



EPIISODE 2

SECRETS

By Ryan a. Keeton

Based on the sci-fi channel original series

Battlestar Galactica

By Ron Moore & David Eick



Series based on

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

created by

Glen Larson

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Friend

Admiral Jonathan Turner: Commanding Officer of the Prometheus Battlestar Group

General John Connors: Commander, Copernicus Homeworld Defense

Commander Tajalle: Commanding Officer, Battlestar Eternal

Dr. Kevin Grazier: Governor, Copernicus Colony

Colonel Karla Horvath: Executive Officer, Battlestar Prometheus

Lt. Colonel Stewart Kelly: Commanding Officer, 7th Marine Expeditionary Regiment

Major Jason "Slider" Allen: C.A.G. Prometheus Air Wing

Major David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Captain Stacie "Sheba" Percival: Commander of the 82nd Viper Squadron "Aces"

Captain Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

Lieutenant Brad "Tiny" Allen: Commanding Officer, 32nd Viper Squadron "Knights"

Master Chief Petty Officer Theresa Madrid: Chief of the Boat (C.O.B.), Battlestar
Prometheus

Ensign Ashley "Splashdown" Klave: Pilot, 32nd Viper Squadron "Knights"

Ensign Melody "Hygiene" Moody: Pilot, 32nd Viper Squadron "Knights"

Foe

Jezebel (D'Anna): Cylon Battle Group Commander, victor of the Battle of Virgon

Eve (Six): Cylon Infiltrator

Gabriel (Leoben): Cylon Battle Group Commander

Lucifer (Cavil): Cylon Fleet Commander, victor of the Battle of Leonis

Seth (Doral): Cylon Tracker

Adam (Simon): Cylon Scientist

Lillith (Sharon): Cylon

PROLOGUE

A FAKE LIFE

**FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Admiral Turner rubbed his stinging eyes and shook his head as he tried for what felt like the one hundredth time to finish reading the initial reports Major Briedis and his engineering teams had submitted on the status of the ships General Connors had under his command.

It had been two days since their arrival at the Copernicus colony. Two days since he had assumed command of a fleet twice as large as his own. Two days since...

Sheba, pinned to the floor under Connors' boot, a targeting laser aimed right between her eyes, surfaced before Turner could usher it out of his mind and it brought back all of the anger, hurt and frustration he had felt when it had happened.

"I'm a Cylon." She had said.

Without even thinking he raised his fist and slammed it down on the desk, which caused everything on it to jump.

As his fist throbbed from the impact, he fought back the tears that threatened to flow from his eyes.

Knock, knock

Turner looked up as his door slid open to reveal Colonel Horvath carrying a tray.

"You haven't come out in twenty four hours so I figured it was time to check on you, the X.O. said as she sat the tray of food on his desk and took a seat across from him.

"Thanks." Turner mumbled, wincing as he reached for the glass of liquid.

"In the age old battle of fist versus solid object, it's usually the object that wins." Horvath said with a smirk.

“Thanks for the tip.” Turner replied as he took a drink.

Horvath watched him closely as he drank down half before she finally spoke.

“Admiral, how long have we known each other?” she asked.

Turner arched his eyebrow. “Say again?”

“How long have we known each other?” she repeated.

“Just about two and a half years.” He replied cautiously. “Where is this going, Colonel?”

“In those two and a half years I have never seen you like *this*.” Horvath said, her voice firm but gentle.

“Your point?”

Horvath visibly steeled herself. “You look like hell, sir.”

Turner scowled. “It’s been a rough couple of days, Colonel.”

“You’re right, it *has* been,” Horvath replied, her own tone matching his. “The news about the Colonies, the Cylons looking like us, Sheba—”

“Colonel,” Turner said, his voice shaky as he fought to control the emotions raging inside him, “if there is one thing I can’t stand, it’s a liar. Sheba *lied* to us.”

Horvath nodded. “I understand.”

