



# INTERGALACTIC WARFARE

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## Chapter 1: Silent Skies

The perpetual darkness of deep space was broken only by the soft blue glow of monitoring equipment. Fox Meyer rubbed his tired eyes, glancing at the clock—3:17 AM. Another late night at the remote observation outpost nestled in the mountains of Colorado.

"You should rest, Fox. Your human physiology requires adequate sleep cycles." The voice came from Klumgongyn, who stood silhouetted against the large display window overlooking Earth's majestic night side. "I'll sleep when I'm dead," Fox replied with a half-smile, raising his fifth cup of coffee in a mock toast.

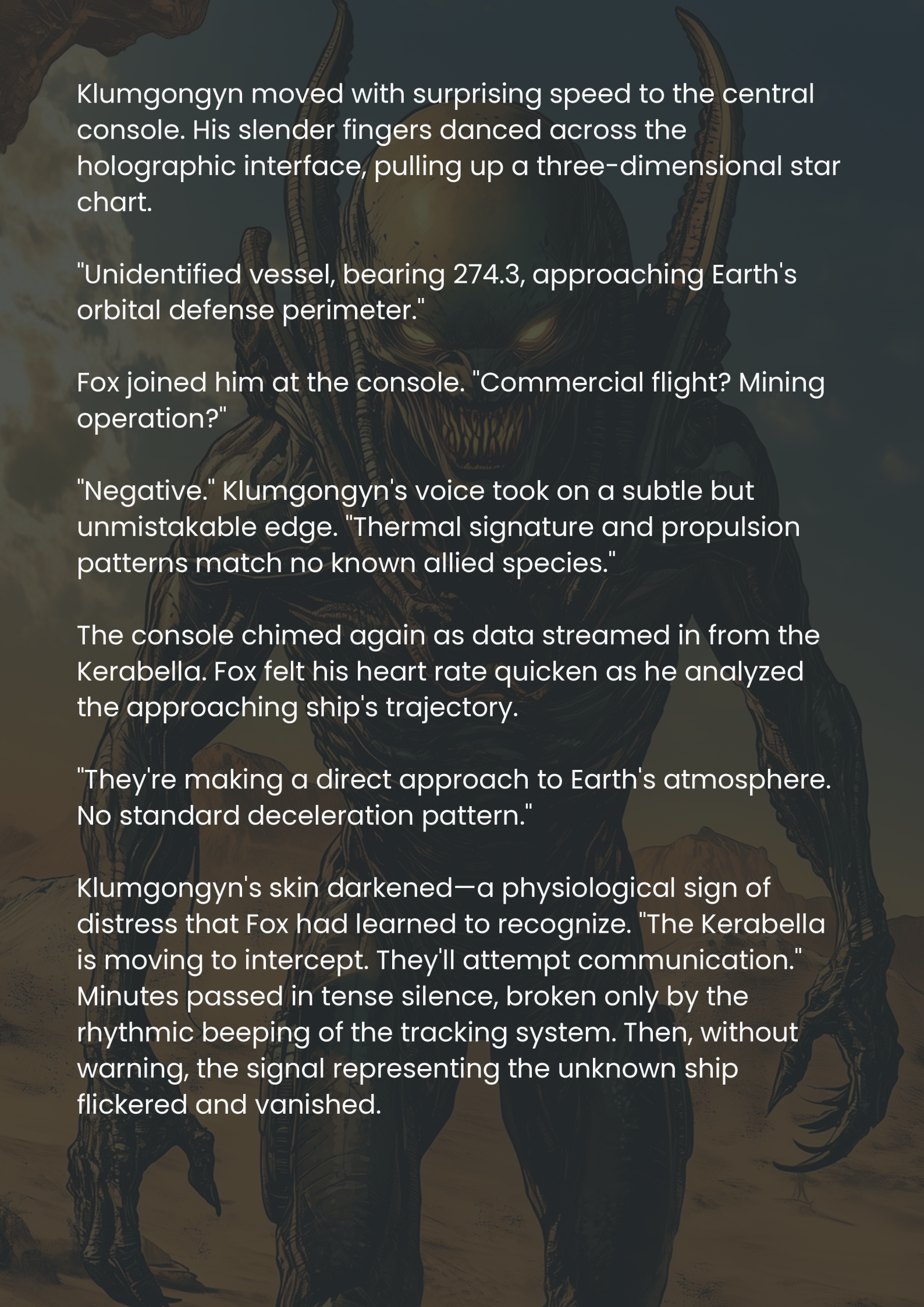
Klumgongyn's large, expressive eyes blinked in their distinctive triple pattern. "A curious human expression. Counterproductive, since being dead would render sleep unnecessary."

Fox chuckled. After three years working with the Volrac liaison, he'd grown fond of his literal interpretations of human idioms. "Any news from the Kerabella?"

"Captain Zarlyx reports all sectors clear. The mining dispute on Celex-7 has been resolved peacefully."

Fox nodded, turning back to his console. Routine reports. Standard protocols. Another quiet night monitoring the stars. Just as he was about to suggest they run a diagnostic on the long-range scanners, a sharp tone pierced the silence.





Klunggongyn moved with surprising speed to the central console. His slender fingers danced across the holographic interface, pulling up a three-dimensional star chart.

"Unidentified vessel, bearing 274.3, approaching Earth's orbital defense perimeter."

Fox joined him at the console. "Commercial flight? Mining operation?"

"Negative." Klunggongyn's voice took on a subtle but unmistakable edge. "Thermal signature and propulsion patterns match no known allied species."

The console chimed again as data streamed in from the Kerabella. Fox felt his heart rate quicken as he analyzed the approaching ship's trajectory.

"They're making a direct approach to Earth's atmosphere. No standard deceleration pattern."

Klunggongyn's skin darkened—a physiological sign of distress that Fox had learned to recognize. "The Kerabella is moving to intercept. They'll attempt communication." Minutes passed in tense silence, broken only by the rhythmic beeping of the tracking system. Then, without warning, the signal representing the unknown ship flickered and vanished.





