

A comic book style illustration of Aquaman. He is a muscular man with long, wavy blonde hair and a full beard. He is shirtless, showing his abdominal muscles, and wears a green cloth wrapped around his waist. He holds a golden trident in his right hand. The background is a dark blue sky with white clouds and a large, bright full moon. The title 'HATCHERY' is written in a large, stylized, white font with a black outline and a halftone dot pattern at the top.

HATCHERY

DIALOGUES FROM
ATLANTIS



Chapter 1: The Monaco Revelation

The Mediterranean sparkled like sapphires beneath the balcony of Villa Ephrussi, where Monaco's elite had gathered for the season's most exclusive art auction.

Cassandra Laurent adjusted her diamond earpiece, scanning the crowd with practiced nonchalance. Her target, arms dealer Anton Kruger, was three tables away, bidding aggressively on a 16th-century Ottoman dagger.

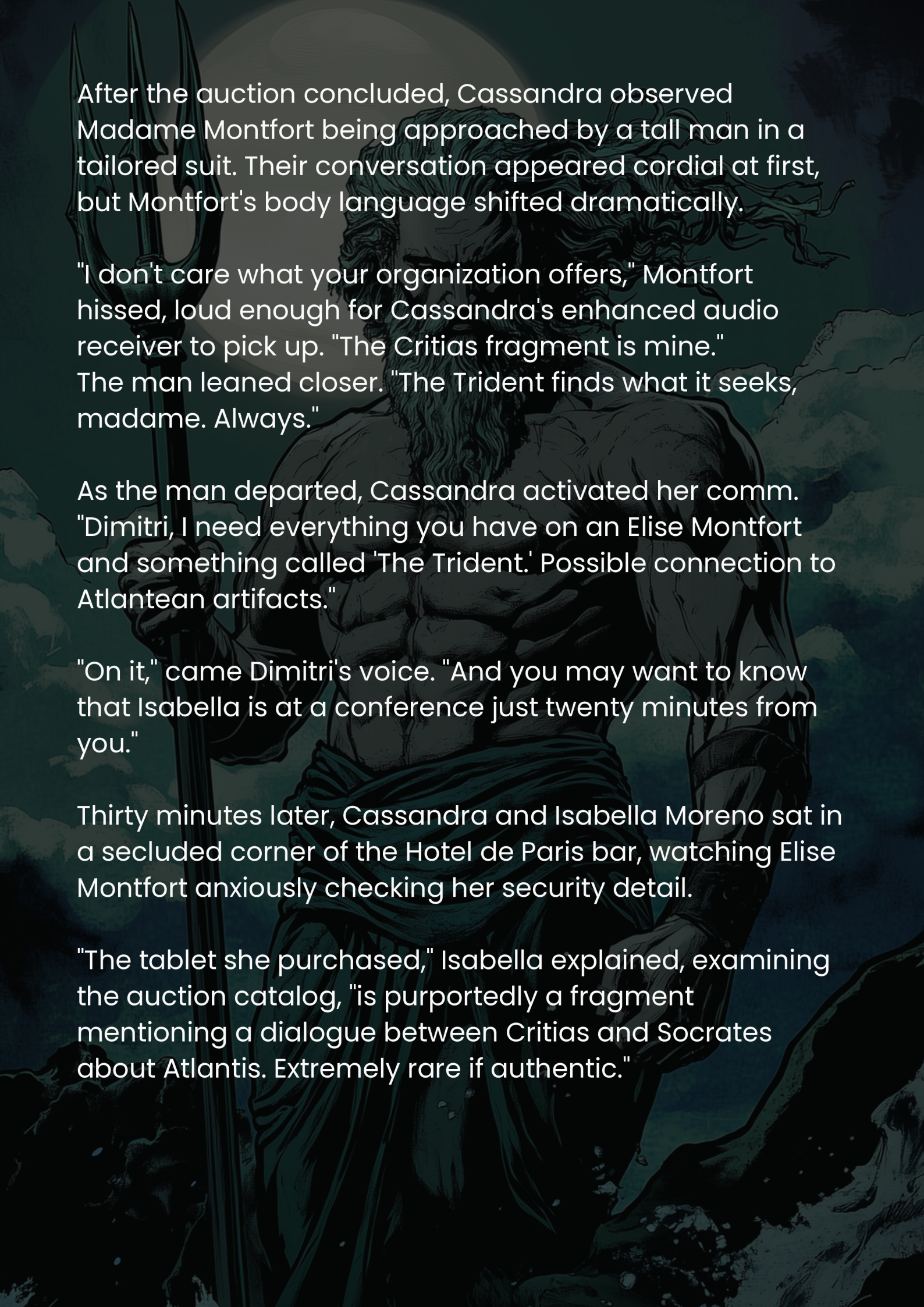
"Target still engaged," she murmured, the words carried securely to the SERPENT monitoring station two blocks away. "No contact with the Libyan buyer yet."

