

## **Waiting for Godot**

As this is a philosophical, absurd play, it requires you to think philosophically without limiting your thoughts and ideas. No question has only one answer, but could be answered in various ways according to your points of view. The questions are only given to help you think more deeply. They are not, in fact, examination questions to memorize.

The quotations are specified to focus on what is most important. However, it is strongly recommended to read the text of the play in its entirety in order to understand it more thoroughly.

### **Symbols:**

- The Boots
- The Willow Tree (in Act I and II)
- The Hat
- Night and Day
- Godot
- The Rope
- Pozzo and Lucky
- Time
- Place

### **A few questions to ponder about:**

- Do you agree that bad things happen to only good people?
- What is the absurdity of life?
- How is the play introduced?
- How do you feel reading the play?
- How do Vladimir and Estragon differ from one another?
- What are they waiting for?
- Is the ability to think a blessing or a curse?
- How is religion discussed in the play?
- What is the meaning of the truth? How does one find the truth?
- Why does Godot not appear at night, according to Estragon and Vladimir?

- Could a carrot still hunger?
- What do Lucky and Pozzo represent?
- Could they in a way be related to capitalism?
- Why do Vladimir and Estragon suddenly speak of death?
- Is suicide seen as a solution to their problems?
- How is the concept of waiting presented throughout the play?
- Pozzo speaks of killing Lucky, for what reason?
- What does the bag of Lucky represent?
- What could Godot refer to?
- How do you feel about the personalities of Pozzo and Lucky?

## Quotations

### Page 9

*A country road. A tree. Evening. 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.

### Page 10:

VLADIMIR: ...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!

**Page 11:**

VLADIMIR: There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet. (*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it, feels about inside it, knocks on the crown, blows into it, puts it on again.*)

**Page 12:**

VLADIMIR: Ah yes, the two thieves. Do you remember the story?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: Shall I tell it to you?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: It'll pass the time. (*Pause.*) Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour. One—

ESTRAGON: Our what?

VLADIMIR: Our Saviour. Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other . . . (*he searches for the contrary of saved*) . . . damned.

ESTRAGON: Saved from what?

VLADIMIR: Hell.

ESTRAGON: I'm going. *He does not move.*

VLADIMIR: And yet . . . (*pause*) . . . how is it —this is not boring you I hope— how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there —or thereabouts— and only one speaks of a thief being saved.

**Page 13:**

VLADIMIR: Then the two of them must have been damned.

ESTRAGON: And why not?

VLADIMIR: But one of the four says that one of the two was saved.

ESTRAGON: Well? They don't agree and that's all there is to it.

VLADIMIR: But all four were there. And only one speaks of a thief being saved. Why believe him rather than the others?

ESTRAGON: Who believes him?

VLADIMIR: Everybody. It's the only version they know.

ESTRAGON: People are bloody ignorant apes.

**Page 13/14:**

ESTRAGON: Charming spot. (*He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.*) Inspiring prospects. (*He turns to Vladimir.*) Let's go.

VLADIMIR: We can't.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON: (*despairingly*). Ah! (*Pause.*) You're sure it was here?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: That we were to wait.

VLADIMIR: He said by the tree. (*They look at the tree.*) Do you see any others?

ESTRAGON: What is it?

VLADIMIR: I don't know. A willow.

ESTRAGON: Where are the leaves?

VLADIMIR: It must be dead.

ESTRAGON: No more weeping.

VLADIMIR: Or perhaps it's not the season.

ESTRAGON: Looks to me more like a bush.

VLADIMIR: A shrub.

ESTRAGON: A bush.

VLADIMIR: A—. What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place?

ESTRAGON: He should be here.

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.

ESTRAGON: We came here yesterday.

VLADIMIR: Ah no, there you're mistaken.

ESTRAGON: What did we do yesterday?

VLADIMIR: What did we do yesterday?

ESTRAGON: Yes.

VLADIMIR: Why . . . (*Angrily.*) Nothing is certain when you're about.

