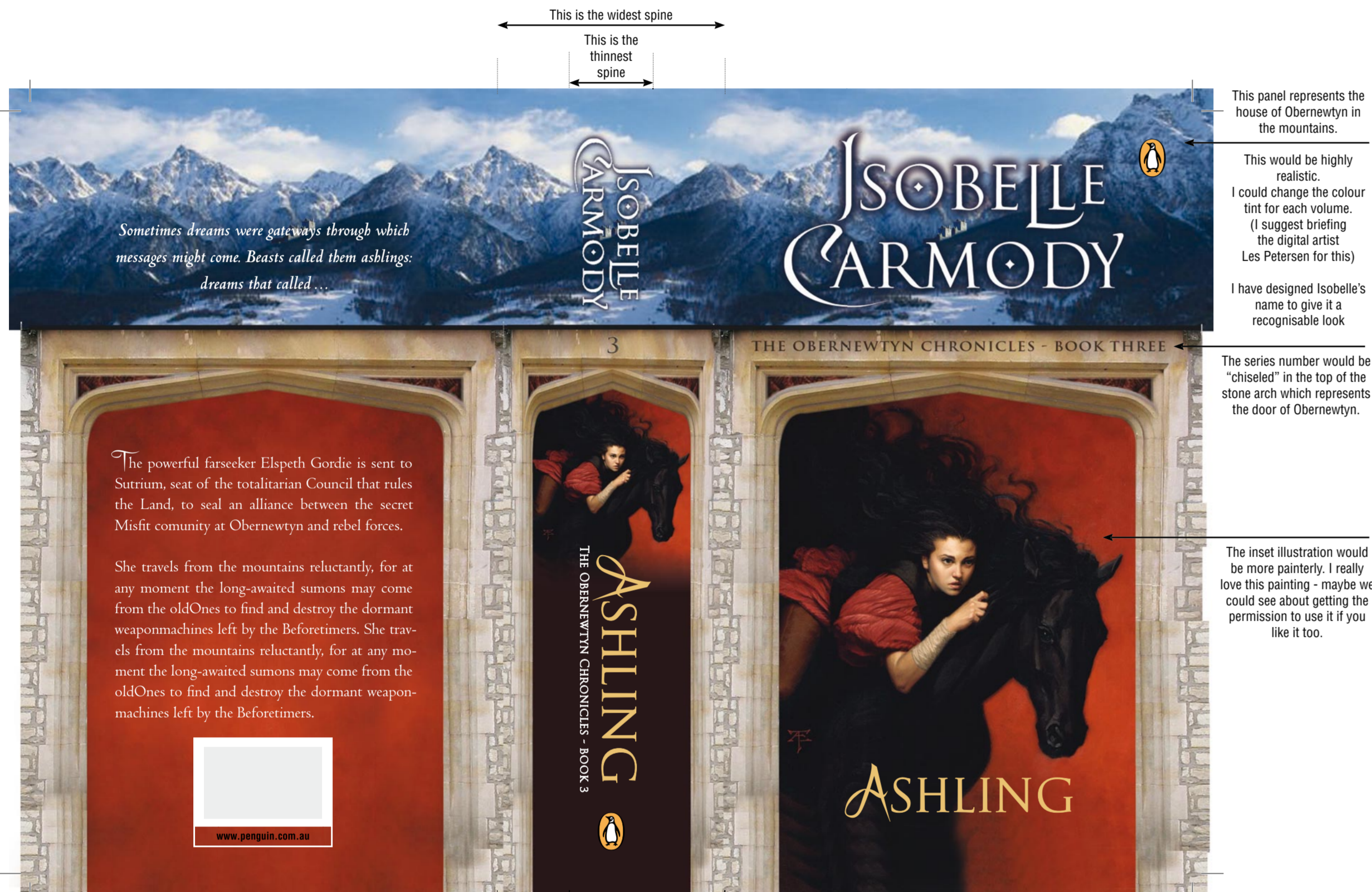
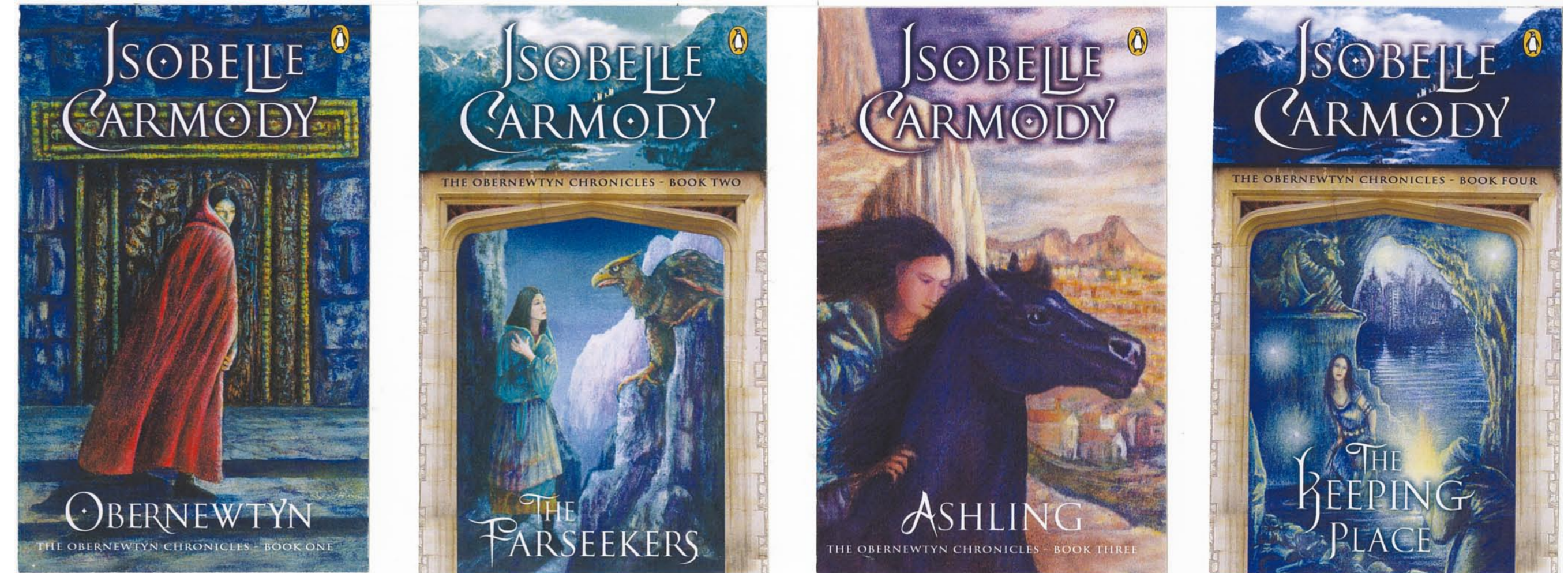


Concept roughs for the Obernewtyn series

In true publishing style I was given a tight budget and deadline! First I came up with a traditional border design for the series look and placed existing illustrations in it. Either the illustrations could be a filler until I commissioned an original illustration or we could consider purchasing the rights to use these paintings. I thought that the border could be realistic and the inset illustration painterly. I had to make the series design work with a spine width which varied from 18mm - 60mm. I worked on creating a individual style of typography for the author's name. It is basically the font 'Cresci' with flourishes added in Adobe Illustrator. The typography was approved.

