

THE RIVER BECOME ROAD



BODHA

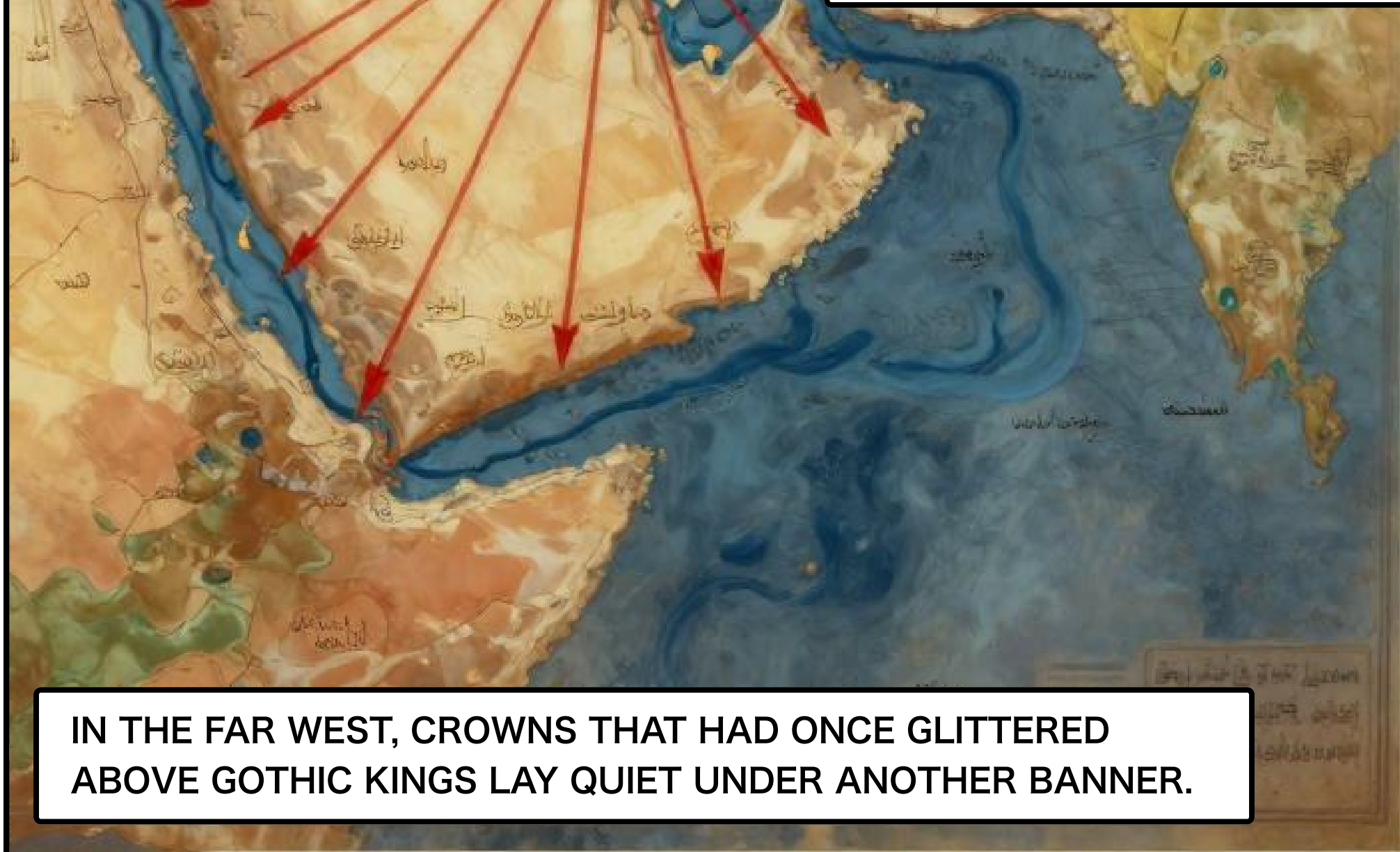
VOL. 1 ISSUE 2

SCROLLS OF **ARYAVARTA**

A CENTURY AFTER A PROPHET ROSE IN THE DESERT, HIS SWORD HAD TAKEN PERSIA, SYRIA, EGYPT, THE AFRICAN COAST, AND SPAIN. THE OLD GODS OF THOSE LANDS FELL, AND THE TEMPLES THAT HAD STOOD FOR A THOUSAND YEARS STOOD NO MORE.



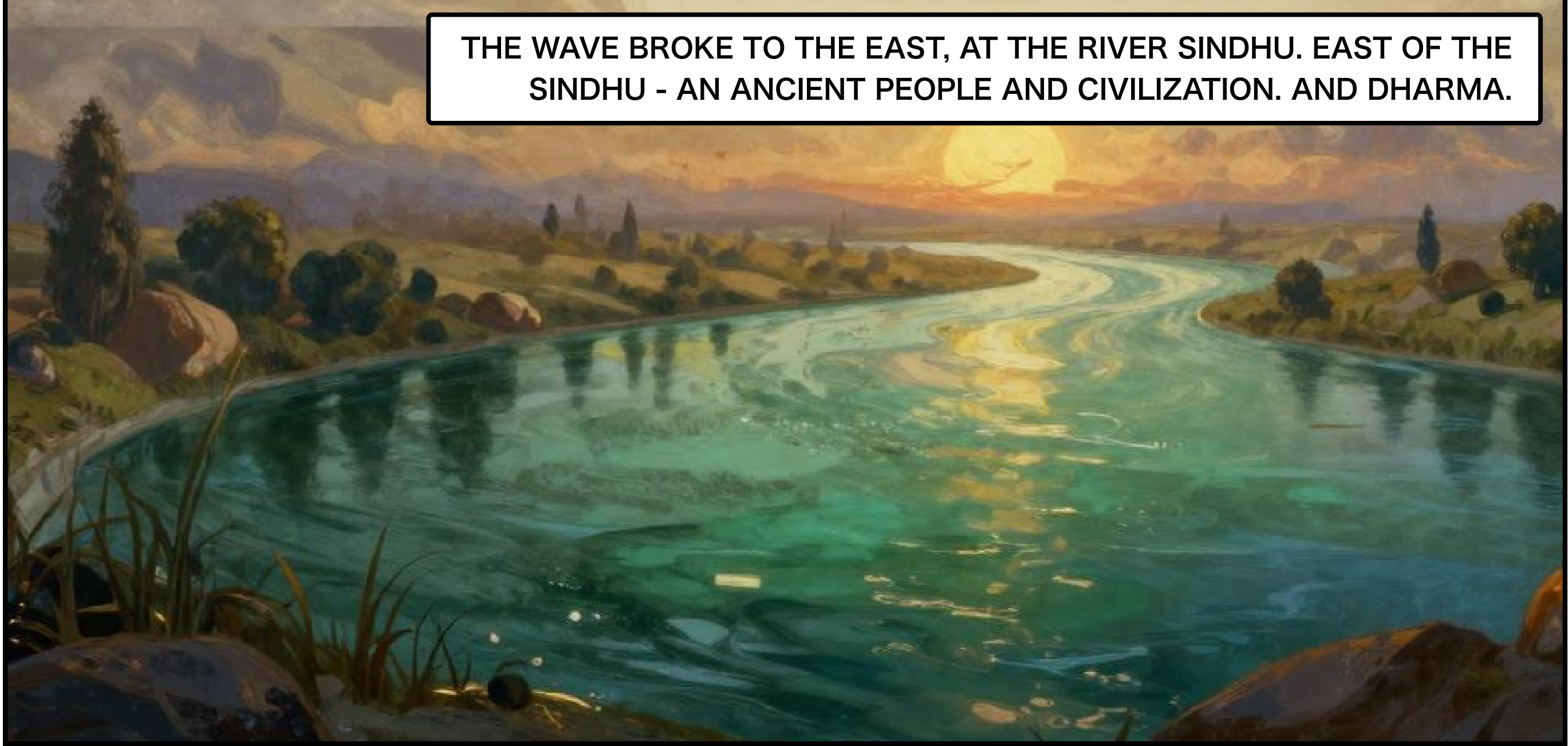
IN PERSIA, THE SACRED FIRE DIED. MEN CAME WITH LAW IN ONE HAND AND SWORD IN THE OTHER.



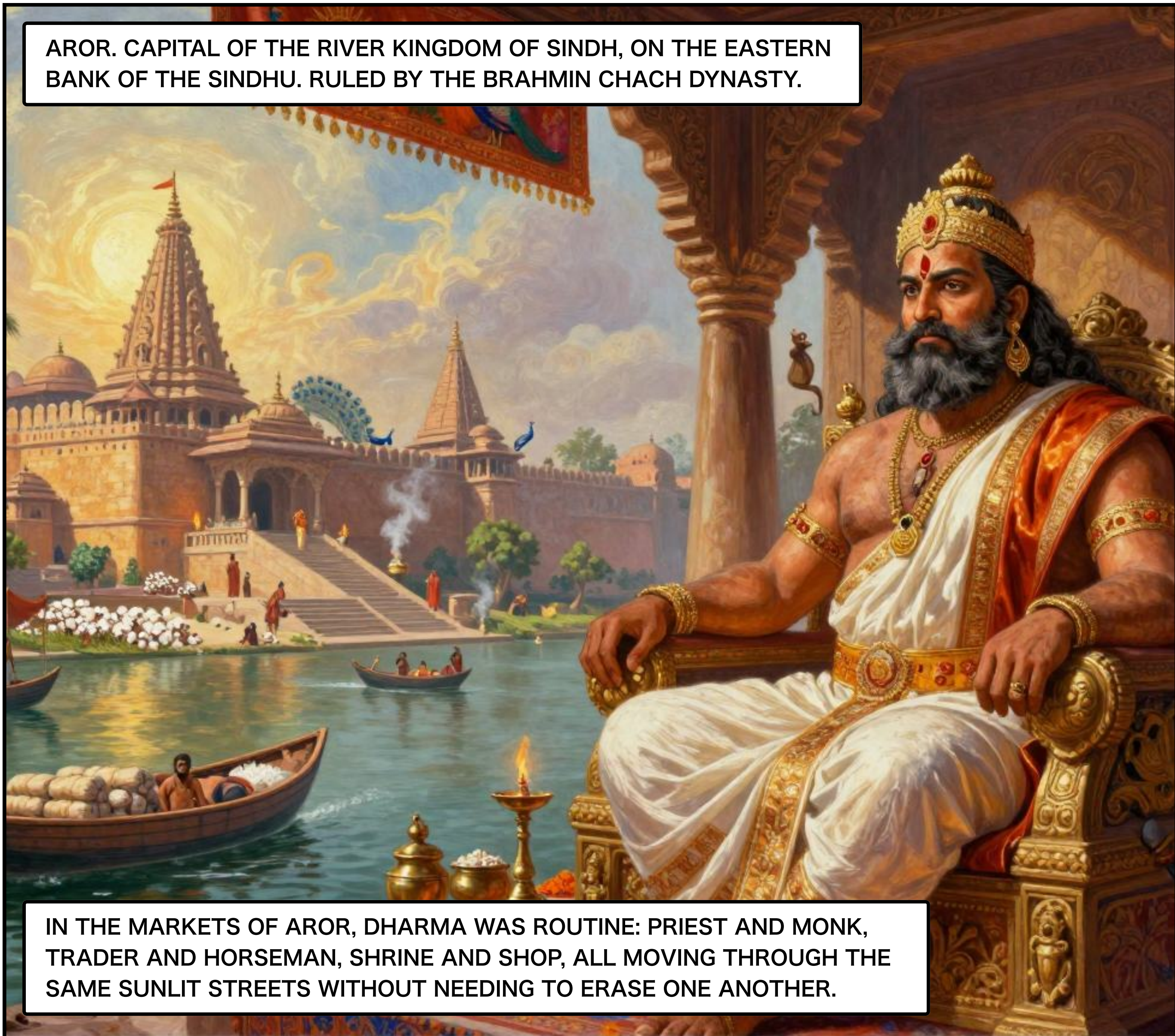
IN THE FAR WEST, CROWNS THAT HAD ONCE GLITTERED ABOVE GOTHIC KINGS LAY QUIET UNDER ANOTHER BANNER.



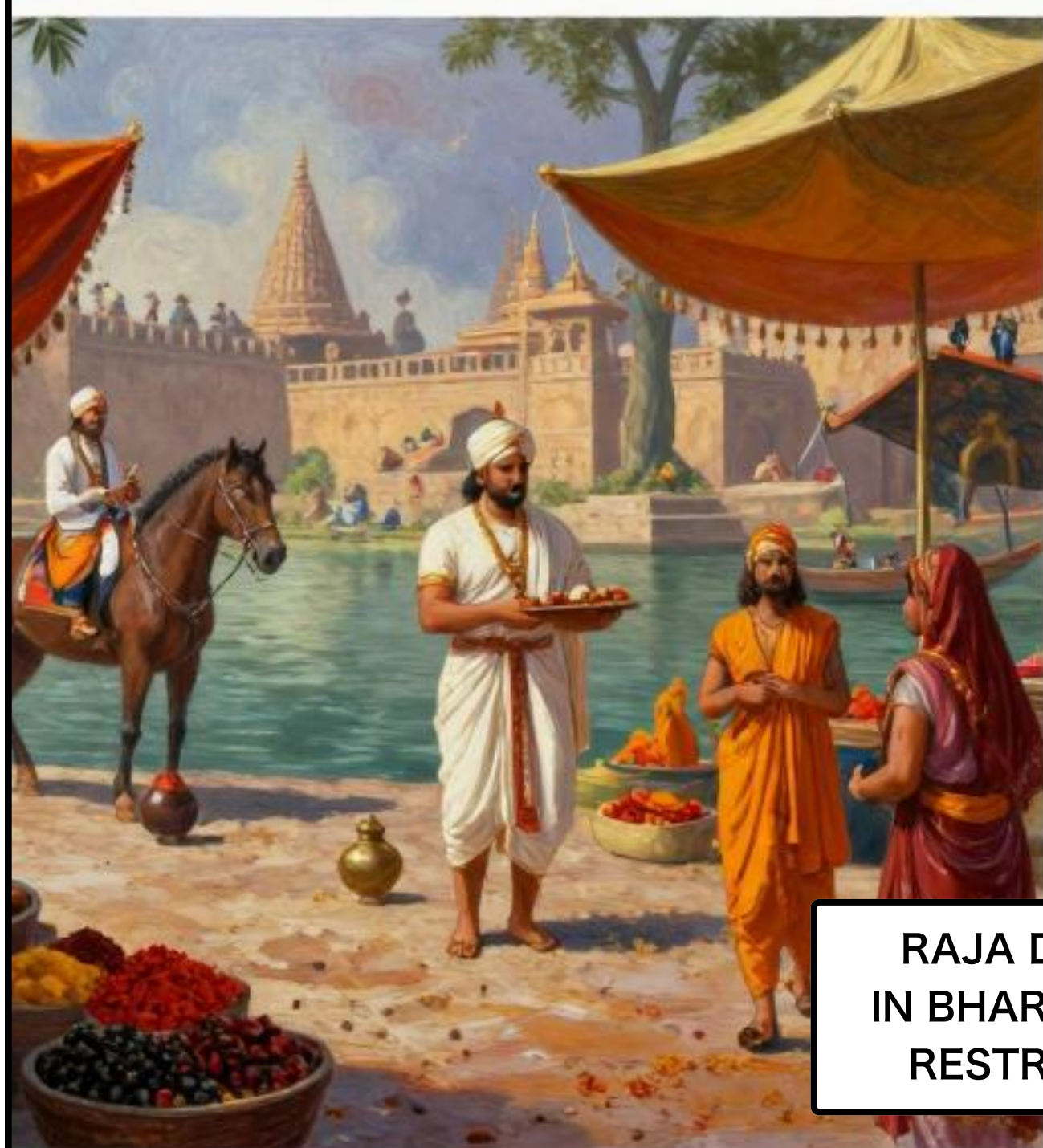
THE WAVE BROKE TO THE EAST, AT THE RIVER SINDHU. EAST OF THE SINDHU - AN ANCIENT PEOPLE AND CIVILIZATION. AND DHARMA.



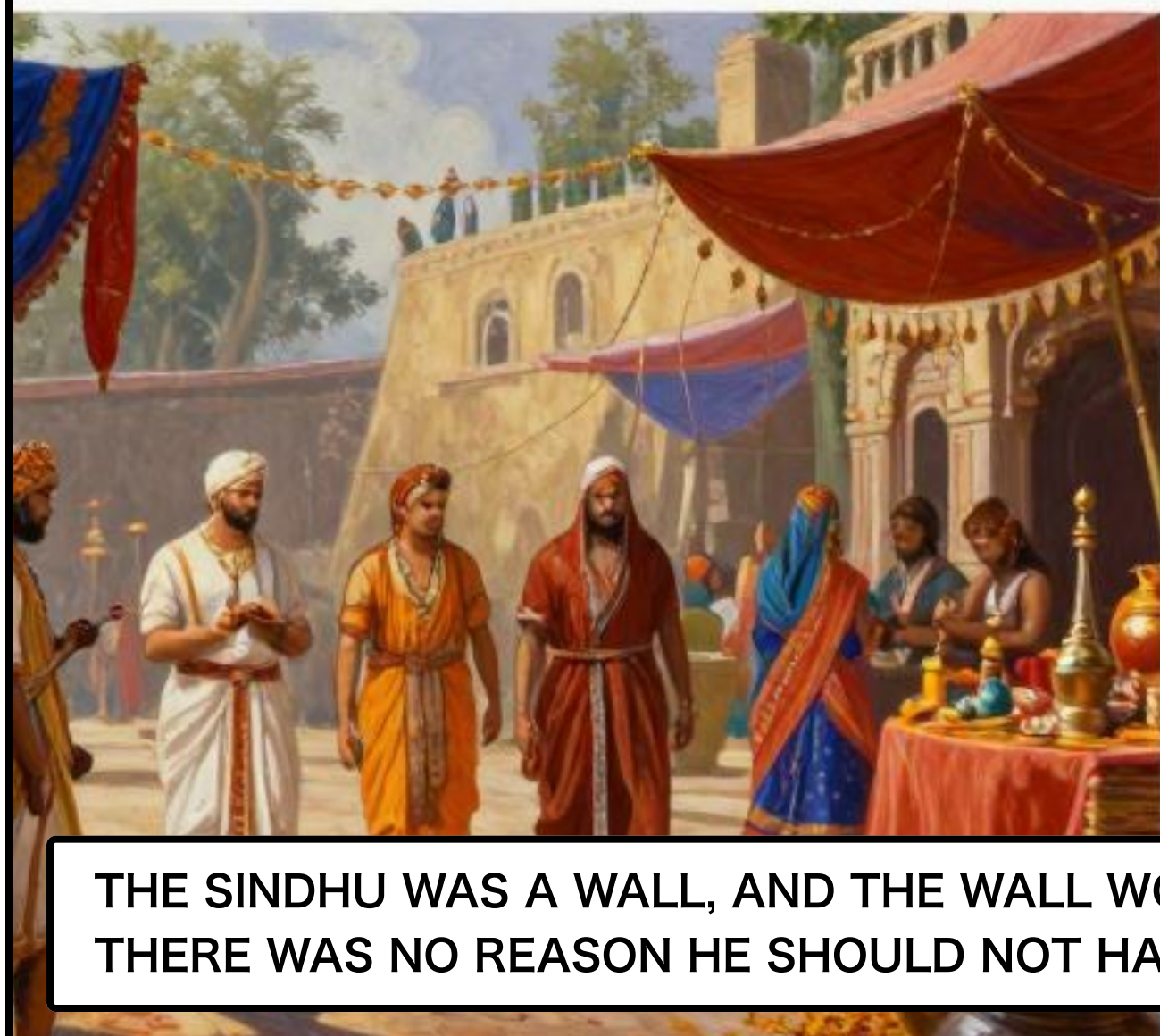
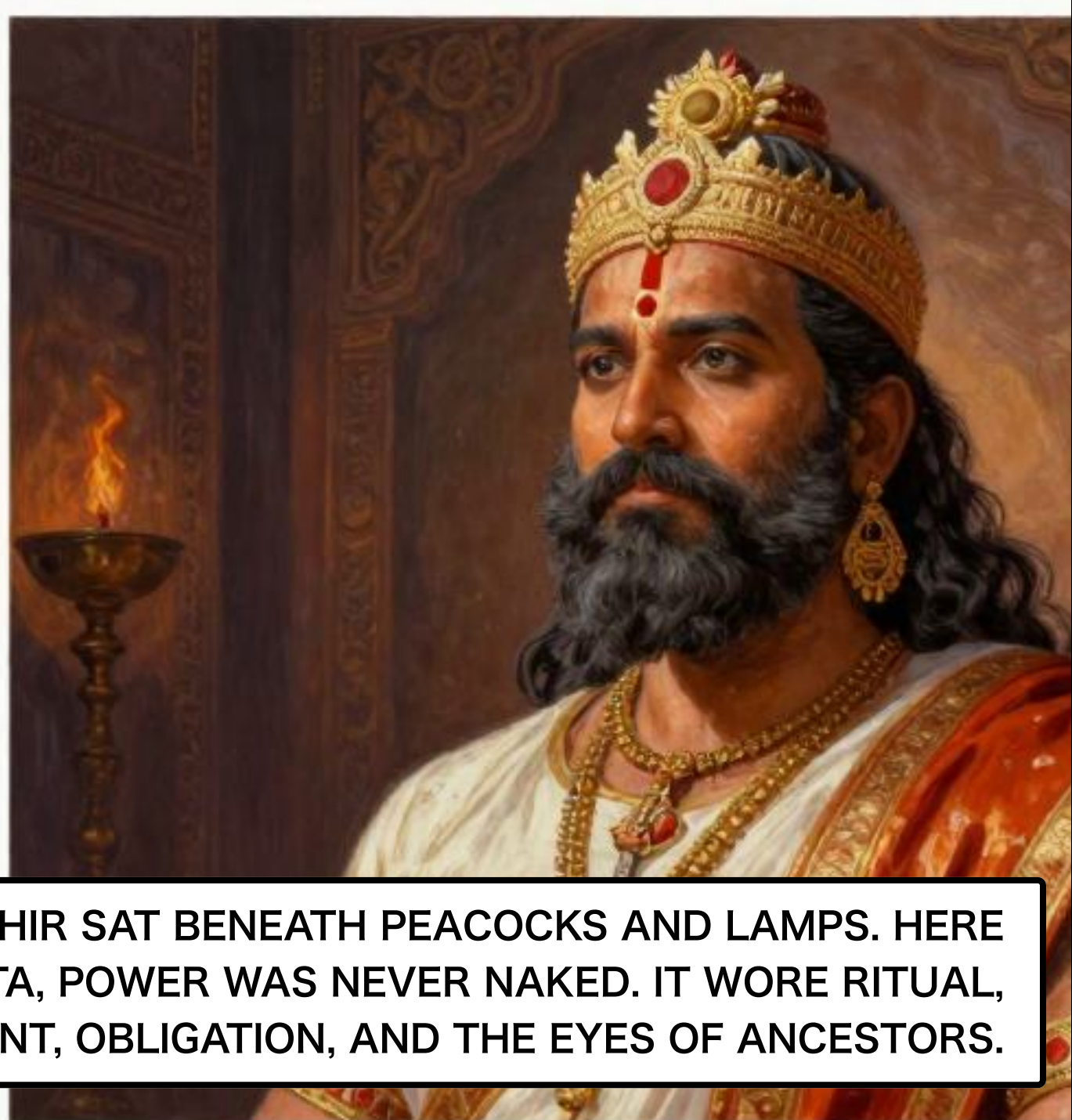
AROR. CAPITAL OF THE RIVER KINGDOM OF SINDH, ON THE EASTERN BANK OF THE SINDHU. RULED BY THE BRAHMIN CHACH DYNASTY.



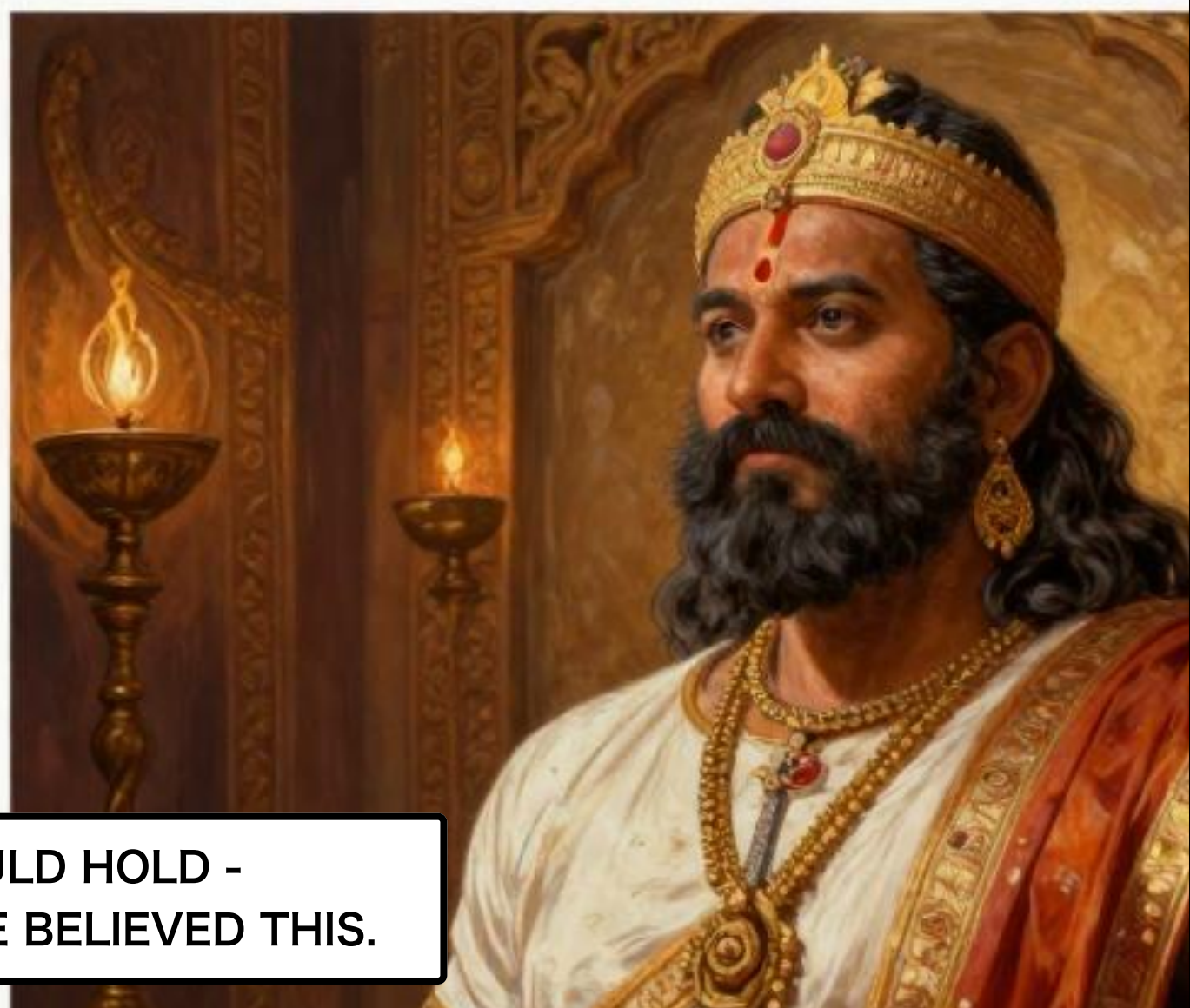
IN THE MARKETS OF AROR, DHARMA WAS ROUTINE: PRIEST AND MONK, TRADER AND HORSEMAN, SHRINE AND SHOP, ALL MOVING THROUGH THE SAME SUNLIT STREETS WITHOUT NEEDING TO ERASE ONE ANOTHER.



