

- Read the text. Then meet in your group. Each student has read a different page from the novel.
- Guess WHO these characters are. Where the story plays? What might be going on?
- Be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

The Web site started out as most of my projects do—as a way not to be bored, a way to create something interesting out of nothing. Also, it was that holiday juggernaut that starts with Halloween, gains steam over Thanksgiving, and comes to a roaring crescendo with Christmas and New Year. The commercialism had reached an all-time high last year, and I felt a desperate need to rebel. Especially with Mom not here, creating the site was a way to distract myself during that torturous and overwhelming time.¹⁴

I designed the graphics, set up the Web site using my cell phone as the modem so the line couldn't be traced.¹⁵ I could have done the whole webcam hey-look-at-me thing, but even online my privacy was crucial.

¹⁴ It hardly dented the sadness.

¹⁵ I got the phone from an ad in the back of a magazine and registered it to a post office box.

This all came at a time when I was designing a series of biblical action figures—for no other reason than my own entertainment, of course.¹⁶ So I called the site The Gospel According to Larry—Larry being the most un-biblical name I could think of.

At first it was funny—just two or three hits a day—lonely Internet nomads with nothing better to do than read the rantings of another spiritual pilgrim. The comments were mostly positive, and some of the arguments were stimulating, so I began to stay up later and later to put more time into my sermons. Someone even posted an article from a local newspaper about the site. Reading that was a hundred times more gratifying than my early acceptance letter to Princeton, believe me.

People started e-mailing Larry, asking who he or she was. One day I had the idea of photographing my possessions,¹⁷ scanning them, and posting them to the Web site. Would it be possible to track down an anonymous person ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD by the things he or she

¹⁶ My favorites were Sampson and Delilah. She came with scissors, and his hair could actually be removed.

¹⁷ The subject of my stuff needs its own chapter; I'll do that next.

owned? The question intrigued me. I made a bet with myself that I could photograph each item in such a way that no one could track me down.

It was a Catch-22. I was happy that what I did was interesting to others, but because Larry's identity was unknown, I couldn't take any credit for the phenomenon, couldn't use it on my resume, or more importantly, brag about it to someone like Beth. I could, I suppose, but there's something pretty slimy about a philosopher seeking attention for personal gain.¹⁸

So I found myself in the awkward position of starting my own fan club. It was a routine almost worthy of the Python troupe, or maybe just the Three Stooges. The irony and just plain weirdness of it invigorated me, and I spent the next hour sorting through the photographs of my possessions, deciding which one to post the next day.

¹⁸ Witness the televangelists if you don't believe me.