



*The Art of*

# ABHORSEN

by Rengin Tümer



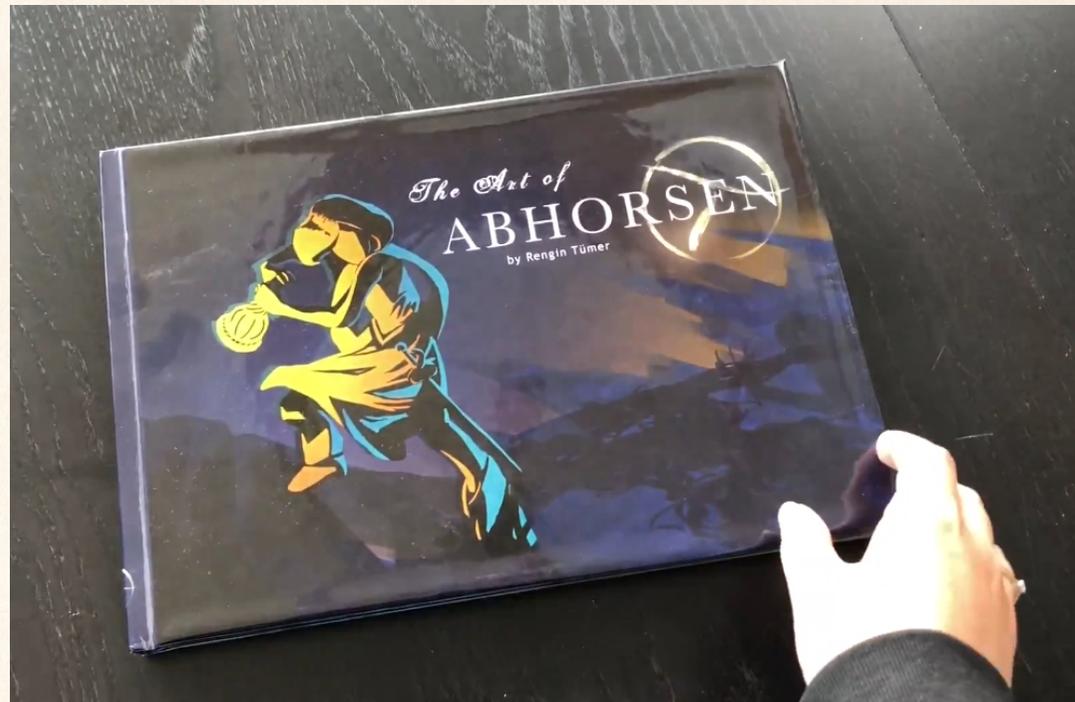
# About this booklet

If you're reading this, that probably means you got this book through signing up for my e-mail list. Let me thank you for that AGAIN, even though I'm sure I have already.

Reading on, you'll stumble into a preview of an 81-page artbook that I made as part of a 20 week long graduation project. I actually got a few of them printed back then for my teachers, as seen to the right here.

I'm sure you're more interested in the art and its thought process than anything else, so please read on! This preview contains the preface, thoughts and concepts on Abhorsen House and Sabriel, and a storyboard I made.

Enjoy!



