

HAZARD

A detailed illustration of a muscular, green, reptilian creature, likely a crocodile or alligator, standing in a jungle. The creature has a large, scaly head with glowing yellow eyes and a wide, toothy mouth. Its body is covered in scales and has a prominent, dark, spiky dorsal fin. The creature is wearing a brown, tattered loincloth. The background is a lush, green jungle with various plants and trees.

RETURN OF THE
KROHNDAAHYR

Chapter 1: First Contact Revisited

The sun beat down on the ancient necropolis outside Cagliari, Sardinia. Isabella Moreno wiped sweat from her brow as she crouched at the entrance of a newly discovered chamber. The local university had invited her to consult on some unusual findings, not knowing her SERPENT affiliation. They simply knew her as Dr. Moreno, the brilliant historian with an uncanny knack for connecting historical dots.

"Dr. Balducci, look at these markings," Isabella called out, her LED headlamp illuminating symbols carved into the stone that matched nothing in her extensive mental catalog of ancient languages. "This isn't Phoenician, Nuragic, or any Mediterranean script I've seen."

The Italian archaeologist joined her, squinting at the wall. "That's why we called you. Three different linguistic experts said the same thing."

Isabella ran her fingers over the strange glyphs. They seemed to pulse faintly under her touch, though she told herself it must be a trick of the light. She took photographs with her specialized camera, and when the flash went off, something extraordinary happened—the symbols momentarily glowed with an ethereal blue-green luminescence.

"Did you see that?" she gasped, but Dr. Balducci was already walking back to examine another section of the chamber.

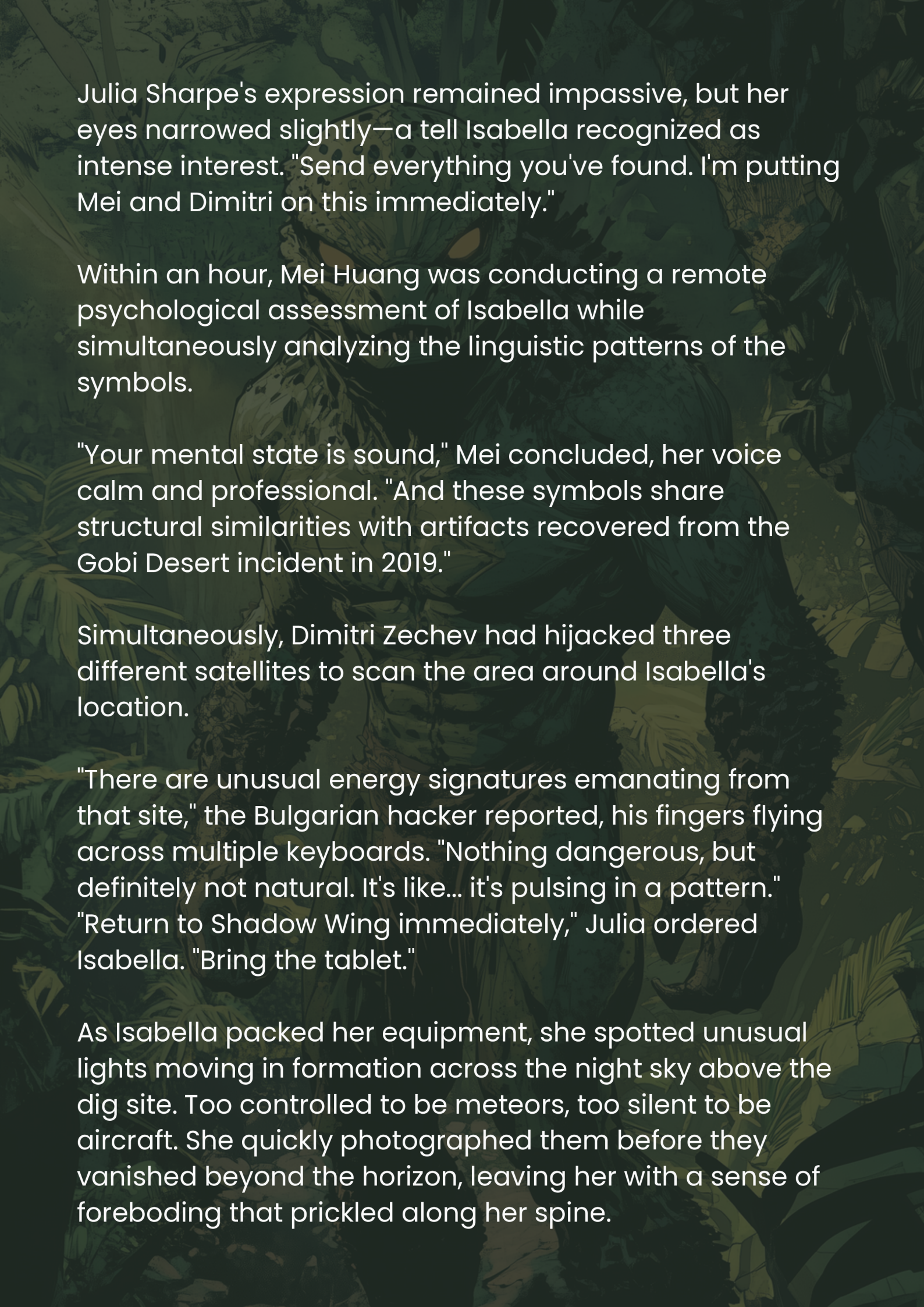
Isabella's heart raced. This was no ordinary archaeological find. She continued her examination, finding a small stone tablet with more of the strange writing, partially buried in the corner of the chamber. Carefully extracting it, she felt an unusual warmth emanating from the stone despite having been buried for what must have been millennia.

