

## Portfolio Work: Concept Art

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A collection of concept work for the visual novel project “The Dream Prince”, including landscapes, color study, character concept sheet, and detail development. These visuals are intended to be paired with the twine game “The Dream Prince” for development into a full visual novel. All images are mixed media, with an emphasis on watercolors and blue graphite for lines and details.

The images in this piece were drawn with the intent of experimenting with color palette and placement, focusing on the main setting of the game, The Dream Realm. I began with the intent of exclusively using pastels, but discovered that similar values created a sense of dreaminess which, while evocative of the setting I wanted to create, made each aspect of the image less distinct from its surroundings. I quickly began expanding into variations in saturation and value, in order to retain the mood of each image while creating more memorable and distinct visuals.

### **Top Row**

- Top Left: The first “melted moon” image. I wanted to make the light itself seem dreamy, so the moon is malleable, and changes shape with the passage of time.
- Second Left: An experiment with sky colors, as well as an alternate color for the moon “blobs” that drift off of it to form the “stars”.
- Second Right: Landscape study. The far-off mountains and strange smoke are meant to be evocative of, yet distinct from, volcanos; instead of a sign of danger, they are merely part of the dream world and add to its mystique. The red moon concept was dropped from this point onward.
- Top Right: Scenery concept, including giant chrysalis and tree study. Butterflies and metamorphosis serve as visual metaphors for personal growth and rebirth, and while they are not the focus of this project, they are still intended to be a recurring element.

### **Center Right**

This image is the first full landscape study, with the intent of observing color concepts explored above brought together as a cohesive whole. The focus of the piece is the horizon, and how the Princess (center) stands out as the primary figure with a different color palette, sporting earth tones and her silver nightgown. Additionally, this is where I chose to have the sun and moon be the same entity, growing and shrinking with the passage of time while never properly setting, with its scattering pieces forming “stars” in the sky. This piece helped me fine-tune plans for future color schemes and focus; the sky and ocean did not have enough contrast, but the palace is silver as well, visually pairing it to the Princess as her destination. She is using her bed as a boat, which is also distinctly green and silver. Future ideas for the color direction solidify in this piece and inform the next two pages.

## Right Column

- Item 1: A texture test for brick, when the castle was still going to be similar in color to the matching scenery. While it was not used, it did help with identifying shades of contrast and similarity between the pinks and purples.
- Item 2: A motif I enjoy adding to my work is the visual of flower petals turning into butterflies. I believe it can be evocative of transformation, of the change from passive to active, and the idea of transition between life stages. It contributes to the surreal nature of the Dream Realm.
- Item 3: A repeat of the sky experiment from the top row, but with lessened saturation and a focus on the green. I replaced the green “stars” with yellow shortly after.
- Item 4: Mountain study, intended to observe them in the absence of the red moon figure.
- Item 5: Mountain smoke study, using the same color for both base and shading. Meant to practice with looser, less constrained use of watercolors.
- Item 6: The sun/moon study, where I solidified the melting moon/reforming sun concept, as well as the vibrant pastel yellow color. I drew this early on, then changed the other sketches to match it, though the red moon had already been painted at that point.
- Item 7: Chrysalis study. Fine detail on small objects can be elusive with watercolor, so I wanted to focus on the shape and the darker, more distinct color of the shell. This chrysalis belongs to a character who guides the Princess on her journey before beginning metamorphosis, leaving her on her own.

## Page 2: Character Concept Study

This page's work is intended to develop the lead character, the Princess (to be named by the player). This page focuses on the Princess in three different states – Awake, within the Dream Realm, and Asleep within her own world, and the details which are used to distinguish each version, while keeping them recognizably the same character.

- Item 1: Awake (Notes)
  - Sepia Tones
  - Opulent
  - “Vintage”, “Old-Fashioned”, “Rustic”
  - Imagery should look aged
  - Inspiration: Old photographs, roses, lace, buttons, ribbons
- The figure is meant to capture her look while in the waking world, not under the influence of the curse that sets up the rest of the story. She is meant to appear restrained and proper, as is befitting of a princess who holds herself to a high standard. Her hair is pinned up, her crown is heavy, and her dress has some weight to it. I initially intended to color her with alcohol marker to contrast with the other figures; however, testing was unsatisfactory, so she has been painted with more matte layering than the other figures.
  - Figure Notes (left):
    - Roses: Beige
    - Hair: Contained
  - Figure Notes (right):
    - Crown: Heavy and Prominent
  - Figure Notes (bottom):
    - Composed, Refined, Statuesque
- Item 2: Dreaming (Notes)
  - Pastels + Silver
  - Gradients
  - Pale Lines
  - Appears unaffected by gravity
  - Inspiration: Clouds, fog, waves, night gowns
- This is the primary design for the lead, featuring “her” thematic colors of silver, pale blue/green, and her warm strawberry-blonde hair. While her pastel theme and delicate palette suits her surroundings in the Dream Realm, her actual colors are more grounded, devoid of the bright pinks, purples and neon shades of the world around her. Silver quickly became her “signature” color during visual development, and is on all three of her designs in the crown. It is also used to visually pair her with certain elements in the Dream Realm, such as her bed-boat and doorways.
  - Figure Notes (left):
    - Roses: White
    - Hair: Down
    - No Jewelry
  - Figure Notes (bottom):
    - Loose, Airy, Ethereal

