

Bản ghi số 9

# RECORDING NUMBER 9

## Team members:

Four Girls Sardines:

Nguyen Anh Tuyen - s3988779

Nguyen Anh Khoa - s3979769

Do Bao Chau - s4023727

Truong Nguyen Kieu My - s4037623

## Logline

An's journeys through her fragmented memories, encountering her younger selves in a mysterious hallway – until a final, wordless embrace allows her to heal the child within.

# DESIGN PRACTICE

A surreal, emotional journey through memory and time, where one woman revisits her younger selves within the liminal space of a hallway and a mysterious door. Through this internal exploration, she confronts long-buried emotions, childhood fears, and finally embraces self-acceptance.

We chose the number nine for the title and the recording because in Vietnamese, nine is "(九)", a term that symbolizes eternity. This represents the everlasting and unbreakable bond between a mother and daughter, a connection that endures despite any distance separating them.

This is a cinematic meditation on healing through time, using symbolic imagery, subtle transitions, and character transformation across age to tell a deeply human story, all without dialogue.

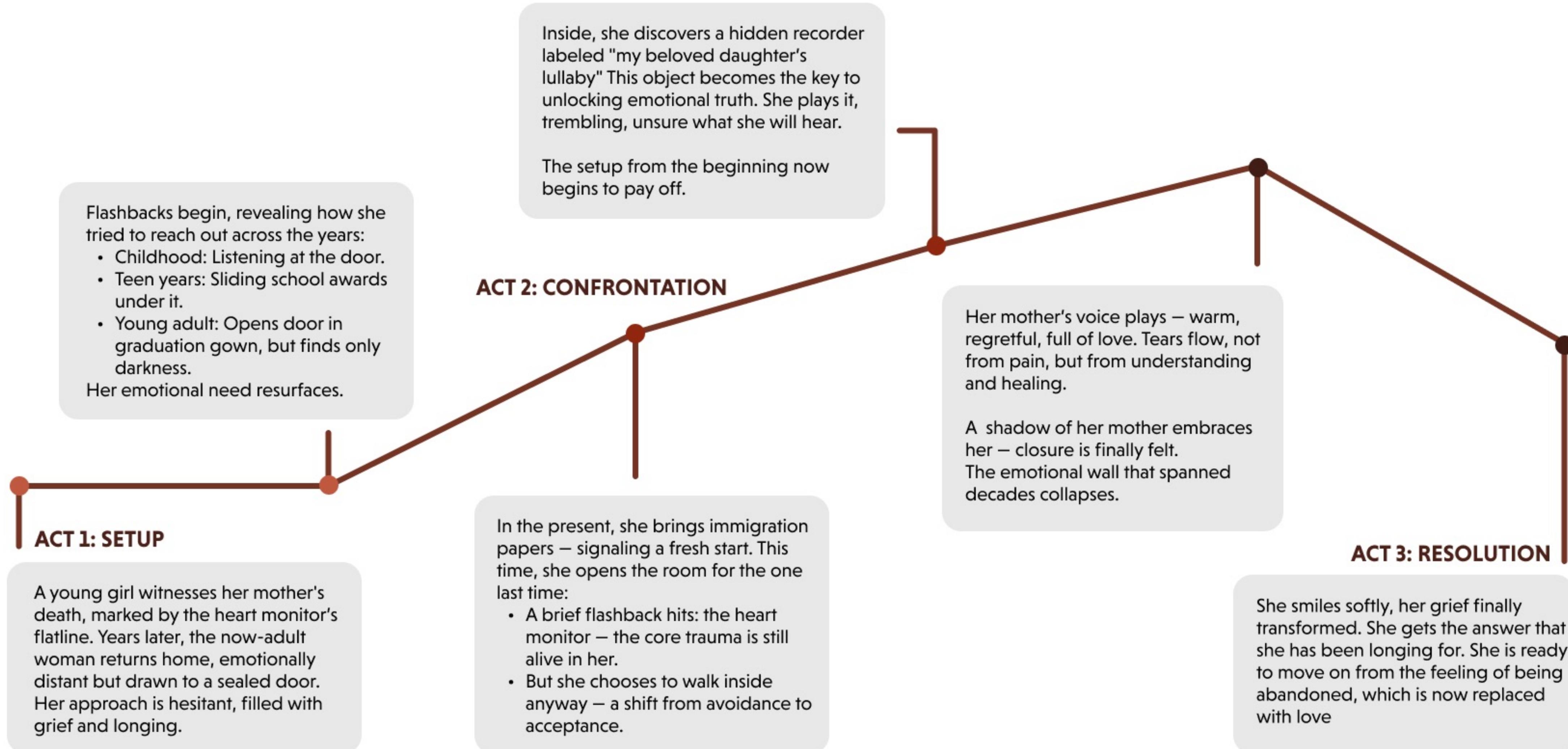
# CONCEPT

# SUMMARY

In a quiet, dimly lit house, a young girl stands before a strange, old door. Time feels fluid – scenes shift between her at different life stages. The hallway becomes a symbolic space of memory and unresolved emotion.

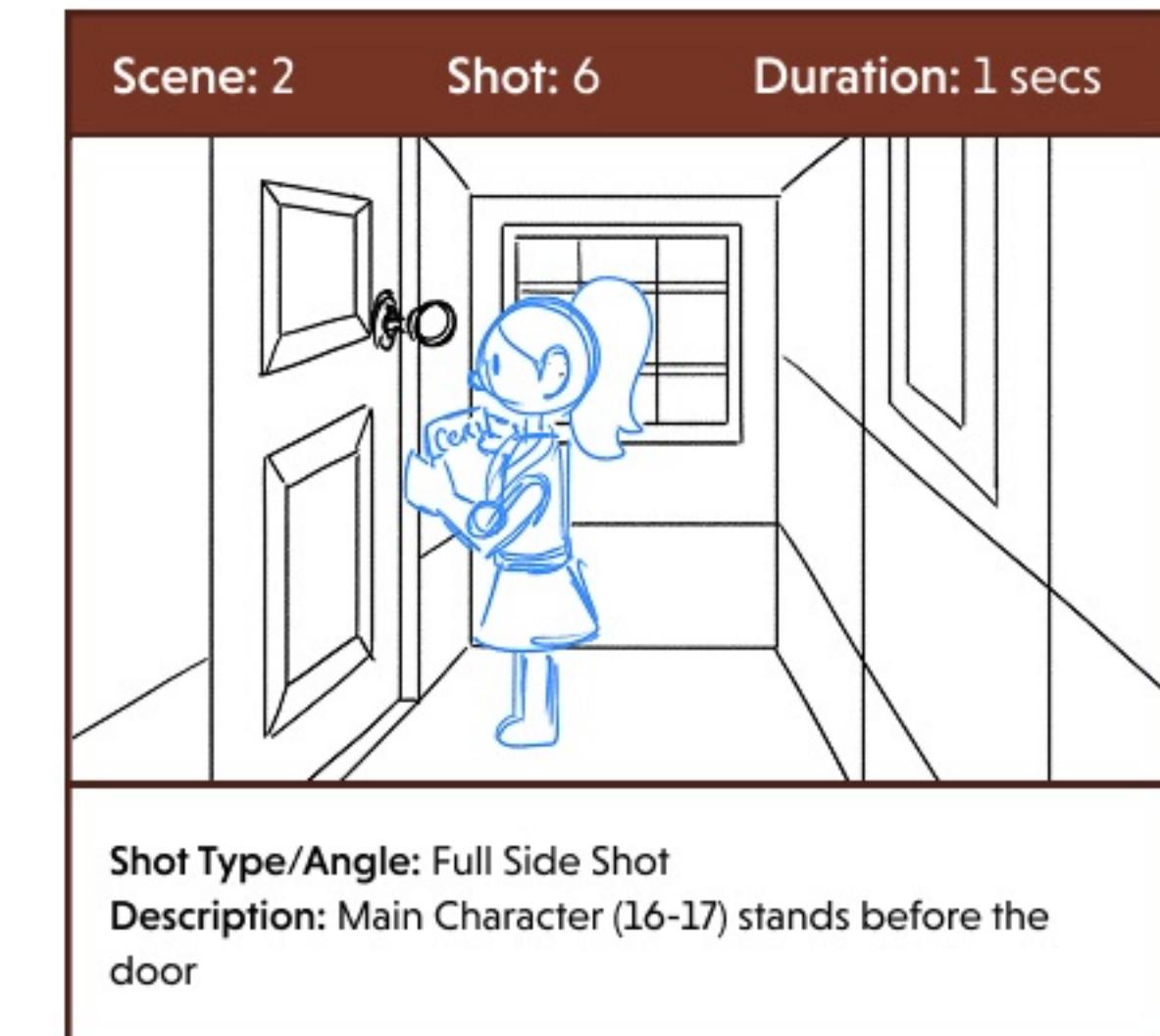
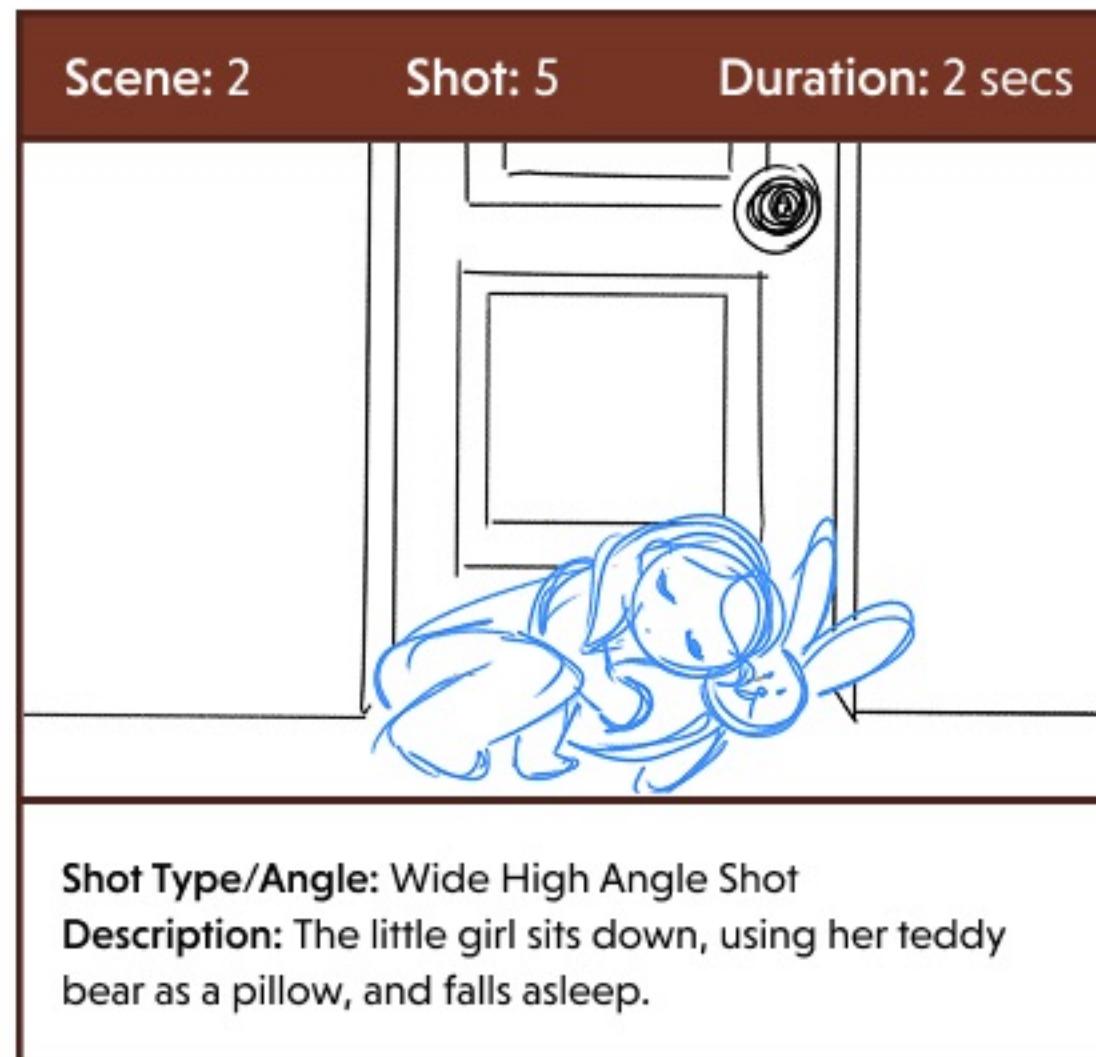
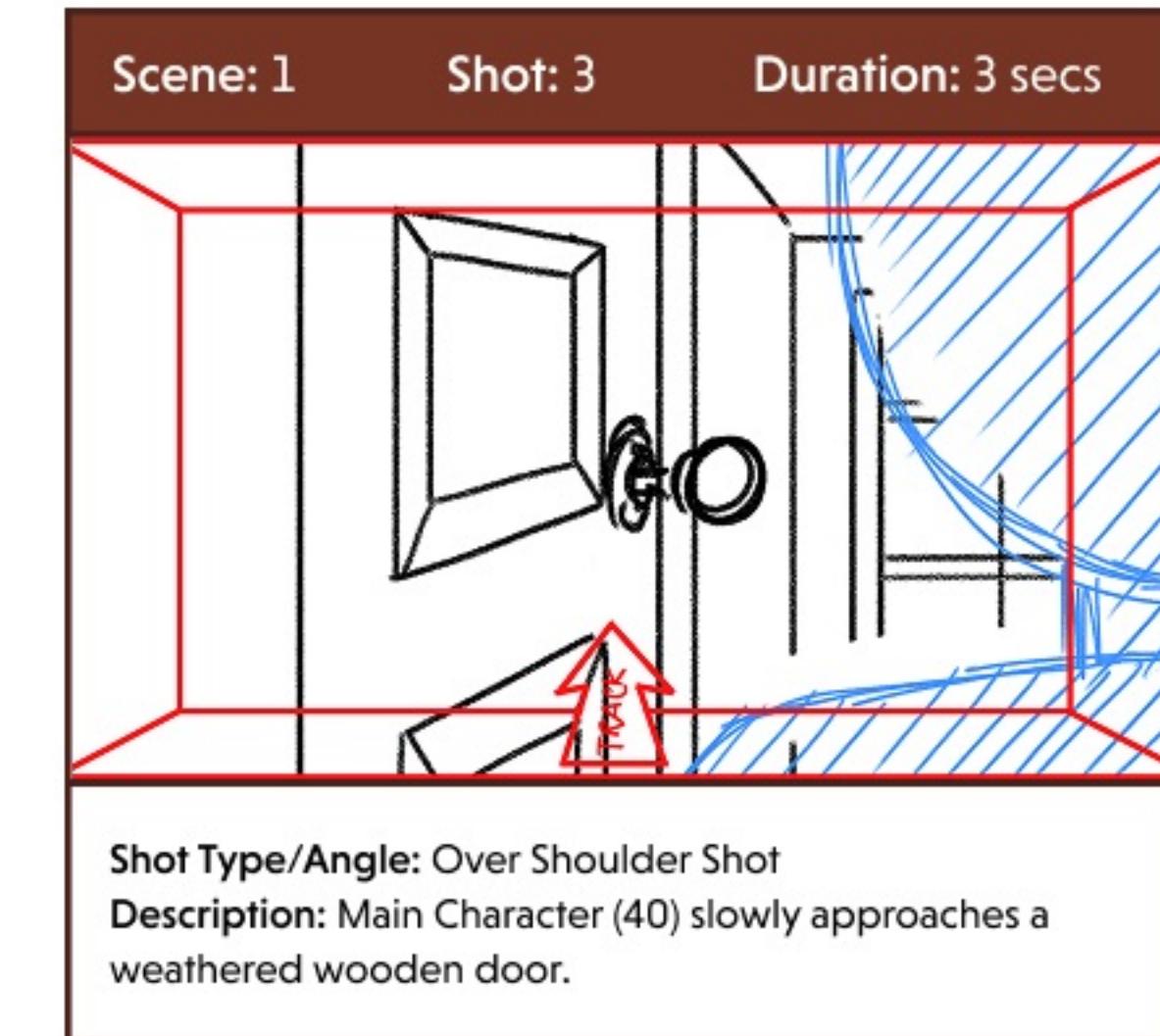
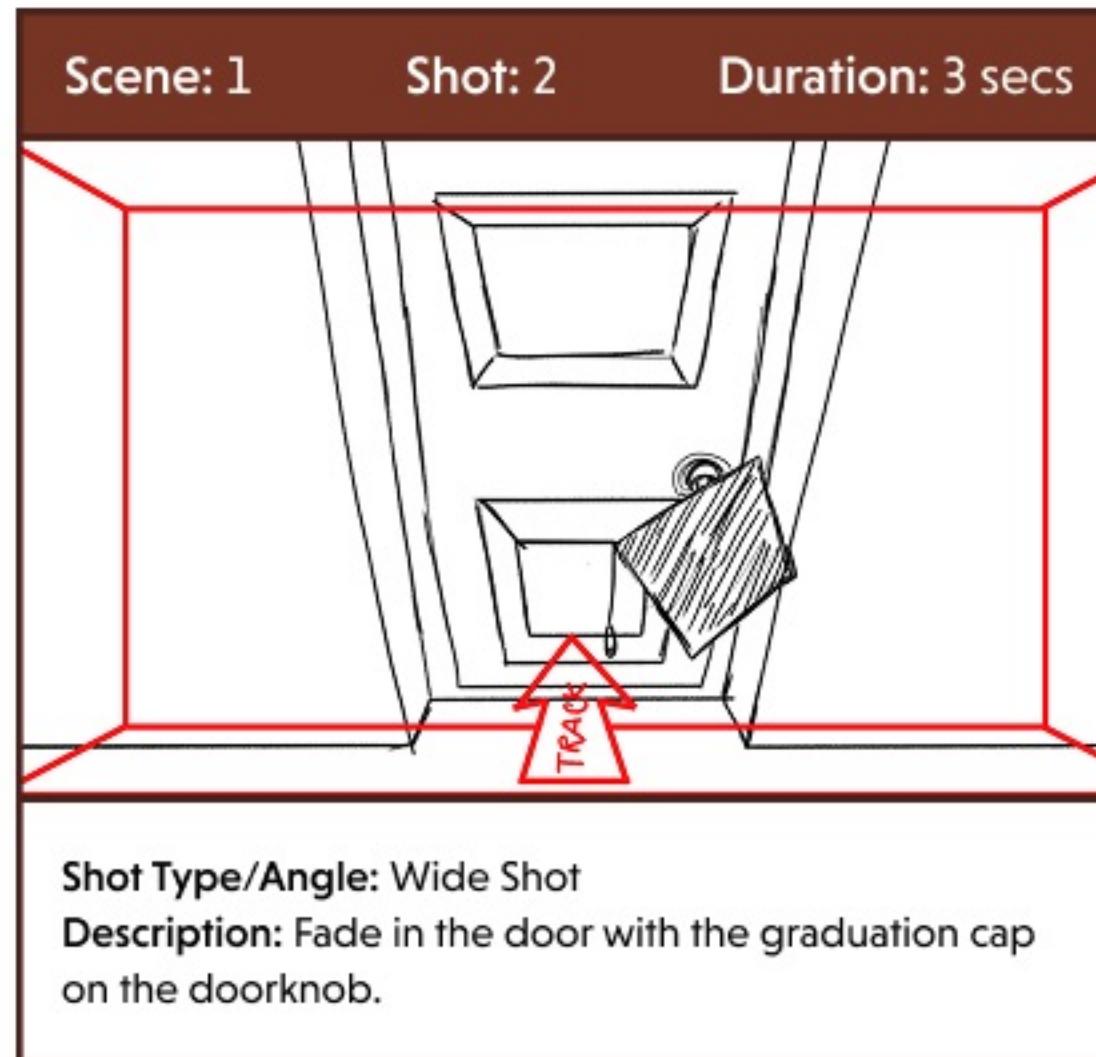
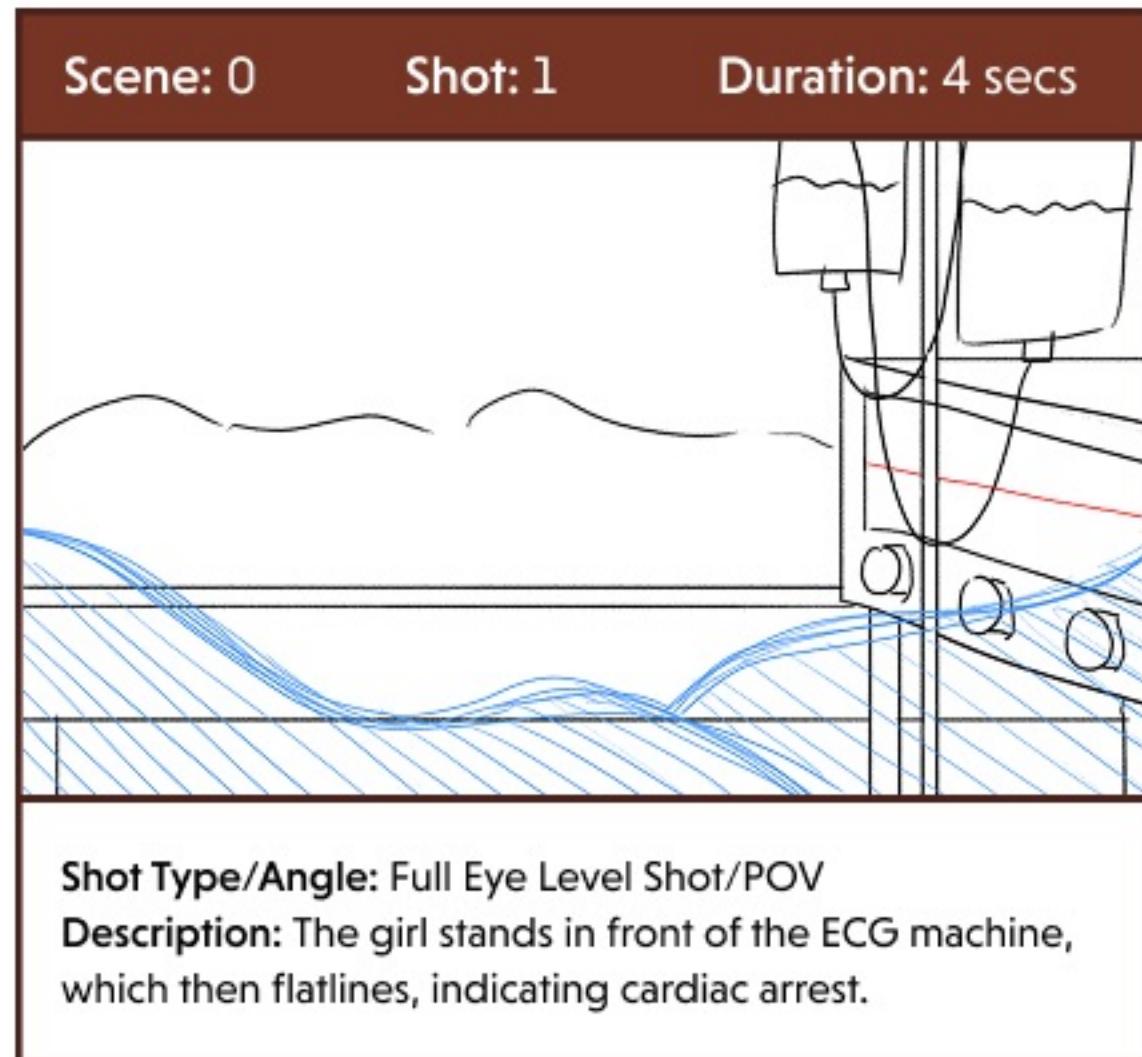
As she ages from child to teen to adult, she continuously returns to the door, each time getting closer to opening it. Inside, she finds her youngest self waiting, vulnerable. In a tender moment, the adult kneels and embraces the child.

