

## Exits and Entrances

### Write me!

“Every exit (is) an entrance somewhere else,” says the Player as he explains what the Tragedians do (28).

“Death is an exit, unobtrusive and unannounced,” says Guil after the Spies die “rather well” (84).

**Acting** and **death**, the two major themes of the play, are often intertwined; the Tragedians act death in many different ways and show that an acted death is far more dramatic – and more believable – than a real one.

Unlike the spies, Ros and Guil do not die “rather well.” They just **fail to reappear**. The failure is part of Guil’s earlier definition of death – “Now you see him, now you don’t” (84). Guil’s last words before his disappearance are, “Now you see me, now you---” (126). He does not agree with the Player about an entrance following the exit. That, he says, only occurs in **acted deaths**, when the Player returns wearing a different hat. In real death, he says, “no one gets up” (123).

Think about these parallels: acting and death, exits and entrances. Consider the following:

- No one believed the real death of the actor on stage, described by the Player on page 84.
- The Player is always “on” and always in character and costume.
- Ros and Guil never leave stage until they die (are they “on”?). Their only exit is a momentary leap into a barrel.
- The Tragedians perform Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s deaths.
- At the end of Act 2, Ros and Guild don’t know if they want to come back – or even if they want to go. (They go).
- The Player does get up after being supposedly killed by Guil.
- The bodies of Ros and Guil are not on stage in the final scene.
- When the Player gets up after being stabbed, he says, “For a moment you thought I’d – cheated” (124).

What is Stoppard saying here about death? About acting and death? About exits and entrances? About Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s deaths?