

1

3,500,000,000 BCE.

France.

"What's that say?"

Thomas indicated the engraving on Piro's rifle as he swung the weapon out of view.

"Nothing."

Thomas was suspicious.

"It says *something*."

"Keep your eyes on the road."

Thomas swerved the Lamborghini back into the correct lane.

"The Black."

"An unusual scepter."

"You're not making any sense."

"Watch out!"

2

The Lambo came to a smooth stop beside the flat plane of black water, its US DOT serial number plainly visible in large script along the driver's side door, flickering silver in the primordial moonlight. Technically, the duo were undercover at the commencement of life on Earth. For appearances, Thomas was shining.

"Turn that down," said Piro, hopping out of the car and training his weapon on the water.

Thomas killed the sound system and pocketed his keys.

Quiet.

As they waited, an hour elapsed.

"Nothing's happening," observed Thomas.

"Quiet," said Piro, redoubling his focus.

"*Nuance?*" Thomas asked, finally obtaining a clear view of Piro's sidearm. His familiar mocking tone.

"Don't start."

"*This* is what you couldn't tell me in the car?"

"A weapon deserves a name."

"But not an original one, from the looks of things."

"Let it be."

Reaching into his pouch, Thomas produced a handful of crack rocks and began skipping them, one by one, across the surface of the black pool.

"What are you doing?"

"This?"

Thomas spit.

"Practicing."

3

The Black was already out of control. The Lamborghini had been fully absorbed. Thomas sprinted for the highway and tripped over a rock. His crack sack spilled its contents across the pavement.

"Fuck!"

Thomas banged his fist against the road.

"I've signaled for the RAGNAROK."

Piro stripped a length of reflective tape from his roll and laid down the standard homing pattern on the street. It shone in the street lights and he imagined the ship would have no problem locating them with its optical scanners.

"Something's wrong with the lake."

"It ate my car!"

"Single-celled organisms. Grand theft auto. Something is wrong."

Thomas continued to pound his fist on the street, cracking the pavement and finally causing several sections to break loose and slide away, floating past the power lines, into the clouds.

"I'm very, very angry!" shouted Thomas.

And he was.

4

The Black lapped at Thomas' Reeboks, slowly ruining his favorite black jeans.

"My favorite black jeans," he lamented.

Piro took potshots at the substance as it expanded, crawling in every direction towards the streets.

"Gah! It's everywhere!" Thomas reached down and touched his gloved finger to the sticky paste. Tasted it, then recoiled. "What is this stuff? Heroin?"

"Relax. It's responding to ordinance."

"It's not tickling *your* balls!"

"Maybe you shouldn't have wasted so much product on the water. Did you ever consider that the interaction might surprise you?"

Piro checked the indicator in his leaf. The RAG-NAROK was still several minutes out.

5

The RAGNAROK rested in orbit, waiting for her boys to contact her. She calculated that the simple supply run was taking much too long. Stock was low. They had taken more than would be needed to barter for magazines and candy.

What were they up to?

Soon, she decided to run a search:

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3%2C500%2C000%2C000+BCE+piro+tab2
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Working...

THE END