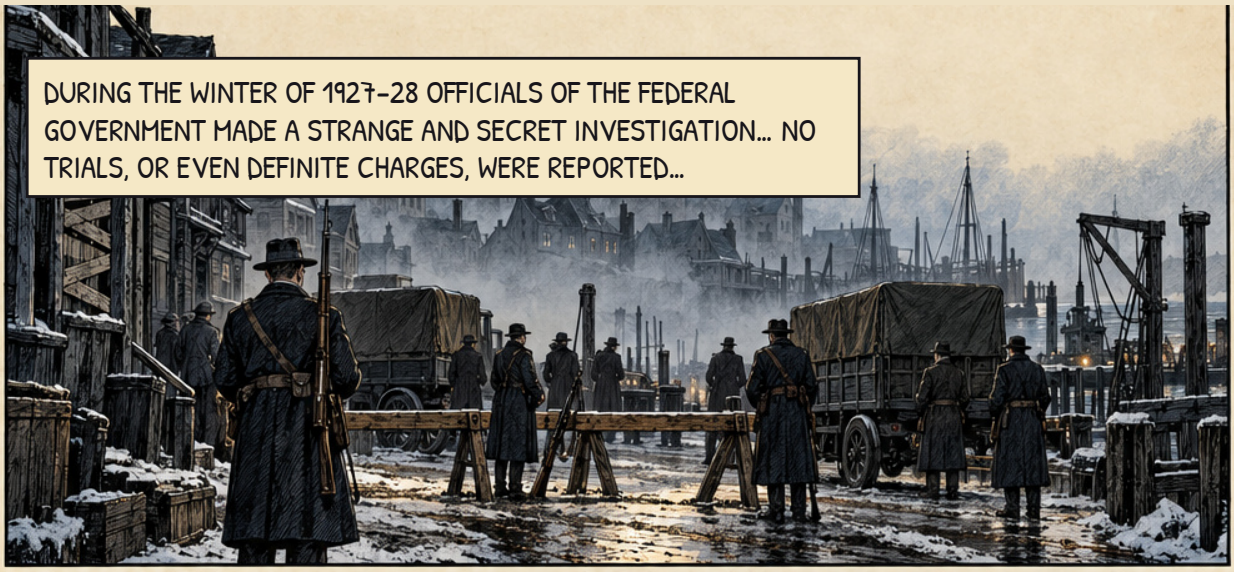
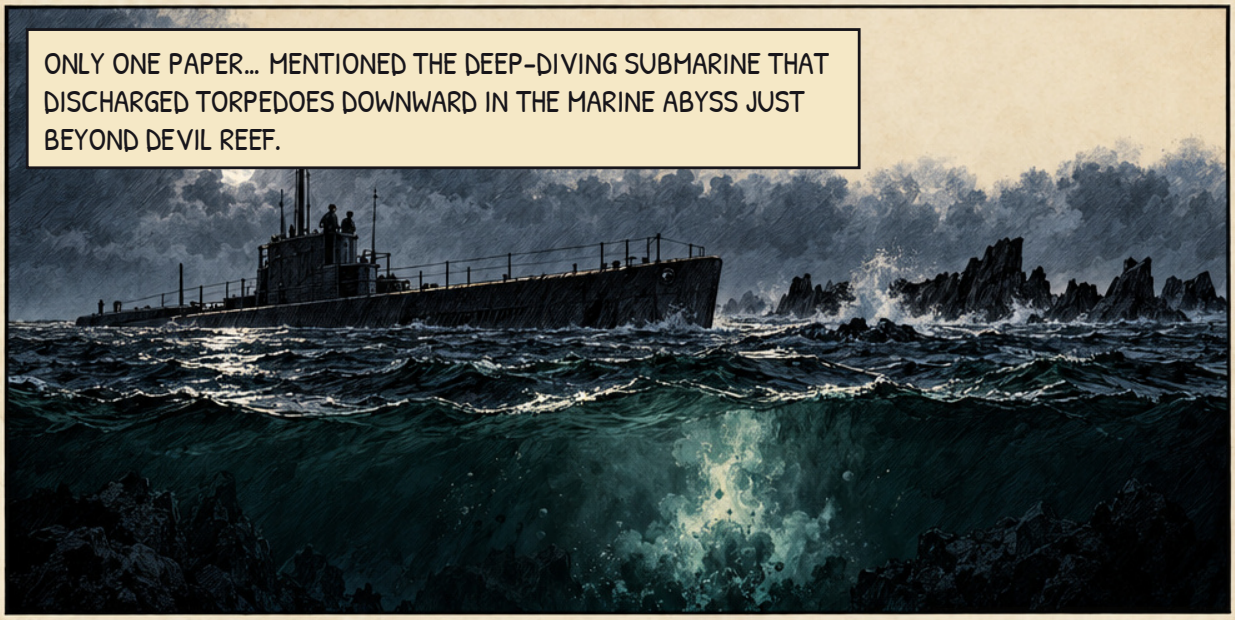
THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH





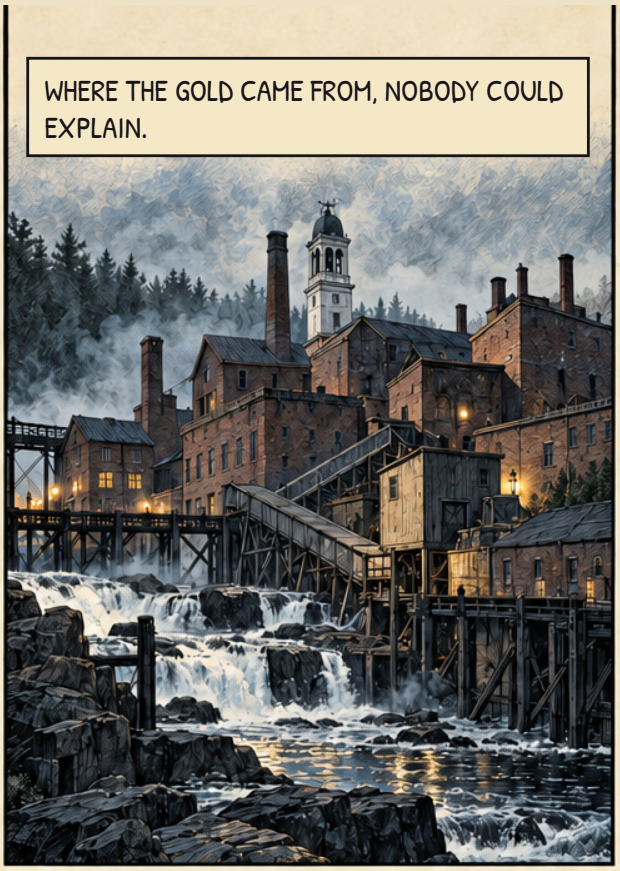


THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

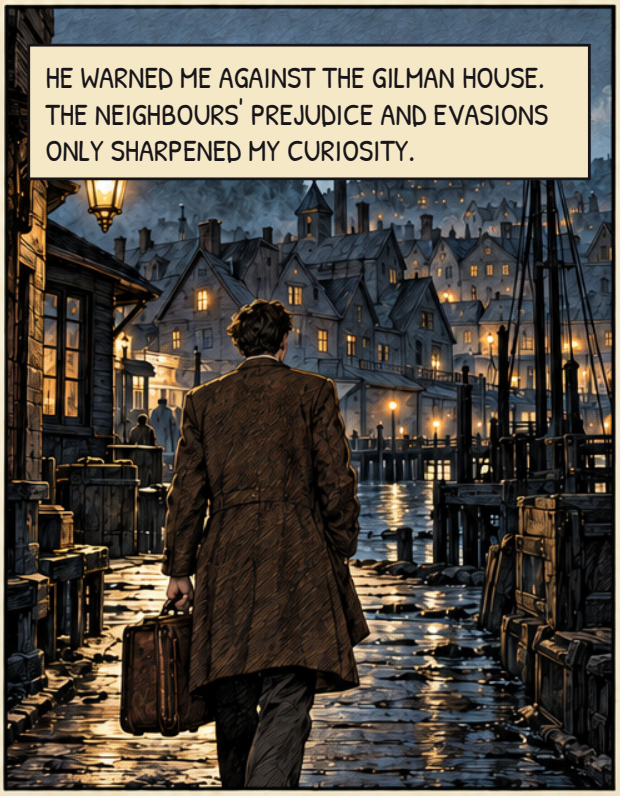


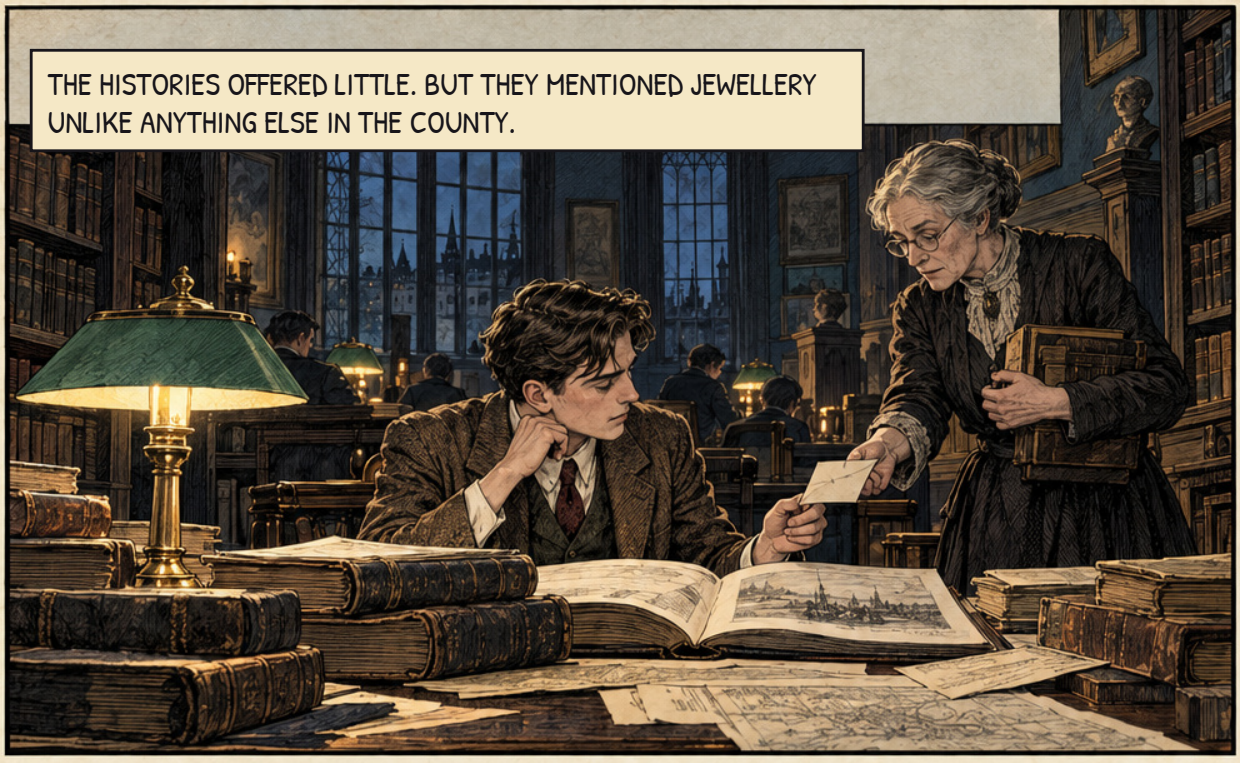
THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

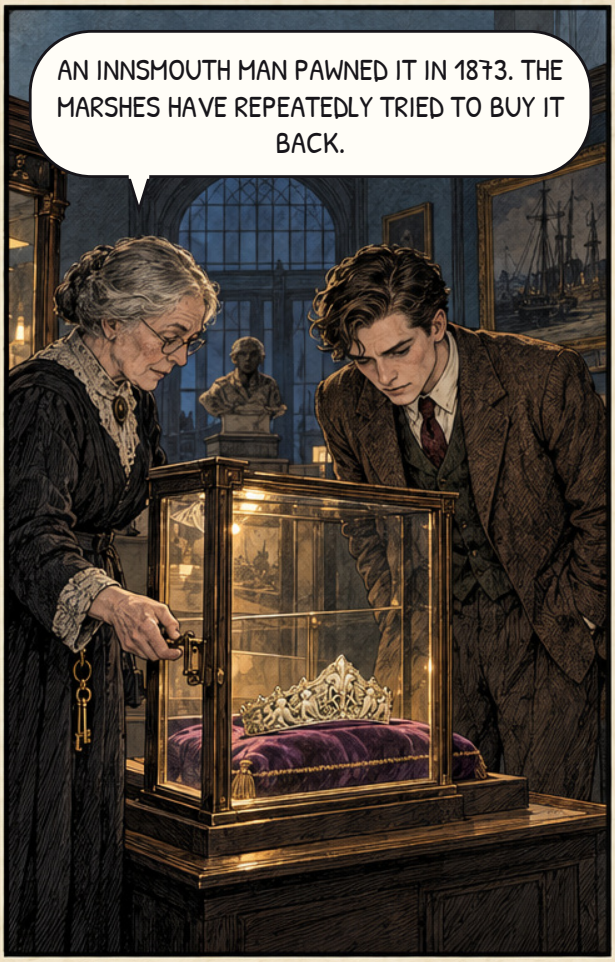









THE HISTORIES OFFERED LITTLE. BUT THEY MENTIONED JEWELLERY UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN THE COUNTY.