RAJA DAHIR SAT BENEATH PEACOCKS AND LAMPS. HERE IN BHARATA, POWER WAS NEVER NAKED. IT WORE RITUAL, RESTRAINT, OBLIGATION, AND THE EYES OF ANCESTORS.



THE SINDHU WAS A WALL, AND THE WALL WOULD HOLD - THERE WAS NO REASON HE SHOULD NOT HAVE BELIEVED THIS.

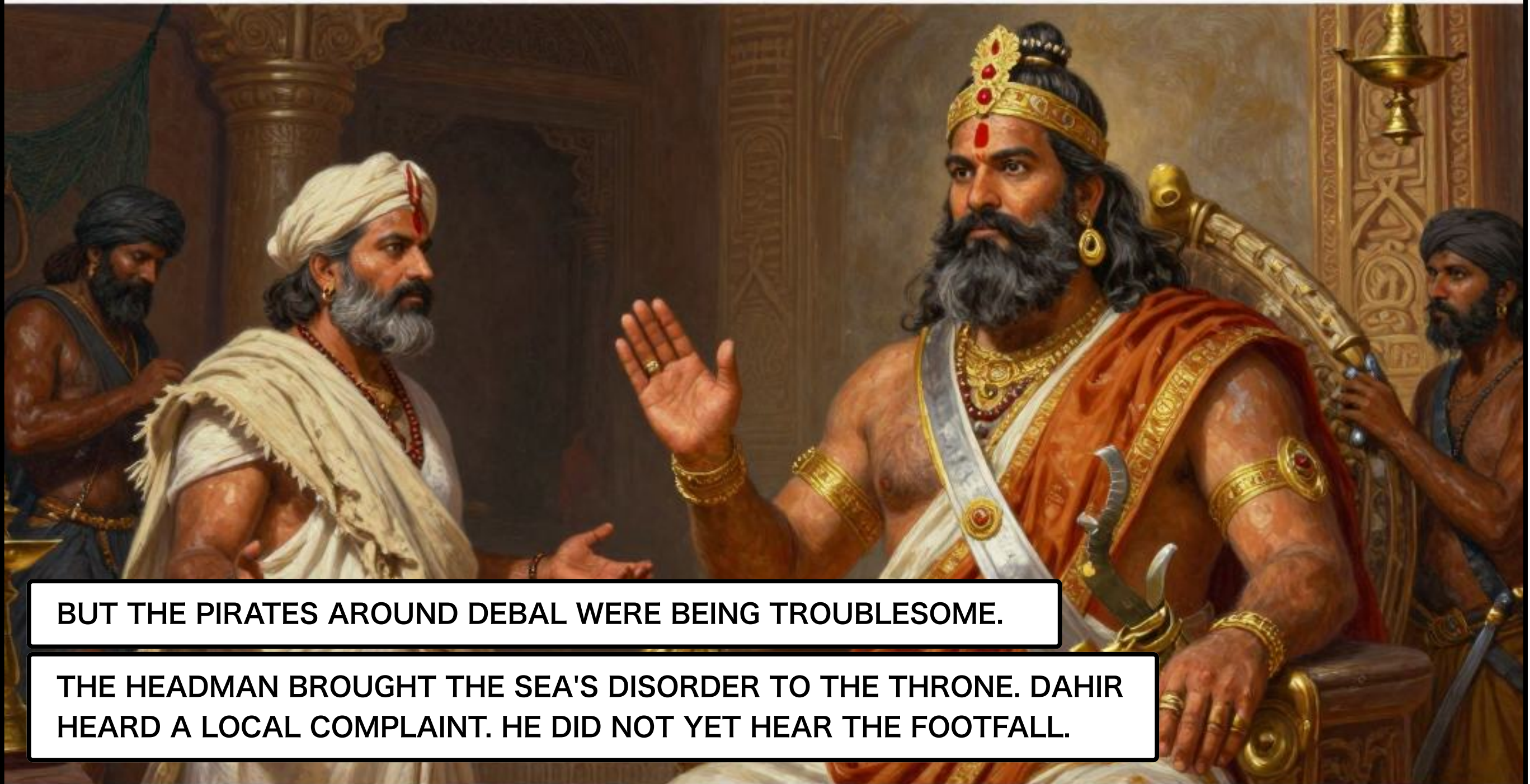




AT THE RIVER'S MOUTH,
WHERE THE SINDHU FINALLY
MET THE SEA, STOOD DEBAL.

ITS HARBOUR FED AROR
UPRIVER. ITS GREAT TEMPLE
ROSE ABOVE THE ROOFTOPS.

FROM THE HIGHEST PINNACLE OF ITS SHIKHARA FLEW A BANNER OF RED
SILK SO VAST THAT SHIPS OUT AT SEA TOOK THEIR BEARINGS BY IT.

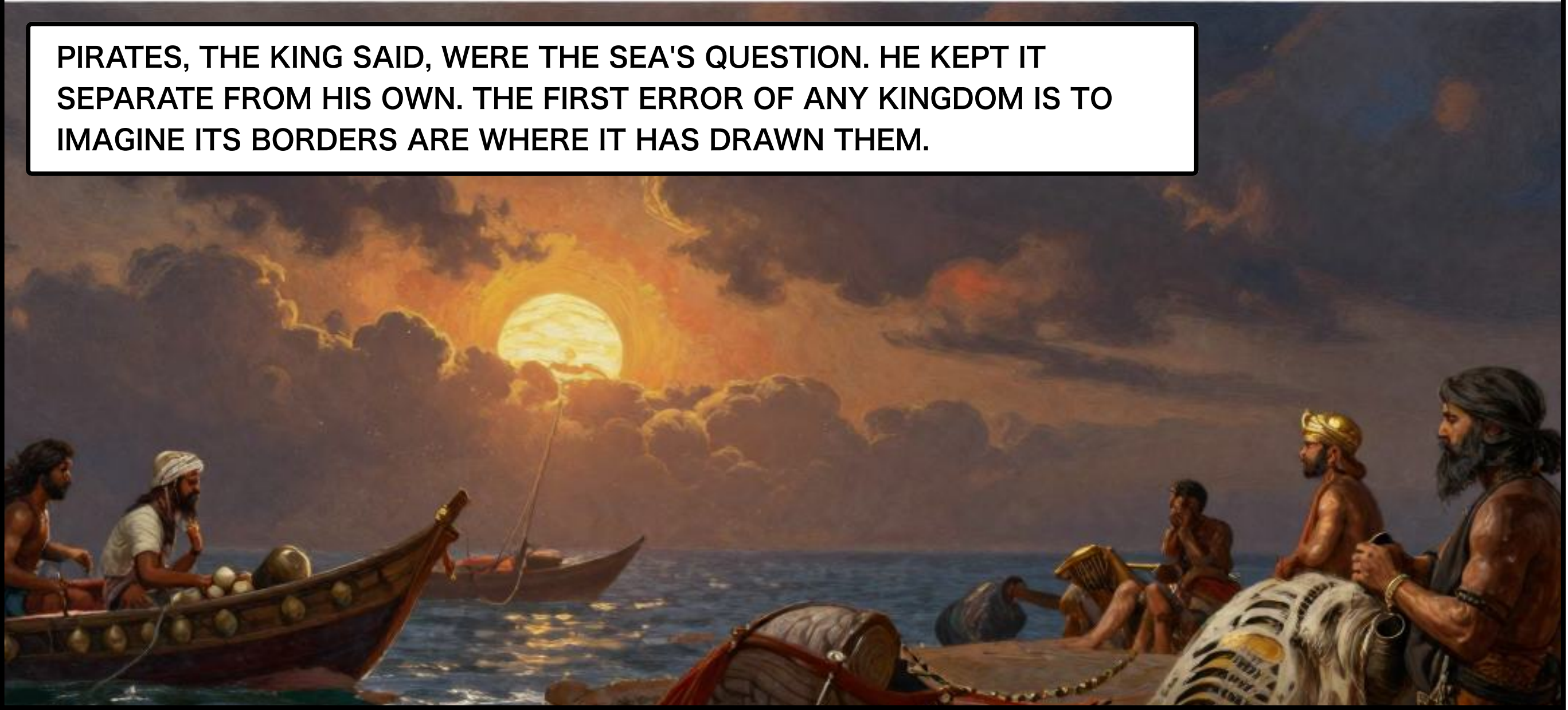


BUT THE PIRATES AROUND DEBAL WERE BEING TROUBLESOME.

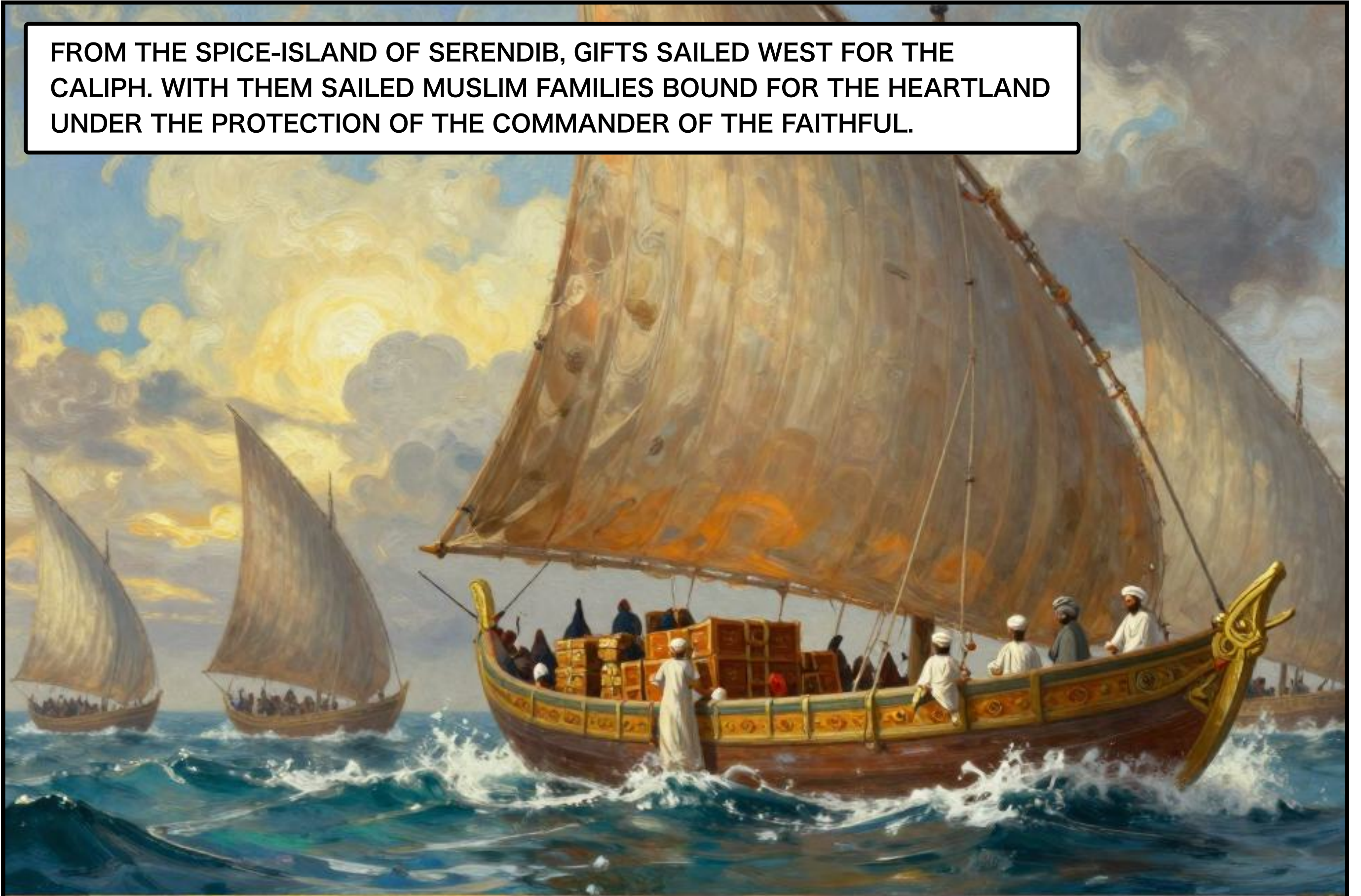
THE HEADMAN BROUGHT THE SEA'S DISORDER TO THE THRONE. DAHIR
HEARD A LOCAL COMPLAINT. HE DID NOT YET HEAR THE FOOTFALL.



PIRATES, THE KING SAID, WERE THE SEA'S QUESTION. HE KEPT IT
SEPARATE FROM HIS OWN. THE FIRST ERROR OF ANY KINGDOM IS TO
IMAGINE ITS BORDERS ARE WHERE IT HAS DRAWN THEM.



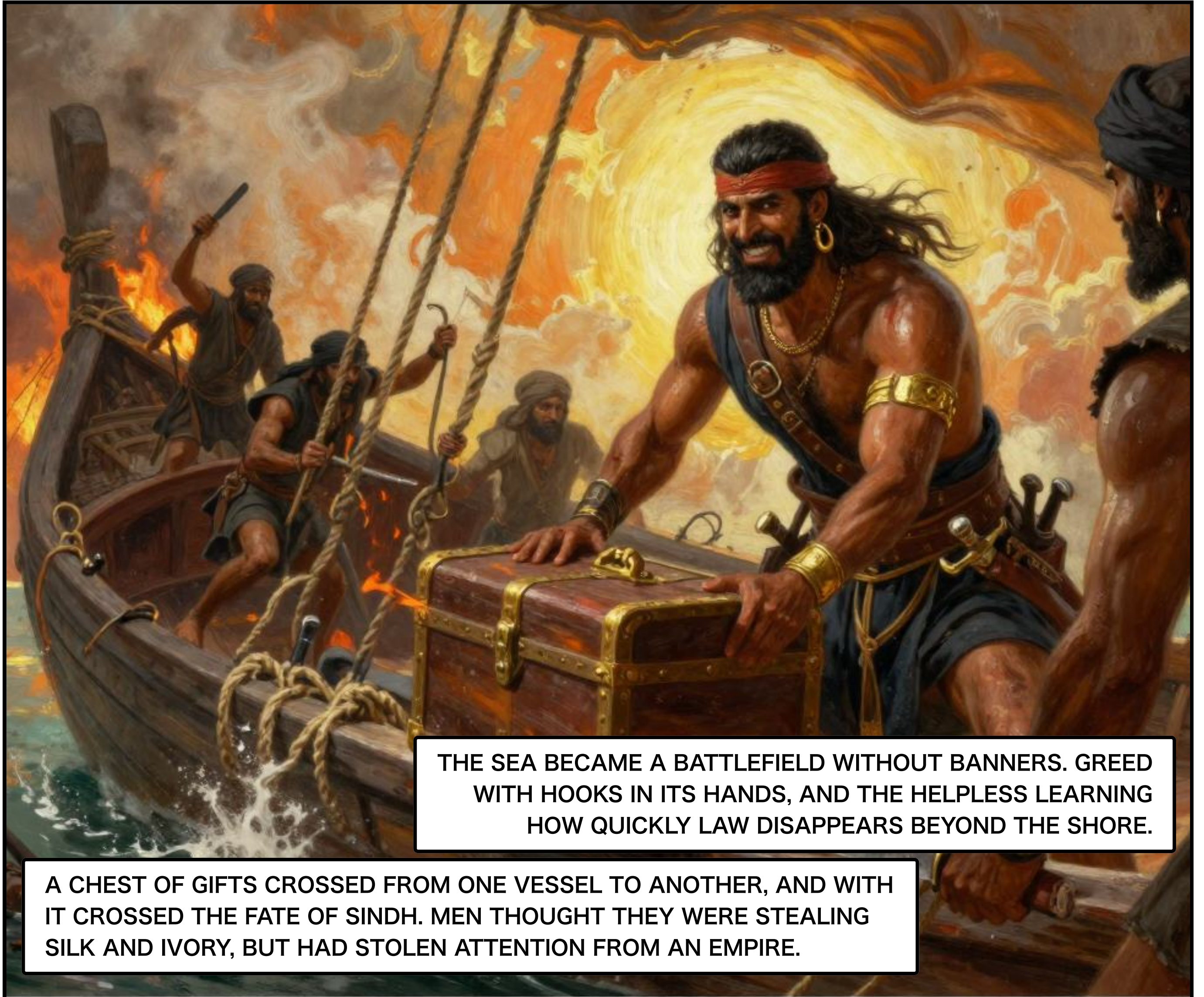
FROM THE SPICE-ISLAND OF SERENDIB, GIFTS SAILED WEST FOR THE CALIPH. WITH THEM SAILED MUSLIM FAMILIES BOUND FOR THE HEARTLAND UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL.



ON THE DECK, AN OLD MAN'S PALMS LIFTED TO HEAVEN. A CHILD LAUGHING AT FLYING FISH.



DANGER FIRST APPEARS AS A SMALL DARK SHAPE BEHIND THE ORDINARY WORLD. THE CONVOY SAILED INSIDE ITS OWN PEACE, AND THE PEACE HAD ALREADY BEEN SIGHTED BY MEN WHO LIVED OUTSIDE IT.



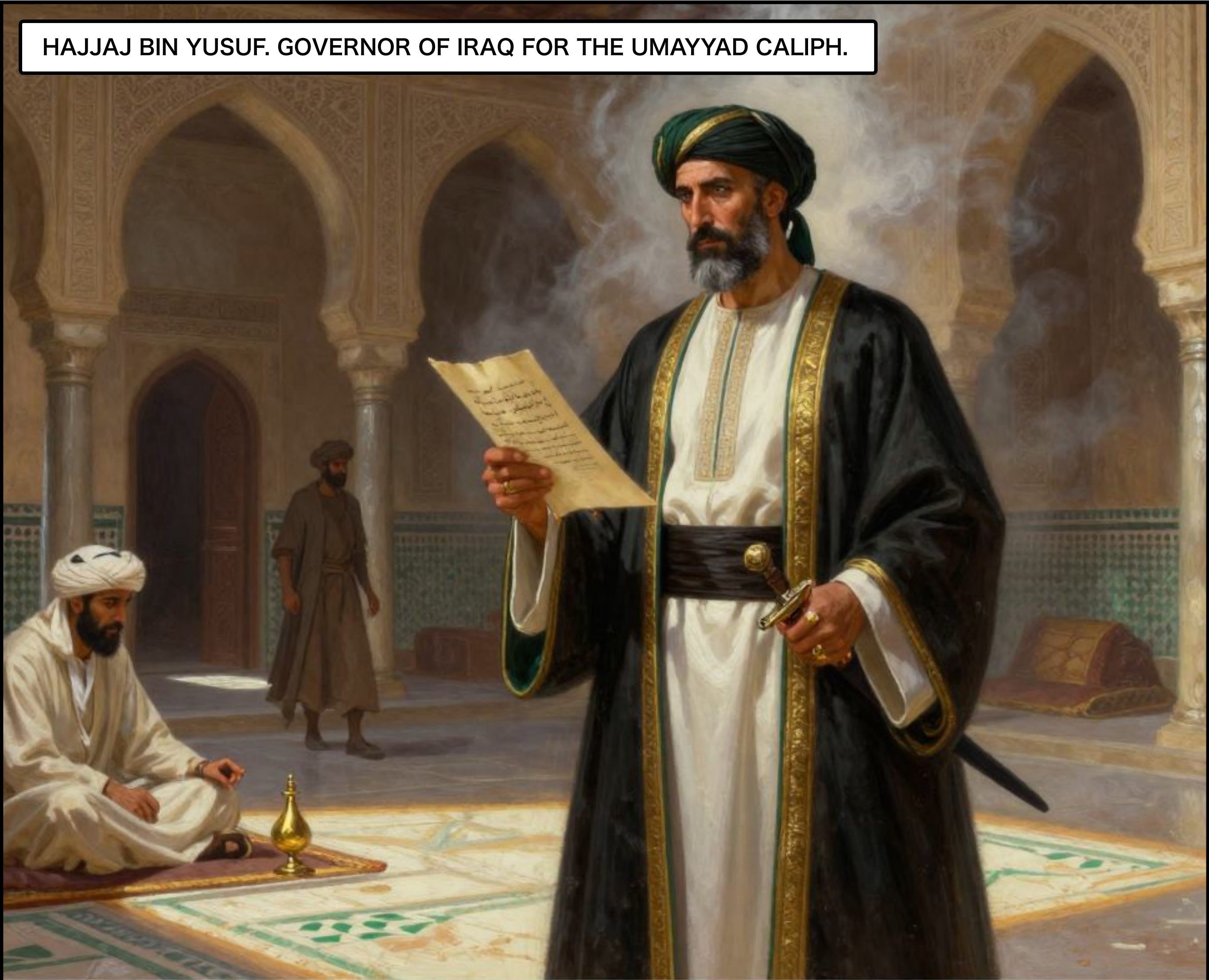
THE SEA BECAME A BATTLEFIELD WITHOUT BANNERS. GREED WITH HOOKS IN ITS HANDS, AND THE HELPLESS LEARNING HOW QUICKLY LAW DISAPPEARS BEYOND THE SHORE.

A CHEST OF GIFTS CROSSED FROM ONE VESSEL TO ANOTHER, AND WITH IT CROSSED THE FATE OF SINDH. MEN THOUGHT THEY WERE STEALING SILK AND IVORY, BUT HAD STOLEN ATTENTION FROM AN EMPIRE.

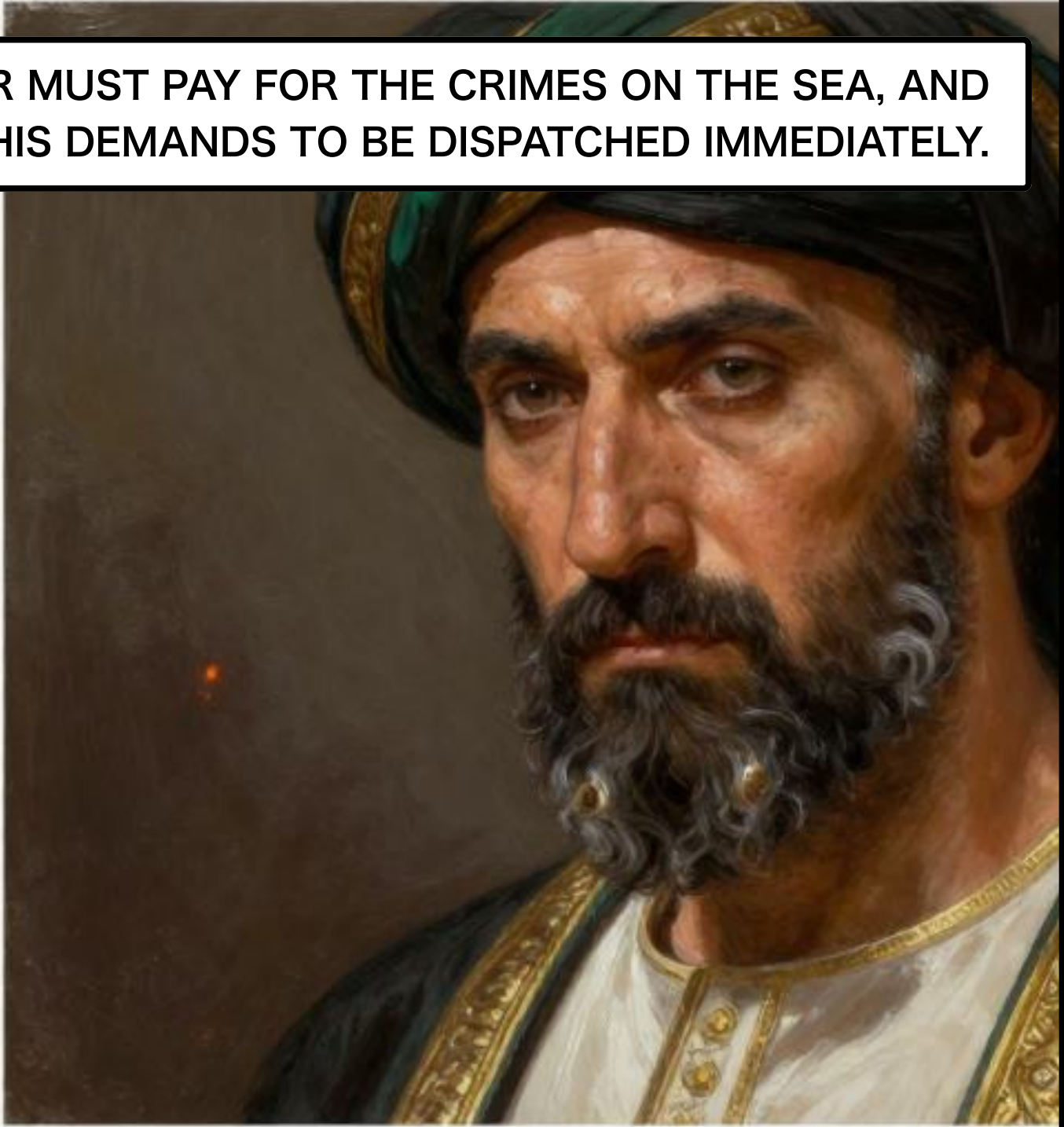
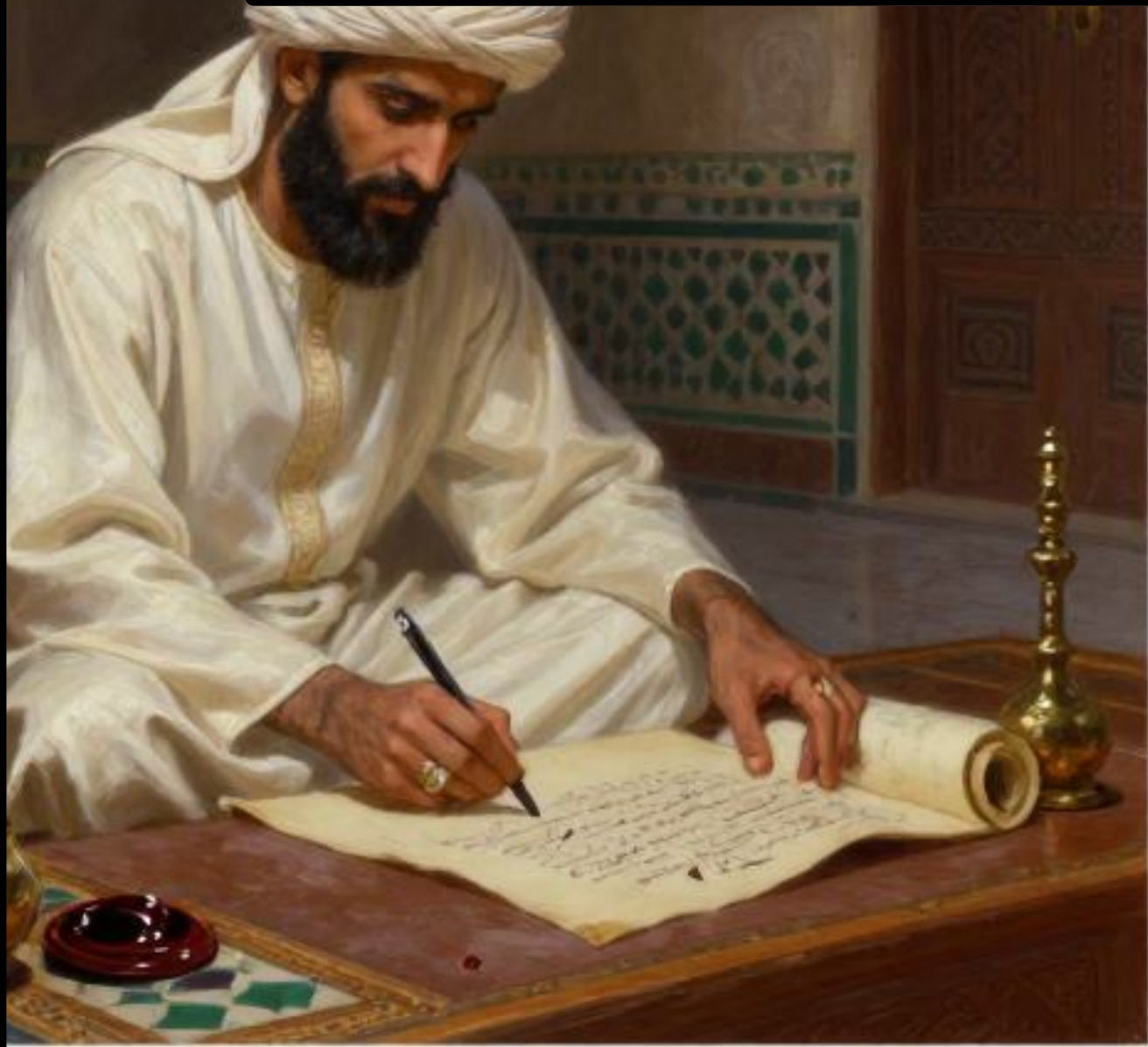


ONE WOMAN'S CRY, CARRIED ACROSS THE WATER, REACHED IRAQ. IT WAS ENOUGH. THE EMPIRE HAD BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR THE SMALLEST REASON. NOW IT HAD ONE.

