



A BUNCH OF BEARS AND SOME GIRL

Omaehtoisten kokemusten pohjalta laadittu ja toteutettu julistesarja hahmoineen

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu

Muotoilu- ja taideinstituutti, muotoilu ja viestintä

Pakkausmuotoilu ja -grafiikka

Opinnäytetyö

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Opinnäytetyö
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Opinnäytetyökseni olen suunnitellut ja laatinut neljä omakohtaisista kokemuksista rakennettua kuvitusta nykypäivästä, jotka muodostavat yhdessä toimivan julistesarjan. Hahmojen suunnitteluprosessin pohjana olen käyttänyt Kolme karhua ja Kultakutri-sadusta tuttuja hahmoja, jotka esiintyvät jokaisessa julisteessa.

Pohjatyönä kuvituksien toteuttamiselle olen tutkinut alkuperäisen sadun taustaa ja sen hahmoja. Hahmojen toteuttaminen on iso osa prosessia, joten oli myös erityisen tärkeää tehdä taustatutkimusta siitä, minkälaisia karhut ovat luonteeltaan ja olemukseltaan.

Tulen toteuttamaan kuvitukset omakohtaisten kokemusten pohjalta. Kuvasarjan karhuhahmot esittävät kuvan aiheesta riippumatta ihmismassaa. Niiden persoona, sukupuoli ja ikä määräytyy aina kuvan antaman viestin mukaan. Kultakutri on päähenkilö ja täten pysyy samannäköisenä läpi koko julistesarjan.

Olen valinnut kuvaamani aiheet niin, että katsojan on helppo samaistua näkemäänsä. Karhuhahmoja käyttäessä ihmishahmojen sijaan välillä ikävänkin sanoman välittäminen katsojalle käy helpommin. Tarkoituksena on kertoa eläinhahmojen kautta tarina, jonka katsoja voi tulkita omalla tavallaan. Pyrin myös siihen, että kuva-aihe ei ole kulttuurisidonnainen vaan kaikkien ymmärrettävissä.

Aiheet olen rakentanut niin, että saan mahdollisimman monta eri kuvakulmaa tarkasteltavakseni. Muun muassa paikka, aika, ikäryhmä ja tunnetila luovat kuvalle sisällöllistä syvyyttä. Tätä hyväksikäyttäen luon toimivan kokonaisuuden ihmisten tarkasteltavaksi ja tulkittavaksi.

Avainsanat:

Hahmosuunnittelu, Kolme Karhua ja Kultakutri, kuvitus, nykypäivä, kokempohjaisuus, kuvasarja, karhut, persoona



ABSTRACT

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Anni-Julia Tuomisto / A Series of Posters

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For my Final Thesis, I have designed and created four illustrations. The illustrations are based on the present day and structured from scenes of my personal experience. The four illustrations form a connected series of posters. There are three bears and a girl in each poster. The characters taken from “The Story of the Three Bears” serve as a backbone for my own story. This way the viewer can relate straight to the given message.

I did a lot of groundwork by looking into the history of “The Story of The Three Bears”, its plot, scene and characters. Creating the characters of my story was an essential part of the process. It was particularly important to study bears, their nature, personalities and the ways they can possibly act and present themselves in different situations.

As I am creating my design based on my personal experience, regardless of the topic, the bear characters represent an anonymous group of people acting as one. Their personality, age and gender are determined by the message of the poster. Goldilocks is the main character and she remains the same through the series.

I have chosen topics that people can easily relate to. By using bear characters instead of human characters to tell my story, it is sometimes easier to convey unpleasant subjects to the viewers. The idea is to tell the tale with the help of bears and to let the viewer understand it as he/she pleases. I have created the posters not to be distinctively culture-related so that they can be interpreted by anyone and anywhere.

I have structured the topics so that they can be inspected from many different angles. Place, time, age group, emotions - all these create the actual meaning and depth of each illustration carrying the idea and growing into a series of posters for the viewer to see.

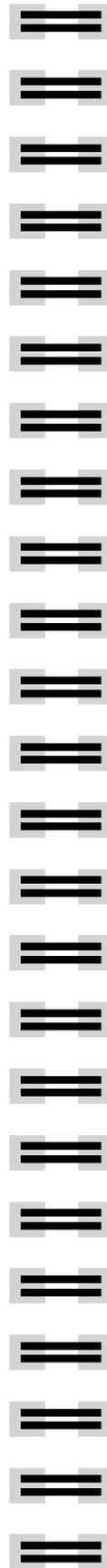
Keywords:

Character design, “The Story of The Three Bears”, illustration, present day, experience, series of illustrations, bears, personality



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1 INTRODUCTION

I have always been keen on drawing, painting, the world of colors and anything visual in general. For the last five years, during my studies, I have played with sketches, doodles and scribbles. I have used these sketches to make my own designs, arts, but especially animal characters. Testing different colors and playing with gradients has been lots of fun. I therefore wished character design to play a major part of my Final Thesis.

I decided to use familiar characters to keep the connection alive for the viewer, to help to understand better the new aspects I was giving to the designs. Using the characters of "The Story of the Three Bears" was a natural solution as the tale provided three animal and one human character to play with. Also, it is one of the famous fairy tales well known in many parts of the world.

I had a clear idea which way to go with my versions of the characters. In my thesis, I present many different examples of the style I wish to use. One of the examples and also my personal favorite is the Ren & Stimpy animated series.

First I wished to keep my Final Thesis concentrated only on the characters and nothing else. It is so interesting to learn about facial expressions and body language and to see that your possibilities for creating a character are practically limitless. I had even a style in mind which I had used for four years, a style produced with the help of Adobe Illustrator.

After creating my own story and the characters and giving them different poses and facial expressions, I started to get bored. But in the process I had learned how to create a proper character in the right way, considering all the aspects, different angles, personality, color, etc. I had also learned that

for creating a character and for keeping the character interesting you really need a story behind it all. Hence the question – what can I as an author offer to the reader?

I started to consider different options for keeping the design process alive and progressing. For example - does the reader, who has not a slightest idea about character designing, wish to see characters in different angles, or should there be something more to present? This was the turning point of my thesis.

I started to create different surroundings that I could set my characters in. I decided to drop the surroundings and atmosphere familiar from "The Story of the Three Bears" - the cottage, the forest, the ancient way of life, wooden chairs and squeaky floors. I ended up using present day city life and my personal experience. I kept the scenes and surroundings as generic as I could, so that people can relate to the message I wished to convey.

I chose the scenes and the surroundings by mixing extremities, different genres, ages and personalities. Picking day and night scenes, crowded places and contemporary night life provided new aspects to my designing process. Making people to react to your work can be great fun, a reward for the artist always worth aspiring to.

I produced my Final Thesis with a strong thought about my future. Some day it is my plan to go and study for a Master's degree in character design somewhere abroad. I hope my book will bear witness to my passion for the subject. Character design is my passion and it took five years to realize it.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 THE STORY OF THE THREE BEARS



This chapter is about the fairytale called The Story of the Three Bears: its history, characters and their personality. I will also discuss the differences between the original story and its later adaptations.

History

The story of the three bears is a fairy tale written and published by British author and poet Robert Southey in 1837. The same year, British writer George Nicol published a rhyme based version of the fairy tale with Southey's permission in hopes for a bigger audience.

The Story of the Three Bears is one of the best known fairy tales in the English language. In the first version of the tale the characters consist of three male bears and an old woman. The old woman turned into a young blond girl in the publication of 1849. Later, the young girl had various names based on her golden hair but at the beginning of the 20th century the name Goldilocks became the formal name for the girl.

Also the fairy tale has had many different names. The original name was "The Story of the Three Bears" but it is also known as "The Three Bears", "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and just "Goldilocks".

Storyline

The story tells about three bears who live in a cottage deep in the woods. While the bears are waiting for the porridge to cool, they go for a stroll in the woods.

Meanwhile a woman wanders to their house. She looks through the window to be sure that nobody is at home. When assured that the house is empty, she breaks in. She tastes the porridge, sits in the chairs breaking one and goes upstairs for a nap with a full belly.

After a while, the bears return to the cottage. They notice that someone has eaten their porridge and sat in their chairs. When they go upstairs they find a woman sleeping in their bed. The intruder then wakes up and jumps through the window. She never returns.

Old version

In Robert Southey's original tale in "The Story of the Three Bears", there a small wee bear, a middle-sized bear and a big, huge bear who all live together. Southey describes the bears as good-natured, harmless, tidy, trustworthy and hospitable. Each bear has its own porridge cup, a chair and a bed. Southey does not have name for the bears and they are described as young men, not as a family.

In this version the woman is not a young girl but an old woman described as impudent, bad, foul-mouthed, ugly, dirty and a vagrant. Visually, the woman is depicted as black-haired, with a huge crooked nose and frumpy old clothes.

New Version

The storyline has not changed in the course of time. The actual change has taken place within the characters and in their personalities. The bears were originally presented as young bachelors, but with the evolution of the story they changed into a family. The human character of the story also changed, first being an old hag, it gradually turned into an innocent girl called Goldilocks. In my opinion, the changes have made the story more approachable.

Setting the story in the present day brought many new aspects and opportunities use as to of the story. The story being a public domain and therefore free to be used by anybody anywhere, the story has been used in various marketing materials, theater, new versions of the fairy tale proper and even 3D movies. None of these, though, have been in worldwide distribution.

