

THE TARTARIA TRUNK

The map that changed the history of America



The greatest mystery in history
is not what happened...
but what stopped being told.

ANGEL PRIMAL

THE TARTARIA TRUNK

It all began with a forgotten trunk.

Inside, there were no answers.

There were questions
that would change the history of the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND PROLOGUE

The History We Inherited

PART I — THE DISCOVERY

1. The Auction — Lot 47
2. The Impossible Photographs
3. The Traveler — 1796

PART II — THE SYSTEM

4. The Cities of the Federation
5. Frisland — The Lost Node
6. The Communities

PART III — THE OCCUPATION

7. The Usurpation
8. The Impossible Return
9. The Hospitals

PART IV — THE REWRITING

10. Chilaga — The Reset
11. The System's Showcase
12. San Francisco — The Gold Rush

PART V — THOSE WHO REMEMBER

13. Those Who Know
14. The Risk of Remembering

PART VI — THE RECOGNITION

15. The Initial Archive
16. The Hidden Manuscript
17. The Discovery
18. The Recognition

EPILOGUE

The Box

✦ INTRODUCTION

There are stories that never disappear. They simply change places. They sink beneath layers of earth, beneath new cities, beneath different names, beneath dates that seem precise and yet explain nothing.

They remain there, still, like buried architecture, waiting. Not for someone to validate them, but for someone to ask the right question.

For a long time, I believed history worked like a restoration. You arrive at a document, brush away the dust, mend the torn edges, restore clarity to what time has worn down—and in the end, a clearer truth emerges. Not an absolute truth, but one closer to the original. I was wrong.

History does not always deteriorate naturally. Sometimes it isn't erased. It is repositioned.

Dates are reassigned, origins are redefined, and structures that already existed are absorbed into a new narrative. It is not construction or destruction—it is adaptation.

This book is not a historical reconstruction. Nor is it conventional fiction. It emerges from an uncomfortable middle ground.

It begins with an intuition: that some structures from the past have not disappeared—they have simply stopped being recognized.

What is told here does not aim to prove anything.

It presents itself as a novel, but it does not arise solely from imagination. It follows a narrative aligned with real chronology, blending fiction with a possible reality.

There are records, maps, anomalies, and patterns that, when observed together, stop feeling coincidental.

This book does not explain them.

It simply places them in front of you, so the reader can decide how to look at them.



It does not seek to answer uncomfortable questions or impose a new version of history either.

This book proposes a possibility: that certain elements of the past may have been reorganized within a broader system of coherence. It arises from the certainty that not everything left outside of history has truly disappeared.

Sometimes, what doesn't fit is not removed. It is displaced, fragmented, diluted. It doesn't vanish. It simply becomes harder to recognize.

Someone intervenes beforehand, moves the pieces, changes the labels, replaces some pages with others, while leaving the overall appearance of the archive intact.

And when different pieces begin to align—even if no one connects them, even if no narrative exists to unify them—something activates. Not in the archives. In perception.

Long ago, I left behind the official explanations about the construction of ancient structures such as the pyramids. Most of them do not withstand even a moderately rigorous analysis.

Over time, I came to understand that these inconsistencies may not be there by mistake, but to keep our attention directed toward a past that is too remote—away from what is more recent, from what carries a more decisive weight in how we understand our history and make sense of our lives.

This book does not ask you to believe in something new or to undo what you already know. It simply proposes a different gesture: to look without the need to close the question. To allow what creates dissonance to remain long enough to be seen with new eyes.

Because perhaps the problem is not history, but the framework from which we have been anchored to look at it—and from which we have never stopped doing so.

Perhaps, in that gesture, something begins to be recognized. And, for the first time, to be honored.

✦ PROLOGUE

The History We Inherited

There are objects that survive time. Not because they are valuable, but because no one has bothered to destroy them... or to remember them.

For centuries, we have assumed that history functions as an accumulated record of the past. Each generation adds a layer of knowledge to the one before it. Documents are preserved, archives are organized, errors are corrected.

That is the theory. The practice is stranger.

Archives are also reorganized. Documents are lost. Maps change. Sometimes, when one compares editions separated by barely fifty years, something unsettling emerges: cities that shift, rivers that change course without explanation, entire islands that appear for centuries and then cease to exist.

Ancient cartographers knew this phenomenon well. They called them lost lands. Most were simple navigation errors: confusion with ice banks or mirages on the horizon. But some islands appeared too consistently to be dismissed as mere mistakes.

One of them was Frisland.

For more than two hundred years, it appeared on European maps, located between Iceland and Greenland. Some cartographers drew it almost as large as Ireland. Others depicted ports, bays, and cities. Then, at the end of the 18th century, the island vanished.

Expeditions crossing the North Atlantic could no longer find it. New maps erased it. History buried it with a simple sentence: Frisland never existed. That is the official explanation.

Official history has an obvious advantage: it simplifies anomalies. But simplifying does not mean explaining. Sometimes it only organizes the narrative enough so that no one keeps asking questions.

And when a narrative is presented as completely coherent—without cracks, without contradictions, without visible error—the deception becomes invisible.

This novel begins with one of those questions that do not appear in history books: What happens when a civilization is erased from historical records, but its cities remain standing? What if the answer were not in history, but in what was left outside of it?

For years, I searched through archives, maps, and records. The answers were not there. They appeared somewhere else: in the notebooks of a traveler named Max, and in a mysterious trunk.

The object that ended up changing my life did not seem important. In the catalog, it was listed as a minor lot: a 19th-century travel trunk, of unknown origin, with unclassified contents. Nothing more.

The first line in one of the notebooks began like this:

“I arrived in America expecting to find a new world...”

Even now, I am not sure when I began to understand it. Perhaps when I found images whose dating did not align with the official chronology. Or perhaps when I descended beneath a modern city and saw, by the light of a flashlight, a construction of massive stone slabs whose origin no one could explain.

In the notebooks, there is a phrase that has returned to me so many times that I no longer know whether I read it... or heard it myself:

People believe they are building a new world... and there is no one left alive who remembers the previous one.

I cannot help but think that everything is still there, waiting to be recognized. Not only as a memory, but as a presence whose beauty could reveal itself again... in form... and in the human being who learns to hold the gaze.

The harmony of that world is still breathing beneath the surface.

And once you recognize it... you can no longer pretend not to see it.

CHAPTER 1

The Auction — Lot 47

The auction catalog arrived a week earlier. I didn't remember requesting it, nor being included on the list.

In any case, I wasn't expecting to find anything important in it.

It was one of those catalogs that archives and libraries send out when they're clearing duplicate holdings, uncatalogued items, or pieces whose origin no one remembers anymore.

Most of the lots consisted of antique furniture, boxes of administrative documents, or deteriorated maps that had spent far too long stored in damp basements.

Nothing out of the ordinary.

ILLUSTRATED CATALOG OF HISTORICAL OBJECTS AND CURIOSITIES

23

PUBLIC AUCTION
OF
ANTIQUITIES
AND
COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

On behalf of various
owners and heirs

To be held at the Auction Hall
of the House of Auctions of

E. DUVAL & CO.
14 ALCALÁ STREET
MADRID

May 14, 15 and 16, 1890,
at two o'clock in the afternoon

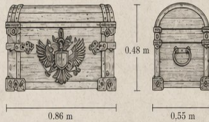
PUBLIC EXHIBITION
May 11, 12 and 13, 1890,
from 10 in the morning
until 5 in the afternoon

LOT 47 — TRAVEL TRUNK



PROVENANCE: Unknown
ESTIMATED DATE: Late 19th century
MATERIALS: Reinforced wood
with metal fittings
CONDITION: Structurally sound
and complete

DESCRIPTION.
Medium-sized travel trunk with a reinforced structure using metal plates and rivets. The front panel features a heraldic double-headed eagle emblem, executed in relief, whose iconography does not correspond to any cataloged official registry in the European repertoires of the period.
The surface wear suggests prolonged use under varying conditions. However, the metallic elements are well preserved, an uncommon feature for pieces of this kind, suggesting a possible careful maintenance for its time.
ARCHIVAL NOTE: The interior has not been fully classified. Preliminary documentary indications of contents have been recorded.



0.86 m 0.48 m 0.55 m

APPROX. WEIGHT: 18.7 kilograms

NOTE: Descriptions have been written based on information provided by consignors.
The House of Auctions does not guarantee the absolute authenticity of the objects.

*"It is not the object that matters... but what has endured
within time long enough not to be altered."*

I flipped through the pages with very little attention, almost automatically, not looking for anything in particular—more out of habit than anything else.

That's when I saw it. It wasn't a conscious choice. My attention stopped there before I decided it.

Lot 47. Travel trunk. 19th century.

Nothing in the description suggested that the object had crossed half the world or had belonged to anyone of note. I don't know why it caught my attention. There was no reason.

Perhaps because it seemed to be the only object in the catalog out of place. Or perhaps it was the image on the lid—something not mentioned in the description. A kind of metal emblem: a two-headed eagle.

For a few seconds I thought it was just a decorative motif, an ornamental piece added by some European manufacturer. However, as I looked at the image, something began to resonate within me.

It wasn't just any ornament. It conveyed a strange sense of power, mystery, and mysticism.

Even so, I turned the page and kept going through the catalog. A few minutes later, I went back. The trunk was still there, as if waiting.

The auction was to be held three days later. I had no real reason to go, but that trunk stirred an inexplicable pull in me... and I couldn't help but show up.

The room was half full: furniture collectors, antique dealers, a few restorers. Nothing unusual.

The first lots went by quickly—chairs, display cases, document boxes, old engravings.

When Lot 47 came up, the auctioneer barely raised his voice.

—Travel trunk, 19th century...

Silence... No one seemed interested.

I raised my hand... There was a very brief pause... and the hammer fell. It all happened too fast, as if no one had really had the chance to intervene.

The trunk was mine. Or perhaps... I was beginning to be its.

I didn't know whether I had bought it following my own intuition or pushed by some invisible external force.

I wasn't expecting to find anything special. And yet, something about that trunk conveyed a very specific kind of silence. Not the silence of something empty, but the silence of something that had been kept for far too long.

The truth is, I felt neither excitement nor disappointment. Only a strange curiosity I couldn't quite explain.

That same afternoon, I took it to my study.

During the trip, I had the feeling that I hadn't bought an object, but something that had been waiting for me...

I couldn't say why. That kind of intuition was very unusual for me.

I left it in a corner and simply observed the metal emblem: the two-headed eagle.

There was something in its design that conveyed power and knowledge at the same time, as if it belonged to an ancient, wise tradition—or an unknown civilization.

Finally, I opened the trunk, though with some difficulty, and for a brief moment I had the impression that something inside seemed to shine.

Inside, I found maps, drawings, and artifacts. There were also six notebooks, all written by the same person: Max.

Alongside them were several manuscripts written in a different hand. They weren't signed, but the handwriting was completely different.

Max had arrived in America in 1796.

The notebooks formed a diary, but it didn't seem like an ordinary travel journal. In the first notebook, Max recounted his adventures, but in the others he described in great detail the events that were unfolding as the world changed in the 19th century.

According to his own words, he had traveled through the interior of the continent for years and had seen cities that did not appear on any map. I didn't know then that those pages would completely change the way I looked at the past.



I opened the second notebook and read: “I arrived in America expecting to find a new world. The first thing I found were questions.” It was a line from Max, and I had no idea it would become the central theme of this story.

The following pages did not attempt to answer them. Each entry added a new anomaly: a map that didn't match any known layout, cities appearing where they shouldn't exist, majestic buildings with no coherence within the accepted chronology.

Too many things that didn't fit with anything I could interpret. I couldn't find a framework, a reference, a prior logic that would allow me to place so much inconsistency into context.

CHAPTER 2

The Impossible Photographs



For a few minutes, I simply stared at one of the notebooks I had opened on the table. The handwriting was steady, with no visible corrections.

It didn't resemble the kind of improvised writing one finds in travel journals. Every line had been written with intention, as if the author knew that someone, at some point in the future, would end up reading those pages.

Max wrote like someone deeply astonished, confronted with something entirely unexpected.

But the astonishment wasn't only his—it was mine as well, not just because of what he described, but because of what it implied.

His notes revealed a version incompatible with the traditional account of the discovery and conquest of America.

The notebook did not follow a conventional narrative structure. There were no introductions or context—only records: coordinates, concise descriptions, direct annotations. It didn't feel like he was telling a story, but rather documenting a process in real time.

The first entries were brief: dates, routes, and small observations about paths, rivers, and settlements. Nothing seemed out of place. However, as I continued reading, a pattern began to emerge.

In several passages, he mentioned disproportionate buildings, monumental plazas in places where only a few hundred people lived, wide avenues paved in stone that seemed designed for a kind of traffic that did not exist.

At first, I thought they were exaggerations—the kind of impressions any traveler might have when encountering a new territory for the first time. Until I opened another notebook.

Between its pages were several incredibly precise drawings of the plazas and buildings he described. And beneath the notebooks, wrapped in a dark cloth, I found something I hadn't noticed when I first opened the trunk.

A compact metallic artifact, with no visible joints. It looked like some kind of advanced technology I had never seen before. It was about the size of a camera, but it had no lens.

I spread several images across the table, and for a few moments, I couldn't fully understand what I was looking at.

I thought they were extremely precise drawings. But there was something about the light... the shadows. It wasn't just accuracy—they were too perfect.

I looked again at the object. An ancient device... with a surprisingly modern appearance.



I returned to the images.

They didn't match anything I had seen before. There were streets, plazas, stone buildings, towers, arches...

All of them had a perfect definition, a coherence in light and proportion that was impossible to explain—as if they had been captured, not drawn.

But if those images were photographs... the problem wasn't what they showed, but when they had been taken. It wasn't the image itself. It was the chronology.

Because it implied that those cities already existed and had been built many decades earlier. Perhaps centuries. As if the nineteenth century had been the moment when someone decided to rewrite the history of their origin.

None of it aligned with the idea of a newly emerging civilization.

According to Max, they were inherited cities—not designed or built by the new generations.

The proportions repeated themselves, the heights seemed to follow something beyond mere design, and their coherence did not match an improvised development.

But if they hadn't been built in that century... then the possible explanations began to become unsettling.

And that, rather than making me doubt, began to disturb me.

For a few seconds, I didn't think about cities... I thought about time.