HAJJAJ BIN YUSUF. GOVERNOR OF IRAQ FOR THE Umayyad Caliph.

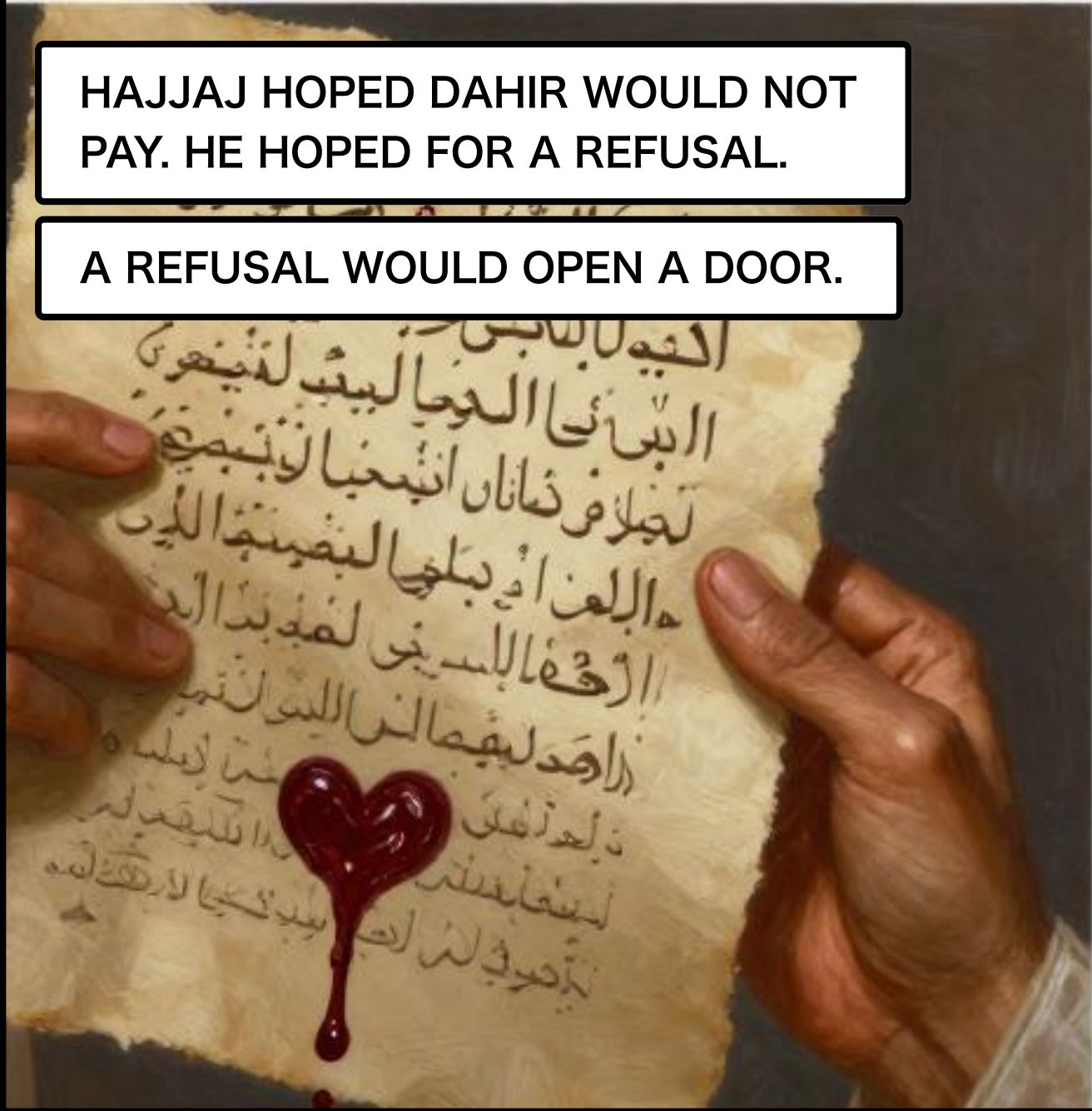


DECIDED THAT THE KINGDOM OF AROR MUST PAY FOR THE CRIMES ON THE SEA, AND A SCRIBE FAITHFULLY CAPTURED HIS DEMANDS TO BE DISPATCHED IMMEDIATELY.

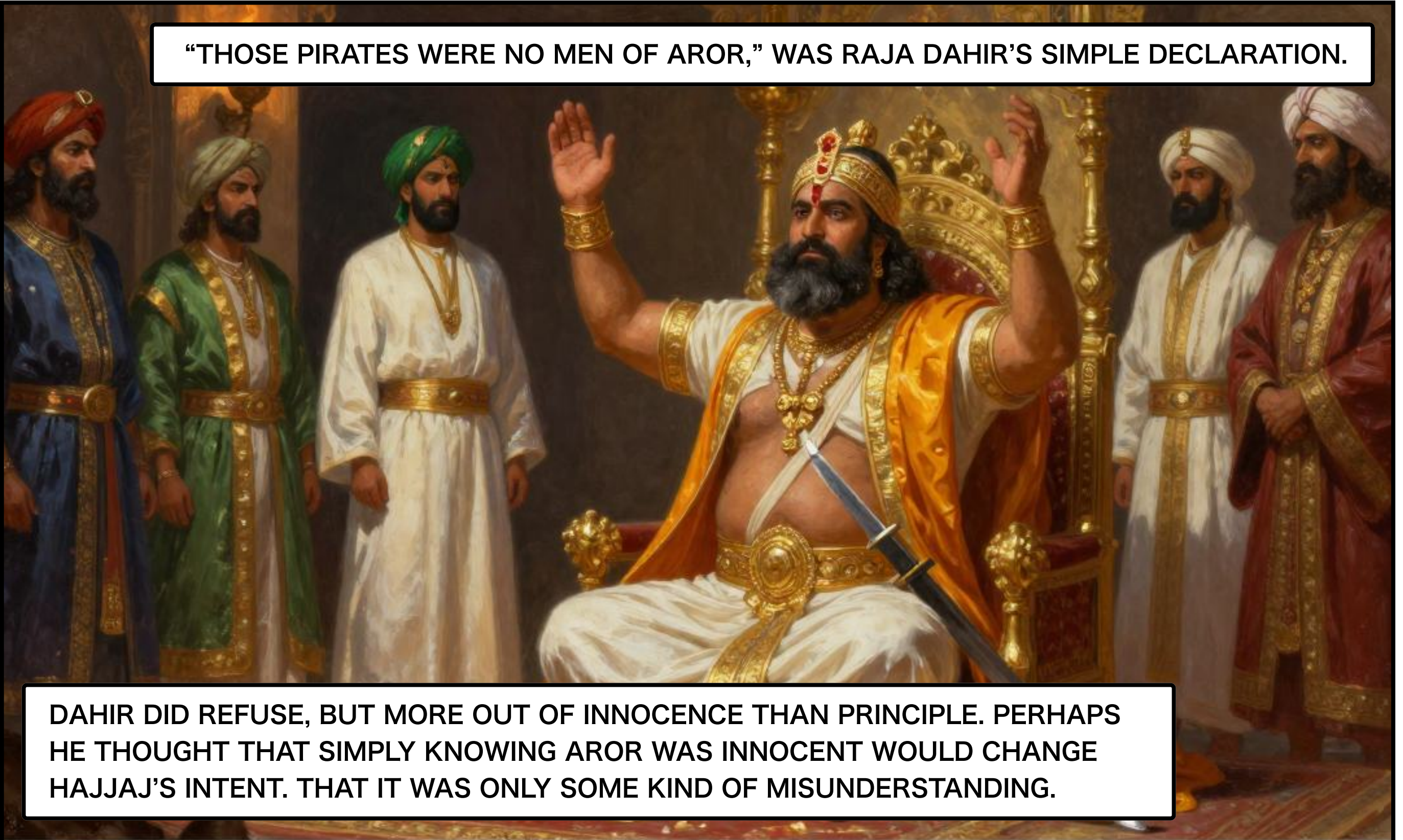


HAJJAJ HOPED DAHIR WOULD NOT PAY. HE HOPED FOR A REFUSAL.

A REFUSAL WOULD OPEN A DOOR.

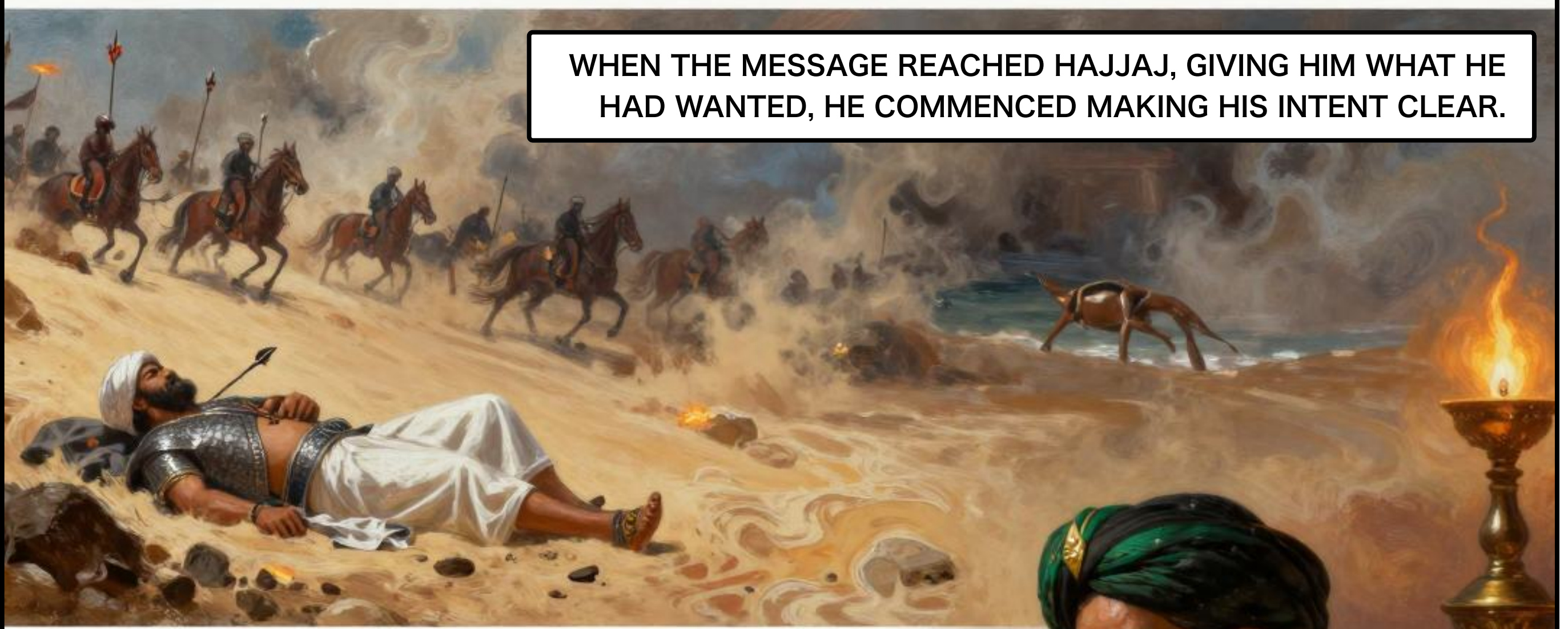


"THOSE PIRATES WERE NO MEN OF AROR," WAS RAJA DAHIR'S SIMPLE DECLARATION.



DAHIR DID REFUSE, BUT MORE OUT OF INNOCENCE THAN PRINCIPLE. PERHAPS HE THOUGHT THAT SIMPLY KNOWING AROR WAS INNOCENT WOULD CHANGE HAJJAJ'S INTENT. THAT IT WAS ONLY SOME KIND OF MISUNDERSTANDING.

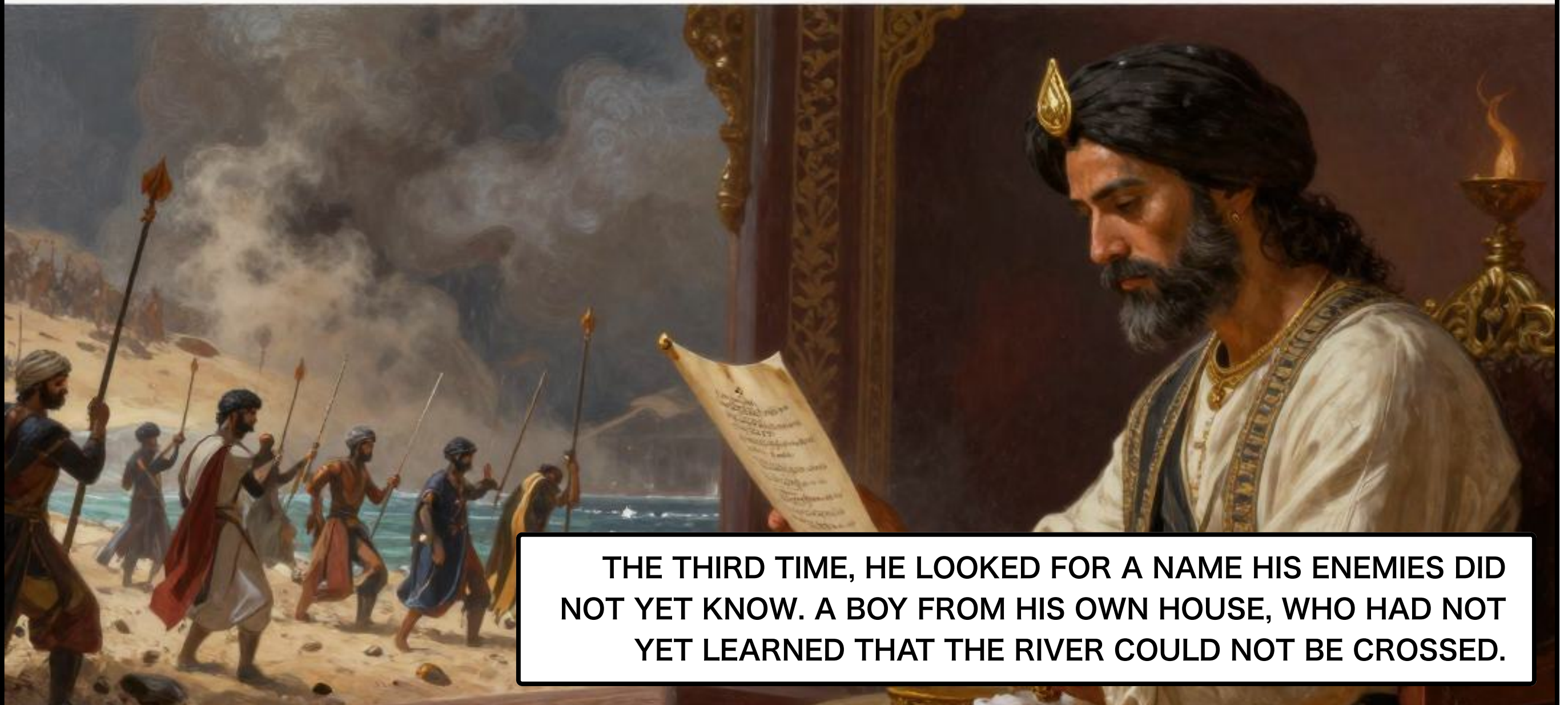
WHEN THE MESSAGE REACHED HAJJAJ, GIVING HIM WHAT HE HAD WANTED, HE COMMENCED MAKING HIS INTENT CLEAR.

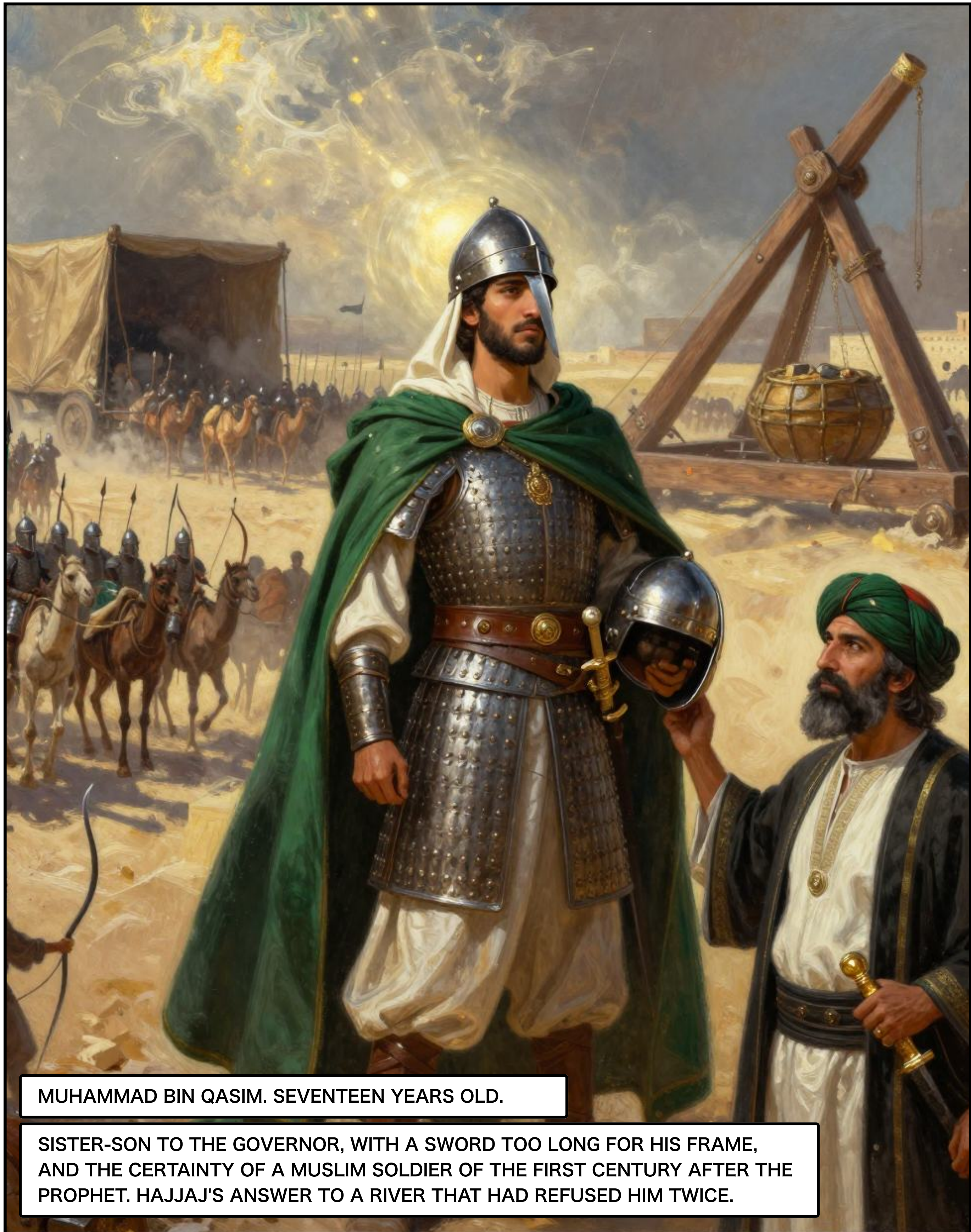


TWICE HE SENT MEN AGAINST THE RIVER.
TWICE THE SINDHU BEAT THEM BACK INTO THE DESERT.



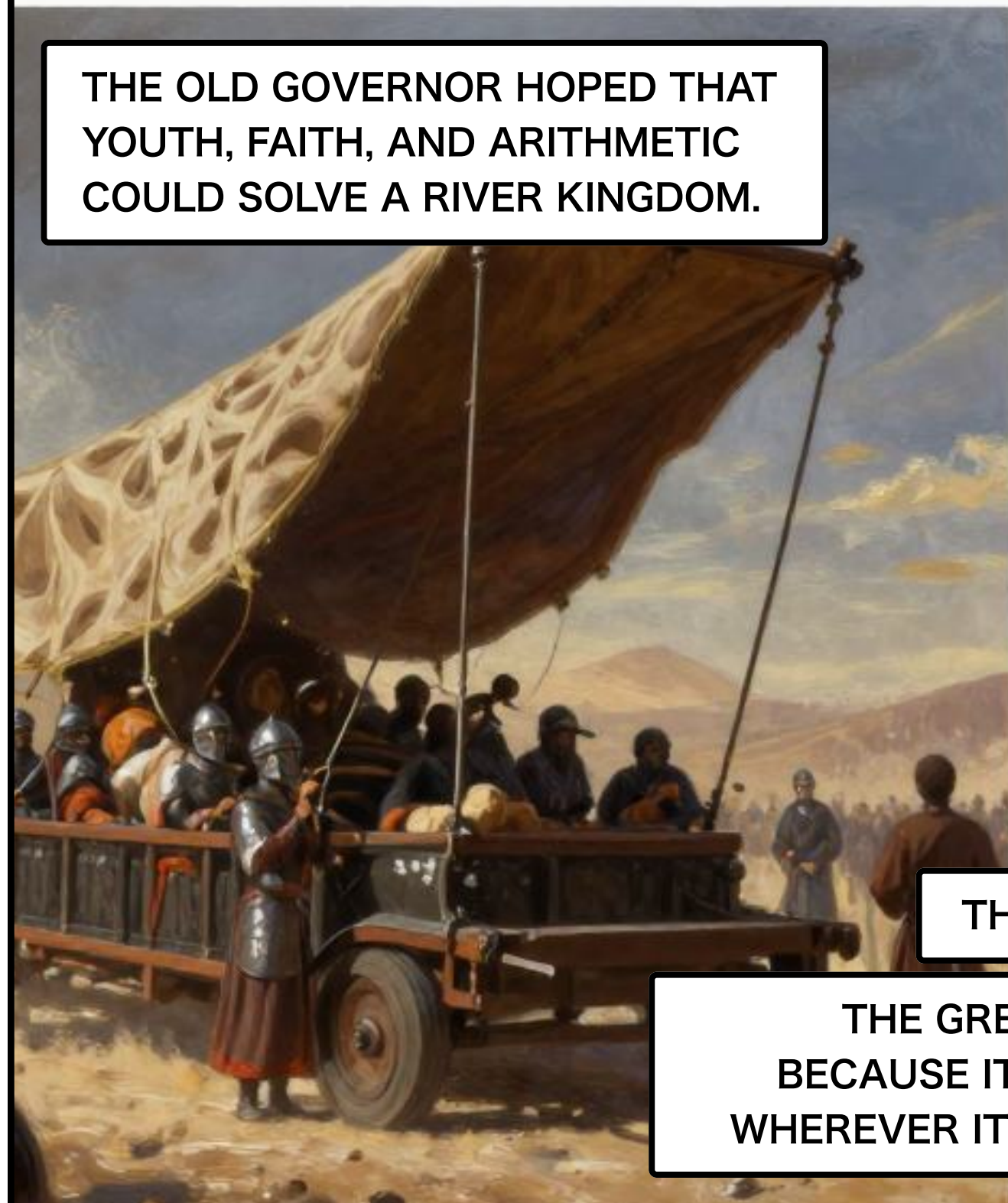
THE THIRD TIME, HE LOOKED FOR A NAME HIS ENEMIES DID NOT YET KNOW. A BOY FROM HIS OWN HOUSE, WHO HAD NOT YET LEARNED THAT THE RIVER COULD NOT BE CROSSED.



