

# FREE SAMPLE

EXCERPT BY ROVINA CAI & REIKO MURAKAMI



beginner's guide to  
**sketching:**  
characters, creatures & concepts



# sketching:

beginner's guide to  
characters, creatures & concepts



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# Illustrating a scene

Learn how to draw a dynamic scene, integrating the character and creature designed on the previous pages.

By Rovina Cai

In this final part, I will bring together the friendly witch and guardian beast to create a complete scene. I'll cover techniques for designing a dynamic composition and posing the designs from the earlier exercises to fit them into the scene. I will also explain how to design and draw natural and human-made elements found in the landscape of the scene.

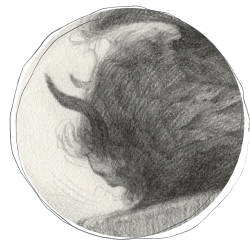
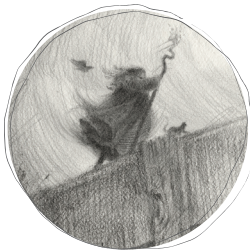
This part of the process is where everything comes together; all the research and ideas that went into the design of the creature and character can now be applied to create a cohesive illustration that tells a story.

For this part, I will illustrate a meeting between the witch and the beast. Through a series of abstract thumbnails, I came up with the idea that the beast would be guarding a bridge that the witch comes across on her travels. The final illustration will have just enough visual information to hint at a story, while still leaving room for the viewer's own interpretation.

## TOOLS

- Pencils (H and 2B)
- Paper (including tracing paper)
- Eraser

*There is a contrast of organic shapes and lines found in the landscape and straight lines found in the bridge. The balance of the two creates a visually interesting image.*



*The focal area of the drawing is the witch and the beast. All other elements within the drawing create implied lines that move the eye around the composition and lead the viewer's attention back to the focal area.*



*A sense of drama is created through the positioning of the two subjects and the implied lines that suggest movement within the drawing.*

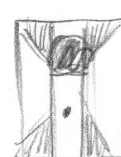
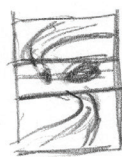
*The approach to this drawing is much more loose and expressive; though I am still thinking about the design of individual elements, the focus is on creating mood and atmosphere.*



# Design the composition

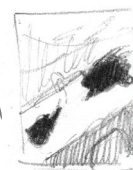
I begin by sketching the overall composition using a series of thumbnail sketches. When making an illustration with a complete scene, it is important to think of the image as a whole before designing specific elements.

The design process for this part is different to the previous ones. I think about all the elements at the same time as I create thumbnails. For example as I think about how the bridge fits into the composition, I also design the shape of the bridge and where the character and creature will be in relation to it. For the sake of clarity, I have separated the process into four exercises, but keep in mind that I work on all of these elements alongside each other to create a cohesive image.



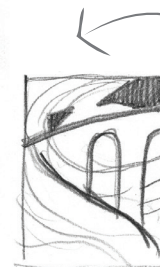
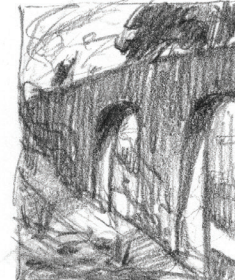
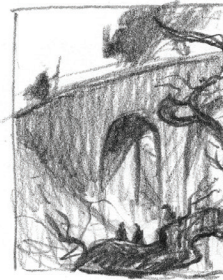
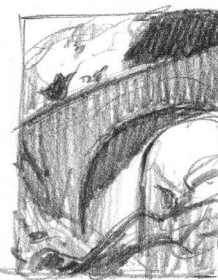
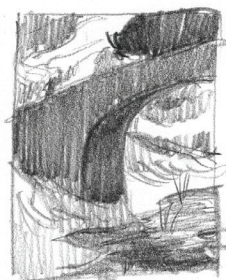
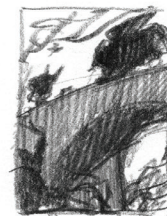
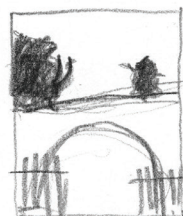
I start off with some very simple thumbnails, thinking about abstract shapes and lines rather than specific recognizable elements.

I also do some thumbnails for possible story and location ideas. At this stage the thumbnails are very rough; I'm not worried about drawing correctly, just note-taking in visual form.



Some ideas include the creature guarding a bridge or the character chasing the creature.

Once I come across an idea that I like, I do more thumbnails with variations of the same setting, trying out different elements and positions for the character and creature.



I liked the idea of the bridge, so I try it out with various landscape elements such as a river, some branches, and a grassy hillside.





## 01 Basic thumbnail

I begin with a round of thumbnails exploring abstract shapes. I do not depict the actual figures or any recognizable elements, but I do keep in mind that I am working with one big shape (the creature) and one little shape (the character). Diagonal and curved lines help to create a dynamic composition, so I focus on arranging my shapes around these lines.

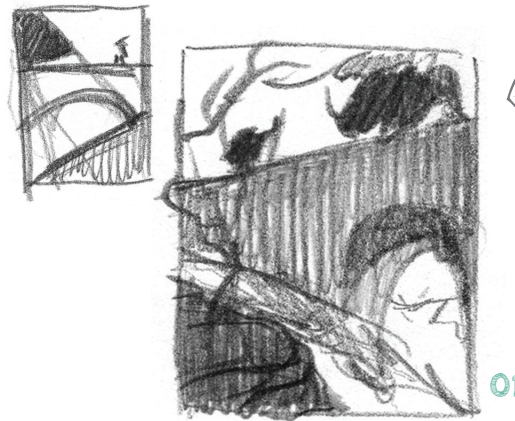
Once I find an abstract I like, I start thinking about what these shapes could be and how to relate them to the story. I had a curved line in my abstract that reminded me of an arched bridge, so I make a new thumbnail of my character and creature standing on a bridge. At this point I decide that my story for the illustration is to be the beast guarding a bridge, which the witch comes across on her travels.

## 02 Detailed thumbnails

The next step is to take the thumbnail a bit further and flesh it out. In this updated thumbnail, things start to come together and I think about specific elements in more detail. I make a little side sketch, simplifying the lines to make sure that the composition is working well. I also plan the shading and value structure of the drawing in this thumbnail, indicating where the darkest and lightest parts will be.

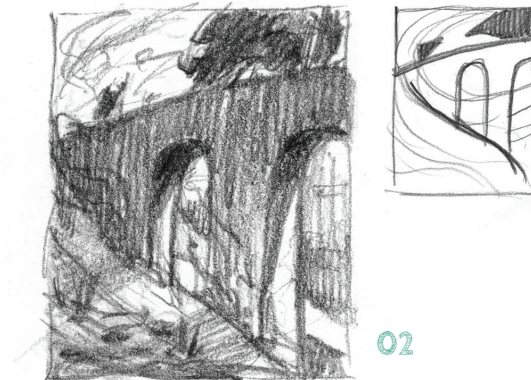
## 03 Preliminary sketch

Once I am happy with my plans, I proceed to the preliminary sketch. In this sketch, all the different elements in the drawing are designed and this is what I will use to trace over for my final drawing. As I draw the creature and character, I go back to my previous designs and use them as reference. I will cover the design process for the bridge and landscape in later exercises, however, it is important to work on all the elements in the drawing side by side, so that the finished illustration is cohesive.



*Work with abstract shapes and lines rather than depicting the actual figures or any recognizable elements.*

*At this point, all the different elements in the drawing are designed and planned in preparation for the final version.*



*At this stage, the thumbnail is still very rough and I consider this to be like taking notes with sketches, rather than actual drawing and designing.*





## 04 Transferring the drawing

Now that my design is complete, it's time for a familiar step: transferring the sketch onto the paper for the final drawing. The approach to this drawing is more expressive than the previous stages as much of the landscape will be comprised of energetic, improvised lines, so when I transfer the sketch, I only mark in the bridge and a basic outline of the two figures.

## 05 Adjusting the drawing

The bridge incorporates quite a few straight lines and I want to make sure I get them right, so I use a ruler to adjust and draw accurately. I also darken some of the traced lines and indicate some details such as the beast's scales and fur. The drawing is now ready for rendering.

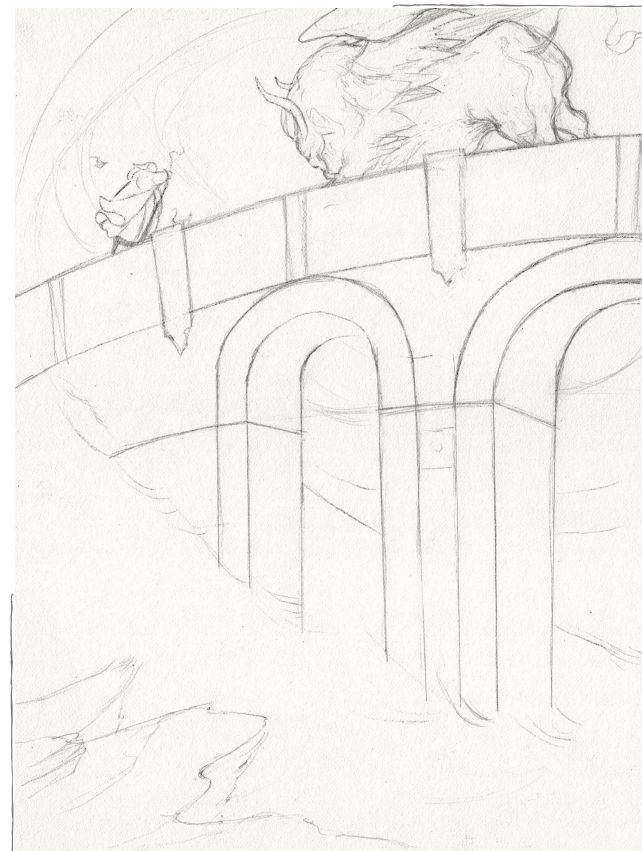
### Guidelines

Drawing arches and repeating elements can be tricky; using a guideline to mark in where an object goes will help you draw things correctly. When drawing things in perspective, it helps to think of everything in terms of squares and rectangles. For example to draw an arch, I first draw a rectangle to mark where the top and side edge of the arch will be. I then use this rectangle as a guide to draw the curved shape of the arch.



04

*The approach to this drawing is more expressive than the previous steps, so only mark in the bridge and figures.*



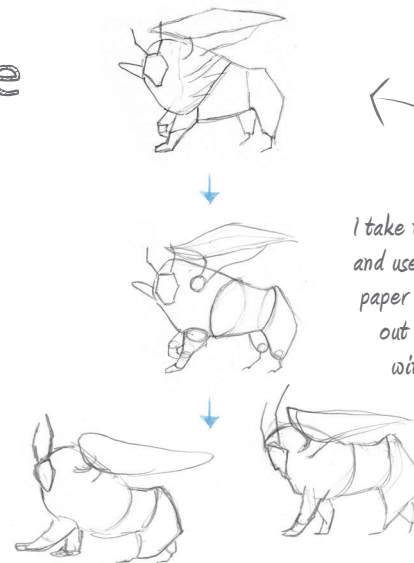
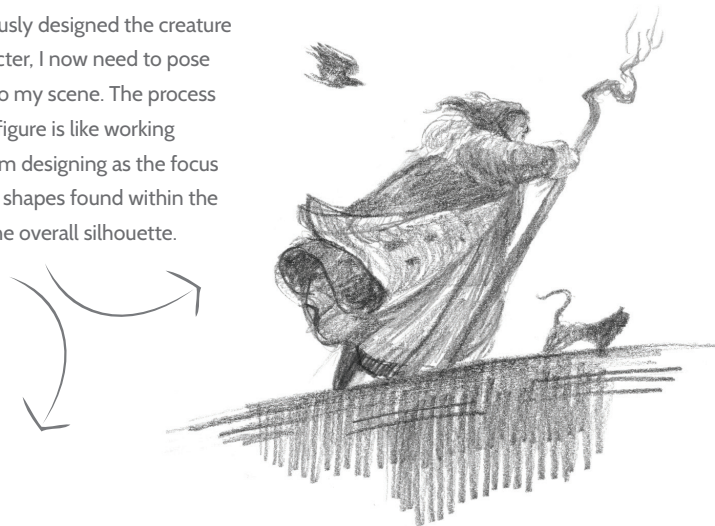
05

*Use a ruler to draw the straight lines of the bridge accurately.*



# Pose the character and creature

Having previously designed the creature and the character, I now need to pose them to fit into my scene. The process of posing the figure is like working backwards from designing as the focus is on the large shapes found within the designs and the overall silhouette.



I take the previous designs and use a piece of tracing paper over them to mark out the large shapes within the design.



From the traced sketch, I add more definition to the shapes, drawing in areas that are hidden in order to get a better sense of how everything connects.



Once I have the basic shapes planned out, I can move them around into poses. I stick to quick gesture drawings when working out the pose that would fit best into the final composition.



Once I find a pose I like, I then make a more refined sketch, drawing the details back into the shapes.



I want the witch to be in a more powerful, dynamic pose, as if she is greeting or challenging the beast. By contrast, I pose the beast as if it is bowing its head in obedience.





