PIXIE DUST

Introduction

As you may or may not know, I make my living coloring pictures. Most of my work is done on a commission basis for private clients, but sometimes I also put my drawings up for auction.

Auction work is different than commission work. With a commission I'm getting top dollar for every piece, but with an auction things are less certain. An auction piece might sell for low or high. It's hard to tell, and that uncertainty carries risk. It's risky to spend ten hours on a drawing that may sell at auction for less than a hundred dollars.

So when I entered the auction market I new I had to find a way to make high quality color pictures in a short amount of time with reduced labor and materials. To accomplish this goal I developed a hybrid color system, and today I'm going to share that system with you!

Now, I know you probably color for the satisfaction and not the money, but the system I developed will save you both time and money spent on coloring materials. And hey, who couldn't use a little more time and money? So sit back, relax, and let me show you a whole new way to color your images.

Copic Colors Used For The Class Page

(Refer to the color conversion chart for non Copic alternatives.)

	W3	BV00	RV11	YR24
E00	W6		RV17	
E13		B01		Y11
E31	V20	B28	R02	Y21
E25	V17	B66	R08	
				G40

Chapter One:
Coloring The Base Colors

Important: Please watch the chapter one video *before* beginning this class!

For this class I'll be using a black and white line drawing, but rather than laying in my base colors with traditional media like markers or colored pencils, I'll be doing the entire base color process on the computer.

Now don't worry, if you don't have a computer coloring program such as Photoshop or a free program such as Gimp, it's no problem! I've provided both a black and white line drawing and a pre-colored base coloring drawing with this class.

The point of this chapter is not so much for you to follow along, rather the point here is to show you a new technique that you can use to speed up the coloring time and reduce the cost of coloring materials used on any coloring page you make.

If you do choose to try this technique on this or any other coloring page, you should familiarize yourself with the basic tools you will use most often. These tools are nearly universally available even in free software you can find online.

Color Picker

Usually a field of color ranging from light to dark and pure to dull. You select the colors you want to use with this tool.

Paint Bucket

A tool for filling entire areas with color with a single click.

Eye Dropper

A tool for selecting colors you already used for use again in other areas of the work.

Magnifying Glass

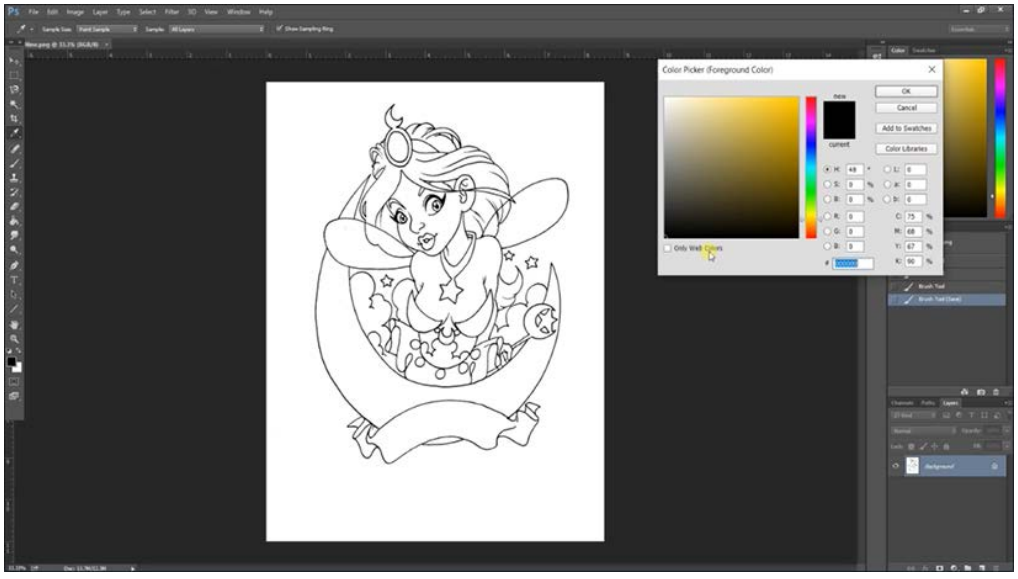
A tool for zooming in and out on an image while you work.

For a complete discussion of these tools and how to use them, be sure to watch the video before beginning this class.

For this demonstration I'll be using Adobe Photoshop CC. In this program the tools we will be using are located on the left. That little yellow circle between the tool bar and the image is the cursor, and the color field in the upper right corner is the color picker field. I've opened the line drawing in Photoshop and am ready to start laying in the base colors.

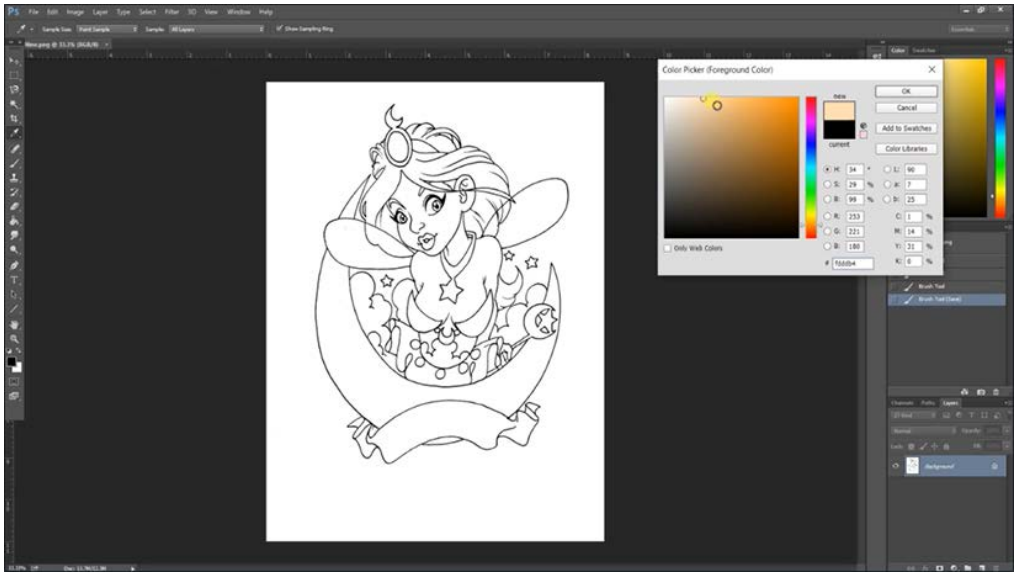
Notice that the yellow circle has moved to the bottom part of the tool bar on the left.

I click there..



...to bring up the color selection box.

I move the slider on the color bar to orange...

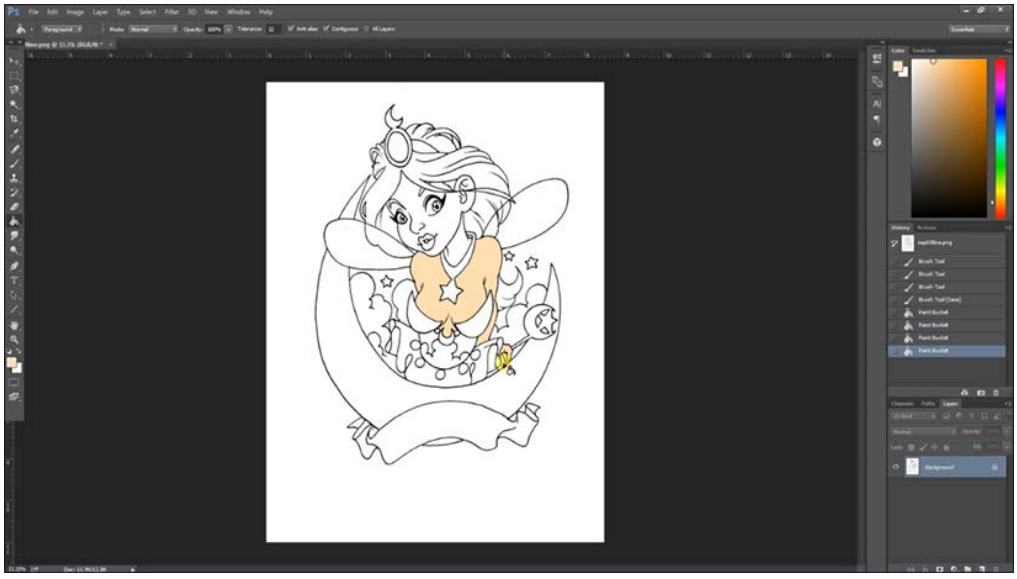


...then select a flesh color along the top portion of the color field and hit "OK".

