

PALE RIDER

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SCAN ME

PALE RIDER

**Fifteen-hundred years ago, the Old World fell,
and the Pale first appeared.**

**Humanity fought their wars,
and the Pale grew, expanding
where fear and chaos reigned.**

**This continued until the Pale
had consumed nearly all
of the known world**

The year is 1512 After The Pale.

**Mankind is fractured, confined to
Isolas where the Pale hasn't yet reached.**

**Only fragments of the Old World survive:
Nation-states that law and prioritize order over all
and frontiersmen who brave the fringes of the
Pale in search of freedom.**

**But there are those for whom the Pale
is not the end of the world.**

**They are capable of many things:
Guardsmen, Drivers, Hunters, Beast-Slayers.**

**Above all, however, they are the line
that holds together the world.**

They are the forewarning of the Pale.

**They are the couriers that connect Earth's scattered isolas,
forecasters of the Apocalypse.**

They are Pale Riders...

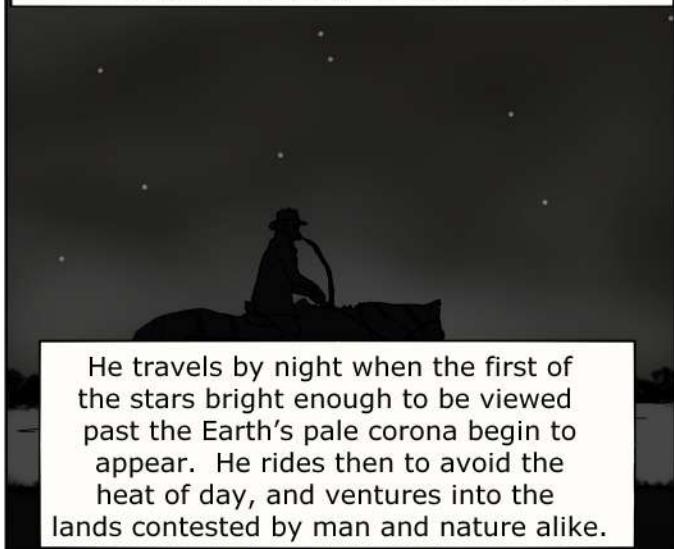
The Pale Rider is a horse; his eyes scan the late evening sky's horizon. He sees no sun. The Pale is due West, as the last forecast had predicted it would be.

Ordinarily, it would be of no concern, more of a reassurance than anything to know that the Pale was where it ought to have been. It hardly would even have been worth the recurring year's end forecasting.



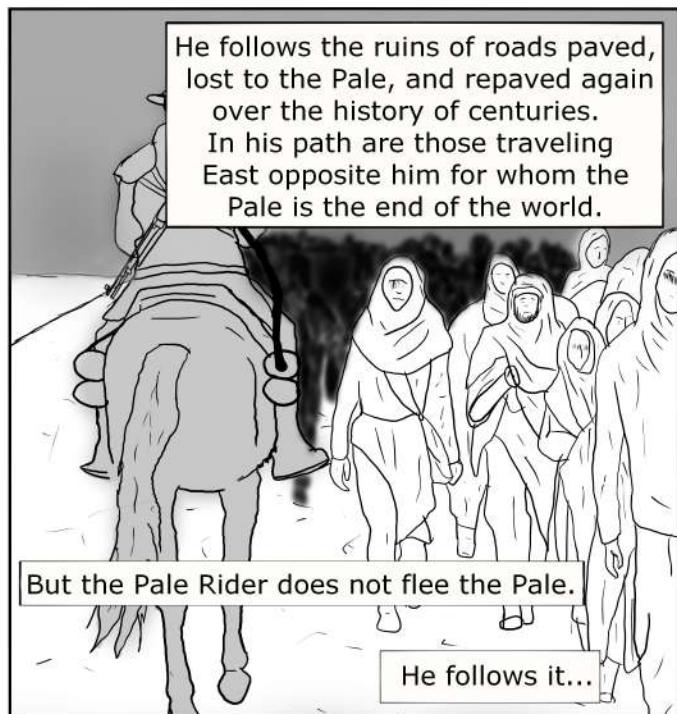
But the Pale is due southeast of Carson, a city of 40 thousand. If the Pale has changed its course, then the city must know, and its people must flee. If there is nothing to be done and the city is lost, then it is the world that must know.

So, the Pale Rider is delivered orders from Albion, the capital of the Concord of Free States, and is dispatched from Ashdown nearer the frontier where the Pale still roams.



He travels by night when the first of the stars bright enough to be viewed past the Earth's pale corona begin to appear. He rides then to avoid the heat of day, and ventures into the lands contested by man and nature alike.

He follows the ruins of roads paved, lost to the Pale, and repaved again over the history of centuries. In his path are those traveling East opposite him for whom the Pale is the end of the world.



But the Pale Rider does not flee the Pale.

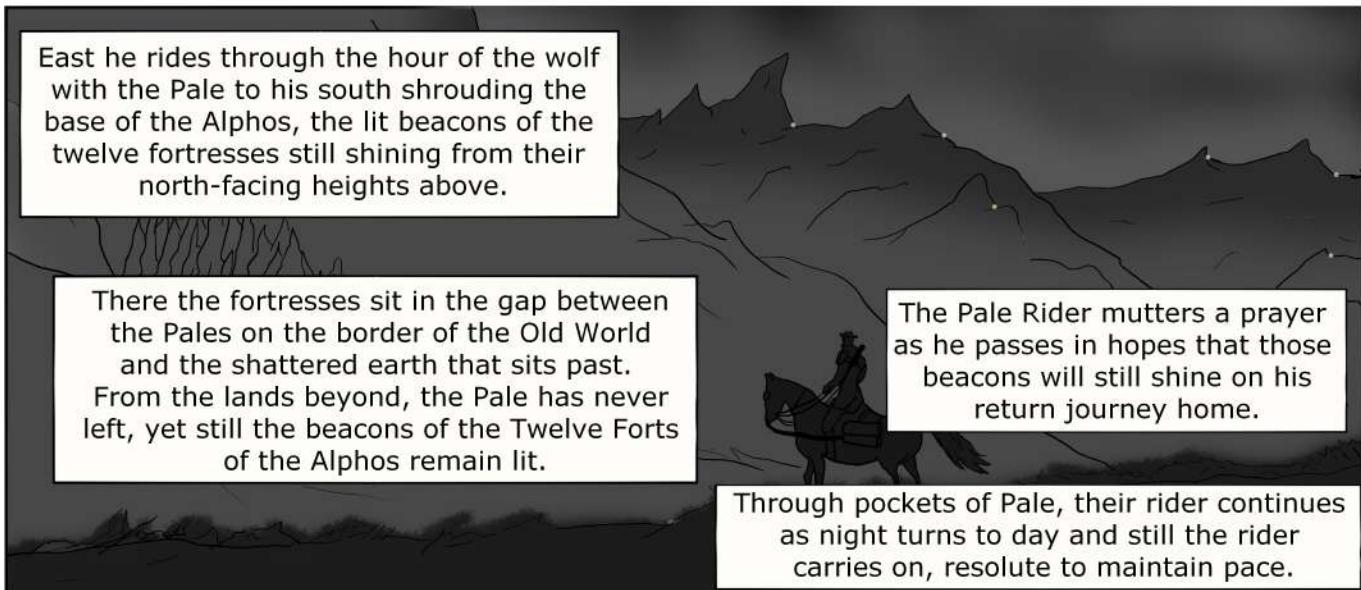
He follows it...