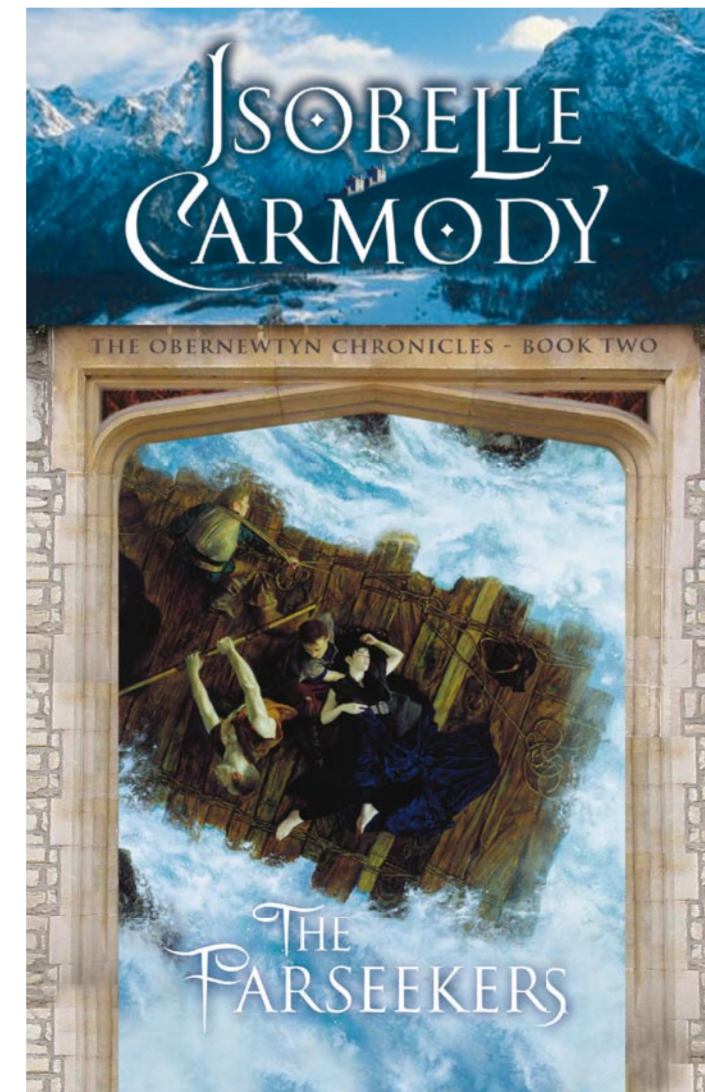
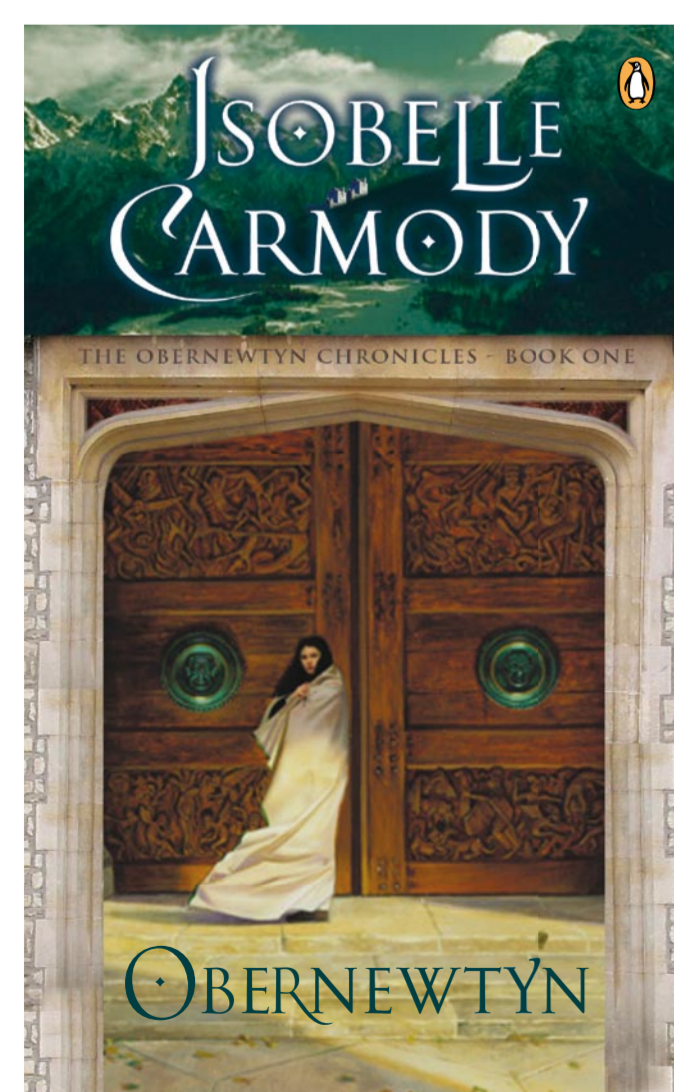
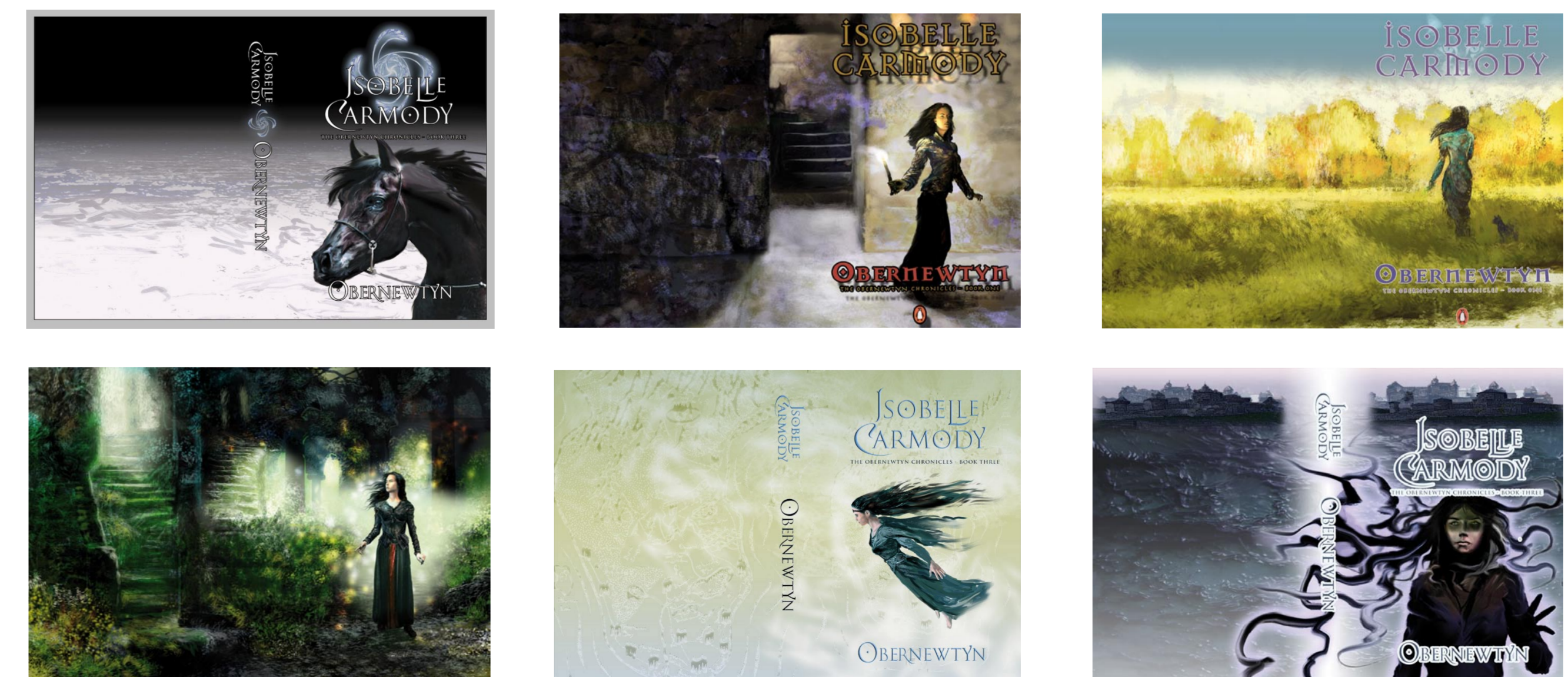
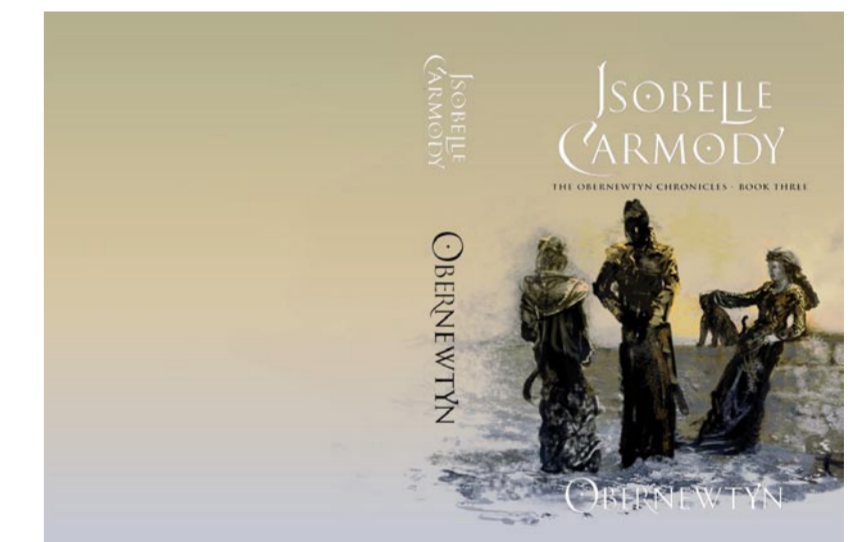


I design in either of two ways: Firstly I see a concept clearly in my head and then set about finding images to put it together in reality. Or I see an image that inspires me and I work with that. I tried a couple of different illustrative concepts which didn't really go anywhere. I was asked to try Miles Lowrey's illustrations in the border design and full bleed but I didn't feel that the illustrations would work in the new design.



Digital concept roughs by Les Petersen

I asked Les Petersen to come up with some concepts for Obernewtyn. He says he comes up with concepts in a similar way to myself with the added approach of doing a few sketches and playing around with them in photoshop. His concept roughs appear below. He had some interesting ideas but I wasn't sure if they would carry over to work as a series look. Then I started some completely new concepts which became the final *direction for the series . . .

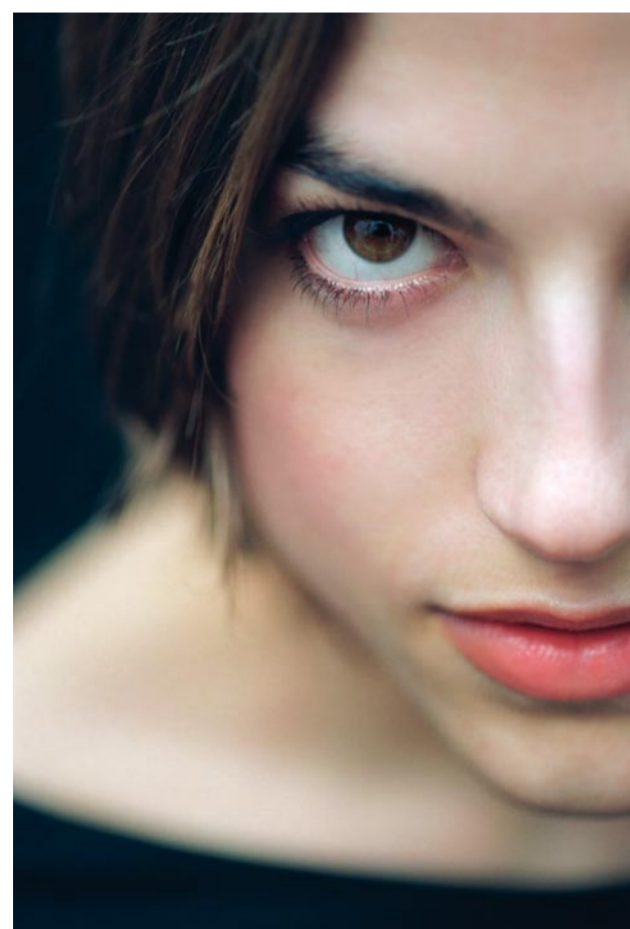


Preparing Final artwork for Obernewtyn

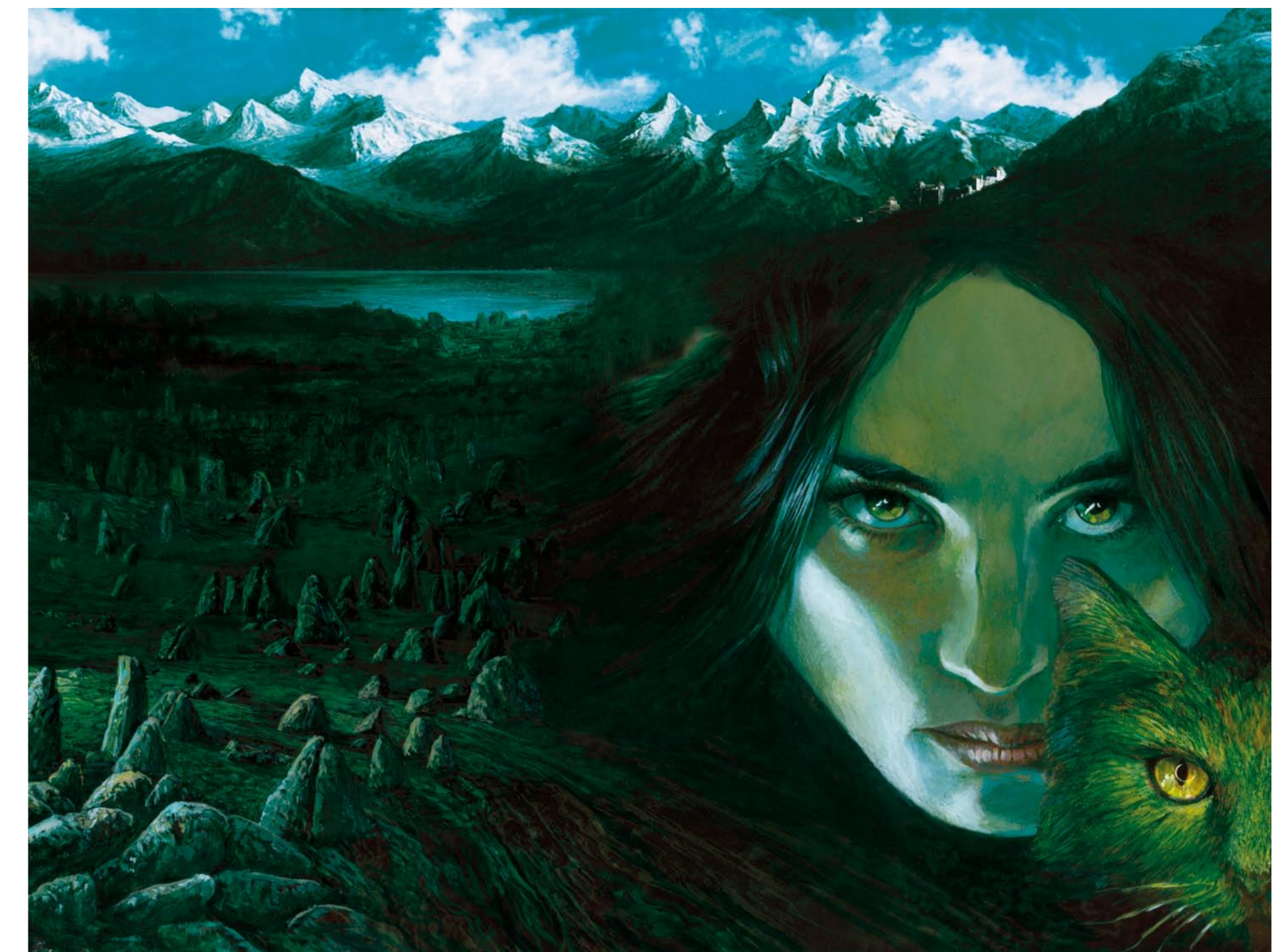
I see Obernewtyn as a book where most of the action happens in the characters minds. The book is very character driven, and is seen from the main character Elspeth's viewpoint. I wanted to convey the intensity of Elspeth, to see through her eyes into her psychic world. You see Obernewtyn secluded in the mountains, the radioactive 'Black lands' and her mentor Maruman the cat.

I sourced stock images and used them to put concepts together in photoshop. Both Isobelle and myself had envisioned the covers as paintings. I commissioned illustrator Les Petersen to do the paintings.

