

# ***The Arrangement***

*by*

*Joseph Arnone*

Copyright © 2023

[www.MonologueBlogger.com](http://www.MonologueBlogger.com)

All rights reserved. No part of this ePlay may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any other storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the author or publisher.

Cast of Characters

HARDWICKE:

50's

CARPENTER:

30's

Place  
Study

Time  
Day

Setting: The play takes place inside a large living room/study of Hardwicke, a blind man in his fifties and in a wheelchair, who looks older than his years.

There is a shiny red leather sofa stage center. A large elaborate Egyptian styled carpet covering a wood floor. There are wall sized paintings on all walls, a bookshelf and small liquor shelf on wheels.

At Rise: The play opens with Hardwicke sitting offstage center right, when Carpenter enters the room with his gun drawn, firmly aimed at Hardwicke. Carpenter appears younger than he is, he's from the streets but speaks surprisingly well and wears nothing but a t-shirt, jeans with no shoes or socks. He is dripping with sweat and his t-shirt is wet.

*Carpenter enters the room carrying a revolver. He tippy toes his way to Hardwicke, who sits in his wheelchair.*

*Carpenter raises his revolver inches from Hardwicke's temple.*

HARDWICKE: Did you water my garden?

CARPENTER (*Unmoving.*): ...I did.

HARDWICKE: Did you fertilize the grass?

CARPENTER: ...I did.

*Hardwicke turns his wheelchair, facing the revolver.*

HARDWICKE: Yes?

CARPENTER: Yes.

*Hardwicke pushes the wheels to his wheelchair in one stroke.*

*Carpenter steps out of the way.*

HARDWICKE: Did you clear out the weeds?

CARPENTER: I only just finished.

HARDWICKE: I despise weeds. Especially those that most blend in, the ones that are clever at being undetected. They choke the life out of everything that is good. They creep up on beautiful flowers and restrict their vital force...slowly, quietly, till all the nutrients are drained and there is no energy left to blossom. What was once vibrant and radiant can now be seen as dull and subdued. That is most vile. No? Crooked. Corrupt. I have nothing but contempt for weeds. What they are good at doing, is their continuation of functioning to starve all that is sacred; they construct clever traps, tricks and roadblocks unless you remove them, INSTANTLY, on the double, one by one, rip them away before their contamination destroys what could be, what must be within the bounds of their force. Weeds. They cannot fester forever. They will try, but sooner or later they get taken out. (*Beat.*) Care for a cold beverage?

CARPENTER (*Dropping his gun.*): No, I'm, I'm alright.

HARDWICKE: Sit down, take a load off. You are sweating.

CARPENTER: I am? (*Stares at his t-shirt.*) I am. It's hot -

HARDWICKE: - Hot outside, I know. Quite. The sun will do that to you, especially when it comes to yard work. What I wouldn't give to bury my hands into the Earth's soil. No feeling quite like it.

HARDWICKE (CONT'D): (*Beat.*) The doors?

CARPENTER: What?

HARDWICKE: Did you finish painting the doors?

CARPENTER: I haven't finished, but I've started.

*Hardwicke wheels himself to a liquor shelf and fixes himself a drink.*

*Carpenter places the gun back inside the front of his pants.*

*Hardwicke turns to Carpenter.*

HARDWICKE: Why don't you sit?

*Carpenter sits on the sofa.*

Sure I can't offer you a -

CARPENTER: No.

HARDWICKE: Tell me...how are things coming?

CARPENTER: Coming?

HARDWICKE: Along.

CARPENTER: Alright. I've been alright.

HARDWICKE: How's the guest house?

CARPENTER: Good. The guest house is good.

HARDWICKE: Have all your amenities been sufficient?

CARPENTER: They have been..yes.

HARDWICKE: Well...

CARPENTER: Well...

HARDWICKE: When?

CARPENTER: Soon...

HARDWICKE: Soon...hmf!

CARPENTER: I should get on with the painting?

HARDWICKE: What for?

CARPENTER: You've asked me to -

HARDWICKE: The thing about killing somebody is that you can't think about it, you just do it. As soon as a thought enters your mind, it's all over. Complete inaction. You don't seem to ever get past the thought. Five months. Five months of indecision coming from you, you're weak! Your conscious gets the better of you with each attempt! Spineless. They said you were the one. They said I could count on you. Five months! ...and now? Isn't it all becoming a bit too late? (*Beat.*) Answer me, I say! Isn't it all becoming a bit too late?

CARPENTER: It isn't, too late.

HARDWICKE: You've given me too much time. In the beginning, in the very beginning the idea was raw, fresh, exciting, NEEDED! I was ready. You've kept me waiting. All I do is WAIT. Everything is a long drawn out WAIT with you. You are never prompt, never on time, never get anything done in a timely manner and now look, look it's been five whole months and nothing, I-AM-STILL-HERE.