Turner stood, his hands clinched into angry fists. “That bitch played me like a frakking fool!”

“But?” The X.O. prodded.

Turner stood tall for a moment, his anger keeping him strong but it faded fast and he collapsed in his chair. “She was like one of my kids. How the hell do you hate someone you love like a daughter.”

“It’s simple: you don’t.”

Turner sat upright. “*What?* How the hell can you say that? She betrayed us all!”

Horvath shook her head. “No she didn’t. She lied, yes. She deceived most certainly, but when it came time to take it to the Cylons she fought just as hard as anyone else on this ship and she did so *with* the knowledge that she was killing her own people.”

Turner made to respond but suddenly couldn't find his voice.

Horvath leaned forward. "Two hundred years ago you wouldn't have been allowed to serve because of your skin color and the fact that you were descended from the fifth tribe. Twenty years ago you wrote a paper on how difficult it was to fit in at the Colonial Academy on Caprica because you came from a pacifist society. Do you remember what you wrote in that paper?"

"The actions of a man define him, not his blood." Turner replied quietly.

Horvath stood and turned to walk away. She paused only for a moment and turned back "You're not the only one who's *lost* something these last few days, but you *are* the only one who can give us all something back."

Turner considered her words carefully as he also considered his own feelings in the matter. He didn't like being deceived in any way, shape or form and by hiding what she was Sheba had done exactly that.

At the same time he couldn't rightly blame her. After all, what would he have done or said if she had come to him with the truth

"I think I'll pay Sheba a visit after I meet with Connors." He said finally.

Horvath nodded her approval. "I think that's the right move, sir, but *after* you get some sleep."

Turner arched an eyebrow. "Are you monitoring my every move, Colonel?"

Horvath smiled and stood up. "A good X.O. watches her commander's back at all times."

Turner nodded. "You're doing a good job of it. Wake me up in four."

"Eight." Horvath replied.

"Are we haggling?" Turner chuckled.

"Eight hours, sir." Horvath repeated, undeterred by his attempt at humor.

"I can promise you six, Colonel. That's it." Turner said.

Horvath continued to stare him down for a long moment and then, sensing that she wasn't going to get any further with her argument, acquiesced. "Six it is. Don't let me see you one minute sooner, sir."

Turner waved her off. "Get out of here Colonel."

**BRIG
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Sweat poured off of Sheba's brow as she completed her one hundredth push up with a large exhale. Going to her knees, she wiped the moisture away and rolled over onto her back to begin her sit-up repetitions. She made it to thirty-eight before she heard the unmistakable sounds of the door servos in action.

Glancing up she saw a shadow move along the access way outside of her glass fronted cell. She continued to do her sit ups though, not paying any mind to the new presence.

In the two days since she had been taken into custody, several of her friends had paid her visits, each one stating their support and how the General had made a big mistake labeling her a Cylon.

However, the looks of utter shock on their faces when she had told them that the General was right about her were more than she could bear. Many had still professed their friendship to her and some had left quietly but she could see in all of them that their attitude toward her had changed.

She wasn't a fellow pilot anymore. She was a Cylon.

The enemy.

She prided herself on being emotionally and physically tough but after seeing so many of her friends hurt by the revelation of her origins, she couldn't bear it any longer.

She had asked the guard to stop admitting visitors.

Which was why, as she opened her eyes in mid rep, she was even more surprised to find Slider standing there looking in on her, his arms folded across his chest and his eyes stone cold.

Taking a deep breath, Sheba stood and moved to the glass that separated them.

"Hi." She said as she approached.

Slider continued to fix her with a hard expression. "So it's true then?"

Sheba hung her head. "Yes."

Slider shook his head and wiped tears from his eyes. "I can't believe this."

Sheba looked up and reached a hand out to the glass but Slider took a quick step away, his face screwing into a mask of anger.

“You lied to me *AGAIN!*” he shouted, his eyes full of pain and anger.