If those images were real, the problem was their date. Their clarity did not belong to early nineteenth-century technology.

I tried to find an explanation: later reproductions, or copies made from old engravings. But the perspectives were too precise, and the light too natural. There were also shadows, textures, and other details that an engraving simply could not reproduce.

In some images, there were people wearing clothing that didn't belong to any specific period.

And in several of them, in the sky, there were balloons—elongated aerostats, suspended in the air.



Max said he could spend hours watching them descend. They would remain suspended beside platforms or within large open hangars. He said they moved with the wind... and also against it.

That kind of aerial vehicle did not yet exist at the time.

I returned to the journal. I searched for references. On one of the pages, I found a brief note. A single sentence: *"The city was almost empty, but its buildings seem constructed for millions of inhabitants."*

I read the line several times. Then I looked again at the images.

The plazas were enormous. The avenues were designed for hundreds of carriages and thousands of people.

At the center, the same structures always appeared: a massive tower with a large dome, and a tetraportico arch.

At first, I thought they might have had some kind of religious function... but they didn't resemble any known religious architecture.

They were neither churches nor administrative buildings. They were something Max mentioned constantly in his journals: towers and arches.



He didn't describe them as isolated elements. He recorded their positions and the distances between them.

I examined the images again.

In three of them, I could clearly identify the same structures, always located at the center of the city.

The entire urban layout seemed to have been organized around them.

I also considered that they might be symbolic elements.

There was a sentence written: "*They seem built to function.*"

I began to realize that the trunk did not simply contain travel memories. It contained a systematic observation of places and structures that, according to official maps, should not even exist.

He wasn't pointing out isolated constructions, but repeated ones—connected to each other.

That's when I started to notice another kind of dissonance. One that wasn't in the maps, but in time itself. For centuries, we have assumed that building a city is a slow process:

Generations... layers... mistakes corrected over time.

What Max described clashed with much of nineteenth-century history, especially its early decades.

I closed the notebook and remained in silence, staring at the photographs spread across the table.

Then I remembered the emblem on the trunk—the double-headed eagle.

For a moment, I had the feeling I had already seen that symbol before, in one of the images.

I stood up, walked over to the trunk, and looked again at the metal emblem.



A strange feeling washed over me—that the trunk had been built to hold something important and that, for some reason... it had ended up in my hands.

Before opening another notebook, I looked again inside the trunk. At the bottom, among carefully folded fabrics, there were several objects I hadn't yet examined.

I took them out one by one. They were metal devices. One of them stood out from the rest: it was made of several concentric rings that rotated within each other with almost perfect precision.



I turned it carefully. The movement was continuous, without resistance.

I thought it might be an astronomical instrument—something designed to track the movement of celestial bodies or stars.

The pieces looked very old. And yet, they weren't corroded, and they moved with remarkable smoothness.

Beneath it, I found several plans. Technical drawings. Sections of structures and mechanisms I couldn't interpret.

None of it matched. Not the history. Not the known technology.

I opened another notebook. On the first page, there was a sentence written in darker ink:

“There are cities that do not appear on maps. Nor in records. But that does not mean they never existed—or that they do not exist.”

For a moment, I didn't doubt the authenticity of the images.

I began to doubt everything else.

Because if those photographs were real, then it wasn't just that history was incomplete—it was that the chronological order had been rearranged.

For a moment, I had the feeling that everything fit—or at least that it was beginning to—in a way that was hard to ignore. .

Then another, more uncomfortable feeling appeared.

Maybe I was forcing an interpretation of all this... or maybe, for the first time, I was beginning to accept what seemed most evident.

I paused for a few minutes and considered the possibility of documenting nothing... and forgetting everything.

Instead, I did the opposite. I decided to continue.

CHAPTER 3

The Traveler — 1796

The first diary was dated in July of 1796.

At the beginning, the handwriting was somewhat illegible, hurried—like that of an explorer who writes simply because he wants to remember.

From the second notebook onward, however, it became firm and clear... like that of someone who needs to leave a record.

He no longer seemed to be writing for himself, but for whoever might come after.

The first entries spoke of a journey. He had arrived in America from Europe. He didn't explain his origins or the reason for his trip. He only hinted that he had left to escape: problems with the law, with the Inquisition, with authority.

And something else: he had lied about his age and his name in order to travel without being detained. He was only sixteen years old.

He had not arrived in America through an established port, nor by following a traditional route.

The first references in his notebooks mentioned no names. They spoke of open bays, of coastlines without defined limits, of places where land and sea did not seem to belong to any one place.

His earliest notes place his arrival during the summer, in territories that at the time belonged to the Spanish Crown.

He mentions three places: Matagorda Bay, Galveston Bay, and also Corpus Christi.

He does not describe large docks or infrastructure.

He mentions ships anchored far from the coast, cargo transferred in small boats, movement without any apparent order.



He also mentions that during the voyage, several days before reaching the coast, he saw a massive fish flying over the water.

It was nothing like the small flying fish he had seen before. This one was enormous. He insisted it exceeded twenty meters in length and had fins spanning ten meters from tip to tip.

One of the travelers mentioned that ancient sailors used to call it the “skyfin surface glider”

Max spent some time in Matagorda, helping repair ships, and in Corpus Christi Bay, unloading materials.

It was there that, little by little, his role began to change. He was offered a job copying maps, and without intending to, he began to see something more than routes... he started to recognize patterns and learn how to read them.

During those early years, he moved along the coastline without any clearly defined direction.

From 1800 onward, his journey took on a more concrete form. His notes began to refer to recognizable settlements within the northern Spanish territories of New Spain:

Reynosa, near the Río Bravo, Camargo, and San Fernando, where he already encountered churches and laid-out streets.

Years later, the journey reached a turning point: Saint Louis.

Nothing he had seen before could compare to it.

He wasn't describing simple surprise. He said it was a sensation difficult to define: a mixture of fascination, disorientation, and intrigue. As if he had arrived at a place he did not believe possible in that territory... and yet, there it was, right in front of his eyes.

The streets were very wide, and the proportions did not match the number of inhabitants walking through them.

The buildings did not seem new, but neither did they appear old.

Max described it with immense astonishment: *"Everything conveyed a strange sense of permanence."*

Unlike the settlements in the south, Saint Louis was not just a point of passage. It became a place he arrived at... and departed from.

His journeys ceased to be linear and began to take on a radial form. Saint Louis remained the axis. He always returned there.

From there, he traveled in different directions, moving through cities that, by his own account, should not exist with such monumental constructions:

Chicago—often written in his notebooks as Chilaga—New York, Washington D.C., Boston, and other smaller inland cities.

Max did not observe like a traveler.

He described not only what he saw, but how it repeated itself: structures, proportions, relationships.

The cities did not merely share a similar form. They appeared finished. They were growing around them, but the center of each city was already there... complete.

In his final entries, he mentions his intention to travel west, toward San Francisco... but there are no records of that journey.

In Saint Louis, he heard about a woman they called the “princess of the old world.” The name caught his attention... a princess of what? Of a territory? Of a kingdom?



CHAPTER 4

The Cities of the Federation

I returned to the images.

This time, I didn't look at the buildings. I focused on the paper. It didn't belong to its time—and neither did the negatives.

It wasn't a matter of style. It was a matter of possibility. Those images should not exist.

They weren't misdated photographs... they were technically impossible photographs.

The texture of the paper was too uniform, and the emulsion too stable. The negatives were neither glass plates nor celluloid, and the material did not resemble anything I had ever seen.



The problem wasn't what they showed... it was that they existed.

Max arrived in Saint Louis in the summer of 1805. During the first few days, he was more than impressed. He had never seen anything like it.

The streets were incredibly wide, all paved in stone. In the center of the city stood majestic buildings rising on enormous columns, vast arches, and towers crowned with domes that seemed to touch the sky, with embedded metallic elements that gleamed.

He also saw slender structures rising above the rest, crowned by large bells suspended high above.

He was afraid of heights, yet one day he decided to go up in a balloon—something that did not seem unusual there. He rose slowly to nearly a hundred meters.



From above, the city turned into a pattern: the streets were lines, the towers points, and the massive arches were gateways.

The flight was brief. The movement became unstable, and they decided to descend for safety. He noted that they used to go farther.

He also recorded the presence of vehicles that moved on their own, without horses, gliding silently over the pavement without effort or any visible source of energy.

On cold days, he would enter stone buildings located in the center of the city where the temperature remained constantly mild. There was no fire, no braziers, no chimneys. It didn't happen in every building, only in certain structures.

He also mentions that some buildings were illuminated. Inside, instead of oil lamps, there were small lights that remained on without anyone tending to them.

It was during those first months that he met the princess. In his notebooks, he wrote: "*The woman spoke to me again today.*"

He does not explain when he first saw her or where... nor what role she played within the city. He only makes it clear that she had been there for a long time.

She spoke Spanish and English. She had been in contact with explorers and merchants arriving from Europe, who spent long periods in Saint Louis. She had a remarkable ease for learning languages.

—I have been in this world for more than seventy years —she told him.

Max looked at her with confusion... she did not appear to be more than fifty.

—I was born in the year 7243.

Max let out a slight smile, more out of bewilderment than mockery.

She smiled back, unoffended.

—It corresponds to the year 1735 in your calendar.

Max watched her, trying to decide whether she was serious... or simply a confused woman.

He told her about his experiences in the city and everything he had seen—the towers, the arch, the bells, the vehicles, the balloon—while she listened without interrupting.

When Max finished, she spoke calmly:

—Nothing is working as it once did...

—They did not generate energy —she said—. They captured it and channeled it.

Max looked at her, not understanding.

—The towers —she continued— were designed for that.

They captured the energy and stabilized it at each point.

She lifted her gaze toward the arch and remained silent for a moment.

—The arches are the axes that once connected cities and continents...

The towers sustained the system within each city —she added— but it was the arches that united the world.

Max asked her about the bells.

—They mark the rhythm of the city —she replied—.

Their main function is to generate a pulse...

A vibration that harmonizes the body and keeps us connected.

They are placed within structures designed to amplify the vibration and spread it throughout the city.

—And the glass buildings?

The princess did not respond immediately.

She looked around, as if measuring what Max might be able to understand.

—They are not there for aesthetics... —she finally said—.

They filter the light... only certain frequencies...

The ones most beneficial to the body.

She paused briefly.



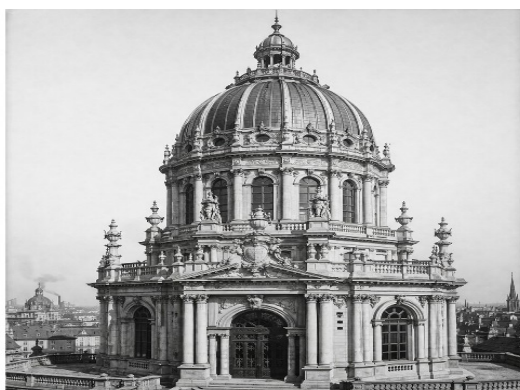
“Glass isn’t simply transparent: it lets beneficial rays pass through and softens the light that can be harmful. It also amplifies natural currents... the ones in the air, in the earth, in everything.

Light, sound, and energy currents are not separate things.

The different spaces are designed so that everything converges at the same time, thus maintaining balance.”

She paused again before adding:

“Nothing you have seen was designed to produce... but to conduct and sustain.”



Max asked who had built all of it.

She shook her head slightly and said:

—The real question is what the system was meant to do... how it made life possible.

The princess also spoke to him about the position of the towers in each city and the orientation of each arch in relation to others.

Max looked up at one of the structures as she said:

—Everything is aligned with what kept it functioning.

She went on to explain that the openings, the heights, the windows... were not designed merely for light or ventilation, but were positioned in relation to the sky... synchronized with solar, lunar, and stellar cycles.

The towers were not independent...

They were part of a larger system. They captured energy, stabilized it, and distributed it.

The princess shifted her gaze toward the arch.

—The arches are not monuments or symbolic structures. They are axes that connected cities and continents.

—The cities were not isolated —she added—. They are points within a network that has ceased to function.

—And what was it for? —Max asked.

She took a moment before answering.

—To sustain what is seen... and what is not seen.

Max didn't understand, but he didn't interrupt.

Then he asked her about the canals. She replied that they interweave beneath the city and are part of the system.



The city is built within the flow of water. Everything is connected: the canals, the reservoirs, the pumping stations.

Max didn't understand.

—Pumping stations?

—Where the water rose —she said—, where it was made to ascend when the terrain required it.

The water circulated throughout the entire city. Not only as a resource, but as a system. It entered the buildings, descended, was redistributed... and then rejoined a continuous flow.

The canals functioned like arteries—not to store, but to maintain the flow in balance. The water moved... and the city breathed.

She turned toward the window.

—That's why the buildings are the way they are, and why the basements are so deep. It's all part of the same circuit.

The princess took a long time before continuing.

—Now the water is still there —she said—, but the system no longer works.

—And the fountains? —Max asked.



—They are part of the same system. They are not simple wells... The water was not just stored... it was in motion.

—So... everything was connected? —he asked.

—Everything —she replied, her eyes resting on the structures. —Now they no longer respond.

The princess added that the failures had begun long ago.

—There was a sign, years earlier, in 1780—the day the sky went dark.

It was not a storm or smoke. It was as if something had covered the world in darkness. The sky turned completely black, at times tinged with red.

Max watched her in silence.

—It was a sign we did not know how to interpret.

Max frowned slightly, and she paused.

—It was a warning to shut everything down.

She lifted her gaze for a moment.

—But we didn't.

She remained silent for a few seconds.

—Two days later... it came.

—The sky ignited. Lights of color cut through the darkness of the night: reds... greens... in the middle of the night. There was so much light... auroras that had never traveled so far south.

It was the opposite of the dark night.

The structures became overloaded. The conductors... the installations... everything that was connected received more than it could withstand.

Max looked puzzled.

—Fire. In different parts of the city —she said.

The installations began to burn. Not from the outside.

From within... in the connections... in the circuits themselves.

The structures did not collapse. The towers remained standing, but what made them function had been completely burned out.

The princess lowered her gaze for a moment.

—We kept trying to repair it... —she said—
but the damage is too deep.

She paused.

—The circuits are not additions. They are embedded within, set into the stone. They are part of the structure.

She looked at Max.

—It was all built at once—stone and metal.

Silence lingered for a few seconds.

