

L.H. Blake Commission Rationale

I have previously created artwork for L.H. Blake on different books, but this was my most recent collaboration with them. At the start of the project, she shared multiple photos and videos as inspiration for the scene, along with the written portion, so I could better understand the atmosphere and depth of the characters.

For this design, she wanted her two main leads positioned at the top of a dark staircase, with the male character autographing the woman's shoulder. She envisioned a Hispanic woman with dark brown hair and bangs, styled in an updo with hoop earrings. She wears a red strapless dress. The male lead was described as a "drummer" type with long blonde hair, wearing a t-shirt with the sleeves ripped off.

When it came to composition, we explored multiple perspectives, including a view from the bottom of the staircase and a side angle. Ultimately, we decided that a back-facing perspective, with the characters centered on the staircase, was the best choice. This decision also considered the book's printing layout. For example, if the characters were positioned too far to the side, it might have looked off in the final product.

Since the scene takes place at night and needs a romantic atmosphere, I used a dark blue background to contrast with the characters, particularly the bold red of the woman's dress. To enhance the setting, I added lighting coming from the bottom of the staircase, creating a stronger sense of depth and ambiance.

The style of this artwork was a challenge for me, as it differed significantly from my usual drawing style. She wanted an outlined character style that matched the aesthetic of many romance book covers while staying relevant to the genre. To achieve this, I opted for a more 2D look for the characters. We also experimented with different character poses to make the scene feel as natural as possible.

Two major constraints in this project were the time frame and the artistic style. I had only two weeks to complete the illustration before the book's preorder launch, which required working efficiently. Additionally, adapting to the specific style she wanted was a learning curve for me. However, this project was a valuable experience in understanding a client's needs and considering practical factors like sizing and the physical product.

While it may not be my personal favorite artwork, I will always keep it as an example of professional collaboration and the ability to deliver a polished final product under constraints.