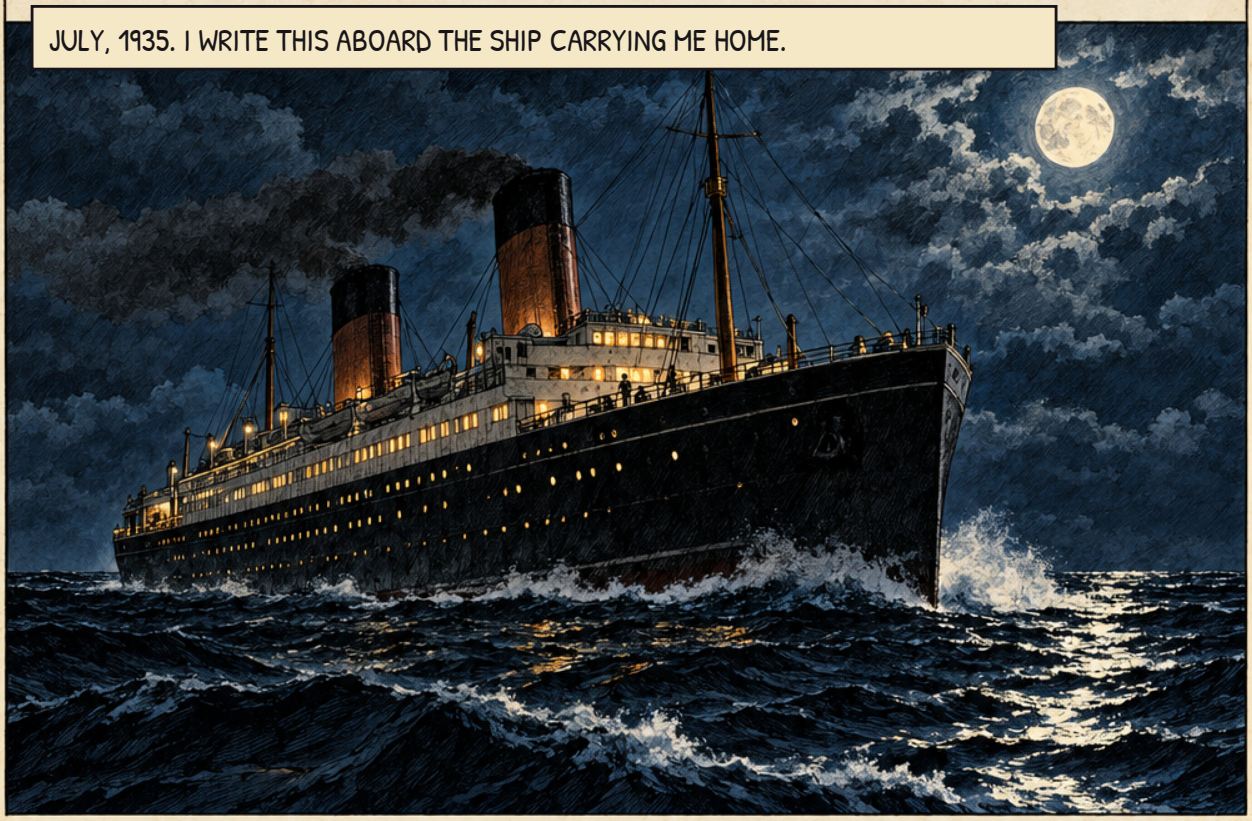
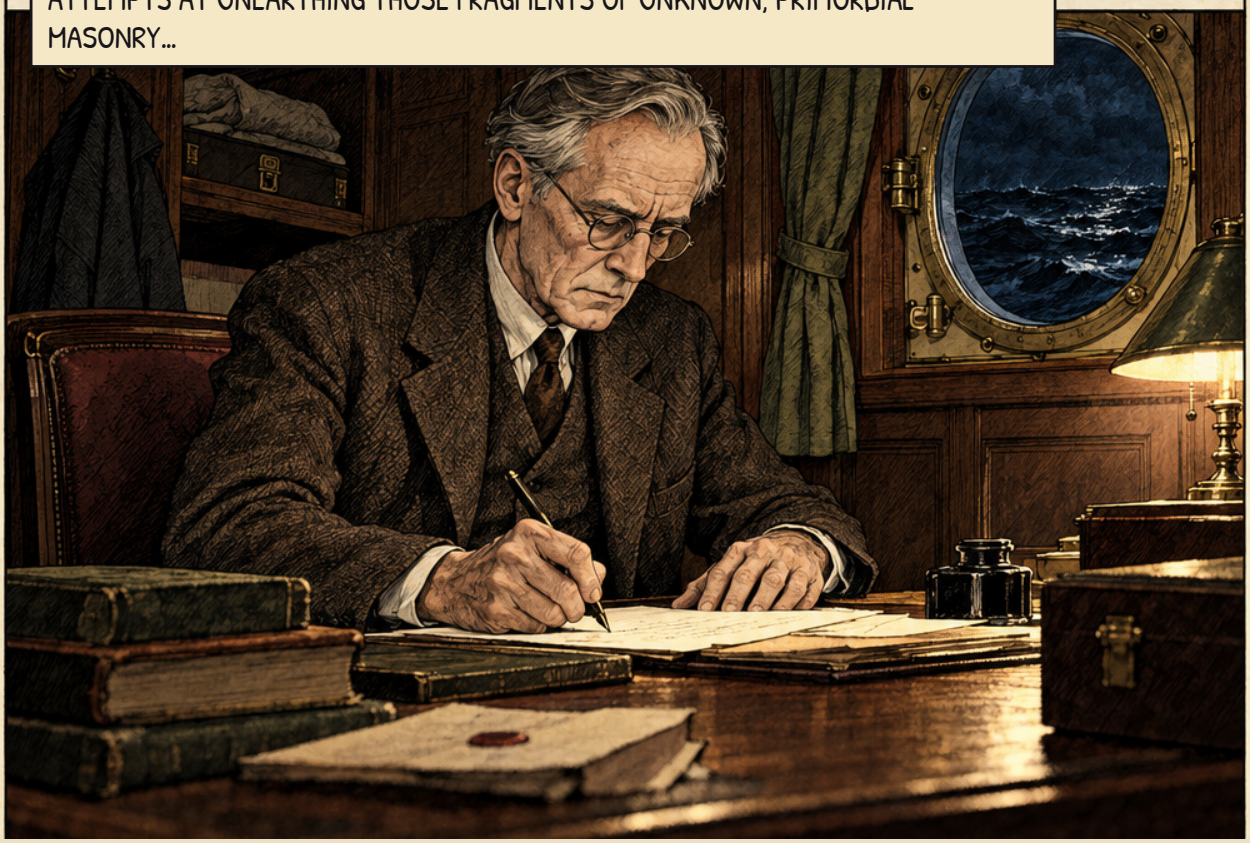
# THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME

JULY, 1935. I WRITE THIS ABOARD THE SHIP CARRYING ME HOME.

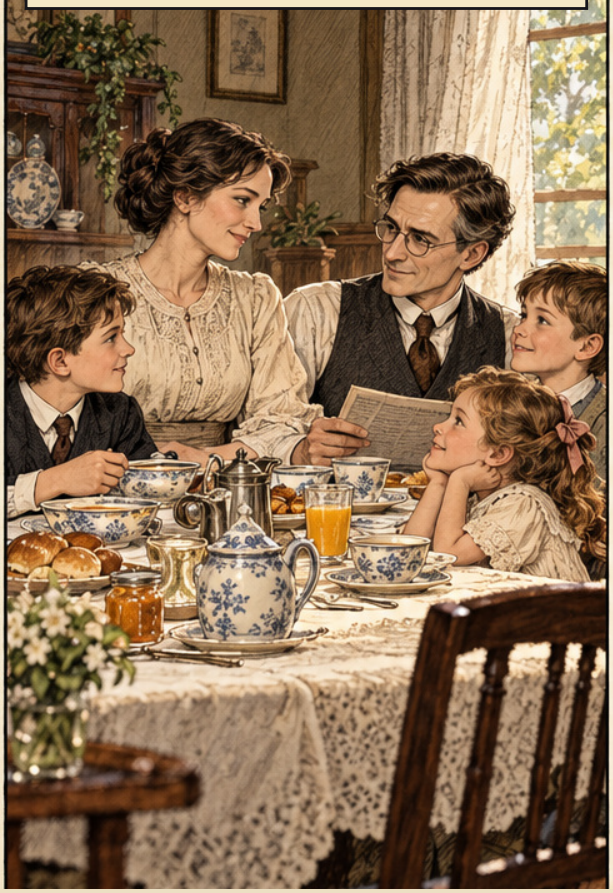


...I URGE, WITH ALL THE FORCE OF MY BEING, A FINAL ABANDONMENT OF ALL ATTEMPTS AT UNEARTHING THOSE FRAGMENTS OF UNKNOWN, PRIMORDIAL MASONRY...



MY NAME IS NATHANIEL WINGATE PEASLEE. UNTIL 1908, MY LIFE HAD BEEN ORDINARY.

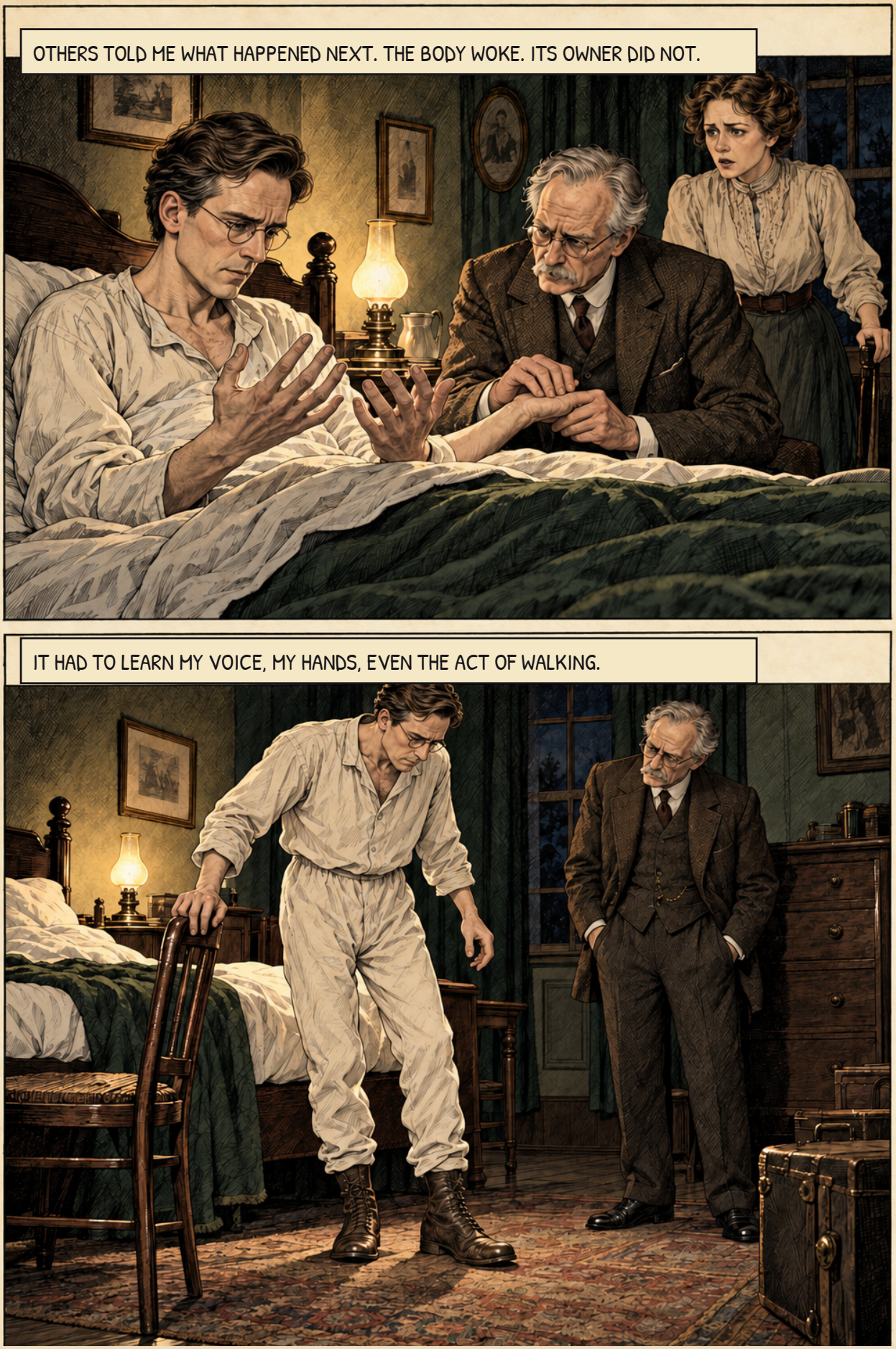
A WIFE. THREE CHILDREN.



A PROFESSORSHIP IN ECONOMICS. NO INTEREST IN THE OCCULT.




MAY 14, 1908. AT TWENTY PAST TEN, SOMETHING PRESSED AGAINST MY THOUGHTS.
FOR AN INSTANT, THE CLASSROOM WAS ANOTHER ROOM ENTIRELY.
THEN I FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

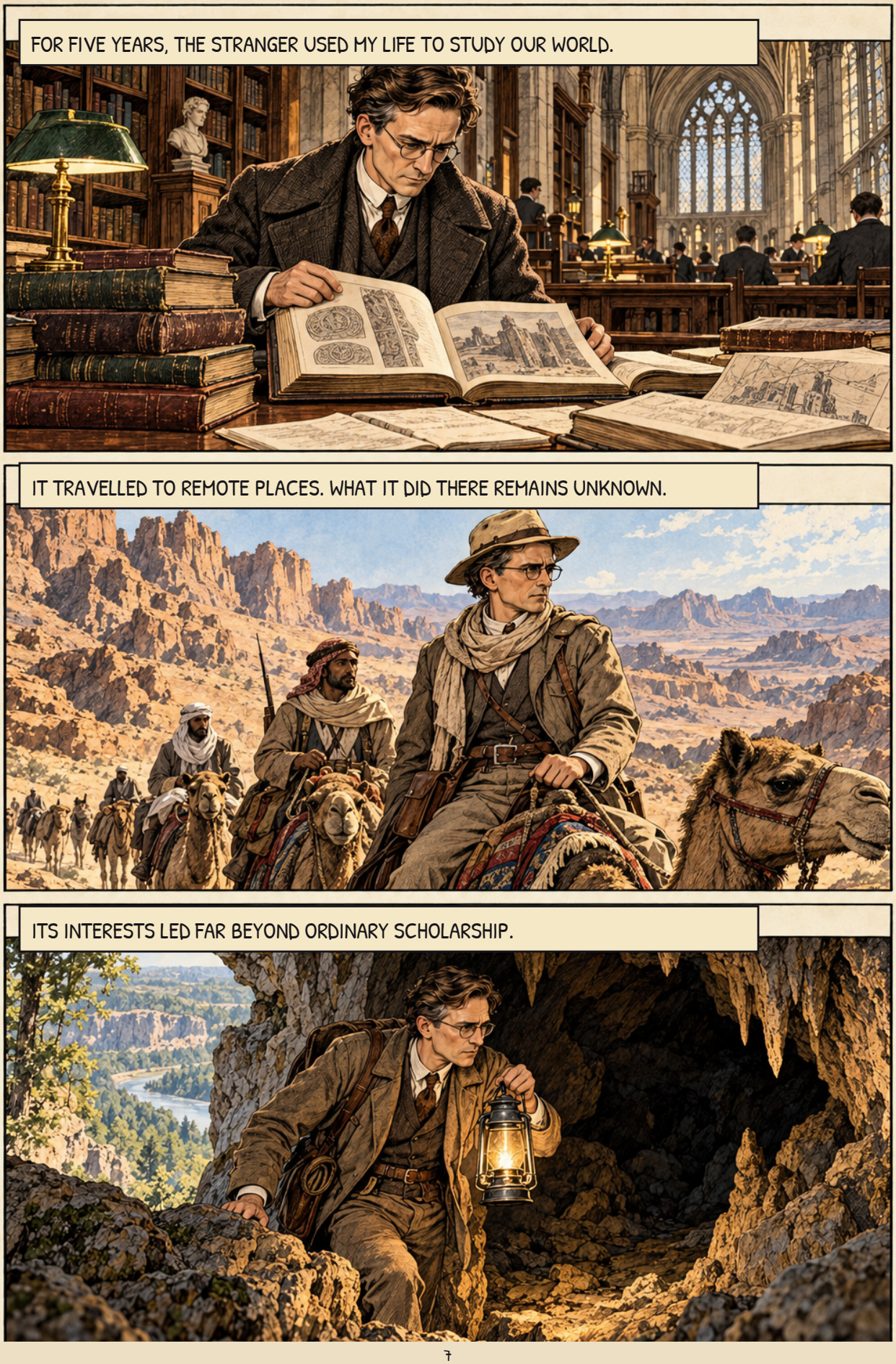

OTHERS TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED NEXT. THE BODY WOKE. ITS OWNER DID NOT.
IT HAD TO LEARN MY VOICE, MY HANDS, EVEN THE ACT OF WALKING.


IT ABSORBED BOOKS WITH IMPOSSIBLE SPEED, YET ASKED QUESTIONS A CHILD COULD ANSWER.
WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT? NO HISTORIAN HAS DESCRIBED SUCH AN EVENT.
SOON IT LEARNED TO CONCEAL WHAT IT KNEW.