As the day waned, Isabella listened to local folklore from an elderly guide who had joined the expedition. He spoke of "i visitatori delle stelle"—the star visitors—who came bearing gifts of knowledge and technology to the ancient inhabitants of the island.

"La gente pensava che fossero dei," the old man whispered. The people thought they were gods. "And what happened to them?" Isabella asked, her Spanish heritage making it easy to understand his Italian. The old man's face darkened. "They left when blood was spilled. The gifts were misused. They promised to return one day—either as friends or as judges."

That night, in her rented villa overlooking the Mediterranean, Isabella made a secure call to SERPENT headquarters.

"Julia, I've found something you need to see," she said without preamble when the Overseer's face appeared on her secure tablet. Isabella positioned the stone tablet under her camera. "These markings don't match anything in our historical database."



Julia Sharpe's expression remained impassive, but her eyes narrowed slightly—a tell Isabella recognized as intense interest. "Send everything you've found. I'm putting Mei and Dimitri on this immediately."

Within an hour, Mei Huang was conducting a remote psychological assessment of Isabella while simultaneously analyzing the linguistic patterns of the symbols.

"Your mental state is sound," Mei concluded, her voice calm and professional. "And these symbols share structural similarities with artifacts recovered from the Gobi Desert incident in 2019."

Simultaneously, Dimitri Zechev had hijacked three different satellites to scan the area around Isabella's location.

"There are unusual energy signatures emanating from that site," the Bulgarian hacker reported, his fingers flying across multiple keyboards. "Nothing dangerous, but definitely not natural. It's like... it's pulsing in a pattern." "Return to Shadow Wing immediately," Julia ordered Isabella. "Bring the tablet."

As Isabella packed her equipment, she spotted unusual lights moving in formation across the night sky above the dig site. Too controlled to be meteors, too silent to be aircraft. She quickly photographed them before they vanished beyond the horizon, leaving her with a sense of foreboding that prickled along her spine.

Chapter 2: Shadows in the Amazon

The humid air of the Amazon rainforest clung to Fox Meyer's skin like a second layer as he and James Brown pushed through the dense undergrowth. What had begun as routine reconnaissance following reports of "strange lights" had quickly evolved into something far more interesting.

