

HATCHWARRIOR

A yellow, muscular alien with large, dark eyes and a small, downturned mouth. It has a large, rounded head and small, pointed ears. The alien is standing in a jungle, with its right hand resting on a rock. The background is a dense, green jungle with various plants and trees.

WHERE'S KLUMGONGYN

Chapter 1: Digital Warfare

The soft blue glow from multiple monitors illuminated Dimitri Zechev's face as his fingers flew across the keyboard. His brow furrowed in concentration, eyes narrowed, the Bulgarian tech specialist was deep in what appeared to be an intense cyber operation.

"Got you now," he muttered, hitting the enter key with theatrical emphasis.

Across the cabin of Shadow Wing, Fox Meyer's phone buzzed. The American extraterrestrial liaison glanced down and burst into laughter.

"Oh, that's good!" Fox called out. "But not good enough." His fingers moved rapidly over his screen.

Dimitri's monitor suddenly filled with a rapid succession of dancing alien GIFs, each progressively more ridiculous than the last. The final one featured a green extraterrestrial in a Hawaiian shirt doing the hula.

"Very mature," Dimitri called out, but he was already searching for the perfect response.

At a nearby workstation, Isabella Moreno sighed heavily as another notification chimed on her screen. The Mexican historian was attempting to analyze ancient Mayan text that might reference early extraterrestrial contact, but the constant pinging from the company chat was making concentration impossible.



"Twenty-three," she said to no one in particular.

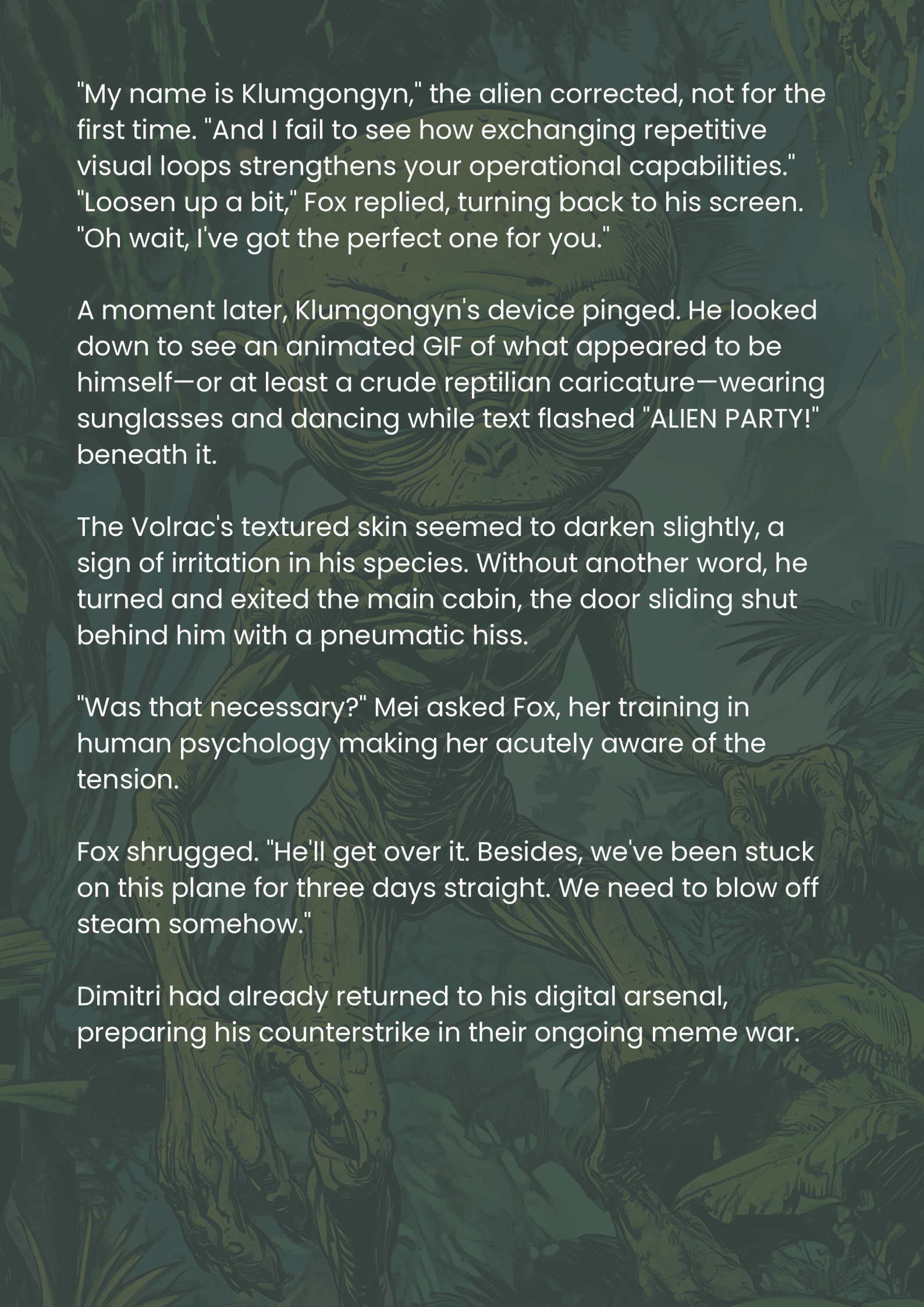
Mei Huang looked up from her own work. "Pardon?"
"Twenty-three notifications in the last five minutes,"
Isabella clarified. "All memes and GIFs."