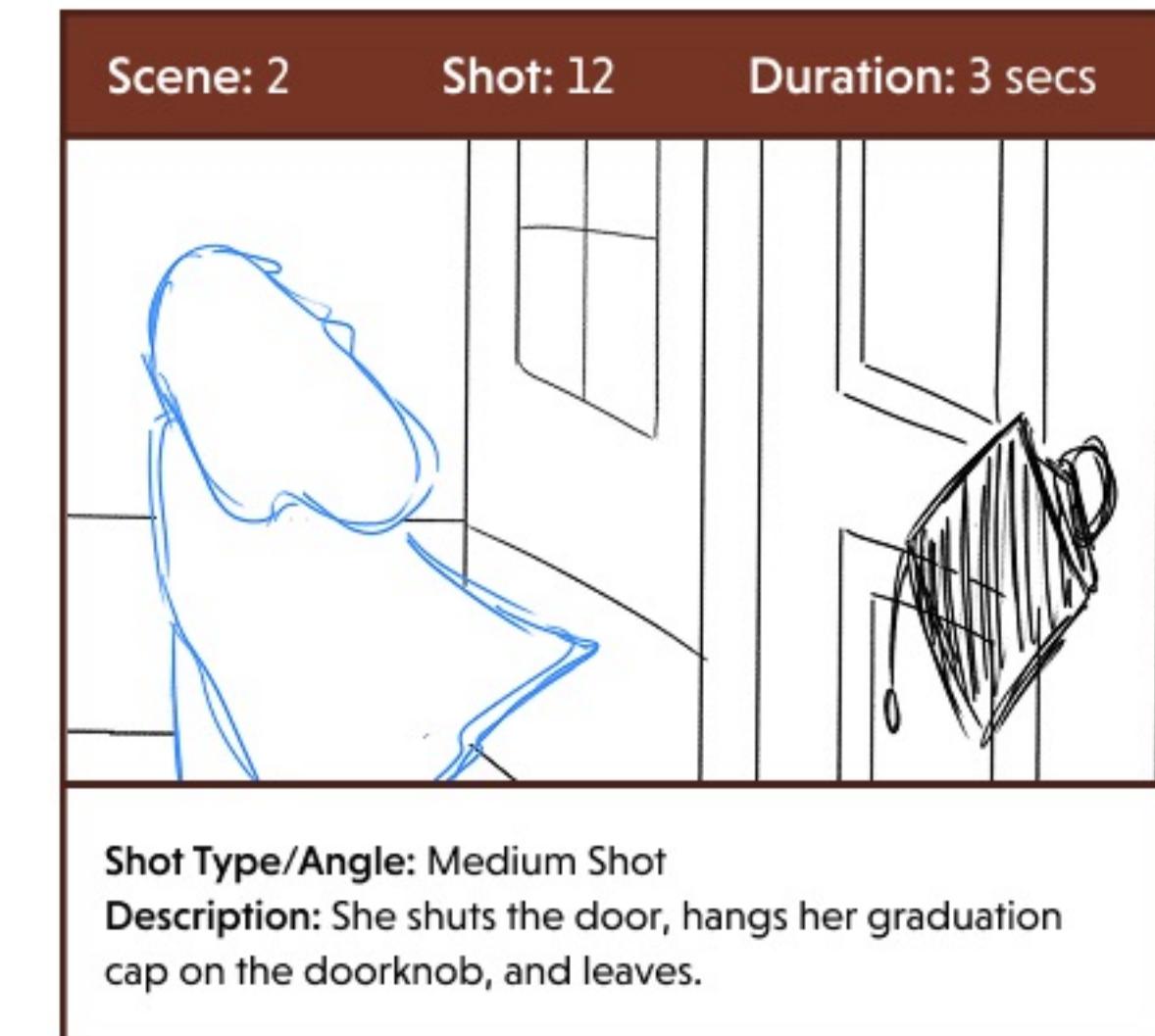
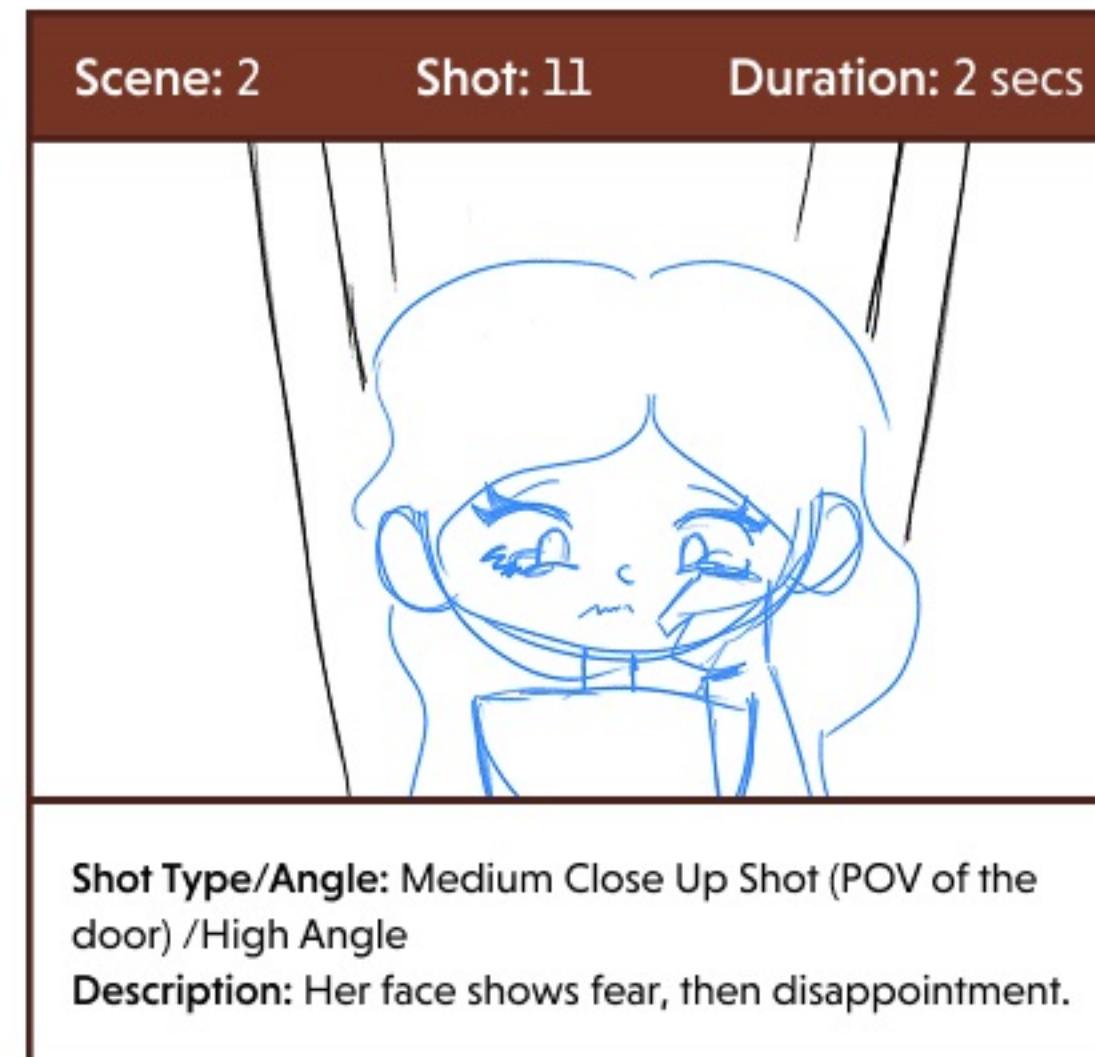
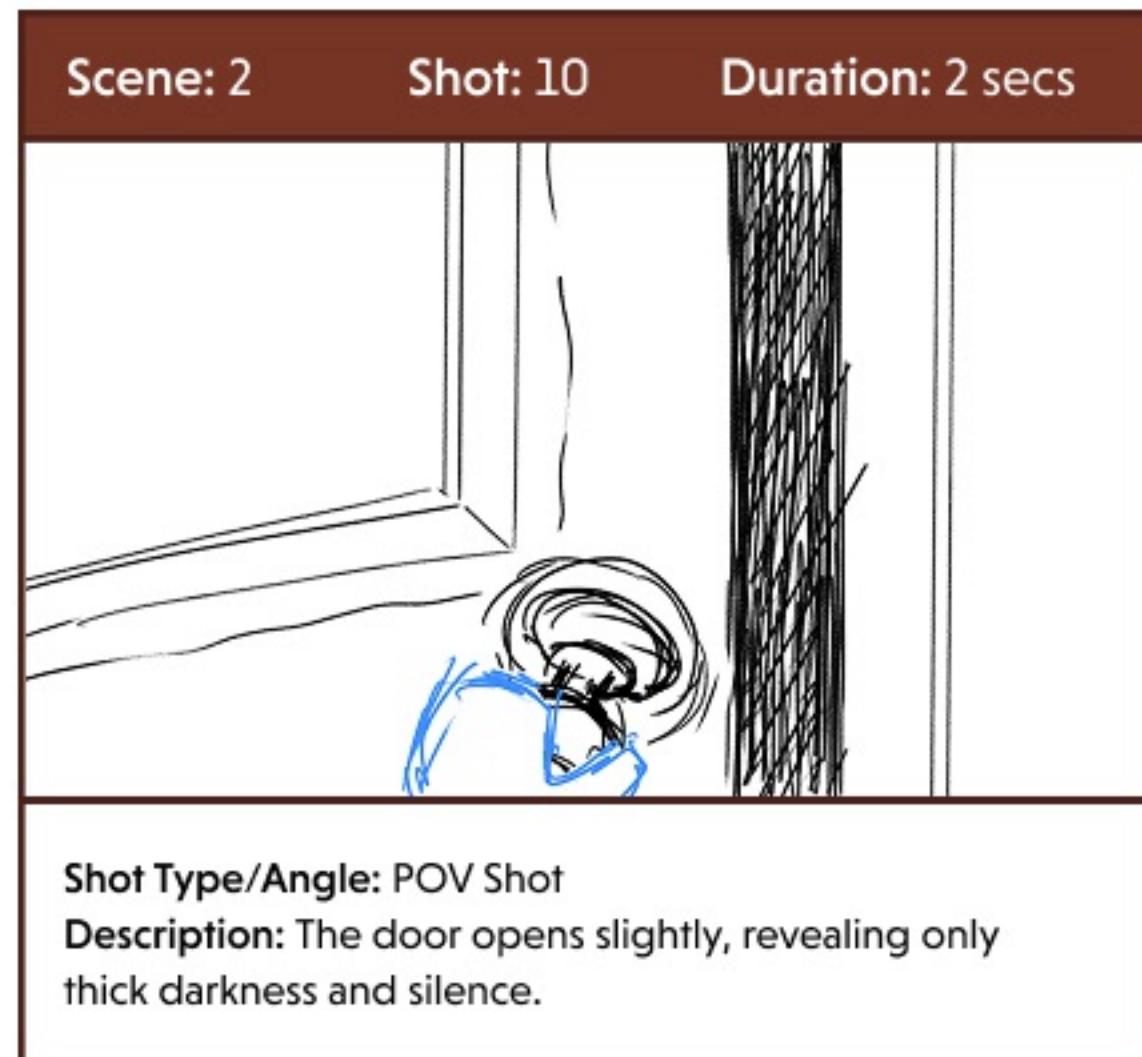
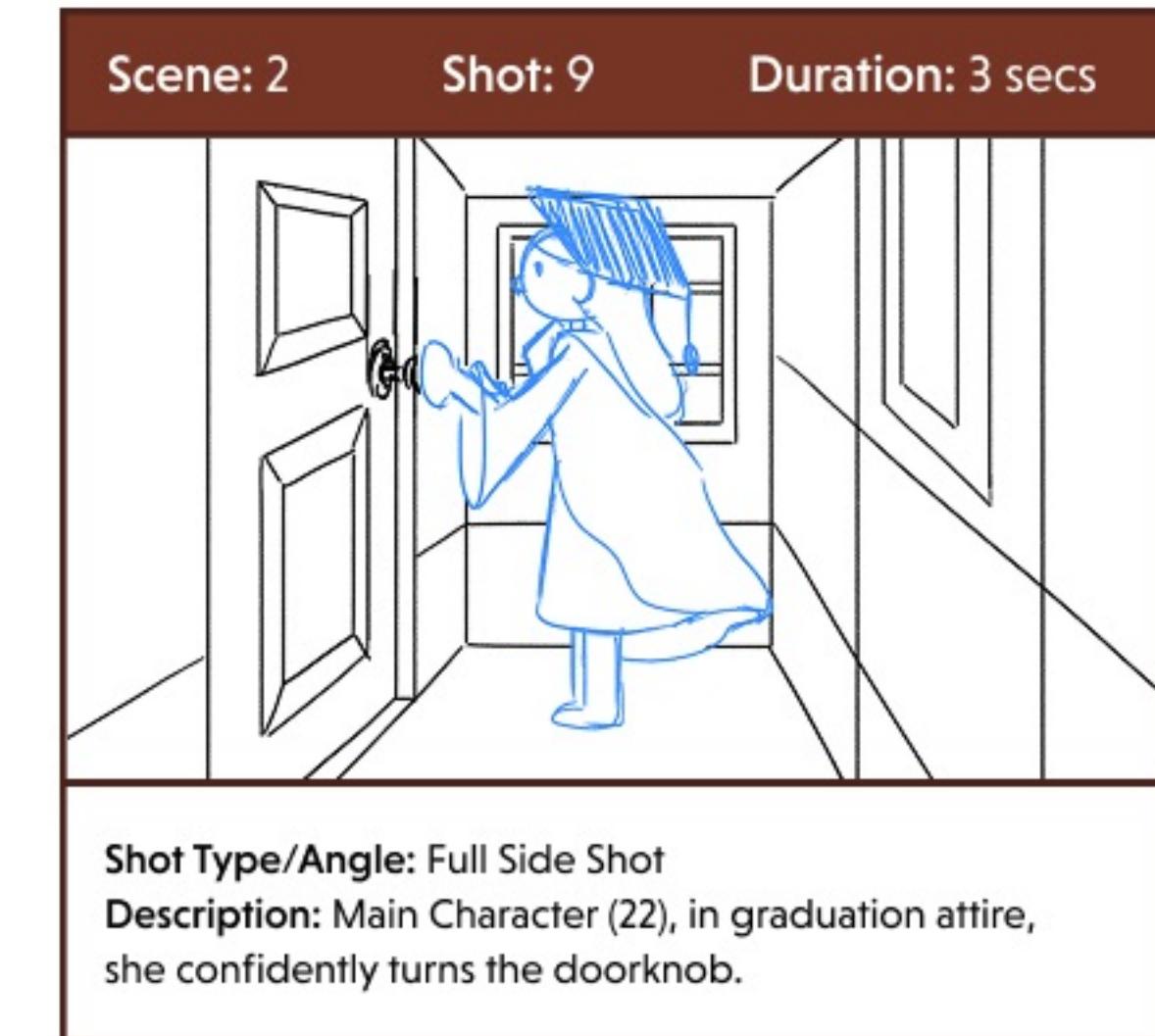
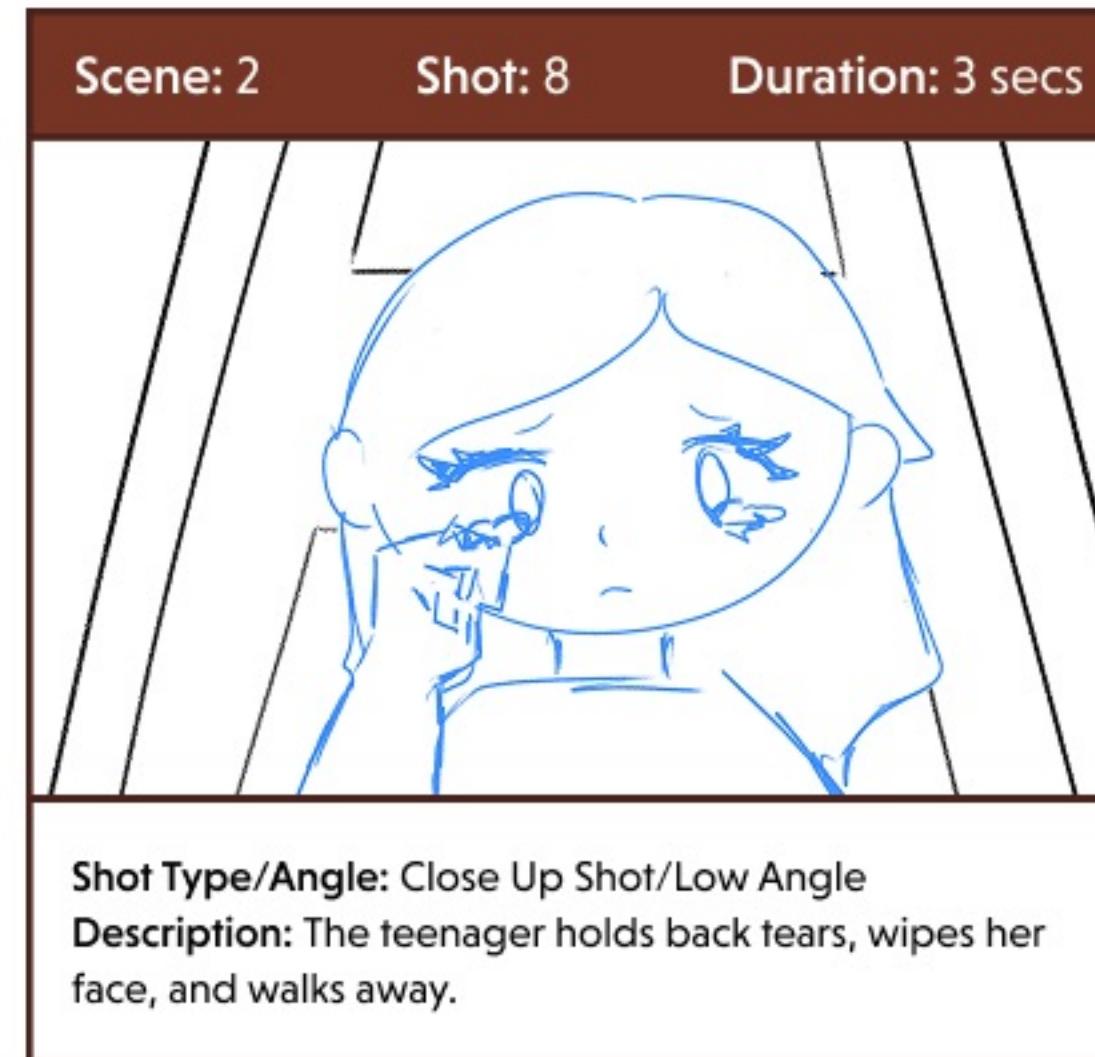
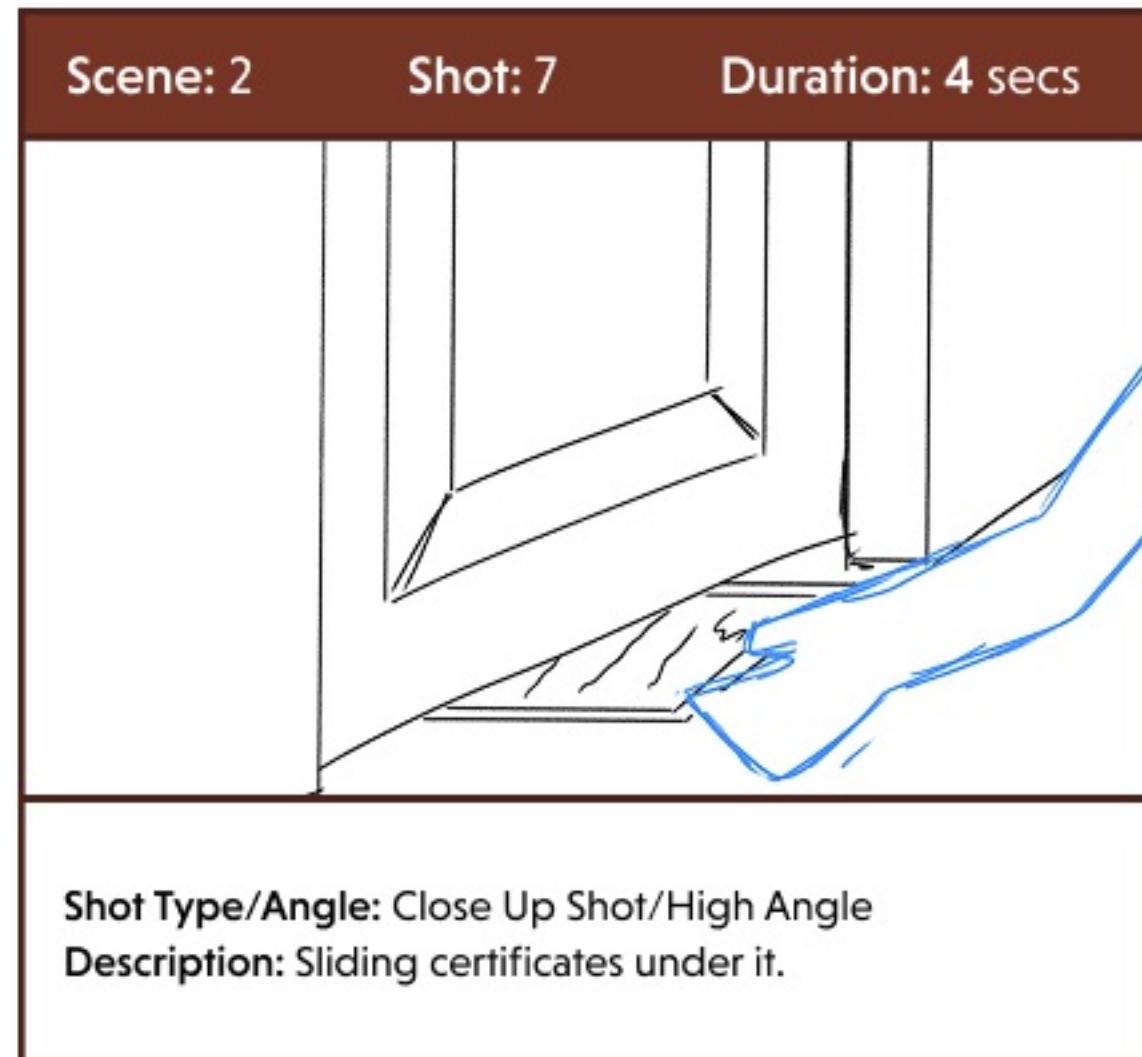
This act of self-compassion brings stillness, resolution, and a sense of closure, suggesting that healing comes from facing the past with gentleness, not fear.

