

HAIRY HORROR



KLUMGONGYN  
RETURNS



# Chapter 1: Signs from the Stars

The holographic display bathed Mei Huang's face in an ethereal blue glow as her fingers danced across the virtual keyboard. Around her, the mid-cabin of Shadow Wing hummed with activity. The Bombardier Global 8000's sophisticated interior was a far cry from the luxury jet it appeared to be from the outside. Here, in the heart of SERPENT's flying headquarters, the hunt was on.

"There it is again," Mei muttered, her brow furrowing as she isolated a peculiar signal pattern. "Dimitri, are you seeing this?"

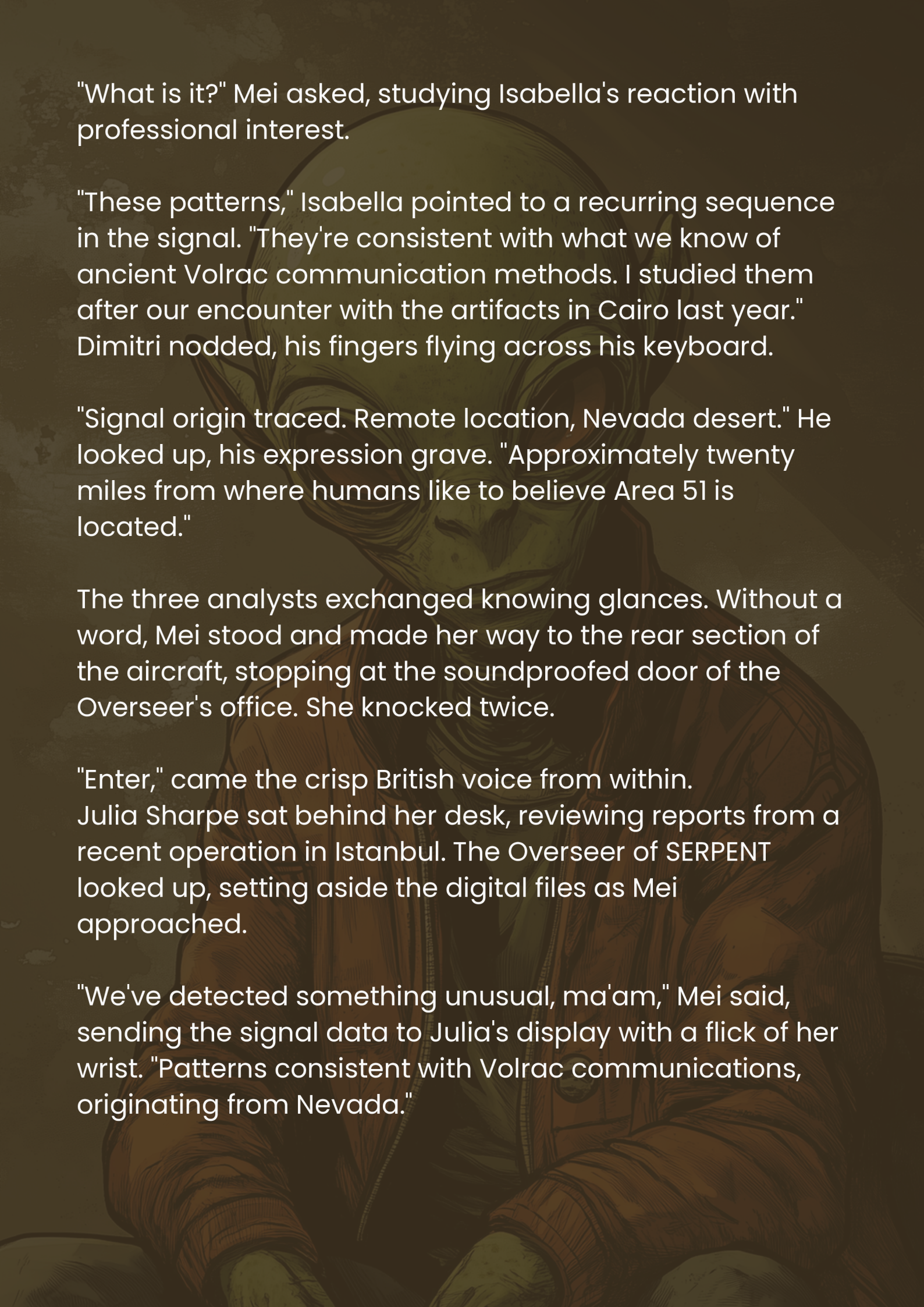
Across the holographic command table, Dimitri Zechev nodded, his eyes never leaving his own display. The Bulgarian tech prodigy's fingers moved with practiced precision, tracing the digital breadcrumbs.

"Da, I see it. Very strange encryption. Not military, not commercial." He paused, rubbing his stubbled chin. "And definitely not terrestrial."

Isabella Moreno approached from her workstation, coffee in hand, her historian's interest piqued. "May I?" she asked, leaning over Mei's shoulder. The psychologist nodded, shifting to give her colleague a better view.

Isabella's eyes widened. "Dios mío," she whispered. "That's... impossible."





"What is it?" Mei asked, studying Isabella's reaction with professional interest.

"These patterns," Isabella pointed to a recurring sequence in the signal. "They're consistent with what we know of ancient Volrac communication methods. I studied them after our encounter with the artifacts in Cairo last year." Dimitri nodded, his fingers flying across his keyboard.

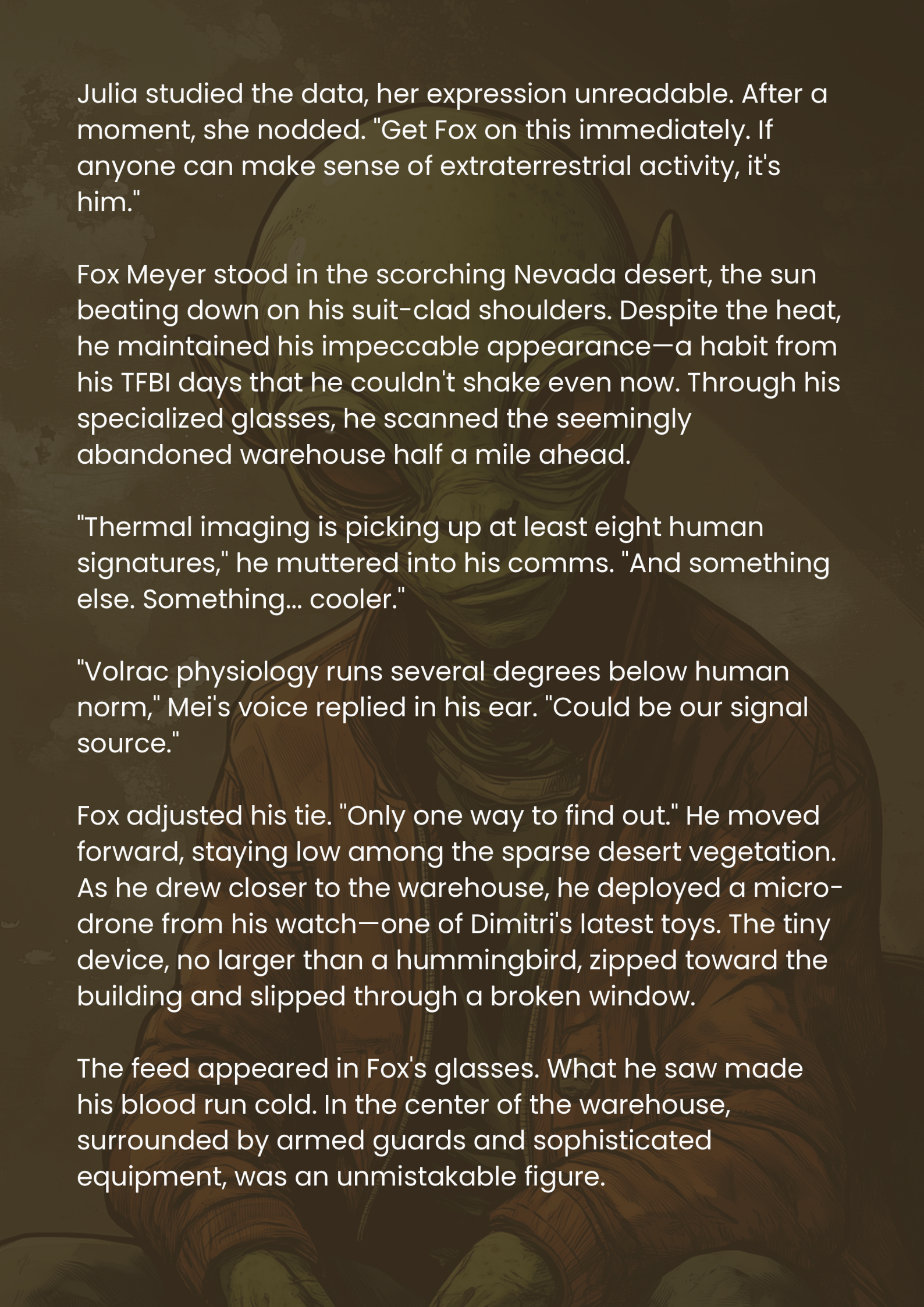
"Signal origin traced. Remote location, Nevada desert." He looked up, his expression grave. "Approximately twenty miles from where humans like to believe Area 51 is located."

