



# THE LOCKSMITH

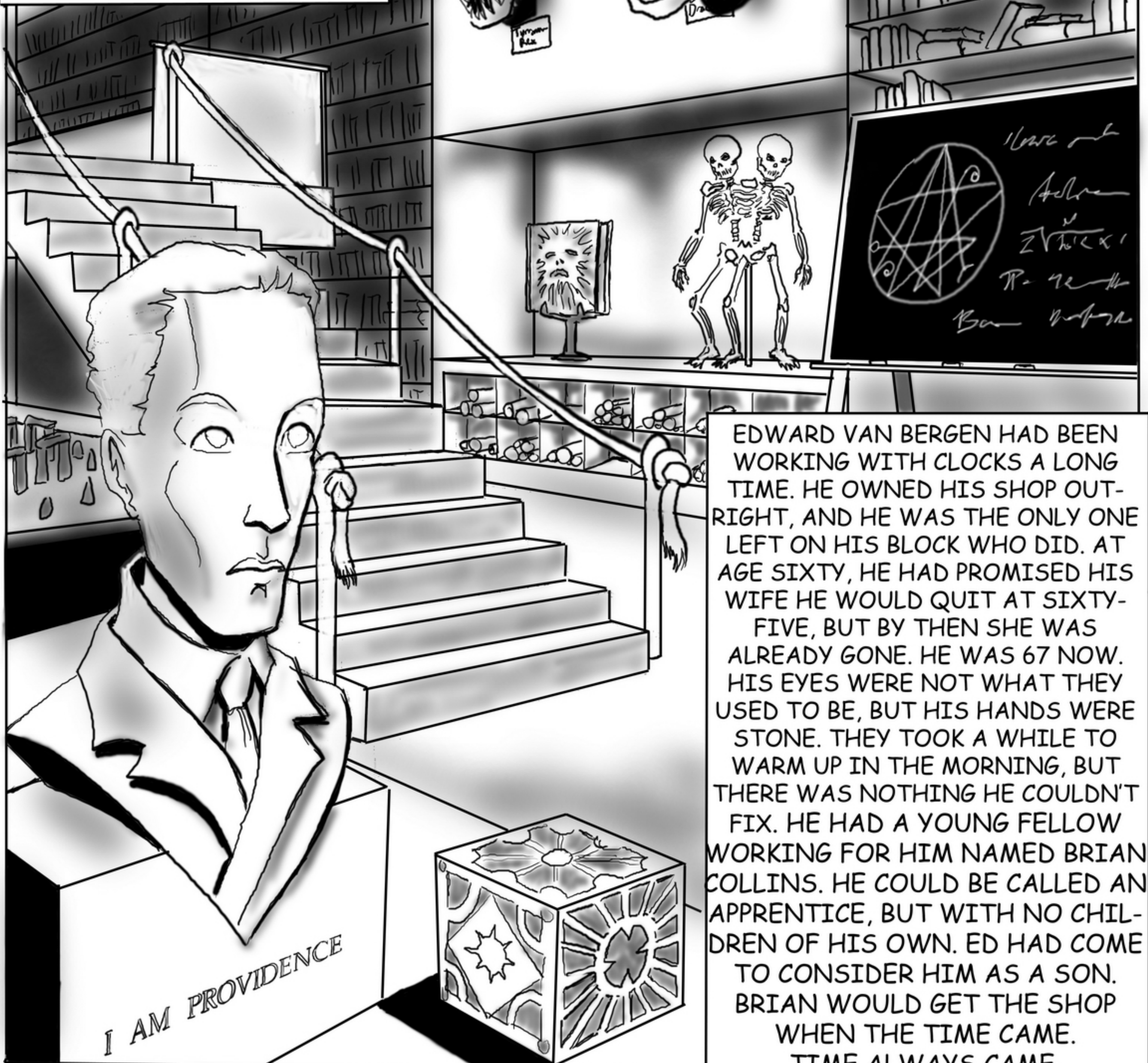
SEAN KENNEDY



MARC RØDSKOV

# The Bookshelf

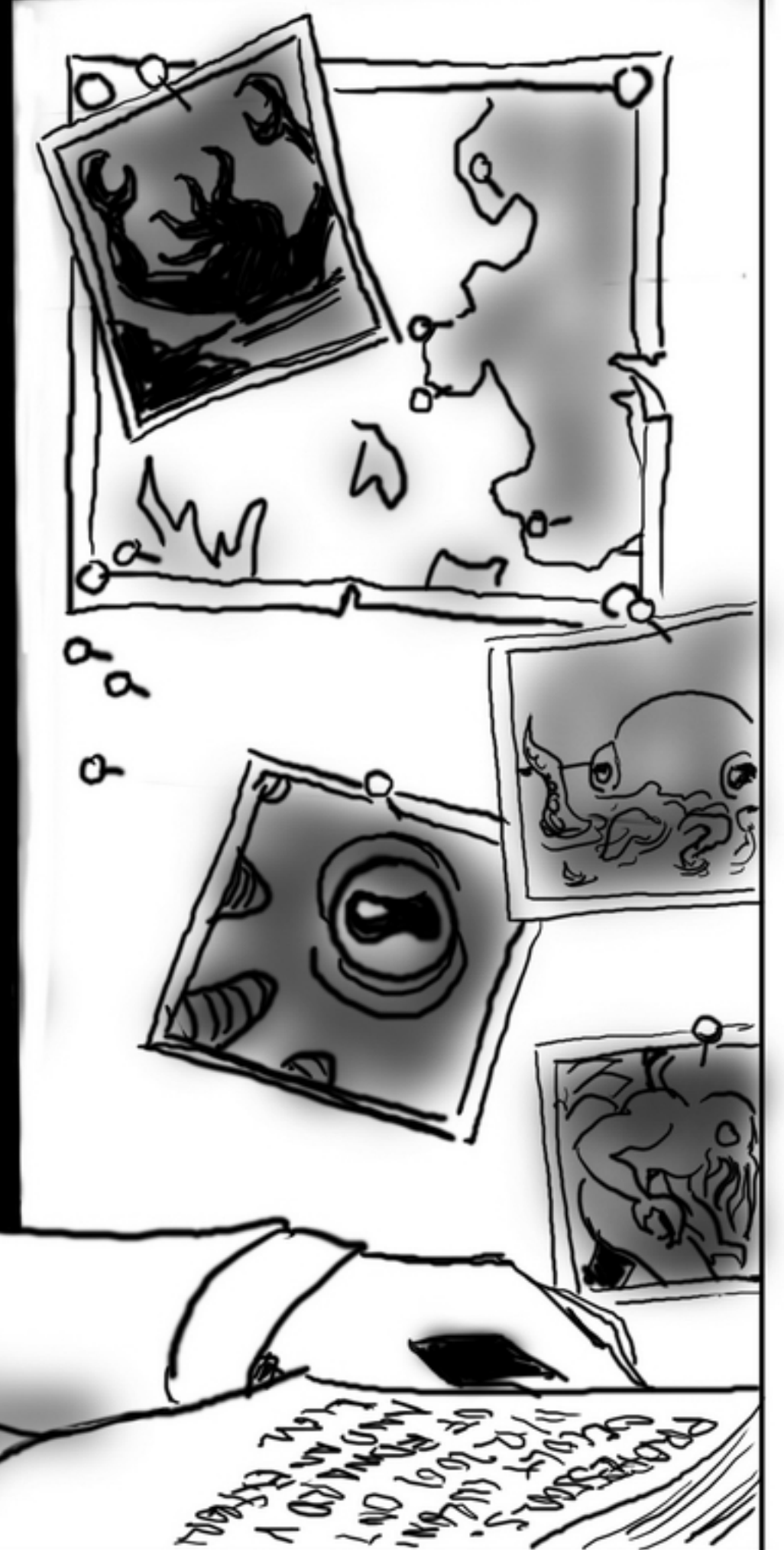
PROFESSOR S. KENNEDY  
OCCULT CHRONICLES  
11/12 2008 ON THE SUBJECT  
OF EDWARD VAN BERGEN  
AND AN EXTRAORDINARY  
CLOCK.



