VIETNAM-KOREA UNIVERSITY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

GRADUATION THESIS REPORT

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SHORT STORY THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAIN

Student name: Do Thi Kim Oanh

Class: 21DA

Major: Information Technology

Specialization: Digital Art

Instructor: MSc. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy

Da Nang, 25 December 2025

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INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION

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Instructor

Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy

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First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Board of Rectors and all the lecturers of the University for their continuous support, for creating favorable learning conditions, and for providing adequate facilities and equipment throughout my academic journey at the University.

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I firmly believe that the knowledge and practical experience gained during the implementation of this graduation design project will serve as valuable assets for my continued academic pursuits and as a solid foundation for my professional development after graduation.

Due to the limited duration of the internship and my lack of practical experience, this report may still contain certain shortcomings. I sincerely hope to receive understanding and constructive comments from the lecturers so that I can further improve myself.

Sincerely, thank you.

Do Thi Kim Oanh

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INTRODUCTION

1. THE URGENCY OF THE TOPIC

- Enhancing Emotional Communication Through Visual Language:
  Illustration is an effective way to help viewers easily feel and understand messages through visuals. In modern life, where people have less time to read, illustrations become a powerful bridge between art and emotions.
- Revisiting and Preserving Childhood Memories:
  Childhood represents a meaningful and memorable stage of human life. Through illustration, these moments can be artistically preserved and reinterpreted, not only reflecting personal experiences but also resonating with viewers by awakening their own cherished memories.
- Emphasizing the Significance of Illustration in Contemporary Society:
  Beyond its decorative function, illustration is widely used as a storytelling tool that enhances communication, stimulates imagination, and increases the effectiveness of visual content. As a result, illustration has become an indispensable element within today's creative and cultural industries.
- Opportunities for Professional and Creative Development:
  For students with a strong interest in illustration, this topic provides an opportunity to experiment, refine technical skills, and develop a personal artistic voice, thereby laying a solid foundation for future career orientation.
- Contributing Positive Values to the Community:
  An illustration project can extend beyond individual expression to deliver meaningful messages, inspire emotional connection, and promote positive values within the community.

➢ In conclusion, the urgency of this topic lies in its dual impact: fostering the creator's artistic growth while simultaneously offering emotional and aesthetic value to society.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Applying Illustration to Literary Storytelling:

This project aims to apply illustration as a visual storytelling tool to interpret and recreate the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain."* Through images, the project seeks to enhance narrative depth, clarify story progression, and support readers in better understanding the literary content.

- Developing Illustration Skills Through a Complete Creative Process:
  By illustrating a literary work, this project provides an opportunity to practice and improve illustration skills from concept development, character design, and scene composition to color application and final presentation using both traditional and digital techniques.
- Interpreting Themes and Characters Through Visual Language:
  The project focuses on visualizing key themes, character emotions, and symbolic elements within the story. Through illustration, abstract literary ideas are transformed into expressive visual representations that convey mood, atmosphere, and narrative meaning.
- Creating a Cohesive and Meaningful Illustration Series:
  The objective is to produce a complete and coherent set of illustrations that maintain consistency in style, color palette, and visual storytelling. The final product may take the form of an illustrated short story or artbook with both artistic and narrative value.
- Affirming Creative Direction in Illustration:
  This project serves as an important step in affirming the author's interest and long-term orientation in the field of illustration, particularly in literary illustration and narrative art, while laying a foundation for future creative projects.
- Delivering Artistic and Educational Value:
  Beyond fulfilling graduation requirements, the project aims to offer artistic, cultural, and educational value by introducing literary content through visual art, thereby enriching readers' experiences and encouraging engagement with classic or meaningful narratives.

3. RESEARCH SUBJECT AND SCOPE

- Subject of the Study:

- The content, characters, costumes, and settings in the short story "The Marriage of Sir Gawain."
- The system of imagery, symbolism, and humanistic messages conveyed in the work.
- Illustration style and the distinctive aesthetic characteristics of Medieval European art, combined with elements of modern creative interpretation.

- Scope of the Study:

- Focusing on the development of character design, spatial composition, and key situations within the narrative.
- Rather than exploring the entire Arthurian legend system, the project is limited to the scope of the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* in order to ensure clarity, focus, and design effectiveness.
- Content:

  This study focuses on illustrating the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* by analyzing and visually interpreting its narrative content, characters, costumes, and settings. The illustrations aim to convey key moments of the story, emphasize character relationships, and reflect the underlying humanistic messages of the work.
- Methodology:

  The project applies a combination of traditional hand-drawing techniques and digital illustration software. Particular attention is given to character design, scene composition, color palettes, and visual storytelling methods inspired by Medieval European art, while incorporating modern creative elements to enhance emotional expression.
- Target Audience:

  The project is intended for readers who are interested in illustrated literature, medieval-themed narratives, and visual storytelling. It is especially suitable for audiences who appreciate art-inspired interpretations of classic literary works.
- Timeframe:

- The research and execution of the project are conducted within the time period allocated for the graduation course, with the objective of completing a cohesive and high-quality illustrated product that fulfills academic requirements.
- Space:

The creative process is primarily carried out within the academic environment. However, the final illustrated work has the potential for practical applications beyond the classroom, such as exhibitions, publications, or visual art showcases.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

- Literature and visual research:

  Studying the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain,"* the Arthurian literary context, character archetypes, and symbolic meanings; additionally, referencing illustrations, artworks, and visual materials related to Medieval European culture.
- Content analysis and selection:

  Identifying key narrative segments, representative details, and core messages to be conveyed through illustration.
- Concept development and sketching:

  Creating mood boards and preliminary sketches for character design, spatial settings, color schemes, and illustration style.
- Illustration execution:

  Producing and refining the illustrations according to the selected style, while ensuring consistency in composition, color palette, and visual symbolism.
- Finalization and presentation:

  Compiling the works into a complete illustration set (illustrated book, artworks, or accompanying publications) and clearly presenting the creative concept and implementation process.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

1.1.INTRODUCTION

Currently, my career orientation is focused on illustration; therefore, for this graduation project, I chose the topic of illustrating the short story "The Marriage of Sir Gawain." This project provides an opportunity for me to apply my strengths in visual storytelling while further developing my illustration skills through a structured and comprehensive creative process.

By interpreting a literary work through illustration, I aim to explore how images can enhance narrative meaning, express character emotions, and convey symbolic messages embedded within the story. The process allows me to practice character design, scene composition, and the use of color and atmosphere inspired by Medieval European aesthetics, combined with contemporary creative approaches.

For me, this project goes beyond fulfilling graduation requirements; it represents a meaningful exploration of the relationship between literature and illustration. Through carefully constructed and emotionally driven visual narratives, I hope to offer viewers a deeper understanding of the story's themes and values, while allowing them to connect with the characters and reflect on the timeless messages conveyed in "The Marriage of Sir Gawain."

