

CHAPTER 40

After being led back to the surface of the ocean, Dave and his friends climbed aboard the shuttle and headed back to shore. As the vessel approached the coastline, a voice came over the loud speaker, saying “Admiral, a fleet of twenty battle cruisers has appeared in this system. They appear to be on course to attack Gallicea. What are your orders?”

“Set an intercept course, Ka-a-Fa!” De-o-Nu barked. “Also call for reinforcements and warn the planet to prepare for attack. The general and I will be there soon.”

“Aye-aye, Admiral,” Ka-a-Fa replied as he cut the connection.

“Brother, we should leave Dave, Odo and Lini here on the planet,” Fa-a-Di said. “It think the ship may be overwhelmed by the enemy.” He turned to Dave and asked, “Do you think you can fly this shuttle?”

“Of course, you two should use Jake and Mitch to get to the ship quicker,” Dave replied. “And keep me informed. I’ll contact Admiral Adamsen when we land to get help.” Dave rushed over to the helm while the two Galliceans pulled off their pressure suits. When they were ready, the two maklans landed on them and the group flashed off the ship. Dave turned on the auto-pilot which was programmed to return to the landing site.

“Dave, you should land as quickly as possible,” Odo said. “If the attackers come here, this small craft will be an easy target. The Hive should protect us if we are on the ground.”

“That’s my plan, Odo,” he replied. “There had to be a Hive involved in this attack. Twenty star cruisers don’t just appear out of thin air. Do you think it was Atar Pa?”

“Only God knows, Dave,” the elder answered.

Fa-a-Di assumed command of the Kong-Fa which was rapidly approaching the flank of the enemy fleet. Four more ships would arrive in the next ten minutes and Kong-Fa had to slow down attackers until they arrived. “Brother, I’ve never seen that configuration of a warship before,” he said to De-o-Nu. “Do you recognize them?”

“No sir,” he replied. “I don’t recognize that insignia either. They must be from some unknown civilization.”

“Shit!” Fa-a-Di shouted. “I didn’t see the insignia at first. I saw that same sign on the shuttle on Lagamar Boley on my second visit.”

“You’re saying those are Brotherhood cruisers?” De-o-Nu asked. “In this galaxy? How did they get here?”

“Had to be a Hive, Brother,” Fa-a-Di replied. “Ka-a-Fa, fire on all ships. It won’t hurt them much but might draw them off the planet.” A rain of plasma bombs shot out from the ship and raced toward the attackers. As they exploded, the enemy ship defenses held. None of the ships returned fire or turned to attack. “They’re after the planet. Another terrorist attack. I’ll personally see those bastards in hell! Give me more power!”

The shuttle landed near the camp site. Most of the Galliceans who had spent the previous night had already left and more shuttles were landing and unloading. The few who remained were showing the new visitors that breathers were no longer

needed. It was looking like another party would occur that day. Dave was very happy to be back on the ground knowing the battle was raging above him. He hoped Odo was correct about the Hive protecting this planet at least. Odo came up behind Dave and clapped him on the back. "I guess we just wait to find out how the battle goes," he said.

"I've already called the fleet leadership. We have ten ships on the way, but without a portal in this system it will take hours to arrive. I asked Zee to look into transporting ships here, but that will take time to arrange as well," Dave replied.

"Before we leave, I need to gather my personal things," Lini said. "I know the Galliceans will win the day. Those filthy Brotherhood agents will crumble under their withering attack."

"How do you know it is the Brotherhood?" Dave asked.

"Who else would attack a defenseless planet?" she replied. "I should only be gone a few minutes."

"Let me walk with you Lini," Dave said. "Consider it your first briefing as a member of my crew. Do you want to come along, Odo?"

"No thanks, Dave," he replied. "I think I'll get to know some of the Galliceans. I promised to help them understand the natural Hive. I'll see you when you get back." Dave and Lini left the shuttle stand and walked back down the hill.

"Brother, High Priest Um-e-Ka and most of the population have left Sa-la-Na," De-o-Nu said. "They are either flying about or looking for Ka-la-a to land on. They are reporting heavy bombardment of the city at this time."

“What about our reinforcements?” Fa-a-Di asked.

“Eight minutes out, General,” Ka-a-Fa said.

“How is the city holding up?” he asked. “Is it going to lose power?”

“It’s too early to tell, brother,” De-o-Nu said. “The constant bombardment is taking a toll.”

“General, I have an idea,” Ka-a-Fa interrupted. “When my fleet engaged the Brotherhood over Lagamar Boley, we tried a new tactic to rapidly disable their ships.”

“Just do it!” Fa-a-Di urged. “We’re not even denting their defensive arrays with one ship.”

“Okay, sir. I’m overloading the plasma system. I’m trying to get to two hundred percent of maximum,” Ka-a-Fa said.

“Won’t the ship explode?” Fa-a-Di asked. “Is this a suicide attack?”

“Hardly! Watch this!” Ka-a-Fa shouted. He pressed the contact and a massive blast of plasma shot at the last ship in the line of attackers. Less than a second later, he pressed the contact again, sending a second blast behind the other.

