

# The Wisp of Willow

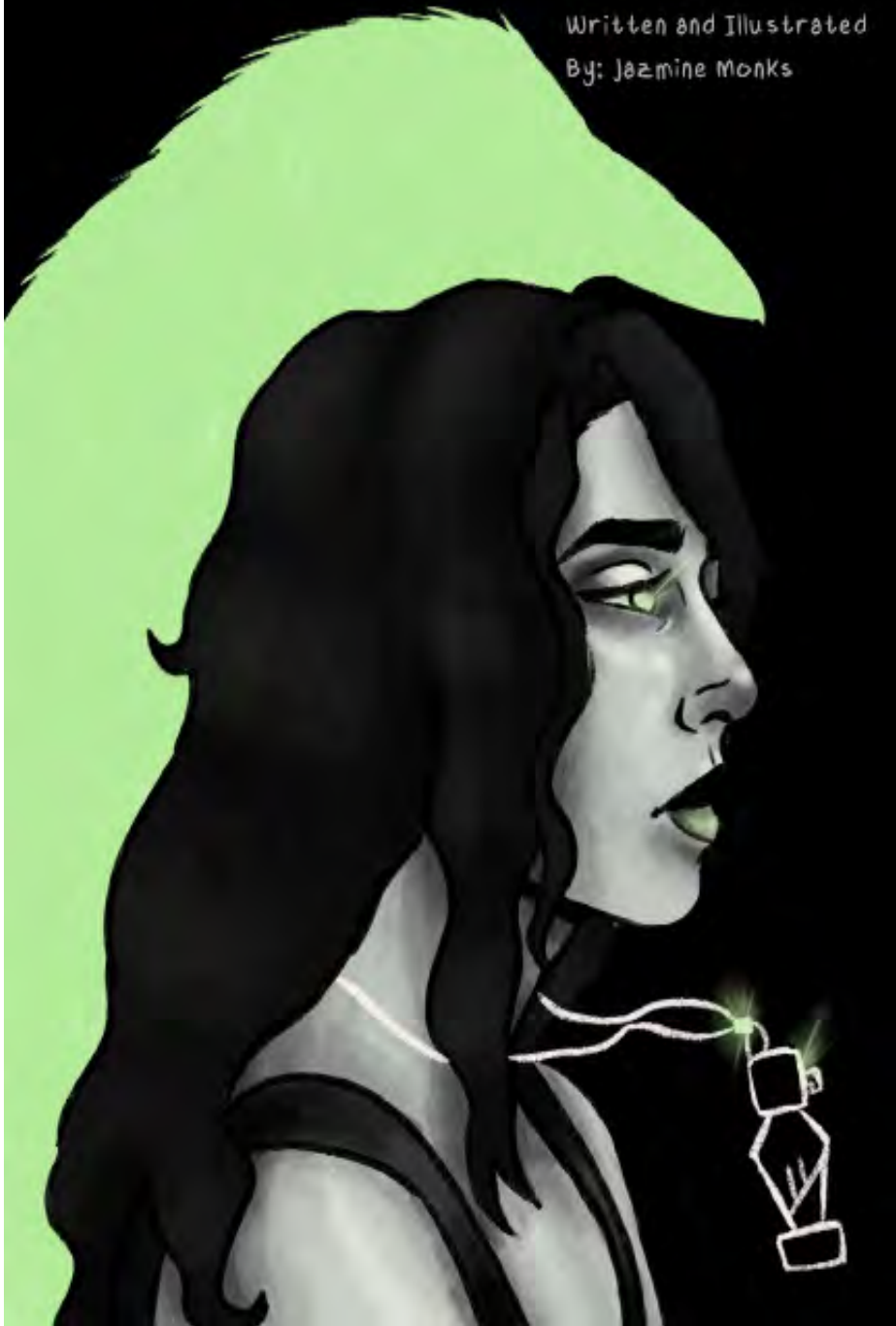
A teenage girl discovering the mysterious world of witchcraft, and uncovering the dark past of her recently deceased grandmother. But little does she know she will also be consumed by the dark secrets her grandmother once held.

A young adult Graphic Novel by Jazmine Monks



# THE WISP OF WILLOW

Written and Illustrated  
By: Jazmine Monks



## Project Synopsis

The Wisp of Willow in its final form would be around a 200-page graphic novel, at the dimensions of 6 inches by 9 inches. The pages themselves will be black and white with a tonal color that is a light green, so similar to my sample pages. The age range would be in a young adult reader category. And this narrative covers themes of grief, loss, reconnection, fitting in, and homesickness.

## Book Synopsis

The Astor family originally living in a small rural town, now are forced to move into a large metropolis city due to the recent mysterious passing of their grandmother. As well as their mother Aspen recently got a new job promotion. Once making the long trip into the city the Astor family begins unpacking their items into their new apartment. Willow, our main character, notices a raven figurine that was given to her as a child by her grandmother. While Willow examines this figurine Aspen walks by and asks Willow to go pick up something to eat for the two of them and her younger brother Jaxson. Willow then places the figurine back into the box. As Willow is leaving the apartment she decides to bring her pet gecko named Drax along for the trip, but somehow the raven figurine ends up in her purse. After grabbing a couple of boxes of mac n cheese for dinner she begins heading home. She remembers vaguely that her mother mentioned a shortcut through a local park when she gave Willow directions to the quickie mart.