With the cursor back over on the tool bar I select the paint bucket tool.

I move the cursor to her chest area and click...

...to fill in that area with the selected flesh color.



Continuing with the paint bucket, I fill her hand...

...and her neck.

I move the paint bucket tool to her face and click to fill, but there's a problem!

Notice how the flesh color has "leaked" into her hair and into the white area of her eye!

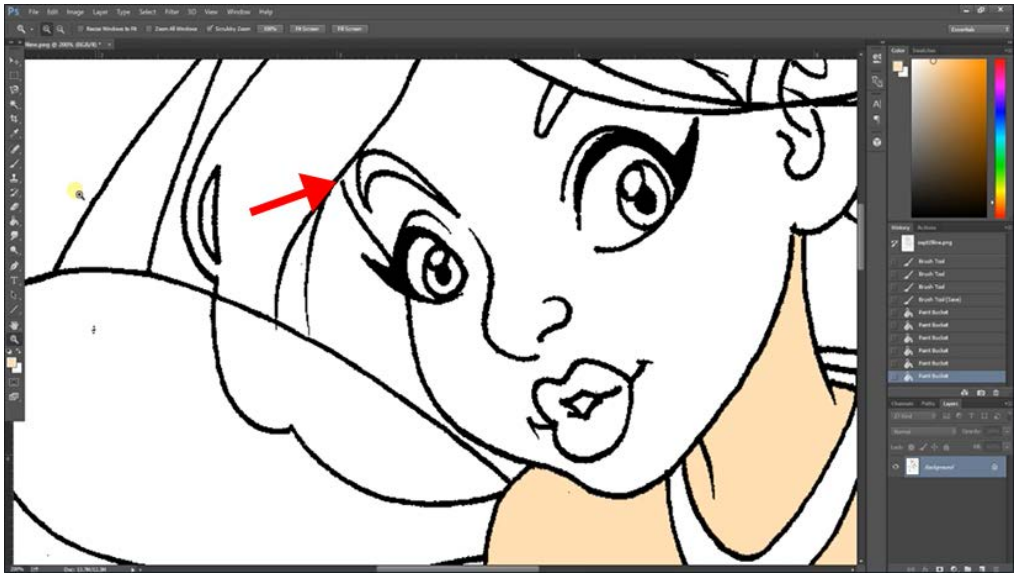
Color leaks like this are cause by breaks in the line work. In this case there is a small space between the line of her forehead and the line of her hair.

To undo the last color fill, I click on "edit" at the top of the work space...

...and then click "undo paint bucket"....

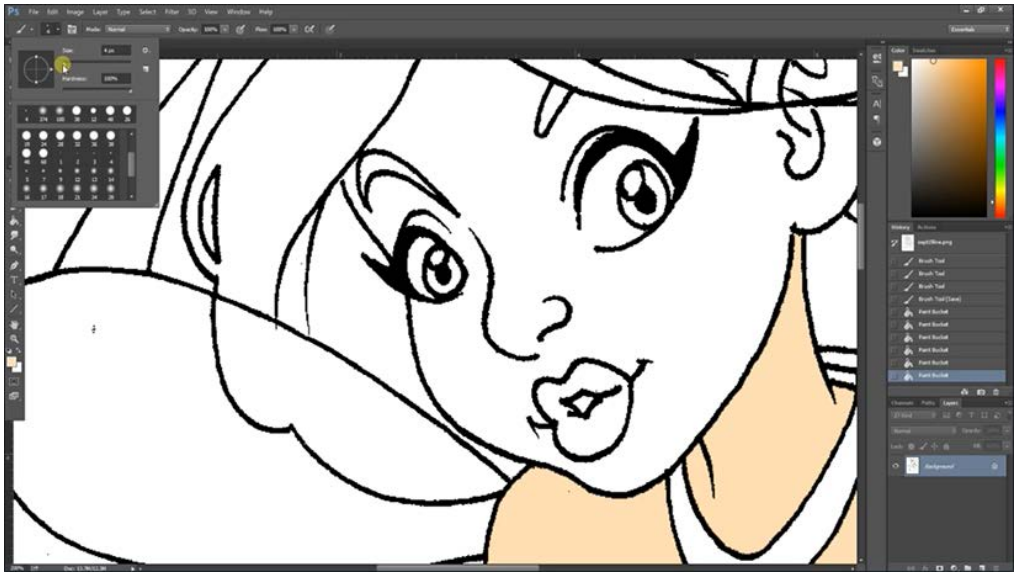
...which undoes the color fill on her face.

Now notice the cursor on the lower potion of the tool bar. I select the "magnifying glass".

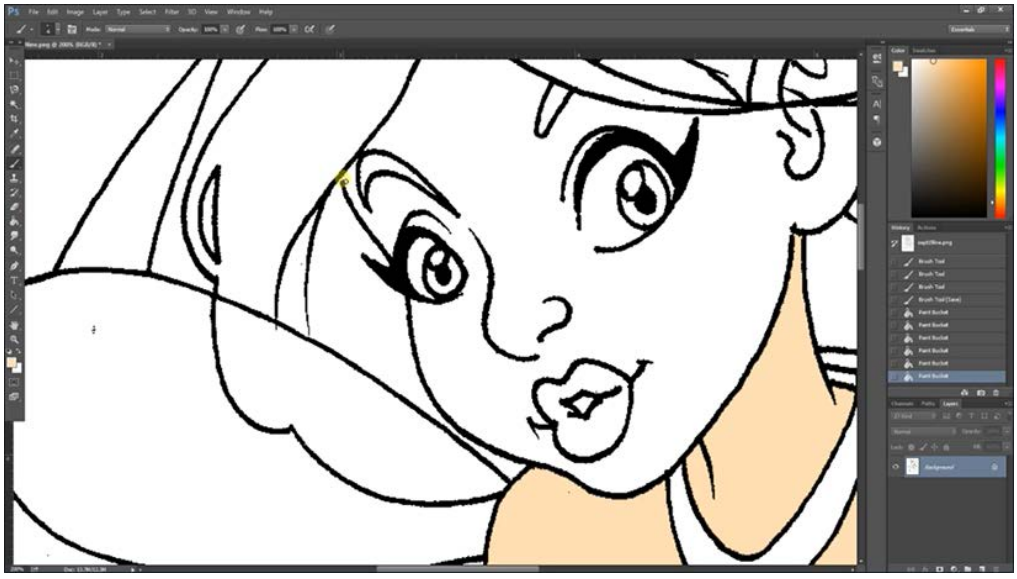


I then enlarge the image by clicking on it until it reaches a size big enough to see the gap in the line work.

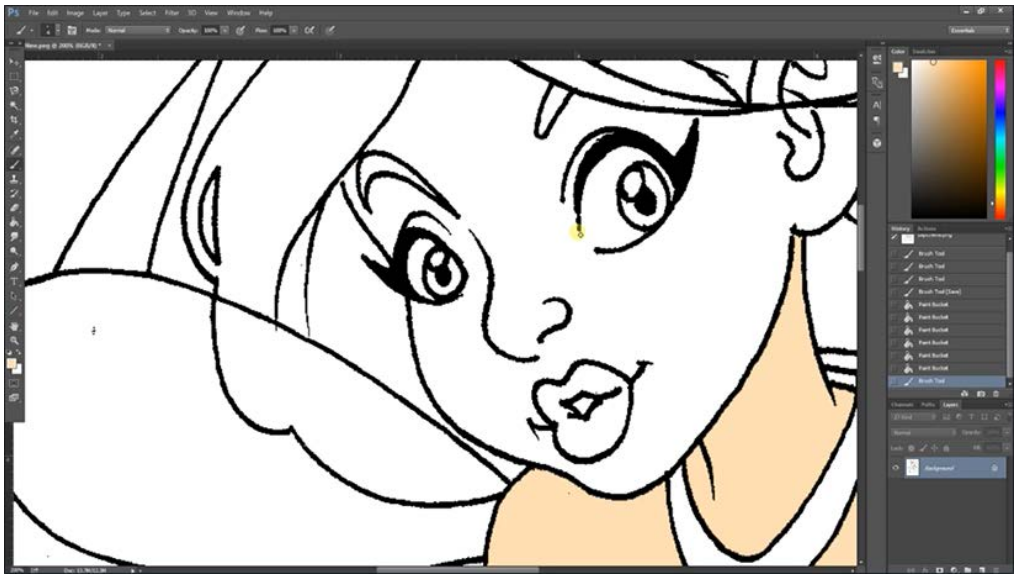
With the cursor back on the tool bar I select the "brush" tool.



