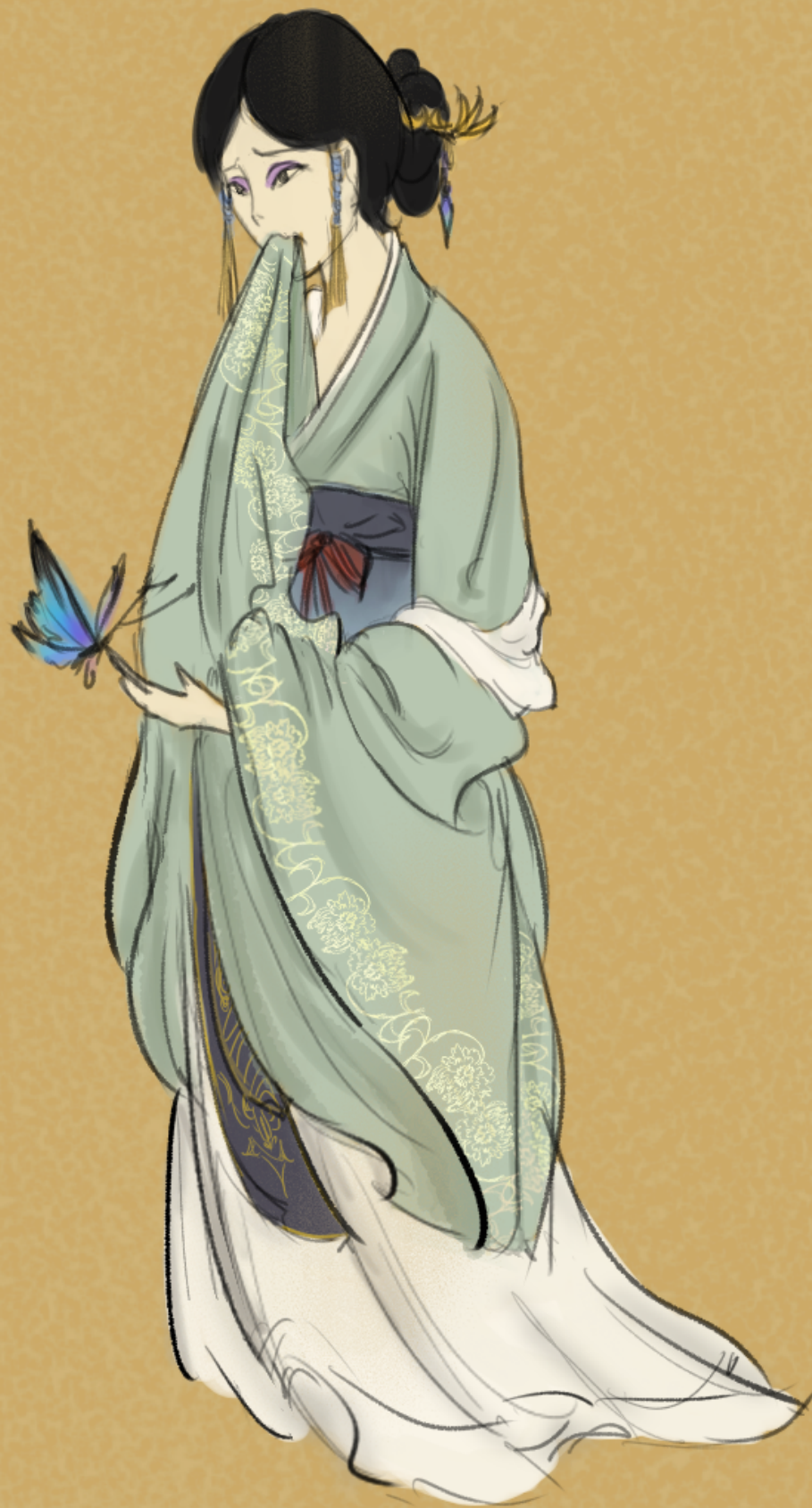


殄滅國賊西施后身
漢朝群臣不及婦人



FACE DESIGN

larger, more trusting pupils



- more youthful
- play on her guise of innocence and youth - she's 16!!

← downward sloping eyes for innocent appearance

↑ fuller cheeks

natural to no makeup



↑ smaller neck, larger head
more childlike proportions

more DANGER

- explore her political role in destabilizing an entire court
- more devious and cunning

sharper jaw, cheek, brow bone

more realistic neck proportion

more severe brow



← deeper set eyelids

↑ heavier makeup



HAIRSTYLE

- elaborate and fancy hair is seen in many of my reference images of her. More modern takes have flower and longer hair while older drawings have her hair in an updo.



- more complex hair accessories
to add grace and elegance
- more enticing/exotic/exciting
hair to look at

- longer hair more recognized as
feminine as modern view
- flowiness further emphasizes
the flowing in her clothes + grace

Diaochan Illustration

My creative project was to put myself in the shoes of an illustrator for a new edition of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms tasked with creating an illustration for Diaochan. I wanted to use a very specific premise so the goals for my illustration would be better-defined. So with this illustration, there are a few things I want to accomplish.