AN INNSMOUTH MAN PAWNED IT IN 1873. THE MARSHES HAVE REPEATEDLY TRIED TO BUY IT BACK.


ITS WORKMANSHIP SEEMED ANCIENT AND COMPLETE, YET BELONGED TO NO TRADITION I KNEW. WHY DID IT SEEM FAMILIAR?

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH





THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

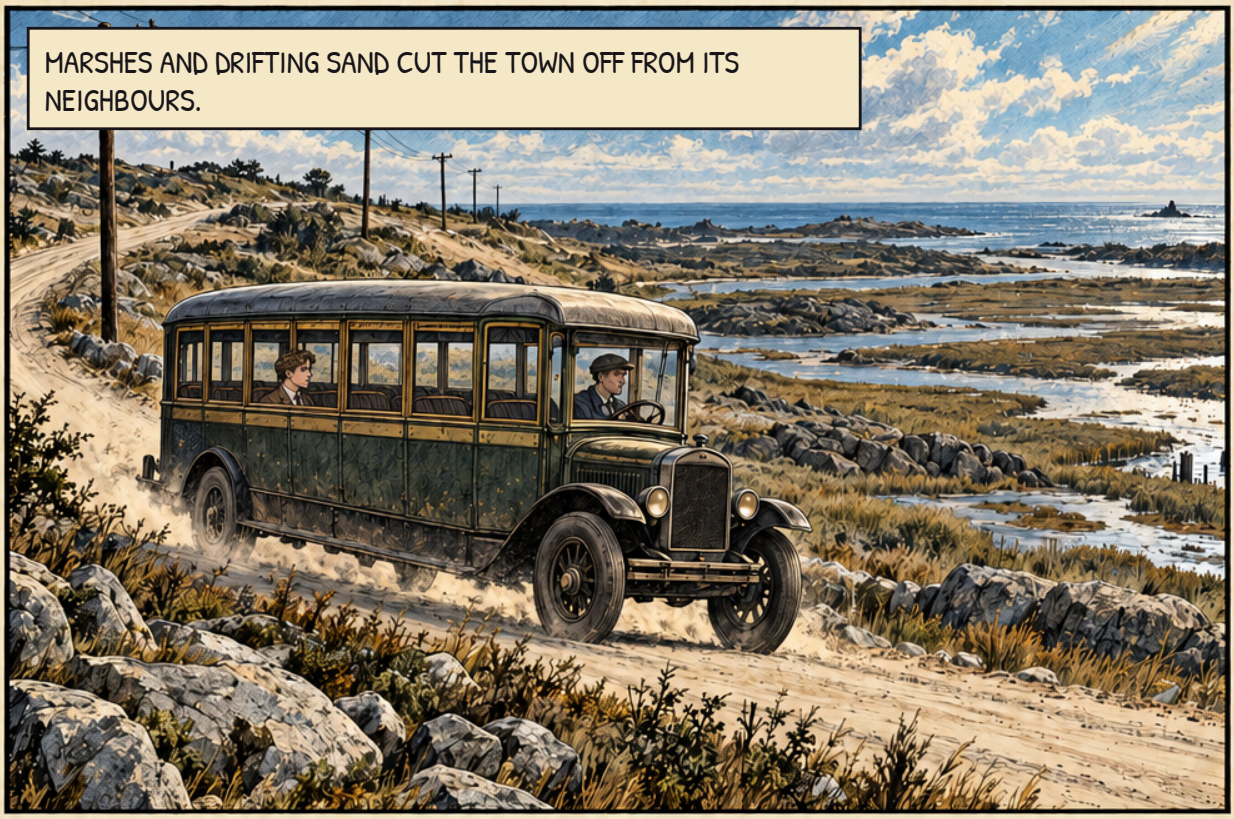


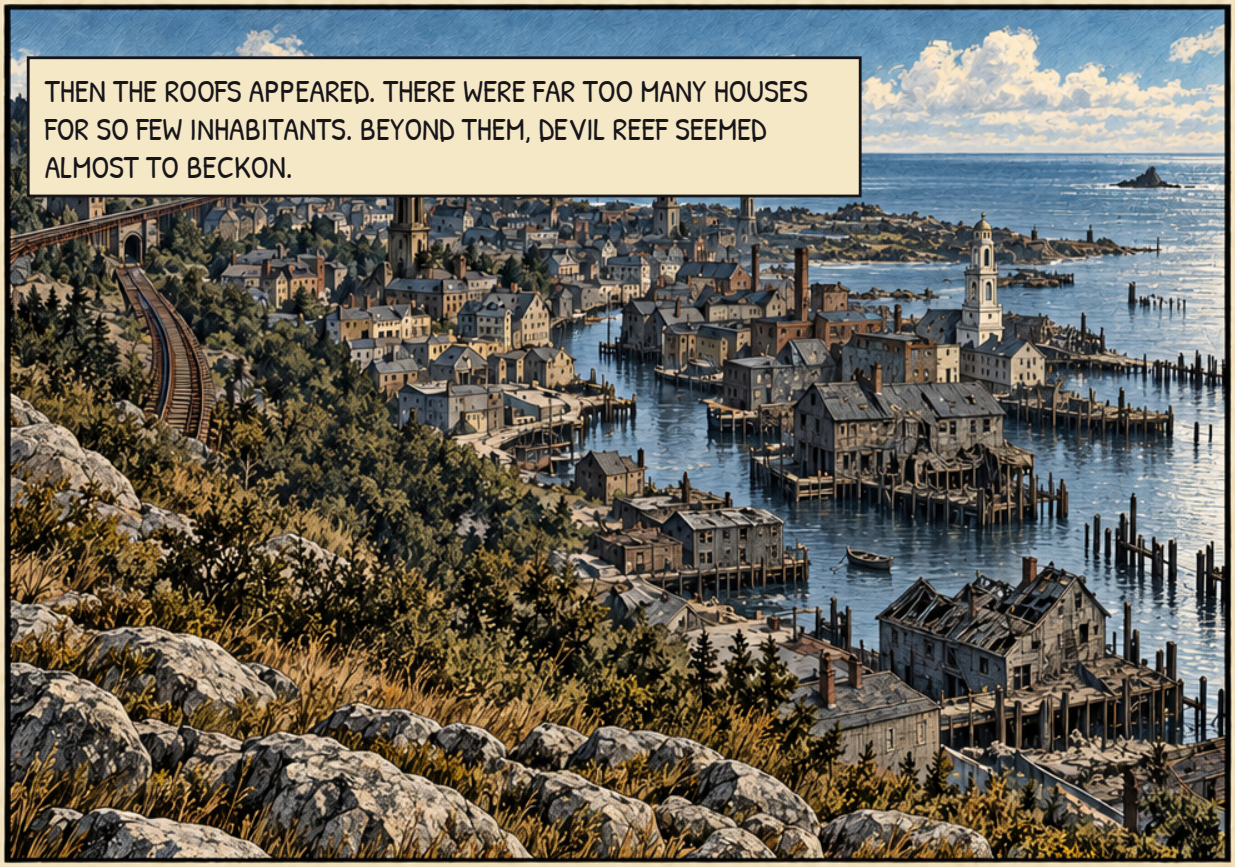






THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH






THE CRACKED BELL STRUCK ELEVEN AS WE PASSED NEW CHURCH GREEN.


A FIGURE CROSSED THE BASEMENT DOORWAY. THE TIARA WAS THE MUSEUM PIECE'S TWIN.

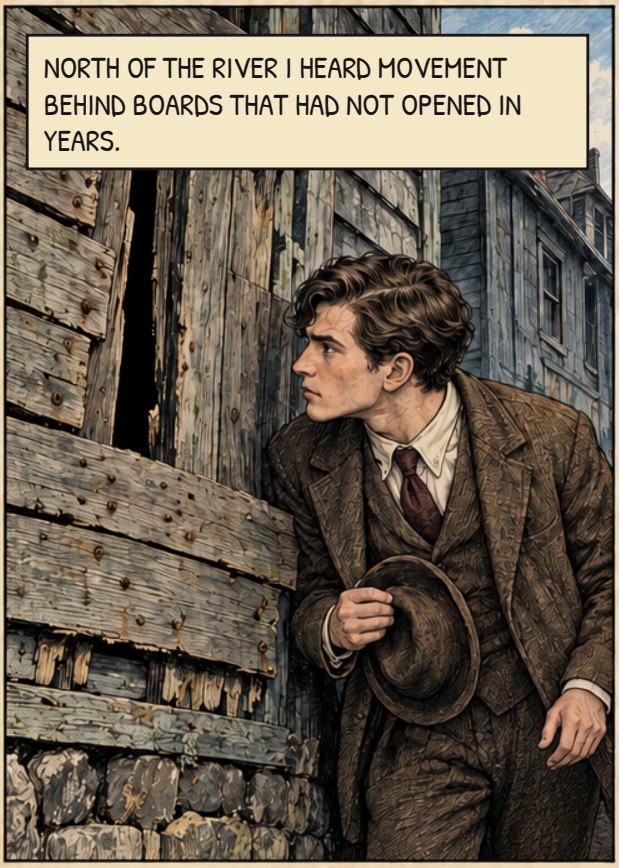

I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS ONLY A PRIEST IN UNFAMILIAR VESTMENTS. THE SHOCK WOULD NOT LEAVE ME.

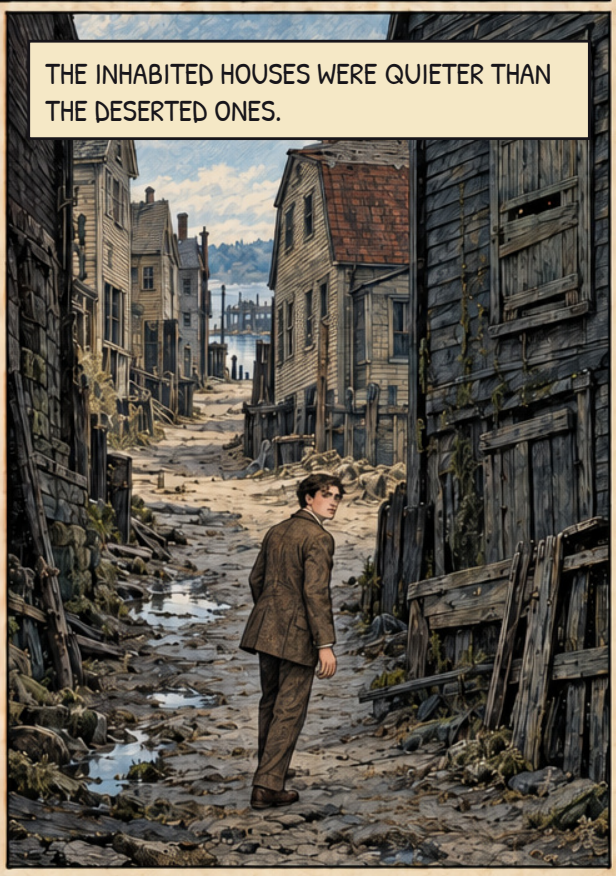

I LEFT MY BAG AT THE GILMAN. THE ARKHAM BUS WOULD LEAVE AT EIGHT THAT EVENING.
I'M FROM ARKHAM. IT'S GOOD TO TALK TO SOMEBODY FROM OUTSIDE.
FEDERAL RUNS NORTH FROM THE SQUARE. THE FINE OLD HOUSES ARE WEST; THE WATERFRONT IS EAST. TAKE THIS. MOST STREET SIGNS ARE GONE.