She walks down the dark alley and at the end it opens up to the wooded area in the local park. As she walks through the woods she begins to hear odd chanting and notices a strange group around a large bonfire. She climbs the tree closest to her to get a better view. A sense of deja vu washes over her, but right after that is when the branch she is sitting on breaks. And she plummets to the ground with a large thump. The group looks towards her and Willow panics, running back to the dark alley and all the way home. Once arriving home Willow slams the front door, causing her and her mother to break out into a big argument over Willow's attitude and the fact that Aspen didn't really explain to her children how their grandmother died. Willow is then sent to her room for the night, she tries to sleep and get some rest but the group in the park freaked her out and she needs to know what it was. She opens up her laptop and does some quick google research and learns that the group in the park was performing witchcraft of some kind. Shocked she slams the laptop shut, noticing the figurine on her desk she locks it in a drawer and goes to sleep. The next day school starts, Willow's first day is a bad start after accidentally bumping into the school bully. After being shoved and taunted about the slight southern drawl in her

voice she keeps quiet the rest of the day and doesn't attempt to make friends. Seeking comfort, during lunch she heads to the library to do some more research on the witchcraft ritual she witnessed. Throughout the day Willow notices this figurine in odd places and during times she feels most self continuous. Jaxson on the other hand had a fairly good first day of classes and started to make lots of friends. The two walk home together, and during dinner Jaxson discusses his first day while Willow remains silent.

As school continues Willow is noticing her self-consciousness is beginning to increase, she begins to have a negative mindset compared to her usual self. And as these issues increase so do the figurines' appearances, and slowly it has grown in size a bit. At one point a group of three classmates attempts to befriend Willow but she brushes them off. Willow keeps finding herself returning to that park at night, and researching witchcraft more and more. But sadly every time she visits the park they are not there, and she is about to give up and not bother going anymore. But next evening she goes out and finds them in the park again. She writes down information of what they are doing, the date, time, what chanting she can hear, etc.

A month later, Willow again is suffering worse with her depression and she is also down because again a time period passes where the women in the park don't show up again. But once again they show up when Willow assumes the worst. She notices that the ritual is slightly different from the last, such as their clothing is different colors. She notes this down. She notes down the type of moon for that night, and she is awe-struck. She realizes that they only perform these rituals during a full moon. During this time her grades begin to fail, due to her lack of attention to school. She and her mother fight a lot due to her going out late at night and her failing grades. Willow attempts to speak to one of her teachers after class. But the teacher says that the only way to bring her grade up is to ace the final or retake the course. In defeat, Willow goes to the library to research a bit before going home for the day. But one day when she got home from school she noticed the figurine on top of an odd box that was never unpacked. She opens the box and finds her grandmother's book of shadows and a collection of odd items.

She reads through her grandmother's book of shadows and finds a spell for happiness. She then decides to perform it. She then creates an altar in her room with the items that were in the box. She then performs the ritual, it ends up being the ritual her grandmother performed as well that made her harm herself. But as the ritual ends all of the sudden a shadowy figure in the shape of a raven

appears from the figurine and starts attacking Willow. It begins scratching and clawing at Willow, causing marks to appear on her body. In a panic, she runs out of the house. The shadow figure tries to follow her but Drax bites it and the shadow figure disappears.

Willow runs out into the street in a panic, people notice her in a panic with scratches on her. Willow mumbles to herself and then remembers who could help, and looks up to the sky. Luckily it's a full moon. She runs to the wooded area at the park. Willow runs up to the group of women asking for help. Willow then explains what has been happening, and shows them the figurine. The group explains that the figurine is cursed and how she can fix this. As well as what witchcraft actually is and that the information she has received from her grandmother's book of shadows is not correct. They give her a special flower that will help neutralize the figurine, she thanks them and then continues back home. While this occurs Willow's mother finds her altar and the failed ritual. Willow attempts to sneak back into her room when she notices everyone seems to be in bed. But when she enters her room she sees her mother sitting on her bed. Her mother proceeded to tell Willow that her grandmother actually practiced witchcraft herself. But as she got older, she started to perform dark magic, creating hexes and such. She finds out that her grandmother killed herself and her grandfather during a dark ritual. She was attempting to create a cure for her issues but sadly the ritual backfired. And that this is why they had to move because of what had happened and that her mother didn't want her children to be in a place that had such a dark aura to it. Willow is shocked by this information.

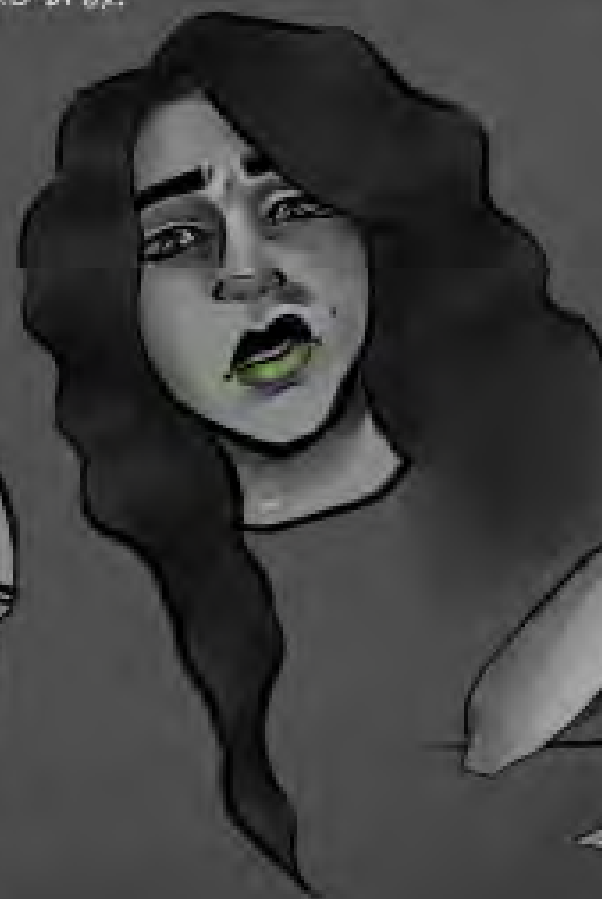
Some time has passed now. Willow is a bit older and has created a coven of her own that is made up of a few classmates from school. Willow now decided to make amends for what had happened to her grandparents. She decided to visit their gravesite and perform a cleansing and purifying ritual, as well as destroys the hexed raven figurine. To bring peace to her and her grandparents she burns the figurine during the ritual to destroy it. Willow now has friends and is thriving in life as a witch. Her bond with her mother has gotten stronger and the same with her little brother.

