

COVER ISSUE #9

THE BURGLAR'S BIG HEIST!

CAACKLIN!

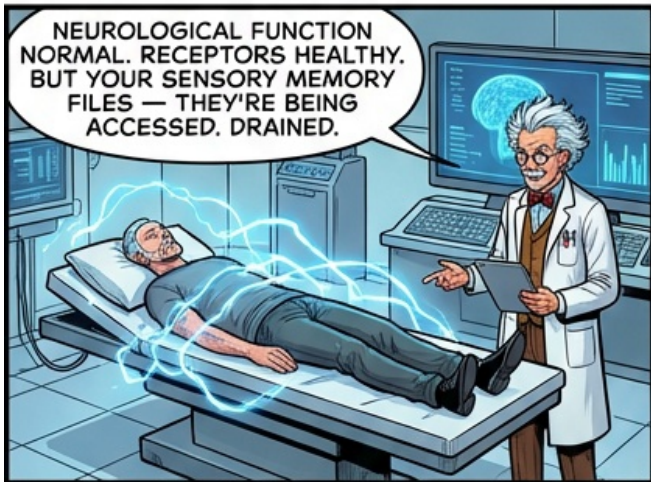
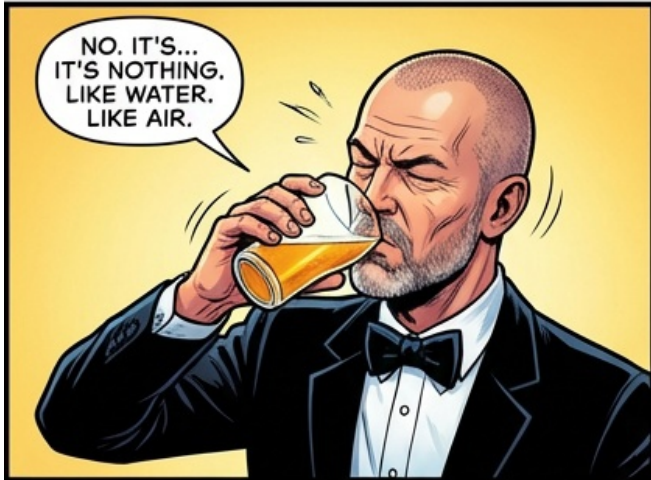
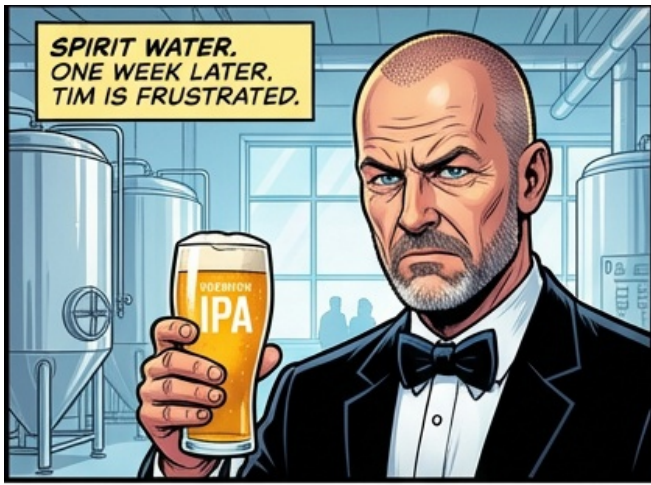
BUNGS

LONG GROVE, IL.









THREE DAYS LATER, TIM IS... DIFFERENT. WITHOUT TASTE AND SMELL, HE'S DISCONNECTED. FOOD IS FUEL. SCENTS ARE DATA. HE'S BECOME PURELY INTELLECTUAL.



I CAN'T TASTE IT, BUT I CAN CALCULATE IT. PREDICT IT. PERFECT IT.



LISA TOUCHES HIS SHOULDER. HE FLINCHES — NOT FROM PAIN, BUT FROM THE LACK OF ASSOCIATION. HER TOUCH DOESN'T TRIGGER MEMORY, COMFORT, DESIRE. IT'S JUST PRESSURE.



