

A PIG'S LIFE

by

Philip Heckman

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701 Panther Trl.
Monona, WI 53716-3058
philipheckmanwriter.com
pheckman02@gmail.com

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Characters

BOSS, a male or female piglet, No. 1 of the litter, privileged and dominant.

TWO, a male or female piglet, the boss's "enforcer," coarse and mean.

THREE, a male or female piglet, the most nondescript member of the litter, fat and complacent.

FOUR, a male or female piglet, the one who's just a step above oblivion, nervous and sneaky.

RUNT, a male piglet, the weakest of the litter, significantly smaller than the others.

LITTLE GIRL, 8, compassionate and tenacious.

PAPA, 40s, a practical farmer and the Little Girl's loving father.

Time

Many years ago.

Setting

A pig sty.

A PIG'S LIFE

Four piglets lie in a disheveled sty. Their rank order is immediately apparent in the way they arrange themselves around BOSS, who lounges with practiced ease in the largest pile of straw CS. TWO sits close to BOSS, keeping an eye of FOUR, who's constantly trying to cozy up to the boss. THREE sprawls off to the side, hoping to stay out of TWO's way.

After a moment, BOSS squirms uncomfortably.

TWO

What's the matter, Boss? You need a rub or a scratch?

BOSS

There's something in the straw. Something...sharp...and poky.

BOSS leans forward and TWO digs through the straw until he finds something.

TWO

Probably just this stick. Here, get rid of it.

TWO throws the stick at THREE.

THREE

Why me?

TWO

'Cause you're a chubby piglet and you need the exercise.

FOUR hustles after the stick.

FOUR

I'll take care of it, Boss.

RUNT enters with the defensive posture of a natural-born victim. BOSS stops FOUR.

BOSS

Naw, leave it lie. That's where the runt sleeps.

The four piglets chortle meanly. FOUR's laugh is the loudest and most obnoxious, a series of loud, wet snorts.

FOUR

Yeah, let the stupid runt sleep on the poky stick.

RUNT cringes when FOUR scoops up straw from the floor to throw at him. The other piglets ad lib derision. FOUR goes too far, however, grabbing straw from BOSS's pile. TWO cuffs FOUR.

TWO

Hey, back off, chump! Don't crowd the Boss.

FOUR

(Obsequiously.)

OK, yes, of course...You all right, Boss?

BOSS

I'm hungry. Where's that old sow?

THREE

Now there's a fat pig!

General laughter, except RUNT.

RUNT

Don't say that.

BOSS signals a halt to the laughter.

BOSS

What did you say?

RUNT

(Weakly.)

That's our mother. You shouldn't talk about her like that.

BOSS looks at TWO, who signals to THREE and FOUR, who drag RUNT forward.

TWO

And without permission, you shouldn't be talking at all.

TWO grabs RUNT by an ear, twisting it viciously.

RUNT

Owie, owie, owie...

THREE and FOUR laugh cruelly.

TWO

That's more like it.

BOSS
Come here, Runt.

TWO
You heard the Boss.

TWO gives RUNT a push. RUNT advances fearfully.

BOSS
Just who do you think you are?

RUNT
Your...your brother.

BOSS
You think were related?
(*To the others.*)
Do we look related?

BOSS flexes its muscles. TWO, THREE, and FOUR guffaw.

RUNT
N...no. But...

TWO
But what, butthead?

RUNT
But we are...related. I'm your little brother. Mom says so.

BOSS
I say she's lying.

RUNT
No!

BOSS
I think you're adopted, dropped in here from a sty on the wrong side of the barn.

TWO
An outcast!

THREE
A throwaway!

FOUR
Yeah, a tiny reject.

BOSS
That's why we call you Runt.

TWO

You're lucky we keep you around.

BOSS

Damn right. If it was up to me, you'd get the axe.

*BOSS makes a throat-cutting gesture.
TWO kicks RUNT away.*

TWO

So shut up and keep your nose in the mud.

FOUR

Yeah! And stay away.

THREE

(Pointing O.S.)

Look, look, here she comes, here she comes! Dinner time!

The sound of footfalls signal the unseen sow's arrival, which the hungry piglets turn their heads in unison to observe. Characteristically they position themselves for feeding. BOSS, of course, is in the forefront, followed by TWO, who thuggishly shoves THREE and FOUR behind him. RUNT hangs back entirely.

BOSS

Hey, Momma, come to The Boss.

TWO

Oink, oink!

THREE

Gimme, gimme!

FOUR

Oh, yeah!

The four piglets ad lib further excitement as they wiggle to the sound of the unseen sow, who apparently lies down heavily on the apron. One by one, the piglets rush forward to the sow and take up their feeding positions, facing the audience side by side in rank order --BOSS, TWO, THREE, FOUR--sucking blissfully like mad. The four larger piglets crowd out RUNT as he tries to squeeze between each of them in turn, with increasing futility and desperation.

As the larger piglets knead the sow's nipples, they suckle and grunt and moan with pleasure, calling out...

BOSS

Oh, Momma, this big piggie's going to market...

TWO

And this big piggie's staying home...

THREE

And this big piggie's sipping Liebfraumilch...

FOUR

And this big piggie's in a zone...

RUNT tries again to get between BOSS and TWO, but the latter yanks him away by the ear.

TWO

But this little piggie cried--

RUNT

(In pain.)

Wee, wee, wee--

TWO

--and left us alone.

TWO pushes RUNT backwards and resumes his position. RUNT runs frantically back and forth along the line of gorging piglets, jumping up and down to make himself heard.

RUNT

Please, guys, let me in...There's room...There's twelve teats, for crying out loud. I counted them. Twelve...More than enough for all five of us.

TWO

Tough. The Boss gets first pick.

BOSS

And I'm a four-fisted drinker!

TWO

Then me.

THREE

And we're all bigger than you, Runt. So take a hike. Go back to the sty you came from.

FOUR

Yeah, go back and die.

RUNT dejectedly turns away, falling to his knees in the straw, amid sobs.

RUNT

It's not fair...I don't need much..Just a drop or two...She's my momma too...Just because I'm small doesn't mean I'm useless.

RUNT quickly reaches the depths of despair, then...

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Please don't, Papa. Put the axe away. It's not right.

PAPA (O.S.)

I know what I'm doing. I've raised a litter of pigs before. The littlest one never survives.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

But I'm little. And I survived.

PAPA (O.S.)

That's different.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

How? Unjust is unjust. I can love the runt just as much as you love me.

PAPA (O.S.)

I doubt that.

(Sighs.)

All right. You can have him. You'll have to feed him from a bottle, though.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Oh, Papa, I can do it! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

RUNT mimes being tickled and petted.

FOUR

Look, they're taking him away.

THREE

More milk for the rest of us.

BOSS

Probably going to toss him in the garbage.

TWO

Where he belongs. Good riddance, Runt.

BOSS

That's the last we're gonna see of his scrawny ass. Little twerp finally got what he deserved.

The piglets laugh and greedily resume their meal.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Oh, Papa, he's so cute! Thank you for letting me keep him.

PAPA (O.S.)

Well, you saved him for now. But you might come to regret it.

LITTLE GIRL

Oh, no. Never. Just look! Such a little sweetheart.

RUNT raises his shoulders, as if being lifted up into heaven, and exits on his tiptoes, dancing. The remaining piglets don't even notice.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

You know what? I'm going to call him...Wilbur.

The remaining piglets squirm in smug ignorance. Fade to black.

THE END