"What happened?" Fox demanded, fingers flying over the controls. "Did we lose them?"

"Impossible," Klumgongyn replied, voice unnaturally flat. "Unless..."

The realization hit them simultaneously.

"Thermal regulation." Fox's voice dropped to a whisper. "They're masking their heat signature."

Klumgongyn's communication device emitted a series of rapid tones. He listened intently, his large eyes widening further.

"Fox, the Kerabella has reestablished visual contact. The vessel... it's a Krohndahkyr scout ship."

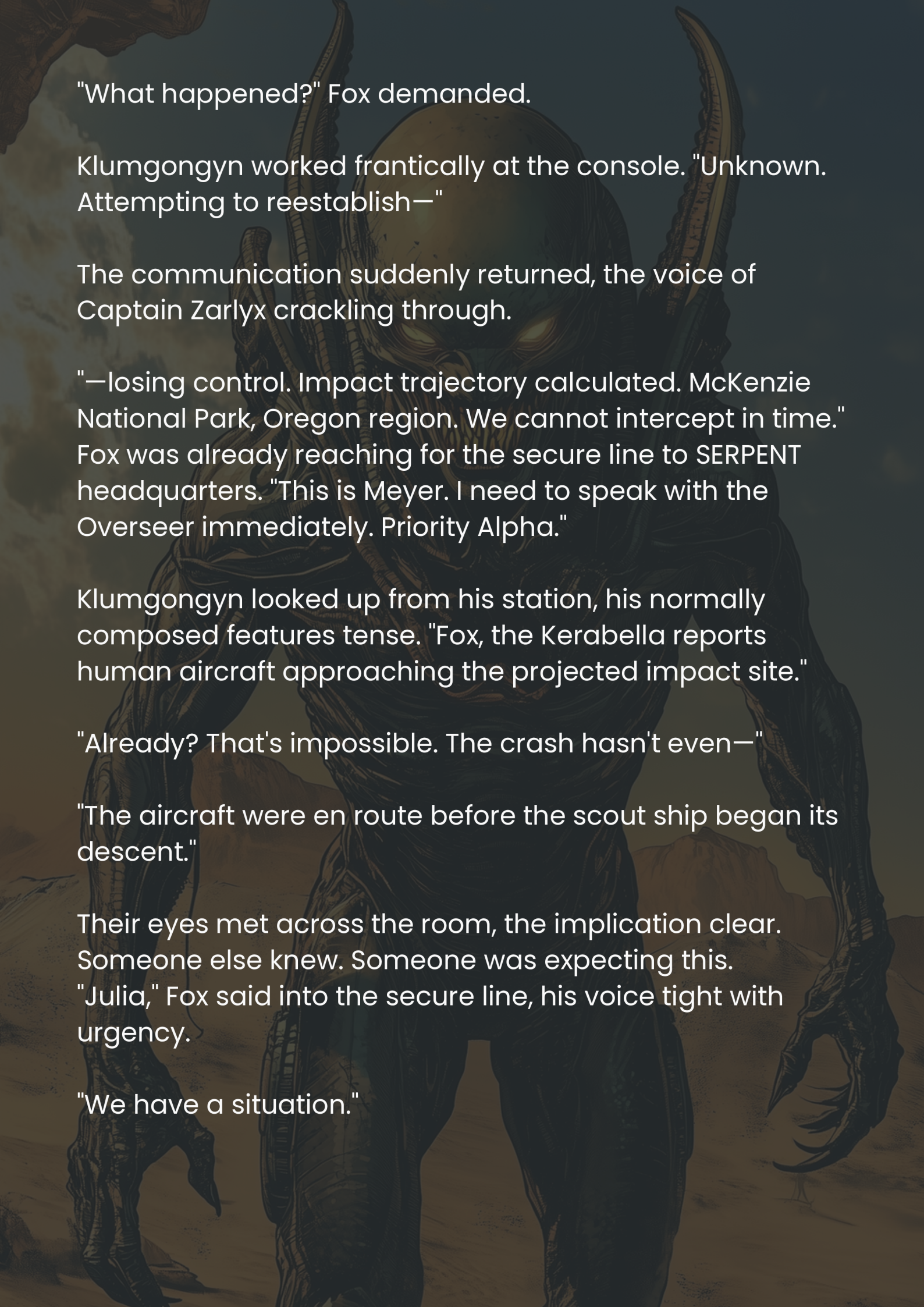
Fox felt a chill that had nothing to do with the room's temperature. "Are you sure?"

"Positive identification. The Second Intergalactic Fleet insignia is visible on the hull."

The implications were too severe to fully process. Fox had read the classified files on the Krohndahkyr—nightmares made flesh, predators evolved to hunt with terrifying efficiency.

The signal from the Kerabella suddenly cut out, plunging them into silence.





"What happened?" Fox demanded.

Klumgongyn worked frantically at the console. "Unknown. Attempting to reestablish—"

The communication suddenly returned, the voice of Captain Zarlyx crackling through.

"—losing control. Impact trajectory calculated. McKenzie National Park, Oregon region. We cannot intercept in time." Fox was already reaching for the secure line to SERPENT headquarters. "This is Meyer. I need to speak with the Overseer immediately. Priority Alpha."

Klumgongyn looked up from his station, his normally composed features tense. "Fox, the Kerabella reports human aircraft approaching the projected impact site."

"Already? That's impossible. The crash hasn't even—"

"The aircraft were en route before the scout ship began its descent."

Their eyes met across the room, the implication clear. Someone else knew. Someone was expecting this.

"Julia," Fox said into the secure line, his voice tight with urgency.

"We have a situation."



## Chapter 2: Shadows and Whispers

Thirty-five thousand feet above the Atlantic Ocean, Julia Sharpe stood perfectly still in the center of Shadow Wing's command room, absorbing the news from Fox Meyer with the practiced calm of a seasoned intelligence operative.

"Chart a new course," she ordered, turning to the cockpit door where Pablo Iglesias had appeared upon hearing the priority alert. "Northwest United States. Maximum speed." Pablo nodded once. "Atmospheric conditions are favorable. We can be there in three hours if we push it."