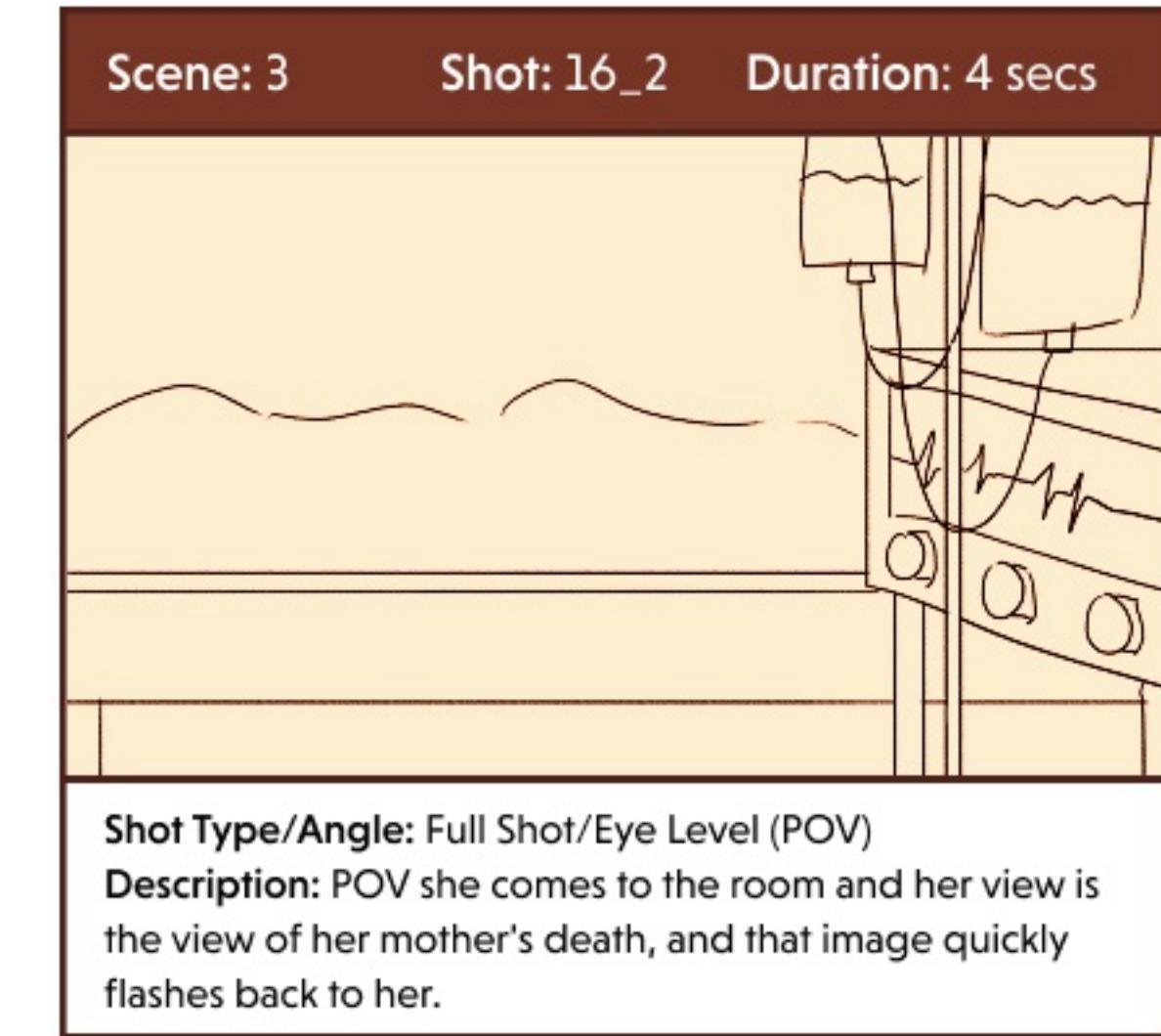
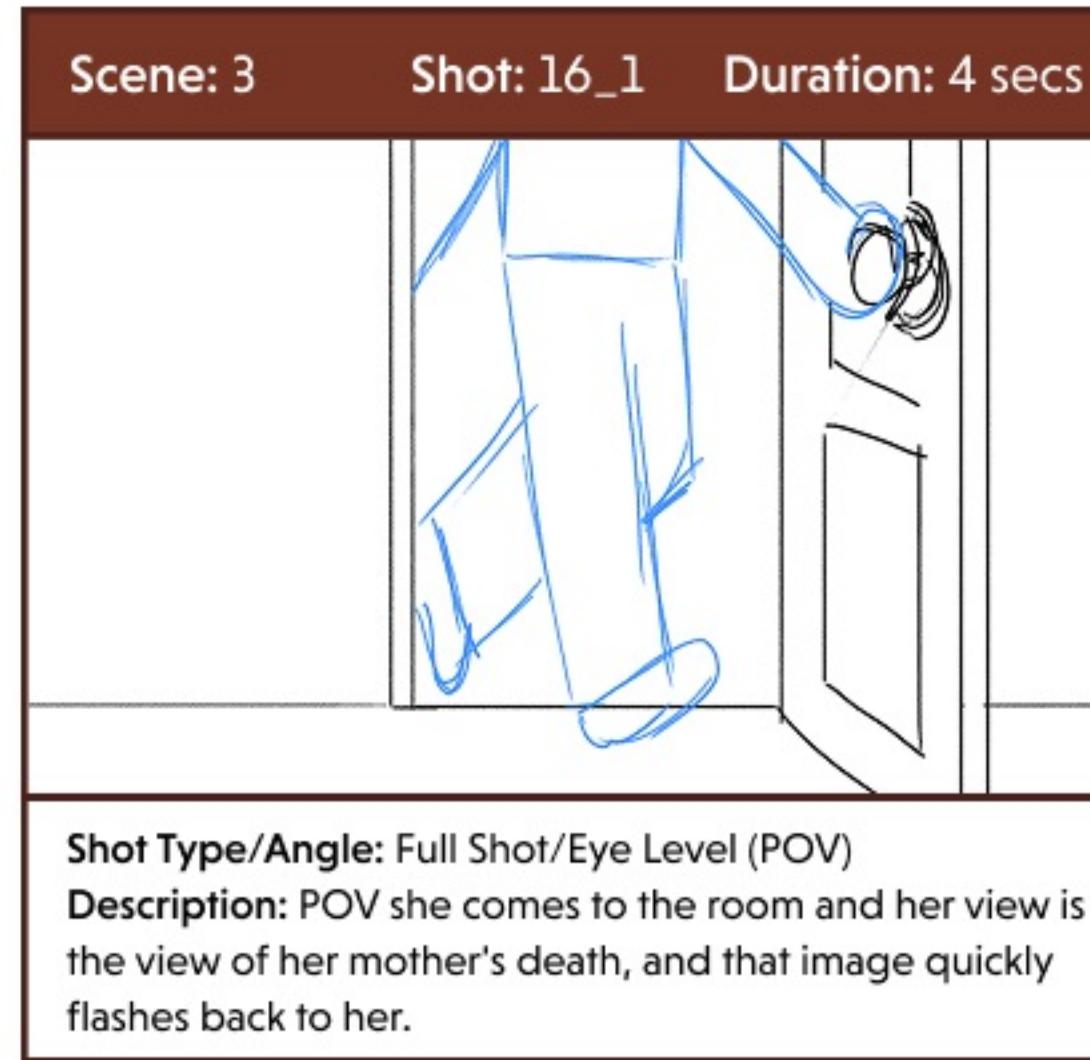
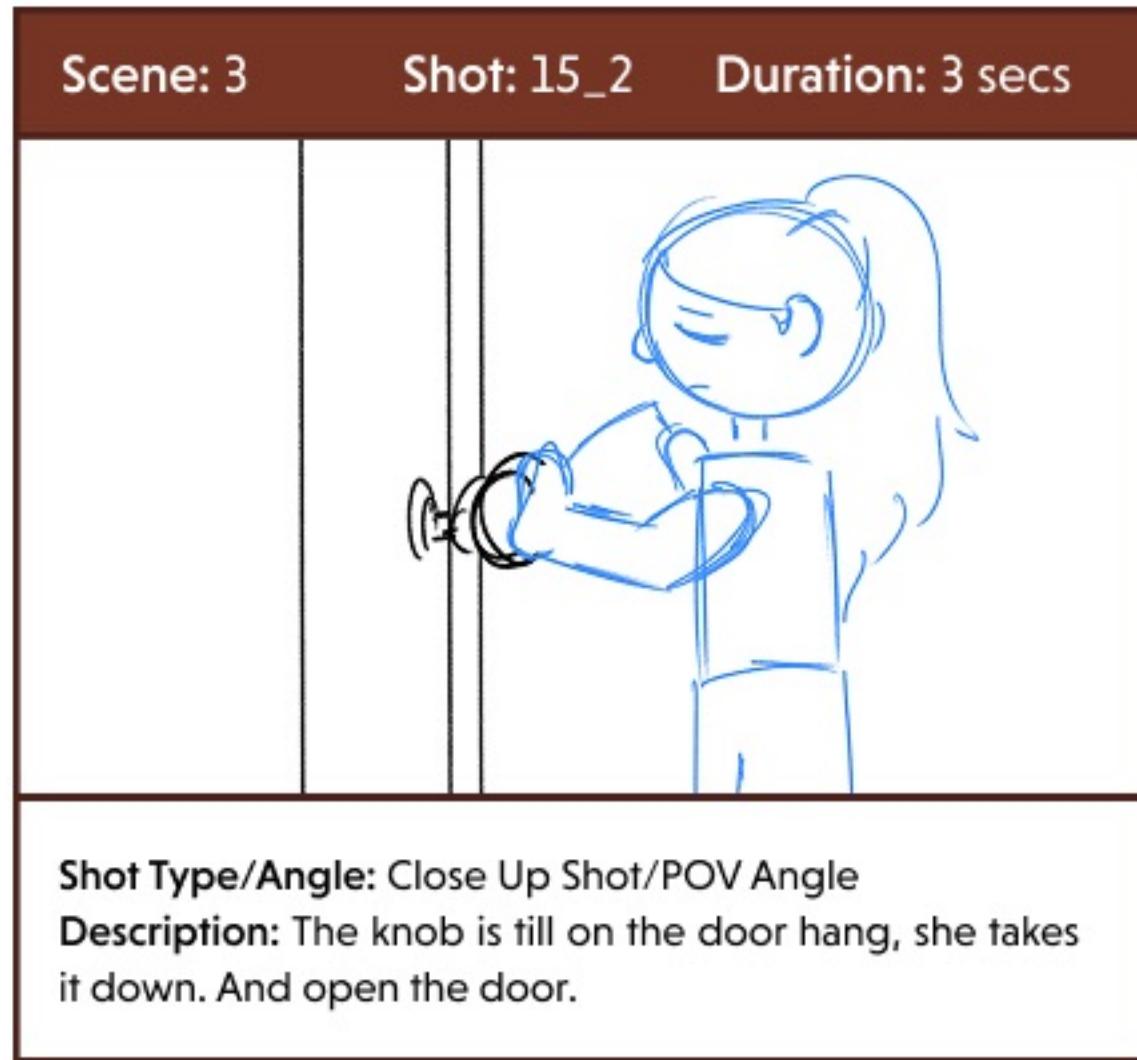
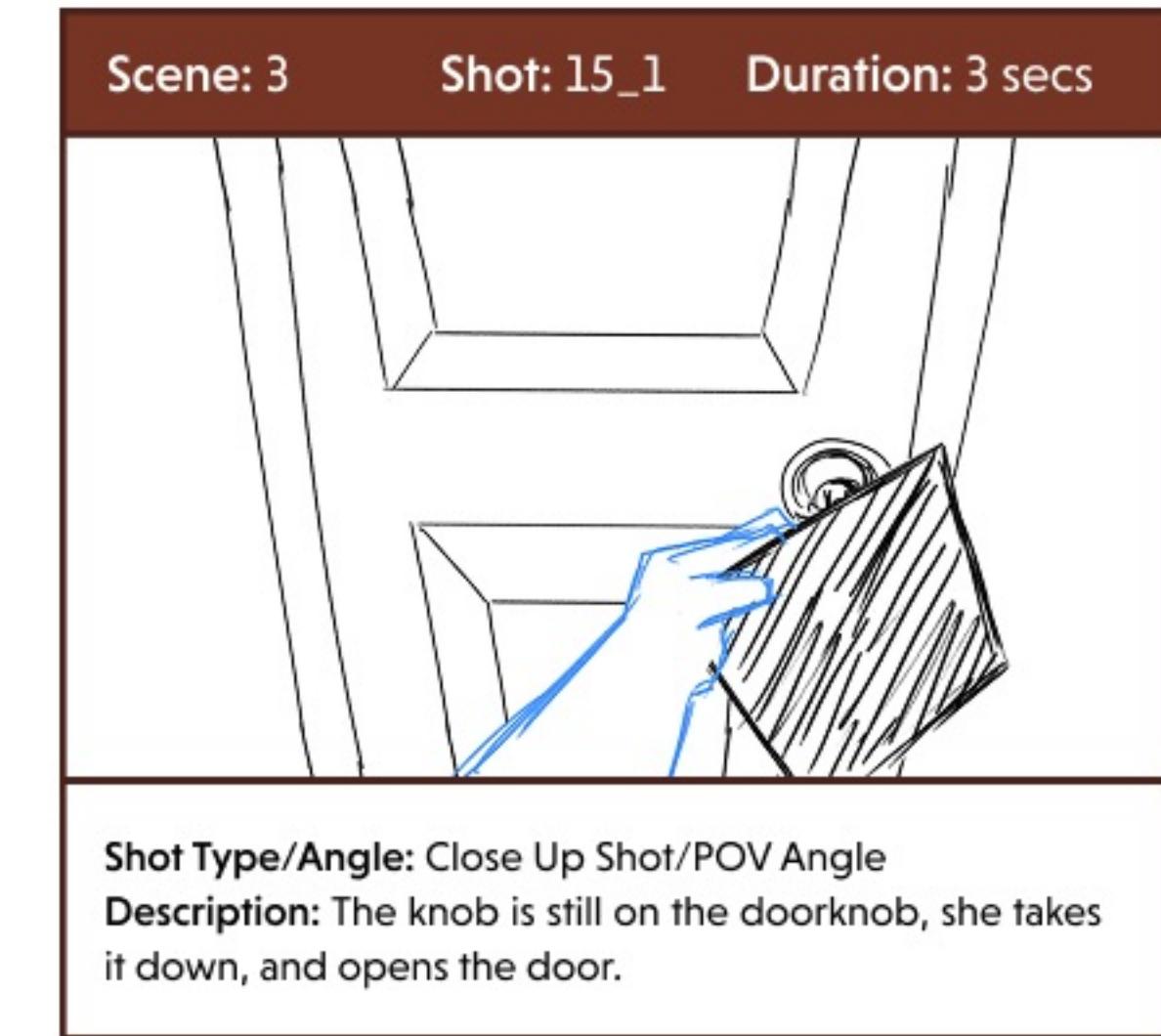
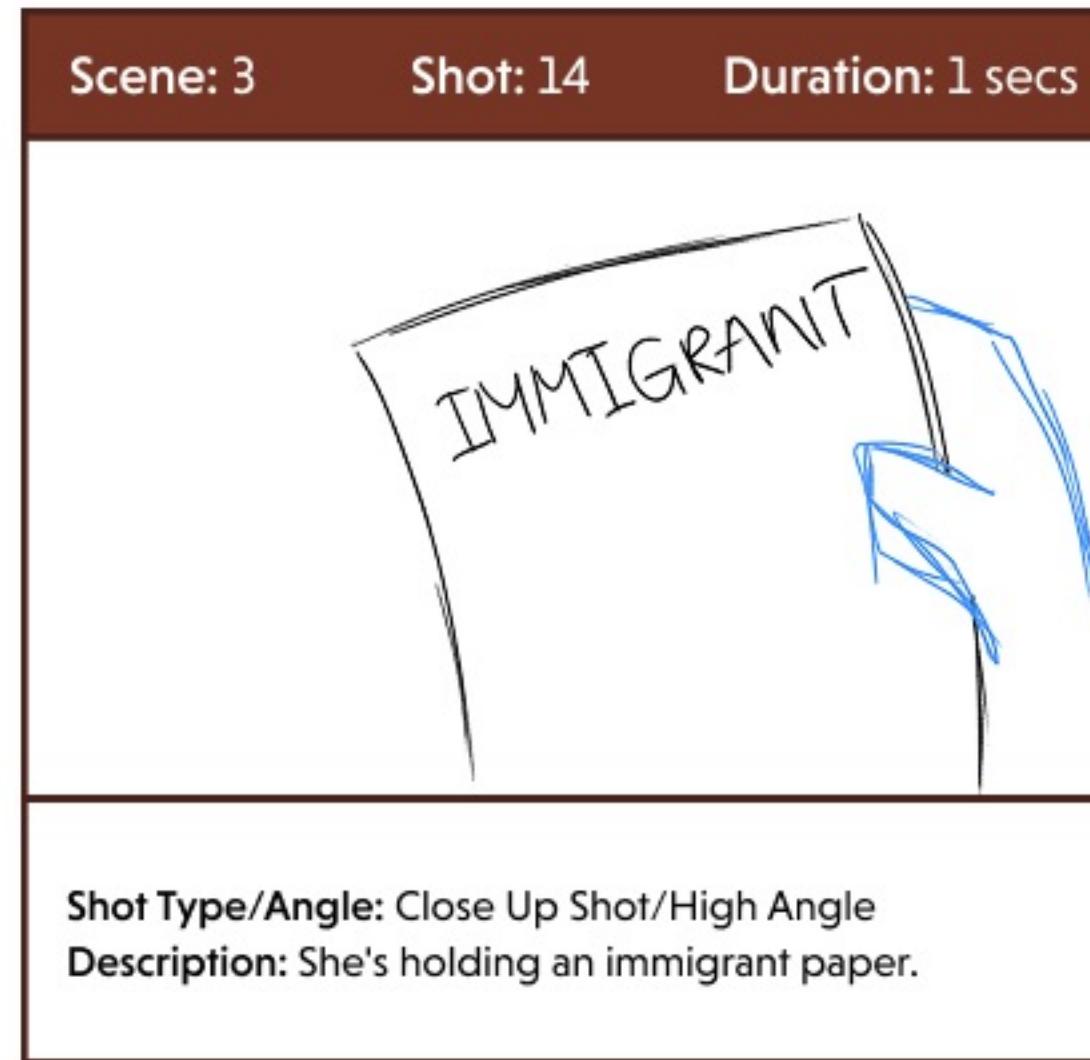
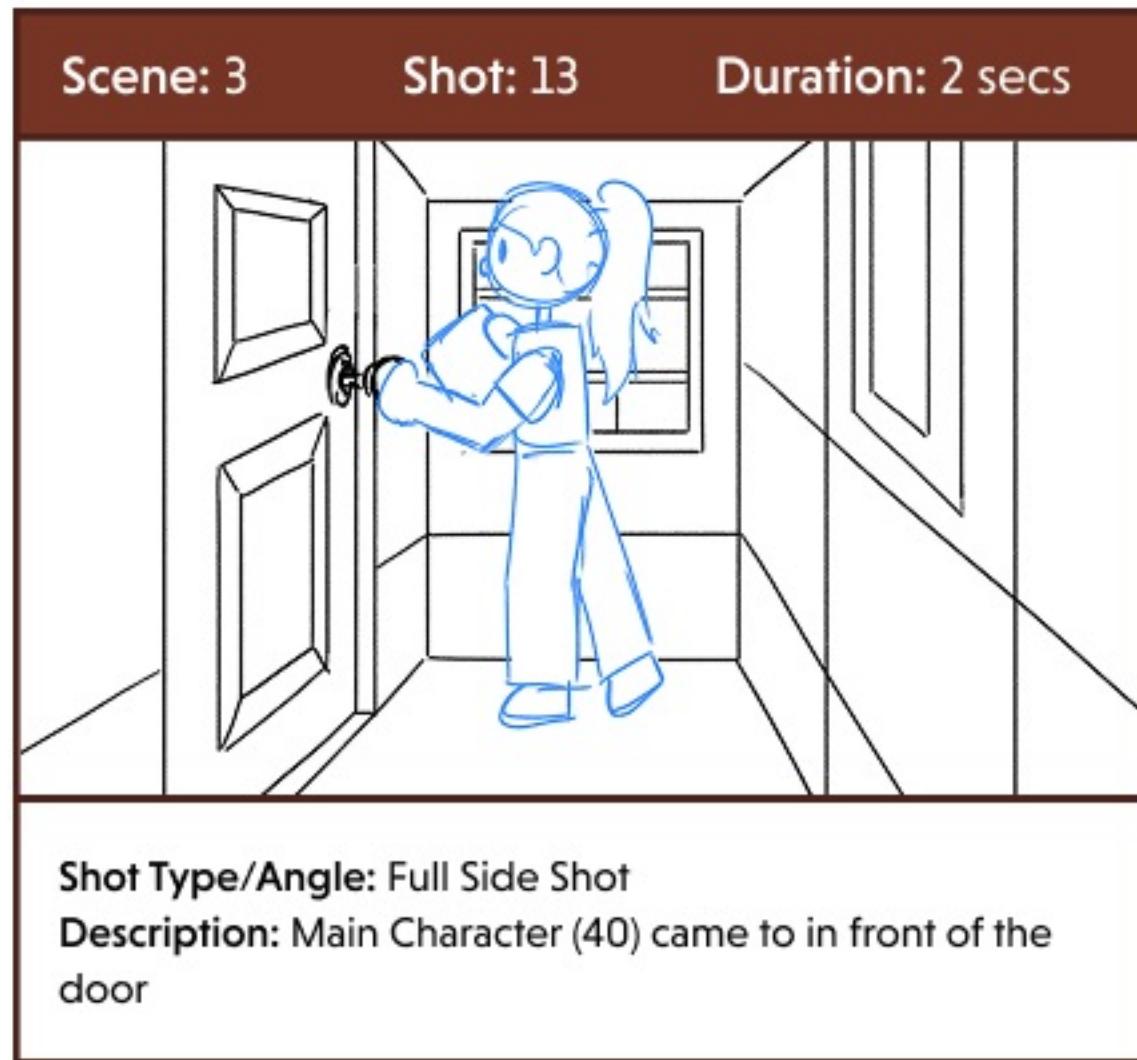