Today, the tale is typically framed as a discovery of separating right from wrong, but for earlier generations, it was a tale about an intruder unable control herself when encountering possessions of others.



PALMER

On the upper left, an illustration from George Nicols rhyme based version of The Story of the three Bears, 1837, Google books. On the right is an illustration By Laura Palmer.

2.2 THE INSPIRATION

This chapter is about my approach to the subject of my final thesis. I will also share some examples of the visual style that inspired me. I will also explain how many different things affect the way a character and its surroundings look like.



The Inspiration

There has always been an intriguing aspect towards certain starchynes of animations like Ren & Stimpy, Sponge Bob and Two Stupid Dogs. I was about ten years old when I saw The Ren & Stimpy Show for the first time on the Finnish TV. As I have always been keen on animals, I found those chums very amusing.

I used to think that they were just a silly dog and a cat. As I gained years and saw the series again, I started to understand the humor behind it all. Actually, The Ren & Stimpy Show was originally not meant for children, but for adult viewers. I did not mind it, though, when I was a kid. The series made a strong impact on me. A couple of years ago, I rented all episodes and watched them over again.

The Humor

Although the scenes in The Ren & Stimpy Show are set in the present day, the show's crew wished to avoid contemporary jokes referring to current events. This is why the humor is based on various adventures of Ren and Stimpy, e.g. the adventures of Season 1, The Littlest Giant released on September 1, 1991. Stimpy dreams of Wee Ren, and the whole episode is based on Wee's adventure.

The same type of humor has been used in Sponge Bobs Square Pants, in Two Stupid Dogs and in many other Nickelodeon animation series, although, in my opinion, none of these animations have reached the depth of The Ren & Stimpy Show.

Kricfalusi, Ren & Stimpy

Ren & Stimpy characters were created by John Kricfalusi in 1978 for personal amusement and as the pets of George Liquor and Jimmy The Idiot Boy (Kricfalusi's earlier animations), during his time in Sheridan College in Canada.

Ren Höek is a scrawny, violently psychotic chihuahua. In the series, Ren cares a great deal about Stimpson the cat, but at the same time he keeps pestering and making rude insults towards him: "YOU SICK LITTLE MONKEY!". Andy Meisler of The New York Times described Ren as "adventurous," "intelligent," and "emotionally brittle."

Stimpson "Stimpy" J.Cat is a three years old, fat and stupid cat. With a red and white body, Stimpy is a rotund Manx cat with a blue nose, purple eyelids, no tail, human-style buttocks, flat feet, and a brain the size of a peanut. For the viewer, it is simple to identify to Stimpy as somebody lovable. Andy Meisler of The New York Times described Stimpy as "bosom," "barrel-chested," and "good-natured." Stimpy's trademark facial expression is a blissfully ignorant smile with his tongue flopping out.

Kricfalusi designed the bodies of Ren and Stimpy so that they would stretch in every direction – until their mouth would turn upside down and their eyes would pop out. There were no limits to the facial expressions of the two. I find it one of the most fascinating aspects of Kricfalusi's designs.

The Style I'm After

The Ren & Stimpy cartoon is a brilliant example of what I am

looking for. The use of color is vigorous. The scenes are all about the characters, not the surroundings. There is a good usage of close-ups painted acrylic on canvas by Scott Willis as seen on this page.

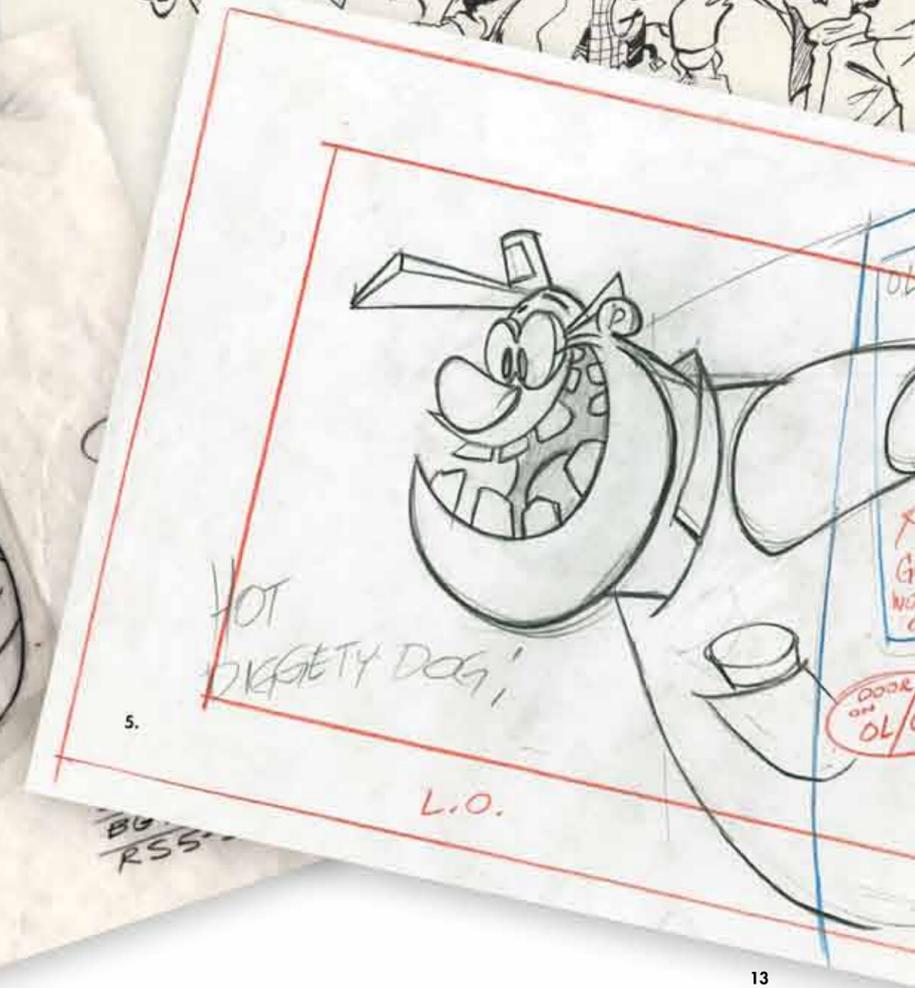
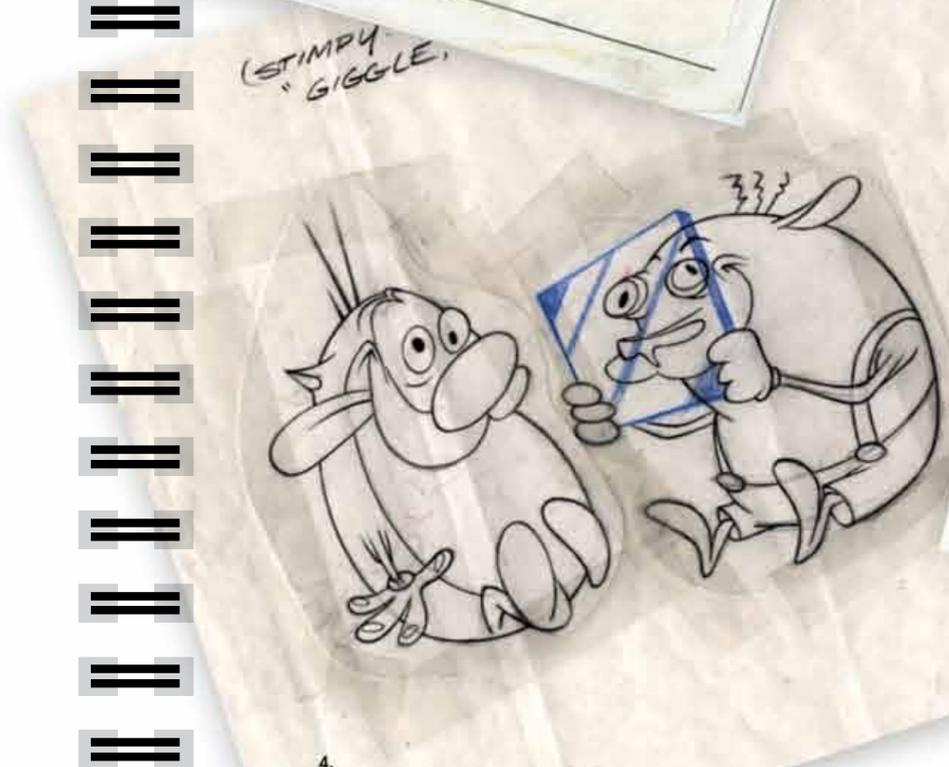
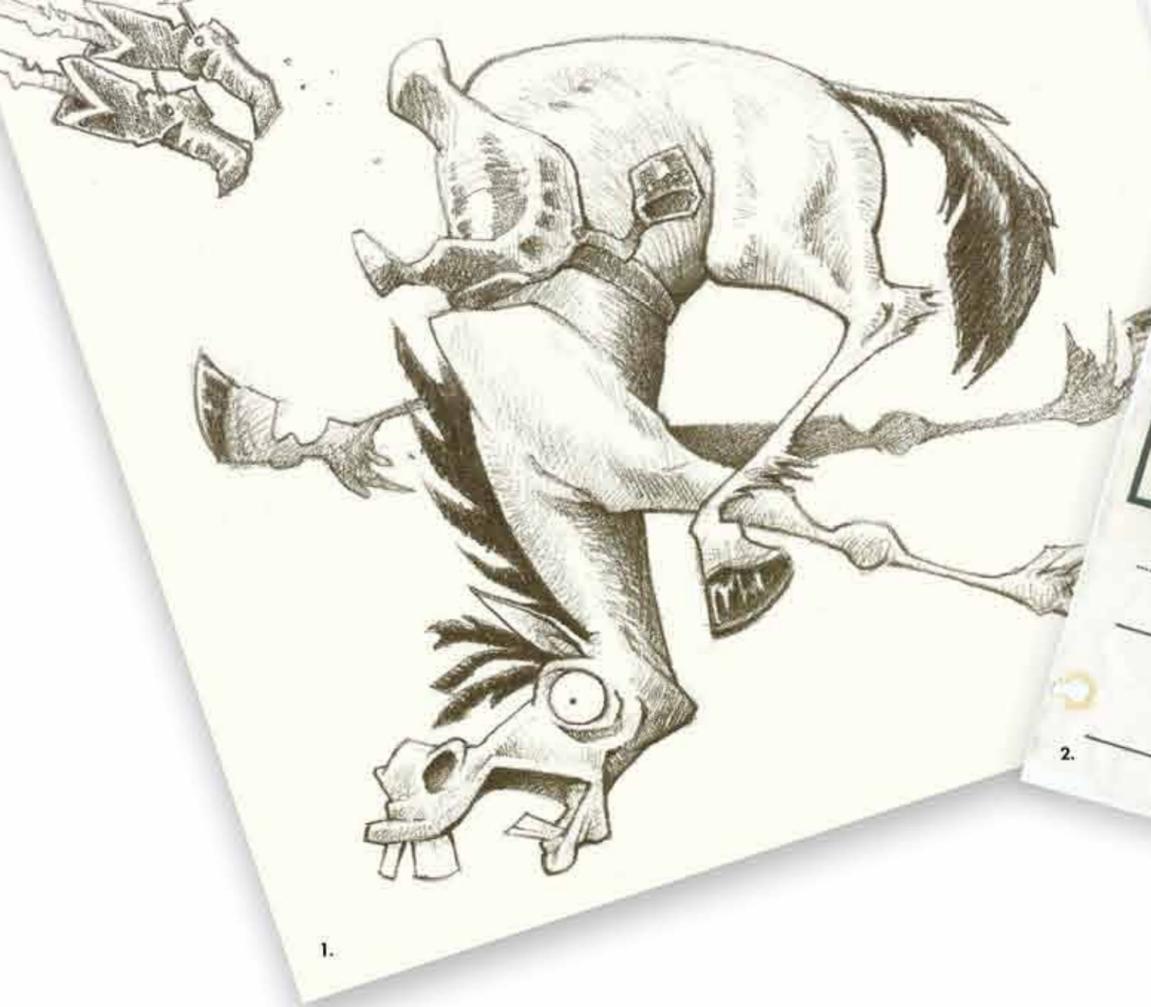
In my thesis, though, it is not my intention to imitate the style used in the Ren & Stimpy cartoon. On the opposite - to achieve even a part of the humor aspect with my very own design would be a success for me.