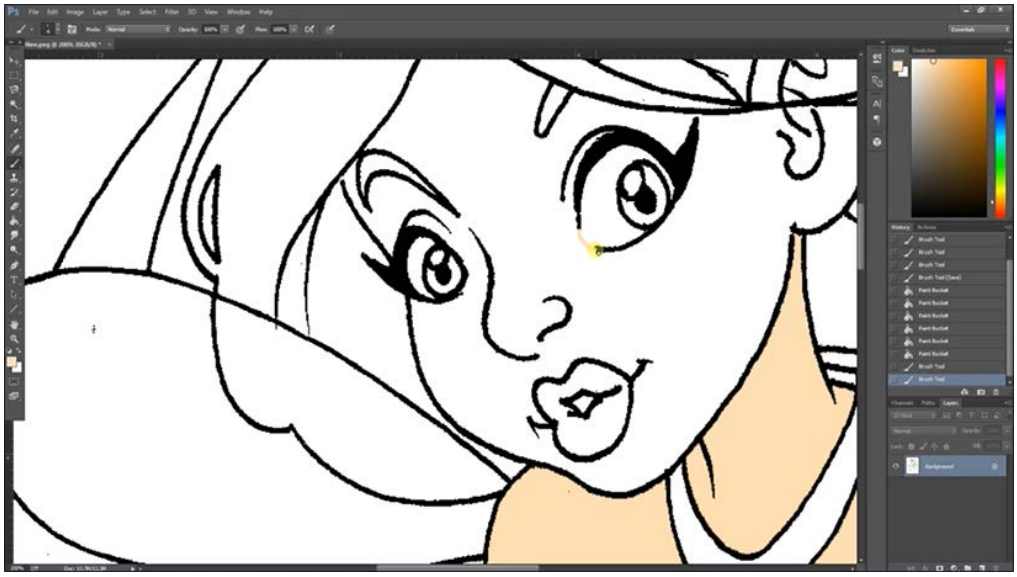
I adjust the size of the brush to be very small.



I then fill in the gap with the skin color chosen earlier.



Continuing with the brush tool I "close off" her eye...



...by connecting the lines of her upper and lower lashes.

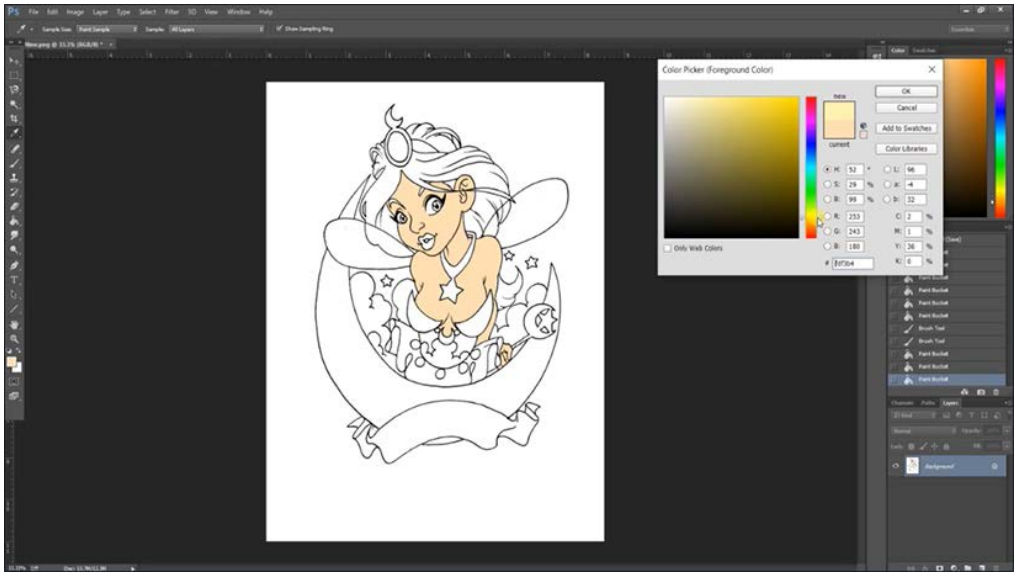
With the line work closed up I zoom back out and move my cursor to the tool bar to select the paint bucket tool...

...and fill the face again, this time with no leaks!

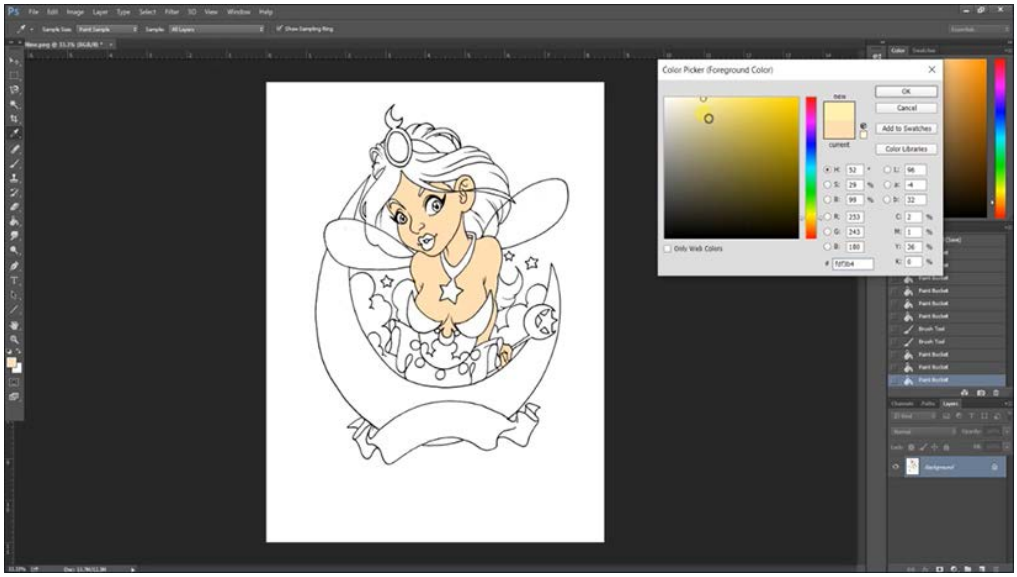
Continuing with the paint bucket I fill the top of her ear...

...and the rest of her forehead.

We have completed the flesh colored base colors. We can now repeat the basic process to add base colors to the other areas.



