

### **Bio**

**Amber Morales** is an Animator and Illustrator. Inspired by the animated films she watched from a young age, Amber grew a love for character creation and bringing those designs to life. Amber found that her talents shined when animating 2D and 3D characters, which led her to graduating with a BFA in Animation. While working within 2D animation, she developed her skills in storyboarding, scriptwriting, stop-motion, and digital frame by frame animation. She also works on all aspects of the 3D animation process, including modeling, texturing, and rigging. Amber intends to implement her skills at an animation studio in hopes of inspiring others the same way she was over 10 years ago.

### **Statement**

I've always known that I wanted to create my own characters and bring them to life. Inspired by the animated films from my childhood, I picked up the drawing pencil and started honing my craft. As I entered high school, I learned about the world of digital art and although the initial switch was jarring, I knew that it was the field I wanted to work in.

Working in 2D animation, I've been told it is a dying industry since 3D has become the focus of animated films. Despite this shift, I believe that 3D and 2D animation can coexist and can even work together. I'm determined to stick with my passion in 2D and prove that it still has a place in this quickly evolving world.

After Highschool, my art moved from a traditional space to a digital one. My works are focused on placing realistic and relatable characters in fantastical settings. As a Hispanic artist and member of the LGBTQ+ community, I know how important diversity is in our media. I strive to create stories with representation so that everyone can enjoy the field of animation.

After I graduate I plan to work in the 2D animation pipeline as either a character designer, storyboard artist, or 2D animator. I also plan to move to New York for better opportunities in animation. My goal is to create my own animated shorts where I can make my story ideas come to life.

### **Project Summary**

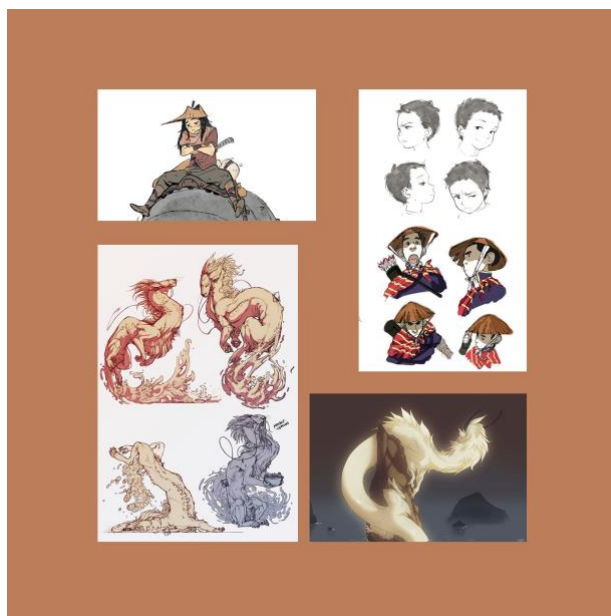
At the tallest peak of a mountain in Ancient China hatches a curious baby dragon. Unbeknownst to his parent, he travels down to a human village in the valley below. He is elated to see creatures he has never seen before but quickly finds himself in a precarious situation. After being trapped in a cage, a young boy takes pity on him and sets him free. Meanwhile, the dragon's parent is on a rampage looking for its baby. The young boy calms the large dragon by returning the baby and receives a pearl for his kindness.

## Environment Moodboard



Creating my project, I was really inspired by traditional Chinese paintings. The stylized clouds, rich colors, and vanishing mountain peaks helped establish the environment I saw my characters in.

## Character Style Moodboard

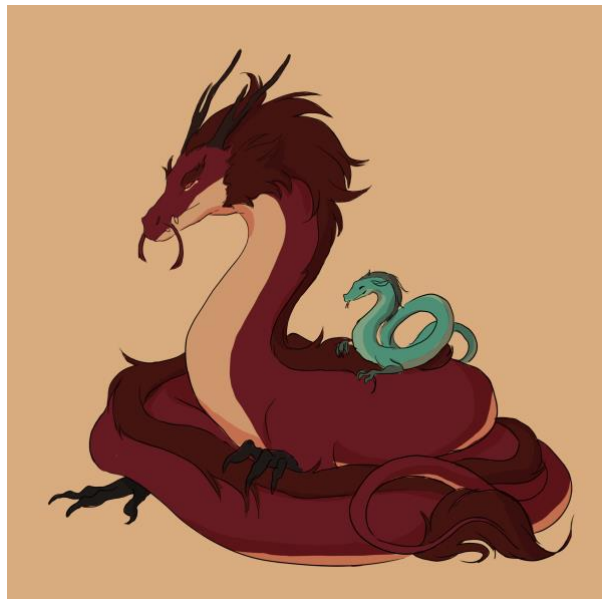


For the characters, I wanted them to be in a semi realistic style that wasn't too bubbly and cartoonish.

