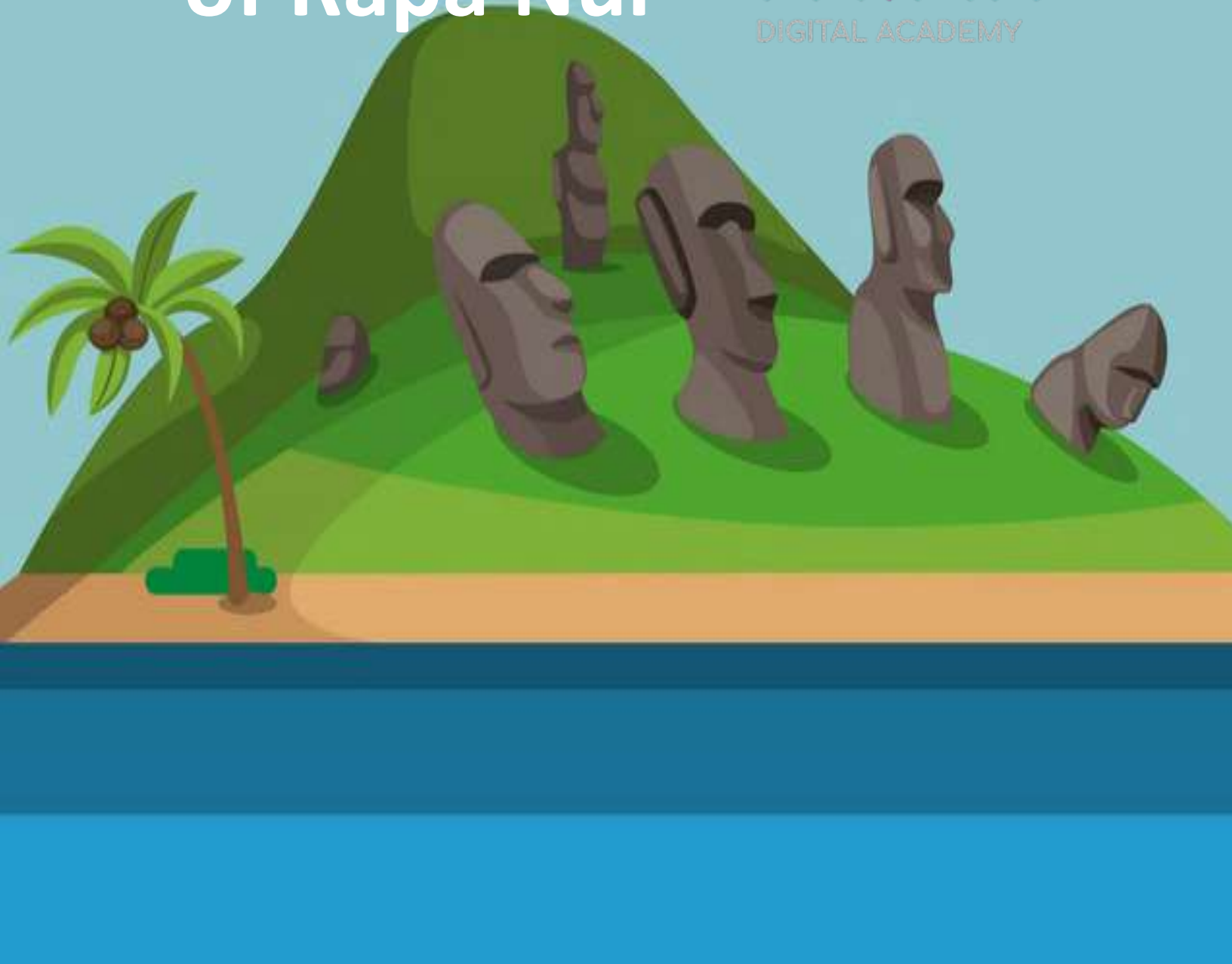




# Tales of Ancient Worlds

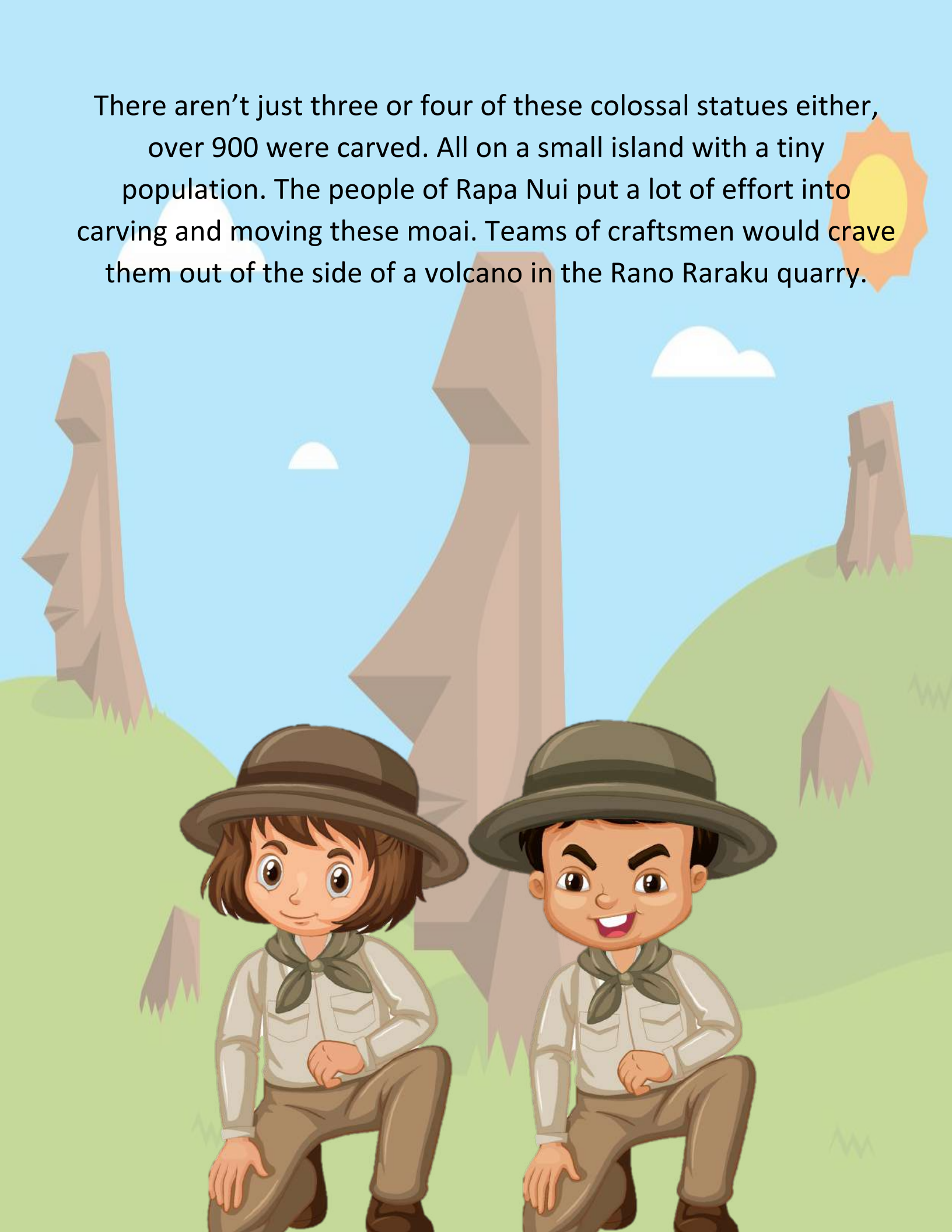
## The Watchman of Rapa Nui



On the Polynesian island of Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island, are some of the most amazing and unique statues in world history. Standing guard over the island, with their backs to the sea, are the moai. The tallest moai is called Paro. It is almost 10 m (30 ft) tall and weighs as much as 50 cars.



There aren't just three or four of these colossal statues either, over 900 were carved. All on a small island with a tiny population. The people of Rapa Nui put a lot of effort into carving and moving these moai. Teams of craftsmen would carve them out of the side of a volcano in the Rano Raraku quarry.





One question that had been bothering archaeologists and historians for a long time was how the people of Rapa Nui moved the moai from the side of a volcano down to the beach.

