THE STATEMENT OF RANDOLPH CARTER



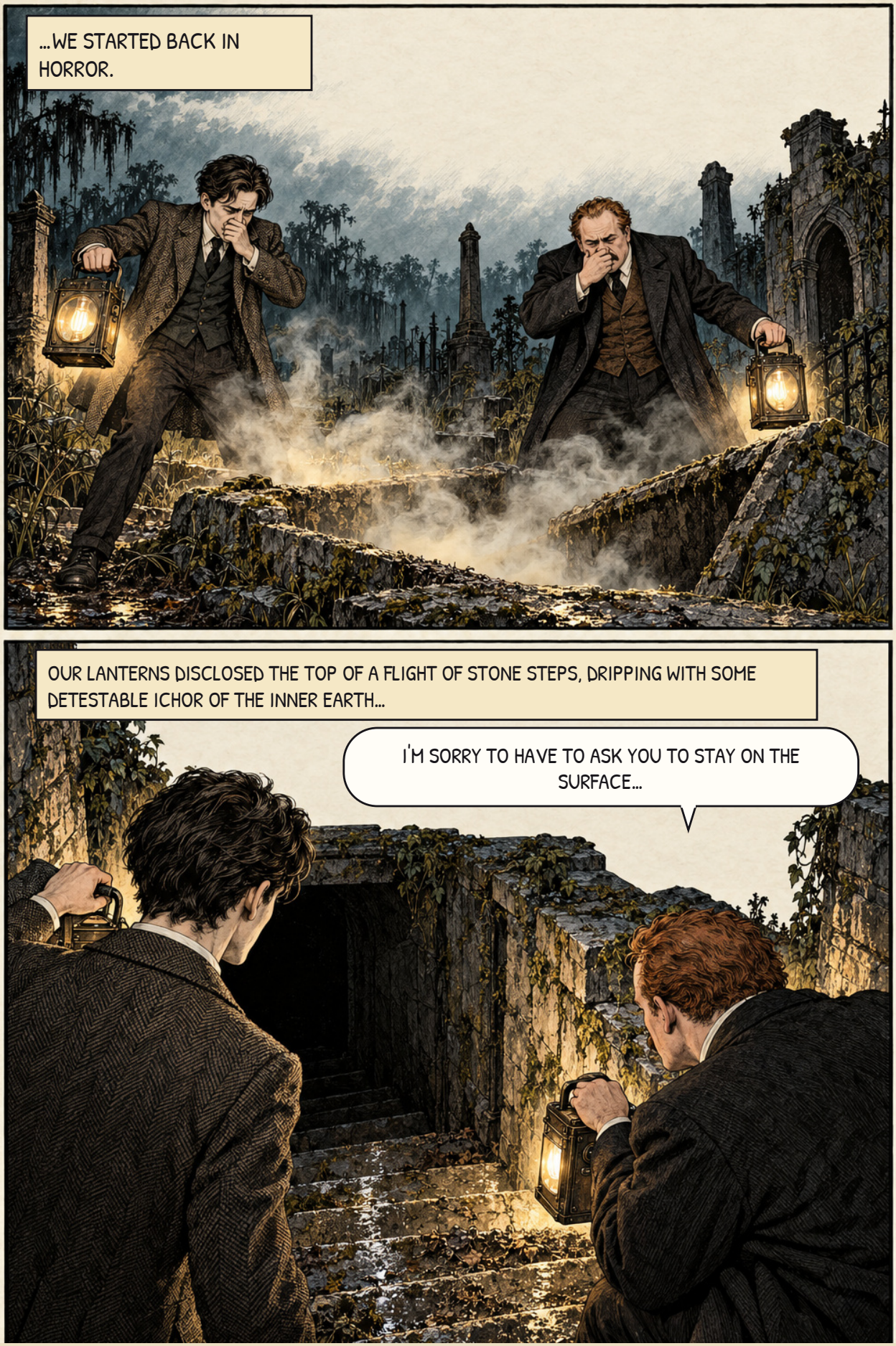

IT IS TRUE THAT I HAVE FOR FIVE YEARS BEEN HIS CLOSEST FRIEND, AND A PARTIAL SHARER OF HIS TERRIBLE RESEARCHES INTO THE UNKNOWN.
...THAT ANCIENT BOOK IN UNDECIPHERABLE CHARACTERS WHICH HAD COME TO HIM FROM INDIA A MONTH BEFORE...
WHY DO SOME CORPSES NEVER DECAY, CARTER? WHY DO THEY REMAIN FIRM IN THEIR TOMBS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS?
WARREN ALWAYS DOMINATED ME, AND SOMETIMES I FEARED HIM... NOW I FEAR FOR HIM.


