

**RAT KINGS**

Pilot

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**FADE IN**

**INT. CREMATORIUM - DAY**

A conveyor belt. Somebody approaches carrying a box.

They tip the box above the conveyor belt.

A mountain of RATS, MICE, a few COCKROACHES, a couple of small SNAKES, a SQUIRREL and a PIGEON are dropped onto it.

FLAMES. They're headed into the heart of the cremation chamber.

The corpses wilt away, disintegrating into ash.

SUPER: NO ANIMALS WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS SHOW.

**INT. FACTORY - DAY**

A MOSQUITO lands on a clipboard. A hand SPLATS it.

RITA CRAWLEY (60, pointy-faced, intense) is following PHIL (50s) around with a clipboard, smearing off that mosquito. She's inspecting the factory, ticking things on her sheet.

RITA

What do you produce here?

PHIL

You ain't heard of us?

RITA

Well, I recognise the name, but I wasn't sure.

PHIL

Luckman's is the largest dairy vendor in the Northern hemisphere. Mr Luckman himself has tasked me with establishing new sites across London.

Phil leans back against a railing and folds his arms as if he's a super important guy.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We even ranked number 1 in farming magazine's best butter AND best brie.

RITA  
(who cares?)  
Very impressive.

PHIL  
In fact, a little line I like to  
use is 'when it comes to cheese, we  
are the big cheese'...

Phil waits for Rita to laugh, she catches it just before it  
gets too awkward and gives a little titter. She writes the  
word 'Prick' on her clipboard.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
But of course, producing all that  
cheese means we will be attracting  
a lotta mice.

RITA  
It's actually a misconception that  
mice like cheese.

They keep walking, Phil is checking out the machinery.

PHIL  
Oh yeah? What do they like?

RITA  
Vegetables. Grains. However, that  
won't stop them coming for your  
dairy when times are desperate.

PHIL  
So can you get me a quote for your  
services? I've got another company  
coming in soon and I just want to  
get this sorted, production kicks  
off next week.

RITA  
Of course, would you like to know a  
little bit more about my company?

PHIL  
(no)  
Yeah...

Phil is cranking up a machine, half-listening to her.

RITA

Creepy Crawleys - my name is Rita  
Crawley, CEO - is an independent  
family run business fully dedicated  
to delivering a premium service to  
all clients and assist in the  
eradication of all pests on  
business and domestic properties in  
a timely manner, and take  
preventative measures to...

Phil starts banging away at the machine, something's broken,  
he is fully ignoring her.

RITA (CONT'D)

Would you like to hear about our  
packages? We have Bronze, Silver  
and Gold packages, all of which -

PHIL

Can you pop it in an email?

RITA

Right. Sure.

Rita writes a note down angrily.

RITA (CONT'D)

We are very competitive with our  
quotes, we can always consider a  
price match - could you let me know  
which other companies you are  
meeting with?

PHIL

Oh it's just one other company.  
(checks his phone)  
Tail End Services.

This name means SOMETHING to Rita - it isn't good. Her eye  
twitches.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You know 'em?

RITA

I'm aware of them.

PHIL

You got everything you need or...?

**EXT. FACTORY - DAY**

Rita gets into her CREEPY CRAWLEYS VAN. Another VAN pulls into the parking area and parks right opposite. She looks at the DRIVER - a slightly overweight, red-faced man. This is AXEL CRAWLEY (60).

They make eye contact. A Mexican stand-off begins.

Axel switches off the engine. A side angle shows their two vans opposite each other - Creepy Crawleys Vs Tail End Services.

Axel opens the door and steps out. Rita mirrors him.

They march up to each other.

AXEL

Poaching my clients now?

RITA

This is in a North London postcode.  
We agreed I get North, you get  
East.

AXEL

The office over there might be in  
the North, but the actual area of  
operation is in the East.

RITA

If you google this factory it says  
it starts with N. It is in the  
North. North means it's mine.

AXEL

And where will the pests be? In the  
puny little office over there or  
here in the enormous factory with  
all the food?

RITA

The premises are officially  
registered in a North London  
borough, so your points are  
irrelevant.

Axel is sick of this back and forth - he's going to take it to a personal level.

AXEL

It wasn't enough taking my money,  
my surname and my business - now  
you're happy to cross borders?

RITA

I just explained how I am NOT crossing any borders... And we built this business together.

AXEL

Right, we built it together. With whose money? I did all the heavy lifting at the beginning, you swooped in once the hard work was done.

RITA

The hard work? Sorry I couldn't give 100% of my time when I was busy pushing four of your children out of my cunt, while you were at the office fingering your secretary.

Beat. An awkward pause.

AXEL

I think we should leave it there before it gets too nasty.

RITA

Because you haven't got a leg to stand on.

Axel turns to his van.

AXEL

I have some stuff of yours actually...

He retrieves a box of crap from the van.

RITA

Great, only took you what... 7 years?