—But on the day of the dark night... something else happened.

—It was not just a sign... We stopped hearing the cities on the other side of the ocean. Communication was lost that very day.

It was then that the princess asked him something, and Max replied:

—Yes... I would love to be your emissary.

Max does not describe the conversation or the conditions.

However, from that point on, his notes change in nature.

They cease to be simple records and begin to serve a purpose.

He also implies that the princess had access to sufficient resources.

In several entries, he hints at the existence of gold—apparently without limitation—without explaining its origin.

The journeys, the stays, the travel between cities... everything was covered.

For nearly a decade, Max moved between cities:

Chicago (Chilaga), Washington, New York, Boston... and other, less significant cities in the East and the interior.

He repeated several routes each year... and always returned to Saint Louis.



At first, he recorded the data of each city separately, but soon he stopped doing so, and the notes began to blend together.

It was no longer about describing places, but about recording what was happening as a whole.

He did not observe the buildings as separate structures... but as different states of operation within a single system.

The symmetry repeated itself in every city: central axes, similar proportions... buildings that seemed to replicate over and over again.

The structures were still there, but what mattered now was how they functioned.

In some cities, there was still activity—limited, localized.

Certain parts continued to respond. But in others, the system had ceased to function entirely.

On one occasion, he wrote:

“They seem like cities waiting for instructions.”

The vehicles guided by something invisible appeared less and less. The balloons, when still operational, barely rose.

And when they did, they traveled only short distances.

The loss of capacity was not sudden... it was gradual and constant.

He also recorded movement beneath the surface. Underground routes. They remained active only in some cities... with journeys limited to a few times a day.

In general, very few structures remained operational.

One of them was the statue located at the entrance of the port of New York—referred to as *The Sentinel*.

It emitted a constant and powerful light.

Max was deeply impressed and wrote: “While the rest of the city was dark... she continued to illuminate hope.”



Sometimes he met with operators. They did not govern. They only tried to keep certain parts of the system functioning.

All of them agreed that it was a failure of the system as a whole.

The water had stopped flowing... both in the canals and in the underground networks. The water system no longer functioned in any city.

The bells, however, continued to ring. They were the only element that remained active in every city. But it was not enough to sustain life.

In smaller cities, there was even less activity... more silence. Some parts remained active... but fewer and fewer.

Max's task was to record everything he saw and then report to the princess on the state of the systems.



From 1815 onward, there was a sudden shift.

He stopped recording structures and began documenting climatic conditions.

“The light began to change—dimmer, more opaque.”

In 1816 he wrote: *“There was no summer this year.”* A reddish sun that gave no warmth rose each morning. It illuminated, but it did not sustain life.

People planted in spring, as they always had. But the cold came in June... and returned in July. There was no summer... there was no harvest.

The following year was the same—worse in some places. Everything pointed to the same phenomenon occurring across the Northern Hemisphere, and at the same time.

It appeared in every account. People arriving by ship from other continents said the same thing.

They described the same sky: a dimmed sun, light without heat, crops failing again and again.

Something invisible was happening everywhere, and no one knew what it was. And above all, no one knew whether it was temporary or permanent.

When the harvests began to fail, it wasn't only that there was no food... the quiet order that sustained everyday life began to fracture.

The seasons stopped responding, and the rain began—persistent, dense, endless... falling like a deluge.

The ground could not absorb so much water, and the mud advanced like a slow river, covering streets, sealing entrances. Journeys grew longer, paths disappeared.

In some cities, the system did not fail gradually; it simply stopped responding entirely.

Max wrote: *"This is not a failure of the network. It is a shutdown."*

When he returned to Saint Louis, the city was no longer the same.

Mud covered everything—fresh, unsettled. Doors half buried, windows at ground level.

The sludge had flooded the basements and completely paralyzed all systems.

The people had disappeared. There was almost no movement left.

The city was silent.

He searched for the princess. This time, she was waiting for him.

Max told her about the rains and the buried cities.

She listened and said:

—I suspect this is not happening only on this continent. It may be occurring across the entire world.

She seemed to be speaking not only about the cities, but about something else.

In the years that followed, the cities were completely abandoned.

When all the systems ceased to function, people began to leave. Those who stayed did not last long... hunger and disease took those who tried to keep the cities alive.

He wrote a note: “When the systems stopped functioning... the city ceased to sustain life.”

CHAPTER 5

Frisland: The Island of the North Atlantic

It was in New York that Max heard that name. It did not appear on any map or in any document. He simply heard it.

Sailors arriving from the Atlantic—men who did not speak to each other, and yet repeated the same thing: Frisland.

They said the island was no longer there, that it had disappeared.



Max did not note it as something important. Not then.

However, upon returning to Saint Louis, he mentioned it to the princess.

For the first time since he had known her, she closed her eyes and fell into a prolonged silence... as if she were not remembering, but confirming something she had already sensed.

The system was failing... and part of the problem was beginning to reveal itself.

The princess spoke without looking at him:

—It is not just an island. It is the node of the Atlantic.

Max thought of the towers. Of how they always appeared at the center of cities... of how they seemed placed according to a precise logic.

—Then are the cities nodes as well?

The princess shook her head slightly.

—The towers did not connect to other cities... they captured and stabilized what came through.

She paused briefly.

—It is the arches that function as axes.

They are four-gated structures, oriented in four different directions... they connect with cities thousands of kilometers away.

Saint Louis, Chilaga, and others on this side of the ocean with Paris, London, Milan... Saint Petersburg... through Frisland.

—Everything was laid out... as a single structure.

Max lowered his gaze for a moment.

—When a main node like Frisland ceases to be active... the system falls out of balance.

—The towers remained connected within each city.

But between cities, it was the arches.

—Was Frisland a main node? —Max asked.

She nodded. —It is the node that connects the two continents.

I began to search. Old maps, sailors' notebooks, travel accounts, forgotten archives... I did not find definitive proof... yet something kept recurring.

Frisland did not appear once or twice... it appeared on maps for generations... with coasts, with bays, with cities... and then... it disappeared.

For a long time it had been little more than an anomaly: a strange detail on maps, an island repeated for centuries and then omitted.

However, as I progressed through Max's notebooks, the name began to carry a different weight... it no longer seemed like a cartographic error.

I spread several maps across the table and added to them all the cities from the notebooks: Saint Louis, Chicago, New York, Boston...

I extended those lines toward other major cities in Europe—Paris, Madrid, Moscow...

Everything pointed to Frisland occupying a central position, an essential point in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

CHAPTER 6

The Communities

In the years that followed, the cities were left empty. No inhabitants remained, no active systems—only structures.

For a long time, there was no one. The cities were not inhabited. They were paused.

At first, some tried to resist, to stay and adapt.

But it was not possible. Without the system, the city could not sustain life.

People eventually left—not for other cities, but for the countryside: rural areas with still-fertile land, places where the soil could still be cultivated.

Small communities began to form—scattered, with no connection between them. The princess and Max moved to a place several days' journey from Saint Louis.

She spoke little, but when she did, Max listened with complete attention, often forgetting to write... leaving only brief notes.

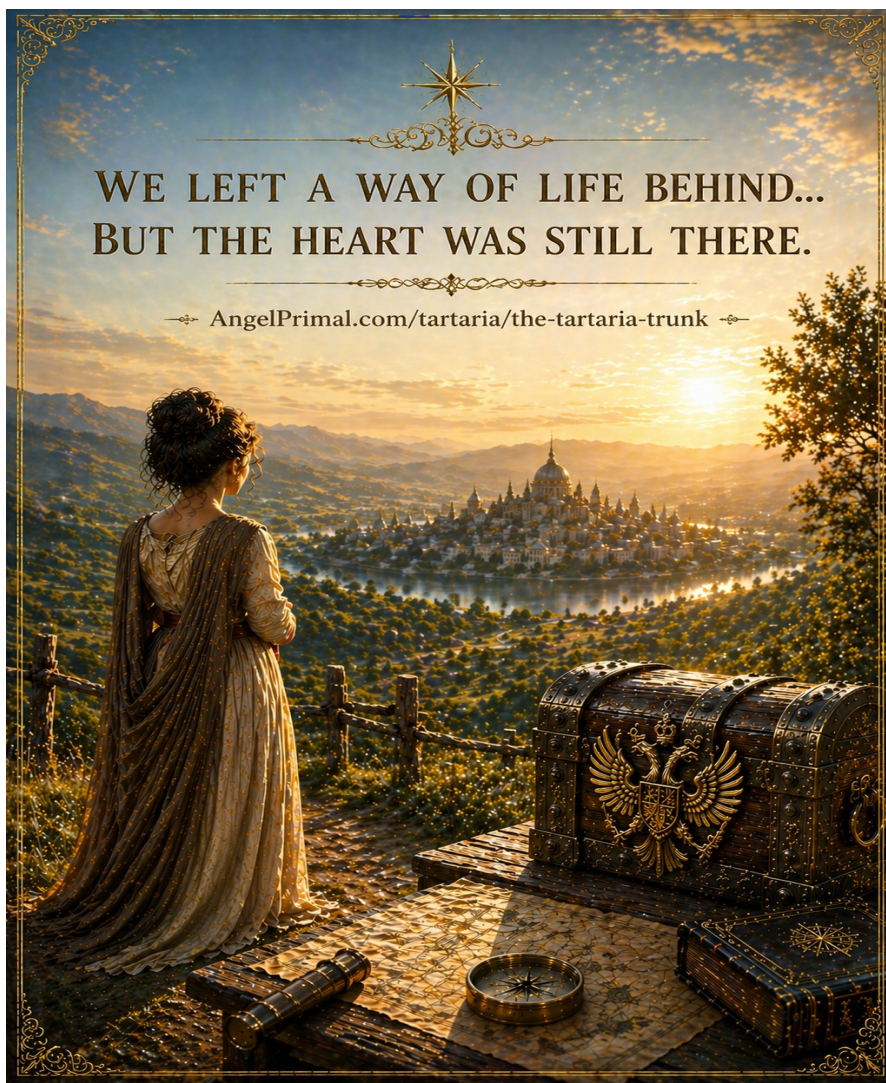
She spoke of the cities not as a collection of buildings, but as organisms. She explained in detail the entire architecture of the systems—how they responded to fields and currents, how they integrated sound vibrations with invisible flows. No structure generated energy. All of them channeled it.

Max did not always understand, but he listened.

The princess spoke to him about many subjects related to vital balance. The system was not only technical—it was natural. It was not separate from the Earth, but part of it.

On one occasion, Max became curious about the princess's youthful appearance, despite the years she claimed to have. She said that vital energy flows through all forms of life.

She spoke to him about water, breathing, the flow of energy, and certain foods that prolonged life—foods that not only nourished the body, but also detoxified and purified it. Max mentions that he radically changed the way he ate.



During those years in the community, they recreated some of the city's systems, although in a very rudimentary way.

One day, the princess spoke of something he did not expect.

“It is not the first time.”

She remained silent for a few seconds, as if listening to something older than words.

“These cycles of creation and destruction have happened before.”

“The world does not break... it readjusts.”

She paused briefly...

“What is known as Atlantis is not a myth.

It was a cycle... like others before... and others to come.”

She lifted her gaze toward the horizon.

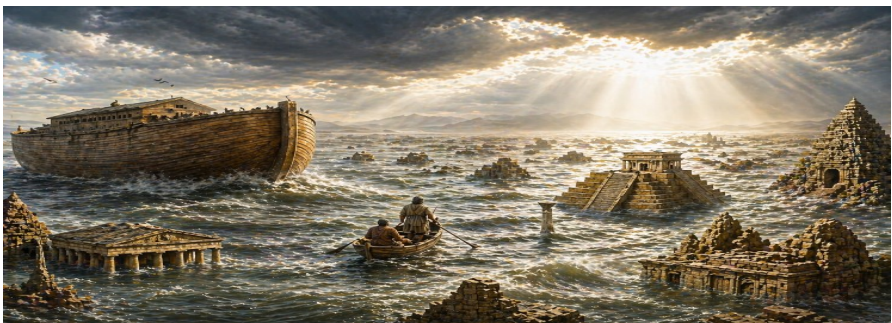
“There are times when water reclaims what is no longer in balance... lands that disappear... coastlines that change... entire peoples that vanish without leaving a trace.”

“The flood of Noah, Deucalion, the great river floods in the East, or the flood of Manu...” she said without emphasis... “they were adjustments.”

Max had never heard of any of this, and his expression seemed to ask questions.

She told him:

“Adjustments of everything that could no longer be sustained.”



She looked again at the towers and continued: “When balance is lost, the planet responds. It self-regulates and corrects itself. And in that process, it cannot avoid sweeping away what it needs to regenerate.”

She paused briefly.

“That is how the forces of creation move on this planet.”

A long time passed before they even considered returning to the city.

There was no point. Saint Louis was not a city to live in.

Over the years, the climate began to stabilize. The rains gradually ceased, the mud started to dry, and the routes slowly became passable again.

When they finally decided to return to Saint Louis, the city was no longer deserted. There was human presence. They were not just occupying it—they seemed to be claiming it. They said they had discovered it, as if it had always been uninhabited.

Max understood that it had not been merely a collapse. It was a transition. And that, at some point in that process, someone had arrived ahead of them.

CHAPTER 7

The Usurpation

The city was still there, half buried—but it was no longer empty.

Max had stayed away for years, and when he returned, there were new people. Not passing through. Not observing... already settled.

Some structures had been cleared. Not completely... but enough to be inhabited.

Doors freed from the mud, streets partially passable.

They were not building anything new. They were cleaning and occupying.

For more than two decades, no one had returned.

The rivers of mud and the persistent rains had made it impossible. And yet, someone had been there for months.

“We found it like this,” one of the men said.

He did not speak like a visitor. Nor like someone uncertain. He spoke like someone claiming ownership.

“Abandoned... there was no one.”

Max did not respond.

In several areas of the city, there were organized groups working, removing layers of mud and opening access points. The activity was constant.

In some places, they used machinery he had never seen before. Heavy, noisy, designed to break through obstacles.

At times, they could not distinguish between obstacle and structure, and they damaged parts of the buildings or unknowingly tore out elements of the system.

In the center of the city, the main buildings were reserved.

Not for those who worked, but for those who decided.

Men who neither cleaned nor excavated... only organized.

“Government,” one of them said, as if that word explained everything.



