



WITCH MUM SURVIVAL GUIDE

Oliwia Widuto • Oct 2017



Character Design

Images which influence the character of Gowdy.



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/peaceloveetcats/witch/>



Concept Design

Images which influenced the habitat.

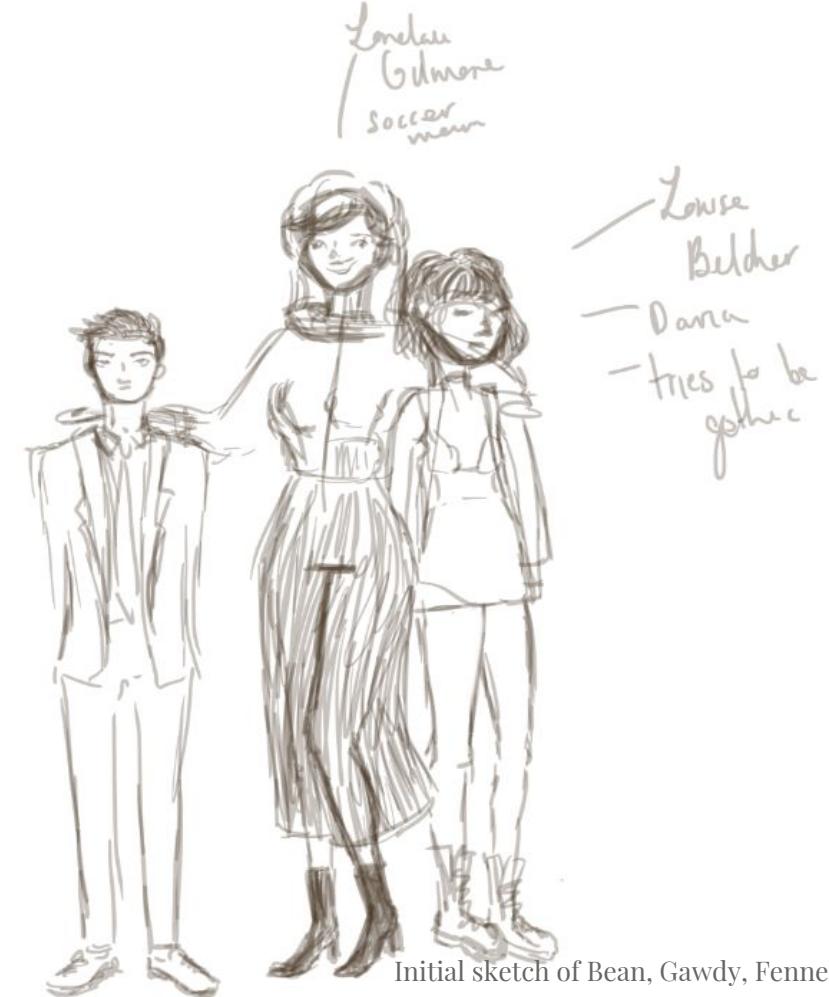


Project Description

“Witch Mum Survival Guide” is a 12 episode animated series. It is fairly low detail, to be created in illustrator or similar and aimed at distributors such as Adult Swim.

The target audience is primarily mums who want to laugh, feel understood and grounded at the end of a hard day.

However, the show is also to appeal to the entire family with it's b-list characters; Bean, the “so laid back he could be horizontal” son, Fennela, the non magical rebellious daughter, and the house which plays a father figure.





