

# OPERATION: LifeSavers

GOAL: EVERYONE WILL BEAT THE AP LITERATURE EXAM

DATE OF MISSION: MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>

<p><b>Title:</b> Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead <b>Author:</b> Tom Stoppard <b>Date of Publication:</b>1967 <b>Genre:</b> Satire/parody and many would consider it a Black Comedy (or a dark comedy). Note that even as the two men go through distress, the novel is still pretty humorous.</p>	<p>Biographical information about author:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tom Stoppard was born on July 3, 1937 in Czechoslovakia</li><li>• His family was Jewish</li><li>• As a young boy, Tom fled to Singapore in 1939, with his parents to escape the once dangerous Nazis.</li><li>• During World War II, Tom fled once again. This time, it was to India, in order to escape the Japanese attack on Singapore.</li><li>• His father remains in Singapore, but dies on his way to India--when he was ready to flee the area. His COD: drowning.</li><li>• Tom moves again--this time to England, due to his mother's marriage to a major in the British army.</li><li>• To fell in love with English literature--especially plays and fiction.</li><li>• In his late teenage years, Tom dropped out of school and became a journalist. During this time, Tom had the opportunity to look over plays as a part of his job.</li><li>• Soon, Tom becomes a theater critic for a known magazine in London. This is when he begins his career in play writing.</li><li>• In fact, his play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, was once a play called Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear-- before he had edited it.</li><li>• The R&amp;G are Dead that we know today once won the Best Play award way back in 1967 and a Tony Award the year after.</li><li>• Stoppard also continues to create other literary works involved with Shakespearian writing--and don't forget the comedy involved with these</li></ul>
<p>Historical information about the period of publication: This book was published in 1967 in England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 1939, the Nazis were continuing to capture Jews.</li><li>• World War II occurs after 1939</li><li>• The Japanese attack Singapore</li><li>• India gains independence from Britain</li></ul> <p>At 1967...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nuclear weapons from outer space are banned. The soviet Union then ratifies it.</li><li>• NASA launches Lunar Orbiter 3 then 4</li><li>• JFK's body is moved to another burial site</li><li>• protests opposing the Vietnam War were starting in New York City, Washington DC, and San Francisco</li><li>• The six day war, between Israel and Arabs, breaks out and Israel wins.</li><li>• East Jerusalem is added to Israel</li><li>• race riot, and others, in Detroit, Michigan</li><li>• China helps North Vietnam</li><li>• Thurgood Marshal becomes the first African American justice on US Supreme Court</li><li>• .Battle of Duk, in Vietnam War, begins. A little less than three hundred US soldiers are killed</li><li>• President Lyndon Johnson--&gt; US</li><li>• A lot of racial violence in US</li></ul> <p><a href="http://www.earthtothemoon.com/1967_journal.html">http://www.earthtothemoon.com/1967_journal.html</a></p>	

	<p>texts!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tom Stoppard continues to write...</li></ul> <p>Characteristics of the genre:</p> <p><b>Satire:</b> the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding <a href="#">vice</a>, folly, etc.</p> <p>A literary composition, in verse or prose, in <a href="#">which</a> human folly and vice are held up to scorn, derision, or ridicule.</p> <p>a literary genre comprising such compositions.</p> <p><b>Parody:</b> a humorous or satirical imitation of a serious piece of literature or writing: his hilarious parody of Hamlet's soliloquy.</p> <p>The genre of literary composition represented by such imitations.</p> <p><b>Black Comedy:</b></p> <p>comedy that employs morbid, gloomy, grotesque, or calamitous situations in its plot.</p> <p>like black humor:</p> <p>a form of humor that regards human suffering as absurd rather than pitiable, or that considers human existence as ironic and pointless but somehow comic.</p> <p>all definitions from: <a href="http://www.dictionary.com">www.dictionary.com</a></p>
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Plot summary:

