

# General Nutzack and Superfast, Inc.

A short parody and/or satire

By: Wil C. Fry IV

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To: Mark A. Hurst—a good best friend

The following story is dedicated to Mark Alan Hurst, with apologies to Mike (“General Nutzack”). Mark was the inspiration for this story, and also—surprisingly—gave it his blessing. The main character is based on Mark, and indeed, is an anagram of his name (Mark Alan Hurst = Makan Rats Hurl). Due to legal reasons, I probably shouldn’t reveal which true-life fast-food restaurants were the basis for “Superfast” and “McCalorie’s,” although it’s probably slanderously obvious. Karjen Valshan, the “Pleasure Android” in this story, was loosely based on a set of four true-life sisters which were in and out of Mark’s life constantly: Karen, Jennifer, Valerie and Shanna. All of them were beautiful, intelligent and fun to be around. Hopefully, they won’t take offense to their characters’ usage here. “Big Stone” should obviously be understood to represent “Little Rock,” while “Williamstown” is my fictional Jacksonville, Ark., where Mark and I lived for some time. “Megadeath” has no relation to the sometime-well-known metal band, but rather is a dark misrepresentation of “MegaMarket,” a grocery store where Mark and I once worked. I’ll let you guess the other satiric references, like the political parties, Martians, Spilt Blood & Guts, and Fartu Zlimm (pronounced “far too slim.”)

Please enjoy this time-wasteful short story, and don’t get your panties in a wad over it. I meant no harm to anyone. I was merely trying to make fun of a particularly memorable time in the lives of Mark & I. All of it is completely true (although exaggerated), except for where Fartu and Makan commit criminal acts. Those parts are not true.

Thanks for reading.

General Nutzack (pronounced “Nut Sack”) sat in his plushly padded genuine imitation leather chair with wide and comfortable arm rests, alternately looking through stacks of paper files and gazing around him at the slim, supple, nubile female forms that were ever-present in the orbital restaurant. He was looking through stacks of paper because the computer payroll system (for which he had paid handsomely) had broken down for the last time, some months before. He was gazing at the supple female forms because he was middle-aged, overweight, unhappily married, and *looking* couldn’t hurt anyone, could it?

The orbital restaurant, boldly christened “Superfast” by long-dead corporation executives, was part of a small group of orbiting modules that formed a loose “space town” of sorts, only a few miles behind the expansive space city *Big Stone*, both cities being a few hundred miles above the surface of the Earth. Its inhabitants commonly called the “space

town” “Williamstown,” although no one who lived in *Big Stone* seemed to have heard of it. In Williamstown, several thousand people lived out their lives in cramped—yet somewhat airtight—compartments, linked precariously with transport tubes, pitted metal latticework, and the strong yet reprehensible bond of poverty.

Most of the people living in Williamstown could not force themselves to remember the exact reasons why they had moved there in the first place, although *all* of them were just “waiting for my chance to get out of here.” They knew the *good* jobs could only be found in the nearby city of *Big Stone*, or in one of the other larger space cities, but it just seemed to be too difficult to get out of Williamstown.

General Nutzack glanced briefly at the stack of papers in his hand again, wondering what it was he had been looking for. *Oh yeah*. He stood up, and hollered back into the kitchen area, “What was his name again?”

In the kitchen, four Martians and one human male were scurrying about, attempting in vain to prepare enough orders to serve the customers lined up in the transport tube just outside the Superfast module. The lone human, Makan, looked up at Nutzack, sweat dripping off his chin.

“Fartu,” he said, too loudly for the confined area, trying to be heard above the racket of smoking grills, sizzling grease vats, and the order-taking female voices. “His *name* is Fartu. Can’t you find his application?”

General Nutzack looked at Makan (whose full name was Makan ‘Rat’ Shurl), his face turning beet red. “How many times have I asked you,” he said, each syllable gaining strength, “not to *cuss* while the girls are taking orders?” By the time he reached the end of the sentence, his voice was a shout.