AXEL

It got lost in the spare room.

RITA

You finally cleared it out?

AXEL

Well... Aurora's moving in, thought I'd make some more space.

RITA

This is the new secretary you wore down?

AXEL

She's not a secretary, she's our accountant. And sorry that I am able to move on and find love.

That stings Rita.

RITA

Perhaps the reason I struggle to move on is because my last marriage ended with something seriously fucking traumatic.

AXEL

Don't talk about that here.

RITA

Nobody is going to understand what that means.

AXEL

Have you been to... Check on things, recently?

RITA

Yes. Nothing to worry about.

AXEL

Good. I better go in for my quotation.

RITA

Break a leg.

Rita gets into her van, and starts the engine.

TITLES.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**

EDGAR CRAWLEY (Late 20s, tall, slender, pale) is pulling the bodies of DEAD MICE out from beneath a kitchen counter, and bagging them up.

The screen SPLITS as he answers RILEY CRAWLEY (30, Wednesday Addams vibes, gothic).

EDGAR

Happy birthday. What you up to?

RILEY

Working.

Riley is watching a HORNET'S NEST go up in FLAMES while she vapes.

EDGAR

I thought you had the day off.

RILEY

Mum asked me to work the morning.

EDGAR

It is a busy time.

RILEY

I'm gonna add Rufus and Lance to the call.

Riley presses something on her phone.

The screen SPLITS INTO FOUR.

At the bottom appears left appears LANCE CRAWLEY (30s, body builder) he is in a bedroom dealing with a MOUNTAIN OF BEDBUGS.

LANCE

Hey. Happy birthday sis.

RILEY

Is that bed bugs? Jesus Christ.

LANCE

Yeah, they taste alright though.

RILEY

Grim. Where's Rufus?

A dimly lit RUFUS CRAWLY (30s, a younger version of his dad) appears on screen momentarily.

RUFUS

Hap -

LANCE

He's in the tube. Some super rats apparently.

RUFUS

- Py Birthday -



LANCE

How come you're working? Does Mum not let you take the day off?

RILEY

Wish I picked team Dad.

LANCE

You really don't. He's been a right prick lately.

RILEY

Yeah well Mum's the same.

EDGAR

I think Mum's been great.

LANCE

That's because you're Mummy's favourite.

EDGAR

I am not -

RILEY

You are.

EDGAR

Only because I work the hardest.

LANCE

And because you were breast-fed until you were 5.

EDGAR

I had a calcium deficiency.

RILEY

So are we still on for dinner tonight?

RUFUS

Sorry I'm underground -

A horde of RATS SCREAM on Rufus' end before it cuts out again.

LANCE

I'm still down. Sorry we should have arranged you something. It's been crazy lately.

RILEY

It's fine. I just want to see you guys, without Mum or Dad.

LANCE

Who will feed Edgar his milk?

EDGAR

Fuck off. I'm free though, I'll be there.

RILEY

Great. Lance can you ask Rufus when he's above ground?

LANCE

Sure. Anyway I better get back to it.

RILEY

Me too. See you later guys. Don't let the bed bugs bite.

Everyone drops off the call. We're back to just Edgar.

The TENANT - MRS ASHBY enters, her CAT just behind her. She spots the pile of dead mice.

MRS ASHBY

Heavens, that is a lot!

EDGAR

There's been a rise in infestations in this area recently. I've blocked up all the entrances they made, there shouldn't be any more. I'll have a word with your downstairs neighbours as they could be getting in from below. Otherwise all good.

MRS ASHBY

Excellent, thank you. I'll leave you to clear all this up then.

She leaves. Edgar checks his phone for a few seconds. Wipes his brow.

Mrs Ashby re-enters, cleaning her throat.

MRS ASHBY (CONT'D)

You're not er... Gay by any chance? Or... I don't know the word for it any more.

EDGAR

No. No I'm not.

MRS ASHBY

It's just I have this grandson,  
Jason. He's... like that, and I  
would love for him to find a  
boyfriend.

EDGAR

Sorry I can't do much for you  
there.

MRS ASHBY

Not a worry, I just got a sense  
that you might be.

Edgar raises an eyebrow.

MRS ASHBY (CONT'D)

If you ever change your mind and  
start to play for the other team as  
it were, just give me a call.

Mrs Ashby leaves again.

He returns to the task at hand and the CAT has stolen a DEAD  
MOUSE.

EDGAR

No... No no. Put it down!

The cat turns and stares at him, the mouse dangles by its  
tail from the cat's mouth. There's a moment of hope -

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Put it down.

Edgar reaches out but the cat SWALLOWS it whole.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

**INT. TAIL END OFFICE - DAY**

Axel, AURORA (40, pretty and visibly significantly younger  
than Axel) and Lance are sat at a table together all on  
laptops.

In comes Rufus carrying a black bag.