The three analysts exchanged knowing glances. Without a word, Mei stood and made her way to the rear section of the aircraft, stopping at the soundproofed door of the Overseer's office. She knocked twice.

"Enter," came the crisp British voice from within. Julia Sharpe sat behind her desk, reviewing reports from a recent operation in Istanbul. The Overseer of SERPENT looked up, setting aside the digital files as Mei approached.

"We've detected something unusual, ma'am," Mei said, sending the signal data to Julia's display with a flick of her wrist. "Patterns consistent with Volrac communications, originating from Nevada."





Julia studied the data, her expression unreadable. After a moment, she nodded. "Get Fox on this immediately. If anyone can make sense of extraterrestrial activity, it's him."

Fox Meyer stood in the scorching Nevada desert, the sun beating down on his suit-clad shoulders. Despite the heat, he maintained his impeccable appearance—a habit from his TFBI days that he couldn't shake even now. Through his specialized glasses, he scanned the seemingly abandoned warehouse half a mile ahead.

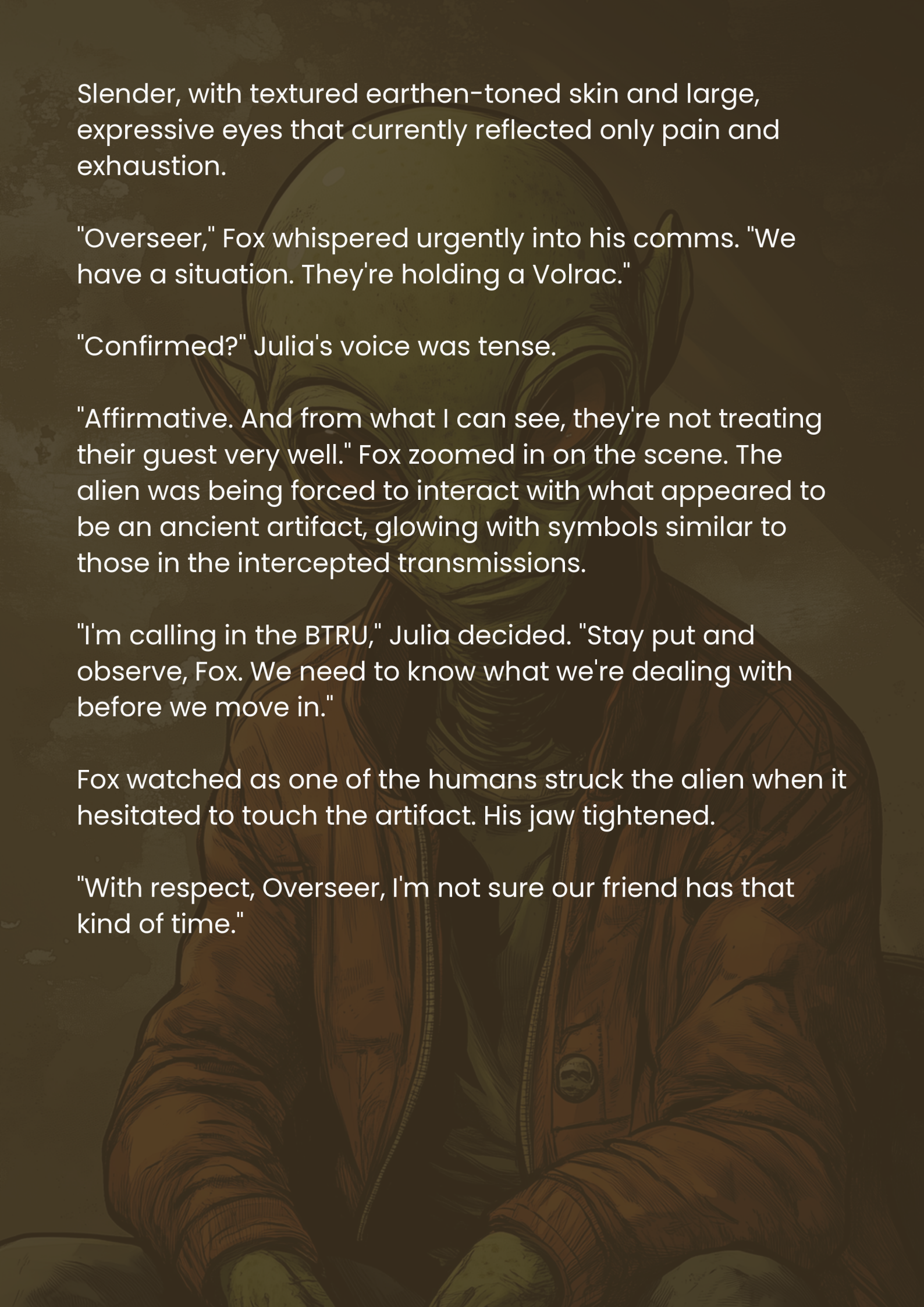
"Thermal imaging is picking up at least eight human signatures," he muttered into his comms. "And something else. Something... cooler."

"Volrac physiology runs several degrees below human norm," Mei's voice replied in his ear. "Could be our signal source."

Fox adjusted his tie. "Only one way to find out." He moved forward, staying low among the sparse desert vegetation. As he drew closer to the warehouse, he deployed a micro-drone from his watch—one of Dimitri's latest toys. The tiny device, no larger than a hummingbird, zipped toward the building and slipped through a broken window.

The feed appeared in Fox's glasses. What he saw made his blood run cold. In the center of the warehouse, surrounded by armed guards and sophisticated equipment, was an unmistakable figure.





Slender, with textured earthen-toned skin and large, expressive eyes that currently reflected only pain and exhaustion.

"Overseer," Fox whispered urgently into his comms. "We have a situation. They're holding a Volrac."

"Confirmed?" Julia's voice was tense.

"Affirmative. And from what I can see, they're not treating their guest very well." Fox zoomed in on the scene. The alien was being forced to interact with what appeared to be an ancient artifact, glowing with symbols similar to those in the intercepted transmissions.

"I'm calling in the BTRU," Julia decided. "Stay put and observe, Fox. We need to know what we're dealing with before we move in."

