



Vegvisir

a graphic novel by
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ARTIST STATEMENT

Alexandra is a Portland based illustrator and writer from a small fishing and logging town in Washington state. Growing up with the Pacific ocean in her front yard and the Olympic National Park in her backyard she developed a love for natural lines, textures, and colors. She spends her time at her desk by the window creating gloomy and fantastical environments and the characters who call them home. Worlds that are not so different from the world she grew up in.

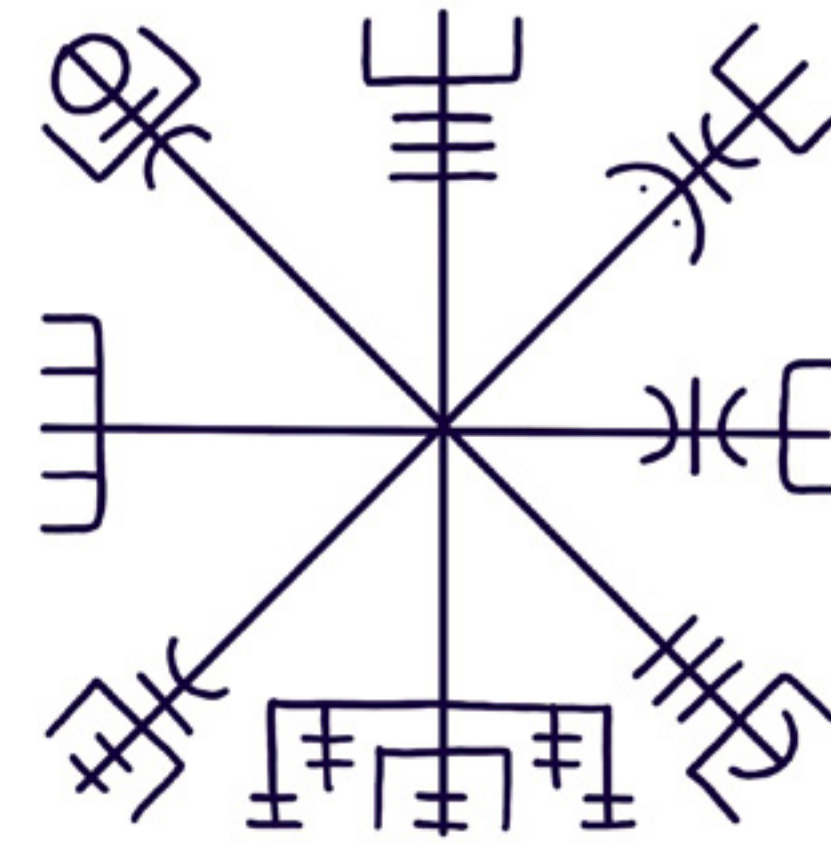
She earned her BFA at Pacific Northwest College of art, majoring in Illustration. In her final two semesters she set out on a journey to create her dream graphic novel Vegvisir and continues to work diligently on it until completion.

WRITTEN PROPOSAL

Everyone has struggled with mental illness; whether you have some form of it yourself or know someone that does. We don't always know how to help others or even help ourselves through these illnesses, and each illness is its own thing. It's all relative and we have no fix-all method, but there is one thing in common with all mental illness. To overcome, we must first embrace. In a series of narrative illustrations, four 11x17" character sheets and four 13x19" scenes, I will be depicting a Viking-esque heroine overcoming mental illness in unconventional ways. She isn't the classic Viking either, instead of war and violence she prefers to pick flowers and make friends. How does someone that isn't classically strong deal with her versions of mental illness? By showing this "weak" person overcome and befriend her mental illnesses I hope to inspire others to take the first steps to help and embrace the demon within.

This project connects to me on a very personal level, I have been struggling with anxiety and depression very severely in the past couple of years. While it's always been present I had a tipping point 2-3 years ago. It has changed me as a person—in a good way. Through a cornucopia of different methods I learned to work on becoming friends with anxiety and depression rather than trying to fight them or push them out to find "normal" again. Living with these things is my new normal. Mental illness doesn't make a person any less human or perfect. This realization gives me a great drive for this project because I have been in a very dark place recently where it feels as if I was the only person in the world experiencing what I'm going through. I have had the realization that I am alone in this. Everyone's mental illnesses are different—no one can ever understand mine, as I can never fully understand theirs. My project will be cathartic for myself but also will be a way to shed light on and open up a safe space for people with these conditions to jump that first hurdle of acceptance.

To create a visual experience, I'll be combining my own experiences with mental illness with the scenery and styles of my blood lines. Because my mother is Italian and my father is a mixture of Mexican, Scottish, and Swedish, I like to think of myself as an Italian Viking. I'll be using seaside scenes for our heroine to wander her world while giving her a very nordic look; Tunics, furs, leathers all in natural colors with some metal accents some decorated with symbols some not. The creatures that represent the different mental illnesses will also carry various aspects from all of my ancestry such as some flowers native to southern Italy and dipping a bit into my Scottish/Scandinavian roots and taking inspiration from their gods such as Freya and Loki. I am particularly excited about the Nordic styles from their clothes, to how they wore their hair. Research for reference of styles will be conducted to ensure an accurate-but-still-my-own representation of the cultures.



There will be a lot of sketchbook pages with lists and small drawings to convey my thought process in the early stages along with a couple of thumbnails. I don't like going straight into digital format; rather like getting messy with the sketchbook first off, then use the sketches and research to construct a more final piece digitally and keep some of the traditional marks as well.

With my thesis I want to create illustrations bigger than I have before, in a banner-like format that I can hang in a sequence whether it flows from top to bottom or left to right. I'll be taking inspiration from some of my oldest influences to create these as well.

My first and most important influence is my grandmother, my mother's mom. She was an old Catholic Italian woman who died recently. She and her husband taught me many things and were a big part of my early childhood: from farming to cooking and everything in between. They were just a wonderful pair of people.

A more direct influence for this thesis is Matt Rhodes, a concept artist for the video game Dragon Age. This has to be my favorite game series out there and the art for it is just amazing and inspiring to me. He uses a balance of shape and texture that just leaves me in awe. I am also looking at bringing inspiration from the brothers Grimm's fairy tales for how to create mental illness into a creature of some sort that isn't an everyday trope. I have been heavily influenced by a mixture of things that range from concept artists to family. I'm going to draw from them all in this thesis project.

In the last couple semesters I have had a breakthrough in my art and style and have been running with it. I've done a lot of successful experimental works and will be utilizing those successes in my thesis to make my best work possible. With my use of shape and line I have a bit more playful and inviting style that I want to utilize to try to bring in some younger adults to look at my work. I also have small details that can be hidden within the larger shapes which I will try to use to create interest and make people look at my pieces longer. I take a lot of pride in my imagination. I used to create a lot of characters and backstories for fun and took a break from that to focus on discovering myself, my voice, and my style. So, now I am going back to what kick started my art career in the first place

. My life has been a series of rollercoasters—from not knowing what is wrong with me, to knowing and then learning to accept it. I realize I am not the only one, but it can feel like you are alone when you are going through a rough patch, that's just how it works. So I want to create these pieces to invite people to see that it's okay, and you don't have to be a perfect human being to overcome those experiences. You can be a clumsy Viking girl who is not really good at fighting; sometimes all it takes is a helping hand. This project is already starting to feel very important to me. It is also very personal and reflective of some hard times in my life, but by doing this project it gives me a chance to finally express myself and also a way to connect with others who have struggled.



ABSTRACT

This project is the ground works of a graphic novel that takes place in a historical viking fantasy setting. It has become very dear to me over the past few months as it combines elements of: family, mental illness, and courage. I have created character designs for the four main characters, an example of page layout side by side it's script, a two page spread and the cover for the first book within the series. It is an allegory of my own personal experience, or at least how I felt at the time. Through years of therapy I had learned to "identify" my anxieties, to put a name to them and eventually face them and embrace them. That is exactly what I did with this graphic novel and created three characters based off the three main types of anxiety: neurotic, moral, and realistic anxiety.

It is not your everyday, bloody battles and gore type of pop culture viking story either. It is more of a mental battle, a new take on how to overcome anxieties and fear. There doesn't always need to be swinging swords to overcome what may seem scary at first. The main heroine of the story wants to be independent from everyone in her family but ends up learning that she is stronger with them and it's okay to ask for help every once in a while.