He places it on the table and pulls out the BIGGEST RAT EVER - its body the length of his forearm. He think it's really cool.

AXEL  
Put that away.

LANCE  
That is massive.

AURORA  
Disgusting.

RUFUS  
You ever seen one that big? It's one of these super rats we've been getting.

AXEL  
Get rid of it, this is an office.

Rufus rolls his eyes. He walks off - he makes eye contact with Aurora, there's a vibe...

AXEL (CONT'D)  
Lance... We've just had a message through from a potential Westminster client - he's very important. Works for the Health Secretary or something. Can you deal with it?

LANCE  
Can't we get anyone else to do it?

AXEL  
This is an important one. If we win this then we'll have a good year.

Lance sighs.

LANCE  
Do you listen to anything I say? Have I not made it clear I want to move away from the ground work? I want to do what you do.

AXEL  
This is our chance to expand, move into the West. It's a one-off.

RUFUS

You said this morning was a one off. I've been up to my elbows in bed bugs.

AXEL

A big part of my role is client management, so this is all part of it. I will move you into a more permanent senior position soon, but right now we don't have the staff.

LANCE

Hire the staff then.

AXEL

Look I'm not just going to hire a bunch of Romanians like your mother, I have to be selective.

LANCE

So you can move your girlfriend here up from receptionist to our accountant in like... 3 weeks.

Aurora looks uncomfortable.

AXEL

It wasn't 3 weeks...

LANCE

But with me I have to spend a lifetime doing the shitty work and I basically have to wait for you to die before I get to move any higher up.

AXEL

Don't be so horrible.

LANCE

It seems my only options are, ride Daddy's dick or wait for Daddy to die. That's the choice you've given me.

AXEL

Set up your own company if you want to be the big fucking boss.

LANCE

Maybe I will. Send me the address for this Westminster client.

He leaves, so now it's just Axel and Aurora. Aurora is staring at her laptop screen as if she didn't hear any of that.

AXEL

Ignore him. You deserve to be where you are.

AURORA

It's fine.

He puts a hand over hers. She puts on a smile.

He goes in to kiss her -

AURORA (CONT'D)

I might go fetch some lunch...

She waits for him to catch the hint.

AXEL

Oh sure, sure. Do you want my card?

Axel hands his credit card straight over to her, desperate to please her.

AURORA

Want anything?

Axel shakes his head, smiling.

AXEL

Treat yourself to something nice!

AURORA

I will, thank youuuu.

As she exits his field of vision, her smile drops. She whips out her phone, types a quick message to Rufus which reads 'Van?'.

Over the other side of the office, Rufus' phone DINGS. He reads it, looks up at her.

#### **INT. CREEPY CRAWLEYS OFFICE - DAY**

Rita is in a workshop-type room. She's developing a new trap, it looks like a feeding bottle one would use for a pet hamster.

Rita lifts a clear plastic container from a nearby shelf which contains a RAT. She lifts the lid and allows it onto the table.

It approaches the trap, it goes up to get some food. Starts sucking on the end of it when suddenly-

SHING. A blade shoots directly through its head. Blood sprays across the table.

She stares at it for a moment, proud of her handiwork.

Her phone RINGS.

RITA

Edgar.

The screen SPLITS - Edgar is still at the house.

EDGAR

(hushed)

Mum, a cat has died. And it's sort of my fault.

RITA

What? How?

EDGAR

It ate one of the mice. The poisoned mice.

RITA

Christ. What are you going to do?

EDGAR

You need to tell me what to do.

Edgar starts hyperventilating a little bit.

The CAT'S BODY is collapsed on the floor.

RITA

Hey, calm down. We'll work it out. Does the client know?

EDGAR

No, not yet.

RITA

What kind of cat is it?

EDGAR

It's like... Blueish gray?

RITA

British shorthair.

EDGAR  
You're thinking I should... Replace  
it?

RITA  
Do you have any other suggestions?

Edgar has not.

RITA (CONT'D)  
Bag the dead one so she can't see  
it - but don't forget to remove the  
collar.

EDGAR  
Thank you Mum. I'm so sorry.

Rita hangs up. Edgar's on his own from here.

**INT. LANCE'S VAN - DAY**

Lance slows down and stops right in front of Riley. She opens  
the door and gets in.

RILEY  
Thanks. Couldn't be arsed with  
trains.

LANCE  
Na, especially not on your  
birthday.

Lance reaches into the back and hands her a gift bag.

RILEY  
No way!

LANCE  
I bet nobody else got you anything?

Riley doesn't want to answer that one.

She opens it - it's a POP-UP BOOK.

RILEY  
Holy shit! It's the one we made  
together! How old were we? 5?

LANCE  
4. I think Mum did most of the work  
for us.



RILEY  
That's amazing.

She pulls a lever and a cartoon man tries to stab a rat with a knife, his arm going back and forth.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
And nobody took us for a little counselling sesh? Just to check if this was normal?

