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*A Brief Introduction*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION



*THE STORY I AM ABOUT TO SHARE with you takes place in 1931, under the roofs of Paris. Here you will meet a boy named Hugo Cabret, who once, long ago, discovered a mysterious drawing that changed his life forever.*

*But before you turn the page, I want you to picture yourself sitting in the darkness, like the beginning of a movie. On screen, the sun will soon rise, and you will find yourself zooming toward a train station in the middle of the city. You will rush through the doors into a crowded lobby. You will eventually spot a boy amid the crowd, and he will start to move through the train station. Follow him, because this is Hugo Cabret. His head is full of secrets, and he's waiting for his story to begin.*

— Professor H. Alcofrisbas

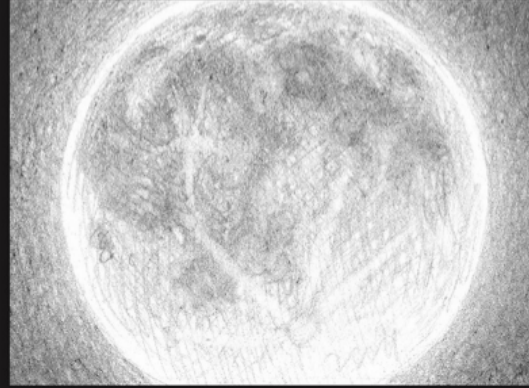
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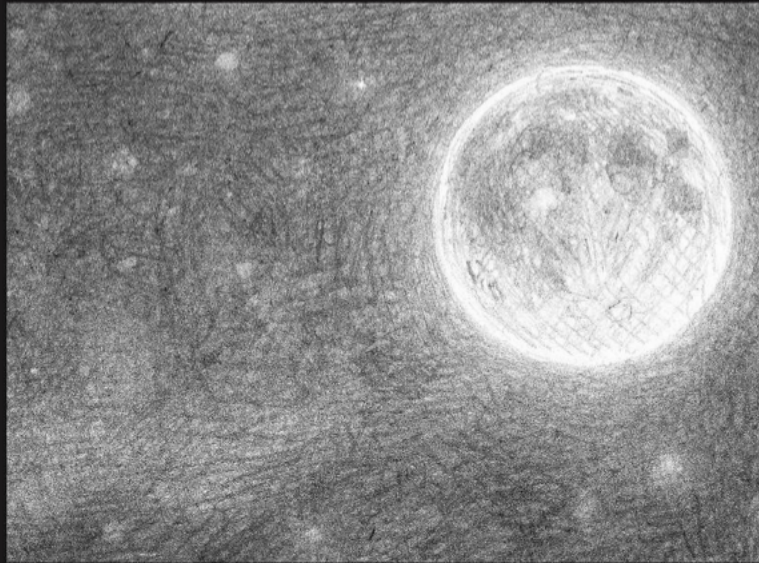
  