- Guildenstern and Rosencrantz appear to be wandering in the wilderness, each with a bag in his hand. Guildenstern's bag is nearly empty, but Rosencrantz's bag is nearly full.
- The two begin to gamble with the coins-- with Rosencrantz tossing one coin at a time in the air and asking Guildenstern whether it was heads or tails. Rosencrantz always claimed that the coin had landed on heads. They do this several times.
- During this time, Guildenstern tries to come up with reasons as to why the coin continues landing on heads--bringing in a discussion about the laws of probability and a little bit of philosophical thoughts. Yet, Rosencrantz seems to be in his own world. He isn't concerned by what's going on around him, and continues to flip the coins.
- The two continue to discuss the laws of probability, and the absurdity that is associated with the coins continuously landing on heads. However, the two constantly show confusion and loss of memory. They do not remember anything about why they had been wandering in the wilderness, except the fact that a messenger had told them to meet them in the area they were in.
- The coin toss is repeated about 90 times or more.
- The absurd nail cutting scene occurs here. This is when Rosencrantz begins to cut his nails, as he tells Guildenstern about the absurd scientific phenomenon that states that a human's fingernails and beard continue to grow after death.
- Ros thinks he hears music, and suddenly begins to speak of how he believes that yellow is a mystical experience that everyone shares. The music appears to be coming from a band. These were the tragedians! These include a drum player, the small boy named Alfred, the horn player, the flautist, the spokesman, and the lead player.
- The player claims to recognize the two men as fellow artists.
- The tragedians and the two protagonists try to decide on a price, and the tragedians, along with the player, almost leave out of dissatisfaction.
- The player orders the tragedians to put on several scenes of different genres of plays that they normally perform. These include sexual entertainment-- and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern show disgust towards the player and his greed.
- The player is told to guess whether the coin, in which one of the protagonists tosses in the air, is heads or tails, and the player does not win. The player gets angry.
- Player explains to Ros. and Guild. that they act out blood, rhetoric, and love--which is what the players said to Hamlet in Shakespeare's Hamlet.
- Guild. and Ros. appear to be in Hamlet's court. The scene in which Hamlet enters Ophelia's bedroom, in Hamlet, occurs at this time; and Claudius and Gertrude welcome Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for arriving. They are asked to find out what was the cause of Hamlet's absurd actions.
- Rosencrantz constantly claims that he wants to go home and questions if he is dead.
- BLACKOUT
- Hamlet tells Ros and Guild what they want to hear, he also mixes up their names.
- The two have a discussion about licking their fingers or toes to find out whether or not the wind is southerly.
- Ros and Guil also discuss whether or not they think Hamlet is mad.
- Ros mistakes the queen for the player
- The two try to speak with Hamlet, but get nothing out of it.
- The actors that are acting out Ros and Guild are wearing the same clothes as this play's Ros and Guild
- Hamlet kills Polonius. Hamlet calls Ros a sponge...
- BLACKOUT
- The two are in a boat. Guildenstern feels free on the boat, but Ros thinks he's going to be sick.
- Coin toss
- Ros opens the letter to find out that Hamlet's head was to be cut off.
- Hamlet changes the letter and stamps it when the two are unaware.
- R & G speak of death. The player rides the boat because their play had offended the king, and they ran away via the boat.
- Pirates attack the ship, and they all hide inside the barrels.
- The ending of Shakespeare's Hamlet is described

