

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION 06

PRE-PRODUCTION PREPARING THE FOUNDATION 08

Section 1 Context 09

Section 2 Script 10

Section 3 Character design 15

Section 4 Background 33

PRODUCTION BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE 53

Section 1 Storyboard 54

Section 2 Animation 61

POST-PRODUCTION FINISHING TOUCH 64

INTRODUCTION

With the goal to successfully graduate and get our Bachelor of Arts, we chose to make a short animation for our Capstone Project. We are two absolute dreamers, and are both fascinated by love itself. Still, we know that love are hard to achieve, and most of the time we cannot be with our loved ones.

We decided to challenge ourselves to share our opinion on love through this project. We aim to deliver a message about love and hope breaking through boundaries, even social standards and time.





But, what kind of love? Another thing that has a great impact on us is the normalization of homosexuality. To us, knowing the gender of the one you love does not affect on how we see you as a person. However, we are aware of the fact that it is still a long run for the LGBTQ community to be treated the same by society.

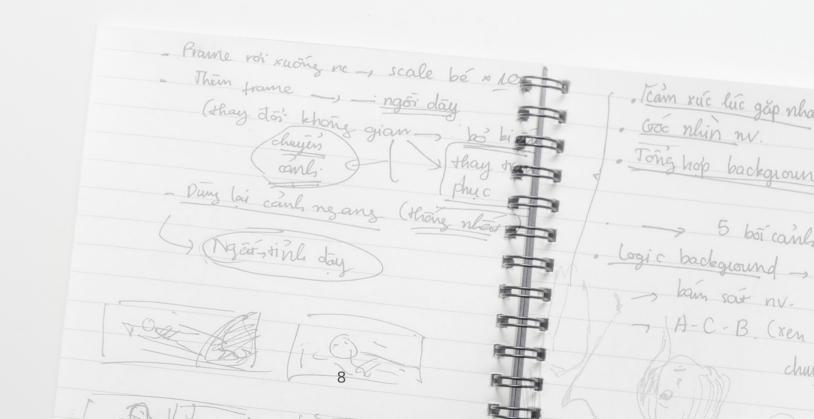
As far as we know, we both do not belong to the LGBTQ community. Therefore there may be some shortcomings of the matter. We apologize beforehand on behalf of that. We hope to have the ability to deliver a meaningful message and make a humble change to society's view.

We have decided to use 2D animation to visualize our story since we feel that emotions can be better delivered with drawings. Moreover, 2D animating method is what we both most familiar with.

Succeed or not, we hope you can enjoy the final result fully.

PRE-PRODUCTION

PREPARING THE FOUNDATION



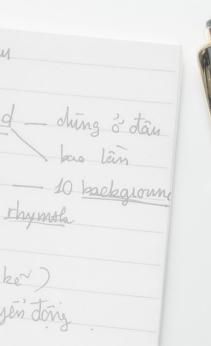
CONTEXT

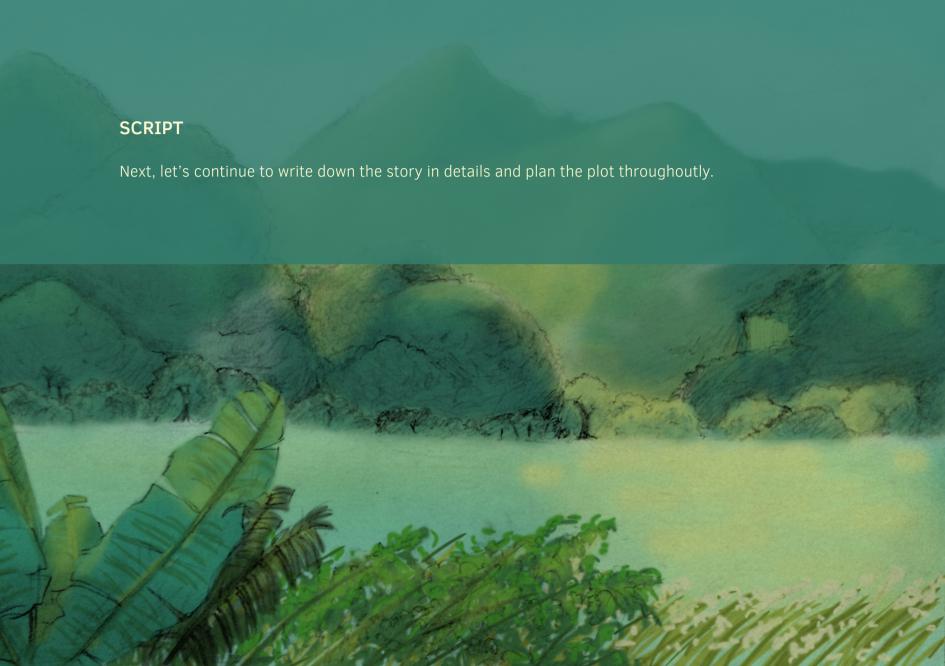
The timeline sets back to the 19th century, to the Nguyen Dynasty. It tells the story of a young princess and her lover. Right after they recognize their feelings for each other, they have to part. The princess is made to marry the prince of Qing Imperial against her will.

