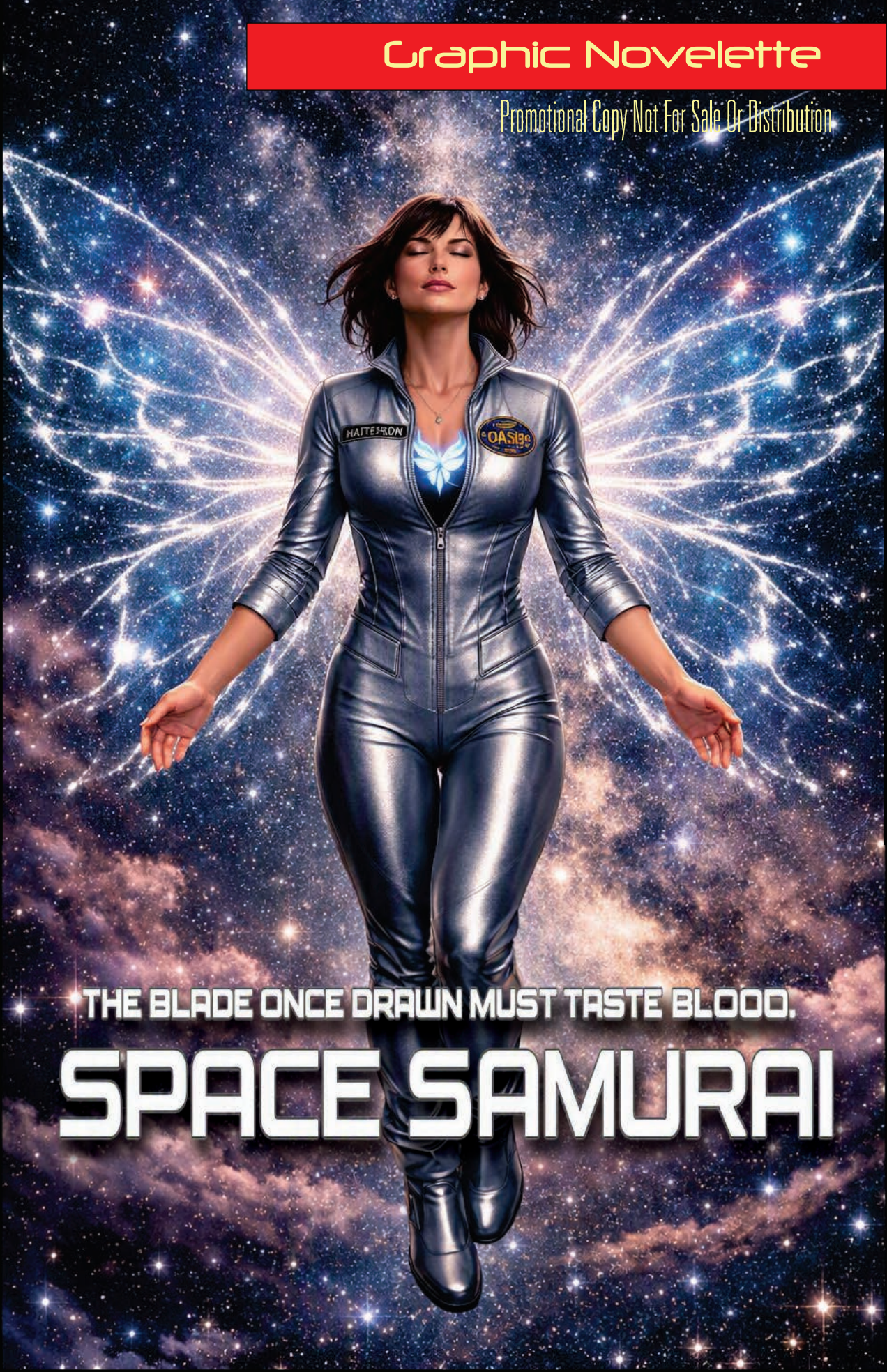
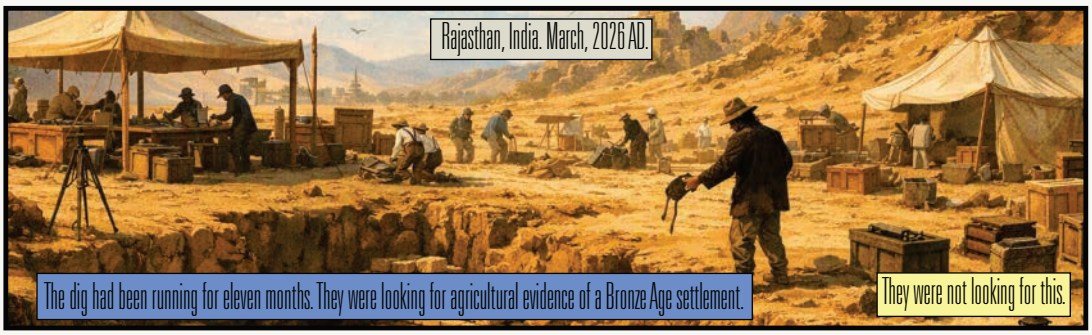
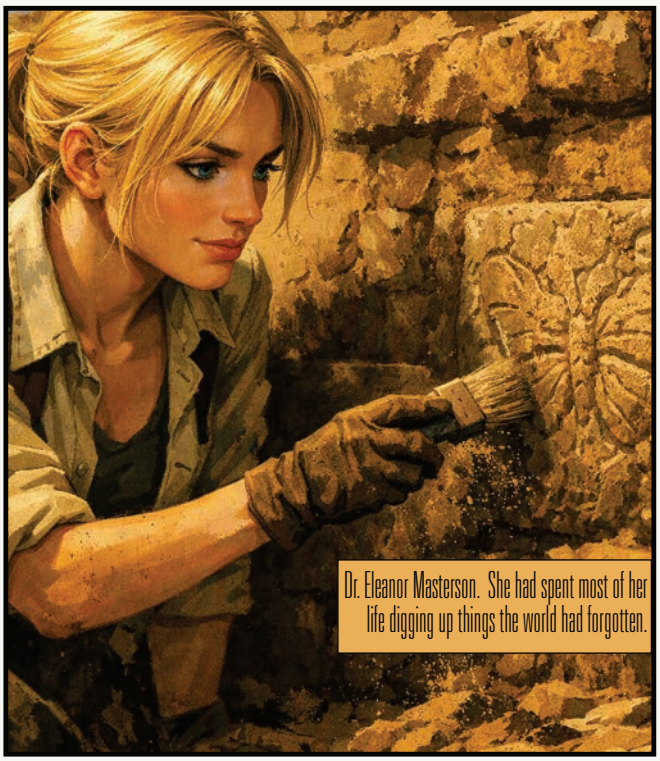
Graphic Novelette