Fox watched as one of the humans struck the alien when it hesitated to touch the artifact. His jaw tightened.

"With respect, Overseer, I'm not sure our friend has that kind of time."



## Chapter 2: Operation Galaxios

Gabriel Adams studied the holographic layout of the warehouse, his experienced eyes picking out defensive positions and blind spots. Around the command table stood the rest of the Borderless Tactical Response Unit: Mikko Häyhä, the Finnish sniper; Amir Hussaini, the Iraqi-born breacher; and Liam Irwin, the Australian survival expert.

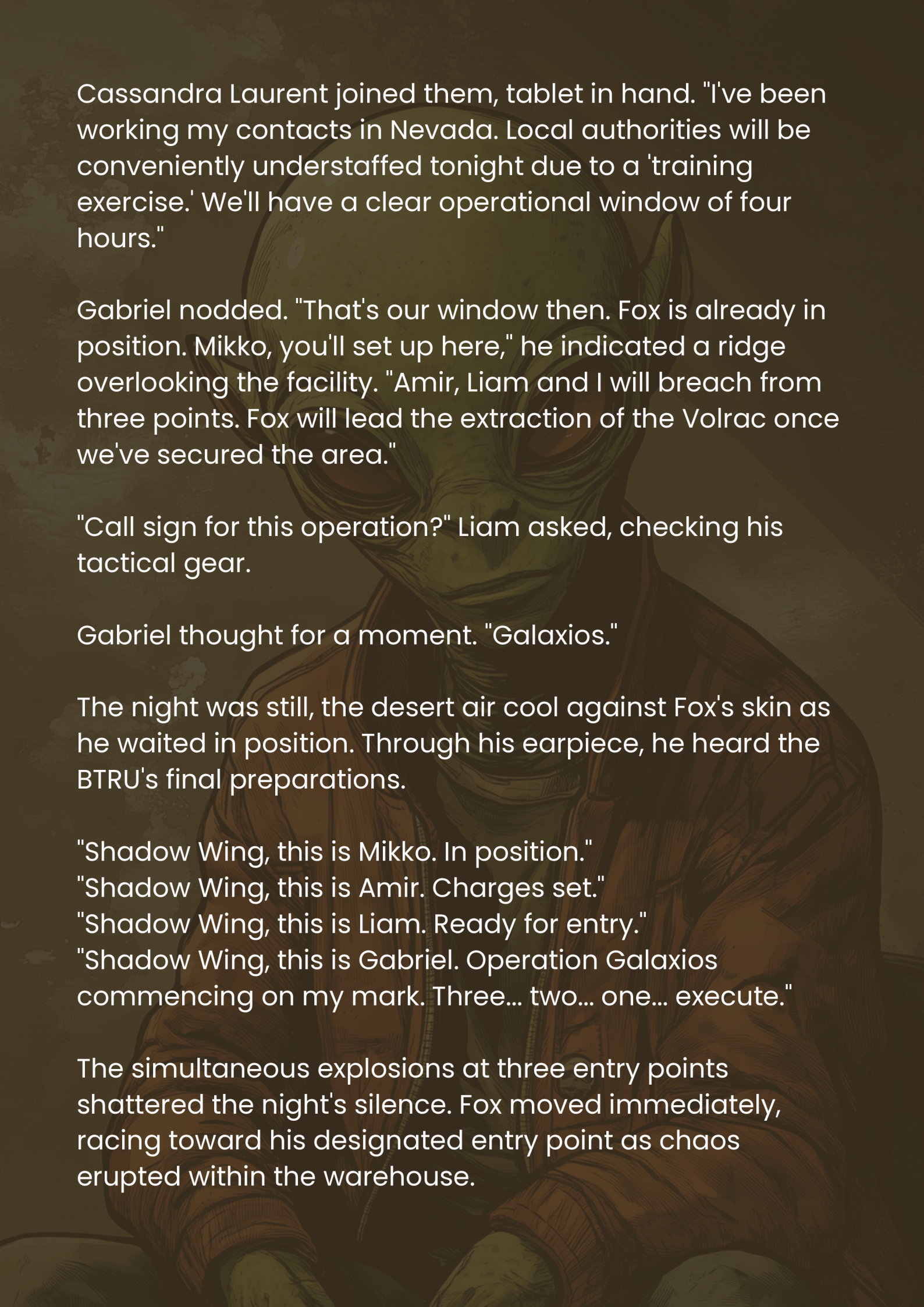
"Fox's drone has identified eight tangos," Gabriel said, highlighting positions on the display. "Four on rotation patrol, two monitoring the alien, and two on the artifact research. Standard criminal types—mercenaries, not professionals."

"Weapons?" Mikko asked, his voice characteristically quiet. "Small arms primarily. One has what appears to be a modified pulse weapon—likely salvaged alien tech."

James Brown entered the war room, adjusting his immaculate cufflinks. The former MI6 operative had just returned from preliminary reconnaissance.

"I managed to infiltrate their supply chain," he reported. "They're a private outfit calling themselves 'Starfall.' Obsessed with alien technology. They believe our Volrac friend can help them activate some sort of ancient device they've discovered."





Cassandra Laurent joined them, tablet in hand. "I've been working my contacts in Nevada. Local authorities will be conveniently understaffed tonight due to a 'training exercise.' We'll have a clear operational window of four hours."

Gabriel nodded. "That's our window then. Fox is already in position. Mikko, you'll set up here," he indicated a ridge overlooking the facility. "Amir, Liam and I will breach from three points. Fox will lead the extraction of the Volrac once we've secured the area."

"Call sign for this operation?" Liam asked, checking his tactical gear.

Gabriel thought for a moment. "Galaxios."

The night was still, the desert air cool against Fox's skin as he waited in position. Through his earpiece, he heard the BTRU's final preparations.

"Shadow Wing, this is Mikko. In position."

