



## **Tales from the Emerald Isle: A Riso-Printed Zine Collection**

by Rachel Howard

Mentored by John Dougherty

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*about* · layout · illustration · covers · printing · reception · conclusion



# About | Office of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research funds Undergraduate research projects at the University of West Florida.

Proposals include an abstract, budget, and the approval of a faculty mentor.

My goal was to have a collection with four different stories, and printing 40 copies for each zine. This would create a total of 160 zines to distribute.

These zines measured at 5.5” x 8.5”.

One of the requirements of receiving the grant was participating in a research symposium where I would present my work.



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# About | Zines & Risographs

Zines are self-published works that are usually printed to be distributed to the local community.

Interest in illustration and publication design, I believed a zine would be the best way to combine those two areas of interest. This was also a great opportunity to gain experience with the risograph.

A risograph is a type of printer that is similar to screen printing, but allows for efficient printing and photocopying. It is ideal for zines.

Low cost for each print run and ink is environmentally friendly.





# About | Irish Fairy Tales

I wanted to use this as an opportunity to not only explore my heritage, but share a bit of Irish culture with the local community.

Fairy and folk tales are a more accurate representation of modern day Ireland as compared to mythology.

Feedback mentioned being respectful and avoiding stereotypes.

Although many of these fairy tales are very old, they were not published until early 19th century. This meant these tales were changed or altered to fit the beliefs of their Christian publishers.





# About | Irish Fairy Tales

The four tales chosen were *Lady of Gollerus* by Thomas Croften Croker, *Demon Cat* by Lady Wilde, *The Bunworth Banshee* by Thomas Croften Croker and *The Enchanted Cave* by Edmund Leamy.

These were picked due to their similarities to western fairy tales or importance in Irish culture.

Researched each story to ensure it was a good fit.



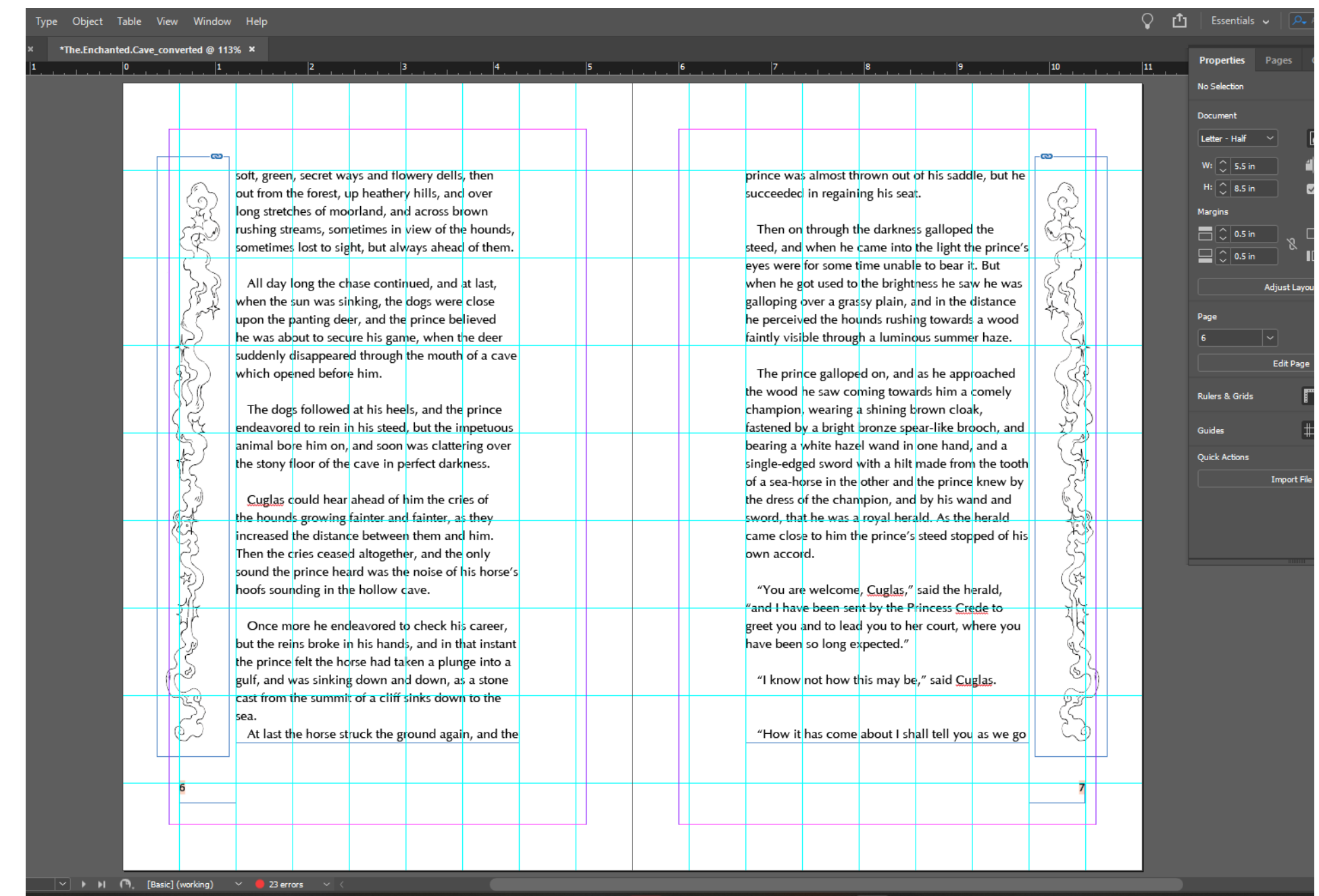
# Layout | Interior

Used a 9 x 9 grid to create page harmony.

The typeface for the body text was Optima. It has a nice weight to it when on the printed page, and I think the stroke contrast would work nicely with my illustrations.

The total number of pages in each zine had to be divisible by four.

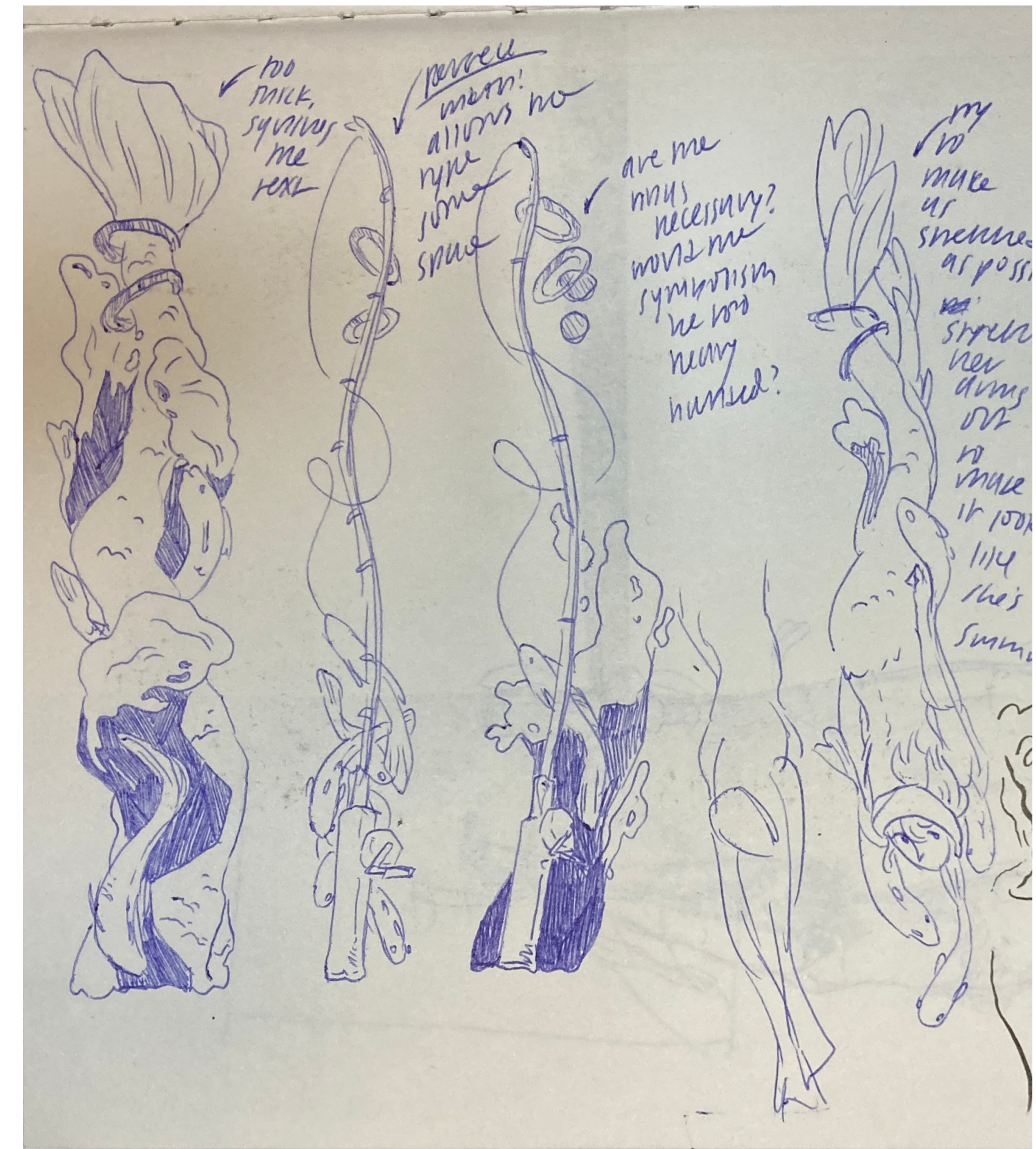
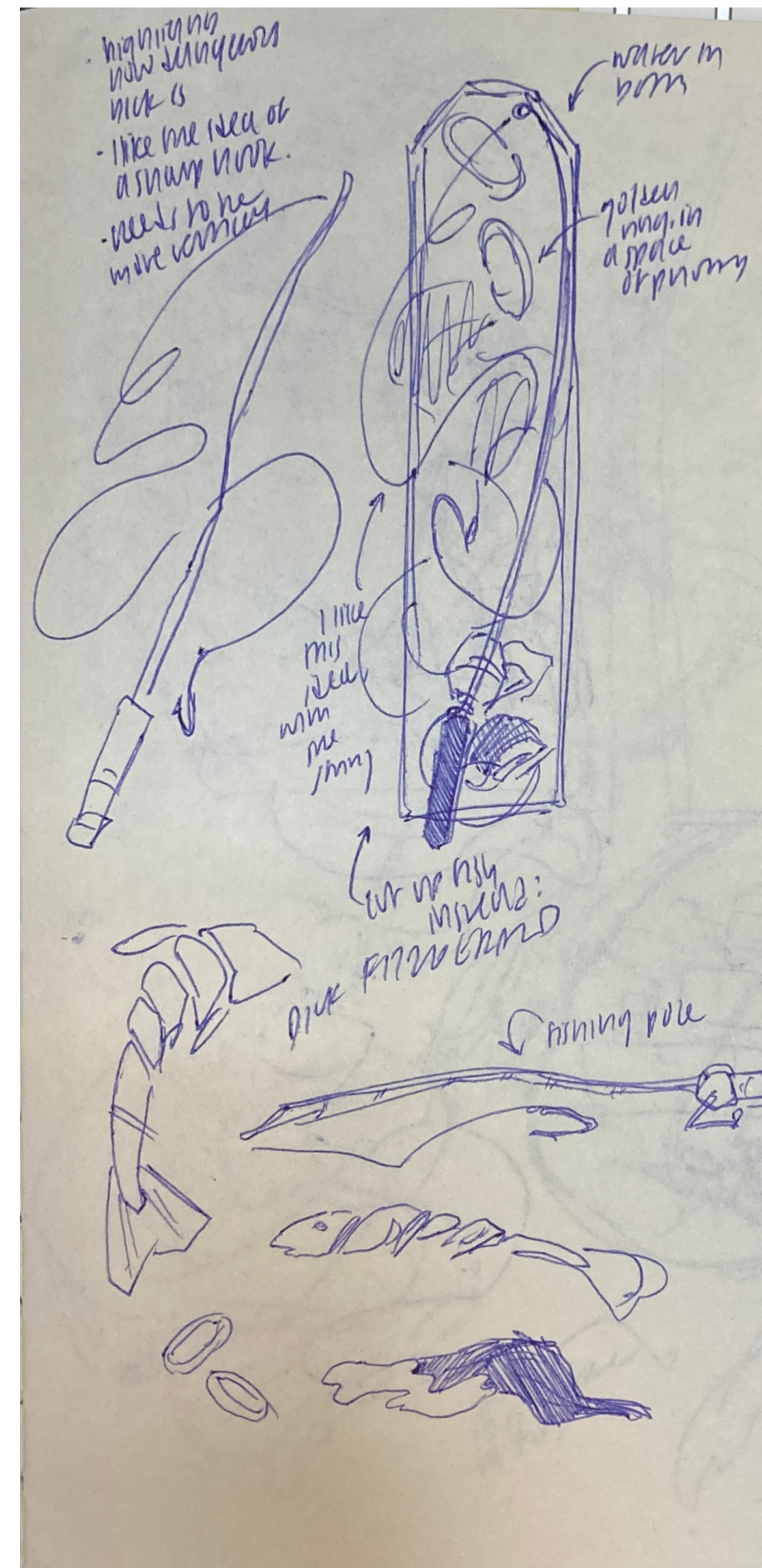
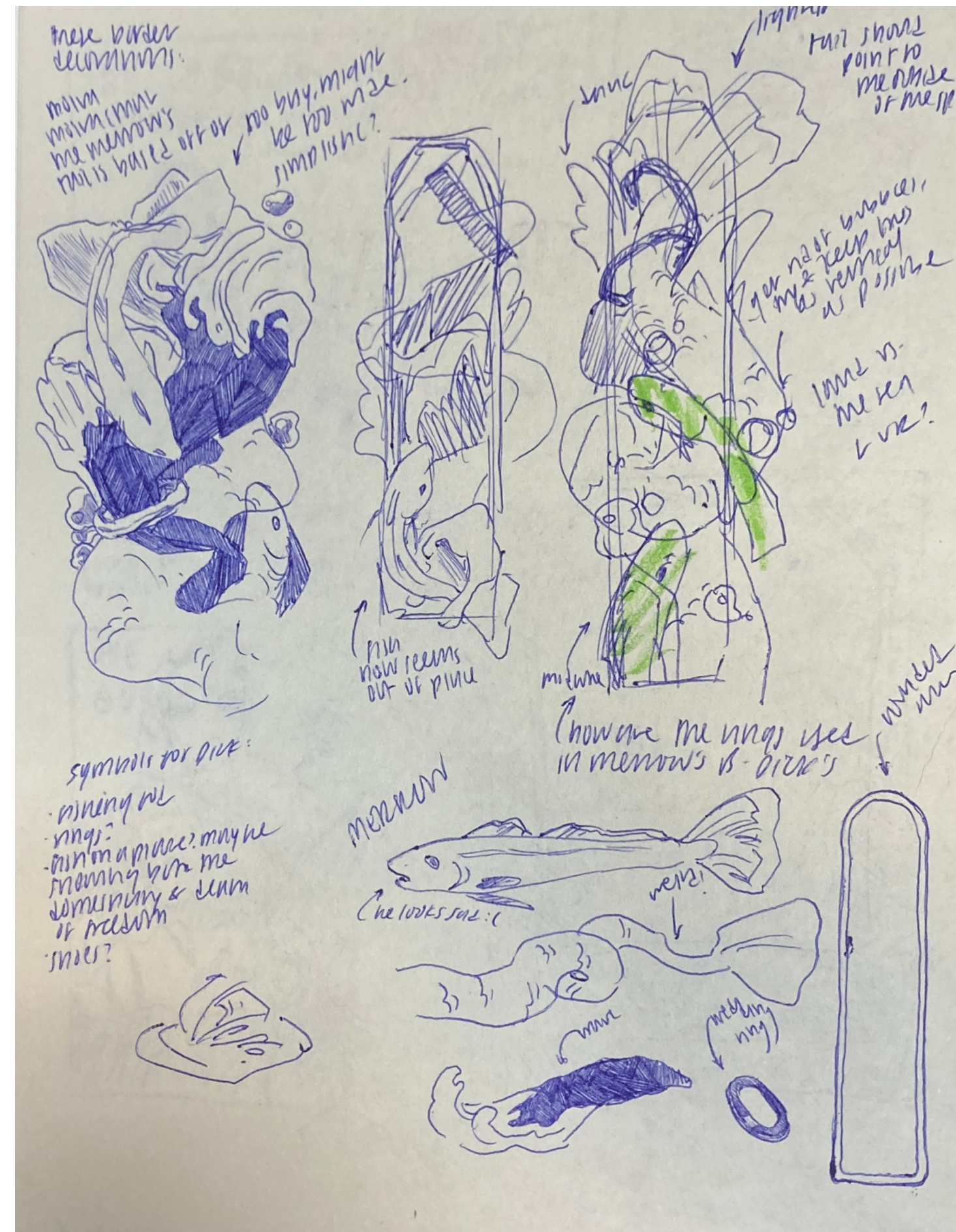
Wanted to include a graphic element that captured the feeling of fantasy. I decided to use decorative borders that featured characters or important elements from the story.



