

DON'T LET THE BEDBUGS BITE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KESSLER EXTERMINATION - DAY

The town is small and quaint, reminiscent of the 1950s by appearance. Few cars on the street. Most people walk or ride bikes.

Sign on a small, older house reads "Kessler Extermination." Pictures of cockroaches, ants, and termites decorate the windows.

A rusty, rundown pickup truck with a shell over the back is parked out front. A crummy, worn magnet hangs on the driver's door, barely readable with the business name. A faded spot remains on the passenger door where a matching magnet used to hang.

RON KESSLER (30), a meek man both inside and out, very smart and dedicated, unloads a couple of sprayers from the back of his truck.

A newer van, complete with a giant plastic cockroach on top, approaches. "Critter Ridders" is on the side in bright block letters. Underneath in smaller letters is the caption "We get rid of bugs 4 U."

VINCE MILLER (35), scraggly, the kind of man who would rip off his own mom, sits behind the wheel. With a victorious laugh, he holds up a middle finger at his adversary as he drives past.

RON
(yelling)
How's business, asshole?

The van's heavy exhaust fumes cloud around Ron. He coughs.

SARAH (25), demure and plain, steps outside, her swollen belly indicative of a late pregnancy. She could burst at any moment. The ancient screen door, complete with torn screen, creaks heavily with movement.

Sarah looks down the street, where Vince's van disappears from sight.

SARAH
Was that Vince?

RON
Off to another job, I reckon.

SARAH
He does it on purpose, you know.

RON

What?

SARAH

Drives by here when he doesn't need to. He wants to make sure you see him.

RON

His time will come.

Sarah opens the screen door, stands there for a moment, looking down the street at Vince's exhaust fumes that dissipate.

SARAH

We have to talk, Ron.

Sarah steps inside, the screen door banging closed.

INT. KESSLER EXTERMINATION - RON'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Old desk and chair, closet, rusty file cabinet. Articles and pictures on the wall of Mitch Kessler, Ron's dad. The information shows Kessler Extermination in its hey day when it was very successful.

A plaque hangs off to the side with Mitch's name inscribed. Given to him by the Southtown Major for "Exceptional Service To Southtown In The Extermination Field."

Next to it is a photo of Mitch (early 50s). Dressed in coveralls with his name on the front pocket, Mitch proudly holds a sprayer.

A certificate from Southern University has Ron's name written on it. A degree in Biochemistry. Another certificate from the same university shows a degree in Entomology.

Sarah grabs an eviction notice from the desk and holds it up as Ron enters. His eyes lock on the paper.

SARAH

How long have you been hiding this from me?

RON

Sarah...

Sarah picks up a stack of bills lying by her side and slaps them down to the desk.

SARAH

And what about those?

RON
I was hoping business would pick
up.

Sarah waddles down the hall.

RON
Sarah!

Sarah returns with a suitcase in each hand.

RON
What are you doing?

SARAH
I'm going to Mom's for a while.

Ron grips Sarah's shoulders.

RON
Honey, I can make the business
work. Just please give me a little
more time.

SARAH
Ron, you're smart when it comes to
formulas and stuff. You just don't
have your dad's business sense.

O.S. A car horn HONKS.

SARAH
I have to go.

Sarah moves to the main door.

RON
Sarah, we can work this out.
I'll... I'll do whatever you want.

SARAH
Maybe we could go to counseling
while I'm staying at Mom's.

RON
Doesn't that cost a lot?

Sarah sighs. She carries her bags through the doorway.

EXT. KESSLER EXTERMINATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sarah goes to the car parked in the driveway. From it emerges MARTHA RANDALL (40s), a serious demeanor behind a face older than her actual years. A cigarette in her mouth, she helps Sarah load the luggage into the trunk.

As they climb into the car, Martha looks over at Ron, who stands at the screen door. Martha gives him a smug grin.

Sarah locks eyes with Ron. The car pulls away.

INT. KESSLER EXTERMINATION - RON'S WORKROOM - DAY

In the basement of Ron's house, hidden behind a rotted wooden door. A lab table rests in the center, complete with a microscope, beakers, Bunsen Burner and chemicals. A stool stands beside it. A door in the far wall.

A table against the wall holds a few glass tanks with lids. Several drawers are built within.

Ron schlepps inside. He opens a shoddy bottom drawer. It sticks. He fights with it. Falling lopsided in the hole, it's a real struggle.

Ron pulls it out completely. Accidentally drops it to the floor. The papers inside scatter.

Disgruntled, Ron stoops and begins picking up the mess. His eyes shift to the hole where the drawer had been. He reaches inside. Pulls out a small notebook.

Ron sits back on his stool at the table, thumbs through the notebook, stopping on an early page.

MITCH (V.O.)

November 15, 2015. I started work on my KAB formula, "Kills All Bugs." Early data shows great promise. A super pesticide that will destroy any insect.

Ron's eyes widen. He turns a page.

MITCH (V.O.)

November 29, 2015. The new formula failed to work on cockroaches in the lab today. I think adjusting the levels of carbon disulfide may be successful in tomorrow's trials.

Ron lowers the notebook. He looks off into empty air as he recalls.

SARAH (V.O.)
Ron, the hospital called. Your
dad... it looks like he's had a
heart attack.

RON (V.O.)
How bad?

SARAH (V.O.)
They say you should get there right
away.

A tear comes to Ron's eye. He wipes it away.

RON (V.O.)
I'm here to see Mitch Kessler.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
I'm terribly sorry, but Mr. Kessler
just passed away.

Ron lifts the notebook. His sad look hardens into one of
determination.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

One of the nicest houses in the neighborhood.

INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - SAME

Sarah sits at the table, finishing a large meal. She relaxes
in her chair.

Across from her, Martha chain smokes in front of an empty
plate.

SARAH
Thanks for letting me stay here a
while.

MARTHA
Ron's a loser, Sarah. In little
over two years, he has run his
father's successful business into
the ground. You live in a dump.

Sarah looks off.

MARTHA
Think of the baby.

Sarah takes her plate to the sink and rinses it. She
purposely keeps her back to Martha.