Storyboard Bible

by

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The Littlest Pet Shop

The Littlest Pet shop is a show about humour, adventure and friendship. It is set in Paw Tucket, an alternate universe that pets can go to through the portal in the center of Paw Tucket. You get to go to Paw Tucket if you have done something nice for your owner (i.e. comfort them when they are sad, get the newspaper, stop your owner from walking in front of a car, etc)

Paw Tucket is a great place for for pets to meet other pets that they would never have met in the human world. Roxie, Jade, Edie, Bev, Trip and Quincy is our main cast and it's through them we get introduced to the world of Littlest Pet Shop.

Before you start boarding

Make sure you know what the episode is about. You should be able to sum it up in one sentence, i.e. Bravery comes in many forms, or You can't please everybody. This theme or armature is the message of the story and the reason for telling it.

Then make sure that each sequence builds up to that message. I.e. in the episode of Bravery comes in many forms, perhaps the episode starts with Quincy being afraid to do something with the group (jumping in the bouncy castle), they then get invited by a celebrity to go on a trip with him. Throughout the episode the celebrity pushes the group around, but no one wants to go against him. In the end as the celebrity is bullying Quincy to bungee jump, Quincy speaks his mind. The sequence "headlines" would be something like this: 1. Q is not brave, 2. Everyone but Q is excited to get invited to a celebrity adventure, 3. Celebrity is not a nice pet like they thought, 4. Celebrity is pushing everyone around but no one dares to confront him, 5. Everyone is misarable at the trip, 6. Q speaks his mind in front of everyone and puts Celeprity in his place, 7. Celebrity appologises and they end the trip doing something they all like.

Before you start boarding

When you know the point of the story and how the sequences are building towards that point it becomes a lot clearer what part of the script you need to emphasis to make sure that message of the episode comes across and that it flows nicely.

Sometimes you might get a script that is a bit vague or unclear about these things. Then it is especially important that you work it out so that you know what parts of the script to emphasis in order to improve whats already there and make the message of the episode as strong as you can.

What to Focus on

- Build visual comedy into the story!

- Push the acting and bring out the personalities

- Play the different character's personality up against each other. Show their contrast!

- Acting should be rooted in the relevant animal gestures as much as possible. When they need to carry things, try to be inventive. I.e. On their head, hold it with their mouth, on a trolley, etc.

- Generally keep the horizon level low. The camera should be at character's eye level or slightly lower.

- You're compositions shouldn't feel like a theater stage, but rather like a three dimensional world that your camera moves around in.

Technical Specs

Project Frame Rate: 23.976 fps
Resolution Width: 1920
Resolution Height: 1080

Naming conventions for Board Artists and Editors.

Filename format:
Show name and series number (LPS412) [underscore]
Season and Episode number (101) [underscore]
Abbreviated name (COD) [underscore]
Board version (Always B1 for board artists, B2 or B3 for inhouse revisionists) [underscore] Save version number (01)

So The Littlest Petshop, season 1, episode 1 - Cabbages Of Doom would be
LPS412_101_COD_B1_01

Technical Specs

Checklist before handing off storyboard:

- Is the naming convention correct?

- Is the frame rate and resolution correct?

- Have you optimised the project? (File - Optimise Project, Only tick first box - Remove Unused elements from the project). This should be the last step as you can't undo it.

Roxie

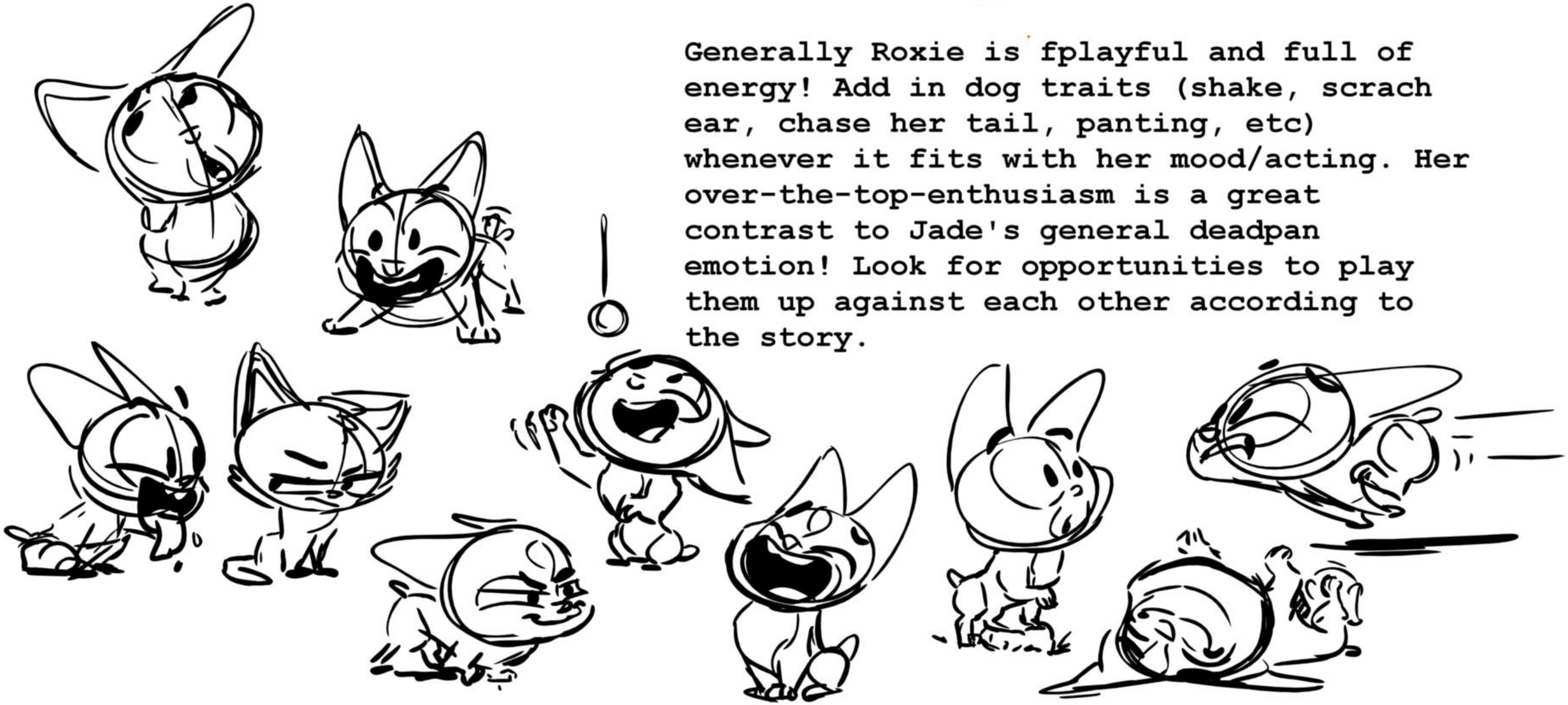
Optimistic Super Excited
Loyal

Roxie gets excited about pretty much anything, especially food! She lives with Jade and is constantly pointing out to everyone that they are best friends. Her excitement can be a bit on the excessive side, especially for Jade.

Roxie

Optimistic Super Excited
Loyal

Generally Roxie is fplayful and full of energy! Add in dog traits (shake, scrach ear, chase her tail, panting, etc) whenever it fits with her mood/acting. Her over-the-top-enthusiasm is a great contrast to Jade's general deadpan emotion! Look for opportunities to play them up against each other according to the story.



Jade

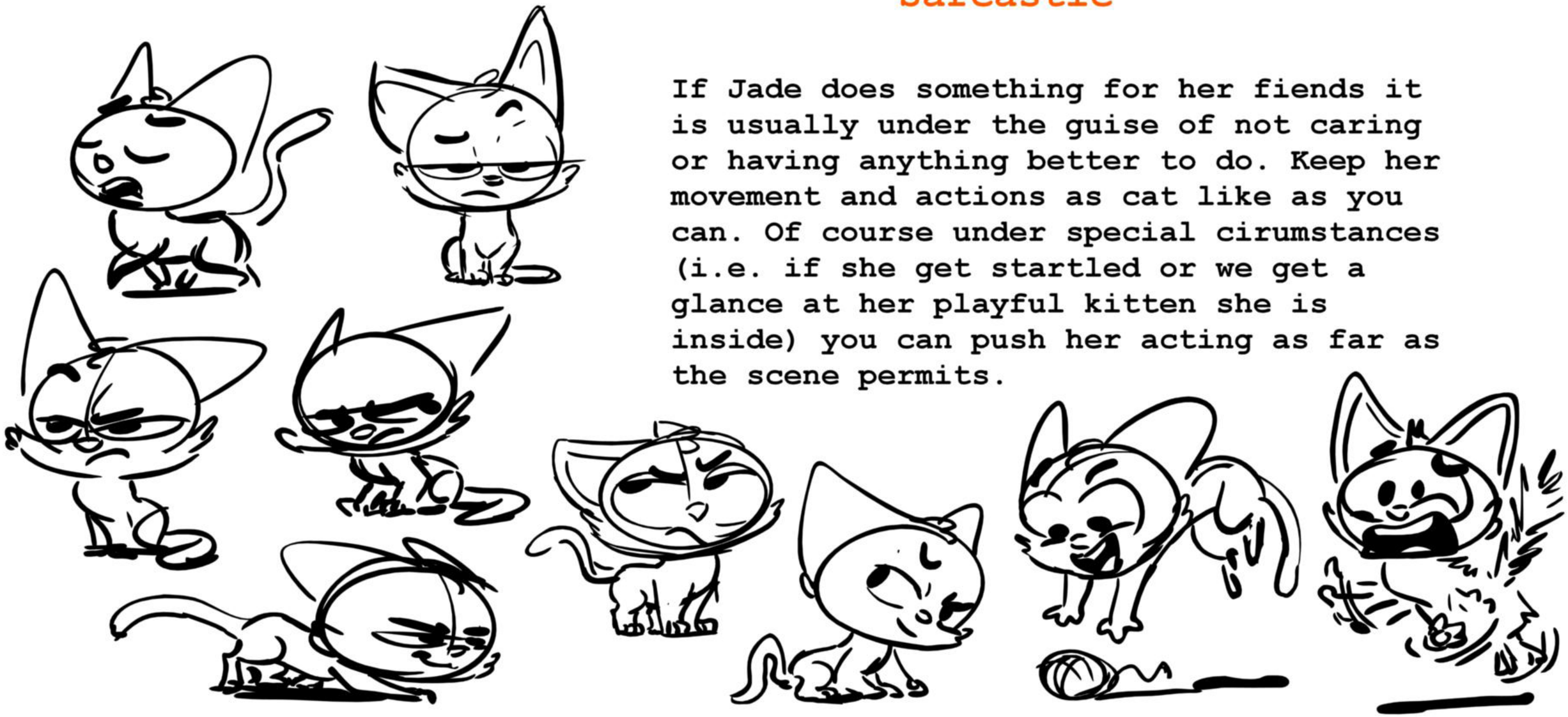
Dead-pan Secretive Sarcastic

Jade is not easily impressed. A dead-pan "cool" from her is probably the highest praise you could ever wish for. She is constantly pointing out that she is NOT Roxie's BFF. Deep behind her hard shell there is a cuddly, playful kitten that cares a lot for her friends, but it only comes out on very rare occations. If you are lucky, you might get a glance of it one day.

Jade

Dead-pan Secretive
Sarcastic

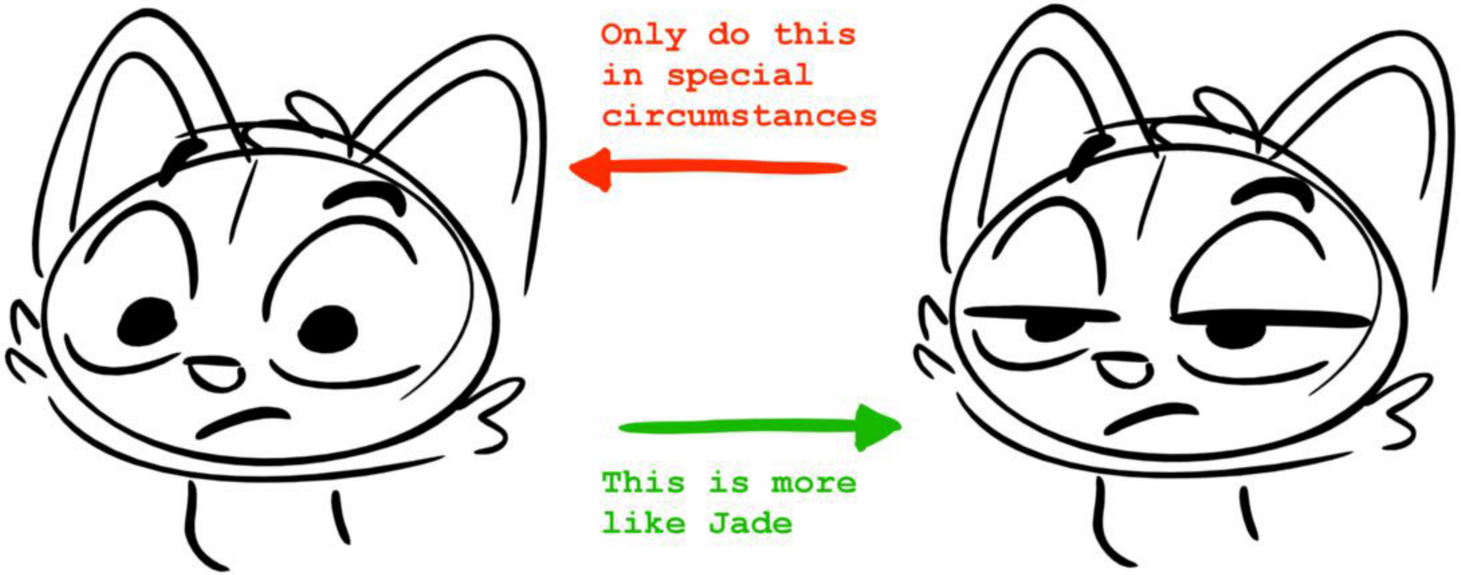
If Jade does something for her fiends it is usually under the guise of not caring or having anything better to do. Keep her movement and actions as cat like as you can. Of course under special cirumstances (i.e. if she get startled or we get a glance at her playful kitten she is inside) you can push her acting as far as the scene permits.



Jade

Dead-pan Secretive
Sarcastic

Keep Jade very low-key. In general we almost never see her eyes fully open. In stead her upper eyelids are often half closed in a sarcastic/unimpressed look or looking annoyed/angry with her eyebrows deep down over her eyes. A look or a raised eyebrow is as extreme as her acting goes.



Edie

Theatrical **Ambitious**
Melodramatic

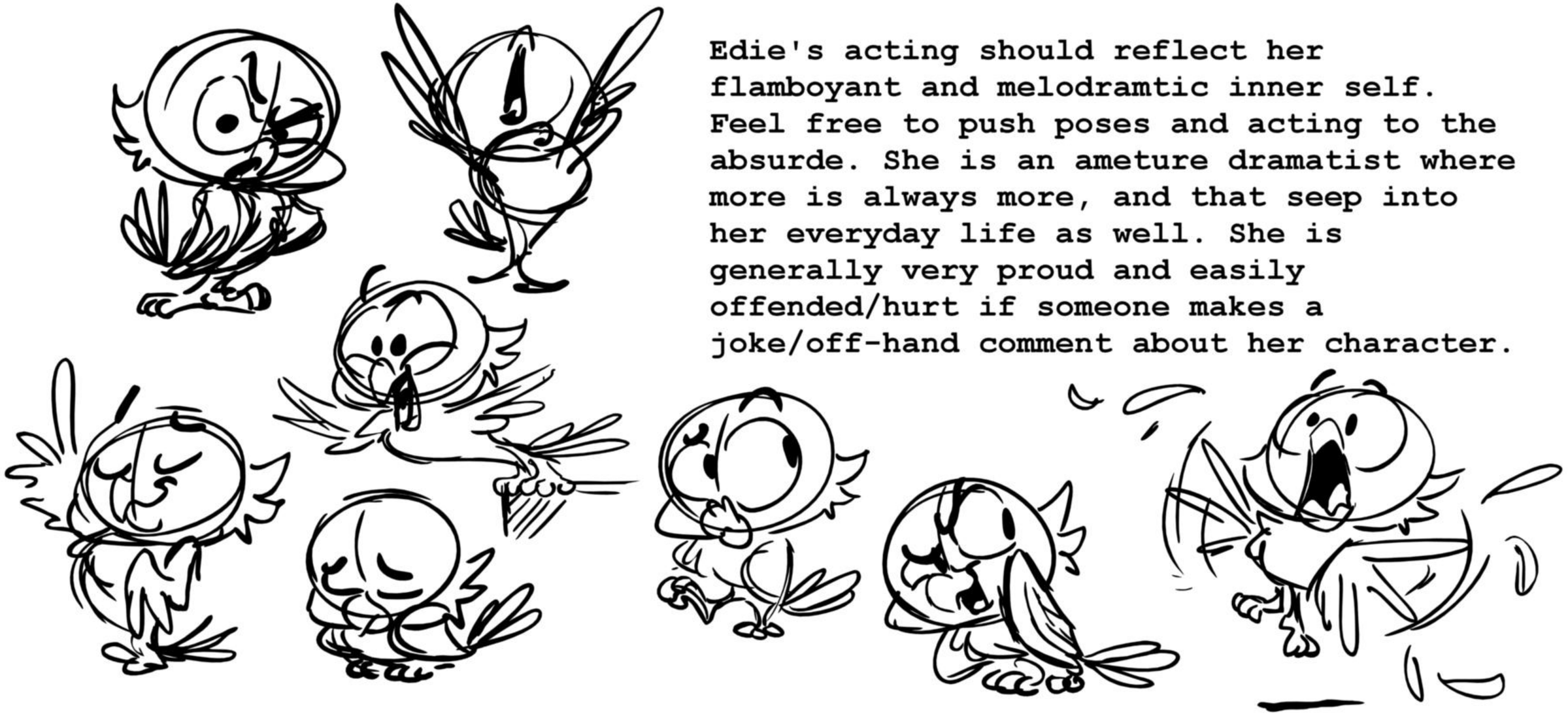
Edie is a preformer through and through. She loves everything that involves the theater and celebreties. She has lots of stories about her theater life and the brilliant artists she has met, and doesn't mind telling you about it. She tends to live in her head a bit which can sometimes cause her to fly into windows or even be unaware of conflicts that are building.

All though she cares deeply about her friends, she might need a bit of help to learn that she has hurt someone.

Edie

Theatrical Ambitious
Melodramatic

Edie's acting should reflect her flamboyant and melodramtic inner self. Feel free to push poses and acting to the absurde. She is an ameture dramatist where more is always more, and that seep into her everyday life as well. She is generally very proud and easily offended/hurt if someone makes a joke/off-hand comment about her character.