A commotion near the auctioneer's podium drew her attention. A woman in her fifties with silver-streaked dark hair had stood up, outbidding everyone for a cracked clay tablet fragment.

"Five million euros," the woman announced firmly, silencing the room.

The auctioneer, visibly flustered, slammed his gavel down. "Sold! To Madame Elise Montfort."

Cassandra noticed Anton Kruger's sudden interest in Madame Montfort. He abandoned his bidding on the dagger and made a discreet call.



After the auction concluded, Cassandra observed Madame Montfort being approached by a tall man in a tailored suit. Their conversation appeared cordial at first, but Montfort's body language shifted dramatically.

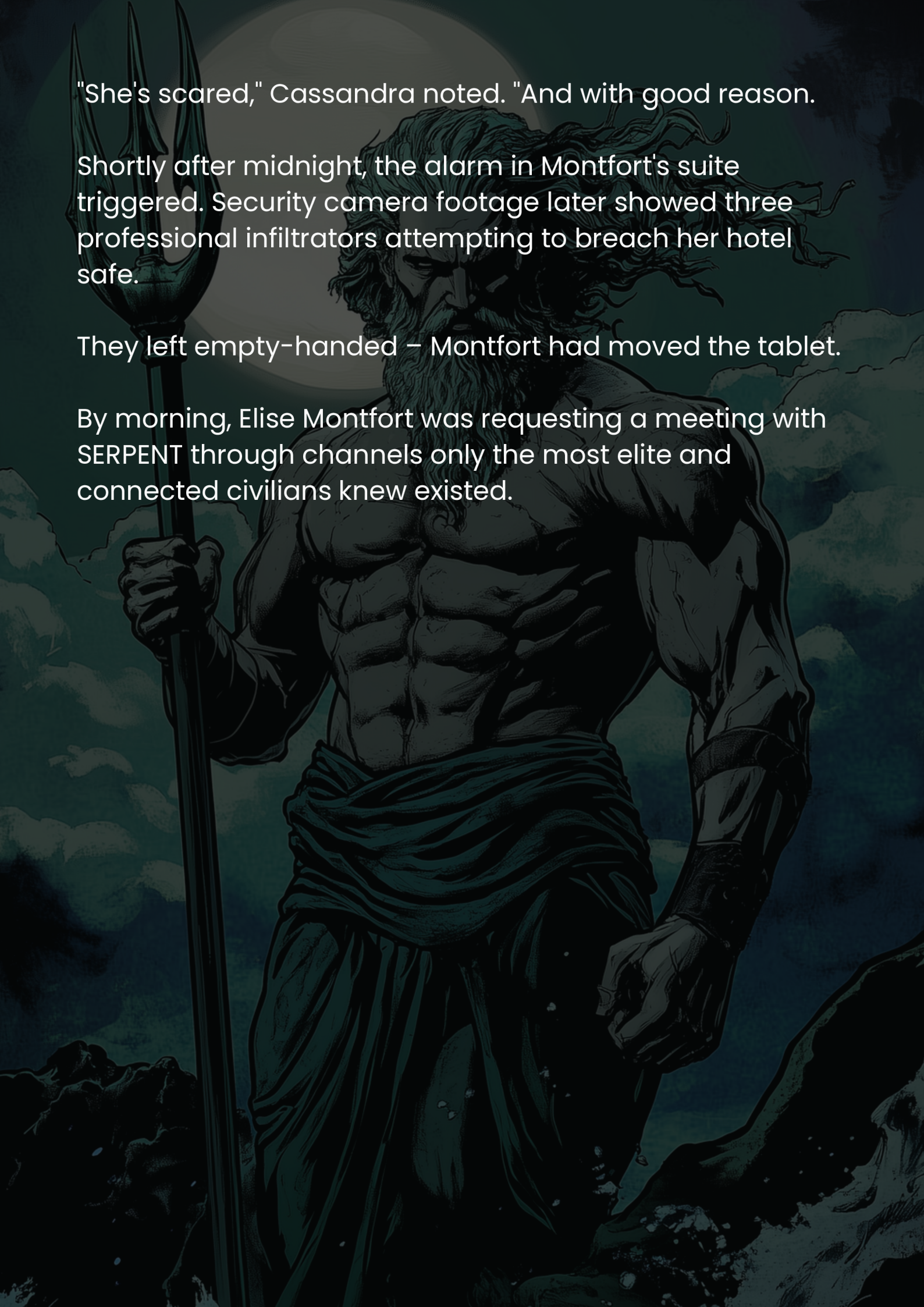
"I don't care what your organization offers," Montfort hissed, loud enough for Cassandra's enhanced audio receiver to pick up. "The Critias fragment is mine." The man leaned closer. "The Trident finds what it seeks, madame. Always."

As the man departed, Cassandra activated her comm. "Dimitri, I need everything you have on an Elise Montfort and something called 'The Trident.' Possible connection to Atlantean artifacts."