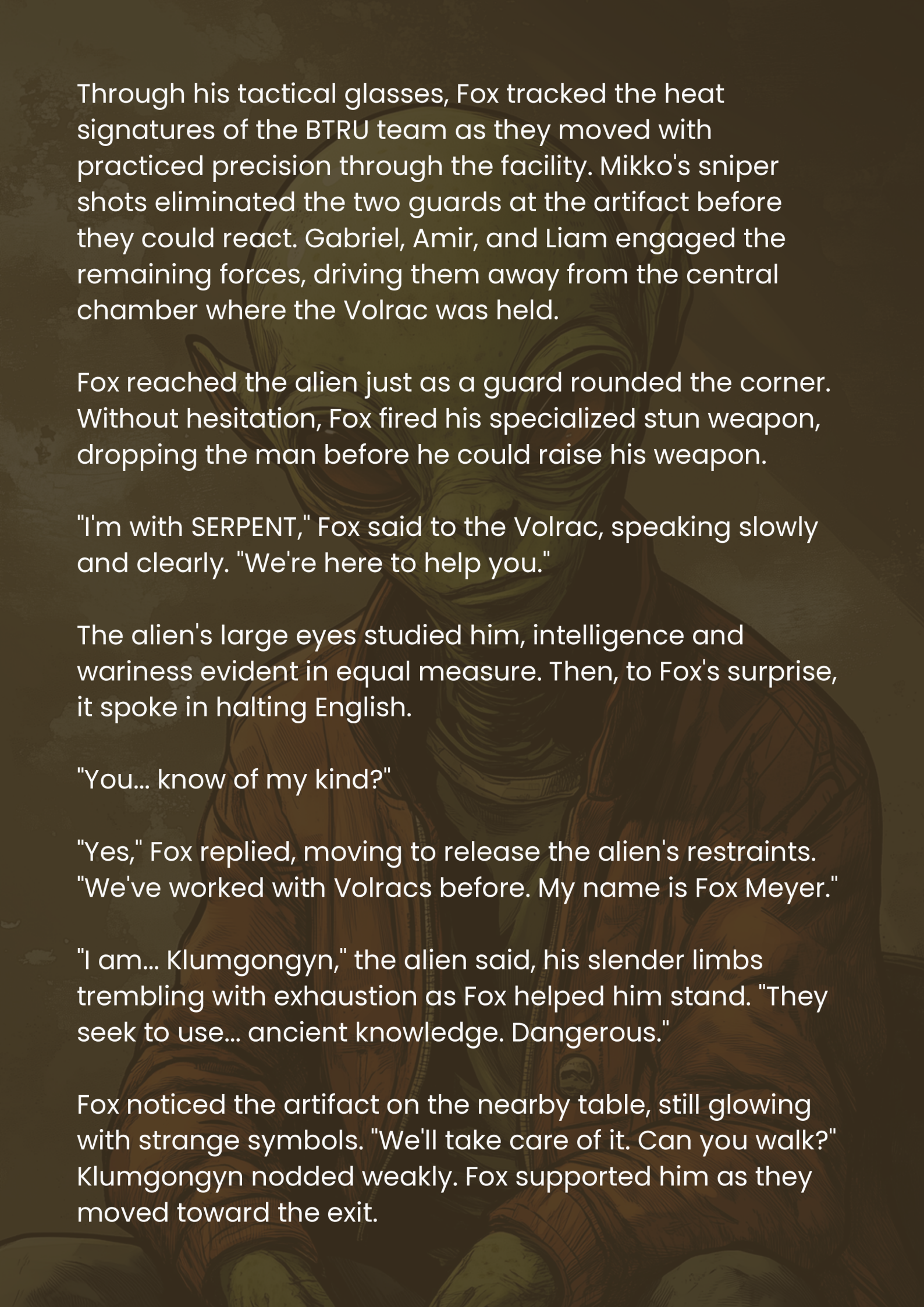
"Shadow Wing, this is Amir. Charges set."

"Shadow Wing, this is Liam. Ready for entry."

"Shadow Wing, this is Gabriel. Operation Galaxios commencing on my mark. Three... two... one... execute."

The simultaneous explosions at three entry points shattered the night's silence. Fox moved immediately, racing toward his designated entry point as chaos erupted within the warehouse.





Through his tactical glasses, Fox tracked the heat signatures of the BTRU team as they moved with practiced precision through the facility. Mikko's sniper shots eliminated the two guards at the artifact before they could react. Gabriel, Amir, and Liam engaged the remaining forces, driving them away from the central chamber where the Volrac was held.

Fox reached the alien just as a guard rounded the corner. Without hesitation, Fox fired his specialized stun weapon, dropping the man before he could raise his weapon.

"I'm with SERPENT," Fox said to the Volrac, speaking slowly and clearly. "We're here to help you."

The alien's large eyes studied him, intelligence and wariness evident in equal measure. Then, to Fox's surprise, it spoke in halting English.

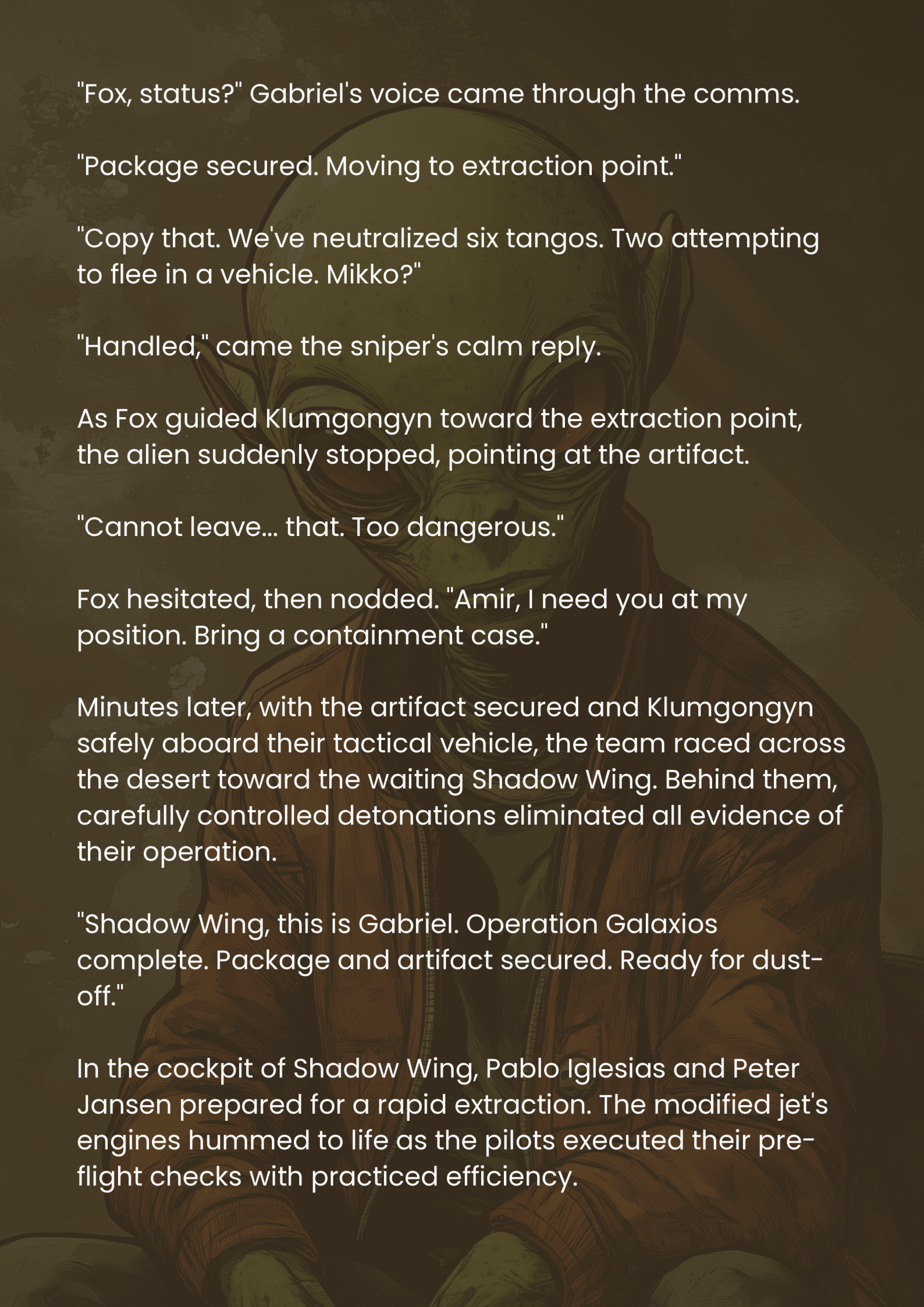
"You... know of my kind?"

"Yes," Fox replied, moving to release the alien's restraints. "We've worked with Volracs before. My name is Fox Meyer."

"I am... Klumgongyn," the alien said, his slender limbs trembling with exhaustion as Fox helped him stand. "They seek to use... ancient knowledge. Dangerous."

Fox noticed the artifact on the nearby table, still glowing with strange symbols. "We'll take care of it. Can you walk?" Klumgongyn nodded weakly. Fox supported him as they moved toward the exit.





"Fox, status?" Gabriel's voice came through the comms.

"Package secured. Moving to extraction point."

"Copy that. We've neutralized six tangos. Two attempting to flee in a vehicle. Mikko?"

"Handled," came the sniper's calm reply.

As Fox guided Klumgongyn toward the extraction point, the alien suddenly stopped, pointing at the artifact.

"Cannot leave... that. Too dangerous."