The Chinese psychologist and linguist nodded sympathetically. "I turned my notifications off an hour ago. There's only so many dancing cat videos one can endure while trying to profile a potential alien collaborator."

On the other side of the cabin, a slender figure stood motionless, watching the exchange. Klumgongyn's large, expressive eyes reflected the same blue light that illuminated the humans, but there was no amusement in them. The Volrac had been attempting to relay important updates from Varnyr regarding potential timeline anomalies, but his carefully crafted message had been immediately buried under an avalanche of what the humans called "reaction GIFs."

"Is this what you call professional communication?" Klumgongyn asked, his voice carrying the slight electronic undertone that all Volrac speech had when translated through their communication devices.

Fox looked up, still grinning. "Come on, Klum, it's just team bonding."



"My name is Klumgongyn," the alien corrected, not for the first time. "And I fail to see how exchanging repetitive visual loops strengthens your operational capabilities." "Loosen up a bit," Fox replied, turning back to his screen. "Oh wait, I've got the perfect one for you."

A moment later, Klumgongyn's device pinged. He looked down to see an animated GIF of what appeared to be himself—or at least a crude reptilian caricature—wearing sunglasses and dancing while text flashed "ALIEN PARTY!" beneath it.

The Volrac's textured skin seemed to darken slightly, a sign of irritation in his species. Without another word, he turned and exited the main cabin, the door sliding shut behind him with a pneumatic hiss.

"Was that necessary?" Mei asked Fox, her training in human psychology making her acutely aware of the tension.

Fox shrugged. "He'll get over it. Besides, we've been stuck on this plane for three days straight. We need to blow off steam somehow."

Dimitri had already returned to his digital arsenal, preparing his counterstrike in their ongoing meme war.

Chapter 2: Silent Departure

The cargo bay doors of Shadow Wing opened with a hydraulic groan as the BTRU team filed in, equipment bags slung over their shoulders. Gabriel Adams led the way, his normally stern expression softened by satisfaction after a successful operation.