First, I want the character design to convey the character to the reader. That is to say, upon looking at this design, the reader would be comfortable with registering this drawing as one of Diaochan. This goal is primarily concerned with the design of her character — choosing her physical features and clothing only before thinking about the drawing style, posing, framing, etc. I started off by digging into what Han dynasty clothing was like, and found that the 1600s and 1980 editions depicted her wearing a *ruqun*, a style of clothes common to women of the time. She also wore a waist skirt and sash over the *ruqun* in both. So, I decided to adopt this style of clothing as well. It was important for me to make the sleeves incredibly large so as to introduce more folds and flowy fabrics into her outfit, since free-flowing fabric came up in almost every image of Diaochan I looked at across different time periods (some examples of these are included in my presentation slideshow) and I wanted to play it up. When I drew her face, as seen in my face sketches, I was trying to find a balance between her youth and innocent filial piety and her scheming and dangerous side that destabilized a whole kingdom. In my final rendering, I opted for a bit of a balance between the two, by not using the fuller, more rounded face of the younger variant along with the deeper set eyelid and poisonous purple makeup of the more dangerous variant. While modern iterations have her hair down, I chose to put her hair in an updo because it appeared more “exotic” of a hairstyle, adding a layer mystique and historical separation to her design. To play into our modern perception of long hair being seen as more feminine, I added dangly decorations on to her hairstyle. I

chose a clawed hair decoration as well as a pointed crystal since these sharp shapes convey the danger that she possesses. The part I spent the most time on was the colour palette of her clothing. I definitely wanted it to be cool colours, because the 2016 Arena of Valour interpretation of her as an ice maiden resonated with my understanding of her as calculated and cunning. I chose a pale jade for her top as a representation of the rarity of her beauty. I chose white for her skirt to resemble the room “still trailing in mist” line from the poem in the Moss Roberts edition. Finally I added a flower pattern since flowers were also a recurring motif in the images I came across. On one level, they represent a delicacy to her artistry and her femininity that makes her stand out amongst other characters. From a plot standpoint, it is the promise of her “defloration” that she wields as her weapon in the battle against Dong Zhuo.

Second, I want the illustration to appear legitimate and “historical.” Although my task as the illustrator doesn’t necessitate this (for example, many modern editions, especially those geared toward a younger audience, take on a more manhwa type of illustration), I wanted this to play into the discussion we had on the interesting spot between history and fiction that the novel finds itself in. From my midterm paper, I argued that while taking great creative liberties with plot, the novel legitimizes itself as a historical retelling through the tone of narration, extra-diegetic elements like maps or diagrams, and its context with respect to the storyteller tales, and the later video games and comments that strayed further from history, making the novel look more historical in comparison. Similarly, I took great liberties with her design by using blue jewels and purple makeup to convey a cold danger to a reader, and used a historically inaccurate hairline style to better fit in a modern reader’s comfort zone of “beautiful hairstyles.” However, I weathered the image by having the paper yellowed and coarse, streaking into the painting at some parts to imitate a historical painting. I included poetry, seen as a highly respected form of art, to elevate the status of my painting. It also acts as an on-image caption, acting similarly to how interlineal commentary works to imply the novel’s importance and worth. I opted specifically to keep the *ruqun* and black hair

that were changed in some modern drawings of her to appear more historically accurate in comparison to the *Dynasty Warriors* series for example. I also chose to draw in a style that does the opposite of what Scott McCloud discusses in his drawing of icons and comics. Rather than using a simplified/neutral looking face (the same face syndrome many modern anime and game characters suffer from), I tried to include more extreme facial features, such as the steep slant in her eyes, deep set eyelids, and strong furrowing of the brow to separate her from the emblematic default female face. McCloud also argues that icons try to make text as bold and direct as possible, to make the text perceived rather than received information. To make this appear less like an icon or comic, I wanted to use a “stroke-y” font. I tried my hand at calligraphy but it didn’t look too good, so I found this font online. It’s not as heavily stylized as I wanted, but I was aiming for something along this style.

Finally, I wanted the illustration to convey a bit of my own argument for who Diaochan is as a player in the tale of the Three Kingdoms. The female characters in RotK and in Three Kingdoms history were primarily important for their political role or relationship to male characters, as we saw in reading about Lady Zhen as well. As such, I chose to pose her looking sad and forlorn. It is her sadness that both incites Wang Yun to ask her to participate in the plot against Dong Zhuo and her sadness that tricks Lu Bu and Dong Zhuo into believing her. It is her ability to look really sad that enables her to “exterminate the traitors” as the poem on the image narrates. I chose to have her covering her face since someone covering their face is a body language gesture I associate with deceit and distrust, which plays well into her role in the novel. Finally I included the butterfly with sharp wings and a brilliant venomous blue as a symbol of danger, and her willingness to touch it reveals how dangerous she can be.