

# THE LYDIAN STONE

# THE ENGINE OF EMPIRE



**VESUBIUS**

**COMIC  
BOOKS**

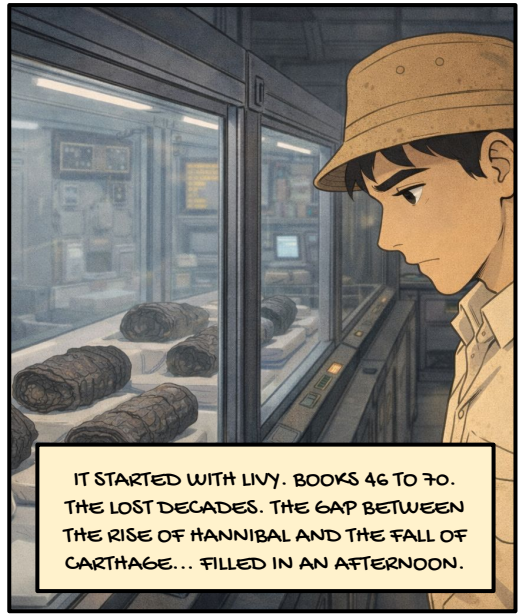
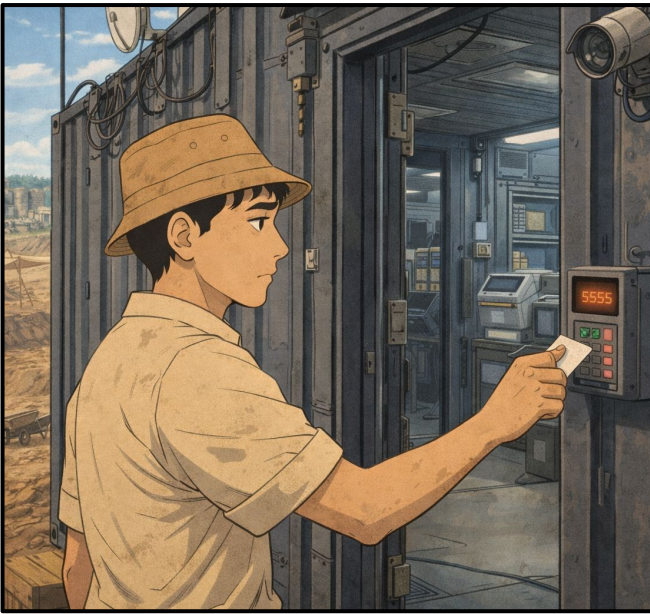


**Issue #2**

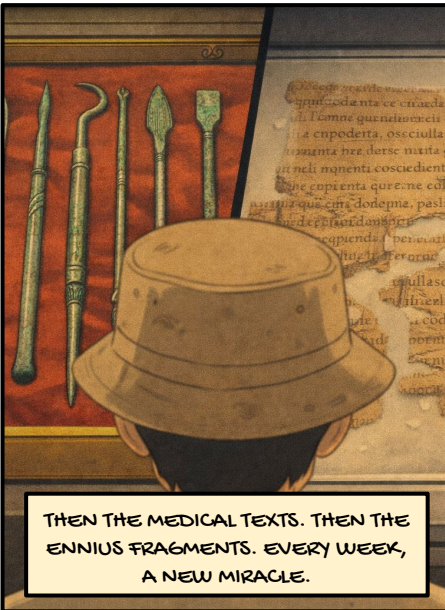








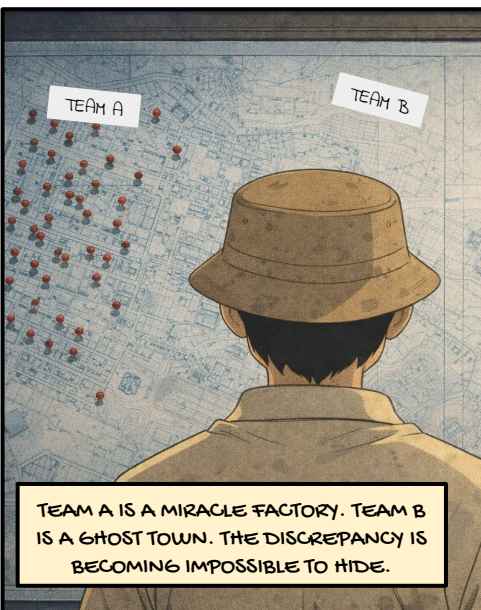
IT STARTED WITH LIVY. BOOKS 46 TO 70. THE LOST DECADES. THE GAP BETWEEN THE RISE OF HANNIBAL AND THE FALL OF CARTHAGE... FILLED IN AN AFTERNOON.



THEN THE MEDICAL TEXTS. THEN THE ENNIUS FRAGMENTS. EVERY WEEK, A NEW MIRACLE.



ONE AFTER ANOTHER. SOMETIMES I HAVE TO DELAY THE "DISCOVERY" JUST TO MAKE IT LOOK PLAUSIBLE. EVEN LUCIA, MY OWN TEAM LEADER, THINKS THE ALGORITHM IS JUST 'DIALED IN'.

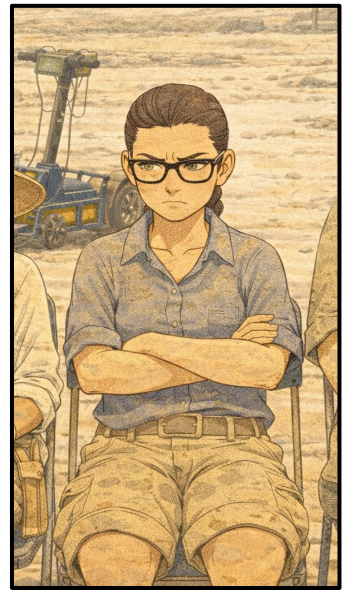
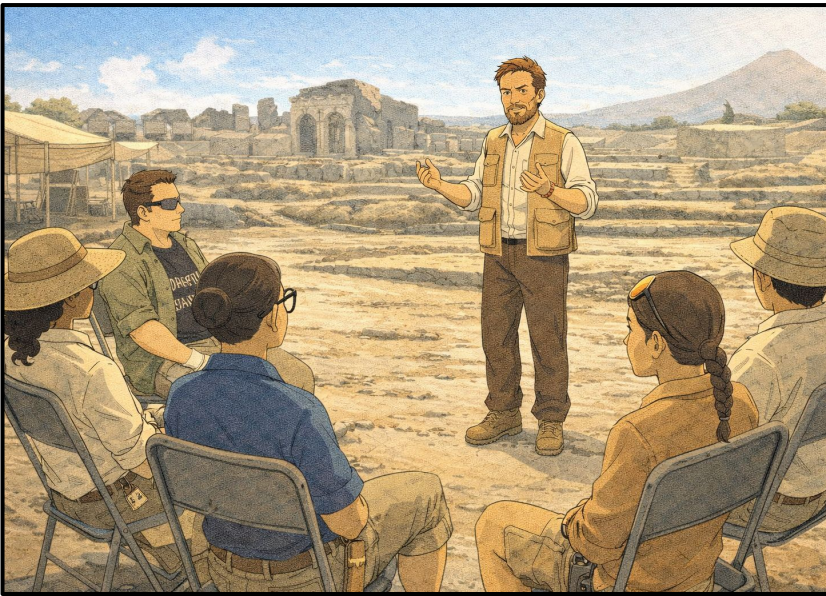


TEAM A IS A MIRACLE FACTORY. TEAM B IS A GHOST TOWN. THE DISCREPANCY IS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE.



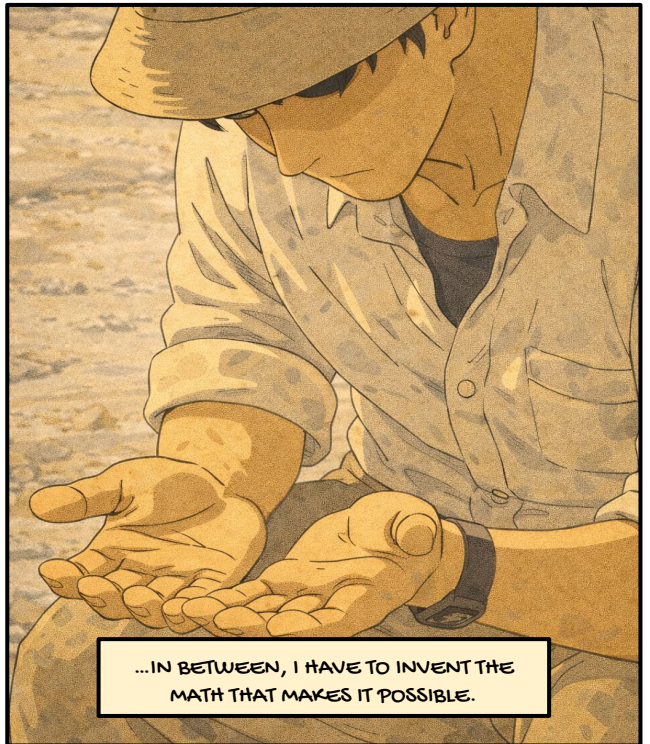
THE WORLD THINKS IT'S THE ALGORITHM. THEY THINK WE CRACKED THE CODE.



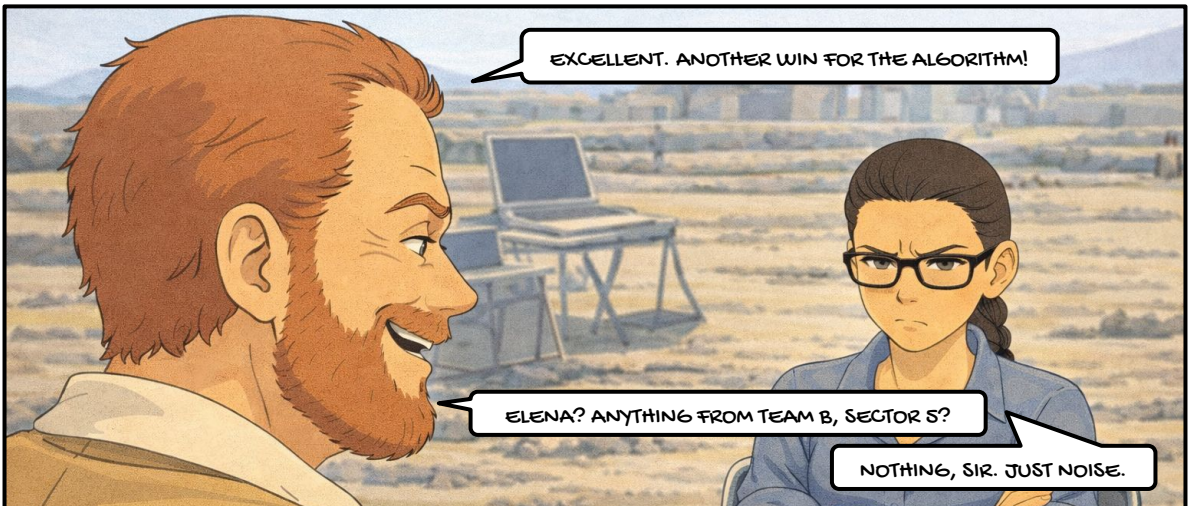


SECTOR 4. GRID 9.  
THE MODEL...

...THE MODEL SHOWS ANOTHER  
HIGH-PROBABILITY ANOMALY.  
LIKELY WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER  
STORAGE DEPOT.



...IN BETWEEN, I HAVE TO INVENT THE  
MATH THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE.

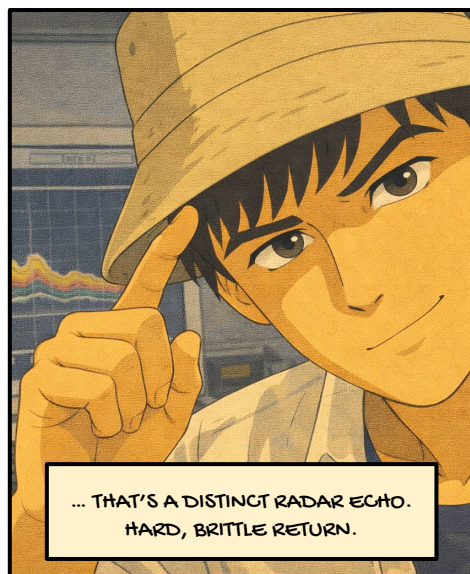
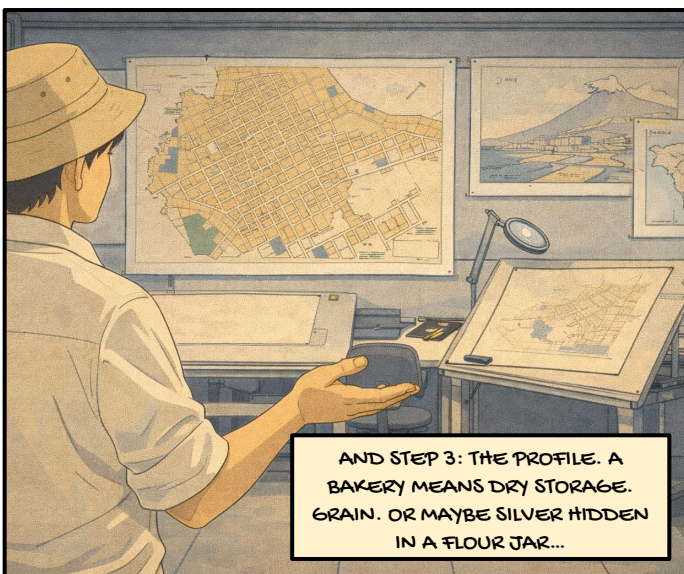
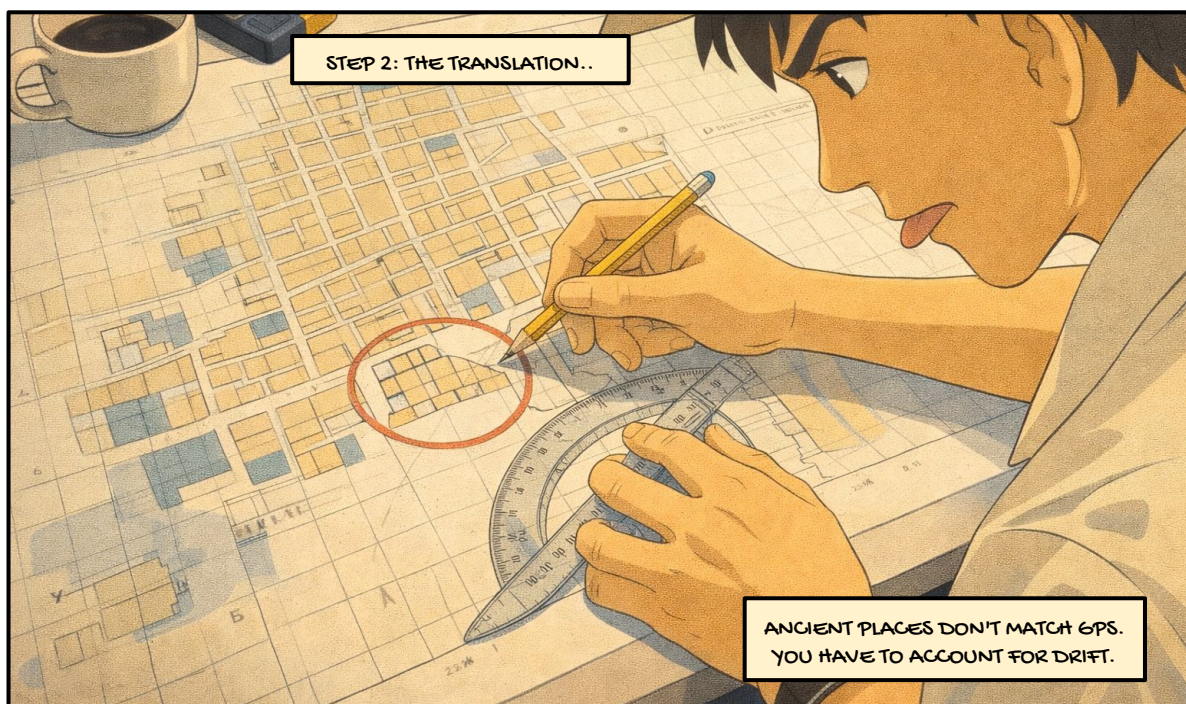
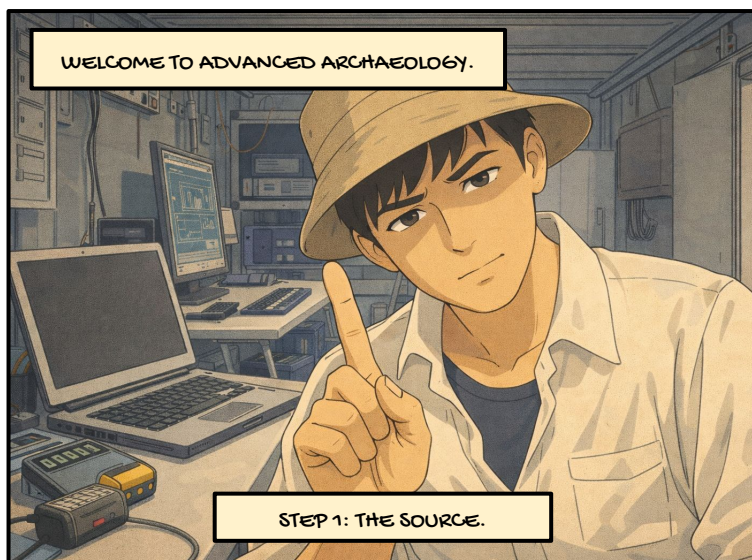


EXCELLENT. ANOTHER WIN FOR THE ALGORITHM!