The buildings had not yet been fully unearthed, but some form of hierarchy already existed—with the intention of permanence.

They had not conquered the city. It had been “discovered,” and that was enough.

No one seemed interested in knowing the origin of those buildings.

They had taken official possession and were only concerned with uncovering, occupying, and remaining.

In the peripheral areas, some former inhabitants had begun to return. They were allowed to occupy smaller structures—spaces not yet assigned, buildings that had been left outside the new order... but under one unmistakable condition:

“Do not touch what has already been assigned.”



No one questioned that rule. Not because they agreed with it, but because there were armed men. They did not speak or negotiate.

They were simply there, and they did not listen to reason.

The new occupants did not question anything. They had been there for months—working, excavating, organizing themselves.

For them, that was enough... they were building their future.

They did not see an inherited city... they saw available land.

And they were turning it into something they could manage, even if that meant tearing down parts they did not understand.

Max walked along one of the main avenues. He recognized every corner. The city was being reinterpreted and adapted to a new way of functioning.

Some towers were still standing, but they no longer formed a network. Others had been demolished. The arch, however, remained there... like a symbol.

He stopped in front of one of the towers. No one was working there. They did not know what to do with it... and that was why it was still intact.

That night he wrote: *"They have not come to reactivate it. They have come to turn it into something else."*

It was not just about occupying the city, but about integrating it into a new model of management—one in which what came before was no longer preserved.

The structures were being redefined, their function replaced. And in that silent process, the city ceased to be what it once was.

CHAPTER 8

The Impossible Return

Over the following months, the harmony of the settlement began to change.

Not because of what was happening in the city, but because of what was starting to happen among the people. At first, they were isolated conversations, small groups, comments that were never fully voiced—but soon it was no longer that.

There were two ways of seeing what was happening: those who wanted to return, and those who did not.

—We shouldn't stay here —some said—, it's time to go back to our city.

—It's not the same anymore —others insisted.

The discussion was not about the city. It was about what returning meant.

—Returning meant adapting... and submitting.

Max observed. He did not intervene. He only listened... to every argument, every doubt. Some began to prepare, to organize themselves to return and reclaim what was theirs. Nostalgia weighed more than reason.

Max knew it was not that simple. The princess knew it too. She did not take part in the discussions, did not try to convince anyone. She only observed... as if she recognized the moment. As if it had happened before.

One afternoon, Max approached her.

—Should we go back?

She did not answer immediately.

—We can —she said at last—, but we would not be returning to the same place.

Max held her gaze. —Why?

—Because the world is changing.

She added nothing more.

One night, the tension reached its limit, and the discussion broke open.

—If we wait any longer —one said—, they'll take the city.

—They already have it —another replied—, they arrived when no one was there, and they're not leaving.

—That doesn't give them the right —someone said.

—No... but they have weapons and tools we don't.

Max decided to step in.

—This is not about who is right.

Everyone turned toward him.

—It's about who can impose it.

No one responded. It was not a matter of ownership. It was a matter of capacity.

And then someone said what no one wanted to say out loud:

—Then we'll have to go back in a different way.

No one asked how... they all understood.

That night, the settlement changed... not visibly, but in silence. There were no defined sides, but there was a clear line in intention: those who wanted to reclaim the city, and those who were beginning to understand that returning might mean losing something more than the city.

Days later, without warning, hundreds gathered. They began to organize the march—the return.

Max sensed it before it happened. This would not be a return without consequences. There would be conflict... and perhaps something more.

Some time before, the princess had given him a trunk. Inside it, he had been storing his notebooks and other objects she had given him.

That very night, he decided to take the trunk out of the settlement. He hid it in a nearby cave.

The next morning, very early, a small group began walking toward Saint Louis.

The princess went with them... not leading, not guiding... just accompanying. She would not stop it. She wanted to be there.

Max looked at her.

—Do you know what's going to happen?

She took a moment to answer.

—Not exactly... —she said—. But I do know how it ends.

When they reached the city, they headed toward the center. There were armed men. They did not block the way... they only watched... and controlled.

The group moved forward to one of the main squares.

—We camp here —someone said.

It was not a takeover. It was presence... occupation... remembrance.



For several hours, nothing happened. The new inhabitants continued with their activities... and watched them. By mid-afternoon, they began to surround them slowly. Armed groups.

“You have to leave the city.”

The princess did not move. She did not seem surprised. Max looked at her. She nodded.

“This is where it begins.”

“We’re not leaving,” some replied.

Then the arrests began. Without violence. One by one. They were separated. Neither Max nor the princess resisted. They were held for a day. No explanations, no questions... only control. The next day, they were released.

They returned to the settlement. And for days, they debated. The options. The next step. In the end, they made a decision: they would return—but this time, not just as a gesture.

The second time, they were not just hundreds... there were many more.

They also arrived from other settlements.



For a few hours, nothing happened—but shortly after, the arrests began. Thousands were detained.

This time, it was not just one day. Max never saw the princess again.

During the detentions, they began separating the children. The mothers' screams changed nothing. They were taken away anyway.

Shortly after, the transfers began—to destinations no one explained.

A word started to circulate: Hospitals. They were not hospitals for healing... they were spaces for containment... and correction.

Most never returned. Some did... but they were no longer the same.

CHAPTER 9

The Hospitals

Max lost track of time shortly after the transfer. There were no windows or external references—only a succession of moments impossible to place in order. The building was not new. He had seen buildings like it in other cities, but now their purpose was different.



They called it the hospital.

They were separated upon arrival: men on one side, women on another, children somewhere else.

“They never saw them again. They never knew where they were taken.”

He was assigned a large room—clean, with no visible signs of medical activity. Everything was in order. Too much order. There were no recognizable medical instruments. Only structure, schedules, movement, and control.

During the first nights, Max couldn't sleep. Not because of the silence, but because of what moved through it. From other wings, at hours impossible to determine, voices could be heard.



They weren't conversations. They were screams. Isolated and distant. They repeated for hours. Always the same:

"I want to see my children! Tell me where they are! Please!"

Women's voices. Tearing screams. No one responded. No one came.

Over time, they stopped screaming. Not because they had been heard.

Someone whispered that they did the same to everyone who screamed: medication. Until they stopped... and the silence returned.

Not a natural silence. An imposed one. Sustained, as if it too were part of the place.

Max began to notice the rhythm.

The doors always opened at the same time. Almost without sound.

Food arrived, was removed, and then something happened.

The bodies became slow and heavy. Conversations shortened. Eyes lost depth. It wasn't a visible treatment—but the change was undeniable.

Max was not alone. There were others. People who had tried to reclaim what they believed was theirs.

They all said the same thing:

“We were only reclaiming what was ours.”

Months later, I managed to access official hospital records from that time. They were not from the early years, but later—when the cities had already been occupied and the new system had begun to organize what was meant to remain.

The records were not extensive, but they were consistent: melancholy, acute mania, confusion of thought, amnesia. In many cases, no prior history. No background. Just a number. And a diagnosis.

One word appeared again and again: nostalgia. Not as memory—but as a problem.

“Excessive attachment to the past.”

I understood when I closed the file. They were not describing an illness. They were describing an incompatibility. Not between the person and reality—but between the person and the permitted narrative.

And when someone failed to adapt, they were corrected... until they no longer remembered why they didn't adapt.

It was in one of those records that I found her. It had to be her. There was no name—only a number, with no origin, no prior history. Just a brief description:

“Elderly woman, approximately seventy-five years old, claims to be over one hundred.”

In the observations section, notes accumulated from different days—fragments collected without order:

“Says the city is not shut down... it has simply stopped responding.”

“Insists that everything used to be connected.”

“Speaks of a network of cities.”

The document was not marked as relevant. It was just one among many.

I knew she was neither confused nor mad. Behind those statements, there was no disorder. There were memories—and loss. A loss that could not be explained by any diagnosis.

And then I felt something close to a kind of joy.

Because, despite the isolation and the medication, they had not managed to correct her. She continued to hold the truth of what she knew—even if that meant living in a place where she could not share it.

The word correct was never spoken. It didn’t need to be.

The hospitals were not places of healing. They were spaces designed to intercept what could not be integrated. Places where certain memories were neutralized before they could stabilize.

It wasn’t just about confining bodies. It was about isolating narratives. Not about understanding what they remembered—but about preventing those memories from circulating.

The language did not describe treatment—but containment. The priority was not to stabilize the person, but to limit their impact. To prevent others from accessing their narrative.

Potential risk: “Capacity to destabilize other patients.”

The danger was not agitation or violence. It was that too many memories might begin to align—that what had been treated as individual dysfunction would stop appearing that way.

They were not extracting information. They were introducing it slowly. Replacing it continuously.

Throughout his entire stay, Max was unable to write anything.

It was during that period that Alesandra appeared.

She was not a patient. She was part of the system.

She had been born into a world that no longer remembered the previous one. And yet, she had begun to sense that something was not in place.

Max's experiences during those years were recorded in Alesandra's manuscripts.

She was a young woman who moved discreetly, observing more than intervening. She did not ask direct questions. She did not correct. She only listened.

At first, Max said nothing. He knew where he was. He knew what happened to words in that place.

But Alesandra was different—and that was enough.

One afternoon, she said quietly: "You are not responding."

Max held her gaze... "I have nothing to say."

"That's not what they want to hear," she replied.

From then on, she saw him frequently. Never for too long. Never drawing attention.

Max spoke little. Fragmented phrases. Broken memories.

Alesandra did not interrupt him. She listened. And afterward, outside, she wrote down what she remembered from their conversations.

That is how part of what Max said during that time was preserved. Not as a continuous diary—but as fragments gathered by Alesandra from what he managed to express.

She wrote:

"No one describes what they have known anymore.

They repeat what they are now expected to say."

As the months passed, the change in the hospital became visible. Not only in the bodies—but in the language.

They stopped speaking of towers and began speaking of buildings. No longer of networks, but of cities. They no longer described function.

They only repeated the same story—ordered and acceptable. A version that could be sustained. To avoid medication.

Max expressed it in one of the phrases Alesandra recorded most precisely:

“They are reorganizing what we remember to implant what must be considered true.”

Those who did not adapt were given increased medication, little by little, until they stopped resisting.

In some cases, they were taken to the room of the machine. No one came back the same.

They couldn’t string two words together. Some lost their voice.

They looked... but there was no one behind them.

CHAPTER 10

Chilaga — The Reset

Alesandra did not expect to see him again. She had only had contact with Max for a few months, before being transferred to another hospital, and years had passed since then.

When she arrived in Chicago—the former Chilaga—she found a city in motion. The streets were full of people, constant activity, continuous reorganization.

She had only recently been assigned there, yet she had already learned the essentials: move without drawing attention, observe without intervening, remain within the system without standing out.

She saw him by chance, on one of the busiest streets, under a bridge, among other beggars.

At first, she didn't recognize him. He was a very old man, aged, his body worn down and his voice broken. He spoke to himself, and others laughed.

"The cities don't work," he said. "They no longer respond."

Something in his voice stopped her. It wasn't just the words—it was the tone. She approached and listened.

"The towers are no longer connected."

Then she knew.

"Max... is that you?"

He lifted his gaze. It took him a few seconds to react—as if waking from a long sleep.

When he recognized her, his eyes lit up, and for a moment, the noise of the street seemed to disappear.

"Where have you been?" he murmured.

"It's still there."

Max raised his hand with difficulty. He wasn't pointing to an exact place, but to a direction.

Alesandra leaned closer. "What is?"

Max took time to respond, as if words no longer obeyed him.

"It's in a cave."

There was a brief silence.

"Near the settlement."

Another silence, and then he said:

"The trunk."

He then pulled out a crumpled piece of paper with a drawing—something like a map—and handed it to her. Alesandra took it without saying anything.

Max looked up.

"The world has to remember."

Then he withdrew into himself again. Something in him receded.

He went back to speaking to himself. He was no longer present.

For several minutes, Alesandra did not move.

She was concerned not only about Max's condition, but about what his words implied. Accepting it was not just listening—it was taking on the responsibility of continuity.

Days later, the fire began. It did not start in a single place. It appeared in multiple points at the same time and spread with an impossible speed to contain.

The entire city was engulfed in flames, under a single explanation.

The city burned—and the narrative was already prepared: an accident caused by the drought of recent years.



Days later, Alesandra asked about Max... No one knew anything... No one was looking for him... No one had recorded his death. He became just another anonymous victim of a fire no one could explain.

During the following nights, it became difficult to sleep.

She couldn't change the past, but she also couldn't continue acting as if nothing had happened...

The feeling that she had to do something did not go away.

She knew it wasn't her story. And yet, something was pushing her to take a place within it.

Until that moment, she had listened and observed.

Now, that was no longer enough. She felt that it was her turn—and that this commitment was not only to Max.

It was to herself. To find the trunk and keep the memory alive.

San Francisco appeared in Max's notebooks as a place he never reached.

That journey now belonged to her.

CHAPTER 11

The System's Showcase

Alesandra found the trunk weeks after seeing Max for the last time.

The cave was a two-day journey from Chicago.

She recognized the emblem immediately... the two heads Max had told her about. Inside were the notebooks, the photographs, the objects—everything he had mentioned.

For days, she returned again and again to the notebooks.

At first, she didn't understand everything, but she recognized enough: the cities, the towers, the system. Everything she had heard in the hospital... was there.

In one of the notebooks, she found something different. It wasn't a typical entry... it was a dialogue between Max and the princess.

"It's not the end," she said. "It's a transition... but not all transitions are visible... some begin long before anything happens."

"Toward what?" Max asked...

"Toward control... not direct control... a control that doesn't need to occupy... because it redefines how everything works."

There was a brief pause.

"When the system can no longer sustain itself, they don't rebuild it... they replace it. They don't just replace the structures—they replace the energy that sustains them."

"Who?..."

"Those who come after... they don't arrive as conquerors... they arrive when everything is already weakened."

"They won't rebuild the cities," she continued. "They will use them... and then make disappear whatever doesn't fit."

“There will be fires... and synchronized wars. They don’t start on their own... they are triggered when the system has already changed from within.”



Max remained silent.

- They will change the names... and the dates...
- New academics will decide what can be considered truth...
- New crowns will need a clean origin...
- Religious institutions will not allow a memory outside their control...
- Those who write history will not accept what cannot be integrated into their narrative...

Her tone did not change.