<p>Describe the author's style:</p> <p>All descriptions are in the other box.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Shakespearean</li><li>2. Repetition</li><li>3. Simple Dialogue</li></ol>	<p>An example that demonstrates the style:</p> <p>Style Trait One:</p> <p>Throughout the play, Stoppard includes excerpts from Hamlet. Therefore, his play has more of a Shakespearian feel to it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All of page 126</li><li>2. All of page 37</li></ol> <p>Style Trait Two:</p> <p>Throughout the play, Stoppard repeats many events and quotes. With more repetition, there is more emphasis. Therefore, the things that are repeated are important.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Repeating the words "remember" and "forgot" like on page 61, where "Ros doesn't wish to be reminded of the last thing he remembers".</li><li>2. Coin Tossing</li></ol> <p>Style Trait Three:</p> <p>There is simple dialogue all over the play. On some pages, R &amp; G even start exchanging uncompleted statements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Page 42</li><li>2. Page 46</li></ol>
<b>Memorable Quotes</b>	
<b>Quote</b>	<b>Significance</b>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. "Another curious scientific phenomenon is the fact that the fingernails grow after death, as does the beard" (Stoppard 18)</li><li>2. "Yellow is a mystical experience shared by everybody" (Stoppard 20).</li><li>3. "I never change out of [my costume]" (Stoppard 33).</li><li>4. The <b>two</b> quotes to be discussed are: "we only know what we are told, and that's little enough. And for all we know, it isn't even true" (Stoppard 66). "Audiences are told what to expect, and that is all they are prepared to believe in" (Stoppard 84).</li><li>5. "Do you think death could possibly be a boat?" (page 108)</li><li>6. "We don't question, we don't doubt. We perform." pg 108</li><li>7. "Life is a gamble, at terrible odds-- if it was a bet you wouldn't take it" Page 115, during act three.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. The concept of existentialism plays an important role in the text, and it can be detected in this quote. This quote is one in which Rosencrantz says as he was cutting his nails; and based on the quote, he claims that fingernails continue to grow after death. This, alone, is enough evidence to prove that Rosencrantz confuses the two concepts of life and death, and does not have a clear understanding of the difference between the two. In other words, life can be questionable because there is no proper way to figure out whether the life we live in now exists altogether. In fact, Rosencrantz questions his existence several times throughout the text- which is a vital component of existentialism.</li><li>9. Within this quote, Guildenstern expresses his belief that life is mystical and imaginary. To do so, Guildenstern describes the color yellow as a mystical experience shared by everyone. If the color yellow were to represent a skin color that is shared by everyone, then calling the color yellow a mystical experience is calling humans a mystical experience--which, in return, refers to existence as a mystical experience. Is there a way to prove one's existence?</li><li>10. After discussing the way in which they put on plays, the player tells the protagonists that he never changes out of his costume, and that he is always in character. This is significant to the text in that it highlights humans' inability to express their true selves-- or their true potentials. Every human has character. Yet, there are restrictions put in place by society that one must blindly follow, or face societal sanctions. Therefore, everyone is required to be in their costume at all times. Once they change the costume and oppose, the world goes into chaos.</li><li>11. These two quotes can directly relate to the idea of existentialism, and how existence and life can be questionable. The first quote speaks of how a human's knowledge is limited to only what they know, or are told, about the world. Yet, what we do know as humans is not enough to prove ones existence. For all we know, this whole life may not even exist-- which is the heart of the quote. In the second quote, we are also told, this time by the player, that audiences, or people, are told what to expect, and that is all they have to believe in. This is completely true. Humans are born into this world, they are introduced to it, they learn about it, they act upon that knowledge, and they leave life with that knowledge. This is because they are told that one day they will once grow up to have a family, that they will one day obtain a job, that they will face loss, that they will fail and succeed, and much more. However, it is very difficult for many to expect death, because they are not prepared to believe in it. Death is not something one can accurately describe to those that are still alive. It is a part of the unknown. Therefore, it becomes difficult</li></ol>
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	<p>for audiences to, sometimes, even imagine it.</p> <p>12. What is interesting about the concept of death in this play is the fact that it is not only present in the conversations between the major characters of the play, but that the concept of death takes on the role of the boat in which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ride to deliver Hamlet to England. In this boat, Rosencrantz proposes a significant question about the boat and death, asking Guildenstern whether "death could possibly be a boat"- which is ironic because the reader is already aware that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will eventually die (Stoppard 108). There is no escape for the characters in the play. Ever since the two characters ride on the boat, they become trapped within it. There is no way they could stop in the middle of the path and instantaneously be dropped back to the beginning. Nonetheless, the boat seems to represent the experience of living in a world in which one cannot alter or control. This can be true. However, what is more accurate is the fact that the boat represents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's journey from life, to death.</p> <p>13. Throughout the play, and even in Hamlet, it seems as if Rosencrantz and Guildenstern like to be ordered around. They are the type of characters that like to be given directions, although such treatment may be unjust-- and this quote alone acts as strong evidence for this claim. Although the two men constantly question their actions and motives, they decide to do whatever they are told just because they are told. This, in fact, illuminates one of the most important themes of the text: a person's giving in to the randomness of the world. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can represent humans in general; and just like other humans do on a daily basis, these men give in to their fate-- often without doing anything useful about it. This giving in to randomness can be detected in many areas of the play, but especially at the ending. The two men give in to the randomness of the society in which they live in. They agree to take Hamlet to England, although they did not know why. The result was their death.</p> <p>14. This is something only the mysterious character of the player to say. Although he doesn't say it directly, he seems to know everything about the characters of Ros and Guild and their fate. In this quote, the player reveals one of the truths that Ros and Guild had been searching for throughout the whole play. He reveals the true nature of life-- the true nature of Ros and Guild's life. He compares life to a gamble in which not many succeed at achieving the positive ends of it. This can be compare to the coin toss symbol provided in the text. The coin toss hints at the</p>
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	<p>randomness of the world in which we all live in. Things happen all the time, but no one, but the coin tosser, or god, is able to control fate altogether. In other words, what the player is saying is that life is not fair; it cannot be played the way someone desires to.</p>
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Characters			
Name	Role in the story	Significance	Adjectives
Rosencrantz	<p>Rosencrantz is one of the main characters in the play. At the beginning of the play, both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive at the scene. Both are inseparable.</p> <p>Rosencrantz spends a lot of time tossing coins in the air, not</p>	<p>Rosencrantz's significance lies in the fact that he was one of the two main characters of the play that spent the whole time looking for answers to their questions about life and existence, and</p>	<p>optimistic, easygoing, carefree, confused, simple...</p>