## 01 Shading in the witch

I start the shading process by identifying the darkest part of my drawing. In this case, it is the figures. The witch and the beast are backlit (the light is coming from behind the bridge), so this would make them appear as if they are in shadow.

I begin blocking in the witch, shading in the darkest parts such as the inside of her coat and her walking stick. I also lightly indicate her hair and the folds of her dress. This area is quite small and requires precision, so I shade with a 2B pencil with a very sharp point.

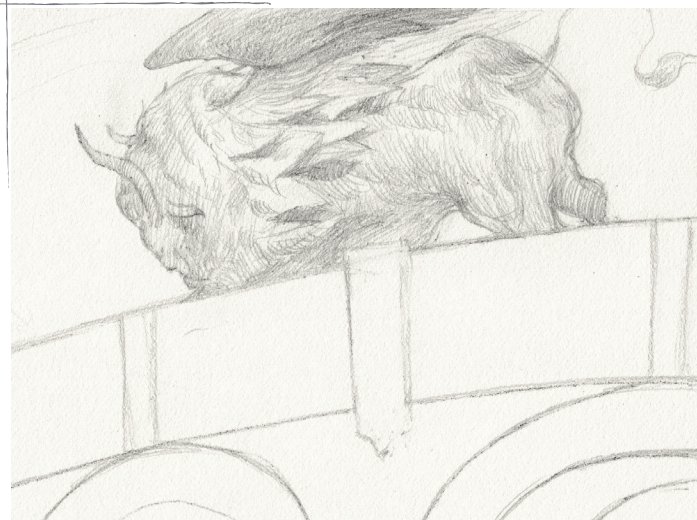
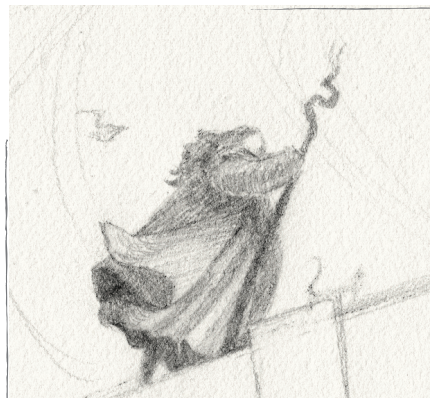
## 02 Shading in the beast

I move on to the beast and repeat a similar process, marking in the shadows under the scales and loosely shading in the fur on the body. I know this whole area will be quite dark, so in my first layer of shading I can be quite loose and rough with my pencil marks. There will be more layers of shading on top to blend in the marks.

## 03 Adding details to the witch

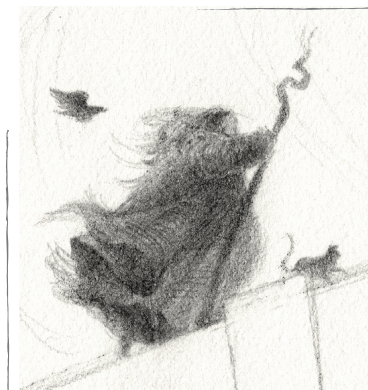
I alternate between the witch and the beast to make sure I do not go too dark with my shading. It's always easy to add more shading to darken something, but removing shading that is too dark will ruin the mark-making or texture of a certain area. Once I have some of the beast shaded in, I am ready to finish off the witch. Since the character occupies a small area of the drawing, there doesn't need to be too much detail. I use small marks to suggest the folds of her collar and details in her face. I also shade in her cat and raven.

*The light is coming from behind the bridge; this makes the witch appear as if she is in shadow.*



*You can be loose and rough with the pencil marks in your initial layer of shading because this whole area will be dark.*

*Take care not to shade too darkly.*



### Maquettes

For complex creature or character designs, it is useful to create a maquette to use for reference. The model doesn't need to be detailed – a small sculpture capturing the basic shapes will allow you to view your design from different angles and come up with more interesting compositions. You can also use it as reference for lighting when shading in the drawing.

I use non-hardening modeling clay, but any malleable material like polymer or paper clay, or even a kneadable eraser, would work.





## 04 Adding details to the beast

The beast is larger than the witch, so I spend more time shading and adding details here. Now that the witch is done, I am able to use her as a reference for how dark the shading on the beast needs to be. I focus on shading in the darkest areas on the beast, including the horns and the shadows underneath the wing.

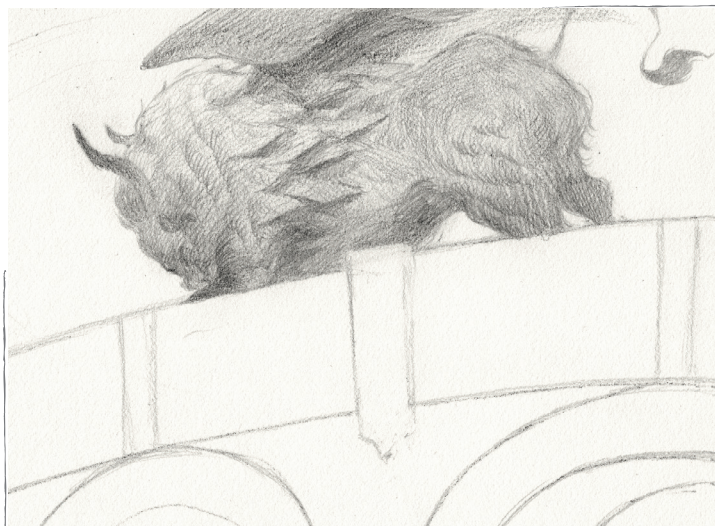
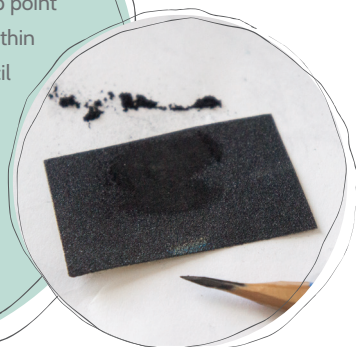
## 05 Completing the figures

Comparing the beast to the witch, I realize it is not dark enough, so I darken the beast significantly and also add in little details like the spots on its fur and horns. I finish this area by creating one more layer of shading over both the figures. I also blend with some graphite powder on a brush. This gives the edges a soft appearance which works well for creating mood and atmosphere within the drawing.

### Even sharper pencils

Earlier in this chapter, one of my tips was to sharpen a pencil using a utility blade.

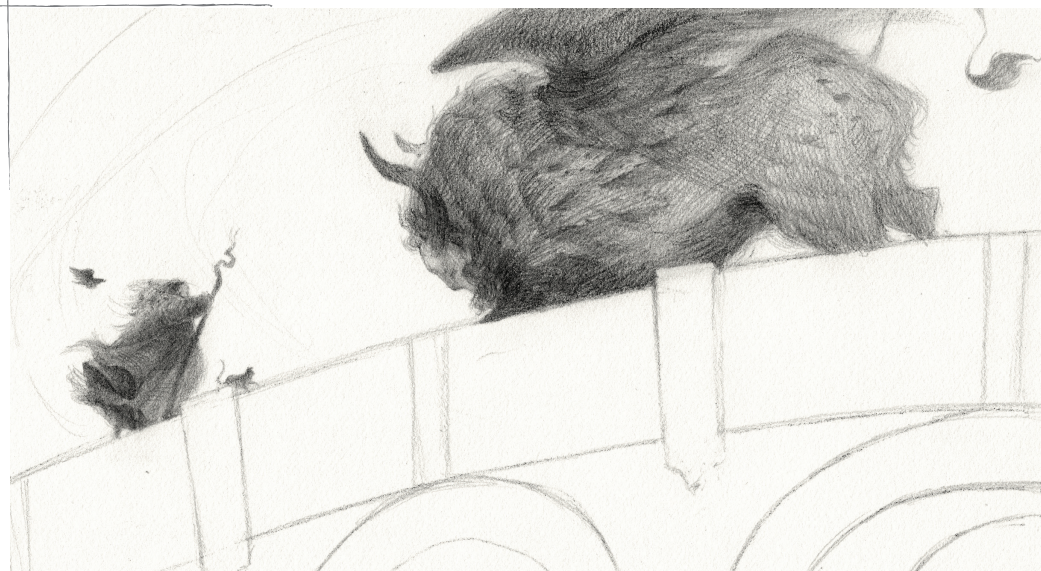
While it is possible to get a very sharp point with the blade, keep some sandpaper within reach to use to quickly sharpen your pencil as you work. The graphite powder that comes from the sharpening can then be applied to the drawing using a paintbrush, used to smooth out large areas of shading or add a soft, smoky effect to some edges.



Use the witch as a reference for how dark the shading on the beast needs to be.

04

You can blend the shading using graphite powder. This softens the edges creating mood and atmosphere.



05



# Draw the bridge

The shape of the bridge was already determined in my planning for the composition, so when I sketch in this exercise, I focus on the surface texture and design. I also look for ways to add small details to the bridge in order to create visual interest.

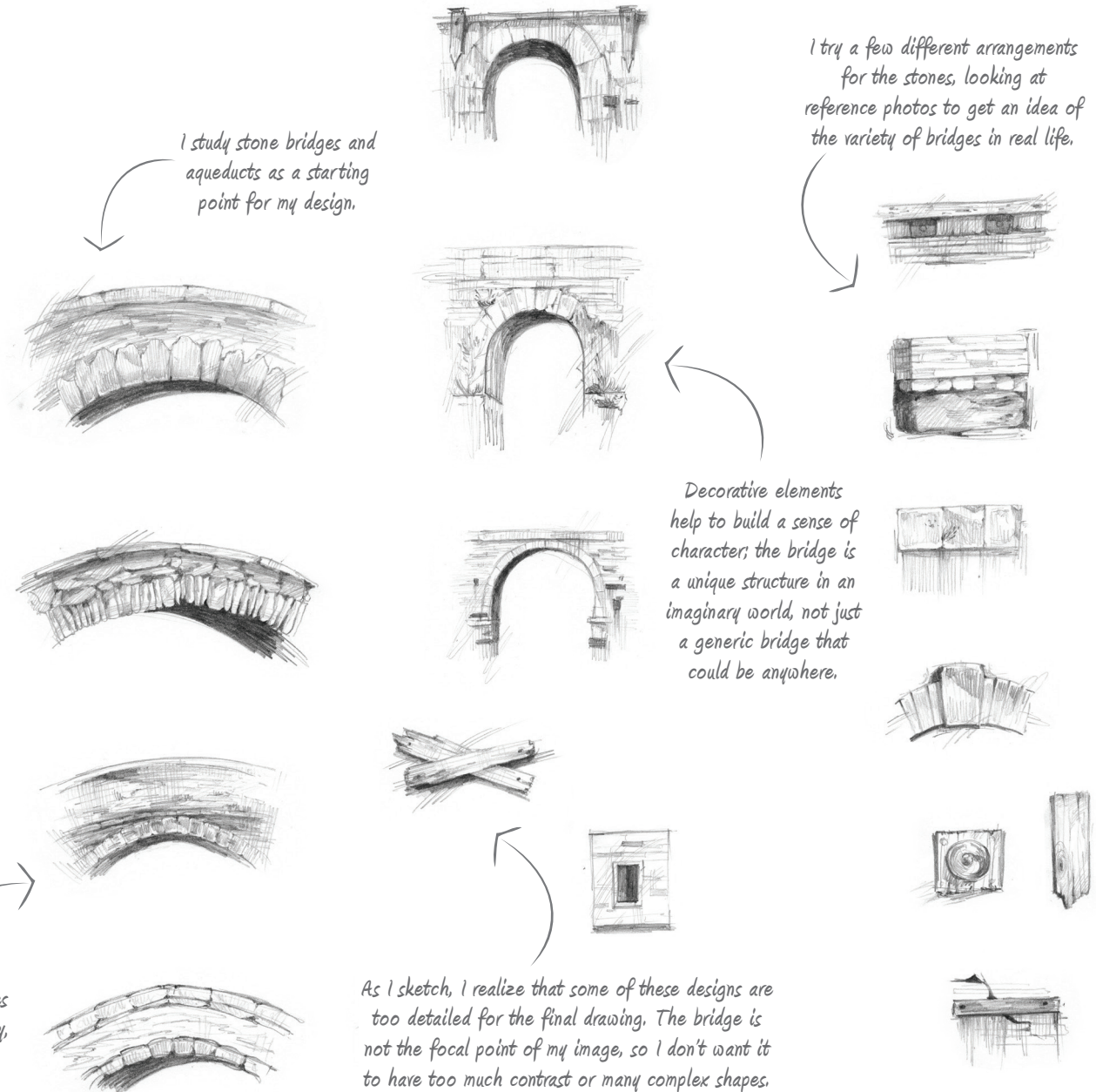
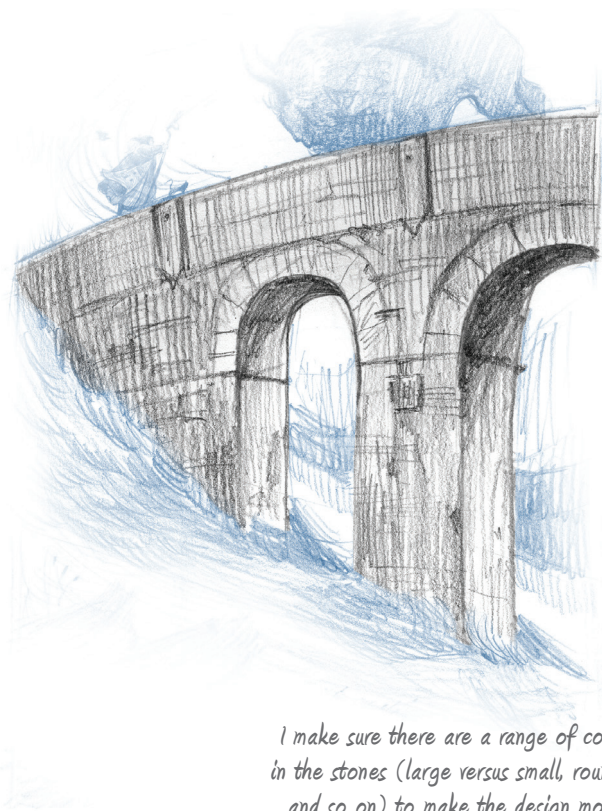
I study stone bridges and aqueducts as a starting point for my design.