Although the story originates from a specific literary tradition, I believe that its humanistic themes - such as honor, transformation, and personal growth - remain universally relevant. Through this illustrated project, I aspire to create a work that is both artistically refined and emotionally engaging, resonating with contemporary audiences.

1.2.MOTIVATION

The topic of illustrating the short story "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" holds both academic and artistic significance, while also providing an important opportunity for me to further develop my illustration skills. As a literary work rooted in the Arthurian tradition, the story contains rich narrative elements, symbolic meanings, and emotional depth, making it an ideal subject for visual interpretation through illustration.

By recreating this story in visual form, I am able to improve my observational skills, attention to detail, and ability to express emotions and abstract concepts through images. The process of translating literary descriptions into visual representations challenges me to carefully study characters, settings, costumes, and moods, thereby enhancing my visual thinking and artistic sensitivity.

Throughout this project, I have the opportunity to practice and refine my hand-drawing skills, beginning with preliminary sketches and gradually developing them into complete illustrations. At the same time, I experiment with a combination of traditional drawing techniques and digital illustration tools, allowing me to become more familiar with contemporary methods while maintaining a handcrafted artistic quality. This exploration helps broaden my creative approach and strengthens my technical versatility in illustration.

In addition to improving technical skills, this project also contributes to the development of my visual storytelling ability. Each illustration is not merely an image but a narrative component that supports the story's progression and emotional impact. Selecting appropriate compositions, color palettes, and illustration styles that reflect the medieval atmosphere and the underlying themes of the story presents an engaging creative challenge, fostering my design thinking and conceptual skills.

Moreover, working on a comprehensive illustration project of this scale encourages me to develop a more structured and disciplined working process. From researching the literary background, generating ideas, sketching, refining details, to finalizing the illustrated work, the project helps me improve my time management skills and my ability to work systematically and independently.

In conclusion, illustrating "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" is not only an opportunity to deepen my understanding of a meaningful literary work but also a valuable process for enhancing my illustration skills, refining my personal style, and preparing a solid foundation for my future career in illustration and visual design.

1.3. WHAT IS "ARTBOOK"?

An artbook is a creative publication that collects illustrations centered around a specific theme or story. It is not merely a book of images, but a visual narrative that reflects the artist's creative process, from initial sketches to finished works, while conveying ideas and emotions through illustration.

In this project, the artbook is based on the story "The Marriage of Sir Gawain." Through illustrations, the project highlights the characters, settings, and emotional depth of the narrative. This artbook also serves as an opportunity to develop my illustration skills, refine my personal style, and create a storytelling-oriented artistic product.

1.4. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

1.4.1. Adobe Photoshop

Image 1 – Adobe Photoshop

Photoshop is a powerful and widely used tool in digital illustration, especially in creating detailed and expressive artworks. With its flexible and diverse features, Photoshop supports the illustration process from initial sketches to fully rendered images.

- Illustration with Brushes tools:

  The Brush Tool is a core element of my illustration workflow, allowing freehand drawing with various brush types such as soft, hard, and textured brushes. Photoshop also supports custom brushes, enabling me to develop a personal style and create detailed elements like hair, textures, lighting, and shadows.

- Using Layers in Illustration:

  Layers are a key feature that greatly enhances flexibility in the illustration process. By separating elements such as background, characters, colors, and lighting into different layers, I can easily edit specific parts without affecting the overall artwork. This method improves efficiency and helps maintain consistency throughout the creative process.

- Editing and Applying Effects:

  Photoshop offers various effects such as Gaussian Blur, Drop Shadow, Outer Glow, and texture overlays. These tools are useful for creating depth, enhancing lighting, and adding realistic surface details, making the illustrations more vivid and visually engaging.

1.4.2. XP-Pen

Image 2 – XP-Pen

XP-Pen is a well-known graphic tablet brand widely used by artists and designers in digital illustration. Combining XP-Pen with professional allows me to work more accurately, flexibly, and efficiently in the illustration process.

- XP-Pen and Adobe Photoshop:

  XP-Pen enables me to draw directly on the tablet with a natural hand-drawing experience, similar to working on paper. The pressure-sensitive pen allows precise control over stroke thickness and opacity, helping me create smooth lines, detailed textures, and expressive lighting and shading effects.

- Benefits of using XP-Pen in illustration design:

- Provides a natural and intuitive drawing experience.
- Enhances precision and control when creating fine details.
- Allows quick editing and flexible workflow without relying heavily on the mouse or keyboard.
- Supports pressure sensitivity, enabling varied and expressive strokes that make illustrations more vivid and dynamic.

CHAPTER 2. CONTENT

2.1.TOPIC OVERVIEW

With the goal of completing the illustrated artbook based on "The Marriage of Sir Gawain", I aim to apply the knowledge and skills I have accumulated throughout my studies to create a work that reflects my personal artistic voice. This artbook is not only a graduation project but also an opportunity for me to reinterpret a classic Arthurian tale through illustration, giving it new visual life while preserving its core humanistic values.

The characters in the artbook are developed based on the original literary descriptions, combined with my own creative interpretation. Gawain, the central character, is portrayed as a noble knight whose inner conflicts, moral growth, and emotional transformation play a crucial role in the story. Through character design, facial expressions, gestures, and costumes inspired by medieval European aesthetics, I aim to convey the psychological depth and humanity of each character.

The background and setting are inspired by medieval Europe, particularly the Arthurian world. Elements such as castles, royal courts, forests, and rural landscapes are illustrated to reflect the atmosphere of the Middle Ages, while still allowing room for modern creative adaptation. The visual environment is designed to support the narrative, enhance the emotional tone of each scene, and immerse viewers in the legendary context of the story.

Key events and situations in the artbook are selected from important moments in "The Marriage of Sir Gawain", focusing on themes such as loyalty, respect, love, and the role of women in medieval society. Through these illustrated scenes, I aim to highlight the moral message of the story, especially the value of understanding, mutual respect, and equality within marriage.

Although the story originates from medieval literature, this illustrated artbook seeks to create a connection with contemporary audiences. By combining traditional Arthurian themes with a modern illustrative approach, I hope the project will not only honor the original tale but also offer viewers a fresh perspective on timeless human values that remain relevant today.