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*The Thief*



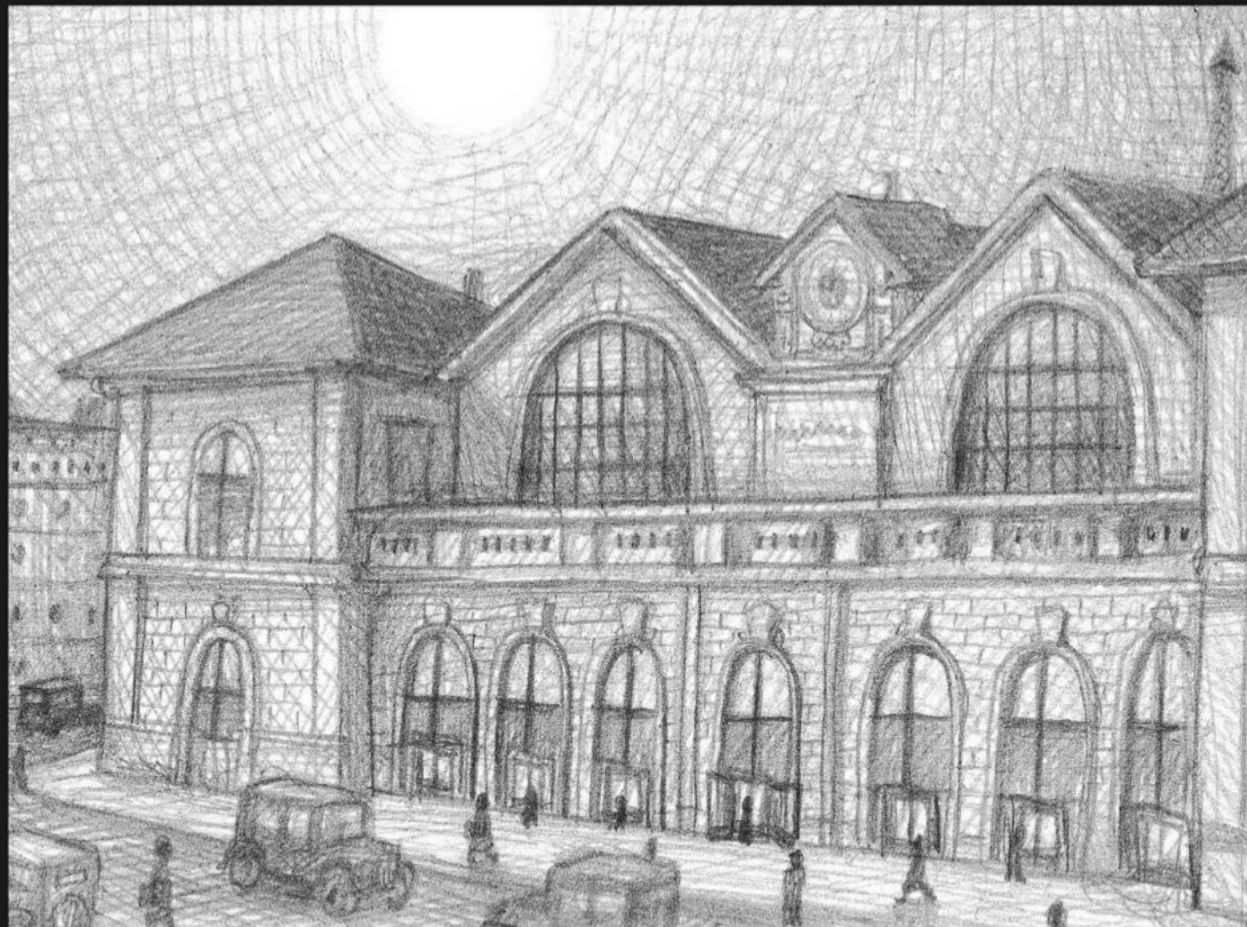


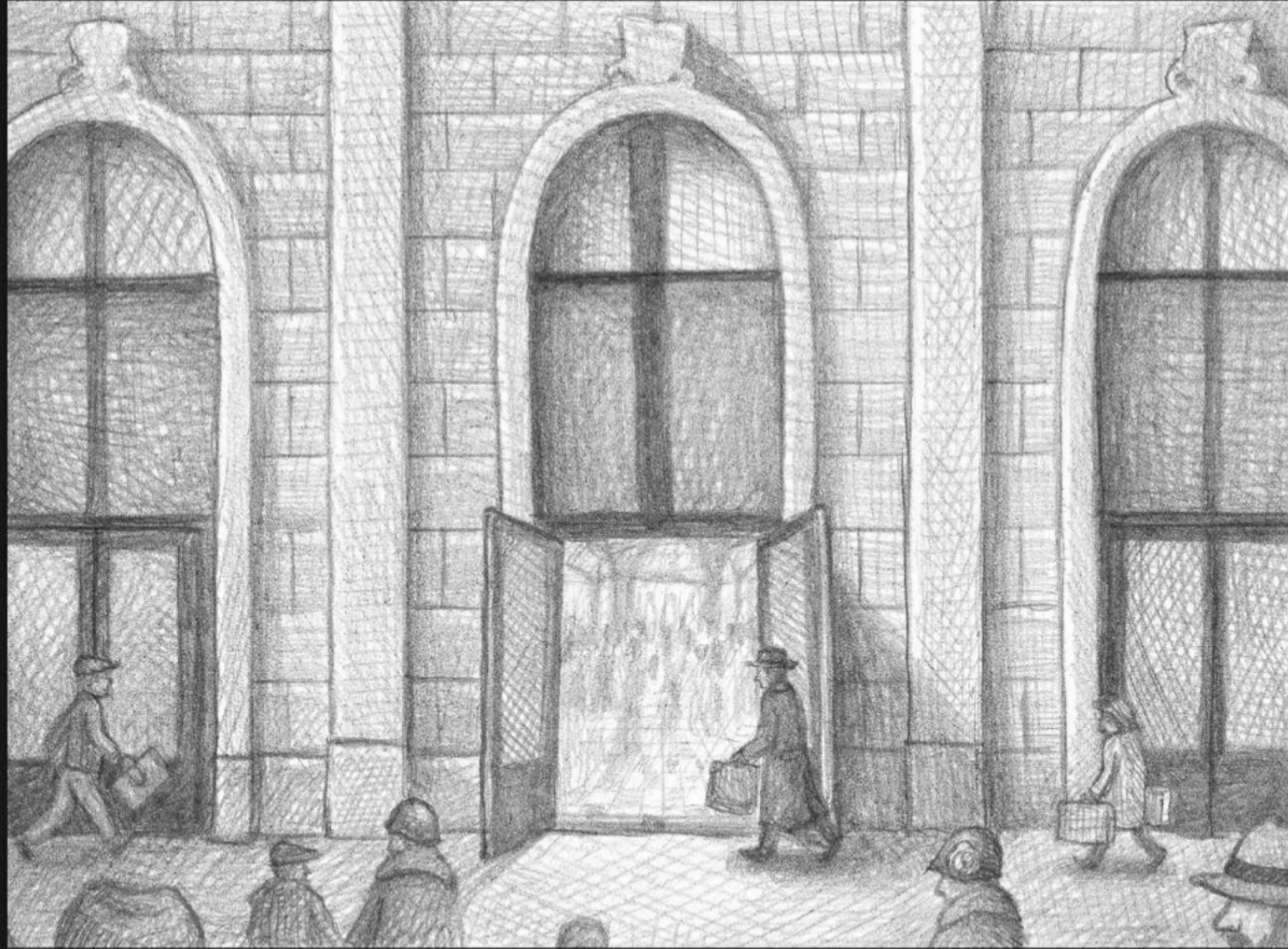












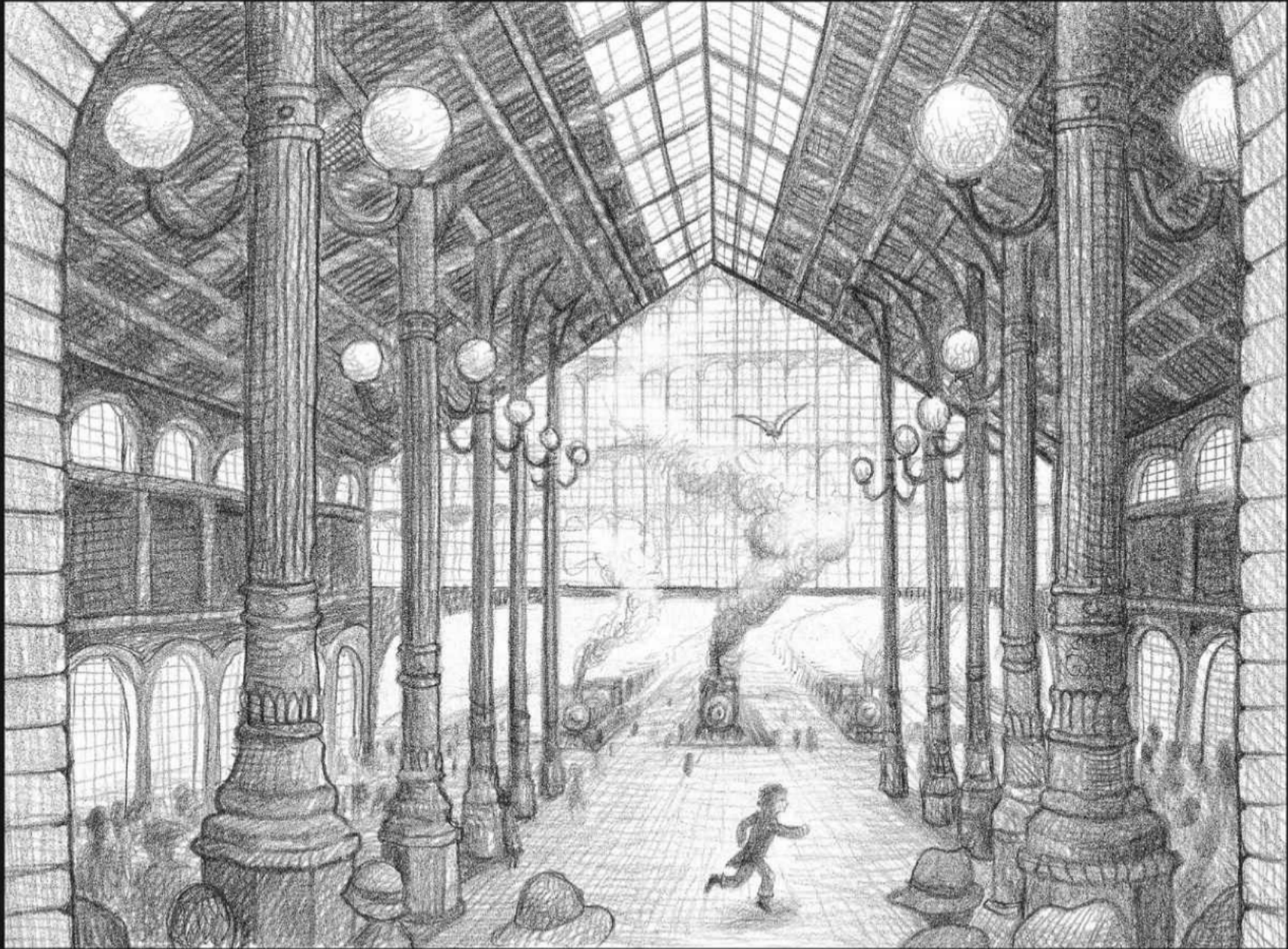


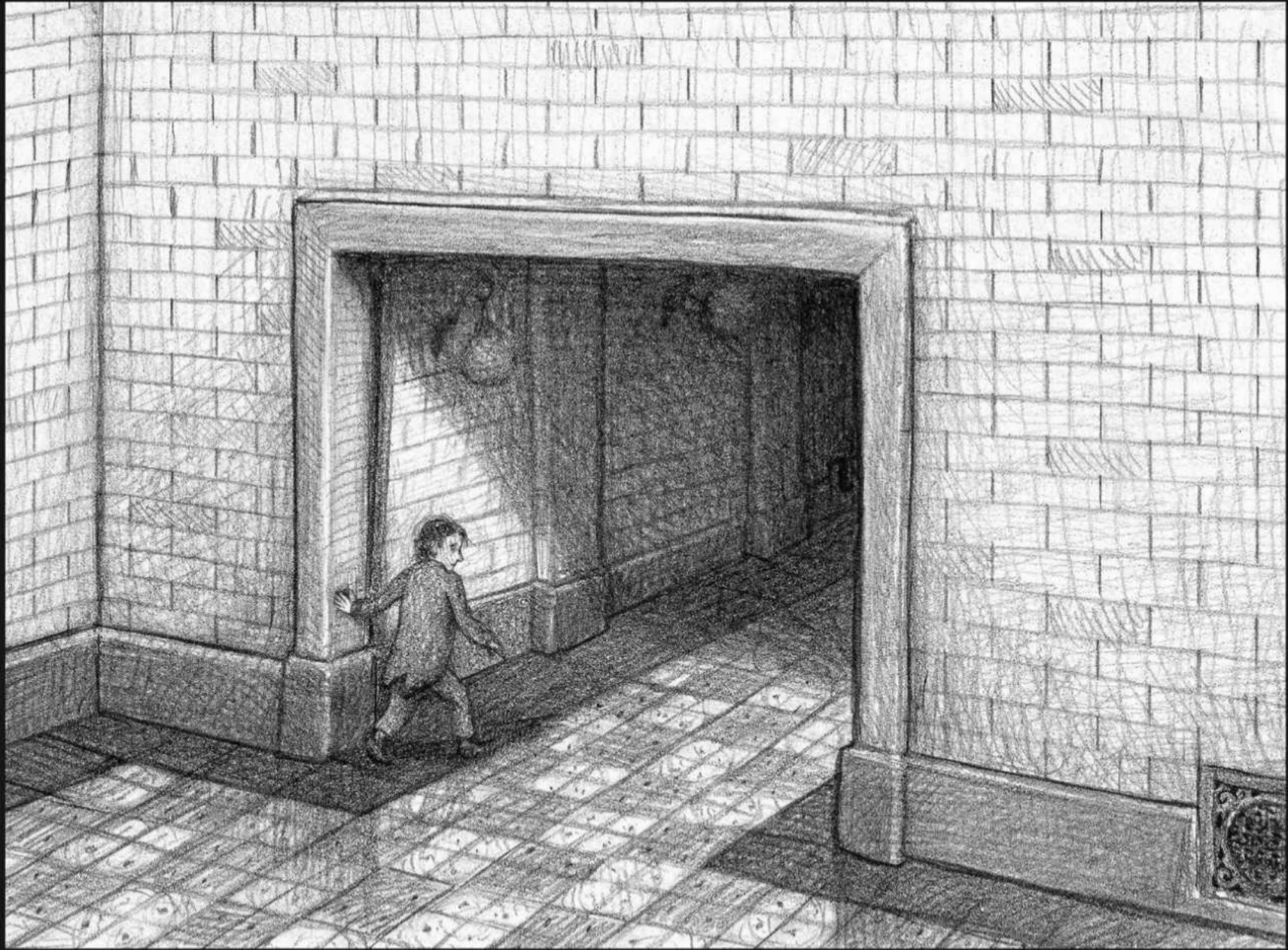




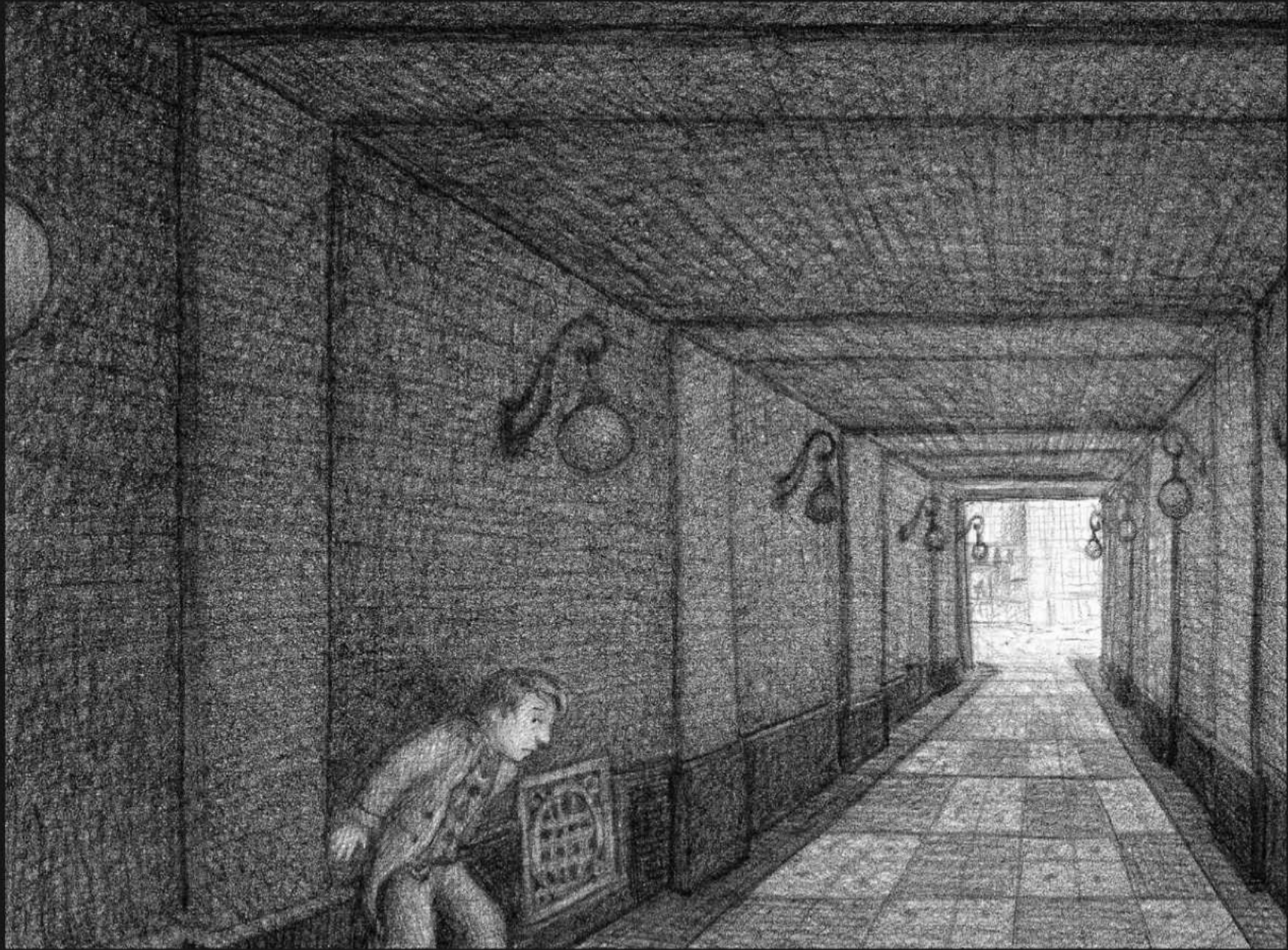




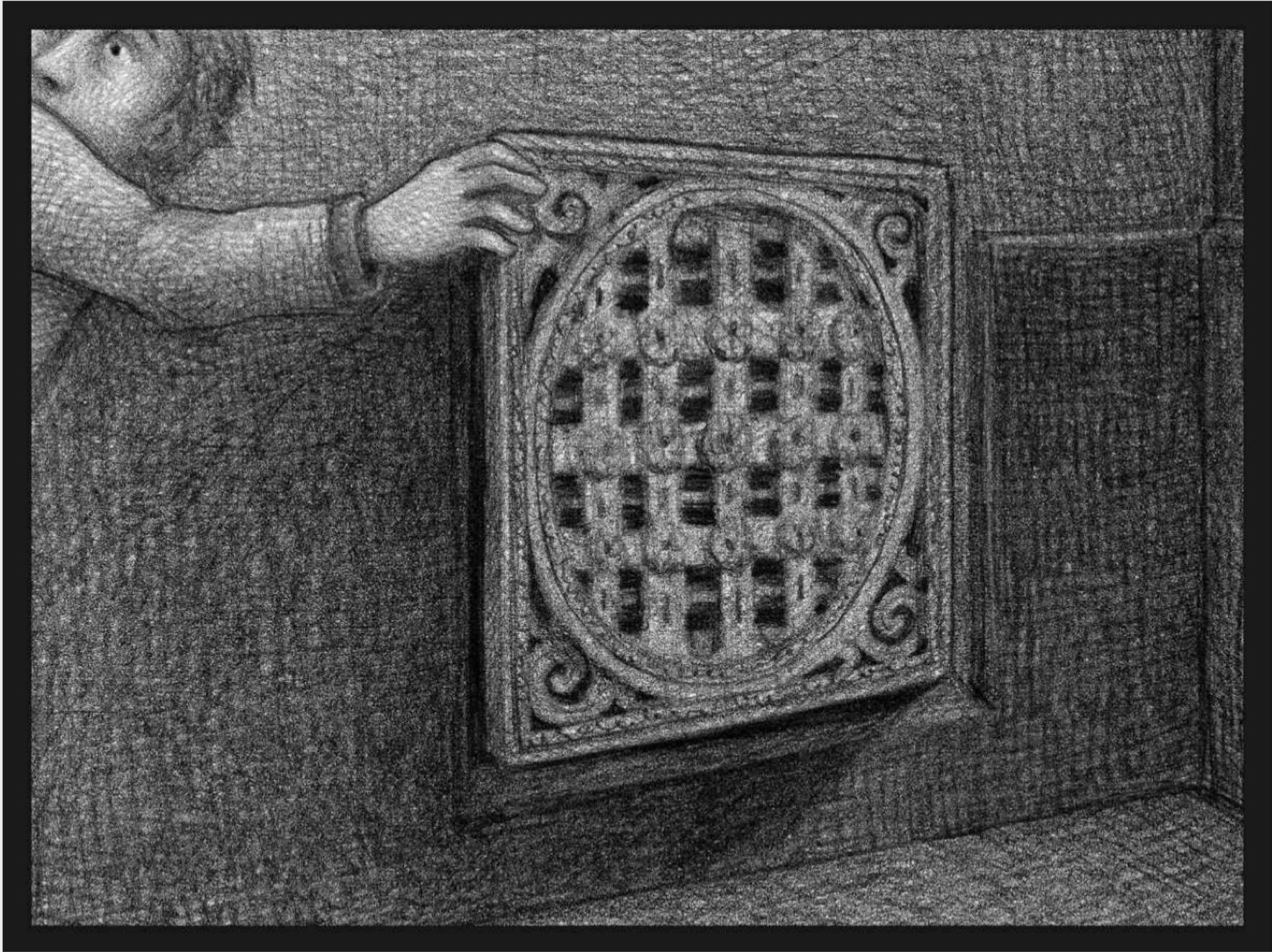


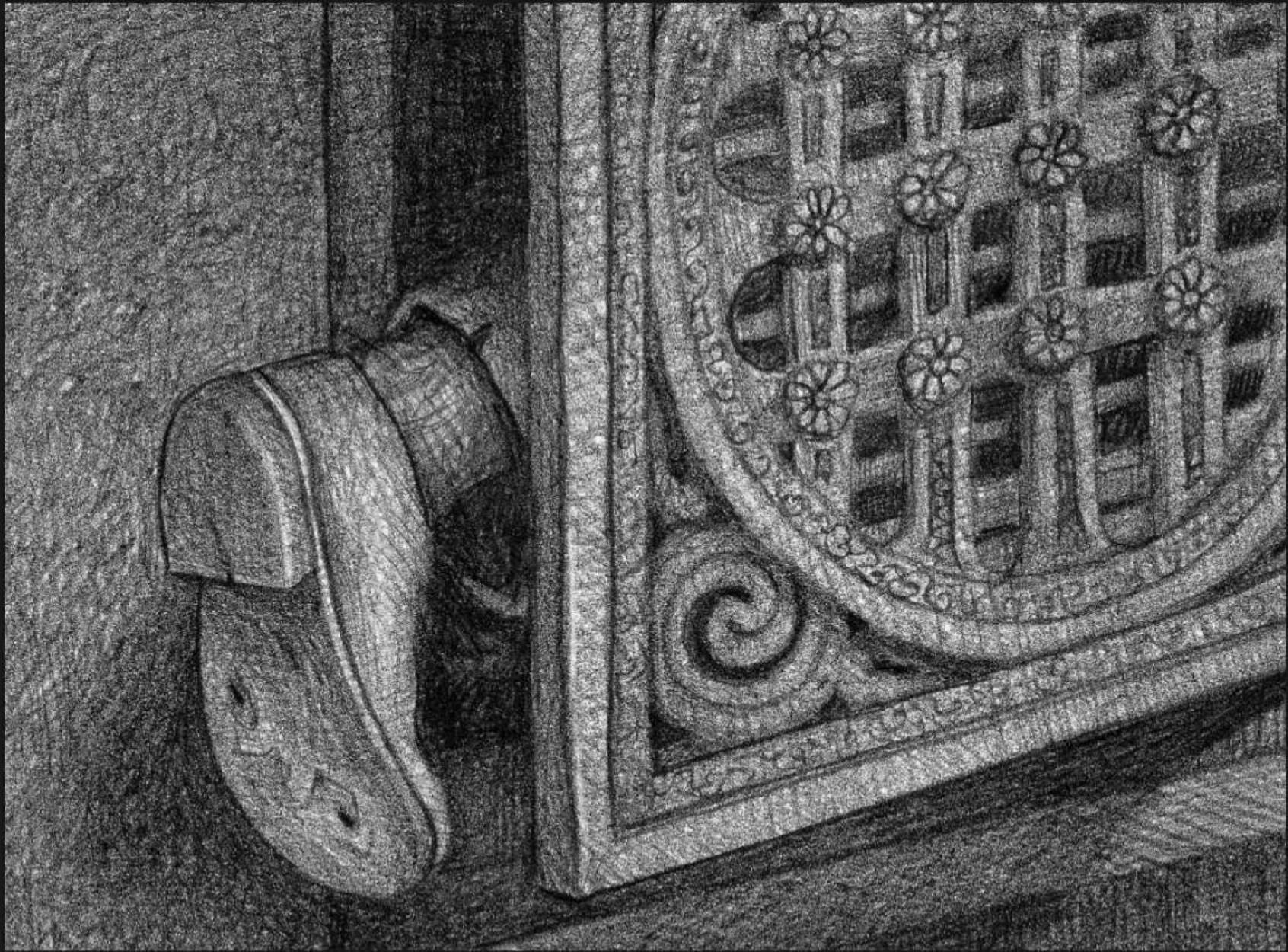






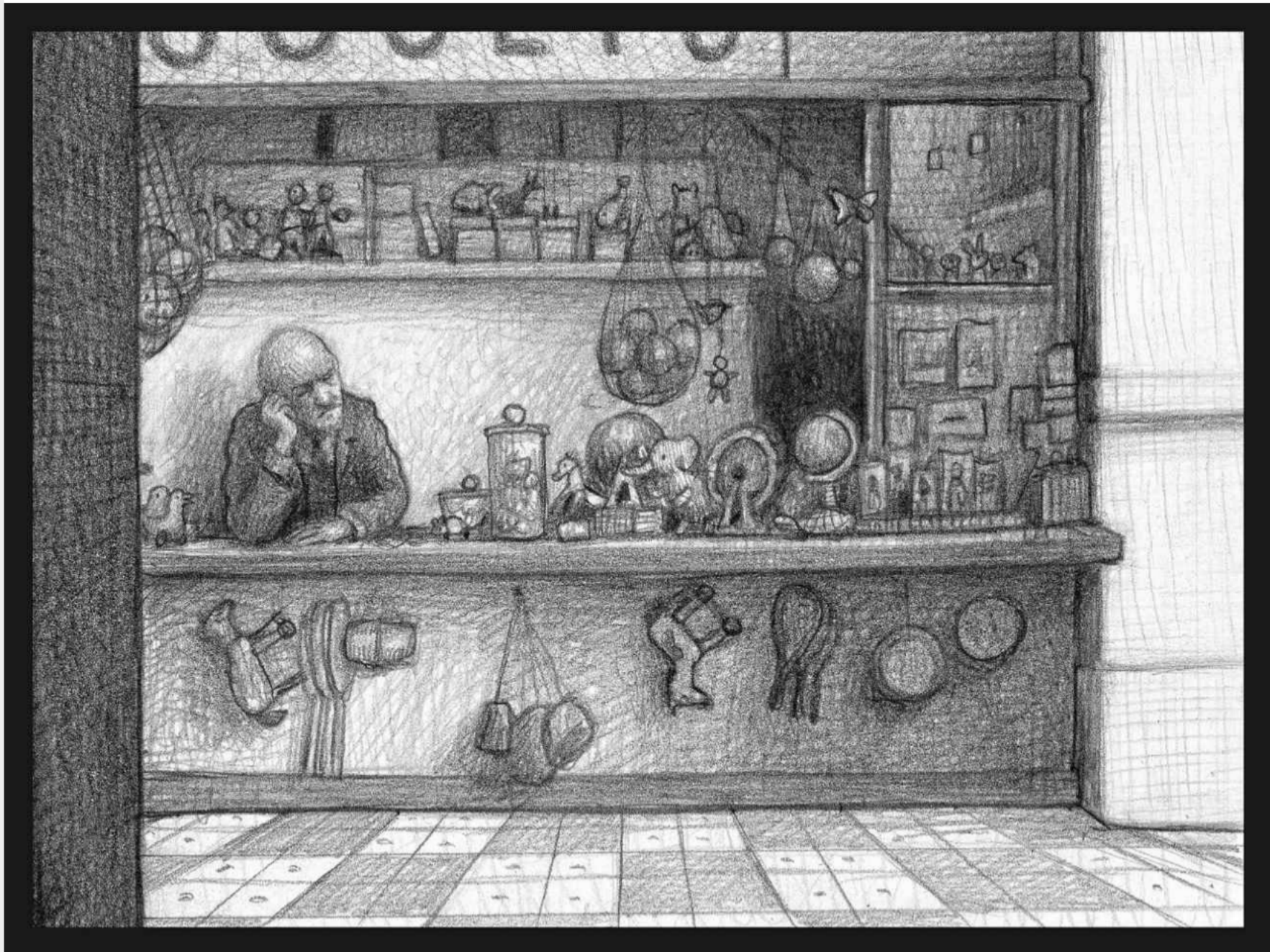




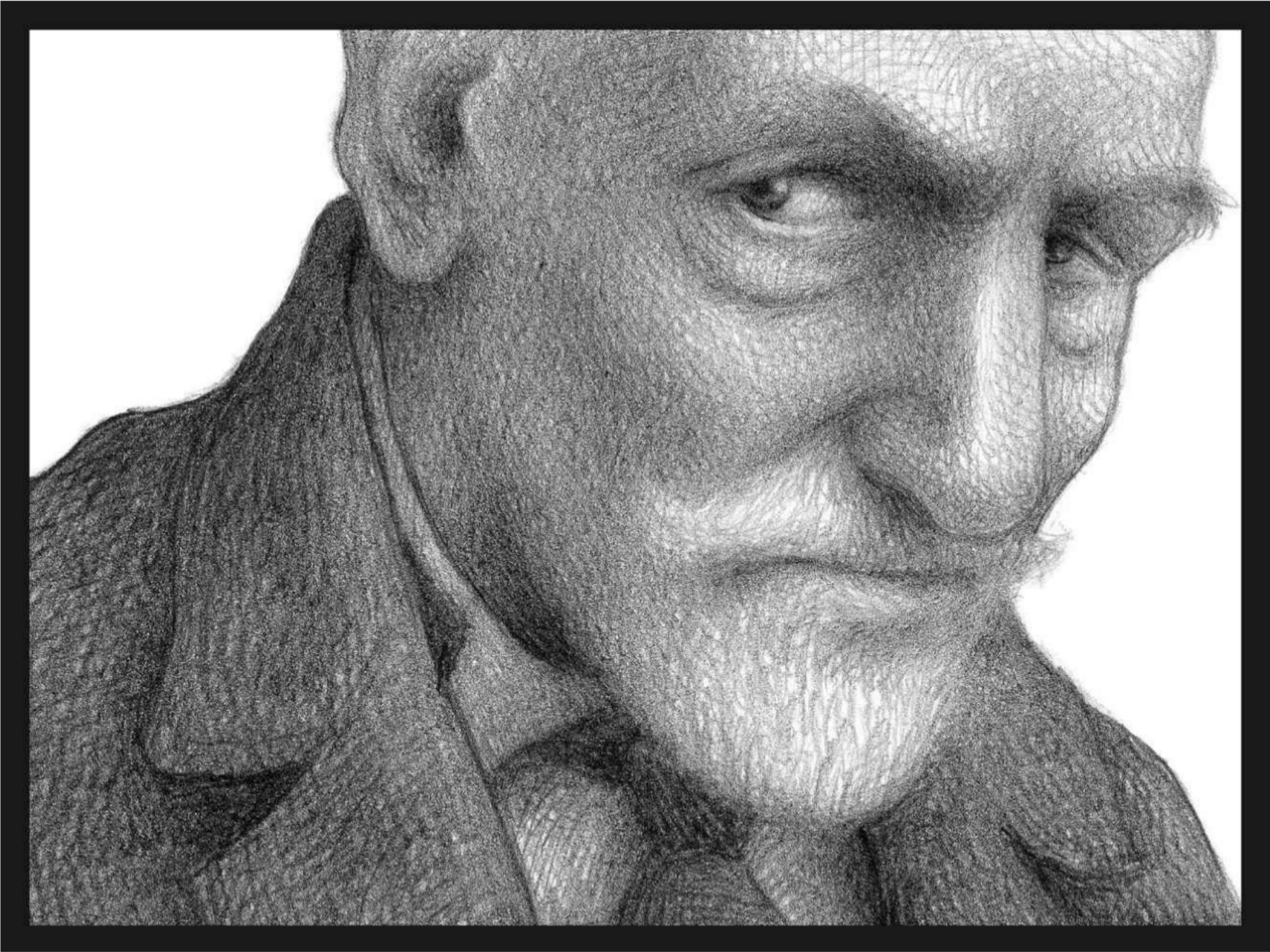


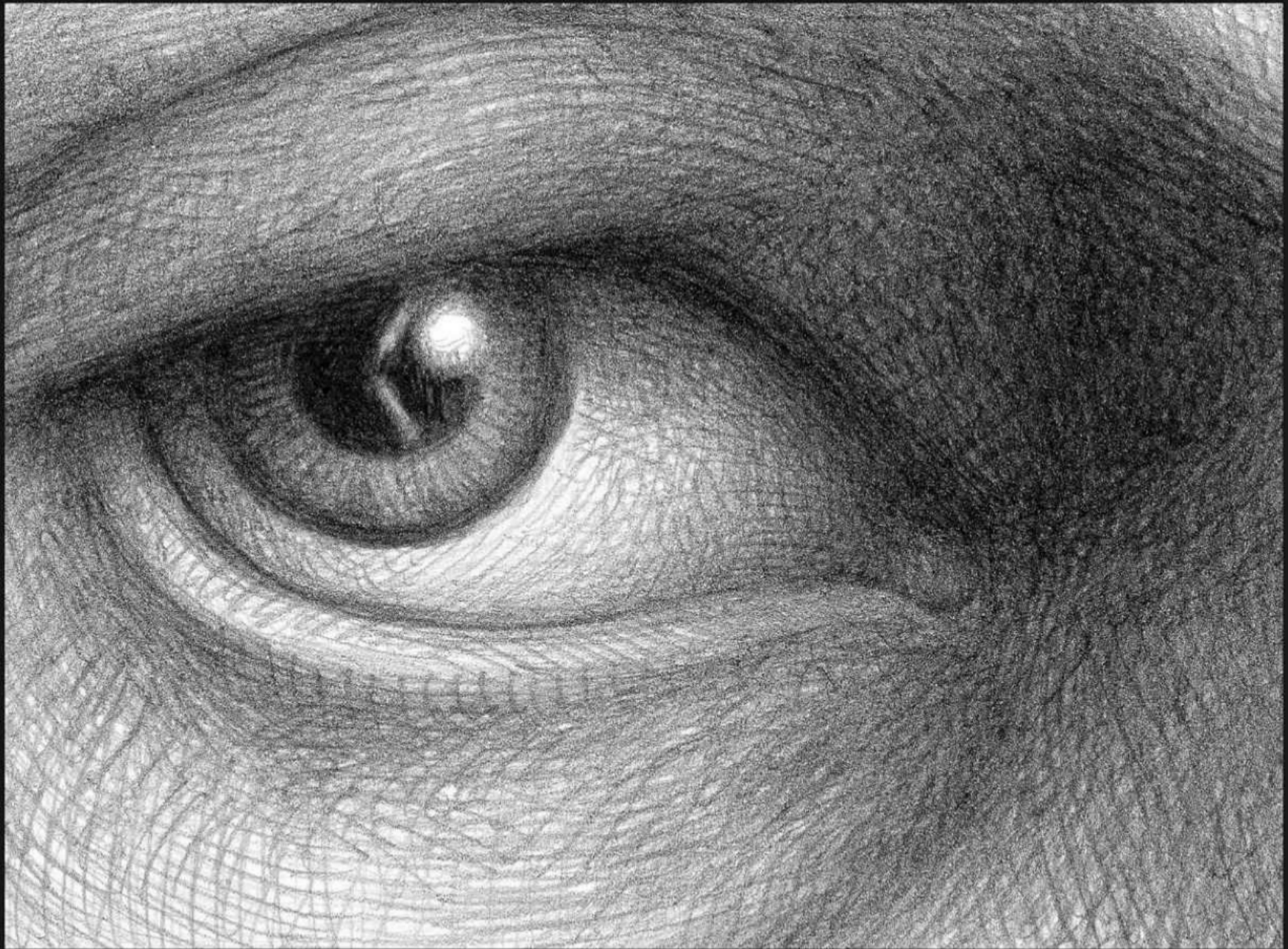




