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opening extract from

The Invention of Hugo Cabret

written by

Brian Selznick

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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.

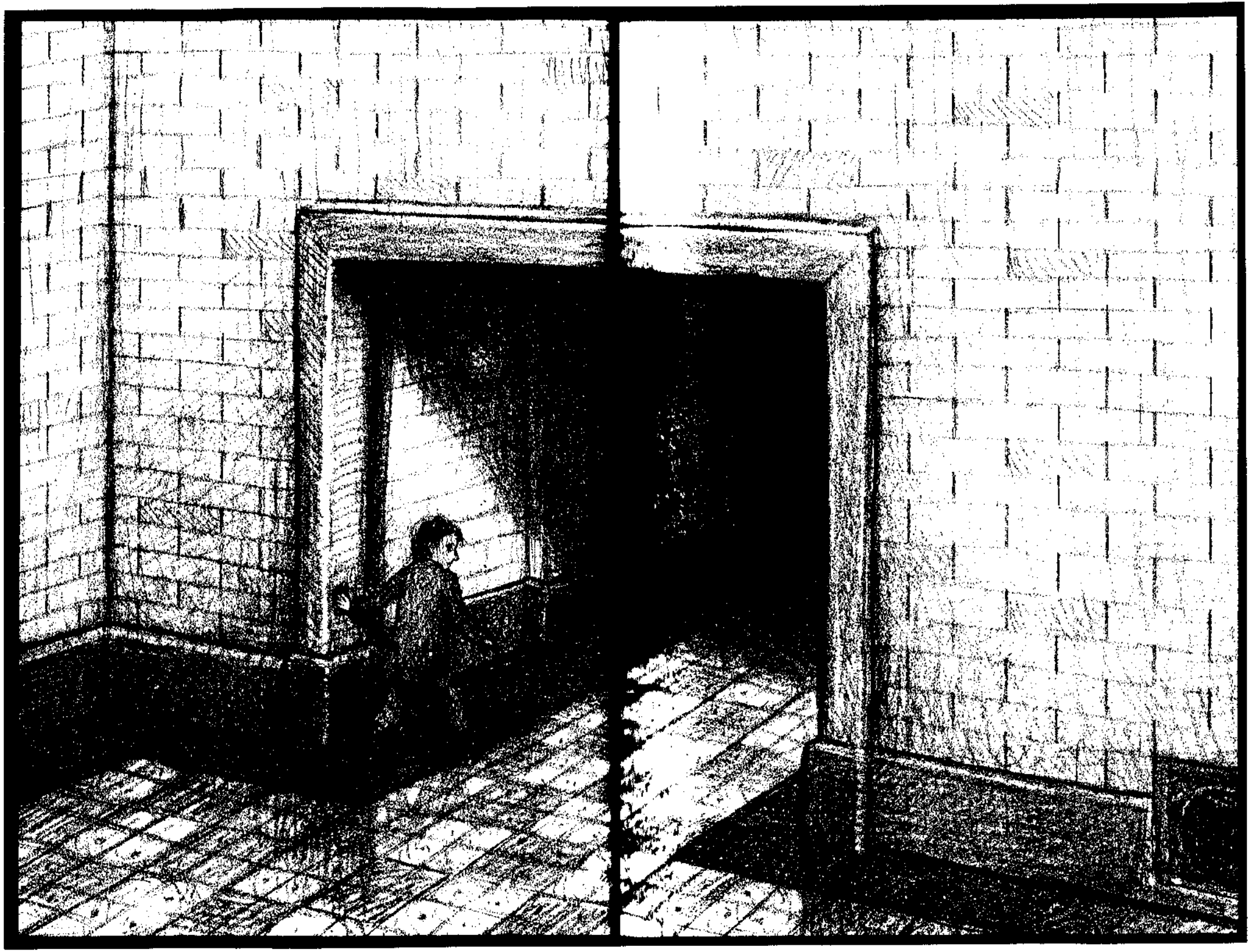