Sheba took a step back, fear rising in her chest. She had never seen him this angry before and it frightened her immensely.

“You lied about our child and now you lied about being a frakking Cylon!?” Slider snarled. “What else have you lied to me about? If you’re a Cylon then who is the woman you’ve been calling *mom* for the last ten years? For that matter, does she even exist? What about our son? Is he a piece of fiction too?”

Being overwhelmed by the pure, raw rage of the man she love, Sheba was at a loss for words. “I- I don’t—”

“Tell me the mother frakking truth you Cylon bitch! Is our son *real?*” Slider shouted, slamming his fist into the glass hard enough to make it vibrate.

“Gods damn it, I don’t know!” Sheba screamed back, tears rolling down her face. “I don’t know what’s real and what’s not anymore! I don’t know!”

She broke into wracking sobs as she sank down to the floor and curled herself into a ball.

Slider continued to watch her for a long moment, anger clouding his tear streaked face, and then he turned and marched from the room without saying another word, leaving Sheba all alone in her cell to contemplate what was real and what wasn’t.

CHAPTER 1

PICKING UP THE PIECES

**RAPTOR 717
DEEP SYSTEM RECON
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

“Leaving grid fourteen for grid fifteen.”

“Copy that.” Splashdown yawned in reply to her partner as she activated the long range antenna on her Raptor. “*Prometheus*- Splashdown: Grid Fourteen is clear. Moving to Grid Fifteen, time now. End transmission, 1405 hours.”

The Raptor she was piloting was all alone in space as it cruised past the small and rocky sixth planet, far beyond the massive asteroid belt that circled the system between the third and fourth planet that provided cover for the hidden human colony.

Because of the great distance and the interference that the ore heavy asteroids put out, it was a long moment before she received a reply from the *Prometheus*, which was in geosynchronous orbit above what was now being called Sanctuary City.

“Splashdown- *Prometheus*,” the garbled voice of Colonel Horvath replied, “We copy Grid Fourteen is clear. Proceed to Grid Fifteen and while you’re at it, check out a strange magres reading we got on our long range dradis. It’s probably nothing but it can’t hurt to be sure. End transmission, 1412 hours.”

“Did you get the coordinates?” Splashdown asked as she stretched her arms.

“What do I look like, some frakking monkey with a flight suit on back here?” Hygiena asked sarcastically before adding quickly “Wait, don’t answer that.”

Splashdown smiled. She was glad she had been able to talk Hygiena into tagging along in the back seat for the mission. Since Sheba’s arrest two days earlier things had been tense in the wardroom and because they were so close to their former instructor, she and Hygiena had felt it most when the truth had been revealed.

In all honesty, Splashdown didn't really know how she felt. On one hand, Sheba admitted she was a Cylon *and* that she had hid the fact from her comrades for months. On the other hand, she still remembered her as the kind and caring friend who had seen her through the worst of times. It tore at her heart to think of Sheba locked in a prison cell, but she also knew there was nothing she could do about it, short of getting herself killed in some desperate attempt to break her out.

Hygiena was another matter. She had been angry as hell at their former flight trainer for keeping the secret but she had understood the practical reasons for it. If anything she was angrier at the General for treating her like some kind of hideous thing and at Admiral Turner for allowing him to.

Hadn't Sheba proven her loyalty time and again during the *Prometheus*' mission? Hadn't she sacrificed herself to save the *Prometheus*' destruction at the hands of the Alliance? As far as Hygiena was concerned, it didn't matter what Sheba was. Her actions spoke louder than her origins.

"Coordinates locked in and spinning up the FTL." Hygiena reported.

"Very well. Standing by for the green light."

The engines continued to whine as they gathered the power to rip a small hole in the fabric of space and instantly transport them to the next planet in the system.

"The board is green and we're clear to jump." Hygiena said.

Splashdown took a deep breath. "Here we go."

Punching a flashing green button, Ashley felt her mind body and soul turned inside out as the universe collapsed in on her, compressing her down to the size of a single atom. In the same instant, she felt a power growing inside her, like a nuclear reactor was powering her instead of a heart.

