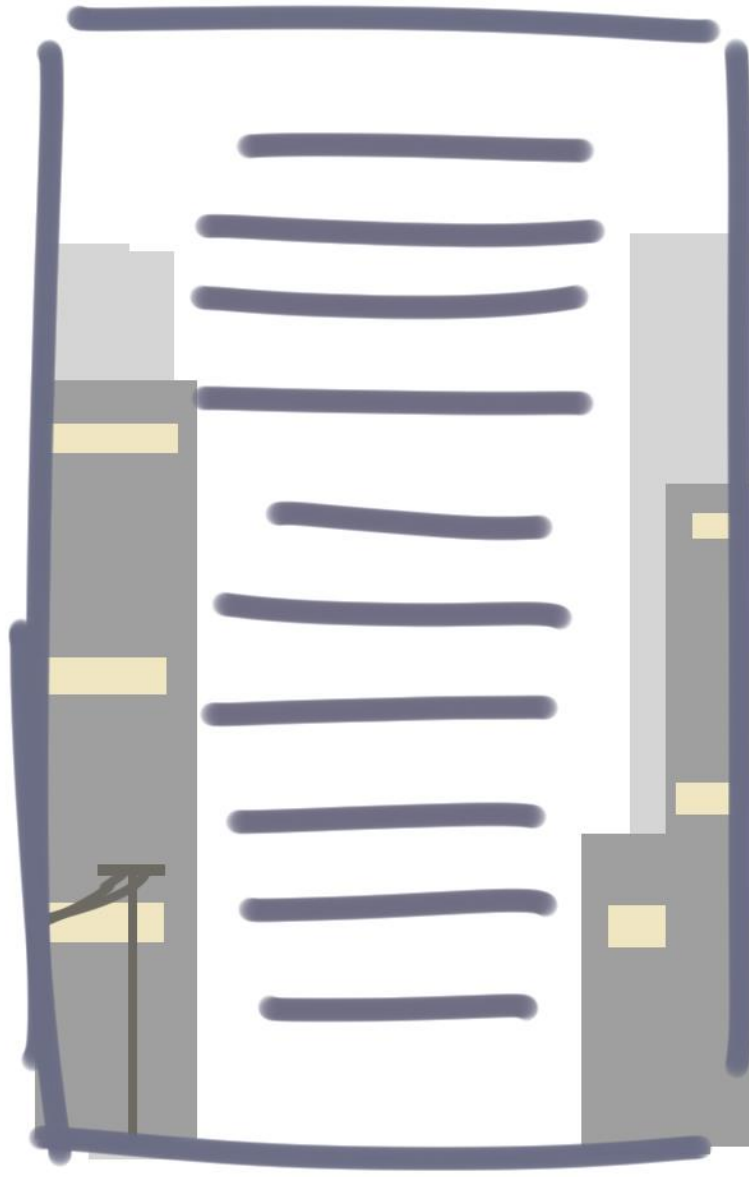
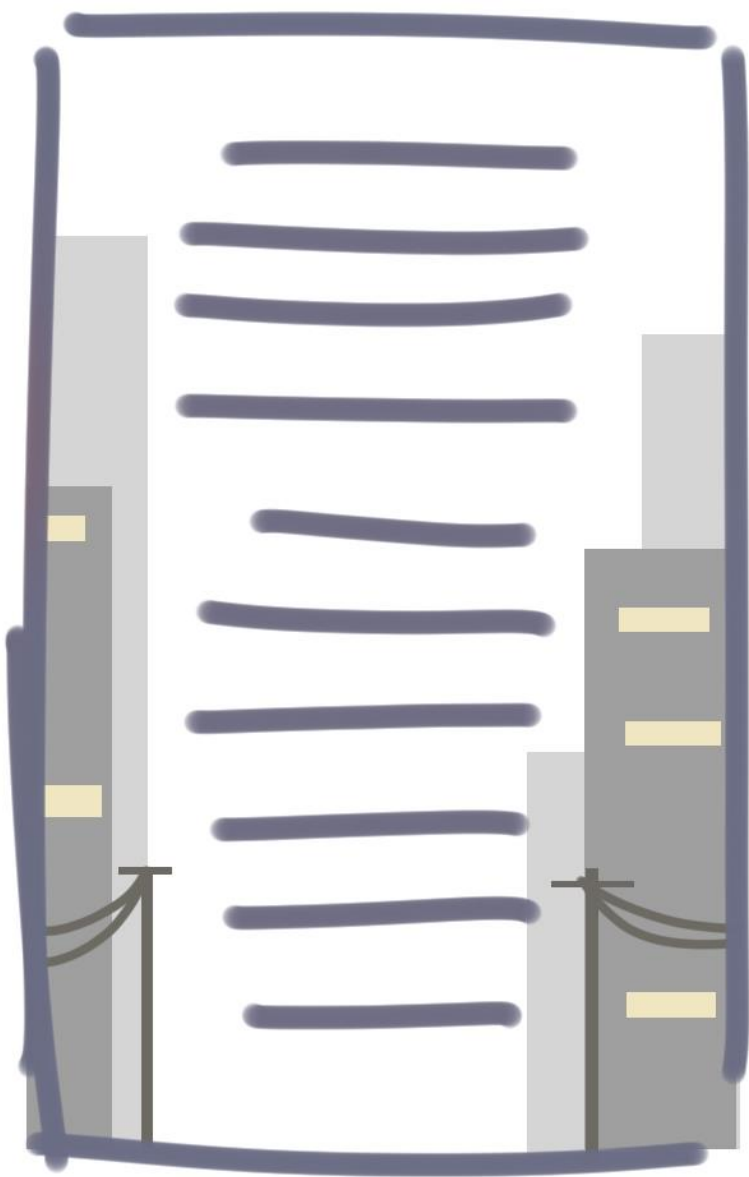


