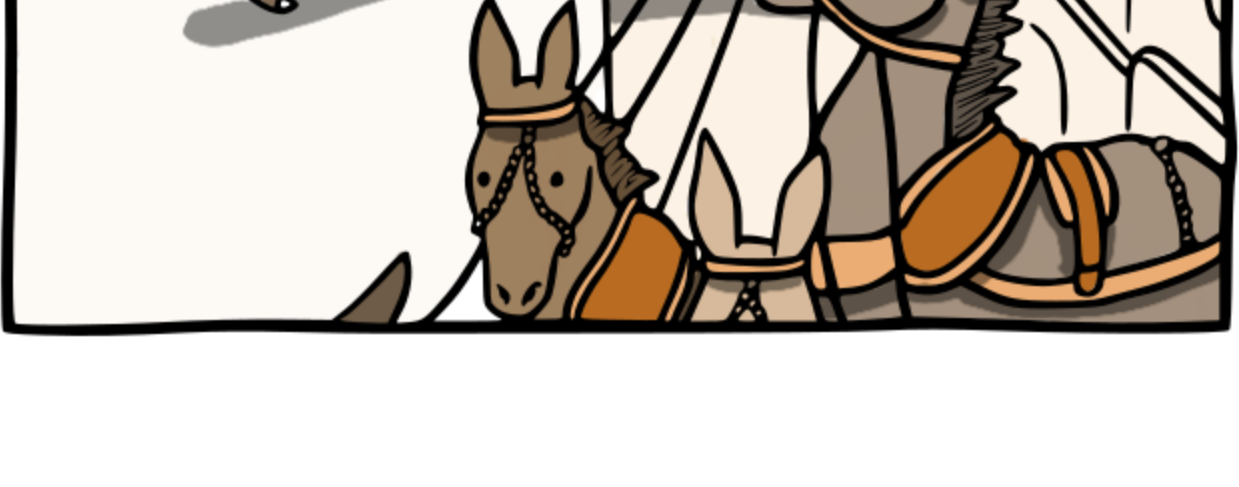




# BLACK ELK

## The Native American Medicine Man Arrested on Suspicion of Being Jack the Ripper

In May 1887, William "Buffalo Bill" Cody brought his wild west show of gunslinging and horsemanship to England.



It was part of the American Exhibition, a world's fair held in Earl's Court, London, to coincide with the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.



He brought with him a band of Native Americans from a number of different tribes, including the Sioux, Cheyennes and Ogalalas.



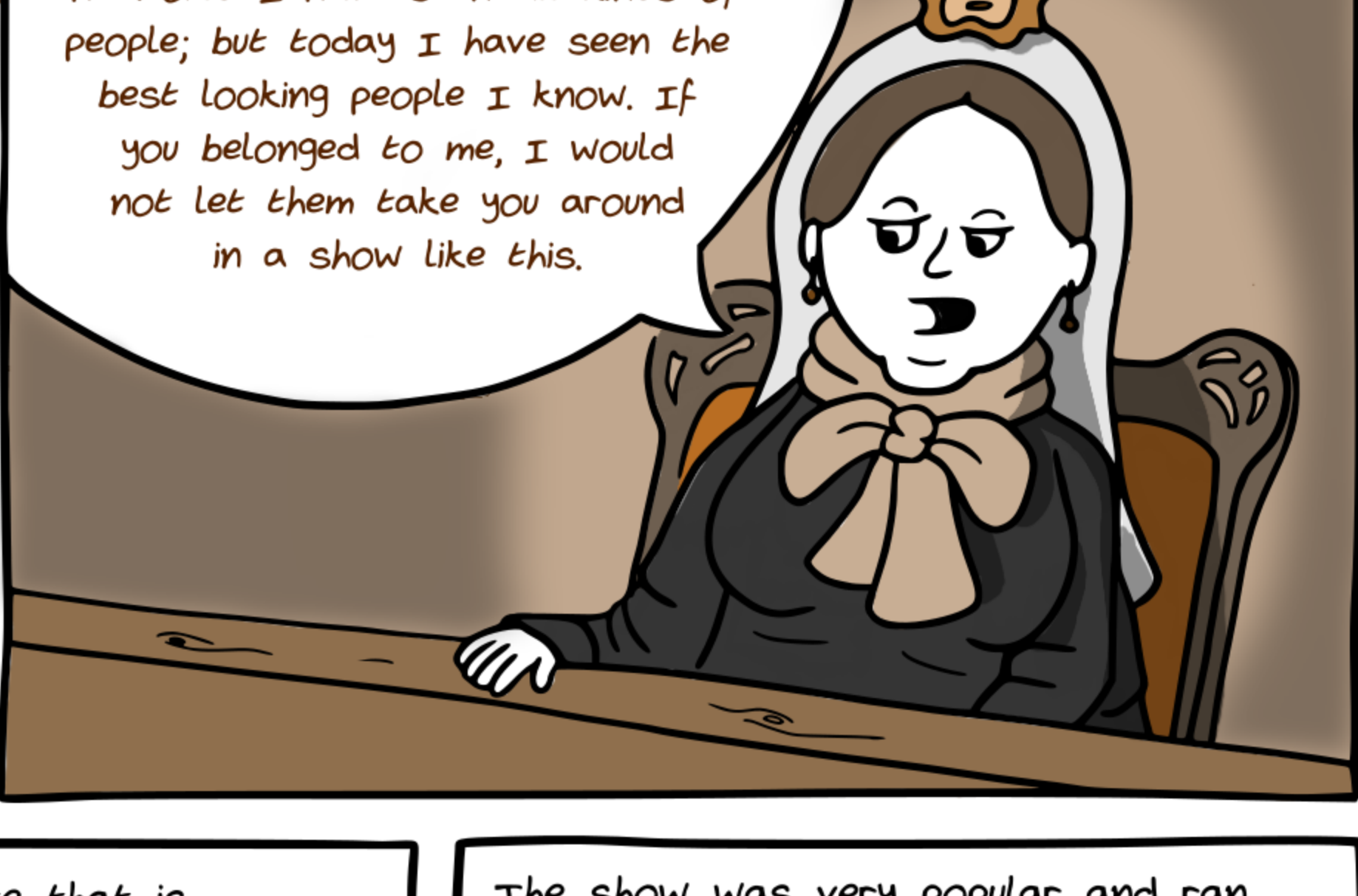
Among them, was the medicine and holy man Black Elk of the Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe, seen here in 1937 aged about 74.



