

INT. SHIP'S BRIDGE

Lieutenant Commander Cassandra, Cassie, Hayle (30) is sat in the captain's chair, gripping the sides as her ship is thrown around.

We join during a battle for which our hero's ship is obviously outmatched.

Explosions rock the bridge.

CASSIE

Reroute power from main engines, boost power to the shields.

EXT. SPACE

The other ship is firing phasers at the Federation ship and dodging almost every return blast.

INT. SHIP'S BRIDGE

The bridge is rocked by blasts from the mystery assailant

ENGINEERING CREW MEMBER

I'm trying, Captain, but I can't get the matrix to respond - it's jammed.

CASSIE

Get it done, Lieutenant.

ENGINEERING CREW MEMBER

Aye, Captain. If I can just reroute the...

Around them control panels explode and crew are thrown back, visibly wounded

CASSIE

Dammit.

She rushes over and pushes the engineering crew member out of the way, vigorously jabbing at the control surface.

It stubbornly refuses to cooperate. A red message, "JAMMED", flashes on the screen.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with this thing?!

EXT. SPACE

The mystery assailant fires a volley of phasers at our hero's ship, the shields flicker and then falter.

From the enemy ship an energy build up sound can be heard and then two bright flashes of light as photon torpedoes are fired.

They streak over to Cassie's ship and, with no shields, it's a sure kill. They rip through the hull and the ship starts to explode.

INT. SHIP'S BRIDGE

We watch as Cassie, still standing at the engineering console, is surround in explosions and then a brilliant white light...

Which fades to reveal Cassie still standing in the same position, the recognisable lines of a holodeck in the background.

JESSICA HAYLE (O.S)

That's the third time you've failed the scenario, Cassie.

Cassie turns and we see a woman dressed in a Starfleet uniform, Jessica Hayle (50) - although, curiously, it is an older style uniform with no rank identifiers.

JESSICA

(cont)

Each time at exactly the same moment.

CASSIE

(angry)

I don't understand what this is meant to teach me. If I can't reroute the power then we lose the shields and then the ship.

Jessica smiles, seeing something Cassie obviously doesn't.

JESSICA

What was your training at the Academy, Cas.

CASSIE

You know that. Transwarp theory. What's that got to do with anything?

JESSICA

You just said "If I can't reroute the power". Do you have any training on power distribution systems?

CASSIE

Not exactly...

Suddenly the penny drops. Cassie nods.

CASSIE

I think I understand. Each time I rush to help the engineer. But he's trained in power distribution systems, I'm not.

I should stay in command and trust that my crew can do their jobs.

Jessica smiles widely and puts her hand on Cassie's shoulder

JESSICA

A good captain knows that they can't do everything... be everywhere. There are some things you have to just trust that your crew can do.

CASSIE

Thanks, mom.

They briefly hug.

ADMIRAL JACK POPE (O.S)

(Over communicator badge)

Admiral Pope to Lieutenant Commander Hayle

Cassie taps her communicator

CASSIE

Go ahead, Admiral.

JACK

Report to my office, Cassandra.

CASSIE

Acknowledged.

Cassie turns to her mother.

CASSIE

See you later, mom.

JESSICA

I hope it won't be too long, I get so bored.

They both quickly embrace again and Cassie walks away, towards and past the camera.

We stay looking at Jessica as we hear the sound of doors opening and closing.

CASSIE (O.S)

Computer, end program.

The lights dim on the holodeck as the program shuts down. Jessica waves slightly before she, too, flickers like the hologram she is, and fades away.

EXT. STARFLEET ACADEMY - DAY

Short establishing shot of a very busy, bright and prosperous Starfleet Academy.

INT. ADMIRAL POPE'S OFFICE

POPE

The Salvation is ready for it's maiden voyage, Cassandra.

CASSIE

I'd heard. The last simulation went well?

POPE

No issues found.

(pause)

All within operational parameters.