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH



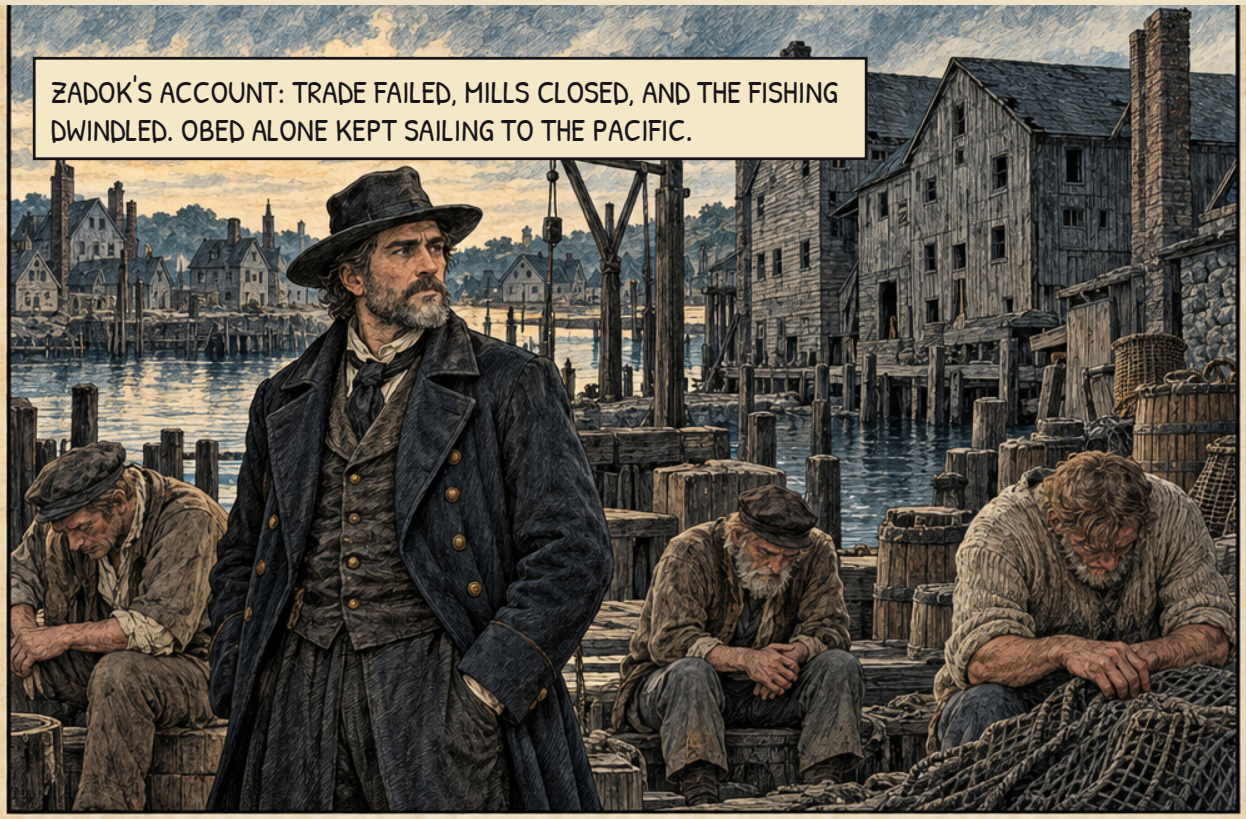

SOUTH OF THE RIVER, WHOLE STREETS WERE EMPTY. NO DOGS. NO CATS. ONLY THE FALLS AND THE TIDE.

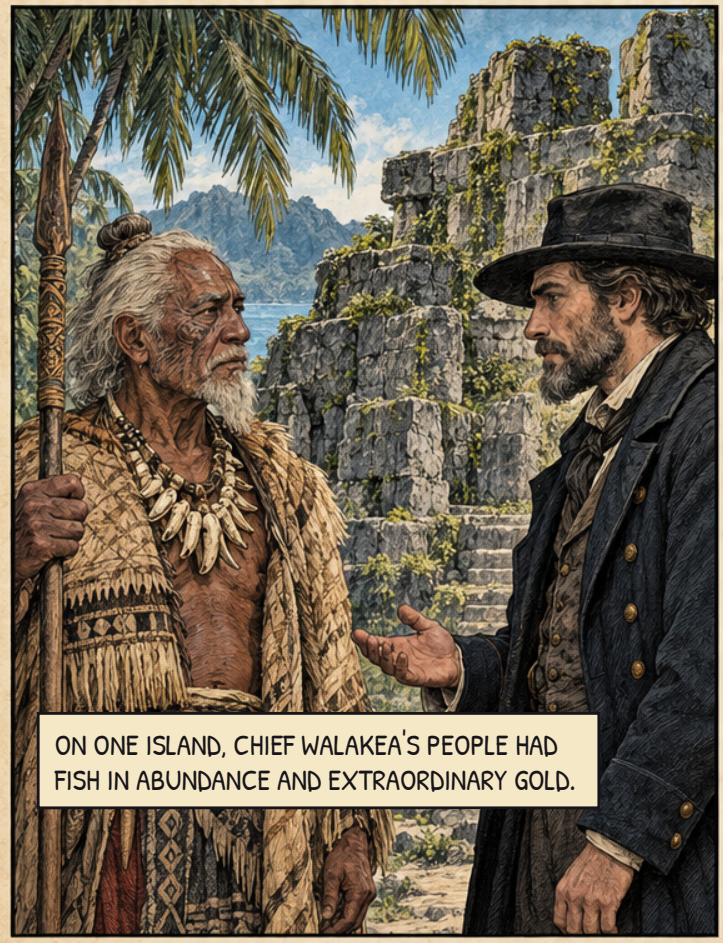

NORTH OF THE RIVER I HEARD MOVEMENT BEHIND BOARDS THAT HAD NOT OPENED IN YEARS.


THE INHABITED HOUSES WERE QUIETER THAN THE DESERTED ONES.


THE WEALTHY FAMILIES KEPT THEIR HOUSES IN ORDER, AND THEIR UPPER ROOMS SHUT.
BY THREE, EVEN THE ARCHITECTURE HAD LOST ITS CHARM. I WANTED A WAY OUT BEFORE THE BUS.
THEN I SAW THE OLD MAN FROM THE GROCERY BOY'S STORY.


CURIOSITY WON AGAIN. A BOTTLE DREW HIM AWAY FROM THE FIRE STATION.
YOU REMEMBER WHEN THE SHIPS STILL CAME HERE?
THAT'S WHERE IT BEGAN. CAPTAIN OBED MARSH BROUGHT IT BACK FROM THE SOUTH SEAS.


ZADOK'S ACCOUNT: TRADE FAILED, MILLS CLOSED, AND THE FISHING DWINDLED. OBED ALONE KEPT SAILING TO THE PACIFIC.


ON ONE ISLAND, CHIEF WALAKEA'S PEOPLE HAD FISH IN ABUNDANCE AND EXTRAORDINARY GOLD.


OBED TRADED FOR THE ORNAMENTS. THEN HE LEARNED WHAT THEIR MAKERS DEMANDED.


THE ISLANDERS MET BEINGS AT A REEF. TWICE A YEAR THEY BROUGHT OFFERINGS, INCLUDING HUMAN LIVES.
IN RETURN CAME GOLD, AND FISH DRIVEN IN FROM THE OPEN SEA.
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE PRICE THEY ASKED LATER.

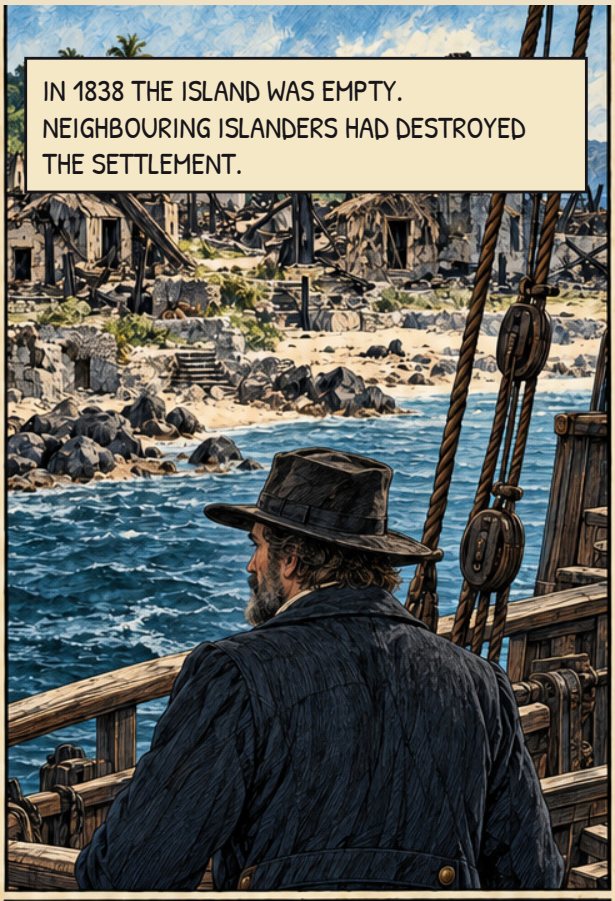

THEY WANTED CHILDREN WITH THE ISLAND PEOPLE. CHILDREN WHO LOOKED HUMAN AT FIRST.


WITH AGE, THE CHILDREN CHANGED. SOME EARLY; OTHERS ONLY AFTER SEVENTY YEARS.

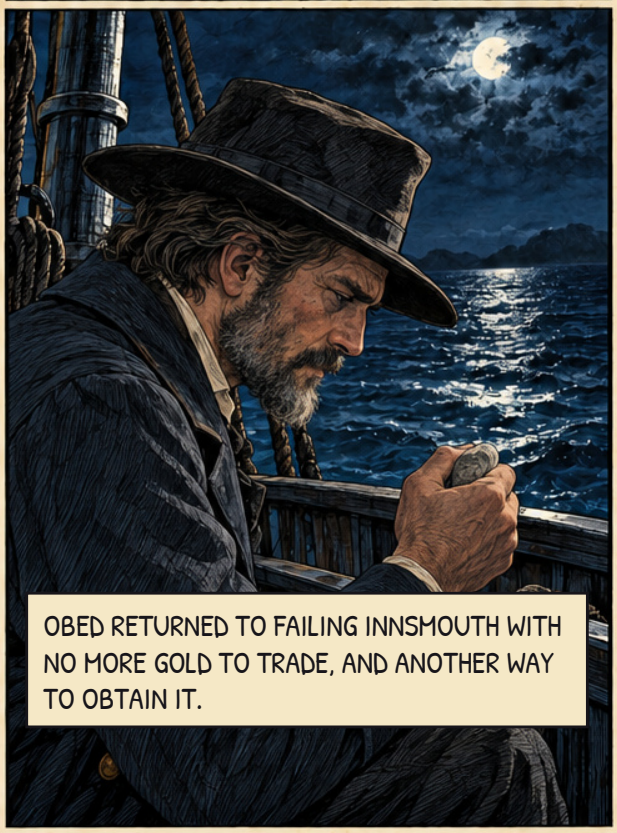

ZADOK: ...THEM AS TURNED INTO FISH THINGS AN' WENT INTO THE WATER WOULDN'T NEVER DIE. THEM THINGS NEVER DIED EXCEP' THEY WAS KILT VIOLENT.