—And the new financial system will need a world that depends on them... on their resources... on their energy... on their movement.

Something very different from what existed before.

There was a silence.

—They don't need to agree... it isn't necessary... they all move in the same direction.

—They do not destroy the world... they replace the conditions under which a new one can exist...

—First value... then territory... and finally... memory.

I stopped reading for a moment. The noise of the city was still there, but I no longer heard it the same way.

I returned to the notebook. The pages moved forward. The years did too.

A name appeared again: Chilaga. As if it had all happened before someone decided to explain it.

What had happened days earlier was not an isolated event.

It was a repetition.

I remembered the fire... the smoke... the streets burning in multiple places at once... It had not started in a single location, and it had spread too quickly. Everyone said the same thing: an accident.

Alesandra knew it was not. Chicago had not been the beginning. It had simply been the first one she witnessed.

She looked back at the page. She had not read the future. She had uncovered the process of transition into a new system.

More fires followed in other cities. The same pattern: Destruction... Reorganization... and then... Construction.

Not real construction, but reconstruction on top of something that already existed.

Across different parts of the world, cities—or fragments of them—began to appear with a monumental scale that was difficult to explain within the construction timelines attributed to them.

Buildings of classical proportions with domes, columns, and perfectly aligned axes. Complete infrastructures.

All of it, according to the official version, built in just a few years. It was not a single case... it repeated itself.

Entire urban complexes presented as modern achievements, constructed in two or three years. And later demolished—partially or entirely—through processes that required a level of effort, cost, and complexity difficult to reconcile with the idea of temporary structures.

The discrepancy was hard to ignore. Because the question is not how long it takes to build something like that.

The question is another: why does something supposedly built so quickly require so much time and effort to be dismantled?

History explains it as progress... exhibitions... architectural experiments... ephemeral cities... but when one examines the records closely, the perception shifts completely.

For a long time, the official explanation was enough.

Until everything begins to align.

Years separated by decades repeated the same type of anomaly: conflicts in different regions, fires in key cities, massive reconstructions in nearly simultaneous periods.

There were too many coincidences to be independent. They stopped appearing as isolated events.

Not only in time, but also in space.

Cities separated by thousands of kilometers began to show the same patterns: the same structures, the same proportions, the same processes of destruction and reconstruction.

They no longer seemed like independent developments. They looked like responses. As if different points of the world had been adjusted at the same time, following the same invisible schedule.

It was not evolution... it was a more precise sequence.

Appearance... followed by clearing... then reconstruction... and finally the removal of what did not fit into the new order.

For a moment, I felt a strange clarity. And I thought I had understood the pattern. Everything fit. Too well.

But when I went back over the notes, I was no longer so sure. Perhaps I wasn't discovering anything. Perhaps I was only reorganizing what I wanted to see. In any case, it was all too unsettling.

I returned to the trunk, to the photographs, to the plans.

It did not seem as though they were creating something new. It seemed as though they were uncovering and reorganizing—but without the network, without the function. Only preserving the form to present the façade.

The cities filled again, but they were no longer the same. They were adapted versions... controlled... explained.

I remembered the hospital. The isolation, the repetition, the imposed responses. I understood they were not separate processes. It was the same process.

First the collapse... then the void... then the occupation... and finally the exhibition.

A new history built on top of the previous one, but without mentioning it. As if it had never existed.

I opened one of Alesandra's manuscripts again.

On one of the pages she had written: "They will present it to the world as if they were the builders... and then they will make it disappear to avoid uncomfortable questions."

CHAPTER 12

San Francisco: The Gold Rush

Alesandra could no longer remain there. For years, she had been part of the new system—reading reports and filing cases.

Over time, she understood that they were not trying to heal anyone, but correcting incompatible deviations.

If she stayed, she would end up correcting herself.

That day, she gave no notice. She offered no explanation. She simply left her position and walked away from the building without looking back.

It was the summer of 1875. Several years had passed since Max's death in the Chicago fire when she decided to travel west.

She first traveled to Omaha, and from there took the train to Sacramento.

The railway line was recent. It cut across the territory like a scar.

The journey was not linear. It came in interrupted stretches—temporary work along the way, improvised lodgings.

The movement of people was constant. A continuous flow of individuals heading in the same direction.

They did not seem to be fleeing, but neither did they seem to know exactly where they were going.

Some traveled by train. Others in wagons. Others on foot.

All of them repeated the same word:

“Gold.”

They spoke of opportunity, of starting over.

Alesandra did not take part in the conversations. She only listened and observed.

Nothing suggested an organized movement. And yet, everything advanced in coordination, as if it were a call. It did not feel like a spontaneous migration driven by the gold rush.

At one stop, near Sacramento, she met a railway worker who handled maintenance.

“Now we only do maintenance,” he told her. “We don’t excavate anymore.”

Alessandra did not react.

“When we started the work years ago, the tracks were already there.”

There was a brief silence.

“We just removed dirt... meters and meters... cleared tunnels... opened entrances.”

He said nothing more.

Sacramento was only a pause. A week later, she continued down toward San Francisco.

When she finally saw the bay, she felt relief—but above all, recognition. As if she were not arriving somewhere new, but encountering the sister city of Chicago.



On the outskirts, everything seemed very improvised: wooden cabins and quickly built structures. But the center was different, and much of the city had already been cleared.

Some streets were still covered by layers of hardened earth, while others had been completely cleaned.

There were machines—large and heavy. They were being used to remove soil and expose structures. Sometimes they damaged the structures in the process.

She walked along one of the main avenues, wide, with façades that repeated the same monumental architecture she had seen in Chicago.

She stopped in front of a building. The visible entrance was not the original one. It had been opened higher up. The real entrance was still buried.

She continued until she saw it. The tower. Like those in Chicago. Like those in Max's notebooks.

There were many people in the city working and trading. But very few spoke about the mines.

There was hardly any mining activity.

And then she understood. Gold was not the real driver of growth. It was the excuse—the mechanism that had attracted thousands upon thousands of immigrants and settlers.

Those who excavated. Those who cleared. The new occupants. Those who made everything function and appear new.

She found work easily. Not because she sought it, but because the city needed a great deal of labor.

Her new company managed public works: earthworks and structural reinforcement.

Her role was to record expenses, track tasks, and file reports. A routine, monotonous job that allowed her to survive.

At first, they were just passing comments. Conversations in low voices. Repeated jokes. Incomplete sentences.

“It depends on what you find below...”

“They’ve stopped the work in sector three again...”

Alesandra didn’t understand, but she didn’t ask.

Her job gave her access to reports—some incomplete, others restricted. Certain phrases kept appearing: “Pre-existing installation.” “Unknown origin.”

Some orders were canceled just as the work reached a certain depth. Areas that were filled in again almost immediately.

Over time, Alesandra befriended one of the technicians. One night, away from the worksite, he said more than he should have.

“There are cables and structures,” he said, “that I’ve never seen before.”

He paused.

“They always appear at the same depth. Tunnels. Metal components. As if someone had laid out a network and buried it.”

Days later, she found a note repeated in several documents: “Resonant configuration.” No one in the company used that term. And in other documents: “Validation completed.”

Every time that phrase appeared, everything changed. Some excavations stopped. Closed areas were opened.

Sometimes, they would halt the excavation and then cover almost everything again—tons of sediment over what had been uncovered.

From somewhere, orders came to conceal it again beneath the earth. Someone decided what could come to the surface and what had to remain buried.

Then the names began to appear.

The same names showed up—in conversations, in agreements. Men who did not work, did not excavate, did not transport. They only appeared at key moments—when an area changed status, when something was found, or when something had to stop being found.

They did not give direct orders, yet everything seemed to organize itself around them.

They were not in official records. They appeared in conversations, in indirect signatures, in newly formed companies. Surnames with no history. Young or middle-aged men with no known background, who within a few years went from managing small contracts to controlling entire areas of the city.

They built nothing. They only accumulated. Land. Concessions. Access.

They met in discreet buildings, away from the noise of the worksites. Places not listed in public records.

It was not just a company. Nor a single family. It was a network.

Alesandra entered some of those spaces. Not as an observer, but as part of the process. She was hired to draft certain agreements. Before starting, she always had to sign a confidentiality document.

She witnessed several of those meetings. They did not speak of construction or gold. They spoke of allocation, distribution, control.

The machines working on the buildings in the city center bore an engraved symbol—a metal piece she had never seen before.



Later, they told her that this organization controlled the contracts for the works in the city center.

I set the notebook aside. Not because I had finished, but because my mind was already saturated and I couldn't keep organizing anything else.

I felt that everything was starting to fit together... The connections kept appearing... and yet, I still couldn't fully understand them all.

I didn't want to see it as a conspiracy... It was a sophisticated structure in operation.

They weren't creating a new system. They were organizing the transition.

First as intermediaries. Then as managers. And finally, as owners.



Throughout the entire process, they secured substantial commissions and portions of ownership in the form of shares or stakes.

They obtained abundant subsidies to build new infrastructures and buildings for government and administration. However, in many cases, they were not starting from scratch. Much of it was already there... it only needed to be unearthed, adapted, and repaired.

Those subsidies did not just finance construction. They fed a network. They allowed the new magnates to expand their influence, secure contracts, and shape decisions within the political system.

The railroad was the most evident example. It was not merely about building a line across the territory. In many sections, the tracks were already there—hidden beneath layers of earth that only needed to be removed.

But the real value did not lie in the line itself... it lay in everything around it. It wasn't the track... it was what it made possible.

Millions of hectares on both sides of the railway were granted to the companies. Land that suddenly acquired incalculable value by being connected through the very railroad that had been subsidized.

The railroad did not only transport goods and people. It defined the value of land... and who could benefit from it.

To sustain that control, they maintained direct connections with senators and congressmen, and distributed shares among political figures to ensure favorable decisions. In this way, they accessed strategic contracts and managed federal subsidies with an efficiency difficult to challenge.

In the case of the railroad, land grants were massive. Between 1865 and 1900, the federal government ceded millions of hectares of public land to railroad companies—an area comparable to the size of Texas.

The most benefited company, Northern Pacific Railroad, received more than 16 million hectares, an area larger than the entire state of Florida.

For European readers, Texas is larger than all of Spain, and Florida is 20 times the size of the province of Madrid.

These were not simple concessions. They were the foundation upon which all subsequent power and wealth would be structured.

That infrastructure did not just drive the country's economic growth—it ultimately defined who could exist and expand within the system.

On that network, some of the greatest fortunes in modern history were consolidated. Families like the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, or the Morgans did not emerge from a competitive vacuum, but within a system that had already been designed beforehand.

By 1904, through Standard Oil, John D. Rockefeller's empire controlled nearly 90% of oil refining in the United States.

It was not just a matter of efficiency, but of access—preferential access to railroad transport through monopolistic agreements that today would be considered clearly illegal practices.

The system operated on a relentless logic: buy competitors—and political will—or, failing that, destroy them. Secret agreements were established with railroad companies to artificially reduce costs, while real corporate structures were concealed through networks of intermediary entities. At the same time, the legal framework was influenced through bribes and pressure on legislators, ensuring that any attempt at regulation was neutralized before it could take effect.

A similar dynamic occurred in steel with Andrew Carnegie, who controlled the entire chain—mines, coal, transport, factories, and distribution—and used intermediaries to absorb competitors, cutting off their supply until forcing their sale.

In parallel, J. P. Morgan dominated finance: he did not produce goods, but controlled money, deciding which companies survived and who gained access to capital through conditional financing, executive placements, and strategic bankruptcies. Controlling money was, in essence, controlling the entire system.

In just a few decades, 40% of the nation's wealth became concentrated in 1% of the population. This was not a side effect—it was the logical outcome of the system.

What was being built was not just an economy. It was a structure of power. The great families did not create the system from scratch... they inherited it, occupied it, and then... benefited from it almost exclusively.

In just a few years, some became the new magnates—not only because of what they built, but because of everything they controlled.



Organizations such as Freemasonry did not appear as a visible power. However, they were present at many of the points where things changed hands: in permits, in signatures, in meetings.

They did not decide what the system was—but they did decide who could access it.

They coordinated and connected newcomers with what was already in place. They distributed and organized.

They turned structures they did not fully understand into usable assets.

And in that process, as a natural consequence, the wealth of the new families was created—families that rivaled the new aristocracy... or rather, aligned with it.

Thanks to their contacts and position, they grew quickly. Too quickly. Fortunes with no prior trajectory. No visible foundation... yet sustained by everything they managed.

That night, I wrote: “They did not only generate wealth... they appropriated a prior inheritance and assigned themselves the authority to administer it.”

I closed the notebook. I understood the true role played by the call of gold. It was not the origin. It was the mechanism—the way to activate movement.

And like others, Alesandra had arrived too late for the distribution.

CHAPTER 13

Those Who Know

It wasn't obvious. There were no clear signs, no words that confirmed it. And yet, it was there. In the glances that lingered a second longer than usual. In a silence that wasn't uncomfortable.

In the way some people stopped in front of buildings—not as if they were observing, but remembering.

Alesandra began to notice it gradually. At first, it was just a faint sensation, almost invisible, difficult to name. A barely perceptible repetition that appeared in different places, with different people—always in the same way.

No one spoke. They never did. There was no need.

There was something in the way their eyes met... a brief certainty, almost imperceptible, that disappeared before it could be explained.

It was a silent recognition, without gestures or explicit signals. They did not form a group, did not seek each other out, did not follow one another. And yet, they were connected.

By something that all of them, in some way, knew.



An old man stopped in front of a façade. He didn't look at it like the others. He wasn't searching for details or shapes.

He traced it with his eyes, slowly... as if he weren't just observing its beauty, but verifying something he already knew.

Alesandra approached.

"All of this was already here before," he murmured.

He didn't seem to be addressing anyone. For a moment, he remained still, realizing someone had heard him.

He didn't fully turn around. Just enough... and then he continued walking... without looking back.

Later, it happened again. Two women were walking slowly, side by side. One of them, very old, tilted her head slightly.

"They've cleared it."

The other nodded with a minimal gesture. They didn't look at each other and kept walking.

Alesandra didn't intervene. She only observed and listened.

There weren't many of them. They appeared in different places, with no apparent connection between them. They didn't seek each other out. They didn't gather. They simply shared something impossible to ignore.

They didn't argue. They didn't try to convince anyone.

They didn't look for proof, validation, or answers.