They escape together but are then killed trying.

Is that all? Do they truly never have a chance to be with one another?

Are there any chances for them even after death?





The background of a river running round a citadel. Two girls of the same age playing in the river, laughing freely. Suddenly, someone appears and took the taller, more refined-looking girl away. The other girl sadly waving her friend goodbye. The tall girl turns out to be the princess of the kingdom.







Act 2

As time passed, the girls grew, as did their relationship. They maintain a close bond, though in order to meet, the princess has to sneak out of the palace through a secret hole in the citadel wall.



The night of the light festival. They row a small boat among the river, which in this moment, is seemingly filled with light from all the floating lamps. Together the girls join the festival, let their own flowers float above the water. They share an intimate moment, and something sparks within them that night.



As the princess find her way back to the palace, she is caught by the emperor, already waiting at the secret hole. Back at the meeting place, her poor friend remains unaware of this event. She makes a gift, waiting for her princess to show up. However, time passes, and she never does.





Act 5

A royal wedding is taking place. People are gathering to see the carriage passing through. The poor girl, among the crowd, tries to get pass to get a look. As a wind blows the drape of the carriage, poor girl gets a peek into the carriage. She sees her friend in wedding gown, frowning face full of devastation. This greatly shocks the poor girl. Full of determination, she pushes through the crowd to follow the carriage.

Act 6

The boisterously decorated wedding boats row through the river. Inside the largest boat, the princess sits in her cabin. In contrast to the merry surrounding, she is weeping uncontrollably. Suddenly, there is a knock outside her room. She lifts her curtain to look out, then gaspes in surprised. Outside her cabin, is her dear friend, dressing as 1 of the guard. The poor girl in disguise, signals the princess to keep quiet.



The princess takes off her wedding gown, wearing only undershirt and dress. She jumps over the window of her cabin, tip-toes towards the end of the boat. Suddenly, there is a shout from 1 of the guard. The princess, caught red-handed, turns to run to the other side. However, another team of guard notice and surround her.

Act 8

Among the guards, walks out her supposedly fiance - the prince of Qing Imperial. He looks down at her and her overall attempt to escape. Grabbing her chin, he forces her to look up at him. Suddenly, the prince's body arched, face wrenching in shock and pain. Someone has run up from behind, slamming a knife into his stomach. His body falls, and behind him, surprisingly, is the friend of the princess.

Act 9

Grabbing the princess's hand, the girl leads them to the railing and both jump into the water. The guards, caught by great surprise, can only stared as the 2 girls escape. The prince, enraged, signals for the bows and arrows to be set in place. The arrows are shot toward the girls, some are in flame. An arrow logs its way to the poor girl's shoulder, she gaspes in pain. The princess hastily helps her up, and they continue to swim toward land

Act 10

The 2 girls reach the land, and run into the forest. They run deep into the forest without anyone chasing after. Relief, they slow down and look for a place to rest. They turn at a hidden bush, and right in front of their horrored eyes, are the prince and his guards. The prince raises his arm, a silver light flashes and the poor girl falls down, her soul taken away from her body.

Act 11

The princess is shocked. Everything becomes blur, as her lower body trembles and her legs give up. Sitting down in front of her friend, she shakingly strokes her dead friend's cold cheeks. Behind her, 2 guards are approaching. They grip her tightly by the shoulders and elbows, jerk her back crudely. Out of her trance, she struggles and manages to push 1 of the guards away, taking the sword on his side.

Act 12

She falls to her friend's side. Raising the sword, she stabs herself in the mid-section. She falls next to her friend, hand reaching to hold. She finally smiles, as she takes her last breath. 2 butterflies from their bodies fly up to the sky, entangled with each other.