East he rides through the hour of the wolf with the Pale to his south shrouding the base of the Alphos, the lit beacons of the twelve fortresses still shining from their north-facing heights above.

There the fortresses sit in the gap between the Pales on the border of the Old World and the shattered earth that sits past. From the lands beyond, the Pale has never left, yet still the beacons of the Twelve Forts of the Alphos remain lit.

The Pale Rider mutters a prayer as he passes in hopes that those beacons will still shine on his return journey home.

Through pockets of Pale, their rider continues as night turns to day and still the rider carries on, resolute to maintain pace.



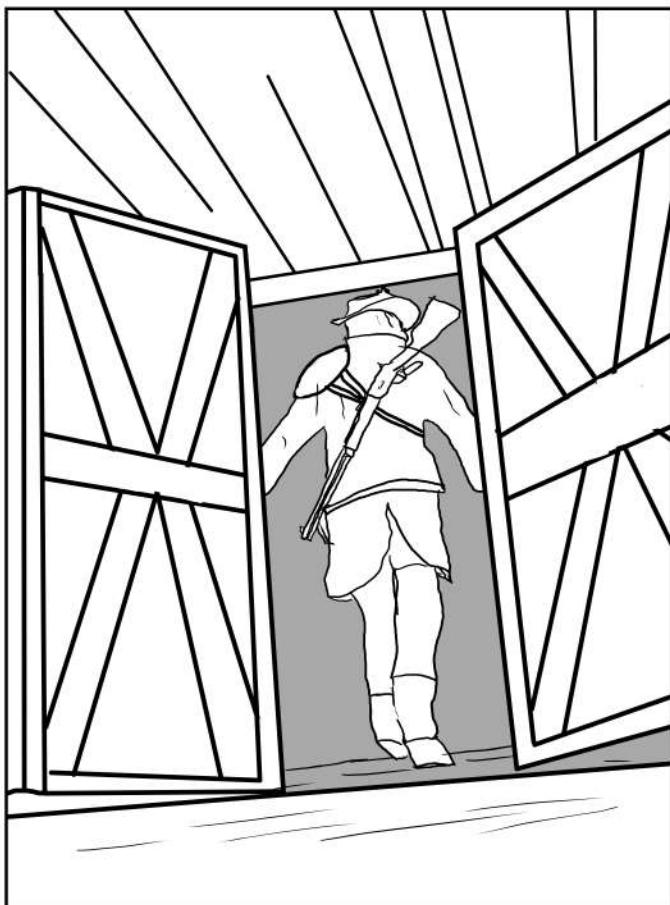
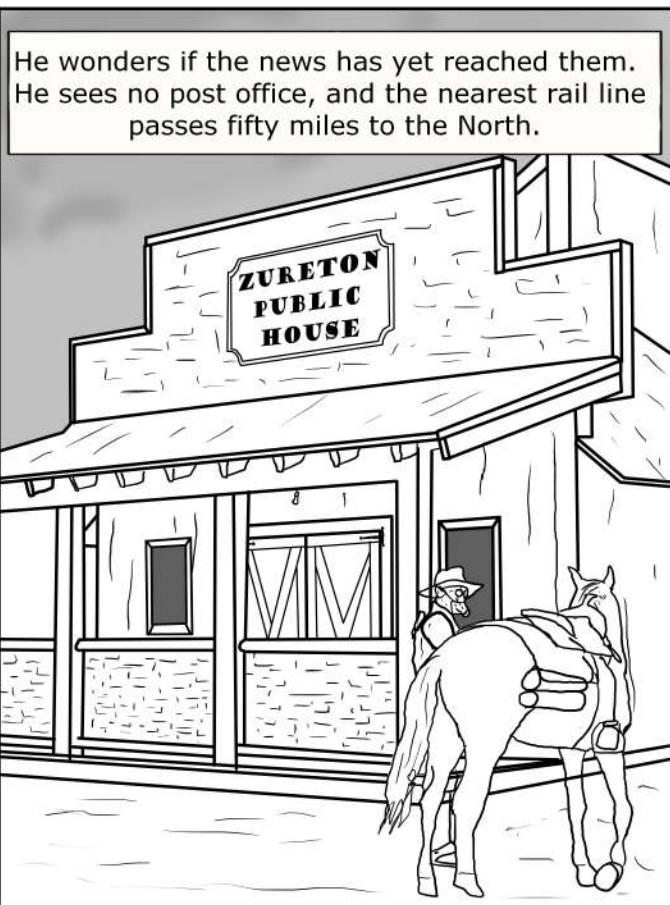
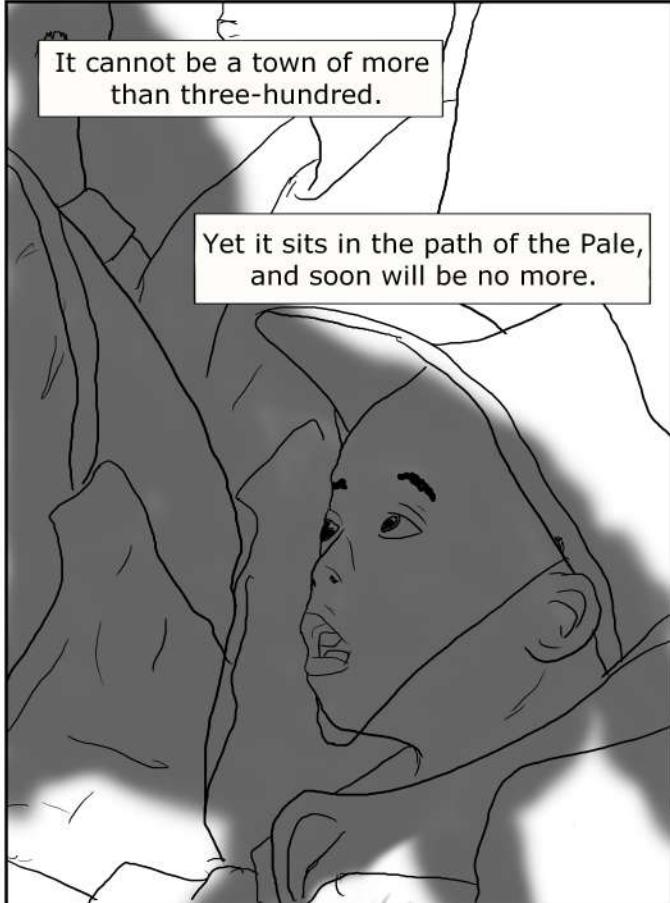
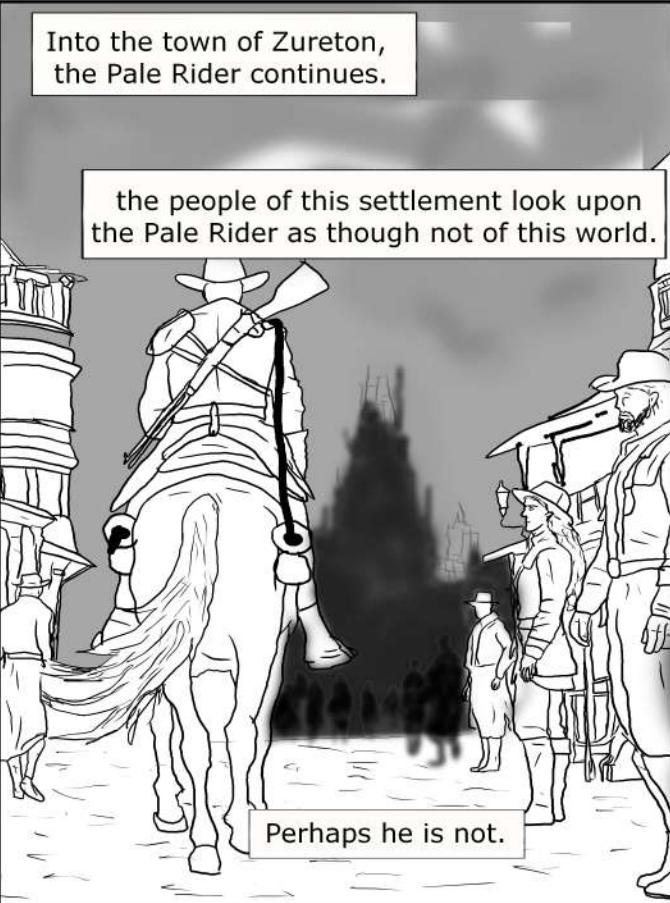
Into the town of Zureton,
the Pale Rider continues.

the people of this settlement look upon
the Pale Rider as though not of this world.