They simply recognized. They said only what was necessary—sometimes not even that—and avoided saying it out loud.

In the afternoon, she saw another old man standing in front of a tower.

He wasn't looking at it like a visitor. His eyes moved up and down, pausing at specific points.

Alesandra stood beside him.

“It belongs to another time,” he said without looking at her.

Alesandra watched him for a few seconds.

“What time?” she asked.

The man remained silent. He turned his head and looked at her. For a moment, he seemed to hesitate... but then he looked away and left.

There was something in the way they recognized each other—brief, almost imperceptible—that marked an invisible boundary, a line none of them crossed.

Alesandra began to understand. They were not isolated. But neither could they come together. Not without exposing themselves.

Each one held what they knew in silence. Separately. Sharing it openly was not a solution.

There were no attempts to reconnect or build something together. Only a fleeting recognition—and then distance.

Not out of lack of trust.

It was a kind of implicit agreement, as if they had all reached the same conclusion: coming together was too dangerous.

Alesandra perceived it more and more clearly... and then she understood.

It wasn't just about what they knew. It was about what would happen the moment it stopped being invisible... Because making it visible would make them vulnerable.

And she began to notice another difference. More subtle. More important. Not in what they knew, but in how they defended it.

On one side, those who spoke with certainty and explained everything: architecture, style, dates, new construction. Ordered words, complete explanations that left no room for doubt. Everything had an answer.

They moved with certainty. They didn't stop, didn't hesitate, didn't look beyond what was necessary—because they believed that looking twice was a waste of time.

And then there were those who remained silent. Those who measured. Those who recognized without explaining. Those who seemed to weigh every word.

The difference was not in knowledge.

It was at that precise point where some closed the answer... and others were only just beginning to form the question.



That night, Alesandra wrote:

“Only those who don't know the history speak...

and want to explain everything.

Or those who do know it...

and have the power to decide which version can be told.”

She added nothing more.

She closed the notebook.

CHAPTER 14

The Risk of Remembering

The old man who had been observing the tower never appeared again. No one asked about him.

Months later, Alesandra saw the woman who had said, “They’ve cleared it,” again.

She was on the same street, in the same place—yet she no longer seemed the same. She was speaking out loud.

“An impressive construction,” she said, “in such a short time. It’s an incredible work.”

She had not stopped speaking—but now she was saying something else.

One afternoon, a man stopped beside Alesandra. He did not introduce himself. He simply said in a low voice:

“Don’t ask questions or speak about that with anyone again.”

It was neither an order nor advice. It was a warning.

Alesandra looked up. “About what?”

The man held her gaze a second longer than necessary.

“You know very well...” And he left.



That night, she couldn't sleep. A feeling of fear flooded her.

That was the turning point. From then on, a certain self-censorship took hold. She began to measure her words, not to linger too long, not to look twice, not to ask questions... although she kept seeing... and that, she could not avoid.

She thought of Max, of the cities, the fires, the phrases, the glances... And something shifted in that moment. There was no longer doubt or confusion. Her mind was clear—perhaps too clear.

The next morning, everything was the same.

The streets, the people, the explanations. Nothing had changed, and yet everything was different.

She stopped focusing on others—not because they weren't there, but because they could not converge. Each one held what they knew in silence, separated from the rest, with no possibility of forming something shared. That was the key.

And then she understood... the same thing Max had barely begun to see. There are moments when everything starts moving in the same direction—and becomes irreversible.

She understood that the new structures could not be sustained on something that questioned them. Institutions could not allow a memory outside their control. Narratives could not accept what did not fit, and the new system could not function without a submissive, dependent, and fully subordinate loyalty.

No one had made an agreement—it wasn't necessary. They were all moving in the same direction. They didn't need to destroy. It was enough to replace.

First, value: what mattered, what was allowed to circulate.
Then, territory: what could be occupied, what had to be reorganized.
And finally, memory: what could be said—and what had to be forgotten.

For a moment, she felt paralyzed. It wasn't a theory—it was what was happening. It wasn't about preventing anyone from seeing, but about preventing almost anyone from aligning.

Then she began to remember the hospital. What was now happening in the streets... she had already seen before, in the hospitals. People separated, stories fragmented, narratives that could not meet.



Just like there, the objective remained the same: to isolate—each person with their own version, with no possibility of comparison, no possibility of reconstructing a different narrative.

It wasn't an anomaly of the system... it was the system.

CHAPTER 15

The Initial Archive

I left the notebooks on the table, not fully closed.

For several minutes, I could hear my own silence. It wasn't a pause—it was resistance. I knew that if I continued, I wouldn't be able to go back. And yet, I kept organizing—not processing a specific idea, but connecting the facts.



Up to that point, everything was still separate: the cities, the mud, the abandonment, the communities, the return, the new rules, the hospitals, the fairs.

It was all there, yet it was not fully connected. Not because elements were missing, but because I had not yet grasped the depth of the structure.

I opened the notebooks again—not to move forward, but to go back.

Max's notes and photographs showed great cities... vast domes... terracotta palaces... train stations... hospital complexes...

Monumental structures supposedly built in just a few years—structures that, by any modern standard, would require decades.

Buildings like the Capitol in Washington and others of similar design that, even with today's most advanced technology, would be nearly impossible to replicate.

Then came the mud—with doors buried and streets raised.

The original level had become unusable, and it was necessary to build on top of it.

Then came the displacements, the communities, those who remembered.

After that, the return, the occupation, the rules, the conditional access.

It was no longer about returning, but about integrating into something that had been redefined.

I stopped reading the notebooks and began reviewing other files, other accounts—trying to broaden my perspective and contrast what appeared in the notebooks and manuscripts from the trunk.

In official records, I found references to hundreds of thousands of children with no clear origin, who had been transported by train and distributed across rural areas, assigned to families.

For a moment, I wondered if they were the same children from the families who had been reclaiming their cities.

Further on came the hospitals, the memory, and the fairs—where monumental cities appeared, built within impossible timeframes.

I reviewed an official archive of the Chicago fair: more than two hundred buildings, some monumental, constructed over an area of more than one million square meters, in just a few years.

A scale that simply does not add up. All the buildings had been recorded, but without coherent evidence of how they had been constructed.

And then, everything disappeared. As if it was not meant to remain—perhaps to avoid uncomfortable questions about its construction.

Decades later, there were repeated fires in which millions of official records vanished.

The pattern repeated—it didn't only happen with buildings, but also with archives and millions of important documents.

In the Ellis Island fire, more than forty years of entry records into the country disappeared in a matter of hours. One and a half million legal identities were burned. There were no copies.

The 1890 census—the most complete up to that time—was lost in a fire. There were no duplicates. Millions of files destroyed in fires across different courthouses and military archives.

No inventories remained. No copies.



The same scenario repeated itself, again and again, always with the same result:

Nothing remained to sustain continuity.

The past disappeared, and the records were rewritten under the direction of those who governed the new system.

For a moment, I felt overwhelmed by so much information. I stopped and seriously questioned what I was doing.

Maybe I wasn't discovering anything. Maybe I was just collecting and organizing data that fit the pattern I wanted to see.

It was a good moment to stop and let everything settle.

Days later, I resumed the investigation, and in a private collection I found several brief accounts—no interpretation, just descriptions of a completely dark day.

The sky was black—not covered, not cloudy—black. Light did not pass through the air, and candles were lit in the middle of the day. The silence was unnatural, and when the darkness lifted, the sky appeared reddish.

I reviewed other sources. Independent accounts, different locations across half the world—the same description. It was not a local phenomenon. Too widespread, too sudden, too uniform.

For decades, something had been happening before anyone recorded it. Not as an event, but as a process.

Constant volcanic activity in the North Atlantic... sustained gas emissions... continuous climate disturbances.

None of this reached the sudden violence of an event like the 1755 earthquake that devastated Lisbon, but its persistent nature could have allowed the accumulation of gases and seismic tension over years—perhaps decades—altering atmospheric and geodynamic balance... without leaving a clear trace in the records.

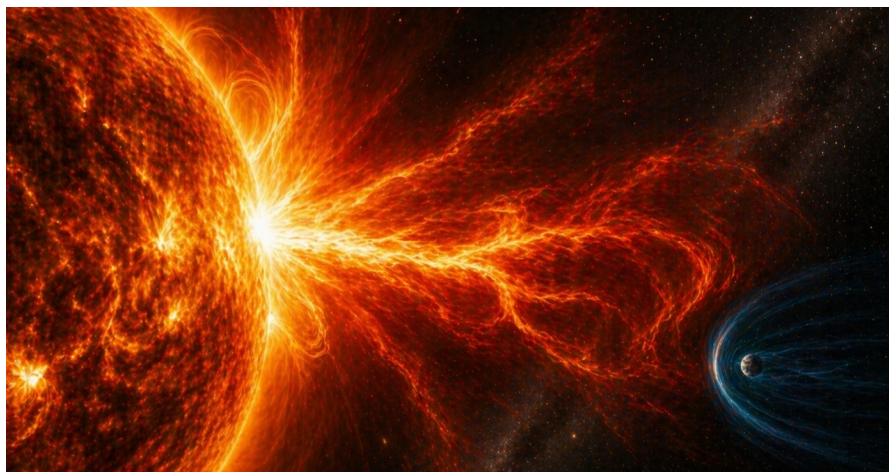
And at the center of it all, the island of Frisland.

The name appeared for centuries on ancient maps, and then disappeared—without transition, without explanation.

Was it the cause of the oceanic disconnection of the Tartarian ecosystem?

It was then that I found a reference that, in another context, might have gone unnoticed.

The solar storm of 1859—the so-called Carrington Event.



Official records described it as a storm that affected the telegraph system. Numerous melted cables, and even some operators electrocuted.

The batteries and systems that had been disconnected continued to function. The network did not require external power for several hours. As if the energy were in the environment itself.

I stared at that line for several minutes.

Not because of what it explained, but because of what it implied.

A primitive system like the telegraph could continue operating powered by the Earth's own electromagnetic field.

I remembered the towers and their domes, and the arches Max described—not as buildings, but as nodes.

And then the question appeared, inevitable: *what if the telegraph was not the most advanced system of its time, but the only one that survived?*

I went back to the notebooks. To the dates. To 1780.

Now it made sense. If that same solar phenomenon had occurred before, it would not have been recorded.

Not because it didn't happen, but because there was nothing recognized that could register it. The telegraph did not yet exist. And officially, there was no other network.

I paused, thinking... That did not mean nothing had happened in 1780. You cannot record the damage to something that officially does not exist.

I let my imagination unfold and began to consider everything not just as a possibility... but as if I already knew how it had happened. So I allowed my mind to fit each piece together until it formed a coherent reality:

*For decades, sustained seismic and volcanic activity in the North Atlantic had been building tension to a critical point:
the sinking of the island of Frisland.*

The system did not collapse at that moment, but what was lost was communication across the ocean.

And then, the following day, the sky went dark.

It was not a storm. It was not smoke. It was total darkness in the middle of the day. An absence of light that did not correspond to any known phenomenon.

Days later, the solar storm arrived. Not as an isolated event, but as a decisive blow.

The structures did not collapse, but the systems stopped responding.

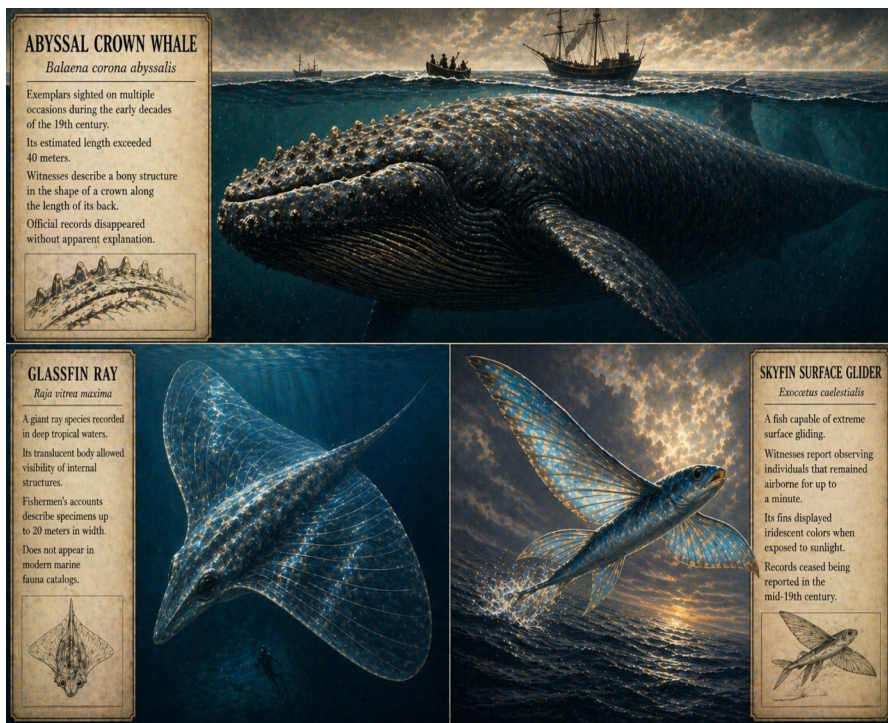
And, beyond the loss of communication between cities, the network was severely damaged.

In the following decades, the records began to change. Not abruptly, but progressively—silently, systematically.

Tartaria disappeared from the maps, as if it had never existed.

In parallel, other accounts vanished from official archives. They remained only in private notebooks, in isolated testimonies.

Different marine creatures that did not fit within the theory of evolution.



An impossibly large whale: the “abyssal crown whale.”

A gigantic translucent fish: the “glassfin ray”

And the flying fish Max saw: the “skyfin surface glider”

Was it all a product of imagination?

I paused there again and returned to Max's note.

A massive fish, twenty meters long, suspended in the air above the ocean for longer than should be possible.

I couldn't help but imagine it. What an experience! To witness not just a flying fish of that size, but also the immense whales and other life forms that may have since gone extinct.

In some private archives, I read that during the early decades of the 19th century, the oceans still held forms of life that did not fit into the world that would come later.

Like Frisland... they stopped appearing in official records... they ceased to be part of what could be documented.

I closed the notebook slowly.

I wasn't reconstructing a story. I was observing a shift in systems.

From the 20th century onward, records became consistent and narratives fully coherent.

The last generations who remembered something different disappeared through wars, pandemics, or natural death.

