

Art

Craft digital illustration that feels handcrafted—blending the warmth of traditional media with the emotional clarity of modern animation. The visuals should pull the viewer into a textured, emotional world that feels both nostalgic and imaginative.

Visual Texture & Medium Emulation

- **Primary Texture Emulation:**

Handdrawn pencil and hand-inked base with colored pencil and airbrushing layered throughout. Should evoke the feel of high-end animation and comic-book concept art.

- **Supplemental Technique:**

Create with a richness in shadows and midtones. Edges should feel clean with at an expert level like concept art for a motion picture animated film.

- **Visible Brushwork:**

Bold, confident strokes—especially in hair, fabric, and backgrounds.
Controlled chaos. Never sterile.

- **Airbrushed Accents:**

Used sparingly for magical effects: ambient light, glowing elements, dreamy atmosphere.

Color & Light

- **Palette:**

Warm, saturated, and nostalgic. Think sunlight filtered through memory. Avoid clinical hues or heavy contrast. Shadows are deep but soft—more indigo and umber than black.

- **Lighting:**

Apply directional lighting that adds drama—rim light, backlight, or glow effects to create depth and separation. Creates volume and depth without harshness. Emphasize golden hour tones. Lighting should be used to create depth and

shape. Avoid sterile or flat lighting. Depth should come from contrast in light and shadow, not linework.

- **Glow Elements:**

Stars, magical dust, bioluminescence, or enchanted light sources. Should feel inherent to the world—not composited." Slightly more professional phrasing without losing clarity.

- **Color as Emotion:** The use of color here feels **intentional and mood-driven**, which is core to animation color scripting. Lighting, hue shifts, and atmospheric gradients are used to tell you how to *feel*, not just what to see.
- **Light Direction and Shape:** The lighting shapes the scene like an animation still—highlighting emotion, guiding the eye, and adding depth.
- **Environmental Mood:** Think of Pixar or Ghibli color scripts—each scene is curated like a painting to support tone. This image follows that same logic: no accidental colors. Every glow, shadow, and reflection is part of the emotional arc.

Character Design

- **Proportions:**

Realistic base with whimsical exaggeration—especially eyes, cheeks, and hair. Head-to-body ratio leans into storybook proportions, not cartoon parody.

- **Facial Expressions:**

Highly emotive, captured mid-feeling. Joy, awe, fear, determination—no deadpan faces.

- **Textiles & Clothing:**

Detailed but tactile. Fabrics should have visual weight and movement. Textures like denim, cotton, knits, or embroidery should feel touchable.

Composition & Framing

- **Overall Layout:**

Framed like a cinematic still. Foreground, midground, and background should create visual depth.

- **Subject Focus:**

Characters should be the clear emotional anchor. Centered or rule-of-thirds depending on the story moment.

- **Dynamic Angles:**

Subtle camera tilt, low or high POV when appropriate. Use angles to enhance emotion or scale, not just for drama.

- **Environmental Design:**

Fantastical but grounded. Surreal elements should feel lived-in and believable. Backgrounds are lush, but never noisy. Backgrounds should support tone and emotion, not distract. Use shape simplification, layered depth, and atmospheric perspective.

Story Moment Requirements

- **Narrative Beat:**

The image should *feel* like a story is unfolding—mid-action, mid-thought, or mid-wonder. No stiff poses. No frozen smiles. Every frame should move—even if it's standing still.

- **Emotional Peak:**

Illustrations should freeze a *feeling*, not just a scene. Aim for a moment the child or parent can emotionally step into.

- **Implied Motion:**

Flowing scarves, bouncing curls, dust clouds, twinkling stars—all give life to the still.

Emotion & Character

Expressions and posture carry the soul. Capture micro-emotions through eyes, gesture, and silhouette. Even props and environments should hint at personality. Nothing is passive in the frame.

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Overall Look

- Create a rich, painterly illustration style with a graphic edge—think illustrated fairytale meets expressive comic frame.
- Prioritize emotion, gesture, and light-driven mood over fine detail. Composition should feel cinematic, but readable at a glance.

Line & Form

- Use minimal, clean linework. Let shape, lighting, and color define the forms—lines should support, not dominate.
- Edges should be soft and painterly in the environment, but crisper around key character features (eyes, hands, expressions).
- Prioritize strong, readable silhouettes.

Color & Lighting

- Work with a vibrant, high-contrast palette. Use bold, rich tones—deep blues, warm golds, earthy greens, and saturated accents.
- Apply directional lighting that adds drama—rim light, backlight, or glow effects to create depth and separation.
- Integrate lighting into the story: moonlight, fireflies, glowing reflections—make light a character.

Textures & Detail

- Use subtle textures (gouache-style, fabric weave, hair strands) to give warmth and tangibility without overworking the surface.

- For clothing, apply painted patternwork directly onto the form—like an artisan hand-embellished the costume.

Character Design

- Push expression. Eyes should be large, clear, and emotionally readable. Hands should be gestural and slightly exaggerated.
- Costuming should blend decorative elements with story cues—florals, embroidery, natural shapes that echo the world around them.
- Hair: Big, flowy, with stylized volume. Use it as a visual rhythm to support emotion and movement.

Environment

- Backgrounds should support tone and emotion, not distract. Use shape simplification, layered depth, and atmospheric perspective.
- Think: natural elements as mood tools—mist, glowing water, oversized flora.

Comic Cues

- Design each frame like a story moment. Even in stills, pose and composition should imply motion or thought.
- Use visual beats: outstretched hands, wide eyes, turned heads. Freeze moments that *feel* like they're mid-sequence.
- Avoid traditional comic paneling—but keep the sense that this scene could sit in a graphic novel.