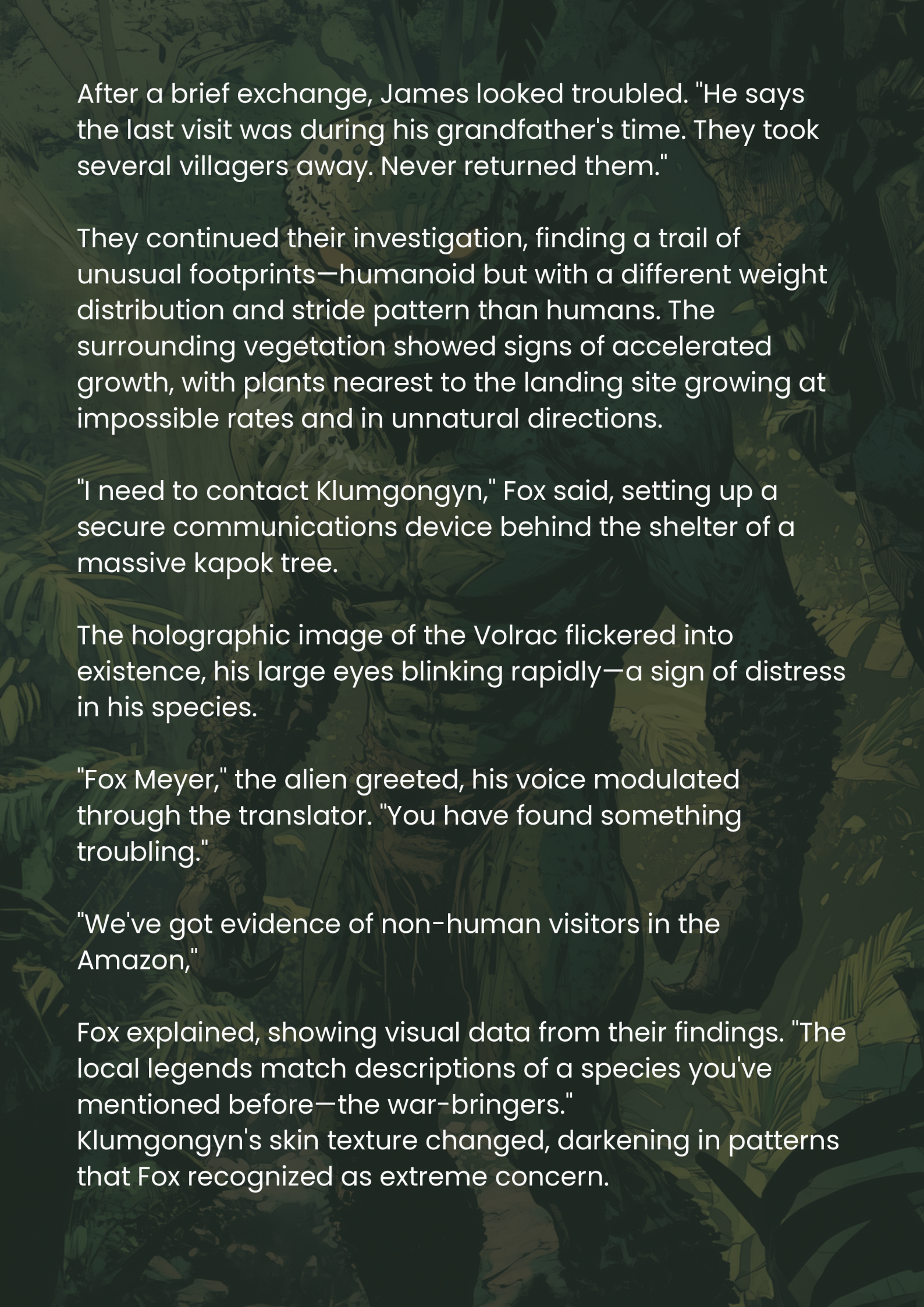
"Bloody hell," James muttered in his crisp British accent, kneeling to examine a patch of scorched earth. "This isn't from any campfire."

Fox nodded, taking readings with a handheld device disguised as a smartphone. "The soil composition has been altered at the molecular level. High-temperature plasma discharge, consistent with certain types of propulsion systems."

Their local guides, two indigenous men from a nearby village, refused to venture further into the clearing. The older one spoke rapidly in Portuguese, which James translated for Fox.

"He says this is the landing place of the 'star-skin warriors' from their legends. Says they are ancient enemies who disappeared generations ago but always threatened to return."

Fox's expression grew serious. "Ask him how long ago they were last here."



After a brief exchange, James looked troubled. "He says the last visit was during his grandfather's time. They took several villagers away. Never returned them."

They continued their investigation, finding a trail of unusual footprints—humanoid but with a different weight distribution and stride pattern than humans. The surrounding vegetation showed signs of accelerated growth, with plants nearest to the landing site growing at impossible rates and in unnatural directions.

"I need to contact Klumgongyn," Fox said, setting up a secure communications device behind the shelter of a massive kapok tree.

