

Wanted

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A
Hyacinth Productions
Creation

All text owned by Julia Hoch.

*Imagine a time
When states were new.
When they weren't
All red and blue.*

The Bomb Explodes

This time I'm under a table, the floral tablecloth hiding me from view. I hold my hands over my ears to dull the din of clanging pots and pans, apparently a wedding tradition, in this bizarre town.

Slowly the banging stops and I peek my head out. Straight across from me: is *The Other Man*.^{*} His eyes are red, almost as though he's been crying a lot. He carries a jug of alcohol, which splashes because it is so full.

"Hope I didn't miss the wedding," he says.

Silence.

^{*} *The Other Man* = T.O.M.

"Don't I get to kiss the bride?" He says it with nastiness, but his eyes are filled with real want.

She steps towards him, and her new husband pulls her back.

"Oh, don't worry," he grins, "I got a present for you too," he says laughing jovially.

He lifts up his left hand, flicks his wrist, and a blade pops out.

I want one of those.

The room takes a step back and I realize the gift is not the knife. The Groom* steps in and the crowd is now in a circle around them, I slip out of my hiding place

* The Groom = T.G.

to join the circle and stand on a chair to see. T.O.M. takes a swipe with the blade and the groom easily jumps back. Another swipe, another jump, he goes in with his leg as though to sweep T.G.'s feet out, T.G. steps in and lands an uppercut under his chin. My brow furrows, something's wrong.

I've tussled enough to know, how fights go, and T.O.M. isn't fighting, he's playfighting.

The swipes are too big and too slow, he's playing drunk, but why? I think of some of the other kids, who let themselves be beaten up by the older kids, play-fighting just like this, knowing that after a good thrashing often their attacker will take 'em under wing in tutelage. It's a way to move from outside to inside.

I watch him wondering...but they're playing with a knife...and T.G. is not going to bring him in. He's made that very clear. T.O.M.

is down after the uppercut, eyes closed just barely breathing, and T.G. turns to the crowd, he's okay. Quick as lightning T.O.M. leaps up, drops the knife, and knocks T.G. down. He straddles him, pushing down on his chest, and T.G. grabs the knife. I scream "Don't!" but it's covered by the crowd's gasps. T.G. stabs him in the heart. Both men smile. T.G.'s is one of accomplishment, and T.O.M.'s of peace.

The room remains frozen for several seconds and then T.G. says, "Look, he fell on his own knife."

The room unfreezes as the crowd tries to determine what to do with the dying man and the man they all saw kill him. But I just keep seeing the man's face before he died, that smile, those planned missteps.

This man who would not live. He chose
his killer, he chose the weapon...

How'd it happen?

The Beginning

The trickle began with a sales line.
A way to make a few bucks.

“Must be wanting something...Pretty girl like
you?”

It wasn't about him, the salesman.
But what if I
Could want

What if

I'd heard of
Wanting things
But wanting
And not getting felt
Too dangerous

So I

Things started
Coming to mind
Then straight to my

Mouth

Beautiful things

Shiny shoes

Lace

Perfume

Being pretty

Being beautiful.

Being wanted

Being shown I was

Wanted.

I wanted things

To happen to me.

A stream was

coming from the

faucet now

And I didn't

know how to

stop it.

Wanting felt
good

Felt so good.

He sold me
something
and I bought it.

The Fuse is Lit

I watch from the rafters of the barn as the adults bid down below. The men on the women's picnic baskets in this school auction. It's been boring mostly. But the other kids were making fun of my ratty dress and my dirty hair. So I snuck up here instead.

They get to the last basket, and even though they're not supposed to know, they know whose it is. The ones who haven't gotten food yet start bidding. But the woman's date keeps just raising the price. He's focused, determined. The other men drop out as the price goes higher. One--two--three. He's the only one left.

He starts to smile. He thinks he's got it.
Pulls the money from his pocket. Smiles at
her.

And then another man enters just before
the "gone."

It's Pretty Boy.

Pretty Boy* smirks at Her Date*, the
dark-haired man, then starts selling his
possessions to the town, to outbid him.
Starting with his saddle...

The room shifts, there is a stand-off. The
town has to pick sides and P.B. is more
popular than H.D. By having dirt on
everyone. So they start buying.

* Pretty Boy= P.B.

* Her Date= H.D.

And what was about an apple pie,
suddenly becomes about his inclusion in the
community.

Pretty Boy is circling him.
I hold my breath.

I see my future before me in this man
willing to pay his life savings
to the town to be included.. and because
of one manipulative man they'll all turn
their backs.

I'm ready to run when suddenly the woman
looks up

And catches my eye.