I try a few different arrangements for the stones, looking at reference photos to get an idea of the variety of bridges in real life.

Decorative elements help to build a sense of character; the bridge is a unique structure in an imaginary world, not just a generic bridge that could be anywhere.

As I sketch, I realize that some of these designs are too detailed for the final drawing. The bridge is not the focal point of my image, so I don't want it to have too much contrast or many complex shapes.

I make sure there are a range of contrasting shapes in the stones (large versus small, round versus pointy, and so on) to make the design more interesting.





## 01 Initial shading

I lay down an initial layer of shading over the entire bridge, marking in the shadows as I go along. I also indicate some surface details such as cracks in the stones and the grain of the wooden decorations. I want the bridge to appear ancient, so there are plenty of opportunities to add in small details of decay.

I shade in the bridge using vertical lines; this creates a sense of movement which leads the eye up towards the figures at the top of the bridge.

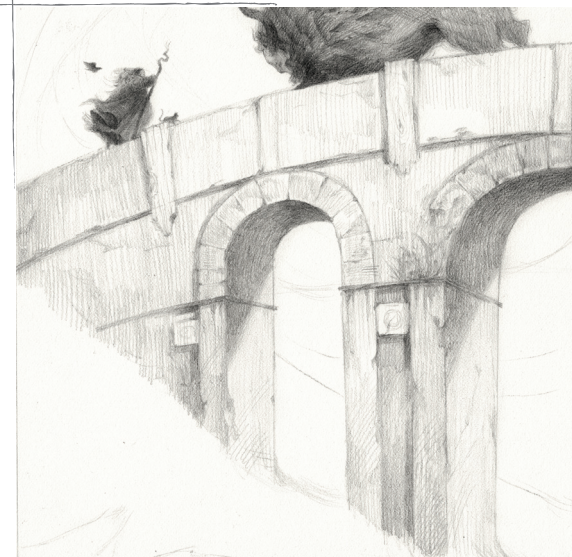
## 02 Shading in the arches

Starting with the darkest parts of the bridge, I shade in the shadows underneath the arches. I also begin to shade in the stones that frame the arches. I use a B pencil to shade in the shadows. Though the area needs to be quite dark, I make sure the shadows are not too solid; the shading gets lighter as the shadow moves down the side of the arch.

## 03 Shading in the bridge

I then move on to shading in the main part of the bridge. The light is coming from behind, so this whole area will be in shadow. However, because of reflected light from the ground, the shadows on this side of the bridge are not as dark as under the arches.

I also add small details as I continue to shade, breaking up straight edges by adding in textures and bits of grass. Since the bridge is old, I don't want anything to look too symmetrical or clean.



*There are plenty of opportunities to add in small details of decay.*



*I use a B pencil and make sure the shadows are not too solid.*

*The light is coming from behind, so this whole area will be in shadow.*





04

#### 04 Adding details

Once the bridge has been shaded in, I can focus on the details. I shade in the wooden decorative elements and continue to create more texture over the stones. I add in horizontal lines (in a cross-hatch style) to the middle section of the bridge to hint at bricks, differentiating the texture from the top part of the structure.

#### 05 Corrections and adjustments

It's easy to get lost in all the small sections of the bridge, and though I have been using a very light hand, some details stand out too much. I therefore finish off this section with a layer of shading over the entire area, creating long vertical pencil strokes across the entire bridge. This helps to blend the shading and tone down of some of the contrast.

*I use cross-hatch techniques to shade in the wooden decorative elements, and continue to create more texture over the stones.*

*I shade lightly over the entire bridge area to even out the contrast.*

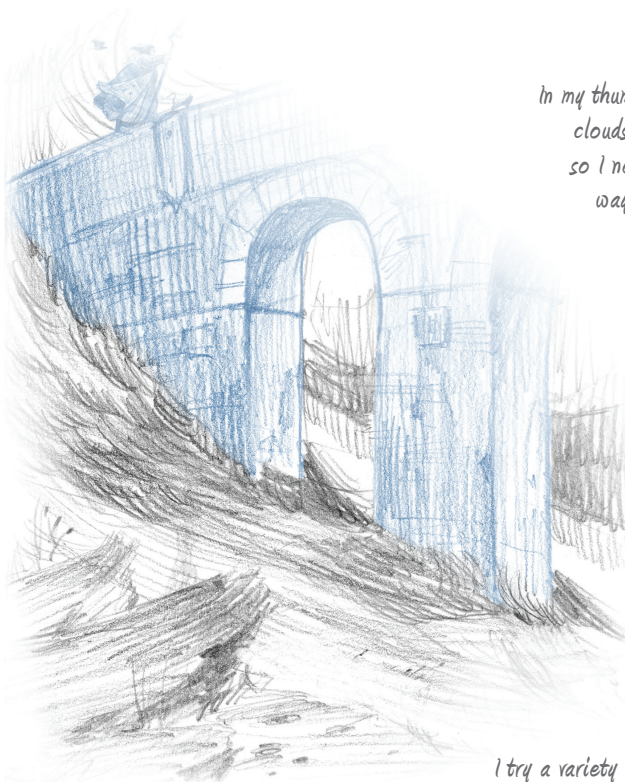


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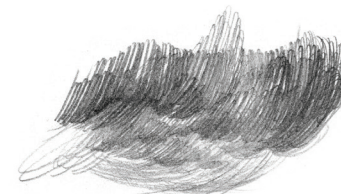
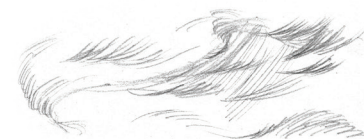
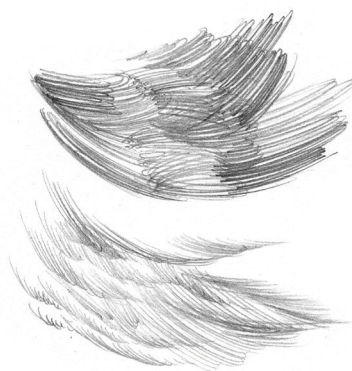


# Draw the landscape

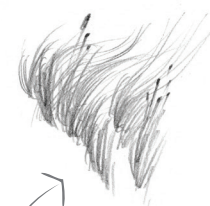
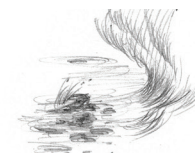
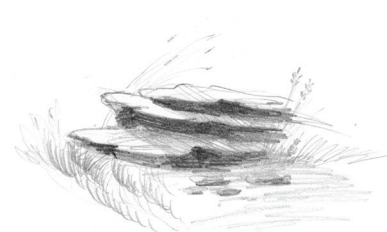
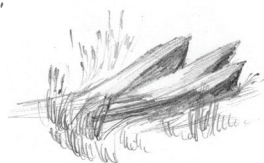
Like the bridge, the landscape is designed when working on the overall composition of the drawing. It is difficult to retain the exact design of grass and clouds between the sketch and the final, so in this sketch, I just loosely indicate shapes and lines that will go in the final drawing.



*In my thumbnails, I have indicated clouds in the background, so I now explore different ways to draw clouds.*



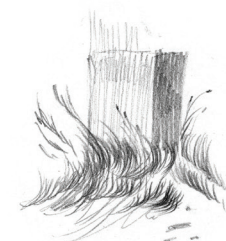
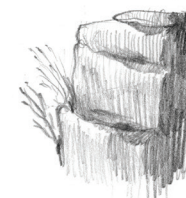
*I focus on moody storm clouds; they will add a sense of drama to my image.*



*I also study the base of the bridge and the way that grass would wrap around the stones.*



*I try a variety of different marks that can be used to render grass, from small, quick strokes to longer, organic lines.*





## 01 Shading in the grass

This part of the drawing relies on creating loose, expressive marks. In my exploratory drawings, I created a variety of different sketches for the grass, experimenting with mark-making. I will use these as a guide while I work on the final drawing. I don't copy any of my references directly, but use them to inform my choices when making marks.

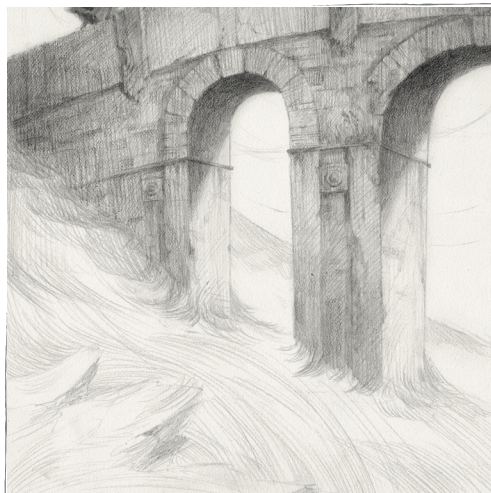
I want to keep the grass light in tone to contrast the solid shading in the bridge, so as I shade, I make very loose marks, leaving ample white space in between each line. This kind of shading will give the drawing an airy feeling, which heightens the atmosphere and movement within the image.

## 02 Shading in the sky

I approach the sky in the same manner as the grass, using loose, expressive marks to create implied lines which convey movement. I take care to follow the lines designed in my initial thumbnail, for example the clouds create a sweeping shape in the background, which brings the whole composition together.

## 03 Adding detail to the sky

The clouds are a background element, and I don't want them to be too dark, so I use an H pencil to add in small details and areas of shading. I include a range of different tones and marks when shading in the clouds: the areas closer to the horizon have more complex shapes, indicating storm clouds, while the area behind the witch has less detail so that the clouds do not distract from the focal point.



*Using a loose extended grip will help to create light gesture lines.*



*You can use loose marks to create implied lines in order to help convey movement.*

*include a range of different tones and marks when shading in the clouds.*





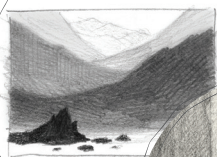
## 04 Adding form to the grass

Now that the sky is complete, I move on to finishing the shading of the grass. Although it covers a large area of the drawing, the grass needs to be subtle so that it doesn't compete for attention with the focal point. A good composition has uncluttered areas where the viewer's eye can "rest" away from areas of interest, and the grass serves as that space in this drawing.

When working on the grass, I am very selective with my shading and leave the white of the paper in many areas. I use a 2H pencil so that my shading remains light in tone.

## 05 Finishing touches

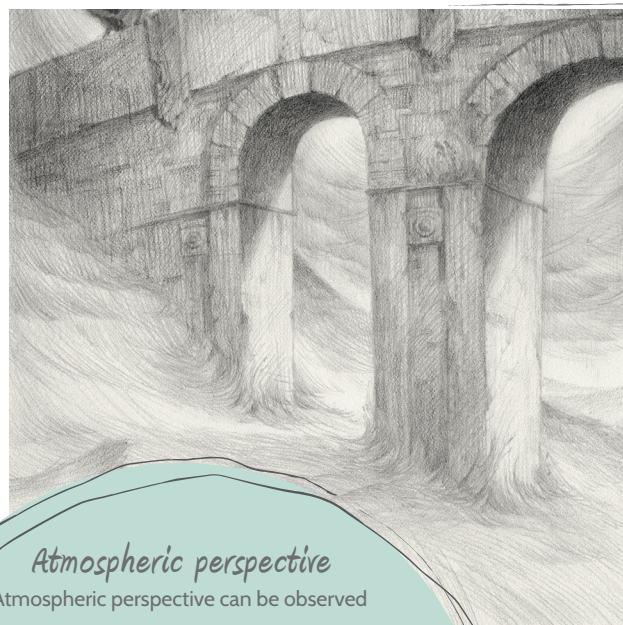
I am now ready to add finishing touches to the whole drawing. I draw in small rocks using a light oval motion, pick out some individual strands of grass, and also add some final textures to the bridge. These small adjustments add another layer of detail to the drawing, making it more believable and visually interesting.



### Atmospheric perspective

Atmospheric perspective can be observed when looking at objects in the distance.

