

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie, stands in the center of the frame. He is wearing dark sunglasses and has a serious expression. The background is a European-style street with yellow buildings, blue shutters, and a balcony with a railing. The sky is a clear blue.

# HYPERTORIA

# ROGUE AGENT

LOCATE A ROGUE SECRET  
AGENT AND PREVENT AN  
INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT



## Chapter 1: First Signs

The September rain fell in sheets across Milan's fashion district, turning the cobblestone streets into shimmering mirrors that reflected the city's elegance even in the downpour. James Brown adjusted his tailored Brioni suit and ducked under an ornate awning, his gaze fixed on the delivery truck that had just arrived at the back entrance of what appeared to be an abandoned textile factory.

This wasn't part of his assignment. He was supposed to be meeting an asset—a routine information exchange on Russian activity in the Mediterranean. Yet something about the men unloading unmarked crates caught his attention. Clinical precision. Military bearing disguised beneath civilian clothes.

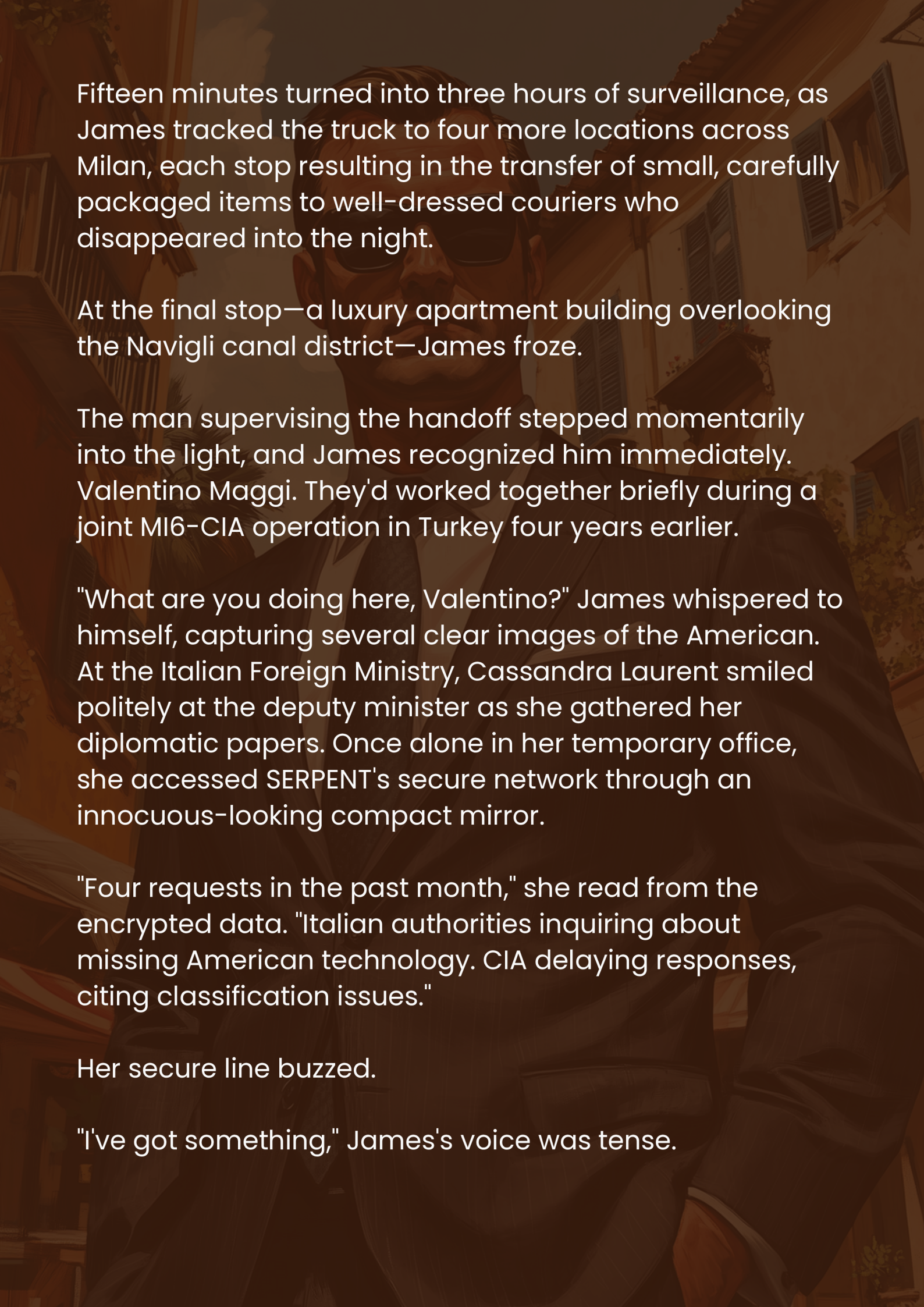
The practiced nonchalance that screamed training to anyone who knew what to look for.

