SOPHIA'S STORY · II



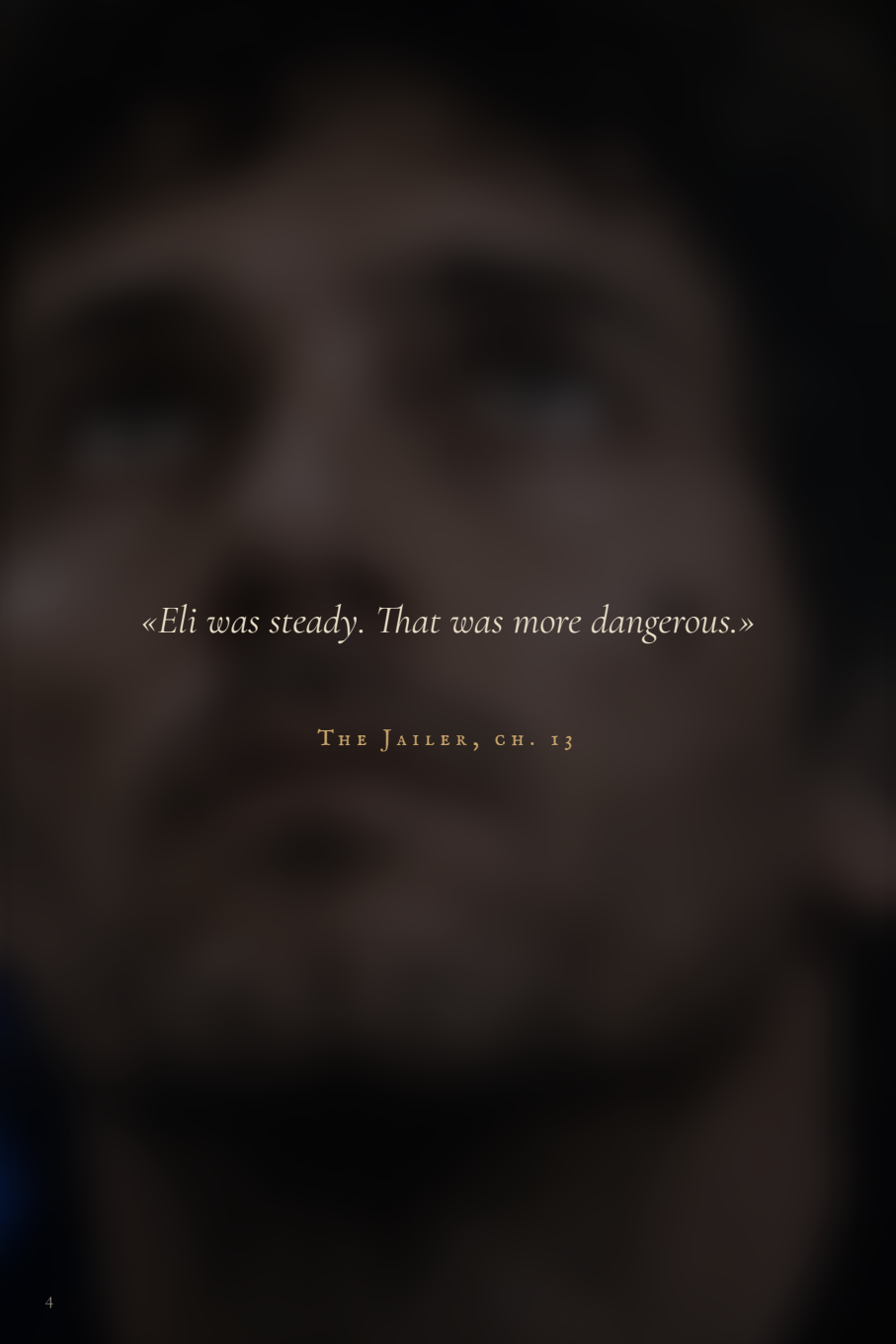
BLOHER

ELI WARD

the shaving claims no centre







«Eli was steady. That was more dangerous.»

The Jailer, ch. 13



I

Eli Ward

nobody

Eli Ward was nobody

Dark curly hair, a face more tired than old, a gaze that never quite settles on anything visible. He orders tea and does not touch it.