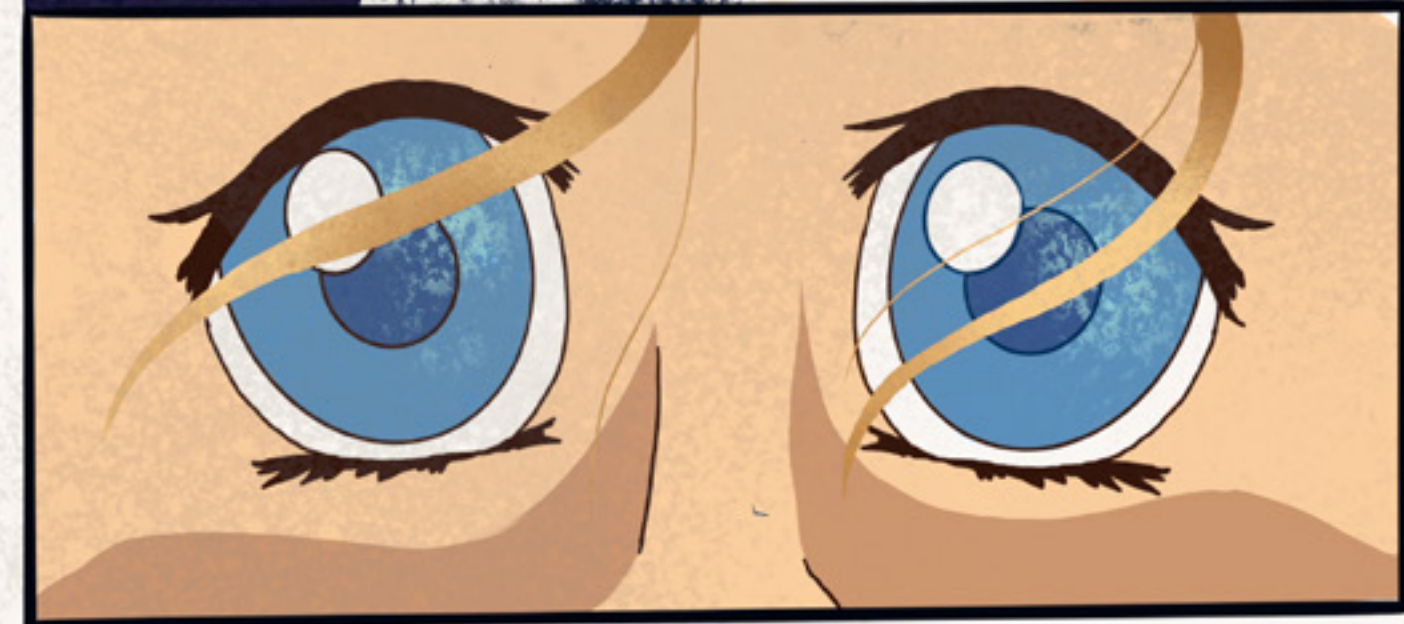
This graphic novel series is targeted toward young adults who may feel alone or are struggling with mental illness. As a way to guide them, give them an escape or just be a good book to pick up and read, Welcome to the world of Vegvisir.

ORAL

Everyone has struggled with mental illness; whether you have some form of it yourself or know someone that does. We don't always know how to help others or even help ourselves through these illnesses, and each illness is its own thing. It's all relative and we have no fix-all method, but there is one thing in common with all mental illness: to overcome, we must first embrace. Welcome to the world of Vegvisir, where through the power of illustration and some script writing you too can learn to embrace your demons.

I have created the groundwork of a graphic novel that takes place in an historical fantasy setting. Family has always been a very big part of my life and I am lucky to have the family I do: supportive of all my endeavors and always wanting to lend a helping hand both mentally and physically. A few years ago I hit a wall with my mental health and just hit rock bottom; it was the loneliest time of my life, even though I was surrounded by so many great people. This graphic novel is my way of bringing together the community of people who are experiencing anxiety/mental illness and those who wish to understand it better. I have always been interested in mental illness and how it affects myself and others and how I can better help those who are struggling. While mental illness, specifically anxiety, is becoming a more prominent topic, it is still stigmatised by the majority when it shouldn't be.

Vegvisir focuses around Viola, a 17-year old viking girl living on the Aland Islands just off the coast of Finland. You will meet her father, Gorm, see glimpses of her past which reveal her mother, Bianca. In the present, Viola is being forced into an arranged marriage by her father in a misguided effort to make sure she is safe and taken care of. Viola has a different idea for her future and instead of telling her father how she feels, she lashes out and becomes more angry taking it out on not just her father, but also a friend, Frida... On the way to meet the new suitor, tragedy strikes, sending Viola overboard and to death's door.. When "she wakes up" the place she calls home is foreign to her. Her father is missing, the whole tribe is missing. And on the back of her hand is the mark of Vegvisir; An old icelandic symbol meaning "life path", it was given to people who had strayed off their own life path. Once she realizes she is alone she sets off to find out what has caused this darkness and the disappearance of her family.



On Viola's journey she encounters three demons who put her mental strength to the test, her first encounter being a shifty demon with the appearance of a wolf stalking her through the forests sending chills down her spine every time she makes eye contact. A mysterious raven who gets inside her head, pestering her with questions of right and wrong. No matter how far Viola runs she can't escape them. The final demon comes as a surprise to her and strikes fear into Viola's heart just when she thought she couldn't be scared anymore than she was.

This story is an allegory of my own personal experience, or at least how I felt at the time. Through years of therapy I had learned to "identify" my anxieties, to put a name to them and eventually face them and embrace them. The point isn't to go back to the way things were before, but to keep moving forward and learning to live peacefully with what may seem so scary at first.

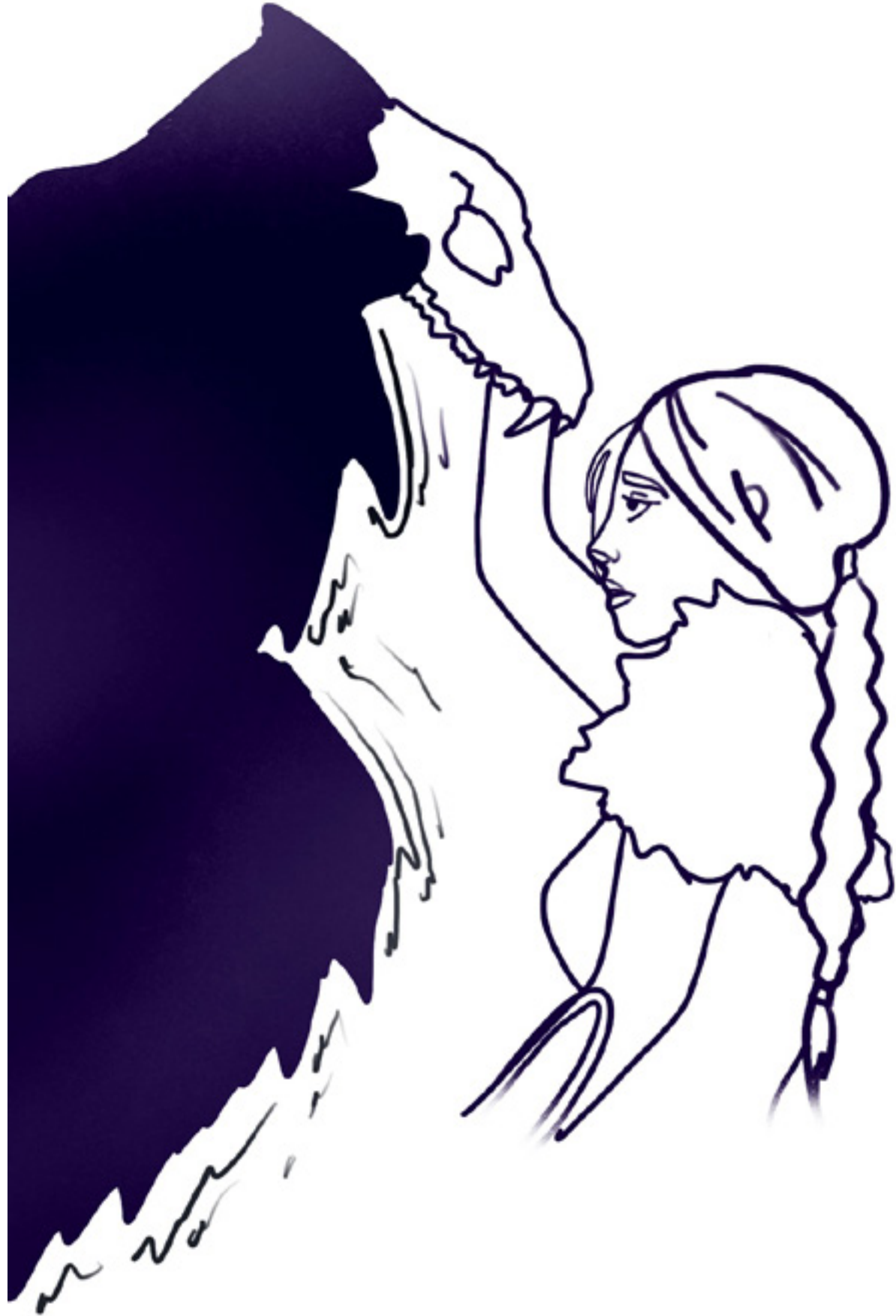
My initial inspiration was my grandmother, she passed away shortly after my thesis one class began and from that point on I knew I wanted to do something that connected to my family somehow. My grandmother had helped me find my courage many times before. While I looked for courage everywhere but inside myself she knew it was with me all along. With my family roots being half from the coasts of southern Italy and the other half coming from the seafaring people of Scandinavia, Sweden. What better way to pay an homage to my grandmother and my family heritage than a viking with strong family bonds.