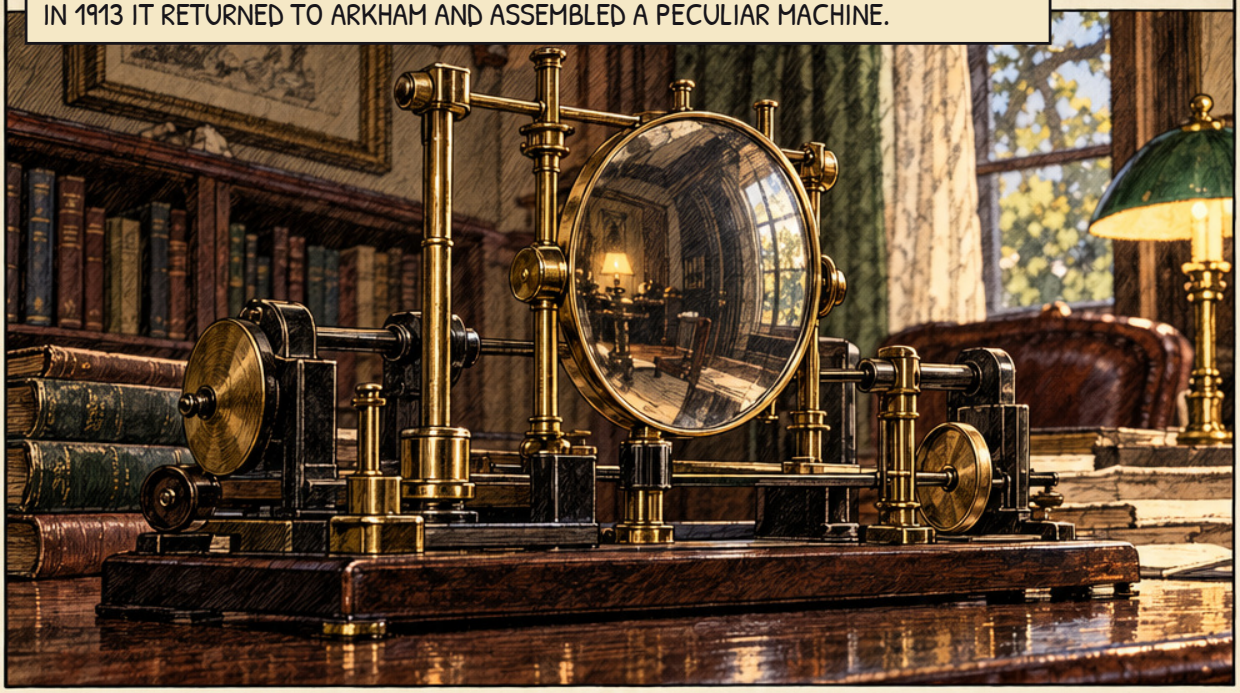

YOU ARE NOT MY HUSBAND.


IN 1910, ALICE DIVORCED ME. ROBERT AND HANNAH WENT WITH HER.


ONLY WINGATE BELIEVED THAT I MIGHT RETURN.


FOR FIVE YEARS, THE STRANGER USED MY LIFE TO STUDY OUR WORLD.
IT TRAVELLED TO REMOTE PLACES. WHAT IT DID THERE REMAINS UNKNOWN.
ITS INTERESTS LED FAR BEYOND ORDINARY SCHOLARSHIP.

IN 1913 IT RETURNED TO ARKHAM AND ASSEMBLED A PECULIAR MACHINE.



A STRANGER CALLED LATE ONE NIGHT.



BEFORE DAWN, MY PAPERS AND THE MACHINE WERE GONE.




SEPTEMBER 27, 1913. THE DOCTOR FOUND MY BODY UNCONSCIOUS AGAIN.
...OF THE ORTHODOX ECONOMISTS OF THAT PERIOD, JEVONS TYPIFIES THE PREVAILING TREND TOWARD SCIENTIFIC CORRELATION.

I HAD RESUMED THE SENTENCE INTERRUPTED IN MY CLASSROOM.



NOR DID MY RIGHTFUL FACULTIES AGAIN LOOK OUT UPON THE DAYLIGHT OF OUR NORMAL WORLD FOR FIVE YEARS, FOUR MONTHS, AND THIRTEEN DAYS.



MY FAMILY HAD VANISHED WITH THEM.

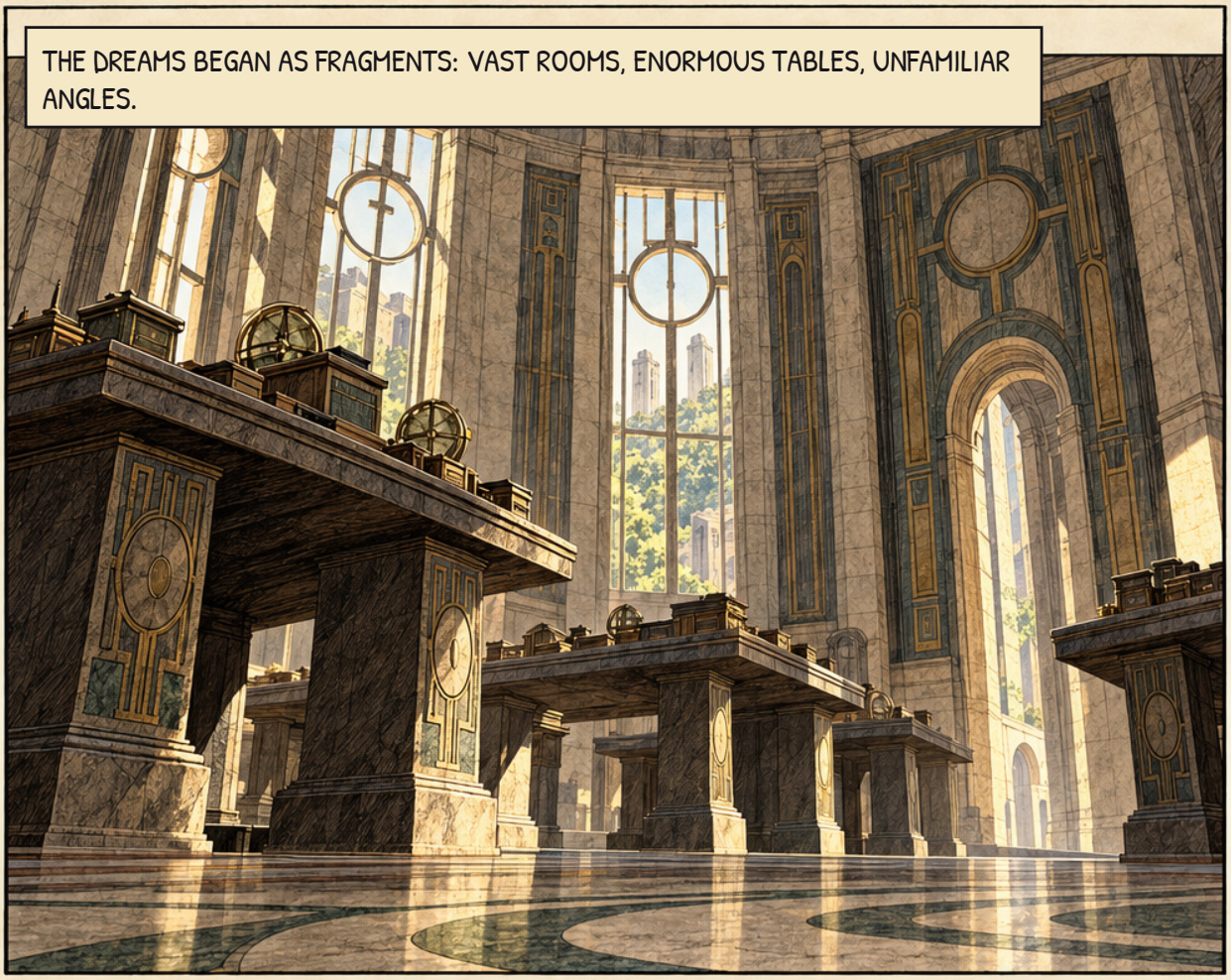


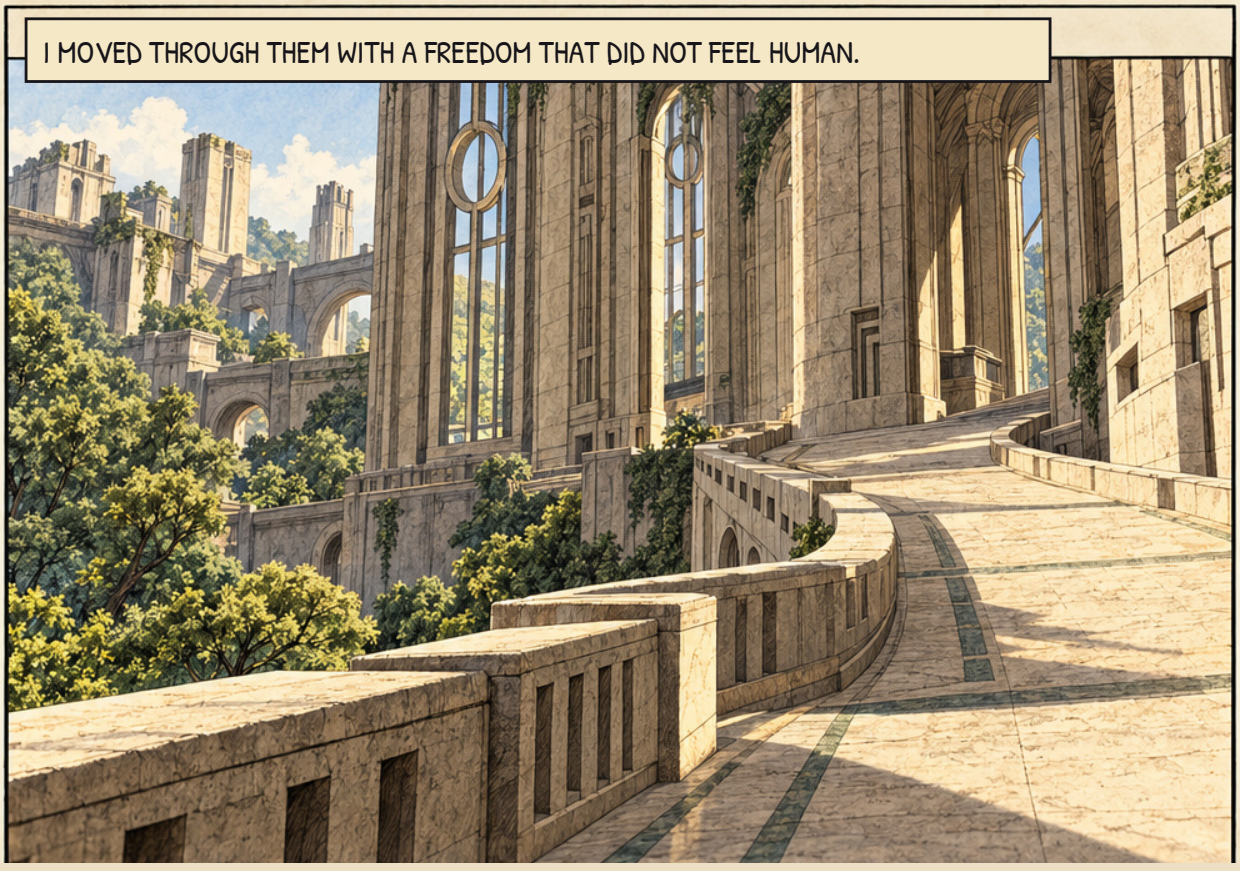

FATHER? IS IT REALLY YOU?
WINGATE CAME BACK TO ME. IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, HE HELPED ME REBUILD MY LIFE.

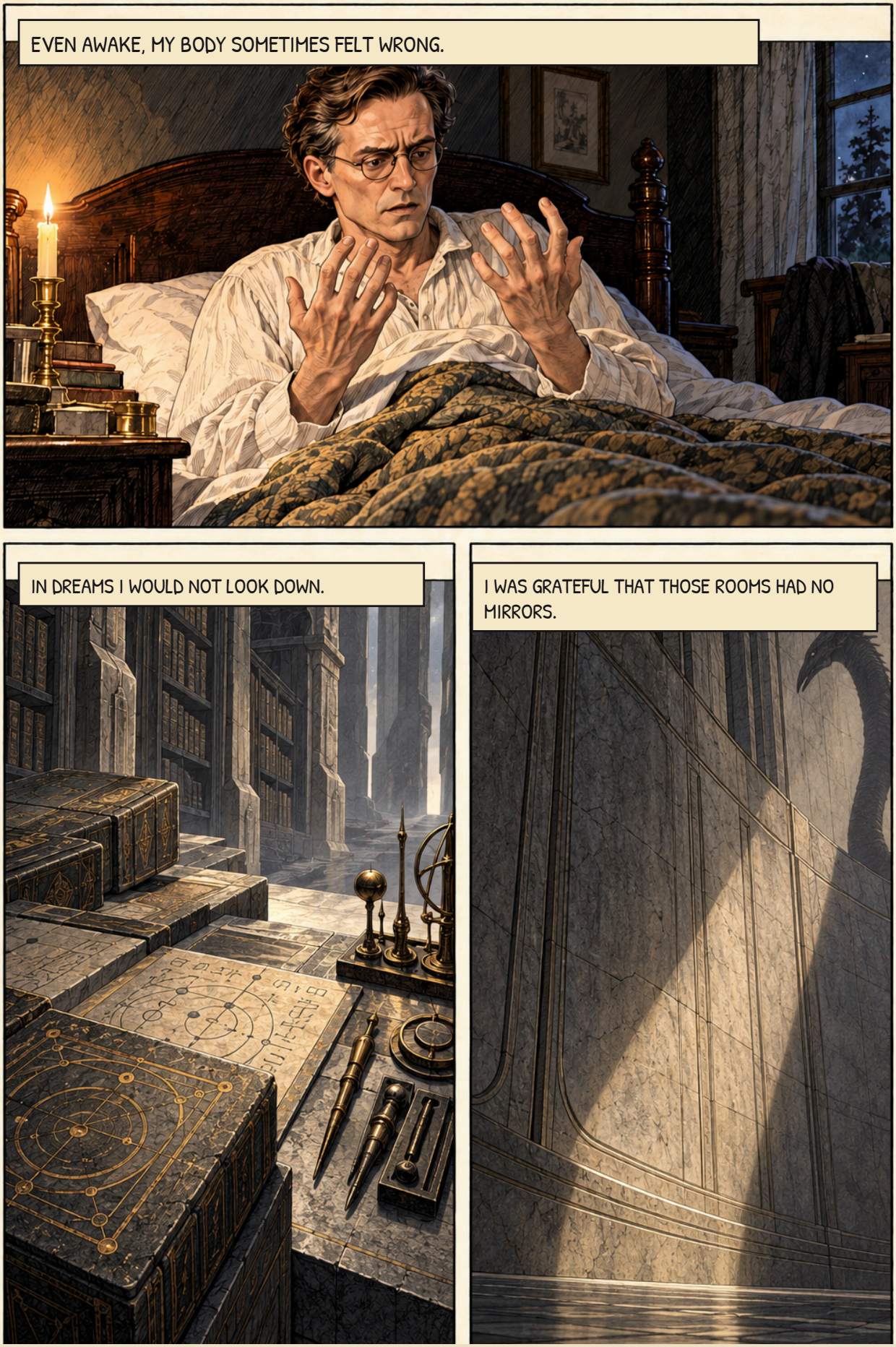

I TRACED THE STRANGER'S MOVEMENTS THROUGH RECORDS AND WITNESSES.


I TRIED TEACHING AGAIN. I COULD NOT KEEP IT UP.

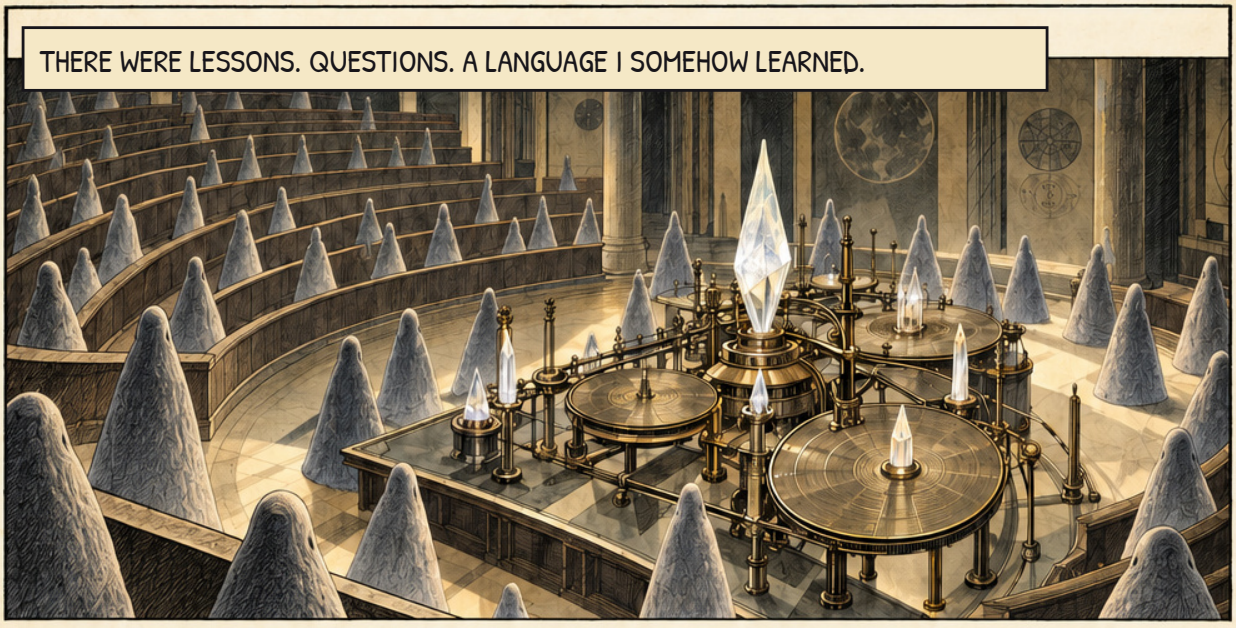

MY SENSE OF TIME HAD BECOME STRANGELY DISORDERED.

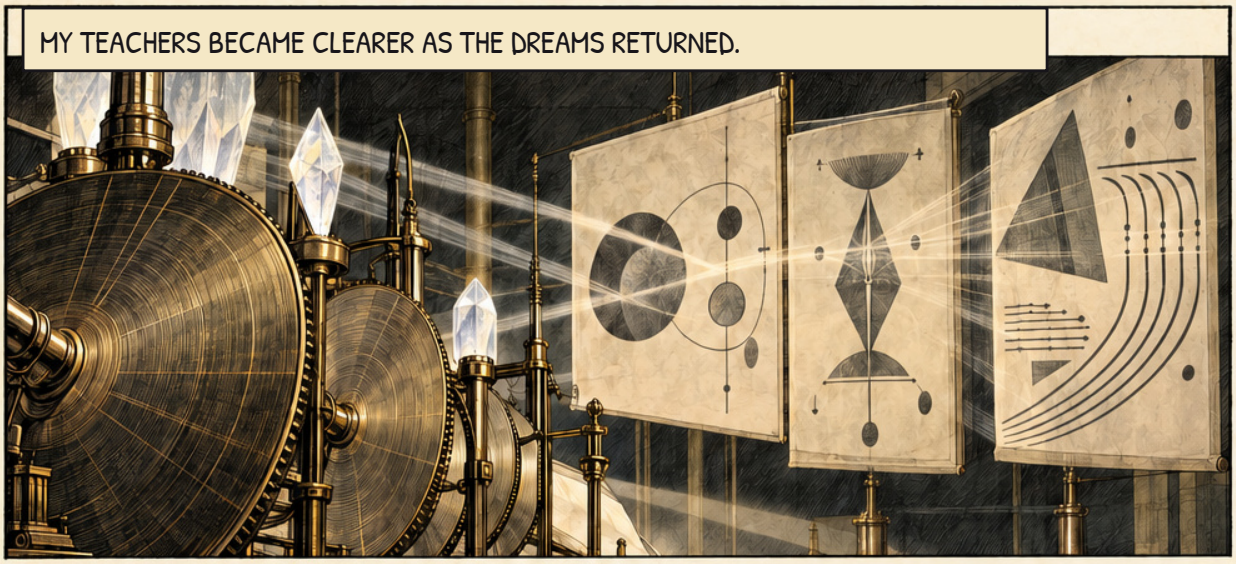

THE DREAMS BEGAN AS FRAGMENTS: VAST ROOMS, ENORMOUS TABLES, UNFAMILIAR ANGLES.


