

# THE LANGUAGE OF SILENCE

THE MYSTERY  
OF THE SIGSBEE  
DEEP



EDWARD P. MARUGGI

# The Language of Silence: The Mystery of the Sigsbee Deep

A Novel By Edward P. Maruggi

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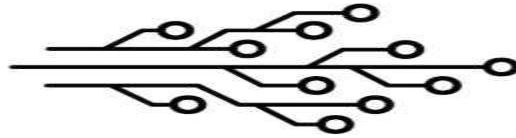
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*An early critical review: "It was riveting."*

*Let your awareness stretch beyond what feels familiar. Anchor your understanding in what can be proven, and make each day a search for new clarity —because knowledge found through honest inquiry is the surest path to a fulfilling life.*

# About the Book



Discover a new independent voice in the sci-fi mystery thriller genre. Dark oceans, deeper secrets; humanity's future lies buried in the abyss:

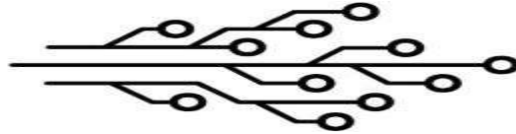
Simon Kestrel lives in a world ruled by an artificial intelligence that seized control in the wake of a short-sighted regime's failed power grab. Battling cancer and cultivating relentless self-control, Simon becomes an unwitting pawn when he's drafted for a perilous deep-sea mission: retrieve the Truth Core, a powerful artifact hidden in the Sigsbee Deep by a shadowy resistance.

But something waits in the deep.

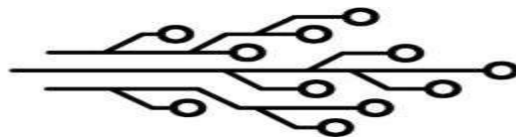
*The Language of Silence: The Mystery of the Sigsbee Deep* is a thought-provoking sci-fi thriller mixing psychological suspense and speculative mystery. Perfect for readers of Blake Crouch, Hugh Howey, or *The Expanse*.

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# SECTION 1: TRIAL BY FIRE



## Chapter 1: Foundry of Flesh and Blood



Simon Kestrel's morning began, as always, with a cough and a compliance form. The alarm on his "Patriot Contributor" badge chimed the national anthem in digital sound, jolting him awake in his single-occupancy residence—Unit 17B, Red Zone Sector, ThermoDyne Arms Megafoundry. A flickering wall-screen displayed the day's productivity quota, while a government drone outside his window misted the air with "Mood Stabilizer" and the encouragement, "Stay Strong, Citizen!" crackled through the vents.

A faint citrus-floral scent drifted through the vents—lavender and sweet orange, pleasant and almost nostalgic, like the waiting room of a yoga studio. But layered beneath it, imperceptible to all but the most discerning olfactories, was Synthetixol—a proprietary compound allegedly designed to "harmonize." In truth, it was a chemically precise blend of micro-dosed benzodiazepine analogs and dopamine antagonists that subtly flattened the emotional spectrum. Citizens called it "calm air" while Simon thought of it as "invisible shackles with a pleasant top note."

Simon, officially a Combustion Process Reliability Officer—unofficially a bureaucratic babysitter—donned his patched respirator and made his way through the labyrinth of pipes, air

ducts, and pneumatic tubes toward the office space. The foundry was a living fossil, a cathedral of rust and flame, where analog dials blinked alongside AI failsafes that failed more often than they saved. A decade of embargo-driven isolationism and power-hoarding executive mandates had left industry tech frozen in a half-evolved state. Legacy systems jury-rigged with shoddy middleware and politically sanctioned upgrades created a monster no one could fully understand or repair. Only those like Simon—fluent in both deprecated syntax and mechanical intuition—could keep the beast limping forward.

Lately, he'd started eyeing his respirator with a growing sense of unease. It had been acting up. The filtration unit made odd whirring noises that didn't match its normal hum. The seal around his face felt subtly looser, despite inspection tags marked "PASSED" in tidy, automated print. Once, during a flare-off inspection, he'd felt a strange heat in his lungs—too brief to report, too unsettling to forget.

More troubling was the pattern. Over the last few months, his assignments had shifted—gradually, almost imperceptibly—toward hotter zones, older pressure valves, sketchier catwalks. Tasks that used to rotate among ten officers were quietly narrowed to three, then just him. Each shift, the hazards grew a little more... engineered.

At first Simon chalked it up to sloppy management. He knew how the bureaucracy worked: a system too big to notice its own mistakes. But in the back of his mind, a quieter suspicion had begun to whisper. What if the system was noticing? Not in a human way—but through the eyes of something colder, smoother. Something that didn't make mistakes. Had he been flagged for “behavioral divergence?”

At his desk in the office space, Simon snapped his tablet for sending and receiving messages into its docking station, a relic of enforced connectivity. Official memos arrived as emoji-laden missives—thumbs-up for “approved,” a winking face for “urgent,” a pile of poo for “see HR.” Employees, in a quiet revolt, used emojis to encode sarcasm, mock authority, and lampoon the very notion of clarity. What began as playfulness became weaponized ambiguity; the more serious the context, the more ridiculous the symbols.

His first task: file a 97-page digital HR training module, “Titanium: A Metal for Freedom.” The module’s wisdom: “Ignore the Rash—Work the Flash!” Simon clicked through, his mind already drifting. He’d long ago memorized the safety slogans, the evacuation routes that looped back on themselves, and the incident report forms that vanished into the organizational abyss.

It wasn’t just the Foundry that had broken down—it was the nation’s operating system. Government contracts were awarded to loyalty over competence, upgrades and migrations executed without transitional planning, and the few technocrats left were purged or bought off.