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Rajasthan, India. March, 2026 AD.
The dig had been running for eleven months. They were looking for agricultural evidence of a Bronze Age settlement.
They were not looking for this.


Dr. Eleanor Masterson. She had spent most of her life digging up things the world had forgotten.


She almost missed it.


In twenty-two years, she had never once felt afraid of what the ground was holding.
Until now.


. . . No. That can't be right.


Document. Date. Contain. Don't react.
Dr. Masterson.
Step away from the wall.
KZZZYK


There is a girl. You already know her name.
When the time comes, you will give this to her.

She had watched Star grow up at a careful distance.
Always a field, a classroom, a street between them.



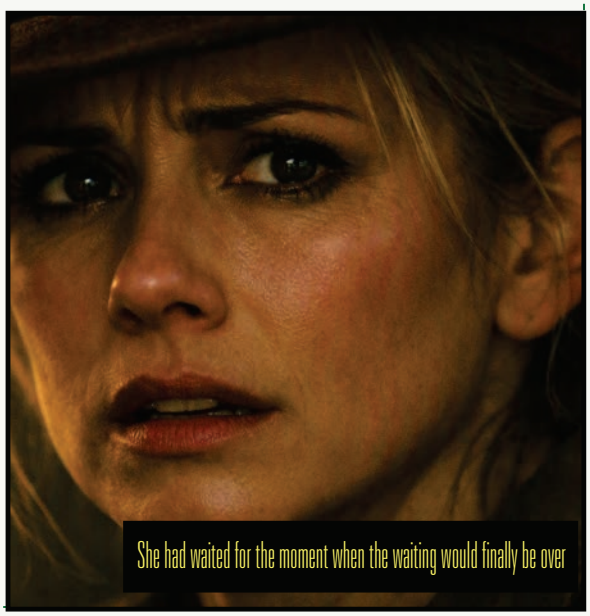
Star had never been graceful.
She had always been joyful instead.