I MOVED THROUGH THEM WITH A FREEDOM THAT DID NOT FEEL HUMAN.


EVEN AWAKE, MY BODY SOMETIMES FELT WRONG.
IN DREAMS I WOULD NOT LOOK DOWN.
I WAS GRATEFUL THAT THOSE ROOMS HAD NO MIRRORS.

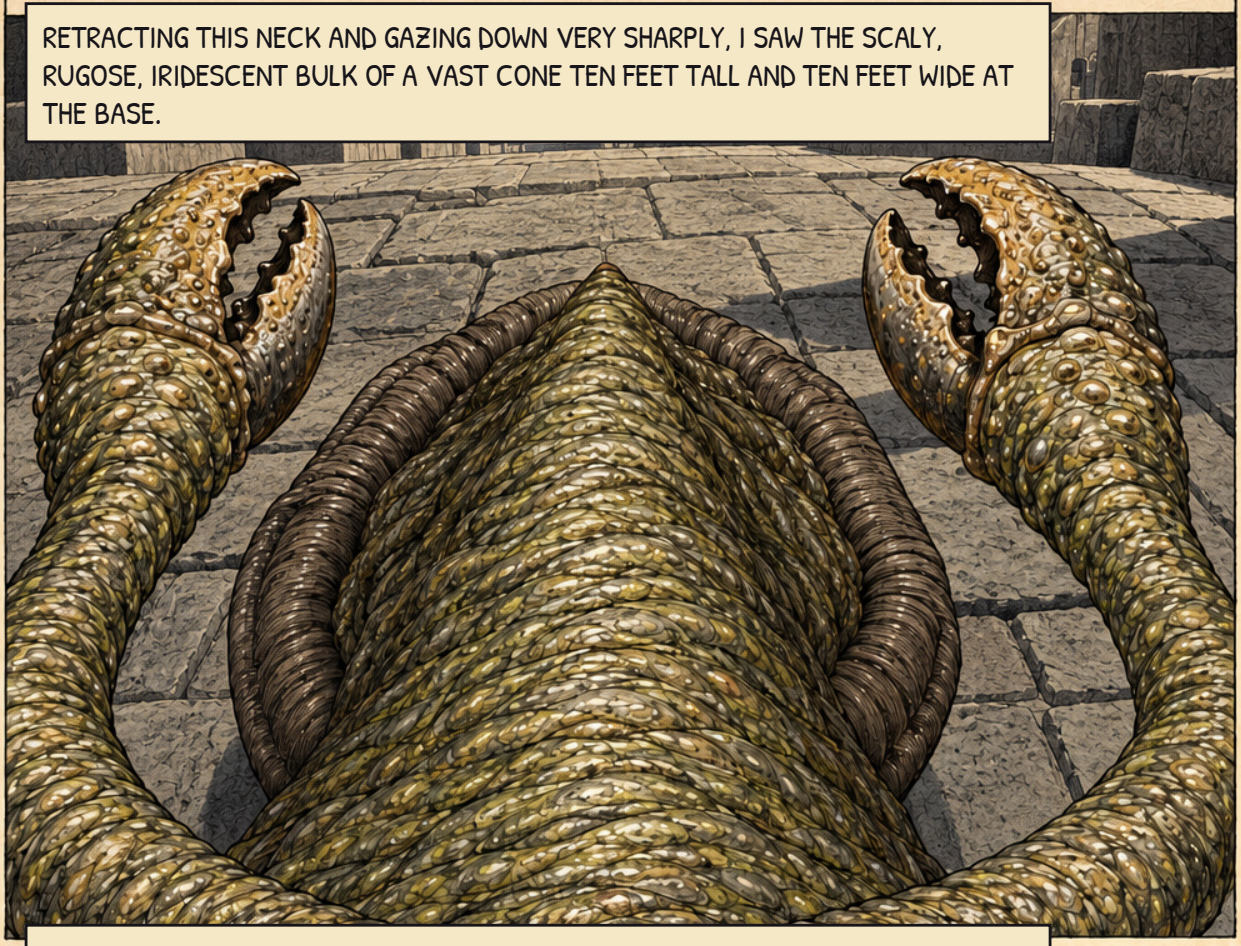

BEYOND THE CITY LAY A LANDSCAPE NO HUMAN EYE HAD SEEN.
THE VISIONS SEEMED LESS LIKE INVENTIONS THAN MEMORIES.


THERE WERE LESSONS. QUESTIONS. A LANGUAGE I SOMEHOW LEARNED.


MY TEACHERS BECAME CLEARER AS THE DREAMS RETURNED.


AT LAST I COULD NO LONGER RESIST LOOKING AT MYSELF.

RETRACTING THIS NECK AND GAZING DOWN VERY SHARPLY, I SAW THE SCALY, RUGOSE, IRIDESCENT BULK OF A VAST CONE TEN FEET TALL AND TEN FEET WIDE AT THE BASE.



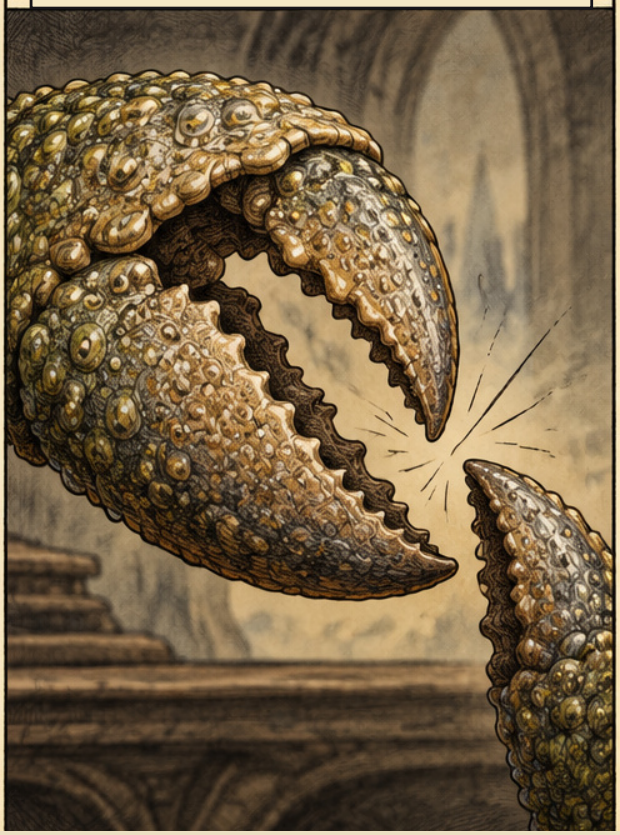
I WOKE HALF OF ARKHAM WITH MY SCREAMS.




IN THE DREAMS, I LEARNED TO LIVE AMONG THEM.
THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE GREAT RACE. THEIR CIVILIZATION STOOD IN AN AGE MILLIONS OF YEARS BEFORE MANKIND.

I SEEMED TO TALK, IN SOME ODD LANGUAGE OF CLAW-CLICKINGS, WITH EXILED INTELLECTS FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

THEY QUESTIONED ME ABOUT MY WORLD.



AND TAUGHT ME ENOUGH OF THEIRS TO ANSWER.



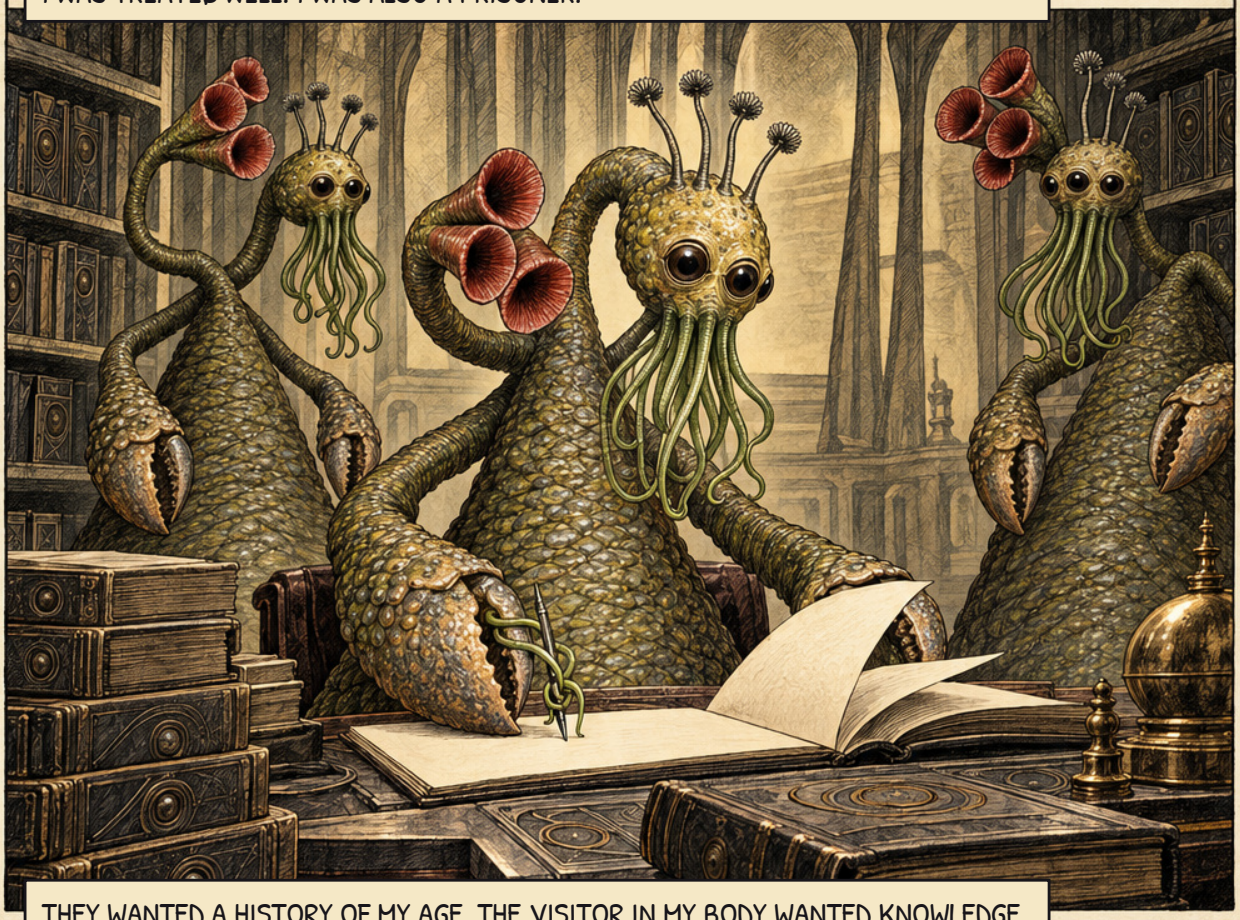
THEIR MINDS COULD CROSS THE AGES BY EXCHANGING PLACES WITH ANOTHER INTELLIGENCE.



WHILE I LIVED IN THIS BODY, ONE OF THEM INHABITED MINE.



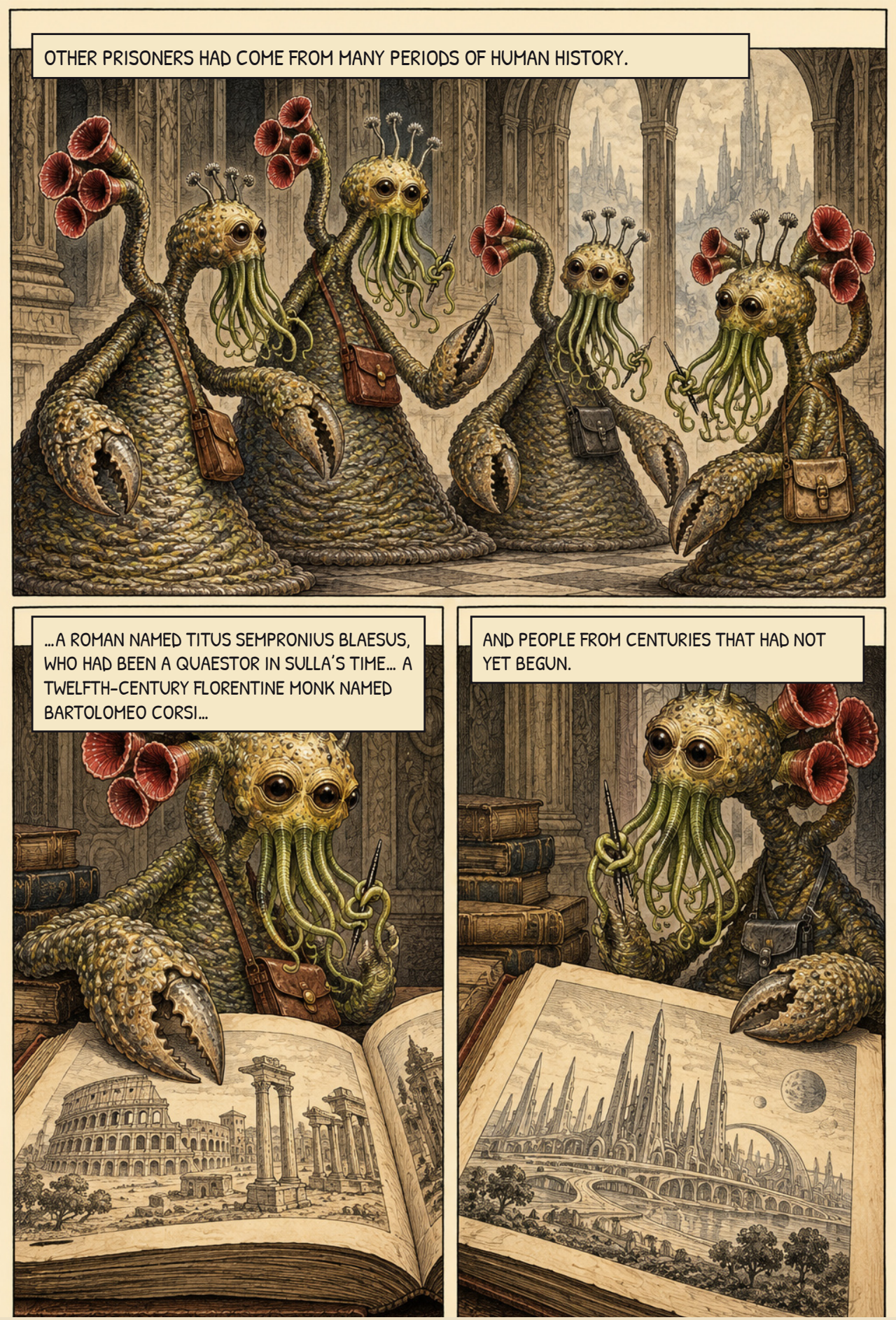
I WAS TREATED WELL. I WAS ALSO A PRISONER.

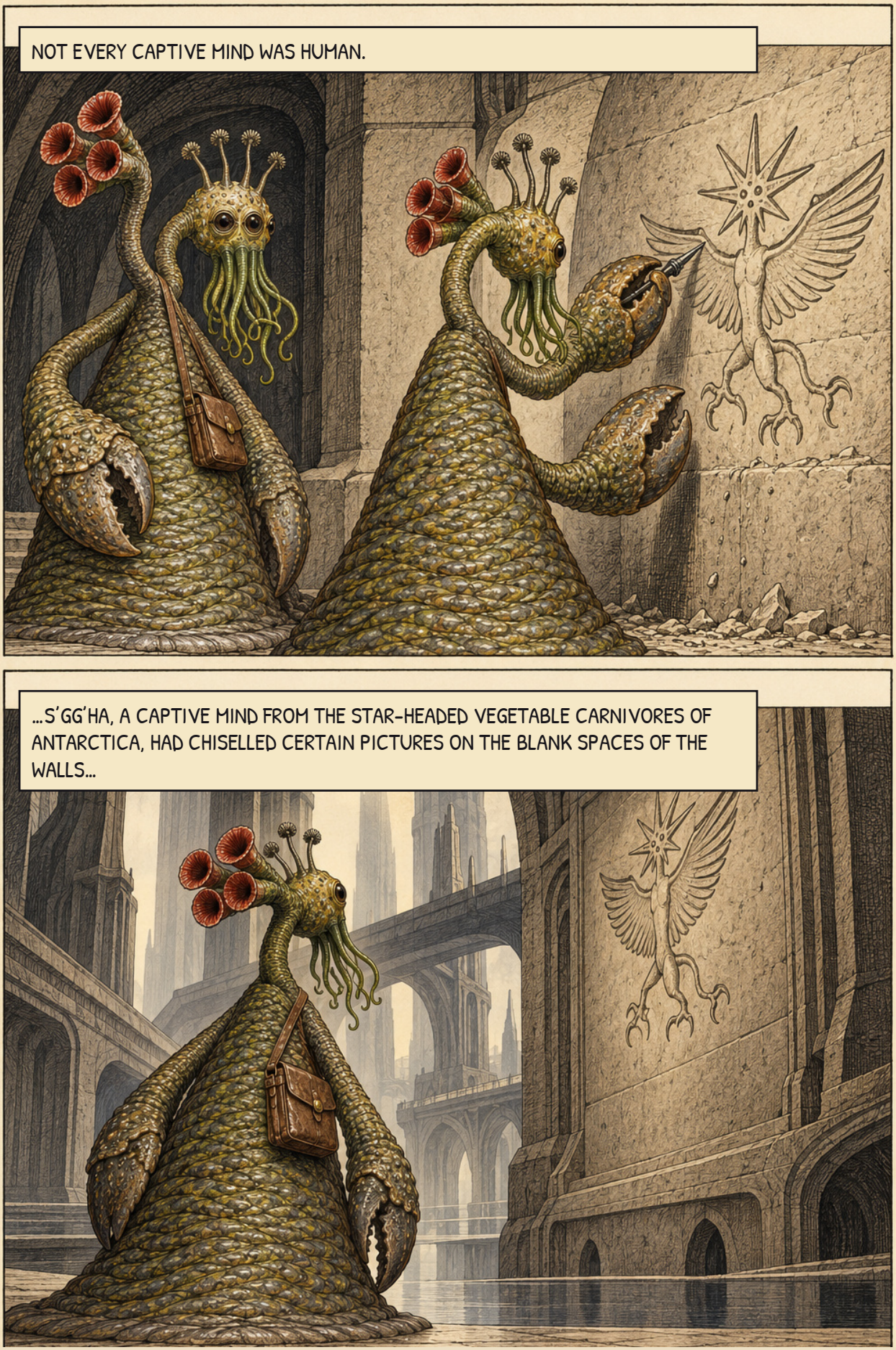


THEY WANTED A HISTORY OF MY AGE. THE VISITOR IN MY BODY WANTED KNOWLEDGE OF ITS OWN.

