

(This is part two of the Mall Rats Collection. It is part two because of a word processor change due to a computer crash, not because of any plot elements. It picks up after “...*the customer exits, Angie remains, pondering. She looks again at the locked door and the CLOSED PERMANENTLY sign. Blackout.*”)

A nondescript area under the toekick, where Watson has set up what appears to be a dance studio.

Watson is doing (and singing to) some dance warmups when Marvin and Macaroni enter.

Marvin

Watson – we have an issue that requires some delicacy.

Watson

What kind of delicacies you got in mind, cat? I’m particularly fond of shrimp.

Macaroni

I’m a mouse, not a cat, and you’re starting to sound like a rat.

Watson

Chill man! Rats don’t eat shrimp.

Marvin

Rats eat anything – that’s all they think of is food.

Watson

You’re the one that’s offering me a meal. Whatcha need? No, let me guess. Somebody’s not getting it and you need me to win them over.

Macaroni

Well...

Watson

You’ve got a plan, and there’s somebody standing in the way.

Macaroni

Um...

Marvin

Watson, how is it that you get spiders to dance?

Watson

You came to ask me about spiders?

Macaroni

Not exactly.

Watson

Because spiders are cool. They sit out all day, just chillin’ – waiting for stuff to happen. Gives them a lot of time to think, to reflect.

Marvin

That doesn’t sound like dancing.

Macaroni

And it’s not what...

Watson

Makes ‘em open. You say something, they don’t start out by tellin’ you you’re wrong. They listen. They think.

Macaroni

It’s not spiders.

Watson

It’s always spiders. Tell them dancing is fun, they won’t do it right away. But they *will* consider it. Why not dance? It’s liberating, it’s joyous. And then you come around later, hum a tune, move to the music, and they’re right there with you. Because why not?

Macaroni

It’s not spiders. It’s rats.

Watson

Rats are cool too.

Marvin

Sometimes.

Macaroni

You know all the stuff we’ve been making lately? The stuff for the rats?

Watson

The food court stuff?

Macaroni

Yeah, that.

Watson

Kylie mentioned it to me. Interesting dude, Kylie.

Marvin

That's not the half of it.

Macaroni

He hangs with Pettigrew...

Watson

...and Pettigrew has a problem with something, so you want *me* in the middle of it.

Macaroni

No...

Marvin

Yes. Let's not beat around the bush, huh?

Macaroni

Okay. Here's the thing. We used to put the art in the food court because, well food. But there's a new health ministry...

Watson

Yeah, I know. Wide open space, ripe for the taking. But Pettigrew's not having it.

Macaroni

How do you know?

Watson

Spiders. Here's the thing. Big mistake. Food in the health office? Not cool. Health at the food court? Not possible.

Macaroni

Food at the food court? Invisible. Our sculptures blend in with everything else. *This* is a chance to get noticed.

Watson

Be careful what you wish for.

Marvin

So what would *you* do?

Watson

Dunno. Let me think. Who comes to this health thing anyway?

Macaroni

So far, nobody. It just opened. So it's ours if we want it.

Watson

It's a health ministry, right. So people come in to get healthy. They need exercise, but they won't do it unless it's fun. Let me think now.

(beat)

Ok, so it's the first day – opening night, so to speak. Lights come on, the music starts, a fanfare with a nice, driving rhythm. We all come out as a conga line, break into three groups, and do a high energy number that gets everyone dancing. The spiders start in their webs doing this bouncy thing, and on the chorus, when the rhythm changes up, they leap from web to web. Like this:

Watson starts singing a high energy tune and is cut off by Macaroni

Macaroni

Yeah, no. We don't usually do musicals.

Marvin

(to Macaroni)

Well, to be fair we don't usually do rat statues either.

Macaroni

What? You think this makes sense?

Marvin

As much sense as anything else we've done. And it's different. Might even go viral on Critter.