James activated the micro-camera embedded in his watch, capturing images of the license plate and the men's faces.

"Interesting development," he murmured into his comm device. "Three individuals unloading what appears to be electronic equipment. Professional handling, likely military background."

A familiar voice replied in his ear. "Transmitting images now," came the crisp response from Cassandra Laurent. "I'm at the consulate. Give me fifteen minutes."



A man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a dark suit and tie, stands in the foreground. He is looking slightly to the right. The background shows a building with windows and shutters, and a street scene with a car. The image has a warm, brownish tint.

Fifteen minutes turned into three hours of surveillance, as James tracked the truck to four more locations across Milan, each stop resulting in the transfer of small, carefully packaged items to well-dressed couriers who disappeared into the night.

At the final stop—a luxury apartment building overlooking the Navigli canal district—James froze.

The man supervising the handoff stepped momentarily into the light, and James recognized him immediately. Valentino Maggi. They'd worked together briefly during a joint MI6-CIA operation in Turkey four years earlier.

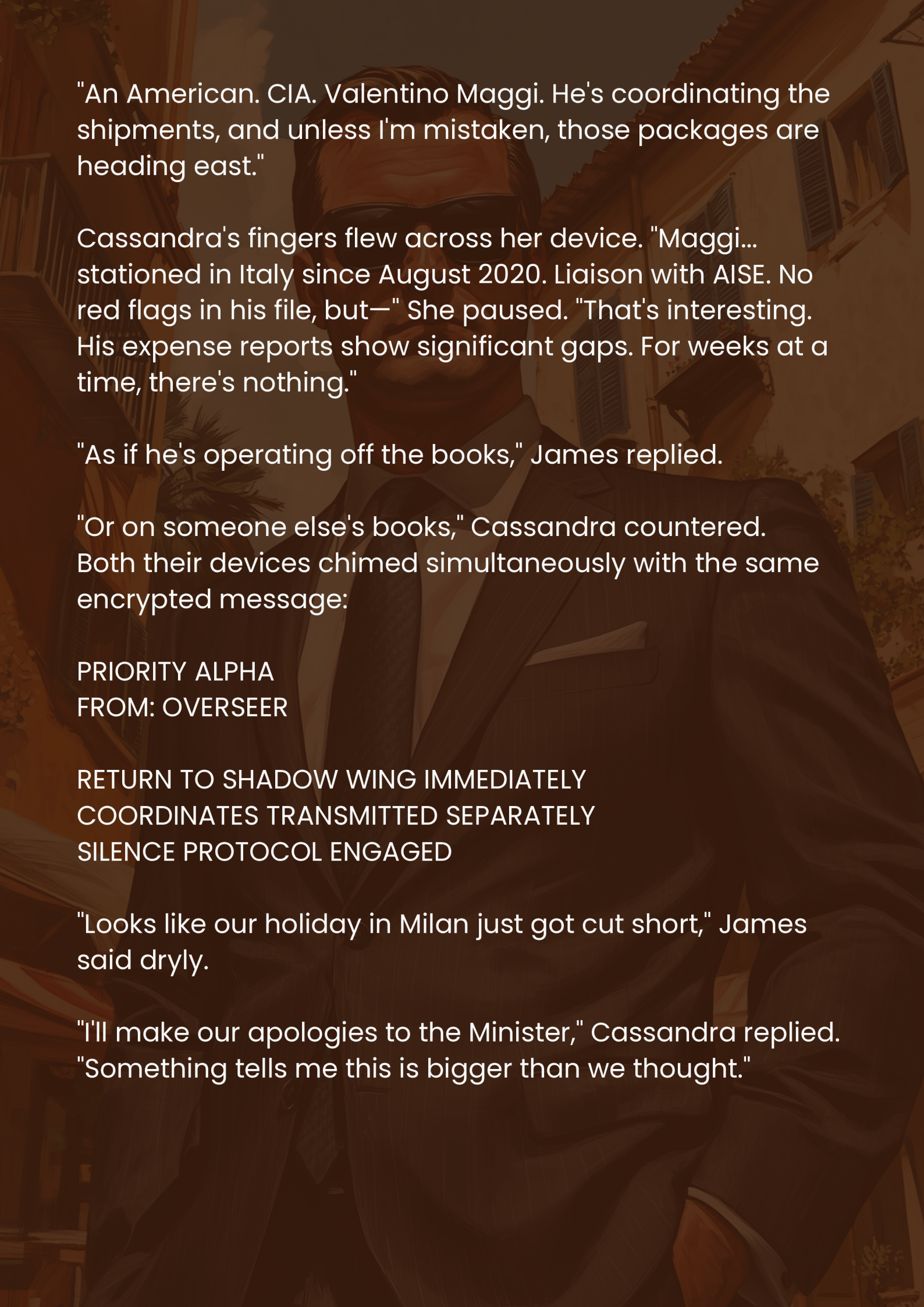
"What are you doing here, Valentino?" James whispered to himself, capturing several clear images of the American. At the Italian Foreign Ministry, Cassandra Laurent smiled politely at the deputy minister as she gathered her diplomatic papers. Once alone in her temporary office, she accessed SERPENT's secure network through an innocuous-looking compact mirror.

