



HATCH

FAR AWAY
OUTPOST

Chapter 1: The Hanging Man

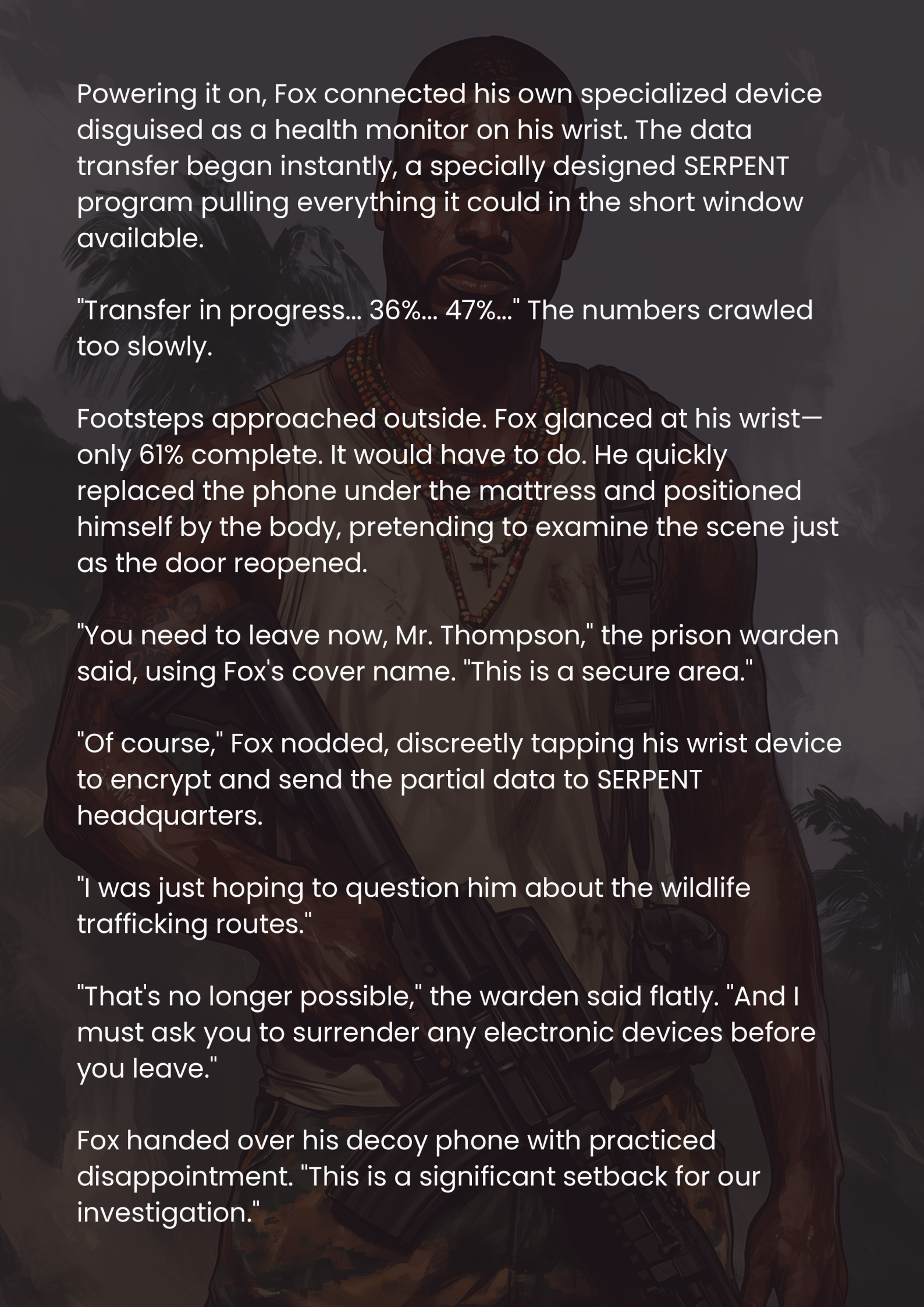
The stench of death hit Fox Meyer before he even reached the cell. The Kenyan prison guard's face was grim as he unlocked the heavy metal door, swinging it open to reveal a sight Fox had hoped to avoid. The young poacher—barely in his twenties—hung limply from a makeshift noose fashioned from his own bedsheets.

"Damn it," Fox muttered, his American accent slipping despite his cover as a wildlife conservation consultant. "When did this happen?"

"Less than an hour ago," the guard replied, his voice low. "The morning patrol found him. We had just interrogated him yesterday."

Fox's mind raced. He'd spent three months infiltrating this poaching network, and this kid had been his first real break. The guard stepped out to speak with his superior, and Fox seized the moment. With practiced movements, he scanned the cell, his eyes landing on a small bulge under the thin mattress on the metal bed frame. The cell phone.

Somehow the guards had missed it during their search. Fox glanced at the door, then quickly retrieved the device, a cheap burner model. The kid must have hidden it during the commotion of his arrest. Fox had only seconds before the guard returned. He couldn't pocket the phone—he would be searched on the way out—but he could access it.



Powering it on, Fox connected his own specialized device disguised as a health monitor on his wrist. The data transfer began instantly, a specially designed SERPENT program pulling everything it could in the short window available.

"Transfer in progress... 36%... 47%..." The numbers crawled too slowly.

Footsteps approached outside. Fox glanced at his wrist—only 61% complete. It would have to do. He quickly replaced the phone under the mattress and positioned himself by the body, pretending to examine the scene just as the door reopened.

