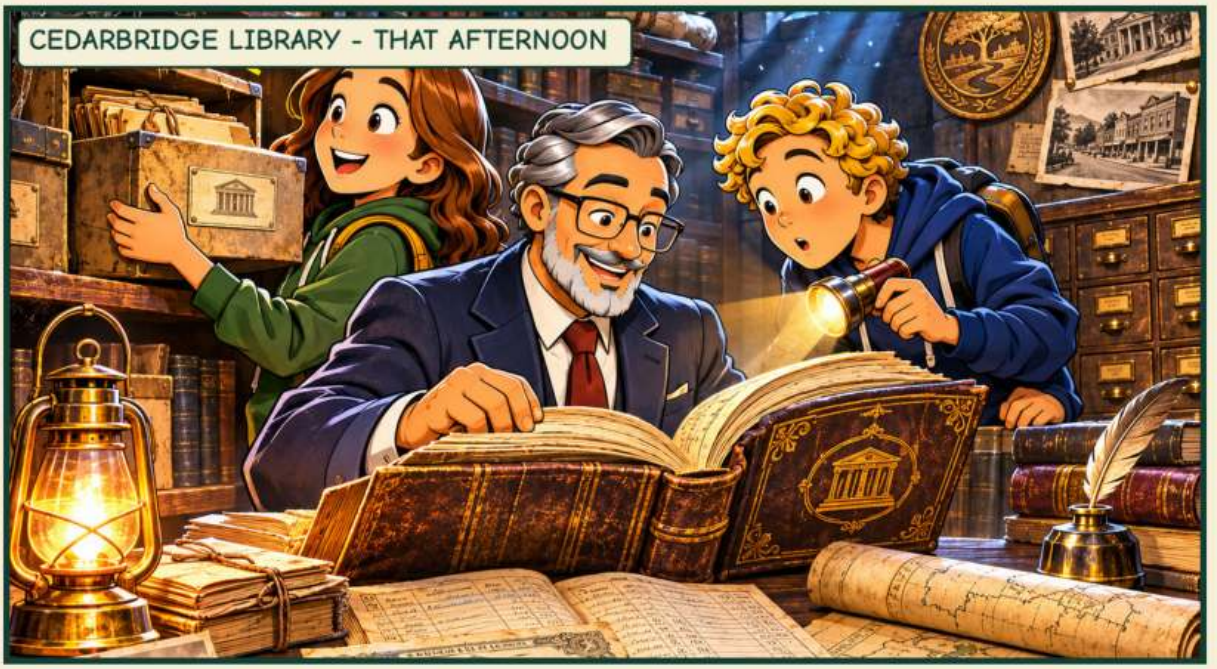
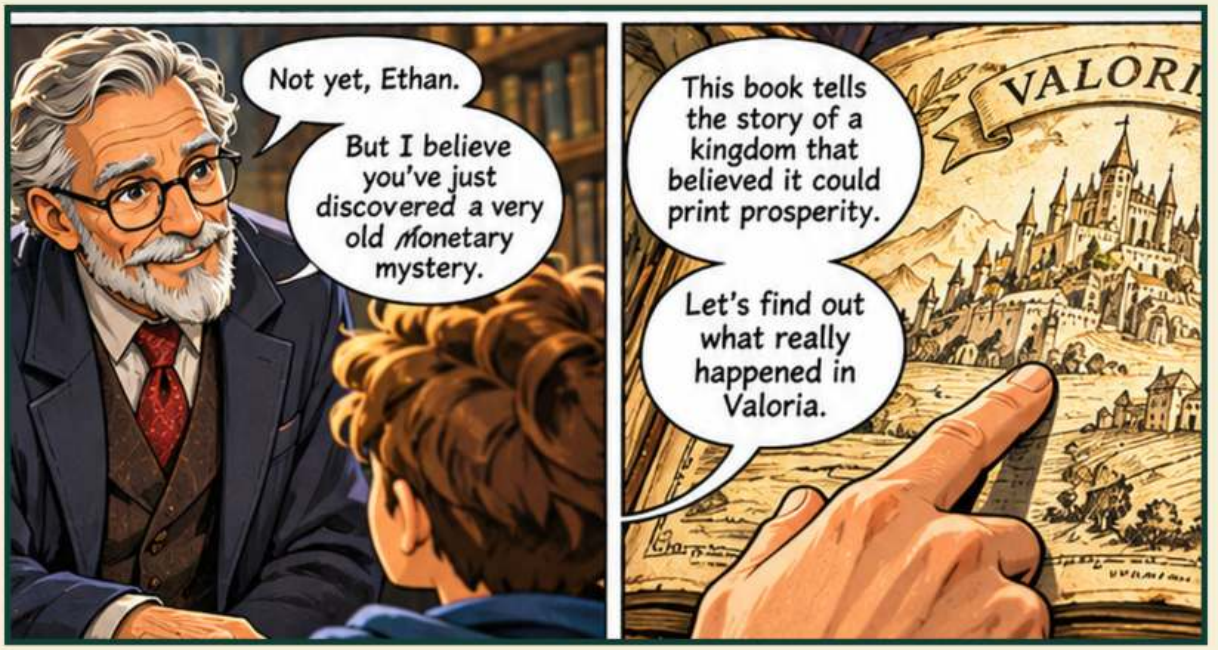

The Money Detectives
The Kingdom of Paper Promises
CHAPTER 1
The Kingdom That Could Print Anything
IN THE KINGDOM OF VALORIA, THERE LIVED A KING WHO WANTED EVERYONE TO BE WEALTHY.
ONE DAY, HIS CHANCELLOR OFFERED A REMARKABLE IDEA.
THE KINGDOM COULD CREATE AS MUCH MONEY AS IT NEEDED.
AND FOR A LITTLE WHILE, IT SEEMED TO WORK.
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW FOR EVERYONE!
BUT BENEATH THE CELEBRATION, NOT EVERYONE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE KINGDOM'S NEW PROSPERITY WOULD LAST.



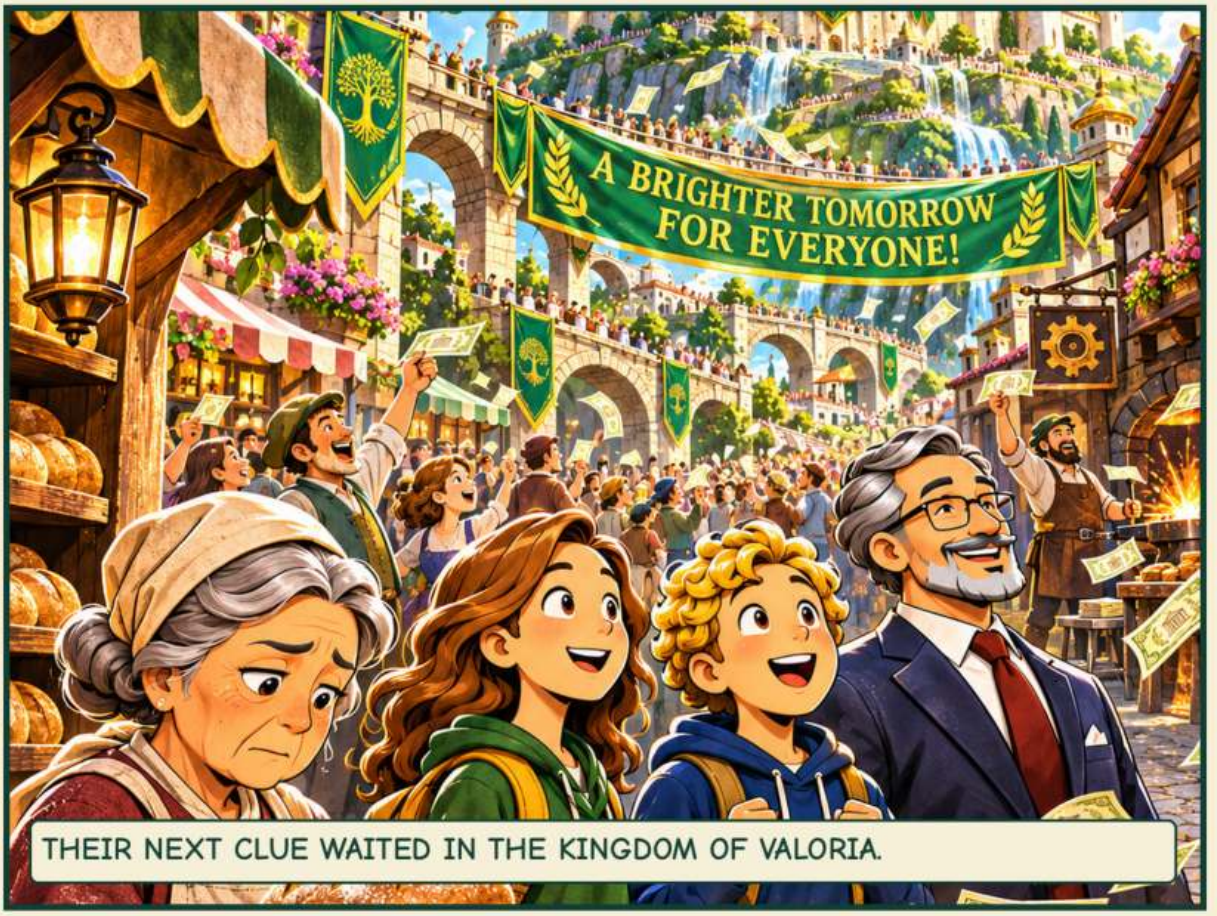




A NOTE INSIDE THE BOOK CHANGED EVERYTHING.



THE DETECTIVE RECOGNIZED AN OLD MONETARY MYSTERY.



THEIR NEXT CLUE WAITED IN THE KINGDOM OF VALORIA.


I wondered who had found the green book.
CEDARBRIDGE ARCHIVE

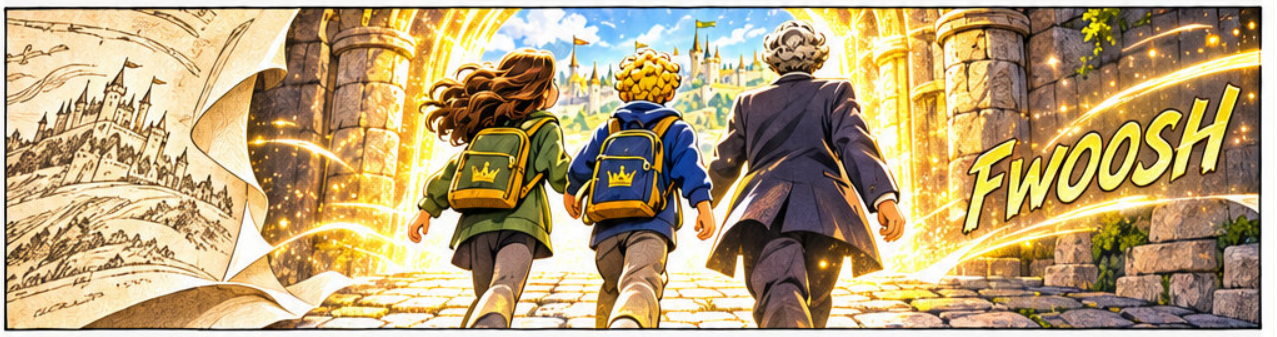

You know it?
I know that someone wanted a very important question remembered.


Was Valoria a real kingdom?
Not in our history books. But the choices it made are very real kinds of choices.


Ethan... the picture is moving.
WHOOOOM

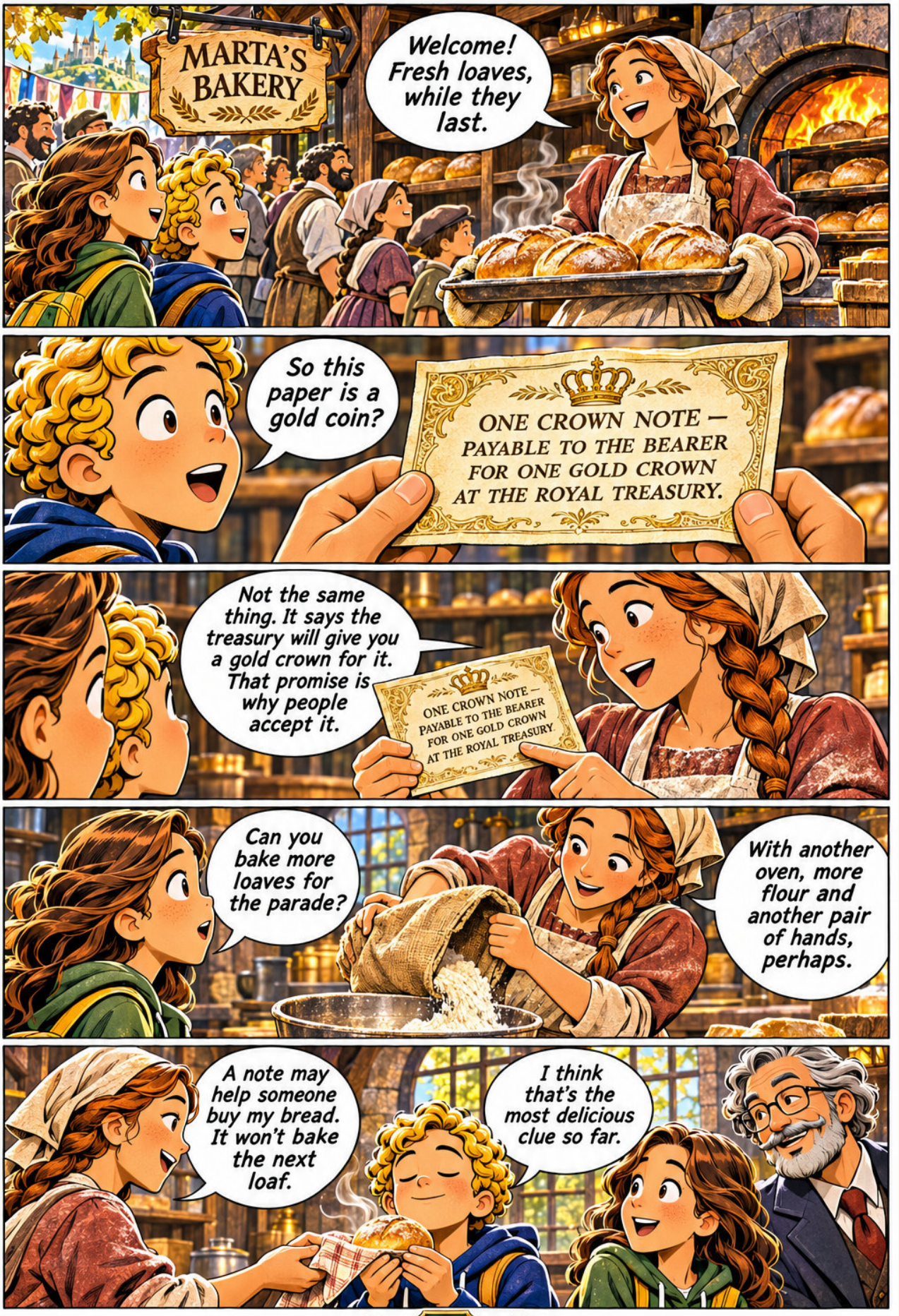

Are we supposed to run?
Only if you would prefer not to solve the mystery.

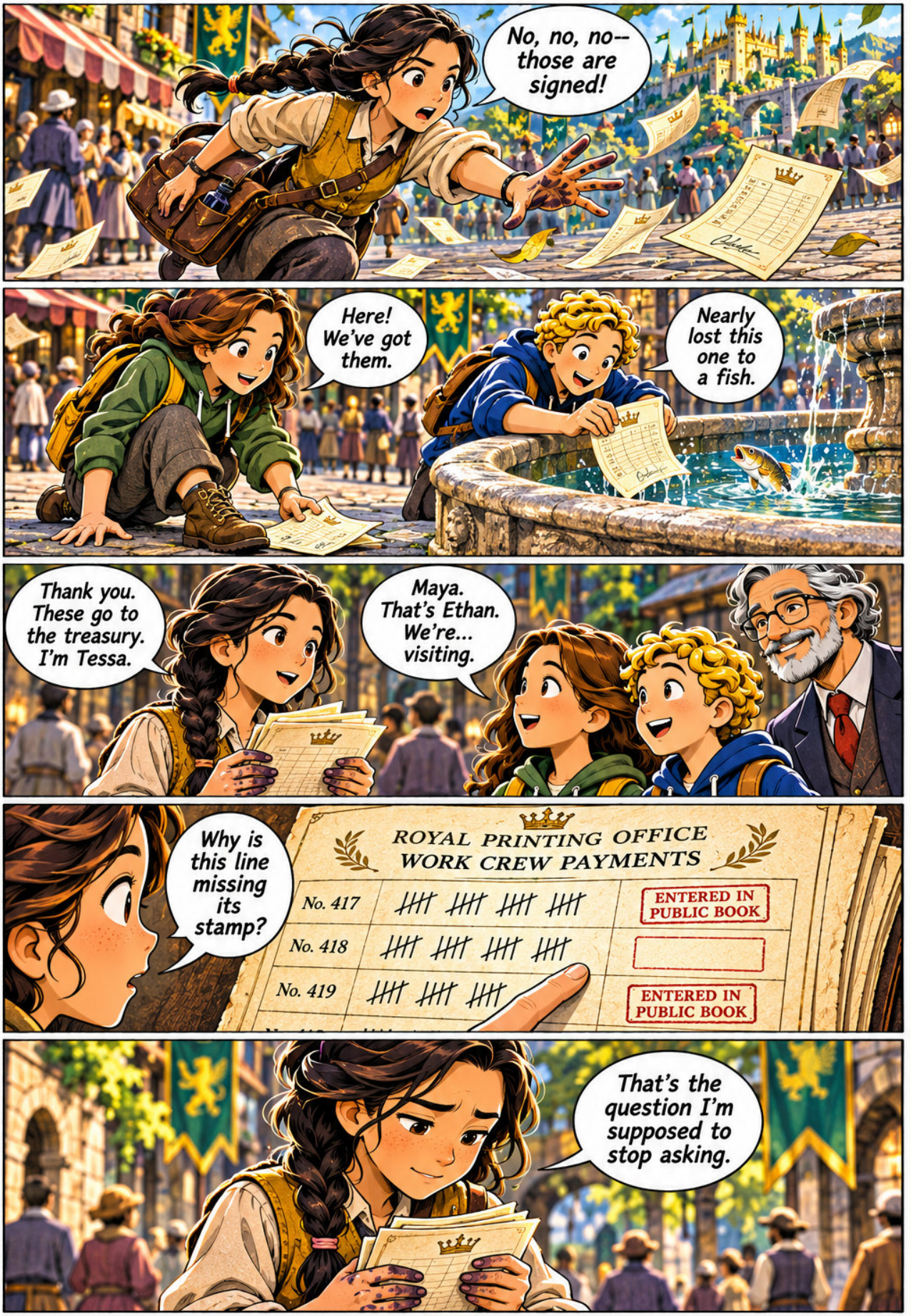

If we go in, we stay together.
Agreed. I especially vote for the together part.


FWOOSH


This is the most expensive-looking book I've ever opened.
VALORIA
ROYAL PRINTING OFFICE

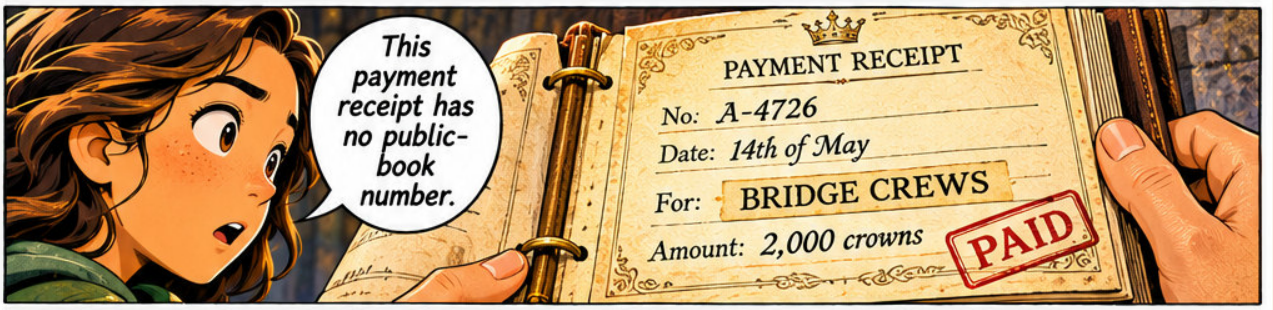

For new roads! For a new aqueduct! For Valoria!
They paid us early! The bridge work starts tomorrow.
They're paying people to build useful things. That sounds good.
It might be. A bridge can be worth building.
But the paper comes from the printing office. Where do the stones, tools and labor come from?
A good question for the people doing the work.
DELIVERY TALLY
Stone ✓
Timber ✓
Iron ✓
Tools ✓
Labor ✓
I was hoping for a question with a pastry answer.


MARTA'S BAKERY
Welcome! Fresh loaves, while they last.
So this paper is a gold coin?
ONE CROWN NOTE — PAYABLE TO THE BEARER FOR ONE GOLD CROWN AT THE ROYAL TREASURY.
Not the same thing. It says the treasury will give you a gold crown for it. That promise is why people accept it.
ONE CROWN NOTE — PAYABLE TO THE BEARER FOR ONE GOLD CROWN AT THE ROYAL TREASURY.
Can you bake more loaves for the parade?
With another oven, more flour and another pair of hands, perhaps.
A note may help someone buy my bread. It won't bake the next loaf.
I think that's the most delicious clue so far.


No, no, no— those are signed!
Here! We've got them.
Nearly lost this one to a fish.
Thank you. These go to the treasury. I'm Tessa.
Maya. That's Ethan. We're... visiting.
Why is this line missing its stamp?
ROYAL PRINTING OFFICE
WORK CREW PAYMENTS
No. 417
No. 418
No. 419
ENTERED IN PUBLIC BOOK
ENTERED IN PUBLIC BOOK
That's the question I'm supposed to stop asking.


TA-DAAA!
For years we have postponed the bridge, the wells, the road to the farms.
Why should tomorrow wait?
CROWN NOTE
10
10
The royal printing office can issue the notes to pay skilled workers now. Their work will help Valoria grow.
I mean, a new road would help Marta get flour.
Yes. But a road still needs stone and workers. And those notes still promise coins.
The cheers reached the castle walls. The doubts did not.
A brighter tomorrow begins today!