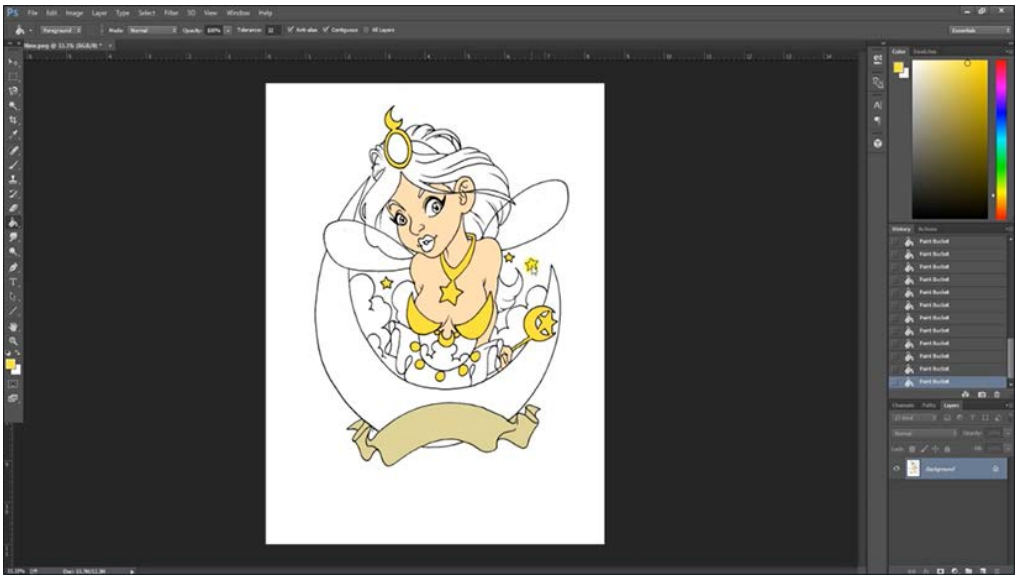
Step One - Open the color picker and slide the bar to select a hue.



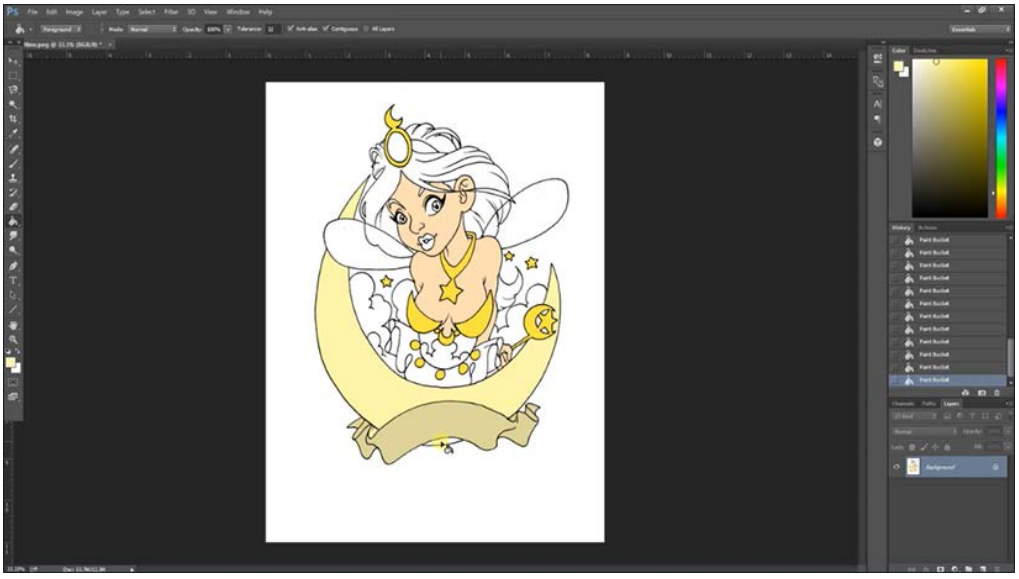
Step Two - Choose the appropriate color at the right value and saturation from the color field.

Step Three - Fill the chosen area with color.

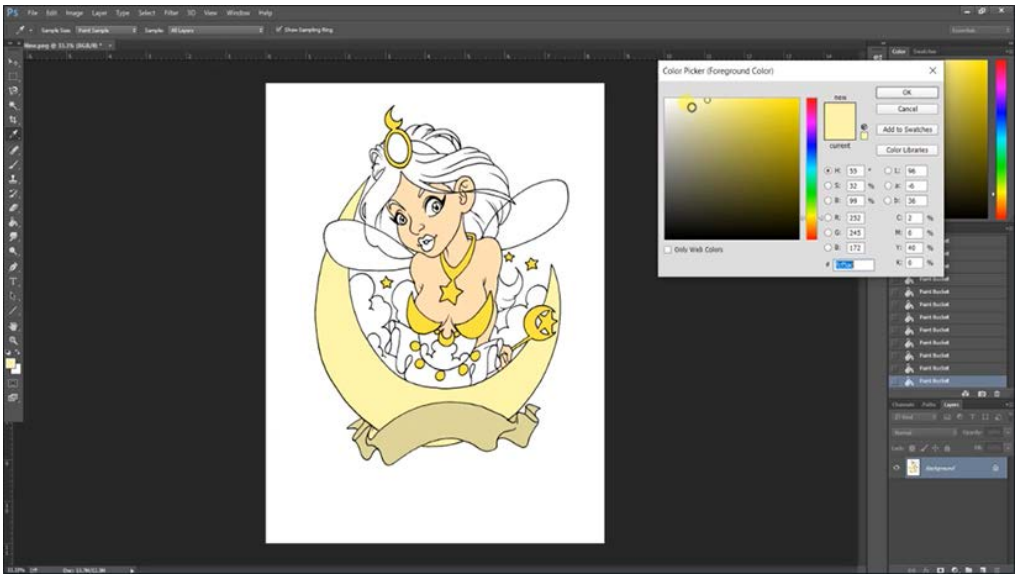
Easy peasy.



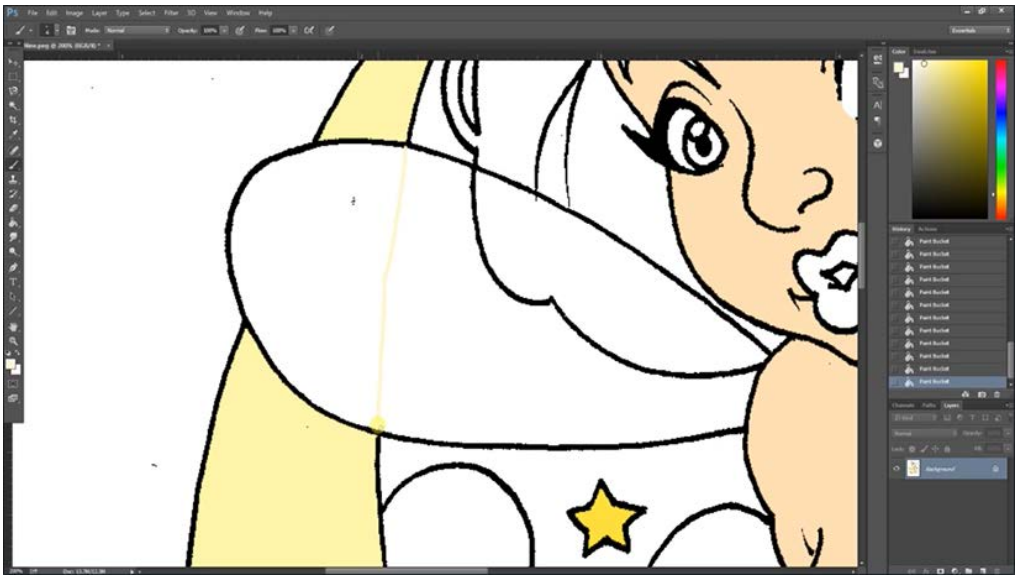
Gold base colors...



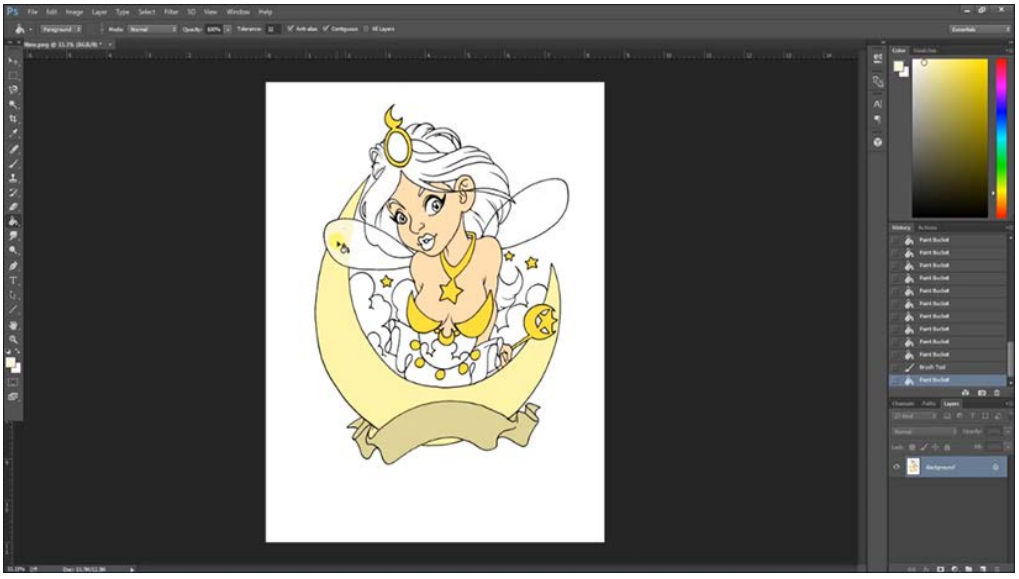
...and a light yellow for the moon.