# The Characters



# Willow Astor

Description: Willow is our main character in the story. She is 16 years old and is introverted. Originally she grew up on a farm with her mother, brother, and grandparents. Willow and her mother don't have that close of a relationship, and she and her brother can get along for the most part. Around the age of 11 her grandfather passed away and her grandmother recently passed due to... unknown events. Willow had a close relationship with her grandmother so her death was a big loss for Willow. Eventually she discovers witchcraft and this leads her down to her journey within this story. Outside of witchcraft Willow enjoys horror films, heavy metal music, and spending time with her gecko Drax.





# Aspen Astor

Description: Aspen is a single mother in her late 40's. Her children are Willow and Jaxson. Aspen is a strong woman, with an authoritative minor. She is a kind person but she tends to come off as blunt and cold. She grew up in a rural town and always had to commute a long way to her work, as she got a promotion she decided to move her children with her after the passing of her parents. She was really close with her father growing up, but her and her mother didn't have a lot in common, which she now regrets. As Willow's mental health declines she begins to worry more for her since she had to go through this with her mothers.



# Jaxson Astor

Description: Jaxson is the younger brother of Willow. He is 13 years old and the typical popular jock in school. Although he does have a small adjustment period due to the move into a larger town, but he quickly learns how to fit in at the new middle school. Jaxson and Willow tend to argue with one another but besides that they get along for the most part. He has a close relationship with his mom, and also is a social butterfly. His favorite sport is basketball, but is open to trying any new sport. Outside of sports, he enjoys playing video games and helping his mom or sister cooking meals.



# Drax

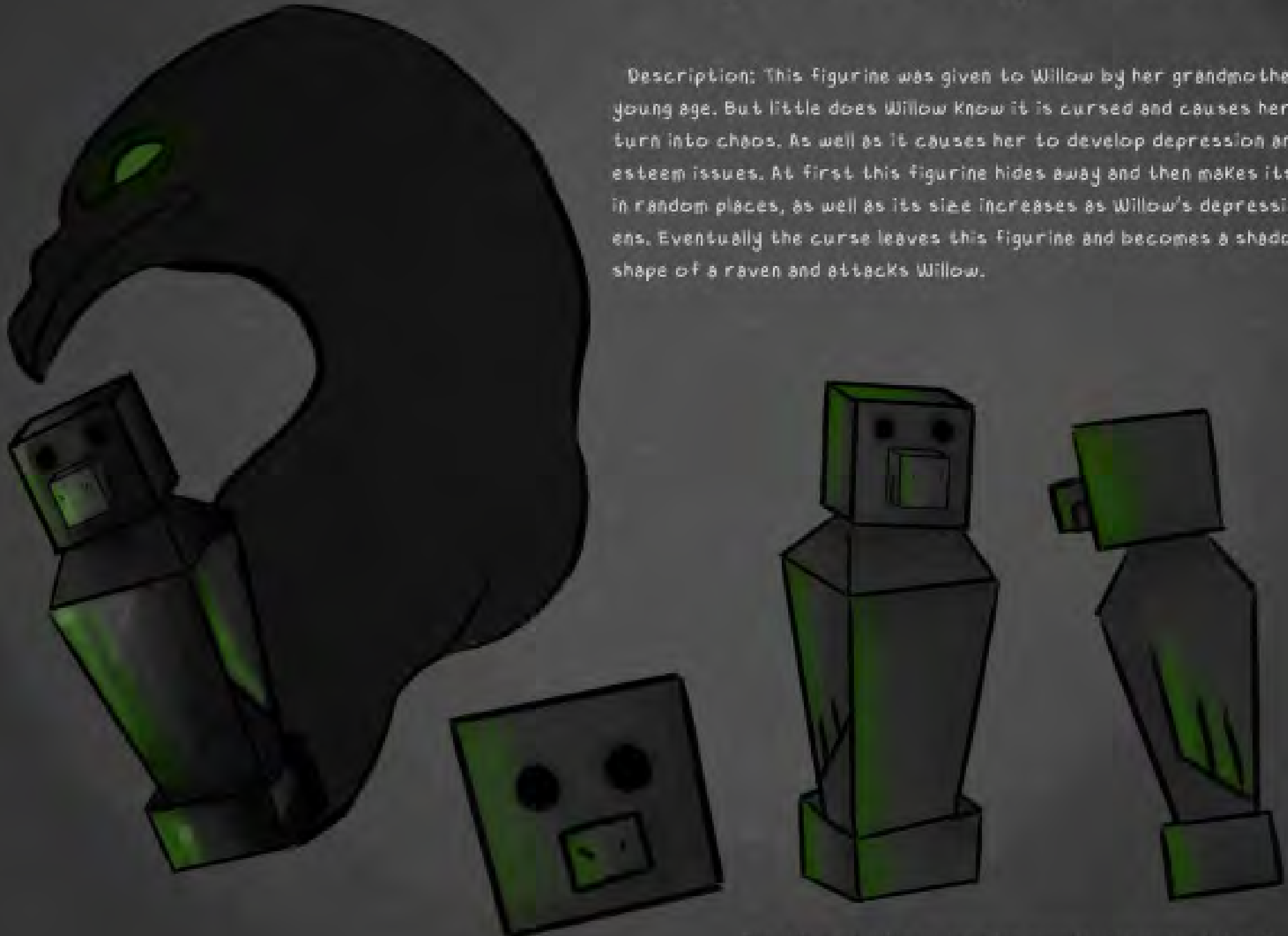
Description: Drax is Willow's pet leopard gecko, she has had him for around 3 years now. Willow likes to take Drax with her when she makes small runs to the store or when she goes on a walk. She puts him in a breast pocket in her jacket to help keep him warm enough. Later on Drax will become her familiar and help her with her craft and break the curse that the raven figurine has. Drax can also have conversation with Willow since he is her familiar. Although he primarily speaks to Willow through head nods and eyeball licks, he can state small sentences to Willow.