Makan began to grow red as well. Makan ‘Rat’ Shurl had a long and complicated (and shadowy) story, but, to be brief, he had left his native farming community on Venus as a youth, with the intention of getting a university education in Earth orbit (where all the *really* large human settlements were). The freighter he had stowed away inside ended its voyage at *Big Stone*, where the ship’s crew had found him, and tossed him out. That was just fine with him—he’d saved enough money (he thought) to get an apartment there *and* attend college. At first, things had worked out just fine for Makan, for his natural brilliance had paved the way for him at The University of Earth at *Big Stone* (UEBS.) His natural willingness to work beyond the call of duty had landed him a job in the space station, in the space suit repair center, where his main task was to do all the work the other workers left behind every day.

However, Makan’s stormy temper had landed him in more than one scrape, and—at the last—he’d been threatened with a “spacing.” For the reader who has never been off his home planet, a “spacing” is when a person is ejected from a station or ship’s airlock, customarily without his or her space suit.

Makan finally grew weary of his growing list of enemies in *Big Stone*, so he joined a crew of mercenaries on the pirate ship *Megadeath*. When the *Megadeath*’s head pirate, Ole Miss, decided to go out of business, Makan had ended up in Williamstown, working at Superfast, alongside a group of teenagers who had never even been on a planet’s surface.

“Why the *hell* do you get to *cuss*,” he shouted back at the General, “but any time *I* start to *cuss*, you bite my *head* off?”

The four Martians in the kitchen with Makan began to back away, their main eyes averted from the growing ruckus, and they carefully avoided standing directly in between Makan and Nutzack as they went about their work, which was now more difficult since Makan had stopped his work to confront the boss.

General Nutzack was about to answer when his eye caught the order screen. “Jumping Jupiter!” he exclaimed. “Why the \*%\* is it taking three \*%\* \*%\* minutes to get these orders out? *Two* minutes is the limit. I don’t \*%\*ing understand why I have all five of you \*%\*ers back there, when you can’t do one \*%\* \*%\* thing!” He stormed back to his padded chair. He had once been an officer in the Stellar Guard Fleet, so he had absolutely no idea how to supervise those working for him.

Makan growled under his breath, punched the metal casing of the air purifier, and went back to work. The air purifier suddenly clicked on for the first time all day, and began filtering the harmful chemicals out of the module’s atmosphere.

\* \* \*

Fartu Zlimm lounged comfortably in the common room of the living module he shared with Makan ‘Rat’ Shurl, watching a rerun holovision show on Makan’s expensive holoprojector. The incinerator unit in the wall flashed briefly as Fartu flicked a cigarette into the receptor hole, turning the atoms into energy for the Williamstown power system. His stomach lurched suddenly as the cheap gravity generator cut out for a second, buzzed and then resumed supplying gravity to the room.

“Mother \*%\*er!” he said out loud, to no one in particular. “I thought I told that little \*%\* to get that thing fixed!” Glancing worriedly around the room, he made sure that all of Makan’s decorations were still in place.

A soft whirring noise that was supposed to be a door-chime alerted him that someone was in the tube outside. He looked sarcastically at the screen that should have shown him the face of the visitor—it hadn’t worked in months. “The \*%\*ing price you \*%\*ing pay for nothing!” he exclaimed, opening the door.

“Is Makan home?” a female voice said.

“Hey, Karjen Valshan,” he said. “No, but you can come in if you want.”

Fartu didn’t have to glance down at her form; he knew she was built in a way that made many men crazy with lust—in fact, he’d long ago committed the form to memory.

Karjen Valshan looked angry—as much as a Pleasure Android can show any *real* emotion. “I thought he had today off...”

The door closed behind her as she came inside, looking around, just in case Fartu had lied to her regarding Makan’s whereabouts, and perhaps hoping Makan—or anyone—had left some credit discs laying around.

“Nope. Sorry. His next day off ain’t for another four weeks. Must’ve misunderstood ‘im.” Fartu sat down.

Karjen Valshan sat across from him. “So, Fartu, what’ve you been up to lately?”

“\*%\*ing around,” he replied, in his usual caustic manner.

Karjen Valshan looked at him strangely for a second, as her processors translated the colloquial expression for her. “Enjoying yourself, then?”

When she turned her eyes away for a second, Fartu risked a brief glance at her body. \*%\*, he thought, *Why can’t I get ahold of a woman like that?* Then he reminded himself that she was just a Pleasure Android, and a faulty one at that.

“Sure, I guess,” he answered. “Were you and Makan supposed to do something tonight?”