**Page 15:**

ESTRAGON: You're sure it was this evening?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: That we were to wait.

VLADIMIR: He said Saturday. (*Pause.*) I think.

ESTRAGON: You think.

VLADIMIR: I must have made a note of it. (*He fumbles in his pockets, bursting with miscellaneous rubbish.*)

ESTRAGON: (*very insidious*). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (*Pause.*) Or Monday? (*Pause.*) Or Friday?

VLADIMIR: (*looking wildly about him, as though the date was in scribed in the landscape*). It's not possible!

ESTRAGON: Or Thursday?

VLADIMIR: What'll we do?

ESTRAGON: If he came yesterday and we weren't here you may be sure he won't come again today.

VLADIMIR: But you say we were here yesterday.

ESTRAGON: I may be mistaken. (*Pause.*) Let's stop talking for a minute, do you mind?

**Page 16:**

ESTRAGON:

(*coldly.*) There are times when I wonder if it wouldn't be better for us to part.

VLADIMIR: You wouldn't go far.

**Page 17:**

VLADIMIR: ... (*Silence. Estragon looks attentively at the tree.*) What do we do now?

ESTRAGON: Wait.

VLADIMIR: Yes, but while waiting.

ESTRAGON: What about hanging ourselves?

...

ESTRAGON: Let's hang ourselves immediately!

VLADIMIR: From a bough? (*They go towards the tree.*) I wouldn't trust it.

ESTRAGON: We can always try.

VLADIMIR: Go ahead.

ESTRAGON: After you.

VLADIMIR: No no, you first.

ESTRAGON: Why me?

VLADIMIR: You're lighter than I am.

ESTRAGON: Just so!

**Page 17/18:**

ESTRAGON: (*with effort*). Gogo light—bough not break—Gogo dead. Didi heavy—bough break—Didi alone. Whereas—

VLADIMIR: I hadn't thought of that.

ESTRAGON: If it hangs you it'll hang anything.

VLADIMIR: But am I heavier than you?

ESTRAGON: So you tell me. I don't know. There's an even chance. Or nearly.

VLADIMIR: Well? What do we do?

ESTRAGON: Don't let's do anything. It's safer.

VLADIMIR: Let's wait and see what he says.

ESTRAGON: Who?

VLADIMIR: Godot.

ESTRAGON: Good idea.

VLADIMIR: Let's wait till we know exactly how we stand.

**Page 20:**

ESTRAGON: (*violently*). I'm hungry!

VLADIMIR: Do you want a carrot?

ESTRAGON: Is that all there is?

VLADIMIR: I might have some turnips.

ESTRAGON: Give me a carrot. (Vladimir rummages in his pockets, takes out a turnip and gives it to Estragon who takes a bite out of it. Angrily.) It's a turnip!

VLADIMIR: Oh pardon! I could have sworn it was a carrot. (*He rummages again in his pockets, finds nothing but turnips.*) All that's turnips. (*He rummages.*) You must have eaten the last. (*He rummages.*) Wait, I have it. (*He brings out a carrot and gives it to Estragon.*) There, dear fellow. (*Estragon wipes the carrot on his sleeve and begins to eat it.*) Make it last, that's the end of them.

ESTRAGON: (*chewing*). I asked you a question.

VLADIMIR: Ah.

ESTRAGON: Did you reply?

VLADIMIR: How's the carrot?

ESTRAGON: It's a carrot.

**Page 21:**

*Enter Pozzo and Lucky. Pozzo drives Lucky by means of a rope passed round his neck, so that Lucky is the first to enter, followed by the rope which is long enough to let him reach the middle of the stage before Pozzo appears. Lucky carries a heavy bag, a folding stool, a picnic basket and a greatcoat, Pozzo a whip.*

**Page 22:**

POZZO: I present myself: Pozzo.

VLADIMIR: (*to Estragon*). Not at all!

ESTRAGON: He said Godot.

VLADIMIR: Not at all!

ESTRAGON: (*timidly, to Pozzo*). You're not Mr. Godot, Sir?