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

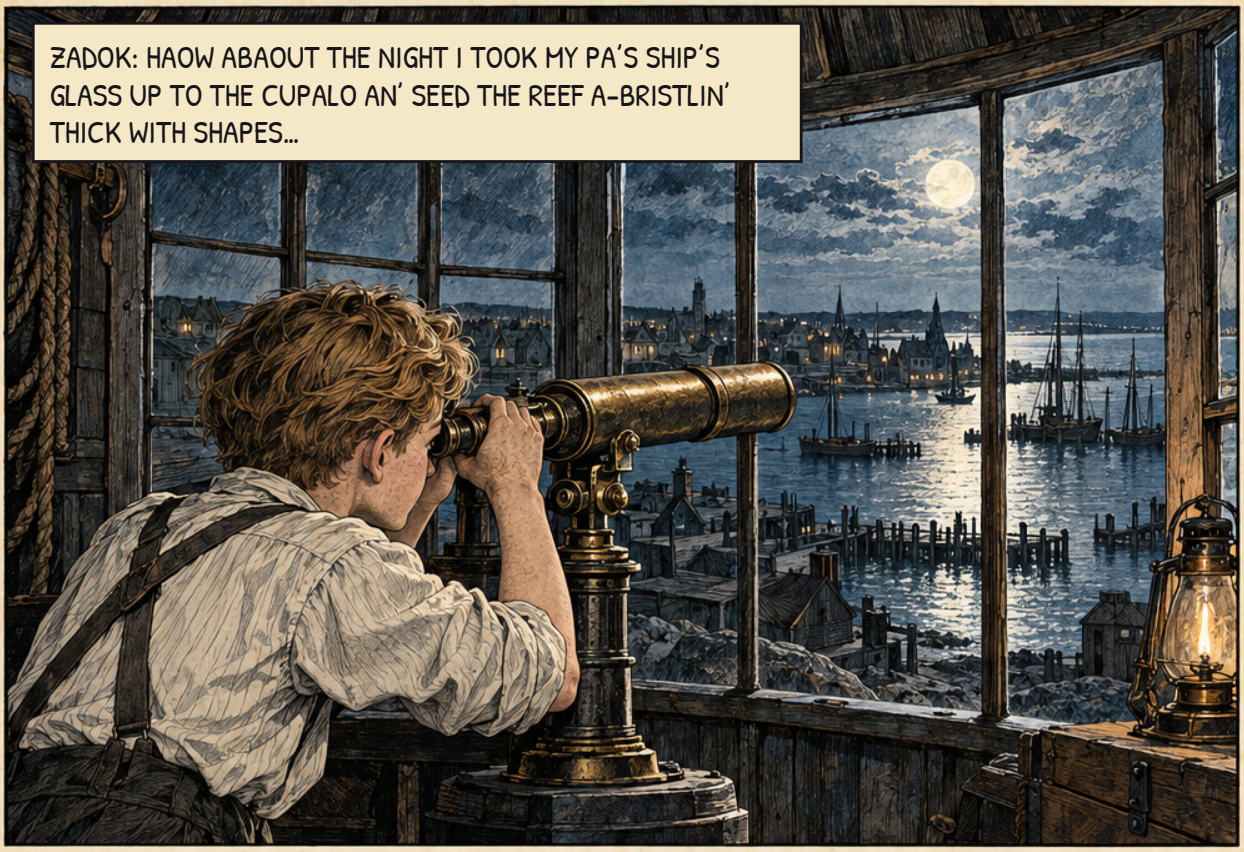


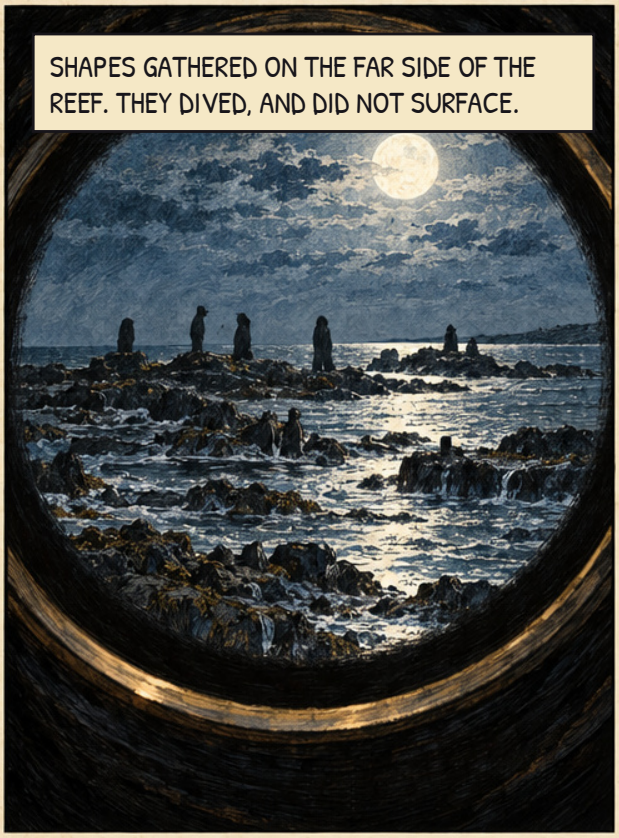


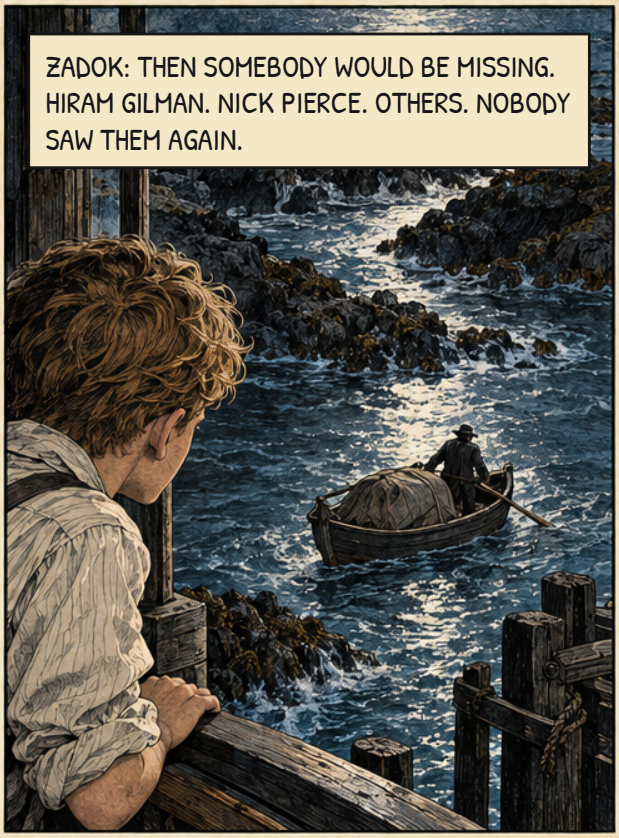




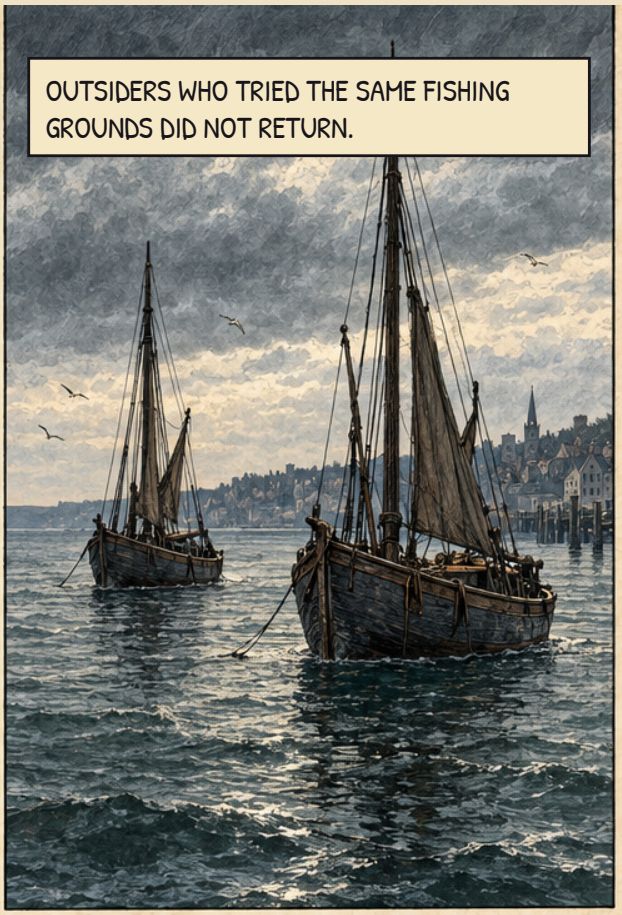

YOU PRAY, AND YOUR NETS STAY EMPTY. I KNOW POWERS THAT ANSWER.
HIS MATE OPPOSED HIM. MINISTERS PROTESTED. ONE WAS DRIVEN AWAY; ANOTHER DISAPPEARED.
AT NIGHT THE BOATS WENT TO DEVIL REEF. THE CHANTING CARRIED ACROSS THE HARBOUR.


ZADOK: HAOW ABAOUT THE NIGHT I TOOK MY PA'S SHIP'S GLASS UP TO THE CUPALO AN' SEED THE REEF A-BRISTLIN' THICK WITH SHAPES...


SHAPES GATHERED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE REEF. THEY DIVED, AND DID NOT SURFACE.


ZADOK: THEN SOMEBODY WOULD BE MISSING. HIRAM GILMAN. NICK PIERCE. OTHERS. NOBODY SAW THEM AGAIN.


THE FISH RETURNED. THE REFINERY SMOKED. GOLD AND CARGO WENT OUT TO BOSTON.

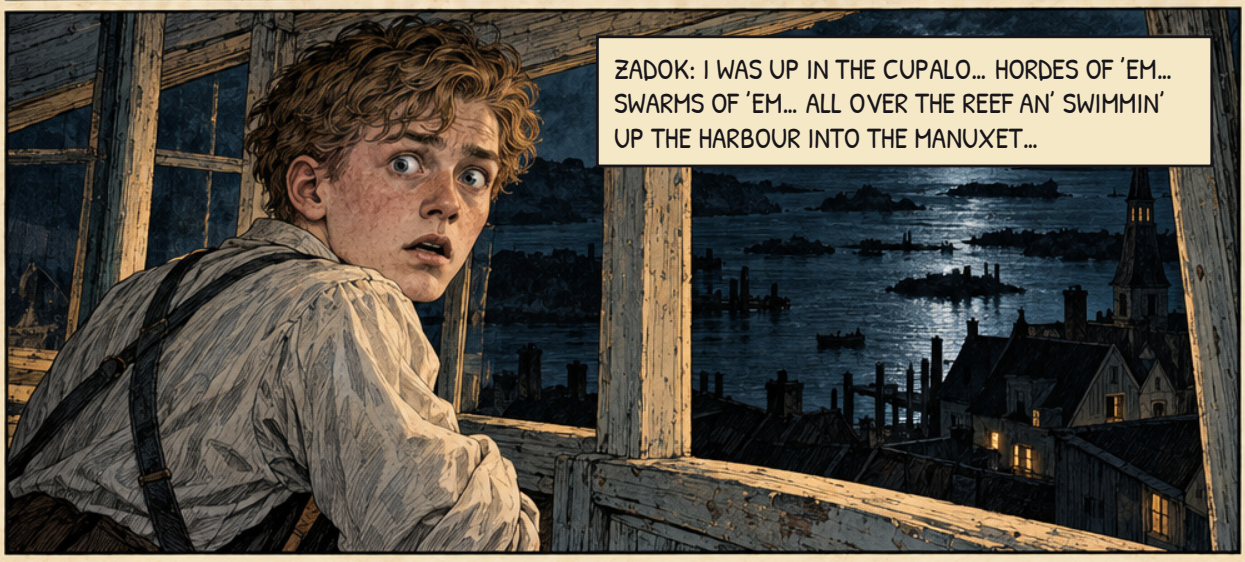

OUTSIDERS WHO TRIED THE SAME FISHING GROUNDS DID NOT RETURN.


THE ORDER OF DAGON BOUGHT THE MASONIC HALL. MATT ELIOT VANISHED.


AT FIRST HE WANTED THE GOLD. I DON'T THINK HE MEANT TO BRING THE REST OF IT ASHORE.


AT LAST THE TOWN REBELLED. A PARTY FOLLOWED THE BOATS AND SHOTS WERE FIRED.

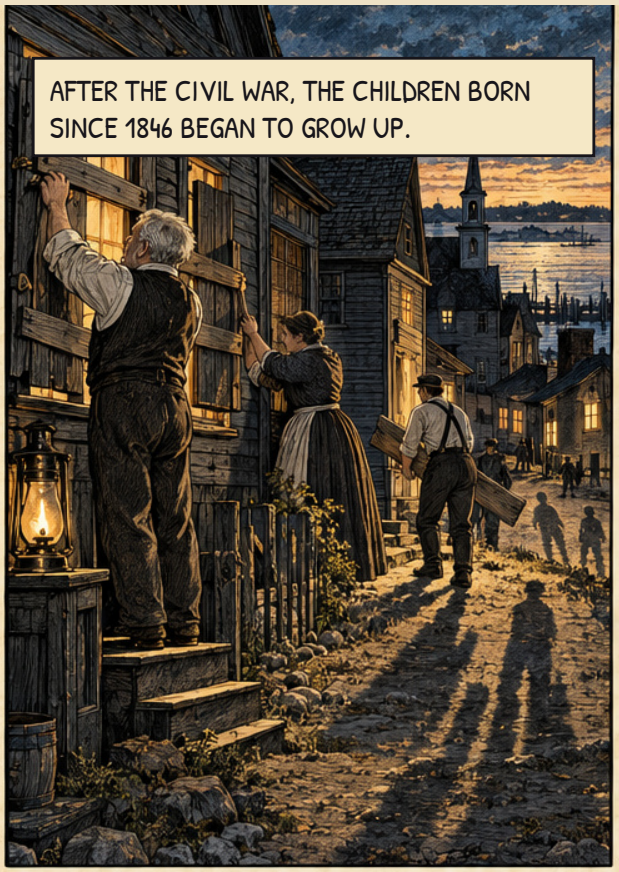

OBED AND THIRTY-TWO OTHERS WENT TO JAIL. FOR TWO WEEKS, NOTHING WAS GIVEN TO THE SEA.