The first blast knocked out the rear defensive array. Before it could recharge, the second blast hit, smashing through the array and striking the engine nacelles, which exploded in a massive fireball. The fireball grew and shot forward until the entire vessel burst into thousands of pieces.

“They’re turning to attack us, brother,” De-o-Nu said. “I don’t know how long our array can hold up to that many ships.”

“I’m up to one hundred and forty percent, general,” Ka-a-Fa said. “I just need a few more seconds to attack again.” Plasma blasts rocked the Kong-Fa, but her array held at eighty percent.

After collecting her things, Dave and Lini crossed the river again. She kissed the ferryman on the cheek and wished him well, wondering if she would ever see this place again. Dave carried most of her baggage and she was talking nonstop. “I can’t believe I’m doing this Dave. Tell me everything about space and the Free Society. Where are we going now? Will I be going for that training right away?”

“Don’t worry, Lini,” he laughed. “There is all the time in the world. I only worry about my friends in space now. Twenty to one odds are pretty long. I don’t even know if I’d want to keep doing this without them.”

She took one of the bags from him and put her arm around his waist. “Dave, you worry too much. We are going on a new adventure. God will protect Fa-a-Di and De-o-Nu. You have to have faith.”

“Hello Dave,” said a voice behind them. They turned to see Fola Untor pointing a blaster at them. “Surprised to see me here?”

Ka-a-Fa fired the second round of double plasma blasts at a lead ship, which exploded in a giant fireball which damaged four other vessels. The remaining enemy ships turned and headed away as quickly as they could. “Thank God they gave up,” Fa-a-Di said. “What’s our defensive level, brother?”

“Ten percent, General,” De-o-Nu laughed. “If they knew that, they’d never have fled.”

“General, I’m getting an odd reading on the terrestrial planet,” Ka-a-Fa said. “It looks like a temporal wave near the encampment.”

“Oh no,” he sighed. “They’re after Dave again. Jake, get over here and take me there right now!”

“I am surprised to see you Fola. You can’t imagine how surprised, actually,” Dave said as the man approached them.

“Tell the girl to move away, Admiral,” Fola smiled. “I don’t mean any harm to her. And both of you need to turn around slowly.”

As they turned, Lini asked, “Who is that man and what does he want from you?”

“It’s a long story and I doubt I have time to tell you,” Dave replied.

“If she doesn’t move, you’ll have plenty of time to tell her, Dave,” Fola laughed. He was only a couple feet behind them now. Dave could feel the tip of the blaster in his back.

“You should move Lini,” Dave said. “This isn’t your battle.”

“Fola Untor? I thought you were dead,” shouted Fa-a-Di who appeared ten feet ahead of them with Jake clinging to his chest. His two blasters were aimed at them. “Drop the weapon before you are killed for the second time!”

Lini saw Fola's free hand moving to touch Dave's shoulder. The arm had a strange electronic device covering it from wrist to elbow. Several lights were flashing red. Just as he touched Dave, she grabbed Dave's other arm. A massive blast of light and energy shot through the area knocking Fa-a-Di off his feet. Several nearby trees caught on fire and the ground shook as though an earthquake had struck. Fa-a-Di rose slowly, feeling as though he had been shot by a blaster. His uniform was singed and Jake lay on the ground, barely breathing. There was no sign of Fola, Dave or Lini. They had disappeared in the giant explosion.

De-o-Nu flashed into the clearing with Mitch clinging to his chest. He rushed over to help Fa-a-Di get to his feet. Mitch took Jake and flashed away for medical aid. "Brother, what happened? Where is Dave? Was it a bomb?"

"I don't know," Fa-a-Di said, shaking his head. "That bastard Fola Untor was here with Dave and Lini. I was about to shoot him when the blast occurred and they were just gone."

Ka-a-Fa's voice crackled over their intercoms. "Please leave that area. There is a massive temporal eddy in your immediate area. Hurry!"

As the two Galliceans ran, Fa-a-Di glanced at his chronometer, which appeared to be running backwards. After a few seconds, it stopped completely, then began to run normally again. Ka-a-Fa's voice crackled over their intercoms. "Please leave that area. There is a massive temporal eddy in your immediate area. Hurry!" Within a few minutes, they had climbed back to the shuttle port.

They sat to rest near the shuttles. “Did you see your chronometer, brother?” Fa-a-Di panted. “Mine was running backwards and then stopped.”

“That’s why we got the same message from Ka-a-Fa twice,” De-o-Nu reasoned. “That was so strange.”

“It’s worse than strange, brother,” Fa-a-Di replied. “Fola has taken Dave and Lini to another time so we cannot find him.”

“But I thought Dave said Fola was dead,” De-o-Nu said. “How could a dead man do this?”

Odo Pak had seen the blast and arrived at the shuttle at the same time as the two Galliceans. “You are thinking too linearly, De-o-Nu,” he began. “Obviously, Fola came to the future before he went to the past where he was killed on Earth 47.” He sat with the others. “The worst part is that Fola could have done this many times. We may experience more of his treachery yet.”