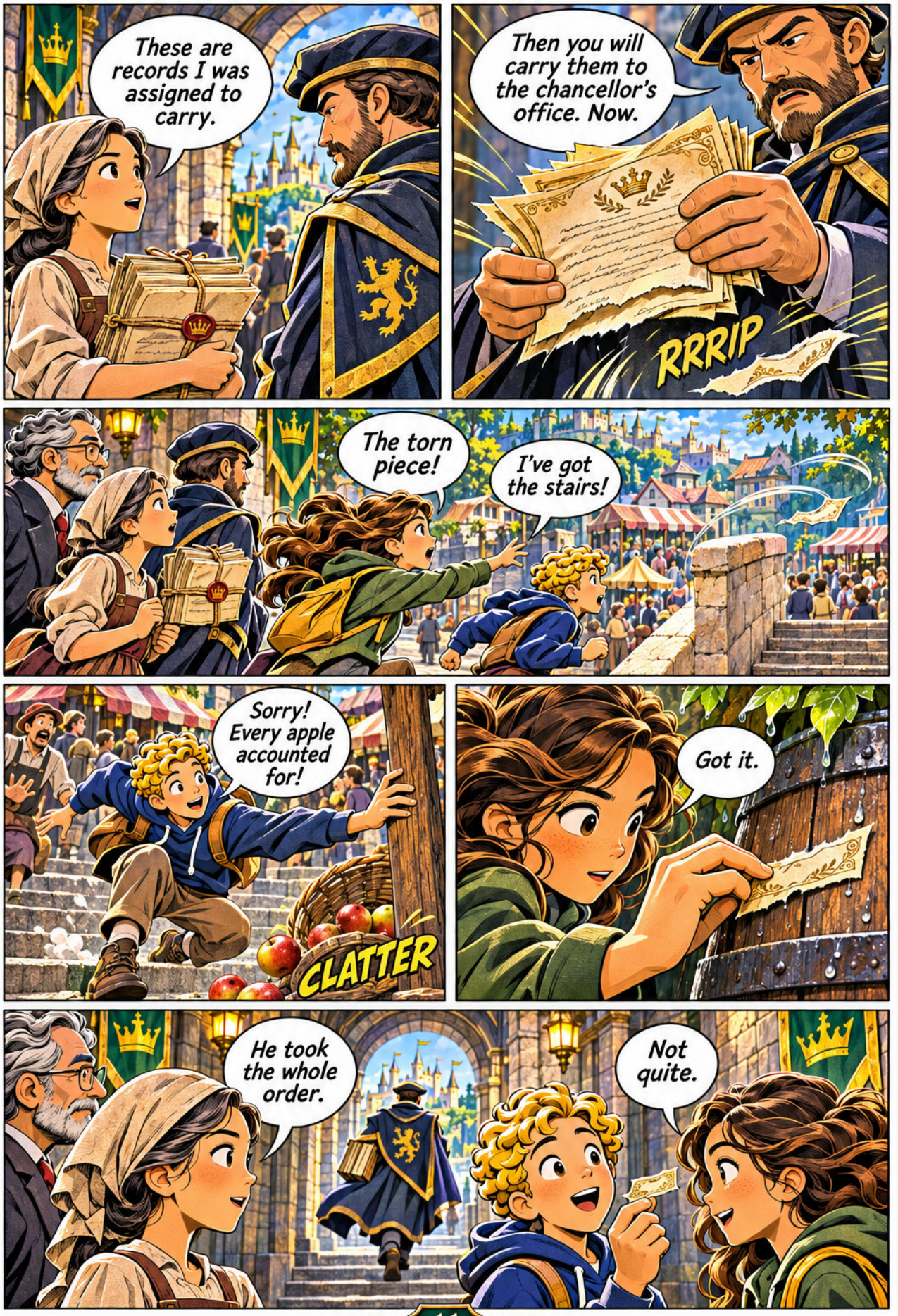

I keep copies of payment receipts. They're meant to match the public ledger.
ROYAL TREASURY
SERVICE PASSAGE

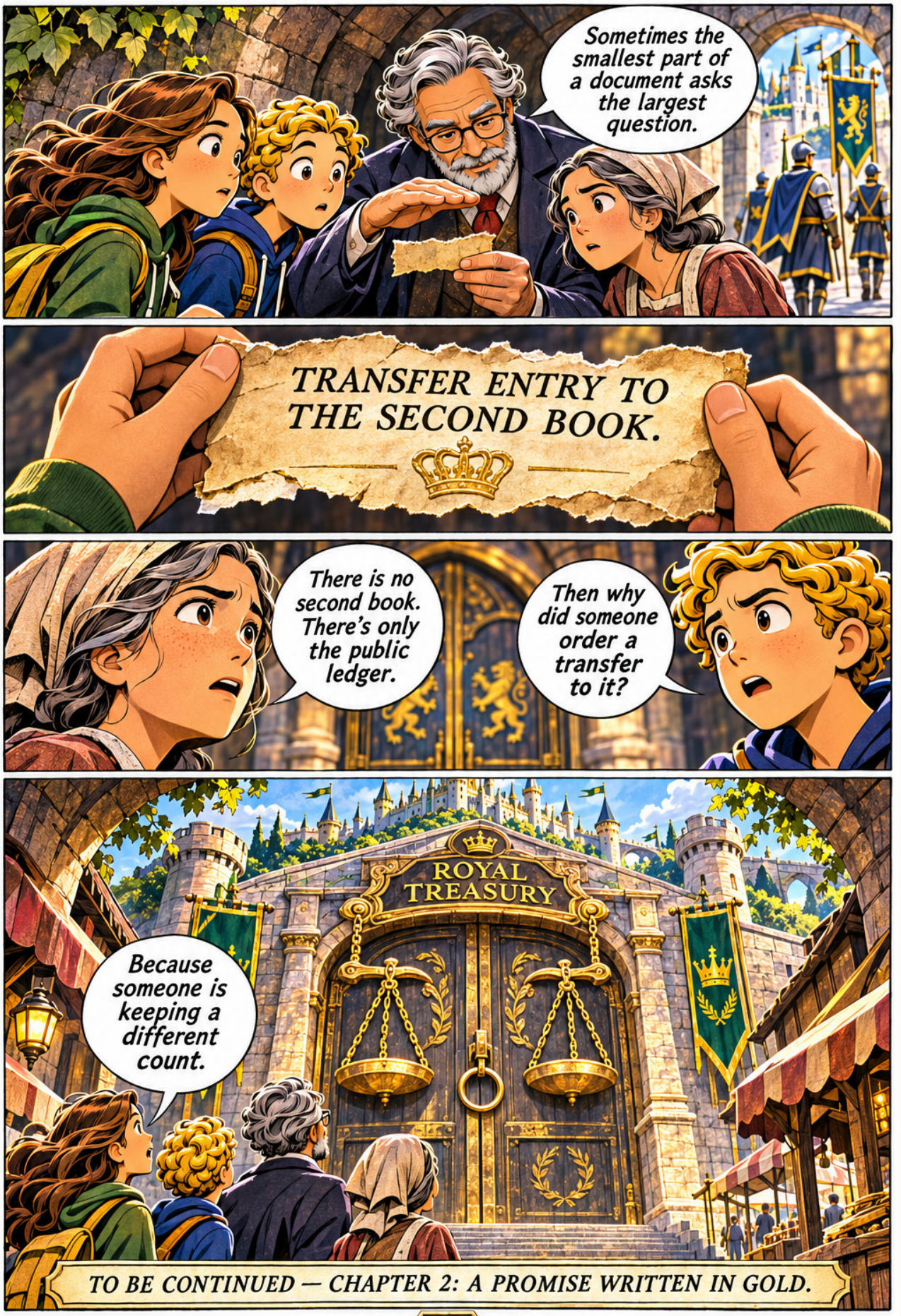

This payment receipt has no public-book number.
PAYMENT RECEIPT
No: A-4726
Date: 14th of May
For: BRIDGE CREWS
Amount: 2,000 crowns
PAID


Thie public clerk says to wait. But the printer says the issue was approved yesterday.
Maybe the record is just late?


That's what I thought. Until I found three.
PAYMENT RECEIPT
No. A-4726
For: BRIDGE CREWS
PAID
PAYMENT RECEIPT
No. A-4727
For: BRIDGE CREWS
PAID
PAYMENT RECEIPT
No. A-4728
For: BRIDGE CREWS
PAID


Apprentice Tessa. Those royal orders are not for public inspection.

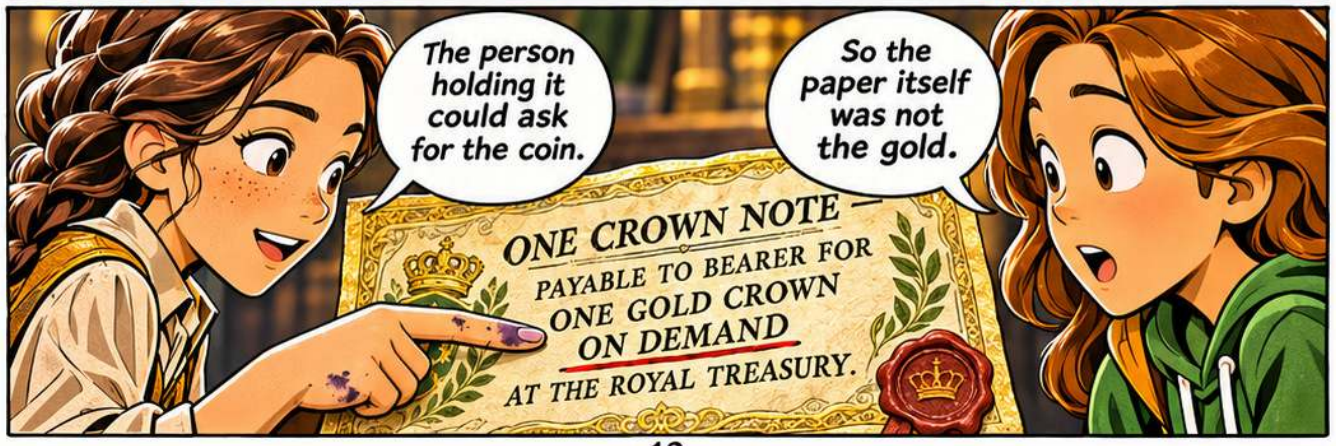

These are records I was assigned to carry.
Then you will carry them to the chancellor's office. Now.
RRRIP
The torn piece!
I've got the stairs!
Sorry! Every apple accounted for!
CLATTER
Got it.
He took the whole order.
Not quite.


Sometimes the smallest part of a document asks the largest question.
TRANSFER ENTRY TO THE SECOND BOOK.
There is no second book. There's only the public ledger.
Then why did someone order a transfer to it?
ROYAL TREASURY
Because someone is keeping a different count.
TO BE CONTINUED — CHAPTER 2: A PROMISE WRITTEN IN GOLD.


ROYAL TREASURY
PUBLIC EXCHANGE
You said there is only one ledger.
One that the public is allowed to see. That is what I was taught.


What is a Crown Note promising?
Perhaps we should begin with a question no one needs to hide.
PUBLIC EXCHANGE
— SERVICE COUNTER —


ONE CROWN NOTE —
PAYABLE TO BEARER FOR
ONE GOLD CROWN
ON DEMAND
AT THE ROYAL TREASURY.


The person holding it could ask for the coin.
So the paper itself was not the gold.
ONE CROWN NOTE —
PAYABLE TO BEARER FOR
ONE GOLD CROWN
ON DEMAND
AT THE ROYAL TREASURY.

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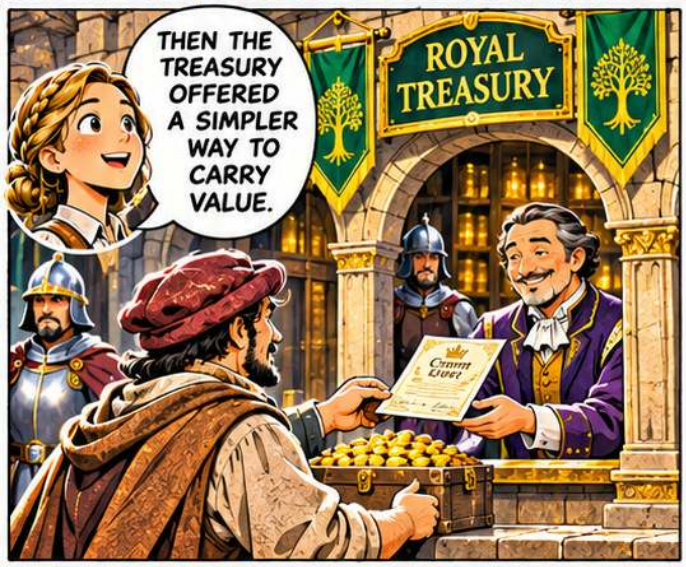
CHAPTER 2 — A Promise Written in Gold









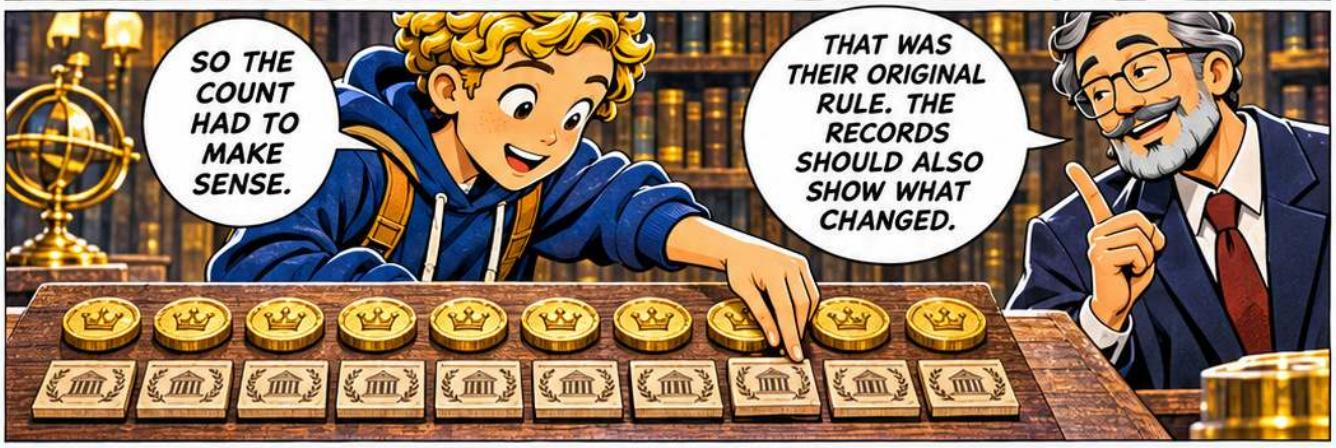
COMIC PAGE 15 — THE COIN BEHIND THE PAPER

CHAPTER 2 — A Promise Written in Gold




AT THE BEGINNING, THE RECORDS WERE MEANT TO AGREE.
PUBLIC ACCOUNTING BOARD
GOLD CROWNS (COINS)
CROWN NOTES (PROMISES TO PAY)


TEN THOUSAND COINS. TEN THOUSAND PROMISES TO PAY A COIN.
EARLY TREASURY RECORD
GOLD CROWNS HELD FOR REDEMPTION:
10,000
CROWN NOTES OUTSTANDING:
10,000


SO THE COUNT HAD TO MAKE SENSE.
THAT WAS THEIR ORIGINAL RULE. THE RECORDS SHOULD ALSO SHOW WHAT CHANGED.


NOT EVERY LATER PAGE IS SO EASY TO EXPLAIN.
PUBLIC LEDGER
LATER TREASURY ENTRY
GOLD CROWNS HELD FOR REDEMPTION:
12,000
CROWN NOTES OUTSTANDING:
—

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CHAPTER 2 — A Promise Written in Gold

COMIC PAGE 17 — A NOTE AT THE BAKERY



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The Kingdom of Paper Promises

CHAPTER 2 — COMIC PAGE 18 — THE NEW ENTRIES









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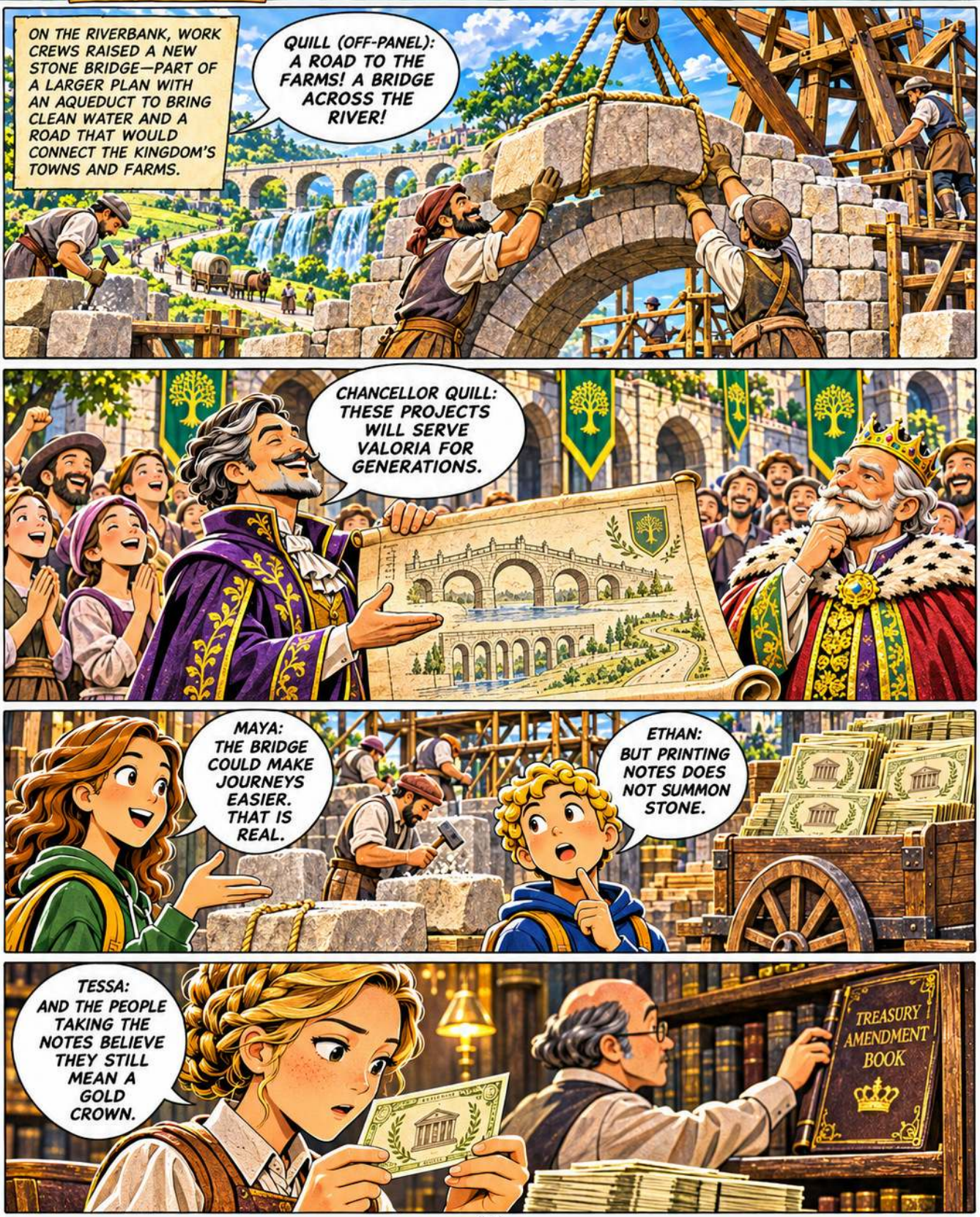
CHAPTER 2

