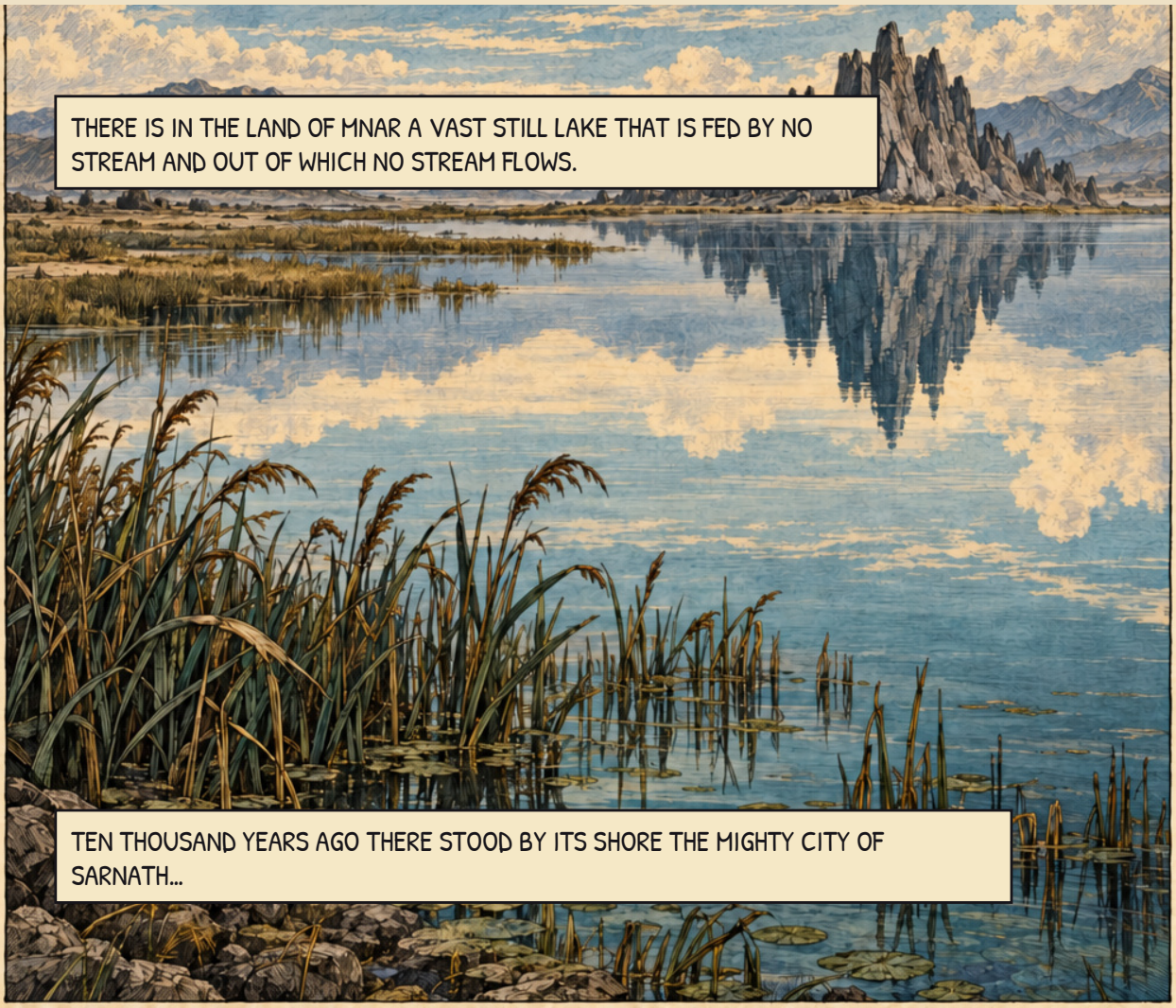
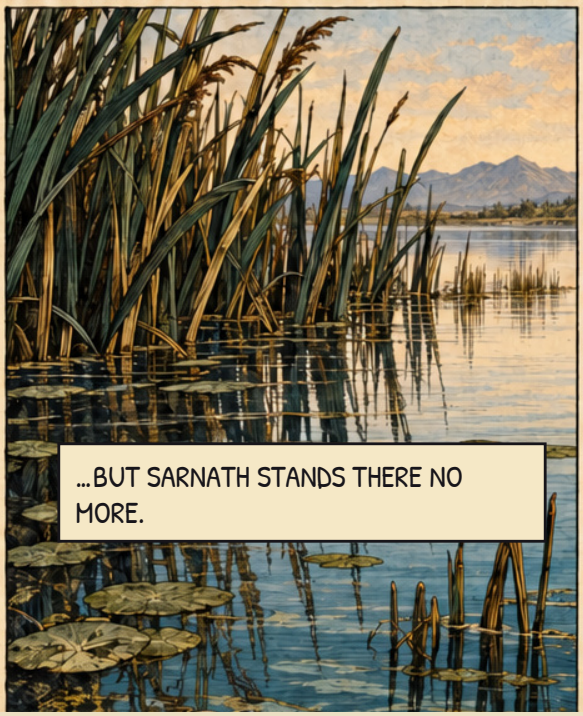