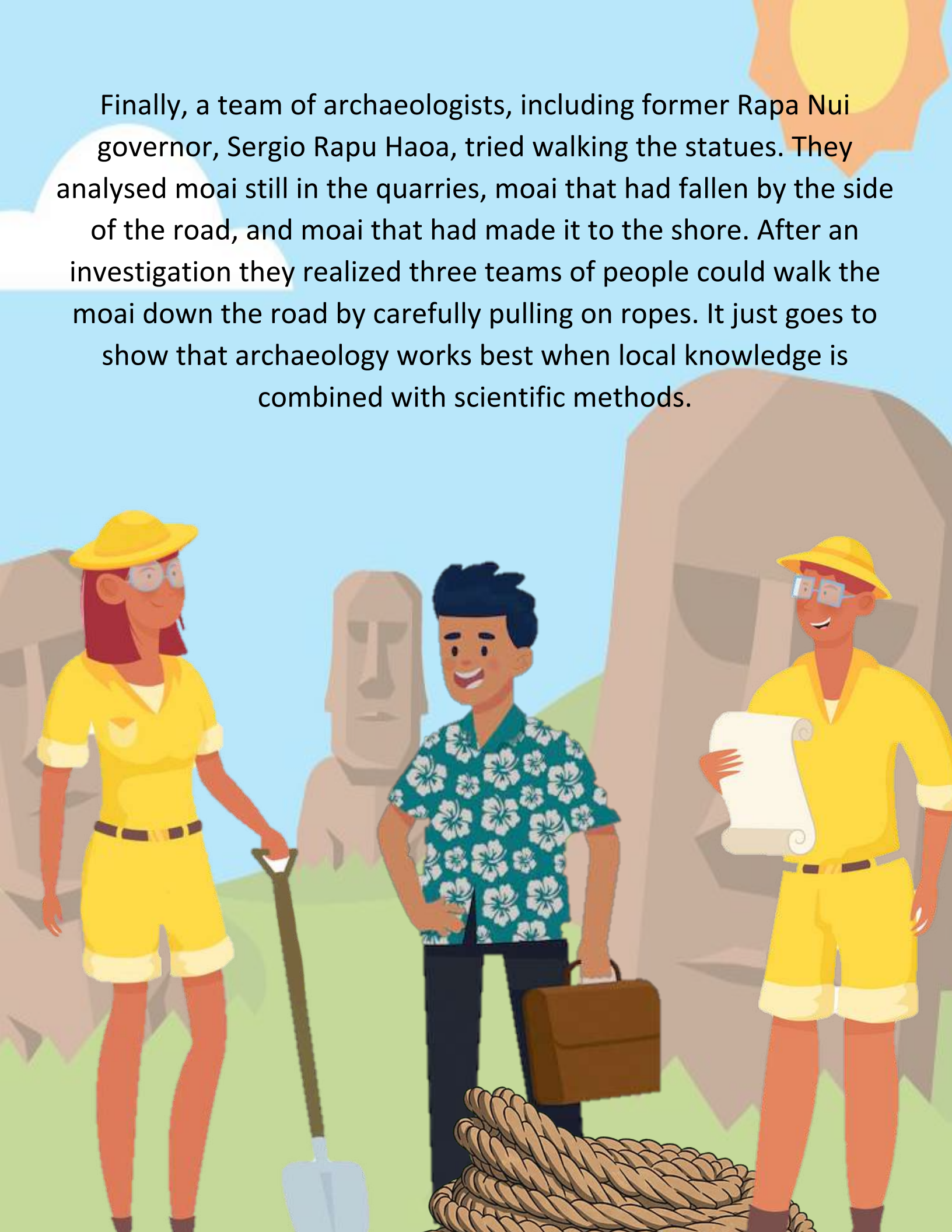


The Rapa Nui people who lived on the island were asked what they thought had happened. They said the statues walked down.

Archaeologists who weren't from the island scoffed at the idea. They presumed the moai were moved by a sledge, or maybe pushed on rollers, but each time they put it to the test, they failed.



Finally, a team of archaeologists, including former Rapa Nui governor, Sergio Rapu Haoa, tried walking the statues. They analysed moai still in the quarries, moai that had fallen by the side of the road, and moai that had made it to the shore. After an investigation they realized three teams of people could walk the moai down the road by carefully pulling on ropes. It just goes to show that archaeology works best when local knowledge is combined with scientific methods.