Influence: Gravity Falls



Influence: Disney



Influence: Phineas and Ferb



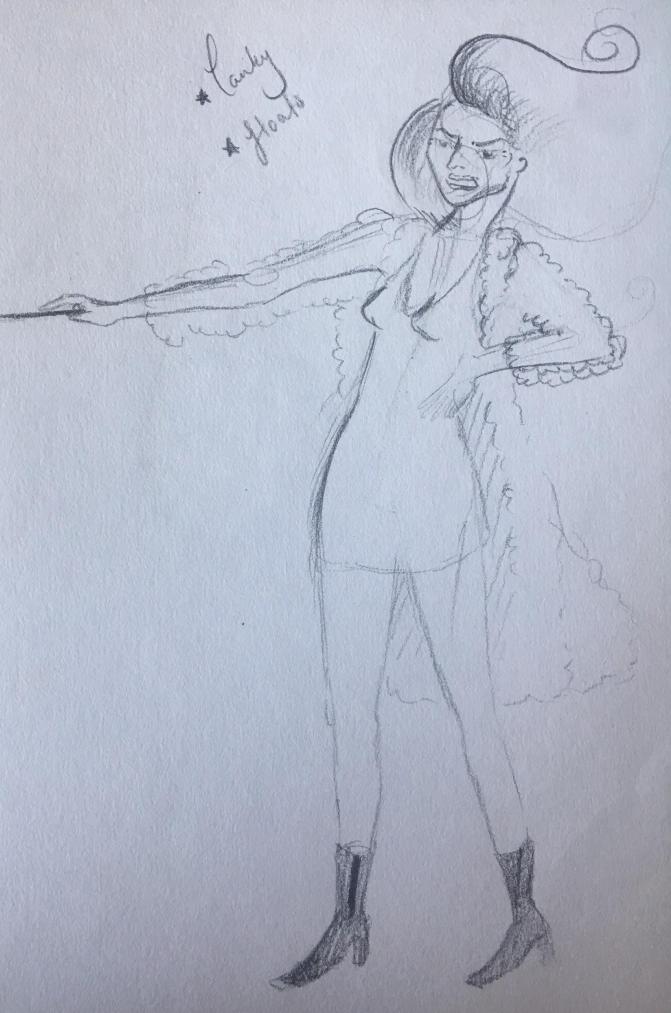
Influence: Adventure Time



Influence: Ursula Decay



Which Witch?



This page shows the initial sketches of Fennela (top and bottom right) and Gawdy (all other). From the beginning of the process I was certain I wanted Fennela to have pig tails, and Gawdy to be lanky and pointy with a nod to 80s dress style.



Character Description



Isobel Gowdy is a Scottish Folklore character, also known as Queen of Elphame. She is mentioned in the Scottish Witch Trials under the ruling of Mary Queen of Scots and believed to have given a detailed testimony without any torture. Gowdy was originally a stay at home mother and wife of low social status. All stories describe Gowdy as having flaming ginger hair.

My take on this story is to put an ancient witch into contemporary setting. Today, Gowdie is a high up Avon (Avon is a cover for the Witch Association) representative who works from home. She admires but doesn't actually get on with other suburban mums, and is easily pushed over the edge. Frequently she lashes out, and suffers from immense mood swings.

Gowdie is usually seen wearing a suit with lilac witch boots. She has lilac eyes and flowing ginger hair. She is roughly 45, tall, skinny, pointy and menacing. Her skin is beginning to droop however there are still distinct remnants of strong features like cheekbones and pointed nose.

Style study: Adventure Time

I played with the idea of making my character extremely simple like the designs in Adventure time. I was especially inspired by Marceline's character (below).



Style study: Gravity Falls

I wanted to make Gawdy more expressionate hence I tampered with interpreting some Disney styles, especially those captured in Gravity Falls. I also wanted to see what the character might look like with different body types and in different hues.



gawdy

45. witch mum. avon saleswoman.



Final Design

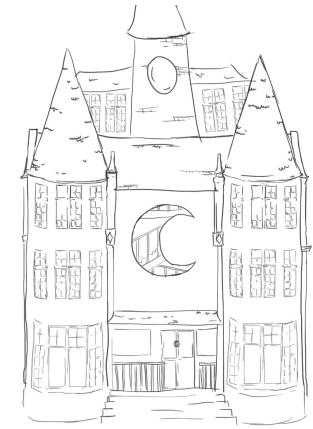
This is my final design which is most inspired by the works of Ursula Decay, however you can see clear Disney influences. I decided extra detail, especially in the face is necessary to show Gawdy's age.

I thought a more realistic silhouette will make the character more relatable. I went for a dark colour scheme contrasted by bright details i.e. fruit (top left), dress, (bottom left) and bright orange hair.



Witchy homes around Edinburgh.

To create the perfect townhouse for my characters, I went out and took photos of fitting homes around Edinburgh.



Habitat Concept

Scene 1

6am, autumn morning.

In the centre of the scene there is a tall Georgian house made of purple brick with a black tile roof.

It is covered in cobwebs, dreamcatchers, nests, ~~wilas~~, drying plants etc. On either side we can see contemporary homes, made with yellow brick.

Zoom from street view of house to ~~Gowdie~~ centrally in front of the house, medium shot.

