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Costume Design for *She Kills Monsters*

Gayani Bulathsinghala

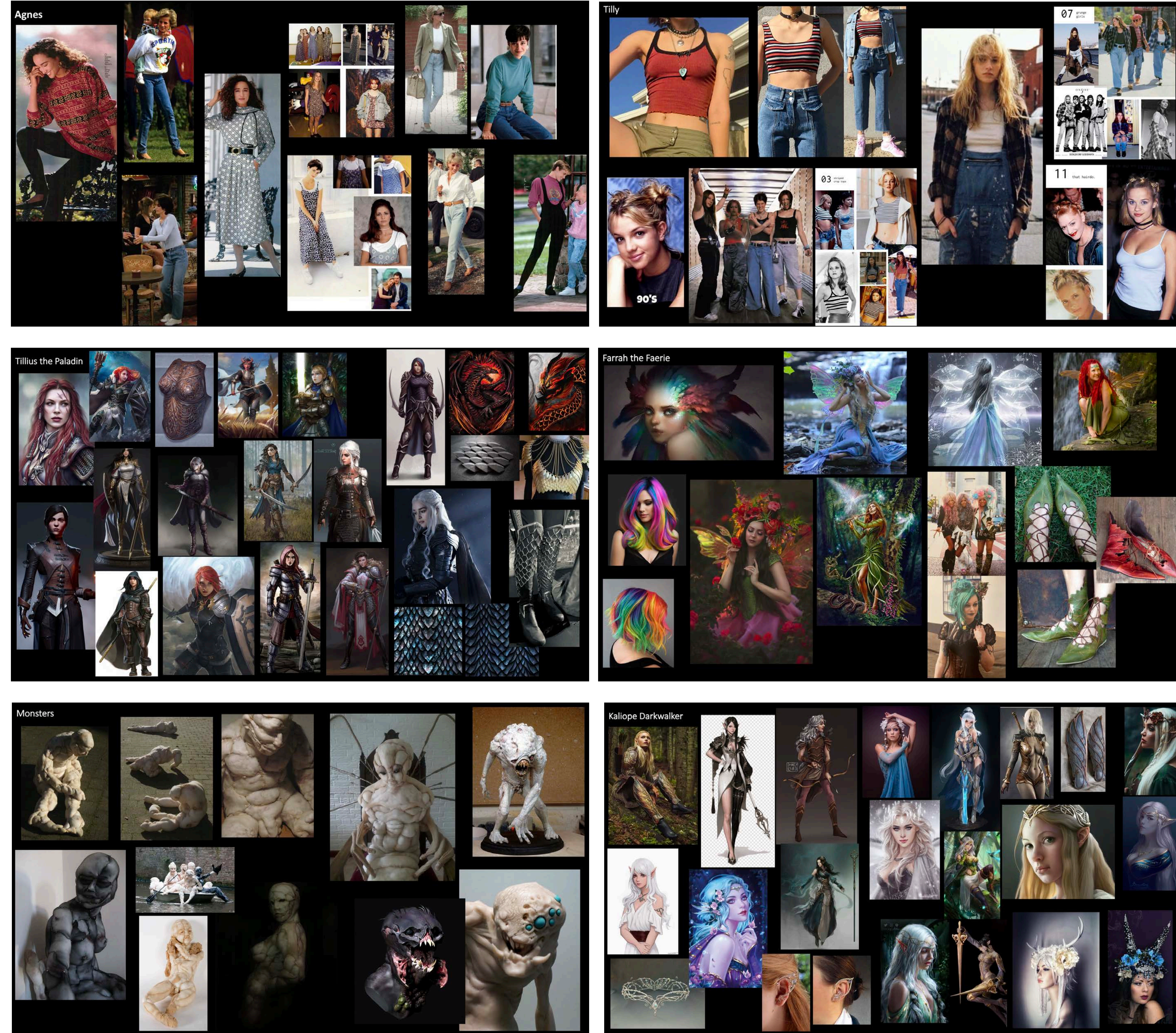


She Kills Monsters is a drama-comedy play by Qui Nguyen. The story is about Agnes Evans, who loses her parents and sister Tilly to a car accident. The sisters did not have a good relationship growing up and Agnes is trying to make-up for that by trying to get to know Tilly better by playing a Dungeons & Dragons module that Tilly had written. A costume designer is not only a designer of clothing, but also a researcher. When a script is handed to a costume designer, they first analyze the play and then analyze the characters. There is a great deal of psychology used in a costume designer's work when trying to design for a certain character. The writer sometimes gives an idea as to what they want to see but even then it is up to the designer to figure out exactly what a character needs. There is a reason behind why we put on certain clothes everyday—weather, mood, to impress someone, or the answer could be as simple as a pile of dirty laundry. As the costume designer for *She Kills Monsters*, I have done research to create both the gaming world according to Dungeons & Dragons as well as the reality set in the 1990s.