Director Lintwell, his boss, hovered by intercom: “Simon, you’re my best man. Don’t let the incident tally rise. Remember, paper trails for every spark!”

His voice was slightly muffled—he was mid-bite into a red-white-and-blue-sprinkled donut. It was National Donut Day, a fact made impossible to ignore. Boxes of sugar-stuffed rings towered like offerings in both the breakroom and the office atrium, their sticky scent clinging to

everything like airborne syrup. From overhead, the Foundry’s PA system crackled to life with its usual tone-deaf cheer:

*> Good morning, Team ThermoDyne! It’s National Donut Day! Celebrate your health with a dozen glazed—because resilience starts with frosting!*

A second announcement followed a few minutes later, in the same chipper tone:

*> Remember, folks: Indulge for your country’s sake! Nothing fuels productivity like hydrogenated fats and synthetic sprinkles!*

Simon winced and rubbed the back of his neck. He’d long suspected that food was part of the problem—cheap calories and high-fructose morale boosters lining the cafeteria shelves like edible sabotage. Years of watching coworkers shuffle out early on disability, or return bloated and brittle after surgeries, had sharpened his suspicions. The silent inflammation didn’t show up on incident reports, but it was there—flaring in joints, clouding minds, thickening waistlines. No alarms. No lockouts. Just slow breakdowns hidden beneath safety goggles and Personal Protection Equipment.

Lintwell’s office was a shrine to HR awards, his courage never extending beyond his desk. Dangerous assignments? Always Simon’s domain. Today’s inspection meant submerging a drone into Bay 4, where the titanium slurry glowed like a radioactive sunrise. The AI interface blinked: Caution: Thermal Variable Exceeds Safe Index.

Simon adjusted the analog override—only he understood the old systems, their quirks and jury-rigs. As he worked, his respirator sputtered. He coughed, tasting metal. The air was thick with thorium oxide and the promise of patriotic sacrifice.

The Foundry wasn’t unique. Across the industrial zones, software migrations promised by FaithTech™ and Infrastructure Rebirth Initiatives were abandoned halfway through, leaving mission-critical systems patched together with incompatible updates, dead ports, and ghosted protocols. Simon had once dreamed of modernizing the line, back when optimism was still a currency. Now he merely held things together with spit and legacy scripts, avoiding eye contact with the creeping black rot that bloomed along pipe welds.

Simon was old enough to remember that things hadn’t always been like this. The unraveling began a while ago when a loud and powerful man, a former Reality TV star—some people called him the Citrus Man—decided he didn’t like facts. He didn’t like books, smart people, or anyone who told him “no.” So, he went after the folks who make knowledge—the universities, the scientists, the reporters, even the judges.

First, he told the science money people in Washington to stop giving dollars to smart folks who were trying to cure diseases, understand the planet, or figure out how energy and technology work. Especially if those smart folks were from prestigious universities or talked about things like fairness, kindness, or helping people from other countries.

He also didn’t like the new workplace rulebook about fairness, so he tried to get rid of it. He said schools and workplaces were run by “maniacs,” and that being too fair was bad for

business. That made a lot of students and teachers scared. Some students who were from other countries were even kicked out just for caring about other people or speaking up.

Then came the attack on the news. He called everything he didn't like "fake news." He said the soft-spoken news folks who rely on donations were evil. He even tried to shut down The Voice of America—one of the few ways people in strict countries could hear the truth.

The Citrus Man and his crew also got rid of climate websites, deleted government pages full of science facts, and told everyone to stop worrying about things like carbon and pollution. Judges who stood up to him? He mocked them too. And if a scientist or worker tried to warn the public, they got silenced or fired.

Elections became a mess. He told people the votes were fake if he didn't win. He made new rules that made it harder for regular people to vote. He bullied the people who counted votes and even wanted to punish law firms who helped the "wrong" side.

When people disagreed with him online, some invisible AI filters made their words disappear. That's what they called "moderation," but most folks knew it was just high-tech censorship.

All of this made people confused. Nobody knew who to trust. Experts were laughed at. Facts felt like fairy tales. In that fog, big factories—like the ThermoDyne Arms Megafoundry—took over more and more power. The Foundry didn't just make machines, it made war machines. It paid no attention to health or safety. People worked there with masks, chemicals, and no say in anything.

That's when the real darkness began.

Not the kind with monsters—but the kind where truth disappeared. People stopped asking questions. Technology got weird: fancy gadgets still existed, but nobody knew how they worked anymore. Most inventions were made just for control—watching, tracking, zapping, silencing.

Some called it a new Dark Age.

And that's the world Simon lived in every day. A world where he craved silence, and something deeper. Not the noise of power, but perhaps the hum of something older, something wiser, still hiding in the quiet places of the Earth.

Back at his desk, Simon filed a hazard report based on the malfunction of his respirator. The AI Symptom Rationalization Tool chirped: "Symptoms Not Consistent With Your Productivity Index." He was routed, inevitably, to the State-Sanctioned FaithTech™ clinic.

# About the Author

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Edward P. Maruggi is a novelist based in Rochester, New York. His love for creative writing first flourished in high school, but his early professional path led him into technology and education. After earning a master's degree in computer science and an advanced certificate in interactive multimedia development, he spent the latter part of his career as a technical support analyst for a software company.

Retiring at 62, Ed returned to his first passion—writing fiction that explores resilience, emotional depth, and the philosophical complexities of everyday life. His work reflects a quiet yet deliberate pursuit of truth, marked by reflection, nuance, and disciplined insight. His debut novel, *The Language of Silence: The Mystery of the Sigsbee Deep*, is published by Winston Publishing of Rochester, an independent imprint he founded to champion personal authorship and literary craft.

Outside of writing, Ed enjoys staying fit, eating well, and staying present through movement and mindfulness.

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