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I guess what I should do is conjure a spirit version of myself and send him floating above the desks in my classroom, between the fluorescent lights, have him observe me for a day and tell me what he sees. I hope he would report that my students appreciate *Romeo and Juliet*, that they understand semi-colons, that they respect me and learn from me, that clearly, from his perspective over their heads, they are better off from having me as their English teacher.

Then when the 2:20 bell rings, what I should do is buy the spirit me a double mocha latte, easy on the whip, and grill him about who I *am*, exactly, what I stand for—just tell me, okay?—and what, after these years, my essential beliefs are. But he would smirk at me, slurp his drink, and say, “You mean you don’t already know? Seriously? Man, what a—”

“I could blink and make you disappear,” I would interrupt.

“Then maybe you’d stop stalling and just tell the world what your special, fuzzy-wuzzy beliefs are. Don’t be embarrassed. It’s who you *are*. Slurp.”

“Fine. I believe that to have faith, a person must reject logic and embrace the absurd. In Professor Marino’s Kierkegaard class, we learned about teleological suspensions of the ethical, the prime example being Abraham, who nearly murders his own son because God tells him to. And I know I wouldn’t be able to do that. I would choose my son, and it scares me if that means that I am not truly faithful.”

“Plus, you don’t go to church because you think it’s boring. You’re an under-the-shirt Christian.”

“Meaning?”

“You wear your cross under your shirt—literally and figuratively. It’s a cop-out, and you know it. Slurp.”

At this point, I would pace the room. The spirit me would follow with his eyes, amused, sitting cross-legged in thin air. Then I would find some excuse to leave the room: to make copies, check my mailbox, anything. When I return, he would be there.

“You forgot something. Slurp. You believe in love.”

“Are you being nice to me now?”

“It’s the caffeine. Sit down.”

I would sit, and he would continue: “You believe in the impossibility of true faith, but at least you’re honest about it. The skipping church thing is kind of pathetic, but you’ll take your kids when you have kids, right?”

“Um...”

“Yes, you will. And you’ll love them. You’ll be present and active in their lives. The effort you put into teaching pales to the effort you’ll put into parenting. And that’s why you’re going to turn out okay. Slurp. All the faith stuff—well, you’ll figure it out. Life’s a journey, not a destination, Jesus loves you even though you’re an immature narcissist, and you have a beautiful wife whom you love and who loves you back. I’d smack you but you’re me, and it would hurt. Okay? All better, Mr. Sensitive?”

And before I could answer yes, he would be gone.