

Independence: The Ancient Trap

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Chapter 6

GTD Independence

Unknown

13 May 2371

The Transport ship docked with the Independence a few minutes after leaving the Pinecone. She had sustained minor damage because of the speed at which she left the Pinecone but it was easily repairable. The crew departed and went to the Briefing Room to be debriefed. Almino was the last to leave as he was the Commanding Officer. As he stepped down from the Transport, Captain Moloch was waiting for him.

“What happened over there Almino” His voice was very calm considering what had just happened. He seemed to know that Almino was deeply disturbed just by looking at him and that was why he tried not to sound too forceful.

“It was terrible sir. The crew has been mutilated.” His voice was that of a sad man.

“All of them!” The Captain was shocked.

“I don’t know. We didn’t stay to find out.”

“Any idea what did it?”

“Shivans sir. Defiantly Shivans” The Captain shocked turned to one of horror.

“Shivans! Did you see them? How many? Where are they?” The Captain didn’t care how forceful his voice sounded. He needed to know as much as possible as quickly as possible. If Almino was correct, they were in more trouble than they thought.

“I don’t know much but there was enough evidence to know it was them.” Almino took a deep breath in to calm himself. Even though he did not show it, inside, he was screaming. “Sir, I suggest we go to battle stations immediately and organise fighter patrols of the area. Not to act would be highly dangerous.” Now it was Almino’s turn to be forceful.

“Yes, I agree. Once I have finished talking to you, I would like you to organise fighter patrols. Two wings at a time and keep another on emergency standby.”

“Yes sir” He turned to begin organising the patrols but was quickly stopped by the Captain.

“I said AFTER I have finished talking to you!”

“Sorry Captain” Almino returned to the Captain but was annoyed at not being able to begin right away”

“Now. What else did you find out?” Almino took a deep breath in before he started to talk.

“Well sir, we didn’t find much out at all. We didn’t stay that long. We did however recover a disk from the Computer and discover a Plasma Conduit in the corridor. Using the data on the disk, we have been able to work out the last 44 years of the Pinecones history.” The two men walked out of the Docking Area in to a long, quiet corridor with very few people. They turned left and began to walk to the Command Deck. “When the ship first entered this place, they were in a similar situation as we are now. They had suffered minor damage but were intact. Within a few hours of being here, they were attacked by an alien race.”

“The Shivans?”

“Yes. Because shields do not operate in this place because of the large subspace energy fluxes, they were able to defend against them for almost 13 years. During that time, they studied this place and discovered that it is an alternated dimension and that the subspace anomaly is the gateway in to it.” The two men entered the elevator and the Captain pushed the Level 7 button. “They also discovered that although this dimension is natural ? the Dubbe Gate in to it is not. Someone else made it. Since neither the Terrans nor Vasudans had the technology to make it, they assumed that it was made by another species. The Shivans. This hypothesis stuck for around 9 years until Peter Sobeck, son of the ships original science officer asked this question: If the Shivans made this anomaly, why would they trap themselves in it? He thought that the anomaly is a trap of some kind, designed to pull ships into this other dimension.” They door opened and the two men stepped in to the Command Deck. Tobeck walked over to them and listened to the remainder of the conversation. “He did not know who built it or what it was designed to trap.”

“Perhaps it was made by the Ancients and was designed to trap the attacking Shivans.” Tobeck commented.

“Maybe. Any way, as the Shivan attacks continued, the crew worked on a way to escape. They built a Beam Cannon ? of which the conduit we saw was a part of - to escape. The cannon took 3 years to build with the crew salvaging equipment from the other ships trapped with them but just before it was activated, the Shivans attacked and destroyed the Device before it could be turned on. From that point on, the crews moral went down and the Shivan attacks did more and more damage until eventually they managed to get inside the ship. The crew tried to fight them off but without success. The last log entry says that the Shivans controlled 97% of the ship and that the remaining crew was in the area around the mess hall having been forced from the Command Deck a week before. The log entry was dated July 4th 2338, two years after the collapse of the GTA.” The Captain sat in his Command Chair.

The Captain called over one of the female ensigns. “Can you get me a drink please?”

“Yes sir. What would you like?”

“Um, I’ll have a black coffee please” The ensign walked over to the door and left the Command Deck. At that time, Muhammad walked over to him from the engineering section.

“Sir, we have detected a 3% Power Loss in the Main Reactor Core.”

“A 3% Power Loss. What do you suggest we do?”

“I think the best thing to do is to run a System Check”

“Very well, Scott, you handle it.” Muhammad nodded and returned to the engineering station. Chief Engineer Scott also nodded and began the repairs.”

“Sorry about that Commander.”

“That’s fine” Almino chuckled.

“Did the disk include information on what the cannon was for?”

“We managed to get some. Apparently, they discovered, by chance, that an energy blast of a certain frequency could create a similar subspace anomaly to the one in Dubbe which would allow them to escape. They managed to create a small anomaly but it collapsed only a few minutes later. To build one big enough for the Pinecone to pass through would require more energy. “

“And that’s why they built the Beam Cannon!”

“Yes” The Ensign returned with his drink. He picked it up and took a sip. “Thank you Ensign” He took another sip and turned back to Almino, “Could we duplicate the effect with our own Beam Cannon?”

transmitted to the Independence so we can re-modulate our Main Beam Cannon accordingly. By the time the Dice gets back, we'll be ready to go."

Almino flipped one of the pages on the pad. "The 25 Foxcubs will be piloting Ulysses' and will be taking out all fighter and bomber opposition while my own elite 27th Mad Cats will be flying the new Hunter Class Heavy Assault Fighter. The 27th Mad Cats will be dealing with any larger threats such as cruisers and corvettes. If we can't handle the Shivans on our own, two additional wings will be on standby. One, of Ulysses Space Superiority Fighters and another of Ursa Bombers in case any really big ships arrive. Any other information will be given to you in mission. We launch in half an hour. Dismissed!"

The pilots got out of their seats and made their way to the exit. Most of them were heading to their cabins to get a few minutes sleep before the mission. Some had decided to head to the simulator to brush up on their piloting skills. Almino put the pad on one of the now empty chairs and followed them out. He walked over to a console built into the wall of the Fighter Bay. He hit the button and waited for the speakers to activate.

"This is GTD Independence Command Deck" Lisa's voice sounded clear and easy to listen to, even over the speakers.

"Ah, Lisa. Let me speak to the Captain please" Almino could just about hear Lisa calling out to John Moloch who was probably on the other side of the bridge.

"This is the Captain. How are things going down there?" He sounded confident and Almino didn't want to break that confidence.

"Everything is fine. We will be ready to launch in 30 minutes. No, make that 28 minutes, 17 seconds!"

"Good. Well done commander! Are the ships read?" The captain stopped mid-sentence. For a second he didn't know why. Then he saw it. Or rather? he felt it. The ship shook violently as a Shivan Bomb ripped through the ship's hull and exploded somewhere above the Fighter Bay. The shock sent Almino flying across the room, slamming him into a bulkhead. A conduit exploded and sent boiling hot gas steaming through the Fighter Bay, scolding several crew members before the breach was sealed by Operations. Almino got up and looked out of the window just in time to see a Shivan fighter shoot past it. He ran over to the console, holding his bleeding head and slammed it. Hard.

"John! What the HELL was that!?" He pulled a cloth from his pocket and held it on his head."

"Commander" The Captain's voice was serious and from the sound of it, he had been hurt too. "I think we're going to have to launch ahead of schedule! Three fighter and two bomber wings incoming. We also have a Destroyer and 3 cruisers on the way too! Launch all fighters. We're going to need them!"