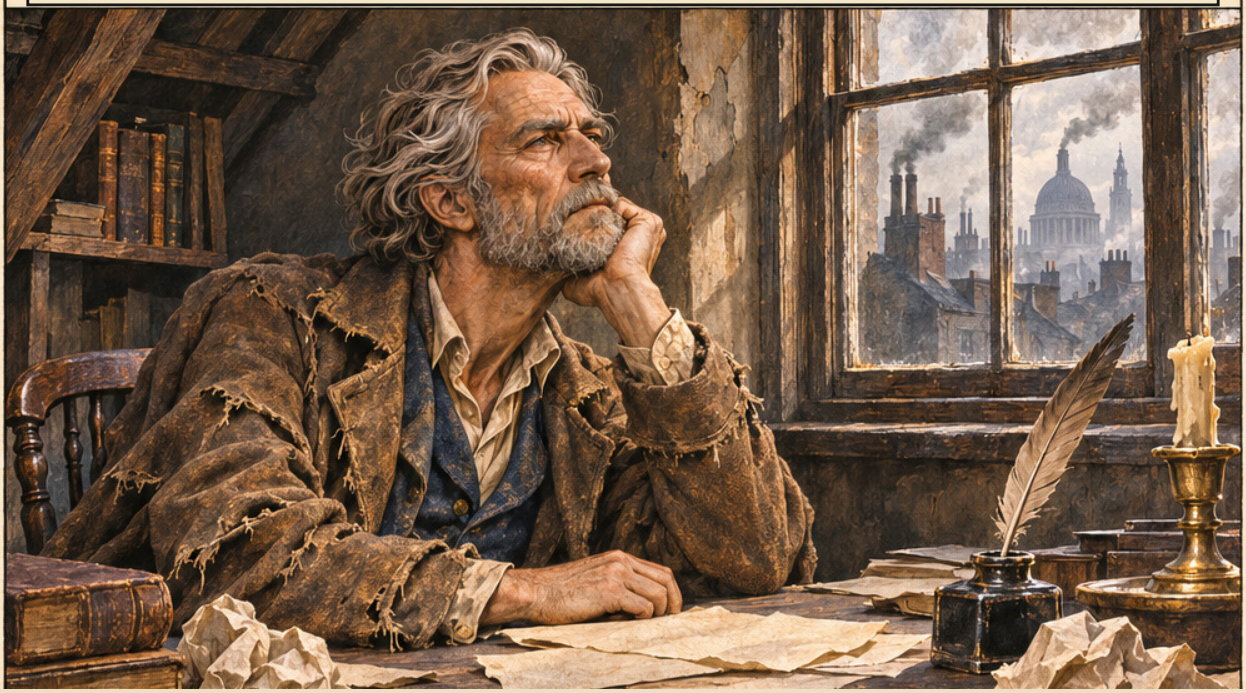
CELEPHAÏS

IN A DREAM KURANES SAW THE CITY IN THE VALLEY, AND THE SEA-COAST BEYOND...



...ALONE AMONG THE INDIFFERENT MILLIONS OF LONDON... HIS MONEY AND LANDS WERE GONE... WHAT HE WROTE WAS LAUGHED AT BY THOSE TO WHOM HE SHEWED IT...



HE HAD BEEN DREAMING OF THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS BORN; THE GREAT STONE HOUSE COVERED WITH IVY, WHERE THIRTEEN GENERATIONS OF HIS ANCESTORS HAD LIVED...



...PAST THE GREAT OAKS OF THE PARK, AND ALONG THE LONG WHITE ROAD TO THE VILLAGE.



THE VILLAGE SEEMED VERY OLD, EATEN AWAY AT THE EDGE LIKE THE MOON WHICH HAD COMMENCED TO WANE...



FAITH HAD URGED HIM ON, OVER THE PRECIPICE AND INTO THE GULF, WHERE HE HAD FLOATED DOWN, DOWN, DOWN...



THEN A RIFT SEEMED TO OPEN IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE HIM, AND HE SAW THE CITY OF THE VALLEY, GLISTENING RADIANTLY FAR, FAR BELOW...



KURANES HAD AWAKED THE VERY MOMENT HE BEHELD THE CITY...