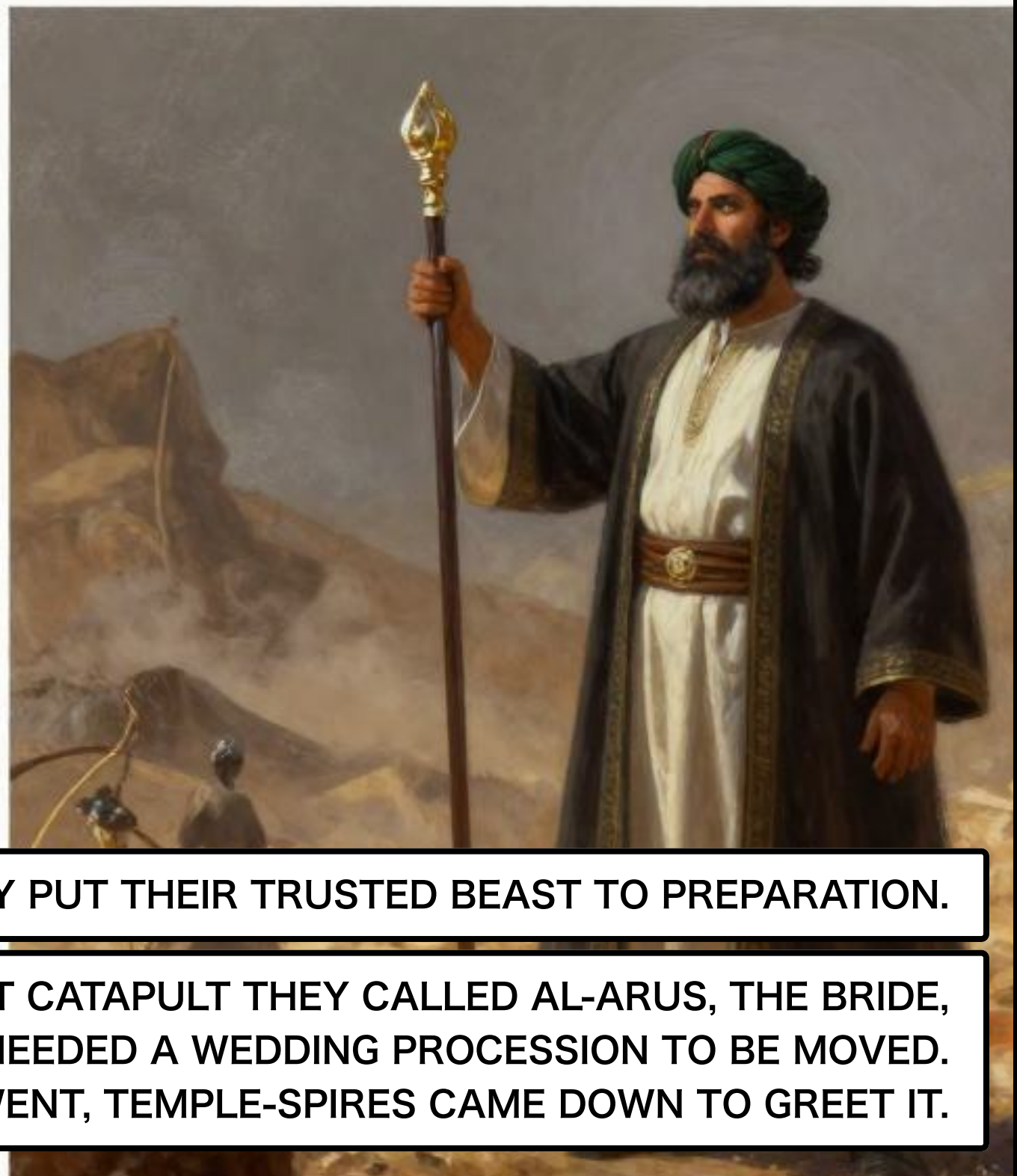


MUHAMMAD BIN QASIM. SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.

SISTER-SON TO THE GOVERNOR, WITH A SWORD TOO LONG FOR HIS FRAME, AND THE CERTAINTY OF A MUSLIM SOLDIER OF THE FIRST CENTURY AFTER THE PROPHET. HAJJAJ'S ANSWER TO A RIVER THAT HAD REFUSED HIM TWICE.



THE OLD GOVERNOR HOPED THAT YOUTH, FAITH, AND ARITHMETIC COULD SOLVE A RIVER KINGDOM.



THEY PUT THEIR TRUSTED BEAST TO PREPARATION.

THE GREAT CATAPULT THEY CALLED AL-ARUS, THE BRIDE, BECAUSE IT NEEDED A WEDDING PROCESSION TO BE MOVED. WHEREVER IT WENT, TEMPLE-SPIRES CAME DOWN TO GREET IT.

SIX THOUSAND MEN BY THE DESERT ROAD. THE SIEGE TRAIN BY SEA. THE FULL WEIGHT OF AN EMPIRE YET TO LOSE A WAR, GATHERED AT THE EDGE OF ONE UNFAMILIAR TO GIVING IN CHEAPLY.

CAMELS, HORSES, WARRIORS - THESE HAD COME TO THE SINDHU MANY TIMES IN THE PAST. THIS HORDE ALSO CAME WITH VERSES IN THEIR MOUTHS.



OUT OF THE SALT-PANS INTO THE GREEN OF THE INDUS DELTA, THE FIRST RUNNING WATER SOME OF THE ARABS HAD EVER SEEN.



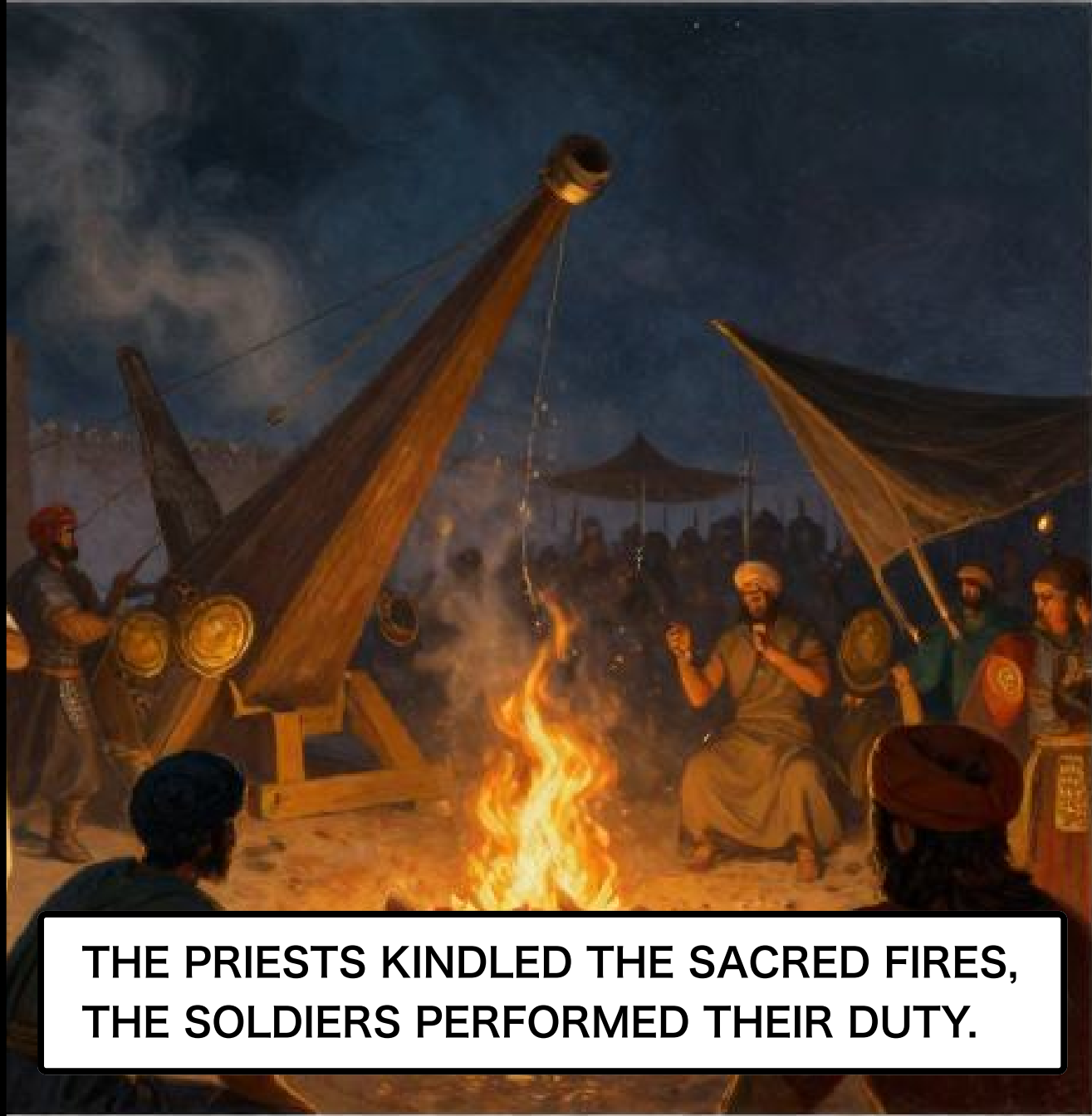
AND IN THE DISTANCE, THE BANNER OF DEBAL.





DEBAL CLOSED ITS GATES AND TRUSTED ITS WALLS. THE CONFIDENCE OF A PORT-TOWN THAT HAD NOT BEEN SERIOUSLY ATTACKED IN CENTURIES.

STONES STRUCK AND WALLS ENDURED.



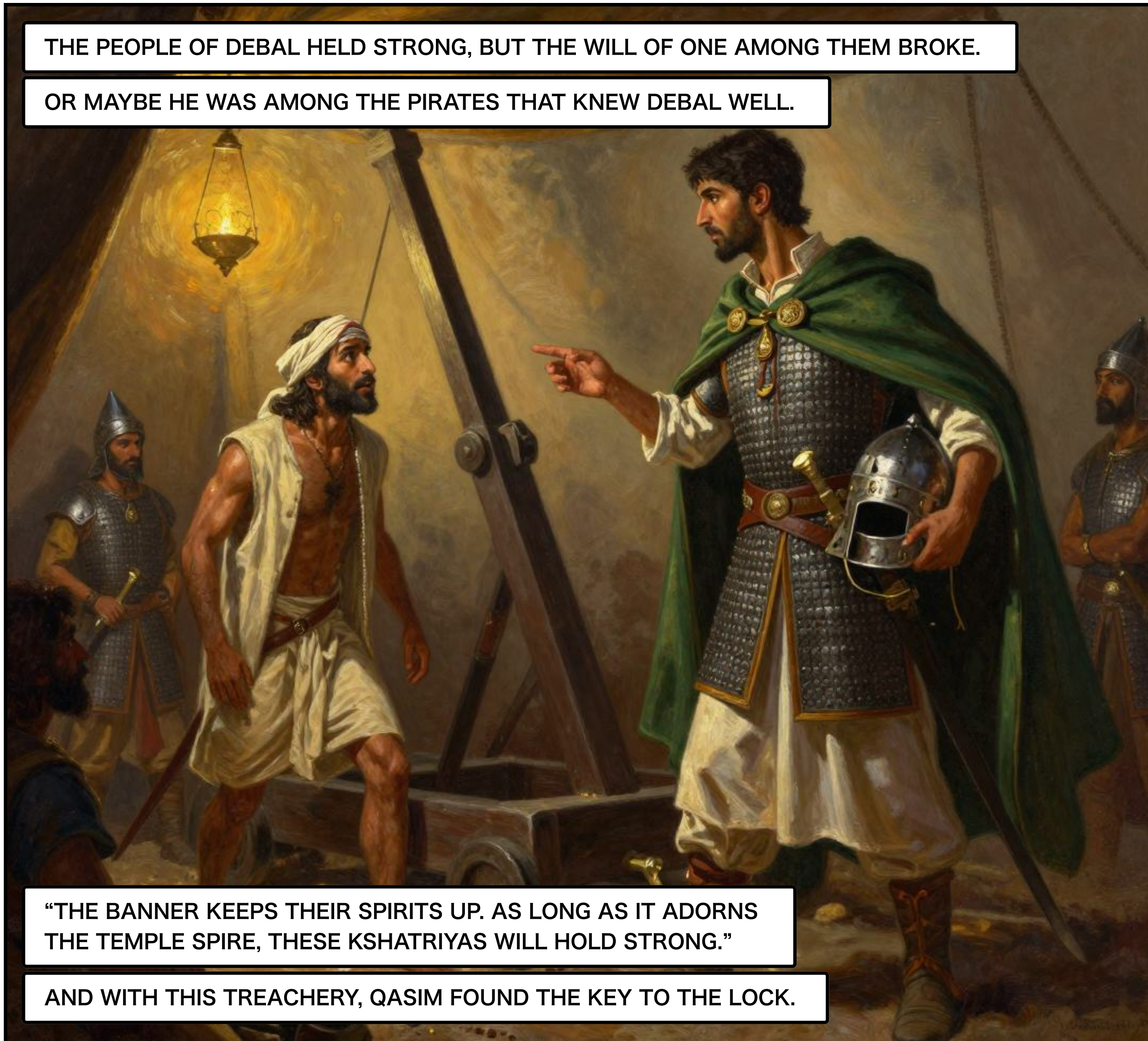
THE PRIESTS KINDLED THE SACRED FIRES, THE SOLDIERS PERFORMED THEIR DUTY.



YOUNG QASIM STOPPED LOOKING AT THE WALLS. HE NOTICED THE BANNERS AND PRAYERS.

THE PEOPLE OF DEBAL HELD STRONG, BUT THE WILL OF ONE AMONG THEM BROKE.

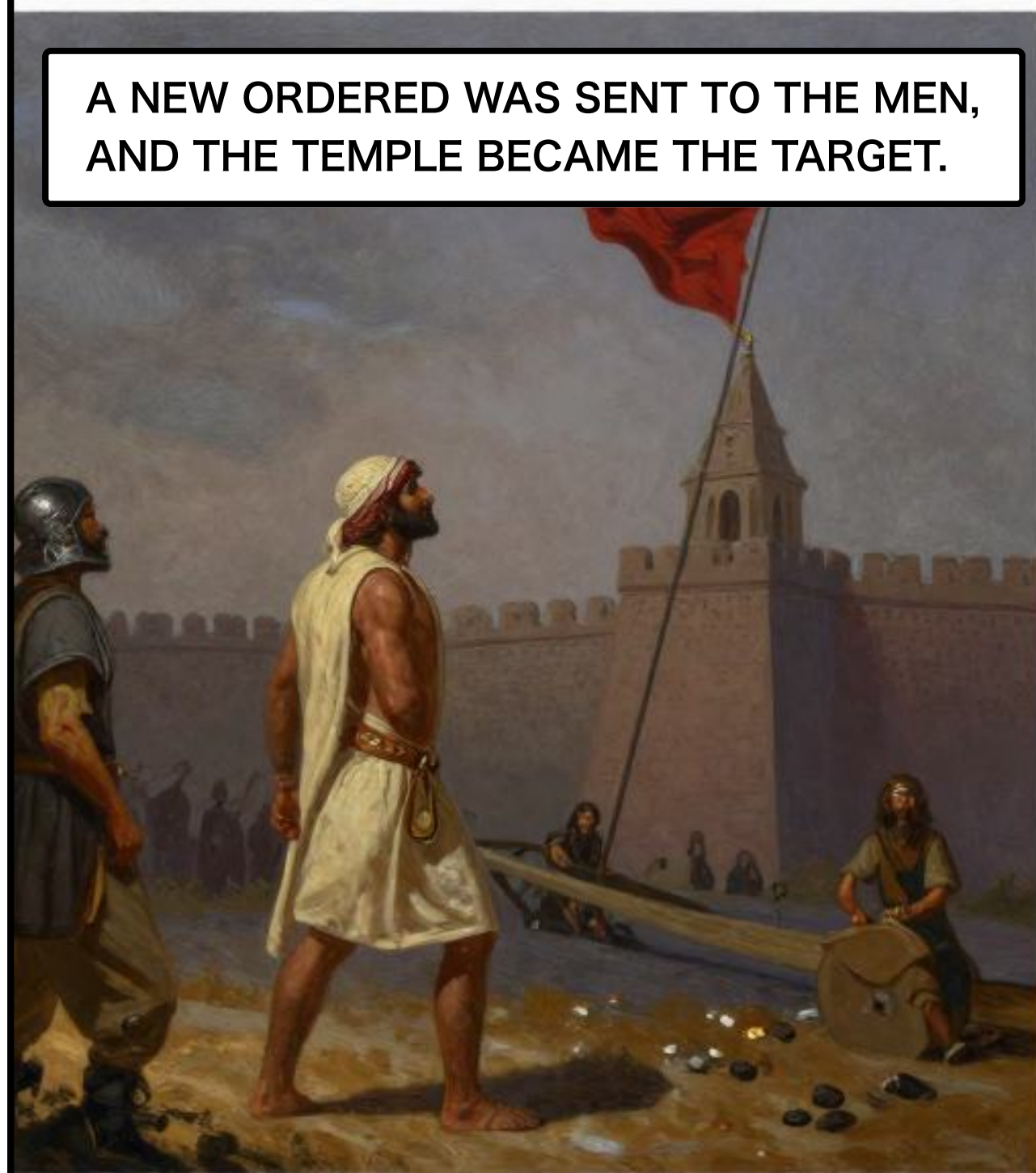
OR MAYBE HE WAS AMONG THE PIRATES THAT KNEW DEBAL WELL.



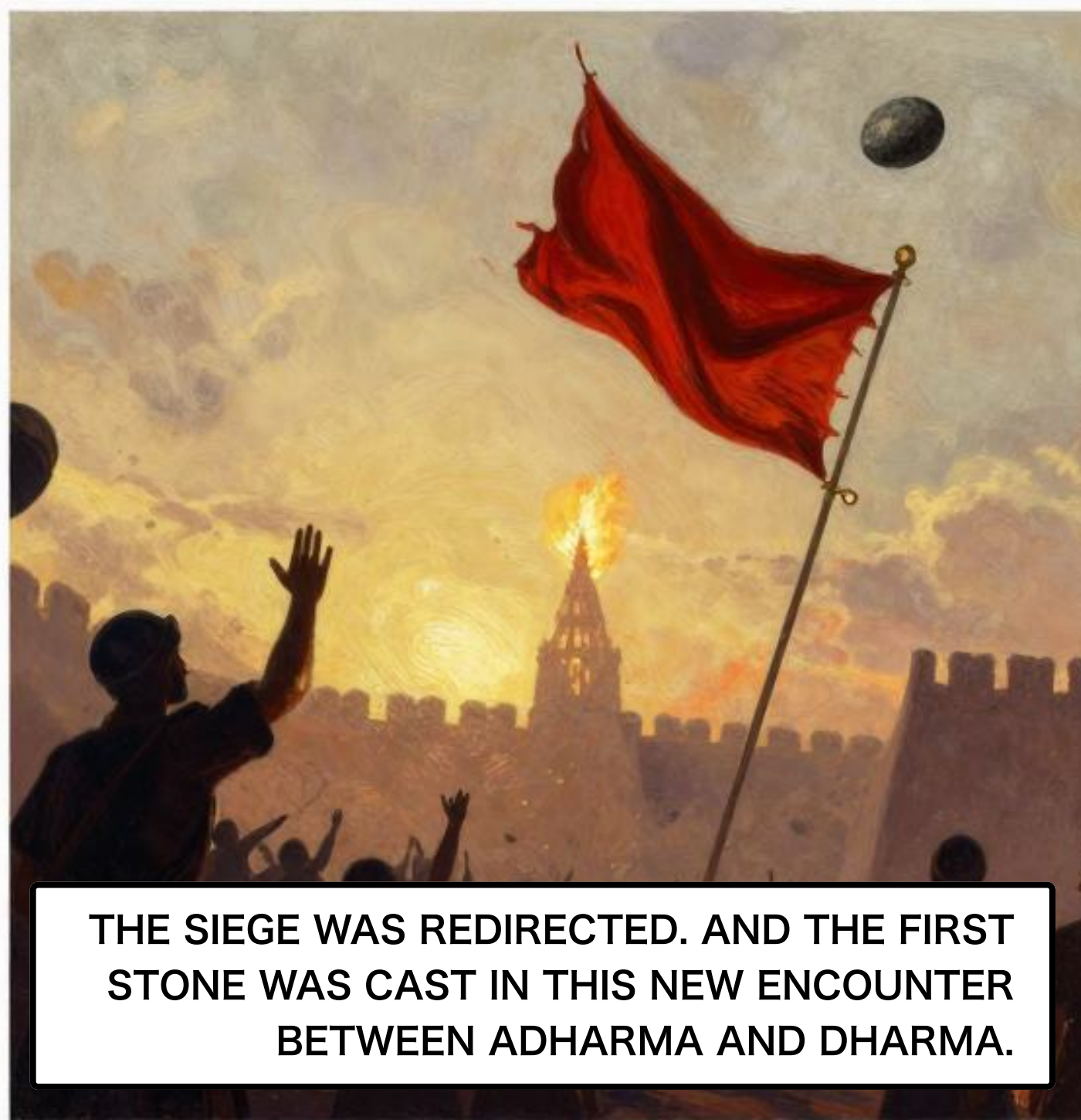
“THE BANNER KEEPS THEIR SPIRITS UP. AS LONG AS IT ADORNS THE TEMPLE SPIRE, THESE KSHATRIYAS WILL HOLD STRONG.”

AND WITH THIS TREACHERY, QASIM FOUND THE KEY TO THE LOCK.

A NEW ORDER WAS SENT TO THE MEN, AND THE TEMPLE BECAME THE TARGET.



THE SIEGE WAS REDIRECTED. AND THE FIRST STONE WAS CAST IN THIS NEW ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ADHARMA AND DHARMA.



BY THE TIME THE SUN ROSE, THE BANNER FELL.



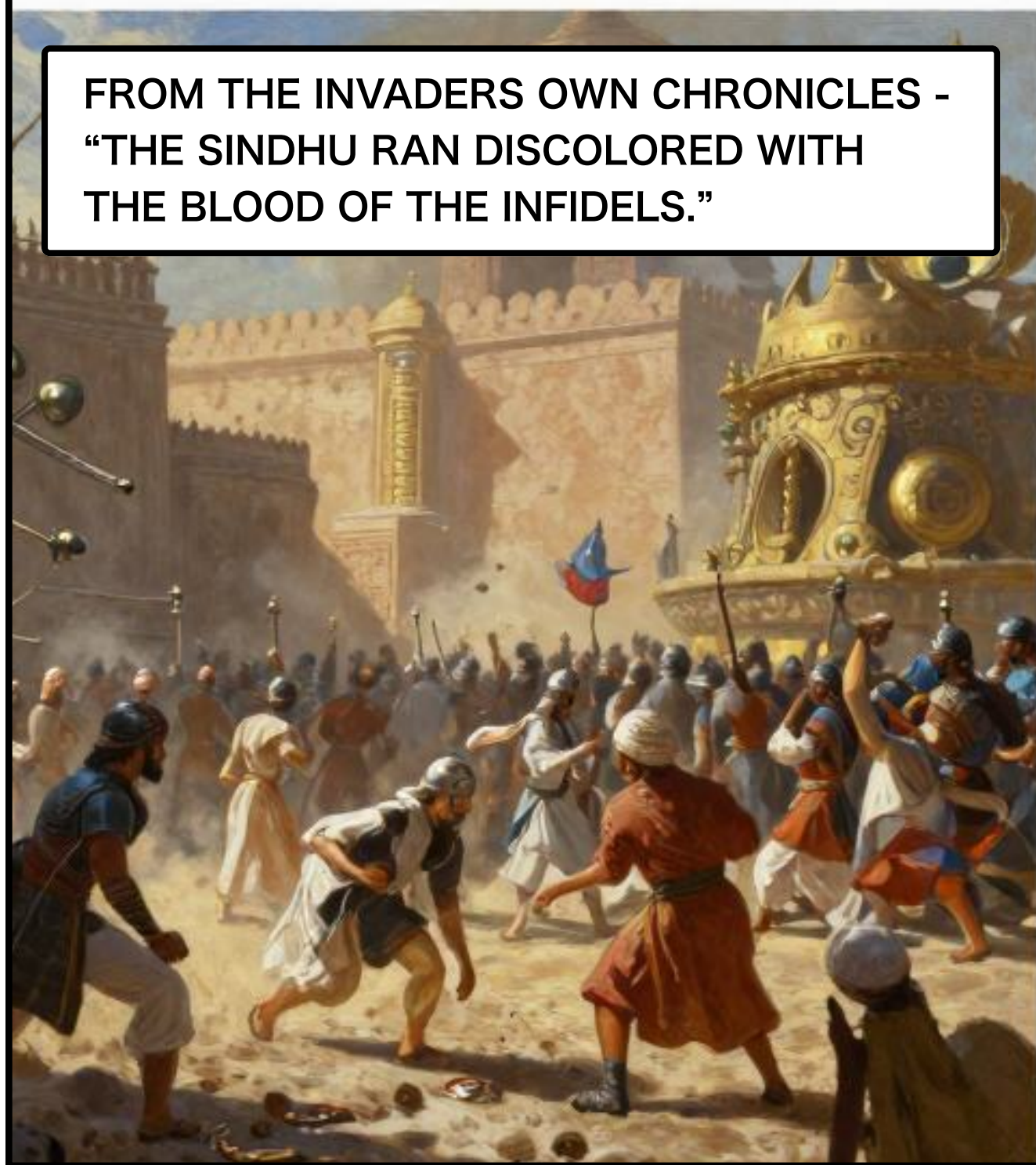


THE DEFENDERS' COURAGE BROKE WITH THE BANNER'S STAFF.

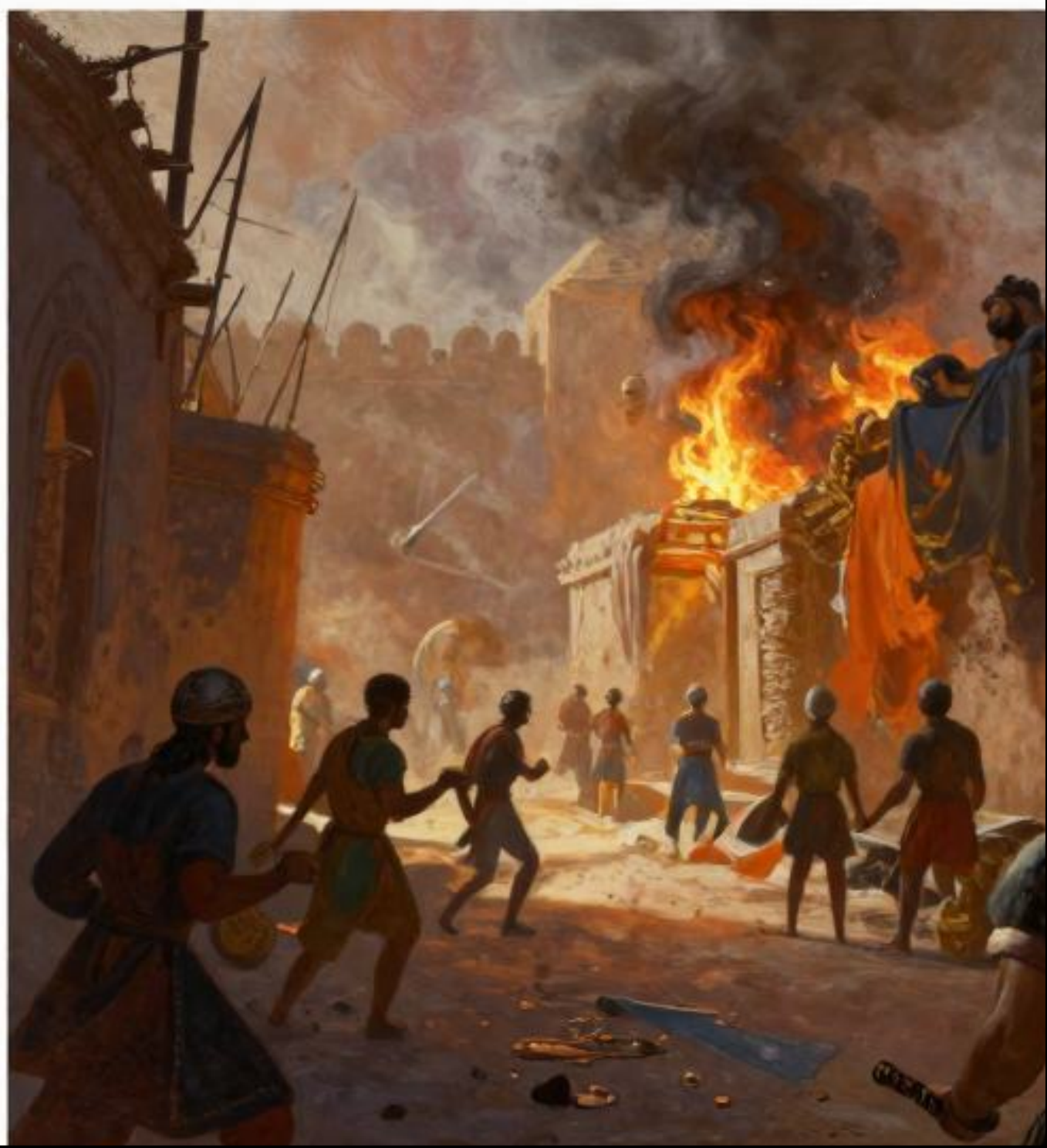
WHEN THE COURAGE DROPPED, THE GATES FELL OPEN. DEBAL GAVE WAY...



