

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'all'd 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.