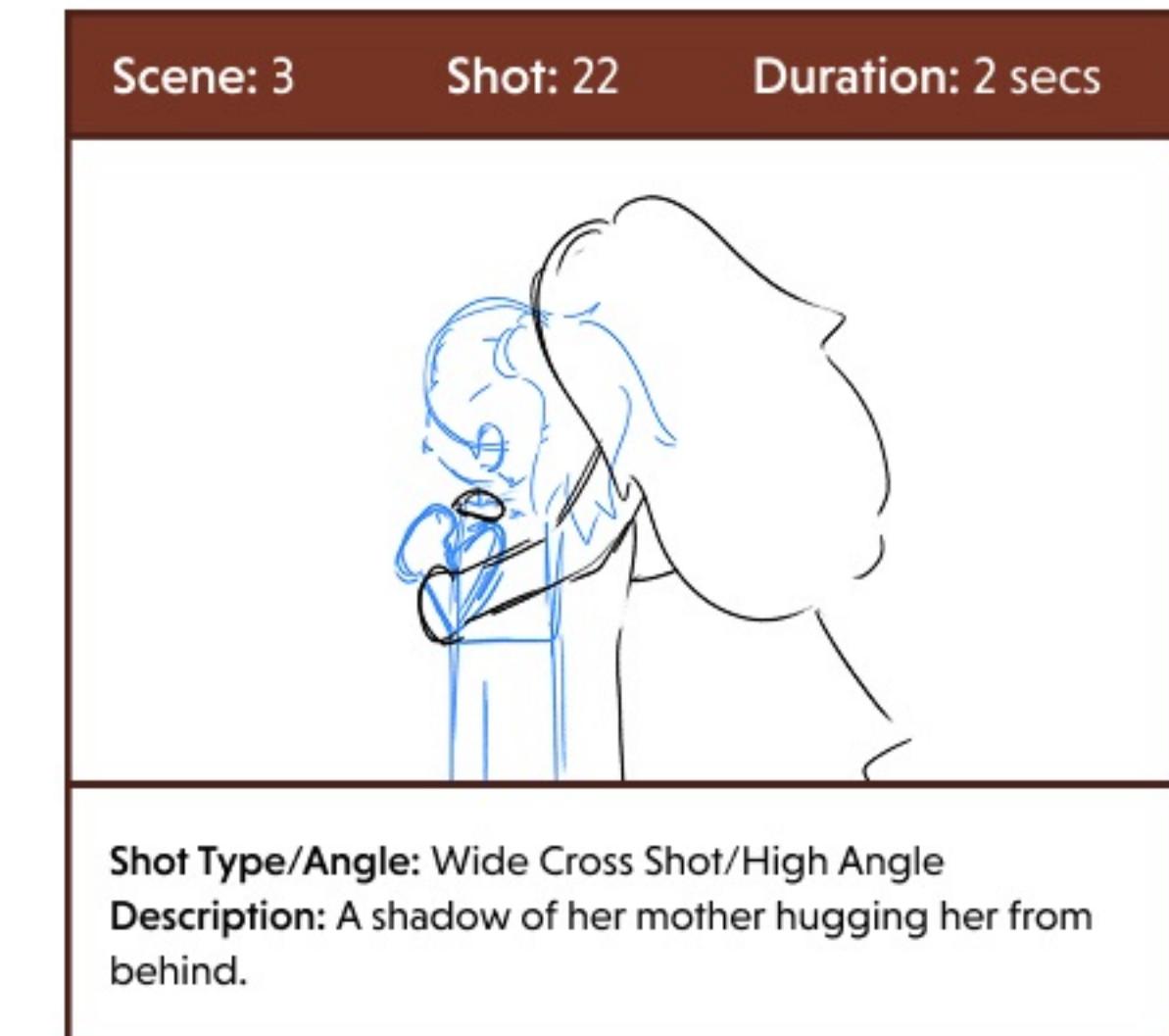
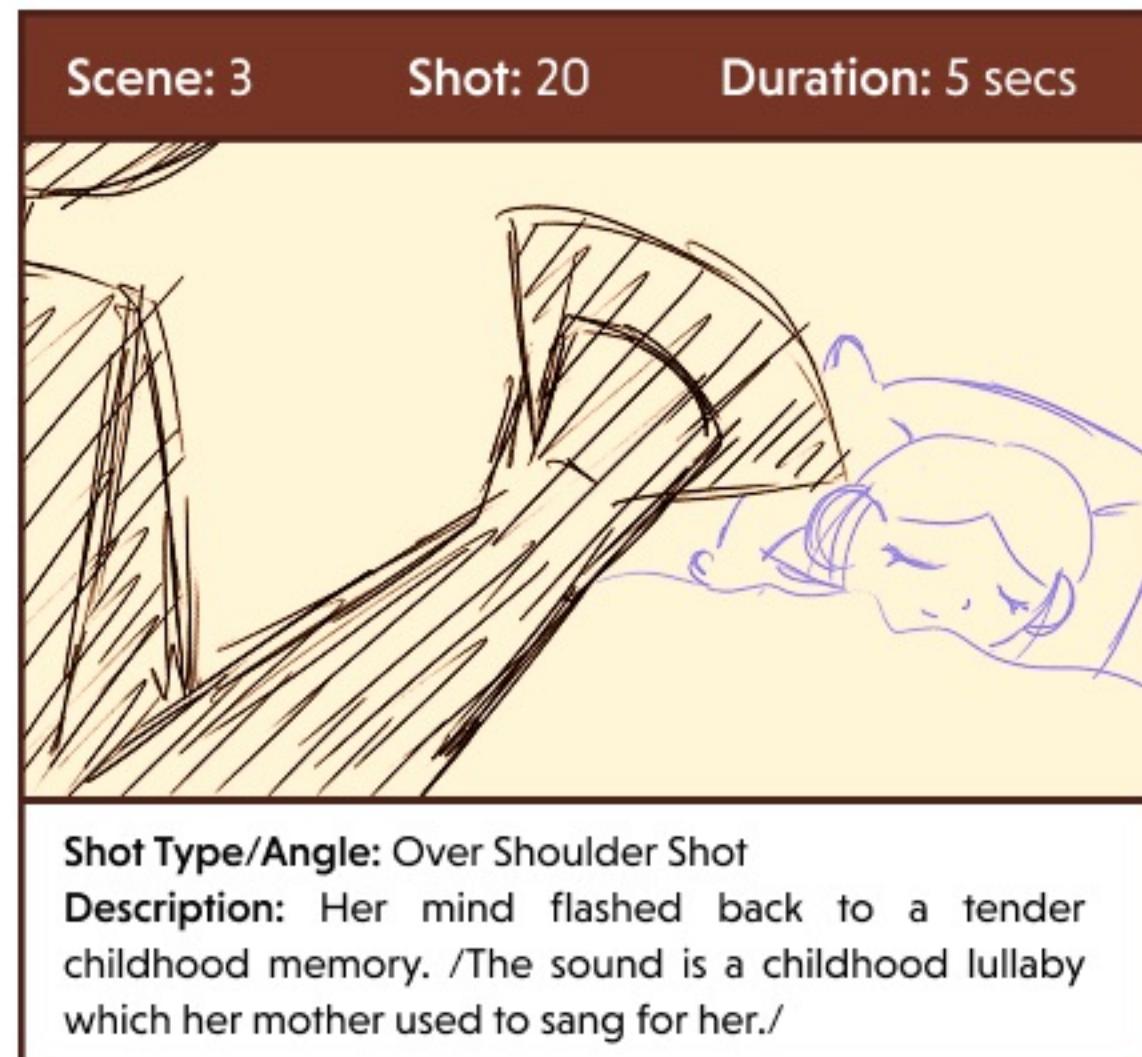
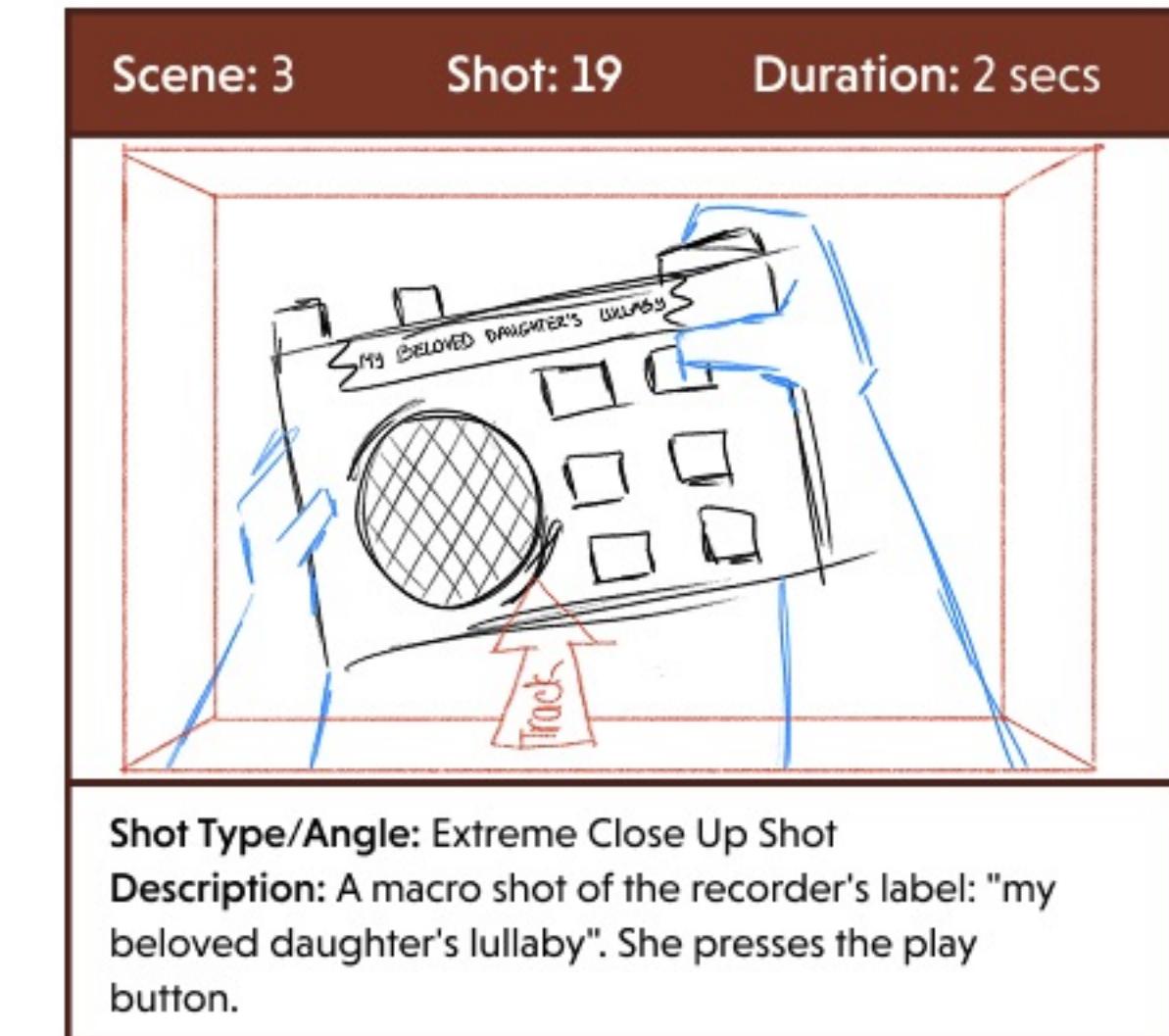
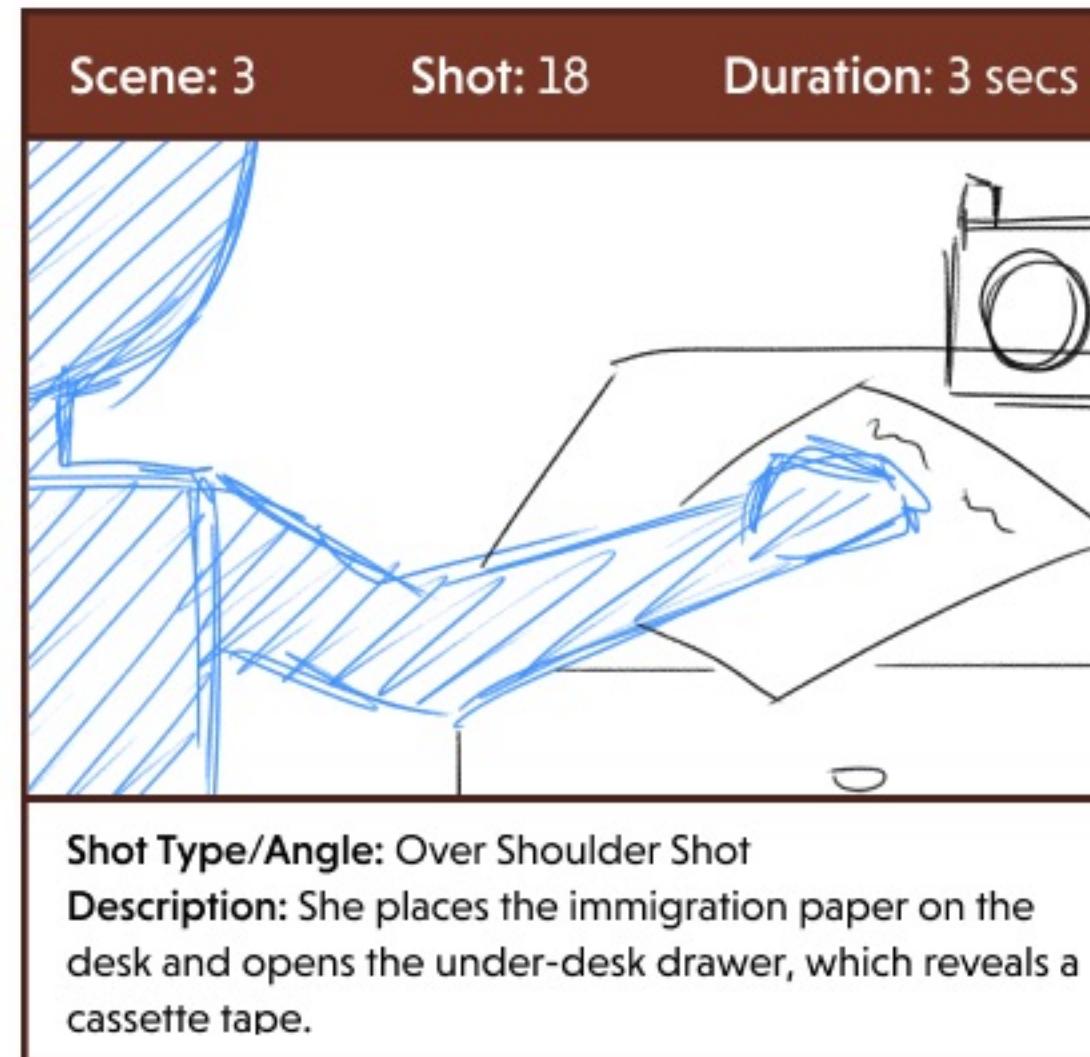
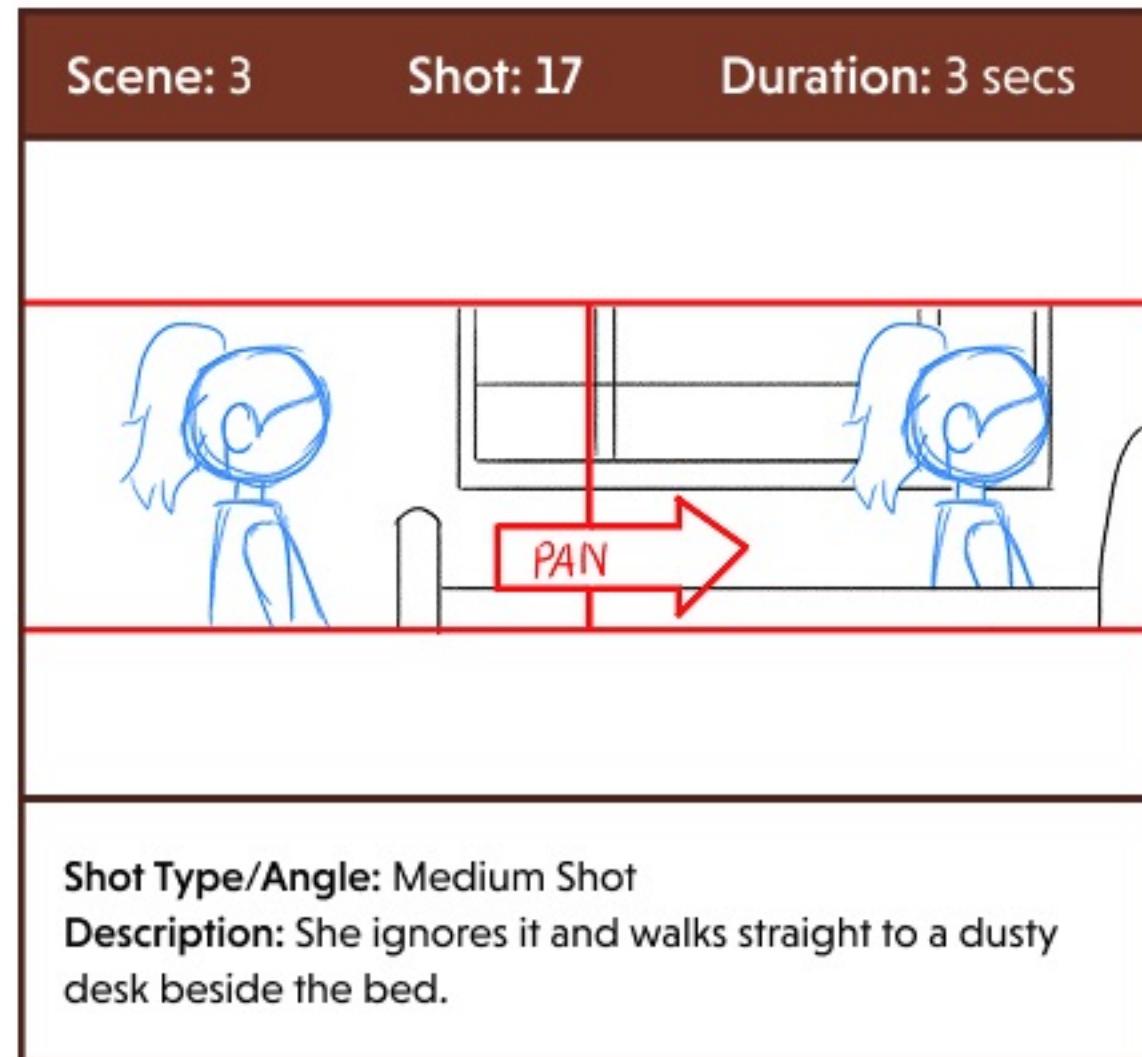
# THREE ACT STRUCTURE