So why did the Rapa Nui spend all this time building moai? What did they mean to them? This is not an easy question to answer but understanding how and why people do things is one of the most interesting parts of archaeology. The moai represented notable ancestors of the Rapa Nui people.



Their society was organized by rank, and kings were viewed with great respect. A powerful king would have his followers carve a moai in his honour and to honour his ancestors. Because of this moai are like a historical record, going all the way back to the first kings and chiefs of Rapu Nui, like Hotu Matu'a, who first settled the island.





There was even an element of competition in moai-building. Rival kings would want to be seen building the biggest and most elaborate statues to impress their neighbours. Kings do love to brag! There may have been a very practical reason for constructing moai as well. One of the challenges of living on a small island is that it can be easy to run out food. You don't have much land to grow on, and major storms can damage the crops you're growing.



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As a result of this, the Rapa Nui were excellent farmers. They built small rock gardens to trap nutrients and keep them safe from the wild, stormy weather of the south Pacific (nobody wants to eat a rotten sweet potato after all).

The moai may have also helped in this process. One of the best places on the island to grow crops was on the volcano of Rano Raraku, the same place where the statues were quarried.





Archaeologists and biologists dug up the soil there and looked inside it for ancient seeds and pollen. They found that Rano Raraku was full of sweet potatoes, gourdes, bananas – everything that Rapa Nui loved to eat! It seems that the carving of moai created a lot of rock dust and powder, which made the soil excellent for growing food.



You could say the moai protected the Rapa Nui in two ways. Firstly, they acted as guardians of the people, guiding them spiritually. Secondly, they helped provide a nice, cooked dinner with bananas for dessert.





# The Gigantic Inca Empire





Despite only numbering about 100000 people, the Incas built the largest empire in the history of the Americas. It stretched 1500 miles (2500 km) from the humid jungles of Colombia, over the mountains of Peru and through the dry deserts of Chile. Such a diverse empire created a fascinating civilization.



## South America

The Inca Empire dominated the west of South America. The Incas started expanding with the ascent of Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui (“Reverser of the World”) to the Incan throne in 1438 CE.





## Sensing a Pattern

Incan textiles are world famous. The women best at weaving were called the accla. They lived in the acllawai, or “house of chosen women”, and produced clothing for the army, the nobility, and the emperor.





## Incan Emperor

The Inca emperor was called the Sapa Inca. Living in the capital city Cuzco, he led a luxurious life; feasting, drinking from gold cups and wearing the finest clothes and the Mascaipache – the Incan crown.



