It's a bad analogy—because it often conjures up thoughts of junk food and Doritos—but sometimes horror simply needs comfort food. Not in the sense of a guilty pleasure, but a wonderfully prepared bit of something old-fashioned; hence, THE INNKEEPERS.

Ti West's highly anticipated new film (premiering at Austin's SXSW) sees a terrific duo in Claire (Sara Paxton) and Luke (Pat Healy), the last two employees of the Yankee Pedlar Inn—employees who want to investigate its haunted legends as well.

What West has gotten so right isn't something groundbreaking, but completely essential. Claire and Luke are complete characters that really capture the dynamic of the everyday hangout at your unexciting job. Much of THE INNKEEPERS is hilarious, and often quotably so, stemming from its two great leads.

It's funny watching THE INNKEEPERS after seeing and commending INSIDIOUS for its lack of false scares, but so much of THE INNKEEPERS is about what people and their minds will do as a result of boredom and sarcasm, like half-assedly pop into ghost hunting.

But as in West's HOUSE OF THE DEVIL, there's a very clear point where THE INNKEEPERS transitions from something incredibly fun and endearing (the misdirection scares don't ever feel cheap, but appropriate), with some spooky scenes in the mix, to a terrifying assault where the stakes suddenly are much higher than anyone thought. And because Paxton and Healy are truly delightful as the heart of the movie, the fear is real.

West's direction is elegant, floating the camera through the hotel as an entity itself and crafting

(along with wonderful work from Jeff Grace and Graham Reznick on score and sound as usual) some really solid tension out of what's essentially a classical spook story. Even the ghost's legend isn't particularly spectacular, but something you'd expect to hear in an inn that isn't particularly spectacular itself. However, a breathtaking backstory isn't necessary when there's a palpable atmosphere and threat.

There's a late-stage scare that feels slightly out of step with THE INNKEEPERS' overall style, but otherwise the film is a wonderful (and really, really fun) picture that continues to confirm not only West's talent but the general quality of Glass Eye Pix and their eye for damn good work.