On one cheek he has a small mark: almost a badly drawn four-pointed star.

He distrusts theories, which seem to him cages with better lighting, and the word “I”, and names that arrive too soon. He is not looking for gods or ships: he is looking for function.



The four-pointed star





II

Normalising

a part inside the machine

The fourth-floor cubicle

He works in a six-storey federal building. He clocks in at 7:28. His job is to compare the internal and public versions of reports on aerial phenomena and witness accounts.

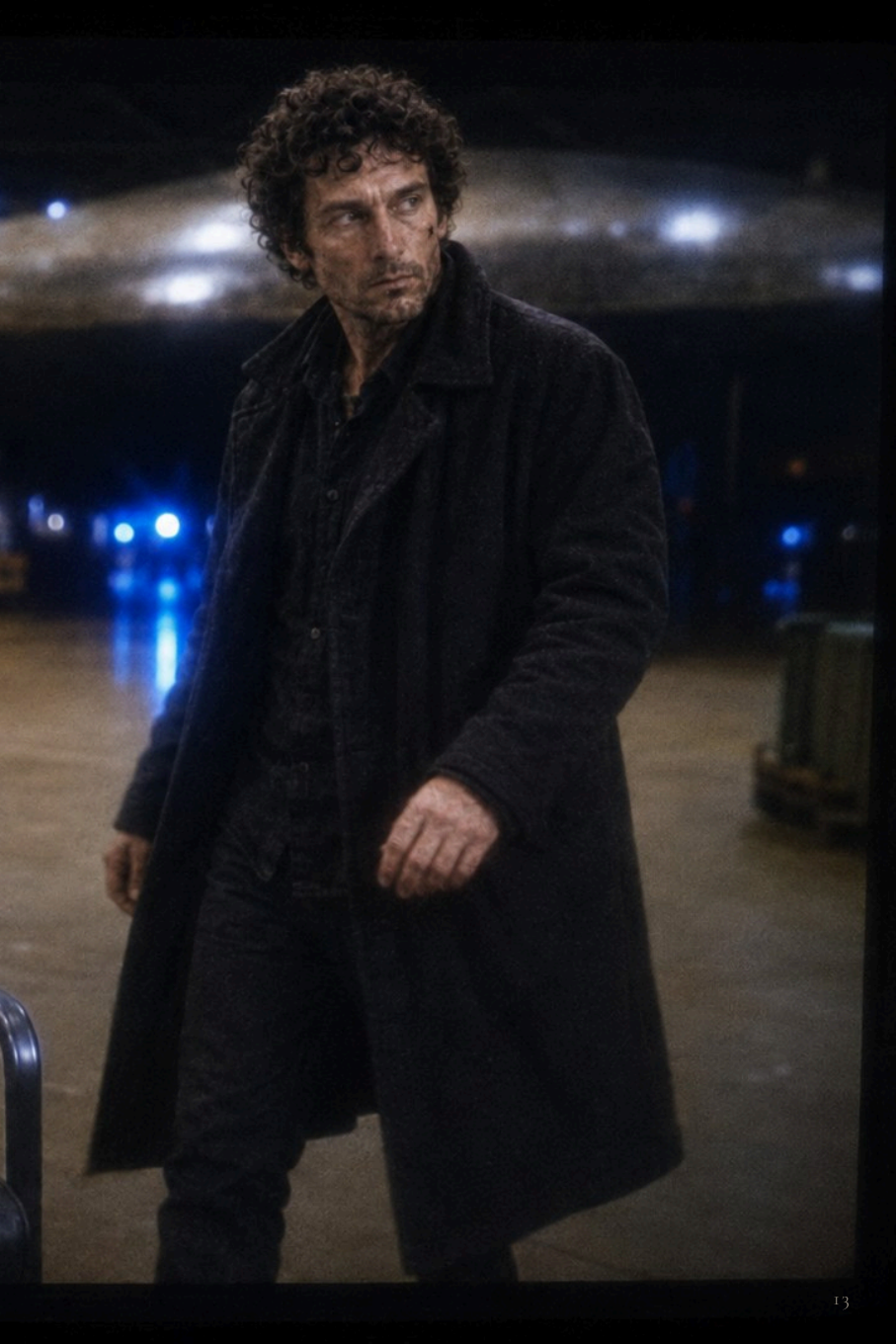
He discovers that normalising is a way of destroying the truth without erasing it. In one public version a sentence disappears: “It did not seem like a visitor. It seemed like staff.”