COMIC PAGE 19 — A USEFUL BRIDGE



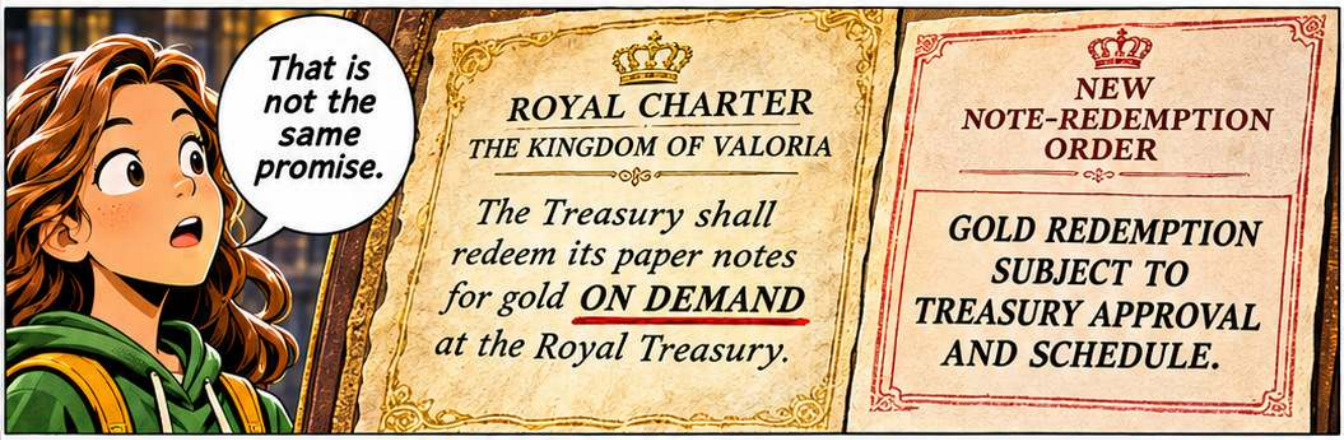
The MONEY DETECTIVES

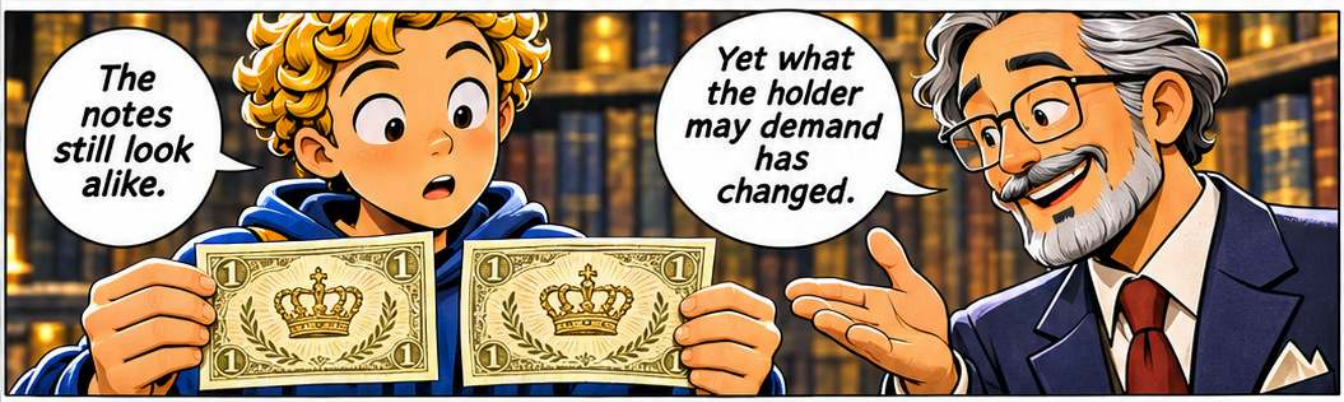
CHAPTER 2

COMIC PAGE 20 — THE ALTERED PROMISE

A Promise Written in Gold







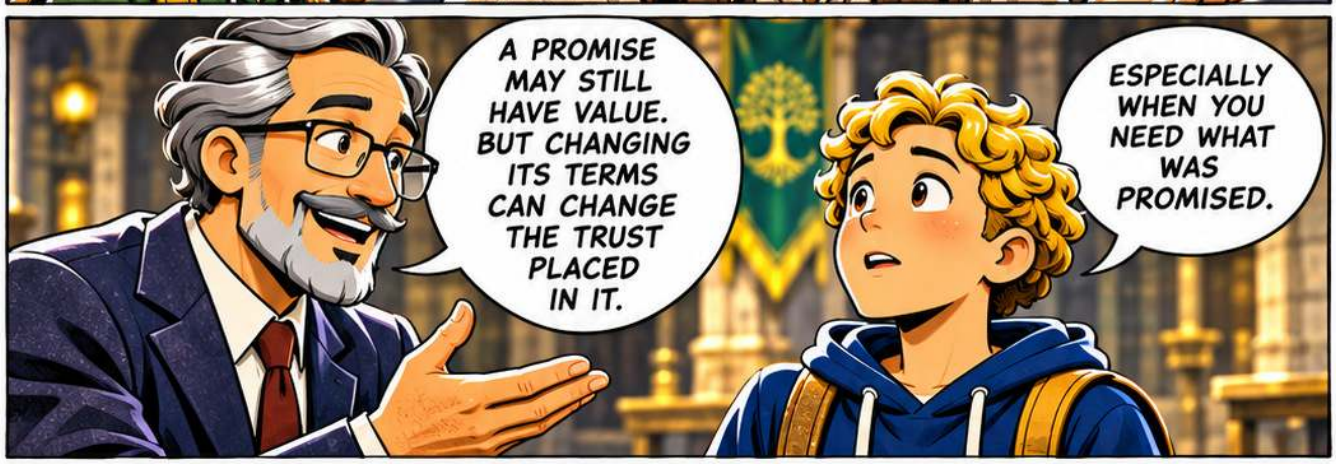


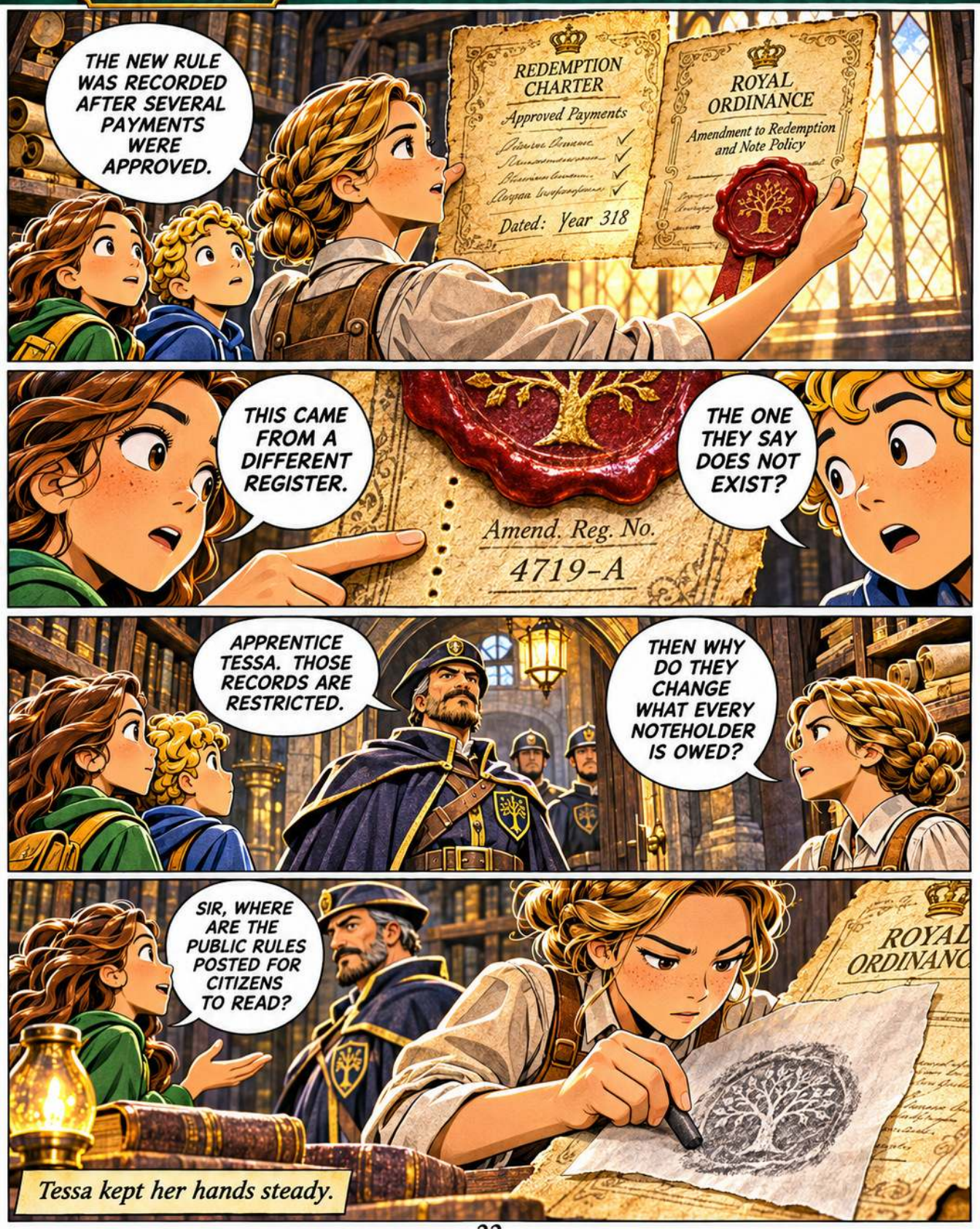
CHAPTER 2 — A Promise Written in Gold



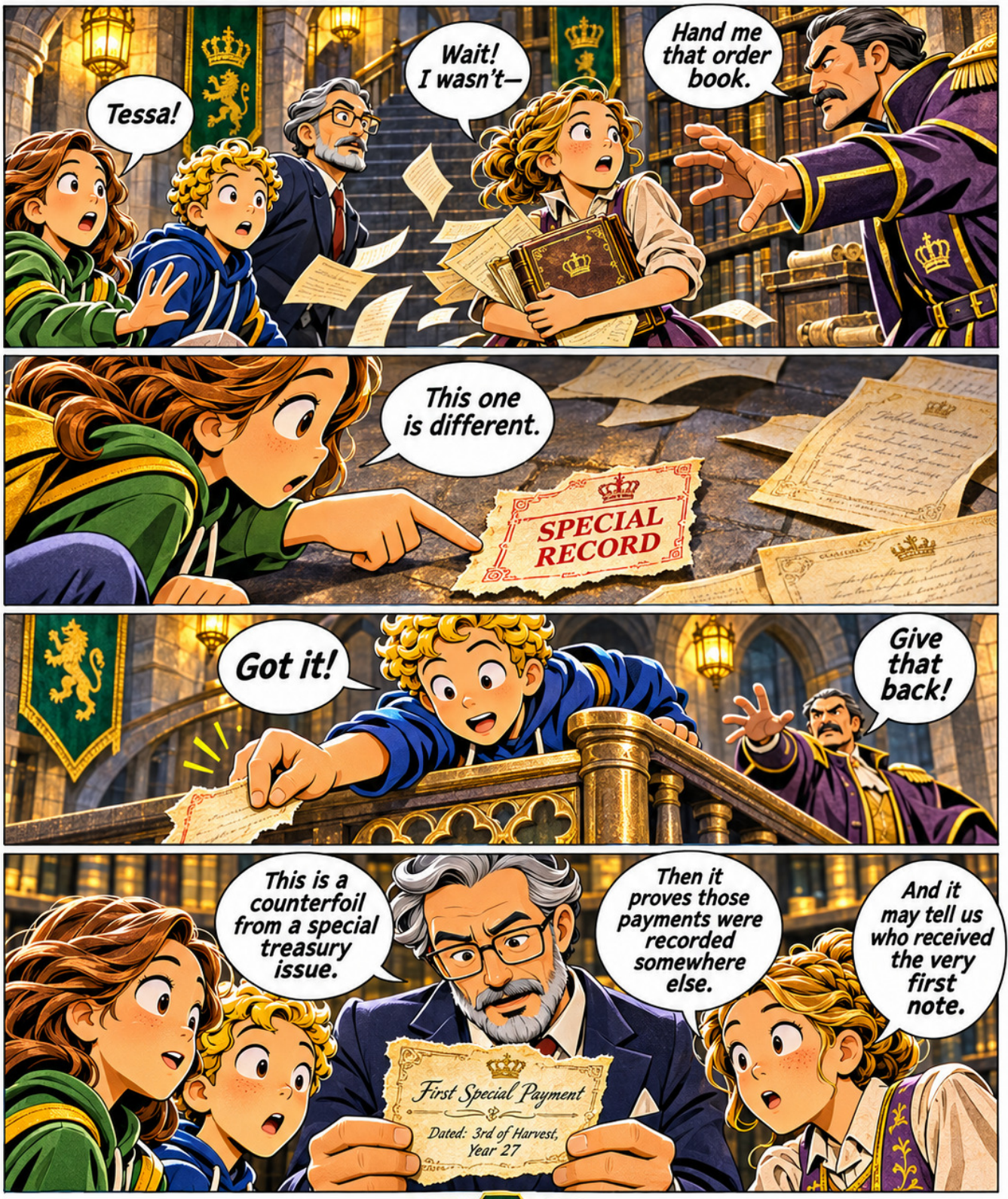






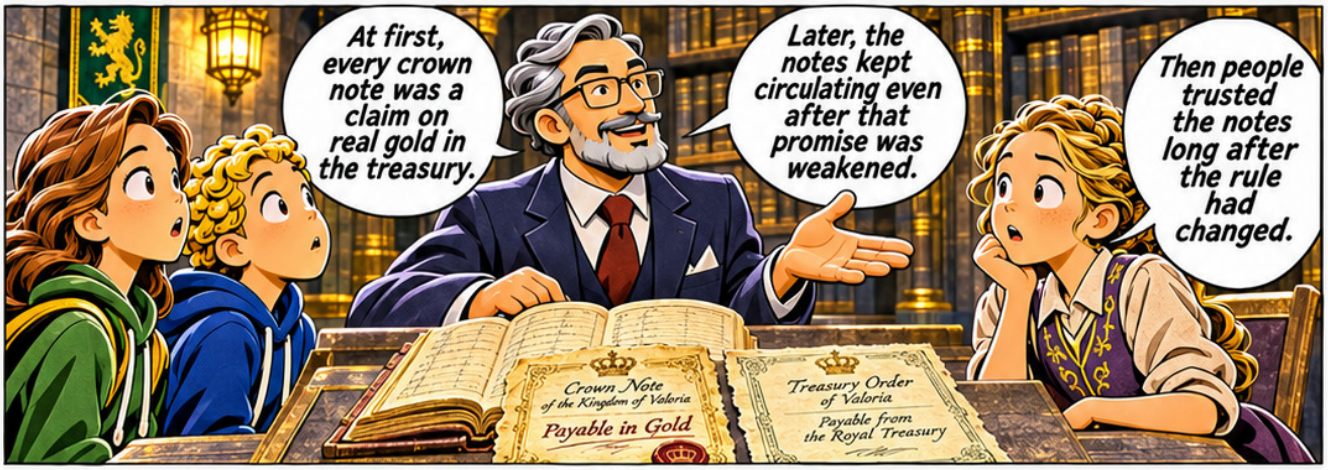

THE NEW RULE WAS RECORDED AFTER SEVERAL PAYMENTS WERE APPROVED.
REDEMPTION CHARTER
Approved Payments
Dated: Year 318
ROYAL ORDINANCE
Amendment to Redemption and Note Policy
THIS CAME FROM A DIFFERENT REGISTER.
Amend. Reg. No. 4719-A
THE ONE THEY SAY DOES NOT EXIST?
APPRENTICE TESSA. THOSE RECORDS ARE RESTRICTED.
THEN WHY DO THEY CHANGE WHAT EVERY NOTEHOLDER IS OWED?
SIR, WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC RULES POSTED FOR CITIZENS TO READ?
ROYAL ORDINANC
Tessa kept her hands steady.

COMIC PAGE 23 — A PROMISE WRITTEN IN GOLD



COMIC PAGE 24 — A PROMISE WRITTEN IN GOLD









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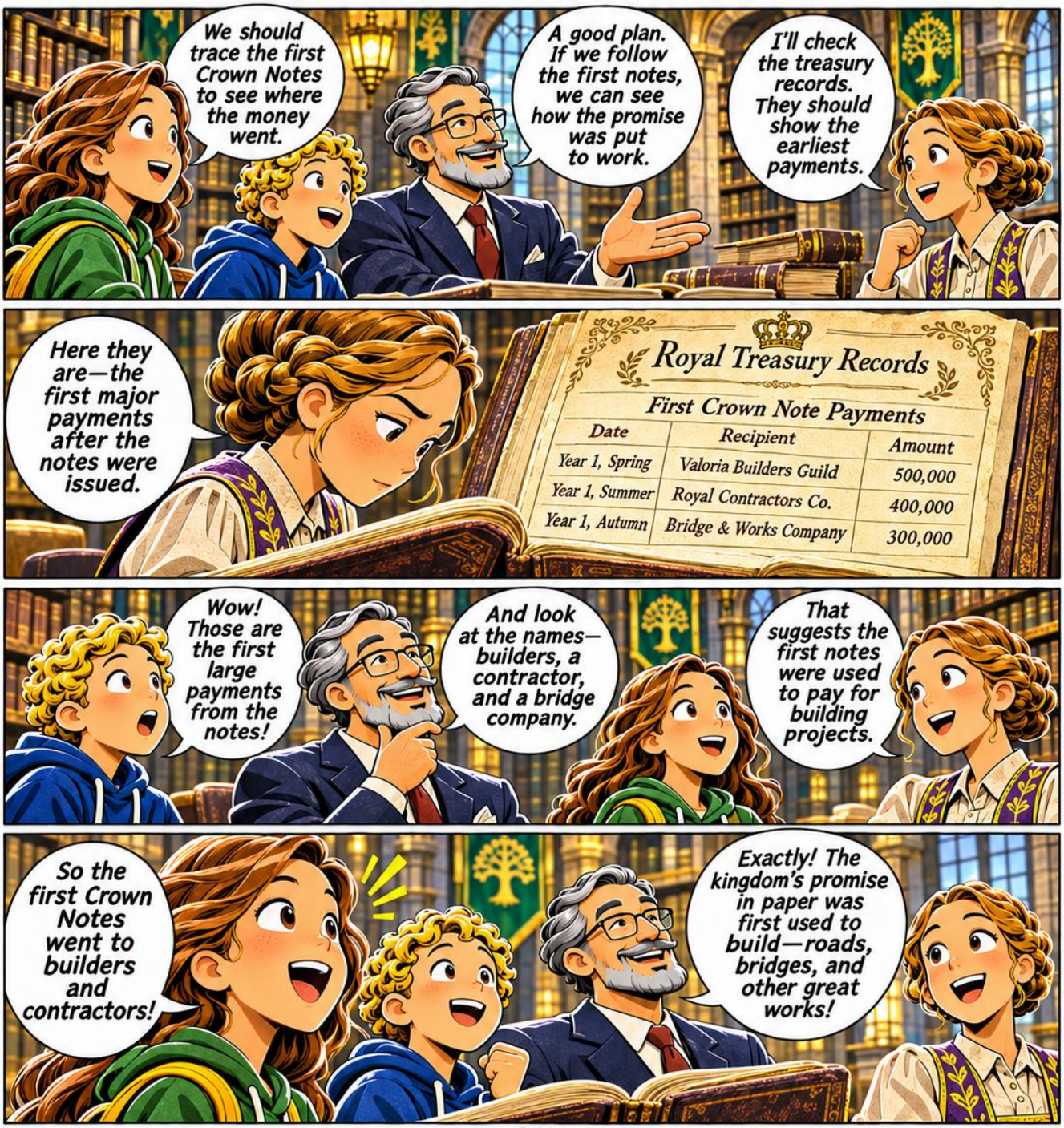
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 25 — FOLLOWING THE FIRST NOTES



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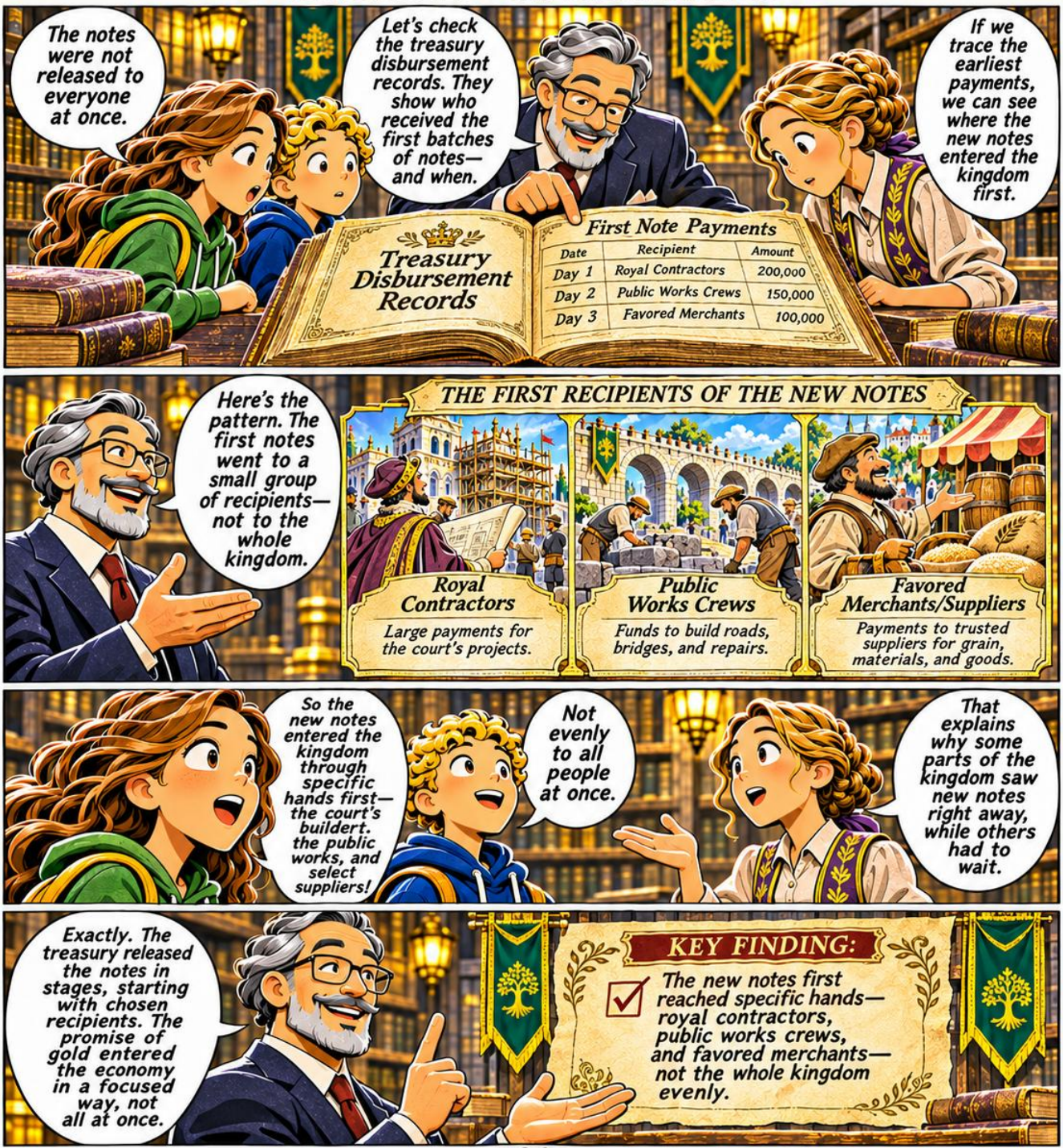
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 26 — THE FIRST RECIPIENTS



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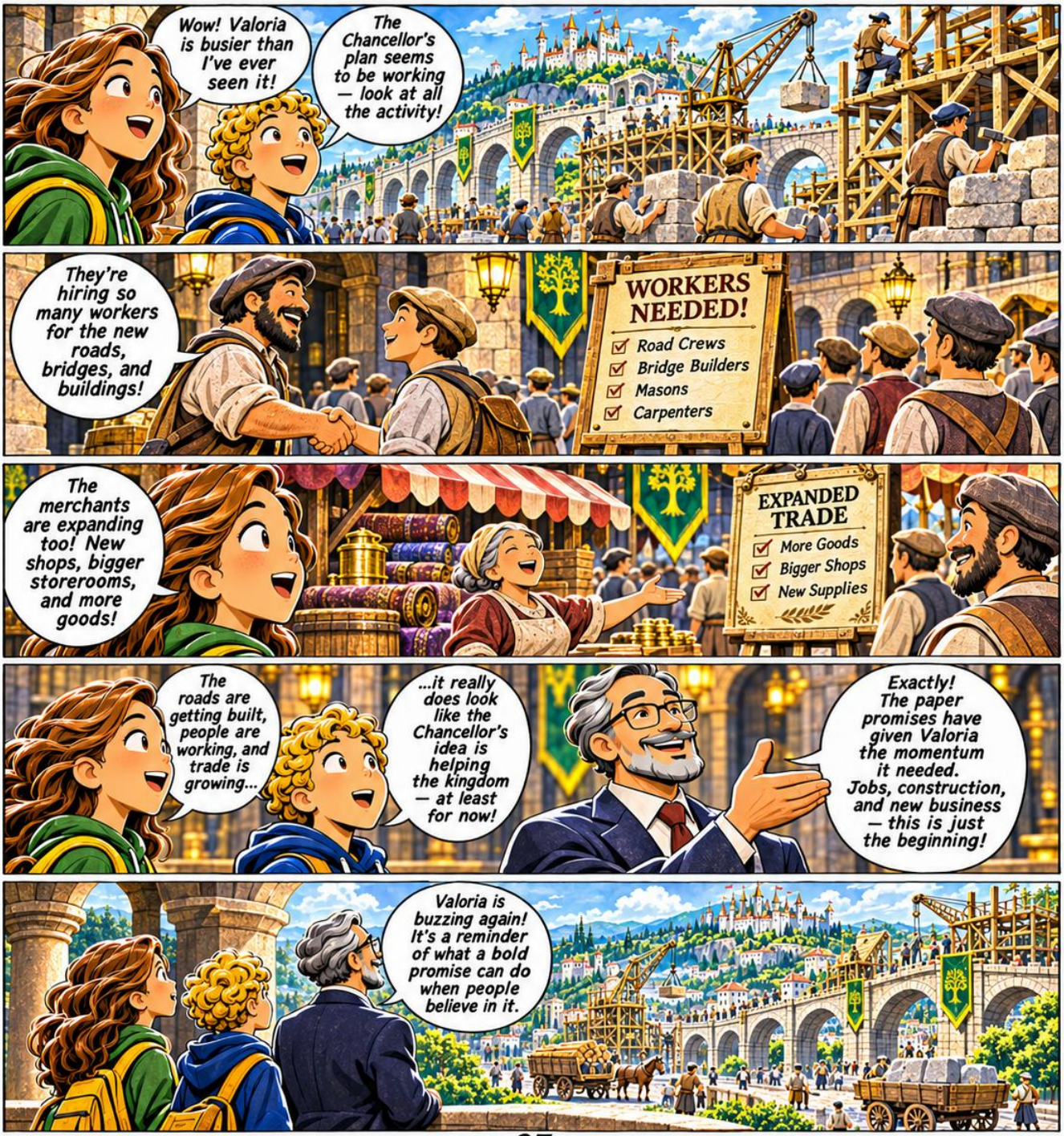
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 27 — A KINGDOM BUZZING



