



# RADIANT VERMIN

BY PHILIP RIDLEY



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RADIANT VERMIN  
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*Find out what you're afraid of and go live there.*

Chuck Palahniuk

*Horror is the removal of masks.*

Robert Bloch

*For greed all nature is too little.*

Seneca

RADIANT VERMIN received its world premiere on February 27, 2015, at the Tobacco Factory Theatre in Bristol, England. It was produced by Supporting Wall and Metal Rabbit and directed by David Mercatali. The cast was as follows:

OLLIE ..... Sean Michael Verey  
JILL ..... Scarlett Alice Johnson  
MISS DEE/KAY ..... Debra Baker

RADIANT VERMIN then transferred to the Soho Theatre in London, England, with the same producing and creative team, in March 2015. The cast was as follows:

OLLIE ..... Sean Michael Verey  
JILL ..... Gemma Whelan  
MISS DEE/KAY ..... Amanda Daniels

## **CHARACTERS**

OLLIE

JILL

MISS DEE/KAY

# RADIANT VERMIN

*Ollie and Jill, twenties.*

*Jill is holding a baby.*

JILL. Hello, I'm Jill.

OLLIE. And I'm Ollie.

JILL. This is our son Benjy.

OLLIE. We'd like to tell you about our home.

JILL. Our *dream* home.

OLLIE. That's right.

JILL. *How* we got it.

OLLIE. Exactly. Because...well...

JILL. We're good people.

OLLIE. We *hope* we are.

JILL. We *try* to be.

OLLIE. And yet...*some* of the things we've done—

JILL. To *get* our dream home.

OLLIE. Well...they're not exactly...nice.

JILL. No, they're not.

OLLIE. In fact they're...

JILL. They're...

OLLIE. ...Horrible.

JILL. I'm afraid they are, yes.

OLLIE. Some might even say...shocking.

JILL. They would.

OLLIE. But I'm sure—

JILL. We're *both* sure.

OLLIE. Once we've...explained—

JILL. *Why* we did—

OLLIE. *What* we did—

JILL. Then you'll understand.

OLLIE. Because *everything* we did.

JILL. No matter how horrible.

OLLIE. No matter how shocking.

JILL. We did it all—

OLLIE and JILL. For baby.

JILL. Talking of which—Look at him!

OLLIE. He's fast asleep.

JILL. He's had a busy day.

OLLIE. His birthday.

JILL. One year old.

OLLIE. We had a party.

JILL. In the garden.

OLLIE. The garden party from hell.

JILL. Don't give away the end of the—

OLLIE. Oh! Sorry, sorry.

JILL. They'll all be waiting for the garden party from hell now!

OLLIE. They won't, they won't—Garden party from hell! Forget I said it!—They've forgotten. See?

JILL. ...I'll just pop Benjy in his cot.

OLLIE. I'll be getting things started, shall I?

JILL. Yes, yes, I won't be long.

*Jill exits.*

OLLIE. Right! Now me and Jill—we've talked about where to begin explaining all this. And we've decided to start one and a half years ago. That's six months before Benjamin was born. So. We're not in our dream home now. Oh, no. We're in a tiny flat in a place called Red Ocean Estate—Oh! You've heard of it, I see. Saw the documentary on telly, did you? Crime capital of the universe

and all that. Honestly, you'd think everyone on the estate was either a drug dealer or suicidal. True, the Russian family that gassed themselves *were* drug dealers, but to spend half the programme on that single event was misleading in the extreme if you want my opinion. So...here I am! In our Red Ocean Estate flat. Laying some more mice traps!

JILL. We've just got a letter.

*Jill has returned.*

OLLIE. Too late for the post.

JILL. Hand delivered. Looks official. (*Reading.*) "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Swift, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Miss Dee and I would like—with your permission, of course—to talk to you about a subject that is very close to my heart. Namely, dream homes."

OLLIE. Dream homes?

JILL. "I have been asked by the local council to head a new department that will function as an offshoot of the government's housing programme. The name of this new department is the D.S.R.C.D.H. Otherwise known as the Department of Social Regeneration Through the Creation of Dream Homes."

OLLIE. Never heard of it.

JILL. "It gives me the deepest joy to inform both of you that you've been selected for participation in our new scheme."

OLLIE. What scheme?

JILL. "To put it simply. We will give you a house."