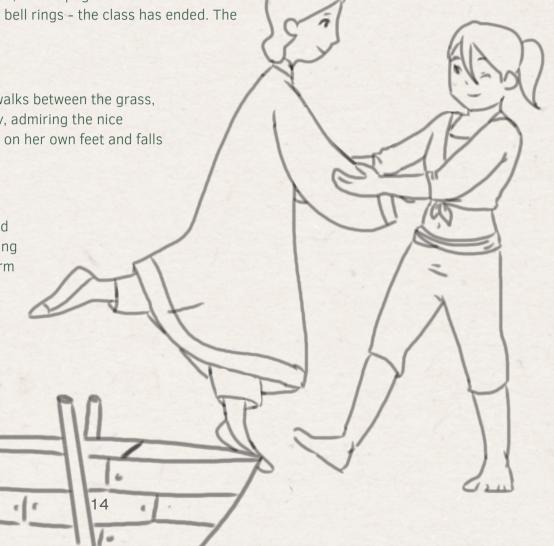
2 butterflies fly pass a window. A girl, bearing a striking resemblance to the princess, stares absent-mindedly out to the window at the 2 butterflies, not paying attention to the ongoing lecture. She turns back to her notebook, whose pages are filled with drawings of boats and stars and flower lamps. The bell rings - the class has ended. The girl stands up, gathers her things and walks out.

Act 14

The girl is at a familiar area next to the river. She walks between the grass, feeling the wind blowing, looking happily at the sky, admiring the nice weather. Too caught up with the scenery, she trips on her own feet and falls to the shallow part of the river.

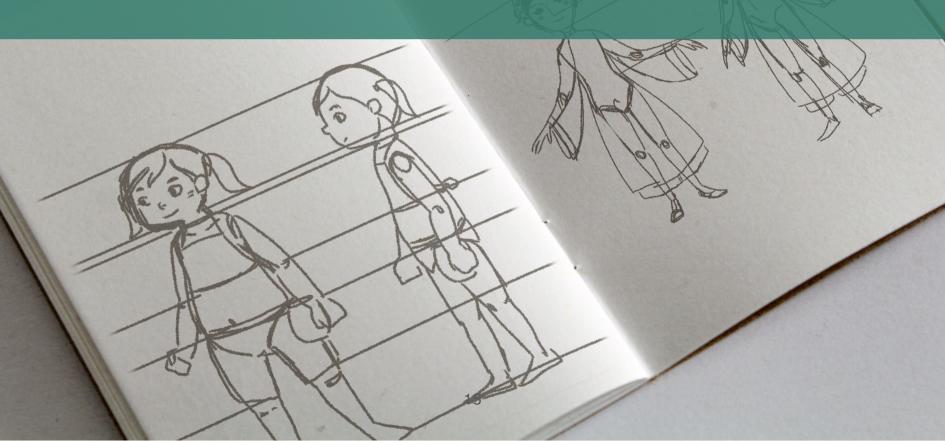
Act 15

Sitting up, she struggles to stand. Suddenly, a hand appears in front of her, inviting her to take it. Turning to look at the owner of it, she is struck by some form of recognition. The girl before her smiles. And everything is engulfes in a stream of light as the movie draws to the end.



CHARACTER DESIGN

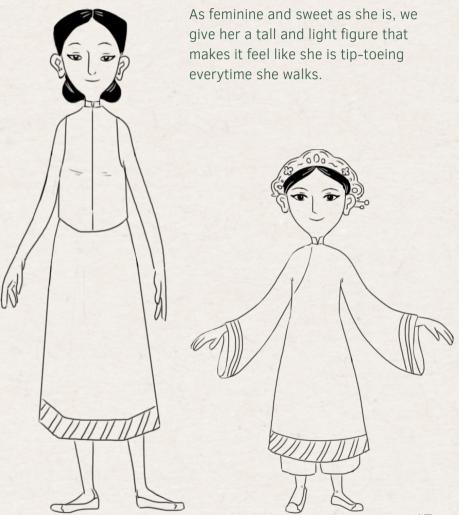
We have 3 main characters. However, throughout the story, there are younger versions and versions with different clothes of them, which makes it a total of 7 designs.



The Princess

Daughter of Gia Long Emperor, 8 and 18 years old

She is indeed a graceful and lovely girl that belongs to a royal family. She is soft, caring but also rebellious and strong when needed.



Her hair is pure black and parted in the middle like female royalties of the Nguyen Dynasty.

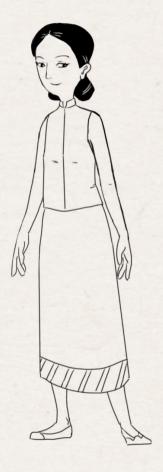


Her dresses is inspired from Nguyen Dynasty's princesses official costumes.



