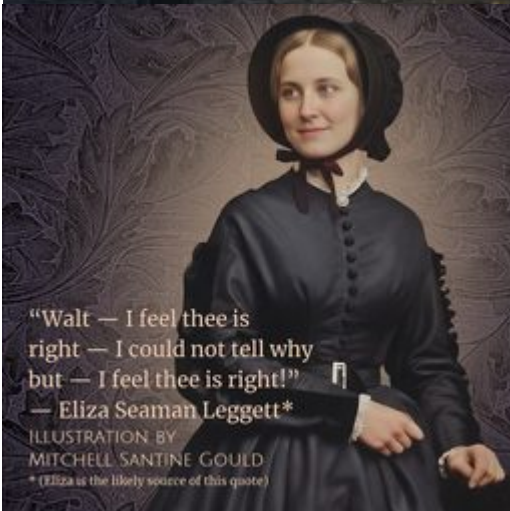




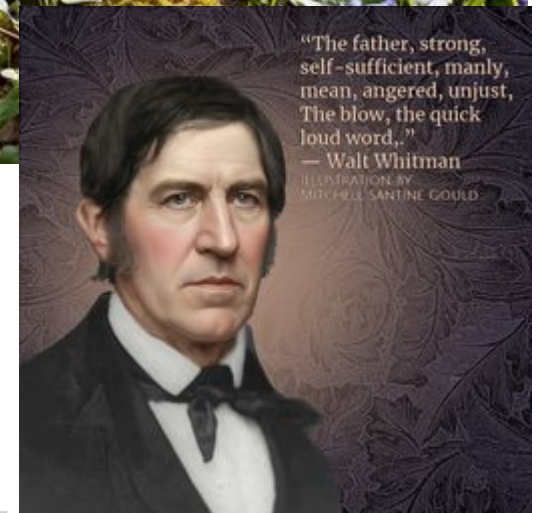
"Walt — I feel thee is
right — I could not tell why
but — I feel thee is right!"
— Eliza Seaman Leggett*

ILLUSTRATION BY
MITCHELL SANTINE GOULD
* (Eliza is the likely source of this quote)

1818 Eliza Seaman is 4 years old. She and Elias Hicks are fictionally among the Quakers present for the epochal launch of the first Black Ball packet, the *James Monroe*. Establishes the climax of the Age of Sail.



1819 Eliza meets Master Walter Whitman at the Roslyn home of William Hicks, a distant relative of hers as well as of Elias Hicks. Walter Sr. has come to the sawmill for lumber.





"God has impressed upon our animal bodies propensities and passions suitable to their Nature, to provide for what we stand in need of."
—Elias Hicks, 1824
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCHELL SANTINE GOULD

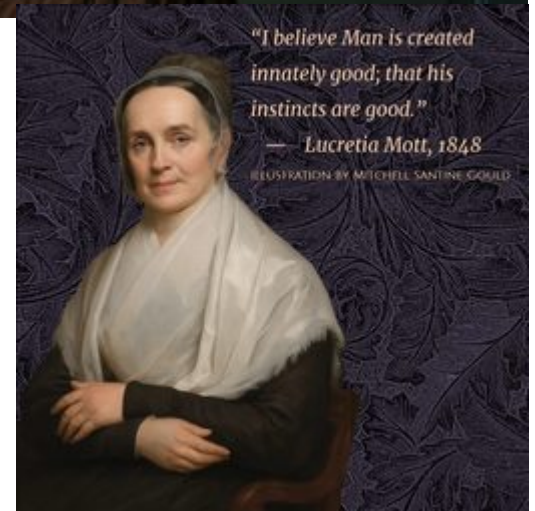


1827 Eliza witnesses the bitter brewing turmoil over the Hicksite Schism, along with Lucretia Mott and the Whitman family. She runs afoul of her mother's Orthodox sect for attending Hicks's worship.

"I believe Man is created innately good; that his instincts are good."

