

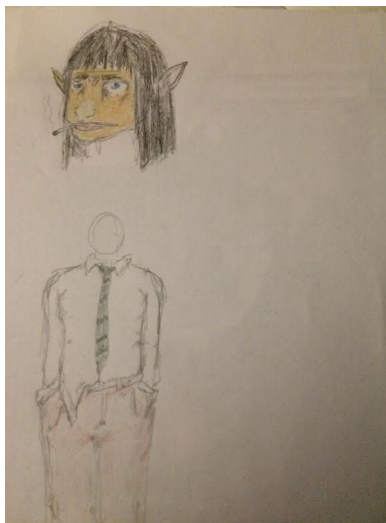
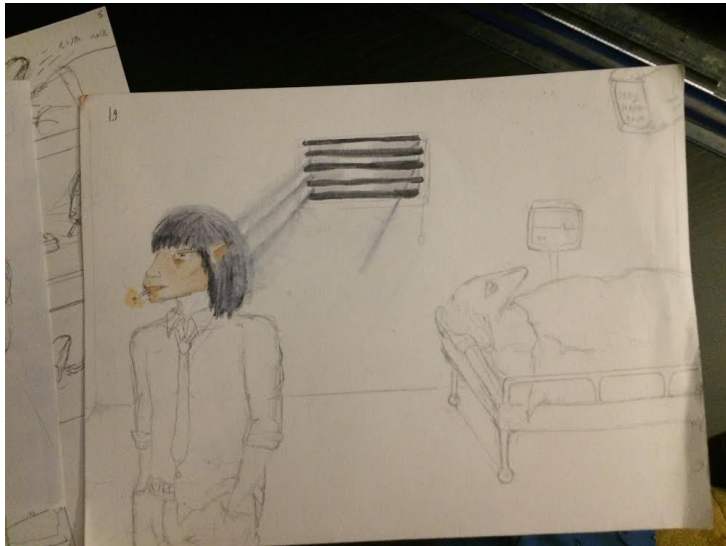
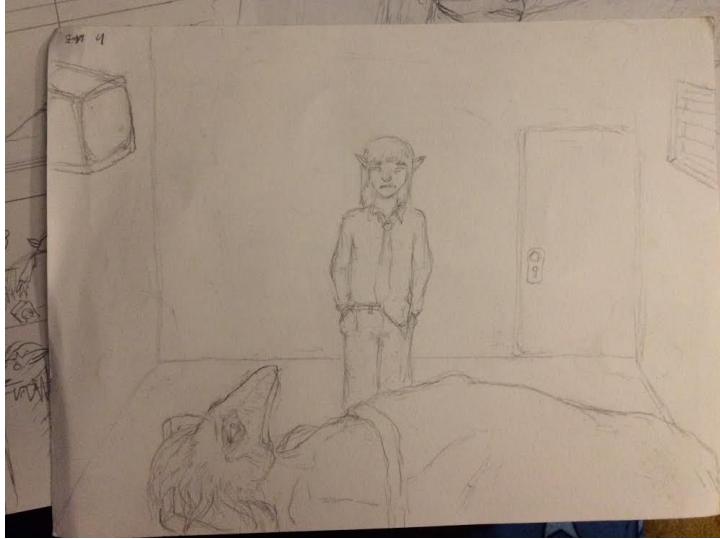
Xavier Carroll and Eva Karlen  
Reel Reading  
Quarter 4 Benchmark

