

**BOHEMIAN RAT CITY**

By Maggie Smith

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Draft Six

Maggie Smith

[maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com](mailto:maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com)

## **CHARACTERS**

**MADDEN** — simple, accepting of the situation they've been put in, but not happy about it

**SAGE** — absolutely bitter, no room for optimism anymore, tired of existence, melodramatic, angry, but not alone

**ARA** — young and naive, devoted to what can't be seen, wants others to have hope

**CHARLIE** — focused and busy, would rather be alone, a conspiracy theorist

## **SETTING**

An Alleyway Dumpster, in a City of Human-Rat Hybrids  
Early Afternoon, September of the Future

## **NOTES**

Underlined words are meant to be emphasized

The rats are of no set identity, so that they can be played by performers of any race, gender identity, age, disability or ability, etc.

The dialogue is meant to be straightforward and not subtle at all. The characters say exactly what they think, and should be played that way.

The dialogue is written in verse but should be spoken as if it's in prose. The sentence doesn't stop at the end of the line, rather, where there is punctuation.

When a line does not have ten syllables, that indicates a pause that takes up as many seconds as there are missing syllables in the line. For example, a two-syllable line will get an eight second pause. This will be marked in the script for easy access when reading.

Finally, while the script covers the topic of spirituality and deities, it is not meant to reflect any one religion. Rather than focusing on the way God is portrayed, I request that you read it while asking yourself what should be considered a sin, and what drives a person to follow a religion.

**BOHEMIAN RAT CITY**

*[Lights up on a single, regular-sized dumpster in an alley, with SAGE sitting next to it, exhausted. MADDEN walks on slowly, looking around, and spots SAGE. Yes, they are human-sized rats.]*

MADDEN

What have you been doing with your whole day?

SAGE

I'm thinking about not being hungry.  
If I think about it enough then I  
Forget that I haven't eaten in days.

MADDEN

*[Two second pause]* I'm not gonna lie, *[One second pause]* that's dumb.  
Why don't you just come and scavenge with us?  
You'll find enough food if you work for it.

SAGE

I don't have any energy for that.  
Just leave my body to rot and perish.

MADDEN

Are you really going to do this here?  
Buddy, this is the fifth time this week that  
You've sulked in a doleful heap by the trash.

SAGE

I don't view it as sulking. It's more like  
Taking a nap. Without falling asleep.  
And getting to be sad the entire time.

MADDEN

Fine. Suit yourself.

*[A six second pause as MADDEN begins to leave the dumpster, but is stopped by SAGE, who speaks again, almost to no one.]*

SAGE

Do you think that God still cares about us?

MADDEN

What are you talking about? What do you—  
Why am I the one you're asking this to?

SAGE

I'm only asking a question, Madden.  
I'm not saying it's something I believe  
In, it's just a thought that I've had bouncing  
Around in my skull and into my brain.

*[ARA enters, rushing to MADDEN and SAGE.]*

ARA

There you are. I've been looking for you both.  
Guess what. *[One second pause]* Guess. Nevermind, I'll just tell  
You. I pet a cat today! A cat! Wow!  
*[Four second pause as ARA looks around]* What're you two doing?

MADDEN

Sage thinks God doesn't like us anymore.

ARA

Sage, what do you mean? I know life is rough,  
But please, please think about what you're saying.  
We haven't been abandoned, we just need—

SAGE

I have been thinking about it. All day.  
Our God is a cruel one. Would a kind god  
Do what our God did? There's no way. They just...

MADDEN

Got mad and turned Their creations to rats?

SAGE

Got mad and turned Their creations to rats!

ARA

I'm sure They had Their reasons. There's no way  
They would hurt us. They're kind. They care for us.

SAGE

Don't defend Them. They abandoned us all.  
Reasons are nothing more than excuses.  
Whatever reasons They give us would be  
Nothing more than lies to put us at ease.

ARA

And I'm sure They didn't enjoy it. Think  
About how They must have felt, doing that.  
We were Their children. And— And we still are.

SAGE

Do you really think so? *[One second pause]* Be honest.