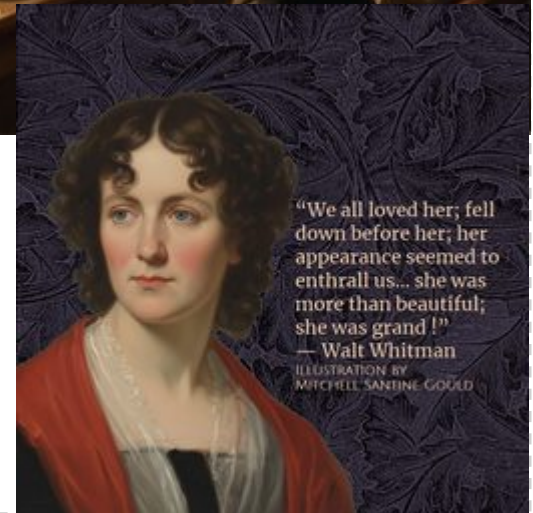
— Lucretia Mott, 1848

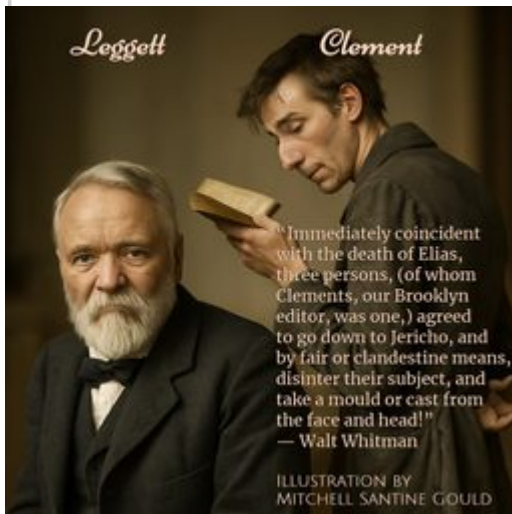
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1830 Eliza is brought before Orthodox Discipline for attending Frances Wright's radical lecture at the Hall of Science, having joined other Quakeresses on stage. Young Walter Whitman is also in attendance.

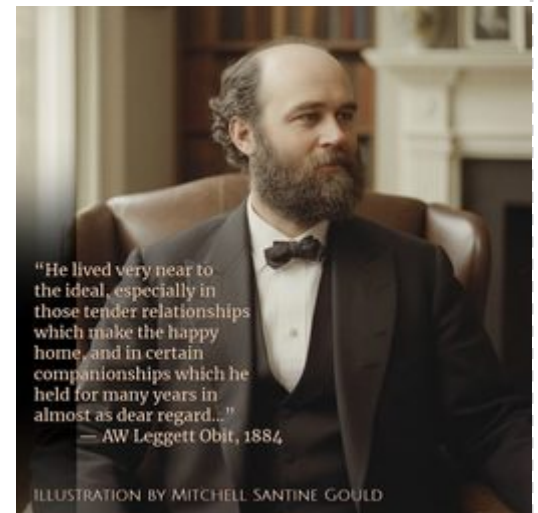




1830 Eliza joins "Pip" Leggett and Walt Whitman's future employer Samuel E Clement to disinter the body of the towering theologian Elias Hicks for a death mask. Disguised as a boy, she is protected from exposure during the infamous lawsuit that follows.



