How Rats and Their Bare Tails Came to Be

By: Makena F
In a beautiful town, there was once a beautiful women named Rodentius. Although Rodentius was very beautiful, she was also a vain and boastful person. She often spent her time admiring herself in a mirror, or boasting to others about how much prettier she was than them.

She would say to others, “I am the prettiest woman in the world. No one is prettier than me and no one will be.” The town’s people were always offended by this and tried to stand up to her by yelling after her, “Rodentius you should not boast about beauty when you have none inside. Inside you are a vain and withered person.” But she would not hear it and ignored every complaint by walking away.
One day the town’s people would not tolerate her boasting any longer. They immediately went to the Greek temple and sent their plea to two specific Greek gods, Hephaestus and Athena. Their plea included that they needed the gods to do something about Rodentius boasting meanly to other villagers, and about what she had been doing recently.

Hephaestus and Athena soon got the town’s people plea and woe. They quickly came up with a sly plan to help the town’s people. For their scheme to work, they had to get Demeter to help. And according to plan, Demeter was helping them. Demeter made the most beautiful bush and instantly put a spell on it, to only attract Rodentius into their trap, and only Rodentius.
Later on, Rodentius was taking a walk through the dreadful forest. All she thought about was how much prettier she was than everything in the area. A while later she found the beautiful bush in the ugly forest. Rodentius excitedly exclaimed, "This is the most beautiful bush I have ever laid eyes on!" And it was the prettiest bush she had ever seen, even more beautiful than her. She was captivated by the beauty of the bush and found herself drawn to it. When she got close enough, she could smell the berries. They smelled terrific, she had to eat some. The closer she moved toward the bush, the worse the temptation got. When she was just in arms-length, she snatched up some berries. She plopped one in her mouth and found they tasted even better than they smelled. She couldn't help herself from eating more, and more until every last berry was plucked off and eaten. After she was finished eating, she felt very sleepy and crawled into a small hole covered with leaves to sleep in. She had a restless night of tossing and turning as if she was turning into another creature.

When she woke from her slumber, she felt very small, lonely, and uncomfortably hot. She scampered to a nearby pond and looked at her reflection, like she did every morning with the mirror in her lovely room. When she gazed upon her reflection, she saw a hideous creature instead of her beautiful self. She shifted uncomfortably and saw a tail was connected to her new ugly self, but this tail of hers was burning. Then it hit her that was why she was very hot, her new tail was on fire! "Ah, I look hideous!" screamed Rodentius, "What has happened to my beautiful body, and where did this burning tail come from?" She instantly stuck her tail in the pond and let it cool. When she took her tail out of the pond, it was a long and ugly pink tail. "What has this cruel world done to me?!" Rodentius cried.
After this was said, for the first time in her life, she pleaded to the gods. But it came out more of a demand to have answers. The gods sent down Pegasus to tell Rodentius the truth of her new self. Pegasus told her that she was now the ugliest of creatures. She cried at that pond for hours until it was called the pool of sorrow. When she was crying, Pegasus gave the same news to the people that lived in the town. They rejoiced that Rodentius was gone. They rejoiced by chanting these words over, and over, “RODENTIUS, RODENT, RAT, R, R, R!” While the town people rejoiced, Rodentius sulked at the pond of sorrow, but not daring to look at her reflection for she would cry even longer until the pool would overflow. And rats still never look at their reflection in ponds, for they will see how hideous they are, and cry until that pond floods.