CASSIE

And that's management speak for...?

POPE

Look, Cassie. This is an experimental drive - the Reese-Montgomery propulsion system has never been tested on a real ship.

All simulations have been successful, the device has been powered and charged without incident...

But - a maiden voyage is never without risk.

CASSIE

I understand that, I just wanted to see where I stood.

POPE

Where *you* stood?

CASSIE

Well, you didn't call me in here to tell me something I already knew.

Everyone can't stop talking about how the brave Captain Montgomery's taking the USS Salvation to the edge of the galaxy and back...

(pause)

You obviously want me to join the crew.

POPE

I don't want you to join it, Cas. I want you to captain the Salvation.

CASSIE

But, Captain Montgomery...

POPE

Captain Montgomery cannot go, Cassie. For all our medical advances there's one thing we can't stop, old age. His mind is sharp, but his body is not up to the rigours of a shakedown cruise.

CASSIE

Why me? I've never captained a real ship before.

POPE

You have.

Cassie tries to speak but the Admiral raises his hand.

POPE (CONT'D)

I know that was only back to Earth after your captain fell ill, but you've still been in command of a star ship.

Montgomery is unable to captain the Salvation and so you're the only choice we have.

You were top in your class on Transwarp drives and the only available command officer we have that's not assigned to a ship.

You will take the Salvation and pilot her outside the solar system.

From there you will engage the Reese-Montgomery drive and take her as far as you can. Then ... turn around and come back.

Pope smiles at an obviously shocked Cassie

POPE (CONT'D)

I know it's a lot to take in, but the maiden voyage is scheduled for tomorrow afternoon, San Francisco time, and we need you there.

CASSIE

One request, sir.

Pope inclines his head

CASSIE (CONT'D)

I have a private holodeck program... A training course of sorts. I would like that to be uploaded to the Salvation's main memory banks.

POPE

Consider it done. Good luck, Captain Hayle.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE

A shuttlecraft floats through space, through the window we see Cassie and a man.

The man, Lt Cdr Christopher Reese (35, English), is piloting.

As the shuttlecraft moves we see the glimpse of a larger, very impressive, ship behind it.

INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

REESE

Impressive, isn't she.

Cassie moves to get a better look out of the shuttlecraft's window.

CASSIE

(in awe)

The word I would use is amazing.

REESE

Bloody big, that's what I'd use. Bigger than any other ship Starfleet has made.

(pause)

Bigger than some space stations.

CASSIE

(distracted by the colossus)

Really?

REESE

Oh, yes. She's an old experimental ship from the Dominion wars that never saw action.

CASSIE

(still distracted, staring at the ship)

You seem to know a lot about it for a pilot.

REESE (CONT'D)

(without responding to the implied question)

The Dominion were pummelling us with energy weapons that ripped through our shields, we realised that the only ships that survived were ones with ablative armour, like the USS Defiant.

CASSIE

(A little more interested)

But you can't retrofit ablative armour to the large ships, like Galaxy and Excelsior classes.

REESE (CONT'D)

No, so work started on this beauty. A large behemoth of a ship - little more than ablative armour itself.

On the inside it was almost totally hollow, but with launch tubes for shuttle-sized fighters, and larger, delta flyer class ships - all to be equipped with ablative armour.

Reese started doing hand motions with both hands, imitating fighters. Obviously excited by his re-telling.

REESE (CONT'D)

They could come screaming out of the Salvation to attack The Dominion, doing as much damage as they could.

Then retreat into the safety of their hangers while the larger ship prepared to warp away.

He claps his hands with finality and "whooshed" a warp noise to end his story.

CASSIE

But we defeated The Dominion anyway.

REESE

Yes, and so the ship was mothballed, almost totally complete but totally useless with the peace of today.

Captain Montgomery found it in some shipyard around Alpha Centauri, towed it back here and installed the drive...

It needs all that space, the drive. It's just a prototype, you see.

