

Second Draft

October 2000

DESIRABLE THING

by Ryan McFadyen

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High fences push up on all sides of a farm. Oversized, bright orange pumpkins fill the fields within. A sun-damaged colonial homestead overlooks the pumpkin compound. The farm is surrounded by arid, drab land. It is the middle of the day, heat hazes distort our vision.

The sun beats down on a gang of WORKERS who tend the pumpkin fields singing as they do.

A worker wipes sweat from his brow, looks up at another and watches him flick sweat from his chest, leaving muddy trails. They acknowledge each other with a nod, then continue working.

On the front porch of the homestead sits PETER, the Pumpkin Baron. He rocks in a squeaking rocking chair with a blunderbuss across his lap, and two large panting DOGS at his feet. We see beads of sweat growing on his forehead, a cigar burning close at hand. We watch the track of the rocking chair creak across a floorboard, crushing a small insect as it goes.

CUT TO:

Title card;

DESIRABLE THING

Peter coughs and barks through a megaphone at the workers, completely unintelligible warbling.

He hears something in the distance and stands up, looking out to the horizon. The dogs get up and bark. Peter slaps a mosquito against his neck.

We see a black shining covered jeep carrying military OFFICIALS bumping over the dusty road towards the farm.

Peter jumps down from the porch and strides down the garden path, dragging his dogs on chains behind him. He barks orders at the workers through his megaphone as he goes, kicking at one of them on the way past. The workers drop what they are doing and follow him.

As the jeep pulls up at the front gate, Peter presses a button and the large front gates buzz and swing open slowly.

Peter stands in the front, trying to look demure. The workers stand in a straggle behind him. Peter is smiling.

OFFICIAL 1 gets out of the jeep, wearing a black helmet with a visor. He shakes hands with Peter.

A worker pulls a cart of pumpkins out to the jeep; OFFICIAL 2 prods him with a cattle prod as he loads pumpkins into the jeep.

Official 2 brings EMMET out of the back of the jeep. He has a bag over his head.

Emmet is lead to stand in front of Peter. Official 1 pulls the bag off his head.

Emmet blinks in the bright sunlight and his eyes come to focus on Peter.

Peter smiles. He leans in and sniffs at Emmet like a dog. He is happy with his purchase. He hands Official 1 a card, which reads;

PETER AND MIRANDA PUMPKINEATER
INVITE YOU TO A SORIEE
WEDNESDAY EVENING
PUMKIN ESTATE.

Official 1 pockets the invitation.

Peter and Official 1 perform a military salute to each other.

The Officials leave; the doors swing shut behind them with a buzz and an ominous clang.

CUT TO:

SCENE 2: EXT. FARMYARD. LATE AFTERNOON

2

Emmet is poking seeds into the ground, working his way along a row. Other workers check him out and laugh to each other. One lingers on him for too long and Peter notices, barks an order at them, then rushes over and whips Emmet.

Emmet works faster, his breathing gets harder. He sounds like he is about to start crying when...

A heavenly female voice is heard singing a beautiful dirge. Emmet hears it and looks up.

The other workers also hear the noise and visibly relax, their faces soften - they are transported to a dreamlike trance. They continue working with subtle smiles.

Emmet's eyes are full of tears. He blinks them away and looks up to the sky for the voice, then turns his head around and looks back towards the homestead.

We pan in up to and through the front doors of the homestead, and continue along a cool hallway. The voice gets louder and clearer. When it sounds like we are almost at the source, the song ends.

Emmet blinks. He is in love with the voice.

SCENE 3: INT: BASEMENT. NIGHT

CUT TO:
3

WORKERS are sitting together in dim light, taking vitamins.

PETER opens a trapdoor and throws EMMET down into the room.

The workers look up at him from their vitamins. Emmet shivers.

SCENE 4: INT: LOUNGE. NIGHT

CUT TO:
4

The soiree is in full swing. Wallpaper-magazine lounge GUESTS titter and talk the beautiful talk amongst themselves.

PETER flits about in a kimono, slurping back Manhattans and chuffing cigars.

OFFICIAL 1, still wearing his visor talks to a flirtatious MOD GIRL.

Through a grate in the floor we can see EMMET peering through. All he can see is the feet of the guests whirling around.

Peter crosses to a stand with a red satin cover over it. Claps his hands for attention.

PETER:

Ladies and Gentlemen, the delightful Miranda.

He slips the cover off the stand, revealing a pumpkin shell with windows cut out of the sides.

The same heavenly voice comes out of the pumpkin. The Guests are entranced.

Emmet struggles to look through the grate, trying to see the person singing, but can

only make out the same feet. He gives up trying to see and moves away, back into the cellar.

Inside the pumpkin, MIRANDA sits reclining on a chaise lounge in a red satin evening dress. She sings fifties lounge/jazz. The music is beautiful but her face is sad.

PETER is pleased to watch as GUESTS including two BEAUTIFUL MEN and OFFICIAL 1 and the MOD GIRL pair off and become amorous on couches etc.

PETER is left alone, trying to look happy about it.