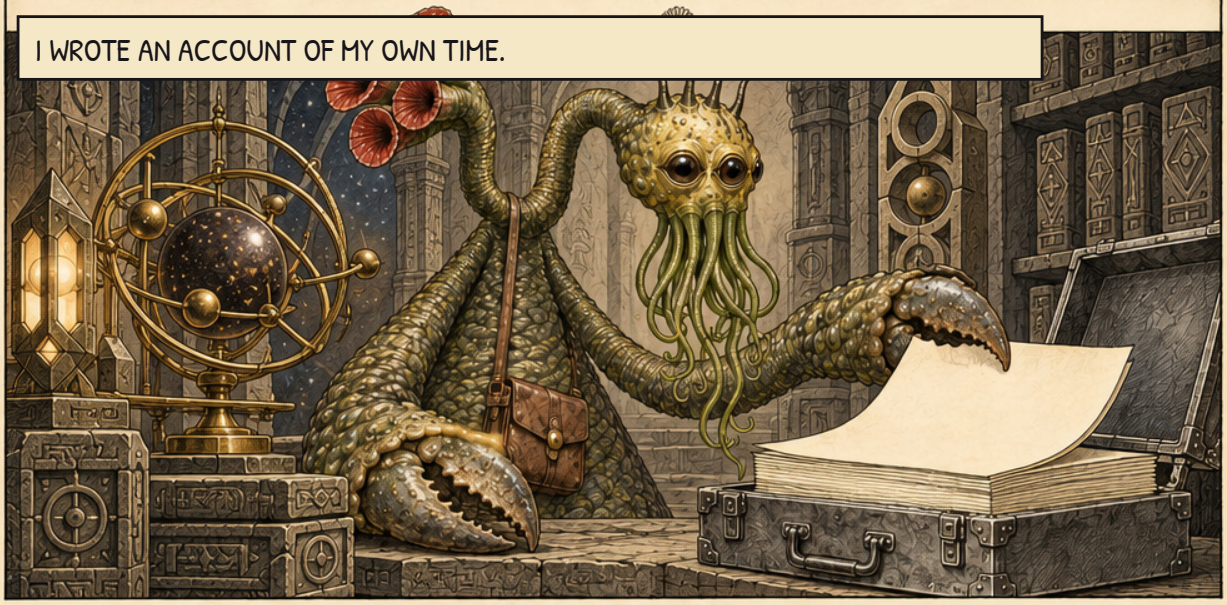



THEIR CENTRAL ARCHIVES HELD THE HISTORIES OF WORLDS AND AGES.
EACH BOOK LAY IN A METAL CASE. EACH CASE HAD ITS APPOINTED PLACE.


OTHER PRISONERS HAD COME FROM MANY PERIODS OF HUMAN HISTORY.
...A ROMAN NAMED TITUS SEMPRONIUS BLAESUS, WHO HAD BEEN A QUAESTOR IN SULLA'S TIME... A TWELFTH-CENTURY FLORENTINE MONK NAMED BARTOLOMEO CORSI...
AND PEOPLE FROM CENTURIES THAT HAD NOT YET BEGUN.


NOT EVERY CAPTIVE MIND WAS HUMAN.
...S'GG'HA, A CAPTIVE MIND FROM THE STAR-HEADED VEGETABLE CARNIVORES OF ANTARCTICA, HAD CHISELLED CERTAIN PICTURES ON THE BLANK SPACES OF THE WALLS...

I WROTE AN ACCOUNT OF MY OWN TIME.



IN RETURN, THEY ALLOWED ME MORE FREEDOM TO STUDY AND TRAVEL.



MY HISTORY WAS ASSIGNED A PLACE IN THE LOWEST ARCHIVE LEVEL.



I CAME TO UNDERSTAND THEIR LEARNING, THEIR ARTS, AND THEIR PATIENCE.



THEIR KNOWLEDGE WAS IMMENSE.



SO WAS THE PRICE PAID BY THE MINDS THEY DISPLACED.

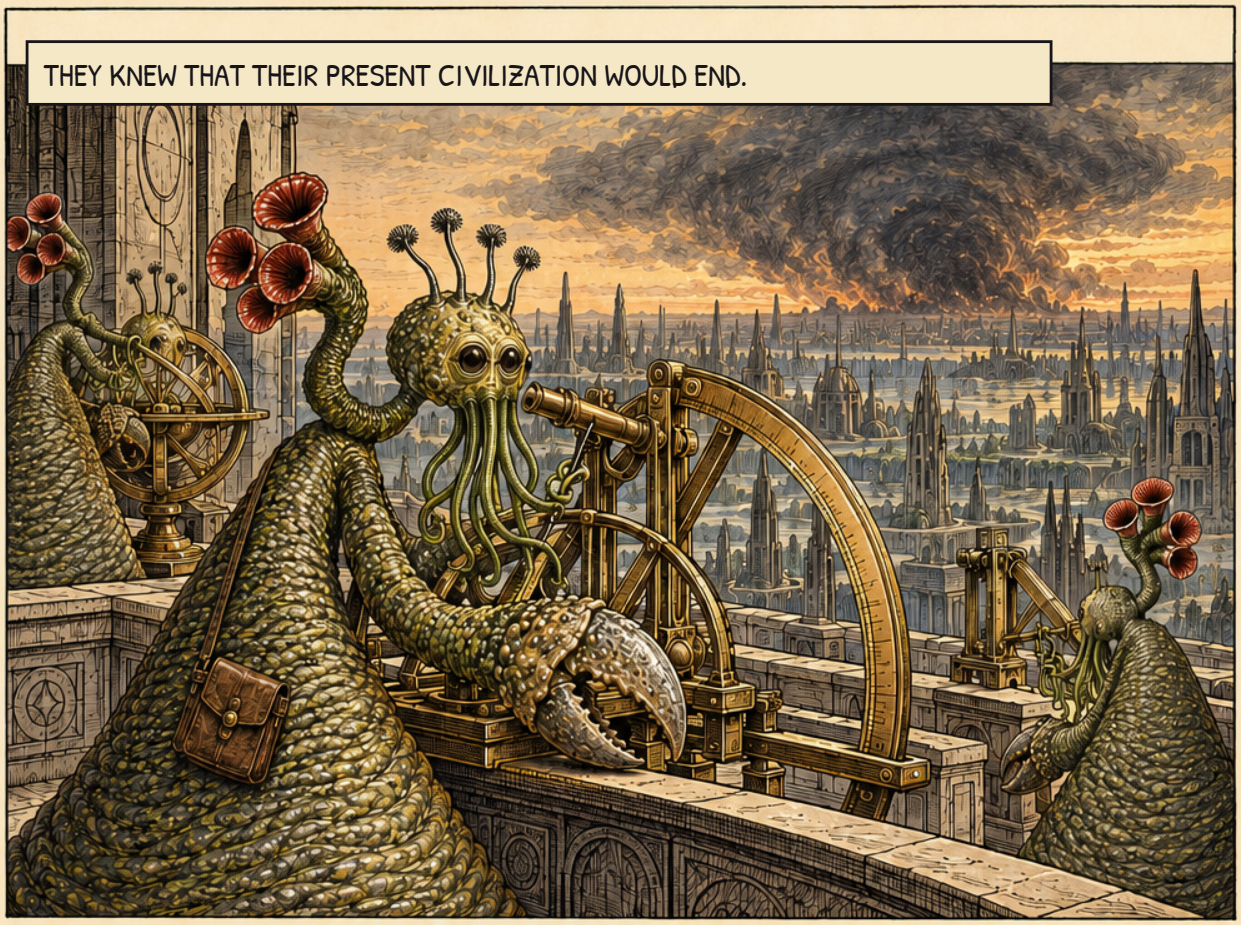


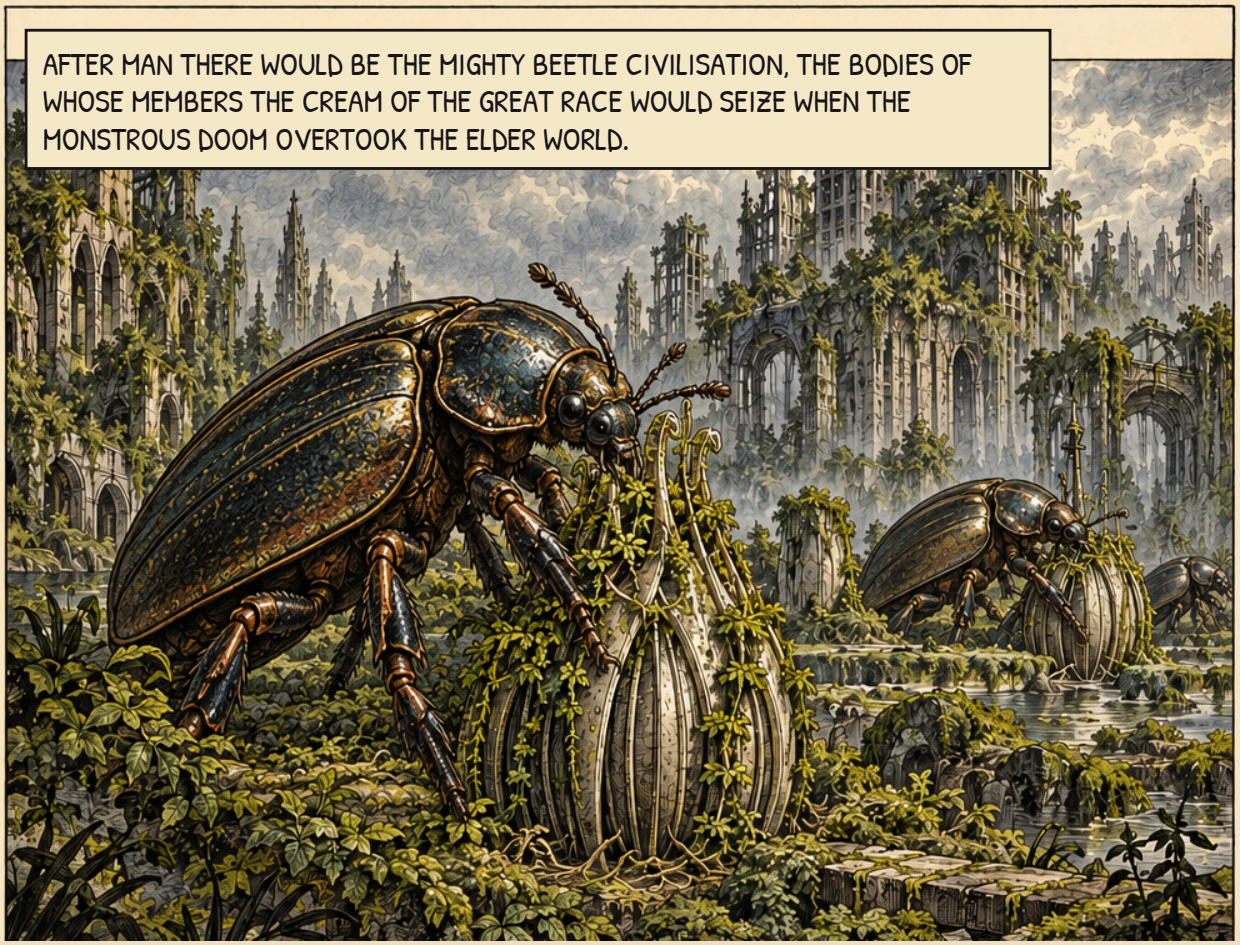
THE GREAT RACE HAD NOT ALWAYS WORN THESE BODIES.

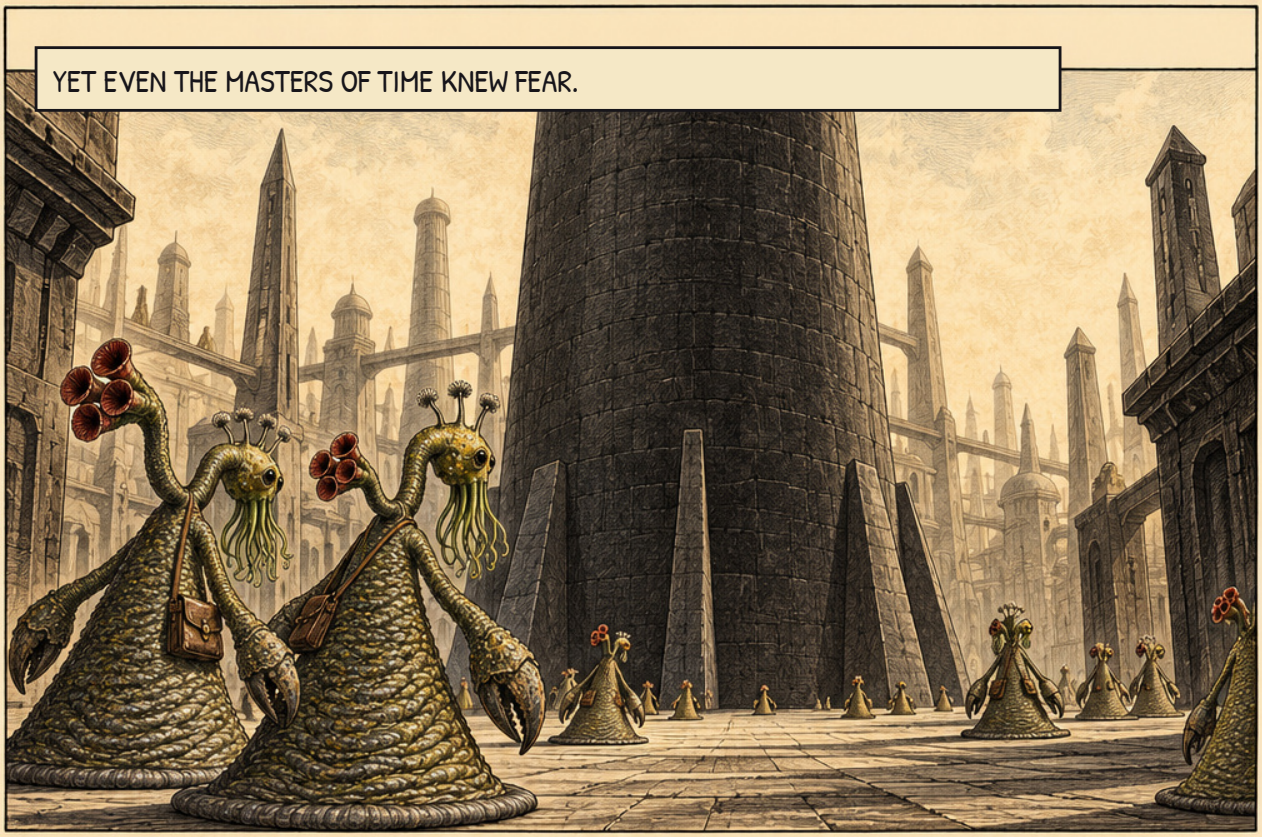


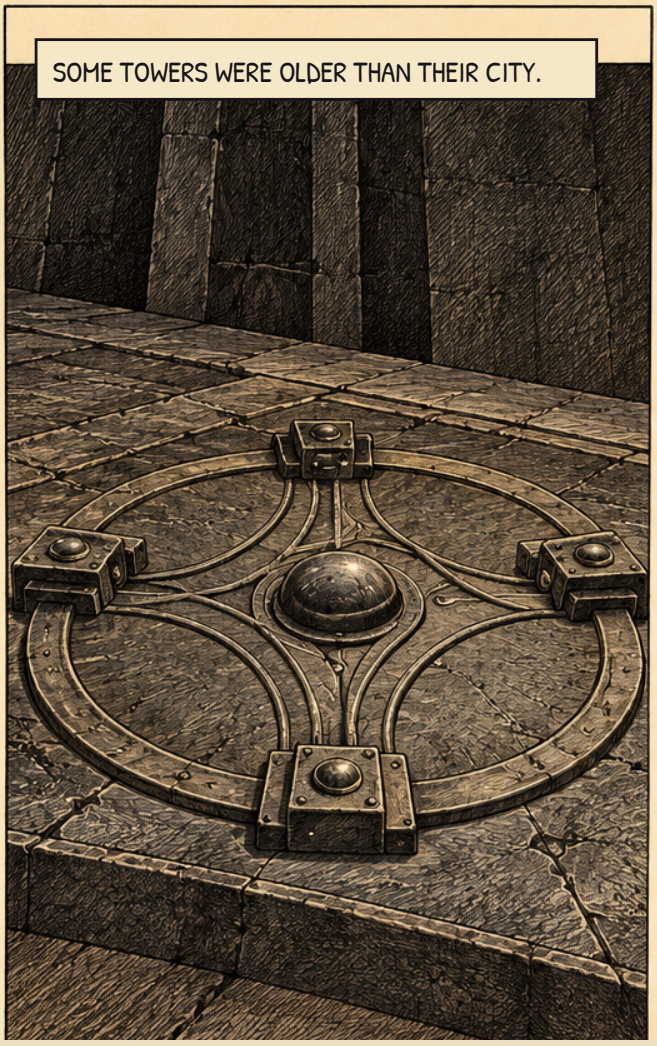
THEIR MINDS HAD COME FROM ANOTHER WORLD AND TAKEN POSSESSION OF THIS ONE.




THEY KNEW THAT THEIR PRESENT CIVILIZATION WOULD END.