EDWARD VAN BERGEN HAD BEEN WORKING WITH CLOCKS A LONG TIME. HE OWNED HIS SHOP OUT-RIGHT, AND HE WAS THE ONLY ONE LEFT ON HIS BLOCK WHO DID. AT AGE SIXTY, HE HAD PROMISED HIS WIFE HE WOULD QUIT AT SIXTY-FIVE, BUT BY THEN SHE WAS ALREADY GONE. HE WAS 67 NOW. HIS EYES WERE NOT WHAT THEY USED TO BE, BUT HIS HANDS WERE STONE. THEY TOOK A WHILE TO WARM UP IN THE MORNING, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULDN'T FIX. HE HAD A YOUNG FELLOW WORKING FOR HIM NAMED BRIAN COLLINS. HE COULD BE CALLED AN APPRENTICE, BUT WITH NO CHILDREN OF HIS OWN. ED HAD COME TO CONSIDER HIM AS A SON. BRIAN WOULD GET THE SHOP WHEN THE TIME CAME. TIME ALWAYS CAME.



ED'S SHOP ITSELF WAS NOT MUCH TO SPEAK OF. HE KEPT AN ASSORTMENT OF RINGS AND NECKLACES, BUT HIS MAINSTAY WOULD ALWAYS BE THE WATCH. THE PERFECT MEASURE OF TIME HELD IN THE PALM OF A GENTLEMAN.



HIS CLIENTS WERE ALL REPEAT CUSTOMERS-- HAD BEEN FOR YEARS. VAN BERGEN JEWELERS HAD A REPUTATION, AND THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE COLLECTOR WHO WOULD TRUST ED WITH TOUCHING THE WORKINGS OF THEIR PRIZED MECHANISMS. IN HIS OWN TIME ED HAD WORKED ON SOME FINE PIECES. CARTIER AND HAAS REPEATERS FROM THE 19 CENTURY AND EVEN A DROZ MUSIC BOX FROM 1745. SOMEHOW THE PRESTIGE IT HAD ONCE HAD WAS FADING THOUGH. WASHED AWAY WITH TIME... HOW IRONIC.

SWAPPING BATTERIES WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE FREQUENT. THE NEW DIGITAL MONSTERS OUT OF THE ORIENT WERE REPLACING THE FANTASTIC TIMEPIECES OF KINGS.

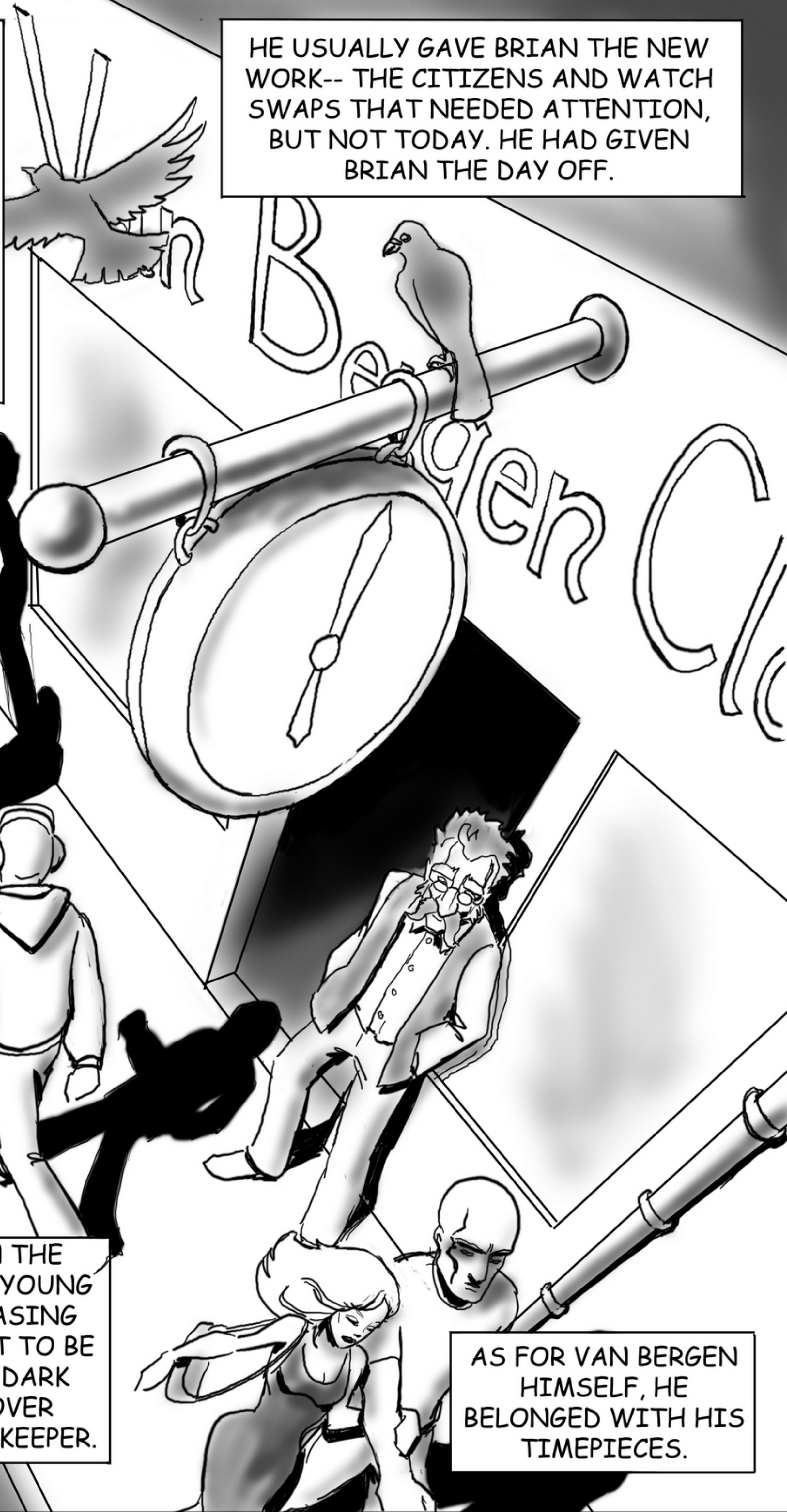
HE USUALLY GAVE BRIAN THE NEW WORK-- THE CITIZENS AND WATCH SWAPS THAT NEEDED ATTENTION, BUT NOT TODAY. HE HAD GIVEN BRIAN THE DAY OFF.



IT WAS FRIDAY IN THE SPRING, A TIME FOR YOUNG MEN TO BE OUT CHASING THE FAIRER SEX, NOT TO BE TRAPPED INSIDE A DARK ROOM, FUZZING OVER FOSSILS AND THEIR KEEPER.



AS FOR VAN BERGEN HIMSELF, HE BELONGED WITH HIS TIMEPIECES.





HE OFTEN FOUND HIMSELF SO DEEP WITHIN HIS TIME PIECES THAT HE FORGOT TIME ITSELF, LULLED BY THE FAMILIAR TICKING OF ALL THE CLOCKS-- LOST IN THE MAZE OF SPRINGS AND GEARS. LIKE THE WATCHES THEMSELVES, IT WAS THE TENSION-- THE SLOW UNRAVELING OF THE MYSTERY THAT KEPT HIM GOING. IT WAS EASY TO LOSE HIMSELF IN THE MINUTE GALAXIES THAT WAITED IN EACH PIECE.