LISA, DON'T BE EMOTIONAL. WE NEED TO FIND THE THIEF. I'VE MAPPED THE INCIDENTS. THEY'RE FOLLOWING THE OLD BOOTLEGGERS TUNNELS.



LONG GROVE, IL
SECRET: DURING PROHIBITION, THE VILLAGE WAS A HUB FOR SMUGGLING. TUNNELS CONNECT THE COVERED BRIDGE, SPIRIT WATER BREWERY (THEN A BARN), AND HALF THE DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS.



I'M GOING IN. TONIGHT.



YOU CAN'T. YOU'RE COMPROMISED. YOU CAN'T SMELL DANGER, CAN'T TASTE POISON—

AND YOU CAN'T PROTECT ME FROM EVERYTHING!



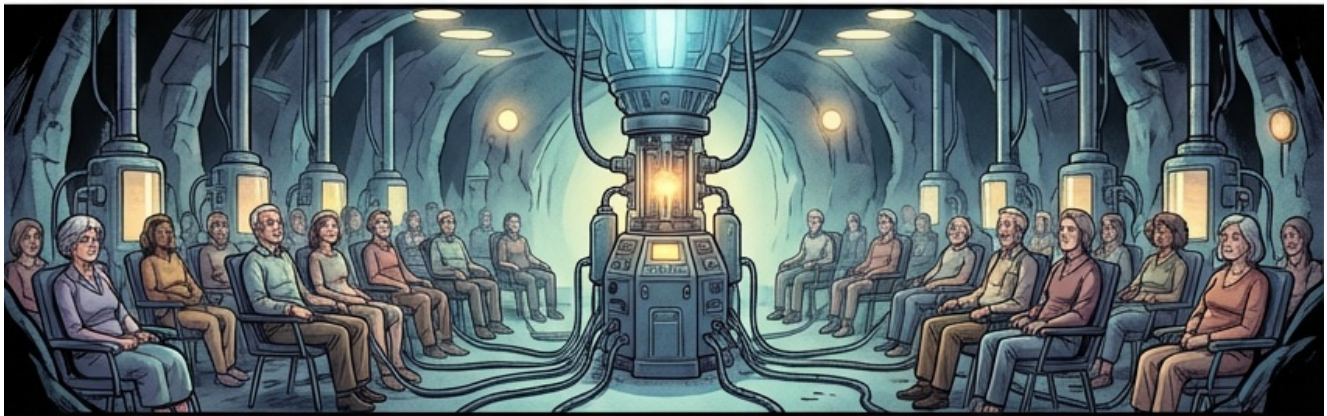
I'M SORRY. I JUST... I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM WITHOUT THIS. AND I NEED TO FIND OUT.

