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SHOUTS & MURMURS

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WHAT I'D SAY TO THE MARTIANS

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People of Mars, you say we are brutes and savages. But let me tell you one thing: if I could get loose from this cage you have me in, I would tear you guys a new Martian asshole. You say we are violent and barbaric, but has any one of you come up to my cage and extended his hand? Because, if he did, I would jerk it off and eat it right in front of him. "Mmm, that's good Martian," I would say.

You say your civilization is more advanced than ours. But who is really the more "civilized" one? You, standing there watching this cage? Or me, with my pants down, trying to urinate on you? You criticize our Earth religions, saying they have no relevance to the way we actually live. But think about this: if I could get my hands on that god of yours, I would grab his skinny neck and choke him until his big green head exploded.

We are a warlike species, you claim, and you show me films of Earth battles to prove it. But I have seen all the films about twenty times. Get some new films, or, so help me, if I ever get out of here I will empty my laser pistol into everyone I see, even pets.

Speaking of films, I could show you some films, films that portray a different, gentler side of Earth. And while you're watching the films I'd sort of slip away, because guess what: the projector is actually a thing that shoots out spinning blades! And you fell for it! Well, maybe not now you wouldn't.

You point to your long tradition of living peacefully with Earth. But you know what I point to? Your stupid heads.

You say there is much your civilization could teach ours. But perhaps there is something that I could teach you—namely, how to scream like a parrot when I put your big Martian head in a vise.

You claim there are other intelligent beings in the galaxy besides earthlings and Martians. Good, then we can attack them together. And after we're through attacking them we'll attack you.

I came here in peace, seeking gold and slaves. But you have treated me like an intruder. Maybe it is not me who is the intruder but you.

No, not me. You, stupid.

You keep my body imprisoned in this cage. But I am able to transport my mind to a place far away, a happier place, where I use Martian heads for batting practice.

I admit that sometimes I think we are not so different after all. When you see one of your old ones trip and fall down, do you not point and laugh, just as we on Earth do? And I think we can agree that nothing is more admired by the people of Earth and Mars alike than a fine, high-quality cigarette. For fun, we humans like to ski down mountains covered with snow; you like to "milk" bacteria off of scum hills and pack them into your gill slits. Are we so different? Of course we are, and you will be even more different if I ever finish my homemade flamethrower.

You may kill me, either on purpose or by not making sure that all the surfaces in my cage are safe to

lick. But you can't kill an idea. And that idea is: me chasing you with a big wooden mallet.

You say you will release me only if I sign a statement saying that I will not attack you. And I have agreed, the only condition being that I can sign with a long sharp pen. And still you keep me locked up.

True, you have allowed me reading material—not the “human reproduction” magazines I requested but the works of your greatest philosopher, Zandor or Zanax or whatever his name is. I would like to discuss his ideas with him—just me, him, and one of his big, heavy books.

If you will not free me, at least deliver a message to Earth. Send my love to my wife, and also to my girlfriend. And to my children, if I have any anyplace. Ask my wife to please send me a bazooka, which is a flower we have on Earth. If my so-called friend Don asks you where the money I owe him is, please anally probe him. Do that anyway.

If you keep me imprisoned long enough, eventually I will die. Because one thing you Martians do not understand is that we humans cannot live without our freedom. So, if you see me lying lifeless in my cage, come on in, because I'm dead. Really.

Maybe one day we will not be the enemies you make us out to be. Perhaps one day a little Earth child will sit down to play with a little Martian child, or larva, or whatever they are. But, after a while, guess what happens: the little Martian tries to eat the Earth child. But guess what the Earth child has? A gun. You weren't expecting that, were you? And now the Martian child is running away, as fast as he can. Run, little Martian baby, run!

I would like to thank everyone for coming to my cage tonight to hear my speech. Donations will be gratefully accepted. (No Mars money, please.) ♣