# Raven Figurine

Description: This figurine was given to Willow by her grandmother at a young age. But little does Willow know it is cursed and causes her life to turn into chaos. As well as it causes her to develop depression and self esteem issues. At first this figurine hides away and then makes itself appear in random places, as well as its size increases as Willow's depression worsens. Eventually the curse leaves this figurine and becomes a shadow in the shape of a raven and attacks Willow.



# Witch Coven

Description: The Witch Coven is made up of three women between the ages of 23 - 47. The three of them originally met in a local whole foods market. They met due to the three of them fighting over who gets the last bag of frozen vegan chicken nuggets. Once a month they meet up to perform various different wiccan rituals. Their rituals are performed during the full moon each month, since that is when their magick is the most powerful. Outside of witchcraft the three on occasion meet up for the local punk band concert, or to have brunch and discuss their favorite things that happened this week.



# School Bullies

Description: The three school bullies are in the same grade as Willow. They all are considered as gothic and angsty teens. They tend to get into various different kinds of trouble, and like to make a scene. Willow first encounters the three as she is trying to find her first class on her first day at the new school. She accidentally bumps into one of them, and they shove her into the wall of lockers. Although they look rough on the outside, these three do care a lot for each other and they each have their own issues they are dealing with.



# Classmates

Description: These three are in the same grade as Willow and share a lot of classes together. The three of them attempt to make friends with Willow but she tends to brush them off. Eventually after breaking Willow down a bit the four of them begin to have lunch together, or discuss the homework assignments in the library before classes start. These three have been friends since elementary school. The male on the left and girl in the middle are actually twins, and the girl on the left met the two because they were her neighbors as a kid.



# Chapter by Chapter Synopsis

## Chapter 1:

After the mysterious death of their grandmother, the Astor family moves from rural Oregon to a big city in Oregon. While unpacking Willow finds a cursed figurine. Willow remembers when her grandmother gave it to her, and how they used to be close. After unpacking Aspen(Willow's Mother) sends Willow to go pick up something to eat. Willow brings Drax her pet gecko, but little did Willow know the cursed figurine was in her bag as she left for the quickie mart. Willow has a nice conversation with Drax on the way to the quickie mart. Mainly Willow talks and Drax looks at her curiously and licks his eyeball in reply. She then arrives at the quickie mart and has a shopping spree. Willow then leaves the quickie mart.

On the way back home she notices a dark alleyway between a few buildings that looks like a shortcut. She goes down the spooky alleyway cautiously and at the end of it, opens up a dark wooded area at the park that's on her walk home. As she walks through the wooded area she hears the sound of people's voices that spooks her, and in the distance, she can see a group of people standing around a giant fire. She hides behind a large tree to get a better look at what is going on. She then climbs onto a low-hanging branch to watch the group. She watches the group of people chanting and dancing around the fire, for a moment she gets a sense of seeing this before. While doing this Drax watches as well looking a little less derpy as usual. Then the branch she is sitting on breaks and she tumbles to the ground. She notices the people look in her direction and she is filled with panic, so she heads back to the alleyway and continues on her original route.

Once arriving home Willow slams the door shut in a panicked manner. Aspen notices this and begins to harp on Willow about slamming the door. Thus causing a large argument between the two, mainly discussing the fact that the family had to get up and move with no information on the death of Willow's grand-

mother. Aspen sends Willow to her room, and only allows her to come out for dinner and to get ready for bed. But Willow wakes up in the middle of the night, having trouble sleeping. She decides to look upon the internet about what she saw in the park. After researching a bit she discovers that the scene in the park was a witchcraft ritual. A bit worried she slams the laptop shut and notices the figurine was set up behind her laptop now staring at her, and Drax is cuddling around it as he naps. She places Drax back in his tank, puts the figurine in her desk drawer and locks it, and then tries to go back to sleep.

## Chapter 2:

The next day school starts, Jaxson(Willow's little brother) had a good first day, he fits in for the most part. Willow has a bad first day, getting made fun of due to her slight accent when speaking and she doesn't attempt to make friends. As well as when she first enters the school Willow accidentally bumps into someone, and the stranger ends up pushing her into a locker, slightly denting it. So due to this during lunch she finds the library to research a bit more. But the books will have very vague information. As she tries to pull out a sandwich from her bag she ends up grabbing the figurine. In an





afternoon class that day Willow notices the figurine on the teacher's desk as they lecture, she purposely doesn't go pick it up. Although when Willow and Jaxson begin to walk home she notices that the figurine somehow ended up in her pocket. During dinner, Jaxson shares how his day went at school. Aspen notices that Willow is being more quiet and usual and asks how her day went. But Willow does not reply.

