



TWO PLAYS BY NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS  
SODOM AND GOMORRAH  
and  
COMEDY: A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT

*Translated from the Greek and with an Introduction  
by Kimon Friar*

Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957) maintains his lead as the best known and most widely read modern Greek writer. Known chiefly for his epic *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* and his many novels, among them *Zorba the Greek*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Saint Francis*, etc., he is also an accomplished playwright, having written nineteen plays, most of them in strict meter, a few in prose, and four in free verse. As in his other works, so in his plays Kazantzakis captures the imagination of his readers with his essentially dramatic view of life, laden with religious and existential concerns. This is also true of the two plays in this volume, *Sodom and Gomorrah* and *Comedy: A Tragedy in One Act*.

The two plays in this volume, written forty years apart, provide insightful commentary on the kinds of questions which manifest themselves in the whole range of Kazantzakis's work. The plays also reveal that in a certain sense Kazantzakis anticipated his European colleagues by a generation. This is especially true of *Comedy: A Tragedy in One Act*, written in 1909, in which Kazantzakis was the first to put into practice the "theatrical possibilities" which had to wait for Sartre's *No Exit* (1944) and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952). In *Sodom and Gomorrah*, written in 1948, Kazantzakis dramatizes once more the "savage struggle to the death between Man and God." Both Plays, sensitively translated by Kimon Friar, attest further to the genius of Kazantzakis as an artist and as a visionary.

The two introductions, by Kimon Friar and Karl Kerényi, respectively, put the plays in their Greek and indeed European cultural perspective.

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Kimon Friar is a well-known neohellenist residing in Athens who has distinguished himself as an editor, translator and lecturer. He is best known for his translation of *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* by Nikos Kazantzakis and his *Modern Greek Poetry*, both monumental accomplishments. His other translations include *The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises* by Nikos Kazantzakis; *With Face to the Wall*, selected poems by Milos Sahtouris; and *The Sovereign Sun*, selected poems by Odysseus Elytis, winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize for Literature.