

The Crack of the Other Side

6: A Ghost Adventure (Part 2)

D-Roy's Turn

In the dark, the dressing rooms were much more ominous, even the end with the ridiculous clown costumes and gaudy princess dresses hung up on dust-coated racks like old skins. D-Roy peeked out from behind two such dresses, listening to the distant string of frightened cursing and psyching himself up for the fun.

"Ptooie..." Somehow a sequin had ended up in his mouth, "Bleh, dusty..."

"Shuddap, here they come!" Edorad grinned and stood slightly from where he was seated on a crate of costume supplies, "Just remember what I told ya—don't squish 'em and don't overestimate their intelligence..."

"Got it," D-Roy said with a grin, sinking back into the rack of dresses. "I'm gonna go firshht..."

"Go on ahead then." Edorad sat back down.

The tromping of Zak's unsteady boots in the corridor leading to the two Soldados' hiding place echoed closer.

"Hey guys—three bozos heading your way!" D-Roy and Edorad both snickered as they recognized Ilfort's cheerful voice. "And they are *primed*!"

"Heheheh!" Edorad seemed delighted to hear of his comrade's success in weakening the investigators' bladders. His heavy elbow nudged D-Roy playfully, "Play nice."

"Holy shit, dudes," Zak started with a soliloquy, holding his hands out like some inebriated preacher to his particularly gullible flock. "That was like, no bullshit there, man. Whatever's in here means business."

"I ain't goin' back on that stage, man..." Aaron's gaze cast about, seeing shapes in the shadows of the props and hanging costumes. Zak rounded on him.

"We gotta go back." He pointed in what he imagined was a badass way into the camera lens, "These ghosts in here are nothin' but bullies. If we run away, they win."

"Hey, were we keeping score? Sorry, I forgot," Ilfort said as he popped up over Aaron's shoulder. "Please, stay! We haven't even begun to play yet..."

"Kesheshesheshesh!" D-Roy crept up on the one called Nick, eyeing him and wondering how best to make him lose his head like the others were so quick to do, "Hey, guysh, can these recorder thingiesh catch our voishesh?"

"If you concentrate hard enough, yeah," Edorad said. D-Roy grinned and lowered his face until it was inches from the device laying by Nick's hand. Ilfort's face lit up and he instantly knew what D-Roy had in mind.

"Keep it clean." He held a stitch in his side from suppressing chuckles for too long, "You know, some kids watch this show."

All the while Zak was warming up for an EVP session, by far the most scientific exercise in trying to find dead people the *Demon Journey* crew had attempted this evening. Unlike the treatment he'd given Ilfort in the theater, this set of questions had a significantly different theme.

"Can anyone hear me?" he asked to the darkness between where Ilfort stood and Edorad sat shaking with silent laughter, "Is anyone here, with us, in this dressing room?"

"Yeah!" D-Roy growled in his best "demon impersonation". Ilfort fell over, "There'sh two midgetsh and a shtripper..."

"Are you stuck here? Do you need help?"

"Heeeeeeeelp meeeeeeee..!" D-Roy whined in a loud drone, "Heeeelp meeeee...hang these *streamers*..!"

"Are you a male spirit?" Zak by chance stopped right in front of where Nick was now holding up the voice recorder. D-Roy frowned and stood up on his tip-toes to continue, "Or are you a woman..?"

"Who cares! We're all horny transhveshtitesh, baby!"

"Are you the woman that called me in here earlier..?" Zak's eyes became big and soulful, casting about the room and wandering so that he stood right in front of where Edorad was sitting. The large Arrancar took a break from laughing for a few seconds and scooted off his seat just in time to avoid the leader of the team plopping down in his lap, "Were you murdered in this very theater?"

"I ordered a pizzsha, not a dooooooouchebaaaaaag..!" D-Roy moaned, having trouble sustaining his ghostly voices without busting out laughing, "Now let'sh all have a ghoooooosht gaaaangbaaaaaang..!"

"D-Roy—! Stop—!" Ilfort was literally on the floor, rolling onto his side with his face painfully squinched up. Aaron chose that moment to move and get a new angle to shoot from, walking backwards right into Ilfort's legs.

"Oh, sh—" The fat one crashed to the floor, his camera skittering away and coming to a rest relatively undamaged under an old dresser. Ilfort extricated himself from under the oblivious human and jumped upright before Zak rushed over.

"What happened, man?!" Zak lunged and helped Aaron to his feet. Aaron scrambled around, recovering his camera, and leaned against the dresser.

