

Ghost Roast

written by

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An original spec for This is the Thing (Fibe TV1)

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

MIKE is working the cash. It's nearly closing time. Customers are milling about. Mike picks up the phone and pages the store:

MIKE
(into phone)
Attention, shoppers: the store
will be closing in 5 minutes.

No reaction.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Please bring your items to the
front.

Nothing.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(gives up)
Or not. That's cool too.

MANOLIS approaches the counter with some LPs.

MANOLIS
Give 'em hell, Mikey!

MIKE
Hey, Manolis.

MANOLIS
You're playing my roast tonight,
right?!

TIM enters alongside Mike.

TIM
Roasted Greek? Yum! Sadly, Michael
has other commitments.

MIKE
Sorry, man. I promised Tim I'd
stay for inventory.

MANOLIS
(to Tim)
I thought you were in Hollywood
with your YouTube thing?

TIM
Didn't work out. Creative
differences.

MIKE
They asked him to shave.

TIM

This 'stache is the source of my power.

MIKE

He's the hipster Samson.

MANOLIS

So ditch Hipster Samson and do the gig! It's gonna be packed, man - you want to be a comic, don't you?

MIKE

(thinking)

I do wanna test my roast material...

TIM

Uh-uh, no way, dude. You promised!

MIKE

Sorry, Manolis. Maybe next time.

MANOLIS

Word of advice, Mike. You're too nice. You've gotta be selfish in this business or you'll never make it.

MIKE

I'm not "too" nice, am I?...

MANOLIS

Yeah, maybe not. Can I borrow twenty bucks?

MIKE

(happy to help)

Oh yeah, for sure.

Mike hands Manolis a bill, which Manolis takes.

MANOLIS

See? Too nice. And you know where nice guys finish?

Manolis pays for his purchase with the twenty dollar bill.

MANOLIS (CONT'D)

Last. Keep the change.

MIKE

(processing all that)

Huh.

Manolis exits.

TIM

Rude.

MIKE

Hey, bros before shows, right?

Tim checks his watch, then picks up the phone, and in one motion:

TIM

(moved)

Awww.

(into pager, to customers)

We're closed. Go away.

INT. RECORD STORE - NIGHT

Mike and Tim both hold clipboards for inventory.

MIKE

OK, inventory time. What's my job?

TIM

The most important one of all,
Mikey: You're on lookout!

MIKE

(not understanding)

Like, for missing Blu-rays...?

TIM

I know I have a cool, casual -
some might say *smouldering* -
exterior. But the truth is...

(in confidence)

I'm scared, Mikey. I'm scared AF!

Mike looks at his clipboard, confused.

MIKE

I'm sure it's not *that* off.

TIM

It's not the inventory I'm scared
of, Michael.

(hushed)

It's the ghost!

MIKE

(automatically)

Totally, man.

(double-take)

Hang on - *ghost*?! What are you
talking about?

TIM
You know Old Olaf?

MIKE
The janitor? Doesn't he drink soap
all day?

TIM
No, he doesn't "drink soap all
day," Michael. That's absurd.
Anyway...

DISOLVE TO:

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Earlier that morning, Tim raises the store's security grate as OLAF (60s) mops nearby, gulping soap between mops. Old Olaf is grizzled and intense - an "old salt" type. As Tim reports dialogue, they 'speak' along - like Luis's stories in Ant-Man.

TIM (V.O.)
I was opening the store today as
Olaf mopped out front. Something
was off. He was pale, scared.
"Howzitgoin', Olaf? You look like
you've seen a ghost." "So Olaf not
crazy - you see ghost too?!" (I
can't do his accent, but you get
the idea.) "I see who now?" He
leans in real close and whispers:
"Ghost of Lime Ridge Mall."

CUT TO:

INT. RECORD STORE - NIGHT

MIKE
You've got to be kidding me!

TIM
Just listen:

CUT TO:

INT. BEDDING STORE - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Flashback in a flashback of Olaf's POV of his story to Tim.

