of time are hidden from the blind." Ultimately, for Pozzo, man's existence is discomforting and futile, depressing, and gloomy and, most of all, brief and to no purpose. The gravedigger is the midwife of mankind: "They give birth astride the grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more."

He is introduced in the play as a slave driver. As a rich man he is accustomed to materialistic ways of wealth and opulence. He commands total attention and feels proud to introduce himself - "I present myself: Pozzo." Any mistake regarding his identity is met with ferocious resentment. He prides upon declaring that the rest are humans like him, but considers himself superior to the rest. He asserts that he is forced to be a part of this society, because he has no society of his "likes".

His scorn and contempt for Lucky knows no bounds. The abuses that he hurts and heaps on him and the amount of control he has on him serve as an example of his exploiting nature. Lucky is reduced to an automaton with no voice of his own. In the first act, Pozzo makes himself comfortable at the expense of his slave. Pozzo shows some generosity in allowing Gogo to collect the leftover bones. However, he is particular about Lucky's right - "In theory the bones go to the carrier."

By Act II, the proud and sometimes cruel Pozzo has lost his sight and must necessarily be led around by his slave. His helplessness is seen when he falls down and cries for assistance to get up. From an arrogant and wealthy exploiter he changes to a pathetic helpless man.

It is impossible to consider Pozzo as a character independent of his slave, Lucky. In the first place, they are bound together by a rope. At no point are the two men separated. In the first act, the rope is long; the audience sees Lucky long before they see Pozzo. Pozzo presents himself with God-like pomp, which is probably the reason he is mistaken for Godot. In symbolic terms, the god-like character is bound to his inferior slave, but the distance between them is great. In the second act, however, the rope is shorter. At the same time, the god-like character has fallen into pathetic disarray. He is blind and weak. All the pomp and extravagance which once defined him is gone. In this act, his slave must care for him. His greatness is gone.

## **LUCKY:**

Lucky is Pozzo's slave, whom Pozzo treats horribly and continually insults, addressing him only as "pig." He is mostly silent in the play, but gives a lengthy, mostly nonsensical monologue in act one, when Pozzo asks him to think out loud. While all the characters on-stage suffer in different ways throughout the play, Lucky is the play's most obvious figure of physical

suffering and exploitation as he is whipped, beaten, and kicked by other characters.

As noted above, Lucky is the obvious antithesis of Pozzo. At one point, Pozzo maintains that Lucky's entire existence is based upon pleasing him; that is, Lucky's enslavement is his meaning, and if he is ever freed, his life would cease to have any significance. Given Lucky's state of existence, his very name "Lucky" is ironic, especially since Vladimir observes that even "old dogs have more dignity."

All of Lucky's actions seem unpredictable. In Act I, when Estragon attempts to help him, Lucky becomes violent and kicks him on the leg. When he is later expected to dance, his movements are as ungraceful and alien to the concept of dance as one can possibly conceive. We have seldom encountered such ignorance; consequently, when he is expected to give a coherent speech, we are still surprised by his almost total incoherence. Lucky seems to be more animal than human, and his very existence in the drama is a parody of human existence. In Act II, when he arrives completely dumb, it is only a fitting extension of his condition in Act I, where his speech was virtually incomprehensible. Now he makes no attempt to utter any sound at all. Whatever part of man that Lucky represents, we can make the general observation that he, as man, is reduced to leading the blind, not by intellect, but by blind instinct.

Lucky is unique in a play where most of the characters talk incessantly: he only utters two sentences, one of which is more than seven hundred words long (the monologue). Lucky suffers at the hands of Pozzo willingly and without hesitation. He is "tied" (a favourite theme in *Godot*) to Pozzo by a ridiculously long rope in the first act, and then a similarly ridiculous short rope in the second act. Both tie around his neck. When he is not serving Pozzo, he usually stands in one spot drooling, or sleeping if he stands there long enough. His props include a picnic basket, a coat, and a suitcase full of sand.