



# **TRINITY COLLEGE FOR WOMEN NAMAKKAL**

## **Department of English**

**A Glimpse of Nobel Laureates**

**23PENE04- EVEN Semester**

**Presented by**

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# THE CARETAKER

- ❖ The Caretaker, three-act play by Harold Pinter, published and first produced in 1960. The work is Pinter's second full-length play and it concerns the delicate balance between trust and betrayal in familial relationships.
- ❖ The Caretaker is a drama in three acts by Harold Pinter. Although it was the sixth of his major works for stage and television, this psychological study of the confluence of power, allegiance, innocence, and corruption among two brothers and a tramp, became Pinter's first significant commercial success.
- ❖ It premiered at the Arts Theatre Club in London's West End on 27 April 1960

# Introduction

- ❖ The language and plot of *The Caretaker* blends Realism with the Theatre of the Absurd. In the Theatre of the Absurd language is used in a manner that heightens the audience's awareness of the language itself, often through repetition and circumventing dialogue.
- ❖ The play has often been compared to *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett, and other absurdist plays because of its apparent lack of plot and action.
- ❖ *The Caretaker* is a drama of mixed modes; both tragic and comic, it is a tragicomedy. Elements of comedy appear in the monologues of Davies and Mick, and the characters' interactions at times even approach farce.

# Characters

- ❖ Aston- The older brother of Mick, Aston appears shy, reserved, and slow.
- ❖ Davies is an itinerant and a tramp. After a fight at his cafe job, he is brought by Aston to the room where he is offered the caretaker position by both Aston and Mick. Davies is loud, confident, arrogant, and full of himself.
- ❖ Mick-The younger brother of Aston, Mick is rather mysterious and complex. He cares deeply for his brother and deftly deceives Davies. He is intelligent and ambitious, and talks frequently about his projects and desires to expand.

# Theatre of Absurd

- ❖ The Theater of the Absurd is a movement in drama that refers to the work of several playwrights of the 1950s and 1960s. The term is credited to the critic Martin Esslin, who in turn derives it from an essay by the French writer Albert Camus.
- ❖ The Theater of the Absurd writers are including Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter, and Eugene Ionesco.
- ❖ The most prominent Theater of the Absurd playwrights were European, owing to the war's devastation of their homeland, witnessed firsthand.

# Themes & Moral of the Play

- ❖ It is usually well-known that the theme of loneliness and isolation is clear in the play of "The Caretaker" by Harold Pinter in 1959. The chief characters of this work often feel lonely and isolated from each other whether by an action of their will or because of some harmful powers imposed against them.
- ❖ The moral of a story is the lesson that story teaches about how to behave in the world. Moral comes from the Latin word mores, for habits. The moral of a story is supposed to teach you how to be a better person. If moral is used as an adjective, it means good, or ethical.

# Important Lines

- ❖ All them Blacks had it, Blacks, Greeks, Poles, ... treating me like dirt.
- ❖ If I had a few years off me I'd ... I'd break you in half.
- ❖ Picked it up in a ... in a shop. Looked quite nice to me.
- ❖ You're knocking at the door when no one's at home
- ❖ Well, I mean, you don't know who might come up them front steps, do you?

# Significance of the title

- ❖ Caretaker references the character of Davies who accepts a job offer from brothers Aston and Mick as a caretaker of a home. However, Davies is anything but a caretaker of the home. Aston takes care of Davies, and Mick takes care of his brother Aston.
- ❖ “The Caretaker” represents many of the key characteristics of modernism. The characters frequently deceive each other, and the meaning and truth in what they are saying is often ambiguous.



# General Points

- ❖ The action of the play occurs in the flat of Aston and Mick, two brothers. Aston, who is slow-witted, befriends a wheedling, garrulous tramp named Davies.
- ❖ When Davies appears at the brothers' flat, Mick, who is the smarter of the brothers but is unstable, vies for Davies's friendship. Individually, both brothers offer Davies a role as caretaker. Finally realizing through the course of the play that the equilibrium they have established is in jeopardy, the brothers ultimately reject Davies.

**THANK YOU**

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