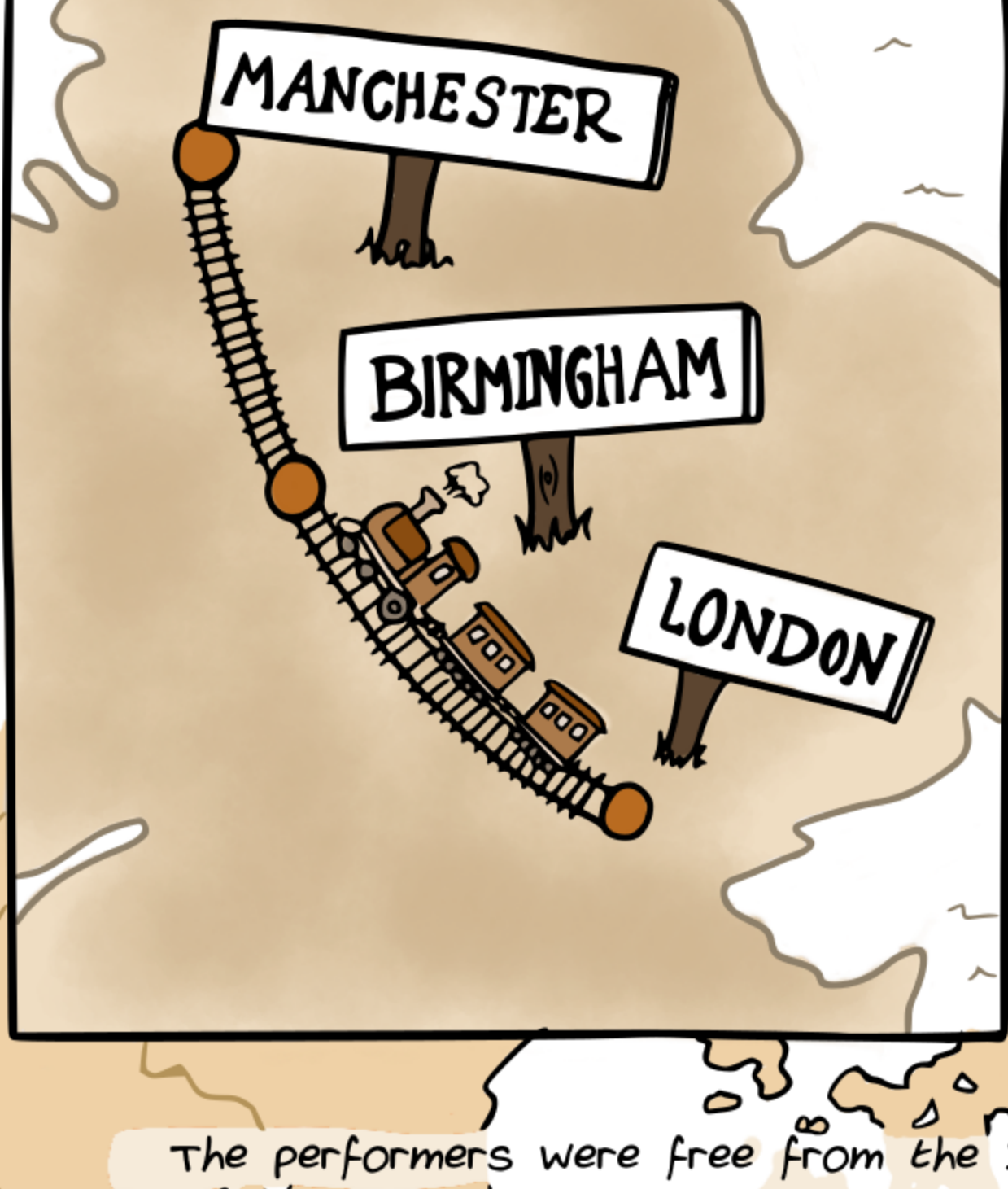
On the 11th of May 1887, a special performance of the show was given for Queen Victoria and several other members of European royalty. Black Elk remembered the event very fondly. He called Queen Victoria "Grandmother England".