THE CAVALRY ENTERED WITH PURPOSE AND STRENGTH. TO THE SURPRISE OF DEBAL'S CITIZENS, THERE WAS NO MERCY FOR THE INNOCENT AND UNARMED.

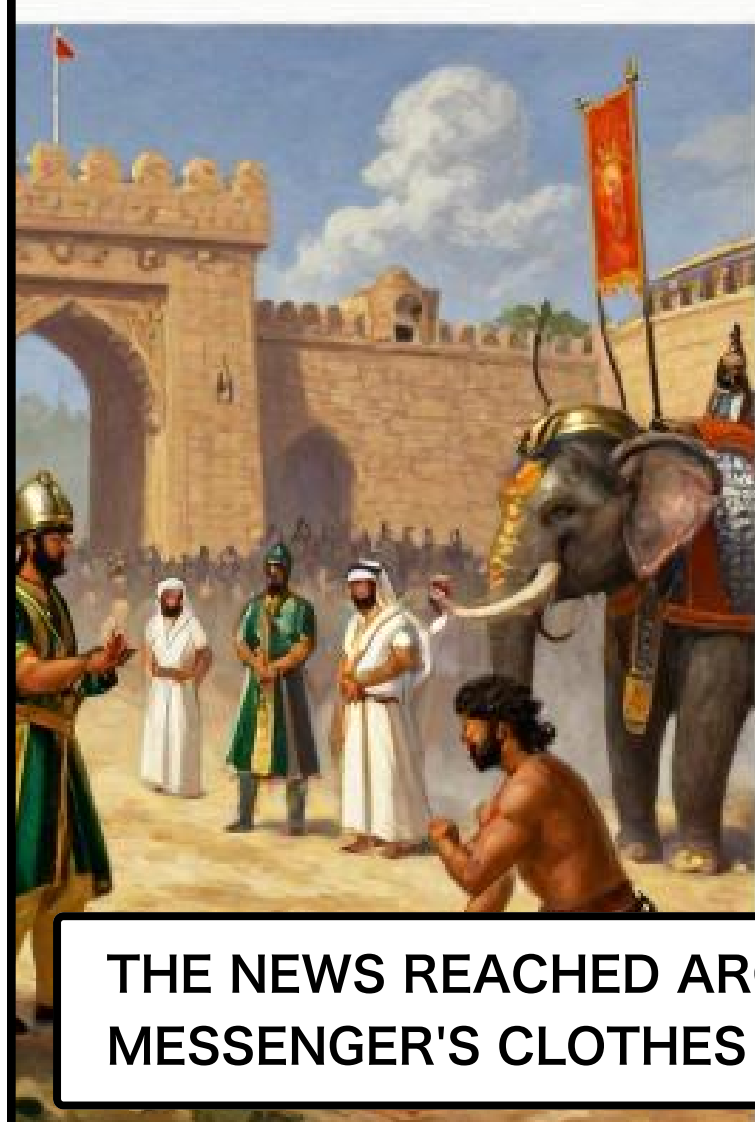
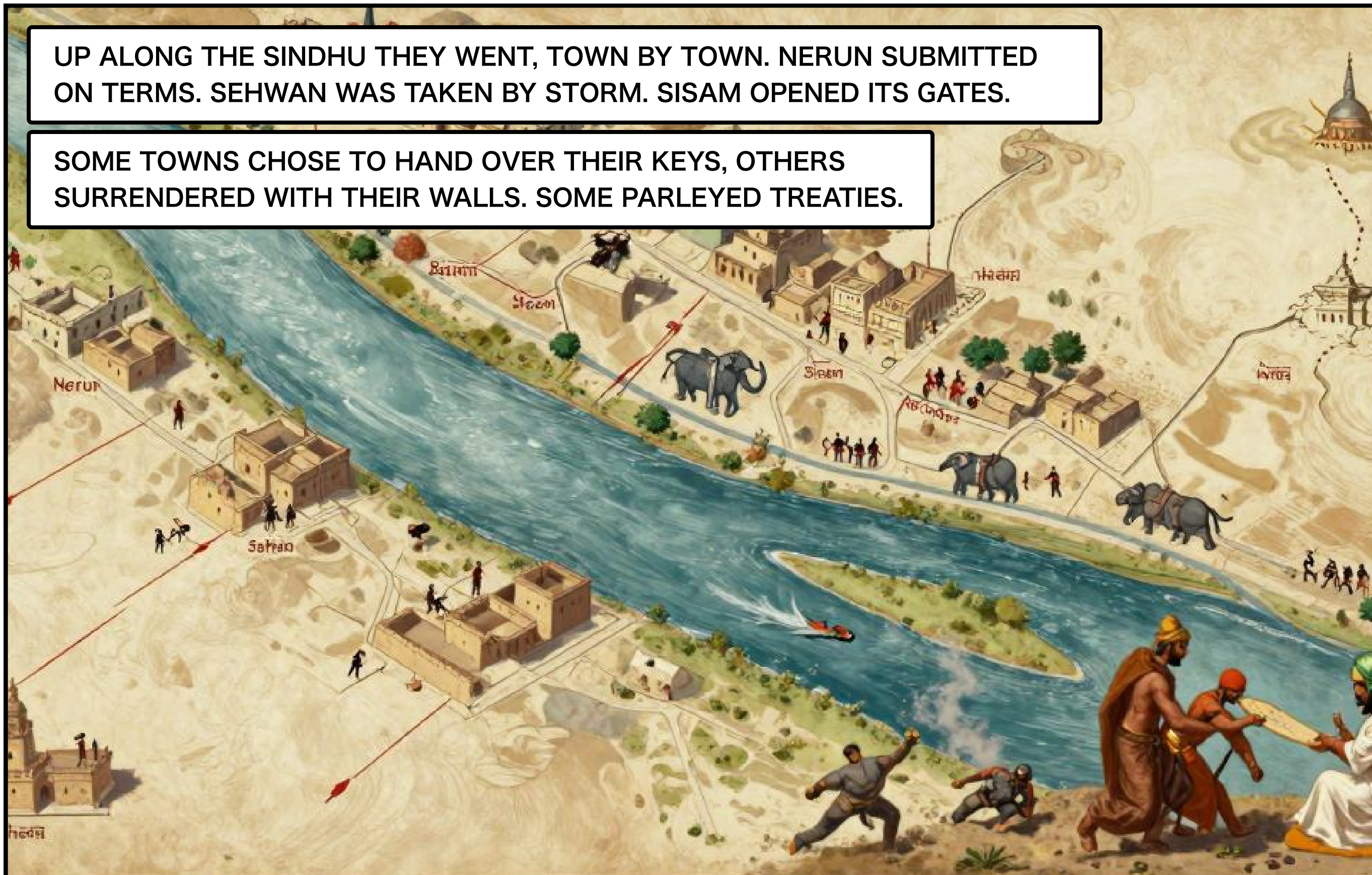


FROM THE INVADERS OWN CHRONICLES -
"THE SINDHU RAN DISCOLORED WITH
THE BLOOD OF THE INFIDELS."

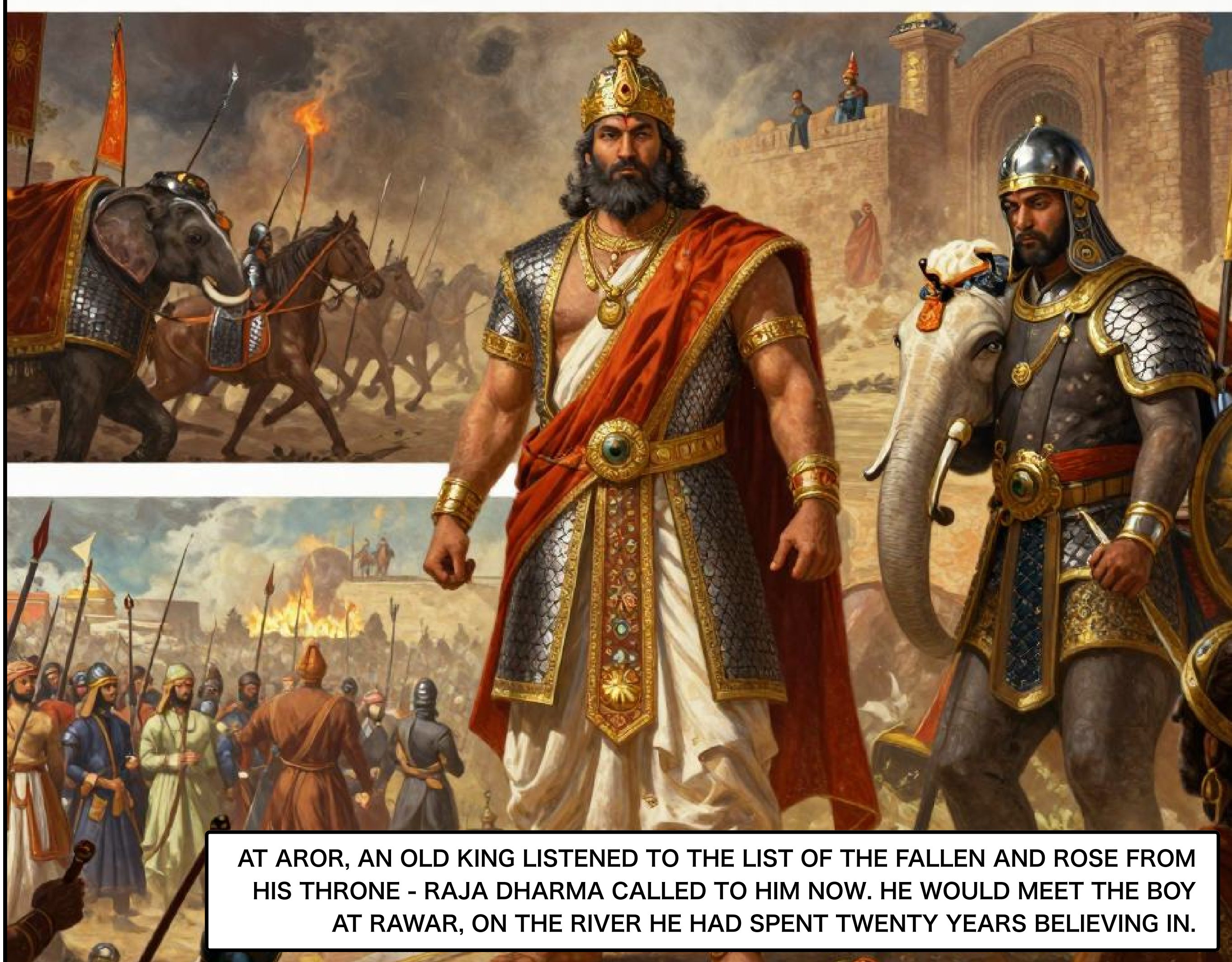
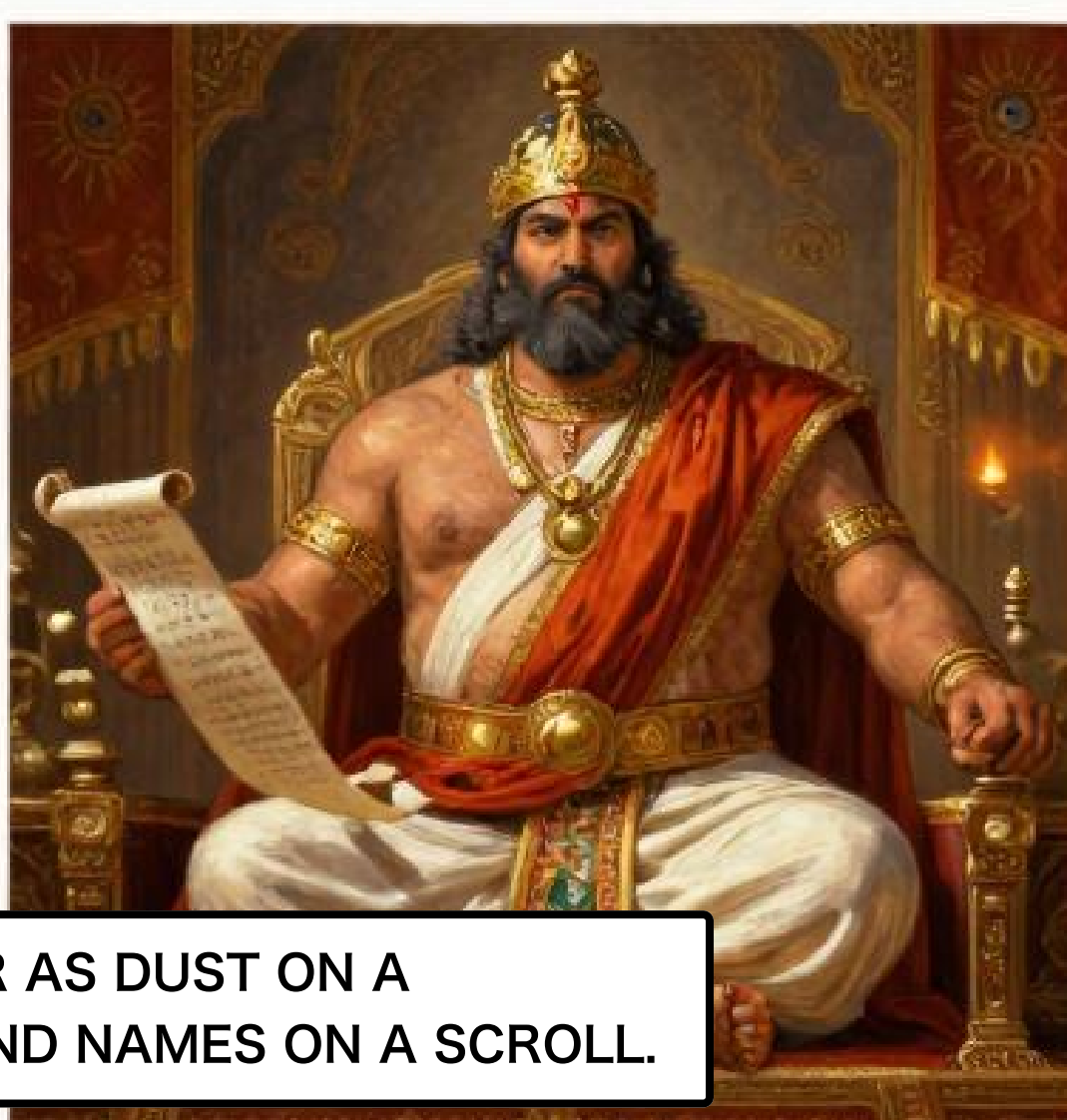


UP ALONG THE SINDHU THEY WENT, TOWN BY TOWN. NERUN SUBMITTED ON TERMS. SEHWAN WAS TAKEN BY STORM. SISAM OPENED ITS GATES.

SOME TOWNS CHOSE TO HAND OVER THEIR KEYS, OTHERS SURRENDERED WITH THEIR WALLS. SOME PARLEYED TREATIES.



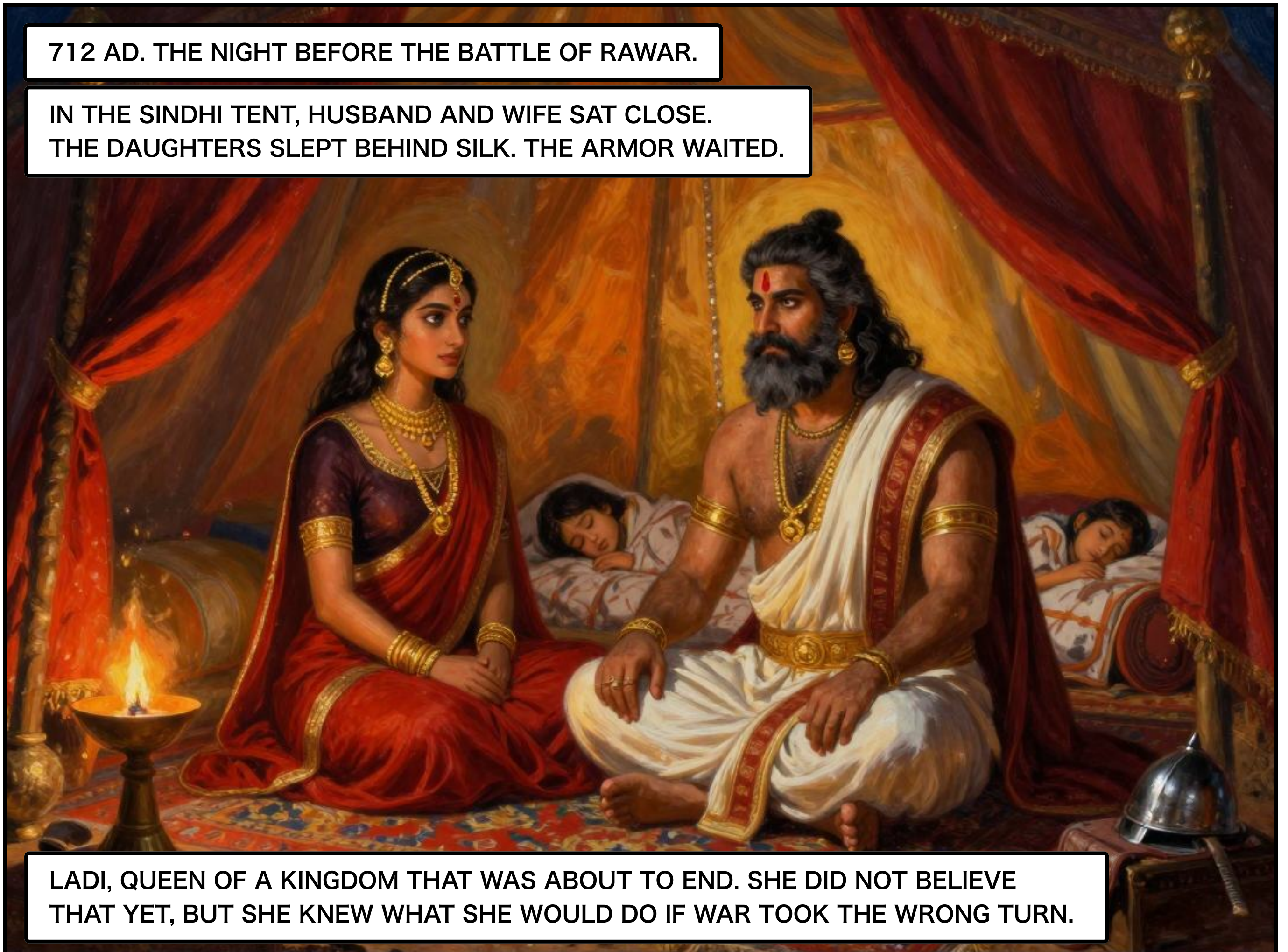
THE NEWS REACHED AROR AS DUST ON A MESSENGER'S CLOTHES AND NAMES ON A SCROLL.



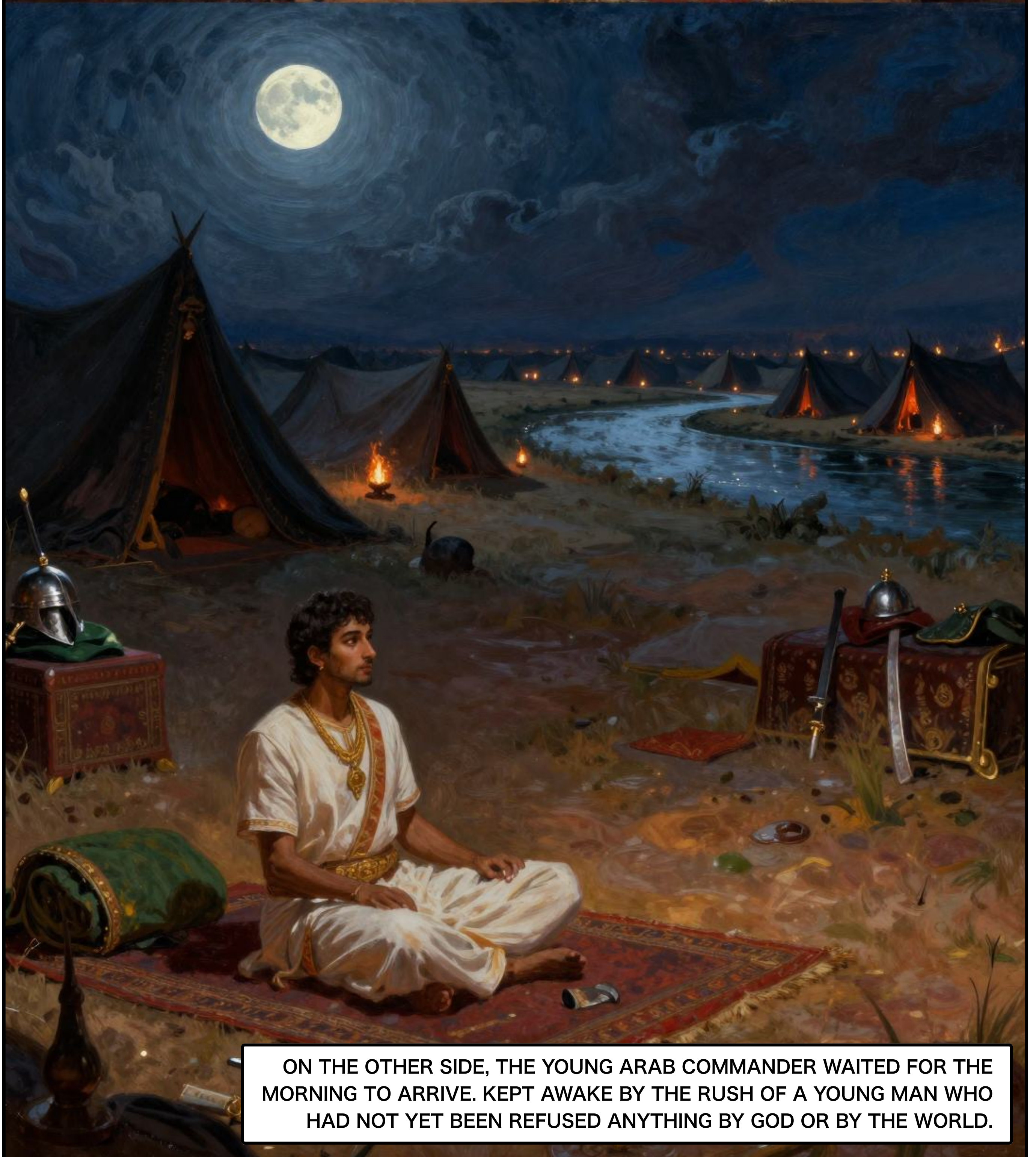
AT AROR, AN OLD KING LISTENED TO THE LIST OF THE FALLEN AND ROSE FROM HIS THRONE - RAJA DHARMA CALLED TO HIM NOW. HE WOULD MEET THE BOY AT RAWAR, ON THE RIVER HE HAD SPENT TWENTY YEARS BELIEVING IN.

712 AD. THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE OF RAWAR.

IN THE SINDHI TENT, HUSBAND AND WIFE SAT CLOSE.
THE DAUGHTERS SLEPT BEHIND SILK. THE ARMOR WAITED.



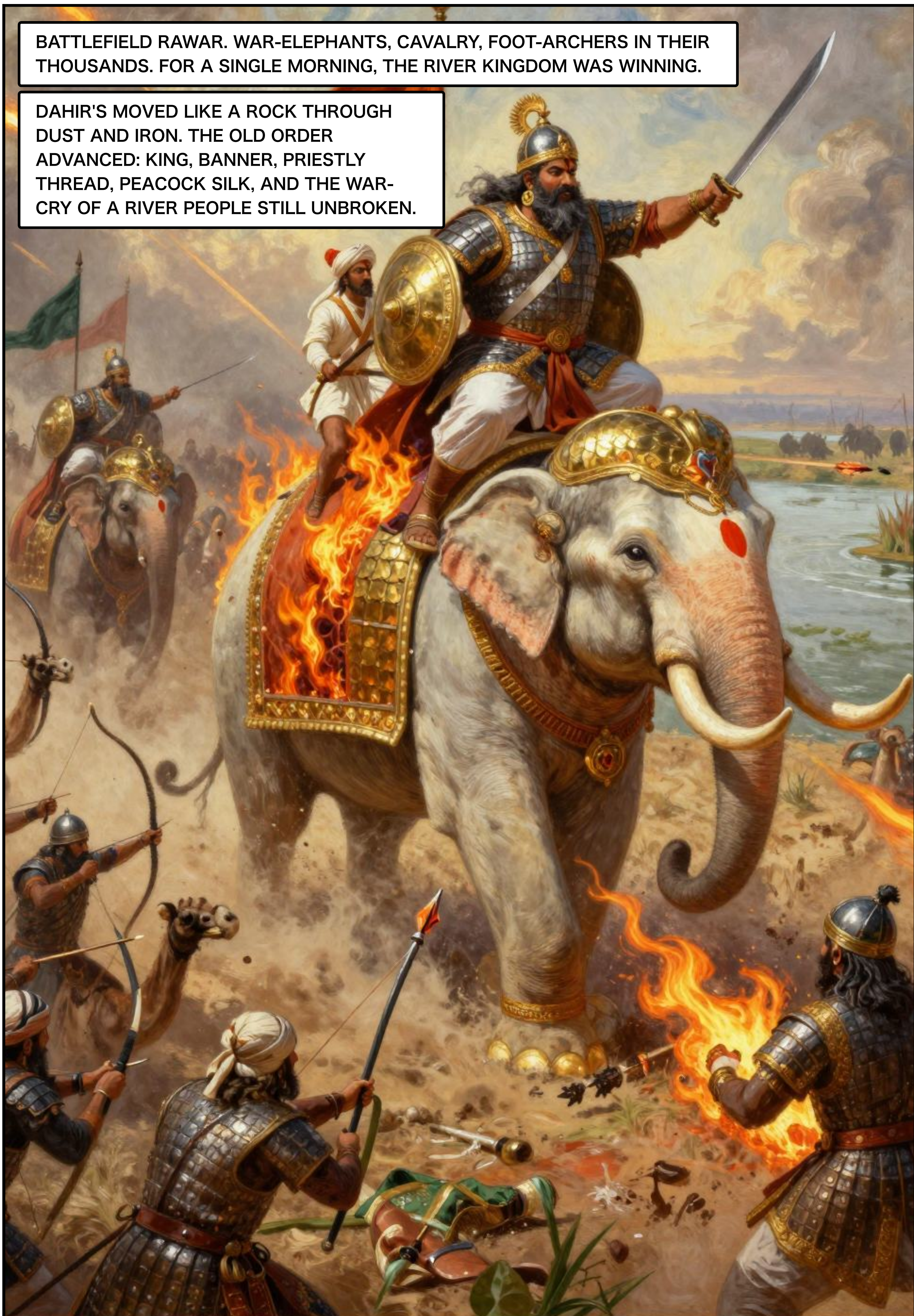
LADI, QUEEN OF A KINGDOM THAT WAS ABOUT TO END. SHE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT YET, BUT SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WOULD DO IF WAR TOOK THE WRONG TURN.