2.2. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The process includes the following stages:

- Defining Theme and Concept
- Researching and Planning

- Sketching and Designing Characters and Scenes
- Drawing Details and Editing
- Designing Layout and Layout
- Printing and Publishing

2.2.1. Defining Theme and Concept

2.2.1.1. Defining Theme

- Main theme:

  The illustrated artbook *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* focuses on visually interpreting the short story through illustration in order to convey its humanistic values and moral messages. By combining narrative and imagery, the project aims to evoke emotional engagement and provide viewers with a deeper understanding of themes such as love, respect, and the role of women in medieval society.
- Core idea:

- Main character: Gawain is portrayed based on the original Arthurian text as a noble knight who undergoes moral and emotional challenges. His character development reflects the journey toward understanding respect, integrity, and equality within marriage.
- Setting: The visual setting is inspired by medieval Europe, particularly the Arthurian world, including King Arthur's court, castles, forests, and mythical landscapes characteristic of medieval legends.
- Story: The illustrations focus on key moments of *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"*, highlighting themes of honor, promises, love, and mutual respect between individuals.
- Illustration style: The art style draws inspiration from medieval European aesthetics, combined with modern creative elements. A muted and warm color palette is used to enhance the legendary atmosphere and emotional depth of the story.

- Theme objectives:

- Conveying Humanistic Messages: Emphasizing values such as understanding, respect, and equality in relationships, especially within marriage.

- Evoking Emotional Reflection: Encouraging viewers to reflect on the psychological depth of the characters and the timeless moral lessons of the story.
- Honoring Classical Literature: Contributing to the preservation and reinterpretation of Arthurian legends through contemporary illustration, making the work more accessible to modern audiences.

2.2.1.2. Concept

The illustrated artbook *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* is structured into two main parts: the opening at King Arthur's court and the challenge that initiates the story, followed by Gawain's journey, marriage, and moral resolution. Characters are depicted with varied expressions and body language, combined with symbolic medieval European settings. The illustrations are arranged in narrative order to guide viewers from initial conflict to the story's humanistic message.

2.2.2. Researching and Planning

2.2.2.1. Research

- Exploring the Arthurian World:
  Study the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* to understand its narrative structure, character development, and moral values. Research the Arthurian legend background to identify key symbols, themes, and cultural meanings relevant to the story.
- Researching Medieval European Culture:
  Study the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"* to understand its narrative structure, character development, and moral values. Research the Arthurian legend background to identify key symbols, themes, and cultural meanings relevant to the story.

  Explore visual materials related to medieval Europe, including architecture, castles, costumes, armor, and daily life, to ensure historical and aesthetic authenticity in the illustrations.

Image 3 - Medieval Europe Through Paintings

- Finding Artistic Inspiration:
  Analyze existing illustrated books and artworks inspired by medieval legends and mythology to learn about composition, color schemes, and emotional storytelling through images. Explore illustration styles that balance classical medieval aesthetics with modern creative approaches.
- Audience Analysis:

- Primary audience: Readers and art enthusiasts interested in illustrated literature and medieval legends.
- Secondary audience: Students, researchers, and general readers who seek visual interpretations of classic literary works.

2.2.2.2. Planning

- Building content:

- Main story: The artbook is developed based on the short story *"The Marriage of Sir Gawain"*, centering on King Arthur's crisis, Sir Gawain's noble sacrifice, and the story's profound message about women's autonomy and respect within marriage.
- Introduction: Presents the conflict in which King Arthur is captured by a powerful baron and is forced to answer a life-or-death riddle: *"What do women truly desire?"*

- Body: Illustrates Arthur's journey to seek the answer, his encounter with an old woman, and Sir Gawain's selfless decision to marry her in order to save the king and the kingdom. The focus is placed on Gawain's moral integrity, emotional growth, and honorable character.
- Conclusion: Concludes with the resolution of the riddle - the right of women to make their own choices - and the transformation of the old woman, emphasizing themes of mutual respect, understanding, and genuine love in marriage.

• Outline layout:

- Cover page: Includes the publisher's name and logo, the title of the story, images of the main character, price, barcode, target audience, and message.
- Content pages: Story progression / plot development.
- Credits page: This page lists the author, illustrator, editor, cover designer, publisher, year of publication, etc.

• Prepare resources:

- Illustration tools:
    - Use XP-Pen drawing tablet to ensure accuracy and naturalness when sketching and drawing details.
    - Adobe Photoshop for drawing and editing illustrations, focusing on light, shadow and color.
- Collecting materials:
    - Search for and store reference images of the medieval period, including architecture and clothing from that era.
    - Refer to other illustrations to learn about drawing style, color combinations and storytelling.
- Color research:

  Create a color palette suitable for the theme: use warm tones (yellow, orange, red) for interiors to evoke a sense of antiquity, combined with blue and green to create contrast and a fresh feeling.

CHAPTER 3. IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT

3.1. Creating Sketching Design Ideas

3.1.1. Character sketching:

When I started working on the project, I skipped the hand-sketching stage and moved directly to line art for the character in order to save time. Although this approach helped speed up the initial progress, it required greater focus and more revisions during the refinement process to ensure accurate proportions, composition, and overall visual balance.