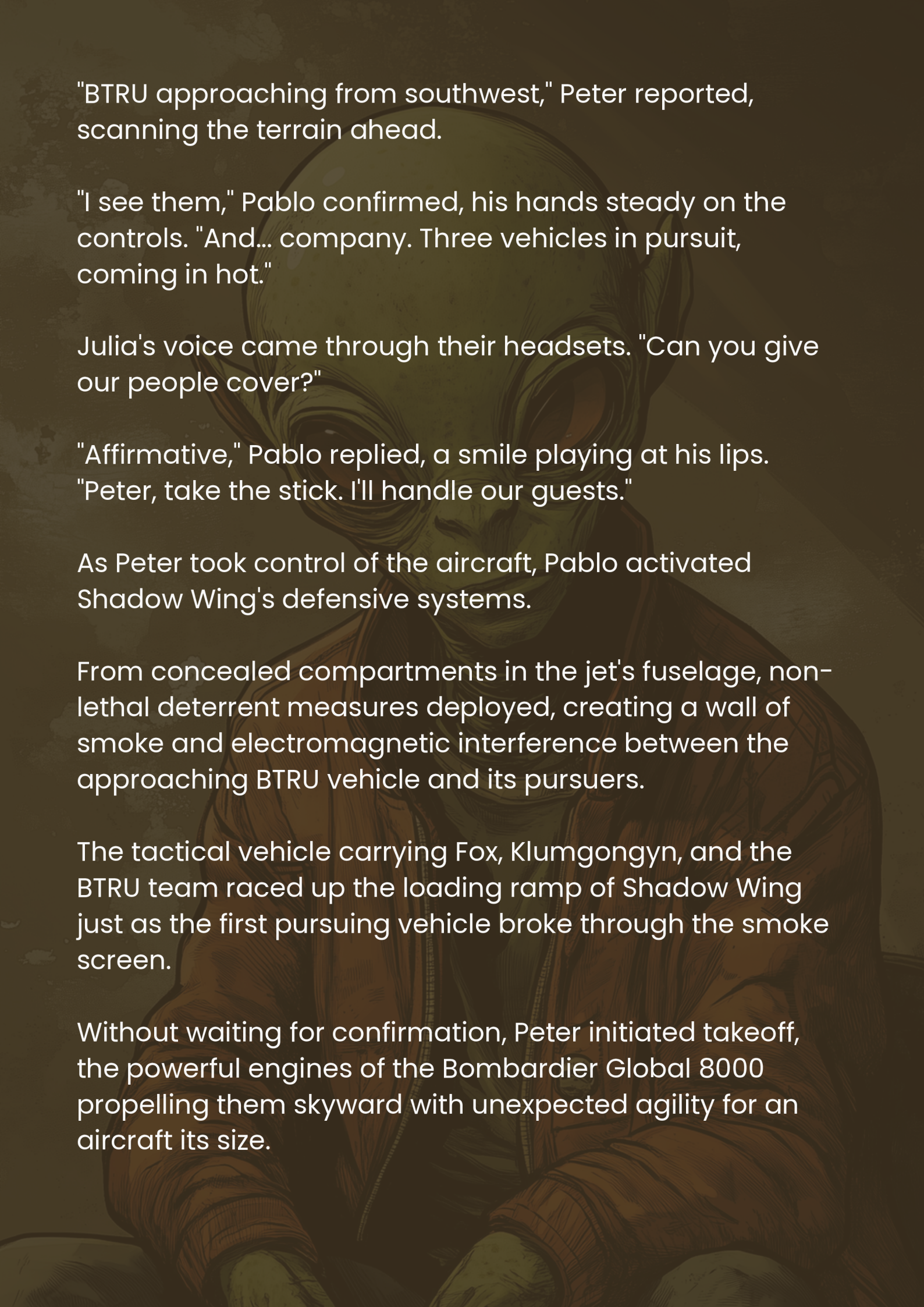
Fox hesitated, then nodded. "Amir, I need you at my position. Bring a containment case."

Minutes later, with the artifact secured and Klumgongyn safely aboard their tactical vehicle, the team raced across the desert toward the waiting Shadow Wing. Behind them, carefully controlled detonations eliminated all evidence of their operation.

"Shadow Wing, this is Gabriel. Operation Galaxios complete. Package and artifact secured. Ready for dust-off."

In the cockpit of Shadow Wing, Pablo Iglesias and Peter Jansen prepared for a rapid extraction. The modified jet's engines hummed to life as the pilots executed their pre-flight checks with practiced efficiency.





"BTRU approaching from southwest," Peter reported, scanning the terrain ahead.

"I see them," Pablo confirmed, his hands steady on the controls. "And... company. Three vehicles in pursuit, coming in hot."

Julia's voice came through their headsets. "Can you give our people cover?"

"Affirmative," Pablo replied, a smile playing at his lips. "Peter, take the stick. I'll handle our guests."

As Peter took control of the aircraft, Pablo activated Shadow Wing's defensive systems.

From concealed compartments in the jet's fuselage, non-lethal deterrent measures deployed, creating a wall of smoke and electromagnetic interference between the approaching BTRU vehicle and its pursuers.

The tactical vehicle carrying Fox, Klumgongyn, and the BTRU team raced up the loading ramp of Shadow Wing just as the first pursuing vehicle broke through the smoke screen.

Without waiting for confirmation, Peter initiated takeoff, the powerful engines of the Bombardier Global 8000 propelling them skyward with unexpected agility for an aircraft its size.

