

ARCTIC JOE

Written by

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EXT. ANTARCTICA - DAY

JOE WOMBASH stands before a gathering of penguins, cold wind blows across the tundra, water laps at the shore behind them.

The rear-half of a horse costume hangs from his shoulders by suspenders, extends out behind him, wind whips the tail back and forth.

A bucket of sardines rests next to his hooves.

From somewhere nearby, a faint, eerie HUM throbs.

He speaks into a mini-cassette recorder.

JOE

Chapter one. Pantomime, is an art form, but its mastery can only be attained if you believe in the spirit of pantomime, and if you are certain that you can achieve complete harmony within the art.

Joe grabs a handful of sardines from the bucket and scatters them among the penguins who devour them in seconds.

JOE (CONT'D)

Now, when pantomime is reenacted, the key is to not be overzealous to the point that you fall over or something. Balance is everything, in life, in love, and most assuredly, in pantomime.

Another handful of fish is tossed at the penguins.

JOE (CONT'D)

It is essential that you keep a certain perspective when attempting to pantomime. The release of spiritual energy is very powerful. Pantomime is not to be played with. It is not a toy for children and simpletons. There are no short cuts. I abhor the term "panto". It indicates an unwillingness to commit ones true self to the artform. To seek a easy route to ultimate enlightenment, the kind only pantomime can provide, is a betrayal.

Joe throws the last handful of fish, then checks his antique pocket watch.

JOE (CONT'D)

Gloria, transcribe this for my book editor, you may take excerpts for the newsletter, and tell Jeremy to stay out of my desk. I expect to find a *full* bottle of creme d'menthe when I return or it's coming out of your paycheck.

Joe abandons the bucket, walks toward a before-unseen obsidian monolith that stands well over 10 feet. It HUMS with eldritch energy, black tendrils of malevolent power seep the object.

JOE

Gloria, tell Captain Korg that I'm done here and expect the final payment. Just going to fiddle with this thing, what's he calling it? The monolith. It was right where he said. Won't take long. I'll be back to the ship in time for the 7PM performance. Who hires a pantomime group as ship's entertainment?

He fondles the smooth volcanic stone, runs his fingers along the faint, blood-red veins.

JOE

I mean, it's a worthy request, don't get me wrong, but you'd think a DVD player and some Steven Seagal blurays would suffice. The crew isn't exactly the most sophisticated of audiences. I overheard one of them wondering if the troupe has sex with the costumes. I'm not sure if he meant we have sex with them on, or if we have sex with the costumes themselves.

Joe steps back, looks the monolith up and down, looks back at the penguins.

JOE

Addendum. I'm inclined to turn down the offer for Cirque du Soleil. Their loosey-goosey policy on nipple exposure is troubling. I don't need people ogling my junk through those thin-as-tissue tights they make you wear.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)
I can't tell if they're being
risqué, or just cheap.

A massive Emperor Penguin pushes through its smaller friends,
waddles forward, a scrap of paper in its beak.

JOE
That's all for now, Gloria. This is
Joe Wombash signing off, over and
out.

Joe carefully approaches, reaches for the scrap. The penguin
remains still, allows Joe to take it.

He examines the paper. It has strange symbols, he reads aloud
a handwritten message, struggles with the pronunciation.

JOE
"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh
wgah'nagl fhtagn".

He looks to the penguin for understanding, receives none.

The THROB intensifies, Joe grimaces as if a sudden headache
hits him.

He rubs his temples, weaves unsteadily to the monolith,
relaxes against it.

A relief carving of a cosmic creature with tentacles for a
mouth appears on it face.

Black tendrils envelop him, he drops the tape recorder, tries
to move away, the tendrils pull him back, up against the
monolith.

He disappears inside, the horse costume is rejected, drops
into the snow at the base of the structure.

A moment of stillness, and then, a HIDEOUS SCREAM echoes from
its depths.

The penguins realize there will be no more fish thrown at
them.

They shuffle off into the freezing water.

THE END.