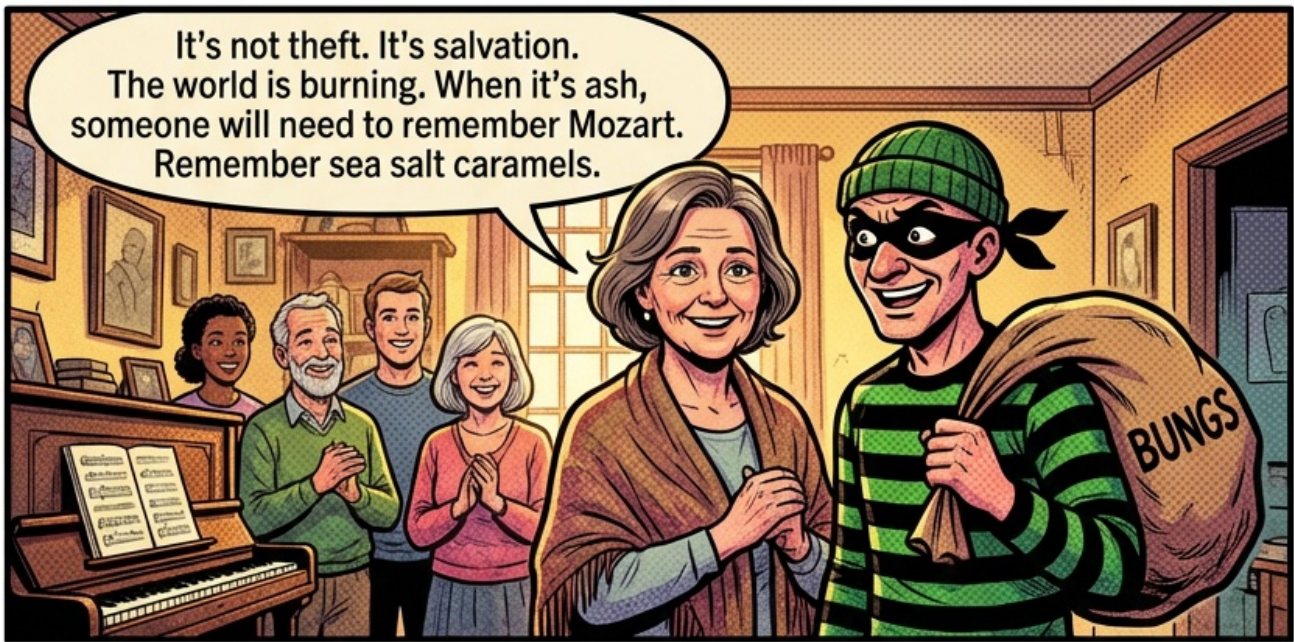


THEN WE GO TOGETHER. BUT TIM — IF YOU CHANGE, IF YOU BECOME SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T NEED ANYONE... THAT'S NOT YOU. THAT'S THE THEFT TALKING.



THE TUNNELS













VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE, IL



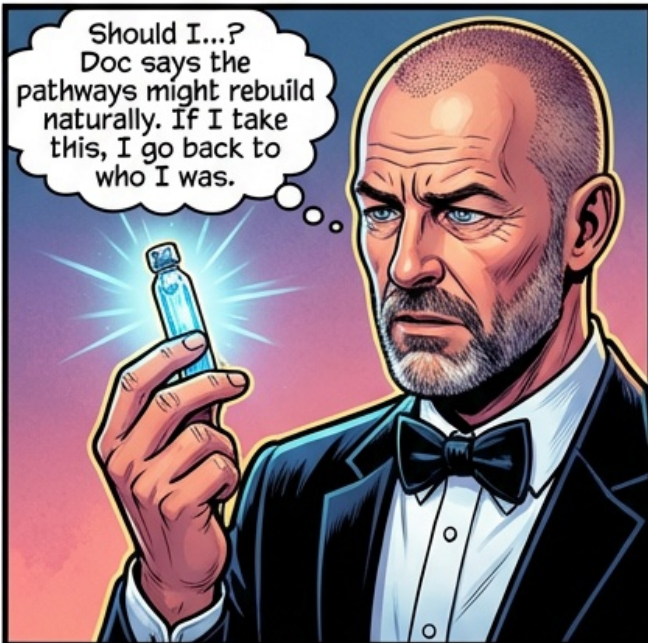
I just wanted to save something. I lost my family. I wanted to keep the world from losing anything else.