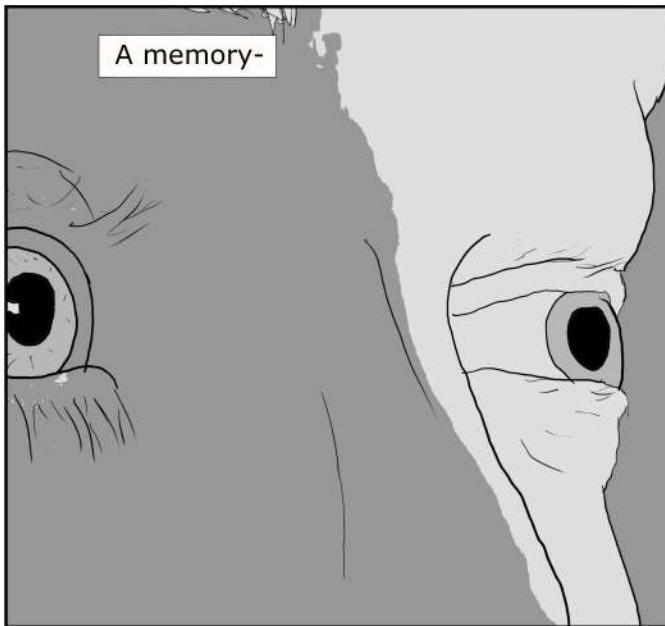
Perhaps he is not.

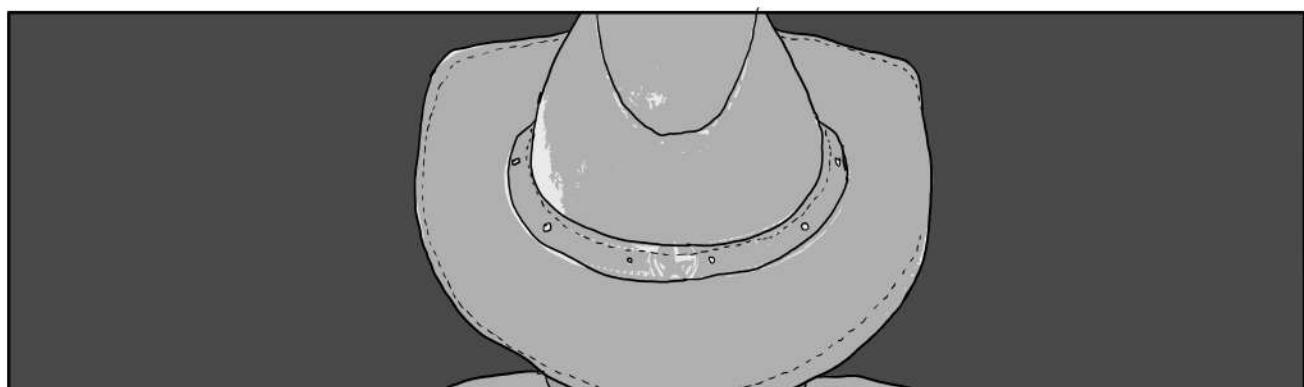
It cannot be a town of more
than three-hundred.

Yet it sits in the path of the Pale,
and soon will be no more.











There are limitations to talking about the Pale.

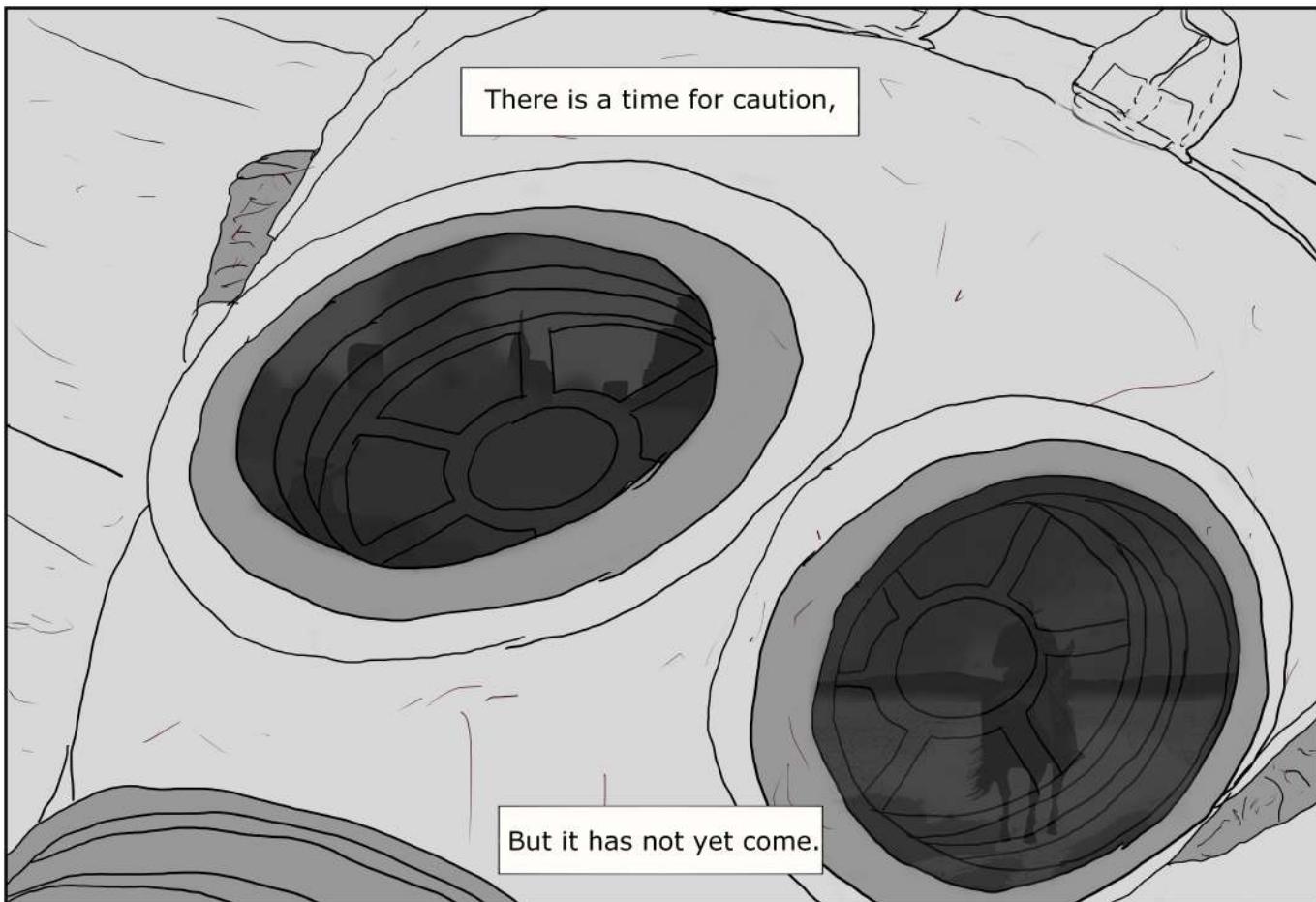


But Zureton is a town of 300.