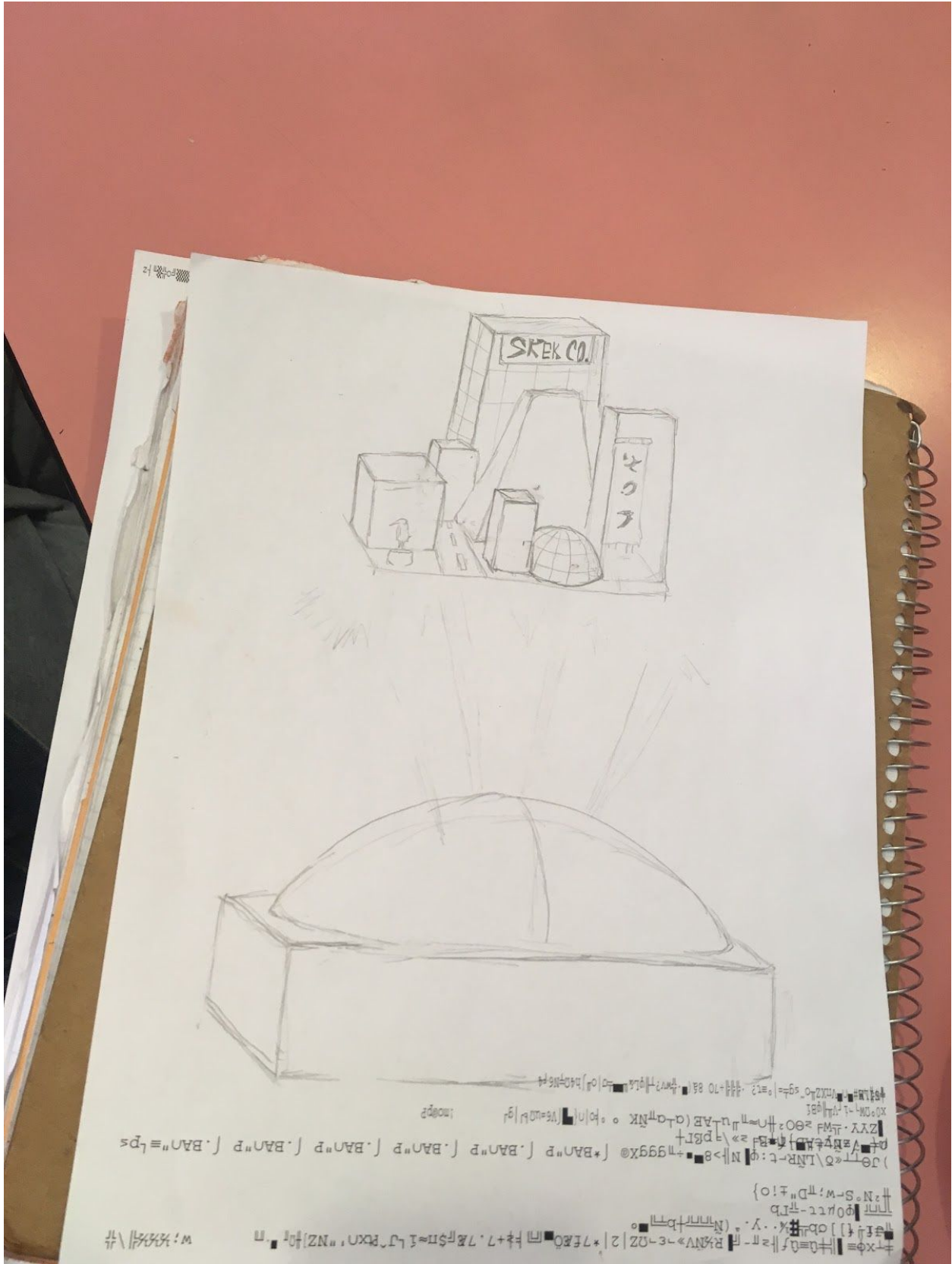
## **Introduction**

We have created the screenplay and some accompanying images to a few scenes from a neo-noir version of Jim Henson's *The Dark Crystal* (1982). Some background information about the original plot of *The Dark Crystal* and the new plot and setting are included in the screenplay. This information may contain some spoilers about the original *Dark Crystal* film. Though our reboot is stylistically different from the original *Dark Crystal*, the plot is generally the same. Jen and Kira are the last two members of a race of elf-like creatures called Gelflings that have been killed by the evil Skeses. The Skeses want to harness the power of the dark crystal so that they can live forever and rule over all other races of creatures, and Jen must ensure that this does not happen. Jen has been raised by the Mystics, or a race of creatures known as the Urru, and Kira has been raised by Podlings, or small forest sprites that like to dance and make merry. Jen's master dies and he is sent to find a shard of the dark crystal and stop the Skeses. Along the way, he meets Kira. Jen and Kira travel to an abandoned Gelfling temple and then to the castle of the Skeses and ultimately defeat the Skeses. For our fourth quarter benchmark, we created a screenplay and some parts of a storyboard for three scenes of the *Dark Crystal* reboot.

