

SMACKING SAMUEL BECKETT

By

Anthony Clark Vines

© 2008

Copyright, 2008, by Anthony Clark Vines
as an unpublished dramatic composition
See Library of Congress: AL422983821-632911

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that SMACKING SAMUEL BECKETT is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound taping, all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as information storage and retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is laid upon the question of readings, permission for which must be secured from the author in writing. All inquiries concerning rights should be addressed to: Anthony Clark Vines at:

clark@anthonyclarkvines.com.

No performance of the play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of the author and paying the requisite fee.

SPECIAL NOTE

All groups receiving permission to produce SMACKING SAMUEL BECKETT are required to give credit to the author as sole and exclusive author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production thereof; the name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to half the size of the largest letter used for the title of the play and no smaller than 10 point type.

SMACKING SAMUEL BECKETT

Characters

SAMUEL BECKETT, *a young, thin, gaunt man with very spiked hair.*

HARRI THOMAS, *a young woman in a lab coat.*

Lights up on a man sitting at table writing. A woman enters and approaches the man.

HARRI

Excuse me.

BECKETT

Yes.

HARRI

You wouldn't happen to be Samuel Beckett would you?

BECKETT

Aye.

(HARRI reaches out and slaps him in the back of the head.)

BECKETT

Oww. What was that for?

HARRI

For being Samuel Beckett.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Ahh! Are you daft or what?

HARRI

No, just assertive.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Ahh. Blimey. You've gone crackers.

(She slaps him again, this time repeatedly around the head.)

BECKETT

Ah. Chaa. Chaa. Stop it. Stop it. Listen, I don't know who you are lass, but--

(She slaps him in the head again.)

HARRI

My name is Harri, not lass.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww. Well, listen Harri, I've yet to strike a woman but...

(She slaps him in the head again.)

HARRI

But what? What? What are you going to do? There's nothing else you can do. You've already ruined my life you...you...writer.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww. God blind me (*Pronounced as Gah-bly-me*), woman. Oh, now look what you done. You made me blaspheme. Now I'm going to hell.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

HARRI

Well. Good. You deserve it, you bastard.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww. Listen, lass (*She draws to hit him, he intercedes*)... HARRI. Listen, Harri, if you will just stop smacking me about we could talk about this. I mean I don't even know you. How could I have ruined your life? Did I beat up your boyfriend or do I owe you some money or did I insult your family. I will be happy to apologize. (*Rubbing head*) Although I believe I have paid in full, but if it will help--

HARRI

Nothing you say could make it right.

BECKETT

Make what right?

HARRI

What you did.

BECKETT

What did I do, girly?

(She slaps him in the head again.)

HARRI

I told you, it's HARRI and you wrote *WAITING FOR GODOT*.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww. Waiting for what?

(She hits him again. He tries in vain to defend himself.)

HARRI

Godot. *WAITING FOR GODOT*. The play you wrote. That damn, stupid, absurd piece of crap. It ruined my life. It ruined everything, you Irish bastard.

BECKETT

God-blind-me woman. Ahh. There, again. I blasphemed again. Lord, forgive me. This woman is going to kill me and send me to hell.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

HARRI

You idiot. Why? Why did you have to go and ruin my life? Couldn't you have written something better, something different? Why did you write that piece of crap anyway?

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Ahh. I haven't written anything call Waiting for...?

(She repeatedly slaps him in the head.)

HARRI

Godot. Godot. How many times till it sinks in. Godot. Godot. Godot.

BECKETT

Missy...Harri. I tell you, I've not written anything called *WAITING FOR GODOT*, so stop smacking me about.

HARRI

You haven't written *WAITING FOR GODOT* yet?

BECKETT

No. I've not written anything by that title.

HARRI

Damn, I must have overshot the time.

BECKETT

What are you going on about, lass...Harri?

HARRI

Nothing. Look. You haven't written it yet but you're going to. So when you get the urge to remember one thing.

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww.

HARRI

I came once. I can come again.

BECKETT

Woman...Harri. You're making no sense. I've got no intention of writing a play with such a daft name. Besides, what in the name of all that's holy is a Godot anyway?

HARRI

I don't know. You wrote it.

BECKETT

No, I didn't. I haven't written much of anything yet.

HARRI

Well, you're going too. So when you do, don't.
(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww. Who the hell are you?
(She slaps him in the head again.)

Harri. Harri. Thomas. From the United States. Remember my name. Burn it into your soul, cause if you write that play, so help me god...

BECKETT

Wait. If? You said if I wrote that play. I haven't written this play, this...Godot play. Think, lass, uh...Harri, think. It makes no sense. Why are you doing this to me?

HARRI

Because you're going to write it you idiot.

BECKETT

My name is Sam, not idiot. And how do you know what I am going to write?

HARRI

Because you already have.

BECKETT

No, I haven't.

HARRI

Where I come from, you have, Sam.
(She attempts to hit him but he avoids it.)

BECKETT

Hah! Where you come from everyone probably thinks they're Napoleon or Bloody King George.

HARRI

Where I come from, you're already dead. Hah! But you didn't die soon enough because you still wrote that damn play.

(She is in pursuit of him but he is now avoiding her attempts to hit him.)

BECKETT

Lass, woman, missy, HARRI, you've been too much into the spirits. You're making no sense.

(She stops and considers.)

HARRI

All right. Truce. I'll explain. *WAITING FOR GODOT* is a play--

BECKETT

Aye, I gathered.