SCENE 5: EXT: FARMYARD. NIGHT FADE TO:
5

PETER sees the GUESTS off at the front door. A mosquito lamp buzzes blue ozone nearby, electrocuting insects as it goes. We can hear the dogs fucking.

The guests load, in couples, into a number of expensive cars parked amongst the pumpkins, and drive out into the night.

SCENE 6: INT. LOUNGE. NIGHT CUT TO:
6

We hear the front door closing, and then PETER lurches drunkenly into the room.

He downs his last Manhattan and growls hornily.

He advances on the pumpkin and drools at MIRANDA through the small windows.

His eye fills up the frame of the pumpkin's window. MIRANDA, terrified, pushes against the pumpkin wall and stares back at him with wide eyes.

She starts to sing a mournful, wavering tune to him.

Peter's face relaxes from a drooling grimace, he starts to look a little sad.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7: INT: BASEMENT

7

The WORKERS all lie in a jumbled mess, kissing in one corner of the room.

EMMET hears the music and rushes to the grate high in the wall. He presses his ear against it and strains to hear the music.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8: INT: LOUNGE

8

PETER is now bawling his eyes out. He slopes over to a couch and lies on it as MIRANDA continues singing to him - it turns into a kind of lullaby. He presses a pillow between his knees and starts to fall asleep.

CUT TO:

SCENE 9: INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

9

EMMET yawns. He blinks tiredly and moves away from the grate.

FADE TO:

SCENE 10: INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

10

Miranda's singing can be heard distantly.

The WORKERS snore in their heap in a corner of the room.

EMMET lies with his head on a sack, dreaming.

FADE TO:

SCENE 11: INT. FAIRYTALE CASTLE

11

Inside EMMET's dream Miranda's singing is clearer, but still distant. He is dreaming he is a knight in armour, he walks up a staircase to a tower turret. The door swings open and he sees MIRANDA from behind, in her red satin dress, swaying to

and fro and singing a haunting song. She stops singing and turns to face him.

MIRANDA:

Look at me. I'm a damsel in this dress.

CUT TO:
12

SCENE 12: INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

EMMET wakes with a start.

Miranda's singing goes on. Emmet steps over the sleeping bodies of the other workers and climbs up the steps of the basement to the trapdoor. He pushes it open and climbs upwards.

CUT TO:
13

SCENE 13: EXT. FARMYARD. NIGHT

EMMET sneaks past the DOGS in their doghouses marked 'Baz' and 'Ben', following the music. The dogs are fast asleep. He carries a pitchfork in front of him like a sword.

Emmet comes to the window of the lounge and peers into the warm light.

CUT TO:
14

SCENE 14: INT. LOUNGE. NIGHT

MIRANDA looks out of her pumpkin at the room, still singing.

The window slides up and EMMET places the pitchfork in through the window, and then silently eases himself into the room. He climbs over the sleeping body of PETER and walks up to the cage.

Miranda stares out at him, their eyes meet.

Miranda smiles and stops singing.

(outside one of the dog's ears pricks up?)

Peter opens his eyes.

Emmet carefully lifts the pumpkin off its hook and looks for a way to open it. Peter roars and surges at him from behind, holding the pitchfork.

Emmet dodges the pitchfork and tries to keep the pumpkin out of the way.

Inside the pumpkin Miranda is thrown about in her orange room.

The men struggle and the pumpkin is sent flying from Emmet's hands.

It smashes on the floor.

Peter gasps. He lunges at Emmet with the pitchfork.

Emmet grabs the pitchfork off him and tries to hold him off, forcing Peter backwards.

Suddenly Peter stops retreating.

Peter is impaled in the back of the head by the hook that held the pumpkin.

He falls forward onto the floor; the pumpkin stand follows him, still attached.

Outside the dogs are barking furiously.

Emmet is gasping. He looks around him, feeling sick.

He sees the pumpkin, smashed to pieces on the floor.

He starts to cry.

There is a small noise. Emmet looks up to see

Miranda pushing a large piece of pumpkin shell off her. She emerges covered in pumpkin pulp.

Emmet is overjoyed; he rushes to pick her up.

As he holds her in his hands, Miranda starts a new song. Her singing gets progressively louder and higher.

Emmet is smiling. He feels a slight pain in his head.

Miranda sings harder. The noise is deafening and piercing.

Emmet drops her and holds his head.

As she sings Miranda starts to grow and Emmet shrinks, until they have swapped heights.

When Miranda reaches her full height she stops singing. She sighs, exhausted.

Emmet runs around in little frantic circles on the floor.

Miranda pushes her hair back off her face and flicks a large piece of pumpkin off her shoulder.

SCENE 15: INT/EXT: LOUNGE/FARMYARD. DAY CUT TO:
15

Thirties male crooning music plays.

PETER's astonished face looks at us. We pull back and realize he has been skinned and now lies as a rug on the lounge floor.

We keep pulling back out of the room and see on the deck of the house.

MIRANDA sits in the rocking chair with the blunderbuss across her lap, rocking.

A very tiny EMMET sits on her shoulder,
singing to her.

We keep pulling back until we see the
whole of the pumpkin farm. The dogs and
all the workers are gone.

The gates are wide open.

CUT TO:

Title card:

THE END

Roll credits.