"Four requests in the past month," she read from the encrypted data. "Italian authorities inquiring about missing American technology. CIA delaying responses, citing classification issues."

Her secure line buzzed.

"I've got something," James's voice was tense.



A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, stands in front of a building with light-colored walls and dark shutters. He is wearing dark sunglasses. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the building and some foliage.

"An American. CIA. Valentino Maggi. He's coordinating the shipments, and unless I'm mistaken, those packages are heading east."

Cassandra's fingers flew across her device. "Maggi... stationed in Italy since August 2020. Liaison with AISE. No red flags in his file, but—" She paused. "That's interesting. His expense reports show significant gaps. For weeks at a time, there's nothing."

"As if he's operating off the books," James replied.

"Or on someone else's books," Cassandra countered. Both their devices chimed simultaneously with the same encrypted message:

PRIORITY ALPHA  
FROM: OVERSEER

RETURN TO SHADOW WING IMMEDIATELY  
COORDINATES TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY  
SILENCE PROTOCOL ENGAGED

"Looks like our holiday in Milan just got cut short," James said dryly.

"I'll make our apologies to the Minister," Cassandra replied. "Something tells me this is bigger than we thought."



## Chapter 2: Connecting Threads

Isabella Moreno spread physical maps across the holographic table aboard Shadow Wing, currently cruising at 45,000 feet above the Mediterranean. Digital overlays illuminated trade routes, both official and unofficial, throughout Southern Europe and Russia.

"It follows historical patterns," she explained, pointing to illuminated pathways. "During the Cold War, these same routes were used to smuggle restricted technology into the Eastern Bloc. The Sicilian ports, through Albania, then northward."

Across the cabin, Dimitri Zechev hunched over three screens, his fingers dancing across multiple keyboards. Lines of code reflected in his glasses.