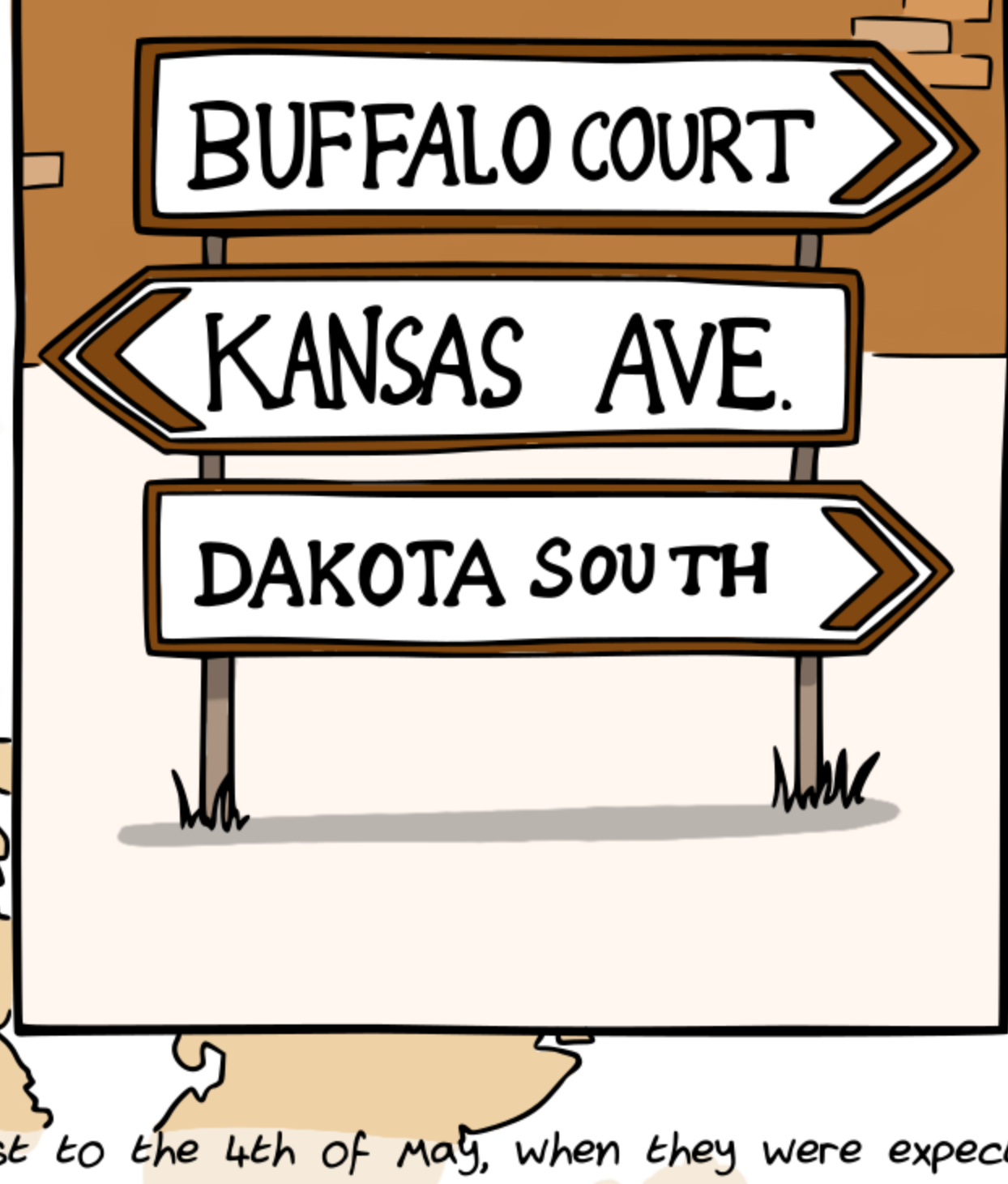
After they had danced, the Queen spoke to the performers



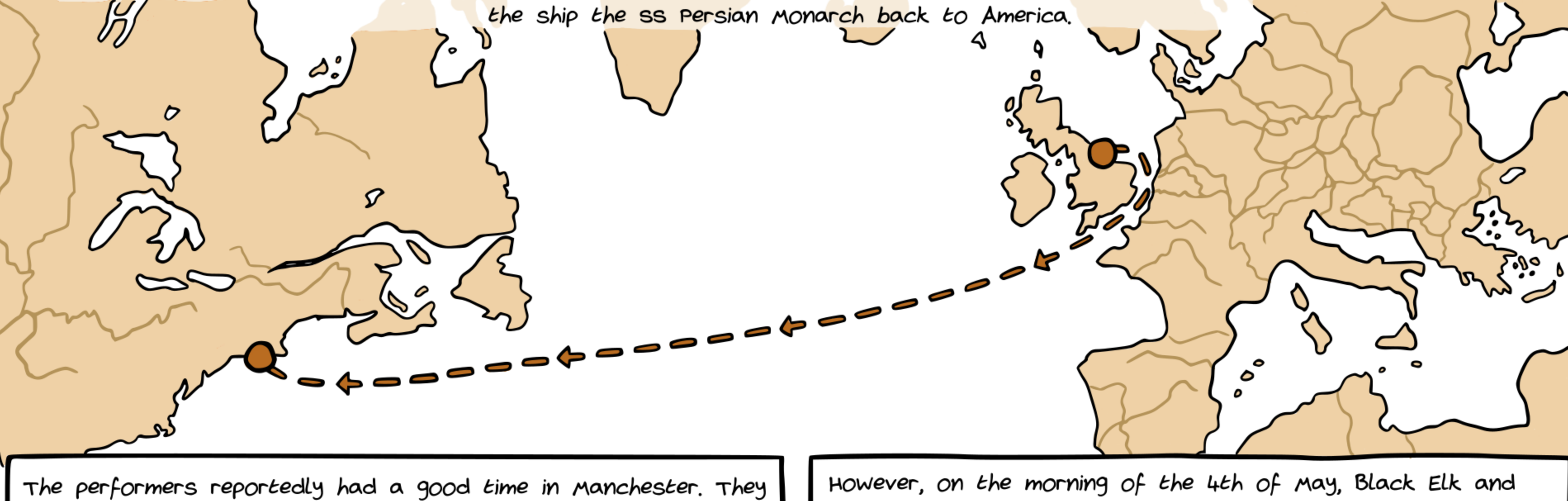
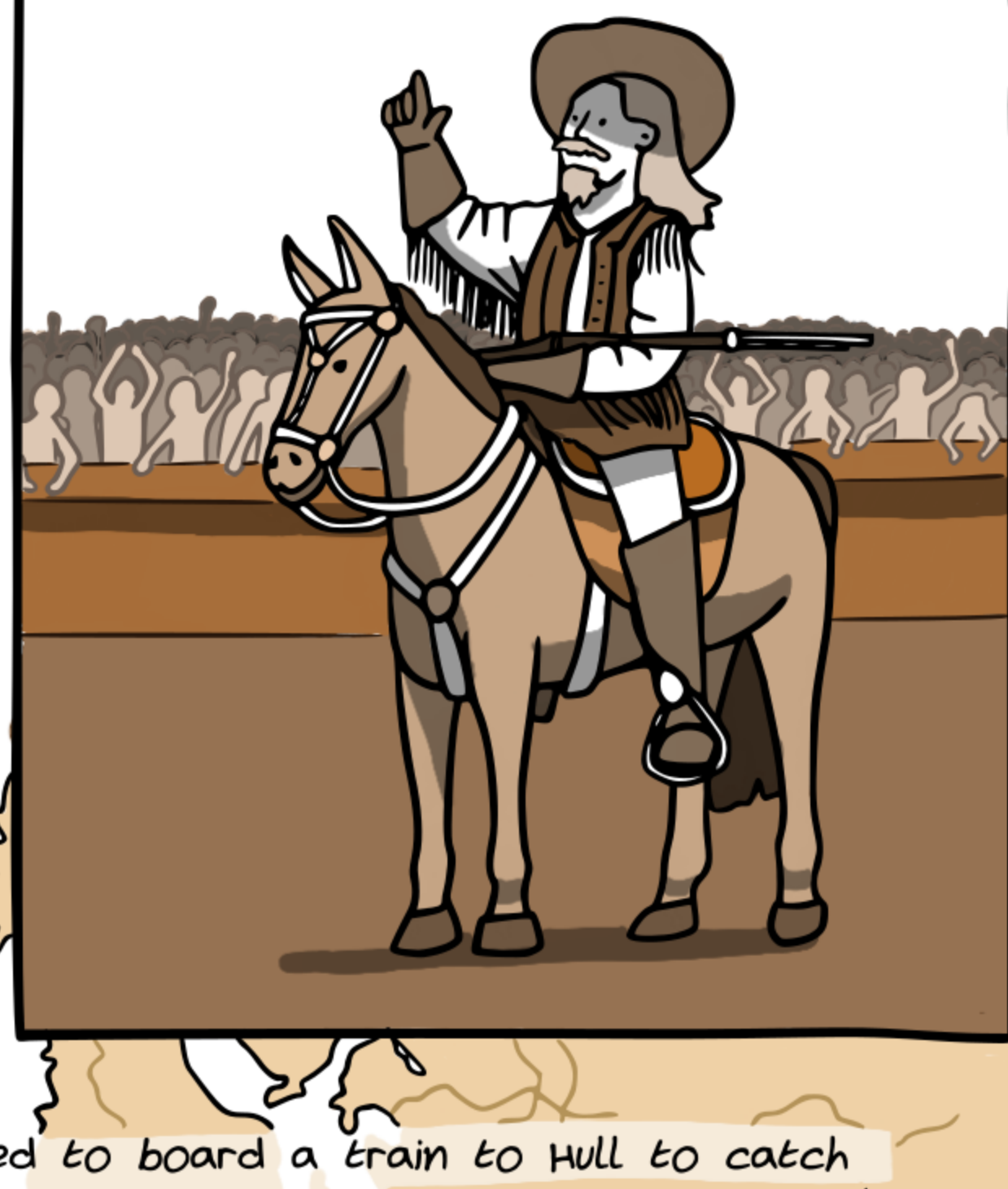
From London the show toured to Birmingham and then Manchester, specifically Salford.