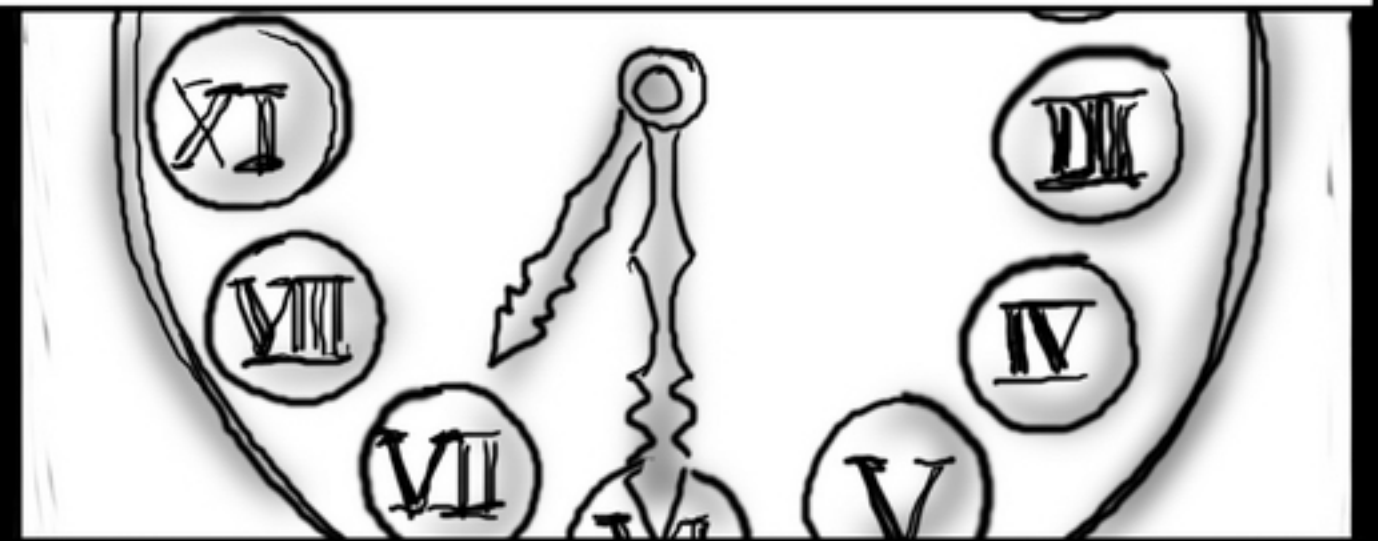


HE HAD BEEN FIGHTING, LOCKED IN AN INTRICATE PUZZLED COMBAT WITH A PATEK REPEATER. PARTS TO FIX THESE MASTERPIECES COULDN'T BE FOUND, SO IT WAS UP TO ED TO FABRICATE THEM FROM OTHER PARTS. MINISCULE FILES AND CUTTERS WERE HIS WEAPONS OF WAR. HE WAS A GENERAL, OVERLOOKING THE BATTLE OF ORDER THROUGH HIS MAGNIFICATION LAMP.



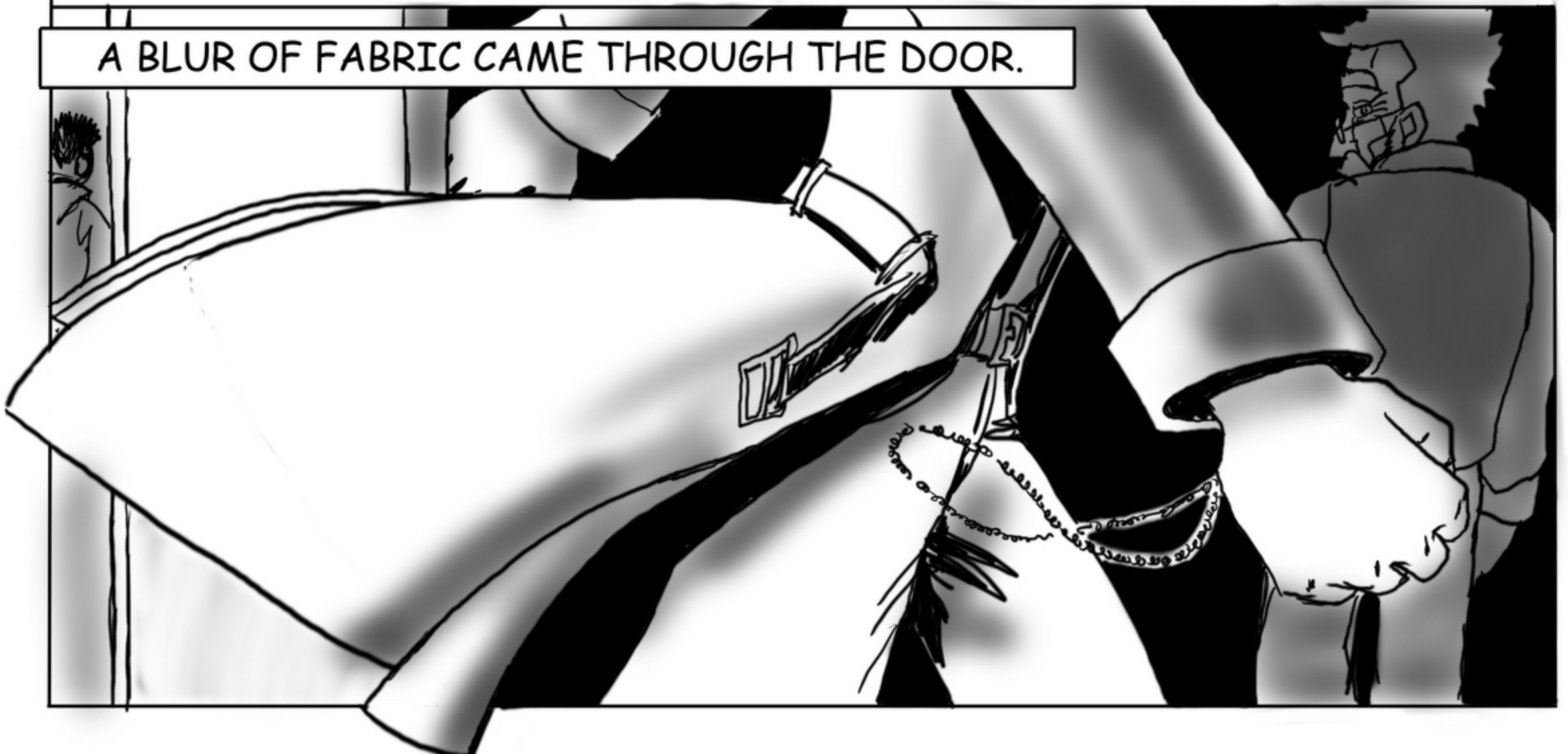
VICTORY! AT LAST ORDER HAD BEEN RESTORED TO THAT MICROCOSM.

THE FAITHFUL WANAMAKER SAID 7:30 pm HE HAD BEEN CLOSED FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR AND A HALF.



WHAT WOULD HE DO? MAKE HIS WAY BACK TO HIS TINY APARTMENT, SIT ALONE AND WATCH WHATEVER THE MASTERPIECE SHOWCASE HAPPENED TO BE? THEY WERE MOSTLY THINGS HE HAD SEEN, BUT HE DIDN'T MIND SO MUCH, IT PASSED THE TIME.

A BLUR OF FABRIC CAME THROUGH THE DOOR.



IT WAS A MAN  
IN HIS LATE  
FOURTIES. HE  
HAD LONG HAIR,  
WELL KEPT, LIKE  
RENAISSANCE  
NOBILITY. HIS  
FACE WAS  
WEATHERED--  
HARDENED BY  
TIME IN A  
TROPICAL  
REGION.

HE WORE A DARK TRENCH COAT. IT HAD SEEN  
BETTER DAYS, BUT THE QUALITY WAS UNMISTAK-  
ABLE. HE WAS A MAN OF SOME MEANS, BUT RIGHT  
NOW THOSE MEANS WERE PANIC.

ARE YOU VAN  
BERGEN?

YES, BUT I'M  
AFRAID  
WE'RE  
CLOSING.

A FAINT EASTERN ACCENT, WASHED BY MANY  
CONTINENTS.

A FIRM ROMAN NOSE  
AND ARTICULATE LIPS,  
HIS HEAVY BROW  
CREASED BY SEARCHING  
EYES.

I HAVE AN EMER-  
GENCY. YOU HAVE TO  
FIX MY TIME PIECE.

I'M SORRY,  
WE HAVE  
ACTUALLY  
BEEN CLOSED  
FOR AN HOUR  
AND A HALF,  
BUT IF YOU...

I'LL PAY YOU  
A THOUSAND  
DOLLARS  
CASH RIGHT  
NOW!

ED WAS AN OLD MAN, HIS BACK SLIGHTLY HUNCHED FROM HIS WARS WITH THE WATCHES. HIS GLASSES GREW ANUALLY THICKER, AND HIS DESIRE FOR FASHION HAD GIVEN AWAY TO COMFORT SOMETIME IN HIS FIFTIES.