The heat and power continued to grow and the universe began to expand like rubber, stretched out across all of eternity until finally it snapped back into place.

Shaking her head to clear the momentary dizziness that jumps always gave her, she focused her eyes on her board and took stock of the situation.

"I have a lock on that strange reading. Looks like a power plant of some sort but there's too much interference from the planet to be sure." Hygiena reported.

"Let's go take a closer look then." Splashdown said as she throttled the engines up and began to descend towards the riotous gas giant below.

The deck plates began to vibrate faintly as the Raptor entered the outer layers of the gas giant's atmosphere. Splashdown checked her instruments and saw the telltale signs of hull ionization.

"Watch the gravity shear, Mel. If it gets up past point seven five I'm going to pull out."

"Roger that." Hygiena replied over the growing noise.

Suddenly, Ashley caught a flash of metal through the clouds. "What the hell was that?"

"Don't know. I'm trying to get a fix on it but I'm not sure." Hygiena replied as she worked the dradis controls feverishly. "Wait, I'm getting something on the infrared scan."

Ashley began to feel ice forming in her gut, a sign that something was about to go terribly wrong. She trusted her instincts and pulled up on the stick, pushing the engines to their max as she climbed out of the gas giants' gravity well.

"I got it!" Hygiena declared. "War book says- oh frak! Get us out of here Splash!"

At just that moment a ship burst from the cloud in front of them and Splashdown knew her fears had been justified. The curved wing shape was all too familiar to her.

Now it was a race.

FLAG SUITE BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS COPERNICUS SYSTEM

Admiral Turner had just closed his eyes, his head resting comfortably on the pillow in his bunk when the handset next to his head buzzed quietly. Sighing deeply he reached for it not even bothering to open his eyes.

"C.I.C. for commanding officer." Captain Halloran's voice said.

"Go ahead." Turner replied, keeping his eyes closed and hoping that it was something minor.

"Sir, we have a mayday call from Splashdown and Hygiena in sector Grid Fifteen. They're in contact with a Cylon Raider."

Turner's eyes snapped open. "Sound action stations and spin up the FTL. I want the quick response force ready to go in two minutes."

“Yes sir!” Halloran replied as the alarm klaxon began to sound.

Almost jumping from his rack, Turner was on his feet and pulling on his boots in seconds as he raced for the door.

Moving quickly down the corridors in the senior officer’s sector, he buttoned his jacket and straightened it just as the doors slid open to admit him to the C.I.C.

“Admiral on deck!” announced the marine standing watch at the door.

“Report.” Turner commanded as he approached the situation table.

“Our FTL is online and coordinates are locked in and the *Sentinel* and the *Saber* are both standing by to jump, sir.” Halloran reported from his operations post.

“Maddie, get Splashdown on the line and put it on speakers.”

“Yes sir.” the Master Chief replied.

Turner activated his wireless headset and static filled his ear for a long moment before Splashdown finally spoke.

“Prometheus, Splashdown two-seven-zero: We’re in heavy contact with multiple Raiders. No shots fired yet.” Klave reported as calmly as she could.

“Splashdown, Prometheus Actual: Can you jump?”

“Negative, Actual. There’s too much E.M. We can’t get an accurate position.”

“Mister Halloran, start the jump clock at fifteen seconds and get me General Connors.” Turner commanded as he switched his headset back to Splashdown. “Hold on for fifteen seconds kid, help’s coming.”

“Understood sir.” came her determined reply.

“Prometheus Actual, this is Marine Six.” General Connors gruff voice said into Turner’s ear.

“Marine Six, Prometheus Actual: We have heavy enemy contact in Grid fifteen. I’m departing with the Q.R.F. and leaving the Orbital Defense Group with you.”

“Understood, Admiral. Good hunting.” Connors replied.