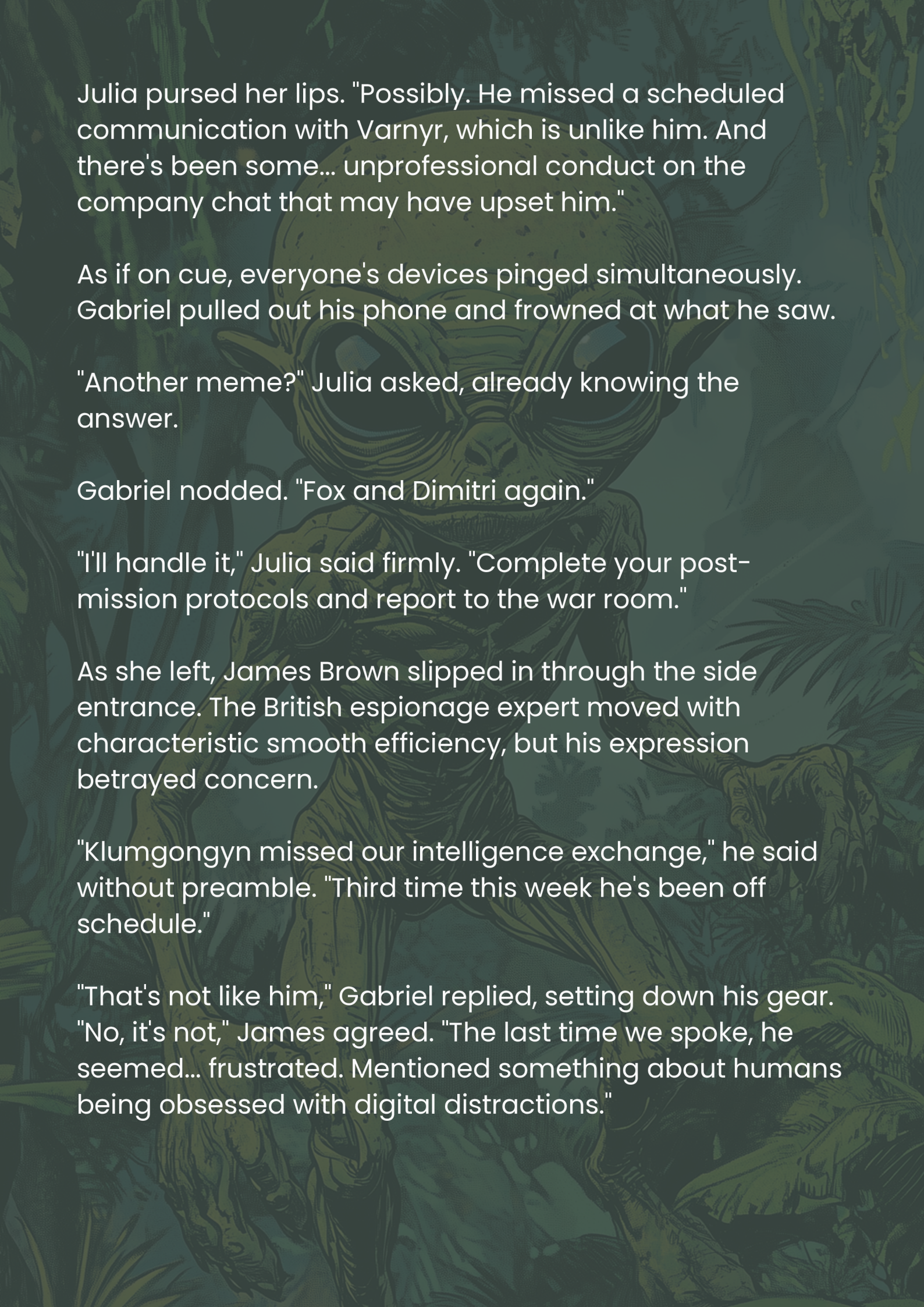
"Extraction complete, zero casualties," he announced to no one in particular, a hint of pride in his voice. Behind him, Mikko Häyhä carefully placed his disassembled sniper rifle case on a storage rack, while Amir Hussaini and Liam Irwin engaged in quiet conversation about the mission.

