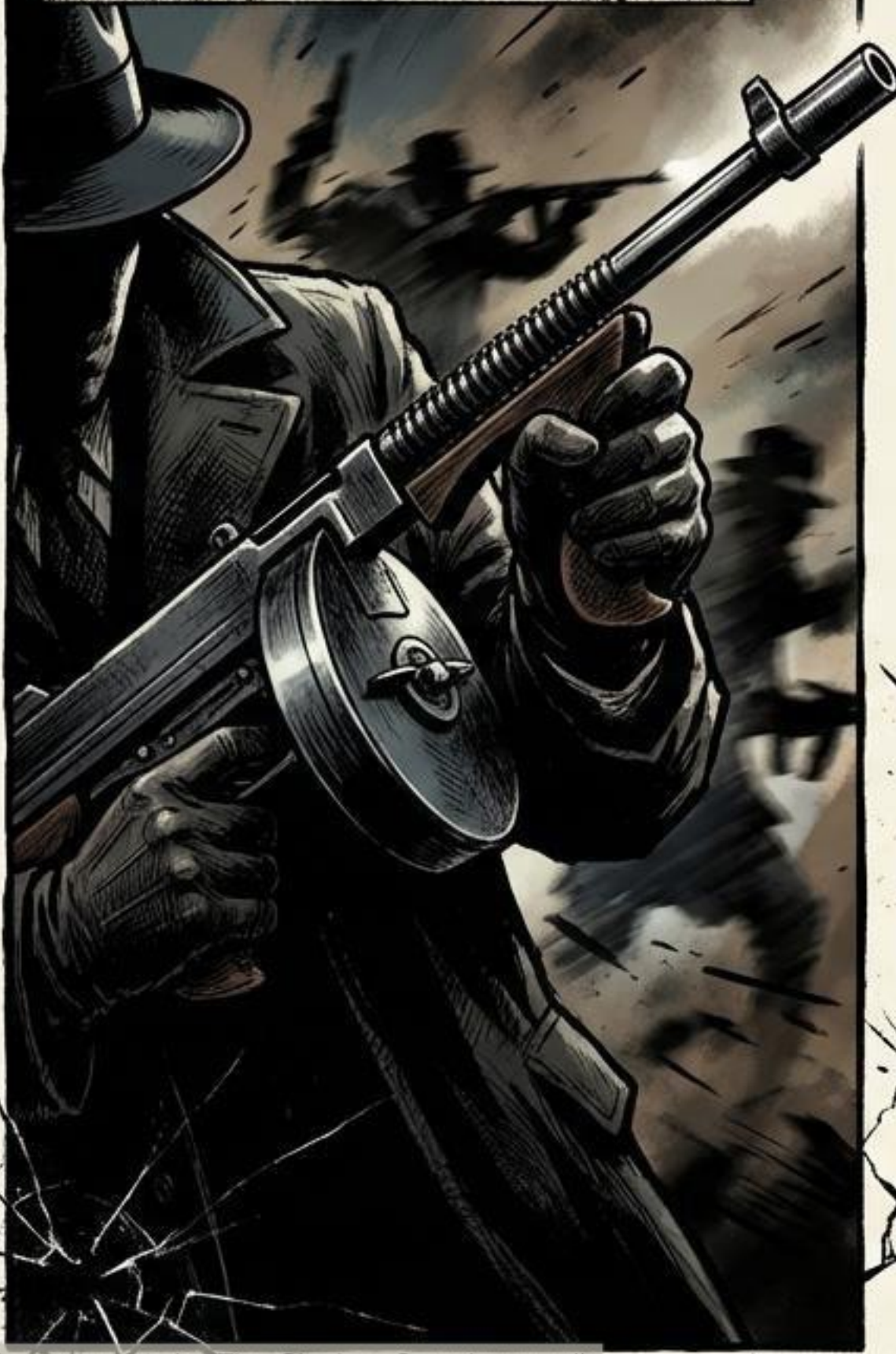


THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

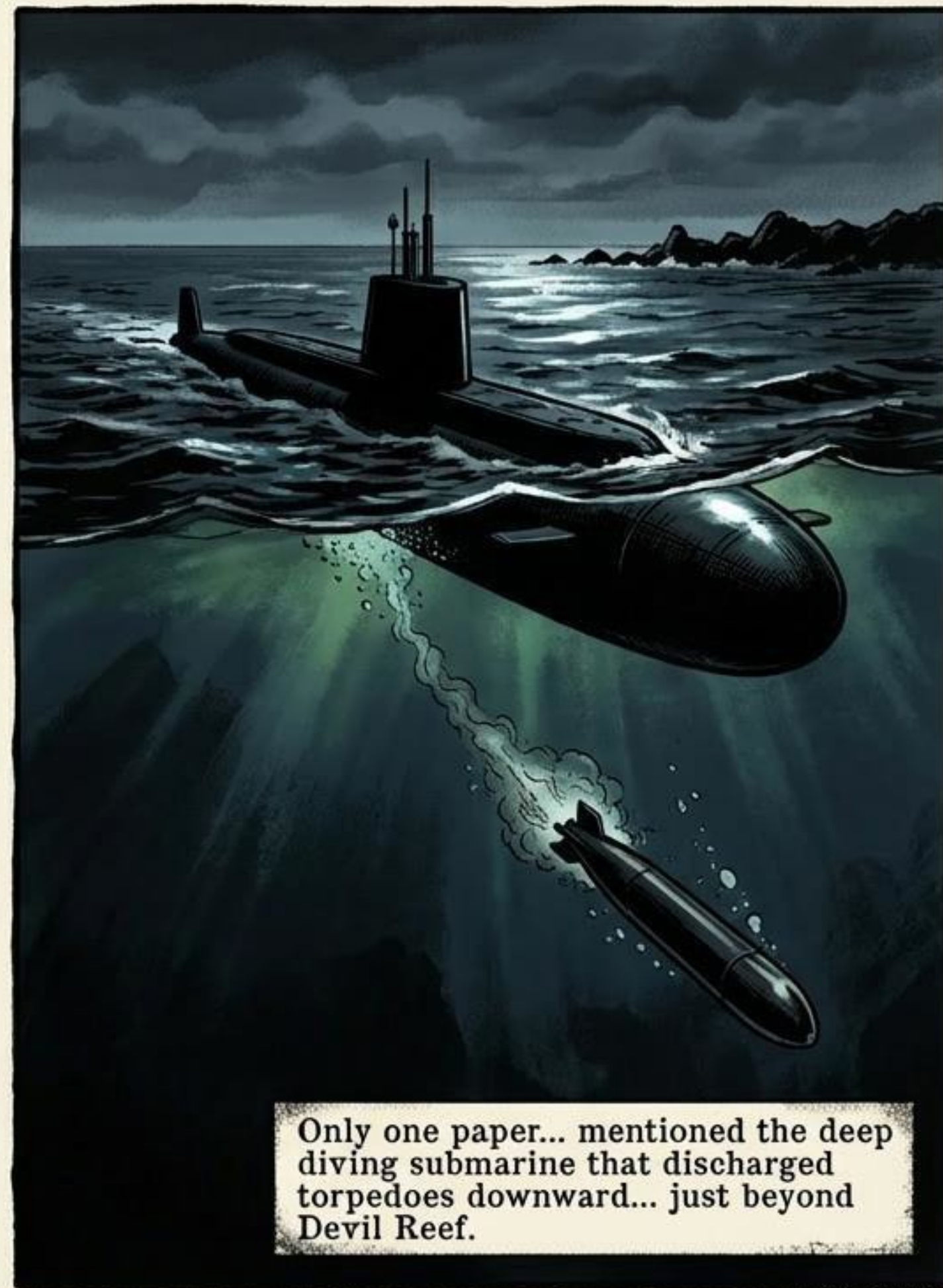
CHAPTER 1: A Whisper of an Ancient Seaport

During the winter of 1927-28, officials of the Federal government made a strange and secret investigation...



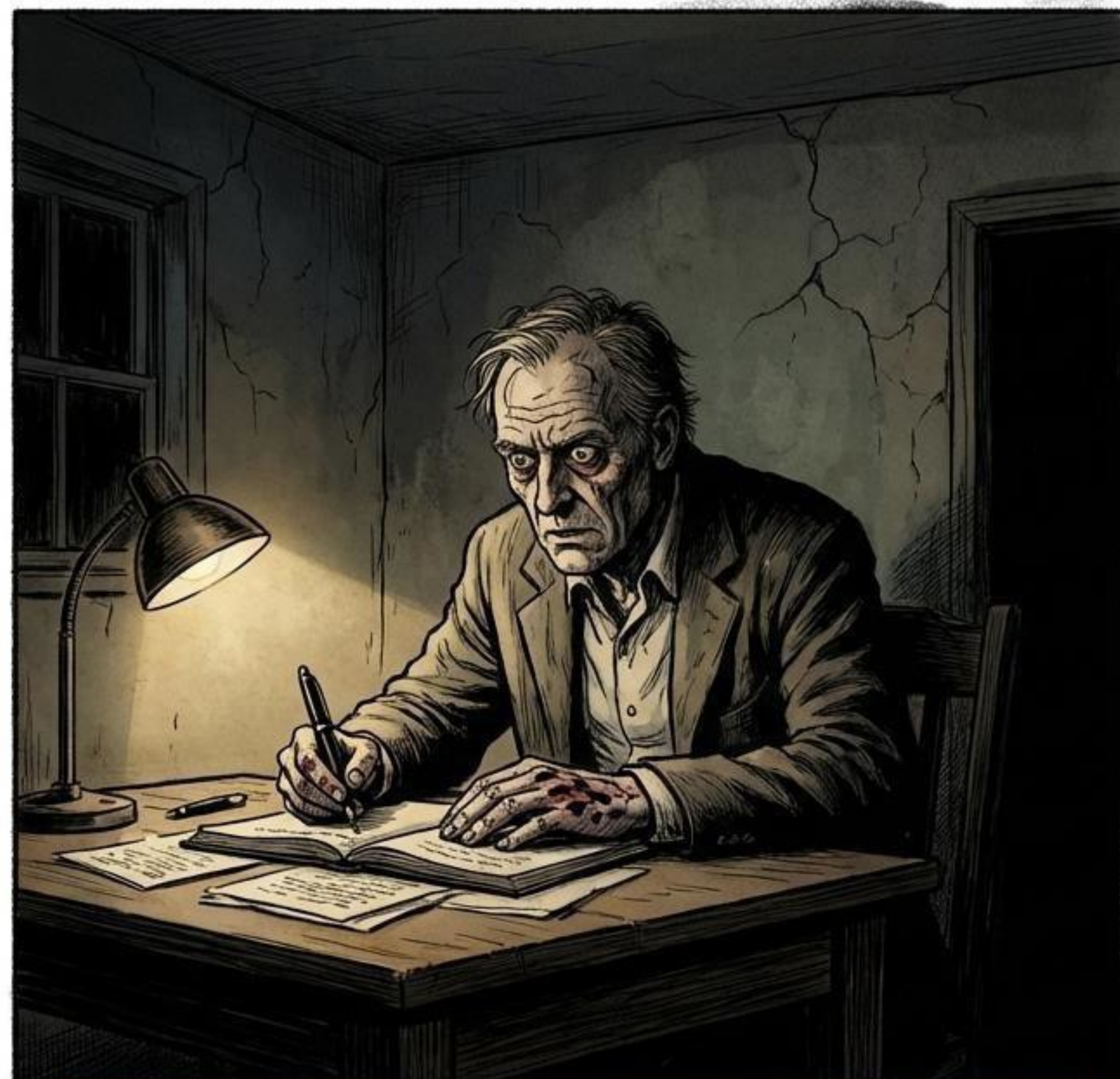
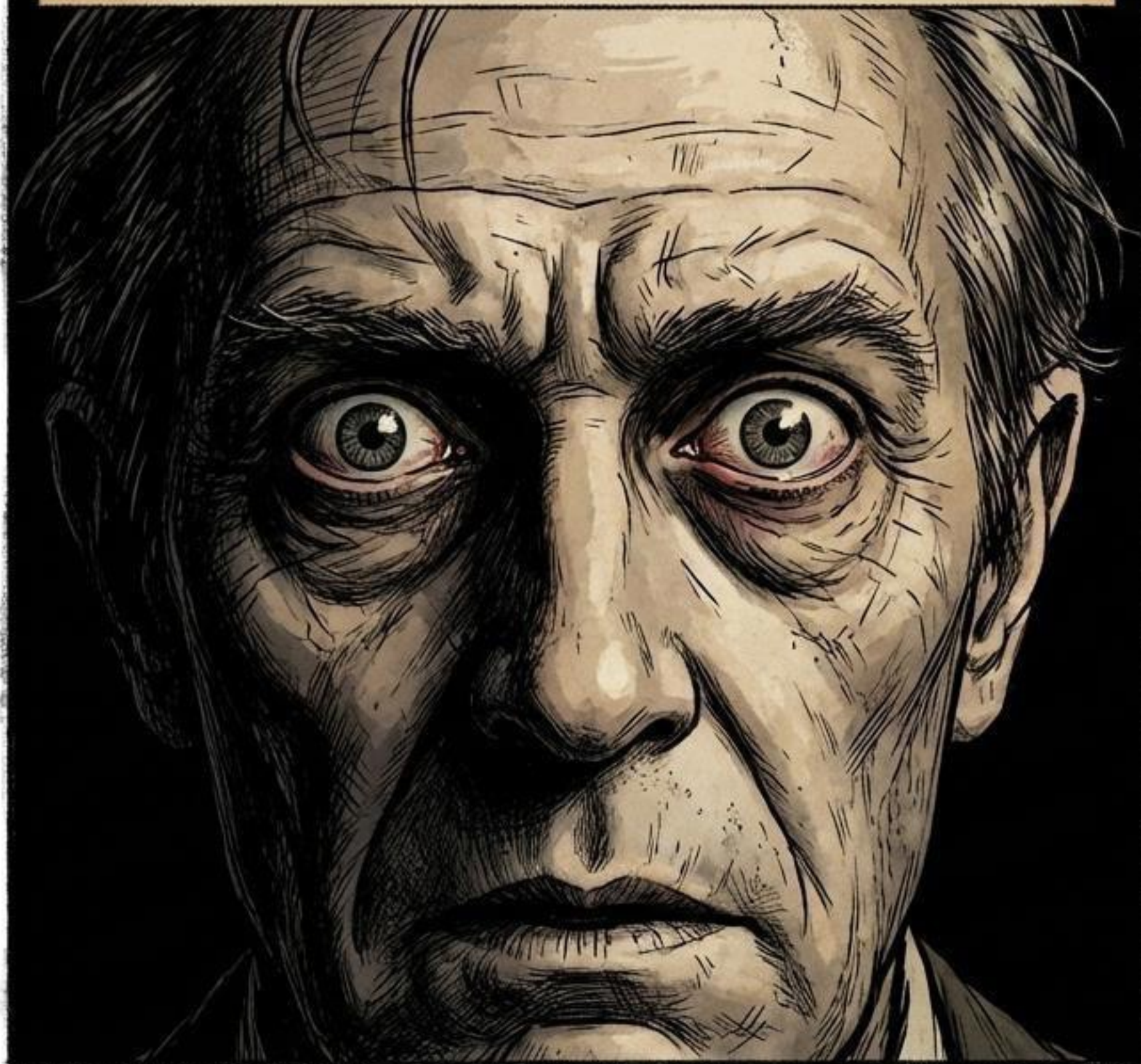
No trials, or even definite charges, were ever reported. Nor were any of the captives seen thereafter...

...vague statements about disease and concentration camps... nothing positive ever developed.



Only one paper... mentioned the deep diving submarine that discharged torpedoes downward... just beyond Devil Reef.

But at last I am going to defy the ban on speech about this thing. For my contact with this affair has been closer than that of any other layman...



It was I who fled frantically out of Innsmouth... and whose frightened appeals brought on the whole reported episode.

The Shadow Over Innsmouth

I was celebrating my coming of age by a tour of New England... always seeking the cheapest possible route.