I am going to start by hand. Sketching, drawing, scribbling - anything involving a pen and paper is a plus. I want to become a better drawer in the process. The style can be simplified, yes, but I want the first impression of a character to be better than good. My design shall have to tell a tale of its own.

On the top left, acrylic on canvas By Scott Willis
Rens ear
Stimpys eyes
Rens eyes

On the right, an illustration By John Kricfalusi
from the animation George Liquor Stories.





A Collection of inspirational sketches, from left to right:

1. A bolted horse, from the book "The Daily Zoo, Year 2" By Chris Ayers
2. Ren & Stimpy, A Storyboard sketch by Bob Camp
3. Famous Artists Cartoon Course > Lesson 16: Animals
4. Ren and his cousin Swen, from John Kricfaluci Blogspot
5. A storyboard sketch by Jim Smith from Animation Archive



3 CHARACTER DESIGN

3.1 CONSISTENT CHARACTER DESIGN

*A major part of this chapter is based on my notes from the book *Creating Characters with Personality* by Tom Bancroft. This is not the only way to design good characters – these tips are just some of the many that influence me and my designs.*

Stages of Character Design

Designing characters is not just putting some funny faces on a piece of paper. There are quite many different stages involved in a good design. In professional character design several designers work together to create one character. During the working process, each designer leaves his mark on the character.

Blue sky designers are the base of the character design. They are asked to create many different variations of a character with little guidance as to what the character will ultimately be. This procedure will require as much research as it does drawing. The basic idea is to find out what are the features that strengthen the personality and make the character more alive.

There are also many ways to deepen the character's personality: costuming, ethnic influences, cultural references - all depending on the creative thinking of the designer. Blue sky designers are the first people to be called when a major project is at hand.

Character polishers use the material produced by the blue sky designers to create even more polished look for a character. They tend not have a distinctive style of drawing but are able to make the character their own. Character polishers use the existing design and bring the character into life through different poses and expressions. Further, the polisher produces an expression sheet showing the character from different angles, in different poses and with various expressions.

Shape and Size

Character design starts from basic forms, such as circles, triangles and squares. A good way to get to know the character is to ask yourself questions like: How old is it? Is it rich or poor? Is it smart or dumb? Using basic shapes in the design gives you visual clues needed to describe the character. They become the backbone of the determining qualities and overall attitude of a character.

Interesting size relations between shapes make a stronger design with more visual interest. If the character to be designed, for example, is a child, I instantly think of a large head, plump body and small limbs. With varying sizes the

viewer does not get bored of the character and is likely to find new aspects to it more easily.

Variance

Variance refers to the spacing and variety of sizes and shapes in your design. Using different shapes, angular and round, the design gets more versatility and contrast. By using contrast in line thickness, making the shape varied and dynamic and using opposite forms like straight versus curvy, the design rarely comes out flat in the end.

Negative space is one of the aspects to consider as a part of the design. The spaces or gaps between the shapes of the character will help to define the design visually. Many of the already existing characters, as seen in the picture, can be recognized from their silhouette.

Pushing Your Design

It is a common reaction to fall in love with the character you designed and stick to it. The general rule here should be: Keep pushing forward! There is always something nice about the design. Keeping the nice things and pushing forward with the parts that are just about OK is a good way to get more out of your design. There are no limits to how many times you can draw your character. I find myself learning to work by the rule. Earlier I used to be the girl who was sure that the design was ready when drawn out for the first time. The truth is that it could have been designed far beyond by evolving the sketch even further.

The Animal in Me

When designing animal characters, the first thing to address is the balance between human and animal attributes. Knowing whether the character is more like an animal or a human will be the guide to how realistic or cartoonish your animal design is going to be. If the animal attributes of a character prevail, it would be natural to apply realistic anatomy to your design. If the character has a lot of human characteristics, then the animal is most likely to be designed as anthropomorphic.

There are different levels of using human and animal elements and anatomy in the design. For example, an animal can be presented realistically growling and walking on four feet but with the ability to speak and having some human facial expressions. The design can even be simplified by making the animal character walk on two feet and have all the assets that a human character would have. In the book *Creating Characters with Personalities*, defines this type of character design as anthropomorphic. I learned that in addition to animals also forces of nature, plants and other non-living things can be designed as anthropomorphic.

Why do we use animal characters to tell us stories?

By using animal characters the viewer can enjoy and learn from the message of the story without directly recognizing himself or someone he knows in it. It is a way to keep the viewer interested without putting up barriers. It is a way to convey the message first and leave the presumption who the characters might represent further in the background.

For example, in the story "The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" tells a story of a deceiving man. When a wolf character is telling the story opposed to a human character, the viewer lets down his guard and examines the picture more open-mindedly.

Using animal characters gives you an opportunity to act silly or ignorant without being directly degrading to people. Telling the story through an animal character keeps the contents of the story less insulting as someone who identifies himself with the situation in which the character is found might feel.

With these tips and a whole lot of other information, I created my three bears and Goldilocks characters. My design process was hugely helped by the book "Creating Characters with Personality" with many technical bits I learned from it.

3.2 MY WAY OF WORKING

This chapter is about my character creation process from start to finish, and explain my methods starting from a sketch and ending up with the finalized vector graphics version.



For Starters

For five years I have been a consistent user of Adobe Illustrator. I use it to finalize the sketches I produce by hand. I consider myself self-taught with the program and my style to be curvy and balanced, with smart use of gradients. I like to bring tri-dimensionality to my images and the use of gradients helps me to create that feel. My method has been very much the same throughout the past years.

I always start the design by hand with a pencil and a sketchbook. I keep a smaller sketchbook with me, when I am not at home, in case I have an nice idea for my design. After quite a lot of sketching in different styles, faces, postures and personalities, I tend to choose the best one out of the bunch and keep pushing forward with the specific design.

When I am satisfied with the character, I scan the sketch. The scan does not have to be of the best quality, sometimes a screenshot is enough. Having a picture of the design helps you to keep the character's basic forms and proportions right.

After Sketching

Now that I have the design scanned on the computer, I bring it to Adobe Illustrator. I leave the picture in its own layer and lock it down. I do another layer and start to do the basic shape of the character. Now that the character has the base color, I start working on details. These details are everything, without them the character would look flat, the basic kind Adobe Illustrator material that everyone does, amateurs and sometimes even professional graphic designers. With details, I mean light and

shadow areas, wrinkles, eyes, the shape of mouth and fingers. It is always good to keep in mind the direction of light - it helps to keep the style intact. I often use the Pathfinder tool to cut parts of the base and highlight them.