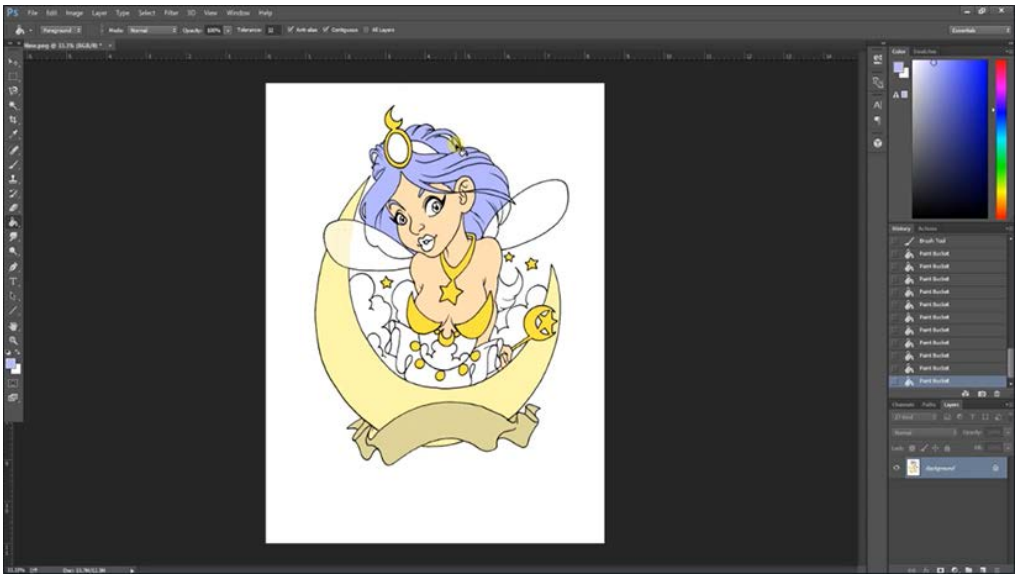
Now here's the fun part! I want to make her wings look transparent, so we need to see the moon through her wings! So I pick a slightly lighter yellow than I used on the moon...



...then enlarge the image with the magnifying glass, and connect the lines of the moon through her wing.

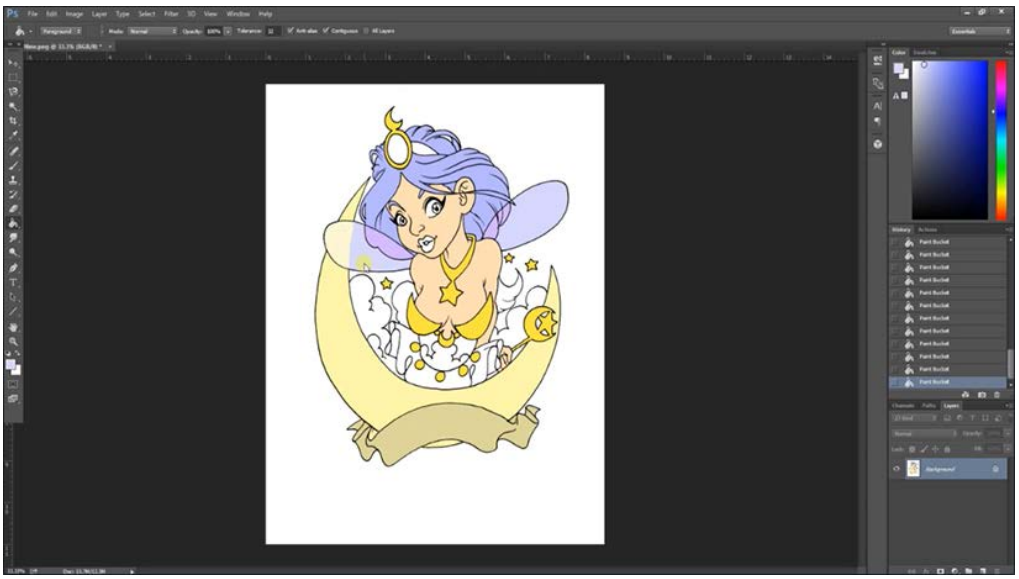


I zoom back out and then fill in the space with the lighter yellow using my paint bucket tool.

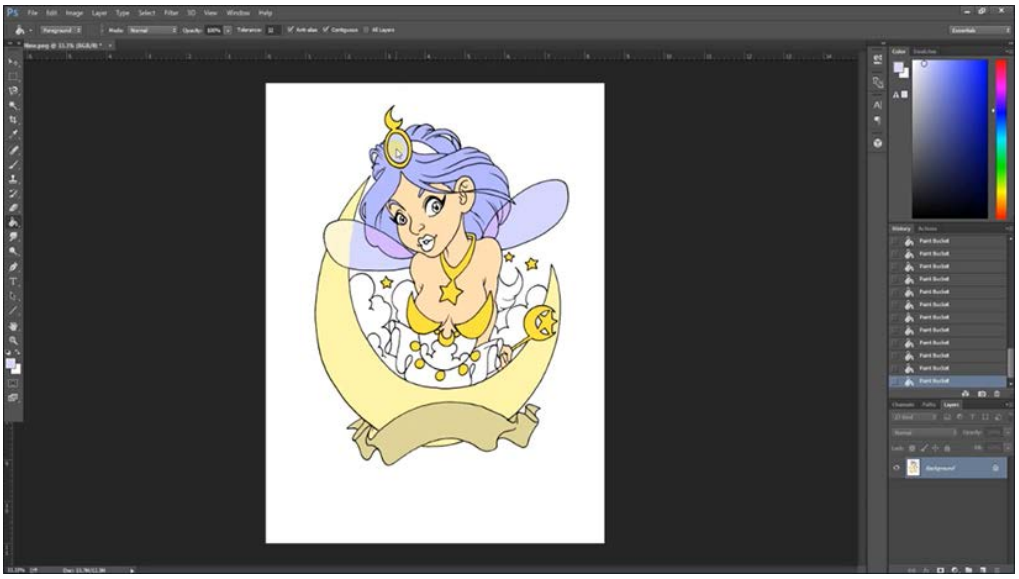


Using the paint bucket and a light blue, I fill in her hair and eyebrows.

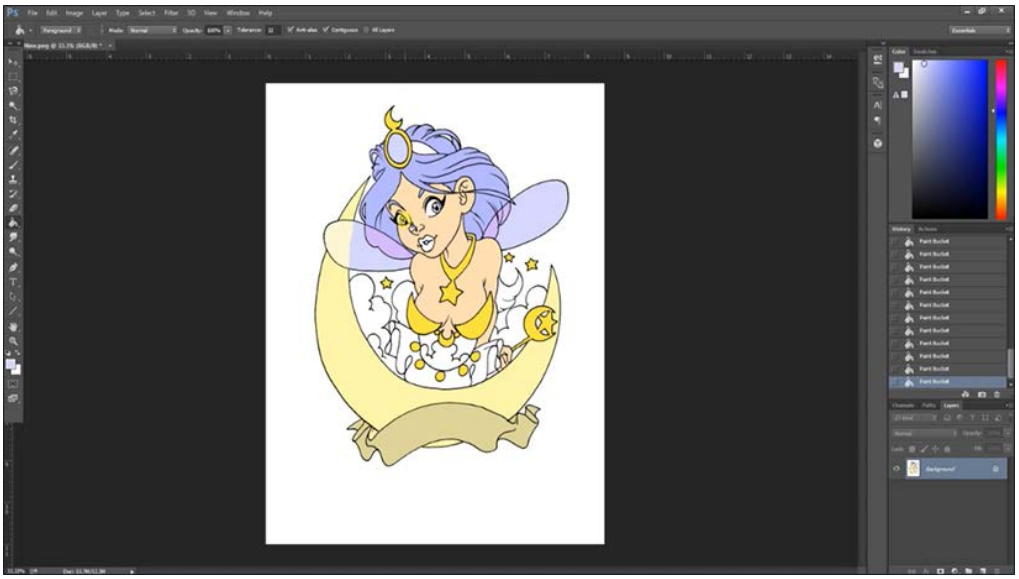
I change the color to a light blue-purple and fill the hair that can be seen through her wings.