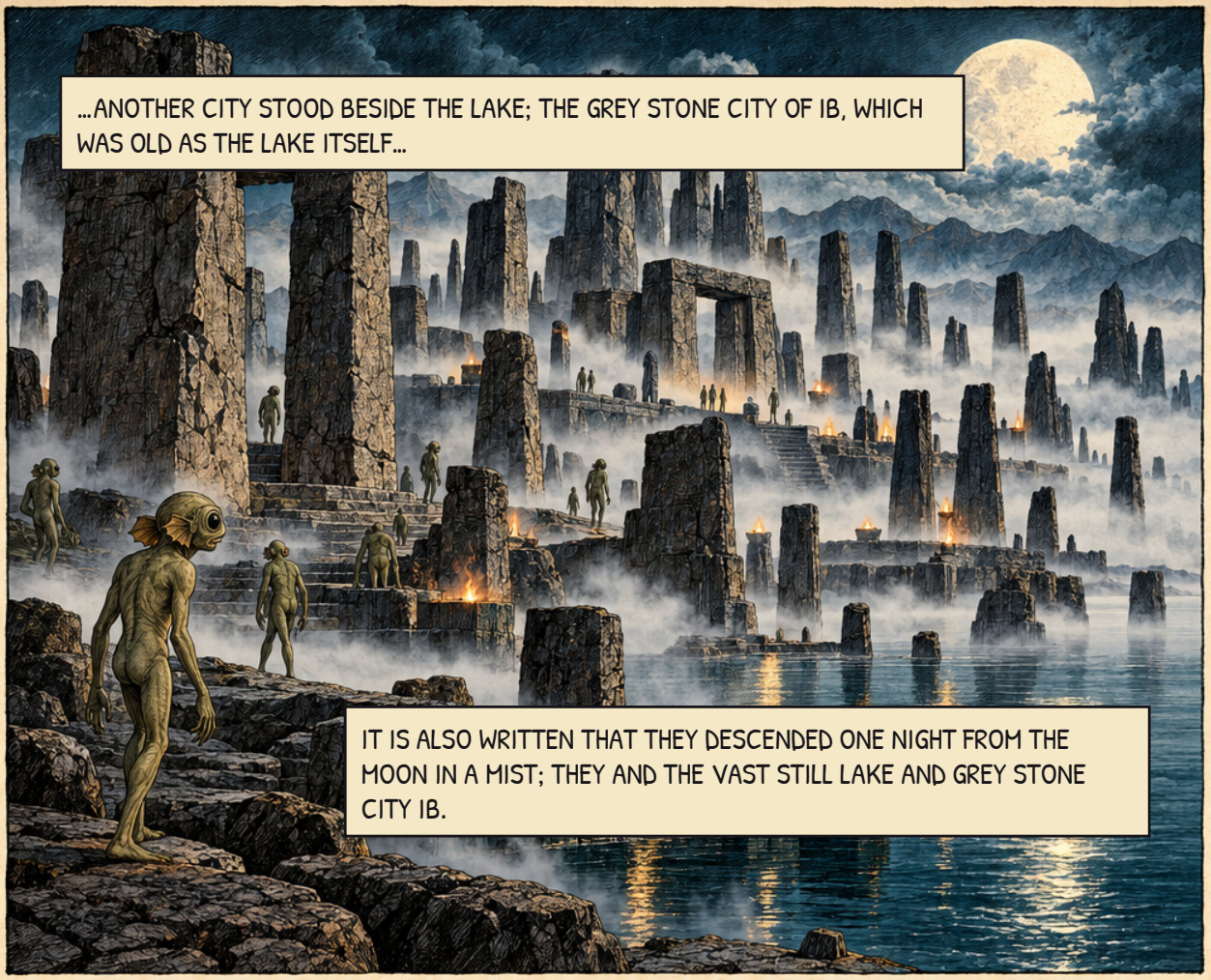
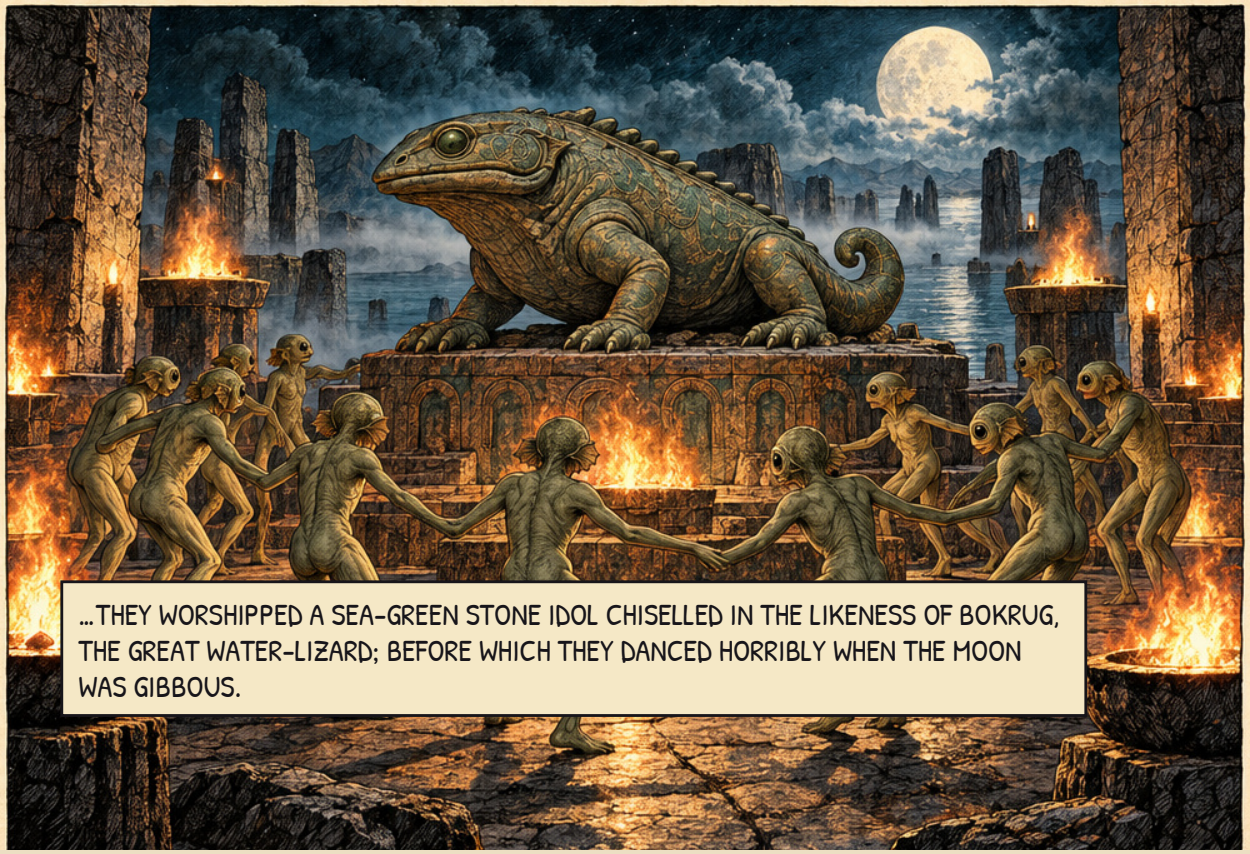
THE DOOM THAT CAME TO SARNATH