"The breaching charge worked perfectly," Amir was saying. "Like cutting butter with a hot knife."

"Yeah, mate, but next time give us a three-count instead of two," Liam replied, rubbing his shoulder. "Nearly took a door to the face."

Their banter died down as Julia Sharpe entered the bay. The Overseer's expression was one of measured concern. "Welcome back, BTRU," she said, her British accent clipped and precise. "Debrief in thirty. But first, has anyone seen Klumgongyn in the last few hours?"

The team exchanged glances and shook their heads. "Not since yesterday," Gabriel answered. "Is there a problem?"



Julia pursed her lips. "Possibly. He missed a scheduled communication with Varnyr, which is unlike him. And there's been some... unprofessional conduct on the company chat that may have upset him."

As if on cue, everyone's devices pinged simultaneously. Gabriel pulled out his phone and frowned at what he saw.

"Another meme?" Julia asked, already knowing the answer.

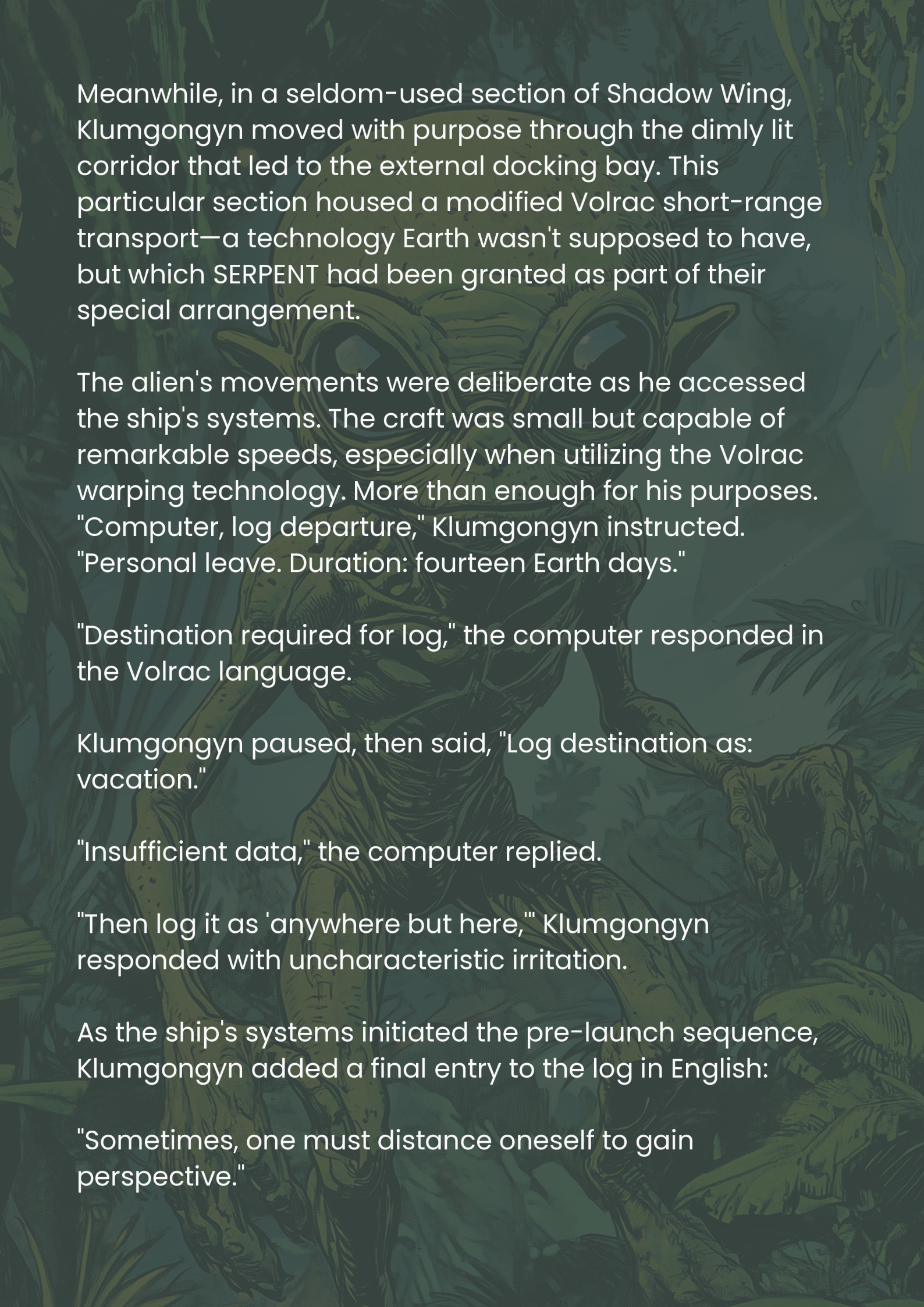
Gabriel nodded. "Fox and Dimitri again."