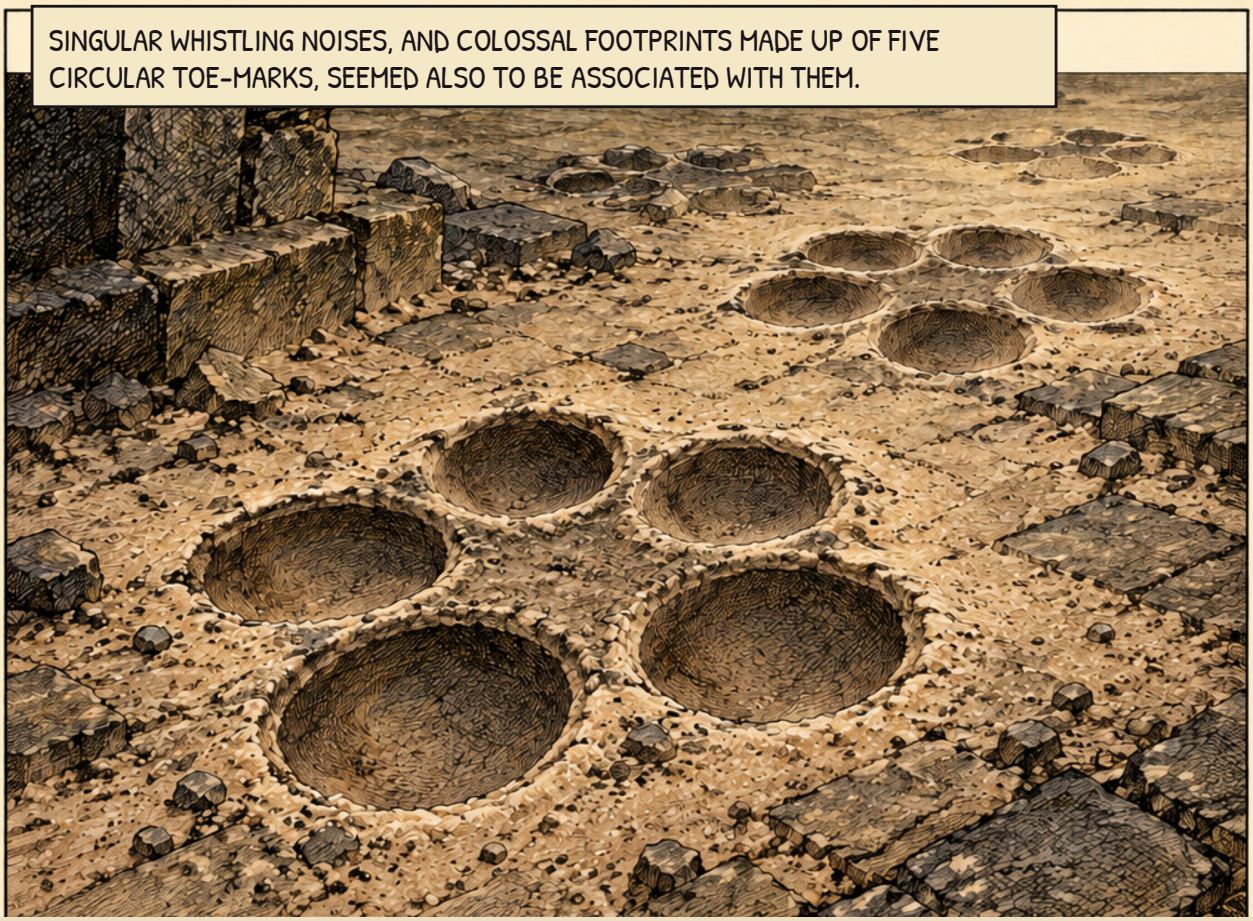

AFTER MAN THERE WOULD BE THE MIGHTY BEETLE CIVILISATION, THE BODIES OF WHOSE MEMBERS THE CREAM OF THE GREAT RACE WOULD SEIZE WHEN THE MONSTROUS DOOM OVERTOOK THE ELDER WORLD.

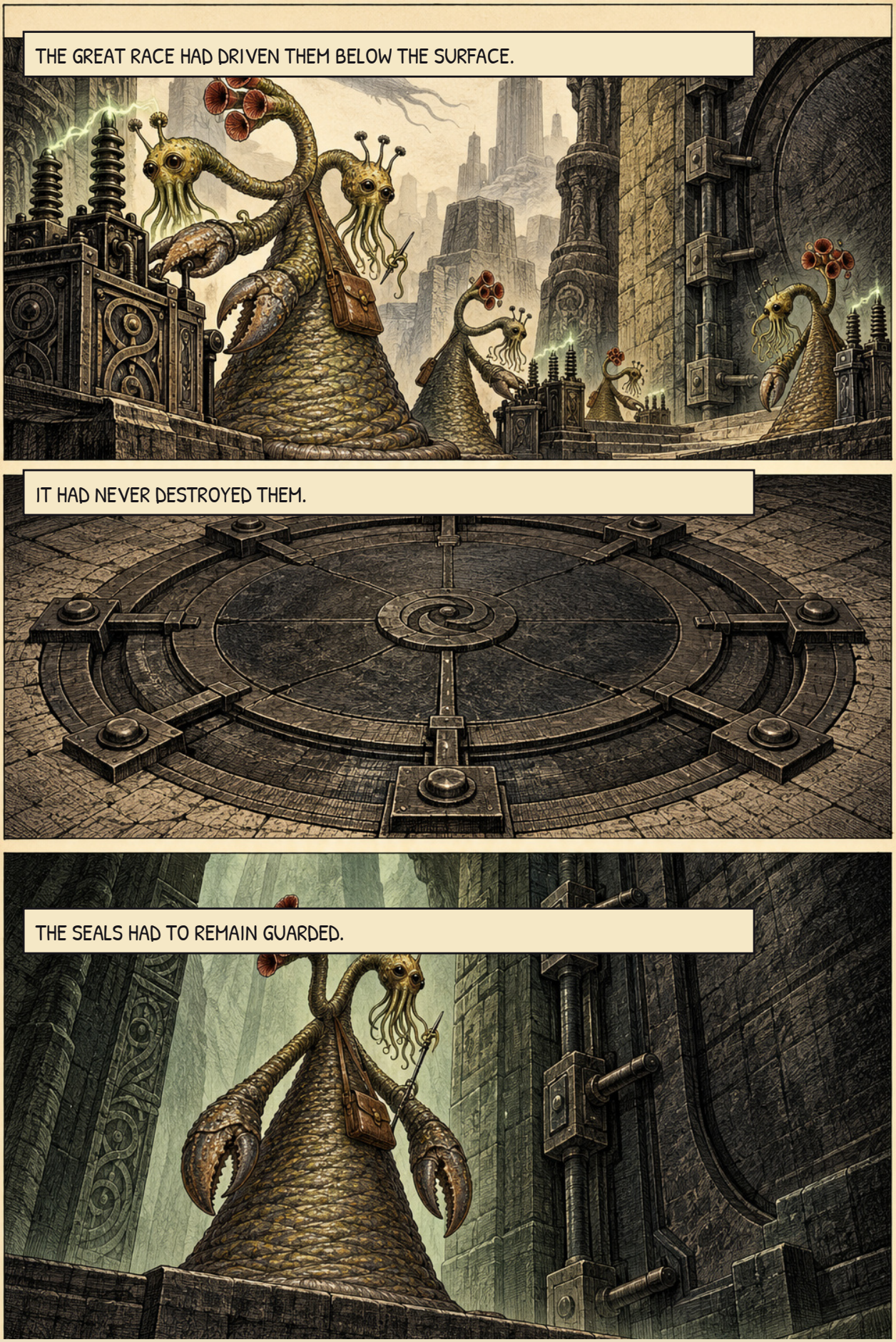

YET EVEN THE MASTERS OF TIME KNEW FEAR.


SOME TOWERS WERE OLDER THAN THEIR CITY.


THE DEPTHS BENEATH THEM WERE FORBIDDEN.


AN ELDER RACE HAD ONCE RULED HERE: BEINGS ONLY PARTLY MATERIAL.


SINGULAR WHISTLING NOISES, AND COLOSSAL FOOTPRINTS MADE UP OF FIVE CIRCULAR TOE-MARKS, SEEMED ALSO TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.


THE GREAT RACE HAD DRIVEN THEM BELOW THE SURFACE.
IT HAD NEVER DESTROYED THEM.
THE SEALS HAD TO REMAIN GUARDED.


THEIR HISTORIES FORETOLD A FINAL REVOLT FROM BENEATH.
WHEN IT CAME, THEIR MINDS WOULD FLEE THROUGH TIME. THEIR CITY WOULD REMAIN.


BEFORE RETURNING A CAPTIVE, THEY WOULD BLOT OUT THE BORROWED YEARS.
BUT SOMETHING IN MY OWN MEMORY HAD SURVIVED.


IN WAKING LIFE I FOUND OTHER ACCOUNTS OF LOST YEARS AND IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS.
OLD MYTHS CONTAINED THE SAME IDEAS.
PERHAPS THE STRANGER HAD READ THEM, AND LEFT THEIR TRACES IN MY MIND.

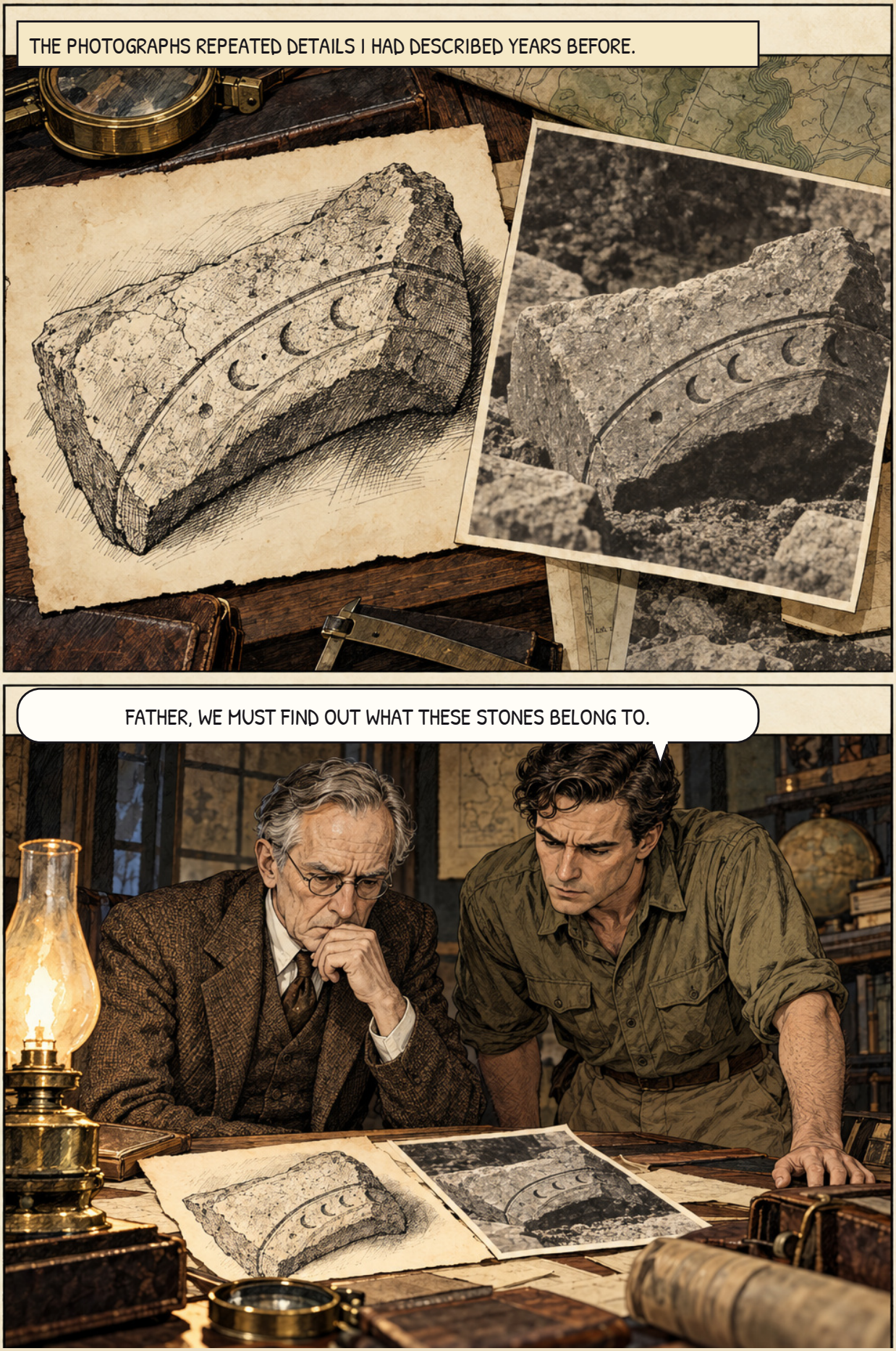

I STUDIED PSYCHOLOGY AND RETURNED TO TEACHING IN 1922.
WINGATE WORKED BESIDE ME. THE STUDIES GAVE MY LIFE A PURPOSE.

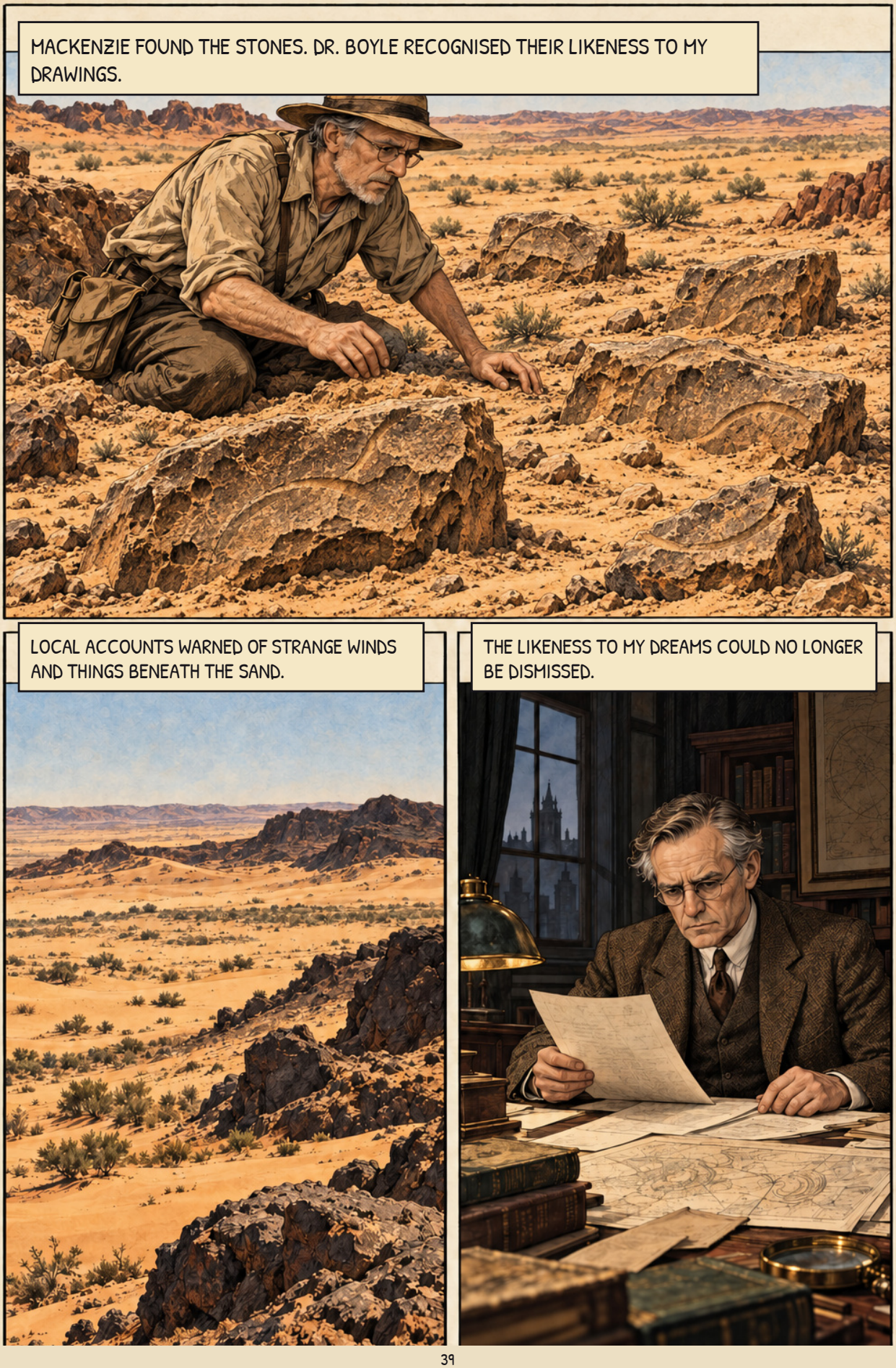

IN 1928 AND 1929 I PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF THE DREAMS.
I TREATED THEM AS MATERIAL FOR A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY.
THEY STILL FELT LIKE MEMORIES.

THEN, IN 1934, A LETTER CAME FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

A MINING ENGINEER, ROBERT B. F. MACKENZIE, HAD FOUND UNUSUAL STONES.

HE HAD SEEN MY PUBLISHED DRAWINGS.


THE PHOTOGRAPHS REPEATED DETAILS I HAD DESCRIBED YEARS BEFORE.
FATHER, WE MUST FIND OUT WHAT THESE STONES BELONG TO.


MACKENZIE FOUND THE STONES. DR. BOYLE RECOGNISED THEIR LIKENESS TO MY DRAWINGS.
LOCAL ACCOUNTS WARNED OF STRANGE WINDS AND THINGS BENEATH THE SAND.
THE LIKENESS TO MY DREAMS COULD NO LONGER BE DISMISSED.

MISKATONIC ORGANIZED AN EXPEDITION. DYER, ASHLEY, FREEBORN, WINGATE, AND I WOULD JOIN MACKENZIE.



I HOPED THE DESERT WOULD DISPROVE MY NIGHTMARES.



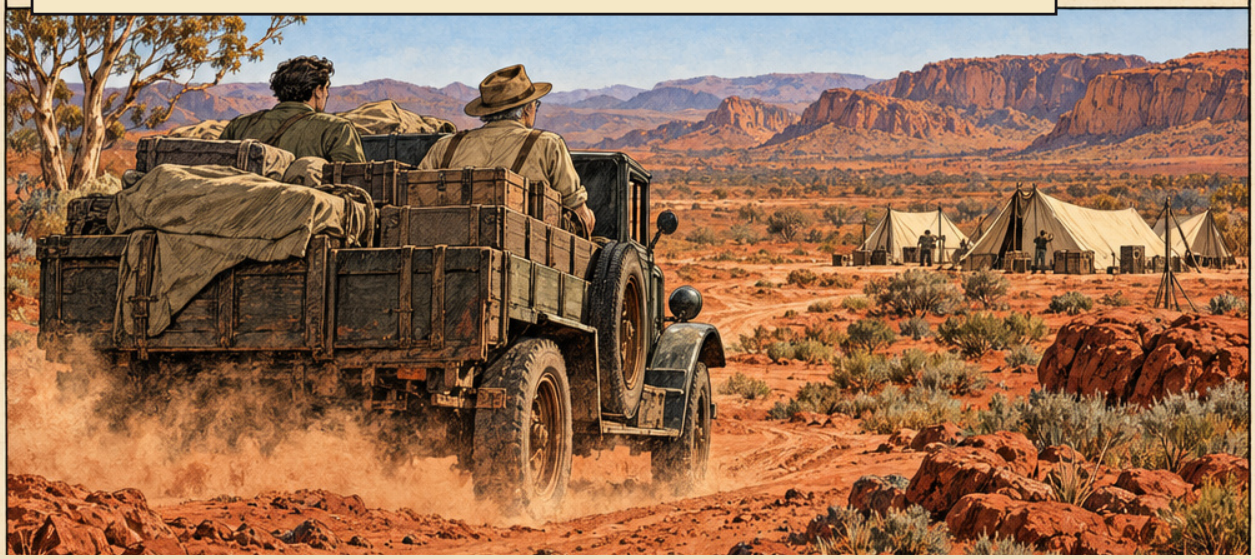
WE SAILED ON MARCH 28, 1935.