She puts it away.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
Where are you off to?

LANCE  
Gotta go deal with a client for Dad.

RILEY  
I thought you weren't dealing with clients anymore?

LANCE  
Same here. Dad is being Dad.

RILEY  
How much longer are you going to do it?

LANCE  
What?

RILEY  
Put up with his bullshit?

LANCE  
I know he's a gammon-faced prick, but I still prefer him to Mum. At least he's honest in his shitiness.

RILEY  
No, I mean how long are you going to work for either of them? In this business?

LANCE  
I love this business.

RILEY  
No you don't, you just don't know anything better.

LANCE  
That's what love is.

RILEY  
Wouldn't you rather follow a  
passion you found by yourself? Or  
find a way to be your own boss?

LANCE  
I'd love to set up my own company.  
Do everything they did but better.  
I couldn't do it on my own though.  
I'd need someone else.

He glances over at her.

RILEY  
What? Me and you?

LANCE  
I wouldn't want to set one up with  
Edgar. Nor Rufus.

RILEY  
I don't want to run a company, I'll  
end up like Mum. All pointy and  
cruel like a Roald Dahl villain.

LANCE  
No you wouldn't. You'd avoid  
becoming like her out of spite.

RILEY  
I am incredibly spiteful.

LANCE  
Exactly!

RILEY  
Okay... But we're not being serious  
right? Because I don't actually  
know anything about running a  
business.

LANCE  
Nobody does. And besides, you know  
how not to run one.

We move out of the window of Lance's van, and stop next to  
another identical van, it's Rufus'.

The van is bouncing up and down. There's good suspension on  
those wheels.

**INT. RUFUS' VAN - DAY**

On the dashboard - a BOBBLEHEAD of RATATOUILLE bobbles.

In the back, Rufus is finishing up on top of Aurora. They moan simultaneously.

AURORA

Wow.

Rufus instantly starts getting dressed again. The shame is setting in.

RUFUS

We can't be this stupid though.  
Let's keep it more discrete.

Aurora is lying there looking saddened.

Rufus smiles at her - but gets nothing back.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

Did you need finishing off?

AURORA

It's not...  
(sighs)  
Don't worry.

RUFUS

No, come on. Say it.

AURORA

Do you love me?

RUFUS

How do you mean?

AURORA

That's a no then.

RUFUS

Well no - it's just... I didn't  
know that's where this was going...

AURORA

That still sounds like a no.

RUFUS

I really don't know how to answer  
that.

AURORA

You need to.

Rufus sits there trying to come up with SOMETHING.

RUFUS  
It's not really one or the other.

AURORA  
I feel like I've made a mistake,  
maybe we should come clean? Clear  
the air.

RUFUS  
No, no. Come on. It's not like  
that.

AURORA  
How is it then?

Rufus reads between the lines, he realises what he has to do.  
Checkmate.

RUFUS  
I love you.

AURORA  
(excited)  
Really?

RUFUS  
(er...)  
Yes. Obviously.

AURORA  
And what do you LOVE about me?

Rufus giggles, then realises he must answer. *Shit.*

RUFUS  
Oh gosh... Where to start... I love  
your hair, your eyes, your smile...

She wants more, a lot more.

RUFUS (CONT'D)  
And obviously loads of other stuff.  
You're really nice and everything.  
You support West Ham. And -

AURORA  
Do you see marriage in our future?

Rufus pauses while pulling up his jeans.

RUFUS  
Well... You know, it's difficult  
init?

AURORA  
What do you mean?

RUFUS  
Again, it's a complicated  
relationship.

AURORA  
All relationships are complicated.  
Answer the question.

RUFUS  
I guess... I hadn't considered it.

AURORA  
Why not?

RUFUS  
Because you're engaged to my Dad?

AURORA  
Can we leave him out of it?

RUFUS  
It's hard to leave him out of it.  
We're very much... Drinking from  
the same cup.

AURORA  
Oh I'm a CUP to you? Is that what  
this is? Two men, one cup, father  
and son edition.

Aurora looks like she's going to cry again.

RUFUS  
Alright then, yes. I would love to  
marry you. And I see it in our  
future.

AURORA  
You're so sweet.

She cuddles him - he's clearly reconsidering his life  
choices.

AURORA (CONT'D)  
I have a surprise for you later.

RUFUS

(uh oh)

I'm sure that'll be fun. What kind of surprise?

AURORA

A little gift. You'll see.

RUFUS

You can't give it to me now?

AURORA

I like to torture you.

She taps him on the nose flirtily.

RUFUS

You do...

**INT. RESCUE SHELTER - DAY**

There are tonnes of CAGES full of CATS. Edgar is browsing them in a rush.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

What kind did you have in mind?

Edgar ignores them.

He has a photo on his phone of the DEAD CAT.

He's trying to find one the same, but none of them look right.