We're coming to the docking port now, prepare for departure, Captain.

CASSIE

"Lieutenant Commander", I'm not on my ship yet.

REESE

In that case - prepare for departure, *Lieutenant Commander*.

INT. USS SALVATION'S DOCKING PORT

The shuttlecraft enters and lands. Waiting for the shuttlecraft is, most of, the senior crew.

The shuttlecraft door opens and Cassie steps forward and out.

CASSIE

Thank you, pilot. You're dismissed.

Reese smiles and follows Cassie through the doorway.

Cassie looks confused and is about to say something before she's interrupted by Commander Sa'ar (Klingon, Female)

SA'AR

Welcome Captain. I am Commander Sa'ar of the house Odas, your first officer.

Let me introduce the rest of your senior staff.

First Lieutenant Simaal Ka (Bajoran, Female, 30), Science officer
Lieutenant Commander Jaeger Fox (Male, Human, German, 40), Chief of security
Doctor Niarin Praan, (Female, Trill, 30)

Medical
Ensign Carlos Ramirez (Male, Human,
Hispanic, 25), Navigation

CASSIE
(in "Captain mode")
Greeting, everyone. I can't tell you how
excited I am for this voyage. I'm sure
you will all exceed my expectations.
Where's the Chief Engineer, hidden up some
Jefferies tube?

Sa'ar looks shocked and glances behind Cassie.

Reese steps around Cassie and stands next to Sa'ar, a big smile
on his face.

REESE
Chief Engineer, Lieutenant Commander
Christopher James Reese.

Reese stands to attention with just the slightest hint of
mockery.

REESE (CONT'D)
Reporting for duty, *Captain*.

Cassie looks annoyed at being taken for a fool but after a
moment, sees the joke.

A small, almost imperceptible, smile crosses her face before
her composure is back.

CASSIE
I'll speak to you later, Lieutenant.

Make a fool of me again and I'll flush you
out of the nearest airlock.

Reese is still smiling like that would be the most wonderful
experience of his life.

REESE
Yes, sir.

Cassie turns to Sa'ar.

CASSIE
Show me my bridge please, Commander.
Everyone else - dismissed.

INT. SALVATION'S BRIDGE

The "whoosh" of a turbo-lift door opening reveals Cassie and
Sa'ar.

SA'AR
Captain on board.

The bridge crew turn and stand to attention.

CASSIE

I'm not here to replace Captain Montgomery, I'm here to see that his ship, your ship, fulfils his dreams and ambitions. I hope you can help me in that task. I need every one of you to perform your duties as best as you can and I will see you there and back again. Thank you and carry on.

The crew turns back to work at their stations as Sa'ar leads Cassie to the ready room.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

CASSIE
Sit down, Commander.

Sa'ar does so.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Tell me about my ship... my crew.

SA'AR
It's an old ship, Captain, but solid.
I've never seen such an armoured hulk
before I came here. Even Klingon ships
aren't this well defended.

Sa'ar smiles, her teeth jagged and discoloured, but there was no malice in the smile, just an honest sense of pride at her ship.

Cassie nods.

CASSIE
And my crew?

Sa'ar looked pensive, smile gone.

SA'AR
Nervous but excited for what's to come.
They were shocked to hear the change of
command but understand the need.

CASSIE
That's very perceptive for...

Sa'ar's smile was back.

SA'AR
A Klingon? You might say so. I've lived
among humans since I joined the academy.
With command comes the need to understand
those under you and it's something I've
... challenged myself with improving.

CASSIE
Very commendable. And what about you,
Commander? You've been with this ship for
months. You're a full rank Commander, I'm
only a Lieutenant Commander. How do you
feel about my command?

SA'AR

On this ship you're Captain. I don't know why Starfleet chose you and I don't need to know. They're my superior officers and their judgement is final.

CASSIE

That's all you have to say?

SA'AR

It is.

CASSIE

Okay. Thank you, Commander. Please make ready to leave port, I intend to depart within the hour.