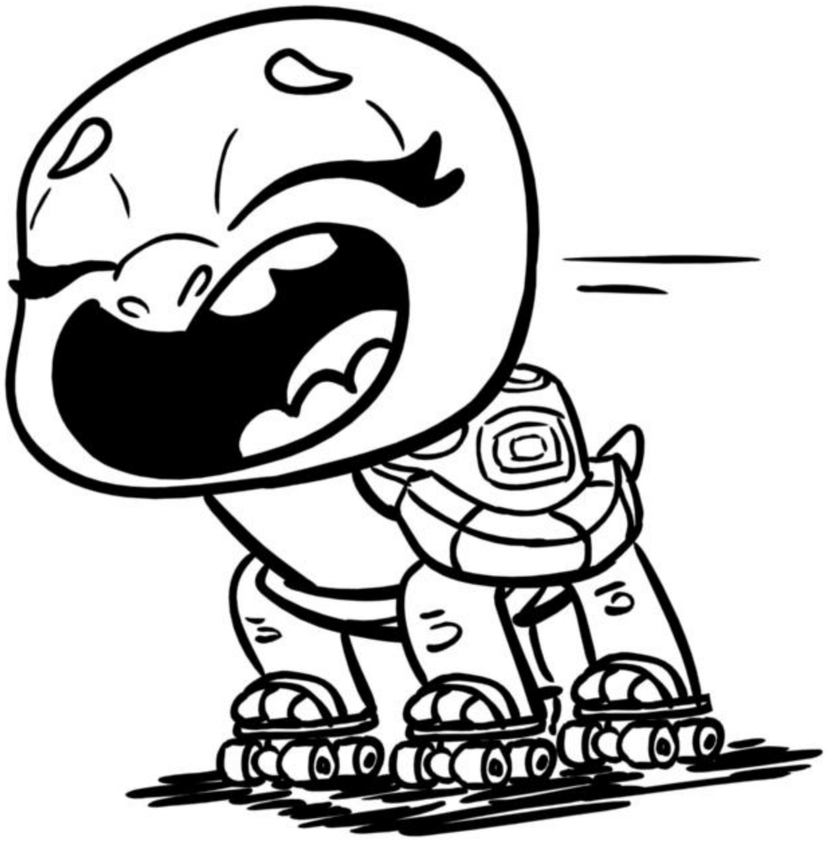


Bev

Considerate

Ambitious

Can-do-attitude



Bev is positive and supportive with a can-do attitude! Any step, no matter how small, in the right direction is a success for her. She is always up for trying new things but as a turtle she isn't the most agile of the pets so she often have her own excentric take on a yoga pose or martial arts move. The exception to this is roller derby, where she is a natural.

Usually she is very attentive of her friends emotions and will go to great lengths to make sure that everyone is happy, even if it is at her own expence.

Bev

Considerate

Ambitious

Can-do-attitude

Bev is a bit of a goof ball. Keep her up beat and positive. She is a little turtle shell of energy an optimism. But even turtle shells has it's breaking point so Bev can of course also get overwhelmed by sadness, worries and anger. But when she does act it outin a more humble and sincere way than what we would see from the generally more over the top expressions of Edie, Roxie or Trip.

Trip

Hip

Adventurous

Desire to excel

Trip is a big personality in a small hamster. He is the cool guy, ready for adventures, hip hop and chilling with his shades. As the smallest pet of the group, he regularly over-ecompensates and bites more than he can chew, so to speak. Trip is not one to give up easily, but the inevitable failures that comes from always trying to be bigger than he is will eventually get to him. He lives with his best friend Quincy and the two personalities are in stark contrasts of each other.

Trip

Hip

Adventurous

Desire to excel

Trip's acting should gemerally be cool and bold. His poses should be proud and balanced until he over-estimates his ability. A lot of the humour with Trip comes from his over-the-top-confidence contrasted with his reactions to defeat. Being a hamster he can naturally get up on two legs, but genrally when he is walking or moving around keep him on all fours, and when he is on two legs pose him as a hamster, not human, with his belly close to the ground.

Quincy

Neurotic

Self Aware

Easily Influenced

Quincy is extremely nervous and easily scared! Whereas Trip usualy thinks more of himself than he really is, Quincy is overly aware of his own limitations and will even amplify them in his head. He will always think saftey first, (second, third and forth,) which isn't always such a bad thing when you're best friend with Trip. As a result of his low self image he is easily influenced by others wich constantly puts him in situations outside of his comfort sone. Because of this he has to confront his fears more than anyone else in all of Paw-Tucket, which in a way makes him the bravest pet around.

Quincy

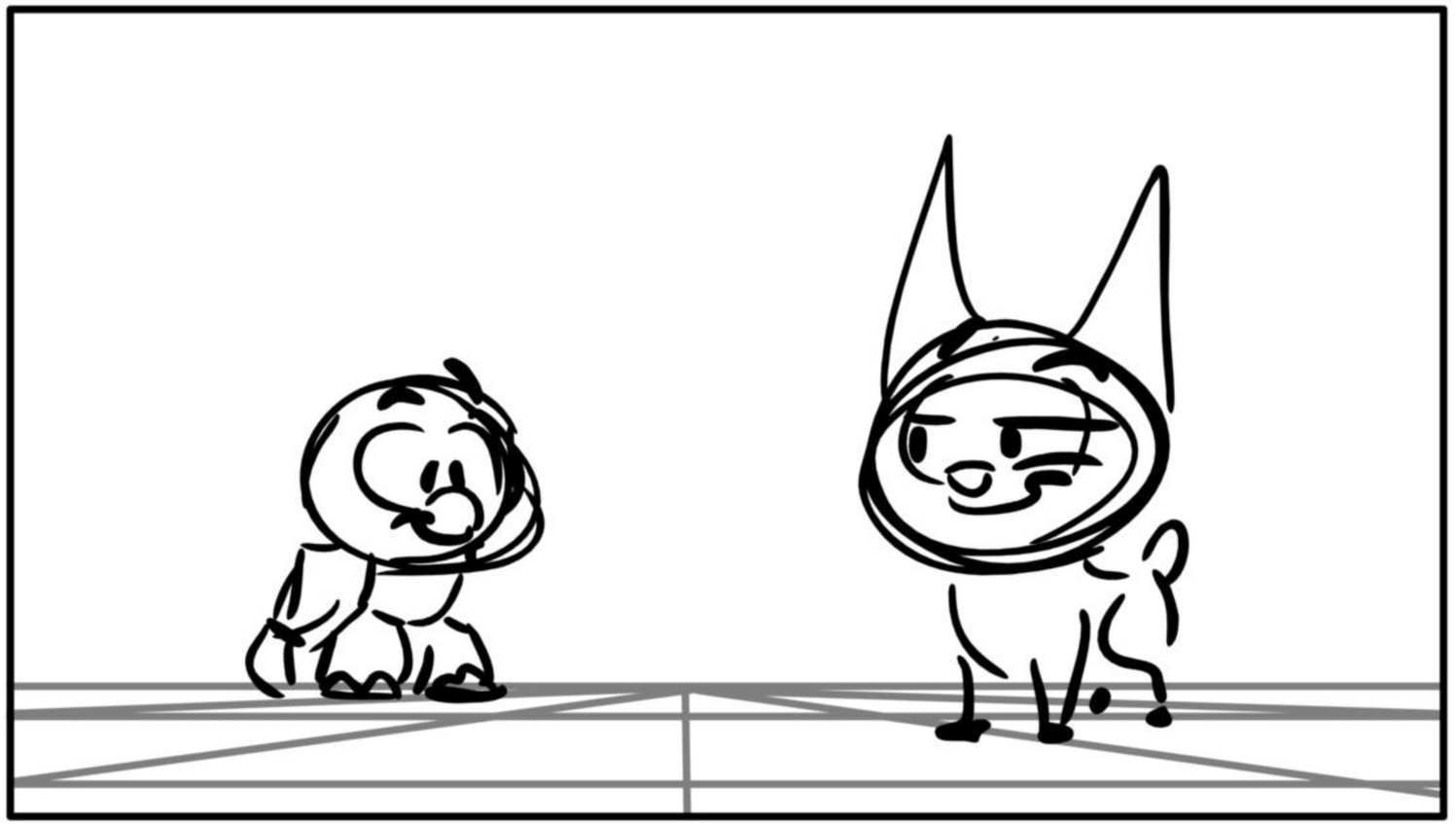
Neurotic

Self Aware

Easily Influenced

Generally have Quincy's acting reflect his nervous personality. He should feel uncomfortable in his own skin, constantly shifting his body weight, eyes darting rapidly around,and often unable to keep eyecontact (just quick glanses) when he feels especially voulnarble, which is most of the time. Bringing his legs close together is another way of pushing that uncertanty - wheras Trip is trying to make himself bigger, Quincy is usually trying to take up as little room as possible. But if there is a problem he alone can face, Quincy will summon the courage and take responsibilty - especially if one of his friends needs him!

Keep persepctive low and clear



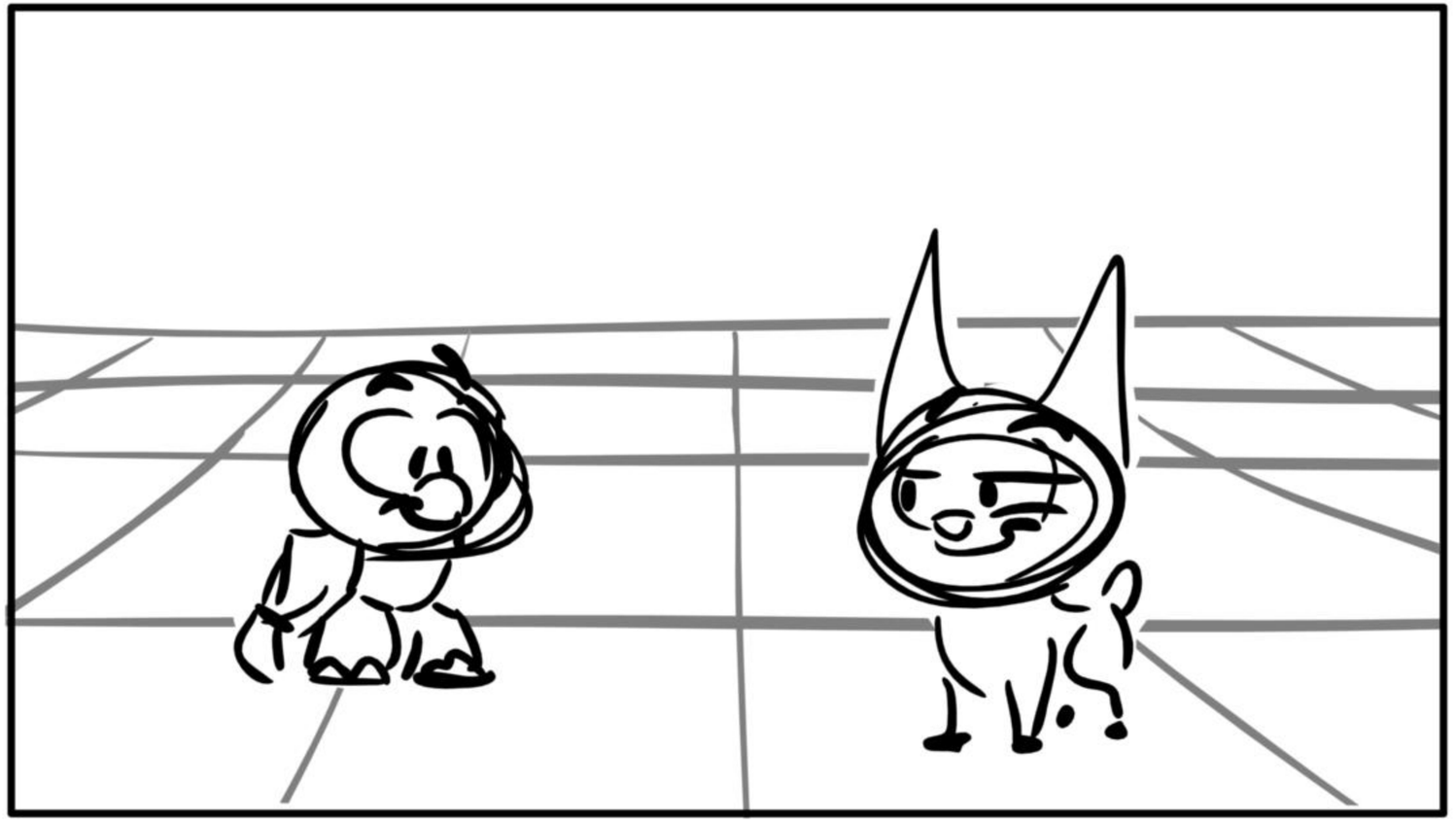
Do This

- **Low Horizon.** Generally always keep the horizon lower thant the characters heads.

- **Clear Vanishing Point**

You don't have to use the line tool to draw it. You can just draw it by hand, but it has to be clear and low.

Keep persepctive low and clear

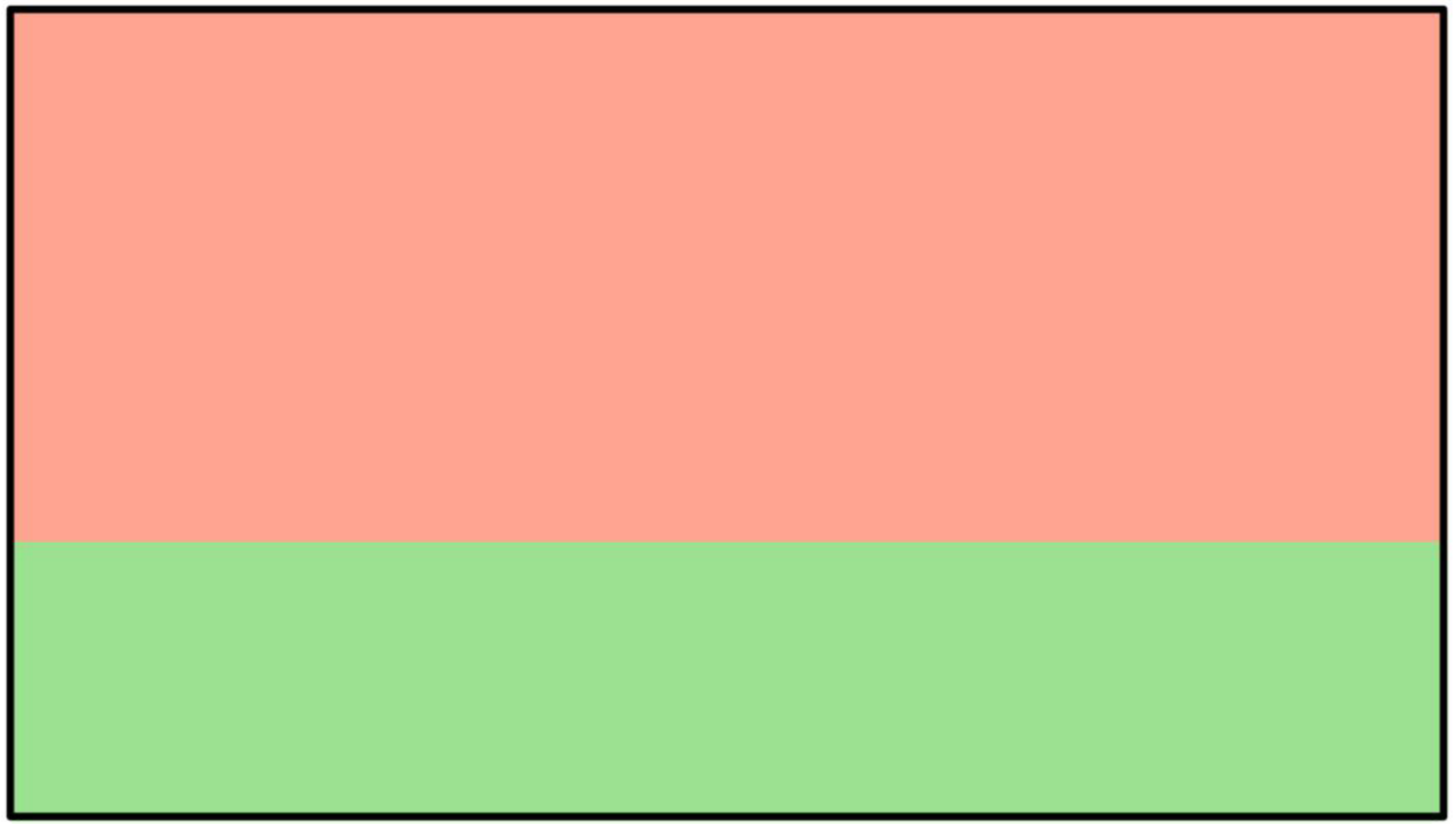


NOT THIS

- **Horizon line is higher than the characters.**
Generally we want to keep the camera from the pets POV or slightly lower.

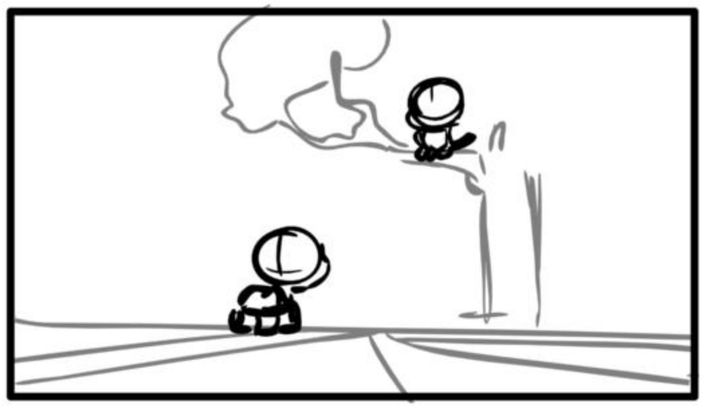
- **No clear vanishin point.**

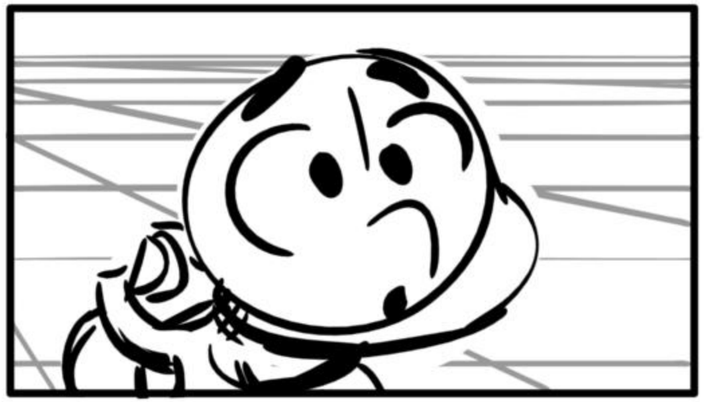
Keep persepctive low and clear

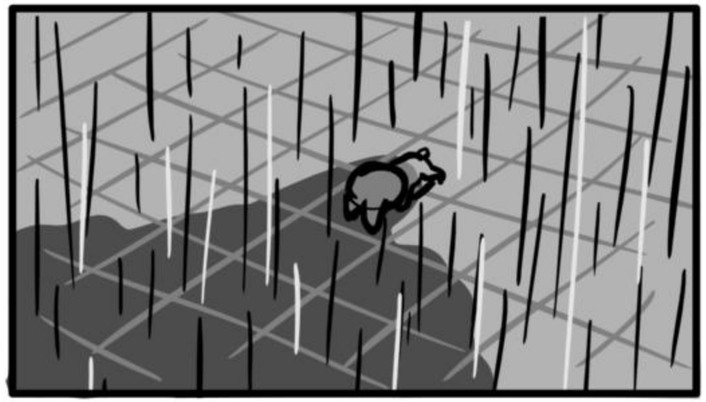


As a very(!) general rule keep the horizon line somewhere in the green section of the screen. Usually if it is in the red section it's too high.

Keep persepctive low and clear







BUT there are exceptions to this rule if the scene calls for it.

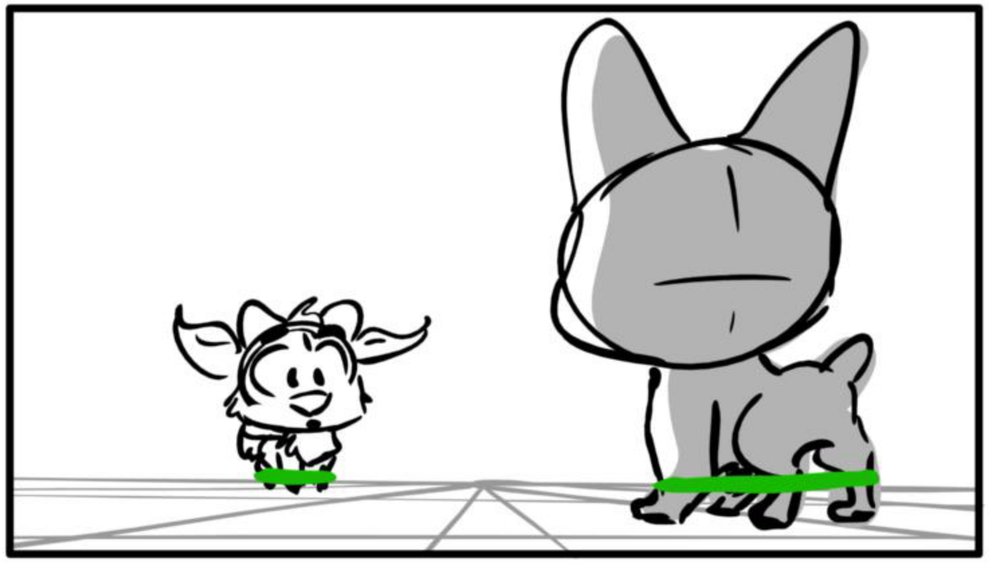
Example 1: One character is higher than the other.