## Record Keeping

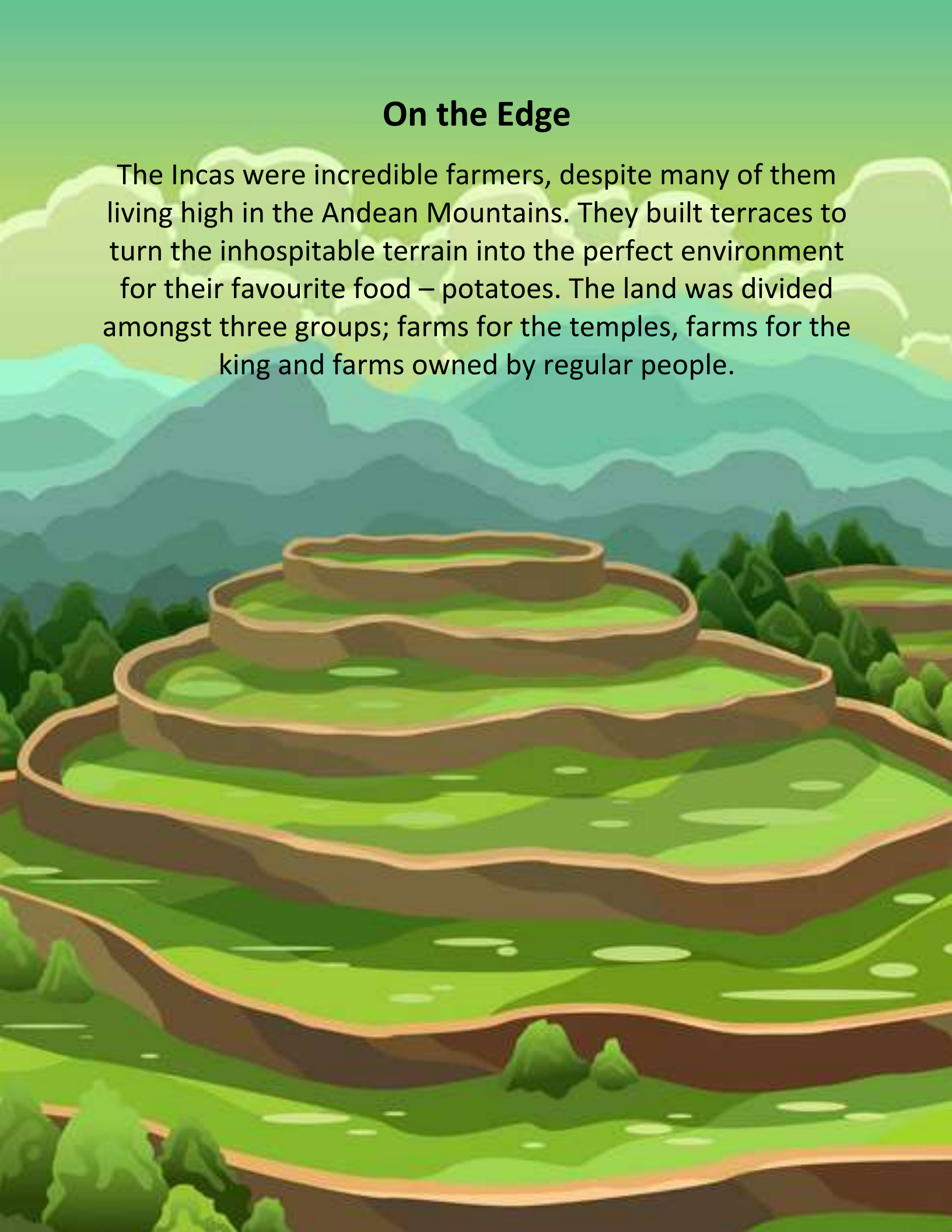
The Incas organized their empire using quipus, or knot records. Each rope and knot meant something different. Some acted like an alphabet that could record history, while others were used to list supplies.





## On the Edge

The Incas were incredible farmers, despite many of them living high in the Andean Mountains. They built terraces to turn the inhospitable terrain into the perfect environment for their favourite food – potatoes. The land was divided amongst three groups; farms for the temples, farms for the king and farms owned by regular people.