# Preface

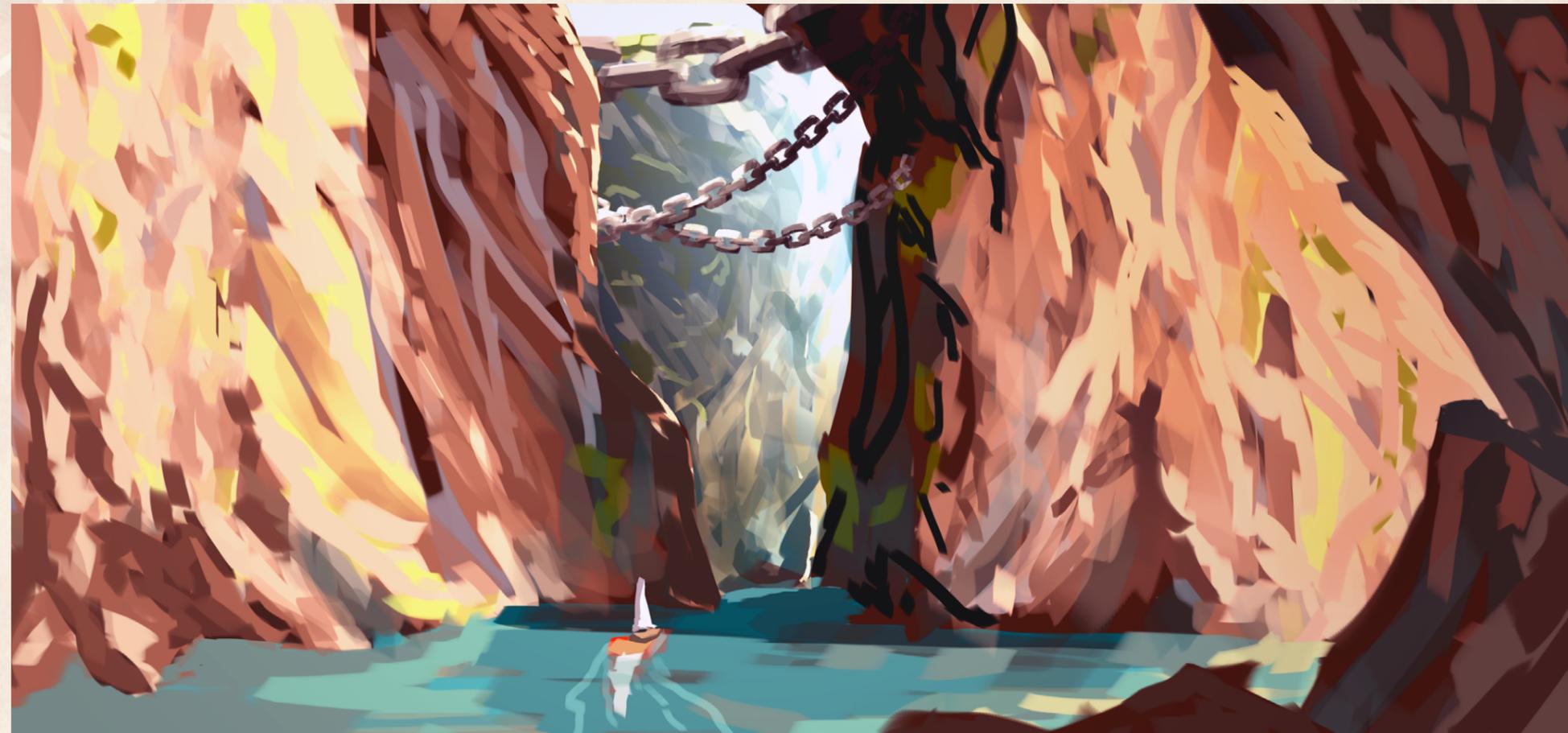
One day during my early teens, my mother came home with a present - a brand new book for me to read. Being the novel-loving child that I was, it didn't take long for me to start the book, and I was hooked. *Sabriel* by Garth Nix got me yearning for the rest of the series, even though I wouldn't get my hands on the second and third book a while later. However, after all these years the books have still stayed in the back of my mind as a great source of inspiration and an original concept. As a result, when I came up with the idea to create an artbook as a graduation project, the *Abhorsen* series was an obvious choice, even after reviewing other books as an option. The *Abhorsen* series seemed more suitable than other books because it was relatively unknown and there is no film based on the books (yet), and therefore I would not be so influenced by an established image, and be free to come up with my own world.

This book displays the art for a hypothetical movie, going through visual development and experimentation inspired by the art books already out there, especially Pixar's and Disney's artbooks for *Tangled* and *The Princess and the Frog*. The book will display a range of experiments and thoughts on paper, fleshing out the characters and their world through sketches and paintings.

Addendum, 2019: I finally got to show my project to Garth Nix himself. He graciously shared it on his Twitter timeline, enabling some other fans of the *Abhorsen* series to see the flip-through video of the book as well.

I've always been incredibly proud of this project. It took a lot of convincing but I was eventually allowed to do this project for my Game Design course, as long as I incorporated 3D into the workflow. 3D has now become a major tool in my work for reference and ideation. This book is a great way for me to reminisce my student years and appreciate the lessons I learned from it. I hope you'll check out my recent work as well to see how I've developed after producing this project.

Happy reading!



# Abhorsen House

“Sabriel stood on a narrow ledge that projected out from the bank of a river at least four hundred yards wide. A little to her right, a scant few paces away, this mighty river hurled itself over the cliff, to make a truly glorious waterfall. Sabriel leaned forward a little, to look at the waters crashing below, creating huge white wings of spray that could easily swallow her entire school, new wing and all, like a rubber duck swamped in an unruly bath.