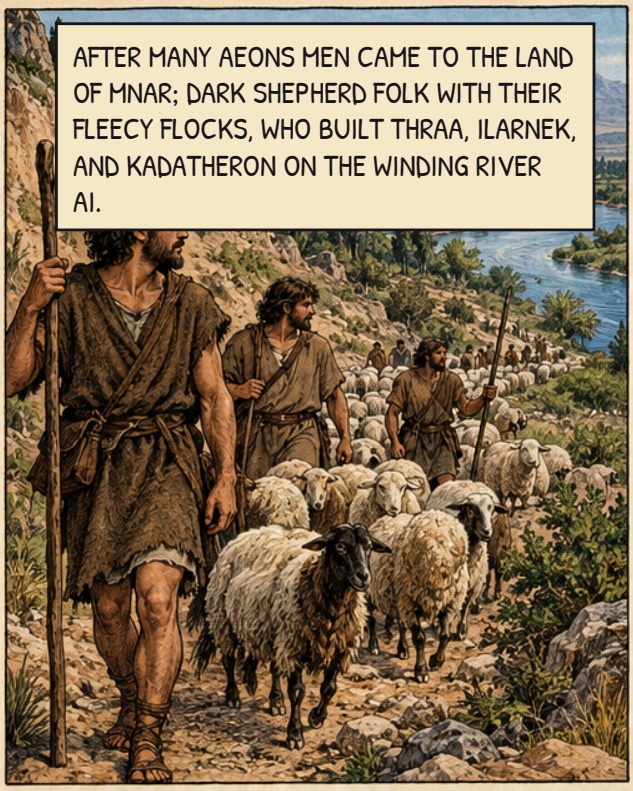


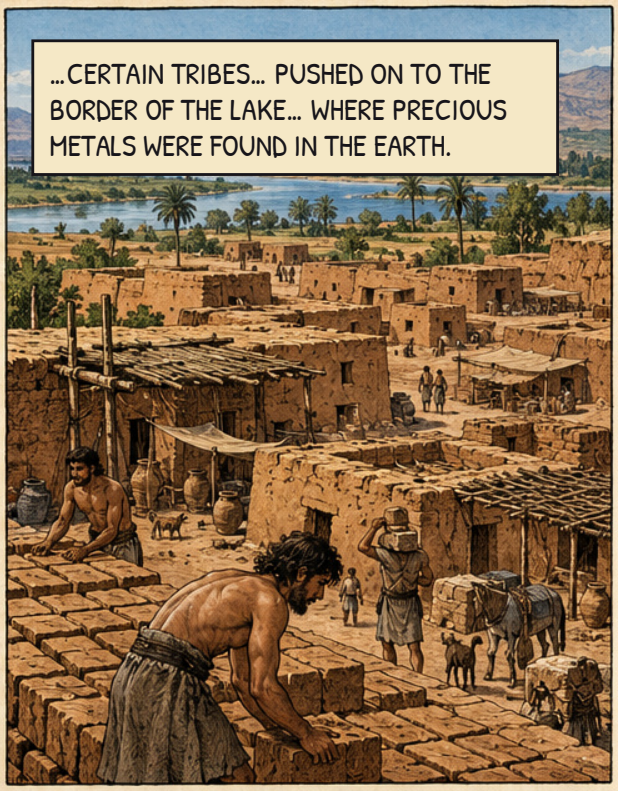





...ANOTHER CITY STOOD BESIDE THE LAKE; THE GREY STONE CITY OF IB, WHICH WAS OLD AS THE LAKE ITSELF...
IT IS ALSO WRITTEN THAT THEY DESCENDED ONE NIGHT FROM THE MOON IN A MIST; THEY AND THE VAST STILL LAKE AND GREY STONE CITY IB.

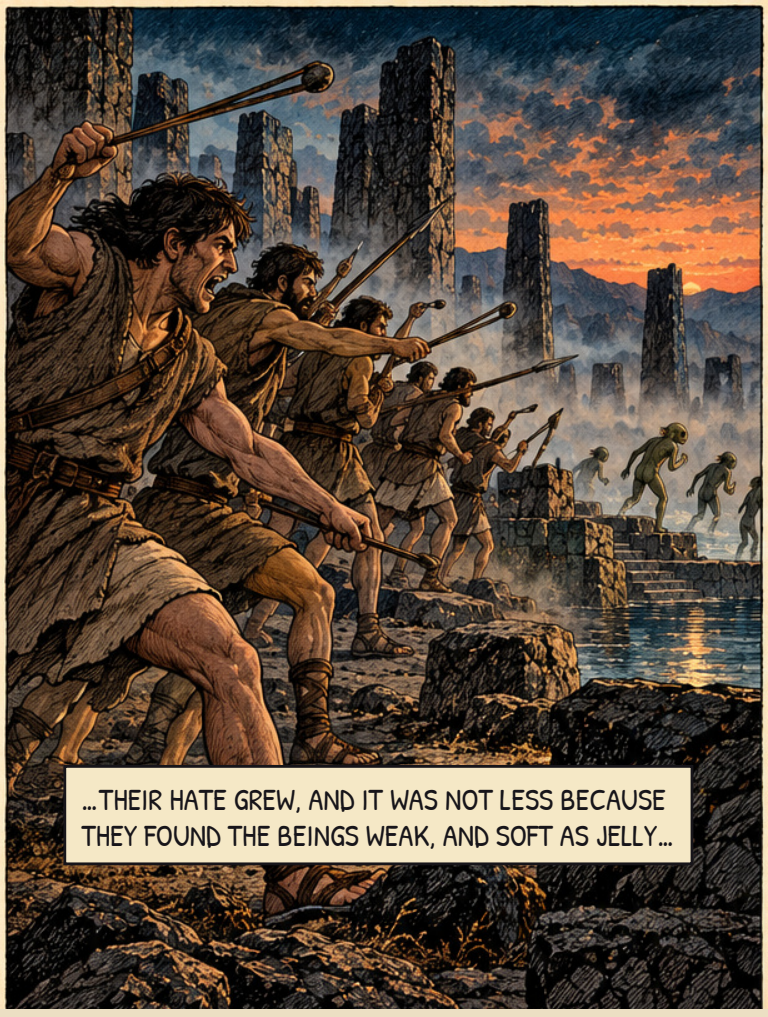

...THEY WORSHIPPED A SEA-GREEN STONE IDOL CHISELLED IN THE LIKENESS OF BOKRUG, THE GREAT WATER-LIZARD; BEFORE WHICH THEY DANCED HORRIBLY WHEN THE MOON WAS GIBBOUS.


AFTER MANY AEONS MEN CAME TO THE LAND OF MNAR; DARK SHEPHERD FOLK WITH THEIR FLEECY FLOCKS, WHO BUILT THRAA, ILARNEK, AND KADATHERON ON THE WINDING RIVER AI.