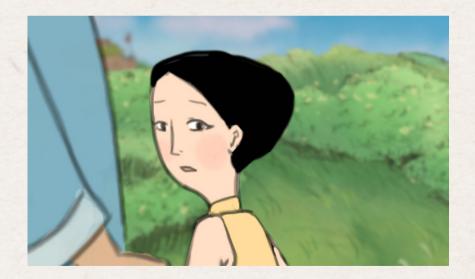
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Her color scheme has a soft pastel tone. We use shades of pink to represent her lovely and naive nature, bright yellow/gold for her royalty status, and green for her youth and love for plants. Her skin is quite fair for she is born and raised in the palace. Overall, she gives off the aura of a spring fairy.

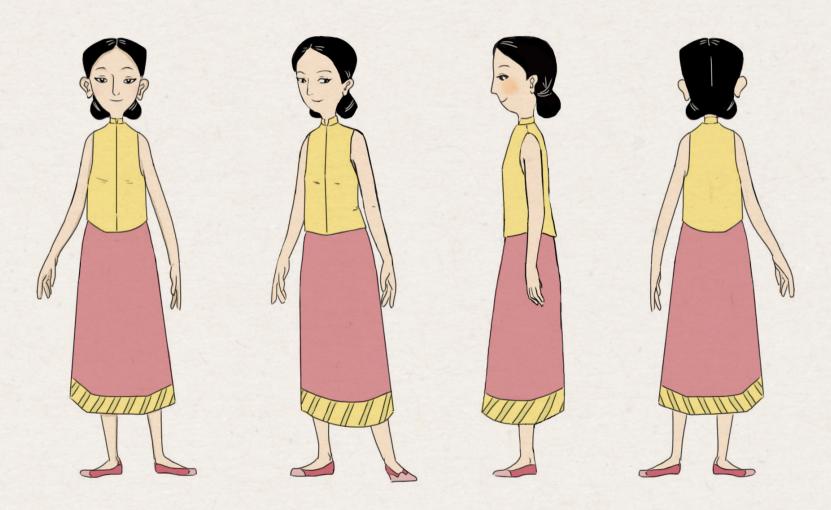


She has all the best features according to beauty standards at that time: a diamond shaped face, almond shaped eyes with double eyelid, willow leaf eyebrows, straight and long nose, small and heart shaped lips, long earlobes, etc.

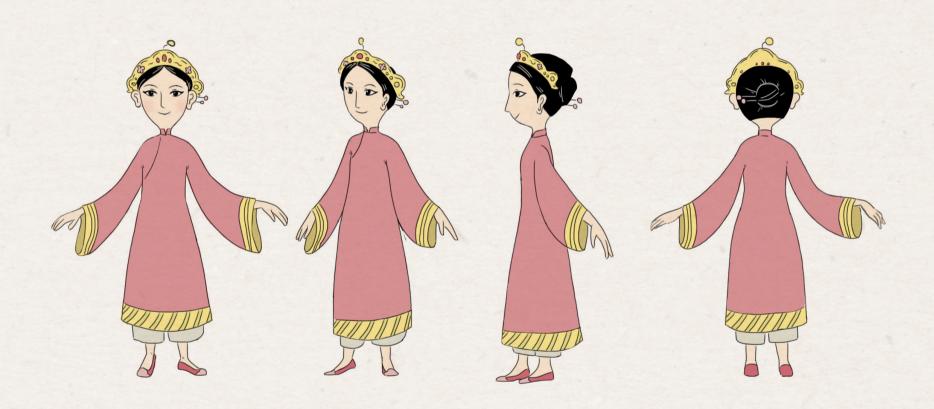
With this look, people will expect her to be reserved and timid.



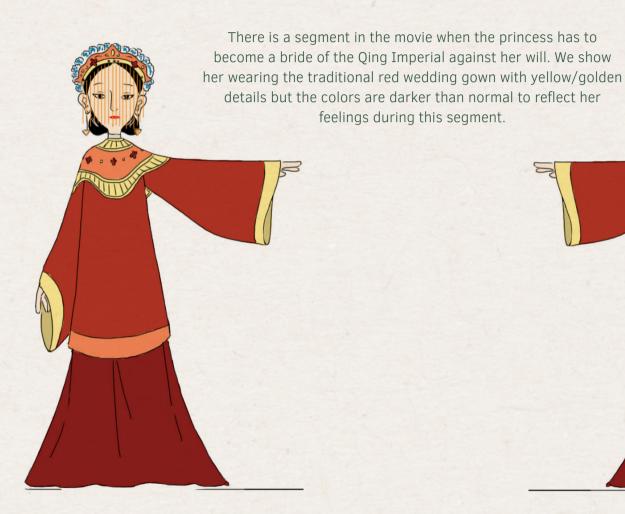
The Princess (18 years old)



The Princess (8 years old)