SA'AR

Aye, Captain.

CASSIE

And, Commander, please tell Lieutenant Commander Reese I wish to see him, right away. We have unfinished business, I feel.

Sa'ar laughed

SA'AR

Yes, Captain.

INT. BRIDGE

Cassie is seated in the command chair, feeling the arms of the chair, shifting to get comfortable.

CASSIE

Navigation?

RAMIREZ

Ready, Captain.

CASSIE

Engineering?

REESE

(over comms)
Ready, sir.

CASSIE

Prepare to take us out, Mr ...?

RAMIREZ

Ramirez, Captain. And aye aye.

CASSIE

Carefully, if you please, Mr Ramirez. We don't want to chip her paint, it's such a dashing colour of dark grey.

RAMIREZ

No, ma'am. I'll be careful. But I think

if I nudged the docking station we'd do more damage to it than us.

CASSIE

Indeed. Mr Ramirez... Engage.

EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT

We are treated to the view of the USS Salvation as she moves away from Earth. It dwarfs the tiny space station next to it. After a couple of seconds we hear the unmistakable sound of a warp drive starting its build up. It lasts a beat longer than we are used to, before ... *whoosh*

EXT. DEEP SPACE

The USS Salvation comes out of warp and we get a view of it in all its glory. It's not a sleek ship, but it's beautiful in its own way.

INT. BRIDGE

RAMIREZ

We've arrived at the test co-ordinates, ma'am.

CASSIE

Good.

Captain Hayle to all hands. This is the moment you've worked towards for the past few months. We are about to fire up the Reese-Montgomery drive. We don't know what it will feel like, so I suggest you hold on to something solid. See you on the other side.

Hayle to Reese. This would be a bad time to tell me we can't proceed because you've left something important back on Earth.

INT. ENGINEERING ROOM

REESE

Does clean underwear count, Captain?

CASSIE

(over comms)

No, Chief, it does not count.

REESE

In that case, we're ready.

CASSIE

(over comms)

Then go at your leisure, Commander. We're all waiting.

REESE

Aye, Captain!

Reese taps his badge to close the call and turns to his staff. They're scurrying around checking everything they can think of. Reese decides he needs to check some things himself. He peers at some chips and taps his PADD. Finally satisfied he moves to the main engineering console.

REESE (CONT'D)
Get ready for initiation. We're going in
3... 2... 1... Go!

He taps his console.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - LOOKING AT THE SALVATION

We hear a deep hum. The Salvation starts to vibrate. Then, suddenly, it contracts in on itself and pops out of existence. We are left staring at empty space for a beat.

INT. BRIDGE

Cassie is gripping her command chair tightly as the bridge moves around her. It's not a smooth movement, it seems to speed up and slow down. Time is not moving as it should, it's as if pockets of time are being passed though, because that's exactly what is happening.

CASSIE
(voice speeding up and slowing down)
Commander... what's happening?

REESE
(over comms, voice speeding up and slowing down)
Pockets... of-time... Captain. We-
expected... this.

CASSIE
(voice speeding up and slowing down)
It's not ... very-pleasant!

INT. ENGINEERING

REESE
(voice speeding up and slowing down)
You should see... the-recording-of-the...
first... warp-drive-test. Let me...
adjust-the temporal dampening...

Reese taps the panel in front of him.

REESE (CONT'D)
(normal voice)
That's better.

Behind Reese panels explode.

CASSIE
(over comms)

What was that?

REESE

Hold on, Captain. I'm investigating.

He looks at the panel next to him, tapping it to bring up a diagnostics display. On the screen is a star field. A whirling cloud of bright gas dominates the centre, with the Salvation showing a parabolic trajectory next to it.

REESE (CONT'D)

Oh no...

CASSIE

(over comms)

Commander?

REESE

We just passed by a black-hole, Captain.
A newly formed one, by the look of it.
That's why it wasn't on our star charts.
The tidal forces have caused us to start
to spin.

