

The Bouquet
written by
Vicky L. Neal

3024 Apple Knoll Lane
Middletown, Ohio 45044
(513) 539-0258
vickyneal5@yahoo.com
www.vickylneal.com

FADE IN:

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

A large wedding reception takes place. At least a hundred PEOPLE. MUSIC plays. People dance. Others eat and drink.

ON STAGE

At the end of the song, the DJ grabs his mic. His voice carries over speakers around the room.

DJ

Coming up in moments, the bride will
toss the bouquet.

A roar of chatter takes place amongst excited female guests. Many scatter out of sight.

The DJ starts another SONG, something slow and romantic.

DANCE FLOOR

The BRIDE (23) dances with the GROOM (26).

HARRIET REYNOLDS (25), frumpy, glasses on a chain, hair in a bun, a glum presence on the brightest day, wearing a geekish dress, steps into view. She glances at the couple on occasion as she speaks to the camera.

NOTE: No one notices Harriet in the opening scenes.

HARRIET

That's my Aunt Meg. She just married the man of her dreams, but no one in my family was surprised. Aunt Meg caught the bouquet at her sister's wedding seven months earlier. She had to be the next woman in my family to marry.

As she walks through the sea of tables filled with guests socializing and having a great time:

HARRIET

You see, there's this tradition in my family that has been around for three generations. No one knows how it started, or why it happened, but it never fails.

Harriet picks up a glass of champagne from a table and takes a sip. She giggles.

HARRIET

The bubbles tickle my nose.

She sets down the glass and continues her stroll.

HARRIET

In order for a female family member to marry, she has to catch the bouquet thrown by a blood family member. Once she does, she knows she will marry before any other woman in the family. No matter how beautiful one of my female relatives is, how intelligent, or rich, she won't marry until she catches a wedding bouquet thrown by the previous relative to get married.

Her troubled gaze goes to something she sees before her.

Seated at a table with adults and a few children, LITTLE HARRIET (5) has a strong resemblance to grown Harriet. The same type of glasses. Similar clothing choices. Little Harriet sits quietly while the other kids play in their seats. They talk and laugh. Little Harriet is out of place.

Grown Harriet watches sadly.

HARRIET

That's me when I was five. I wasn't very social. Low self-esteem.

Elbows on the table, Little Harriet picks up her glass of soda and sips. Next to her, HARRIET'S MOM notices.

HARRIET'S MOM

Harriet...

She nudges Little Harriet's arm. It falls from the table, nearly taking Little Harriet with it.

HARRIET'S MOM

... no elbows on the table.

Little Harriet's sad eyes look up at her mom.

Grown Harriet stares at the scene.

HARRIET

Nothing I ever did was good enough for my mom. My lack of confidence affected the rest of my childhood, even as an adult. I've never even had a date, much less kissed a man.

The slow SONG ends.

DJ (ON SPEAKERS)

It's now time for the bride to toss
the bouquet.

Harriet turns to the stage.

HARRIET

This was the beginning to my problems.

BY THE STAGE

A mad dash of female guests rushing to the stage front.
More like a stampede. Women of all ages push and shove to
get the front spots. Many wear knee or elbow pads. Some
put on helmets. This is some serious competition under way.

Girls, Little Harriet included, try to push their way through
the mess, but their presence remains unrecognized. Little
Harriet tries jumping for a look over the much bigger females.
Fails to see anything. Sighs her disappointment.

MARGE LINTON (20s), looking unnaturally tough in her pretty
dress, glances at SHIRLEY REYNOLDS (20s) next to her, dressed
to battle with the pads and helmet.

MARGE

You're goin` down, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

In your dreams, Marge.

Near them, PATSY REYNOLDS (20s) hunches slightly, ready to
move. She wears a catcher's mitt, pounding it with her fist.
She glances at her fellow competitors.

PATSY

Watch and learn, Girls. I'll show
you how it's done.

The bride makes her way to the stage with the gorgeous bouquet
in her hands. She turns her back to the crowd.

BRIDE

Is everyone ready?

She tosses the bouquet behind her.

Immediately, the grown women go into full battle mode for
the flowers. Punches are thrown. Teeth are broken. Hair
is ripped out. Older women whack others with their canes.
The little girls step back to avoid being trampled.

The happy reception has now become a combat zone.

An OLD LADY (70s) who uses a walker just to stand, holds the bouquet, beaming with joy.

OLD LADY

At last!

Marge grabs the bouquet as she shoves the old lady out of sight to the floor. THUD.

Shirley takes the bouquet out of Marge's hands. Just as Shirley is certain she has won the prize, Patsy elbows her ribs and catches the dropped flowers. She beams.

Another contestant knocks the prize out of her hands. The battered bouquet, flowers scattering in every direction, goes through a few more changes of ownership before...

SLOW MOTION

... it flies through the air. The women gawk in terror as their eyes follow after it. The bouquet comes to rest in a small pair of hands.

END SLOW MOTION

The crowd of women stands huddled together, looking at what they see before them. Collectively, the group gasps in shock.

Little Harriet holds the beaten up bouquet, most of its flowers ripped from their stems. She studies the women before her, not sure what to think. Grins sweetly at them.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A wedding takes place. Marge, slightly older, wears an elegant wedding gown. The GROOM oozes money with his expensive tux and hundred dollar haircut. Both stand before the MINISTER in front of a good-sized crowd.

Those on the bride's side include now 7-year-old Little Harriet and her parents.

Near them, Shirley and Patsy sit in misery. Their distaste mainly focuses on Marge.

The minister starts to speak, but belches instead. He places a hand to his mouth.

MINISTER

Excuse me.

He clears his throat and tries again.

MINISTER

By the power vested in me by the
state of New York, I now...

He belches again. His hand goes to his chest. His face
twists in pain.

MARGE

You now...

MINISTER

I now...

MARGE

Say it!

The pain grows worse. The minister collapses.

Onlookers jump to their feet. A DOCTOR dressed in a tux,
hurries to the pulpit. He kneels beside the minister and
checks his vitals.

But Marge only has one thing on her mind...

MARGE

You're almost done. Five more
seconds.

She tries to pull up the minister. The doctor pries her
fingers from his patient.

DOCTOR

Marge, he's having a heart attack.

MARGE

I don't care.

Groans of shock come from the guests.

MARGE

No... I do care. I just want to be
married!

A MAN pulls out his cell phone.

MAN

I'll call an ambulance.

The minister struggles to breathe. The pain is unbearable.
The doctor loosens his attire.