TIM (V.O.)
 Earlier that night, Olaf was in Quilts Etc. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees something move in the bedding isle. "Hello?" he called. "Is anyone?" No reply. So he gets closer and closer... All of a sudden, one of the sheets turns and looks at him with its dead, black eyes!

A classic, white-sheet GHOST appears and moves towards Olaf.

TIM (V.O.)
 A ghost! Olaf ran as fast as his old, Norwegian legs would allow and hid in his janitor closet till dawn.

CUT TO:

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Back in the initial flashback, Olaf concludes his story to Tim.

TIM (V.O.)
 "The night," he warned. "Ghost come at night."

Tim finishes opening the store. Olaf exits, chugging soap.

CUT TO:

INT. RECORD STORE - NIGHT

TIM
 And *that's* why you're on lookout.

MIKE
 (incensed)
 I cancelled my gig 'cause you're scared of ghosts?! You know what you are, Tim? You're *selfish!*

TIM
 You gotta believe me, Mikey!

MIKE
 Manolis was right. I *am* too nice. Next time you need help, forget it.

Mike grabs his inventory clipboard and heads to the back room.

TIM

Wait!

MIKE

I'll be in the stock room. If I see any ghosts, I'll let you know. Oh wait! *Ghosts aren't real!*

Mike exits. Tim gets down to doing inventory.

TIM

Fine! Go!
(regretful)
Some friend you are...

In the background, the ghost rises up from behind a rack and follows after Mike.

EXT. HAMILTON STREET - NIGHT

B.A. JOHNSTON sings a short, thematic song.

INT. RECORD STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Mike is counting product, oblivious to what's behind him.

MIKE

...89, 90 Imagine Dragons LPs.

He crosses it off his inventory sheet.

MIKE (CONT'D)

'Dragon' down our sales.

Behind Mike, the ghost enters and the door slams shut through ghostly magic. Off the noise:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Not now, dude. I'm still mad at you.

Beat. As Mike talks, the ghost rummages through product in the back. Maybe tries on headphones and sways to the music; or compares Deadpool shirts, trying to decide which one's cooler...

MIKE (CONT'D)

Sorry I snapped. It's just that, I want to be a comic more than anything, right? Gigging's the only way I can make that happen. That's why I was so upset.

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 I just worry that I put other
 people first so much, I forget to
 take care of myself, y'know?

Beat.

MIKE
 I know you know. Pass the Funkos?

The ghost fetches a box for Mike, puts it in his work area and floats back to the door, as Mike looks away, searching for the right words:

MIKE (CONT'D)
 You wouldn't ask me to miss a gig
 for nothing. I guess you really
 needed me, huh? Tell you what?
 Grab us some coffees and call it
 even.

The door opens 'on its own' again and the ghost floats out.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Good talk, man.

INT. RECORD STORE - NIGHT

Tim is doing inventory and completely terrified.

TIM
 2 Cannibal Corpse LPs with flesh-
 eating zombies on the cover,
 check. 2 Carcass LPs with songs
 like "Torn Arteries" and "Genital
 Grinder," check.
 (crying out)
 Why'd I start with the death metal
 section? It's the second scariest
 genre after Christian Rock. What?!
 Who's there?!

Beat. Silence.

TIM (CONT'D)
 You're losing it, Timbo.

Beat.

TIM (CONT'D)
 Maybe Mike was right. Maybe I was
 being selfish.
 (MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
If ghosts aren't real, then he
missed his gig for nothing.

Beat.

TIM (CONT'D)
Mike's always there for me. Next
time, I'll be there for him.
(overconfident)
Ghosts! Hah! They're about as real
as the Leafs' cup chances.
(aloud)
You hear that, ghost? I don't
believe in you anymore!

He picks up another scary death metal album.

TIM (CONT'D)
(spooked)
Definitely not...

INT. RECORD STORE - NIGHT

Mike enters.

MIKE
Hey man, the back's all counted.