...CELEPHAÏS, IN THE VALLEY OF OOTH-NARGAI BEYOND THE TANARIAN HILLS, WHERE HIS SPIRIT HAD DWELT ALL THE ETERNITY OF AN HOUR ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON VERY LONG AGO...



...HE HAD FOUND HIS FABULOUS CITY AFTER FORTY WEARY YEARS.



BUT THREE NIGHTS AFTERWARD KURANES CAME AGAIN TO CELEPHAÏS.



...THE SMALL WOODEN BRIDGE WHERE HE HAD CARVED HIS NAME SO MANY YEARS AGO...



...NOR WERE THE MARBLE WALLS DISCOLOURED, NOR THE POLISHED BRONZE STATUES UPON THEM TARNISHED.



...EVEN THE SENTRIES ON THE RAMPARTS WERE THE SAME, AND STILL AS YOUNG AS HE REMEMBERED THEM.



...THERE IS NO TIME IN OOTH-NARGAI, BUT ONLY PERPETUAL YOUTH.



...KURANES WALKED THROUGH THE STREET OF PILLARS TO THE SEAWARD WALL...



HE FOUND THE MAN, ATHIB, SITTING ON THE SAME CHEST OF SPICES HE HAD SAT UPON BEFORE, AND ATHIB SEEMED NOT TO REALISE THAT ANY TIME HAD PASSED.



THEN THE TWO ROWED TO A GALLEY IN THE HARBOUR...



FOR SEVERAL DAYS THEY GLIDED UNDULATINGLY OVER THE WATER, TILL FINALLY THEY CAME TO THE HORIZON, WHERE THE SEA MEETS THE SKY.



HERE THE GALLEY PAUSED NOT AT ALL, BUT FLOATED EASILY IN THE BLUE OF THE SKY AMONG FLEECY CLOUDS TINTED WITH ROSE.



...THEY WOULD SOON ENTER THE HARBOUR OF SERANNIAN, THE PINK MARBLE CITY OF THE CLOUDS...



...AS THE HIGHEST OF THE CITY'S CARVEN TOWERS CAME INTO SIGHT THERE WAS A SOUND SOMEWHERE IN SPACE, AND KURANES AWAKED IN HIS LONDON GARRET.



FOR MANY MONTHS AFTER THAT KURANES SOUGHT THE MARVELLOUS CITY OF CELEPHAÏS... IN VAIN...



...TOO GIGANTIC EVER TO HAVE RISEN BY HUMAN HANDS...



...THERE WERE NO PEOPLE THERE, BUT ONLY BIRDS AND BEES AND BUTTERFLIES.



ON ANOTHER NIGHT KURANES WALKED UP A DAMP STONE SPIRAL STAIRWAY ENDLESSLY, AND CAME TO A TOWER WINDOW OVERLOOKING A MIGHTY PLAIN AND RIVER LIT BY THE FULL MOON...



...A FEARSOME AURORA SPUTTERED UP... SHEWING THE RUIN AND ANTIQUITY OF THE CITY, AND THE STAGNATION OF THE REEDY RIVER, AND THE DEATH LYING UPON THAT LAND...



