

# *Midnight or the Woodland*

*by*

*Joseph Arnone*

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Cast of Characters

BADGER:

50's

LENOY:

20's

Place

Cabin in the woods

Time

Afternoon

Setting: The play takes place inside and on the woodland of Badger's cabin.

At Rise: The play opens with Badger and Lenoy talking on the front porch to Badger's cabin.

*Lenoy lays down lumber.*

BADGER: What else?

LENOY: That's it.

*Holding up a beer.*

BADGER: Come, have yourself a cold one.

*Lenoy takes the beer and drinks  
it down.*

*He hands it back to Badger.*

BADGER: Well done, lad. Another?

LENOY: Sure.

*Badger digs into his cooler.  
Hands Lenoy a beer.*

BADGER: Taste it this time, yeah?

*Lenoy sits down on a log.  
He sips his beer.*

BADGER (*observing*): Ya look a little weary eyed.

LENOY: Ah, me? No.

BADGER: Ya nose looks swollen up.

LENOY: Still? (*quickly*) I mean, is it now?

BADGER: Ya father isn't still goin' round beatin' ya, is he?

LENOY: Oh, not really, no.

BADGER: Once in a while then?

LENOY: Can't do nothin' without somethin' really.

BADGER: The bastard.

LENOY: I reckon I'll be out soon anyways, no reason to make any waves.

BADGER: You're bigger and stronger than he is, ya know.

LENOY: I know.

BADGER: Ya could take him with a single lick, that's true.

LENOY: I like fightin'.

BADGER: So? What are ya waitin' fer?

LENOY: I can't do it.

BADGER: Sure ye can.

LENOY: It's me father. I don't want to beat up me own dad.

BADGER: No, huh?

LENOY: It'll hurt me more than it'll hurt him, aye, like on the inside like, yeah?

BADGER: After everythin' he's done to ya?

LENOY: Sure.

BADGER: You're a good lad, Lenoy. God bless ya. If you were my son I'd be pleased indeed.

LENOY: Oh, now -

BADGER: There's a talent in ya lad, ya just need to find it.

LENOY: I ain't good at anythin' really, Badger, honest to God -

BADGER: Nonsense! Look at all the wood you've chopped down fer me. You've done the work of three men.

LENOY: Ah, that's nothin'. I ain't even tired none, ya know?

BADGER: Boy I remember the days when I was filled with your kind of spirit. Energy that would never burn out. You need ta channel it lad, find somethin' ya really enjoy doin' and thrust yourself in it.

LENOY (*without hesitation*): Boxin'.

BADGER: Yo say, Boxin' did ya?

LENOY: Aye.

BADGER: Is that why I see you throwin' fists in the air earlier?

LENOY: That was me sparrin'.

BADGER: Ya don't say?

LENOY: Oh, ya know, nothin' fancy, just horsin' round.

BADGER: Show me!

LENOY: Really?

BADGER: Go on!

*Lenoy stands up and spars. He is quite impressive. Fast, determined and ferocious.*

*Lenoy stops and looks at Badger for approval.*

BADGER: Aye.

*Lenoy sits back down and sips his beer.*

LENOY: Aye.

BADGER: I must say, that was quite the sight.

LENOY: Oh, no -

BADGER: I'm tellin' ya, ya could really throw a fist son. If you were to get into it with a random bloke they'd be in the shit fer sure. Christ! Ha, ha, ha.

LENOY: Ha, ha, ha.

BADGER: Where'd ya learn to fight like that?

LENOY: Videos. I like watchin', uhrm, the old vintage warriors I call 'em, like Jack Dempsey or Rocky Marciano like.

BADGER: Tell you what?

LENOY: What?

BADGER: I'm going to make you a boxing bag!

LENOY: Yeah?

BADGER: Sure. A boxer's gotta have somethin' to hit, eh?

LENOY: But, how we supposed to make -

BADGER: Leave that up to me. I have an old cot in me shed. I'll reconfigure the bloody thing fer ya and you can have that as your own customized punching bag that is.

LENOY: Really?

BADGER: Sure thing.

LENOY: Gee, thanks.

BADGER: A man's gotta have a purpose in life or else he ceases being a man, yeah?

LENOY: Ya.

BADGER: You like boxin' eh?

LENOY: Love it really like.

BADGER: Do some trainin' and if it suits ya, ya should take it up serious.

LENOY: Trainin' how like?

BADGER: Runnin', jumpin' rope, sparrin', we'll make ya the punching bag.

LENOY: You think I could be a boxer?

BADGER: Why not? A person could be whatever the feck they wanna be in this life.

LENOY: Me father wants me to join The Defense Forces.

BADGER: Aye. Nothin' wrong in that lad, but if there's a fighter in ya, it's worth a look at.

*(pause.)*

LENOY: Umm...why do ya live out here in the woods Badger?

BADGER: Oh, I enjoy the silence, the fresh air, I like to read, to think.

LENOY: What's that ya think about then?

BADGER: Oh, life, memories, things like that.