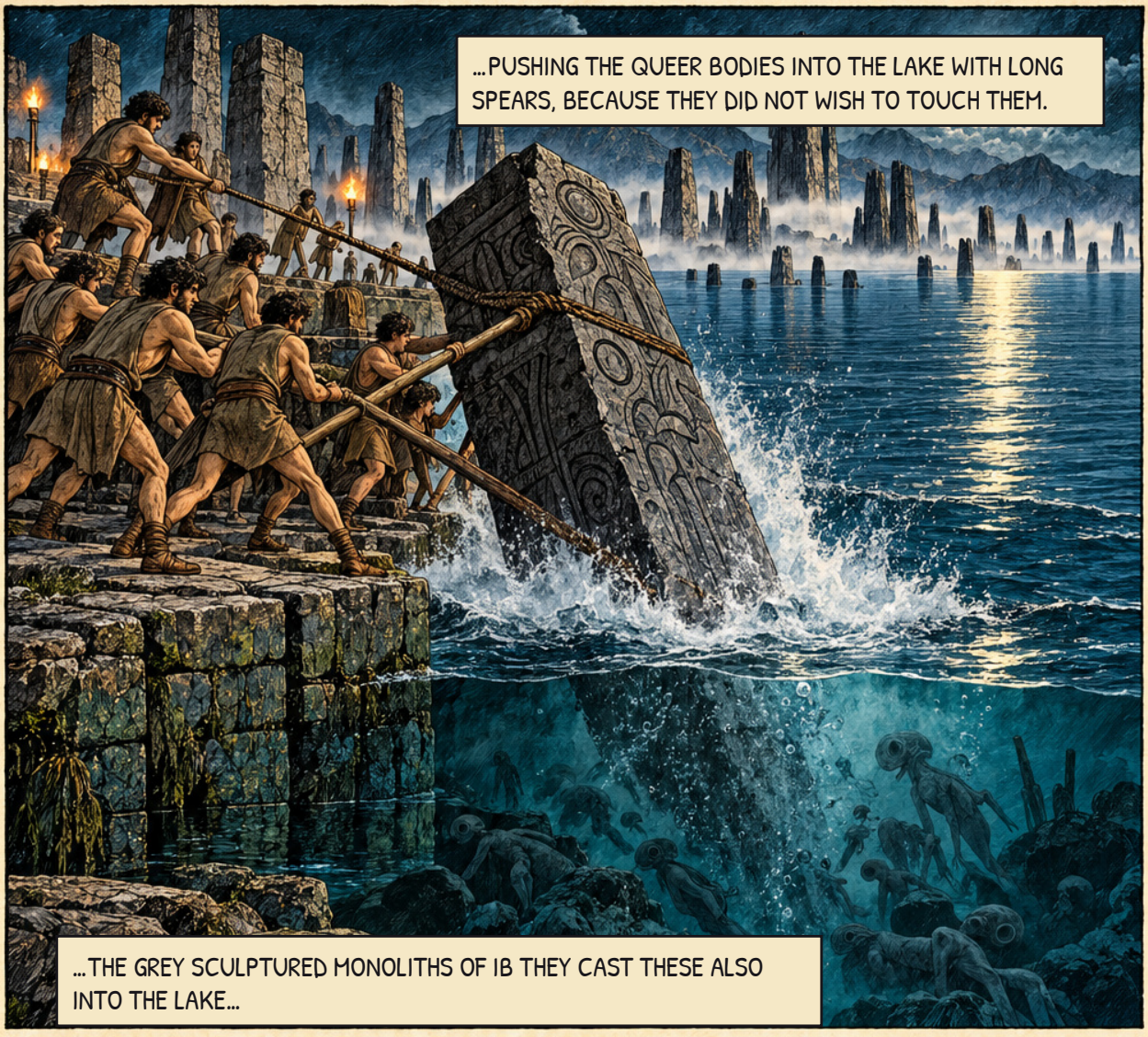

...CERTAIN TRIBES... PUSHED ON TO THE BORDER OF THE LAKE... WHERE PRECIOUS METALS WERE FOUND IN THE EARTH.

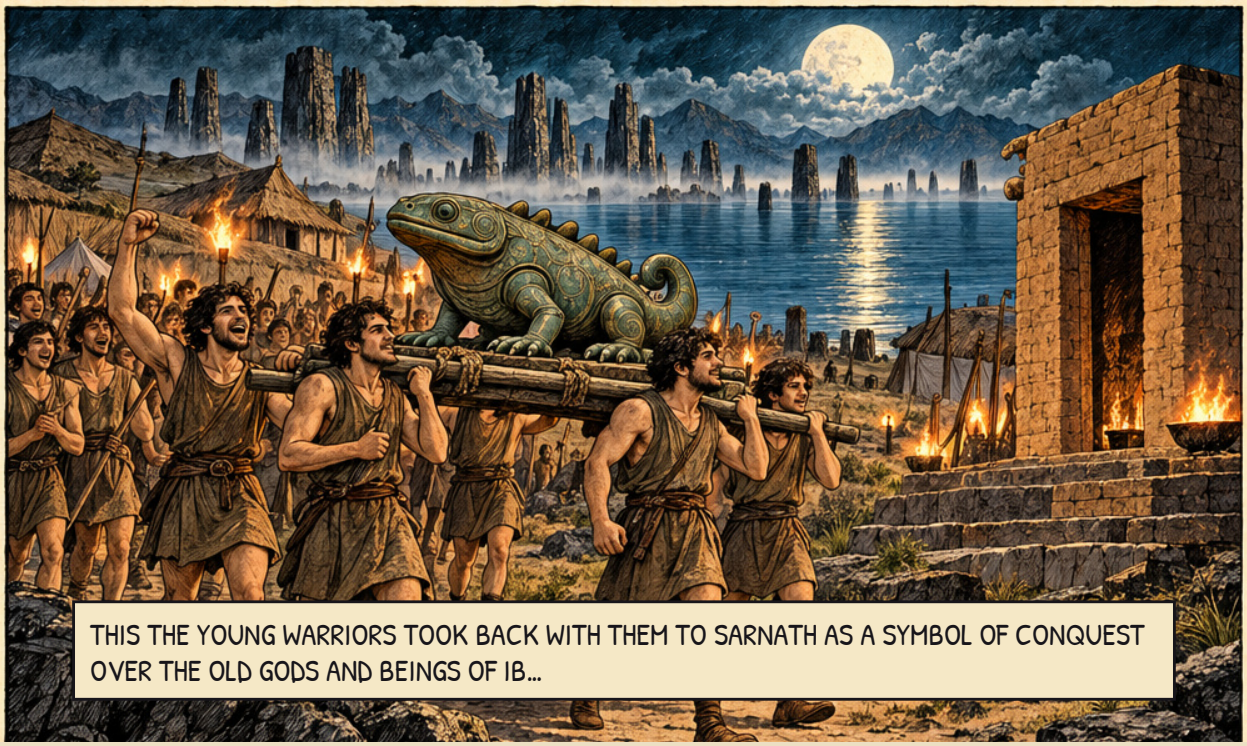

NOT FAR FROM THE GREY CITY OF IB DID THE WANDERING TRIBES LAY THE FIRST STONES OF SARNATH...

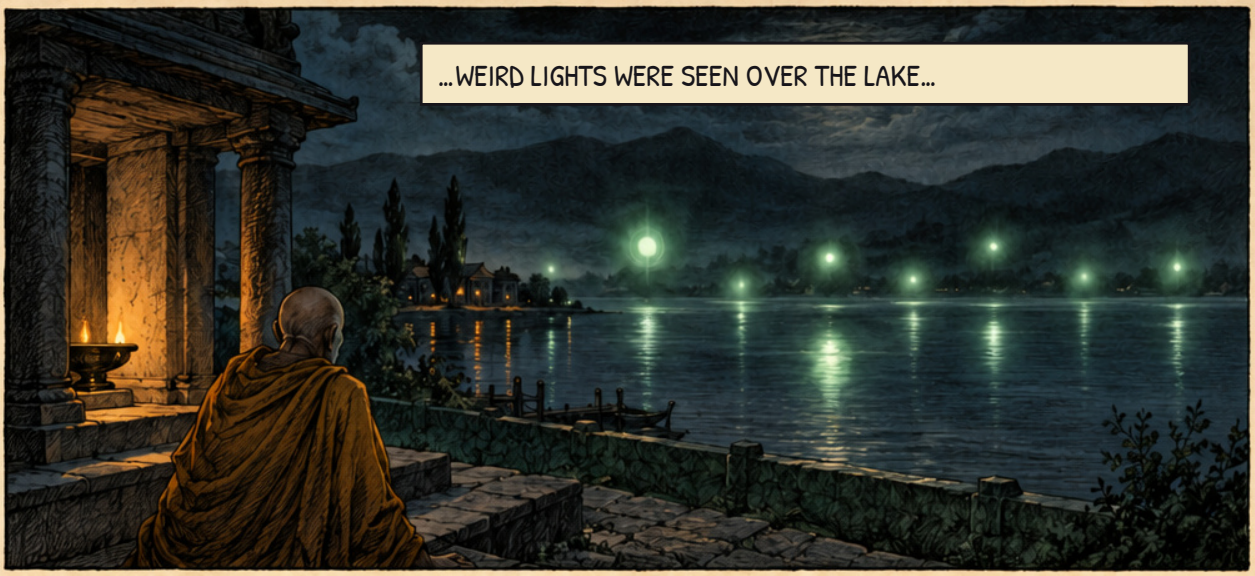

...WITH THEIR MARVELLING WAS MIXED HATE, FOR THEY THOUGHT IT NOT MEET THAT BEINGS OF SUCH ASPECT SHOULD WALK ABOUT THE WORLD OF MEN AT DUSK.