Image 4 – Line art of Gawain

3.2. Scenes sketching:

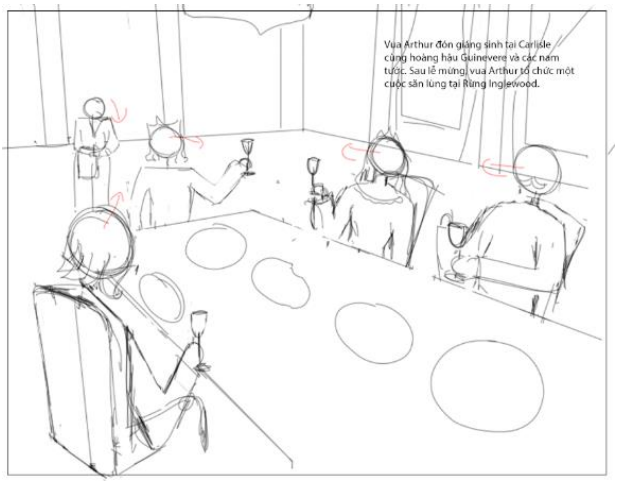


Image 5 – Sketch page 1 2

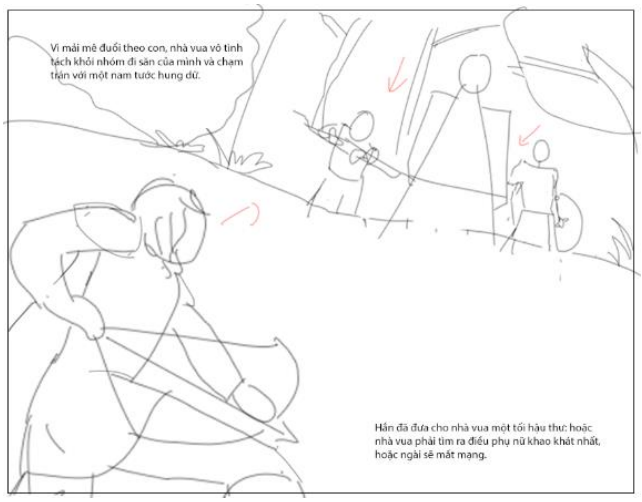
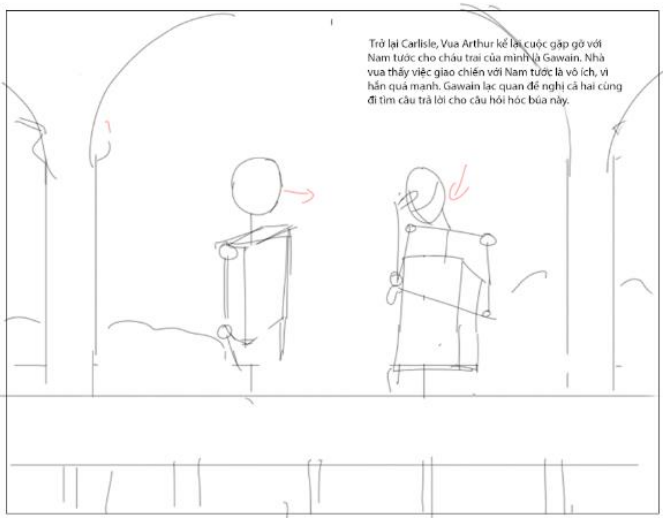


Image 6 – Sketch page 3 4



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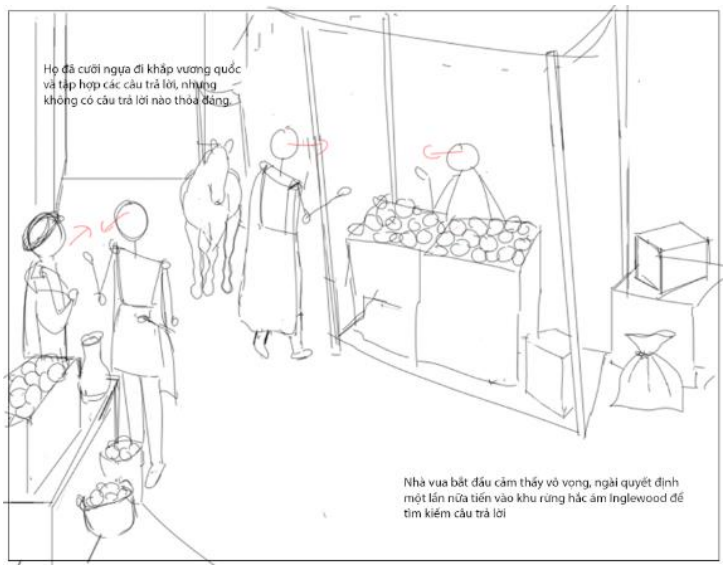

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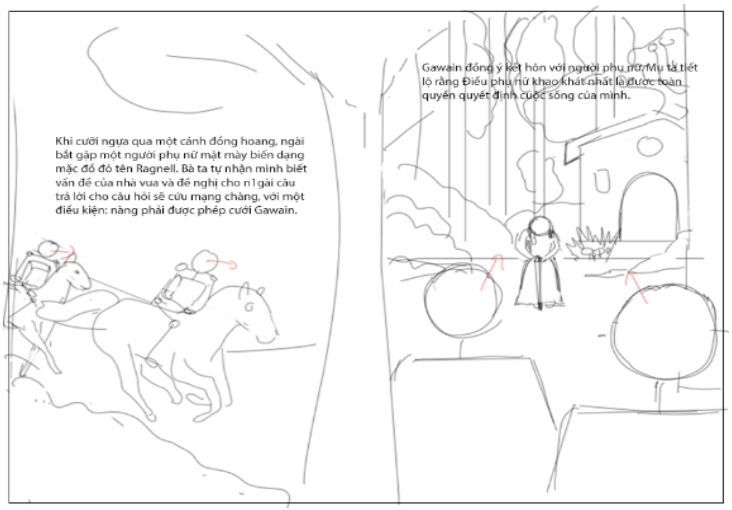