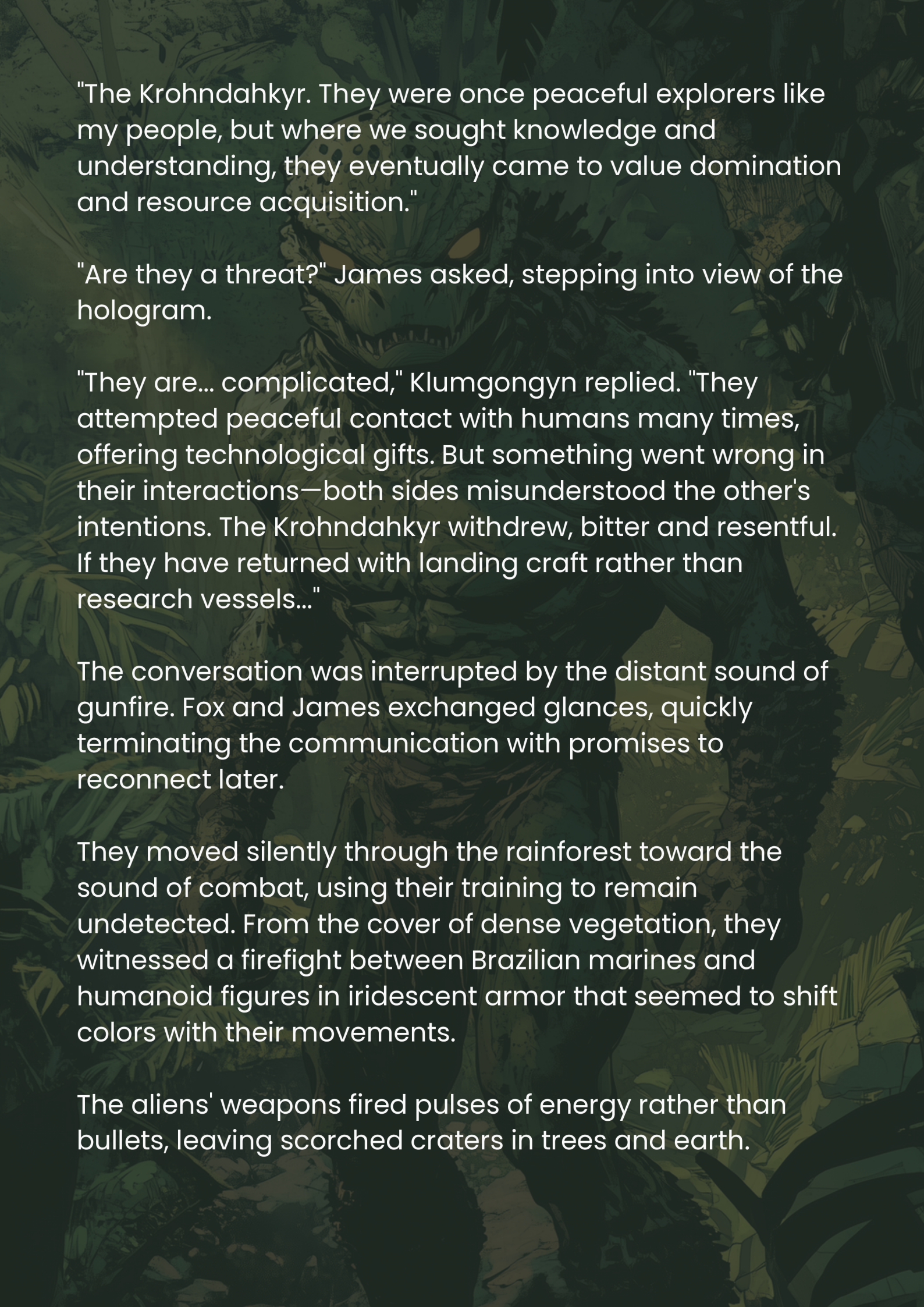
The holographic image of the Volrac flickered into existence, his large eyes blinking rapidly—a sign of distress in his species.

"Fox Meyer," the alien greeted, his voice modulated through the translator. "You have found something troubling."

"We've got evidence of non-human visitors in the Amazon,"

Fox explained, showing visual data from their findings. "The local legends match descriptions of a species you've mentioned before—the war-bringers."

Klumgongyn's skin texture changed, darkening in patterns that Fox recognized as extreme concern.

The background of the entire page is a dark, moody illustration of a rainforest. In the center, a large, green, scaly alien creature with glowing orange eyes and sharp teeth looms. The creature has a menacing expression. The surrounding environment is filled with dense, dark green foliage and trees, creating a sense of a hidden, dangerous world.

"The Krohndahkyr. They were once peaceful explorers like my people, but where we sought knowledge and understanding, they eventually came to value domination and resource acquisition."

