

Captain Photon

Captain Photon knew the odds of success were against him, but he also knew that he had no other options.

"the power grid to the defence shield has been knocked out" - By decrypting the enemy signals, he knew his home planet was lost - "decontamination of the planet commencing in eight - seven - six" Staying would mean certain death. Entering the wormhole would give him a chance to save himself and return with greater force, but propelled light years away, it would be at least a decade to return home and how much would be left by then?

As Captain Photon fell through the wormhole he knew he would need to bring some substantial backup with him through the wormhole to recapture the planet from the invading army. This exact cause of events had happened before; Many times before at Victor 7, Rigel 22 and Forens 277. The aggressors strategy was the same each time. Exit light speed within the planets atmosphere and head strait for the planarity defence shield. The shield would then be destroyed right before the main fleet exited light speed and began to invade the planet using small craft that were able to bypass the electromagnetic accelerator cannons in orbit.

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Once out of the wormhole Captain Photon knew he needed to contact someone about the cause of events and began to make his way down to the planet that was floating below him. The planet was a orb of blue and green floating in the deep blackness of space. Suddenly the ships radio crackled to life. "Capitan what news do you bring from Espia ?" "Invaded Sophie like the rest of them; Looks like the same strategy too." "Well that's not the news we were looking for" said Sophie over the radio her voice sounding slightly robotic as the ship began to glow from the plasma outside. "Proceed to landing pad 7 when you get here." Then the radio cut out and all that was left was the growing roar of the plasma outside.

Once clear of the plasma Captain Photon guided his ship down to the landing pad Sophie had instructed. The landing pad was in the middle of a dense forest but he could still the spaceport in the distance. He then powered down the ship before walking over to the airlock and pulled the leaver on the wall next to him. The airlock cycled with a loud hiss of air being thrown into the room before the door sprung open to reveal Sophie

standing outside waiting for him waiting in the rain under the dark grey sky.

“Sophie it's good to see you again.” “Likewise Fred I was worried that you may not of made it to the wormhole.” “Fortunately the wormhole was not the target of the initial wave of there invasion; But I have no doubt that it will fall in the coming hours.” “Well you can tell your commander what's happening but then your mine for the evening.” “I will meet you outside the bar in 30 minutes ok?” “You know it” said Sophie before she walked back down the stairs next to the launch pad and out of sight. As Fred walked through the rain towards the staircase his mind was overflowing with thoughts on how he would break the news. Another planet lost was not a good look for human settlements this century. Fred then reached the metal staircase and walked down it being careful not to slip on the wet metal. Once at the bottom of the stairs he entered the building and took the monorail to mission command.

The monorail took no more than 5 minutes and as Fred stepped out he spotted the person he wanted to see waiting on the station platform waiting quietly for him. “Capitan Photon it's good to see you I trust you have the report. “I do indeed lets head to the briefing room.” After a short walk they entered the briefing room. It had a large holographic planing table in the middle of the room and was surrounded by three levels of bench style seating moulded into the rooms walls. The room was full of 100 of the best and brightest minds that mission command had. They were humanity's finest but were they going to believe Fred when he said he wanted to act sooner rather than later.

“Ladies and gentleman you are probably aware that we have lost contact with Espia.” There was a wave of murmuring around the room. “It looks like the battle strategy that they are using has not changed and that the orbital cannon network was not effective against them.” “That's impossible yelled one of the members of mission command.” “It would seem that they can exit light speed inside the atmosphere” said Fred as he looked upwards into the auditorium. “I would recommend that we regroup for a counter attack before this planet too becomes a hive.” The room was filled with booing and Fred took this as an opportunity to leave the room.

Once back on the monorail he tried to clear his head of the anger of mission commands reluctance to do anything about the planets that were under attack. Something that was only getting worse as the years went on.

Later Fred and Sophie were waiting to be served at a restaurant and Sophie was asking questions. "So Fred did they at least listen to you?" "Nope they never do it's so annoying." "So would you like to work for me then?" "What do you mean work for you Sophie?" "I work for lets say an interested party who sees these invasions as a real threat." "So you want me on your crew?" "No I need a leader; You would be leading the team and the pay is good." "So your taking the fight to the invaders? That's a bold move." "We have the funding; So if your interested meet us at docking bay two at 10 am sharp." The rest of the restaurant meal was uneventful and Fred ended up going back to the hotel that Sophie was staying at. A run down affair with panels coming of the walls in all directions.

That morning Fred was in the dining room when Sophie walked in and sat down next to him. "Morning Fred I hope you had a nice sleep. As we have a lot to do today." "That is if I join your cause." "Obviously but it's a worthy cause I think you will come around." "It may pay better than flying around in a scout ship." "That's the spirit" said Sophie as she spread some jam on the bread on the table in front of her. Fred then watched her as she ate the bread. Fred himself was enjoying a nice breakfast of beans and sausages. After a while Sophie got up and turned around towards Fred. "I am taking the monorail if you want to come with me."

The monorail trip was a short hop to the docking bay. It was a private affair but Sophie just showed some form of id and that was that. Ahead of them was a ship that shined red across it's metallic surface. It was sleek and very expensive looking. It was not something that Fred recognised. "As you can see we had it custom made for this mission" Said Sophie as she and Fred walked towards the ships airlock. The airlock cycled as the approached it and the stepped inside.

Inside there were holographic panels everywhere and the surfaces danced with ripples of light and reflections. There were people running around and it was all very impressive looking. "So what's the catch?" Asked Fred looking towards Sophie. "This is a lot to take in." "The catch" said Sophie as she looked towards Fred with her blue eyes and long brown hair. "Is that you have to stop the next invasion from consuming another planet. It will be hard but we have the finances to back you up."