THE PLACE WAS AN ANCIENT CEMETERY; SO ANCIENT THAT I TREMBLED AT THE MANIFOLD SIGNS OF IMMEMORIAL YEARS.
MY FIRST VIVID IMPRESSION... CONCERNS THE ACT OF PAUSING WITH WARREN BEFORE A CERTAIN HALF-OBLITERATED SEPULCHRE...
...I SWEAR I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS THAT WE EXPECTED TO FIND.


NO WORD WAS UTTERED, FOR THE SPOT AND THE TASK SEEMED KNOWN TO US...


...USING HIS SPADE AS A LEVER, SOUGHT TO PRY UP THE SLAB LYING NEAREST TO A STONY RUIN...


FINALLY OUR COMBINED STRENGTH LOOSENED THE STONE, WHICH WE RAISED AND TIPPED TO ONE SIDE.


...WE STARTED BACK IN HORROR.
OUR LANTERNS DISCLOSED THE TOP OF A FLIGHT OF STONE STEPS, DRIPPING WITH SOME DETESTABLE ICHOR OF THE INNER EARTH...
I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO STAY ON THE SURFACE...


...IT WOULD BE A CRIME TO LET ANYONE WITH YOUR FRAIL NERVES GO DOWN THERE. YOU CAN'T IMAGINE... THE THINGS I SHALL HAVE TO SEE AND DO.
THEN LET ME COME WITH YOU. I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU ALONE.
IF YOU INSIST, WE ABANDON THE EXPEDITION.
BUT I PROMISE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OVER THE TELEPHONE OF EVERY MOVE—YOU SEE I'VE ENOUGH WIRE HERE TO REACH TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH AND BACK!


...A THREAT WHICH PROVED EFFECTIVE, SINCE HE ALONE HELD THE KEY TO THE THING.
THEN HE SHOOK MY HAND, SHOULDERED THE COIL OF WIRE, AND DISAPPEARED WITHIN THAT INDESCRIBABLE OSSUARY.
FOR A MOMENT I KEPT SIGHT OF THE GLOW OF HIS LANTERN... BUT THE GLOW SOON DISAPPEARED ABRUPTLY, AS IF A TURN IN THE STONE STAIRCASE HAD BEEN ENCOUNTERED...

...THE GROTESQUE SHRINES AND MONOLITHS SEEMED TO ASSUME A HIDEOUS PERSONALITY—A HALF-SENTIENCE.



...FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER OF AN HOUR HEARD NOTHING.



THEN A FAINT CLICKING...

WARREN?




GOD! IF YOU COULD SEE WHAT I AM SEEING!
CARTER, IT'S TERRIBLE—MONSTROUS—UNBELIEVABLE!
WARREN, WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT?
I DARE NOT TELL YOU—NO MAN COULD KNOW IT AND LIVE—GREAT GOD! I NEVER DREAMED OF THIS!


QUICK!—LEAVE EVERYTHING ELSE AND MAKE FOR THE OUTSIDE—IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE!
YOU ARE STILL DOWN THERE! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
...THROUGH MY FEAR I FELT A VAGUE RESENTMENT THAT HE SHOULD DEEM ME CAPABLE OF DESERTING HIM UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.
BEAT IT! FOR GOD'S SAKE, PUT BACK THE SLAB AND BEAT IT, CARTER!


WARREN, BRACE UP! I'M COMING DOWN!
DON'T! YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND! IT'S TOO LATE—AND MY OWN FAULT. PUT BACK THE SLAB AND RUN—THERE'S NOTHING ELSE YOU OR ANYONE CAN DO NOW!
...HIS NEXT WHISPER FOUND ME STILL HELD INERT IN THE CHAINS OF STARK HORROR.
CARTER—HURRY! IT'S NO USE—YOU MUST GO—BETTER ONE THAN TWO—THE SLAB—


NEARLY OVER NOW—DON'T MAKE IT HARDER—COVER UP THOSE DAMNED STEPS AND RUN FOR YOUR LIFE—YOU'RE LOSING TIME—
SO LONG, CARTER—WON'T SEE YOU AGAIN.
CURSE THESE HELLISH THINGS—LEGIONS— MY GOD!
BEAT IT! BEAT IT! BEAT IT!


AFTER THAT WAS SILENCE. I KNOW NOT HOW MANY INTERMINABLE AEONS I SAT STUPEFIED...
WARREN! WARREN! ANSWER ME—ARE YOU THERE?
...AFTER A WHILE THERE WAS A FURTHER CLICKING IN THE RECEIVER...
WARREN, ARE YOU THERE?


SHALL I SAY THAT THE VOICE WAS DEEP; HOLLOW; GELATINOUS; REMOTE; UNEARTHLY; INHUMAN; DISEMBODIED? ... AND THIS IS WHAT IT SAID:
YOU FOOL, WARREN IS DEAD!