

Pooky Night: A Fateful Meeting on All Hallow's Eve

October 31, 2006

Zoom in, focus on crowd, pan the studio.

Announcer (KFC): Ladies and gentlemen, here he is: that pig with a plan: That pedantic peddler of porcine prurience; to loath him is to love him; fresh in from a long hiatus in Parma, Italy; put your hoofs together for: Nauuuught Eeeeeee Piiiigyyyy!

The band kicks in with “We are the cheeky boys,” and NP enters dancing and waving at the cheering crowd. He sees his shadow created by the spotlight and immediately begins a series of rabbit punches and fancy footwork, screaming I am the greatest in his best Mohammed Ali impression, which winds up more sounding like Babe with a chest cold but still manages to work the crowd into a frenzy.

Monologue (NP): Well, well, well look what we have here. What a lovely audience, whew! {the remaining smatter of applause dwindles as he mops sweat from his brow with a hanky clad hoof} Wow, the last time I saw a group this excited was in Guantanamo when I did my reenactment of the Bay of Pigs for the enemy combatant's Infidels-only poker league down there. Yep, it was a little Saving Private Ryan with a sprinkling of Jack Nicholson-Tom Cruise tête-à-tête tossed in for drama. I wrapped up with my impression of W.C. Fields imitating Ted Kennedy drinking a 7-11 Big Gulp sized “Chappaquiddick Iced Tea” while trying get up Mary Jo Kopechne's skirt and driving off the Dike Bridge simultaneously. Let me tell ya, that gets those little jail birds singin' everytime! But tell me something folks, really... about Infidels... the truth here... isn't it kind of gross to think of yourself *in Fidel*? I mean that's just gross!!!

The band kicks up again and NP lets his hoofs fly once again as he dances off camera to position himself in his interview area. It's a desk of sorts, but the entire area is made up like a pen in a barn complete with a straw floor and orange crates for seats.

NP takes a seat on an orange crate and grabs a Ticonderoga from his quiver of pencils, spinning it on one hoof.

“Well then, I’m bored. Let’s bring on our first and only guest, shall we?” He rolls his eyes and tosses a pencil blindly behind him.

“Ow!” KFC arrives from backstage with a prop-pencil stuck in his eye and blood faker than from the movie *Billy Jack* running down his face and hands. “Watch it; you’ll put someone’s eye out!”

“Ha! Too late,” retorts NP. “Sit down, I’ve got pie in the oven.”

KFC takes a seat on the crate next to NP and crosses a leg, checking to make sure his shorts aren’t too short. “Um, NP, there aren’t any guests.”

“Oh crap, there weren’t any last time either.” NP mused.

“Quite a monologue, but it seems a bit dated.” KFC said. “You know with all that torture stuff so hush-hush these days.”

“Yeah, well I wrote that a while ago; found it in my white suit.” NP explained. “I’ll torture you, if you don’t tell me where the guests are.”

“Yeah well, word kind of got out that you were, well... dead” said KFC.

“Sons of bitches!” The pig exclaimed. “Who the hell told them that?” NP lit up a cigarette and shot jets of smoke from his nose like a vapor trail.

“Uh... me, I guess.” KFC shrugged. “I thought you quit smoking.”

“This is me quitting, you f-ing a-hole. What the hell are you thinking spreading rumors about me? NP demanded.

“Well you’ve been gone for so long...” KFC offered.

The pig seethed for a moment and then said, “FINE! I have developed a contingency plan just for this occasion. I learned this tactic in my army days back in Iraq.”

KFC spread his hands in a humble apologetic fashion and asked, “Whaddya got in mind, Pig?”

NP said, “I’ve written a story—a spooky one at that. Just in time for your hollow weenie. You, idiot boy, can go and check on my chocolate chicken. Off with you—run along now and make sure it doesn’t burn. I like it crispy, but juicy. Like my bitches.” He smiled lasciviously.

Now you out *there* {motions to the camera}, my leagues of gracious fandom, well, well, well... gather round the fire kids; NP’s got a tale to tell... It’s called Pooky Night. Moo-a-a! OK, OK, Shhh! Hey, Shaddap already!!! OK... OK...”

“THE NIGHT WAS WINDY BUT NOT DARK. A FORCEFUL GALE had sprung up with the moon at about an hour past dusk and continued its fury well past midnight. The light of a fat and waxing moon hung against the steel-blue backdrop of the autumn night, casting a dappled flurry of shadows from groaning trees. The old giants’ leaves rustled, branches creaked, and trunks swayed in a menacing moon-lit dance. A window shutter banged in the distance: *bang... bang... bang*, as if being repeatedly slammed by a madman’s rage.