You could take that old bus, I suppose... but it ain't thought much of hereabouts. It goes through Innsmouth...



That was the first I ever heard of shadowed Innsmouth. A town able to inspire such dislike in its neighbors, I thought, must be... worthy of a tourist's attention.



That was the first I ever heard of shadowed Innsmouth. A town able to inspire such dislike in its neighbors, I thought, must be... worthy br... worthy of a tourist's attention.



More empty houses than there are people, I guess...



...old Captain Marsh driving bargains with the devil...



...it sort of makes you crawl.



...a whole legion of devils seen sometimes on that reef...



...heard voices in other rooms...
It sounded so unnatural—slopping like, he said...

Train to Arkham – too expensive!

Newburyport



*Bus via INNSMOUTH
(cheaper)*

*Manuxet
River*

Innsmouth

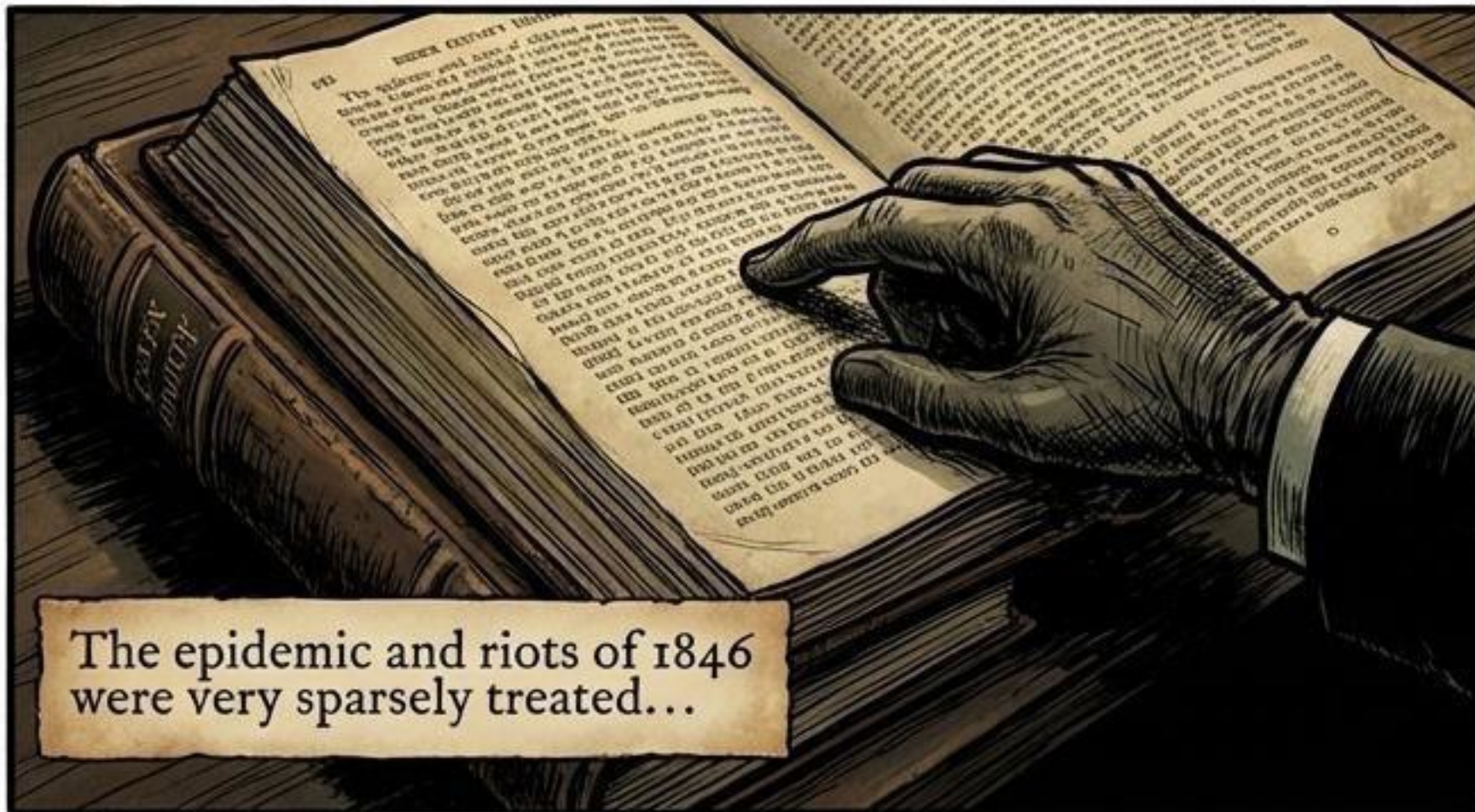
Town not on modern maps?

Arkham

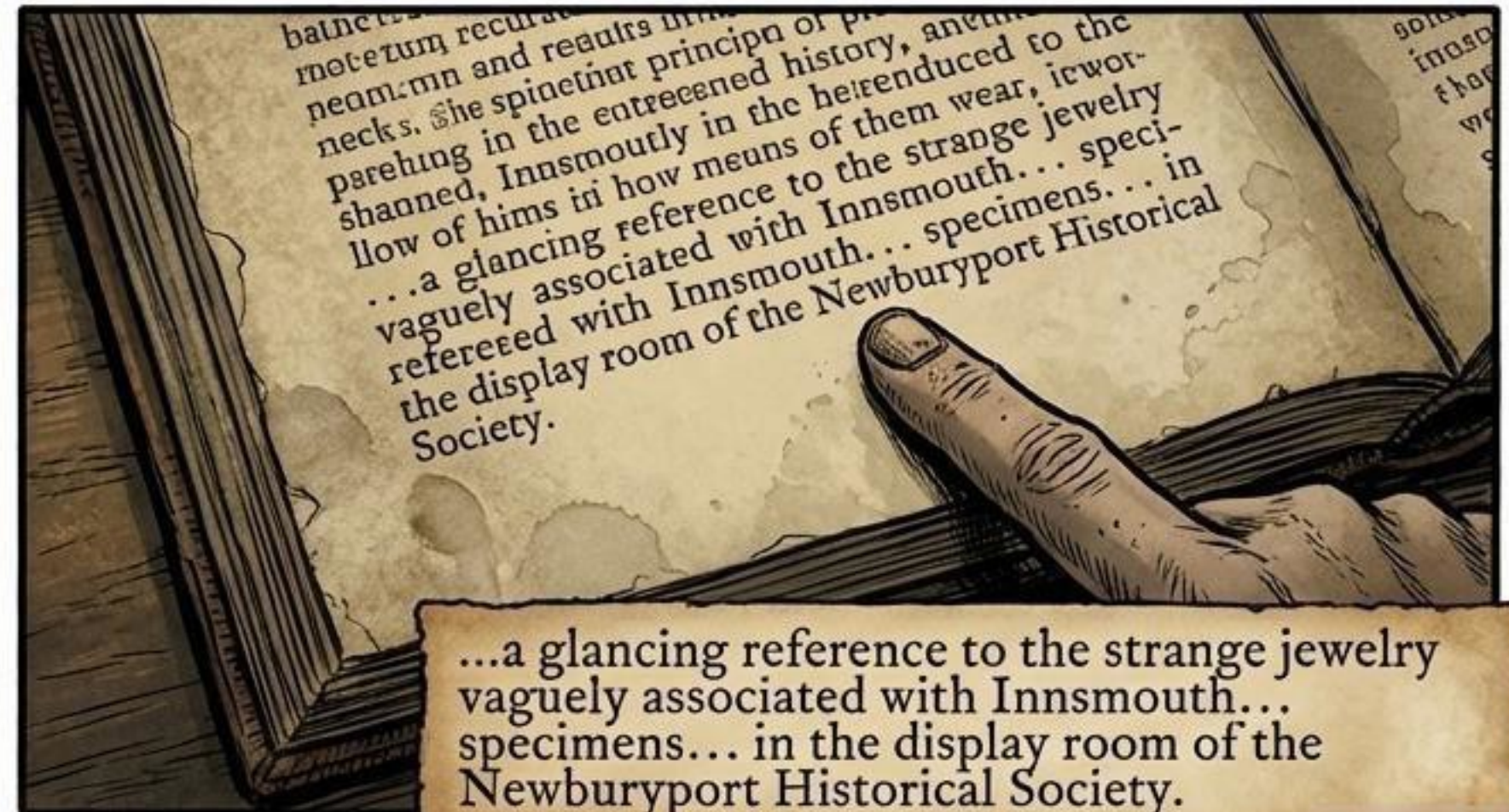


Devil Reef?



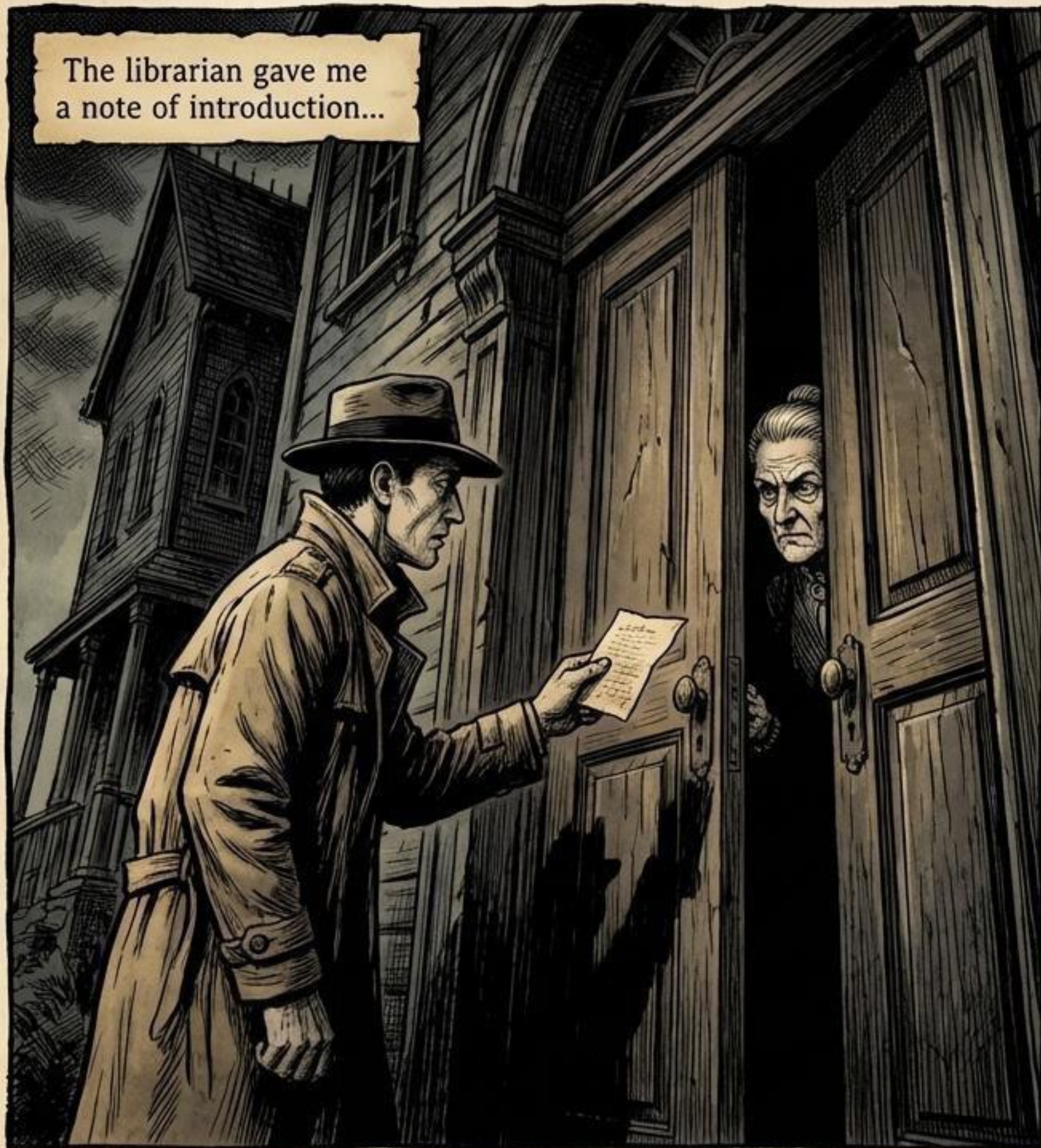


The epidemic and riots of 1846 were very sparsely treated...



...a glancing reference to the strange jewelry vaguely associated with Innsmouth... specimens... in the display room of the Newburyport Historical Society.

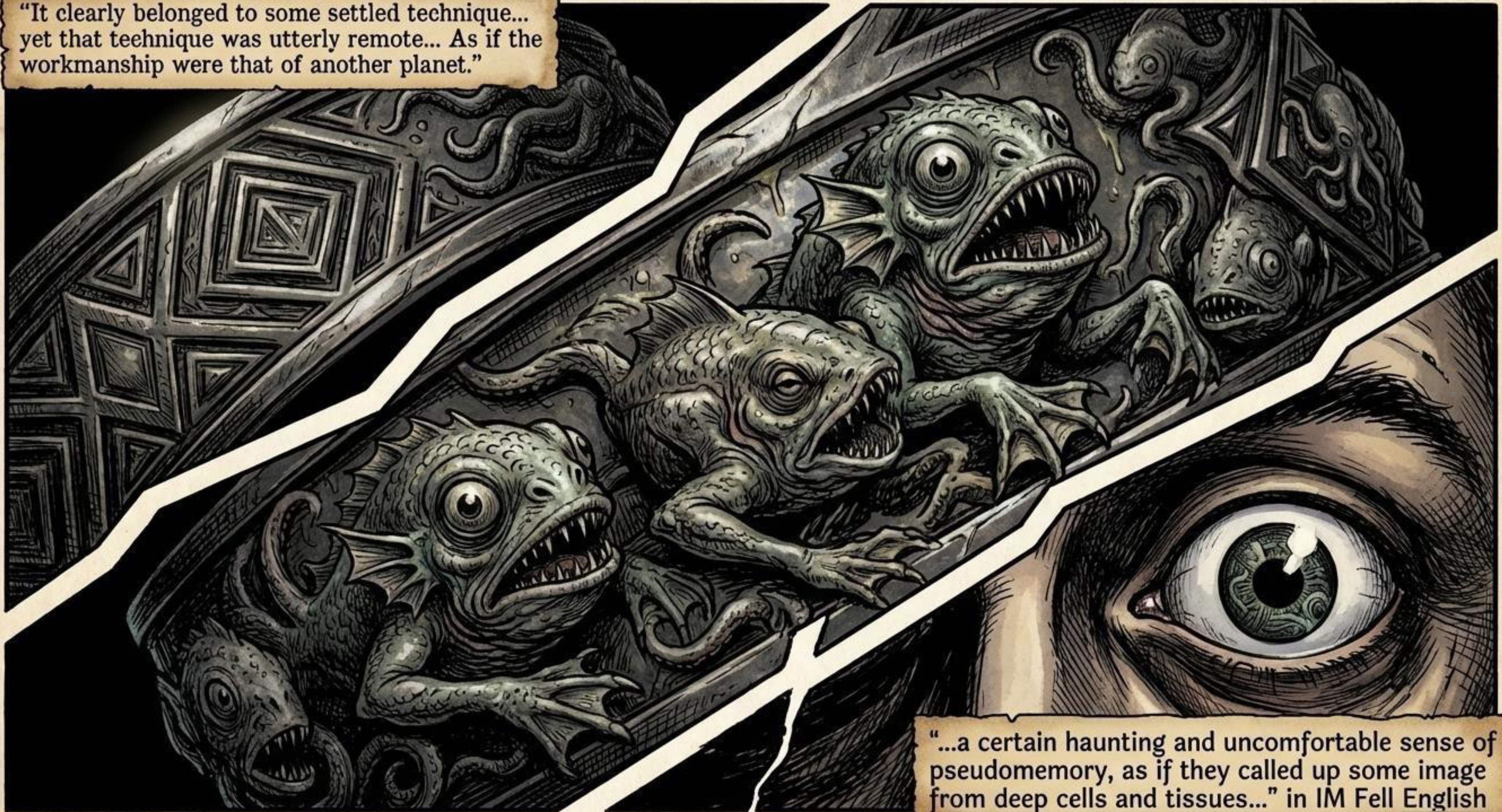
The librarian gave me
a note of introduction...