Watson

Chill, 'roni. Act like a spider. Think!

Macaroni

(pondering)

Well, we do want to get noticed.

(ponders some more)

Do you know any bees? They could maybe do the wiggle dance.

Watson

Now you're thinking like a cool cat!

Marvin

We're doing this?

Macaroni

Dunno yet. How do we get Pettigrew on board?

Watson

Don't tell him. Leave the statues out in the food court, where they'll get the usual lack of attention. We do our thing, and he'll either come around, or he won't.

Marvin

Or we can give him the option. That way if he takes it, he's on board. But if he doesn't, it's on him.

Watson

That's equally good.

Macaroni

Okay, let's do it. I'll tell Kylie to tell... no, I'll tell Pettigrew myself.

Watson

Cool! Spiders be chattin' tonight!
(Macaroni and Marvin begin to exit across the stage as the lights go down on Watson. Watson vanishes and they shortly run into Pettigrew as they walk.)

Macaroni

I hope this is the right decision.

Marvin

It's the right approach – the thing I'm hesitant about is leaving it in Watson's hands.

Macaroni

Can *you* make spiders dance?
(Pettigrew appears)

Pettigrew

I knew you were woke, but dancing with spiders? I'm sure glad you're not working for me.

Macaroni

Yeah, about that. I'm going to make you a proposition, and I don't care whether you take it or not. It's going to happen anyway.

Pettigrew

Funny – I was going to make *you* a proposition.

Marvin

That would be funny.

Macaroni

You fired us, remember? Anyway, here's the deal. Those statues – we'll put them wherever you want. Food court, whatever. But we're *also* going to do a thing in the health thing. It'll be our thing. *If you want*, we could put your statues in the Ministry of Health during the thing we're doing there. If you don't want, we won't. Just tell me by tomorrow.

Pettigrew

And just what is this thing you're doing at the health thing?

Marvin

(to Macaroni)

Are you sure we want to tell him?

Macaroni

I don't know. Which would be more fun?

Pettigrew

Oh sweet summer mouse... this isn't about fun.

Macaroni

Yes it is. You want your message out there, it has to be fun. And I guarantee you this will be *fun!*

Pettigrew

What this?

Macaroni

Ok. Picture this: The room is packed – people all over the place. Then a full blown orchestra starts to play. The lights come on, highlighting your statues – yours of course gets the brightest light. And while people gape in amazement, rows and rows of dancing mice (and rats, if you dare!) pick up the throbbing beat as it crescendos...

Pettigrew

Stop right there. This is totally batty.

Marvin

Didn't think of bats! Can we get bats?

Pettigrew

No! We are dignified.

(Marvin and Macaroni burst out laughing)

Marvin

You just commissioned a statue made of food.

Pettigrew

Yes – that is art. Or so I’m led to believe.

Macaroni

So’s this.

Pettigrew

We’re rats. Dancing is something we don’t usually do.

Marvin

Musicals are a big thing these days.

Pettigrew

What if it gets out on Critter?

Macaroni

Mission accomplished. You’d be famous.

Marvin

...and would have your pick of all the food eveywhere you go.

(Kylie enters)

Pettigrew

Kylie – get a load of this: Macaroni wants to put on a musical.

Kylie

Cool! Can I be in it?

Pettigrew

No! Of course you can’t be in it! Are you daft?

Kylie

Remy could be the voice coach – we’d do everything in French!

Macaroni

(To Pettigrew)

Anyway, what was the proposition you were going to proposition me with?

Pettigrew

I was... never mind.

Macaroni

Ok. Let me know tomorrow where you want the statues.

(Macaroni and Marvin exit)

Kylie

What’s wrong with a musical?

Pettigrew

I don’t know. But I don’t trust the mouse.

Kylie

She’s gotten us everything we wanted. I think it could work.

Pettigrew

Singing, dancing, wearing funny hats. It’s effete.

