

## The Humans (Matt Haigh)

### Vonnadorian Hosts' Committee Meeting, following The Outrage

The Chairman opens: we meet to discuss what action to take following the recent outrage on the planet locally called "Earth" - the killing of one of our number, a Vonnadorian. Let me summarise the case. These Earthlings were known to be dangerous but were previously regarded as astoundingly stupid, having not even mastered eternal life. However, one of their number has stumbled upon a proof of the Riemann Hypothesis with everything that entails.....

*A Junior Committee Member interjects: What **does** that entail exactly? I mean, the human mathematicians have been assuming for 150 years that all the non-trivial zeros of the zeta function have a real part of one-half. I see no practical distinction between making that assumption and having a proof of it.*

Interrupting the junior member, the Chairman, who would have been annoyed had he been possessed of emotions, continues: Our first emissary fell victim to the wiles of the despicable Earthlings and subsequently committed the outrage of murdering our second emissary whom we had sent to correct the situation. We must now discuss whether the situation is secure...

*...and also what to do about the murdering scumbag, adds the Junior Member.*

You are verging on the emotional, says The Chairman. We are not interested in revenge, which is motivated only by emotion not by reason. The former Vonnadorian is no longer a threat.

*The Junior Member queries: Which former Vonnadorian? The dead one? Or the murderous bastard? I do wish we had names, it would make communication so much simpler. It's confusing the way we don't have names, isn't it? Why don't we have names, I can't recall.*

Names, says The Chairman, are symptoms of a species which values the individual self above the collective good. We never place the desires of the individual above the needs of the collective.

*Well that's fine and dandy as long as you're not the individual getting fried on an Aga by a feral Vonnadorian gone native. It's a wonder we get any volunteers.*

We don't. They are instructed.

*For the collective good?*

Quite so.

*Why don't we just vaporise the planet? Saves sending another Vonnadorian to prance around naked and get trashed. Come to think of it - why do they appear naked? Can't we do clothes with our super-duper advanced technology and stuff? Seems a bit Terminator to me.*

You may have unwittingly made a sensible suggestion. The vaporisation, that is, not the clothes. We'll see to it immediately.

*Good job. It'll put a stop to any more crap Earthling novels too.*

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Score: 50010 tops. Started reasonably but became increasingly pointless.