— Professor H. Alcofrisbas

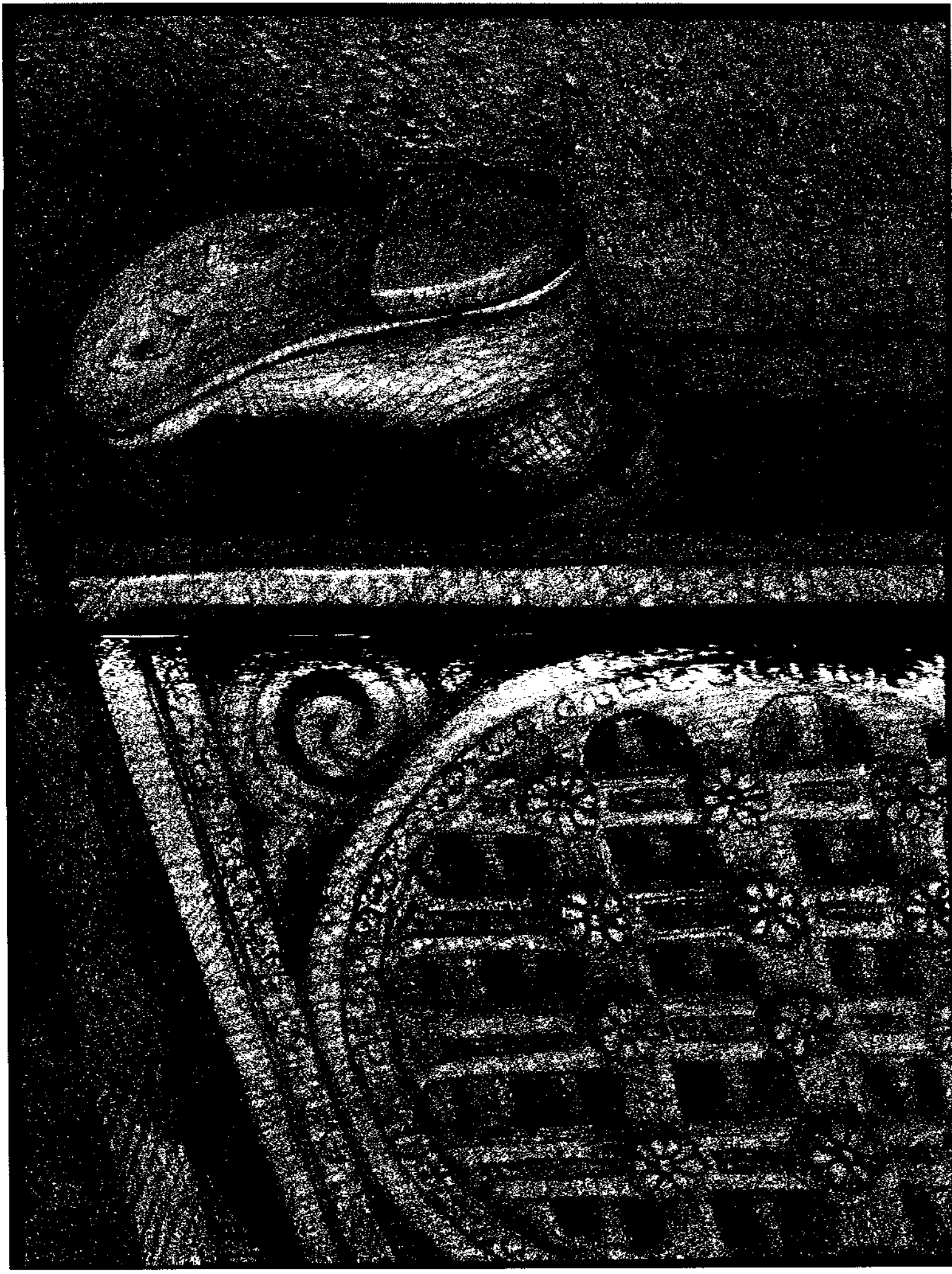


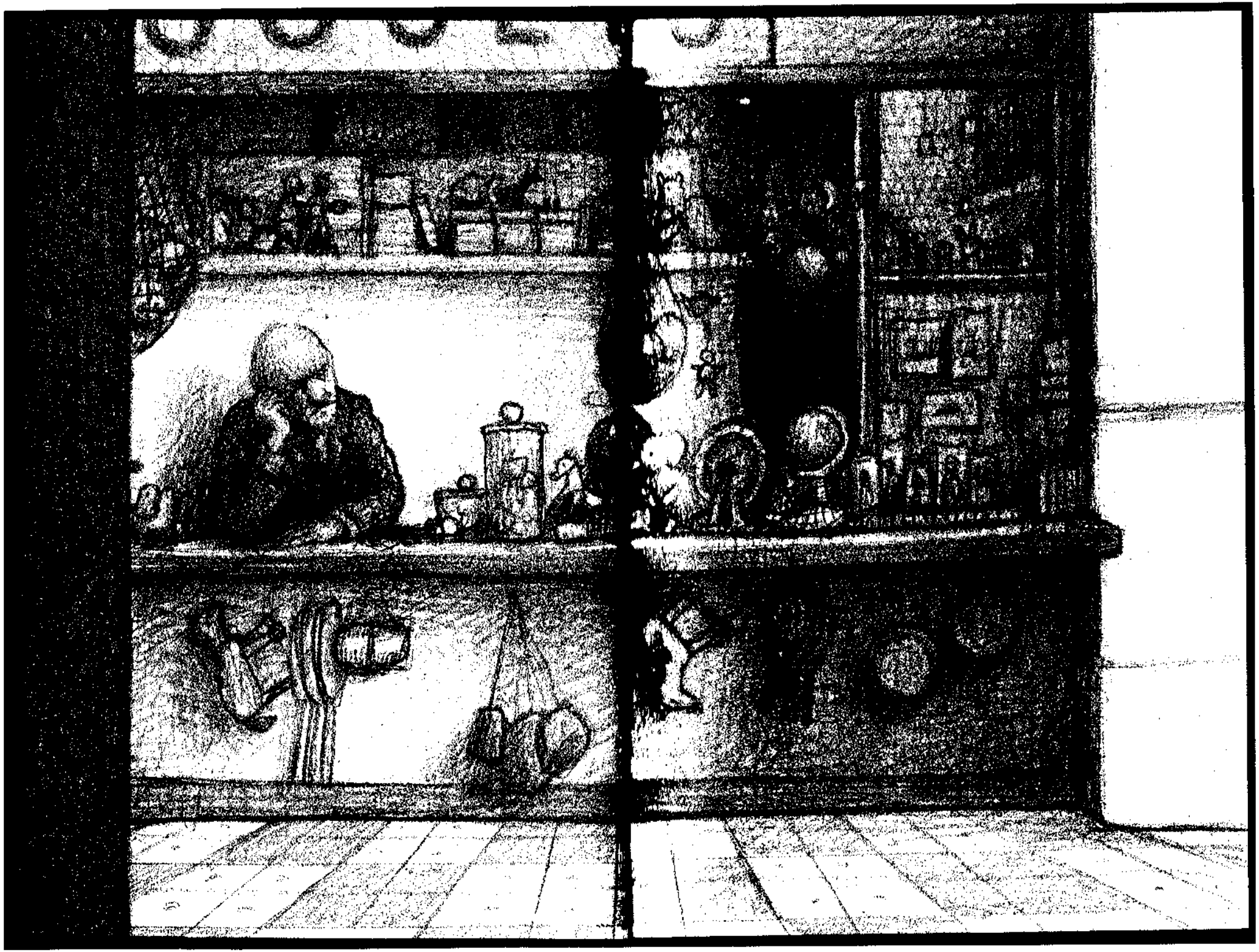
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