Elements that are far away appear hazy and have less detail and contrast compared with those that are closer to the viewpoint. Study from real life or look at a photograph of mountains and you'll notice that the further back an element is, the more faded it will appear. Creating the illusion of atmospheric perspective gives a drawing a sense of depth, making it more life-like and dynamic. Keep this effect in mind when rendering and take care not to add too much detail and contrast to background elements.



04

*Remember to leave areas that are less busy to give the viewer's eye time to rest.*

*Adding small details gives believability to the drawing, making it more visually interesting.*



05





### *Wrap up*

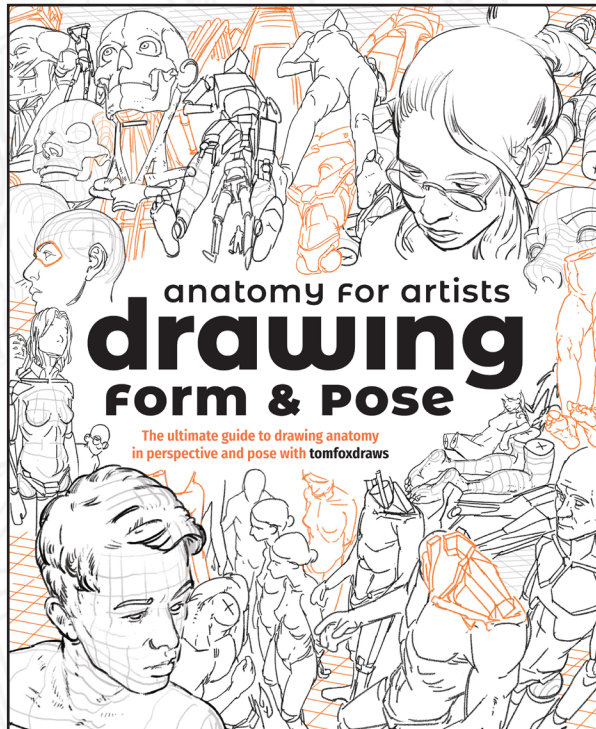
You can now apply these same techniques and tools to your own work and create a unique world from your imagination. Happy exploring!





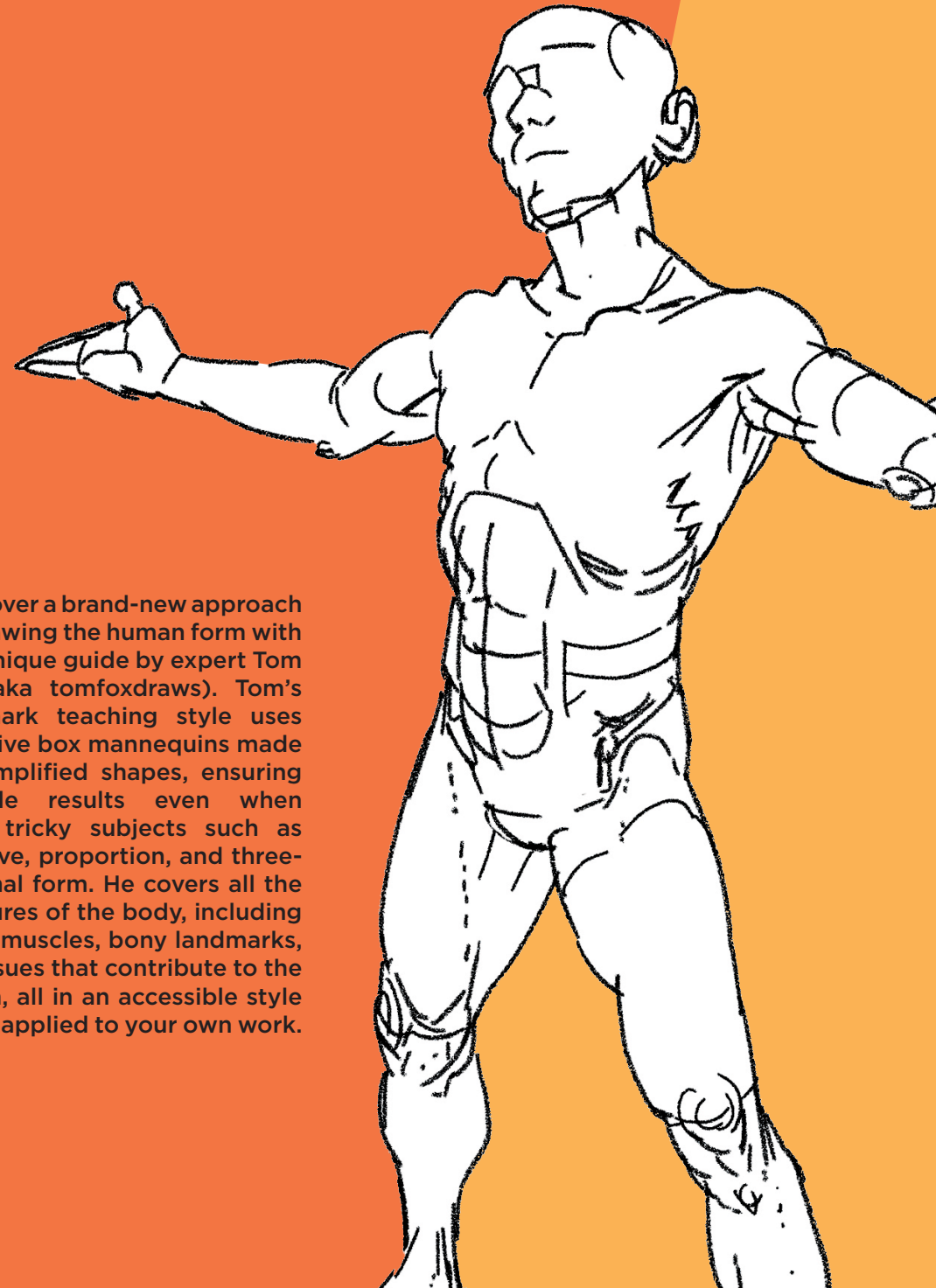
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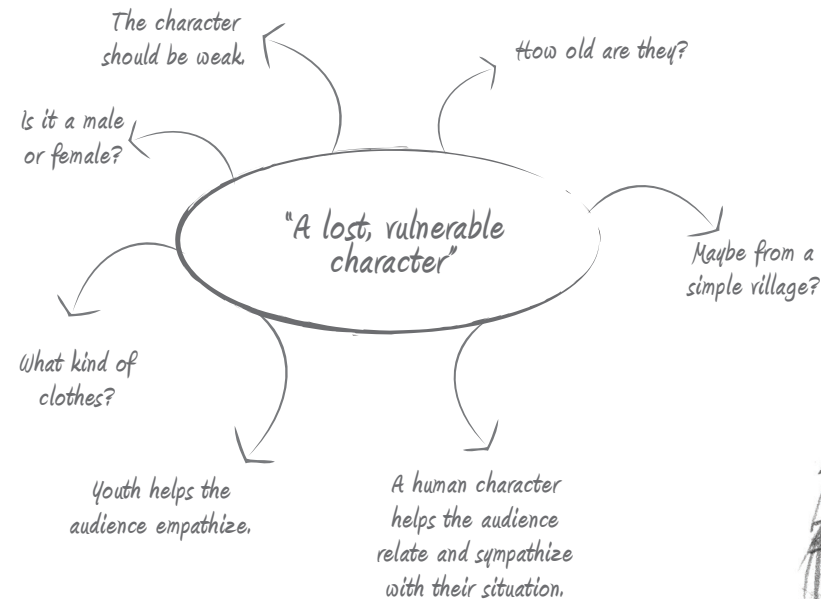
# Designing the prey

Learn how to visualize a character concept with quick pencil sketching.

By Reiko Murakami

In the first part of this three-part tutorial I will go over the basic process for creating a character for a scene. You will learn about the thinking process behind visualizing the character from a brief and then how to come up with the design and details with a quick pencil sketch.

Before starting to draw, it is a good idea to take a look at your brief and start developing some ideas and key words that you want to reflect in your character.



## TOOLS

- Pencil (HB-6B)
- Paper
- Eraser



# Designing a pose

After writing down some ideas, I envisage this character as a helpless girl who came from a nearby village and got lost in a barren area. Since she is a human I don't have to worry too much about adding unusual features. I'm going straight to thinking about her attitude and gesture. What's the best pose to describe that she's helpless and vulnerable? The concept is the opposite of a predator. A predator may have a bold and tense pose with his arms wide open. In contrast, let's make her arms closed and her back hunched a bit. As you will see later, there will be a predator in my scene so she may be looking up nervously while the predator stares at the camera directly.



*When thinking about gestures, have one emotion that describes the character. Remember, keep the simple idea first. I picked "scared" for this character.*



*Hunched over shoulders can indicate feeling insecure, which our character would definitely be, seeing as she is lost alone in a barren land.*



## Body language

An open chest usually communicates a heroic, confident, and powerful character. A closed chest or hunched back represents nervousness, shyness, or slyness. In most cases, a character being open towards the viewer suggests they are more confident or relaxed than a character looking away from the viewer.

*Keeping the head down or even crouching down in a lower position can be seen as a defensive pose.*





## 01 Gesture drawing

When laying down your first gesture drawings, a good place to start is with laying down the landmarks, such as the joints, and connecting them with light, quick pencil strokes; don't use outlines! Usually the pelvis, spine, elbows, knees, ankles, and ears are good places to mark down.

## 02 Fleshing out

Now that you have your gesture pose it's time to start fleshing out the character. Imagine this stage as if you were adding clay to the skeleton, building up the volume and form around the joints and lines. Make sure you flesh out your joints so they are facing in the correct direction. Concentrate on getting the naked body correct first before you start thinking about clothing or hair.

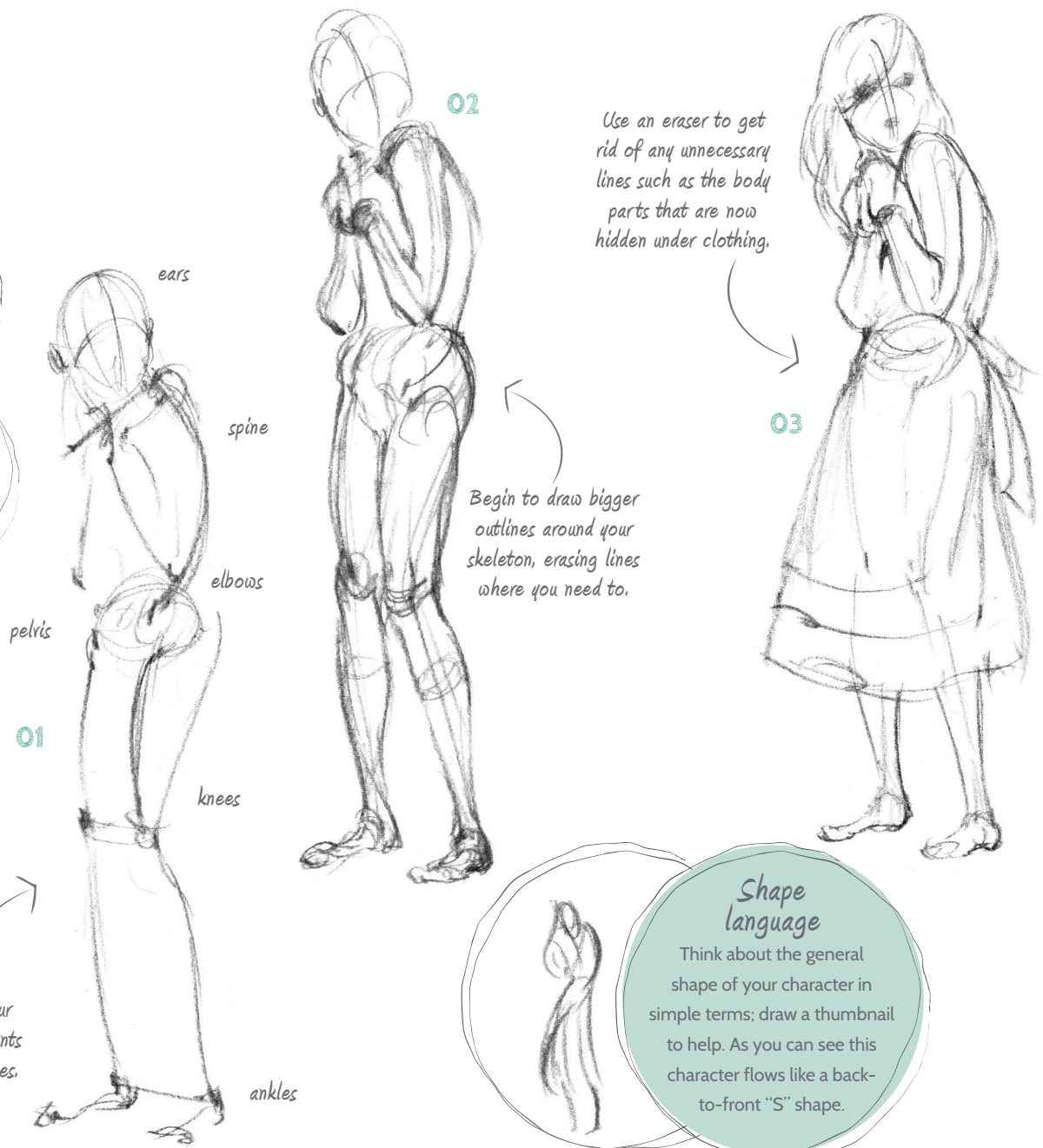
## 03 Creating shape

Now you can begin to create some shape to your character by adding clothing. I imagine her dress to be rather simple and, since she is a village girl, appropriate for her character. Speaking about being appropriate, there is no right or wrong in concept design. It's either appropriate or not. Every character has a purpose and if it feels like a feature is going along with the purpose (concept), then it's an appropriate artistic decision.

