

On A Tear

By Jack Hall

With apologies to Groucho and Chico Marx

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CHARACTERS

Pastor Firefly

Baroni

Baroni walks into Firefly's office. He has a desk, chairs, and a few Bibles on the desk.

FIREFLY: Hello, can I help you?

BARONI: Yeah, I'm here to get saved.

FIREFLY: You are? Wonderful. I'm Pastor Firefly. And you are?

BARONI: I am Mr. Baroni.

FIREFLY: Well, everything you need to know is right here in this book.

Firefly picks up two books and hands one to Baroni.

BARONI: Does it have any pictures?

FIREFLY: No.

BARONI: Then I don't want to read it.

FIREFLY: Mr. Baroni, I assure you, this text has all the answers you need in black and white.

BARONI: You don't have any color?

FIREFLY: That's over in the New Testament.

BARONI: I don't know if I can read all that.

FIREFLY: That's okay, nobody ever does. But here, I'll take you through and give you the highlights.

BARONI: Okay.

FIREFLY: Here we are. The Book of Genesis.

BARONI: Cool! I love Phil Collins.

FIREFLY: Chapter one, verse one. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Now that's life changing stuff, huh?

BARONI: Well, I don't know if I like that.

FIREFLY: Why not?

BARONI: Well, I'm a man of science. I believe in the big boom.

FIREFLY: I believe you are a big boom.

BARONI: How am I gonna believe that some guy made the world in six days when science says it all came from a big boom?

FIREFLY: Well, even if it came from a big boom, the stuff that went boom had to come from some place.

BARONI: I don't know.

FIREFLY: Look, I don't want to lose you over one little verse. If you don't like it, we'll just take it right out.

BARONI: Can we do that?

FIREFLY: Sure, just look.

Firefly rips the first few pages out of his Bible.

FIREFLY: See? It's gone.

BARONI: Yeah, it's too long anyway.

Baroni rips a few pages out.

BARONI: Now what's next?

FIREFLY: Well, let's see. It says here that anyone who sins is separated from God.

BARONI: What, anyone?

FIREFLY: That's right. It's right here. See there's a snake and an apple...

BARONI: I don't like snakes.

FIREFLY: Shall we take it out?

BARONI: Why not?

They both rip.

BARONI: Now what do we got?

FIREFLY: Now this next part gets into sin. Like right here, it says we should not take the Lord's name in vain.

BARONI: Ehhh, I don't know about that.

FIREFLY: Why not? That seems like a simple enough thing to give up.

BARONI: Yeah, but to quit swearing, I gotta quit driving. And if I quit driving, I gotta quit my job, and if I quit my job, I can't put money in the plate.

FIREFLY: Well, we can't have that, can we?

They rip.

FIREFLY: Now this next part is about honoring your parents.

They both look at each other with a sour face and rip the page out.

FIREFLY: Now it says here you cannot commit adultery.

BARONI: Adultery? What's that mean?

FIREFLY: It means you can't have sex unless you're married, and then only with your wife.

They look at each other, laugh, and rip.

FIREFLY: Ah, here we are. The Book of Psalms. Do you like poetry?

BARONI: I should say not.

FIREFLY: Well, we can tear through a couple more books.

They rip. Baroni looks at the last page before he tosses it.

BARONI: Hey, what's this?

FIREFLY: Why that's the Song of Solomon. It's sort of a love song.

BARONI: Love song, huh? (*reads*) "A flock of sheep... a tower... clusters of fruit..." (*looks up and smiles*) You know, I think I'll hang on to that one.

Baroni tucks the page in his pocket.

FIREFLY: Now we come to the Major Prophets. Now these books I just know you're going to like.

BARONI: No, I don't like them.

FIREFLY: Well, your word's good enough for me.

They rip.

FIREFLY: Now is my word good enough for you?

BARONI: I should say not.

FIREFLY: Well, that takes care of the Minor Prophets.

They rip.

BARONI: Now what we got left?

FIREFLY: Only the best parts. This is the part where Jesus comes and saves us from our sins.

BARONI: And the snakes?

FIREFLY: No, just the sins. See, just like I told you, it's right here in the red. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me."

BARONI: What's that mean?

FIREFLY: It means he's the only way to salvation, the only true way for anyone to be saved from their sins and get to Heaven.

BARONI: So what happens if you don't believe in him?

FIREFLY: Well, then you don't go to Heaven.

BARONI: That's a little closed minded. I mean how can you say this guy is the only way to Heaven? What gives you the right to say that?

FIREFLY: Look, uh, if it'll get you on the church roster, we'll rip through this section too.

BARONI: Fine.

They tear out all but the last page.

BARONI: What's that leave us with?

FIREFLY: Revelation.

BARONI: What's that part say?

FIREFLY: Revelation? Why that's an exciting book. It's all about the end of the world.

BARONI: Why would I read that when I got the History Channel?

They rip.

FIREFLY: Well we're down to the last page.

BARONI: Anything good here?

FIREFLY: Let me see here. *(reads)* "If anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll."

They both look up at the audience, then each other, then the ground, then each other.

FIREFLY: You know, this might have been a bad idea.

Pulls out the paper from Song of Solomon.

BARONI: At least I still got clusters of fruit.