What Ellie remembered most was the laugh. Big. Unguarded.
The sound of something that doesn't know it should be hidden yet.

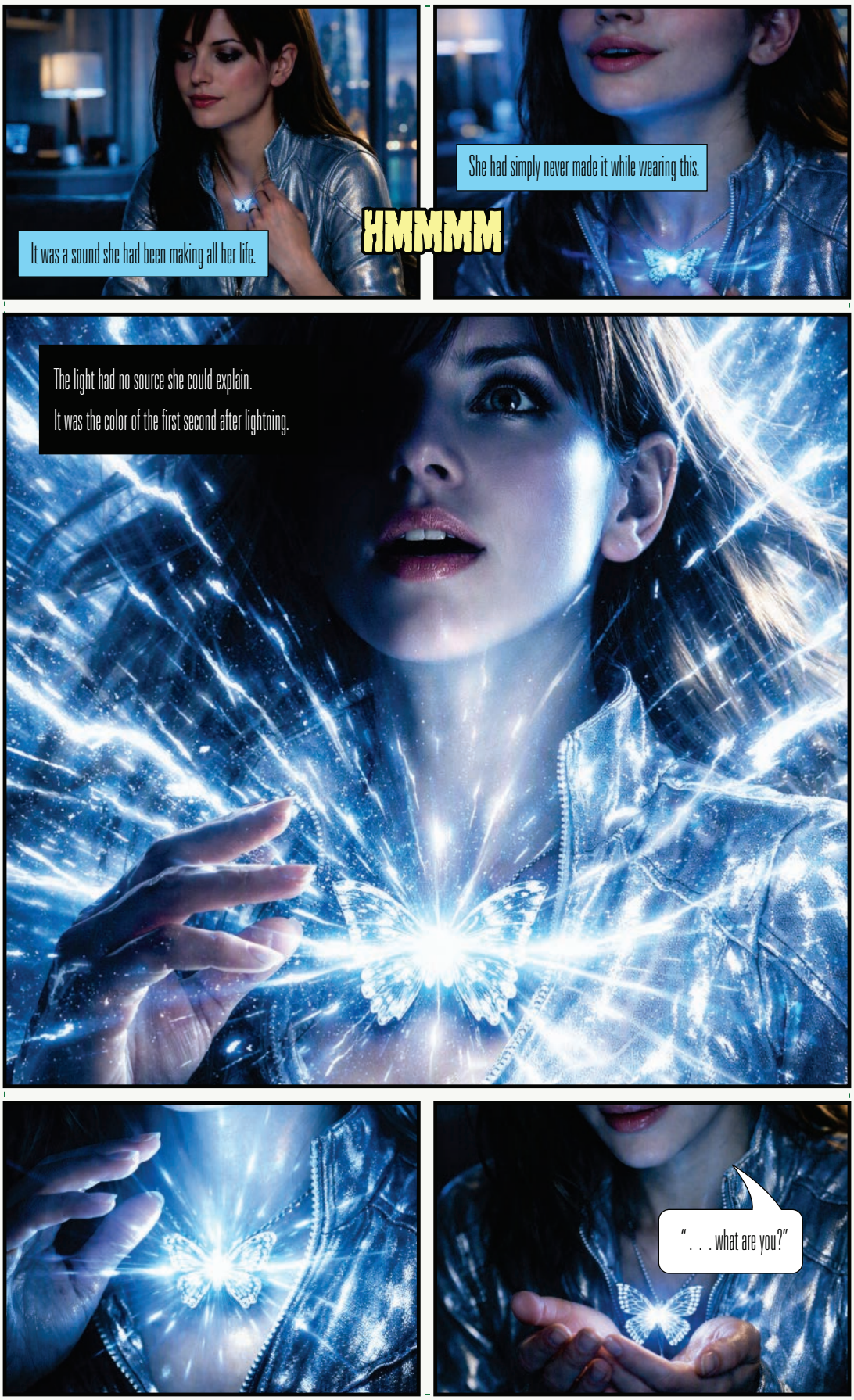


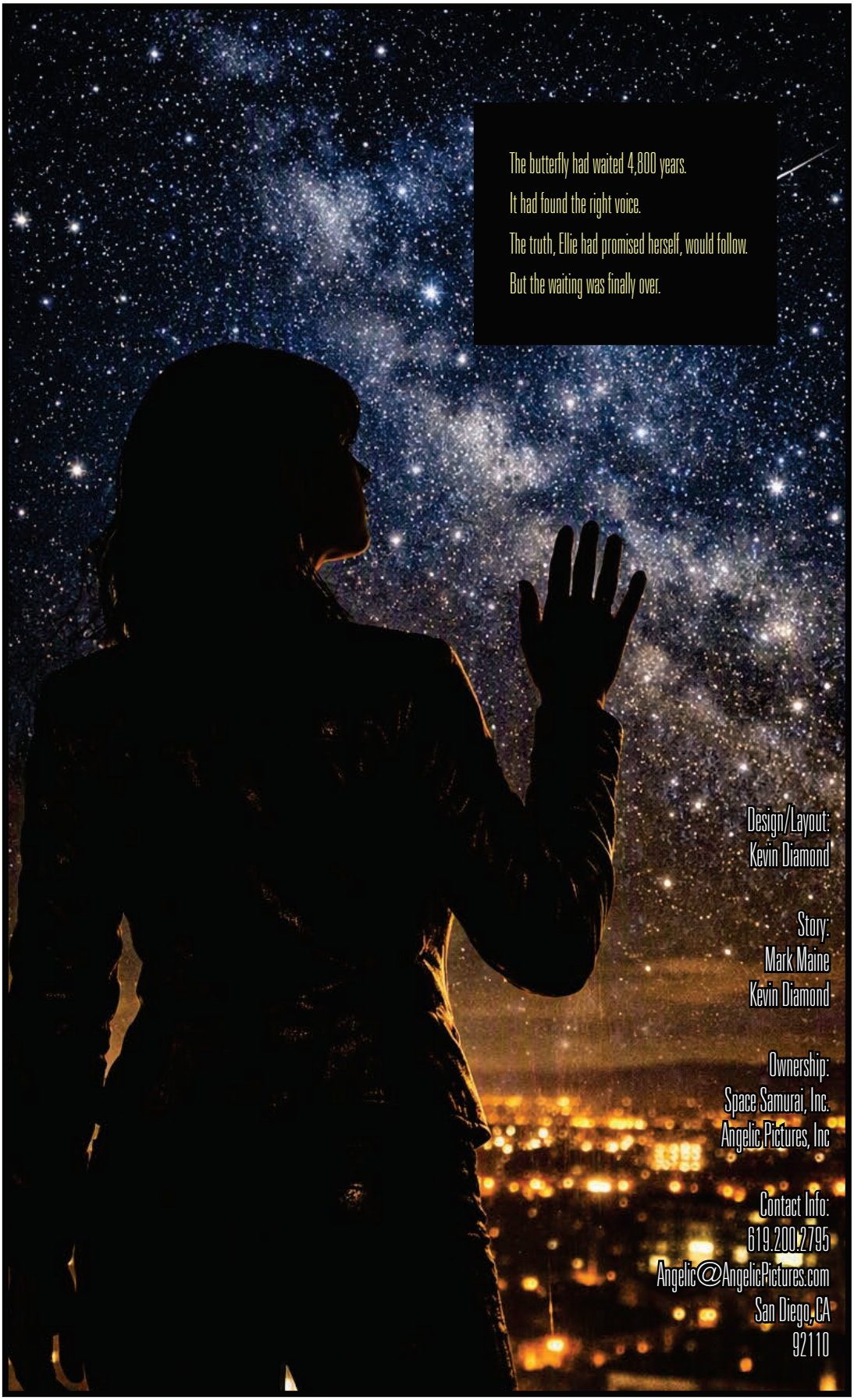
For years she had carried the secret of what Star was.



She had waited for the moment when the waiting would finally be over


2063 San Diego Star Harbor
MASTERSON
OASIS
Ellie guessed what would happen next. She had simply wanted one more ordinary moment before everything changed.
I brought you something.
MASTERSON
OASIS
I found it on a dig in India.
Thought of you immediately.


It was a sound she had been making all her life.
HMMMM
She had simply never made it while wearing this.
The light had no source she could explain.
It was the color of the first second after lightning.
". . . what are you?"



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