

King of Rats Summary: A new one-act written, directed, and produced by students.

While on an expedition for her sister's paranormal investigation show, Connie meets the town's local hermit and the inspiration for the cryptid they were searching for: a strange, nervous man named Roark. As Marian gets more tunnel-visioned on the investigation, causing issues for Roark in the process, Connie and Roark strike up a friendship; the latter trying to step out of his shell more at the encouragement of his guardian angel, and despite the guilt from the metaphorical and literal shadows of his past.

Special Considerations: Includes themes of self isolation, self hatred, and both physical and verbal abuse. Roark and King are involved in several scenes of physical violence

Characters

MARIAN- A paranormal investigator still looking for her big break. Although she's generally a good person, she gets tunnel visioned easily and that can lead to her being irresponsible at best if not downright pushy and aggressive when she gets her sights set on something. She's very ambitious and wholeheartedly believes in things lurking in the shadows, just waiting for the right explorer to prove their existence once and for all. Once focused on something, it's not uncommon for Marian to overlook chores, sleep, food, or her sister in favor of hyperfocus.

CONNIE- A skeptic who just wants to live her life. She loves history and legend, but she's considerably more grounded than her sister. She's not entirely opposed to the existence of some degree of the supernatural, but certainly doesn't believe in most of it; ghosts and strange people she can get behind, but cryptids and monsters is where she draws the line. Connie is the most normal person compared to the people she finds herself around, and is long accustomed to strangeness, having grown up with her sister.

ROARK- A nervous man and hermit who lives on the estate of his adoptive father Thomas Finley, a wealthy man who was a beloved local figure until his death. Roark very rarely gets out of the house outside of his regular walks through the series of underground tunnels beneath town, an entrance to which connects directly to the estate's cellar. This has gained him a reputation in the form of "The Rat King," Newforte's local cryptid. Roark is quite kind, but he's anxious and flighty, largely due to the secrets he holds.

KING- Roark's shadow (literally). An ominous figure who follows Roark wherever he goes. King is the shadow of who Roark once was along with the guilt of what Roark did in that

previous life, set to follow him as a reminder. As the personification of all of Roark's self-hatred and guilt and all of the tyrant's anger and cruelty, The King despises Roark and wants to see him suffer. Roark is the only one who can hear The King, interact with him, or see him for what he really is; everyone else just sees a shadow moving on its own.

BASIL- Roark's guardian angel/spirit. An overwhelmed entity who genuinely wants to see Roark succeed and will pull strings occasionally to try and nudge things in the right direction. They, however, generally try to avoid direct intervention unless they feel it's absolutely necessary. They have known Roark since before he was Roark, and they're likely the only one who realizes just how far he has come. Basil is always present, always observing, just sometimes from the audience and not from the stage.

[NOTE: Basil is not meant to have any particular religious association as much as they're just generally a helpful supernatural force]