Gowdie: Okay team! Today we're decluttering (Clutching survival guide in silk nightgown. Her face is fake excited; eyes over large and chin trembling)

Camera turns to kids

Kids: gurning, sighing (the kids have been just pulled out of bed. ~~Fennella's~~ eye is trembling and hair sticking in all directions. Bean is hugging and whispering to a lion statue, half asleep)

Bean: (croaky, still sleeping) mum you love this house...

House: Gowdie, please be reasonable...

Fennella: Yeah mum we thought this was you aesthetic

Bean: (rolls eyes at ~~Fennella~~ for using euphemism)

Gowdie: I do... but if we never tried new things you would still be eating Cheerios instead of Cookie Crisp. Anyway you can't keep lying in...(glances at survival guide) it makes you play xBox.

Bean & House: (Bean wakes up. Both Bean and House turn head in confusion at what ~~Gowdie~~ just said)

Cut to 5 large paint buckets with pastel colours.

House: have mercy woman! We are not in a seaside town! Do you know how hard I worked for this reputation? You don't just get named the most Gothic house in the Province 3 years in a row for doing nothing!

Gowdie: Sweetie, hush. I think the blue will really bring out the porch.

Bean: Yeah house. The blue frames your face.

House: I'm freaking out. I am freaking out!!

Cut to ~~Fennella~~ taking off cobwebs

Fennella: stay put! stop moving! Oh..my... (spider falls on her shoulder) GOD!

House: (giggle) oh.no... (laughing) you stop!! (giggling) it tickles!

Cut to Bean and ~~Gowdie~~ washing windows, laughing, house thrusts a window open and kicks Bean off the ledge. ~~Gowdie~~ looks angrily at House but then starts laughing.

Cut to ~~Gowdie~~ painting the house

House: I'm guessing the book club didn't go so well last night?

Gowdie: don't be silly! It was great...

(flashback of table setting going on fire. ~~Gowdie's~~ eye is twitching but she is smiling at the other women who fake laugh politely)

Linda is great. Her mince pies are out of this world...

(flashback to ~~Gowdie~~ choking on a mince pie)

and the kids are fantastic. So interesting..and.. polite...

(flashback to posh kid turning up his nose when ~~Gowdie~~ presents a pudding)

Great, great. Just great.

All 3 are standing in front of the house examining paintwork.

Gowdie: (squinting) ...well... I think its..nice

House: You know at first I was apprehensive but I feel groovin'! (confetti shoots out chimney, wobbling resulting in lots of creaking)

Fennella: You look ugly.

(silence)

Gowdie: (confused/disgusted) no honey...I wouldn't say "ugly"...we have to adjust...

House: (breaks into crying) Gowdie I feel hideous! It's wrong it's all wrong, I don't feel Georgian anymore. The kids are laughing at me. Jason and his wife just drove past and do you know what they said?! Do you know?! They said I reminded them of their honeymoon in Florida. I've lost all sense of self. Who am I. WHO AM I GOWDIE?! what have you done to me?!