### **Chapter 3:**

As the school continues, her mental health issues increase, and so do the figurine appearances. For example, Willow has found it in her shower, her teacher's desks, in Drax's tank, in the fridge, etc. There are a few classmates in school that try to befriend Willow, but she doesn't notice due to her obsession with the women in the park. Willow begins traveling back to that wooded area on her walk to and from school to hope to see them. And she starts going



out at night to watch them, but alas they are not there. The next evening she goes out and finds them in the park again. She writes down information of what they are doing, the date, time, what chanting she can hear, etc.

### **Chapter 4:**

A month later, Willow again is suffering worse with her depression and she is also down because again a time period passes where the women in the park don't show up again. We also notice that the figurine seems to get larger in size the more she is depressed. She again late in the night leaves to go see the coven. She notices that the ritual is slightly different from the last, such as their clothing is different colors. She notes this down. Willow also notes down the typical information she writes down. She notes down the type of moon for that night, and she is awe-struck...she precedes to flip through the pages to read the last note when they were performed and she realizes that performs on the night of a full moon. She then sneaks back home.

### **Chapter 5:**

Her grades begin to fail, due to her lack of attention to school. Her mother fights with her because of her failing grades most nights. Aspen doesn't understand why Willow just doesn't ask for help from her or her teachers. Willow continues to go out at night to watch the coven and her mother gets concerned as to what she is doing. After the most recent fight with her mother, Willow attempts to speak to one of her teachers after class. But the teacher says that the only way to bring her grade up is to ace the final or retake the course. In defeat, Willow goes to the library to research a bit before going home for the day. But one day when she got home from school she noticed the figurine on top of an odd box that was never unpacked. She opens the box and finds her grandmother's book of shadows and a collection of different items.

### **Chapter 6:**

She reads through her grandmother's book of shadows and finds a spell for happiness. She then decides to perform it. She then collects items and creates an altar in her room. She then performs the ritual, which ends up being the ritual her grandmother performed as well that made her harm herself. But as the ritual ends all of sudden a shadowy figure in the shape of a raven appears from the figurine and starts attacking Willow. It begins scratching and clawing at Willow, causing marks to appear on her body. In a panic, she runs out of the house. The shadow figure tries to follow her but Drax bites it and the shadow figure disappears.

### **Chapter 7:**

Willow runs out into the street in a panic, people notice her in a panic with



scratches on her. Willow mumbles to herself and then remembers who could help, and looks up to the sky. Luckily it's a full moon. She proceeds to run to the alleyway and then runs down it. And then into the wooded area. Willow runs up to the group of women asking for help. The women are concerned for her and ask her if she is alright. Willow then explains what has been happening, and shows them the figurine. The group explains that the figurine is cursed and how she can fix this. As well as what witchcraft actually is and

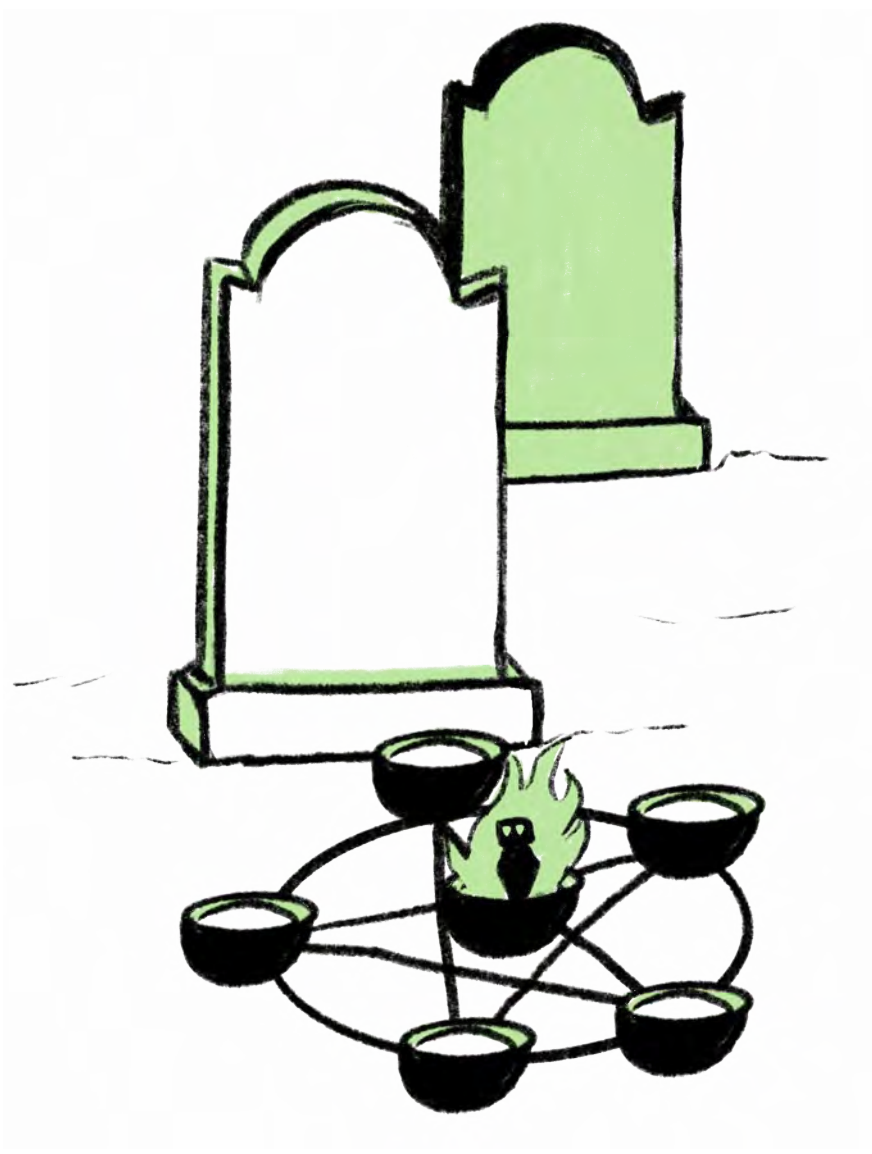
that the information she has received from her grandmother's book of shadows is not correct. They give her a special flower that will help neutralize the figurine, she thanks them and then continues back home. While this occurs Willow's mother finds her altar and the failed ritual.