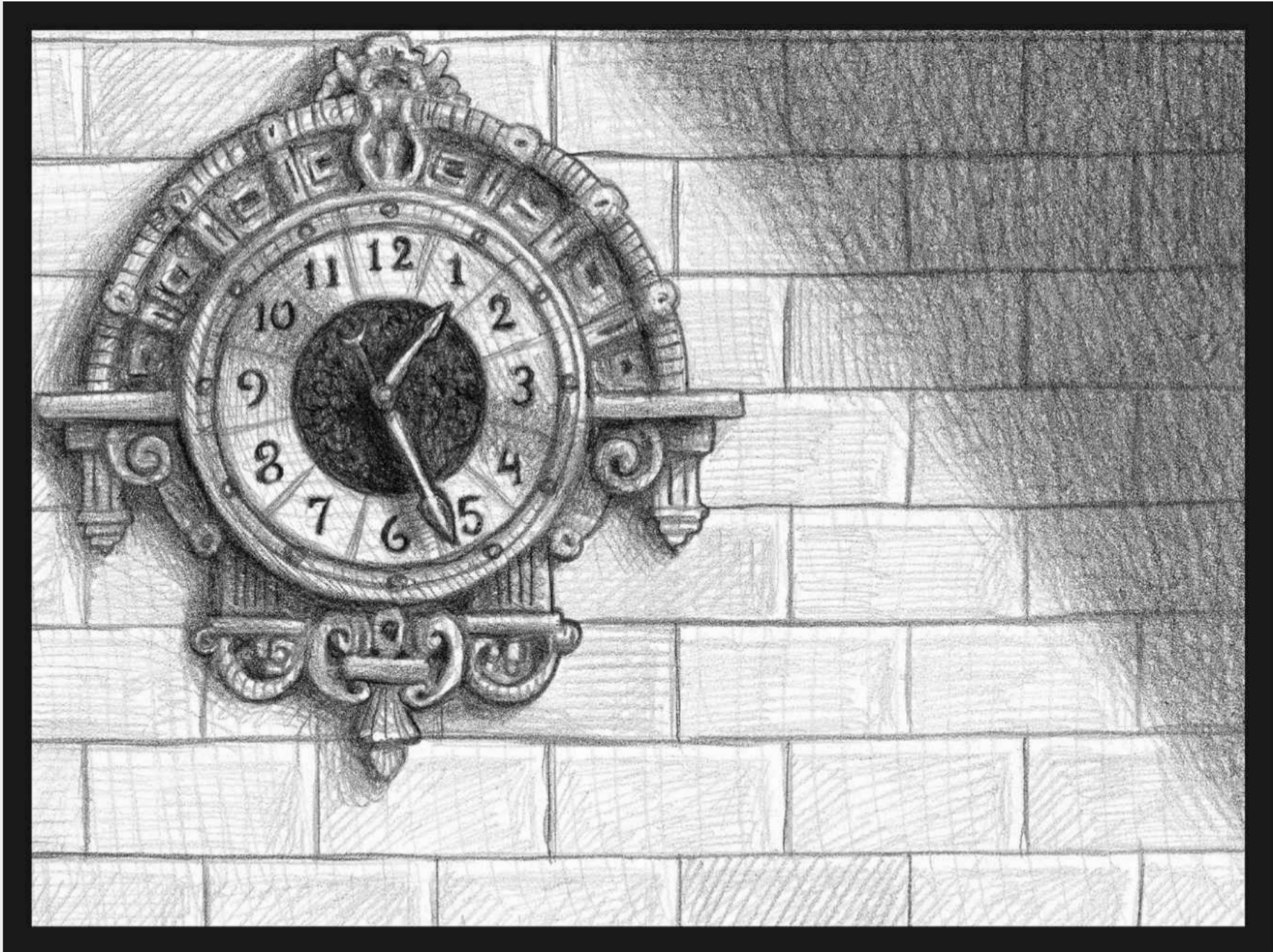






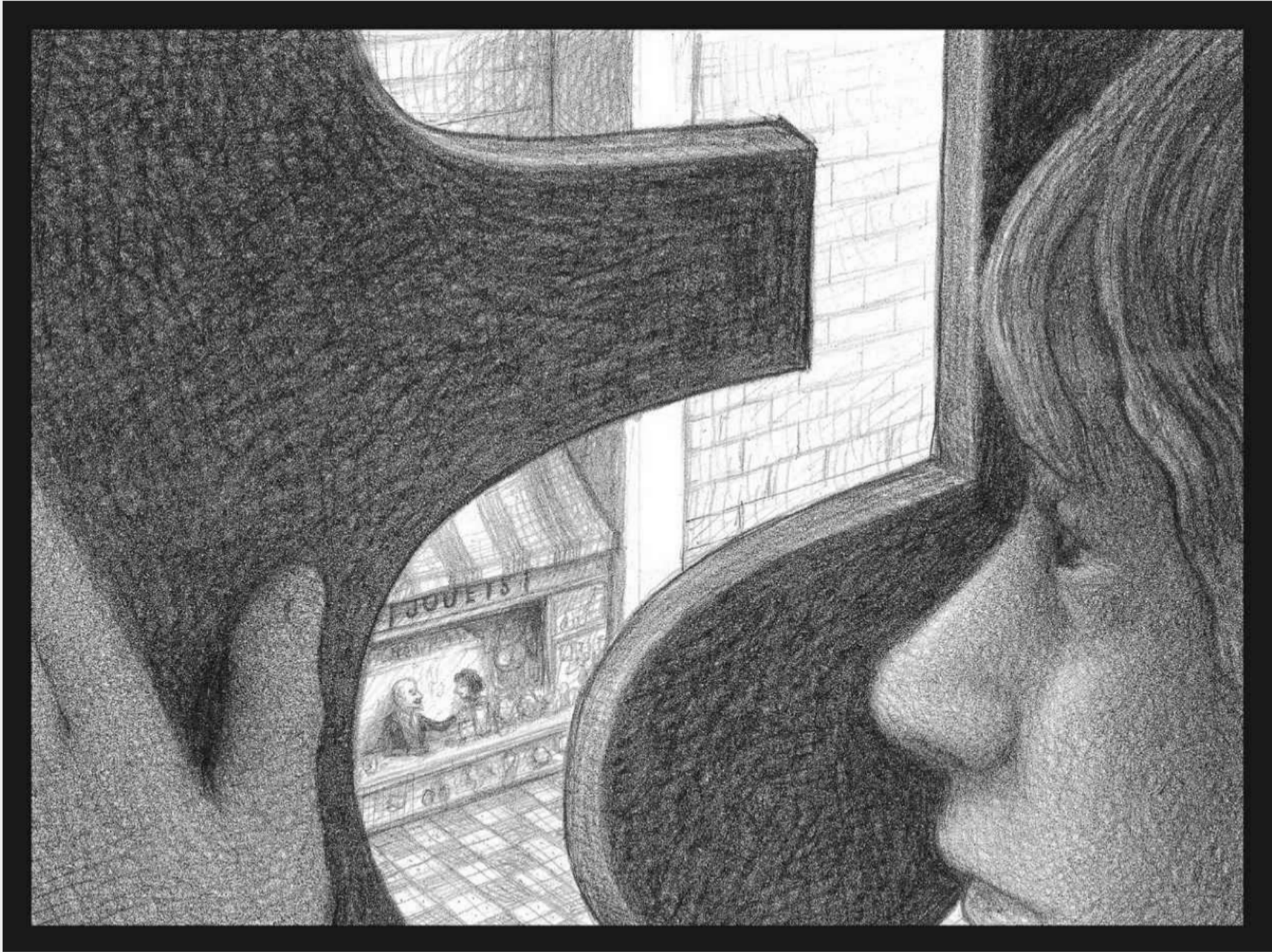














FROM HIS PERCH BEHIND THE CLOCK, Hugo could see everything. He rubbed his fingers nervously against the small notebook in his pocket and told himself to be patient.

The old man in the toy booth was arguing with the girl. She was about Hugo's age, and he often saw her go into the booth with a book under her arm and disappear behind the counter.

The old man looked agitated today. Had he figured out some of his toys were missing? Well, there was nothing to be done about that now.