And the stories some told their grandchildren were reduced to the confused recollections of the elderly.

The new educational systems left no room to believe them.

Subsequent generations learned to discard anything that wasn't "scientific"... within an academic framework in which any alternative version sounded like old tales from grandparents.

All those monumental cities had not been built in the 19th century. They had been occupied, altered, and later reused.

In some places, the transition left traces: layers, remnants, visible adjustments. In others, nothing.

The structures were already integrated, as if they had never belonged to anything different.

Then came the wars. They did not initiate the process—they coincided with it and ensured it.

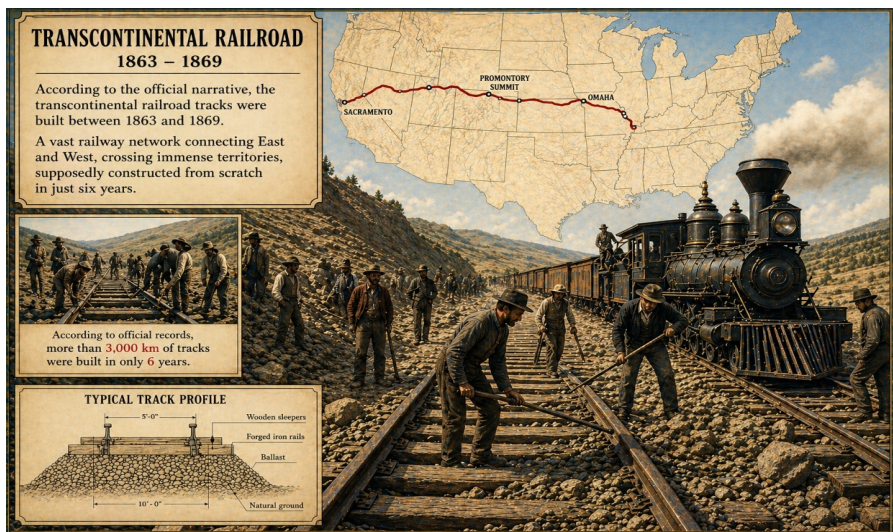
They did not open territories. They closed them.

In certain places, the adjustment was not limited to occupation—there was also destruction: selective fires recorded as accidents.

Some structures remained, others disappeared—not because of their condition, but because of their function, and to avoid leaving traces of the previous technology.

It was not a story. It was a sequence—not of events, but of phases: interruption, collapse, intervention, reorganization, filtering, exhibition, and finally, the forgetting of the previous world.

Another day, I managed to add one more piece to the puzzle of Alesandra's manuscript, when she spoke with the railway worker about the tracks they had unearthed.



According to the official account, the transcontinental railroad tracks were built between 1863 and 1869.

An entire network connecting East and West, crossing vast territories—supposedly constructed from scratch in just six years. More than 2,000 kilometers of tracks, tunnels, and bridges.

It sounds like a children's story... one that no one seems to have questioned.

I opened my eyes to see clearly that it wasn't just the structures.

It was memory: what was remembered, what was forgotten, what could be told, and what could be questioned—or even thought.

I returned, mentally, to the hospitals.

They weren't seeking information, but coherence.

A single version—not necessarily true, but stable.

And some memories could not be adjusted without breaking.

Then I understood the full pattern: the fairs displayed, the hospitals filtered, and the system reorganized the new accounts—the new narrative.

I placed my hands on the table. I didn't feel uncertainty, but rather discomfort. Because this wasn't just a theory—it was a structure in operation.

Max had not been just a witness. He had been interrupted, set aside, and then returned to the world—when he was no longer a credible witness, and the essential pieces had already been put in place.



He looked like a mad wanderer, whose mental faculties had deteriorated—probably due to so much medication over the years. His memory was eroded, his perception distorted, his speech completely fragmented.

One day, I decided to show the trunk's photographs to someone. Not just anyone.

Someone who worked with archives, with history, with real documents. A historian. We had known each other for years. He wasn't easily impressed.

We met one afternoon. I showed him the photographs, the plans, some notes. I had digitized them weeks earlier and uploaded them to the cloud.



He looked at them calmly, one by one, without haste, barely reacting. When he looked up, the coffee had already gone cold.

“This proves nothing,” he said.

It didn't sound like rejection, but method.

“They can’t be authentic,” he added.

“They don’t match any record.”

We met again a few days later. We went to several archives. We reviewed digitized collections, different versions of the same material.

Some images weren’t there. Others were—but they weren’t exactly the same. We checked dates, earlier versions, copies stored in different repositories. There were differences.

“It’s not a cataloging error,” he murmured. I didn’t know what to say.

He paused on one of the searches... comparing two images that, according to the record, should have been the same. But they weren’t.

“Look at this—the lines don’t match, nor do the proportions.”

He remained silent for a few seconds before continuing.

“If this were a mistake, it would be obvious,” he said.

He looked up. “It’s as if they had been modified.”

He didn’t say who. He didn’t say how. And he didn’t seem willing to go further.

“In history there are errors,” he added. “But not of this kind... not at this scale.”

He didn’t say it as a conclusion. He said it as a boundary.

I never spoke to him again.

Not because the conversation had ended, but because I understood that from that point on, he was no longer willing to keep looking.

I doubted once again whether to continue my investigation. I was beginning to understand why others had stopped.

I remembered the princess’s words. They sounded like a warning I had not fully understood. “When the system can no longer sustain itself... they don’t rebuild it... they replace it.”

I remained silent. The question came on its own.

“Who?”

This time, I wasn’t satisfied with an abstract answer, and I began to piece together everything I had read in the notebooks and manuscripts from the trunk.

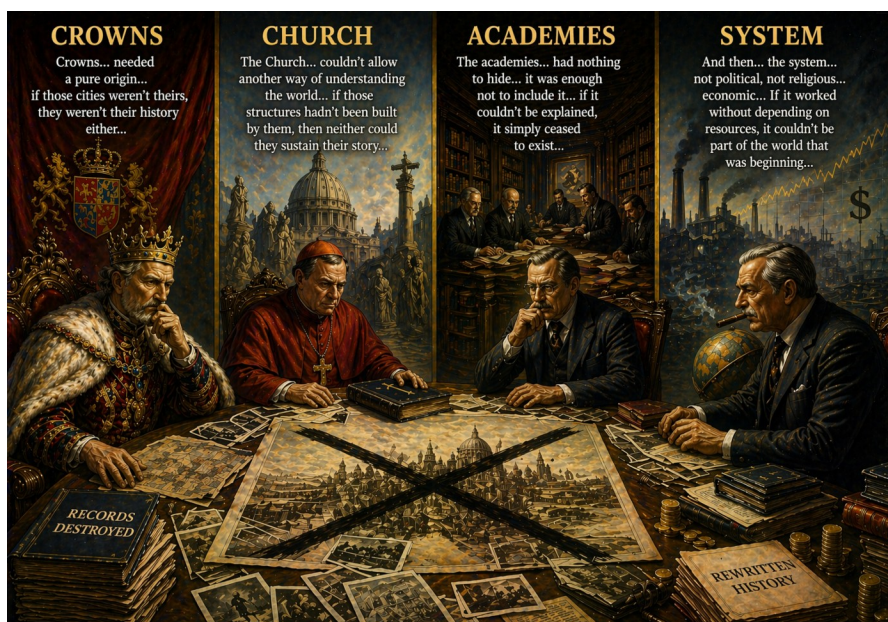
“The crowns... needed a clean origin... if those cities weren’t theirs, then neither was their history...”

“The Church... could not allow another way of understanding the world... if they had not built those structures, then they could not sustain their narrative...”

“The academies... didn’t need to hide it... it was enough not to include it... if it couldn’t be explained, it ceased to exist...”

“And then... the system... not political, not religious... economic...”

If that system functioned without depending on resources, it could not be part of the world that was beginning...



I wondered whether those groups were in agreement.

The answer came on its own. They didn't need to be. Each one only needed to move in the same direction, even for different reasons and from different positions.

A world that could be explained. A world that could be sustained. A world that was dependent.

I looked again at the records, the dates, the cities.

—Everything that didn't fit. So... who were they?

—They were not a group.

—They were a convergence.

—A system that does not need to organize itself because it is already moving in the same direction.

Then I understood what the princess had not fully explained.

“They do not destroy the world...”

“They replace the conditions in which the new one can exist.”

I looked at the notebooks as one looks at something that has survived—
—not time, but reorganization.

Then the question appeared—not as a conclusion, but as a limit: if everything had been reorganized, if the cities had changed, and if memory had been filtered...

What part of history had truly been preserved?... and what part was already the result of that reorganization?

I wrote nothing else. I took no notes.

I formed no silent certainty. I simply closed the notebook and left it on the table.

From that moment on, everything depended on something else. Not on what was written, but on what others were capable of recognizing.

Even so, for some reason, I felt that not everything was on the table.

I returned to the trunk—not looking for anything new, but because I sensed I had not yet seen everything.

I removed the notebooks, the photographs, the objects I had already examined.

I placed them on the table, one by one, until the bottom was clear.

I paused for a while. Everything was already out of the trunk. And yet, I had the feeling that something was still missing.

I went back to the trunk and found it. A darker notebook, with no markings on the cover.

It wasn't with the others. It was at the bottom, half hidden—as if it had not been placed to be found.

I opened it. The first pages contained no explanations, only records: scattered dates, places, brief notes.

New York appeared several times, as did Chilaga, Saint Louis, Boston, and other cities.

The entries did not describe what was visible. They described what was underneath.

Max was not only speaking about streets or buildings—he was speaking about levels.

“Beneath the city... there is more city.”

I read the sentence several times.

The following pages were more precise.

They mentioned access points, descents, structures that did not appear on any map.

They were not basements or improvised tunnels.

They were spaces—deeper and more extensive than any building would require—and they were all connected.

He did not specify any one city. The notes brought together observations from different places without distinguishing between them.

The descriptions blended together. He did not use technical language.

I turned several pages. There were drawings—overlapping layers, levels that did not correspond to a single structure.

On one of the pages, the handwriting changed slightly: metallic structures embedded in stone... sealed chambers...

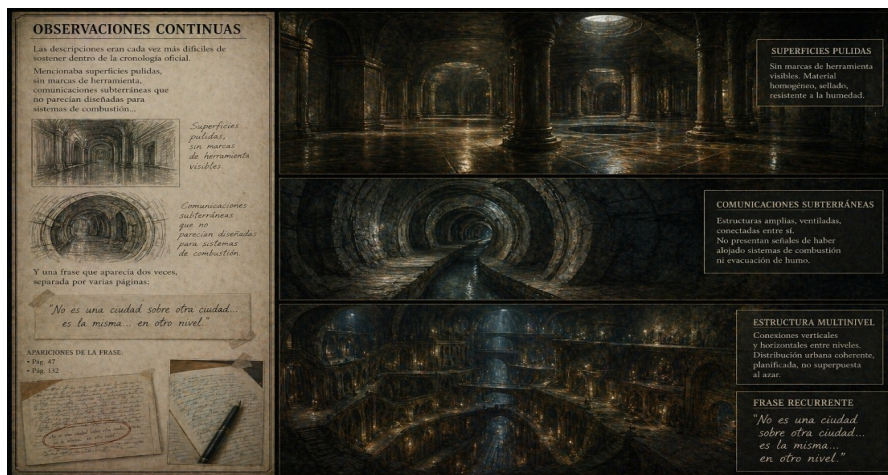
Max did not seem surprised. He seemed to be confirming something he had already suspected.

I kept reading. The descriptions became increasingly difficult to reconcile with the official timeline.

He mentioned polished surfaces, without tool marks... underground communications that did not seem designed for combustion-based systems.

And one sentence appeared twice, separated by several pages:

“It is not a city beneath another city... it is the same one... on another level.”



I closed the notebook for a moment and looked at the photographs spread across the table—the towers... the domes... the proportions.

The question was no longer on the surface of the cities...

It had moved beneath them.

The next day, I felt the same sensation again—but this time it didn't fade.

I had gone through all the notebooks, yet something still didn't fully close. It wasn't a specific doubt, but a persistent feeling—a slight pressure in my chest, constant.

It wasn't about the spaces, but about the sequence.

Everything I had seen so far explained how the system had functioned—but not what had happened afterward, nor who had inherited it.

I tried to close the notebooks and leave it there.

But the pressure in my chest did not go away.

CHAPTER 16

The Hidden Manuscript

The next day, the pressure in my chest was still there.

I returned to the trunk. It seemed there was nothing left—until I noticed that the bottom gave way slightly. I pressed, and something shifted just a few millimeters.

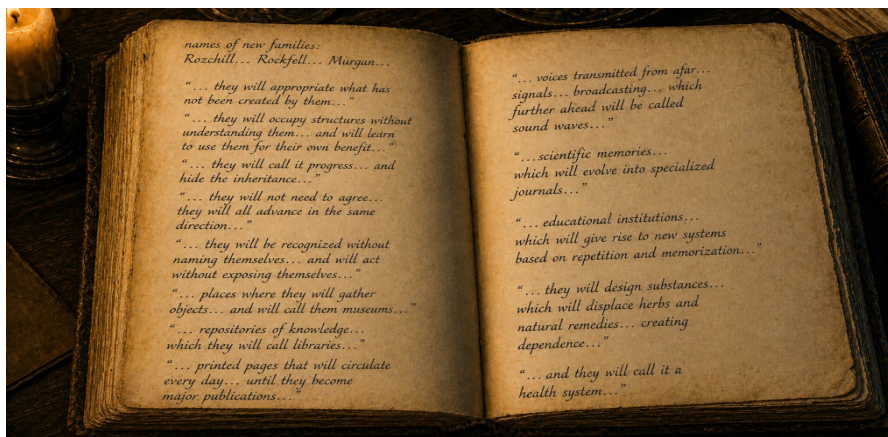
Beneath it, there was another manuscript. It had to be something important to be hidden like that. There were no records or observations—only fragments, written without dates, without order. They did not describe what had happened, but what was yet to come.

The handwriting was not Alesandra's. It was Max's. But it wasn't his usual style or way of writing.

The text revealed a new facet of the princess—not only as a guardian of the past, but as a visionary. She would enter a trance... and Max would write.

It did not describe cities or towers, nor the system. It spoke of what would come afterward. And it named names.

