

# **PLAY**

**A (MINI) HISTORY  
OF THEATRE  
FOR KIDS**

**ADAM SEELIG**

**ONE**  
little  
**GOAT**  
Theatre Company

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first edition

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for **Shai** and **Arlo**

with **love** and **love**

## **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

*PLAY: A (Mini) History of Theatre for Kids* was first performed at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School in Toronto on November 2, 2015, in a One Little Goat Theatre Company production directed by Adam Seelig. Since then, it has been performed for thousands of children in elementary schools throughout Toronto.

## **CAST**

**A** Richard Harte

**M** Rochelle Bulmer alternating with Jessica Salgueiro

## **PRODUCTION**

**Set & Costume Designer**

Jackie Chau

**Stage Manager**

Sam Hale

## CAST

**A** a person

(male in this text – can be played by anyone)

**M** Mavis-the-Sometimes-Cat and others

(female in this text – can be played by anyone)

## DEAR ACTORS

Pace and emphasize the text as you and director wish. At certain points I've indicated a pause or silence or what-have-you with a long line (——), but also feel free to pause or be silent or what-have-you in the middle of one of your dialogue entries if that's what's right.

The spacing of the script (whose first draft was written by hand – i.e. this is not a 'type-writer' piece) is generated by the vertical alignments of letters and words, creating a tonal zone for the dialogue. While the dialogue may not be conventionally naturalistic, by all means speak it as naturally, again, as you wish.

– Adam Seelig

**A** enters, plays guitar. **M** enters as a cat, with ukulele, and crosses to **A**.

**A:**

Hey Mavis

**M:**

Meow

**M** stands up and plays the ukulele, joining **A** in the music. They bring their duet to a close.

**A:**

Okay so this  
play            started  
          with            me here playing  
                  guitar                    on  
          this stage

**M:**

Meow

**A:**

And with Mavis  
          the            cat (**M** purrs)  
                  ya  
          Mavis  
          the            sometimes  
                  cat                    who  
                  sometimes

and sometimes meows talks depending  
on  
the moment  
ya  
this play started  
with us ———

Now let's  
go farther back  
let's  
go way  
way  
back  
let's see  
how the  
first plays  
started ——— and who made  
the  
first plays in  
the world ———

Children

Kids like you  
kids from the beginning  
kids have always  
made plays  
seriously

just imagine for  
a second  
just imagine i'm  
a kid (M meows)  
and i'll  
also  
imagine i'm  
a kid  
a kid from  
thousands of years  
ago and i'm

walking around okay let's  
say i'm

walking around  
a fire  
a fire  
pit  
okay i'm

walking around the  
fire  
and i'm enjoying  
the  
fire the  
way its flames  
to seem  
and jump



dance so  
start to i jump  
and  
dance  
a little the  
around fire  
too  
and i'm enjoying  
this  
i'm  
having  
a good time and when  
my sister sees  
me  
having  
a good time she joins  
me  
having  
a good time  
too and now  
we're both  
having  
a good time right  
we're  
having  
a good time and (laughs)  
and (laughs)  
and

**M** and **A** dance around fire in opposite directions. After a few rounds, **M** taps **A** on shoulder each time she passes him. Eventually, after another shoulder-tap, **A** changes directions, following behind **M** and taps her shoulder. **M**, surprised, turns around and taps **A** back, then **A** taps **M**, **M** taps **A**, **A** taps **M**, etc, in more rapid succession. ———. **A** chases **M** around fire until he tags her, then **M** chases **A** back until she tags him, etc, ending in both laughing and catching their breath.

**A:**

Okay so you can  
see what we  
ended up  
playing right  
we  
ended up  
playing  
a game of  
tag  
we all know  
tag  
okay now here's  
a different  
game

**A** and **M** do a version of leapfrog around fire.

**A:**

You got  
it leapfrog that was  
easy now here's  
a different game

Much mime by **A** and **M**.

**A:**

That one was  
a little trickier  
so don't feel badly  
if you didn't guess  
it we  
were

playing  
a  
game called jumping  
on  
a dead tree and munching  
on its bark  
until your  
teeth hurt

**M:**

Ouch

**A:**

It's not  
as popular  
as  
it  
was thousands  
of years

it's ago but still  
 a game and  
 tag like leapfrog  
 the games we play  
 are simple  
 little plays  
 they're  
 the first  
 our lives  
 and plays in  
 the first  
 our plays in  
 world ———

Made up  
 by children ———

So children wrote the world's first plays (M meows and shakes head)  
 no because  
 children didn't  
 write the first plays  
 they made  
 them

For playwrights let's look  
 at Sophocles the Greek

playwright

Sophocles

who

wrote

plays

in

Greece

over

two

thousand years ago

and

we

still perform his plays

today the same

way the Olympics

the Olympic

games

started in

ancient Greece

and we

still

play them

today the

games

theatre

of

Sophocles

come

from

ancient Greece

and we

still perform

them

today

but

Sophocles'

games

are

serious games intense

games challenging

games and why

why would  
we  
want to play  
those when  
we could play simple fun like  
ones tag instead  
well it's challenging  
to dribble  
a soccer  
ball fast  
all the way up  
the field  
it takes work and  
it's a serious  
challenge  
to  
do a pirouette but that's  
what  
makes  
it exciting  
that's  
what  
makes  
it a more serious  
kind of  
fun

you  
should see Mavis do  
a pirouette she's really  
good at  
it hey  
Mavis  
would  
you please show  
us how  
you do one of  
your pirouettes we'd  
really love  
to  
see  
you do one (M meows)  
hey  
Mavis come  
on  
Mave just  
one  
pirouette  
it'll  
be great there  
you go come  
on  
over there  
you great now — are that's