**VIPER 876,
STARBOARD LAUNCH TUBES
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Slider blinked back the dizziness that normally followed a jump and checked his instruments as he switched his engines from standby to active for launch.

“Engines to active, power at one hundred percent.” He reported to the flight officer.

“Roger that, you are go for throttle up. Standby for launch.” The F.O. replied.

Slider gave the thumbs up and checked his board one last time before opening a channel to his pilots. “Squadron Leaders: form up at your designated defense points and don’t get fancy out there. Stick to business and make sure you get home in one piece.”

“Viper eight seven six, you are clear. Acknowledge dispatch.” The F.O. announced.

Slider saluted and was thrown back in his seat before his hand had returned to the throttle as his Viper was shot out of the launch tubes at speed.

Blinking his eyes to clear them he pushed forward on his throttle and yanked back on the yoke to align his Viper for rendezvous with his squadron.

In front of him he saw a massive wave of Cylons hard on Splashdown’s tail as she hauled it for home.

“All Vipers: Weapons free!” he announced.

Suddenly a spark of light caught his eye and he immediately went to the dradis readout to confirm what he already knew. “Prometheus, Slider: New contact bearing zero-five-four karem oh-seven-seven. Unknown configuration but from the size of it, I have to say it’s a Cylon Basestar.”

“Acknowledged Slider.” Colonel Horvath’s voice replied through the garbled static. “Dispatch a squadron to bring Splashdown in and take the rest of your fighters out to engage the Basestar.”

“Roger that.” Slider replied. “Tiger: Take your squadron and bring Splashdown home. Shooter, Tiny: Form your squadron on mine and follow me in.”

“Right with you, Boss Man.” Tiny replied eagerly.

“CAG, Tiger: Have you gotten a close look at those Raiders?”

Slider turned his head to the left to see a tangle of small ships darting around Splashdown’s Raptor like fireflies but he couldn’t make out any detail. “Negative Tiger, what do you see?”

“They’re the old Mark One Raiders from before the Cylon War. War book confirms it.” Tiger replied.

“Look at ‘em. They’re all over Splashdown but they’re not shooting.” One pilot observed.

“They got her right in the kill box too.” Another said.

“This doesn’t make any frakking sense, sir.” Shooter said.

“All Vipers, weapons hold.” Slider commanded as he opened a channel to the *Prometheus*. “Prometheus, Slider: Something strange is going on out here. We’ve got Mark One Raiders all over our Raptor but they’re not taking the shot. It’s almost like they’re *escorting* them.”

Turner’s eyes tightened at the corners as he listened to Slider’s report. He shared his CAG’s gut feeling that something wasn’t right but he couldn’t quite place his finger on what until a sudden idea came to mind.

“All ships: Hold position and do not fire unless fired upon.” He commanded.

“Sir?” Colonel Horvath asked, her voice betraying her surprise.

“You heard me Colonel. Relay the order.” Turner commanded, his tone offering no room for discussion.

“Aye sir.” Horvath replied as she activated her headset.

“Maddie, send out hostile challenge and I.D. and then push the response up onto the speakers.”

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied as she activated the long range comm system. “Attention unknown vessel: This is the Battlestar Prometheus. Identify yourself and state your intentions or you will be fired upon.”

The line was silent for a long moment as static crackled through the speakers. Turner was about to have her repeat the message when the static broke and a voice came through.

A voice from the grave.

“Battlestar *Prometheus*, this is the Battlestar *Ares*. It’s good to see you again.” said the voice of Colonel James Ryan.

All activity ceased and the C.I.C. became quiet as a tomb, the beeping of the instruments the only sounds that could be heard.

Turner, his mouth dry and eyes wide, activated his headset with a shaky hand. “*Ares* Actual, this is *Prometheus* Actual: Jim, is that- is that you?”

The sound of static filled the speakers for a long moment followed by a chuckling laughter. “Yes sir it is and I am requesting permission to rejoin the fleet.”