"On it," came Dimitri's voice. "And you may want to know that Isabella is at a conference just twenty minutes from you."

Thirty minutes later, Cassandra and Isabella Moreno sat in a secluded corner of the Hotel de Paris bar, watching Elise Montfort anxiously checking her security detail.

"The tablet she purchased," Isabella explained, examining the auction catalog, "is purportedly a fragment mentioning a dialogue between Critias and Socrates about Atlantis. Extremely rare if authentic."



"She's scared," Cassandra noted. "And with good reason.

Shortly after midnight, the alarm in Montfort's suite triggered. Security camera footage later showed three professional infiltrators attempting to breach her hotel safe.

They left empty-handed – Montfort had moved the tablet.

By morning, Elise Montfort was requesting a meeting with SERPENT through channels only the most elite and connected civilians knew existed.



Chapter 2: Echoes Through Time

Shadow Wing cut through clouds at 45,000 feet, its course plotted from Monaco to Athens. In the aircraft's war room, Julia Sharpe stood before the holographic command table, the blue light illuminating her features as she addressed her team.

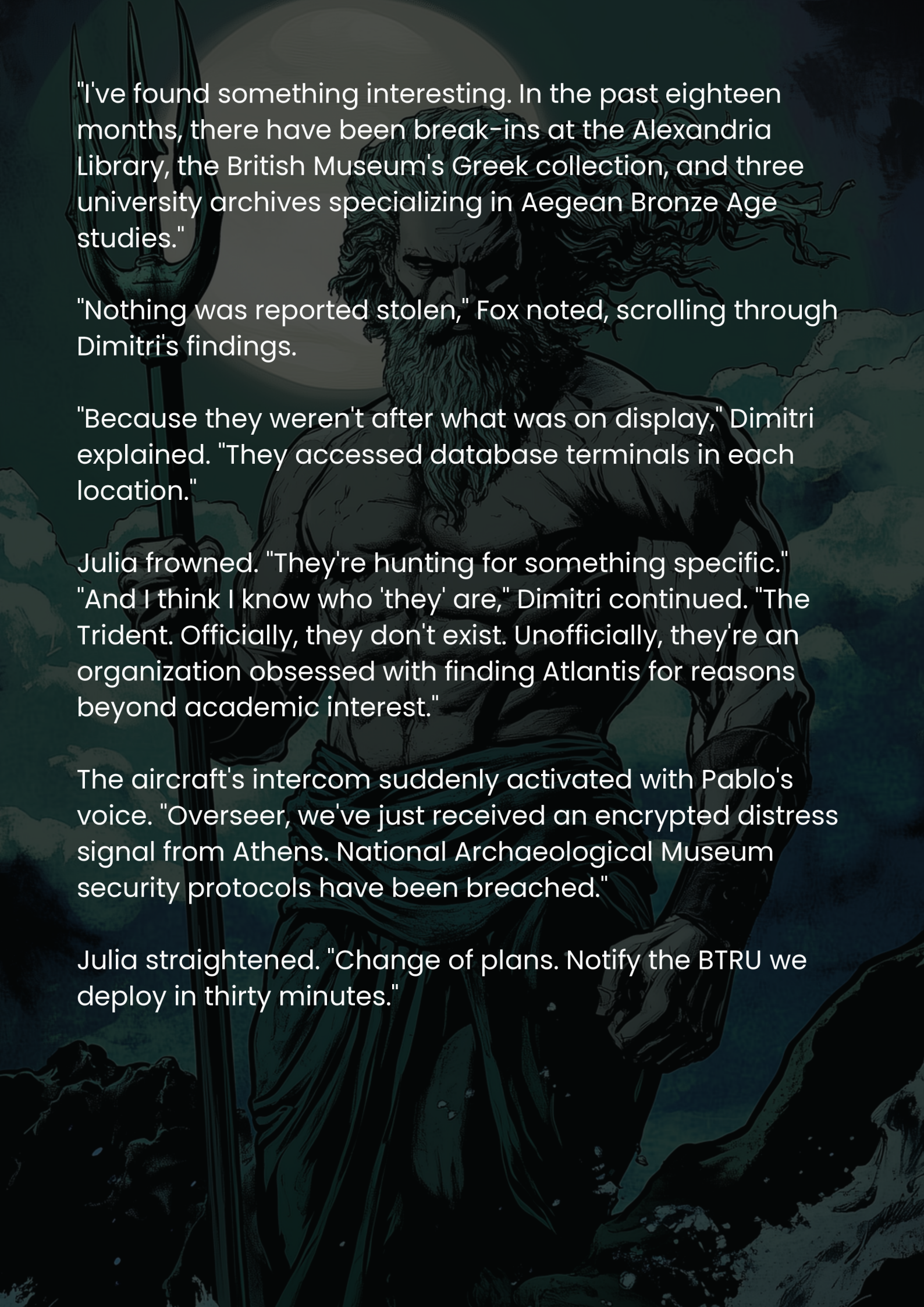
"Elise Montfort," she began, tapping the table to display a dossier, "made her fortune in shipping and tech investments. She's spent the last decade funding archaeological expeditions throughout the Mediterranean."

