

Origins of Rat-Man

written by

D.K. Prete

Address
Phone
E-mail

EXT. REMMY'S CHEEZERIA - EVENING

COLBY stands on a street corner, flipping a sign for Remmy's Cheezeria. He wears a fully-body rat mascot suit, eye-holes hidden by the mask's cartoonish grin. He's quite skilled even with the heavy costume; a few pedestrians take notice and file into the restaurant.

A timer goes off and Colby rolls up the sleeve of the costume to stop his watch.

INT. REMMY'S CHEEZERIA - CONTINUOUS

He paces through the Cheezeria's entrance, and into the employee area. He leans the sign against the wall and removes the mascot head.

COLBY

Hey Remmy, I'm heading home
alright?

REMMY, a short man in a chef's hat, hurries from the kitchen and hands Colby a wrapped sandwich.

REMMY

Some impressive sign work today,
Colby! Can I pay for your ride
home?

COLBY

No thanks, I ride my bike,
remember?

REMMY

Yeah, about that....

EXT. BEHIND REMMY'S CHEEZERIA - CONTINUOUS

Remmy and Colby stand outside the restaurant's back exit. A broken chain and bike lock lays next to the rack, cycle nowhere in sight.

COLBY

I wish you'd told me sooner....

REMMY

I just found out myself. Brie
texted me about it on her break
just before you came in.

A beat.

REMMY (CONT'D)

So, should I call you a cab?

COLBY

Nah, it's fine. I'll just take the bus.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Colby sits on the bench, alone, with the costume head sitting beside him. As Colby unwraps his cheese sandwich, a small rat peeks out of the bushes.

Colby takes no notice as the creature scurries up the bench and onto his shoulder. Only when it jumps, landing on his hand does he startle.

Frightened, the rat sinks its teeth into his thumb. Colby winces and flings it off. The rat scurries away into the darkness just as the bus arrives.

Colby presses on the wound, annoyed but unhurt. He wraps up his sandwich, grabs his mascot head, and boards the bus.

INT. COLBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Colby, now in pajamas, tosses and turns in his bed. He dreams of the rat at the bus stop as the full moon beams through his window. The light falls on the mascot head as it grins toward Colby.

INT. COLBY'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Colby enters the bathroom and washes his face before he catches his reflection above the sink. He freezes.

His eyes are tinged yellow and his normally clean-shaven face has sprouted thick, wiry whiskers.

Colby shakes his head and rubs his eyes. They remain yellow. Sighing, he grabs a razor and prepares to shave.

INT. COLBY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The whiskers on Colby's face are still present, his eyes even yellower. His front teeth poke out behind his lips slightly as he grabs his phone.

The screen's brightness hurts his eyes. Even with it turned all the way down, he squints as he dials a number.

COLBY

Hey, Remmy.

REMMY (V.O.)

Colby! We missed you yesterday. How ya doing, buddy?

COLBY

Not too good. I've got a bad fever; think I caught something at the bus stop. Is it alright if I take another day or two?

REMMY

Shoot, knew I should've called you a ride. Rest up, alright? Take all the time you need.

COLBY

Thanks, man. I'll come in as soon as I can. Thanks. Bye.

Colby hangs up and opens the fridge, reaching straight for the cheese drawer. He's halfway into a block of Swiss when he notices his hand.

Coarse fur sprouts from the bite mark on his thumb and runs up his to his wrist. His fingernails are long and dirty.

Colby stares at this, nose twitching before he goes back to devouring his cheese.

INT. REMMY'S CHEEZERIA - DAY

Colby hides inside his rat costume, scampering past the kitchen as he snatches his sign and head for the front door of the restaurant.

Remmy catches him and rushes to greet him.

REMMY

Colby! How're you doing? I was starting to get worried.

The face of the rat costume stares back blankly.

REMMY (CONT'D)

Look, I feel real bad about your bike, what with you getting sick and all. How about I give you the pay from those days you missed, enough to cover a new one?

Colby's voice has changed to a low hiss.

COLBY
That'd be... good....

REMMY
You sure you're good to work today,
man?

COLBY
(nods)
I'm fine.

REMMY
Oh... kay... Just don't push
yourself, alright?

Colby gives him two rat-thumbs up and hurries to the front of the store with his sign. Remmy watches for a moment.

REMMY (CONT'D)
Did that costume always have a
tail?

EXT. REMMY'S CHEEZERIA - DAY

Colby is better at sign flipper than ever with the added grace of his tail. All is going well until a CUSTOMER leaves their cat at an outdoor table while she goes inside.

Colby and the cat eye each other before it hisses. Colby hisses back and hunches down low. Suddenly, the cat pounces on him, scratching and clawing at his fur.

Blood seeps from the cuts.

The Customer and Remmy rush outside to break up the scuffle.

REMMY
Colby, are you okay?

CUSTOMER
I'm so sorry; she's normally so
well-behaved.

The cat growls at Colby once it's pulled away. He hisses back and lunges for it.

INT. COLBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Colby sits on his bed, staring at the the head of his rat costume across the mattress. It stares back.

Colby stands and peers out his window. The moon looks like Swiss cheese, or a Rat Signal.

He nods to himself, newfound purpose coursing through his veins as he dons the rat head.

EXT. CAMPUS PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Orange light pours from the streetlamps in little spotlights along the sidewalk. Few cars remain in the lot and all is quiet but the clinking of a lock and chain.

A lone BIKE THIEF fiddles with the lock of a bike. Something scuttles behind him but when he turns, nothing is there.

He kneels back down and cuts the chain with a pair of bolt cutters. He stands, readying the bike before he stops, staring into the distance.

A large silhouette stands a few meters away, just beyond the streetlight.

The Bike Thief's eyes adjust and he's just able to make out the shape of the figure.

It is The Ratman.