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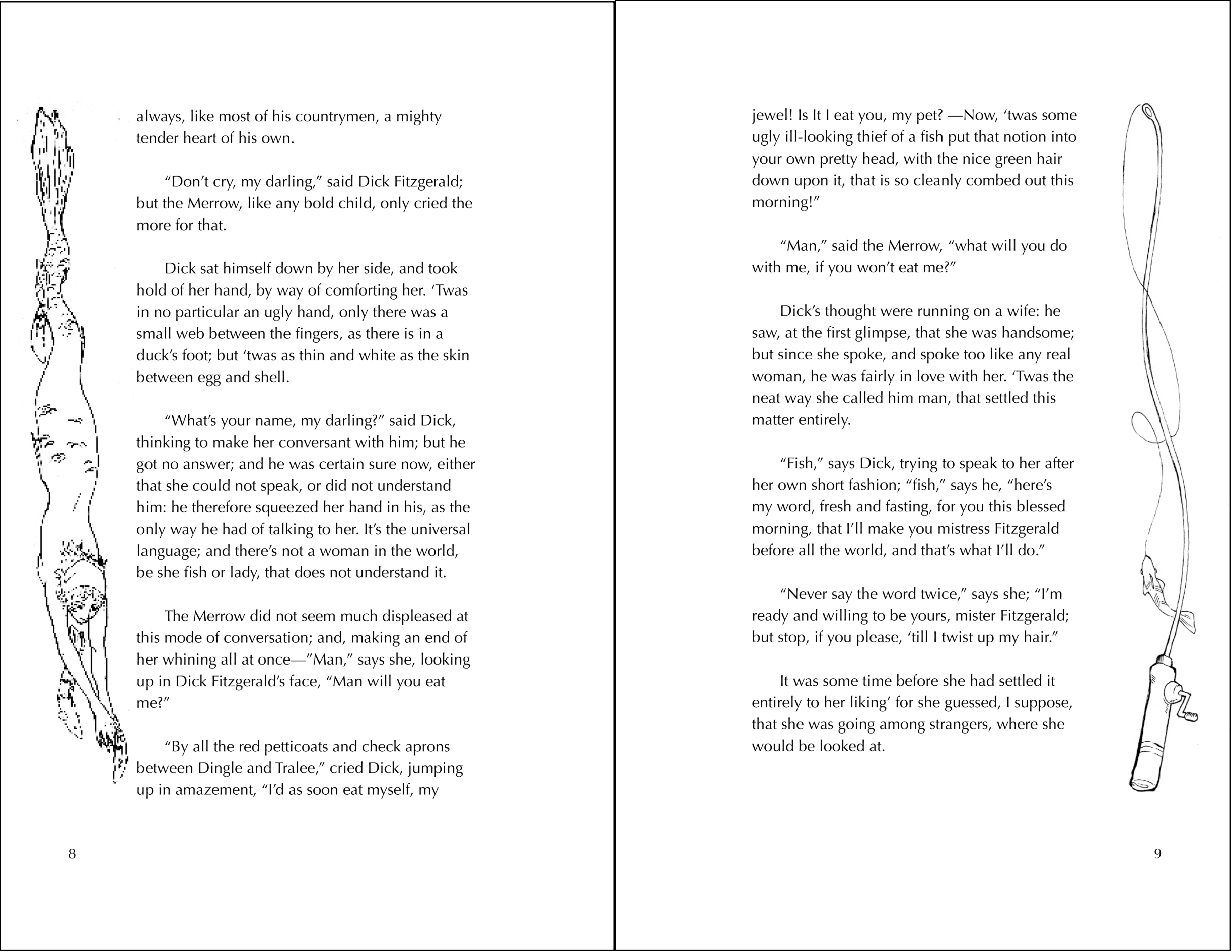
# Layout | Decorative Border



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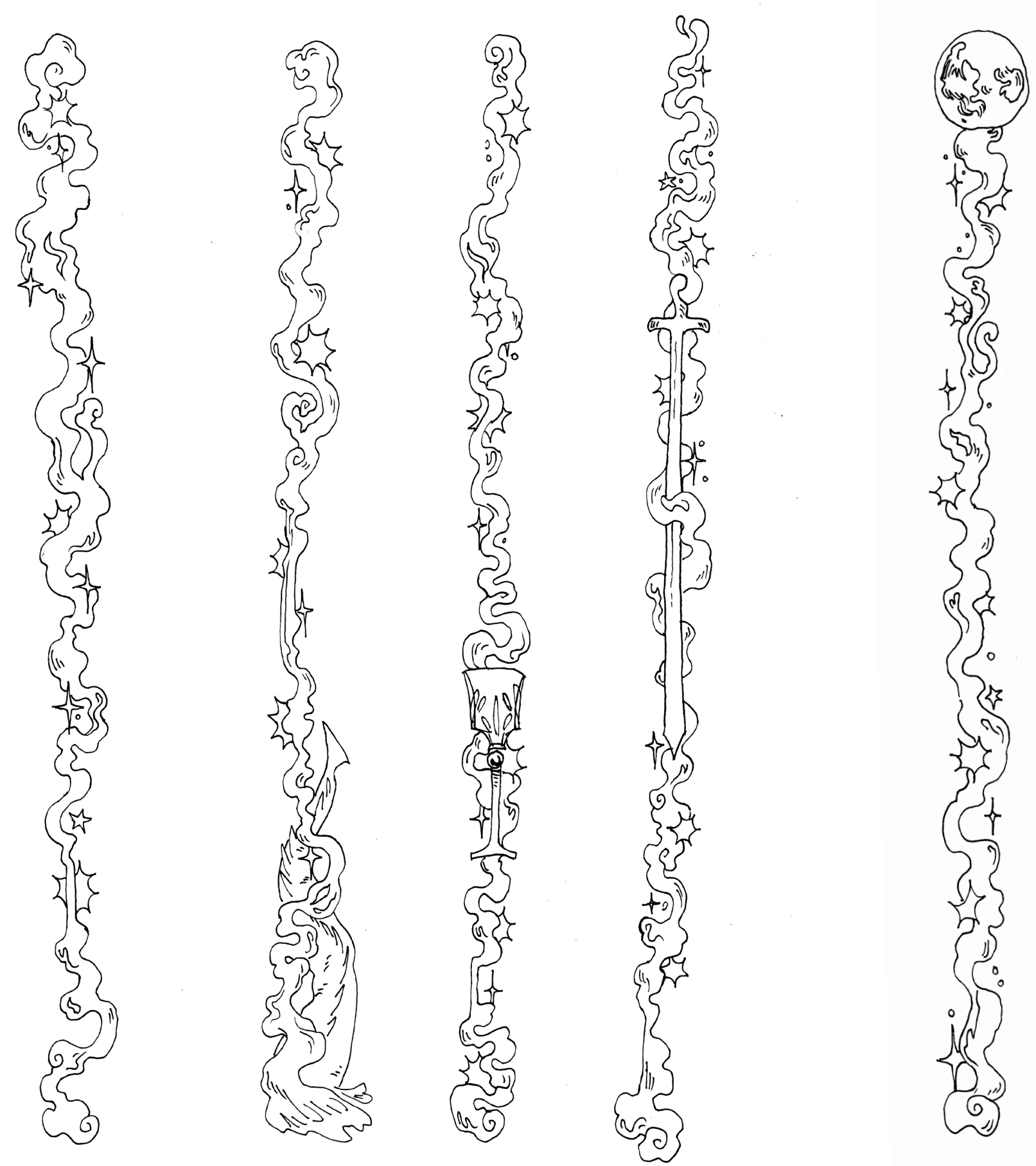