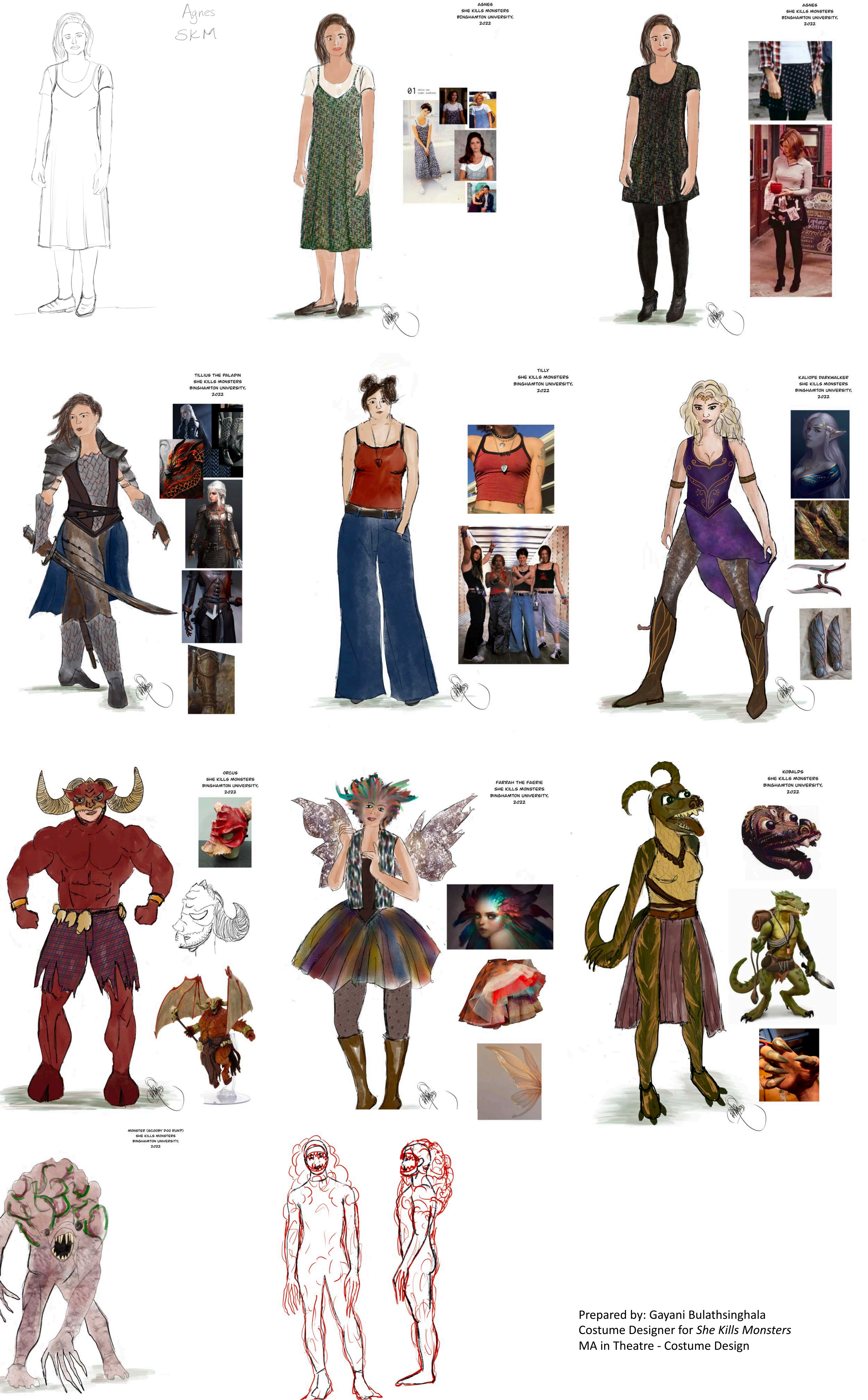
First step in the process as a costume designer: **Paperwork!**

After reading the script once, we read it again to find clues in the direction for each character. These clues might be given directly through stage directions, or they may be included in the dialogues. As the costume designer our goal is to find all of these little clues to build a personality for the character. We call this a **Character Notes Chart**. Below is an example of the chart for character Agnes in *She Kills Monsters*.

Character	Page #	Notes
Agnes	8	Likes "Ace of Base"
	8	Average, average height, weight, build... Tilly's Sister
	9	Parents and sister (Tilly) dies from car crash
	9	The Story is about how Agnes, the girl who never left home, found a way out
	20	Is a Democrat
	25	Been in relationship with Miles for 3.5 years. Just now moving in with him and not engaged to be married Bugbear attacks bring her close to death. Tilly uses a revive spell and to restore Agnes's hit-points
	27	Kills bugbears and levels up
	28	Comes in with black leather gloves. Thinks they will help her stay in character
	39	Puts on her gloves and as she does she's instantly transported to the D&D world
	41	"I watch 'The Real World' I listen to Madonna, there's no way I'm anti-gay"
	42	Upset that she learned more about her sister in a role-playing game than she did in real life
	46	Teaches English in High School. Same highschool as Tilly and her friends go to
	47	Family died 2 years ago
	48	Black gloves are possibly Vera's
	56	Listened to 10,000 maniacs while making out with Miles in the couch
	59	Miles Slashes her Arm
	62	24 years old
	62	Tilly says: "twenty four in Ohio-time is like geriatric, it's like super old, it's like thirty. Shouldn't you already have a kid? Or two?" And Agnes doesn't object to those words
	68	Starts applying some lipstick
	69	Challenges Sucubi to a cheerleader style dance battle
69	Kills the sucubi	
72	Agnes's world had "George Michaels and leg-warmers"	
73	Agnes failed to understand her. Now that she's dead, she'll never get a chance to be close to her	
74	Agnes is a Total Betty according to Ronnie	
76	Getting to know Tilly's friends	



