

GHOSTLIGHT

"Pilot"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TARRYTOWN THEATER-NIGHT

The Tarrytown Theater, once grand, is now old and crumbling.

INT. TARRYTOWN THEATER- CONTINUOUS

The inside of the Tarrytown is textbook spooky: tattered curtains, faded portraits, perpetual creaking.

Onstage, a group of kids, JAMES, GRIFFIN, INEZ, and MADDY (10-12), huddle around a weak FLASHLIGHT.

GRIFFIN

Okay... dare!

INEZ

I dare you to go up *there*.

GRIFFIN

Are you pointing at something?

JAMES

Yeah, where are the lights in here?

GRIFFIN

There's one!

He brings out a LIGHT STAND with a bulb in a wire cage (also known as a GHOSTLIGHT). He reaches for the switch.

MADDY

Don't! That's the ghostlight!

JAMES

What?

MADDY

The ghostlight. It'll make the ghosts come out!

JAMES

I don't believe in ghosts.

MADDY

Don't let them hear you say that!

JAMES

That Sleepy Hollow tour really messed you up. There's nothing to be afraid of!

INEZ

Why don't you prove it, James? I dare you to turn on the ghostlight.

JAMES

No, that's dumb.

INEZ

James is a scared little baby!

JAMES

Am not!

INEZ

Your Paw Patrol flashlight begs to differ.

JAMES

It came in a SET.

INEZ

You're stalling! Go!

He approaches. All cringe. He flicks on the light. Nothing.

Then. MUSIC NOTES. A GRAND STAIRCASE SET rolls out behind them. A spotlight illuminates a HAND on the banister.

PATRICK (late 30's, a ghost), wearing a feather boa and sparkly headdress, steps into the light. He struts down the stairs, ready for his closeup. The music swells. He BELTS.

PATRICK

HELLO, DOLLY!
WELL HELLOOOOOO, DOLLY!

He pauses, awaiting applause. The kids have seen and heard NONE of this.

JAMES

See? Nothing.

Patrick gives an offended look. He SNAPS. ALL LIGHTS GO OUT. The Kids SCREAM and bolt out of the theater.

PATRICK

Carol Channing would never have stood for this.

END COLD OPEN.

ACT ONE

We're mid-CHASE SCENE. A series of frantic, CLOSE-UP shots:

A GUY WITH AN AXE and a YOUNG MAN scramble between tall HEDGES during a SNOWSTORM. Maniacal laughter. A flash of a BLADE. SCREAMS! AXE GUY corners YOUNG MAN, who SHRIEKS.

PATRICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

HOLD!

The men freeze. Pull back to reveal the actual setting:

INT. TARRYTOWN THEATER: STAGE - NIGHT

We're at a dress rehearsal and it looks ROUGH. Half-painted sets, flickering lights, cheap costumes, very fake weapons.

SUPER: One Week Earlier

PATRICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hold please! Stop! House lights on,
snow machine OFF.

CAST & CREW MEMBERS peek out from the wings. PATRICK (frazzled, but very much alive) hops onstage to address Young Man, JEFFREY (20's). Patrick's intern, LUCY (23, shy) follows.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Jeffrey. Can I ask you a question?

JEFFREY

Not sure I can say no.

PATRICK

Excellent. Now could you please tell me what play we are putting on?

JEFFREY

This is clearly a trick question.

PATRICK

We are putting on "THE SHINING: A Theatrical Examination." What was once an iconic novel is now an iconic movie and what was once an iconic movie will now be an iconic immersive play. It's the circle of life. Now, what, pray tell, was that horrifying sound you were just making?

JEFFREY

I was screaming. It's in the script.

PATRICK

No, Jeffrey. The script calls for a "childlike squeal," because, hey, Danny Torrence, *your* character, is a CHILD. You were giving me "old man dying of constipation." Do I need to give this role to Justine?

JUSTINE (20's, short, dressed as a ghost twin) perks up.

JEFFREY

I can do it, I promise.