Turner looked at Horvath whose eyes were narrowed in concern. “Sir, if he’s still got his Cylons aboard that ship then we need to keep him back from the Colony until—”

Turner nodded. “I agree. *Ares* Actual, this is Admiral Turner-- Recall your Raiders, hold position and stand by to receive a landing party.”

“Understood sir, we’ll be waiting.” Was Ryan’s reply as the line closed down.

“Colonel, you have the con. Instruct Slider to form his Squadron with me. I’ll be in my Viper.” Turner commanded.

“Understood sir.” Horvath replied as she turned to issue orders. “Set condition two and have our Vipers begin landing.”

Turner nodded and marched out of the CIC and made his way down to the pilot’s locker room where he prepared himself to see a ghost.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROBOT KING

CONFERENCE ROOM
BASESTAR 1
ORBIT OF CAPRICA

Lucifer entered the conference room where the Cylon Conclave had gathered expecting a cold greeting. Instead he found himself warmly applauded as he took his seat next to Cavil, his brother.

The mood in the room was one of mixed feelings and Lucifer could feel it in his bones. Today was the announcement of the next step in the great plan.

“Welcome all to this Conclave of the Cylon.” Cavil said leaning forward. “We all know why we’re here so let’s just get down to it, shall we?”

“Before we make any announcement, brother, why not open the floor to debate on this proposal?” The Cylon known Doral asked.

Cavil rolled his eyes. “We’ve *been* debating this for weeks now. It’s time for a decision, not more talk.”

“I agree,” Said D’Anna, “debating this further is pointless. The decision has been made.”

“What decision?” asked the Six known as Eve.

D’Anna turned to Lucifer with a smirk. “You mean you haven’t told them yet?”

“I figured it was *your* plan so you could tell them.” Lucifer replied.

“What plan?” Eve asked.

“Why don’t you explain it, Caprica? After all it was your and Sharon’s idea.” D’Anna said pointing to Caprica Six.

“We were wrong about the war.” Caprica said after taking a deep breath. “We shouldn’t have attacked the humans.”

“Well it’s a little late for that now.” Said Seth, a brother to the Doral model. “99 percent of the human population has been eradicated and the last one percent is either living in caves on the colonies or huddled together in ships following the *Galactica* and the *Pegasus*.”

“What about the Prometheus and the other ships that have been raiding our bases?” Asked Jezebel, a Three like D’Anna.

“We’re not concerned about them. They’re a handful at best and hardly worth the effort of destroying.” Said Cavil.

“It’s the humans on Galactica we want. They’re trying to find Earth.” Said Sharon, an Eight.

This brought the conversation to a halt.

“Earth?” Jez asked incredulously. “Are you frakking kidding me?”

“Earth is real sister. The humans have found Kobol and opened the Tomb of Athena. They’re on their way to the home of the Thirteenth Tribe as we speak.” Caprica explained.

“So what? If the humans all walked off of a cliff would we follow them there *too*?” Jez retorted, her face twisting in anger. “For that matter, why are we even discussing this? We set out to eradicate the human race! Why are we following them across half the frakking universe looking for some mythical planet that, in all probability, doesn’t even exist? We should find their fleet and finish the job we started!”

“We tried that, sister.” Cavil replied, his annoyance visible in his posture. “Maybe you forgot the little surprise they popped on us?”

“Who can forget?” Jez rolled her eyes. “We lost two Basestars, ten wings of Raiders and a Resurrection ship. Need you any more proof that they need to be destroyed?”

“Again, you over react.” Doral spoke up. “They have only two Battlestars and a rag tag fleet of civilian ships.”

“Over react?” Jez asked incredulously. “Those two Battlestars destroyed an entire Cylon battle group! Now the *Prometheus* shows back up in Colonial space and rescues another Battlestar from the perfect trap and you say I’m over reacting?”

“She has a point. With the *Galactica* and *Pegasus* plus the *Prometheus* and whatever other ships they might have, they could pose a threat to us if they were ever to combine forces.” Simon interjected.

