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Substance of Life

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Print by Wendy Cramer

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rift match no known star charts. Possibility exists that rift is not in this dimension."

"Oh well. Anything of interest out there before we close the hole?"

"Sensors picking up strange pattern in background electromagnetic radiation."

"Is EM radiation natural phenomena or Twazil made?"

"No."

"No it is not natural? or no it is not Twazil made? Be more specific in answers."

"Inquiry made as either/or; 'no' satisfies both cases."

"Speculate on origin of EM radiation."

"Signal too weak. Unable to formulate hypothesis at this time."

"Shut down sensors except for EM detectors; boost power to that system."

"Complying."

"Speculate on origin of signal."

"Origin unknown. Signal strength and frequency indicative of primitive communications as used on Twa in pre-colonization period: primarily used in video transmission."

"Computer, boost power to maximum and adjust system to interpret unknown EM frequency."

"Complying."

"Open commercial video channel and display on main monitor."

"Complying."

The monitor buzzed to life and on the screen was the current Twazil President, Jeorz Shrub. The president sat behind his desk in the Twazillane Government Center; behind him were the flags of state. He was a very distinguished-looking Twazil with a warm smile; too bad he was a crook, Tweezor thought.

"My fellow Twazillanians. I come here tonight with three very heavy hearts. The state of Twazil is..."

"Cut sound," commanded Tweezor.

"Complying."

President Shrub's lips continued to move, but no sound came forth. That was alright with Tweezor; as far as he was concerned everything that Shrub said was a lie.

"Computer, feed unknown EM signal through main monitor."

"Complying."

President's Shrub's warm smile was replaced by static. A picture was clearly trying to form, and Tweezor strained