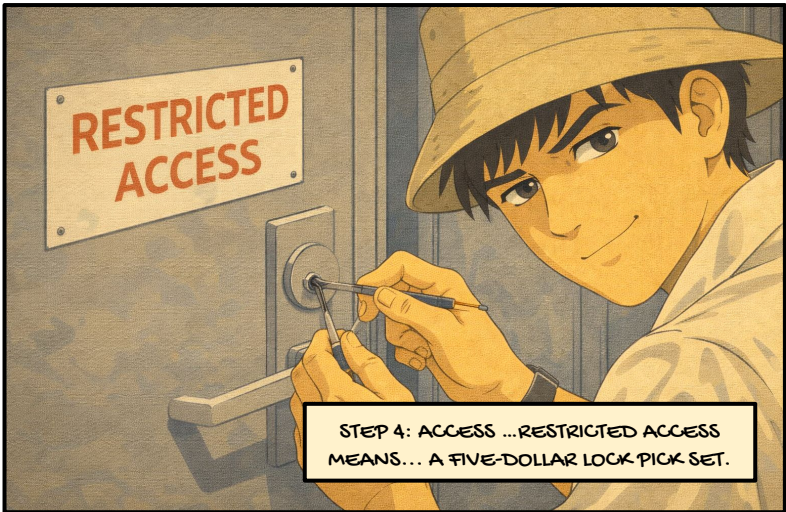
ELENA? ANYTHING FROM TEAM B, SECTOR 5?

NOTHING, SIR. JUST NOISE.









STEP 4: ACCESS ...RESTRICTED ACCESS MEANS... A FIVE-DOLLAR LOCK PICK SET.



AND STEP 5: AUTHENTICATION. PARRINI IS A MEX HISTORIAN. HE IS A TOTAL IDIOT AT CYBERSECURITY.



STEP 6: THE INJECTION. I DON'T JUST ADD A DOT IN THE DATA. I PAINT THE TEXTURE. 'CRACKED MUD' FOR SCROLLS. 'METALLIC RING' FOR SILVER.

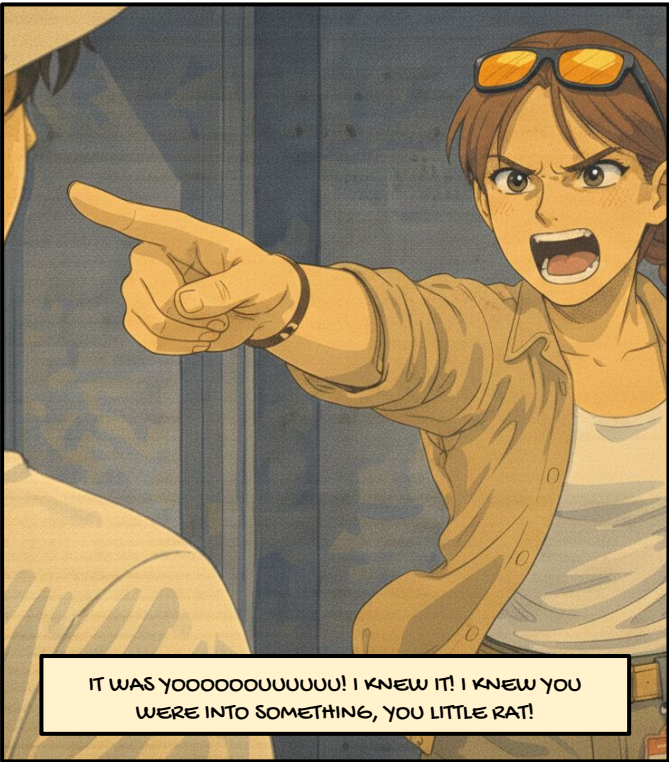


TO THE SYSTEM, IT LOOKS LIKE RAW DATA FROM THE GPR CART. HARD TO DETECT.





AND THAT, CLASS, IS HOW YOU—



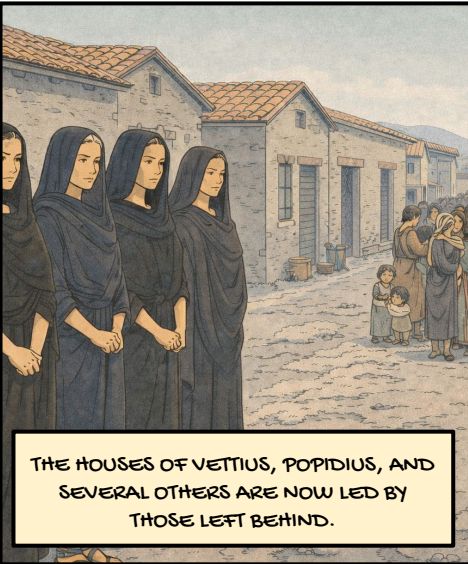
IT WAS YOOOOOOUUUUUUU! I KNEW IT! I KNEW YOU WERE INTO SOMETHING, YOU LITTLE RAT!



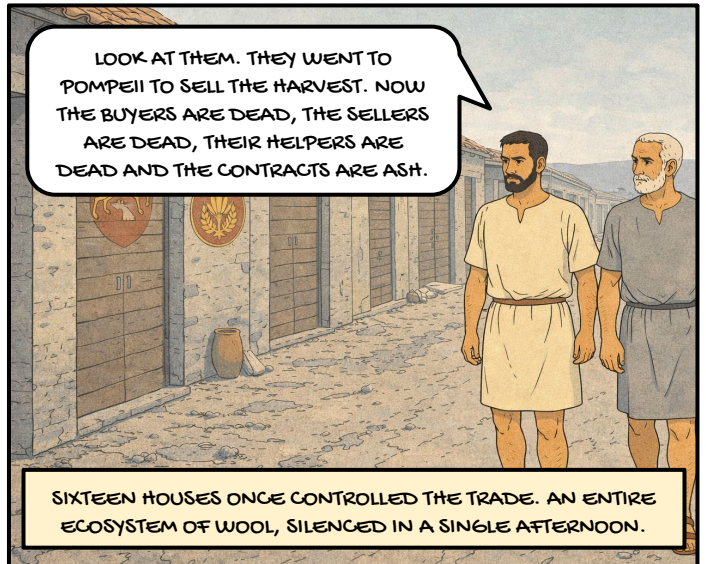
PICENTIA. THE WOOL CAPITAL OF CAMPANIA. A TOWN  
BUILT ON THE RHYTHM OF THE LOOM.



WHEN MOUNT VESUVIUS ERUPTED, MOST OF THE MEN  
WERE IN POMPEII. THEY DID NOT COME BACK.

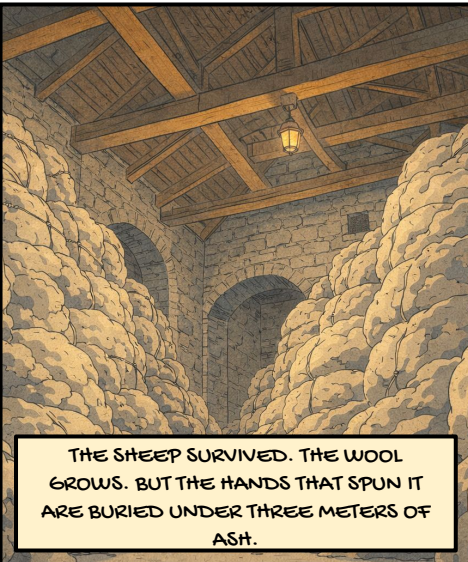


THE HOUSES OF VETTIUS, POPIDIUS, AND  
SEVERAL OTHERS ARE NOW LED BY  
THOSE LEFT BEHIND.

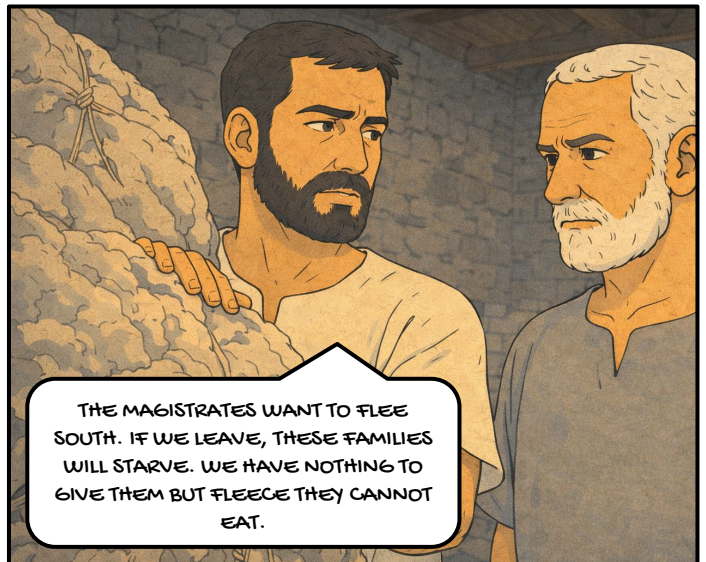


LOOK AT THEM. THEY WENT TO  
POMPEII TO SELL THE HARVEST. NOW  
THE BUYERS ARE DEAD, THE SELLERS  
ARE DEAD, THEIR HELPERS ARE  
DEAD AND THE CONTRACTS ARE ASH.

SIXTEEN HOUSES ONCE CONTROLLED THE TRADE. AN ENTIRE  
ECOSYSTEM OF WOOL, SILENCED IN A SINGLE AFTERNOON.

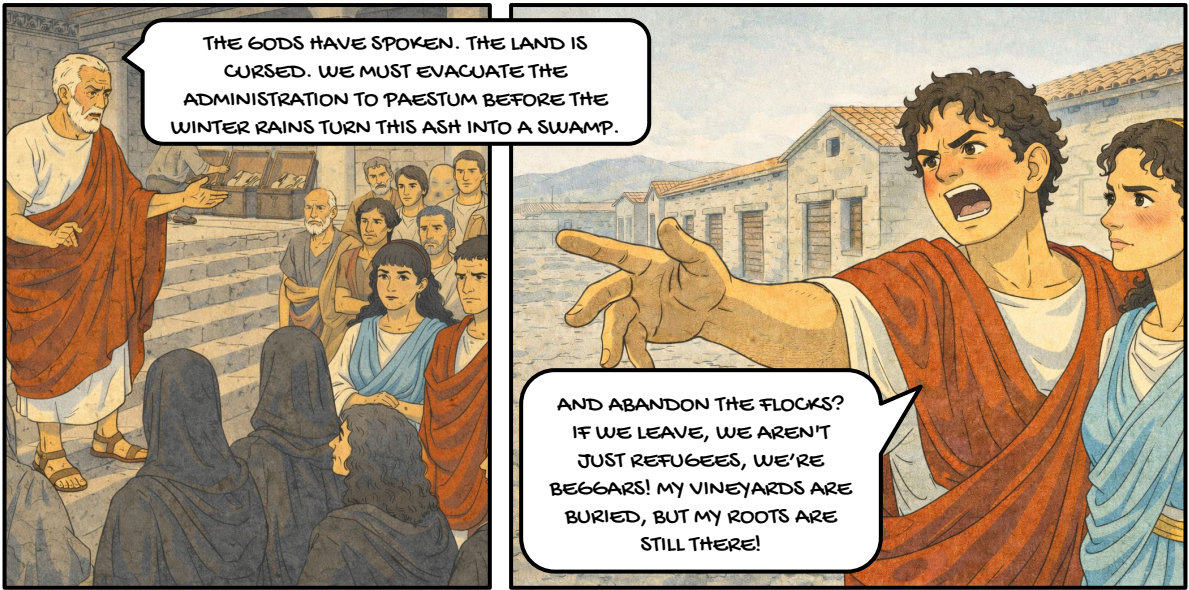


THE SHEEP SURVIVED. THE WOOL  
GROWS. BUT THE HANDS THAT SPUN IT  
ARE BURIED UNDER THREE METERS OF  
ASH.

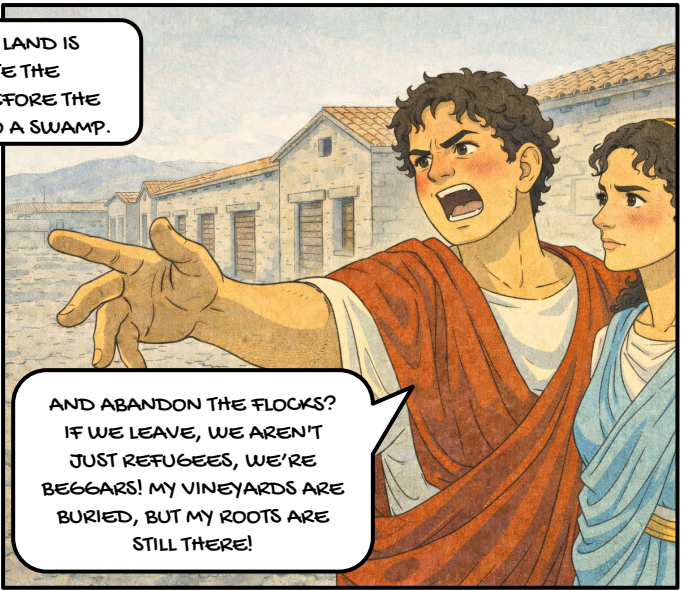


THE MAGISTRATES WANT TO FLEE  
SOUTH. IF WE LEAVE, THESE FAMILIES  
WILL STARVE. WE HAVE NOTHING TO  
GIVE THEM BUT FLEECE THEY CANNOT  
EAT.