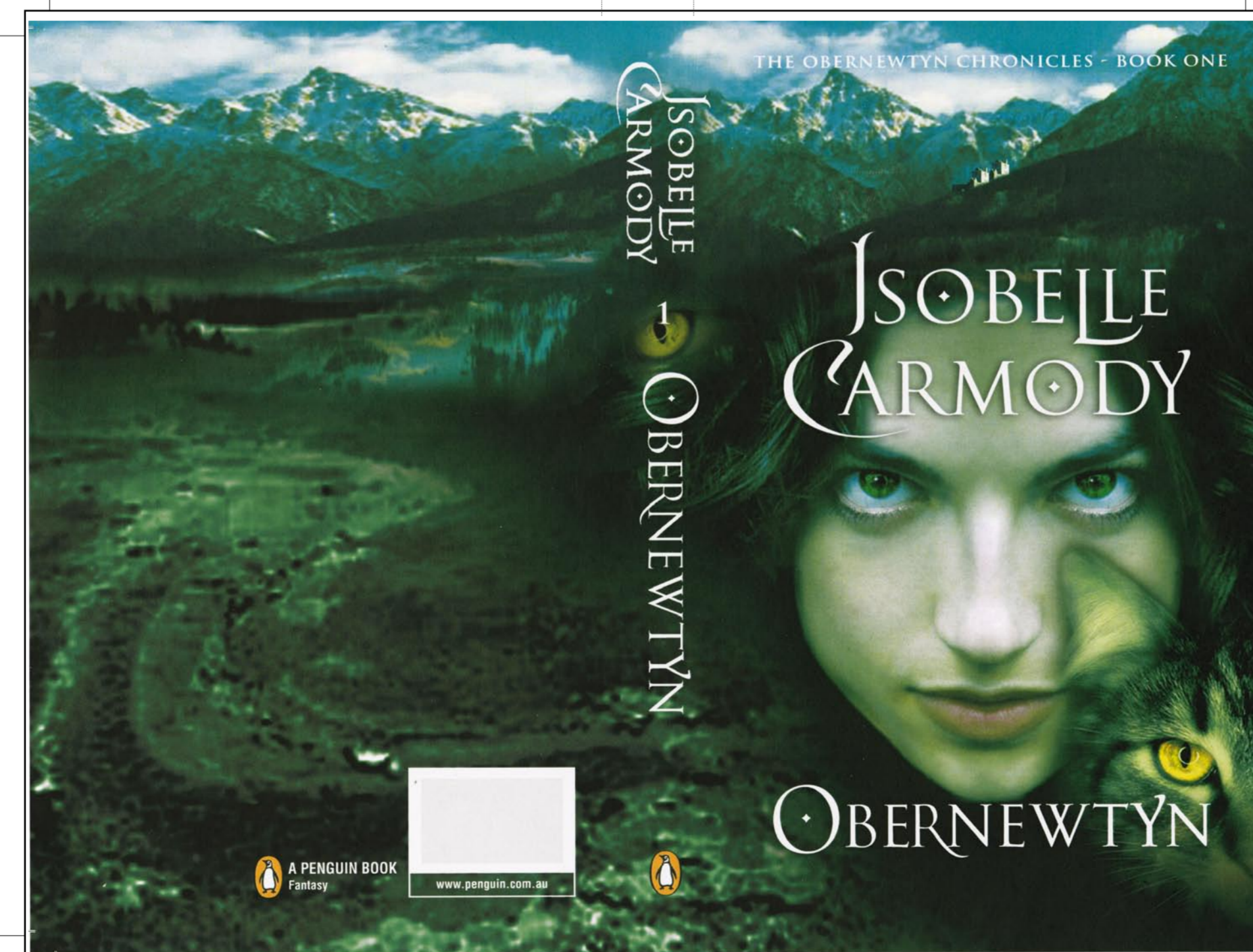
The evocative strength of the photographs proved to be a powerful feature so that the decision was made to use the faces as photographic elements and use Les Petersen's painterly work for the backgrounds. It was a difficult task to find one existing stock photo who looked like Elspeth - let alone 4 more!



This concept for Obernewtyn put me on the right track. You can see that I have the elements of the composition for the series look in position. An intense face closeup, an animal and a background with the type in place.



Les Petersen's painting showing Obernewtyn in the mountains and the 'Blacklands'.



Here I have given the concept a strong colour cast which made the image bolder and removed it from literal reality. This approach for the series was approved as a concept at the cover meeting. I supplied this as reference to the illustrator.



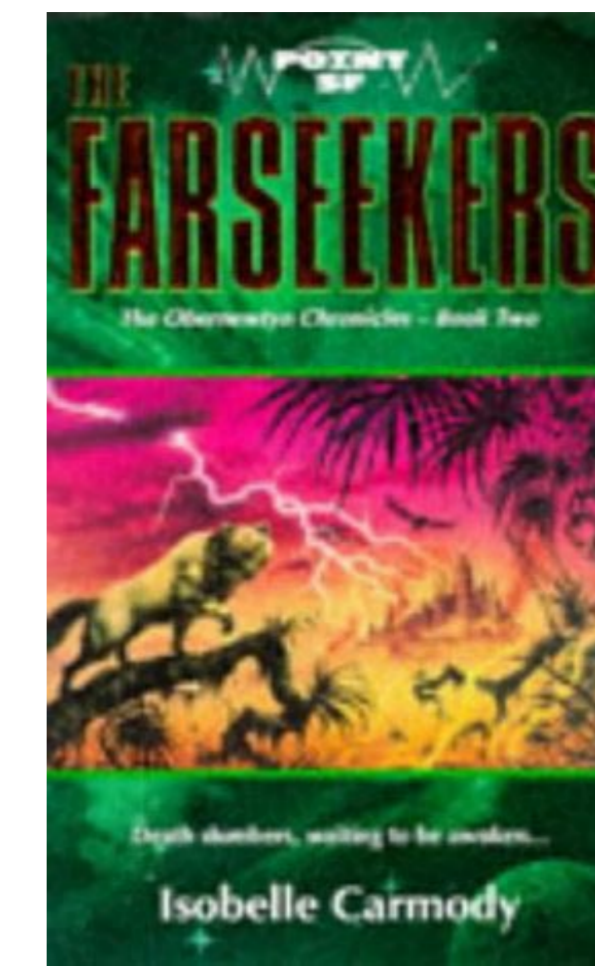
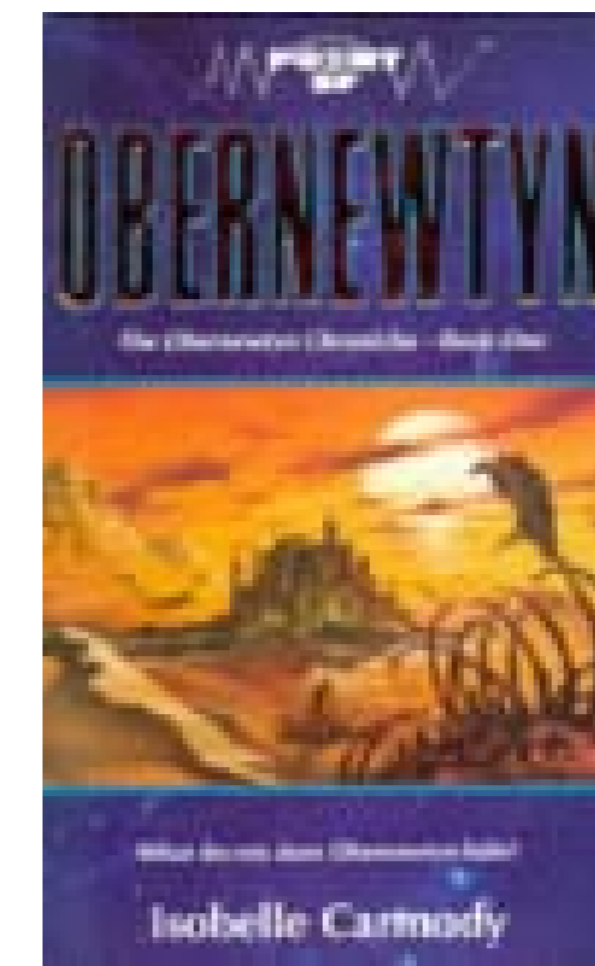
This is the final cover combining the photographic elements and Les Petersen's evocative landscape.