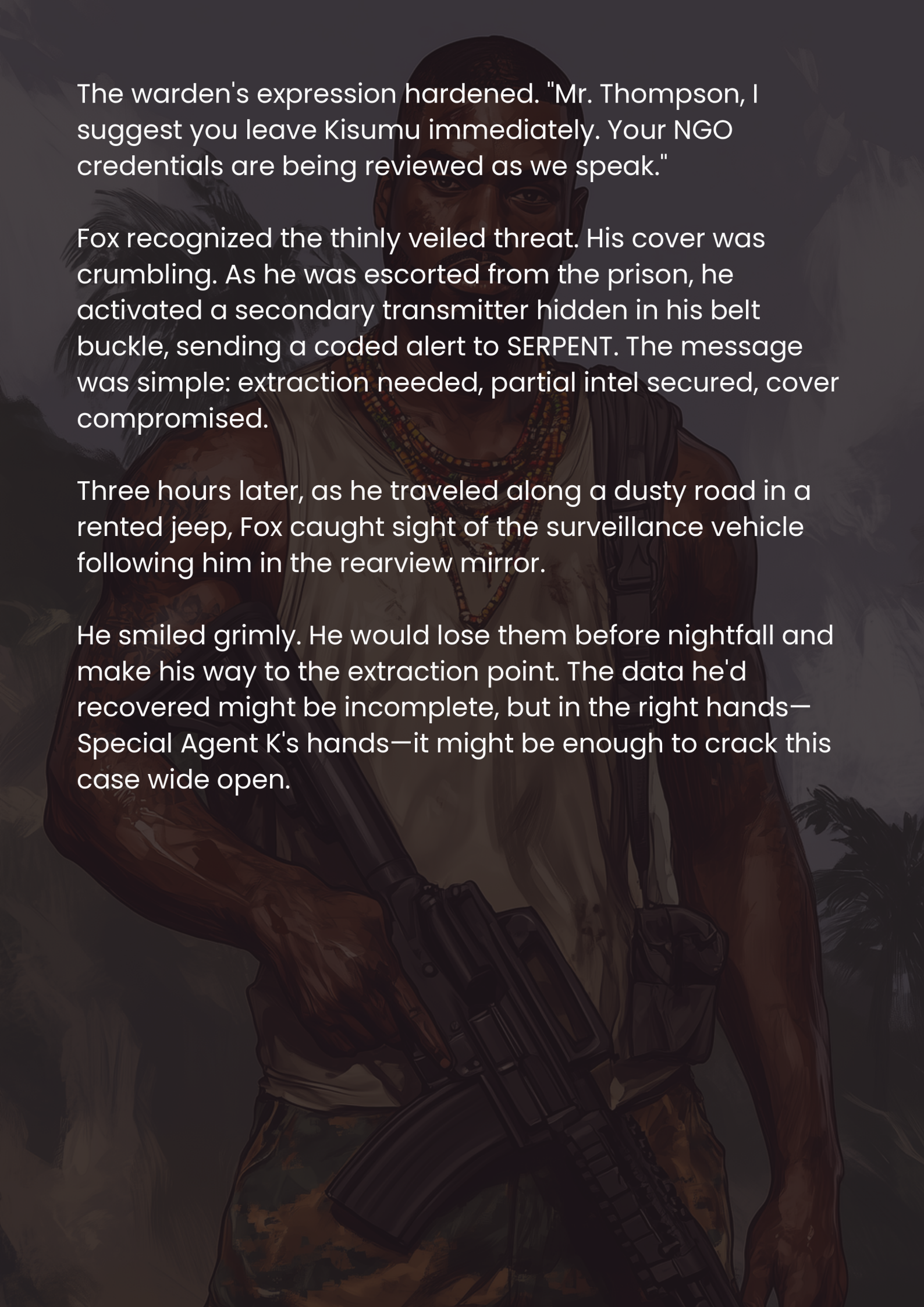
"You need to leave now, Mr. Thompson," the prison warden said, using Fox's cover name. "This is a secure area."

"Of course," Fox nodded, discreetly tapping his wrist device to encrypt and send the partial data to SERPENT headquarters.

"I was just hoping to question him about the wildlife trafficking routes."

"That's no longer possible," the warden said flatly. "And I must ask you to surrender any electronic devices before you leave."

Fox handed over his decoy phone with practiced disappointment. "This is a significant setback for our investigation."



The warden's expression hardened. "Mr. Thompson, I suggest you leave Kisumu immediately. Your NGO credentials are being reviewed as we speak."

Fox recognized the thinly veiled threat. His cover was crumbling. As he was escorted from the prison, he activated a secondary transmitter hidden in his belt buckle, sending a coded alert to SERPENT. The message was simple: extraction needed, partial intel secured, cover compromised.

Three hours later, as he traveled along a dusty road in a rented jeep, Fox caught sight of the surveillance vehicle following him in the rearview mirror.

He smiled grimly. He would lose them before nightfall and make his way to the extraction point. The data he'd recovered might be incomplete, but in the right hands—Special Agent K's hands—it might be enough to crack this case wide open.