Hugo needed the toys.

The old man and the girl argued some more, and finally she closed her book and ran off.



Thankfully, within moments the old man had crossed his arms in front of him and closed his eyes.

Hugo crept through the walls, came out through an air vent, and hurried down the hall until he reached the toy booth. Nervously, he rubbed the notebook one last time, then cautiously lowered his hand around the windup toy he wanted.

But suddenly there was a movement from inside the booth, and the sleeping old man sprang to life. Before Hugo could run, the old man grabbed his arm.

The little blue windup mouse Hugo had taken fell from his hand, skidded across the counter, and landed on the floor with a crack.

“Thief! Thief!” the old man yelled down the empty hallway. “Someone call the Station Inspector!”

At the mention of the Station Inspector, Hugo panicked. He twisted and tried to get away, but the old man pulled hard on his arm and wouldn’t let go.

“I finally caught you. Now empty your pockets.”

Hugo growled like a dog. He was furious with himself for being caught.

The old man squeezed tighter until Hugo was practically standing on his toes.

“You’re hurting me!”

“Empty your pockets!”

Reluctantly, one by one, Hugo pulled out dozens of objects: screws and nails and bits of metal, gears and crumpled playing cards, tiny pieces of clockworks, cogs, and wheels. He pulled out a crushed box of matches and some small candles.

“You have one more pocket to go. . . .” the old man said.

“There’s nothing in it.”

“Then turn it inside out.”