A Short History of Obernewtyn Covers

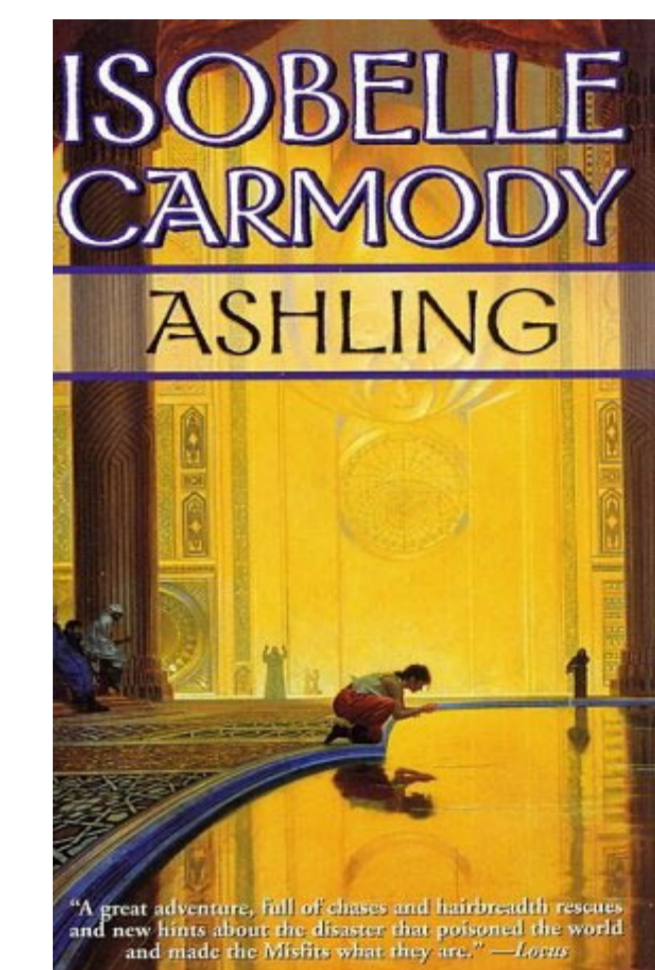
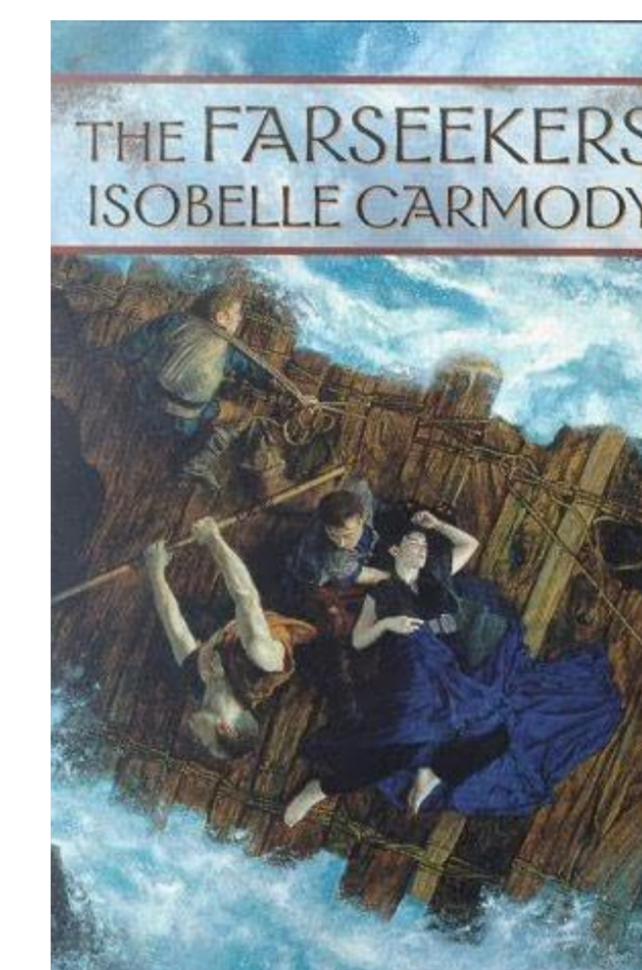
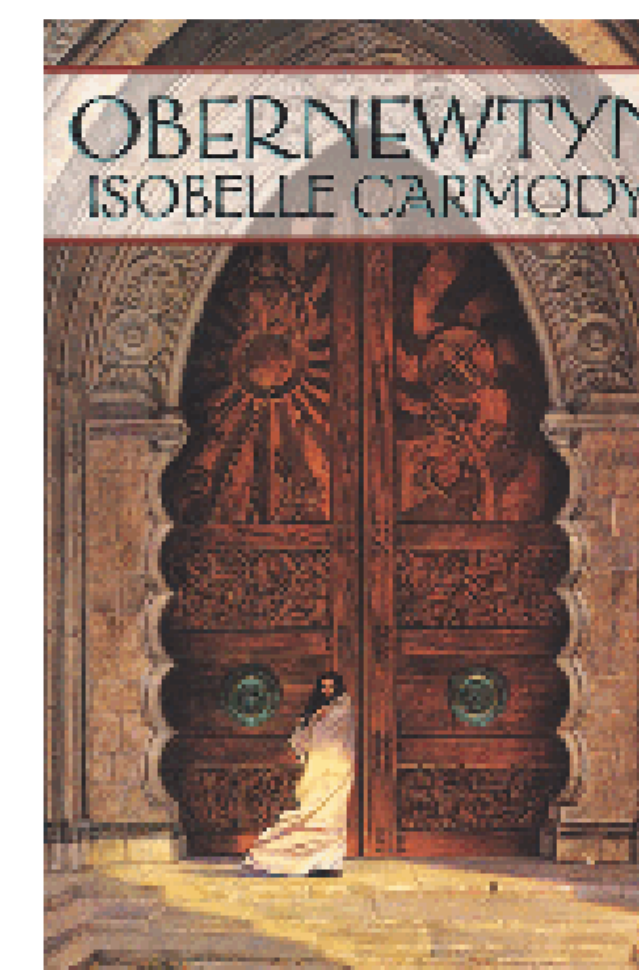
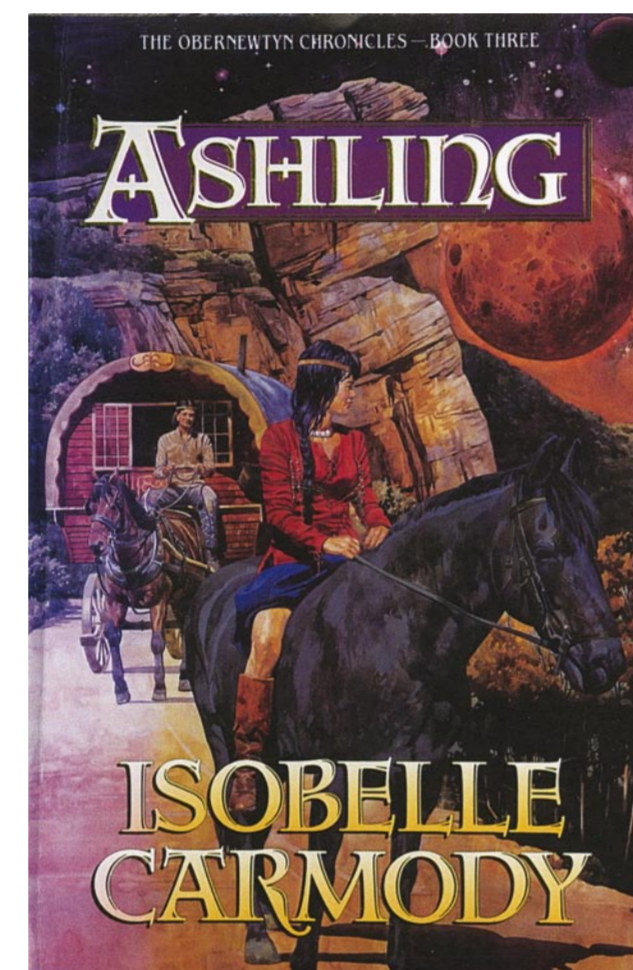
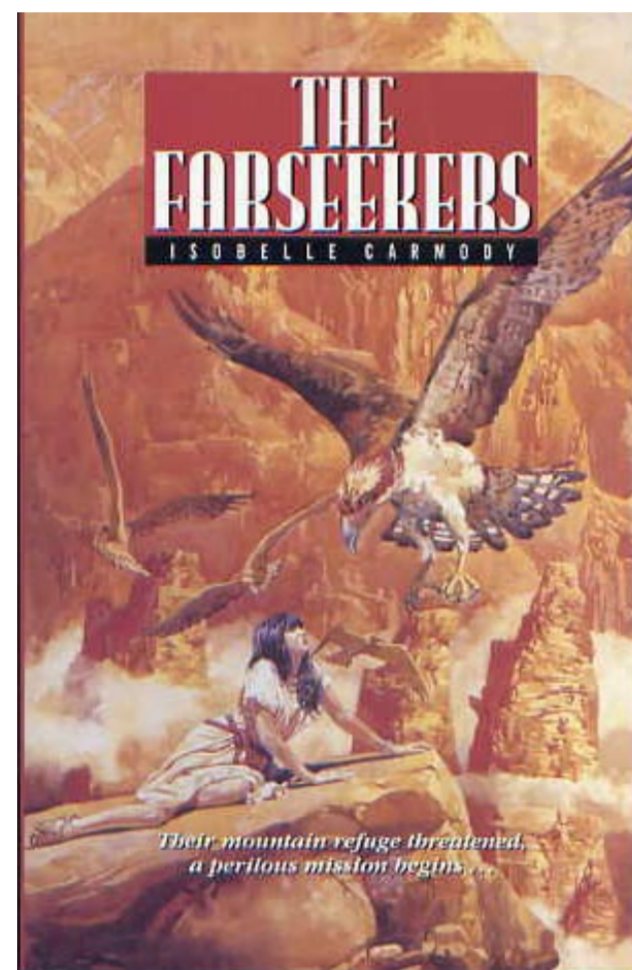
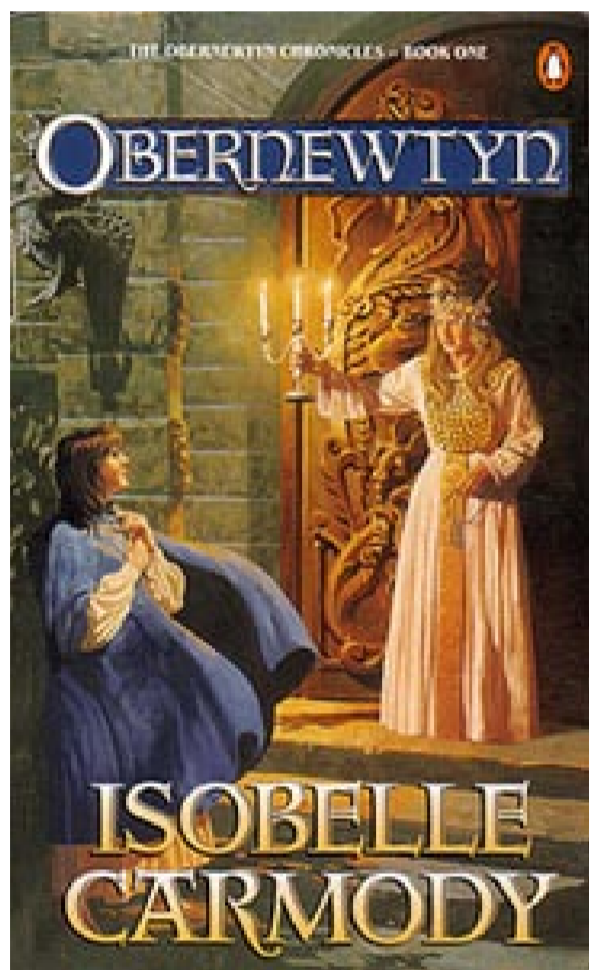
Obernewtyn was originally published by Puffin Australia in 1987.

This first Australian edition was illustrated by Geoff Kelly and designed by Penguin designer Cathy van Ee.