### Environment concept art



### Dragons concept art



The larger dragon's design was changed to red in order to stand out more as well as create an intimidating presence.

## Little boy concept art



The boy's hair was changed to a ponytail for easier animating. In the final version he has boots and longer sleeves which was also to ease the animating process.

## Script & script sequence

2.

### EXT. MOUNTAINS

#### FADE IN:

The sun rises over a Chinese village and surrounding mountains

The faraway view of the village is blocked as an ADULT DRAGON flies by to reveal the title

Slow zoom to the peaceful village.

### EXT. VILLAGE

The village is humble with leaking houses and minimal crops.

The villagers are hard at work, exchanging various items at their small market.

A BABY DRAGON has stumbled upon this village looking lost but curious.

He peers out of some bushes at the edge of the village.

A VILLAGER hands over a few coins in exchange for some spices.

While watching this transaction the BABY DRAGON is snatched by the tail from behind.

A BEARDED VILLAGER, male, 40's, examines the strange creature he just found.

The shine of the BABY DRAGON's luminescent scales makes the villager's eyebrows rise.

The BEARDED VILLAGER makes his way to his own market stall and tosses the baby dragon in a small empty bamboo cage.

### EXT. TOP OF MOUNTAINS

The ADULT DRAGON lands at the top of mountain and discovers that its egg has hatched with no baby in sight.

Switch to the black and white perspective of the dragon. A scent trail in the color of the BABY DRAGON leads down the mountain towards the village.

### EXT. VILLAGE

The BABY DRAGON is biting at its wooden jail bars about to give up when a shadow looms over him.

A YOUNG BOY, around 7y/o, messy and energetic, opens the cage while the BEARDED VILLAGER is preoccupied and frees the BABY DRAGON.

The BABY DRAGON hides in his robes and they run off screen.

### EXT. FOREST EDGE

The ADULT DRAGON emerges from the forest, approaching the village.

It notices the scent trail leads to the cage and lets out a frightening roar.

The VILLAGERS are alarmed and raise their weapons

Before it attacks the YOUNG BOY jumps in front of the ADULT DRAGON and offers back the BABY DRAGON.

The ADULT DRAGON nuzzles its baby and the BABY DRAGON winds up the top of its parent's head and chirps.

The YOUNG BOY bows in apology.

The ADULT DRAGON lowers its heads to the boy and opens its jaws to reveal a bright pearl.

The YOUNG BOY is amazed and accepts the offered pearl.

The ADULT DRAGON turns and flies off into the sky towards the mountains with its baby.

The YOUNG BOY waves goodbye as the pair disappear into the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAINS

FADE IN:

The sun rises over a Chinese village and surrounding mountains

The faraway view of the village is blocked as an ADULT DRAGON flies by.

Title revealed and disappears.

Slow zoom to the peaceful village.

EXT. VILLAGE

Pan of the village, villager walks by carrying a bucket.

From the bush in the foreground a baby dragon pops up

Shot of the baby dragon looking back and forth very curious.

A VILLAGER hands over a few coins in exchange for some spices.

The baby dragon is snatched by the tail

A man holds the baby dragon

Close up on the scales glimmering

Man's eye brows rise and he walks off screen with baby dragon in tow

Shot of the baby dragon thrown in a bamboo cage. Door Closes behind him

EXT. TOP OF MOUNTAINS

The ADULT DRAGON lands at the top of mountain

Shot revealing a broken egg in an empty nest

Close up of nostrils inhaling

Black and white shot of the egg. A white mist surrounds the egg and trails to the left.

Shot of the scent trailing down the mountain pointing to the village.

2.

EXT. VILLAGE

The BABY DRAGON is biting at its wooden jail bars about to give up when a shadow looms over him.

Side view of a boy opening the cage while the man is busy

They run off screen.