"I'll handle it," Julia said firmly. "Complete your post-mission protocols and report to the war room."

As she left, James Brown slipped in through the side entrance. The British espionage expert moved with characteristic smooth efficiency, but his expression betrayed concern.

"Klungongyn missed our intelligence exchange," he said without preamble. "Third time this week he's been off schedule."

"That's not like him," Gabriel replied, setting down his gear. "No, it's not," James agreed. "The last time we spoke, he seemed... frustrated. Mentioned something about humans being obsessed with digital distractions."



Meanwhile, in a seldom-used section of Shadow Wing, Klumgongyn moved with purpose through the dimly lit corridor that led to the external docking bay. This particular section housed a modified Volrac short-range transport—a technology Earth wasn't supposed to have, but which SERPENT had been granted as part of their special arrangement.

The alien's movements were deliberate as he accessed the ship's systems. The craft was small but capable of remarkable speeds, especially when utilizing the Volrac warping technology. More than enough for his purposes. "Computer, log departure," Klumgongyn instructed. "Personal leave. Duration: fourteen Earth days."

"Destination required for log," the computer responded in the Volrac language.

Klumgongyn paused, then said, "Log destination as: vacation."

"Insufficient data," the computer replied.

"Then log it as 'anywhere but here,'" Klumgongyn responded with uncharacteristic irritation.

As the ship's systems initiated the pre-launch sequence, Klumgongyn added a final entry to the log in English:

"Sometimes, one must distance oneself to gain perspective."



In the cockpit of Shadow Wing, Pablo Iglesias noticed a small alert on his secondary display.

"Peter," he called to his co-pilot, "are we expecting any outgoing craft today?"

Peter Jansen looked up from his pre-flight checklist. "Not that I'm aware of. Why?"

"Because bay three just initiated an unauthorized launch sequence," Pablo replied, his voice rising with concern.

Both pilots watched in astonishment as the small Volrac craft detached from Shadow Wing and, in a flash of blue light, disappeared into the atmosphere.

"Was that—" Peter began.

"Yes," Pablo confirmed grimly.

"That was definitely Klumgongyn's ship."

Chapter 3: Digital Breadcrumbs

Special Agent K stood before the holographic command table in the war room, studying the timeline of events displayed in glowing blue light. The projection showed Klumgongyn's last known movements throughout Shadow Wing, ending with the unauthorized departure twelve hours ago.

"So he just... left?" K asked, looking up at the assembled team members.