It was a very long fall, and the height, coupled with the sheer power of the water, made her quickly look back to the river. Straight ahead, halfway across, Sabriel could just make out an island, an island perched on the very lip of the waterfall, dividing the river into two streams. It wasn't a very big island, about the size of a football field, but it rose like a ship of jagged rock from the turbulent waters.

Encircling the island were limestone-white walls the height of six men. Behind those walls was a house. It was too dark to see clearly, but there was a tower, a thrusting, pencil silhouette, with red tiles that were just beginning to catch the dawning sun. Below the tower, a dark bulk hinted at the existence of a hall, a kitchen, bedrooms, armory, buttery and cellar. The study, Sabriel suddenly remembered, occupied the second to top floor of the tower. The top floor was an observatory, both of stars and the surrounding territory.

It was Abhorsen's House.”

The Great Hall | *Digital*





Lighting Key | Digital

## Coming Home

The Abhorsen's House is an important location in the first book of the Abhorsen Trilogy. It provides Sabriel and the reader with her first bits of information about the world beyond Ancelstierre, and provides a starting point for Sabriel's transformation from a schoolgirl looking for her father to the Abhorsen, who has to lay the Dead to rest.

The House is a haven, the home that Sabriel would've grown up in if times had been kinder. It's entrance is described as something that could almost be a little yellow-brick cottage in the hills, and is a sharp contrast to the chase-scene that takes place beforehand:

"There was more light now, heralding the advent of the sun, and she could see a sort of wooden landing stage leading up to a gate in the white wall. Treetops were also visible behind the walls, winter trees, their branches bare of green raiment.

Birds flew between trees and tower, little birds launching themselves for their morning forage. It was a vision of normalcy, of a haven.

The gate swung open, pitching her onto a paved courtyard, the beginning of a red-brick path, the bricks ancient, their redness the color of dusty apples. The path wound up to the front door of the house, a cheerful sky-blue door, bright against whitewashed stone. A bronze doorknocker in the shape of a lion's head holding a ring in its mouth gleamed in counterpoint to the white cat that lay

coiled on the rush mat before the door."

However, when Sabriel has recovered from her flight from the Mordicant, the house takes on a more mythical and serious mood. Sabriel awakes to candlelight and when she enters the dining room, the leaded glass in the windows makes Sabriel wonder whether they are made of glass at all. Later on, Abhorsen's House becomes the place where Mogget makes Sabriel realise how little she knows about the world, and how grave the tidings for her father and the Old Kingdom are.

The books themselves provided a fairly good start in terms of the layout of the house, especially since Garth Nix provided a plan of the House and its gardens with the books. More than that, though, his descriptions of the characters' surroundings have always been ample, but leave enough room for interpretation.

The hardest part would have been the exterior design. The rooms were well-described and even when some liberties were taken in terms of the design of the rooms themselves, the props and functionality stayed largely the same.

The top-down view provided by Garth Nix, however, seemed a bit unsuitable for this image that a house in the middle of the waterfall conjured up. Garth Nix's design is very symmetrical, with one thick tower jutting up in the middle of the House.