Chapter 2: Shadow Wing Rendezvous

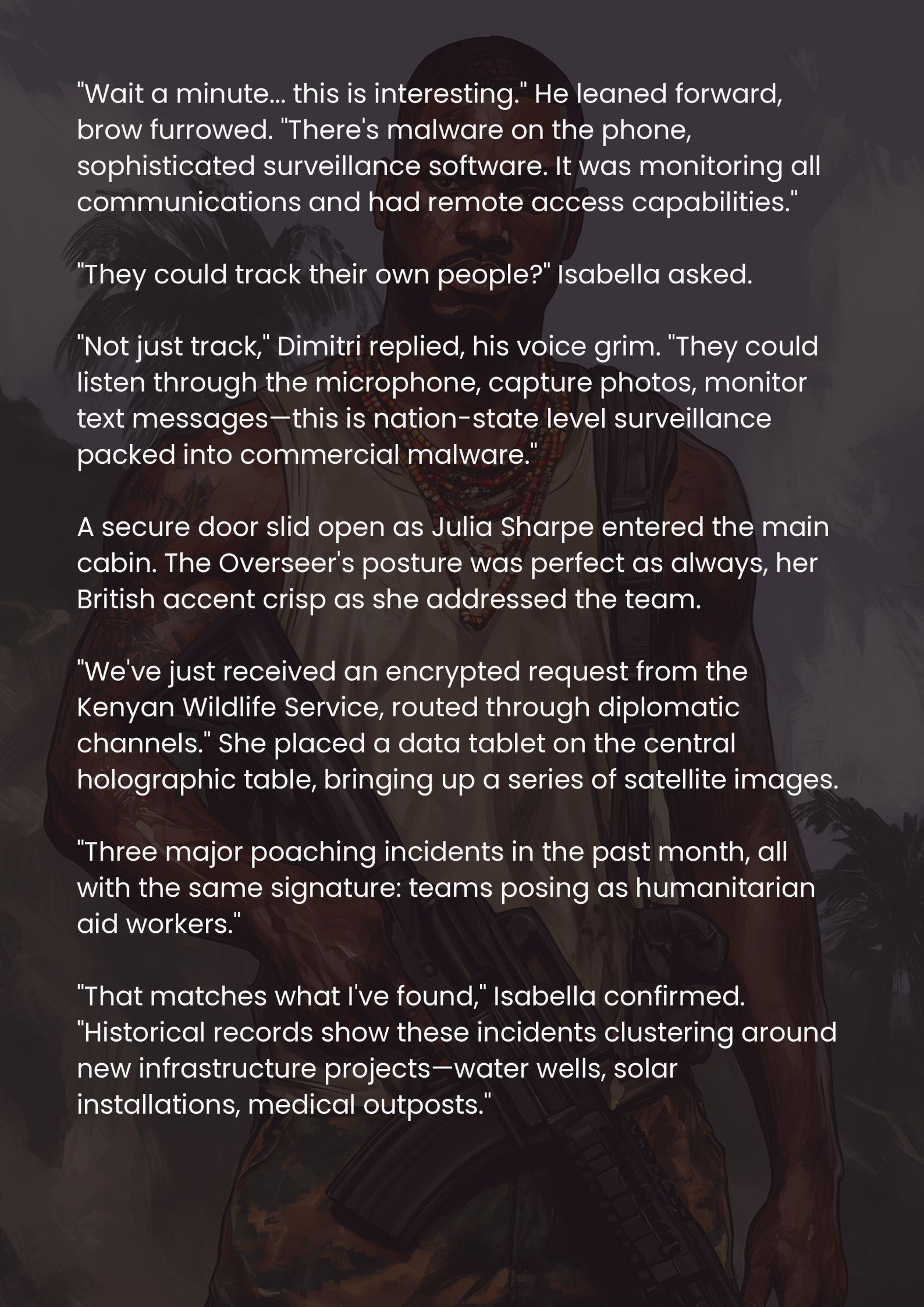
"The encryption is unlike anything I've seen in standard poacher communications," Dimitri Zechev announced, his fingers dancing across his keyboard. The Bulgarian hacker's workstation aboard Shadow Wing was surrounded by floating holographic displays showing fragmented data streams.

"This isn't amateur hour. These people have serious tech support."

Isabella Moreno looked up from her historical analysis of poaching patterns across Kenya's national parks. "They've been evolving their tactics. Looking at reports from the last five years, they've gone from opportunistic kills to precision operations."

The interior of the modified Bombardier Global 8000 hummed with activity. Shadow Wing was currently cruising at 40,000 feet over the Indian Ocean, its exterior appearing as a normal private jet while inside, SERPENT's mobile command center was fully operational.

"Fox was lucky to get anything at all," Mei Huang commented, studying psychological profiles on her screen. "Based on my analysis, the young man who hung himself fits the profile of a new recruit, not someone with access to their primary operations. That he killed himself suggests significant fear of reprisal from the organization." Dimitri's terminal suddenly flashed red.

A man with a beard and a woman are visible in the background. The man is in the foreground, looking slightly to the right. He has a beard and is wearing a white tank top. The woman is behind him, partially obscured. She has long dark hair and is wearing a white top. The background is dark and indistinct.

"Wait a minute... this is interesting." He leaned forward, brow furrowed. "There's malware on the phone, sophisticated surveillance software. It was monitoring all communications and had remote access capabilities."

"They could track their own people?" Isabella asked.

"Not just track," Dimitri replied, his voice grim. "They could listen through the microphone, capture photos, monitor text messages—this is nation-state level surveillance packed into commercial malware."