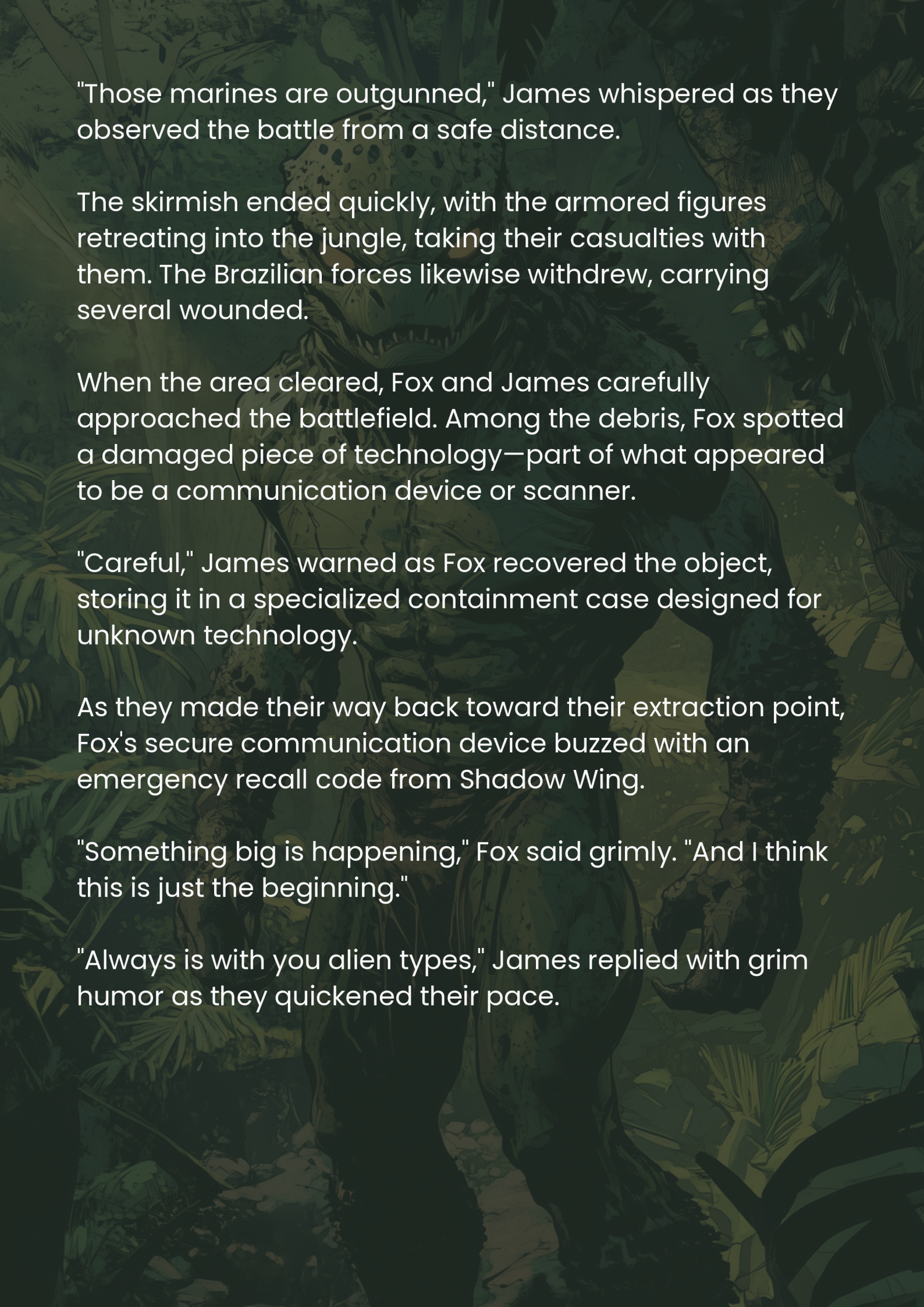
"Are they a threat?" James asked, stepping into view of the hologram.

"They are... complicated," Klumgongyn replied. "They attempted peaceful contact with humans many times, offering technological gifts. But something went wrong in their interactions—both sides misunderstood the other's intentions. The Krohndahkyr withdrew, bitter and resentful. If they have returned with landing craft rather than research vessels..."

The conversation was interrupted by the distant sound of gunfire. Fox and James exchanged glances, quickly terminating the communication with promises to reconnect later.

They moved silently through the rainforest toward the sound of combat, using their training to remain undetected. From the cover of dense vegetation, they witnessed a firefight between Brazilian marines and humanoid figures in iridescent armor that seemed to shift colors with their movements.

The aliens' weapons fired pulses of energy rather than bullets, leaving scorched craters in trees and earth.



"Those marines are outgunned," James whispered as they observed the battle from a safe distance.

The skirmish ended quickly, with the armored figures retreating into the jungle, taking their casualties with them. The Brazilian forces likewise withdrew, carrying several wounded.

When the area cleared, Fox and James carefully approached the battlefield. Among the debris, Fox spotted a damaged piece of technology—part of what appeared to be a communication device or scanner.

"Careful," James warned as Fox recovered the object, storing it in a specialized containment case designed for unknown technology.

As they made their way back toward their extraction point, Fox's secure communication device buzzed with an emergency recall code from Shadow Wing.

"Something big is happening," Fox said grimly. "And I think this is just the beginning."

"Always is with you alien types," James replied with grim humor as they quickened their pace.

Chapter 3: Convergence Point

The sleek form of Shadow Wing cut through the clouds, its advanced engines barely audible despite the speed at which it traveled. Inside, the mobile headquarters of SERPENT hummed with activity as team members from various operations around the globe converged for what was rapidly developing into a crisis situation.

In the technology lab, Dimitri hunched over the alien device recovered by Fox and James, his workstation surrounded by holographic displays showing analyses and comparisons with items in SERPENT's extensive xenotechnology database.