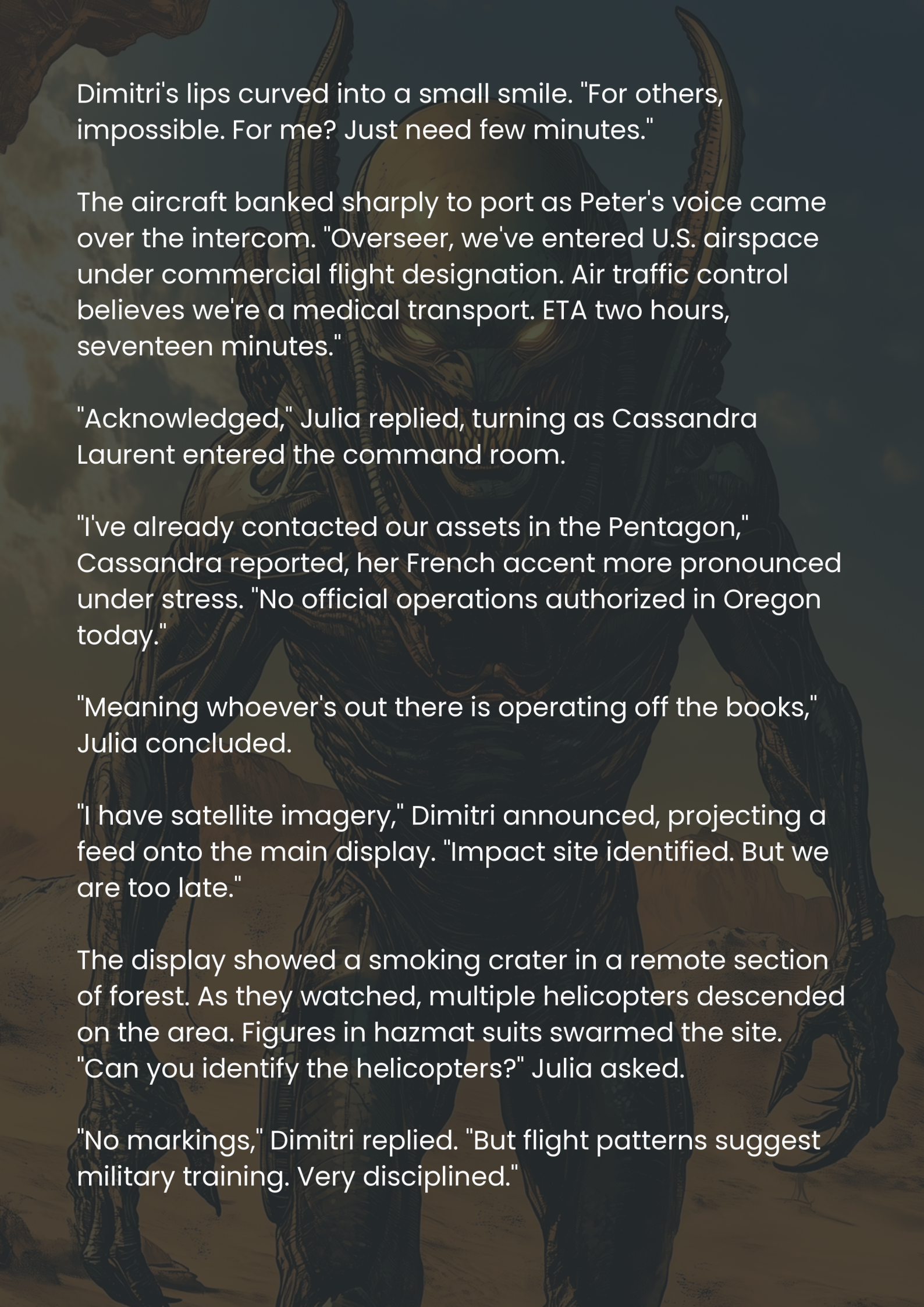
"Push it," Julia confirmed.

As Pablo disappeared back into the cockpit, Julia felt the subtle shift in the aircraft's trajectory, followed by the increased hum of engines as Peter Jansen, Pablo's co-pilot, coaxed more power from the modified Bombardier. "Dimitri," Julia called, approaching the tech station where Dimitri Zechev hunched over multiple screens. "I need eyes on McKenzie National Park. Every satellite feed, every camera within fifty miles."

The Bulgarian hacker didn't look up, his fingers already dancing across multiple keyboards. "Government agencies suddenly very active in Oregon. Many encrypted channels. Very interesting timing, yes?"

Julia leaned over his shoulder. "Can you break the encryption?"





Dimitri's lips curved into a small smile. "For others, impossible. For me? Just need few minutes."

The aircraft banked sharply to port as Peter's voice came over the intercom. "Overseer, we've entered U.S. airspace under commercial flight designation. Air traffic control believes we're a medical transport. ETA two hours, seventeen minutes."

"Acknowledged," Julia replied, turning as Cassandra Laurent entered the command room.

"I've already contacted our assets in the Pentagon," Cassandra reported, her French accent more pronounced under stress. "No official operations authorized in Oregon today."