**M** prepares for a pirouette. ———. Balks and walks away:  
Meow

**A:**

Cats rarely do  
what they're told  
they're  
not like  
dogs  
are they  
cats really only  
do  
what they feel  
like doing when  
they feel  
like doing  
it oh well

**M** does a pirouette. **A** hasn't noticed.

**A:**

That's too bad you  
would  
have enjoyed seeing her  
do  
it but  
here's  
another example Mave  
what's one plus  
one



**M:**

Meow  
meow

**A:**

What's two plus  
two

**M:**

Meow  
meow  
meow  
meow

**A:**

What's four plus  
four

**M:**

Meow  
meow  
meow  
meow  
meow  
meow  
meow  
meow  
meow

**A:**

Not especially

challenging is  
it  
not very exciting so  
how about Mavis what's  
the square  
root  
of

15,159,273,129 ———

**M** in search of answer literally and figuratively contorts, covering every inch of stage.

**A:**  
More challenging problem  
more exciting solution

**M:**  
123,123

**A:**  
Nicely done Mave  
amazing that was  
a big problem to  
solve and  
that's  
what Sophocles  
is  
amazing at too  
big problems

posing big problems his plays  
 in  
 like  
 if  
 i run away from  
 my  
 problems do  
 i only make them  
 worse  
 if  
 i try  
 to  
 run from trouble will  
 i only end  
 up  
 running into  
 it

**M** 'runs from trouble' looking over shoulder, ends up full circle 'running right into it'.

**A:**

Or how about this question  
 which  
 is at the  
 heart  
 of Sophocles' great  
 play Antigone  
 and

that  
question  
is what  
is more  
important  
to be safe  
or to be free —

Okay before  
we  
play out that question  
in  
a scene from **Antigone**  
i want

to  
play it  
out in  
a scene from  
my own life  
okay Mavis  
you  
play me

**M:**  
Meow

**A:**  
Okay when  
i was

in grade three it  
was  
on  
the first  
day of  
grade three it  
was  
a really hot  
really sunny  
really beautiful  
day so  
at lunch recess  
our  
long recess  
when we  
were  
playing soccer  
a  
big group  
of us  
playing soccer  
on  
the  
school field which was  
a  
grass  
field  
i decided

in the middle of  
the game  
i decided to  
take  
my  
shoes and socks  
off so  
i feel the grass could warm  
feet under  
feet i've always  
feel that of warm  
grass under  
toes my  
and i  
like being barefoot when  
i can  
as you  
can see but  
being barefoot wasn't allowed  
at  
school  
and i didn't  
know

i  
aware  
wasn't  
that  
it  
wasn't allowed  
one  
until  
of  
my

teachers outside called me over  
she calls me off  
the field and  
tells me to  
put my shoes back  
on  
put your shoes back  
on please

**M:**  
Why can't  
i play barefoot

**A:**  
Because it's  
not safe

**M:**  
But  
but i've  
done

it  
before

**A:**

Not  
at school you haven't

**M:**

And i won't  
get hurt

**A:**

You can't be sure how  
can  
you be sure there isn't  
a sharp stone  
or broken piece  
of glass  
in the field  
some where that'll  
cut  
your foot  
you can't be sure

**M:**

So then  
so then it'll be  
it'll be my own problem  
my problem



and no one else's

A:

Mine too though it  
will be  
my problem  
too because  
i am  
responsible for what  
happens  
at  
school and  
what  
will happen  
tell  
me what  
happens when  
your  
friends  
see their  
friend running  
around barefoot  
they might like  
the idea  
too  
and  
they all

start going  
 barefoot  
 and  
 then before i know  
 it we've  
 gone from  
 a field  
 full of  
 bare  
 feet to a class  
 bandaged feet a full of hobbling  
 around on

crutches and even  
 one or two children  
 on  
 crutches  
 is one or two  
 too many —

**M:**  
 Okay

**A:**  
 I say putting  
 on my socks

**M:**

Okay

**A:**

I say now putting

on my shoes and

as

i'm putting them

on

i do something

i do something hardly ever

do

i say something

smart alecky

i say

**M:**

It's a free country

you know

**A:**

That's

what i

say

**M:**

It's a free country

**A:**

With rules our

country has  
rules and  
so does  
our school now be safe  
and  
have fun  
and  
i run back  
onto  
the field  
and  
then  
i played by  
the must  
have shoes  
rule even though  
the  
rule was  
new to me  
so we know on Sophocles' question  
we know where my teacher  
stood for  
her it  
was more  
important to be safe  
than to be free she did  
after all  
say

our  
country has rules —

Antigone

on the  
other hand

the teenage girl

in Sophocles' play

Antigone

refuses to  
follow new  
rules

she  
the

absolutely rejects

new

laws

of

the land  
and

the

play

gets intense

but remember

it's

still

just a

game

where

no

one really

gets

hurt like

like in

fencing (**M** meows)  
right  
in  
fencing  
i might attack  
my opponent  
with  
my sword