Example 2: You want to convey a spesific mood.

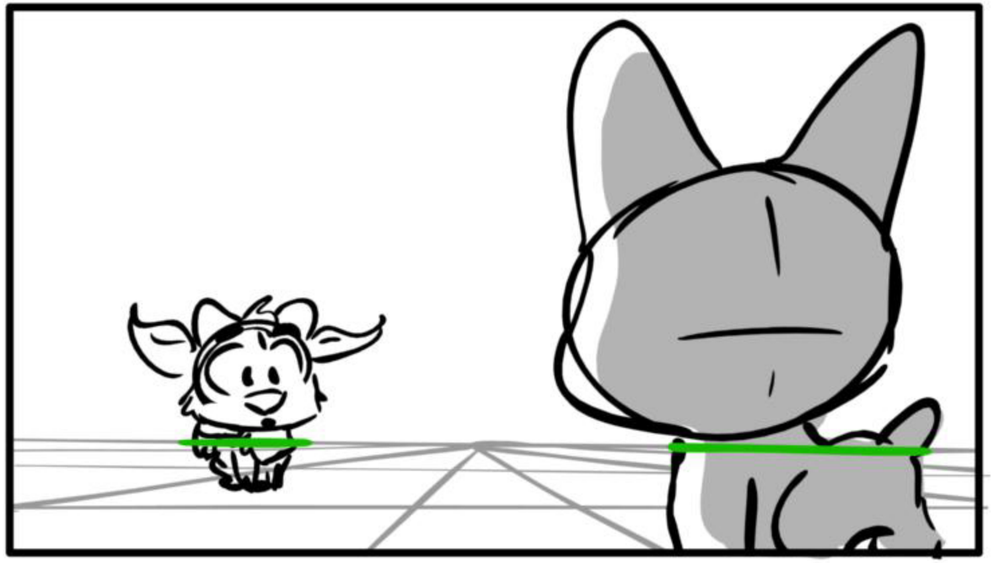
Keep persepctive low and clear

Keep in mind that the horizon line will go through the characters at the same place if they are the same height, no matter how far away from each other they are. Almost all the characters on LPS are pretty much the same height.

Do This

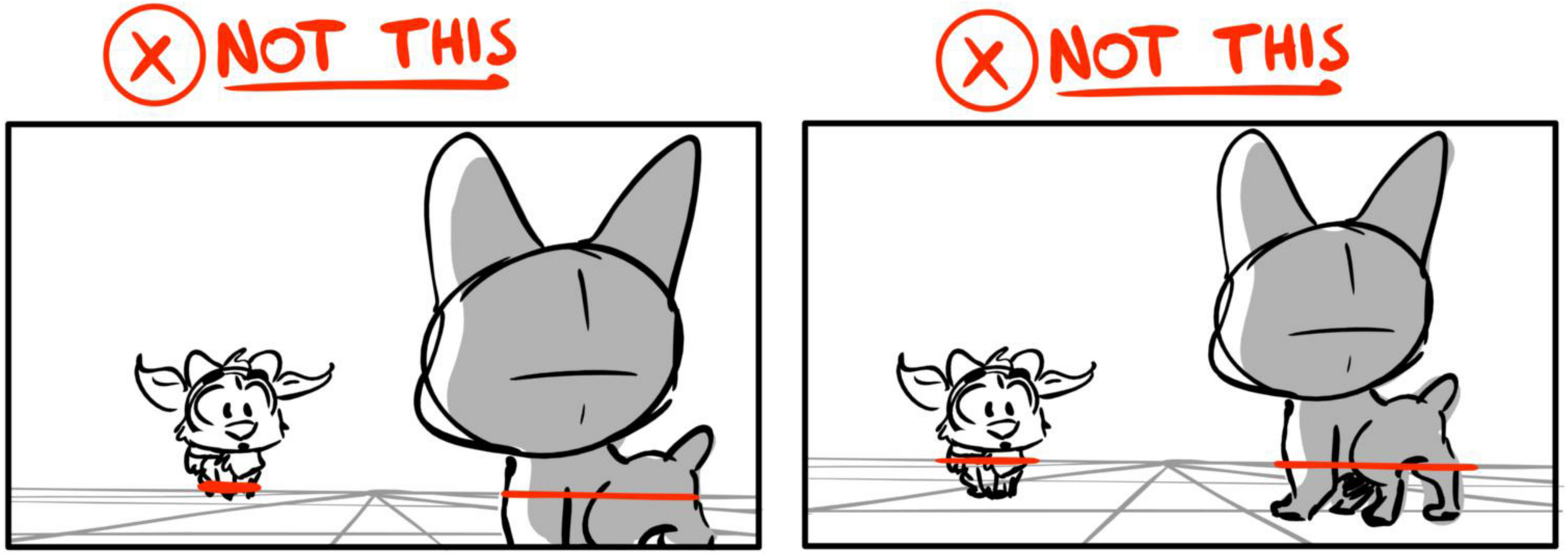


Do This



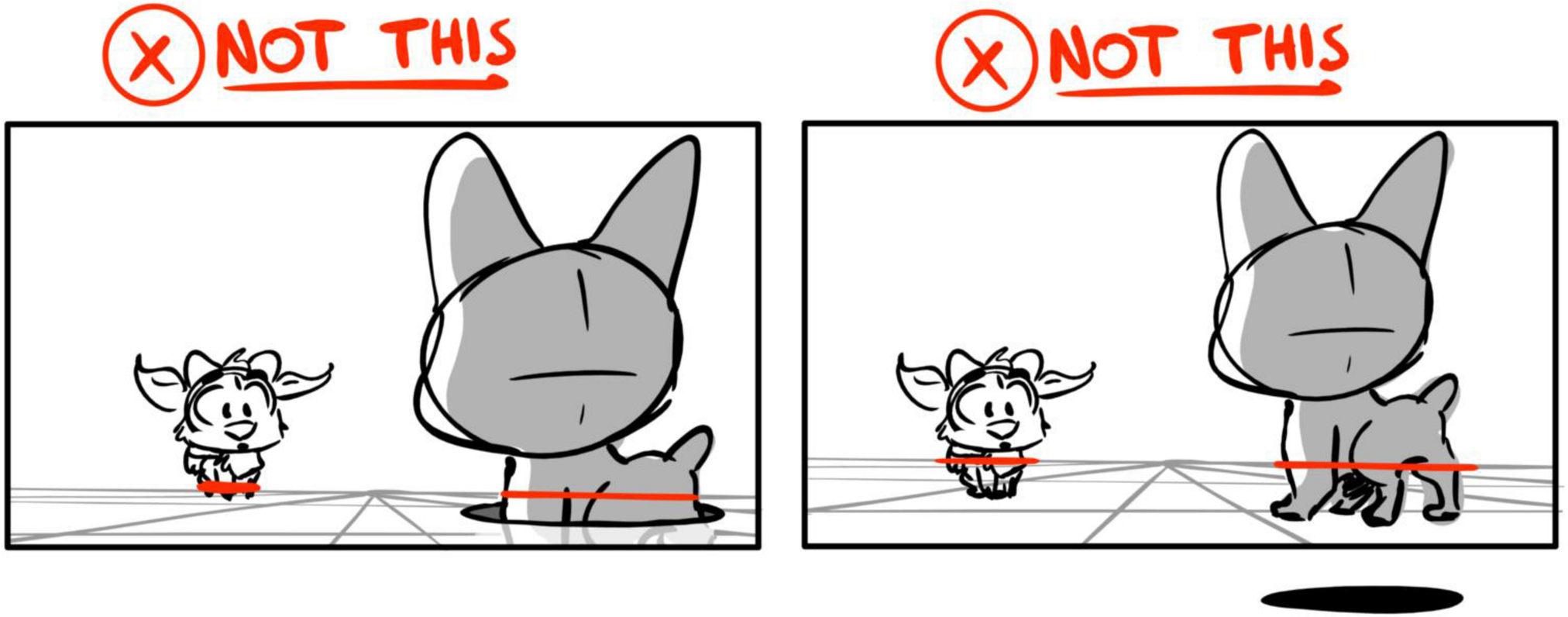
Keep persepctive low and clear

If not it looks like the character size relation is off and that they are not grounded on the same plane.



Keep persepctive low and clear

In stead it looks like the characters a hovering in the air, stuck in a whole, or they just look tiny.



The scene should not feel like a flat theater stage.

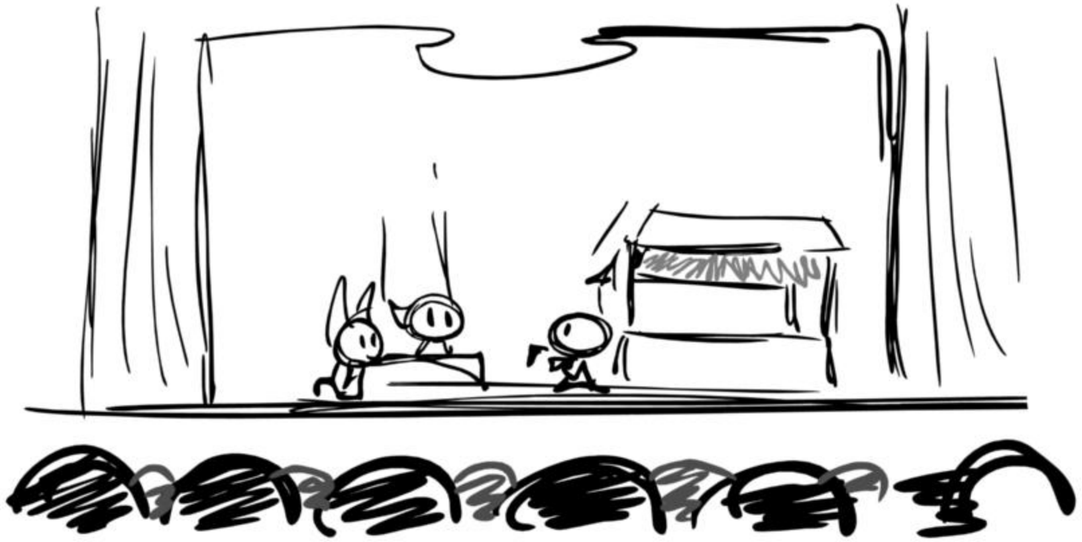
The world of LPS needs to feel real and 3 dimensional. Don't create close ups by just re-using the establishing shot and cutting into it. The sequence ends up feeling very flat we don't get the same emotional impact since all the characters are talking to each other in profile.

See the following example.

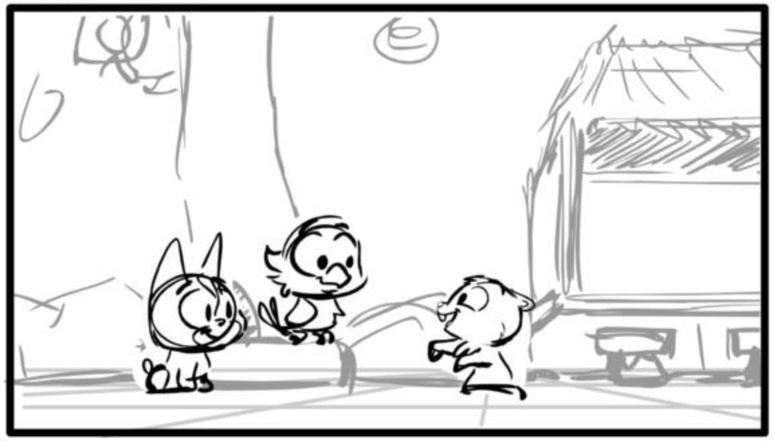
The scene should not feel like a flat theater stage.

✕ NOT THIS

The scene becomes flat and unengaging. It feels like we are just watching a theater stage.



Shot 0010



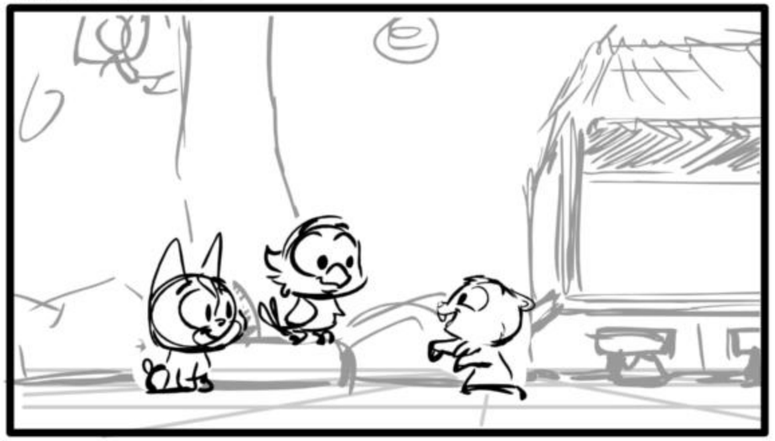
Shot 0020

The scene should not Feel like a Flat theater stage.

Do This

The location feels more 3 dimensional. And it is easier to engage with Trip like this because he is facing the camera in stead of talking in profile.

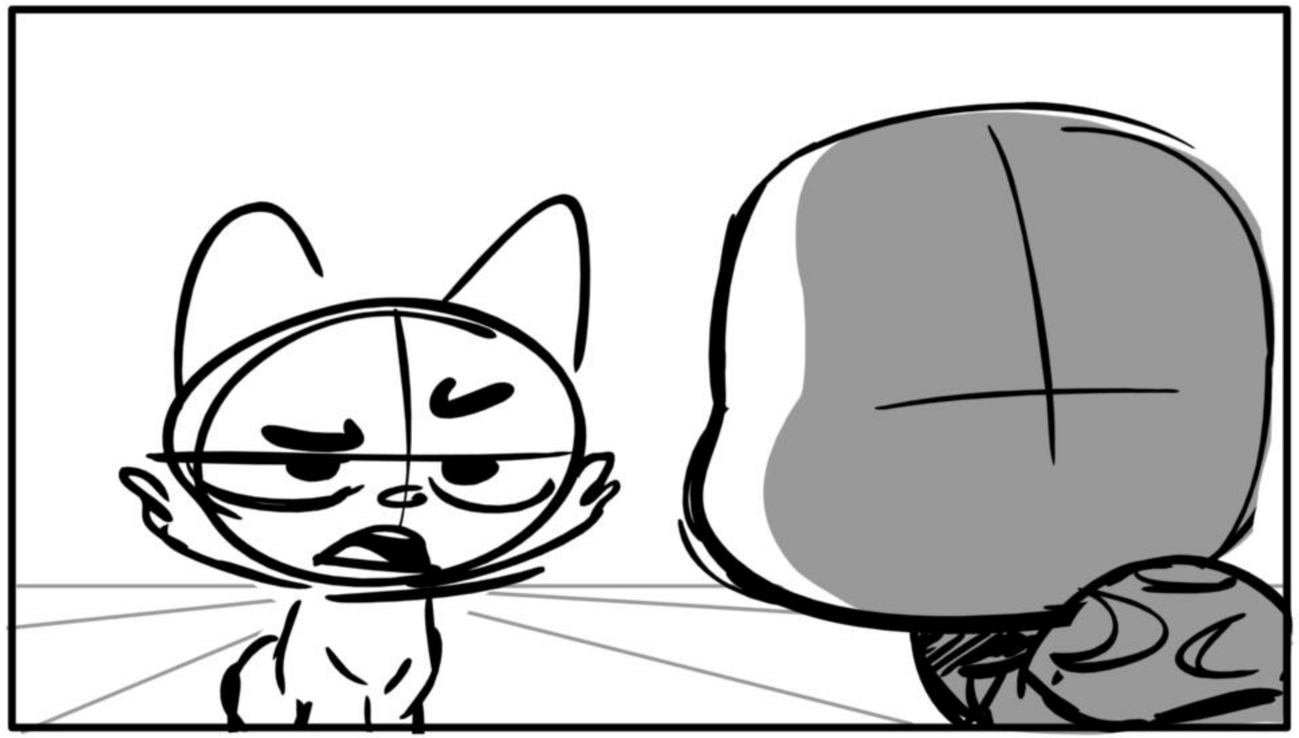
Shot 0010



Shot 0020

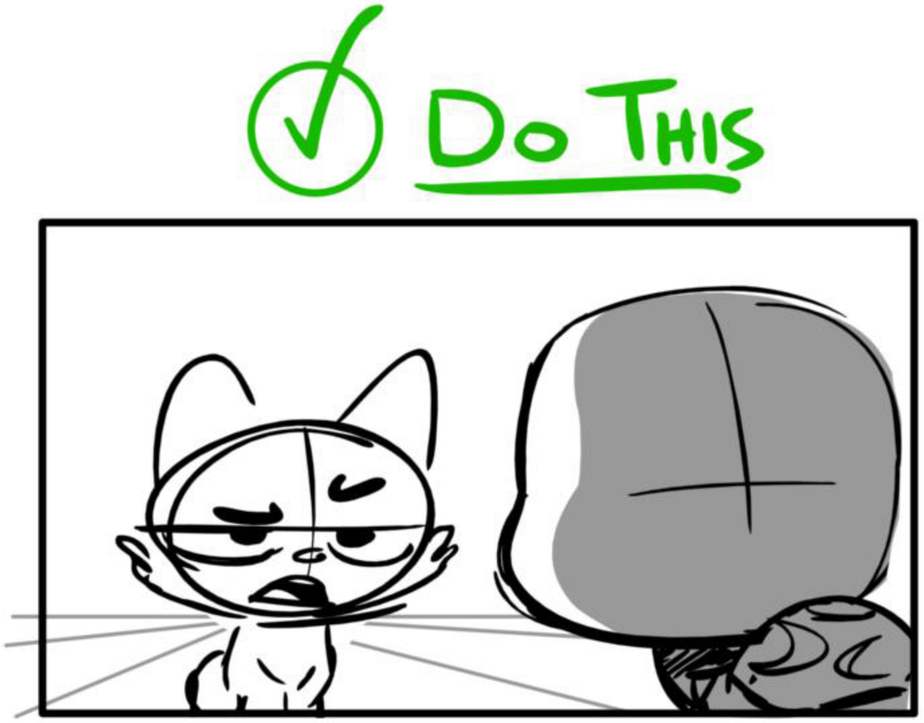
Rule For Over The Shoulder shots.