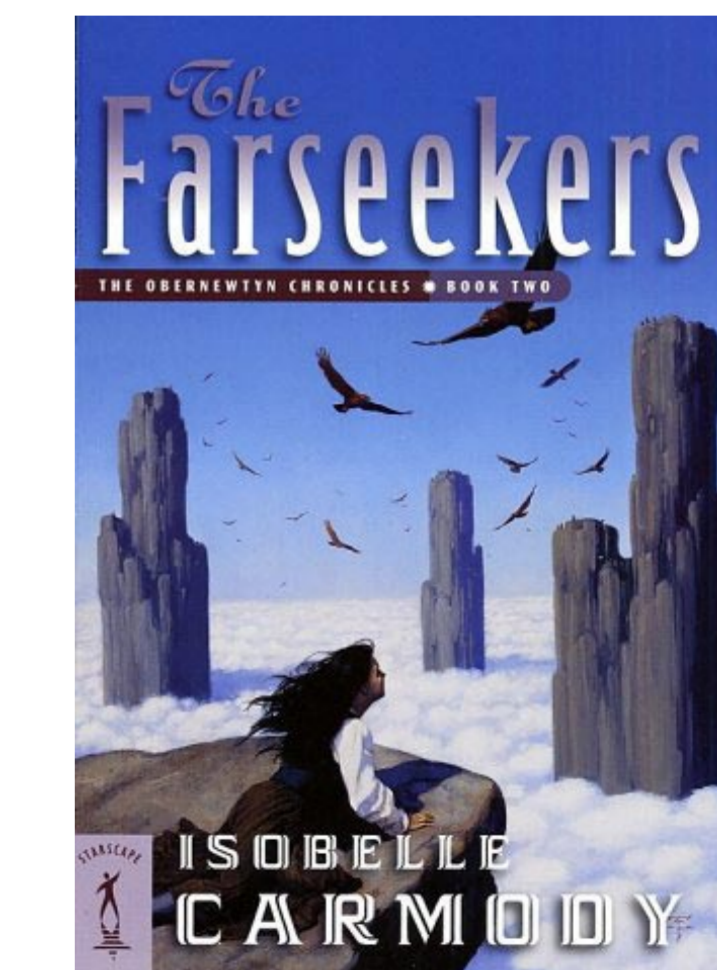
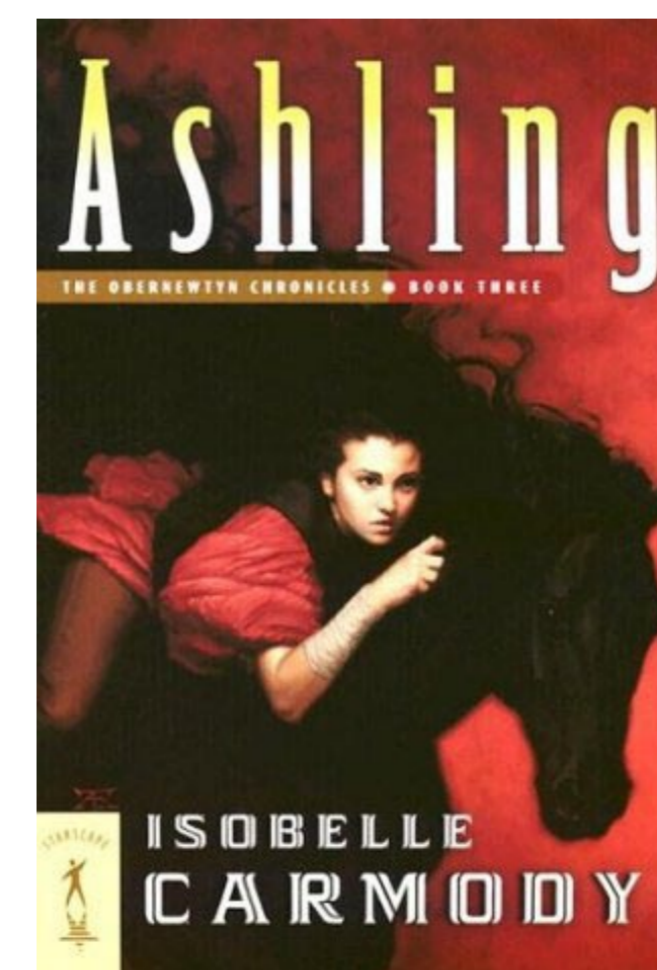
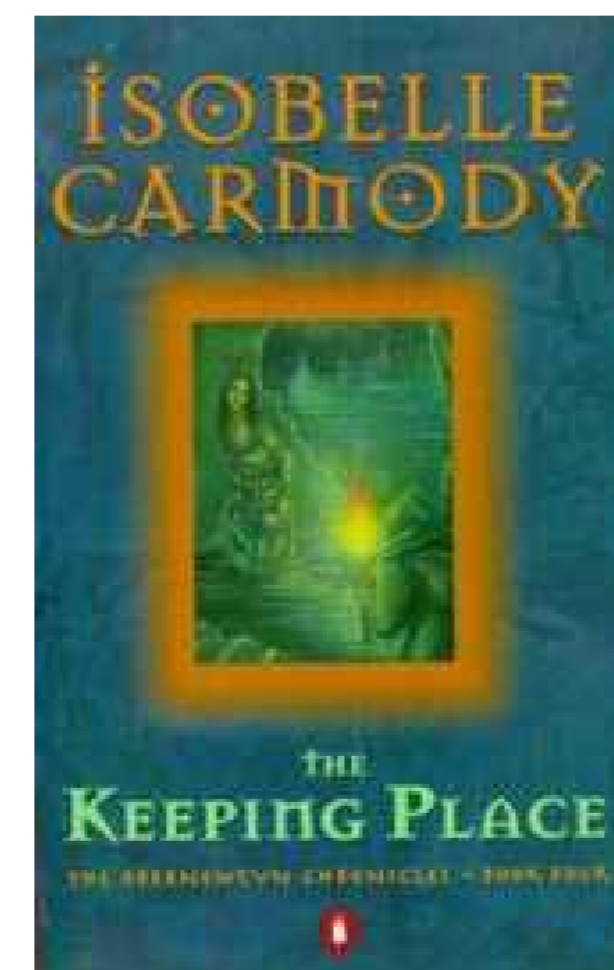
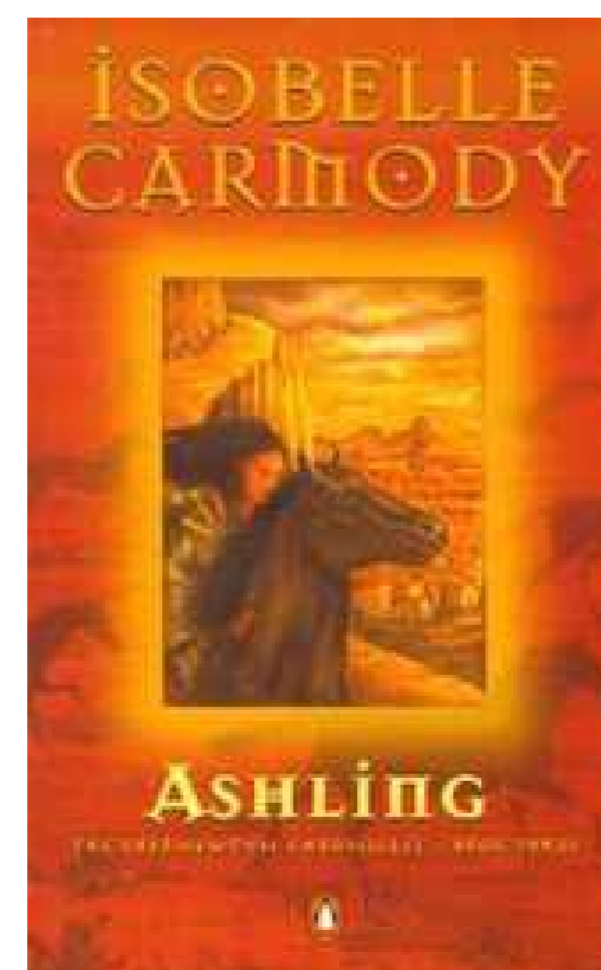
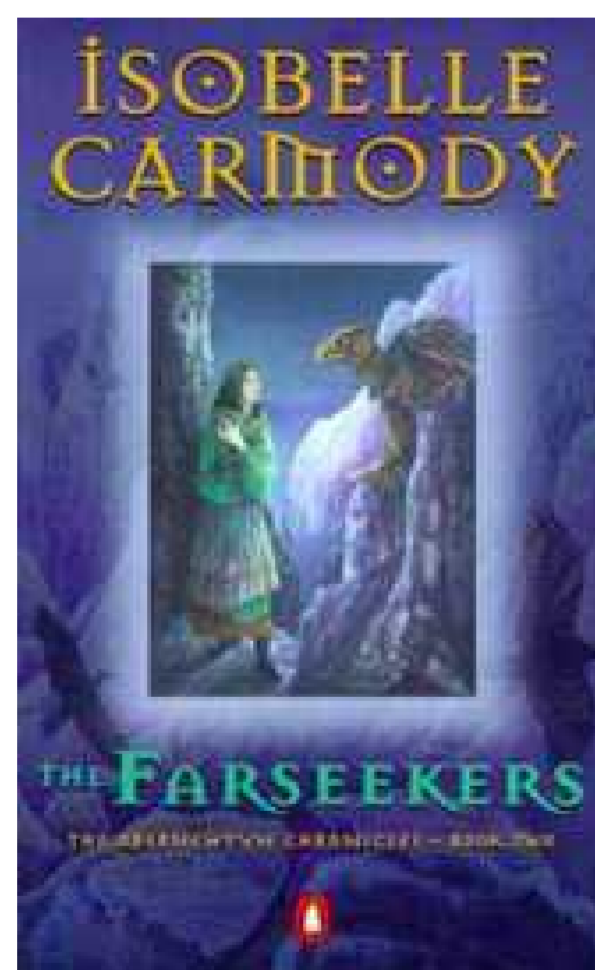
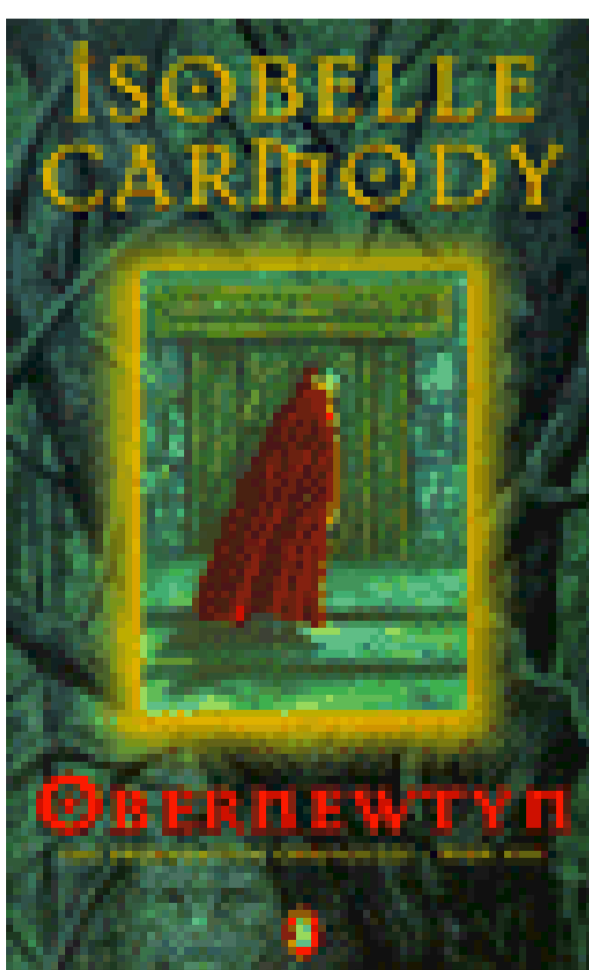
A Selection of Overseas Obernewtyn Covers

I think these very post-apocalyptic science-fiction styled covers at right may be early English editions.



The 1993 cover features illustration by Australian artist Connel Lee and design by Penguin designer Ann Wojczuk. It is a very 'realistic' approach with traditional fantasy style typography.

These USA adult covers feature exceptionally beautiful oil paintings by Donanto Giancola. I approached him with a possibility for illustrating the new covers. He was absolutely charming as said that he loved the books and was interested in doing the job for me. Unfortunately time and budget restraints did not allow for this.



1994 Australian B format edition. Illustration by Canadian artist Miles Lowrey. Design by Penguin designer Ellie Exarchos. Lowrey's more painterly illustration breaks out of the typical fantasy genre style. Using his existing artwork was considered for the new editions of Obernewtyn.

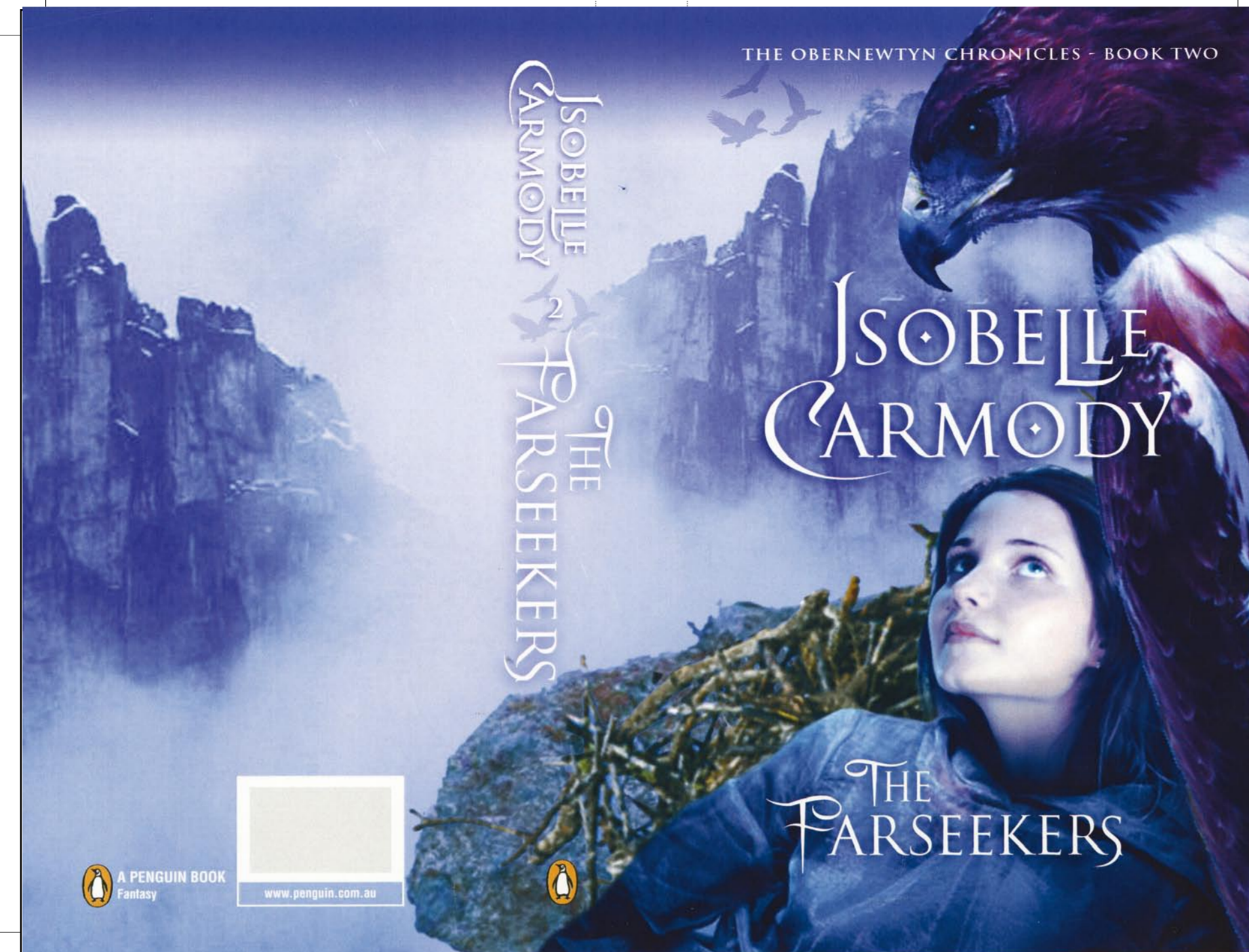
These USA young adult covers feature oil paintings by Tristan Elwell. I considered using the existing illustrations of Donanto Giancola and Tristan Elwell in new designs. Then I would have 3 pieces of artwork existing and only need to commission 2 more to be done in the time available. However it was decided to commission something new and quite different.