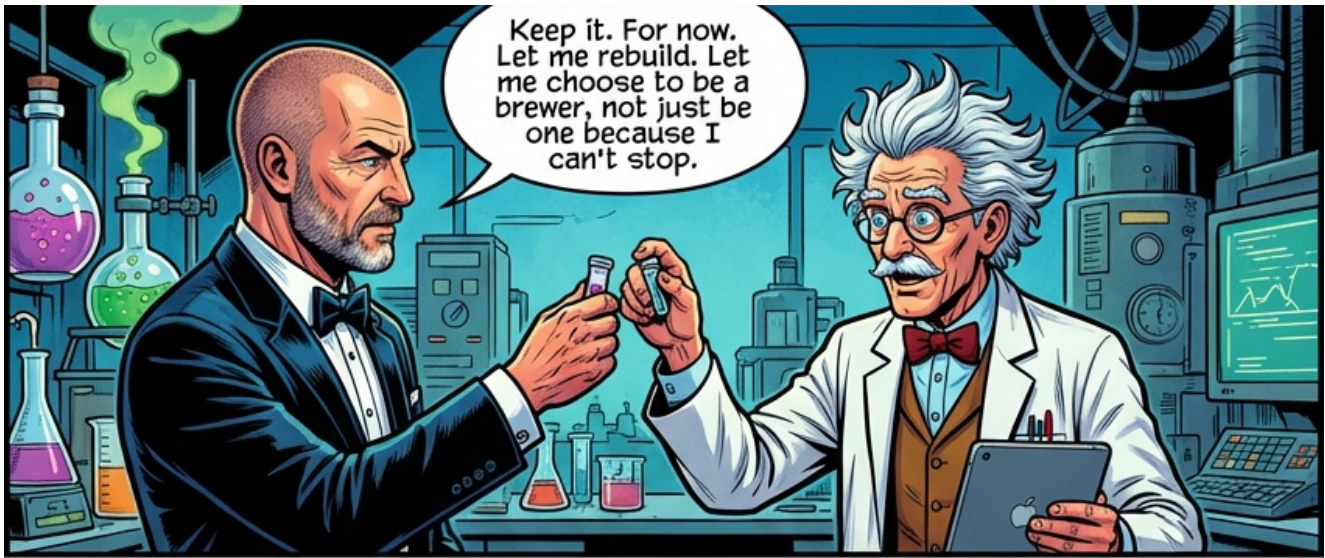


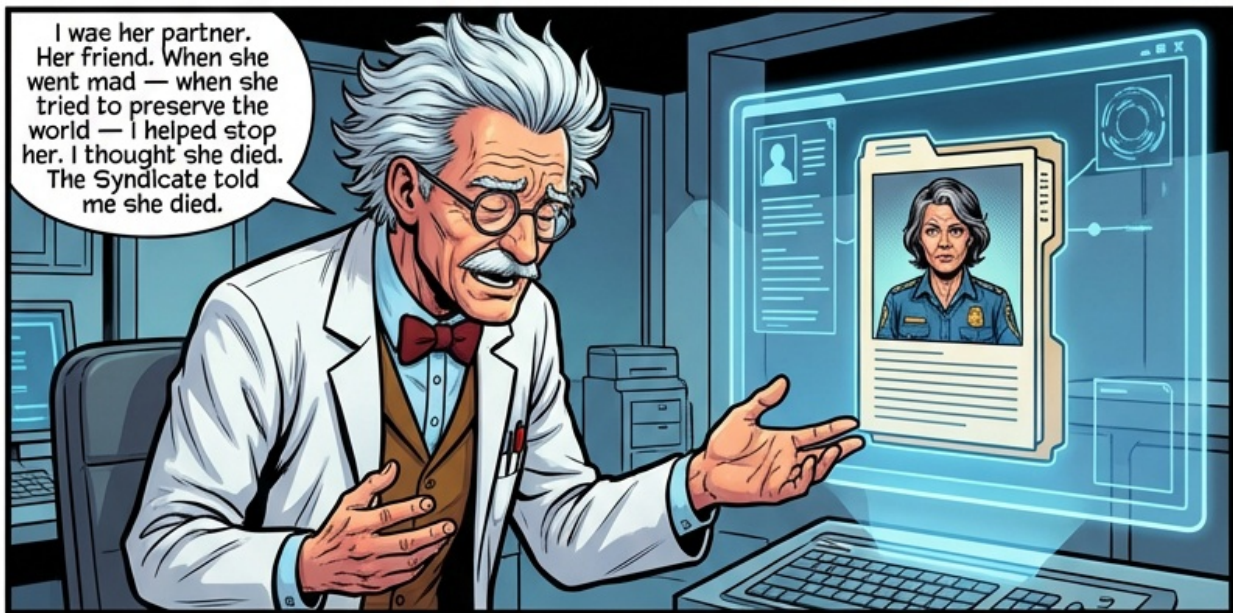
Then live in it. Taste it. Even when it hurts. Especially when it hurts.

In the Village of Long Grove, IL.

The Police arrive. The volunteers are treated. The sensory memories — stored in crystal vials — begin returning to their owners.











MAYA.

