


BECKETT BITES

GLOSSARY



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PLAY

Term	Definition	Line/Speaker	Image
Urns	A small vessel intended to hold the ashes of the cremated dead. For a history of the cremation process, click here .	<i>"three identical grey urns"</i> (stage dir.)	
Impassive	Not feeling or showing emotion	<i>"Faces impassive throughout"</i> (stage dir.)	
In the flesh	An idiom to mean in-person or face-to-face. "Flesh," on it's own, however, refers to the body. In the Bible, "of the flesh" is often understood as a euphemism for sexual conduct. Historically, "of the flesh" was connected to the term "carnal," which is defined as "pertaining to or characterized by the flesh or the body, its passions and appetites"	<i>"Seeing her now for the first time full length in the flesh I understood..."</i> (W2)	
Bitch	Several meanings and interpretations. Traditionally refers to a female dog or wolf but is also known as an offensive term to women.	<i>"I smell you off him, she screamed, he stinks of bitch."</i> (W2)	


Dogged	To follow someone or their movements closely and persistently.	“Though I had him dogged for months” (W1)	
Assiduous	To show great care, attention, and effort. Marked by careful attention or persistent application.	“And there was no denying that he continued as...assiduous as ever.” (W1)	
Platonic	Named for the Greek philosopher Plato, refers to a relationship marked by the absence of romance or sex.	“This, and his horror of the merely Platonic thing” (W1, note that the term is capitalized)	
Erskine	Name meaning “high cliff”	“Fearing she was about to offer me violence I rang for Erskine” (W2)	
Settle my hash	An idiom which means to subdue, suppress, or overcome someone who is making trouble. In this instance, “hash” refers to the mess that the perpetrator has made.	“She would settle my hash.” (W2)	<i>Settle one's hash, to, a picturesque phrase expressive of such manner of acting as will finally silence an opponent and make an end to his hostility. “If you don't vamos this instant, I'll settle your hash with this here toothpick in a minit.” (Life in Mississippi, p. 114.)</i>

Morning room	In Victorian homes of the 18 th and 19 th centuries, the morning room is where the lady of the house would typically prepare for her day.	"I was sitting stricken in the morning room" (W1)	
Bloodhound	A large breed of dog distinctive for their unparalleled ability to detect human scent over great distances. Paired with an exceptional tracking instinct, bloodhounds have been enlisted by police and law enforcement for centuries to track criminals or missing people. In the case of <i>Play</i> , bloodhound is used metaphorically, to suggest that an exceptional private investigator was hired.	"She put a bloodhound on me." (M)	


Riviera	Refers to the French Riviera, is the Mediterranean coastline of the Southeast corner of France, characterized by deep blue sky and sea and sunny weather. Typically known as a vacation destination for aristocrats or the upper classes.		
Grand Canary	The third largest island as part of the archipelago known as the “Canary Islands,” located off the coast of Northwest Africa but part of Spain. Characterized by long, white beaches and picturesque villages.		
Clean Breast	An idiom which uses “clean breast” to mean baring one’s heart and to speak openly and honestly about something that has been previously lied about or kept secret.	“Then I got frightened and made a clean breast of it.” (M)	
Pudding face	Comes from European slang, meaning a large, chubby face	“Pudding face, puffy, spots, blubber mouth, jowls” (W1)	

Dugs	A pejorative term, usually meaning large and/or saggy breasts, indicating that the woman is older.	“Blubber mouth, jowls, no neck, dugs you could – “ (W1)	
Old hand mower	Designed to cut grass on sports ground and extensive gardens, hand mowers feature a fixed cutting blade in front of the rear roller and wheel-driven rotary blades. Click here for the sound of the handmower.	“I could hear a mower. An old hand mower.” (W2)	
Flunkey	a person who performs relatively menial tasks for someone else, especially obsequiously.	“calves like a flunkey”	
Affairs in Order	To organize one’s financial and legal arrangements in preparation for death.	“He swore we should as soon as he had put his affairs in order.” (W2)	
Doxy	An outdated term to mean a lover, mistress, or sex worker.	“I ran into your ex-doxy” (M)	


Ash (location)	A small English village located Southwest of London.	“On the way back by Ash and Snodland – “ (W1)	
Snodland (location)	A small English town outside of London. It is believed that Beckett found Snodland (and the aforementioned town Ash) on a map during his stay in Kent, following his secret marriage to Suzanne Déchevaux-Dumesnil in 1961.	“On the way back by Ash and Snodland – “ (W1)	
Lipton's	A brand of British tea developed by Sir Thomas Lipton. Leading up to the twentieth century, tea was still seen as a luxury item due to the need for trade and import factors. Lipton aimed to develop an affordable and reliable product, and it exploded with	“Personally I always preferred Lipton's” (M)	

	popularity amongst the working class.		
Dinghy	<p>A type of small boat, often used as a lifeboat or carried by a larger vessel. Interestingly, but perhaps unrelatedly there is an Irish Naval vessel named for Samuel Beckett, a dinghy from which served as a rescue boat in 2015.</p>	<p>“A little dinghy, on the river, I resting on my oars, they lolling on air-pillows in the stern...sheets.” (M)</p>	

FOOTFALLS

Term	Definition	Line/Speaker	Image
Feat	In modern times, “feat” means an act of accomplishment or bravery. In this context, the archaic version of feat is used to mean neat or tidy – May’s movement is characterized as graceful and dexterous.	“Watch how feat she wheels.” (V)	
Sequel	Something that takes place after or as a result of an earlier event – but in this case, sequel is a pun in the English version: “sequel” = “seek well.”	“Sequel. <i>(Pause. Begins pacing. Steps a little slower still. After two lengths halts facing front at R. Pause.)</i> Sequel.” (May)	
Evensong	Traditionally held at sunset, Evensong is a Christian service of evening prayers, psalms, and canticles, conducted according to a set form, especially that of the Anglican Church. Click here to read more about this service in an article from The New Yorker.	“Amy did you observe anything...strange at Evensong?” (M)	

ROCKABY

Term	Definition	Line/Speaker	Image
To and fro	A phrase to mean a constant movement backward and forward or from side to side	<i>"time she stopped going to and fro" (V)</i>	
Rocking-chair	A chair with two curved bands mounted to the bottom. Originated in the early 18 th century in North America. Evocative of a rocking cradle's back-and-forth motion, which is known to soothe infants to sleep.	<i>"Fade up on W in rocking-chair facing front downstage slightly off centre audience left."</i>	

COME AND GO

Term	Definition	Line/Speaker	Image
Miss Wade's Playground	Refers to a boarding school for girls attended by Beckett's cousins on Morehampton Road in Dublin known as "Miss Wade's." To read more about the biographical origins, click here.	"Just sit as we used to, in the playground at Miss Wade's" (Flo)	