initial sketches







complete studies



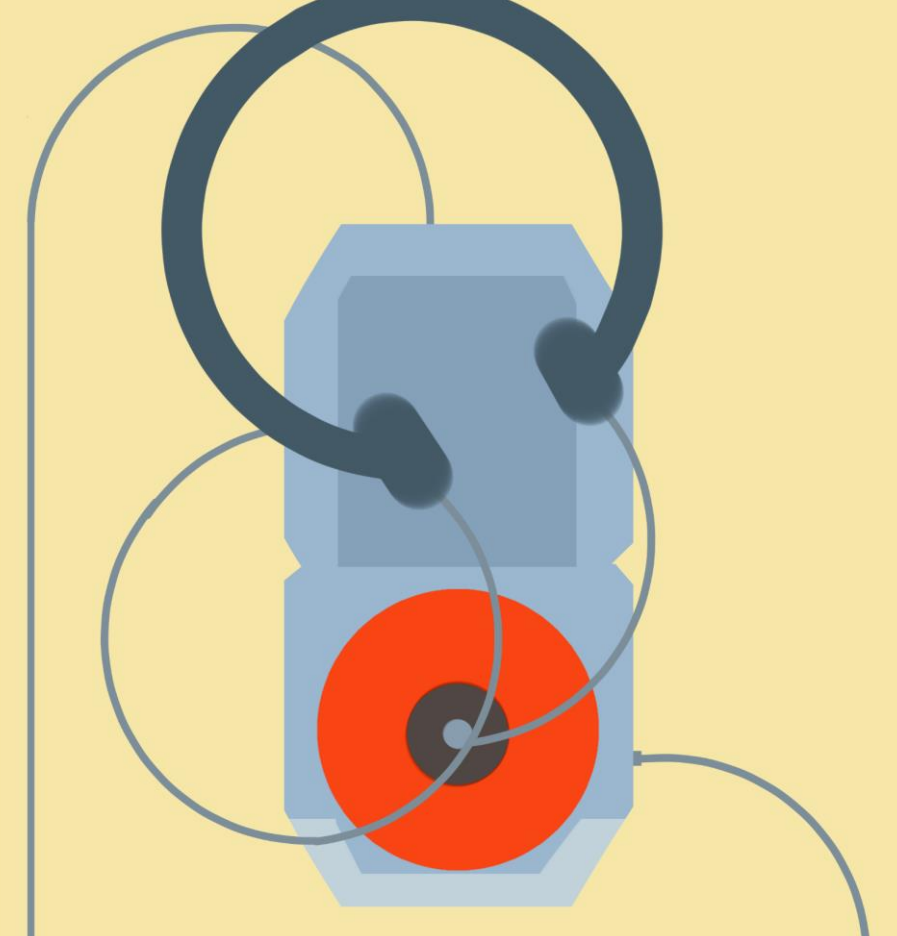
"I'm being serious!" Josiah says, frustrated. "You've seen Groundhog Day, right? It's just like that. I've lived April 19 again for about eleven times now, I think. Only I can tell it's a loop, though, 'cause I remember everything. And you don't. So essentially it's just me stuck in this loop."

"Dude, you're freaking me out. You sure no one spiked that drink?"