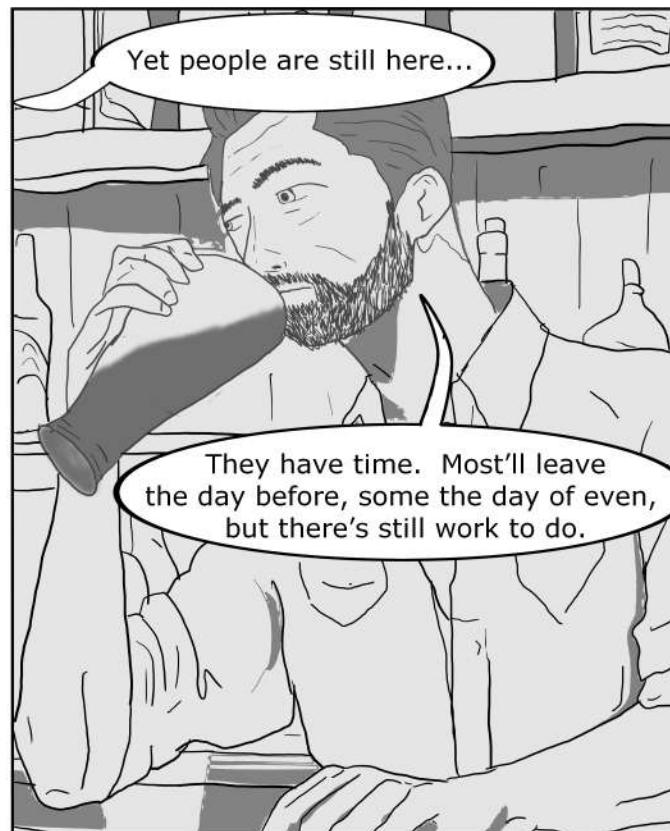
Even a mere mention to the wrong man capable of having disastrous consequences.

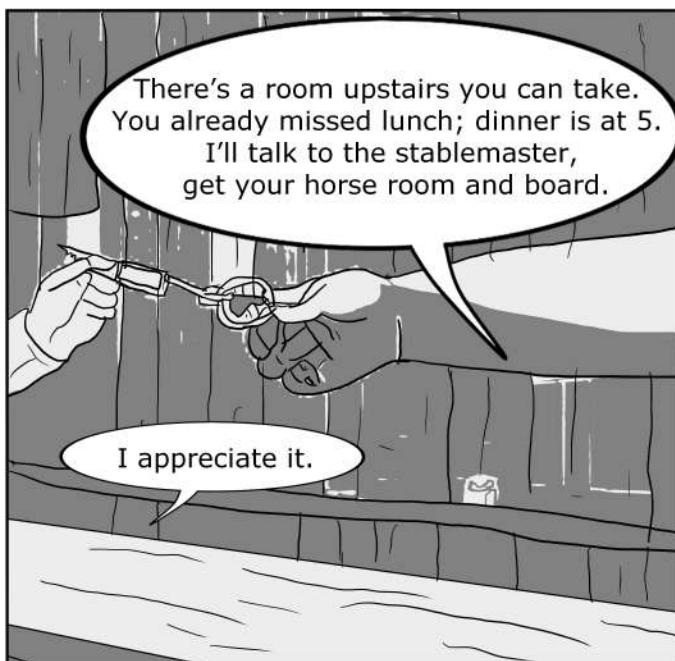
And the closest thing to leadership the town has is the man with whom the Pale Rider is already speaking.



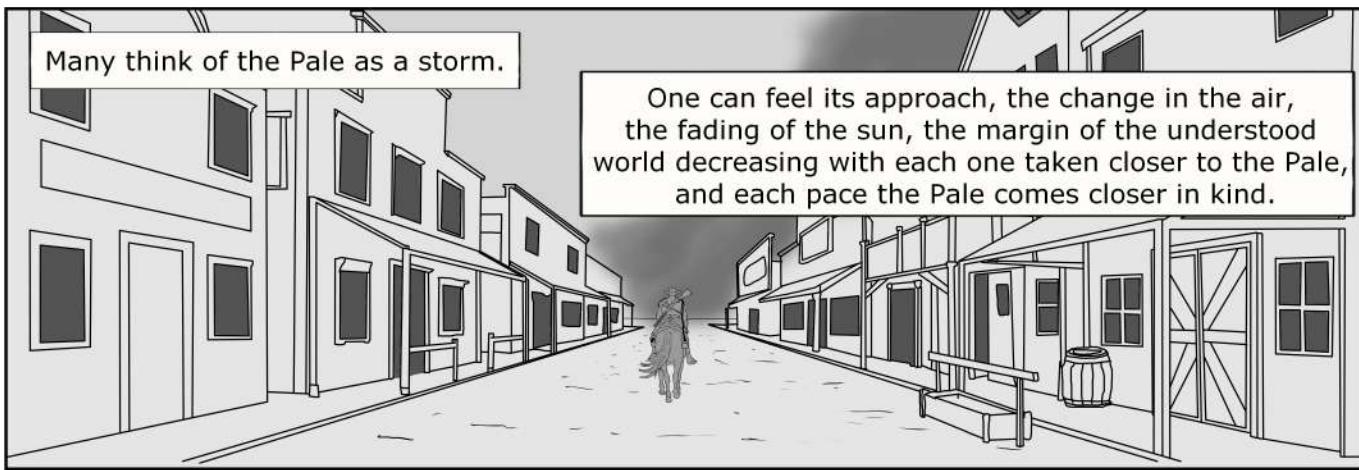
There is a time for caution,

But it has not yet come.



