

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GODOT?

One-Act Play

by
Jonathan Dorf



Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

Toll-Free 888-473-8521

Fax 319-368-8011

Web www.brookpub.com

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First produced by City Theater Company, Wilmington, Delaware

CHARACTERS

GODOT 30s to 60s, con man

BOY early teens, but likely played by an older actor

MAN big and dangerous, and probably young and dumb

Any of these roles could be cast as women if necessary, though if GODOT is a woman, the role of the MAN must also be cast as a woman.

(Morning in a dingy apartment. GODOT fusses with a stick-on white beard, half on and half off, that makes him look like Santa. BOY, dressed in knickers that make him look ridiculous, futilely folds an uncooperative paper flower.)

GODOT: Nothing to be done. That bird is on its last legs.

BOY: It's a flower, sir.

GODOT: It's so wrinkled you can't tell what it is anymore.

BOY: Yes, sir.

GODOT: Have you seen your brother?

BOY: What brother, sir?

GODOT: Must we go through this every day?

BOY: Go through what, sir?

GODOT: Pull out your memory book.

BOY: My what?

GODOT: *(the beard still half on his face, picks up a book and shoves it into BOY's hands)* Your memory book.

BOY: How long have I been here, Mr... Mr...

GODOT: Godot.

BOY: Have I been here long, Mr. Godot?

GODOT: Terribly.

BOY: How long is terribly long, Mr. Godot?

GODOT: A terribly long time. And terrible that we go through this every single morning.

BOY: I'm sorry, Mr. Godot. I don't mean to -

GODOT: And stop calling me Mr. Godot.

BOY: But isn't it your name, Mr. Godot?

GODOT: Of course it is. But I know it's my name. You don't have to keep saying it over and over. Mr. Godot. Mr. Godot. Godot. Godot. Godot. If you say it over and over again, it won't mean anything at all.

BOY: *(very quickly to himself)* Godot. Godot. Godot. God -

GODOT: Stop that.

BOY: Sorry, Mr. G - *(stopping himself)* Sir, I thought perhaps if I said it enough, I might remember it tomorrow.

GODOT: There, there. Read your book.

BOY: *(looks at the book)* It's only pictures, sir. I can't read pictures. Where are the words?

GODOT: And if one day you forget your letters, where will you be then? *(BOY looks terrified by this prospect. GODOT tries to pat the BOY on the back, but BOY flinches. GODOT moves to pat him again, and again BOY pulls away.)* Stay... *(This goes on for a while before GODOT is finally able to pat BOY on the head.)*

BOY: I thought you were going to beat me.

GODOT: Of course not. *(fakes a punch; BOY flinches)* Two for flinching!

BOY: What?

GODOT: You flinched, so I get to punch you twice on the arm.

BOY: But you said -

GODOT: Take it like a man.

BOY: But -

GODOT: Take your lumps, and then I have an errand for you.

BOY: *(runs to the other side of the room)* You said you wouldn't beat me.

GODOT: I'm not beating you. I'm punching you.

BOY: It looks like a beating to me.

GODOT: You don't even remember who you are. How can you expect to remember the subtle nuances of language?
(chases BOY, lunging at him and missing)

BOY: You're a bully. **(GODOT grabs BOY's wrist, but BOY escapes by pulling off GODOT's beard. GODOT lets out a howl, and BOY runs to the corner. GODOT, nursing his injured face, traps him.)**

GODOT: The two most splendid marks are waiting for me on a road not far from here.

BOY: I don't know any roads.

GODOT: **(points)** It's that way. It has a single tree that may or may not have leaves. They go by Vladimir and Estragon, or Didi and Gogo, and they may or may not be wearing boots.

BOY: And if I won't go?

GODOT: These men are willing to put their faith in me completely. You will tell them that I will be there shortly. Imminently. There will be no further delays. I'm going to clean them out to the last penny.

BOY: You're a bully, and I won't go.

GODOT: If you don't go, I'll beat you within an inch of your life. And then tomorrow I'll tell you that a savage fiend beat you within an inch of your life, but it was I who saved you. And you will love me for it. **(closes in on BOY)** They may look like paupers, but I can smell wealthy eccentrics a mile off, and these two are going to solve everything. **(Just as GODOT lunges at BOY, there's a knock at the door. Both freeze. Another knock, insistent this time.)**

MAN: **(offstage)** Open up, Godot. **(GODOT puts a finger to his lips)** I hear you moving around in there, so don't go thinkin' if you go all quiet that it's gonna work. **(silence)** Godot, you got ten seconds to open this door or I'm gonna break it down, and that's gonna leave me with a lot of hostility by the time I get on your side. **(beat; GODOT opens the door; in steps MAN)** Mr. Godot.

GODOT: **(beat)** No...

MAN: You're not Godot.

GODOT: No.

MAN: Then who's Godot? **(to BOY)** You Godot?

GODOT: Mr. Godot is not here.

BOY: But Mr. Godot -

GODOT: Has left you a message.

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