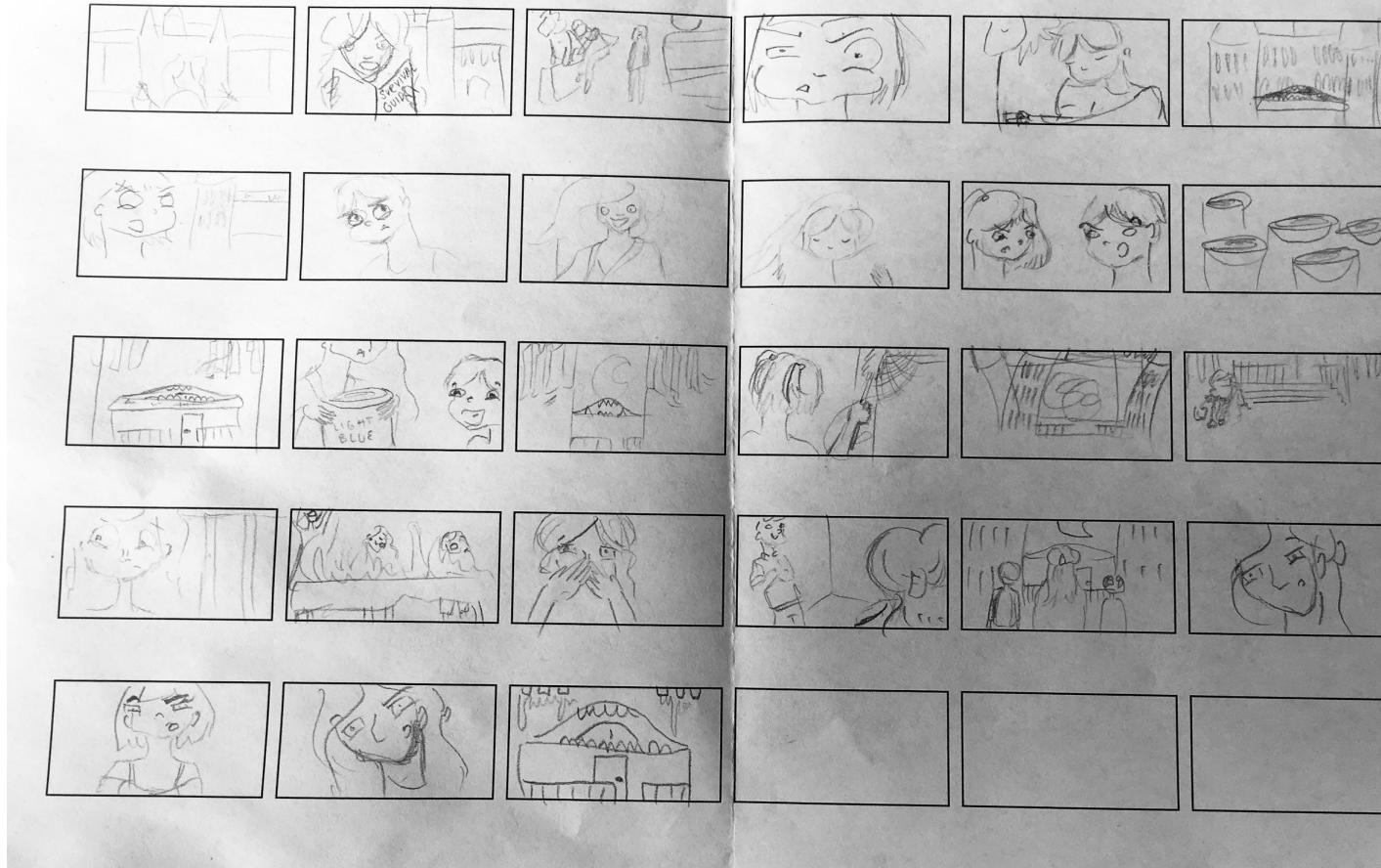
Storyboard

Page No. 1

Scene 1

Production WITCH MOM

Story Artist Olivia Widuto



Concept Image



Feedback

My focus group found my sketches very interesting. They opened with saying they could already see a lot deeper into the story. In terms of my main character, the group agreed Gowdy's outfit spoke for the character- it was obvious she was a businesswoman with a twist. I designed her lilac boots with the aim of creating a memorable outfit, which could potentially make for great cosplay as I think this is a surprisingly big part of animation culture, and attaining a fan base with deep ties.

On the other hand, with the change between her day outfit (suit) and night outfit (silk robe) my group was confused, thinking this was a second concept sketch. This insinuates she does not have a characteristic enough silhouette. At first this concerned me however having given it more thought, I decided getting used to and recognising her pointy silhouette was only a matter of seeing her for a couple scenes as opposed to one drawing.

One of the downsides mentioned, was a lack of detail in the house. I had storyboarded a lot of witchy details which I wanted to include but because the house will often be a part of the background, I found the detail very distracting. However, once the theoretical camera moves in closer to the house, it begins to look bare. My proposed solution for this, was to draw black outlines of items when the house is used for background, but add colour and even more detail when the characters are interacting with the house or when more than a third of the house is out of shot due to being zoomed in.

My only concern is how adding in detail this way would work during a continuous dolly zoom. The only solution I have at this time is simply cutting between far away and close up shots.

Having read my script, a discussion concerning who the main character should be, followed. The group said the House character "stole the show." My idea for the house was to provide additional comedy to the show, but also council to the other characters. It is based on personas such as Phil Dunphy from Modern Family, or Gene from Bob's Burgers (below, respectively.) Although there is not much more I can do in terms of character design for the house, this feedback made me greatly consider how much dialogue this character is given.

I did not receive much feedback on Bean or Fennela which emphasised their role as B list characters. Although this was my intention, the session made me realise these characters need to be developed further as they disappear in the rubble of Gowdy's overly emotional, sharp personality, and the House's flamboyant bubbliness.