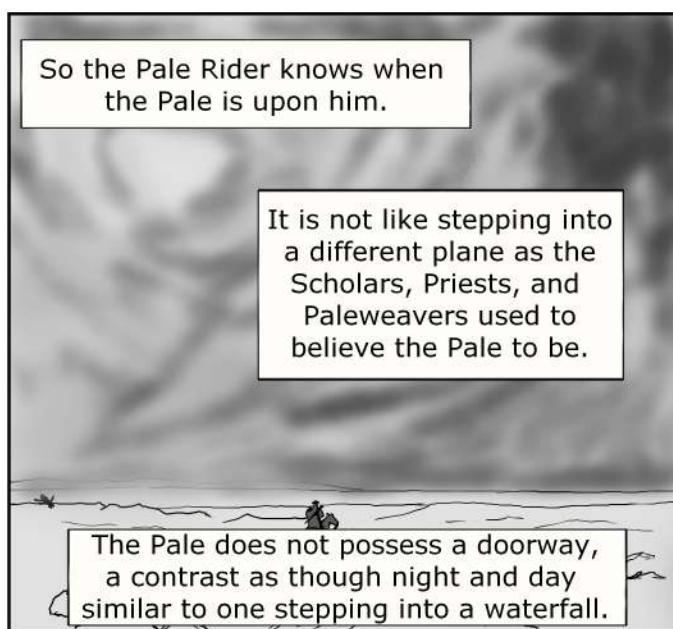






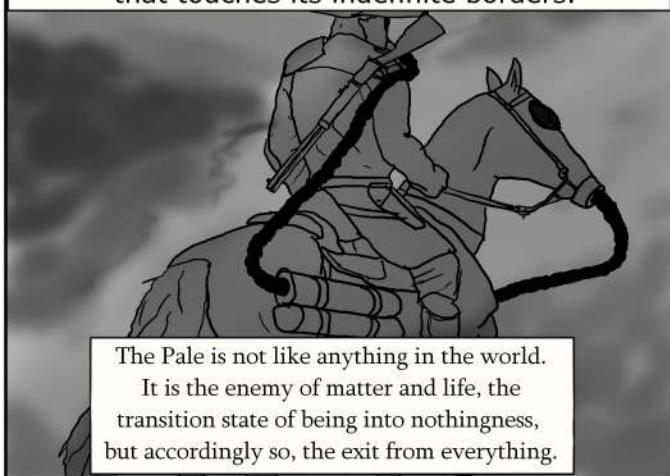
Many think of the Pale as a storm.

One can feel its approach, the change in the air, the fading of the sun, the margin of the understood world decreasing with each one taken closer to the Pale, and each pace the Pale comes closer in kind.

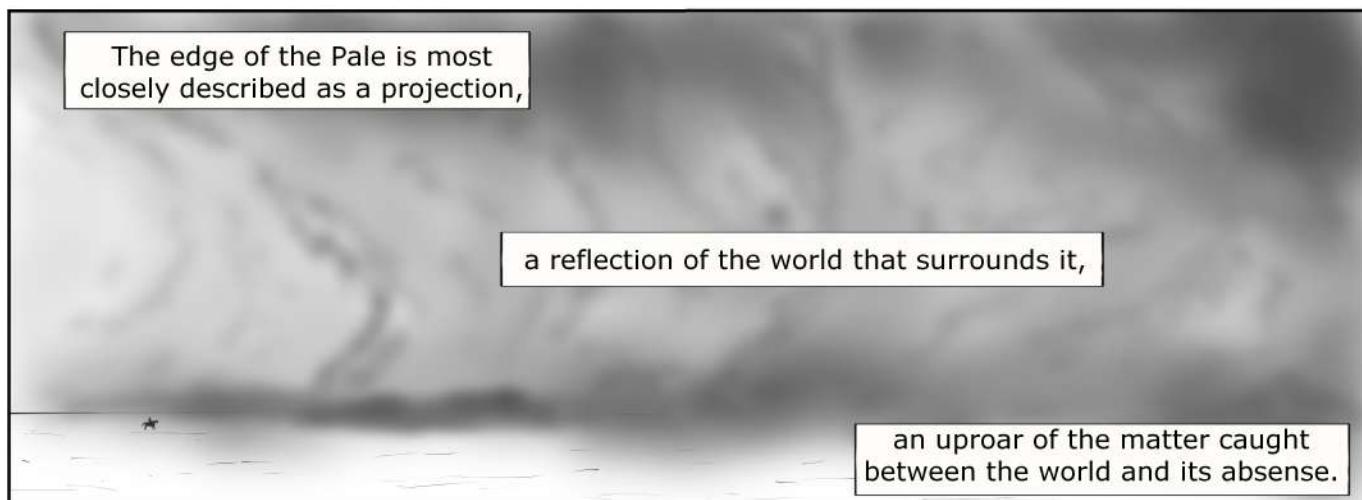


The Pale does not possess a doorway, a contrast as though night and day similar to one stepping into a waterfall.

The Pale has no sensation to be felt. It is achromatic, odorless, and featureless, measured not by the matter within, but the matter without that touches its indefinite borders.



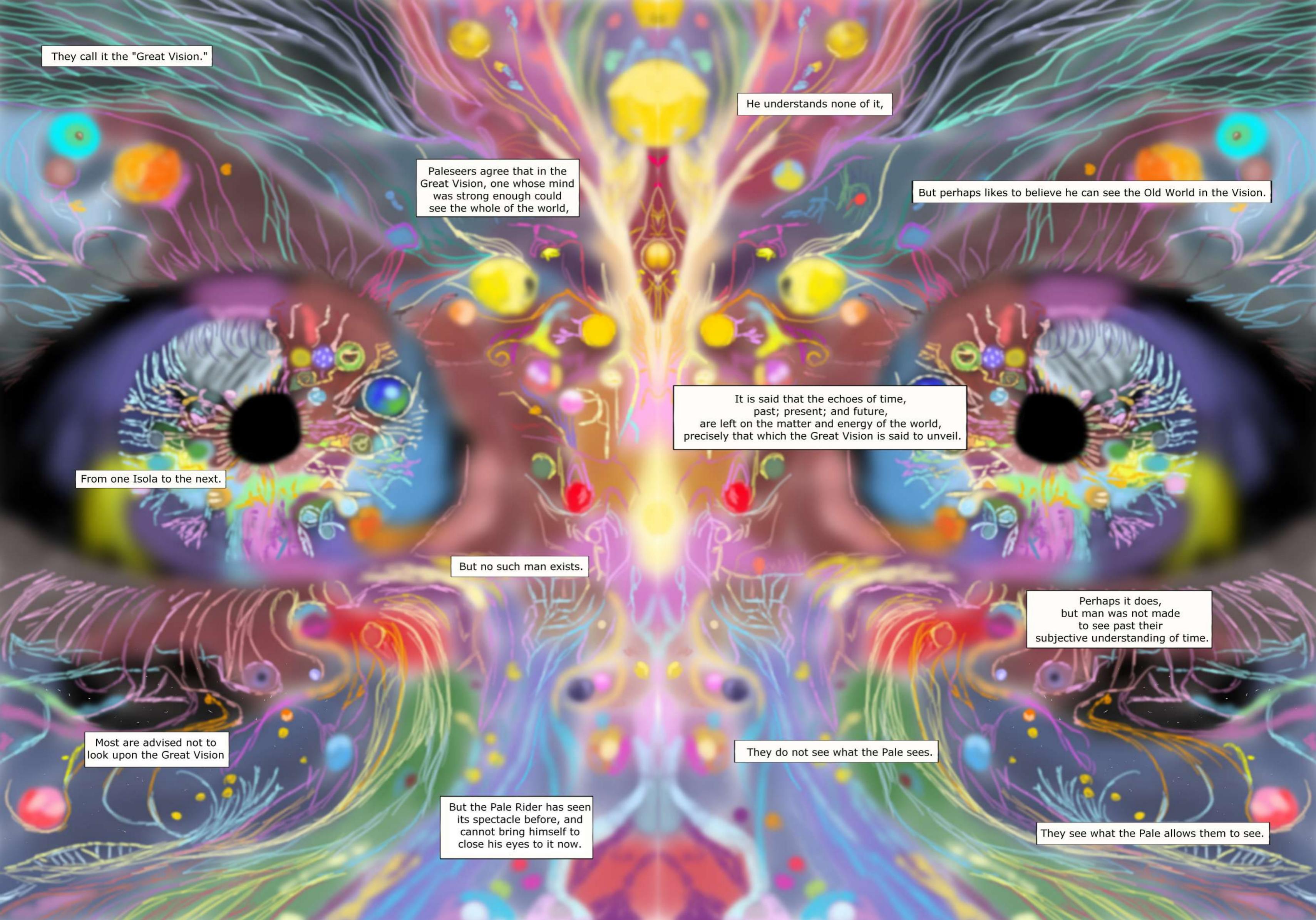
The Pale is not like anything in the world. It is the enemy of matter and life, the transition state of being into nothingness, but accordingly so, the exit from everything.



