

Prompt: “that black bird attacked me”

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Kylie and Remy are in an open area in the food court, in scale to rats. It is daylight, but the sun streaming in from an atrium dome window leaves a side area of the stage in shadow.

KYLIE

Three quarters of them. All dead. I have no idea why.

REMY

Why? Eez obvious. Zey have no taste in food.

KYLIE

Not everything is about food, Remy!

REMY

What else eez there to be about? Zees pellets – zey need a proper marinade. C’est non pas eating raw. Eez bad for ze palate.

KYLIE

Remy! **The pellets are poison!** Don’t you see?

REMY

(reflecting to himself)

I like zat. Pellet... palate. Could make a nice slogan.

KYLIE

We’re not cooking pellets.

REMY

(Decisive)

Right – Zat’s the problem, n’est-ce pas? Zey need to be sautéed in ze finest olive oil.

KYLIE

You’ll be next.

(Pettigrew rushes in.)

What’s with the tracks?

PETTIGREW

You won’t believe it.

KYLIE

I know. But tell us anyway. We like to be amused.

PETTIGREW

You know those rats that claim to be “dying”? I went outside where those softies were all lying in the grass, to wake them up.

KYLIE

You know, those rats are **actually** dead.

PETTIGREW

Faking it. Trying to get out of doing what needs to be done.

REMY

And just what needs to be done?

PETTIGREW

Stop the mice, you imbecile. Go back to the way it was, when rats were strong, and mice were scared. The way it is now, the rats are trembling in their paws.

REMY

No, they stopped trembling a while ago. Now they are just dead.

PETTIGREW

If they’re dead, we don’t need them. But we do need them.

So they are not dead. Logic.

REMY

I see.

KYLIE

You’re right. We don’t believe it.

PETTIGREW

Go outside yourself! Go see what I saw!

KYLIE

I’ve seen dead rats.

PETTIGREW

Have you seen giant birds?

KYLIE

When we were on Main Street.

PETTIGREW

Well, they've come here. I was prodding the rats and that black bird attacked me.

REMY

What black bird?

(A big shadow falls across the stage – the rats look up to see what caused it. Pettigrew points up, the shadow is gone.)

PETTIGREW

That black bird!

KYLIE

So... a black bird attacks you, but the mice are the enemy?

REMY

Makes as much sense as anything else you've said.

PETTIGREW

Shut up. You don't know what you're dealing with.

KYLIE

Do you know what kind of bird that was?

PETTIGREW

No – what do you think I am, an ornithopter?

REMY

It's a vulture.

KYLIE

It comes for dead things.

REMY

The rats are not sleeping.

PETTIGREW

You lie!

(Pettigrew storms out.)

KYLIE

He's right about one thing.

REMY

What is that?

KYLIE

Ever look at the round pellets with the colors? Closely? Each one has an "m" on it. For "mouse".

(Remy considers this. Meanwhile, lights slowly come up on the shadowed area of the stage, where we can see Andy and Marvin watching.)

REMY

I cannot believe this. First, "m" can mean lots of things. Or nothing. Second, an enemy isn't going to sign their work. And third, rats don't even know the alphabet, so where are you even getting the idea of the letter "m"?

KYLIE

Let's just say a little birdie told me.

(lights fade out, first on the main stage, last in the shadowed area with Andy and Marvin.)