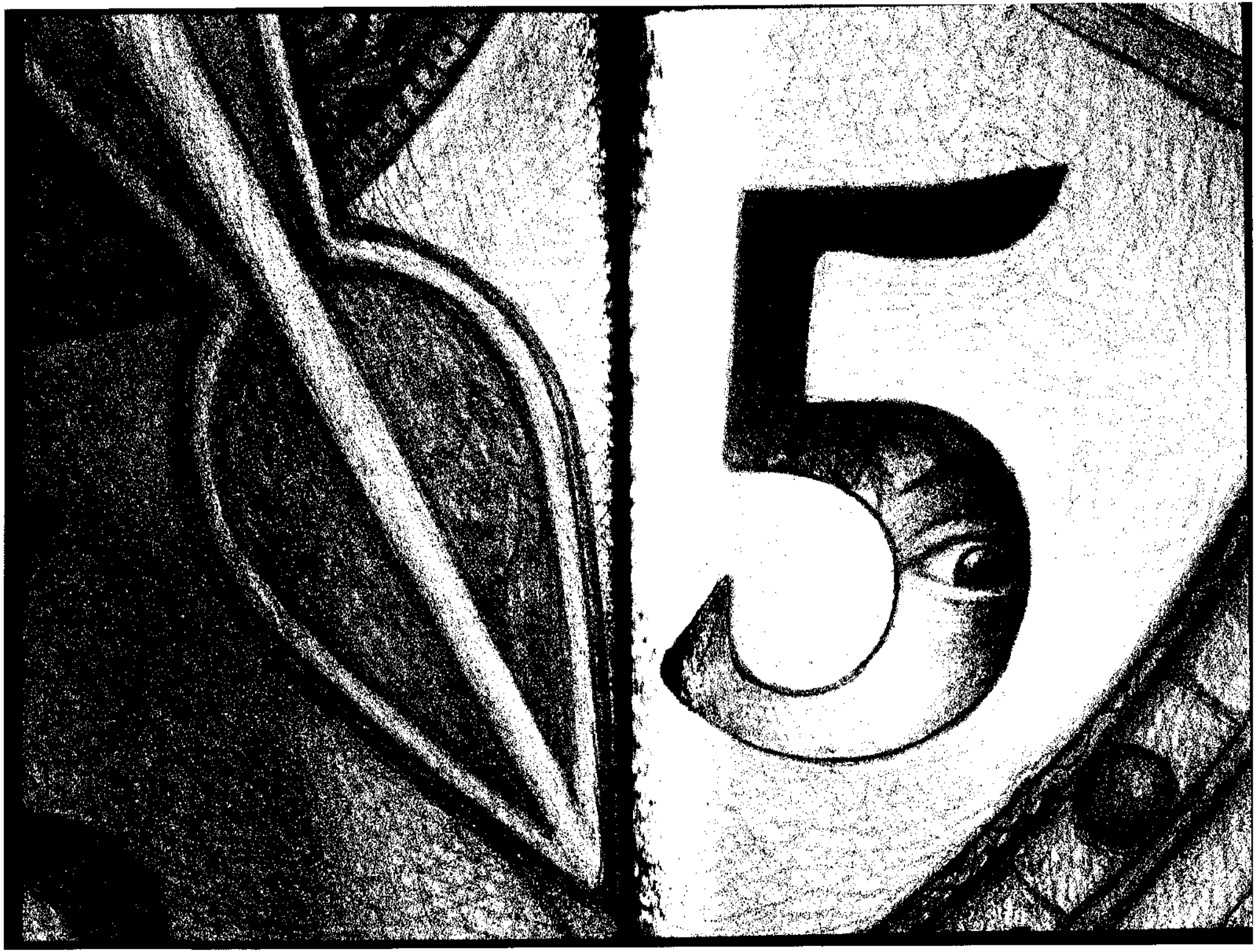


The Thief








5



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.