Edgar shows the employee the photo.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Is it -

EDGAR

It's asleep. Not dead.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

I was going to ask if it's male or female?

Edgar flips a coin in his brain.

EDGAR

Male? Male.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

We actually have one like this.  
Poor thing, nobody wants him.

The employee shows him over to a cage away from the others. Inside is a very similar looking CAT. But it has scratches on its face, bits of fur missing. You'd cross the road to avoid this little menace.

EDGAR

And this is the only one similar?

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

I'm afraid so.

Edgar realises he's cornered. He looks at the cat - it HISSES at him.

EDGAR

I'll have to take him.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

I'll warn you he is a bit rowdy. We call him Will Feral - as in F-E-R-A-L because -

EDGAR

Because he's feral I get it. So can I just take him?

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

Absolutely. With a payment of £200.

EDGAR

£200 to rescue an animal?

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

That's a very standard price.

EDGAR

But I'm rescuing him. You should be paying me if anything.

The employee shrugs.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

And if I don't give you money, you're going to put him down?

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

If nobody wants him by the end of the week.

EDGAR

Which nobody will. Because, look at him. So I'm paying you two hundred quid to not murder that cat. So when people rescue cats, they're really rescuing them from you.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

No, we rescue them. This is a rescue shelter.

EDGAR

But then you immediately endanger them again with the threat of death.

The employee stands there, staring vacantly at him.

SHELTER EMPLOYEE

Card or cash?

Edgar pulls out his wallet and starts fumbling for notes, absolutely livid.

**INT. GP SURGERY - DAY**

Rita is sat opposite her doctor, there's a silence.

DOCTOR

These are some leaflets that will help explain some of the things I touched on in more depth. But to be clear... This isn't the end. It's impossible to tell how this will develop at this stage.

RITA

But I could die in 6 months time?

DOCTOR

Yes, or in 25 years. There's simply no way to determine what will happen.

RITA

Stop feeding me optimistic bullshit. The odds have slipped towards 6 months, correct?

DOCTOR

In a sense.



Rita is taking it in. She's not crying or upset, just a little numb.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
My advice would be to not go back  
to work, go home and spend time  
with your family.

RITA  
I work with my family.

Rita stands. Puts on her coat.

DOCTOR  
You're welcome to wait in the foyer  
for someone to collect you.

RITA  
I'll be fine.

DOCTOR  
Remember it's okay not to be okay.

RITA  
I'm afraid I come from a generation  
where it is not.

**INT. GP SURGERY, FOYER - DAY**

Rita comes out and notices Axel stood at reception signing in.

She tries to hide her face and rush past.

AXEL  
We must stop meeting like this.

Rita sighs and turns to him.

RITA  
We must.

There's a silence, Rita isn't up for a sparring match now.

AXEL  
Everything okay?

Rita walks away.

Axel watches her, left wondering, he's genuinely concerned.

**EXT. WESTMINSTER OFFICE - DAY**

Lance and Riley step out of the van.

LANCE

Are you sure you want to come with?  
It'll be boring.

RILEY

I need to kill time until tonight.

LANCE

Did Mum send you to spy on me? Or  
to poach our new potential  
Westminster client?

Lance presses a button on an intercom.

**INT. WESTMINSTER OFFICE, HALLWAY - DAY**

JAMES HARDIN (30s, stressed, dark eye bags, twitchy) leads  
Lance and Riley down a corridor.

JAMES

Exterminators?

LANCE

That's right. I understand you've  
got a rat problem?

JAMES

Very much so. This way.

LANCE

So, what do you do here?

JAMES

Ugh, where to start. They call me  
the lap dog of parliament.

RILEY

So you make the teas? Sort the  
mail?

JAMES

And the bloody rest. The Health  
Secretary wants a new computer, I  
get him one. The Chancellor goes on  
a 3-day bender and wakes up in  
Paris covered in his own shit, I  
fetch him.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

The entire department of education are filmed snorting coke off a 14-year-old Filipino boy, I pay off some journalists.

LANCE

Sounds stressful.

JAMES

Obviously those are just examples... Anyway if that wasn't enough, apparently pests are my problem too.

**INT. WESTMINSTER OFFICE, WORK AREA - CONTINUOUS**

James leads them into a more official work area, a few scattered desks around.

JAMES

I came in early this morning and found one of the fuckers had chewed through my computer wires. Look at that.

He shows them some split wires in the corner.

Lance bends down and starts inspecting a nearby HOLE. He starts knocking on the wall.

Riley is looking around the room at the strange paintings of aristocratic old men.

RILEY

Do you not use Bug Busters?

JAMES

Normally, yes. But they've let us down. Apparently someone called in sick, some nonsense like that.

RILEY

They can't be doing that. You're probably one of their biggest clients.

JAMES

Of course. There are a lot of rats in Westminster.

LANCE

Especially in the House of Commons.

JAMES

Pardon?

LANCE

This is a large hole, what's on the other side of this wall?