She hesitated, ever so succinctly, then replied, “No.” She drew the word out, sounding like “Noooooo.” “I just needed to talk to him about something.”

Fartu wondered for a moment why Karjen Valshan never wanted to talk to *him*. Then he remembered that she only talked to Makan to ask him for money. It was difficult being a Pleasure Android, these days.

In the early days of *Big Stone* and the other orbiting space cities, like *New New York* and *Angel City*, men had outnumbered women 12 to 1. So the International Space Council—that was when rulers on Earth’s surface still controlled the orbiting cities—had ignored the Pleasure Androids, whose builders had sprung up all throughout space. “What’s the harm?” they had asked themselves, knowing privately that many of them visited Pleasure Android Centers frequently.

Back then, the space men had made plenty of money, enough to support themselves, their families, and several Pleasure Androids. Some had even left their families, to live with a Pleasure Android, although a rational, thinking man should know that an Android could never bring happiness.

Because of high demand, the manufacturers of the Pleasure Androids had made as many as possible (and as beautiful as possible), without seeming to care about quality. The Androids repeatedly broke down, or needed work done to their insides. Their power systems were costly to recharge, and needed daily maintenance. Still, men flocked to them because of their outward physical perfection.

Now, though, the economy in space was tight, as everyone knew, and quite a few Pleasure Androids wandered from space city to space city, and from man to man, seeking the necessary funds for survival.

Fartu remembered when he had once asked Makan, “Why can’t she just get a job” (referring to Karjen Valshan).

Makan had laughed. “Oh, she’s had job after job, but she’s just not programmed for it. Her processor is so out-of-whack that her boss can tell within a few days that she’s just an Android.”

Fartu had thought for a moment, then said, “If she wasn’t so high-maintenance, you could take care of her.”

“She *is* really nice,” Makan had agreed, but he knew in his heart that Superfast could never pay him enough to support a Pleasure Android.

Fartu regarded Karjen Valshan with a curious glance. “How’s your new living module working out, with Ro’ike?”

“Pretty good, I guess,” she answered. “But this town’s so prejudiced against Martians. I’d invite you and Makan over sometime, but I know Makan doesn’t really like Ro’ike.”

Fartu shrugged. He knew that Makan really had nothing against Martians in general, or Ro’ike in particular. Makan just couldn’t stand that Karjen Valshan spent all her time with one Martian after another, and never spent time with him anymore.

“Can I have something to drink?” she asked him.

Fartu knew that was just a polite way for her to ask for a can of Pleasure Android power fluid. It irritated him slightly. Not that the power fluid was that expensive, of course. But Karjen always wasted it. He knew it wasn’t her fault, though. Her power fluid receptor unit

was damaged, so she could only ingest an ounce at a time. The problem was that the containers of power fluid only came in 15-ounce containers, and, once opened, they quickly lost their ability to power up Androids. So, each time Karjen ingested an ounce of power fluid, the remainder of the container was wasted.

Of course, he knew that they had power fluid in the apartment module. Makan kept it around for Karjen. Besides, Fartu and Makan occasionally imbibed the syrupy liquid for recreational purposes.

Suddenly, Fartu remembered that Makan had purchased the last box of power fluid, so he said, “Sure,” and retrieved her a container from the cupboard.

“Thanks,” Karjen said, smiling, her straight white teeth framed by very kissable synthetic lips. She opened the container of power fluid, and poured just less than an ounce into her power fluid receptor unit. She closed her eyes demurely as her power unit hummed happily away to itself, and then she set the mostly-full can on the table in the center of the room.

“Well,” she said, smiling, “I’ll just come back later, when Makan’s here.”

“Or you could go talk to him at work,” Fartu offered.

“No thanks.” She smiled brightly, and pushed away into the zero-g transport tube.

\* \* \*

“Doesn’t he already have a job?” General Nutzack asked Makan, raising his voice over the racket inside Superfast. His eyes were not directed toward Makan—as usual, he was glancing from female form to female form.

“Yes,” Makan hollered back at him, his strong hands busy flitting from food unit to food unit. His eyes were also directed toward the young female forms in the restaurant. He even braved a glance at a few of the female Martians, although he knew they would never give him a second thought.

“Fartu’s been working across the ‘tube’ from us, at McCalorie’s, for a few months, but I think he’s getting tired of it.”