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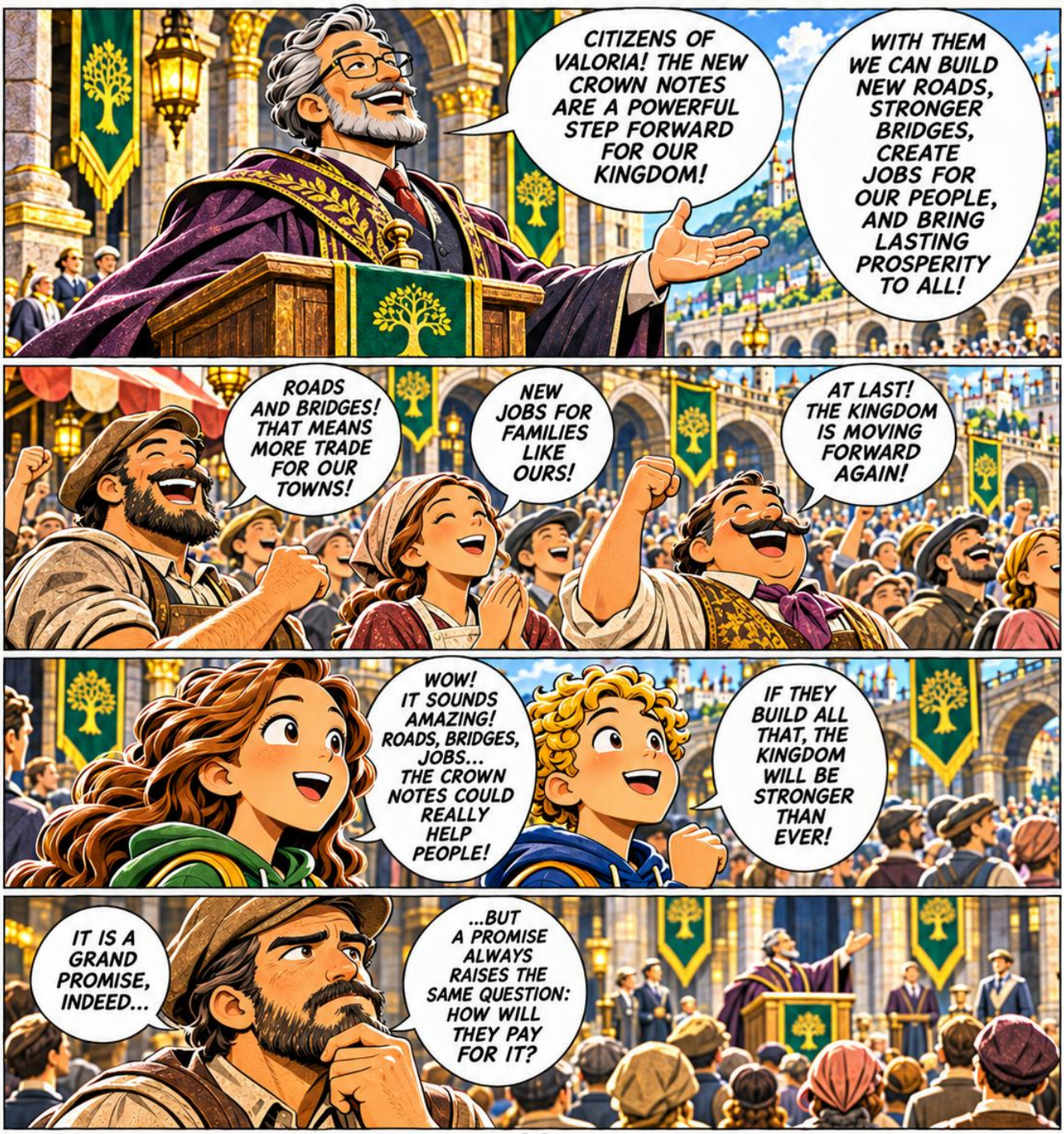
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 28 — THE CHANCELLOR CELEBRATES



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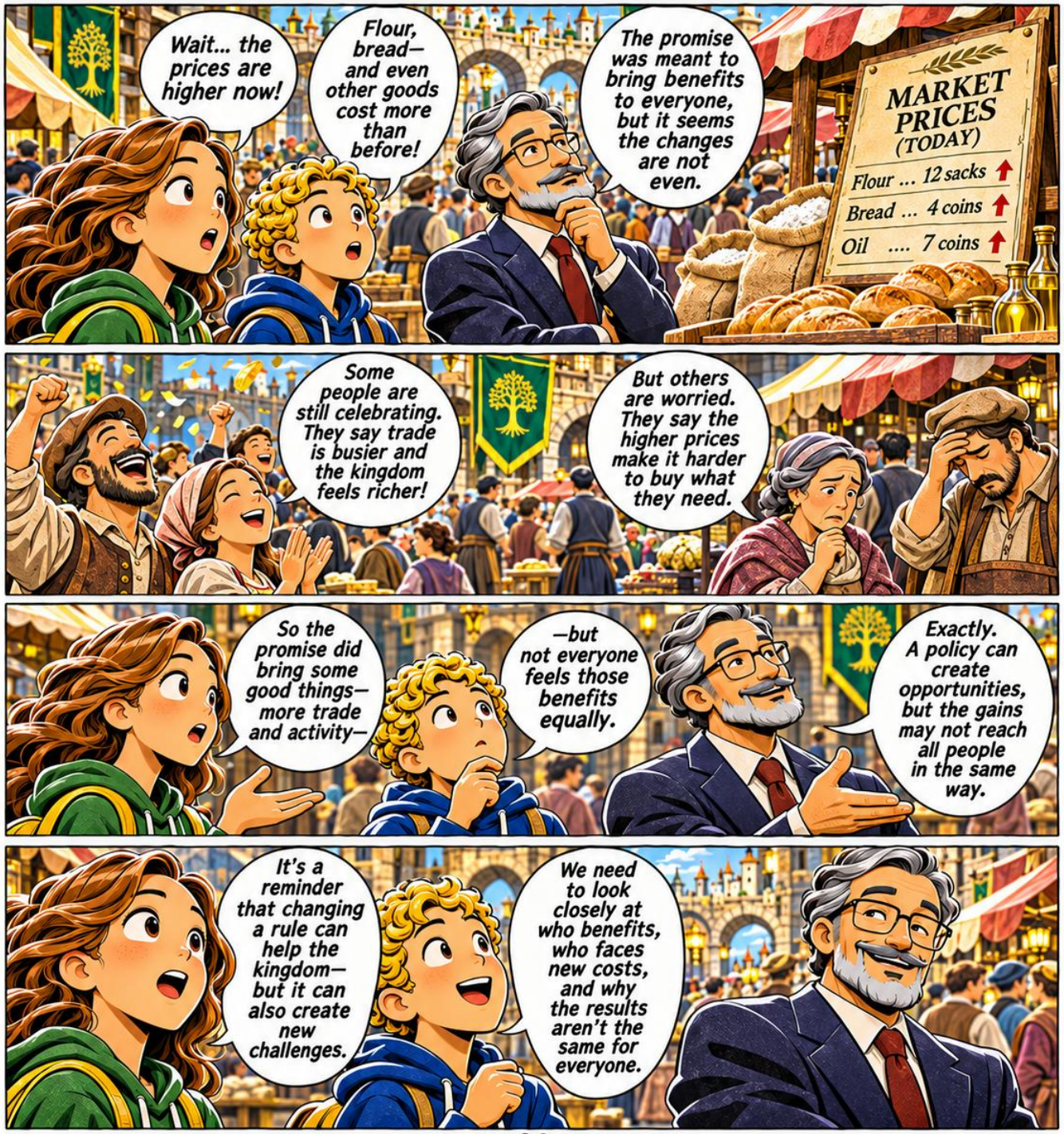
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 29 — A DIFFERENT STORY IN THE MARKET



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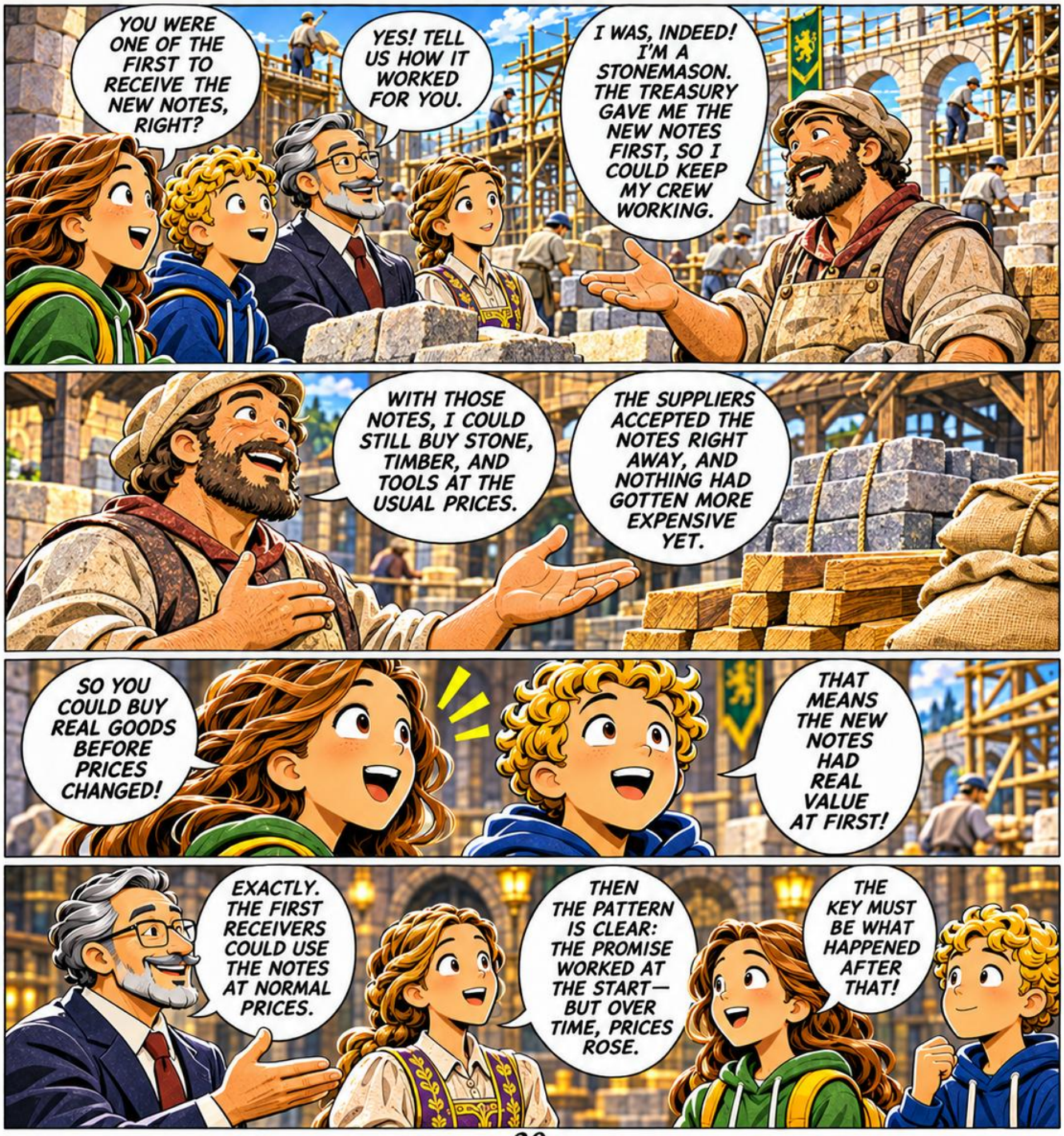
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 30 — SPEAKING WITH FIRST RECEIVERS



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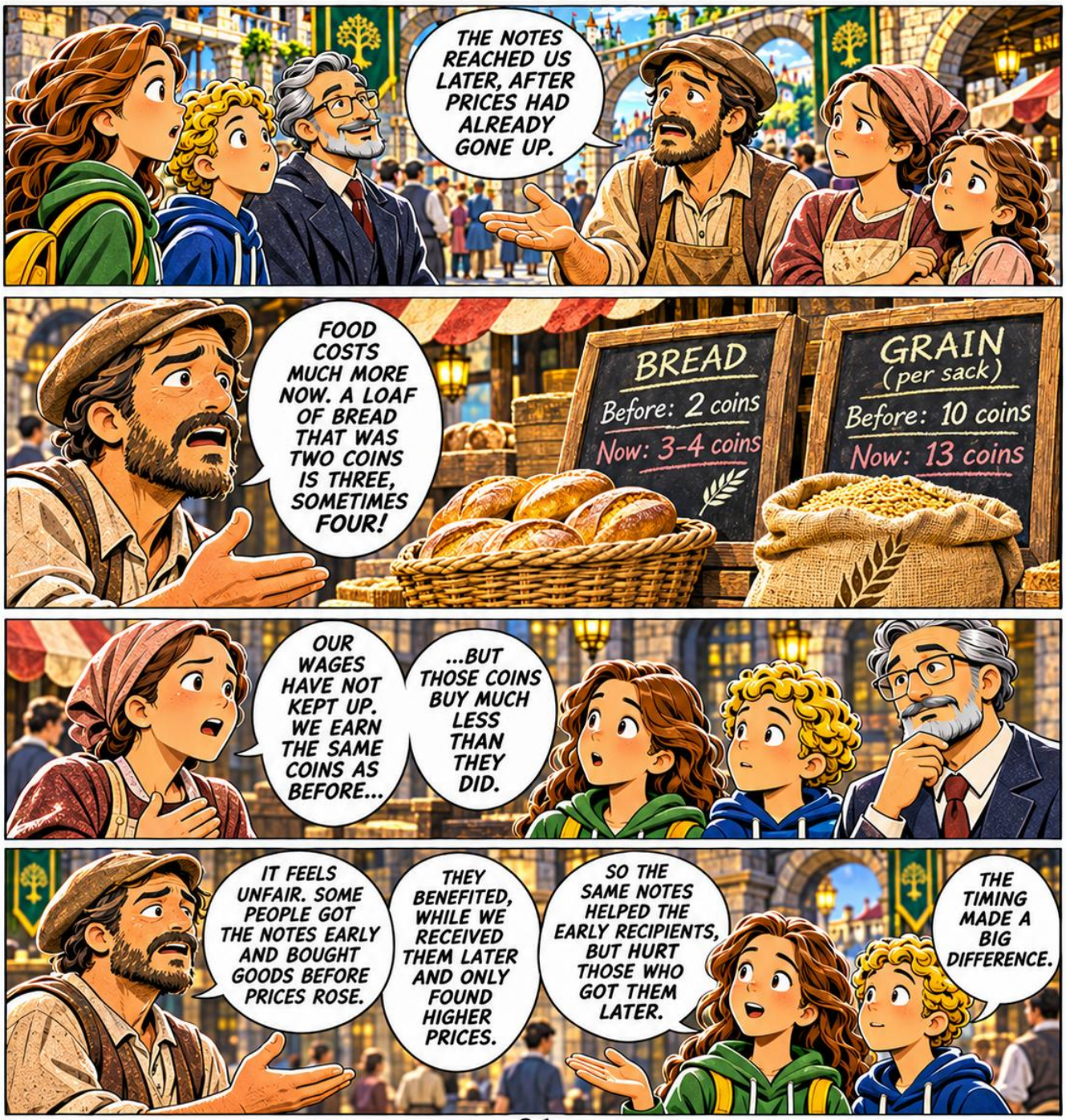
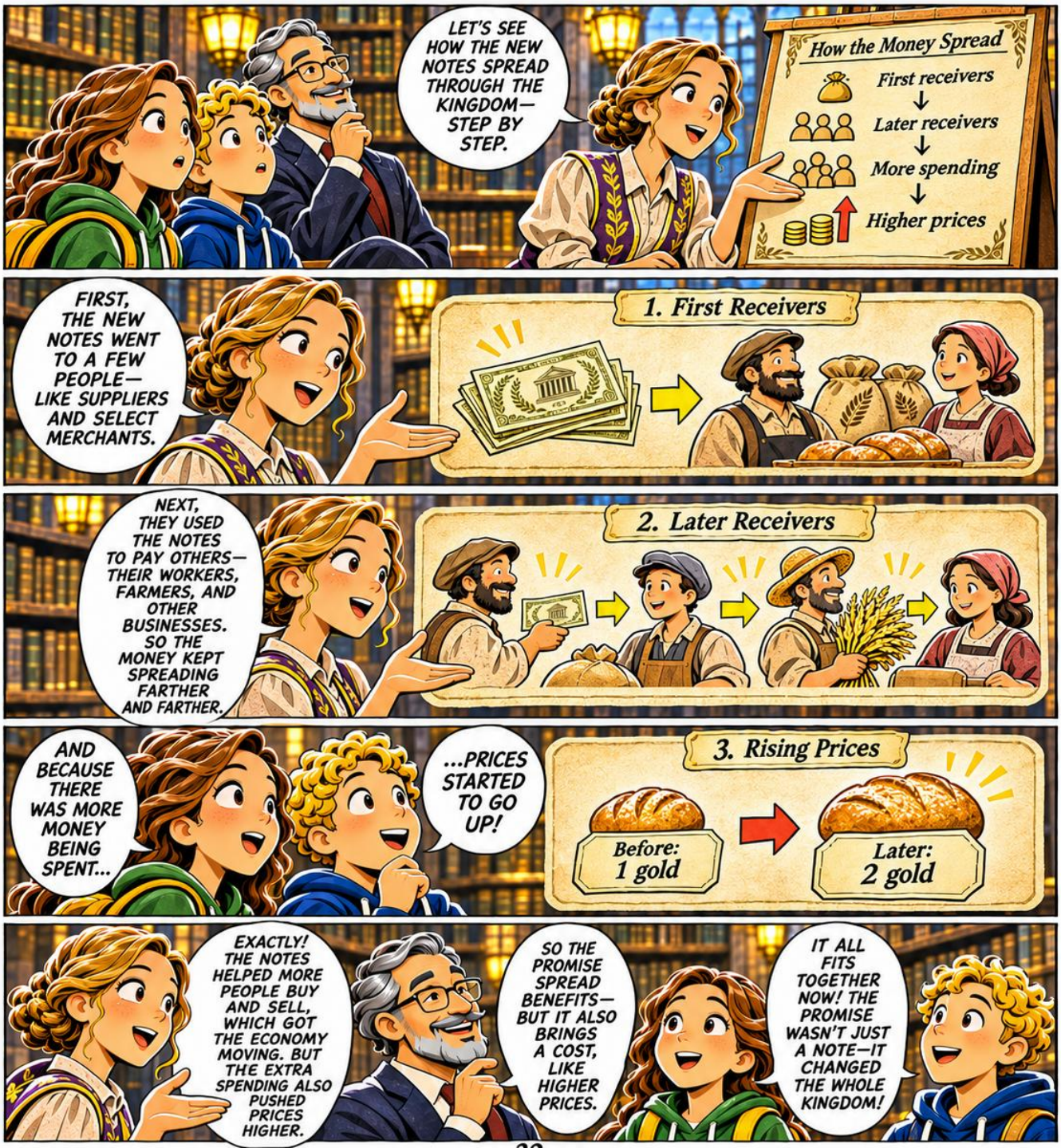
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 31 — BY THE TIME IT REACHED US



COMIC PAGE 32 — HOW IT SPREADS THROUGH THE KINGDOM



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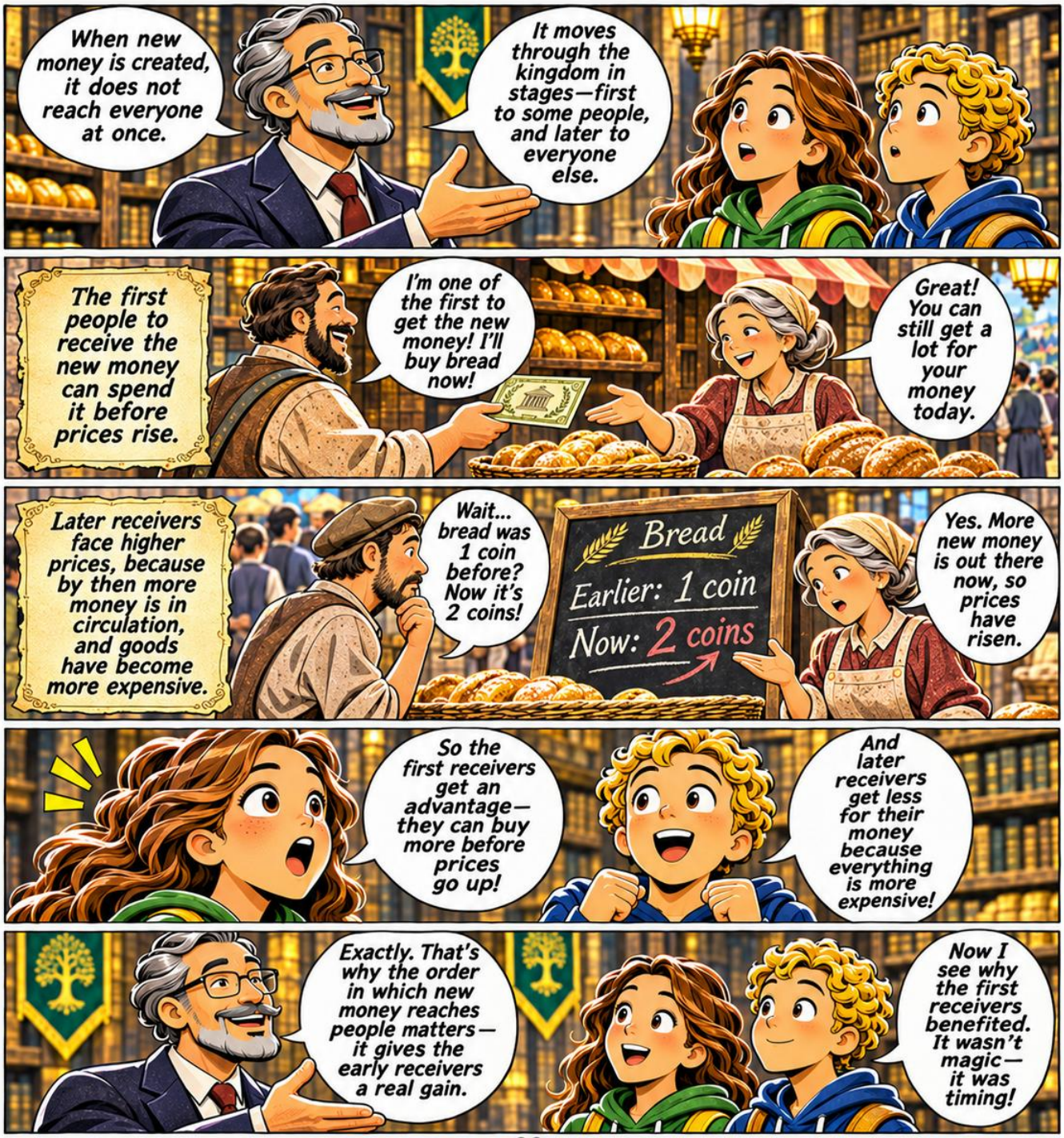
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 33 — WHY THE FIRST RECEIVERS GAINED