The edge of the Pale is most closely described as a projection,

a reflection of the world that surrounds it,

an uproar of the matter caught between the world and its absense.



They call it the "Great Vision."

He understands none of it,

Paleseers agree that in the Great Vision, one whose mind was strong enough could see the whole of the world,

But perhaps likes to believe he can see the Old World in the Vision.

From one Isola to the next.

It is said that the echoes of time, past; present; and future, are left on the matter and energy of the world, precisely that which the Great Vision is said to unveil.

But no such man exists.

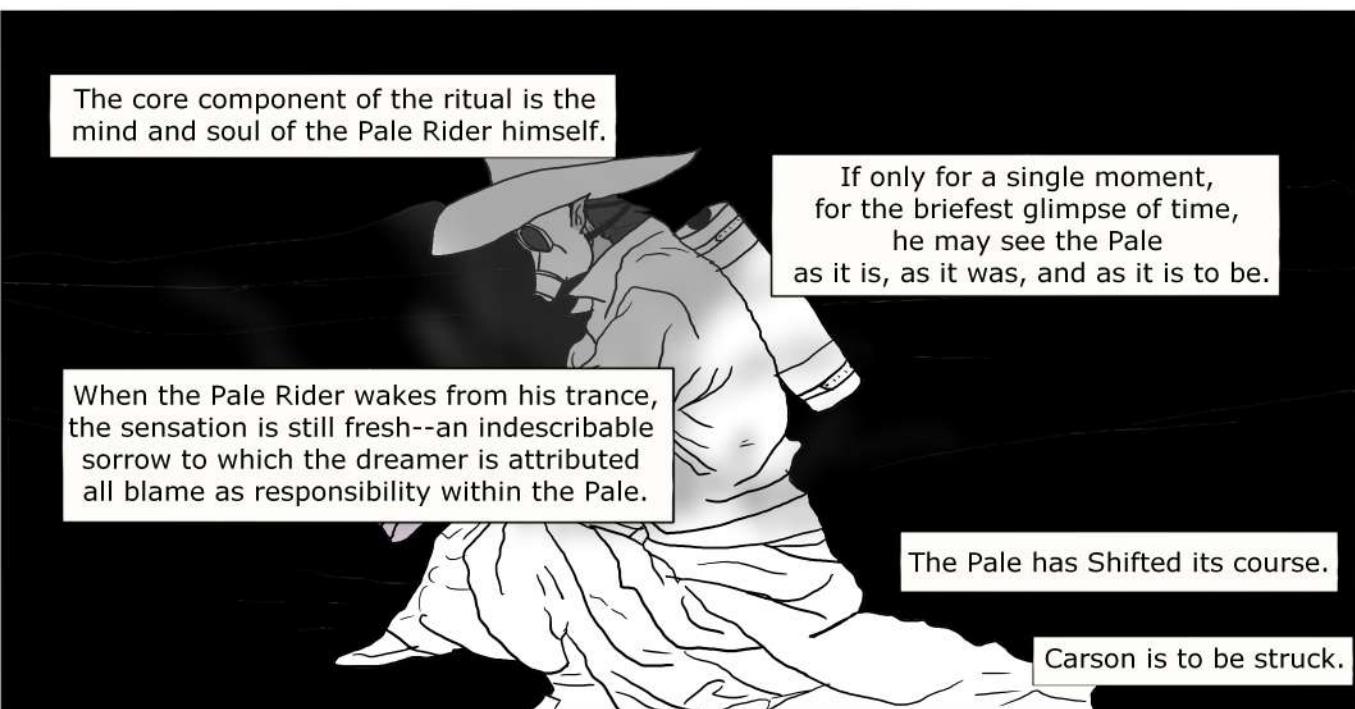
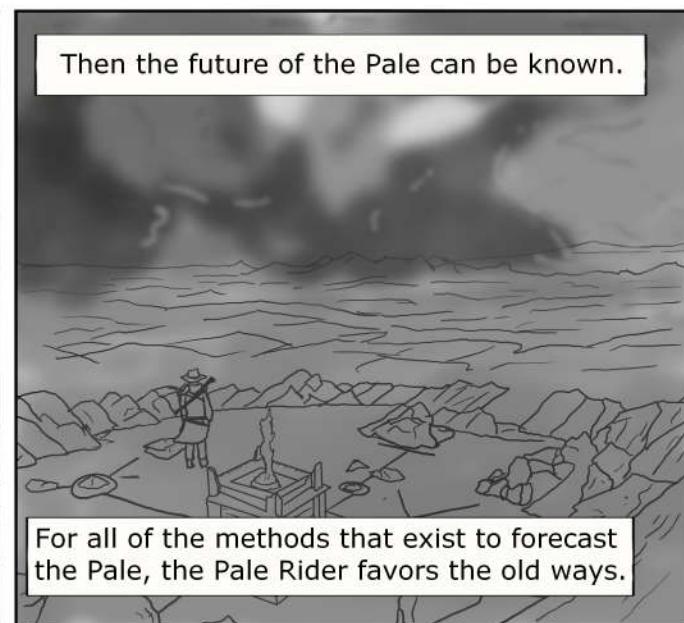
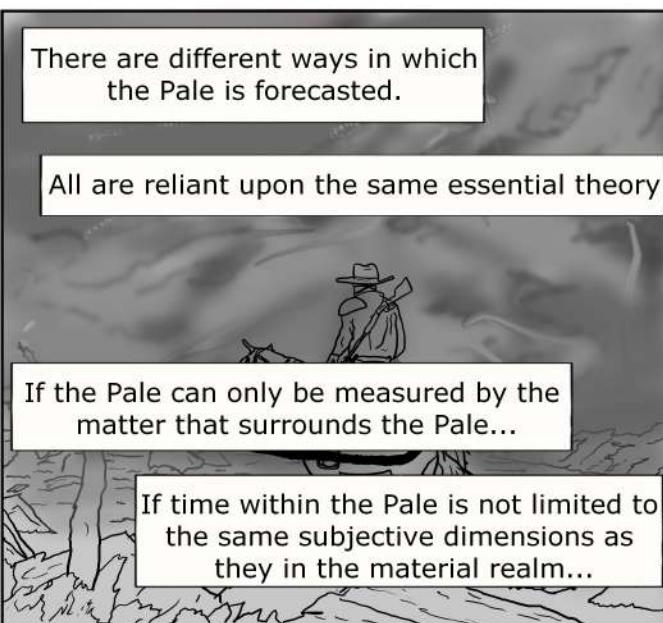
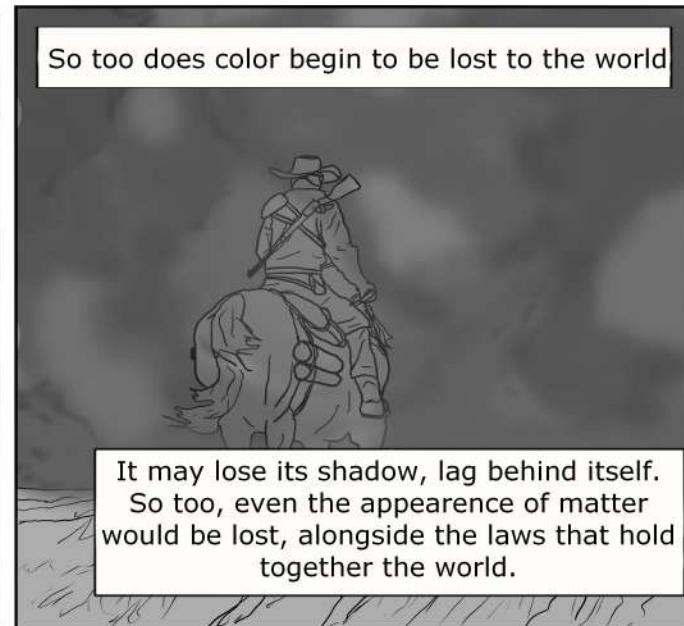
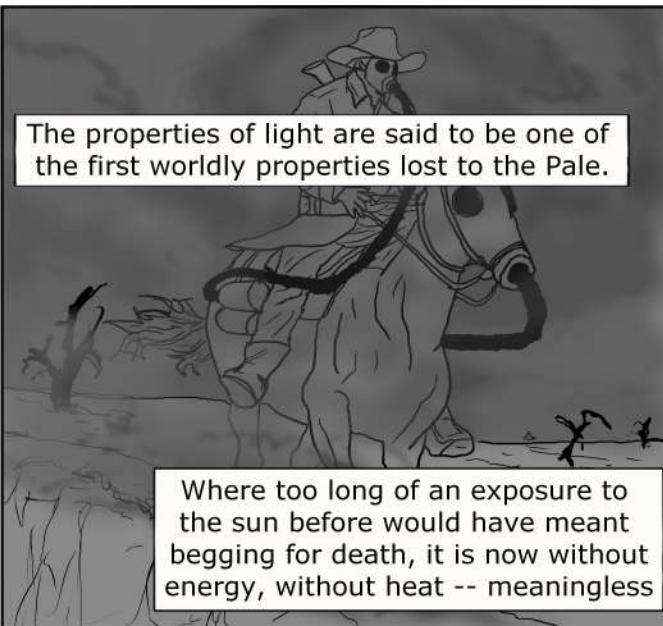
Perhaps it does, but man was not made to see past their subjective understanding of time.

