

*Good Night Ratso Rizzo: a Domestic Account of an Epic Battle*

by Winnie Zensuck (from her memoir)

Last night Stanley K, junk yard dog extraordinaire, proved his street fighting cred and murdered Ratso Rizzo in cold blood.

We were wide awake at two am., alarmed by a coyote krewe<sup>1</sup> yipping in unison across Uz Valley, their siren calls rappelling off the valley walls and enticing pedigreed pets off their plush plaid cushions to press dumb wet noses to picture windows. Ratso Rizzo, Banksy's<sup>2</sup> kitchen vermin replacement, dared to venture beyond the kitchen cabinets to complete several tumbling passes across our bedroom floor in the dead dark night. I screamed before remembering who I am- The Ratwife. The rat scamp decamped for the living room and to the shelter of a green recyclable grocery bag, with StanleyK and the Ratwife in hot pursuit. The Ratwife kicked the bag off the stunned vermin, while the hellhound, his back fur like an electric mohawk, lunged at Ratso Rizzo with predatorial gusto. The mangy black toothed jaws of our Cerberus nabbed the rat's portly midsection, but Ratso, with his collapsible rib cage, was able to squirm out of the jaws of death and plunge to the floor with a thump. He appeared concussed, cartoon stars circling his head, and for a moment I felt for him in our common impairment. Coming to my senses before he did, I grabbed a broom. A bewildered and bemused Stanley K stood over Ratso, as if his winning strike turned out to be a gutter ball. Ratso was stunned, but was soon reclaimed by StanleyK, who tossed him in the air like an orca with a juicy seal, before the decisive death blow: down fell Ratso Rizzo into the soft purple shag in defeat. *EW*.

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<sup>1</sup> Krewe: a group of people who get together at Mardi Gras to put on a party - Walker Percy, [The Moviegoer](#)

<sup>2</sup> Banksy refers to the dead Norwegian rat in our kitchen named for the elusive graffiti artist, Banksy. In the documentary *Banksy: Exit through the Gift Shop*, the artist leaves his work in museums and public places, while he 'exits through the gift shop'. Our house became the rat Banksy's gift shop, with excrement pellets his form of graffiti until his death by rat trap. See *Blinking Icons*, chapter ?-WZ

Yes there was blood.

Ratso played dead, or was dead, and we were finally able to assess the epic proportions of this prime specimen of Norwegian rat. “Some rat!” opined Fritz, who had emerged from the bedroom to catch the denouement of the rat fracas. StanleyK just stood there, sniffing his plunder, while Fritz, in his silky night culottes, giggled like a Victorian school girl and egged the dog to ‘Finish the job!’ and ‘Take the rat outside!’ and the demeaning, “Be a good boy”. This was a strategic but moot request, as the dog appeared to have developed leg lock and would not budge.

Strangely, Fritz appeared to have the same affliction, and so The Brave Ratwife, domestic Artemis, brandished the bright red broom and dustpan to sweep away the vermin like Travis Bickle summoning the rain in *Taxidriver*.

The rat, however, was so heavy from eating the pantry’s now paltry stock of chocolate chips and sushi rice, that the Ratwife could not get traction with the broom, thwarted by the depth of the purple shag in which Ratso was mired, and so she scooped the heaving plateful of rat onto the red plastic groaning board, ran to the door, and hurled him with all her *climacteric* might into the dark dark night. There was some yipping and hotfooting during this whole sordid encounter, because even a Stoic is not immune to the expression of human revulsion.

The ratwife noted, not without justifiable pride, that her dear children were untroubled in their sleep, knowing in their unconscious hearts that their mother was both fierce protector of their days and the *femme matador* of their dreams<sup>3</sup>. Like Diana with her quiver/ broom and hunting dog, the Mythic Ratwife and loyal beast, StanleyK, vanquished the enemy and curbed the sacking of our Rome for one more night...and so, Goodnight Ratso Rizzo<sup>4</sup>. Till tomorrow, rats.

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<sup>3</sup> Phrase courtesy of Junot Diaz-WZ

<sup>4</sup> Norwegian rats are reported to be prolific fuckers, colonizing the verdant hillsides of Uz Valley, brazenly eating the peanut butter while fornicating on the overpriced ‘humane’ rat traps favored by Uz-zos, which produce not only fat rats and alot of heirs, but paroxysms of laughter on rat dad poker night.

