

Roots & Wings

by Terry Roueche

a one act drama

Copyright September 2015 Terry Roueche and Off The Wall Play
Publishers

<http://offthewallplays.com>

Time
Present

Place
A Hole Dug 13 feet in the Ground

Cast of Characters

JOEY: 40s. Defeated, but has tried to live an obliging and decent life. HE is without confidence or belief in himself. As a result, HE is afraid of the world and those that have power over him.

BILLY: 20s. HE feels and sees deeply, but is unable to express his feelings and emotions to others. As a result, the only thing he knows is to use his fists out of frustration and anger.

Caution: This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<http://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-ofplays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

-Roots & Wings-

The Set: Two men in a hole 13 feet deep in the earth. There are five-gallon buckets about. One bucket is attached to a rope hanging down from the surface.

At Rise: The two men hold shovels, and are filthy from shoveling all day. JOEY stands motionless while BILLY circles him. Both men are looking upward. They are heavily fatigued. The sun is setting on the men. There is a thermos and crackers in a bucket off to the side.

BILLY

(HE stops circling. Calls out loudly)

Hey! Hey! Boss man! Boss man! You up there? Hey! Hey!

(Pause to listen)

Answer me!

(Pause to listen)

Hey! Somebody!

(Long pause. The two stand back to back looking upward)

BILLY (cont'd)

Somebody! Somebody! Somebody!

JOEY

Quit your screaming there's nobody up there.

BILLY

(Angrily)

Where the hell did they go?

JOEY

They left us.

BILLY

(Angrily, calls out)

Somebody up there?

JOEY

Shut up, will you.

BILLY

They forgot us?

JOEY

It looks like that, don't it.

BILLY

What we gonna do?

JOEY

Wait. Maybe somebody'll come along. Maybe the boss man'll remember and send somebody back.

BILLY

Maybe they went on break. Maybe that's it. They went on break.

JOEY

What, all of them? It's the day's end, they gone.

BILLY

They just gonna leave us down here?

JOEY

Why you keep asking me that?

BILLY

What're we gonna to do?

JOEY

We got to figure they'll be back.

BILLY

When?

JOEY

I don't know, in the morning I guess.

BILLY

We got to stay down here all night; it's getting dark. What if they don't come back?

JOEY

They wanted us digging this hole, didn't they? They got a reason don't they? They'll be back.

BILLY

What're we gonna do?

JOEY

Wait.

(JOEY stands and begins to shovel dirt in a bucket)

Dig.

(BILLY begins digging then stops)

BILLY

I ain't digging no more.

JOEY

They paying you to dig.

(JOEY digs harder)

BILLY

I ain't digging no more.

(HE realizes, smiles)

They playing a joke on us. That's it.

(Circles looking upward, his voice is easy, going along with the joke)

All right, all right, enough's enough, you sons-of-bitches, send down the ladder!

(He waits)

Quit playing around and send the ladder down!

(Pause. Screams out)

Put the ladder down! Come on, put the ladder down!

JOEY

Just dig, will you.

BILLY

We got to figure a way out.

(Angrily)

Stand back.

(BILLY begins viciously digging into a side.

JOEY grabs BILLY)

JOEY

What're you doing?

BILLY

We can dig sideways and use the dirt to fill in, and we could rise right up. Get out of the way, if you ain't gonna help.

JOEY

You gonna get us buried alive.

(JOEY grabs the shovel)

This dirt's mostly sand, it'll come right down on us. I seen that happen to a man. We was right then trying to dig him out. He was dead when we got to him.

BILLY

How could they forget we're down here?

(Calls out)

Hey! Anybody!

JOEY

Maybe somebody'll see we ain't around and remember and come back.

BILLY

You've been with them, right? They know you.

JOEY

Just today.

BILLY

What do you mean?

JOEY

You keep blaming me we down here? Nobody made you do nothing, your choice to come here and dig.

BILLY

I just showed up this morning. They just gave me a shovel and told me keep up with it.

JOEY

Same thing. I don't know none of them.

BILLY

Then they ain't gonna be thinking about us, are they?

(Resentfully)

Maybe they won't be back tomorrow, or the next, or for a week for all you know.

(Slight pause)

You ain't been on with them?

JOEY

What'd I just tell you?

BILLY

I thought you was. I thought you'd been with them and you knew what was going on.

JOEY

They gave me a shovel and said dig, same as you.

BILLY

You acted like you knew what was going on, now you telling me you don't know, no more than me? Is that what you telling me?

JOEY

I didn't act like nothing.

BILLY

Why didn't you say something?

JOEY

Say something about what? Say something about what? What would I say something about what? They ain't paying me to think.

BILLY

(HE's confused. HE doesn't understand. HE becomes threatening)

That you don't know, no more than me.