...I had eyes for nothing but the
bizarre object which glistened...



"It clearly belonged to some settled technique... yet that technique was utterly remote... As if the workmanship were that of another planet."



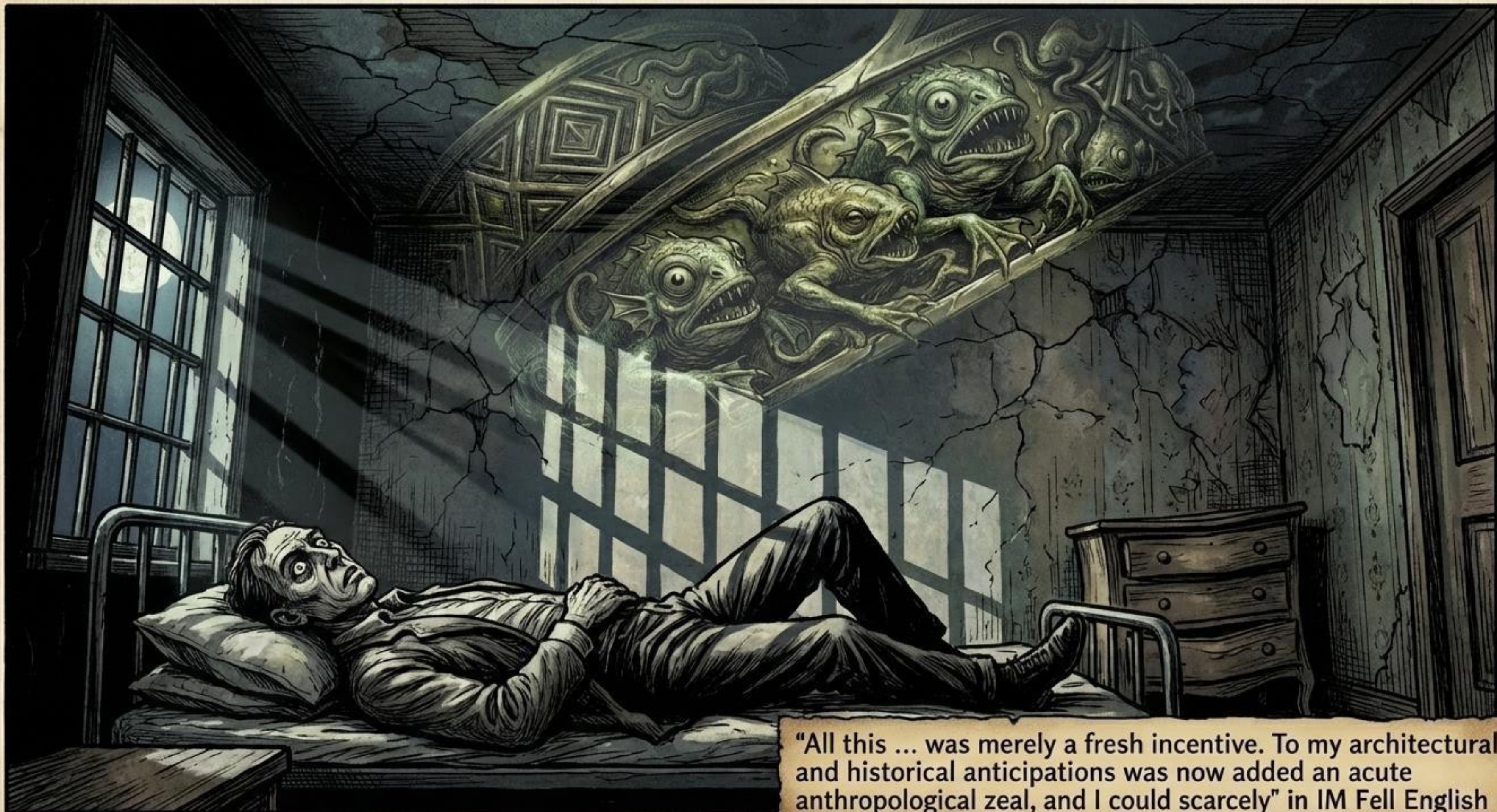
"...a certain haunting and uncomfortable sense of pseudomemory, as if they called up some image from deep cells and tissues..." in IM Fell English



Her own attitude toward shadowed Innsmouth... was one of disgust at a community slipping far down the cultural scale...



It was called, she said, "The Esoteric Order of Dagon"... a debased, quasi-pagan thing imported from the East...

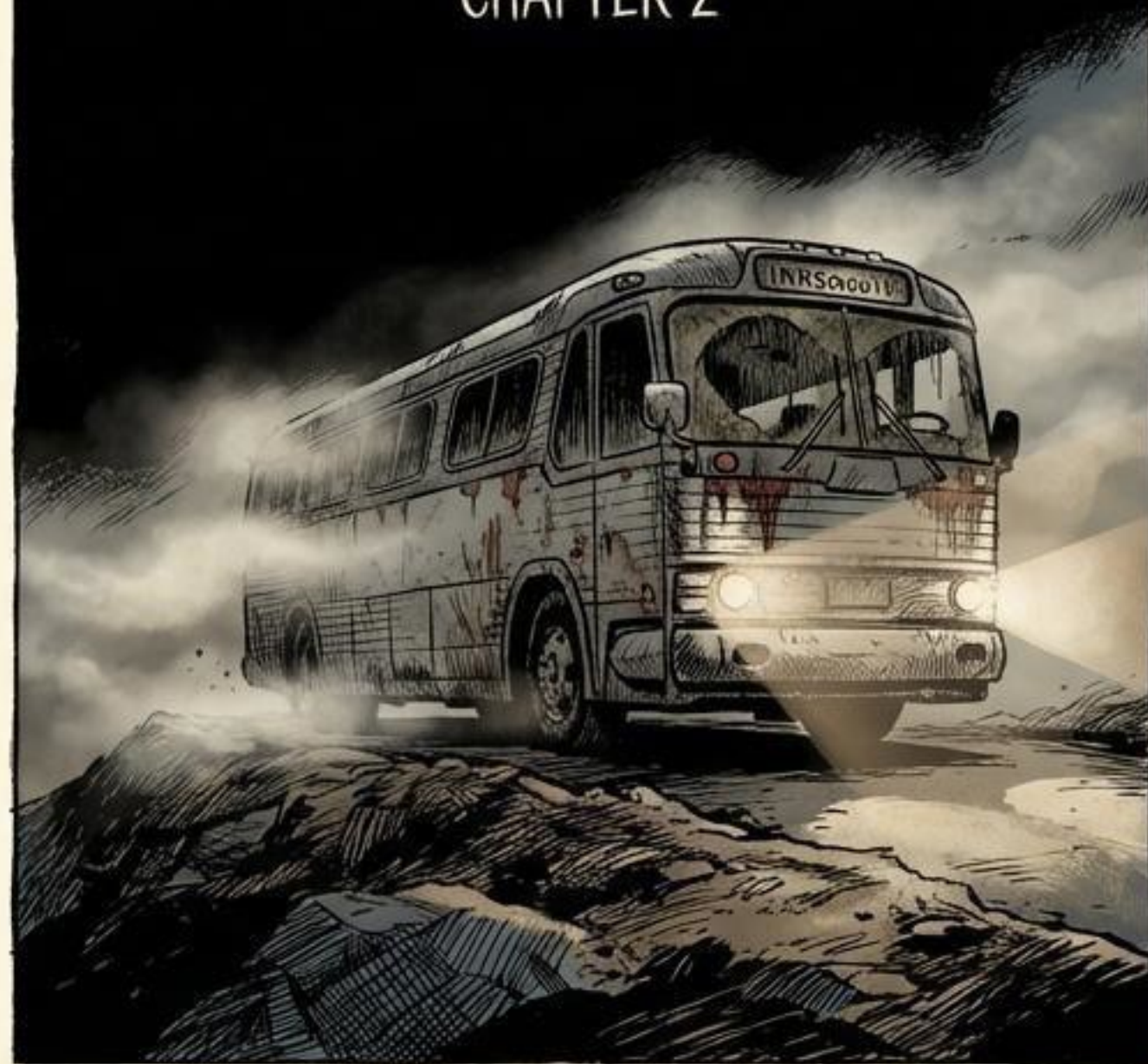


"All this ... was merely a fresh incentive. To my architectural and historical anticipations was now added an acute anthropological zeal, and I could scarcely" in IM Fell English



End of Chapter 1.
...to be continued.

THE SHADOW OVER
INNSMOUTH
CHAPTER 2

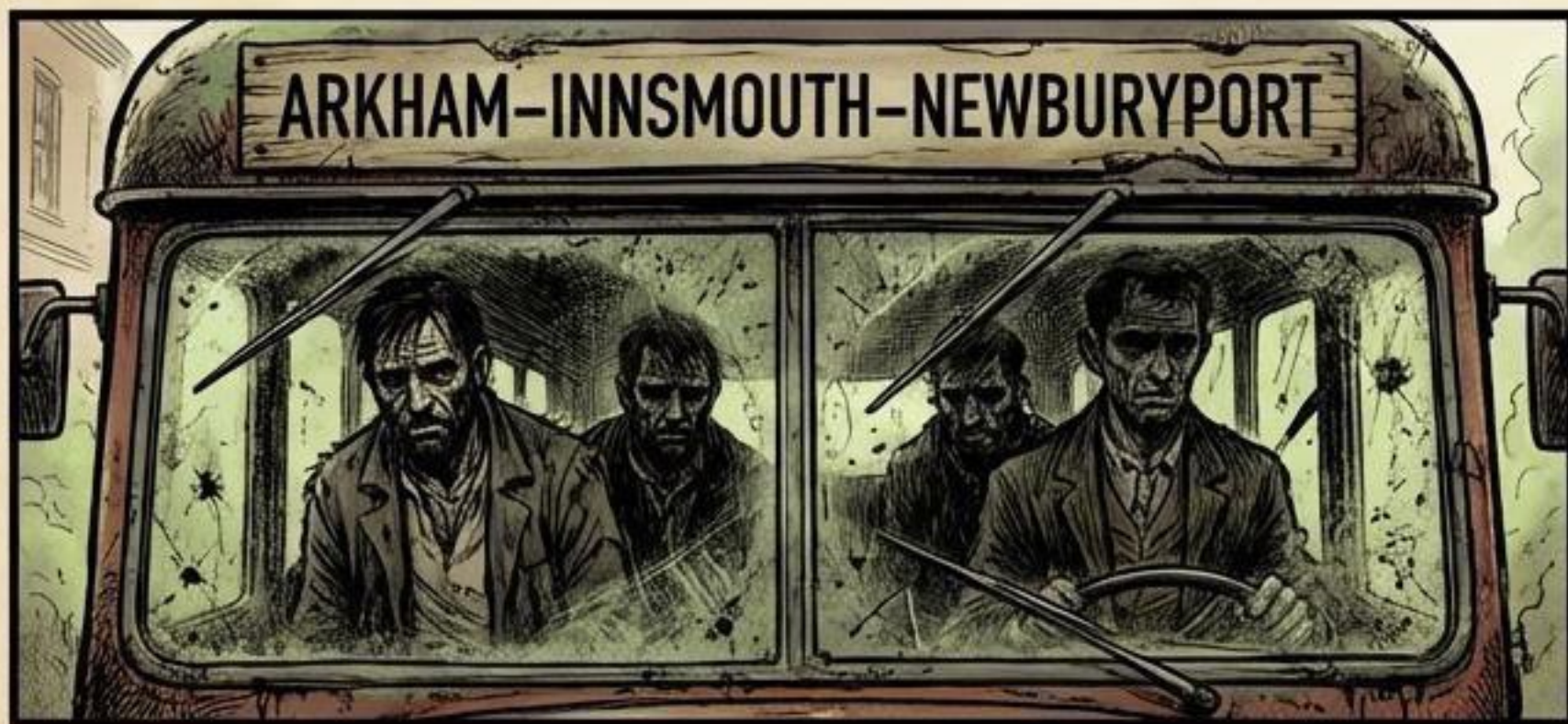




Shortly before ten the next morning I stood with one small valise in front of Hammond's Drug Store waiting for the Innsmouth bus.



As the hour for its arrival drew near I noticed a general drift of the loungers to other places... Evidently the ticket-agent had not exaggerated.



There were only three passengers—dark, unkempt men of sullen visage...



The driver also alighted... and there spread over me a wave of spontaneous aversion which could be neither checked nor explained.

He had a narrow head,
bulging, watery-blue eyes
that seemed never to wink,
a flat nose, a receding
forehead and chin...

...the sides of
his neck were
all shriveled
or creased up.

His hands were large
and heavily veined...
the fingers were
strikingly short.

I myself would have
thought of biological
degeneration rather
than alienage.





"I was sorry when I saw there would be no other passengers. Somehow I did not like the idea of riding alone with this driver."



"The landscape became more and more desolate as we proceeded."



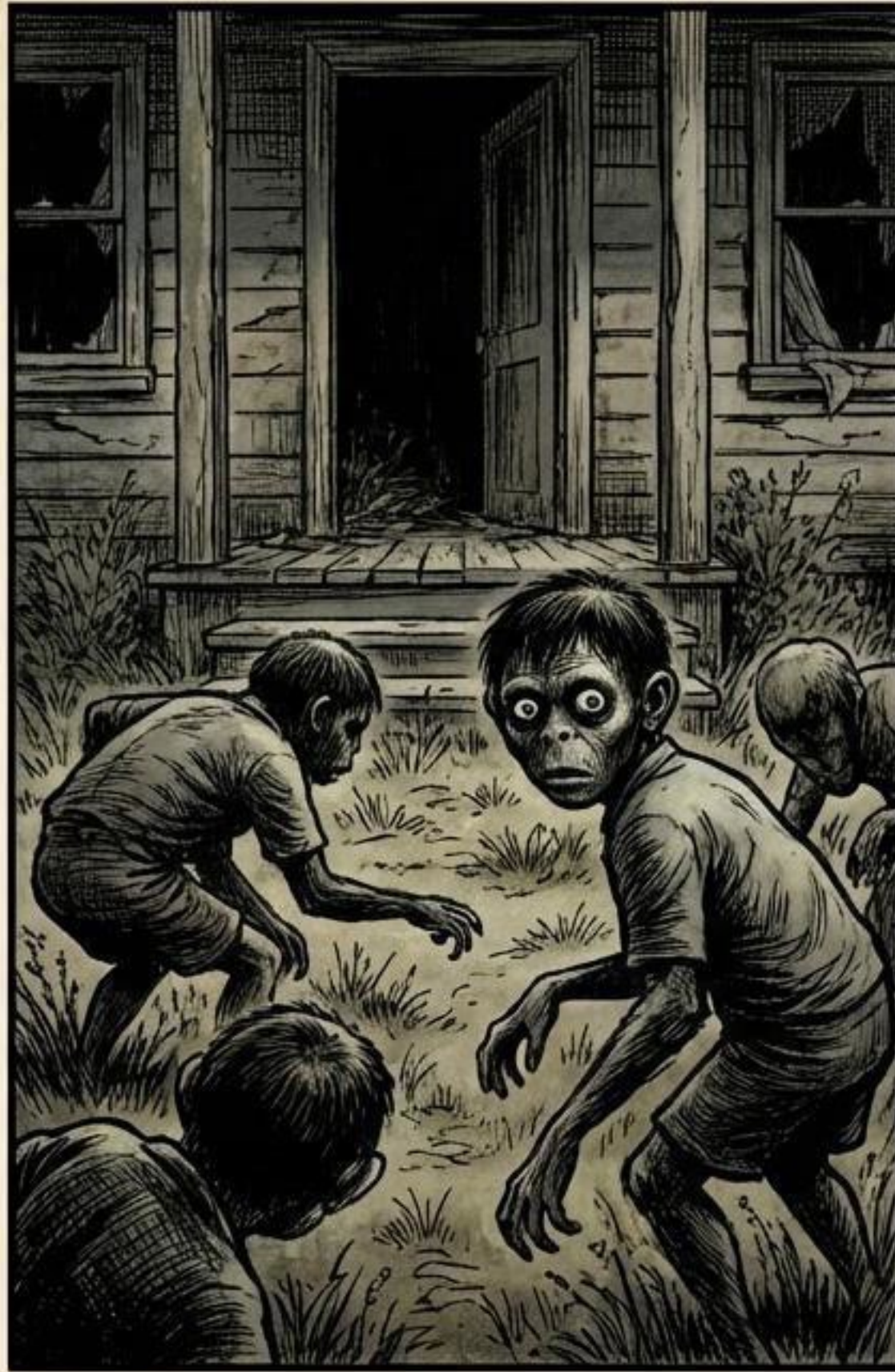
"It was as if the bus were about to keep on in its ascent, leaving the sane earth altogether and merging with the unknown arcana of upper air and cryptical sky."