They occupied the site that is presently home to the Lowry Centre; a legacy you can still see in some existing Salford street names.



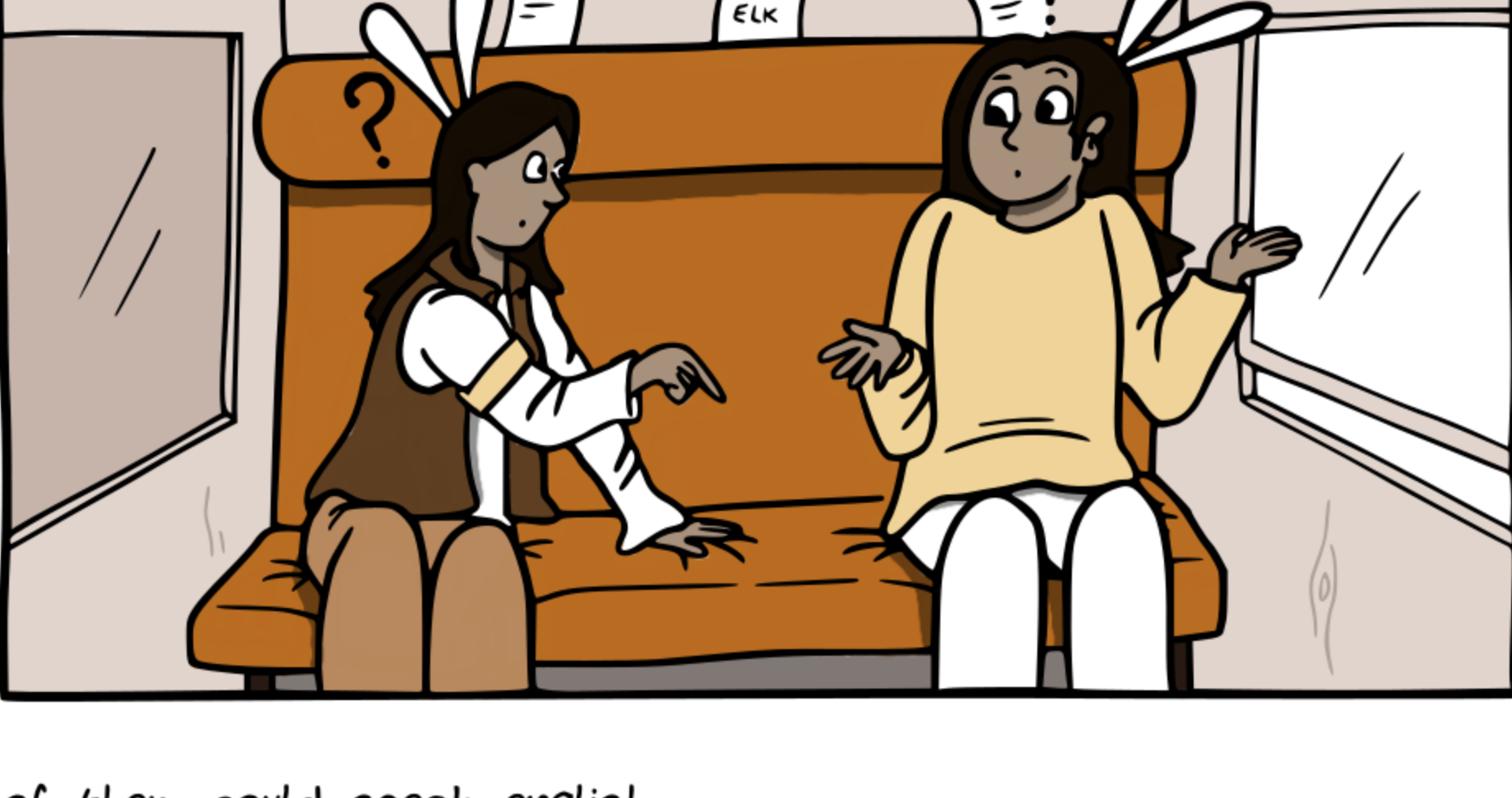
The show was very popular and ran for 5 months, performing to vast crowds. The closing performance was given on the 30th April. William Cody was given a standing ovation.