JOEY

What business was it of mine?

BILLY

I kept my mouth shut with you, figuring you was over this job, and they had you keeping on eye on me. I didn't like that none.

You watching me all day, and you let it go on, didn't say nothing when we could have been looking out for each other. If that had been the case, we wouldn't be stuck down here now.

JOEY

I did what they told me, dig a hole. They didn't tell me to do nothing else.

BILLY

(Spitefully)

We ain't even got no idea what we're digging for.

JOEY

I figured a foundation.

BILLY

Foundation for what?!

JOEY

High-rise maybe. Office building maybe. Condos maybe. Maybe a tower for something.

BILLY

This deep? What needs a footing this deep? You didn't think to ask them that?

JOEY

Why would I question it? They told me to dig.

BILLY

Something this deep, I'd have asked what for.

JOEY

Then why didn't you?

BILLY

They said you knew the particulars, that's why I figured you knew what was going on. I remember that now. They told me that.

JOEY

The boss man spit on the ground and said dig a hole, make sure I do a day's work - no monkeying around. I didn't ask you to come up and start digging.

BILLY

You made out like you knew what was going on, and I took it, all day from you, you telling me to fill them buckets all the way.

JOEY

You'd pull the rope and they'd be half empty. That makes me look bad.

JOEY (cont'd)

(Pause, to throw it back, spitefully)

How you come up all full of yourself holding that shovel cocky-like, like you was somebody knows all about digging a hole. You was gonna teach me about digging. I saw right off how you went at it, with them cigarettes dangling out your mouth, you weren't gonna last through the morning, and you'd be dragging by afternoon, and I'd be doing most of the digging, and that's what happened, just like I knew it was gonna happen, like I knew I'd keep it steady all day. So shut up and let me think.

BILLY

I dug twice as much in the morning as you, so I see it we dug about the same.

JOEY

Fine. We dug the same.

BILLY

I say we dug the same.

JOEY

Think that.

BILLY

(Threatening voice)

We dug the same.

JOEY

Think what you want.

BILLY

Dug the same.

(BILLY holds his shovel threatening)

Same.

JOEY

What does it matter now?

BILLY

I carry my weight.

JOEY

We ought to be thinking together on getting out of here. We got a common problem - get out. Unless you're gonna hit me with that shovel, and morning comes the boss man'll look down here and

JOEY (cont'd)

call the law, 'cause you ain't going nowhere without me and you both figuring this out together.

BILLY

When we're out we'll settle this.

JOEY

Settle what, how much dirt we dug?

BILLY

That's right.

JOEY

Why would it matter to us how much dirt we dug when it don't matter to them enough they can just leave us, like we was nothing to them. We been forsaken, left us hanging here. Forsaken.

BILLY

(To himself)

We dug the same.

JOEY

Somebody hands you a shovel and says dig? So you dig. They told me seven feet by seven feet eighteen and half feet down then stop - don't go no deeper.

BILLY

We ain't eighteen and half feet down yet.

(Realizes)

You don't think they left us on purpose, because we ain't got to eighteen and half feet? You think they done that on purpose, walk off leaving us until we got to eighteen and half feet, figuring it take us all night?

JOEY

That don't make sense, they didn't leave nobody to pull the buckets up.

BILLY
Sons-of-bitches. Doing us like this.

(Pause)

JOEY
You got a phone?

BILLY
No.

JOEY
You got a wife or something?

BILLY
(Takes a moment to study JOEY)
All day down here, me trying to talk to you civil like, and you not giving me as much as the time of day. Now you wanting to be friendly like. You not saying a word to me besides dig - getting me all riled up.

JOEY
You got anybody or not?

BILLY
I was wanting to pop you in the head with this shovel - getting me all riled up - saying nothing all day.

JOEY
I'm thinking maybe somebody'll be out looking for you?

(Pause)

BILLY
Oh.

JOEY
Is somebody gonna be looking for you or not?

BILLY
No. What about you?

JOEY
I just drifted in, I don't know nobody.

BILLY

So nobody's gonna be looking for you either?

JOEY

No.

BILLY

They paired us right, didn't they?

JOEY

They didn't think about it one way or the other.

BILLY

Fate or something we're down this hole together. Makes you think, don't it?

JOEY

About what?

BILLY

How we both end up here.

JOEY

I don't think nothing about it.

BILLY

How life swings around to knock you in the back of your head when you think you got things straight finally.

JOEY

I don't think about it.

BILLY

You think the last place you'll end up in life is down a hole in the dirt. What a joke, skip ahead to when you stop breathing.

(Pause)

I guess we'll just wait it out.

(Finds the crackers)

Look-at-here. Some crackers.

(Sees JOEY's thermos and shakes it)

What you got in here?

JOEY

Coffee. Help yourself.

BILLY

