

## GENGHIS KHAN VERSUS A VELOCIRAPTOR

By Eirik Gumeny

### Cast of Characters:

TOM, male, mid-to-late twenties, slacker extraordinaire

HENRY, male, mid-to-late twenties, slacker ordinaire

LORI, female, mid-to-late twenties, diner waitress

SATAN, male, older than recorded time, Prince of Darkness

### Setting:

Diner. Middle of the night. Chrome and grease and bad music permeate the atmosphere. HENRY and TOM sit at a table, finishing their meal, coffee mugs and mostly empty plates between them. The table sits in the center of the stage, in front of a window with crooked blinds. HENRY sits stage right, TOM stage left.

HENRY is wearing khakis and a hideous blue and yellow polo shirt with a name tag saying "Ralph Wiggum" affixed to it. His shift at the video store has been over for approximately the length of one meal and the time it took to walk across the street to the diner. TOM is wearing jeans, a t-shirt, and a zip-up sweater. Every item of clothing he's wearing has holes in it. He does not have a job and is at the diner with his friend in the middle of the night because what the hell else is he going to do.

TOM

Man, if you get a time machine you've GOT to tell everyone. Otherwise you're gonna be running around trying to hide it all the time, trying to act all clandestine and shit, but you know – you just fucking KNOW – someone's gonna find out about it sooner or later and then you're screwed. Blackmail, getting murdered for it, flaming bags of poo on your doorstep, whatever. You've gotta go public with it fast and save yourself the grief.

HENRY

Maybe. I mean, it's a solid enough argument... but how are you supposed to make money off it? If things start disappearing from history, and everyone knows you're the only guy with a time machine, they're gonna know something's up.

TOM

No way. You start stealing history's greatest shit, no one's gonna notice a damn thing. As far as they're gonna remember, that's just the way it's always been. Shroud of Turin? What's that? You mean that creepy-looking cloth Bob has above his fireplace?

You can fuck with the past as much as you want because whatever you do is how it will have already been done.

HENRY

What?

TOM

Think of that Simpsons episode. You go back in time with your magic toaster and accidentally off a butterfly, and suddenly everyone's got lizard tongues and it rains donuts. But no one notices 'cause to them everyone's always had lizard tongues and it's always rained donuts. The only one who'd think it was weird is you, if you came back to the new present.

HENRY

Alright, I think I get it... But if you've always had the Shroud of Turin, or whatever, then it's not gonna be worth

anything. How are you going to pawn off ancient artifacts for ridiculous sums of cash if no one cares what they are?

TOM

You're not. That's my point.

[LORI, the waitress, walks over from stage left and refills their coffee mugs. She's wearing a dirty apron over jeans and a black shirt.]

LORI

Anything else for you gentlemen this evening?

HENRY [looks at LORI, then at TOM and shrugs]

I think I'm good.

TOM

I don't know, I could go for some kind of dessert-y thing. Do you guys have any cheesecake?

LORI

Of course. You have a preference? I don't know what's left of what.

TOM [shrugging]

Whatever.

LORI [shrugging]

OK.

[LORI walks away from the table.]

TOM

Anyway, like I was saying, you're not gonna just skip down the corridors of time stealing stuff. You're simply going to use your newfound notoriety to give the people what they want. That's why you go public with it. Do you have any idea how much you could charge people to ride a dinosaur? Or for a big, ol' brontosaurus steak? You'd be a millionaire by the end of the week!

HENRY

I don't know about that, man. I doubt a t-rex is gonna be cheap to house or feed. Or clean up after. And there's no guarantee it's gonna taste any good.

TOM

It's a dinosaur. Of course it's gonna taste good.

HENRY

There is absolutely no basis for that claim.

TOM

The Flintstones.

HENRY

I don't really think that counts.

TOM

Whatever, dude. Look, why limit yourself to dinosaurs, anyway? You could eat every extinct animal ever. [TOM takes a sip of coffee] You know what, fuck the animals!

HENRY [concerned about TOM's extracurricular activities]

What?

TOM

Saving the dodos? That is just a waste of fucking time, man. You could kidnap Abe Lincoln and Adolph Hitler and make 'em fight!

HENRY [relieved]

Oh, thank God.

TOM

You'd make a mint on the tickets alone, nevermind the broadcast rights.

HENRY

No way. That'd never work. Lincoln was a brawler; Hitler was just a little, emo punk. It'd be over in ten seconds. Nobody would pay to see that.

TOM

Yeah... Well, what about Stalin?

HENRY [takes a moment to think about it]

That might work. Stalin would probably put up a pretty good fight.

[LORI returns from stage left, carrying a plate with a gargantuan slab of cheesecake on it.]