# Layout | Decorative Border





# Layout | Decorative Border





awake on his couch thinking of her, a shadow was suddenly cast on the floor.


The prince looked towards the window, and what should he see sitting on the sill outside but a little woman tapping the pane with a golden bodkin.

The prince jumped from his couch and opened the window, and the little woman floated on the moonbeams into the room and sat down on the floor.


“You are thinking of the Princess Ailinn,” said the little woman.

“I never think of anyone else,” said the prince.

“I know that,” said the little woman, “and it’s because of your love for each other, and because her mother was a friend to me in the days gone by, that I have come here to try and help you; but there is not much time for talking, the night advances. At the bank below a boat awaits you. Step into it and it will lead you to the mainland, and when you reach it you will find before you a path that will take you to the green fields of Erin and the plains of Tara. I know you will have to face danger. I know not what kind of danger; but whatever it may be do not draw your sword before you tread upon the mainland, for if you do you shall never reach it, and the boat will come back



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sped back towards the floating island, while forth from the island came a fleet of fairy boats to meet it, led by the shallop of the fairy queen.

The queen greeted the prince as if she knew not of his attempted flight, and to the music of the harps the fleet returned to the palace.

The next day passed and the night came, and again the prince was lying on the couch, thinking of the Princess Ailinn, and again he saw the shadow on the floor and heard the tapping against the window. And when he opened it the little woman slid into the room.

“You failed last night,” she said, “but I come to give you another chance. To-morrow the queen must set out on a visit to her fairy kinsmen, who dwell in the green hill near the plain of Tara; she cannot take you with her, for if your feet once touched the green grass that grows in the fruitful fields of Erin, she could never bring you back again. And so, when you find she has left the palace, go at once into the banquet hall and look behind the throne, and you will see a small door let down into the ground. Pull this up and descend the steps which you will see. Where they lead to I cannot tell. What dangers may be before you I do not know; but this I know, if you accept anything, no matter what it is, from anyone you may meet on your way, you shall not set foot on the soil of Erin.”



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# Illustration | Style

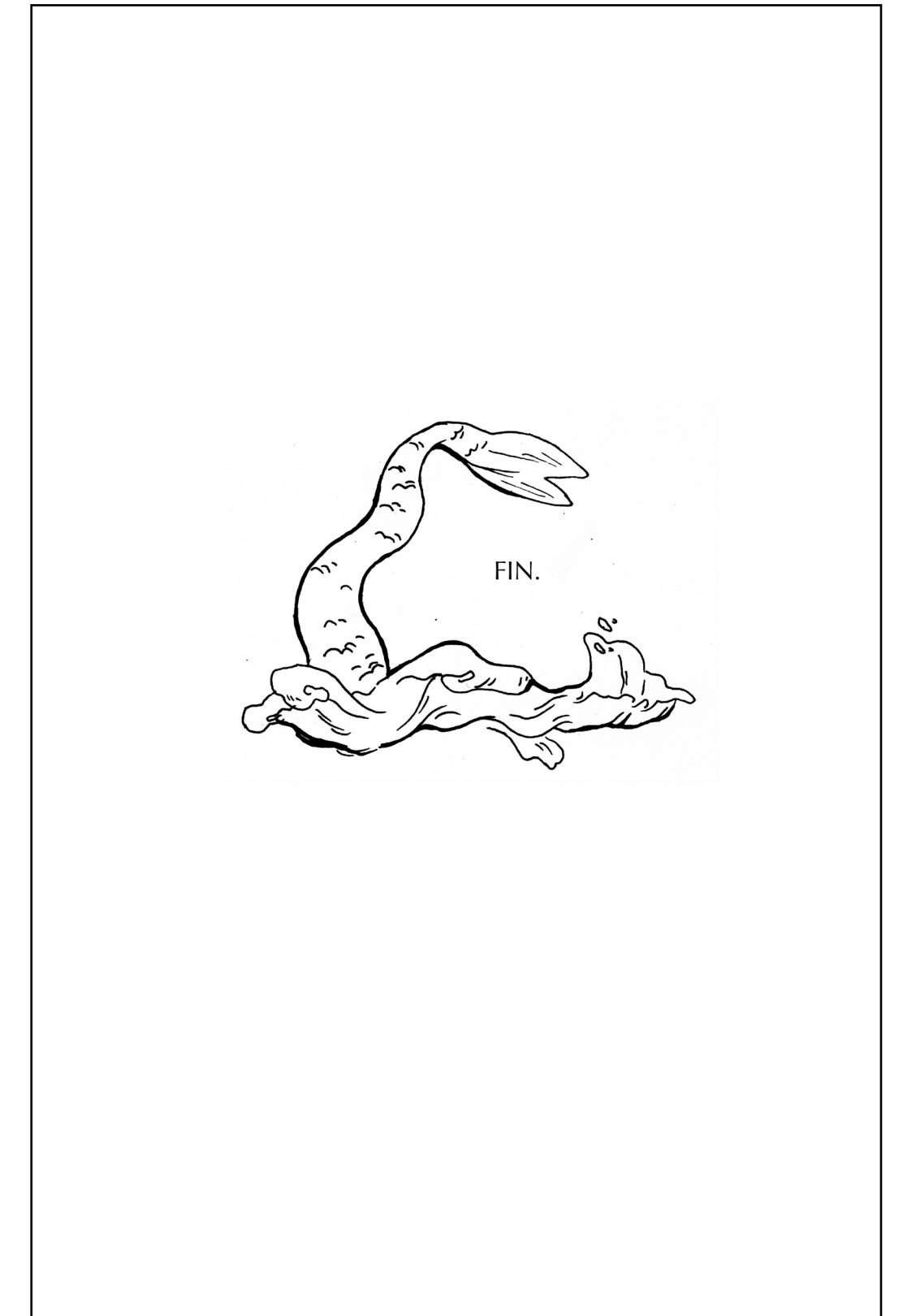
Each story had an 'opening' illustration and a small 'closing' illustration at the end. Three of the four zines had illustrations of major plot points.

I made some illustrations in different styles to see how they would look on the riso. I experimented with pencil and ink.

The shaded pencil drawing did not have the look I wanted when it was printed on the riso.