### Chapter 8:

Willow attempts to sneak back into her room when she notices everyone seems to be in bed. But when she enters her room she sees her mother sitting on her bed. Her mother proceeded to tell Willow that her grandmother actually practiced witchcraft herself. But as she got older, she started to perform dark magic, creating hexes and such. She finds out that her grandmother killed herself and her grandfather during a dark ritual. Instead of her grandmother seeking help with her mental health issues, she ends up drowning in it. And has a breaking point, she was actually trying to create a spell to get rid of her curse. But she never asked for help so she couldn't handle it. As well as all the different potions, spells, etc. can be symbolic of different medications. And that this is why they had to move because of what had happened and that her mother didn't want her children to be in a place that had such a dark aura to it. Willow is shocked by this information

### Chapter 9:

Some time has passed now. Willow is a bit older and has created a coven of her own. Willow now decided to make amends for what had happened to her grandparents; she decided to visit their gravesite and perform a cleansing and purifying ritual, as well as destroys the hexed raven figurine. To bring peace to her and her grandparents. Willow now has friends and is thriving in life as a witch. Her bond with her mother has gotten stronger and the same with her little brother.



# About the Proje

This project was inspired by various different aspects that have happened to me during my life. I've never really been the type to like to talk about myself and my life, but in some aspects this project has helped me learn to open up a bit about certain aspects of my life. When I first started attending PNCA, I was having an extremely difficult time. I came from a small rural area, called Scappoose Oregon. Generations of my family have lived there and attended highschool there, so coming from such a small school to PNCA I had a bit of a culture shock. Most of my life I've also secretly dealt with depression and anxiety, and attending college only increased it and made it worse. Around my sophomore year here I finally told my family about my issues and began to get help. Even now sometimes I don't understand why I have mental health issues because for the most part I had a good life and childhood. But I remind myself it's just the way my brain is wired.

I also want to mention another element that affects why I made this story. My great-grandfather was a tall and lanky man, he stood around 6'5 and had a deep gravelly voice. In all honesty he scared me as a child. During the fall semester of my sophomore year my great-grandmother passed away due to health conditions. It was very hard on my great-grandfather. I noticed small comments he'd make implying he was depressed. But I thought he was too stubborn of a man to ever commit suicide, so I said nothing. But I was wrong, that summer July 9th 2019 he went into his backyard near the pool I used to swim in as a kid and shot himself. Later that afternoon my grandfather would find him. Even though most of my life I was terrified of the man, and wasn't that close to I know it still affects me. His house happens to be near where I live, so any time I have to go anywhere I have to drive by his house. And that in itself is mentally draining for me. Now recently a young family has moved into his house, and I wonder if they know what happened. I wonder if he's still there, scaring the little girls who now live there, because anytime I have to drive past that place my lungs grow weak as I hold my breath and feel that heavy presence of something