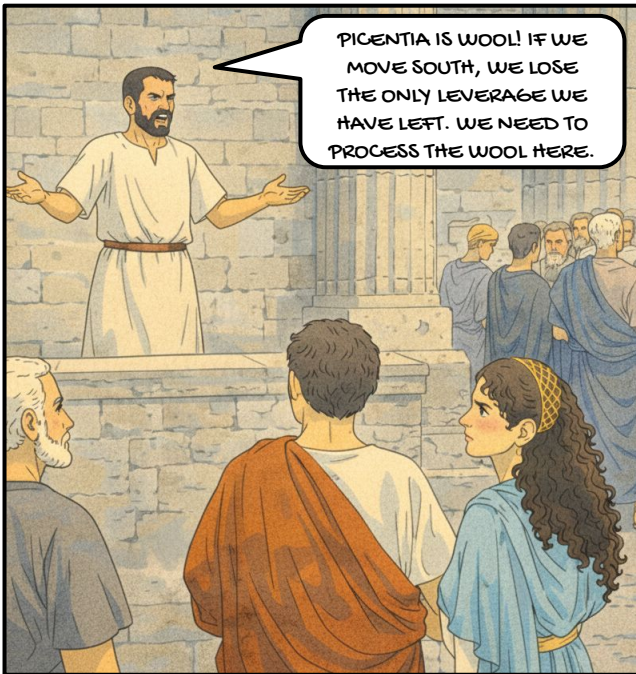




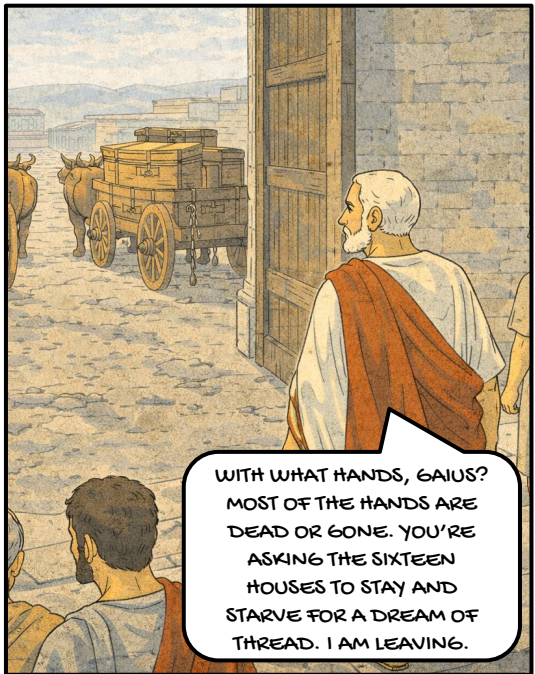
THE GODS HAVE SPOKEN. THE LAND IS CURSED. WE MUST EVACUATE THE ADMINISTRATION TO PAESTUM BEFORE THE WINTER RAINS TURN THIS ASH INTO A SWAMP.



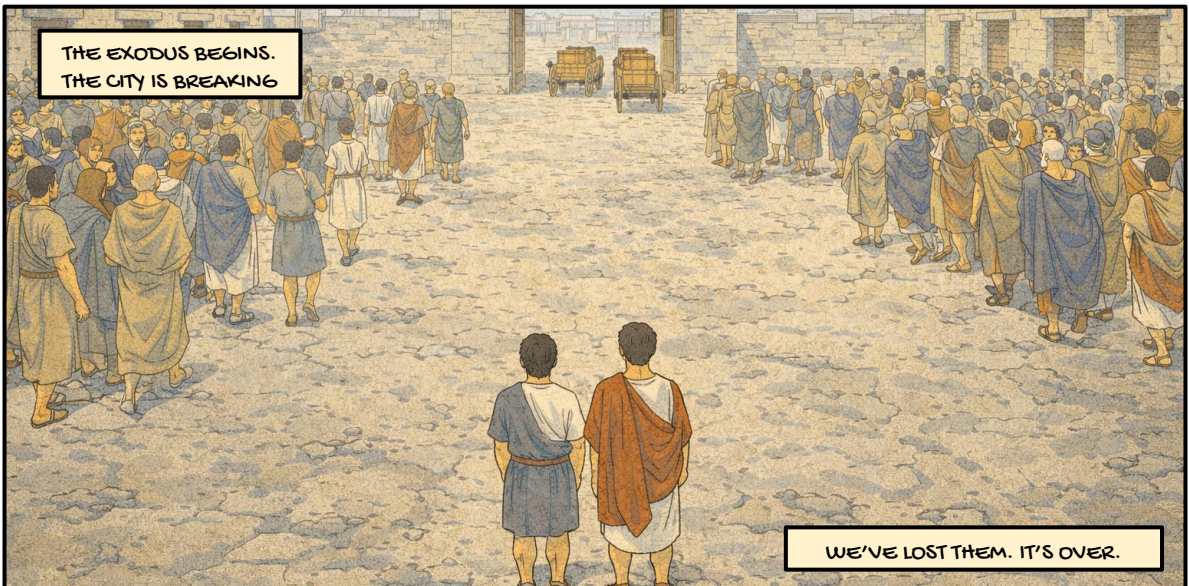
AND ABANDON THE FLOCKS? IF WE LEAVE, WE AREN'T JUST REFUGEES, WE'RE BEGGARS! MY VINEYARDS ARE BURIED, BUT MY ROOTS ARE STILL THERE!



PICENTIA IS WOOL! IF WE MOVE SOUTH, WE LOSE THE ONLY LEVERAGE WE HAVE LEFT. WE NEED TO PROCESS THE WOOL HERE.



WITH WHAT HANDS, GAIUS? MOST OF THE HANDS ARE DEAD OR GONE. YOU'RE ASKING THE SIXTEEN HOUSES TO STAY AND STARVE FOR A DREAM OF THREAD. I AM LEAVING.



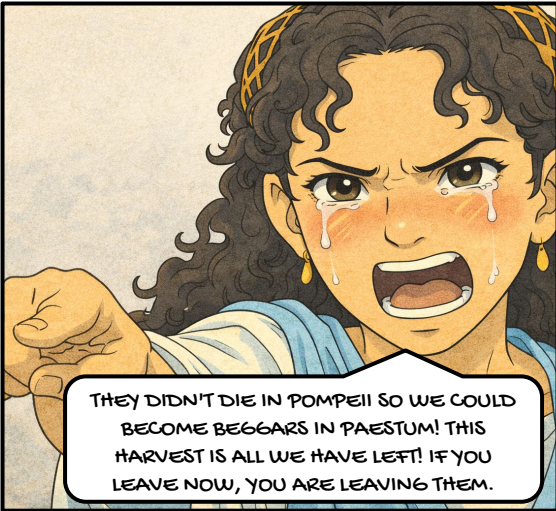
THE EXODUS BEGINS.  
THE CITY IS BREAKING

WE'VE LOST THEM. IT'S OVER.

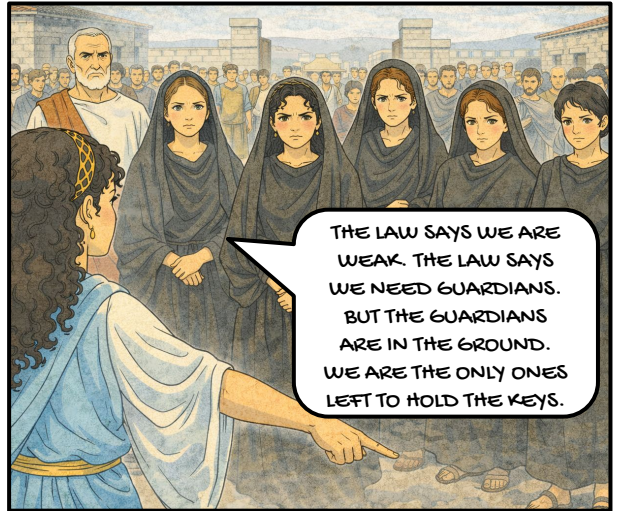




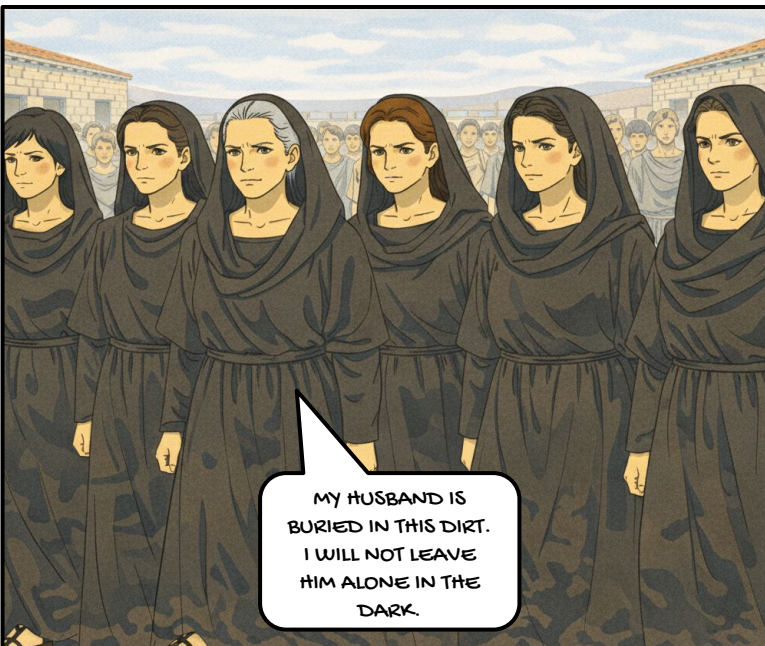
STOP! YOU ARE RUNNING FROM THE ONLY THING YOUR HUSBANDS HAVE LEFT!



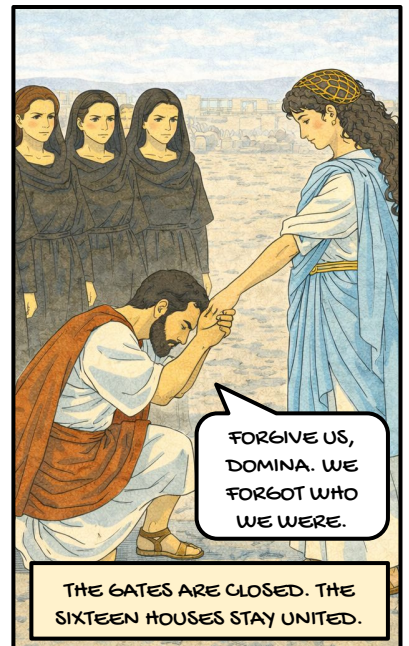
THEY DIDN'T DIE IN POMPEII SO WE COULD BECOME BEGGARS IN PAESTUM! THIS HARVEST IS ALL WE HAVE LEFT! IF YOU LEAVE NOW, YOU ARE LEAVING THEM.



THE LAW SAYS WE ARE WEAK. THE LAW SAYS WE NEED GUARDIANS. BUT THE GUARDIANS ARE IN THE GROUND. WE ARE THE ONLY ONES LEFT TO HOLD THE KEYS.



MY HUSBAND IS BURIED IN THIS DIRT. I WILL NOT LEAVE HIM ALONE IN THE DARK.



FORGIVE US, DOMINA. WE FORGOT WHO WE WERE.

THE GATES ARE CLOSED. THE SIXTEEN HOUSES STAY UNITED.



THE COUNCIL HELD, BUT THE WOOL IS PILING UP LIKE SNOW. GAIUS LOOKS AT ME AND SEES A MIRACLE THAT ISN'T COMING. I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO TELL HIM.

LIKE  
SNOW

IF YOU REPORT THIS NOW, THEY SHUT THE SITE AND MARCUS GOES DARK.

IF WE CROSS THIS LINE AND HELP THEM... I DON'T KNOW WHO WE BECOME IF WE START PLAYING GOD.

YOU SAID THAT OUR WORLDS ARE NOT CONNECTED. WHATEVER WE DO TO HELP THEM WON'T CHANGE OUR WORLD. WHY ARE YOU HESITATING? THEY ARE DYING IN THE DARK

SO... THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW!

THERE'S A MAN ON THE OTHER SIDE! IT'S UNREAL!

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, I KNOW. IT NEVER GETS ANY LIGHTER.

THE WOOL IS ROTTING IN THE WAREHOUSES. THE PEOPLE WILL STARVE.

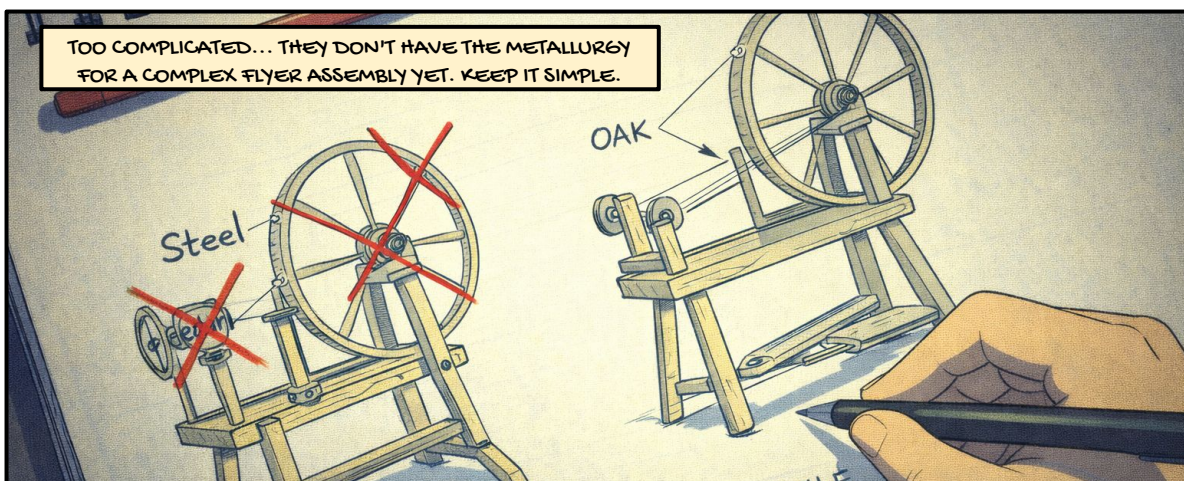
WE AREN'T GOING TO JUST WATCH!



3:00 AM.