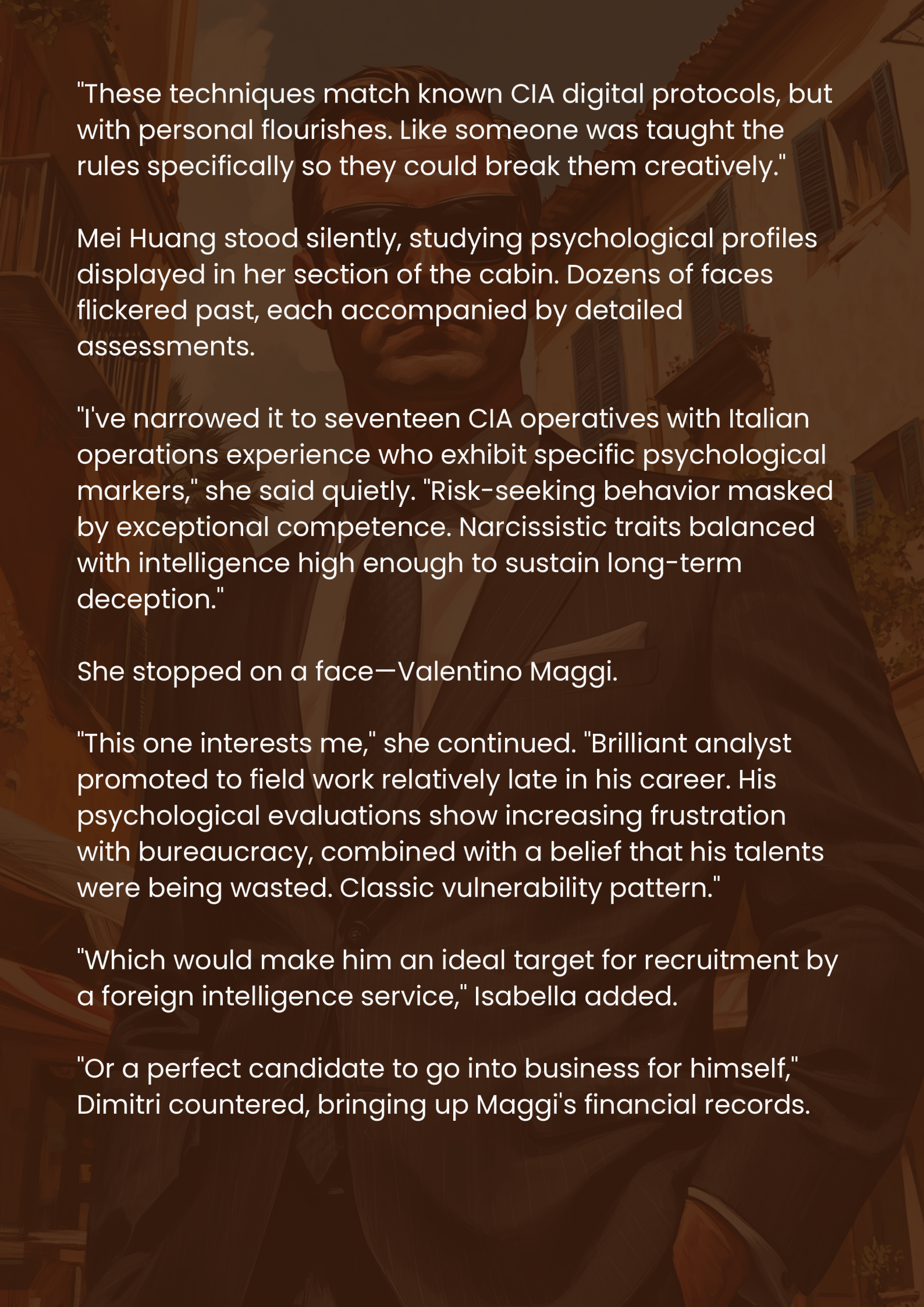
"Got something," he announced without looking up. "Whoever did this is good, but not good enough."

He projected a complex network diagram onto the main screen. "Financial transfers disguised as legitimate business operations. Software companies that don't exist ordering parts that shouldn't be available. Very sophisticated digital masking."

"CIA level?" Isabella asked.

"Someone trained by them, definitely." Dimitri nodded.



A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie stands in the center of the frame. He is wearing dark sunglasses and has a serious expression. The background is a warm-toned, slightly blurred image of a building with windows and shutters. The overall lighting is soft and the colors are muted, giving it a cinematic feel.

"These techniques match known CIA digital protocols, but with personal flourishes. Like someone was taught the rules specifically so they could break them creatively."

Mei Huang stood silently, studying psychological profiles displayed in her section of the cabin. Dozens of faces flickered past, each accompanied by detailed assessments.

"I've narrowed it to seventeen CIA operatives with Italian operations experience who exhibit specific psychological markers," she said quietly. "Risk-seeking behavior masked by exceptional competence. Narcissistic traits balanced with intelligence high enough to sustain long-term deception."