"This is definitely Krohndahkyr," he muttered, manipulating a 3D rendering of the internal components. "But it's more advanced than the artifacts we have on record from their previous Earth visits. They've been busy for the last few centuries."

The door to the lab slid open as Isabella entered, carefully carrying her finds from Sardinia. As she placed the stone tablet on the examination table near Dimitri's workstation, both items—the tablet and the damaged alien device—emitted a soft, resonant tone. The symbols on the tablet began to glow with the same luminescence Isabella had witnessed at the dig site.

"That's... not supposed to happen," Dimitri said, eyes widening as he quickly established a containment field around both objects.

"They're communicating," Isabella realized. "Or recognizing each other, at least."

On the lower deck of Shadow Wing, Gabriel Adams supervised as his BTRU team performed equipment checks on their specialized gear. Unlike conventional military units, the BTRU had been equipped with adaptable technology designed to counter a variety of extraterrestrial threats.

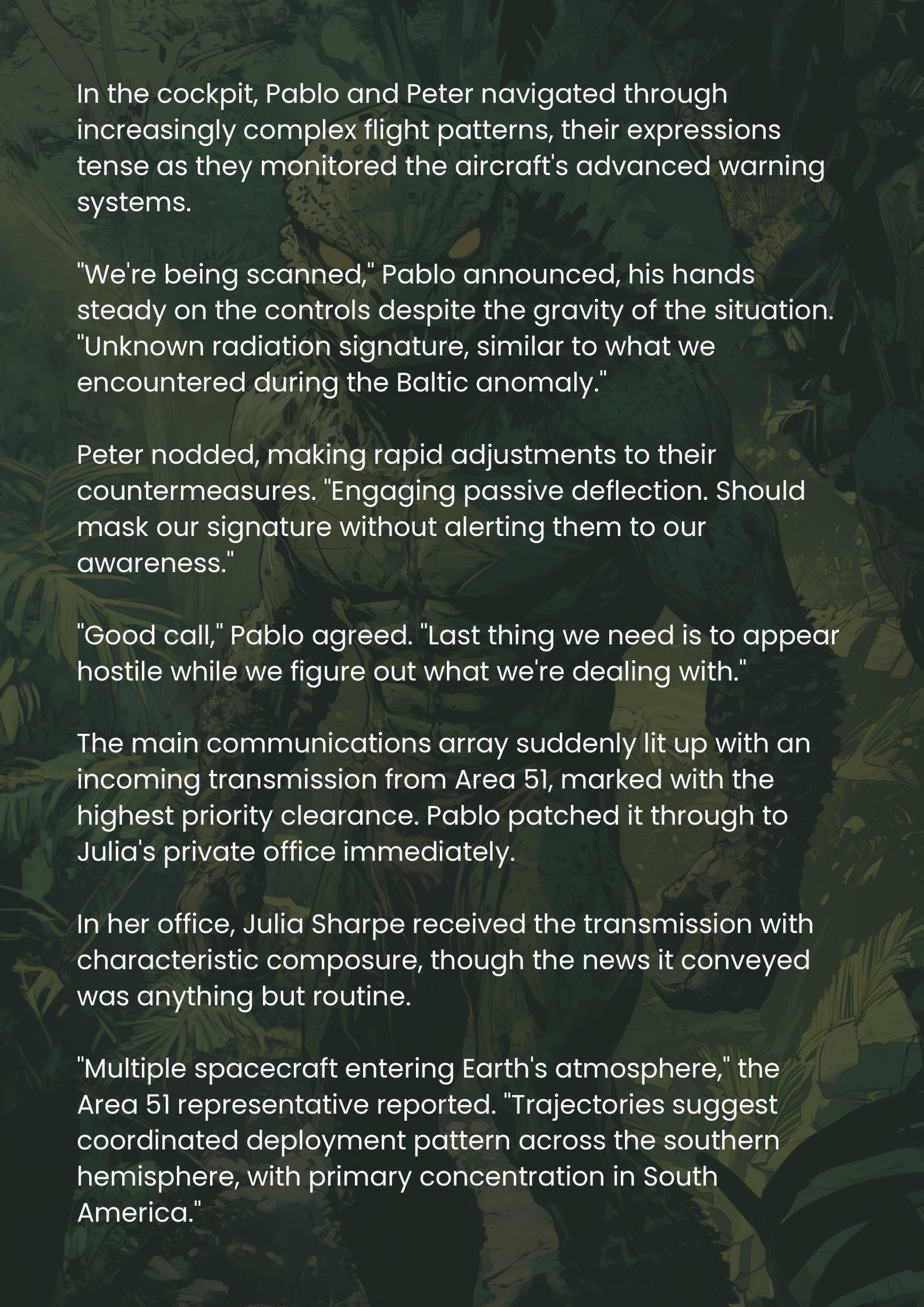
"Remember your training for Class Three opponents," Gabriel instructed as Mikko calibrated his custom sniper rifle. "Superior technology doesn't make them invincible. They still have vulnerabilities—we just need to identify them."