Mei Huang studied the high-resolution photographs of the clay tablet fragment. "The inscription includes Greek characters, but the syntax is... unusual. It appears to be an early form of cipher."

"What's her interest in Atlantis?" Fox Meyer asked, leaning against the bulkhead.

"Obsession would be a better word," Julia replied. "According to her, she's been piecing together evidence of Atlantis for years. This tablet is supposedly part of a transcript of dialogues that never made it into Plato's published works."

Dimitri's fingers flew across his workstation keyboard.



"I've found something interesting. In the past eighteen months, there have been break-ins at the Alexandria Library, the British Museum's Greek collection, and three university archives specializing in Aegean Bronze Age studies."

"Nothing was reported stolen," Fox noted, scrolling through Dimitri's findings.

"Because they weren't after what was on display," Dimitri explained. "They accessed database terminals in each location."

Julia frowned. "They're hunting for something specific." "And I think I know who 'they' are," Dimitri continued. "The Trident. Officially, they don't exist. Unofficially, they're an organization obsessed with finding Atlantis for reasons beyond academic interest."

The aircraft's intercom suddenly activated with Pablo's voice. "Overseer, we've just received an encrypted distress signal from Athens. National Archaeological Museum security protocols have been breached."

Julia straightened. "Change of plans. Notify the BTRU we deploy in thirty minutes."

Chapter 3: The Athens Incursion

The National Archaeological Museum of Athens stood silent against the night sky, its neoclassical facade illuminated only by strategic security lighting. Inside, motion sensors had triggered silent alarms, their signals intercepted by multiple jamming devices placed throughout the building.

"Eagle's Nest, this is Warhammer. We are in position," Gabriel Adams whispered into his tactical comm, his night vision goggles revealing the museum's grand hall in shades of green.

The BTRU team spread out around him – Mikko with his compact sniper rifle, Amir checking his breaching charges, and Liam securing their exit route.

"Copy, Warhammer," Julia's voice responded from Shadow Wing. "Special Agent K and James are approaching from the east entrance. Intel suggests at least seven hostiles inside, methodical search pattern."

You adjusted your tactical vest, the familiar weight of your sidearm against your ribs as James Brown nodded toward a service door.

"Already bypassed the lock," he murmured. "Been watching them for twenty minutes before you arrived. They're after something specific – ignoring priceless artifacts, focusing on document storage areas."



Through your earpiece, Dimitri's voice added, "Thermal imaging shows four on the main floor, three heading to the basement archives."

You slipped through the door, James close behind. The museum's corridors stretched before you, display cases full of ancient treasures barely visible in the emergency lighting.

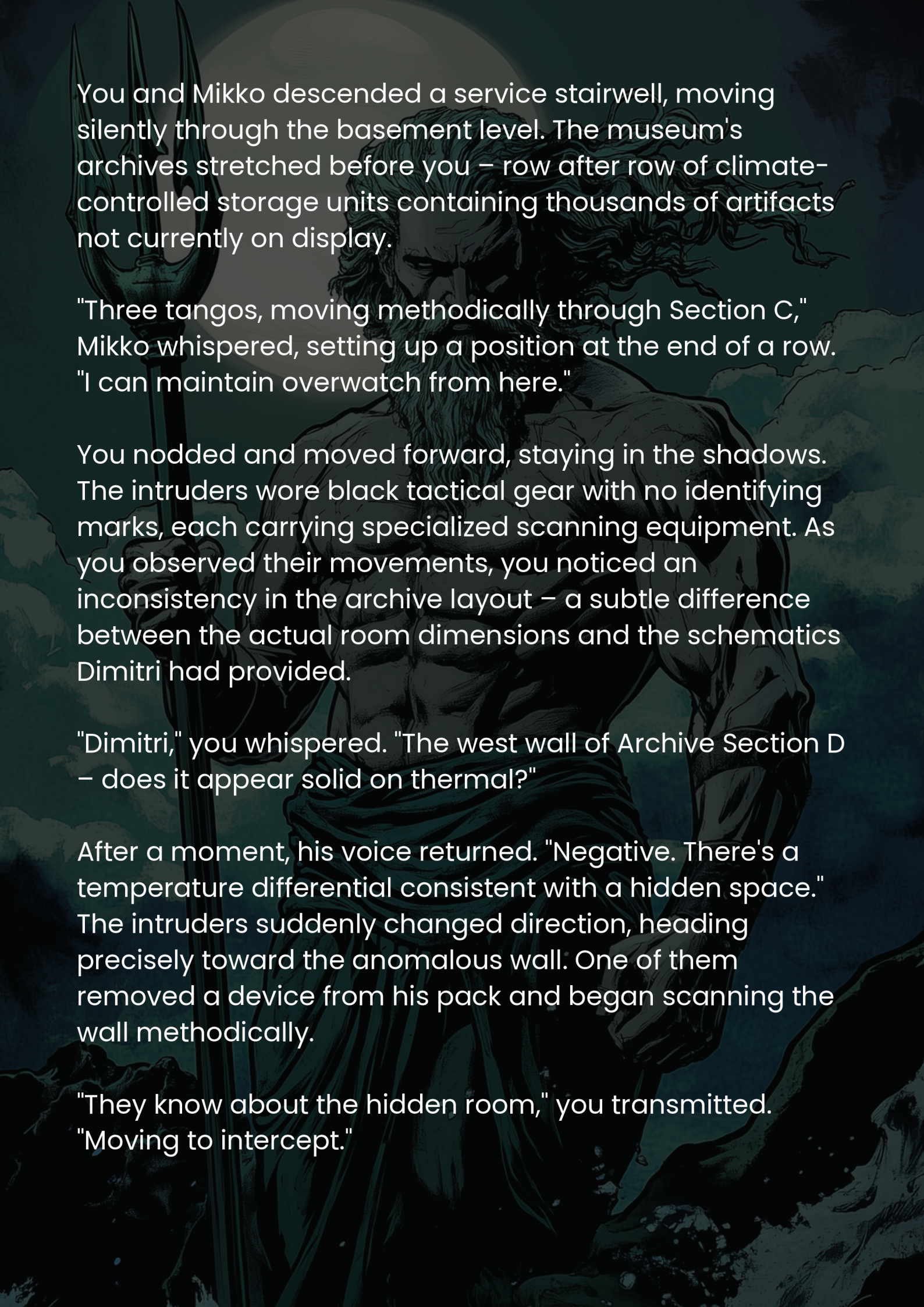
"Movement, north gallery," Mikko's voice whispered through comms. "Two tangos, professional equipment, carrying scanning devices."

