

PIG FARM

ACT I
Scene 1

(The large, eat-in kitchen of a struggling pig farm somewhere in America. Tom, a strong, weather beaten man, sits at a table looking over a letter from the federal government. Upstage left is a door which leads to the front yard, barn, and pig pens beyond. Upstage right is a window which looks out onto the same. Stairs descend along the stage right wall from bedrooms above, a door enters into the wall beneath the stairs leading down to the basement below. The kitchen is sparsely equipped with long outdated appliances. Outside we hear the distant cacophony of pigs, thousands of pigs. Tim, Tom's hired hand, enters from the front yard, filthy from his morning's work.)

Tom. TIM

Tim. TOM

(Tim crosses to the stove to pour himself a cup of coffee.)

TIM
Pot-bellied clouds up there today, Tom. Looks like it's gonna rain.

TOM
That right?

TIM
Looks like it. Gonna turn the whole God-damned farm into mud.

TOM
Yeah. Well, that's what happens when it rains, Tim.

TIM
So they say.

(Tom crosses upstage to look out the window.)

TOM
How are them pigs doing?

TIM
Still there.

TOM
Count 'em?

TIM
Tried to.

TOM
What do you mean, "Tried to."

TIM
Kept moving around.

TOM
You're supposed to count them, Tim.

TIM
I know that, Tom. About fifteen thousand, I'd say.

TOM
About?

TIM
Thereabouts.

TOM
You think the EPA fellow will go for that, Tim? "About fifteen thousand"?

TIM
I don't know.

TOM
"How many pigs you got for me today, Tom?" "About fifteen thousand." "Well, that's just great, Tom. Just great. No fines for you today." You think that's how it's gonna be when the G-men come around? All sweetness and candy?

TIM
Tony says they're not coming.

TOM

Tony?

TIM

From down the road. Says they would've been here by now if they were.

TOM

Don't listen to Tony.

TIM

Says he's got a feeling.

TOM

I've got a feeling!! Got a lot of feelings!! Too many!!
(Pause)
Look, Tim, I don't like riding you any more than you like being ridden. But the feds are gonna be here. Today. Tomorrow at the latest. They'll have their counting men, so I need my counting men, which is you. So I want you to go out there and count every God damned pig I own. You understand me?

TIM

Sure, Tom, I understand you.

TOM

Good, Tim. That's real good.

TIM

God damned federal government. Why do they need a count, anyway?

TOM

It's the law, Tim, federal law, that's why. We'll be done with the feds one day, with their laws and taxes and what-not. But until that day we play ball. Get me?

TIM

Sure, Tom, I get you.

(Tom takes a large, black magic marker from his shirt pocket and offers it to Tim.)

TOM

Look, Tim, here's my marker. Take it.

(He does so.)

TOM

Now, when you count a pig you just give it a mark, right on the snout, just like that. Okay? That way you'll know which pigs you've counted and which you haven't.

TIM

Okay.

TOM

You got your pad?

TIM

Yeah, I got it.

TOM

Okay, then.

TIM

I'm just one man, Tom.

TOM

The day you count my pigs is the day I call you a man.

TIM

And there's fifteen thousand of them.

TOM

Thereabouts, Tim, thereabouts. Let's find out exactly how many.

(Tina, Tom's wife, beautiful but already a little worn out, enters from the basement carrying a huge basket of freshly laundered clothes. She drops the basket on the table.)

TINA

Tom. Tim.

TOM

Tina.

TIM

Tina.

TINA

Pot-bellied clouds up there today.

TOM

So I heard.

TIM

Gonna turn the whole God-damned farm into mud.

TINA

Yeah, well, that's what happens when it rains.

TOM

So they say.

TINA

New wash today?

TOM

Naw, I'm good. Might as well get another wearing out of them.

TINA

How about you, Tim?

TIM

Naw, I'm good. I have to go back out anyway. Got marker work to do.

TINA

Marker work?

TOM

Tim'll be doing the count today.