ON THE OTHER SIDE, THE YOUNG ARAB COMMANDER WAITED FOR THE MORNING TO ARRIVE. KEPT AWAKE BY THE RUSH OF A YOUNG MAN WHO HAD NOT YET BEEN REFUSED ANYTHING BY GOD OR BY THE WORLD.

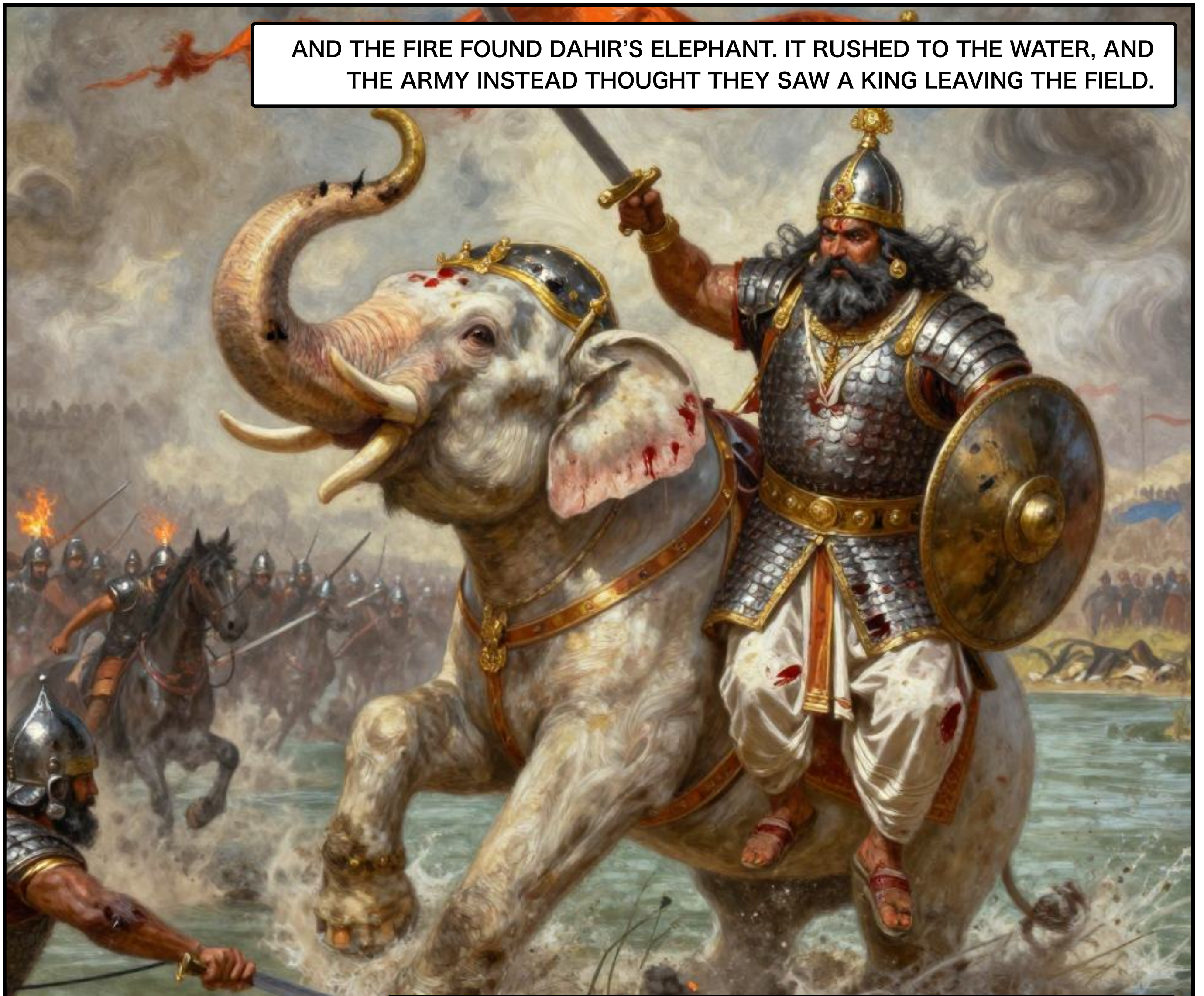
BATTLEFIELD RAWAR. WAR-ELEPHANTS, CAVALRY, FOOT-ARCHERS IN THEIR THOUSANDS. FOR A SINGLE MORNING, THE RIVER KINGDOM WAS WINNING.

DAHIR'S MOVED LIKE A ROCK THROUGH DUST AND IRON. THE OLD ORDER ADVANCED: KING, BANNER, PRIESTLY THREAD, PEACOCK SILK, AND THE WAR-CRY OF A RIVER PEOPLE STILL UNBROKEN.



FOR A WHILE THEY EVEN PUSHED THE ARAB FLANK BACK. THEN CAME THE FIRE.

AND THE FIRE FOUND DAHIR'S ELEPHANT. IT RUSHED TO THE WATER, AND THE ARMY INSTEAD THOUGHT THEY SAW A KING LEAVING THE FIELD.



WHEN THE ROYAL BANNER LURCHED, THE CENTER STAGGERED.

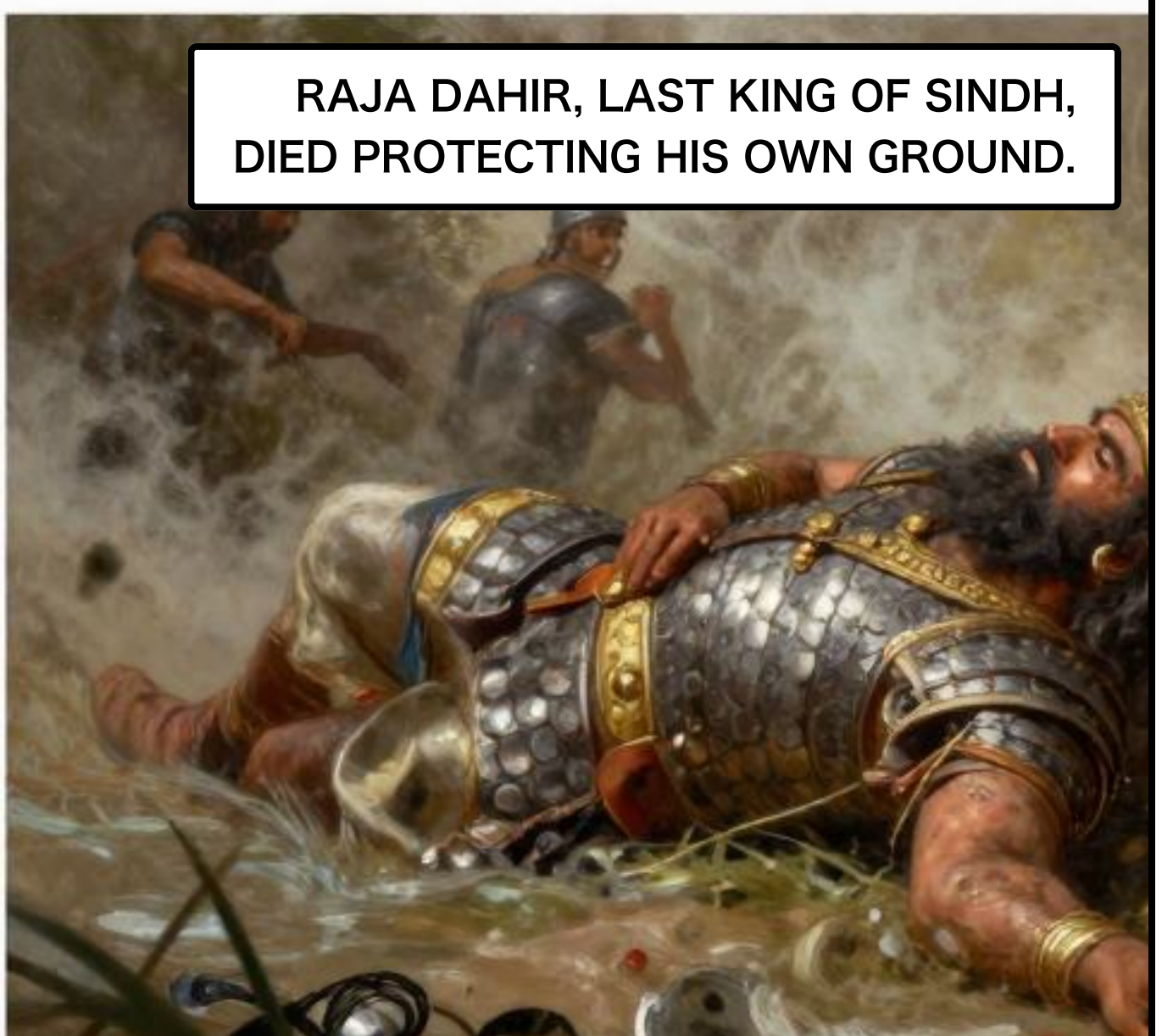
WHEN THE CENTER STAGGERED, THE BATTLE TURNED.



DAHIR CAME DOWN INTO THE MUD, RINGED AND BLEEDING. EVEN ON FOOT, HE INSISTED ON HIS KSHATRIYA DUTIES TO THE VERY END.



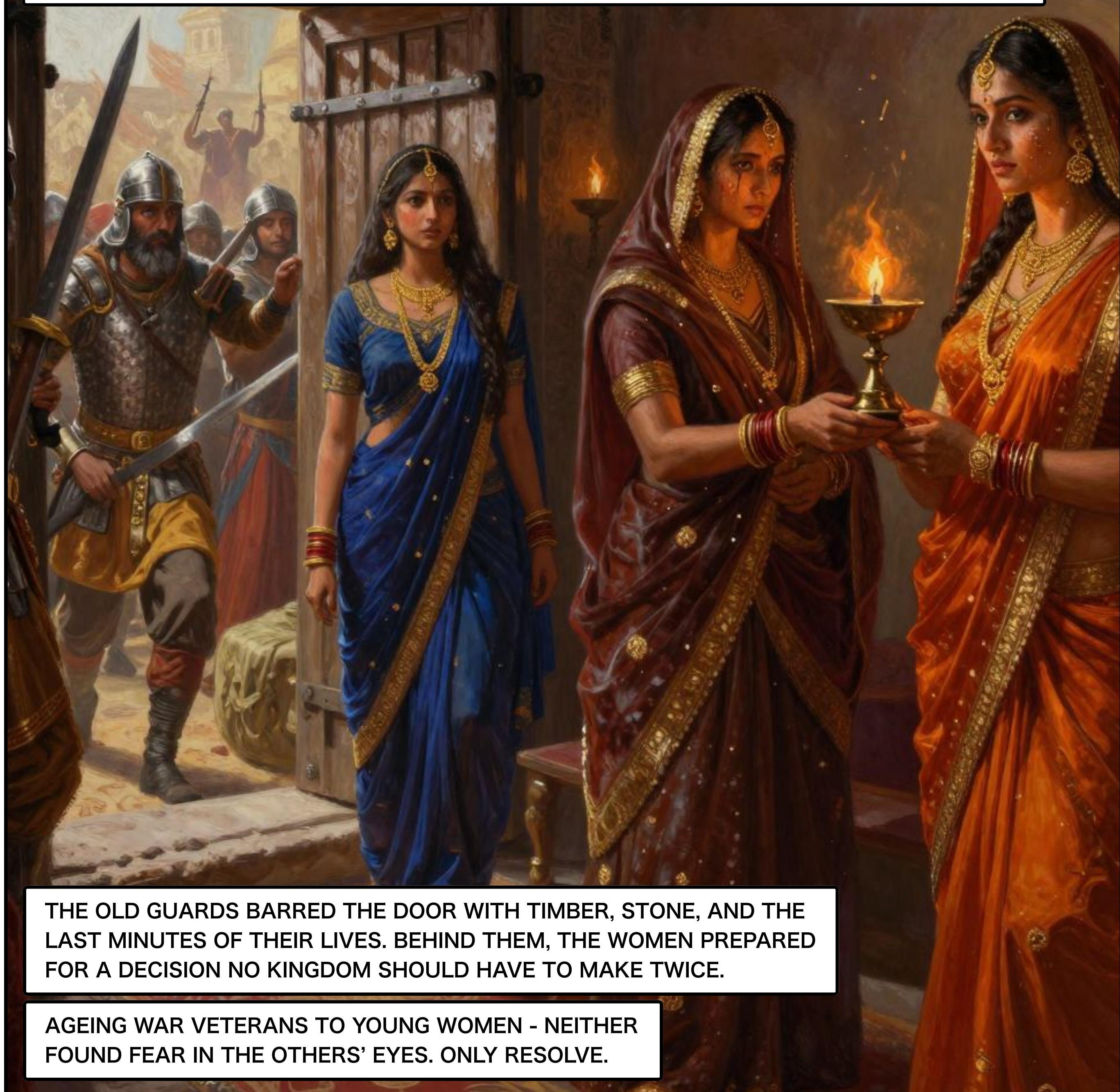
RAJA DAHIR, LAST KING OF SINDH, DIED PROTECTING HIS OWN GROUND.





THE QUEEN SAW THE BANNER FALL, AND UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT.

THE KING'S VOW WAS TO THE KINGDOM, HER'S WAS TO THE WOMEN OF THE HOUSE. AN ANCIENT VOW, OLDER THAN KINGS AND KINGDOMS. A VOW OF HONOR AND DIGNITY.



THE OLD GUARDS BARRED THE DOOR WITH TIMBER, STONE, AND THE LAST MINUTES OF THEIR LIVES. BEHIND THEM, THE WOMEN PREPARED FOR A DECISION NO KINGDOM SHOULD HAVE TO MAKE TWICE.

AGEING WAR VETERANS TO YOUNG WOMEN - NEITHER FOUND FEAR IN THE OTHERS' EYES. ONLY RESOLVE.

JAUHAR. THE FIRE THE WOMEN OF THE ROYAL HOUSE CHOSE FOR THEMSELVES WHEN THE GATES HELD BACK MLECCHAS AND ADHARMIS.

THEY WALKED INTO IT IN THEIR FINEST CLOTH, WITH THEIR GOLD STILL ON THEM, THEIR HAIR UNBOUND.

WHEN ENEMY SOLDIERS BROKE THROUGH THEY WERE WELCOMED WITH BLAZING HEAT. A FIRE THAT DENIED THEM THE SPOILS THEY SOUGHT.

BUT THREE WERE NABBED JUST IN TIME. THE QUEEN AND TWO PRINCESSES. CAUGHT AT THE THRESHOLD.

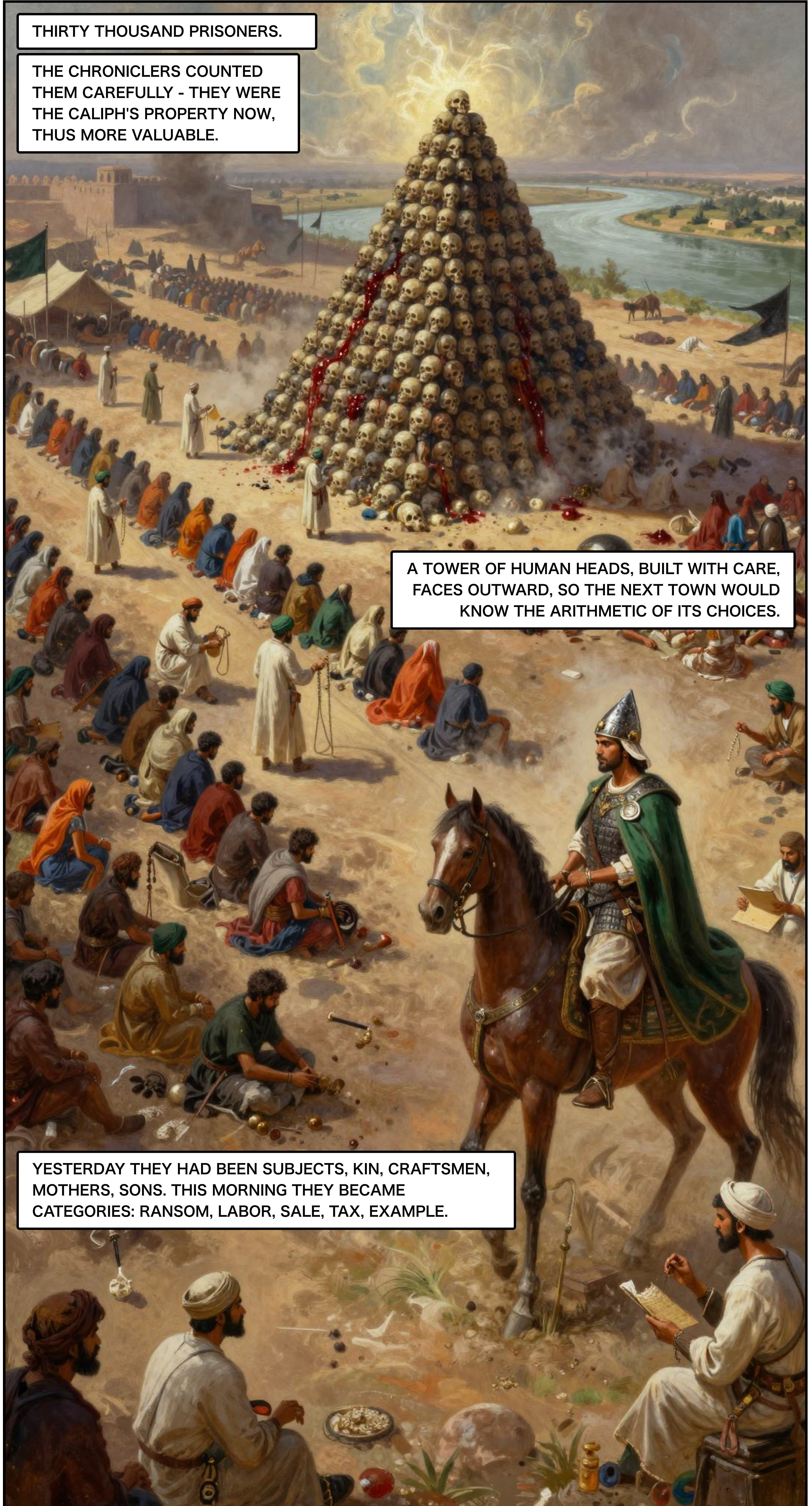
"THEY WERE SPARED," THE CHRONICLERS DECLARE. AROR ITSELF WOULD HAVE USED A DIFFERENT WORD.

THIRTY THOUSAND PRISONERS.

THE CHRONICLERS COUNTED
THEM CAREFULLY - THEY WERE
THE CALIPH'S PROPERTY NOW,
THUS MORE VALUABLE.

A TOWER OF HUMAN HEADS, BUILT WITH CARE,
FACES OUTWARD, SO THE NEXT TOWN WOULD
KNOW THE ARITHMETIC OF ITS CHOICES.

YESTERDAY THEY HAD BEEN SUBJECTS, KIN, CRAFTSMEN,
MOTHERS, SONS. THIS MORNING THEY BECAME
CATEGORIES: RANSOM, LABOR, SALE, TAX, EXAMPLE.



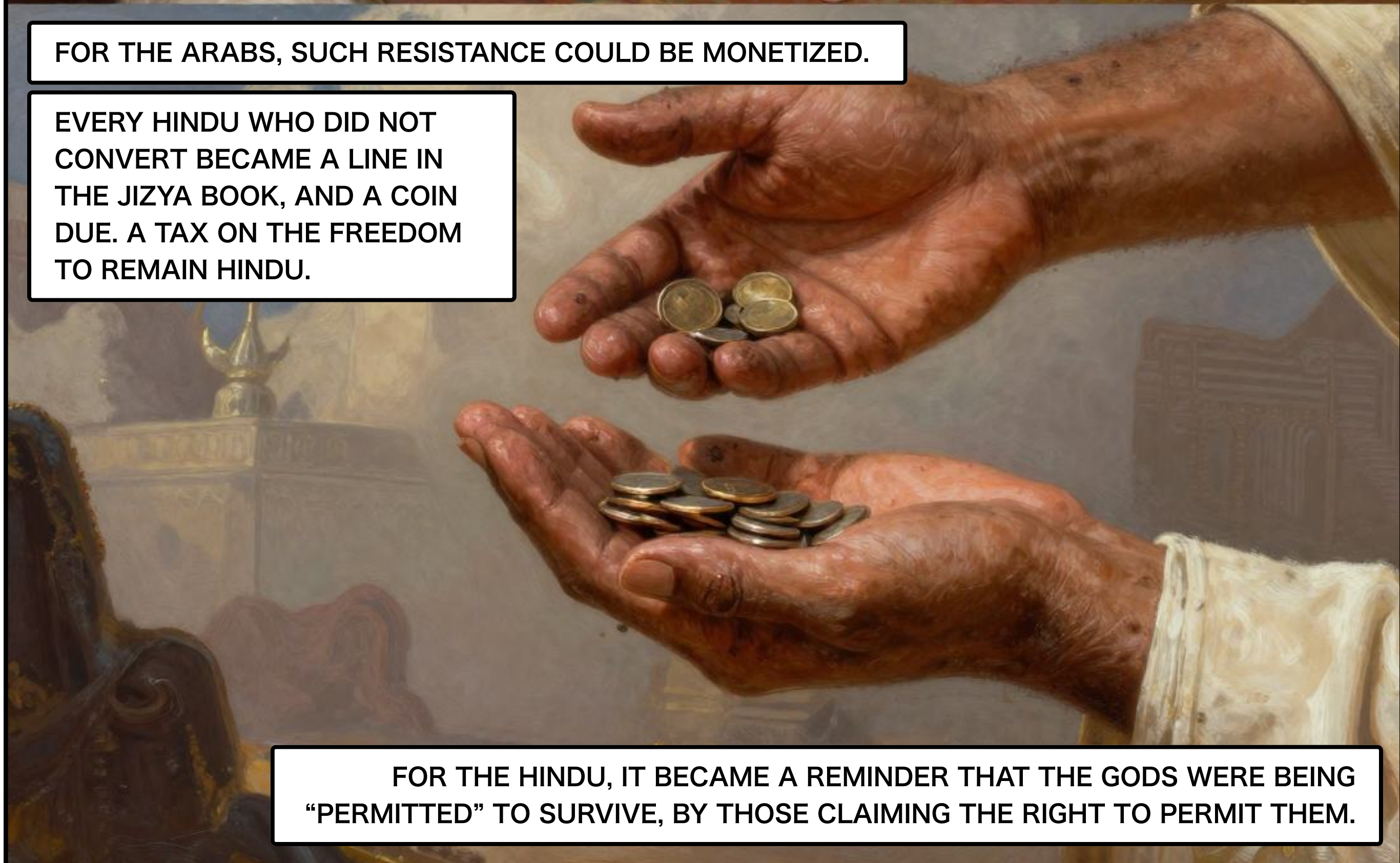
AT BRAHMANABAD, QASIM TRIED A DIFFERENT ROUTE. PERSUASION, BRIBERY - CONVERSION.



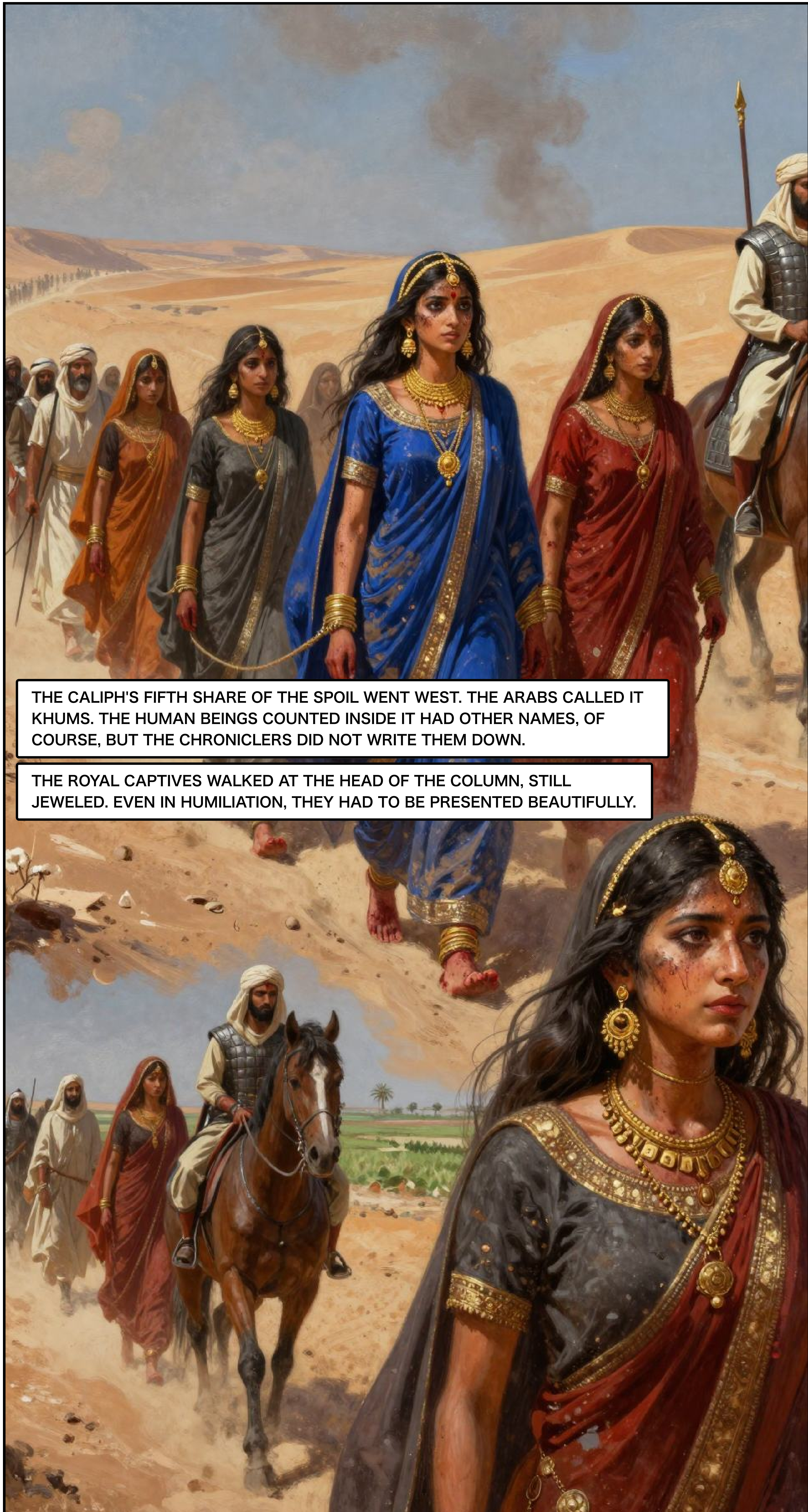
THE BRAHMIN ELDER ENGAGED, BUT DID NOT KNEEL. THE WARRIORS' DUTY WAS DONE. BUT HIS WAS NOW BEGUN - HE HAD TO PRESERVE TEMPLE, TRADITION, AND DHARMA.

FOR THE ARABS, SUCH RESISTANCE COULD BE MONETIZED.