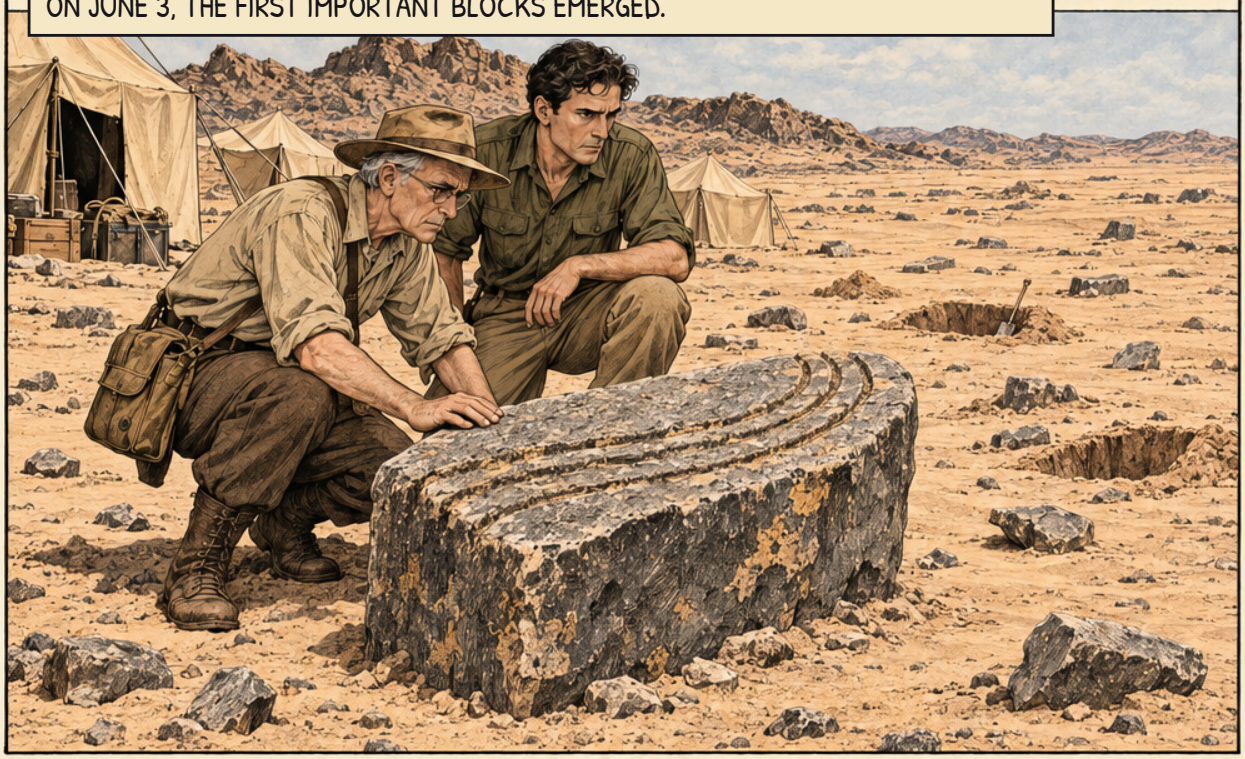
IN AUSTRALIA, WE ASSEMBLED OUR MEN AND EQUIPMENT.



THEN WE WENT INLAND, BEYOND THE FAMILIAR WORLD.



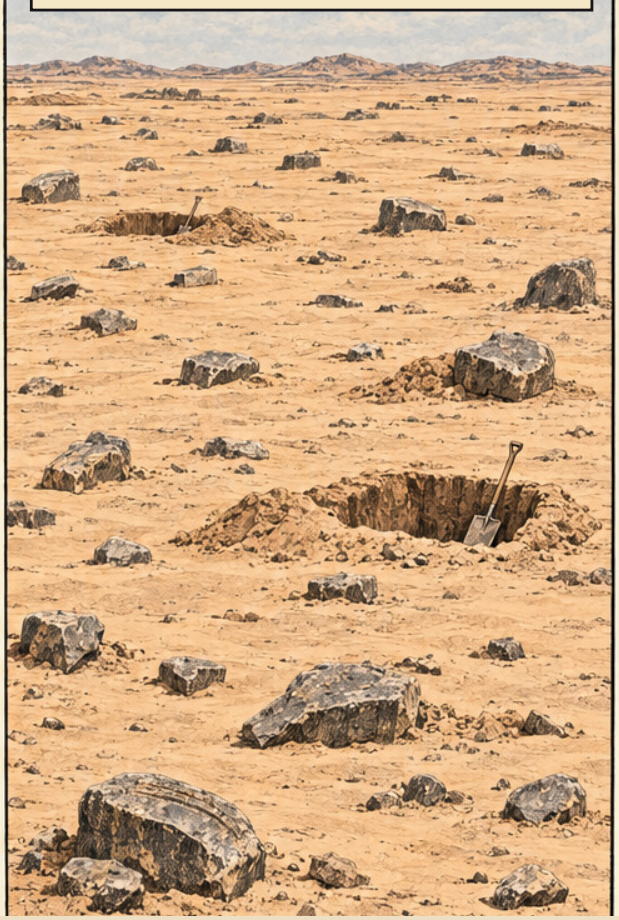
ON JUNE 3, THE FIRST IMPORTANT BLOCKS EMERGED.

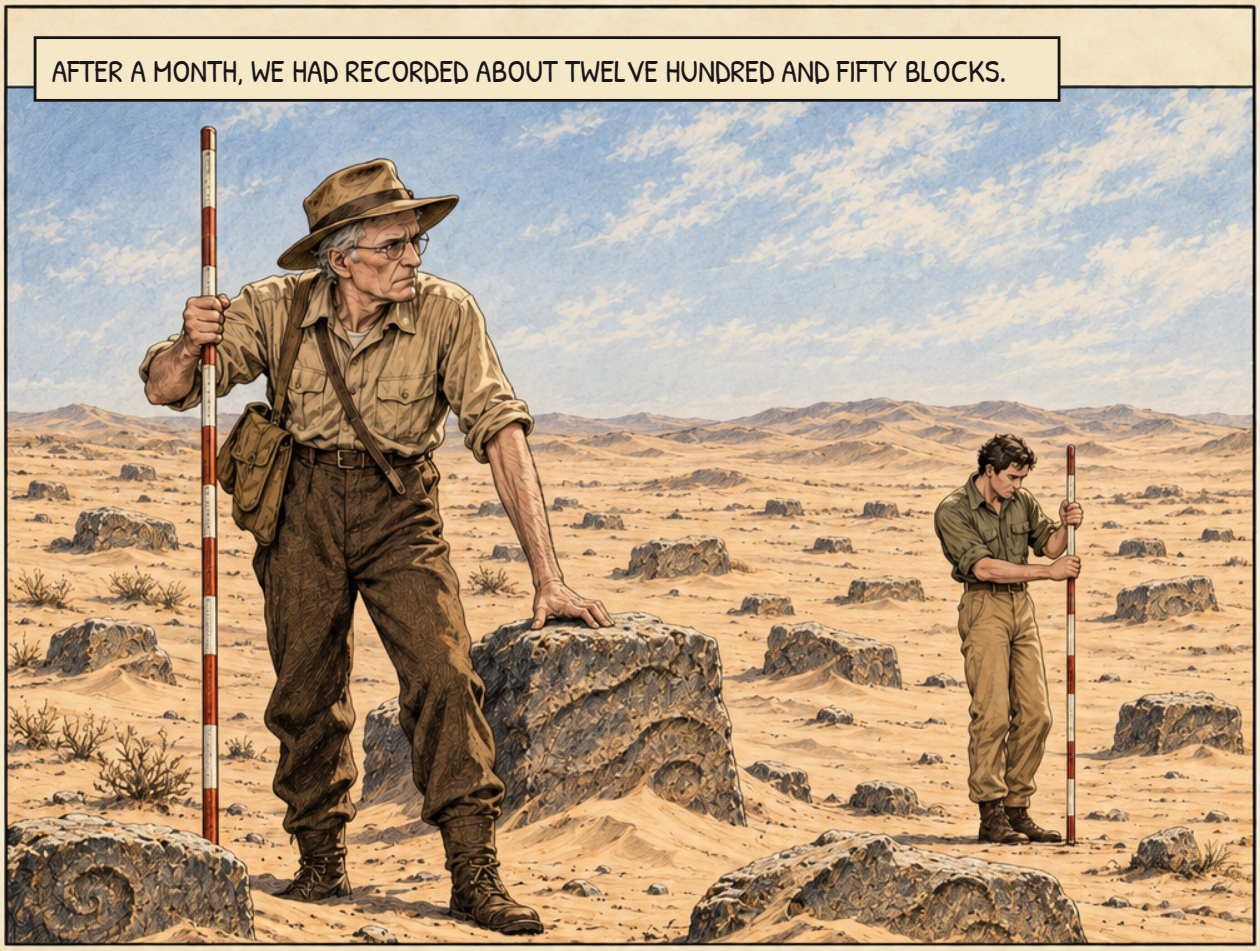


THEIR CURVES AND MARKINGS WERE UNMISTAKABLE.



THE SCATTERED FRAGMENTS GAVE NO CLEAR PLAN.

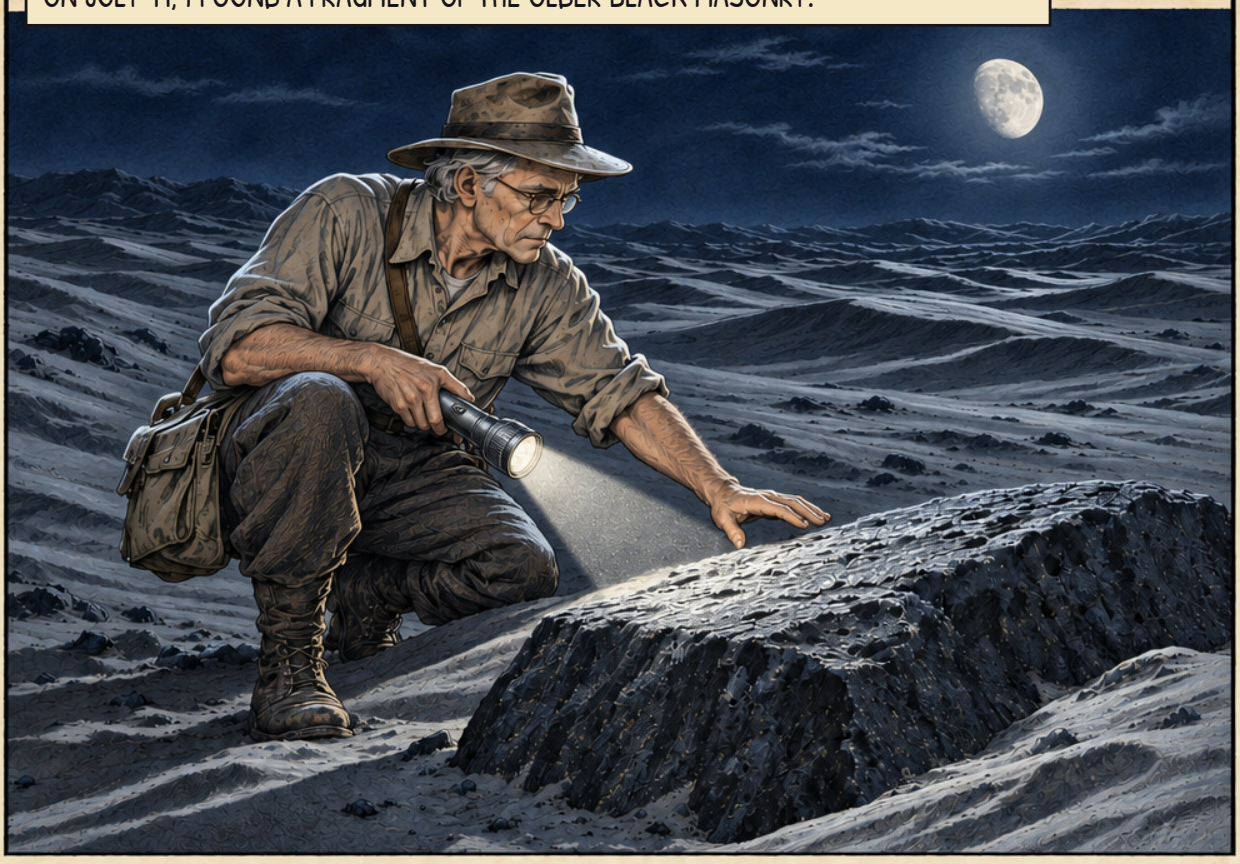



AFTER A MONTH, WE HAD RECORDED ABOUT TWELVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY BLOCKS.


WINGATE SEARCHED FROM THE AIR, BUT THE SHIFTING SANDS YIELDED NO RELIABLE OUTLINE.

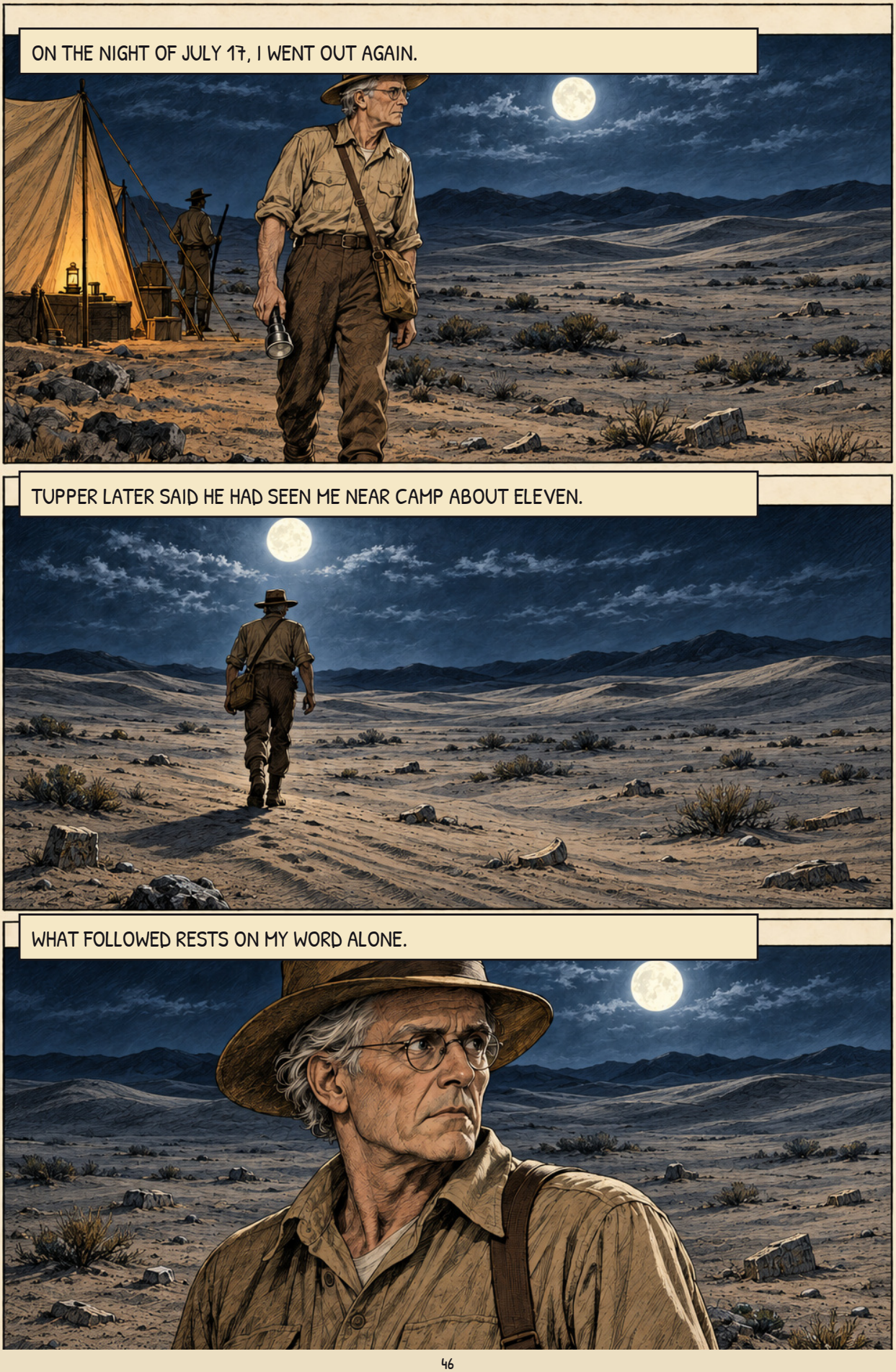

EVERY NEW DETAIL STRENGTHENED THE RESEMBLANCE.
I KNEW THINGS I HAD NO REASON TO KNOW.
I BEGAN WALKING ALONE AMONG THE DUNES.