This story takes place mainly from Viola's point of view, where she doesn't exactly know what is going on until the end of the series. Her world, or at least how she sees it, and how she learns to overcome her fears, is based on my own personal story, my struggle with mental illness, specifically my long struggle with anxiety. In some ways, I have inserted some personal memories into the story, such as the fight with myself to admit something was wrong and confide in someone. That someone eventually turned out to be my father which then took steps to find me help. The theme of anxiety has become more underlying and subtle than in my original idea, but this way it's paced better and a little more fun to read and relate to. Originally, I wasn't actually going to create this graphic novel, hell it wasn't even going to be a graphic novel, I just wanted to create embodiments of my anxieties, hoping people would understand. I then took a step back and thought to myself that this could be so much more.

I am a bit of a late bloomer when it comes to my creative voice. I used to rely heavily on art as an outlet for whatever was ailing me at the time. Whether it was anxiety or some other mental battle I have found sitting down with my sketchbook usually helps. It wasn't until I came to PNCA that I realized that I could hone this habit into a sort of process and style that I could call my own. Through color and many attempts at different ways of creating a piece of art I had finally settled on a process and recurring style. I wasn't done polishing off how I work though-- I wanted to continue to use it as a form of expression for myself and make art that resonates with people. Since that realization my art has taken on a very organic form emotionally, using a combination of shapes, varied-weight lines and textures to create characters, environments and everything in between.

You will see my palettes consist mostly of blues, greys, and primarily cooler colors with a dash of yellows and oranges for, what I find personally, a striking contrast of those cooler colors and partially because they are my favorite colors to work with. My voice in this project I think comes out the best compared to any other project I have done before because I put so much thought and research into each character, the environment, and the overall story. If you were to ask me a year ago what my artistic voice was I would have probably gave you a blank stare with no response but since looking back onto why I got into art to begin with combined with the hardships I have endured and overcome in recent years it has become more clear to me and this project is proof of it.

You will see this come out within the characters of this project especially since a lot of these characters are based on my manifestations of anxiety, my family and I, and battles I have gone through with my own mental health. While before I was creating characters to just look cool with no backstory or reason to any of the design choices, each component of the characters in Vegvisir has a reason for being the way they are designed. By designing the story around the mental battles versus bloodied battles that are so often shown in viking pop culture I am hoping to draw an audience that yearns to see a different side of viking storytelling.



This project is targeted toward young adults who may or may not be struggling with mental illness. Mental illness, however, is ageless. It does not care what age you are so if there is an older person who picks up the book and relates to it then so be it! The audience narrowed due to personal experience and research: I learned that in most people, young adulthood is about the time when mental illness becomes way more prevalent in everyday life, whether it's childhood trauma catching up or the anxiety of going out into the world by yourself for the first time. Mental illness is ever present; it may take time to fully realize it is there.

Now that you have learned a little bit about my project and vision for this project let's take a look at the actual visuals! Since coming to PNCA my artistic style has evolved. I came into this school thinking I knew EXACTLY what I wanted to do and how I wanted to work. Of course when I got here I started changing from visual development to editorial to painting and then back to visual development, my main reason for choosing to come to art school. video games, manga, graphic novels, movies, and animations were a huge part of my own self discovery and way of coping with mental illness.

In these worlds that a team of creators made were characters I felt like I could relate to and characters I looked up to, and I still look up to them today.

My process starts off slowly: I gather my inspiration, I sketch and sketch and sketch till something starts to stick within the design. Once I've found that something, in this project's case it was the "viking" theme, I start to roll with it. Viola came first; the sketch that started it all was actually just a small doodle in my sketchbook which kept evolving as time progressed. Then came the idea of turning this into a whole narrative story that I could share with people. My creative process tends to be quite messy and not always coherent so I used that to my advantage for this project and turned my scribbled sketches into characters.

First came Faustus, probably my favorite demon (don't tell the others). Yes, he is as shifty as he looks. He is meant to represent neurotic anxiety which revolves around unconscious fears of losing control of one's self. In old Finnish folklore wolves are hated and feared because they are a symbol for destruction and desolation. The very name for wolf in Finnish is, susi , which translates to "useless thing." Faustus in Latin means Lucky. In Finnish lore wolves are considered bad omens. I wanted to combine those back stories, one being a bad omen (the onset of anxiety) and luck of him actually being a guide. He isn't all that useless, as it turns out, and proves to be more than just a big bad wolf.

Edda, whose looks are based on a raven which in many cultures all over are seen as powerful beings, both good and bad. Specifically to Finnish folklore they are tied to being quite mysterious and magical beings. Her name, however, is a homage to great Norse philosophy texts and her whole character represents moral anxiety. This anxiety is based around one's values and whatever value that seems to be in danger the subconscious seeks to reduce that danger. Edda questions Viola's actions, lifestyle, and her choices in life that brought her to where she is now and really makes her stop and think about what is important to her.

Kare, spelled with a K, is the final demon that was born from the scribbled sketches, his appearance is of an adder, the only poisonous snake found within Finland. This character was a bit tricky for me because I wanted a representation of realistic anxiety, an anxiety that focuses on making someone feel in genuine danger even if they are not. Snakes are thought to have been worshipped in Finland which gave me an idea of how I could incorporate the character well into the story. Kare was born off the notion that NOT all gods, things worshipped, are good. She's portrayed as villainous but his actions end up saving Viola by waking her up from her coma in the end.

Now for Viola, our main heroine of the story, she was born from myself and my own personal experiences as well of those I have had the chance to connect with over the years through our shared struggle with anxiety. Viola is seventeen years old at the beginning of this story and goes through quite a bit of struggle with her relationship with her father. She comes off as hot headed and feisty but strives to be like her mother who was calm and serene: she always knew what to say and how to say it.

All of this is taking place in Saltvik, Aland Islands which is part of present day Finland and lies on the gulf of Sweden. The climate is a humid, continental climate and the region experiences all four seasons. It was the perfect place to settle down, since Viola and her tribe were experienced in shipping and trading and this provided access to multiple routes as well as becoming a main hub for trading from others who traveled through. The landscape is a mix of greenery and grunge seashores with little ridges separating the middle of the land from the water's edge. It is Viola's home, she feels the most at home when she can smell the ocean air, but since the accident, those familiar smells and shades of green are gone, Though her senses feel heightened, there is no sound of the waves crashing in the distance, no smell of ocean, no kiss from the sun. The land she cultivated and roamed with her father and once with her mother has become as foreign as the lands her tribe sailed off to discover. The concept of "home" has become skewed and foreign when it was once as clear as the waters she sailed on many times before.

Through research of my cultural heritage and personal connection with family and my own mental illness, anxiety, these characters were born into the world of Vegvisir.

My first and most important influence is my grandmother Theresa Viola Laurella, my mother's mom. She was an old, Catholic, Italian woman who died January 5th, 2020. She and her husband, my grandfather, had taught me many things and were a big part of my early childhood: from farming to cooking and everything in between. They were just a wonderful pair of people who I will cherish my memories with for a long time. While my grandparents were the main drivers for this project, my immediate family were also very much involved. Viola's strong family bonds come from own and I don't know where I would be without them.

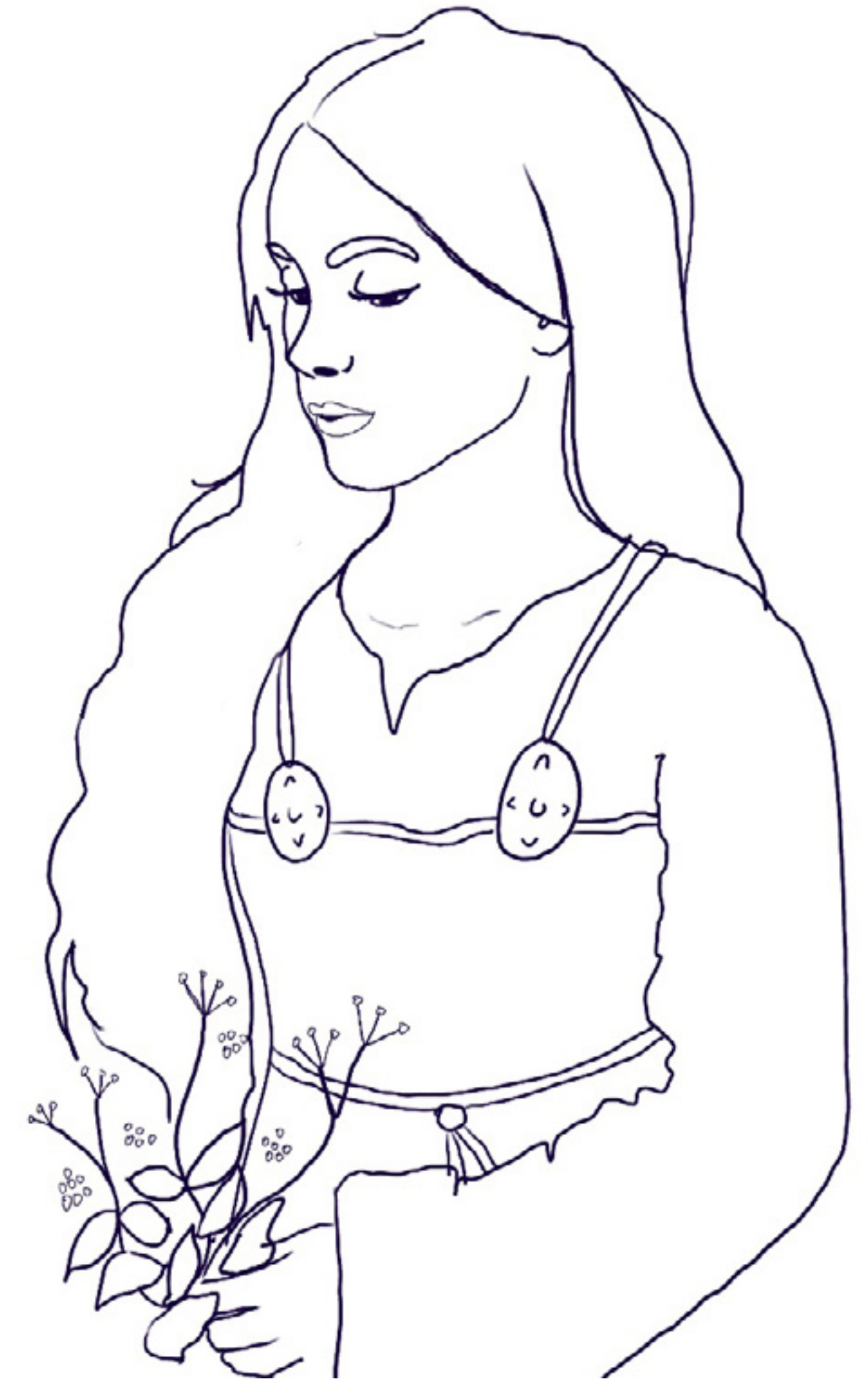
I also drew inspiration from Matt Rhodes, a concept artist for the video game Dragon Age. This has to be my favorite game series out there and the art, and story, for it is just amazing and inspiring to me. He uses a balance of shape and texture that just leaves me in awe. Dragon Age was also one of the main reasons I got into visual development after being gifted one of the game's concept art books shortly before applying at PNCA.