INT. BRIDGE

Cassie taps her command chairs control systems.

CASSIE

My sensors read no rotation.

INT. ENGINEERING ROOM

REESE

I also read the same, Captain. But the
drive insists it is spinning and I cannot
convince it otherwise.

CASSIE

(over comms)

Can you shut it down?

REESE

Negative. The black-hole has locked the
drive on.

CASSIE

(over comms)

Options?

REESE

Just one - jettison the drive.

(beat)

CASSIE

(over comms)

Do it.

REESE

Aye, Captain!

Reese runs around, tapping console frantically and shouting orders to his crew.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

We see the black-hole in the background - far enough away for us to know it's not a current threat to the ship. In the foreground we see the Salvation. After a beat we hear a popping sound, the sound of the large, rear door opening on the Salvation.

We swing around to watch as the door opens fully, exposing a complex and futuristic looking device.

More pops and the sound of thrusters as it is pushed out of the back of the ship.

It is a round, spherical looking device, white and blue energy crackles over its surface. Occasionally the black-hole in the background pulses red and the device sympathetically pulses red energy, sparking out.

It moves away from the ship, the further it moves the more the red energy starts to overcome the blue and white until it's a ball of red flickering light.... at which point it explodes.

INT. BRIDGE

The bridge rocks with the explosion, moving the crew around. Cassie is gripping hard onto her chair and manages to not be thrown off.

CASSIE
Engineering, report.

INT. ENGINEERING

Smoke and sparking consoles everywhere. Reese has a cut on his forehead.

REESE
We successfully jettisoned the drive.
Only minimal damage to the rear of the ship - her ablative armour shielded us from the worst of the blast.

INT. BRIDGE

CASSIE
Well done, Commander. Ensign, what's our position?

RAMIREZ
I'm trying to get a fix, Captain. Give me a moment.

CASSIE
Take your time, Mr Ramirez. I have a feeling we're going to be here a while.

EXT. SPACE

Staging shot - some time has passed.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

The senior staff as positioned around the table. Reese is stood up in front of the table, in front of a monitor that displays a similar view to what we saw on his console earlier. The black-hole in the background and the path of the Salvation around it.

REESE

This is the path we took around the black-hole. The warped space-time around it pulled us into a hyperbolic path - if the core hadn't been jettisoned in time we would have passed so close there would have been no escape.

CASSIE

You said the drive reported that it was spinning out of control, but the ships sensors detected no rotation. Do you have an explanation yet?

REESE

No. And with the drive destroyed we can't recover the data. The best we can hope for is to take the ship's sensor readings back to Star Fleet for analysis. Hope they find something we missed.

Cassie nods and turns to the crew.

CASSIE

There was always a risk this wouldn't work. Right now we don't know how successful the drive was in moving us through the galaxy and our star charts don't instantly recognise what's around us. Once we know where we are we can...

BRIDGE CREW MEMBER

(over comms)

Captain to the bridge. Ships entering the system.

INT. BRIDGE

The senior crew come through the door from the briefing room and take their stations.

CASSIE

Report.

BRIDGE CREW MEMBER

Sensors have detected two ships entering the system, Captain. One is a Federation ship, it looks like a heavily modified Phoenix class. The other is of unknown

origin.

CASSIE

Show me.

The display screen shows two small blobs streaking across the star field, bright lights flash between them.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Magnify.

The display screen changes and refocuses on a closer up view. We can now see the two ships clearly. The first is an angular ship, all sharp corners and planes. The other is, indeed, a modified Phoenix class Federation ship. It has been modified to try to retrofit some sort armour to the hull, but not too successfully. As the first ship fires it damages the armour, chunks flying off after each volley. As a volley hits a part of the ship without armour the blast rips through and out the other side, leaving clean holes through the ship.

RAMIREZ

Oh my...

SA'AR

The Federation ship is hailing us.