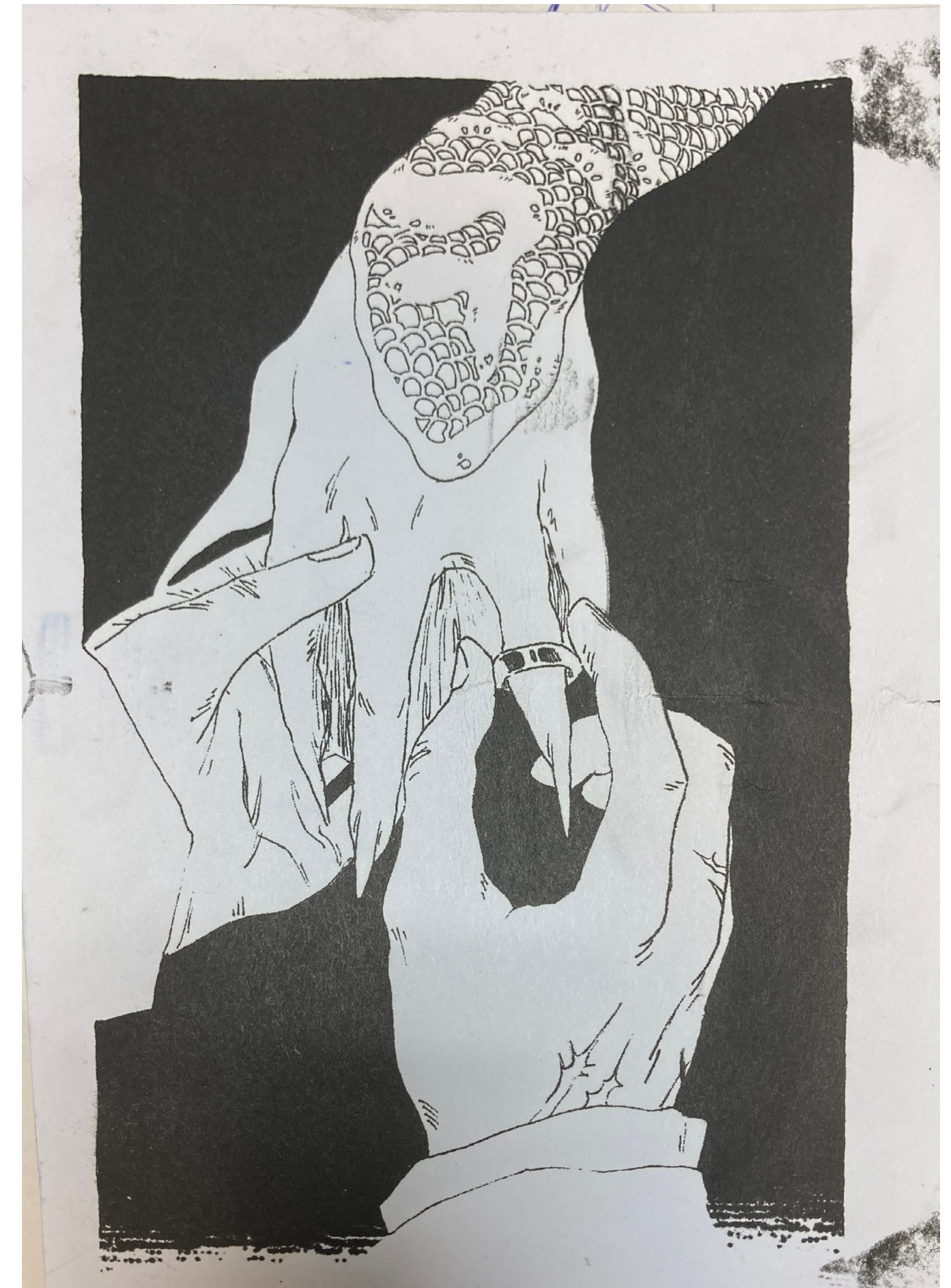
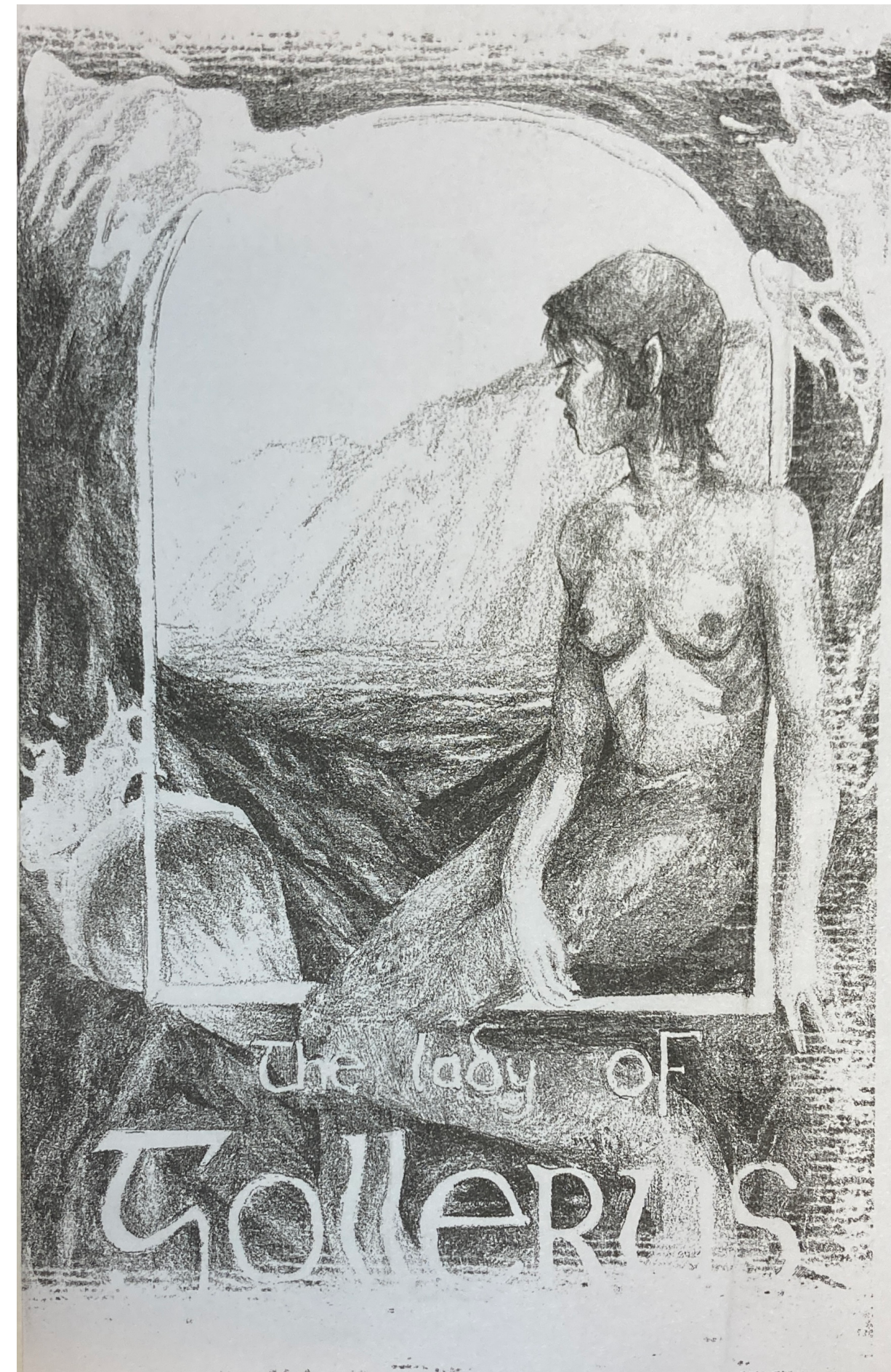
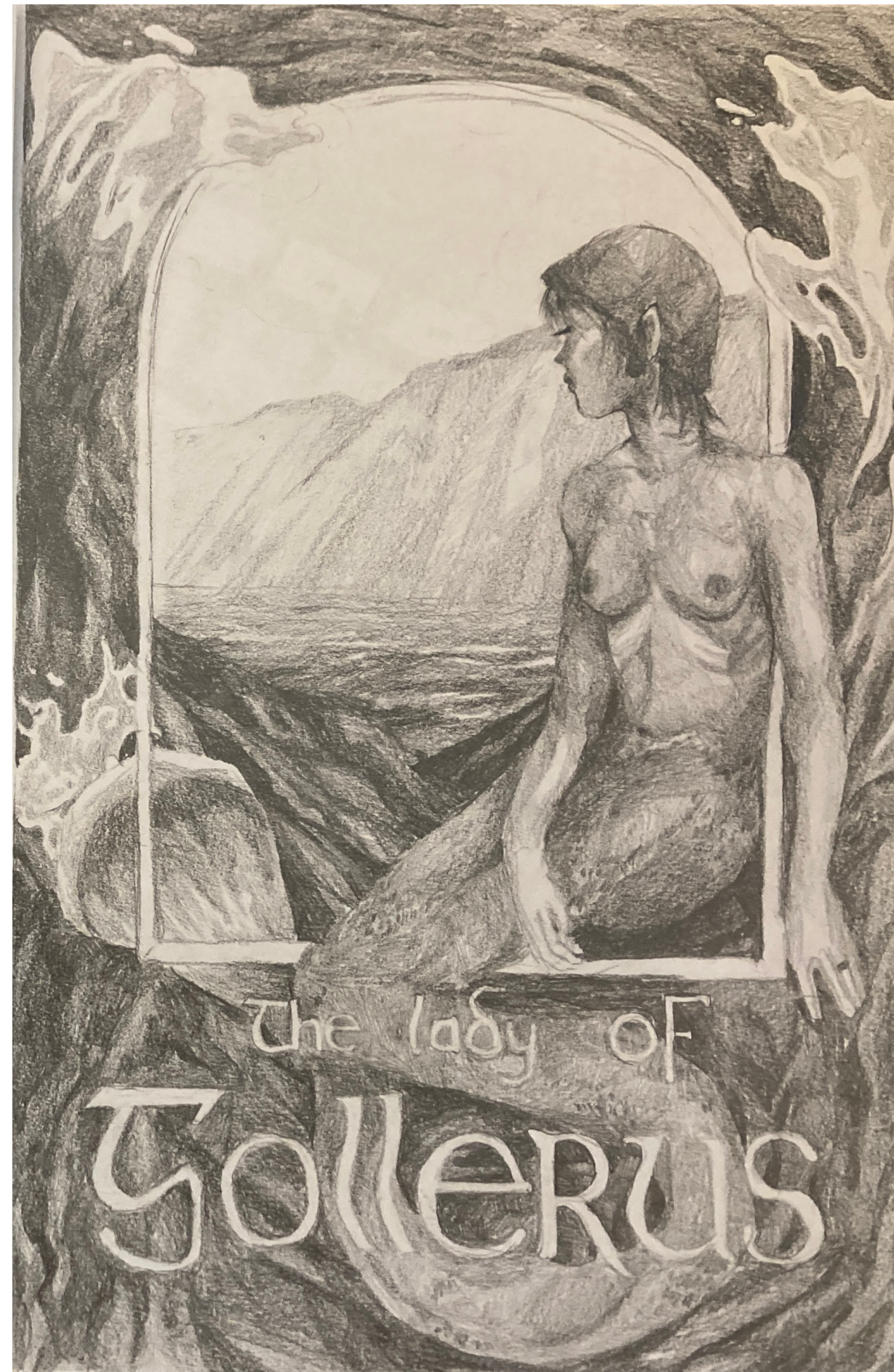
The ink drawing with a black background was not efficient, as the riso repeatedly jammed. There was also so much ink it was prone to smearing.

Ink line drawings had the same look and did not smear!