...THEIR HATE GREW, AND IT WAS NOT LESS BECAUSE THEY FOUND THE BEINGS WEAK, AND SOFT AS JELLY...

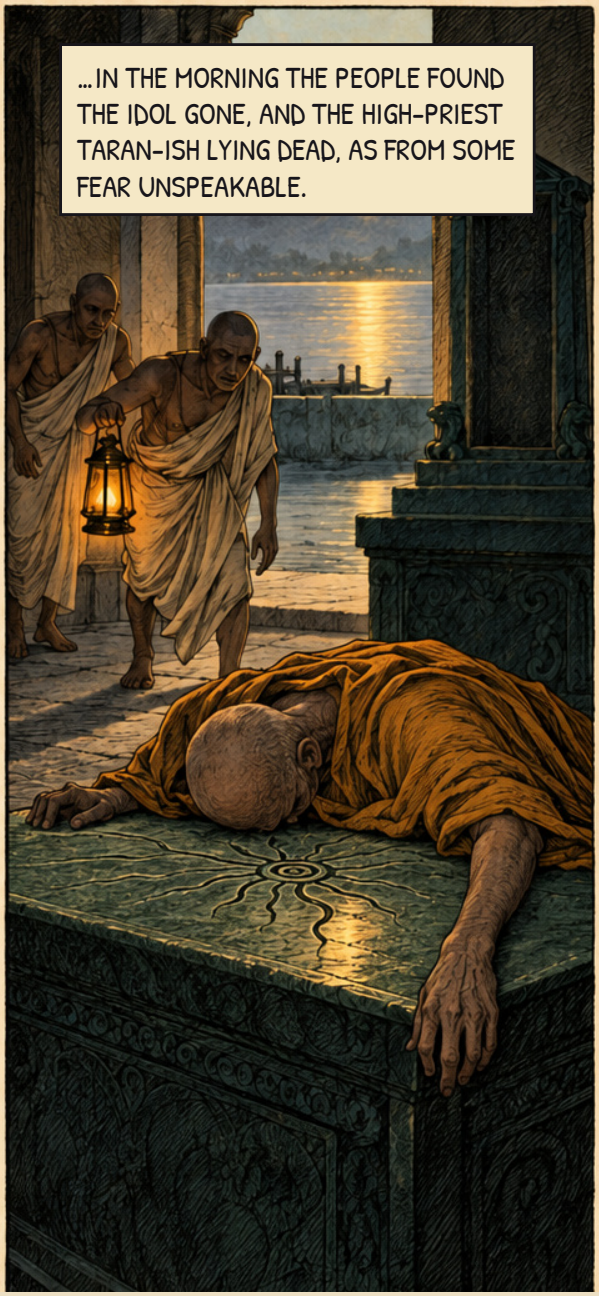

SO ONE DAY THE YOUNG WARRIORS... MARCHED AGAINST IB AND SLEW ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF...

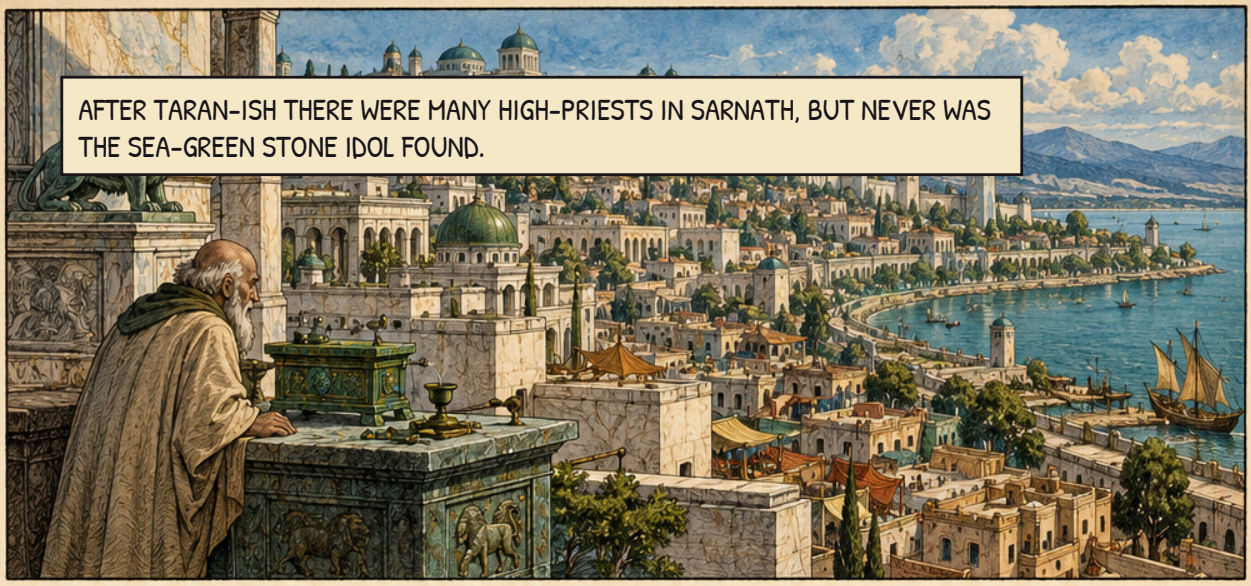

...PUSHING THE QUEER BODIES INTO THE LAKE WITH LONG SPEARS, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WISH TO TOUCH THEM.
...THE GREY SCULPTURED MONOLITHS OF IB THEY CAST THESE ALSO INTO THE LAKE...


THIS THE YOUNG WARRIORS TOOK BACK WITH THEM TO SARNATH AS A SYMBOL OF CONQUEST OVER THE OLD GODS AND BEINGS OF IB...


...WEIRD LIGHTS WERE SEEN OVER THE LAKE...