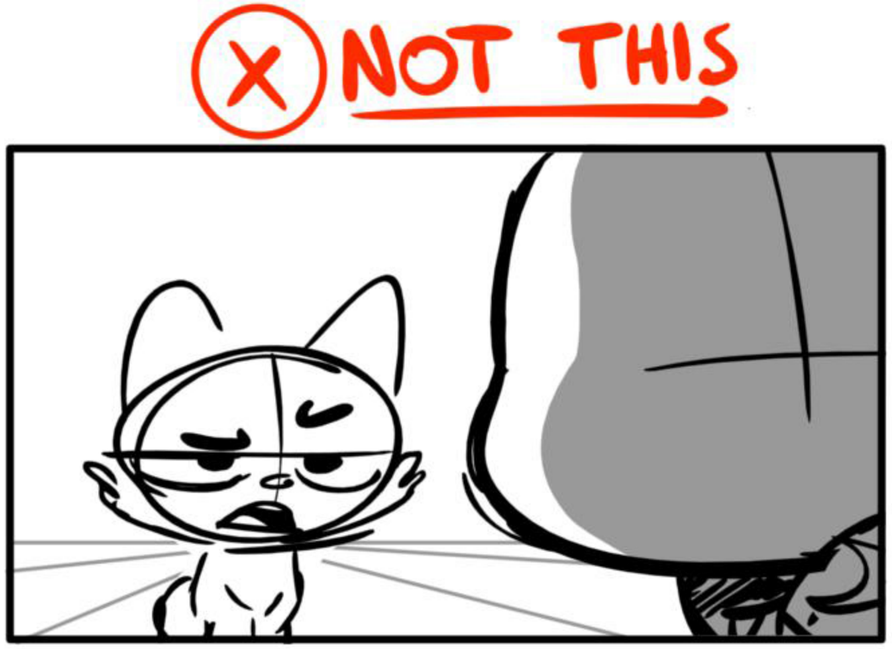
Use Over The Shoulder Shots sparingly. They tend to look a bit strange with the style of the character designs on LPS. If you do need to use them sometimes, follow the next rule.



Rule For Over The Shoulder shots.

Show the whole head. If we cut of parts of the head it becomes harder to know who it is since a lot of the character silhouettes are very similar on LPS. Additionally, cut of heads feels very awkward in the final animation in the graphic LPS style.





Avoid "talking heads"

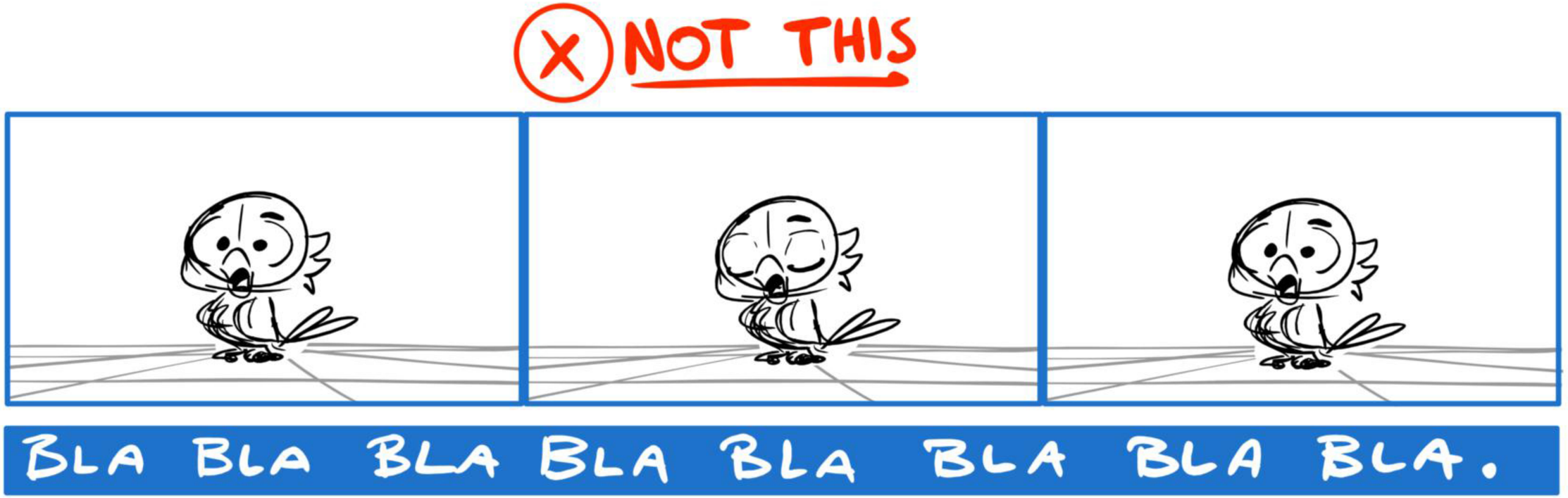
Sometimes you might get a script page that is just a long dialogue between the characters with nothing interesting happening. These scenes will get really boring if we just use lots of use lots of Close Ups/Medium Shots of characters talking.

See the following examples for tecniques to avoid long and boring dialogue scenes.

Avoid "talking heads"

1. Give the character some interesting acting.

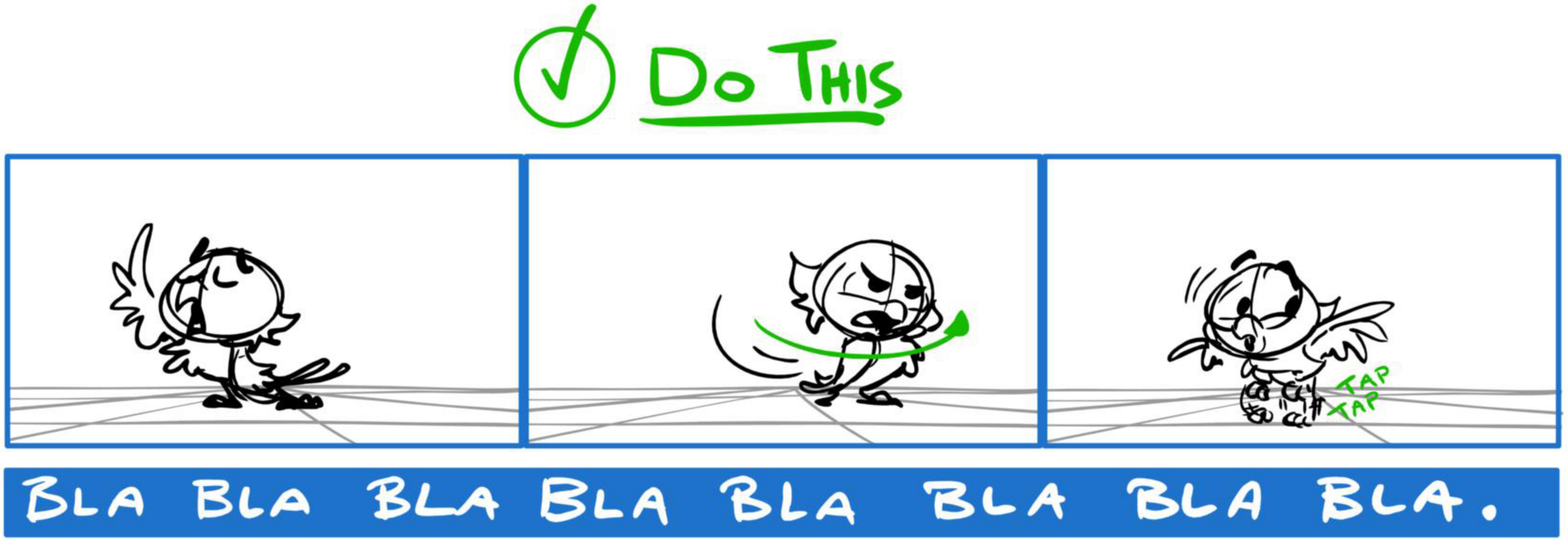
Generally, if a long dialogue shot has few poses and uninteresting poses/expressions it quickly becomes very boring to watch. Imagine the scene below running for 10 seconds.



Avoid "talking heads"

1. Give the character some interesting acting.

Try in stead to find some interesting poses and expressions to really push the acting according to the dialogue.

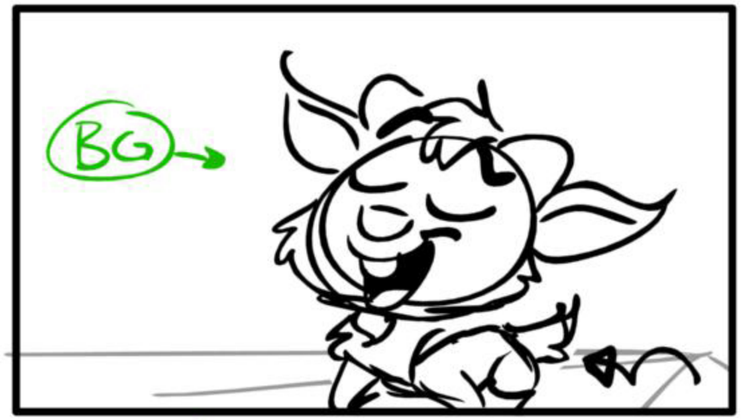


Avoid "talking heads"

2. Give the character something to do.

If the character can do some action while talking it makes it more interesting. See examples below. Note: These actions should make sense within the scene.

✓ Do This



WALKING

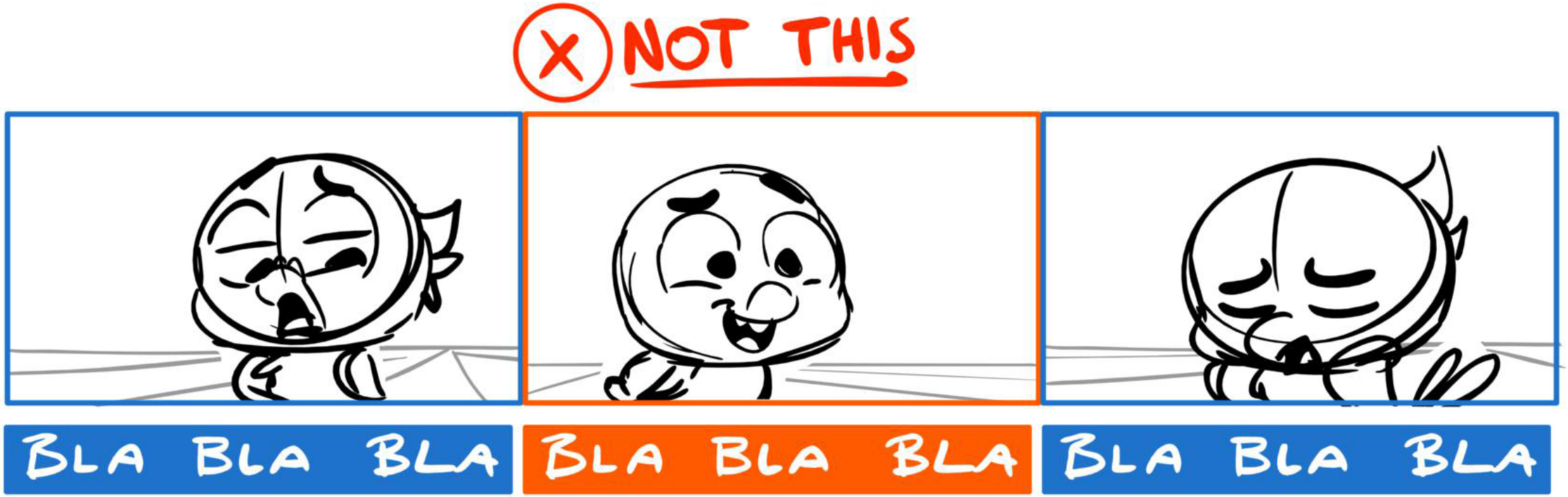
ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

PLAYING GAMES, CLEANING, ETC.

Avoid "talking heads"

3. Vary the shots.

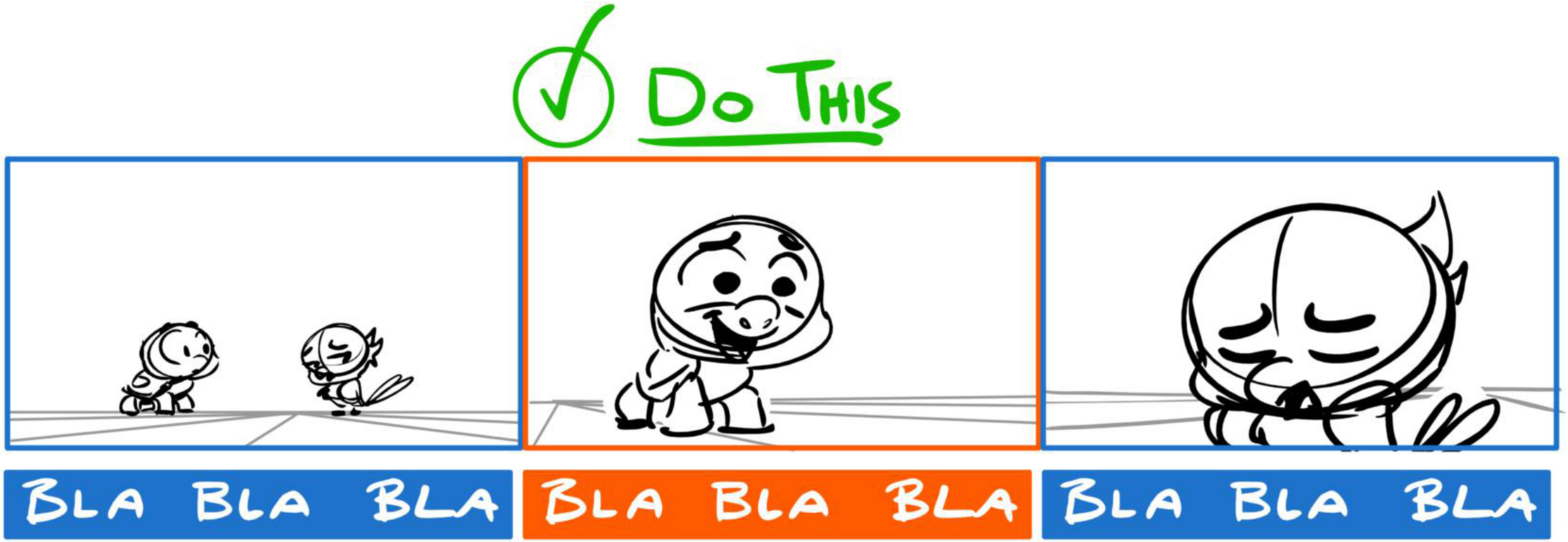
Don't just cut from Medium Shot to Medium Shot or Close Up to Close Up. It often becomes jarring, especially when the silhouettes of the characters are quite similar.



Avoid "talking heads"

3. Vary the shots.

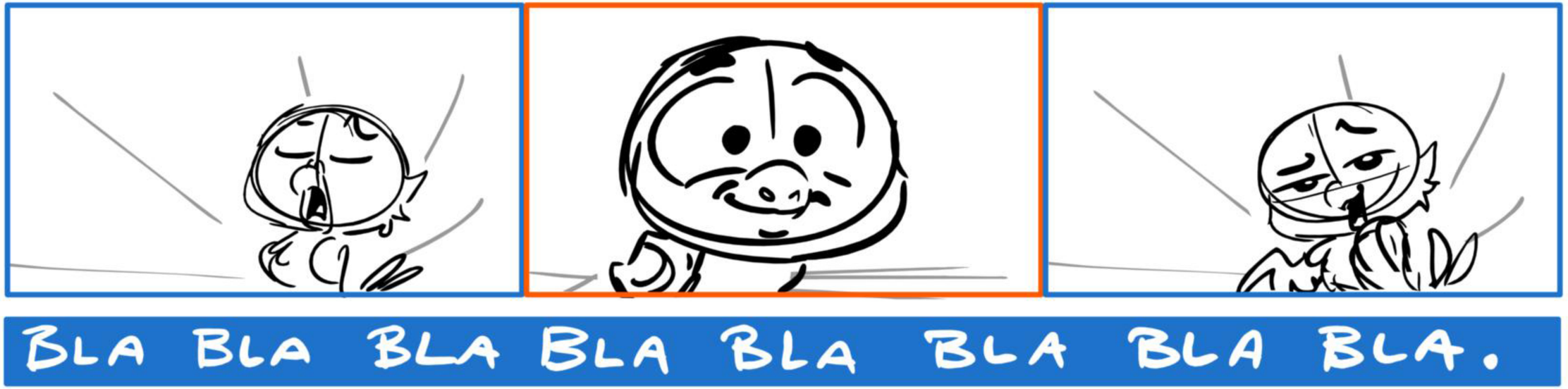
In stead create some variations in the type of shots you use.



Avoid "talking heads"

4. Show reactions of other character.

If one character has a very long line, break it up by showing the reaction of someone listening and then cut back for the end of the line.

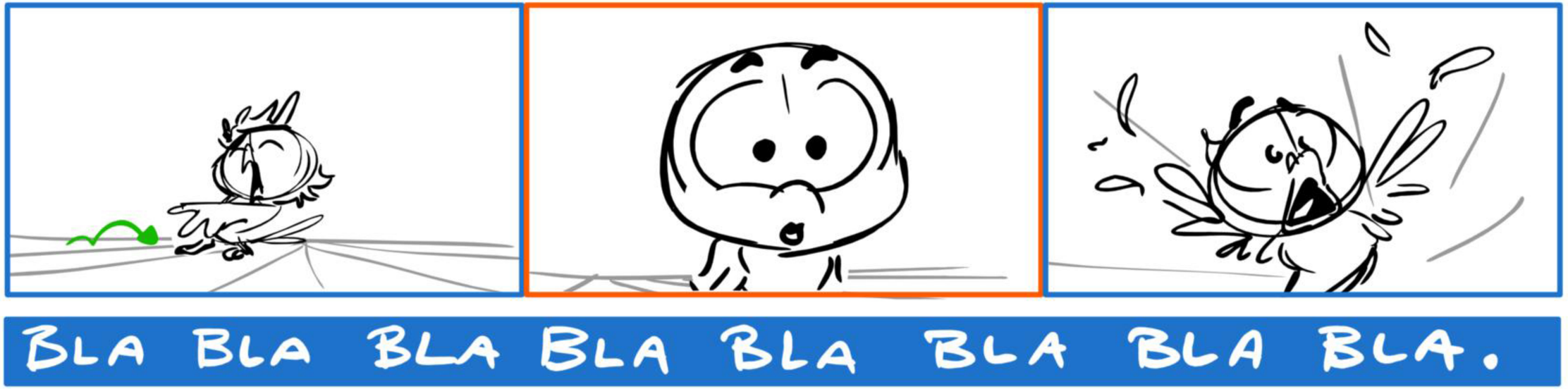


Avoid "talking heads"

4. Show reactions of other character.

This can also be an oportunity to add some humour if what is being said is redicolous.