THE MONEY WASN'T AS INTERESTING AS IT HAD BEEN TWENTY YEARS AGO, BUT ED HAD A WEAKNESS FOR PUZZLES, A VICE THAT WAS MYSTERIES. WHAT POSSIBLE EMERGENCY COULD BE WORTH THIS MUCH? WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAVE THIS MAN SO FRANTIC

LET ME LOCK THE DOOR AND I WILL TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

THE TRENCH COAT SPUN, AND THE STRANGER LOCKED THE DOOR, SLIDING THE DOOR LATCH INTO PLACE.



ALLOW ME.

HE RUSHED BACK TO THE COUNTER, HIS MOVEMENTS FRANTIC, LIKE A DESPERATE MAN TRYING TO KEEP HIS COOL.

PLEASE SIR, THIS IS IMPORTANT.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE WORKED ON SOME EXTRAORDINARY MECHANISMS BEFORE.

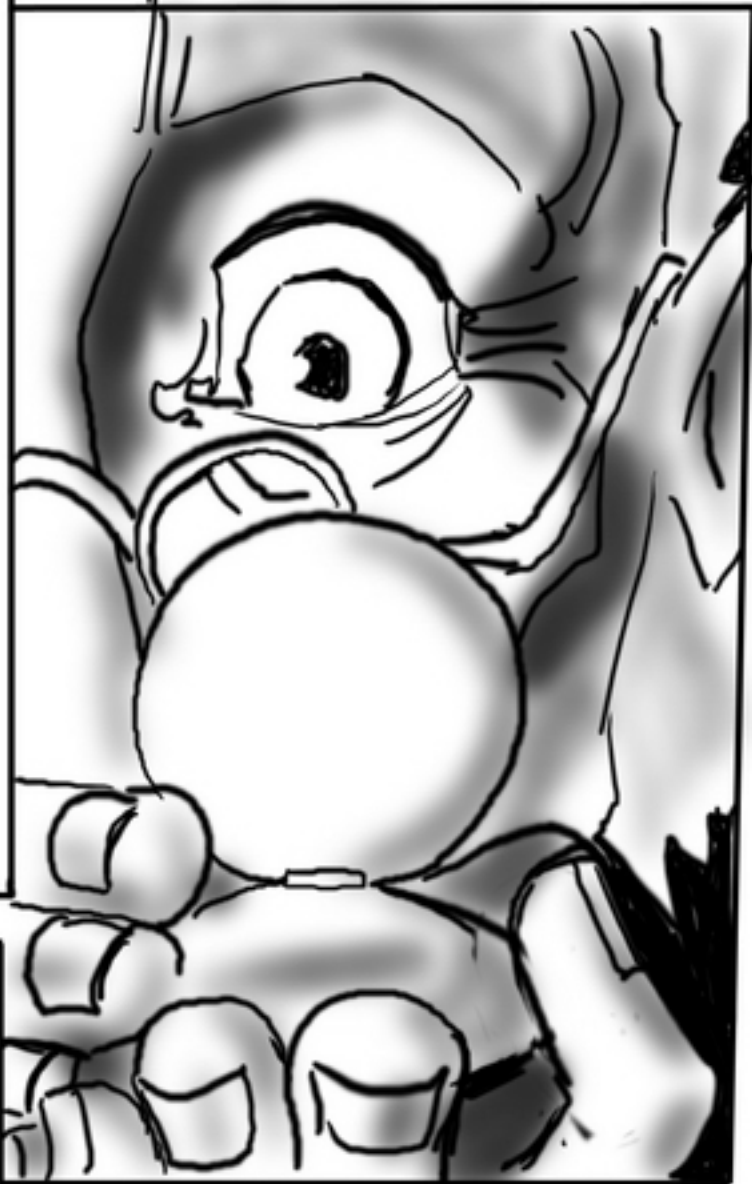
IT IS VITAL THAT THIS BE MADE TO WORK AT ONCE!

