

Be Prepared.

 Daniel. | Midday, March. | iPhones for now.

The record player is plugged in using leads; the room is alive with Diana Ross. Key is slumped on his sofa, flicking through his proto-playing cards. Key's lip curls and tightens as he gropes them. "Daniel" flashes on his iPhone. Key's tongue drips into his beard as he inspects the Jacks. "Daniel" continues to flash. Eventually, Key swipes. And it's Daniel.

Daniel: Right, there's going to be a lockdown.

Key: Hello, Daniel.

Daniel: So you need to be ready.

Key: We don't know what's happening, Daniel, that's kind of the point.

Daniel: I listen to The Today Programme. I'm clued up.

Key inspects the King of Hearts. The monarch appears to be mouthing the word "listen".

Key: Go on then.

Daniel: You need to get out there, stockpile.

Key: Okay.

Daniel: I've just bought a fuck-ton of flour.

Key takes this in. He looks down onto the street. Folk, piled high with toilet rolls, weave uncertainly into the road. Cars beep their horns, a man on a bicycle moves through. He has a vast pole across his back and on each end industrial waste sacks full of pasta and gel; his chain squeaks.

Daniel: I know you.

Key: You don't know me.

Daniel: You'll leave it to the last minute and you'll be locked in, shit all over the walls and nothing to fry your onions in.

Key: You know nothing about me.

Daniel: You're a sleepwalker.

Key: Poppycock.

Daniel: You'll wake up in a fortnight with no food inside you, wishing you'd listened to old Dan. Did you get the record player?

Key stares at his record player. The gossamer-thin stylus trembles as "Upside Down" twirls beneath it.

Key: It's from you?

Daniel: You mentioned you had records.

Key: Yuh.

Daniel: But no turntable.

Key: I'd have got one.

Daniel: Thought it might be nice in lockdown.

Key: I'd have got one.

Daniel: You don't have to get me shit back.

The stylus reaches the centre, returns itself to its cradle. Diana Ross slows to a stop and sits, stroking her nails with her thumbs.

Key: We don't know they're definitely locking down.

Daniel: Is Martha Kearney telling us about it for her own health? You gotta be ready!

Key: Bugger me! Have some faith, man! You make out I'm going to be sprawled on my sofa, watching Come Dine with Me twenty-four seven, pizza toppings slithering down my thighs –

Daniel: It's coming!

Key: It'll disappear.

Daniel: Turn on the telly, man! This is the real shiz.

Key flicks the TV on. Huw Edwards is looking pretty glum; reading his dismal sheets of paper, fiddling nervously with his cuffs. Key spreads himself over his pheasant incubator, dripping down its sides. His eyes scuttle around the television screen sadly. His hair collects in clumps on the floorboards.

Daniel: It's coming. You even got a slow cooker?

Key: I got a cooker, I –

Daniel: Slow cooker.

Key: I don't know what speed it is, man.

Daniel: I got the best recipes. There's a rabbit stew I do, takes nine days on the medium setting.

Key: Rabbit. Yuh.

Daniel: You can't bury your head in the sand.

Key: No.

Daniel: You're like me –

Key: No way –

Daniel: You live alone.

Key: Oh, right, yeah.

Daniel: No one's gonna stockpile this shit for you.

Key: No.

Key opens his weird food cupboard thing. Tins wink at him as the midday sun kisses their lids. He picks out some pasta. 300g maybe, a mixture of fusilli, spaghetti and some broken up lasagne sheets.

Daniel: You gotta get out there, fill your trolley.

Key: I ain't doing that.

Daniel: Use your elbows.

Key: I've got food, I've got crumpets. I ain't joining the scrum.

Daniel: Really get in there with your elbows. Jab 'em in the ribs. Sling some penne in your trolley.

Key: You're a sheep man.

Daniel: I wore my gym kit, shoved some shin pads down my socks. It's madness in the aisles.

Key: Hence why I'm spreading curd on crumpets.

Daniel: You spend six months eating crumpets, you'll end up in a documentary.

Key: What the hell? Where's six months come from.

Daniel: They had a scientist on The Today Programme.

Key: Oh I get it, they wheel in a nerd, you're dangling off his every word. This is three weeks, max. I've got fish fingers, I've got curries

–

Daniel: Tinned?

Key: Who cares what the packaging is? The nerd's saying my lamb madras has gotta be slathered in plastic with a damn sleeve around it now?

Daniel: You've gotta think about this shit. You need to look after yourself. I'm making green juices.

Key: Bleughhh!

Daniel: I've bought a celery mallet. I'm pulverising that shit.

Key: Everyone just chill out!

Daniel: I've bought kettlebells.

Key: Huh?

Key's scratching a list of essentials into his pheasant incubator with his compasses.

Daniel: Your filming gone?

Key: Uh-huh.

Daniel: So what you gonna do?

Key: We've made playing cards with my poems on 'em, we'll flog them.

Daniel: You gotta have a plan.

Key: I know you do, Einstein. This is mine. Sell the cards, buy crumps with the proceeds.

Key spins the Nine of Diamonds into the air and blows it towards his chocolate cabinet.

Daniel: My play's up in smoke.

Key: Stop writing plays.

Daniel: Huh?

Key: Plays are for pussies.

Daniel: Well, anyway, it's pulled.

Key: Okay. Sorry.

Daniel has gone.

Key: Sorry to hear that.

Key has balled himself up now and rests in the corner of the sofa. His ears twitch as he squints towards the window. He listens as the gears of life as he knows it slow and stiffen. Something is jabbing into Key's arnuzzi; he

shuffles and pulls out the orange pen. He holds it. It seems to pull itself further into his hand.