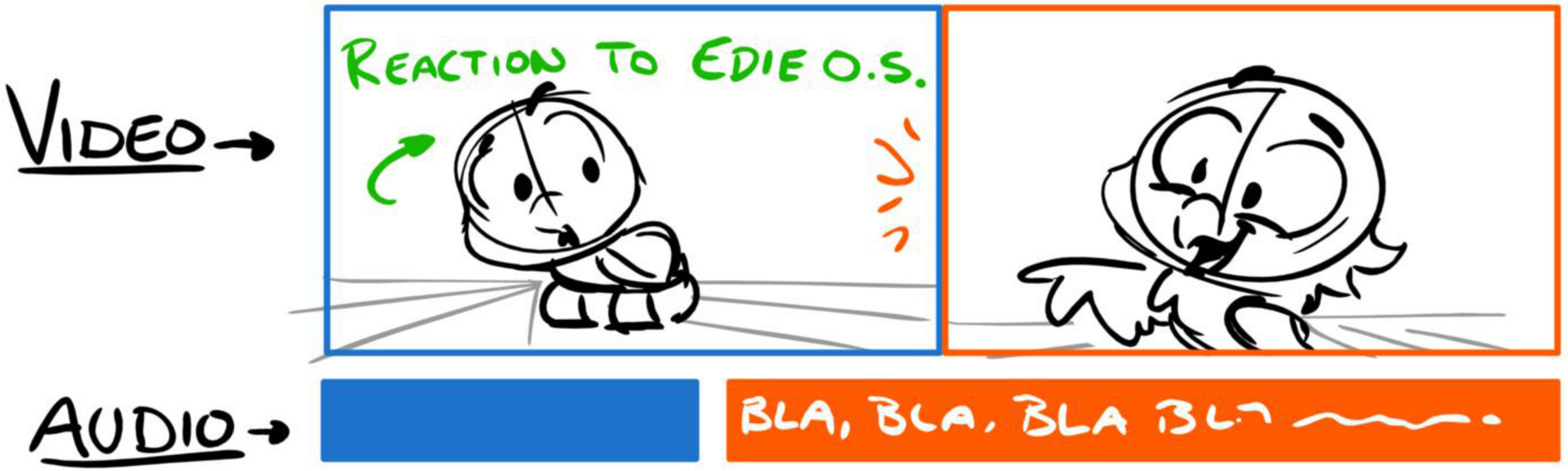
"We used to think that comedy was watching someone do something silly . . . we came to realize that comedy was watching somebody watch somebody do something silly." - John Cleese on Monty Python



Avoid "talking heads"

5. Use J-Cuts and L-Cuts.

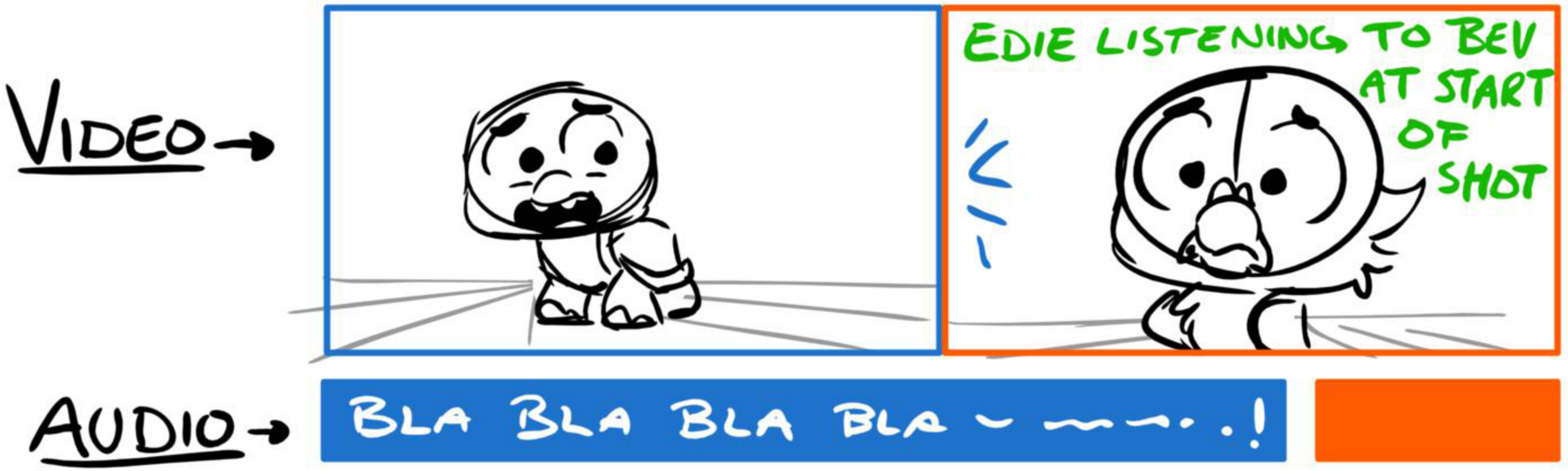
J-Cut is when the audio of one shot starts in the previous shot. (It is called a J-Cut because the video layer and audio layer of the orange shot creates a J shape.)



Avoid "talking heads"

5. Use J-Cuts and L-Cuts.

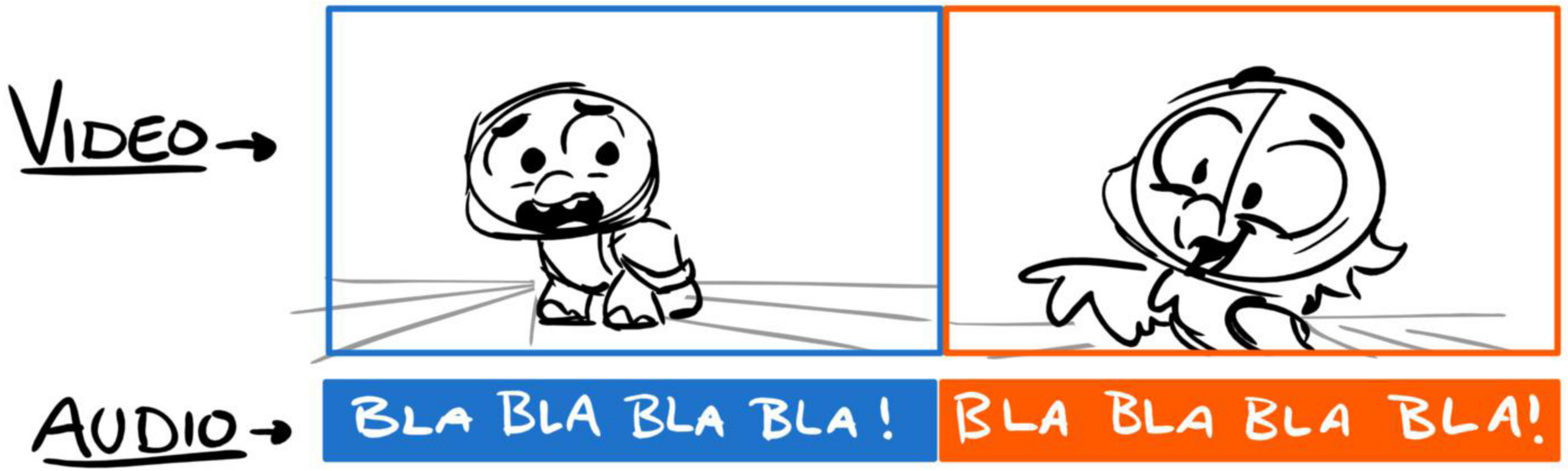
L-Cut is when the audio of one shot overlaps into the next shot. (It is called a L-Cut because the video layer and audio layer of the blue shot creates an L shape.)



Avoid "talking heads"

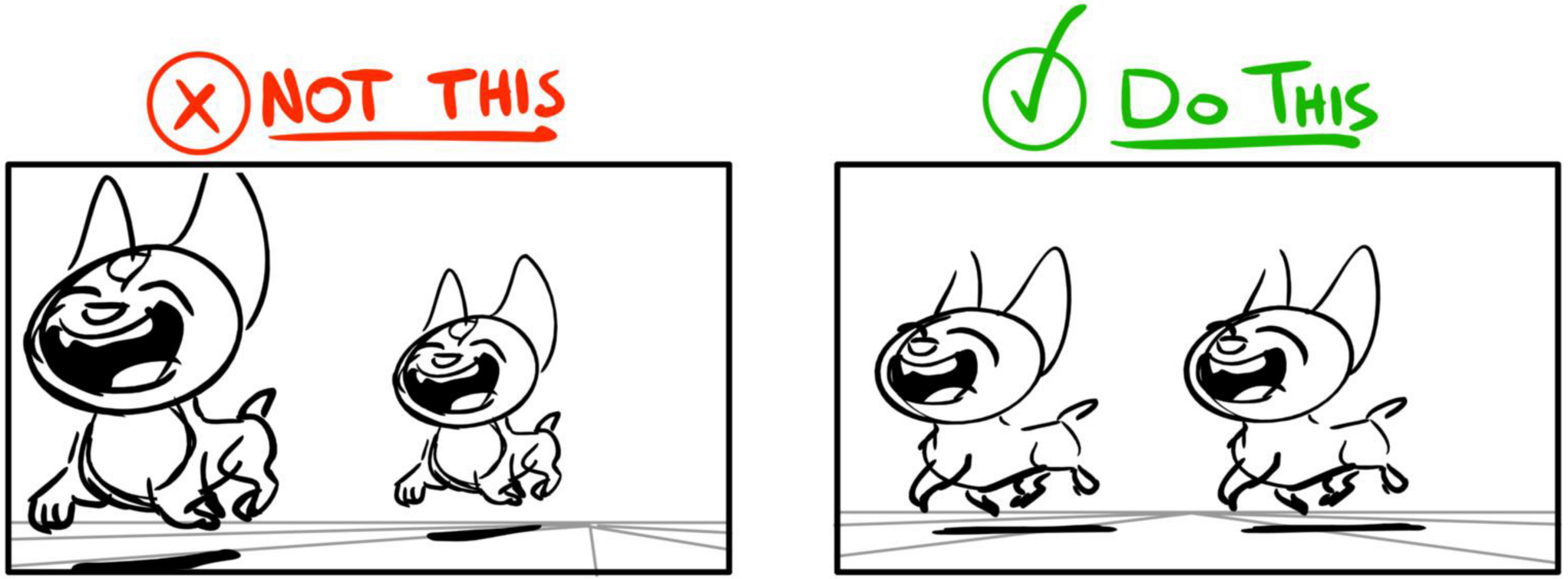
5. Use J-Cuts and L-Cuts.

If the audio and video cuts at the same time, the sequence can feel a bit stacato bacuse the shot, the audio and the acting stops and starts at the same time. J- and L-Cuts tend to give the sequence a better flow. It is ok to use all 3 techniques, but try to vary them and watch out for the flow of the sequence.



Avoid walks in perspective

Walks in perspective takes a long time to animate in 2D Digital Cut Out. So if you can try to keep the walks and runs in perspective. Having the walk in profile makes it easier for the animators and BG-artists (if it's a moving background).



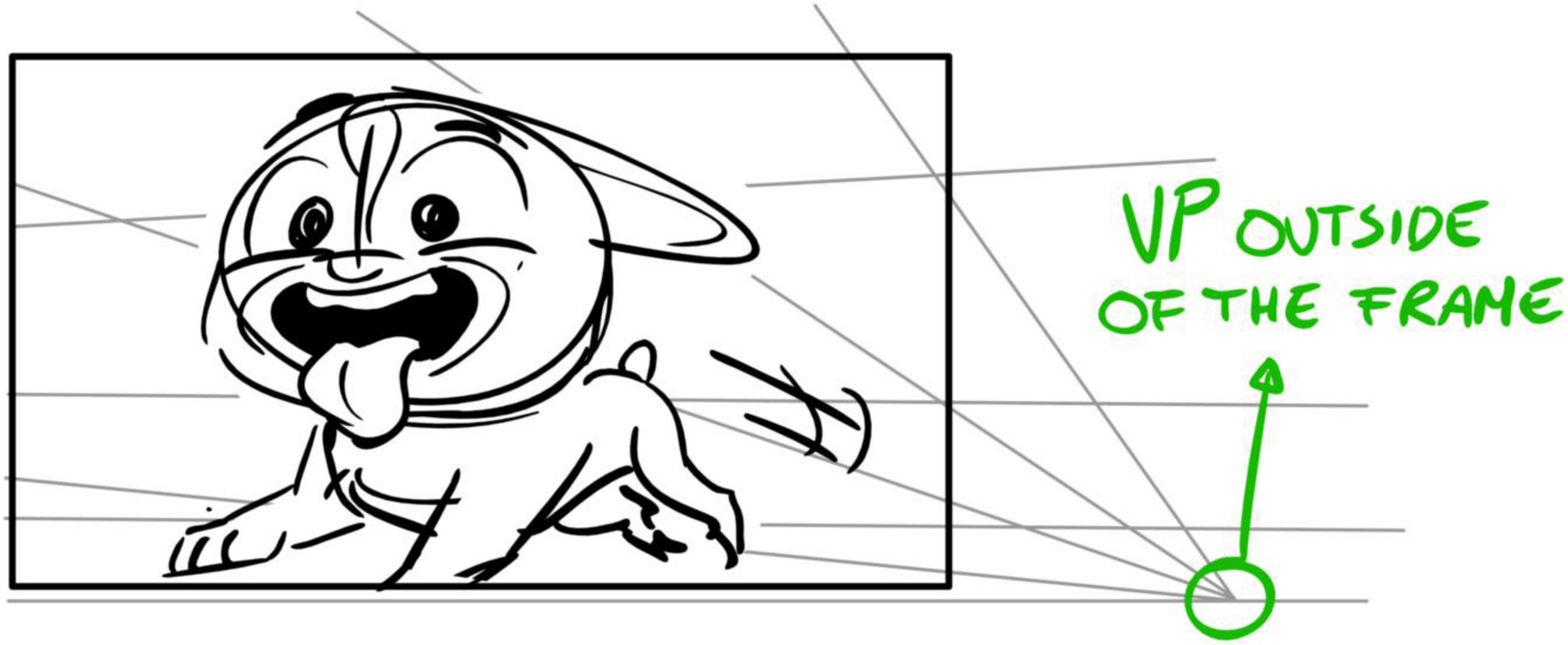
Avoid walks in perspective

However, if you think a perspective walk will make the scene better, then use it. The following examples are ways to include a perspective walk without making life too dificult for people down the pipeline.

1. If the camera is locked and the character runs through the frame super fast the animator can get away with not being so thorough.

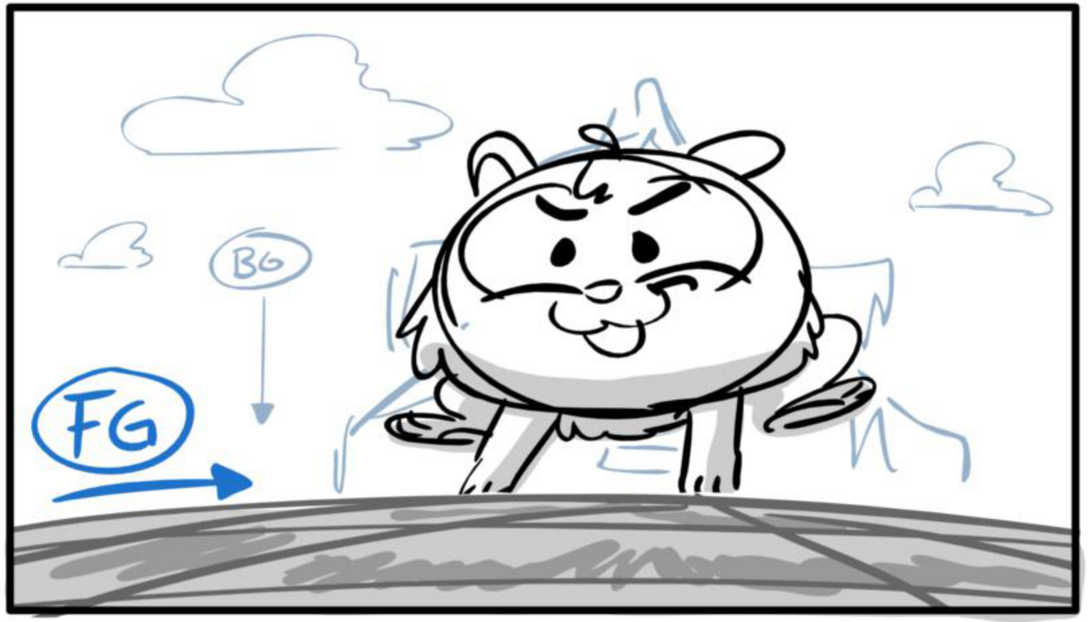
Avoid walks in perspective

2. Use an Up Shot so that the animators don't have to worry about animating the feet hitting the ground. Also, if the background is moving in a 3/4 shot, keep the vanishing point (VP) outside of the frame so it's easier for backgrounds-artists to loop the background.



Avoid walks in perspective

3. Use the ground as a foreground element so that we never see the feet touching the ground. The background can just slowely animate straight down.



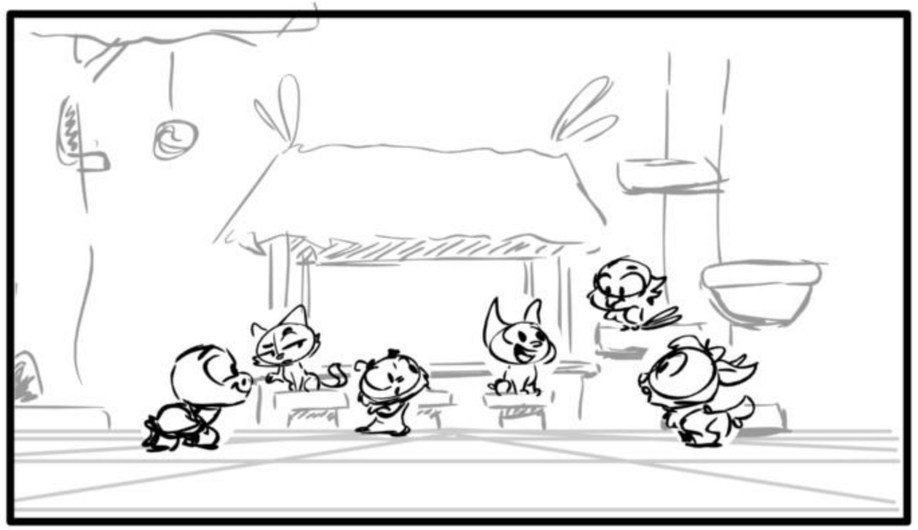
Group characters in nice compositions

Create some variations when you group characters in establishing shots and other group shots.

NOT THIS

To even. Everyone is the same distance from camera and from each other.

DO THIS

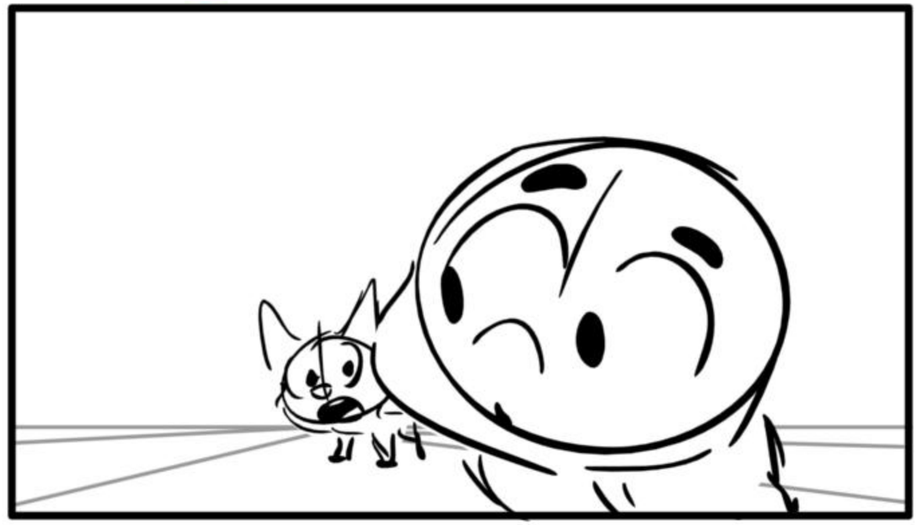


This is better! Variations on distance from camera. They are grouped to give Roxie room since she is the focus here. If possible place some of the characters on stools etc.

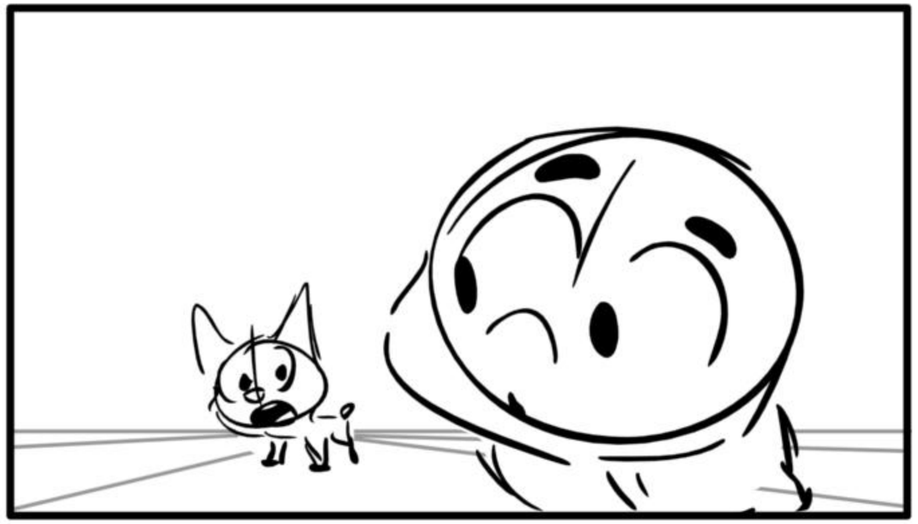
Group characters in nice compositions

BUT look out for their silhouettes. Make sure their silhouettes reads clearly and don't overlap.