"I filled this myself," Josiah tells him, dodging when Tristan tries to swipe the drink away from him. "Come on, believe me. I called you this time 'cause I ran out of options."

Tristan scoffs, opening the car door. "Okay, whatever. Let's go eat somewhere."

"You don't believe me," Josiah sighs. Tristan doesn't say anything as he takes the driver's seat and gives him an expectant look. He gets in.



IF ELSE

Violating the eyes-on-the-road rule for a sec, Tristan whips his head towards him. Josiah leans further back in his seat.

“Yeah, I’m not supposed to know that now.”

“Okay, who told you?”

“No one, ‘cause later in the day you’ll both drop by to give us stuff. And then you’ll stay for a while for dinner,” Josiah goes on and on, ignoring the mild horror on Tristan’s face. “And then, you’ll give me a mixtape. Then you’ll go home, then I’ll try to go to sleep, then as soon as twelve midnight hits I check the time and it’s still April 19.”

“The mixtape,” Tristan repeats, voice hollowed out in shock. It’s Josiah’s turn this time to give him an expectant and rather smug look, but he only looks straight ahead, trying to arrange his thoughts through the empty road.

He swallows. “What were the songs, then?”

“I don’t know. I was going to get my CD player fixed after my flight, right? And you told me to find out for myself.”

Tristan immediately pulls up to the side of the road again, then deflates in front of the steering wheel. He can hear Josiah trying to stifle his laughter, despite being too ashamed to look at him.



IF ELSE

He finds it crazy, almost, that Josiah has been practically alone for the past eleven days, around over two hundred hours — and yet he still seems unfazed. Guilt tugs at the back of Tristan's mind.

“... Hey.”

Josiah spins to face him, although overdoing it a little bit. “What?”

“Does it ever hurt you?” the words fall out before he knows it. “That I don't remember? All the other rounds?”

To Tristan's surprise, he shakes his head almost immediately. “Nah.”

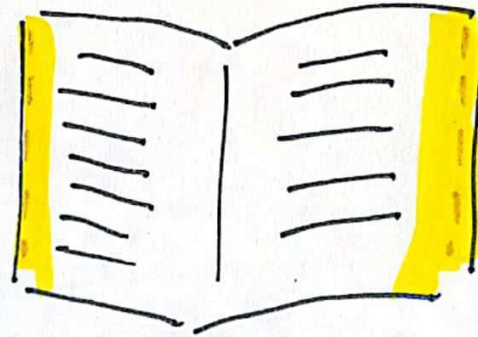
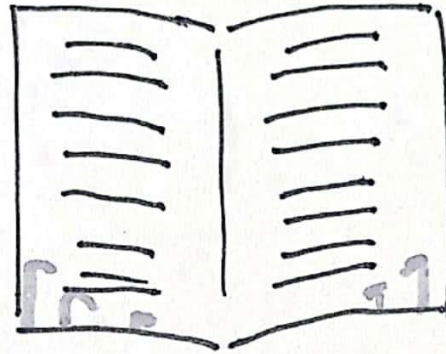
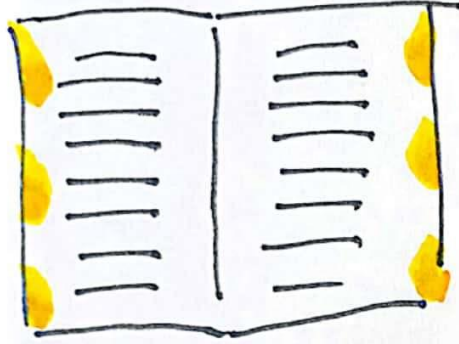
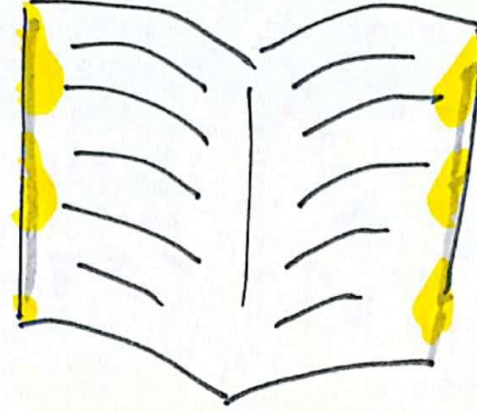
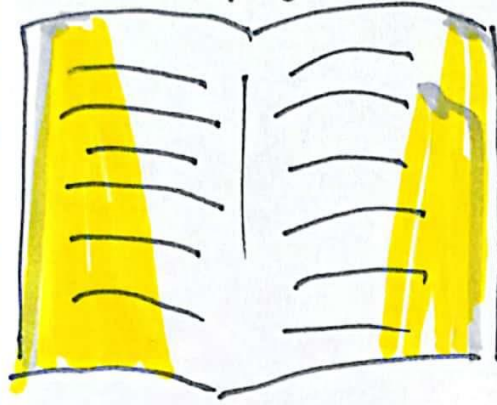
“Huh?”