“Then we’ll have to make sure that never happens. We’ll drive Adama and his fleet away from the Colonies.” Doral said.

“The point is moot. The decision has already been made—we’re withdrawing from the Colonies to seek out the humans. An emissary has already been dispatched to them.” Caprica said.

Jez threw her hands up in disgust. “I can’t believe this! We went through all the work of planning and executing the attack, then we rebuild and recondition the Colonies to support life again only to give it all up and run away?”

“Sister please,” Cavil rolled his eyes, “these emotional outbursts are unbecoming of you.”

“Your stupidity doesn’t look so great either.” Jez snapped back.

“Enough!” Lucifer growled, slamming his hand down on the table with enough force to crack it. “Jez you were brought here as a courtesy, nothing more, and since you don’t have enough sense to shut the frak up you may return to your ship now and await further instructions.”

Jez, her arms folded in defiance, stared into Lucifer’s eyes and he saw the pure unbridled hatred there. “Go ahead,” he said with a smirk, “defy me again and see what happens.”

Her lip twitched slightly at the memory of the last time she had defied his command. It was an unpleasant experience that she wasn’t eager to repeat. Finally, after a long moment she bowed her head in acquiescence. “By your command.”

Her arms still folded across her chest, she spun on her heel and marched from the conference room while the rest of the council watched her go.

“She does have a valid point.” Doral said as the doors slid shut behind her.

“I agree,” Lucifer said, “but I also have a plan that I think will settle the issue without any further discord.”

Caprica, Sharon and Cavil all exchanged glances before nodding in agreement.

“Let’s hear it.” Cavil said.



**PORT SIDE FLIGHT DECK
BATTLESTAR ARES
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Admiral Turner stepped off of the Raptor behind two heavily armed Marines and was astonished to find a Cylon honor guard formed up and waiting for him.

“Stand to attention.” A gold plated Cylon officer commanded in his monotone voice.

Immediately the Cylons snapped to attention, their metal feet ringing as they came together as one.

“Welcome aboard the Ares, Admiral.” The Cylon commander said as he rendered a hand salute. “Colonel Ryan is awaiting you in the C.I.C.”

Turner returned the salute and stepped down from the Raptor wing. “Archangel, secure the ship and then join me in the C.I.C.”

“Aye sir.” Archangel called from the cockpit.

“Centurion, take me to the C.I.C.” Turner commanded.

“By your command.”

Turner looked at the Marine sergeant to his right. “I’ll never get used to that.”

The Marine shrugged and followed after the Cylon commander who led the way.

Moments later, Turner found himself walking through the open door to the Ares Combat Information Center. Ryan had his back to the door as he listened intently to a report over an old phone.

“Very well, Major. Secure the Raiders and set condition three. I don’t want any friendly fire incidents and having our ships out there is bound to provoke someone.”

Hanging up the old phone, Ryan turned around and came to attention. “Welcome aboard, Admiral.”

As Turner took in the sight of his former X.O., he saw many things had changed in the year since he had last laid eyes on him.

Gone were the boyish good looks that many of the hard asses in the crew had snickered about. His face was lean now; the right side crisscrossed with burn scars and the hair he had once kept meticulously cropped was now long and tied back in a pony tail.

“Not exactly a regulation haircut there, Colonel.” Turner said with a smile as he walked forward and took his old friends’ hand firmly.

“We have many things here aboard the *Ares*, sir but hair clippers aren’t one of them.” Ryan replied with a tight smile.

Turner looked on him for a long moment. “I don’t know what to say, Jim. I’m at a total loss for words.”

Ryan nodded in understanding. “Why don’t you let me bring you up to speed on what’s been going on here the last year.” He said turning to the Cylon standing at the situation table. “You remember Alpha? He’s been my acting X.O.”

“A pleasure to see you again, Admiral.” The humanoid Cylon said.