JAMES

I think it's a cellar.

LANCE

We're gonna need to take a look down there. Riley can you get the gear?

Riley looks at him like '*really?*'. He nods at her and smiles.

**INT. TAIL END OFFICE - DAY**

Axel approaches a guilty Rufus at his desk.

AXEL

I just saw your mother. Have you heard from her recently?

RUFUS

We don't talk much.

AXEL

Let me know if you do, okay?

Aurora passes by.

AURORA

Tea for my boys?

AXEL

Yes please love.

Rufus nods - but he can't play it cool.

Axel plonks himself down next to him.

AXEL (CONT'D)

So, what do you think of her?

RUFUS

(defensive)

I don't think that much, obviously. Why would I?

AXEL

Oh come on mate, I know you and I have similar taste.

RUFUS

I mean obviously she's very pretty.

AXEL

Do you think she has good intentions?

Rufus isn't following.

AXEL (CONT'D)

You know, she's not just after my money or anything? You think she's honest?

RUFUS

I reckon so, yeah.

AXEL

I want her to move in.

RUFUS

Oh...

AXEL

You don't think it's time?

RUFUS

Maybe take it a bit slower.

AXEL

You think? We're already engaged. I feel like I need to lock this one down.

RUFUS

I think she needs patience.

AXEL

Okay, okay. Interesting. You seeing anyone?

Rufus contemplates what to reveal.

RUFUS

I have been, but she's a bit cuckoo. She's a bit emotionally blackmail-y.

AXEL

Oof, stay away from her mate. Get a woman like my Aurora.

Aurora returns with two cups of tea.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Anyone you could set up Rufus here with?

AURORA

No.

Aurora sits down, pissed off.

Axel looks at Rufus like *'what's up with her?'*

AURORA (CONT'D)

Why, is he looking for someone?

AXEL

He says the girl he's seeing at the moment is a bit...

Axel does the gesture to indicate *'cuckoo'*. Rufus winces.

AURORA

(gritted teeth)

Really? And is she aware that you feel this way?

RUFUS

That's not exactly what I said, Dad.

AXEL

It is.

RUFUS

I said *'kooky'*. Like, quirky. Cool. Really cool.

AURORA

I'm sure she'd be very interested to know your true feelings.

Rufus shakes his head, there's a sour atmosphere.

Axel observes the two, confused by what's happened. He sips his tea.

**INT. EDGAR'S VAN - DAY**

Edgar is driving along. The cat sits in a cage not far behind him. At a stop, he turns to check on the little bastard.

It stares at him menacingly.

A driver up ahead swerves in front of him causing him to SLAM THE BRAKES ON. The CAGE falls to the floor.

The CAT ESCAPES!

Edgar carries on driving. Will Feral climbs onto the passenger seat.

Edgar looks over at him.

EDGAR

Oh fuck. Please be nice.

The cat continues to stare.

He slowly reaches out to stroke it. He gets away with it. The cat is unperturbed.

Then it POUNCES on him.

We watch the van swerve around.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

Edgar returns to the client house. He now has a giant SCRATCH down his right cheek.

He sneaks in as quietly as possible.

He sets the cage on the floor and opens it up. Allowing the cat out.

He then rushes to the door.

The cat follows him.

MRS ASHBY

Is it all done then?

EDGAR

You are now officially mouse free.

MRS ASHBY

Wonderful. Ouch, what's that on your face?

EDGAR  
It's nothing.

MRS ASHBY  
It looks fresh.

EDGAR  
Your cat did it, but don't worry  
about it.

MRS ASHBY  
That's not my cat.

EDGAR  
Pardon?

MRS ASHBY  
That's just a local cat that  
wanders in sometimes.

EDGAR  
It's not even your cat?

She shakes her head. Edgar processes this.

EDGAR (CONT'D)  
Well, I'll leave him with you.

MRS ASHBY  
Thank you for all your help!

EDGAR  
No worries.

The cat follows him as he heads up the path.

EDGAR (CONT'D)  
God, he's following me.

MRS ASHBY  
He likes you.

EDGAR  
Any idea where his owners live?

MRS ASHBY  
No idea. Good day!

She shuts the door.

Edgar runs to the van and shuts the door - but it's jammed by  
the seatbelt. He shuts it just in time.

He speeds off - leaving Will Feral behind.



**INT. WESTMINSTER OFFICE, CELLAR - DAY**

Lance and Riley follow James down the creaky stairs.

It's a vast cellar, stretching many hundreds of meters across.

James stands back, a little scared.

Lance and Riley, used to this shit, explore confidently.

JAMES

You don't even wanna know what this cellar used to be used for.

Riley finds a LARGE RAT DROPPING. Lifts it up and shows Lance. They share an *'oh fuck'* look.

They walk to the edge of the room. There are even larger holes.

