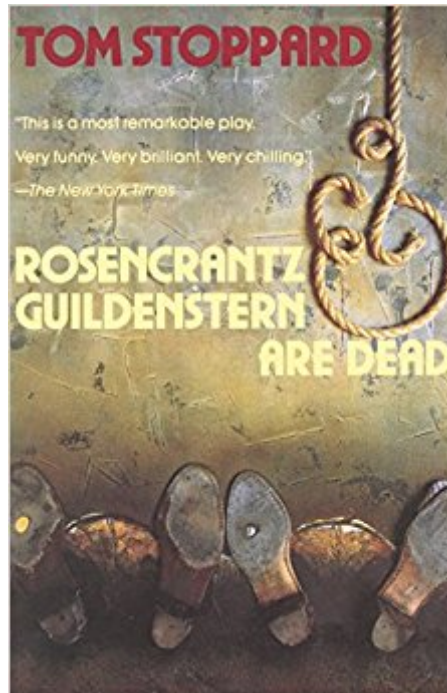




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# Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead



## Synopsis

Acclaimed as a modern dramatic masterpiece, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* is the fabulously inventive tale of Hamlet as told from the worm's-eye view of the bewildered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor characters in Shakespeare's play. In Tom Stoppard's best-known work, this Shakespearean Laurel and Hardy finally get a chance to take the lead role, but do so in a world where echoes of *Waiting for Godot* resound, where reality and illusion intermix, and where fate leads our two heroes to a tragic but inevitable end. Tom Stoppard was catapulted into the front ranks of modern playwrights overnight when *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* opened in London in 1967. Its subsequent run in New York brought it the same enthusiastic acclaim, and the play has since been performed numerous times in the major theatrical centers of the world. It has won top honors for play and playwright in a poll of London Theater critics, and in its printed form it was chosen one of the 147 Notable Books of 1967 by the American Library Association.

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Grove Press; Reprint edition (1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802132758

ISBN-13: 978-0802132758

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 197 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #7,108 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Movies > Screenwriting #16 in Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Dramas & Plays #17 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Regional & Cultural > European

## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: "A masterpiece, not unlike Shakespeare's plays; it's artfully, imaginatively written, multidimensional, and hilarious." —*New Yorker* "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead . . . has proved its sturdiness and power to endure . . . It is, after all, the most performed, most studied, most earnestly analyzed and strenuously anatomized of all Mr. Stoppard's plays: the foundation

of his international career and the inevitable starting point for anyone wanting to appreciate him. *–Â•* *–â* *ç* Benedict Nightingale, New York Times *–Â* *–Å* “A coruscatingly brilliant, endlessly thought-provoking masterpiece. *–Â•* *–â* *ç* Wall Street Journal *–Â* *–Å* “In making *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern . . .* Stoppard mixed the poetic melodrama of Shakespeare with the doom-laden minimalism of Samuel Beckett and topped it with the slapstick of the Marx Brothers. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Rolling Stone *–Â* *–Å* “Very funny. Very brilliant. Very chilling. It has the dust of thought about it and the particles glitter excitingly in the theatrical air . . . This is a most remarkable and thrilling play. In one bound Mr. Stoppard is asking to be considered as among the finest English-speaking writers of our stage, for this is a work of fascinating distinction. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Clive Barnes, New York Times *–Â* *–Å* “Astonishing *–Â* *–â* *ç* a youthful prank bursting with theatrical mischief and literary flair. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Washington Post *–Â* *–Å* “A tour de force . . . Fascinating . . . A triumph. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Roger Ebert *–Â* *–Å* “Tom Stoppard *–â* *–ç* s lively twist on Hamlet . . . [A] metapharcical romp . . . Stoppard *–â* *–ç* s philosophizing playfulness is clearly indebted to the music hall absurdism of *Waiting for Godot* . . . Stoppard *–â* *–ç* s fertile wit keeps this three-act drama pulsing along . . . A subtle pathos, along with the playwright *–â* *–ç* s verbal sophistication, prevents the play from degenerating into a collegiate vaudeville . . . The language remains spry . . . It attains a comic lyricism that *–â* *–ç* s as funny as it is piercing. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Charles McNulty, Los Angeles Times *–Â* *–Å* “Full of philosophizing, nuances and complexities . . . [An] absurdist tragi-comedy . . . Stoppard *–â* *–ç* s . . . writing is pristine. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Charlotte Observer *–Â* *–Å* “Like Beckett, Stoppard shows two figures struggling to find identity and purpose in a world that makes little sense . . . Stoppard is always praised for his intellectual ingenuity: far more important is how, even in his late 20s, he was obsessed with human transience. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Guardian *–Â* *–Å* “After the first night of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at the National Theatre in 1967, Tom Stoppard awoke and found himself famous. It *–â* *–ç* s still a delightful shock, every few years, to be reminded how brilliant and engaging this play remains. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Independent (UK) *–Â* *–Å* “Stoppard *–â* *–ç* s too-clever-for-words little skit in the vicinity of Hamlet . . . This is absurdism 101 with a cultivated Oxbridge edge and an echo chamber of quotations and scattered emotional reverberations from the greatest enigma of a play ever written . . . A brilliant calling card. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Sydney Morning Herald *–Â* *–Å* “*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* feels as fresh and inventive as it must have fifty years ago when it premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and catapulted Tom Stoppard to an international career that continues today. [An] occasionally baffling, always hilarious play. *–Â* *–Å* *–â* *ç* Talkin *–â* *–ç* Broadway