POZZO: (*terrifying voice*). I am Pozzo! (*Silence.*) Pozzo! (*Silence.*) Does that name mean nothing to you? (*Silence.*) I say does that name mean nothing to you?

*Vladimir and Estragon look at each other questioningly.*

ESTRAGON:(*pretending to search*). Bozzo . . . Bozzo . . .

VLADIMIR: (*ditto*). Pozzo . . . Pozzo . . .

POZZO: PPPOZZZO!

**Page 23:**

POZZO: (*peremptory*). Who is Godot?

ESTRAGON: Godot?

POZZO: You took me for Godot.

VLADIMIR: Oh no, Sir, not for an instant, Sir.

POZZO: Who is he?

VLADIMIR: Oh he's a . . . he's a kind of acquaintance.

ESTRAGON: Nothing of the kind, we hardly know him.

VLADIMIR: True . . . we don't know him very well . . . but all the same . . .

ESTRAGON:

Personally, I wouldn't even know him if I saw him.

POZZO:

You took me for him.

ESTRAGON: (*recoiling before Pozzo*). That's to say . . . you understand . . . the dusk . . . the strain . . . waiting . . . I confess . . . I imagined . . . for a second . . .

POZZO: Waiting? So you were waiting for him?

VLADIMIR: Well you see—

POZZO: Here? On my land?

VLADIMIR: We didn't intend any harm.

ESTRAGON: We meant well.

POZZO: The road is free to all.

VLADIMIR: That's how we looked at it.

POZZO: It's a disgrace. But there you are.

ESTRAGON: Nothing we can do about it.

**Page 25:**

ESTRAGON: Why doesn't he put down his bags?

VLADIMIR: How do I know? (*They close in on him.*) Careful!

ESTRAGON: Say something to him.

VLADIMIR: Look!

ESTRAGON: What?

VLADIMIR: (*pointing*). His neck!

ESTRAGON: (*looking at the neck*). I see nothing.

VLADIMIR: Here.

*Estragon goes over beside Vladimir.*

ESTRAGON: Oh I say!

VLADIMIR: A running sore!

ESTRAGON: It's the rope.

VLADIMIR: It's the rubbing.

ESTRAGON: It's inevitable.

VLADIMIR: It's the knot.

ESTRAGON: It's the chafing.

*They resume their inspection, dwell on the face.*

VLADIMIR: (*grudgingly*).

He's not bad looking.

ESTRAGON: (*shrugging his shoulders, wry face.*) Would you say so?

**Page 26/27:**

ESTRAGON: (*timidly*). Please Sir . . .



POZZO: What is it, my good man?

ESTRAGON: Er . . . you've finished with the . . . er . . . you don't need the . . . er . . . bones, Sir?

VLADIMIR: (*scandalized*). You couldn't have waited?

POZZO: No no, he does well to ask. Do I need the bones? (*He turns them over with the end of his whip.*) No, personally I do not need them any more. (*Estragon takes a step towards the bones.*) But . . . (*Estragon stops short*) . . . but in theory the bones go to the carrier. He is therefore the one to ask.

(*Estragon turns towards Lucky, hesitates.*) Go on, go on, don't be afraid, ask him, he'll tell you.

*Estragon goes towards Lucky, stops before him.*

ESTRAGON: Mister . . . excuse me, Mister . . .

POZZO: You're being spoken to, pig! Reply! (*To Estragon.*) Try him again.

ESTRAGON: Excuse me, Mister, the bones, you won't be wanting the bones?

*Lucky looks long at Estragon.*

POZZO: (*in raptures*). Mister! (*Lucky bows his head.*) Reply! Do you want them or don't you? (*Silence of Lucky. To Estragon.*) They're yours. (*Estragon makes a dart at the bones, picks them up and begins to gnaw them.*) I don't like it. I've never known him to refuse a bone before. (*He looks anxiously at Lucky.*) Nice business it'd be if he fell sick on me!