There are various works out in the world that are similar to this project. But one that stands out to me is a video game called: Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice which is a deep dive into mental illness that's "front" is a horror fantasy RPG. The development team behind the game decided to put an emphasis on bringing more awareness to psychosis while with my graphic novel I am trying to bring awareness to anxiety in its main forms.

Two other minor inspirations were:

Star Wars Clone Wars and Jillan Tamaki. Star Wars for it's bold shapes mixed with painterly techniques. Jillan for her limited color palettes and textures throughout her graphic novels.

Last but not least my favorite artist currently: Gabriel Picolo. He is mostly known for his "Teen Titans" graphic novels. So since diving into the world of graphic novels he has been a huge inspiration to me this past year. I love texture and shape and I feel he does both very well so taking my love for those two things and looking at the work he has done it has greatly boosted my motivation. I was very lost for a while when it came to creating my style till I saw one of his books and how he executed the art within them.



Accessibility was key to going with a graphic novel as opposed to other mediums. Now the audience is able to just put this in a bag and go for a walk in the park before sitting down and reading it, or taking it to their favorite coffee or tea shop to read it, share it with others who they think might also enjoy it just by handing it off. A more personal and deeper reason is through my own experience I found reading a book to be way more grounding for me, more relaxing. One study shows that reading stories that explore characters and their lives helps the reader become better at empathizing; seeing from different perspectives. There have also been studies done by the university of Sussex that prove reading can reduce your stress levels up to 68% which can not only benefit someone struggling with mental health issues but also someone who maybe had a hard day at school or work.

Next step of this project is pitching to publishers. Through my time here at PNCA I have met people who were gracious enough to give me a list of emails for potential companies that I could pitch my story to; one of those being Dark Horse Comics. If no publishers are willing to take the story I will do it myself. With the use of self-publishing methods and maybe the help of crowdfunding if needed. I aim to have the first book ready to publish by this time next year. Crowdfunding can be difficult, and admittedly I'm going to have to do much more research on the matter; however until I feel ready and knowledgeable to try crowdfunding I can start making myself known. Creating a fanbase that will be my helping hand when or if crowdfunding is needed. A fanbase that understands, and wants others to understand them. This project will fit into my portfolio by being one big visual development project that could serve to get me more illustration gigs within the graphic novel/comic world or even get my foot into the video game industry doing concept art for rpgs, and mmos.

Anxiety and depression, both are common mental illnesses. However, no two people suffer them the same way. We struggle to find our new normal in our own ways and through this quest to heal we fight, we concede, and we win. I find solace in my art, a catharsis that I'm sure many other artists have found in their lives. What better way to harness myself than to create a world in which my anxiety is personified and told in a manner that children and adults alike can enjoy. Viola, plunging headlong into battle versus the demons she sees within herself.

Making mistakes, but pressing forward, learning, loving, living. Through these books I hope to teach others that fear of the unknown is what cripples us; and though we may think it beneath ourselves to use crutches like friends and family or other help, it is not a weakness, but a strength to do so.

Vegvisir has become very dear to my heart over these past couple of months and I am not at all done with it. I will be continuing to work on it past graduation to get it printed on paper and out there for people to read and share. I hope you enjoyed my presentation of Vegvisir and will continue to follow me on this journey. Thank you for your time.



CREATIVE BRIEF

PROJECT VISION

I will be creating the ground works of a graphic novel that takes place in a historical fantasy setting. Specifically, character sheets of the main characters of the story, splash images such as a cover for the first book of the series as well as some “preview” pages of the novel itself. These, along with bonus writings such as the outline of the story and beat sheets for the first couple pages of book one will serve as the bones of this project as I take it from idea/ideation to the real thing after graduation. This graphic novel’s overall theme will be mental illness and how to overcome it in various and some unconventional ways.

COMPARATIVE MEDIA

There are various works out in the world that are similar to this project. I am trying to create one that is in the forefront of my mind is a video game called: Hellblade which is a deep dive into mental illness that’s “front” is a horror fantasy RPG. The development team behind the game decided to put an emphasis on bringing more awareness to psychosis while with my graphic novel I am trying to bring awareness to anxiety in all its forms.

AUDIENCE

This graphic novel is targeted toward young adults who may feel alone or are struggling with mental illness. As a way to guide them, give them an escape or just be a good book to pick up and read.

MARKETPLACE APPLICATION

This will either be a kickstarter novel I write and illustrate till a publisher picks me up or I will be pitching to multiple publishers. With the underlying theme of mental illness I believe this will be a good contribution to a young adults library.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

I have been transitioning to a full on digital artist so all my sketches and in progress works will be contained within my ipad and google drive. I will be using procreate mainly to create this along with indesign and photoshop for touch ups and type. I will be using some textures I have created traditionally however.

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DOCUMENTATION

SCRIPT PREVIEW

PAGE ONE (five panels)

PANEL ONE

EXT. DAYTIME. On the water a small fleet of period accurate ships are in formation.

PANEL TWO

GORM commands the main vessel and cheerfully barks orders at the rowers.

PANEL THREE

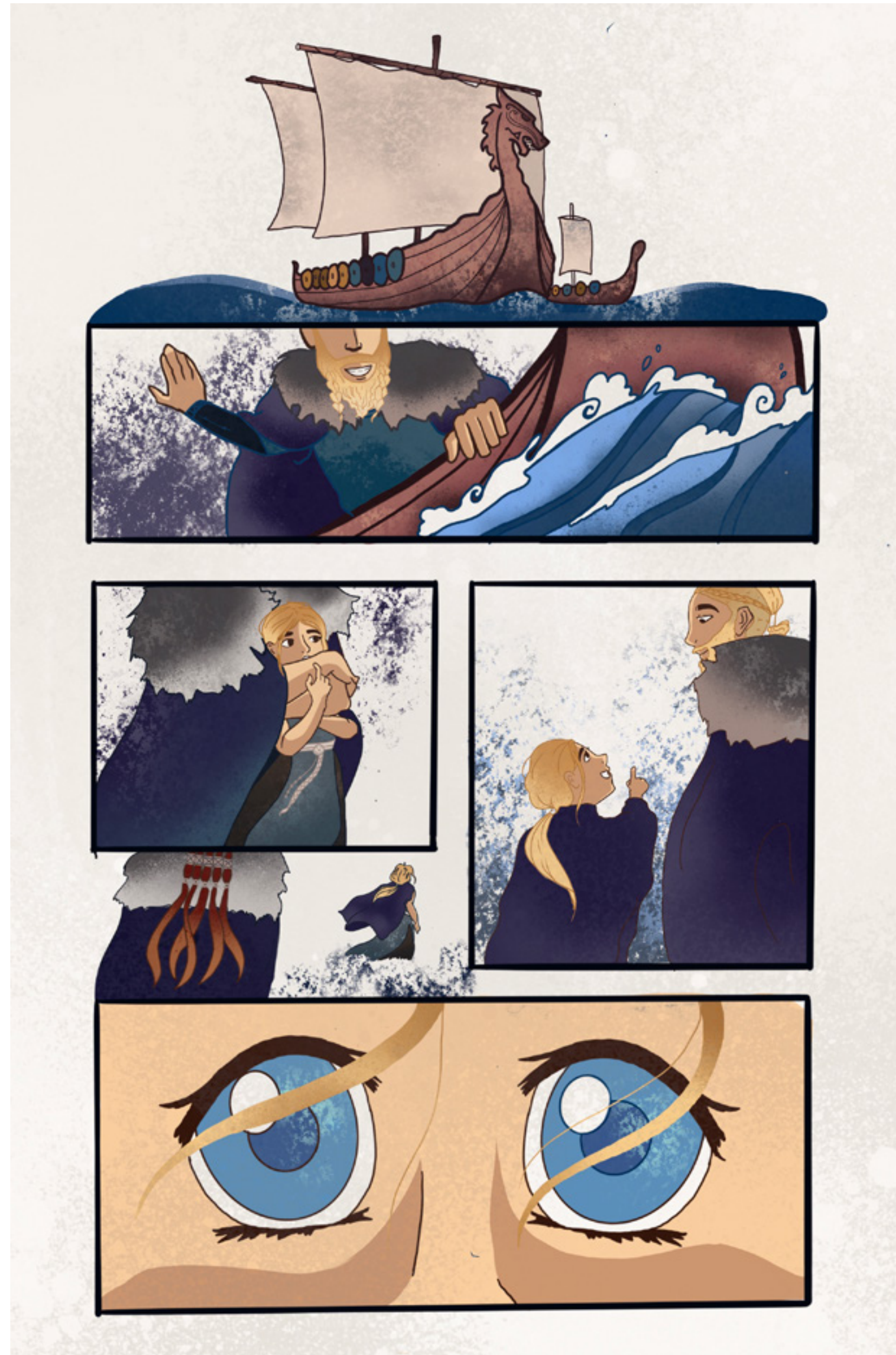
B holds V in her arms protectively as the water splashes past them. The mother points to something in the distance.