With every report NP opened an anxious eye and peeked out from beneath the bed-sheets half expecting this shutter-slammung lunatic to come traipsing into his boudoir with a rusty, ball-peen hammer—or worse—some heavy gauge wire and a pair of pliers. *Bang!* His cheeks quivered as he shrunk deeper into the safety of his duvet. Reaching out to his nightstand, he grabbed a truffle and brought it to his snout in a vain attempt to quell the fear that had already long since crept down the frightened swine’s spine.

In a less frequent tempo of the shutter clatter was the ominous shift from dark to light upon the walls caused by the heavy sway of the largest tree, the one that stood sentinel just outside NP’s bedroom window. With each sway hither and to, the room was awash with a flood of ethereal grey-blue light then plunged into an ever

deepening darkness from which NP imagined any horror could emerge.

“I swear to God if I wake up and you’re still here, first I’m gonna scream like a woman, and then I’m gonna kick you square in the nuts.” He hissed at the figure that had suddenly materialized and was now hovering at the foot of his bed.

The creature alighted upon a cedar trunk with a gentle creak and moved to sturdy himself with what seemed to be the torso of an inverted, green-tea-dipped Diary-Queen cone. He stretched his arms, which were in fact the flippers of a baby porpoise, like a conductor commanding silence before a performance.

“Just who in this sick and dirty world are you?” whimpered NP, sinking deeper into the now chocolate-smearing duvet and peering fearfully from beneath it with but one black eye. “Please tell me you’re not some sort of male pig rapist who goes around taking advantage of innocent, little, tight, succulent pigs. Or are you?”

“If I told you my real name your eardrums would burst, your brain would turn to mush, and you might even explode into flames,” said the figure; “but you can call me, Glimp.” The odd being added a wink, aimed his flippers like six-shooters, firing of a couple rounds into the air and blew at the imaginary smoke with a theatrical flourish.

“I can do that with a fart,” NP scoffed while managing a chuckle despite his trepidation. He then grimaced.

There was a queer moment of silence then the faint sound of a distant ricochet echoed from a far corner of the house—more than likely the kitchen—followed by the tinkle of broken glass. Both creatures cast their eyes sideways, rising their eyebrows, and scrunched their lower lips to the side in a look of instant culpability.

“Ha! That’s what I love about you.” Glimp laughed. “You’re always up for a showdown.”

“Silent but deadly, amigo.” NP returned the wink. “Hey, you’re not another creation of that feeble-minded

mooncalf's are you? I worry about his... you know..." NP tapped a hoof to the side of his head.

"Quite the opposite actually," replied Glimp.

"So who are you, God for Christ's sake? I swear, I'm dangerous; keep back!" NP shoved himself against the head board—cheeks quivering—and threw the remainder of his night-stand truffle reserve at the luminous intruder with all the force he could muster. He threw like a girl. The truffle passed through this nighttime mirage and splattered against an old chest of drawers causing a faint *clink, clink, clink* of the antique brass handles.

"I'm many things to many people, young master Piggy." Glimp said. "Myth or religion in general, is a method in which the human mind has adapted so as to cope with what is otherwise vast and infinite and thus unintelligible."

"Unless you're Stephen Hawking, you moron; I watch NOVA you know." NP hissed. "Geez and I thought I was full of myself. I'm smelling truffles and I'm all out. Is that you?"

"That would be the malted milk balls," said Glimp. "I'm afraid I'm a bit of an addict. Want some?"

Glimp offered a box of candy to NP, who instantly disappeared beneath the duvet. Just as suddenly, a black hoof shot from beneath the covers at the end of the bed and snatched the box. The pig formed a lump in the bed that slowly migrated back to the headboard with a soft crunching sound.

"On young master Stephen, however, you're only part right," Glimp continued unfazed. "You see, he's still confined to human thought, which limits his ability to take in the... whole shebang *per se*. He's definitely working with blinders here; but to his merit he uses what little he's got with admirable vigor."

"Yeah, like I'm supposed to even care what a transparent, flipped fetus says," snorted the pig.

"Your blinders are an entirely different hue, young master Piggy." Glimp folded his pectoral flippers in front of what

might be his chest and sighed, “Unfortunately, they are a bit shit-tinted.”

“Nice.” NP rolled his eyes. “And, why are you here for the umpteenth time?”

“It’s All Hallow’s Eve.” Glimp said.

“And what, *per se*, the fuck is that?” NP shifted under the covers, doing something Glimp couldn’t see.