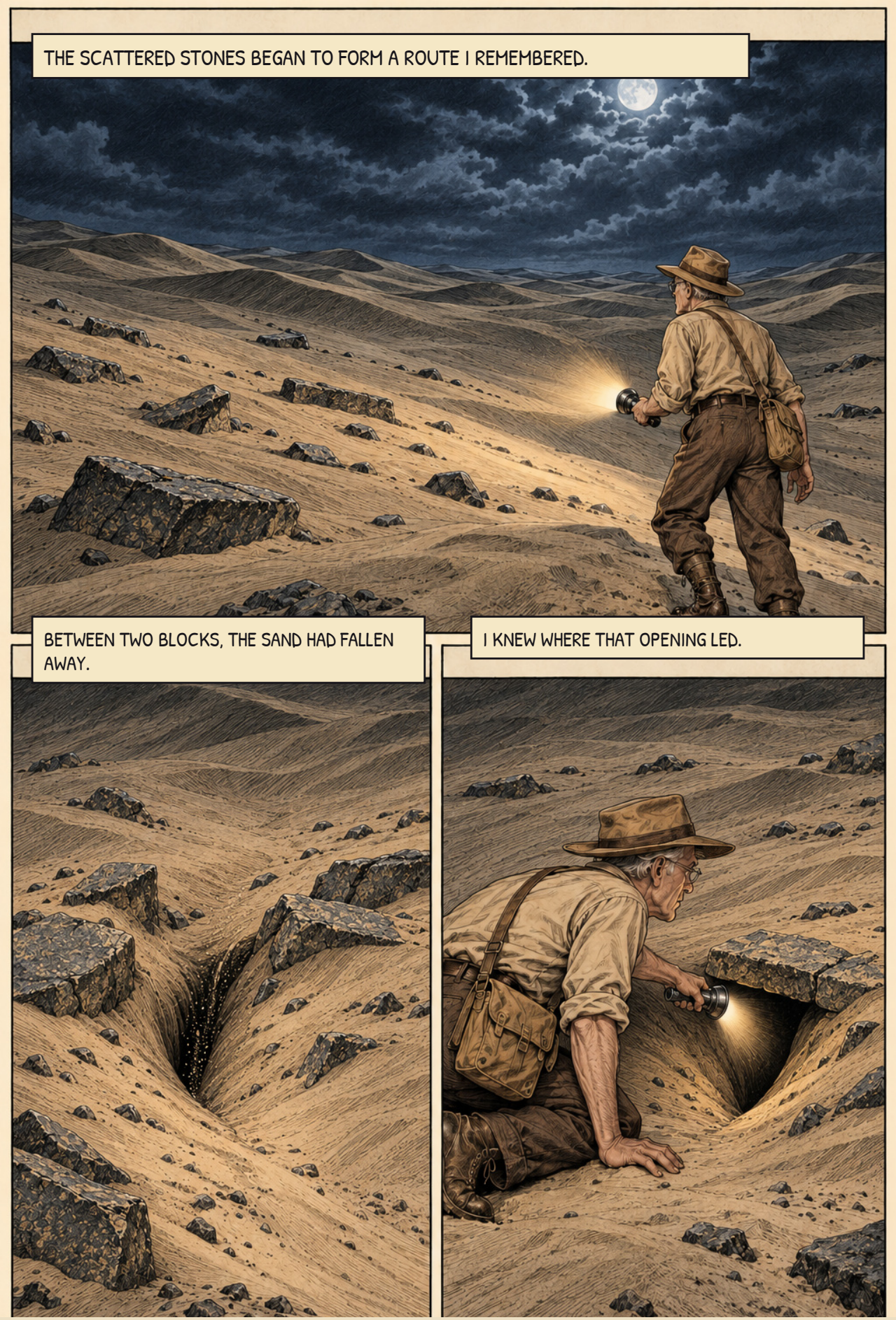
ON JULY 11, I FOUND A FRAGMENT OF THE OLDER BLACK MASONRY.



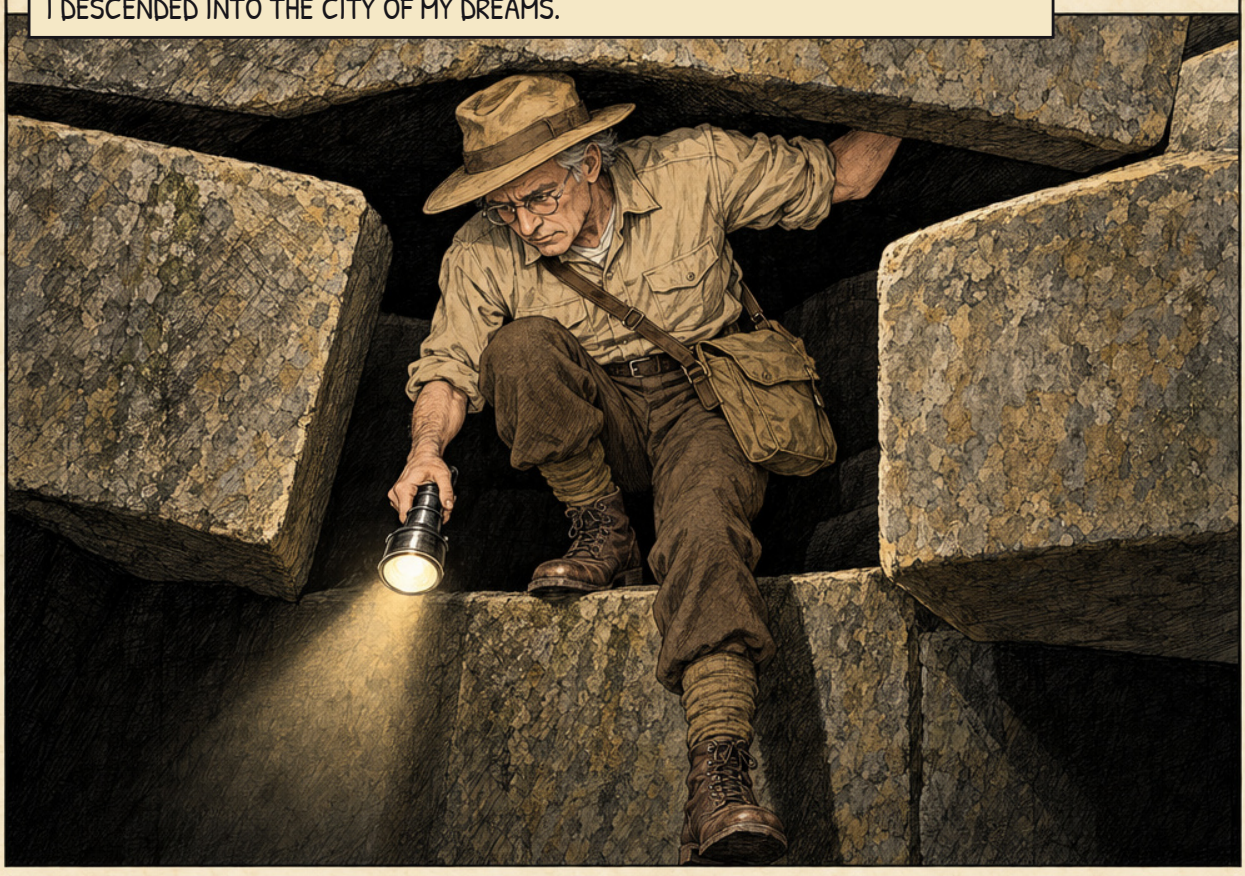
WHEN I RETURNED, THE SAND HAD HIDDEN IT. I COULD NOT FIND THE PLACE AGAIN.




ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 17, I WENT OUT AGAIN.
TUPPER LATER SAID HE HAD SEEN ME NEAR CAMP ABOUT ELEVEN.
WHAT FOLLOWED RESTS ON MY WORD ALONE.


THE SCATTERED STONES BEGAN TO FORM A ROUTE I REMEMBERED.
BETWEEN TWO BLOCKS, THE SAND HAD FALLEN AWAY.
I KNEW WHERE THAT OPENING LED.

I DESCENDED INTO THE CITY OF MY DREAMS.

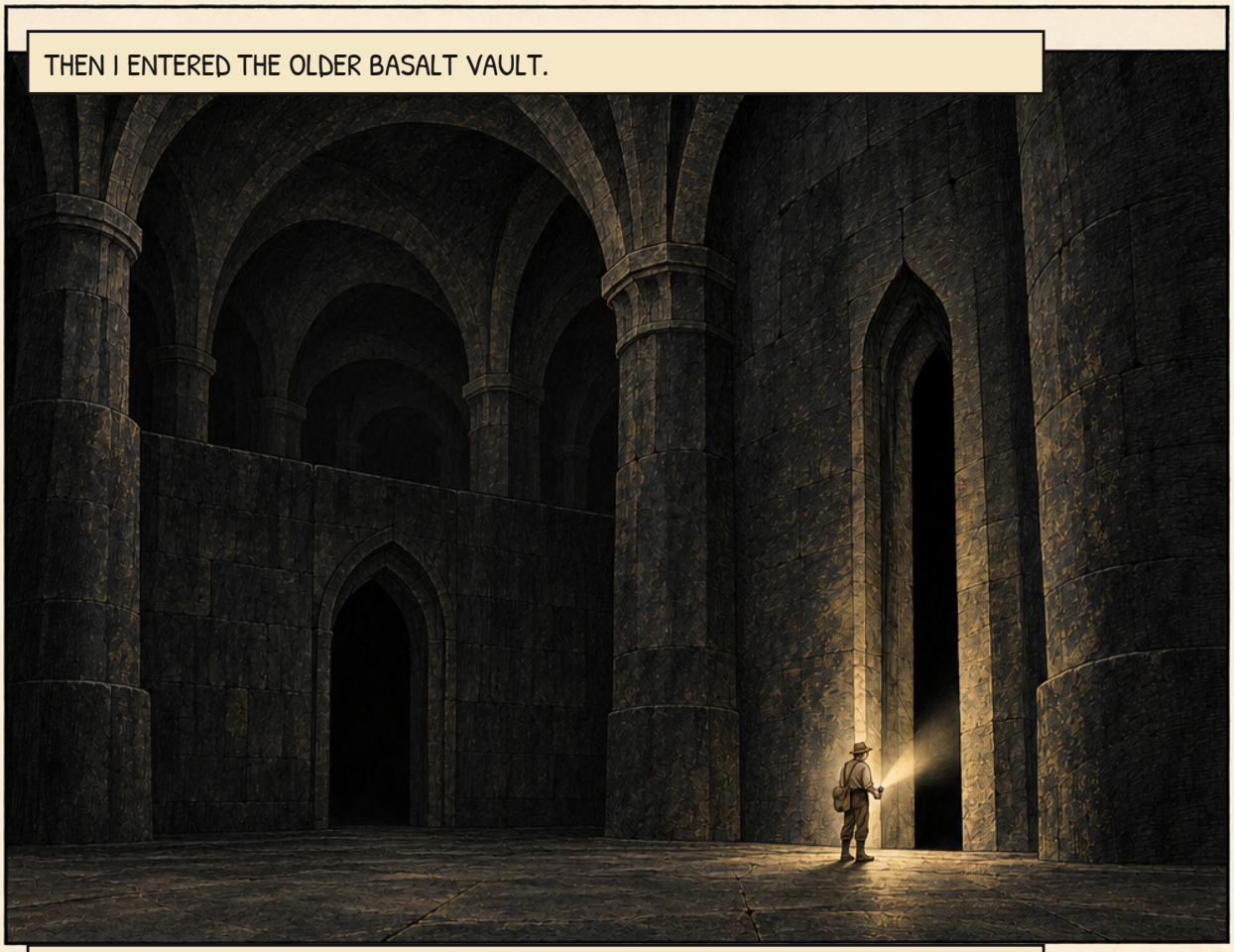


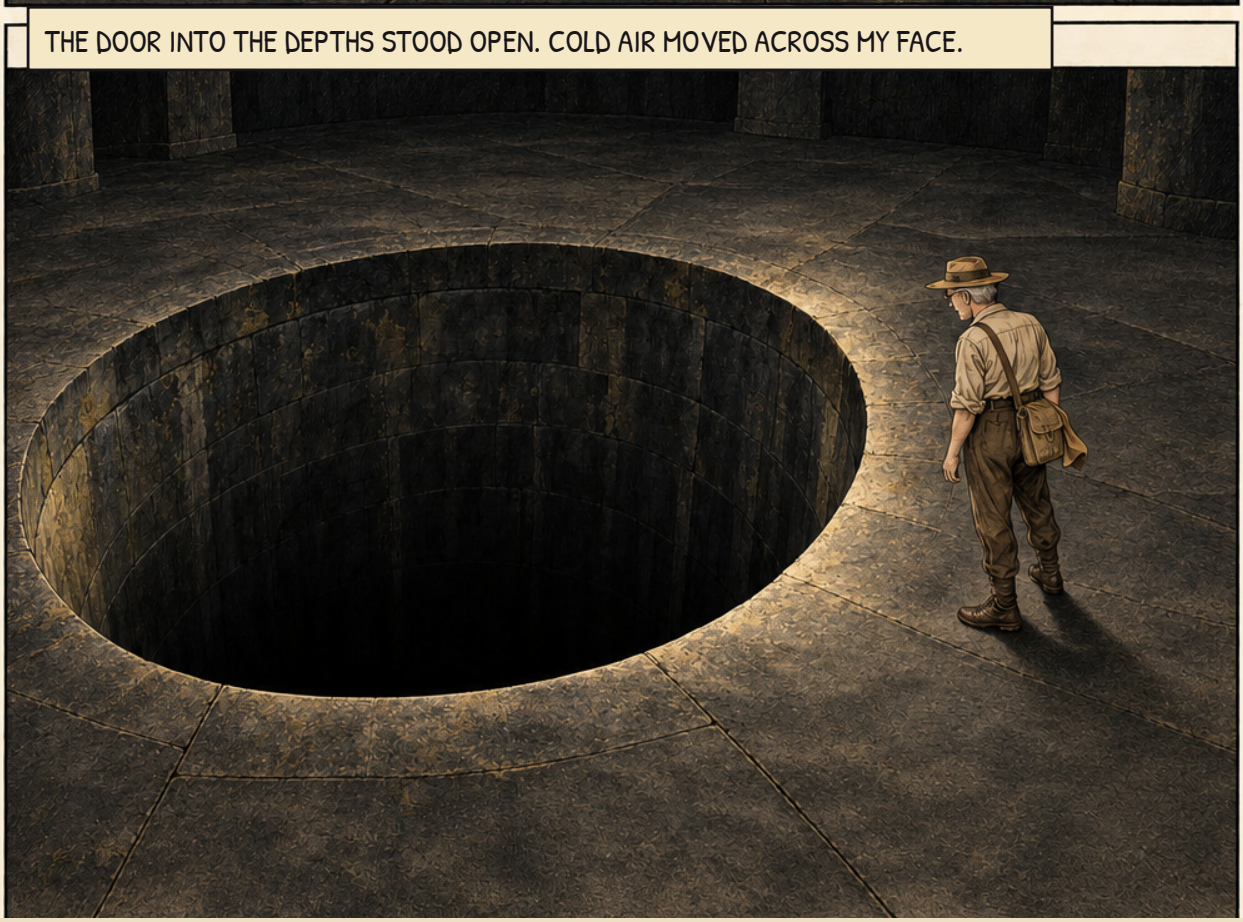
ITS CORRIDORS HAD BEEN MADE FOR BODIES FAR LARGER THAN MINE.




I RECOGNIZED THE TURNS, THE LEVELS, THE PROPORTIONS.
NOT VAGUELY. EXACTLY.
MY FEET FOLLOWED A PLAN MY WAKING MIND HAD NEVER LEARNED.


SOME PASSAGES HAD FALLEN. OTHERS REMAINED OPEN.
MY SHOES DISTURBED DUST THAT MIGHT HAVE LAIN THERE FOR AGES.
STILL, I KNEW ANOTHER WAY THROUGH.


THEN I ENTERED THE OLDER BASALT VAULT.

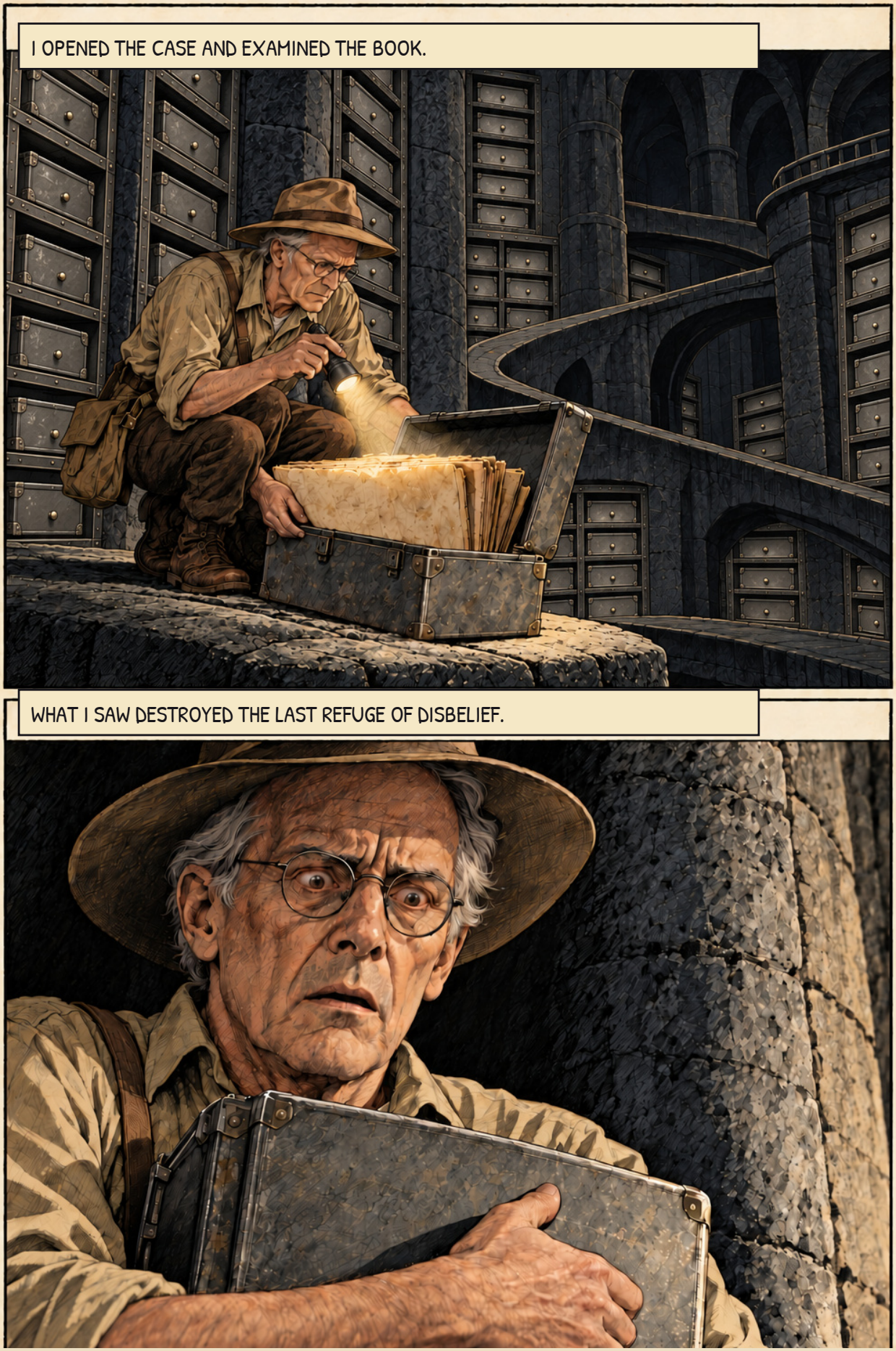

THE DOOR INTO THE DEPTHS STOOD OPEN. COLD AIR MOVED ACROSS MY FACE.