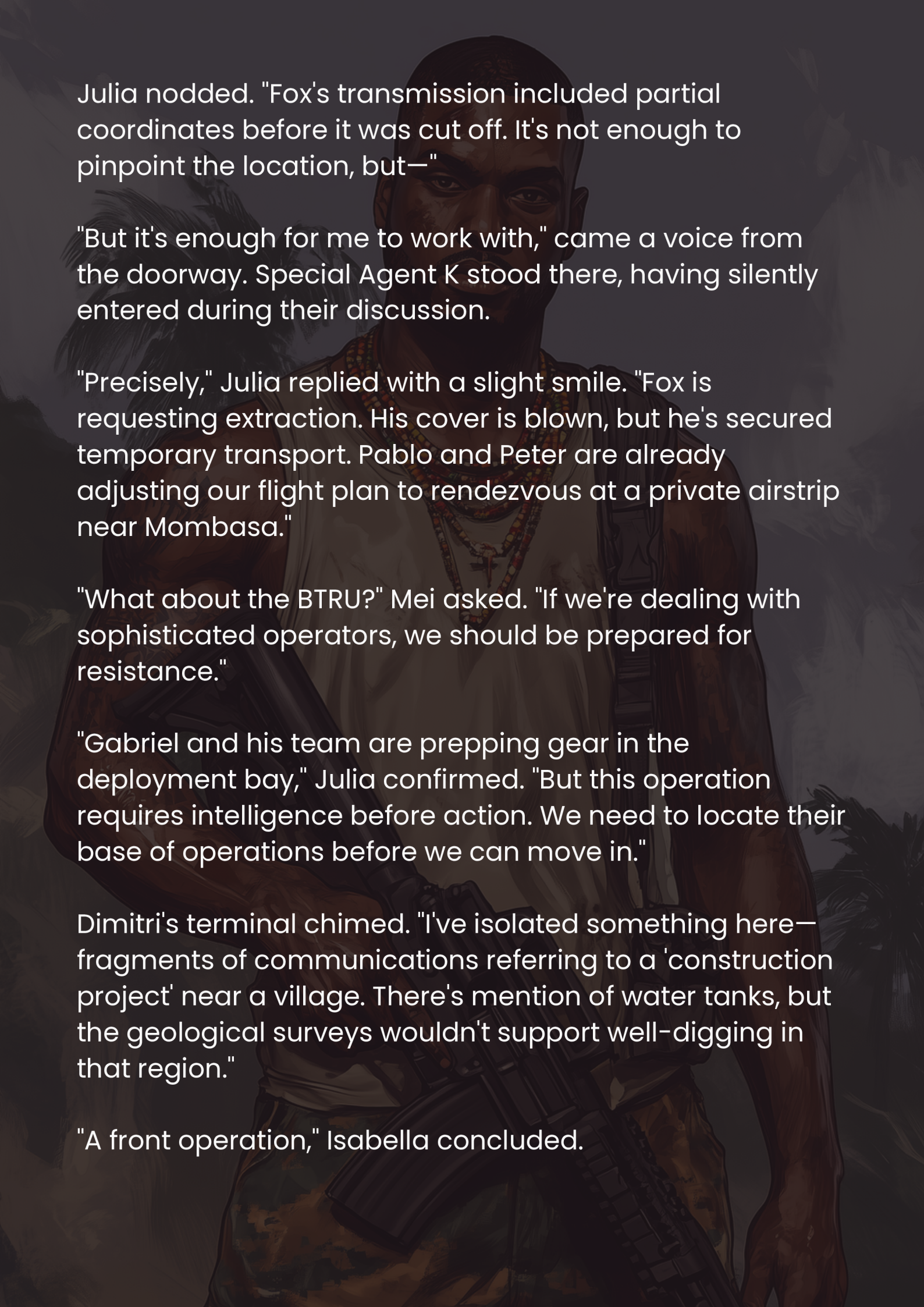
A secure door slid open as Julia Sharpe entered the main cabin. The Overseer's posture was perfect as always, her British accent crisp as she addressed the team.

"We've just received an encrypted request from the Kenyan Wildlife Service, routed through diplomatic channels." She placed a data tablet on the central holographic table, bringing up a series of satellite images.

"Three major poaching incidents in the past month, all with the same signature: teams posing as humanitarian aid workers."

"That matches what I've found," Isabella confirmed.

"Historical records show these incidents clustering around new infrastructure projects—water wells, solar installations, medical outposts."



Julia nodded. "Fox's transmission included partial coordinates before it was cut off. It's not enough to pinpoint the location, but—"

"But it's enough for me to work with," came a voice from the doorway. Special Agent K stood there, having silently entered during their discussion.

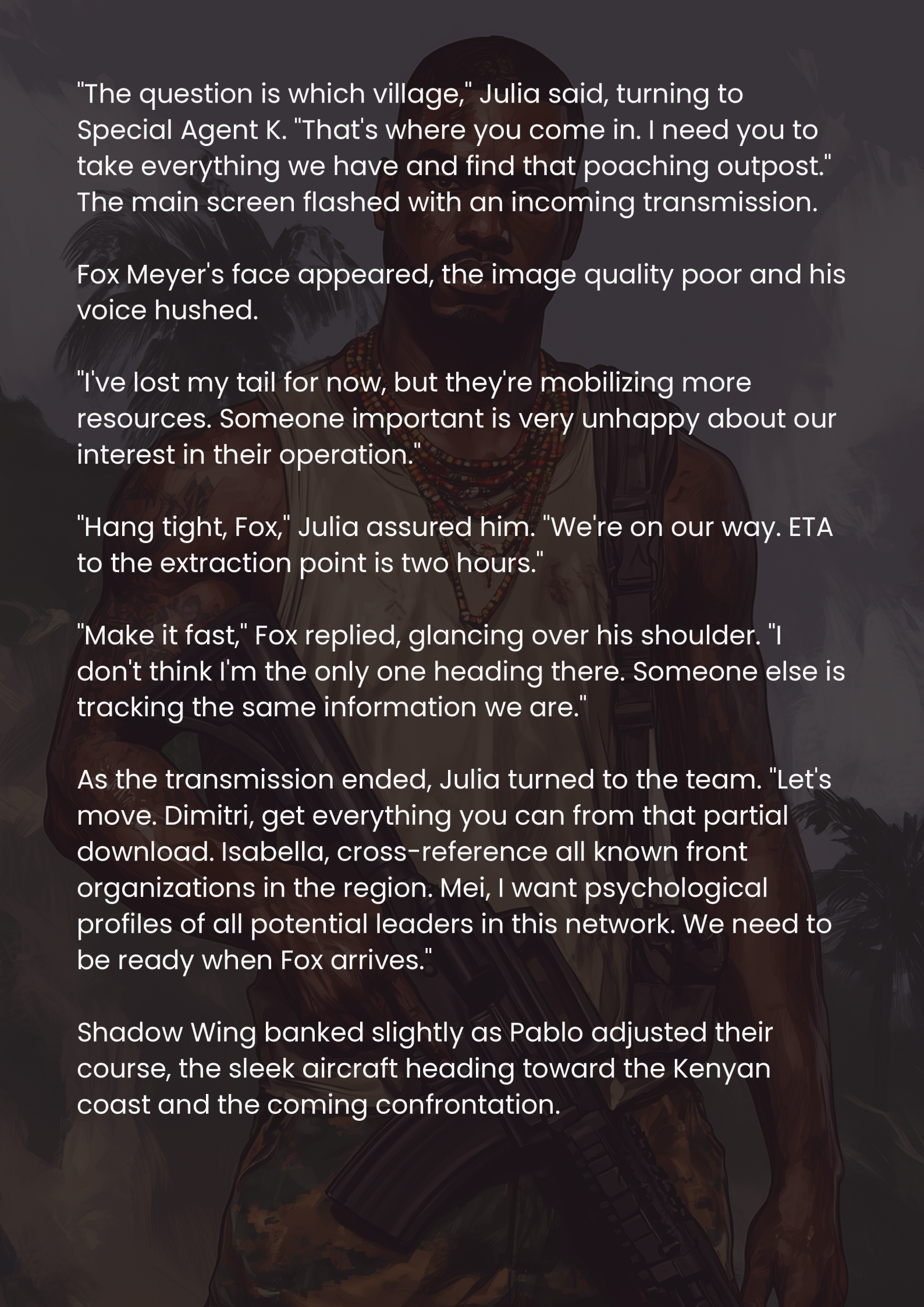
"Precisely," Julia replied with a slight smile. "Fox is requesting extraction. His cover is blown, but he's secured temporary transport. Pablo and Peter are already adjusting our flight plan to rendezvous at a private airstrip near Mombasa."