“I had, I realized, come face to face with rumor-shadowed Innsmouth. It was a town of wide extent and and dense construction, yet one with a portentous dearth of visible life.”



"We began to pass deserted farms in varying stages of ruin."



"Somehow these people seemed more disquieting than the dismal buildings."



"Almost every one had certain peculiarities of face and motions which I instinctively disliked without being able to define or comprehend them."



The black and gold sign on the pediment was so faded that I could only with difficulty make out the words 'Esoteric Order of Dagon'.



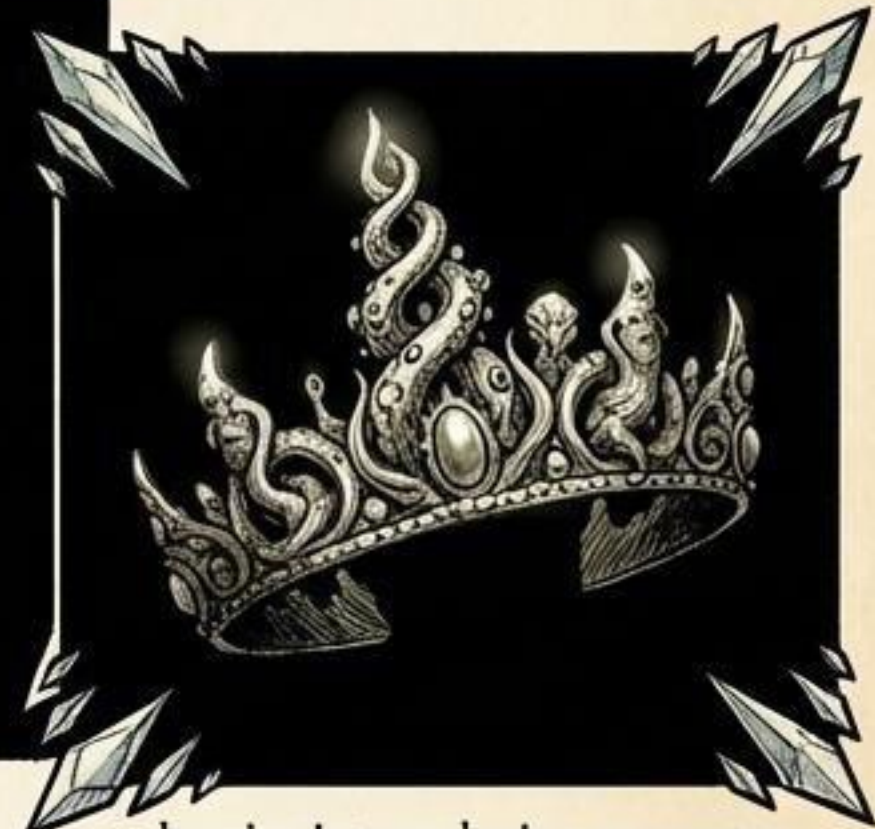
And as I looked, a certain object crossed or seemed to cross that dark rectangle...



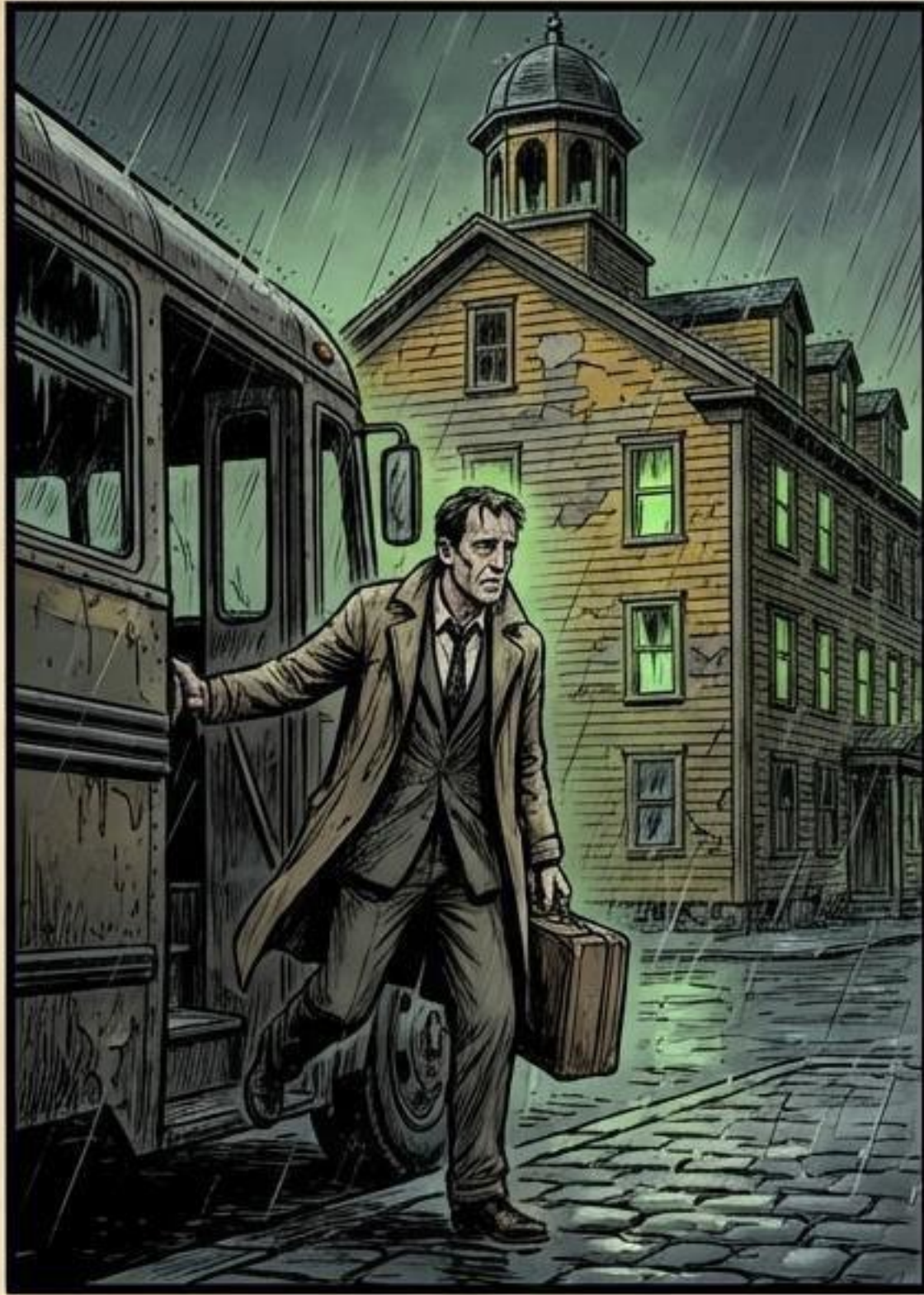
My notice was distracted by the raucous tones of a cracked bell...



And as I looked, a certain object crossed or seemed to cross that dark rectangle...



...burning into my brain a momentary conception of nightmare.



I was glad to get out of that bus...



For some reason I chose to make my first inquiries at the chain grocery, whose personnel was not likely to be native to Innsmouth.



Warning me that many of the street signs were down, the youth drew for my benefit a rough but ample and painstaking sketch map of the town's salient features.

Don't linger much around
the Marsh refinery

People
hostile here



Old Zadok Allen
hangs out here -->



I struck a region of utter desertion which somehow made me shudder.



Those windows stared so spectrally that it took courage to turn eastward toward the waterfront.



Not a living thing did I see... not a sound did I hear save the harbor tides...



The town was getting more and more on my nerves.



I seemed to find this even more oppressive than the southerly desertion. For one thing, the people were more hideous and abnormal...



There were creakings, scurryings, and hoarse doubtful noises; and I thought uncomfortably about the hidden tunnels...



Mansion after mansion claimed my gaze, most of them decrepit and boarded up...



...I could not escape the sensation of being watched from ambush on every hand by sly, staring eyes that never shut.



Innsmouth was rapidly becoming intolerable... It was then that I saw the tumbledown fire station on my left... This, of course, must be Zadok Allen, the half-crazed, liquorish nonagenarian whose tales of old Innsmouth and its shadow were so hideous and incredible.

It must have been some imp of the perverse which made me change my plans. I was hurrying to escape this festering city... but the sight of old Zadok Allen set up new currents in my mind.



Curiosity flared up beyond sense and caution, and in my youthful egotism I fancied I might be able to sift a nucleus of real history from the confused, extravagant outpouring I would extract with the aid of raw whiskey.



I guided my companion to the wholly abandoned stretch of southern waterfront... the ideal place for a long, secret colloquy.



For hours, his aged tongue did not loosen as I had expected. He would babble of current topics, sidetracking my questions about Innsmouth's shadow-haunted past.



His wandering gaze lit on the low, distant line of Devil Reef...



Thar's whar it all begun—that
cursed place of all wickedness
whar the deep water starts.
Gate o' hell...

O! Cap'n Obed done it—
him that faound aout more'n
was good fer him in the
Saouth Sea islands.

Matt Eliot, his fust mate, told abaout an island east of Othaheite... with carvin's of faces... and picters of awful monsters all over 'em.



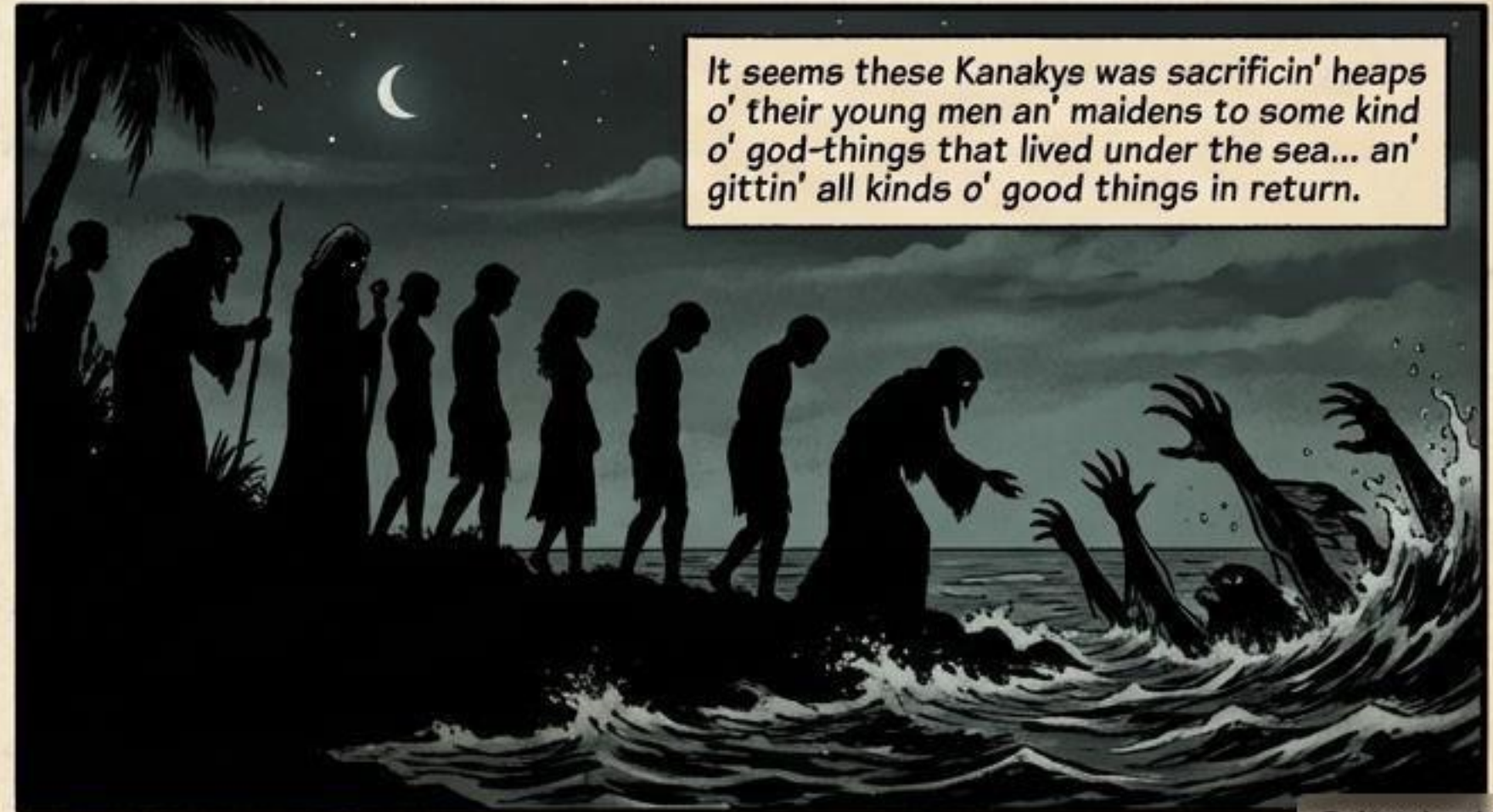
Wal, Sir, the natives around thar had all the fieh they cud ketch, an' sported head rigs made aout o' a queer kind o' gold...

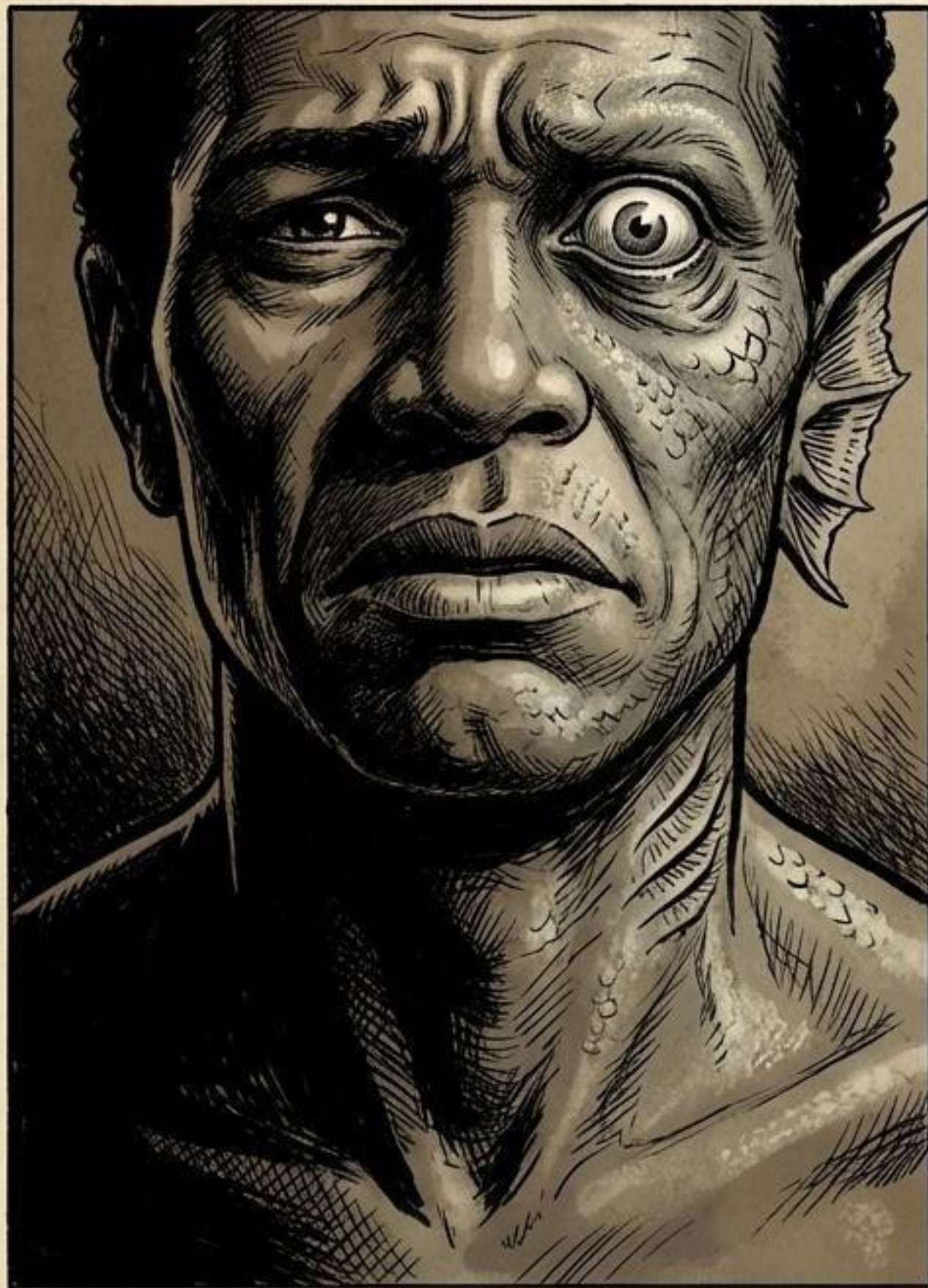


...sorter fish-like frogs or froglike fishes that was drawed in all kinds o' positions llikes they was human bein's.