"Dude, I just tripped." Shockingly, Aaron was not fearful anymore, passing off the strange occurrence of tripping over an Arrancar as a mundane accident, "Musta been that chair leg or something."

"You sure you okay, man?" For the first time in the investigation Tightjeans-jow wore a face that resembled genuine care for his buddies, "You fell pretty hard."

"Awww, how sweet," Edorad snorted, jogging D-Roy in the shoulder. "Watch how quick he turns back into asshole of the year."

"We gotta listen to that tape," Zak shouted back to Nick, who sighed and plugged the recorder into a small speaker by the camera covering that room. "If we hear something aggressive, man, I dunno."

"Why can't they finish a sentence...?" Ilfort looked up at Edorad, scoffing. Edorad was paying more attention to the trio's *unique* interpretation of what D-Roy had said.

"*OH MY GOD!*" The hopping and violent gesturing towards the recorder playing back the scratchy electronic voices began, forcing Nick to take a step back to keep from being smacked, "You heard that, didn't you?!"

"Yeah." Nick nodded, but before he could repeat what he'd heard, Zak did it for him:

"It totally just said 'die' when I asked if anyone was in here!"

"Whaaa...?" D-Roy leaned in, "That ain't what I shaid..."

"It keeps going! Listen!" Zak's face was lit up like a child's at Christmas. D-Roy took a step back, looking over his shoulder at his two friends and mouthing the word "bonkers", "It just said 'get out of here!'"

"How'd they..." D-Roy gawked, throwing up his hands to the ceiling and mouthing more derogatory words. "I shaid 'two midgetsh and a shtripper'! Not 'get out'! You guysh shuck at lishtening!"

If Zak, Nick and Aaron had the skills to hear what was really going on in the room they would have been deafened by Edorad's crowing and Ilfort's rapid snickering. D-Roy crossed his arms and let a slow grin expose his jagged teeth.

"Oooh, you're gonna get it later, " he said, tapping one foot on the floor. "You are sho gonna regret messhin' that up for the viewing audienshe..."

"Easy, Toofuses..." Edorad was suddenly alert, wagging a finger at his smaller comrade, "No smushing, remember?"

"I know, I know..." D-Roy stalked around the three (still freaking out) ghost hunters in a full circle, licking the front of his upper incisors, "I'm jusht gonna... shtartle 'em."

"Maybe we should go and, uh, log this evidence?" Aaron had a sudden bad feeling, like he was in dangerous territory, surrounded by slippery things just outside his field of vision, "I think maybe we should investigate the apartment upstairs now..."

"But we're getting demonic voices!" Zak glared at Aaron as if he were the crazy one. D-Roy popped up at Zak's side and clicked his tongue at the rude assumption.

"Don't make fun of shpeech impedimentsh, you ass."

"Well, that's probably a good sign to get out for now," Nick's words were by far the wisest any member of either party had said all night. "Besides, the apartment is where Caroline and the other employees kept seeing that female apparition on the bed."

"Oh," Zak said. He seemed to light up strangely at the mention of a female spirit. "Yeah, we've got to get a full investigation there, guys." He threw a thumb over his shoulder, jabbing D-Roy in the top of the mask slightly, "I got a 'present' for her if she shows up..." He winked and guffawed. Ilfort felt his stomach turn and tasted a little bit of one of that morning's danishes.

"Did he just..?"

Edorad nodded, eyes closed and sage, "Yep."

"What a douche!" Ilfort hoped for a second that he had been focusing enough to be heard on any of the cameras' sound equipment, "That's a little... rape-y, yeah?"

"Oh, don't worry, the girl's not even here anymore, " the big Arrancar informed him, gesturing up through the ceiling. "Some Soul Reaper came and got her one day. They'd be talking to air if we weren't here."

"I'm not touching you," D-Roy was ignoring them, having his own fun with Aaron, who was growing increasingly worried about his own safety. The snaggle-toothed man was following him extremely closely, holding out one finger just shy of poking him in the back of the head, "Keshehshehsheh..! Thish guy'sh fashe..! Look at it, guysh! He's like a damn meatball or something..."

Ilfort brushed dust from his shirt, looking slightly puzzled.

"Edorad, D-Roy—where'd Nakim go?"

D-Roy's face developed a broad slit from the creepy, closed-lipped grin he made. Edorad's devious smile was a great deal toothier as he pointed to where the trio of investigators were stomping up the staircase to.

"The apartment. Where Zak's gonna get a big surprise."

A small cat was disturbed from her rest on the roof of the old theater as the shrieking gales of laughter woke her.