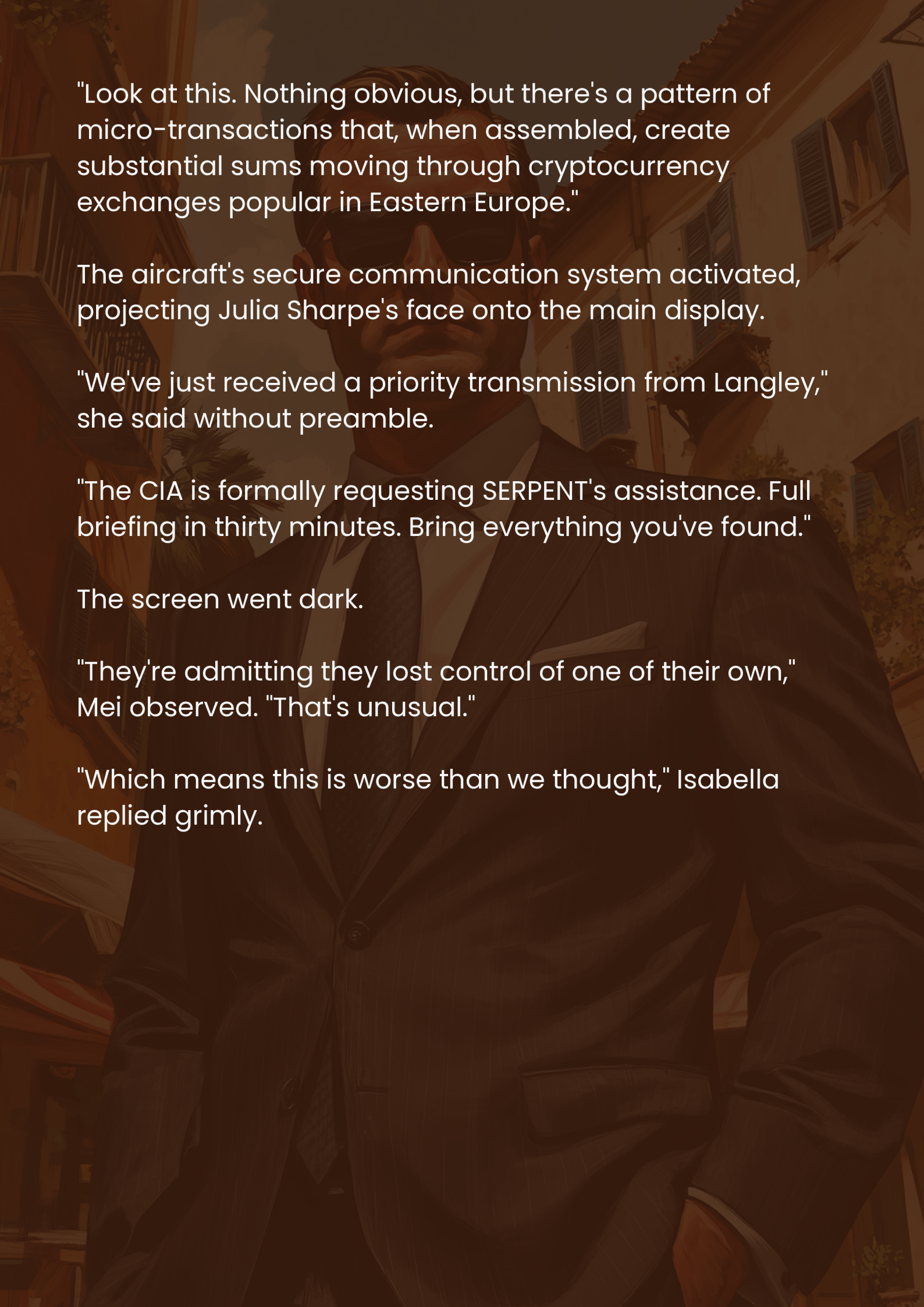
She stopped on a face—Valentino Maggi.

"This one interests me," she continued. "Brilliant analyst promoted to field work relatively late in his career. His psychological evaluations show increasing frustration with bureaucracy, combined with a belief that his talents were being wasted. Classic vulnerability pattern."

"Which would make him an ideal target for recruitment by a foreign intelligence service," Isabella added.

"Or a perfect candidate to go into business for himself," Dimitri countered, bringing up Maggi's financial records.



A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie stands in the foreground. He is wearing dark sunglasses and has a serious expression. The background shows a building with light-colored walls and dark shutters on the windows. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, brownish-orange color palette.

