

FERRET SOLIDARITY

LOGLINE: Man rescues homeless ferret before being threatened with homelessness himself.

SYNOPSIS:

A man feeds a hungry ferret, who takes up residence in the kitchen wall of the house he is squatting. Complication ensues when the man is handed an eviction notice. He must get the ferret to come out of the kitchen wall before his home is destroyed.

EXT. PARK. DAY.

A MAN sits on a park bench under a tree in a relatively quiet urban park. He is in his mid/late twenties and wearing work worn clothes that have seen a lot of wear. His dusty trousers have a lot of pockets and he is wearing heavy work boots. He is eating a sandwich.

He has barely eaten half of it when he hears a loud chirp at his feet. He looks down to see a small FERRET looking expectantly up at him.

MAN

Oh hello, little guy..

FERRET

chirping noise (or whatever noise it is ferrets make)

MAN

Are you hungry little fella? D'you want some of my sandwich?

The Man holds a piece of sandwich out to the Ferret. Within seconds the Ferret has devoured it.

The Man reaches out to scratch the Ferret behind the ears. The Ferret seems to like it. Clearly this is not a wild animal. It is decidedly on the thin side and obviously hungry.

The Man continues to feed the Ferret pieces of his sandwich until there is none left.

MAN

You don't belong out in the wilderness do you. I can take you home and give you more food, how's that sound?

The Man attempts to pick up the Ferret. The Ferret makes no protest. It seems quite happy.

MAN

We've got to find out who you belong to..

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.

We see a kitchen which is relatively clean but in a state of disrepair. The floor is swept and any kitchen utensils are kept neatly, but the plaster on the walls is cracked and peeling, there are holes in it and occasionally squeaking can be heard from beyond these holes since there are clearly mice living in the wall. There are also tools in the kitchen, such as paint scrapers and the like. Evidently an effort is being made to make repairs.

The Man sits on a chair at the wooden kitchen table, on which a cup of tea rests. On the floor is a plate of cat food, which the Ferret is sniffing at.

The Ferret is just about to take a bite when a mouse shoots out of the shadows and runs towards a hole in the wall. Suddenly the Ferret is after it like a shot. The Ferret catches it easily and in seconds there is nothing left of the mouse except its long tail disappearing into the Ferret's mouth. The Ferret then hears more mice scrabbling and squeaking in the wall and shoots through a hole near the floor in hot pursuit of them, easily fitting through the tiny gap.

The Man watches this in fascination. He shakes his head.

MAN

So you like mice better than cat food. That's not a problem. Actually, it could be a solution..

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

The Man is at the stove cooking an omelette for breakfast. He pauses when he hears a mouse squeaking in the wall. Then there is a scrabbling and it is cut off with a short sharp squeak. The Ferret pokes its head out of a hole in the wall. The Man pets its head and smiles. The Ferret happily lets the Man pet him, until he hears a noise behind the wall again that indicates another meal and then he zooms back in again in pursuit of it.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

We see a quiet enough street. Everything is ordinary except for the similar looking pieces of paper stuck up on all the lamp posts and bus stops.

We get a close up shot of one. The poster has a picture of the Ferret next to the plate of cat food from the Man's kitchen. The caption reads FOUND: IS THIS YOUR FERRET? Beneath the photograph there are contact details.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

The kitchen is full of building equipment. The Man is scraping away the old peeling paint on the walls and filling in the holes. He pauses beside the hole in the wall that the Ferret stuck its head out of. He hears noises from beyond. He leaves that hole alone.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.

The Man sits at the kitchen table with a cup of tea. Across from him sits his FRIEND. They are tall and skinny and wear round glasses. Like the Man, their clothes (A black hoodie and grey jeans) have also seen a lot of wear. They look over their mug of tea with a concerned expression.

FRIEND

Look, are you sure you don't need a hand? Me and the others could help you... Actually if I'm honest we sometimes worry about you.

There's a short pause.

FRIEND (cont'd)

You don't need to do this alone, man.

MAN

Ah... well I appreciate the offer, but it's fine. Yiz don't need to worry about me, I'll be grand.
Besides...

He looks at the hole in the wall.

MAN (cont'd)

I'm not alone. :)

FRIEND

Mice and rats don't count.