...TARAN-ISH HAD SCRAWLED UPON THE ALTAR OF CHRYSOLITE WITH COARSE SHAKY STROKES THE SIGN OF DOOM.
DOOM

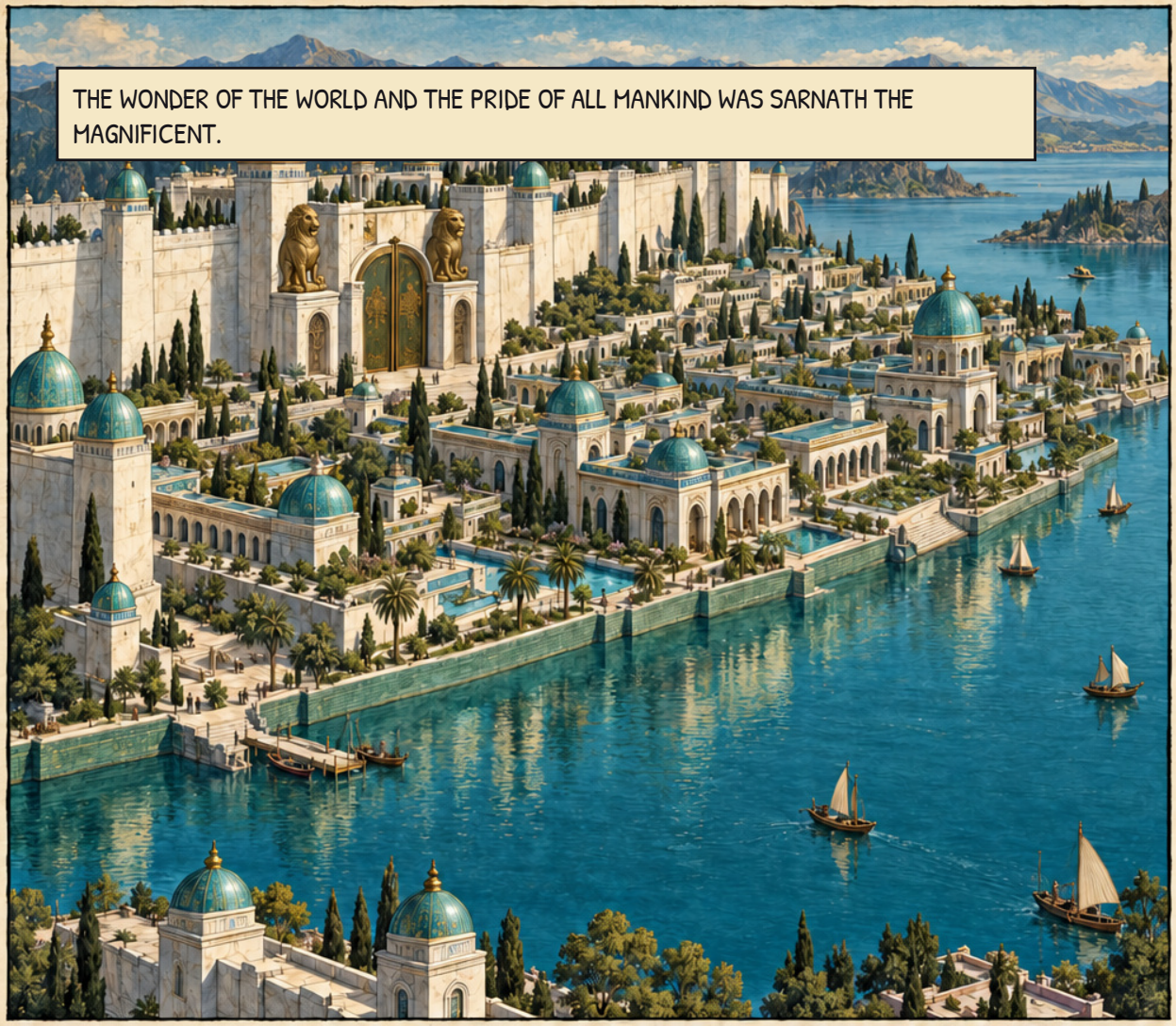

...IN THE MORNING THE PEOPLE FOUND THE IDOL GONE, AND THE HIGH-PRIEST TARAN-ISH LYING DEAD, AS FROM SOME FEAR UNSPEAKABLE.

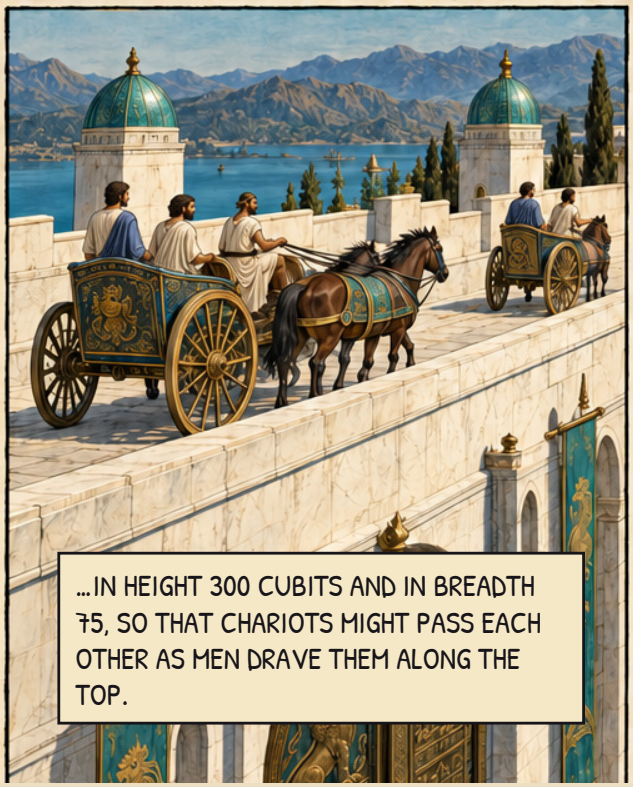

AFTER TARAN-ISH THERE WERE MANY HIGH-PRIESTS IN SARNATH, BUT NEVER WAS THE SEA-GREEN STONE IDOL FOUND.


...THE PRECIOUS METALS FROM THE EARTH WERE EXCHANGED FOR... RARE CLOTHS AND JEWELS AND BOOKS... AND ALL THINGS OF LUXURY...

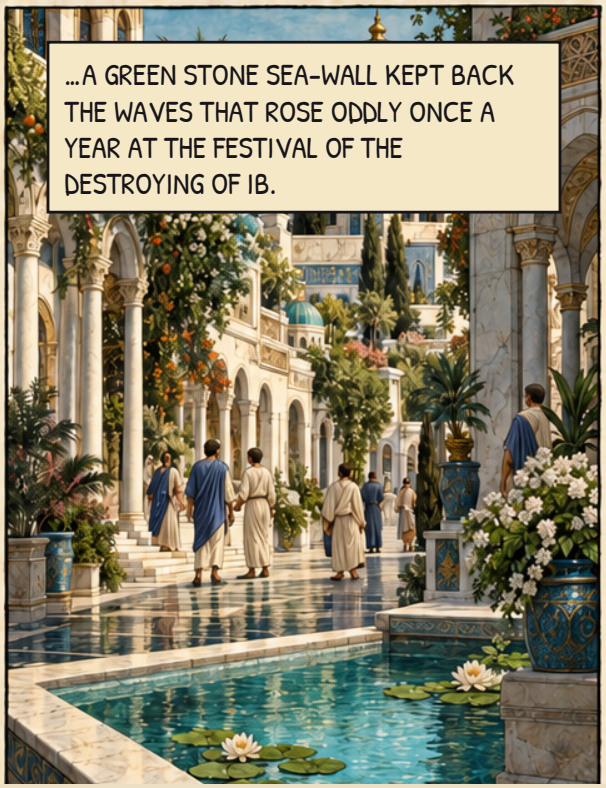

SO SARNATH WAXED MIGHTY AND LEARNED AND BEAUTIFUL, AND SENT FORTH CONQUERING ARMIES TO SUBDUE THE NEIGHBOURING CITIES...

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD AND THE PRIDE OF ALL MANKIND WAS SARNATH THE MAGNIFICENT.





...IN HEIGHT 300 CUBITS AND IN BREADTH 75, SO THAT CHARIOTS MIGHT PASS EACH OTHER AS MEN DRAVE THEM ALONG THE TOP.