"What about the BTRU?" Mei asked. "If we're dealing with sophisticated operators, we should be prepared for resistance."

"Gabriel and his team are prepping gear in the deployment bay," Julia confirmed. "But this operation requires intelligence before action. We need to locate their base of operations before we can move in."

Dimitri's terminal chimed. "I've isolated something here—fragments of communications referring to a 'construction project' near a village. There's mention of water tanks, but the geological surveys wouldn't support well-digging in that region."

"A front operation," Isabella concluded.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white tank top and camouflage pants, is holding a rifle. He is looking forward with a serious expression. Behind him, a woman with long dark hair is partially visible. The background is a dark, misty outdoor setting with some foliage.

"The question is which village," Julia said, turning to Special Agent K. "That's where you come in. I need you to take everything we have and find that poaching outpost." The main screen flashed with an incoming transmission.

Fox Meyer's face appeared, the image quality poor and his voice hushed.

"I've lost my tail for now, but they're mobilizing more resources. Someone important is very unhappy about our interest in their operation."

"Hang tight, Fox," Julia assured him. "We're on our way. ETA to the extraction point is two hours."

"Make it fast," Fox replied, glancing over his shoulder. "I don't think I'm the only one heading there. Someone else is tracking the same information we are."

As the transmission ended, Julia turned to the team. "Let's move. Dimitri, get everything you can from that partial download. Isabella, cross-reference all known front organizations in the region. Mei, I want psychological profiles of all potential leaders in this network. We need to be ready when Fox arrives."

Shadow Wing banked slightly as Pablo adjusted their course, the sleek aircraft heading toward the Kenyan coast and the coming confrontation.

Chapter 3: The Puzzle Pieces

The makeshift airstrip outside Mombasa was little more than a cleared stretch of dirt, barely visible in the fading evening light.

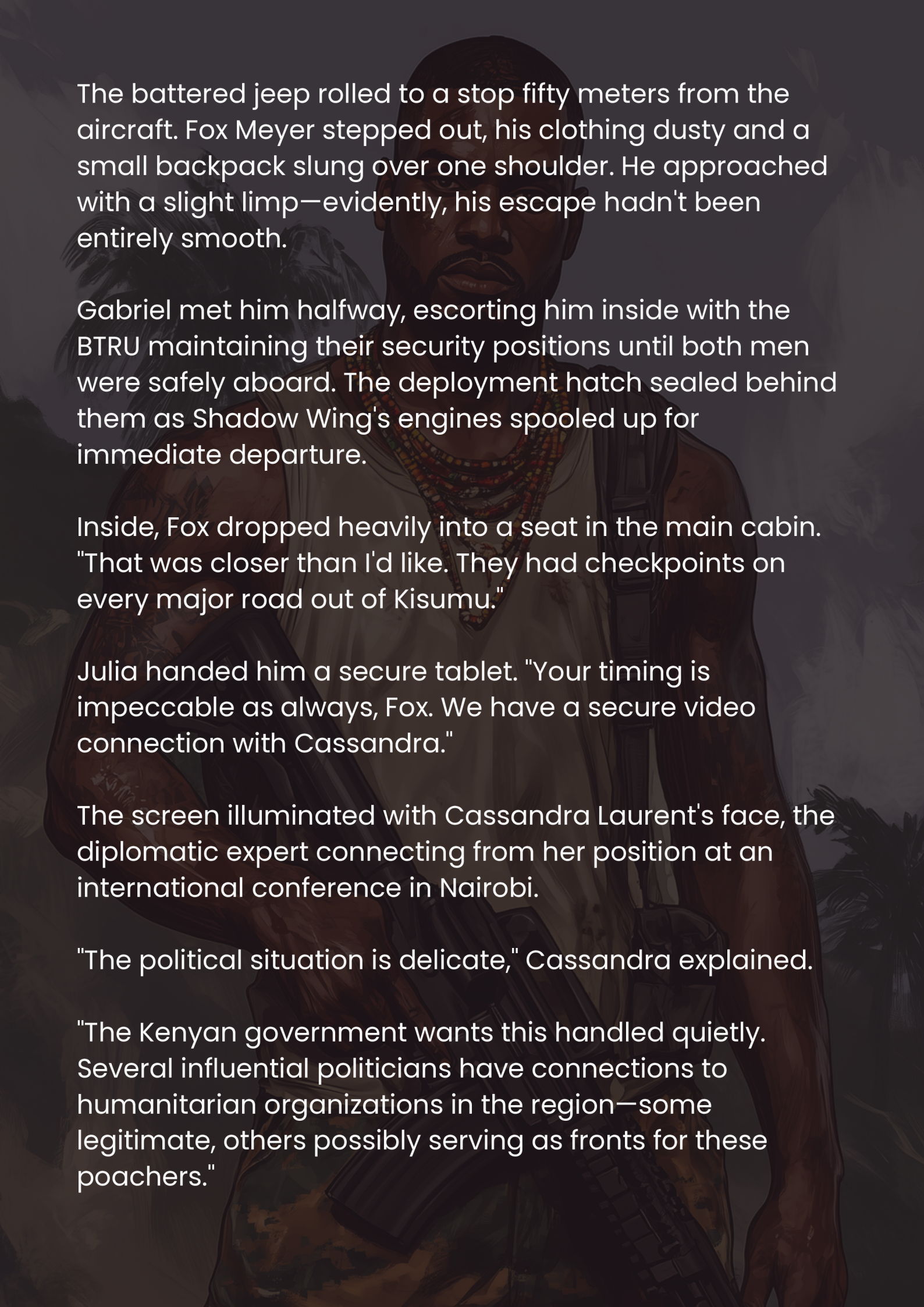
Shadow Wing descended with remarkable agility for an aircraft its size, touching down with minimal dust disruption—a testament to Pablo Iglesias's skill as a pilot.