## **Screenplay and Storyboard**

### **Scene 1**





EXT. LANDSCAPE. EVENING.

L.S. of MYSTIC VALLEY.

[Mystic Valley is a small town with about ten small huts. There are dimly lit lanterns illuminating a dirt path from the rows of huts to a bridge.]

JEN: Ten thousand years ago the crystal cracked... and here, far from the city, the race of Urru- the Mystics- came to live in a dream of peace.

DISSOLVES TO:

M.S of MYSTIC VALLEY.

[Mystics let their cats outside, take down laundry, blow out candles, and perform other village activities.]

JEN: Their ways were the gentle ways of botanists, wizards, and ancient physicians. Yet with the rise digital agriculture and computerized infracities, the old ways have all but vanished... now, there are only ten Mystics, with their thatch huts and community gardens... a dying race... numbly rehearsing the ancient ways in a blur of forgetfulness.

Their prophecies told of wars between tribes, infracity poverty and gang violence, and of the evil of the Skeses. Once a mischievous and greedy tribe from the deserts of Sansuul, the descendents of these beings have formed SkekCorp, a nefarious corporation that runs many of the infracities' major industries and sectors.

A generation ago, the industrious and just Gelflings infringed upon the Skekcorp's clutches of the infracities. Gelflings proposed new programs and businesses to defend those downtrodden members of society. Fearing a shift in power, Skekcorp plotted the deaths of the Gelflings. All of the Gelflings perished in the most violent airoid harshraid of history, which the Pangeatic Security Advisors blamed an infracity gang of Makraks for.

Why kill the Gelflings? Why perpetuate the senseless violence against clans of people that could live harmoniously with one another?

As a young Gelfling, I heard tell of a prophecy that the world must undergo a time of testing; how it must be healed or pass forever into the rule of evil.

My name is Jen. I was raised by the Mystics. I am the chosen one. It is my duty to retrieve the dark crystal.

CUT TO:

C.U. of JEN's FACE.

[Rain pours outside of a hut and Jen stands at the entrance. He sighs and enters. Jen's Master, a Mystic, lies in a hospital bed bed, looking ill and feeble.]

Jen: Evening, Master.

Master: Jen. I'm glad that you made it in time.

Jen: In time?

CUT TO:

M.S. of MASTER'S ROOM.

Master: You are in danger, Gelfling... I have known of this prophecy for years, but I never thought...

Jen: What is it, Master?

CUT TO:

OVER THE SHOULDER. of MASTER. M.C.U

Master: [Touches the button of a small device with a glass lens. A small hologram of a dark crystal shard appears above the device.] I must leave you, Jen.

Jen: Master, no!

Master: Gelfling, you know that you are the chosen one- the one who must bring an end to the evil Skeses' reign of our land. I cannot go on this journey with you, but you are the one who must retrieve the shard. As you are well aware, the Skeses' evil reign has enveloped our cities and the former crystal power [a hologram of the infracities appears above the hologram device] ... we do not have much time.

Jen: Master, not yet... not now.

CUT TO:

C.U. of JEN'S FACE.

Master: You are a skilled young lad. We Mystics have given you the gifts of reason and philosophy; we have helped to hone your wit. We are a dying race... but our ways live on... in you, Jen. You must go now, Gelfling.