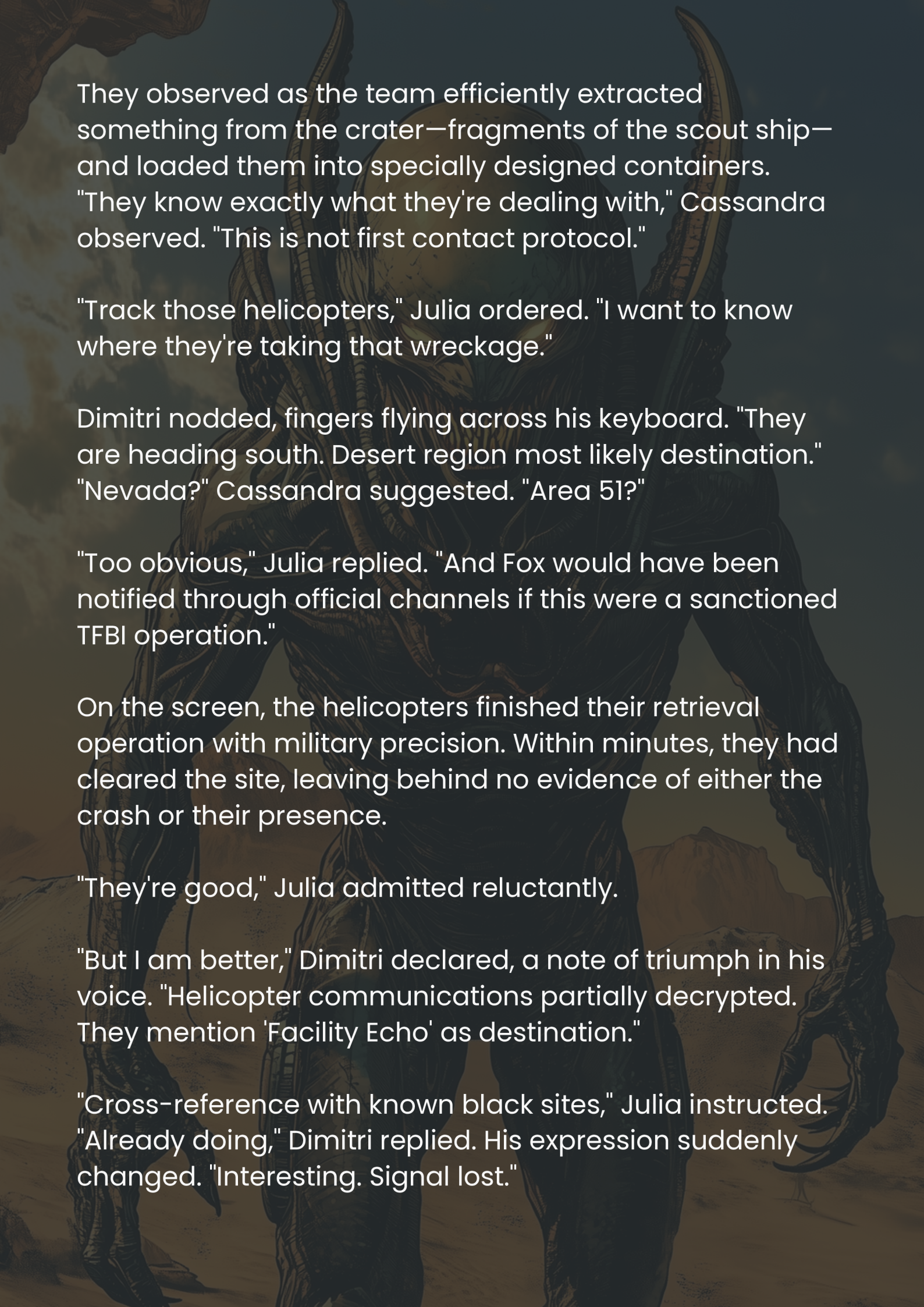
"Meaning whoever's out there is operating off the books," Julia concluded.

"I have satellite imagery," Dimitri announced, projecting a feed onto the main display. "Impact site identified. But we are too late."

The display showed a smoking crater in a remote section of forest. As they watched, multiple helicopters descended on the area. Figures in hazmat suits swarmed the site. "Can you identify the helicopters?" Julia asked.

"No markings," Dimitri replied. "But flight patterns suggest military training. Very disciplined."





They observed as the team efficiently extracted something from the crater—fragments of the scout ship—and loaded them into specially designed containers. "They know exactly what they're dealing with," Cassandra observed. "This is not first contact protocol."

"Track those helicopters," Julia ordered. "I want to know where they're taking that wreckage."

Dimitri nodded, fingers flying across his keyboard. "They are heading south. Desert region most likely destination." "Nevada?" Cassandra suggested. "Area 51?"

"Too obvious," Julia replied. "And Fox would have been notified through official channels if this were a sanctioned TFBI operation."