“How do you know him?” the General wanted to know.

“I \*%\*ing told you, he’s my \*%\*ing roommate!” Makan yelled back, his hands still preparing food at a blinding speed. No one else in the place—not even the Martians, with their legendary athletic skills—could operate the equipment as quickly or efficiently as he could. Even on a bad day, like this.

“I *know* he’s your \*%\*ing roommate,” Nutzack answered, endeavoring to control his temper. For some reason that he couldn’t explain, he hated Makan with a passion. More than he’d hated anyone in his life, he thought, except maybe his soon-to-be ex-wife. But, somehow, he respected Makan quite a bit, at the same time. “But have you ever *worked* with him?”

“Yes.” Makan’s face was growing red again. “I worked with Fartu on the *Megadeath*, for six years. I was his boss at first. Then he stole my job, and he was my boss for a while. He’s a good worker.”

“What kind of work did you do on the *Megadeath*?”

Makan looked up, his hands briefly ceasing their greasy labor. “It was a \*%\* \*%\* pirate ship, okay? We attacked passenger liners, and stole \*%\*%. We took electronics, jewels, credit discs, nuclear fuel—whatever we could get. Sometimes we killed the people, unless they were really rich, then we held them hostage. We took the stolen \*%\*% to space cities, and sold it cheap. We used to make all kinds of money in those days.”

“And Fartu?”

“He was the only one who could search a ship as fast as me,” Makan answered. “I could always depend on him to get everything done he was supposed to do, and he never took anything for himself, like the other crew members did.”

“So he’s honest?”

“You could say that,” Makan agreed.

About that time, Makan noticed that the freeze-dried cupboard was empty of grease-injected food units. “For \*%\*’s sake!” he screamed. “Can’t you Martians do any \*%\*ing thing?” He grabbed the nearest Martian by one of his tentacles, and slung him to the back of the compartment. The Martian slipped on the greasy floor, and banged his secondary head on a calorie-inducer machine. Yellow fluid began to run out of his wound.

The other Martians looked at each other briefly, trying to decide if they should dunk Makan’s head into a boiling grease vat, or just strangle him to death with their tentacles. Makan stood in the center of the floor, watching them.

“Don’t \*%\*ing think about it!” he yelled at them, and stomped to the back of the restaurant, where he began to pick up boxes at random, and throw them around, making as much noise as he could.

One of the female employees, exiting the crew restroom, saw him. “What’s wrong, Makan?” she asked, her voice dripping pheromones.

“\*%\* \*%\*ing \*%\*ers \*%\*,” he shouted at her without looking up from his task of making noise and damaging food-units.

“Oh.” She backed away slowly. “It’ll be okay, Makan.” She hurriedly returned to her station at the front of the restaurant module.

\* \* \*

Fartu Zlimm felt the living module shake. It was a rhythmic, thumping shake, like the beat of an old-Earth techno song, so he knew it was Makan, coming toward the module, down the transport tube. He could always tell Makan’s stomp from any other sound.

When the door slid open, he just stared at the holoprojector while Makan uttered a stream of curses that reminded Fartu of the good old days on the *Megadeath*. No average human could curse like an ex-mercenary.

After about twenty minutes, he looked up, and said, “Karjen was here today, looking for you.”

Makan’s cursing cut off in mid-stream—he would have cursed for another hour, if Fartu had not interrupted. “What did she want?” he asked in a calm voice, taking off his grease-soaked footwear.

“I don’t know—probably money,” Fartu replied, smirking. “She wasted some more of your power fluid.”

“\*%\* \*%\* it!” Makan hissed. “One of these days, I’m gonna make her pay me back for all the \*%\* of mine that she’s wasted.”

“Yeah, right,” Fartu said, under his breath. “Anyway, I told her to go see you at work, but she acted like that was too much trouble.”

Makan hurled one of his space boots into the closet near the front door, causing paint to flake off of the wall. “So, what did you do today, you lazy \*%\*?”

Fartu almost didn’t reply to the question. He knew that Makan was incapable of expressing positive emotion directly. He knew that Makan’s mental condition—caused by

Venus' relative proximity to the Sun—prevented him from ever complimenting anyone, so he just insulted the people that he felt close to. Besides, Fartu realized that he *had* become rather lazy, recently.