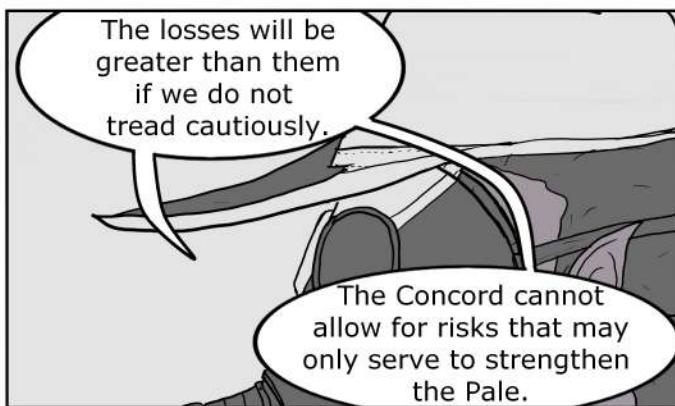
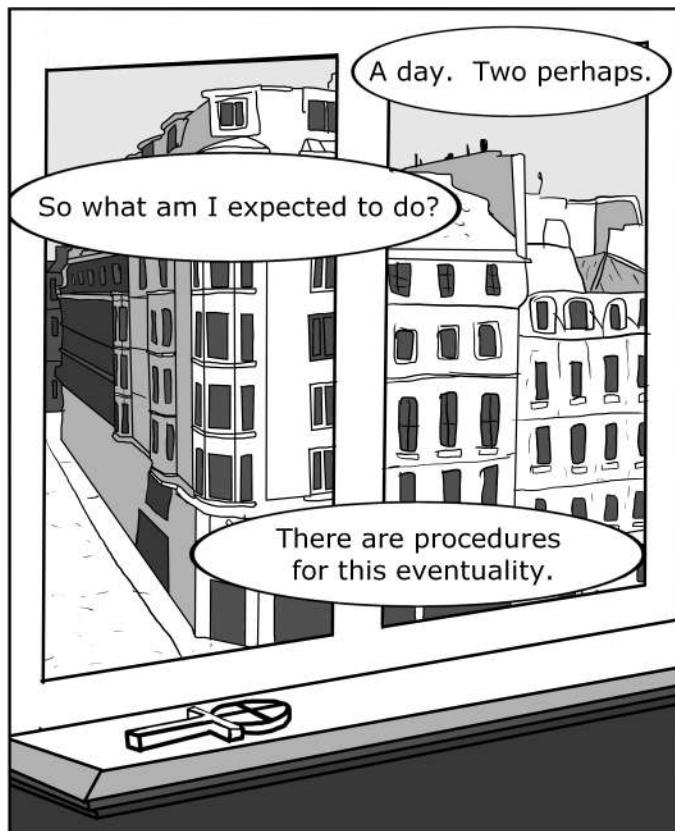
Most are advised not to look upon the Great Vision

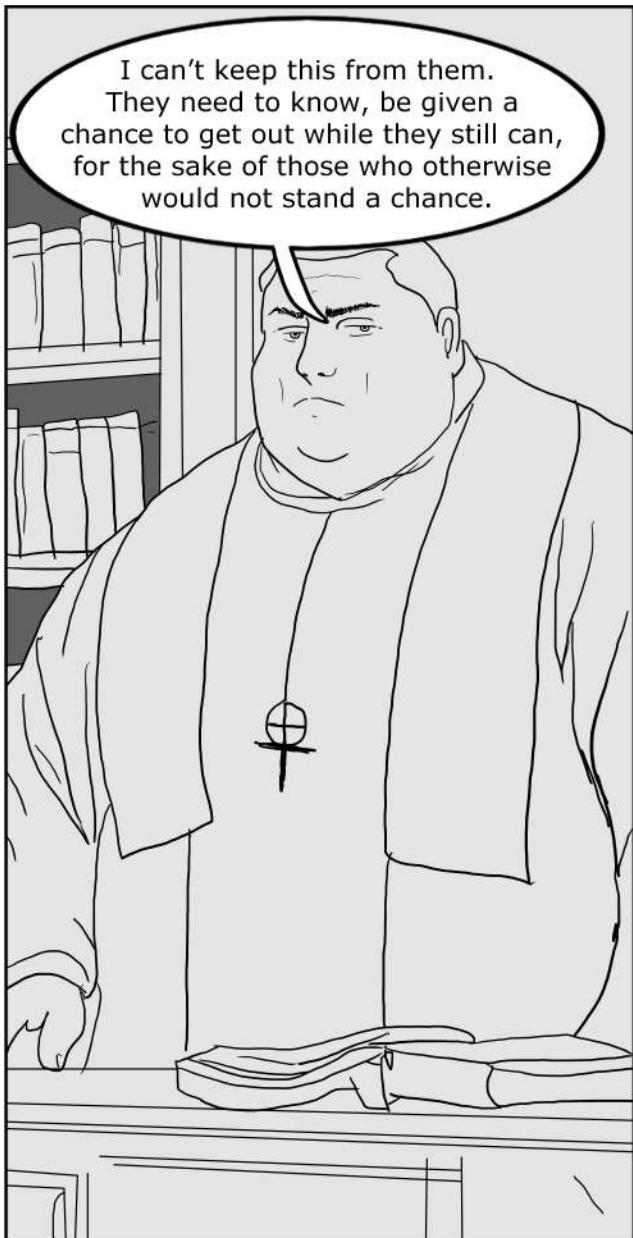
They do not see what the Pale sees.

