

A Roast for Rita

By

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INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

RITA, 55, is on the phone. It's a wall-mounted handset on a spiral chord and it came with the house which she and her husband bought for a fraction of its current value in 1989.

RITA

Oh, Sidney. You haven't been to a family dinner in two months.

INT. CITY FLAT. DAY.

SIDNEY, 20, is a skinny young woman. She has messy hair and is wearing a string vest and that's it.

SIDNEY

I told you two months ago- I will not be involved in the sacrificial ritual of tucking into a bovine corpse of a Friday evening.

A voluptuous woman, VEEMA, 21, strokes Sidney's shoulders and drapes herself round her neck.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

RITA

Actually, I was thinking chicken.

SIDNEY

(through the phone)
Me too, Mum. Me too.

Rita looks at the pasty chicken carcass defrosting sadly on the draining board.

RITA

You're being ridiculous.

INT. CITY FLAT. DAY.

Veema takes the phone.

VEEMA

Mrs. Dixon. Do you have any idea how closely those birds are forced to live with one another?

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

They literally can't touch the ground. It's completely horrific.

INT. DINING ROOM. EVENING.

Rita, her husband BILLY, 60, and her son MICHAEL, 15, are sat around the dining table.

Rita watches her son tearing into a chicken leg in his hand. She's overcome with disgust.

RITA

Michael, that's disgusting!

They boys look at her, confused. This is how they always eat chicken legs.

BILLY

(through a mouthful of meat)
Knife and fork, Mike.

Mike plops the torn-up limb from hi mouth onto his plate.

MICHAEL

Soz.

Rita is thoughtful, which confuses Billy.

BILLY

You alright, Rita, darling?

She nibbles a bit of potato.

RITA

I couldn't get Sidney round.

Billy grunts despondently.

MICHAEL

So?

RITA AND BILLY

Michael.

Telling Michael off is just a reflex. They barely look up from their plates, and neither does he.

Rita just pushes her food around the plate while her boys gobble.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Rita is lying on the sofa, flicking between nature programmes, soaps and variety shows.

Billy is behind her, doing some late-night work at the table.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER.

Rita wakes to a low, inhuman groaning close by.

It's an adult cow, lying on the carpet, bleeding from the neck, kicking its legs against nothing, and screeching at Rita with its round, pink eyes wild and glassy.

Rita's screams join the cow's and the empty house quakes at the walls with the din.

RITA
Billy! Billy!

The cow continues to shriek and cry and groan.

RITA
Michael!

She can't look at the cow anymore, and stumbles into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

It calls after her with a wail.

Rita grabs the phone off its hook and whacks 0,7 then stops.

Her hands are shaking and her nose is running. She drops the phone to the ground.

Still shaking, she tears a biscuit tin down from the top shelf. It lands on the prep surface with a horrible clang.

In the living room, the cow's bloody legs kick and wave. Blood splatters onto the walls.

From the tin she grasps for an old box of cigarettes, tears it open and fumbles with the lighter.

The cow screams in a low, farm-animal howl.

She goes to the door, and stares at the animal.

(CONTINUED)

The tragedy of the scene- the cow, moaning and kicking in buckets of its own blood- makes her bold.

Unlit cigarette still between her fingers, she hoists the phone on its cord like an anchor.

Quaking, she punches in the number again.

INT, SIDNEY'S FLAT. NIGHT.

Sidney is getting fucked by Veema in a strap-on.

A mobile buzzes on the dresser, near Veema.

SIDNEY
(breathless)
Who's calling at eleven?

Veema gives her a deep push and leans down to her ear.

VEEMA
Sid, it's three.

They laugh.

The phone still rings.

SIDNEY
Ugh.

She throws herself against the pillow.

Veema's plastic dick bobs as she giggles.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Rita cries as she grips the phone and locks eyes with the horrifying creature.

INT. SIDNEY'S FLAT. NIGHT.

Veema looks at the mobile.

VEEMA
Babe, it's your mum.

Sidney looks worried.

The phone stops ringing.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Rita drops the phone through her shivering hands and it lands on the floor with a fateful clatter.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

She kneels by the cow as it stares at the wall and its screams grow weaker.

Rita holds a hand out to touch the wound.

She presses her palm against the cow's skin, and her cigarette becomes soaked with blood.

The touch gives her strength to look into the cow's weeping eyes.

Rita nods knowingly.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Rita wrenches a drawer open and pulls out a butcher's knife.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

She kneels by the cow and strokes its cheek.

She raises the knife, but-

-looking into the cow's sparkling eyes-

- she can't do what she needs to. She's too weak.

The woman and the cow lean against each other and both cry.

INT. HALLYWAY. NIGHT.

A key rattles in the lock.

Sidney and Veema burst through the door, both in mismatched, thrown-on clothes.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Rita turns from the dying cow to look desperately across the room at her daughter.

Sidney and Veema take in the scene. Veema throws her hands over her mouth.

Crying, Rita holds her blood-soaked arms out to Sidney.

SIDNEY

Oh, Mummy.

She goes to her mum and holds her, at a slight distance.

RITA

I don't know how-

Veema sits with the animal's head on her lap.

She looks at the knife in Rita's hand, then at Sidney.

Sidney catches the glance, and reaches for her mum's arm.

SIDNEY

Mum, did you-

Rita just cries.

RITA

She's suffering.

At that, bitter tears creep into Sidney and Veema's eyes.

Rita collapses into Sidney's arms as the cow groans low.

Softly, Veema takes the blade from Rita.

She holds it at the cow's neck.

Rita weeps into Sidney's shaking shoulder.

Sidney looks at Veema, who, with tears spilling down her cheeks, does the deed with a swift swipe that stops the hum of the cow's pain at once.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

The three women sit with the cow in the silent, blood-stained living room.

FADE OUT