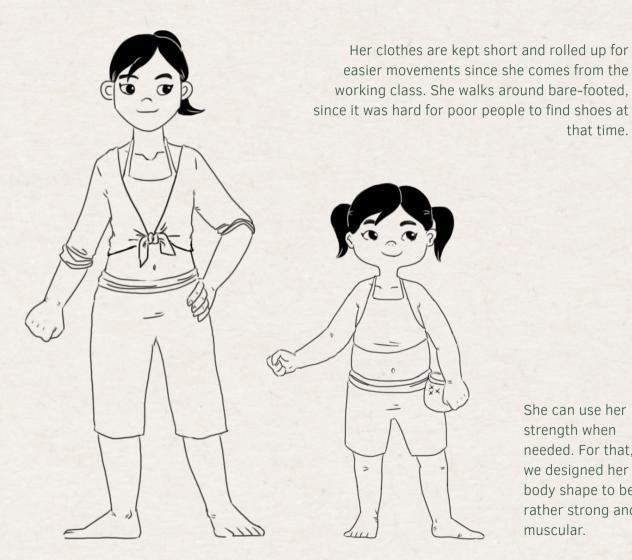


The Princess (in wedding gown)











She can use her strength when needed. For that, we designed her body shape to be rather strong and muscular.

that time.

Comparing to the princess, her features are less delicate and feminine. Rather than being fit to society standards, she stands out with her own look.

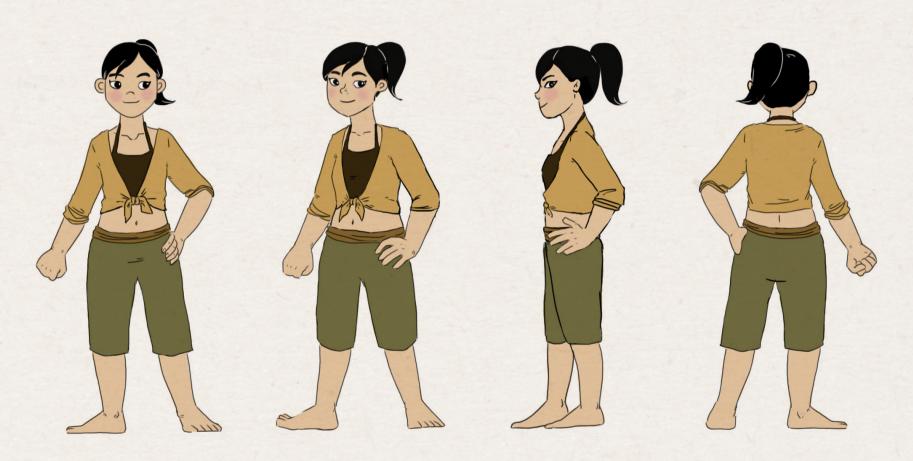




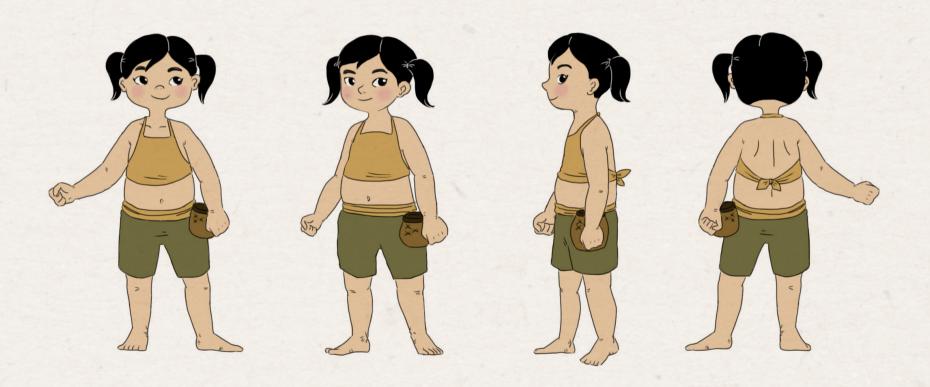
Her color pallette has a warm and earthly tone but still a bit bright, which represents her origin and her down-to-earth but also positive personality. She has a darker healthier skin tone since she grows up playing and working under the tropical sun.



The Poor Girl (18 years old)



The Poor Girl (8 years old)



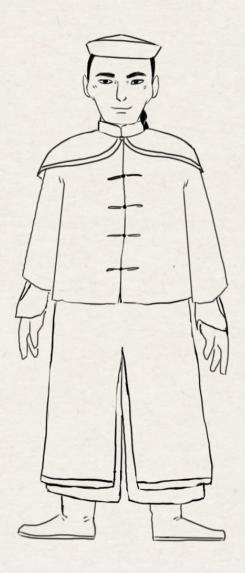
The Poor Girl (in guard's costume)



During the wedding segment, the poor girl disguises herself as 1 of the Qing Imperial's guard to sneek in and rescue the princess.