Lance approaches a BARREL. He shifts it aside. Behind it is a LARGE DEAD RAT. He beckons Riley over.

RILEY

I know, there's more over here.

JAMES

What are we looking at then?

RILEY

We're looking at one of the worst infestations I've ever seen.

LANCE

It's worse than that.

Lance picks one up with two hands and presents it to James.

LANCE (CONT'D)

These are dead super rats. New incredibly resistant rats. Resistant to poison, smart enough to avoid traps and large enough to take down a city.

James looks horrified for a moment, then it drops. He laughs.

JAMES

You're having me on aren't you? So dramatic.

Lance is not joking.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How can some rats take down an entire city?

RILEY

You know the way they chewed through your computer cables? Imagine that on a citywide infrastructure level. Electricity lines, train tunnels, water pipes, gas pipes, the very foundations of every building. They can chew through anything.

JAMES

But these ones are dead... Surely if they're dying then that's a good thing?

LANCE

They're dead because some other, presumably meaner super rats killed them. These two -

Lance presents two different coloured super rats. One DARKER, one LIGHTER.

LANCE (CONT'D)

They're from whole different families.

James isn't getting it quite, still.

RILEY

There's a rat war going on beneath Westminster, and it's likely spreading.

JAMES

Won't they kill each other off?

LANCE

They will kill each other. Millions of them will die very quickly. But when rats are afraid... They breed. And they breed fast, way faster than normal.

James is grappling with that idea.

JAMES

What can we do?

LANCE

We better get a contract set up and get to work. And if people found out it all started here, that's not a great look for you.

JAMES

How would people know it started here?

Lance shrugs.

LANCE

I guess somebody... Somebody who knows about this... Would have to tell them.

The penny drops. James understands.

JAMES

I'll go make some calls.

James runs upstairs, leaving the two of them.

RILEY

Wow, we made it sound so ominous.

LANCE

The Great Rat War.

RILEY

It is a bit concerning though.

LANCE

Oh yeah, London is gonna go to shit.

RILEY

Well done though, you're going to make Dad a lot of money.

Lance thinks about this.

LANCE

I don't think Dad is going to make a penny, do you?

Riley considers this, temptation in her eyes.

**INT. EDGAR'S VAN - NIGHT**

Edgar is driving through some quiet back streets.

Listening to music, he is having a somewhat peaceful drive.

He checks his face in the mirror, touches the SCRATCH. *Little fucker.*

He SLAMS on the BRAKES.

Shock on his face, something is ahead.

He steps out of the van.

In front of the van is Will Feral, sat in the middle of the road, staring at him.

EDGAR

Will Feral?

They stare at each other. The tension slowly fades.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Come on.

He opens up the car door and the cat jumps in.

#### **INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

The four Crawley children - Edgar, Riley, Rufus and Lance are sat a table together. Enjoying a few drinks. The place is pretty empty.

RILEY

I think it's safe to say this place has gone downhill.

RUFUS

So have our lives, so I guess it makes sense.

They CLINK their drinks together.

RILEY

It's nice to see the three of you though. Never see any of you in the same room anymore.

LANCE

Thanks Mum and Dad.

RUFUS

I will say a divorce has never been more necessary.

RILEY

Do you remember when Mum set fire  
to Dad's shed?

Rita - dressed up all glamorously - appears behind her.

RITA

Happy Birthday darling.

Riley is taken aback. She gets up and hugs her.

RILEY

Mum?

RITA

I saw it in Edgar's calendar.

RILEY

(to Edgar)

You share your calendar with her?  
You absolute paedo.

EDGAR

How can that possibly make me a  
paedo?

LANCE

It is pretty paedo-ish mate.

Rita pulls up a chair.

RITA

Thank you for the invite, by the  
way.

RILEY

I didn't want to invite both you  
AND Dad, but I couldn't invite just  
one of you, so...

RITA

That must be so tough for you. And  
by the way, the reason I set fire  
to your father's shed was because I  
found out he had gambled the  
majority of our life savings away,  
just one day after I found out he  
was having an affair.

A tense atmosphere. Nobody wants to talk about that.

The door opens and in comes Axel and Aurora, Aurora dressed  
really inappropriately revealing for a family birthday.

They approach the table.

RILEY  
Why is Dad here now?

AXEL  
Rufus told Aurora.

RILEY  
Why are you telling her?

Rufus shrugs.

Axel kisses Riley on the head.

AXEL  
(to Riley)  
Hi darlin'. Can I get you a drink?

RILEY  
I guess so...

Riley puts her head in her hands. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

AXEL  
Love, go to the bar will you?

He gives Aurora his credit card.

AURORA  
Rufus, wanna give me a hand?

Rufus follows her to the bar, everyone besides Axel thinks this is a bit weird.

AXEL  
(to Lance)  
How did it go with the Westminster chap? We moving in on Bug Busters domain?

Lance doesn't know what to say, he avoids eye contact.