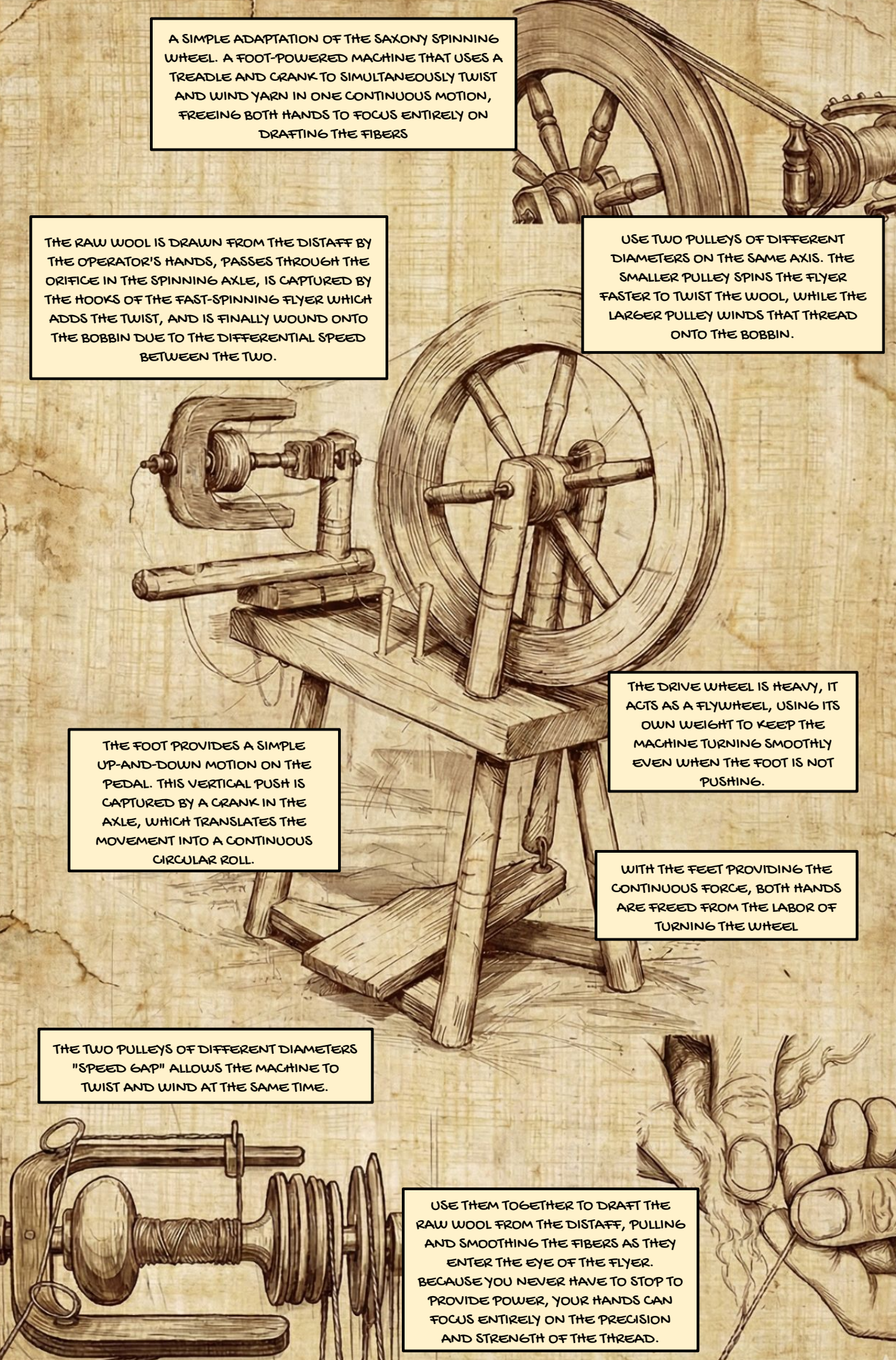
TOO COMPLICATED... THEY DON'T HAVE THE METALLURGY FOR A COMPLEX FLYER ASSEMBLY YET. KEEP IT SIMPLE.



6:15 AM







A SIMPLE ADAPTATION OF THE SAXONY SPINNING WHEEL. A FOOT-POWERED MACHINE THAT USES A TREADLE AND CRANK TO SIMULTANEOUSLY TWIST AND WIND YARN IN ONE CONTINUOUS MOTION, FREEING BOTH HANDS TO FOCUS ENTIRELY ON DRAFTING THE FIBERS

THE RAW WOOL IS DRAWN FROM THE DISTAFF BY THE OPERATOR'S HANDS, PASSES THROUGH THE ORIFICE IN THE SPINNING AXLE, IS CAPTURED BY THE HOOKS OF THE FAST-SPINNING FLYER WHICH ADDS THE TWIST, AND IS FINALLY WOUND ONTO THE BOBBIN DUE TO THE DIFFERENTIAL SPEED BETWEEN THE TWO.

USE TWO PULLEYS OF DIFFERENT DIAMETERS ON THE SAME AXIS. THE SMALLER PULLEY SPINS THE FLYER FASTER TO TWIST THE WOOL, WHILE THE LARGER PULLEY WINDS THAT THREAD ONTO THE BOBBIN.

THE FOOT PROVIDES A SIMPLE UP-AND-DOWN MOTION ON THE PEDAL. THIS VERTICAL PUSH IS CAPTURED BY A CRANK IN THE AXLE, WHICH TRANSLATES THE MOVEMENT INTO A CONTINUOUS CIRCULAR ROLL.

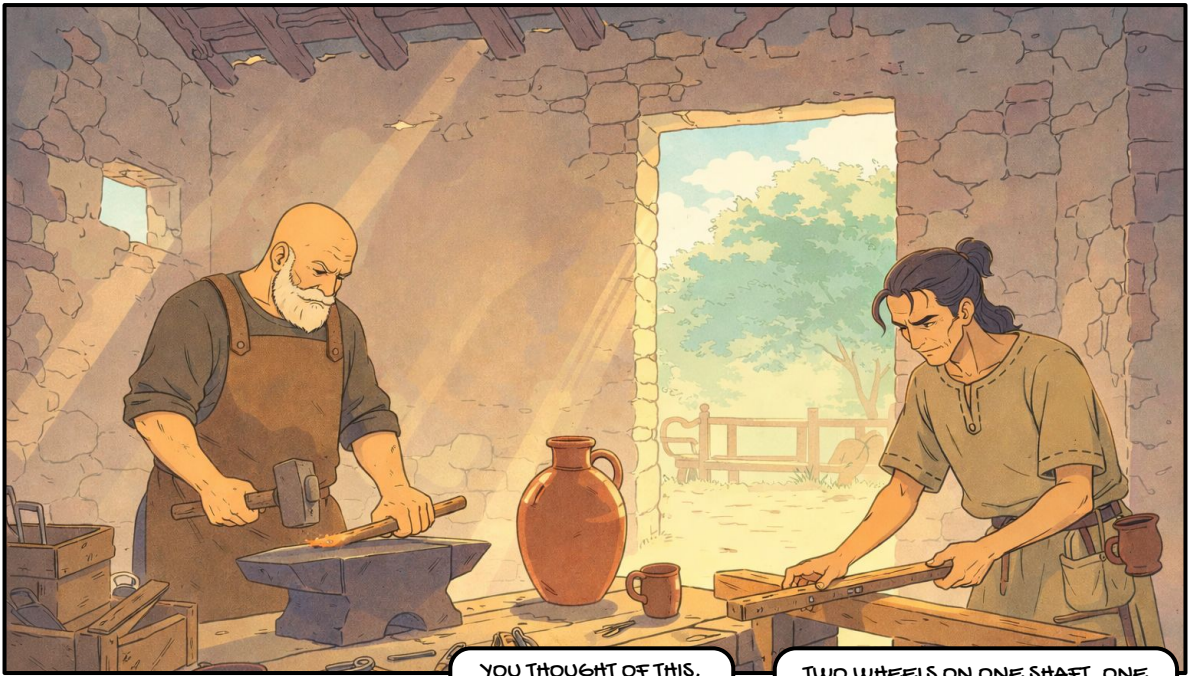
THE DRIVE WHEEL IS HEAVY, IT ACTS AS A FLYWHEEL, USING ITS OWN WEIGHT TO KEEP THE MACHINE TURNING SMOOTHLY EVEN WHEN THE FOOT IS NOT PUSHING.

WITH THE FEET PROVIDING THE CONTINUOUS FORCE, BOTH HANDS ARE FREED FROM THE LABOR OF TURNING THE WHEEL

THE TWO PULLEYS OF DIFFERENT DIAMETERS "SPEED GAP" ALLOWS THE MACHINE TO TWIST AND WIND AT THE SAME TIME.

USE THEM TOGETHER TO DRAFT THE RAW WOOL FROM THE DISTAFF, PULLING AND SMOOTHING THE FIBERS AS THEY ENTER THE EYE OF THE FLYER. BECAUSE YOU NEVER HAVE TO STOP TO PROVIDE POWER, YOUR HANDS CAN FOCUS ENTIRELY ON THE PRECISION AND STRENGTH OF THE THREAD.





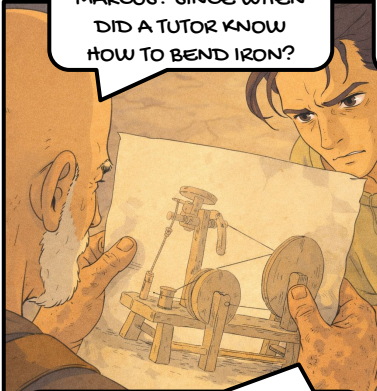
YOU THOUGHT OF THIS, MARCUS? SINCE WHEN DID A TUTOR KNOW HOW TO BEND IRON?

TWO WHEELS ON ONE SHAFT. ONE CORD. THE FORKED-PIECE SPINS FAST TO TWIST, THE CYLINDER SPINS SLOW TO WIND.

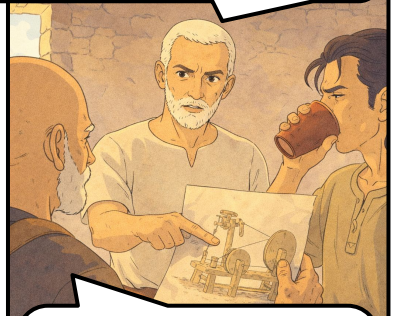
AFTER NIGHTS OF STUDY, I HAVE FINISHED THE DESIGNS.



OLD GREEK MECHANISMS, CART WHEELS, SPINDLE WORK. I HAVE FOUND THE SOLUTION GAIVS REQUIRES. WE BUILD A PROTOTYPE NOW.



HE'S BEEN READING THOSE GREEKS AGAIN. LOOK AT THIS... HE WANTS A TORTURE RACK FOR MICE... OR IS IT A TOY FOR THE EMPEROR'S CAT?

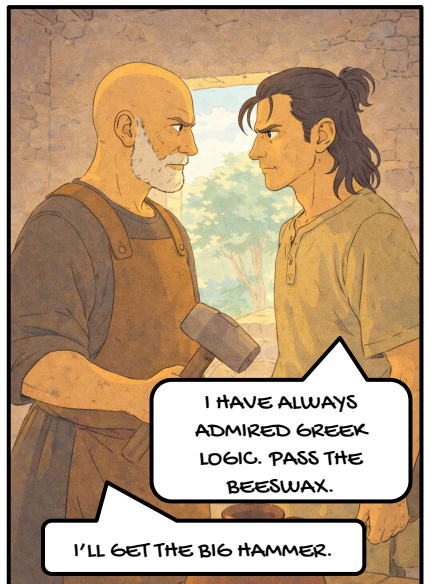


TWO WHEELS ON ONE AXLE TURNING AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS? THEY'LL FIGHT EACH OTHER UNTIL THE WOOD SREAMS! WHO DREW THIS? A GREEK?

IT'S A PARADOX. A GREEK SUICIDE MACHINE. IF THE GODS WANTED YARN TO SPIN THIS FAST, THEY WOULD HAVE GIVEN US WHEELS INSTEAD OF HANDS.



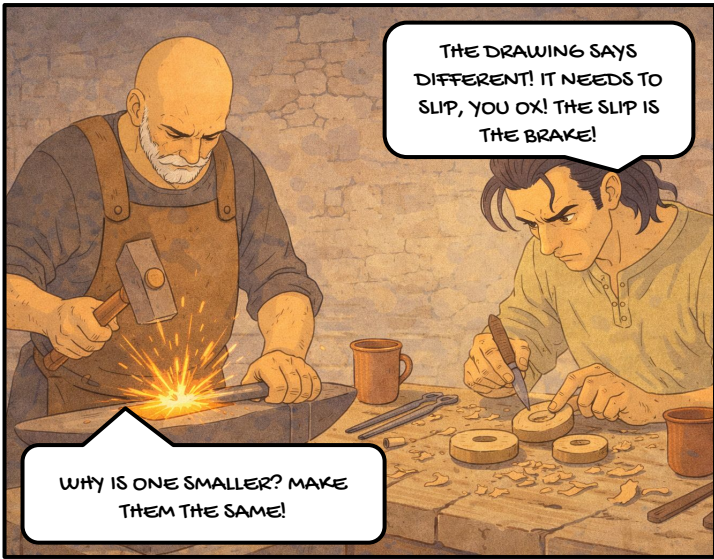
GAIVS IS PAYING TRIPLE.



I HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRRED GREEK LOGIC. PASS THE BEESWAX.

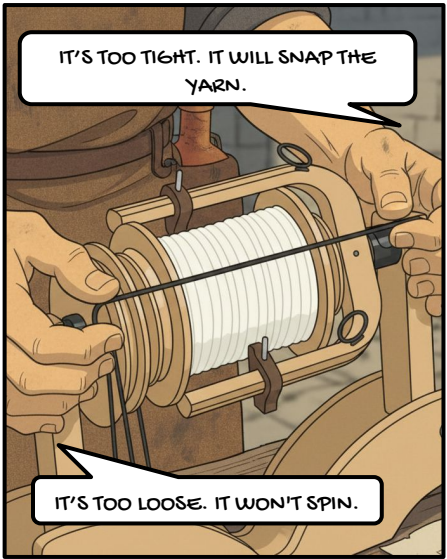
I'LL GET THE BIG HAMMER.





THE DRAWING SAYS DIFFERENT! IT NEEDS TO SLIP, YOU OX! THE SLIP IS THE BRAKE!

WHY IS ONE SMALLER? MAKE THEM THE SAME!



IT'S TOO TIGHT. IT WILL SNAP THE YARN.

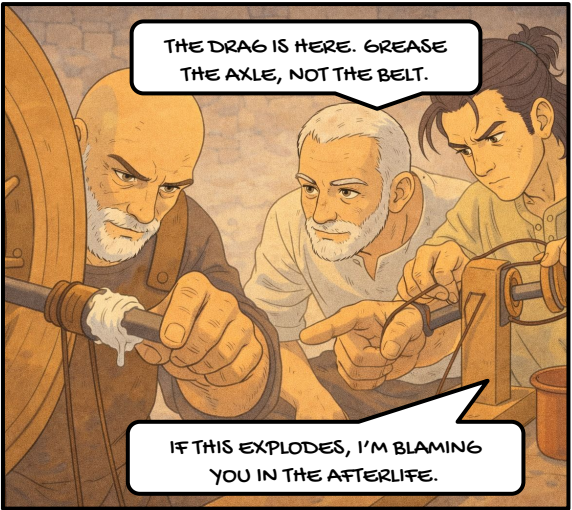
IT'S TOO LOOSE. IT WON'T SPIN.



SEE? IT'S FIGHTING ITSELF. THE BOBBIN WANTS TO RUN, BUT THE FLYER IS CHOKING IT.

