

Your Evil Little Brother Gave You “Aspirins” ? They’re not Aspirins.

In *Community Spirits*, (ISBN 9780976547921), sleuth wannabe Joseph Oliver Kuhl receives another annoying phone call from an admirer, student journalist Patella Sackworth, who speaks first:

“So, Joey, you think these stories are, like, real? The stories about ghosts in town? Including your own, of course.”

Patella is always calling me up and asking me stuff. She is the only child of Mr. Piggy Sackworth, my supervisor over at Mr. D. H. Carp’s Groceries & Sundries where I work on Saturdays, so it is political to be polite to her. Besides, she is a good source of humint, which is the tradecraft name you use for happenings around town.

“Well,” I go, “of course the stories are real. The question is, are the ghosts real?” I raise up my eyebrows and lower my eyelids so I look like I’m puzzling, not like I am criticizing her grammar. She can’t stand any criticism at all. This time she ignores the possible criticism, probably since she can’t see me over the phone anyway.

She goes, “I been hearing all kinds of stuff during my labors over at Kute Kurls & Nails.”

I practice expressing interest by raising my eyebrows again and sort of twisting my head, a trope I saw old-time movie star Kiefer Sutherland perform on the silver screen. Of course, Kiefer was doing his cruel smile at the time, a thing I didn’t inflict on Patella, since she couldn’t see it anyway. “So?”

“I been hearing all kinds of stuff,” Patella goes. “Like, Mrs. Crinkle was all upset while she was getting her hair blued on account of the fact that Ab Crinkle’s picture fell off of the wall over at her house.”

“So, big deal.”

“Ah, but when it was examined, the nail was still in the wall, sticking out straight and strong. And the wire on the back of the picture wasn’t broken either. So the picture, like, just took and fell, no reason for it. Mrs. Crinkle believes it was old Ab himself come back from the spirit world, trying to tell her something.”

I snort my nose. “Maybe he didn’t like her hair blue.”

“No joke, Joey, this is serious stuff. People have also seen strange things happening around town.”

“...Disappearing goats, poetry-reading chauffeurs, and korndog eating citizens play big parts in unraveling the mystery of true love and falling statues...This book is more fun than a barrel of swirling orbs....”

—Beth Edelstein in *Flamingnet Reviews*

“...unlikely to win a Nobel or the Golfalong Prize for English Literature, but a whole lot of fun....”

—Phil Burton in *Tri-Valley Monitor*

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