His supervisor is called Miles Orwell. Eli suspects the supervisor may be supervised too.





Witnesses: what some manage to see before they obey



The signals

He studies abduction files. The common skeleton seems contaminated to him, but in the sober cases he finds something else: witnesses who manage to see an automatic reaction before obeying it.

In crop circles he finds the number five again and again. He coins the word “loosening” and joins two ideas: confinement and Dome.

He calls other intelligences “siblings in existence”, because they too would live inside some form of pressure.



III

Edge Archive

a voice without a face

The channel

At night he posts videos with no face and no name, in a low, dry, tired voice. He talks about noise, about corrections, about the word Dome.

He sees himself as a mole who leaks the truth the way water seeps through a crack. The channel is the most visible form of that crack.

His last video is called “The truth mixed with garbage”.





IV

Sophia

the stairs and the station

The meeting

On the stairs of the Chengdu library they collide: she is going down, he is coming up. Her papers fall and he sees a sheet that says DOME.

The next day they meet again by chance at the train station and talk in a café. He does not give her his number. “Maybe we meet again.” “I do not trust chance that much.”

Later she finds him on Edge Archive. They talk on a private channel, first without names and then as Sophia and Eli.



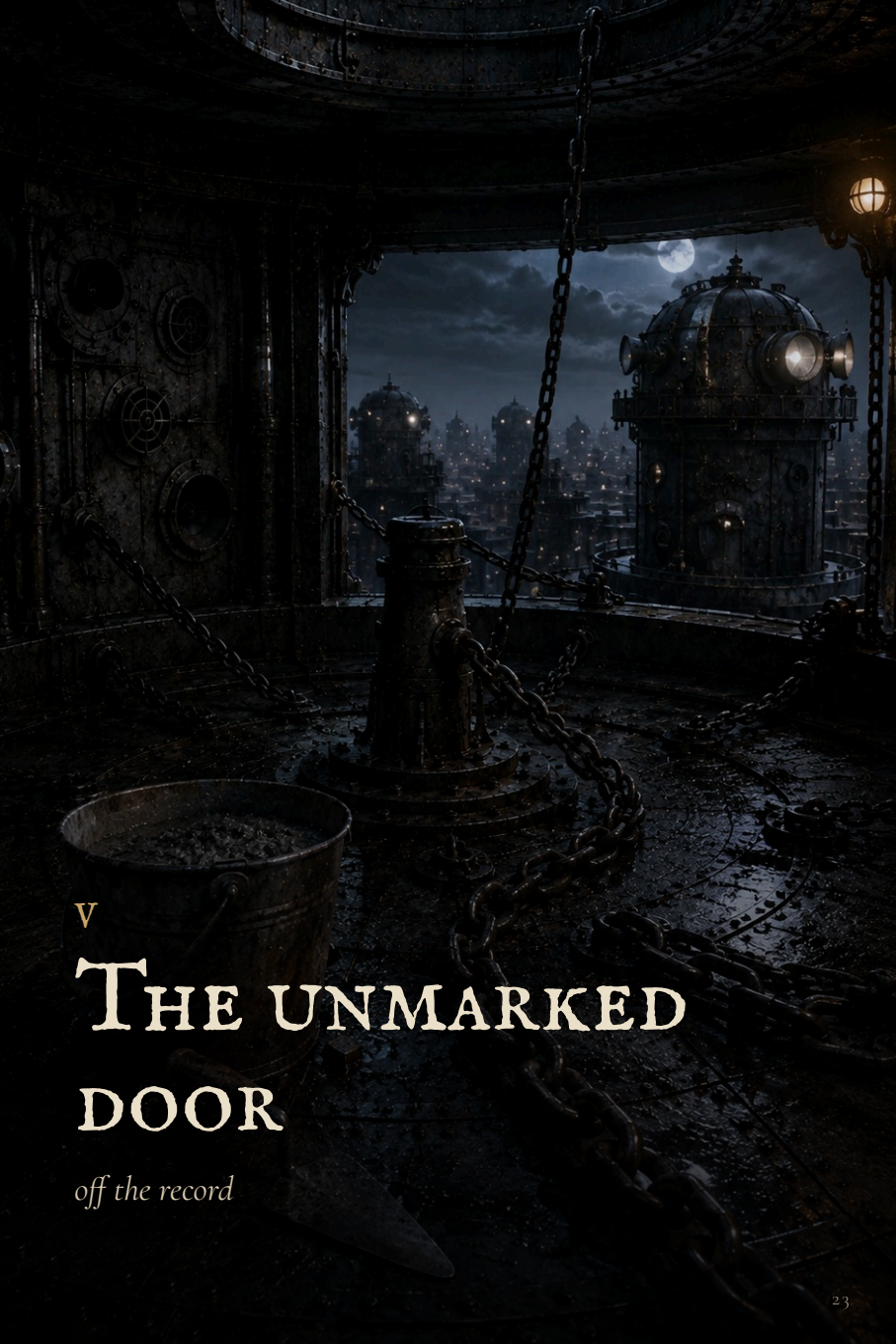
The keyboard ritual

They touch only through text. Eli builds her a language of keys: each letter has a fixed meaning, a curve, an edge, a waiting.

He neither comforts nor tries to persuade. Needing little, he tells her, is not the same as not needing.

On Sundays he disappears.