Jen: [Sighs and turns from Master] I know, Master. I'll find the shard. I'll-

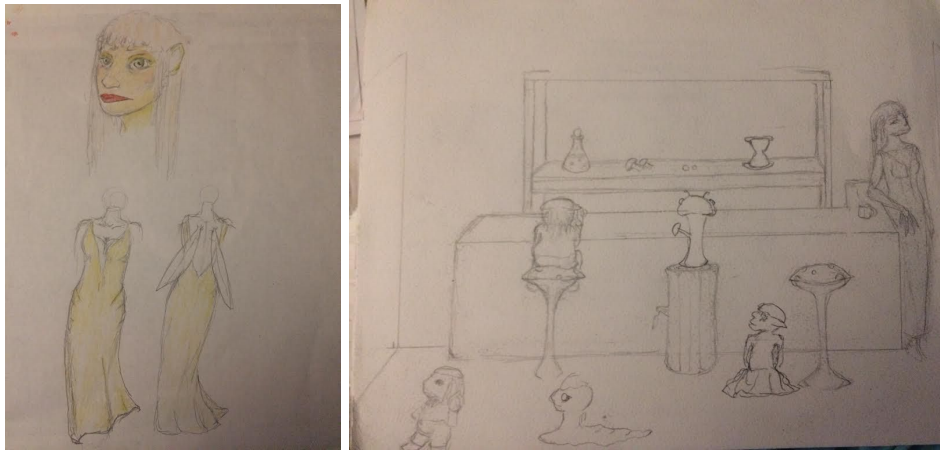
M.S. of MASTER'S ROOM.

Master: [Exhales heavily and dies]

Jen: [Closes eyes, breathes, and walks outside]

FADE TO BLACK

**Scene 2**



INT. PUB. EVENING.

M.S. of JEN.

[Jen sits at the bar on a stool in a smoky, crowded pub. All different types of creatures dance, smoke, and drink around him. Jen looks gloomy.]

CUT TO:

M.S. of PODLING BARTENDER.

Bartender (a plump and jovial podling): Hey- you alright, mister? You look kinda down. Want another Podling Special? Fill up yer cup?

Jen: Please.

Bartender: Haha... you must be the silent type. Rare, you know. Haha! Just look around. No one keeps their feet on the ground. No one keeps their mouths shut!

PAN TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: Rare indeed.

REVERSE SHOT:

M.S. of BARTENDER.

Bartender: [Pauses while he pours a drink] You're sorta funny looking, you know?

CUT TO:

M.S. of JEN and BARTENDER in profile.

Jen: [Gives bartender a wry smile] Hey, you're gonna hurt my feelings.

Bartender: Oh, I don't mean no disrespect, mister. We just don't see many Gelflings around here.

Jen: [Nods solemnly] Probably not. I'm the last one.

CUT TO:

C.U. of BARTENDER.

Bartender: [Raises an eyebrow as he passes Jen the drink] No, I don't think so, mister. Saw a Gelfling lady just about half a hour ago. Pretty girl... hehe. Dancing over there with that tree warrior.

CUT TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: [Shocked and excitedly] What?... how?! Where is she now?

CUT TO:

C.U. of BARTENDER.

Bartender: [Looks up and then to the end of the bar]

PAN TO:

C.U. of JEN in profile.

Jen: [Looks at the far end of the bar. Kira is standing there]

DISSOLVE TO:

M.S. of KIRA.

[Kira, dressed in a low-cut evening gown, looks dazzling in low light.]

Kira: [Smiles] Hello, Gelfling.

FADE TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: [is speechless]

CUT TO:

L.S. of DANCE FLOOR.

One podling to a tree nymph: Look, two Gelflings! Can you believe it?

CUT TO:

M.S. of BAR.

[Kira saunters over to Jen and sits next to him.]

DISSOLVE TO:

C.U. of KIRA.

Kira: [Looks seductively at Jen] Hey. Mind if I smoke?

CUT TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: [Flabbergastedly] No. [Offers Kira a light]

CUT TO:

C.U. of KIRA.

Kira: [Smiles and lights a cigarette] Mukrak got your tongue?

CUT TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: I thought I was the only one.

FADE TO:

OVER THE SHOULDER of JEN towards KIRA.

Kira: And for a while, I thought I was, but I've had too many Podling Specials tonight to really be surprised by anything.

FADE TO:

C.U. of JEN.

Jen: So there's two of us.

FADE TO:

C.U. of KIRA.



