

TOO MANY SCARVES

An animated film

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Undergraduate Capstone Project Documentation

Benjamin Andrew

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WE ARE WE

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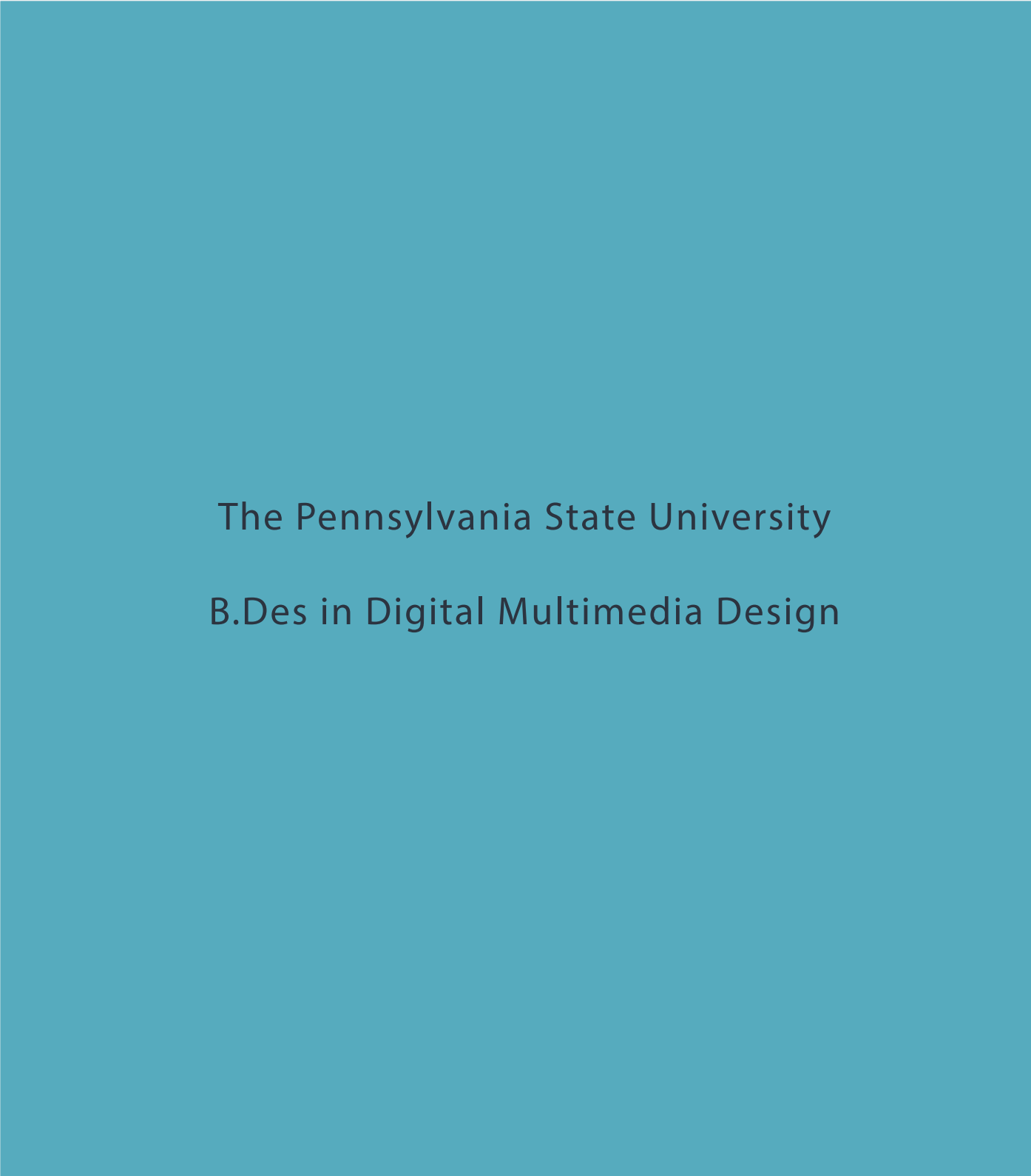
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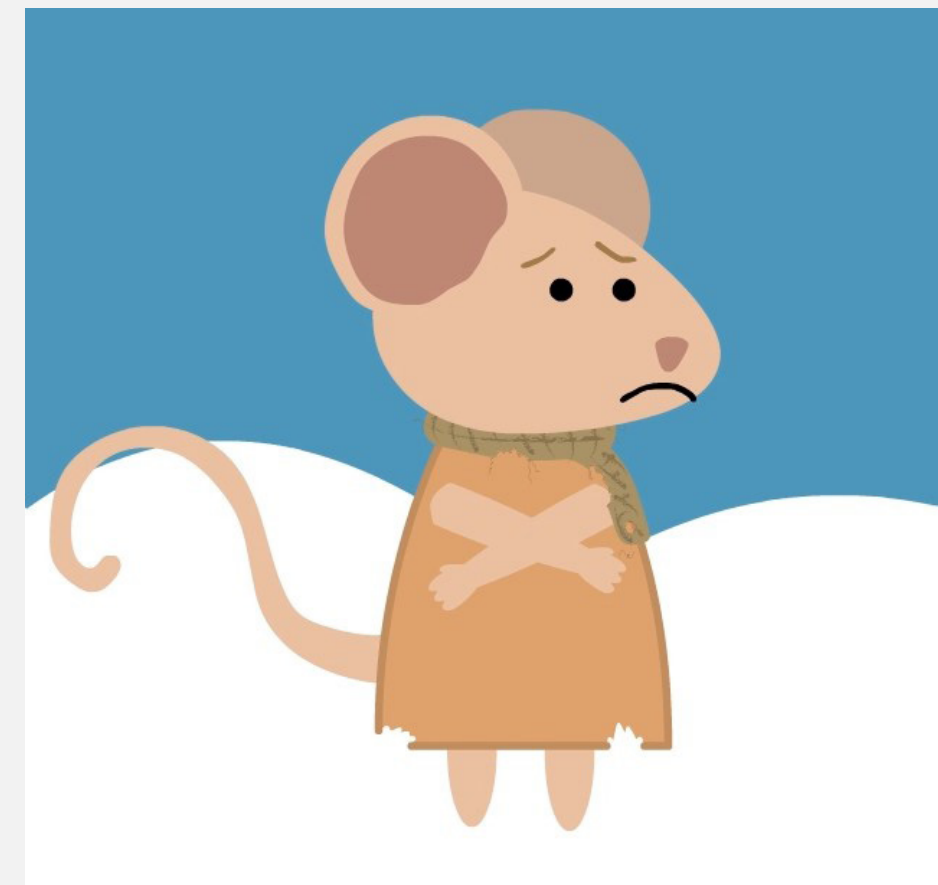