OLLIE. *What?!*

*Takes letter.*

"If you want to hear more about this wonderful opportunity please meet me at the house in question tomorrow at midday. The address is below along with directions."—Oh, it's a joke! A pathetic telly show or something. We'll go there and they'll film us getting all excited. You know? Let's make fun of the underclass desperate to get on the property ladder.

JILL. We are *not* "the underclass."

OLLIE. Okay, okay.



JILL. Desperate, possibly. Underclass? No.

OLLIE. It could be a gang. You thought of that? We'll be robbed at gun point.

JILL. Ollie! If you do not agree to see this house then I will get very upset. And if I get very upset our unborn baby will get very upset. And you remember what that psychiatrist on telly said about pregnancy shaping the rest of a child's life. Do you want our child to grow into someone who machine-guns his classmates?

*Slight pause.*

OLLIE. It's the next day.

JILL. We're driving to the house.

OLLIE. We turn right... Here?

JILL. Yes. Then straight on to the roundabout—Oh, look, Ollie. The old car plant.

OLLIE. What's left of it.

JILL. Look at all those weeds.

OLLIE. Know what it reminds me of? Those Malayan temples they found in the jungle. They sacrificed hundreds and hundreds of—

JILL. Roundabout!

OLLIE. What exit do we—?

JILL. Second!... And we need the third turning—no, *fourth!*—on the right. Gilead Close should be at the end.

OLLIE. Jesus. Nothing but deserted streets. Not a soul.

JILL. What's that saying you're so fond of? "Hell is other people"?

OLLIE. I'm not sure it applies in these circumstances. Also, there's a debate about what Jean-Paul Sartre exactly meant by that. There's some that think he was referring to—

JILL. Ollie.

OLLIE. Sorry.

JILL. ...The houses look solid enough.

OLLIE. The houses in Chernobyl look solid enough but I wouldn't want to—

JILL. Turn!

OLLIE. Left?

JILL. Right!—What's that noise?

OLLIE. The exhaust's hit something.

JILL. It's not going to fall off, is it?

OLLIE. It should be fine.

JILL. That doesn't fill me with confidence, Ollie.

OLLIE. Gilead Close!—What number do we—?

JILL. Three.

OLLIE. I...I can't make out the numbers.

JILL. Well, there're five houses in all.

OLLIE. So three should be—

JILL. Middle one—Here! Stop!

*The car stops. Slight pause.*

OLLIE. Chernobyl chic.

JILL. If you make one more reference to that god-awful place—

OLLIE. Alright, alright.

JILL. ...Well, we won't see much from inside the car, will we.

*They get out of the car.*

...Doesn't seem to be any sign of Miss Dee.

OLLIE. We're a bit early.

JILL. The front of the house looks okay.

OLLIE. The garage is a write-off.

JILL. It matches our car then, doesn't it.

OLLIE. At least our car has doors!—Where're you going?

JILL. Looking through the windows.

OLLIE. Careful, Jill!

JILL. Big rooms.

OLLIE. Big decorating.

JILL. The front door's open!—Miss Dee?!...Miss Dee?!

OLLIE. You're not going inside?

JILL. Why not?

# RADIANT VERMIN

by Philip Ridley

1 man, 2 women

When a young couple is offered an ideal house by a mysterious stranger, it prompts the question: How far would any of us go to get our dream home? A fast-paced, pitch-black comedy, RADIANT VERMIN is a provocative satire about the housing market, homelessness, and inequality.

*“RADIANT VERMIN is a blithely told fable for the age of unaffordable housing. Like a Brothers Grimm story, it is executed with its own consistent fantasy logic, deployed to remind us of the dangers of getting what we wish for... it makes for nasty and energetic fun...”* —**The New York Times**

*“...finely tuned...a fable-like tale, glittering with menace and laced with the supernatural. ...precise, intense and breathtaking...”* —**The Stage (UK)**

*“[Ridley’s] approach is more accessible and overtly political than usual. ...Ridley pictures consumerism at its most insane and destructive. He’s on stingingly funny form...”* —**The Evening Standard (London)**

*“...sheer genius: superb, playful writing, zany, magical plot arcs, pristine characterizations, and acutely rhythmic and cleverly paced humor... [RADIANT VERMIN] enthalls, mesmerizes, shocks, agreeably satisfies our ‘middle class notions,’ then rocks us to the core. The play is never preachy, but it slams you through quiet revelations throughout, sweetly showing that for every step up the ladder of prosperity, someone pays with their lives and substance.”* —**TheaterPizzazz.com**

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SHIVERED  
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**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**

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