The performers reportedly had a good time in Manchester. They rode through the streets on their horses, and even tried out the local tram system.



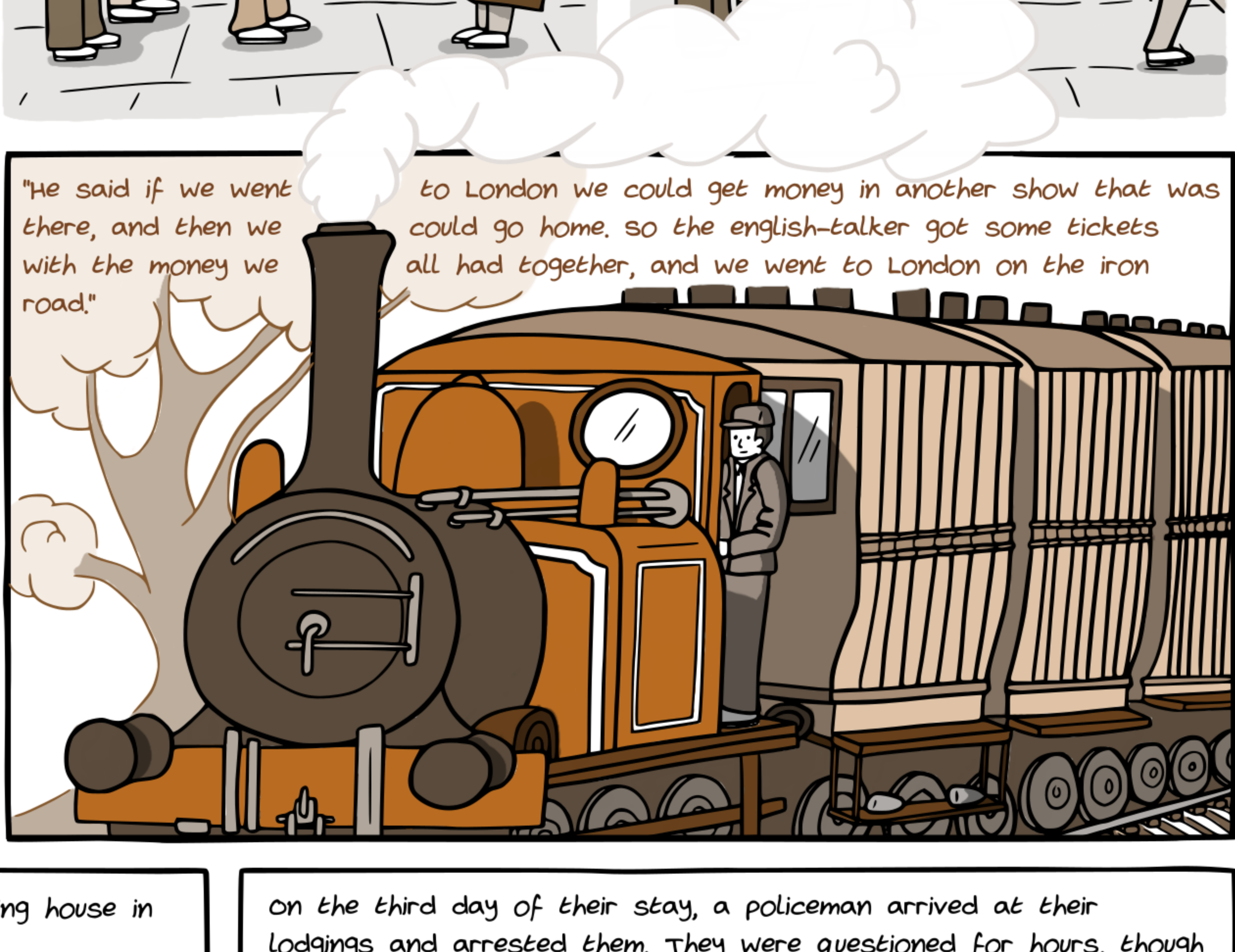
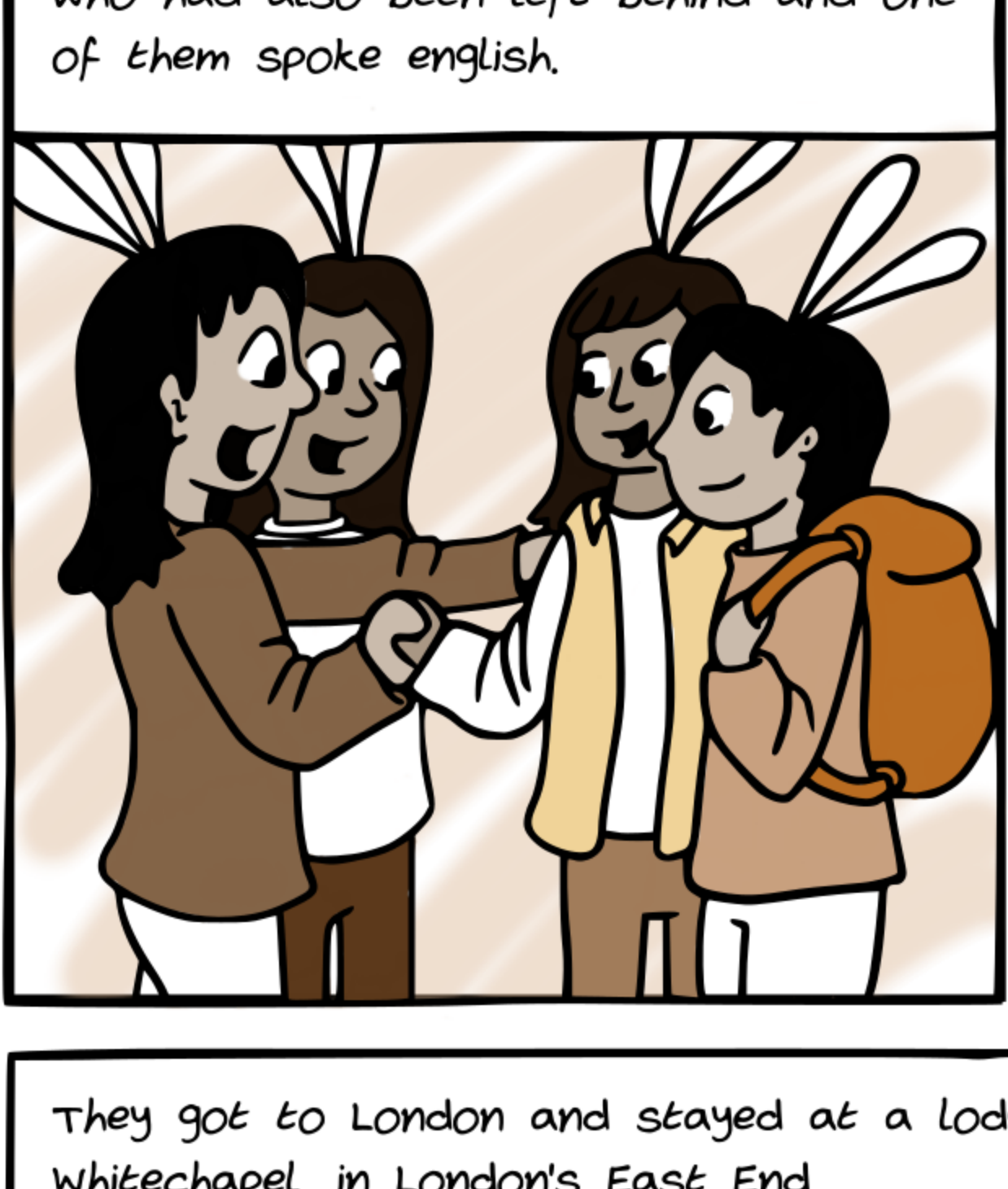
However, on the morning of the 4th of May, Black Elk and his three friends High Bear, Two Elk and Picket Pin (also known as Red Cow) got lost in Manchester, missed the train and, consequently, their boat home.