“Since you ask,” Glimp began. “The term Halloween, and its older spelling Hallowe’en, is shortened from All-hallow-even, as it is the evening before All Hallows’ Day. In Ireland, the name was All Hallows’ Eve. As you well may know, Halloween is a tradition celebrated on the night of October 31, most notably by children dressing in costumes and going door-to-door collecting sweets.”

NP stifled a yawn, though his eyes twinkled and ears perked at the mention of sweets. “Is God to be objectified or personalized?” He just kind of threw that out there.

“All men objectify me.” Glimp continued with a saucy wink and a curtsy, “However, what you may not know is that Halloween originated among the Celts in Ireland, Britain and France as the Pagan Celtic harvest festival, Samhain.

Now, according to what can be reconstructed of the beliefs of the ancient Celts, the bright half of the year ended around November 1 or on a Moon-phase near that date, a day referred to in modern Gaelic as Samhain. This is pronounced ‘Sow-in’ or alternatively ‘Sa-ven’, meaning: End of the summer. After the adoption of the Roman calendar with its fixed months, the date began to be celebrated independently of the moon’s phases.”

“Did you say *sow*?” NP interjected.

“Ahem,” Glimp continued. “As October 31st is the last day of the bright half of the year, the next day also meant the beginning of winter, which the Celts often associated with human death, and with the slaughter of livestock to provide meat for the coming winter.”

“Hey, stop trying to scare me, you Gimp!” NP spat.

“That’s Glimp; please let me finish, it’s not often I get to quote the wikipedia verbatim,” said Glimp; “Now, the Celts also believed that on October 31, the boundary separating the dead from the living became blurred. There is a rich and unusual myth system at work here; the spirit world, the residence of the "Sídhe," as well as of the dead, was thought to be accessible through burial mounds. These mounds opened at two times during the year, Samhain and Beltane, making the beginning and end of summer highly spiritually resonant.

Like most observances around this season, warmth and comfort were emphasized, indulgence was not. Stores of preserved food were needed to last through the winter, not for parties.

“Bo-o-o-o-ring,” NP said then sang. “I like to party; I like to get down.” He waved his hoofs over his head in a very retro dance maneuver.

“And my favorite morsel of utterly useless but mildly amusing minutiae is that Halloween is also called Pooky Night in some parts of Ireland, presumably named after the púca, a mischievous spirit.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, send me the Cliff Notes, Blow-Hole.” NP said and promptly fell asleep, having polished off the last of the malted milk balls.

Glimp hovered at the foot of the bed and looked kindly upon NP. “He’s the savior of this world he thought; but he knows this not.” He thought aloud and frowned at the crappy impression of Yoda he just did.

NP snored and snored until he let out a snort so loud that he woke himself up. “Pooky Night,” NP giggled. “So, Slick Gimpy, you’re only to appear on Pooky Night?”

“No, but it is rather dramatic sounding, wouldn’t you say.”

“Jesus H. Christ, you just bored the pants of me for what?”

“You weren’t wearing any pants. What does the H. stand for?”

“Oh, you make-a me crazy!” NP banged his hoofs against his head like a bongo player jacked up on white doves.

“You’re to help him.” Glimp said.

“Help who, you a-hole? It’s past my bedtime.” NP said.

“It’s my charge as an enemy of banality to ensure that you save your master.” Glimp said.

“Help him what; he’s beyond hope.” NP retorted. “He’s succumbed to A-nality. As in a-hole reality. How am I supposed to fix that? He’s like worse than that frozen-burrito-stuffed Metallica loving mo-tard, Billy from Survivor: Cook Islands. A-holia is his religion.”

“Mo-tard?” asked Glimp?

“That’s half moron; half retard.” NP explained.

“Ah, Billy was indeed that. Regardless, you must help him release what’s in your master’s head before he goes insane. If you don’t; you die; or worse you’ll have no more pie for the rest of your years, Young Master Piggy.”

“Heavens to Betsy, but it’s too late! Beside, the writers from LOST have already done everything, there’s nothing left to write about.” NP said.

“Everything’s been written before. Even you. But it is up to you, young Master Piggy, to save your master from the downward spiral of mediocrity.” Gimp explained.

“And really, come on, how is that supposed to happen? Should I buy him new underwear?” NP asked.

“I will perform a psychic transference upon you.” Glimp said, “It will be more than your piggy brain can take, and you will lose consciousness. When you awake, you will have the solution.”

“And when I wake up I want everything to be OK again?” asked NP.

“You will but your memory will be non-existent. Your mind will become tabula rasa.”

“You mean I won’t remember anything?”

“You will but only subconsciously.”

“Well that’s no fair.”

“Trust me, its better this way.”