# STORYBOARD









# CHARACTER DESIGN

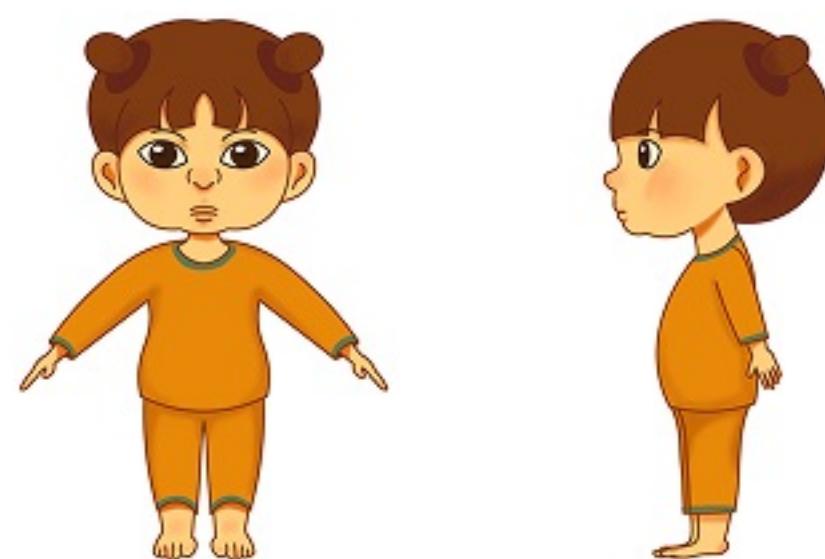
## main character (daughter)

**Name:** Thy

**Age Range:** Shown at 7, 16, 22, and 35+.

**Characteristic:** Sensitive & observant, reserved but strong, deeply introspective, emotional resilience, nurturing.

**Visual Notes:** Signature short brown hair through all ages – a symbol of continuity. Often barefoot or in soft fabrics, adding to a dreamlike, grounded quality.