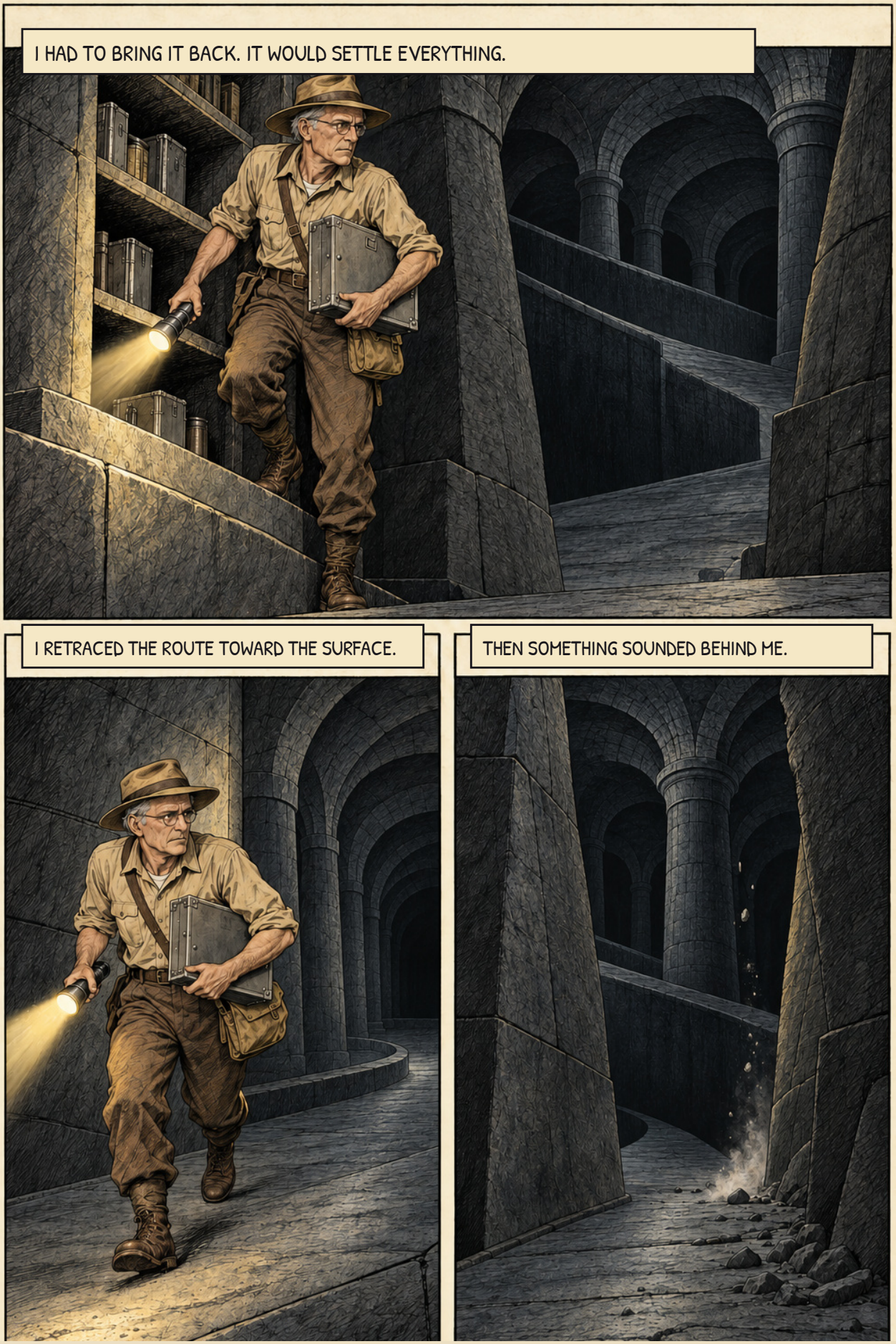

THE GREAT ARCHIVE HAD SURVIVED.
I HAD WORKED HERE. I KNEW THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SHELVES.

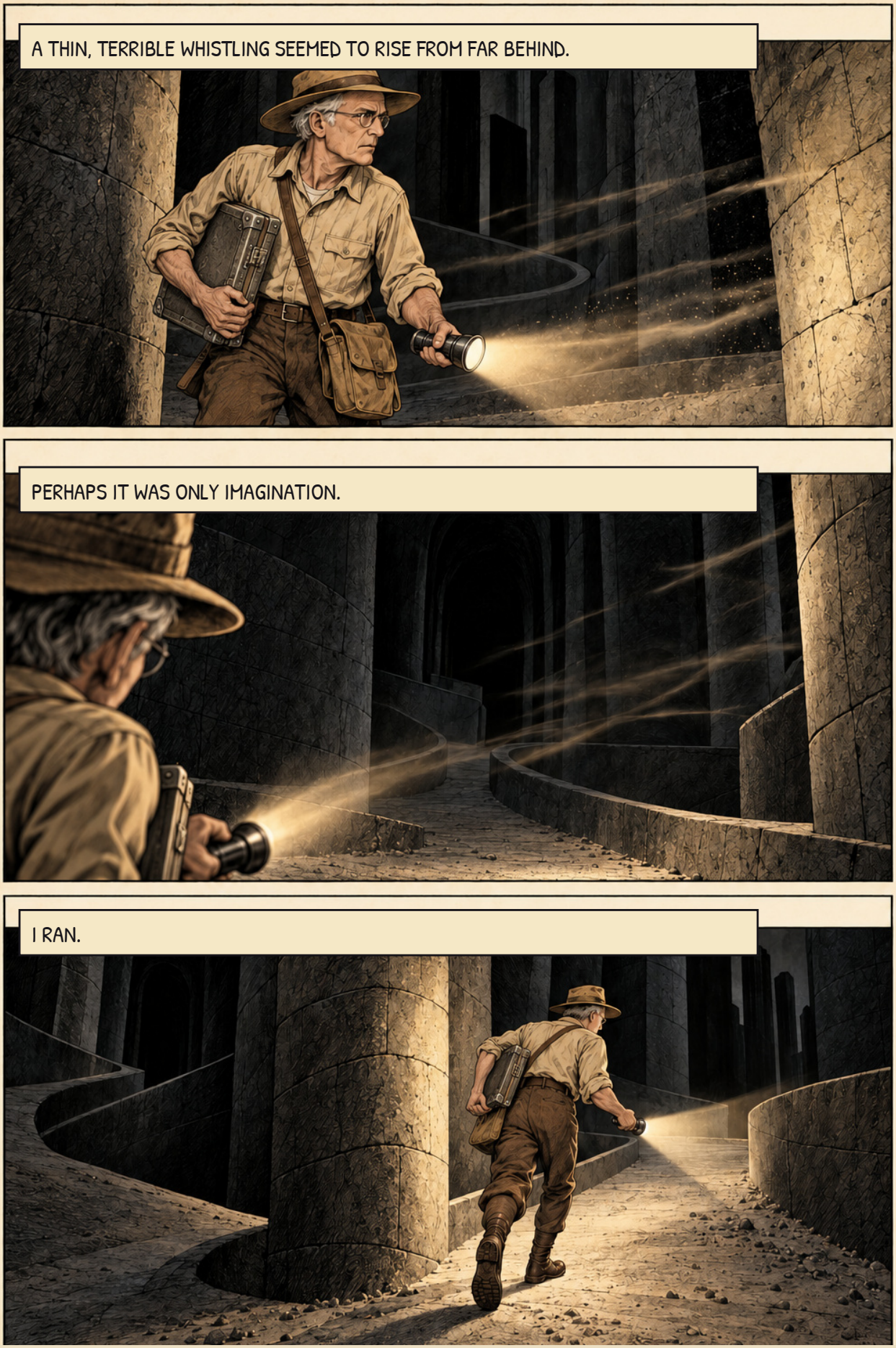

THE FIRST VOLUME HELD CHARACTERS NO HUMAN SCHOLAR COULD READ.
...THE LIGHT OF MY TORCH WAS BEGINNING TO FAIL, HENCE QUICKLY INSERTED THE EXTRA BATTERY I ALWAYS HAD WITH ME.
BESIDE THOSE RECORDS, MY OWN FOOTPRINTS SEEMED IMPOSSIBLY RECENT.

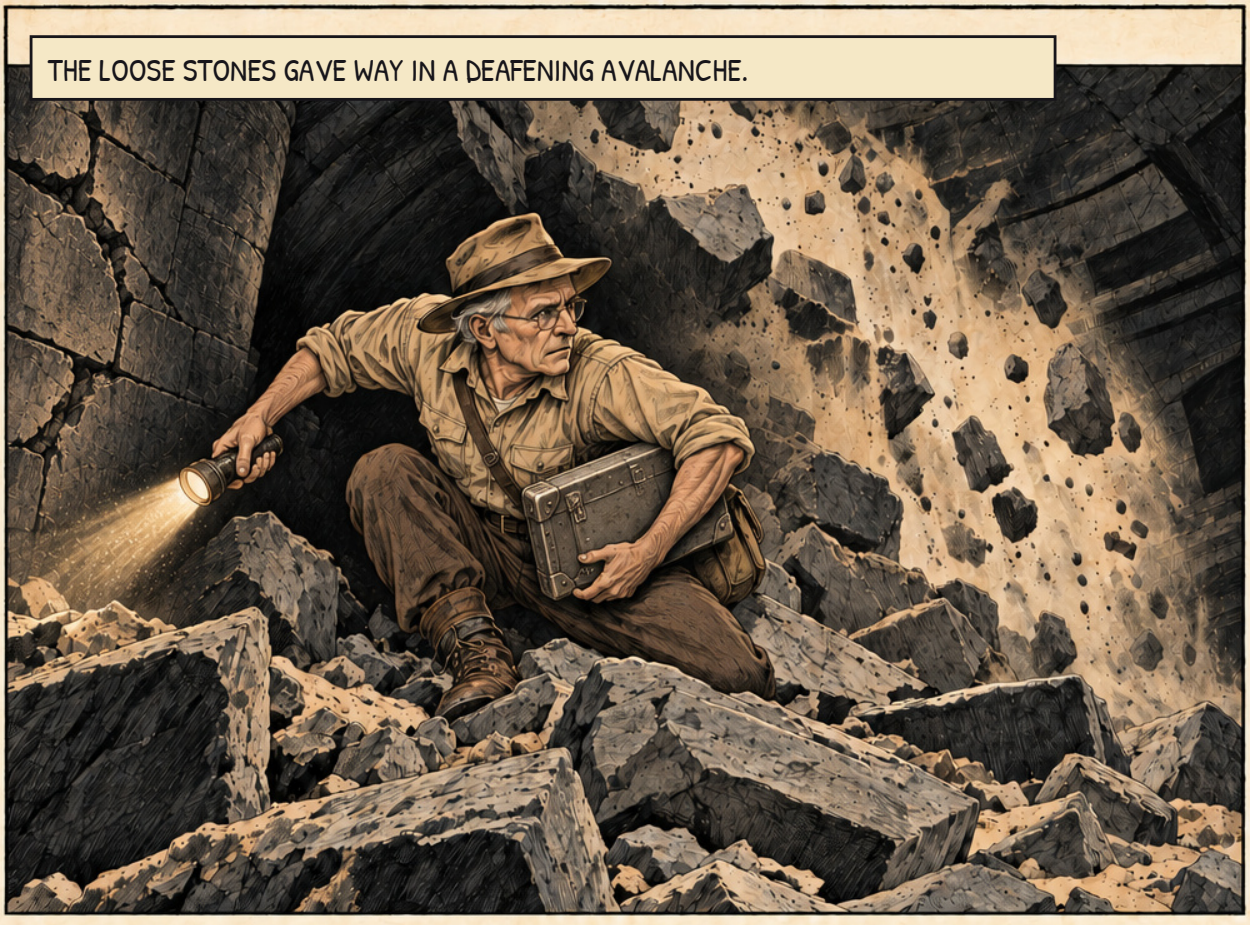

THERE WERE OTHER MARKS IN THE DUST. FIVE CIRCULAR IMPRESSIONS TOGETHER.
SOME METAL CASES HAD FALLEN RECENTLY.
THE DISTURBED TRAIL LED TOWARD THE OPEN DEPTHS.


AT LAST I FOUND THE SECTION WHERE MY OWN HISTORY HAD BEEN STORED.
WHAT HAD BEEN EASY FOR THAT OTHER BODY WAS DIFFICULT FOR A MAN.
YET MY FINGERS KNEW HOW TO OPEN THE LOCK.


I OPENED THE CASE AND EXAMINED THE BOOK.
WHAT I SAW DESTROYED THE LAST REFUGE OF DISBELIEF.


I HAD TO BRING IT BACK. IT WOULD SETTLE EVERYTHING.
I RETRACED THE ROUTE TOWARD THE SURFACE.
THEN SOMETHING SOUNDED BEHIND ME.


A THIN, TERRIBLE WHISTLING SEEMED TO RISE FROM FAR BEHIND.
PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY IMAGINATION.
I RAN.


THE LOOSE STONES GAVE WAY IN A DEAFENING AVALANCHE.

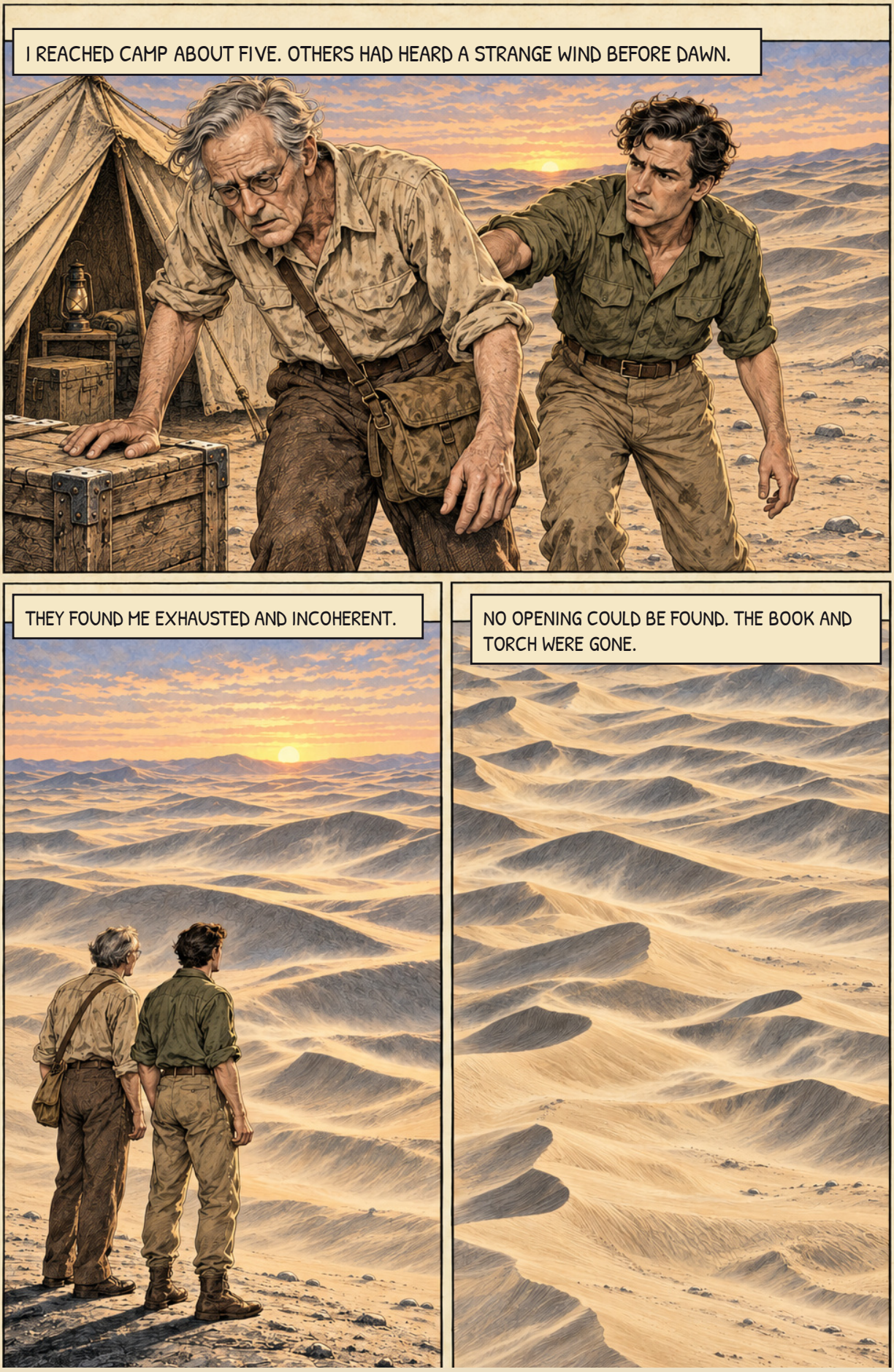

AS ITS ECHOES FADED, THE WHISTLING ANSWERED FROM AHEAD.


THE WIND ROSE WITH A PURPOSE OF ITS OWN.
AT THE BROKEN RAMP, I TRIED TO LEAP.
SOMETHING CAUGHT ME IN THE DARKNESS.


AFTER THAT, ONLY FRAGMENTS REMAIN.


A BODY THAT WAS NOT MINE. A FRANTIC STRUGGLE UPWARD.


I WAS CLAWING PRONE THROUGH THE SANDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN DESERT, AND AROUND ME SHRIEKED SUCH A TUMULT OF WIND AS I HAD NEVER BEFORE KNOWN ON OUR PLANET'S SURFACE.


I REACHED CAMP ABOUT FIVE. OTHERS HAD HEARD A STRANGE WIND BEFORE DAWN.
THEY FOUND ME EXHAUSTED AND INCOHERENT.
NO OPENING COULD BE FOUND. THE BOOK AND TORCH WERE GONE.


I BEGGED THEM TO STOP DIGGING TO THE NORTHEAST. I COULD NOT TELL THEM WHY.
WINGATE TOOK ME TO PERTH JULY 20...
NOW I MUST TELL YOU WHAT I SAW IN THAT BOOK.


NO EYE HAD SEEN, NO HAND HAD TOUCHED THAT BOOK SINCE THE ADVENT OF MAN TO THIS PLANET.
THEY WERE, INSTEAD, THE LETTERS OF OUR FAMILIAR ALPHABET, SPELLING OUT THE WORDS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MY OWN HANDWRITING.