IT SOUNDED MORE LIKE A COMMAND THAN A REQUEST

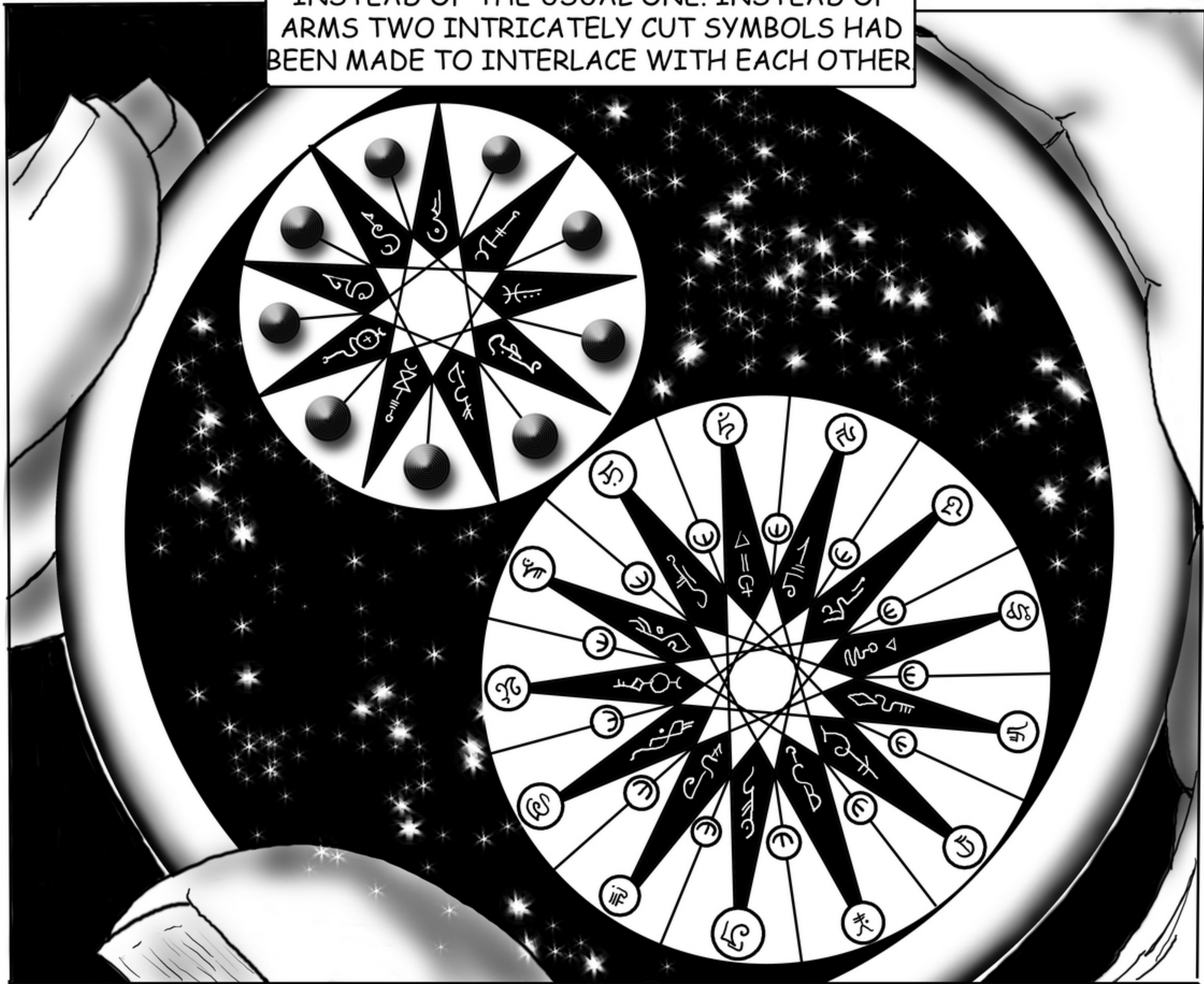




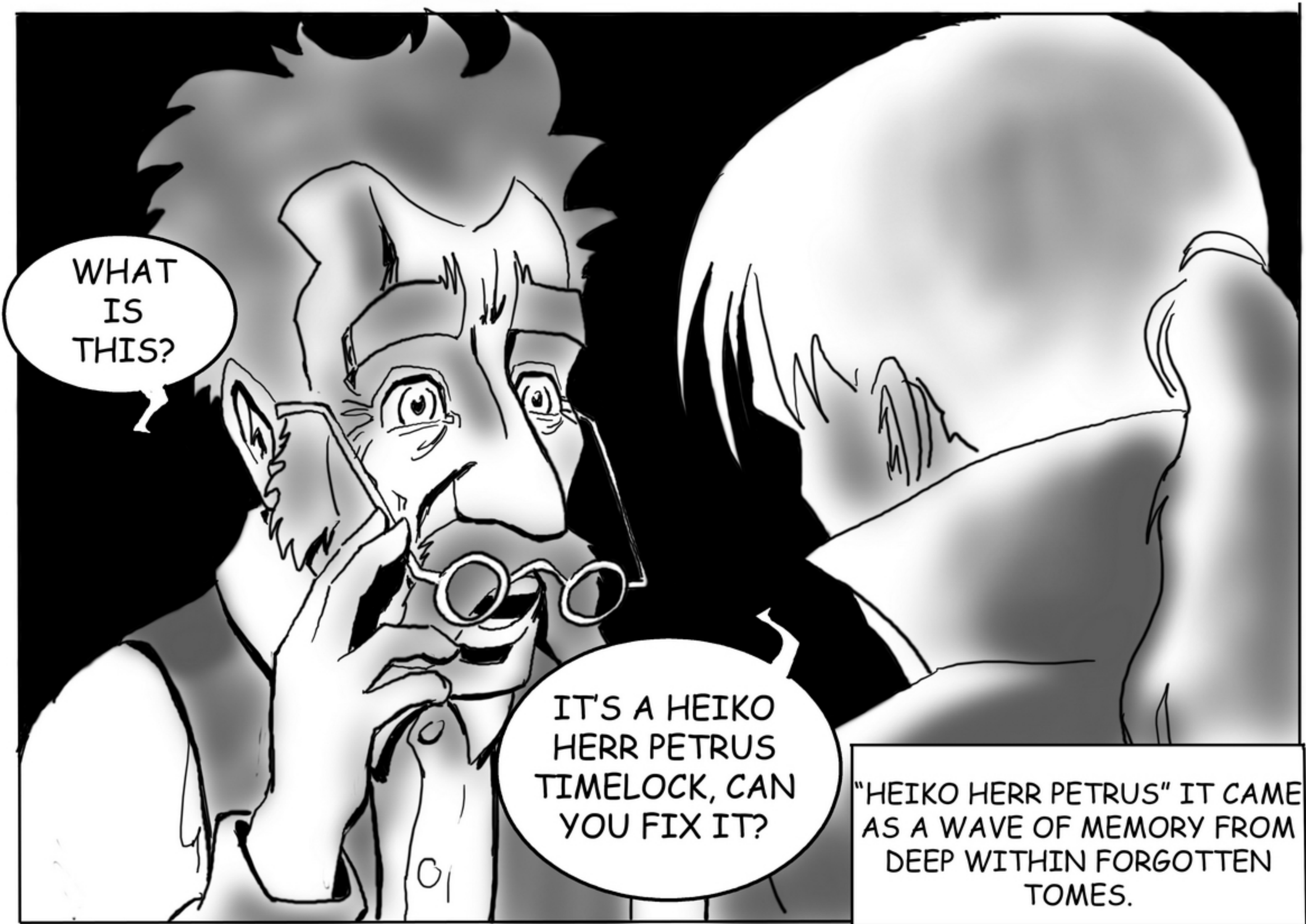
IT WAS GOLD, HE COULD TELL FROM THE WEIGHT, BUT THE TRUE VALUE HE COULD TELL FROM THE SEAMS THAT LINKED THE METAL TOGETHER. THIS WAS A HAND MADE PIECE OF CONSIDERABLE AGE. QUITE A WATCH INDEED. NO MARKINGS ON THE BACK OR FRONT, ONLY THE SEAMS, BARELY VISIBLE WITH AGE. HE PRESSED THE BUTTON AND THE COVER SPRANG OPEN... THIS WAS NOT LIKE ANY WATCH HE HAD EVER SEEN.



THE FACE WAS BLACK PEARL UNDER CRYSTAL GLASS, BUT WAS COVERED WITH INTRICATE MOVING SYMBOLS. TWO AXIS POINTS INSTEAD OF THE USUAL ONE. INSTEAD OF ARMS TWO INTRICATELY CUT SYMBOLS HAD BEEN MADE TO INTERLACE WITH EACH OTHER




THERE WASN'T A FACTORY ON EARTH THAT COULD HAVE CREATED SUCH FINE DETAIL IN THIS MOVING SIGIL. THIS WAS HAND MADE TO THE MOST PRISTINE DETAIL. THE FINEST CRAFTMANSHIP THAT ED HAD EVER SEEN. THIS WAS A MASTERPIECE, A DELICATE WORK OF ART FROM A PAST MASTER OF MACHINES... BUT THIS WAS NOT A WATCH.




IN THE TIME OF THE CLOCKWORK WIZARDS OF THE 18th CENTURY, HEIKO HERR PETRUS WAS A MADMAN. HE WAS A SWEDISH GYPSY OF CONSIDERABLE SKILL, WHO MIXED HIS INTRICATE KNOWLEDGE OF CLOCKWORKS WITH ALL MANNER OF ALCHEMY AND THE OCCULT.





ED HAD HEARD OF HIS WORK ONLY FROM THE DEEPEST OF COLLECTORS. PETRUS WAS A MANIAC MAGICIAN AND A GENIUS. THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT LOOKING AT THE PIECE BEFORE HIM. COLLECTORS SOUGHT THEIR WHOLE LIVES JUST TO FIND TRACES OF HIS WORK, AND ED NOW HELD HISTORY IN HIS HANDS.

A TIME PIECE ONLY RUMOURED TO EXIST.



HE WOULD HAVE DOUBTED THE STRANGER IF HE HADN'T HELD THE PIECE IN HIS HANDS, BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO FAKE SOMETHING LIKE THIS. IT WOULD TAKE A MASTER TO EVEN DECIPHER ITS WORKINGS.

THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY PIECE.

CAN YOU FIX IT?

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

THERE WAS PANIC IN THE MAN'S VOICE.