He has a tall and rather muscular figure. His hair is styled traditionally: the front half is shaved, the back half is left long and braided. His clothes and hat are stylized like royal male clothes from Qing Dynasty.





His skin tone has a pale grayish cold tone. His color scheme is darker than the other. He is wearing the traditional red wedding costume with yeallow/golden details for the royaly status and a few blue accessories, which represent the coldness beneath his neat appearance.



The prince is a selfish and malignant character. We thought his facial features should be small comparing to his face, creating a sneaky and cowardly expression, even though he is also quite good looking. His ears are also made pointy, enhancing the trades mentioned above.

The Prince









Character Comparision Chart





BACKGROUND DESIGN

The background also took us a lot of time to finish with a total of almost 20 paintings. These are lined with pencil on sketch book and colored using Photoshop. Each painting reflects well the mood of the scene throughout the whole movie.



The whole movie is divided in to 2 main timelines: the 19th century and the 21th century. Each timeline both has it's own distinctive vibe and color scheme, but connects together at the same time. For both timelines, we have done lots of researchs in order to come up with the best and most suitable sceneries.

PART 1: THE 19TH CENTURY

The story begins in the 19th century, during the Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnam. The capital was located in Hue, Vietnam during this period. Therefore, we did our research in finding old photos and paintings taken at that time, most of them are by French photographers and illustrators. We also found landscape photos of the region and the palace.



The riverside

The movie starts with a sight of the river in daylight, where the girls' dearest memories take place.

With this scene, and every other scenes, we try to create the feel of a familiar Vietnamese scenery with the banana trees, the small cottage, the smoke from straw stoves that lingers on the water surface, the wooden boat and the small road that leads to the river.

The color has a pastel nature tone with a bit of golden sunrays and pinky cloud. We believe this can remind anyone of their childhood.



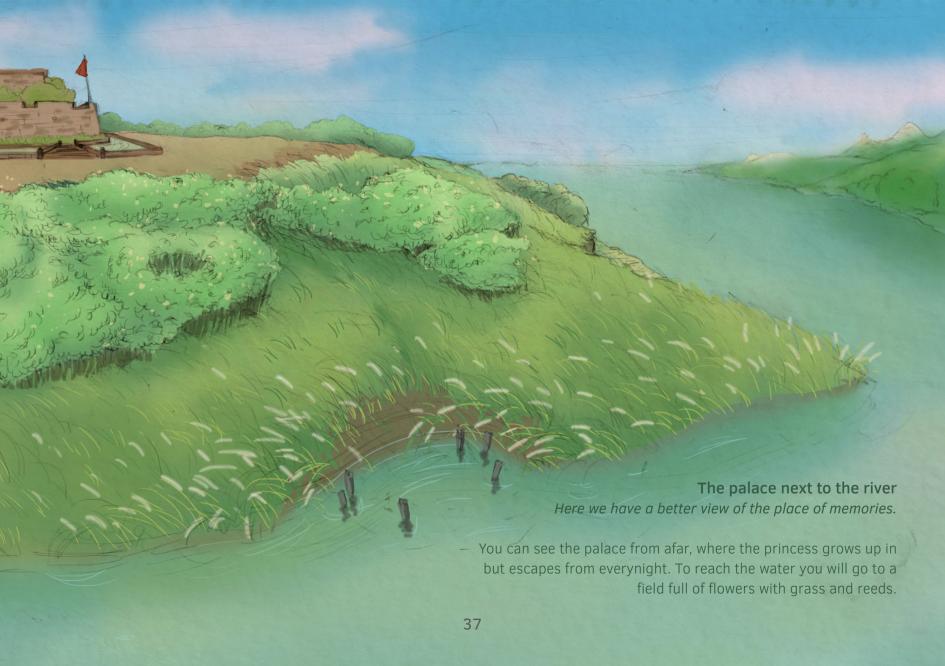


The riverside at night

Parallel to the previous scene is the view of the riverside under the moonlit night sky.

Keeping the vibe from before, but this time we add a bit of romance to it. The place is quiet and isolated with flowers all around, lying under the bright moon and sparkling stars.





