

Small Town Suicide

Hello, Gabby?

No, this is Lorraine.

Just as good. Hold on to your hat, Lorraine.

What is it, Percy?

You know that fella with the wooden leg and the bad breath?

You mean old Gumbo?

Yeah, him.

What about him?

He's gone and jumped off'n the Sligo Bridge.

You don't say.

Appears he was upset about life.

Upset about life?

Yeah, he left a note.

How do you know all this?

I'm the goldarned police commissioner, Lorraine!

Oh, yeah, I forgot. So you mean you have his note right there?

I sure do.

Can you tell me what it says, Percy?

Okay, let's see...

He starts out: "My dear fellow sufferers..." Strange way to start, don't you think?

Yeah...

"I've decided to kick the bucket, buy the farm, meet the reaper, and go the way of all human flesh." He writes kind of funny, don't you think, Lorraine?

Yeah...

"Once when I was young, innocent, optimistic and without a care, I participated in a gross injustice, a veritable sin, a monumental offense, a terrible crime."

Why does he use so many words, Percy?

Got me... Anyways, the next line is a real doozy. "It was due to this ardently suppressed nightmare that I embarked on a life of futile rebellion against the powers of the universe. Sound familiar fellow sufferers?"

Who's he talkin' to in this note anyways?

Who knows?

"In the course of acting out, indulging my most narcissistic fantasies, running away from the truth, and hiding my head in the sand, I became addicted to alcohol, opiates, gambling and womanizing."

You sure old Gumbo wrote this, Percy?

We got his body housed over there in Delbert's funeral parlor, Lorraine.

Okay, okay.

"There comes a time when a man has to face the facts, step up to the plate, draw the line, and make a stand. And that's why I've decided to feed the fishes, cross the bar, fall off the perch, and go out with a bang."

Hell, Percy, the man makes no sense.

Yeah, that's what I was thinkin' too, Lorraine.

I mean, I been listenin' real close and I still don't know why he went and kilt hisself, do you?

Yeah, he shoulda just writ 'goodbye cruel world' and got right down to it, but this here is like a book goin' round in circles. I do like this part: "In the course of my so-called life I've learned that my thoughts and feelings and values -- the very essence of my ego, is nothing but ephemera, smoke and mirrors, insubstantial ether, the vapor of delusion. When I lost my leg I discovered the inescapable truth and it wasn't pretty."

Hold on, Percy. I'm gettin' a headache. I do believe old Gumbo was a troubled man. 'Course he was troubled, he went and jumped off'n the damn bridge, didn't he?

Yeah, Percy, good point.

Here's the last line, Lorraine: "I've learnt four things in my wretched time here. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth, don't take no wooden nickels, stick to the straight and narrow, and good guys finish last."

He was deeply troubled, Percy.

You're right about that, Lorraine.