**A** mimes landing a touch on **M** à la fencing. **M** gasp-meows as if stabbed.

**A:**

But my opponent isn't hurt

**M** showing she's fine:

I'm not hurt

**A:**

So in the same way

in Sophocles'

play

we attack each

other just

not with swords

but with words

knowing that all of us

in the end we're

all friends

**A** and **M** connect. ———. Then suddenly disconnect.

**A:**

In the meantime it's  
game  
on between  
Antigone  
on  
the side of  
freedom  
and her uncle  
on  
the side of  
safety her uncle King Creon  
the ruler  
of  
the land

**M:**

All hail King Creon

**A:**

My people  
my citizens  
my country ———

The enemy tried to defeat us  
it is  
we who

defeated  
them  
the enemy attempted  
but failed  
we defended  
and  
won and with  
me as your king  
all  
is in order —

Antigone's brother  
Polynices betrayed us  
he joined  
the enemy  
he fought against  
us and  
in died  
battle

not a  
hero died  
Polynices a  
traitor and  
such  
traitors  
such  
betrayal can  
never



ever again happen  
 so i  
 will make  
 an  
 example  
 of Polynices  
 a bad  
 example the worst possible  
 example  
 of Antigone's brother  
 with  
 this new  
 rule  
 this new law  
 for  
 all  
 of us  
 no  
 one absolutely  
 no  
 one  
 may bury Polynices'  
 body  
 only loyal citizens  
 may be  
 buried and

Polynices was far  
loyal thus far from  
no one is  
to his  
bury and  
corpse let  
this new rule  
be a reminder for  
all to  
never betray  
your  
country  
never betray fellow citizens  
never betray  
your own people  
never betray  
me always  
honour  
this law  
and  
all laws of  
the our  
land and  
the life

every citizen of  
will  
be safe —

**M:**

Hm you're  
right  
that is  
intense

**A:**

That's how Creon  
is King  
Creon  
is intense

are you  
ready to play Antigone  
are you  
ready to be  
a teenage girl

**M:**

I'm ready

**A:**

Okay here's what Antigone  
has to  
say about

her uncle's

new

law

M:

Unburied my brother

unburied my dear

brother Polynices

may have fought against

us and

died

but he was still

a human being

he was still

my brother to

leave his body

unburied no

better than

an animal

is inhuman

and i

won't i

will never

follow such a

law it's

sick and

it's wrong

when

we should be

free  
 to bury  
 our family  
 own  
 i should be  
 free  
 to do what's right  
 and  
 i  
 will tonight  
 when  
 everyone's  
 asleep i'll do  
 it myself  
 i'll  
 lower my brother  
 in the ground  
 and  
 cover his body  
 to give  
 him the decency  
 he deserves  
 the decent burial that  
 everyone deserves  
 whether friend or  
 enemy  
 everyone deserves respect  
 everyone's body deserves respect

**A:**

You with  
your eyes to  
the ground  
you look  
at me Antigone did  
you do this  
did  
you dare  
to bury  
your brother's  
body

**M:**

I did uncle  
Creon

**A:**

But were you  
aware of  
my  
new  
law against it  
were you even  
aware

**M:**

Well aware  
how could i not be  
you

made it  
loud and clear

A:

And still you  
still went  
and broke it  
your own uncle's  
law  
your king's  
law the  
law of  
your own  
country

M:

Yes

A:

You knew the punishment is

M:

Life  
in prison  
i know

A:

So why  
on earth would  
you

M:

Because your law  
is inhuman  
your law  
is barbaric

A:

You've got  
it all confused  
dear niece  
it's  
your brother  
who was barbaric  
your brother joined  
the enemy

M:

He  
was  
still  
a human being  
and  
i can't  
stand  
and  
watch his body left unburied  
how does that make  
us safe



A:

By making  
an example of him that's  
what  
makes us  
safe Antigone  
don't  
be foolish

M:

I'll take that  
as  
a compliment  
to  
be called foolish by  
a fool

A:

I am the king  
not some  
joker little girl  
and my  
law  
is certainly  
no joke it is here  
to keep us  
secure

M:

At

the  
expense of my freedom

**A:**

You can't just do what  
you want whenever  
you want there  
is law  
and there  
is order  
what  
you call freedom  
your freedom  
as  
you call  
it  
is no more  
than lawlessness  
and chaos

**M:**

And what you call security  
is no better  
than a prison  
a prison  
to keep  
us  
all secure

A:  
Get used to  
it

M:  
Why should  
i

A:  
You broke the law  
you go  
to jail

M:  
Fine  
i'd rather die  
in jail defending  
what's right  
than live  
like  
a coward  
under your  
rule  
and look  
at you just  
at you looking  
i now  
can see  
that you

think you've won  
and  
i've lost but  
it's me who's  
won it's me  
just

think  
i stand by  
my beliefs  
and  
you'll never  
be able  
to shake them  
and

what could be  
greater in  
our  
world than  
to stand up  
for  
what is right  
and rise  
up against  
what's wrong  
no matter  
what these citizens  
would  
agree with

me if they  
weren't  
all so  
afraid of  
you and  
your

ruthless  
use of  
power

**A:**

You're alone Antigone  
you're the  
only one  
who sees it  
that way

**M:**

They see it that way  
too  
but you  
have  
them on  
a tight leash  
that's only getting  
tighter and more  
frightening

**A:**

They're not frightened

of me  
they're not afraid  
they're just being loyal why can't  
you be loyal too

M:

Like a dog

A:

Like a citizen  
a good  
citizen  
Antigone aren't you ashamed  
you've  
dishonoured  
your  
country

M:

Ashamed not  
at  
all i'm  
not  
ashamed i honoured  
my brother it's you  
who should feel  
shame not me  
i'm proud of what  
i've done