The Man's Friend looks more concerned than before.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

We see the same quiet street as before, but we get the impression of time having passed. It's autumn now, and a cold wind blows leaves along the ground. The Posters on the lamp posts are worn and faded now. One blows along the street, torn and ragged. Nobody on the street pays them any attention.

INT. KITCHEN. AFTERNOON.

The kitchen is in a noticeably better state than when we first saw it. The repaired walls are a big improvement, making the entire kitchen look cleaner. However, there is still that one hole in the wall. The squeaking of mice is no longer a prevalent aspect of this place.

The Man sits at the table, poring over a sheaf of paperwork and letters that are spread across it. He looks worried. There's a notebook in front of him in which he periodically scribbles something down. We hear a faint, almost imperceptible scrabbling noise in the wall. The Man cocks his head and listens into the silence. His head is practically at the wall when he's interrupted by a knock at the door. Five loud bangs. He jumps, startled, before going out into the hallway, still clutching the papers he was holding.

INT. HALLWAY. AFTERNOON.

The Man goes into the hallway to open the door. There's a plank of wood braced against it, which he carefully removes first. When he opens the door we see over his shoulder a short, 40-something SECURITY AGENT in a suit. He is holding a notice. He is wearing a beaming smile.

MAN

Hello?

The smile immediately drops to reveal a bored frown.

SECURITY AGENT

I apologize for disturbing your obviously busy day, but I have a notice for you.

He indicates the papers in the Man's hand.

SECURITY AGENT (cont'd)

You have all the briefs, all the paperwork we've sent you, so you are obviously aware that you need to be out of here.

There's a short pause.

SECURITY AGENT (cont'd)

Otherwise we will have to resort to having An Garda Síochána remove you.

MAN

Well, I am kinda busy, you're right about that. I've got to get back to what I was doing...

SECURITY AGENT

You were warned well in advance, so you were aware that you don't have much time. You need to be out of here soon, or we're going to have to come in.

The Man sees, across the street, a pair of GOONS watching him from a van. One of them opens the van door and they start to get out. They are large, burly men who start to walk across the street towards the Man's open doorway with a seemingly unstoppable gait.

MAN

Look I've really got to get back...

The Man starts to close the door. When it's nearly closed we see through the gap that just before the Goons get to the front gate the Security Agent motions them to stop.

As the door closes and the Man puts the brace back as quietly as he can we hear the Security Agent.

SECURITY AGENT

We'll be back soon

The Man sinks down with his back against the door, leaning against it and listening intently.

The letterbox opens right beside his head and the light from beyond is blocked by the Security Agent. We see his eyes dart left and right before he puts his mouth to the gap.

SECURITY AGENT (loudly)
D'YOU HEAR THAT? I SAID: WE'LL BE BACK.

The Man winces from the proximity of the Security Agent's shout.

And then he is gone. We hear his footsteps retreating down the path.

The Man sits there for a moment, and then slowly releases the breath he's been holding.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

The Man sits at the kitchen table, which is covered in what at first glance seems to be a load of random junk, but on closer inspection everything has a common purpose: to get the Ferret to come out of the wall.

The Man is fiddling with a large pot propped up by a spaghetti spoon. Directly beneath it is a small pile of cat food. He lets go of the pot slowly and carefully and sits back, holding his breath.

A few seconds later the spaghetti spoon slips out from under the pot and it clangs down, scattering cat food across the table.

The Man rubs his face with his hands, his expression serious.

INT. KITCHEN. AFTERNOON.

The Man sits at the table, which is even more cluttered than before. He holds a large rat trap with a piece of meat in it. The metal parts of it are covered in what seems to be sponges, in an attempt to make it humane.

The Man jumps and lets go of the trap as it springs shut suddenly. Bits of sponge fly everywhere. The Man's expression quickly changes from startled to disappointed. He groans.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.

The Man sits on the floor opposite the hole in the wall. He is opening a tin of sardines, which he holds directly beneath the hole.

MAN (pleading)
C'mon... come out little guy. I have sardines! Those are
your favourite!

He waves the tin around beneath the hole.

MAN (cont'd)
D'you smell that? Mmmmmm yummy sardines!

He sets the tin down on the floor beneath the hole and waits for a while. No sign of the Ferret.

After a while he picks up the tin and wafts it around beneath the hole again. Then he puts it in front of his mouth and blows on it, as if to blow the smell of the fish towards the tiny gap.