Gabriel responded immediately. "Liam, Amir, flank east. K, what's your analysis of their search pattern?"

You studied the museum layout on your tactical pad, noting the locations where intruders had already searched. "They're following a specific sequence – not random. Each location corresponds to galleries featuring artifacts with numerical significance in ancient Greek mathematics. They're using some kind of numerical key." "Which means their next target is..." James began.

"The Mycenaean collection," you finished. "Lower level, west wing."

Gabriel's voice was decisive. "K, take Mikko and intercept at the archives. We'll handle the main floor."



You and Mikko descended a service stairwell, moving silently through the basement level. The museum's archives stretched before you – row after row of climate-controlled storage units containing thousands of artifacts not currently on display.

"Three tangos, moving methodically through Section C," Mikko whispered, setting up a position at the end of a row. "I can maintain overwatch from here."

You nodded and moved forward, staying in the shadows. The intruders wore black tactical gear with no identifying marks, each carrying specialized scanning equipment. As you observed their movements, you noticed an inconsistency in the archive layout – a subtle difference between the actual room dimensions and the schematics Dimitri had provided.

"Dimitri," you whispered. "The west wall of Archive Section D – does it appear solid on thermal?"

After a moment, his voice returned. "Negative. There's a temperature differential consistent with a hidden space." The intruders suddenly changed direction, heading precisely toward the anomalous wall. One of them removed a device from his pack and began scanning the wall methodically.

"They know about the hidden room," you transmitted. "Moving to intercept."



Before you could advance, a loud explosion rocked the building from above.

"Diversion in the east wing!" Gabriel shouted through comms. "They triggered Greek fire artifacts! Engaging hostiles on the main floor!"