ZADOK: I WAS UP IN THE CUPALO... HORDES OF 'EM... SWARMS OF 'EM... ALL OVER THE REEF AN' SWIMMIN' UP THE HARBOUR INTO THE MANUXET...


THE JAIL OPENED. THE STREETS FILLED WITH SCREAMS. ZADOK'S FATHER WENT OUT WITH HIS MUSKET AND NEVER CAME HOME.
ZADOK: ...CALLED IT THE PLAGUE WHEN FOLKS COME IN AN' FAOUND HAFF OUR PEOPLE MISSIN'... NOBODY LEFT BUT THEM AS UD JINE IN WITH OBED AN' THEM THINGS OR ELSE KEEP QUIET...


THE SURVIVORS SWORE THE OATH OF DAGON. SOME LATER TOOK A SECOND, AND A THIRD.
THERE WOULD BE GUESTS IN CERTAIN HOUSES. THE BARGAIN NOW INCLUDED CHILDREN.
THEY'D A KILT ME LONG AGO FER WHAT I KNOW, ONLY I'D TOOK THE FUST AN' SECON' OATHS O' DAGON OFFEN OBED...

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH










ZADOK: OBED TOOK ANOTHER WIFE. NOBODY IN TOWN EVER SAW HER OUTSIDE.


OF THEIR THREE CHILDREN, ONE DAUGHTER LOOKED HUMAN. SHE WAS EDUCATED IN EUROPE.

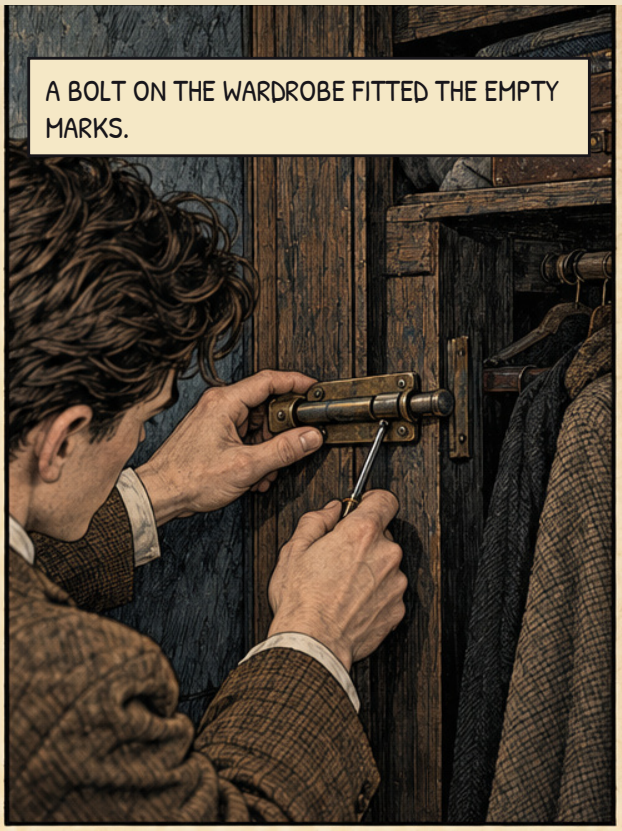

ZADOK: HE MARRIED HER TO AN ARKHAM MAN BY A TRICK. THE MAN KNEW NOTHING.

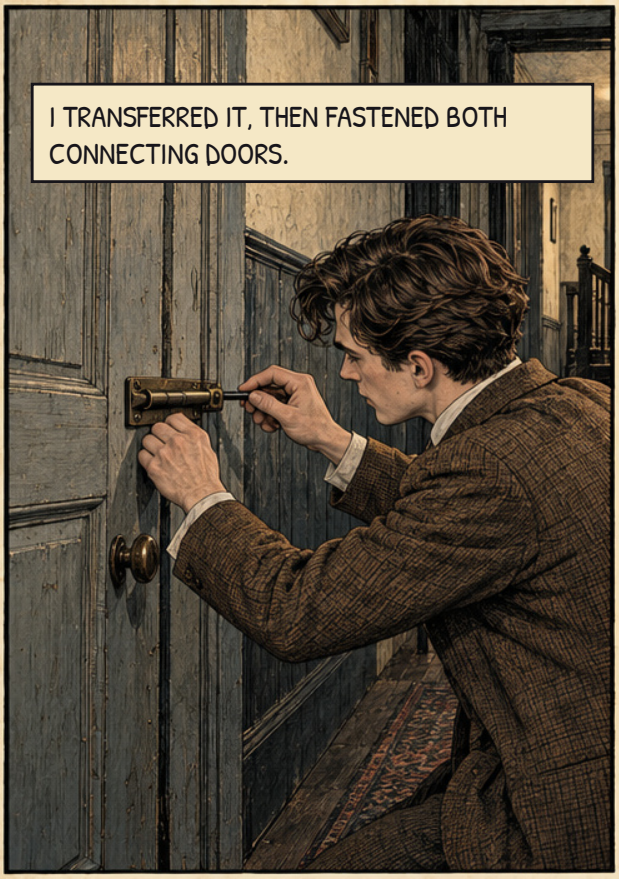

THEM HAOUSES NORTH O' THE RIVER BETWIXT WATER AN' MAIN STREETS IS FULL OF 'EM—THEM DEVILS AN' WHAT THEY BRUNG...
...IT AIN'T WHAT THEM FISH DEVILS HEZ DONE, BUT WHAT THEY'RE A-GOIN' TO DO!... EVER HEAR TELL OF A SHOGGOTH?...
GIT AOUT O' HERE! GIT AOUT O' HERE! THEY SEEN US—GIT AOUT FER YOUR LIFE!

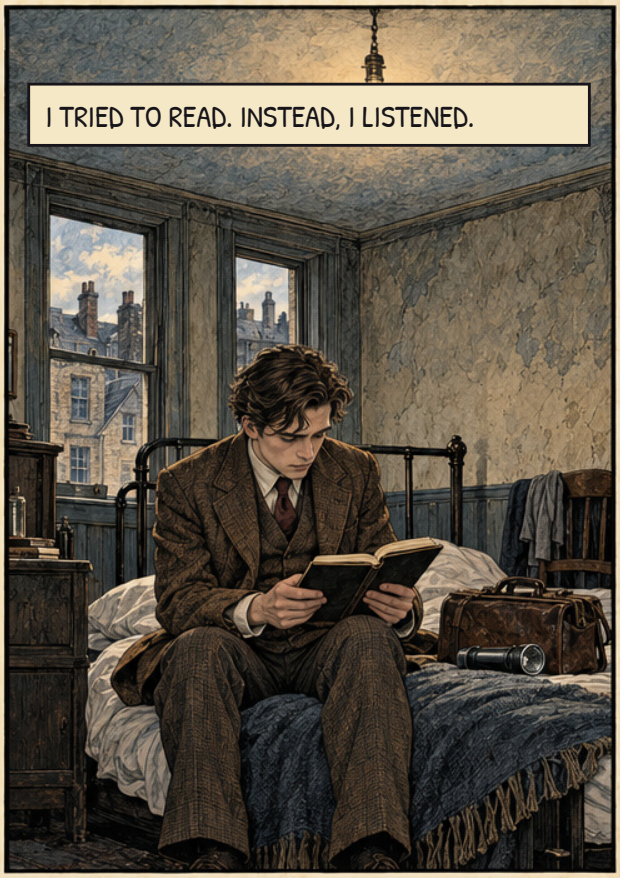

HE RAN. WHEN I REACHED THE STREET, HE WAS GONE.
IT WAS A QUARTER PAST SEVEN. I WANTED ONLY TO REACH THE BUS.


THE BUS ARRIVED ON TIME. SOMEONE WHISPERED TO ITS DRIVER.
ENGINE TROUBLE. CAN'T GO ON TONIGHT. NO OTHER TRANSPORT. YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY AT THE GILMAN.
ROOM 428. A DOLLAR. NO RUNNING WATER.

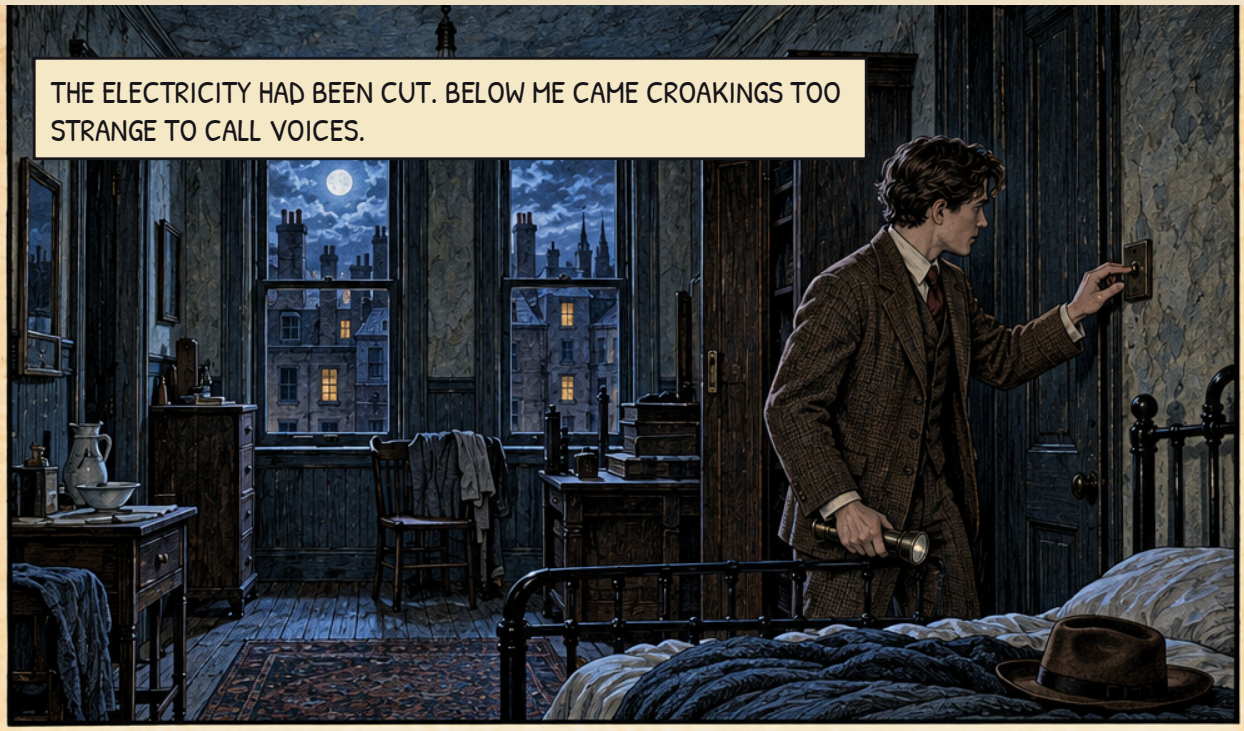

THE ROOM OVERLOOKED A COURTYARD AND LOWER ROOFS. THE BOLT HAD RECENTLY BEEN REMOVED FROM ITS HALL DOOR.


A BOLT ON THE WARDROBE FITTED THE EMPTY MARKS.


I TRANSFERRED IT, THEN FASTENED BOTH CONNECTING DOORS.