Gabriel Adams, the BTRU team leader, was already positioned at the deployment hatch, his team arrayed behind him in combat stance. The moment the aircraft came to a stop, Gabriel signaled, and the team deployed with practiced efficiency, securing the perimeter in seconds.

"Clear southeast," came Mikko Häyhä's voice through the comms as the Finnish sniper took position on a small rise overlooking the airstrip.

"West sector clear," reported Amir Hussaini, the Iraqi-born breacher sweeping his sector with methodical precision. Liam Irwin, the Australian survival specialist, was the first to spot the approaching vehicle. "Movement, north access road. Single vehicle, approaching slowly, lights off."

"Fox's signal confirmed," Dimitri called from inside Shadow Wing. "It's him."

The background image is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a man with a beard and multiple necklaces, holding a rifle. He is standing in a dark, forested area. The text is overlaid on this image.

The battered jeep rolled to a stop fifty meters from the aircraft. Fox Meyer stepped out, his clothing dusty and a small backpack slung over one shoulder. He approached with a slight limp—evidently, his escape hadn't been entirely smooth.

Gabriel met him halfway, escorting him inside with the BTRU maintaining their security positions until both men were safely aboard. The deployment hatch sealed behind them as Shadow Wing's engines spooled up for immediate departure.

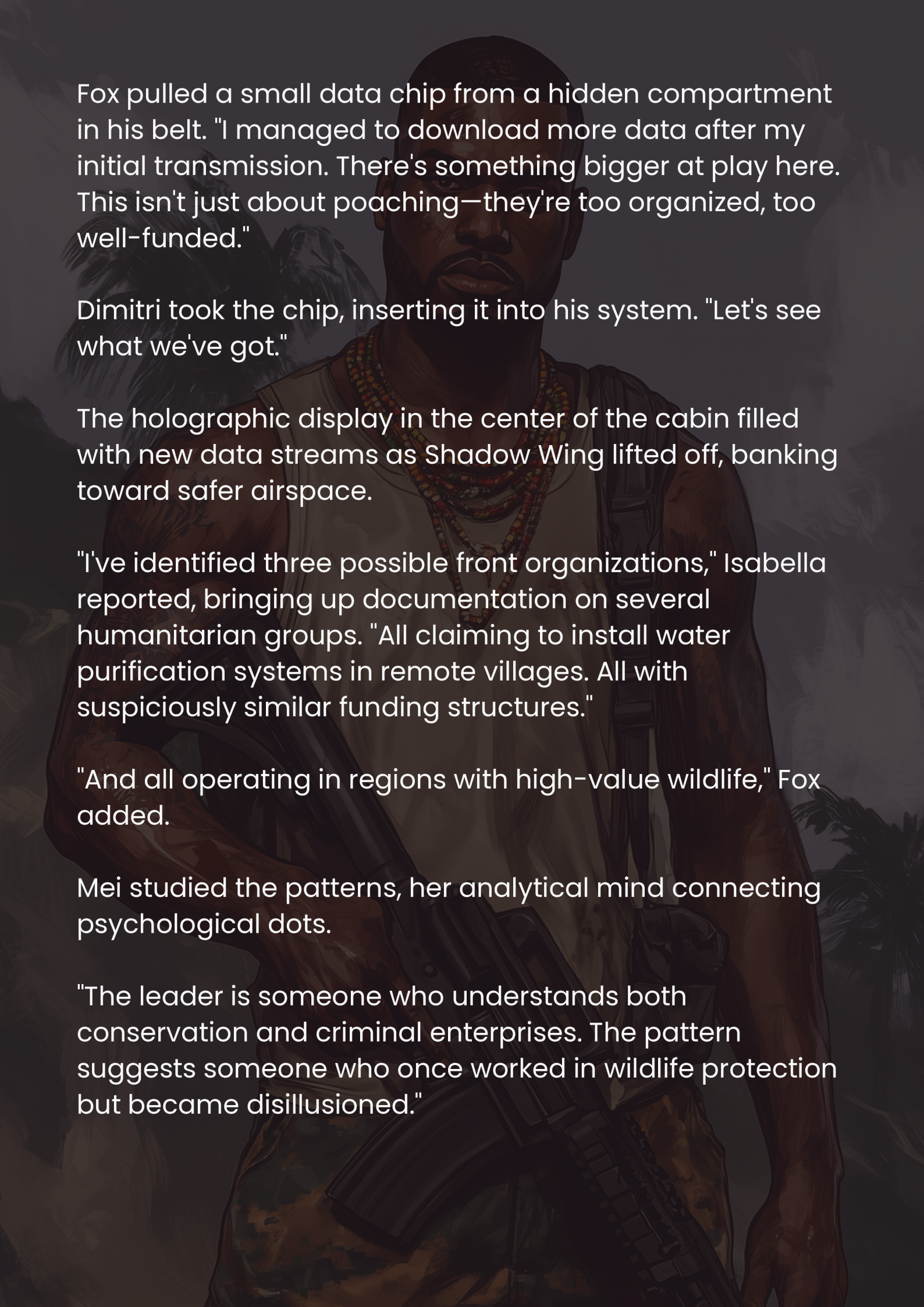
Inside, Fox dropped heavily into a seat in the main cabin. "That was closer than I'd like. They had checkpoints on every major road out of Kisumu."