PATRICK

Show me Tony.

Jeffrey does a high "Tony" voice and wiggles his index finger.

JEFFREY

I can do it, I promise! I'm sorry!

PATRICK

Sorry. Tell that to Stephen King. If he sees you pull that amateur bullcrap tomorrow when he's sitting right-

Lucy taps Patrick and shows him something on her phone.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Shit. Well if he hears a *rumor* that you pulled that amateur bullcrap while he's "on a book tour, indefinitely," I'm sure he would be very distraught!

(changing gears)

Okay, notes!

Cast/Crew gather in the house seats. Lucy pulls Patrick aside.

LUCY

Could we maybe do notes tomorrow?

PATRICK

Absolutely not. I need to do it while I can still read my handwriting.

LUCY

We need to let them go home. It's one of the rules in the contract.

PATRICK

Lucy. My baby bird. My Pygmalion in Timberlands. You're new. You're learning.

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Now learn this and learn it well.
There are no rules during tech week.

LUCY

My uncle says-

PATRICK

Your uncle is not in charge here.

LUCY

But he owns the theater?

PATRICK

Well I own this creative content!

LUCY

Steven King owns this creative content.

PATRICK

Well I'm producing it.

LUCY

And as the producer, you have to pay them overtime if you keep them past 8.

PATRICK

I'll make it quick.

He flips through his notes, addresses the crowd.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Cathy, organ cue was late. Trevor, do we have a typewriter yet? Forget it, I'll find something. Damien, no more dance running. Cathy again, babe, where was my windstorm?

CATHY (50's) yells from the SOUND BOOTH.

CATHY

Spotify only had "jungle rainstorm."

PATRICK

I'll take care of it. Felix, you're mouthing other people's lines again.

FELIX

No, I'm not.

Felix mouths Patrick's words.

PATRICK

Yes, you- yes you are!

FELIX

Nope.

PATRICK

I can see you doing it! How are you even-

(trying to throw him off)

Xanadu! Mistoffelees!

(He sings, Felix mouths)

I AM THE VERY MODEL OF A MODERN MAJOR GENERAL. Wow, you're good.

Felix mouths "Thank you." Lucy signals to speed it up.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Ok. Jo, we need two of the SAME wig. They're evil ghost TWINS. Vanessa, no more gum. Edna, just ...*more*. And I'll have to fix the snow machine again. I swear, I will get that snowstorm right if it *kills* me.

DRAMATIC PIANO RIFF. All turn to orchestra pit. LORRAINE, the elderly pianist, looks up, confused. She COUGHS.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Pit rehearsal is over, Lorraine.

Lorraine nods politely and shuffles away.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I want to run that last scene again. Places for Scene 22!

LUCY

We really have to let them go.

PATRICK

Just this one last thing.

LUCY

Um, it's 8:05?

PATRICK

Um, it's our last rehearsal? They want this to work as much as I do.

(to cast/crew)

Who's willing to stay a bit longer to get this right?

Cast/crew members all stare at their phones, avoiding. Lucy raises her hand.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Nobody. Okay. I'll figure it out.
You're released.

LUCY

Get sleep, drink lots of water. And
keep sharing the event page. We only
have 15 tickets left to sell!
(re-reading notes)
Oops, sorry. We have *sold* 15 tickets.
We have... 785 tickets left to sell.

She sees their hopelessness set in. Though not a born public speaker, she tries to lift their spirits.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Look, we know this hasn't been an
easy road, but we gotta remember
why we're doing this. We aren't
here because we love this play-

A look from Patrick. *Who doesn't love my play?*

LUCY (CONT'D)

We're here because we love *this*.
Theater. Maybe we don't like our lines
or our costumes or maybe we think the
show was a deeply misguided endeavor
to begin with, but we're here! We're
here because the theater is where we
belong. It's home. It's family. It's-

PATRICK

8:07! Time to go!
(to Lucy, shaking his head)
We have to let them go. It's in
their contract.