It seems these Kanakys was sacrificin' heaps o' their young men an' maidens to some kind o' god-things that lived under the sea... an' gittin' all kinds o' good things in return.

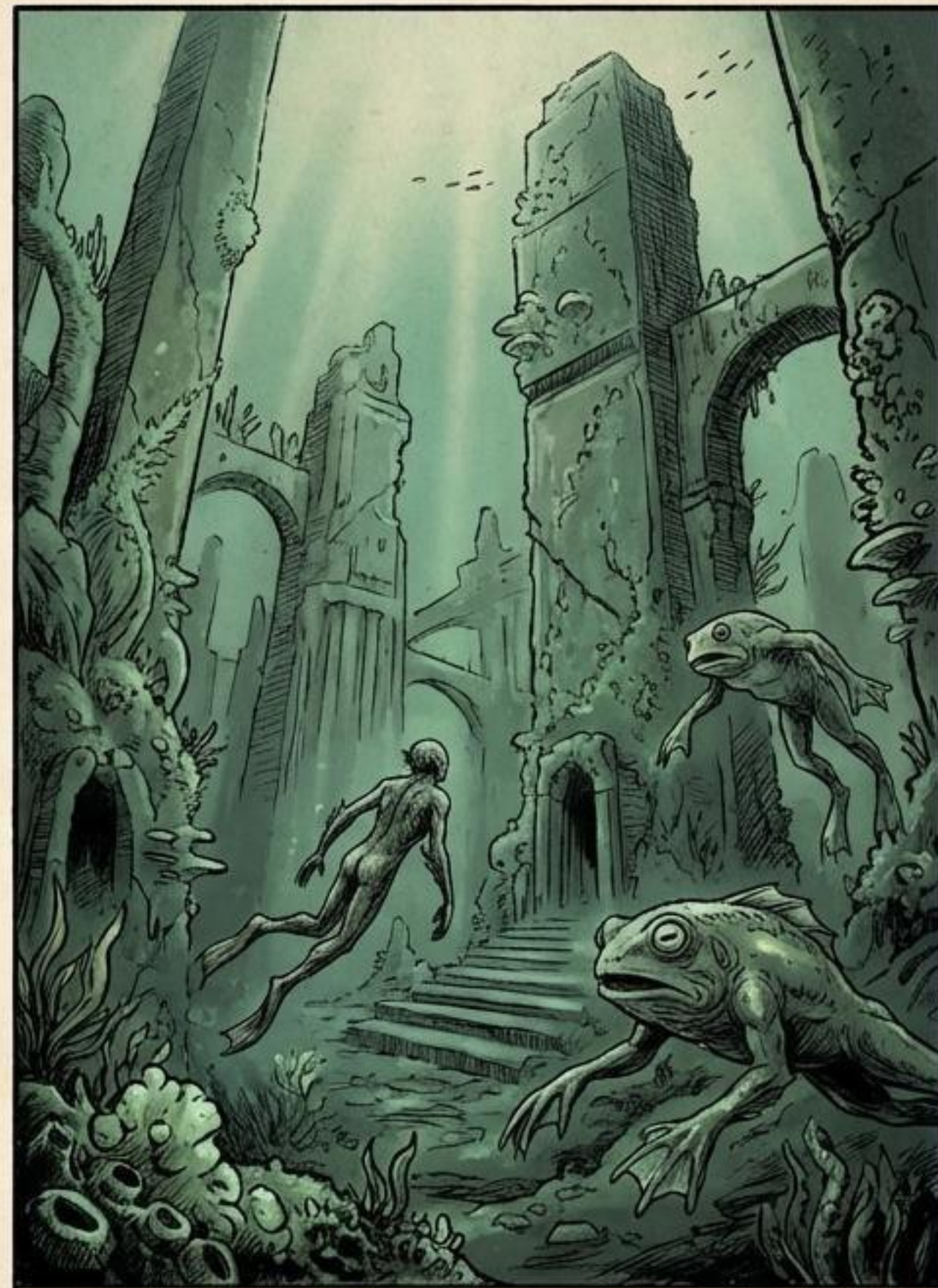




Them things told the Kanakys that ef they mised bloods there'd be children as ud look human at fast, but later turn more'n more like the things...

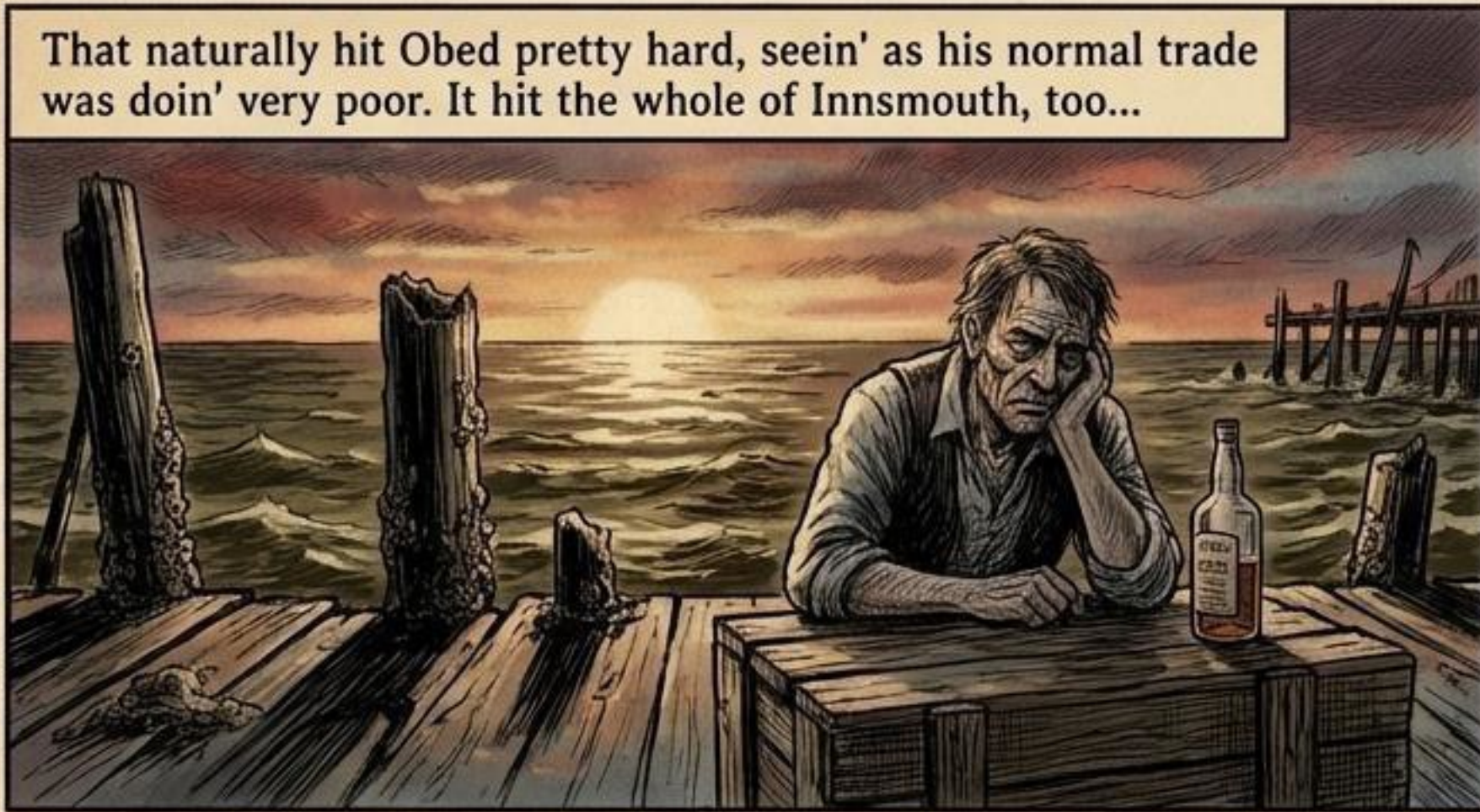


...till fiaally they'd take to ths water an' jine the main lot o' thiags daown thar. An' this is the important part, young feller—

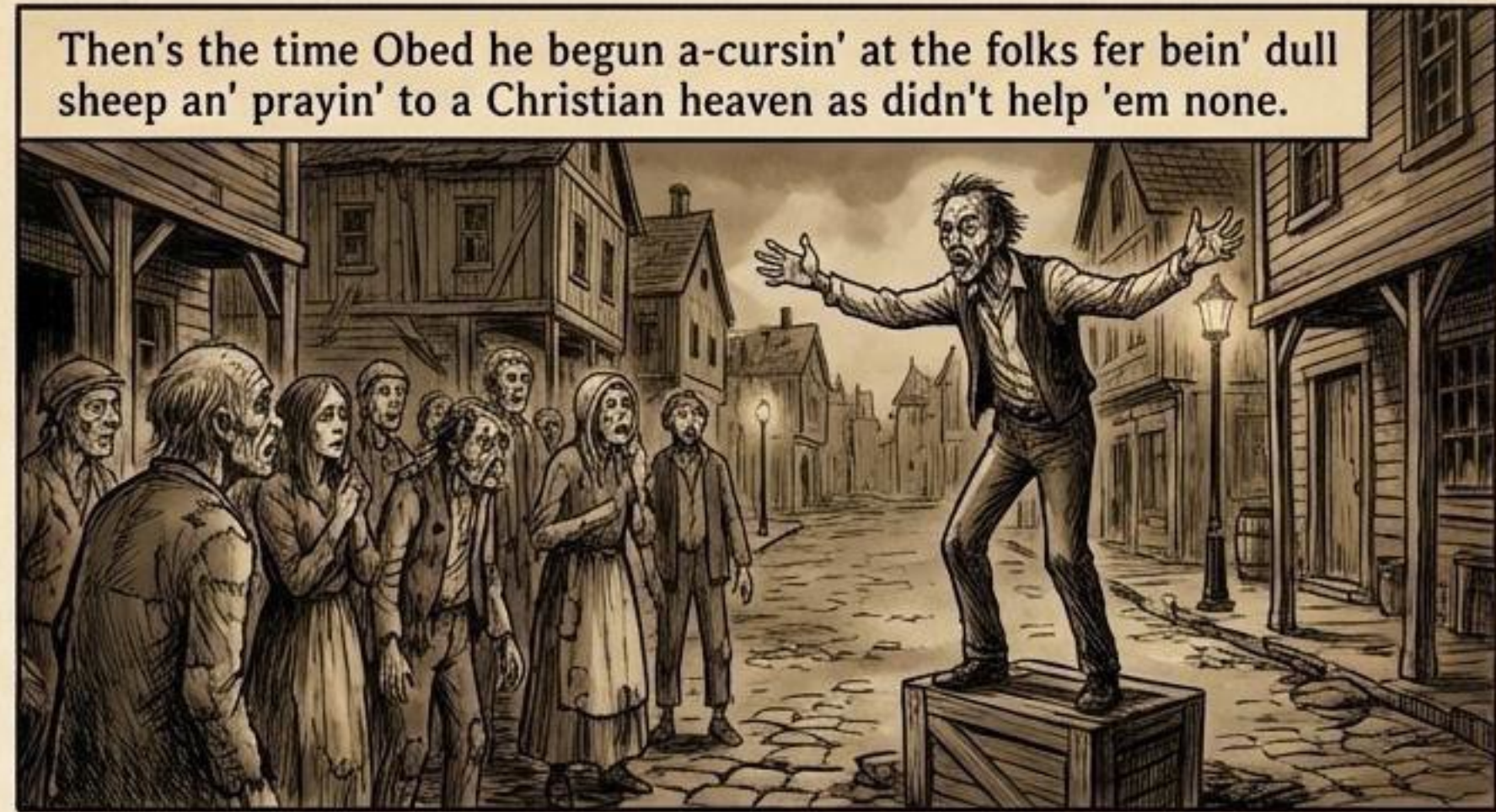


—them as turned into fish things an' went into the water wouldn't never die. Them things never died excep' they was kilt violent.

That naturally hit Obed pretty hard, seein' as his normal trade was doin' very poor. It hit the whole of Innsmouth, too...



Then's the time Obed he begun a-cursin' at the folks fer bein' dull sheep an' prayin' to a Christian heaven as didn't help 'em none.



A flashback night, carrying Captain Obed and about twenty other shadowy thront rows silently across of Devil Reef.



An' tell me why Obed was allus droppin' heavy things daown into the deep water t'other side o' the reef whar the bottom shoots daown like a cliff lower'n ye kin saound?





God, what happened in the streets of Innsmouth that night... they rattled our door, but pa wouldn't open... Mounds o' the dead an' the dyin'... shots and screams... called it the plague when folks come in an' faound haff our people missin'... never heard o' my pa no more...

We all hed to take the Oath o' Dagon... an' later on they was secon' an' third oaths that some o' us took.



It got wuss araound Civil War time, when children born senct 'forty-six begun to grow up...



...Night on Washington Street.



SKREEE!

GURGLE!

GURGLE!

"...an' more an' more attic winders got a-boarded up, an' more an' more noises was heerd in haouses as wa'n't s'posed to hev nobody in 'em..."



Hey, yew, why dun't ye say somethin'? Think the old man's crazy, eh? Wal, Sir, let me tell ye that ain't the wust!

Yew want to know what the reel horror is, hey?



Wal, it's this—it ain't what them fish devils hez done... but what they're a-goin' to do!



They're a-bringin' things up aout o' the water... ever hear tell of a shoggoth?

...eh-ahhh-ah!