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PROJECT OVERVIEW.

Too Many Scarves is a 2D animation project focused on teaching children between the ages of 5 and 8 the value of sharing. It is about Squirrel, a greedy character who needs more scarves and doesn't want to share them. As he is faced with the difficulty of overcoming his own wants and desires, he learns that Mouses' needs are more important than his own.

I approached this project with a desire to reach out to a younger audience and help instill positive morals and applicable lessons. The outcome of this approach consisted of using familiar animals as characters, simple shapes and scenes, and character emotions and facial expressions as a way of communication. I also used exaggeration to make the point of "too many" clearer.



CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

During the concept development stage, one of the main issues I faced was nailing down a story that made sense and could be seen being successful in the long run. From the beginning, I knew I wanted the main character to be a squirrel with a scarf and the theme had always been “sharing is caring”. Initial storyboards had Squirrel lose his scarf because it was caught on a tree branch and then another character finds it. Squirrel sees that character with his scarf and grabs it back. Another draft has Squirrel lose his scarf due to high winds and his mother tells him to give it to a character who needed it. In both options, Squirrel loses his scarf, but I wanted him to give his scarf away.



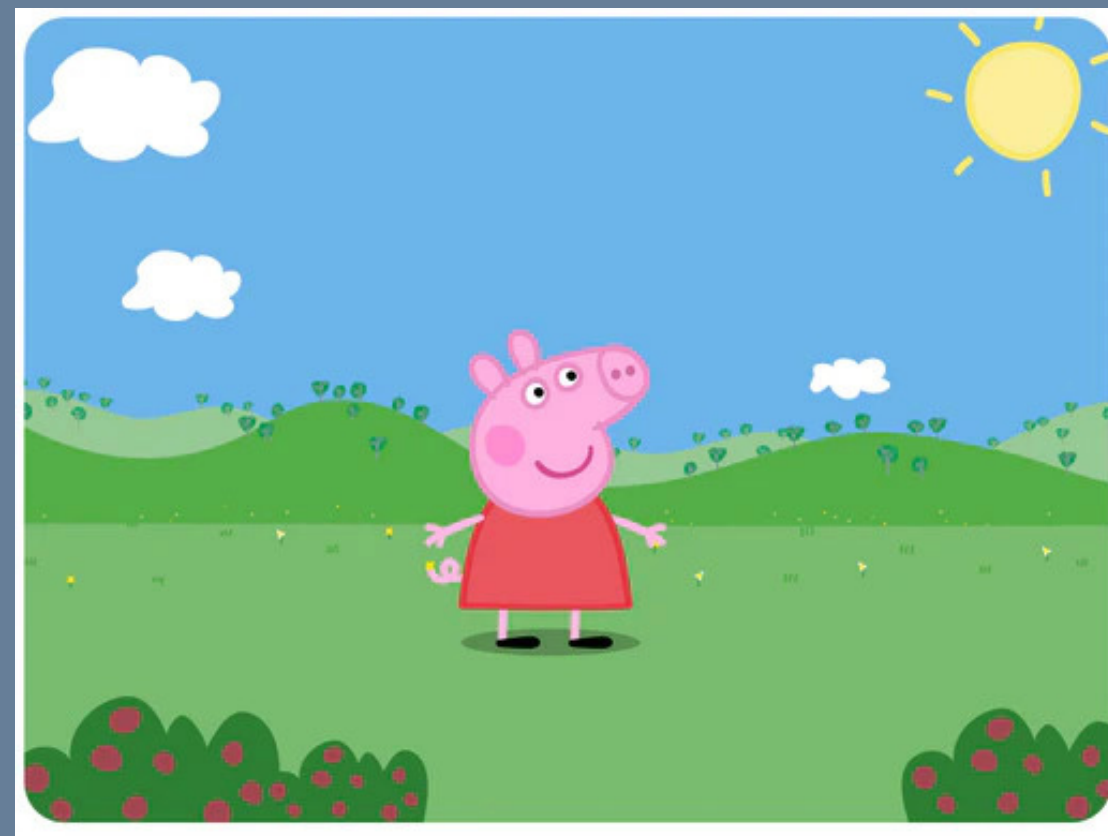
Other issues that occurred quite frequently, and throughout the project's development, was the challenge of learning a new program, Adobe Animate. Some highlighted challenges included, keyframes, creating classic tweens and symbols (including learning how to edit within a symbol), the importance of layers, creating a mesh to make Mouse look frozen, revisiting and relearning the basic principles of animation - squash and stretch, staging, and timing to name a few.

RESEARCH.

Notable companies for my chosen project field include Astley Baker Davies, who created Peppa Pig and Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom, and Nickelodeon Animation Studio who, amongst many well-known shows, created Blues Clues. Blues Clues was a show that I grew up watching, so I was familiar with their way of story telling and how Blue communicated without actual dialogue (although she used barking as communication), it was similar to what I was aiming for with my characters.