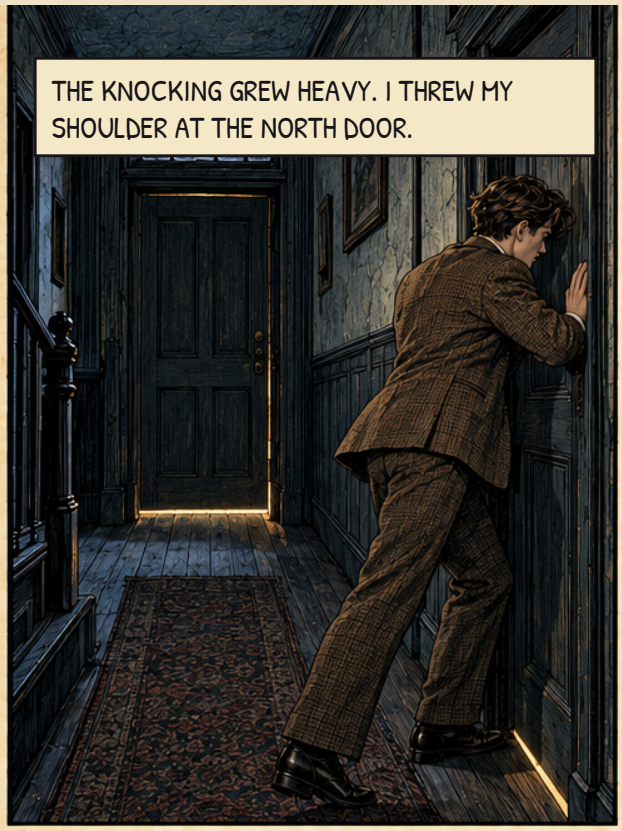

I TRIED TO READ. INSTEAD, I LISTENED.

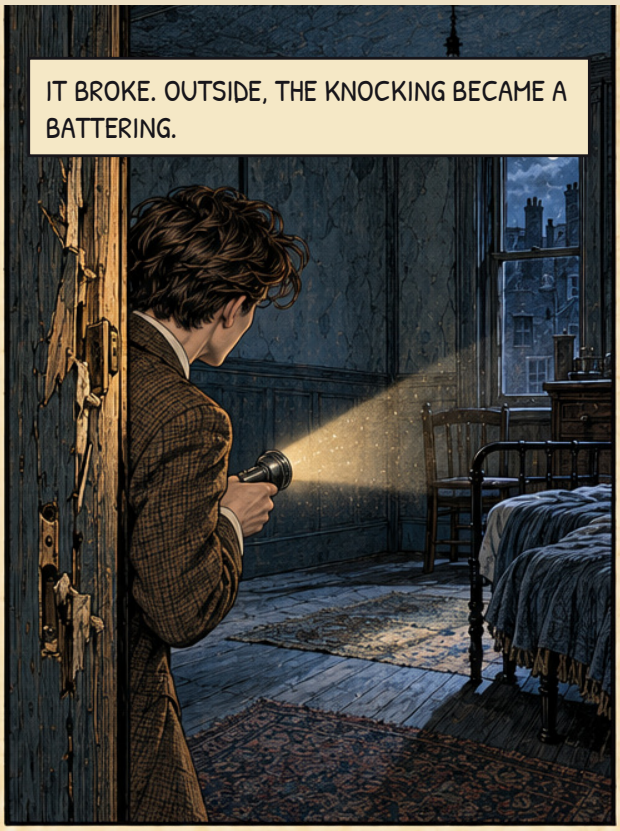

I TURNED OUT THE LIGHT. THE CORRIDOR CREAKED.
SOMEONE WAS TRYING MY LOCK.
THEN THE NORTH CONNECTING DOOR. THEN THE SOUTH. EVERY BOLT HELD. THE FOOTSTEPS RETREATED.


THE ELECTRICITY HAD BEEN CUT. BELOW ME CAME CROAKINGS TOO STRANGE TO CALL VOICES.


NO FIRE ESCAPE. THE NEIGHBOURING ROOF COULD BE REACHED ONLY FROM A ROOM TWO DOORS NORTH.


I POCKETED WHAT I COULD CARRY. THE NORTH DOOR OPENED AWAY FROM ME. THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE MY WAY.

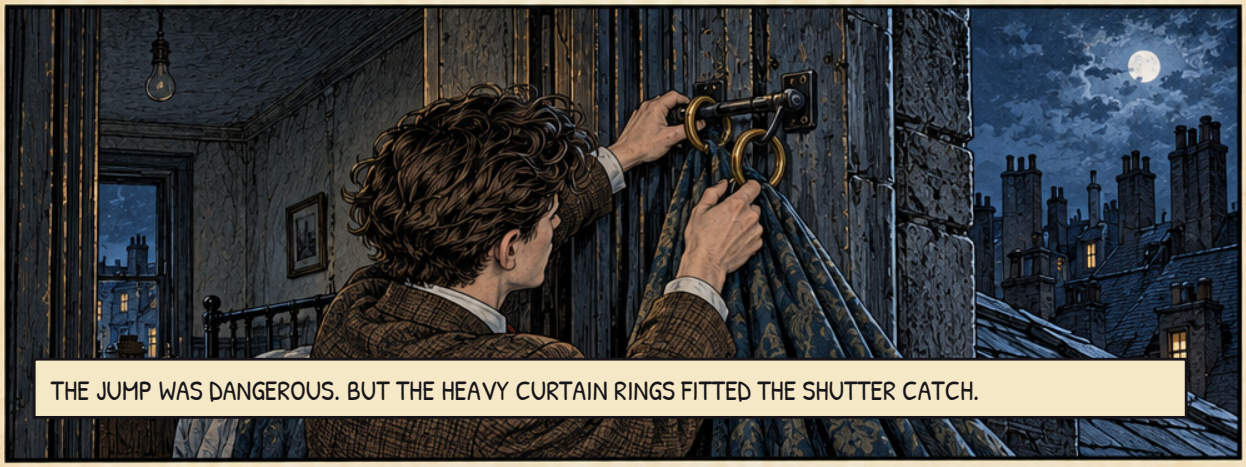

THE KNOCKING GREW HEAVY. I THREW MY SHOULDER AT THE NORTH DOOR.


IT BROKE. OUTSIDE, THE KNOCKING BECAME A BATTERING.

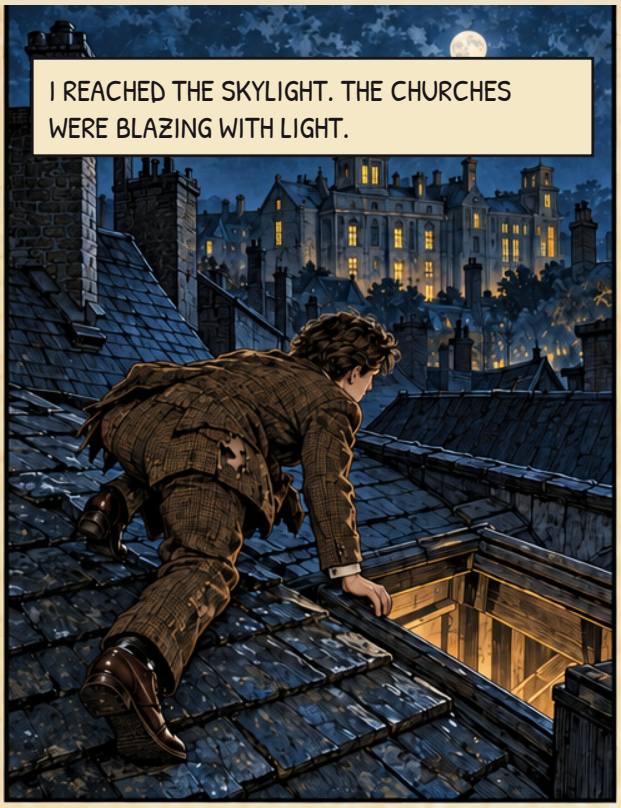

I BOLTED THE NEXT HALL DOOR. BUT A KEY WAS ALREADY TURNING IN THE ROOM BEYOND.


THE NEXT CONNECTING DOOR STOOD AJAR. I REACHED THE HALL DOOR A HEARTBEAT BEFORE IT OPENED.


THEY MASSED AGAINST THE ADJOINING DOOR. NOT ONE CALLED OUT AN INTELLIGIBLE WORD.


THE JUMP WAS DANGEROUS. BUT THE HEAVY CURTAIN RINGS FITTED THE SHUTTER CATCH.


I CLIMBED DOWN WHILE THE WOOD GAVE WAY BEHIND ME.


I REACHED THE SKYLIGHT. THE CHURCHES WERE BLAZING WITH LIGHT.


TWO IN THE MORNING. I RAN DOWN THE EMPTY STAIRS.


THE STREET DOOR WAS JAMMED. BEHIND ME, THE SEARCHERS SPILLED INTO THE YARD.


A SHUTTERED WINDOW OPENED. I WAS IN WASHINGTON STREET.


I HEADED SOUTH, USING EMPTY DOORWAYS AS SHELTER.
IN THE OPEN I COPIED THEIR SHAMBLE. RUNNING WOULD BETRAY ME.
LIGHTS FLASHED ON THE REEF. THE GILMAN'S CUPOLA ANSWERED.

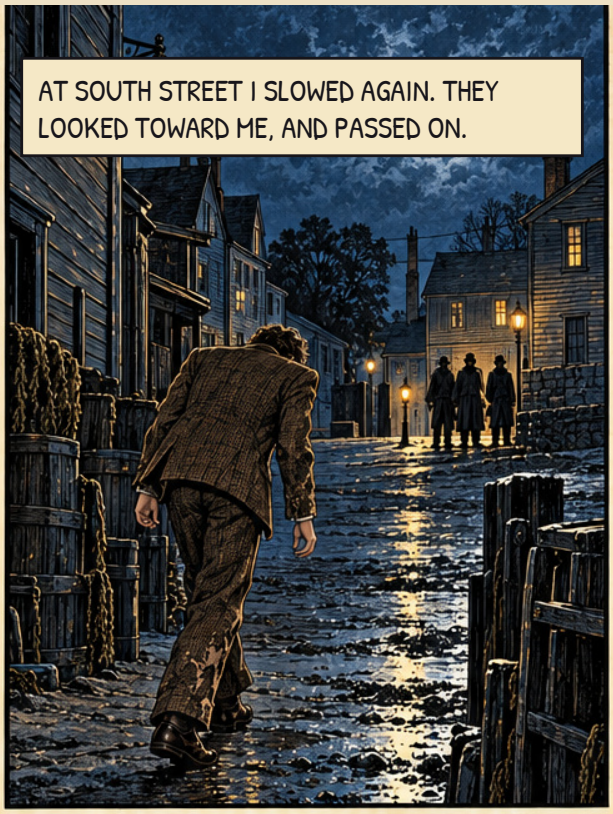

THE WATER WAS ALIVE WITH SHAPES COMING TOWARD THE TOWN.

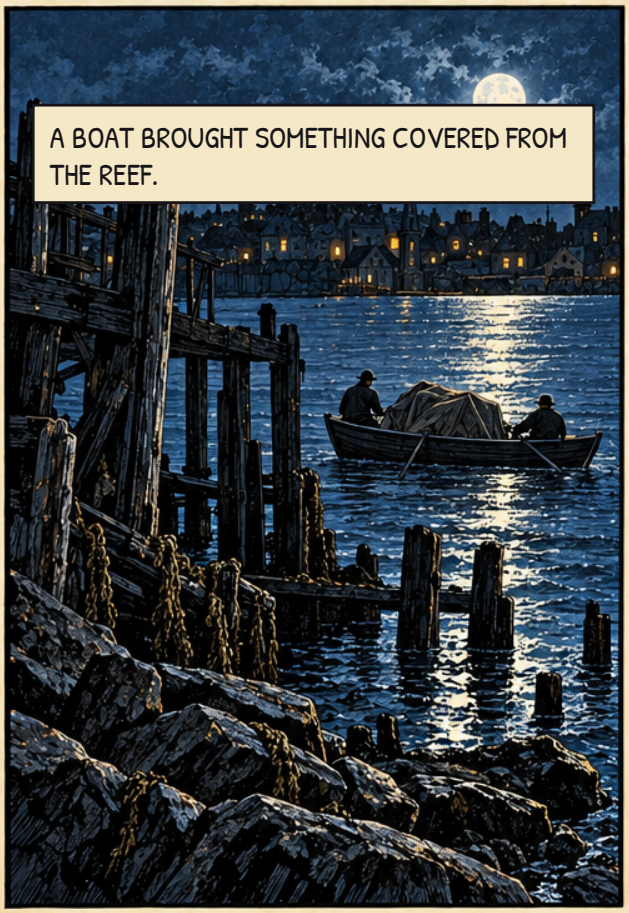

I RAN. THEN A MOTOR AND GUTTURAL CRIES SOUNDED ON THE PARALLEL STREET AHEAD.


THEY WERE NOT FOLLOWING MY FOOTSTEPS. THEY WERE BLOCKING THE WAYS OUT.
I REMEMBERED THE RAILWAY. ITS EMBANKMENT CROSSED THE MARSH. BRIARS MIGHT CONCEAL ME.
I WOULD TURN WEST BY BABSON, THEN WORK NORTH THROUGH THE SIDE STREETS TO THE STATION.