"Look at this. Nothing obvious, but there's a pattern of micro-transactions that, when assembled, create substantial sums moving through cryptocurrency exchanges popular in Eastern Europe."

The aircraft's secure communication system activated, projecting Julia Sharpe's face onto the main display.

"We've just received a priority transmission from Langley," she said without preamble.

"The CIA is formally requesting SERPENT's assistance. Full briefing in thirty minutes. Bring everything you've found."

The screen went dark.

"They're admitting they lost control of one of their own," Mei observed. "That's unusual."

"Which means this is worse than we thought," Isabella replied grimly.



## Chapter 3: The Hunt Begins

Special Agent K stood at the viewport in Shadow Wing's command center, watching clouds drift beneath the aircraft as it banked gently toward a rendezvous point in international airspace.

The holographic command table behind him displayed a three-dimensional map of Europe, with pulsing red indicators scattered across Italy's northern regions.

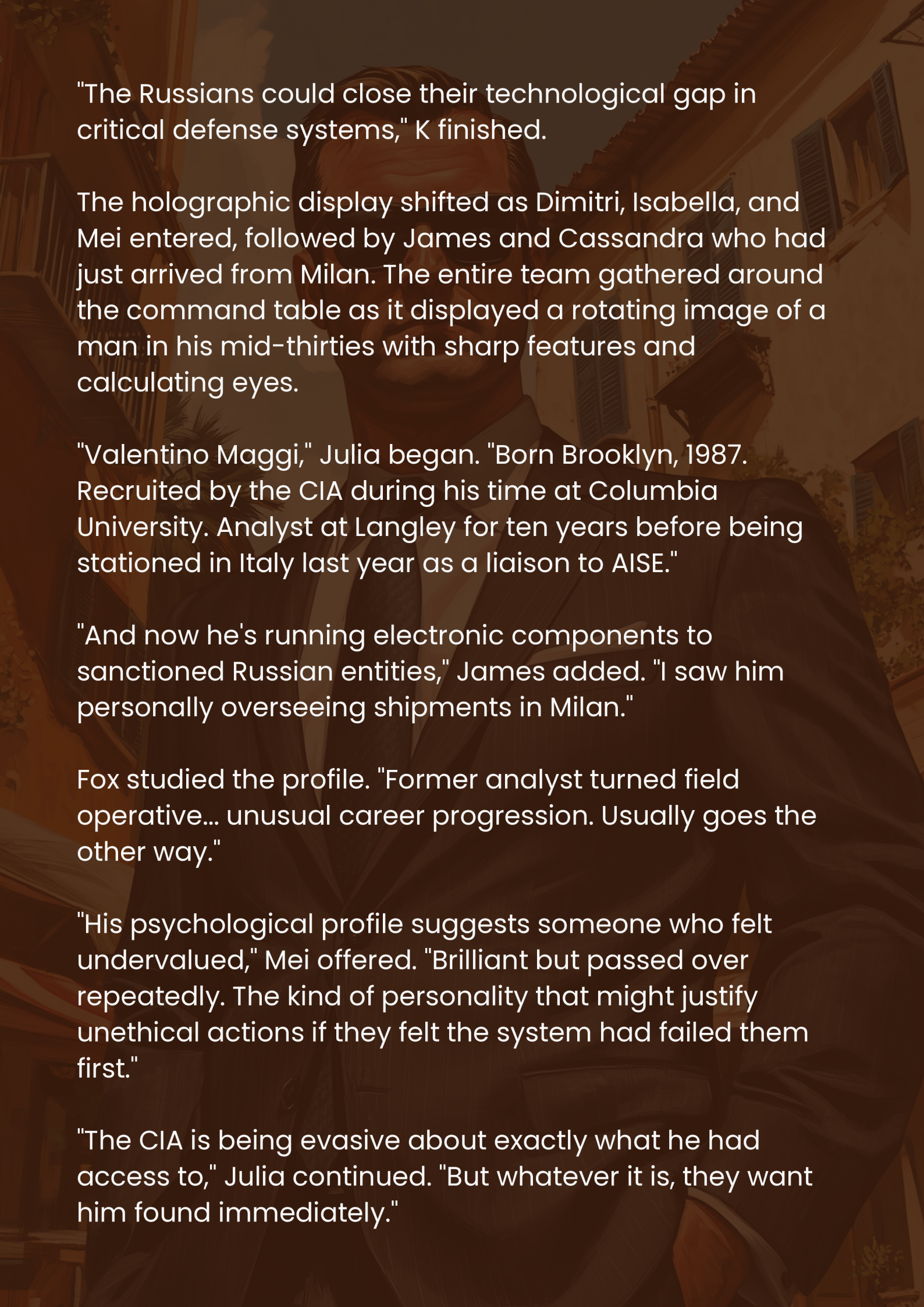
"You've already started analyzing the data," Julia Sharpe observed as she entered, her tailored suit immaculate despite the late hour.