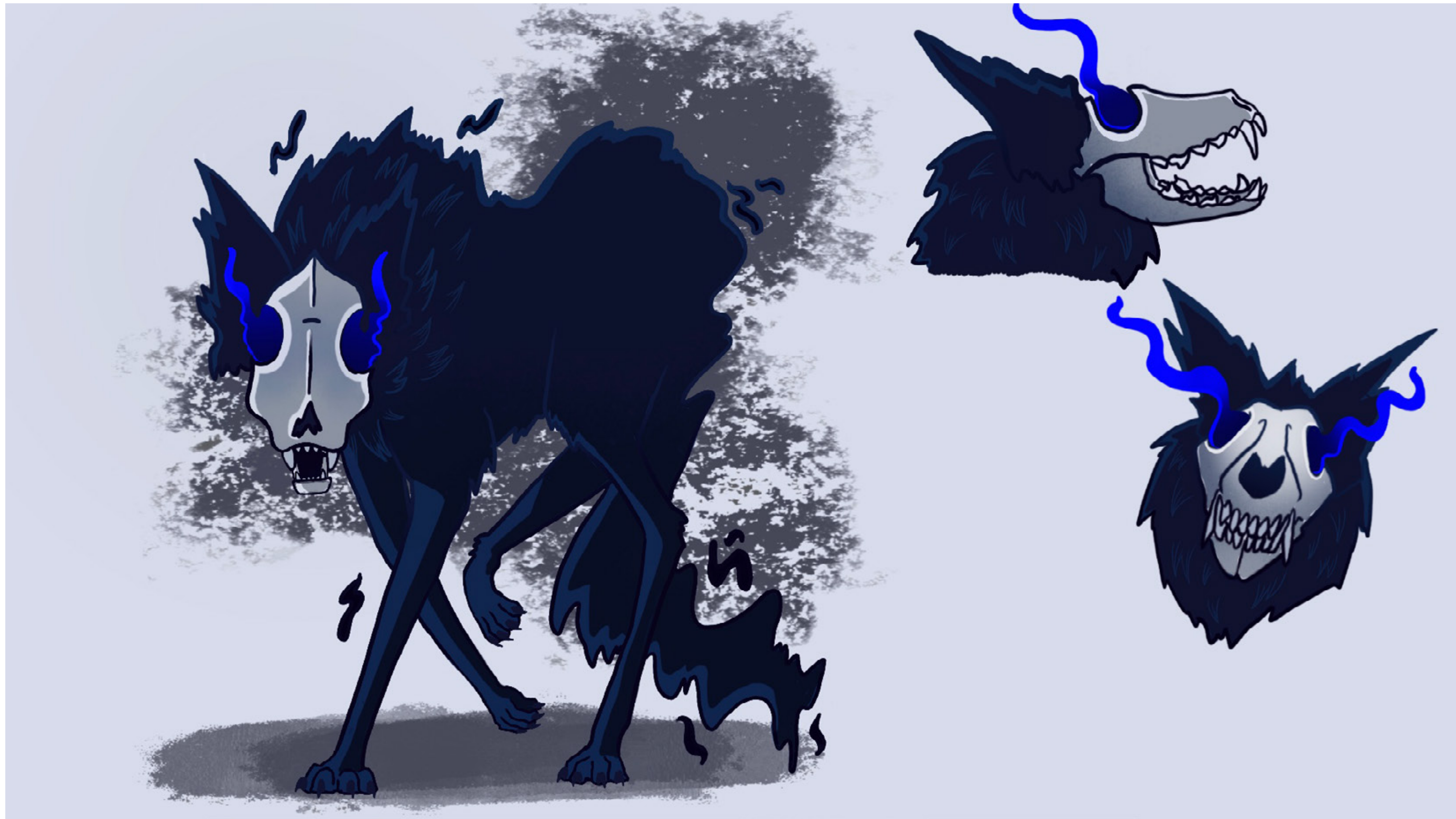
PANEL FOUR

V breaks free her mother and scurries to the front of the ship to join her GORM.

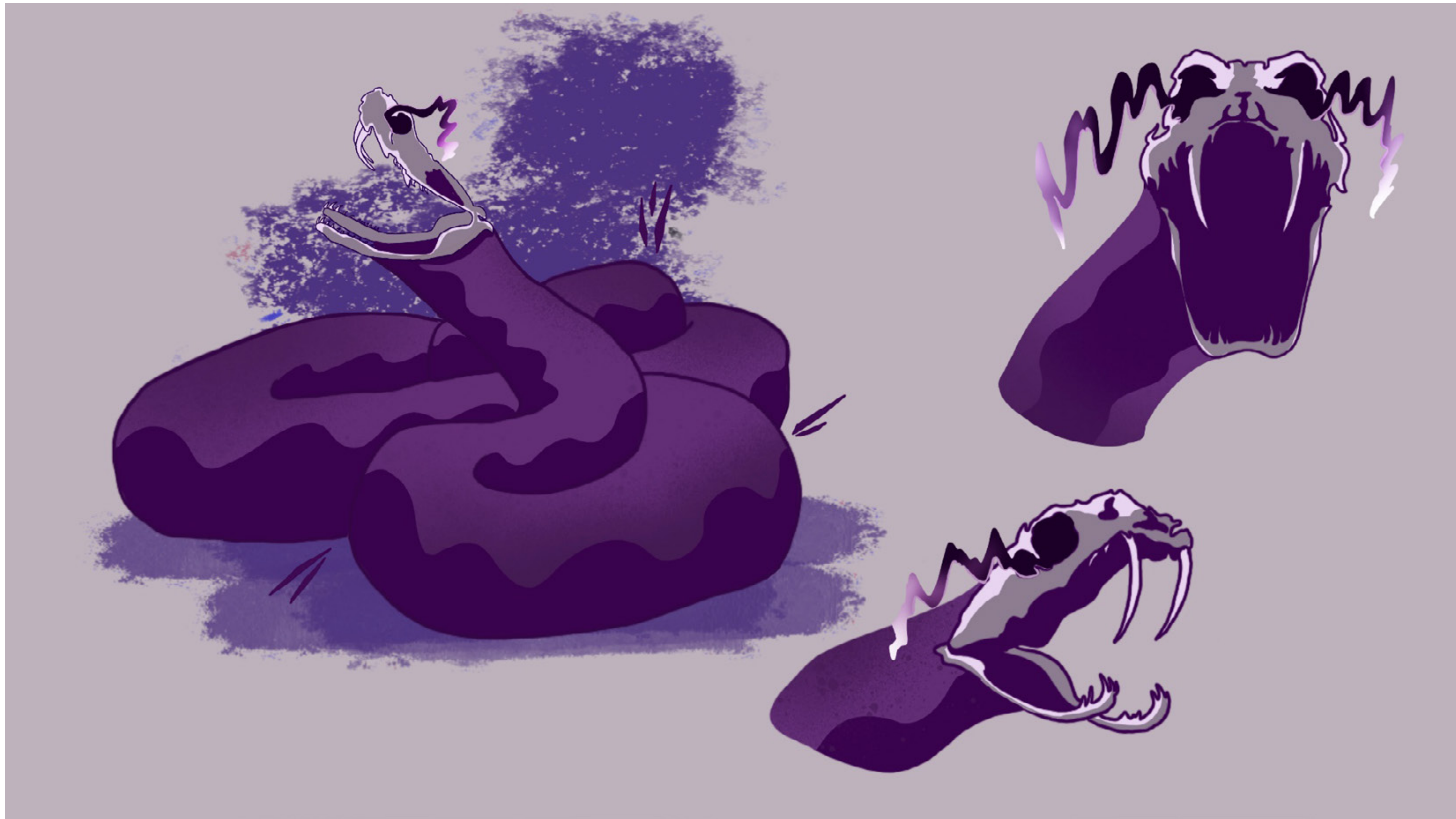
PANEL FIVE

AT her father, GORM'S side she beams with excitement at what they are approaching off panel. He looks down at V with pride. The waves spray water past them.

