Other notable animation companies are Walt Disney Studio Animation, Pixar, DreamWorks, Sony Pictures, Illumination, Warner Bros., Blue Sky Animation Studios, and Paramount Animation.

One of the contemporary issues animators face is bringing diversity and representation into stories. A couple notable examples are in the show Peppa Pig. The studio introduced Mandy Mouse, a character who uses a wheelchair (Rodriguez), and more recently, a same-sex couple (Duggins).



Peppa Pig is mentioned a lot in this document for the reason that it was a large influence in my animation, specifically when it came to character development, scenery simplicity, and visuals. I was drawn to the child-like style. Elements look hand-drawn and lines are not quite connected in characters. Scenes use a lot of negative space, and character rigging result in simple movements and motions.

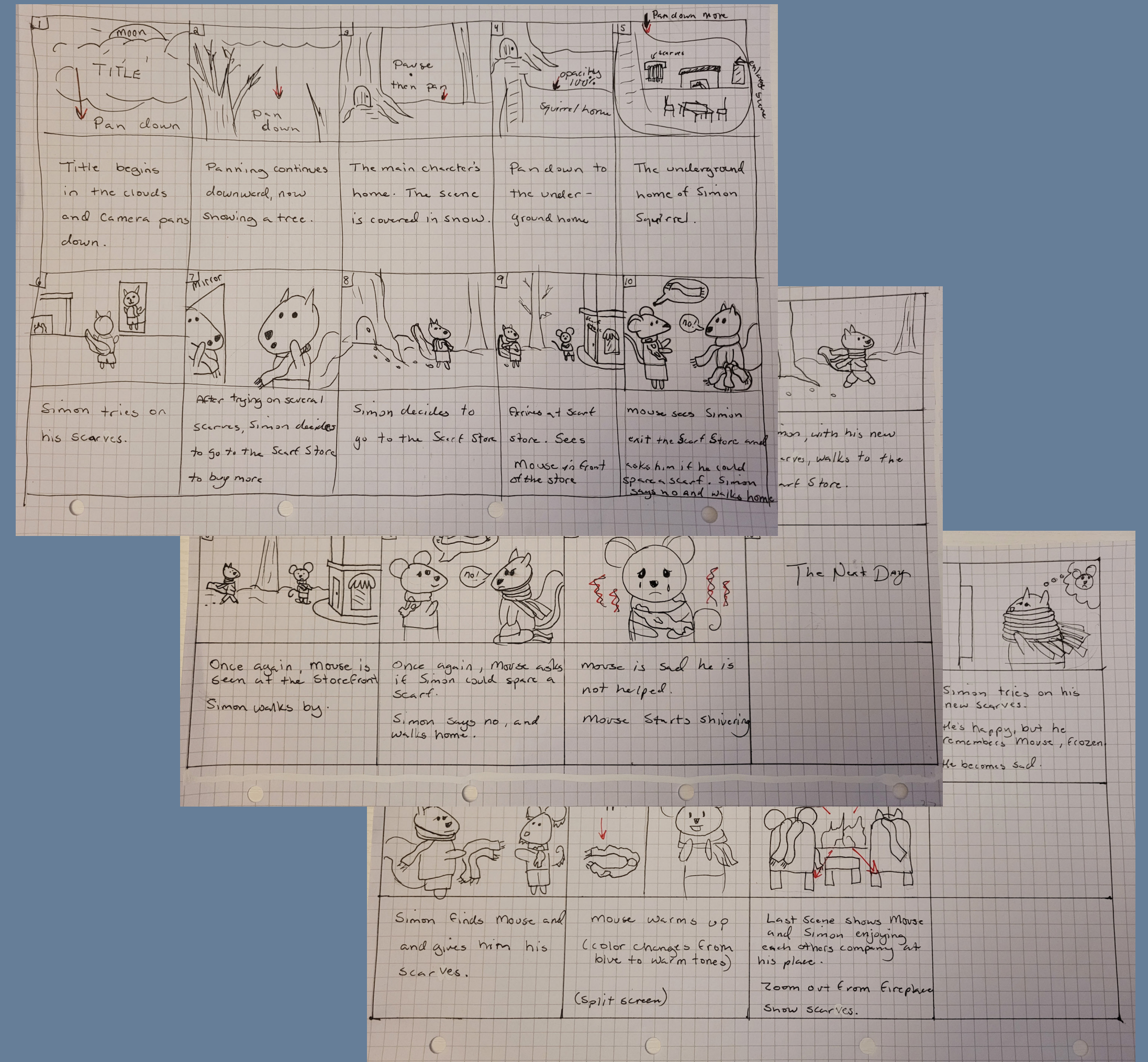


PRODUCTION.

PRODUCTION

Production requirements for my project was, after developing a story, the character development. This was done by researching children's shows that was produced for children in similar age range and animation style. I looked at Peppa Pig, Franklin, Spot, and Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom. I took a lot of character inspiration from Peppa Pig. Unfortunately, I was not able to make an animatic due to getting sick and falling behind in my work, so I had to carry on without it.

After this, I created a storyboard to help visualize my story, the characters, camera direction, and cinematic angles.

