

## Rata-Too-Wide

Life had become brilliant for the young savant of a Rat known as Remy. It had been quite some time since he, Linguini, and Colette had opened up the La Ratatouille courtesy of the funding from the repentant Anton Ego. It had come and gone so fast, the days turning to weeks and then into months as every day was always busy at their bistro. And every day was truly worth it. Though he and Colette had been the only chefs present, after a while they had managed to add a few new faces to their roster to account for the sheer volume of business they were receiving. It was pretty funny watching Colette sometimes go berserk on the new trainees, ah, memories of back when Linguini was in the same position. It always brought a small smile to Remy's muzzle.

This night he had stayed back after closing, to ponder a little on some new recipes he could try. He was tapping a large pencil against a sheet of paper as he pondered to himself in the dim light source of a candle he was standing by. There were so many ideas he could try, and yet it was proving unusually hard to visualize them. Perhaps this was the fabled writer's block many creative types experienced when it comes to putting their ideas out. Remy grumbled to himself as he lazily scratched at his chin, his attention diverting from the white sheet as his mind wandered about, trying to find something else to steal his interest. He paused at the large mixing pot that had been left on a bench. Looks like someone hadn't kept their station clear; Colette was going to blow a fuse the next day. Remy scratched his chin again as he stared into the polished metal, his reflection staring back. With so many days of fine dining and taste testing, he had certainly put on a few. His lithe form was counterbalanced by a large mound of a chubby gut he was sporting. Heck, if he was taller he'd look like his father Django. Remy chuckled to himself as he puffed himself up as tall as possible, his belly protruding as he tried to keep his mass on his shoulders. "A Rat has no need for cooking! Humans can't be trusted" he scolded himself, imitating his father (poorly) as his body unwound, shrinking back there.

He chuckled to himself, slapping his knees as he doubled over from laughing. It really wasn't that funny, but he just couldn't help but laugh loudly from how ridiculous he sounded. It was an infectious laugh, the one that spreads and fills you with the giggles despite the inherent lack of humour. Wiping a tear from his eyes, Remy gazed begrudgingly back at his blank pad. And that was when it hit him: He was going about it all wrong. How could he visualize the flavours when he wasn't experiencing them? It was all well and good to ponder the implications, but an artisan like him needed to experience them, and then inspiration will come.

With all his Rat given grace he rode a tea towel down to the floor, landing with a heavy thump as he skittered on all fours to the food storage. With his slightly larger frame it was a

little more difficult to squeeze under the door, but he somehow managed the act as his fat bottom popped through. Wandering the store, Remy tapped his cheek thoughtfully as his eyes wandered across all the available foods. Hmm, perhaps the cheeses first? Hiking up the shelving, Remy scampered along the shelves of cheeses they used for their cheese tray. There were so many rich flavours here, both familiar and quite austere. Remy froze by a rather lovely wedge of Bleu d'Auvergne; it was a blue cheese, and it showed by the rich blue veins criss-crossing through the creamy texture of the cheese. Looks like Colette had been paying a little extra for such quality. Remy breathed in the sweet aroma of the cheese, his body shuddering from the aroma. Taking a discrete piece, Remy crammed it into his mouth.

His mind was alight with colour as the mixture of spicy, pepper, and salt danced along his palette. He shuddered from the taste, knowing that something sweet would go amazing with it. His knees weakened as he walked on two legs along the cheeses, stopping by a cheeky girl in light-brown. Ah, the sweet wedge of Brie, Queen of Cheeses. Snuffling along its surface, Remy gorged on a large bite of Brie, savouring the flavour. Seems this old girl had been made with a large fistful of salt, judging by the salty flavour that was most prominent in her. Remy had scarcely swallowed when he had taken another bite of Brie, re-experiencing the magic as he chewed on the cheese. Again, something sweet would complement the salt.

Growing slightly more fanatic, Remy encroached on a lovely piece of Camembert. Oh sure, this pretty lady wasn't known for her flavour, but any cheese could be useful given the right preparation. Stuffing his face into the cheese, Remy gnawed his way through the rind, devouring the cheese with gusto as he stuck his nose right into the creamy center. He slurped up the creamy innards, his pupils dilating as he very quickly had entered into a cheese rush. Prying himself from the Camembert, Remy licked the remaining gooey cheese from his face as he looked around with gusto, his eyes falling onto a Murol. It was a donut shaped cheese, not as pungent as its brethren, but with as much class for those who enjoy a softer taste.

Remy's belly bobbed against the ground as he skittered to the cheese. He licked his muzzle greedily as he rubbed his paws together, unable to really figure out where to begin. He shrugged, ramming his teeth into the side, tearing through the rind to the softer cheese within. A slight taste of chilli ran through his mouth as he tore into the cheese, inhaling thick chunks of cheese, chewing them to a fine paste as he devoured each chunk. And with each thick hunk of cheese he swallowed, his belly bulged from all the cheese. He had gone completely mad, an absolute food bender as he just couldn't help himself. He tore and chewed on the Murol, the savoury flavour incredibly addictive as he kept going. And as he went, his belly kept bulging. He had gnawed his way through a quarter of the cheese, and he was more resembling his brother Emile than he did himself, his hips being swallowed by his expanding gut. And he would not be stopped. He barely chewing now as he crammed large

hunks of the Murol into his greedy more, swallowing the semi-solid hunks with sheer delighted gusto. The food packed itself inside him, making him look like he was carrying at least three young Rats inside. But there was no children, only a food baby as Remy was forced onto his front, his gut so full of cheese that his fragile frame could barely hold him up. Sliding forward with whatever he could grab onto, he held onto the cheese, still stuffing himself silly as he looked like he had eaten an orange whole. His eyes were pure mania as he continued until he had devoured the donut of Murol completely.

He belched loudly, cheese particles spraying from his mouth as he sighed in relief. Remy was completely bloated with cheese, his gut easily being twice his size, filled to bursting point with cheese. It was impossible for his tiny feet to reach the floor as they hopelessly hung above his enormous melon-sized belly, his midsection completely rounded out. And he yawned loudly, feeling so contentedly full. Why, he could easily drift off to sleep....

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Remy awoke with a start, morning having come as he had slept amongst the cheeses. He was greeted by the surprised expression of his good friend Linguini. "Oh Little Chef, what have you *done* to yourself?" he gasped in dismay, reaching up to the bloated Rat.

Remy yawned loudly, scratching his side lazily as he was still completely immobile from his midnight snack. Linguini sighed in disbelief, poking Remy's chubby thighs as the Rat didn't attempt to complain. "Looks like someone finally had a food bender huh?" Linguini sighed, hefting Remy in both hands.

The Rat stretched lazily, giving Linguini his best cute look. The waiter melted from the adorable vision the chubby Rat was giving him. "Alright, well, it was only one wedge of cheese. I'm guessing cheese, I hope. But I'll hide you under my hat today; I'll tell Colette you're taking a day off for uh, family reasons" Linguini suggested.

Remy shrugged as he steadily drifted off to sleep again.

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*Some time later...*

Linguini was sitting in the doctor's office, a large cast around his neck. "Mr Linguini, you will be required to wear this cast for a week until your neck properly realigns" his doctor explained to him.

All Linguini wore was a silent expression, showing nothing of the livid rage he was feeling as his lips slowly thinned into a forced smile.