1833 Eliza and her boyfriend Augustus "Gus" Wright Leggett pledge their hearts under the Great Meteor Storm of 1833.

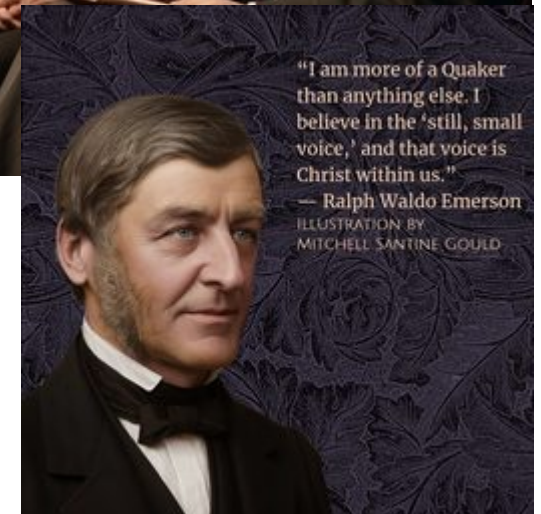


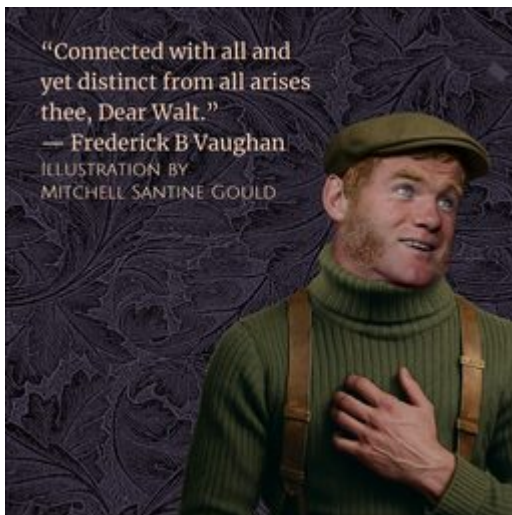


1835 Eliza and her fiancé "Gus" Leggett are called into Manhattan's streets by the Great Fire of 1835. (Young Walter's journalism career is thwarted by the disaster, sending him into economic exile in rural Long Island.)



1842 After a scandalous student romance, Walter resumes his journalistic career in Manhattan. He invites Eliza to Emerson's lecture "The Nature and Powers of the Poet." Gus forbids her to associate with Walter, but she accepts the invitation.





1853 Eliza asks Fred Vaughan to escort her, Samantha Cooper, and Lucretia Mott to the National Woman's Rights Convention of 1853. The opposition is so boisterous that it is called the Mob Convention.





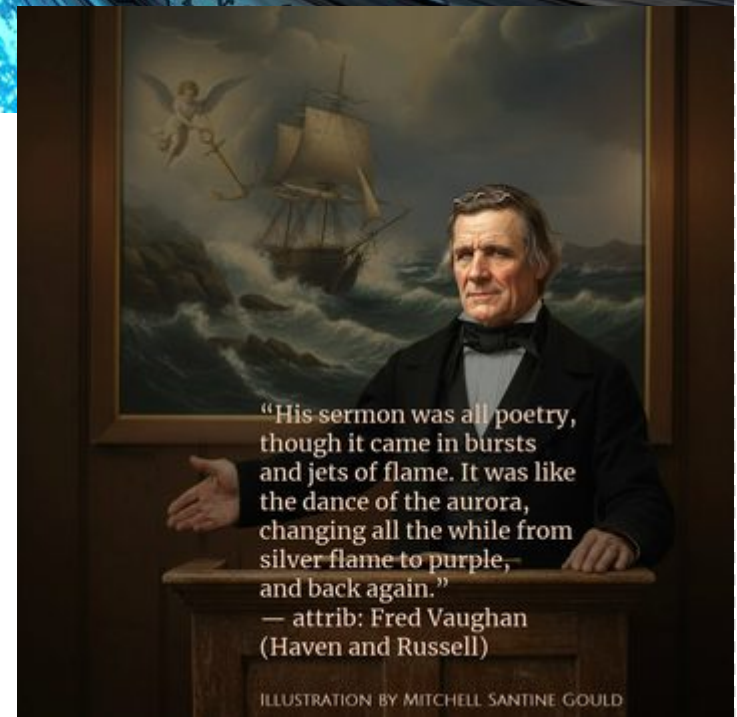
1844 When bullies chase young Freddie Vaughan through the streets of St John, NB, his sailor doll gets crushed beneath carriage wheels. It's a thematic omen of Fred's future as a sailor. As Melville explained, "the wheels must still revolve in dusty, or muddy revolutions. No contrivance, no sagacity can lift them out of the mire; for upon something the coach must be bottomed; on something the insiders must roll. Now, sailors form one of these wheels..."

AND THENCEFORTH, NINE DAYS WERE

G THE WAVES... EVERY CREST, AS FAR AWAY AS THE DISTANT HORIZON, GLEAMED VIVIDLY... IT WAS AS IF OUR GALAXY HAD PLUMMETED INTO THE SEA...



1846 Fred's father moves the family to Boston, where Fred's wayward habits bring him repeatedly into the company of sailors — including the affirming sermons of Father Taylor at the Seaman's Bethel.



"His sermon was all poetry, though it came in bursts and jets of flame. It was like the dance of the aurora, changing all the while from silver flame to purple, and back again."

— attrib: Fred Vaughan (Haven and Russell)

ILLUSTRATION BY MITCHELL SANTINE GOULD



1850 Although this concept is for Manhattan, Fred's driving career begins in Boston. But his vices begin to exile him from society and he runs away to sea.