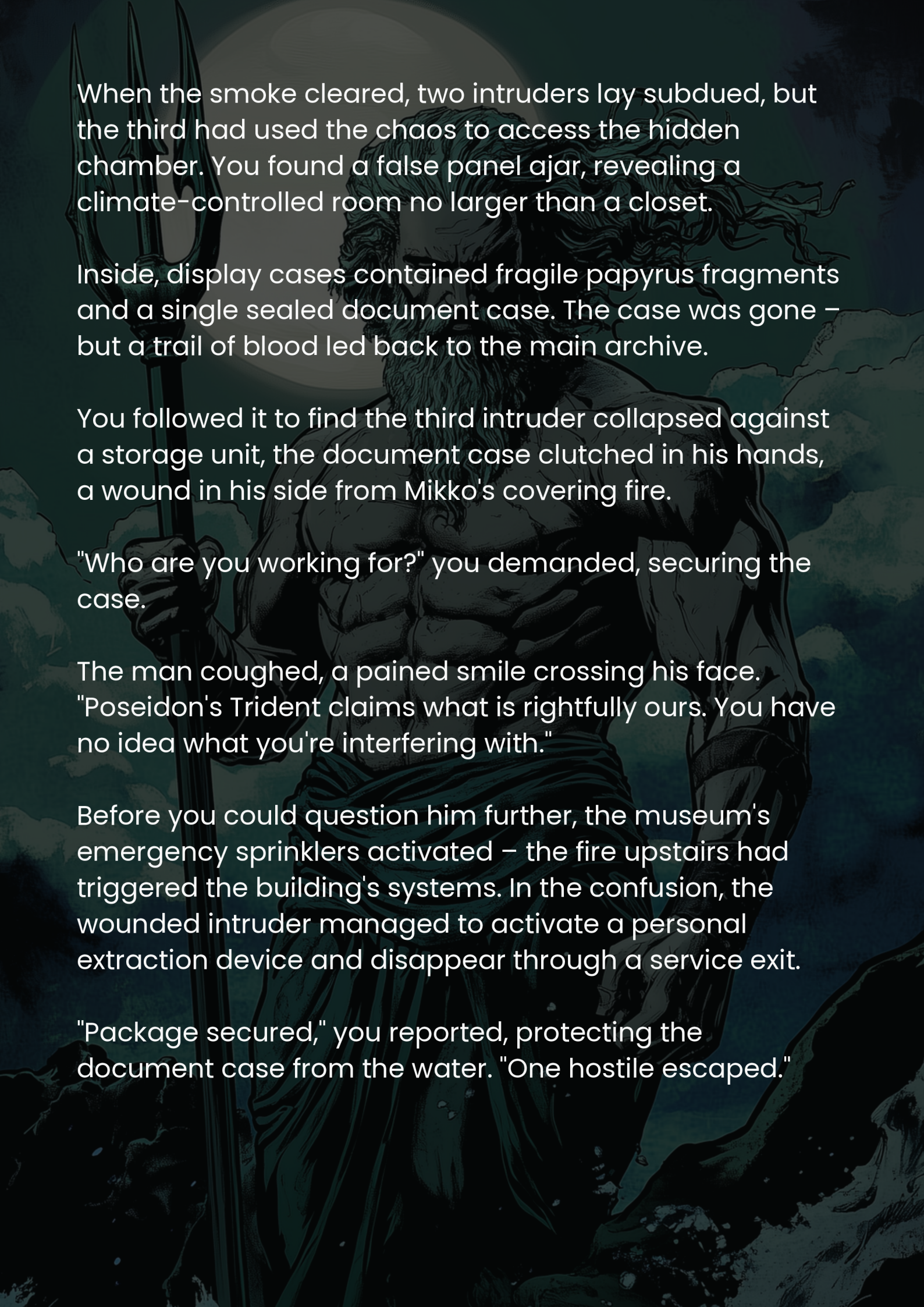
The basement intruders moved quickly now, abandoning stealth. One placed a device against the wall while the others provided cover.

You signaled to Mikko, who fired a disabling shot at the device, shattering it.

The intruders spun, weapons raised, but you had already moved positions. Mikko's second shot disabled one intruder's weapon, while you emerged from cover, your sidearm trained on the remaining two.

"SERPENT! Weapons down!" you commanded. Instead of complying, one intruder threw a smoke grenade. As visibility dropped to zero, you activated your tactical mask's filtration system and thermal overlay.

The firefight was brief but intense. Above, you could hear the BTRU engaging the other intruders. Through broken comm transmissions, you caught fragments of the battle – Amir disabling an intruder's escape route, Liam in hand-to-hand combat with another, Gabriel coordinating the team's movements with precision.



When the smoke cleared, two intruders lay subdued, but the third had used the chaos to access the hidden chamber. You found a false panel ajar, revealing a climate-controlled room no larger than a closet.

Inside, display cases contained fragile papyrus fragments and a single sealed document case. The case was gone – but a trail of blood led back to the main archive.