Man (cont'd)
C'monnnn....
I know how much you love sardines! Can you smell them??
They're tasty. You can have all of them if you come out.
Every single one! How's that sound?

(pause)

MAN (cont'd)
Please come out little guy....?
Please?

He sets the tin down again. Again, he waits. Again, there is not a peep from the Ferret.

MAN (under his breath)
Fuck it.

He stands up. Goes and gets pepper from the press and a jar of mayonnaise from the fridge. Then he sits back down on the floor again.

MAN
Last chance!

He picks up the tin again. Again he puts it up to the hole.

MAN (cont'd)

Ok, little man? One last chance to eat these fishies!

Once more he wafts the tin around beneath the hole and waits. Still there is silence from beyond the wall. He gives a defeated sigh and sets the tin on the floor again.

MAN

Fuck it, *I'm* gonna eat your sardines!

He opens the mayonnaise jar and starts spooning mayonnaise into the tin of sardines and mixing them together.

MAN (cont'd)

D'you hear that, I'm eating your lovely sardines ye little fecker...!

As he mixes the fish and mayonnaise he's not exactly careful, and accidentally spills a dollop on the floor directly beneath the hole in the wall.

The Man has barely eaten a spoonful before there's a scrabbling sound from beyond the hole. He drops everything and listens. When the Ferret finally peeks his head out of the hole twitching his little nose he has no time to react before the Man grabs him.

MAN

Gotcha!

The Man tries to lift the Ferret out of the hole. For some reason there seems to be some resistance. The Ferret isn't protesting, it just seems to be difficult to get him out of the hole somehow.

As the Man gently tugs on him it becomes clear - the Ferret is clearly stuck in the hole.

The Man pulls some more. Still the Ferret isn't budging. The Man ends up fully leaning away from the wall tugging with all his might.

Suddenly, there is a loud POP!, like a cork coming out of a wine bottle. What's revealed has got to be the fattest ferret anyone has ever seen. Where he had once been thin and svelte, this Ferret is now shaped like a large avocado.

MAN
What the actual.....?

He stares incredulously at the Ferret.

MAN (cont'd)
Well!
Someone's been eating well. No wonder you weren't coming out
of the hole!

Unsurprisingly, the Ferret's first action as an ex-prisoner of the wall is to start eating up the spilled mayonnaise off the floor.

The Man looks at him and chuckles.

MAN (quietly)
Looks like we're gonna have to give you some exercise
When all this shite is over...

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

The kitchen looks emptier than we've ever seen it. There's a large cardboard box beside the door next to a toolbox and a rucksack. We hear the floorboards creaking overhead as the Man gets ready to leave the house for the last time.

EXT. STREET. MORNING.

There are several people outside the house. Firstly, there is the Security Agent, accompanied by a few others like him. Square, middle-aged men with serious expressions who mutter to each other under their breath. The Goons are also there in their van, parked across the street.

On the pavement on the same side of the street as the house is the Man's Friend. They have a bicycle with them that has a trailer on the back of it. They are accompanied by others, a couple with bikes, some on foot, and one with a skateboard on her back. All of them have come to support the Man.

The Man's Friend looks more worried than usual. They keep glancing between the door of the house and the Security Agent and his Goons.

Meanwhile, the Security Agent is looking impatient. He keeps glancing at his watch. He says something we don't hear to his co-workers, then

makes his way over to the door of the house. He motions to the Goons, who start making their way towards the door too.

Before any of them can make a move however, the door swings open. In the doorway stands the Man, carrying his belongings. The shot pans down to his hand, which is holding what looks like a leash. The shot pans further down, all the way along the leash until it stops. What we see, strapped comfortably into a little harness, is one extremely well-fed Ferret. As the Man starts to walk out the door and down the path, the Ferret waddles along in his wake.

The security company does not seem to know what to say. The Security Agent looks at the Man, opens his mouth to say something, looks at the Ferret, and shuts his mouth again. He is at a loss.

The Man grins at all the puzzled and dumbfounded expressions in front of him. He looks at the Security Agent.

MAN

You're welcome! We solved your rodent problem.
Don't mention it :)

Then he goes to join his friends. As the shot pulls out and the figures grow more distant as they walk away down the street, we see the Man's Friend bend down to pet the Ferret. And we hear the Man's voice, distant but still clear.

MAN

I told you I wasn't alone.

END.