LORI

Here you go. It's just plain, but it's everything we had left of it. I don't think anyone else is going to order any before it goes completely bad.

TOM [taking the cheesecake]

Thanks.

LORI

You guys need anything else?

HENRY

Would you pay to see Lincoln and Stalin fight?

LORI [confused]

... What?

HENRY

Would you pay to see Abraham Lincoln and Josef Stalin fight?

LORI [still confused]

... What kind of... fighting are we talking about? Like arguing? Or, uh, wrestling?

TOM [looking at HENRY]

I was thinking bare-knuckle boxing, probably. We'd definitely want it in a ring, with some kind of governing body of rules. I mean, we're gonna have to have some kind of control over it. We can't have them dying. That'd fuck up history. But it's still gonna have to be pretty brutal to get people's attention.

HENRY

Why can't we let them die? Didn't you just say - not ten minutes ago, and with some great detail, I might add - that if Stalin WERE to get curb-stomped by Lincoln, no one would notice?

TOM

An excellent point. To which I will reply: Fuck you. You're overthinking things.

HENRY

I think you're underthinking them.

TOM

Call me selfish. I don't want to have to memorize a bunch of new czars after we kill off Anastasia's daddy.

HENRY

You wouldn't have to... You just explained this! More importantly, where the hell did you learn your Russian history?

TOM

Can we get back to the matter at hand?

HENRY

Fine. [to LORI] Bare-knuckle boxing, apparently. Presidents versus Russian dictators.

TOM

Czars.

HENRY [to TOM]

Stalin was not a fucking czar!

LORI [less confused, but not exactly out of the woods yet]

I... I guess, maybe, depending on ticket prices and what else I was doing that night?

HENRY

But, in general, you'd be willing to pay money to see historical figures beat the crap out of each other?

LORI

Probably. I mean, maybe not Lincoln and Stalin exactly, but, you know, someone, sure.

HENRY

Yeah? Who would you pick then?

LORI

Me? I don't know. [pauses] I guess I'd want to see... Jane Austen and Emily Bronte, maybe. There's some serious pent-up aggression there. And I bet they'd both fight dirty.

TOM [slapping the table]

Genghis Khan versus a velociraptor!

LORI

Should I even ask why this is the topic of conversation?

HENRY

We were just hypothesizing about what we'd do with a time machine.

LORI

Right. Of course. How silly of me.

HENRY

You've... never once thought about this, have you?

LORI

Up until this moment, no. I can say that with complete honesty.

TOM

Well, why the hell not?

LORI

Because time travel's impossible?

TOM

With that attitude, sure.

LORI

Riiiiight, 'cause fantasizing about your Celebrity Deathmatches in a shitty diner is infinitely more constructive.

TOM [shrugging]

It might be.

LORI

Uh-huh.

TOM

Hey, for all you know the men's bathroom is a high-tech gravity lab capable of bending the space-time continuum over a table.

HENRY

That was a disturbing analogy.

TOM

I stand by my metaphor.

LORI

I'm sure you do.

[TOM nods. HENRY shakes his head and then sips his coffee.]



LORI

Alright, well, assuming that the perpetual stench coming from the men's room isn't just drunks with bad aim, but is, in fact, the stink of science, just how close are we to this brave new chronology of yours? In your expert opinion, that is.

TOM

Well, right now – and, look, I shouldn't be telling you this, seeing as how it's classified and all, so, you know – [raises a finger to his lips to indicate silence]

[LORI nods solemnly in reply]

TOM

– after months of extensive, exhaustive research, we've got it down to the point where we're pretty much hinging on a miracle, an accident, or a deal with the devil.

SATAN [appearing from behind LORI]

I think I can help you with that last one.

[LORI yelps with surprise. She quickly steps away, stage right towards HENRY, revealing SATAN dressed neatly in a suit. No tail, no pitchfork, but he does have horns on his head.]

HENRY

That was unexpected.

LORI

I'll say.

TOM

I don't know, I kind've saw it coming.

SATAN

That certainly makes my job easier then. [From his inside pocket SATAN pulls out an expensive-looking pen and a folded-up contract on fancy paper] Shall we get down to business?

TOM

Sure.

[TOM moves over, allowing SATAN to take his seat. HENRY looks at TOM, then at SATAN, then at LORI.]

HENRY [to LORI]

This is really happening?

LORI

Apparently...?

SATAN

Oh, yes. I assure you, this is very much happening, and I am very much the big, bad, mother-lovin' devil. Here to take souls and sow discontent just as easy as I please.

TOM [raising his hands]

Hey, whoa, whoa, I don't want any discontent here.