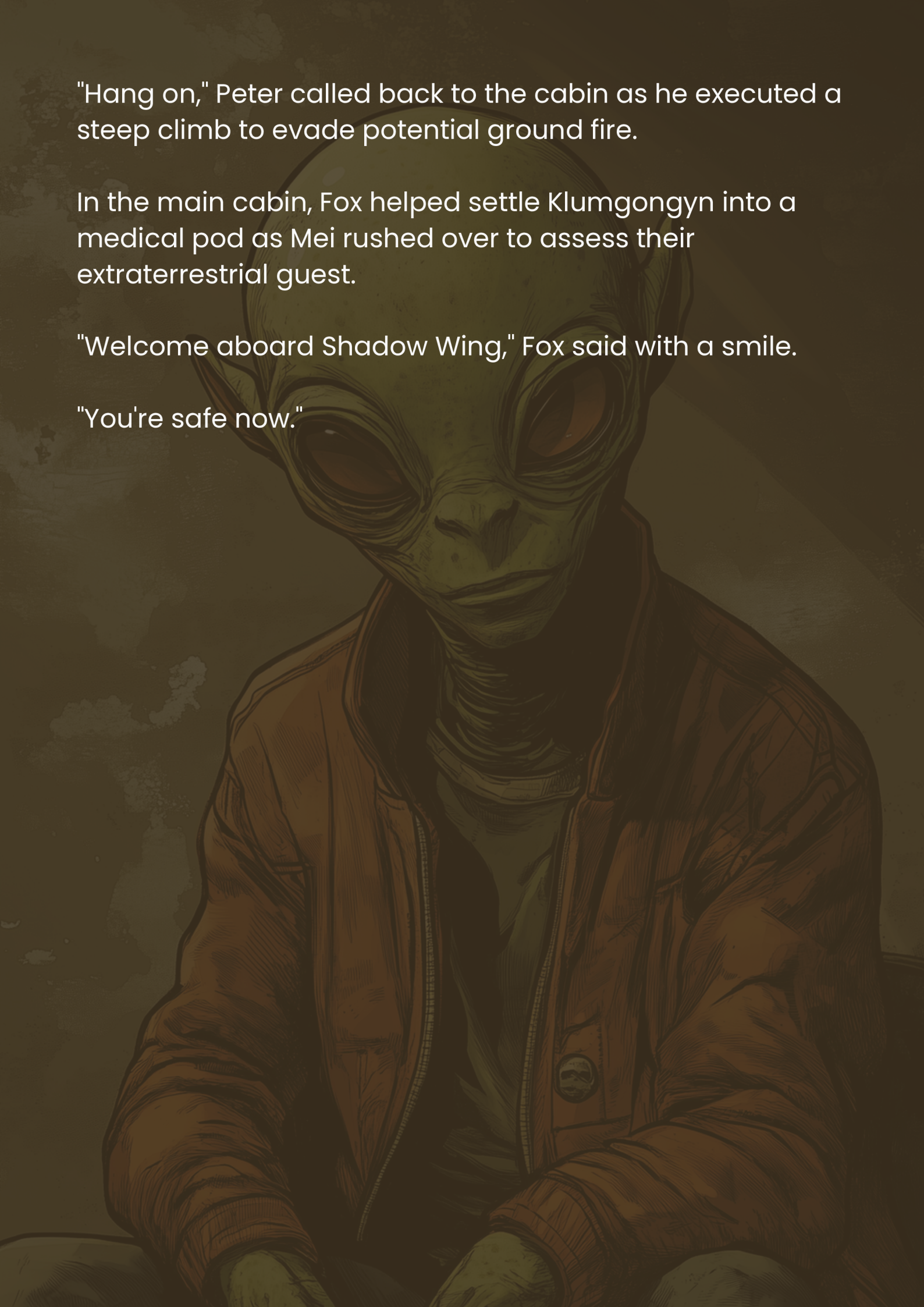


"Hang on," Peter called back to the cabin as he executed a steep climb to evade potential ground fire.

In the main cabin, Fox helped settle Klumgongyn into a medical pod as Mei rushed over to assess their extraterrestrial guest.

"Welcome aboard Shadow Wing," Fox said with a smile.

"You're safe now."





## Chapter 3: The Decision

Three days had passed since Operation Galaxios. Shadow Wing cruised at 45,000 feet over the Pacific Ocean, its destination a remote island where arrangements had been made for Klumgongyn's return to his people. In the medical bay, Fox sat beside the recovering Volrac, who was now much more alert and communicative.

"Your aircraft... impressive," Klumgongyn observed, his English improving by the hour under Mei's linguistic coaching. "Technology integration efficient."

Fox smiled. "That's high praise coming from someone whose species mastered interstellar travel."

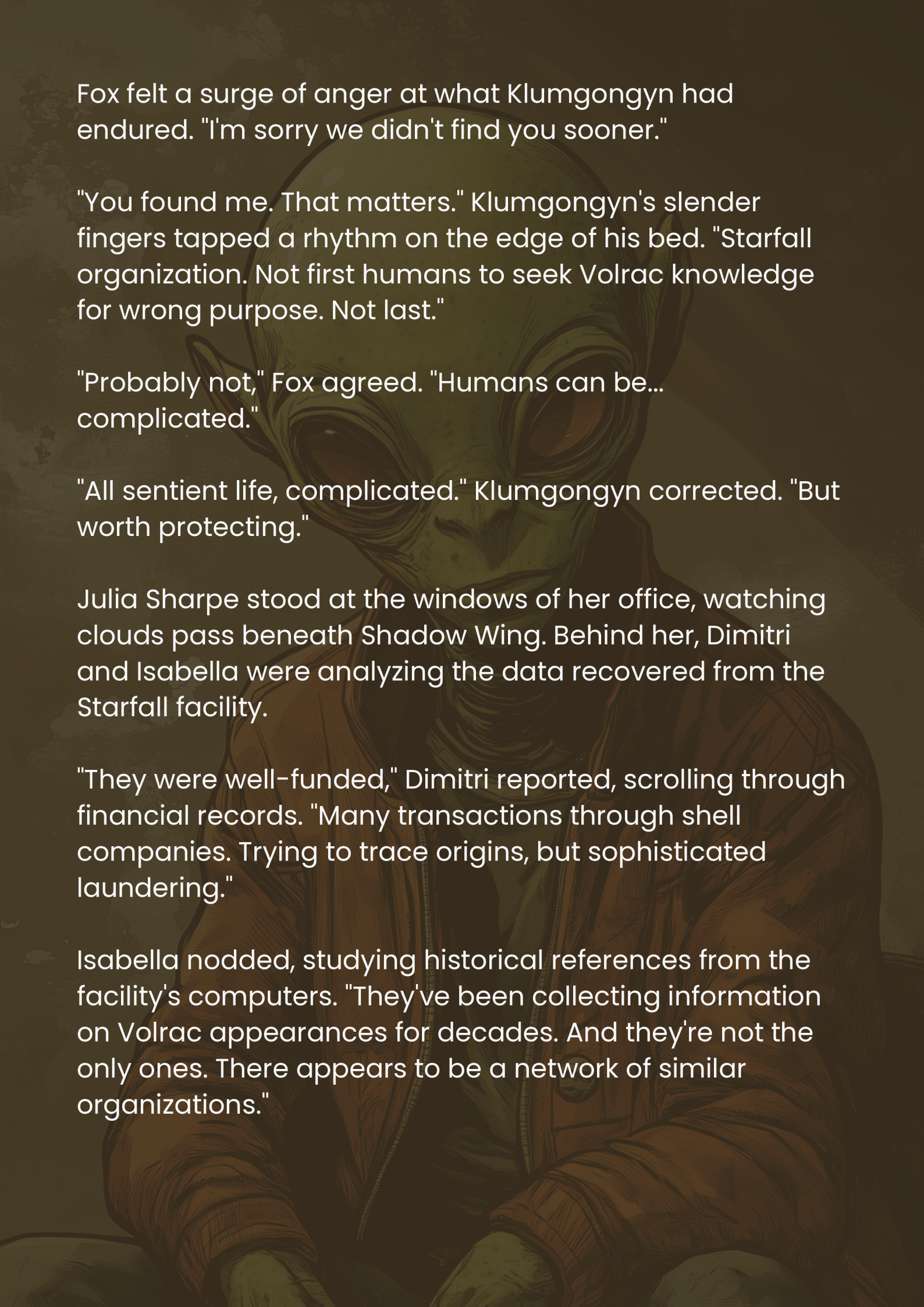
Klumgongyn's expression shifted to something Fox interpreted as amusement. "Different paths, same curiosity." He gestured toward the contained artifact, secured in a specialized chamber across the room. "They did not understand what they found."

"And what did they find?" Fox asked, his curiosity piqued.

The Volrac was silent for a moment.

"A key. To knowledge forgotten even by my people. They captured me when I came to retrieve it." His large eyes darkened with what appeared to be pain. "Six lunar cycles. Questions. Tests. Pain."





Fox felt a surge of anger at what Klumgongyn had endured. "I'm sorry we didn't find you sooner."

"You found me. That matters." Klumgongyn's slender fingers tapped a rhythm on the edge of his bed. "Starfall organization. Not first humans to seek Volrac knowledge for wrong purpose. Not last."

"Probably not," Fox agreed. "Humans can be... complicated."