"Preliminary assessment only," K replied. "Tracking electronics shipments that appeared on black markets throughout Eastern Europe. All high-value components restricted under current sanctions."

Fox Meyer strode in, his usual casual demeanor replaced by focused intensity. "CIA's getting desperate if they're coming to us," he said, dropping a physical file on the table. "This isn't just about embarrassment anymore. They're scared."

Julia nodded. "They should be. We're talking about advanced encryption modules, specialized processing components, and quantum communication prototypes. In the wrong hands—"





"The Russians could close their technological gap in critical defense systems," K finished.

The holographic display shifted as Dimitri, Isabella, and Mei entered, followed by James and Cassandra who had just arrived from Milan. The entire team gathered around the command table as it displayed a rotating image of a man in his mid-thirties with sharp features and calculating eyes.

"Valentino Maggi," Julia began. "Born Brooklyn, 1987. Recruited by the CIA during his time at Columbia University. Analyst at Langley for ten years before being stationed in Italy last year as a liaison to AISE."

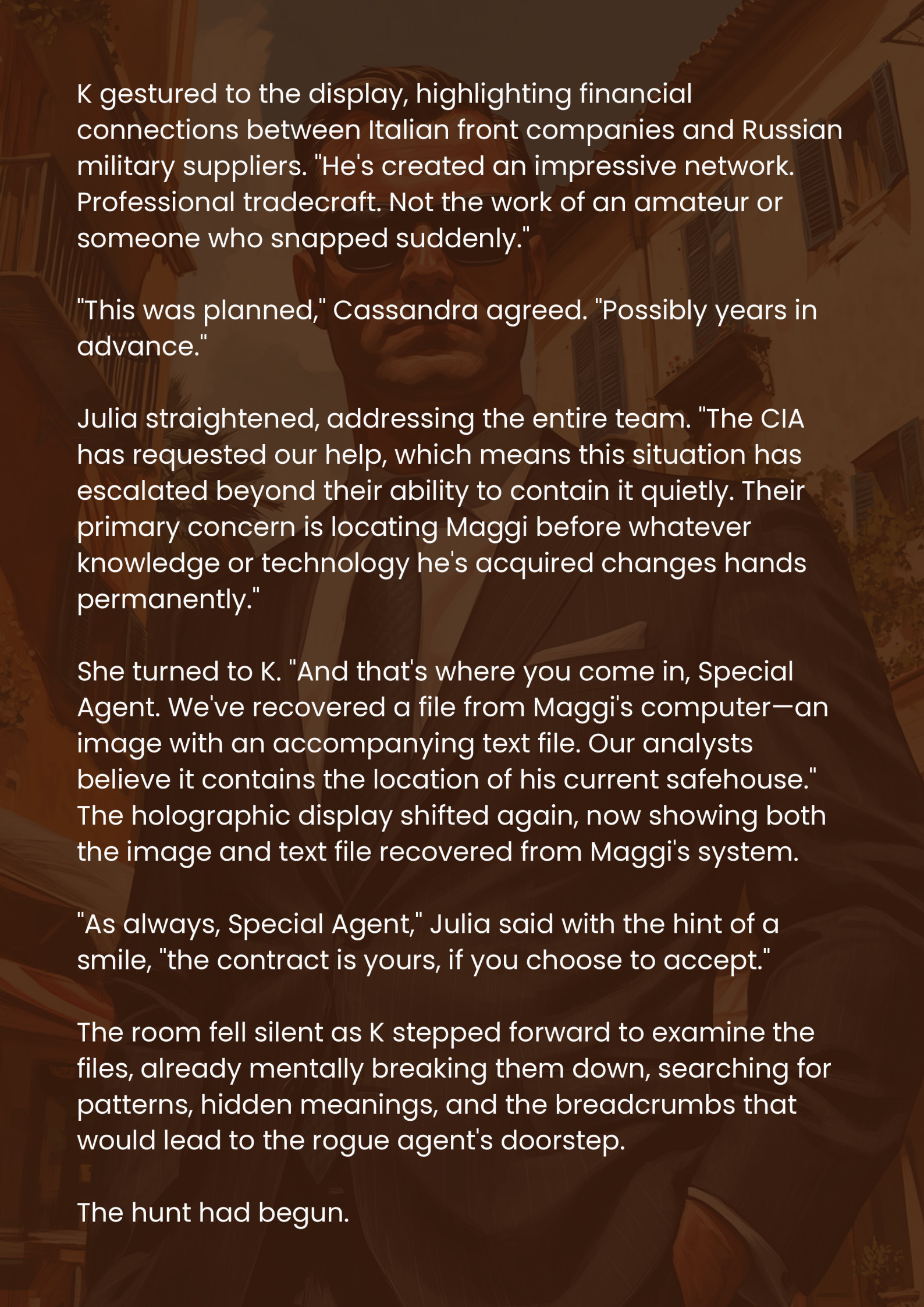
"And now he's running electronic components to sanctioned Russian entities," James added. "I saw him personally overseeing shipments in Milan."