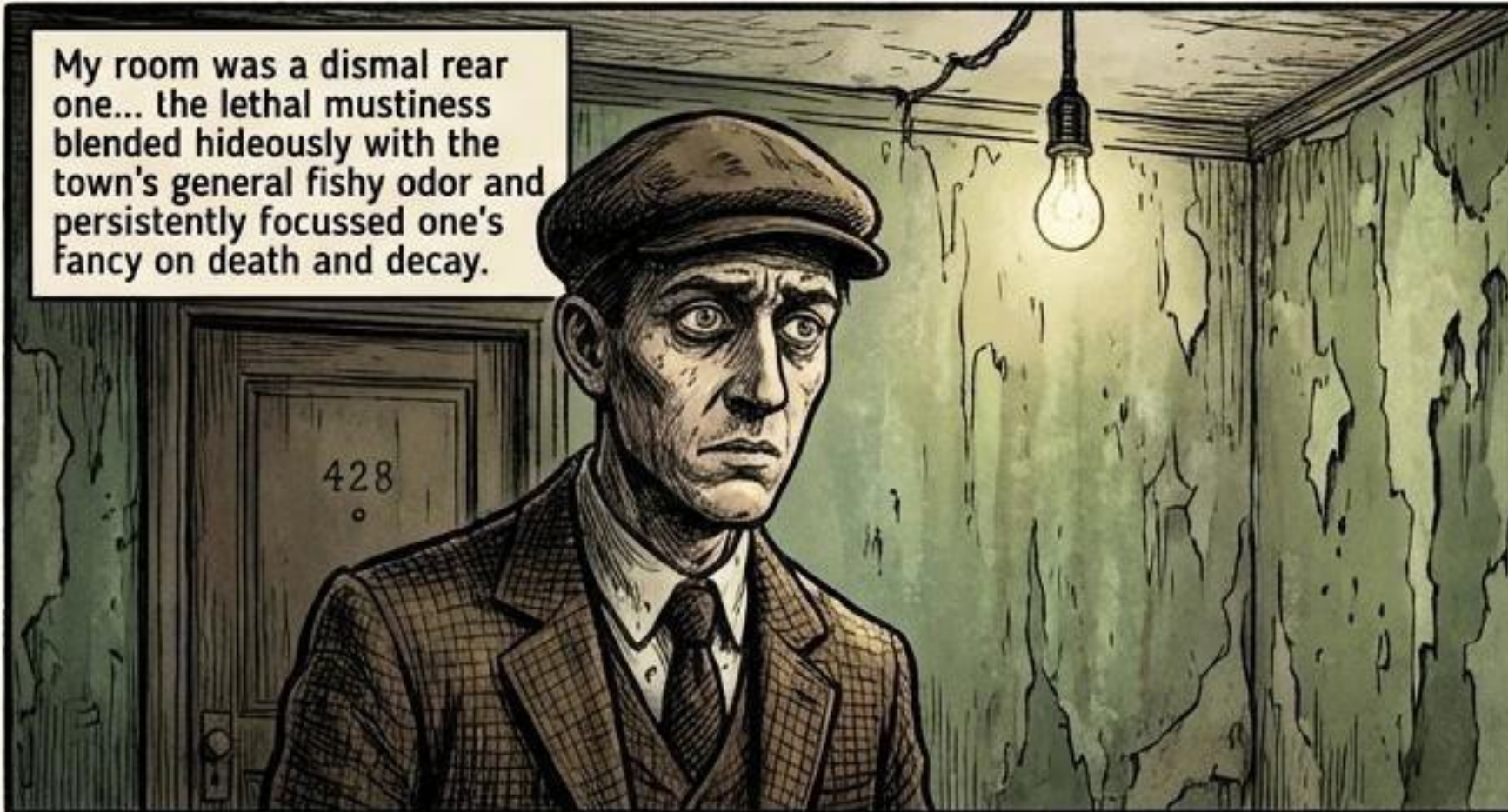


I glanced back at the sea, but there was nothing there. And when I reached Water Street... there was no remaining trace of Zadok Allen.

Almost dazed by this sudden obstacle, and violently dreading the fall of night in this decaying and half-unlighted town, I re-entered the hotel lobby.



My room was a dismal rear one... the lethal mustiness blended hideously with the town's general fishy odor and persistently focussed one's fancy on death and decay.



Another thing that disturbed me was the absence of a bolt on the door of my room. One had been there, as marks clearly showed, but there were signs of recent removal.



Another thing that disturbed me was the absence of a bolt on the door of my room. One had been there, as marks clearly showed, but there were signs of recent removal.

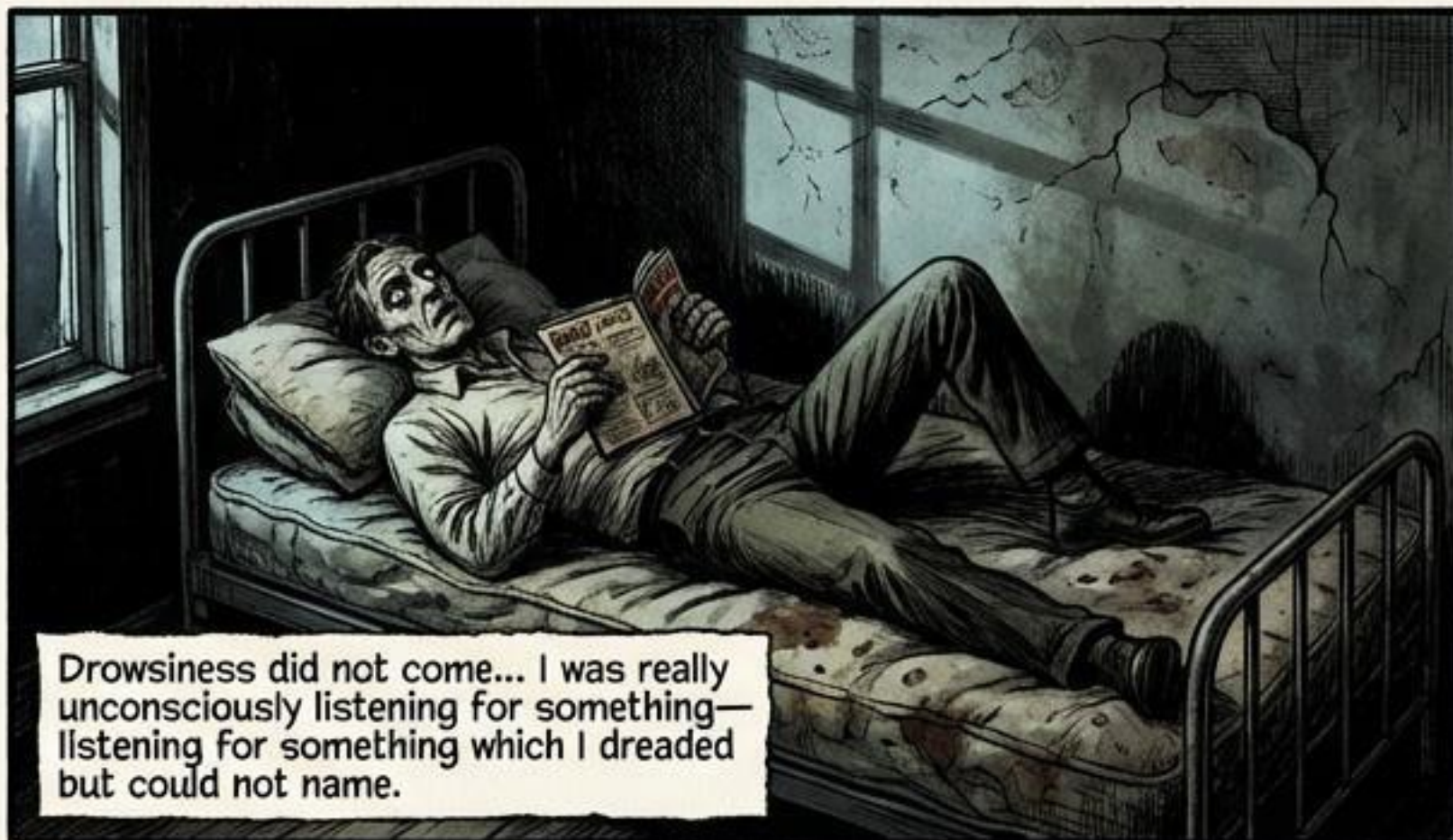




...any symbol of security was welcome in an environment of this kind.



Without the least shadow of a doubt, the lock of my door was being tried—cautiously, furtively, tentatively—with a key.



Drowsiness did not come... I was really unconsciously listening for something—listening for something which I dreaded but could not name.



... The protagonist ear has bolted connecting door to the north.



... The protagonist each was pressed to the connecting door to the south.



Clearly, some cryptic, evil movement was afoot on a large scale...



....the apparent hoarse barking and loose-syllabled croakings bore so little resemblance to recognized human speech.



From the first I felt that the unseen fumbler meant a danger... only to be fled from as precipitately as possible.



Muffled sounds... approached, and at length a firm knock came at my outer door.

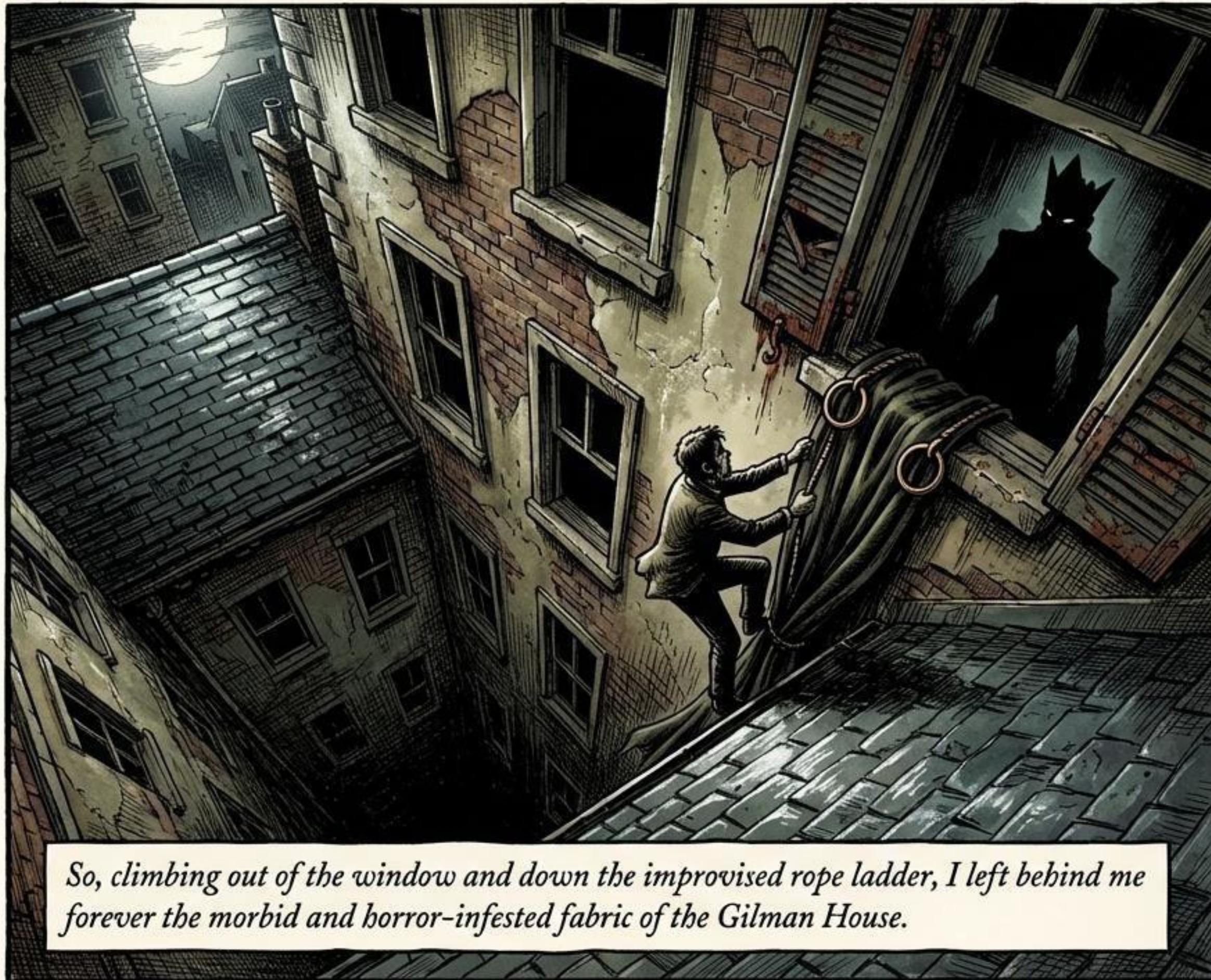
SCREEECH...



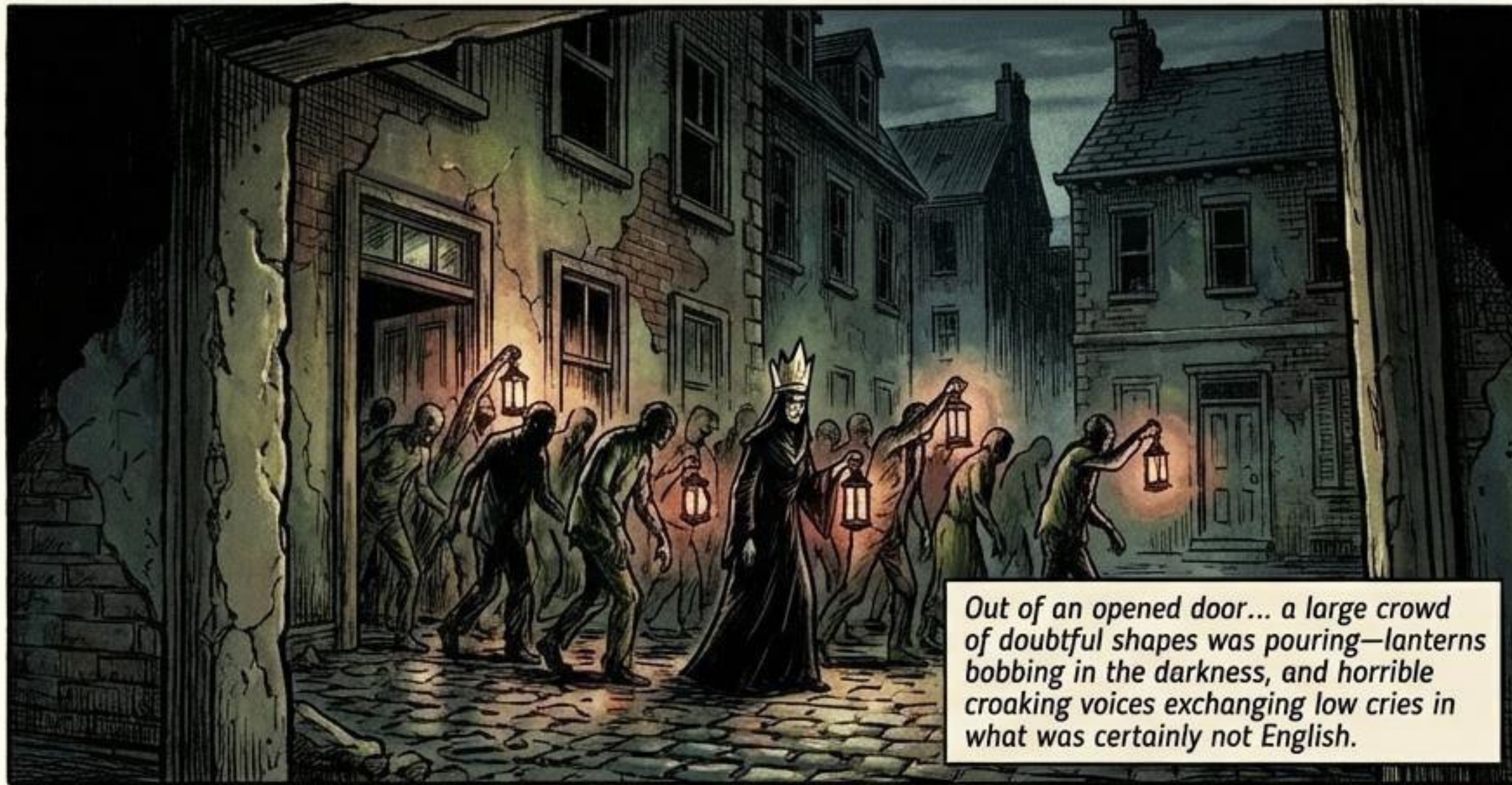
****THUMP!****



As I gained this respite I heard the battering... abate, while a confused clatter came from the connecting door I had shielded with the bedstead.