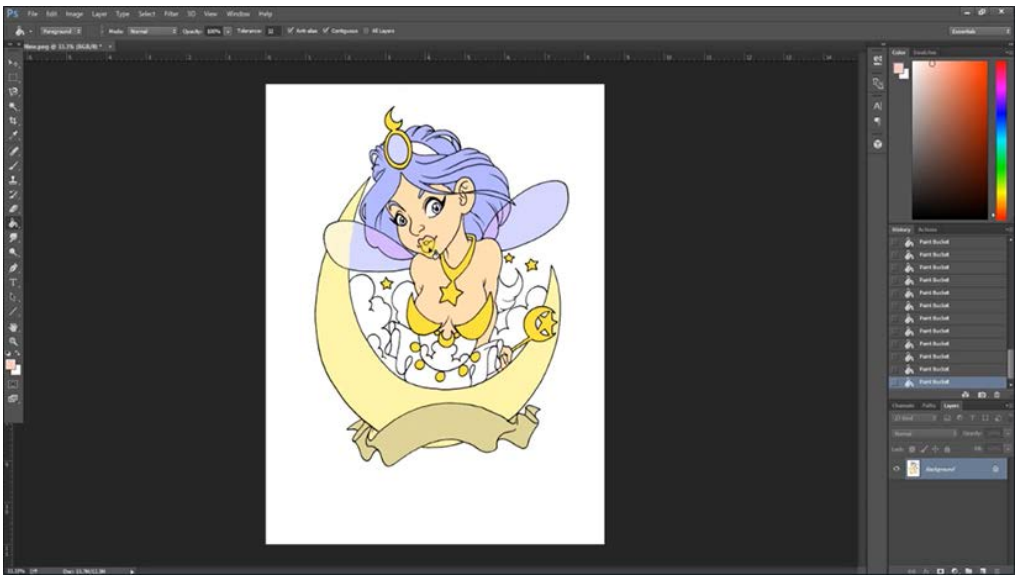
I add a very light blue to her wings...



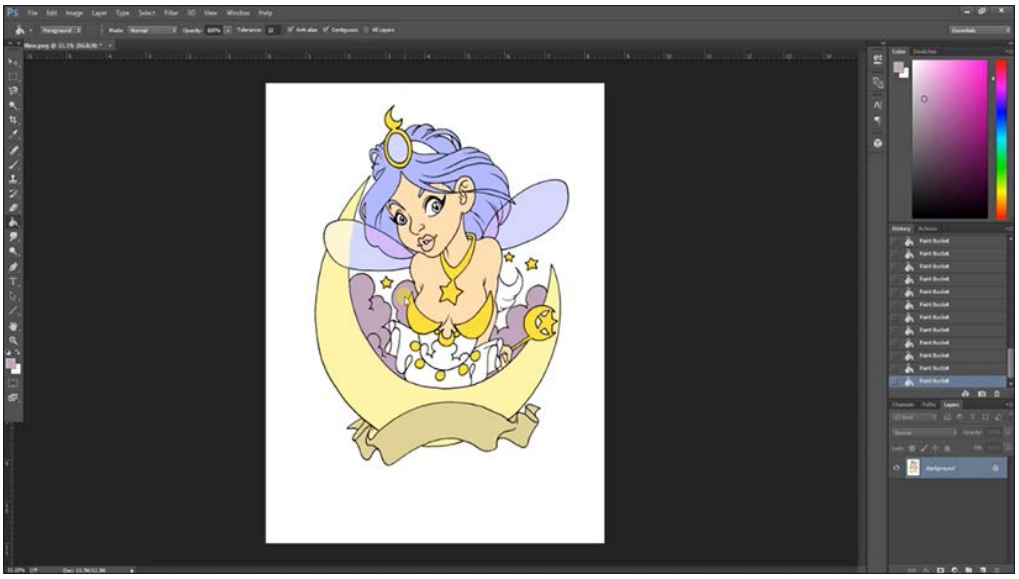
...and use the same light blue for the stone in her headband...



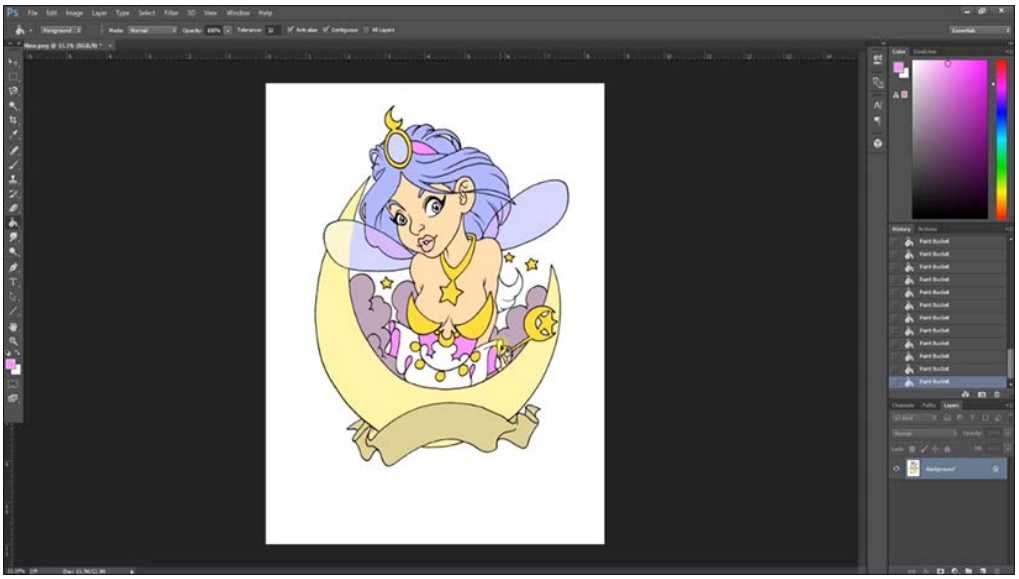
...and the irises of her eyes.



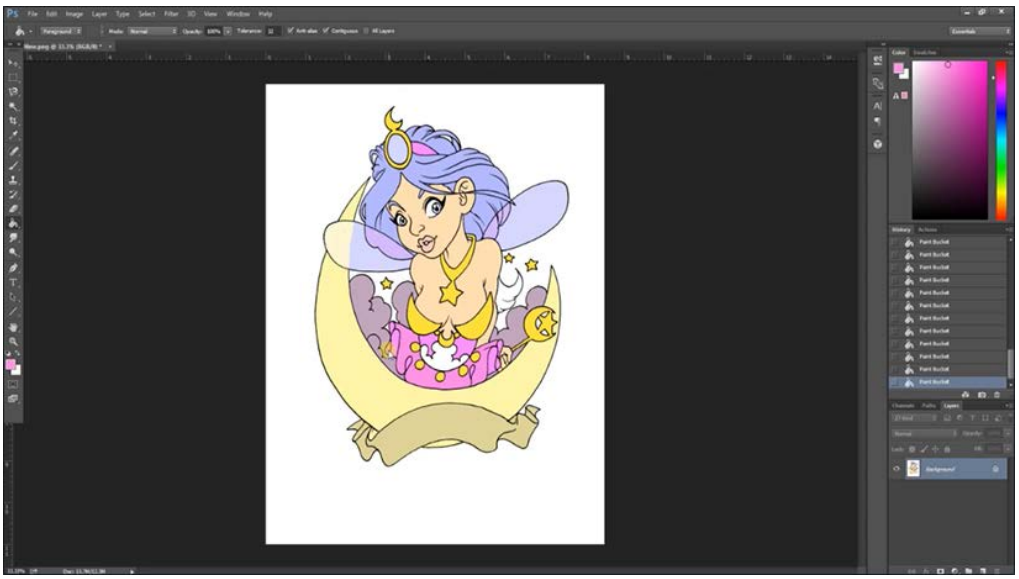
I add pink to her lips. (If you look up at the color field in the upper right corner you can see which color I've selected.