NOT THIS



DO THIS



Give the composition space in close ups

When you do close ups, make sure to give the character enough negative space around him/her to make the comoposition breath.

✗ NOT THIS

Trip's head is getting very close to the edge of the screen here

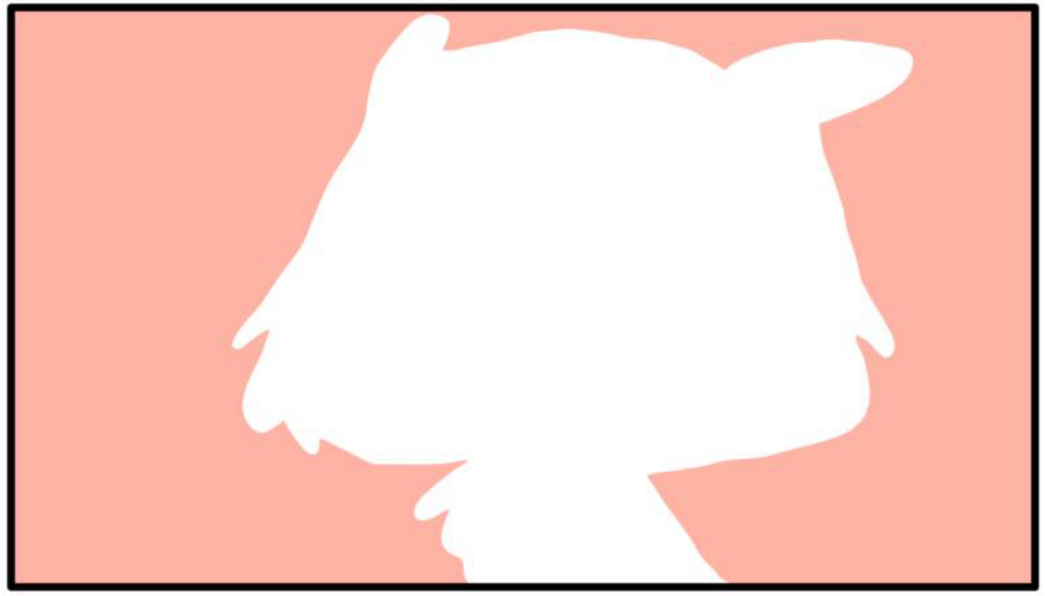
✓ Do This

By just scaling him down slightly, the composition has more room to breath.

Give the composition space in close ups

Look for the negative space.

✗ NOT THIS



Trip's head is getting very close to the edge of the screen here

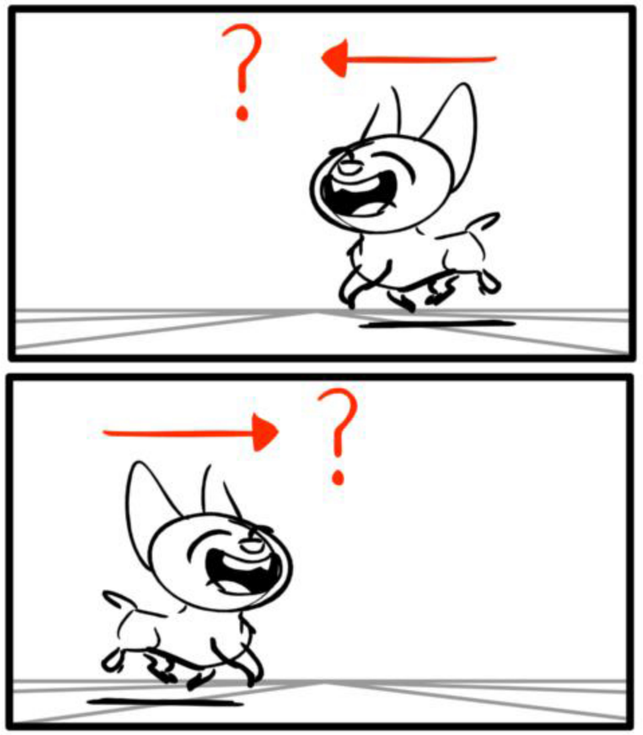
✓ Do This

By just scaling him down slightly, the composition has more room to breath.

Screen Direction & Screen Space

Make sure the screen direction and screen space makes sense. See the examples of what too look out for to make sure it hooks up well from scene to scene.

Screen Direction



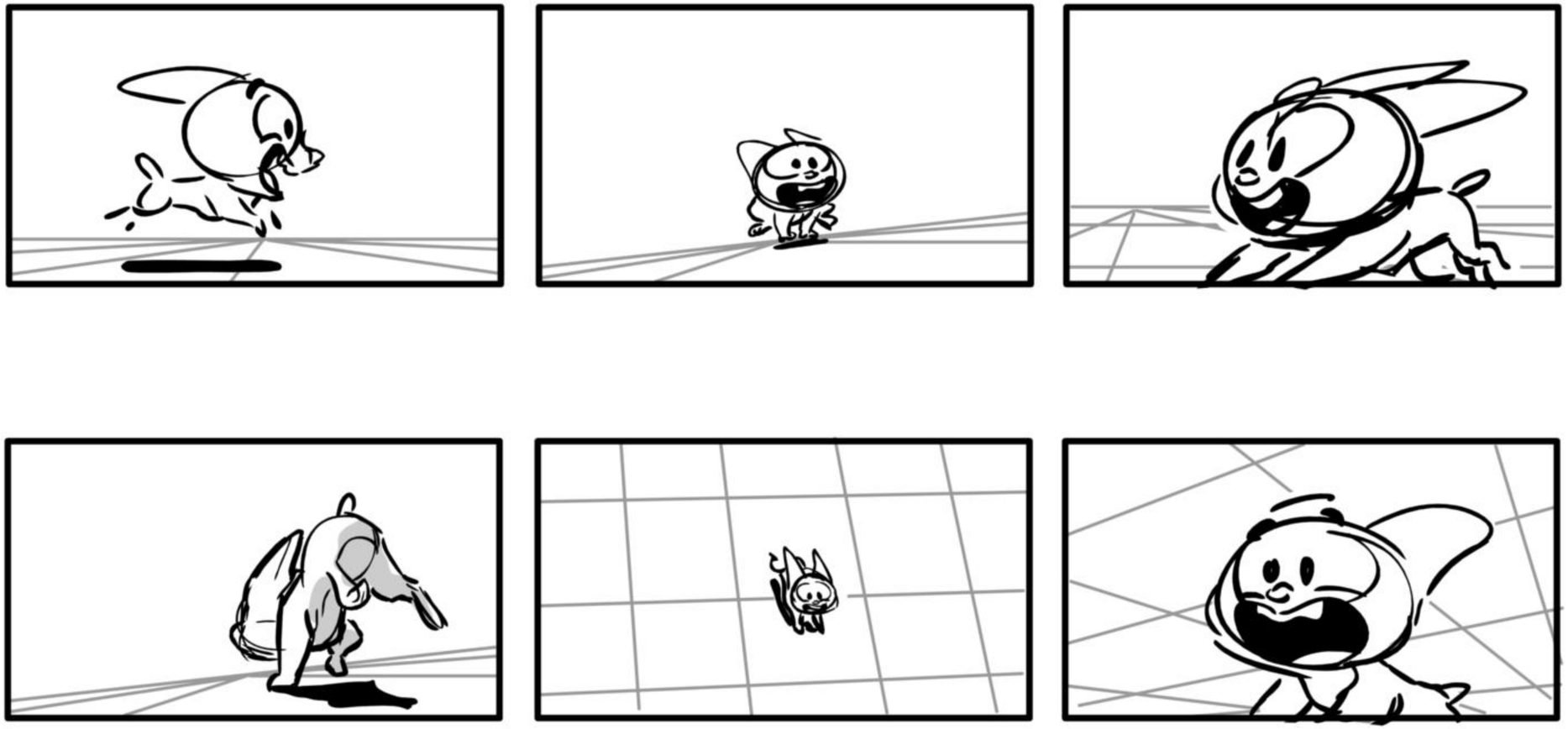
Screen Space

Roxie on Screen Right (SR)

Trip on Screen Left (SL)

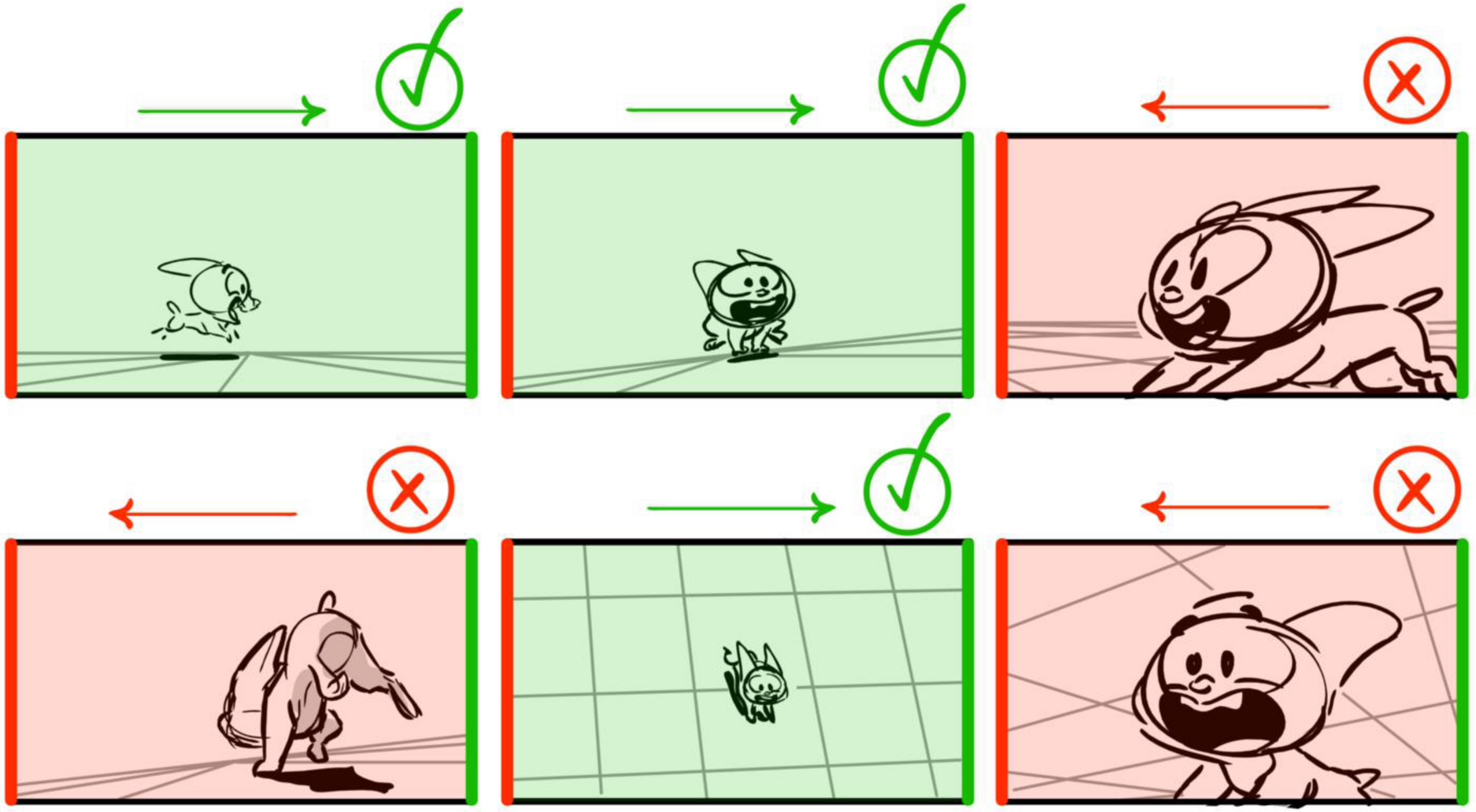
Screen Direction & Screen Space

If a character is running in one direction in one shot. He/She should be running in that direction in every shot regardless of the angle.



Screen Direction & Screen Space

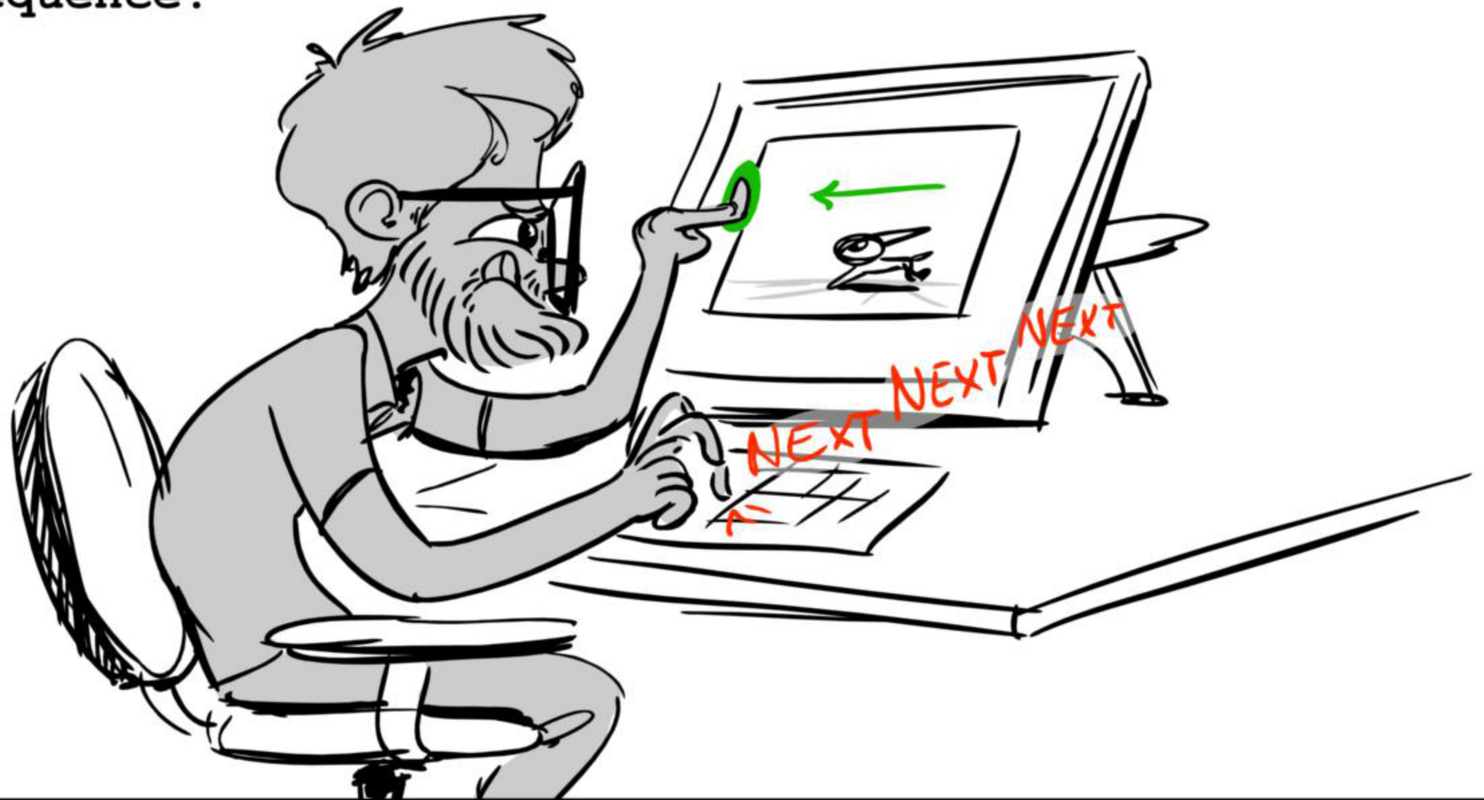
In this example Roxie should always run from SL (Red) to SR (Green)



Screen Direction & Screen Space

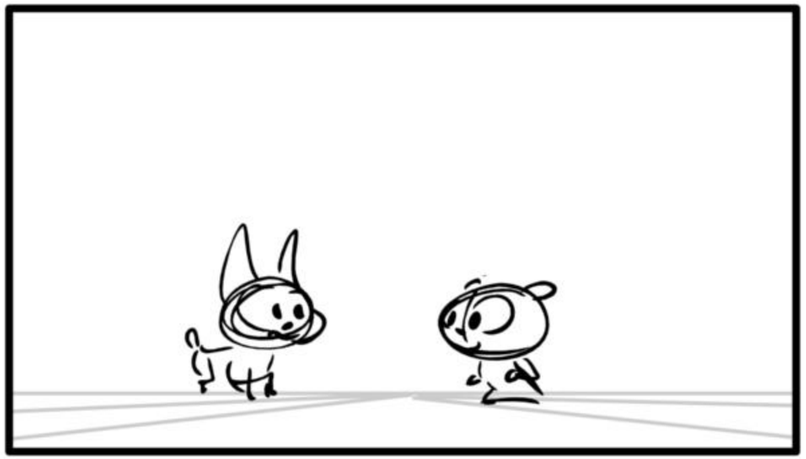
Keeping a consistent screen direction is one of those things that are simple theoretically, but that can actually be really challanging to do with everything else the storyboard artist has to think about.

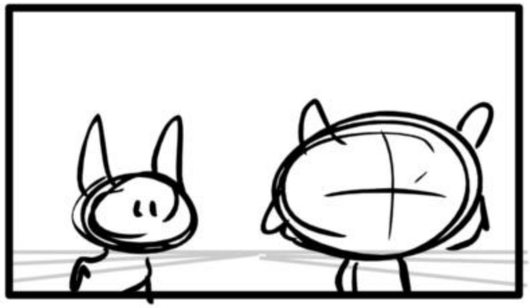
A good tip I once recieved is to physically put your finger on the side of the screen that the character is supposed to exit and play through the sequence.

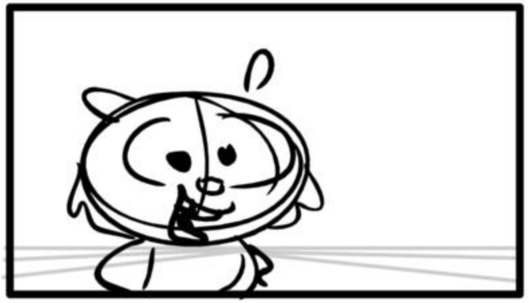


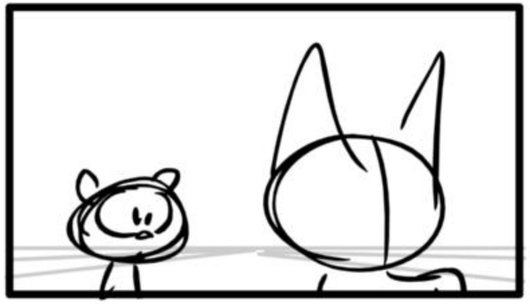
Screen Direction & Screen Space

Make sure that the characters occupy the same space on the screen in relation to each other.