To add to their difficulty, none of them could speak English.



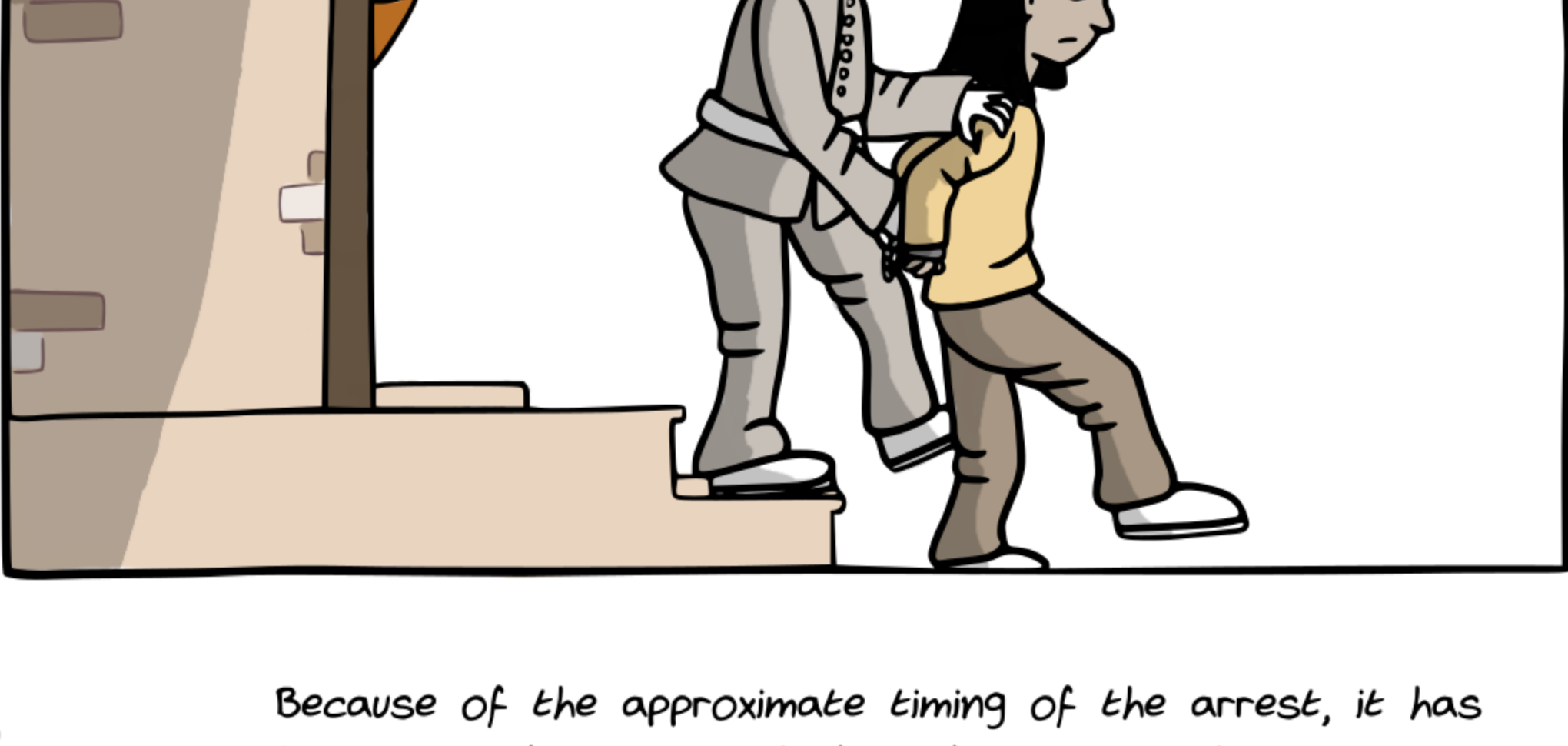
Luckily, they found two other Lakotas that have never been left behind and one of them spoke English.