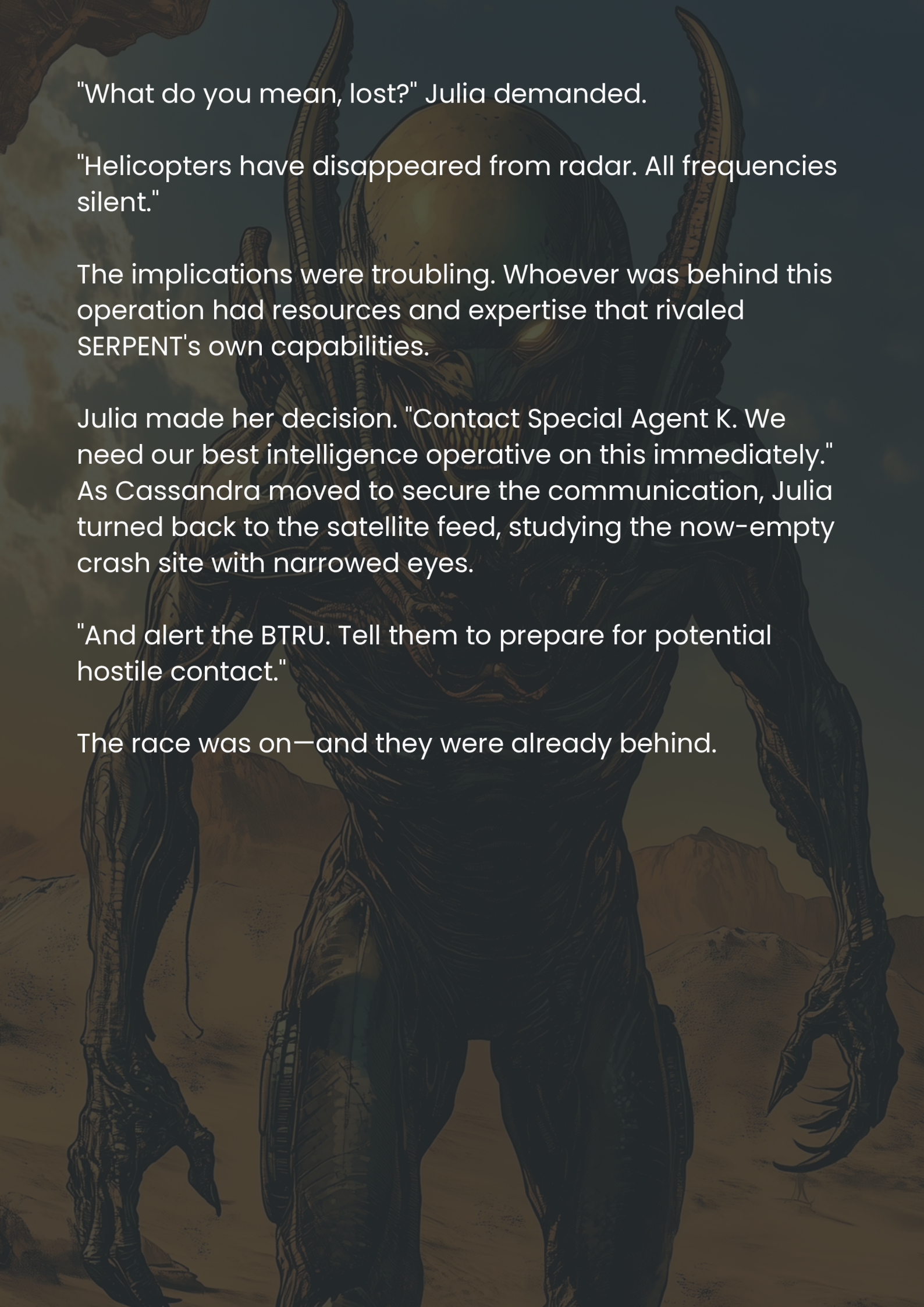
On the screen, the helicopters finished their retrieval operation with military precision. Within minutes, they had cleared the site, leaving behind no evidence of either the crash or their presence.

"They're good," Julia admitted reluctantly.

"But I am better," Dimitri declared, a note of triumph in his voice. "Helicopter communications partially decrypted. They mention 'Facility Echo' as destination."

"Cross-reference with known black sites," Julia instructed. "Already doing," Dimitri replied. His expression suddenly changed. "Interesting. Signal lost."





"What do you mean, lost?" Julia demanded.

"Helicopters have disappeared from radar. All frequencies silent."

The implications were troubling. Whoever was behind this operation had resources and expertise that rivaled SERPENT's own capabilities.

Julia made her decision. "Contact Special Agent K. We need our best intelligence operative on this immediately." As Cassandra moved to secure the communication, Julia turned back to the satellite feed, studying the now-empty crash site with narrowed eyes.

"And alert the BTRU. Tell them to prepare for potential hostile contact."

The race was on—and they were already behind.



## Chapter 3: Race Against Time

The desert air shimmered with heat as Special Agent K approached the Shadow Wing, which sat on an abandoned airstrip thirty miles outside of Reno, Nevada. Despite the urgent circumstances, K took a moment to appreciate the aircraft's sleek lines—a marvel of human engineering enhanced by Volrac technology.

Julia Sharpe stood at the base of the boarding stairs, her posture as impeccable as ever despite what must have been a rushed flight.

"K," she greeted with a brief nod. "Glad you could make it on short notice."

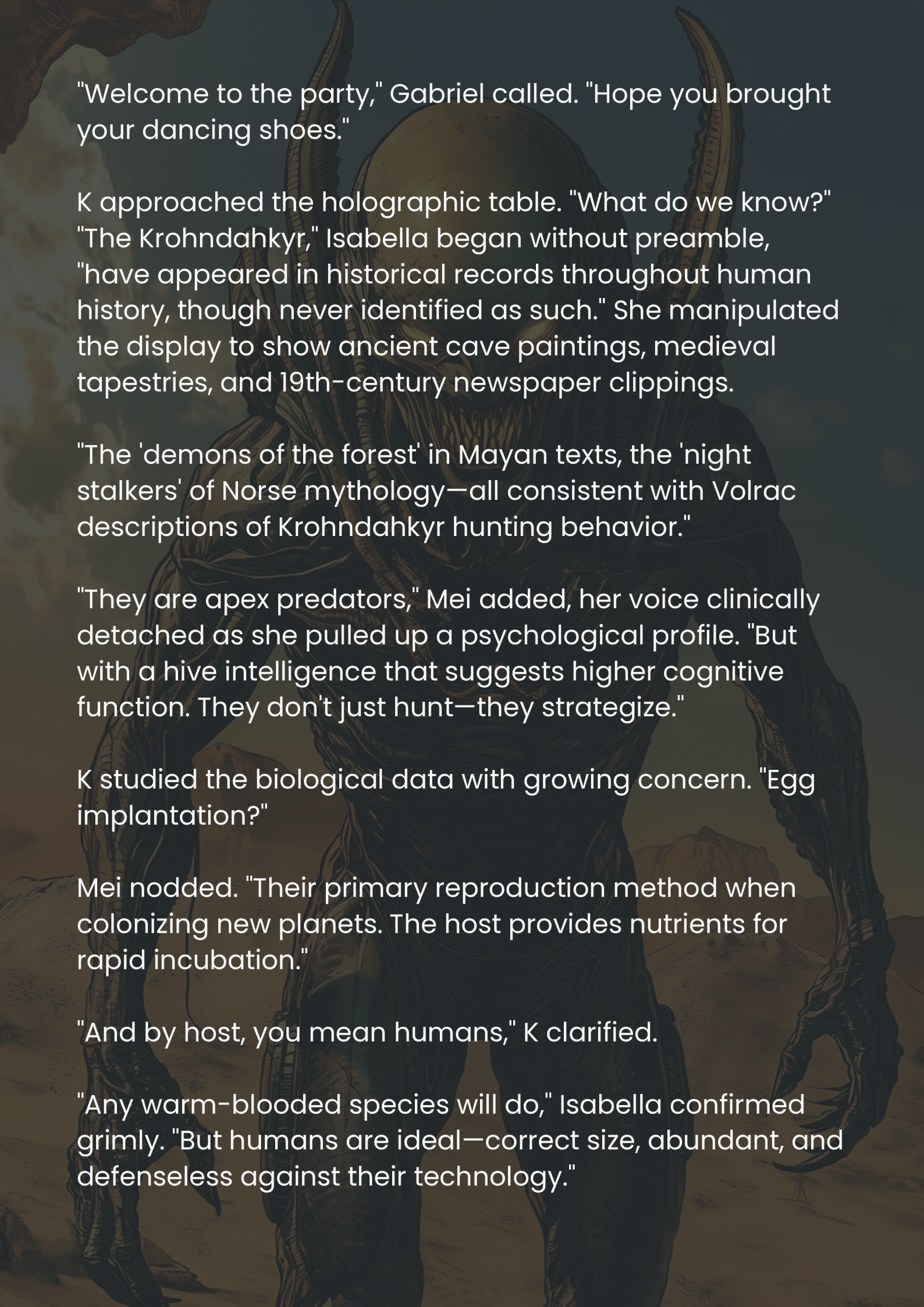
"I was in San Francisco when I got your call," K replied. "Seemed prudent to drop everything."