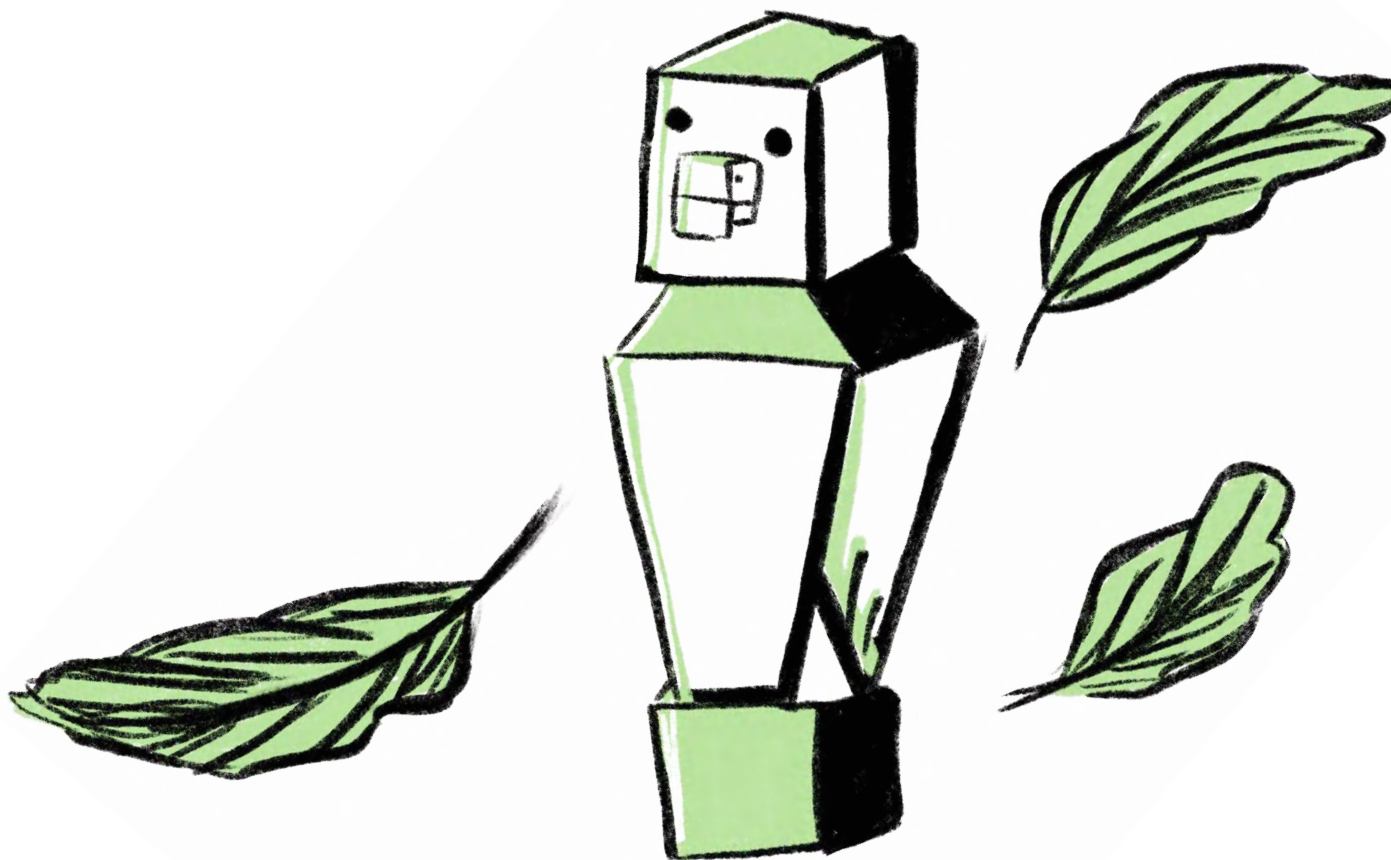
tragic happened there.

I wanted to create this story because of this event that happened to me and the mental health issues I've dealt with in my life, not because I want sympathy. But because I want to be able to help people in some way, give them something to relate to because I didn't have that. As well as mental health issues are complex and have multiple different factors involved in them as to why people have them, it's not all just trauma based.

Not to mention I've always just been a fan of witches, halloween, and anything that goes bump in the night. I've always had a fascination with them most likely due to watching the 1940's black and white horror films as a kid. Fantasy and mystery were always my favorite genres in books and film, and so it's only fitting I created a project myself along those lines.



