

Snap

by Harry B. Sanderford

Sweet Tooth needed a little snack, so he ambled on down the hall to the kitchen. He figured to make one of his patented peanut butter, potato chip, tangerine, raisin, and banana sandwiches because those things just always hit the spot. Unfortunately, when he tugged the Wonder Bread from the top of the fridge, what was left of a newish loaf slid from its sack, scattering 52 pickup style (give or take a few cards) onto his feet and all over the kitchen floor. Examining the Wonder bag now hanging limply in his grasp, he discovered on the leaky end a rather ragged hole he could not recall having formerly been there. Turning his attention back atop the fridge to what *had* been a brand new bunch of bananas, he saw very plainly that one banana was now half eaten. Well, half devoured actually. It wasn't like it had been sliced cleanly with a knife and wrapped in Saran Wrap to be placed in the butter door of the fridge where it would be forgotten for months before its discovery and finally tossed out with suspicion and utter speculation as to its species and origin. No, it had been rather haphazardly portioned with seemingly no utensil involved; an oozing brown viscosity trailing its ragged, blackened, peel. His old nemesis he knew was back.

It wasn't a good idea to come between Sweet Tooth and his snacks, unless maybe you felt like getting eaten. This wasn't Sweet's first round with *Super Raton*. The last time, his pointy faced adversary had escaped down a hidey hole embarrassing him and it was still a sore point. He swore one day he'd get that rat if it ever dared set paw in his pantry again. He'd been waiting ever since, counting the days, and he was ready. At the hardware store he'd purchased the biggest baddest rat trap ever made, the E-Rat-O-Kater! (Patent Pending). It had a one inch thick solid oak base half the size of a clipboard with an over-wound heavy duty spring held in check by a hair trigger that at the slightest vibration or provocation would release the bulky barbed business end. Guarranteed to rend *The*

End. The beady eyed potato chip poacher had not shown himself since.

Kicking bread slices out of his path, there was a lightness in his step on his way to the pantry and a wide grin cracked his face as he fetched the too long dormant E-Rat-O-Kater! from the top shelf. He set it up where the bread had been on top of the refrigerator, baiting it with one of the slices of bread from the floor he smeared with peanut butter. As a last stroke of culinary inspiration he dotted the peanut butter with cheesy puffs he remembered the whiskery one had enjoyed before. He cocked the powerful spring back, hooking the bar under the keeper and sliding it into the trigger. Then he carefully, carefully, holding his breath, very gently, released it. All set. Bon appetit, Mighty Mouse!

He was too wound up now to bother with his patented peanut butter, potato chip, tangerine, raisin, and banana sandwich. Besides, the bread was all dirty. He swept up the bread, snagged an envelope of Poptarts from the cupboard and went back to his room to eat them raw and listen. He hunkered in the dark quietly chewing the crumbly cold pastry. He feared turning on the light or television might alert the twitchy vermin and dissuade him from partaking of his last supper. After a while he stretched out on the bed. He meant to just lay in wait, listening but before long he fell asleep and began to dream. His dreams were a jumble of the tantalizing treats he loved hovering before him. Suspended bags of salty snacks dripped crispy contents like crunchy teardrops while half eaten candy bars and cream filled Little Debbie's draped the backs of aisle seats or spilled over counter top edges in a dreamy Dali vision of Sugar's concessions At The Bijou.

SNAP!

Snapped awake from his dream, Sweet Tooth sprang from his bed and ran down the darkened hallway into the darker kitchen. He skidded to a stop at the far wall, snapped on the light switch and

peered up at the fridge, eager to gloat. Nothing. No writhing rodent, no cheesy puff adorned peanut buttered bread, not even the E-Rat-O-Kater! remained. Slowly he turned, and there he was.

Sweet Tooth had run right past Super Raton in his haste. The scamper hampered rodent of the rotund persuasion was now between him and the door. His legs on his right side were pinned grotesquely in the E-Rat-O-Kater!'s steely grip but damned if the furry bastard wasn't using his left legs to push himself along like one of those bulldogs that has mastered riding a skateboard. Sweet swallowed back a twinge of poptart that was trying to escape and for the first time felt just a little exposed in his BVDs and bare feet. While Sweet Tooth shifted from foot to foot wondering just how to finish the job without requiring a rabies vaccination, the mauled rat was making off with the E-Rat-O-Kater!.. The varmint reached the doorway but instead of skating through and down the dark hallway, it steered into the jam. Wedging the E-Rat-O-Kater! against the jam gained him enough leverage to wriggle his crooked appendages free.

Snap.

The rat sat up on his haunches and casually licked a trickle of blood from his paw before using it to flip Sweet Tooth the bird and darting off down the hall. Sweet Tooth finally snapped out of it himself. He remembered the broom. *Of course, the broom!* he thought and snatching it up, he lit out after the rat. This was not over.

