

SIDE #4

Characters: Dangerous Beans, Darktan, Peaches

DANGEROUS BEANS This is an ideal base. It smells secret and safe. A perfect place for rats.

DARKTAN *[Moving forward]* Right. And you know what's worrying me about that?

DANGEROUS BEANS What is worrying you, Darktan?

DARKTAN It's a perfect place for rats but there *aren't* any rats here. Except us. Rat tunnels, yes. But no rats at all. A town like this should be full of them.

PEACHES Oh, they're probably scared of us.

DARKTAN Maybe. But things don't smell right. Thinking is a great invention, but we were given noses and it pays to listen to them. Be extra careful.

[He turns to a group of rats.]

OK troops! You know the drill! Plague rats, in your platoons, in front of me *now!* Very nice. Right! This is tricky territory troops, so we're going to be careful. And...forward, march!

[He watches them leave.]

That's got us started. If we can't get the humans looking for a good rat-catcher by tomorrow, we don't know our business.

PEACHES We need to stay longer than that. Some of our ladies are going to have their babies.

DARKTAN We don't know if it's safe here yet. Nature has to take its course, obviously. But we haven't explored. There *must* be other rats here. I know they keep out of our way, but even so. I'm going to join my squad. What's up with Hamnpork?

PEACHES He's...thinking about things.

DARKTAN Thinking. Right. Well, I've got traps to see to. Smell you later!

[He exits.]

DANGEROUS BEANS What is the matter with Hamnpork?

PEACHES He's getting old. He needs to rest a lot. He won't admit it, though. And I think he's worried that Darktan or one of the others is going to challenge him.

DANGEROUS BEANS Will they, do you think?

PEACHES Darktan's too wrapped up in breaking traps and testing poisons.

DANGEROUS BEANS I've been thinking that we shouldn't kill other rats. I should like you to write that down. What else have you written?

[Peaches pulls out a grubby sheet of paper and a pencil stub.]

PEACHES *[Reading]* In the Clan is Strength, We co-operate, or we die, Don't Widdle where you eat. *[Writing]* No Rat to Kill Another Rat. *[Looking up]* But supposing we have to?

DANGEROUS BEANS Then we have to. But we shouldn't. That's only four. There's one more.

PEACHES *[Reading]* We Are The Changelings. We Are Not Like Other Rats.