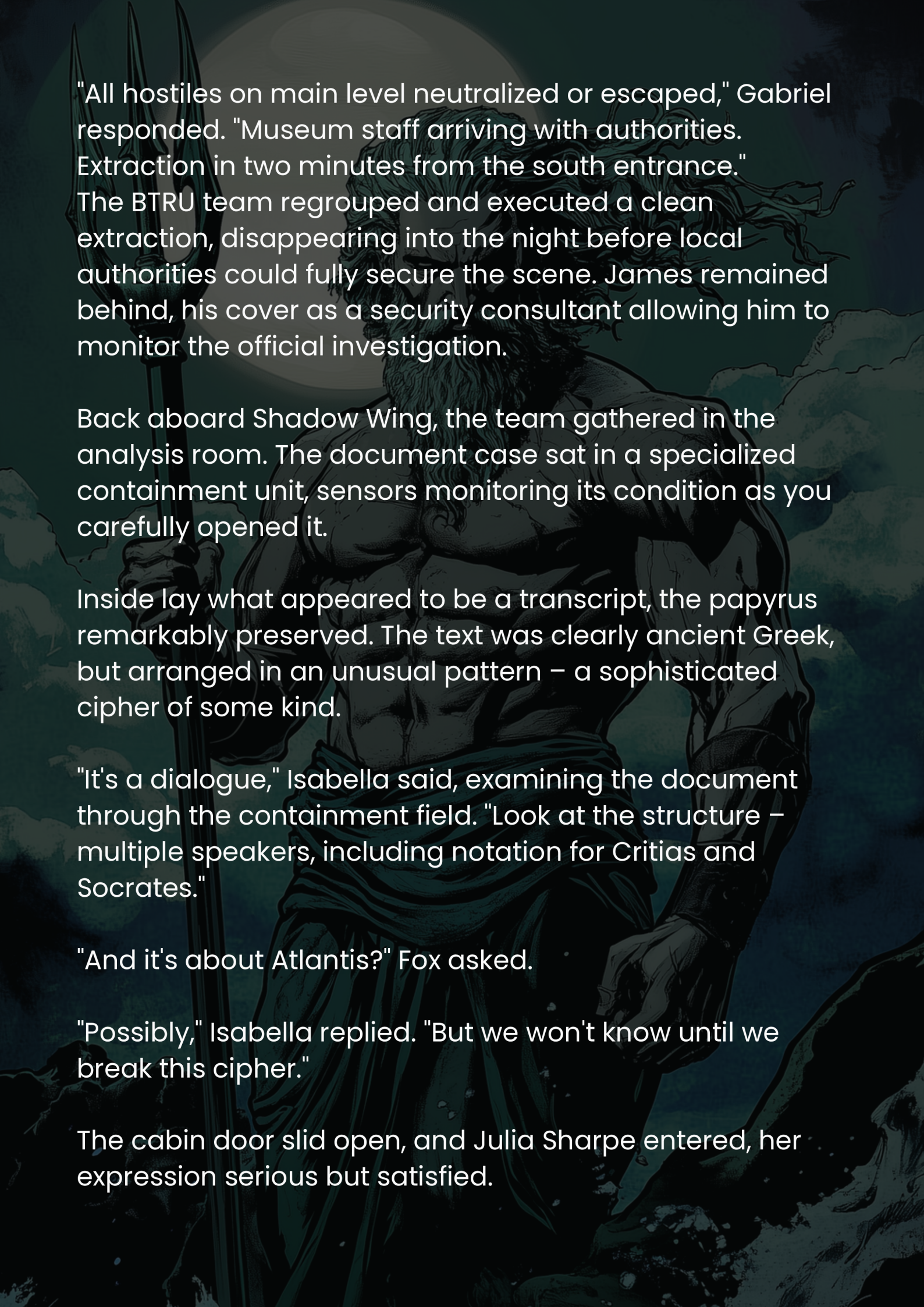
You followed it to find the third intruder collapsed against a storage unit, the document case clutched in his hands, a wound in his side from Mikko's covering fire.

"Who are you working for?" you demanded, securing the case.

The man coughed, a pained smile crossing his face. "Poseidon's Trident claims what is rightfully ours. You have no idea what you're interfering with."

Before you could question him further, the museum's emergency sprinklers activated – the fire upstairs had triggered the building's systems. In the confusion, the wounded intruder managed to activate a personal extraction device and disappear through a service exit.

"Package secured," you reported, protecting the document case from the water. "One hostile escaped."



"All hostiles on main level neutralized or escaped," Gabriel responded. "Museum staff arriving with authorities. Extraction in two minutes from the south entrance." The BTRU team regrouped and executed a clean extraction, disappearing into the night before local authorities could fully secure the scene. James remained behind, his cover as a security consultant allowing him to monitor the official investigation.

Back aboard Shadow Wing, the team gathered in the analysis room. The document case sat in a specialized containment unit, sensors monitoring its condition as you carefully opened it.