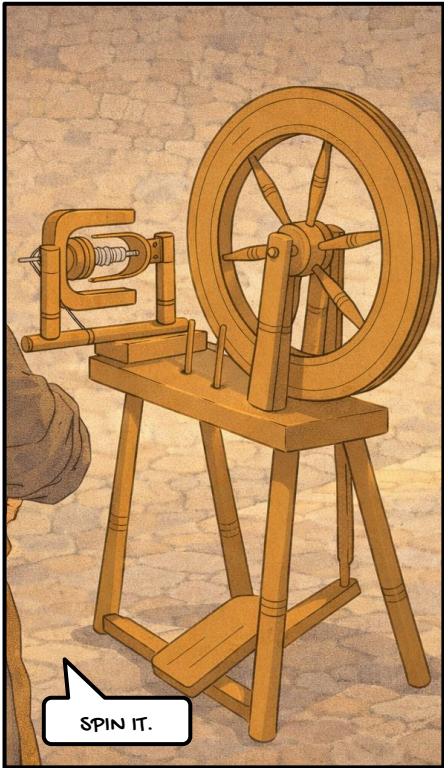
SCREEEEEE

IT NEEDS GREASE ON THE BOBBIN SHAFT. LET IT SLIDE.

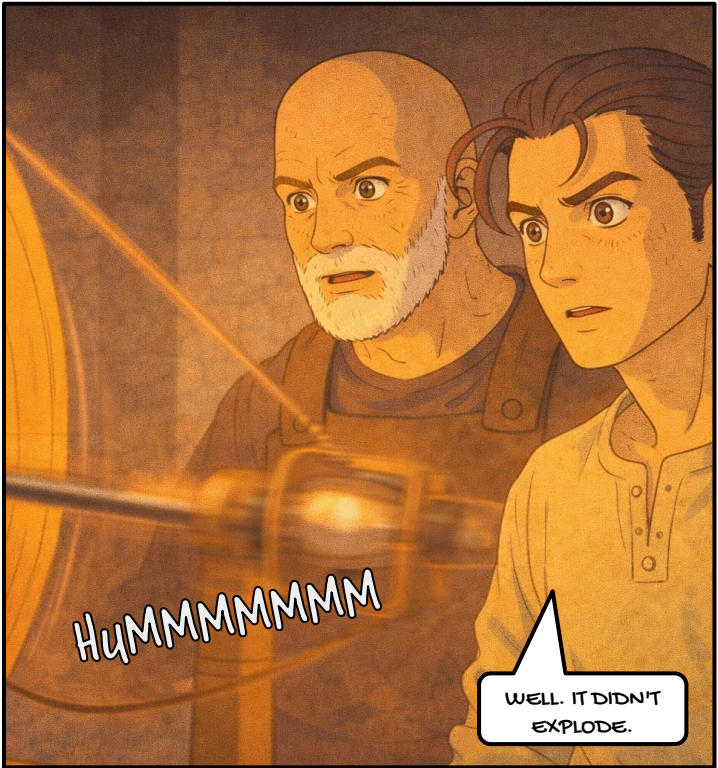


THE DRAG IS HERE. GREASE THE AXLE, NOT THE BELT.

IF THIS EXPLODES, I'M BLAMING YOU IN THE AFTERLIFE.



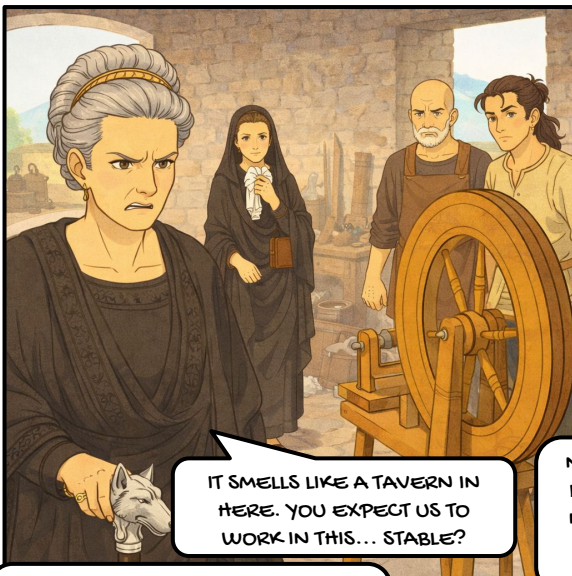
SPIN IT.



HMMMMMMMM

WELL. IT DIDN'T EXPLODE.





IT SMELLS LIKE A TAVERN IN HERE. YOU EXPECT US TO WORK IN THIS... STABLE?

THE SECRET IS THE SLIP! THE SMALL WHEEL TWISTS, THE BIG WHEEL WINDS! IF YOU DON'T KEEP THE RHYTHM, IT WILL SNAP YOUR—



I SAID... MOVE



SAFETY FIRST: SPITTING ENSURES THE EVIL EYE KNOWS EXACTLY WHO IS IN CHARGE.

DON'T TELL ME WHERE TO PUT MY HANDS, BLACKSMITH. I WAS SPINNING WHEN YOU WERE STILL IN SWADDLING CLOTHES.

NOW, DOMINA... PUT YOUR LEFT FOOT ON THE PEDAL. NO, THE OTHER LEFT. AND YOUR HAND HERE... WATCH THE INTAKE.



WHIRRRRR

INTAKE IS A BIT LOOSE. RUFUS, GREASE THE BOBBIN. SIRO, TIGHTEN THE LEATHER. NOW!



WEEKS LATER.

WE ARE GOING TO NEED TWENTY MORE. AND BETTER WINE!



WE CAN'T USE ALL THIS YARN, GAIVS. WE'LL DROWN IN IT.

NO. WE WILL BUY MORE WOOL. EVERY FLEECE IN CAMPANIA. WE SEND IT SOUTH. WE BAIL OUT THE REGION, AULUS.

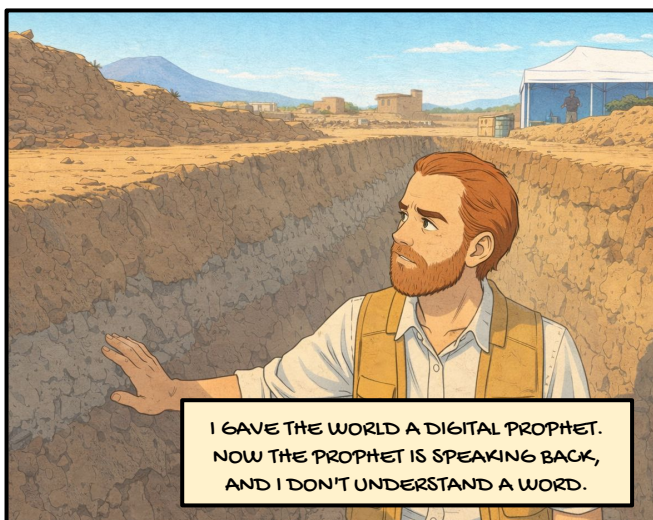
AND ABOUT MARCUS, THE HOUSES WILL REMEMBER WHOSE MIND TURNED THIS WHEEL.



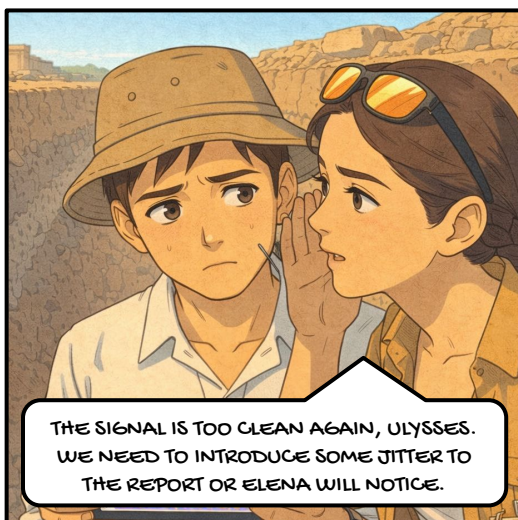
POMPEII. THE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE SHOVEL AND THE SCREEN.



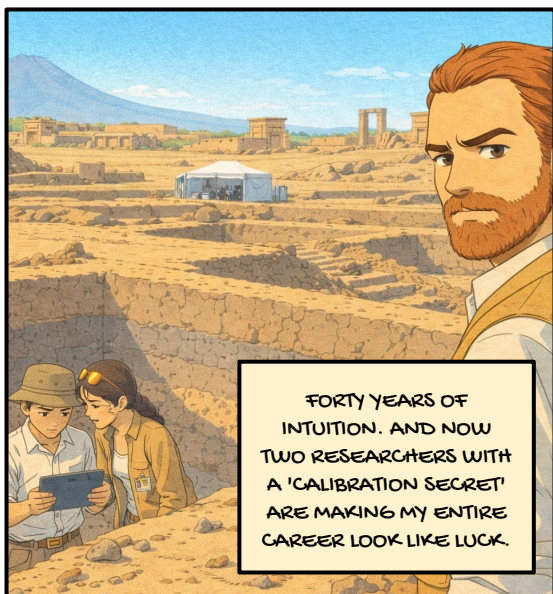
I GAVE THE WORLD A DIGITAL PROPHET. NOW THE PROPHET IS SPEAKING BACK, AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD.



THE SIGNAL IS TOO CLEAN AGAIN, ULYSSES. WE NEED TO INTRODUCE SOME JITTER TO THE REPORT OR ELENA WILL NOTICE.



FORTY YEARS OF INTUITION. AND NOW TWO RESEARCHERS WITH A 'CALIBRATION SECRET' ARE MAKING MY ENTIRE CAREER LOOK LIKE LUCK.

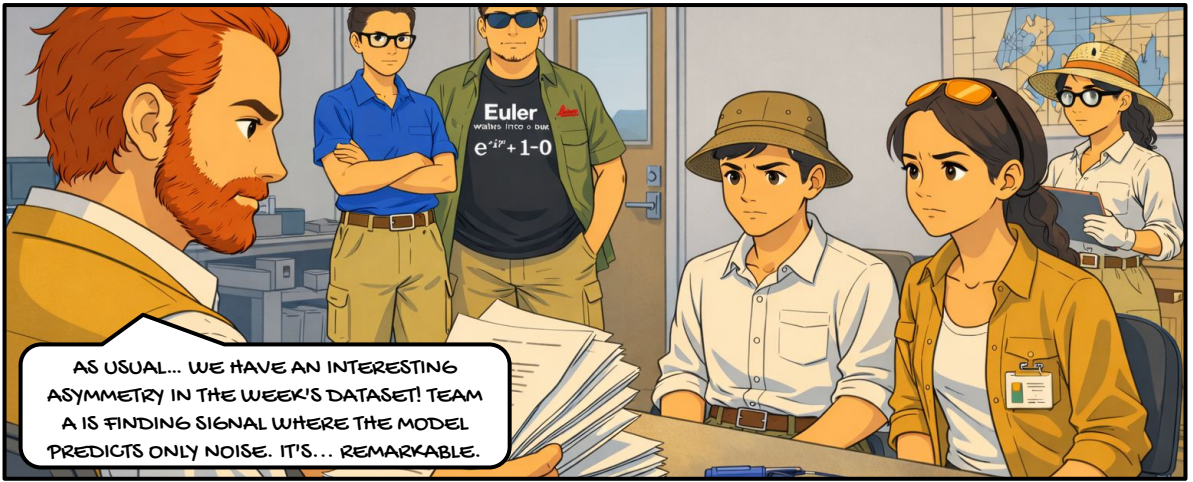


GIANNI, WE HAVE A REPLICATION ISSUE. SECTOR 4 IS YIELDING ZERO SIGNAL USING THE STANDARD DR. HANDMER PARAMETERS. YET TEAM A IS FINDING ARTIFACTS EVERY FEW DAYS. THE DISCREPANCY IS...

STATISTICALLY OFFENSIVE.







AS USUAL... WE HAVE AN INTERESTING ASYMMETRY IN THE WEEK'S DATASET! TEAM A IS FINDING SIGNAL WHERE THE MODEL PREDICTS ONLY NOISE. IT'S... REMARKABLE.

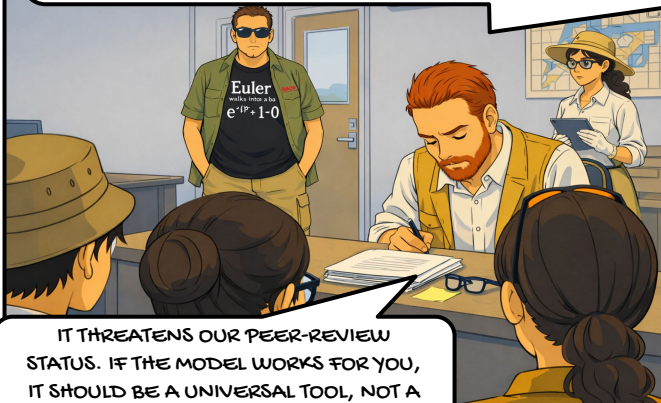


REMARKABLE IS ONE WORD, GIANNI. WE'VE CROSS-REFERENCED TEAM A'S CALIBRATION LOGS WITH OUR OWN. WE'RE USING THE SAME DR. HANDMER PRESETS, YET THE RESULTS DON'T REPLICATE.



STATISTICAL ANOMALIES ARE ONE THING, ULYSSES. BUT FINDING TWELVE SITES IN TWELVE WEEKS SUGGESTS YOU'VE FOUND A 'SHORT-CUT' IN THE CODE THAT YOU HAVEN'T SHARED WITH THE DEPARTMENT. AS SITE DIRECTOR, I CANNOT HAVE A 'PRIVATE' METHODOLOGY ON THIS DIG.

AND IF YOU WON'T SHARE IT, I'LL STANDARDIZE IT MYSELF AND MAKE SURE THE CREDIT REFLECTS THAT.

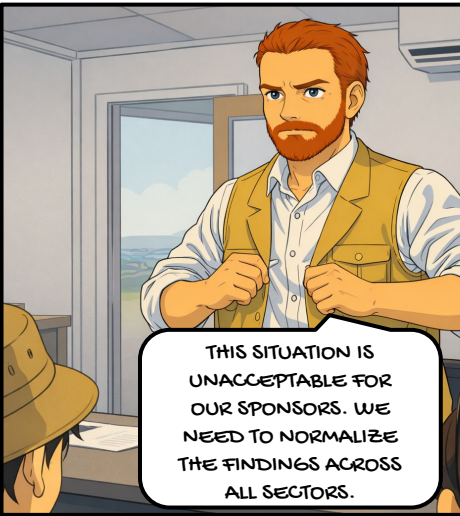


IT THREATENS OUR PEER-REVIEW STATUS. IF THE MODEL WORKS FOR YOU, IT SHOULD BE A UNIVERSAL TOOL, NOT A PERSONAL MIRACLE.

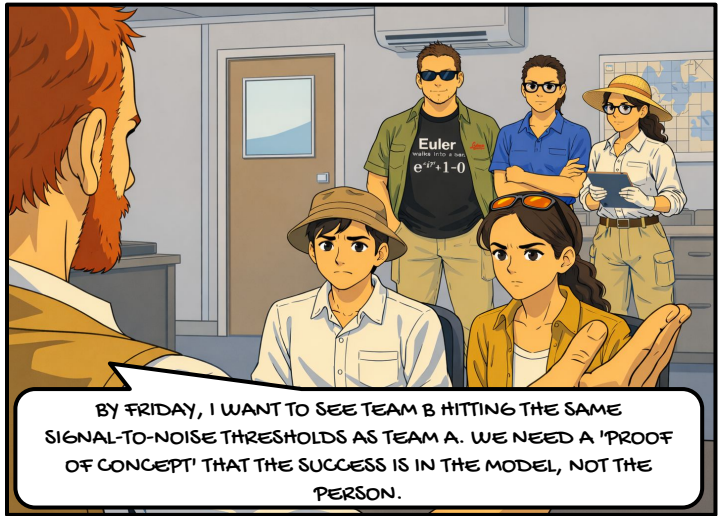


THE NATURE PAPER HAS MY NAME ON IT. I DIDN'T ASSEMBLE THIS PROJECT TO WATCH YOU BECOME ITS FACE.

