

# ***THE WANTING***

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**CHARACTER**

***Unnamed Man: late 40s, businessman, married.***

**TIME AND PLACE**

***The Present. A quiet bar. Early evening. Winter.***

## **THE WANTING**

*A businessman, late 40s, in a quiet bar, early evening. Three empty beer glasses and one full glass of beer are beside him. He is dressed in business shirt, tie and slacks. He looks very tired.*

MAN: He had this second-hand, but in great condition Land Rover. Stupid car. (Pause) It's true we'd drifted a bit in the last few years but that happens when you've known each other for twenty-five. And anyway, he'd had kids, all the stuff that goes with that. His marriage stayed together, mine didn't. (Pause) He wasn't completely faithful. There were one-nighters, something else maybe. Who knows? I didn't like him for it...and I've always liked Joanne, his wife. (Pause) Maybe I've liked her a bit too much. (Pause) I'd be fibbing if I said there weren't times when I didn't want her. But I didn't keep in contact with him to keep in contact with her. Oh, maybe a couple of times I did. (Long Pause) From like fifteen we were out together all the time. We somehow managed to find girlfriends who liked the idea of a gang. It's like that thing how men instantly relax when the women around them drink beer! Rebecca'll get this round! Fantastic! It was amazing. We always seemed to find funny, pretty, smart girls who liked beer! Anyway, we trekked around, overseas, went to London together for a year to work, but I just remember my head spinning of a night in the back of black London cabs. I remember one night after a dozen pints somewhere, that Melbourne band Hunters and Collectors were playing and I said to all these people, forget it, will ya, what's the point? You may as well all be down at the local, you homesick freaks! (Laughs. Long pause) He wasn't always reliable. Sometimes he just wouldn't turn up for things, no call, not a word. You'd ask him next time you saw him. You'd be angry for a minute and he'd just say 'Nah, couldn't make it!' And I'd just accept it. (Long Pause) I was always too weak, way too weak to get stuck into him about the cheating on Joanne thing. In a few drunken moments over the years, late at night, when I've felt lonely, I've

almost felt like picking up the phone and giving her the truth - but I've always pulled back. *(Pause)* Heaps of times I thought we'd lost contact for good but then he'd ring up and we'd laugh about something from ages ago. *(Chuckles)* The last time I ate with him he had two veal schnitzels – two...and all the salads and chips as well. I asked him if he was signing up for World Championship Wrestling! *(Pause)* Fat pig. *(Long Pause)* Fat selfish pig. *(Long Pause)* You might think I'm talking about him like he's dead. Well, he's not. But he may as well be. Right now, I wish he were. *(He becomes extremely agitated then slightly teary before slamming his fist across the table and then standing up)* What can you say about somebody you've known since you were ten, whose parents knew each other, whose houses became each other's, whose backyards became each other's, who split the cost of a beach-house every summer for like fifteen years? What can you say about someone you think you know well, someone you've trusted, even praised to other people? What can you say about someone when you find out that he's been fucking your sixteen-year old daughter, your daughter who's in Year 11, and that now she's pregnant, scared out of her brain? And he goes home, hugs his kids, gets into bed with Joanne and like, and like...when Sal rang, she was crying like I've never heard anyone cry before, this high-pitched wail. I kept asking: 'What is it? What is it? What's wrong? What's wrong, Sal?' I must have said it thirty times. Sixteen. Her first boyfriend. I rang Joanne and said I'm coming around. She said he's not here. I said I'll wait. I'll wait with you. The kids were making a lot of noise. I told her that he wouldn't have any idea that Sal's pregnant, that she'd only told me. Twelve weeks down. *(Pause)* When I got there Joanne was drinking vodka, smoking, eating corn chips, huge tears were falling onto the floor. She knew about things he'd done. She must have or been in denial. How many others were there? And then my daughter, that fat pig, her first boyfriend. Fuck. *(Pause)* I waited in the house. Joanne left and took the kids to her

mother's place. Eight o'clock, nine, ten; I watched the late news. I drank from his fridge and waited and waited and waited. A bit after midnight, I saw those fat Land Rover headlights come up the drive and rock a couple of pot-plants. Oasis was now coming out of the CD player. I stayed on the couch. (*Long Pause*) When he saw me he tried being casual. 'G'day mate, what are you up to?' I swear I've never hit anyone in my entire life but I grabbed his throat and tried ramming his head into the wall and I screamed at him: 'Scum, scum, you are scum. How does it feel to kill two families? Sal's pregnant. Scum, scum, scum...screaming into his face over and over until my throat burnt. But I couldn't throw a punch. Don't know why. Then I said: 'Give me the Land Rover, scum, give me the Land Rover, fat scum.' He handed over the keys. He knew how much he'd destroyed. I left him there in the too bright heavily mortgaged house with the oversize TV and Ian Botham biography on the coffee table. (*Pause*) I got on the freeway into town doing 140. I got out of the car, saw a couple of dodgy looking guys and said: 'Do you guys get off on joyriding? Well there it is. Do whatever you like with it. I don't care. I don't ever want to see it again.' (*Long Pause*) Wouldn't mind another beer and another. (*Long Pause*) Joanne rang yesterday. Told me she's leaving him, staying with her Mum for now and doesn't know where he is. She told me we need to keep this from all the parents, best we can. Forever. Let them retire in peace. (*Pause*) I went around to my ex's, Sally's Mum. What do you say? I told Sally to ring me anytime, anytime, day or night. I said I'd pay for the abortion. What choice is there? She can barely speak, poor kid. The ex is still dragging her to the Catholic Church. Good one. (*Long Pause*) Tomorrow...tomorrow I'm going to track him down – he'll have to turn up again sometime somewhere...he'll have to. (*Pause*) It might be time to throw my first punch.

***He departs quickly. Blackout. The End.***