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH





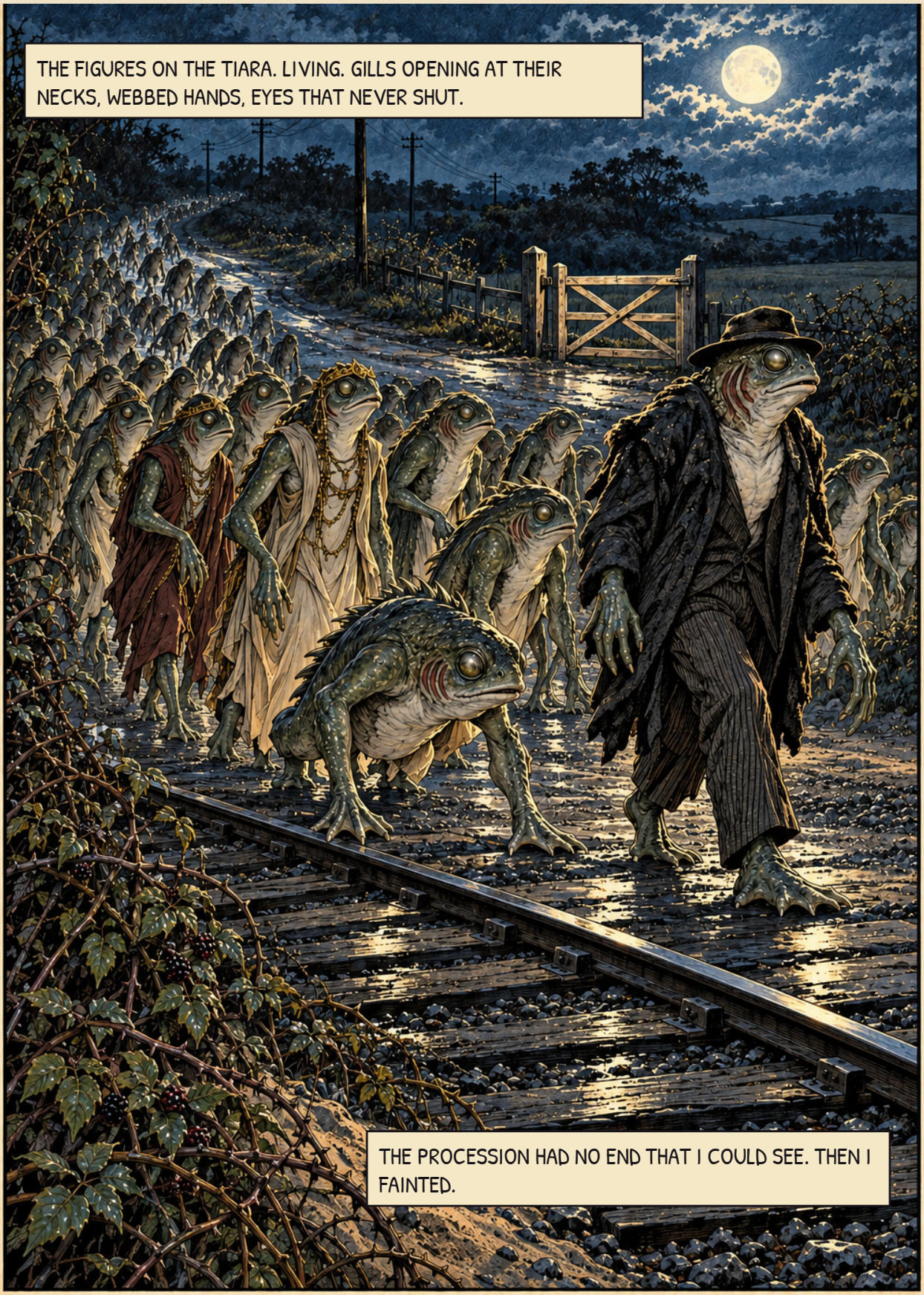





AT LAST, THE STATION. THE FALLS SWALLOWED THE SOUND OF MY STEPS.
THE BRIDGE STILL STOOD. HALFWAY ACROSS, THE SLEEPERS ENDED.
I JUMPED, AND FOUND SOLID WOOD.


THE BRIARS TORE MY CLOTHES, BUT THEY HID ME FROM THE ROAD.
FAR SOUTH, A GREAT COLUMN POURED OUT ALONG THE IPSWICH ROAD. WHERE HAD SO MANY COME FROM?
THEN THE SMELL RETURNED. SOMETHING WAS COMING ALONG THE ROWLEY ROAD.


THE CROSSING WAS BARELY A HUNDRED YARDS AWAY. THEY COULD PASS WITHOUT SEEING ME.
CROAKING. PATTERING. A RHYTHM NO HUMAN CROWD COULD MAKE.
I TRIED TO KEEP MY EYES SHUT.

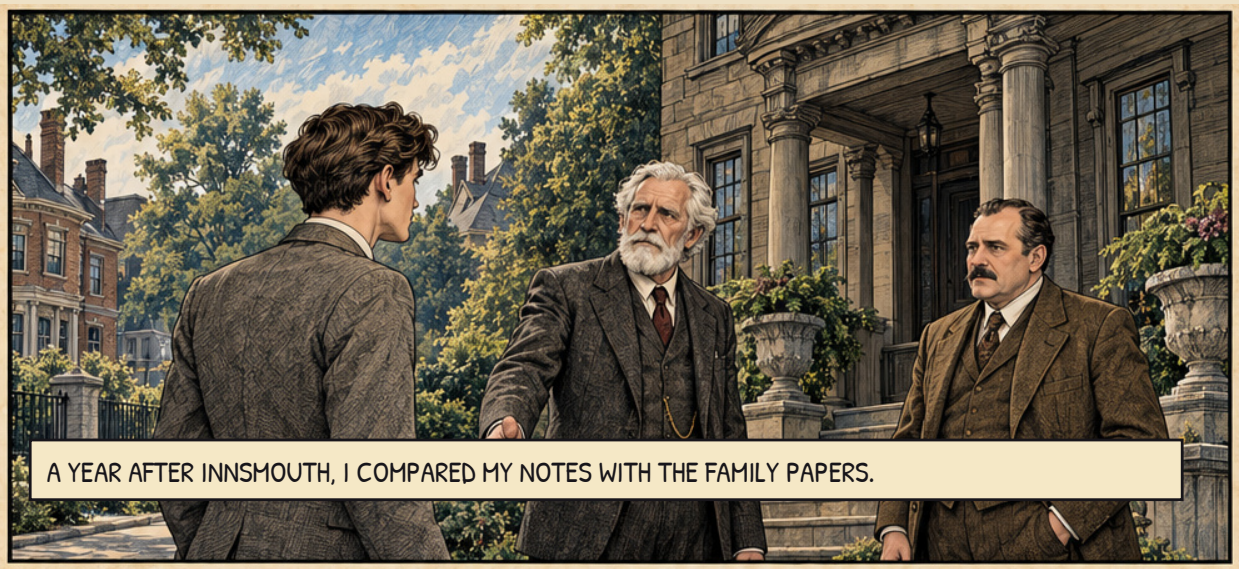

THE FIGURES ON THE TIARA. LIVING. GILLS OPENING AT THEIR NECKS, WEBBED HANDS, EYES THAT NEVER SHUT.
THE PROCESSION HAD NO END THAT I COULD SEE. THEN I FAINTED.


RAIN WOKE ME AFTER NOON. NO TRACKS REMAINED. EVEN THE SMELL WAS GONE.
I REACHED ROWLEY, BOUGHT FOOD AND CLOTHES, AND TOOK THE NIGHT TRAIN TO ARKHAM.
I SPOKE TO THE AUTHORITIES THERE, AND AGAIN IN BOSTON.
THEY NEVER FOUND ZADOK ALLEN.


ELIZA ORNE WAS YOUR GRANDMOTHER? YOUR UNCLE CAME ASKING ABOUT THAT FAMILY YEARS AGO.


HER MOTHER WAS A MARSH, EDUCATED IN FRANCE. WE COULD NEVER TRACE THE PARENTS NAMED IN HER RECORDS.


YOU HAVE THE TRUE MARSH EYES YOURSELF.

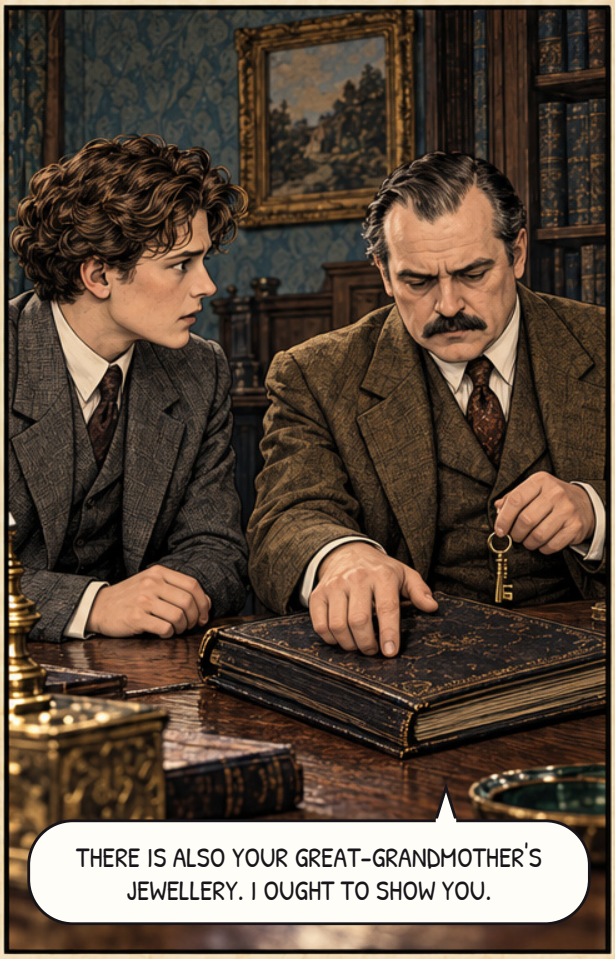

A YEAR AFTER INNSMOUTH, I COMPARED MY NOTES WITH THE FAMILY PAPERS.


GRANDMOTHER HAD FRIGHTENED ME AS A CHILD. SHE DISAPPEARED AFTER UNCLE DOUGLAS DIED.


DOUGLAS HAD KILLED HIMSELF AFTER A JOURNEY TO NEW ENGLAND. THE SAME JOURNEY THE CURATOR REMEMBERED.


LAWRENCE LOOKED JUST LIKE HER. MY BOY HAS BEEN AT CANTON FOR YEARS. HE IS VERY ILL.


THE FACES HAD ALWAYS DISTURBED ME. NOW THEY SUGGESTED SOMETHING I REFUSED TO NAME.


THERE IS ALSO YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S JEWELLERY. I OUGHT TO SHOW YOU.


THE GOVERNESS SAID THEY COULD BE WORN IN EUROPE, BUT NEVER IN NEW ENGLAND.


A TIARA. TWO ARMLETS. A PECTORAL. WORK NO JEWELLER COULD PLACE.

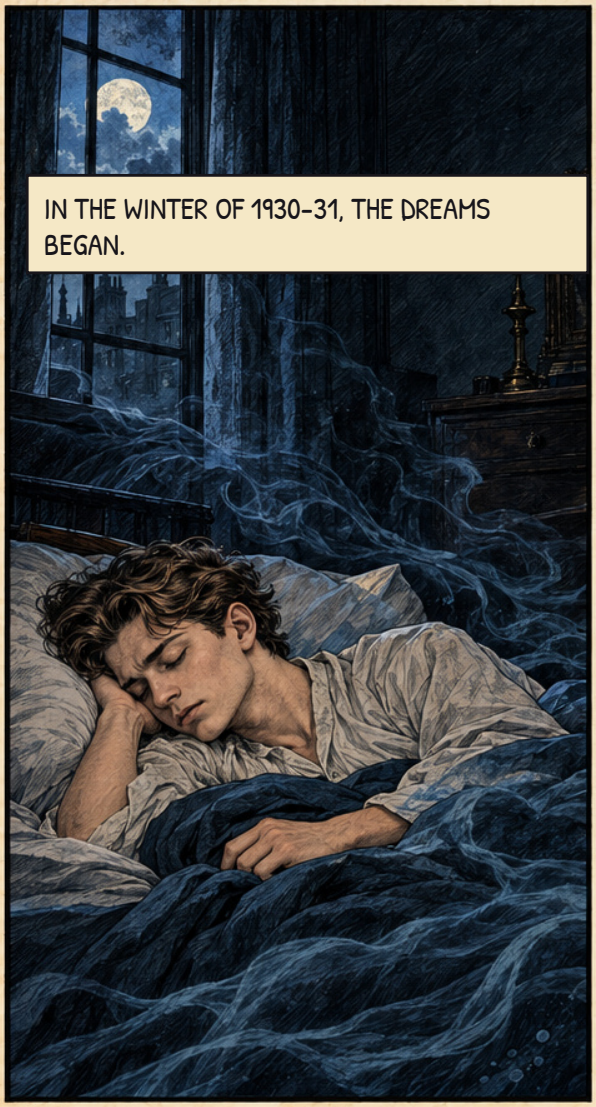

I HAD EXPECTED IT. YET WHEN I SAW THE GOLD, I FAINTED.