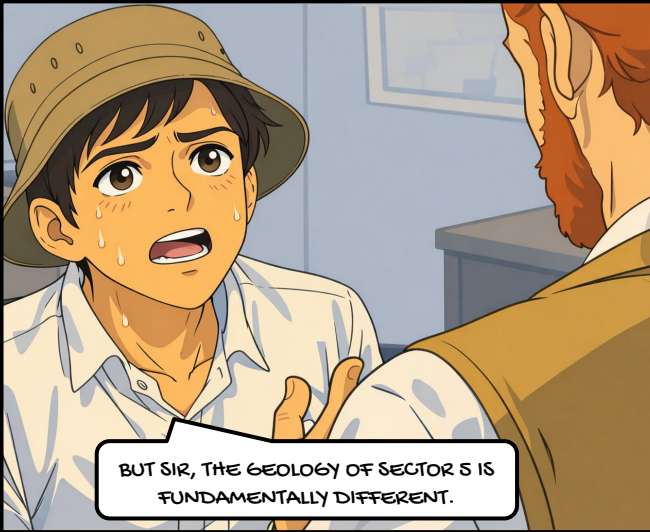




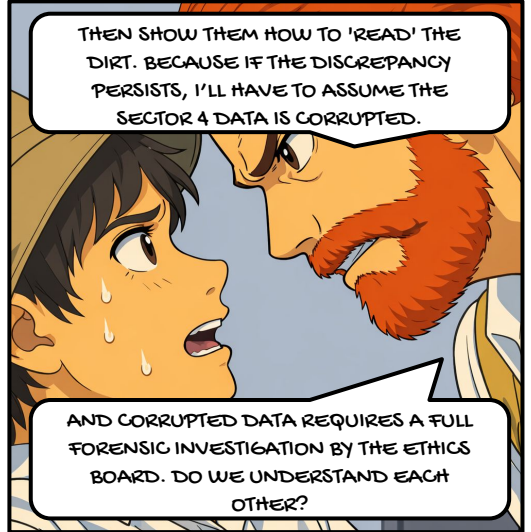
THIS SITUATION IS UNACCEPTABLE FOR OUR SPONSORS. WE NEED TO NORMALIZE THE FINDINGS ACROSS ALL SECTORS.



BY FRIDAY, I WANT TO SEE TEAM B HITTING THE SAME SIGNAL-TO-NOISE THRESHOLDS AS TEAM A. WE NEED A 'PROOF OF CONCEPT' THAT THE SUCCESS IS IN THE MODEL, NOT THE PERSON.

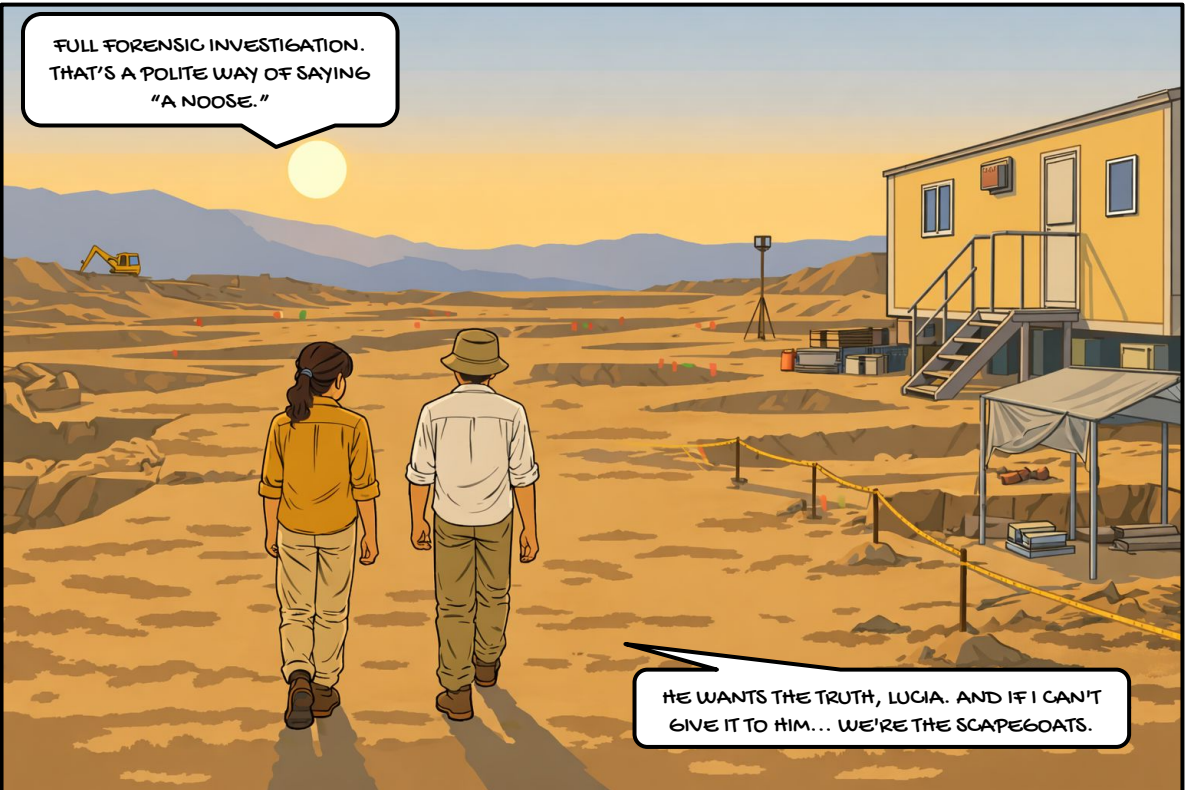


BUT SIR, THE GEOLOGY OF SECTOR 5 IS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT.



THEN SHOW THEM HOW TO 'READ' THE DIRT. BECAUSE IF THE DISCREPANCY PERSISTS, I'LL HAVE TO ASSUME THE SECTOR 4 DATA IS CORRUPTED.

AND CORRUPTED DATA REQUIRES A FULL FORENSIC INVESTIGATION BY THE ETHICS BOARD. DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?



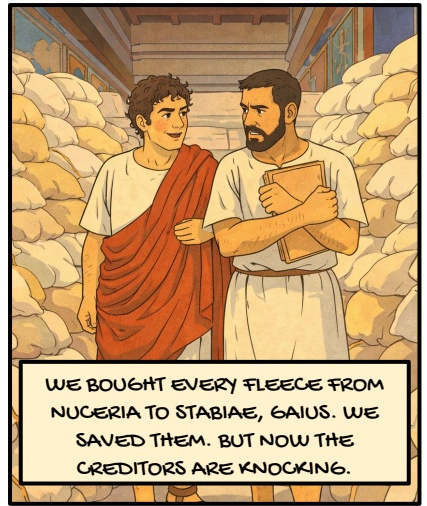
FULL FORENSIC INVESTIGATION. THAT'S A POLITE WAY OF SAYING "A NOOSE."

HE WANTS THE TRUTH, LUCIA. AND IF I CAN'T GIVE IT TO HIM... WE'RE THE SCAPEGOATS.

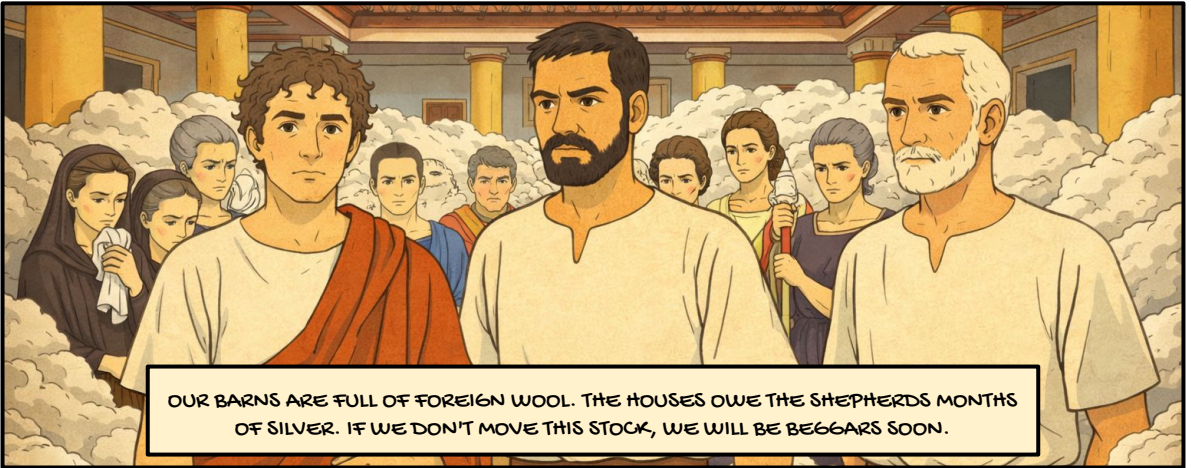




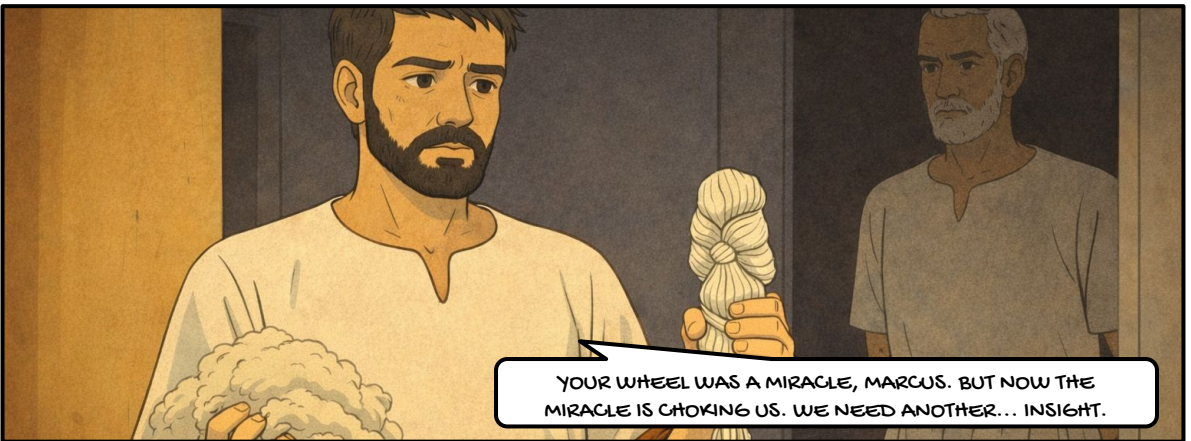
THE CURSE OF EFFICIENCY.



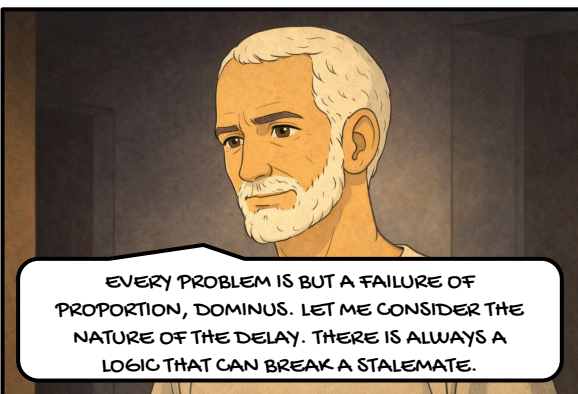
WE BOUGHT EVERY FLEECE FROM NUCERIA TO STABIAE, GAIUS. WE SAVED THEM. BUT NOW THE CREDITORS ARE KNOCKING.



OUR BARNs ARE FULL OF FOREIGN WOOL. THE HOUSES OWE THE SHEPHERDS MONTHS OF SILVER. IF WE DON'T MOVE THIS STOCK, WE WILL BE BEGGARS SOON.



YOUR WHEEL WAS A MIRACLE, MARCUS. BUT NOW THE MIRACLE IS CHOKING US. WE NEED ANOTHER... INSIGHT.



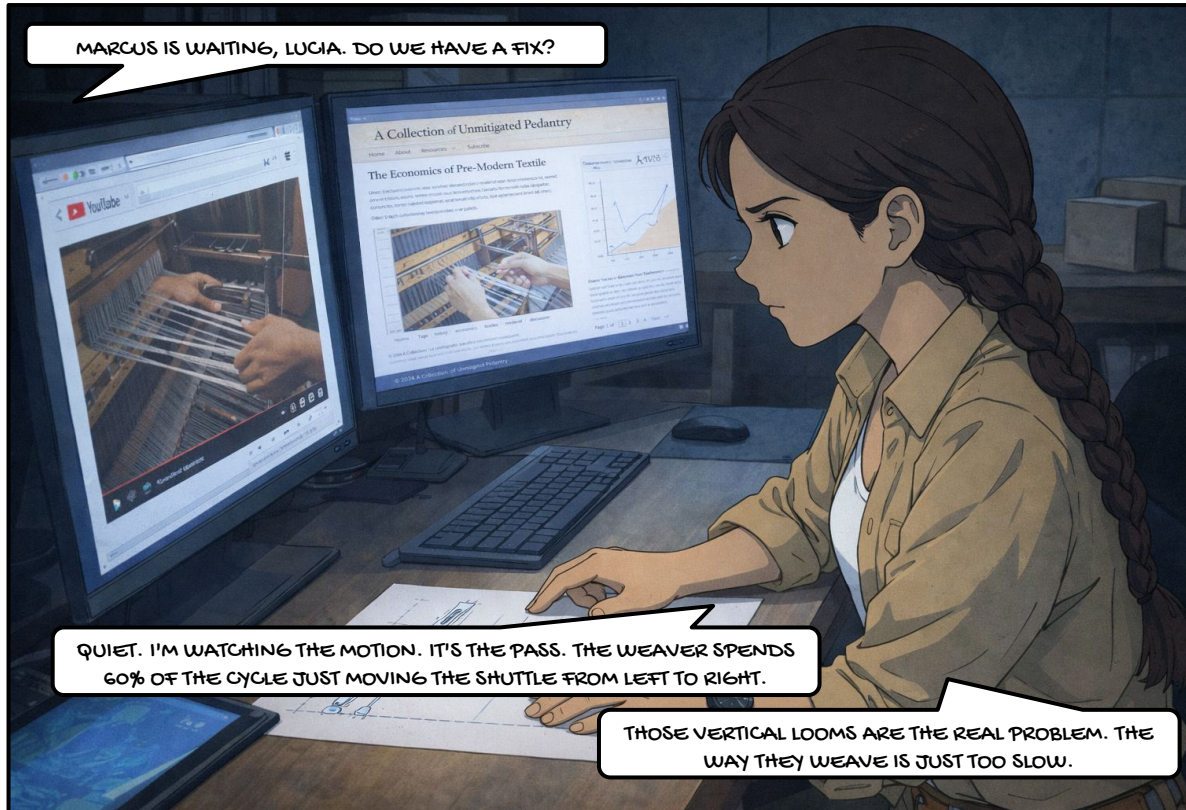
EVERY PROBLEM IS BUT A FAILURE OF PROPORTION, DOMINUS. LET ME CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE DELAY. THERE IS ALWAYS A LOGIC THAT CAN BREAK A STALEMATE.



FIND THAT LOGIC, MARCUS. BECAUSE IF THE WAREHOUSES DON'T EMPTY SOON, THE SIXTEEN HOUSES WILL HAVE NOTHING TO EAT BUT THE WOOL ON THEIR BACKS.