"Indeed," Julia agreed, leading the way up the stairs. "The situation has escalated significantly in the past hour."

The interior of Shadow Wing was a hive of focused activity. At the central holographic table, Isabella Moreno was deep in conversation with Mei Huang, both women gesturing at a three-dimensional display of what appeared to be biological data.

Near the armory section, the BTRU team was methodically checking weapons and equipment. Gabriel Adams, the team leader, looked up as K entered, offering a grim nod.





"Welcome to the party," Gabriel called. "Hope you brought your dancing shoes."

K approached the holographic table. "What do we know?" "The Krohndahkyr," Isabella began without preamble, "have appeared in historical records throughout human history, though never identified as such." She manipulated the display to show ancient cave paintings, medieval tapestries, and 19th-century newspaper clippings.

"The 'demons of the forest' in Mayan texts, the 'night stalkers' of Norse mythology—all consistent with Volrac descriptions of Krohndahkyr hunting behavior."

"They are apex predators," Mei added, her voice clinically detached as she pulled up a psychological profile. "But with a hive intelligence that suggests higher cognitive function. They don't just hunt—they strategize."

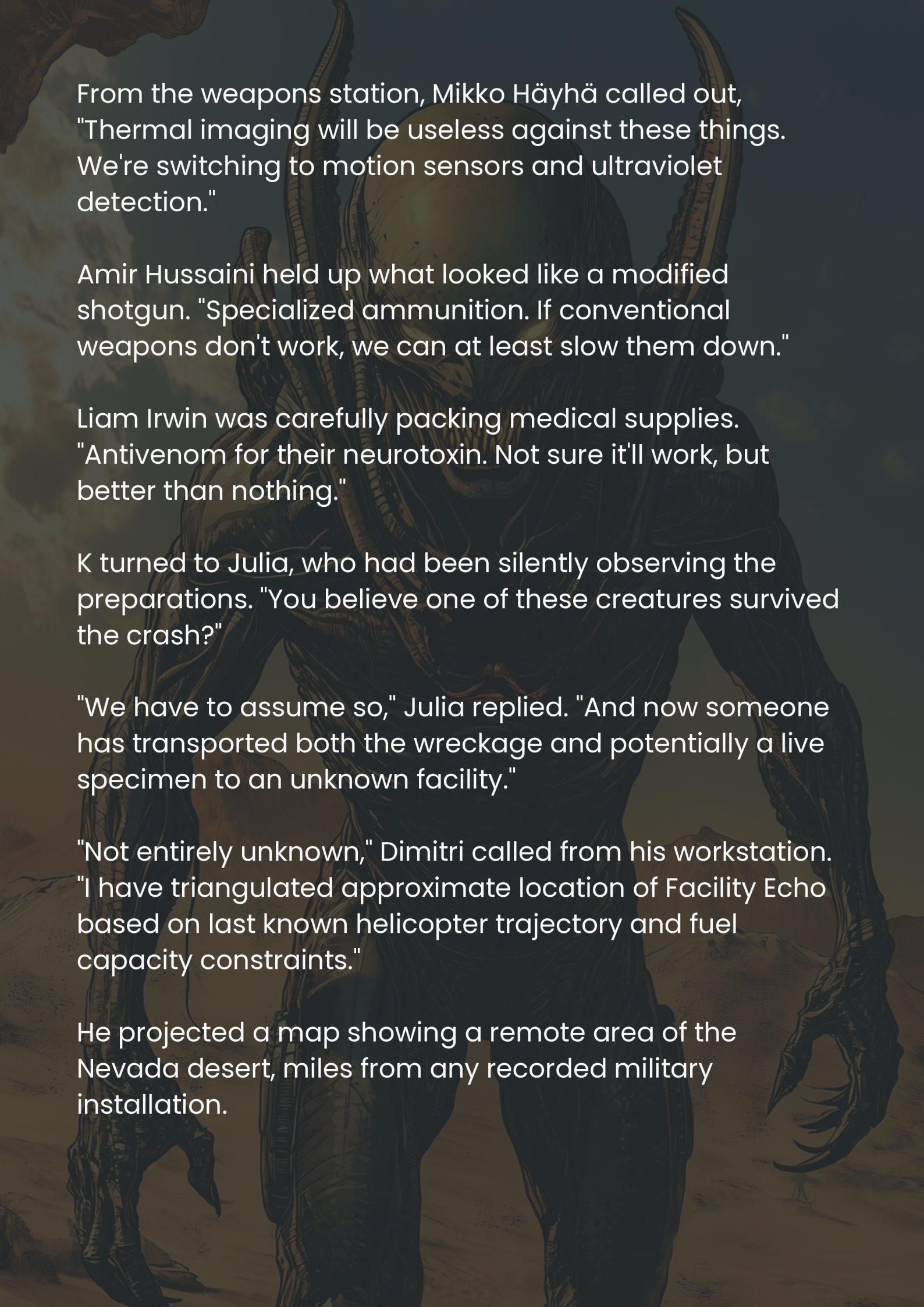
K studied the biological data with growing concern. "Egg implantation?"