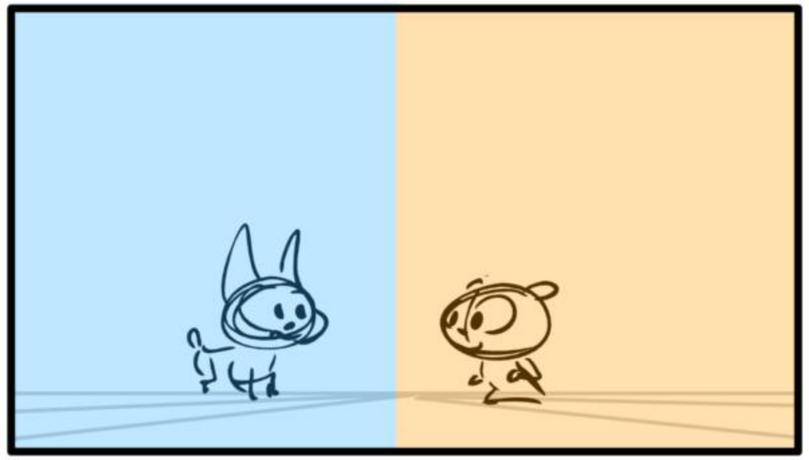


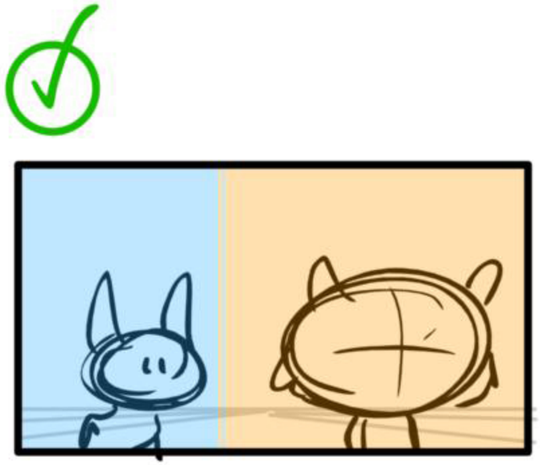




Screen Direction & Screen Space

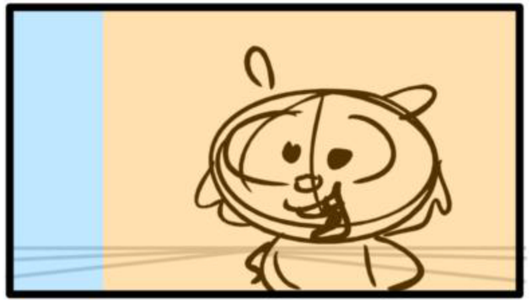
Make sure that the characters occupy the same space on the screen in relation to each other.



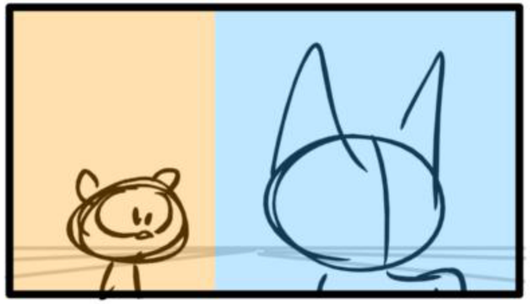


Trip is looking towards Roxie at SR. This is incorrect.,

This is the correct way

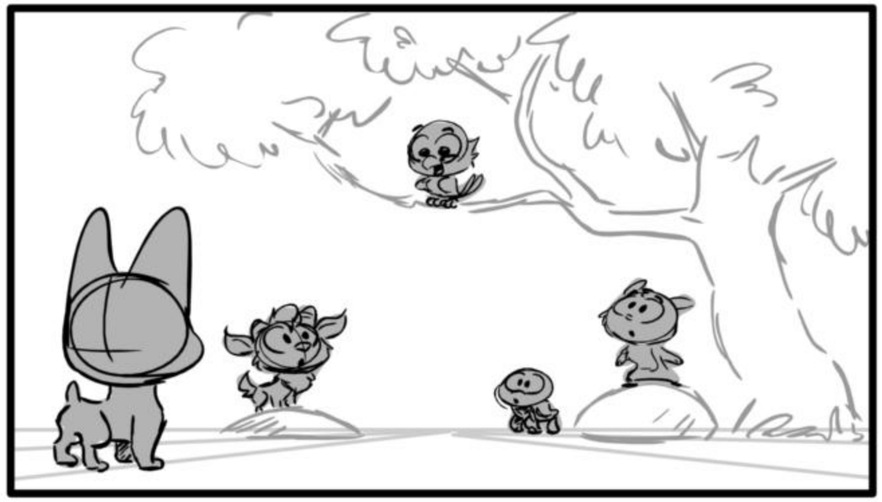


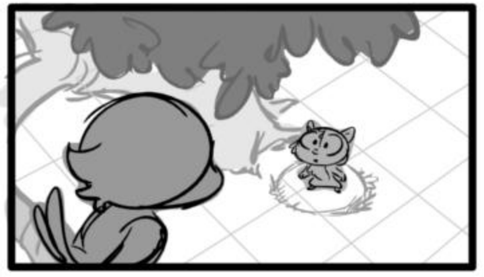
Again we've crossed the line here. Trip is on SLand Roxie on SR



Screen Direction & Screen Space

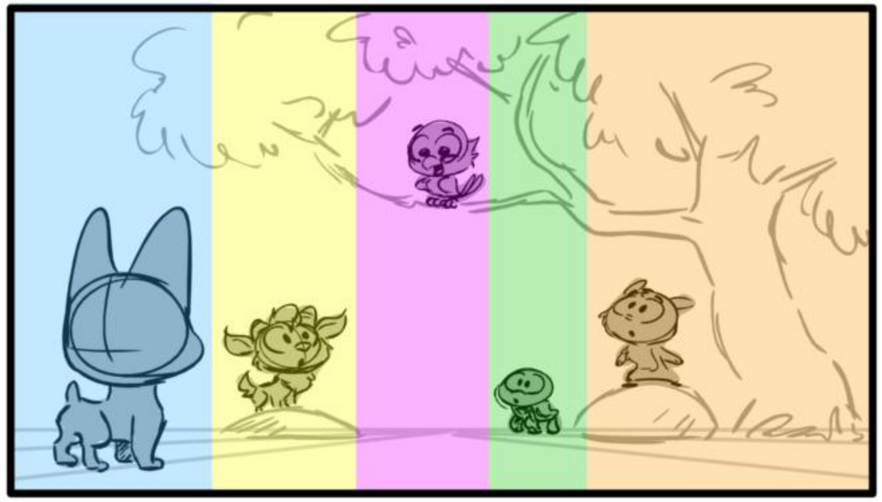
This also applies if you have a more complicated setup with more characters.





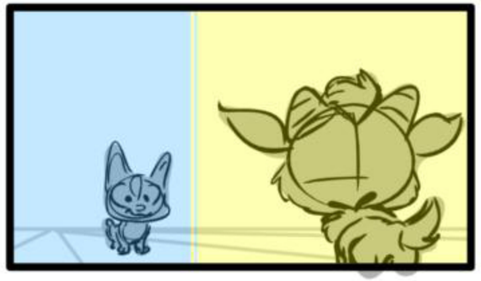
Screen Direction & Screen Space

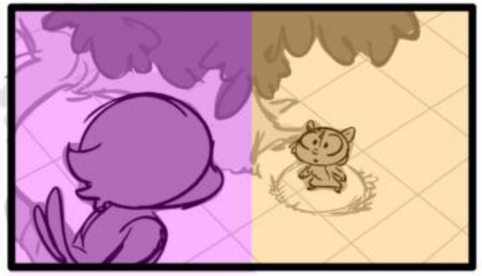
This also applies if you have a more complicated setup with more characters.



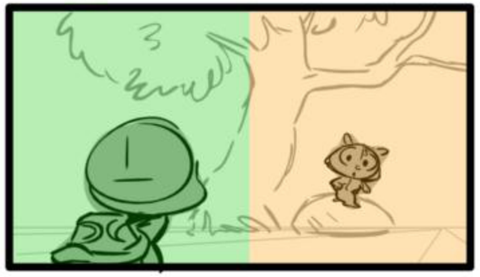
From Left to Right

Blue = Roxie
Yellow = Quincy
Pink = Edie
Green = Bev
Orange = Trip





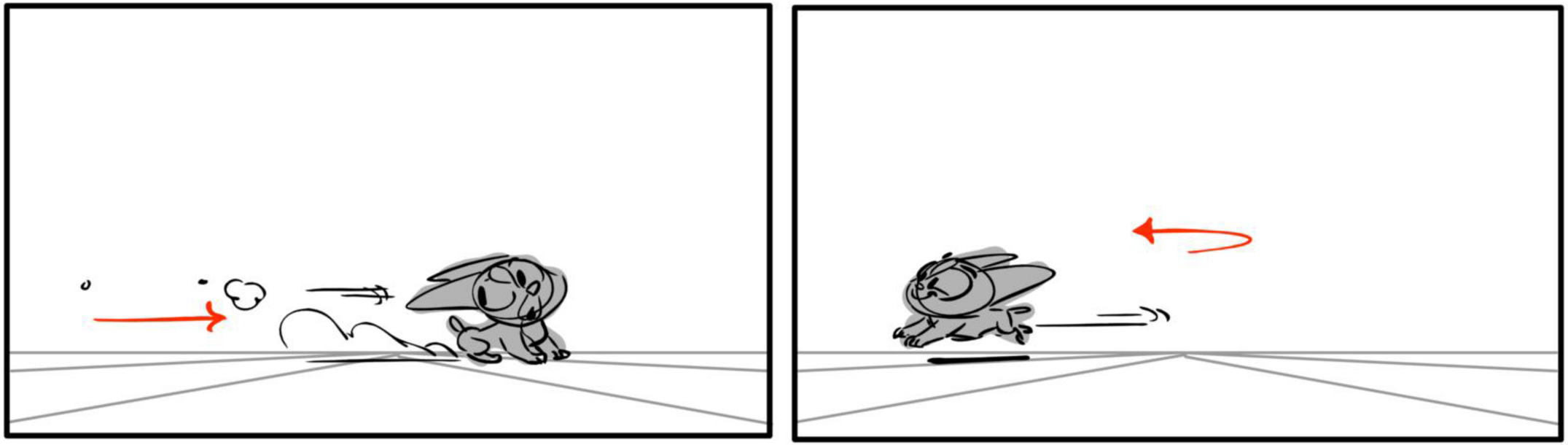
This is incorrect. The correct order from Left to Right should be Blue, Yellow, Pink, Green



Screen Direction & Screen Space

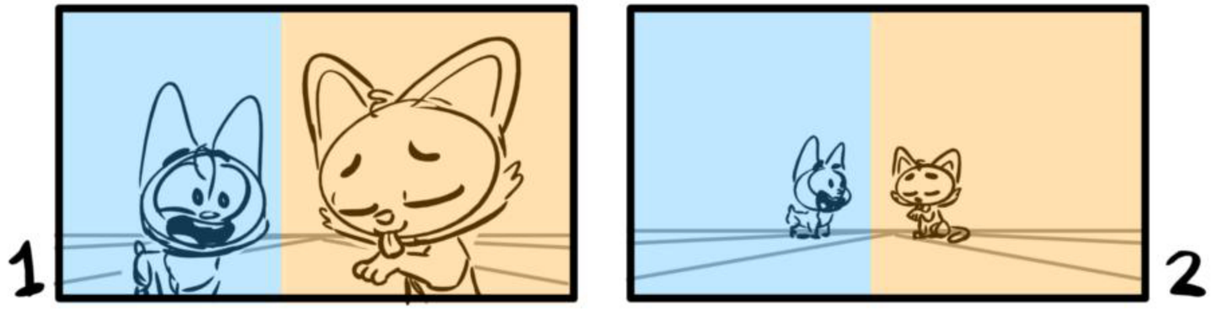
There are exception to when you can, or even have to break these rules. See the following pages for examples.

It is ok the change screen direction if the audience sees the character change direction on screen in a single shot

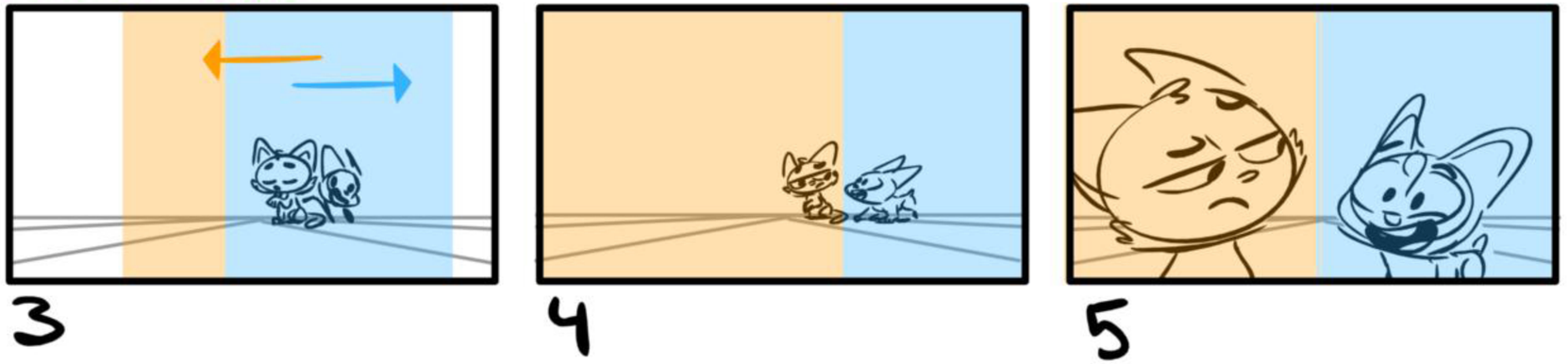


Screen Direction & Screen Space

Roxie is on screen left and Jade on screen right in the first 2 panels



In the third panel Roxie goes to the other side of Jade, so the following shots have Jade on screen left and Roxie on screen right

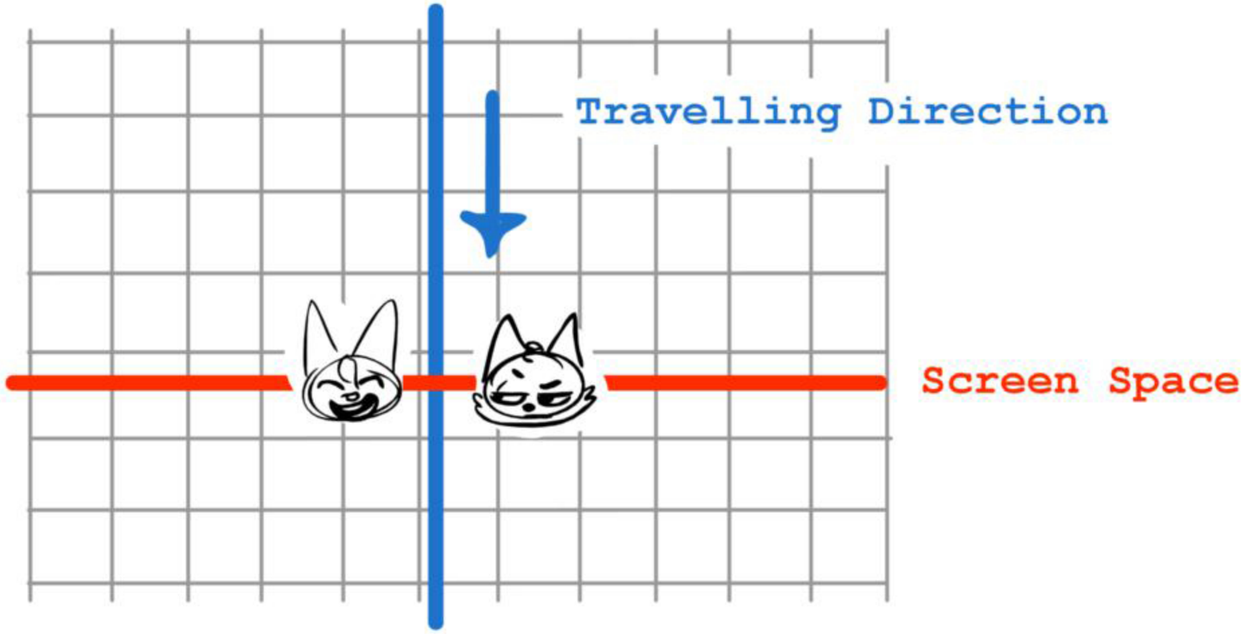


Screen Direction & Screen Space

If 2 characters are walking next to each other and talking, it can become impossible to avoid crossing the line. If you run into a situation like this you can cross EITHER cross the line of the travelling direction to get reaction shots, OR you can cross the lineos the Screen Space to get a shot from behind the characters.

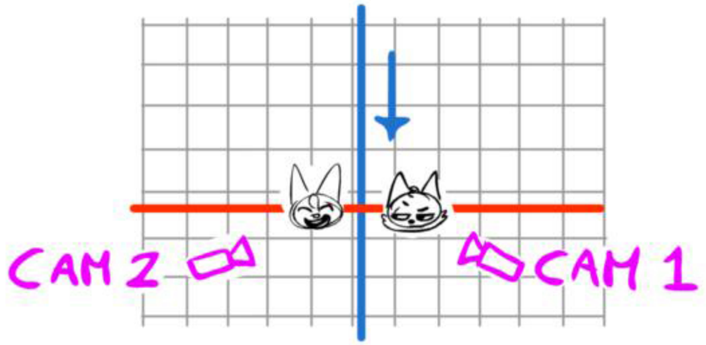
But DON'T cross both of theses lines in 1 cut. See following examples.

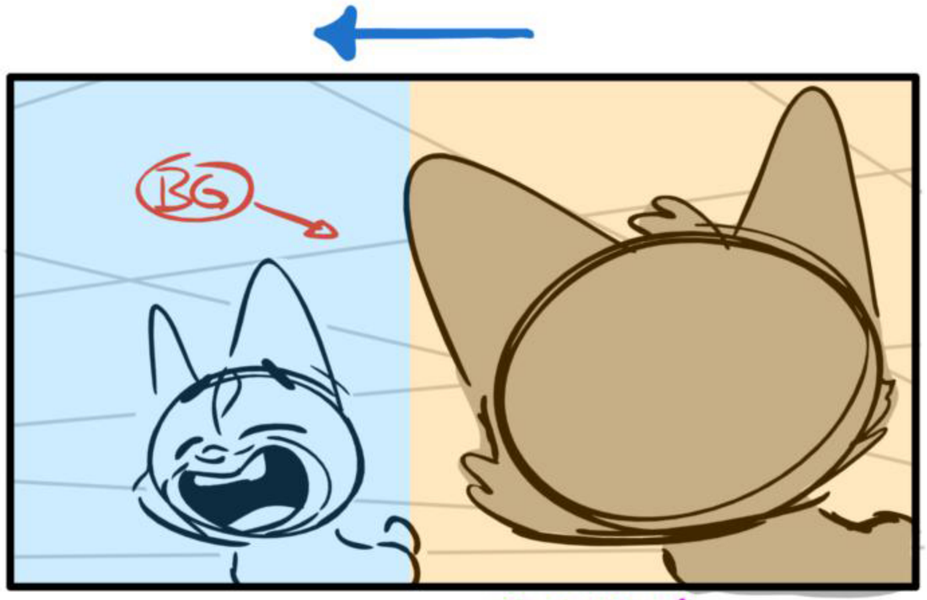
Floor Plan:



Screen Direction & Screen Space

This is ok. We have only crossed the blue line (travelling direction), but not the red line (Screen Space). Usually this is done to get reaction shots in these situations.





