

**From Zoodate**  
*by Don Zolidis*

STEVE, a male praying mantis

DAN, a male praying mantis

FEMALE, a female praying mantis

*STEVE, a male praying mantis, settles into the other table, adjusting his look in the mirror. He puts his hands in front of him like he's praying.*

*DAN, another male praying mantis, swings by. Also praying.*

DAN

Steve!

STEVE

Oh hey man. What's up?

DAN

What are you doing here?

STEVE

I got a date. Got this new app – Zoodate. Matches you up with a lady.

DAN

Are you kidding me?

STEVE

Nope! Gonna get my love on. Woo hoo.

*He rubs his hands together like he's praying.*

DAN

Steve you can't do this.

STEVE

I feel like things are finally starting to happen for me. I've got a job now, I got in shape, I feel like the time is right to fall in love. Maybe this girl Linda is the one.

DAN

The one?

STEVE

The One.

DAN

You're a praying mantis, Steve.

STEVE

And my prayers are finally about to be answered. Axe body spray don't fail me now.

*He spritzes himself with Axe body spray.*

Oh yeah. Smells like... victory.

DAN

Steve, get out. Get out now.

STEVE

Just because you haven't found love –

DAN

I don't want to find love. Do you know what happens? Do you have any idea?

STEVE

I've got some hunches. We gaze into each other's eyes. Her mandibles start to click. I click my mandibles back. Maybe a little dancing. She tells me about her mother, her hopes, her dreams, and then I let her know about my goal to be a professional skateboarder. We buy a bungalow on the outskirts of the zoo, settle in to a long but emotionally fulfilling relationship –

DAN

She bites your head off, Steve.

STEVE

I'm sorry?

DAN

She bites your head off. She eats your entire skull.

STEVE

Why would she do that?

DAN

For calories, dude. Your head contains a lot of calories that she will need to create eggs.

STEVE

What happens to the rest of my body?

DAN

Who cares? She discards it like the broken husk that it is! It doesn't matter BECAUSE YOUR HEAD IS BEING DIGESTED IN HER STOMACH.

STEVE

What if she's nice?

DAN

No no no it doesn't matter if she's nice! This is what females do, man! They sweet talk you and they look all pretty and THEY EAT YOUR ENTIRE HEAD. They rip it from your body and consume it like a piece of cranial candy.

STEVE

That's really misogynistic.

DAN

That's truth! That's science!

STEVE

I think you just don't like women.

DAN

Do you remember Barry?

STEVE

Our friend Barry who was mysteriously decapitated?

DAN

Do you remember Paul?

STEVE

Our friend Paul who was also mysteriously decapitated?

DAN

LADIES ATE THEIR HEADS.

STEVE

I don't believe this.

DAN

What happened to your father, man?

STEVE

Daddy went on a long trip before I was born.

DAN

He went on a long trip inside your Momma's stomach! Get out! Get out before she gets here!

*LINDA, a female praying mantis enters. She seems nice.*

LINDA (*waving*)

Hello!

DAN

Now is your chance! Run! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!

STEVE

I can't run but I can fly.

DAN

FLY AWAY NOW!

LINDA

Hey are you Steve?

DAN

Don't answer! Get out!

*Steve thinks about it. Then flees.*

Ha ha! He escaped! You'll never eat him now!

LINDA

Oh. Darn. I was really looking forward to our date.

*She's sad.*

DAN

You can't fool me with that.

LINDA

No I know that a lot of females get a bad rep. There's a lot of terrible rumors out there.

DAN

That are *true*.

LINDA

They aren't true about me.

*She sits. Sadly.*

I was hoping for a real connection. Someone to talk to. A praying mantis to share my soul with. Maybe Steve was going to be the one. We'd get a little house together. Settle down. Pray together.

DAN

Well I mean... it's a safety thing.

LINDA

I get it. But I'm not like the other girls. I want to listen to stories about your favorite hobbies –

DAN

Like my skill at video games?

LINDA

Yeah definitely.

DAN

Oh. I mean I've been kind of looking for someone to like me for me.

LINDA

And I would do that.

DAN

You would?

*They have a moment.*

I think I'm falling for you.

LINDA

I think I'm falling for you.

*He leans forward for a kiss.*

*She eats his head.*

NOM NOM NOM NOM NOM

DAN (*shriek of death*)

AAAAAAAHAH!

*Linda sighs.*

LINDA

So hard to find a good one.