Kira: I believe so. I was raised here, with the Podlings. They took me in when my family was killed. We've heard about you- a Gelfling that is destined to find the crystal shard.

Jen: [Pauses] What have you heard?

Kira: That you're travelling to the infracities. To stop the Skeses.

CUT TO:  
OVER THE SHOULDER of JEN towards KIRA.

Jen: [Chuckles] That's what my Master told me I'm destined to do. Quite a feat for a lone Gelfling. I don't know this terrain, I've never been to an infracity...

FADE TO:  
C.U. of KIRA.

Kira: What if you weren't alone? [Pause] What if I went with you?

CUT TO:  
OVER THE SHOULDER of JEN towards KIRA.

[Jen begins to speak, but a loud explosion from behind the bar sends Jen and Kira flying to the ground below bar stools. Havoc is wrecked. More explosions are set off throughout the room. Podlings and nymphs run around frantically. Kira pulls Jen by the arm around the bar, into a back room, and then out in a grove of trees.]

Kira: [Catching her breath] It's not safe here. We need to find cover- I know where. See? This is why you need me.

CUT TO:  
L.S. of JEN and KIRA running through the woods.

JEN: [narration] The two of us were like lightning in a baby- rare, I mean, and too hot to trot. Like spider's eggs born in the heat. She was a Gelfling. She understood my plight like no other being that I have ever met. And more than that, she saved my life.

### **Scene 3**

INT. ABANDONED GELFLING LABORATORY. EVENING.  
L.S. of LABORATORY.

[The abandoned Gelfling laboratory is an enormous room filled with CPUs, pieces of computers, and other pieces of technology. The room might once have been grand, with a tall, dome ceiling and towering

pieces of machinery, but now, the lab is dank and dusty. The computers have fallen into disrepair. Pieces of metal litter the floor and old fans buzz slightly, as though trying and failing to come back to life. The room is abandoned, but a the computers emit a slight and warm hum of electricity. Jen and Kira stand side by side gazing at one of the machines.]

Kira: What is this place?

Jen: An abandoned Gelfling laboratory. There used to be thousands of abandoned Gelfling building, but they've all been destroyed.

CUT TO:  
C.U. of KIRA.

[Kira places a hand on an abandoned computer]

Kira: What were they researching?

CUT TO:  
M.S. of JEN.

[Jen walks towards a giant piece of motherboard]

Jen: Medicine. Geology. Gelflings were known for their scholarship.

CUT TO:  
L.S. of JEN and KIRA.

Kira: Who could do this?

Jen: Skeses.

Kira: But who could have the heart?

[Jen wraps his arm around Kira's waist.]

CUT TO:  
C.U. of JEN.

Jen: Skeses. More evil than nature could have intended for them to be.

CUT TO:  
M.S. of a CPU.

[A Skese appears from behind the towering CPU.]

Kira: How do you mean?

[The Skese grins maliciously and watches Jen and Kira.]

CUT TO:

M.S. of JEN and KIRA.

Jen: I remember my Master telling me of the dark crystal's power... his speeches were just vague and contrived ramblings of an elderly sage. But the meaning of his scattered prophecies has dawned on me.

CUT TO:

C.U. of SKESE.

Here, in this lab of our ancestors, I realize... the Skeses are trying to gain immortality.

[The Skese blinks hard and grins nefariously.]

C.U. of KIRA.

Kira: How is that possible?

CUT TO:

M.S. of JEN and KIRA.

Jen: I'm not quite sure, but look here, at this tablet...

[Jen points to a silver panel on the side of a CPU with tiny engraved writing.]

I think that the Gelflings tried to file a lawsuit against Skekcorp for illegal handling of dark crystal shards.

Kira: [Looks at Jen] And...

Jen: [Looks at Kira forcefully] And the Skeses killed the Gelflings.

Kira: [With misty eyes] Our parents... our people...

Jen: [Pulls Kira in for a hug]

CUT TO:

C.U. of SKEKSE.

Skese: Hehehehe! Hmmm.