Mei nodded. "Their primary reproduction method when colonizing new planets. The host provides nutrients for rapid incubation."

"And by host, you mean humans," K clarified.

"Any warm-blooded species will do," Isabella confirmed grimly. "But humans are ideal—correct size, abundant, and defenseless against their technology."





From the weapons station, Mikko Häyhä called out, "Thermal imaging will be useless against these things. We're switching to motion sensors and ultraviolet detection."

Amir Hussaini held up what looked like a modified shotgun. "Specialized ammunition. If conventional weapons don't work, we can at least slow them down."

Liam Irwin was carefully packing medical supplies. "Antivenom for their neurotoxin. Not sure it'll work, but better than nothing."

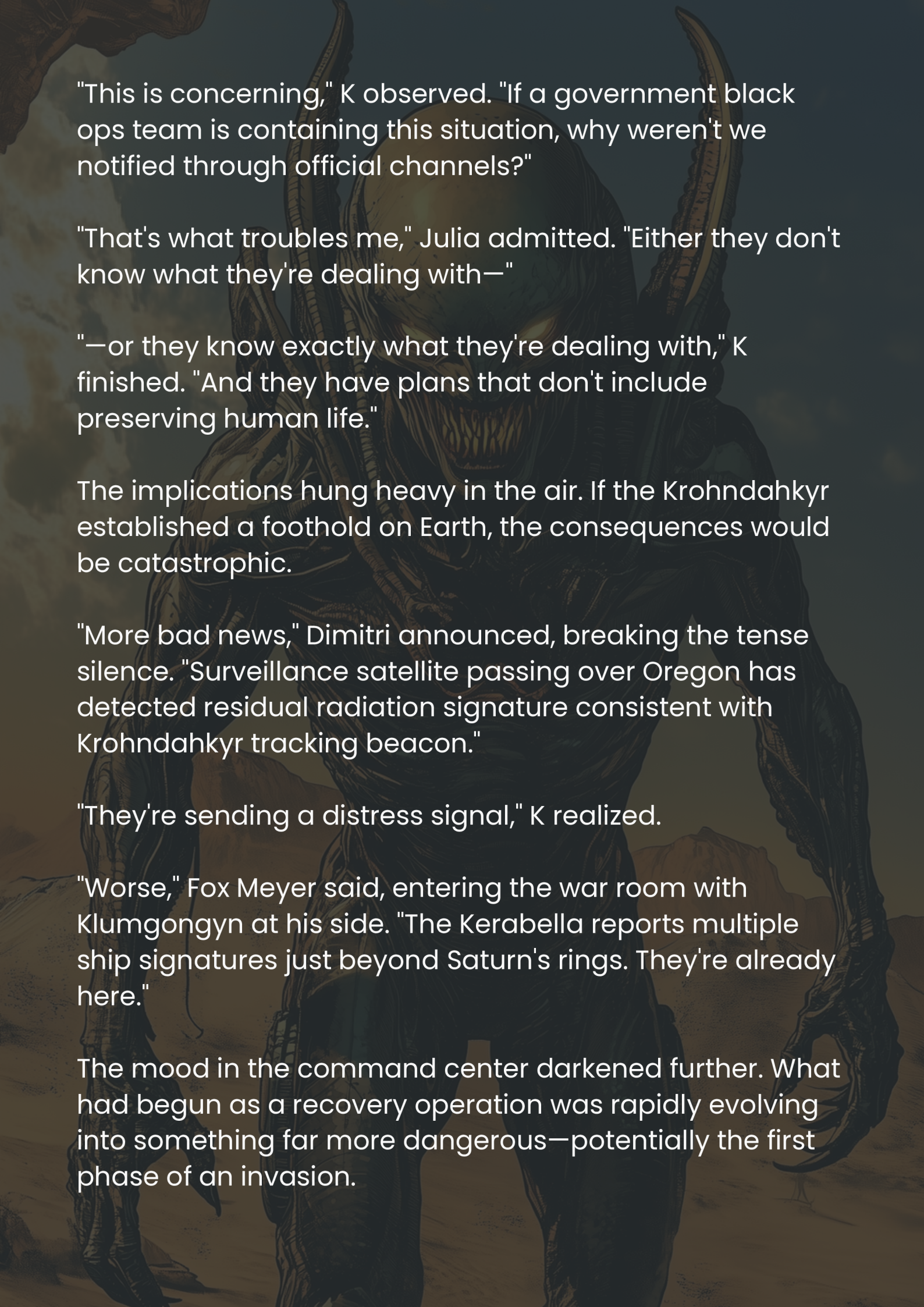
K turned to Julia, who had been silently observing the preparations. "You believe one of these creatures survived the crash?"

"We have to assume so," Julia replied. "And now someone has transported both the wreckage and potentially a live specimen to an unknown facility."

"Not entirely unknown," Dimitri called from his workstation. "I have triangulated approximate location of Facility Echo based on last known helicopter trajectory and fuel capacity constraints."

He projected a map showing a remote area of the Nevada desert, miles from any recorded military installation.





"This is concerning," K observed. "If a government black ops team is containing this situation, why weren't we notified through official channels?"

"That's what troubles me," Julia admitted. "Either they don't know what they're dealing with—"

"—or they know exactly what they're dealing with," K finished. "And they have plans that don't include preserving human life."

The implications hung heavy in the air. If the Krohndahkyr established a foothold on Earth, the consequences would be catastrophic.