Image 9 - Sketch page 9 10

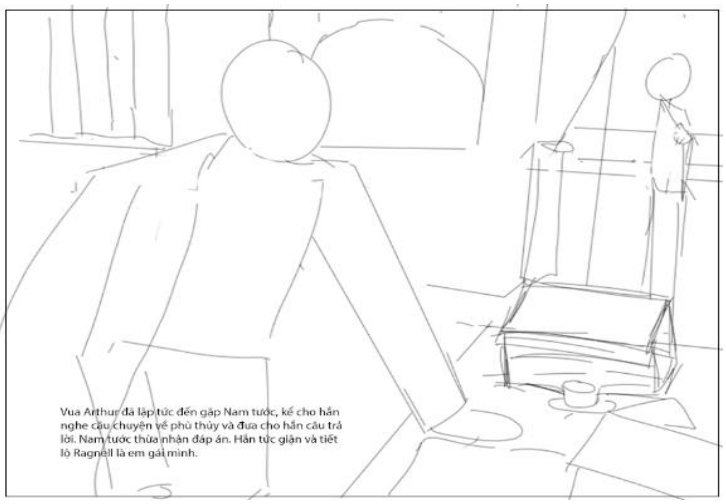

Image 10 - Sketch page 11 12

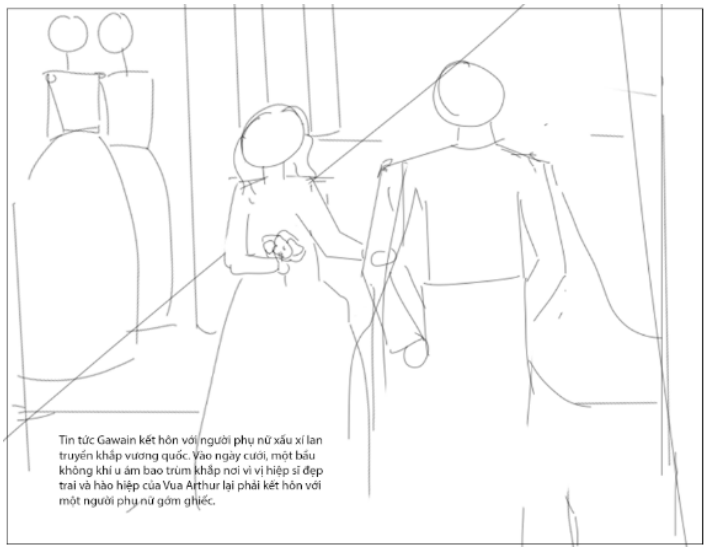

Image 11 - Sketch page 13 14

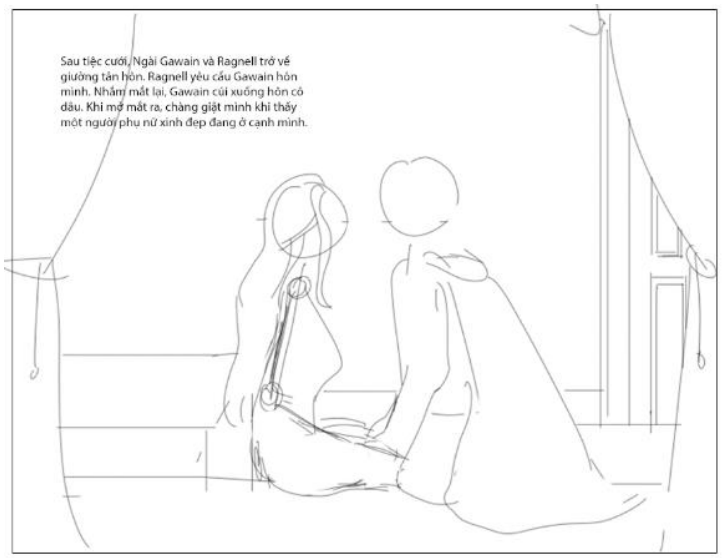

Image 12 - Sketch page 15 16

Image 13 - Sketch page 17 18

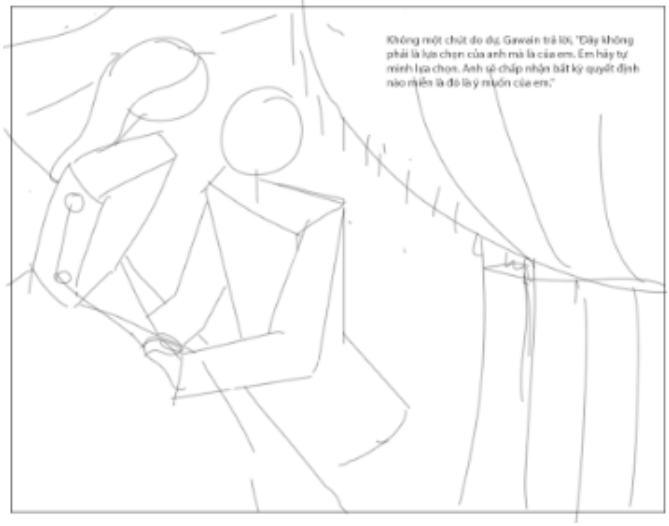

Image 14 - Sketch page 19 20

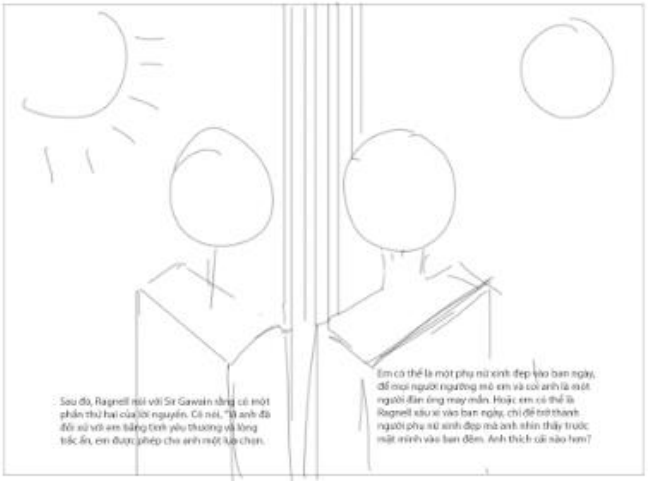

Image 15 - Sketch page 21 22

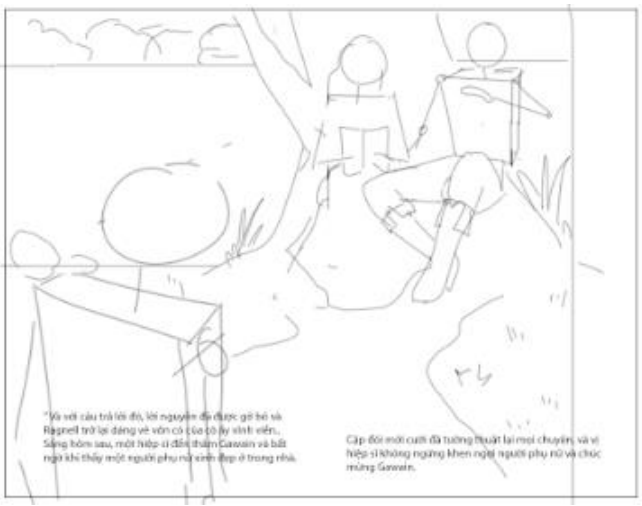

Image 16 - Sketch page 23 24

Image 17 - Sketch page 25 26

3.3. Drawing Details and Editing

3.3.1. Main Character

Character Name: Gawain

Identity: The nephew of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table

Appearance: Gawain has rich brown hair and clear blue eyes, giving him a calm yet resolute appearance. He wears green attire that symbolizes vitality, faith, and the spirit of chivalry. A sword is securely fastened at his side, serving as a constant reminder of his role as a warrior.

Personality: From his steady stance to his determined gaze, Gawain embodies courage, strength, and unwavering resolve, showing that he is always prepared to step into battle to defend his honor and ideals.

Image 18 – Main character

3.3.2. Supporting character

Character Name: Arthur King

Identity: King of Camelot and leader of the Knights of the Round Table, The one who accompanies Gawain throughout the story.

Appearance: Arthur possesses a dignified presence with sharp, resolute facial features that reflect the authority of a king. He has blond hair and blue eyes, giving him a noble and commanding appearance. Arthur wears blue attire, a color symbolizing wisdom, loyalty, and justice. The blue garments further enhance his regal bearing, while his firm posture conveys strength and calm composure befitting a true leader.

Personality: Arthur embodies honor, responsibility, and unwavering determination. His composed demeanor and resolute gaze reveal a king who is firm yet fair, always ready to lead his people in times of war as well as peace. Guided by justice and noble ideals, Arthur stands as a symbol of courage and rightful authority, inspiring loyalty and trust among those who follow him.