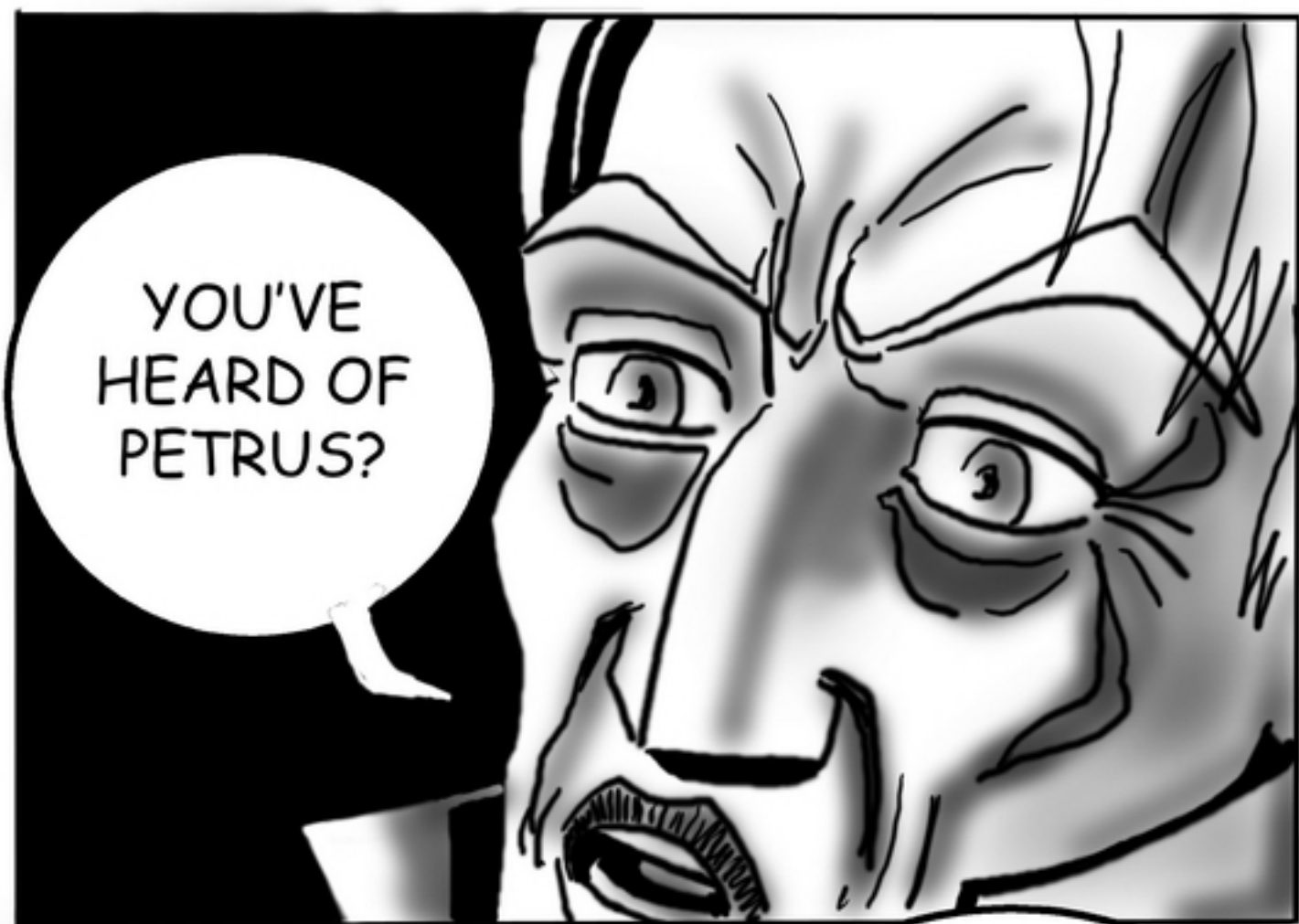


ED WAS AS KEEN TO GET INTO THIS MASTERPIECE AS THE STRANGER WAS TO SEE IT FIXED.

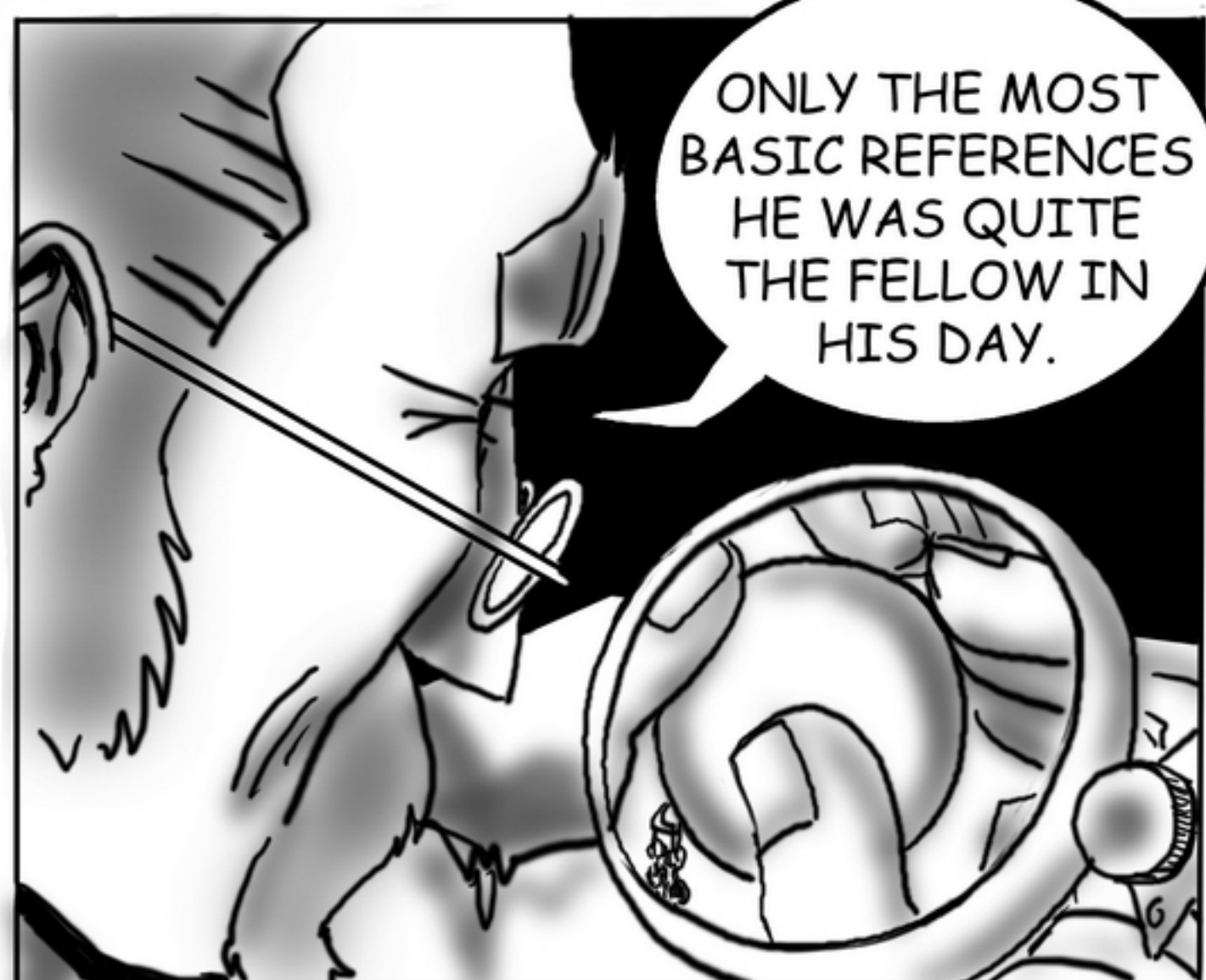
I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY OF HIS WORK BEFORE.

I AM NOT SURPRISED.

I WONDERED IF I WOULD EVER GET TO SEE ANY. IT IS CERTAINLY EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD IT TO BE.



YOU'VE HEARD OF PETRUS?



ONLY THE MOST BASIC REFERENCES HE WAS QUITE THE FELLOW IN HIS DAY.



THERE ARE NO BASIC REFERENCES TO HEIKO HERR PETRUS. YOUR REPUTATION DOES YOU JUSTICE.

WELL, I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR A LONG...

MY WORD!



THIS IS INCREDIBLE!

INSIDE THE BACK OF THE PIECE WAS A MAZE OF A MYRIAD GEARS. EVERY MINUTE PART OF THIS PIECE REPRESENTED DAYS OF PAINSTAKING WORK. GEARS BLURRING INTO EACH OTHER, LOST IN A WORLD OF THIN INTRICACY.

BUT SOMETHING ELSE WAS NAGGING AT THE BACK OF ED'S MIND...

SILENCE...

ALL THE CLOCKS AND WATCHES WERE FROZEN

WHERE IS THE TICKING?

VAN BERGEN...

THERE HADN'T BEEN SILENCE IN THE SHOP SINCE IT OPENED.

NOT A SECOND HAND TWITCHED-- NOT A SINGLE MEASUREMENT OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME ANYWHERE.

EVERY CLOCK-- EVERYTHING THAT COULD MEASURE TIME HAD LOCKED ITSELF.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD AND ANY OTHER THING YOU FIND HOLY. YOU MUST FIX IT NOW!

IT'S A TEMPORAL LOCK, A DEVICE CREATED BY PETRUS TO HOLD THINGS IN PLACE WITHIN TIME. THE NATURE OF WHAT IT IS MAKES IT IMPERATIVE THAT IT BE MADE TO WORK AT ONCE!

THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE HERE. THIS HAD GONE BEYOND THE REALM OF UNDERSTANDING AS MAN KNEW IT.

WHAT IS THIS THING YOU'VE BROUGHT ME?

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

THERE IS NO TIME VAN BERGEN. WORK NOW AND I WILL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.