Kylie

Picture yourself as the Phantom of the Opera. Then talk to me about “effete”.

(Pettigrew begins to imagine himself as the phantom. He gets more and more into it. Kylie steps back, at first to give him room, but then with growing apprehension.)

(blackout)

The new Ministry of Health at the mall. Upstage there is a island with what would otherwise be a cashier's station.

There are banners and signs and swag, appropriate for the grand opening for which people are gathering. Ryan and Cleo find each other in the crowd.

Ryan

I can't believe it. Quinn got the mayor to come tonight!

Cleo

Big whoop. Why is the mayor even interested?

Ryan

Dunno. Maybe he and Quinn were friends back in school.

Cleo
I didn't think the mayor even went to school.

Ryan
What... you don't like the mayor?

Cleo
I prefer mayors who don't treat the town as their own piggy bank.

Ryan
Let's keep that to ourselves while he's here, okay?

Cleo
Isn't it always that way...

Ryan
If we want our jobs, yes.

Dweezel
(Dweezel arrives)
I hear Robert Nevasteele himself is coming. What's that about?

Cleo
Quinn set it up.

Dweezel
You do know the Ministry of Health is not an official ministry of health, right?

Ryan
Yeah, but Quinn doesn't.

Dweezel
Better hope he keeps his mouth shut. You can't mumble mumble if you blabber blabber.

Ryan
It's Quinn. There's no telling.

Dweezel
There'd better be no telling!

Cleo
You know Dweezel, sometimes I think you know more than you know.

Ryan
(Ryan checks his watch.)
Five minutes. Isn't there supposed to be a band or something as a fanfare?

Cleo
Fanfare? For what?

Ryan
For the entry of the mayor.

Cleo
Did you set one up?

Ryan
I didn't set anything up. I got a letter.

Dweezel
We all got letters. That's how it works.

Cleo
Okay - did the band get a letter?

Dweezel
Ask the band.

Ryan
They're not here.

Cleo
Maybe they got a different letter.

Quinn
(Quinn enters)
Quite a crowd you got here!

Ryan
It's the grand opening. How grand would it be without a crowd.

Quinn
My uncle will be very pleased.

Ryan
Who's your uncle?

Quinn
Rob's my uncle

Dweezel
No, it's "Bob's my uncle."

Quinn

He goes by "Rob" and he's not your uncle.

Cleo

I think he means the expression. You see, back in 1887 there was this prime minister...

Dweezel & Quinn

Shut up, Cleo

Cleo

(to Dweezel)

Et tu, Brutè.

Quinn

Rob Nevasteele - the mayor. He's my uncle.

Ryan

That explains a lot.

Cleo

That name - kind of on the nose, no?

Angie

(Angie enters)

Hey Cleo! I see you got a letter too.

Ryan

Everybody got a letter. Except maybe the mayor.

Angie

Quinn would have told him.

Quinn

Of course he got a letter. He'll be here when it counts.

Cleo

Angie, how do you know he knows the mayor?

Angie

You gotta know these things.

Dweezel

Mumble mumble. Blabber Blabber.

Ryan

(Ryan checks his watch again)

Three minutes.

Dweezel

I guess Rob's not coming tonight.

Ryan

How grand would it be without the mayor?

Cleo

Very. The mayor's a rat, and so are his cohorts.

Angie

I wouldn't let Quinn hear that.

(There is some rhythmic squeaking, which grows in intensity. It gradually attracts the attention of the guests and begins to even sound musical as they try to pinpoint the source. Shortly afterwards, a long line of rats and mice escape from the toekick under the upstage island counter. This results in great pandemonium, and then flying things start appearing too. Bees? Spiders? Who knows? In that moment, Rob Nevasteele, a man who carries himself with great self-importance, enters, looks around, and asks Quinn...)

Rob

Is this the Ministry of Health you keep talking about?

(blackout)



Prompts used:

- We don't usually do a musical
- I guess Rob's not coming tonight