# Illustration | Style



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# Illustration | Process

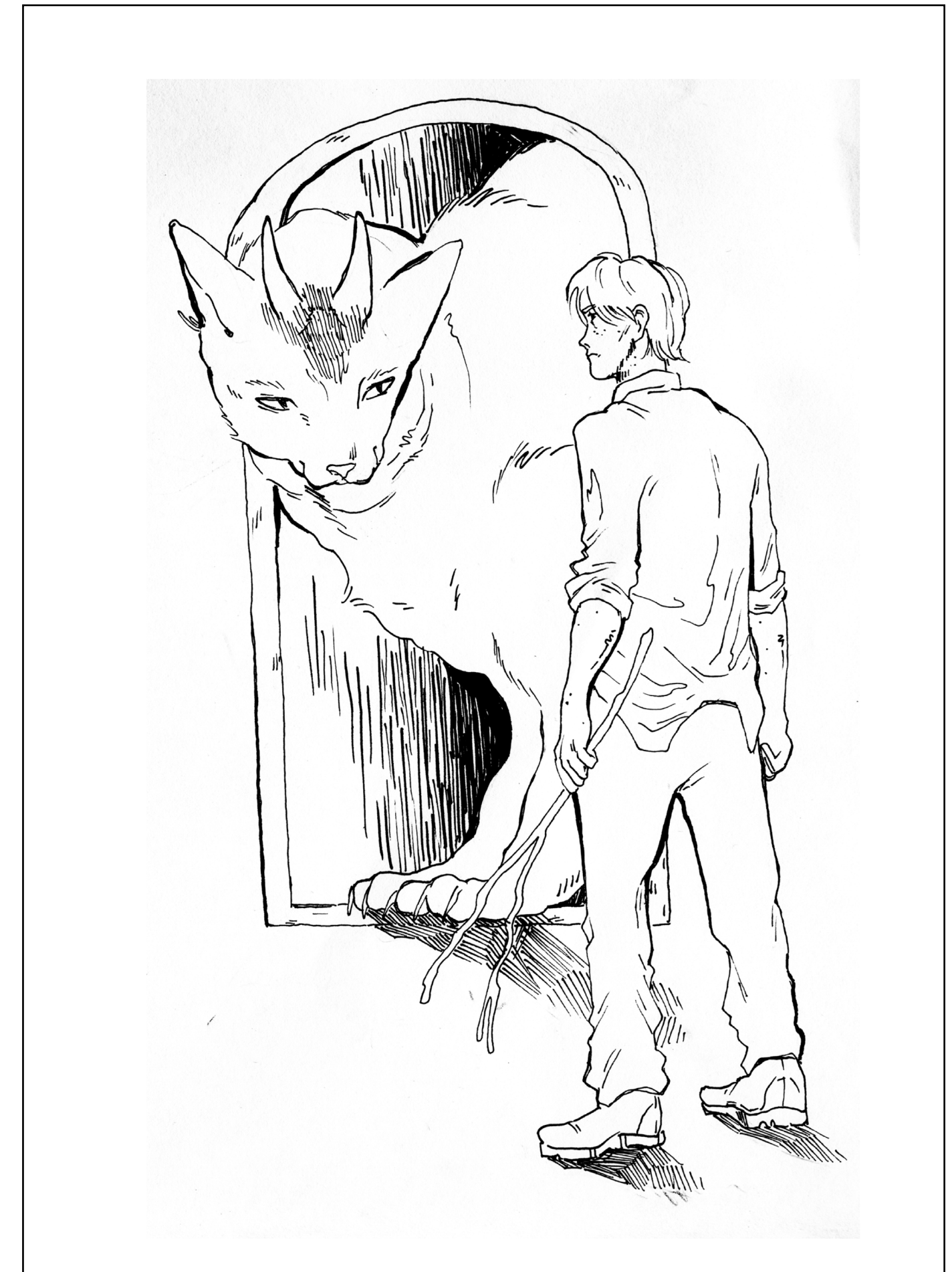
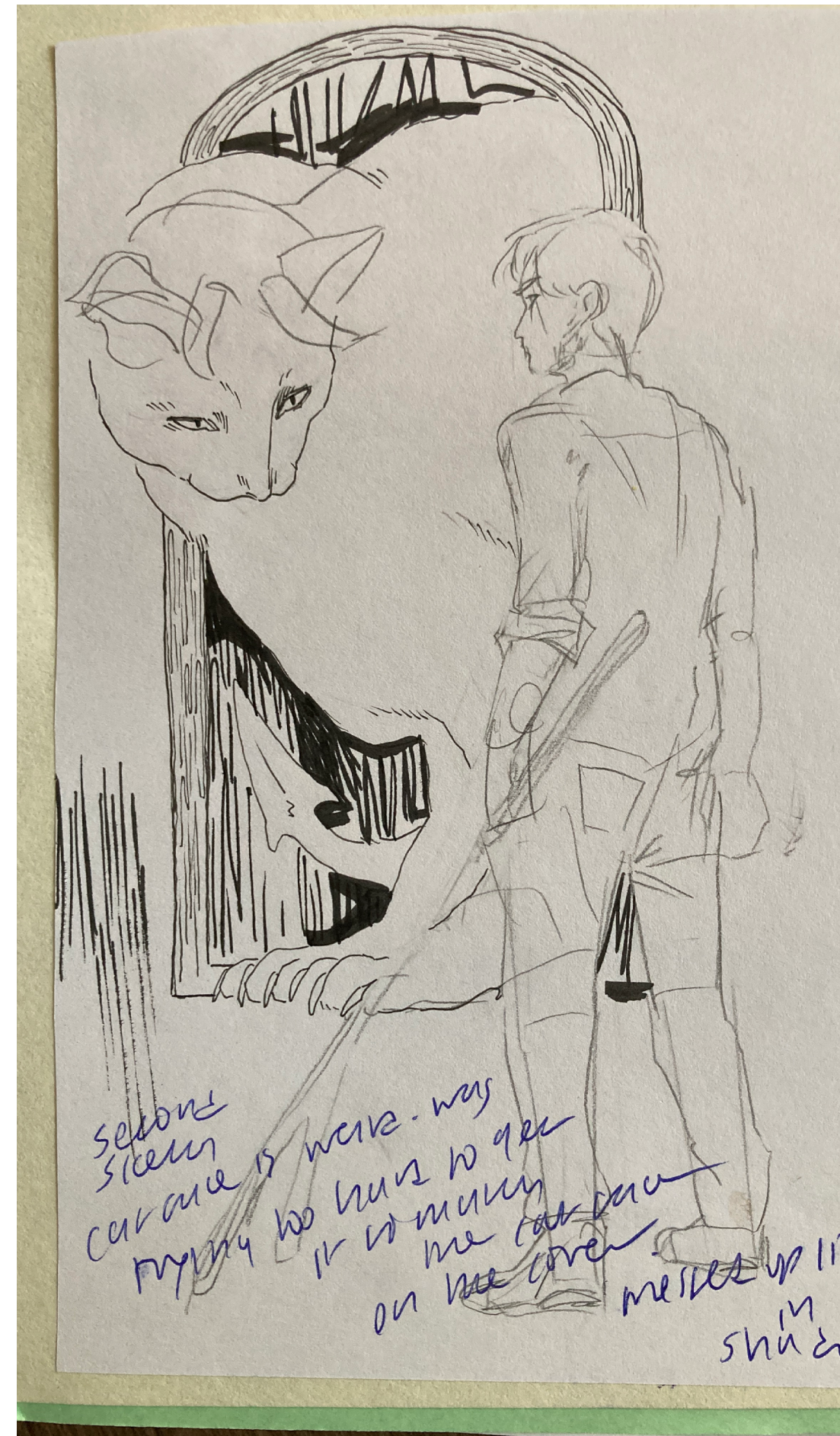
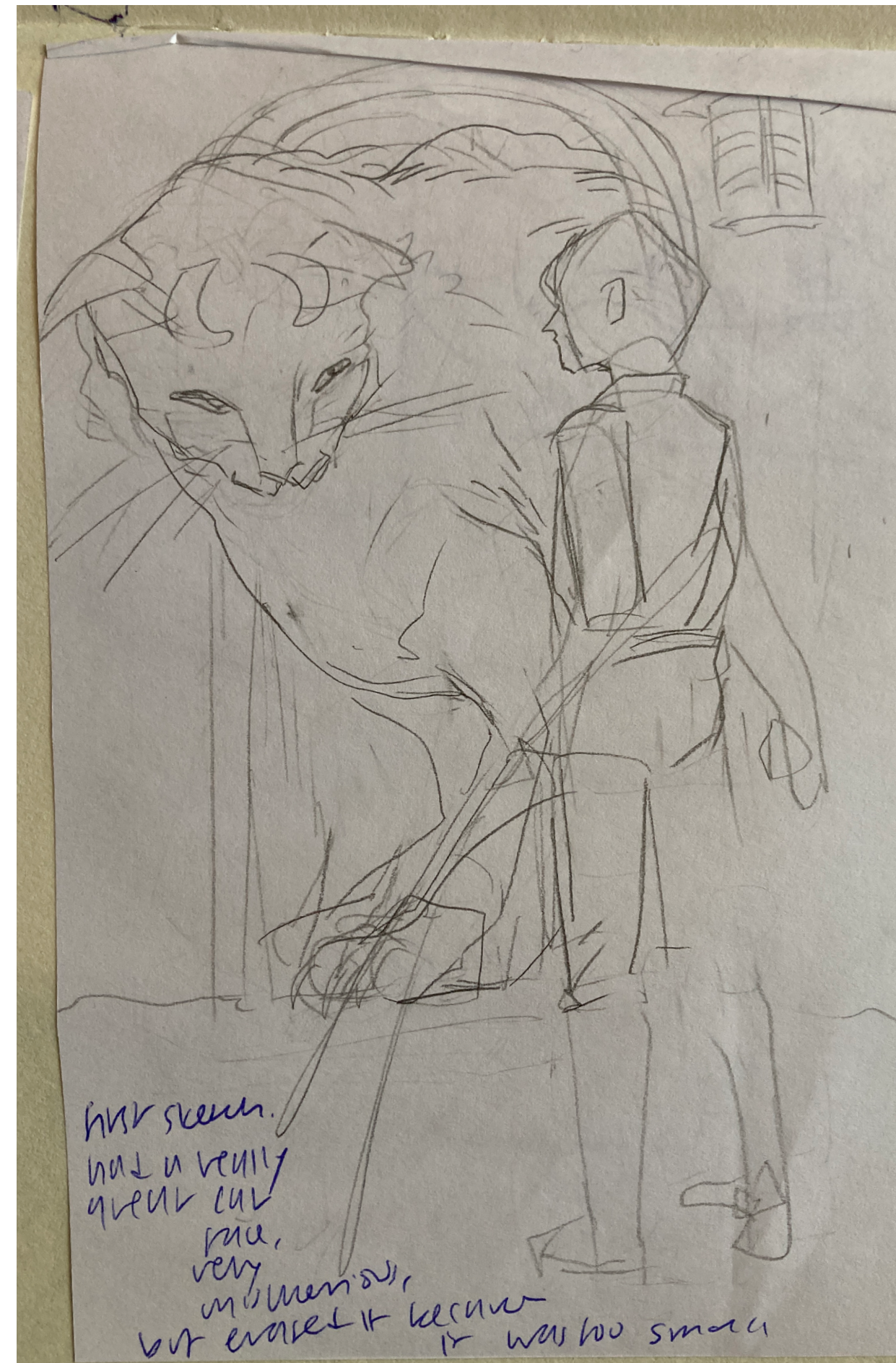
When creating the illustration, I would sketch some options. After choosing one, I would ink it, scan it, edit it in Photoshop, run it through spectralite, and then print it. This final print is what the riso would scan.

Some illustrations were redrawn.





# Illustration | Process



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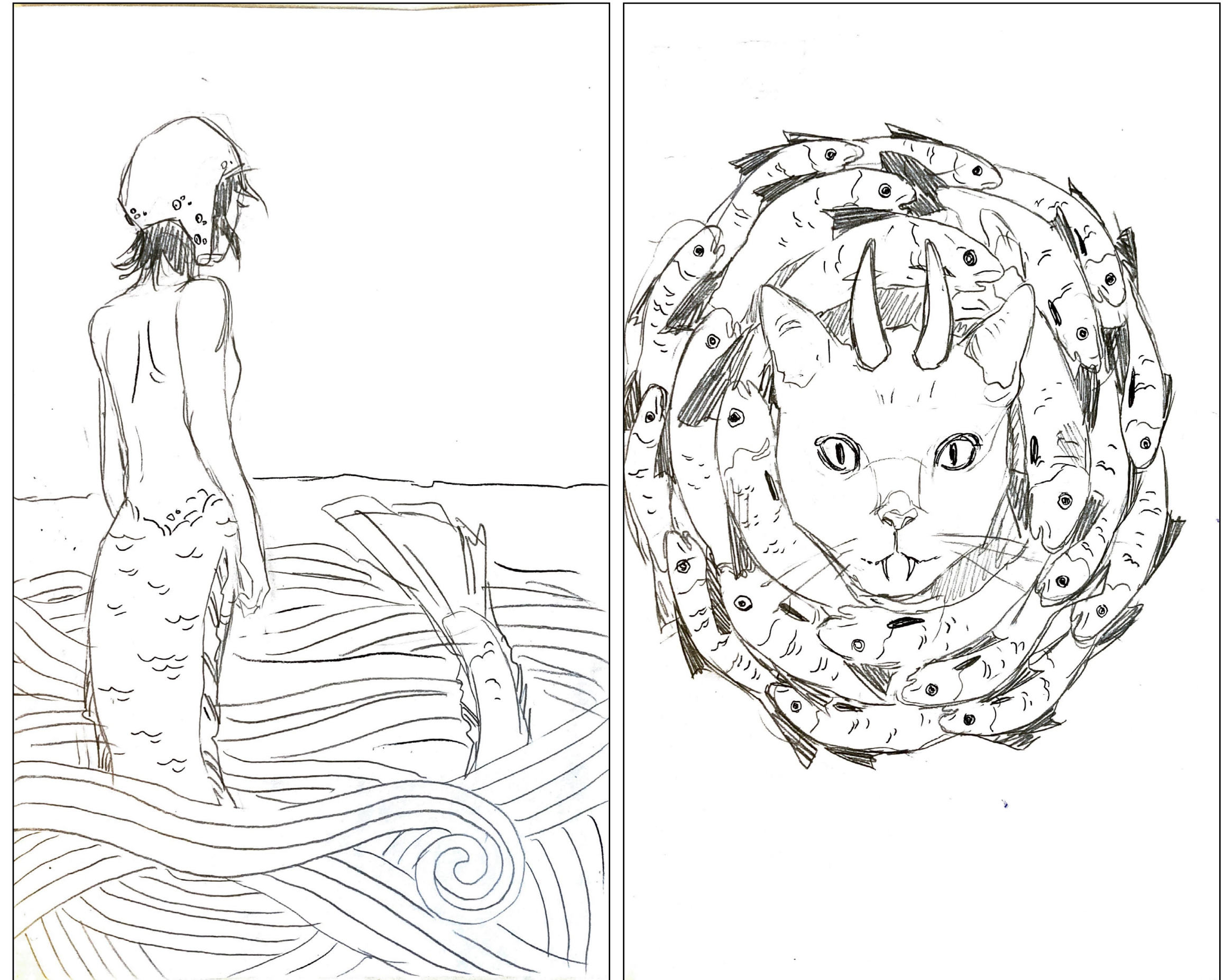


# Covers | First Drafts

These were the first drafts that I went over with my mentor. He encouraged me to design the covers to act as a set.