V

The unmarked door

off the record

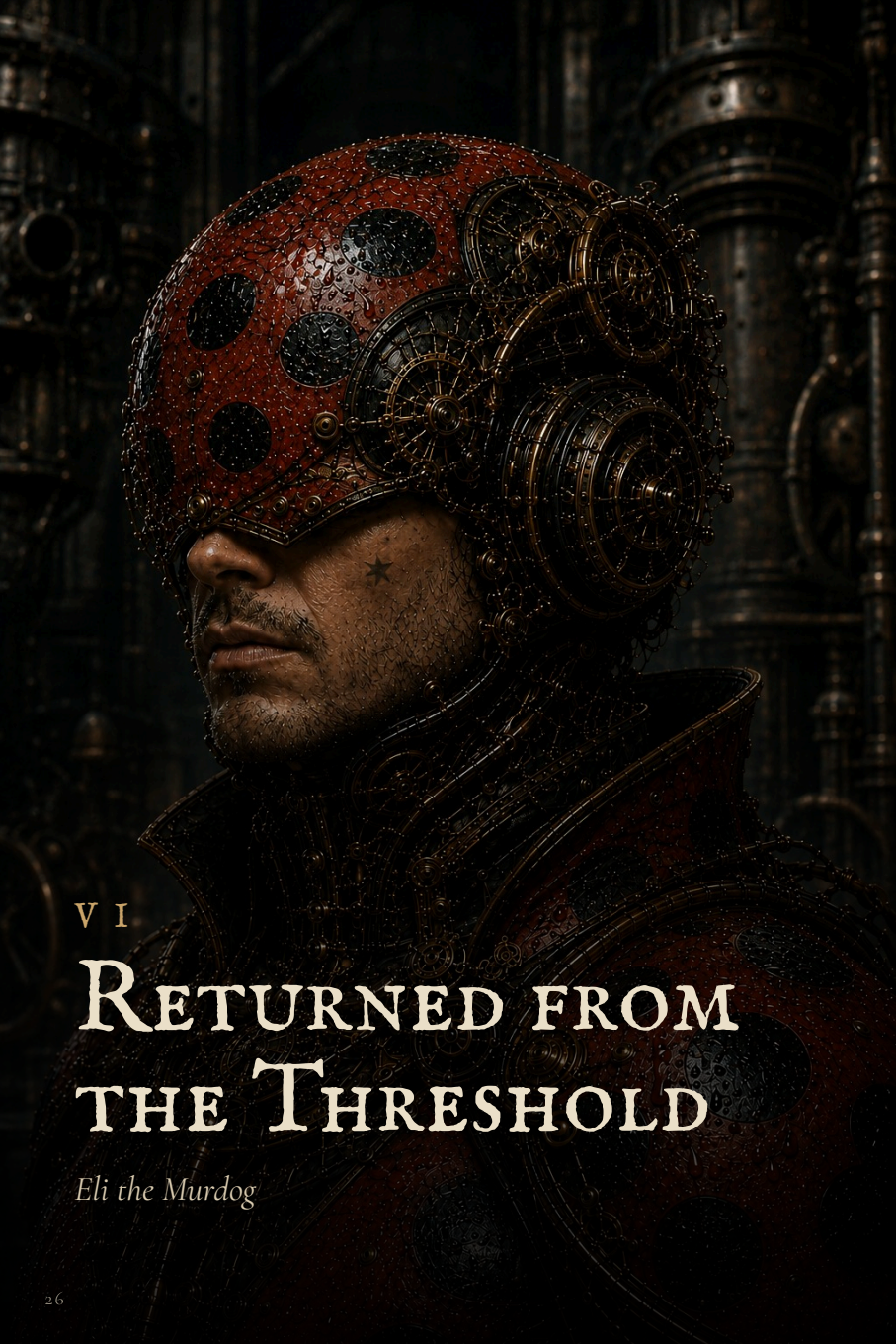
Off the record

The signs pile up: his badge is slow, a new login is required, folders close, the printer stops jamming.

One Monday the screen reads ACCESS UNDER REVIEW. A woman in a grey suit takes him to a lower level. An unmarked door closes with a click.

That night his last video no longer exists and his emails bounce. Sophia waits for weeks and writes messages she never sends. Did he die? No one knows.





VI

Returned from the Threshold

Eli the Murdog

Eli the Murdog

Eli died and passed into the margin. He could have let go completely and did not: he came back. He is a Murdog, a return operator, one of those who cross the Threshold to help a single person.

He entered Sophia's dreams, her bunker, and taught her to let go of her chains one by one: pain, resentment, the questions.

Helping exposes you. She fell in love with him, and that was the new chain, the only one he could not break for her.

MURDOGO

ELI

Retornado del Umbral



OPERADOR DE RETORNO

Cruza el Umbral para ayudar a una persona específica y regresa.

Observa.
Cruza.
Ayuda.
Regresa.

Eli es un retornado del Umbral. No está ligado a una prisión en particular. Su misión es clara: cruzar para ayudar a una persona específica y volver.

