

Preacher Alphonse Jicklo

by Gabriel Orgrease

Preacher Jicklo, a lay minister of the Agape Church of All Dominance, a sub-sect of a sub-sect of a Congregational Methodist sect, had recently relocated to Kracton from the nearby village of Wetwater Falls. In need of gainful employ and as an upstanding sort as seen from the appearance of his not altogether unconventional exterior he had been hired on by the owner, Samson Agnosis Marchad.

Samson, a somewhat inept real estate broker with a profound lack of business acumen, thus having found himself stuck with the Hog n' Bluster when his business partner, his bookie ran off to geographic points undisclosed. Thus for Samson with his customary lack of imagination, and somewhat embarrassed by his sudden property holding, felt forced to change his business plan and actually sell prepared food out of this hole in the wall of the mainstreet mall.

Samson was also somewhat in hopes that his son Jason would become engaged in this minor capitalist enterprise and 'turned around' in his life.

Samson did hold great hopes for the prospect of a moral man such as Preacher Jicklo to likewise turnaround a business that always seemed to be on the brink of collapse. And by the grace of god to turn around a young man who for all appearances appeared to be on the brink of a critical OD.

If one were to make a model of Samson's preconception it would be that religion turns round and round in circles and circles in an ever revolving pattern reminiscent of sprinkle donuts produced on an assembly line.

Jicklo had a bald head devoid of any hair and on his face a nose,

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likewise devoid of nostril hair, the configuration and size of two black walnuts. His nose, as if it were a monument set off his small black eyes which in contrast always appeared a bit red around the edges if one were to look past the heavy black frames of his glasses. Other than that his chin was indistinctly flaccid and his teeth distinctively crooked. Usually in Kracton this cognomen of facial appearance would all be taken as a sign of intelligence headed toward an adulthood of wisdom. Short and broad of body his arms not quite long enough for useful occupation. He was despite appearances a dedicated taskmaster of his peculiar vision without another direction to go in his immediate career but baseline manager of less than a deli, not even a coffee shop, an, "Aba... abam... inable little hole in the wall..." sandwich shop on Kracton Commons not even remotely near any institution of substance other than a driver's school -- his previous career, that he was the only one certain he would return to as god blesses and with much fanfare and fervent prayer, a whole lot of fervent prayer not ever being nearly enough fervent to suffice, was as a high school wrestling coach; unfortunate for him, his career record was with no wins. It could very easily have been said that up to the moment of his move to Kracton that his life had been of no issue, no consequence worth a note. He could as well have been a janitor if his arms were only a few inches and evenly longer.

Into town he had been followed by gossip in accusation of suspected groin gropes of young boys, wet towel snaps on privates, and the odd way that he danced or wiggled his hips when the team nearly scored which he was fortunate in this one specific respect was not very noticeably often. It was rumored that he had had an illicit affair with the wife of the Dean of the community college that was the good rumor, his reason for rapid relocation, or was it the Dean himself... or was it their middle son or youngest daughter? There was no certainty to be found in these rumors as this all occurred at a time before e-mail and social networks. Therefore there was no officious confirmation to settle any factual errors. There was no blog

of record or lack of letter to set a reputation straight. Though all things considered it was probably fortunate for Jicklo in the end that his team of boys rarely scored on or off the mat. Too many heads butt against each other and enough of them against the bare floor. Too many bells rung, rung bells rung, it was a tolling as his team for three years consistently came in at the lowest rank any team would conceivably score at the regional meets in thirty years of the Wetwater Falls Wolverines. A consistency of downward progress - Jicklo was consistent despite failure and that may have made for his redemptive grace.

Fail, fail twice - fail always.

Life as we know full well is a struggle when it is all headed butt down and likewise bitter is the ascent to Golgotha. Rigid in the confinement of his faith, a stalwart fundamentalist secured in the fold of his deviant sect within a sect within a sect it being almost nearly cult like; Preacher Jicklo did not understand a crap about Matthew or his sort on nightshift at the sandwich shop, even less of the likes of Samson's son Jason. Neither little did Jicklo suspect how far it all went beyond the remote of his severely limited circle of faith. It was nothing like anything he would ever see stepping out of his television. (The reader may remember from several hundred thousand pages previously.)

He was suspicious as well of the long-hair male customers and their paisley bulimic dates as he was suspicious of the bald boys, suspiciously much like himself in appearance though obviously they were not in the sanctity of gracious spirit with their swastika tats and piercings. For all transactions, as a fiscally responsible manager, he could count money thrice -- mind you he avoided all night shift work, something of the devil in that -- once before and once after then once again after the bell door had dinged and announced the specious customer out of the shop. He would then clean his hands with a facial towel that he kept stowed below the counter, marinated

in a coffee can with a sweet gelatine made with a secret recipe based on a dilution of bayberry essence and hydrogen peroxide. As a result Jicklo's whitened hands always gave off a particularly gummy-sweet antiseptic smell.

By contrast, and with a sense to avoid stereotype as a religious pervert, Jicklo quickly learned to flirt immoderately with the hungry young single ladies, the prim and sophisticated female clerks who lunched from the neighbored retail stores -- they were well dressed for modest means, most of them in cheap flat-heels -- that fed the heart of this shop, in daylight. For the most part they were flattered by him as their working lives, well actually almost all of their lives, were interminably boring. Plain in nature they found themselves ignored and unseen, and Jicklo's odd attentions were always good for a little bit of a spring in their heartbeats. It was certainly a different sort of music that went on in the daylight of the eatery, a bit more delicate and thumpery, quaint and nearly nymphlike in an aquatic kind of mode of sensual flirtation.

He would offer them small favors. He would offer an extra slice of a dill pickle or a half-cut of a red radish with a bright white meat. He could have intended this to be suggestive as we all know, without need for a long winded explanation, just how a dill pickle, particularly a pre-sliced one, compares to a man. One does not need a handful of tiny plastic crucifixes in order to work out the mathematics of this count.

With his extended offering he would likewise offer them a blemished smile. Or a plastic spoon. Wrestled from out of his sense of mule-like frugality with the white spoon he would lean over ever so slightly as a bulky fulcrum with his way-way enshortened wrestler's arms and hold out with it a raspberry scented pearl-tapioca cup -- held out delicate with the stub tips of his antiseptic fingers across the top of the show-glass counter.