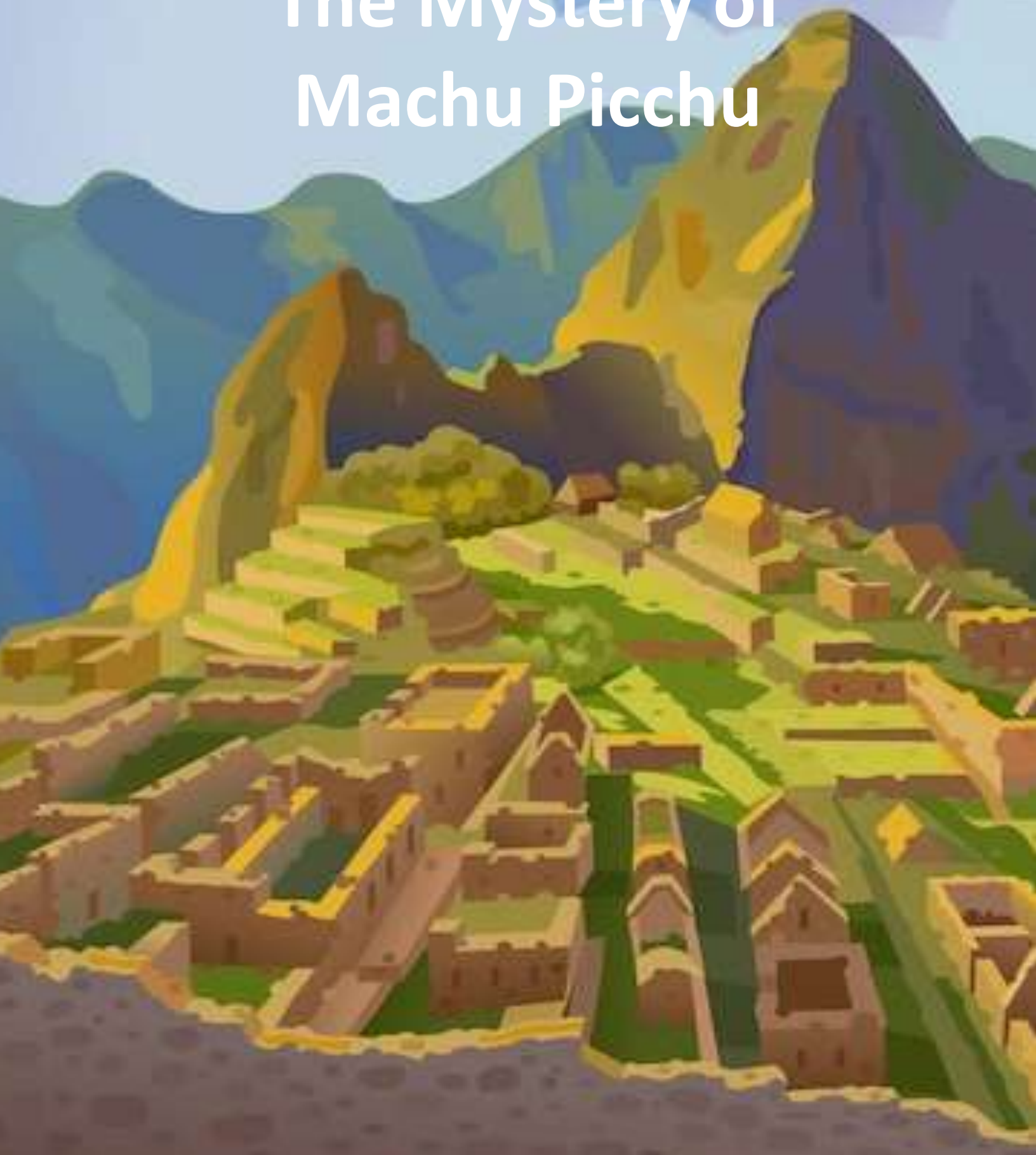
## Roads

To move armies and goods the Incas built a huge road network. There was even a system of relay runners, called chasquis, that could communicate messages over long distances. These runners could send a message as far as 150 miles (240 km) in a single day.





# The Mystery of Machu Picchu



American explorer Hiram Bingham and his Peruvian guides, Melchor Arteaga and Sergeant Carrasco, had been hiking for hours. As they hacked through vegetation and crept along treacherous mountain paths, any wrong step could send them falling into the valley below. It was 1911 and they were searching for the last capital of the Inca Empire, but they came across something much more incredible – the city of Machu Picchu.





As they neared the top of the mountain they encountered a farmer, whose 11-year-old son Pablito said he knew the way to an ancient palace. Pablito led to the group further up, along an Incan Road.



When they reached the top, they couldn't believe their eyes. An entire Incan palace carved out of the top of the mountain.





Machu Picchu was built 600 years ago for Inca emperor Pachacutec and was probably his holiday home. It had everything an emperor would need: farms built on terraces for fresh food, a temple for the king to communicate with the gods and most importantly peace and quiet!





It was a remote location and was not easy to access. It was so hard to get to that the Spanish invaders who arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century didn't find it. This meant that when Hiram and Pablito appeared it was still mostly intact.





There were many incredible artefacts among the ruins, including silver tupu, pins that rich Incas used to fasten their clothes (you don't want your pants falling down up a big mountain).





Hiram agreed with the Peruvian government that he could take these artefacts back to Yale University in the United States, where he worked, on the condition that when Peru asked for them back, they would be returned. But Yale ended up keeping them for over 100 years. Eventually the artefacts were returned to Peru and the fabulous treasures of the Inca Empire are now home where they belong.







THINK  
DIGITAL ACADEMY

