

## **Independence: The Ancient Trap**

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# **Chapter 4**

## **GTD Independence**

### **Unknown**

**12 May 2371**

Captain Moloch awoke with a huge headache. He had been hit by a bulk head which had fallen from the ceiling seconds before the ship entered the anomaly. He rose to his feet, clutching his head, at the same time as Tobeck and Lisa. The ship was a wreck. Bulkheads hung from the ceiling along with wires and other things that Moloch didn't recognise. He looked out of the window, across the vastness of ? nothing. Out side, not a single star or planet could be seen. Even the massive subspace anomaly had vanished. All he could see was black.

"Where are we, Tobeck?" The Captain asked in a fearful and confused voice.

"I think we are inside the subspace anomaly. I am not getting an readings of what's around us but it does appear to be nothing." The Captain walked over to the junior science officer and helped him up. He had blood running down his face and it looked like he had a broken nose. He called over to Lisa.

"Lisa! Get this man down to the Medical Bay! He needs help."

"Yes sir. Pass him this way." The Captain and Tobeck helped him over to Lisa who escorted him to the Medical Bay. Several others who were not as badly injured went as well. The Captain stared out in to the nothingness that was where they were and sighed.

"It's going to take years to find a way out of this place. I can see why we haven't heard from the Pinecone for so long!" The Captain wasn't wrong. This was not normal space at all. The Captain looked out into the darkness and was surprised to see light from the windows reflecting of something out side of the ship. "Tobeck! Come and look at this!" The science officer looked outside and was as surprised as the Captain was at what he saw.

"Oh my God! There's something out there but its too dark to see what it is. I need more light." The Captain walked over to the now empty Communications Station and tapped the ActiveComm button.

"This is the Captain. Muhammad, can you please come here."

"Yes Captain, I'm on my way now" A few moments later and the door slid open. Lisa had returned followed by Muhammad. "I understand that you need my help Captain" The captain pointed to the window.

"Know any way to make it light out there?" Muhammad sat down in an empty chair and thought for a moment about the Captains question.

"If we divert power from the engines to the weapons and re-modulate the main beam cannon to produce a beam with lower kinetic power, we could use the main beam cannon like a search light. Will that do?"

"Perfectly! Get right on to it" Muhammad walked towards the Tactical station and re-modulated the main beam Cannon while Tobeck diverted power from the engines to the weapons system. Muhammad fiddled with the controls, trying to get the modulation right. Green power, + 1 Red ? 43.544456. It was all very complicated. If it was even slightly wrong ? the beam would invert

and rip through the Independence, blowing it apart. After a few minutes, he was certain that he had it right.

“That should be it. Firing the Main Beam Canon now.” The Main Beam Canon at the front of the ship fired out in the nothingness of whatever it was they were in. It was that beam that revealed that it was by no means nothing.

The beam illuminated the area around the ship as the Captain and Tobeck watched in amazement as the light revealed hundreds and thousands of dead, lifeless ships.

“Wow!” The three men looked out at the fleet of ships surrounding them. Ships of every size. Shape and form. Cruisers, Destroyers, freighters. If a ship could be built ? there was an example of it in this place. One of the closest ships was evidently a Shivan Cain class Cruiser. From the extent of the damage ? it had probably been here since before the First Great War. The one next to it ? an unknown class of destroyer belonging to an unknown race had sustained massive damage from a collision it had been involved in long ago. It took them a few moments to realise that each an every one of them was dead in space. No movement ? no lights. They were completely dead. They looked at another. It was brown and was covered very similar to the Lucifer only smaller. Perhaps it was a prototype Lucifer. The starboard window was crowded so Muhammad turned around to look out of the port window and nearly fainted.

“Allah help us!” The Captain and Tobeck spun around to see what it was that had scared Muhammad half to death and came just as close to fainting as Muhammad did. In front of them, through the window, was the dead, lifeless body of a huge, rectangular ship. Very long and dark grey in colour. And unmistakable despite the damage it had sustained. The hull had been scorched black by the fires that had raged through the ship over the 44 years it had been in this place. It looked and was a ghost ship through and through. The entire crew stood in silence to honour the poor souls who had served onboard her 44 years ago. Many of them related in some way to the current crew of the Independence. Then, after some 5 minutes of complete silence, the captain, with a tear in the corner of his eye, spoke up.

“Lisa. Enter this in to the log books: We have found the GTD Pinecone.”