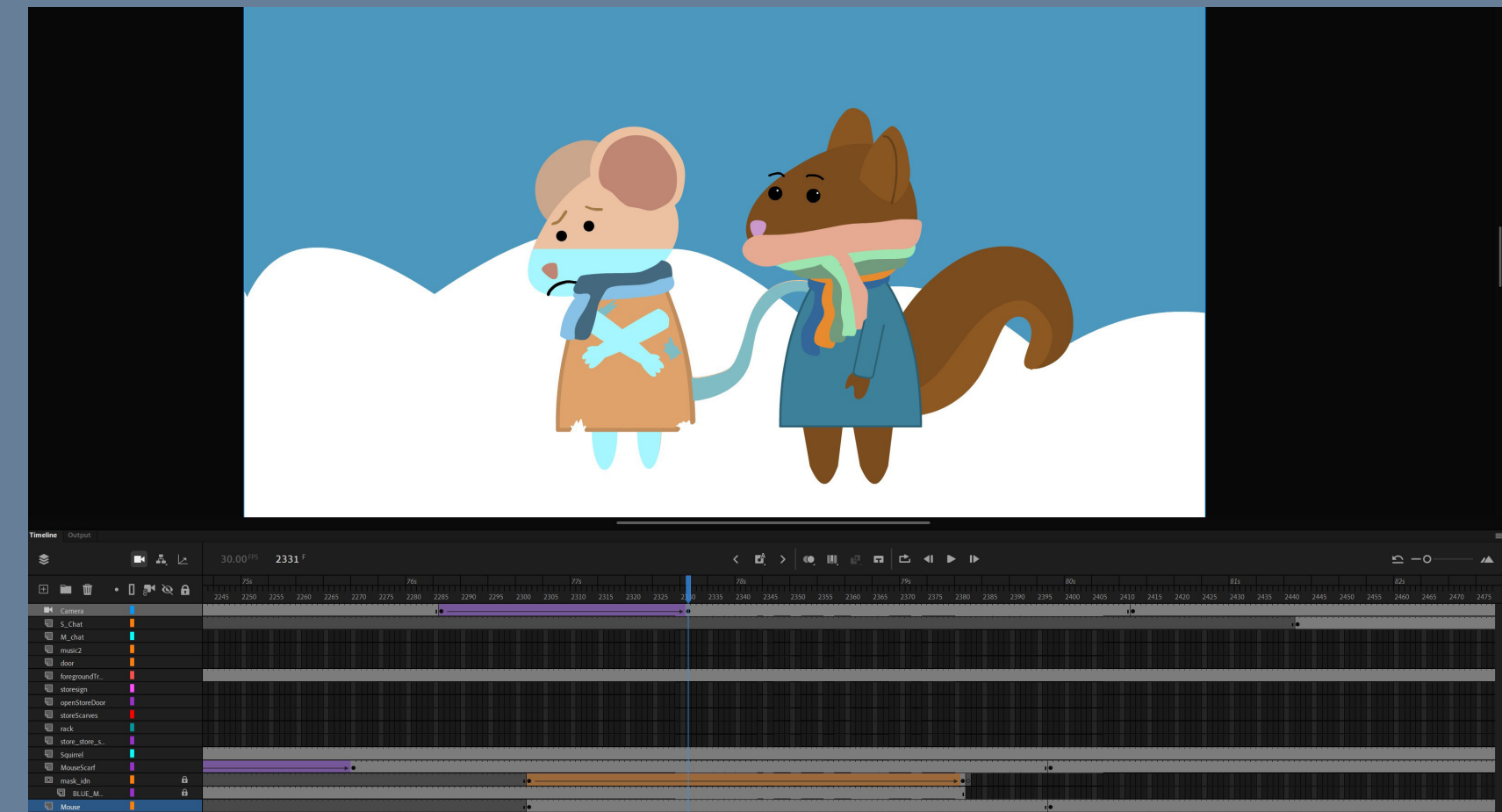
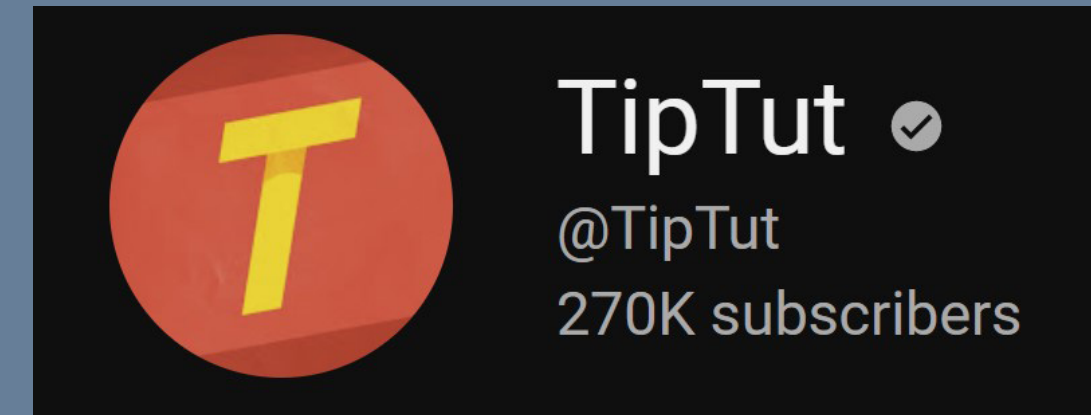


PRODUCTION (CONT).

Once my storyboard was developed, I started working on my animation using Adobe Animate. Since this program was new to me, I spent time on LinkedIn Learning and on YouTube learning how to use the program. I learned most from Adobe Animate's own YouTube channel as well as animator and designer, TipTut (Fryer). I also followed a great tutorial on how to use the masking tool on YouTube.

Once my animation was complete, I edited the video in Adobe After Effects by adding text, fading transitions, music from the artist Podington Bear at Free Music Archive (Crouch) as well as sound from FreeSound.org.

The last step is exporting it to YouTube. The exporting settings were the following: MP4, codec h.264 at 30fps, and the frame size is 1280px x 720px.



CONCLUSION.

Too Many Scarves was a project that set out to captivate a young audience, instill the important lesson on why sharing is caring, and share a bit of silly humor as well. I believe the project, although it did veer from its original storyboard direction, it became a condensed and more successful version that I am proud of.



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