“I already accepted that you weren't going to remember,” he says so nonchalantly. “My parents too. And Saira. And anyone else I embarrassed myself in front of.”

Tristan blinks, then gazes back to his closet. “Okay, but... regardless if you accepted or not, you'd still feel hurt, wouldn't you?”

“Why are you worrying about that?” Josiah laughs. “I'll be fine, I'll fix this loop soon enough. What matters is that I'll create a satisfactory round, which will be the only thing you'll remember. And I don't mind that.”

inside pages



FRONT COVER

Inspired from the ART DECO movement, I painted the cover art to show rows of repeating streetlights, as if an infinite loop. I chose the colors of yellow, orange, and dark purplish blue to resemble urbanized nightlife.



"This all goes away when it resets later, huh."

"Mhm."

"So, if I said anything outlandish now, it wouldn't matter, would it?"

"It wouldn't to you," Josiah tells him. Tristan notices that his eyes seem to be smiling. "But I'd still remember it. I'd probably laugh at you in the next round 'cause of it and you wouldn't know why."

It's a bittersweet smile.

"Okay that's mean," he chuckles, leaning his head on the edge of the bed. "Let's leave the existential stuff for now."

05:48 AM

They wake up several hours later, just shortly after the sun rises. Tristan sees the bedroom door open and hears his mother's voice downstairs.

"I already told Josiah's parents where he is," she says as he reaches the ground floor, browsing through the channels on their TV. "Tell him to call

them when he wakes up."

"Alright, thanks Ma." he takes his seat beside her. The couch is just enough for three, but sometimes he takes the floor when both his parents and best friend are over. "It'll probably be another hour until he actually wakes up, though."

"How is he going to survive college with a sleeping schedule like that?"

"I mean, I'm pretty sure he can schedule his own classes there."

"He's really lucky," his mother says. "Studying overseas? For free? There's no wonder he chose that over staying here with you."

"Don't word it like that," Tristan immediately retorts, earning a laugh from his mother. "Besides, it's not like he had to choose. And we'll still be in contact. People use emails now, Ma."

"Hmmm, sure. But you've both been attached since you were kids. You might think you can handle the separation, but you might end up sadder than you expect when he's actually gone."

For the inside pages I kept it simple, prioritizing readability to let the story speak for itself.

I opted for a light background this time for contrast from the cover. The borders are based on the streetlights from the cover.

For this story, sections are divided unequally and aren't indicated by chapter titles, but rather the time of the day. I indicated those through a header showing the time.

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BACK COVER

Following the ART DECO theme of the front cover, I went on a more simple and formal approach to be able to highlight the text. The header is a quote from the story. I made the borders elaborate for decoration, but also to achieve an infinite mirror effect for the inner and outer borders.

“YEAH... I’M STUCK
IN A TIME loop.”

It is summer in the year 1998, and it’s one of those
midnights where two boys hop on one of their fa-
thers’ cars and take a short drive around urban
Manila.

To Tristan, it’s his last day with his best friend. To
Josiah, it’s his eleventh time reliving that day.

Trapped in the summer that takes place before the
world eventually moves too fast for them to catch
up, two friends attempt to dig up their deep-seated
regrets — even if it means an inevitable goodbye.

Why ART DECO?

The story, titled **if else**, is set in a Filipino city during the 90s. It follows Tristan and his best friend Josiah who reveals to him that he's trapped in a time loop. Both of them navigate through the day as Tristan tries to help Josiah break out of it while dealing with struggles of growing up, the knowledge that they'll separate, and the fear of being left behind in the future.

Therefore I felt that the ART DECO movement, one that was formed as a reaction to new technologies and industrialization during the time period it was conceived, would fit the story well by highlighting the themes of having to await the future. I also saw the geometric and materialistic nature of the movement as bit of a precursor to corporate art and design, which matches well to the urbanized setting and the multiple mentions and references to retro technology and computer science in the story. And lastly, the repetitive-for-convenience aspect represents the time loop premise of the story best for me.

revised covers as of June 2025