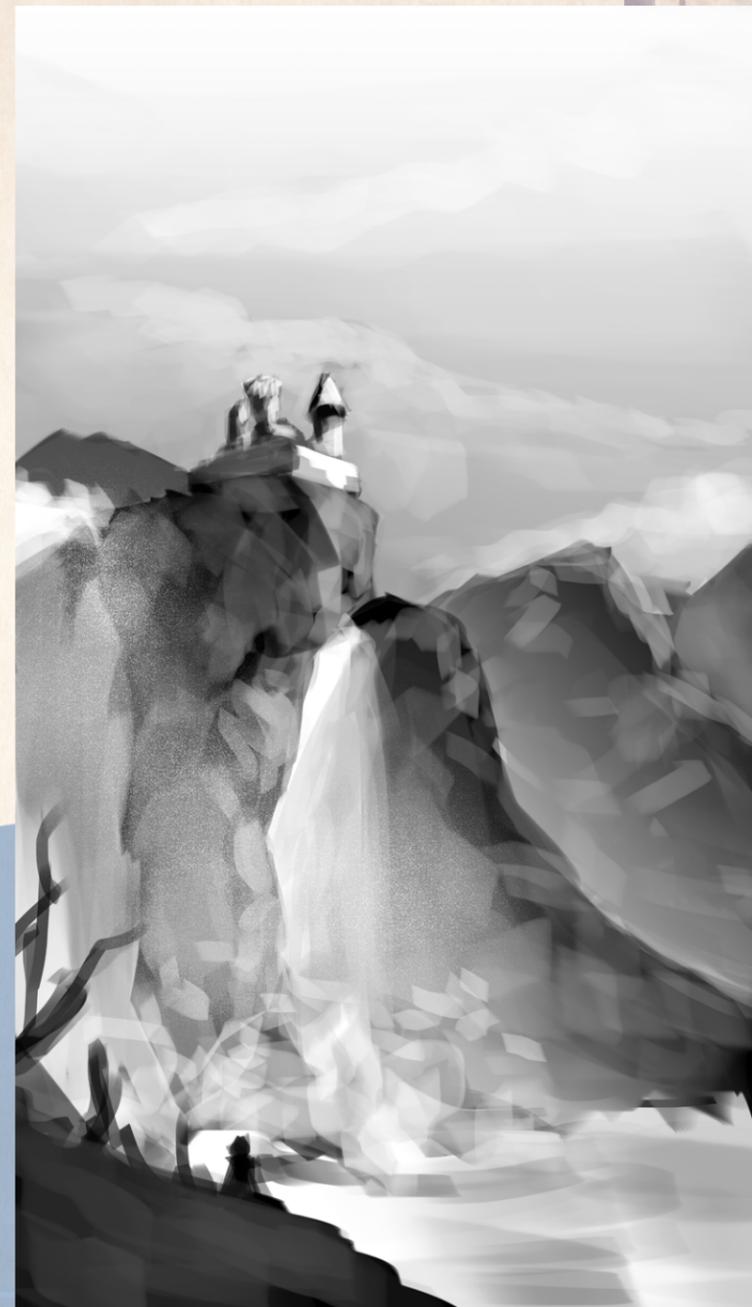


Sketch | Digital



Sketch | Digital

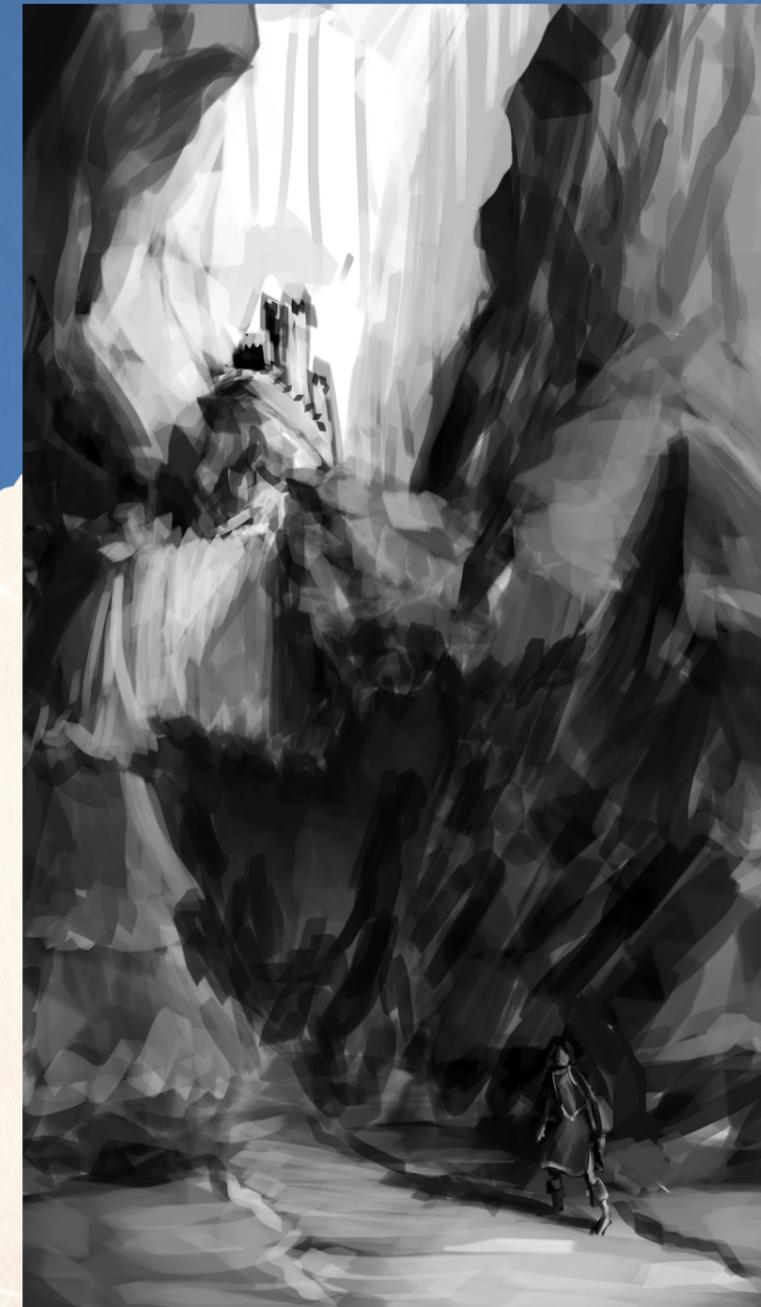
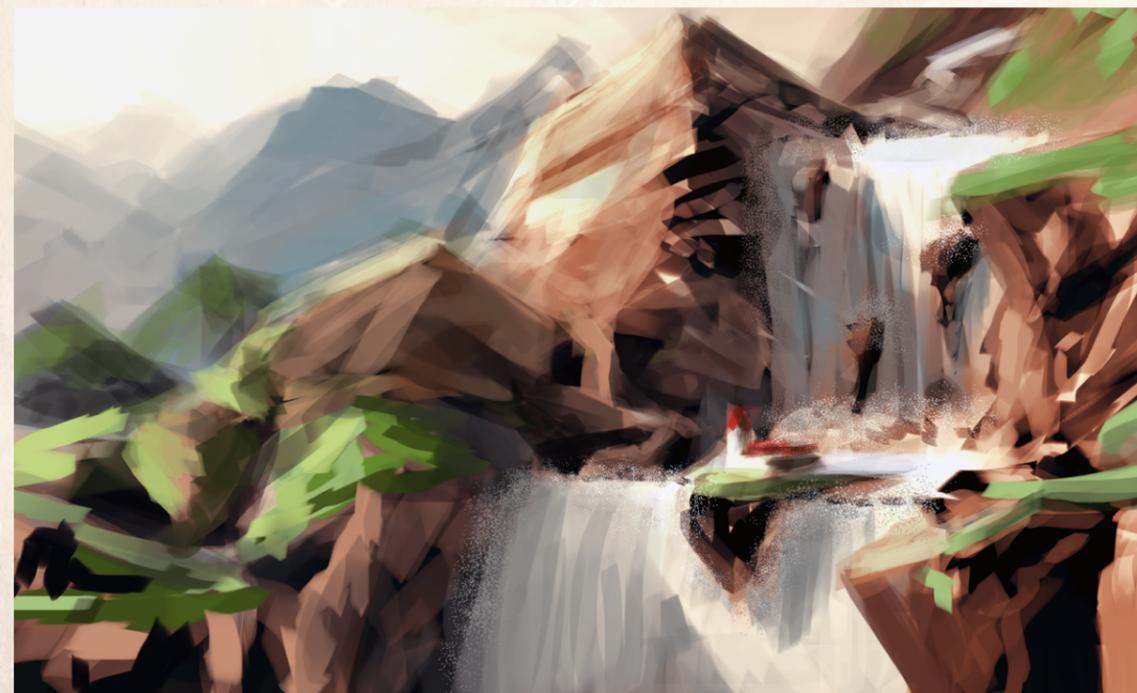
Concept | Digital



Concept | Digital

“I spent some time entertaining the idea of the Abhorsen’s House being in the middle of two waterfalls, but in the end it didn’t really work with story elements presented in the later books, so I let the idea go.”

Concept | Digital



Concept | Digital



Final Leaded Glass Design | Digital

“Abhorsen House is a house full of history. The stained glass windows were an important part of the Great Hall, displaying part of that history.”



Optional Leaded Glass Design | Digital



Lighting Key | Digital



Lighting Key | Digital

# Sabriel

“A tall, curiously pale young woman stood over the rabbit. Her night-black hair, fashionably bobbed, was hanging slightly over her face.