SATAN

No, no, of course not. But I've a feeling that, should you request what I believe you're going to request, you'll be sowing discontent aplenty, all on your own.

TOM

Oh, well, yeah.

HENRY

That does seem likely.

[SATAN adjusts his suit and clears his throat.]

SATAN

So... shall I go ahead with the big, showy opening speech then? Or do you want to get right down to the specifics?

TOM

I don't know, how showy are we talking?

SATAN

It is rather grandiose. And there's quite a bit of rhyming.

TOM [shakes his head]

Skip it.

SATAN

Consider it skipped. [SATAN opens the contract and puts it on the table between himself and TOM] Now you'll find this is pretty straightforward.. [TOM and SATAN lean in over the document] Standard exchange of services. You just fill in the blank here... [SATAN points with the pen]

TOM

... then initial here and sign here. [TOM points with his finger] I got it. Not exactly a whole lot to it.

SATAN

No, not really. You'd be surprised at how confusing it is for some people, though.

TOM [still poring over the document]

You know, you have excellent handwriting.

SATAN

Thank you! Thousands of years I've been working at it, and you're the first one to notice.

TOM

I don't know how that's possible. I mean, it's so neat, and menacing, all at the same time.

SATAN

Exactly! That is exactly what I was going for! Threatening, but somewhat enticing.

TOM

It's actually kind of... beautiful.

SATAN

That is... that is just so nice of you. I almost feel bad about condemning your soul to an eternity of torment and anguish.

TOM

Really?

SATAN

No.

TOM

Well, [takes the pen from SATAN and begins filling out the document] I wouldn't sweat it.

SATAN [laughing]

I'm not the one that's going to be doing the sweating, my friend. My office has central air.

[TOM signs the document with a flourish, then folds it in half and hands it to SATAN]

TOM

That must be nice. Expensive I'd bet, though. How much does it cost to cool off an office in Hell anyway?

SATAN

Not as much as you'd think, actually. We've got a pretty good deal with the utility company.

HENRY

That's not surprising.

SATAN [shrugging and returning the contract to his inside pocket]

Hey, you do what you have to.

[A TIME MACHINE appears behind TOM and SATAN, stage left. LORI and HENRY stare incredulously, mouths hanging open. TOM

acknowledges its sudden presence with a smile. SATAN doesn't flinch.]

TOM [sliding his plate toward SATAN]

Cheesecake?

SATAN

I would love some.

[SATAN picks up a fork and ravenously takes a few bites before remembering himself. He swallows, then daintily wipes his lips with a napkin.]

TOM

I always kind of imagined the cheesecake in Hell would be excessively decadent. You know, one of those teeth-rotting, Twilight Zone-ironic punishments.

SATAN [shrugging]

That was one way to go. The other was to make it with bat shit and live bees.

TOM

That's a little disappointing.

SATAN

Well, it is Hell, after all...

[TOM nods. SATAN raises an eyebrow.]

SATAN

You know, you're taking this astoundingly well. Most people aren't anywhere near this cavalier about signing over their souls to a forever of agony and despair.

HENRY [to TOM]

Seriously, man. The dude appeared out of thin air.

LORI [crinkling her nose]

And he smells like incense and dead people.

HENRY

I really don't think he's fucking around.

LORI

He's got horns growing out of his head, for Christ's sake.

SATAN [to LORI, pointing]

You know, that is actually exactly why. [waves his hands dismissively] But that's another story entirely.

SATAN [to TOM]

Anyway, kid, your friends are right. You should really take this a little more seriously. For all intents and purposes, I OWN you now. I know atheism's pretty popular and all nowadays – [chuckling] believe me, I am well aware of that – but just because you don't believe in me doesn't mean I'm not real.

TOM

No, no, I believe you. And in you. I just believe in myself a little more.

SATAN [condescendingly]

Uh huh. Well, you just keep on believing then. Now, if you'll excuse me, [SATAN stands up] I need to use the little boy's room.

[SATAN walks off stage. TOM watches him leave, then gets up and hops in the TIME MACHINE.]

HENRY

Hey, where are you-

[Lights go out, then come back on, in quick succession. Fancy curtains now cover the window behind the table, and the coffee mugs have been replaced with wine glasses. A lit candle sits on the table.]

LORI is now sitting on HENRY's lap. HENRY is no longer wearing a name tag and LORI no longer has an apron. The two of them are laughing, as if a joke had just been told.

TOM steps back out of the TIME MACHINE and nods approvingly. He takes a seat at the table.

SATAN returns from off stage, adjusting his suit as he walks, seemingly oblivious to the changes.]