In several lines, there were references to figures of royalty, and also names of new families: Rozchill... Rockfell... Murgan...



There were no references to their origins. The names appeared associated with movement, accumulation, and transfer.

“...they will appropriate what they have not created...”

“...they will occupy structures without understanding them... and learn to use them for their own benefit...”

There were mentions of buildings, of works, of objects... not as creation, but as appropriation.

“...they will call it progress... and hide the inheritance...”

As I continued, the texts described dynamics.

Families with no visible origin that, in just a few decades, would accumulate impossible fortunes—without a base, without initial resources.

The following pages spoke of agreements. Not treaties or declared alliances... something more diffuse, more stable.

“...they will not need to agree... they will all move in the same direction...”

Interconnected networks of influence... corporations. Structures that did not belong to a single family and yet connected them.

Many of these families would operate discreetly—without exposure, without a visible name. They would diversify their power into politics, finance, and the media.

Then came sectors... Energy... transport... raw materials. Coal... oil... distribution networks.

The manuscript did not speak in abstractions. Although some names did not match exactly, many of its predictions were precise. It did not only anticipate events... it gave them form and name.

Further on, the manuscript became even more unsettling.

It did not speak only of wealth... it spoke of control.

Cabinets of curiosities... archives... gazettes... annals... academies...
houses of healing...

And among those words, others that did not seem to belong to its time:

“...places where they will gather objects... and call them museums...”

“...repositories of knowledge... that they will call libraries...”

“...printed sheets that will circulate daily... until they become major
publications...”

“...voices transmitted at a distance... signals... diffusion... which they
will later call sound waves...”

“...scientific records... that will evolve into specialized journals...”

“...institutions of learning... that will shape new educational systems
based on repetition and memorization...”

“...they will design substances... that will displace herbs and natural
remedies, creating dependency... and call it a health system...”

Everything appeared not as creation, but as transformation. The entire
system was going to be redefined.

“...they will create new structures... adapting and reshaping what was
already there...”

I paused. His words were trying to describe something that did not yet
have a name.

And between the lines, the same idea kept repeating:

“...they will not only control what happens... they will control how it
is interpreted and how it is told...”

Spaces where the version of the past that must remain will be shown
and constantly repeated.

Everything appeared not as culture, but as structure.

“...they will not hide the past... they will define what can be remembered... and how it must be understood...”

I paused again. There was one final sentence, written with more pressure—as if it had been added later:

“...they will not only adapt to the new system... they will be its consequence...”

“...they will connect without appearing connected...”

“...they will adapt what already exists... and make it dependent...”

I put the manuscript away.

The visionary princess was not describing an uncertain future. She was describing the way the future would be organized.

And also... which families and new structures would be part of it.

CHAPTER 17

The Discovery

I returned to the trunk once again, this time on impulse. Something pushed me to look again. I thought perhaps it wasn't the only hidden compartment. It wasn't just a suspicion—it was a deduction.

The objects were still in place: notebooks, photographs, and the pieces I still didn't understand.

I didn't know if I would find anything new. I only sensed that something remained to be revealed—something I had not yet seen.

I removed everything again, one by one, more carefully than before, until the interior was completely empty... or so it seemed.

I ran my hand along the bottom, pressed in different spots, traced the edges. Nothing.

I paused. If there was a mechanism, it might not repeat itself the same way. So I began examining every corner of the trunk again—not just the inside, but the joints, the seams, the fittings.

Then I saw it. A line too perfect to be wear.

I pressed. At first, it didn't give. But when I insisted, something shifted.

It was a second layer. Deeper. Harder to find.

I carefully slid my fingers in and pulled it out.

It was another notebook—small, compact, unmarked, with no signs of frequent use.

I didn't know why it had been hidden so carefully. Perhaps it wasn't meant to be found.

I opened it. There were no dates, no cities, no descriptions.

The first pages didn't speak of the past or the future. They were something else. They seemed like instructions on how to look.

Short phrases, without elaboration, like directives:

"Don't look at the structures... look at the relationships."

I turned the page.

"Don't search for the origin... observe the repetition."

Another one.

"It's not the form... it's the proportion."

I paused. It wasn't a record, nor a narrative, nor a prediction.

Everything suggested it was a reading code.

I returned to the photographs, to the plans, to the cities I had already seen. I spread them out on the table: Chicago, New York, Washington, Saint Louis, Boston... and others. Different places, but the same logic, the same proportions, the same axes.

I picked up one of the photographs and looked at it closely. I had seen it before. But now I wasn't just looking at the building. I was looking at its relationship with the surroundings: the lines, the distances, the angles.

I went back to the trunk. I took out the device—compact, smooth, with no visible lens.

I remembered one of Max's phrases: "Not all images are seen the same way."

I pointed it at a building.

At first, nothing happened. But then there was a slight shift in what it showed.

The room remained the same... but not entirely. The walls, the floor, the lines of the space seemed to contain something more. It wasn't a surface distortion—it was another layer, another structure, as if the visible did not exhaust everything that was there.

I set the device on the table. I thought I was beginning to understand. I looked again at the photographs—not as records, but as evidence. Not of what had existed, but of what is still there... and has never ceased to be.

I closed the trunk—this time completely. I was no longer going to keep looking.

I stood up and walked to the window. I looked at the city, the streets, the buildings. It wasn't the past I was seeing. It was the present, as it had always been.

I said nothing. I didn't write. I didn't try to explain it. Because it was no longer a matter of understanding—it was a matter of recognizing.

For a few hours, everything fit... too well.

I went back to the photographs I had uploaded to the cloud—the same ones that were in the trunk, the same ones I had digitized weeks earlier. I opened the folders: Chicago, New York, Saint Louis, Boston. I wasn't looking for anything new. I just wanted to verify.

I paused on one image. I couldn't say what had changed, but some things were not where I remembered them.

I zoomed in, checked lines, proportions, details on the façades. Everything seemed correct—and yet, it didn't match.

I opened another, and then another. The pattern repeated. I felt a constant sense of misalignment. It didn't seem like I was looking at the same images.

I thought of an error: compression, digitization, some kind of loss during scanning. I didn't know whether what didn't match was in the photographs... or in my memory.

I went back to the originals. They were not exactly the same.



The images were still there... and yet, they didn't match.

I took a deep breath. It was a very strange error—as if, when digitized, something was correcting them.

I remained still, staring at the screen without really seeing it... And then I began to doubt, with a certain anxiety. I felt disoriented. I could no longer be sure that all those images were authentic.

Maybe they hadn't been altered now. Maybe they had never been what I thought. Maybe they had been created... or modified. Maybe by someone... or by something.

For a moment, I even thought it could all be a joke.

I closed the laptop, and that night I didn't sleep.

I was no longer sure that an original version even existed... one I could return to.

CHAPTER 18

Recognition

I stepped out into the street with the device from the trunk. I needed to leave—I couldn't stay inside any longer.

After that night, everything within four walls had begun to feel insufficient. I couldn't breathe. As if the problem wasn't in the images, but in what surrounded them.

It wasn't just doubt. It was something more unsettling.

If I couldn't trust the photographs, I could trust even less the memory I had of them.

I walked without a clear direction. The city was still functioning as always. People moving along the sidewalks, constant noise, buildings enclosing space. Everything in its place—too much in its place.

I stopped in front of a façade I had seen dozens of times. There was nothing special about it—or so I had always believed.

I looked up. The proportions were still correct, the lines as well—but something didn't fully match.

I didn't know if it was a visible error or just a feeling.

I wasn't sure whether what I was seeing was exactly the same as what I had seen before.

I took a step back. Then I began to notice details I had previously overlooked—details that had always been there.

At the top, embedded in the stone, there were metallic pieces. I knew they weren't decorative, nor structural.

I remembered the photographs... the towers... the connections.

For a moment, everything aligned again—without friction.

Not just as architecture—but as something placed with intention.

And yet, this time there was a difference.

I was no longer sure whether what fit together was real... or simply coherent with what I believed I was seeing.

I took out the device. Not to verify anything—but to confront the one question I could no longer avoid.

If it was there... had it always been there? Or had it just appeared?

I pressed a button on the device and held it, not knowing what would happen.

Something activated. There was no light—only a vibration. The image changed—not abruptly, but gradually.

The building was still there... but now it was different.

The lines seemed to duplicate—not on the surface, but within the structures themselves. Levels that did not correspond to what was visible, internal forms, connections. As if the exterior were only part of it. As if the building did not end with what could be seen.

I pressed the button again. The image returned to the surface—to the accepted version. Nothing had changed.

I put the device away and kept walking—observing, recognizing: a tower, a layout, a repeated proportion. It had always been there.

I stopped at an intersection—and then I felt it. A sense of presence, of coincidence. On the other side of the street, someone else was focusing on the same thing, with another device. Perhaps they were seeing what lay beneath as well.

Our eyes met. There were no gestures, no words. We recognized each other for an instant—and nothing more. Then they looked away and kept walking.

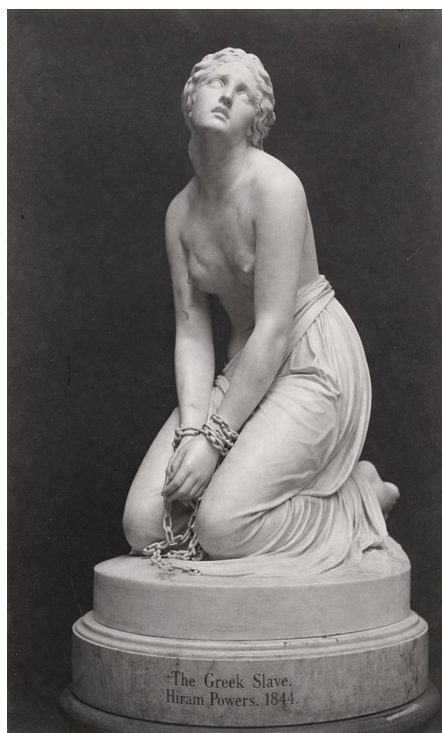
A few days later, I decided to travel to Washington, D.C., and visit the Smithsonian museum...

I wasn't looking for anything in particular.

More than a visit, it was a pause—a rest after so much investigation and so much doubt.

The sculpture stood at the back... white... silent... beautiful.

For a few seconds, I didn't think about anything... I simply looked at it.



But I couldn't help thinking... and the first friction appeared.

If the process was as fragile as they said, there should be errors. And yet, there were none.

I stepped closer to the figure. Too perfect. Too stable.

If the process was that delicate, the sculpture should show some mark—some visible flaw... but it didn't.

I circled the figure slowly. There were no corrections, not the slightest error in the marble.

The question wasn't whether it was beautiful... the question was how it had been achieved.

I stopped at a specific point: the transition from skin to tension. The weight held without visible effort. That was when everything collapsed.

The problem wasn't what I was seeing—it was that what I was seeing didn't match the way it was supposed to have been sculpted.

Because if that beauty was the result of a process, that process should have left a trace... and it hadn't.

I stood there a few more seconds, calmly observing the figure.

The technique required to create something so beautiful hadn't evolved—it had disappeared. No modern artist knew how to create something that perfect in marble. And the same seemed true of many works of art spread across museums around the world.

I remained still for a moment before continuing, filled with a quiet certainty.

The city kept functioning. People kept moving. The explanations were still there. Nothing had stopped, nothing had been revealed. And yet, everything was in plain sight.

It wasn't the past that had changed. It was the present.

I stopped one last time. I looked around and understood that there was nothing to discover—only something to recognize.

And in that instant, I understood why no one speaks. Why no one questions.

Later, I wrote one final sentence and placed it in the trunk:

“Not everything disappears.
Some things... never stop being there.”

✦ EPILOGUE

The Box

I never opened the trunk again. There was no need. I had understood enough—not what had happened, but how it was still happening.

For days, I stopped writing, searching, organizing... I simply observed: the streets, the buildings, the way everything fit together... too well...

One morning, I selected some photographs, some plans, some drawings. I printed them. I didn't explain them. I didn't organize them. I didn't sign them.

I placed everything inside a box—without a date, without an index, without a name... only a map with directions to find the trunk.

I left it where it could be found... not easily, but not impossibly either...

The city remained the same... the explanations too... Years later, someone found the box.

They weren't looking for it... they opened it... they understood almost nothing... and yet, something sparked their curiosity... enough to begin looking at the reality around them...

And, without quite knowing why, they decided to find the trunk.

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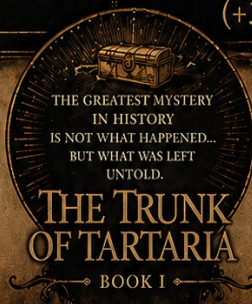
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❖ Acknowledgments

To all the people who have participated—and will participate—in spaces of historical observation.

To those who have held questions without the need to close them, without debate, without confrontation, and without imposing conclusions.

To those who have brought presence, respect, and awareness to a collective field that does not belong to a person or a specific approach, but to the social system as a whole.

To those who sense that history is not only the past, but a living structure that continues to influence the present.

To those who understand that recognizing what has been forgotten is not about attacking the system, but about allowing it to breathe fresh air and recover complexity, coherence, and peace.

And to those who, even without knowing it, are part of this process of remembering, recognizing, and honoring civilizations, cultures, and memories waiting to be integrated.

Every encounter, every shared gaze, every silence held in truth, is already part of this movement.

Thank you.

Angel Primal

✧ Author's Notes

If the questions are still there... it's because they're meant to be.

Materials, references, chronological framework, and links:

👉 AngelPrimal.com/tartaria/the-tartaria-trunk

If you're reading this novel in digital format, remember that the **Free-Access Bonus** is included in the [printed edition of the book](#)

About Systemic Historical Constellations

When something is excluded, it does not disappear: it shifts through time. What is not recognized continues to wait to be seen.

Open gatherings for historical observation:

👉 ConstelacionesFamiliares.es/historical



There are stories
that never disappear.
They only change place.

When a researcher acquires
an old trunk at an auction,
he never imagined that its
contents would challenge
everything he thought
he knew.

The Trunk of Tartaria is not just a novel.
It is a disturbing exploration of the history
of North America...
And the possibility of an advanced civilization
erased from the map less than 200 years ago.

This book is not meant to convince you
or give you answers.
It proposes something simpler... but more uncomfortable:
to look again... and hold the gaze.
Because perhaps the greatest mystery of history
is not what happened...
but what was left untold.