A:

Proud to  
disobey  
your  
uncle

M:

Yes

A:

Proud to  
disobey the king

M:

King you're not a  
king uncle  
Creon  
you're a bully  
you're a tyrant

A:

And you're not my niece Antigone  
you're  
a criminal from  
now on  
you're nothing but  
a criminal  
you're nothing  
guards put her

in prison where  
she belongs

**M:**

No

**A:**

And they  
do Creon's guards take Antigone away  
and Creon

leaves the stage all  
alone  
leaving only  
us at  
the end still wondering  
what's more  
important  
to be safe  
or  
to be  
free

## SONG

"To Be Safe or To Be Free"

**A** plays guitar and sings:

To be safe or to be free



**M** plays ukulele and sings:

To be safe or to be free

**A** and **M** play and sing together:

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

**A** sings:

C c c c C c c c Creon

**M** sings:

A a a a A a a Antigone

**A** and **M** sing together:

C c c c C c c c Creon

A a a a A a a Antigone

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

To be safe or to be free

End song.

**M:**

Next

time i'd

like to play Creon

**A:**

We can do that

**M:**

I think

i'd make

a good Creon

**A:**

Okay

you probably

would but now right

now are

you ready

to go from

playing a teenage girl

to

playing a

really

old woman

**M:**

Ya but i'm going

to take

a break first

**A:**

To be a

cat

again

**M:**

Meow

**A:**

Okay have fun Mavis

while

i

let

them know

we're going to Japan

and

for

that

we're going to

play

a

totally different game with

totally different

rules

by

a

playwright

named Zeami who lived about

about 600 years

ago

**M:**

Meow

**A:**

And what's

amazing about Zeami

playing is the style of he invented called

Noh  
Noh theatre

**M:**  
Meow

**A:**  
N  
o  
h  
Noh so  
not  
**no** but  
**Noh** you know (chuckles)  
so are  
you ready  
now Mavis  
are  
you ready  
to play  
an  
old woman the  
way  
you  
would play  
an  
old

old woman  
in theatre  
Noh  
are ready  
you

**M:**  
Meow

**A:**  
To play  
an  
old woman  
Mavis not  
an  
old cat are you  
ready  
to play  
a very  
old woman

**M:**  
Oh yes  
my dear  
oh yes indeedy darling  
deary  
dear let  
me just  
get some cookies out

of the oven  
i just baked  
some for  
you  
your  
favourite

oatmeal raisin ——

**A:**

Seriously ——

That's your old woman  
that's how  
you're going  
to play  
an  
old woman ——

**M:**

Meow

**A:**

Okay seriously for  
a moment  
seriously to  
play  
an old  
woman you don't have  
to overdo

it  
you don't have  
to pretend  
so hard like  
that  
that  
you end  
up  
more like  
some kind  
of cartoon  
of  
of  
an old  
woman

**M:**

But i don't have  
the body  
of  
an old woman  
i don't have  
an old woman's voice

**A:**

True but do  
you know that song  
the song  
Angel from  
Montgomery

**M:**

Ya

**A:**

Well John

Prine the

singer

songwriter

John

Prine

has

this

song

he

sings

called

Angel from

Montgomery

and

the

first

line

of

the

song

in the

opening

lyrics

he

sings

i

am

an old woman



**M:**

Ya

**A:**

And he sings those words

in his own voice not pretending

it's

the voice

of

an

old

woman ——

Like

## SONG

“Angel from Montgomery”

**A** plays guitar and sings:

I am an old woman [REDACTED]\*

**A** continues playing guitar and talks over:

So i use my own voice

i'm

not pretending

to

use

the

voice

of

an old woman ——

\*Redaction due to copyright.



in  
one of Zeami's  
Noh  
plays  
so  
an  
day  
an  
old woman  
around to  
so  
old woman  
her  
when  
the  
old woman  
walked the actor  
walked just like  
her and  
when  
the old woman  
opened  
her fan  
the actor opened his  
fan  
just like  
her and  
when  
the old woman

talked the actor  
talked just like  
her and Zeami  
told  
the actor

you are  
talented very  
talented

you are  
a very skilled actor but  
to copy someone  
move  
by move  
to copy someone point  
by point  
is not  
the way  
of  
Noh it's  
not  
the way  
we play my  
plays  
in Noh theatre  
to play  
a part  
the actor  
must  
not

copy  
from

the  
outside the actor  
you

must

feel from the inside you  
should

feel inside  
that you are  
an old woman  
here  
here  
are some

lines

from

Sekidera Komachi

my

play

with  
the

99 year

old woman Komachi

Days go by without a single bowl of food  
Whom can I ask for one?  
At night my torn rags fail to cover me  
But there's no way to patch the holes.

Go ahead and try  
it

you  
go ahead                    now  
                  and                    play Komachi  
go ahead

**M:**  
                  Days go by without a single bowl of food  
                  Whom can I ask for one?

**A:**  
Your voice please  
                  use  
your                    own  
                  voice

**M:**  
                  At night my torn rags fail to cover me  
                  But there's no way to patch the holes.