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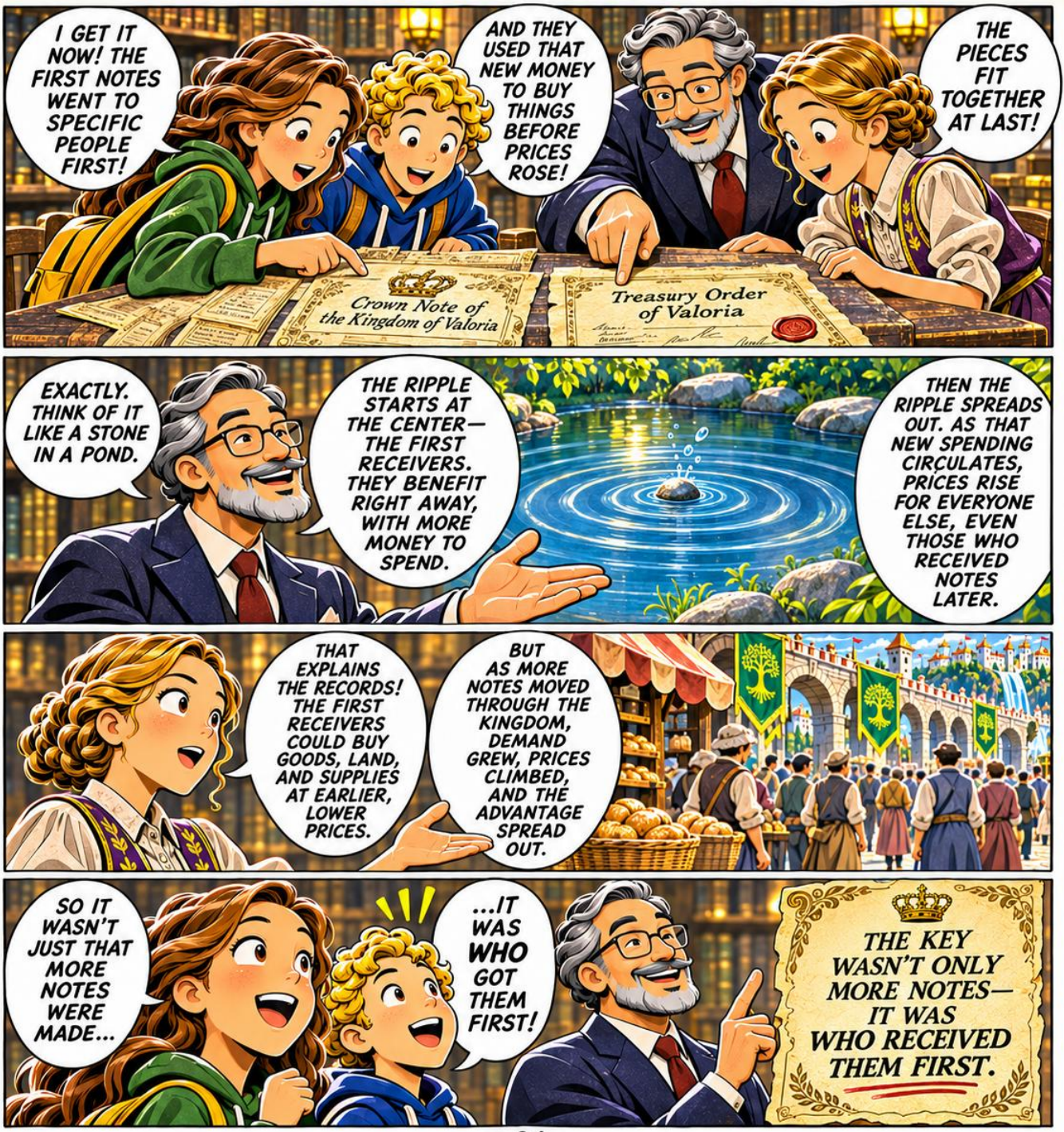
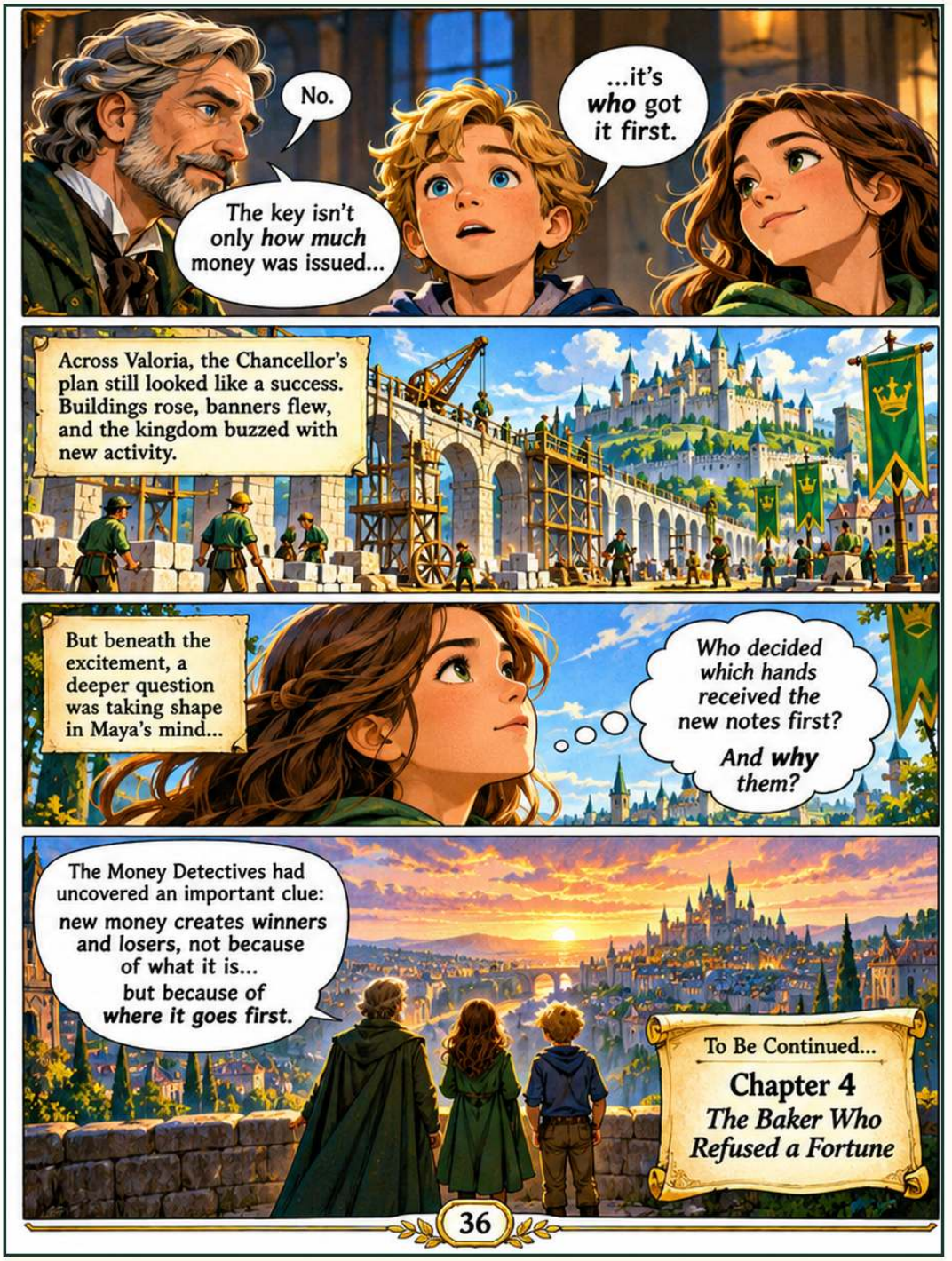
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea

COMIC PAGE 34 — THE PIECES COME TOGETHER



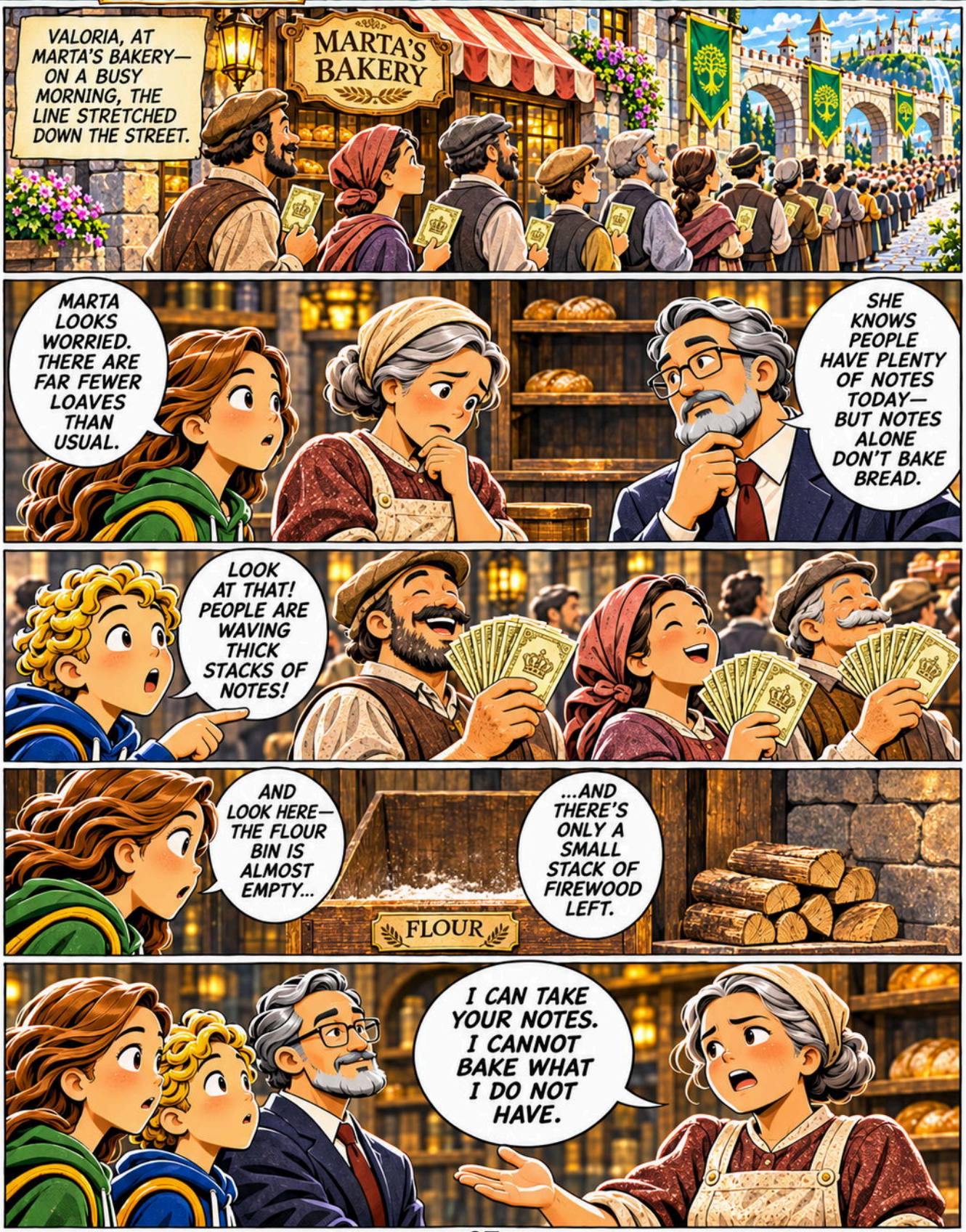

The Money Detectives
The Kingdom of Paper Promises
CHAPTER 3 — The Chancellor's Brilliant Idea
COMIC PAGE 35 — MARTA'S WARNING
Marta, why are your costs rising?
The builders were paid early, and the whole town began spending.
THE NEW NOTES DID NOT REACH EVERYONE AT THE SAME TIME.
The stonecutters received the new Crown Notes early, so they could buy flour, tools, and supplies at yesterday's prices.
FLOUR
Yesterday: 3 Crowns
Today: 4 Crowns
Later, when the notes reached the flour seller, prices had already begun to rise.
The notes reached the stonecutters before they reached the flour seller.
And you had to pay more before your own income rose?
The spending spread, but so did the higher prices.
So the first receivers had an advantage.

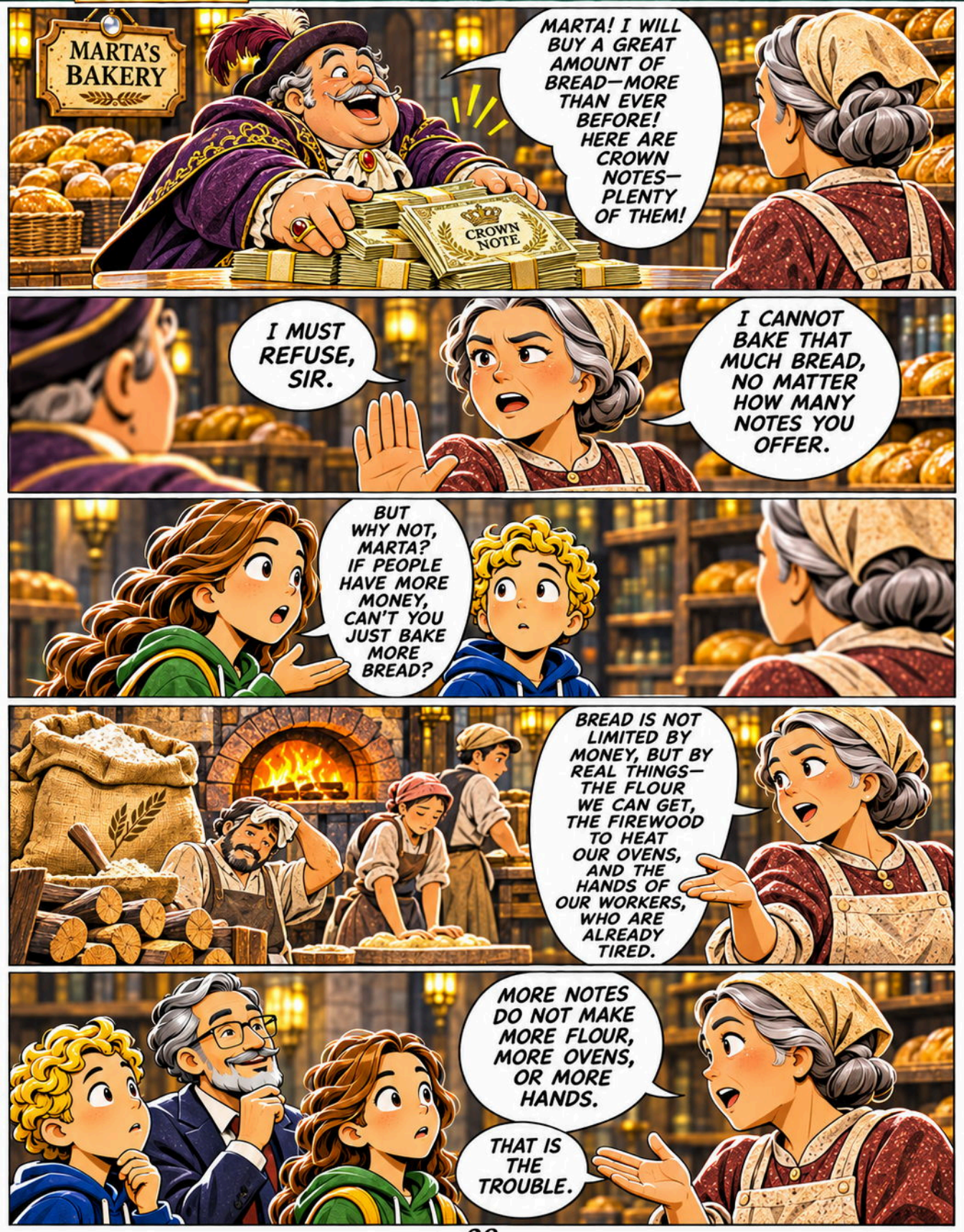
COMIC PAGE 36 — WHO GOT THEM FIRST?



The Kingdom of Paper Promises

CHAPTER 4 — The Baker Who Refused a Fortune




MARTA'S BAKERY
MARTA! I WILL BUY A GREAT AMOUNT OF BREAD—MORE THAN EVER BEFORE! HERE ARE CROWN NOTES—PLENTY OF THEM!
CROWN NOTE
I MUST REFUSE, SIR.
I CANNOT BAKE THAT MUCH BREAD, NO MATTER HOW MANY NOTES YOU OFFER.
BUT WHY NOT, MARTA? IF PEOPLE HAVE MORE MONEY, CAN'T YOU JUST BAKE MORE BREAD?
BREAD IS NOT LIMITED BY MONEY, BUT BY REAL THINGS—THE FLOUR WE CAN GET, THE FIREWOOD TO HEAT OUR OVENS, AND THE HANDS OF OUR WORKERS, WHO ARE ALREADY TIRED.
MORE NOTES DO NOT MAKE MORE FLOUR, MORE OVENS, OR MORE HANDS.
THAT IS THE TROUBLE.


FLOUR AGAIN? IT'S EVEN HIGHER NOW!
I KNOW! I'VE HAD TO RAISE MY PRICES AGAIN. MY SUPPLIES ARE ALMOST GONE!
FLOUR
Today's Price
12 sacks per note


THE STONECUTTERS AND CONTRACTORS ARRIVED WITH THE NEW NOTES FIRST. THEY BOUGHT UP A LOT OF FLOUR, GRAIN, AND OTHER SUPPLIES—BEFORE THE REST OF US EVEN HAD A CHANCE TO BUY.

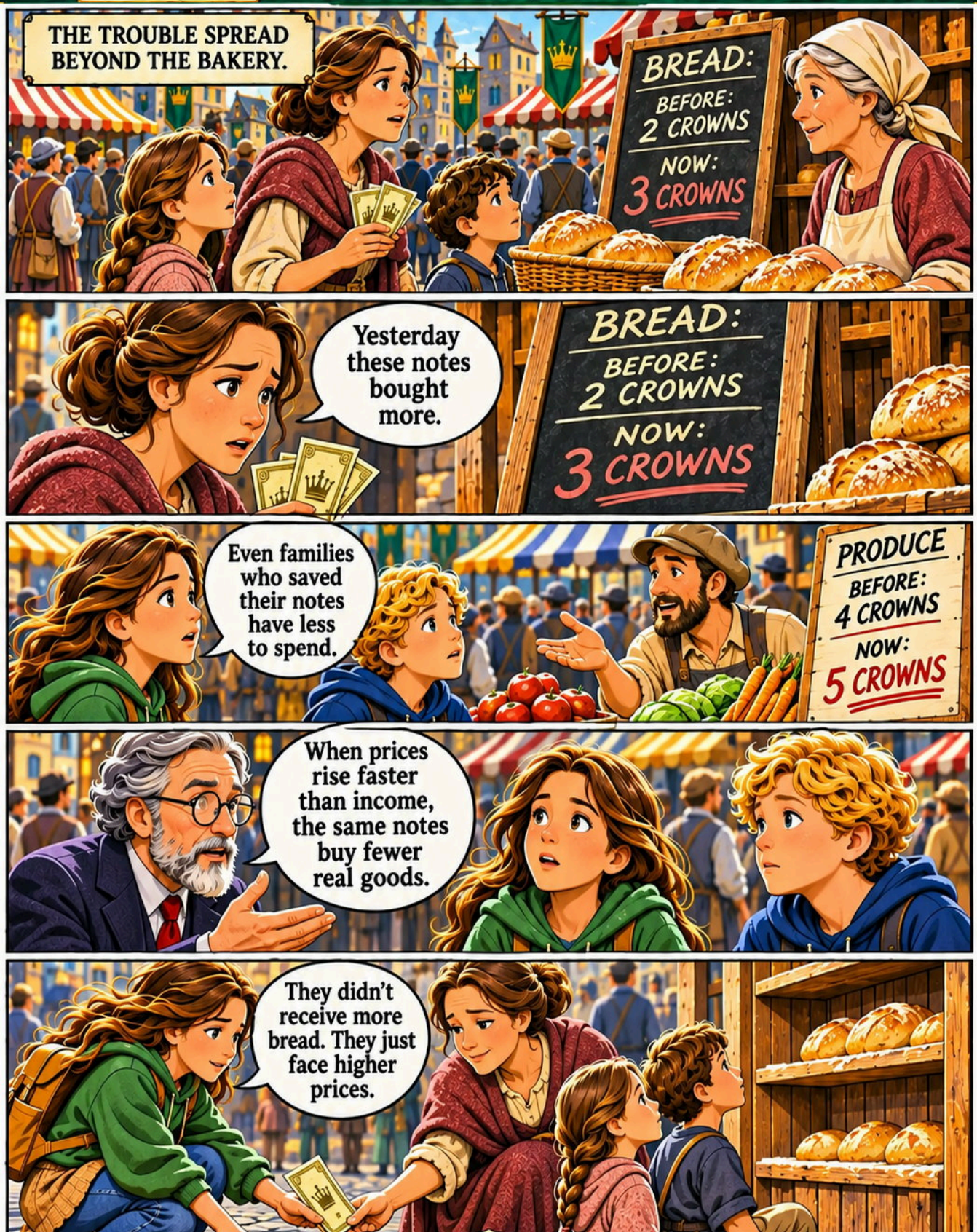

LOOK AT THE PRICES. A MONTH AGO, FLOUR WAS 6 SACKS PER NOTE. TODAY IT'S 12. THAT'S DOUBLE!
Flour Prices
Date | Price (per note)
One Month Ago | 6 sacks
Two Weeks Ago | 8 sacks
One Week Ago | 10 sacks
Today | 12 sacks

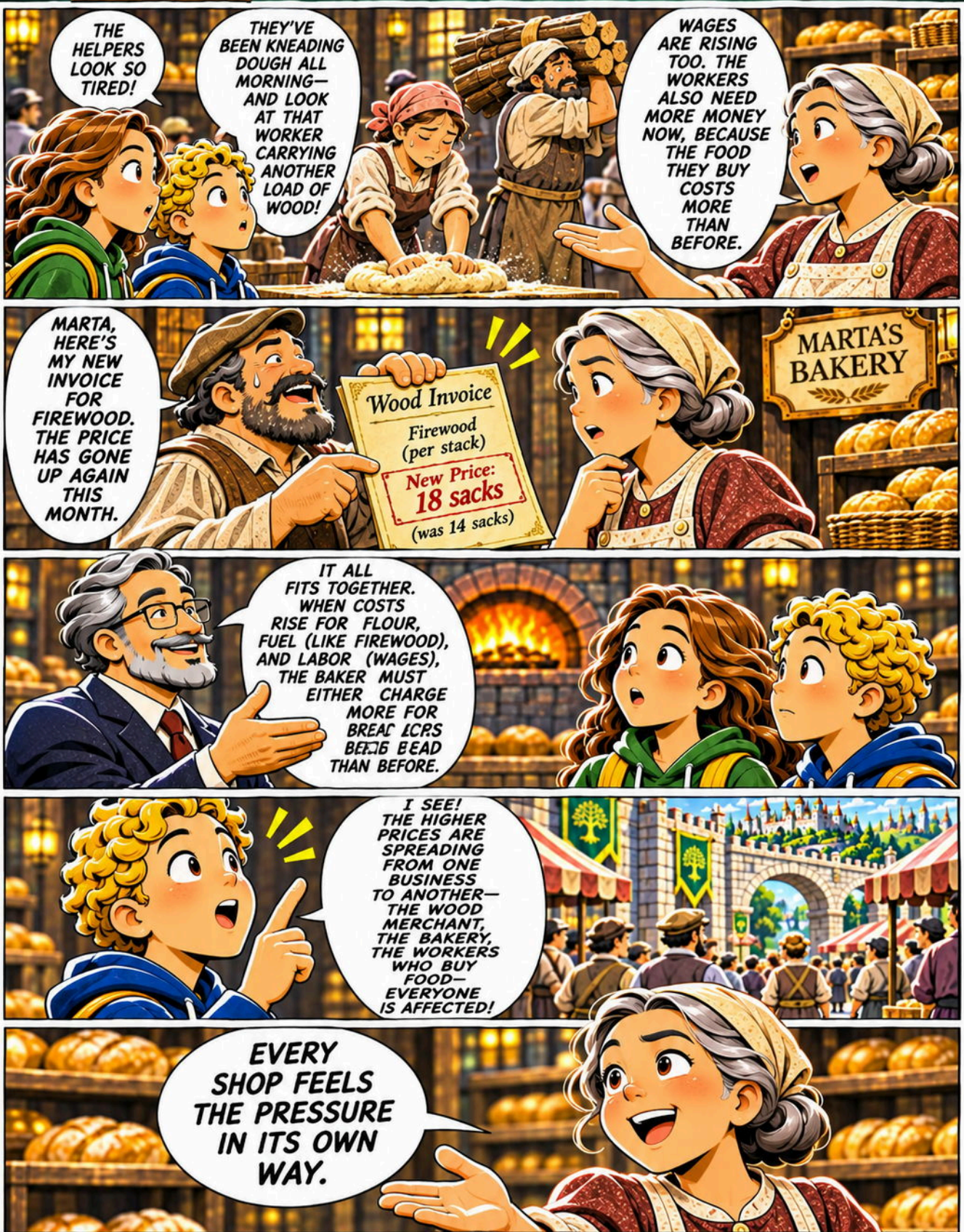

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENS. THE FIRST RECEIVERS—LIKE THE CONTRACTORS—HAVE NEW NOTES TO SPEND EARLY. THEY BUY GOODS BEFORE PRICES FULLY RISE.
BY THE TIME THE NOTES REACH EVERYONE ELSE, SUPPLIES ARE SCARCE AND PRICES ARE ALREADY HIGHER.

