HUGHES AND MINCKS: GHOST DETECTIVES
MINISODE: PASSING THROUGH
BY CAROLINE MINCKS

Sound of the jukebox and general hubbub of Prism. JANINE rings someone up while RYAN and KALE debate.

KALE
Wait, why is *that* the thing you're fixating on here?

RYAN
Because it makes no sense to have a trash compactor!

KALE
But...they have trash, right? So don't they need to compact it before they get rid of it?

RYAN
No! You can't just fling trash into outer space!

KALE
Then what are they supposed to do with it?

RYAN
Incinerate it!

KALE
Flames on a spaceship doesn't seem like a safe idea.

RYAN
Neither does hurling garbage into deep space.

JANINE joins in.

JANINE
Are you two *still* talking about this? Does it really *matter* how the spaceship gets rid of trash? It's science *fiction*, y'all, give it a rest.

KALE
Uh-oh. She just y'alled us. She must be serious.

RYAN

It *does* matter, Janine, because fiction informs the perception of reality and vice versa.

JANINE

Okay, fine, but I'm just saying, this is a universe with aliens and mind melding and people being beamed up, and you're worried about how the Enterprise gets rid of trash?

Pause.

KALE

Janine.

JANINE

What?

RYAN

Janine, did you think we were talking about Star Trek this whole time?

JANINE

...were you not?

KALE

Janine.

RYAN

Well, I know what our next movie night will feature.

JANINE

Okay, okay, there are some considerable gaps in my pop culture consumption. Sue me. I bet neither of you have seen...I don't know...42nd Street onstage.

RYAN

Built the set for it in high school.

KALE

You were a theatre kid?

RYAN

People have layers.

Chimes. HUGHES enters.

JANINE
Hi, welcome to Prism!

HUGHES
Hello, there.

JANINE
I don't think I've seen you in here before. I'm Janine, she/her.

HUGHES
Very nice to meet you, Janine Sherr. I'm Sophie Hughes.

KALE
Hooray, a new friend! I'm Kale. I use they.

RYAN
Ryan. She.

HUGHES
Friendly place you've got here.

RYAN
We are occasionally the welcoming committee.

JANINE
What can I get for you?

HUGHES
The biggest cup of tea you've got, please. And what's that gorgeous thing under the glass there?

JANINE
Guava danishes.

HUGHES
I'll take one of those as well. Everything to go, please.

JANINE starts making their tea and getting their danish.

RYAN

So, what brings you to town?

HUGHES
Just passing through. On business.

JANINE
Well, I hope you'll enjoy your time here, however long it is.

HUGHES
...Janine, it's the oddest thing - I've just realized you sound exactly like my partner.

JANINE
Oh?

HUGHES
It's uncanny. If I closed my eyes, I'd think she was here right now.

JANINE
Huh. Maybe I just have one of those voices.

KALE
Does your partner say "y'all" too?

HUGHES
Not that I've ever heard, but she's full of surprises, so there's always a chance of it.

RYAN
How long have you two been together?

HUGHES
Not terribly long - a bit under a year, just since she got our new office.

KALE
Oh, do you work together too?

HUGHES
Too? Oh! Oh, we're not - we're not *partner* partners.

RYAN

Ah. Sorry, queer bar confusion.

HUGHES
Perfectly fine.

RYAN
What line of work are you in?

HUGHES
We're detectives.

JANINE
Oh, wow.

KALE
...you're a detective? Really?

HUGHES
Don't let the baby face fool you. I can hold my own during an investigation.

Music on the jukebox changes.

HUGHES
Huh. Interesting jukebox.

JANINE
Thanks! We like it. All right, tea and a danish.

JANINE serves HUGHES, who knocks over the cup.

HUGHES
Oh, sh-

Their curse is cut off by the smashing of a glass.

JANINE
No worries! I'll start on another cup for you.

RYAN
Here, I've got napkins.

KALE

I spill stuff all the time. Don't worry about it.

RYAN
It's true, they do. Tea, paint, soup…

HUGHES
Well, good to know I've got company in my clumsiness. Thanks very much, Janine.

HUGHES is starting to add things up.

HUGHES
This, uh, this place...it's, um, pretty old, is it?

JANINE
It is - there's a lot of history here.

HUGHES
Creaky old floors and such?

RYAN
They've gotten better .

HUGHES
I don't suppose this is the sort of place that has a lot of...unexplained activity, is it?

KALE
I mean…

HUGHES
I ask because, well...I'm a ghost detective.

Beat.

RYAN
A what.

HUGHES
I know, I know, it sounds a bit...something. But it's true! Look, I've even got business cards with my title on. See? "Sophie Hughes: Ghost Detective".

RYAN

This is an index card.

HUGHES
We're on a bit of a budget. Anyway, I'd say, judging by the age of the place and the fact that I've witnessed a bit of odd activity just in the few moments I've been here - and I don't mean to alarm you, honestly - I'd say you've got significant ghosts.

Beat.

KALE
Yeah.

RYAN
We know.

JANINE
It's kind of our thing.

KALE
We get along fine with them.

RYAN
They like me.

JANINE
They're learning to like me.

RYAN
They *do* like you, Janine.

JANINE
Aww.

HUGHES
Wait, wait, you...*know*? That this place is crawling with spectres?

JANINE
Well...yeah.

HUGHES

And you’re just sort of...fine with that? Not wanting to encourage them to move on?

Gentle mayhem - possibly some of the Light Hearts episode 1 mayhem, in fact?

HUGHES
Was it something I said?

KALE
They really don’t like when people talk about getting rid of them.

RYAN
We make it work.

JANINE
We really do - they’re part of this place.

HUGHES
Huh. Well. I suppose if you’re really all right with it…

KALE
We really are. They’re...kind of friends at this point?

RYAN
That’s sweet, Kale.

KALE
It’s true!

HUGHES
Hmm. Well, whatever works for you, I suppose.

JANINE
Yeah. We have a good thing going here.

HUGHES
Very happy for you, then.

JANINE
All right. Your replacement tea.

HUGHES
Keep the change. I should get back on the road. Nice to meet you all.

KALE
You too. Good luck detecting ghosts.

HUGHES
Thanks very much. Take care - really, nice place you've got here, and if the ghosts are happy enough, well...good, then.

RYAN
We'll hang on to your index card just in case.

KALE
Nice meeting you!

JANINE
Drive safe.

HUGHES goes.

KALE
People make careers out of all sorts of things these days.

Music and outro.