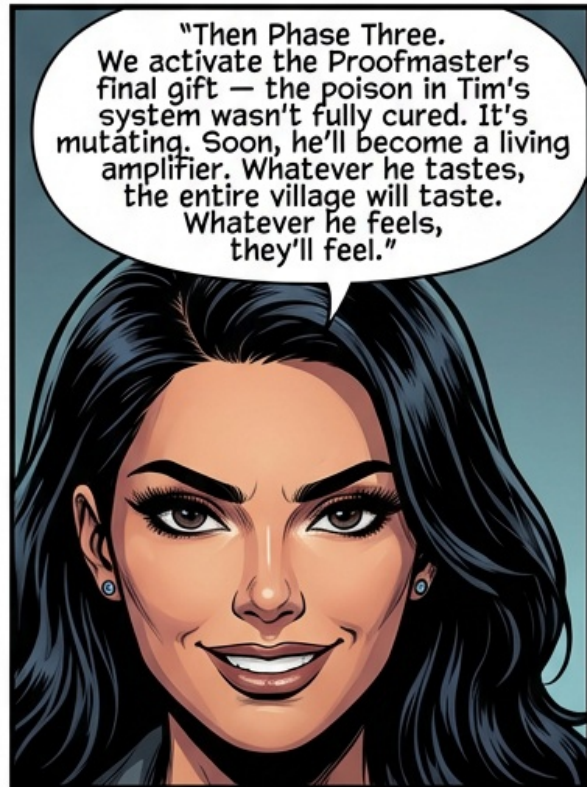


Not Maya. Someone who looks exactly like her.

"The Bung Thief failed. But we confirmed it — Elena Vance is alive. Her daughter is growing stronger. The convergence approaches."



The Proofmaster and Blender were distractions. The real test was the Bung Thief — could Lisa function when her lover was diminished? She can. She's dangerous.



"Then Phase Three. We activate the Proofmaster's final gift — the poison in Tim's system wasn't fully cured. It's mutating. Soon, he'll become a living amplifier. Whatever he tastes, the entire village will taste. Whatever he feels, they'll feel."



VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE, IL.

Join me, daughter. Preserve this moment. Keep them all safe forever.



IN THE VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE:
FIGHTING THE PLAGUE, THROUGH THE PAIN...
I CHOOSE HIM. UNCERTAIN. GENUINE.