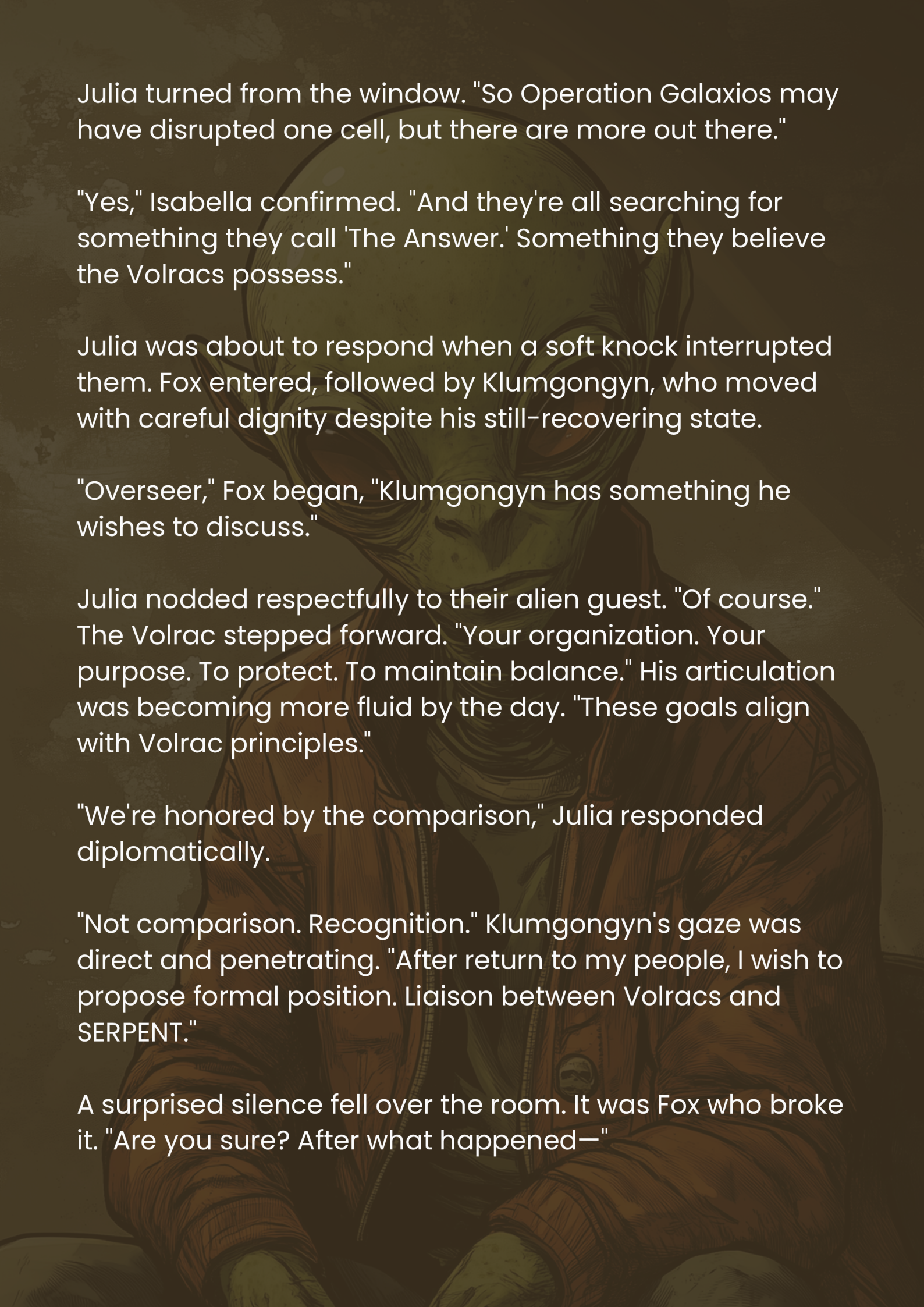
"All sentient life, complicated." Klumgongyn corrected. "But worth protecting."

Julia Sharpe stood at the windows of her office, watching clouds pass beneath Shadow Wing. Behind her, Dimitri and Isabella were analyzing the data recovered from the Starfall facility.

"They were well-funded," Dimitri reported, scrolling through financial records. "Many transactions through shell companies. Trying to trace origins, but sophisticated laundering."

Isabella nodded, studying historical references from the facility's computers. "They've been collecting information on Volrac appearances for decades. And they're not the only ones. There appears to be a network of similar organizations."





Julia turned from the window. "So Operation Galaxios may have disrupted one cell, but there are more out there."

"Yes," Isabella confirmed. "And they're all searching for something they call 'The Answer.' Something they believe the Volracs possess."

Julia was about to respond when a soft knock interrupted them. Fox entered, followed by Klumgongyn, who moved with careful dignity despite his still-recovering state.

"Overseer," Fox began, "Klumgongyn has something he wishes to discuss."

Julia nodded respectfully to their alien guest. "Of course." The Volrac stepped forward. "Your organization. Your purpose. To protect. To maintain balance." His articulation was becoming more fluid by the day. "These goals align with Volrac principles."

"We're honored by the comparison," Julia responded diplomatically.

"Not comparison. Recognition." Klumgongyn's gaze was direct and penetrating. "After return to my people, I wish to propose formal position. Liaison between Volracs and SERPENT."

A surprised silence fell over the room. It was Fox who broke it. "Are you sure? After what happened—"





"Because of what happened," Klumgongyn interrupted.

"Groups like Starfall will not stop. Knowledge they seek... dangerous in wrong hands. Beneficial in right ones." He looked at each human in turn. "SERPENT has right hands."

Julia considered the proposal carefully. "Such an arrangement would be unprecedented."

"Time for precedents," Klumgongyn stated simply. "Universe changing. Adaptability required."

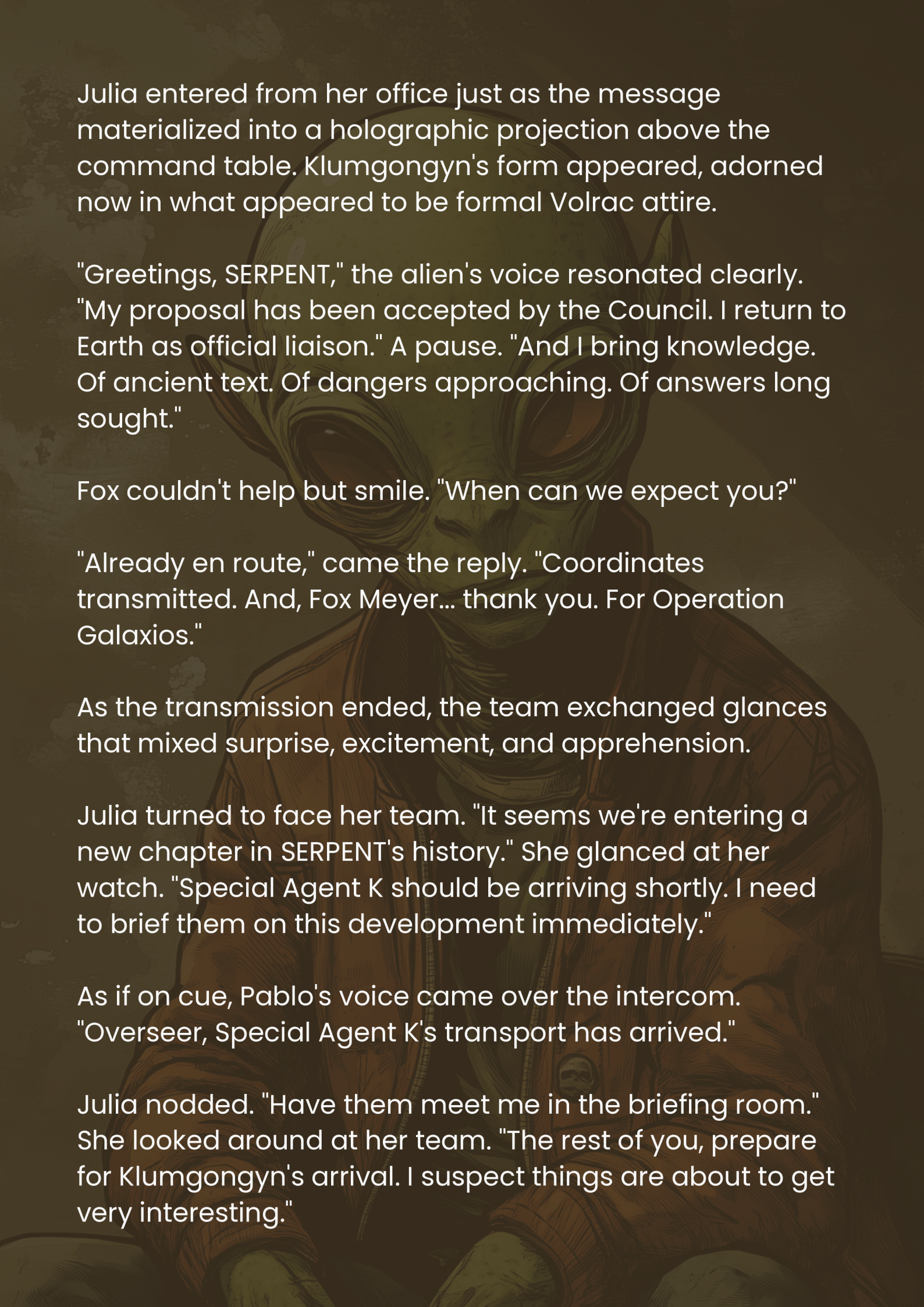
Two weeks later, Shadow Wing touched down at a private airfield in Switzerland. The team had successfully returned Klumgongyn to his people and completed debriefings on Operation Galaxios. Now, they awaited the Volrac's return—if indeed he would return at all.