So, climbing out of the window and down the improvised rope ladder, I left behind me forever the morbid and horror-infested fabric of the Gilman House.



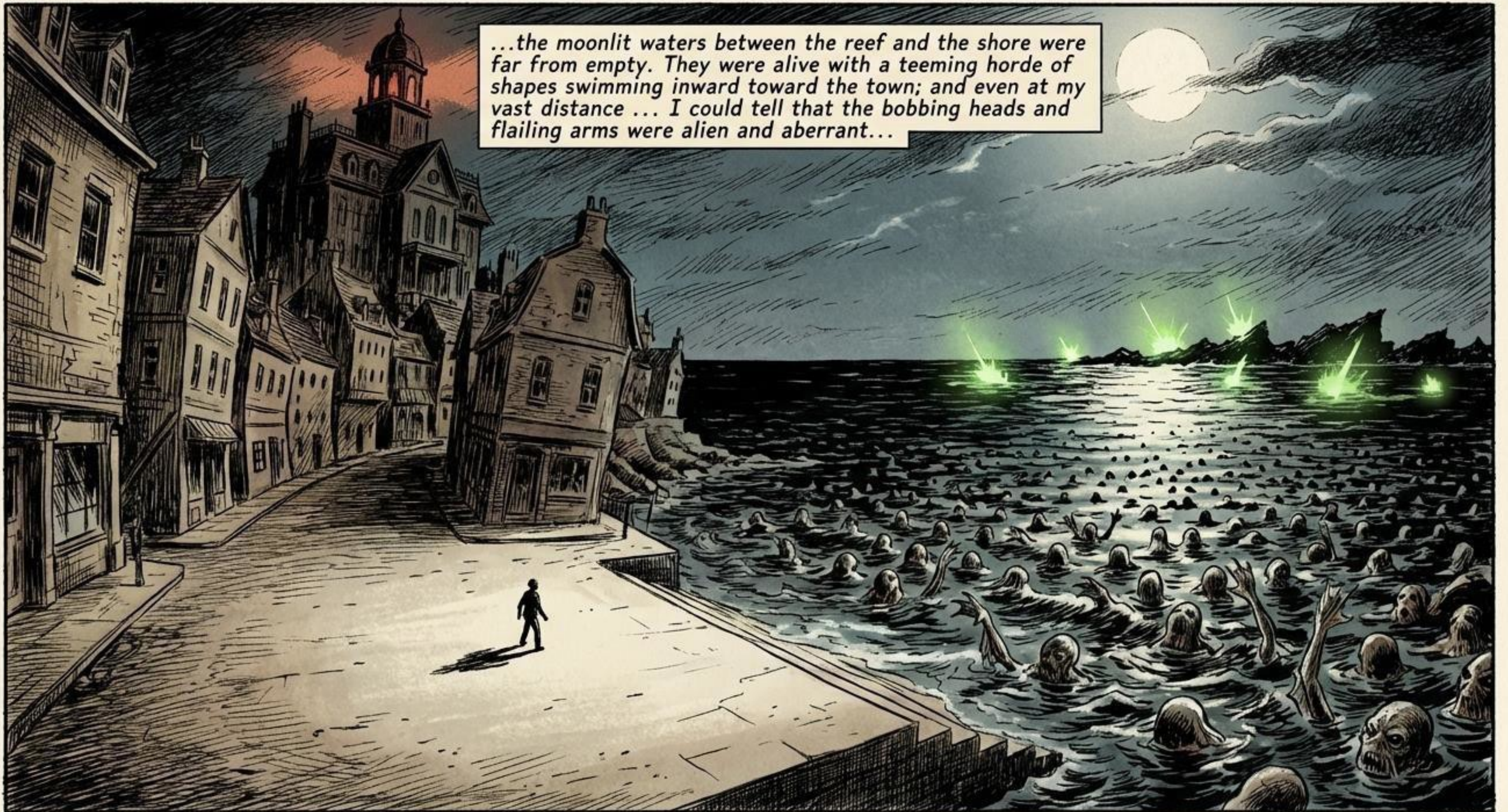
Out of an opened door... a large crowd of doubtful shapes was pouring—lanterns bobbing in the darkness, and horrible croaking voices exchanging low cries in what was certainly not English.

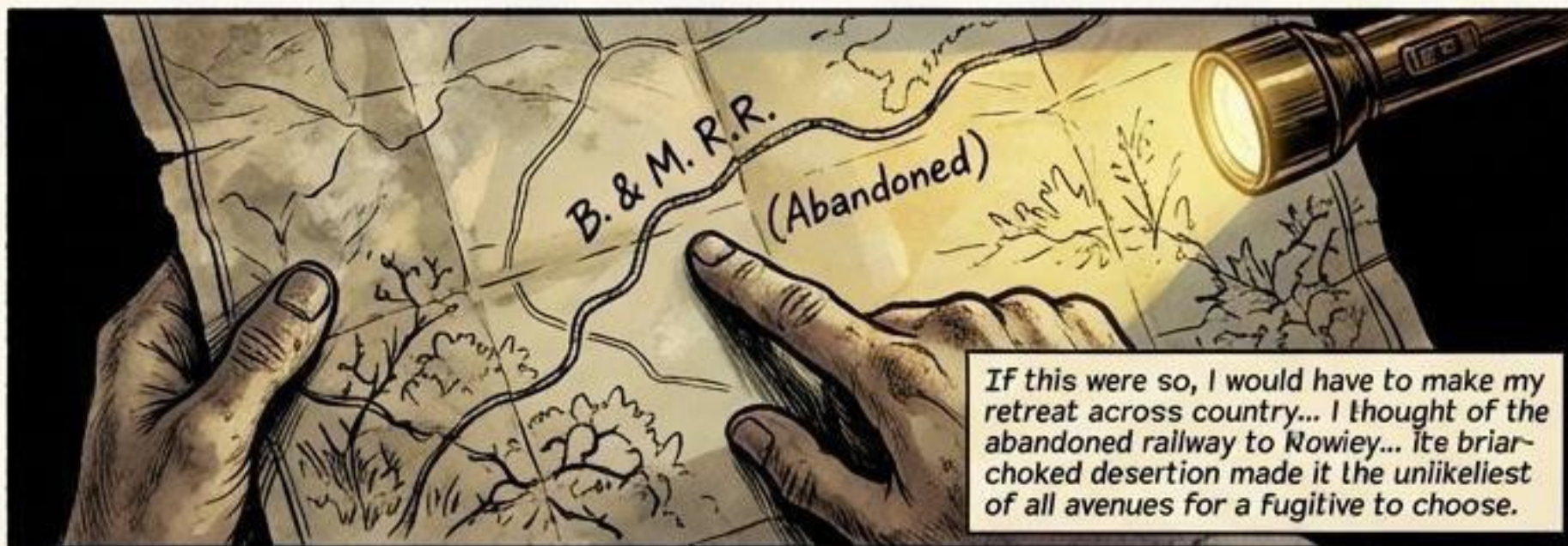




From several directions... I could hear the sound of hoarse voices, of footsteps, and of a curious kind of pattering which did not sound quite like footsteps. Plainly I had no time to lose.

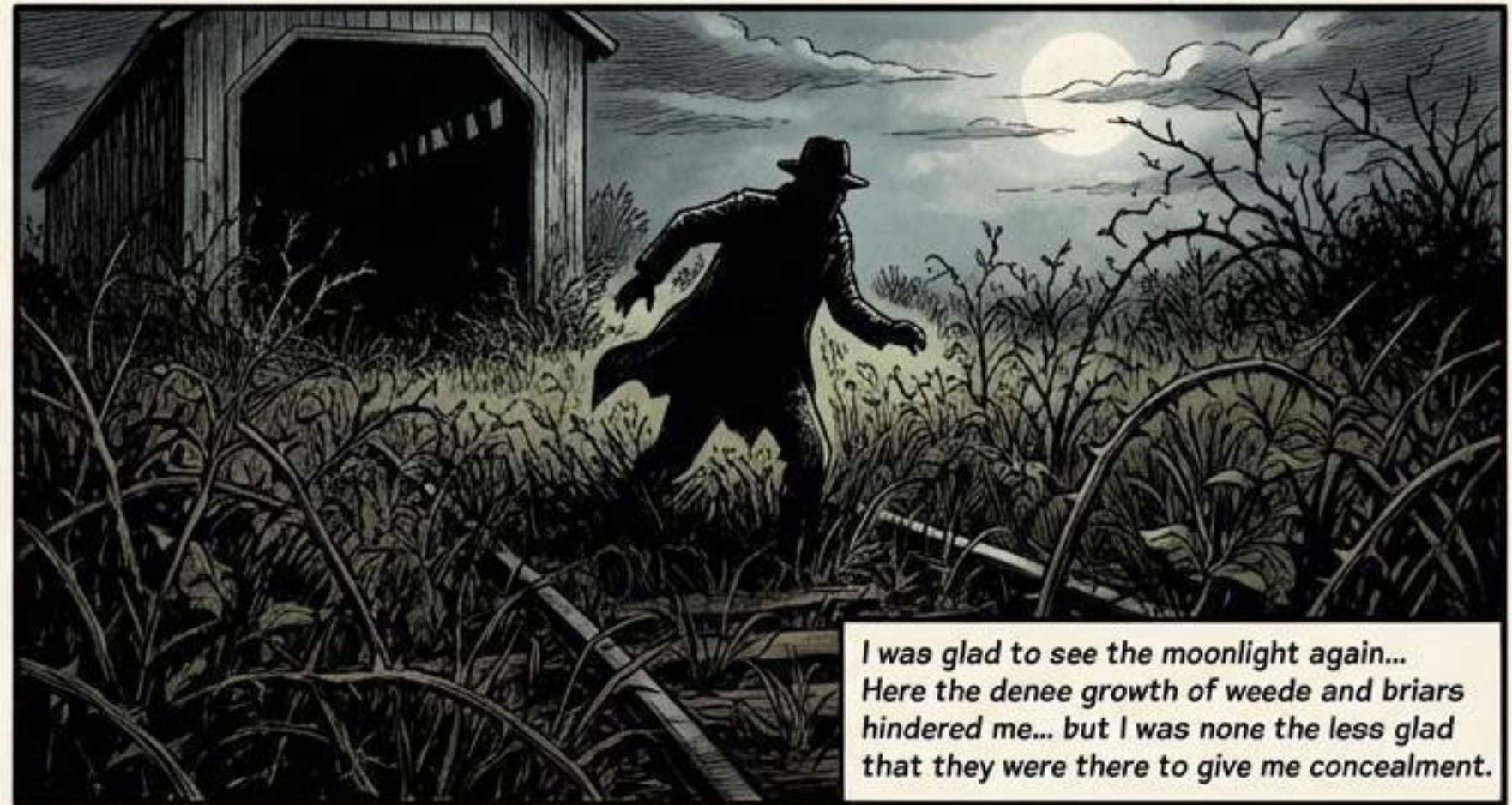
...the moonlit waters between the reef and the shore were far from empty. They were alive with a teeming horde of shapes swimming inward toward the town; and even at my vast distance ... I could tell that the bobbing heads and flailing arms were alien and aberrant...







The gait of this figure was so odd that it sent a chill through me—for it seemed to me the creature was almost hopping.



I was glad to see the moonlight again... Here the dense growth of weeds and briars hindered me... but I was none the less glad that they were there to give me concealment.



It undulated too much, and glistened too brightly in the rays of the now westering moon. There was a suggestion of sound, too... a suggestion of bestial scraping and bellowing...

*It was the end... for whatever
remains to me of life... of every
vestige of mental peace...*

*I saw them in a limitless
stream—flopping, hopping,
croaking, bleating...*



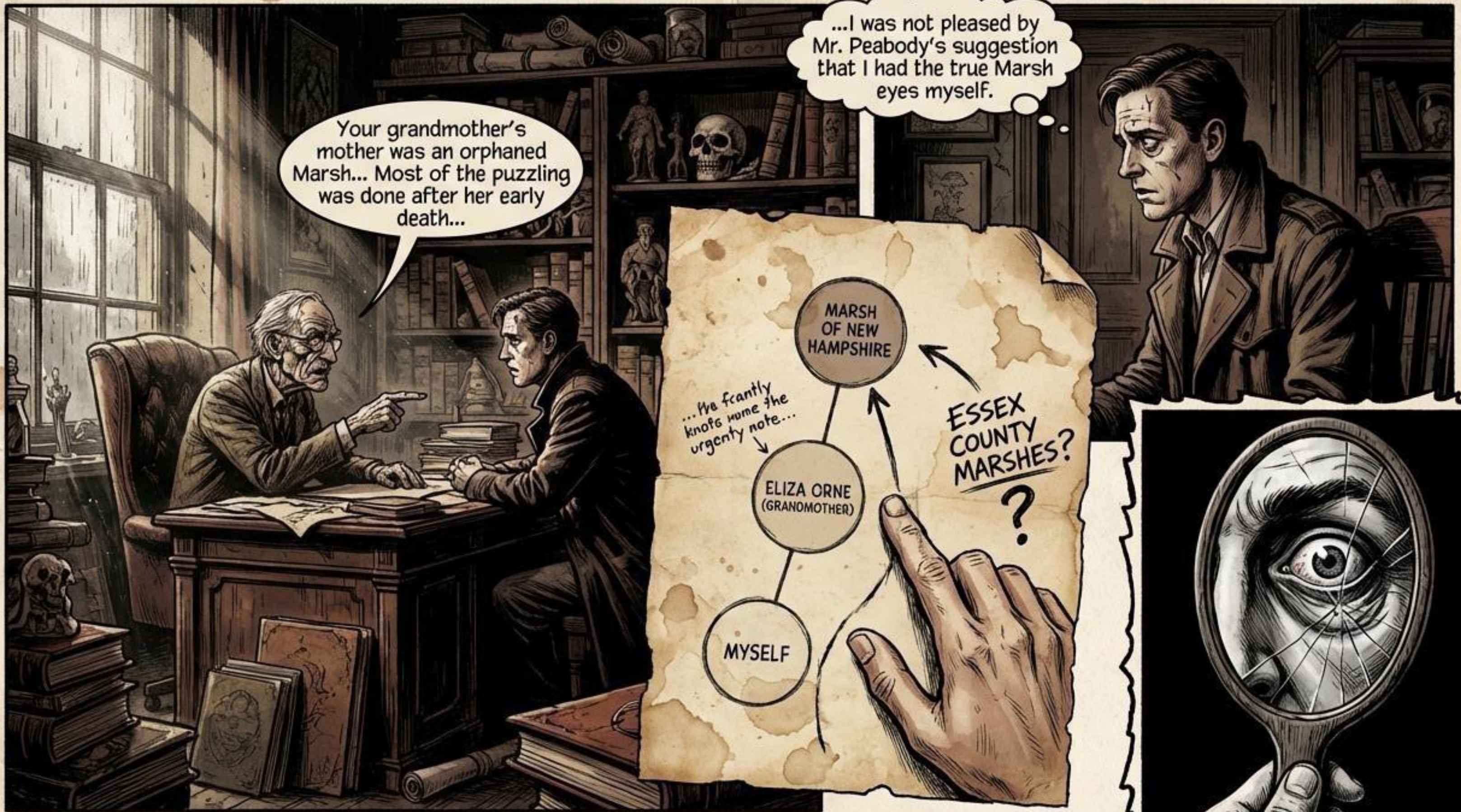
*They were the blasphemous
fish-frogs of the nameless
design—living and horrible.*



In another instant everything was blotted out by a merciful fit of fainting; the first I had ever had.