I keep the top half of the dress quite tight to the body, so the shape will stay similar to the body we have created underneath. From the waist down I draw lines that edge outwards to create the bottom part of the dress – think of it like a triangle shape. Make sure the general flow of the outline doesn't conflict with the body gesture too much.

### Fleshing out feet

A good way to look at feet in order to make drawing them easier is to see them as two major circles. Draw a slightly bigger rounder one at the back for the heel and lightly connect a smaller, slightly squashed one for the ball and toes.



Use an eraser to get rid of any unnecessary lines such as the body parts that are now hidden under clothing.

Begin to draw bigger outlines around your skeleton, erasing lines where you need to.

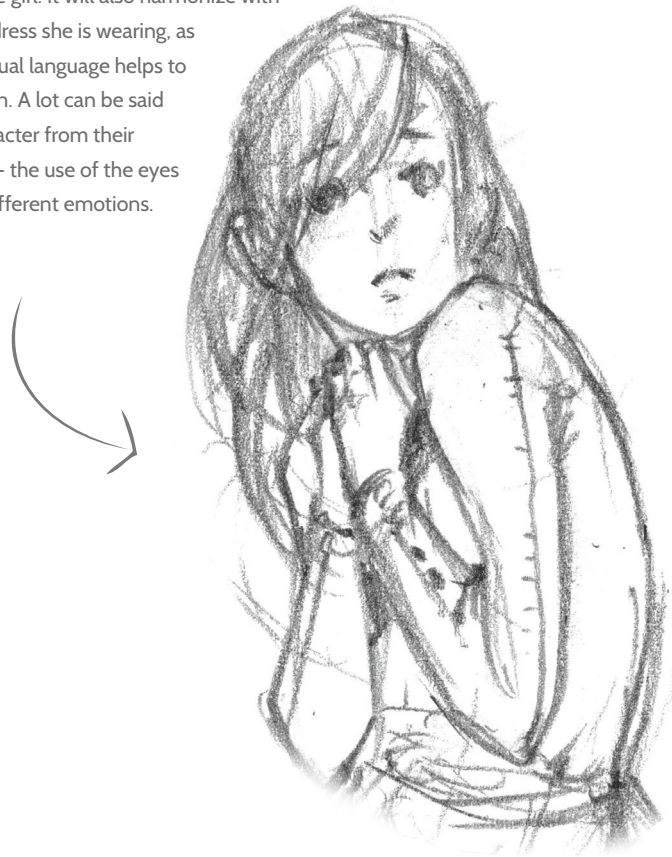
### Shape language

Think about the general shape of your character in simple terms; draw a thumbnail to help. As you can see this character flows like a back-to-front "S" shape.



# Designing the head and adding the details

The main focal point of any character is the head and face as it can help tell more about the character and the story. It's time to decide some further details about her design. Should she have long hair? Long flowing hair would work well with the fact she is a simple village girl. It will also harmonize with the flowing dress she is wearing, as repeating visual language helps to unify a design. A lot can be said about a character from their expressions – the use of the eyes can create different emotions.



*No visible eyes makes a character mysterious. If you want to hide their true identity this is an effective solution.*

*Eyes looking down and to the side can indicate a submissive state.*



*Darkness underneath eyes can make a character look unhealthy, tired, or scared.*



## 01 Landmarks

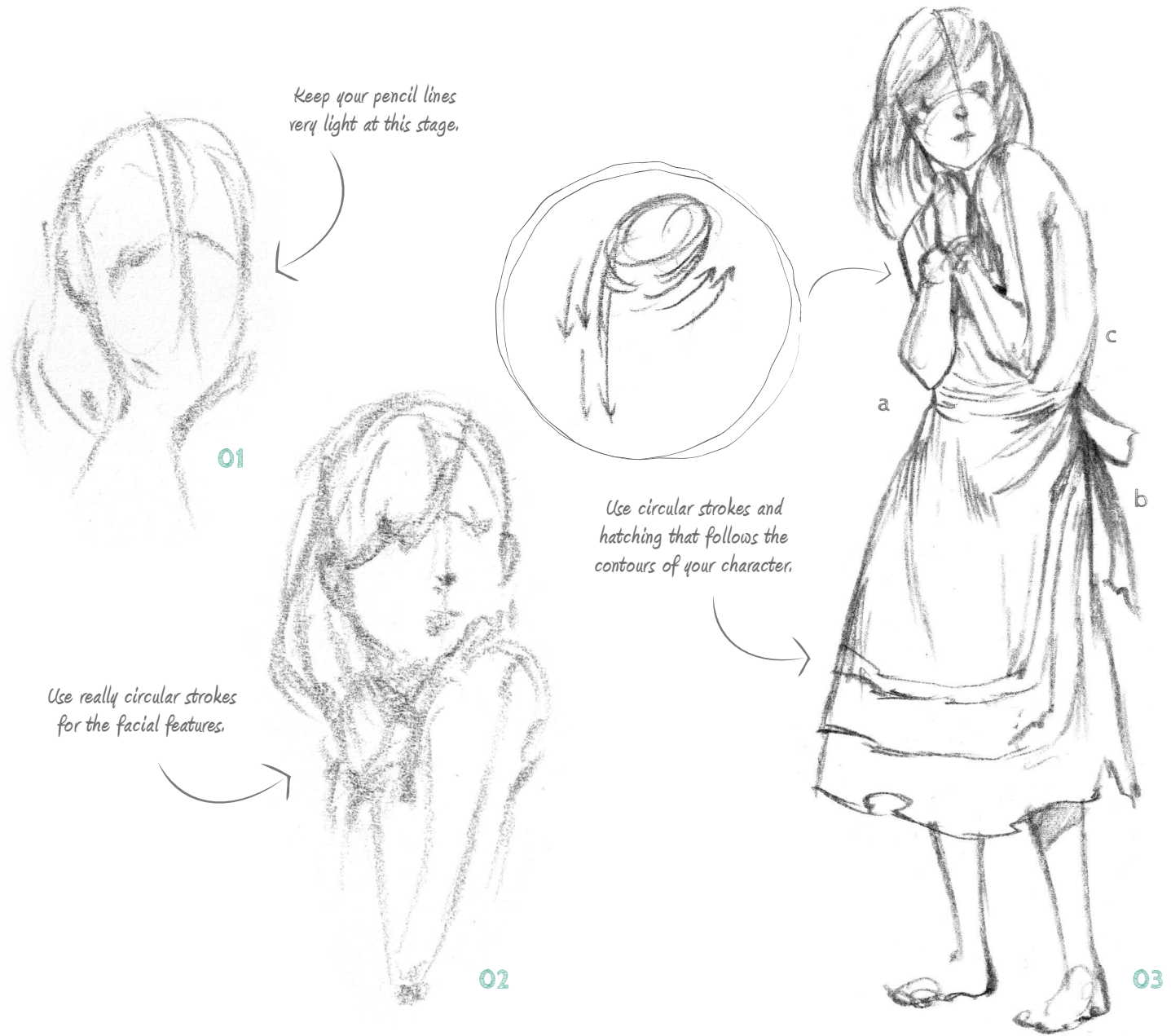
Place landmarks, such as the eyes, just as we did with the body. I keep everything lightly drawn until the very last minute when I'm sure it's almost close to done.

## 02 Blocking in

At this stage start building up the general shape of the head and hair, marking in further features such as the eyes, nose, and mouth with really circular strokes. Remember to still keep it light at this stage as you get a feel for the design.

## 03 Darker areas

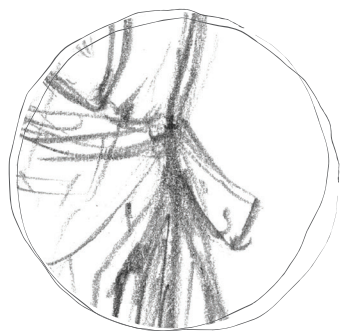
Now your head and body are at the same stage you should start thinking about the darker areas. Using a 2B pencil begin to darken some of the contours, finding where the pockets of shadow are (a, b, and c) and darkening them the most.



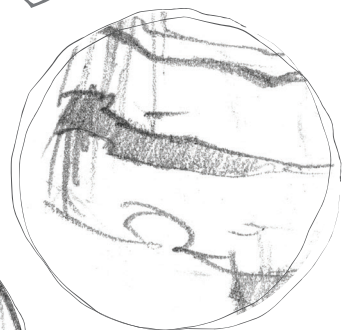


## 04 Finishing up

I now refine the details that are already there. I try not to outline the figure so there's a nice balance of light line and dark, confident marks. This makes the drawing feel three-dimensional and lively. To enhance the drawing further I add extra dark shadow areas around her hands and under her apron.



*Notice the areas where there will be cast shadows. Make sure you use darker shading in these areas to give your character a three-dimensional feel.*



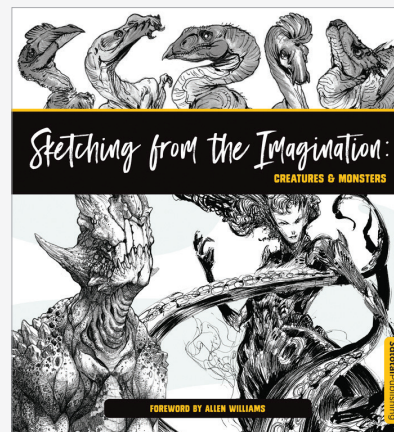
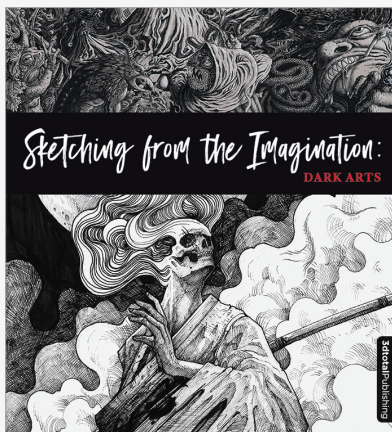
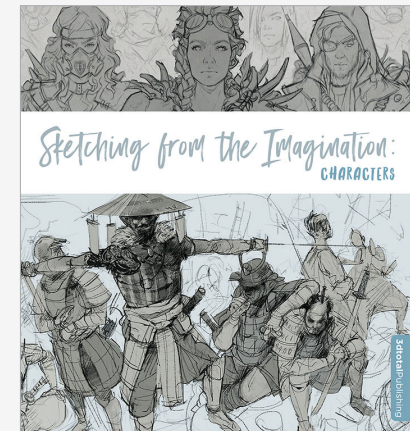
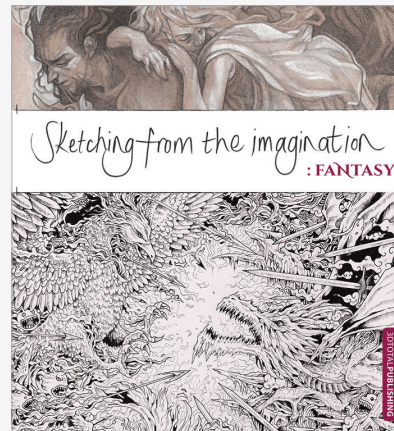
*I don't use my erasers for sketches like this. Erasing too much kills the flow of the gesture and makes a stiff and boring looking figure.*





# Sketching from the Imagination

In each book of the *Sketching from the Imagination* series, 50 talented traditional and digital artists have been chosen to share their sketchbooks and discuss the reasons behind their design decisions. Visually stunning collections packed full of useful tips, these books offer inspiration for everyone.