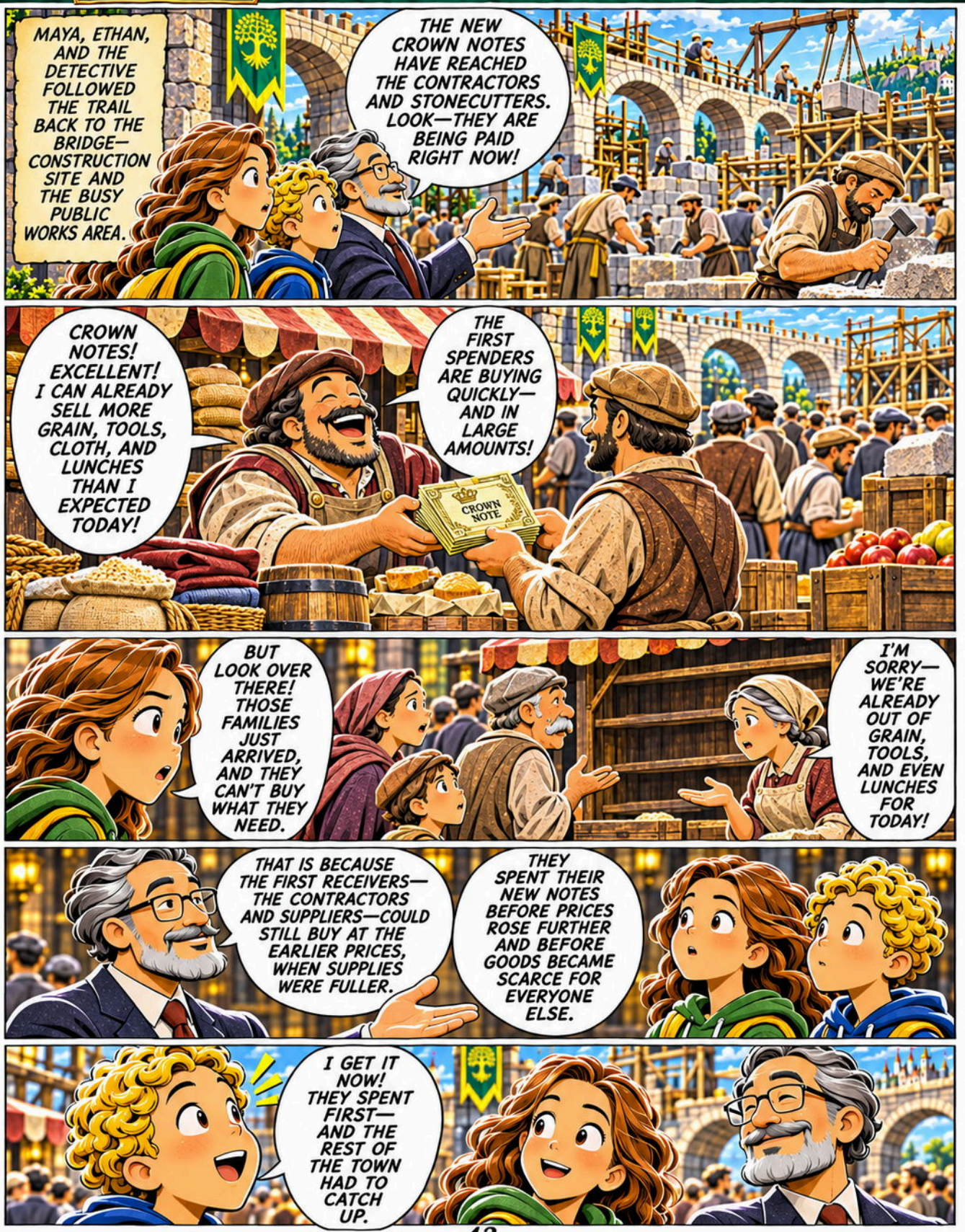

SO THE NOTES REACHED SOME PEOPLE BEFORE THEY REACHED EVERYONE ELSE.

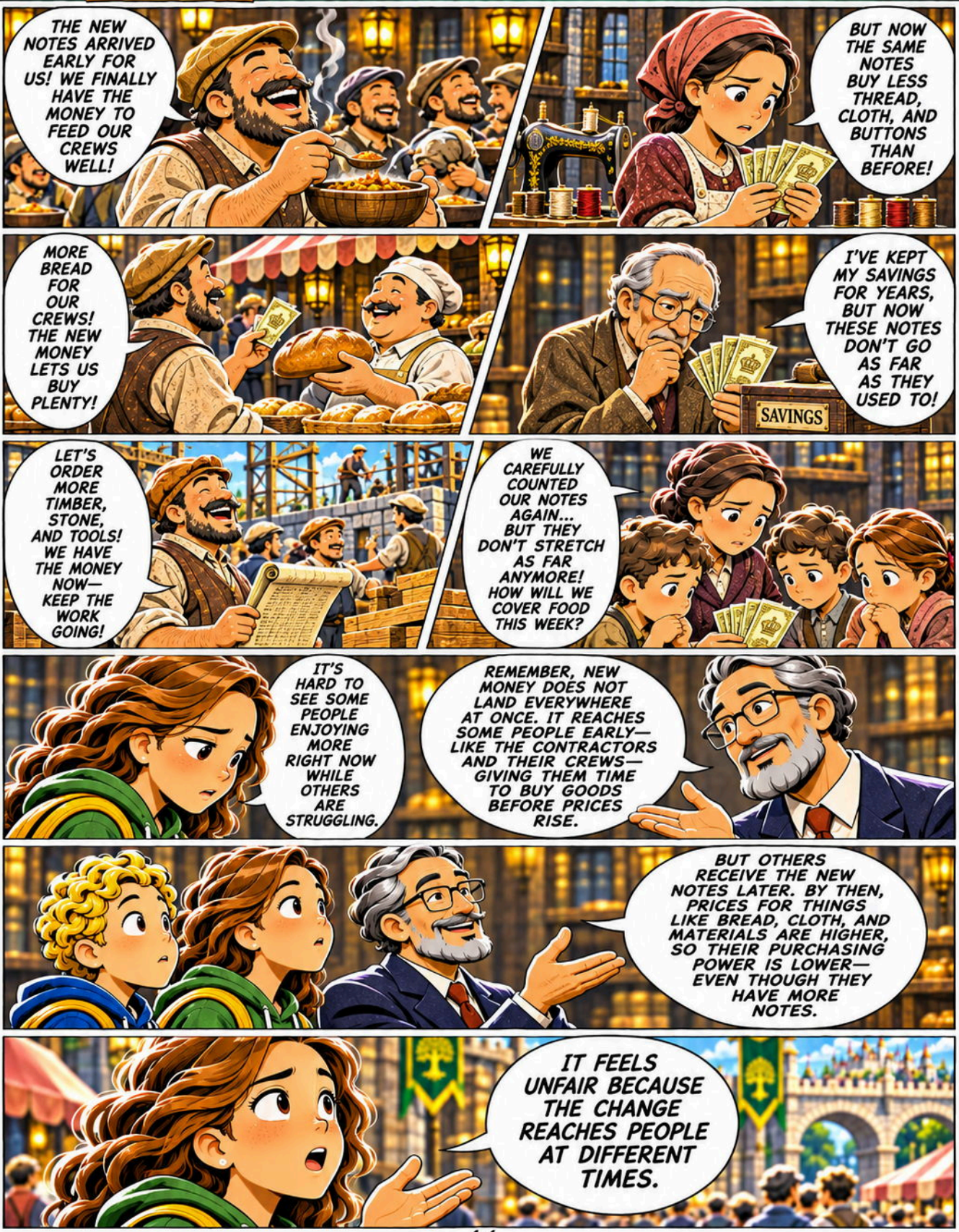
COMIC PAGE 40 — BACK AT MARTA'S BAKERY

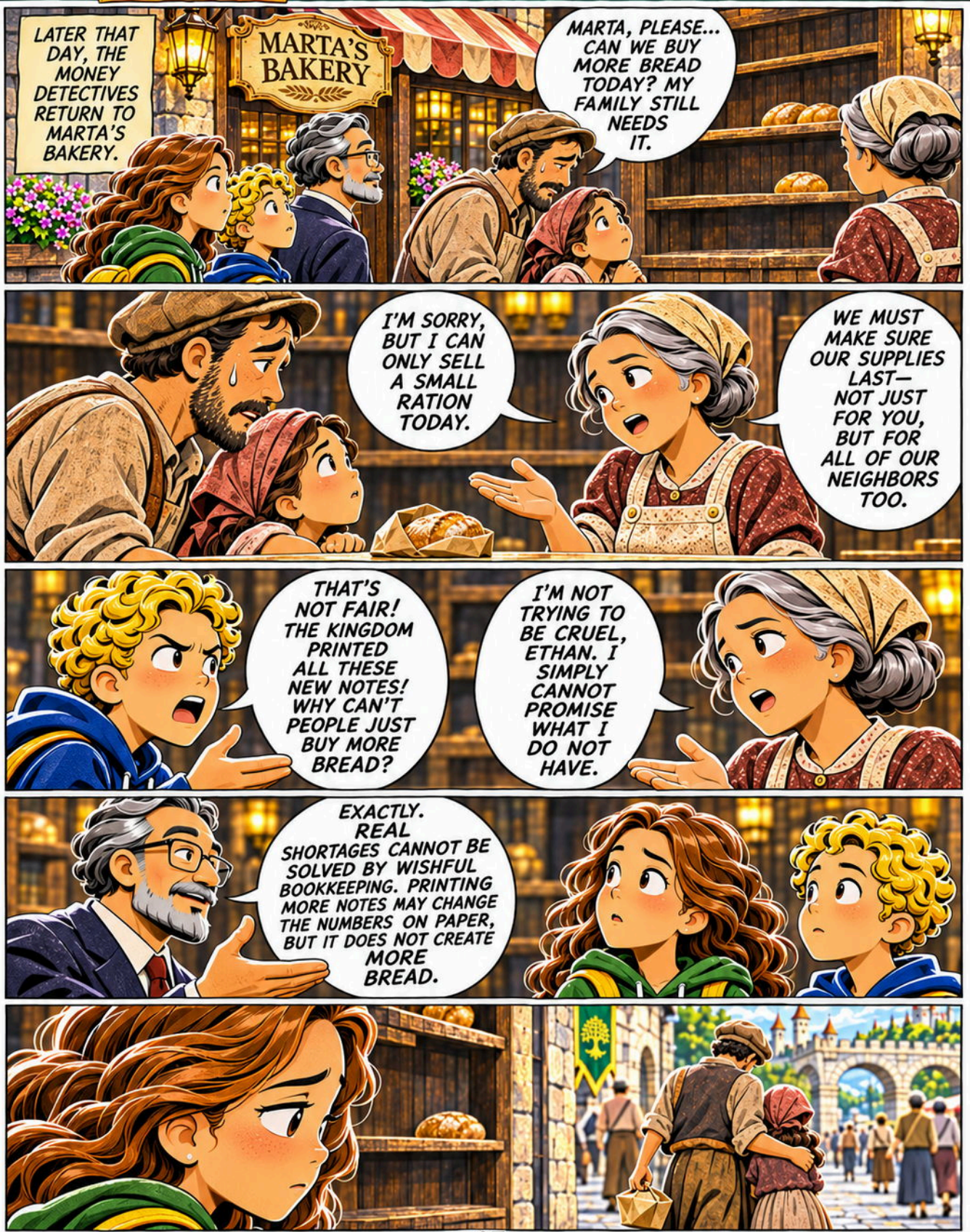


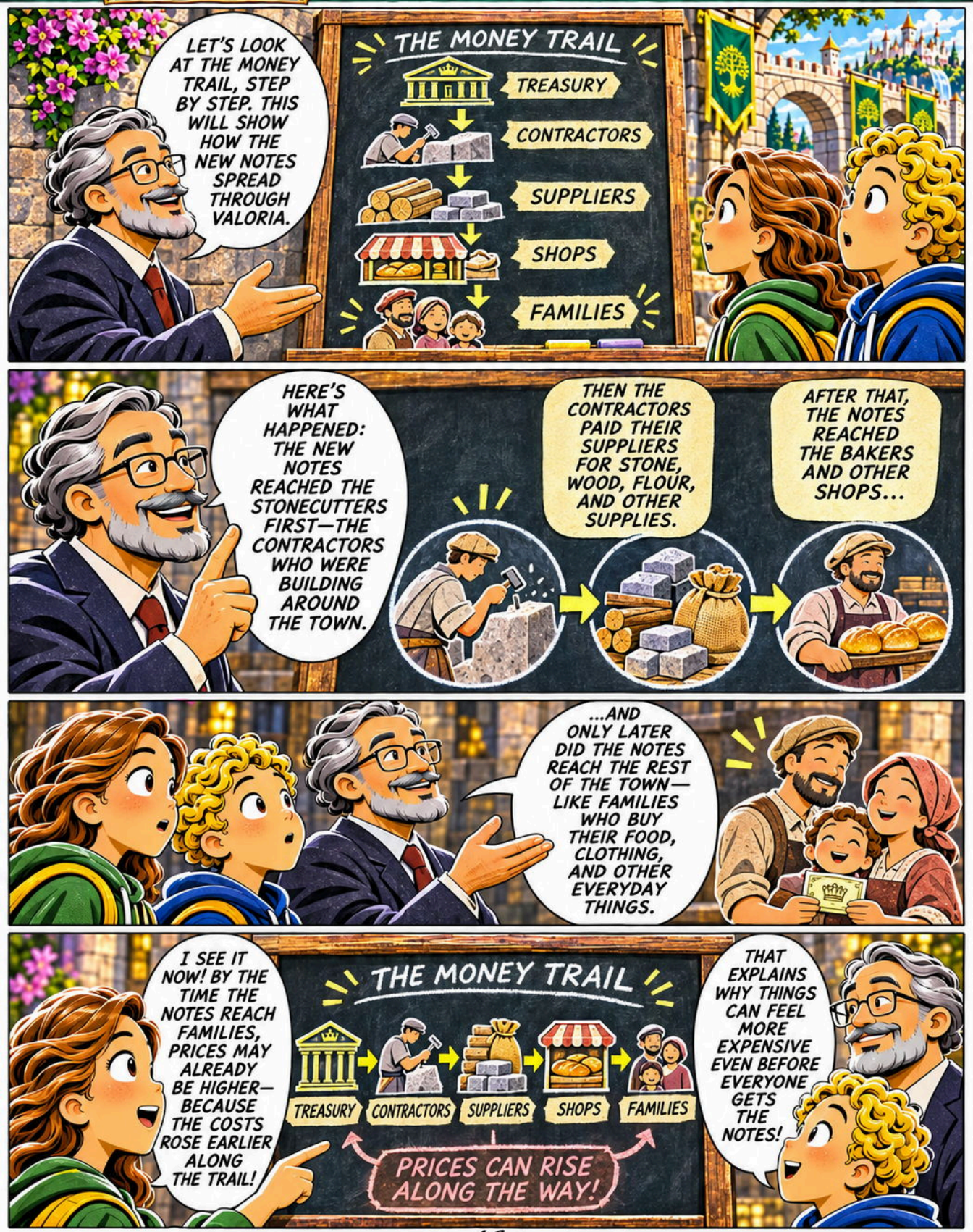

THE TROUBLE SPREAD BEYOND THE BAKERY.
BREAD:
BEFORE: 2 CROWNS
NOW: 3 CROWNS
Yesterday these notes bought more.
BREAD:
BEFORE: 2 CROWNS
NOW: 3 CROWNS
Even families who saved their notes have less to spend.
PRODUCE
BEFORE: 4 CROWNS
NOW: 5 CROWNS
When prices rise faster than income, the same notes buy fewer real goods.
They didn't receive more bread. They just face higher prices.


THE HELPERS LOOK SO TIRED!
THEY'VE BEEN KNEADING DOUGH ALL MORNING— AND LOOK AT THAT WORKER CARRYING ANOTHER LOAD OF WOOD!
WAGES ARE RISING TOO. THE WORKERS ALSO NEED MORE MONEY NOW, BECAUSE THE FOOD THEY BUY COSTS MORE THAN BEFORE.
MARTA, HERE'S MY NEW INVOICE FOR FIREWOOD. THE PRICE HAS GONE UP AGAIN THIS MONTH.
Wood Invoice
Firewood (per stack)
New Price: 18 sacks
(was 14 sacks)
MARTA'S BAKERY
IT ALL FITS TOGETHER. WHEN COSTS RISE FOR FLOUR, FUEL (LIKE FIREWOOD), AND LABOR (WAGES), THE BAKER MUST EITHER CHARGE MORE FOR BREAD OR BAKE SMALLER LOAVES THAN BEFORE.
I SEE! THE HIGHER PRICES ARE SPREADING FROM ONE BUSINESS TO ANOTHER— THE WOOD MERCHANT, THE BAKERY, THE WORKERS WHO BUY FOOD— EVERYONE IS AFFECTED!
EVERY SHOP FEELS THE PRESSURE IN ITS OWN WAY.


MAYA, ETHAN, AND THE DETECTIVE FOLLOWED THE TRAIL BACK TO THE BRIDGE—CONSTRUCTION SITE AND THE BUSY PUBLIC WORKS AREA.
THE NEW CROWN NOTES HAVE REACHED THE CONTRACTORS AND STONECUTTERS. LOOK—THEY ARE BEING PAID RIGHT NOW!
CROWN NOTES! EXCELLENT! I CAN ALREADY SELL MORE GRAIN, TOOLS, CLOTH, AND LUNCHES THAN I EXPECTED TODAY!
THE FIRST SPENDERS ARE BUYING QUICKLY—AND IN LARGE AMOUNTS!
CROWN NOTE
BUT LOOK OVER THERE! THOSE FAMILIES JUST ARRIVED, AND THEY CAN'T BUY WHAT THEY NEED.
I'M SORRY—WE'RE ALREADY OUT OF GRAIN, TOOLS, AND EVEN LUNCHES FOR TODAY!
THAT IS BECAUSE THE FIRST RECEIVERS—THE CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS—COULD STILL BUY AT THE EARLIER PRICES, WHEN SUPPLIES WERE FULLER.
THEY SPENT THEIR NEW NOTES BEFORE PRICES ROSE FURTHER AND BEFORE GOODS BECAME SCARCE FOR EVERYONE ELSE.
I GET IT NOW! THEY SPENT FIRST—AND THE REST OF THE TOWN HAD TO CATCH UP.

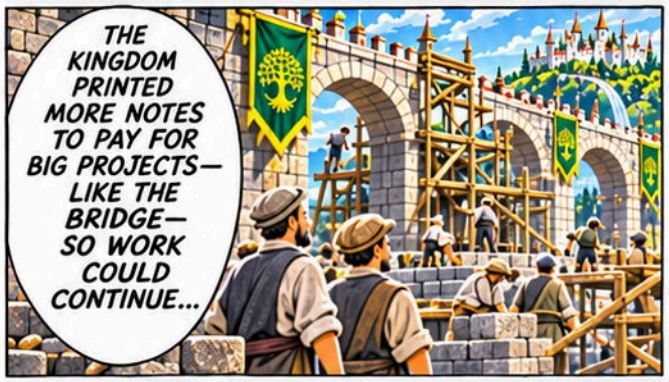

THE NEW NOTES ARRIVED EARLY FOR US! WE FINALLY HAVE THE MONEY TO FEED OUR CREWS WELL!
BUT NOW THE SAME NOTES BUY LESS THREAD, CLOTH, AND BUTTONS THAN BEFORE!
MORE BREAD FOR OUR CREWS! THE NEW MONEY LETS US BUY PLENTY!
I'VE KEPT MY SAVINGS FOR YEARS, BUT NOW THESE NOTES DON'T GO AS FAR AS THEY USED TO!
SAVINGS
LET'S ORDER MORE TIMBER, STONE, AND TOOLS! WE HAVE THE MONEY NOW— KEEP THE WORK GOING!
WE CAREFULLY COUNTED OUR NOTES AGAIN... BUT THEY DON'T STRETCH AS FAR ANYMORE! HOW WILL WE COVER FOOD THIS WEEK?
IT'S HARD TO SEE SOME PEOPLE ENJOYING MORE RIGHT NOW WHILE OTHERS ARE STRUGGLING.
REMEMBER, NEW MONEY DOES NOT LAND EVERYWHERE AT ONCE. IT REACHES SOME PEOPLE EARLY— LIKE THE CONTRACTORS AND THEIR CREWS— GIVING THEM TIME TO BUY GOODS BEFORE PRICES RISE.
BUT OTHERS RECEIVE THE NEW NOTES LATER. BY THEN, PRICES FOR THINGS LIKE BREAD, CLOTH, AND MATERIALS ARE HIGHER, SO THEIR PURCHASING POWER IS LOWER— EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE MORE NOTES.
IT FEELS UNFAIR BECAUSE THE CHANGE REACHES PEOPLE AT DIFFERENT TIMES.


LATER THAT DAY, THE MONEY DETECTIVES RETURN TO MARTA'S BAKERY.
MARTA'S BAKERY
MARTA, PLEASE... CAN WE BUY MORE BREAD TODAY? MY FAMILY STILL NEEDS IT.
I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN ONLY SELL A SMALL RATION TODAY.
WE MUST MAKE SURE OUR SUPPLIES LAST— NOT JUST FOR YOU, BUT FOR ALL OF OUR NEIGHBORS TOO.
THAT'S NOT FAIR! THE KINGDOM PRINTED ALL THESE NEW NOTES! WHY CAN'T PEOPLE JUST BUY MORE BREAD?
I'M NOT TRYING TO BE CRUEL, ETHAN. I SIMPLY CANNOT PROMISE WHAT I DO NOT HAVE.
EXACTLY. REAL SHORTAGES CANNOT BE SOLVED BY WISHFUL BOOKKEEPING. PRINTING MORE NOTES MAY CHANGE THE NUMBERS ON PAPER, BUT IT DOES NOT CREATE MORE BREAD.


LET'S LOOK AT THE MONEY TRAIL, STEP BY STEP. THIS WILL SHOW HOW THE NEW NOTES SPREAD THROUGH VALORIA.
THE MONEY TRAIL
TREASURY
CONTRACTORS
SUPPLIERS
SHOPS
FAMILIES
HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED: THE NEW NOTES REACHED THE STONECUTTERS FIRST—THE CONTRACTORS WHO WERE BUILDING AROUND THE TOWN.
THEN THE CONTRACTORS PAID THEIR SUPPLIERS FOR STONE, WOOD, FLOUR, AND OTHER SUPPLIES.
AFTER THAT, THE NOTES REACHED THE BAKERS AND OTHER SHOPS...
...AND ONLY LATER DID THE NOTES REACH THE REST OF THE TOWN—LIKE FAMILIES WHO BUY THEIR FOOD, CLOTHING, AND OTHER EVERYDAY THINGS.
I SEE IT NOW! BY THE TIME THE NOTES REACH FAMILIES, PRICES MAY ALREADY BE HIGHER—BECAUSE THE COSTS ROSE EARLIER ALONG THE TRAIL!
THE MONEY TRAIL
TREASURY
CONTRACTORS
SUPPLIERS
SHOPS
FAMILIES
PRICES CAN RISE ALONG THE WAY!
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THINGS CAN FEEL MORE EXPENSIVE EVEN BEFORE EVERYONE GETS THE NOTES!