After many creative meetings with the director, the designing team and the visual research, we start rendering the costume. We present a **preliminary sketch** to the director to get his feedback. Once the sketch has been approved, we then move on to the next step of adding colors. Attaching the most prominent research pictures alongside the **final rendering** helps the team better understand the design.



Once we have the **Character Notes** chart for all the characters, then we move on to the chart for **Scene Breakdown**. The scene breakdown helps to see which character/actor is on stage at any given point of time. In this particular play we have characters going in and out of the Dungeons and Dragons fantasy world, New Landia, and the real world, Athens, Ohio. We also have one actor playing multiple roles, our cast consists of 18 actors but we have 40 different costumes. This chart is most important when we need to prepare for costume changes in between scenes. The red colored boxes show quick costume changes—some of these changes are done in under one minute.

Scene Breakdown		Location: Athens, Ohio in 1995 and the Imaginary Land of New Landia	RPG Gaming Store	Tilly's Bedroom	Agnes Kitchen/ New Landia - between the beach and the forest	Inside a dark cave lit with only torches/ Orcus' Lair	Vera's Office	Land of New Landia	Agnes's Office	Land of New Landia	Vera's Office	Land of New Landia	School into Land of New Landia	Agnes's House & Land of New Landia	Vera's Office	Sc h o o l	Land of New Landia	
Act & Scene	Page #	Prologue	Sc. 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Sc. 4	Scene 5	Scene 6	Sc. 7	Scene 8	Scene 9	Scene 10	Scene 11	Scene 12	Scene 13	Scene 14	Scene 15	Scene 16
Costume Des: Gayani B.																		
Actor:																		
Mary Chattin		Agnes	Agnes															
Olivia Timmus		Tilly/ Tilly	Tilly	Tilly				Tilly						Tilly	Tilly		Tilly	Tilly
Samantha Bates		Kaliop/ Kelly		Kaliop										Kaliop	Kaliop		Kaliop	Kaliop
Saorise Cohen		Lilith/ Lilly																
Sebastian Scioscia		Orcus/ Ronnie			Orcus					Orcus				Orcus	Orcus		Orcus	Orcus
James O'Driscoll		Chuck/ Shadow Puppetry	Chuck	Chuck			Chuck	Chuck	Chuck	Chuck				Chuck	Chuck		Chuck	Chuck
Patrick Saint-Ange		Miles/ Bugbear/ Liche/ Shadow Puppet	SP "D&D" title	Miles	first to die	Bugbear	Liche	Miles						Miles	Conan	Miles	Pg.66 heart ripped	
Brianna Thompson		Vera/ Shadow Puppet/ Chris Gobbins/ Bethel/ Voice	SP Car/Shadowed Car		Vera		SP M Tami/Chris Gobbins										Vera	Beholder/ Voice
Elizabeth Dee		Evil Gabbi/ Gabbi/ Gobbins/ Silhouette/ Chris Gobbins	SP word title, Gobbins				SP "Chris Gobbins							Gabbi	Evil Gabbi	Evil Gabbi		
Jessie Jean Newman-Gatfield		Evil Tima/ Tima/ Kobald/ Chris Gobbins		Kobald			SP "Chris Gobbins							Tima	Evil Tima	Evil Tima		
Ruby McEwen		Narrator/ Beholder	Narrator		Narrator		SP Tiamat-Narrator											Beholder
Ally Restrepo		Farrah The Faerie/ Shadow Puppet	SP "Road, foliage				SP "Map	Farrah the Faerie										
Cameron Reilly-Steele		Adventurer/ Mage/ Steve	SP "Kills" title, Gobbins			Steve	SP "boat Rip	Adventurer						pg.7 arms ripped off	Adventurer			Adventurer
Yiorgos Stenos		Bugbear/ Gobbins Silhouette/ Tiamat	Gobbins Silhouette			Bugbear	SP "Map											Tiamat
Rose Goodman		Unnamed Student/ Shadow Puppet/ Mindfayer/ Tiamat	SP "Dre/Dragon		Unnamed Student	SP	Shadowfyer/SP "Sea monster"											Tiamat
Kari Duval		Kobald/ Tiamat	Pg.18 Tail cutoff	Kobald			no tail	Kobald										Tiamat
Michael Tang		Kobald/ Ogre/ Tiamat																Tiamat
Alfredo Del Castillo		Bugbear/ Gobbins Silhouette	SP "Monsters" title, Gobbins			Bugbear		Bugbear										Tiamat

Prepared by: Gayani Bulathsinghala
Costume Designer for *She Kills Monsters*
MA in Theatre - Costume Design