Vibrant Colors

I think one of my assets is my sense of color. I have been in love with colors from the age of four, when I started painting peacocks and other animal characters on paper. Combining and mixing different tones, the use of warm and cold colors and finding the right balance between them, is a skill I have learned from my mother, who worked as a teacher and a lecturer at Tampere Visual Arts School for many years. I think the theory of colors can be studied, but using colors in the right manner is still something you have or you do not.

Body Language and Facial Expressions

Now that I had cleared to myself the actual working process to follow, I started to collect every piece of information on how to create impressive illustrations.

The mood of a character is expressed through its posture and facial expression. A good pose adds life to the character and is always an option for standing straight with arms on the side. Every human has its own individual characteristics: signature walk, facial expressions, laugh, openness and many more.

The interesting part is to try and put moods and poses on the paper. What would my character look if he/she would get angry? The dynamics of the character is behind different poses and facial expressions.

The Alluring Fox

I have used one of my earlier designs (Fall 2009) to present my simple processes in creating a character. In this design, I actually had just one fast 5 cm high sketch of the fox in the corner of my sketchbook. I was not too pleased with this particular sketch, but I liked the curve in the neck area and the petit feet and so I decided to try it out on the computer:

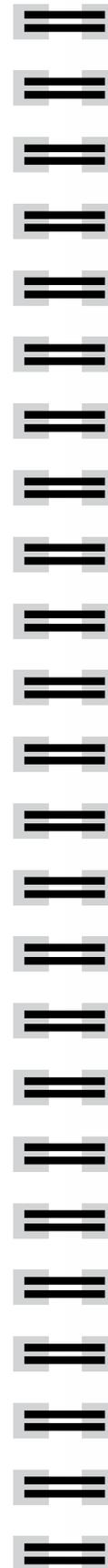
1. First I made the base lines and colored the surfaces. I attached some hair resembling details to the line with Pathfinder Unite-tool.

2. Then I continued with gradients. Here we see a perfect example of what can be achieved with the use of gradients.

3. Adding different details like big eyes, round nose, cute little teeth and hair to the tail were the next steps of the process.

4. Finishing the design with green eyes, moustache, shadow and light areas, and other details were the final tweaks of the finalized version.

This whole process took me approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes. Today I would probably produce this image in 2+ hours provided I had a good sketch to work with. Should I have had a proper sketch of the fox, I would have completed the illustration in less time. It is a perfect example on the importance of a sketch.



1.



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3.



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4 CHOOSING THE TOPIC AND CREATING A STORY AROUND IT

4.1 WHOLE PROCESS FROM START TO FINISH

In this chapter I will explain how I ended up choosing this subject for my final thesis as I had quite a few problems on the way. I will also present the process stages I went through - the good and the lame ones - before I ended up with the final version.

“Designing Characters with Personality”

I picked a well-known fairy tale the characters of which can be easily affiliated to the story not only in Finland, but also in other countries. Choosing a fairy tale with animal and human characters gave me the opportunity to challenge myself with the design of both. As already mentioned, I made a thorough background research on the history, the plot, the characters, the scene of “The Story of the Three Bears”.

I read two different books on character design. The first one was “The Daily Zoo, Year 2” by Chris Ayers. In the book, Chris Ayers presents his animal designs which he had drawn in every single day of the year 2009. It means the book contains 365 Chris Ayers’ different animal images.

The second book I read was “Creating Characters with Personality” By Tom Bancroft who presents Glen Keane, Supervising Animator/Director for Walt Disney Feature Animation and his methods of creating good character design. After reading these books I was eager to start my own designs.

Before I could start, I had to think about the characters and their positions and locations in the scenes - how to design characters with a variety of emotions and versatility of poses. I needed to create my own story, using the traditional

storyline as a backbone for my own.

The Plot

I created a storyline that instantly indicated the scenes and brought the story to the present day. In my version of the story, Goldilocks was the father bear’s secretary and they had a secret affair that the mother bear had no clue about. Eventually the secretary gets tired of waiting and looks for revenge for the wasted years and empty promises. She makes a copy of the key, enters and trashes the three bears’ home when they are away.

The plot written, it was time to create the personalities of characters. I naturally decided that the characters act like humans and are able to walk on two feet and talk like people do - that they will be anthropomorphic characters. After the personalities selected, postures and facial expressions were brought to the design process. It was time to start sketching the characters based on the research material, inspirational pictures and created personalities.

The father bear and the secretary being the main characters of the plot, the first thing on my list was drawing a bunch of different sketches of them. After the sketches, I moved

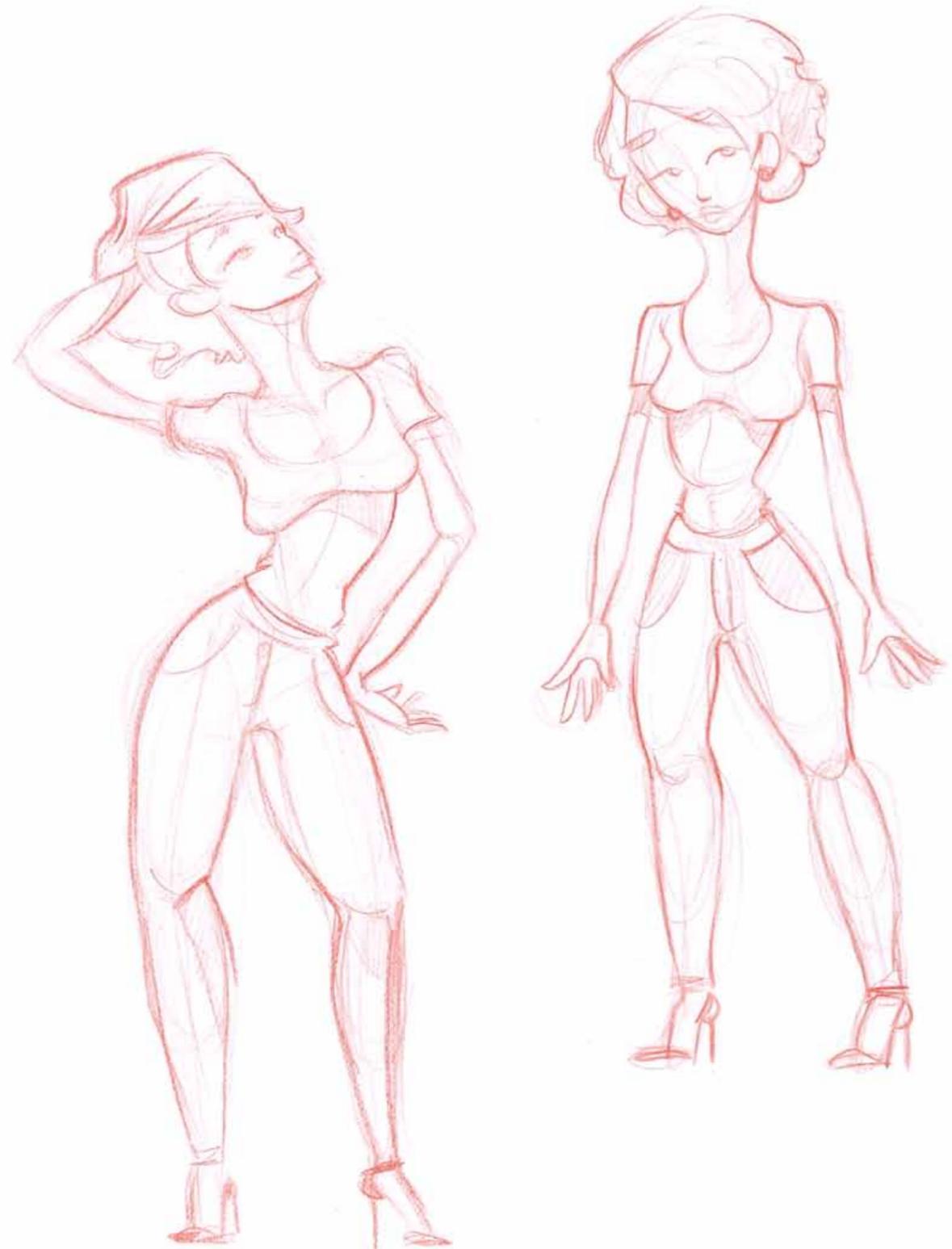
on for the mother and the son bear. I even brought my secretary to Adobe Illustrator to take the image to the next/final stage.

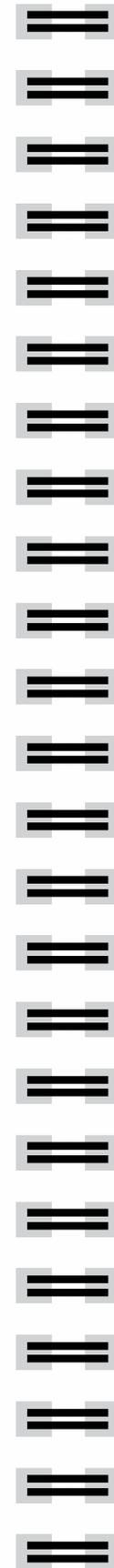
When I had enough working sketches of the characters, it was time to think about other things like the surroundings and accessories, e.g. the cabin where the bears lived. The surroundings had to be thought of, though not at the expense of my character design. I listed things I could design for the bears’ home: the Masturbating Bear from the Conan O’Brien Show, Yogi-poster, a fish tank with one huge salmon, a rotating trundle of bark and frozen berries in the freezer. All these ideas were funny and seemed usable. After talking to people and getting their opinion on where I was heading, I started to hesitate if this was enough for my Final Thesis. Creating characters with personalities? I decided to keep pushing forward.