ED TURNED BACK TO THE TEMPORAL LOCK THAT THE STRANGER HAD GIVEN HIM. THE STRANGER STARTED TO SPEAK. PERHAPS TO CALM HIMSELF, PERHAPS TO SPUR ED ON, BUT THE PROMISE OF ANSWERS CAME.

HEIKO HERR PETRUS WAS A GENIUS WITH TIME, A MASTER OF NUMEROL- OGY AND DIVINATION.

WHAT WAS WRONG, WHAT WAS OUT OF PLACE?

...BUT HIS TRAVELS LED HIM TO DARKER ARTS-- VIRTOMETRY AND THETHATCHERY.

SCIENCES WHICH SHOWED HIM THE REALMS WHICH EXIST BEYOND THE GRASP OF MAN.

PETRUS KNEW THAT THERE WERE CREATURES WHO EXISTED OUT OF TIME. CREATURES WHO WOULD FEED ON THOSE WITH A CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE.

THEY COULD SENSE THOSE WHO DABBLED IN THEIR REALMS AND HUNTED THEM.

HE CREATED THESE LOCKS TO HOLD THOSE WHO WOULD TRAVEL THE FORBIDDEN REALMS FROM BEING SWEEPED UP AND DEVOURED BY THE CREATURES WITHIN THEM.

THESE LOCKS HOLD US IN PLACE IN TIME, CREATING A SHIELD AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF MY PROFESSION.





A SOUND SUDDENLY  
CAME FROM NOWHERE  
AND EVERYWHERE AT  
ONCE.

IT WAS RENDING.  
LIKE THE WARPING  
OF METAL AND  
FABRIC TORN.

AN ECHO  
FOLLOWED  
AS IF IT  
CAME FROM  
THE DEPTHS  
OF A GREAT  
CAVERN.



THE GATES WERE OPENING!

MY GOD. THEY  
HAVE FOUND ME!

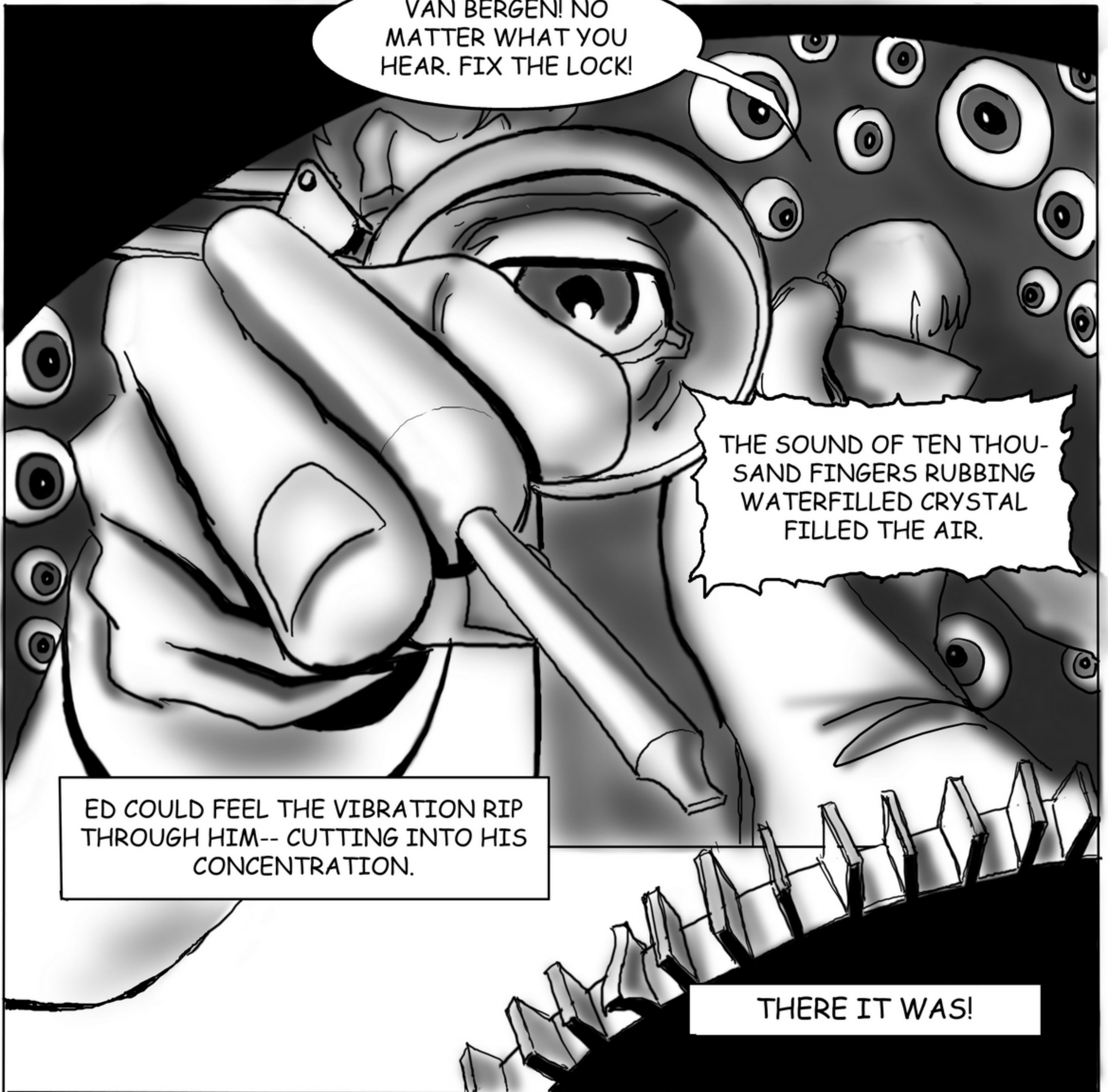
FIX THE LOCK VAN  
BERGEN!





WHATEVER WAS HAPPENING, FIXING THE PIECE WAS THE ONLY THING HE COULD DO. EVERYTHING ELSE WAS BEYOND HIS CONTROL. ED FOCUSED ON THE THE RUNIC GEARS AND SIGIL WORKINGS OF THE ORNATE PIECE. EACH PART LOOKED LIKE IT GREW FROM AND INTO THE NEXT. THIS WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

VAN BERGEN! NO MATTER WHAT YOU HEAR. FIX THE LOCK!