“Well let's get this show on the road” said Fred as he and Sophie walked into the bridge and sat down in different chairs. “Nice leather on this captains chair if I do say so myself.” “Well we had the money now let's do this mission the first lead I have is a small backwater planet a few star systems over” said Sophie as she settled into the chair for the second in command. “Pilot take us out.”

With that they un-docked and glided out of the hanger bay and up into the atmosphere. Once the ship was past the atmosphere and in space proper the pilot took them to beyond the speed of light.

Fred was So distant from home, there was nothing he could do but to better himself. The journey would be hard.

When he felt angry and afraid, he wrote a list of the things he wanted to do. Then, once he'd calmed down, he would make sure never to do those things, because he did not want to be driven by fear.

The time was a blessing in disguise. To arrive straight away would lead to his death. The ten-year journey would force him to grow. To gain the strength and to execute in one single blow a carefully devised plan, to use the time to polish up his skills and gather the resources - physically and mentally.

“This first person may not want to see us” said Sophie as she turned to look towards Fred. “My sister is not exactly thrilled when I need her hacking skills.” “So why do we need her then do you not have a full short list of who we are recruiting for this mission.” “Nope if only it were that simple” said Sophie as she followed there progress on a navigational chart that was floating in the air in front of her.

After a few hours they dropped out of faster than light speeds and could see a small backwater planet that was quickly approaching. The pilot guided there ship down to the surface where it landed with a thump.

“Ok let's go meet her” said Sophie as she and Fred left the bridge and made there way to the airlock. “I think it's best if you speak to her Fred as you have not got any previous connections with her.” “Right you are” said Fred as the airlock cycled. “Hopefully she won't be too hard to find.”

It turns out Sophie's sister was very hard to find and it took over a week to track her down to an old abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of the capital city. "Oh Raven you are so hard to find when you don't want to be found" said Sophie as their ship approached the warehouse low to the ground so as to avoid any spotters. "Fred fair warning we may need to shoot our way in if my sister has made more enemies or if one of the existing groups of mercs found her." With that the airlock cycled and Sophie and Fred jumped out of the ship only to have it fly away and out of sight. "Raven this is Fred" Fred over his suit's radio. "Where are you?" "I don't know how you found me but I could use your help" said Raven over the radio. "I am pinned down by a couple of snipers on the rooftop of the nearby bar; If you help me I would be happy to help you." "That works for us" said Fred back over his suits radio. "Come on Sophie let's go."

They ran across the open grass being careful to stay under the line of sight of nearby walls before ducking through a small pipe and arriving behind the bar. Fred and Sophie then climbed up the ladder to the roof and took up behind the snipers before taking them out with silenced pistols. "Ok Raven the snipers are down" said Fred over his suits radio where are you?" "Stay put" said Raven her voice crackling over the suit radio. "I will come to you."

After a few minutes Raven appeared on the rooftop next to Sophie and Fred via the ladder. "Sophie we meet again" said Raven in an annoyed tone. "What do you want from me now?" "We need your help to stop more planets falling to alien invasion" Said Fred looking towards Raven. "Sophie says you have the skills we need. So I want you to join us on the team." "I think I can probably work that into my schedule" said Raven as the roar of their ships engines appeared overhead. "When do we begin?" "Now ideally" said Sophie looking over to first the airlock door that was opening next to her before she looked back to Raven. "That's unless you have other plans." "No I'm good" Said Raven as she followed Fred and Sophie into the ship commenting on the interior as she went.

Fred was on the way to recapturing Espia he could feel it. That said the journey to recruit his crew was only just beginning. It would no doubt be many years before they would be ready to go on the attack and reclaim the lost world.

After many years Sophie and Fred had acquired the dream team for the upcoming mission and they were now travelling faster than light towards Espia to retake the planet.

“I grew up on Espia” said Fred as he looked over towards Sophie. “Did I ever tell you that?” “Maybe a long time ago” said Sophie as she looked out the window and into the blackness of faster than light travel. “This mission is taking longer than I imagined.” “Yeah I almost don't care if we win or lose” Said Fred looking first towards Sophie before looking back out towards space. “After all the amount of effort we have put in is an achievement in itself.” “I will drink to that” said Sophie as she looked towards the holographic panel next to her that was showing their current course. “Looks like we're almost there Fred so we better get everyone ready.”

With that Sophie and Fred left the bridge of the ship and walked over to the hanger bay where their squad was waiting. “In a moment we will enter orbit of Espia” said Fred as he addressed the squad ahead of him. “Make no mistake this is the mission we have trained for. But that doesn't mean it's going to be easy. The invaders will give us everything they have got to stop us. So give it your best shot. Now it's all yours Sophie” “Thanks for the speech Fred” said Sophie as she brought up a holographic representation of the planet Espia and began the second half of the mission briefing. “The invading party has set up orbital defences around the planet mostly smaller strikecraft. The good news is that we are pretty fast so we should be able to slip by reasonably unseen. Then once on the ground we are going to split up into multiple teams and plant the fusion bombs deep inside key points of the hive. The resulting explosion should clear out the invaders and leave the planet fairly intact.”

“The pilot has just reported that we are on our final approach.” Said Sophie as she looked first towards Fred then the small red light on the holographic panel next to her that would let everyone know when they were near Espia so they could be ready in the dropship.

The little light blinked, indicating that Fred was within four parsecs of home. Whether he lost or won no longer mattered to him...
...What mattered to him was that he had grown. There was nothing more he could do to influence the outcome of the fight. But his inner battle had been won already...