Women & Bears

The pictures in this chapter present a series of sketches I made during the first half of the process. At this stage, I was still thinking that characters would play a major part of my Final Thesis. They still do, but in a different way.

At first, I was thinking of creating a character to be used for various marketing materials, such as packaging,





posters, animation, 3D design, etc. The second stage was to make the design to be used only two-dimensionally. In this case the characters did not have to be drawn in every direction with a variety of different facial expressions, one captivated moment would be enough.

What next?

I had figured out the characters with their personalities. From my numerous sketches I noticed that the characters acted very similarly in different situations. There was not enough variation in the characters' personalities and nature. I also had to rethink the old and frumpy world the characters lived in. I wanted to bring the three bears and the girl into the present day city life, away from the cottage and the forest. I decided that I will not leave the bears and the girl in the middle of the forest and repeat the old fairy tale like so many others had done in the past.

I asked myself lots of different questions and answered them as well as I could. I needed more depth and versatility. I contemplated on the gender of the bears. I almost got stuck thinking that the bears had to be a family, a mother, a father and a son. Going back to the history of the story, I remembered that the bears were originally men, bachelors.

Now I Got It!

At first I had altered the plot of the fairy tale but had kept the surroundings almost unchanged. I still continued thinking about the present day city scene and the ways of bringing the characters to this date. Designing from everyday things which people can relate to was the subject I needed an answer to.

What people can relate to is news. The social aspect came at hand. In the original story the girl eats porridge, sits on a chair, sleeps in a bed. What if the girl did not have these things? Poverty and the poor came to my mind. Thinking about the three bears, a bear is a slang word for a hunky gay guy. I started thinking of minorities and their problems in the society we live in. What about a girl in an unknown environment? Being in a strange house with odd people? I thought about the alienation of people we see in our society.

All these subjects were too serious for me to interpret. I was heading in a too serious direction. It was not my personality. My personality is bubbly and fun so I started thinking what I really wanted and what I personally had experienced. I wished to present my own experience of living in a society - was still my Final Thesis, not anybody else's.

Finally I reached a conclusion. I decided to create

from three to five pieces of illustrations with a slogan. I could present these illustrations in a series of posters. I would be using my best assets by doing something I am good at and learning new things at the same time. I could learn more graphic design. Also, I would acquaint myself with the process of producing print quality material.

I had come to the solution to produce a subjective Final Thesis, based on my personal experience and making statements that the viewer can still easily to relate to. Using a popular fairy tale with well-known characters, is a way to tell my story of my experience in the frame of another tale.

4.2 MY FAIRY TALE

There are many versions of The Story of the Three Bears, and this one is mine. In this chapter I will ponder how to make the characters as colourful as possible and figure out a way to make them stand out and make an impact. I will use word pairs to study the contrast between the girl and the bear characters and create a base for the storyline.

Keeping It Real

Having reached a clear vision on how to proceed with my work, I started to collect every piece of information that could be used for producing impressive illustrations with intriguing character combinations.

I thought of my own life events and experience. What happens during the day opposed to night time? Do people just linger in different places or do they act in a certain way at given circumstances? Could the answers to the questions help me to get the variations I needed for the illustrations?

I started to evolve a story - a Friday night trip of a girl to Helsinki City. The girl takes a public bus during the rush hour. She goes for a shopping spree at Stockmann's. In the evening she sees her new co-workers and when she leaves she sees a raging quarrel.

My challenge was to make these stories alive. Using visual references whenever needed I created a world of a girl that any viewer – especially women - can relate to. I had produced a story to back me up in the designs.

“The Others”

The girl, the leading character, needed others around her to make the illustration become alive. Referring to the bears, when talking of “the others”, I decided to handle the bears always as a group. To present people with certain distinct mannerisms and gestures was a brilliant way to involve the bears. I also

tried to think of extreme emotion pairs to be included in the scenes, e.g. the bears are furious and the girl is calm and quite sad.

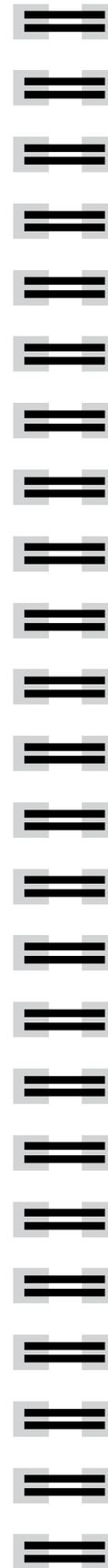
Starting to build up the scenes in my head, I invented a nice pattern to the story. The story starts during the day time, the first scene takes place in a bus. Then we get to the escalators. After shopping, the day has turned into night. After clubbing, the girl is outside again. So, two scenes outside, two scenes inside, two scenes during the day, two during the night, a girl, three bears and a world of different emotions and facial expressions. It sounded good to me!

The bus scene could be presented as quite static, the bears and the girl being side to side, almost in an uncomfortable way. The second scene at the escalators gives a certain tension because of the diagonal lines they do. “In the bar” illustration can be presented so that the bears are in the front and the girl is in the back. Last but not least, I created disorder for the last scene. It was something that required full concentration on details. I main thing, though, was that, I had a vision of each and every scene ready in my mind.

The Steps

In the next pages, I present the poster designs in stages. First comes the sketching part, finding the right angles and positions of characters. After sketching, I bring the drawing on to my computer to start the finalization.

I decided to use Wacom drawing pad and CS5 Adobe Photoshop in addition to Adobe Illustrator. The new tools would lead me to technically more versatile design than I am normally used to. Taking myself out from my comfort zone was a major step. There are always three spreads of material per poster. I wish the pictures to speak for themselves and therefore no text is included. There is also bunch of screen shots to keep you on track on how I work.



"PRIORITY SEATING"

P: In the bus
SITUATION: Sitting in the wrong place
WHO: Three retired men, a girl
EMOTION: Judgemental / Clueless

We all use public transportation every once in a while. This scene has happened to me many times and as many times I have been an observer of it.

"SOCIAL GAME"

P: At the bar counter
S: Talking trash
W: Three young women
E: condescending / perplexed

I have noticed certain cattiness between people – especially women - after a couple of drinks. It is not my friends I am referring to, but well to some acquaintances and in a bar where people “say the darndest things”.

"TAILGATING"

P: At the escalator
S: Standing in front
W: Three adult women, a girl
E: Self-satisfied / irritated

A mall is the worst place to be during the day when it gets crowded. Especially in Finland, people do not know how to walk and it shows. Still, I do not suggest that this problem exists only in here.

"BEAR WITNESS"

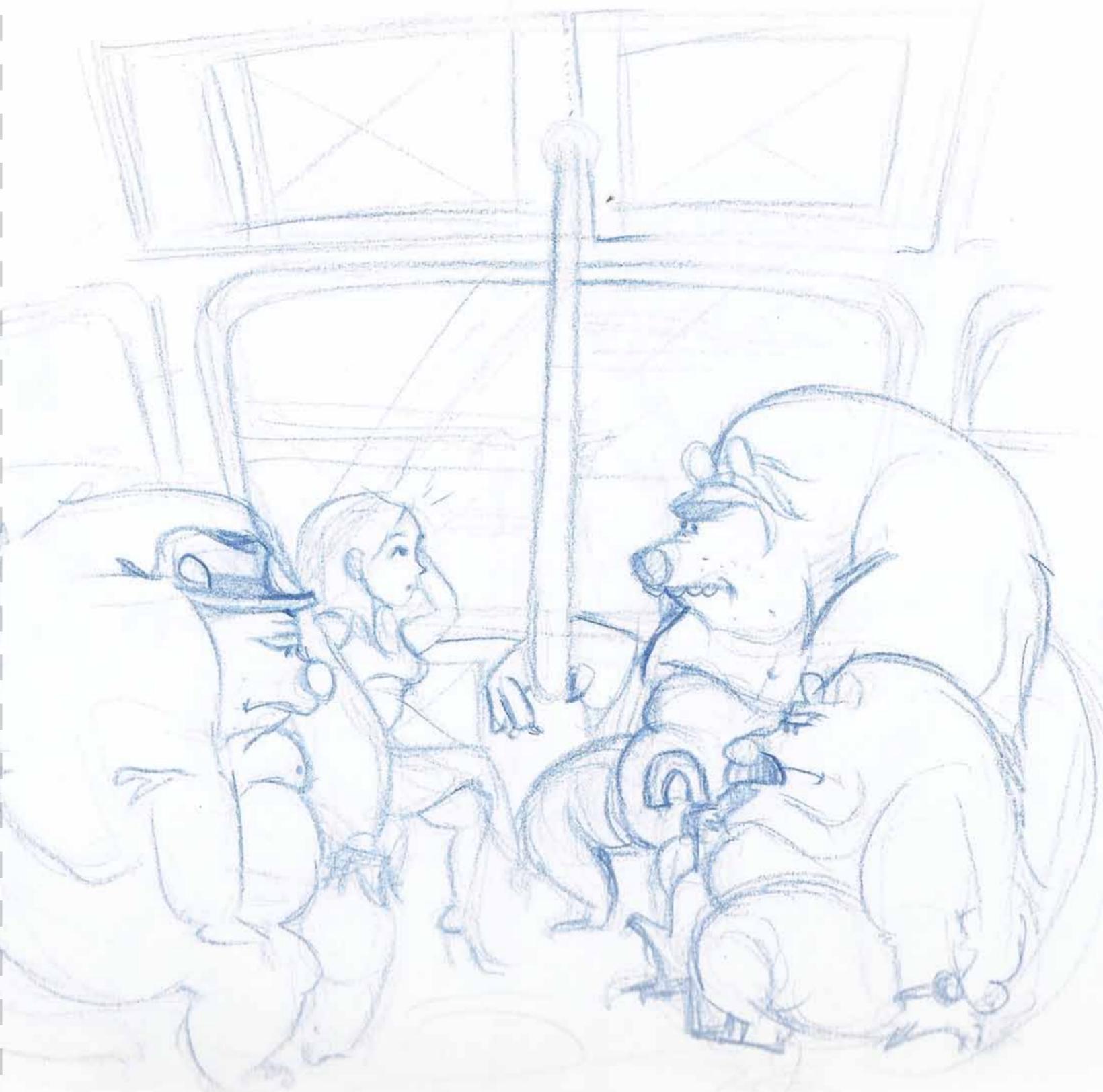
P: In the line to a hot dog stand
S: A brawl
W: Three young men, a girl
E: Furious / staggered