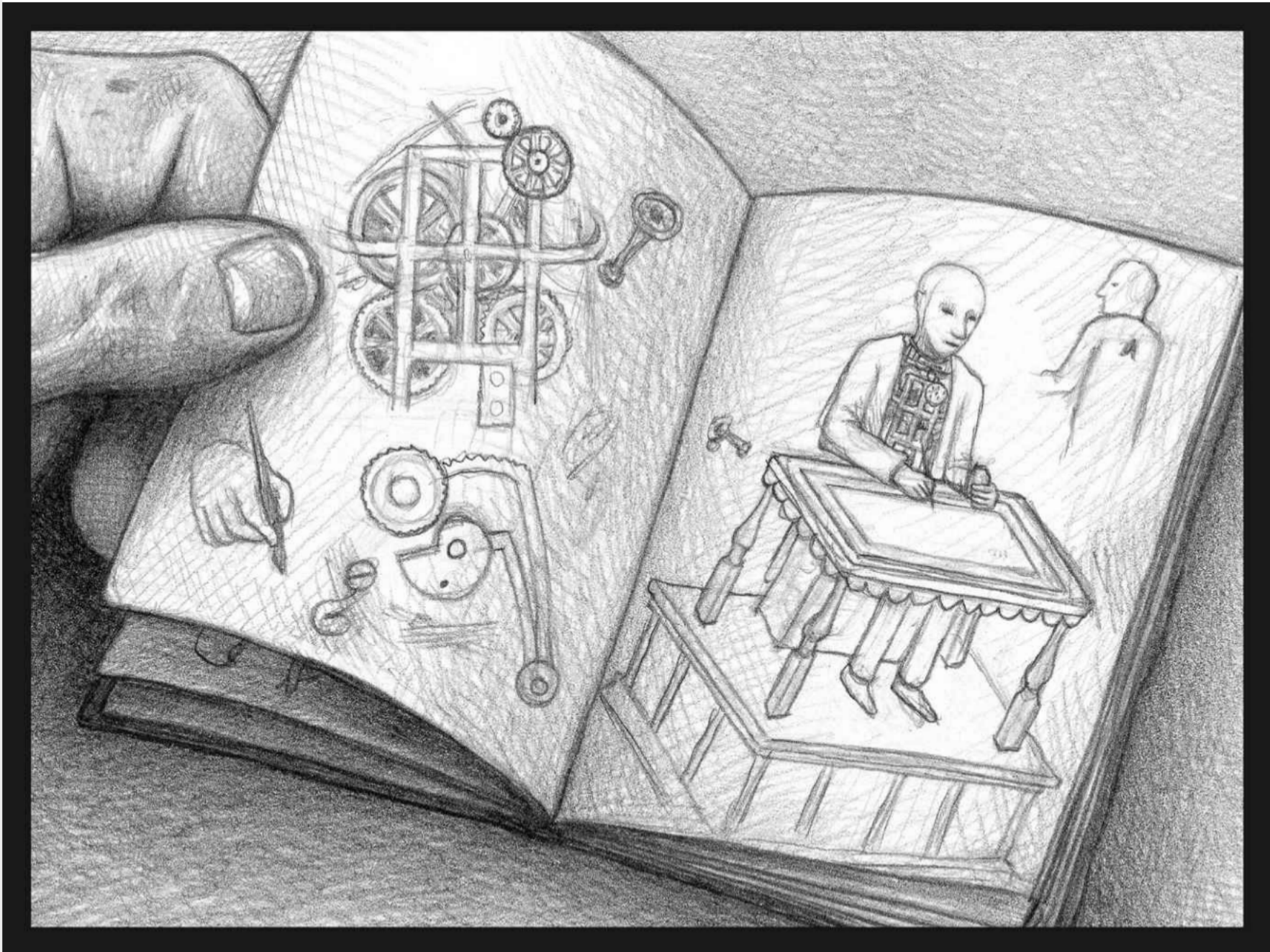
“I don’t have anything of yours. Let me go.”

“Where is the Station Inspector?” the old man yelled down the hallway again. “Why is he never around when he is needed?”

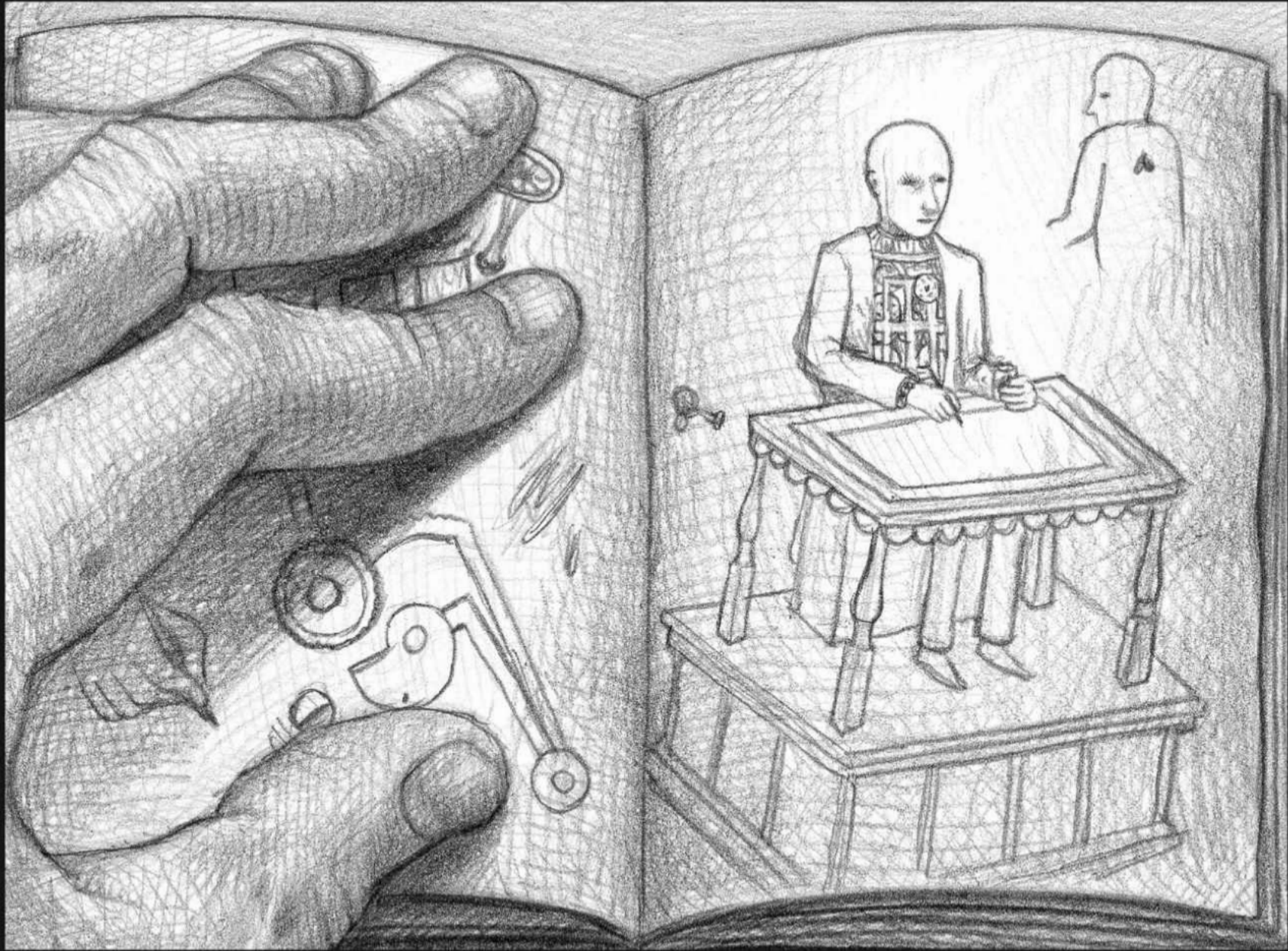
If the Station Inspector, in his green uniform, appeared at the end of the hallway, Hugo knew everything would be over. The boy struggled against the old man, but it was no use. Finally, his hand trembling, Hugo reached into his pocket and pulled out his small, battered cardboard notebook. The cover had been rubbed smooth.