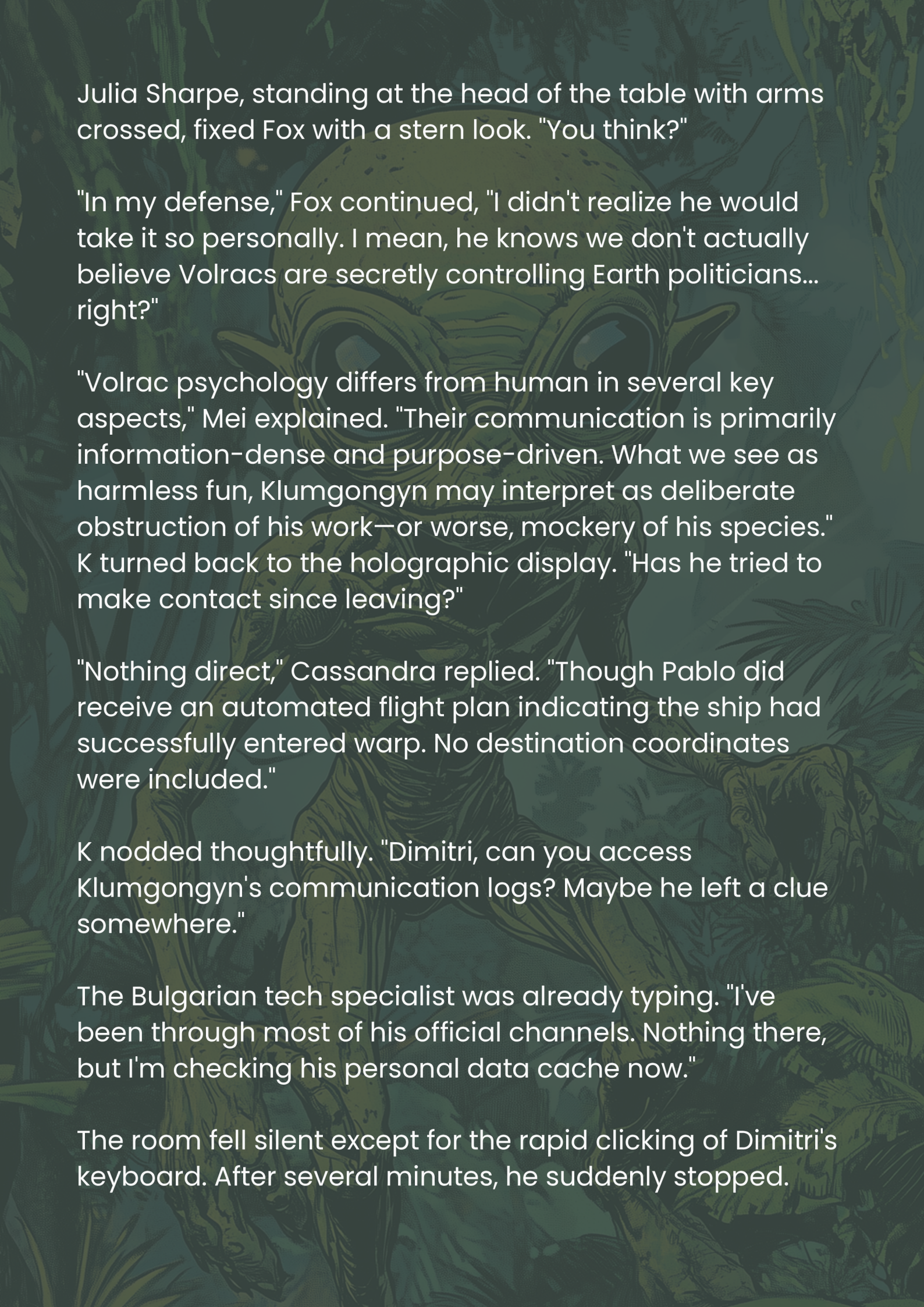
"That's the short version," Cassandra Laurent replied, her diplomatic training evident in her measured tone. "The more complex version involves three weeks of escalating digital harassment."

Dimitri, sitting at a nearby workstation, winced visibly at this characterization. "It wasn't harassment," he protested. "It was just memes."

"Two hundred and seventy-three memes in the last week alone," Mei corrected, consulting her tablet.

"Approximately sixty-two percent targeting or referencing Klumgongyn directly."

