

ENDGAME by Samuel Beckett | Plot

We are seeing the last existing people in a devastated world. At least that's what Clov tells Hamm, who is supposedly blind. They fuss about in Hamm's house, where Clov serves Hamm in every way, being subject to his every whim because he doesn't know the combination to the larder. Hamm knows it and apparently a lot of other things as well. He seems to be living in his memories and fantasies, a tragic hero in his own mind. Clov doesn't seem to remember a thing. Is Clov family or just a servant? We don't know.

Two old people, Nagg and Nell, probably the parents of Hamm, live in trash bins. They seem quite senile. Sadly the theatre couldn't afford any actors for these parts.

Hamm keeps asking Clov to kill him.

For some reason Clov won't, despite having many incentives to do so.

Clov wants to leave, but doesn't. Where would he go?

Hamm wants his pain-killers, but it's never time for them, says Clov.

Nagg just wants food and sweets and earthly pleasures.

He gets none of it, and Hamm wants him to shut up.

Hamm wants Clov to look out the windows, to the earth and to the sea, and report what he sees. Clov says he doesn't see anything. Hamm says he wants to explore the world. He dreams of forests and the sun, and a dripping heart in his head.

We're not sure what that means.

Hamm is afraid that Clov will leave him. Clov says he should be. Hamm says Clov should be happy to have him. That he's been like a father to him. Clov promises to leave an alarm bell if he goes. He also makes a dog for Hamm – some sort of poodle.

Hamm tells us a story about a man who came to him long ago with his son, asking for help. Hamm was a Scrooge, but pretends he wasn't. It's probably not true anyway.

Nagg listens to the story because he's promised candy, and gets very upset when he doesn't get any. Clov couldn't care less about the story, and God still doesn't appear.

Nagg doesn't want to be in the play anymore. Clov says he will open a window, and leaves Hamm alone for a while. Hamm is cold and ponders regret.

Clov comes back, looks out the windows some more. Maybe he sees someone, but we're not certain. He then leaves again, and we're not sure if he comes back. Hamm ponders regret some more.

THE END