Image 19 - Supporting character

3.3.3. Cover book

Image 20 - Cover book

3.3.4. Scenes

Image 21 – Page 1 2

Image 22 – Page 3 4

Image 23 – Page 5 6

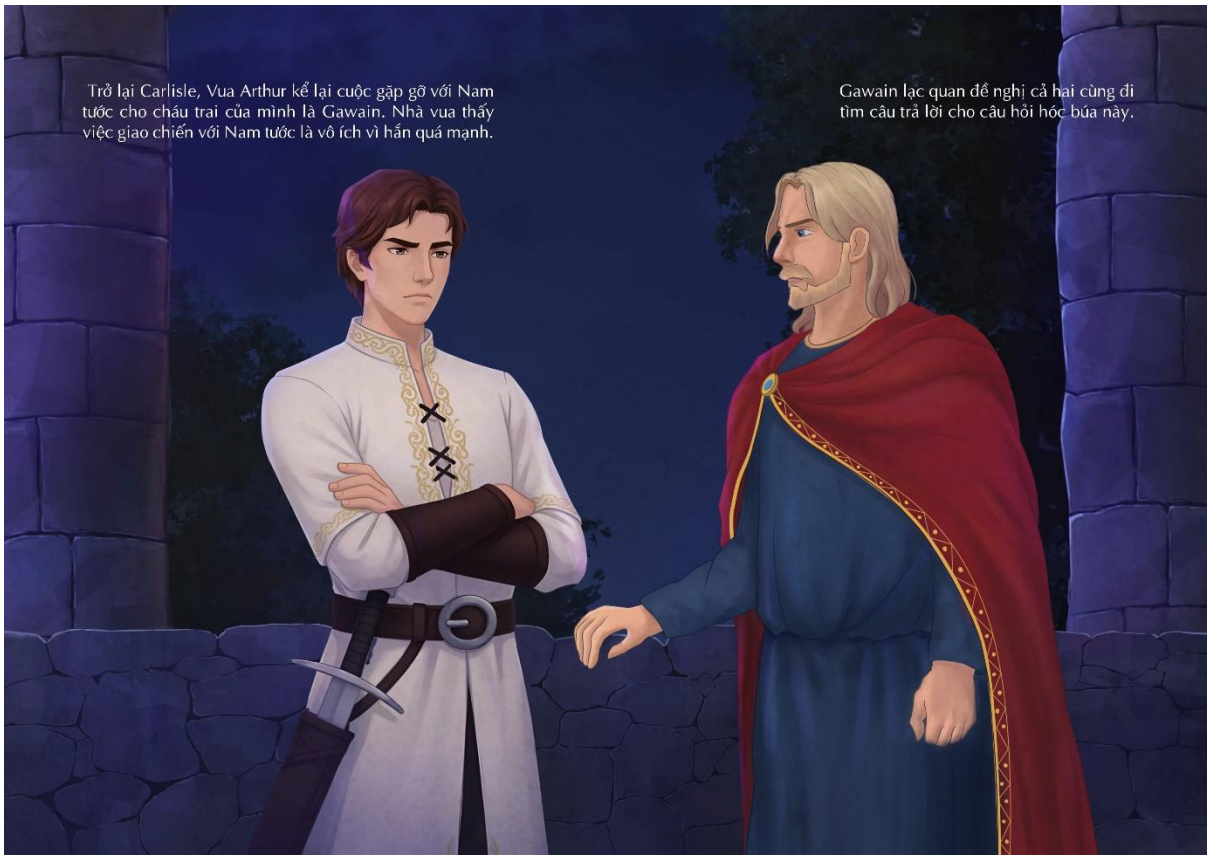

Image 24 – Page 7 8

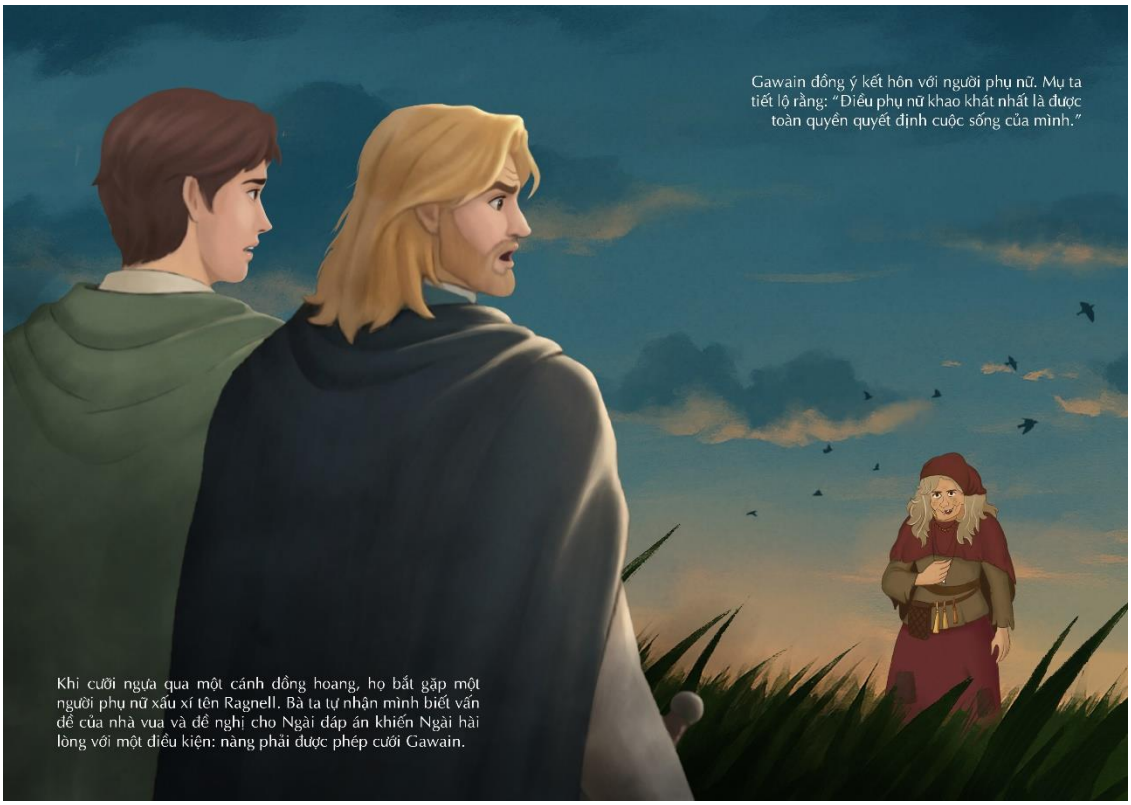

Image 25 – Page 9 10

Image 26 – Page 11 12

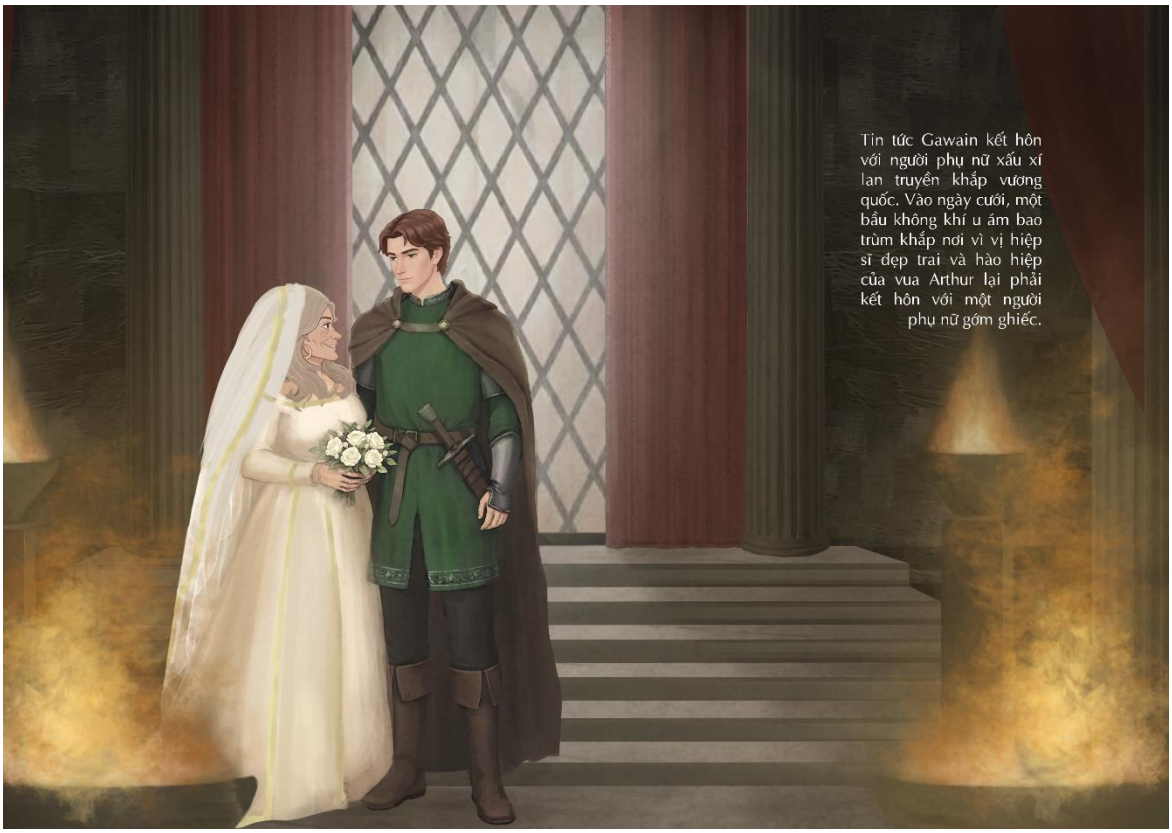

Image 27 – Page 13 14

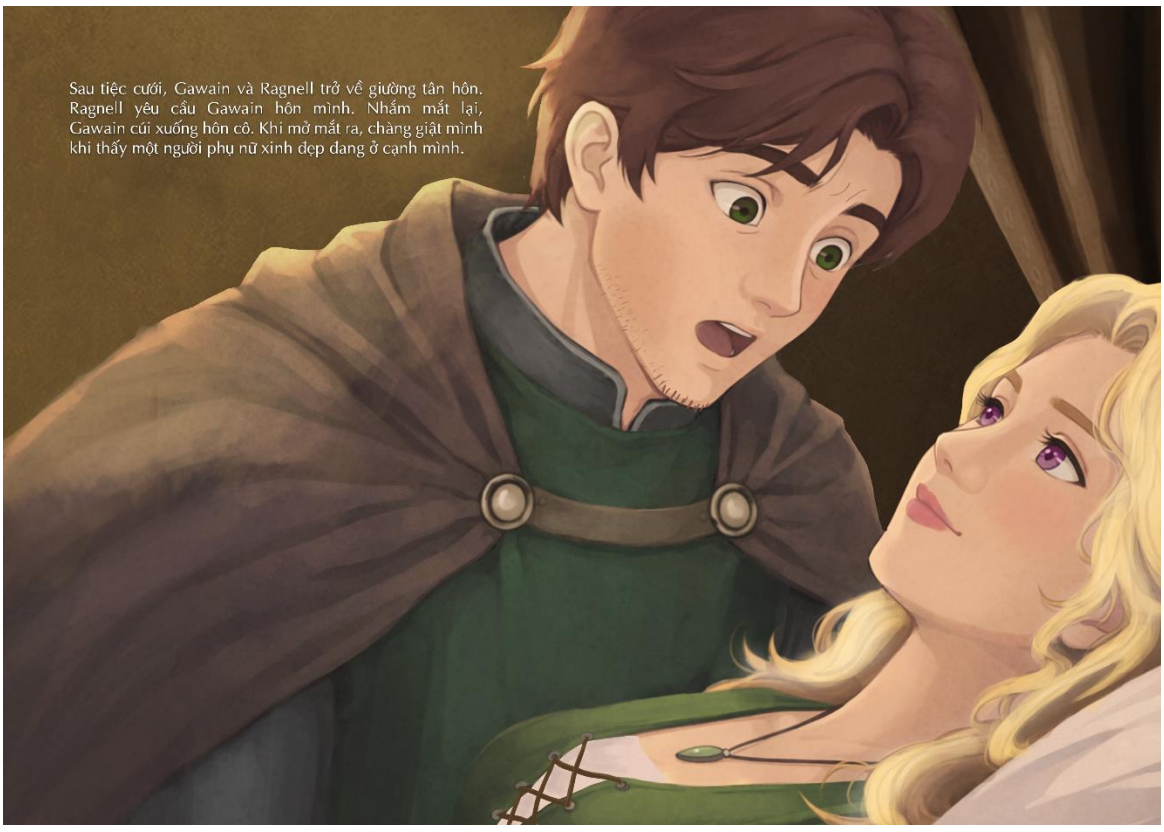

Image 28 – Page 15 16

Image 29 – Page 17 18

Image 30 – Page 19 20

Image 31 – Page 21 22

Image 32 – Page 23 24

Image 33 – Page 25 26

3.3.5. Endpapers:

Each book includes both a front endpaper and a back endpaper. The front endpaper serves as an introduction to the story, presenting the plot and introducing the main characters. The back endpaper contains publishing information about the book, such as the publisher, distributor, author, and other relevant details.