I then add a desaturated purple to the clouds. (Again, check out the color box.)

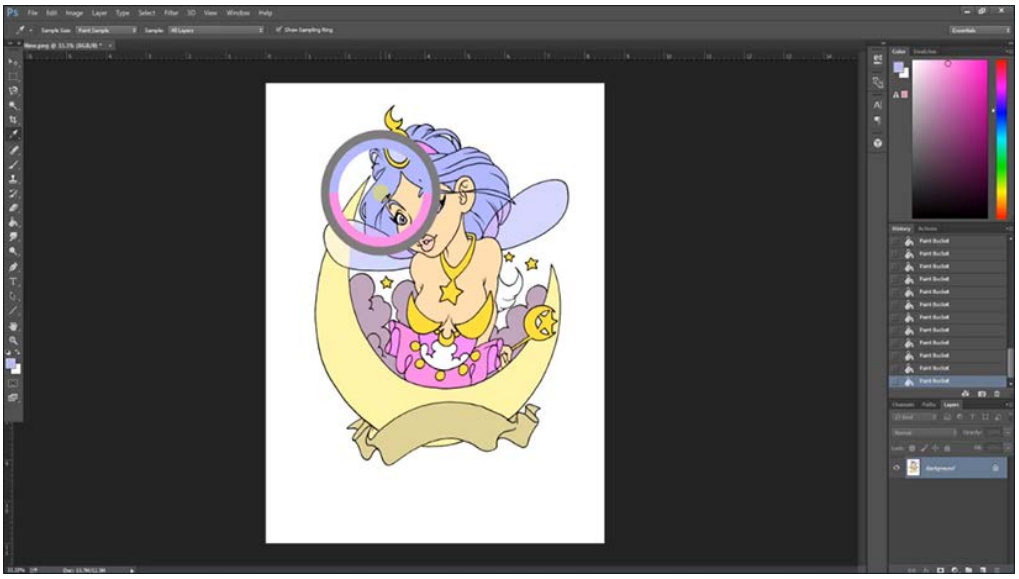


I add a clean light purple to her dress and hair band...

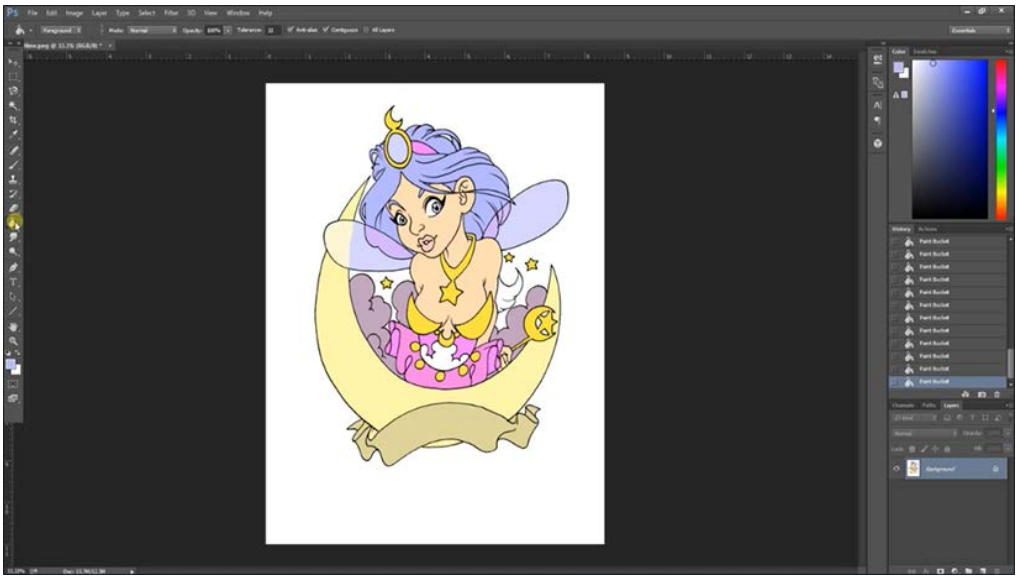


...and then add a slightly redder purple to her skirt.

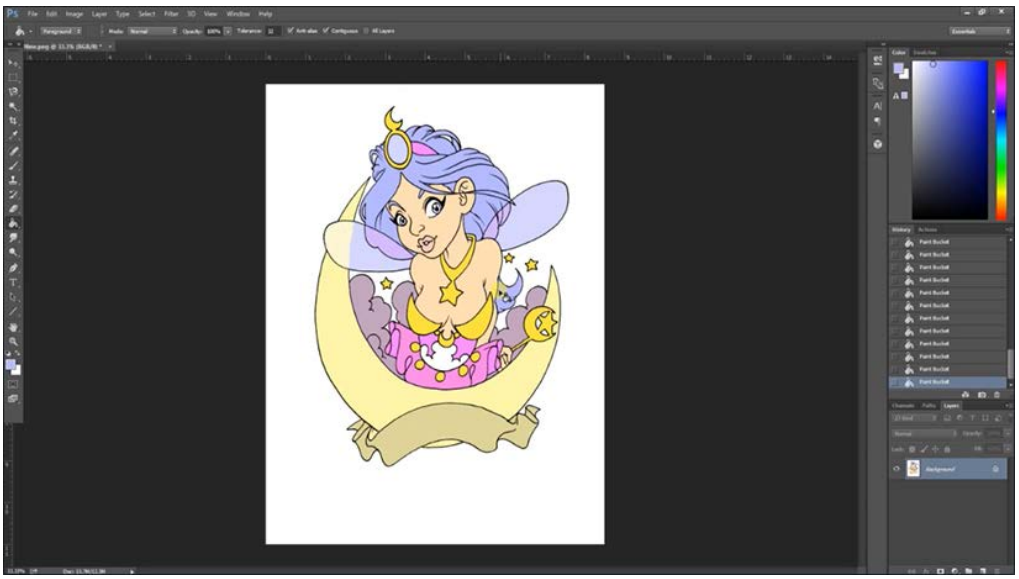
If you look carefully you'll notice I missed a few things. For example, there's a little bit of hair over on the right...



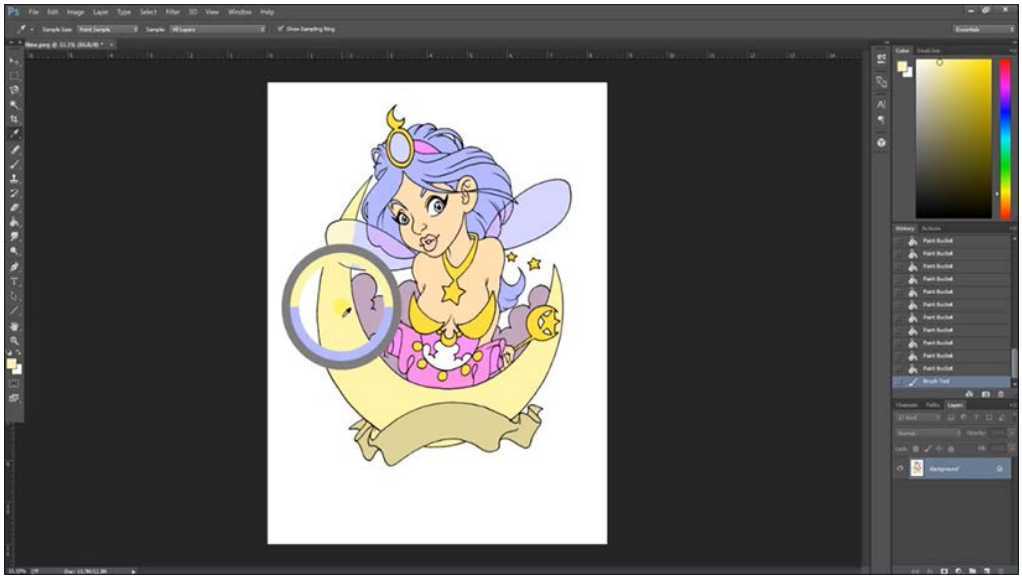
I select the "eyedropper" tool from the tool bar and then click on an area of her hair that has already been colored to select exactly the same color blue.