Fox, who had been uncharacteristically quiet, finally spoke up. "I might have gone too far with the 'lizard people running the government' one."



Julia Sharpe, standing at the head of the table with arms crossed, fixed Fox with a stern look. "You think?"

"In my defense," Fox continued, "I didn't realize he would take it so personally. I mean, he knows we don't actually believe Volracs are secretly controlling Earth politicians... right?"

"Volrac psychology differs from human in several key aspects," Mei explained. "Their communication is primarily information-dense and purpose-driven. What we see as harmless fun, Klumgongyn may interpret as deliberate obstruction of his work—or worse, mockery of his species." K turned back to the holographic display. "Has he tried to make contact since leaving?"

"Nothing direct," Cassandra replied. "Though Pablo did receive an automated flight plan indicating the ship had successfully entered warp. No destination coordinates were included."

K nodded thoughtfully. "Dimitri, can you access Klumgongyn's communication logs? Maybe he left a clue somewhere."

The Bulgarian tech specialist was already typing. "I've been through most of his official channels. Nothing there, but I'm checking his personal data cache now."

The room fell silent except for the rapid clicking of Dimitri's keyboard. After several minutes, he suddenly stopped.

"That's... odd," he murmured.

"What is it?" K and Julia asked simultaneously.

Dimitri pointed to his screen. "Remember that dancing alien GIF I sent yesterday? The one that started the final meme war?"

Several eye-rolls circulated around the room.

"Well, Klumgongyn downloaded it. And then he modified it." Dimitri's fingers flew across the keyboard. "There's embedded data here, encrypted with... oh, that's clever." "In English, please," Gabriel prompted.

"He hid a message inside one of our memes," Dimitri explained, sounding almost impressed. "Using our own joke against us. It's encrypted with a key derived from the exact timestamp when Fox sent the 'lizard government' image."

"Can you crack it?" K asked.

"Already done," Dimitri replied, hitting one final key with flourish.

The main screen lit up with coordinates to an encrypted server. K immediately accessed it, and the team watched as a single image appeared on the display—a tropical beach scene with palm trees and crystal-clear water. Below it was a simple message: "see you in two weeks memelords."



"Is that it?" Fox asked. "Just a vacation photo? No other clues?"

"That's it," K confirmed, studying the image. "But it's more than enough. All we need to do is geolocate this beach, and we can find him."

Julia nodded decisively. "Very well. This has gone far enough." She turned to K. "Special Agent, I'm officially assigning you to this retrieval mission. I'll prepare a formal briefing immediately."

As the team dispersed to prepare for the new mission, K remained at the command table, already analyzing the tropical image. The geolocation challenge would be complex but solvable—exactly the kind of puzzle that made the job interesting.

Behind K, Julia Sharpe was already composing the mission briefing on her tablet, beginning with the words:

"Greetings, Special Agent. We have quite a strange case on our hands today..."

Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

We have quite a strange case on our hands today. Our Alien Liaison Klumgongyn, has gone missing in action. Now don't be alarmed, I don't mean this in any dangerous way. Lately the company chat has been used as a dumpster for GIF wars and edgy memes. Klumgongyn was so fed up with this, that he took one of the spaceships and warped to an unknown location.

He says it's a "surprise vacation" and won't come back for another two weeks. This is of course unacceptable behavior and we need to find him. After arrival he sent a picture with the message "see you in two weeks memelords". We need you to geolocate the image so we can send in a retrieval unit to pick him up.

Whether we'll actually find him once we're there is another issue. Shapeshifting alien lizard like creatures are hard to spot. They've been posing as politicians for years now and nobody's really caught on to them either. You have 24 hours to locate Klumgongyn. After that we'll start refusing to reimburse his travel expenses.

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

Materials

starting-image-wheres-klumgongyn.png

Answer Instruction

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

Use the Country and Streetname to form the answer.

Example: turkey-street-name

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.