

Jazmine Monks

The Wisp of Willow

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The Wisp of Willow

With a 10-page comic, I will tell the story of a newly urban-dwelling 16-year-old girl named Willow discovering Wiccan culture during a time of homesickness and self-discovery. Through the use of stylized two-color illustrations and lyrical prose that is intimate and unique, I will create a narrative of how this new discovery reconnects Willow to nature, ritual and her homesteading childhood.

Creating this comic is very important to me because I grew up on a farm. So naturally working with and on the land is an important aspect in my life. I myself stumbled upon Wiccan culture and witchcraft a few years back and at the time I was in a bit of an identity crisis. But once I found out about Wicca and Witchcraft I felt it was a good combination of the morals that I was raised on and what I believe in currently in my life. As well as, I want to shed light on Witches and Wiccans and debunk the stereotypes people have against them. Wicca follows the nature belief system of paganism and uses witchcraft to practice said beliefs.¹ Wicca is also considered a type of shamanism religion due to its practices and rituals.² All Wiccans are Witches because they practice witchcraft, but not all Witches are Wiccan. Witches practice witchcraft and can be of any religious background. But Wiccans practice witchcraft to pursue their nature based religion. With this narrative I hope to communicate the themes of discovery, reconnection, and self love. I have always firmly believed in learning new things and to keep growing as a person. And one way to grow as a person that is at the core of my belief system is learning how to love yourself. I feel that once you discover your current and past self is when you can learn to accept yourself more. Through the use of Willows conflicting emotions over her new home and past one, I will depict the dichotomy between her past and present self. And how Wiccan culture helps her merge the two together to learn to accept herself.

I want to work within picture books or graphic novels outside of school, so with this piece it will give me more practice after I graduate. The comic will have a whimsical and personal mood, as if Willow was creating the comic herself resulting in a creative representation of Willow's book of shadows, (a diary/log for someone who practices witchcraft). Willow grew up in the rural areas outside of Portland, and her family moved into the heart of Portland, Oregon after her mother's job promotion. Willow is shy and on the quiet side. She enjoys reading and caring for her various pets. Due to her upbringing she also enjoys gardening but because of the new move she is forced to not participate in her hobbies as much. But when she stumbles into a neighbors coven ritual, she becomes intrigued to learn more. After some research into what she just witnessed she decides to perform one herself, through the tools made of nature and gestural movements Willow feels a little bit more at home in this new environment.

For the production of my comic I will use Procreate for the illustrations and layout. In its final form of production it will be a 6x9 inch soft cover book with a saddle stitch binding. My comic will be black and white with a tonal color that I feel best matches the aesthetic and mood of a book such as green or purple. But the front and back covers will be full color. And the comic

¹ Nice, Harmony. "Wica: A Modern Guide to Witchcraft and Magick" Seal Press, New York City. (2019)

² Cunningham, Scott. "Wica: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner" Llewellyn Publications, Woodbury. (1989)

will be in a young adult to middle reader age range. Typically in my digital process I will start out with thumbs or rough sketches, and then I collect a lot of reference photos and do some conceptual work of character designs or props. For my process when making this comic, I will start out with a beat sheet for the narrative and story, and divide it up into 10 pages. With this beat sheet I will then thumb out the project, panel by panel as well as work on a script for the dialog at this time. After multiple revisions I will pencil out the comic, then move to inking and then final color. While in the pencil stage I will be creating an InDesign file in order to print the comic out. For presenting the comic in my oral defense I will have several copies of the comic printed out. I would also hang each page on the wall.

As a little girl I remember watching the Disney Channel movie HalloweenTown every year in October.³ The movie has actually filmed in the town I live near, and so every October I've got to see the town put out decorations to eliminate it as it looked in the movie. That's when I first became fascinated with witches, witchcraft, and the supernatural. Over time as I moved into my teenage years it became even more intriguing to me. As well as I was heavily influenced by comics as a young kid. I most specifically remember reading Frank Miller's Batman: The Dark Knight Returns.⁴ As well as Marvel's Journey into Mystery: The Mighty Thor.⁵ I enjoyed the contrast of line to color in the comics, as well as my brain naturally flowed with the medium of the narrative. As well as they originally belong to my father and it was something that we were able to connect with. Some current artists that inspire me and my work are Sarah Andersen, more specifically her "Fangs" comic that came out recently.⁶ Her comics are very clean and have a nice sense of humor to them that I enjoy. The other artist that currently inspires me a lot is Gawki, their work is very textural and has a very organic feel to it.⁷ Gawki includes a lot of animals and mythical creatures in their work, which I include heavily in mine as well.

My work consists of digital pieces yet with a traditional, organic feel. I use textures and limited color palettes, with heavy line work to create my pieces. It is whimsical, narrative and can range from darker themes to cute animals. I am able to create pieces quickly and yet still be able to still have an attention to detail. I feel that with my "artistic voice/style" I can bring something unique and fresh when it comes to making a comic. I have a natural since when it comes to storytelling. As well as I enjoy making works about nature and animals.

With this 10-page comic, I will share the story of a 16-year-old urban-dwelling girl named Willow. I will explore the themes of homesickness, identity, and reconnection through the use of Wiccan Culture Willow discovers. I will draw on my influences, research, personal work, and personal experiences to create a story for middle age to young adult readers. It will be made up of two color illustration work and an intimate and unique lyrical pose. In this story our heroin stumbles upon a coven performing a ritual, so she decides to research what she just saw. Eventually Willow decides to try performing one herself, and through the use of nature tools during the ritual she feels a little more at home in the unfamiliar town she recently moved to. Finding out that it doesn't really matter where you are that makes a home, it is the things that you surround yourself with that creates your sense of home.