SATAN [taking a seat next to TOM]

As I was saying, Tom, confidence is great and all, but arrogance doesn't exactly help make a case for you "escaping my clutches." I don't know if you read the fine print or not, but if you start acting in a manner that would have delivered you to me the old-fashioned way - murder, robbery, setting kittens of fire - the contract is null and void and I get my time machine back.

I like to call that the "Gotcha Clause." Usually spring it on people right after all their gold vanishes and I'm sitting on a tree branch laughing at 'em. But, see, I'm trying to spare you from that, kid. I don't know why, but I like you, I like your style.

TOM

Yeah, I'm... I'm not trying to escape anything here.

[HENRY and LORI look at one another with furrowed brows, then at TOM and SATAN]

LORI

Escape...?

[SATAN looks at HENRY and LORI, then at their new surroundings. He turns to TOM with an amused look on his face.]

SATAN

That was quick. [pause] What did you do?

HENRY

What did who do? What the hell are you two talking about?

TOM [waving him off]

Business stuff, man. Go back to your wife.

LORI

I could've sworn we were all just talking about cupcakes...

HENRY

Yeah...

LORI

It was getting really heated...

HENRY

You kept arguing about how cupcake cakes compromised the sanctity of the cupcake proper...

TOM [shakes his head]

Nope. Lucy [points at SATAN] and I've been talking about the Starbucks takeover for, like, twenty minutes now. I'm not really sure what you guys are thinking of.

HENRY

Really?

TOM

Really.

LORI [quietly]

I believe us...

[TOM shrugs, as if to say "sorry." HENRY and LORI give one another a confused glance.]

SATAN [to TOM]

Lucy. That's nice. I'm not sure what you think you did, but you do realize I exist OUTSIDE of time, right?



TOM

Yeah. But your things don't. Things like contracts.

SATAN [wide-eyed]

Oh, no.

[SATAN pulls the contract out of his jacket and looks it over. His panic quickly becomes confusion.]

HENRY

What ARE we talking about?

TOM

Hush. The grown-ups are talking, Henry.

SATAN [smacking the contract]

This is exactly what it should be.

TOM [smirking]

Well... wouldn't it always be?

[SATAN takes the bait and frantically re-reads the contract again. HENRY and LORI continue to look at SATAN and TOM with suspicion and puzzlement.]

SATAN

No, see, [reading from contract] "I, Tom Alessio, in exchange for a time machine, proffer my soul for all eternity to Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness and Father of All Lies." [poking contract] That's me, that's my signature!

TOM

Yeah... [pulls a folded piece of paper from his back pocket] So's this one.

[TOM unfolds the worn paper and places it in front of SATAN.]

SATAN

What the...

TOM

You should really read delivery slips more carefully. I mean, you could be signing just about anything.

SATAN

When did I get a delivery...?

TOM

Like ownership of Hell, for instance.

[TOM picks up the contracts, rolls them up, and gets up to leave. TOM taps HENRY's arm with the contract.]

TOM

Yo, get your hand off your woman's ass and let's go.

[HENRY shakes his head at TOM, then HENRY and LORI begin the process of disentangling themselves from one another and leaving the table]

SATAN [still sitting]

The mini-fridge I ordered?

TOM

Yup. Although, in this timeline, it's the mini-fridge I ordered. Well, more specifically, the mini-fridge I ordered you to order for me. Which you did. Seeing as how you're my assistant and all.

SATAN

Wait... What?

[TOM waves the contract and smiles.]

LORI

You finally got a fridge for the media room? Thank God. It was such a pain in the ass having to walk across a field of burning coals to the kitchen just to get a soda.

SATAN [grabbing TOM's arm]

You let them into Hell?

HENRY [confused]

Yeah... into it, out of it. How else would we visit?

SATAN

They visit?! They visit Hell?!

TOM

What? You never had friends stop by the office?

SATAN

Well, no. No, I didn't. I never really had any friends TO stop by...

HENRY [once again confused]

Dude, we're there every Thursday night for Rock Band, ever since Tom had that giant-ass wall TV put in. It's been months.

LORI

You play bass.

[SATAN blinks a few times, not entirely accepting of or understanding this reality. He continues to sit, with his hands on the table, as the others begin to leave.]

LORI [to SATAN]

Are you alright?

TOM [patting SATAN's shoulder]

You'll get used to it.

SATAN [slowly getting up from the table]

I... I guess...

[HENRY shrugs and puts his arm around LORI. Then walk out, stage right]

SATAN

This has just... I mean, this doesn't happen...

TOM [shrugging, as he and SATAN follow behind HENRY and LORI]

It's a fun game.

SATAN

Bass, though? Really?

TOM

You're pretty good.

END