# Creating a creature concept

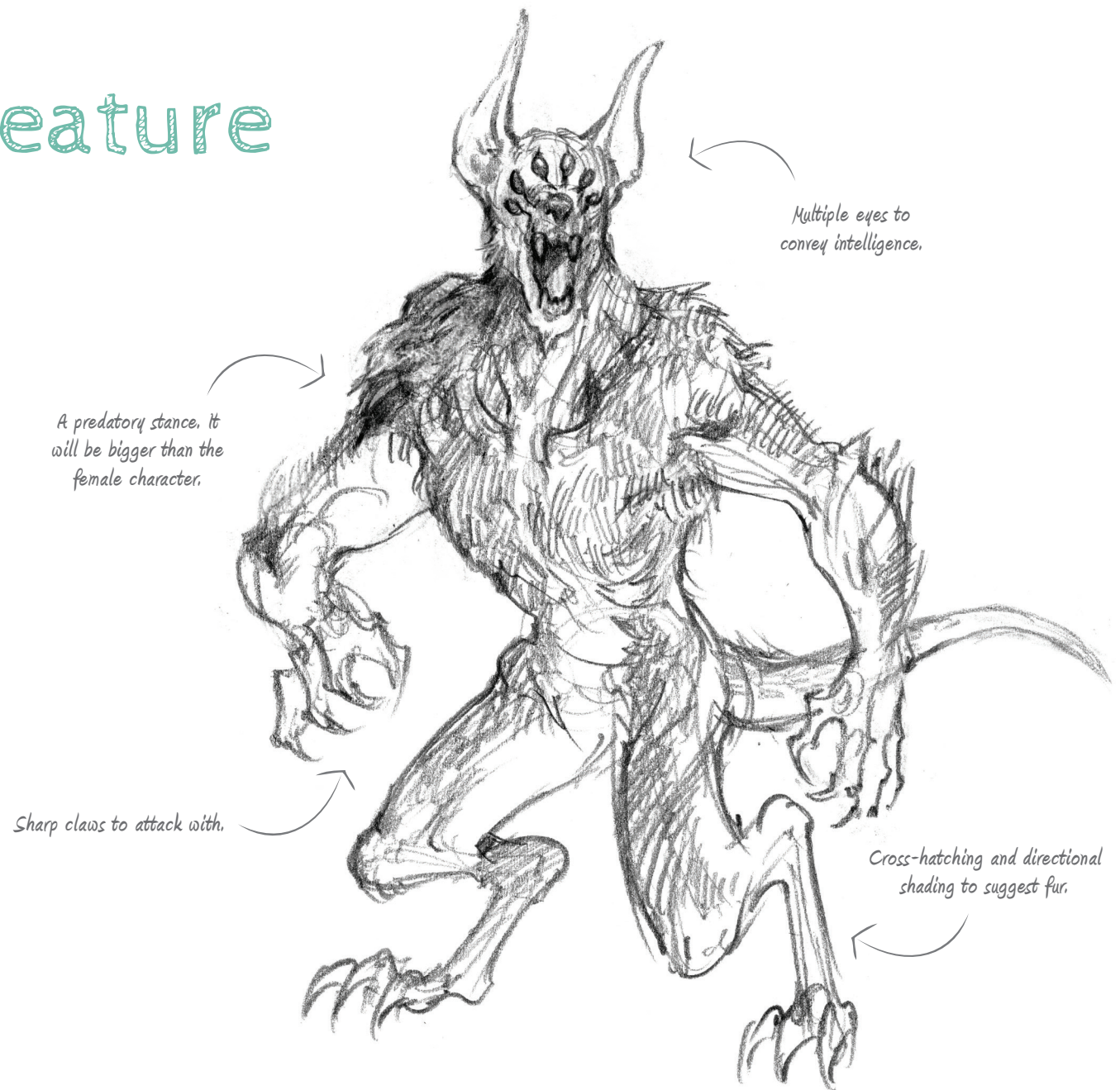
Learn how to visualize a creature concept with quick pencil sketching.

By Reiko Murakami

In this part I will go over the basic process for creating a creature for a scene. We will follow a similar workflow to that we used for the vulnerable character, starting off by using a mind map to come up with ideas, then developing the head and pose.

## TOOLS

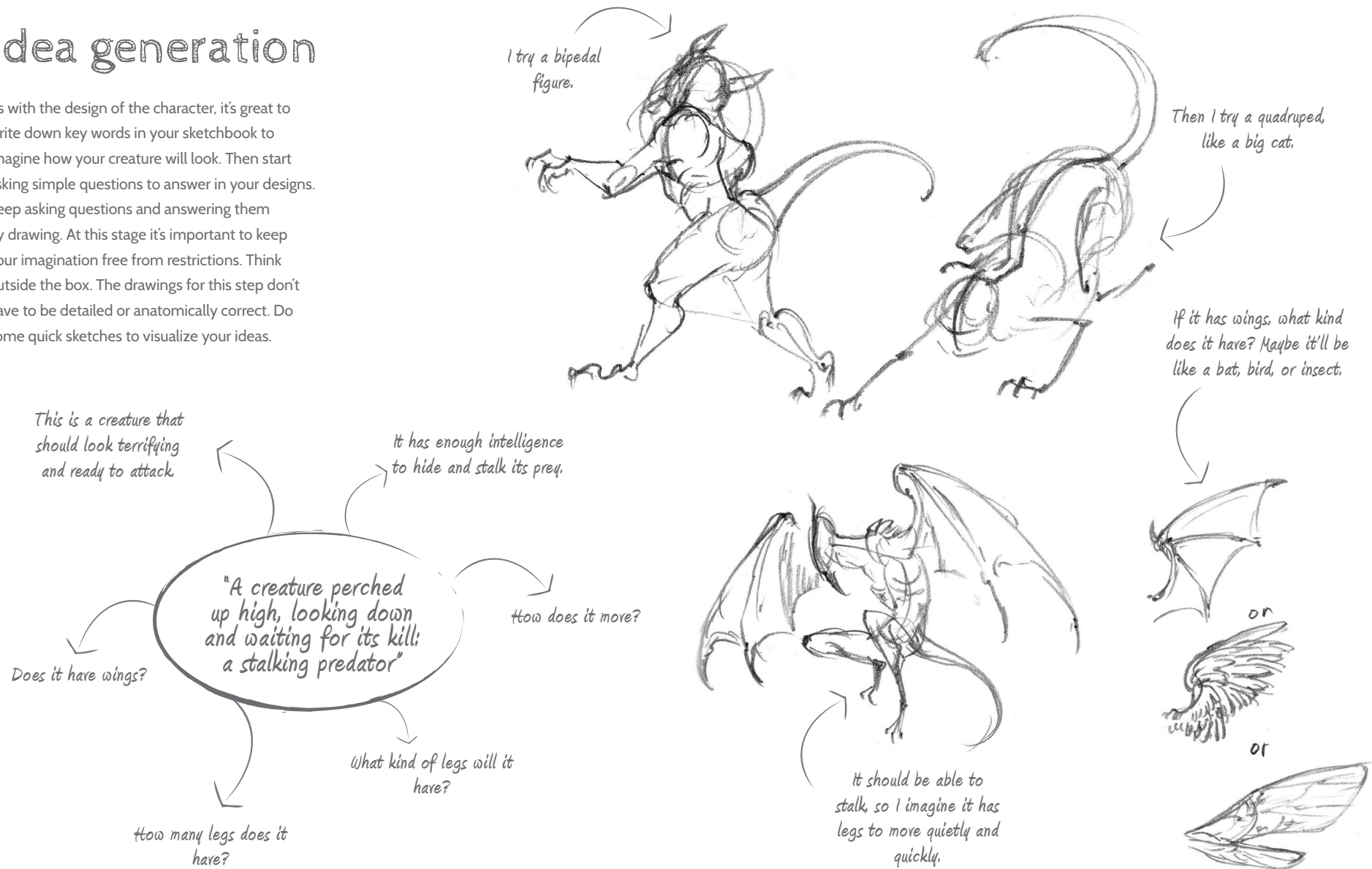
- Pencil (HB-6B)
- Paper
- Eraser





# Idea generation

As with the design of the character, it's great to write down key words in your sketchbook to imagine how your creature will look. Then start asking simple questions to answer in your designs. Keep asking questions and answering them by drawing. At this stage it's important to keep your imagination free from restrictions. Think outside the box. The drawings for this step don't have to be detailed or anatomically correct. Do some quick sketches to visualize your ideas.





# Developing ideas for the head

Next, let's think about how the head will look. Search for some references and decide what kind of head is appropriate for this creature. I always try to keep in mind that your creature has a purpose: it is a predator. It has to look terrifying and ready to attack. It is a hunter, so I stay away from herbivore heads such as those of a rabbit or a horse. This is where things get fun. Let's mix up animal heads and see what happens!

## Keep it simple

When experimenting with details, keep it simple and draw your head in a side profile. Use a circle as a base and build snouts, muzzles, and beaks outwards in different shapes and lengths. Once you have more information about your character you can transfer these design elements into different perspectives.

Try using feline features, as they are great predators.



A dog-like face would also make a good predatory creature.



How about adding horns to a human head and adding extra eyes?



Add a beak and suggest feathers for a bird-like creature.



Combining an alligator head with dog ears could work.



# Developing gestures and adding textures

After thinking through body features, I decide a bipedal creature with a dog-like head is appropriate for the brief. I'm now ready to think about how to present the creature. Let's think about what kind of attitude would best describe this scary predator and do some quick gesture drawings to explore those. When doing gesture drawing, it's important to maintain the flow of the lines. There are many ways to do this. I prefer drawing from the inside, imagining a skeleton posing. Starting with stick figure drawings is just enough to decide the attitude and gesture of the final drawing.

*This creature is physically strong and could be seen to be making himself bigger by puffing out his chest.*

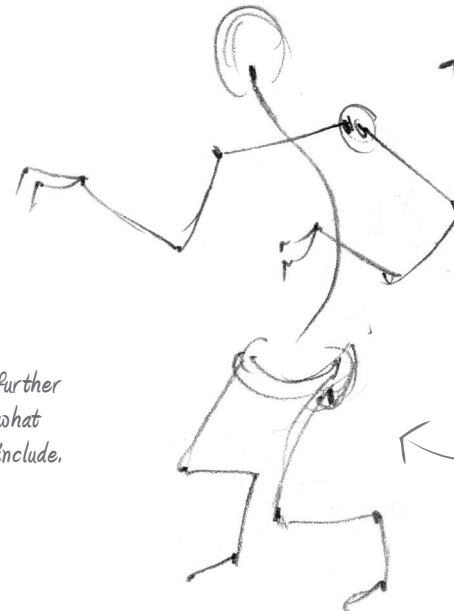


*You can tell a bit more about a creature's body language through its back posture. Is it hunched over in a hunting position, for example?*



*With its arms open and muscles tense, it looks ready to pounce.*

*A stalking position could be assumed; with the knees bent it looks prepared to attack.*



*I explore the head further now that I know what elements I want to include.*





## 01 Gesture drawing

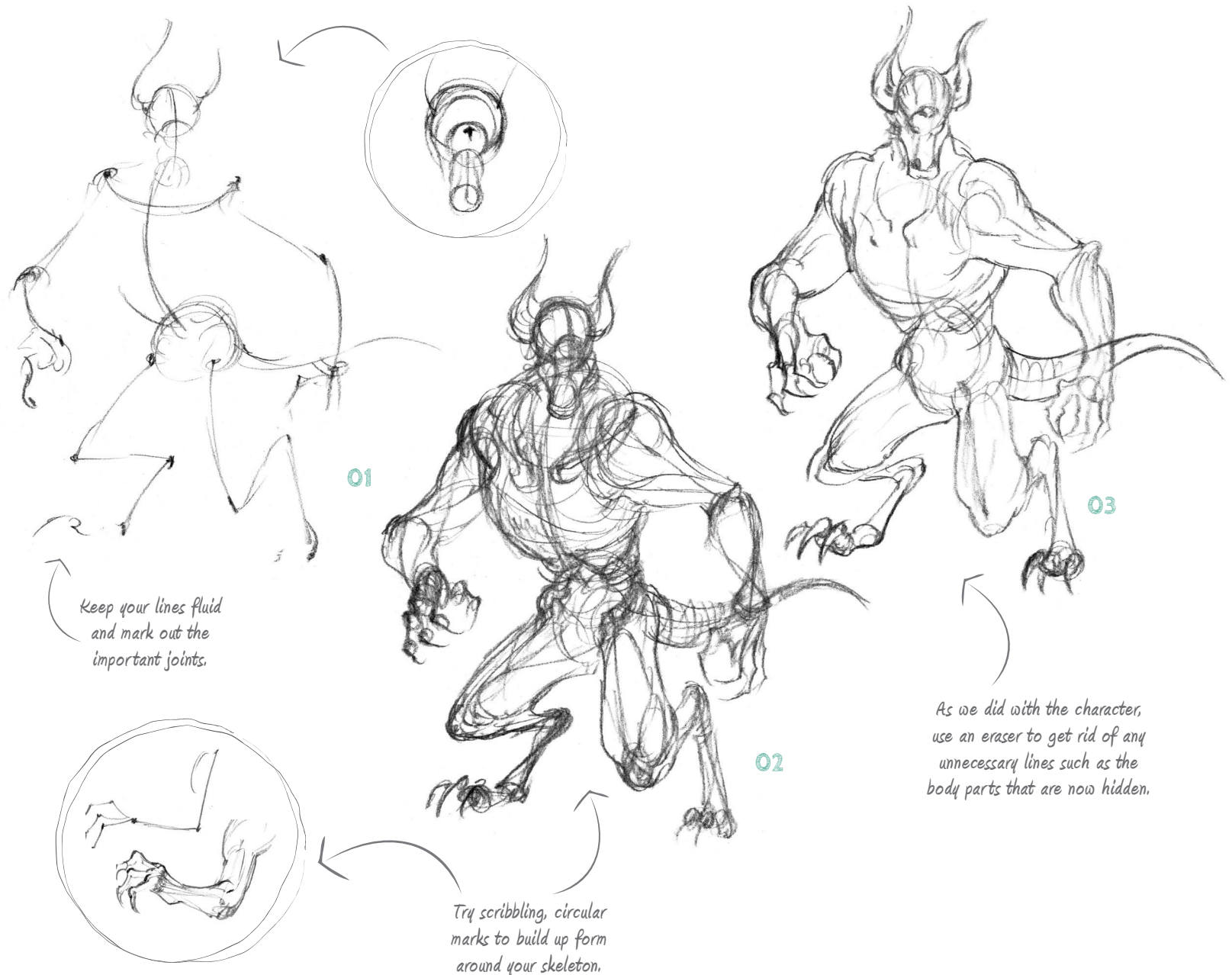
Capture the flow of your character by starting off with your gesture lines and marking in important landmarks. Start by finding the joints of the body, mark them lightly, and then connect them with lightly drawn lines. If you start to see the pose at this point you are doing very well.