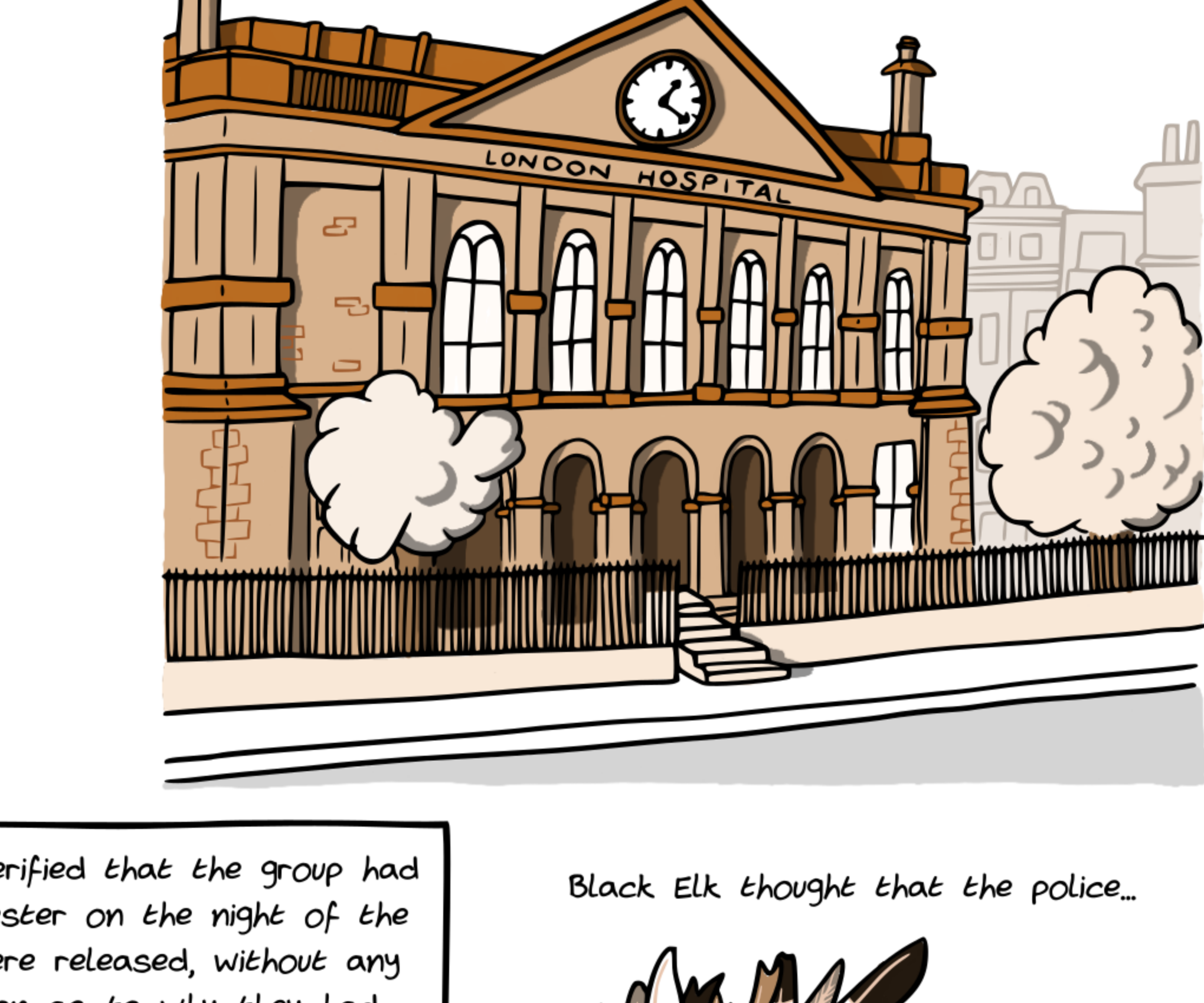
They got to London and stayed at a lodging house in Whitechapel, in London's East End.



On the third day of their stay, a policeman arrived at their lodgings and arrested them. They were questioned for hours, though they were all confused about what was happening.



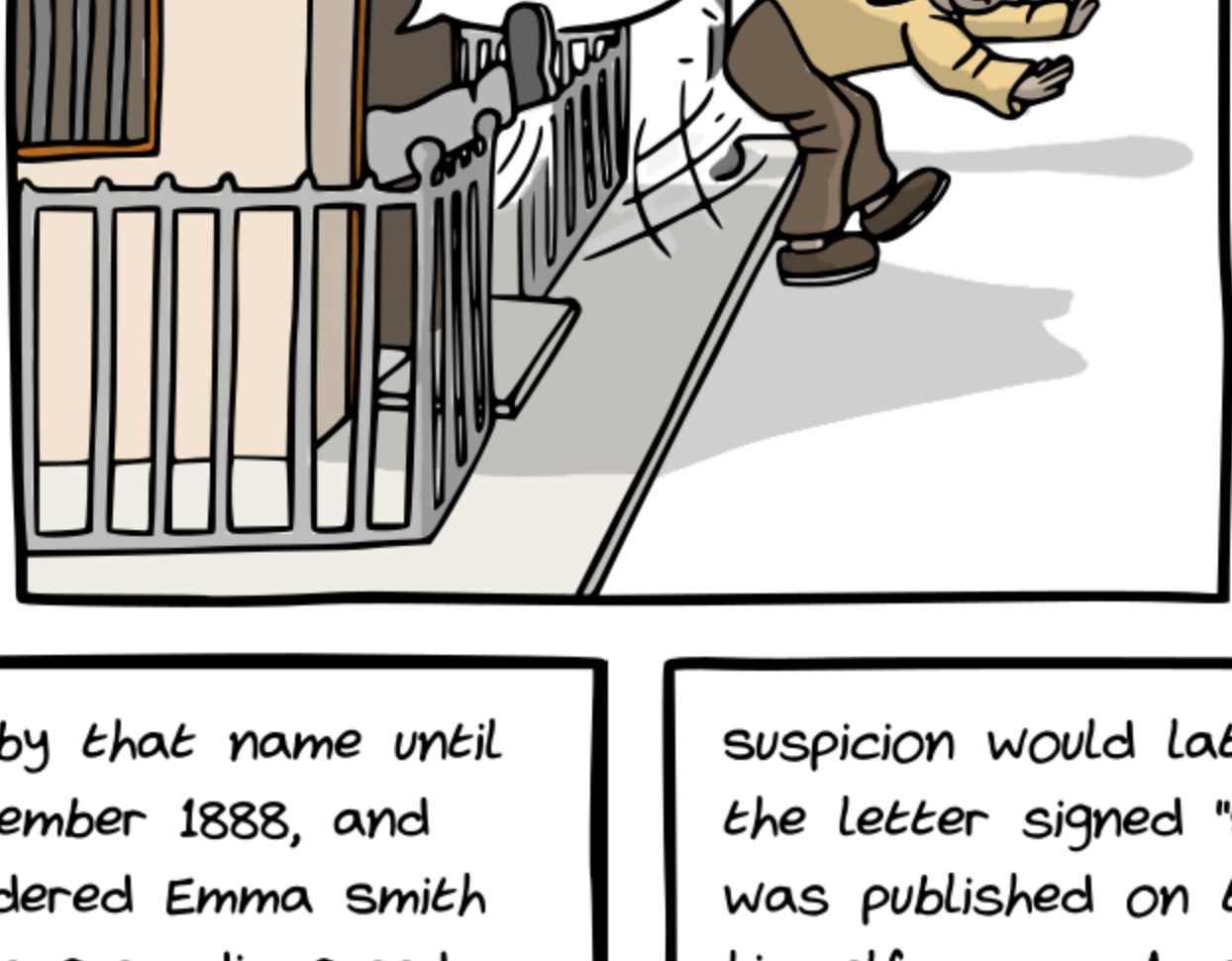
Because of the approximate timing of the arrest, it has been strongly suspected that they were under suspicion of having killed Emma Elizabeth Smith, who was attacked by three men on the night of the 3rd of April. She was taken to the London Hospital, but died of her injuries the following morning.