**A:**  
Your body please with  
your body                    don't  
                  play                    *like* Komachi  
                  *play*                    Komachi  
                  be                    Komachi now  
                  play

**M:**  
                  Oh how I yearn for the days that are gone!

A:

Good now less

less

less even

less the

less you

show the more

we wonder what's inside

you

how you feel

inside

and inside

you

there's a

flower you

have a

flower deep

inside

and

you must

hide

that

flower inside

you it

is

your secret

it

is

your

power don't so  
 show at it all  
 more once hide it  
 show and it  
 less you and will truly make  
 wonder us  
 here  
 here's a  
 mask go  
 on  
 now  
 wear this  
 mask and be Komachi play

**M:**

Days go by without a single bowl of food  
 Whom can I ask for one?  
 At night my torn rags fail to cover me  
 But there's no way to patch the holes.  
 Each passing rain  
 Ages the colourful flowers.  
 Oh how I yearn for the days that are gone!  
 What would I do to recapture the past!



**A:**

This  
is the  
theatre of Zeami and  
Noh  
with its flower inside  
the actor  
a mystery  
the inside actor that fascinates  
like  
a flower even if  
we  
don't know always  
we're we're fascinated why  
even if  
we  
don't always  
understand  
and this lack of  
understanding believe it  
or not when  
we  
leave Japan  
and move to Paris  
France  
when

we  
leave Zeami  
and move to modern theatre  
which started a hundred only years ago about our parents  
grand and grand great parents were here  
grand and grand great parents were here  
on already earth theatre  
wants modern theatre us  
not to modern theatre  
understand modern loves it when  
we don't understand it  
which  
explains why Stein Gertrude Stein starts one of

plays her

like this

**A and M:**

To know to know to love her so.  
Four saints prepare for saints.  
It makes it well fish.  
Four saints it makes it well fish.  
Four saints prepare for saints it makes it well well fish  
it makes it well fish prepare for saints.  
In narrative prepare for saints.  
Prepare for saints.  
Two saints.  
Four saints.  
Two saints prepare for saints it two saints prepare for  
saints in prepare for saints.  
A narrative of prepare for saints in narrative prepare for  
saints.  
Remain to narrate to prepare two saints for saints.  
At least.  
In finally.  
Very well if not to have and miner.  
A saint is one to be for two when three and you make five  
and two and cover.  
A at most.  
Saint saint a saint.  
Forgotten saint.  
What happened to-day ...

**A:**

It makes  
saints but does  
it make sense  
it's hardly one plus  
one equals

**M:**

Meow  
meow

**A:**

Right and how about this does  
this make  
any sense it's from  
another modern play

**M:**

**De par ma chandelle verte**

**A:**

Which means  
by my green candle  
which is also total  
nonsense  
and the playwright  
who made  
this play had  
his

main actor the  
actor playing this ridiculous  
character with  
the name of Ubu

**M:**  
Ubu

**A:**  
he had  
him spend  
lots  
of  
the play  
acting ridiculously as  
Ubu and  
saying ridiculous  
things like

**M:**  
Machiny it goes  
My brainy it grows  
Long live Ubu!

**A:**  
Which  
is also total nonsense and makes us  
go hm  
but

not

hm

as in

interesting

but

more hm

as in

what's the

point

of

that ———

Sophocles' play made us go

**M:**

Hm ...

**A:**

But these modern plays make  
us

go

**M:**

Hm???

**A:**

They challenge us to puzzle over

them

and think about

them

and

laugh

about

them

and

sense

their cleverness  
and squirm  
at  
their grossness and question  
their silliness and question  
and question  
and question  
some  
more but never

answer what they  
are  
or why they  
are so strange  
and  
a play  
that really  
stands out  
for its  
strangeness  
is a favourite modern  
play by

Irish playwright Samuel Beckett

called **Waiting for Godot**

in

**Waiting for Godot** there

are two

characters  
 Didi one one named named  
 Gogo and  
 they  
 wait by  
 a tree  
 for a  
 guy named  
 Godot  
 who never shows up  
 they  
 don't know  
 who Godot is  
 and  
 they  
 don't know  
 why  
 they  
 wait for him  
 but  
 waiting for Godot is  
 all Didi and  
 Gogo  
 do they  
 wait and  
 wait and  
 wait for him  
 by



the tree  
and  
he never shows up  
it's  
all a  
mystery  
and  
then two  
other  
characters show up  
to make this  
strange  
game even

more confusing

one is named Pozzo  
one is named Lucky and  
Pozzo leads  
Lucky  
by  
a leash  
as  
if Lucky were  
some kind  
of dog  
Pozzo orders  
Lucky  
around

commanding him  
forward

**M** moves forward.

**A:**  
Stop

**M** stops.

**A:**  
Back

**M** moves backward.

**A:**  
Stop

**M** stops.

**A:**  
Turn

**M** turns.

**A:**  
Stop

**M** stops.

**A:**  
Dance

**M** dances.

**A:**  
Stop

**M** stops.

**A:**  
Think Lucky ———  
think

**M:**  
And concurrently simultaneously what is more [REDACTED]\*  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**A:**  
Stop ———

**M:**  
I resume and concurrently simultaneously [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

\*Redaction due to copyright.

[Redacted]

**A:**  
Stop

**M:**

concurrently simultaneously [Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

unfinished ...