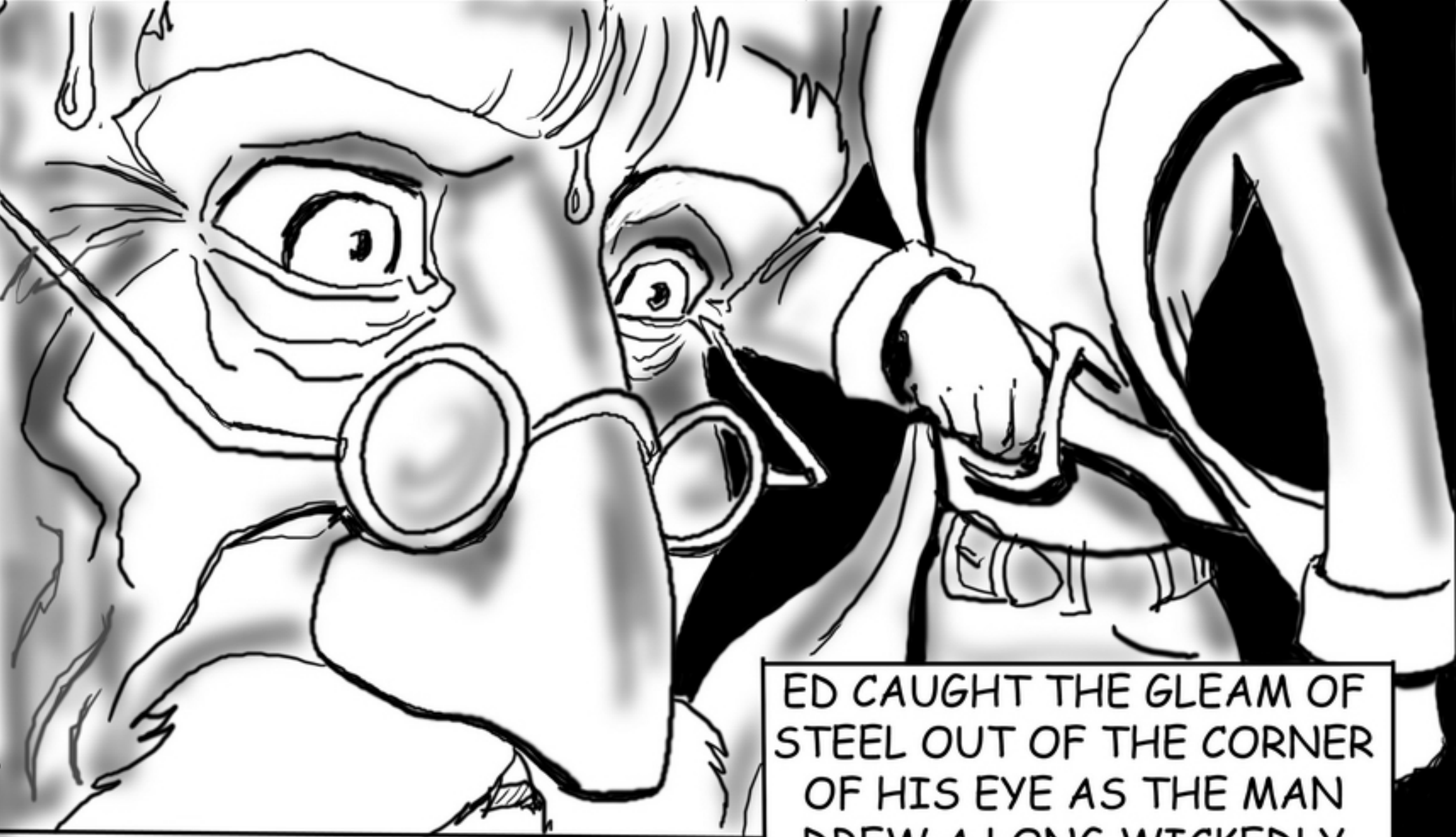
THE SOUND OF TEN THOUSAND FINGERS RUBBING WATERFILLED CRYSTAL FILLED THE AIR.

ED COULD FEEL THE VIBRATION RIP THROUGH HIM-- CUTTING INTO HIS CONCENTRATION.

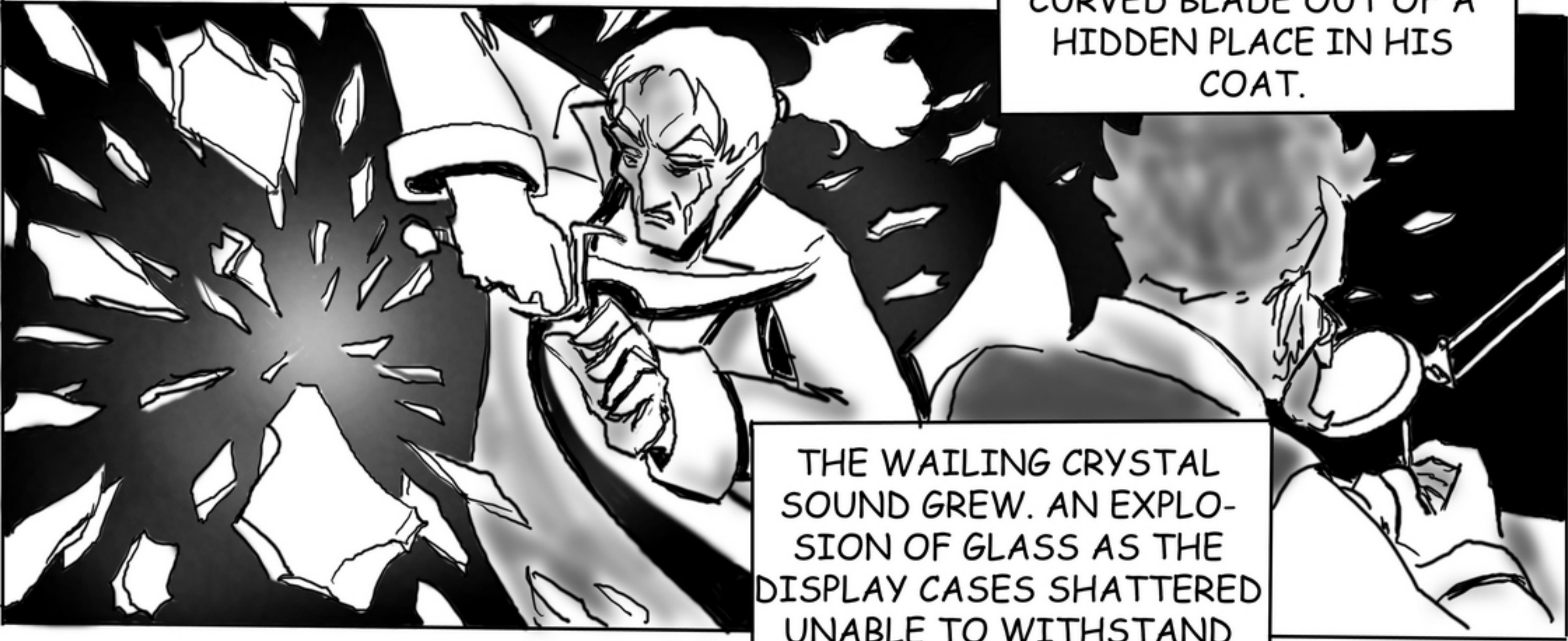
THERE IT WAS!



THE TINIEST OF GEAR-- THE SMALLEST OF PARTS HAD BECOME WARPED. PERHAPS FROM DUST-- A MINUTE PARTICLE INVADDED SOMEHOW. PRESSING THE STRANGE METAL OUT OF ALIGNMENT.



ED CAUGHT THE GLEAM OF STEEL OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE AS THE MAN DREW A LONG WICKEDLY CURVED BLADE OUT OF A HIDDEN PLACE IN HIS COAT.



THE WAILING CRYSTAL SOUND GREW. AN EXPLOSION OF GLASS AS THE DISPLAY CASES SHATTERED UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE VIBRATION.



A RUSH OF HOT BREATH CAME FROM BEHIND HIM STINKING OF FLESH RIPPED OPEN.

ED GRABBED HIS FINEST  
JEWELLER'S SCREW-  
DRIVER AS IT ROLLED  
ACROSS THE TABLE.

HE COULD HEAR THE  
STRANGER YELLING  
OVERTOP THE NOISE,  
TERROR SQUEEZING THE  
VOICE FROM HIS LUNGS.

HE HELD THE PETRUS  
LOCK FIRMLY, HIS HANDS  
THE ONLY STILL THING  
IN THE SHOP.

THE LOCK  
MAN!

EVER SO GENTLY  
HE SLID THE  
SCREWDRIVER  
INTO THE MECH-  
ANISM.

TOO MUCH PRESSURE  
AND HE COULD SNAP  
THE GEARS, TOO LITTLE  
AND NOTHING WOULD  
HAPPEN. FEELING HIS  
NERVES SLIP THROUGH  
THE TOOL HE PUSHED.

THE DEAFENING SOUND OF WET SNAPPING  
LOGS, THE SCREAMING OF ANCIENT GROWTH  
FILLED HIS TINY STORE.

THEN NOTHING...

TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK



THE SOUND WAS GONE... THE ROAR OF TWISTING TIME AND SPACE SNAPPED AWAY...

THE WANNAMAKER PENDULUM WAS BACK TO SWINGING FREELY.



THE TEMPORAL LOCK TICKING EVER SO SLIGHTLY IN HIS HANDS.



TICK TICK

BY THE SHATTERED DISPLAY CASE HE SAW A PATCH OF BLOOD. IT WAS DRIED-- CRUSTED HARD AS IF LEFT UNTOUCHED FOR A MONTH. ROUGH DESPERATE FOOTMARKS HAD KICKED THROUGH IT WHEN IT WAS STILL WET. THE MARKS OF A LOSING BATTLE... THE STRANGER WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.



EVER SO CAREFULLY HE CLOSED THE BACK OF THE PETRUS LOCK.

HE NOW HAD A TIMEPIECE OF HIS OWN.