In the oceans of her eyes I see the impact
of a thousand ships launched over
possession.

Our eyes remain locked as Pretty Boy
hands over the money across Her Date's
chest, H.D.'s head bowed. He did not have
enough. But he would never have had
enough, and that injustice lights the fuse
of a time-delayed bomb in his chest.

But I see this only in my periphery vision
because my eyes are held by the woman's.

And I will stay
and learn to write these pages at desks
bought by this standoff.

Because of her

Because
She saw me.

The Real Beginning

I was wrong before
About the wanting starting with
The peddler's line

It started as she
Spoke about
wanting

Regardless
Of what one is
Supposed to do

Wanting
To kiss

Men.

Wanting to hold
And touch
And kiss

A man

Who wants to
Hold and touch
And kiss you

And as she is proclaiming this
Message
She begins to
Demonstrate.

And she grabs me
By surprise
Holds me
Leans toward my
Lips.

And at the last moment
We both turn away
Laughing.

The laughing covers up
The catch in my breath.

As I feel something
In my gut and
in my throat

Wanting is terrifying.

Wanting is exhilarating.

The Gunfight

He strides right in. That blond, beautiful boy. Ignoring the obvious discomfort of the dark-haired man, he starts touching his posters and sitting on his bed.

The dark-haired man gets jumpy. I know what he feels: the recognition that you are not in control in the room. Feeling the obvious disdain from another, a feeling which you shouldn't care about, tell yourself not to care about, but there it is. You see his face, he's disgusted, and barely disguising it.

In agitation he picks up his gun. He's not comfortable holding it, clearly doesn't use it much, and starts nervously cleaning it.

I'm starting to feel uncomfortable. He so clearly doesn't want anyone in his private space, and here I am hidden in the rafters. But I can't look away.

And then...

And then!

The audacity of Pretty Boy. He picks up a rope and begins to describe to the Dark-Haired man how he could hang himself, walks him through the process, starts "preaching at his funeral."

And the worst part is that the D.H. starts leaning into it. He so longs to be known that even this false flattery hits the spot.

P.B. grins and I can see he's done this before. I can't bear to watch it anymore.

I slip out of my hiding place, and as I walk away I hear two gunshots.

Later I'll hear they both made it, that the floor and wall took the beatings, but for the moment I thought I might have been the last to see one or both of them alive.

If I...

He sits there
Naive, hopeful
With that grin
that giddy smile

I have to stop him
I am not ready to have
people know

I don't yet know
what this is
what I want us to be
and once it's known
there is no turning back

So I turn towards him
And start listing off

All the things he shouldn't
Do
And find myself uttering things I
desperately

Want
Done to me
And for me to do

Things I never knew
That I wanted
Dreams unspoken
Can be kept inside
Ignored
Brushed away

His eyes
remain soft
His lips
Curl upwards
That lovable, knowing grin

And a "sweetheart"
A foolish
"Sweetheart"
Falls from lips
Out like an arrow
Which boomerangs
And I try to
Save myself

But too late
There is a flicker in his eyes
And I know I am sunk

I rush back to my work
Pretend I don't see him

But he plays along
Pointing out all
The ways I've
Given us away
Already

Then
Laying out his dreams
His heart bared
The don'ts only
Underlining
His desire

And the arrow
Comes back to
Fell us both
When he says
He wouldn't mind

So much
If people knew.

My wants have burst
The bubble.

Now a sea. A river.

Damn.

The Heat of Midday

I watch them, hidden in an apple tree.

There is a vast space between them, she pushes it, and he does not try to close it. The entire room crackles.

He knows his power, just holding place.

You can feel the way they long to close the distance, long for that to be okay.

But instead they speak carelessly, about keeping that distance. You can feel the tension.

Finally he grabs her hand. She goes to pull it away, and he holds on. The room changes color as they look at each other.

A fork in the road.

I can't breath.

And then another man, a dark haired man,
passes behind them carrying wood. She
pushes away suddenly and

The first man sees that she is looking at
the dark-haired man.

For a moment there is a dark look on his
face: envy, fury.

But it's gone a second later, replaced by a
grim smile

He grabs his hat and gives a final look,
hoping she'll stop him.

She starts to, but then doesn't.

The Kiss (Almost)

I liked the way he held my hand
Strong, firm
He liked being seen with me

I wasn't sure I wanted this exploration
seen by the town
the neighbors who'd known me since
childhood
almost parents
but I appreciated that he didn't share my
embarrassment

That he grinned back at me
as he pulled me along
Let's get some fresh air

I felt the bristle of
his freshly trimmed beard
As he pressed his lips to mine
It tickled my face in a nice way

I had been hoping

to kiss him
or maybe it was just somebody
that I wanted to kiss
but he was handsome,
had a great smile,
and I liked the way he
took care of people.