**A:**  
And that's  
what  
happens  
in the play  
when Lucky  
thinks ——

and then  
they

leave Pozzo and Lucky that is  
Pozzo and Lucky

leave

leaving

and Didi  
Gogo by

the tree

to keep waiting

and waiting for

Godot who

as we know  
shows

never

and in

the

end the

very end of

the play

Didi turns

to Gogo

and says

well shall we go

**M:**

Yes let's go ——

**A:**

But ——

They don't  
go  
they do  
not  
go like  
they say  
they will  
they simply  
don't follow  
their own command  
they're  
not like dogs who  
do as  
they're told  
they're more  
like cats  
don't you think Mavis

**M:**  
Meow

**A:**  
And that's  
what i  
like about  
that  
end not  
that i prefer  
cats to dogs (**M** meows)

i  
like dogs  
too  
it's  
that it shows us  
a play  
have doesn't  
to  
be  
an event where  
we  
perform tricks jumping  
and chasing  
and rolling  
like over well trained  
dogs  
nor does  
a play  
have to tell  
a story  
a play the  
a theatre  
this stage can  
be place  
a where

you and i  
and all of  
us  
can just

## SONG

“Play Play Everyone Plays”

**A** and **M** play guitar and ukulele and sing:

Chorus Play (play!) play (meow!) everyone plays  
from games outside to games on stage  
Tragedies and comedies with people who spend their  
days (and nights!) making ...

Sophocles wrote tragedies  
with characters like Creon  
whose teenage niece gave him no peace  
and nothing to agree on  
    She said freedom he said nay  
    safety is the only way  
    if you break my law you'll have to pay ...

Chorus Play play everyone plays  
from games outside to games on stage  
Tragedies and comedies with people who spend their  
days making ...

Japanese Noh likes to show  
a different way of being



To help this task we wear a mask  
so the audience - you - are seeing  
    Komachi wishing for her days  
    of youth but now she's old and grey  
    For food and clothes today she has to pray ...

Chorus      Play play everyone plays  
              from games outside to games on stage  
              Tragedies and comedies with people who spend their  
              days making ...

Gertrude Stein wrote funny lines  
their meaning's hard to tell  
*"Ubu Roi, enfants, c'est moi, de par ma verte chandelle!"*  
    Beckett's Godot never ca...me  
    Maybe it's all just a ga...me  
    For girls and boys and grownups all the sa...me ... to

Chorus      Play play everyone plays  
              from games outside to games on stage  
              Tragedies and comedies with people who spend their  
              days making ...

Play play everyone plays  
Play play everyone plays  
Play play everybody loves to play!

END

# To Be Safe or To Be Free

Adam Seelig

**A** G B-7 C G G D C

A: Tobe safe ortobe free M: Tobe safe ortobe free A&M: Tobe safe ortobe free Tobe safe ortobe

8 **B** G D/F# E- G E- D *rit. ...*

free A: C-c-c-c C-c-c-c Creon M: A-a-a-a A-a-aAn - tione A&M: C-c-c-c C-c-c-c Creon A-a-a-a A-a-aAn-

16 D G/E D7 **C** *accel. ...* G B-7 C G D C

ti-go-ne Tobe safe ortobe free Tobe safe ortobe free Tobe safe ortobe free Tobe safe ortobe

24 G A7 *rit. ...* C Eb G

free To be safe or to be free To be safe or to be free - ee

# Play Play Everyone Plays

Adam Seelig

**A** *Chorus 1, 2, 3 & 4*  
F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$  F E $\flat$

Play play everyone plays from games outside to games on stage Tragedies and come-dies and people who spend their

7 *To Coda* **B** *Verse 1, 2 & 3*  
C F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$

days (making) So-phocles wrote tra-gedies with charac-ters like Creon whose teenage niece gave him no peace and

15 F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$ /G F/A B $\flat$  F/C E $\flat$  C

nothing to a - gree on She said freedom he said nay safety is the on-ly way if you break my law you'll have to pay

24  $\text{\textcircled{C}}$  F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$  F *rit. . . .* E $\flat$  B $\flat$  F

Play play everyone plays Play play everyone plays Play play every-body loves to play

## **SYNOPSIS & VOCABULARY**

### **Ancient Greek Theatre**

*Antigone* by Sophocles

King Creon creates a new law to keep his country safe; however, Antigone (pronounced “an-TIG-uh-knee”), his teenaged niece, believes the new law is unfair, so she breaks it. This classic play about freedom versus security, originally written in the Greek language over 2,000 years ago, is still regularly performed all over the world today.

Sophocles’ play asks this question: “What is more important: to be safe or to be free?” (The answer is: both. They are equally important.) Creon thinks it is more important to be safe, while Antigone feels it is more important to be free. They have opposite opinions, so they argue.

**Sophocles** (497-406 BCE, pronounced “SAW-fo-kleez”) was a playwright in Ancient Greece. He wrote 123 (!) tragedies, plays with sad endings that explore challenging issues.

### **Japanese Noh Theatre**

*Komachi at Sekidera* by Zeami

Komachi, born over 1,000 years ago (c.834), is one of the most celebrated poets in the history of Japan. Here is one of her poems (translated by Jane Hirshfield):

This abandoned house  
shining  
in the mountain village –  
how many nights has the autumn moon spent here?

Komachi lived a passionate and exciting life, but by the age of 99 she had become poor and

lonely, living alone in a hut at Sekidera (located in Shiga, Japan). In the play *Komachi at Sekidera*, playwright Zeami shows the 99-year-old Komachi expressing her wish to live in better conditions, as she had in the past.

Zeami Motokiyo (c.1363-1443) was an actor and playwright who developed a special style of Japanese theatre called Noh. In Noh plays, actors play the roles of warriors, demons, ghosts and old women. Noh is the Japanese word for “skill,” and it takes a lot of skill for actors to achieve the careful movements and speaking/chanting techniques of Noh. Noh actors often wear masks and use fans to play their character, moving very carefully and deliberately. As Zeami expressed it, whether an actor plays a warrior or an old woman, “it should seem as though each were holding a branch of flowers.”