ARA

Why would you ask that? You know the answer.  
Look! Charlie's about to walk past us. We  
Can ask and get a second opinion.

*[CHARLIE enters, carrying a large trash bag crossing in front of SAGE, ARA, and MADDEN, clearly hoping to exit. ARA is about to speak, but is cut off by CHARLIE.]*

CHARLIE

Please, please, please, please, please, please don't talk to me.  
I'm begging you. Let me leave and go home.

ARA

But you don't even know what I was go—

CHARLIE

It doesn't matter. I don't want to hear  
It. I've spent years being around you all,  
Having to listen to superficial  
Fights. It makes me feel sick with annoyance.

SAGE

Just leave the poor kid alone, no one cares,  
Not any of us, and not any god.

ARA

*[To CHARLIE]* Do you think God has left us here to die?

CHARLIE

Considering that three years ago I  
Didn't believe in any God, I don't  
Know what to think. Is that enough for you?

SAGE

See, Ara? Not everyone wants to share  
Your devotion to a destructive God.

ARA

But we sinned! We deserved the pain we got!

SAGE

Do you honestly believe that we are  
Deserving of this? That this is our fault?  
Because the last time I checked, I never  
Prayed to God in bed at night, asking for  
Them to turn me into a rat-person.  
This isn't a punishment, this is an  
Abuse of cosmic and crushing power.

MADDEN

What does it matter? Look at us. We're rats.  
Not even real rats. There's no changing that.  
Do you remember that day? *[Three second pause]*  
It was bewildering. The way the sun  
Burned through the air like a never ending  
Comet. The sky dripped bright-orange blood, falling  
And tearing flesh apart. And the screaming.  
Closing eyes to humanity just to  
Open them to monstrosities. And why?

MADDEN (cont.)

Talent and money blinded us. I know  
 I didn't care for my craft. None of us  
 Did, but who could blame us? We wanted to  
 Have some kind of happiness. We did what  
 We thought that we had to do, didn't we?  
 Was that our sin? Did we have too much pride?  
*[Two second pause]* It doesn't matter anymore.  
 This is what our life is now. There's no use  
 In being mad at a God, or any  
 Use in worshipping one, either. Pointless.

CHARLIE

*[Five second beat]* So can I go now?  
 Every second longer I talk to you  
 I feel more and more of my fur fall out.

ARA

And what could you possibly have to do?

CHARLIE

Anything but this. Now, please, let me leave.

ARA

Fine. *[Five second pause as CHARLIE grabs the trash bag and begins to leave]* Plague carrier.

*[CHARLIE stops moving and turns to ARA.]*

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, wanna repeat yourself there?

ARA

Sounds like you heard me just fine, rodent bitch.

CHARLIE

*[Sarcastic]* Ara. I know the only reason you're  
 Insulting me is because you're mad and  
 Insecure. *[One second pause, looking ARA up and down]* Unfortunate vermin.

MADDEN

Do you really think that arguing will  
Get us anywhere? How will that help us?  
God sees us fighting. So what? It's not like  
Us debating will bother Them at all.  
Is this how you want to spend the rest of  
Your lives? Just think about it. The lifespan  
Of a rat can't be too long, come on, guys.

SAGE

Have you Googled the lifespan of a rat?

MADDEN

I tried to Google the lifespan of a  
Human-rat but my claws wouldn't work on  
My phone screen or the computer keyboard.

ARA

We all have our crosses we have to bear.

CHARLIE

You know what my theory is? God wasn't  
Even mad. God got bored. That's all there is.

MADDEN

Here we go again. Can we please stop talk—

SAGE

Wait. Go on. What do you mean God got bored?

CHARLIE

I'd have to guess that nothing happens in  
Heaven. No real wars or drama. So what  
Does God do for entertainment? They turn  
To watch earth. We were always a mess. Right?  
Remember the Internet? A whole mess.



MADDEN

This is dumb. This is dumb. Guys, this is dumb—

CHARLIE

Madden. Shut up. What sins did we commit?  
Sage, what did you do to deserve this fate?  
Did you ever ask God why this happened?