Young men are aggressive in Finland, especially when they drink. I do not know why, but a hot dog stand after 4 a.m. is not the safest place to be. Go for Mc Donald's, at least it is crowded.

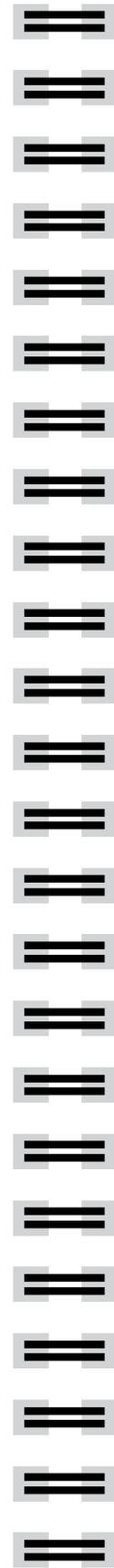
5 THE ILLUSTRATIONS PRESENTED STEP BY STEP

5.1 "PRIORITY SEATING"

"A girl is sitting in a bus, just two benches from the driver. The bus is full and she has chosen to take a seat meant for the pregnant, disabled and elderly. There are four seats reserved, two times two places across from each other. The girl doesn't seem to know the signs. The situation is quite uncomfortable. Around the girl, one bear is sitting beside her, two across from her. The elderly bears are quite irritated about the girl sitting in the wrong place. If staring could kill..."



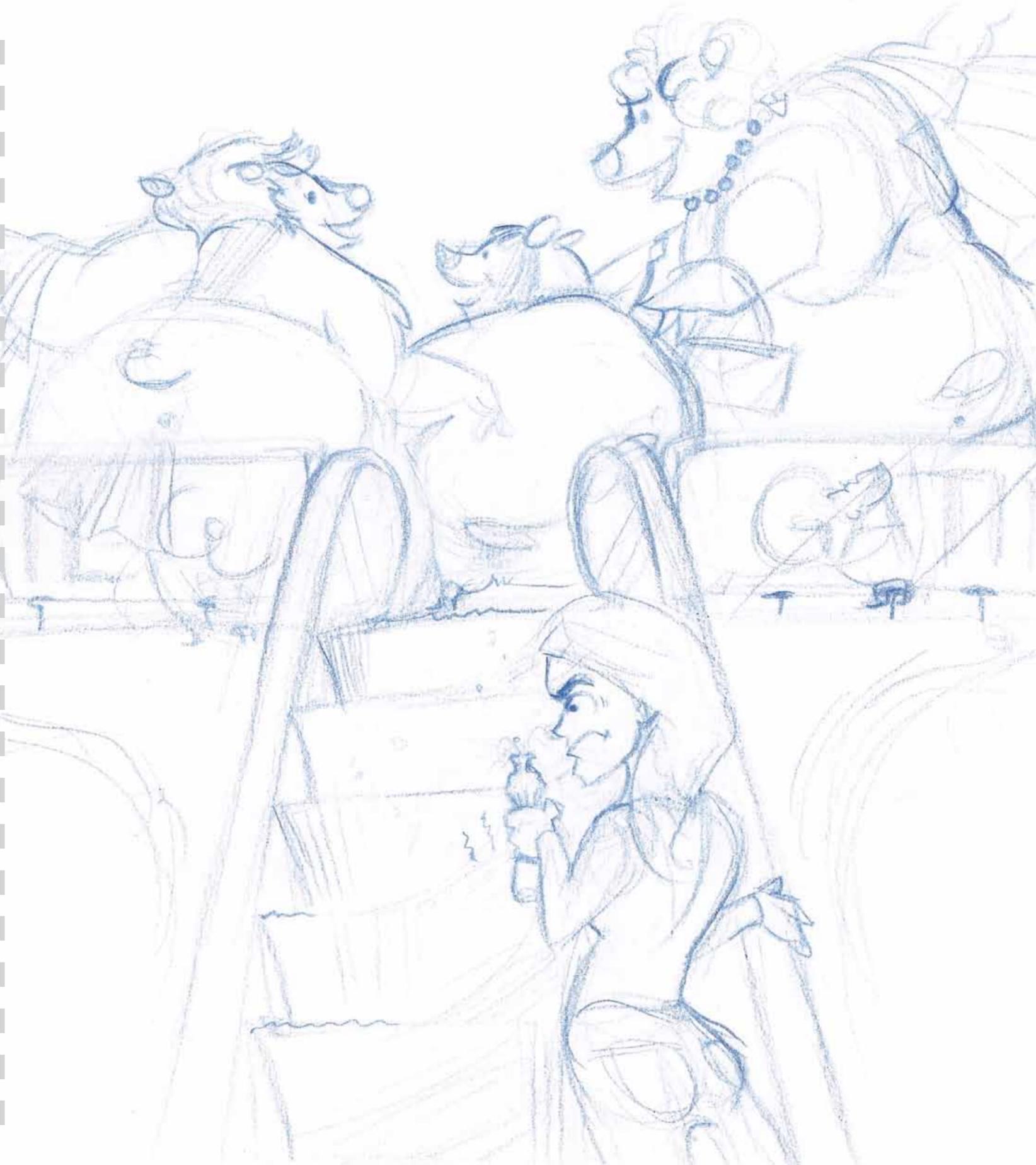
5.1 "PRIORITY SEATING"



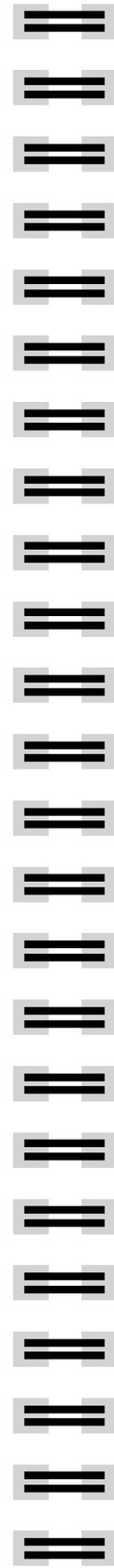


5.2 "TAILGATING"

It is a normal business day. The girl has survived the bear stares in the bus and is heading to the mall to buy a nice shirt for the evening to wear. It is getting late and the girl has to hurry to the third floor. All the elevators are packed, so the escalator seems the best way to get there. Or not. Three aged women are on a shopping spree. Cash is not a problem, or so it would seem, figuring how much design paper bags they have with them. As the three bears arrive at the end of the escalator, they do not keep moving. No, they just block the whole passage with their big butts and paper bags and they try to figure out where they would continue next. Gees!