Julia handed him a secure tablet. "Your timing is impeccable as always, Fox. We have a secure video connection with Cassandra."

The screen illuminated with Cassandra Laurent's face, the diplomatic expert connecting from her position at an international conference in Nairobi.

"The political situation is delicate," Cassandra explained.

"The Kenyan government wants this handled quietly. Several influential politicians have connections to humanitarian organizations in the region—some legitimate, others possibly serving as fronts for these poachers."



Fox pulled a small data chip from a hidden compartment in his belt. "I managed to download more data after my initial transmission. There's something bigger at play here. This isn't just about poaching—they're too organized, too well-funded."

Dimitri took the chip, inserting it into his system. "Let's see what we've got."

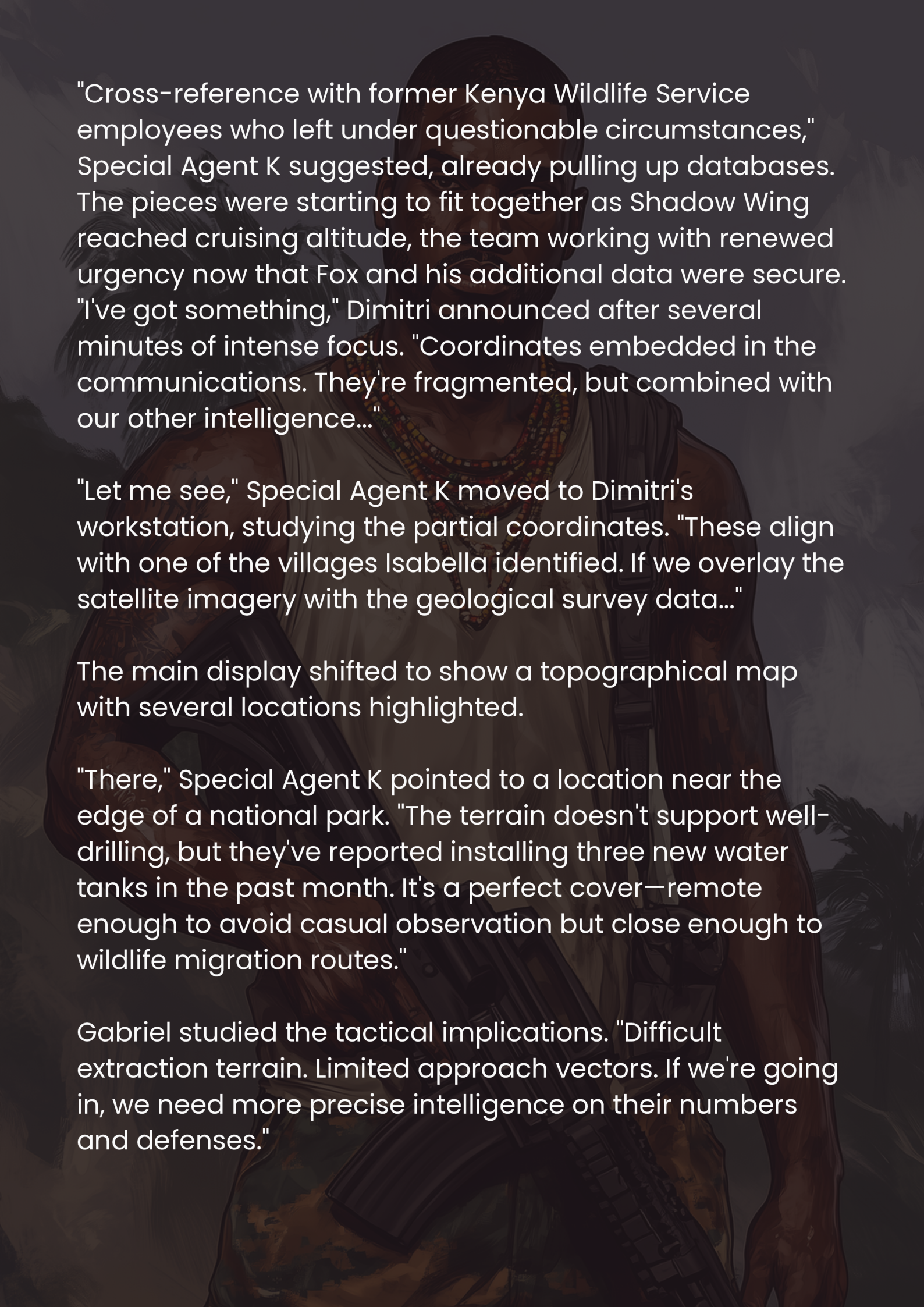
The holographic display in the center of the cabin filled with new data streams as Shadow Wing lifted off, banking toward safer airspace.

"I've identified three possible front organizations," Isabella reported, bringing up documentation on several humanitarian groups. "All claiming to install water purification systems in remote villages. All with suspiciously similar funding structures."

"And all operating in regions with high-value wildlife," Fox added.

Mei studied the patterns, her analytical mind connecting psychological dots.

"The leader is someone who understands both conservation and criminal enterprises. The pattern suggests someone who once worked in wildlife protection but became disillusioned."

A man in a military uniform, wearing a white t-shirt and a tactical vest, stands in the foreground. He is holding a rifle. In the background, a woman with long dark hair is visible. The scene is set in a dark, possibly outdoor environment.