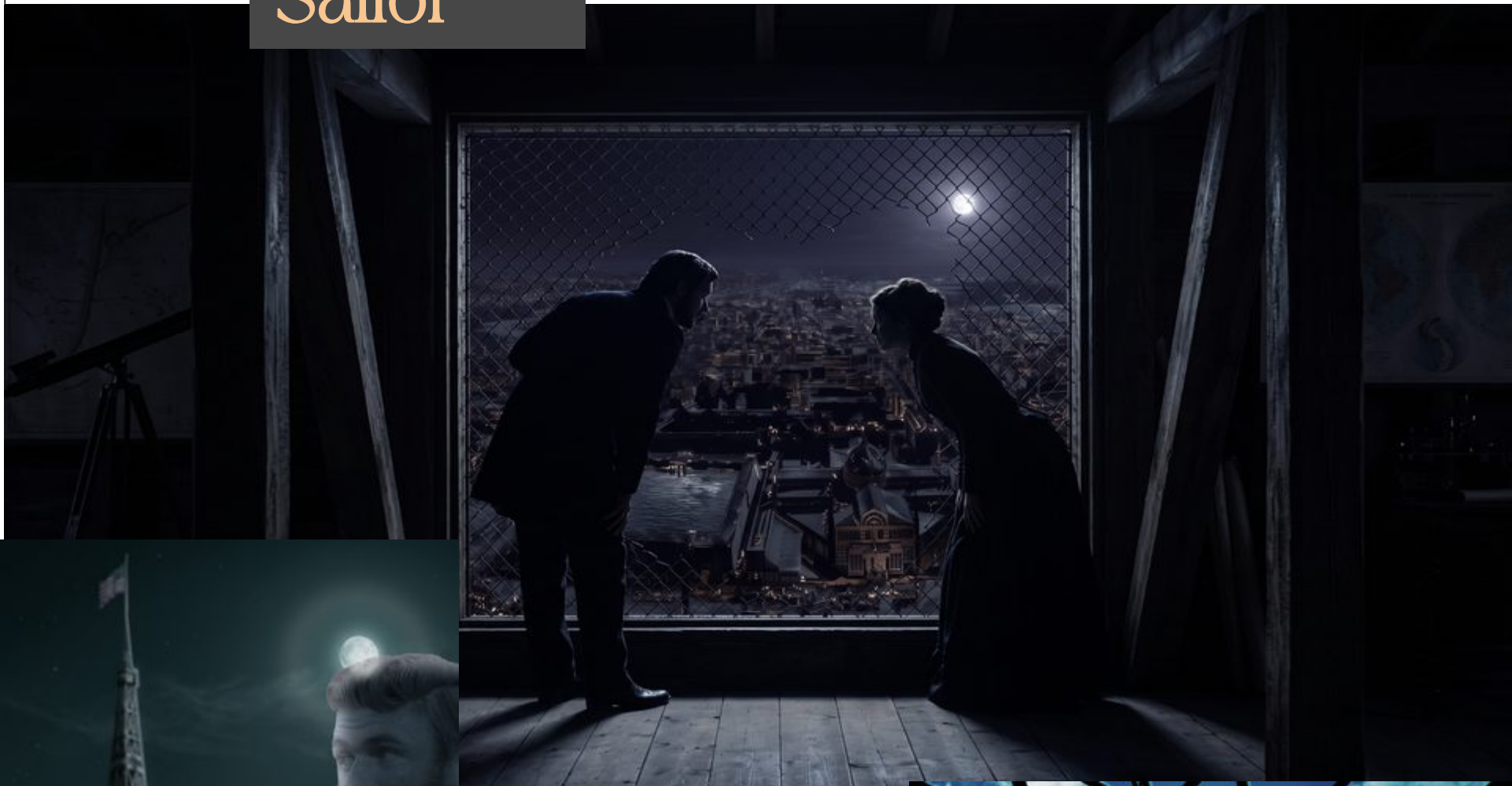


1852 Trying to reform his life of sin, young omnibus driver Fred Vaughan resists the advances of the Emperor of the Stage Box: the notoriously gregarious and oversexed Walt Whitman.





1853 When Walt finally corners him at the opera, Fred finds himself succumbing to Walt's magnetism in the darkest, hottest upper tiers of the theater. He expects to never see Walt again after that.



1853 Returning from the opera, Fred finds it too hot to sleep and climbs the Observatory for cooler air. A stranger, Julianna, is already there.