Preparing Final Artwork for The Farseekers

I could have chosen many scenes from The Farseekers. Elspeth as a gypsy was one image. In keeping with the series look I have chosen a closeup which suggests mental activity rather than physical action.

One of the most pivotal moments is where Elspeth meets the Argllians. Elspeth is healed and instructed by these birds. How close could I crop while still giving the feeling that Elspeth was in the nest of a bird on top of a mountain? The answer was very close! You can see how much closer I have cropped into my initial composition.

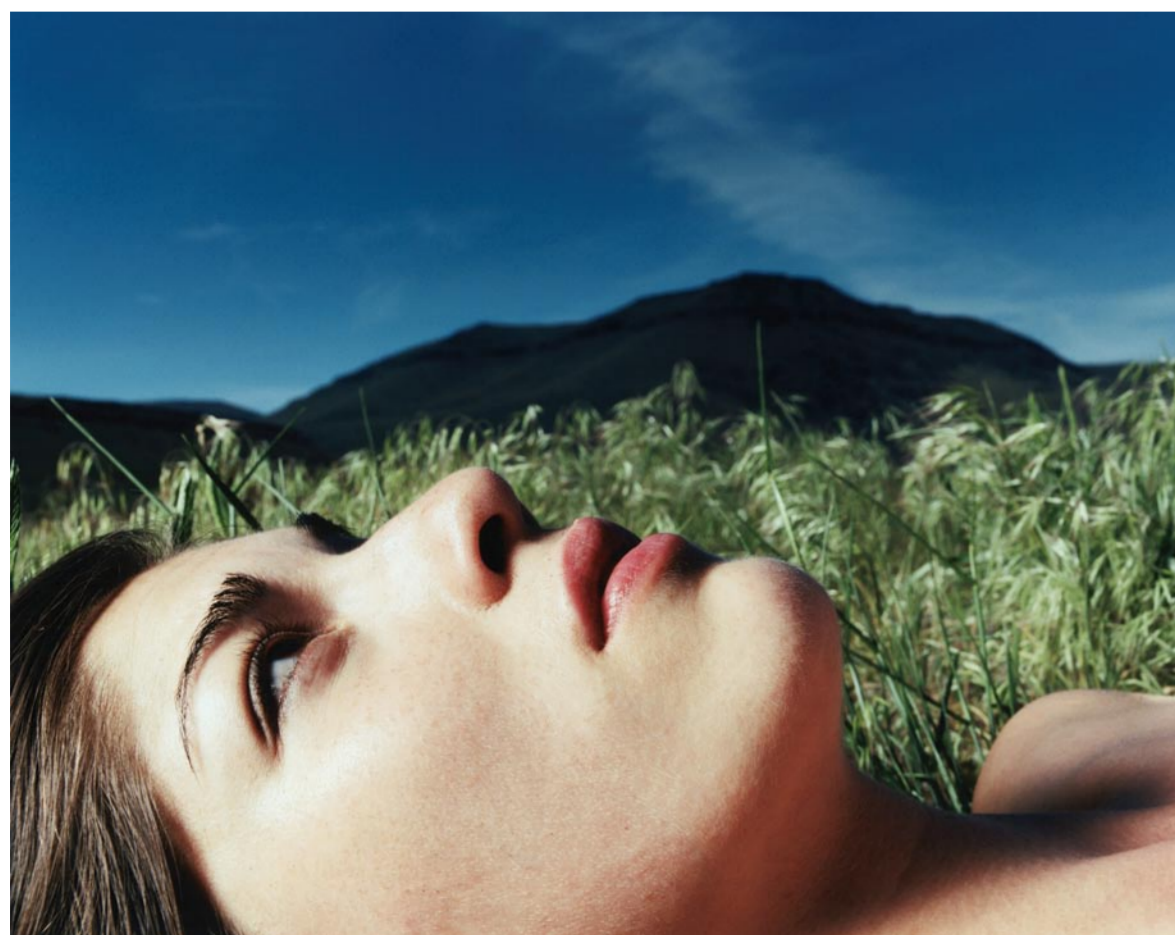
I showed three circling Guanette birds which suggest the 'Govamen' logo on the spine.



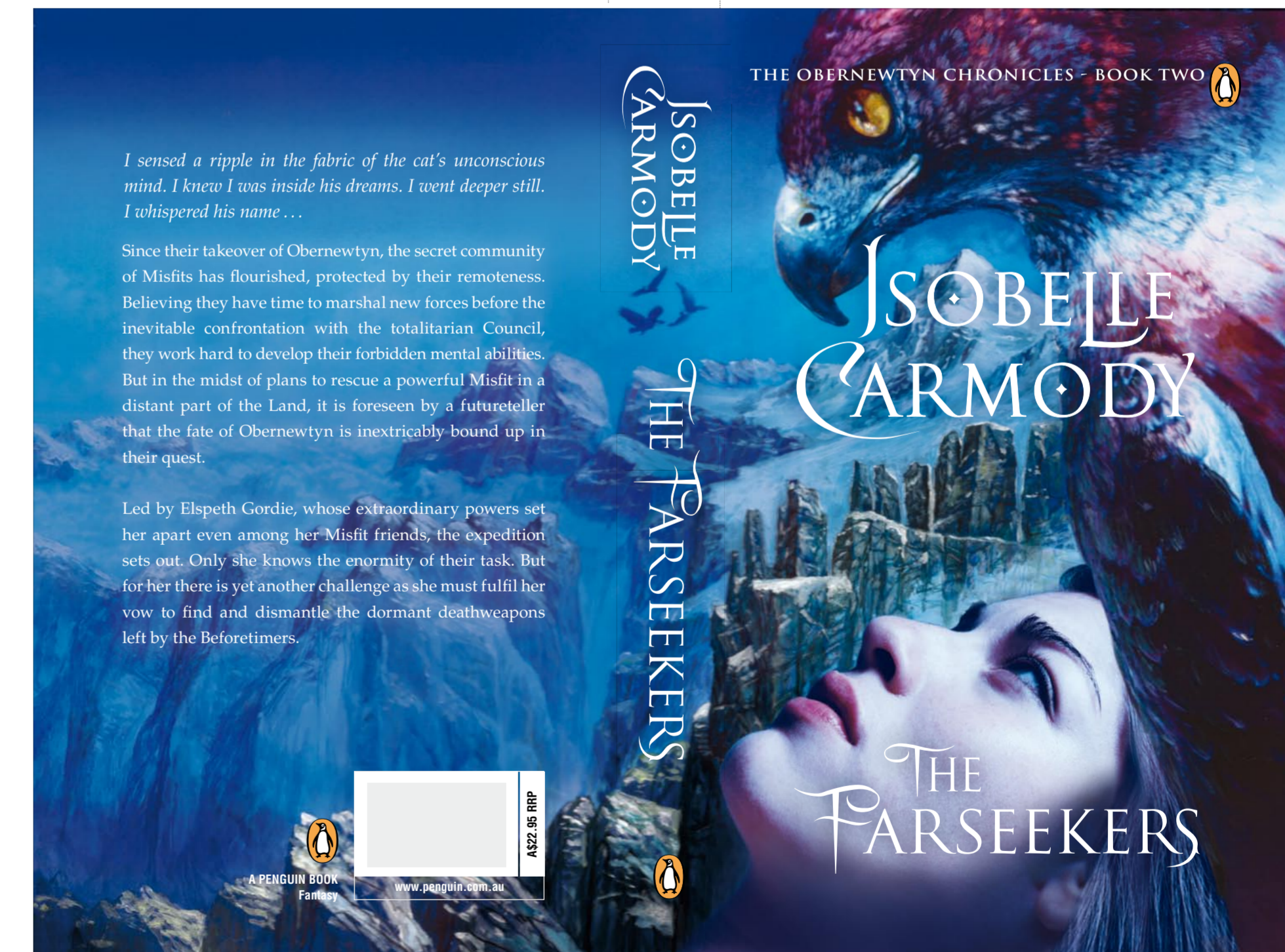
In this early concept I am trying to show Elspeth in the mountain nest of a Guanette bird (Argyllian).



Les Petersen's painting for The Farseekers. He has done extensive rendering of the Guanette bird and the mountains.



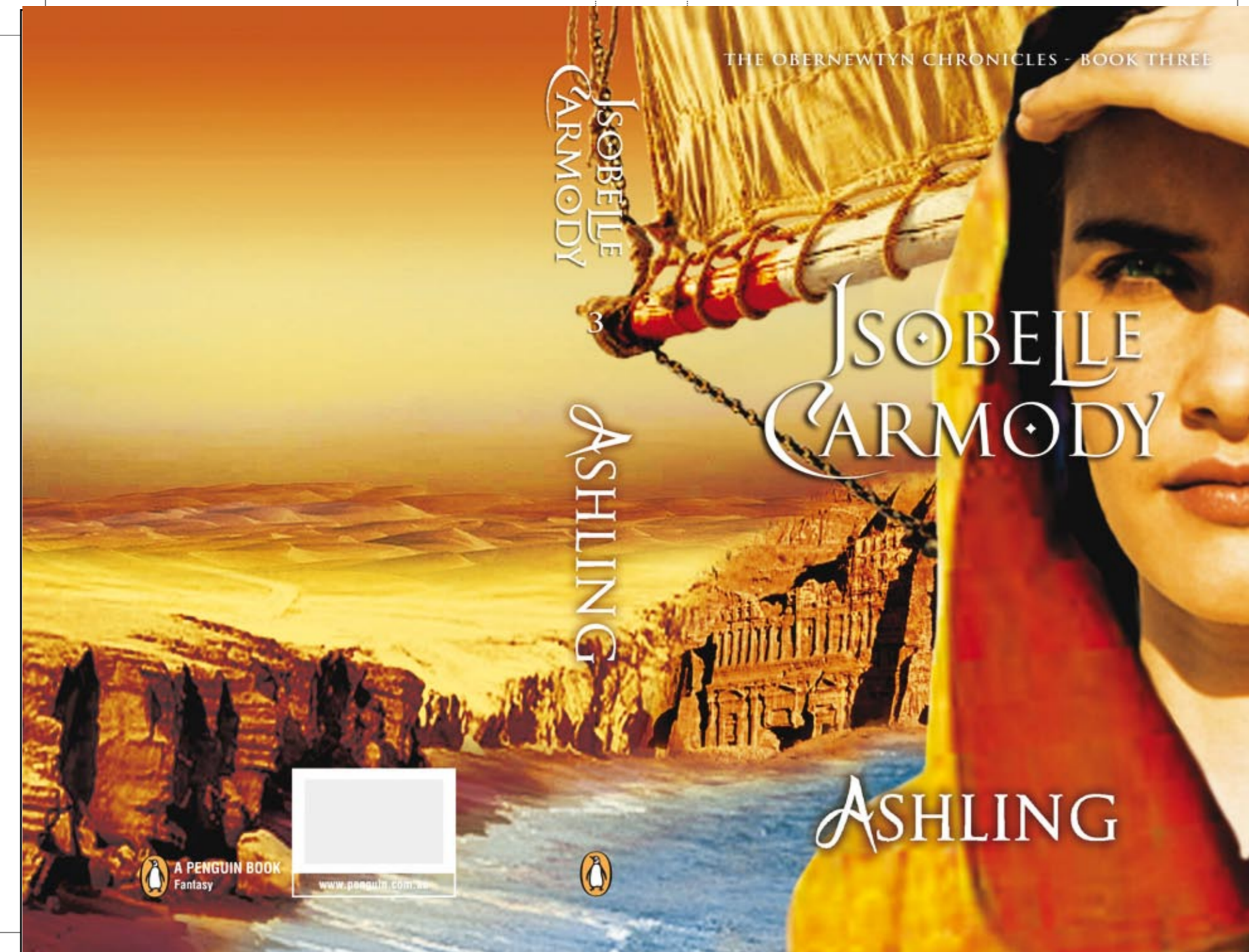
This is the final concept rough. Very close cropping and a more suitable photo of the face (photo at left) make it more powerful. I used an eagle as reference for the bird, adjusting the colours.