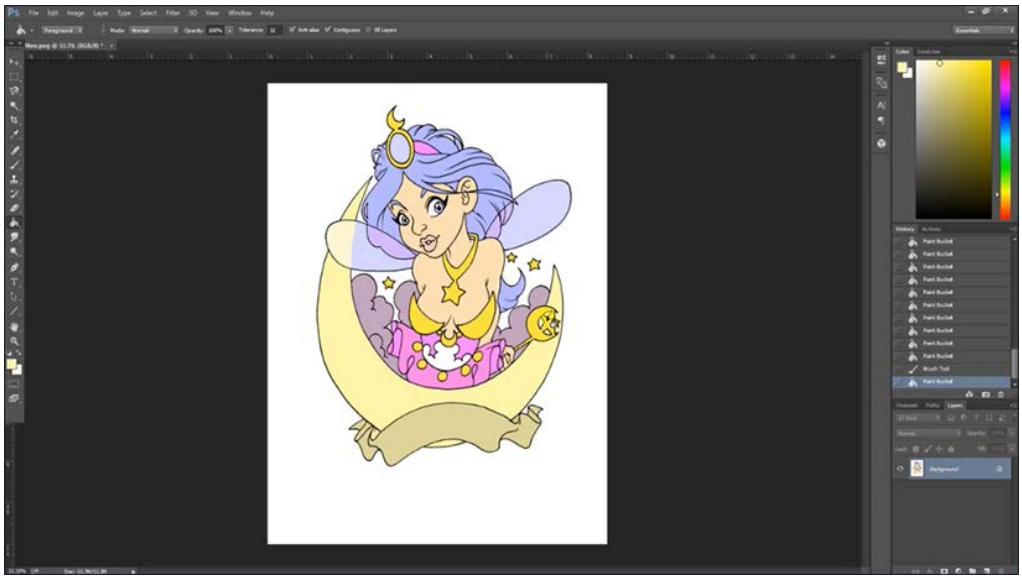
I then switch to the paint bucket...



...and fill the missed area of hair with exactly the right color!



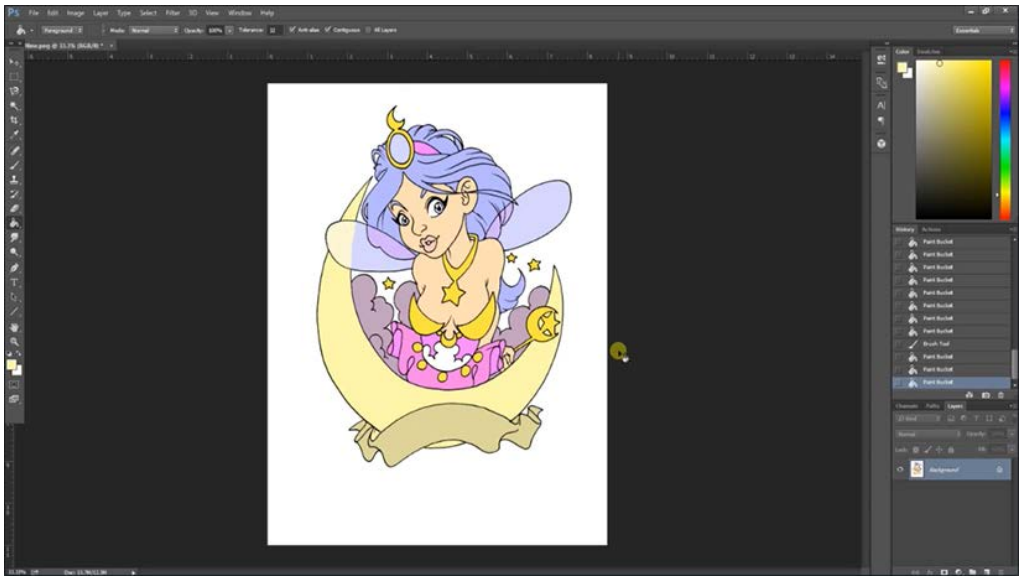
Using the eyedropper tool again, I select the yellow of the moon.



I then fill in the small areas I missed around the wand.

The base colors are complete, now all I have to do is print this out on my preferred coloring paper.

Now, you may be saying to yourself, "Man, that feels like a lot of work!" It's really not. It may seem difficult the first few times but once you get the hang of it it's a real time and money saver! It took me less than 10 minutes to add the base colors for this lesson. It would have taken at least 30 to do the same thing with markers. Plus the computer colors won't mix or "lift" when markers or pencils are colored over them which makes color blending a breeze!



All in all, I love this technique and I use it almost daily in my personal work!

Chapter Two:
Rendering The Image

With the base colors in place and our image printed out in high quality on our favorite coloring paper, we can now begin the rendering process.

I begin by accentuating the edges of the form with E13...

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

E13

After the E13.

I add E25 accents around the eyes, nose, and corners of the mouth...

...in the ears... (E25)

...and under the chin and jaw. (E25)

I then accent the arms. (E25)

After the E25.

I soften the E25 with E13.

After the E13.

I add R02 to the tip of the nose, between the eyes, and on the cheeks.

Continuing with the R02...

R02

After the R02.

I do a heavy blend layer of E00 over all the flesh areas...

E00

After the E00.

I restate some of the darker accents with E25...

E25

After the E25.

I add touches of B66 to the irises.

I then "shape" the eyeballs with W3.

I add R08 to the lips.

After the R08.

I then soften the R08 with R02.

After the R02.

I add RV11 to the cheeks and jawline.

I restate my dark accents in the body with E25.

I then add form to the hair with B66.

I add B66 accents to the stone on her headband...

B66

I then soften the B66 with B01...

B01

I add hair strokes with B28.

After the B28.

I then soften again with B01.

After the B01.

I add G40 "cools" to her face around the eyes, under the bottom lip, and along her jawline.

After the G40.

I then add YR24 accents to her jewelry, bra, and wand.

I darken the bottom edge of the moon with YR24.

I then blend the edges of the YR24 with Y21...

Y21

I blend the Y21 with Y11...

Y11

I add E25 accents to the areas I colored with YR24...

E25

I then soften the E25 with YR24.

I add V17 to the bodice of her dress...

...to the folds of her skirt... (V17)

...and to her headband. (V17)

After the V17.

I then soften the V17 with V20...

V20

V20

I add RV17 to her skirt.

After the RV17.

I then soften the RV17 with RV11.

I add RV17 shadows under the little gold "balls".

Getting close :)

I add V20 accents to the clouds.

I then soften the V20 with BV00.

I use E13 on the banner at the bottom...

...then soften the E13 with E31.

I add W6 accents to the clouds.

I then use the W6 to create a "drop shadow" along the bottom part of the image.

I soften the drop shadow with W3.

Now all we have left is the lettering.

Using the flat chisel end of my E25 marker, I write in the word "NIGHT".

Now we are ready for highlights.

Chapter Three:
Adding Highlights

With the image more or less rendered we can now add our highlights.

I'll be using white gouache to finish off the image.

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

White Gouache

Ta da! Our image is complete! One thing that should seem perfectly clear to you after this class is how easy blending into printed base colors actually is. In my experience the over colors nearly "melt" into the base colors! We also used fewer colors over all and less ink, and I'm guessing you finished this one in no time at all! The coolest part is that the resulting image is still a one of a kind, hand colored original! We just didn't have to work quite as hard to get there :)

So tell me... what do you think?

Until next time...
Christopher Kerry