They pulled a thin, cotton-like undergarment over her head, and a pair of baggy drawers up her legs. Next came a linen shirt, then a tunic of doeskin and breeches of supple leather, reinforced with some sort of hard, segmented plates at thighs, knees and shins, not to mention a heavily padded bottom, no doubt designed for riding.

A brief respite followed, lulling Sabriel into thinking that might be it, but the sendings had merely been arranging the next layer for immediate fitting. Two of them pushed her arms into a long, armored coat that buckled up at the sides, while the other two unlaced a pair of hobnailed boots and waited.

The other sending waved out a gleaming, deep blue surcoat, dusted with embroidered silver keys that reflected the light in all directions. It waved the coat to and fro for a moment, then whipped it over Sabriel’s head and adjusted the drape with a practiced motion.

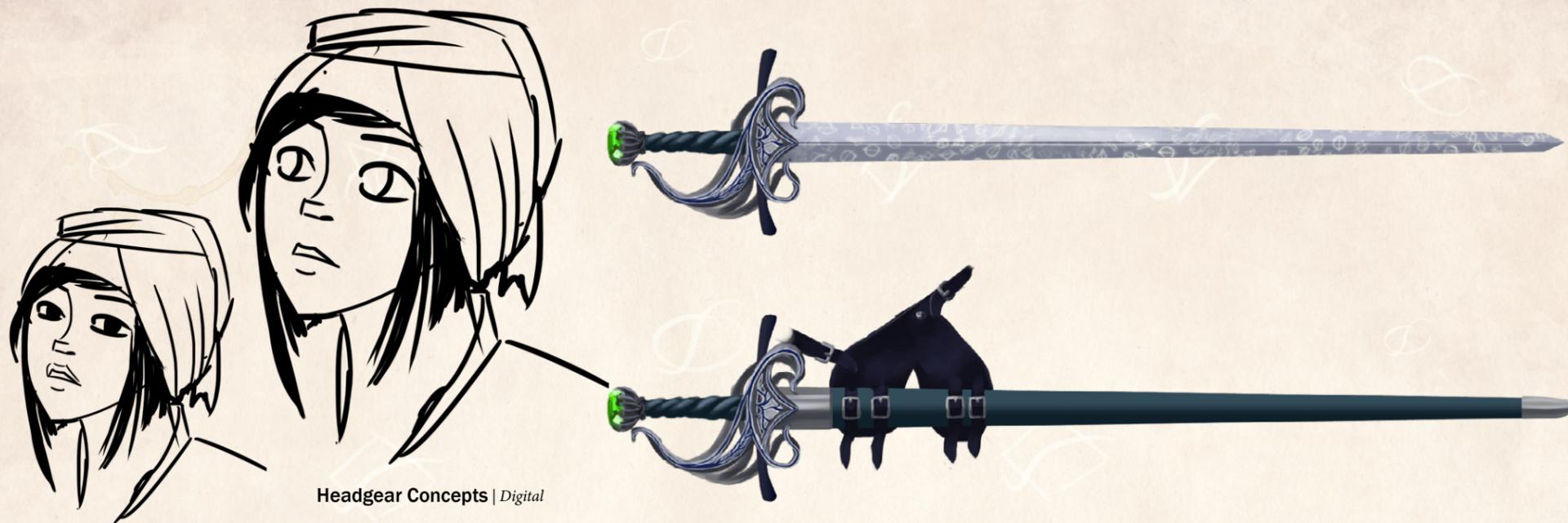
Last of all came sword-belt and bell-bandolier. The sendings brought them to her, but made no attempt to put them on. Sabriel adjusted them herself, carefully arranging bells and scabbard, feeling the familiar weight—bells across her breast and sword balanced on her hip. She turned to the

mirror and looked at her reflection, both pleased and troubled by what she saw. She looked competent, professional, a traveler who could look after herself. At the same time, she looked less like someone called Sabriel, and more like the Abhorsen, capital letter and all.”

Sabriel is the protagonist in the first book of the Abhorsen Trilogy. Right off the bat, she is portrayed as a responsible, down-to-earth kind of girl, but throughout the book she also realises how little she knows of the world she is burdened to protect. She starts as a senior and prefect with top grades and a lot of respect from the younger girls, but as soon as she leaves the school to seek her father, it becomes clear that the Old Kingdom is a dangerous place, and she has no idea how to sufficiently protect herself. The first book is mostly about her finding her way in the Old Kingdom and fitting herself to the new role she is supposed to fill: that of the Abhorsen.