"Conventional rounds?" asked Amir, who was inspecting a series of breaching charges.

Gabriel shook his head. "Load the variable-frequency ammunition. If these are the same species from the Argentina incident in 2018, their armor has weaknesses at certain energy wavelengths."

"I've fought a lot of things," Liam commented, checking his assault gear, "but aliens are still new territory for me."

"They bleed," Mikko said simply. "I've seen it."



In the cockpit, Pablo and Peter navigated through increasingly complex flight patterns, their expressions tense as they monitored the aircraft's advanced warning systems.

"We're being scanned," Pablo announced, his hands steady on the controls despite the gravity of the situation. "Unknown radiation signature, similar to what we encountered during the Baltic anomaly."

Peter nodded, making rapid adjustments to their countermeasures. "Engaging passive deflection. Should mask our signature without alerting them to our awareness."

"Good call," Pablo agreed. "Last thing we need is to appear hostile while we figure out what we're dealing with."

The main communications array suddenly lit up with an incoming transmission from Area 51, marked with the highest priority clearance. Pablo patched it through to Julia's private office immediately.

In her office, Julia Sharpe received the transmission with characteristic composure, though the news it conveyed was anything but routine.

"Multiple spacecraft entering Earth's atmosphere," the Area 51 representative reported. "Trajectories suggest coordinated deployment pattern across the southern hemisphere, with primary concentration in South America."

"Estimated numbers and class?" Julia asked.

"At least seven vessels identified so far. Configuration matches historical records of Krohndahkyr warships, though significantly advanced from our last documented encounter."

Julia ended the transmission and activated the ship-wide communication system. "All personnel to the war room immediately. This is not a drill."

Within minutes, the core team had assembled in Shadow Wing's war room.

The central holographic display showed a real-time map of the detected spacecraft and their projected landing zones.

The secure communication terminal activated, and Klumgongyn's image appeared, larger than life on the main screen. The Volrac's normally composed demeanor had given way to visible concern.

"The situation is graver than initially assessed," he informed them. "The Krohndahkyr vessels we've detected are not merely exploration craft—they are deployment vehicles for their elite forces, the Star Marshals."

"What are we dealing with here?" Gabriel asked. "Numbers, capabilities, intentions?"

"Their numbers will be limited but formidable," Klumgongyn explained. "As for their intentions... the Krohndahkyr once viewed Earth as a potential colony world. They established relationships with early human civilizations, offering technological advancement in exchange for resource rights."