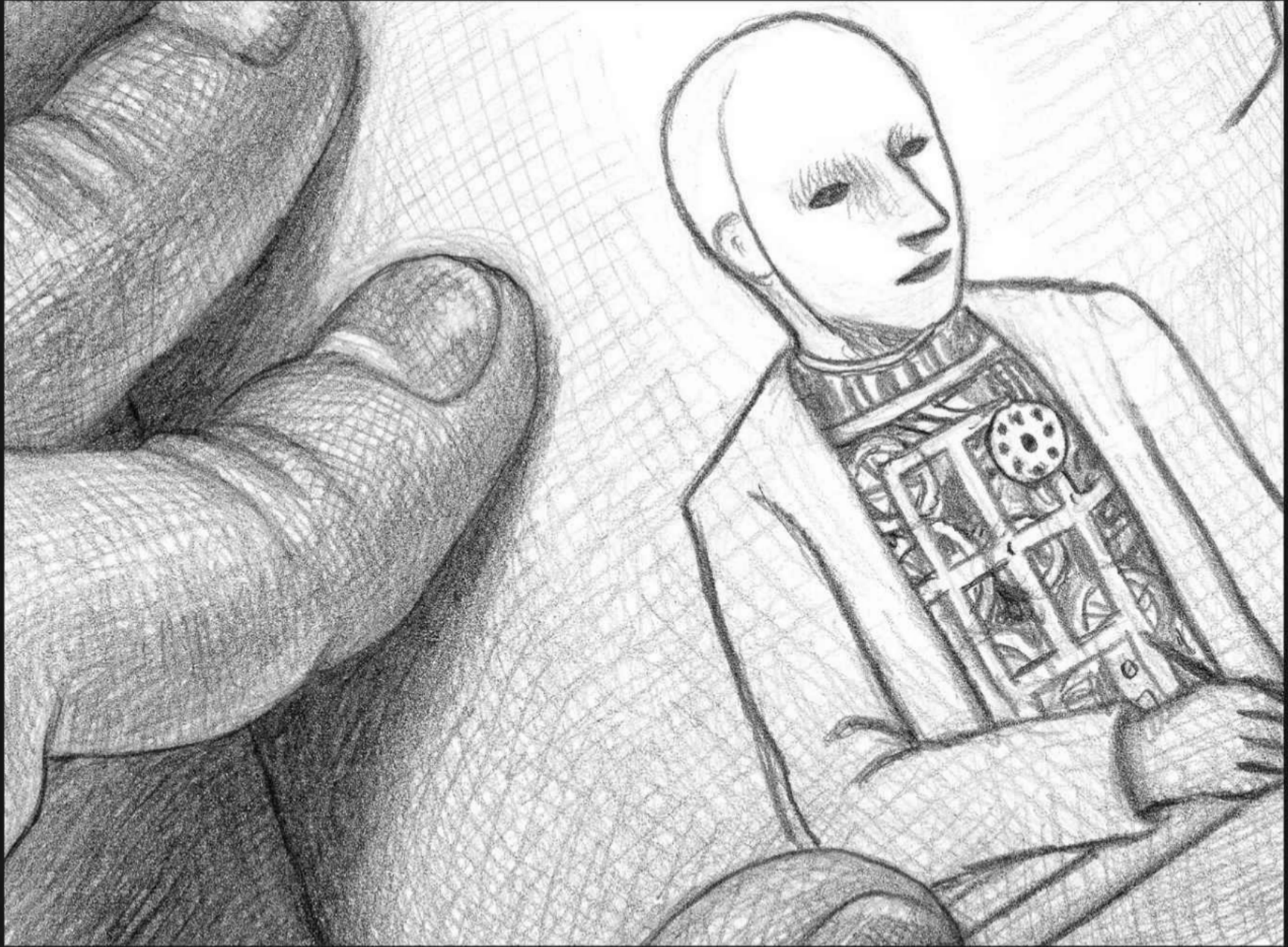
Still holding on to the boy’s arm, the old man snatched the notebook away, set it down out of Hugo’s reach, opened it, and flipped through the pages. One page caught the old man’s eye.



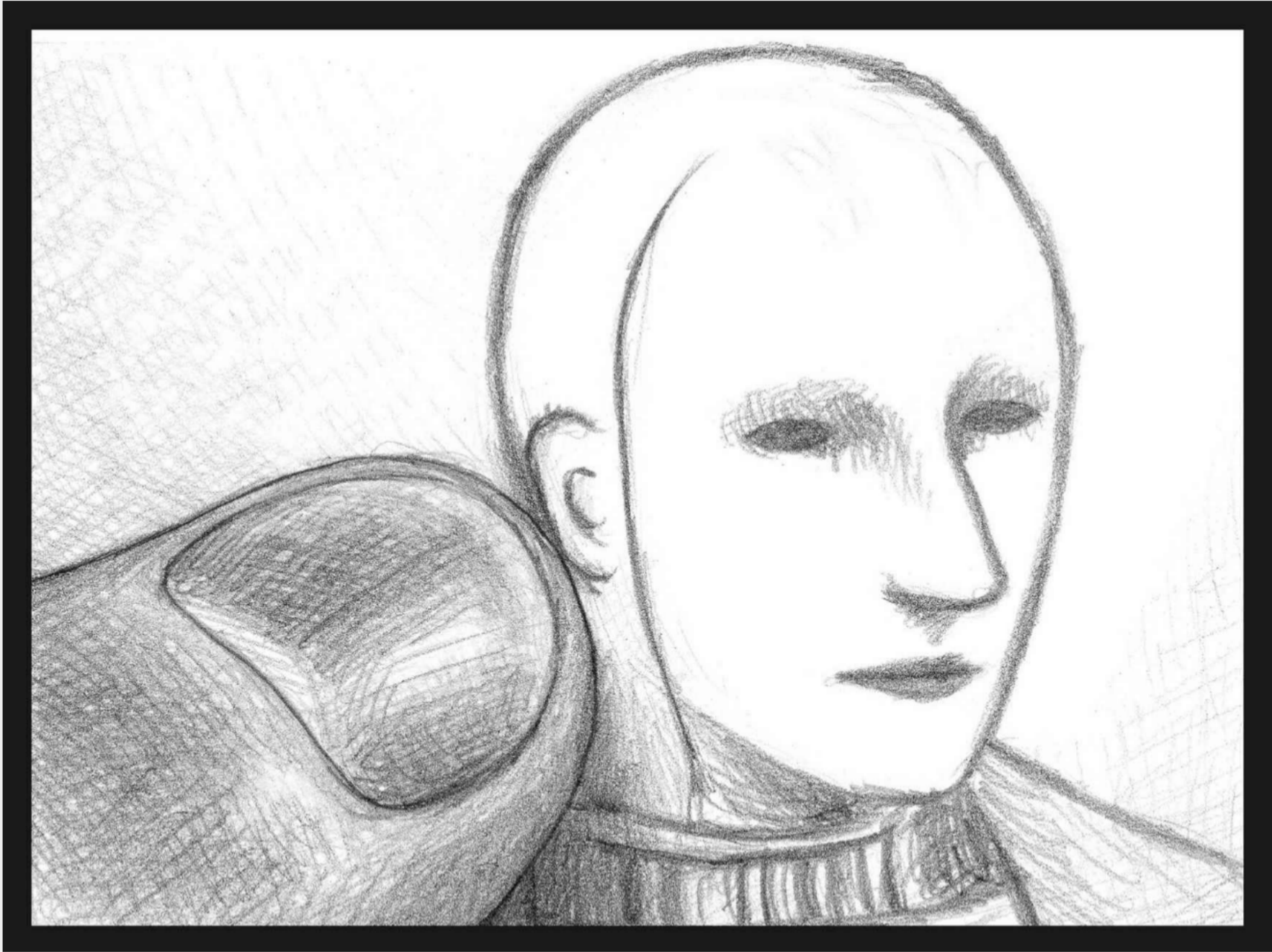












“Give that back to me! It’s mine!” cried Hugo.

“Ghosts . . .” the old man muttered to himself. “I knew they would find me here eventually.” He closed the notebook. The expression on his face changed rapidly, from fear to sadness to anger. “Who are you, boy? Did you draw these pictures?”

Hugo didn’t answer him.

“I said, *did you draw these pictures?*”

Hugo growled again and spit on the floor.

“Who did you steal this notebook from?”

“I didn’t steal it.”

The old man grunted and with a push he finally let go of Hugo’s arm. “Leave me alone, then! Stay away from me and my toy booth.”

Hugo rubbed his arm and stepped backward, accidentally crushing the windup mouse he had dropped.

The old man shuddered at the sound of the breaking toy.

Hugo picked up the broken pieces and placed them on the counter. “I can’t leave without my notebook.”

“It is no longer *your* notebook. It is mine, and I will do with it what I want.” The old man waved Hugo’s box of matches in the air. “Perhaps I will burn it!”

“No!”

The old man collected the contents of Hugo’s

pockets, including the notebook. He placed them in a handkerchief, tied it up, and covered it with his hands. “Then tell me about the drawings. Who did them?”

Hugo said nothing.

The old man slammed a fist down on the counter, shaking all the toys. “Get out of here, you little thief!”

“*You’re* the thief!” Hugo yelled as he turned and ran off.

The old man yelled something after him, but all Hugo heard was the clicking of his own shoes echoing off the station walls.