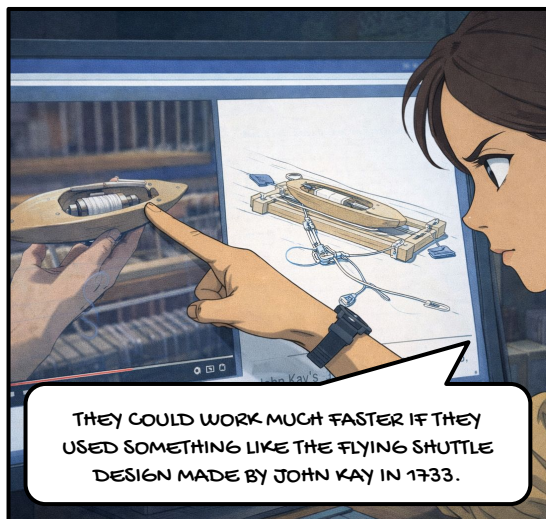


MARCUS IS WAITING, LUCIA. DO WE HAVE A FIX?

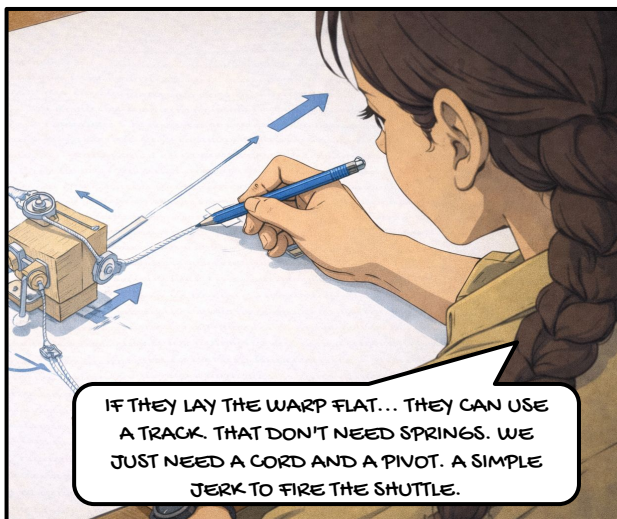


QUIET. I'M WATCHING THE MOTION. IT'S THE PASS. THE WEAVER SPENDS 60% OF THE CYCLE JUST MOVING THE SHUTTLE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.

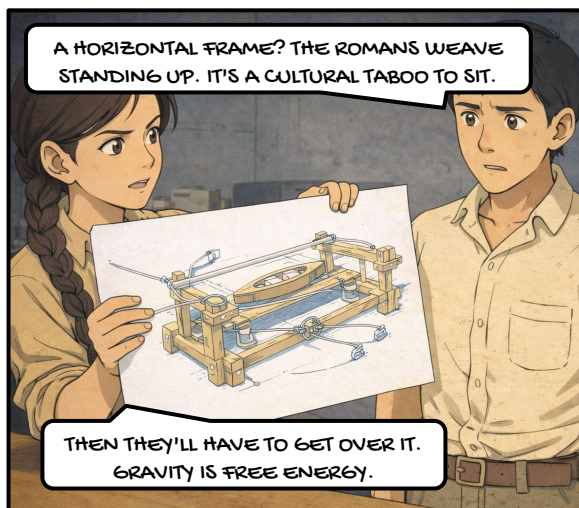
THOSE VERTICAL LOOMS ARE THE REAL PROBLEM. THE WAY THEY WEAVE IS JUST TOO SLOW.



THEY COULD WORK MUCH FASTER IF THEY USED SOMETHING LIKE THE FLYING SHUTTLE DESIGN MADE BY JOHN KAY IN 1733.

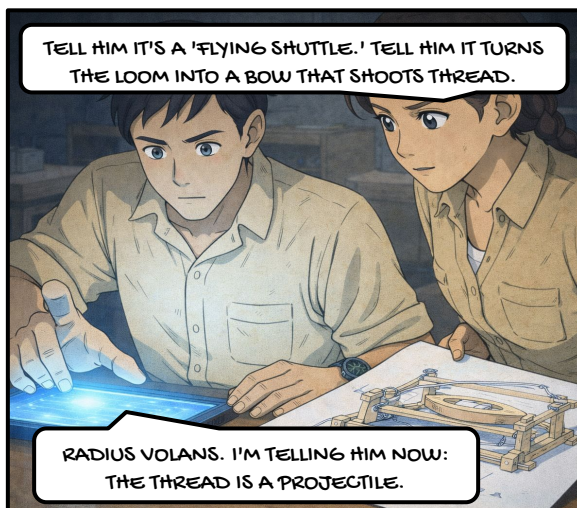


IF THEY LAY THE WARP FLAT... THEY CAN USE A TRACK THAT DON'T NEED SPRINGS. WE JUST NEED A CORD AND A PIVOT. A SIMPLE JERK TO FIRE THE SHUTTLE.



A HORIZONTAL FRAME? THE ROMANS WEAVE STANDING UP. IT'S A CULTURAL TABOO TO SIT.

THEN THEY'LL HAVE TO GET OVER IT. GRAVITY IS FREE ENERGY.

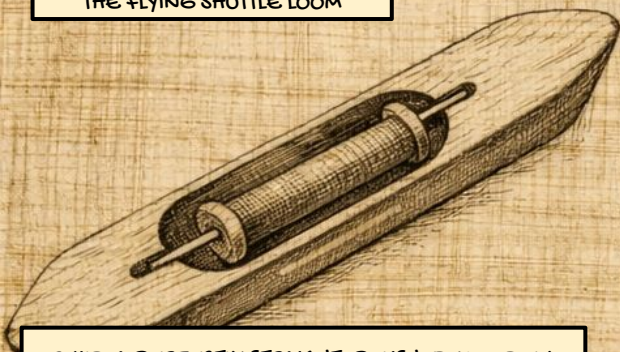


TELL HIM IT'S A 'FLYING SHUTTLE.' TELL HIM IT TURNS THE LOOM INTO A BOW THAT SHOOTS THREAD.

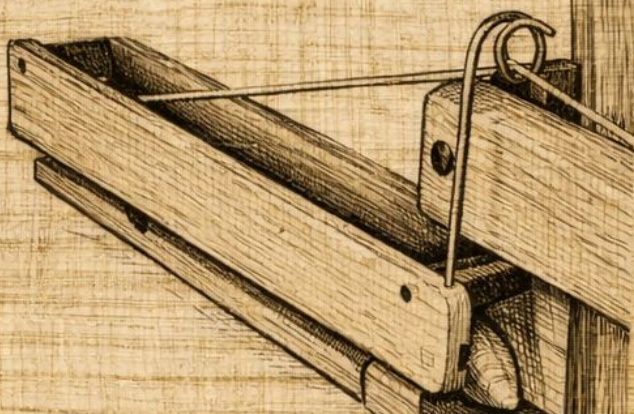
RADIUS VOLANS. I'M TELLING HIM NOW: THE THREAD IS A PROJECTILE.



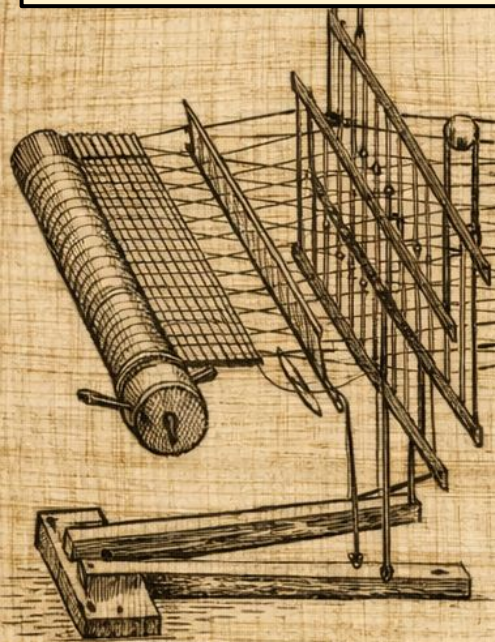
## THE FLYING SHUTTLE LOOM



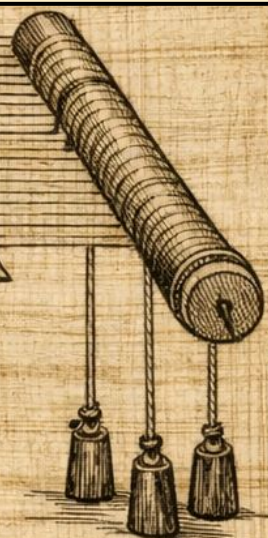
BUILD A PERFECTLY STRAIGHT, POLISHED WOODEN TRACK ACROSS THE LOOM. THE SHUTTLE MUST NEVER TOUCH THE WEAVER'S HANDS DURING ITS FLIGHT; IT IS NO LONGER A HANDHELD TOOL, BUT A PROJECTILE THAT RUNS ALONG THIS TRACK.



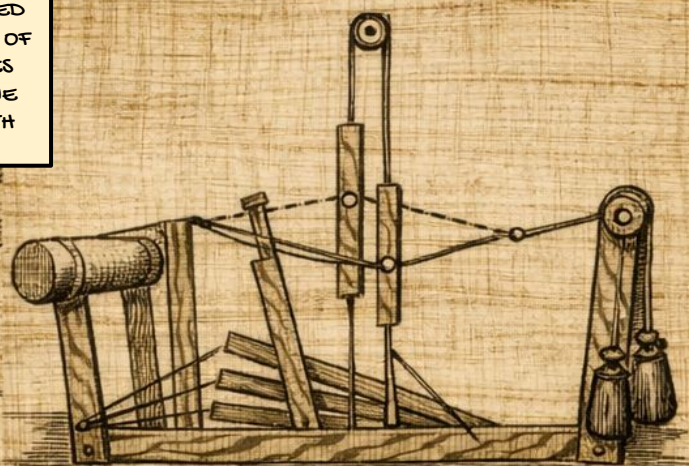
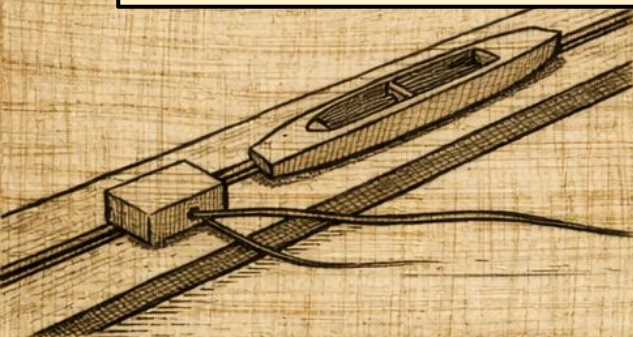
ADD A DEEP SOCKET BOX AT EACH END OF THE TRACK. THESE HOLD THE "PICKERS" IN PLACE AND CATCH THE SHUTTLE, ENSURING IT STAYS ALIGNED FOR THE NEXT THROW.



THE WEAVER'S FEET OPERATE THE TREADLES TO LIFT THE THREADS, WHILE THEIR HANDS PULL THE PICKER CORD.

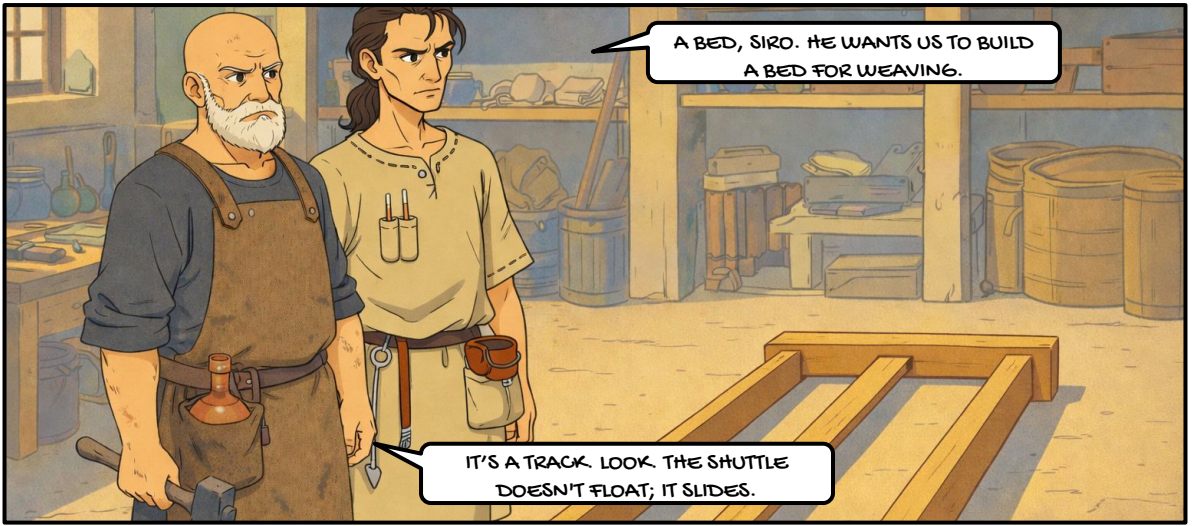


USE A SINGLE CENTRAL ROPE HANDLE CONNECTED TO TWO WOODEN BLOCKS (PICKERS) AT THE ENDS OF THE TRACK. A SHARP JERK OF THE HANDLE FIRES THE SHUTTLE ACROSS THE LOOM. THIS ALLOWS ONE WEAVER TO THROW THE SHUTTLE ACROSS A CLOTH FAR WIDER THAN THEIR OWN REACH.



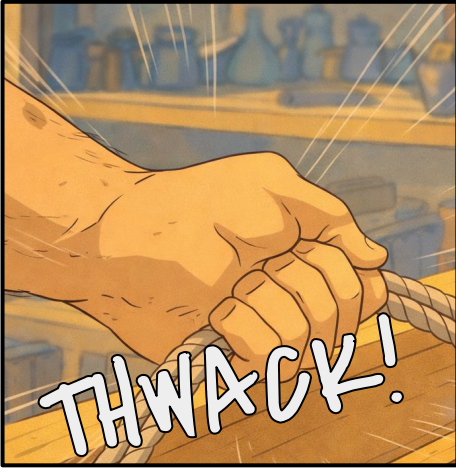
BY SEPARATING THESE MOTIONS, THE WEAVER BECOMES A RHYTHMIC ENGINE, INCREASING THE SPEED OF THE CLOTH TENFOLD.





A BED, SIRO. HE WANTS US TO BUILD  
A BED FOR WEAVING.

IT'S A TRACK. LOOK. THE SHUTTLE  
DOESN'T FLOAT; IT SLIDES.



THWACK!

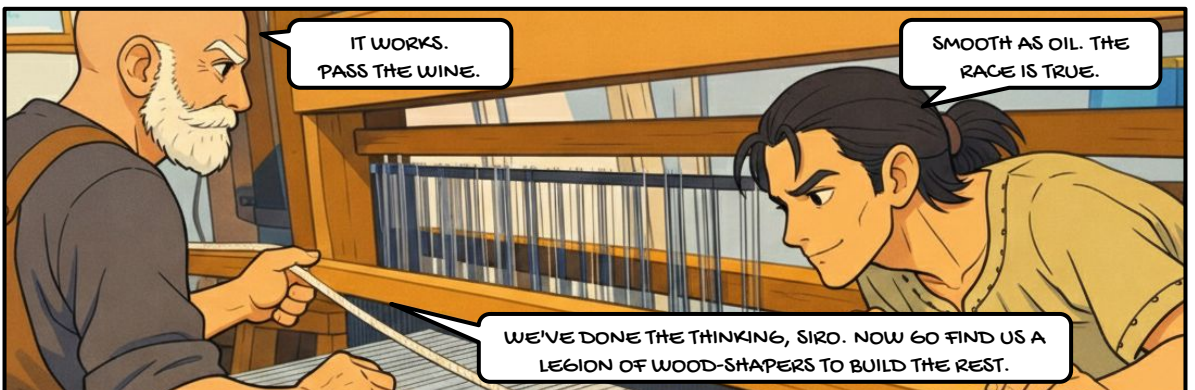


YOU ALMOST TOOK MY EAR OFF! IT'S A  
WEAPON, NOT A TOOL!