- Bottom Notes (all three):
  - Shared Details: Empire Waist, Lace, Curls
- Item 3: Asleep (Notes)
  - Grays
  - Dark Lines
  - Desaturation and Darker Shades
  - Inspiration: Black and White, Funerals
- The simplest and most detached of the designs, this is the view of the princess in the real world while she is in the Dream Realm. This version draws inspiration from the classic visuals of Snow White and Sleeping Beauty while the Princess is enchanted, but adds a distinctly somber note to her design. While she is aware that her mind is trapped in another world, those around her do not, and believe she has simply succumbed to a sleeping illness; and so the magic of a standard enchanted sleep is diminished from their perspective, replaced with uncertain doom. This version of the character is designed with the idea of uncertainty in mind – she is not dressed in black for her own funeral, but she is getting close.

This page is intended to focus on taking the work from the color test and character design pages and using it to create defined, recurring visual elements within the world. The color palette has been refined and re-focused to capture the concept behind the original, while introducing enough variety for better visual distinction and clarity. The specific images depicted are intended to be recurring motifs and elements within the game, with a focus on the Princess as a character and her associated symbolism. There is a focus on material, unifying colors, and contrast within setting, to help create more dynamic and comprehensive imagery than the first color test.

- Top Row (left to right)
  - Left: A portal within the Dream Realm. The concept behind this was simple and easily recognizable – a door that leads to a different location, which seemingly defies physics and/or logic. In this case, the door in question takes the viewer from a cool mountain range to a bright and vibrant purple ocean, overlooked by a pink sky. The silver frame ties it back to the Princess and her silver bed-boat.
  - Second Left: The three roses of the Princess. She has a different rose for each state of being, all tied together by the silver leaves surrounding them.
    - Bottom Left: Beige/Orange, for Awake
    - Bottom Right: Purple/Gray, for Asleep
    - Top Center: Blue/Green, for Dreaming
  - Center Right: Another cloud test, with a focus on color contrast. This was meant to explore shapes of clouds, including volume, height and amount of curl/overlap.
  - Right: A sketch of a creature called a “mothbun”, a flying rabbit with blue-green wings. Strange, fantastical creatures are a staple of fairytales, and while the softness of the orange-yellow coat ties it closer to the Princess, the wings add an element of fancy that places it firmly within the Dream Realm.
- Left Column (omitting shared corner)
  - Top: Hair test. A simple test of colors and shapes for the Princess’s two main hairstyles, as well as an isolated crown for practice. The Princess’s hair reflects her physical and mental state – note how she lets it down within the Dream Realm, familiar visual shorthand for relaxing and lowering one’s walls.
  - Center: lace test. All of the Princess’s dresses have lace, but what style and type depends on her physical state. The left represents her Awake state – one straight edge, one wavy, showing her place as present but acting with restraint. The center lace has two straight edges and reflects her Sleep state, where she is not an active player but is acted upon by those who care for her sleeping body. Third is the lace from her Dream state – wavy, unbound, and loose. Finally, the right is a fabric test, to practice drawing the loose and unstructured material of her Dream state nightgown.
  - Bottom: Tower color test. The Tower as a motif is familiar within fairytales, but the Princess herself does not get locked up in one. Instead, the Tower reflects her mental state and relationship with the waking world, as well as serves to tie the two color palettes together – note how it implements the soft greens of the Dream Realm and combines them with the purple and gray of her sleep state.

- Center Right (Singular image)
  - This image was created to tie all three settings/states into a single visual. It is a stained-glass window depicting the melting moon of the Dream Realm, with the two sides of the waking world surrounding it.
    - The walls and floor use the colors of the Sleeping world-state, being gray and dark purple respectively. Since they are adjacent to the stained-glass window, they reflect the duality of the Sleep and Dreaming states, where what the Princess experiences and what those around her see are drastically different. The simple walls and floor ground the image and allow focus to be drawn to the window.
    - The curtains are a pale yellow, which is paired closely with the Princess's hair and became a recurring color during the development of this image. The pale yellow fits within the Awake state, while the bindings on the curtain are silver, matching it back to the Princess and the window itself.
    - The frame of the window is silver, as is the solder binding each piece of glass within it. The silver is, once again, the Princess's color, and serves to reinforce that this world is connected specifically to her, as do the Sleeping and Waking worlds.
    - The glass panes are all colors tied to the Dream Realm, though the pale blue and green of the Princess's Dreaming rose do appear as well. The window itself is suggestive of its own nature as a portal, inviting the viewer to step closer, to entice them into the Dream Realm and what it has to offer. Within the game, this might be the prototype for a loading or save screen.