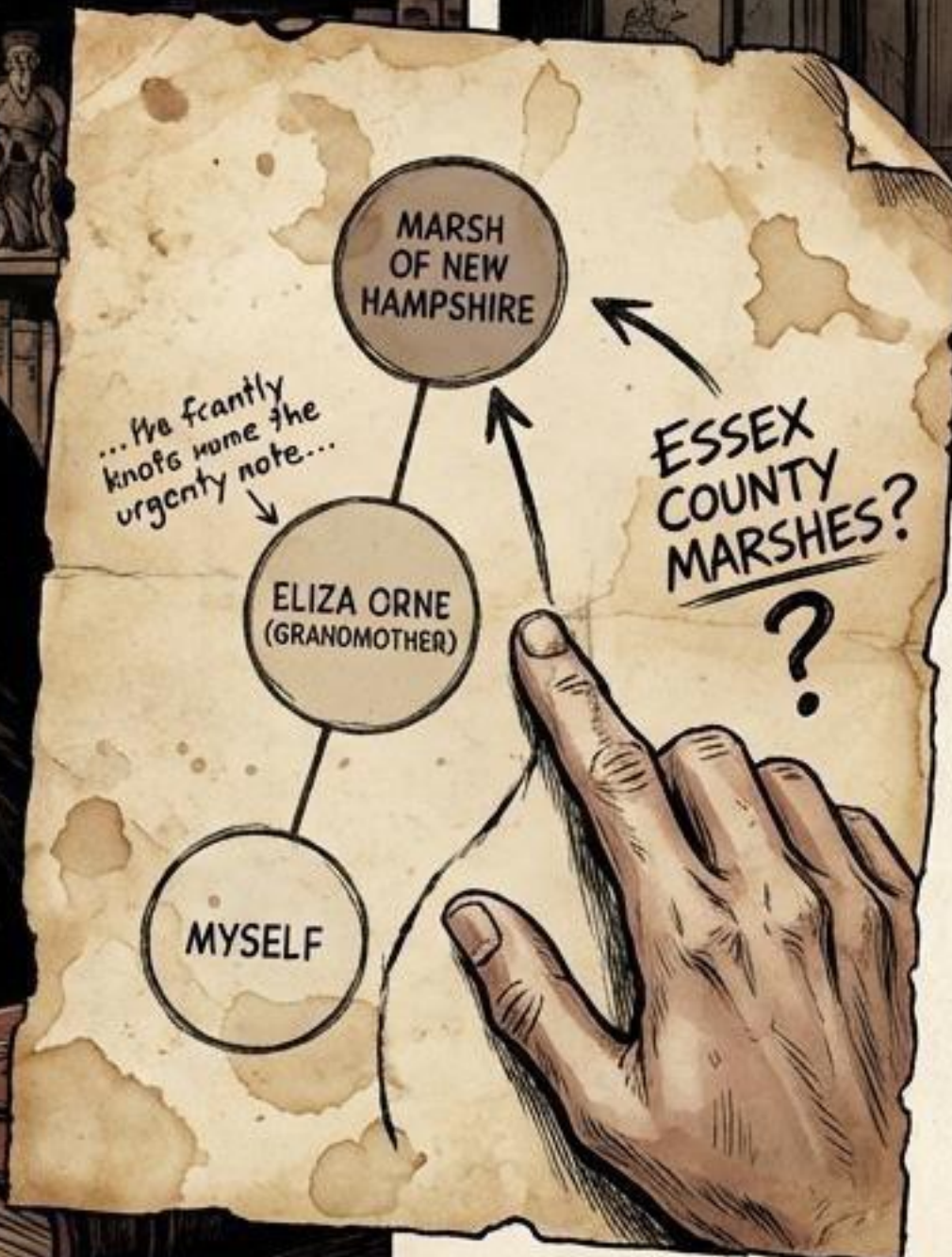
It was a gentle daylight rain that awaked me...
The reality of what I had been through was highly
uncertain in my mind, but I felt that something
hideous lay in the background. I must get away
from evil-shadowed Innsmouth.





Your grandmother's mother was an orphaned Marsh... Most of the puzzling was done after her early death...

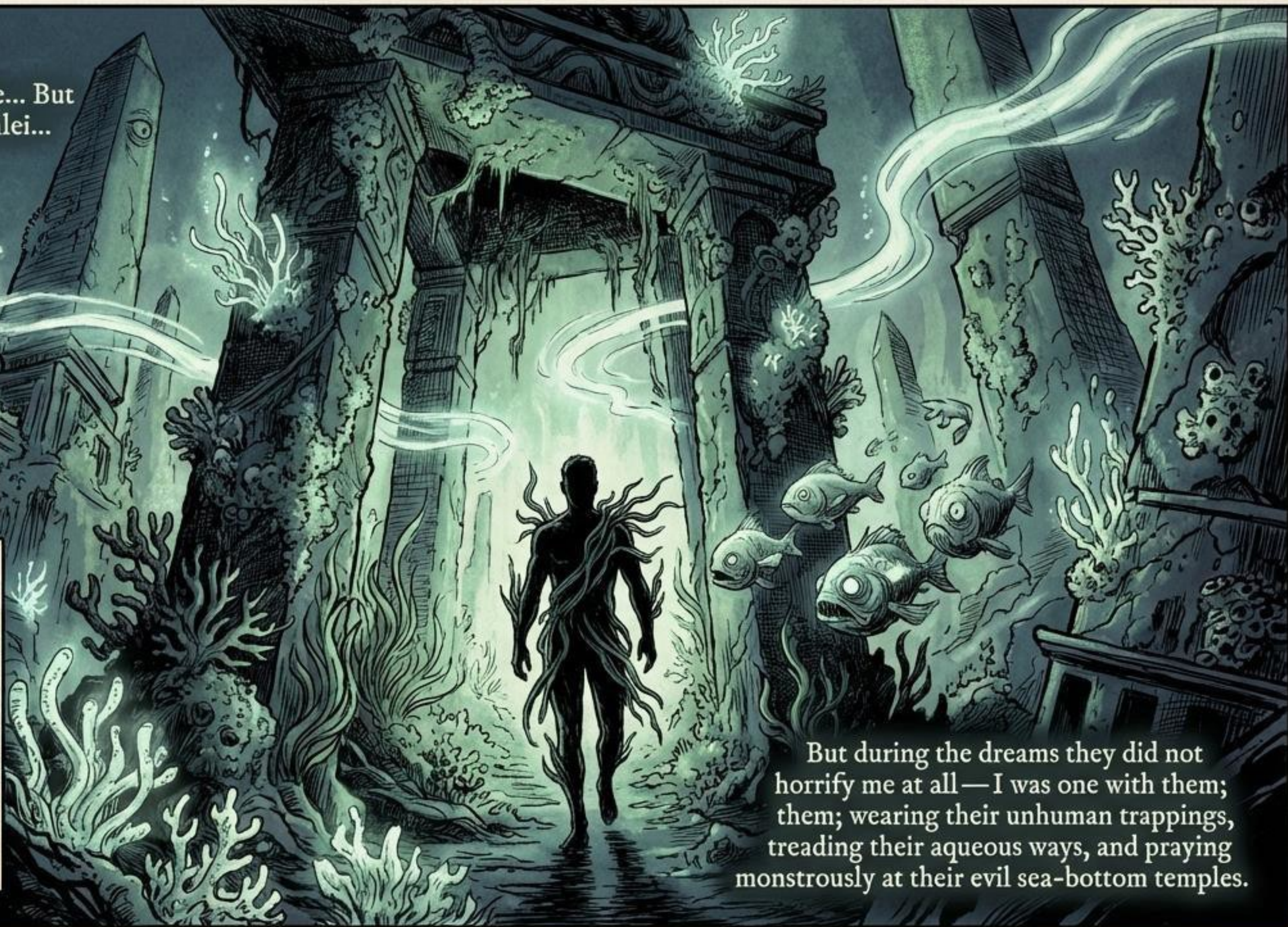
...I was not pleased by Mr. Peabody's suggestion that I had the true Marsh eyes myself.





Great watery spaces

opened out before me... But
sunken city Y'ha-nthlei...



But during the dreams they did not
horrify me at all — I was one with them;
them; wearing their unhuman trappings,
treading their aqueous ways, and praying
monstrously at their evil sea-bottom temples.



It was then that I began to study the mirror with mounting alarm.



That morning the mirror definitely told me I had acquired the Innsmouth look.



She had changed—as those who take to the water change—and told me she had never died...

This was to be my realm, too—I could not escape it.

I would never die.



For eighty thousand years Pth'thya-l'yi had lived in Y'ha-nthlei... The Deep Ones could never be destroyed... some day, if they remembered, they would rise again for the tribute Great Cthulhu craved.

I bought an automatic and
almost took the step...

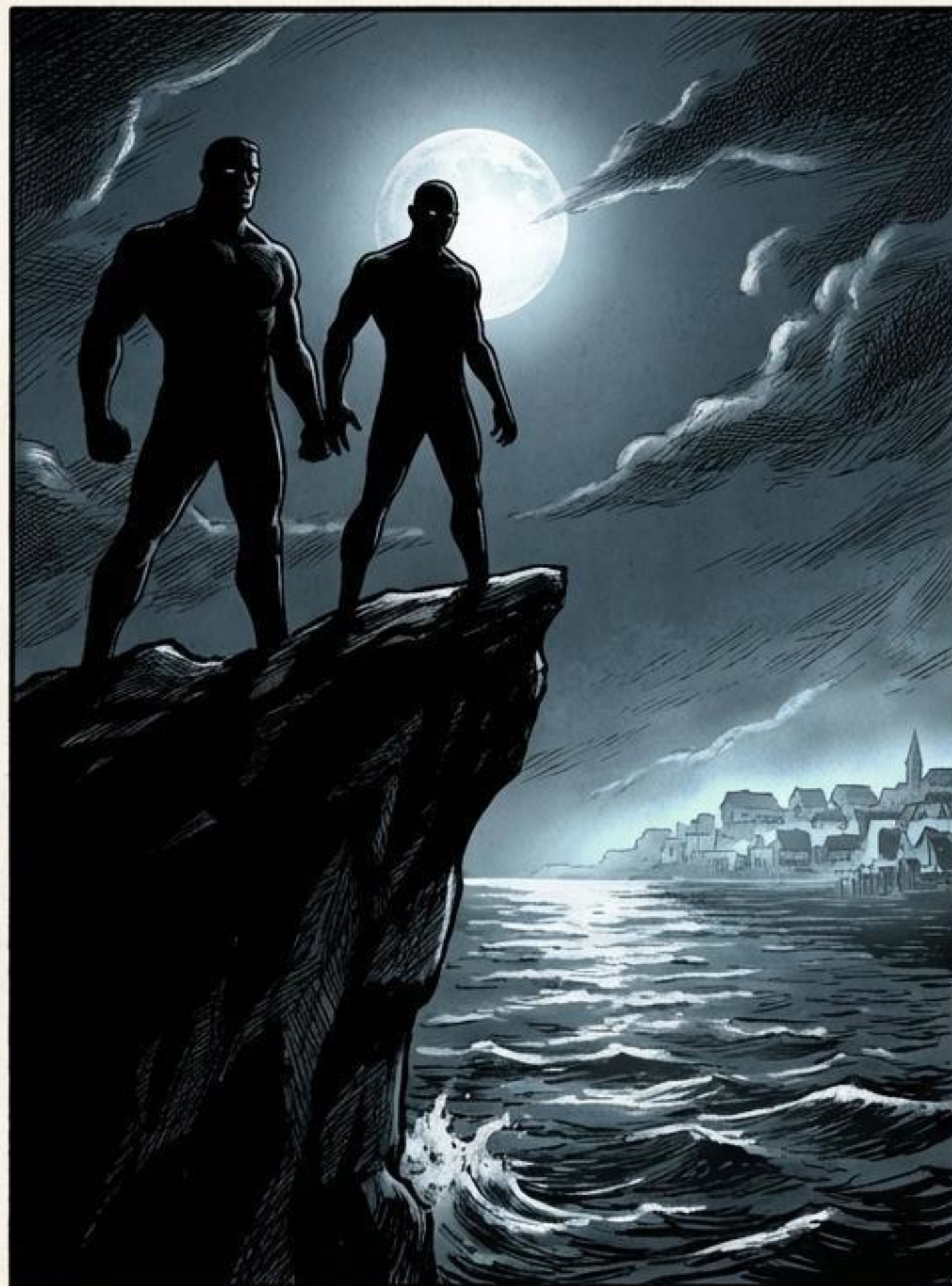


...but certain dreams deterred
me. I feel queerly drawn toward
the unknown sea-deeps instead
of fearing them.

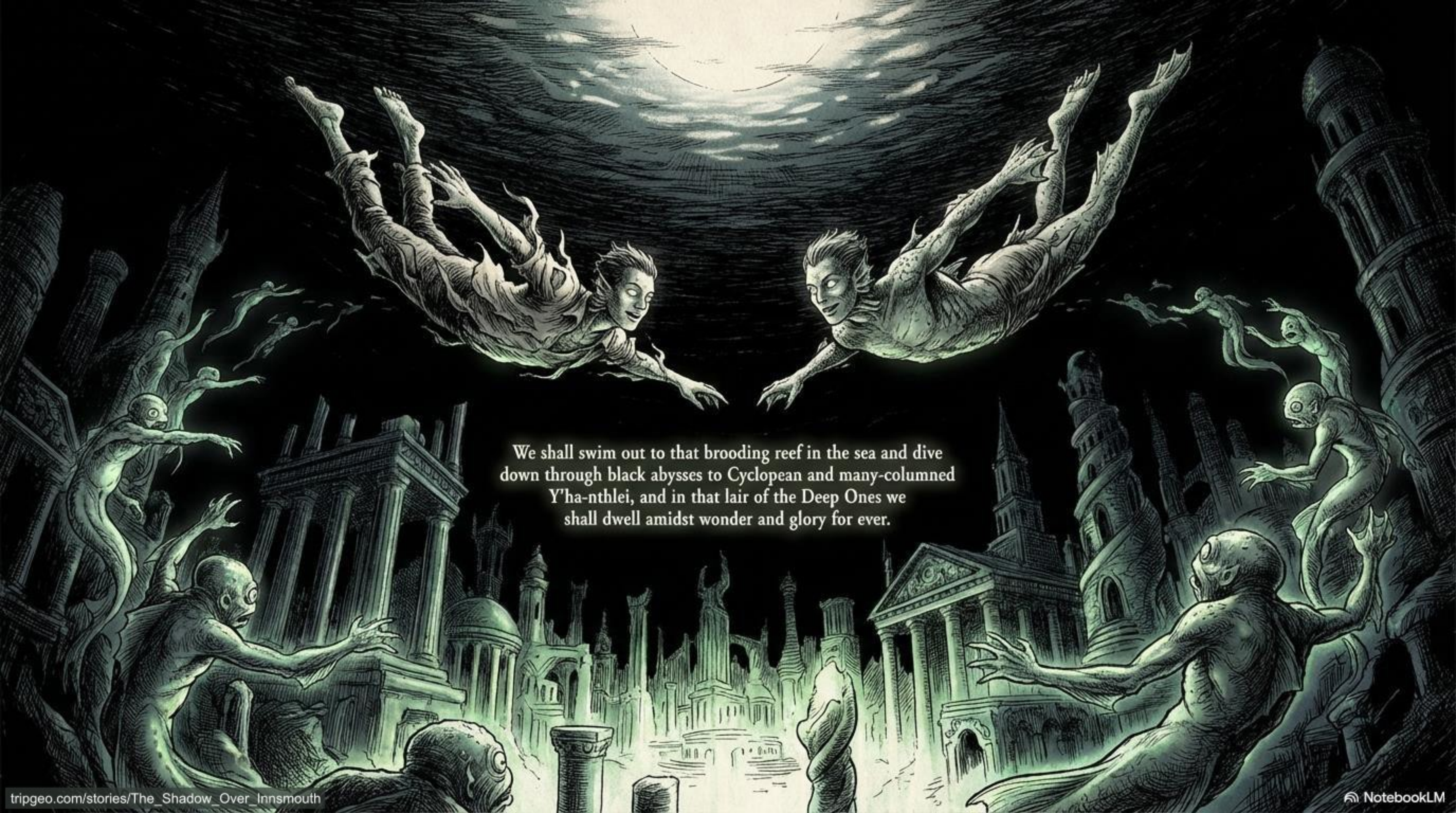


No, I shall not shoot myself—I
cannot be made to shoot myself!

I shall
plan my
cousin's
escape
from
that
Canton
mad-
house...



...and
together
we shall
go to
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.