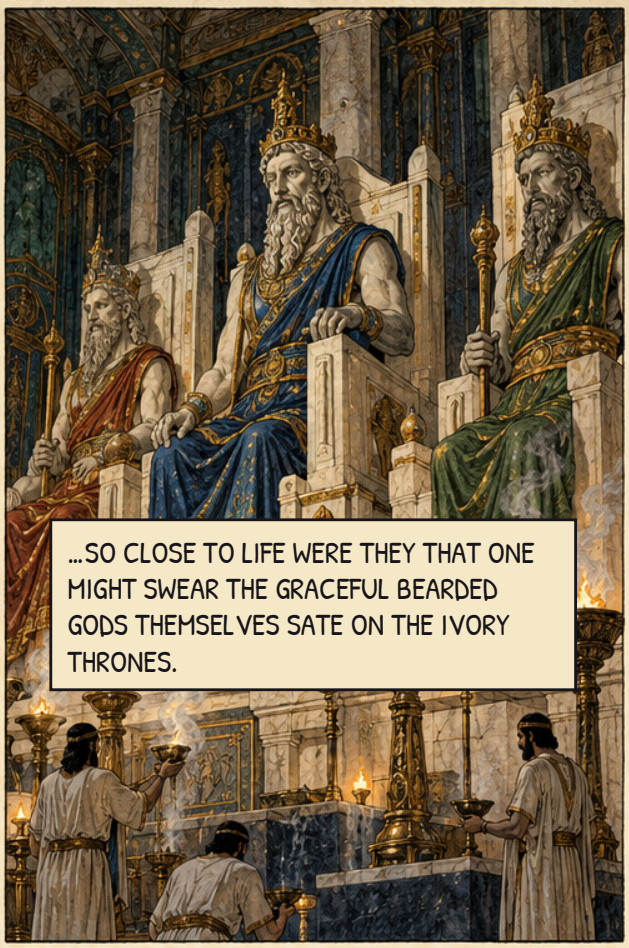
...A GREEN STONE SEA-WALL KEPT BACK THE WAVES THAT ROSE ODDLY ONCE A YEAR AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE DESTROYING OF IB.

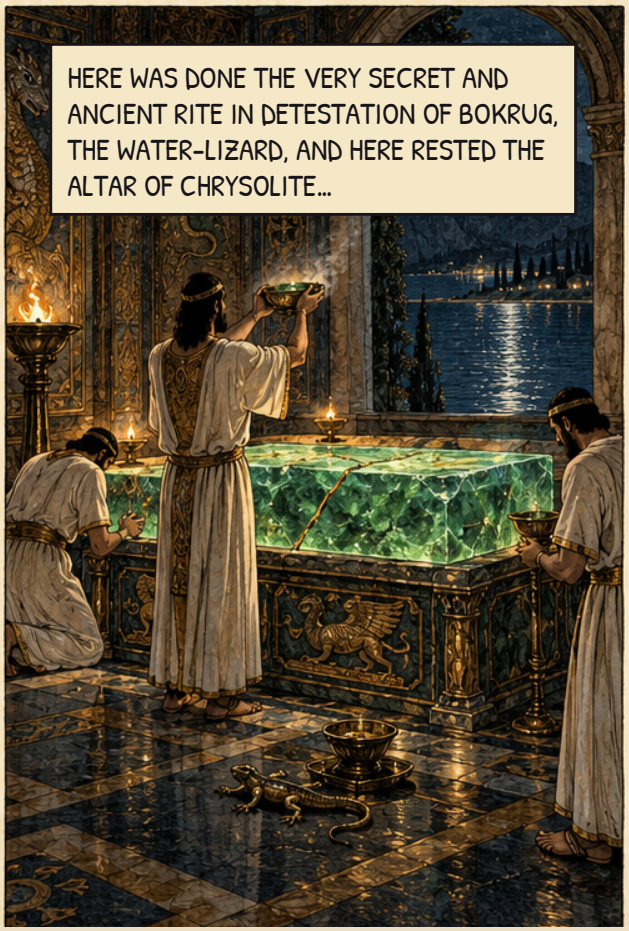

...THEIR WALLS SHEWED VAST PAINTINGS OF KINGS AND ARMIES, OF A SPLENDOUR AT ONCE INSPIRING AND STUPEFYING...


...IT WAS WROUGHT OF ONE PIECE OF IVORY, THOUGH NO MAN LIVES WHO KNOWS WHENCE SO VAST A PIECE COULD HAVE COME.


SOMETIMES THE AMPHITHEATRES WERE FLOODED WITH WATER... AND THEN WERE ENACTED STIRRING SEA-FIGHTS...


LOFTY AND AMAZING WERE THE SEVENTEEN TOWER-LIKE TEMPLES OF SARNATH... A FULL THOUSAND CUBITS HIGH STOOD THE GREATEST AMONG THEM...


...SO CLOSE TO LIFE WERE THEY THAT ONE MIGHT SWEAR THE GRACEFUL BEARDED GODS THEMSELVES SATE ON THE IVORY THRONES.


HERE WAS DONE THE VERY SECRET AND ANCIENT RITE IN DETESTATION OF BOKRUG, THE WATER-LIZARD, AND HERE RESTED THE ALTAR OF CHRYSOLITE...


...SO THAT IN THOSE GARDENS IT WAS ALWAYS SPRING.


EACH YEAR THERE WAS CELEBRATED IN SARNATH THE FEAST OF THE DESTROYING OF IB...


AND THE KINGS WOULD LOOK OUT OVER THE LAKE AND CURSE THE BONES OF THE DEAD THAT LAY BENEATH IT.

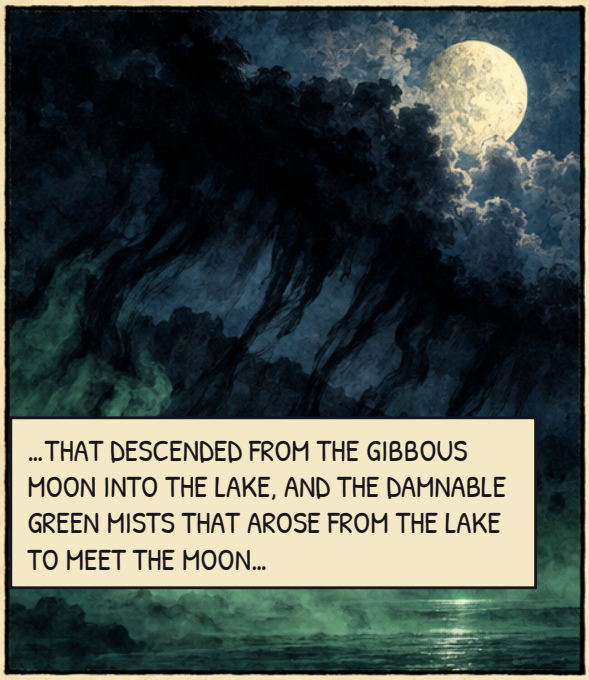

AT FIRST THE HIGH-PRIESTS LIKED NOT THESE FESTIVALS... THEY SOMETIMES SAW LIGHTS BENEATH THE WATERS OF THE LAKE.


BUT AS MANY YEARS PASSED WITHOUT CALAMITY EVEN THE PRIESTS LAUGHED AND CURSED AND JOINED IN THE ORGIES OF THE FEASTERS.

