

PIG MAN JOE

By L H Trevail

Darkness.

Silence.

Opening music. Dark, minimal. Hairy movements in the corners of the room.

A flicker of steely-blue light begins to suggest the face of a man. There are bars in front of his face.

JOE: Ladies and gentleman, this is how it is. The darkness is terrible, and there are pigs in the corners. There are pigs in the dark corners where the spiders should be...

Music kicks in proper. Filmic, melodic.

The flicker of blue light is exchanged for a light coming from an outdoor lamp that is attached to a gatepost.

There is also an intercom. JOE is standing beside the gatepost. The bars are the bars of the gate.

Joe reaches out and pushes the button on the intercom.

The intercom crackles into life.

MALE VOICE: Melvoys Farm, who's there?

JOE: Um..my name's Joe. I was wondering if there was any work going up here.

MALE VOICE: You a pig man?

JOE: Well, I'm trained in sheep, but you know, times being what they are.

MALE VOICE: Where there's muck there's brass..

JOE: Right.

MALE VOICE: How soon can you start?

JOE: Um..

MALE VOICE: Come in, Pig Man.

The gates open. Joe enters Melvoys Farm. The gate closes behind him. The light goes out.

Another light comes on. A gas lamp. It moves closer. It is held by a WOMAN.

WOMAN: You the pig man?

JOE: Joe.

WOMAN: I'm with the chickens.

JOE: Right.

They stand and look at each-other in the lamp light for a moment.

WOMAN: S'pose you'll want a bed for the night.

JOE: Well..

WOMAN: Seems a shame, what with it being nearly dawn and all.

Joe peers into the darkness.

WOMAN: I'm just about to start work.

JOE: Well, I suppose I could..

WOMAN: Good man.

The Woman begins throwing seeds around for the chickens.

JOE: Do you think I should see the farmer?

WOMAN: I am the farmer.

JOE: Oh, but I thought..the intercom..

WOMAN: I have a machine. To make me sound like a man. It sounds better when I answer the gate-bell to strangers.

JOE: Oh.

The Woman throws more seed.

Hollow, empty tumbleweed music.

JOE: Where are the animals, then? Where are the pigs and the chickens?

More tumbleweed music.

WOMAN: There used to be a man here.

Joe looks at her.

JOE: I'm sure there was.

Painfully slowly, The Woman stretches her hand out into the darkness. There is a horrid bird-shriek. She pulls her hand back. Now there is a chicken in it. She breaks it's neck with the swift returning movement of her hand.

She begins to pluck it.

Joe shifts his feet.

WOMAN: Shovel's over there.

JOE: What?

WOMAN: Shovel. For the muck. Better get started, eh?

Sun'll be up soon.

JOE: Right.

Joe heads into the darkness looking for the shovel. He trips over something. Whatever it is falls over.

JOE: Shit.

WOMAN: Take the lamp. I got another.

JOE: Shit.

Joe comes back into the light.

JOE: Sorry.

The Woman indicates the lamp, scattering bloody feathers.

Joe picks it up and moves away.

The light shows farm paraphernalia, old, decrepit. A shovel is leaning up against some more stuff. There is pig shit everywhere. Joe stands in some.

JOE: O.

He rests the lamp on a pile of something. He begins shovelling.

The Woman lights her second lamp. She carries on plucking.

WOMAN: *(singing)* Pigs gotta eat.

Birds gotta die.
I'll love one man
'Till I...

A mighty, grunting shriek cuts through the song. She stops singing at once and turns to Joe.

WOMAN: Pigs is hungry.

JOE: Right.

WOMAN: Feed 'em.

JOE: Feed 'em what?

The Woman throws him the half-plucked chicken.

WOMAN: Feed 'em this.

JOE: What? But..you..

WOMAN: I know. They prefer 'em plucked all down to the skin, but when they're hungry..

JOE: Where are they?

Bristly movement in the dark corners of the space.

WOMAN: Just throw it somewhere.

Joe hesitates.

WOMAN: Anywhere!

Joe throws the chicken. There is a greedy scurrying, scuffling, slobbering, crunching, grunting and shrieking in the darkness. Joe looks into the dark but can see nothing.

JOE: Dear God!

The Woman is looking at him with pity.

He turns to look at her. She hardens, o-so-slowly reaches out and grabs another chicken.

JOE: Um... Can I use the Bathroom?

WOMAN: Bathroom's in the house.

JOE: Which way's the house?

WOMAN: *(the direction Joe threw the chicken)* That way.

JOE: Thank you.

He begins to move away. The woman seems to be trying to make some kind of decision.

The following conversation should be awkward and broken.

WOMAN: Uh..Pig Man!

JOE: Yes, miss.

WOMAN: Why don't you..um..Just pee behind the shed.

Joe looks at her.

WOMAN: *(covering her mouth)* They..I..it's..it's dark and it's..it's a long..long way to the house. It's a long way to the farmhouse, you shouldn't have to..look..just pee behind the shed. Pee there.

Joe looks at her. She does not meet his gaze.

Joe turns the other way and disappears behind the shed.

There is a shifting in the corners of the room.

Sound of Joe peeing.

WOMAN: Joe..

JOE: Yes?

Joe finishes peeing.

He comes back round, doing up his flies.

JOE: Yes, miss.

WOMAN: Have you ever felt..protective..over someone you shouldn't have?

JOE: No, miss. Can't say's I have.

WOMAN: The pay here's terrible..

Joe sits down next to her.

JOE: 's terrible everywhere. Farming at least. Besides, looks like you could do with a hand up here.

WOMAN: Yes..

The darkness rustles.