In the war room, the SERPENT team was engaged in routine operations. Gabriel and his BTRU were reviewing tactical procedures. Mei and Isabella discussed cultural implications of a situation developing in Southeast Asia.

Dimitri was upgrading their cybersecurity protocols. James and Cassandra were coordinating intelligence on emerging threats.

The atmosphere was one of professional focus—until all screens simultaneously displayed an incoming communication.





Julia entered from her office just as the message materialized into a holographic projection above the command table. Klumgongyn's form appeared, adorned now in what appeared to be formal Volrac attire.

"Greetings, SERPENT," the alien's voice resonated clearly. "My proposal has been accepted by the Council. I return to Earth as official liaison." A pause. "And I bring knowledge. Of ancient text. Of dangers approaching. Of answers long sought."

Fox couldn't help but smile. "When can we expect you?"

"Already en route," came the reply. "Coordinates transmitted. And, Fox Meyer... thank you. For Operation Galaxios."

As the transmission ended, the team exchanged glances that mixed surprise, excitement, and apprehension.

Julia turned to face her team. "It seems we're entering a new chapter in SERPENT's history." She glanced at her watch. "Special Agent K should be arriving shortly. I need to brief them on this development immediately."

As if on cue, Pablo's voice came over the intercom. "Overseer, Special Agent K's transport has arrived."

Julia nodded. "Have them meet me in the briefing room." She looked around at her team. "The rest of you, prepare for Klumgongyn's arrival. I suspect things are about to get very interesting."

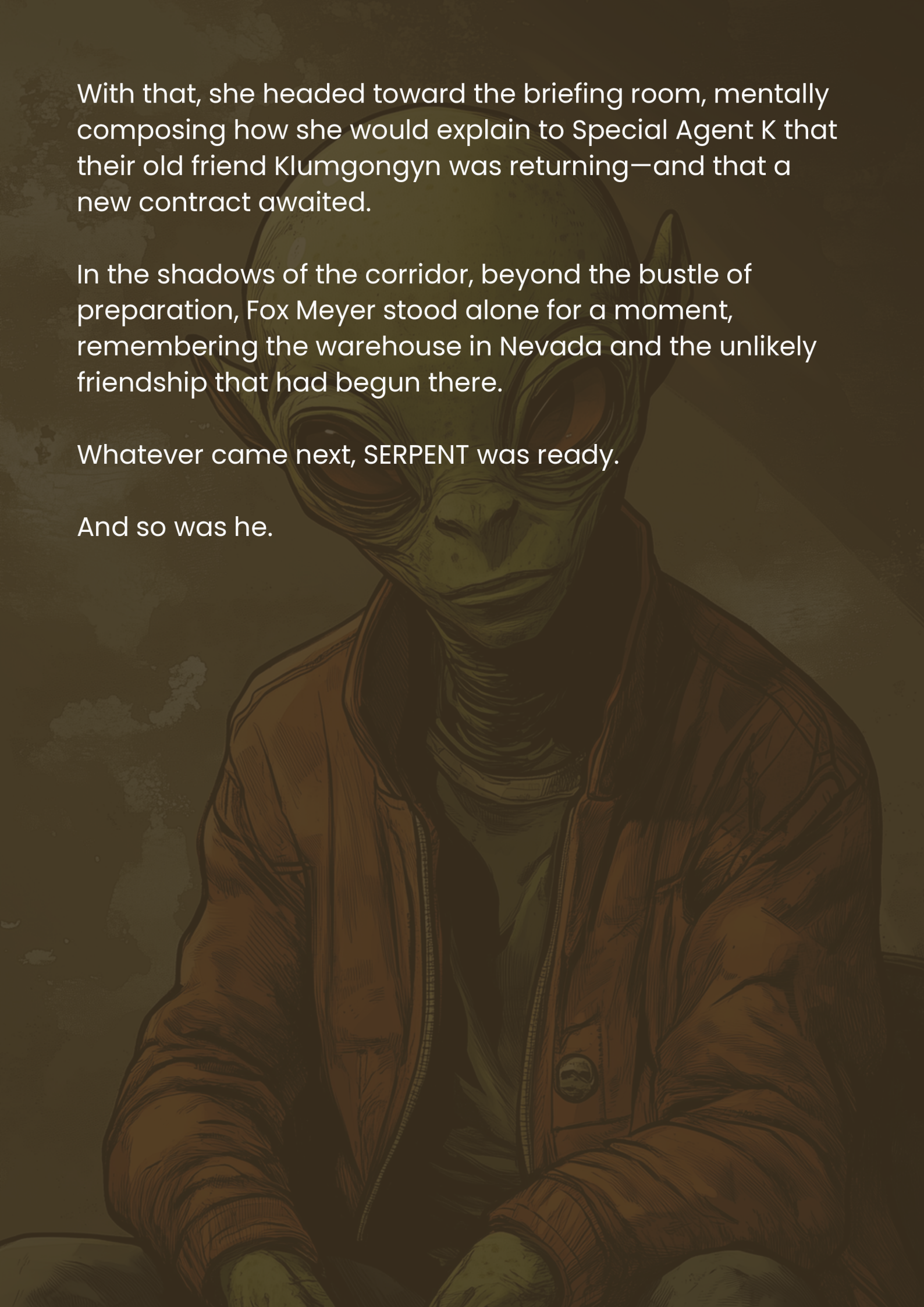


With that, she headed toward the briefing room, mentally composing how she would explain to Special Agent K that their old friend Klumgongyn was returning—and that a new contract awaited.

In the shadows of the corridor, beyond the bustle of preparation, Fox Meyer stood alone for a moment, remembering the warehouse in Nevada and the unlikely friendship that had begun there.

Whatever came next, SERPENT was ready.

And so was he.





# Briefing



Greetings, Special Agent.

We have a very special assignment for you today. You might remember our old friend Klumgongyn. He's recently turned up again and will be cooperating with us going forward. In what capacity that collaboration is, I cannot say right now.

All I can tell you, that below you'll find a text written in ancient Volrac. It's up to you to translate the text, which will help you uncover the answer to all of life's questions.

Everything will become clear upon translating the text.

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



# Materials

declaration-klumgongyn.png

## Answer Instruction

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

Use the language in the picture to decipher 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.