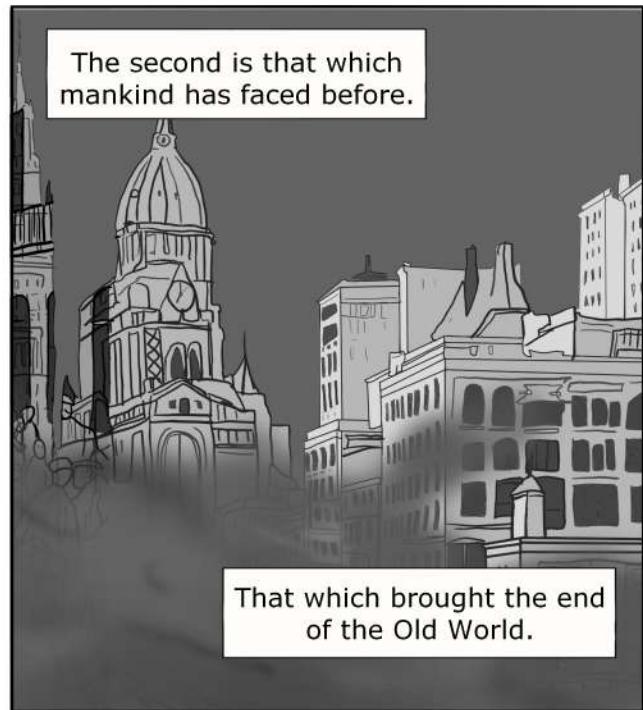
But the Pale Rider has seen its spectacle before, and cannot bring himself to close his eyes to it now.

They see what the Pale allows them to see.









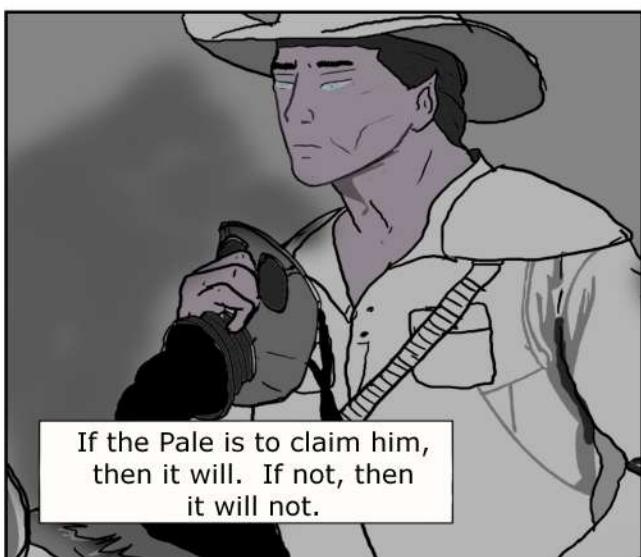


In half a day, Carson has fallen, and so the Pale has emerged anew.

The Pale covers more of the world today than yesterday.



Where he goes now, no protective measure will save him.



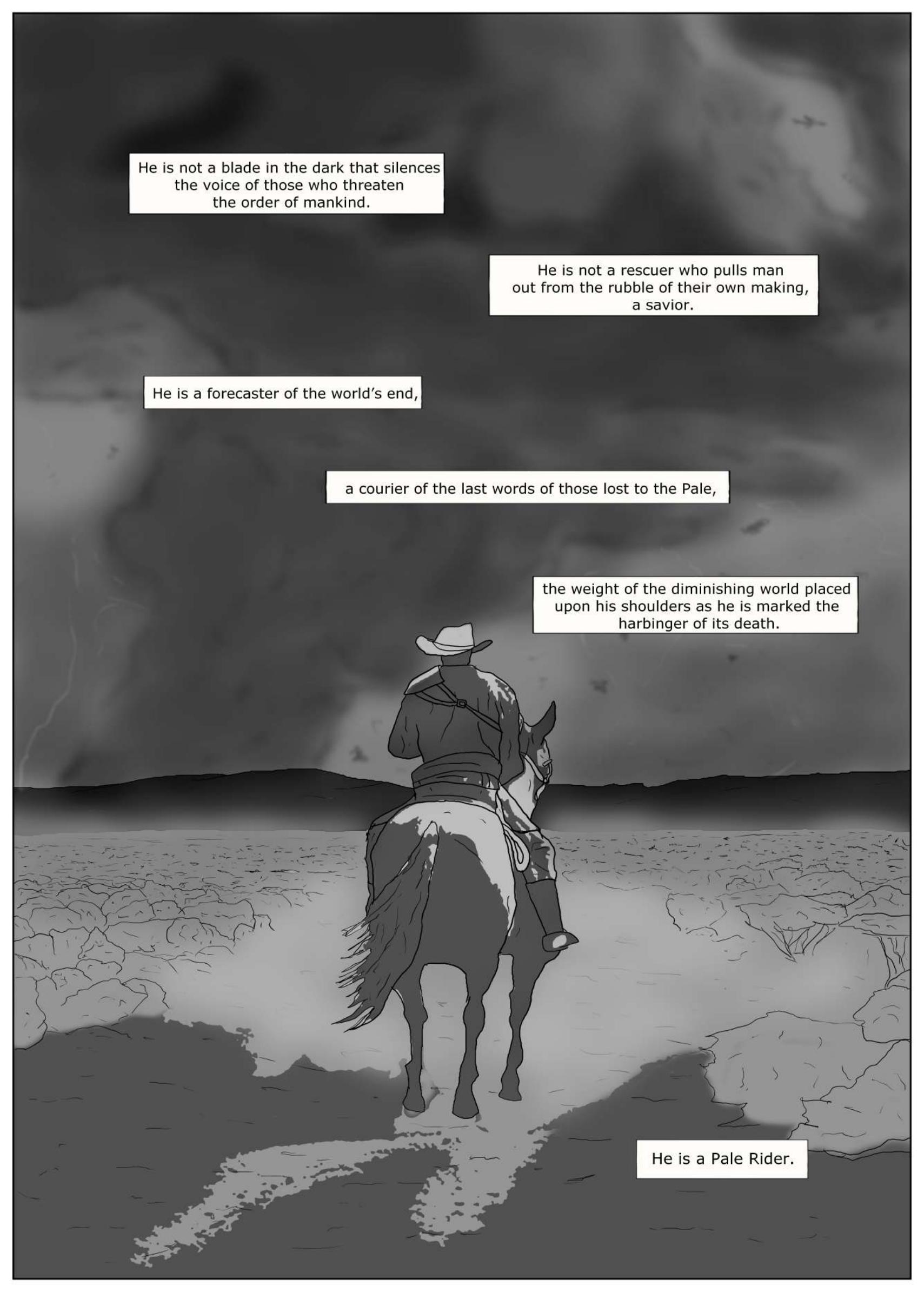
If the Pale is to claim him, then it will. If not, then it will not.



He affords Carson one last look, and for a moment, ponders if he should return.



But that is not what he is.



He is not a blade in the dark that silences
the voice of those who threaten
the order of mankind.

He is not a rescuer who pulls man
out from the rubble of their own making,
a savior.

He is a forecaster of the world's end,

a courier of the last words of those lost to the Pale,

the weight of the diminishing world placed
upon his shoulders as he is marked the
harbinger of its death.

He is a Pale Rider.