This is the final cover combining the photographic elements (seen at left) and Les Petersen's Guanette bird and mountain landscape. I have had to darken the background here so that the back cover type is more legible

Preparing Final Artwork for Ashling

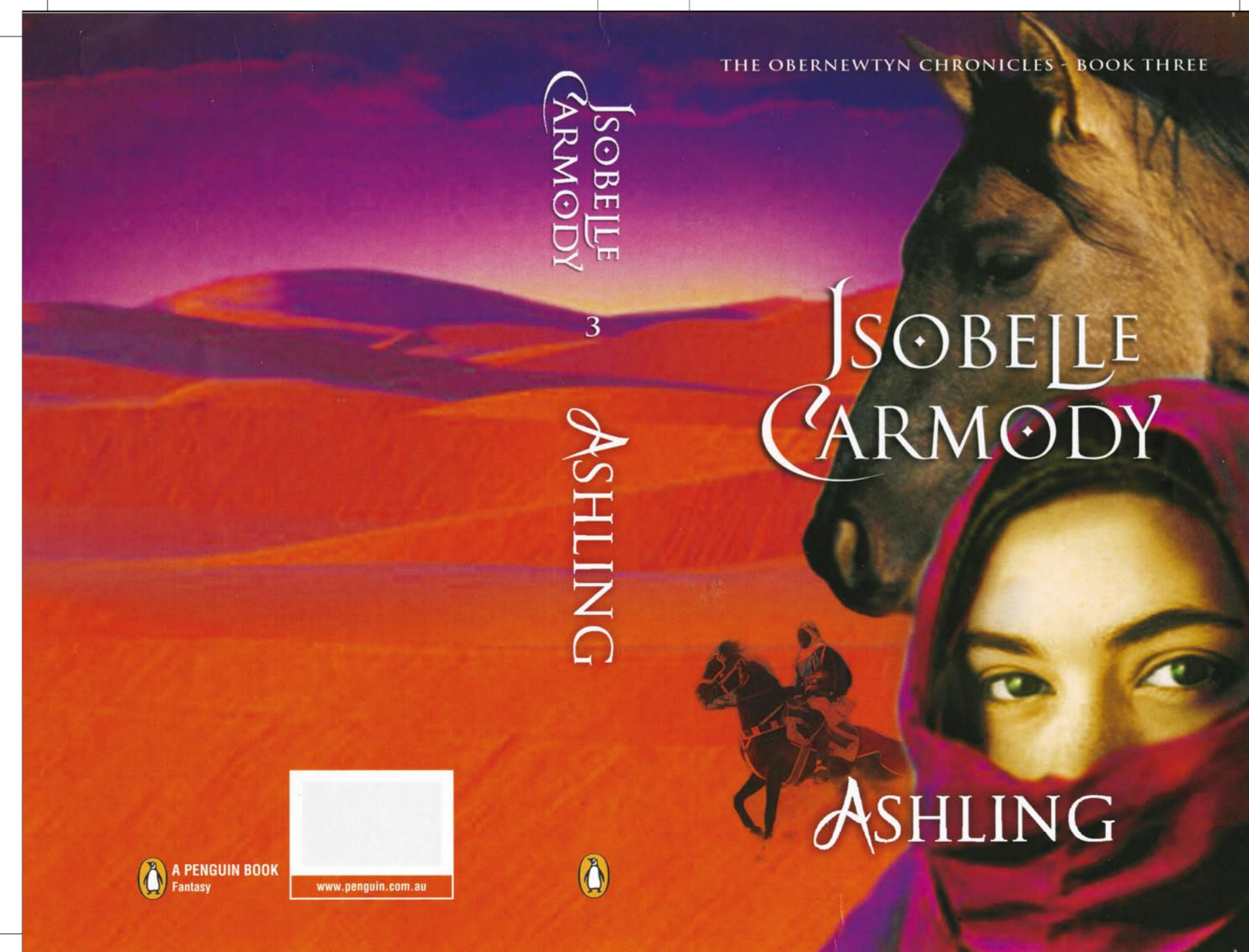
The scene for Ashling's cover was the misfit's voyage to Sardor, a desert country. My initial idea was to show Elspeth on the ship approaching the coast of Sardor. The coastline has sheer cliffs with a temple intricately carved into the rock. The desert is in the distance. This concept was judged as not fitting with the others in the series look so I started again. Each cover featured thus far had featured an animal, so this became the horse cover. At this stage I was running out of stock photos of faces that looked like the Elspeth character. In desperation I tinted a black and white image.



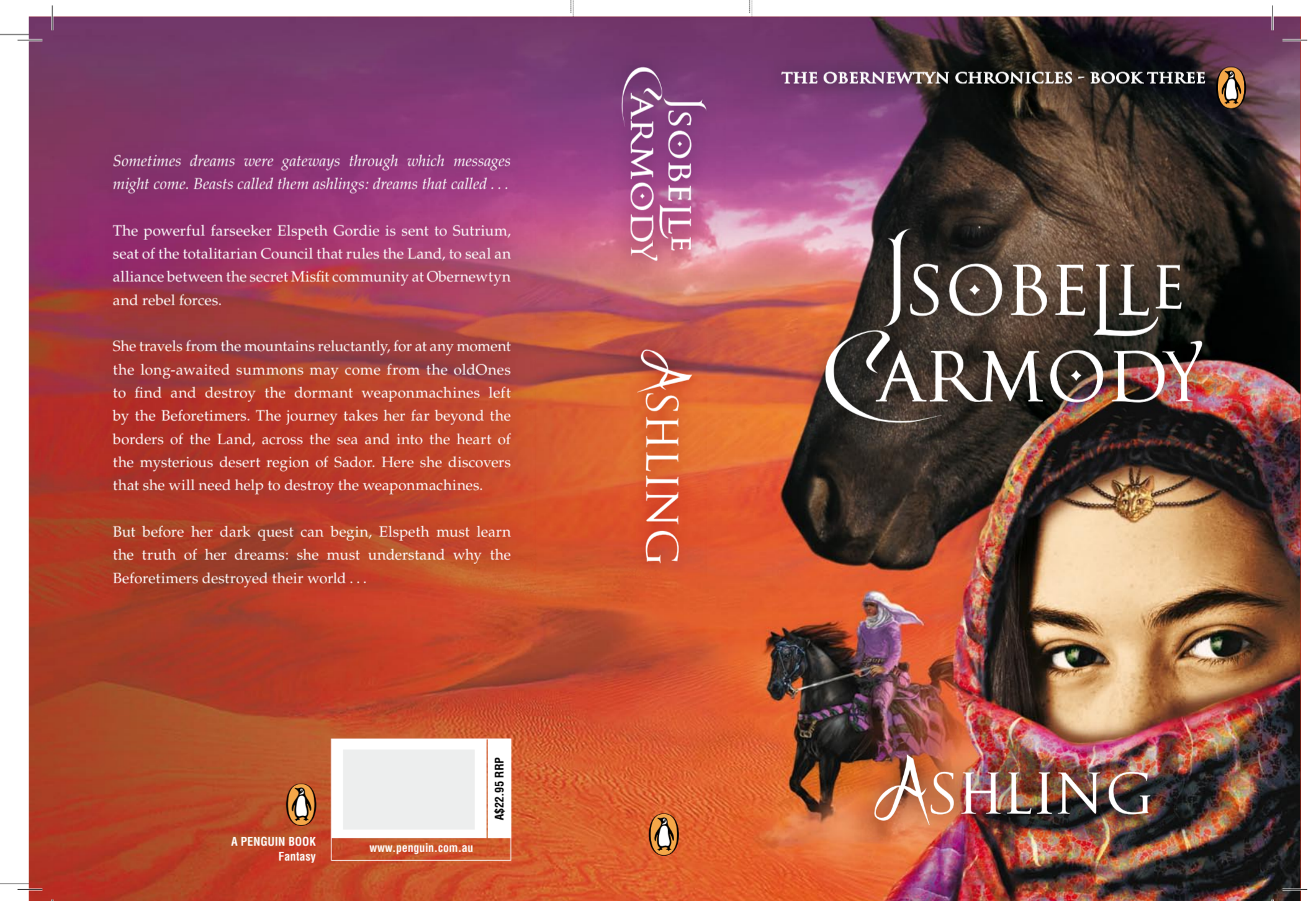
Here is my initial concept with Elspeth aboard a ship looking toward the cliffs of Sardor with the Earthtemple carved into the rock.



Les Petersen digitally painted Elspeth's veil (to which he added a cat's face diadem as a special touch), the horseman and the desert.