	<p>worrying too much about his surroundings, getting confused, and constantly showing care for his buddy, Guildenstern. They come into the play together and die together.</p> <p>Rosencrantz was also Hamlet's past friend. He goes back to Denmark to find out what went wrong with Hamlet-- after being ordered by Denmark's Royalty.</p>	<p>not finding any answers at the end.</p>	
<p>Guildenstern</p>	<p>Guildenstern is obviously another main character of the story. He is, however, the total opposite of Rosencrantz.</p> <p>Guildenstern spends the play trying to come up with answers to everything-- although he fails to. He spends the story with Rosencrantz, and often finds Rosencrantz incapable of thinking.</p> <p>However, just like it is stated above, Guildenstern enters and leaves the play with Rosencrantz. They both try to find out what's wrong with Hamlet during the play.</p>	<p>Guildenstern's character is significant due to the fact that, even when compared with that of Rosencrantz, both are everyday men that do not know the truth about life, death, and existence. The two are hopeless men that often give in to fate.</p>	<p>dominant, pessimistic, hopeless, emotional, philosophical...</p>

Tragedians	These tragedians are male actors that travel and participate in whatever act necessary to earn good money from. In fact, they are even willing to provide an audience with heavily sexual scenes.	The significance of the tragedians lies in the fact that their characters can be easily contrasted with that of R & G. If the tragedians are players, then what are R &G?	disgusting, disturbing, greedy, worthless, not respected, honorless, etc...
The player	The player is the leader of the tragedians. At the beginning of their meeting with R & G, the player calls R & G artists like himself. Therefore, the player is a man that considers himself an artist, although he is willing to sell his fellow actors for the sake of money.	The play is all about confusion, and all the player does as add more to this confusion. His mysterious character seems to know more about the two main characters than it shows the reader.	mysterious, suspicious, confident, demanding, knowledgably (of things R &G don't know)...
Hamlet	Hamlet is the prince of Denmark, and his character comes from Shakespeare's play called Hamlet. In this play, Hamlet goes through several catastrophic events that leave him and the readers debating whether or not he has gone mad.	Hamlet is a crucial, but minor, character in this play. He is crucial in that he, as it later appears, causes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to arrive at his court, get sent away on a ship, and die. He drives all of the events in the play.	Acts on impulse, melancholic, caring, loyal, etc...
Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia, Polonius, and Leartes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudius is Hamlet's uncle. Claudius kill's Hamlet's father, becomes king, and marries Hamlet's mother.</li> <li>• Gertrude is Hamlet's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of these characters help create the play within the play that is present in the text. In other words, these characters are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudius: guilty, acts upon impulse, shameless, evil, etc.</li> <li>• Gertrude: unloyal, yet a little caring, etc.</li> <li>• Ophelia: melancholic, sensitive, sad,</li> </ul>