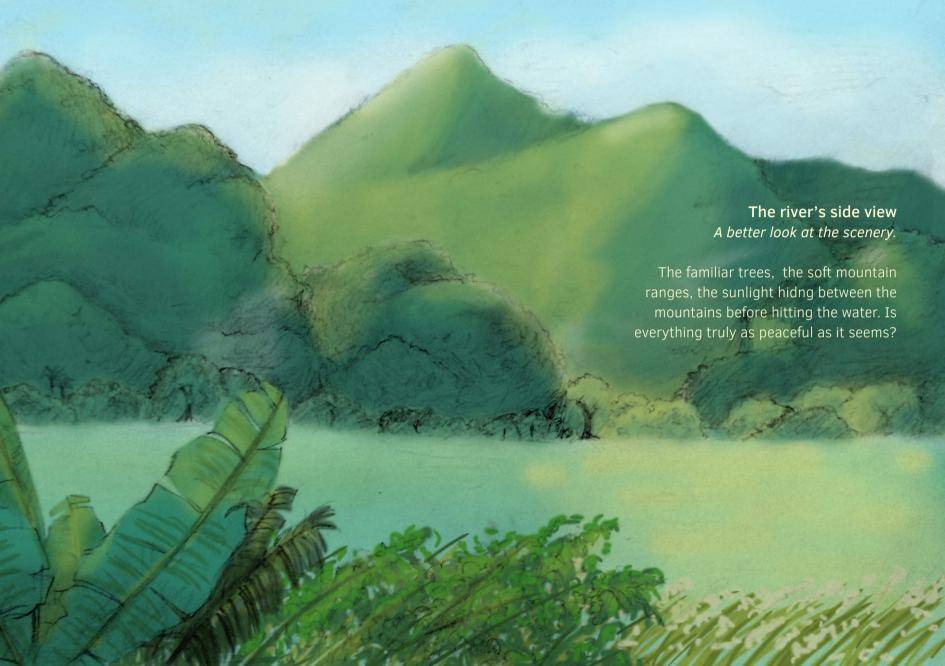


The palace at night This scene provides a peek inside the palace.

As always, the moon shines brightly. In the frame we can get a glimpse of the roofs of the buildings and the plumeria trees planted there.









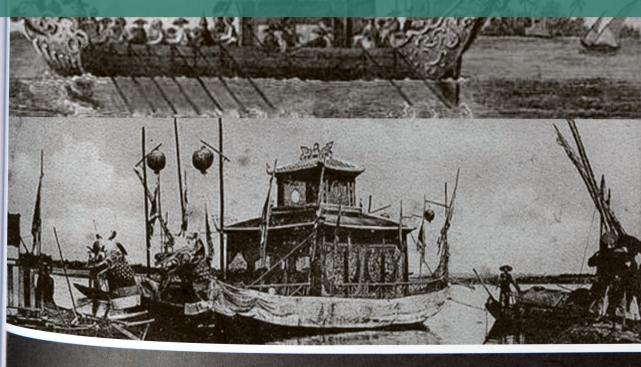






THE SHIP

The ship is another vehicle that is used to bring the princess to China. For this, we looked into others' researchs, photographs and illustrations of different types of ship at that time. In the end we decided to combine them into 1 new type of ship that can meets our requirements.



The ship is made from wood, with mostly red and gold decorations. There is an only room on it, which is for the prince and princess to rest. On 2 sides of it are red lanterns, flags and torches. There are also carved woods at the front and back of it with golden ornaments. The ship is filled with armed guards to protect the prince and princess.





The ship is about 9 - 10 metres in length and 4 - 5 metres wide. The floor and the room are also wooden.

PART 2: THE 21ST CENTURY

The second part of the story represents a new start, a happier time when the girls can finally meet again. The timeline flows into the 21st century. We did our researchs also through photographs of the place.







PRODUCTION

BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE



STORYBOARD

With the script written, we proceeded to sketch the storyboard and fixing the script again here and there. In the end we have a total of 146 scenes. This formed the foundation for the story. Here we show the most important scenes or ones that we are most satisfied with.

Act 1
The girls playing at the river and got interrupted.





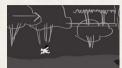






Act 2
The princess escapes the palace at night to meet her friend.

















Act 3
The girls at a floating lamp festival night together.











Act 4
The princess returns to the palace, and got caught by the emperor.

















Act 5
The day of the princess's wedding.



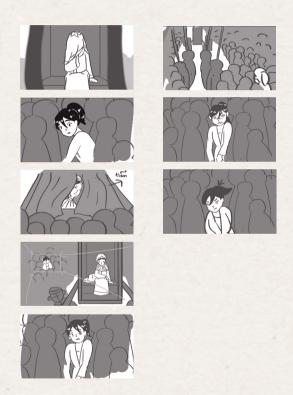






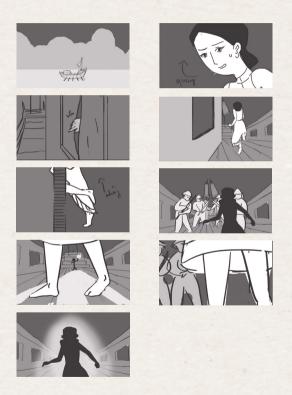


Act 6
The reunion on the ship, the poor girl has a plan.