IT FLIES WILD BECAUSE IT IS  
UNBALANCED. WEIGHT THE  
NOSE LIKE A PILUM.

AYE. LEAD TIPS. IT NEEDS  
MASS TO HOLD THE LINE.

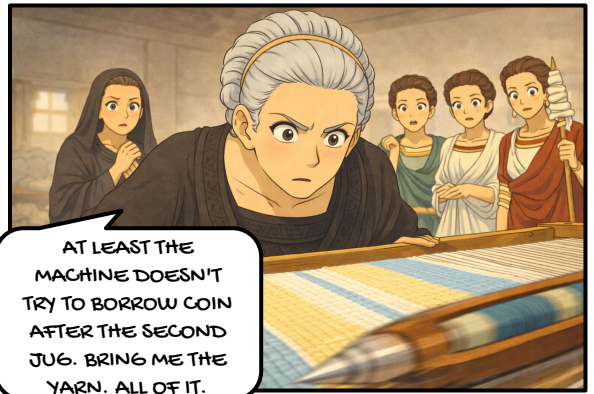
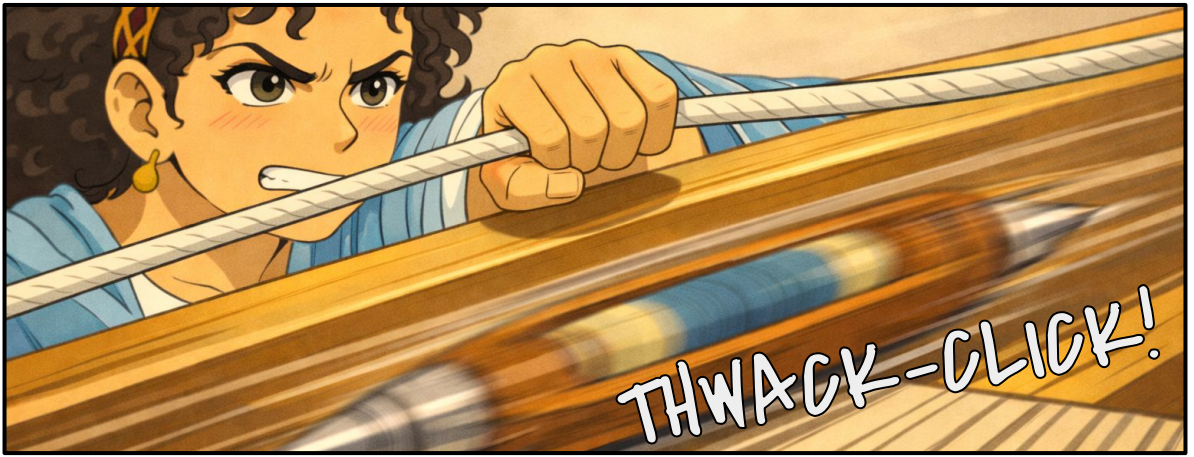
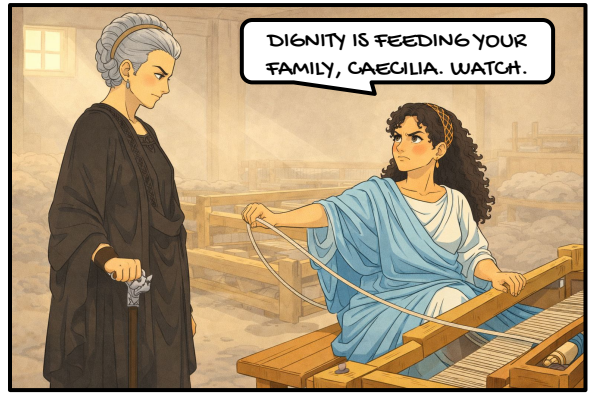
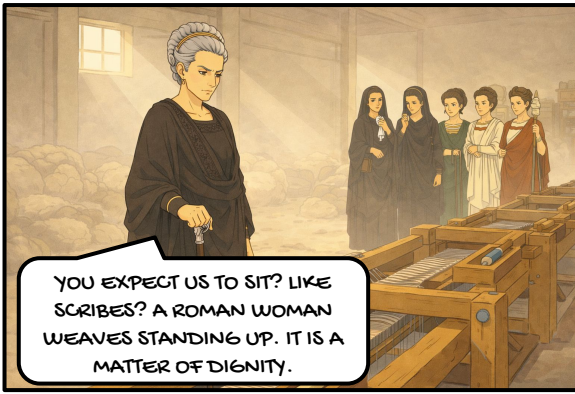


IT WORKS.  
PASS THE WINE.

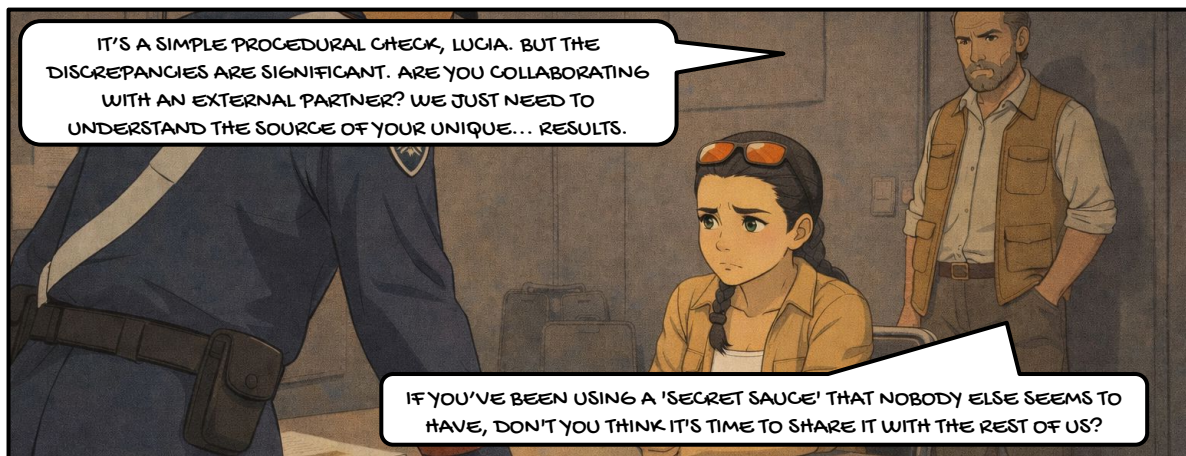
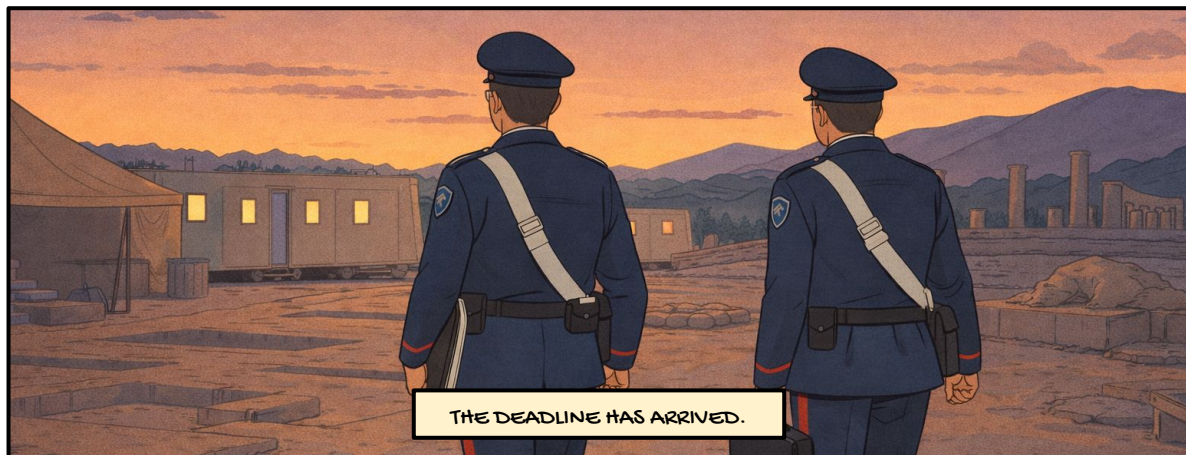
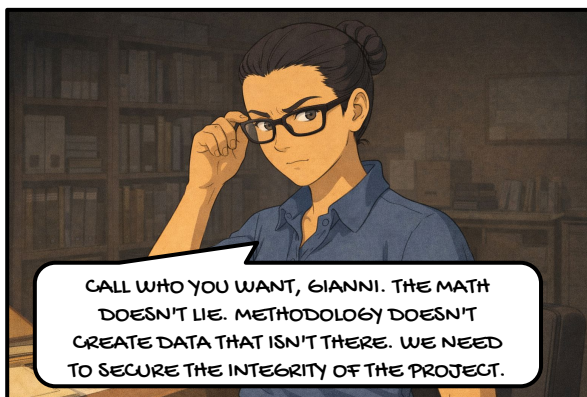
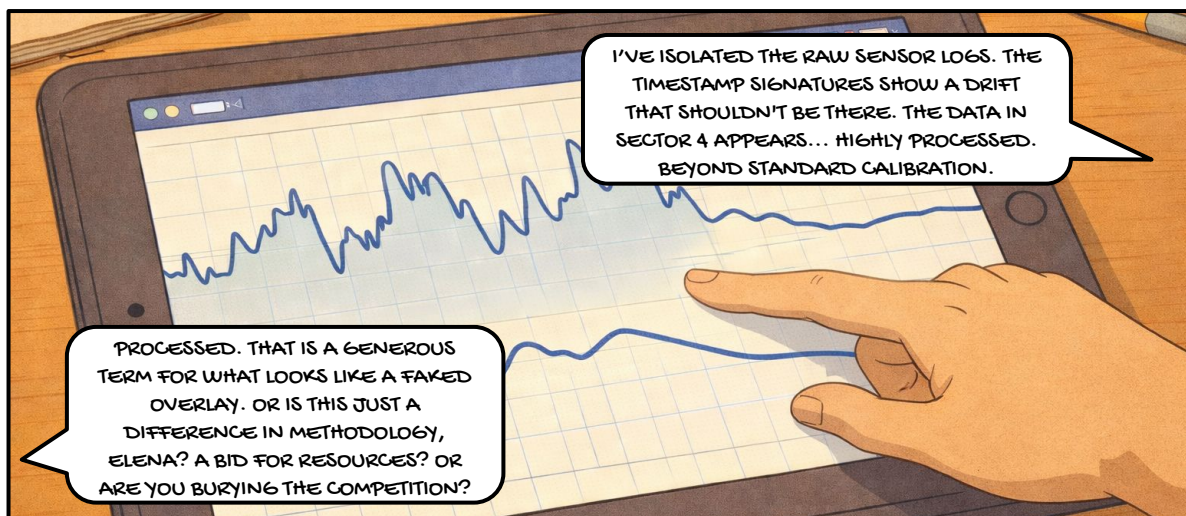
SMOOTH AS OIL. THE  
RACE IS TRUE.

WE'VE DONE THE THINKING, SIRO. NOW GO FIND US A  
LEGION OF WOOD-SHAPERS TO BUILD THE REST.













THEY HAVE LUCIA. THEY  
WILL COME FOR ME.



IT IS OVER. THEY  
FOUND US.

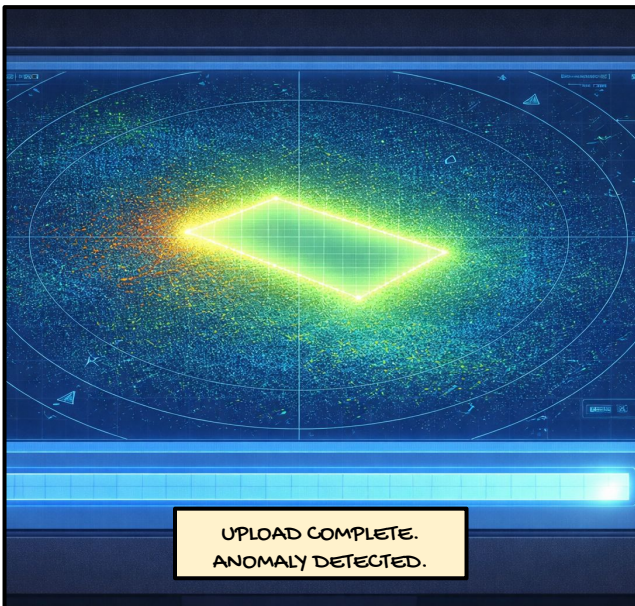


NOTHING IS OVER.  
WHAT DO YOU NEED?

A MIRACLE. IS THERE ANYTHING WEST  
OF THE AGORA? NEAR THE WELL?



SAME STEPS. BUT THIS TIME... WE AREN'T PAINTING FOR  
TEAM A. GIVE TEAM B A MIRACLE... SEE IF THEY CAN  
FIND IT.



UPLOAD COMPLETE.  
ANOMALY DETECTED.



GOODBYE, MARCUS.

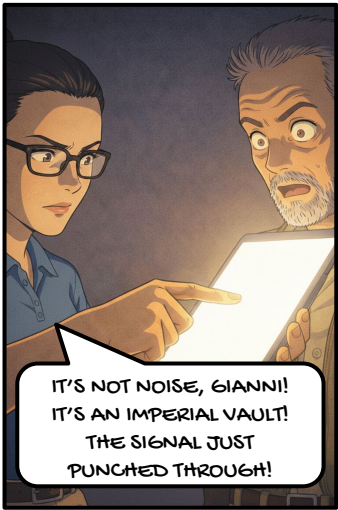




THIS IS THE END OF THE ROAD, ULYSSES. THE LOGS DON'T MATCH. TELL US WHO YOU'RE WORKING WITH.



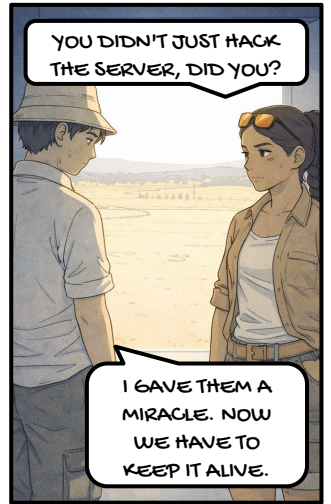
STOP! SECTOR 5 IS LIVE!



IT'S NOT NOISE, GIANNI!  
IT'S AN IMPERIAL VAULT!  
THE SIGNAL JUST  
PUNCHED THROUGH!



SHOW ME THE  
COORDINATES. NOW!



YOU DIDN'T JUST HACK  
THE SERVER, DID YOU?

I GAVE THEM A  
MIRACLE. NOW  
WE HAVE TO  
KEEP IT ALIVE.



THE LIE IS NOW THE TRUTH. I HAVE  
BOUGHT US TIME. BUT THE BILL IS COMING.