# CHARACTER DESIGN

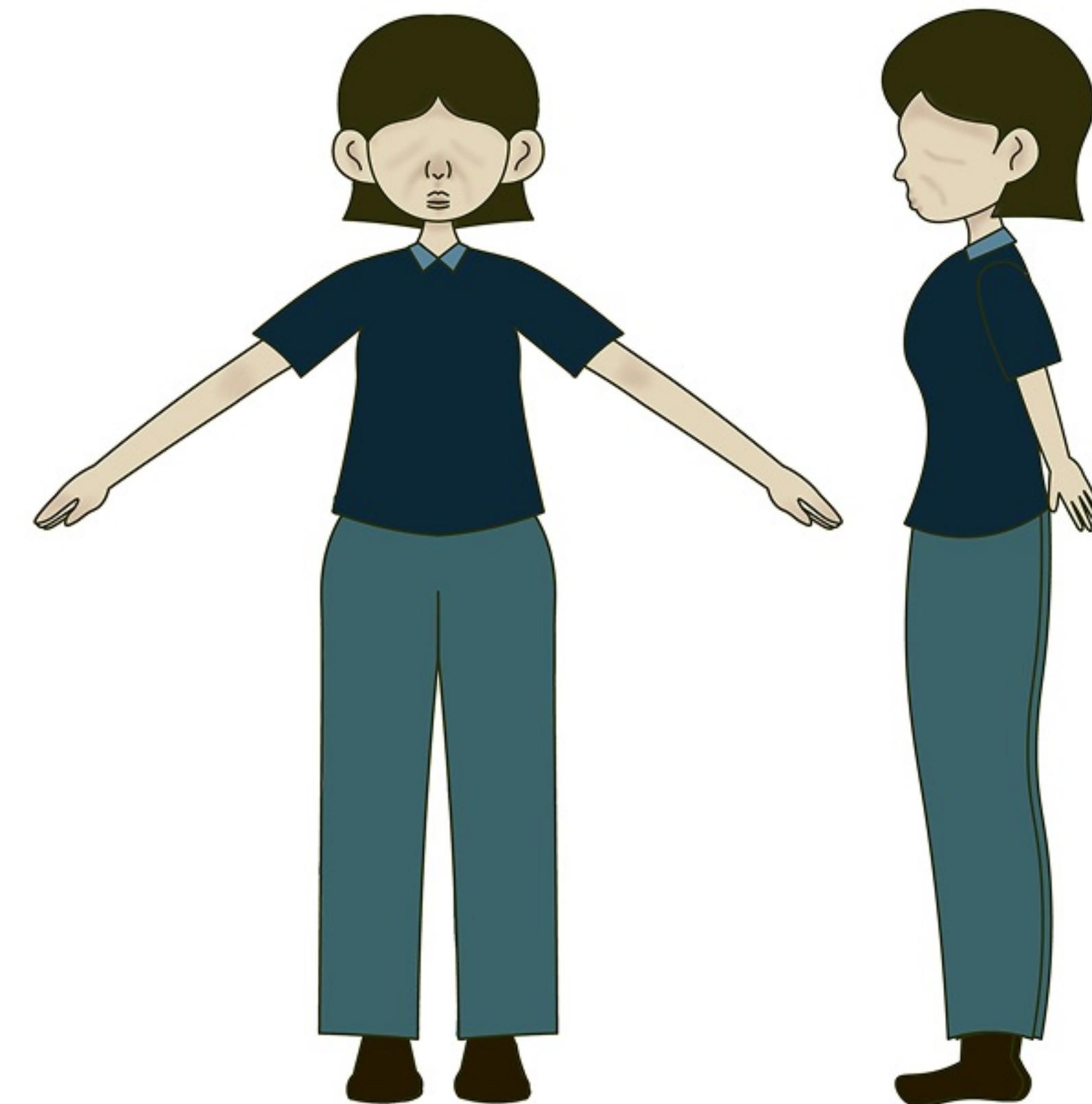
## support character (mom)

**Name:** Unknown

**Age Range:** Late 30s to early 40s in memories.

**Characteristic:** Distant but not cruel, structured and practical, quiet presence, mysterious.

**Visual Notes:** Often bathed in soft or diffused light – viewed from a distance or through a crack in the door. Wears pale or muted tones, blending into the sterile or dreamlike background – more memory than flesh-and-blood.



# REFERENCE WORK

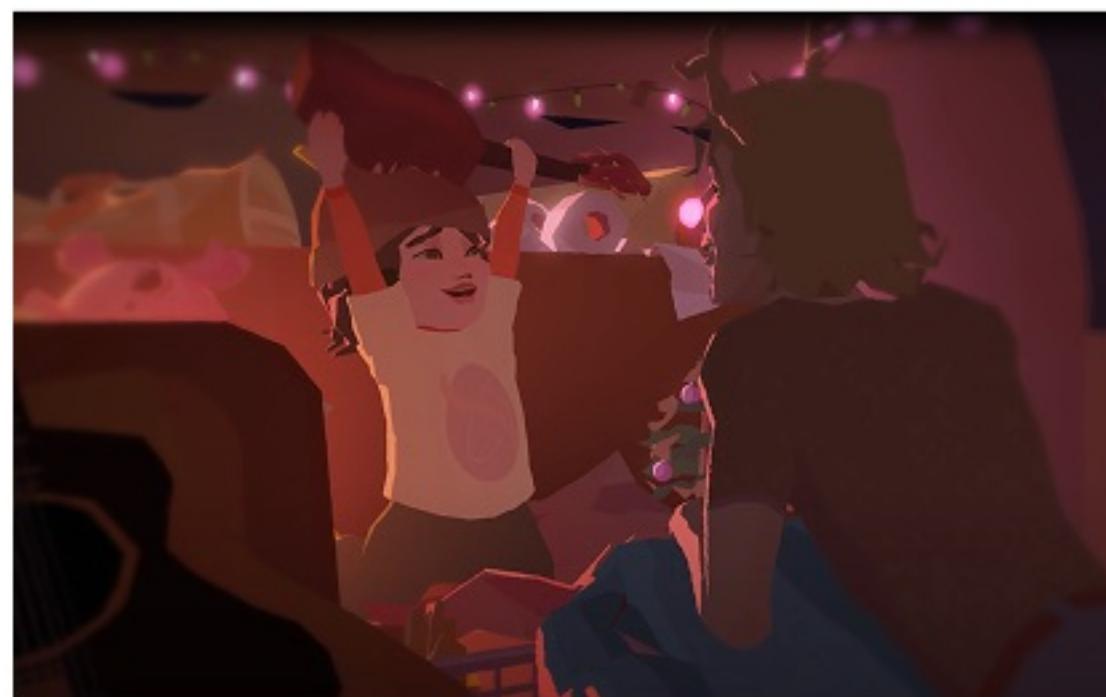
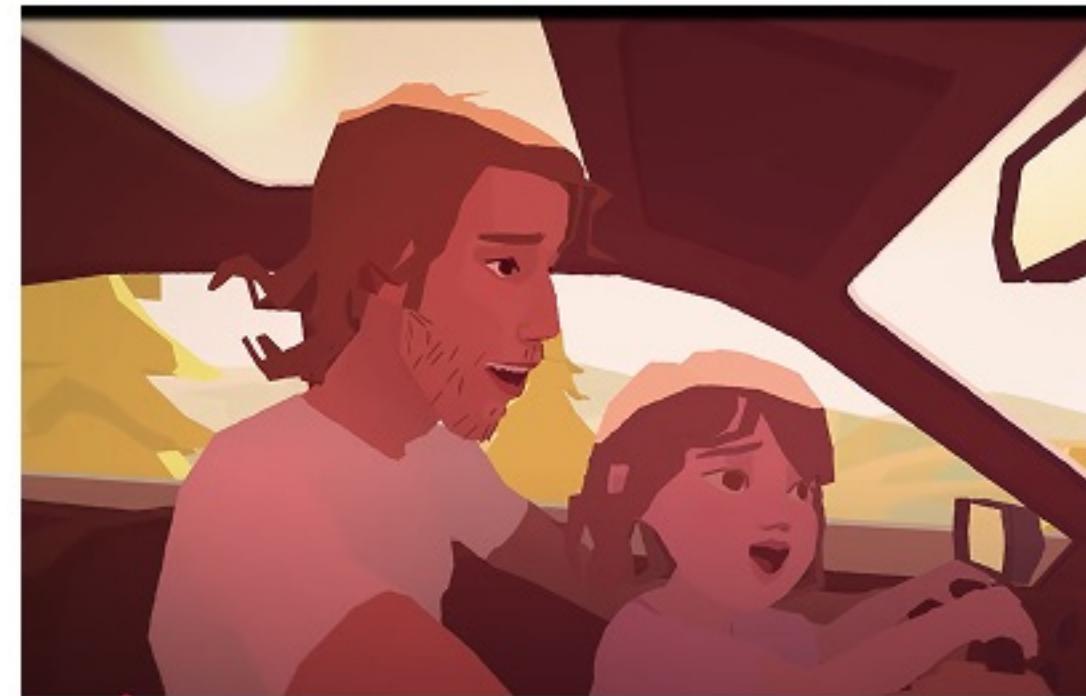
# STORYTELLING REFERENCE



**The House of Small Cubes by Kunio Katō (2008)**

This short animation follows a poor elderly man who dives through the submerged levels of his home, each level representing a layer of his past and his lost family. It's a metaphorical journey through memory and sorrow, ending with a quiet, peaceful acceptance of his solitude and mortality, which has a similar storytelling style and inspiration for our story a lot.

# STORYTELLING REFERENCE



## Pearl (2016)

This film tells a story of a father-daughter relationship through the changing interior of a car over many years. While not directly about death, it beautifully captures the passing of time, the loss of a parent, and the way grief lives on through memories. As the daughter returns to the car after her father's death, the story shifts into a moment of silent, powerful acceptance, she drives forward, carrying his love with her.

# STORYTELLING REFERENCE



## If Anything Happens I Love You (2020)

This animation portrays parents grieving the loss of their child in a school shooting. The film expresses the raw stages of grief from denial, guilt, anger, and finally, a fragile acceptance. It's haunting, quiet, and devastating, but ultimately leads to a moment of emotional reconnection and healing.

## Luca by Andrea Warren (2021)

We were inspired by the character design, which effectively conveys personality and regional origin through clothing. The stylized, yet understandable, aesthetic clearly establishes the setting.

Furthermore, the seamless sea-to-human transformations, a testament to thoughtful rigging, are particularly impressive. The film's warm, painterly lighting and vibrant Italian Riviera textures create a living, breathing environment, further enhanced by subtle secondary animations and well-timed pauses that bring the world to life.



# ANIMATION REFERENCE

## UP by Pete Docter (2009)

We were inspired by the character design, which uses stylized proportions to instantly communicate personality and emotional arc. Carl's square, rigid frame contrasts beautifully with Russell's round, energetic form, visually reinforcing their opposing worldviews. Clothing and posture further reflect age, status, and personal history in a clear way.

We also inspired from the film's color palette, which combine both muted, dusty interiors and lush, saturated environments. There're also lots of subtle environmental animation, like the flutter of balloons enhance the movie interesting and atmosphere.

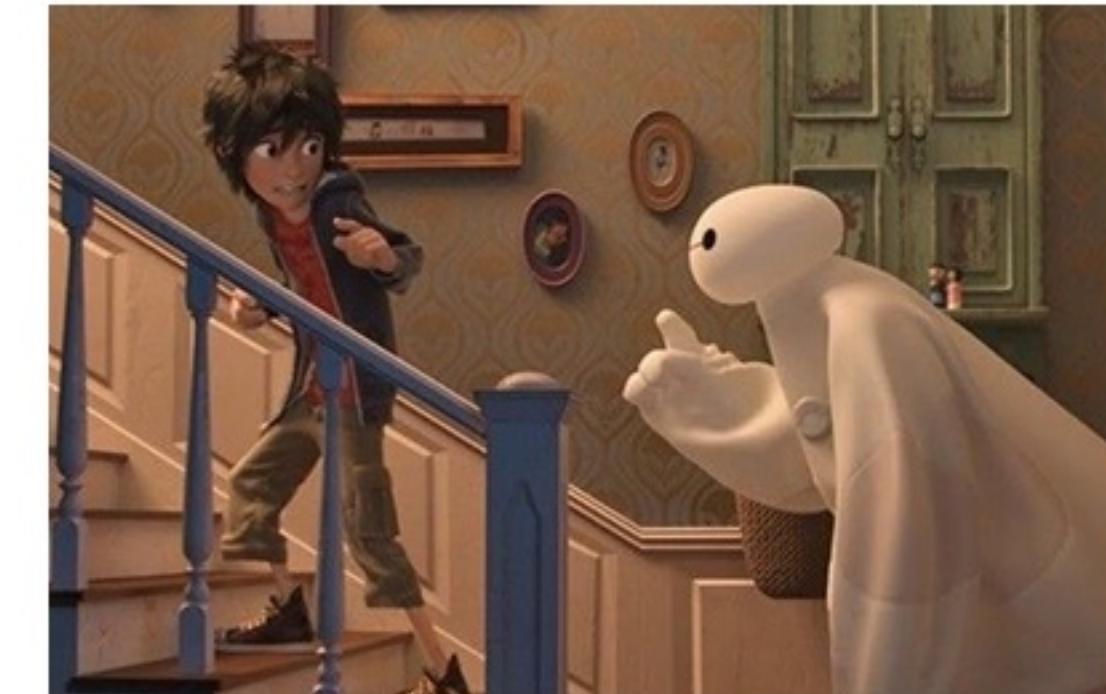


# ANIMATION REFERENCE

## Big Hero 6 by Don Hall & Chris Williams (2014)

We were inspired by how character design and motion reflect personality - Hiro's sharp movements show his energy, while Baymax's soft shape and gentle gestures convey warmth and care. This helped us consider how posing and design choices can express emotion and relationships in our own characters.

We also drew from the film's balance of dynamic action and subtle, emotional moments, especially in how Baymax communicates through small, meaningful movements.