JOE: *(about to ask a question)* Them pigs..?

WOMAN: *(a warning)* Joe..

JOE: *(Changing tack)* they make a lot of mess.

The darkness rustles louder, grunts.

JOE: *(bluntly)* How long you been feeding 'em chickens?

WOMAN: Oh, only since...

The hairy darkness shrieks.

The Woman passes Joe the chicken. Joe throws it out into the darkness. The darkness devours it.

When Joe looks back at the woman, she is holding out a newspaper to him, surreptitiously.

WOMAN: While they're eating...

Joe looks at the paper. He points at a photograph.

JOE: That's you..!

WOMAN: Read it.

Joe hesitates.

WOMAN: You can't read..?

JOE: I lost my glasses on the road.

WOMAN: *(reaches inside a pocket)* Try these.

Joe tries them. They work. He smiles at The Woman. She smiles nervously back.

JOE: Thanks.

He looks down and begins to read.

JOE: Mysterious and grisly...murder at Melvoys farm...?
Following a spate of disappearances in the local area,
the dismembered body of Mr. Melvoys, was found at the
gates of his farm...the farmhouse was empty..police trying
to locate his wife..

Joe looks up at The Woman, realisation dawning.

JOE: Oh, Christ..

He looks around for some way to defend himself.

WOMAN: Joe.. Joe.

Joe looks at her. The darkness begins to rustle.

WOMAN: You've got it wrong. It wasn't me. I'm not a murderer, Joe, you gotta believe me.

The noises in the darkness get louder.

WOMAN: It's the *pigs*, Joe. They're powerful mean, and hungry.

The darkness grunts.

Joe picks up the spade, and moves in front of The Woman.

The darkness shrieks..

JOE: Don't you worry, miss. I can take 'em on.

WOMAN: Oh, I'm sure you can, Joe. They got spindly weak legs, and weak hearts. But they got strong stomachs. And they can be mighty persuasive...

The pig-shriek in the darkness turns hypnotic, almost tuneful.

The Woman regards Joe, as he stands heroic with the shovel raised.

She begins to stretch her hand towards his neck. Her mouth hangs half-open with concentration.

Joe, too is mesmerised by the pig-song for a moment. Then he turns to say something to The Woman.

JOE: Miss...

Her strike misfires, catches him on the side of his face and neck. He staggers, but rights himself, bleeding.

JOE: Oh, hell...

She comes at him again, slow, horrible. He watches in disgust..

The pig-song is louder now, more barbaric.

He wipes some blood from his neck, and dodges her lunge easily.

She rounds on him again. But she is too slow.

The pigs are getting bored. Some of them begin to squeal over the song.

They move closer.

Joe notices this and tries to look into the darkness for them, but as he does so he is distracted, and The Woman grabs his neck. He drops the shovel in surprise, and screams. They struggle. She is trying to wrench his neck. He is trying to dislodge her, and fight for breath.

The pigs get closer still. He is fading, gasping.

He manages to grab hold of the shovel, and brings it down hard across the side of The Woman's head. She lets go immediately, and falls.

The pig song stops. Confused grunting. This is not supposed to happen. Joe disentangles himself from The Woman's limp form. He takes huge, gulping breaths, and looks around.

On the ground, The Woman stirs. She is bleeding heavily from her face and head. She is in a bad way. She tries to get up. Joe reaches down to help her. She takes his hand. He helps her to her feet.

The pigs shriek angrily.

Joe and The Woman stand side by side, bleeding. Joe takes a position with the shovel.

The pigs begin to move in. Doom music. It is truly terrifying. They begin their song again.

Joe wavers. He looks at The Woman, who is swaying and shaking. He looks back out into the darkness. He shifts the shovel in his hands. He looks at The Woman.

The pigs are coming closer.

Joe swings around, smashing the shovel into The Woman, who falls.

The pigs shriek with joy.

Joe catches her, and swings her over his shoulder. He carries her into the darkness. Horrible screams and pig eating-noises.

Joe staggers back into the light as this is going on. He is shaking.

The sun begins to rise. A gentle sliver of light on the horizon.

The pig noises retreat.

Joe sits down heavily.

The dawn light reveals the bloody memory of The Woman among the farm equipment.

The lights change again, to steely blue,

SOUND: Police station.

A POLICEMAN's face moves into the light, right up close to Joe's.

POLICEMAN: Where are the bodies, you sick bastard.

Joe shakes his head.

POLICEMAN: How long did you keep her up there, eh? Plenty of places to hide on a farm, aren't there. Well..we found her alright, what's left of her.

JOE: I..I showed you..

POLICEMAN: Proud of your work, are you, you monster?
Where are the others?

JOE: N..no, I... It wasn't me. I mean, the others weren't. I mean, I wouldn't..they were going to..

Something moves in the corner of the room.

JOE: Oh no..

POLICEMAN: What? Going to what?

The darkness shifts, hairy and menacing.

JOE: They..I..It wasn't me.. It was..

The pig-song begins, slow and deadly.

JOE: o..

POLICEMAN: *(quietly)* What have you done with the bodies?

JOE: *(quietly)* I ate them.

The Policeman stares at him.

Joe turns and stares back, the pig song echoing in his mind. He almost smiles, almost breaks into tears.

JOE: I ate them.

The Policeman's face pulls out of the light.

Joe stares out into the audience.

Bars move slowly down in front of his face.

End music begins. Resigned, beautiful, unemotional, clear.

JOE: This is how it is, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is how it is. There are pigs in the darkness. Pigs in the dark corners where the spiders should be.

Lights fade.

Music fades.

End.