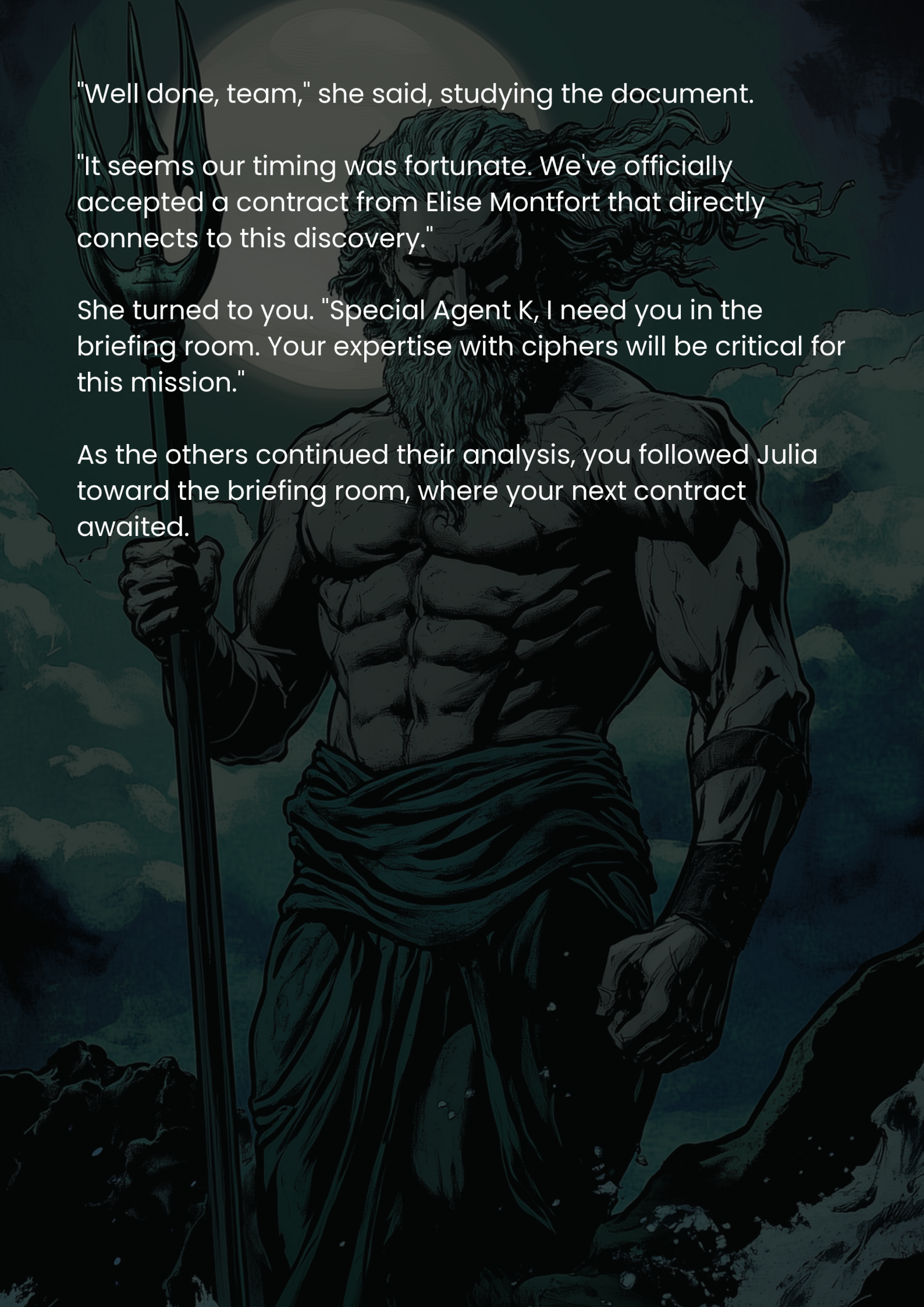
Inside lay what appeared to be a transcript, the papyrus remarkably preserved. The text was clearly ancient Greek, but arranged in an unusual pattern – a sophisticated cipher of some kind.

"It's a dialogue," Isabella said, examining the document through the containment field. "Look at the structure – multiple speakers, including notation for Critias and Socrates."

"And it's about Atlantis?" Fox asked.

"Possibly," Isabella replied. "But we won't know until we break this cipher."

The cabin door slid open, and Julia Sharpe entered, her expression serious but satisfied.



"Well done, team," she said, studying the document.

"It seems our timing was fortunate. We've officially accepted a contract from Elise Montfort that directly connects to this discovery."

She turned to you. "Special Agent K, I need you in the briefing room. Your expertise with ciphers will be critical for this mission."

As the others continued their analysis, you followed Julia toward the briefing room, where your next contract awaited.



Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

One of our clients, a wealthy art collector from Monaco, is requesting we help her find a recorded dialogue between Critias, Hermocrates, Timaeus and Soscrates.

In her quest to unravel the mysteries regarding the ancient city of Atlantis, our client wishes to gather all evidence possible as to where the location of the lost city truly is. Getting stuck a fair bit into her endeavors, she has reached out to SERPENT to decipher a piece of text.

Our client believes this text to be of vital importance to prove the existence of Atlantis as a city. Whether it will lead directly to the discovery of the city is doubtful. Nonetheless, it's of great importance to unravel it's meaning.

I trust your ability to deal with ciphers and ancient dialogues in this matter.

As always, Special Agent, the contract is yours, if you choose to accept.



Materials

text-file-dialogues-from-atlantis.zip

Answer Instruction

Use the answer to unlock the flagfile, this will reward you with your badge.

Use the URL you find as the answer.

Flagfile

Be advised, the flagfile is an encrypted ZIP. Make sure your OS supports the ZIP format. Ensure the password contains no hidden characters or formatting.

PS: Don't forget to claim your Coins and XP, by posting your card in the #card-brag channel in Discord.

<https://discord.hacktoria.com>

Write-Up

There is an attached file called a write-up, this will give you the answer in case you get stuck.

Acknowledgements

This challenge was made by Frank Diepmaat.