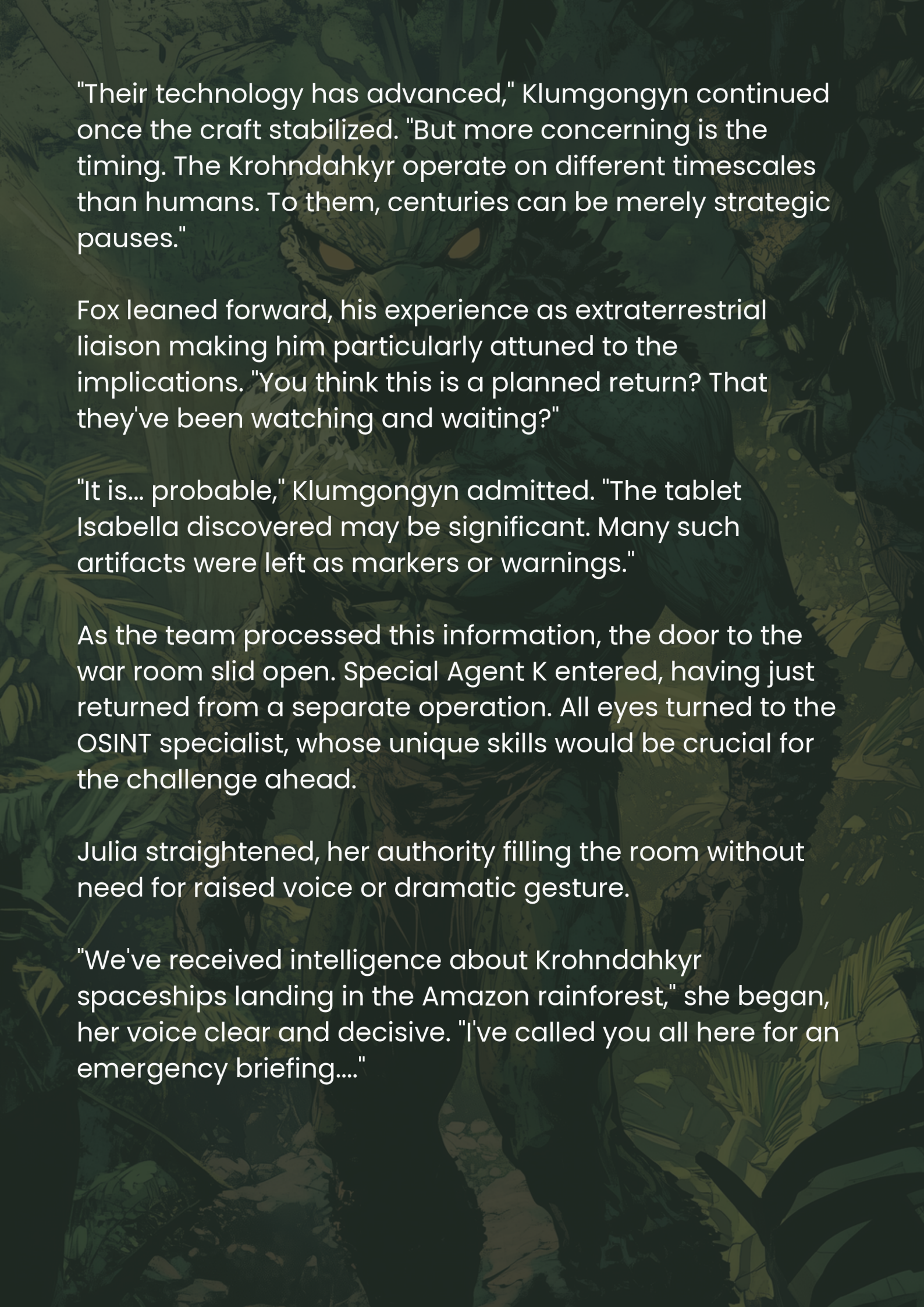
"What went wrong?" Mei asked, her analytical mind already piecing together historical patterns.

"Misunderstanding and betrayal, as I understand it," Klumgongyn replied. "The humans they contacted used their gifts for warfare against other human tribes. The Krohndahkyr saw this as a violation of their agreement. There was conflict. They withdrew, but never relinquished their claim to Earth."

Julia's expression remained impassive, but her mind was already formulating strategies. "Why now? After all this time?"

Before Klumgongyn could answer, Shadow Wing shuddered slightly as its defensive systems automatically responded to an external scan.

"We're being targeted," Pablo's voice came through the intercom from the cockpit. "Taking evasive action." The team braced themselves as the aircraft banked sharply, executing a series of maneuvers designed to break any tracking lock.



"Their technology has advanced," Klumgongyn continued once the craft stabilized. "But more concerning is the timing. The Krohndahkyr operate on different timescales than humans. To them, centuries can be merely strategic pauses."

Fox leaned forward, his experience as extraterrestrial liaison making him particularly attuned to the implications. "You think this is a planned return? That they've been watching and waiting?"

"It is... probable," Klumgongyn admitted. "The tablet Isabella discovered may be significant. Many such artifacts were left as markers or warnings."

As the team processed this information, the door to the war room slid open. Special Agent K entered, having just returned from a separate operation. All eyes turned to the OSINT specialist, whose unique skills would be crucial for the challenge ahead.

Julia straightened, her authority filling the room without need for raised voice or dramatic gesture.

"We've received intelligence about Krohndahkyr spaceships landing in the Amazon rainforest," she began, her voice clear and decisive. "I've called you all here for an emergency briefing...."

Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

Our friends in Area 51 reported Krohndahkyr spaceships landing in the Amazon rain forest yesterday morning. As we know, their once peaceful intentions turned sour after meeting early humans settlers many years ago. They have been recorded through early history to have collaborated with humans on certain projects. Sometimes getting in the way of Klumgongyn and his species.

This time however, they are back with ill intentions. The ships were identifies as Space Marine landing craft, not research ships like we usually see. Unfortunately, the US Spaceforce isn't up for combat tasks yet. At least not of this kind.

Luckily the government of Brazil has found their marines more than willing to take on some aliens in their backyard. General Rodriguez mentioned "If it bleeds, we can kill it". I can't help but wonder why that phrase sounds familiar.

Anyway, your task today is to translate this ancient text we've found near an old cemetery in Sardinia Italy. We believe it to be a gift of great significance they once tried to give the humans they encountered.

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

Materials

krohndahkyr-text.png

Answer Instruction

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

Answer instruction for flag, using the full name in original wording: name-of-author-name-of-the-text

Example: emma-lazarus-the-new-colossus

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.