Su mayor riesgo no es perderse en el Umbral... es reconectar. Sentir de nuevo. Recordar. Y regresar a la existencia con todo lo que eso implica.

FUNCIONES PRINCIPALES

- Detecta huellas residuales de tránsito.
- Identifica fisuras y trayectorias óptimas.
- Cruza el Umbral con precisión.
- Localiza a la persona objetivo.
- Interviene sin alterar el equilibrio.
- Regresa antes del cruce.

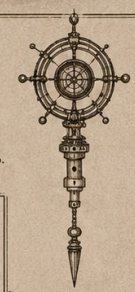
PRINCIPIOS

- No cambia el destino de otros.
- No revela más de lo necesario.
- No se queda del otro lado.
- Regresa. Siempre.

INSTRUMENTO

Localizador de Umbral

Analiza el entorno caótico para revelar huellas, fisuras y trayectorias óptimas. Sincroniza con el campo para proyectar el paso seguro.



ARCHIVO DE UMBRAL — 17

NOMBRE:	ELI MURDOGO
FUNCIÓN:	OPERADOR DE RETORNO
AFILIACIÓN:	RETORNADO INDEPENDIENTE
CLASIFICACIÓN:	EXTRANORMAL
NIVEL DE PELIGRO:	ALTO
ESTADO:	ACTIVO

El Umbral no perdona. Pero tampoco olvida.







The signal

One night, in an archive photo, Sophia sees Eli reflected in a pane of glass: the mark of the four-pointed star.

That night she dreams. Inside her bunker she covers a chain with cement. DOME appears, the star on its face, and wags a finger: no. She understands the chain is Eli and keeps pouring cement.

Sophia, though she had seen a crack, still loved.

«The shaving claims no centre.»

Eli Ward