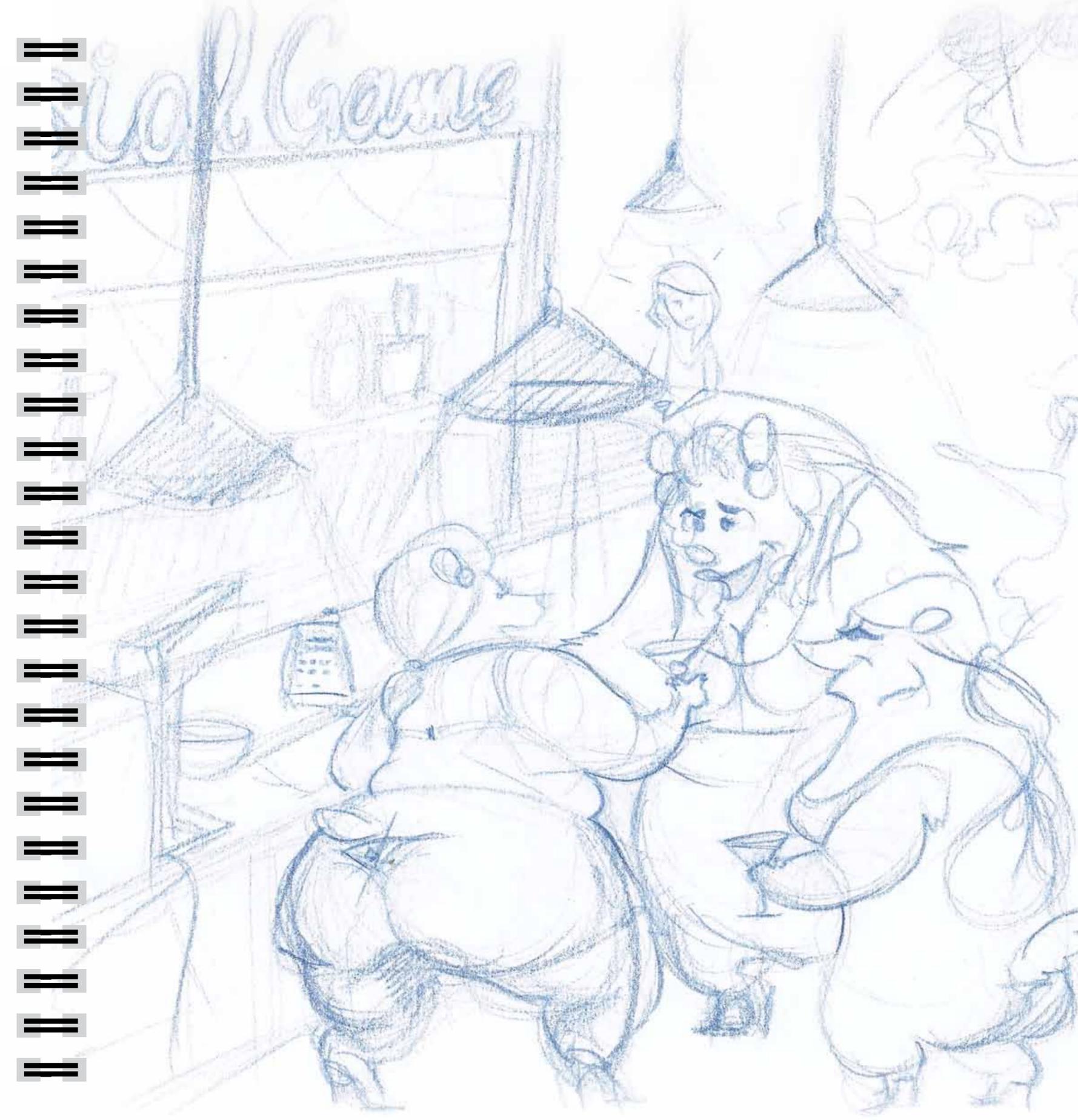
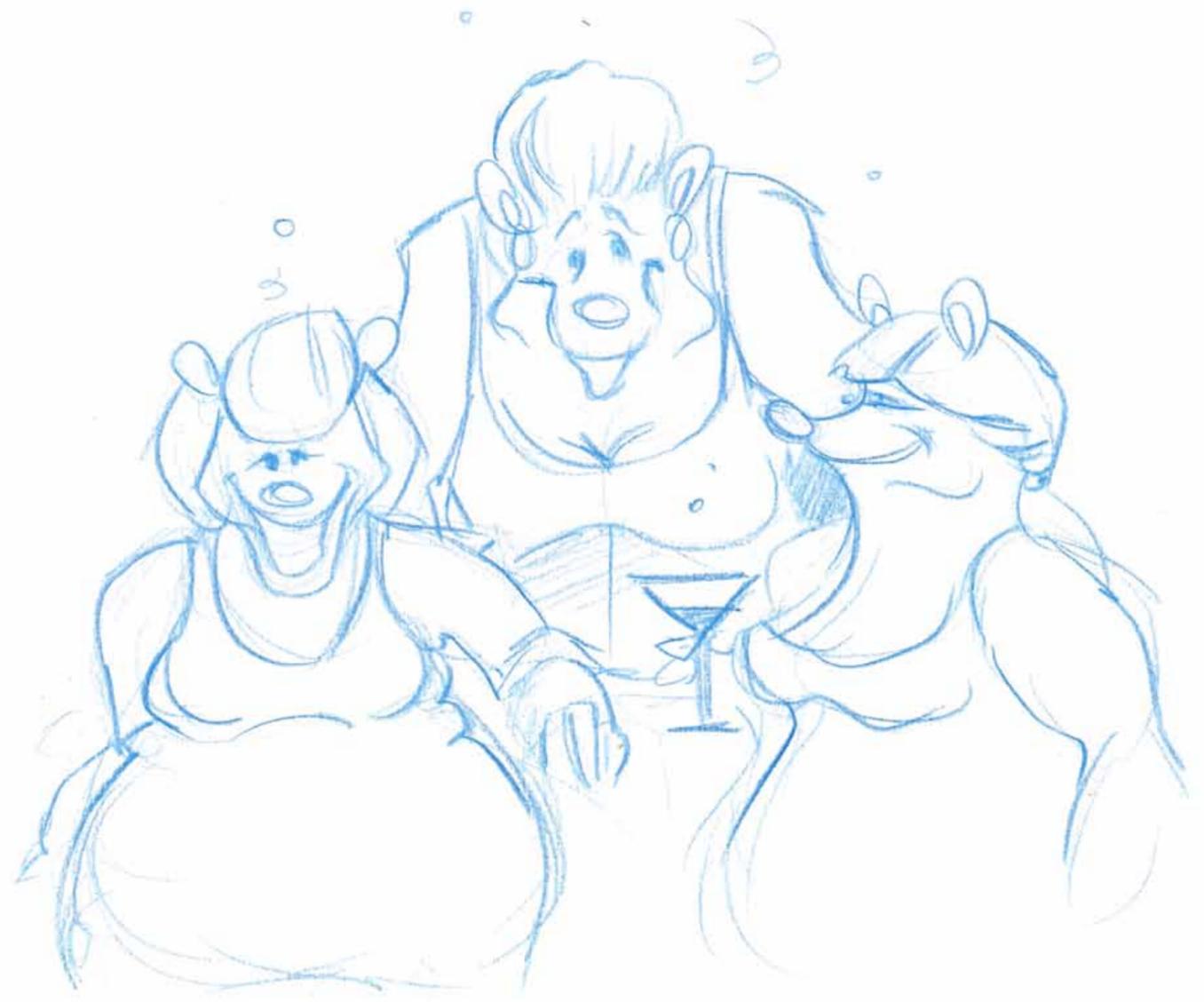
5.2 "TAILGATING"



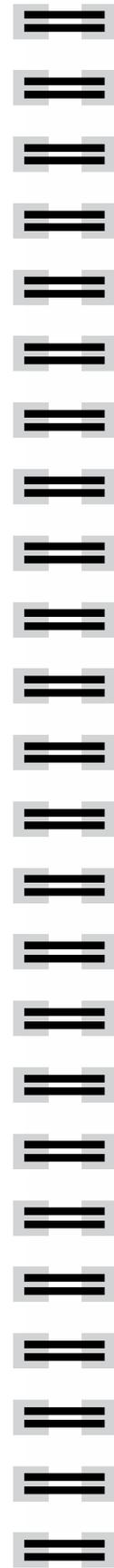


5.3 "SOCIAL GAME"

Finally the girl finds a nice shirt to wear for the evening with her co-workers. She has a good feeling about the night. The evening starts out fine, but after some drinks the atmosphere changes quite drastically. The girl notices that she is sitting alone with a drink while the other girls are at the other end of the bar counter. One of the bears even giggles and whispers something in the ears of others. The girl just does not mix with the others, what a shame.