OBED'S DAUGHTER, RAISED IN EUROPE. AN UNSUSPECTING HUSBAND IN ARKHAM. MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.


COULD OBED BE MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER? WHAT, THEN, WAS THE WOMAN HE HAD MARRIED?


THE GOLD COULD HAVE BEEN BOUGHT. THE LIKENESS COULD BE IMAGINATION. FOR TWO YEARS I FOUGHT TO BELIEVE THAT.


MY FATHER FOUND ME OFFICE WORK. ROUTINE KEPT THE QUESTIONS AT A DISTANCE.


IN THE WINTER OF 1930–31, THE DREAMS BEGAN.


I WANDERED THROUGH IMMENSE DROWNED HALLS. AT FIRST I WOKE IN TERROR.


IN THE DREAMS, THE SHAPES DID NOT FRIGHTEN ME. I BELONGED AMONG THEM.
MY HEALTH FAILED. I LEFT THE OFFICE. AT TIMES I COULD SCARCELY CLOSE MY EYES. MY FATHER WATCHED ME STRANGELY.


THEN I MET MY GRANDMOTHER BENEATH THE SEA.
I DID NOT DIE. I WENT WHERE DOUGLAS MIGHT HAVE COME. HE REFUSED IT.
THIS IS YOUR REALM TOO. YOU WILL LIVE WITH THOSE WHO WERE HERE BEFORE HUMANKIND.

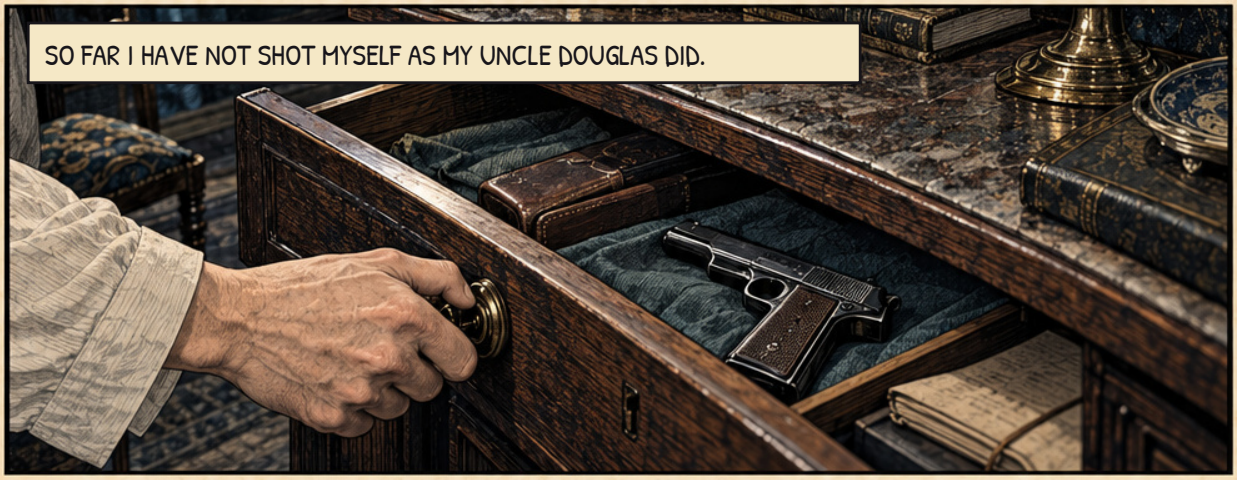

HER GRANDMOTHER, PTH'THYA-L'YI, HAD LIVED IN Y'HA-NTHLEI FOR EIGHTY THOUSAND YEARS.


PTH'THYA-L'YI: Y'HA-NTHLEI WAS NOT DESTROYED WHEN THE UPPER-EARTH MEN SHOT DEATH INTO THE SEA. IT WAS HURT, BUT NOT DESTROYED... IT WOULD BE A CITY GREATER THAN INNSMOUTH NEXT TIME.

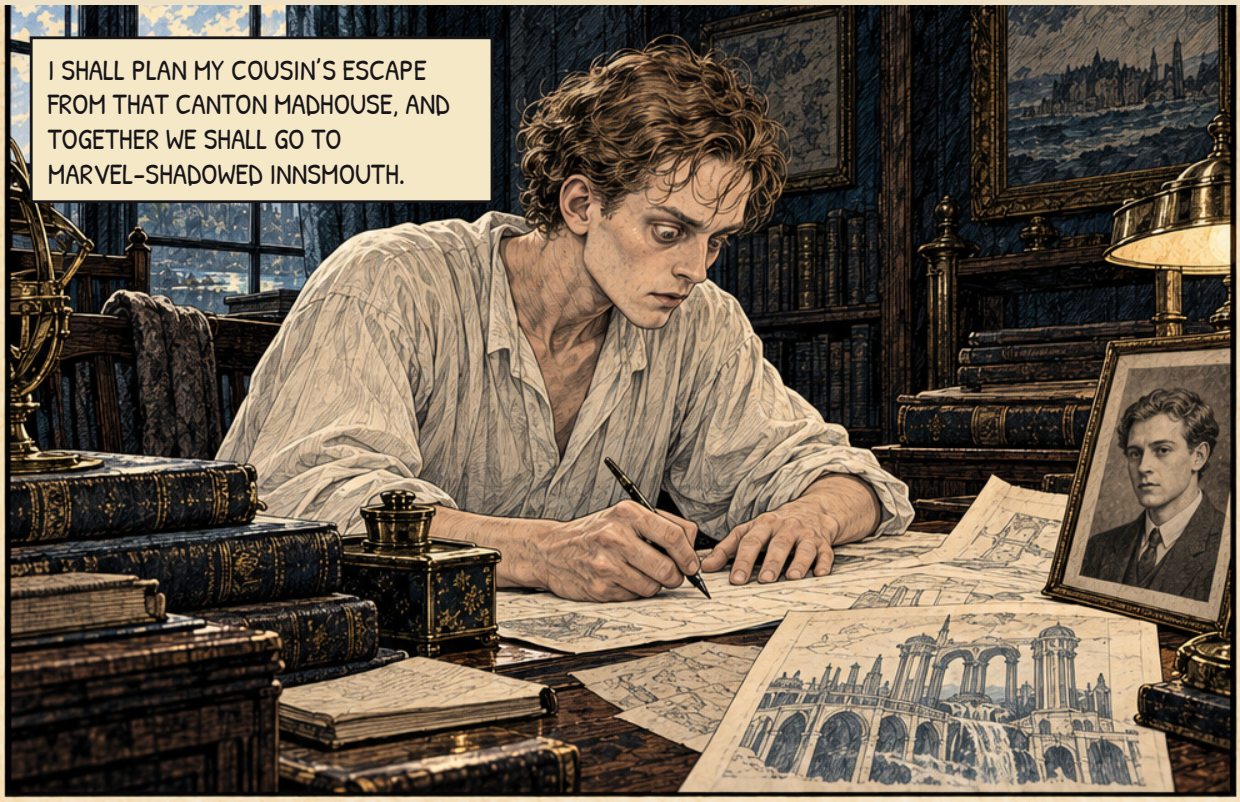

FOR BRINGING THE UPPER-EARTH MEN'S DEATH I MUST DO A PENANCE, BUT THAT WOULD NOT BE HEAVY. THIS WAS THE DREAM IN WHICH I SAW A SHOGGOTH FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND THE SIGHT SET ME AWAKE IN A FRENZY OF SCREAMING.

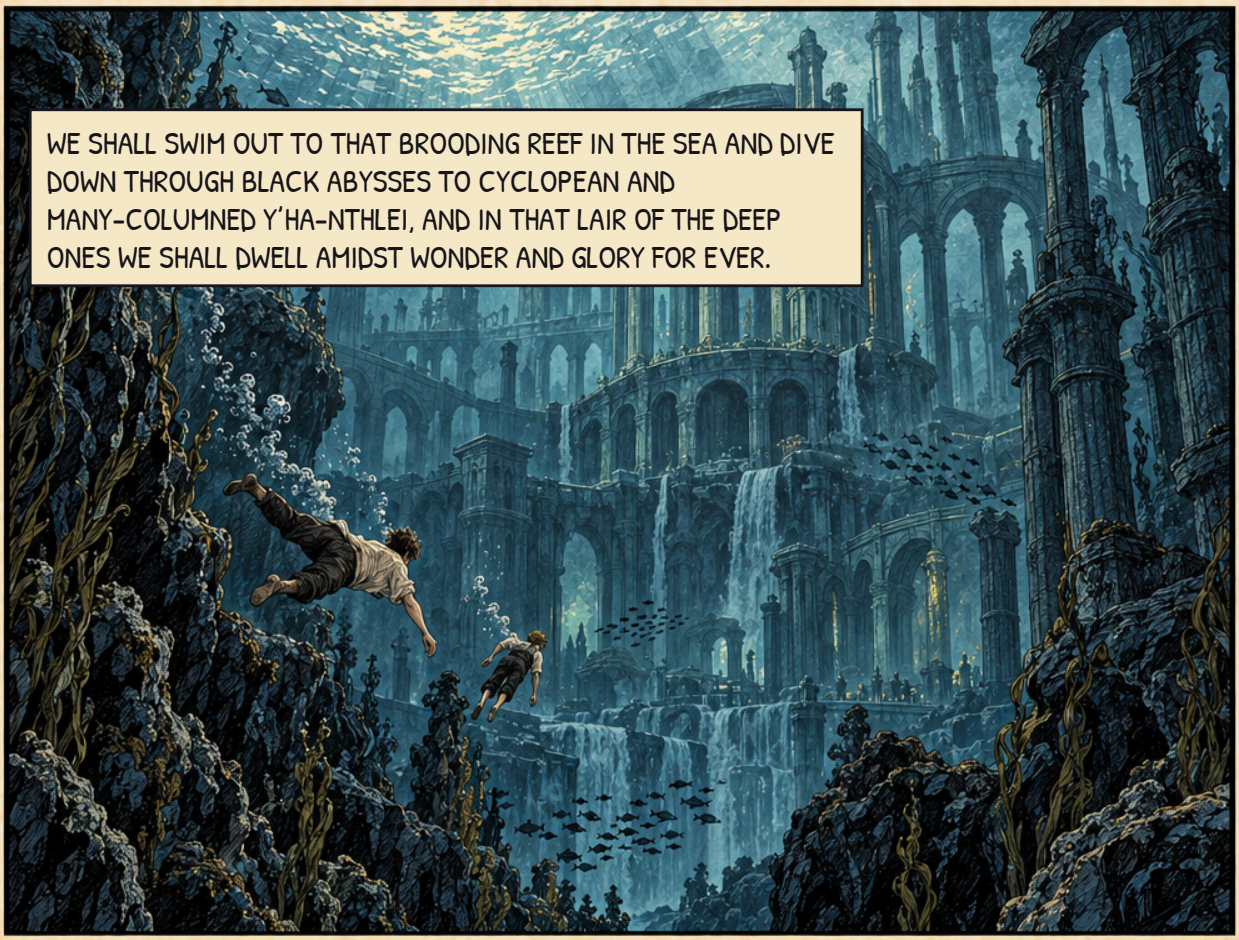
THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH








I SHALL PLAN MY COUSIN'S ESCAPE FROM THAT CANTON MADHOUSE, AND TOGETHER WE SHALL GO TO MARVEL-SHADOWED INNSMOUTH.


WE SHALL SWIM OUT TO THAT BROODING REEF IN THE SEA AND DIVE DOWN THROUGH BLACK ABYSSES TO CYCLOPEAN AND MANY-COLUMNED Y'HA-NTHLEI, AND IN THAT LAIR OF THE DEEP ONES WE SHALL DWELL AMIDST WONDER AND GLORY FOR EVER.