TINA

Awful lot of pigs out there.

TOM

Yeah, I know how many pigs are out there. Roughly.

TINA

Thought you were gonna do the count yourself.

TOM

Thought I was, too. Let the sludge go too long. Got to go down to the river to do another dumping.

TIM

Dumping?

TINA

Sludge dumping.

TOM

What we cleaned out from the pens.

TIM

That's a lot of sludge.

TOM

Leave it for the rain and we'll be swimming in it.

TINA

All ready are.

TOM

Yeah, well, fifteen thousand pigs makes for a lot of sludge.

TIM

Fifteen thousand - - or, thereabouts.

TOM

That's right, Tim. That's exactly right. Now, get on out there, and don't forget about the marker trick I taught you.

TIM

I won't forget about it. And I won't forget about what you said about the end of the federal government, either. I won't forget a word of it. Because when the federal government is gone then so will the count. And on that day I'll have a bottle of beer, I can tell you that much. I'll have a tall bottle of beer.

(Tim exits. Tom crosses to the stove to pour himself a cup of coffee. Tina starts folding the laundry.)

TINA

Good kid.

TOM

Yeah, he's all right.

TINA

Real good kid. Keep filling his head with hateful stuff about the federal government we'll see how long he stays good.

TOM

Doesn't need me to fill it. Spent time in a federal detention center for offending minors. Juvie Hall. Knows the feds better than we do.

TINA

Better than any kid should.

TOM

That's the truth of it. Well, he's with us, now. Until he turns eighteen, that is.

(Pause.)

TINA

When are we gonna have a kid, Tom?

TOM

Aw, not this whole song and dance, again.

TINA

Is that what it is to you? A song and a dance?

TOM

Tina-

TINA

I want a kid, Tom. My own kid. Our kid.

TOM

Tina! I got the feds on my back, I got feed meal to buy, I can't spend time on this right now.

TINA

You promised me.

TOM

I know what I promised.

TINA

Clean wash I've been giving you, Tom. Every day, just like I promised. How about your promise?

TOM

I'm good for it. Just not now.

TINA

When?

TOM

I don't know, when things settle down.

TINA

But that's just the thing, isn't it? Things never do settle down.

TOM

Maybe they do and maybe they don't. But the thing is it's got to be about the farm right now. The pig farm. And that's all it's got to be about.

TINA

Yeah, I know what it's got to be about.

TOM

God damn it, Tina! I've got feed meal to buy! I've got fecal sludge to cart down to the God-damned river! Where's a baby supposed to fit into all that?

TINA

Baby's are small. Fit most anywhere.

TOM

A Baby's an explosion! Don't try to tell me different!

TINA

A baby's an expression of love, that's the main thing.

TOM

Yeah, I know what a baby is.

TINA

You do love me, Tom, don't you?

TOM

Of course I do. You know I do.

TINA

No, Tom, I don't. Not for sure I don't.

TOM

I just need time, Tina, that's all. Time to get things right.

TINA

What you need is to get right with me.

(A truck horn sounds outside.)

TOM

Now, who the Hell would that be?

TINA

Forget it, Tom. Forget about all of it. Just be with me for a second.

(The truck horn sounds again.)

TOM

Son-of-a-bitch.

(Offstage we hear Toby, the feed meal man. Tom crosses to the window.)

TOBY(O.S.)

Feed meal!

TOM

Toby?! That you?!

TOBY(O.S.)

Feed meal, God damn you! Pot-bellied clouds up there, so get on out here before it wets us all!

TOM

All right, Toby, give me a second, will you?!

(To Tina.)

Feed meal's here.

TINA

Awful early.

TOM

I asked him to come early. Feds love feeding time, I want to have some extra meal on hand in case they want to see a show.

(Tim enters.)

TIM
Feed meal man's here.

TOM
Yeah, I heard him, Tim.

TIM
Wants to see you right away, got a lot of deliveries today.
Trying to beat the rain.