## Justification of Decisions

We loved the neo-noir genre after watching *Blade Runner* and wanted to do a reboot of some movie in neo-noir style. *Dark Crystal* seems like a weird movie to make into a neo-noir. Noir is famous for its snappy lines of dialogue and intelligent repartee between characters; *Dark Crystal's* dialogue is sparse, often confusing, and sometimes inaudible over the sounds of weird puppet creatures growling. Neo-noir is often futuristic and inspired by science fiction, while *Dark Crystal* seems modeled after Lord of the Rings and fairy mythology, with costumes that include tunics, cloaks, and long hair. Nevertheless, the premise of a dark crystal with magical properties can be worked into a neo-noir story, so we chose to write a screenplay and parts of a storyboard for three scenes of a reboot of *Dark Crystal* in neo-noir style.

Despite obvious differences between *Dark Crystal* and neo-noir films, we were able to translate the folksy Jim Henson aesthetic of the original *Dark Crystal* into an aesthetic with neo-noir motifs. We added smokiness by having the two main characters smoke, and we used few colors in our storyboard/character art besides gray and blue. We also updated the characters' clothing. Jen, an elf boy who wore a tunic and leather booties in the original movie, now wears a suit, and Kira, who wore a peasant's dress, now wears an evening gown. One of the most important things to update was the setting. The original *Dark Crystal* is set in forest glens and in medieval castles. To give the reboot a neo-noir feel, we created more modern small village slums (like the Valley of the Mystics) and "infracities," or this universe's version of neon-filled cities with modern technology.

We re-designed Kira to match the femme fatale trope. Essentially, we sexualized the character to noir specifications. Kira 2.0 has distinct makeup to accentuate her feminine features, specifically we included bright red lipstick which became popular among women in the 1950's. This sort of a reference to the original noir genre is common amongst the neo noir media. We also added eyeshadow and blush to the characters aesthetic. The dress was loosely based off the original outfit for Kira, we used the general color scheme of neutral cream because it paired well with her skin tone. The original movie makes note of the fact that female gelflings have wings, this informed our decision to make the dress backless. In redesigning Jen, we gave him a major visual edge. We gave him a modern business casual outfit, which he wears in a disheveled fashion, his tie is loose and his shirt is wrinkled. This conveys his jaded sense of self. Notice the cigarette in his mouth, this signifies that he's a man of many vices. We added dark shading under his eyes which indicates age and insomnia, perhaps the product of some past trauma. This makes him mysterious much like most of the leads in the noir genre.

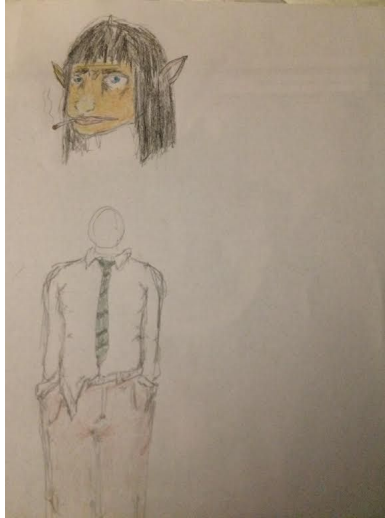
The camera angles in our reboot of *Dark Crystal* are pretty much inspired by the original screenplay of *Dark Crystal*. We use a lot of close ups of character's faces while the characters are speaking and long shots to introduce settings like the Valley of the Mystics and infracities. In Scene 2 during the conversation between Jen and Kira, we use over the shoulder shots to show how Jen and Kira are getting to know each other, and we use medium shots of Jen and the bartender in profile at the bar so that the audience notices the end of the bar, where Kira enters the scene. Other than the setting, the

dialogue was integral to creating a convincing screenplay for a neo-noir film. Jen is reminiscent of a hard-boiled detective. He is sullen, enigmatic, and a bit jaded. He responds curtly when people speak to him, until he meets Kira. Kira plays a femme fatale. She is sly, seductive, and charming. In the short interaction between Jen and Kira in scene 2, Jen opens up to Kira more than he does to any other character in these scenes. We also included some narration from Jen in the spirit of classic noir films.

Character design:



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