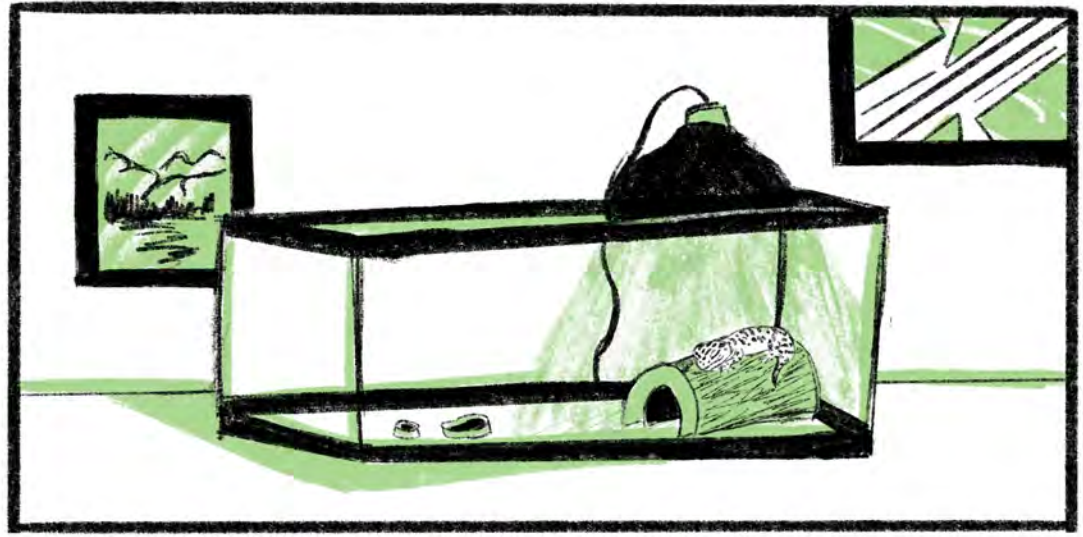
# Sample Pages



















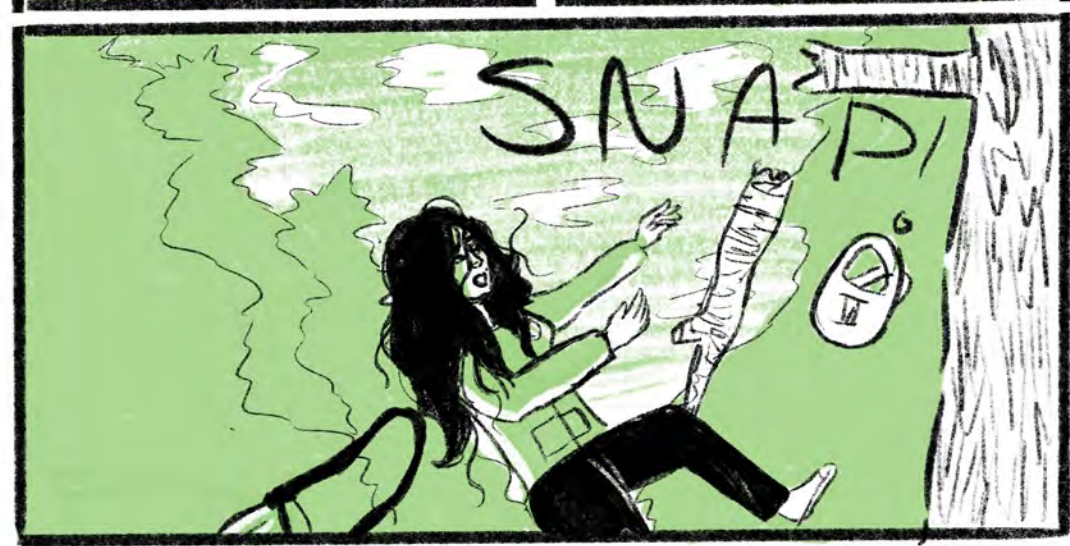
I think I remember my mom mentioning a path that leads into a park, that works as a short cut.



Well, guess I'll try it and find out. What could go wrong?











Well that fucking hurt.



...Shit.



I'm gunna fucking die!



Shit, shit, shit, shit!



How many years have I been telling you not to slam the doors Willow?



Not to mention how late you are.



It was an accident chill a little.



I'm seriously sick of your tempure right now Willow. You need to grow up.



I hate to break it to you mom. But you up and moved us after grandma died. With out explaining anything that happened to her.



So yeah, I'm gunna have a bad tempure.









## WICCA, WITCHES, AND WITCHCRAFT

Wicca is a religion that is based on Paganism. And uses witchcraft to practice said beliefs. Anyone who practices witchcraft is considered a witch. But witches are not always Wiccan.



Witches can be of any religious background. In witchcraft they



perform rituals and spells in order to

effect change into the world or their lives. In order to perform rituals witches need an altar.

An altar is made up of many different items. Some items in an altar are a dagger, candle, an offering, salt, a feather,



a caldron, and some various other items.

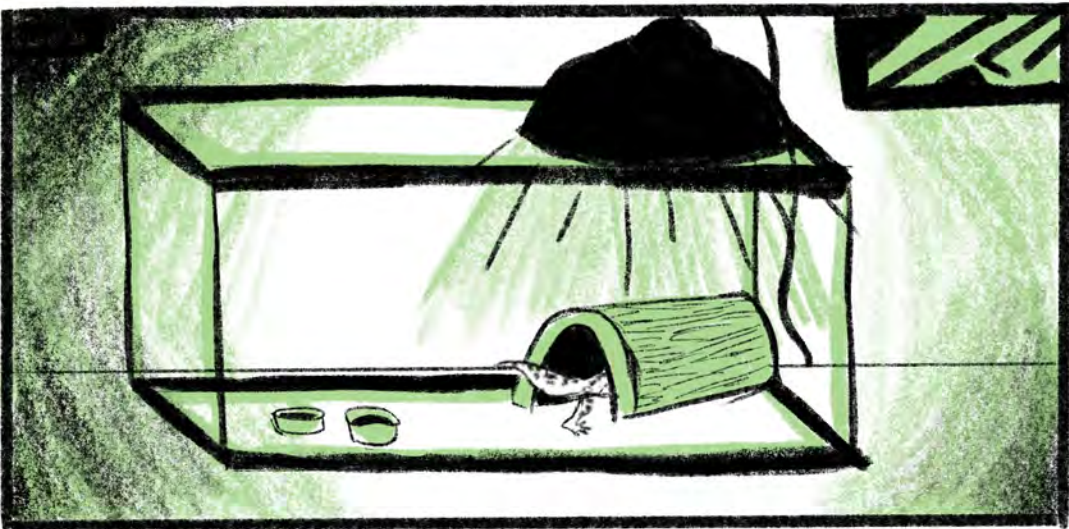
We suggest taking a look at some of the sources below.



for more information on wicca, witches, and witchcraft. Due keep in mind each persons witchcraft practice is unique and individual to said person. So if you decide to try it yourself remember not everything will work for you and your practice.



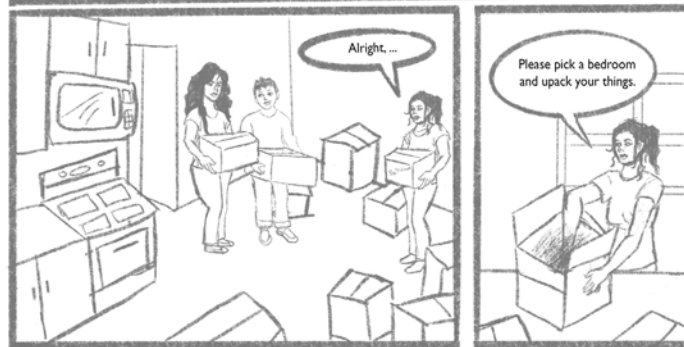






# Process Work















# About the Author

Jazmine Monks is a cartoonist and illustrator. She will be graduating from Pacific Northwest College of Art in May 2021 with a BFA, majoring in Illustration. Her illustration work consists of portrait work, editorial illustrations, and sequential pieces. Outside of her artwork she enjoys caring for her various different pets, watching cheesy old movies, and camping on the Oregon Coast. Jazmine grew up in a small town about forty-five minutes outside of Portland, Oregon. And is currently Portland,

Oregon based. Her social media and contact information is below:

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