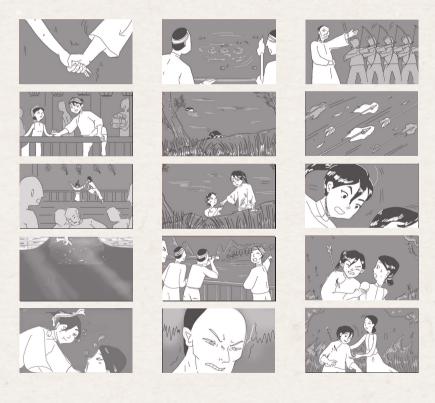
Act 7
The princess's escaping attempt, but she is caught by the guards.



Act 8
The prince is suddenly stabbed from behind by the poor girl.



Act 9
They jump into the water and swim toward land. The poor girl got injured by an arrows shot by the guards.



Act 10
They run into the forest but is surrounded by the prince and his guards. The poor girl is killed.



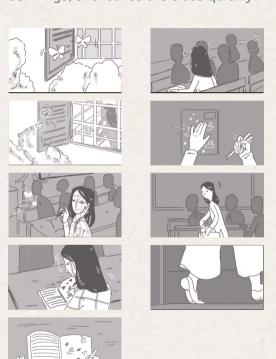
Act 11
The princess takes the swords of a guard.



Act 12
The princess stabs herself and dies on the forest floor next to the poor girl.



Act 13 A girl daydreaming in her lecture. The bell rings, she leaves the class quickly.



Act 14 She walks to a grass field. She misses a step and falls.





Act 15 Someone familiar appears to help her get up.



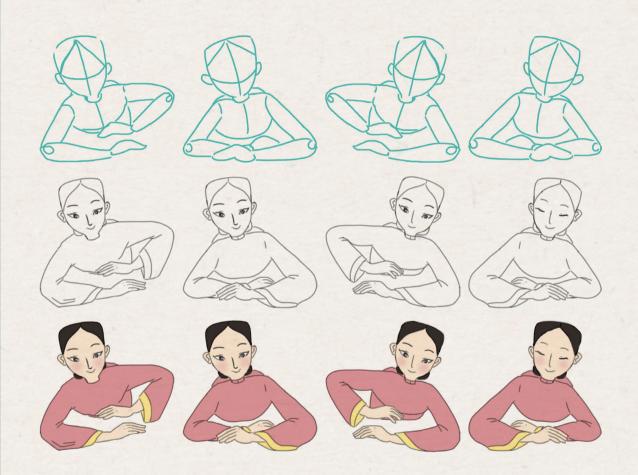


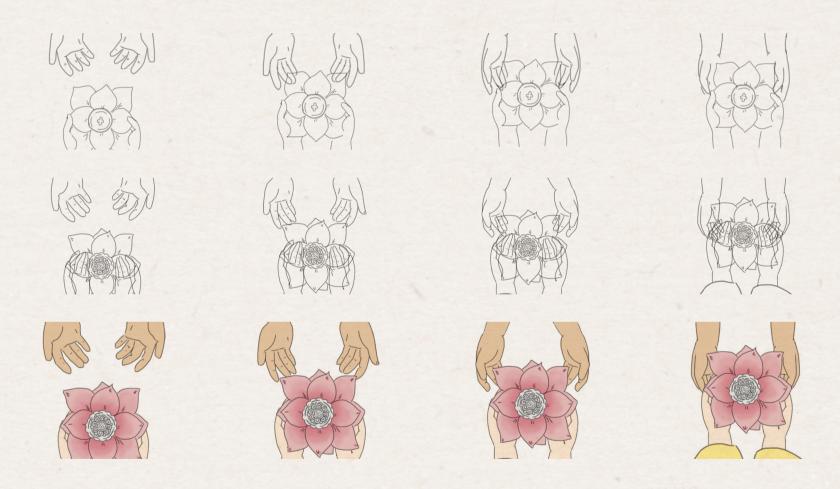




ANIMATION

Having the storyboards as our foundation, we proceeded to draw the detailed movements of each scene. This phase has 3 steps: sketching the actions, cleaning up the lines and adding colours.









MONTAGE & SOUND

The final phase is putting every footage together with sound effects and music. We did little editing here and there to make sure the movie is balanced and meets the deadline.

Everything resulted into a movie that we can be satisfied with. There is still room for improvement, though we believe that finishing the project itself is a kind of succeed that we have achieved.