Cassie nods. The view screen is replaced with the inside of the Federation ship which has obviously seen better days. In the centre of the bridge is Captain Hamilton (Male, Human, 50).

CAPTAIN HAMILTON

(through explosions)

This is Captain Hamilton of the USS Cortana. We have a Harpy chasing us. Our armour is failing. Request assistance.

CASSIE

We have no engines, Captain. Bring her close to us and we will see what we can do.

CAPTAIN HAMILTON

Acknowledged.

Hamilton glances off screen and back

CAPTAIN HAMILTON (CONT'D)

ETA 43 minutes and 20 seconds. Hamilton, out.

The view screen closes and we are back to a view of the battling ships.

CASSIE

Thoughts?

SIMAAL KA

I've scanned both ships. The Cortana is definitely a Federation ship but our records show she is commanded by Captain Reynolds. The other... we do not have its imprint on the data core. It appears to

use an energy weapon that's similar to a Romulan disruptor but much more destructive. It's ripping through the Cortana's shields like they weren't there.

JAEGER FOX

Confirmed. The Cortana's weapons are doing some damage to the other ship but it's clearly out-gunned. She'll barely make it here in time.

CASSIE

What are our options?

JAEGER FOX

We're a test vessel. We have no photon or quantum torpedoes. We have phasers but they were damaged in the core explosion, it will take hours to fix them.

SIMAAL KA

I have an idea. But getting it done on time is going to be close.

EXT. SPACE

The Salvation floats in deep space. Crew are in space-suits outside working on the shuttle-craft launch tubes. We see the flares of welding torches as they work.

INT. BRIDGE

CASSIE

Are you sure this will work, Lieutenant?

KA

I've run simulations on the holodeck while the crew has working. If we cannibalised enough of the remaining drive in time then it will work. The mass ratios are right.

CASSIE

Open a channel to the Cortana.

The view screen displays the Cortana's bridge. It looks worse than last time - cabling and ducts hanging from everywhere. Smoke fills the screen.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Captain Hamilton, we have a plan. You need to come around to 210 point 30. Run across our flank on that side. Keep going straight and steady.

HAMILTON

I hope this works, Captain. We're almost done in here. I've lost most of my crew and my phasers are about to give out.

CASSIE

Just stay on that course and we will help

as best as we can.

HAMILTON

Acknowledged, Hamilton out.

RAMIREZ

They're coming into range now, sir.
Heading straight for us.

CASSIE

Lieutenant Ka, are you ready?

KA

Yes, ma'am. Just give the order.

CASSIE

Mr Ramirez, tell me when they're about to
pass our bow.

RAMIREZ

Aye, sir.

(pause)

4... 3... 2... Now, Captain.

CASSIE

Fire!

EXT. SPACE

Cortana and the enemy ship are passing the side of the Salvation where previously we saw the work progressing earlier. As the Cortana passes we hear a build up of energy and then an explosion. Disjointed pieces of metal, equipment and unrecognisable parts fire out of the shuttlecraft launch tubes and race towards the enemy ship.

They impact the ship and, without shields, rip through the hull and continue out the other side. The impact knocks the enemy ship and causes it to go barrelling towards the black-hole. It spirals around and around until...

INT. SALVATION BRIDGE

KA

It worked! The enemy ship is heading
towards the event horizon. It's under
going tidal stresses from the black-hole.

CASSIE

Great work, Lieutenant.

We watch on the view screen as the enemy ship turns end over end until it explodes into pieces, fire streaking away before being pulled back into the black hole.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Hail the Cortana.

Captain Hamilton appears on the view screen.

HAMILTON

Well done, Captain, but I'm afraid that last shot hit our structural integrity field generators. We have less than 1 minute of reserve power before my ship rips itself apart from inside. You need to transport my crew off the ship.

CASSIE

Understood. Get everyone ready for transport.

The view screen closes and Cassie turns to ops.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Get everyone off there and into the cargo bay.