Fox studied the profile. "Former analyst turned field operative... unusual career progression. Usually goes the other way."

"His psychological profile suggests someone who felt undervalued," Mei offered. "Brilliant but passed over repeatedly. The kind of personality that might justify unethical actions if they felt the system had failed them first."

"The CIA is being evasive about exactly what he had access to," Julia continued. "But whatever it is, they want him found immediately."



A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, stands in the center of the frame. He is also wearing dark sunglasses. The background is a slightly out-of-focus street scene with buildings, including one with blue shutters. The overall color palette is warm and brownish, with a semi-transparent dark overlay.

K gestured to the display, highlighting financial connections between Italian front companies and Russian military suppliers. "He's created an impressive network. Professional tradecraft. Not the work of an amateur or someone who snapped suddenly."

"This was planned," Cassandra agreed. "Possibly years in advance."

Julia straightened, addressing the entire team. "The CIA has requested our help, which means this situation has escalated beyond their ability to contain it quietly. Their primary concern is locating Maggi before whatever knowledge or technology he's acquired changes hands permanently."

She turned to K. "And that's where you come in, Special Agent. We've recovered a file from Maggi's computer—an image with an accompanying text file. Our analysts believe it contains the location of his current safehouse." The holographic display shifted again, now showing both the image and text file recovered from Maggi's system.

"As always, Special Agent," Julia said with the hint of a smile, "the contract is yours, if you choose to accept."

The room fell silent as K stepped forward to examine the files, already mentally breaking them down, searching for patterns, hidden meanings, and the breadcrumbs that would lead to the rogue agent's doorstep.

The hunt had begun.



# Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

We have a request on our hands from our friends over at the CIA. In September of 2021, one of their operatives went missing in action. Upon further investigation, it was discovered this operative went rogue and started a smuggling business for the Russians. Mostly dealing in complex electronics, which have become difficult to come by for Russians after sanctions began. The agent we're looking for is named Valentino Maggi. Born in Brooklyn New York on 18.05.1987.

Valentino was recruited into the CIA during his time as a student at Columbia University. Most of his 10 years in active service were spent as an analyst working out of Langley. Recently though, in August of 2020, Valentino moved to overseas work. Being stationed in Italy as a liaison officer for the Italian foreign intelligence agency "Agenzia Informazioni e Sicurezza Esterna". Doing stellar work, right up until the point he went missing. Prompting an extensive investigation into his whereabouts.

And that is where your task begins. One of the files recovered from Valentino's computer, is an image with a text file. We believe this to be the current location of Valentino Maggi. Locate the safehouse, so local authorities can raid the premises.

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



## Materials

safehouse-aerial-rogue-agent.jpg

## Answer Instruction

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

answer format: country-town-coordinate

answer example: spain-madrid-12.345678-12.345678

## 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.