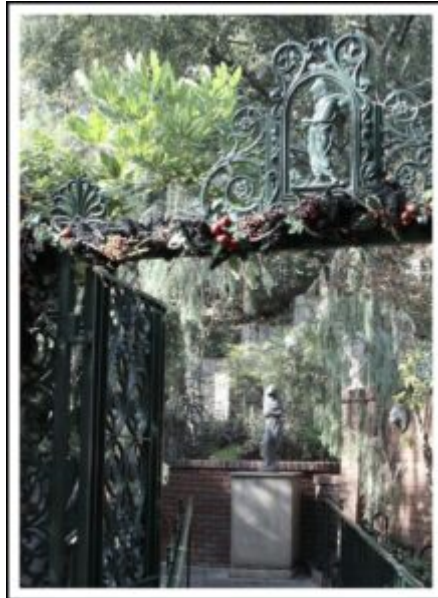


# The ghost in him



“So-So hates Sissy,” Ben announces, breaking the silence in the car.

“WHAT did you just say?” I ask him, while eyeing him in the rearview mirror. Without backing down, wanting to make it perfectly clear, he says it again, “So-So hates Sissy.”

If you don’t remember, So-So is Ben’s invisible—not to be interchanged with imaginary—friend.

“Ben! Don’t say you hate your Sissy, that’s mean,” I tell him.

“I didn’t say it, So-So did,” he tells me with no hint of sarcasm then turns back to his Nintendo DS.

“Pfft, tell So-So not to say that anymore,” I tell him.

“He’s not here right now, he’s at work. I’ll tell him later,” he says not looking up again.

I think I know what’s going on here. Ben is a follower by nature. He goes along with everyone. He’s easy. He is a bit his sister’s crony and this role doesn’t leave much room for protest. So-So is his henchman. His right-hand (invisible) man.

Later that day, while standing in the kitchen, Ben says, "So-So hates Sissy a lot." But this time to his Dad.

"Well, So-So just better learn to get along with everyone in this house," Larry tells him.

Quietly, a matter of factly Ben says, "You're not in charge of So-So, I am."

[Uh-Oh]

"Well, I'm in charge of you and so that means I'm in charge of So-So and as long as So-So lives under my roof he better mind the rules," Larry boomed, obviously peeved.

"He lives ON the roof," Ben says as he walks away. "And he has a job now at The Haunted House at Disneyland. He could live there."

He is a ghost after all.

Originally published January 2009