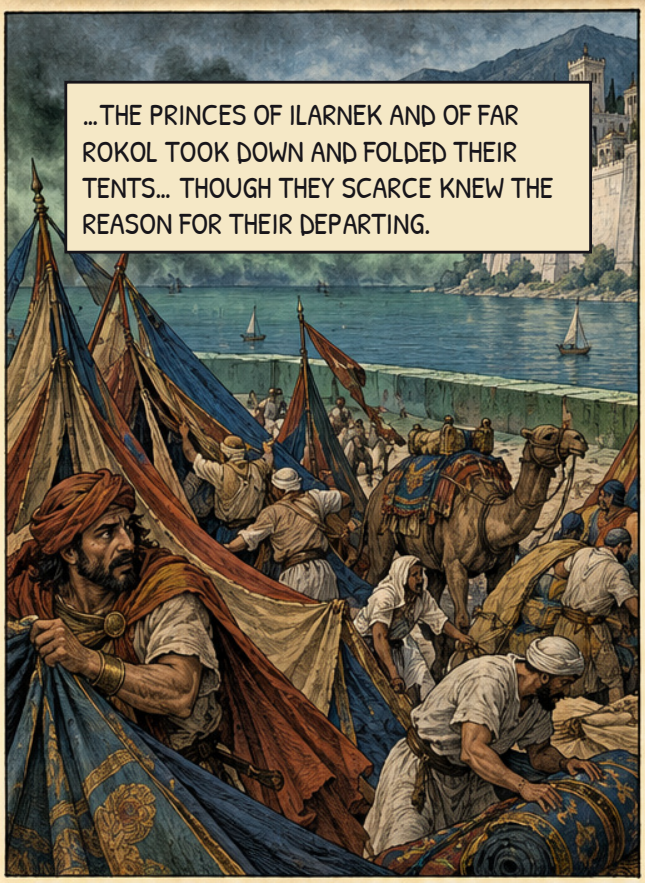

AND A THOUSAND YEARS OF RICHES AND DELIGHT PASSED OVER SARNATH, WONDER OF THE WORLD AND PRIDE OF ALL MANKIND.


GORGEOUS BEYOND THOUGHT WAS THE FEAST OF THE THOUSANDTH YEAR OF THE DESTROYING OF IB.
WITHIN HIS BANQUET-HALL RECLINED NARGIS-HEI, THE KING, DRUNKEN WITH ANCIENT WINE FROM THE VAULTS OF CONQUERED PNATH...
BUT MOST PRIZED OF ALL THE VIANDS WERE THE GREAT FISHES FROM THE LAKE... SERVED UP ON GOLDEN PLATTERS SET WITH RUBIES AND DIAMONDS.


AND IT WAS THE HIGH-PRIEST GNAI-KAH WHO FIRST SAW THE SHADOWS...


...THAT DESCENDED FROM THE GIBBOUS MOON INTO THE LAKE, AND THE DAMNABLE GREEN MISTS THAT AROSE FROM THE LAKE TO MEET THE MOON...


...STRANGE LIGHTS ON THE WATER... THE GREY ROCK AKURION... WAS ALMOST SUBMERGED.


...THE PRINCES OF ILARNEK AND OF FAR ROKOL TOOK DOWN AND FOLDED THEIR TENTS... THOUGH THEY SCARCE KNEW THE REASON FOR THEIR DEPARTING.


THEN, CLOSE TO THE HOUR OF MIDNIGHT, ALL THE BRONZE GATES OF SARNATH BURST OPEN...

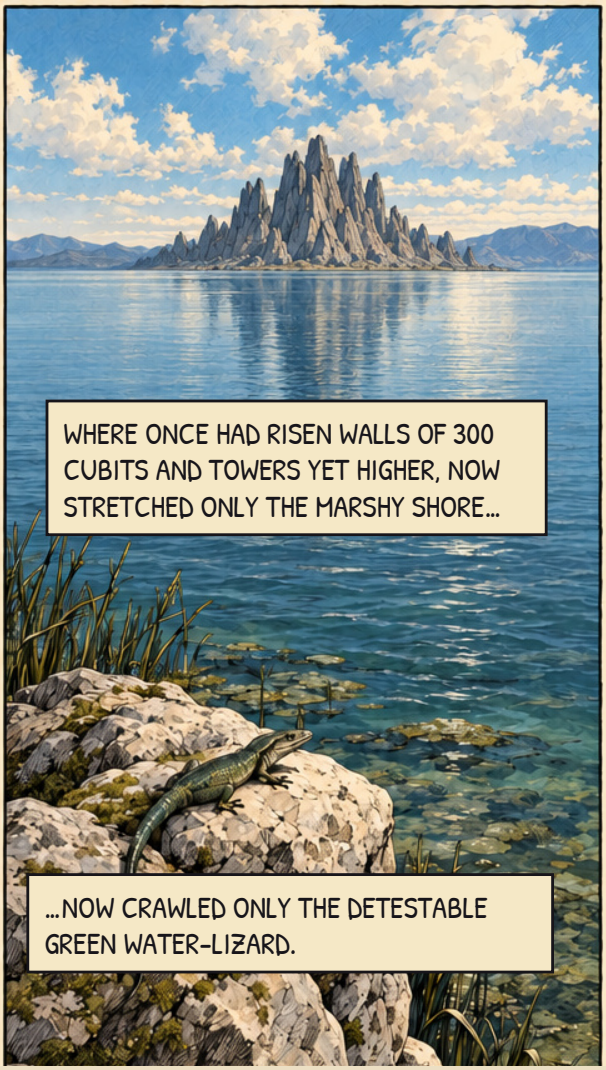

...AND ON THEIR TONGUES WERE WORDS SO TERRIBLE THAT NO HEARER PAUSED FOR PROOF.


...WHERE THROUGH THE WINDOWS WERE SEEN NO LONGER THE FORMS OF NARGIS-HEI AND HIS NOBLES AND SLAVES...
...BUT A HORDE OF INDESCRIBABLE GREEN VOICELESS THINGS WITH BULGING EYES, POUTING, FLABBY LIPS, AND CURIOUS EARS; THINGS WHICH DANCED HORRIBLY...


...GOLDEN PLATTERS... CONTAINING UNCOUTH FLAMES.


...THEY... LOOKED AGAIN UPON THE MIST-BEGETTING LAKE AND SAW THE GREY ROCK AKURION WAS QUITE SUBMERGED.


...ONLY THE BRAVE AND ADVENTUROUS YOUNG MEN OF DISTANT FALONA DARED MAKE THE JOURNEY...


WHERE ONCE HAD RISEN WALLS OF 300 CUBITS AND TOWERS YET HIGHER, NOW STRETCHED ONLY THE MARSHY SHORE...
...NOW CRAWLED ONLY THE DETESTABLE GREEN WATER-LIZARD.


BUT HALF BURIED IN THE RUSHES WAS SPIED A CURIOUS GREEN IDOL OF STONE; AN EXCEEDINGLY ANCIENT IDOL COATED WITH SEAWEED...
THAT IDOL, ENSHRINED IN THE HIGH TEMPLE AT ILARNEK...
...WAS SUBSEQUENTLY WORSHIPPED BENEATH THE GIBBOUS MOON THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF MNAR.