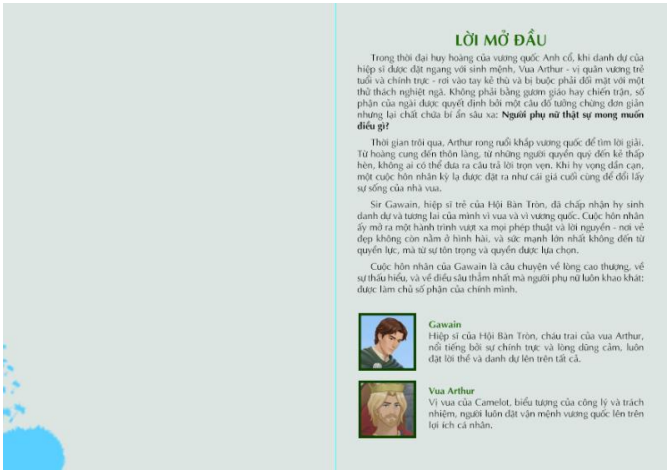

Image 34 - Front endpaper

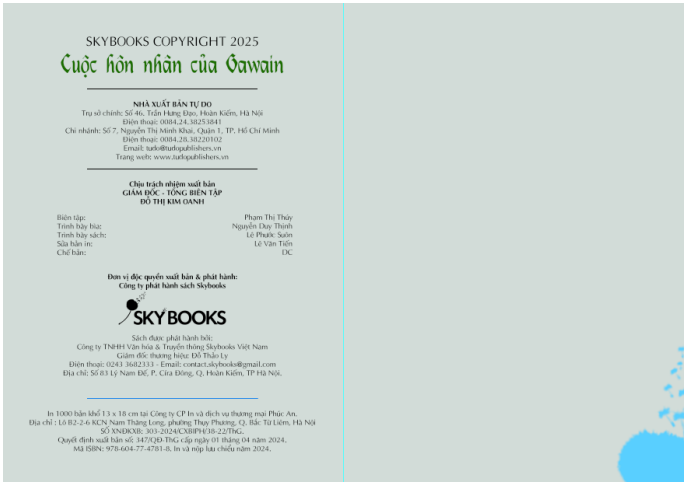

Image 35 – Back endpaper

3.4. Designing Layout

3.4.1. Sub project

Image 36 – Poster

Image 37 – Standee

Image 38 – Bookmark

Image 39 – Sticker

Image 40 - Hashtags

Image 41- QR of flipbook

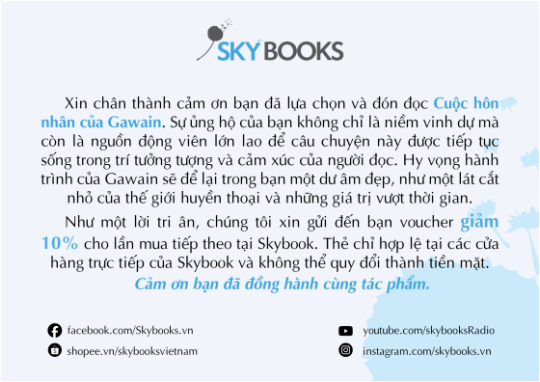

Image 42 – Thank letter

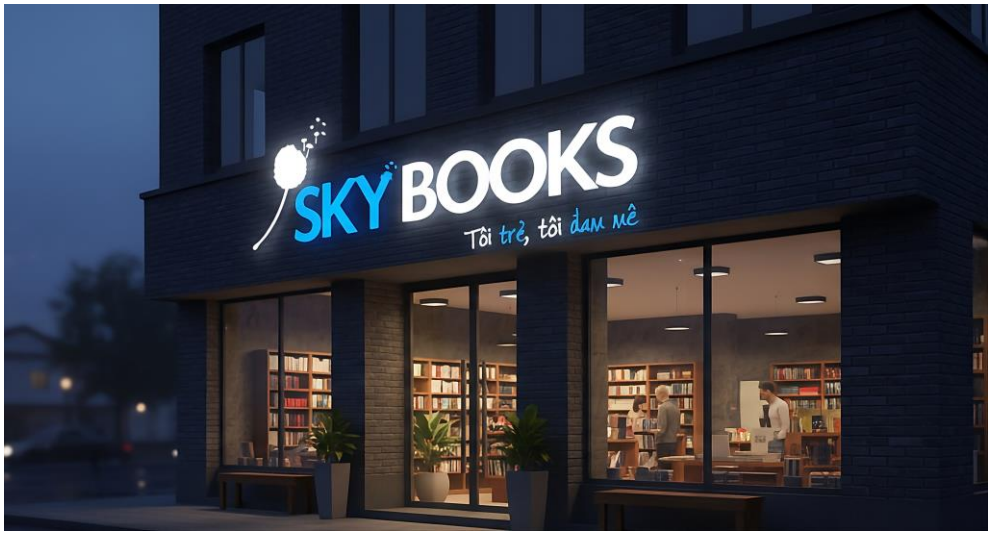

Image 43 – Logo sign

Image 44 – Notebook

Image 45 – Namecard, envelope, letter paper

Image 46 - Employee ID card

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions

Through the research and execution of the graduation project titled **"Illustration Design for the Story *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*"**, I have successfully consolidated the theoretical knowledge acquired during my academic studies and applied it to a complete narrative illustration project. This project marks an important milestone in shaping my personal artistic style and strengthening my professional mindset as an illustrator.

Achieved Results:

- In terms of Professional Expertise:
  - Narrative Illustration Skills: I developed a coherent visual storytelling system, ensuring consistency in character design, costumes, color palettes, and environments throughout the story. The illustrations effectively support the narrative flow and emotional development of the characters.
  - Character Design: The main and supporting characters were carefully constructed with clear identities, personalities, and visual distinctions, contributing to stronger reader engagement and storytelling clarity.
  - Technical Proficiency: I demonstrated proficiency in digital illustration tools such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, from sketching and line art to coloring, lighting, and final rendering, while meeting print and publication requirements.
  - Creative Workflow: I completed a full illustration process including concept research, hand sketching, digital line work, color development, layout planning, and final artwork production.
- In terms of Soft Skills and Attitude:
  - Creative Interpretation: I learned how to reinterpret a classical legend through a contemporary visual style while maintaining respect for the original narrative and its symbolic values.
  - Time Management: I improved my ability to plan, manage, and complete multiple illustrations within a fixed timeline, ensuring consistent progress and quality.
- Limitations:

- Print Experience: My practical experience with printing materials, paper selection, and finishing techniques remains limited, affecting the final physical presentation of the illustrated book.
- Visual Experimentation: Some illustrations remain within a relatively safe visual approach, and bolder experimentation in composition and lighting could further enhance emotional impact.

In conclusion, this graduation project has significantly contributed to my growth as an illustrator. It not only strengthened my technical and creative abilities but also highlighted areas for future improvement, serving as a strong foundation for my professional development.

2. Recommendations

To improve the quality and effectiveness of future graduation projects, I would like to propose the following recommendations:

- For the University and Department:
  - Organize more specialized workshops and seminars focusing on illustration, visual storytelling, and book design to help students better understand industry practices.
  - Encourage collaboration with publishers or creative studios to provide students with real-world illustration and publishing experience.
- Personal Development Plan:
  - Continuously refine my illustration skills and explore diverse art styles to expand my creative range.
  - Improve foreign language proficiency to access international literature, references, and global illustration trends.
  - Gain deeper knowledge of printing techniques and book production to ensure higher-quality illustrated publications in future projects.

REFERENCES

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