1853 A fire at an adjoining factory sets the tower on fire. Dave Broderick shoots a rope to them with a harpoon gun, and both Fred and Julianna try to slide down it. Only Fred survives. Fred's shock prompts Walt to look after him in Walt's own bedroom.





1853 Fred and Walt's bromance blooms on the omnibus box, at Pfaff's rathskeller, and aboard the Brooklyn Ferry, but Walt's growing dedication to bring love "out of the dark confinement" plunges Fred into a quandary. He's not ready to commit to the consequences. Meanwhile, Walt's dominating love is suffocating him.





1853 Fred is eager to attend one of the "Mose the Fire B'hoy" franchises that have enthralled audiences all over America — and which inspired Walt's "rough" persona in *Leaves of Grass*. But the real fire on the stage triggers a panic attack, and Walt takes him to his bedroom for the second time.



1853 By the end of *Sailor*, Fred is exhausted by Walt's passionate but domineering, callous, and promiscuous ways. This arc is cut short when Fred's horses inexplicably spook, triggering a wreck that leaves Fred hospitalized. During his recovery, Walt finds an opportunity to reclaim his love.



1853 Fred has become Walt's favorite stage driver. They are seen together on the omnibus box, aboard Brooklyn Ferry, at the opera, and at Pfaff's. But they still live in a world of hate, and Fred's not prepared to venture on Walt's legendary "Open Road" of pride.



1853 Walt's open red shirt or mashed-down collar are social signals of sensualism that both excite Fred and make him nervous. The lovers can be more relaxed around the more tolerant of the Quakers and, of course, the Free Lovers, sailors and Bowery b'hoys – particularly the volunteer firemen.



1854 Walt and Fred find Pfaff's darkest corner as refuge from the giddy proceedings of Henry Clapp's Bohemians. As an accidental resident of the socialist commune The Unitary Home, Fred has other reasons to run into Clapp – a theoretician of Charles Fourier's radical Free Love utopia. In fact, Fred's friend Samantha Cooper calls upon him to escort her to Free Love Club meetings - until it's raided by the police.



1853 Walt and Fred play Dawn-of-Baseball games with the Red Rovers, a team named for Dave Broderick's Howard Engine #34. Opposing them are the Tattlers, led by the villain of the B story, Dave's loving/hating frenemy, Georgie Wilkes.



1854 Fred sometimes has to bring Walt back to the Unitary Home when the darkness gets too thick in the Whitman household. Walter Sr, drunk, depressive, and paralytic, is dying. Brother Eddie is mentally disabled. Brother Jesse has a rage addiction. Away from the Whitman home, they can relish a shared life - in the precious few hours Fred isn't driving.

1854

A central theme of the trilogy is that titanic forces of love and grief tore Walt's heart open to the kelson of the Creation: love.



*When the faithful hand of the living
does not desert the hand of the dying*

-- Walt Whitman

ILLUSTRATION BY MITCHELL SANTINE GOULD



1854 *Leaves of Grass* is grounded in the gritty realities of antebellum Brooklyn but soars into the era's headiest mysticism. Stanza 5 of "Song of Myself" is a record of the great spiritual Opening during Walt's woodland honeymoon with Fred. This poem radically sanctifies sexual ecstasy.



1854 Audiences love eye-popping spectacle. *Leaves of Grass* is full of it. Whitman's life within the poems is shape-shifting, mystical, transcendent. His spirit is born in everything, and everything lives within him. The kosmos is the limit for an audacious, imaginative director.



1859 CA Senator David Broderick dies on the field of honor, trying to avenge a homophobic slur from a political adversary. At the New York wake, Fred plays "The Parting Glass," and Walt delivers a haunting poem, "As Nearing Departure."





1859 Mixed with his passionate love for Fred, Walt's callousness, infidelities, and domination push Fred to the breaking point. Fred begins to cynically chase and toy with women, until he falls under the spell of young Frances Colvin. They have a strange, obsessive, romance.



18XX The evolution of the Fred-Frances-Walt triangle is too intricate and nuanced to be captured in a lookbook, but these scenes simply give a visual flavor of the vibe. Historians will never know exactly how it all played out, but *Lover* dramatizes a possible scenario. And the final installment brings Eliza back to witness Fred and Walt's last days, the end of their story – and the triumph of Whitman's legacy.