CARPENTER (*Struggling to find the words.*): ...I find that I like it here.

HARDWICKE: You what?

CARPENTER: I find..that I..like it here. I feel safe here. It feels good to me...being here. I rise just before the sun begins to reveal itself. When sitting on the porch I expose my bare feet, allowing the sun to warm me, save me. I tread upon the grass and feel the Earth's embrace. Nothing can harm me, nothing wishes to hurt me. Home. This has become my home. I've even had the thought about dying here. Naturally. Graciously.

HARDWICKE: Shouldn't a man be allowed to choose the way in which he wishes to depart this world?

CARPENTER: And I wish for this place to be mine...so I could die here, of natural causes, of course.

HARDWICKE: I am talking about my death, not yours! Aren't you too young to consider dying? Shouldn't you be busy living?

CARPENTER: What for?

HARDWICKE: There are things to see, to do, experiences to have.

CARPENTER: Pointless.

HARDWICKE: When I was your age I was conquering the world.

CARPENTER: And was it conquered?

HARDWICKE: ...Hardly.

CARPENTER: ...Hardly.

HARDWICKE: Vigor! Where's your sense of WANT?

CARPENTER: I like it here, in the garden that is.

HARDWICKE: Waste.

*Hardwicke gets himself a drink.*

Your age..when I was your age..best years of my life, had I only known..I didn't know time was on my side then. I didn't know had I focused on the things that mattered most to me, I would have become something more..now, age has caught me in its web and I am in the thick of it, you see? Time is behind me now, no longer on my side but a traitor, an enemy. (*Beat.*) You've ruined my death!

CARPENTER: According to the contract, "The hired will remain on premises until the deed gets done."

HARDWICKE: Has this been your plan all along?

CARPENTER: No.

HARDWICKE: Hmf!

CARPENTER: It has never.

HARDWICKE: Haven't you a place to live?

CARPENTER: Here.

HARDWICKE: Somewhere else? Hmm? A place to return to, perhaps?

CARPENTER: I wish to remain here.

HARDWICKE: Thief.

CARPENTER: I do not wish to darken the atmosphere.

HARDWICKE: Darken?

CARPENTER: Murder is a serious business. If I were to kill you there is a chance that the room in which the deed takes place, will become haunted. I am undecided on where I would least want your presence to remain.

HARDWICKE: I won't haunt any part of this damned place. Goodness, I hope I'd have better things to do.

CARPENTER: How can you make such a promise?

HARDWICKE: You call yourself a professional?

CARPENTER: I have yet to experience a problem as such. I've never taken a liking to a place like this before.

HARDWICKE: I take a lot of pride in my home.

CARPENTER: I can see that.

HARDWICKE: You don't have to worry, my spirit won't be angry. It will be quite content once it leaves this place.

CARPENTER: We can't be sure of that.

HARDWICKE: I will be elated, hence the entire reason for you being here in the first place!

CARPENTER: It's quite a predicament.

HARDWICKE: What if I changed my mind?

CARPENTER: How so?

HARDWICKE: I release you from your contract, our arrangement. What if I don't wish to be disposed of any longer?

CARPENTER: Can't. Once the contract is made, it's made.

HARDWICKE: But you've refused to honor it! It's been months!

CARPENTER: That's not to say the deed won't get done.

HARDWICKE: I am of the thought that you have no intention of fulfilling it!

CARPENTER: The contract doesn't know that.

HARDWICKE: I know that.

CARPENTER: You do.

HARDWICKE: All this waiting, it's wrong, It's making me think twice!

CARPENTER: I'm afraid we have to honor the contract.

HARDWICKE: Bullocks!

*Hardwicke fixes another drink for himself.*

CARPENTER: I can take you outside.

HARDWICKE: Outside? Yes, of course! Take me outside and we can do it there, out of the house.

CARPENTER: No.

HARDWICKE: Stop it, you are confusing me boy!

CARPENTER: I wish to take you out to the garden so that you may bury your hands in the Earth's soil once again; to feel the comfort of the Earth, its protection, its embrace. I will take you out there once more, to remind you of what matters most to you..I can do that for you.

HARDWICKE: What makes you imagine I wish to do such a thing as that?

CARPENTER: We all do from time to time. We only need to be reminded sometimes.

*Hardwicke gently rubs his hands together.*

*Carpenter checks the bullets in his revolver.*

HARDWICKE: I must admit there is a pleasant feeling in the words. "Earth's soil"...Earth's soil..hmf! Okay. I am ready.

*Carpenter wheels Hardwicke out of the room and into the garden.*

*A moment of SILENCE.*

*Lights slowly fade to black.*

**END OF PLAY**