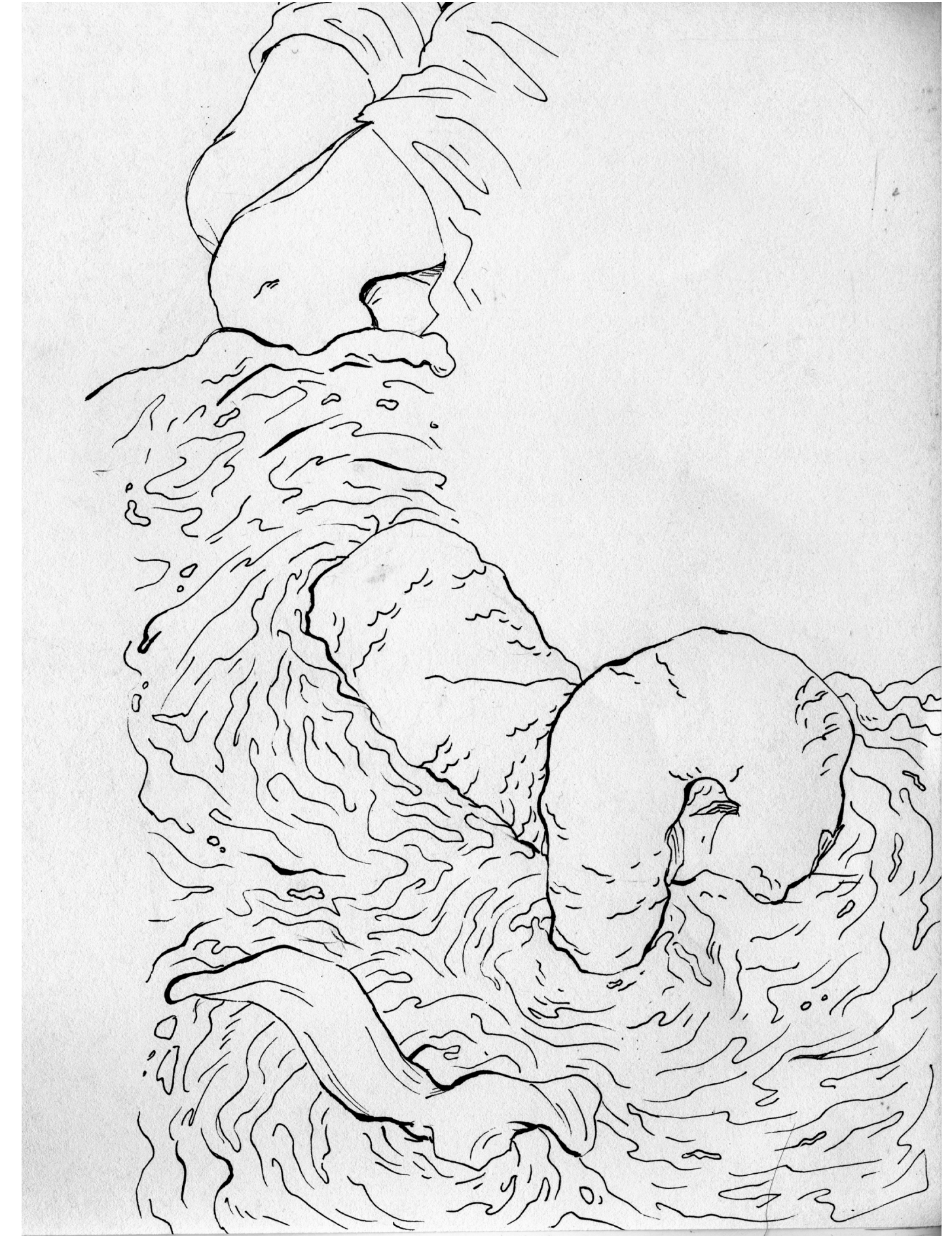
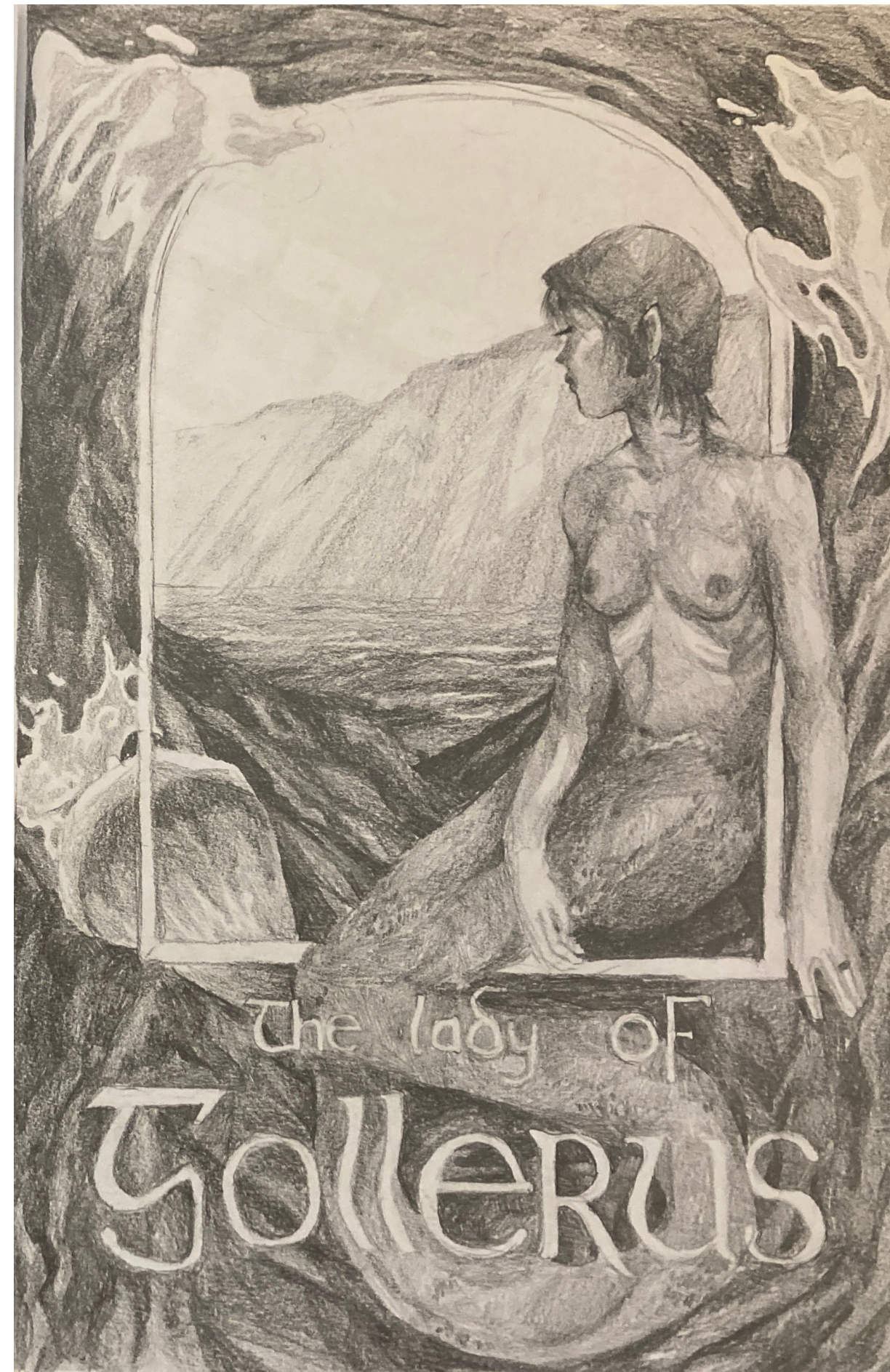
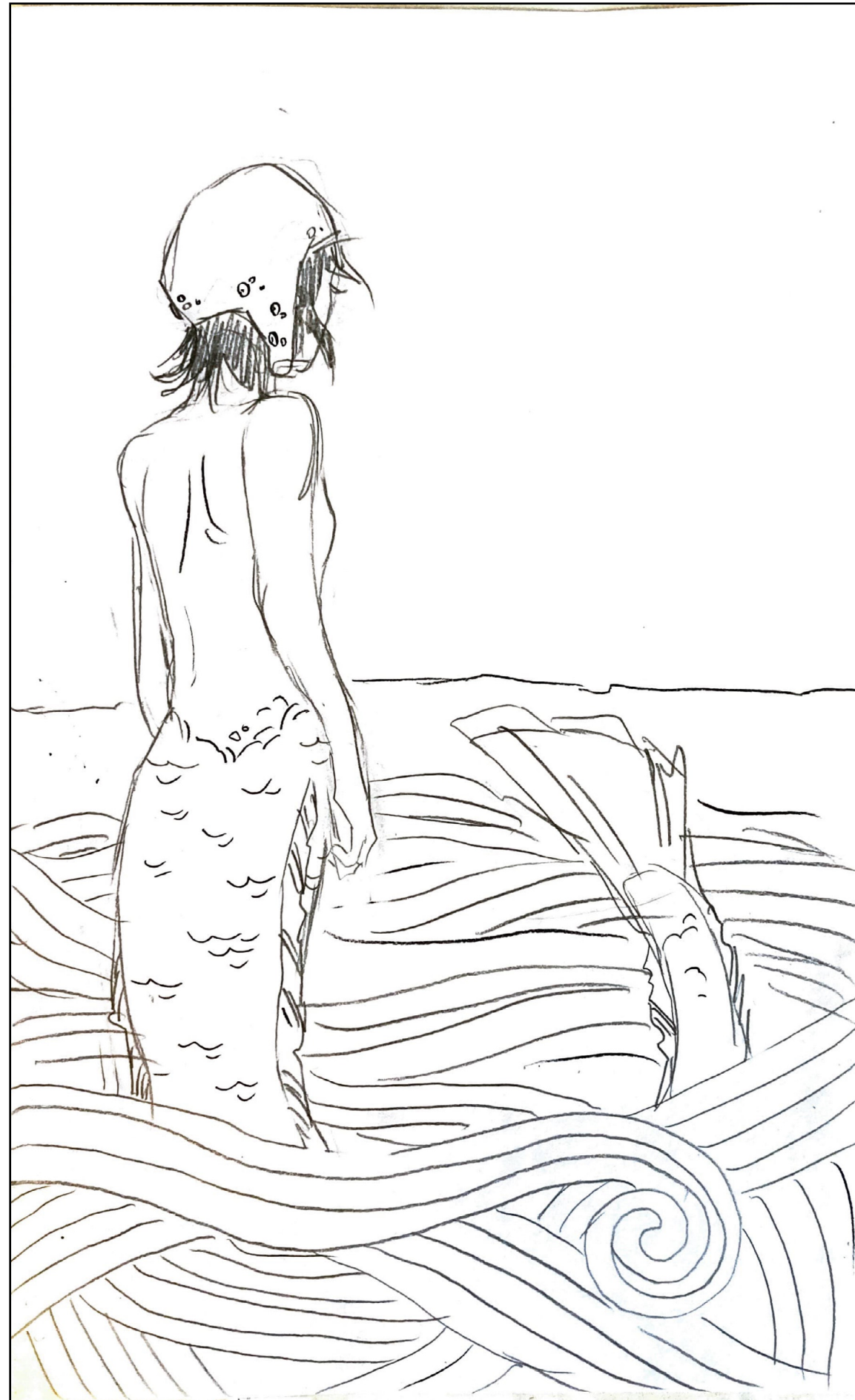
A common motif I wanted to include in all of them was an archway to promote the idea that as you open up and read this zine, you are being transported to a different world.