OUTLINE

ISSUE ONE: 48 PAGES

Viola is not your typical viking, she would rather daydream than learn the arts of war.

The protagonist is Viola, a viking girl born in a settlement on the Aland Islands, part of present day Finland. She trains everyday with her father on how to protect their home from harm. He hopes that one day she will become a great shield maiden and travel the seas with him. She really isn't into fighting as much as she is into how to care for the farm, tending to the various vegetable gardens and flowers. She admires her father's bravery but doesn't see herself becoming a great warrior. Her mother from what she remembers was a gentle soul and the only one who could "tame" her father's rage. She died raiding with viola's father when she was 8 years old, old enough to remember but still too young to be without a mother. She feels split between a world of violence and rage, and one of peace and tranquility. She has developed her father's rage and feels she will boil over at any minute. But that's not the way she wants to live her life. She has been putting off the arranged marriages her father has set up for a couple of years now and has been praying to the gods for an answer, guidance of some sort. It's almost time for the raids to start up again to expand their trade routes and settlements further. Her part in this is still unknown whether she will marry and stay behind or go along with her father and trade with new lands.

ISSUE TWO 48 PAGES

But when the mark of "vegvisir" appears on the back of her hand, her entire village disappears and the world is plunged into a never ending night.

Viola goes to sleep like she does every other night instead this time when she wakes up it's still dark. Her father is missing, the whole tribe is missing. And on the back of her hand is the mark of Vegvisir. "Life path" she whispers to herself... She searches her cabin top to bottom for her father. She has never felt so scared without him until now. She leaves her cabin to see it's not just inside their cabin but everywhere, everywhere there is darkness. When she leaves the threshold of her home a chill runs down her spine, her heart pounding. None of this can be real, it can't be. Her thoughts are racing she hopes that by pinching herself or closing and opening her eyes repeatedly that this will all be over. She had been sitting on the ground in front of her cabin for what seemed like hours before looking up at the now darkened sky and back down to her now marked hand. She will now have to find her own path in hopes it will bring everything back to normal... or wake her up from this terrible dream.

ISSUE THREE 48 PAGES

Can Viola navigate the demons of the night

Not knowing where to begin she just heads to the outskirts of the village for any signs of where they could have gone. Or who could have taken them, any signs of struggle, a fight.. Anything. When she can't find anything she is forced to abandon hope and gathers up a small satchel with some food, water and anything else she may need for her journey. She doesn't know where or how long this journey will take her but she is on her own now. The air is still and quiet, almost too quiet and it feels as if she is being watched from the treeline. No it feels like she is being watched from everywhere but there is no one to be seen. She wonders farther and farther from her village only to become more frustrated when she finds no sign of anyone or anything. The world seems to become darker than it already was. She wanders around her village for what seems like hours before venturing farther away hoping there will be clues outside of the villages reach. She begins her journey into the forest just on the outskirts of the village. She remembered her father telling her that the forest was sometimes home to spirits; good and bad. She doesn't have the luxury of avoiding it this time.

What seems like hours to pass by she begins to wonder if she has just been wondering in circles, that tree looks the same, has she seen it before? Or are her eyes just playing tricks on her. Panic begins to set in, her mouth becomes dry, she can't even swallow and her heart is racing so fast it doesn't feel like it's beating at all. This begins Viola's first encounter with a spirit, not a spirit but what she thinks is a demon. The demon resembles a large wolf with long legs but it doesn't look like it is of this world. It's body seems to move in and out of existence, as if it were smoke moving in the wind. Some parts of it even fall off and dissipate.

She tries countless times to fight the demon off and get away but just becomes more and more panicked. It is like it is taunting her and her behavior becomes more erratic as she moves through the forest. She starts to forget why she even entered the forest to begin with and tries to refocus on her goal of finding her father, her tribe.. This becomes a sort of mantra that she repeats as she tries to find her way through the forest. She eventually confronts this wolf like demon when she has had enough of this run and go. It takes her a while but she finally realizes the demon wasn't even attacking her and she approaches it like she would any other tame animal; placing her hand on its head and all the panic washes away her goal becomes clear again and the demon reveals a way of communicating and introduces itself as Faustus.

Her second encounter happens along the beach near the edge of the forest with her new shifty friend Faustus. This time the demon reveals itself by communicating with her with the voices in her head. It questions what she is doing, wonders if this eternal darkness is in fact her fault. It takes her some time to identify the demon till she comes across a raven with the same skull-like head sitting upon some driftwood on the beach. Faustus tries to give her a warning but the new demon blocks his voice out of her head and takes over. She begins to cry and falls to her knees on the beach. She cannot smell the ocean air and the world becomes black and white. She tries to get away from faustus and the raven by running farther down the beach trying to find her village once more. It is nowhere to be found now, no buildings, no boats. She turns around to see the raven still sitting on it's piece of driftwood. She was sweating which means she did run away but she got nowhere. She then begins to sink in the sand as she stares at the raven tears in her eyes.. She can't breathe..None of this is right ...but none of this is really wrong; she wipes the tears from her eyes and asks the demon what its name is. It replies with Edda. Edda... she knows this name from somewhere, in the teachings from her mother from long ago. She replies to the raven that her questions have no definite answer. The sands starts to push her out and she begins to move towards the raven with her hand held out. She eventually trudges through the sand and touches the ravens head and the guilt, the heaviness is lifted off her shoulders. She can breathe again and the world has some color..

With her new “friends” at her side she gets back to her mission; find her father, her tribe, her family. By now she is so tired she doesn’t know whether she can trust these things completely yet or if she is even on the right path. She refers to the mark of vegvisir on her hand and nothing has changed about it.. Except, wait, something has changed there is a slight glow to it now but she has seen this somewhere before.. She looks back at the edda and faustus, their eyes have the same glow that is appearing on her hand. She smiles slightly and gains a new-found hope. But there is still one more section not glowing. .there is still one more encount-- and just as she says that she falls to the ground and Faustus and Edda lunge at her to try and catch her.

ISSUE FOUR 30 PAGES.

And win her family back or will she succumb to their dark appetites.

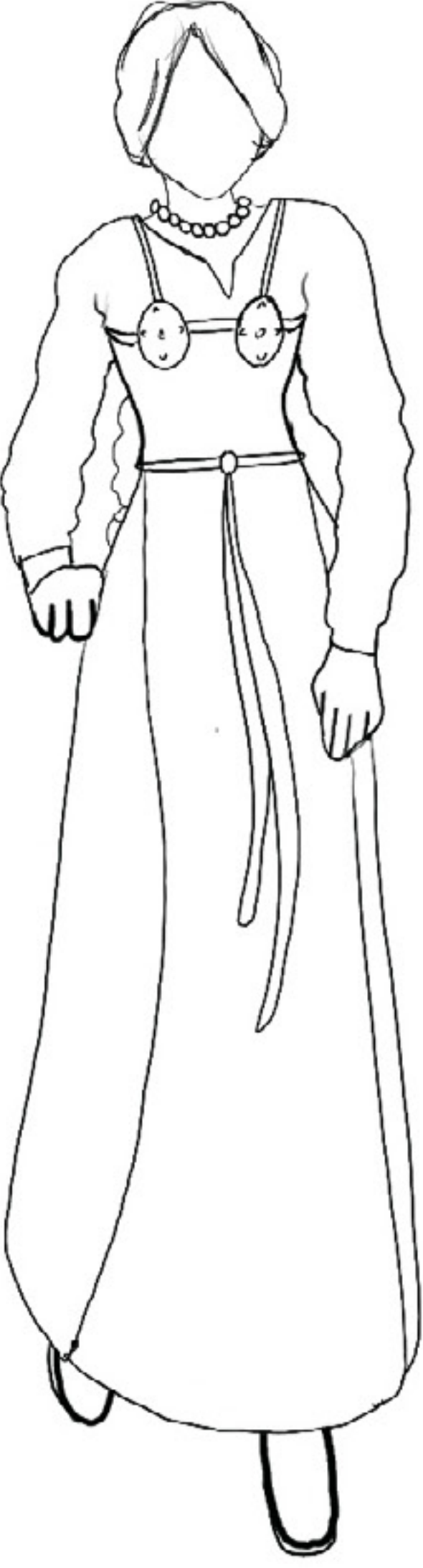
She feels pain shooting up her leg into the rest of her body. She thrashes on the ground her vision becoming blurry when she spots it. An adder, but this isn’t a normal adder... it’s the final encounter but she doesn’t know if she will make it through this one. As she is on the ground she catches a glimpse of something.. Something familiar but it was too quick for her to dwell on. She needs to focus on what is happening right now. Faustus comes to her aid and tries to drag her away from the adder who is about to strike again. When Viola lashes out trying to kick back at the snake. She only seems to hurt herself in the process and can feel her leg start to swell, the world starts to spin.. This isn’t how this is supposed to happen; she screams to the sky.