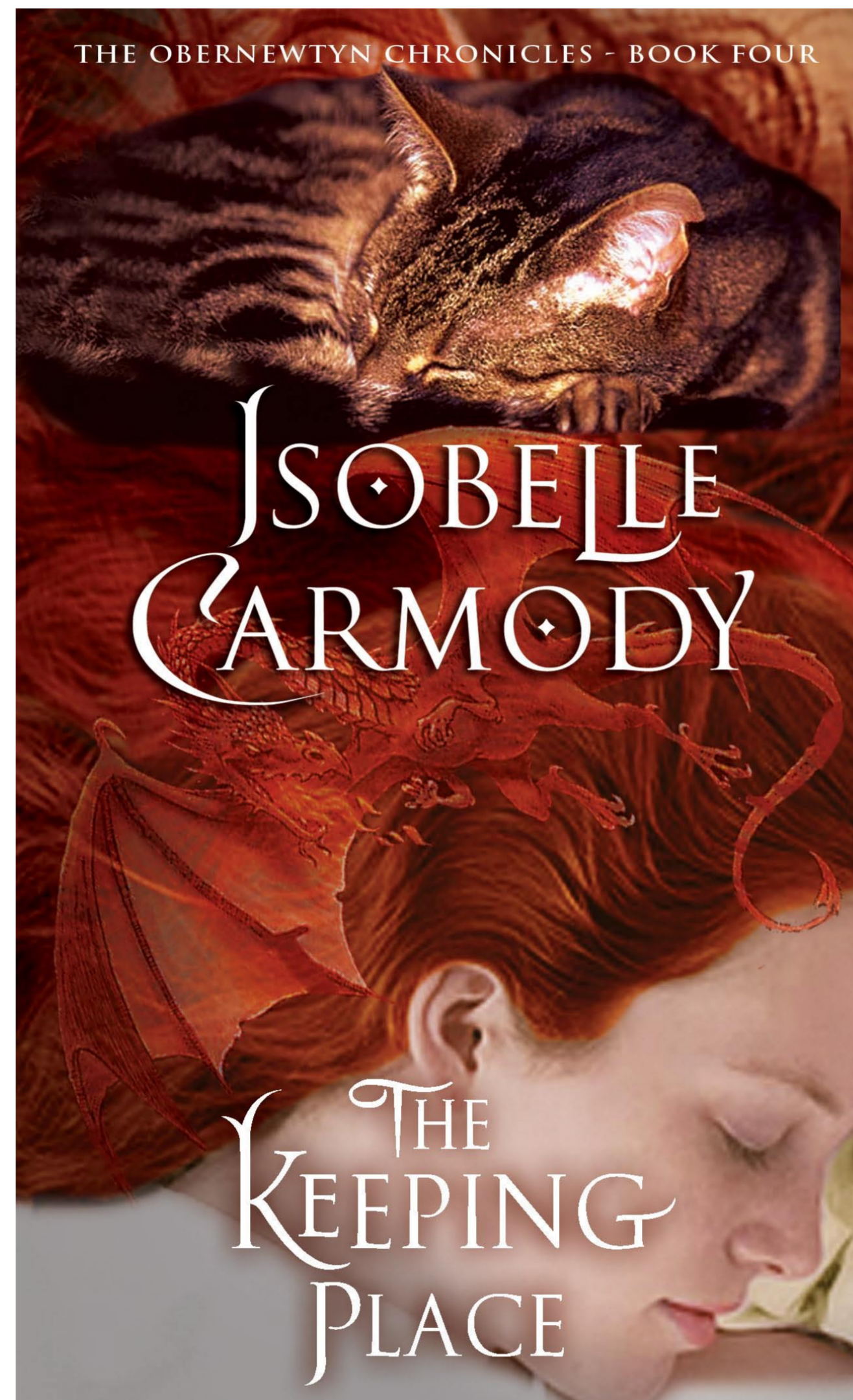
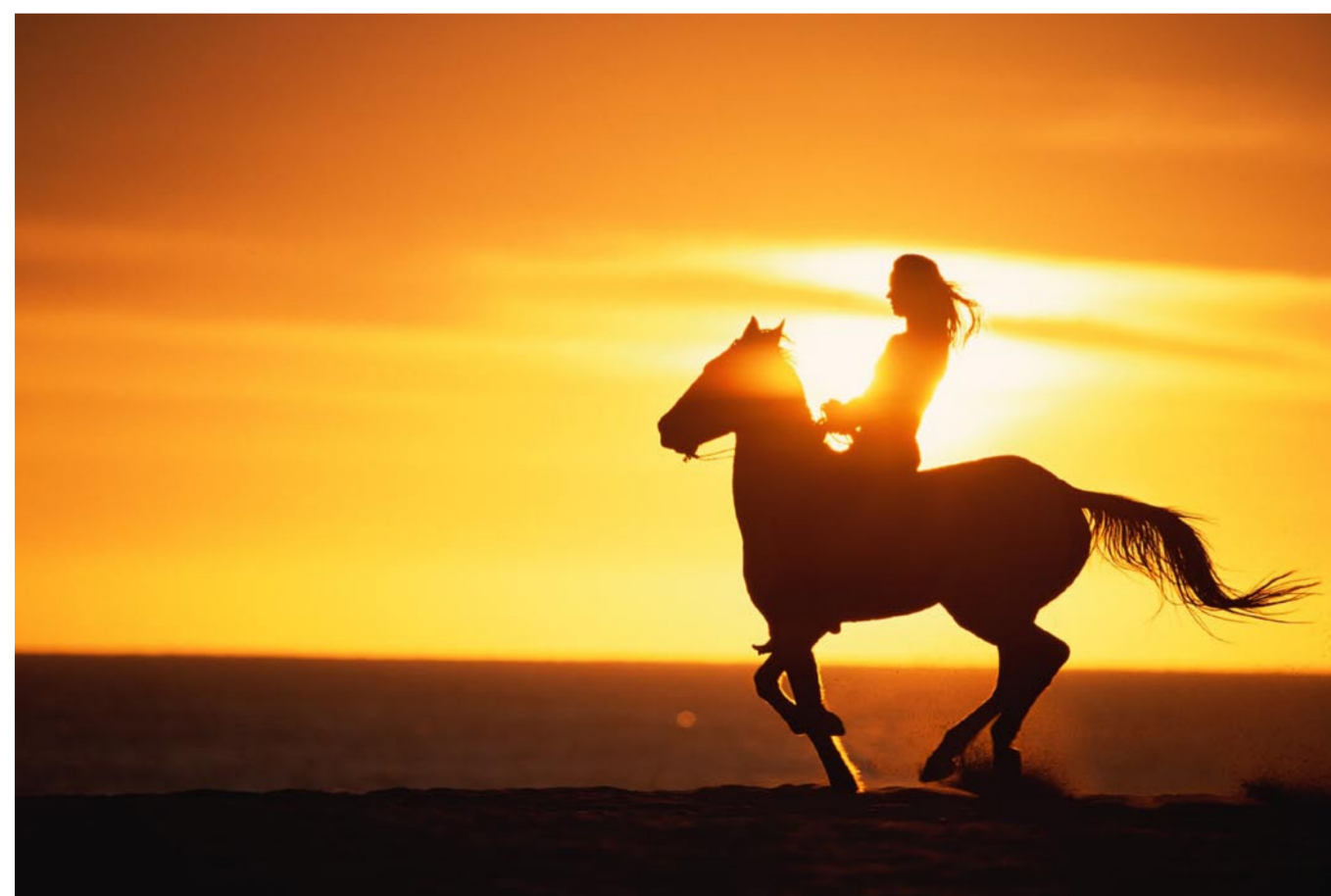
This is the concept which was approved showing Elspeth with the horse in the desert and a Sardorian rider in the distance. It shows the pronounced colour cast which contributes to the series look.



This is the final cover combining the photographic elements (seen at left) and Les Petersen's digital work.

Preparing Final Artwork for The Keeping Place

This is the only cover that features the character 'Dragon' instead of Elspeth. The misfits discover a wild girl in the ruins of a city. She has kept people at bay by mentally projecting the frightening image of a dragon. Later she is accidentally rendered unconscious by Elspeth. Her form in the dream trails is a violent dragon who seeks to destroy Elspeth. She is later discovered to be the daughter of the legendary Red Queen and in a sense her blocked memory is the keeping place.



The concept for The Keeping Place was one of those designs that I just 'saw' complete in my head and then I searched for the components to put it together as artwork. The beautiful girl sleeps and her dreams take the form of a dragon which seems to emerge from the waves of her hair. Maruman the cat sleeps curled in the red-gold pillow of her hair and keeps watch on the dream trails. It is like 'Sleeping Beauty' with a dark edge



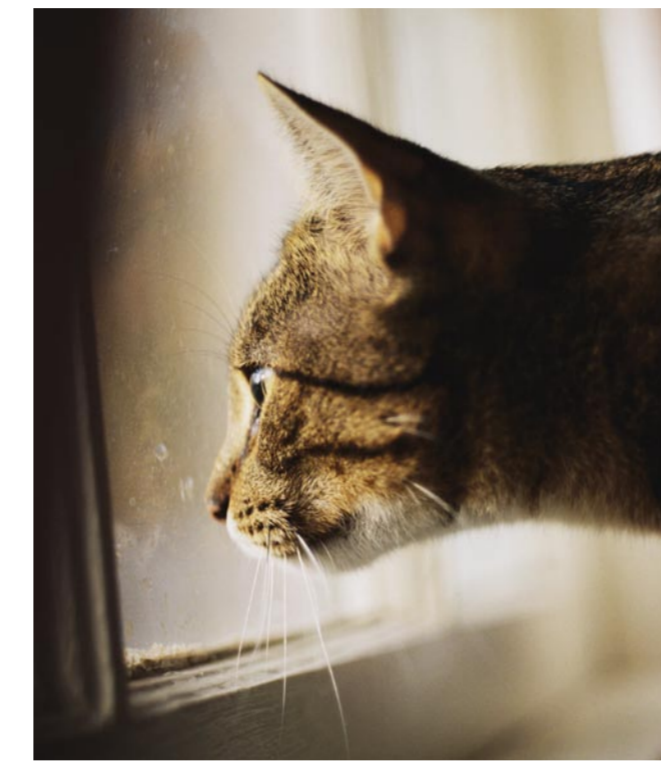
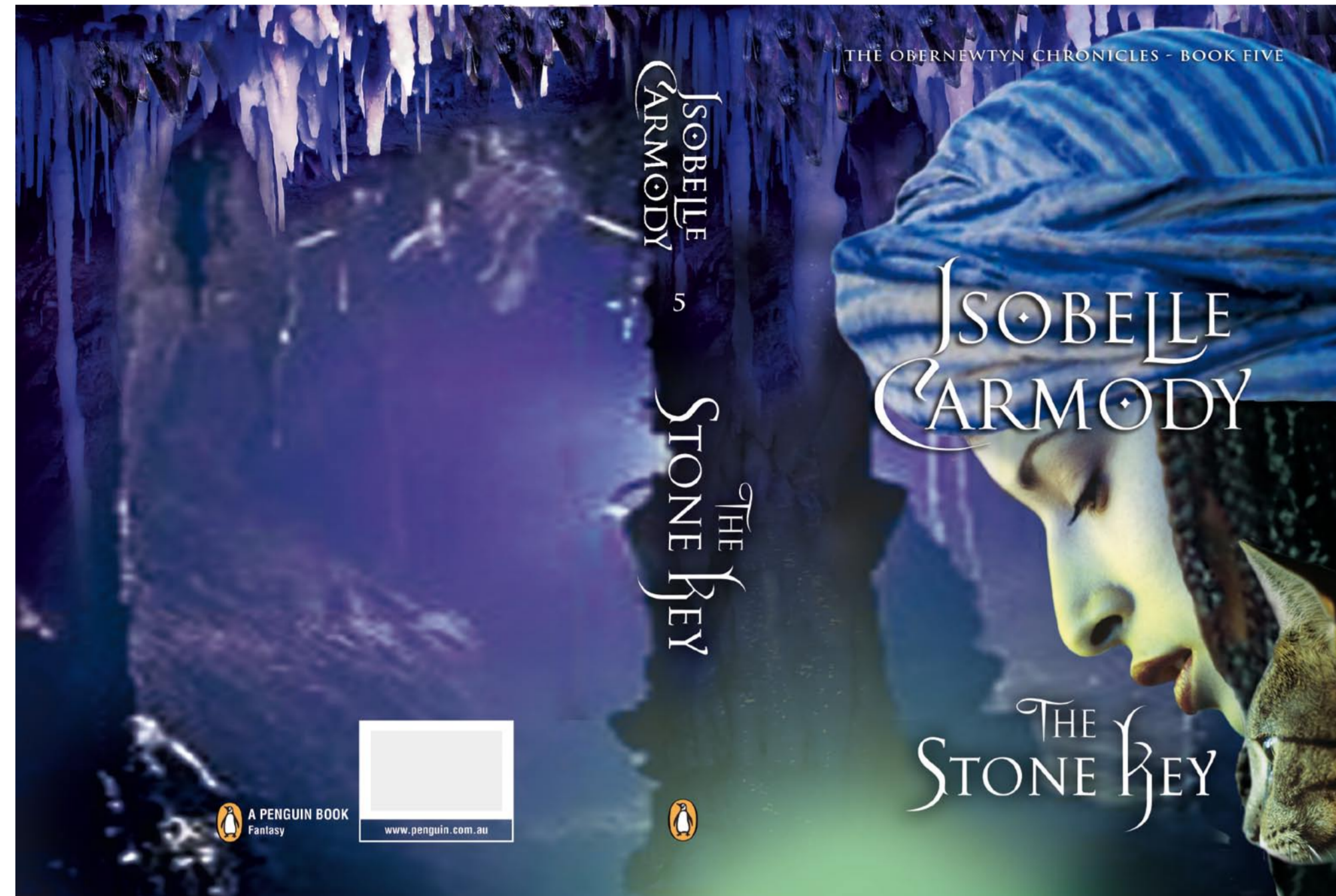
Les Petersen created a superb digital dragon.



This is the final cover combining the photographic elements (seen at left) and Les Petersen's digital work. I did a lot of photoshopping on the hair - it was a tricky job to repeat bits of it to create a cascade of hair, as well as tinting it to an intense red.

Preparing Artwork for The Stone Key and The Sending

Here is a sneak peek of what is to come ... 'The Stone Key' is the forthcoming fifth volume of the Obernewtyn Chronicles to be published in September 2007. 'The Sending' will be the sixth and final book and will be published in 2008.



Elsbeth, wearing sardorian finery is in an amethyst cave looking at a strange glowing object set into the floor of the cavern . . . This is my concept for the 'Stone Key' (at left) Above you can see a couple of the pics I have used to create it. The final artwork (below) I have photoshopped the amethyst cave and turban created by Les Petersen with the photographic images.

Below is my concept rough for the sixth and final volume. Elspeth walks along a crumbling beforetime road carrying an unconscious Maruman in her arms . . . You can see that I chose the reference pic (above) for the light on her face. This concept has yet to be taken to final art.

