

Unbroken Toaster

by Angel Fourlas

Characters

- Angel
- John

Scene: A small, overly elaborate shop with a sign reading “Toaster Tosties Toasted Toastings – Est. 1893, Re-Established 2019” Behind the counter stands Angel, dressed as if auditioning for a Victorian-era philosophy professor. Enter John, holding a toaster.

John: Hi, I'd like to return this toaster, please.

Angel: Ah! Good morning and warmest toasted tidings! Welcome to Toaster Tosties Toasted Toastings—how may I titillate your troubles on this, the toastiest of Tuesdays?

John: Uh... yes. I'd like to return a toaster, please.

Angel: A toaster?

John: Yes. A toaster. And it doesn't work.

Angel: So... a broken toaster?

John: Yes, a broken toaster.

Angel: Mm. *[beat]* let us imagine, if you will, a world in which the toaster you carry is *not*, in fact, a broken toaster—but rather, an *unbroken* toaster. A functioning, thriving, gallantly glowing bastion of domestic heat. An imbroken toaster, if one dares coin a phrase.

John: Okay...

Angel: Now, imagine that this imbroken toaster—nay, this disbroken, misbroken, exbroken marvel—were sitting nobly on your countertop. You, the toastmaster. It, the chrome knight. Together, you engage in the sacred ritual of bread-based alchemy. Bread goes in. Magic ensues. Toast emerges. Lightly golden. Possibly sourdough.

John: That is not what happened.

Angel: Precisely! And yet, here you are, clutching this sullen appliance as though it were a wounded animal, demanding recompense from the gods of kitchenware. But consider this: Is it *truly* broken? Or is it... on strike?

John: No, it's broken. I press the button. Nothing happens. No heat, no glow. No toast.

Angel: So what you're saying is—your toaster fails to fulfill its *so-called* purpose?

John: Yes.

Angel: But what is a toaster's purpose, really? Toasting? Ah-ha! I counter with this: If a man buys a toaster and does not toast, is the man broken? If a toaster exists, yet no bread is inserted—*is it not still a toaster?*

John: What?

Angel: You see, sir, society has shackled us with names and expectations. A “toaster” must toast. A “clock” must tick. A “pillow” must cushion. But remove those functions and what remains? An object? An idea? A rebellion?

John: It’s a toaster. It toasts. That’s it.

Angel: *In theory.* And yet here we are.

John: Look. I bought this toaster last week. It hasn’t toasted a thing. Not a crumb. Not a slice. Not even a bagel. I’d just like to return it.

Angel: Return it. Hmm. A fascinating verb. To return is to undo a decision, to reverse a trajectory, to unwalk a path. But can you return the *experience*, sir? The silent mornings, the cold bread, the dreams of crispy warmth unmet?

John: I don’t want to philosophize. I want my £29.99 back.

Angel: Ah! Money! The great toaster of civilization. Money, like toast, can be warm, or it can be burnt. And here you are, trying to unburn a transaction.

John: I have the receipt.

Angel: How devastating. Very well. Present your parchment of proof. Let the ancient scripts be unrolled and judged by the light of common sense and consumer rights.

John: Here. See? Bought last week. Doesn’t work. I’d like a refund or a replacement.

Angel: Hmm... very well. But I must ask one final question.

John: Okay.

Angel: If I give you a new toaster—gleaming, functional, seductive in its stainless steel allure—what’s to say you won’t return in another week, with another complaint, another malfunction, another silent rectangular void? Have you considered... that perhaps the fault lies *not* in the toaster, but in... you?

John: ...No.

Angel: Fair enough. Here’s a new one.

John: ...Thanks.

Angel: May your loaves be ever evenly browned.

John: ...Right.

[John exits slowly. Angel stares after him as if watching a Shakespearean tragedy unfold in the kitchen aisle.]

Angel:
We toast. We burn. We crumb. We return.

[Angel grabs a fork and inserts it in the, ironically, now functional and electrified toaster causing rapid death]