I also wanted to incorporate elements from the decorative borders in order to unify the covers and the interiors.





# Covers | Evolution



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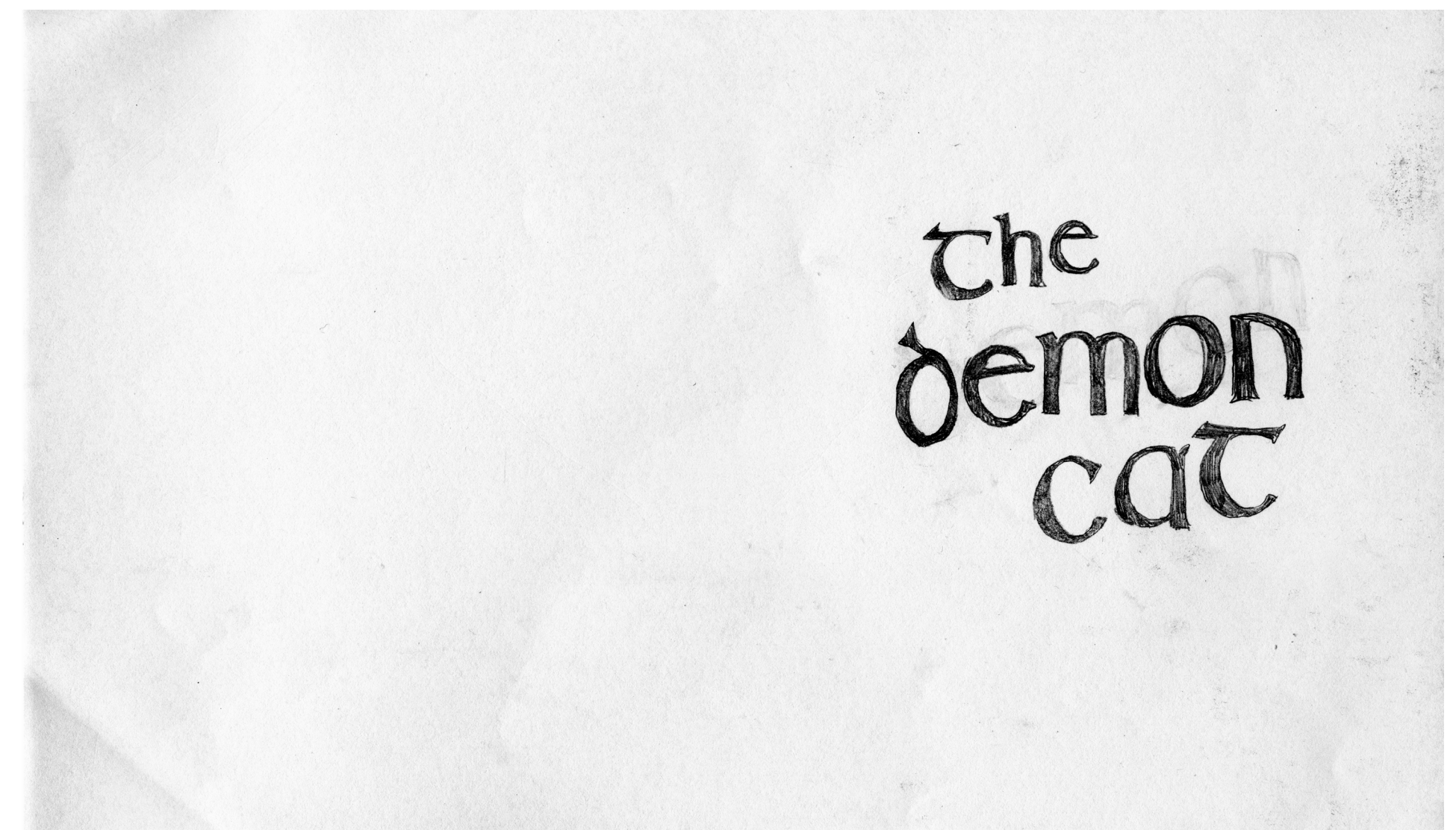
## Covers | Title

Originally tried to mimic the typeface  
'Ceanannas', a typeface developed for gaelic.

Experimented with handlettering until settling  
on this fluid, bubbly style. It came naturally and  
worked with a lot of the organic elements on some  
of the covers.

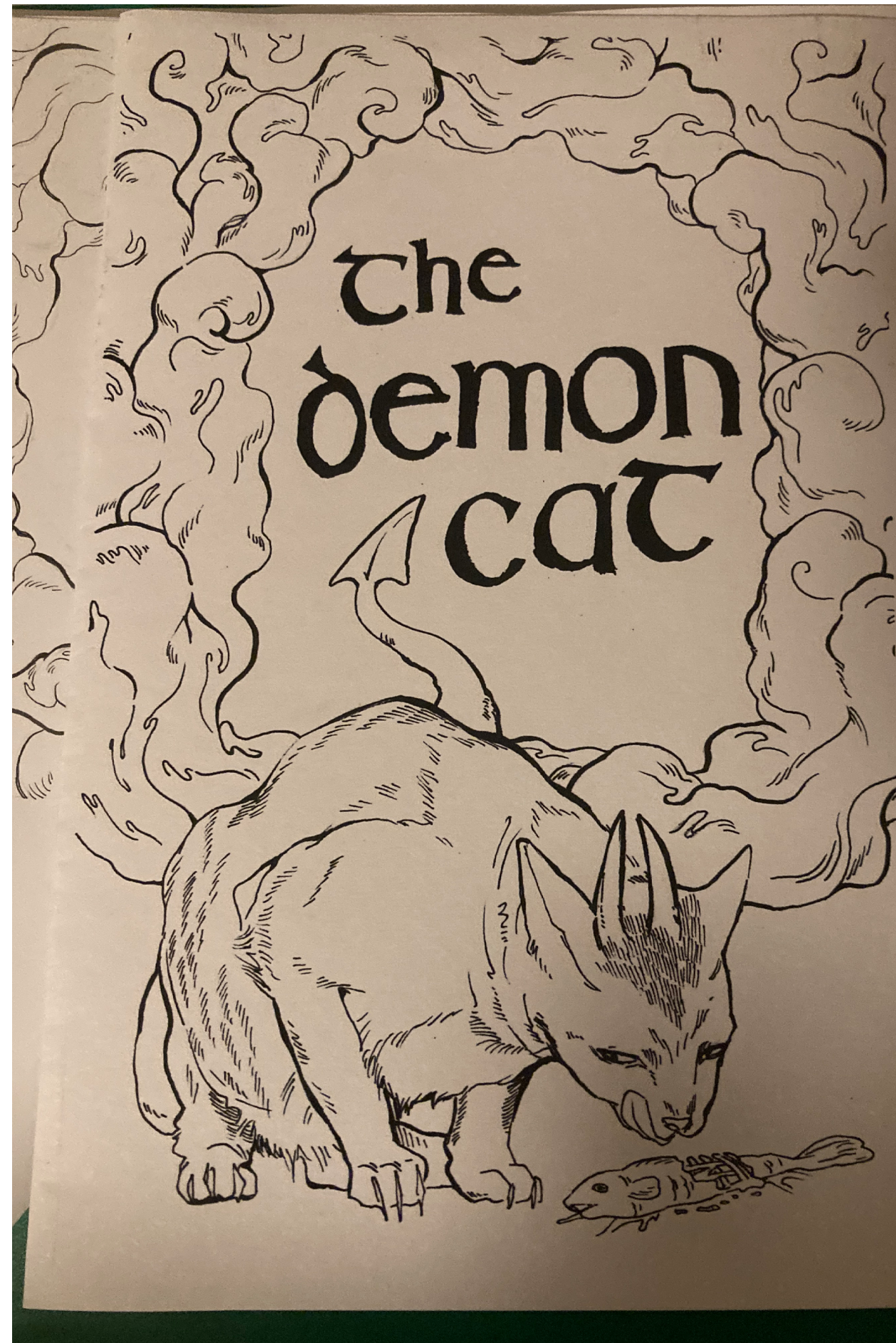
I also wanted to incorporate elements from the  
decorative borders in order to unify the covers and  
the interiors.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz





## Covers | Title



THE  
DEMON  
CAT

THE  
DEMON  
CAT



# Printing | Ink

The first cover we printed was Demon Cat. Using white paper, we printed a green color field, and then the black linework on top.

The green was printed on a separate risograph that was older. It shifted the color field each print, making alignment a time consuming process.

My mentor encouraged me to experiment with colored paper.





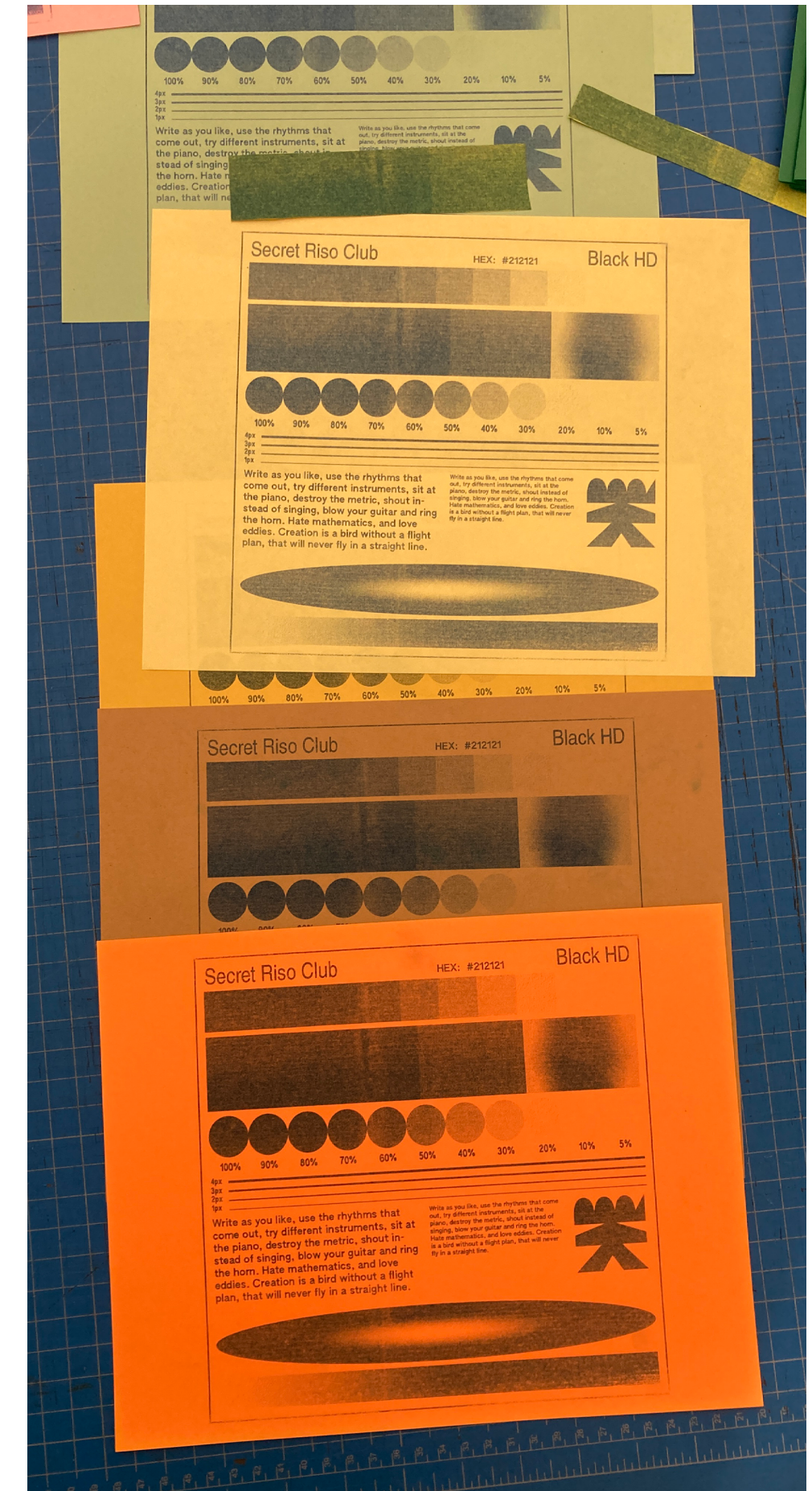
# Printing | Color Interactions

We grabbed a handful of color pages and explored how blue ink looked on top.

