



Don't Mess with Ariovistus *

Hey, give me a minute.
...gotta tell you something:

I have crossed the Rhine
not of my own accord,
but on being invited
and sent for by the Gauls.

Don't mess with Bill.
Don't mess with Bill.

I have settlements in Gaul,
granted by the Gauls themselves.

Don't mess with Bill.
Say it one more time:

The hostages had been given
by their good-will.

Don't mess with Bill.

Now, I know he's a guy who put tears in my eyes
a thousand times or more.
Oh, but every time he would apologize
I loved him more than before.

I took by right of war the tribute
which conquerors are accustomed
to impose on the conquered.

Hear what I say: Hey
girls, keep away...yay...yay! Ah, hah, hah.
Don't mess with Bill.

I have not made war upon the Gauls,
No, no, no, no!
but the Gauls upon me.

Don't mess with Bill.
Leave my Billy alone.

Don't mess with Bill.

All the states of Gaul
came to attack me,
and had encamped against me.

Get a guy of your own.
Don't mess with Bill.

All their forces have been routed by me,
and beaten in a single battle.

Now, there's Johnny, there's Joe
and there's Frank and Jim,
just to name a few.
Now, Bill's got me and I've got him.
I'm sure there's one for you.

If they choose to make a second trial,
I'm ready to encounter them again.

Hear what I say: Hey
girls, keep away...yay...yay! Ah, hah, hah.
Don't mess with Bill.

But if they choose to enjoy peace,
it is unfair to refuse the tribute
which of their own free-will
they have paid up to this time.

No, no, no, no!
Don't mess with Bill.
He's mine, all mine.

The friendship of the Roman people
ought to prove to me
a safeguard, not a detriment; and
I seek it with that expectation.

Though I tell myself
he wants no one else
but keeps coming back to me.
Now, I made no decision
to want competition.
I want to be sure as can be.

But if, through the Roman people,
the tribute is discontinued,
and those who surrendered
to be seduced from me,

Don't mess with Bill.

I will renounce the friendship
of the Roman people no less
heartily than I have sought it.

I'll say it one more time:
Don't mess with Bill.

As to my leading a host
of Germans into Gaul,
I'm doing this to secure myself,
not of assaulting Gaul.

Hear what I say: Hey
girls, keep away...yay...yay! Ah, hah, hah.

I did not come
without being invited,
and I did not make war,
but merely warded it off.

Don't mess with Bill.

I came into Gaul before the Roman people.
Never before did
a Roman army go
beyond the frontiers of the province of Gaul.

No, no, no, no!
Don't mess with Bill.

What does Caesar desire?
Why come into my domains?
This is my province of Gaul,
just as that is yours.

Leave my Billy alone.
Don't mess with Bill.

As it ought not to be
pardoned in me,
if I were to make an attack upon your lands;
so, likewise, you are very unjust,
to obstruct me in my prerogative.

Get a guy of your own,
Don't mess with Bill.

As for Caesar's saying that the Aedui
have been styled 'brethren' by the Senate:
I'm not so uncivilized
nor so ignorant of affairs
as not to know that the Aedui

'cause he's mine, all mine.

in the very last war with the Allobroges
neither rendered assistance to the Romans,
nor received any from the Roman people
in the struggles the Aedui
have maintained with me
and with the Sequani.

Don't mess with Bill.

I feel suspicious that Caesar,
though feigning friendship as the reason
for keeping an army in Gaul,
keeps it with the aim of crushing me.

I'll say it one more time:
Don't mess with Bill.

And unless you depart and
withdraw from these parts,
I shall regard you not
as a friend, but as a foe.

Hey, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Don't mess with Bill.

Even if I should put you to death,
I should do what would please
many of the nobles and leading men
of the Roman people;

Hey, yeah, yeah, yeah.

and could purchase their favour
and their friendship by your death.

Don't mess with Bill.

But if you depart and resign to me
the free possession of Gaul,
I will recompense you with a great reward,

Leave my man alone.
Don't mess with Bill.

and would bring to a close
whatever wars you wished,

Get a guy of your own.

without trouble or risk to you.

Don't mess with Bill.

* Image *Ariovistus* is by caocaothedeciver on Deviant Art. All text in Verdana font is from the song "Don't Mess with Bill" – by William « Smokey » Robinson. Recorded by The Marvelettes (1966). All text in Times New Roman font is a free-style transcription of Ariovistus' reply to Julius Caesar, from Gaius Julius Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War (58 – 48 B.C.), translated by W.A. McDevitte and W.S. Bohn. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869.

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