EVERY HINDU WHO DID NOT CONVERT BECAME A LINE IN THE JIZYA BOOK, AND A COIN DUE. A TAX ON THE FREEDOM TO REMAIN HINDU.

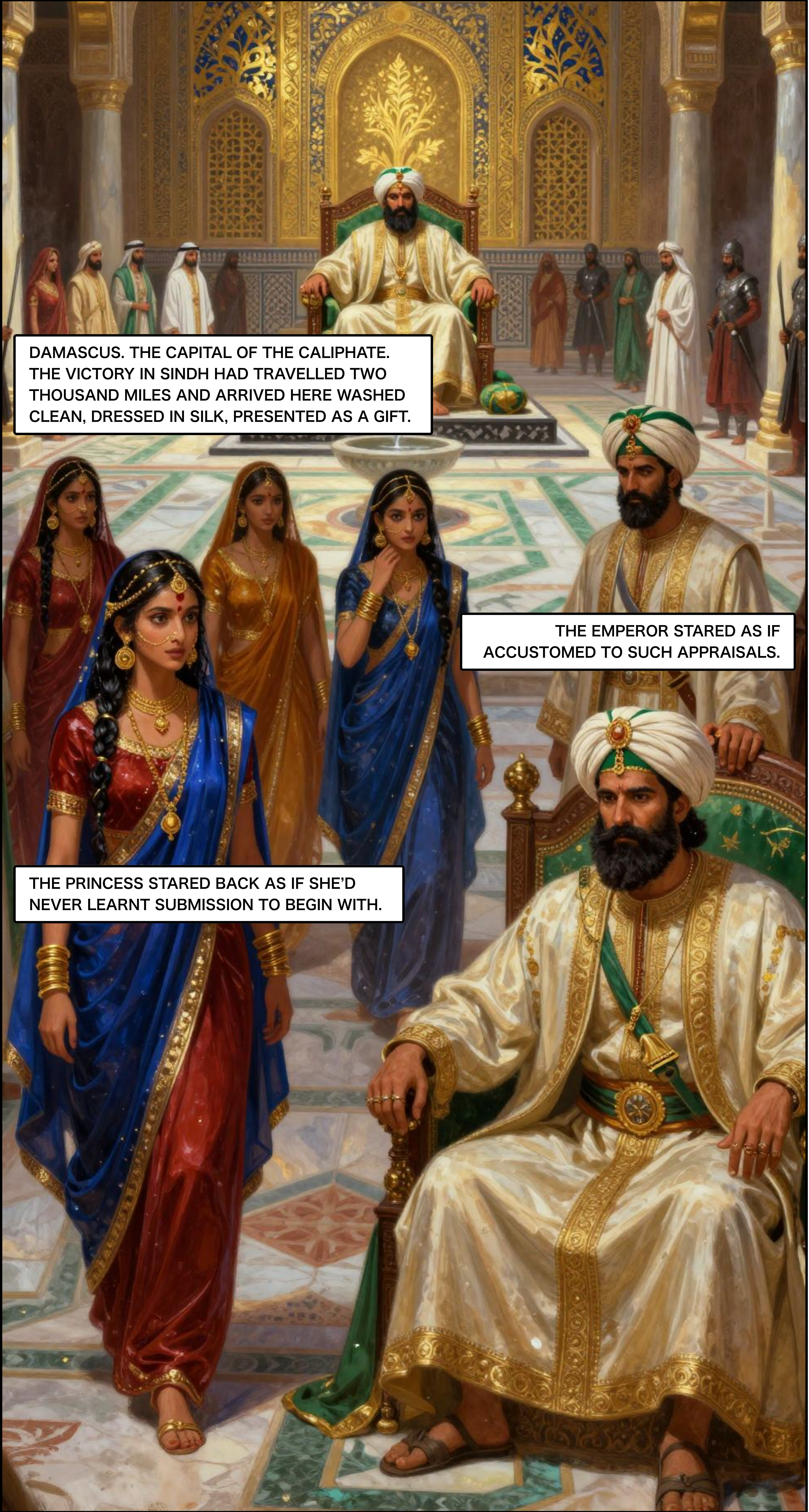


FOR THE HINDU, IT BECAME A REMINDER THAT THE GODS WERE BEING "PERMITTED" TO SURVIVE, BY THOSE CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO PERMIT THEM.



THE CALIPH'S FIFTH SHARE OF THE SPOIL WENT WEST. THE ARABS CALLED IT KHUMS. THE HUMAN BEINGS COUNTED INSIDE IT HAD OTHER NAMES, OF COURSE, BUT THE CHRONICLERS DID NOT WRITE THEM DOWN.

THE ROYAL CAPTIVES WALKED AT THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN, STILL JEWELLED. EVEN IN HUMILIATION, THEY HAD TO BE PRESENTED BEAUTIFULLY.

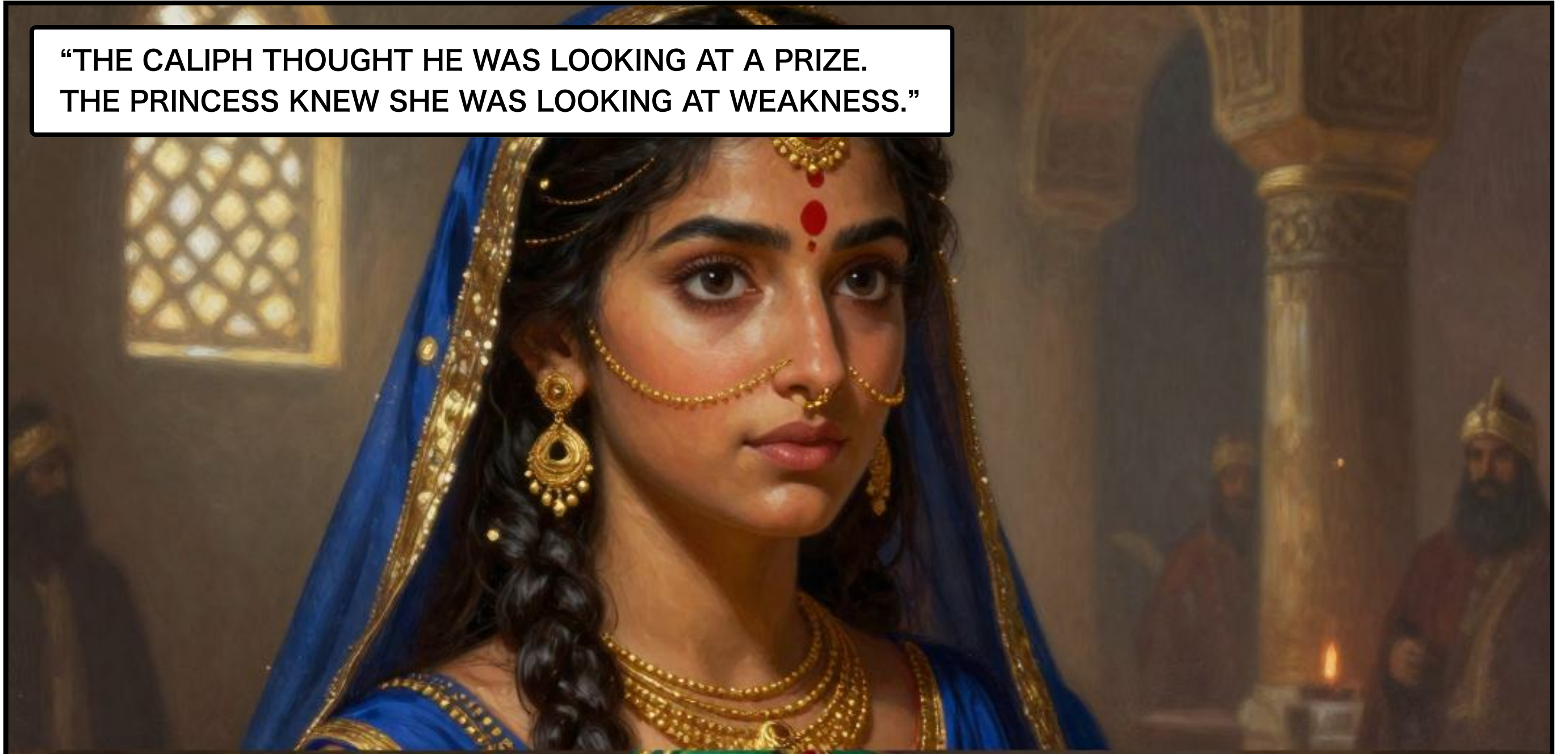


DAMASCUS. THE CAPITAL OF THE CALIPHATE. THE VICTORY IN SINDH HAD TRAVELLED TWO THOUSAND MILES AND ARRIVED HERE WASHED CLEAN, DRESSED IN SILK, PRESENTED AS A GIFT.

THE EMPEROR STARED AS IF ACCUSTOMED TO SUCH APPRAISALS.

THE PRINCESS STARED BACK AS IF SHE'D NEVER LEARNT SUBMISSION TO BEGIN WITH.

“THE CALIPH THOUGHT HE WAS LOOKING AT A PRIZE.
THE PRINCESS KNEW SHE WAS LOOKING AT WEAKNESS.”



THE CALIPH IS CAUGHT IN ASTONISHMENT, FINGER TO HIS MOUTH.
BUT CAPTIVITY HAD NOT STOLEN THE PRINCESS' COMPOSURE.



IT'S A MOMENT THE CHRONICLERS RECORD WITH
GREAT PAUSE, WHEN ENORMOUS POWER LOSES
COMPOSURE BEFORE A CAPTIVE HINDU PRINCESS.





AS FOR HAJJAJ. HE DID NOT NEED
TO WORRY ABOUT SINDH ANYMORE.

BUT HE SENT THE LETTER TO QASIM ANYWAY -
“GIVE NO QUARTER TO THE INFIDELS. CUT THEIR THROATS.”



YOUNG QASIM IN SINDH NEEDED NO NUDGES TO MORE
VIOLENCE, BUT HE WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE LETTER ANYWAY.

AT THE VILLAGE,
A DIFFERENT FLAG
ANNOUNCED A
NEW ORDER.

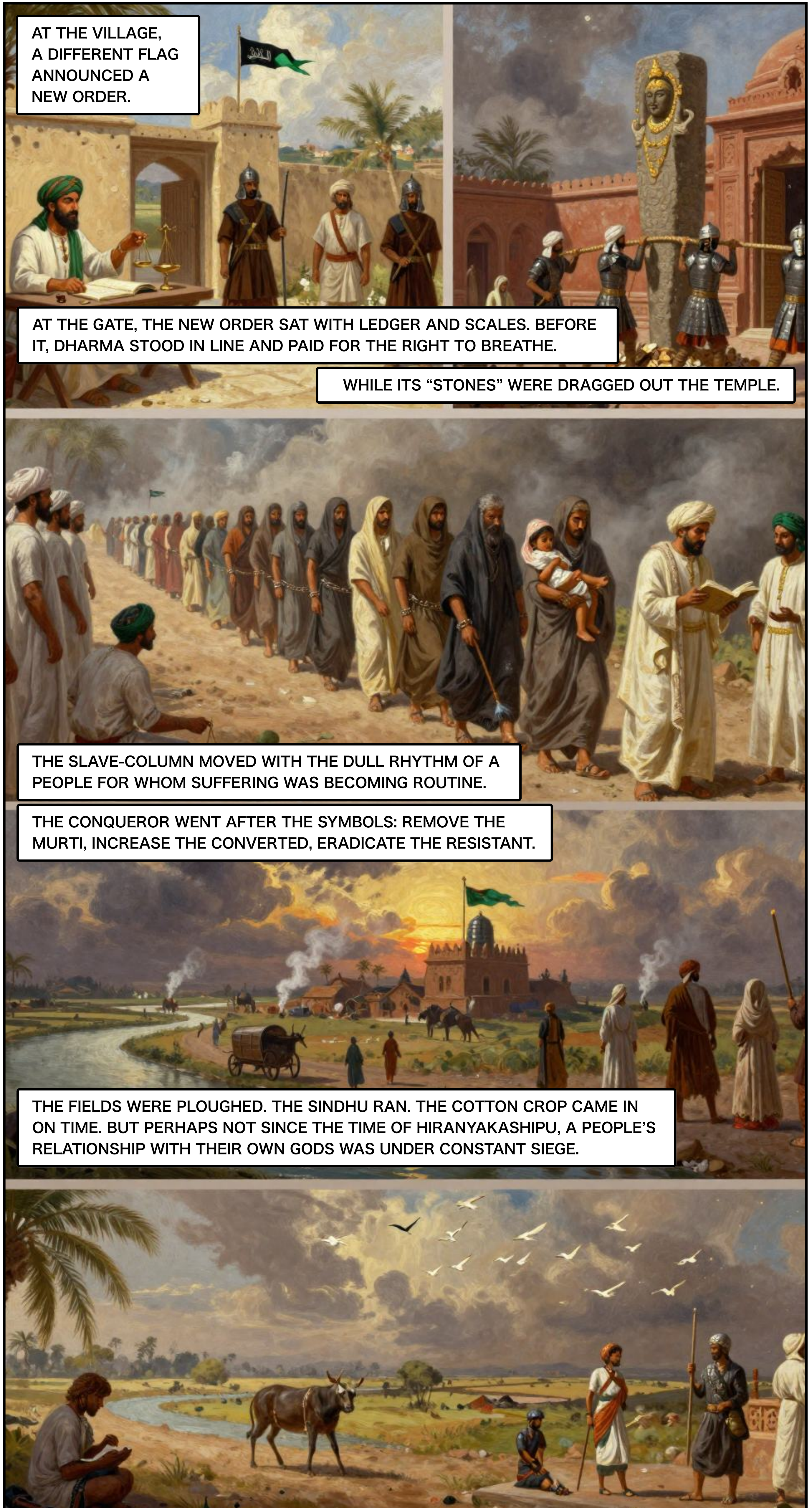
AT THE GATE, THE NEW ORDER SAT WITH LEDGER AND SCALES. BEFORE
IT, DHARMA STOOD IN LINE AND PAID FOR THE RIGHT TO BREATHE.

WHILE ITS “STONES” WERE DRAGGED OUT THE TEMPLE.

THE SLAVE-COLUMN MOVED WITH THE DULL RHYTHM OF A
PEOPLE FOR WHOM SUFFERING WAS BECOMING ROUTINE.

THE CONQUEROR WENT AFTER THE SYMBOLS: REMOVE THE
MURTI, INCREASE THE CONVERTED, ERADICATE THE RESISTANT.

THE FIELDS WERE PLOUGHED. THE SINDHU RAN. THE COTTON CROP CAME IN
ON TIME. BUT PERHAPS NOT SINCE THE TIME OF HIRANYAKASHIPU, A PEOPLE’S
RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR OWN GODS WAS UNDER CONSTANT SIEGE.





FROM THE RAMPART'S AT THE FORT - WHERE HE NOW STATIONED HIMSELF, QASIM WONDERED HOW BEST TO FOLLOW HAJJAJ'S INSTRUCTIONS.

AND WHEN HE LOOKED ON FROM THE EAST WALLS, HE SAW THE ANSWER - SINDH HAD OPENED. BUT BHARATA AWAITED.

HE HAD TAKEN THE GATEWAY, YES, BUT HE HAD ALSO TAUGHT EVERY ARMY THAT WOULD COME AFTER HIM, THAT THE GATES COULD BE BROKEN OPEN.

AND BHARATA WAS STARING BACK AT HIM.

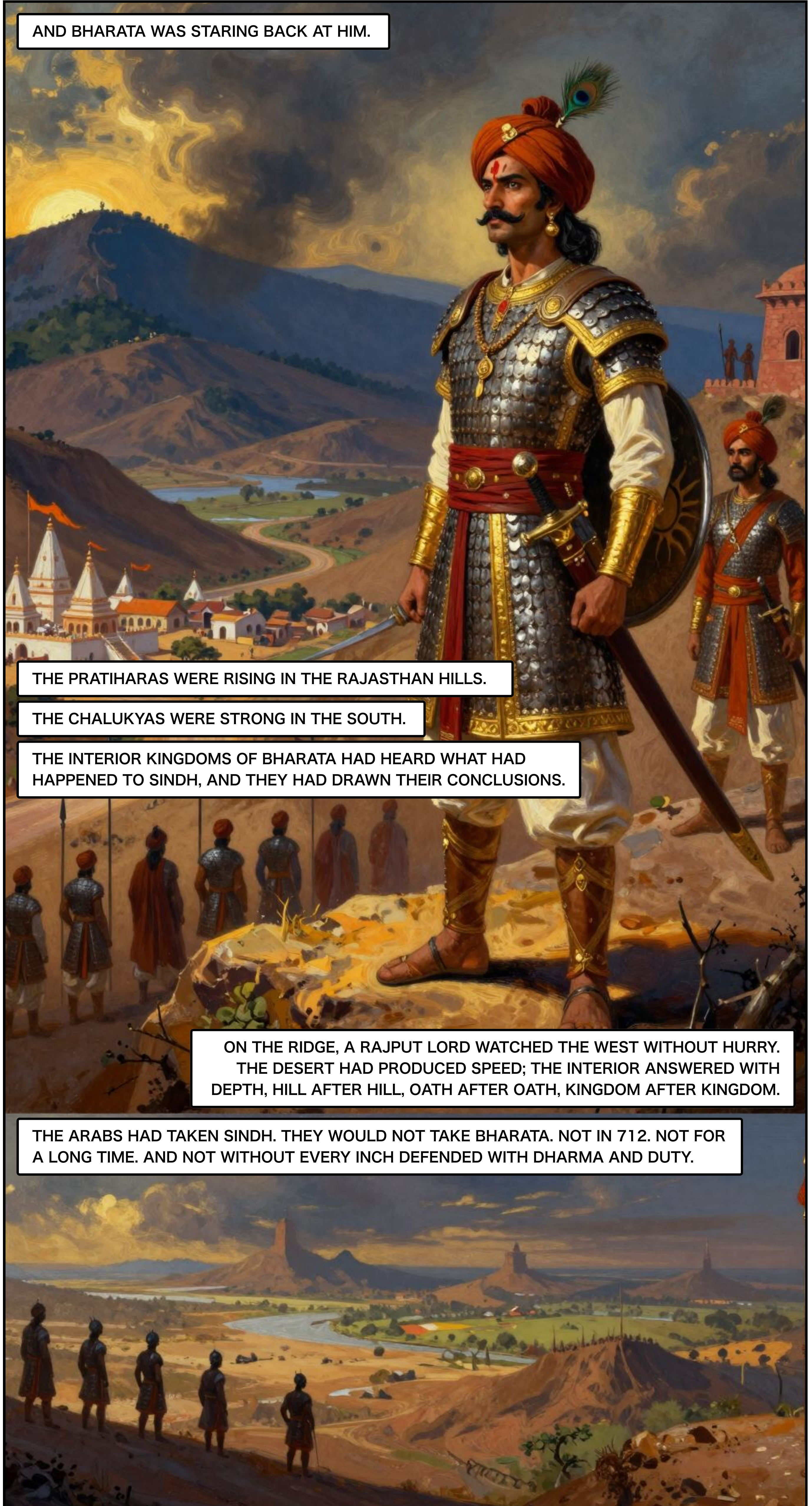
THE PRATI HARAS WERE RISING IN THE RAJASTHAN HILLS.

THE CHALUKYAS WERE STRONG IN THE SOUTH.

THE INTERIOR KINGDOMS OF BHARATA HAD HEARD WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO SINDH, AND THEY HAD DRAWN THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

ON THE RIDGE, A RAJPUT LORD WATCHED THE WEST WITHOUT HURRY.
THE DESERT HAD PRODUCED SPEED; THE INTERIOR ANSWERED WITH DEPTH, HILL AFTER HILL, OATH AFTER OATH, KINGDOM AFTER KINGDOM.

THE ARABS HAD TAKEN SINDH. THEY WOULD NOT TAKE BHARATA. NOT IN 712. NOT FOR A LONG TIME. AND NOT WITHOUT EVERY INCH DEFENDED WITH DHARMA AND DUTY.



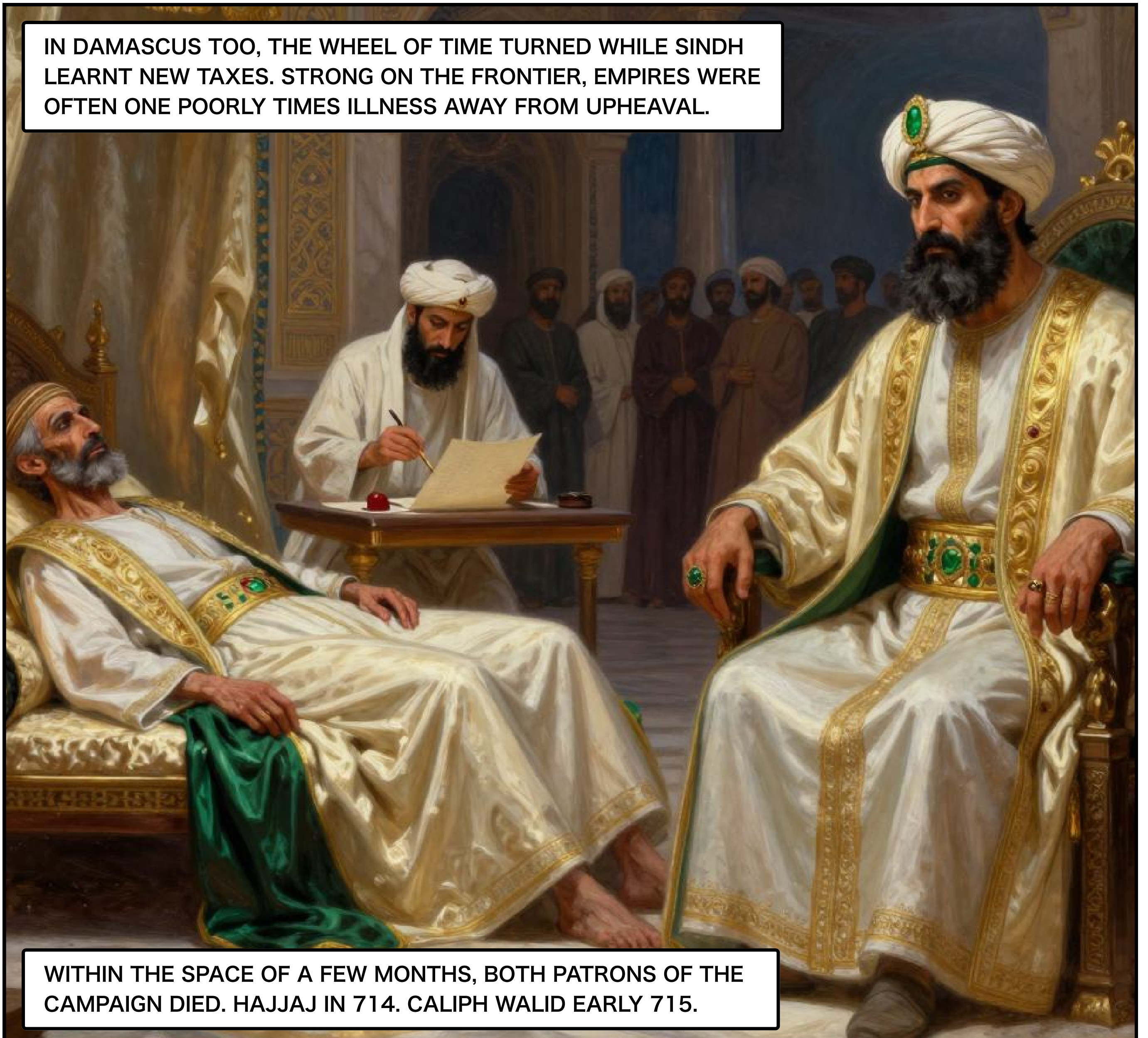


SINDHU - THAT GREAT WALL BETWEEN BHARATA AND THE WEST, A WALL THAT HAD STOOD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, NOW BECAME A ROAD. AND IT WOULD STAY OPEN.



THE BANNER THAT SHIPS ONCE STEERED BY, LAY HALF-BURIED SOMEWHERE IN THE SILT OF THE DELTA.

IN DAMASCUS TOO, THE WHEEL OF TIME TURNED WHILE SINDH LEARNT NEW TAXES. STRONG ON THE FRONTIER, EMPIRES WERE OFTEN ONE POORLY TIMES ILLNESS AWAY FROM UPHEAVAL.



WITHIN THE SPACE OF A FEW MONTHS, BOTH PATRONS OF THE CAMPAIGN DIED. HAJJAJ IN 714. CALIPH WALID EARLY 715.

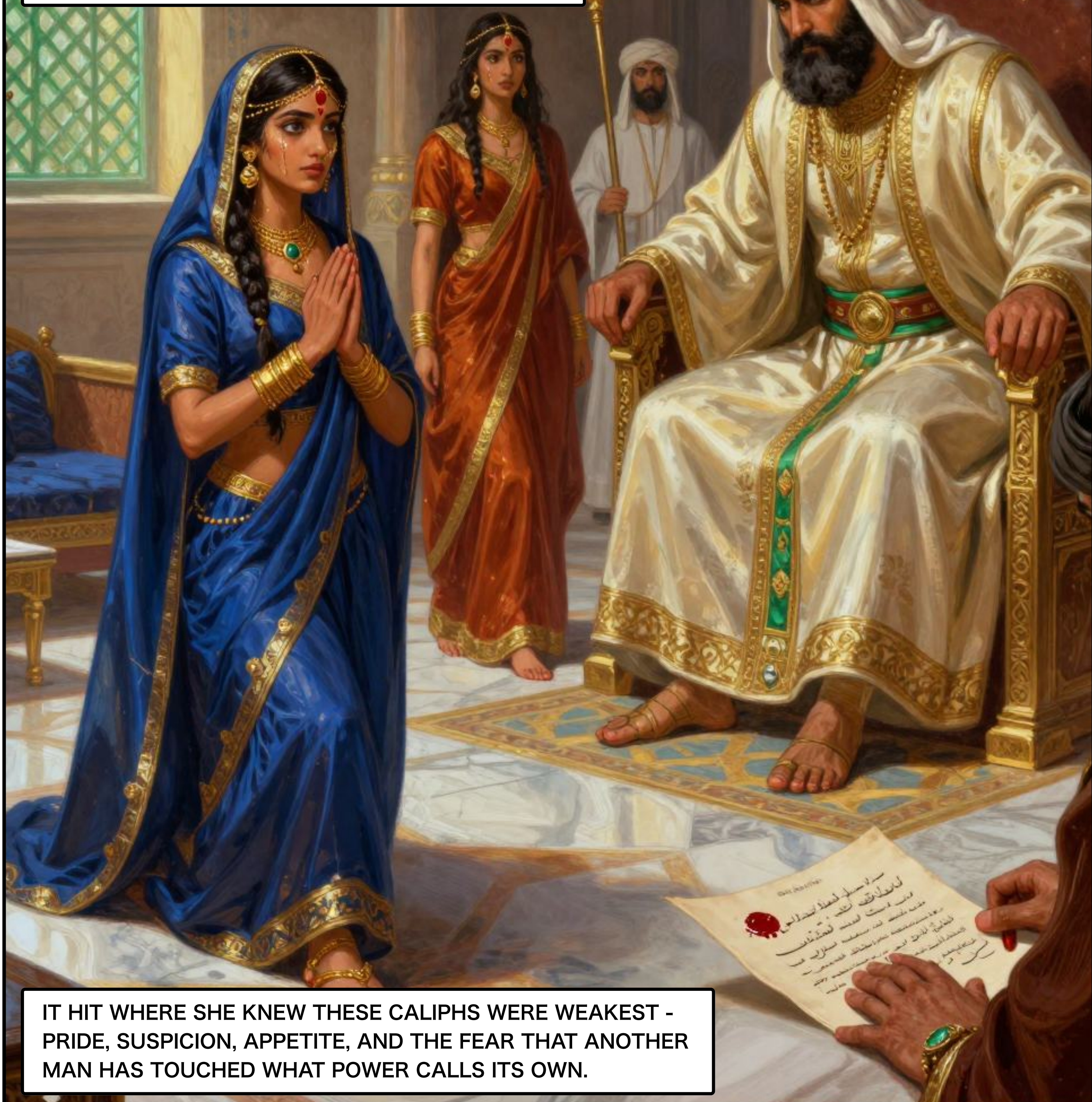
AND SULAYMAN, THE NEW CALIPH, HELD A GENERATIONAL GRUDGE WITH THE HOUSE OF HAJJAJ.