Faustus brings her to what looks like her favorite spot on the beach near where the village once was. Everything happened so fast, things were looking up and now this happens.. She thought the demons were supposed to be helping her, not killing her. She pets Faustus and thanks him for bringing her here.and see a faint glow on her mark..all the sections are glowing now, at least she thinks they are through her distorted vision. Edda comes and lands next to her staring intently her feathers ruffled slightly from fending the adder off. And in the distance she sees the snake in the grass it’s head lifted slightly just flicking its tongue at her. It becomes clearer and clearer and slower and she becomes mesmerized by the snake before drifting off the last thing she sees is all three of the creatures followed by a rush of memories in vibrant color.. The smell of the ocean, the sunlight, wood burning fire, the dirt of the farm and the smell of the trading market.

She feels the touch of a hand on her cheek.. Like really vividly. She gasps for air and bolts forward falling off her bed. Her bed, in the cabin her father and mother made. She blinks and coughs looking around... There is a fire going, and everything is warm. She struggles to get to her feet and rushes to the door, the sunlight burning her eyes as she leaves the threshold of her home.. She sees people.. PEOPLE. They are all heading to the boats, it’s already that time for them to leave, she runs, or at least thinks she is running but in reality stumbles to the beach yelling for her father. Each time she gets a flash of something in her head.. A memory? A memory! She feels a pain in her side and wetness on her forehead but it doesn’t matter she wants to see her father badly. She makes it to the beach and searches for his boat screaming his name “GORM!” Everything seems to go in slow motion until the commotion clears and she sees him. His expression is gentle and surprised. He makes his way through the bustle of people to get to her and she starts to cry tears of joy making her way to him until they embrace. He had thought the gods had taken her to valhalla.. She remembers what happened, they had gone to meet her suitor on a neighboring island and in a panic she had fallen overboard into the rocky waves practically drowning and had been in a death like state since. She remained in her father’s embrace so thankful it was all just a bad dream. The mark of vegvisir was still tattooed on her hand and back at home were carvings of the spirits that she had encountered laying by her bedside.

JOURNAL

EARLY VIOLA CONCEPT

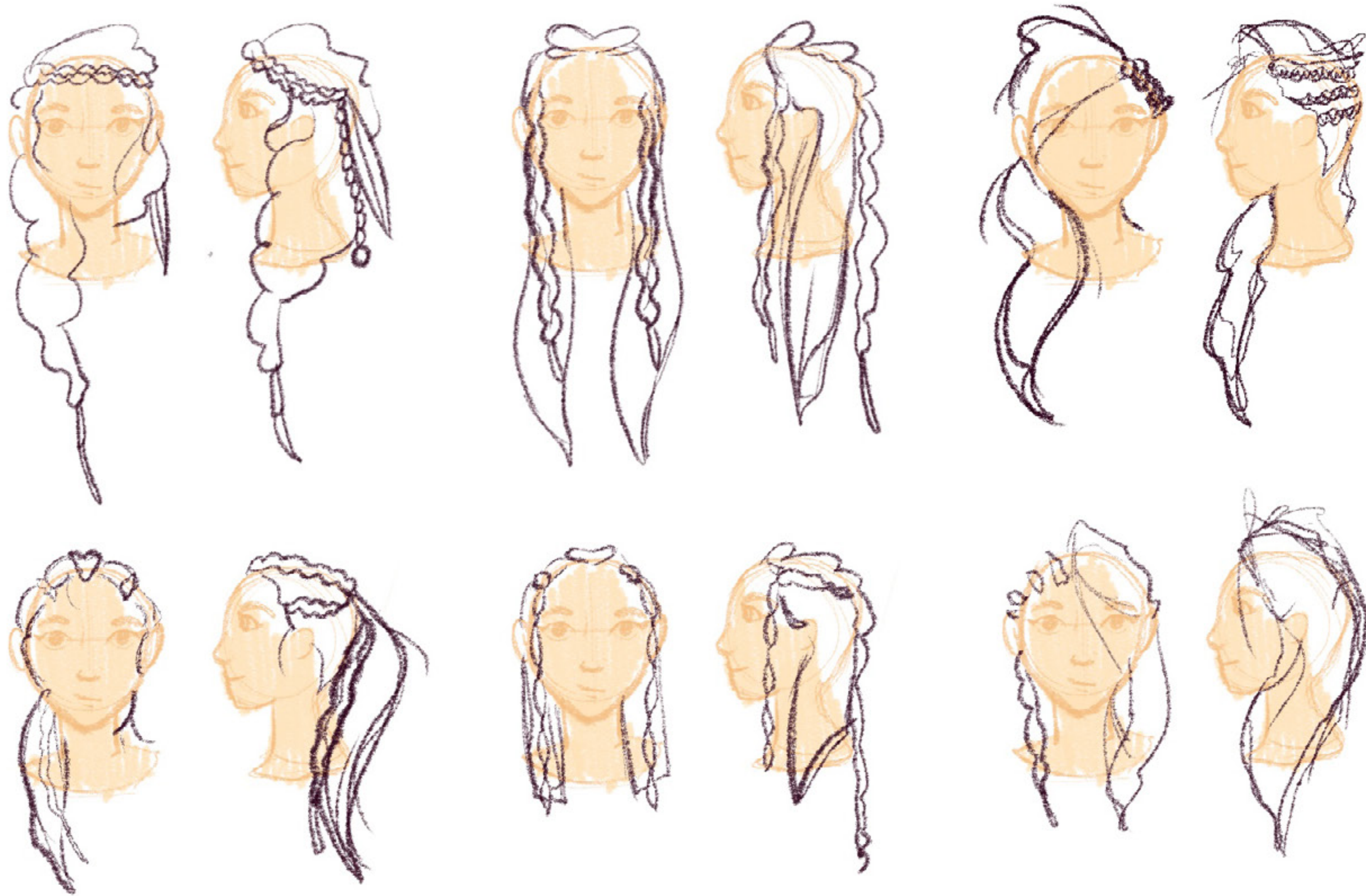


“Viola”