THE FIRST RECEIVERS BOUGHT GOODS BEFORE PRICES HAD FULLY RISEN.
FLOUR
CROWN NOTE

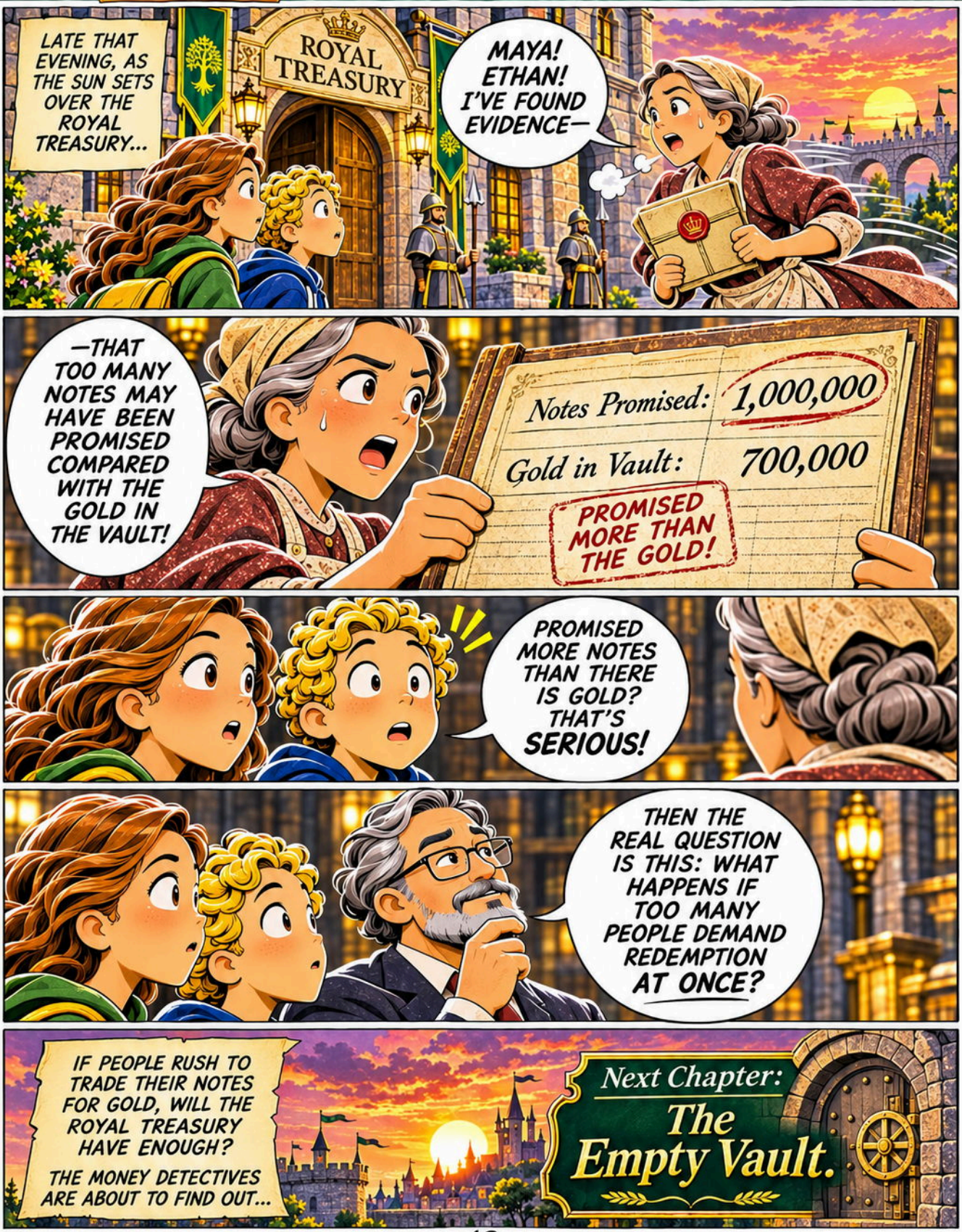

EVERYONE ELSE ARRIVED LATER— TO EMPTIER SHELVES AND HIGHER PRICES.
MARTA'S BAKERY

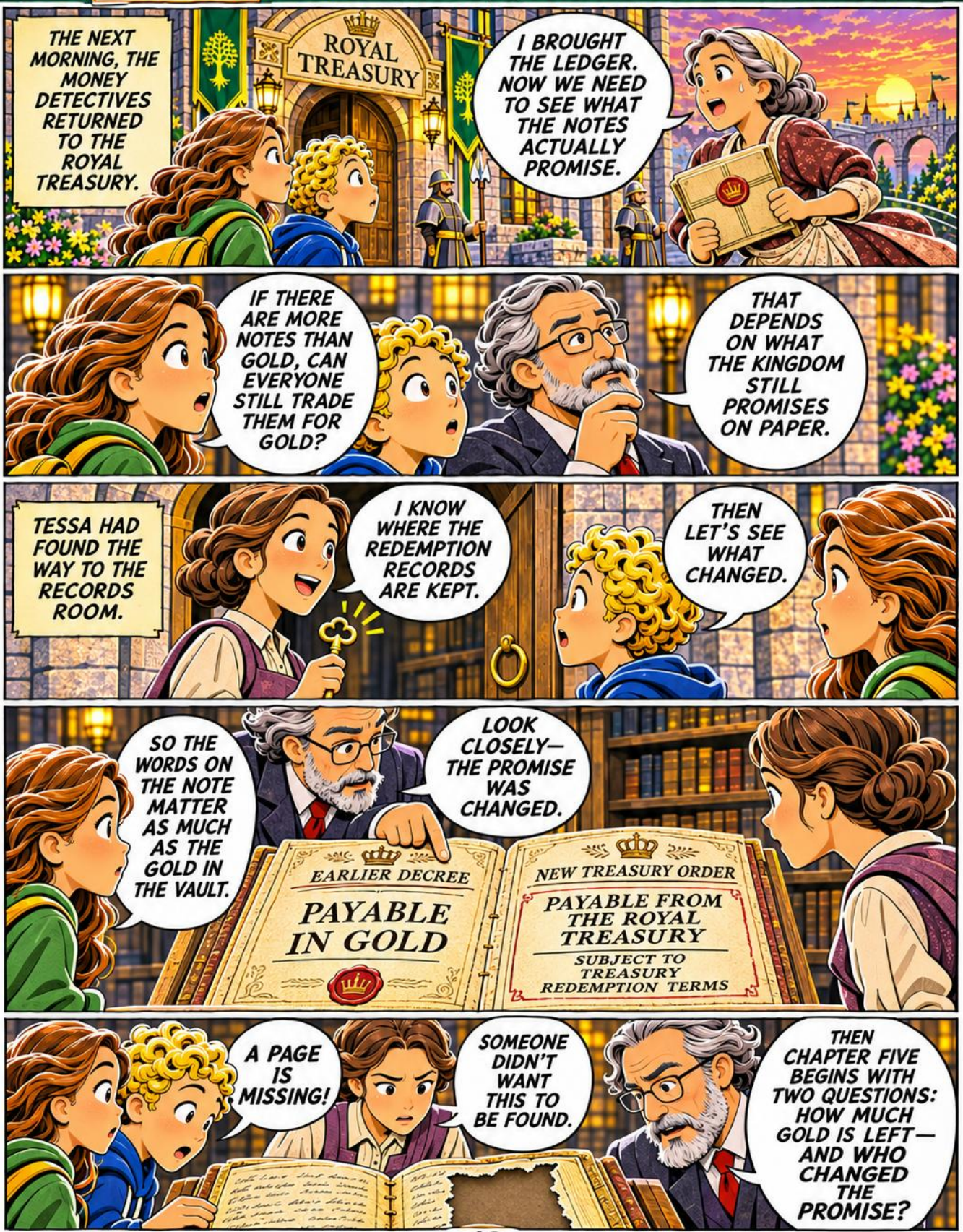

THE KINGDOM PRINTED MORE NOTES TO PAY FOR BIG PROJECTS— LIKE THE BRIDGE— SO WORK COULD CONTINUE...


...BUT THE EXTRA NOTES SLOWLY PUSHED PRICES HIGHER, MAKING GOODS HARDER TO FIND FOR EVERYONE ELSE.


THERE IT IS! WE HAVE SOLVED THIS PART OF THE MYSTERY.
THE KINGDOM DID NOT JUST GIVE AWAY WEALTH. TT PRINTED MORE NOTES, WHICH LET THE FIRST BUYERS GET GOODS EARLY—AND LEFT OTHERS FACING HIGHER PRICES LATER.


SO THE KINGDOM PRINTED MORE NOTES—BUT SPREAD THE PAIN IN A HIDDEN WAY.


LATE THAT EVENING, AS THE SUN SETS OVER THE ROYAL TREASURY...
ROYAL TREASURY
MAYA! ETHAN! I'VE FOUND EVIDENCE—
—THAT TOO MANY NOTES MAY HAVE BEEN PROMISED COMPARED WITH THE GOLD IN THE VAULT!
Notes Promised: 1,000,000
Gold in Vault: 700,000
PROMISED MORE THAN THE GOLD!
PROMISED MORE NOTES THAN THERE IS GOLD? THAT'S SERIOUS!
THEN THE REAL QUESTION IS THIS: WHAT HAPPENS IF TOO MANY PEOPLE DEMAND REDEMPTION AT ONCE?
IF PEOPLE RUSH TO TRADE THEIR NOTES FOR GOLD, WILL THE ROYAL TREASURY HAVE ENOUGH?
THE MONEY DETECTIVES ARE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...
Next Chapter:
The Empty Vault.

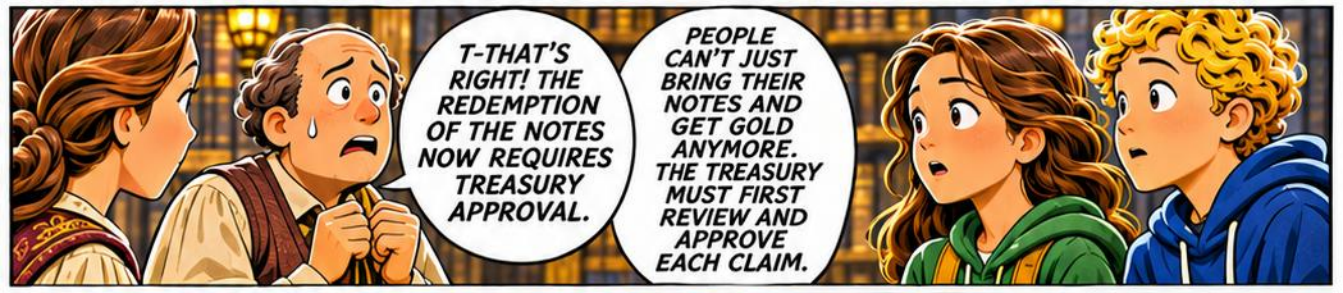

THE NEXT MORNING, THE MONEY DETECTIVES RETURNED TO THE ROYAL TREASURY.
ROYAL TREASURY
I BROUGHT THE LEDGER. NOW WE NEED TO SEE WHAT THE NOTES ACTUALLY PROMISE.
IF THERE ARE MORE NOTES THAN GOLD, CAN EVERYONE STILL TRADE THEM FOR GOLD?
THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT THE KINGDOM STILL PROMISES ON PAPER.
TESSA HAD FOUND THE WAY TO THE RECORDS ROOM.
I KNOW WHERE THE REDEMPTION RECORDS ARE KEPT.
THEN LET'S SEE WHAT CHANGED.
SO THE WORDS ON THE NOTE MATTER AS MUCH AS THE GOLD IN THE VAULT.
LOOK CLOSELY— THE PROMISE WAS CHANGED.
EARLIER DECREE
PAYABLE IN GOLD
NEW TREASURY ORDER
PAYABLE FROM THE ROYAL TREASURY
SUBJECT TO TREASURY REDEMPTION TERMS
A PAGE IS MISSING!
SOMEONE DIDN'T WANT THIS TO BE FOUND.
THEN CHAPTER FIVE BEGINS WITH TWO QUESTIONS: HOW MUCH GOLD IS LEFT— AND WHO CHANGED THE PROMISE?

CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT











CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT





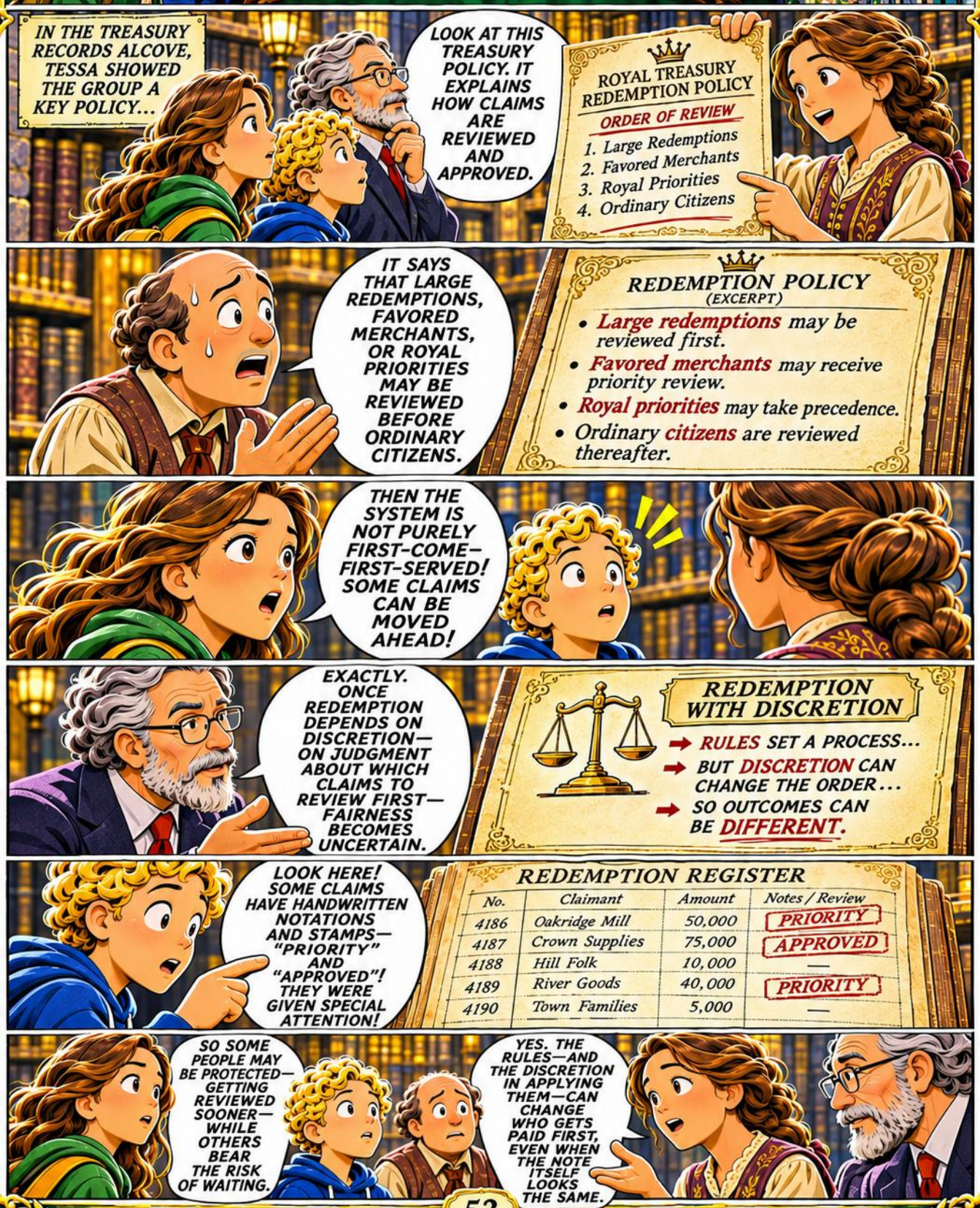








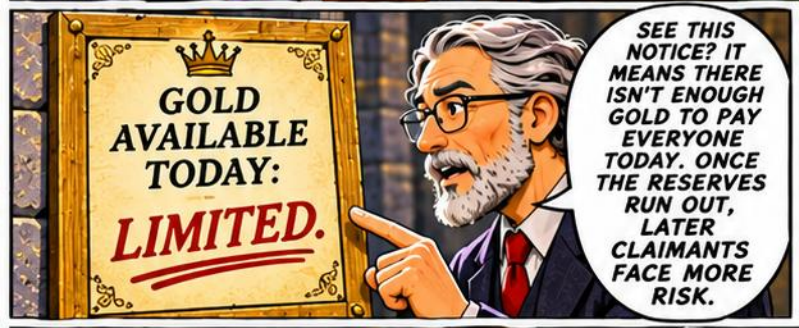
CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT



CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT













CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT

BEHIND THE REDEMPTION COUNTER, TESSA UNLOCKED AN INNER RECORDS CABINET...

TREASURY RESERVES & RECORDS

...INSIDE THEY FOUND THE TREASURY RESERVES, COIN CHESTS, AND DETAILED COUNT SHEETS.

GOLD RESERVES

RESERVE COUNT SHEETS

TREASURY POSITION — CURRENT

NOTES OUTSTANDING (CLAIMS IN CIRCULATION)	GOLD HELD (IN RESERVE)	SHORTFALL (UNBACKED CLAIMS)
1,000,000	700,000	300,000

THE PAPER PROMISES LOOK STRONGER FROM THE OUTSIDE THAN THE RESERVES BEHIND THEM REALLY ARE.

LOOK AT THE SHELVES— ONLY A FEW CHESTS OF GOLD. BUT OUT HERE THERE ARE A MILLION NOTES CLAIMING GOLD!

GOLD RESERVES (WHAT'S ACTUALLY HERE)

700,000 IN GOLD

VS.

NOTES OUTSTANDING (CLAIMS IN CIRCULATION)

1,000,000 IN NOTES

THE SYSTEM WORKS ONLY AS LONG AS MOST PEOPLE DO NOT ASK FOR REDEMPTION ALL AT ONCE.

FEW SEEK REDEMPTION	MANY SEEK REDEMPTION
✓ WORKS	✗ FAILS!

CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT

THE ROYAL TREASURY LEDGER SHOWS THE KEY NUMBERS AGAIN:

CROWN NOTES (CLAIMS TO GOLD):	1,000,000
GOLD CROWNS (ACTUAL RESERVE):	700,000

THIS IS A RESERVE MISMATCH. THERE ARE **300,000** MORE CLAIMS (NOTES) THAN THERE IS GOLD.

THE NOTES REPRESENT **PROMISES**— A CLAIM ON GOLD, NOT A GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE CAN GET METAL ALL AT ONCE.

CROWN NOTE
A Promise to Pay Gold Crowns

IT'S LIKE IF A HUGE CROWD ALL SHOWS UP AT ONCE TO REDEEM THEIR NOTES— BUT THERE'S ONLY A SMALLER PILE OF GOLD!

AS LONG AS **TRUST HOLDS**— AS LONG AS PEOPLE BELIEVE THE KINGDOM WILL HONOR THE NOTES—EVERYONE KEEPS USING THEM, AND THE MISMATCH STAYS HIDDEN.

BUT ONCE **TRUST BREAKS**— WHEN PEOPLE RUSH TO REDEEM THEIR NOTES AT THE SAME TIME— THE SHORTAGE BECOMES VISIBLE TO EVERYONE.

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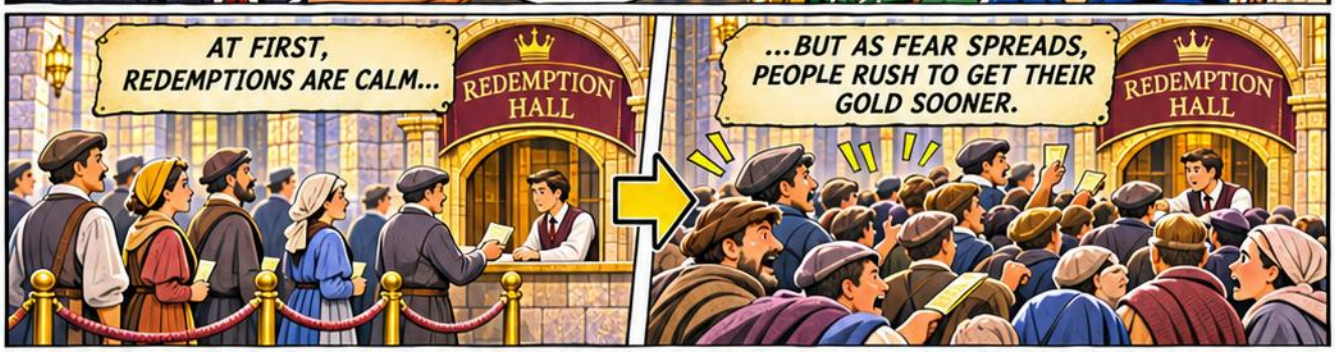
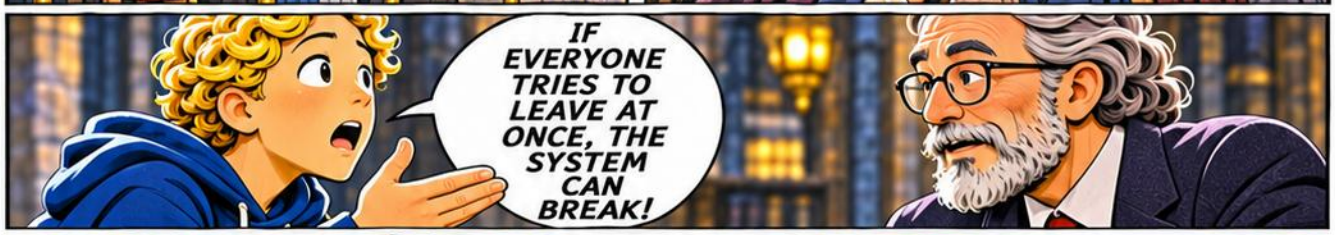
CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT













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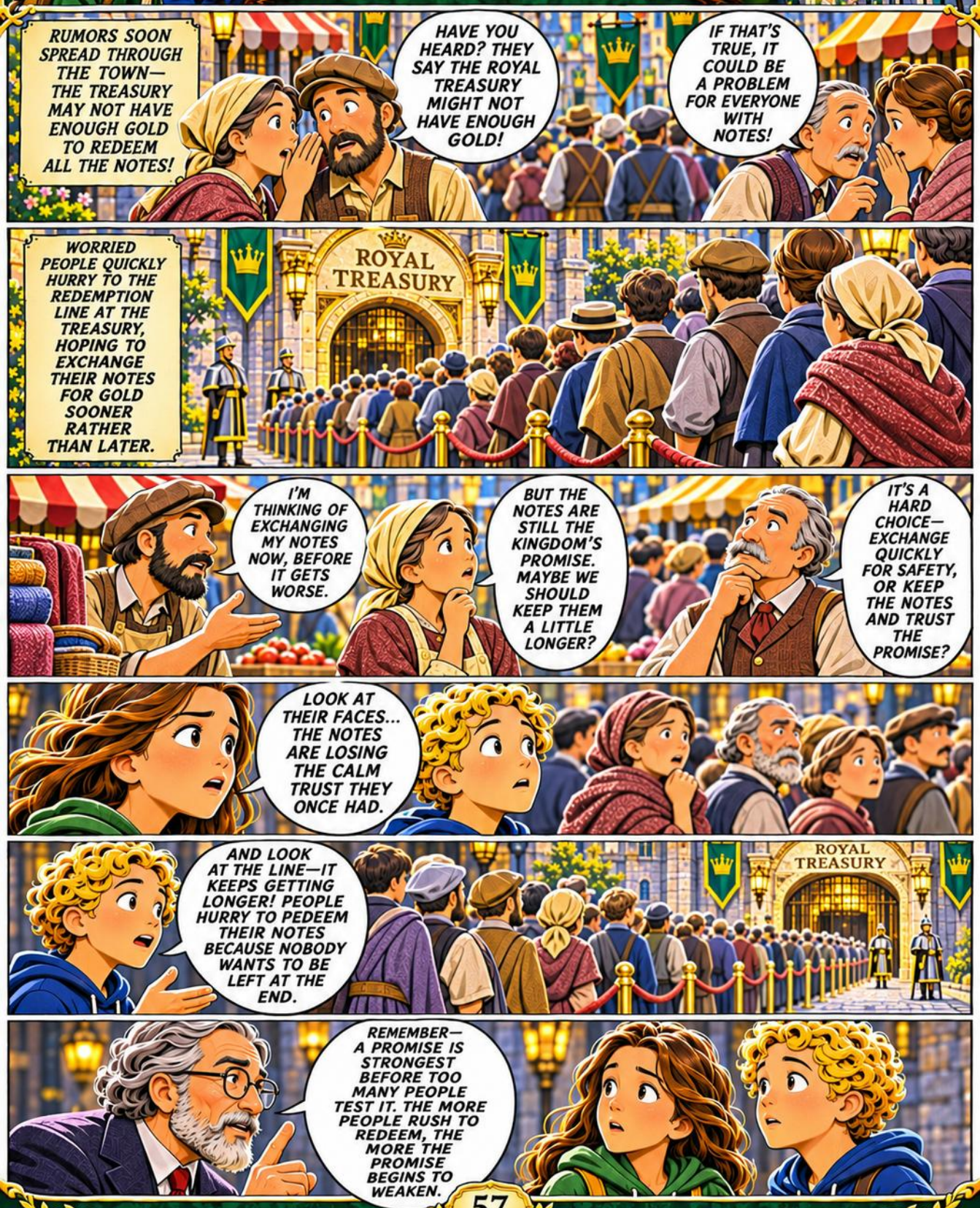
CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT



CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT













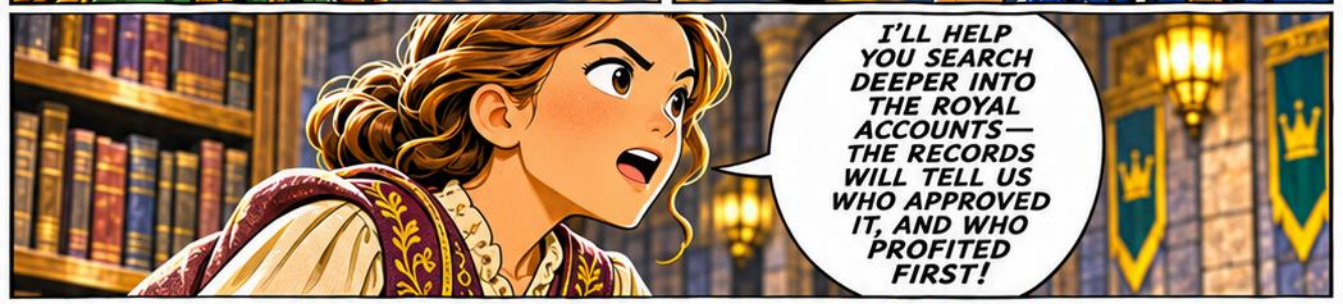
CHAPTER 5 — THE EMPTY VAULT













CHAPTER 6 — THE KING'S ACCOUNTING



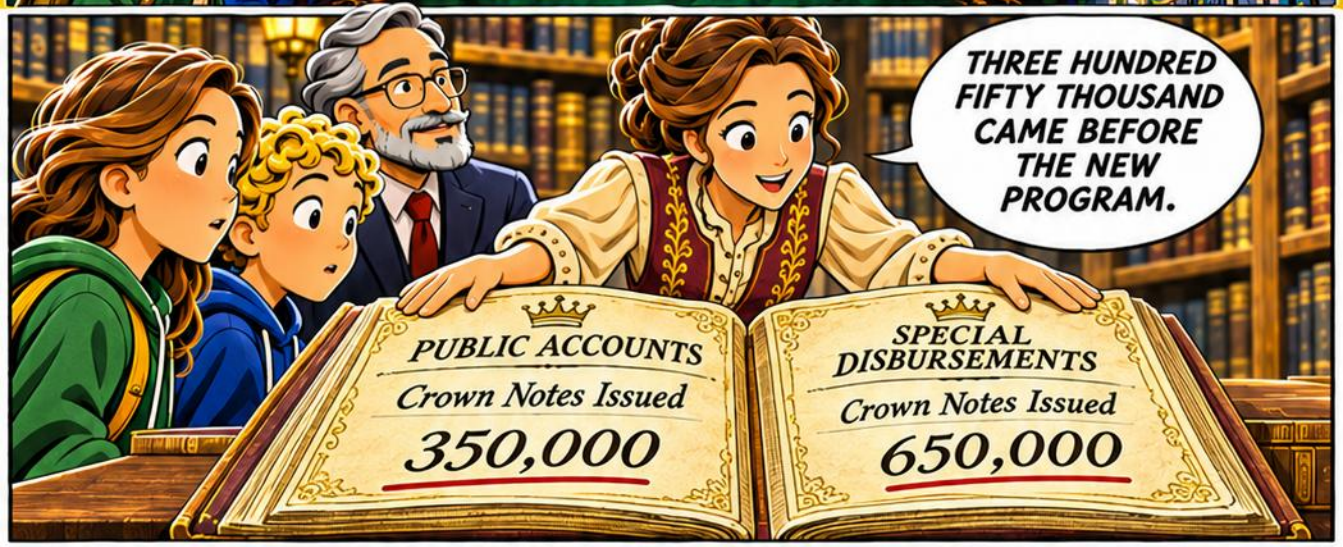








CHAPTER 6 — THE SIGNATURE UNDER THE SEAL









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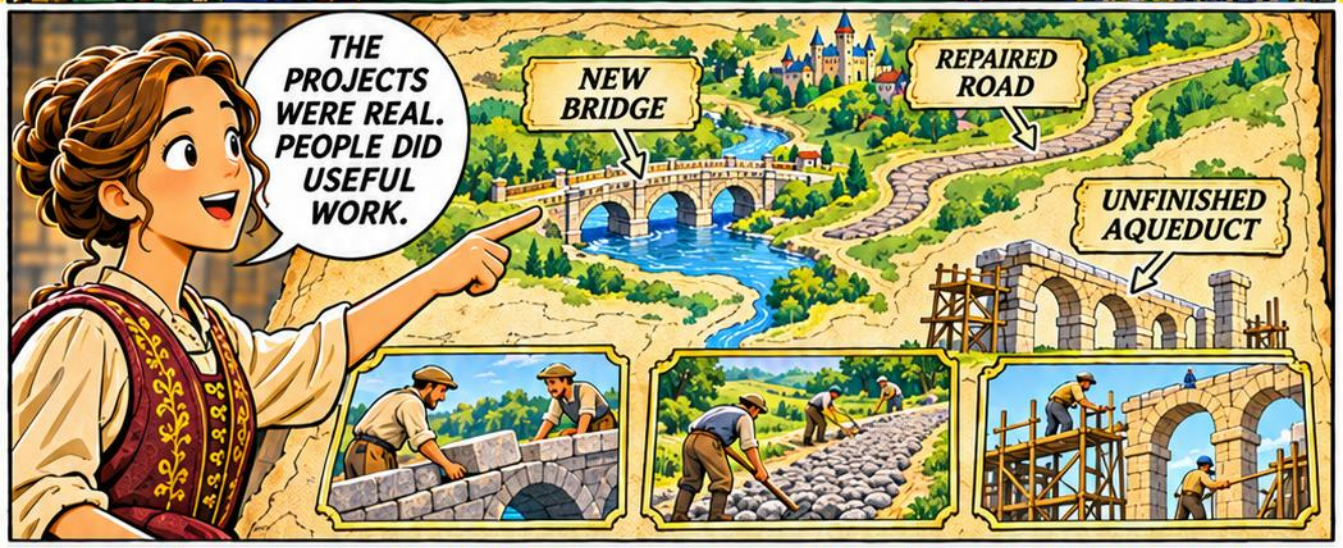
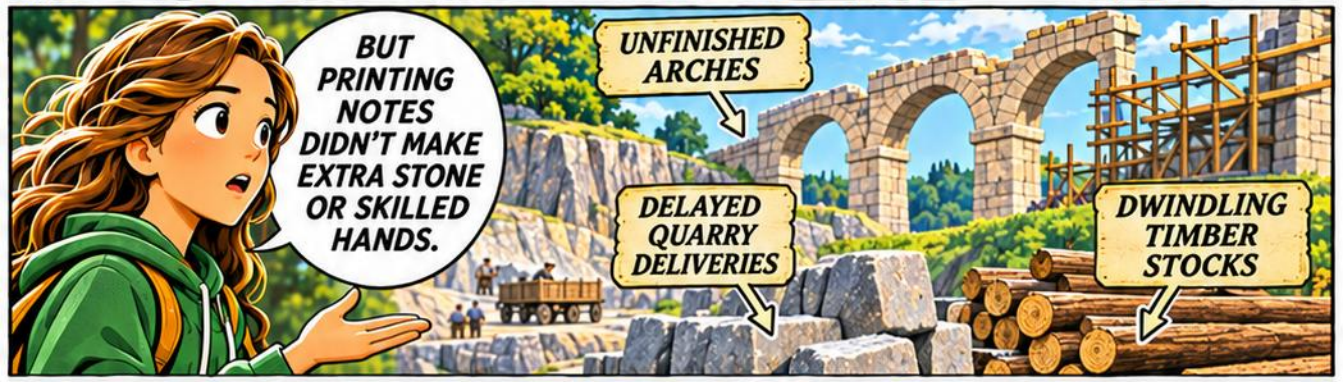
CHAPTER 6 — WHAT THE PROJECTS BUILT










THIS IS THE MISSING PAGE.
SPECIAL DISBURSEMENTS


THE SAME NAMES APPEAR BEFORE THE OTHERS.
REDEMPTION REGISTER
EARLY AUTHORIZATIONS
Date | Authorized For | Review
Apr. 3 | Crown Contractors | PRIORITY REVIEW
Apr. 5 | Valoria Supply Co.
Apr. 8 | Crown Contractors | PRIORITY REVIEW
Apr. 11 | Royal Works Guild
Apr. 12 | Valoria Supply Co. | PRIORITY REVIEW

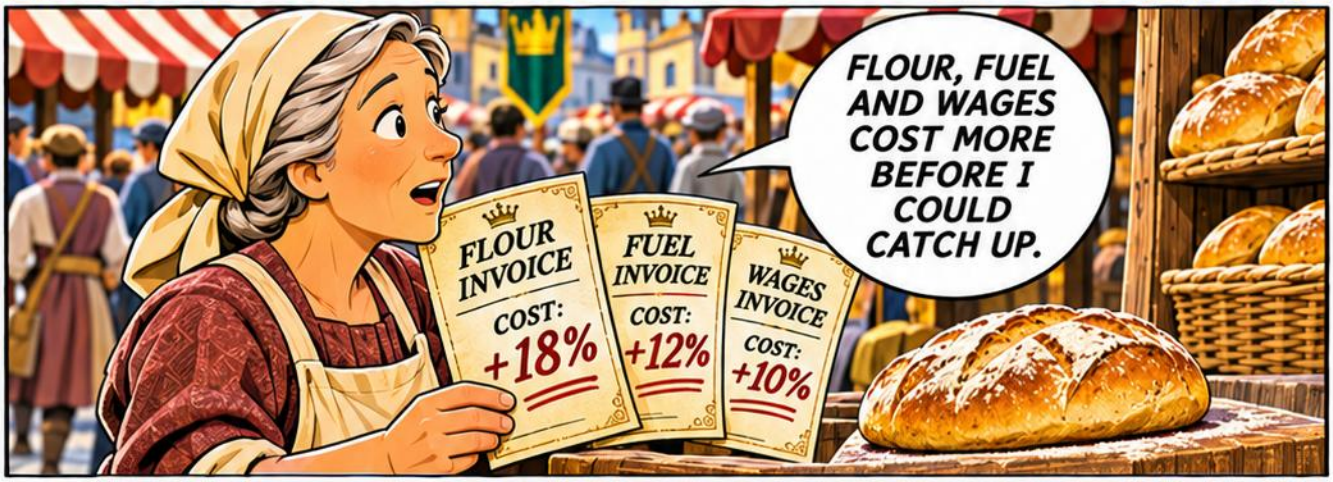

THEY SAID IT WOULD CAUSE ALARM.


HIDING THE TRUTH DIDN'T MAKE THE PROMISE STRONGER.


TELL US WHAT YOU FOUND— EVERY PART OF IT.
ONE MILLION NOTES OUTSTANDING. SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD CROWNS RECORDED.
NOTES REGISTER
1,000,000 NOTES OUTSTANDING
GOLD ACCOUNT LEDGER
700,000 GOLD CROWNS RECORDED
THESE ARE THE SIGNATURES AND THE CHANGED TERMS.
ROYAL AUTHORIZATION
REDEMPTION DECREE (ALTERED)
ORIGINAL TERMS:
REVISED TERMS:
WE WANTED A BRIGHTER TOMORROW. WHAT DID WE OVERLOOK?


WE MEANT TO PAY WORKERS AND BUILD WHAT THE KINGDOM NEEDED.
BRIDGE & AQUEDUCT
THE BRIDGE HELPS ME REACH THE MARKET.
MORE CLAIMS AREN'T THE SAME THING AS MORE SUPPLIES.
I EXPECTED THE NEW WORK TO CATCH UP WITH THE NEW PROMISES.
TREASURY RECORD
Bridge Construction 300,000
Aqueduct Works 200,000
Worker Payments 150,000
Notes Issued 650,000

CHAPTER 6 — THE PEOPLE WHO PAID LATER









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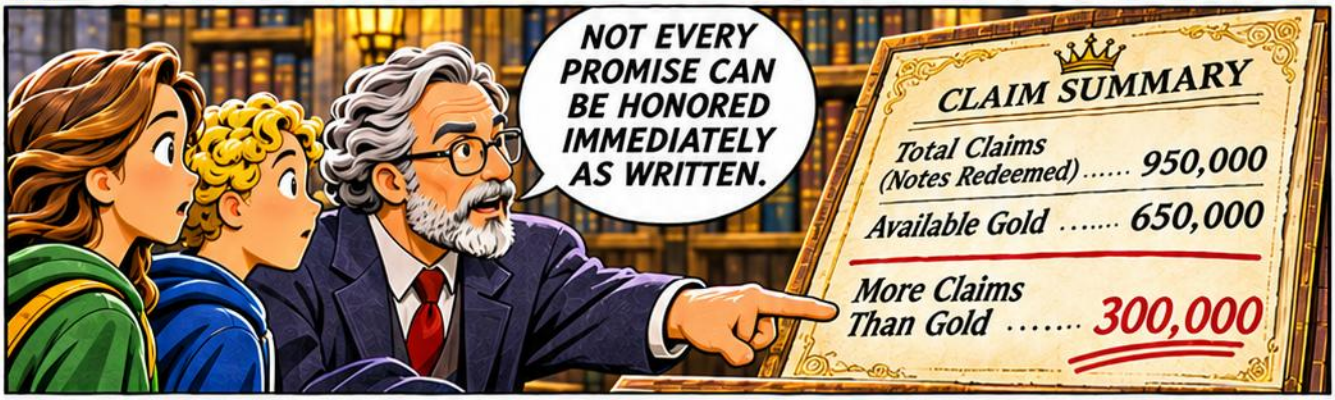
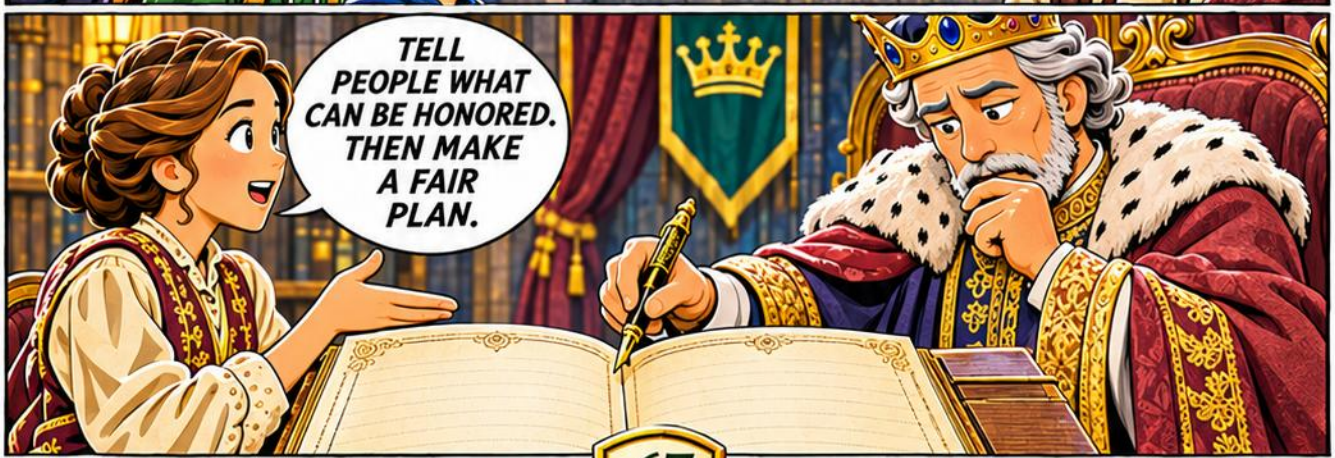
CHAPTER 6 — THREE CHOICES





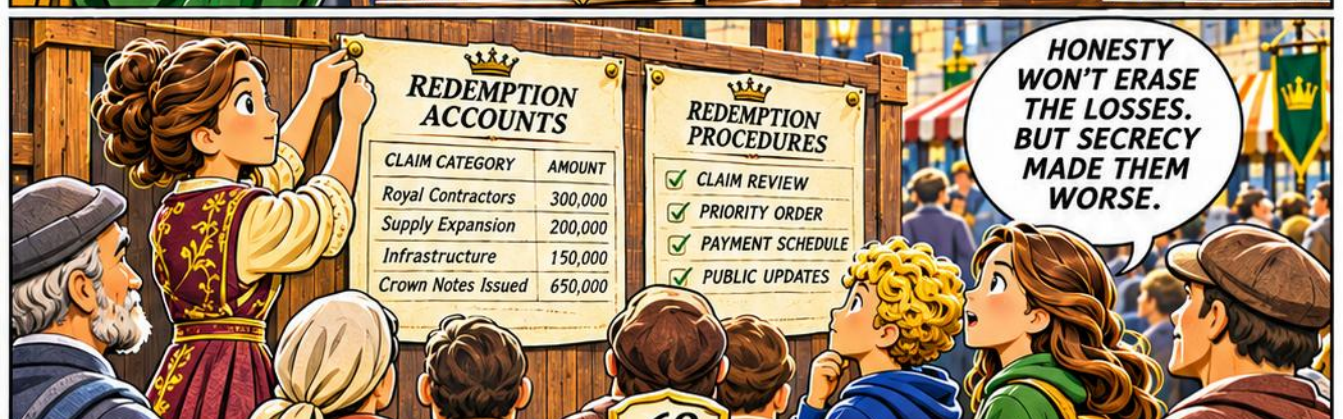





OUR RECORDS WILL BE OPEN. YOU DESERVE TO KNOW WHAT WAS PROMISED.
PUBLIC LEDGER
• NOTES ISSUED 1,000,000
• RESERVES (REAL GOODS) 350,000
• OUTSTANDING 650,000
RESERVE TALLY
GRAIN 150,000
METAL 120,000
OTHER GOODS 80,000
TOTAL RESERVES 350,000


WE CANNOT FIX A SHORTAGE BY PRETENDING IT IS GONE.


THEN LET THE RULES APPLY FAIRLY— NOT JUST TO THOSE CLOSEST TO THE THRONE.
CIVIC REDEMPTION COMMITTEE
WORKERS
BAKERS
NOTEHOLDERS
CITIZENS


REDEMPTION ACCOUNTS
CLAIM CATEGORY | AMOUNT
Royal Contractors | 300,000
Supply Expansion | 200,000
Infrastructure | 150,000
Crown Notes Issued | 650,000
REDEMPTION PROCEDURES
CLAIM REVIEW
PRIORITY ORDER
PAYMENT SCHEDULE
PUBLIC UPDATES
HONESTY WON'T ERASE THE LOSSES. BUT SECRECY MADE THEM WORSE.

WE MUST CHOOSE WHAT TO FUND WITH WHAT WE CAN ACTUALLY SUPPLY.

REPAIR BUDGET

PROJECT	FINISH NOW	POSTPONE	SUPPLY NEEDED	TAX REVENUE	SPENDING (COST)	PRODUCTION (OUTPUT)	REPAYMENT EFFECT
Road Repairs	✓	—	Stone, Labor	High	300,000	More Trade	Faster
Granaries	—	✓	Timber, Labor	Medium	150,000	Stable Supply	Later
Bridge Work	✓	—	Iron, Labor	Medium	200,000	Higher Output	Faster
Palace Expansion	—	✓	Stone, Labor	Low	250,000	Little Output	Much Later

NO MORE PROMISES WITHOUT A CLEAR MEANS OF HONORING THEM.

OFFICIAL ORDER

SUSPEND SPECIAL NOTE ISSUANCE (UNBACKED)

PENDING A PUBLIC AUDIT AND REVISED RULES.

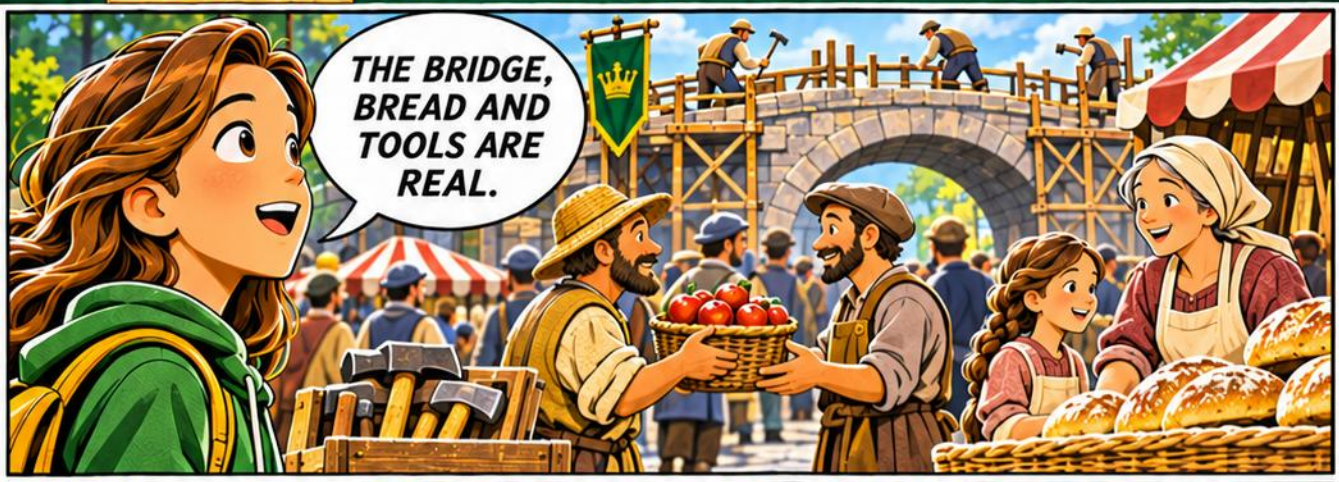
THERE WAS NO INSTANT CURE. TRUST HAD TO BE REBUILT.

SAVINGS

THE BURDEN OF THESE DECISIONS MUST NOT BE HIDDEN.

ROYAL COMMITMENT

- ✓ INDEPENDENT AUDITS.
- ✓ PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS.
- ✓ REVIEW OF HARMED CLAIMANTS.


THE BRIDGE, BREAD AND TOOLS ARE REAL.


CROWN NOTE
A NOTE CAN HELP PEOPLE EXCHANGE THINGS. IT CANNOT SUBSTITUTE FOR MAKING THEM.


A RICHER KINGDOM NEEDS MORE USEFUL THINGS—NOT SIMPLY MORE PROMISES.


I WILL HELP MAKE THE ACCOUNTS PUBLIC.


WE WILL CHOOSE THE DIFFICULT TRUTH.
EASY PROCLAMATION
✓ CLAIM SUCCESS
✓ ANNOUNCE PLENTY
✓ KEEP SPENDING
✓ AVOID HARD CHOICES
BUDGET & REDEMPTION PLAN
✓ STATE THE REAL COSTS
✓ REPAY PROMISES
✓ REDUCE NONESSENTIALS
✓ RESTORE THE RESERVES


GOOD RULES MATTER MOST WHEN THEY ARE HARDEST TO FOLLOW.
ROYAL PROCLAMATION
TRANSPARENT ACCOUNTS
NO SECRET PRIORITIES
REAL BUDGET CONSTRAINTS
CLEAR MONETARY RULES


IT MAY TAKE YEARS TO RESTORE WHAT WAS LOST.
THEN WE'D BETTER BEGIN.


I THINK WE SOLVED THE KINGDOM'S SECRET.
ROYAL ARCHIVES OF VALORIA

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CHAPTER 6 — The First Question