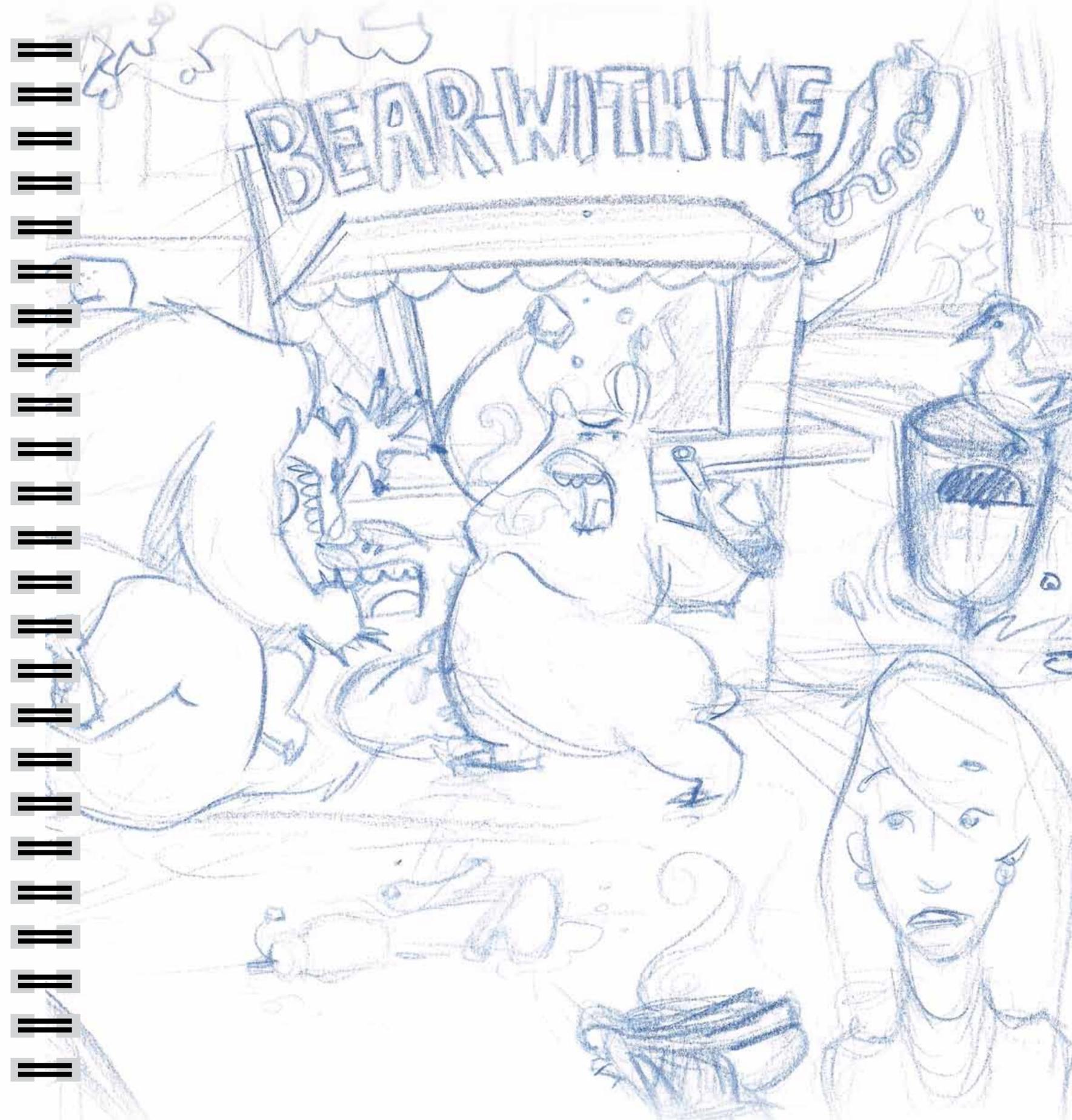
5.3 "SOCIAL GAME"



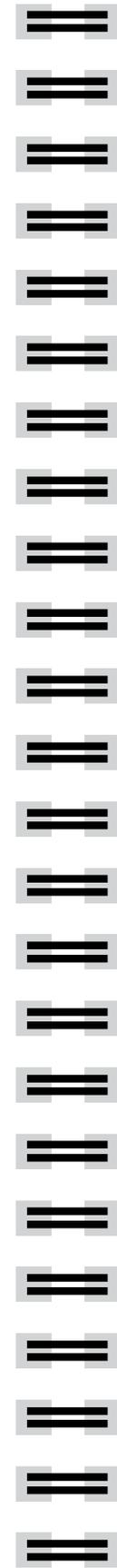


5.4 "BEAR WITNESS"

After not so nice an evening, the girl wants a hot dog for comfort. She knows a stand near her place which has extra good sausages with 98% of meat content. They come from Norway. There are five people queuing before the girl. After ten minutes the girl gets her dog. The three guys who came just after the girl, start to shove each other until the whole situation develops into a fight. Lots of growling involved. The girl immediately calls it a day.

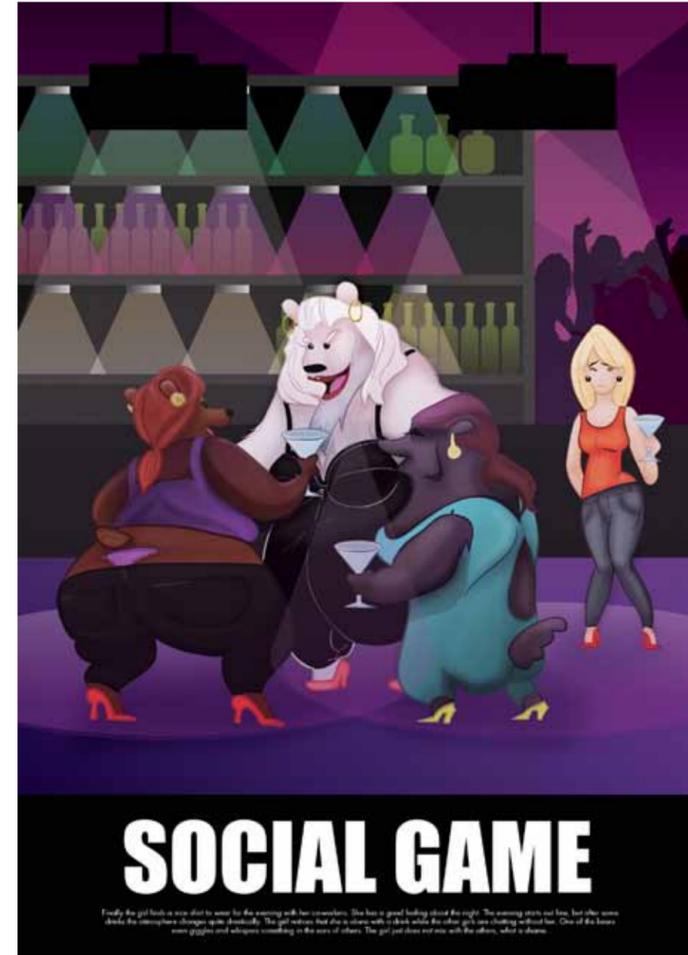
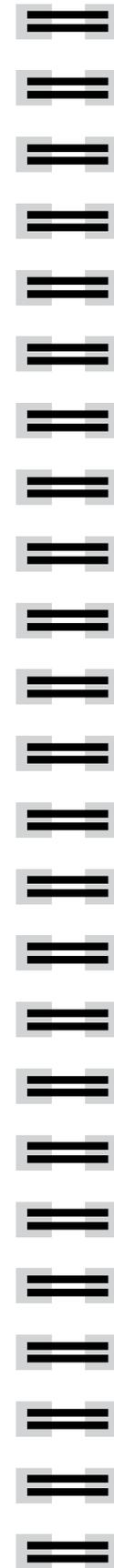


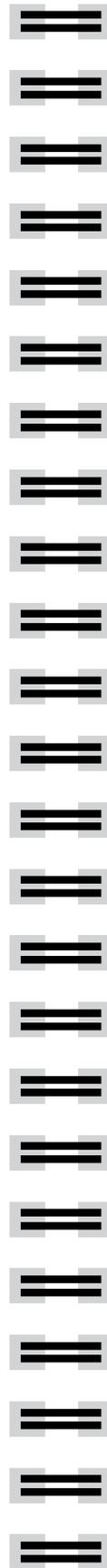
5.4 "BEAR WITNESS"





6 FINAL VERSIONS





7 EVALUATION

When asked for the first time, what would my Final Thesis be affiliated to, I knew immediately that it would be based on character design, one way or other. Looking back to the whole process, I never hesitated that I had chosen character design as one of the major aspects of my Final Thesis. Everything else, though, was a real struggle. I changed my subject three times before I got to seal the deal. The turning point happened in a day, just after I had presented my work as I was at that stage.

When I had decided that I was going to present the characters via posters and through my own personal experience, everything clicked. I had found the missing link of my Final Thesis. My working methods have usually been comparable to those typical for young creative designers: Working at the last minute! But now, when working on my thesis, I noticed that I was able to make a schedule and stick to it..

I would like to think that my Final Thesis is quite well balanced. I have heard that in many cases students tend to remain at the stage of presenting the research stage and the design process is left in the shadow of the accumulated information. In hope I was able to produce a Final Thesis in which both the research part and the part of design and execution are well proportioned.

The whole working process has also given me a lot. I have learned new things about myself and in general: my working methods, scheduling, the importance of research, the orthodox way to design characters and producing acceptable text in Finnish and English. After having been drawing for two months straight, I noticed visible changes in my skills to produce pictures and illustrations. I have noticed that my drawing skills

have improved, I have evolved as a designer and I can make better use of imagination.

Although I created the final version on a computer, working by hand had a major impact on the whole process and its course. I never even considered starting my design directly on a computer. Actually, now, at the end of my studies, I sincerely respect people who can draw well as it is a dying skill.

As it is all about a Final Thesis and after graduation it is only natural to study for your Master's degree or to start working in your field, for me it was especially important to have the freedom to do anything I wanted. In the future there will probably be no time to do this massive project on your own with no limitations. It was the reason why I did not wish to involve any customers to set boundaries to my project.

As I am finishing my four-year studies in five years, the process has been a lonely one with mainly just me alone on my computer. I have been glad to have a small group of people who have listened to me when needed and have given support to my project. Without them I would not have taken the next step and the project would have remained a short narration of four characters.

Finally, I can say I am happy with the efforts taken and work done. I was able to take the setbacks not as a problem, but as a challenge and reason for pushing forward and creating something that I am proud to present.

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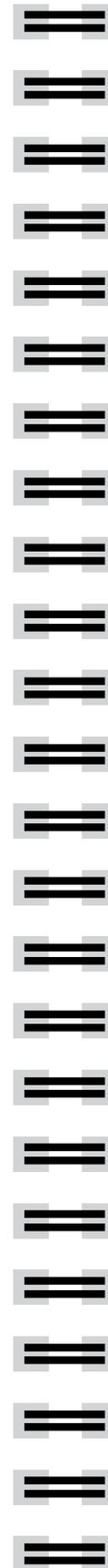
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