LANCE  
We can talk about that later, Dad.

AXEL  
Can't you give me a thumbs up or thumbs down?

Lance shakes his head.

**AT THE BAR**

Aurora orders some drinks and turns to Rufus.

AURORA  
Are you ready for the big news?

RUFUS  
Go on.

Aurora rummages around in her handbag. Then pulls out a PREGNANCY TEST.

Rufus looks at it.

RUFUS (CONT'D)  
Oh God.

AURORA  
I know!

RUFUS  
Shit.

AURORA  
What's wrong?

RUFUS  
I don't... This isn't what I want  
right now.

AURORA  
I thought I was the one for you?

RUFUS  
Yeah but I thought we'd take it a  
bit more slowly. Oh Christ. Have  
you told Dad?

AURORA  
Why would I tell him?

RUFUS  
It could be his.

AURORA  
Pardon?

RUFUS  
Because you are in a relationship  
with him...

AURORA  
Oh no, me and your Dad only really  
do oral.

The BARMAN overhears that as he slides over their drinks.

RUFUS  
 (to Barman)  
 Thanks man.  
 (back to Aurora)  
 Can we discuss this?

AURORA  
 What is there to discuss?

RUFUS  
 You know, the options. The options  
 that come with pregnancy. The  
 different paths we can go down.

AURORA  
 You need to grow up, Rufus. Grow  
 some balls and step up to your new  
 role as a father. I need you.

Aurora leaves the bar.

**AT THE TABLE**

Rita glances over at Axel.

RITA  
 She's beautiful.

AXEL  
 Thank you.

RITA  
 Youthful.

AXEL  
 Yep.

RITA  
 Must be hard to keep up with a  
 spritely young thing like that?

Riley is watching this verbal tennis, caught in the midst of the very thing she wanted to avoid. She looks over at Lance, he rolls his eyes.

LANCE  
 (to Edgar)  
 What happened to your face?

EDGAR  
 It was nothing.



RITA  
Edgar murdered a kitten.

EDGAR  
It wasn't a kitten, Mum. It was a  
cat and if anything it committed  
suicide.

RILEY  
Committed suicide?

EDGAR  
Can we leave it? It's been a long  
day.

Aurora and Rufus return to the table with drinks.

Rufus notices Aurora go to drink some alcohol.

RUFUS  
Should you be drinking that?

The rest of the table goes quiet.

AURORA  
Yeah, why?

Rufus looks around.

RUFUS  
I just... Thought you said you quit  
drinking.

Aurora raises an eyebrow.

Axel leans forward to Lance.

AXEL  
I don't understand why you're being  
so quiet?

LANCE  
I would just rather discuss  
everything later.

RITA  
They don't want us here, Axel. They  
wanted to celebrate without us.

AXEL  
Why?

RITA

They were worried we'd fight and  
sour the mood.

AXEL

Oh come on guys, your mother and I  
can be civil.

RILEY

You absolutely fucking can't.

A silence. Awkward tension between the group.

AXEL

Lance, when will you be able to  
tell me how -

LANCE

I won the contract. Happy?

AXEL

Very happy. Why couldn't you say  
that?

LANCE

There's other things to discuss.

RITA

He doesn't want to discuss it now,  
leave him alone.

AXEL

Keep your crooked nose out of it.

RITA

My nose may be crooked but at least  
it's clean.

AURORA

What does that mean?

RITA

You haven't told her about your  
habits?

AURORA

He stopped that when he met me.

RITA

Sure he did. Tell me, does he  
disappear to his car a lot?

Aurora thinks... *he does actually...*

RILEY  
We're starting our own business.

The table goes quiet.

RITA  
Who?

RILEY  
Me and Lance.

AXEL  
Is this true Lance?

RITA  
With what clients?

RILEY  
We're taking the Westminster  
contract.

AXEL  
You can't do that. That goes  
against your contract.

LANCE  
As if I ever signed a contract for  
you.

Axel realises this is true.

AXEL  
Don't do this guys.

LANCE  
We can do what we want.

RITA  
What do either of you know about  
running a business?

RILEY  
(with venom)  
We've learned a lot from the two of  
you. A lot.

Rita shakes her head with disappointment. She picks up her handbag and applies some lip balm. A LEAFLET falls out of her bag.

Riley and Rita reach for it at the same time - Riley wins. She reads the cover page.

The waiter approaches the table.

WAITER  
Are we ready to order?

We go around the table.

Edgar with his scratched up face. Axel scowling at Lance.  
Rufus watching Aurora drink, the pregnancy test in his hand.  
Riley reading the leaflet - 'How to Cope with Breast Cancer'.  
Rita avoids eye contact, reading her menu.

WAITER (CONT'D)  
I'll come back.

The waiter leaves. We watch the table from further back now.  
You could cut the tension with a knife.

Like a tumbleweed, a LARGE RAT scuttles across the floor.

**FADE OUT.**