	<p>mother. Right after her husband dies, she quickly gets remarried to Claudius. She is the queen of Denmark. She is, however, looked down upon for marrying again-- quickly after the death of her husband. Yet, she shows some care and concern for her son.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ophelia was Hamlet's past beloved. She is also the daughter of Polonius. Ophelia leaves Hamlet, under the request of her father, and later goes mad and dies after her father is killed.</li><li>• Polonius is Claudius's advisor. He is a very obedient man, and cares a lot for his daughter and son. Polonius is later</li></ul>	<p>significant in that they create a crucial part of the text, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. Yet, at the same time, the instances in which they are described or mentioned in the play are mostly comprised of excerpts that come directly from William Shakespeare's play, Hamlet. Therefore, this play within a play stresses importance on the plot in Hamlet and how that play relates to Stoppard's interpretation of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern .</p>	<p>depressed, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Polonius: obedient, persuasive, etc...</li><li>• Leartes: acts upon impulse, demanding, yet wise...</li></ul>
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	<p>accidentally killed by Hamlet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leartes is Ophelia's brother and Polonius's son. He leaves Denmark for a while and returns to find that his father is dead. Leartes takes revenge for his father and ends up getting killed.</li> </ul>		
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<p><b>Setting</b></p>	<p><b>Significance of the opening scene</b></p>
<p><b>Time:</b> The play occurs in the 1500s, which is better known as the Elizabethian Era.  <b>Place:</b> The play begins with the characters spending time in no specified place. Just like in <i>Waiting for Godot</i>, the setting of the play begins with a simple setting. For all we know, they could be-- and probably are-- in the middle of nowhere. We are, however, told that the two men were in the wilderness. Later on in the play, the two main</p>	<p>The opening scene of this play is probably one of the most important parts of the text--especially to the themes of existentialism and the theatre of the absurd. Existentialism is known as a philosophical movement that questions all aspects of meaning. The theater of the absurd, on the other hand, can be defined through several characteristics. One of the most important is the fact that a play has a simple, general, and unrecognizable setting. The opening scene of the play best fits this description. The men enter an area that Stoppard only describes as the wilderness. There is no further description, and what makes this significant is the fact that, with such a setting, the story could have occurred anywhere in the world. Knowing this, another message about absurdity and existentialism is sent to the world: if Ros and Guild were unable to determine if they truly exist and if their lives exhibit many absurdities, then every human on the planet is capable of such characteristics.                  Also, having such a blank and open setting in the opening scene creates a feeling of blankness and confusion amongst the characters-- whom are already confused.</p> <p><b>Significance of ending/closing scene</b></p> <p>The ending scene of this play is the ending scene of Shakespeare's play, <i>Hamlet</i>. Therefore, it is extremely crucial to identify the ending scene as that of Shakespeare's. By ending his play the same way Shakespeare did, Stoppard puts a greater emphasis on Hamlet-- making his story of Ros and Guild fit well with that of Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i>. It's like putting puzzle pieces together. In <i>Hamlet</i>, the focus of the play is put on Hamlet and the other members of his court. Yet, the two characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern did not receive as much attention. Stoppard decided to change that by creating his own interpretation of what he believed went on with these two strange men-- and Stoppard's main goal was to smoothly integrate his story with that of the complicated Shakespearean one. It was a success! After all, it is evident that by including the ending of Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> the way he did, Stoppard succeeded at creating another successful story of Hamlet that many other authors are still unable to do.                  Also, the fact that Ros and Guild die at the end only add on to the absurdity of the play and the satire associated with existence. Life is absurd. It ends in the most absurd ways.</p>