CAM 1

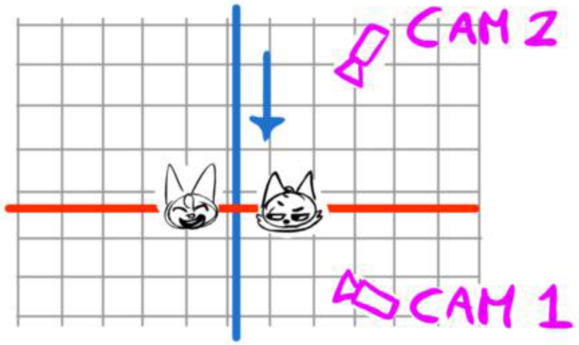
CAM 2

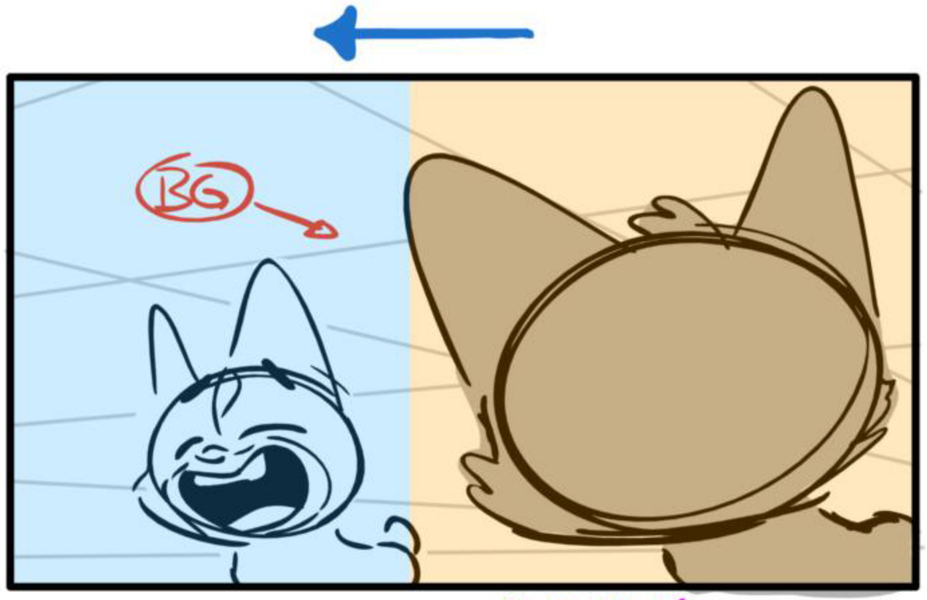
Do This

Screen Direction & Screen Space

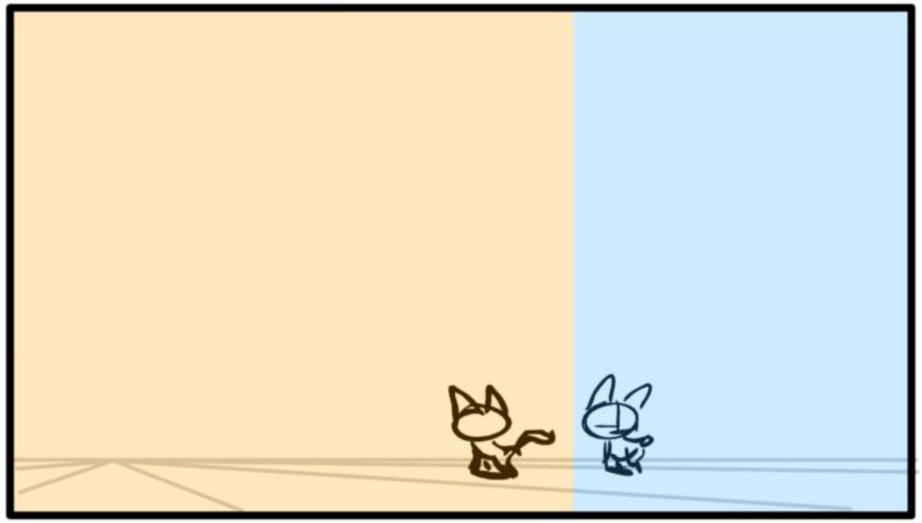
This is ok. We have only crossed the the red line (Screen Space), but not blue line (travelling direction) so the characters are still walking in the same direction.

If you are going to do this, try to make sure that the travelling direction in Cam 2 is the same as it was at the start of the sequence when they started walking.





CAM 1



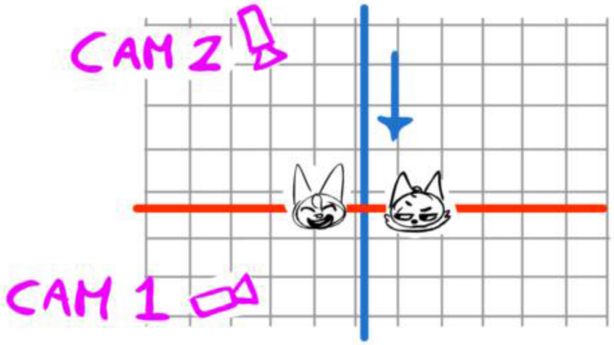
CAM 2

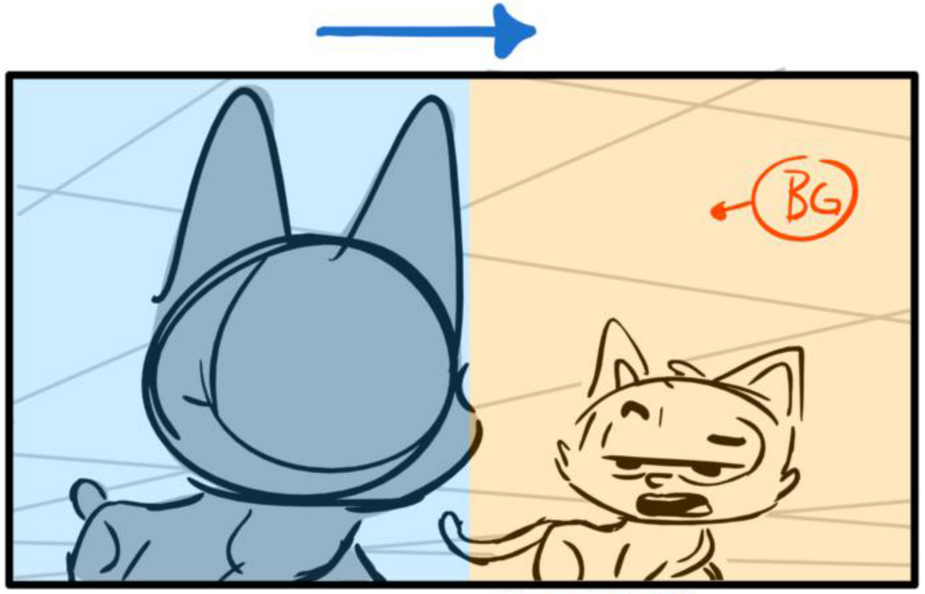
Do This

Screen Direction & Screen Space

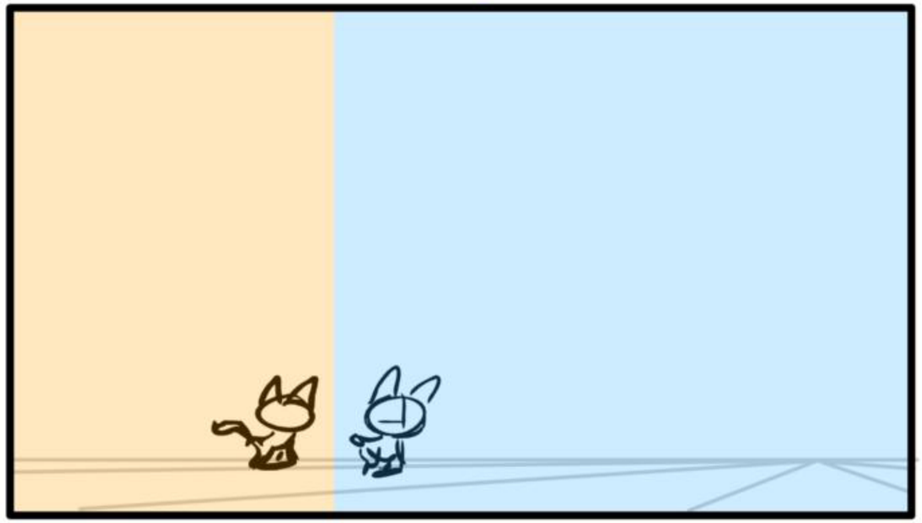
This is ok. We have only crossed the the red line (Screen Space), but not blue line (travelling direction) so the characters are still walking in the same direction.

If you are going to do this, try to make sure that the travelling direction in Cam 2 is the same as it was at the start of the sequence when they started walking.





CAM 1

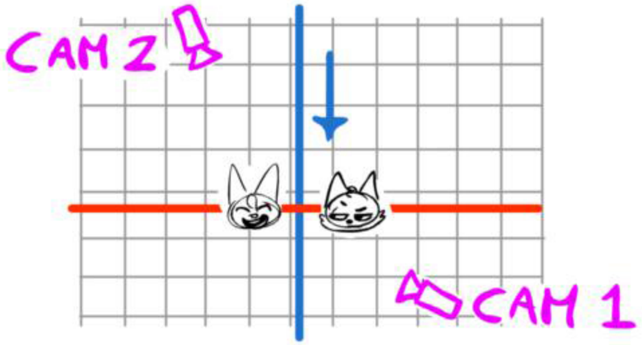


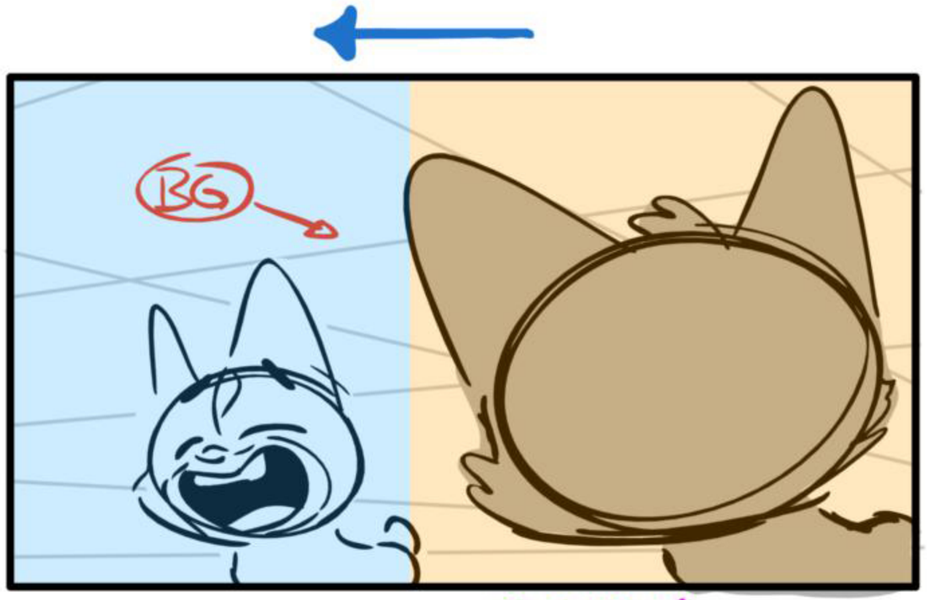
CAM 2

Do This

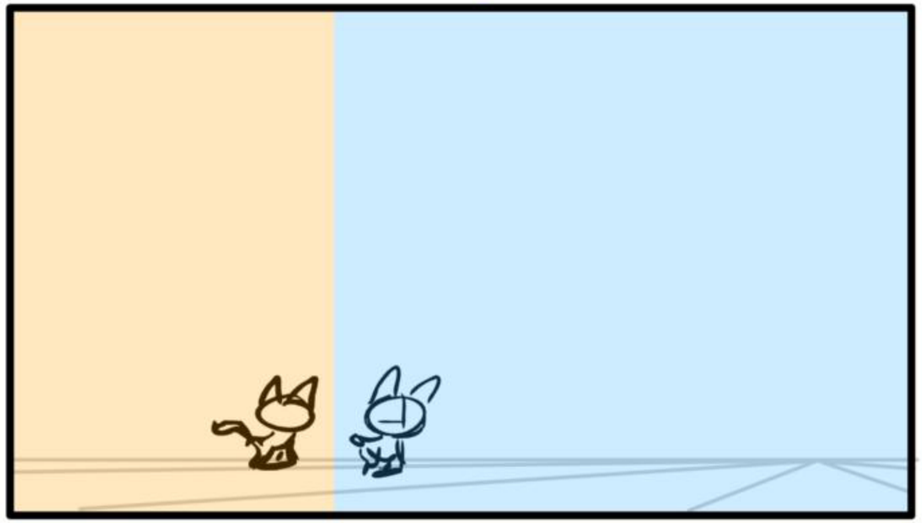
Screen Direction & Screen Space

Don't do this! We have crossed the both the red line (Screen Space) and the blue line (travelling direction) in 1 cut. This becomes very jarring.





CAM 1



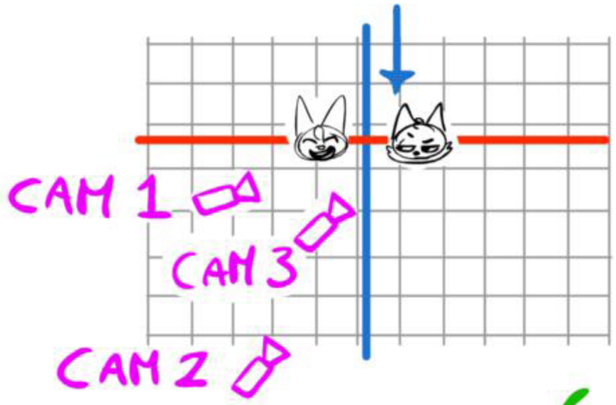
CAM 2

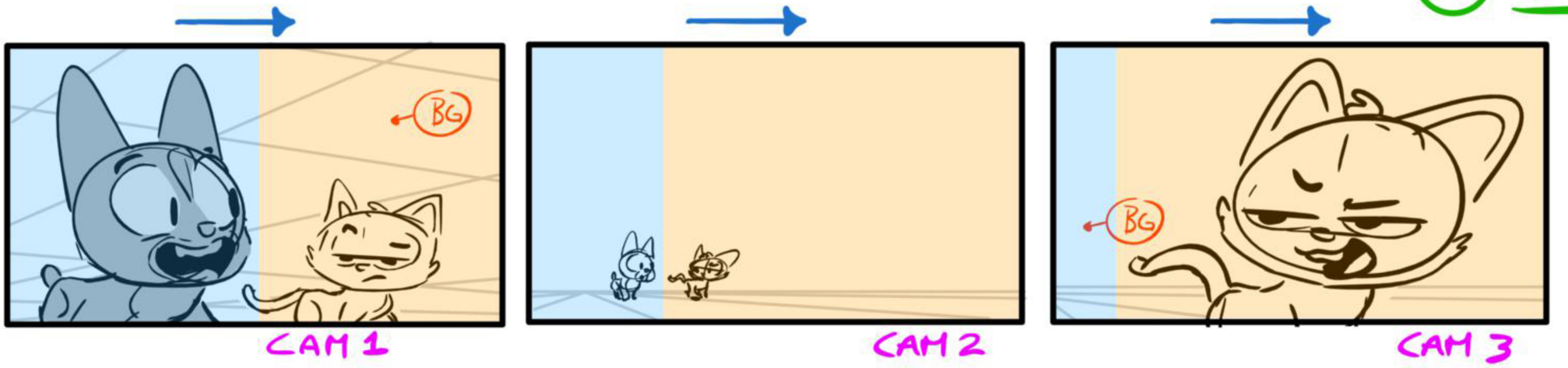
NOT THIS

Screen Direction & Screen Space

Of course, if you can, frame (and pose) it so that you don't cross either line, that is the best solution.

But if you have narrative reasons to cross the line it is ok as long as you only cross 1 in each cut and end up with the characters walking in the same direction as they did at the start of the sequence.



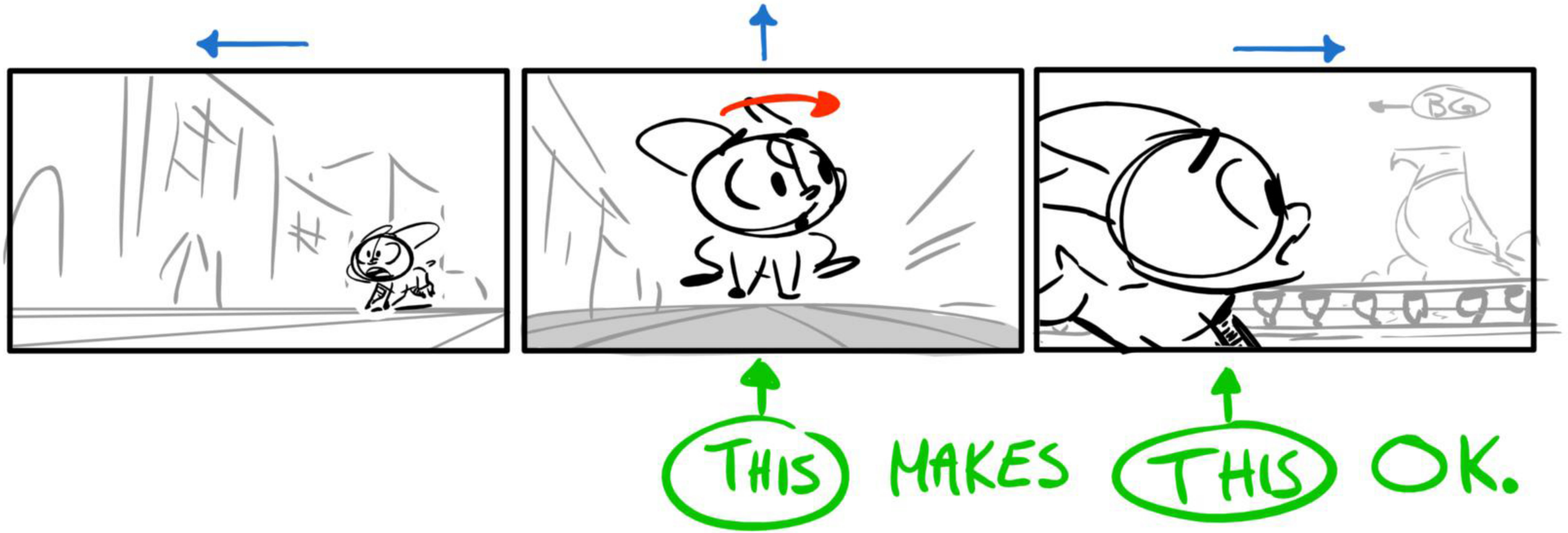


Do This

BEST OPTION!

Screen Direction & Screen Space

If you are in a situation where you have to break the screen direction, you can use a front on shot to neutralise the 180 line so that you can cross it in the next shot.

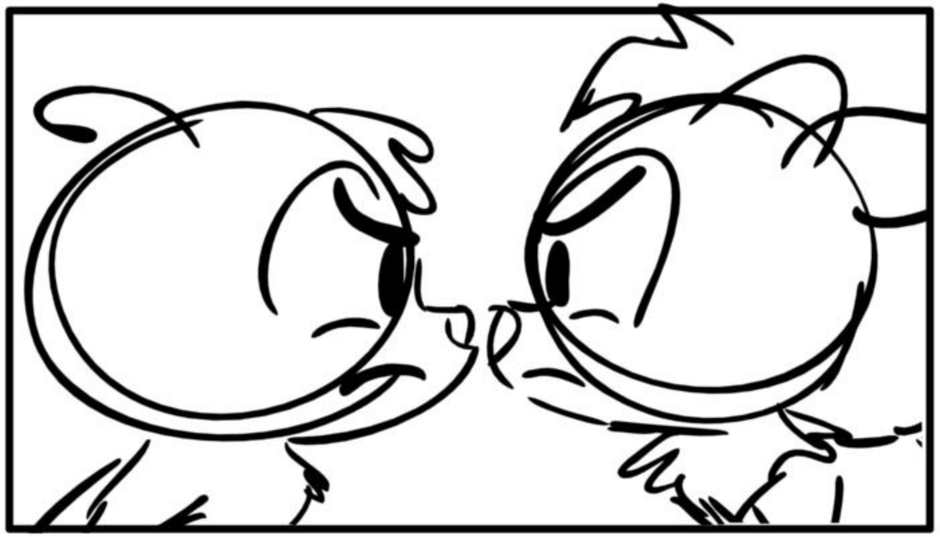


Avoid Profile Heads

If you have a good narrative reason you can use profile heads, but in general stay away from them. It is not that engaging for the audience and difficult for the animators to animate. You can still have the characters running/walking in profile, just give them a 3/4 head.

NOT THIS

DO THIS



If you have a face off between two characers is a good example of when it would be good to use profile heads.

Avoid Front On Heads

Don't break the 4th wall. The characters should never talk directly into the camera.

NOT THIS

Do This