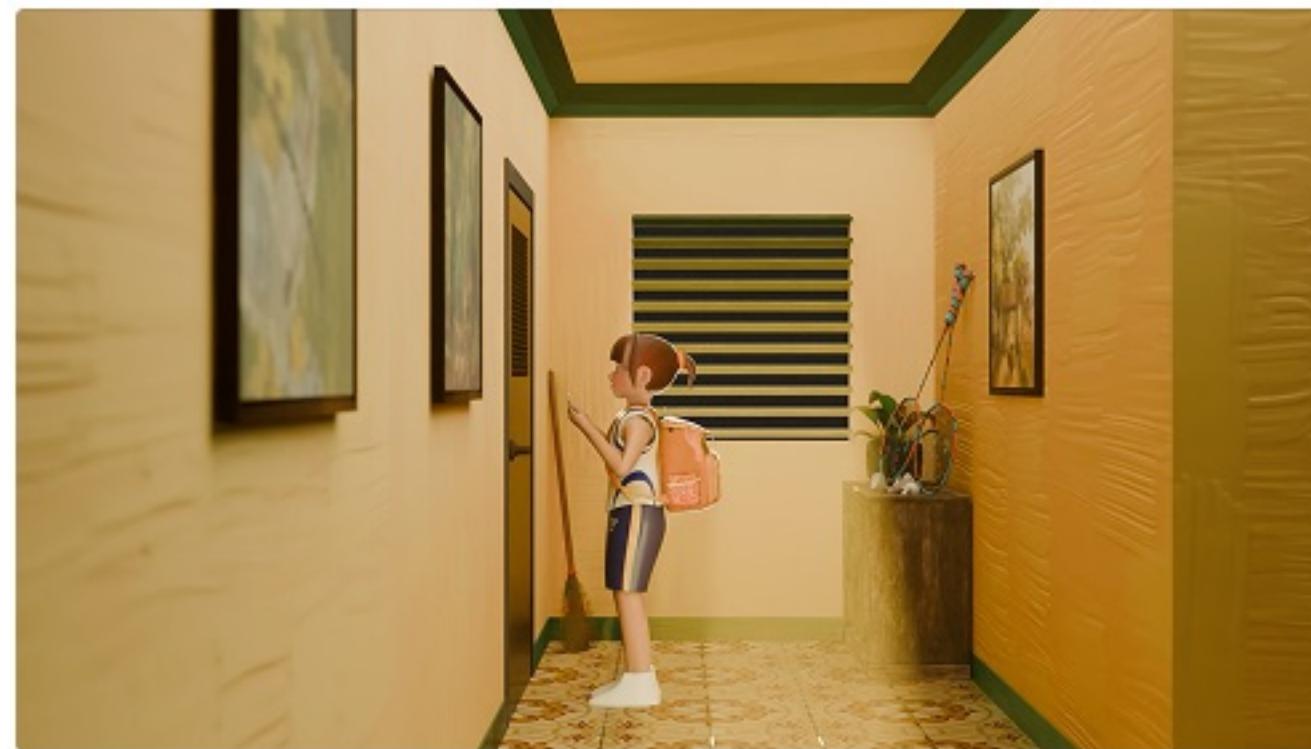


# ANIMATION REFERENCE

### Before



The mom's death isn't real, the kid's facial expression is stiff



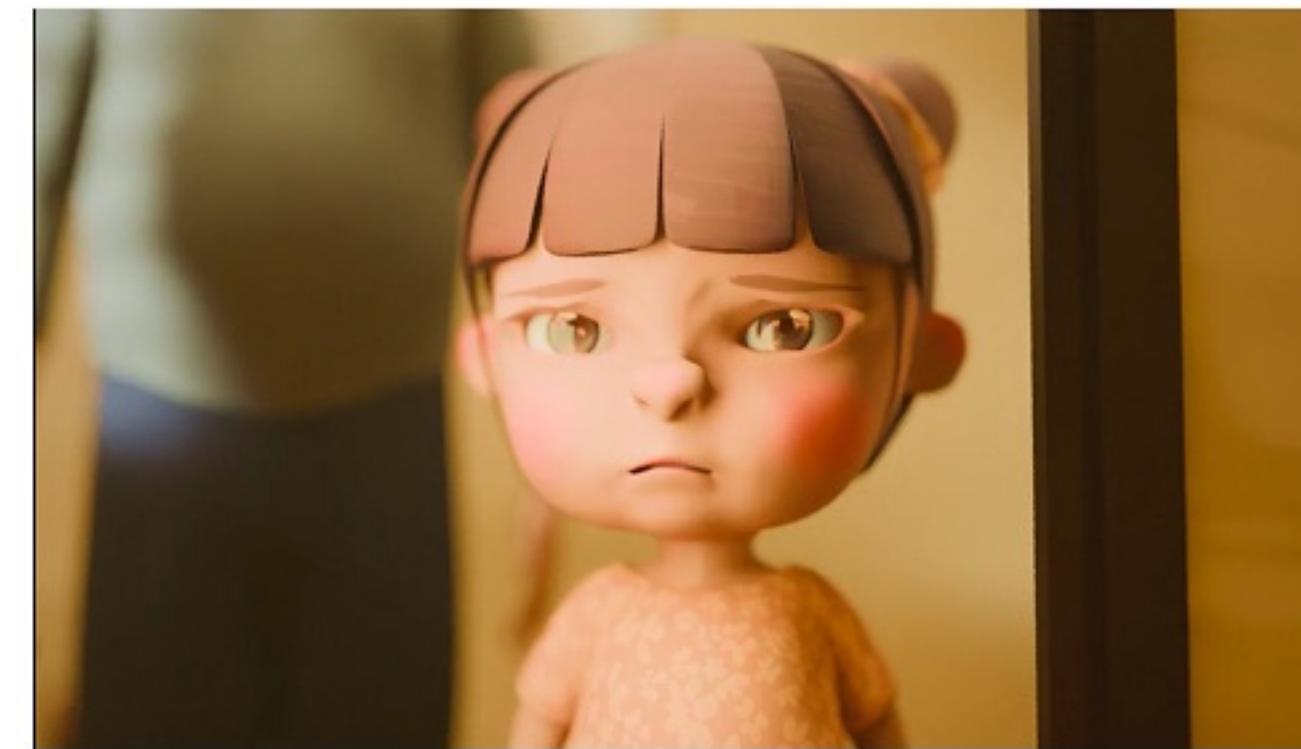
There are too many different light settings and the visual development isn't consistent between scenes

# ITERATION

## After



Add people's panicked voices



The facial expression is more dramatic



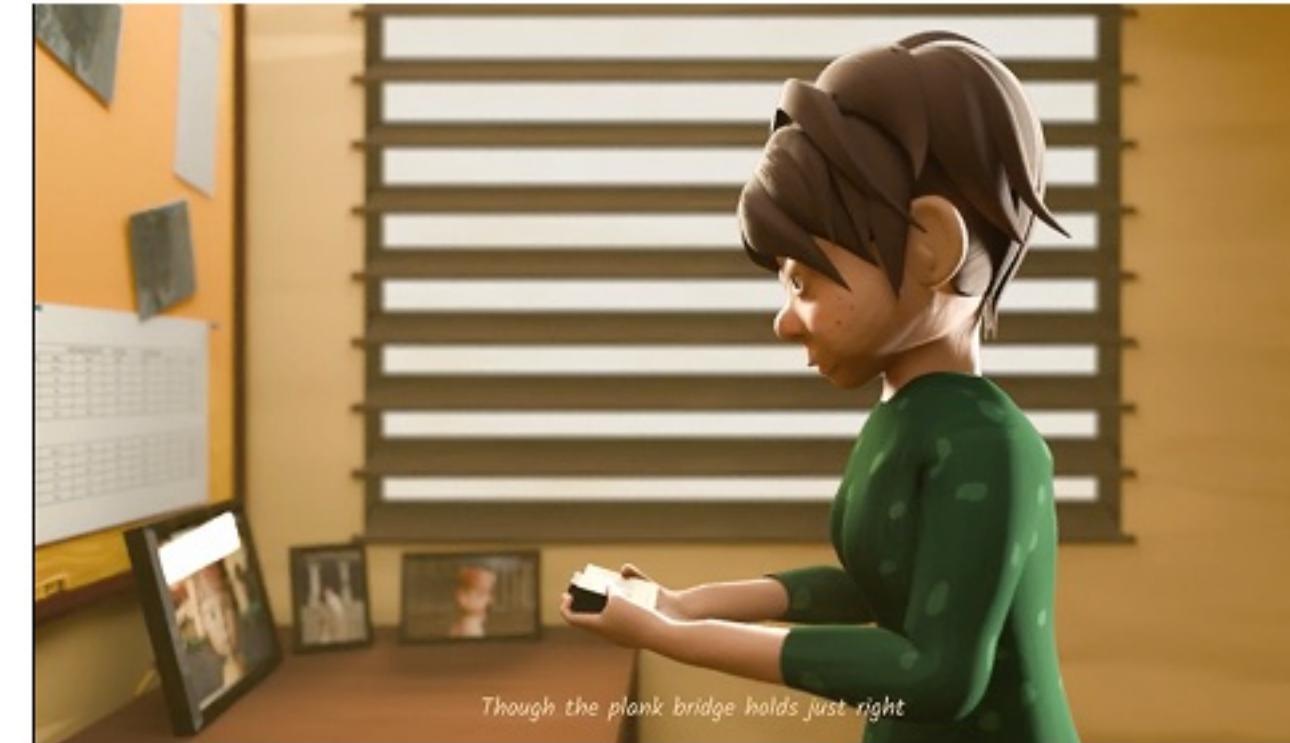
Reduce the number of light settings and use the same color grading setting for all the scenes.



# ITERATION



**FINAL LOOK DEVELOPMENT**



# FINAL LOOK DEVELOPMENT

# PROJECT TIMELINE

7/7	14/7	21/7	28/7	4/8	11/8	18/8	25/8	1/9	8/9	15/9
Concept										
	Character + Background Design			Animatic				Production		
							Render			
									Recheck	

## Modeling

- **Initial Workflow and Methodology:** Our creation process begins with a 2D sketch that serves as the primary reference for the 3D model. We deliberately chose traditional polygon modeling over sculpting, as this aligns better with our team's core skills and allows for a more controlled and precise construction of the character's geometry.
- **Hair Creation Technique:** A specific technique was employed for the hair, which involved meticulously drawing individual lines and curves. The intention was to later convert this line work into a solid 3D mesh, a method chosen to achieve a particular stylized look for the hair strands.
- **Technical Challenges and Optimization:** This line-to-mesh conversion process presented a significant technical hurdle. The resulting mesh map was extremely dense, leading to performance issues and difficulties in management. A substantial amount of effort was dedicated to troubleshooting and optimizing this dense geometry to make it workable for the final model.

# REFLECTION

## Texturing

- **Establishing Mood and Tone:** Our primary artistic goal was to evoke a warm, summery atmosphere. This was achieved through a carefully selected color palette featuring warm hues and soft lighting choices applied during the texturing phase to influence the overall mood of the final render.
- **Artistic Style and Application:** To enhance the artistic feel, we incorporated painterly aesthetics by using custom brush stroke textures. This technique was applied across various surfaces to give the model a unique, hand-crafted appearance, moving away from photorealism and towards a more stylized, illustrative look.
- **Cultural and Temporal Representation:** A key focus was to ground the character in a specific identity—a Vietnamese person from the 2010s. This was meticulously handled through the skin texturing, where we paid close attention to tones, undertones, and subtle surface details to create an authentic and believable representation that aligns with our vision.

## REFLECTION

## Sound Design

- **Core Musical Elements:** The foundation of our sound design is built upon two key Vietnamese cultural elements: a traditional lullaby and the distinct, melodic sound of the "đàn tranh" (a Vietnamese zither). These were chosen specifically for their ability to create a deeply resonant and culturally specific atmosphere.
- **Intended Emotional Impact:** Our strategic use of the lullaby and "đàn tranh" was intended to evoke a strong sense of nostalgia and reminiscence, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own past experiences and memories of family. The goal was to create a soundscape that feels both personal and universally relatable to themes of home and childhood.
- **Feedback and Refinement:** We received critical feedback regarding the child's vocal performance, noting that the singing rhythm felt unnatural and the vocal tone was too deep for a character of her age. In response to this, we have already made specific adjustments to the audio, refining the rhythm and modulating the voice to better suit the character and enhance the overall naturalism of the sound design.

# REFLECTION

## Lighting

- **Establishing a Warm and Consistent Atmosphere:** Our primary lighting strategy was to develop a system dominated by warm colors, such as soft yellows and oranges. This was done to evoke a gentle, nostalgic, and comfortable mood throughout all the scenes, ensuring a visually cohesive experience for the viewer.
- **Simulating Natural Sunlight:** A key element of our design involved crafting the light coming from outside the window to realistically mimic natural sunlight. This required careful placement and adjustment of light sources to cast believable sunbeams and create a sense of a specific time of day, further enhancing the scene's realism.
- **Balancing Intensity and Saturation:** We meticulously managed the intensity of the lights to prevent the warm color palette from becoming oversaturated or "washed out." This involved a process of fine-tuning brightness and contrast levels to ensure that the lighting enhanced the scene's details and mood without overpowering the textures and character models.

# REFLECTION

## Animation

- **Initial Rigging and Weight Painting Challenges:** We encountered significant technical difficulties during the weight painting and character animation phases. These issues stemmed primarily from the auto-rigging solution provided by CloudRig, which proved to be sub-optimal for our specific character model, requiring extensive manual adjustments to achieve proper deformation.
- **Focus on Expressive Facial Animation:** A major priority was placed on the facial animation to ensure the character's emotions were conveyed with clarity and naturalism. We dedicated considerable effort to crafting subtle and believable expressions, as this was crucial for the audience to connect with the character on an emotional level.
- **Achieving Smooth and Intentional Body Movement:** The overall body movement was animated to be fluid and humanoid, avoiding any robotic or unnatural motion. Furthermore, we intentionally manipulated the speed and timing of actions, carefully pacing the animation to enhance the intended feeling and effectively deliver the core message of the narrative.

# REFLECTION

Our goal was to create an emotionally resonant piece with a nostalgic Vietnamese atmosphere, using warm lighting, painterly textures, and traditional sound design. A key challenge was authentically conveying deep emotions that we, as creators, had not heavily suffered through ourselves. In the animation phase, we focused on performance, understanding that the speed and ease of each movement were crucial pieces of the final message. While we know it is incredibly difficult to make a viewer feel a specific emotion, we put our best effort into crafting an authentic experience, hoping the intended feeling would connect and resonate with the audience.

## DISCUSSION

Big Hero 6 (2015), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692367/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Big Hero 6 Background Art (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692353/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Big Hero 6 Pc Wallpaper (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692380/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Disney Birthday Card (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/640285272062813684/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Ecosia - the search engine that plants trees (2020), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/346495765101286981/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Fong R (2011) Wedding Gif, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/276197389616997642/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Google Spotlight Stories (2018) 'Google Spotlight Stories: Pearl Theatrical', YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZwAbpbtsb0&list=RDtZwAbpbtsb0>, accessed 13 July 2025.

If Anything Happens I Love You - Animated Short Film (2020) ifanythinghappensi loveyou.com, <https://ifanythinghappensi loveyou.com/>, accessed 14 July 2025.

Kieu M (n.d.) Big Hero 6 Polaroid Poster, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692370/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Kunio Katō (2014) 'Tsumiki no Ie (The House of Small Cubes)', YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOYSFvPTm2A>, accessed 14 July 2025.

# REFERENCE LIST

Iaila (2025) Black Messiah, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/10766486606250670/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Luca (2017), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/640285272062813773/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Luca Alberto & Giulia - Luca (2025), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/640285272062813768/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Luca And Alberto Vespa (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/640285272062813766/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Ratatouille Sewer Scene (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692383/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Short Movie (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692957/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

The Viral Success of 'In a Heartbeat' - COOL HUNTING® (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/477100154265474759/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Up Carl Y Ellie (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692394/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

Up Disney Pixar Aesthetic (n.d.), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692399/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

(2021), <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/903956956463692969/>, accessed 13 July 2025.

# REFERENCE LIST