This was the first of the eleven "Whitechapel Murders" that have never been solved, and have variously been attributed to Jack the Ripper.



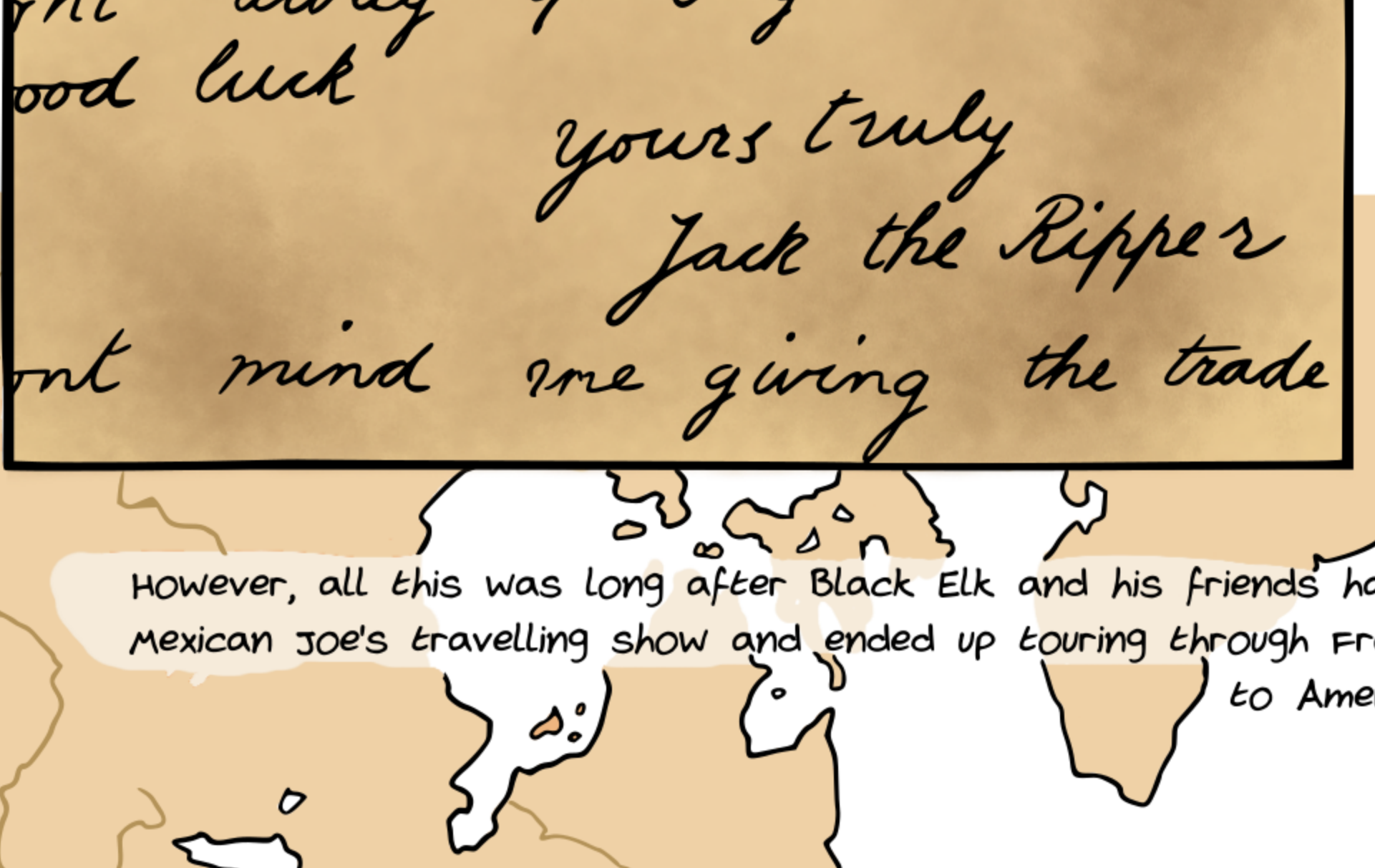
Once it was verified that the group had been in Manchester on the night of the murder they were released, without any more information as to why they had been arrested.



Black Elk thought that the police...



Jack the Ripper would not identify himself by that name until his famous "Dear Boss" letter of 25th September 1888, and while Detective Constable Walter Dew considered Emma Smith the Ripper's first victim, several of his colleagues disagreed.



Suspicion would later fall on all Americans in London, after the letter signed "Spring Heel Jack, the Whitechapel Murderer" was published on the 4th of October, where he identified himself as an American.

