

Just when the leaves had begun to fall and carpet the grass in a vast array of orange a funny thing happened to me. It was the early morning of November first to be exact. It's not too hard to remember the day after Halloween on any occasion and this was not any occasion.

I'd finished doing a load of laundry. Unfortunately the fuse had blown, once again, for the dryer. In order to have dry clothes for the next day, I ingeniously tied a rope from the front room shutter, all the way through my narrow one bedroom apartment to a dresser drawer knob in my bedroom. All of my wet clothes were hung over the rope. Every T-shirt, every boxer short and even every sock hung independently on the line.

With nothing good on TV (why is there nothing good on Tuesday nights?) and tired of watching my clothes dry - I opened my bedroom window and went to bed. It turned out to be a good night to dream. Unlike most of my dreams - I was getting the girl. The girl and I were eating supper at a fancy Italian restaurant when a screeching noise could be heard throughout the restaurant. My date turned to me and said in a serious tone "Come back when you figure out what that noise is."

I awoke from my dream to again hear the screeching noise. It was coming from the front room. I stumbled out of bed, put my robe on and ventured out to the front room. At this point something hit my face and I jumped back into bed. I could see little things floating in the air! - like bats or some sort of evil fairies. I turned the light on and realized the bats were in reality socks hanging on my homemade clothesline. They were swaying back and forth from the breeze from the window so I quickly closed the window. I heard the screech again. It sounded like someone or something clawing its way out of a trap. I walked to the front room, slowly, but this time turning on every light in the process.

I made it through my bedroom and the study and stood at the edge of the front room. I stood still and observed everything - making sure nothing was missing and nothing new (like a thief) was in the room. I took one step and observed again. Nothing unusual. Another step and as I put my foot down, a noise came from the front of the room. I jumped back to my original starting point in the room and carefully observed the room. My eyes fiercely scanned back and forth throughout the poor mismatch furniture looking for

anything to explain the screech. A bang came from the east end of the room. My eyes leaped to the east end. My answer came when I saw the fridge. The fridge motor had turned off.

When my heart, and nerves, calmed down I heard the screech yet again. It came from near the front door. I walked over to the front door and put my hand an inch from the doorknob. I was debating whether or not the door had been locked by me or unlocked by someone else. I was too scared to see if it was unlocked. When I mustered some courage, I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and turned the doorknob. It was locked. I looked into my full-length mirror beside the door to see how white I was from being scared. The day before I had bought the mirror because I came to work with unmatching clothes. By putting the mirror near the door, I would be able to give myself the once over glance before I left for work. However when I looked into the mirror that frightful night, I did not see myself scared. It wasn't because I was no longer scared (because I was indeed). No it was because the reflection I saw in the mirror was not my own. There was a stranger clawing his way through my mirror!

The man on the other side noticed me and politely gave me a hello wave. I should have ran but being stunned by a man in my mirror I simply returned the wave. He motioned for me to move back and I obliged. With one last screech, the man came through my mirror and into my apartment. He smiled at me. I said nothing and only stared.

"Hey, do you have any chocolate? I have a craving for some chocolate."

He walked past me to the cupboards. To my disappointment, my visitor for another dimension was a mooch. He rooted through the cupboards until he found some Chocolate Chip Cookie Mix.

"Ah, this is the stuff."

He reached over to the oven door and grabbed my apron. He put the apron on and then opened the fridge and gathered his ingredients. A mixing bowl later, he had made cookie dough. My visitor preheated the oven, opened the top cupboard and grabbed two cups. He opened the fridge again and discovered there was no milk.

"You have no milk."

I finally spoke. "Right"

"How did you expect to eat breakfast in the morning without any milk?"

I didn't want anger my health crazed cookie-loving guest with the correct answer of "well, I don't eat breakfast" so I mumbled beneath my breath "idunno"

"Well we can't have cookies without milk. Grab your coat. We're going to the store."

I obeyed my visitor as he turned off the oven and put the apron away. I opened the door for him. I thought about running back into my apartment and locking the door but by this time I was convinced he was a ghost and it's a given that a ghost can go through walls. Plus I hadn't had homemade cookies in over a year since I had disasterously tried to make them myself (I burned all of them).

"Don't forget your wallet." The ghost reminded me. I grabbed my wallet and we set off on our stroll for the convenience store that was two blocks away.

"Do you know 41 Polly Road?"

I nodded in the affirmative notion. 41 Polly Road was the only house in the neighbourhood that had a balcony attached to the front window.

"I grew up there." I said nothing.

"You want to know if I'm a ghost don't you?"

Again I nodded in the affirmative.

"I am." I said nothing. The ghost noting that I was too scared to talk decided he would do all the talking. First he told me his name: Patrick Sutherby then his life story. Patrick was a star kicker in high school. The summer after graduating from East York Collegiate he went on a recruiting trip to Northwestern. That night in Chicago, Patrick had an urge for some chocolate so he went down to the local variety store. There he was shot and killed in a robbery. He told me he was an innocent bystander and I believe him.

When we reached the store he stopped.

"Aren't you coming in Patrick?" My shyness had disappeared.

"Nah, superstition, I guess."

I went into the variety store and purchased the milk. Patrick was eagerly waiting outside for me and we walked back to my place. Patrick baked a dozen cookies and when we had eaten them, he baked another dozen. After the second dozen, Patrick sat in the rocking chair, rocking it ever-so-slowly drinking milk from the carton. He appeared full and content. Shortly after I fell asleep on the couch and continued my date at the Italian festival while Patrick watched the television.

When I awoke the next morning, there was no evidence of Patrick. In fact there was no evidence of Patrick ever being in the apartment. All the dishes he used were back in the cupboards. I checked the cupboard for cookie mix but I couldn't remember how much was in the cupboard before last night. I checked the fridge for the milk and there was none. I checked the garbage and found no remains of a milk carton.

Later in the day I bought all the supplies for baking cookies but I have never seen Patrick again.

Over the years, I have told this story to quite a few people. Some think that Patrick was indeed a ghost from beyond the grave. "He obviously took the milk carton with him." My friend Molly told me. I'm not sure if my encounter with Patrick was real or not - but never again did I do chocolate and acid at the same time like I did before I went to bed that night. I have been off chocolate ever since.