But now something about him
wasn't quite right
maybe he was a little too drunk
the kisses too one-sided,
the moves not spontaneous.

Or maybe I had just wanted
to be wanted
and he clearly did

But still...

I pushed him away gently,
firmly

He looked at me
with hurt

which morphed to
hatred

*Not good enough for you, huh?
You think you're better.
We'll see...*

I only heard bits and pieces
as my whole body tensed
how had it turned from a kiss
to a threat so fast?

You slut.

There was another feeling in my stomach
finding this endpoint
to my desire.

A punch in the gut, a queasiness
That that wonderful
euphoria
should lead here.

I faced him.
Told him this simply
would not do.

Realized womanhood.

The Salesman

He was the man that I wanted to be.

All fashion and swank and smiles.

He removed his city hat, his clothes clearly marking him as an outsider, but the the kind of outsider who regaled you with stories and made you feel beautiful and intelligent and important.

Without even seeing me his dazzle had stopped in my tracks, my half-packed bags still in the hayloft, as I stood in the doorway staring at him.

He hopped up on the porch and turned his charm on the three women surrounding him.

He was the rare man who loved that women wanted. And provided it in all varieties.

A wry smile at the cowgirl who'd rode in with him, a knowing offer of lacy underthings to the kind older woman, but first a permissive prompt to the young woman who had been pretending to ignore him.

"Must be wanting something...Pretty girl like you?"

The Proposal

*While I am thinking about it, how about
marrying me?*

*I was so surprised I said "What?!" louder
than I meant to.*

He repeated it, panic in his eyes now.

Will you marry me?

The moment suddenly froze.

*I felt his eyes on me
but I felt others too.
Eyes filled with hurt
That turned to hatred
Her eyes filled with joy
At the freedom to explore
My aunt's eyes filled with delight
at the boy
in front of me's
Songs and smiles*

I saw the eyes of the girl in the worn dress
as I found myself, not just my pies,
being bidden on,
her realization of what growing up
would entail.

I looked into his eyes once more
He was so sure of me
I envied him that confidence,
I knew better

I regretted ever wanting
Ever pursuing what I wanted
Being beautiful
Being wanted
Being shown I was wanted

That had gotten me into this mess.

It was time to put an end to this nonsense
This duel over me

I thought of my heart softening
When he told me that he wouldn't
mind if people said we
were in love.

I chose that feeling,
And let go of the rest.

I kiss him.

I'll marry you, if you want me to.

The First Morning

I wake up to singing. The singing is in a man's voice, light and tuneful. I sit up in the hayloft where I spent the night and rub my eyes.

I see a young man speaking to the kind woman who'd directed me to her hayloft and brought some warm bread and a glass of milk to me last night. I wish I asked her name. Then a younger woman, seemingly related, comes out of the main house, singing the same tune, her voice is even sillier than his. She pretends to be uninterested in him.

His eyes have been following her since she came out. It's the same old story I've seen in every town I've been through. So I am headed out.

But then he starts to sing again, my heart melts and I sit captured by the spell.

Bound

How?

How?

How did it happen?

The lips that only a few minutes before,
Had pressed against mine
"You may now kiss the bride."
Curled back in a smile of achievement,
As the knife went into his flesh.

I had vowed to end this fight
By taking vows
To one man
Giving him
What he wanted

And still
The destruction wreaked
By my desire
Had killed a man
And revealed my new husband to be a
killer.

I wondered how I had missed it
I thought I picked the safer man
But that grin...

I looked around for Her
But I saw instead the young girl
In the tattered dress
On a stool
Her face a mixture of
Confusion
And horror.

I walked over
And lifted her down from the stool
Her face taking a moment to register mine.
And then she said in a quiet,
Clear voice.
"He didn't even try to fight."



COMPONENTS OF A MAGIC LANTERN:

1. LAMP
2. REFLECTOR
3. CONDENSING LENS
4. LENS TUBE,
5. BODY
6. BASE
7. SMOKESTACK.

ADDITIONAL NEEDS FOR A SHOW:

1. FIRE
2. PEOPLE
3. A ROOM THAT CAN BE DARK

4. IMAGINATION

~~FLANNY FROGS~~

~~GOOFY GEESE~~

~~BATTY BIRDS~~

~~COWARDLY COWS~~

~~DASTARDLY DOGS~~

~~CANNIVING CATS~~

SILLY GOATS

*The above has been a Silly
Goats Production. Watch
out for Frog Stickers And Be
Sure to Smell The Wheat after
A Rainstorm. It's a Little
Wonder-ful World After All...*

