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The Apology- 3rd Draft

INT- STANFORD PRISON

It is a two man cell. There's a bunk-bed, and a toilet. A giant of a man, a hard-core inmate STEVE is sitting on the lower bed quietly reading the newspaper. TED is lying down in the upper bunk. Ted sits up. He is a small, bookish looking man, completely out of place. He climbs down from his bunk and patiently waits for Steve to look up from his paper. After a minute, Steve folds the paper and puts it down.

STEVE

Ted.

TED

Steve.

STEVE

May I help you?

TED

I think you know what I want.

STEVE

I'm sorry, I really have no idea.

TED

I think you owe me an apology.

Steve stands up. He's a foot taller than Ted.

STEVE

Well, that's unfortunate. Because I categorically, unequivocally refuse to offer an apology to anyone, about anything. It's one of the few things in my life that I am absolutely adamant about.

TED

Oh.

Steve sits back down on the bunk and picks up his paper.

STEVE

I'm sorry.

TED

Fine. I forgive you.

Ted starts to get back in his bunk.

STEVE

What?

Ted stops and turns back to Steve.

TED

You just offered an apology, so I forgave you.

Steve stands up again. Ted takes a step back.

STEVE

No, you misunderstood. That was not an apology.

TED

It wasn't?

STEVE

No. I was just saying that I'm sorry that I couldn't offer you an apology.

TED

But you did? And you just did again. You just apologized.

STEVE

No, I didn't.

TED

You said, "I'm sorry." That's an apology.

STEVE

Well, if I did say that, than I regret saying it, and hope you'll forgive me.

TED

There! That was another one.

STEVE

Another what?

TED

An apology. You just apologized again! And not only that, you had already offered an apology when we first started talking.

STEVE

I beg your pardon?

TED

There, you just did it again! You "beg" for my "pardon"? (A BEAT) But more to the point: when we first started talking, you said, "I'm sorry, I really have no idea."

STEVE

Well, if I did say that, than I...

TED

What? If you did say that than you what?

STEVE

Nothing. Never mind.

TED

You don't apologize? Ha! All you do is apologize. You're like an apologizing machine.

Steve takes a step towards Ted.

STEVE

You know, that's not a very nice thing to say.

TED

Oh. I was really just making an observation.

STEVE

Still, it wasn't very nice.

TED

Well, I just got caught up in the moment. I didn't mean anything by it.

STEVE

You know that, "not apologizing" is very important to me. It's something about myself in which I take a great deal of pride. And yet, you called me an "apologizing machine"? And now, you want to dismiss it with just an "I didn't mean anything by it?"

TED

Look, I'm not very good at apologizing. What I said was thoughtless, and cruel. You are not an apologizing machine. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me.

STEVE

I'm afraid I can't accept your apology.

TED

What, why not? Do you also not accept apologies?

STEVE

That's ridiculous. Why would I not accept apologies?

TED

Well, then why won't you accept mine?

STEVE

You said you're not very good at apologizing, right?

TED

Correct.

STEVE

But then you followed it up with a very good apology. I mean it was almost flawless.

TED

Thank-you.

STEVE

So, which is it? Are you *not* very good at apologizing or are you *good* at apologizing?

TED

Well...

STEVE

Because if you are very good at apologizing, and you're just saying you're not very good at apologizing;

(MORE)

STEVE(cont'd)

than it's an apology wrapped in a lie: and I won't accept it.

TED

But...

STEVE

But, if you really aren't very good at apologies than I don't accept it because I think I deserve a decent one, don't you?

TED

Of course, you're right.

There is an uncomfortable pause.

TED

So, what do we do now?

STEVE

Well, I think you owe it to me to retract your apology, until you determine what kind of apology you are capable of giving me.

TED

That's very kind of you. (A BEAT)
If it's OK with you, I'd like to now retract my apology.

STEVE

That's fine.

Steve sits back in his bunk and picks up his paper. Ted climbs back into the upper bunk and lays down.

STEVE

Ted.

TED

Steve?

STEVE

You owe me an apology.

THE END