Try not to draw dark. Be patient and mark everything as light as possible. Remember, we are drawing from the inside.

Based on the landmarks for the head, draw several connecting circles lightly to figure out the general shape of the head.

## 02 Fleshing out

We have now got the pose and general idea of how he should appear. Let's add some flesh to this skeleton and give him a more detailed look. Imagine that you are adding clay flesh to a wired armature. Try not to outline the figure; the outline should be a result of your pencil marks searching for the connection between joints. If you are not used to drawing this way, I recommend having a good reference from a real animal or human next to your drawing to refer to as you draw. Use flowing pencil strokes in the direction of the skeleton lines. This will help to build up some form.



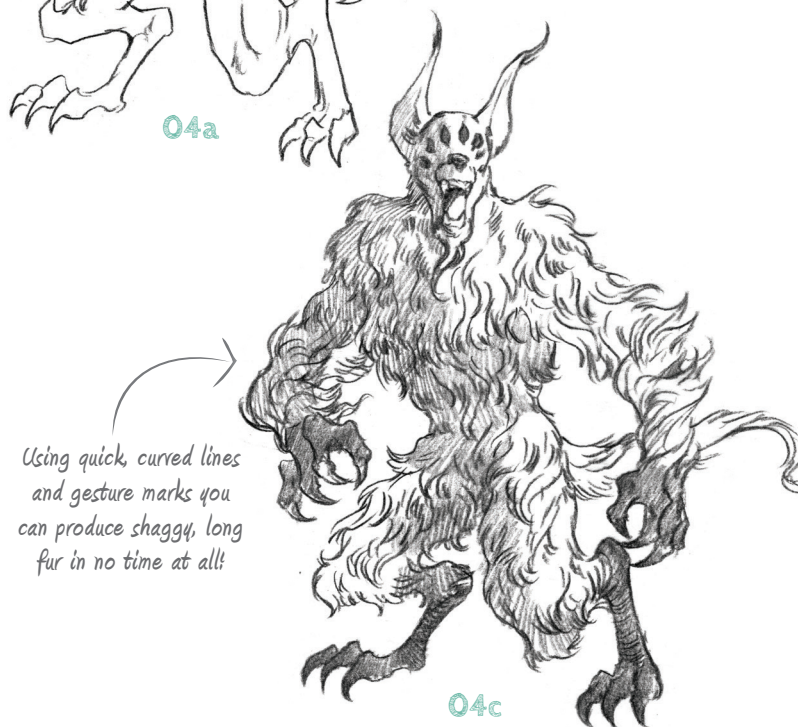
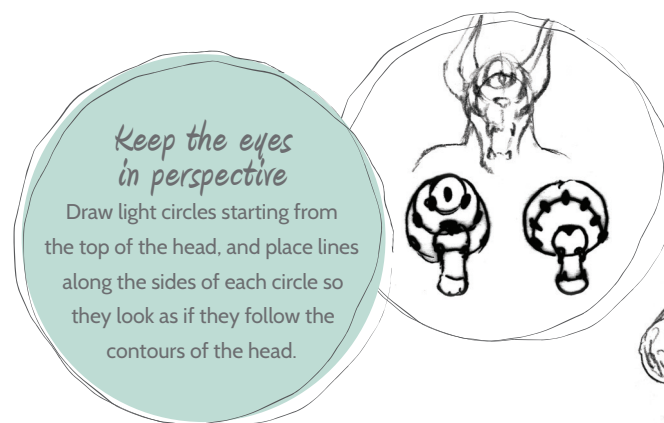
### 03 Creating shape

At this point I use an eraser to tidy up inside the lines. I also begin to define the contour lines by darkening them in areas. At this point I begin to add some details to the head. I can make him look unique by adding an unusual number of eyes – the odd combination of familiar features creates something unique. You can do a lot with designing creature eyes. For example having no pupil (either complete black or white) usually suggests the creature is incommunicable and otherworldly. Alien and god-like characters often have full black or white eyes. Unusual numbers of eyes give a creature an uncanny feel – you may have seen a lot of horror creatures with a lot of eyes or no eyes at all.

I want to place the eyes on the head evenly spaced and following the surface contour of the head.

### 04 Adding texture

Now that I have the shape and design of the creature's body and head, I need to decide on what kind of texture and details to add. I explore these options a little bit before I decide on the final look. I try a very smooth skin which doesn't have much shading, adding in some skin spots with circular pencil strokes. I then try yeti-type fur by adding directional "S"-shaped marks following the contour of the body. I decide to go with fur but something a bit rougher than the yeti look. I add quick pencil marks to suggest it's covered with fur in parts. Using short, quick strokes that go along the surface contour is just enough for this kind of quick sketch. Note that in the final design the chest area is covered with short and curvy strokes. If you draw a straight line on the curvy surface like flesh, it will make the area look flat.





# Composing a scene

Learn how to bring your scene together.

By Reiko Murakami

In this final part of the tutorial I will go over the basic process for composing a scene using the character and creature we designed in the previous parts. You will discover how to develop the composition and present the scene in a quick pencil sketch.

To show the open and barren space, I add a horizon. The patterns on the ground are drawn in a specific direction to give a sense of perspective.

## TOOLS

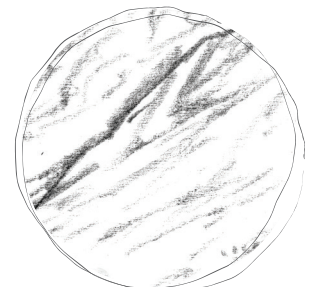
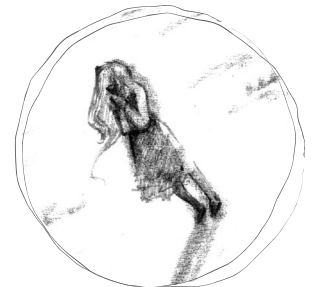
- Pencil (HB-6B)
- Paper
- Eraser

The composition follows the brief and shows all the necessary elements in a creative way to describe the scene.



The size difference between the predators and the girl is used not only to describe the distance from the camera, but also to show the concept of prey being watched by threatening predators. The placement of all three characters creates a triangle that leads the viewer's eye to focus on the most important elements in the image.

Notice the difference between the character's gesture and the predators. The girl appears to be helpless while the predators show their sharp claws and are ready to attack.



# From thumbnails to final composition

Now we have two characters ready to go, let's think about the scene. How will it look? Again, we need to refer to the brief (see the mind map below). As the point of view is that of a predator, the predator should be closer to the viewer. It will also be darker because it is stalking, perhaps in a shadow. The foreground should be dark to give a sense of depth and perspective. The prey will be in the distance, perhaps in light. Remember, she is vulnerable. She probably doesn't know she's being watched or recognize that she's in an open space where she can be easily attacked. Let's draw some quick thumbnails to see how I can combine all of the ideas above.

The creature will be darker.

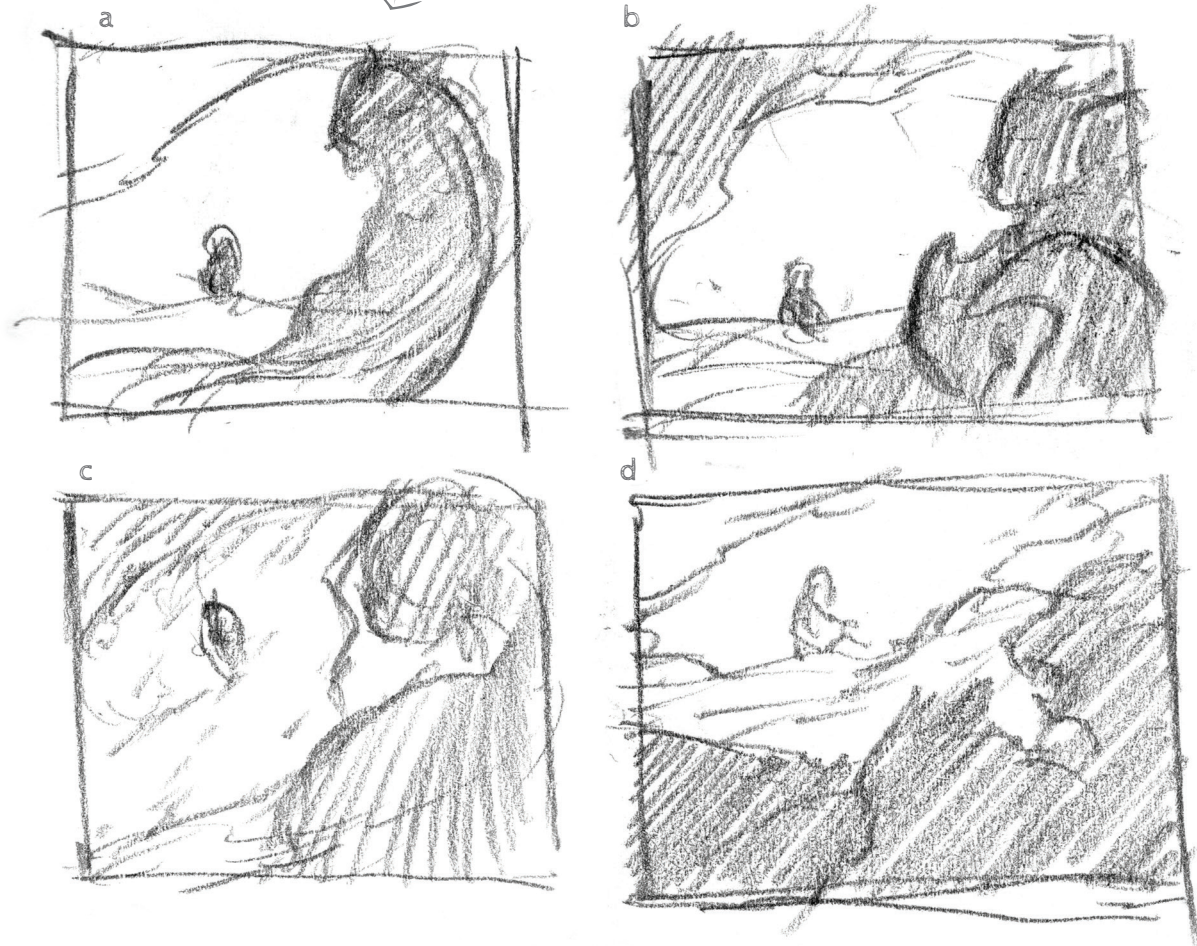
The point of view is that of the predator.

"A lost, vulnerable character will be seen in a barren environment from the perspective of its predator, which will be a creature perched up high, looking down and waiting for its kill. Composition will be key to effectively sell the oblivious prey being watched by a stalking predator."

The prey will appear in the distance.

The predator should be closer to the camera.

What's the camera angle? What needs to be shown? Often the clues are in the brief





## 01 Gesture

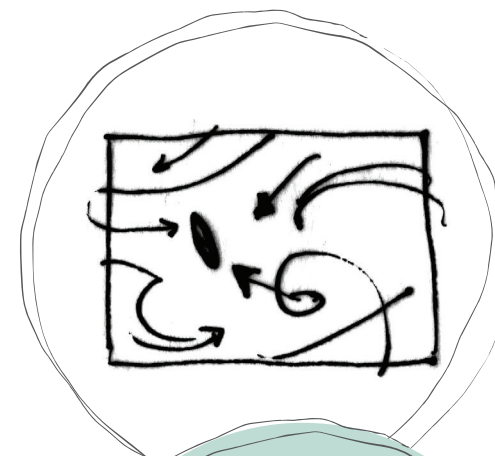
Of all the sketches in my ideas generation, thumbnail B feels the best to serve the purpose. I decide to add another predator to make the scene more dramatic. I work out more of the scene composition by creating a rough gesture drawing. This way I can see where to place the main elements to lead the viewer's eye around the image.

## 02 Refining the thumbnail

Once I am happy with the gesture sketch I make another sketch based on that. This time I draw it bigger and put in more details. This is a good time to start thinking more about value, shapes, and lighting.