<p>characters appear in Hamlet's Castle/Court. This is in Denmark. In this section of the book, the main events that occurred in Shakespeare's Hamlet occur. The men then hop onto a boat that leads them to their demise. The boat was far away from land.</p>	
<p>Symbols</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coin Toss:</b> In Rosencranz and Guildenstern are Dead, Tom Stoppard presents to the readers an abstract statement about the randomness of the world, through the simple act, and motif of tossing a coin. From the first few lines of the text, the reader is introduced to the idea</li> </ul>	<p>Old AP Questions</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2005 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Question 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)</p> <p>In Kate Chopin's <i>The Awakening</i> (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess "that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions." In a novel or play that you have studied, identify a character who conforms outwardly while questioning inwardly. Then write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid mere plot summary.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2011 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Question 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)</p> <p>In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life "is a search for justice."</p> <p>Choose a character from a novel or play who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character's understanding of justice, the degree to which the character's search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.</p>

<p>of gambling-- making chance and probability important parts of the text. In fact, chance plays a significant role in the lives of the characters--which can be seen through the absurd situations in which these two men have been put in, thought the play. What's interesting about this is the fact the two always give into chance and randomness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In fact, each coin being tossed could represent the world in which we live -- one side</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2004 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Question 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Suggested time— 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)</p> <p>Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes' observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.</p>
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<p>can represent Rosencrantz's confusion, while the other can represent Guildenstern's philosophical ideas. Every time the coin is tossed, confusion and philosophy blend-- creating the world that we live in today. The world is random and full of risks and challenges. This is seen though the constant landing of the coins on the heads side. Although the laws of probability exist, the world does not follow such restrictions. It is random and full of</p>	
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<p>surprises-- and this could be seen through the simple act of tossing a coin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Boat:</b> What is interestin g about the concept of death in this play is the fact that it is not only present in the conversat ions between the major character s of the play, but that the concept of death takes on the role of the boat in which Rosencra ntz and Guildenst ern ride to deliver Hamlet to England.</li></ul>	
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<p>In this boat, Rosencrantz proposes a significant question about the boat and death, asking Guildenstern whether "death could possibly be a boat"- which is ironic because the reader is already aware that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will eventually die (Stoppard 108). There is no escape for the characters in the play. Ever since the two</p>	
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<p>characters ride on the boat, they become trapped within it. There is no way they could stop in the middle of the path and instantaneously be dropped back to the beginning.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the boat seems to represent the experience of living in a world in which one cannot alter or control. This can be true. However, what is more accurate is the fact</p>	
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<p>that the boat represents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's journey from life, to death.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Barrels and Pirates:</b> Towards the end of the play, where the characters ride on the boat to England, pirates attack. This is when the characters "run for their lives downstage, [quickly] catch sight of each other, and slam down lids" (Stoppard 118). As readers that are already aware of the play's ending, and the fact that the boat</li></ul>	
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<p>can represent death, then the pirate quickly becomes a representation of a death warning's warning. In real life, such a warning can come in the form of an illness or disease. Some people sense death. Yet, others need a warning; and after the warning, fear begins to build as death approaches-- which explain their hiding in the barrels and quickly closing the lids. The barrels, on the other hand, represent the</p>	
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<p>"mystical experience" that all humans believe can protect them from everything (Stoppard 20). Truth is, however, life cannot protect you from death. The pirates will arrive, and the barrels will vanish.</p>	
<b>Possible Themes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Randomness of the World</li><li>• The Absurdity of Existence/Life</li><li>• The Difficulty associated with decision-making</li><li>• The Differences between one's acting life, and one's real life</li></ul>	