TOM
I said I heard him. I'll be right out.

(The horn sounds again.)

TOM
His truck is full of sacks, Tina. Got to get them over to
the slop house.

TINA
Go on, Tom. Go on out to the God damned feed meal man.

(Tom exits to deal with Toby, Tim lingers.)

TIM
Tina.

TINA
Tim. Feed meal man's a real son-of-a-bitch, isn't he.

TIM
He's all right. He's a hard man, but he's fair once you
get to talking to him.

TINA
How about you, Tim? Are you a fair man?

TIM
Me?

TINA
Sure, you.

TIM
I don't know. I do what I do, I suppose. Never thought
about it much to tell you the truth.

TINA

Suppose you should think about it, then.

TIM

Suppose I should.

TINA

Get the Hell out of here. Do your counting. Do it before the God damned feds show up.

(Tim exits, Tina continues folding. Tom rushes in.)

TOM

Son-of-a-bitch feed meal man's charging me emergency rates again.

TINA

Yeah, that's how it is around here, isn't it.

TOM

Won't unload the meal without it, without the extra.

TINA

Purse is in the bedroom.

(Tom runs upstairs. Tina goes to the window.)

TINA

Hey! Hey, feed meal man! You're a real son-of-a-bitch, aren't you?!

TOBY(O.S.)

Who said that?! Who in the God damn Hell said that?!

TINA

Over here, you God damned son-of-a-bitch! You God damned, no-good, emergency-rate-charging son-of-a-bitch!

TOBY(O.S.)

You want your feed meal, do you?!

(Tom returns in a hurry from upstairs.)

TINA

You know what I'd like to do?! I'd like to take that God damned feed meal and-

TOM

Tina! What the Hell do you think you're doing?!

TINA

What's it look like?

(Honking sounds.)

TOM

Were you yelling at him?! He's the God damned feed meal man!

TINA

Yeah, and who am I, Tom?! Who the Hell am I?!

(Tim rushes in.)

TIM

He's leaving, Tom.

TOM

And what the Hell are you still doing here?! I thought I told you to start counting!

TIM

He's leaving, Tom, he's starting to turn the truck around!

TOM

Well, all right! Go stop him, then!

TIM

For crying out loud, that's what I was trying to do.

(Tim rushes back out.)

TOM

Yell at me if you need to, Tina. But don't yell at Toby. He's the feed meal man.

TINA

Maybe I'm tired of yelling.

TOM

Tina-

TINA

All these years I've been giving you clean clothes,
birthing pigs, cooking food. All these years I've stood by
you, kept you going so you could keep this farm going. So
now you stand by me. You give me a baby, God damn you, and
you do it now - and I mean right now!

(Thunder sounds in the distance.)

TOM

God-damn pot-bellied clouds.

(Tim returns.)

TIM

Last chance, Tom.

(Tim exits, Tom follows him to the front door and
calls out.)

TOM

Be right there, Toby!
(To Tina.)
I'll be back, Tina.

TINA

Take your time.

(Tina storms off and exits into the basement.)

TOM

What does one man have to do to run a God damn pig farm
around here.

TOBY(O.S.)

You call me a son-of-a-bitch?

(Tom exits out into the yard. Tom and Toby talk
as lights fade.)

TOM(O.S.)

Emergency rates, Toby. It's a little hard to swallow.

TOBY(O.S.)

Tell you what, Tom, no emergency rates. No rates at all
because you aren't getting any feed meal at all, not from
me you're not!

TOM(O.S.)

Toby-

TOBY(O.S.)

Pot-bellied clouds, Tom! Pot-bellied clouds, and it's a son-of-a-bitch you're calling me?!

(Thunder sounds louder, now. The rain is on the way.)

TOM(O.S.)

Pot-bellied skies, Toby. Pot-bellied world if you ask me.

TOBY(O.S.)

Said something there, Tom.

TOM(O.S.)

Pot-bellied world.

(Black out.)