LENOY: People in town say you're dangerous. That you've killed ya wife.

BADGER: Don't believe everythin' ya hear.

LENOY: I don't.

BADGER: That's not to say I haven't killed anyone.

LENOY: You have?

BADGER: Aye.

LENOY: Then, is it true..what they say?

BADGER: Not in their context..I certainly don't go out each night on the hunt...my situation, what occurred was purely circumstantial, but that's not fer us to discuss, it's the past and it's me personal business, I'm only being honest with ya cause I like ya and I don't want to lie to ya. But as far as those feckers talkin' about me wife, well, I wish them all to die and burn in hell.

LENOY: Hell's a hot place, eh?

BADGER: I'd wish 'em all worse if I could think of somethin' worse than hell.

LENOY: Oh, I didn't mean to make ya mad some.

BADGER: Crazy thing about it is that I've thought about it.

LENOY: Thought about it?

BADGER: Killin' me wife.

LENOY: You have?

BADGER: Sure I have.

LENOY: That isn't too normal like, is it?

BADGER: It's honest. That's the trouble in this world, nobody is honest anymore. We all hide our truest thoughts, afraid of getting labeled one thing or another. Closed off.

Ya see, we keep things deliberately on the inside fer fear of lookin' crazy or fear of gettin' banned from our ever evolving society..but there's a secret truth lurking within all of us..it's undeniable..it's, it's unavoidable. We all have private, sinister thoughts; thoughts we would never reveal to others; distasteful, horrifying, uncomfortable thoughts that rise up in us, that scare us, that make us question our own goodness...what do we do? We run. We sweep our thoughts under the nearest rug and we sigh in relief because we trust that the darker depths of our psyche won't get caught. Aye. So, what happens?

Someone somewhere can't bare it. They try drinkin', vacationin', cheatin', whinin', distractin' themselves with materialism..but deep down there's that neverending ticking time bomb; that person, whoever it may be, becomes another statistic all of us shake our heads over; all while keeping our own dangerous thoughts caged.

Well, here I am Lenoy, a man who has confessed his sins, my thinkin' sins that is..me wife, she left me..fecked off somewhere I know not, GONE. Have I thought about doin' somethin' bad? Yes, it's passed me mind, but will I ever? Highly unlikely. I prefer to exercise a painful thought, than act on a mindless one, ya see?



LENOY: But how do you know?

BADGER: What?

LENOY: How do ya know that by exercising the bad thought, it doesn't act as preparation for doing something bad, physically, like?

BADGER: My thoughts act as a release for me; it's corrective reasoning is all.

LENOY: Corrective?

BADGER: I think things through in order to dampen my impulses, in order to be certain I never, ever, ever do somethin' I'll later kill myself for.

LENOY: But some people entertain bad thoughts and then act on those bad thoughts, no?

BADGER: You know something? You're not as dumb as we both think you are. That's a profound thought you're having.

LENOY: Is it?

BADGER: Profound.

LENOY: What's profound mean exactly?

BADGER: Means your having an intelligent thought that sheds light on a particular subject.

LENOY: Right. I am.

BADGER: I guess it all depends on the individual.

LENOY: What does?

BADGER: What we do with our most private thoughts.

LENOY: Mm.

BADGER: Some of us, like me that is, some of us will think about things and let the thought die, others have no thoughts to speak of and perform a bad act, yet still others I believe will have terrible thoughts that will lead up to a final conclusion. Depends on the person, really. Ya know, being a human being is a trying thing to be. There's always a bunch of ways things can go, various outcomes all depending on the specific person that is and the way in which they behave. Thank you.

LENOY: For what?

BADGER: For making me expand my thought.

LENOY: I've done that?

BADGER: You certainly have.

LENOY: ...I've thought quite often like, uhrm, I've thought quite often like killin' me father. I sometimes worry that I won't be able to push me thoughts far enough away from meself..some days...that..some day, I'm gonna take that axe next to the fireplace and embed it into me father's forehead while he snores. But then, I do imagine, think, that it's best I slam the axe into his forehead while he's awake, while he's drinkin', just before he takes off his belt to whip me like, and catch him, RIGHT THERE..so, he could see what he's done to me...I'm a bad person fer thinkin' this way, ain't I Badger? It's me father I'm speakin' of..but, he hates me so much, don't he?

BADGER: There, there son..aye, he's yer father and aye those are bad thoughts but they are thoughts you will never breathe any life into.

LENOY: Why not? How do you know fer sure?

BADGER: Because you're good lad..inside. Most of us are, aye, and this is our plight. It's the never acting on those bad things lad, it's the never acting on those bad things that give us character, that make us worthy of livin' this life. *(beat)* Can't say I wouldn't like to confront yer father meself that is, but it isn't me place.

LENOY: But you said you killed someone before, no?

BADGER: Ah lad...that was a very long time ago and that is a sin I will forever be payin' fer, fer the rest of me years.

LENOY: You regret it?

BADGER: Aye. I've done wrong son. But you shouldn't, see?

LENOY: ...Aye.

END OF PLAY