# Why I Draw

I like to draw my characters as anthropomorphised animals. I don't know why I do but it just gives me some comfort in designs. I like to believe it stems from me not wanting to imagine the real person — whether out of laziness or lingering issues I have with said person — or because drawing animalistic caricatures of people are easier to draw. I like to look back at events in my life to see if there was anything I could to change. I develop characters based on those events and parts of my life. This way I can comprehend myself better and give that understanding to others

Sullivan is a sullen, tired looking non-human rat. He has experienced trauma from Mr. S, his father. Him being a rat is to emphasize that he had to lurk in the shadows of his father to get by. Him being tired shows how much he has worked to survive the several years of torture he went through under his father. Even after a while of being away from him, Sullivan still feels a looming presence. In his early years, Sullivan was very compliant and scared. He reflected my lack of control with my step-dad. I would not like to fully explain what I went through but I used Sullivan as a way to cope. I used him to think of ways I could've fought back, things I could've done to fight against Mr. S, to help my mother and sister. But I could do nothing because I was only 7. Sullivan is the representation of me being afraid of my step-dad and my inner thoughts during the after years when we finally left him.

In contrast, Mr. S is a showy confidant egotistical scientist. Along with Sullivan he is a non-human rat. He was tasked with learning and understanding the magic that other non-humans have access to. During his first successful test of recreating magic, he slowly started to develop his evilness. Before this he was very much not a nice guy, his first experiment fully encapsulates this part of him. Mr. S is a representation of my mom's old partner. When first meeting and living with him, his actions were not kind but he wasn't all that bad. He treated me with as much respect you can give a 5-6 year old and it was

alright. But then he got drunk . While I have now fully moved on from that part of my life, in the early years after we left, he still tried to be a part of my life, specifically wanting to talk to my sister. He lingered on for as long as he could but ultimately like us he moved on. I was angry for what he did to my family, so initially I made Mr. S looks like a scrawny non-human rat similar to Sullivan. Put him through what he put me through but this made my anger last longer. While trying to understand my anger, I made Mr. S into a physical and mental powerhouse of a non-human then it clicked. When conjuring up Mr. S, I felt angry, repulsed, but I knew completely that I truly could not do anything about the situation. The lack of control is what I ended up using for his character. A person who has control over everyone and everything, a totalitarian.

Mr. S and Sullivan intertwine with each other, creating a deformed Yin and Yang where Yang has dulled Yin to a grey. Sullivan is able to leave but the world that he lives in keeps bringing his father back into his life. Sullivan has been tainted and ruined by Mr. S so he could never experience a real childhood. He tries to move on but is stopped at every corner because he has no one to lean on. A cold, lonely, and miserable man, Sullivan holds all of his emotions to himself, not allowing anyone to come in and influence him. But when I was making Sullivan, he really did not help me dealing with the lingering trauma from my step-dad. He just showed me what I hadn't done. I've ignored this part of Sullivan for a long time by making new friends and relationships to help mend the hole he was supposed to fill.

My old friend who I will call *A* helped me get through middle school. I had just finally moved away from my step-dad so I was happy about that but I was still scared because I had never experienced California since I was 4. *A*fter a few weeks of school, I met *A* hanging around the school. During lunch we used to talk about the same video games and the *Spiderman Spiderverse Films*. Without him I don't think I could've gone through Middle school. While there were other people I hung out with, *A* was the main guy who was with me. When I move on from something I like to make fun and make the memory feel little. This was shown throughout my family members and I just picked it up from there. In hindsight this is possibly why I wanted Mr. S to hurt but nevertheless, *A* helped this by taking nothing too seriously. However all of our gallivanting around

school seemed to be one-sided. During the summer before high school it was told to me by another friend that there were some messages that were sent about me — They were left by *A*. As I've mentioned before, I make light of situations to make myself feel better, but no matter what, this just made me bitter and unhappy. All the calls we made after just had me feeling like I wasn't wanted. "It was just one person, it shouldn't affect me" I told myself. Two years of thinking this guy was my friend while in reality, did not want me there by his side at all. I have now moved on from that friend group and made new and WAY better friends who have supported and liked me all of this time. After a while, I decided to make two characters that represented this event in my life.

The Garfeild twins are non-human bat-lizard hybrids and are known as the "Lavaiathans" at their work place. They help reinforce the now limited use of magic within their world. They both represent my actions that I noticed that affected my relationship with A. They befriend Sullivan on one of their shifts. Lizzie G is the youngest out of the twins and is the 'serious' one. Leo G is the eldest out of the twins and is more silly than Lizzie. Lizze G, I will call her LG for efficiency. LG shares many similarities with Sullivan like that they are both tired or the events around them. LG hides this about her which represents me not wanting to share a lot about my life. Sullivan represents A in that he does not hide if he is sad. Both have similar ways of coping but in the end they do not attempt to understand each other. Leo represents the hyperactivity me and A both had back in middle school. In this relationship, Leo represents me in how I tried getting to know A when we first met. This relationship worked well in the beginning but overtime, Sullivan — in real life — had gotten tired of Leo. The lack of communication between them — along with me and A — was ultimately what broke the friendship apart.

Language is the bane of my thinking. The words that A used to say how weird and "repetitive" I am hurst. Describing and using descriptive language to help one picture something they had never seen before can be simply avoided if you just draw what you saw. Drawing is the earliest form of communication shown by the cave paintings made thousands of years ago. This one time I was having trouble describing one of my favorite games to my mom—Cuphead. I was trying to draw him and his brother mugman but I

had trouble doing so. So I asked my mom for help with drawing their heads. But what my mom drew was completely off to what I originally wanted. I tried using so many words in my 7 year old brain that I eventually started stressing out. I ran to the other room to get another sheet of paper and decided to just draw my best and I ended up doing just that.

I draw because it's an easy way to convey my thoughts without spending tens of minutes on figuring out how to say something that can be drawn in a few seconds. Presenting this thinking to everyone is a huge task-and-a-half. If I had spent 20 minutes describing to my mother what I wanted her to draw just for it to look wrong, why on earth would anyone not want to draw? I love to draw because It helps me understand myself better as a person by seeing myself through my own characters. It helps develop my sense of self and identity while also allowing others to understand and interpret the you, you share.

This is why AI pisses me off. I do not like AI in creative settings. AI defeats the whole purpose of understanding and delving deep into your own queries and negates all thought within the human mind. One can say that you "made" art with AI but all you did was have a lottery machine spit-ball a collection of other people's thoughts and queries into what you "think" is what you wanted. Some can argue that they can't do art because of a certain disability or handicap they have. The only handicap this person has is their own self. There are artists out there who have created art with just their feet, mouths, and even a blind artist who uses the texture of paints to know what paint they have used. All were capable of producing art because they wanted to prove to the world they could.

Creating just to create is fine and alright to do but when it becomes a quick input without effort, that is where creativity dies. To have meaning is to have a deep understanding of what art is what you have created means to you. I create characters and places so I have this better understanding of myself and how it could affect others.