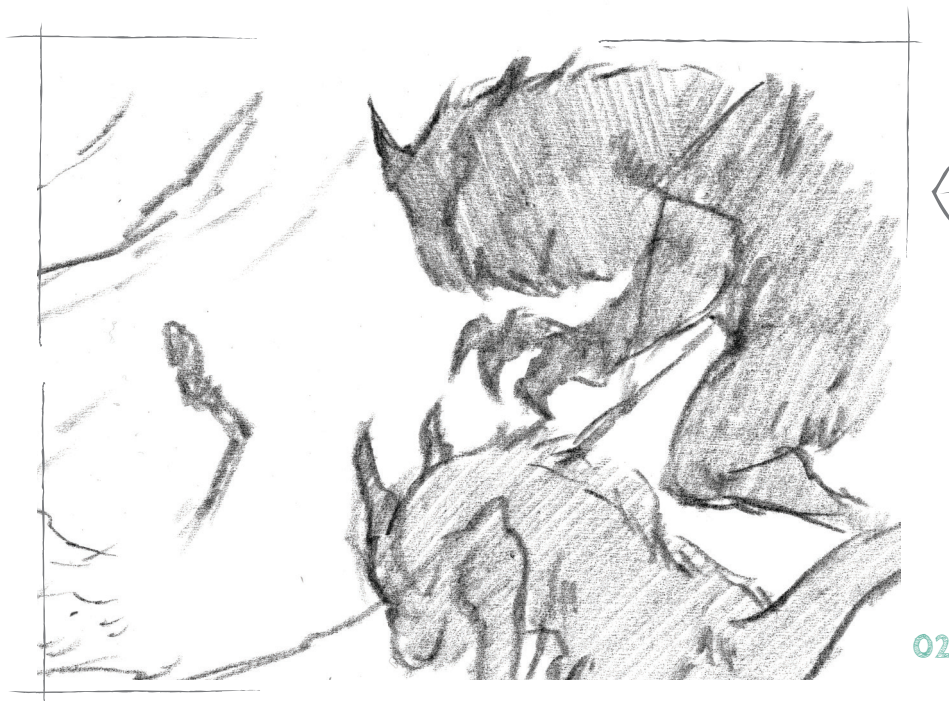


*When designing the composition, gesture studies help you to decide where your elements will be placed.*



### *Lead the viewer's eye*

Even producing a simplified line drawing to work out your gestures will help with the placement of elements. As you can see in this simplified version of my scene, all the gesture lines lead the viewer's eye around the image to point at the girl.



*I begin to refine the shapes of my character and creature.*

### 03 Value and shape

I produce a quick plan of where to place my values. The foreground is usually the darkest area. I also review the silhouette shapes of the image and how they read: big shapes (the predators) versus the small shapes (the girl and background rocks). I think it will be nice to add shadow to the girl as it will emphasize her aloneness. I use soft and broad strokes to fill the dark places. For this step I use a 7B pencil with a rounded tip.

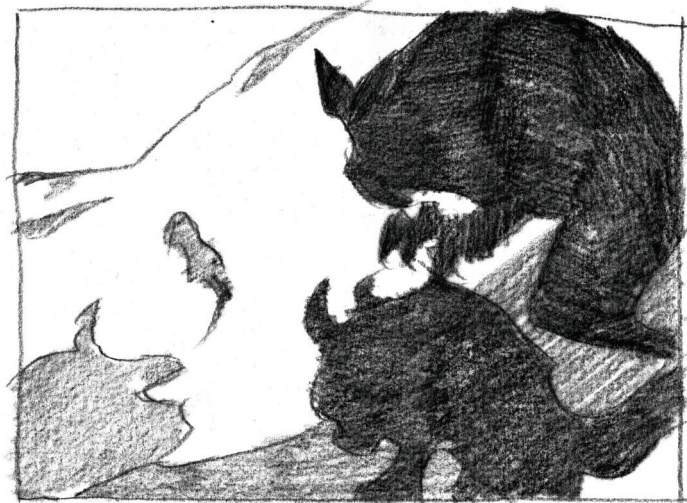
### 04 Perspective

I refine the horizon to make sure this is an open and vast space. Image 04 shows the rough perspective I'm imagining when drawing ground details. I organize my lines to go along with the grid direction. By doing so, viewers get the sense of perspective.

I use a variety of light lines to depict vast and barren earth and cloud. In order to do this, hold your pencil very lightly and, without forcing it, move it with your forearm, not the fingers. Your wrist should not be bending while doing so. This creates unexpected lines that are less like your hand drawing.

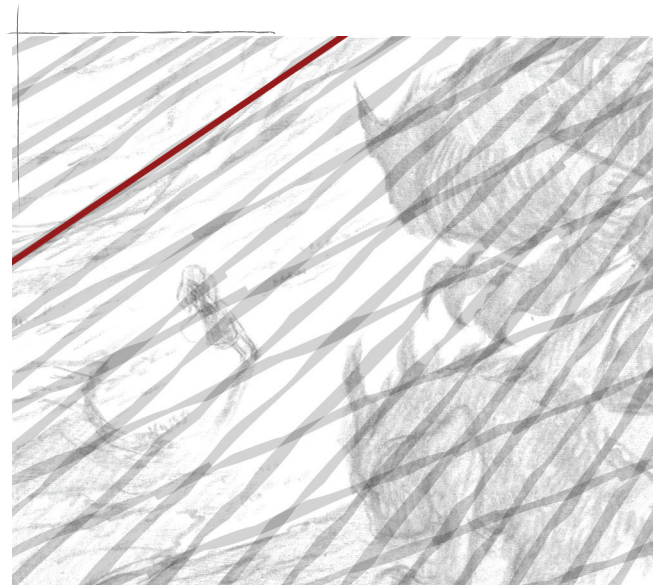
### 05 Adding fur

I add more shading to the predators. Rough, quick strokes are used to show the fur on their surface. Similar to the idea of organizing strokes to the perspective grid, I draw fur lines which go along the surface contour. By using short and broad strokes I make the creatures look more organic and closer to the camera. I leave some empty areas to suggest light hitting on their fur. Deciding where to leave space is also important when doing quick pencil sketching.



*Always start from lighter value, it's easier to add darkness than trying to make things lighter.*

*I leave unshaded space to show highlights on their fur.*



04



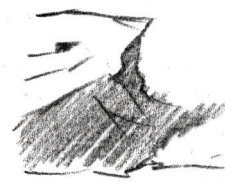
05

*In order to create lines such as the horizon and clouds, try not to draw with your fingers - use your forearm.*



## 06 Rock rendering and details

First I block out the rock shape using straight lines and then lightly shade the bottom area of the rock. I then add extra dark areas with the sharp tip of my pencil and add short strokes to give a rough surface.



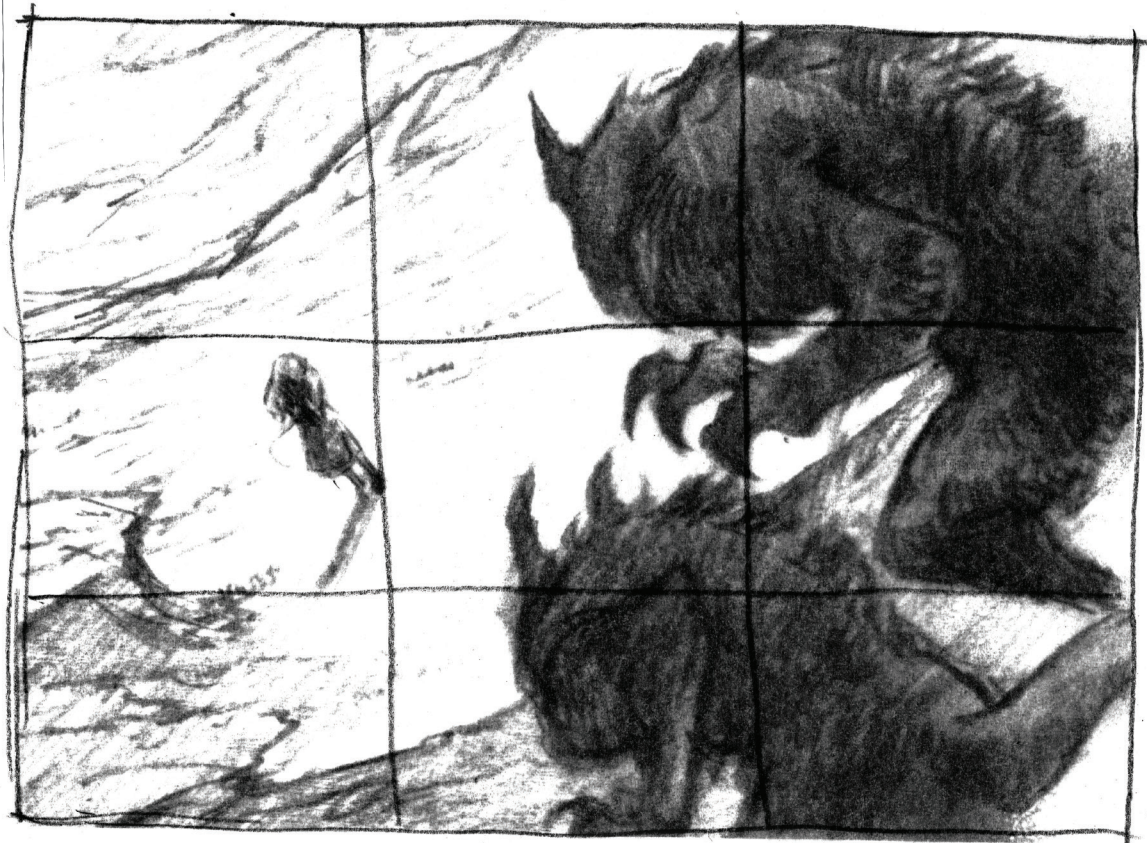
Use a sharp pencil to add rough surface detail.

06

## 07 Composition and finishing up

To check my final composition I place a grid over my image and use the rule of thirds (a method whereby you place a grid divided into nine equal parts over your image, placing main elements near the intersection of gridlines to achieve an optimum composition). My main elements are placed off-center, creating an interesting and dynamic composition.

I'm satisfied with the environment and the predators, so I draw the details of the girl. I've been using a 7B pencil with a rounded tip, but now I switch to a 2B pencil with a sharpened tip. I think about her gesture and her situation. Since she is so tiny on the paper I decide to do minimal strokes to communicate her pose. Instead of drawing every detail I focus on broad shadow areas, shading lightly at first, then going to the spot where I think the shadow is darker. At last, I add a few flowing lines to show her hair in wind. You can see the final image on the next page.



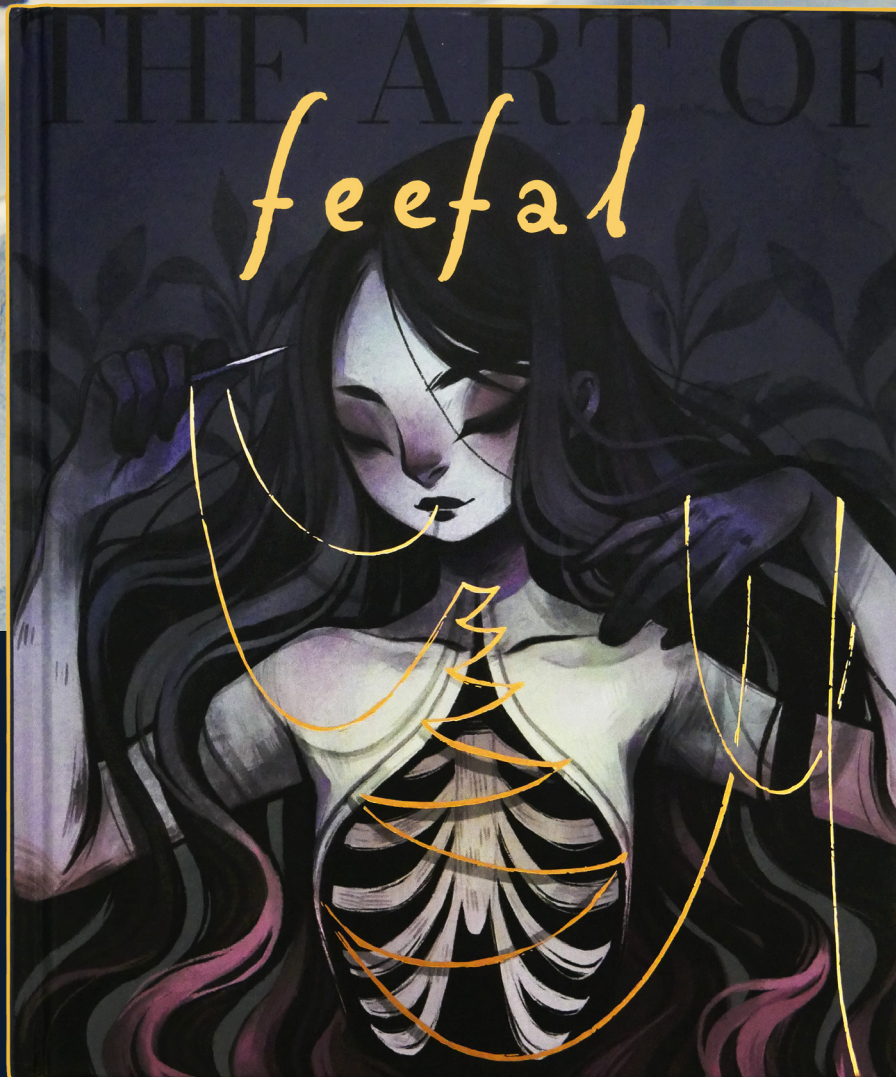
Use the rule of thirds to check the position of your main elements and create balance in your composition.

07









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