

The rest of the day passed without incident for the Martians. None of the crew asked any questions about the missing electrician, they just assumed he was hiding away in his workshop or his cabin as was his habit. The next day however, a Tuesday, was to bring some problems for Andre, the chief engineer, down in the engine room. As the ship approached the equator naturally the air temperature rose, and today it was well over thirty degrees. The superstructure of the ship was of course fitted with air conditioning, and this kept the cabins and offices at a pleasant temperature. The engine room, however, had just one very small aircon vent situated in the toilet off the main control room. The lack of air conditioning in the rest of the engine room, combined with the outside temperature, in addition to the huge amount of heat the three storey engine working night and day produced, all raised the temperature in the engine room that day way up beyond even the hottest Russian banya. Andre had been working extremely hard all morning down in the engine checking that it was working absolutely perfectly, as he knew it was essential that the ship reached the equator on time. The second and third engineers along with the motorman and the storekeeper were with him all day and he had them cleaning, greasing, tuning, welding and checking every part of that huge noisy machine. As the day wore on the temperature continued to rise and the sweat to flow and by mid afternoon the Martian that resided in Andre's head could take it no longer. It was of course used to the pleasant warm climate of Mars, but confined inside a furry bunny suit and sealed inside the fat head of Andre, without any fresh air except the hot diesel laden fumes of the engine room, was proving just too much for it. It needed some time just to cool down and get a little air. It needed to get

out of Andre's head. Wiping his drenched face with his oily handkerchief Andre remembered the air conditioned toilet off the engine room's control room, the perfect place for a bit of a private cool down, and with heavy legs and sweaty damp overalls made his way to it.

Andre entered the small cool room, closed the door, took down his trousers and sat on the toilet with a sigh of relief. The refreshingly cold air around his lower half was a great comfort. Reaching around the back of his dirty sweaty neck he lifted the Velcro flap of skin and pushed the blue head release button. The top of his head neatly lifted away and hinged back, revealing a limp overheated white rabbit. Its fur was plastered to its skin from sweat and its limbs saggy from heat exhaustion. The cool air from the air conditioning vent was an immediate relief and the rabbit unfolded and then flapped its ears cooling its head further to the relief of the alien inside. The Martian, the rabbit and Andre were all feeling a lot cooler and had turned their attention to feeling a series of swellings that had recently developed around Andre's genitals when the handle of the toilet door moved. 'Oh shit,' said the Andre, the rabbit pumping the peddles and manipulating a joystick to form the words. 'I forgot to lock the door.' Before he could lunge forward to stop the door it swung open. There stood Jasman Laudu the small Indonesian motorman.

'Oh I'm so sorry sir. I didn't...' began Jasman. The initial sight of his superior sat with his trousers around his ankles feeling his genitals had been enough of a shock, but now it hit him what was strange about the scene. There was a rabbit sat absolutely still, frozen by his presence, inside Andre's still open topped head. Jasman let out a loud high pitched scream, that any horror movie actress would have been proud of, and bolted from the control room.

'Bollocks,' said Andre as he quickly closed his head, pulled up his trousers and dashed into the control room. Reaching for the phone he speedily dialled the extension for the captain's quarters. 'Come on, answer...ah Pimento, I've got a problem down here. You'd better get

here quick, and bring the Chinese,' said Andre in a panicked voice.

Jasman the motorman's mistake was probably running to tell the second and third engineers and the store keeper about what he had just seen before trying to escape. His best chance would have been to immediately run onto deck and thrown himself into the sea. After all, there is nowhere else to run on a ship. What actually happened was that when the four of them tried to flee from the engine room they found all the exits blocked by the menacing Chinese deckhands each brandishing an oversized spanner. They were quickly cornered and after a brief and futile struggle Jasman and his three colleagues lay unconscious on the oily floor.