“Sounds like a hang-over to me. Whatever, let her rip; just as long as I don’t have to see your mutton gun in my room ever again.” NP smacked. “Ever, you got me?”

Glimp rose above the bed, his figure awash with color that emanated from some inner glow. His eyes turned to flame and lightening shot from his mouth like the forked tongue of an electrified dragon.

The crack of lightening arrived simultaneously with the white flash of light that lit-up the room like a flashbulb the size of the largest chocolate chicken pie ever made attached to a cannon.

KFC sat bolt straight up in his bed, his heard pounding; his mind torn asunder betwixt worlds. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes and stared around the room. Rising from the bed he set his feet to the floor and found the remains of a half-melted truffle between his second and third toes. It felt like a cold turd.

“NP?” He called. “NP?”

He turned as he heard the sound of a scrape at the door—the front door. It happened again... *scrape, scrape, scrape*. He reached for the light switch. The power was out. He opened the bedroom door and tentatively padded down the hallway that in his mind seemed a corridor to hell... *scrape, scrape, scrape*. *Had the madman’s banging stopped*, he thought to himself. *Now replaced by this noise at the door? Or was that a dream?* He reached the door and peered through the peephole but only saw a shadowed silhouette.

“Who is it?” He called through the door.

Scrape, scrape, scrape...

His heart was drumming in his chest. He turned to the dish that held candy left out for the trick-or-treaters that never appeared tonight, ostensibly due to inclement weather. *But now...* he thought.

KFC steeled himself, placed his hand on the doorknob, and began to turn... *scrape, scrape, scrape*. He pulled the door open to a hairline crack and moonlight spilled into the foyer like a lighthouse fog-light. There loomed a figure cast in blue by a cold ray of the moon. It held a pillow case sodden with blood.

“Got any bacon?” The ghoul requested.

His fear turned to horror; his horror paralysis, and then he shat his pajamas...

“THE END. So whaddy’a think?” Asked NP.

“Um... that’s kind of an abrupt ending isn’t it?” Said KFC.

“Oh, shut up, you know nothing about art. Whaddy’a expect for a rush job anyhow? Besides, it’s terrifying.” NP said.

“Indeed. Who wrote that anyway?” KFC asked.

“You did, mostly.” NP admitted plainly.

“And, you called me a moon-calf?”

“A little artistic license was taken where required. I specialize in similes.”

“There’s something not right with you, you know...”

“That’s right, a-hole. And you love it!”

NP rose from his orange crate and his knees cracked. He turned to the audience and with a look of annoyance said, “That’s it, show’s over folks. Scram, beat-it, go home! Skedaddle!!!

He reached behind him and switched an old fashioned lever that looked like it had been commandeered from Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory, and the studio slipped instantly into a stygian darkness. A scream of unimaginable torture and terror pierced the blackness and shot straight through the very bones of the audience. NP snickered maniacally in the dark and turned another lever causing a giant inflatable glow-in-the-dark devil to fall from the scaffolding and hang about the crowd suspended by stunt wire. Complete with a pointed tail, pitchfork, and hoofs, the devil spun on its ropes and vomited hot pigs blood in projectile streams, drenching its hapless victims.

Then the lights came on.

Lying in the stage's pig sty was the dismembered torso of KFC that lied seeping blood into the straw. He was beyond dead. He was slaughtered. A blood steeped axe handle stood erect from his crotch where the business end had tendered its resignation. This was no Billy Jack hematological placebo either; it was the real deal—coppery and wet like spilled pomegranate juice. It glistened under the hanging devil's glow. The entire room smelled like a sweaty old penny. Some puked; others fainted; most screamed and ran for the door. The studio became pandemonium.

Backstage NP and KFC cracked a bottle of Tuaca and proceeded to nuke up a batch of apple cider in preparation for their ceremonial Halloween dinner of chocolate chicken pie and steaming cocktails called hot apple pies. Screams could be heard through the walls.

"I think they're pretty freaked out." KFC said.

"Yeah, well f-them a-holes. What do they expect? It's Halloween, It's dinner time, and dinner is my religion." NP grabbed the aerosol whipped cream and shot a load of sweet foam so deep into his snout that it shot out the sides. He quickly recovered with a shot of Tuaca and a spork full of meat pie. "Say, does you pee ever smell like canned tuna?"

KFC promptly spiked NP's mug with another snort of booze and said, "I think that's too much coffee, but I'm not sure."

“Here’s to old friends and canned tuna.” NP held out his spiced mug.

“Here’s to Pooky Night,” KFC held out his.

They clacked their drinks together and toasted as Pooky Night fell away once more on the slippery skein of time that never fails to unravel our lives as we strive in vain to keep impermanence in check.