All grumble as Patrick ushers them out. A STAGEHAND brings the GHOSTLIGHT center stage and turns it on. All other lights OUT.

EXT. TARRYTOWN MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Cast/Crew walk to the nearby train station and parking lot. Lucy catches up to the AXE GUY actor, Damien (50's).

LUCY

Do you have any food allergies?

DAMIEN

Trying to poison me? Honestly, if
it gets me out of the show
tomorrow, go for it.

LUCY

I'm baking opening night cookies.

DAMIEN

Do you ever...sleep?

LUCY

You guys deserve something special!
It's opening night!

JEFFREY

(overhearing)
You mean closing night.

LUCY

But Patrick booked the theater for
two months.

JEFFREY

Sweetie, this show won't last two
days.

LUCY

It'll get better! Tech is always rough.

DAMIEN

Look back there.

They all look. The Tarrytown looks extra shabby in this light.
They see Patrick struggle to keep a POSTER from unsticking.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Our show is dead, our theater is
dead, and our director has-

He indicates "a stick up his ass." She doesn't get it.

LUCY

Back pain?

DAMIEN

Sure. His *back pain* is gonna screw
us all out of a job.

JEFFREY

Speak for yourself. I just booked a
commercial gig for Tuesday. Swiffer.

The group "Ooo"s, impressed.

LUCY

Ok, maybe this won't last. Maybe *The
Shining* isn't meant to be a play.

DAMIEN & JEFFREY

It's not.

LUCY

We just have to stay positive!

Damien puts a hand on Lucy's arm.

DAMIEN

Save that positivity for a better show. You can't get attached to this one.

JEFFREY

Don't even put it on your resume.

Lucy looks back.

LUCY

I should go help him.

DAMIEN

You should go home and *rest*. Pass out watching House Hunters like a normal person.

They arrive at the PARKING LOT and go their separate ways. Lucy gets in her beat-up MINIVAN.

INT. LUCY'S CAR-NIGHT- TRAVELING

Lucy plays her pump-up mix. This girl a GEEK. "Jellicle Cats" is her "Eye of the Tiger." She skips songs until she gets to "Everything's Coming Up Roses" (2008 revival, obviously).

LUCY

Sing to me, Patti.

As Lupone belts, Lucy relaxes. She sees Patrick duck inside the theater. She keeps driving, resolving to stay out of it. Her resolution lasts zero seconds. She turns the car around.

INT. TARRYTOWN THEATER: STAGE - NIGHT

Patrick sneaks inside. With only the ghostlight on, it's quite eerie. He shakes off a chill and puts in headphones.

PATRICK

Sing to me, Ethel.

"Everything's Coming Up Roses" plays (Original 1959 Cast, obviously) as he begins his SAVING THE SHOW MONTAGE:

-Patrick sews COSTUMES with gusto.

-He fiddles with lights. SPARKS fly. He backs away.

-He spray-paints two WIGS until they look identical.

-He tries the lights again. A LIGHT FIXTURE falls. He backs away.

-Patrick experiments with his new "snow machine" (two LEAF-BLOWERS and a PILE OF CONFETTI). It blows him backward.

END MONTAGE

Patrick presses START on the final light/sound sequence and... it works. Pure stage magic. He moves center stage, snowstorm swirling around him. He spins, "Sound of Music"-style, in total bliss.

Lucy tiptoes into the theater, holding two COFFEES and a TOOL KIT. She marvels at the spectacle until...

The power shuts off. CRASHES! BANGS! A final YELP. Silence.

LUCY (V.O.)

Patrick!

Lucy flicks on a FLASHLIGHT. The stage is a mess of COLLAPSED SETS. Patrick sits in a confetti-covered heap, looking quite like the frozen Jack Nicholson at the end of *The Shining*.

LUCY

Patrick, it's perfect! Just like the real thing!

No response. She gets closer.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Patrick?

He's not posing. Patrick is dead. Lucy SCREAMS.

END ACT ONE.

[SAMPLE]

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