A GRUDGE HE WOULD REAP UPON HAJJAJ'S YOUNG KINSMAN IN PARTICULAR.

THE PRINCESS HAD SPENT THREE YEARS IN THE INNER PALACE OF DAMASCUS, KEPT LIKE A JEWEL, WATCHED LIKE AN ENEMY. SHE HAD USED THOSE THREE YEARS WELL.

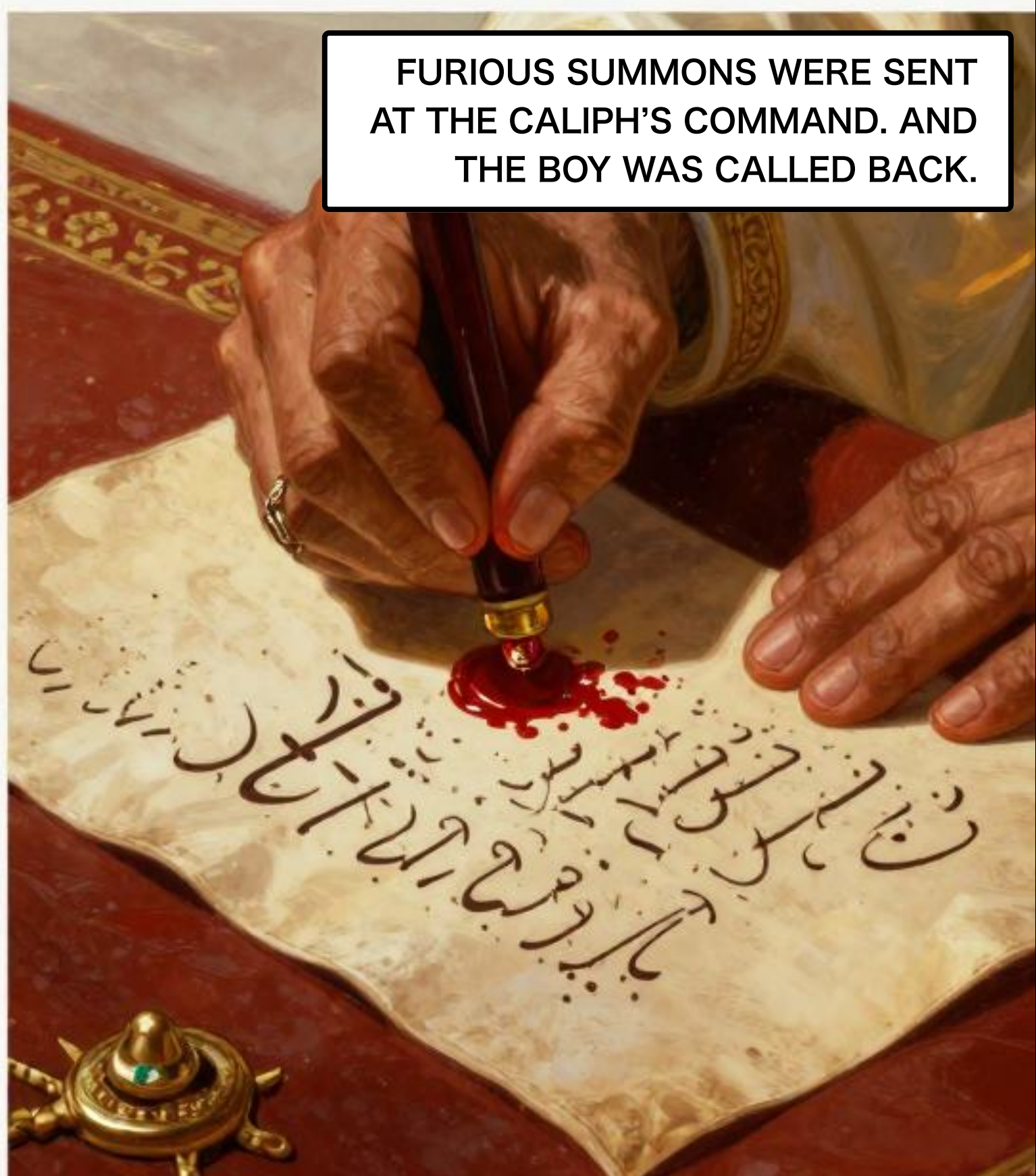
SULAYMAN NEEDED AN EXCUSE, AND THE PRINCESS PROVIDED IT. SHE TOLD HIM OF HOW QASIM HAD DISHONORED HER AND HER SISTER..



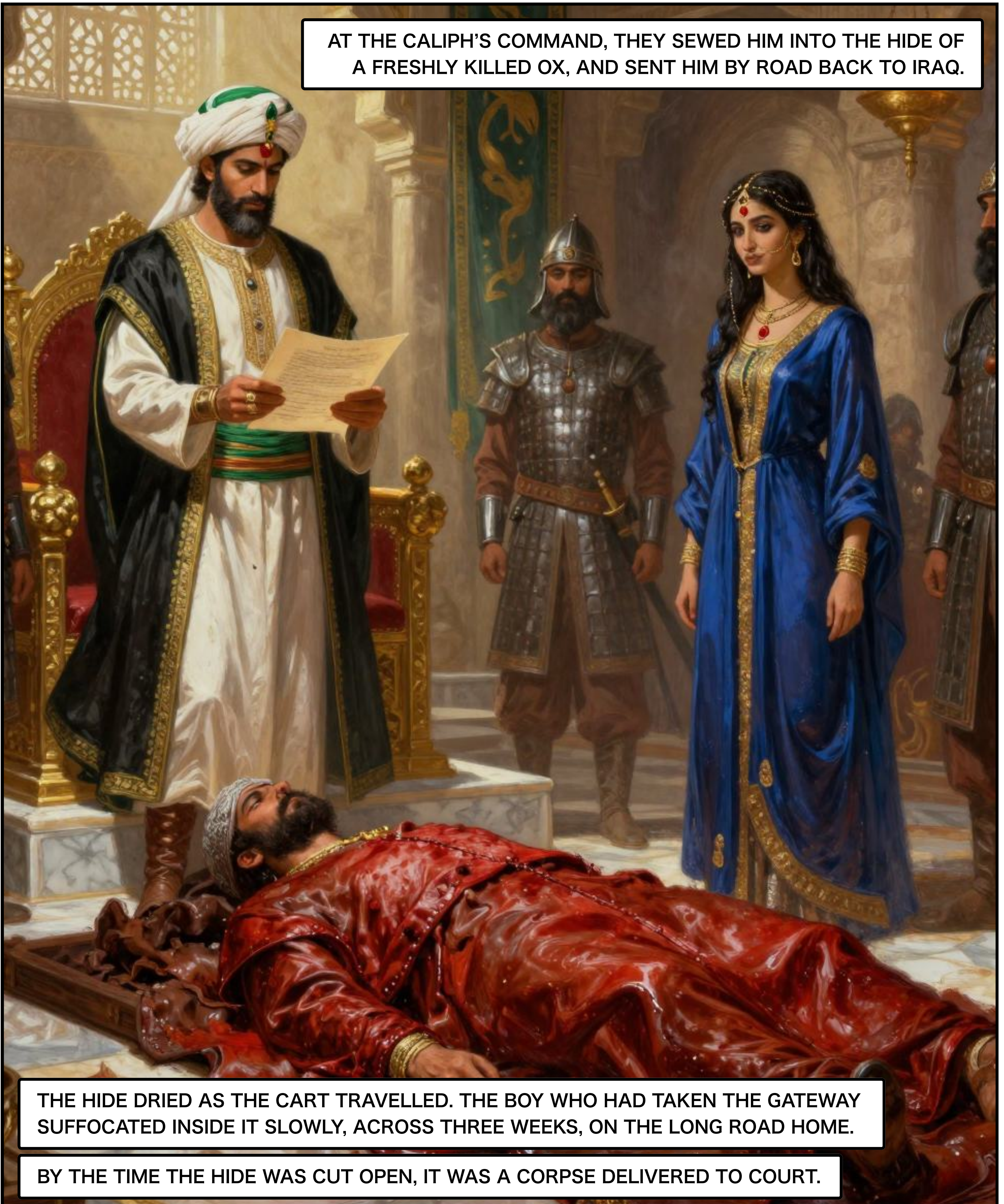
IT HIT WHERE SHE KNEW THESE CALIPHS WERE WEAKEST - PRIDE, SUSPICION, APPETITE, AND THE FEAR THAT ANOTHER MAN HAS TOUCHED WHAT POWER CALLS ITS OWN.



FURIOUS SUMMONS WERE SENT AT THE CALIPH'S COMMAND. AND THE BOY WAS CALLED BACK.

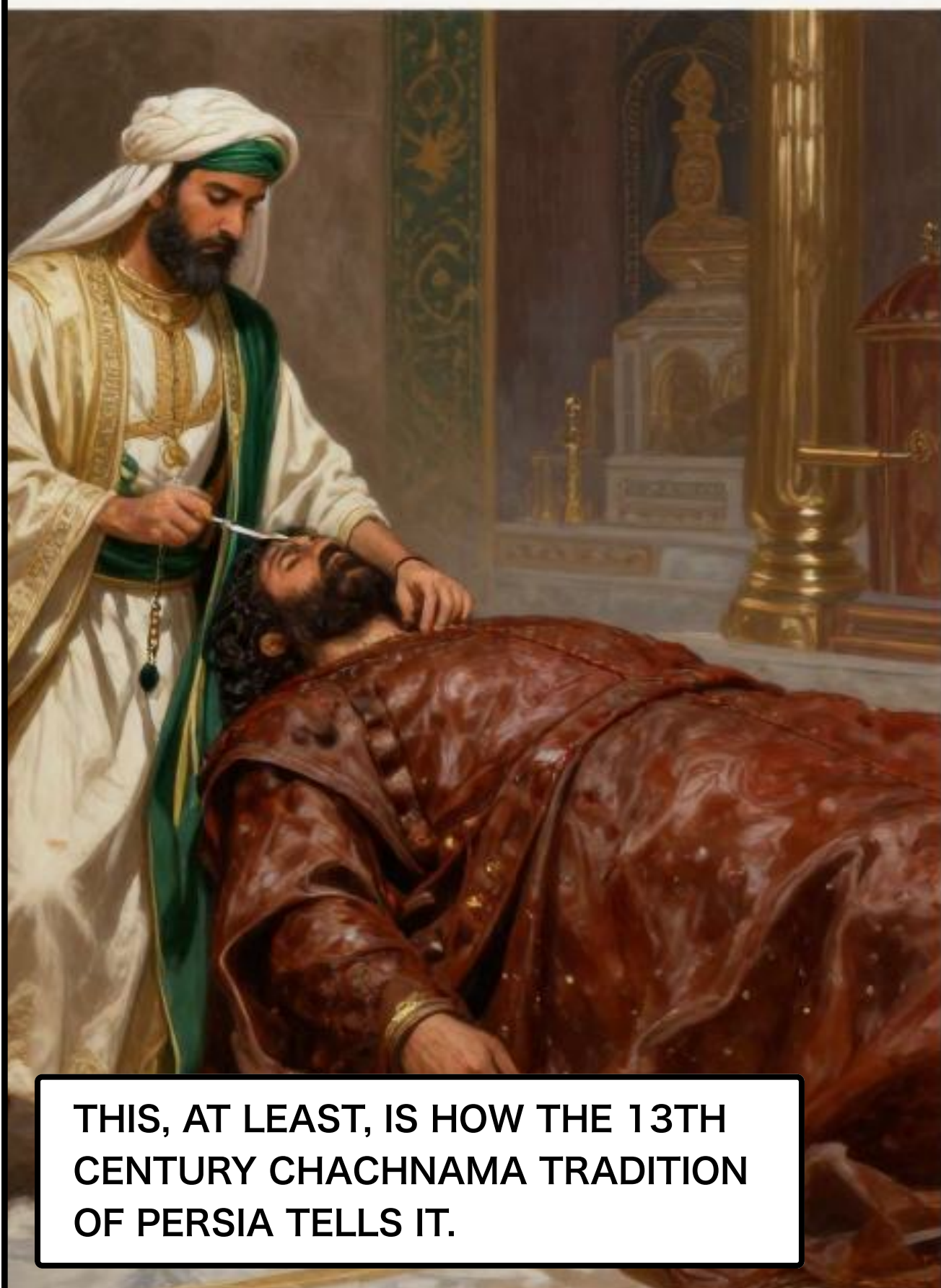


AT THE CALIPH'S COMMAND, THEY SEWED HIM INTO THE HIDE OF A FRESHLY KILLED OX, AND SENT HIM BY ROAD BACK TO IRAQ.



THE HIDE DRIED AS THE CART TRAVELLED. THE BOY WHO HAD TAKEN THE GATEWAY SUFFOCATED INSIDE IT SLOWLY, ACROSS THREE WEEKS, ON THE LONG ROAD HOME.

BY THE TIME THE HIDE WAS CUT OPEN, IT WAS A CORPSE DELIVERED TO COURT.



THIS, AT LEAST, IS HOW THE 13TH CENTURY CHACHNAMA TRADITION OF PERSIA TELLS IT.

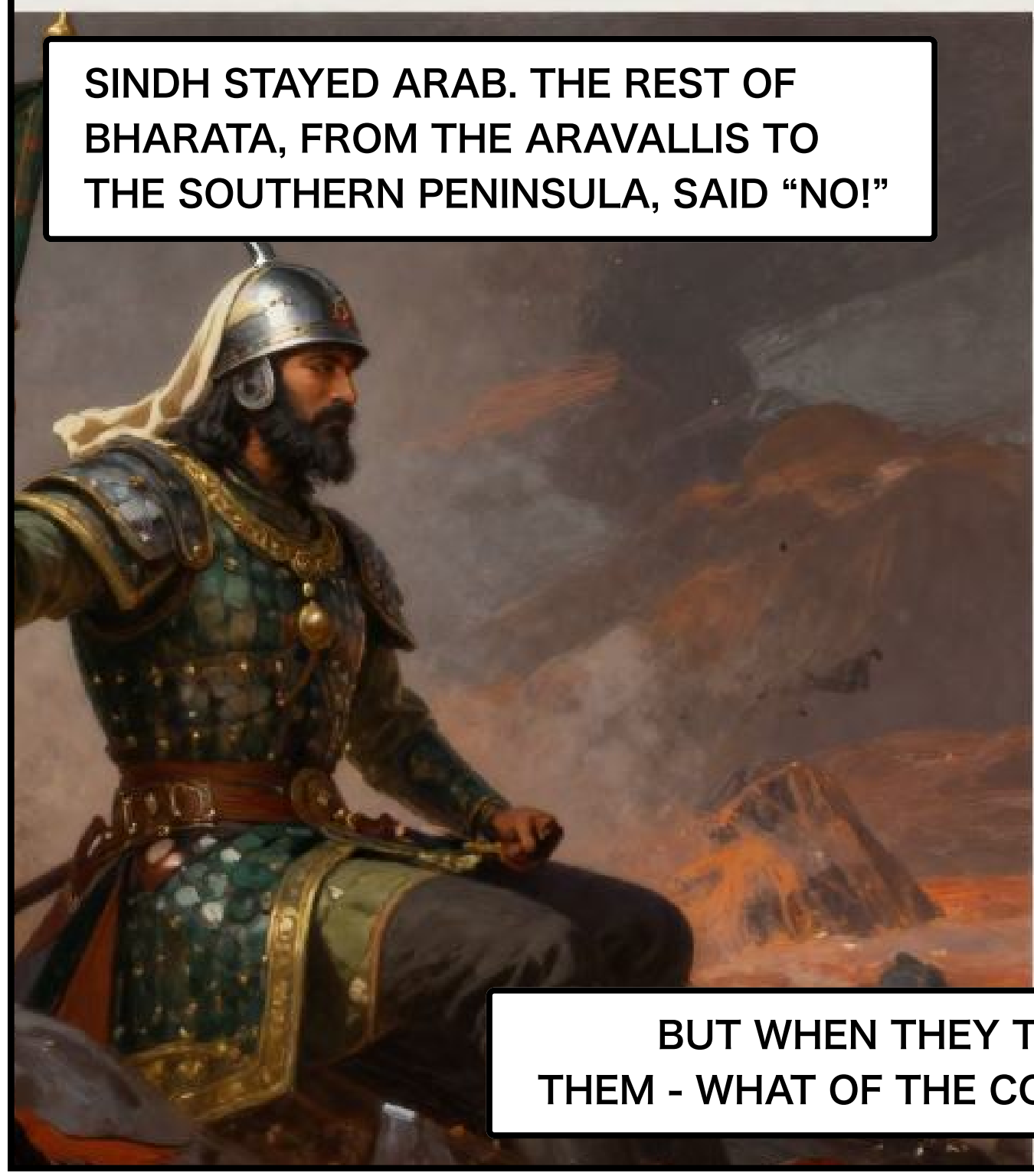


THE PRINCESS THEN REVEALED HER PLAY. SHE HAD MADE UP A LIE. THE DAUGHTER OF AROR HAD AVENGED HER KINGDOM.

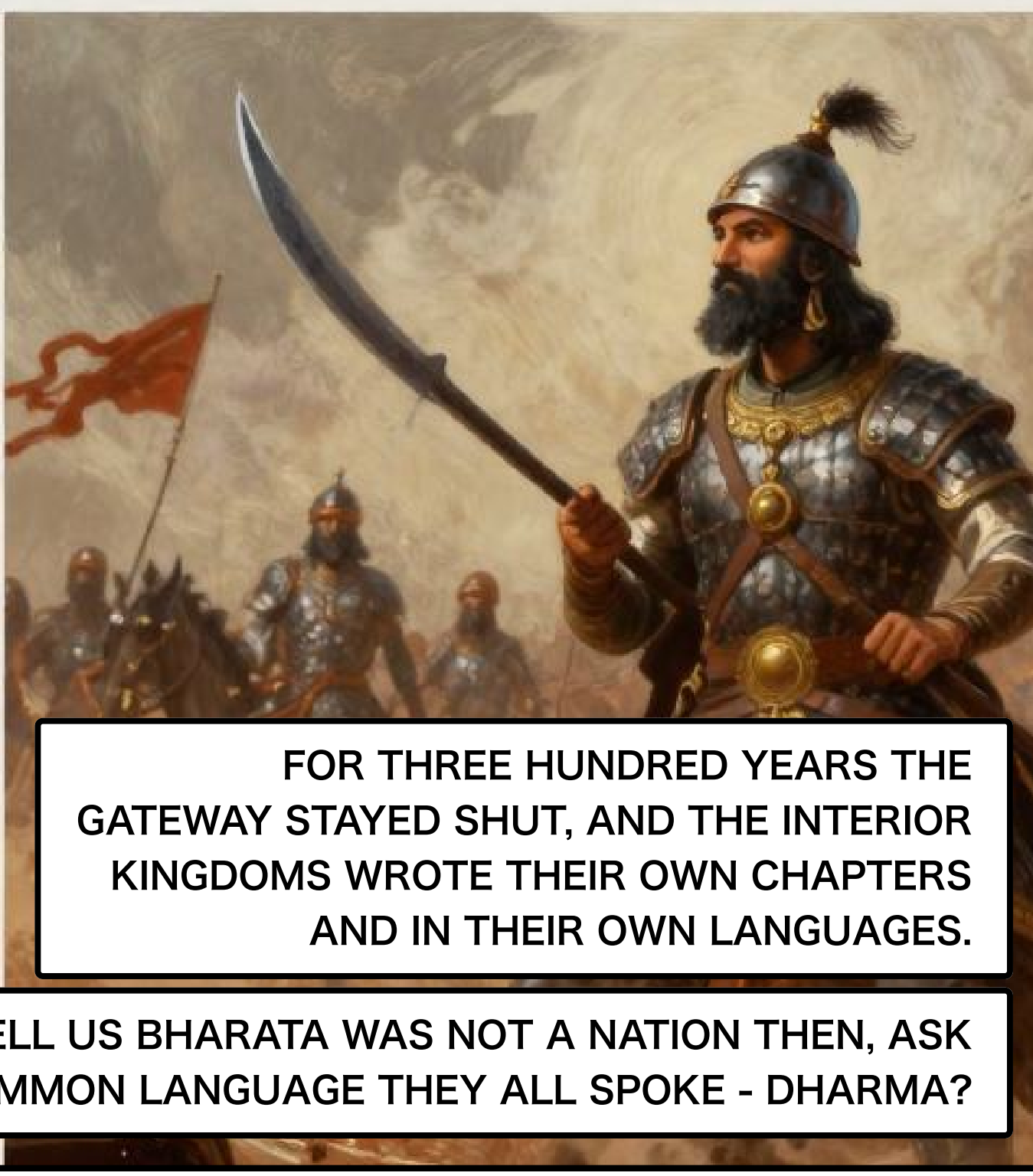


THE ARABS PRESSED EAST OF SINDH FOR A GENERATION AFTER QASIM, CERTAIN THAT AS THE RIVER KINGDOM HAD FAILED TO DO, THE INTERIOR KINGDOMS WOULD ALSO.

AT RAJASTHAN, AROUND THE YEAR 738, THE PRATIHARA KING NAGABHATA MET THEM ON HIS OWN GROUND AND BROKE THEM. THE INTERIOR OF BHARATA HAD ANSWERED.

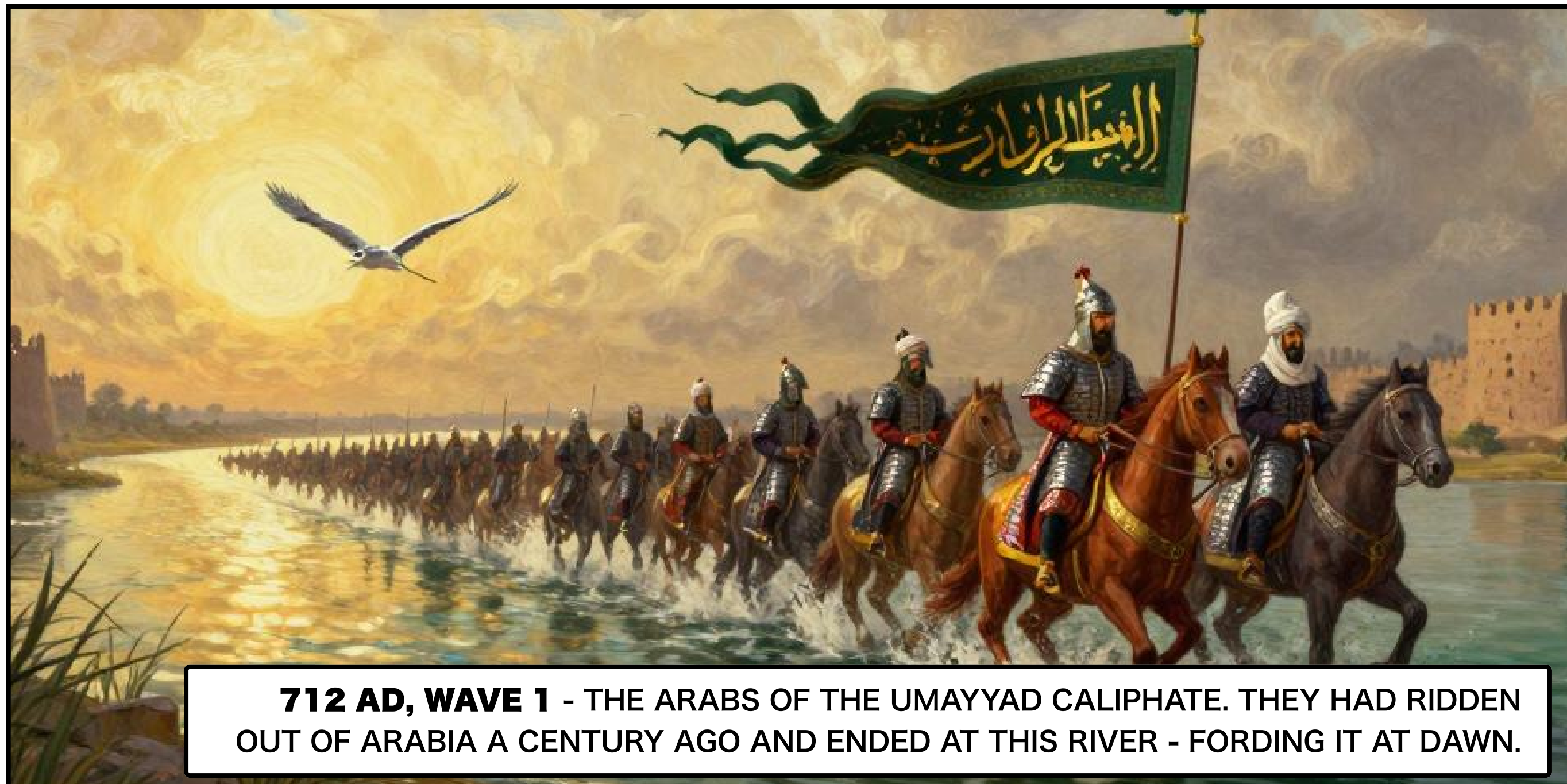


SINDH STAYED ARAB. THE REST OF BHARATA, FROM THE ARAVALLIS TO THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA, SAID “NO!”



FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS THE GATEWAY STAYED SHUT, AND THE INTERIOR KINGDOMS WROTE THEIR OWN CHAPTERS AND IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES.

BUT WHEN THEY TELL US BHARATA WAS NOT A NATION THEN, ASK THEM - WHAT OF THE COMMON LANGUAGE THEY ALL SPOKE - DHARMA?



712 AD, WAVE 1 - THE ARABS OF THE Umayyad Caliphate. They had ridden out of Arabia a century ago and ended at this river - fording it at dawn.



1000 AD, WAVE 2 - Mahmud of Ghazni would come seventeen times, but never could rule a single province of it.



1192 AD, WAVE 3 - Muhammad of Ghor, whose victory at Tarain cracked the door at last and let in the sultanate that would sit at Delhi for the next three hundred years.



1526 AD, Babur of Ferghana - with cannon, matchlocks and the patience of a man who knew he had time. The empire he founded would last two centuries on the throne, and longer in name.



...the story is not yet finished. The hardest chapters are still to come.

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