“I wrote a letter to that girl I was telling you about—the one who lives in *Feenix*, on the Moon. Then I just watched the holo for a while.”

“Anything good on?”

“Well, they had a show about that band I like, Spilt Blood & Guts, and that was pretty good. Did you know that two of the members of SPG used to be male prostitutes in *New New York*?”

“Yeah,” Makan answered, slinging his other space boot into the closet, cracking the inner seal of the airtight module. “Also, their guitar player killed those four families on his space yacht back in ‘82, and only spent two days in jail.”

“Well, sure,” Fartu said sarcastically, “but he paid a million-credit fine. If you’ve got enough money, you can get out of anything.”

“But they had security tapes!” Makan exclaimed. “The holo tapes showed him chopping off their heads, and eating their brains. It was on the news back when I was in high school.”

“Hmm...” said Fartu.

“So, what’s for supper?”

“Beer.”

\* \* \*

Thirty-four beers later (Makan had drank 31, and Fartu had had three), the two friends were sitting at opposite ends of the couch, with the holo-stereo playing so loudly and brightly that they could barely hear or see each other. Flickering lights swished through the compartment, splashing on the walls, and intangible shapes wafted in the air, all to the beat of the newest Spilt Blood & Guts chip.

“Man!” Fartu shouted over the heinous music. “This new *\*\*\*ing* chip is the worst *\*\*\*ing \*\*\** that SPG ever made!”

“Maybe we should *\*\*\*ing* turn it up!” Makan hollered back, swigging on another beer.

Fartu turned it down slightly instead. As the sound faded somewhat, they could hear the sounds of warfare in the passageway outside.

“The *\*\*\*ing* Martians are at it again,” Makan simmered. “Sometimes I wonder why we brought them off that *\*\*\* \*\*\*ing* planet in the first place.”

Fartu shrugged his slender shoulders. “Personally, I just wonder why the *\*\*\*ing* police don’t do anything about it. That’s why we pay our *\*\*\* \*\*\*ing* taxes, isn’t it?”

Another gunshot went off, visibly indenting the wall of the apartment module. Muffled sounds sounded from outside.

“The fat *\*\*\*ing* cops ain’t got enough sense to blow *\*\*\** out their *\*\*\**,” Makan informed Fartu. “Give me one of those cigarettes.”

Fartu shrugged, blowing a cloud of blackish-gray smoke into the holo lights. “They’ll kill you, you know.”

As he spoke, he reached into the crate beside the couch, and pulled out a handful of the white tubes, tossing the bunch at Makan. The larger Makan moved with lightning speed, grasping only one of the cigarettes, as the rest fell to the floor.

Makan lit the cigarette with Fartu's lighter. "Do you still have your blaster?" he asked. "Sure," Fartu answered, coughing. He cleared his throat and took another drink of beer. "I've had it ever since before I worked on the *Megadeath*. Why?"

"I'd like to go outside and shoot a few Martians," Makan explained casually. "Clear the air a little."

"Okay," Fartu said. He was gone less than a minute, returning to the living room with another crate. Using a scratched skillet from the kitchen, he pried the top off, revealing a pile of weapons.

"Here's my backup blaster," he said, tossing the heat-ray gun to Makan. "Want a knife or something?"

Makan shook his head. "I won't be out there very long. Wanna come?"

"Don't have the energy," Fartu answered. But he got up anyway. He didn't plan on shooting any Martians—that wasn't his style—but he knew Makan's penchant for trouble-stirring-up, and he wanted to be around, just in case.

Fartu Zlimm pulled his main blaster out of the crate. He was pretty sure it was still legal to own the blasters, although the laws had changed a lot over the years. The Mptyhed Party had tried for years to outlaw weapons in all forms, including butter knives, for years, on the premise that no one except law enforcement and criminals should own dangerous items. Their main political opponents, the Richmon Party believed stringently—due to heavy donations from weapon-owners—that most law-abiding citizens should be allowed to own a few weapons, as long as they were used responsibly.

But Fartu was a member of the third party, who had accurately labeled themselves the LeaveUsAlone Party, and believed that people (even Martians) were smart enough to make their own decisions.