**Page 28:**

POZZO: I hope I'm not driving you away. Wait a little longer, you'll never regret it.

ESTRAGON: (*scenting charity*). We're in no hurry.

**Page 29:**

ESTRAGON: Why doesn't he put down his bags?

**Page 29/30:**

ESTRAGON: Why doesn't he put down his bags?

POZZO: But that would surprise me.

VLADIMIR: You're being asked a question.

POZZO: (*delighted*). A question! Who? What? A moment ago you were calling me Sir, in fear and trembling. Now you're asking me questions. No good will come of this!

VLADIMIR: (*to Estragon*). I think he's listening.

ESTRAGON: (*circling about Lucky*). What?

VLADIMIR: You can ask him now. He's on the alert.

ESTRAGON: Ask him what?

VLADIMIR: Why he doesn't put down his bags.

ESTRAGON: I wonder.

VLADIMIR: Ask him, can't you?

**Page 30:**

VLADIMIR: Here.

ESTRAGON: What is it?

VLADIMIR: He's about to speak.

*Estragon goes over beside Vladimir. Motionless, side by side, they wait.*

POZZO: Good. Is everybody ready? Is everybody looking at me? (*He looks at Lucky, jerks the rope. Lucky raises his head.*) Will you look at me, pig! (*Lucky looks at him.*) Good. ... I am ready. Is everybody listening? Is everybody ready? (*He looks at them all in turn, jerks the rope.*) Hog! (*Lucky raises his head.*) I don't like talking in a vacuum. Good. Let me see.

*He reflects.*

**Page 31:**

POZZO: He wants to impress me, so that I'll keep him.

ESTRAGON: What?

POZZO: Perhaps I haven't got it quite right. He wants to mollify me, so that I'll give up the idea of parting with him. No, that's not exactly it either.

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: He wants to cod me, but he won't.

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: He imagines that when I see how well he carries I'll be tempted to keep him on in that capacity.

ESTRAGON: You've had enough of him?

POZZO: In reality he carries like a pig. It's not his job.

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: He imagines that when I see him indefatigable I'll regret my decision. Such is his miserable scheme. As though I were short of slaves! (*All three look at Lucky.*)

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: Remark that I might just as well have been in his shoes and he in mine. If chance had not willed otherwise. To each one his due.

**Page 32:**

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: I do. But instead of driving him away as I might have done, I mean instead of simply kicking him out on his arse, in the goodness of my heart I am bringing him to the fair, where I hope to get a good price for him. The truth is you can't drive such creatures away. The best thing would be to kill them.

*Lucky weeps.*

ESTRAGON: He's crying!

POZZO: Old dogs have more dignity. (*He proffers his handkerchief to Estragon.*) Comfort him, since you pity him. (*Estragon hesitates.*) Come on. (*Estragon takes the handkerchief.*) Wipe away his tears, he'll feel less forsaken. *Estragon hesitates.*

POZZO: Make haste, before he stops. (*Estragon approaches Lucky and makes to wipe his eyes. Lucky kicks him violently in the shins. Estragon drops the handkerchief, recoils, staggers about the stage howling with pain.*)

Hanky!

*Lucky puts down bag and basket, picks up handkerchief and gives it to Pozzo, goes back to his place, picks up bag and basket.*

ESTRAGON: Oh the swine! (*He pulls up the leg of his trousers.*) He's crippled me!

POZZO: I told you he didn't like strangers.

**Page 33:**

POZZO: He's stopped crying. (*To Estragon.*) You have replaced him as it were. (*Lyricaly.*) 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. (*He laughs.*) Let us not then speak ill of our generation, it is not any unhappier than its predecessors. (*Pause.*) Let us not speak well of it either. (*Pause.*) Let us not speak of it at all. (*Pause. Judiciously.*) It is true the population has increased.

...

POZZO:

Guess who taught me all these beautiful things. (*Pause. Pointing to Lucky.*) My Lucky!

...

VLADIMIR: (*looking at the sky*) Will night never come?

...