³ Halloween Town. Directed by Duwayne Dunham. Burbank: Disney Channel, (1998)

⁴ Miller, Frank. "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns" DC Comics, Manhattan. (1986)

⁵ Kirby, Jack. and Lee, Stan. "Journey Into Mystery: The Mighty Thor (issue #83)" Marvel Comics, New York City. (1962)

⁶ Andersen, Sarah. "Fangs" Andrews McMeel Publishing, Kansas City. (2020)

⁷ Gawki. "Overgrowth: Digital Works by Gawki" <https://www.gawki.net/about>. (2019)

Bibliography:

Andersen, Sarah. "Fangs" Andrews McMeel Publishing, Kansas City. (2020)

A collection of one page comics depicting the relationship between a vampire and a werewolf.

Cunningham, Scott. "Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner" Llewellyn Publications,

Woodbury. (1989)

A book describing Wicca and its holidays, belief system, rituals, etc. It also provides some beginner spells, recipes, rituals, and chants. It is geared towards a solitary beginner practitioner, so it doesn't touch on covens and their rituals.

Diaz, Juliet. "Witchery: Embrace the Witch Within" Hay House Inc., Carlsbad. (2019)

A compilation of several different spells, rituals, herbs, recipes, chants, etc. that can be used within one's practice of witchcraft. In the beginning of the book the author discusses her personal experience with witchcraft and her own history with it and how it affects her today.

Gawki. "Overgrowth: Digital Works by Gawki" <https://www.gawki.net/about>. (2019)

A collection of the artist's Gawki's work over the past few years.

Halloween Town. Directed by Duwayne Dunhamr. Burbank: Disney Channel, (1998)

A film created by Disney, depicting the story of three siblings discovering their grandmother is a witch and lives in a town called HalloweenTown. Said town is made up of various different monsters, and creatures associated with Halloween.

Kirby, Jack. and Lee, Stan. "Journey Into Mystery: The Mighty Thor (issue #83)" Marvel Comics, New York City. (1962)

Comic about the superhero Thor in the marvel franchise. This was one of the first few times said character was presented within the franchise.

Miller, Frank. "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns" DC Comics, Manhattan. (1986)

Comic about the superhero Batman in the DC franchise.

Murphy-Hiscock, Arint. "The Green Witch: Your Complete Guide to the Natural Magic of

Herbs, Flowers, Essential Oils, and More " Adams Media, Avon. (2017)

A collection of information that is helpful for beginner green witches. Connotations information on herbs, crystals, etc and their properties within witchcraft. Discusses how to go about a green witch craft path.

Nice, Harmony. "Wicca: A Modern Guide to Witchcraft and Magick" Seal Press, New York City.

(2019)

A book describing the basics of Wicca centered towards beginners, as well as its geared towards a modern witch. It also describes the different types of witches and witchcraft that can be performed, as well as this specific author touches on social media and its effect on witch culture. It also provides examples for beginning rituals, spells, recipes, etc.

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The Wisp of Willow

Midterm Review - Creative Brief

03/09/2021

Project Vision:

The Wisp of Willow is a pitch for a 180-page graphic novel. The Wisp of Willow, tells the story of a newly urban-dwelling 16-year-old girl named Willow discovering Witch culture during a time of homesickness and self-discovery. After the recent mysterious passing of Willow's grandmother, her family is forced to move from rural Oregon to big city life in Oregon. But one day Willow stumbles upon a coven performing a ritual, thus causing her life to turn into chaos. Although eventually, this new discovery will reconnect Willow to nature, ritual, and her ancestors.

Audience:

_____This narrative is set in a contemporary time frame and is intended for a young adult age range. In particular, teens dealing with mental health issues and grief from a family member passing away. I myself have dealt with mental health issues that developed as a teenager and I wanted to create something I know I would have liked to have then. But I feel anyone dealing with these issues can find some kind of connection within this narrative.

Methods & Materials:

_____I first started with writing and creating the story. I spent several weeks writing and revising it. Once the writing was solid and clear I moved into thumbs, pencils, etc. I have been working fully digital for this project, I have been using procreate on a tablet for all the artwork. Each day I am working on this project I make sure to write down exactly what I did so I don't lose track of anything.

Comparative Media:

_____An example on the market that I feel is similar to my project is “Speak - The Graphic Novel”, Written by Laurie Halse Anderson and Illustrated by Emily Carroll. This graphic novel tells the story of a teenage girl trying to fit in during high school while dealing with mental health issues and trauma caused by sexual assault. Both Speak and my project discuss the topic of a teenage girl trying to fit in during high school with mental health issues and trauma. But my project also contains several different dichotomies within it such as; rural vs urban, fitting in vs being yourself, liberal views vs conservative views, etc.

Another example is the story of “Sabrina the Teenage Witch”, which tells the story of a teenage witch learning to deal with everyday life. Once again it deals with the concept of fitting in but plays with the stereotypical version of a witch and not the witch culture I am focused on for Willow. Sabrina doesn't deal with issues of mental health, but Willow does.

Marketplace Application:

_____After I graduate I ideally will go into publishing, so I plan on using this pitch as a starting point. I will most likely send this pitch off to different press and publishing companies that are having openings, in order to get this published or get another project. But if that does not happen I may self-publish it someday. And I will also be putting it in my portfolio, which is on my website.