### **Modern Theatre: Gertrude Stein, Alfred Jarry & Samuel Beckett**

*Four Saints in Three Acts* by Gertrude Stein

*Four Saints in Three Acts*, written by Gertrude Stein in 1927, is actually an opera in which all the words are sung, not spoken as in a play, but we have included it in *PLAY* because it is a brilliant example of nonsensical Modern Theatre. We love Stein’s writing the same way babies love Mother Goose: for its captivating rhythm and delightful, often hilarious combination of words and phrases.

**Gertrude Stein** (1874-1946) was born in the United States but spent most of her life in Paris, France, where she wrote wildly inventive and clever texts in English. She is best known for the phrase: “a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.”

*Ubu Roi* (King Ubu) by Alfred Jarry

Over a hundred years ago (1896), when Alfred Jarry staged *Ubu Roi*, his play about a very-rudely-behaved king named Ubu, the Paris audience was so disgusted by what they saw that they stood up, yelled at the actors and stopped the play. The play caused a riot! Years later,

however, when it was also performed as a puppet show, audiences started to appreciate the ridiculousness of Ubu and learned to laugh at (rather than be offended by) his outrageous behaviour and his silly expressions.

**Alfred Jarry** (1873-1907) was born in France. Playing pranks and being ridiculous were an important part of his life and plays, especially his best known play, *Ubu Roi*. Jarry had a pet owl and loved to ride his bike and go fishing.

*Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

Didi and Gogo wait by a tree for a character named Godot (pronounced "GOD-oh"), who never shows up. Huh? Then two other characters show up to make matters even stranger: one, named Pozzo, leads the other, named Lucky, by a leash, while Lucky utters gibberish. *Waiting for Godot*, written in 1953, is a play in which "nothing happens" in the oddest and sometimes funniest of ways.

**Samuel Beckett** (1906-89) was born in Ireland and moved to France as an adult. Even though Beckett was raised speaking English in Ireland, he also loved the French language, so he decided to write all of his plays in both English *and* French. (He would have felt at home in bilingual Canada, *n'est-ce pas?*)

## **VOCABULARY**

**Play:** A game in which people (called actors) play different roles (called characters) and interact with each other.

**Playwright:** A writer who writes plays.

**Comedy:** A play with a happy ending.

**Tragedy:** A play with a sad ending.

**Game:** Games like tag are the first plays in our world – made up by children!

**Script:** When a play is written down (not all plays are, by the way), it is called a script. The script allows the actors to memorize what their characters say in the play.

**Mime:** To mime is to pretend an object exists. If I pretend to hold a cup of tea and drink “invisible tea” from an “invisible cup,” I am miming the action of drinking a cup of tea. Most people mime something every day without even realizing they are using this special theatre skill. (In *PLAY*, for example, when the actors pretend to have a sword fight without holding actual swords, they are miming.) Charades is a popular game of mime.

**Dialogue:** When two or more people talk in a play, we call it dialogue.

**Audience:** People who watch a play.

**Drama:** Another word for theatre.

#### Ancient Greece

**Olympics:** A sporting competition invented in Ancient Greece featuring track and field.

**Question:** Some questions have clear answers; other questions are more complicated. When we ask the question, “What is two plus two?” there is a clear answer: “Four.” When Sophocles’ play asks us, “What is more important: to be safe or to be free?” there is no clear, single answer. That explains why Sophocles wrote an entire play on this question.

**Principle:** What you feel is right and true. Antigone feels everyone should be free: that is her principle. Creon feels everyone should be safe: that is his principle.

**Citizen:** A member of a city or country.

**Inhuman, Barbaric, Ruthless:** These words describe terribly unkind behaviour.

**Decency:** Acceptable behaviour.

**Chaos:** Total disorder and confusion. (This word was invented in Ancient Greece.)

**Tyrant:** A bully who runs a country. If a prime minister were a bully, we would call them a tyrant.

## Noh Theatre

**Play (verb):** When an actor plays a character in Noh, they must not merely pretend to be that character or mimic what that character is like; they must feel what it is to be that character.

**Mimic (verb):** Imitate. If I change my voice so it sounds like my grandmother's, I mimic her voice. In some kinds of theatre, mimicking is used to make audiences laugh; in Noh theatre, however, mimicking is not done.

**Fascinate:** To hold someone's attention, to charm them.

**Mystery, Secret:** Sometimes we are fascinated by certain people because we sense there is an exciting mystery or secret deep within them. Zeami wants Noh actors to fascinate us in that way.

**Mask:** An actor will wear a Noh mask, which is carved from wood and painted, to cover their own face and become a character in the play, such as an old person (like Komachi), or a ghost, or even a terrifying demon.

**Poet:** Some poets rhyme, some poets don't, but what all poets have in common is the ability to make words express more than expected. There are poets who can express a lot with few words. Komachi is a great example of such a poet.

## Modern Theatre

**Modern:** Today we use the word modern to describe things that strike us as new and exciting. The CN Tower in Toronto, for example, struck people as being modern when it was first built, and it still looks modern today. Similarly, Gertrude Stein's writing (much like the art of her friend Pablo Picasso) still feels modern today.

**Nonsense:** Nonsense may be the opposite of sense and meaning, but it is no less important, and it can be interesting and fun. Gertrude Stein, Alfred Jarry and Samuel Beckett all loved to use nonsense in their plays.