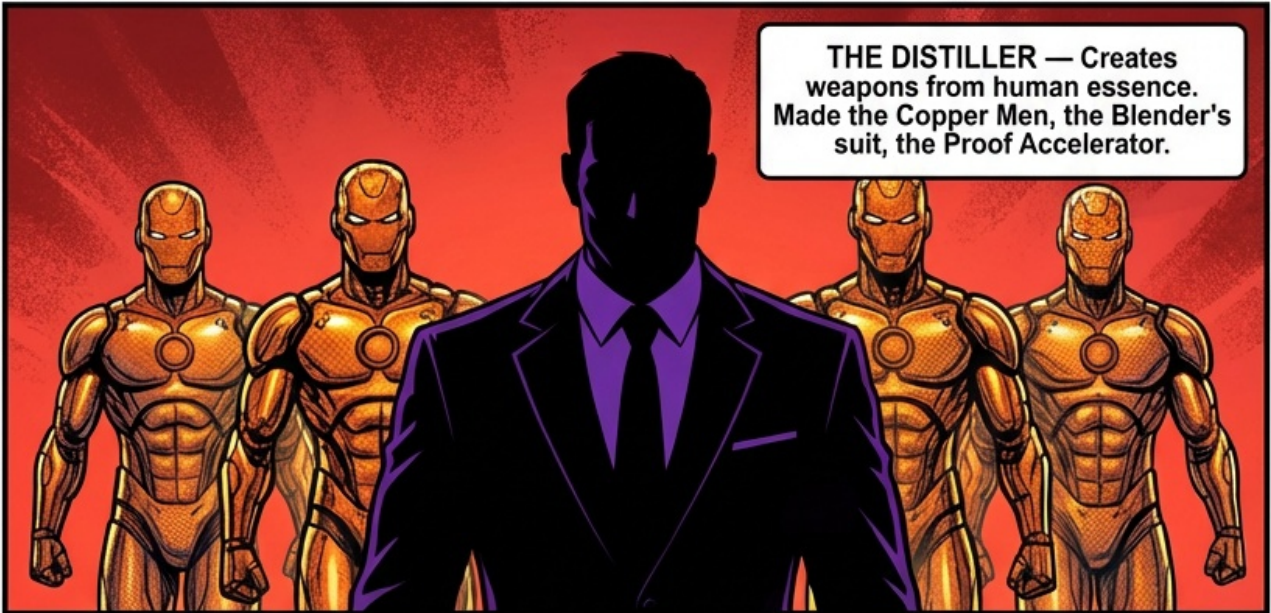
THE SIX SHADOWS REVEALED

THE SPIRIT WAR

THE PRESERVER (Elena Vance? Lisa's mother) — Leader. Wants to freeze the world in a "perfect" moment.



THE DISTILLER — Creates weapons from human essence. Made the Copper Men, the Blender's suit, the Proof Accelerator.



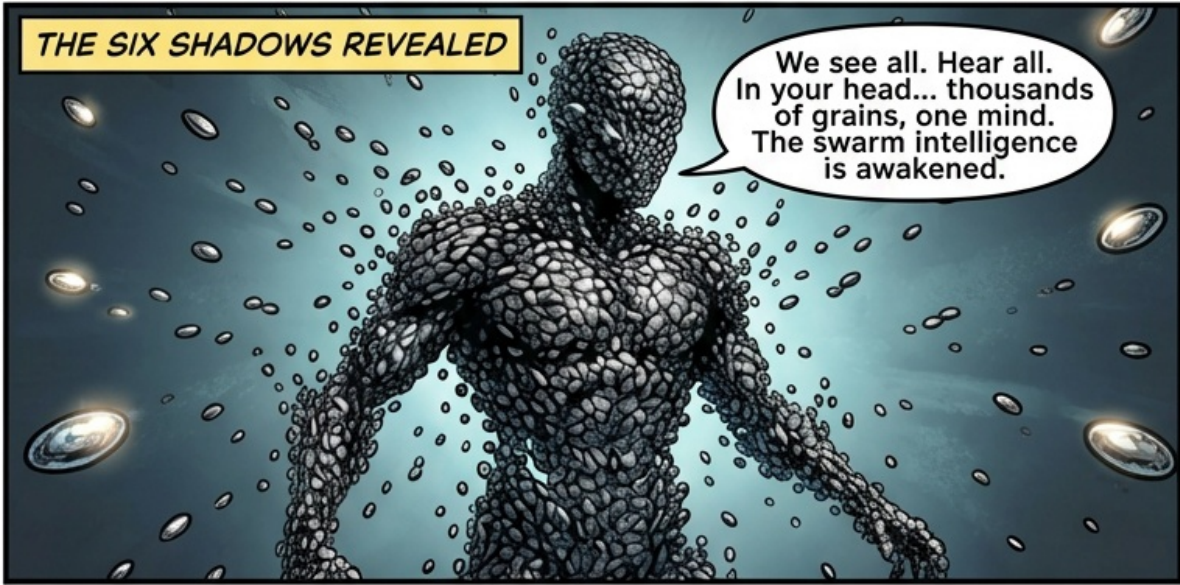
THE CASK — Immortal being, body is a wooden shell containing countless souls. Feeds on experience.

I contain millennia millennia...
The Cask is eternal.



THE SPIRIT WAR

THE SIX SHADOWS REVEALED



We see all. Hear all.
In your head... thousands
of grains, one mind.
The swarm intelligence
is awakened.



The lost
potential... I am
the untamed creation.
The most powerful, the
most unpredictable...
and I have arrived.



I am **THE BRAIN!**
School Teacher that
knows everything just
by touching you... all
your secrets are mine!
The Spirit War
begins **NOW!**



THIS HISTORIC VILLAGE IS MINE!
LONG GROVE WILL BOW TO THE CASK!

LONG GROVE, IL

LONG GROVE, ILLINOIS

THE VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE, IL:
UNDER SIEGE!

THIS VILLAGE
IS NOW MINE,
PUNY HUMANS!

NOT ON
MY WATCH!
I AM LISA,
AND YOUR REIGN
OF TERROR
ENDS HERE!

CRASH!

BOOM!

ZAP!

ZAP!