Makan kicked the door off its hinges and leapt out into the smoke-filled passageway. "##%\*!" he shouted, and began firing the borrowed blaster. Focused atomic heat rays shot out of it, disintegrating the matter in their paths, cutting swaths through the multi-eyed, fully tentacled crowd in Makan's vision.

Fartu peeked around the edge of the doorway, eyeing the passageway warily.

Makan didn't duck as the Martian gang members fired back at him, yet somehow, he wasn't hit. It had always been Makan's way—don't take ##%\* from anyone.

When two cops ran around a bend in the passageway, Makan continued to fire.

"Don't shoot!" the officers screamed, sliding to the floor, searching for cover behind melting Martian corpses.

As Makan kept firing, the still-living Martians turned from Makan, and fired at the cops. Together, Makan and the Martians blew the two peace officers to tiny bleeding bits, and then resumed shooting each other.

"##%\*," Fartu muttered, leaning back into the apartment module. "Now we've gotta move *again*."

Just before Makan's battery ran low, the Martians began to back down, and finally the last of them slunk around the farthest corner.

"##%\* ##%\* Martians," Makan said, grinning at Fartu. "Let's go get something to eat."

Fartu eyed his old friend carefully. "Don't you think we ought to pack up and leave, first?"

“Naturally,” Makan answered, handing the borrowed blaster to Fartu. He eyed his thin friend as if suspecting him of being a closet moron. “I meant eat after that.”

“Of course,” Fartu mumbled, and packed his blasters away again. “I guess you should pack, while I wire up some bombs. As you know, my \*#%\*’s already ready.”

“I wish I’d learned how to make bombs,” Makan said loudly, as he strolled toward his private room, at the very back of the module. “Bombs are cool.”

Fartu didn’t answer, but quickly set to work, pulling packets of explosives from underneath the sofa cushions. With deft hands, he ripped down the heavy curtains that covered the false picture window, and ripped the double-thick material apart. From between the layers of curtain fabric, he pulled several lengths of wire he’d stored there. With a pocket screwdriver, he swiftly opened the back of the holoprojector, where he’d hidden the small box of detonators.

He could hear the raucous crashes from Makan’s bedroom, and yelled curses.

Without breaking a sweat, Fartu danced around the room like a trained monkey, attaching explosives to the walls, hooking up wires, and plugging in the detanators.

Just as Makan entered the room, dragging two six-foot-long metal crates, Fartu attached the last wire, and held up a timer. “It’s set to blow in 10 minutes. Is that enough time?”

“\*#%\* if I know,” Makan swore, heavy globules of greasy sweat dripping from his chin. “Are we going to steal a jeep or what?”

Neither man had owned a space jeep for years, since moving to Williamstown. The economy just wasn’t good enough. They earned about \$2 per hour, each, at Superfast and McCalorie’s, respectively. Of course, Makan’s stereo system cost as much as two used space jeeps, and Fartu’s weapon stash had cost enough to buy yet another, but that didn’t seem to factor into the equation for them.

“Why not?” Fartu said. “You’ve already killed about 24 Martians, and assisted in the murder of two cops. Sure, let’s steal a jeep. Or a yacht.”

Because the cops had been humans, the legal punishment was limited to 20 years in the gas mines of Jupiter, but Martian-killing was another story. The Mptyhed Party had finally passed the bill a few years back, declaring that if a human killed a Martian, it was a “hate crime, despicably vicious, and punishable by extreme torture.” Of course, if a Martian killed a human, that could be understood, so Martians usually just served 5 to 10 in a luxury resort.

Incidentally, it was not a crime for a Pleasure Android to kill a human male, but human males were prohibited from “killing” Pleasure Androids. Fartu’s thought that was because most politicians were married to Pleasure Androids.

The pair of average human males left the apartment, sauntering along the passageway, their space boots squishing through the pieces of dead Martians.

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General Nutzack’s space yacht wasn’t difficult to steal, not for experienced pirates like Fartu and Makan.

Makan loaded his impossibly heavy steel trunks into the cargo compartment while Fartu disarmed the alarm system (it had been set to the second-strongest setting, “Melt All Intruders”) and picked the door locks. The only thing that made it difficult was the fact that the yacht was parked just behind the Superfast restaurant module, and clearly visible from the Superfast view ports. Fortunately, General Nutzack wasn’t looking out the view ports;

he was inside, carefully watching the hindquarters of the nubile females who were hard at work. The females were busy serving customers, and the Martian cooks were busy smoking hand-rolled tubes filled with barely-controlled substances in the break room, so no one saw them taking the yacht.