POZZO:

That was nearly sixty years ago . . . (*he consults his watch*) . . . yes, nearly sixty. (*Drawing himself up proudly.*) You wouldn't think it to look at me, would you? Compared to him I look like a young man, no? (*Pause.*) Hat! (*Lucky puts down the basket and takes off his hat. His long white hair falls about his face. He puts his hat under his arm and picks up the basket.*) Now look. (*Pozzo takes off his hat. [All four wear bowlers.] He is completely bald. He puts on his hat again.*) Did you see?

VLADIMIR:

And now you turn him away? Such an old and faithful servant!

ESTRAGON: Swine!

*Pozzo more and more agitated*

**Page 34/35:**

VLADIMIR: After having sucked all the good out of him you chuck him away like a . . . like a banana skin. Really . . .

POZZO: (*groaning, clutching his head*). I can't bear it . . . any longer . . . the way he goes on . . . you've no idea . . . it's terrible . . . he must go . . . (*he waves his arms*) . . . I'm going mad . . . (*he collapses, his head in his hands*) . . . I can't bear it . . . any longer . . .

*Silence. All look at Pozzo.*

VLADIMIR: He can't bear it.

ESTRAGON: Any longer.

VLADIMIR: He's going mad.

ESTRAGON: It's terrible.

VLADIMIR: (*to Lucky*). How dare you! It's abominable! Such a good master! Crucify him like that! After so many years! Really!

POZZO: (*sobbing*). He used to be so kind . . . so helpful . . . and entertaining . . .

my good angel . . . and now . . . he's killing me.

ESTRAGON: (*to Vladimir*). Does he want to replace him?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: Does he want someone to take his place or not?

VLADIMIR: I don't think so.

ESTRAGON: What?

VLADIMIR: I don't know.

ESTRAGON: Ask him.

POZZO: (*calmer*). Gentlemen, I don't know what came over me. Forgive me. Forget all I said. (*More and more his old self.*) I don't remember exactly what it was, but you may be sure there wasn't a word of truth in it. (*Drawing himself up, striking his chest.*) Do I look like a man that can be made to suffer? Frankly? (*He rummages in his pockets.*) What have I done with my pipe?

VLADIMIR: Charming evening we're having.

ESTRAGON: Unforgettable.

VLADIMIR: And it's not over.

ESTRAGON: Apparently not.

VLADIMIR: It's only beginning.

ESTRAGON: It's awful.

**Page 36:**

VLADIMIR: Will night never come?

*All three look at the sky.*

POZZO: You don't feel like going until it does?

...

POZZO: No doubt you are right. (*He sits down.*) Done it again! (*Pause.*) Thank you, dear fellow. (*He consults his watch.*) But I must really be getting along, if I am to observe my schedule.

VLADIMIR: Time has stopped.

**Page 38:**

VLADIMIR: One can bide one's time.

ESTRAGON: One knows what to expect.

VLADIMIR: No further need to worry.

ESTRAGON: Simply wait.

VLADIMIR: We're used to it.

He picks up his hat, peers inside it, shakes it, puts it on.

POZZO: How did you find me? (*Vladimir and Estragon look at him blankly.*)

Good? Fair? Middling? Poor? Positively bad?

VLADIMIR: (*first to understand*). Oh very good, very very good.

POZZO: (*to Estragon*). And you, Sir?

ESTRAGON: Oh tray bong, tray tray tray bong. ('très bon' in French, which means very good)

POZZO: (*fervently*). Bless you, gentlemen, bless you! (*Pause.*) I have such need of encouragement! (*Pause.*) I weakened a little towards the end, you didn't notice?

VLADIMIR: Oh perhaps just a teeny weeny little bit.

ESTRAGON: I thought it was intentional.

POZZO: You see my memory is defective.

*Silence.*

ESTRAGON: In the meantime, nothing happens.

POZZO: You find it tedious?

ESTRAGON: Somewhat.

POZZO: (*to Vladimir*). And you, Sir?

VLADIMIR: I've been better entertained.