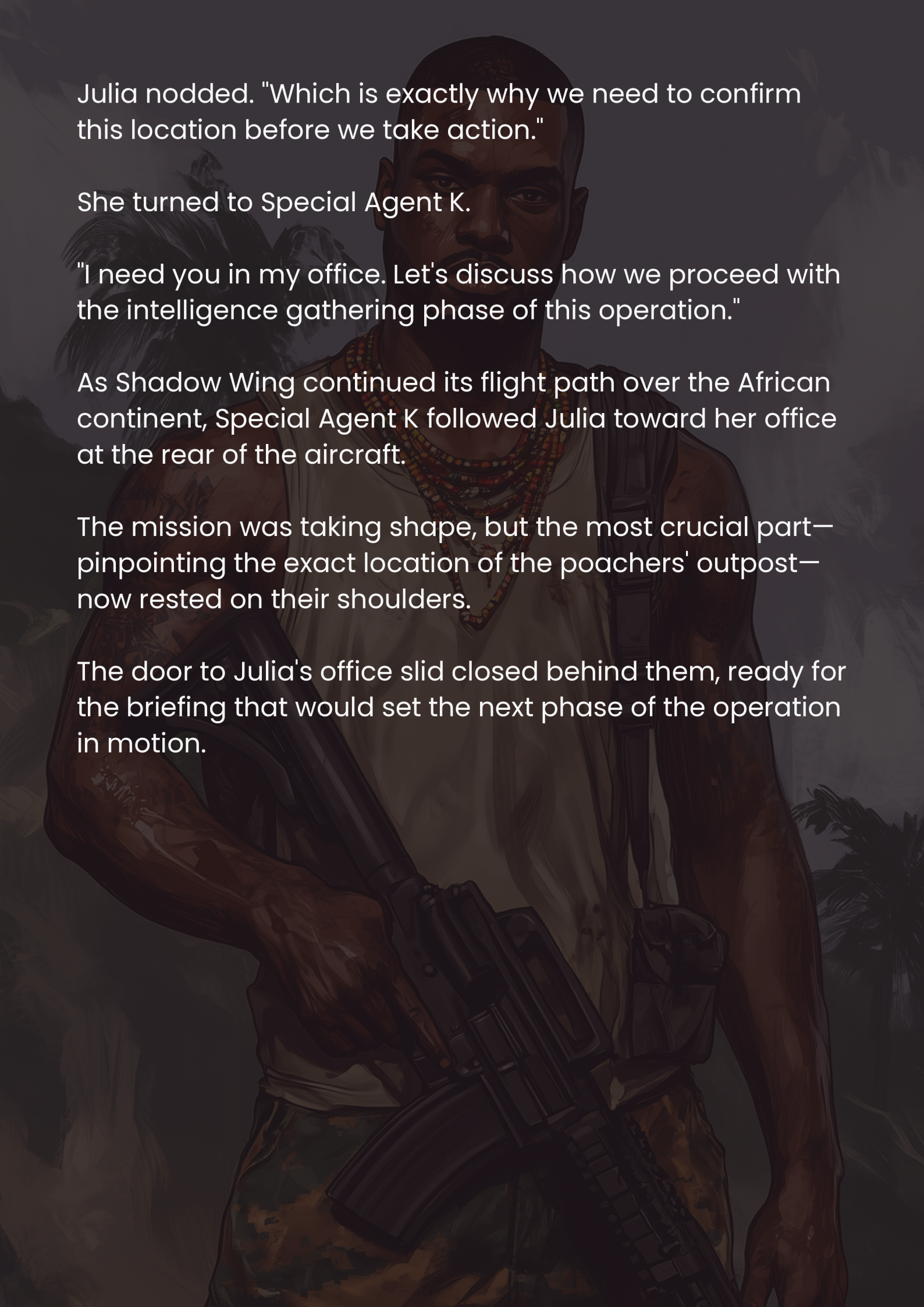
"Cross-reference with former Kenya Wildlife Service employees who left under questionable circumstances," Special Agent K suggested, already pulling up databases. The pieces were starting to fit together as Shadow Wing reached cruising altitude, the team working with renewed urgency now that Fox and his additional data were secure. "I've got something," Dimitri announced after several minutes of intense focus. "Coordinates embedded in the communications. They're fragmented, but combined with our other intelligence..."

"Let me see," Special Agent K moved to Dimitri's workstation, studying the partial coordinates. "These align with one of the villages Isabella identified. If we overlay the satellite imagery with the geological survey data..."

The main display shifted to show a topographical map with several locations highlighted.

"There," Special Agent K pointed to a location near the edge of a national park. "The terrain doesn't support well-drilling, but they've reported installing three new water tanks in the past month. It's a perfect cover—remote enough to avoid casual observation but close enough to wildlife migration routes."

Gabriel studied the tactical implications. "Difficult extraction terrain. Limited approach vectors. If we're going in, we need more precise intelligence on their numbers and defenses."



Julia nodded. "Which is exactly why we need to confirm this location before we take action."

She turned to Special Agent K.

"I need you in my office. Let's discuss how we proceed with the intelligence gathering phase of this operation."

As Shadow Wing continued its flight path over the African continent, Special Agent K followed Julia toward her office at the rear of the aircraft.

The mission was taking shape, but the most crucial part—pinpointing the exact location of the poachers' outpost—now rested on their shoulders.

The door to Julia's office slid closed behind them, ready for the briefing that would set the next phase of the operation in motion.

Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

I hope you're in the mood for hunting down some poachers. We have a contract from the Kenyan government to track down an animal smuggling and poaching operation.

This group uses various humanitarian organizations as fronts for their poaching operations. Often pretending to be building civilian infrastructure to obscure their activities.

In their latest attempts to stay undetected, the group started to present themselves as construction workers. Traveling to remote villages and outposts to supposedly install water tanks and wells. Unsuspecting locals would let them go about their business, as they used this cover to poach wild animals.

Last week, the Kenyan authorities were able to apprehend one of their members. They were able to extract a few pieces of information from his cellphone. Unfortunately, the young man hung himself that same night. Making further questioning somewhat troublesome. Your mission is simple, find the location of the current poacher outpost.

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

Materials

faw-away-outpost-starting-image-01.png

faw-away-outpost-starting-image-02.png

Answer Instruction

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

Put together the answer as, all lowercase letters:
country-county-road-nearest-t-split-road

Example (leave out words like road/rd):
france-champagne-nicelane-escargot

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.