**Ridiculous:** Silly, funny, hilarious, amusing, droll, preposterous, ludicrous, laughable, non-sensical, comical, outrageous, absurd. People have created a category for plays like *Waiting for Godot*: "Theatre of the Absurd."

**Waiting:** The action of staying where you are until something else happens. Essentially, waiting is the action of inaction. Have you ever sat by a tree, or in the hallway, or on the stairs, or in a classroom, and waited for someone? Most of us grow impatient or bored when we have to wait in those situations, but maybe waiting is more interesting than we think. Beckett definitely thought so, which is why he wrote *Waiting for Godot*.



## NOTES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From grades five to seven (1985-88), I went to Osler Elementary School in Vancouver, where, on a couple of occasions, a small opera troupe visited and performed in our school gym. I can't remember the 'take-home messages' of those performances, if they even had one, but I definitely remember their energy and spirit. Here, very much alive in front of me, was a group of people singing, moving and playing together dynamically and, in every sense of the word, harmoniously. They made an impression on me, and for all the theatres I've attended since, the gym floor of Sir William Osler might remain the most influential. Many thanks to my teachers from back then for bringing that troupe to us – especially Ms Monk, who, I recall, prepared us for one of the performances, ensuring its ideal reception – and, of course, thank you to the performers themselves for fostering those first encounters with the theatre. It is with those experiences in mind, and thinking of my own children, that I wrote *PLAY*.

Thank you to the exceptional actors – Rochelle Bulmer, Richard Harte and Jessica Salgueiro – who, for several years now, have tirelessly performed and contributed to *PLAY*.

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*PLAY* was written in Toronto, on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation and home to a diversity of Indigenous people.

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While the excerpt of *Antigone* (441 BCE) is my own version of the Sophocles, I am indebted to Robert Fagles for his outstanding translation.

“Angel from Montgomery” (1971) is by John Prine.

The excerpt of *Sekidera Komachi* (early 15th century) by Kanze Motokiyo Zeami is translated by Karen Brazell in *Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre*, edited by Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). I am grateful to Jane Hirshfield for the following observation (in introducing her co-translations for *The Ink Dark Moon: Love Poems by Ono no Komachi & Izumi Shikibu*):

In the history of world literature there is only one Golden Age in which women writers were the predominant geniuses. This occurred at the turn of the last millennium, when the emperors of Japan held court in the city of Kyoto, then called Heian-kyo. Ono no Komachi (834[?]-?) served at the court during the first half century of its existence; her poetry, passionate and complex, marks the beginning of the era.

The Gertrude Stein excerpt is the beginning of *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1927/1934) in *Stein: Writings 1903-1932* (New York: The Library of America, 1998).

The Ubu excerpt (“Machiny it goes...”) is a take on “*La chanson du décervelage*” (“The Song of the Disembraining”) from one of Alfred Jarry’s Ubu plays (*Ubu cocu*, 1896), which originally goes:

Voyez, voyez la machin’ tourner,  
Voyez, voyez la cervell’ sauter,  
Voyez, voyez les Rentiers trembler;  
Hourra, cornes-au-cul, vive le Père Ubu!

The *Waiting for Godot* excerpt is from Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986).

– Adam Seelig  
Toronto, November 2019

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Adam Seelig** is a poet, playwright, stage director, and the founder of One Little Goat Theatre Company in Toronto, with which he has premiered works by Yehuda Amichai, Thomas Bernhard, Jon Fosse, Claude Gauvreau, Luigi Pirandello and himself. His works have been covered and acclaimed in an array of media including the New York Times, Globe and Mail, New York Review of Books, Toronto Star, Canadian Theatre Review, CBC, NOW, World Literature Today and Poetry Magazine.

Seelig is the recipient of a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship for drama, and of a Stanford University Golden Award for his study of Samuel Beckett's original manuscripts (published in Modern Drama).

Born and raised in Vancouver, Seelig has also lived in northern California, New York, England and Israel.

## **PLAYS**

Music Music Life Death Music: An Absurdical – 2018

Smyth/Williams: A Staging of the Police Transcript – (adaptation) 2017

Ubu Mayor: A Play with Music – BookThug 2014

Parts to Whole – BookThug 2014

Like the First Time – BookThug 2011

Talking Masks – BookThug 2009

Antigone:Insurgency – 2007

All Is Almost Still – 2004

## **POETRY/FICTION**

Thanks – (forthcoming) Pedlar Press 2020

Every Day in the Morning (slow) – New Star Books 2010

## **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

“Toronto’s enterprising **One Little Goat**” (New York Times) is North America's only theatre company dedicated to poetic theatre. With over 15 years of acclaimed productions for adult audiences, the company is thrilled to make its theatre-for-young-audiences debut with *PLAY*.

One Little Goat is a not-for-profit, artist-driven, registered charity.

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

Beginning with classic games like tag, *PLAY: A (Mini) History of Theatre for Kids* is an exciting introduction to some of the world's most enduring games we call "plays." Performed by two actors, *PLAY* takes young audiences (grades 1-7) through four fascinating periods of drama:

- Early Beginnings: games around the fire
- Ancient Greek Theatre: *Antigone* by Sophocles
- Medieval Japanese Noh Theatre: *Komachi at Sekidera* by Zeami
- Modern Theatre: Gertrude Stein, Alfred Jarry & Samuel Beckett

This publication includes script, lyrics and sheet music.

(*PLAY* is in no way a complete history of theatre! Out of thousands of years in drama, it simply presents some favourite moments for kids, and adults, to appreciate.)