SAGE

Are you asking me if I ever had  
A direct conversation with God? No.

CHARLIE

What sins do you remember committing?

SAGE

*[Two second pause, thinking]* I put an empty milk carton  
In the fridge for someone else to deal with.

MADDEN

Ha! That's not a sin. Try something else. Worse.

SAGE

When I dropped an ice cube on the kitchen  
Floor I would kick it under the freezer  
Instead of picking it up. Is that one?

CHARLIE

No, you're not hearing me. That's not a sin.

MADDEN

Why can't we just be finished with this? Please.

SAGE

*[Spoken quickly]* One time, when I was five, my sister and  
I were spending the night at my grandma's  
House. We were playing in her bedroom and  
Jumping on the bed. We started running  
Around on the bed, like jumping off it,

SAGE (cont.)

Then running around and jumping back on  
 The other side. I didn't think that my  
 Sister was jumping off fast enough, so  
 I pushed her off the side of the bed and  
 She was crying, and I convinced her that  
 She fell by herself and that we didn't  
 Need to tell our mom, but then she did, but  
 Our mom didn't believe her until the next day,  
 And her arm was broken and she needed  
 To wear a cast for almost three months and  
 She couldn't do gymnastics until her  
 Arm healed, which was a really long time for  
 Her to wait, and I feel bad but I can't  
 Apologize because I made her think  
 She fell by herself. And I am a rat.  
 So what do you think, is that bad enough?

CHARLIE

*[Seven second pause, taking it all in]* What the fuck?

ARA

I don't think that any book covers that.

MADDEN

There's nothing that could ever cover that.

ARA

Is— Is that a sin? Does that count as one?

MADDEN

It could. It might. But Sage was also young  
 When that happened so I don't think it counts  
 As much if it happened as an adult.

CHARLIE

'Kay, putting that aside, have you ever,  
 You know, committed murder or something  
 Like that? You know, something serious or—

SAGE

Do I look like the kind of person who  
Would commit murder? Is that what you think?

MADDEN

Well, you don't look like a person at all.

CHARLIE

I'm not saying I think you did, I'm just  
Trying to prove a point. You didn't sin.

ARA

Everyone sins. There's a whole list of sins,  
You have to do one at some point. We aren't  
Perfect. We're born sinful, we'll die sinful.

CHARLIE

Okay. Why didn't God spare you, Ara?

ARA

What do you mean? I sinned too, we all did.

CHARLIE

*[To ARA]* You were Their most devoted follower.  
You loved Them too much to be a human  
Rat, didn't you? But here you are with us,  
In an alleyway, by a dumpster. So  
Why aren't you the exception? The one,  
Good soul saved from the damnation. Huh? Huh?  
Why aren't you special, Ara? Why aren't you?

MADDEN

Charlie. Take a breath. Calm down. And stop it.

ARA

They're right. *[Three second pause]* I should be special.  
Why am I a rat? For fuck's sake, why am  
I a rat? No. No. God doesn't turn Their  
Acolytes into rats. They do not. They

ARA (cont.)

Do not give them claws for fingers, or take  
Teeth away, or give them long, rough, pink tails.

CHARLIE

So, say it with me. God got bored. That's it.

ARA

God got bored. They had nothing to do, so  
They turned us into rats to have some fun.

SAGE

How do we fix this? We can't just sit here.

CHARLIE

We tell the others. We tell everyone  
We can find. God can't stop us all if we  
Revolt. We stop following Them. And then,  
When They see what we're doing, They'll fix us.

SAGE

I'm sorry, you're suggesting we fight God?

MADDEN

That's what it's starting to sound like. I'm in.

ARA

Me too. I can't believe I'm doing this.

SAGE

*[Four second pause]* What the hell... I'll do it.

CHARLIE

Perfect. We'll show God we're not afraid of  
Them anymore. *[Yelling]* You hear that? We aren't afr—

*[The lights go out as the sound of a lightning strike fills the air. The lights come up, and the rats lay on the ground, fried. The lights slowly dim down again. God has killed the rats. END OF PLAY.]*