“\*#%\* yeah!” Makan squealed, as the yacht rocketed away from the small orbital village called Williamstown. “That was more fun than \*#%\* a ship full of deactivated Pleasure Androids!”

Fartu raised one eyebrow doubtfully. “Check the screen, you stupid bastard.”

Makan looked sharply down at the ship-finder screen. A large mass of unregistered ship-metal was closing in on them. “What the \*#%\* is that?” Makan growled. Then he took a sip from a glass filled with wine they’d found stashed in General Nutzack’s yacht.

“It’s Superfast,” Fartu answered, lighting one of his cigarettes. He tapped the ash off the end of it into an empty leather seat in the yacht’s control room. “I tried to tell you that General Nutzack was installing rocket engines in the module.”

“But that’s illegal!” Makan stupidly protested.

Fartu farted toward Makan. “Take that, you moron,” he muttered.

“What?” Makan responded. “I couldn’t hear you.”

Fartu farted again, this time fanning the gas toward Makan. “Did you hear it that time?” About that time, a huge blast rocked the yacht, and fiery explosions lit up the forward view screen.

“Ah! Just like the old days!” Makan crowed, then belched loudly. “Man! That tasted like \*#%\*,” he pointed out unnecessarily.

Fartu skillfully guided the agile yacht through empty space, second-guessing where the Superfast lazer cannons and missiles would strike. More than once, they narrowly missed getting blasted out of the sky.

Then the radio burst into life. “Who the \*#%\* do you \*#%\*ers think you are!” General Nutzack’s voice out of the speakers. “I had to embezzle for *years* to buy that yacht!”

“Then why are you trying to blow it up?” Makan laughed. Then, realizing his mistake, he pressed the “transmit” button, and repeated his question.

“If I *don’t* shoot, are you \*#%\*ers going to give it back?” Nutzack replied sarcastically.

“No,” Fartu said, grabbing the mike before Makan could talk again. “But you might want to know that the cops are after us. If they open fire, they might hit you by accident. So, if I were you, I’d back off.”

Nutzack’s drunken laughter echoed back over the tinny speaker. “Fat chance of...”

His voice cut off.

Fartu and Makan saw on the screen where General Nutzack’s spacecraft (once a Superfast restaurant module) disappeared, blown apart by a police missile.

Then, a new voice came over the speaker. “You there in the yacht! This is Officer Thinkun None. Are you okay?”

“I think,” Fartu replied, grinning at Makan. “Thanks for saving us.”

“No problem,” None replied. “The two men in that craft were vicious cop-killers. They were wanted for 24 hate crimes committed a few minutes ago. We would have apprehended them and tortured them as the law allows, but since I could see that they were firing on you.”

“Wow,” Fartu said. “Thanks again.”

Just as the police craft veered away, another explosion, this one much farther away, lit the screens behind them.

“There goes my apartment,” Makan pointed out. “Good bomb, by the way.”

“Thanks,” Fartu said. And then he farted again.

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Later, they heard on the news that one more death had occurred in the passageway outside their former abode. A faulty Pleasure Android by the name of Karjen Valshan had been seen on security cameras, approaching the broken door, just before the bombs went off. The poor android was destroyed instantly, but the case had been closed immediately by Officer Thinkun None, when he pointed out that he’d already killed the perpetrators in a space battle.

Fartu and Makan went their separate ways after docking at *Big Stone*. First, they sold General Nutzack’s space yacht, and split the money.

Fartu used his half to buy every known album and holo by Spilt Blood & Guts, and then moved to Mars, where he married a set of poverty-stricken Martian twins, spawned 52 mixed-breed children, and lived drunkenly ever after.

Makan bought a last-class ticket back to his home farming city on Venus, where he attended a technical college, and later led a revolution that ended only when the last freedom fighter was dead. Venus remained under the control of Earth, and Makan lived out his days working in the kitchen of a maximum security prison on the Moon, where he was casually \*#%\*ed daily by Martian prisoners.

After a while, he came to like it.

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