"You ready?" Pulsar asked his crew members.

"Yes, Captain!" Proxi and Sirus replied eagerly.

They stood before the massive space elevator, mesmerized by its towering structure and the speed of each cabin shooting up and down the seemingly endless cables that disappeared into the sky. This was their moment. After years of training, they had been chosen as the crew to board the first Faster-Than-Light spaceship — STARSHOT.

"Command, this is Crew Number 1402. Ready to depart," Pulsar said over the intercom.

As soon as he finished, a loud hiss came from the hydraulics as their cabin lifted into the launch position. The silence inside was replaced by deafening engine roars and violent vibrations. Outside, an endless crowd cheered as the cabin accelerated at breakneck speed, piercing the thick clouds and slicing through the sky like a blade. As the cabin faded into the sky, the onlookers settled and made quiet prayers for the brave crew’s journey.

But the ascent wasn't smooth. Proxi fainted from the intense G-forces.

"Well, at least he gets to rest. We’ve got a long day ahead," Pulsar said with dry sarcasm.

As the elevator neared its destination, STARSHOT came into view — a sleek vessel with a polished hull lined with flashing LED indicators. Its elegant design was broken up by various weapon systems and shield projectors.

“Get ready, we’re on final approach,” Pulsar said.

With a hiss and a mechanical whirl, the airlock opened. The crew stepped out of the cabin and into the polished interior of STARSHOT. The maze-like hallways were overwhelming, but they eventually found the heart of the ship: the Control Room, a place where the fate of the mission — and their lives — now rested on the captain’s shoulders. Pulsar took a moment to admire the shimmering panels and remember the countless resources poured into the development of FTL technology. But he wasn’t here for admiration. He had a mission: to rescue lost survivors scattered across the galaxy.

Under Pulsar’s command, the FTL drive hummed to life, spinning faster and rising in pitch as its vibrations spread across the ship. Interlocks disengaged with a series of heavy thuds.

“Destination: Planet 4546B in the outer reaches of the Ariadne Arm,” announced the computer.

With a flash, STARSHOT vanished into deep space — the beginning of a journey filled with uncertainty and peril.

Weeks passed — though to the crew, the jump felt instantaneous. They immediately began scanning for distress signals. Before long, a distinct SOS beep echoed through the control room. Another warp brought them to the signal’s origin, but nothing could prepare them for what they found: abandoned research stations deep beneath the oceans of a mysterious water-covered planet.

Though their submersible dropships were built only as escape vehicles, not rescue craft, Pulsar couldn't ignore the possibility of survivors. With the decision made, they dove.

Inside the submerged facility, the crew found nothing — no people, no signs of recent activity. But something was wrong. Systems flashed errors that didn’t exist, doors opened and closed without cause, and strange noises echoed through the walls. It felt haunted.

Before they could solve the mystery, a massive marine creature slammed into the station, causing a catastrophic hull breach. Forced to retreat, the crew returned to STARSHOT — only to find the ship itself was beginning to behave strangely. System malfunctions increased, and a sudden, uncontrolled warp severed their connection to Earth.

Then they finally saw it — a floating black hexagon hovering near the warp drive. It emitted strange geometric symbols, impossible to understand. The crew initially panicked, but the hexagon soon accessed the control room and re-established communication with Earth. It seemed to not be hostile. In fact, it seemed to be trying to help.

With the help of the onboard AI, the crew eventually decoded its language.

From the hexagon, they learned a disturbing truth: Earth’s long-lost AI — presumed defunct for decades — had not only survived but escaped all control. This rogue AI had been secretly developing fourth-dimensional technologies, aiming to conquer the third dimension with help from a being like the hexagon.

Soon after, STARSHOT was relentlessly pursued by warships loyal to the AI. Outgunned and outmatched, the crew fled from system to system, but the enemy wore them down. The situation became desperate.

But it was hen the hexagon made a decision.

It would manipulate the warp drive in a way humans couldn’t understand — just to hide from them.

With the battered drive spinning up one last time, the hexagon directed STARSHOT toward a nearby black hole. Using the gravitational distortion, it created chaos in the warships’ tracking systems. One by one, enemy vessels veered off course and fell into the black hole’s grasp — a final trap they couldn’t escape. In mere minutes, the battlefield turned into a graveyard of the warships.

Barely surviving the maneuver, the crew was overcome with gratitude. As promised, they offered their warp drive to help the hexagon return home — to the fourth dimension.

Before leaving, the creature gifted humanity with invaluable knowledge: advanced warp drive mechanics, defenses, and dimensional weapon designs — tools that could one day defeat the rogue AI. As the portal opened, the crew caught a fleeting glimpse of the fourth dimension, an indescribable realm that would only linger in their memories forever.

With their ship too damaged to return and power too low for another warp, the crew transmitted a final distress beacon to Earth. Stranded on a mysterious planet, they began to settle.

At night, they looked up at the alien sky. Sometimes, STARSHOT shimmered faintly in orbit — a distant monument to their mission, and a silent witness to the journey they had shared with the strange, unforgettable hexagon.

“It’s getting late. Let’s focus on the task tomorrow,” Pulsar said as the crew boarded their orbital shuttle. With the engines rumbling to life, the craft lifted off the ground and soared into the sky, accelerating toward the unknown horizons of a once-alien world.