viking who likes picking flowers



EARLY VIOLA HAIR CONCEPT

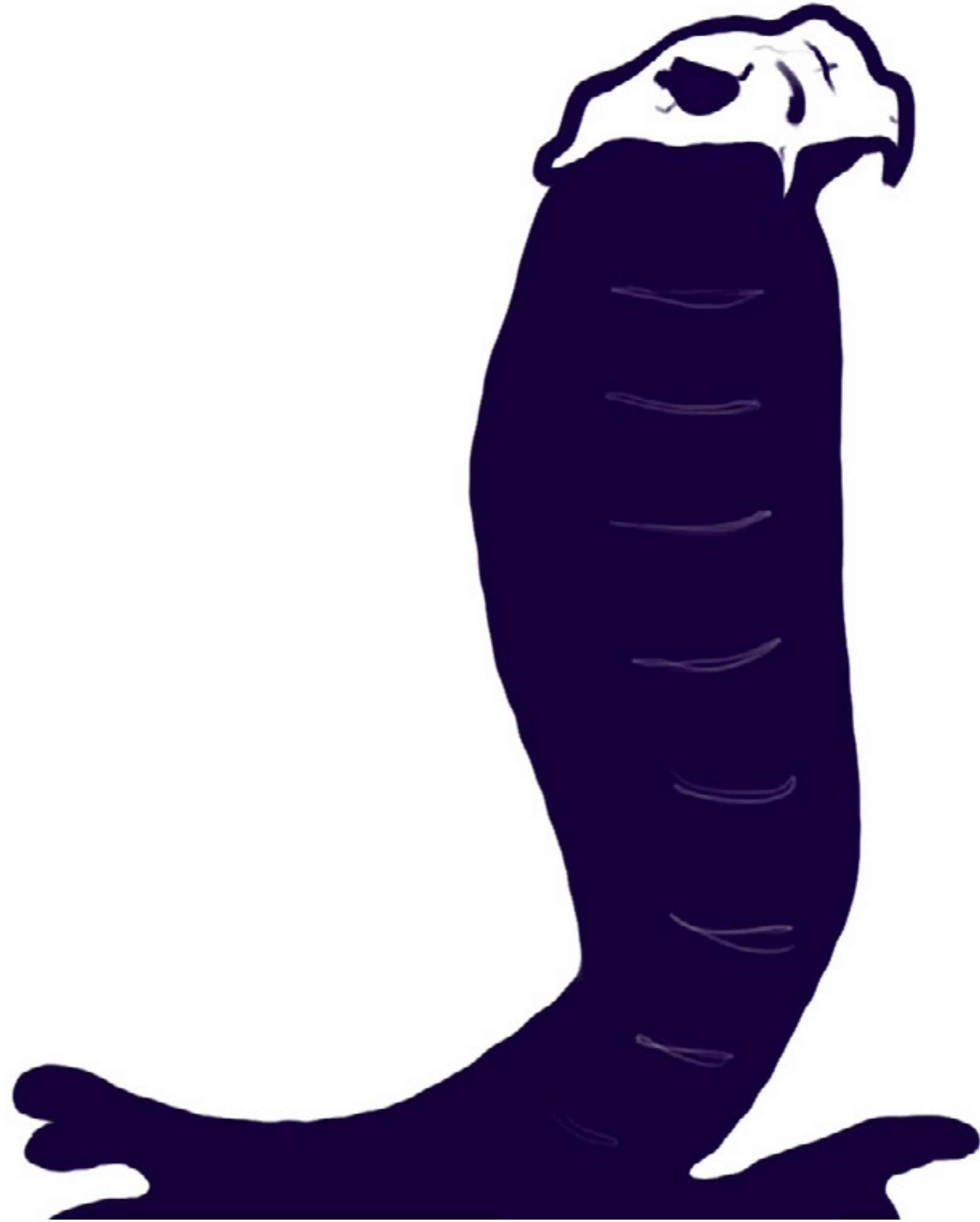


EARLY FAUSTUS DESIGN





EARLY KARE DESIGN




EARLY EDDA DESIGN



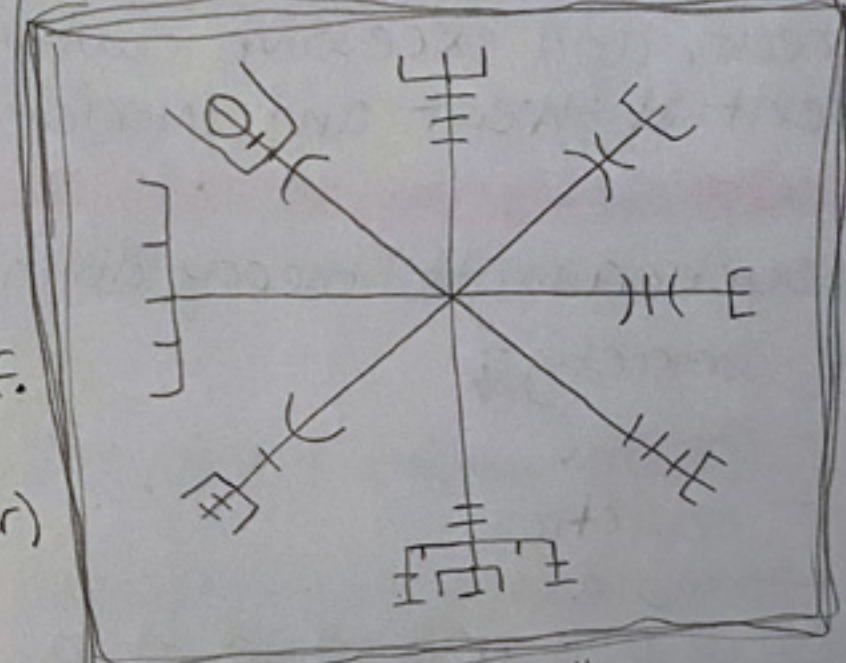
THE BEGINNING OF VEGVISIR

"Heroine"




- "Valknut" = Odins Knot
- "Yggdrasil" = World tree
- * "Vegvisir" = Compass for li
- Vikings believed that the vegvisir provided necessary assistance as well as guidance to those people who lost their life path.

• powerful symbol to honor one's lineage or bestow guidance and protection upon one's self.



• vegur (way) + visir (pointer) deriving it's meaning from the same word as the Eng. wise. it points someone the right way.

"Vegvisir" thesis Name



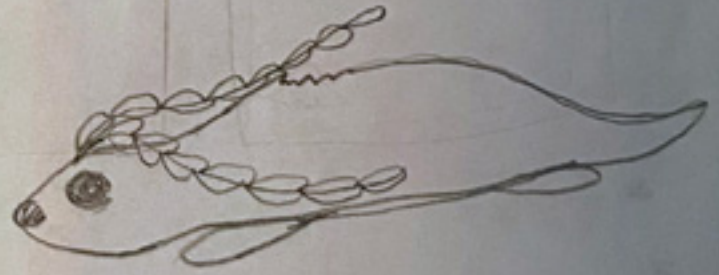

- Amulet?
- pin?
- hair pendant?

Specifics!

- 5-7 illustrations, spot illustrations.
- 11x17, character concepts, 3-5
- 13x19, illustrated scenes, 5-6

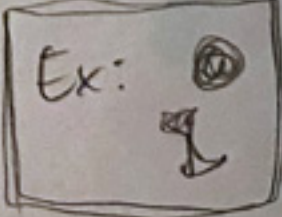
Anxiety: "sense of doom", panic attacks, depression, headaches, irritability, pounding heart, breathing probs, loss of libido, upset tummy, extreme fatigue, ↑ blood pressure, muscle aches & pains.

Embodiments of anxiety; capture the feelings & symptoms with natural elements & shape.

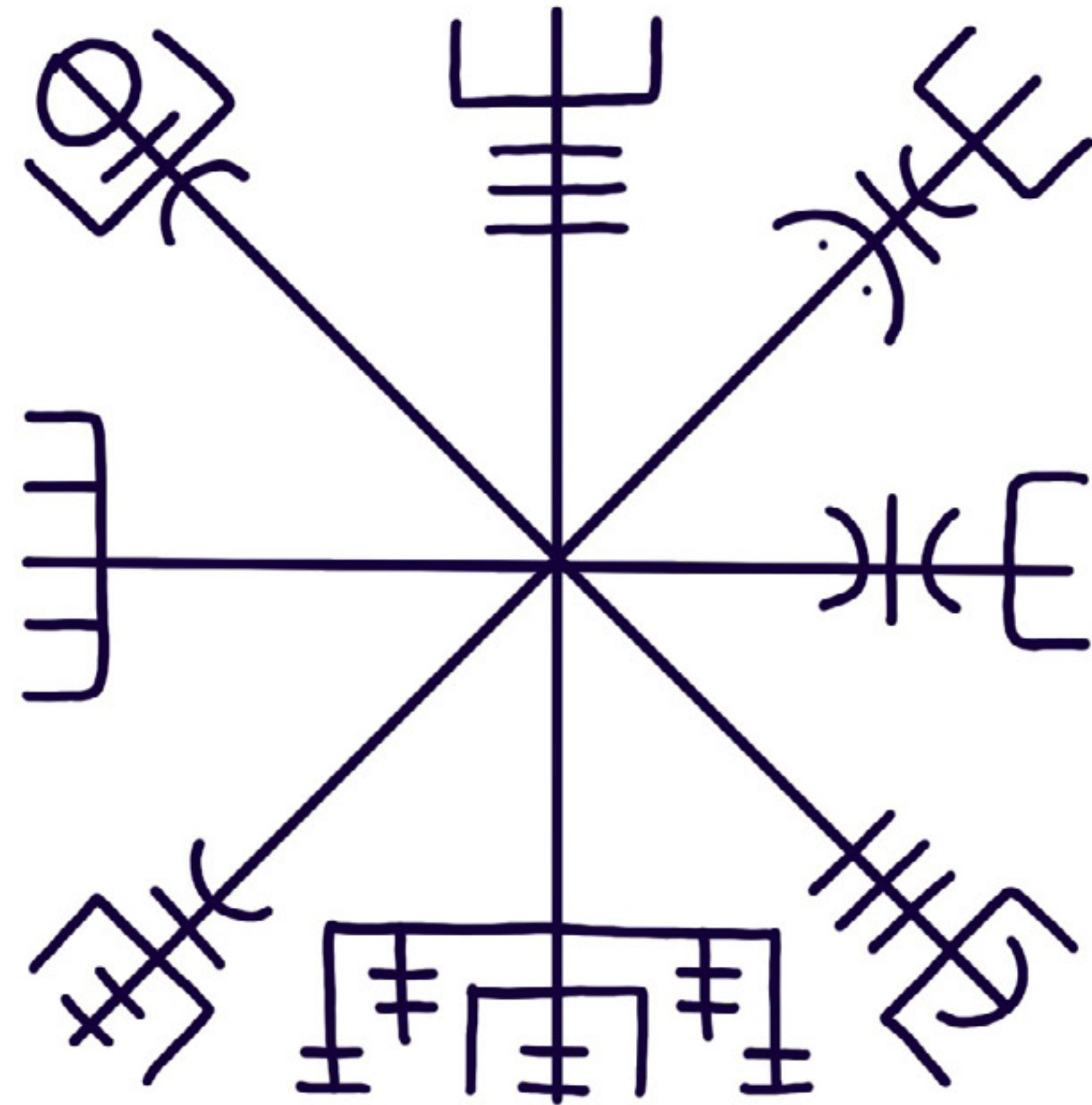


- Bioluminescent details/accents.
- Dark bodies, scribbled facial features(?)

(crows) iris

Ex: 

• "Failure always leads to success"



Alexandra White
Thesis Portfolio
FA 2020