

"The Guy With the Cardboard Christ" preview sample #1
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Jerry: Hi. My name is Jerry. *(Stretches out a hand across the cutout to Alan.)* What's yours?

Alan: *(Reluctantly taking the hand to shake it across the cutout's chest.)* Uh, it's Alan.

Jerry: Alan! Great name, great name. Nice to meet you, Alan! *(He leans back and crosses his legs, with his arm around the cutout.)*

(Alan begins to raise the paper again to read, but stops and lowers it with slight irritation as Jerry speaks again.)

Jerry: So, Alan, what brings you here to the park on this beautiful afternoon?

Alan: Oh, I just like to sit here and enjoy the fresh air, and read a little. You know, a little break, some... **quiet time?** *(Stressing the words, he indicates the paper with a small shake and lifts it up to read, hoping Jerry takes the hint.)*

Jerry: *(Nodding broadly several times.)* Oh, yeah, I know what you mean. Quiet time is important. *(With a small dismissive smile, Alan lifts the newspaper back up and begins to read.)*

Jerry: *(Putting his arms up and his hands behind his head. After a few seconds he speaks, but looking up or in front of him.)* Yep, gotta have that quiet time, or you'll go crazy.

(Alan's fingers spasmodically grip the newspaper a little tighter, but makes no reply. A few more moments pass.)

Jerry: It's a craaaazy world. Lots of crazy people.

(Alan lowers the paper slightly with a crumpling motion, as if restraining himself.)

Alan: *(Tightly, he glares straight ahead as he answers.)* There **surely are.** *(He lifts the paper again, gripping it tightly and almost stretching it across his face as a barrier.)*

(A couple more beats pass.)

Jerry: If it weren't for my Jesus here I'd go crazy.

(Alan's hands jerk in anger, ripping the newspaper down the middle, then he crumples it down in his lap with exaggerated patience. His eyes are wide with irritation but his voice is tightly controlled.)

Alan: *(Through his teeth, forcing a grin.)* You don't say.

(Jerry grins and slides over closer, pushing the cardboard cutout next to Alan. He misses the obvious anger and mistakes the attention as a sign of interest.)

Jerry: *(Animatedly.)* Oh, yeah. If I didn't have my Jesus here to talk to about everything, I'd flip out. I don't have many friends...

Alan: *(Sarcastically)* Really? I wonder why?

Jerry: *(Continuing.)* ...but Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

(Alan, folding the wrinkled paper, has given up on solitude and turns his attention toward Jerry for some amusement, with a grim smile.)

Alan: So, you take your... *(Indicates the cutout pressing against him.)* "Jesus" with you everywhere you go, huh?

Jerry: (*Proudly.*) I don't leave home without him.

Alan: What about on the bus? Do you have to pay his bus fare too when you get on?

Jerry: Oh, no, I just fold him up and put him under the seat.

Alan: I see, I see. How convenient. What about the movies?

Jerry: Well, I do have to pay for his ticket when we go there. I wouldn't want to leave him under the seat in the theater, he'd miss seeing the movie, and the popcorn and soda on the floor would get him all sticky.

Alan: (*More amused by the minute.*) That would be messy. Couldn't have your Jesus getting nacho cheese on his beard.

Jerry: Of course, I do have to take a pair of ear muffs when we go, I wouldn't want my Jesus to have to hear all that bad language. And sometimes I have to cover his eyes during the naughty parts.

Alan: And do you cover your eyes too?

Jerry: Well, no, that would be a waste of good money, to pay for a ticket and then not watch the best parts! (*A beat.*) I mean, why go see "Cheerleader Massacre Part 5," if you didn't watch to see lots of skin, and bloody murder?

Alan: Of course. What about when you go on a date, do you take your "Jesus" along, too?

Jerry: (*Reluctantly, hanging his head.*) Well, I haven't had any dates since I started taking my Jesus along with me...

Alan: (*Feigning shock.*) No! You can't mean that. Why not?

Jerry: (*A little downcast.*) Well, when I have my Jesus around, I can't talk to the girls that I'd like to take out. He's so good, I guess they can't stand to be around him for long. Makes them feel sinful, I guess. When they see us coming down the street, or we try to sit next to them at the club, they run away.

Alan: Well, I declare. I thought Jesus loved sinners!

Jerry: He does! They just don't love him. And I suffer persecution for his sake sometimes. "If they hated me, they will hate you also," my Jesus said, and it's true! (*Sitting up with renewed vigor.*) Once, I tried to introduce a girl I met to my Jesus, and she called me a crazy idiot, and even punched my Jesus in the face! We chased her down the street, yelling that my Jesus loved her anyway, and so did I, but she ran away screaming. The Bible says to "go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in," but when she saw my Jesus and me hiding in her hedges one night she called the cops on me.

Alan: (*Grins with amused interest.*) What happened then?

Jerry: She got a restraining order against us. Now when my Jesus and I go past her house we can't get within 50 yards of it.

Alan: Well! (*Crossing his legs and clasping his hands around his knee.*) Do you and your Jesus read the Bible together at night?

Jerry: Well, I used to read my "Bedtime Stories From the Bible" book, but once I found my Jesus, I figured, 'Well, my Jesus is the Word of God, and he's here with me, so what's the point of reading it any more? I have the Word in sight all the time!'

Alan: (*Claps his hands together.*) Makes perfect sense. Do you take him to church with you?

Jerry: Well, I did for awhile. But they asked me not to anymore. (Continues...)