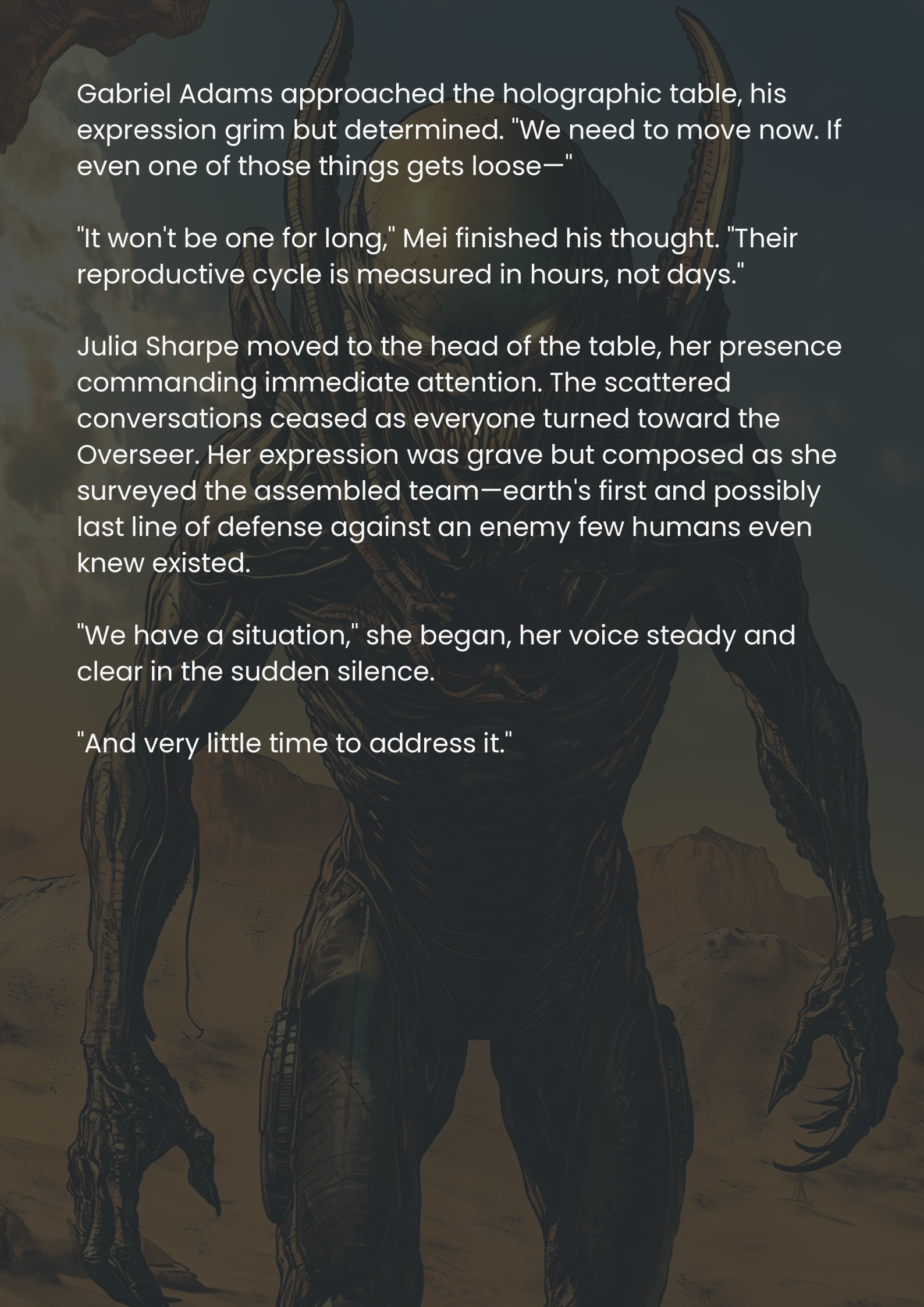
"More bad news," Dimitri announced, breaking the tense silence. "Surveillance satellite passing over Oregon has detected residual radiation signature consistent with Krohndahkyr tracking beacon."

"They're sending a distress signal," K realized.

"Worse," Fox Meyer said, entering the war room with Klumgongyn at his side. "The Kerabella reports multiple ship signatures just beyond Saturn's rings. They're already here."

The mood in the command center darkened further. What had begun as a recovery operation was rapidly evolving into something far more dangerous—potentially the first phase of an invasion.





Gabriel Adams approached the holographic table, his expression grim but determined. "We need to move now. If even one of those things gets loose—"

"It won't be one for long," Mei finished his thought. "Their reproductive cycle is measured in hours, not days."

Julia Sharpe moved to the head of the table, her presence commanding immediate attention. The scattered conversations ceased as everyone turned toward the Overseer. Her expression was grave but composed as she surveyed the assembled team—earth's first and possibly last line of defense against an enemy few humans even knew existed.

"We have a situation," she began, her voice steady and clear in the sudden silence.

"And very little time to address it."



# Briefing



Greetings, Special Agent.

We have a serious matter on hand today. Klumgongyn has alerted us to the presence of an invasive alien species. Going by the name Krohndahkyr, these creatures are the stuff of nightmares. They lurk in the dark, staying motionless for days or stalking their prey using very heightened senses. Climbing, swimming and making vast leaps as they silently move through the dark. The Krohndahkyr have the ability to regulate their temperature to the point they become invisible to thermal imaging. Using their many arms and spiked tentacles, they have the ability to rip a human to shreds in seconds.

Just a few hours ago, the Volracs observed a scout ship of the 2nd Intergalactic Fleet of the Krohndahkyr, crash into earth near McKenzie National Park in Oregon. We need to find the location of these aliens. If the Krohndahkyr manage to get a hold of any human, this will not end well. The Krohndahkyr will either rip them to pieces and disappear into the night and settle our planet.

Klumgongyn is coordinating with the KSP Kerabella, deploying several H-Wing Space-fighters towards our planet. They will keep an eye out for any Krohndahkyr spacecraft closing in.

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



## Materials

starting-materials-intergalactic-warfare.png

## Answer Instruction

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

Answer Format: country-state-county-16.2570-123.7212

## 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.