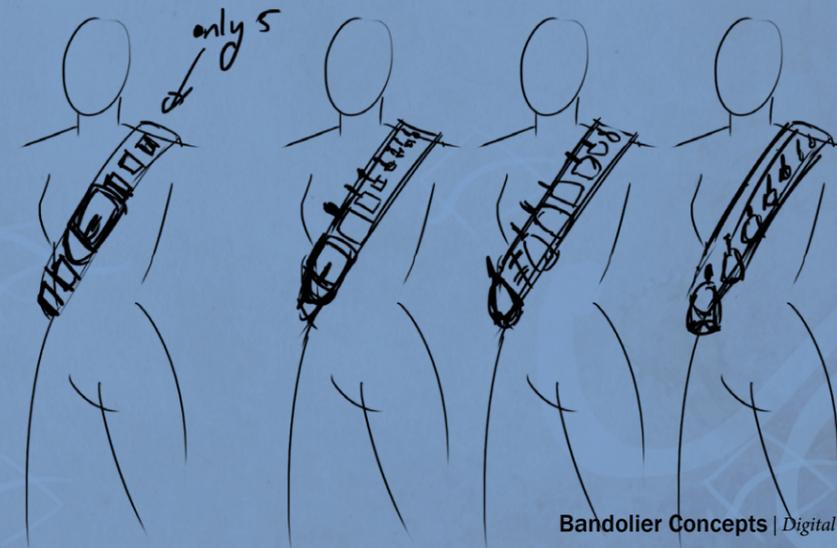


Sabriel | Digital



Headgear Concepts | Digital

Abhorsen's Sword | Digital



Bandolier Concepts | Digital



Sabriel in Death | Digital



Concept | Digital

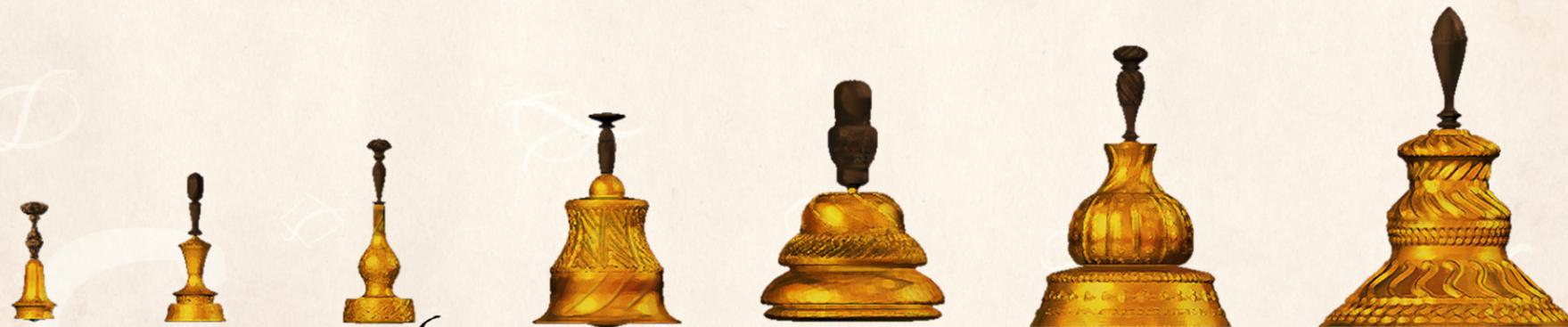


Concept | Digital

“The Bells are the Abhorsen’s tool to lay the dead to rest. I didn’t want to end up with the standard bell silhouette, so I used Alchemy to help me break away from the conventional shape.”



Early Silhouette Concepts | Digital



*Ranna Mosrael Kibeth Dyrin Belgaer Saraneth Astarael*

Abhorsen’s Bells | Digital



# There's more where that came from..

I hope you enjoyed this preview! In the rest of the book, I continue to go into all kinds of concepts like the Mordicant, Mogget, the Clayr and Lirael, Touchstone and more. If you're happy with this preview, please consider getting the book in my store! You can find it at [gumroad.com/l/abhorsen](http://gumroad.com/l/abhorsen)

If you use MAILINGLIST as a coupon code, it'll give you 30% off on the book!

I've included a little sneak peek to the right. If you've enjoyed this preview, please consider supporting me by purchasing the full 81-page book!

Again, thank you for your support and your interest in my work. Without it, I wouldn't be able to make my art like I am right now.