TIM
You're a nice guy, Mike.

MIKE
It's nothing.

TIM
It's *not* nothing. Next time you
need help? I *gotchu*.

MIKE
(charmed)
You 'gotch' me?

TIM
I gotchu.

MIKE
Awesome. Now, how 'bout those
coffees?

TIM
Alright! *What* coffees?

The front shutters rattle: It's the ghost with some coffees.

GHOST

Boooo!

MIKE

The ghost! He's real! I
should have listened to Tim!

TIM

The ghost! He's real! You
should have listened to Tim!

MIKE

I have so much to live for. Late
night spots! A sitcom! Growing old
and out of touch and complaining
how PC culture on college campuses
is out of control!

TIM

The Seinfeld!

MIKE

Exactly! Oh man, I don't wanna
die!

TIM

(rising to the occasion)
I gotchu, Mikey. Hey ghost, over
here!

MIKE

What are you doing?

TIM

Creating a diversion so you can
escape!

The ghost is slowly closing in on Tim.

MIKE

I can't just leave you!

TIM

Why not?

MIKE

'Cause I'm a nice guy, dammit!

They hug.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What a way to go! Killed by a
bedsheet! The last time I saw a
phantom menace *this* lame, it had
Jar-Jar Binks in it!

GHOST

(offeneded)
Oooh!

The ghost staggers back, injured.

MIKE
What happened?

TIM
I think he's sensitive.

MIKE
That's it!

MIKE AND TIM
Ghost roast!

Tim turns on the PA and tosses Mike a mic:

MIKE
Hey ghost, you're so old you used to cheer for the Hamilton Tiger-Cubs! And back in your day, they wanted to build an LRT- yeah, an LRT-Rex!

The ghost staggers back again - direct hit!

MIKE
And talk about stupid! You're so stupid you thought Mohawk College was a school for punks. But you're a film buff, it's true: You once went to Copps Colosseum and said "1 for the Russell Crowe/Joaquin Phoenix fight!"

The ghost staggers back further still - he's on the ropes!

TIM
Finish him off, Mikey.

MIKE
I can't! I'm out of jokes.

The ghost begins to recover.

TIM
Riff, man! *Riff!*

MIKE
Hey, ghost...

Mike looks around the store for inspiration.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Your... favourite album... is Eagles
Greatest Hits?

The ghost howls in despair - he's mortally wounded.

TIM
Woah, dude. Too far.

MIKE
I was desperate.

GHOST
Ooohh!

Poof! The ghost disappears.

TIM
Great set, buddy.

MIKE
Yeah, it felt good.

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

The next morning. Tim and Mike drink coffees and play a game:

MIKE
Deaddie Vedder.

TIM
Corpseney Love.

MIKE
Skel'ton John.

Minolis approaches the counter.

MINOLIS
What's going on, boys?

MIKE
We're playing "Undead Rockstars."

TIM
It was a long night.

MIKE
But we got through it. Together.

TIM
Heck yeah we did, bud.

Beat.

TIM (CONT'D)
Braaaaaain Maida!

To the tune of *Superman's Dead's* pre-chorus:

MIKE
Oh?

TIM
A-woo-oo!

MIKE
Oh?

TIM
A-woo-oo!

MIKE
Oh?

TIM
A-woo-oo!

MIKE
Hey Manolis, how was the show?

MANOLIS
Terrible! The audience was dead.
Totally dead.

MIKE
Sucks, man. Mine too.

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Joan Zom-baez?

TIM
Absolutely not.

MIKE
Yeah, no, sorry.

UNDER CREDITS:

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

Olaf and the ghost are sitting at a table. The ghost is hunched, sulking, as Olaf enjoys his breakfast.

OLAF
You barely touch eggs!

Olaf keeps eating for a few beats, then:

 OLAF
 Okay, I eat.

Olaf reaches over and takes the ghost's plate for himself and washes it down with soap. He offers the ghost a swig, but the ghost shakes his head, "No thanks."