Observed the color interactions. We thought the bright yellow would produce a good green, but the yellow paper was simply too bright for it to be perceived as green.

Assigned a color ink and paper color to each cover. Some of the titles included a colorful layer and then an offset black layer.

Alignment went a lot smoother. Embraced a little bit of offset, as it added to the charming riso style.



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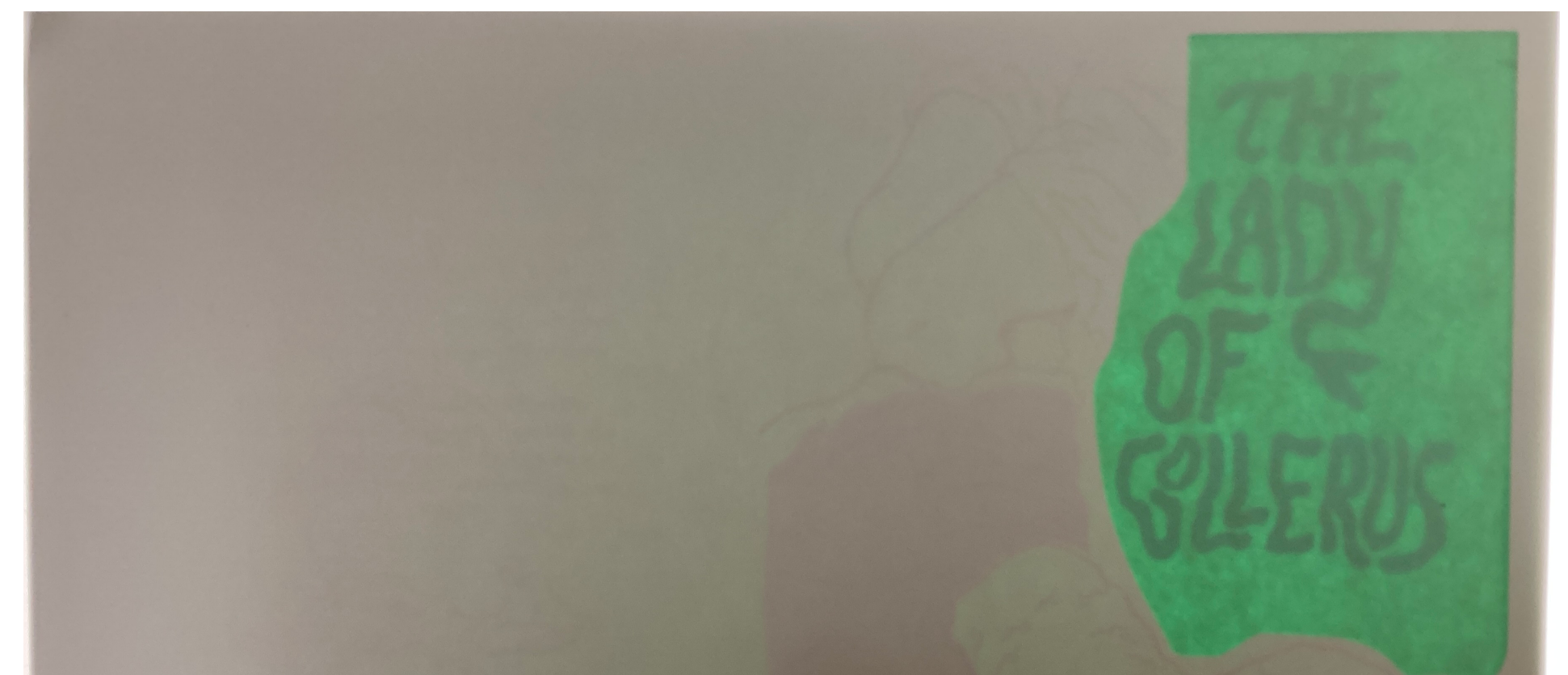


# Printing | Cover Cutouts

I really wanted to cut the archway out in order to emphasize the concept.

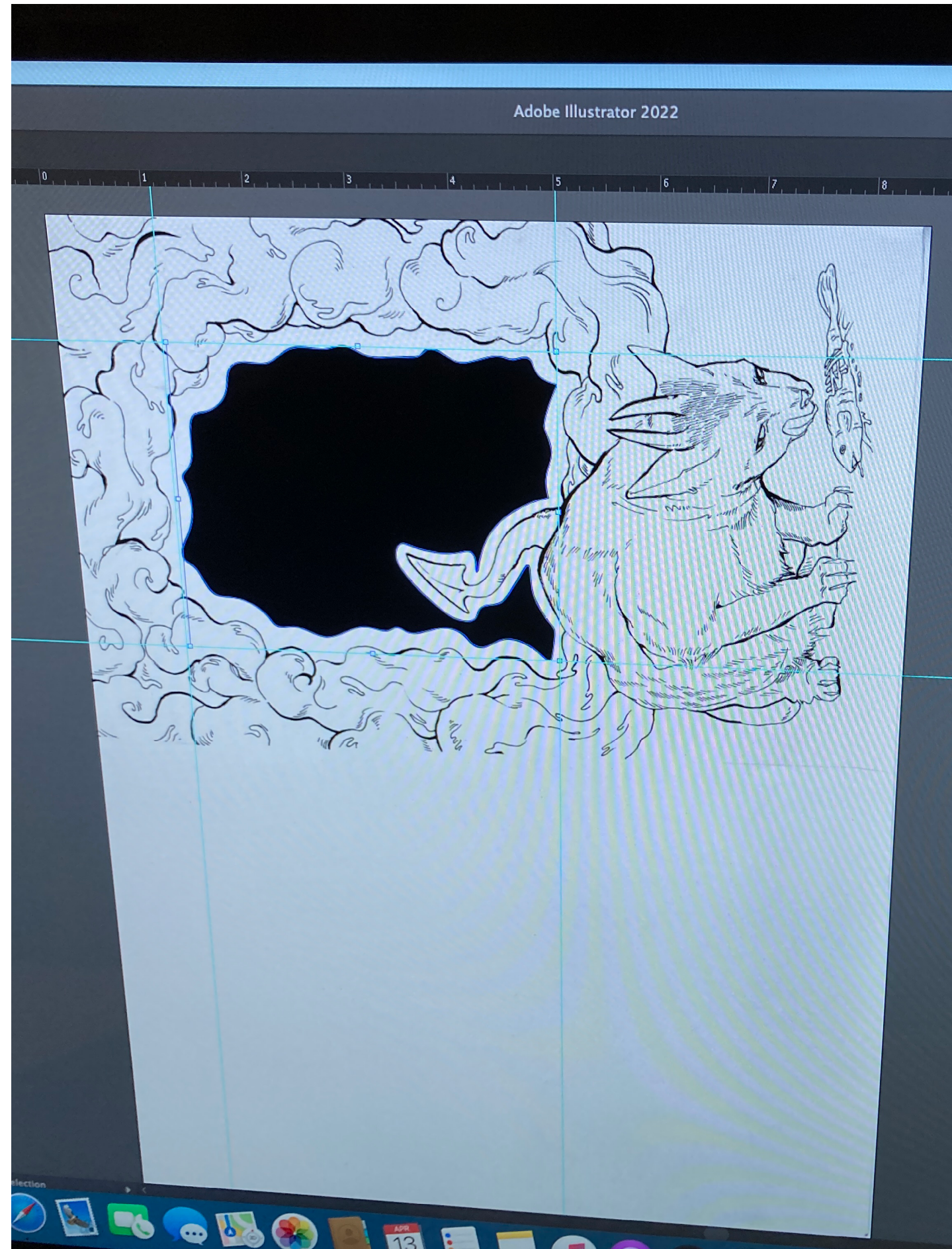
Originally used a Cricut Explore 3 from my friend and fellow intern Katie. However the Cricut would sometimes jam the paper, or shut down. Switched to a silhouette Cameo 2, which was more efficient and easier to use.

I used a light table to draw the area I wanted cut, then scanned it, traced it in Illustrator, exported it as a .png, and uploaded it to the software.





# Printing | Cover Cutouts



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# Printing | Binding

The zines were bound with a booklet stapler.

Special thanks to my friend and fellow intern Chullain and my mentor, who helped me bind almost all of the zines.

Our goal was to have 40 copies of each zine which we surpassed with 53 copies of *Lady of Gollerus*, 43 copies of *Demon Cat*, 54 copies of *The Bunworth Banshee*, and 50 copies of *The Enchanted Cave* for a total of 200 zines!





# Printing | Binding



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# Reception | OUR Research Symposium

The first event was the OUR Symposium. I designed some materials to turn the table into an installation. The vinyl banners were printed by Richard, one of my mentors for my TAG Team internship.

Was able to meet with students, faculty and professionals from the University of West Florida, Pensacola State College, and local professionals.

I had 20 copies (with 4 copies to keep for display).

A lot of people loved the illustrations, especially the decorative borders from *The Enchanted Cave*.

*Demon Cat* was the most popular, followed by *The Enchanted Cave*, *The Bunworth Banshee*, and *Lady of Gollerus*.





# Reception | Synthesis BFA Exit Show

The following day was the opening reception for Synthesis, the exit show for BFA students at the University of West Florida.

Many people grabbed a complete set.

All remaining copies were displayed here, with gallery copies for people to read even if there weren't any zines left.

*Demon Cat* was the most popular, followed by *The Enchanted Cave*, *The Bunworth Banshee*, and *Lady of Gollerus*.





# Reception | Synthesis BFA Exit Show



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# Conclusion | Reflection

When this project was finished, I was very proud of the final result. I believed each zine was given an equal amount of time and effort, giving them all the same level of quality. I did wish I managed my time better, as this project got quite stressful near the end.

With that being said, there are two things I would change, which are the covers. I believed the covers for *Demon Cat* and *The Enchanted Cave* helped their popularity because they featured the main character in an exciting way. *Demon Cat* makes eye contact with the viewer as he eats his fish, and Cuglas (the protagonists from *The Enchanted Cave*) holds his sword to create a striking diagonal.

The illustrations for the cover of *Lady of Gollerus* and *The Bunworth Banshee* are a bit more vague. Looking back, I wish I included the faces of these characters. I believe it would've encouraged people to choose those stories.

Not only would I have changed the illustration for the cover of *The Bunworth Banshee*, but I also would've changed the color of the cover. Green was also used in the *Lady of Gollerus* in a more successful way than *The Bunworth Banshee*. I believe switching the color of the cover would've helped distinguish the two from one another.

Despite that, I am so happy to have created this work. Speaking to people at the Symposium and the Synthesis was a truly incredible experience. Many people seemed very interested, and I'm happy I had the chance to share this project with them.





## Thank You for Reading!

If you would like to see more of my work, please check out my behance at [behance.net/rachelmhoward](https://www.behance.net/rachelmhoward).

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