Dragon is carried by boy

EXT. FOREST EDGE

The ADULT DRAGON emerges from the forest, eyes glowing, approaching the village.

Shot of the scent trail leading to the cage

Zoom on empty cage

Close up dragon roars.

Side view villagers shocked

Hand grabs a sword

Low shot from behind the villagers facing off against the dragon

The boy rushes through the crowd

Pulls baby out of his robes and holds it up to the dragon

Close up where dragon nuzzles baby

Baby jumps onto dragons head and chirps

Young boy bows

Dragon opens its jaws and a pearl falls into the boys palm.

Young boy looks amazed at the pearl and a rush of wind moves his hair

Shot of the dragon flying upwards

Shot from behind the boy waving as the dragons disappear.

I have written scripts before but never a sequence, so this was very useful for me as an animator.

## Storyboarding

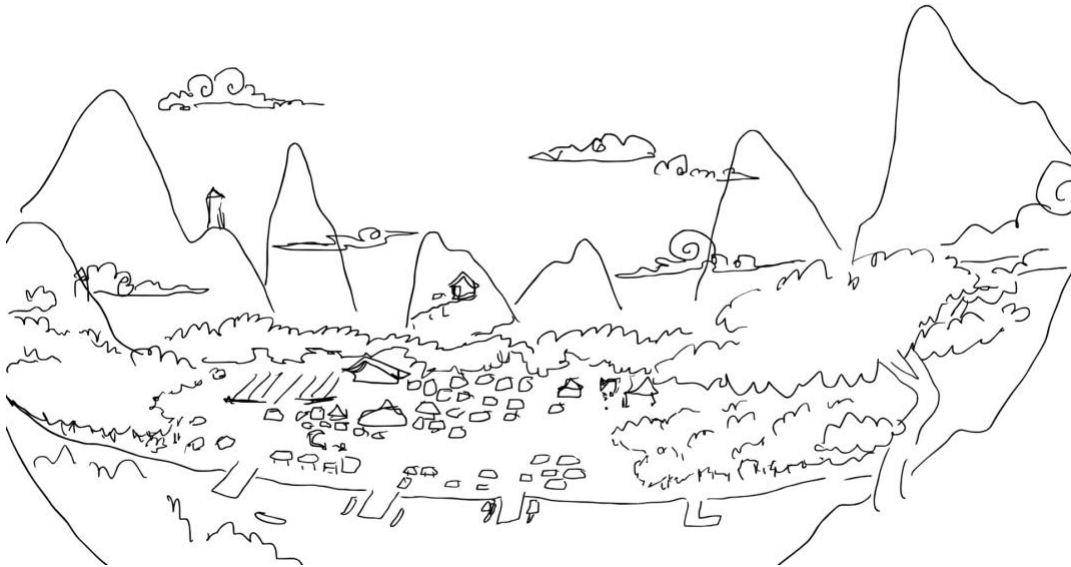
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The storyboarding processes was one of my favorite parts because the visuals for the scenes popped into my head very quickly after creating the script. When I draw illustrations the sketching phase is my favorite part so naturally I felt the most in my zone during this.

### Rough Animation



Next, I took the storyboards into Toonboom Harmony to work on the roughs. Sketching in Harmony was much clunkier than Photoshop because I had limited brushes. I still enjoyed the process and seeing the motion of my drawings in the intimal stages.

### Lineart & Color



The cleanup and line art were the most tedious part of the whole process but making sure everything was as neat as possible was crucial for easy coloring.



## Backgrounds



During the inks and coloring process, I also was working on the backgrounds in Photoshop. In the case that I ran out of time I didn't want to be left with no backgrounds so I prioritized vital shots and worked from there.

## Putting everything together



When putting everything together I switched to After effects. This way I could adjust my backgrounds more efficiently, add masks, lighting effects, and crucial shadows. I used new compositions for each shot and exported them.



Lastly, I imported the shots into Final Cut where I compiled everything together with the sound effects and music.

### Final Animated Short



I learned a lot during the process of making *A Dragon's Pearl*. I grew more comfortable with illustrating backgrounds, organization, timing, and sound design. No film process is without its own share of hiccups but the skills I had developed over my 4 years at the University of Tampa helped smooth these things out. I will look back on this fondly as a testament to my growth as an artist and I look forward to the stories I will create in the future.