HARRI

--which you wrote.

BECKETT

No.

HARRI

Okay, which you will write.

BECKETT

No.

HARRI

Let me finish. Which you will write in the future, which is where I am came from.

BECKETT

Missy, lay off the mash. It's gone and made you mad.

HARRI

Listen, Beckett, Sam, it may sound far fetched but its true. I came from the future because you wrote that damn god-awful play and it ruined my life.

(He is off guard and she hits him again.)

BECKETT

Ahh. You need help, Lass. How could you have come from the future? It's not possible. You've gone completely nuts.

(She chases him around but is unsuccessful.)

HARRI

I'm not crazy. I work in a lab, a physics lab, for the United States government. We've been working on a way to travel back in time and we succeeded about six months ago. That's when everything went down hill and you ruined my life.

BECKETT

How, woman, how? Make yourself clear.
(She sits down.)

HARRI

After the success of the Temporal Intervention-Manipulation Experiment...

BECKETT

The what?

HARRI

Temporal Intervention Manipulation Experiment: T.I.M.E. for short. The device that allowed me to come back through time to... *(She thinks about hitting him but he draws out of reach.)* Anyway, we were celebrating. My fiancé, Dick, was one of the prime engineers who worked on the project. We had fallen in love. It was perfect. He was perfect. Intelligent. Handsome. Clever. Funny. Cultural. God, he was so, so, perfect. He loved me and I loved him and everything was perfect.

(BECKETT is somehow drawn into this story and sets next to her, losing his apprehension toward her.)

HARRI

Dick adores plays. He loves the theatre. So to celebrate our success, he took everyone out to dinner, and then to a play. It was going to be a great evening until...

BECKETT

Until?

HARRI

Until...

(She slaps him in the head again.)

BECKETT

Oww.

HARRI

Until we went and saw your damn play *WAITING FOR GODOT*.

BECKETT

All right, despite the fact that this sounds like that trash that Wells fellow wrote, how could a play ruin someone's life?

HARRI

Because, after he saw it, it changed him forever. Before your play, he was driven, ambitious, on his way up. He saw life as special, beautiful, wonderful. But that play. Your damn play. It sucked the life out of him. After seeing it, he lost interest in the world. He talked about how it appealed to him. How it made sense if you thought about it. How life really was meaningless and that nothing we did or said or took action to made any real sense. Life was absurd, so why try. After that he lost interest in everything. He just fooled around at work. Then he stopped coming to work. He stayed home and watched the soaps, ate cupcakes and candy bars and drank beer all day. He stopped working out, got fat and never bathed and wasn't interested in sex anymore. Not that I was much interested in him in that state anyway. I mean, before, he was built like Adonis and we made love for hours, hours, at a time, but after your play--

BECKETT

That doesn't sound like something I would write.

HARRI

But you did or will or.

BECKETT

No, no. You're confused about a lot of things, but mostly about the writing. I write poetry and stories for children. See?

(Hands her a manuscript. She reads briefly.)

HARRI

This is cute. I. You are Samuel Beckett, right?

BECKETT

Aye.

HARRI

Then I don't understand.

BECKETT

Neither do I but I know that this whole thing is, well, absurd. Coming from the future just to hit me for a play that I haven't written and most likely wouldn't. It's just meaningless, Harri. It makes no sense. It's absurd.

HARRI

You're right. I'm sorry. I wanted revenge but now...

BECKETT

Perhaps you had better set down. Would you like some tea?

HARRI

No thank you. I guess I just got here to early. But if that's so, then perhaps there is a chance for me to change things. I hadn't thought of it before. I was just pissed.

BECKETT

So you are drunk.

HARRI

What? No. Not that kind of pissed. Angry. I was angry. I just wanted to get revenge for you ruining my life. But now, now I can change everything. Fix it. All I got to do is make sure you don't write that play.

BECKETT

Which I haven't.

HARRI

But you will.

BECKETT

Harri, I don't even know what a Godot is? How can I write about it? Lord in heaven, what am I saying?

HARRI

I'm not sure, but you do. You will. So let me tell you what the play is about and you don't write anything like that.

BECKETT

Will you stop hitting on me? Will you go away and never come back?

HARRI

I promise. Okay, it takes place on a stage with two men dressed as bums next to a tree. And they talk about how life is a meaningless and absurd series of events that make life pointless and random.

(They pause and look at each other.)

BECKETT

That's all?

HARRI

Pretty much. I didn't pay much attention to it. I found it kind of--

BECKETT

Absurd? Sounds a lot like this day.

HARRI

Yeah, I can see that.

BECKETT

All right. If that's all then, I have a great deal of healing to do, Harri, so if you don't mind--

HARRI

I'm leaving. Remember; don't write anything like that, okay?

BECKETT

Right. And get some help when you get back to the future, okay?
(She exits and he locks the door and rubs his head.)

BECKETT

Lord, what a loony lass. Mad as a hatter. Blimey. What a day. *(Pours himself a drink)* Some days are so randomly absurd, there's no point in getting up. I mean, that was just meaningless. Pointless. Glad she's off. Hope she never comes back. The boys down at the pub will never believe this one. Blimey, I better put it to paper so I never forget it. She said don't write, what was it called, *WAITING FOR...WAITING FOR...* God I ought to remember... Ah, yes, that's it. *GODOT*. And she said there were two bums next to a tree....

He trails off, obviously writing WAITING FOR GODOT, thus beginning the vicious cycle.

Finis