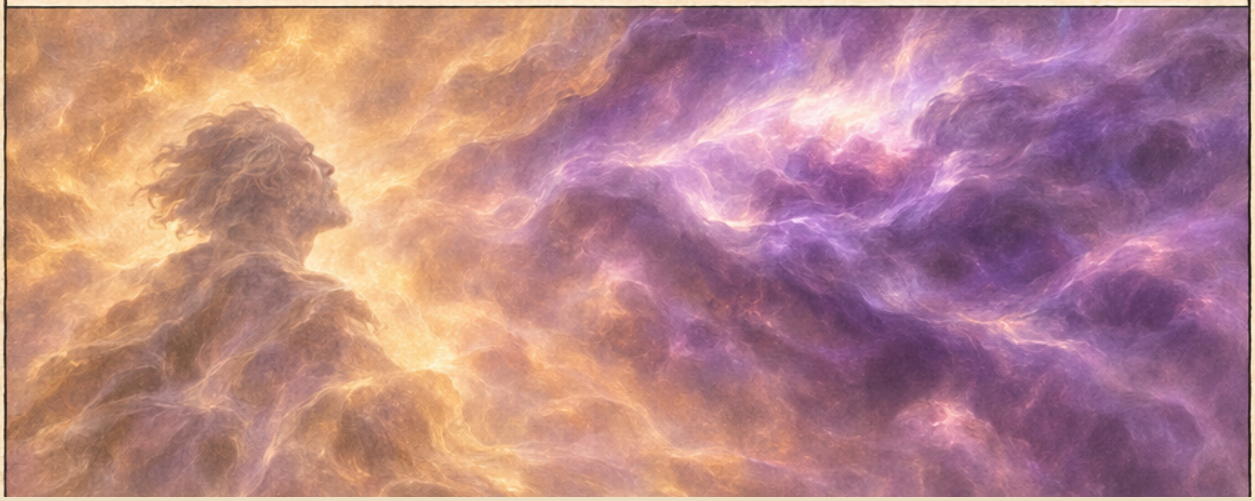
...ONCE BARELY ESCAPING FROM THE HIGH-PRIEST NOT TO BE DESCRIBED, WHICH WEARS A YELLOW SILKEN MASK OVER ITS FACE...



...HE BEGAN BUYING DRUGS IN ORDER TO INCREASE HIS PERIODS OF SLEEP. HASHEESH HELPED A GREAT DEAL...



AND A VIOLET-COLOURED GAS TOLD HIM THAT THIS PART OF SPACE WAS OUTSIDE WHAT HE HAD CALLED INFINITY.



...EVENTUALLY HE HAD NO MORE MONEY LEFT, AND COULD BUY NO DRUGS.



THEN ONE SUMMER DAY HE WAS TURNED OUT OF HIS GARRET...



...WANDERED AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE STREETS, DRIFTING OVER A BRIDGE TO A PLACE WHERE THE HOUSES GREW THINNER AND THINNER.



...ASTRIDE ROAN HORSES AND CLAD IN SHINING ARMOUR WITH TABARDS OF CLOTH-OF-GOLD...



...IT WAS HE WHO HAD CREATED OOTH-NARGAI IN HIS DREAMS...



...HE WAS NOW TO BE APPOINTED ITS CHIEF GOD FOR EVERMORE.



...ALL RODE MAJESTICALLY THROUGH THE DOWNS OF SURREY AND ONWARD TOWARD THE REGION WHERE KURANES AND HIS ANCESTORS WERE BORN.



...AS THE RIDERS WENT ON THEY SEEMED TO GALLOP BACK THROUGH TIME...



WHEN IT GREW DARK THEY TRAVELLED MORE SWIFTLY, TILL SOON THEY WERE FLYING UNCANNILY AS IF IN THE AIR.



IN THE DIM DAWN THEY CAME UPON THE VILLAGE WHICH KURANES HAD SEEN ALIVE IN HIS CHILDHOOD, AND ASLEEP OR DEAD IN HIS DREAMS. IT WAS ALIVE NOW...



THE ABYSS WAS NOW A SEETHING CHAOS OF ROSEATE AND CERULEAN SPLENDOUR... THE KNIGHTLY ENTOURAGE PLUNGED OVER THE EDGE AND FLOATED GRACEFULLY DOWN...



AND KURANES REIGNED THEREAFTER OVER OOTH-NARGAI AND ALL THE NEIGHBOURING REGIONS OF DREAM...



...AND HELD HIS COURT ALTERNATELY IN CELEPHAÏS AND IN THE CLOUD-FASHIONED SERANNIAN.



HE REIGNS THERE STILL, AND WILL REIGN HAPPILY FOREVER, THOUGH BELOW THE CLIFFS AT INNSMOUTH THE CHANNEL TIDES PLAYED MOCKINGLY WITH THE BODY OF A TRAMP WHO HAD STUMBLED THROUGH THE HALF-DESERTED VILLAGE AT DAWN...



...PLAYED MOCKINGLY, AND CAST IT UPON THE ROCKS BY IVY-COVERED TREVOR TOWERS, WHERE A NOTABLY FAT AND ESPECIALLY OFFENSIVE MILLIONAIRE BREWER ENJOYS THE PURCHASED ATMOSPHERE OF EXTINCT NOBILITY.