"A brilliant play. Philadelphia Inquirer "Stoppard's intellectual word games and bits of comic business are exhilaratingly clever while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's antics as they stumble in and out of Hamlet make them part Abbott and Costello, part Laurel and Hardy, part Olsen and Johnson, and part Vladimir and Estragon . . . Invigorating brilliance . . . A literate and thought-provoking celebration of the spoken word. TV Guide "Tom Stoppard's . . . meta-theater masterpiece. V. Club "A funny play . . . Stoppard wittily plucked two minor characters from Hamlet and created a dazzlingly wordy and deliberately confounding play . . . Although R & G is among the earliest of Stoppard plays, it has all the comic ingenuity and intellectual razzle-dazzle that has become his signature. Curtain Up "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead . . . [is] now a solid part of the Stoppard canon, and . . . it's a treat . . . The two men become vehicles for Stoppard's non-stop wit with words, flow of ideas and diddling with logic . . . As always, Stoppard's cerebral work will leave some people energized by its storm of ideas. NewsWorks "Intimate, funny and anachronistically atmospheric . . . Without doubt, the play resides within the traditions of the Theatre of the Absurd . . . Stoppard makes it so entertainingly witty, fun and ultimately affecting, you will hardly notice you have been being existential . . . A testament to Stoppard . . . Medieval yet modern, silly yet existential, and all around thoroughly entertaining. Metro Weekly "This monumental and hugely successful play is a highly entertaining mind gym in which Stoppard uses a complex yet fluid dialogue between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern . . . to effortlessly explore the nature of our elusive and all-too-temporal existence. Limelight Magazine (Australia) "A classic of absurdist comedy . . . Mr. Stoppard has fun upending expectations . . . [A] seriously amusing romp. CentralJersey.com

Tom Stoppard's work includes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, The Real Inspector Hound, Jumpers, Travesties, Night and Day, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, After Magritte, Dirty Linen, The Real Thing, Hapgood, Arcadia, Indian Ink, The Invention of Love, the trilogy The Coast of Utopia and Rock 'n' Roll. His radio plays include If You're Glad I'll Be Frank, Albert's Bridge, Where Are They Now?, Artist Descending a Staircase, The Dog It Was That Died, In the Native State and Darkside (incorporating Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon). Television work includes Professional Foul, Squaring the Circle and Parade's End. His film credits include Empire of the Sun, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, which he also directed, Shakespeare in Love, Enigma and Anna

Karenina. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love this play, such a wonderful piece of work, masterfully written, so funny, very creative to see how the author took what most thought to be flat unimportant characters from Shakespeare HAMLET and gave them life. LOVE THIS PLAY

If you are going to a revival of this play, read this first. It's brilliant, but VERY talky. Also read Hamlet, to see the brilliance of Stopped's work

Just one of my favorite lines from this fine play is "What a fine persectution--to be kept intrigued without ever being enlightened." That is the predicament of two bit players in the grand pageant that is Shakespeare's Hamlet. They know little about their childhood friend and less about court intrigues. They are we, and we are they. Like Rosencrantz, we observe closely and infer. Like Guildenstern, we trust that reason and precedent will deliver truth. For these poor fellows, neither experience nor reason enlightens and they end with a whimper, not a bang. The play is--well, playful. Stoppard plays with language, belief, classic characters, life and death. Read it aloud. Read it to yourself. Reread Hamlet, then read Stoppard's play again. Keep a copy near and dip into it in idle moments. It will delight and inform.

great book - lives up to the rating

A delightful play to read aloud.

I love this the first time I read it in high school. I've loved it every reading since. Even after directing this show in college through an extremely grueling rehearsal and production period, I still love this show. Waiting for Godot meets Hamlet. If you like either of those two classics, you owe yourself to check this out. Thought provoking and hilarious, many times almost simultaneously. Slight warning: The play is a masterpiece in my eyes, but mileage may vary for the movie. I personally don't like the decisions made in the movie, but I do love the performances by the main three actors.

This is the only play we had to read last semester for my Intro. to Drama class that I really was not able to get into much at all. I wouldn't say it felt like a chore to read it. It just wasn't my cup of tea, so I didn't care for it much. That being said, there was definitely some good humor involved, and the

ending seems like it would be quite chilling and surreal live on stage. So, not great, in my opinion, but certainly okay. The primary issue that I had with it, which you might or might not find helpful to know, is that there is very much an air of the characters being dragged to their ultimate fate. There is not really any action and reaction, or even any real development at all. The play simply jumps from one place to another until it ultimately reaches the destination that all readers of the original Shakespeare will already know is coming. I have a feeling that much of the play, including a great deal of the random nonsense, would be hilarious in a live show. Just reading it through, however, doesn't do it for me, for the most part.

Beautiful condition

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