Turner nodded. “Seems like you have a good organization going here Jim.”

“As good as any crew I’ve ever served with sir,” Ryan replied proudly. “Let’s go to my ready room. I’ll crack open the logs for you.”



**COMMANDERS’ READY ROOM
BATTLESTAR ARES
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Turner sat down as Ryan began pouring from a bottle of Ambrosia and took in the sight of the place Ryan had called home for the last year. For the most part, the room looked much the same as he remembered from the photos brought back by the salvage team.

“This ambrosia is older even than you are.” Ryan said with a smirk. “But since it’s been a year since I saw you last *and* you’ve been promoted, I think its okay to drink it.”

Turner smiled. “Yeah. This happened right after your—” he stopped midsentence and a lump came to his throat. “Right after your memorial service.”

“Ah. Was it good?” Ryan asked as he set the two glasses down in front of them.

“Yeah, it was.” Turner took a long sip. “So tell me what happened.”

A far off look came to Ryan’s eyes as his memory went back a year prior to the last moment they had spoken. “The ship was in rough shape. We’d lost over half of our Raider contingent and we were venting atmosphere in three places when we jumped. The shock wave of the explosion followed us through the jump vortex and hit us just as we came out.”

Ryan took another long sip of his drink and pointed to his face. “That’s when *this* happened. One of the control consoles in C.I.C. fed back and exploded while I was looking over a damage report. Fortunately, Alpha took me to sick bay and had the Cylon doc fix me up.”

Turner studied the haunted look in his friend’s eyes and felt his own heart ache for him. The man had been through so much before this had happened and he could see that the scars on his body weren’t his only ones.

“When I woke up two days later, Alpha reported that the ship was underway but severely damaged.” Ryan took a long and steady breath. “It took us almost two months to get jump capable again but once we did I had us set a course for home. I figured that when we got back we could make repairs and go from there but when we jumped into the Caprica system...”

Turner nodded. “What have you been doing since?”

“Intelligence gathering mostly.” Ryan replied taking another drink. “My Cylons here can tap into the Cylon mainframe and download information, but their command protocols were taken offline forty years ago when Commander Rivera first set out.”

“Good because that could be a problem with the civilians on the ground here.” Turner replied.

“Civilians?” Ryan asked, astonished. “There are civilians here?”

“Yes. This is the Copernicus colony. The first in what was supposed to be a new colonization program.” Turner explained. “General Connors told me that it wasn’t in the defense mainframe yet so that’s why the Cylons don’t know about it.”

“Who is General Connors?”

“He was the commander of the colony expedition. Now he is in control of all ground forces.”

“Well, if you would allow me sir, I would like permission to join the fleet.”

Turner took a long swallow. “We can talk about that later, I’ll need to confer with General Connors first. However, I want you to forward a list of supplies and anything else you may need. I’ll send Briedis over with a team of engineers to see about repair and upgrade work.”

“Actually, I would prefer if you sent Lieutenant Margaritell over. He has more experience with the ship.” Ryan countered.

“Okay.” Turner nodded as he stood. “Get cleaned up and then meet me aboard Prometheus in two hours. We’ll go back to the planet and speak to General Connors then.”

“Understood sir.” Ryan said as he stood to attention and saluted.

Turner returned the salute. “Welcome back Jim.”

“Jon,” Ryan called as Turner turned to leave, “did you ever find Earth?”

Turner’s face formed a bittersweet smile. “Yeah, we did.”

“What was there?”

Turner shook his head sadly. “Death, nothing more.”



CHAPTER 3

TRUTH & CONSEQUENCES

**COPERNICUS COMMAND
SANCTUARY CITY
COPERNICUS COLONY**

“They’re *what*?” General Connors asked, his voice carrying loudly in the makeshift command center he had set up in what was quickly becoming the capital city of the planet.

“They’re Cylons.” His aide, a tough pilot by the name of Robyn Layton replied. “I got the scuttlebutt from some marines aboard Prometheus about an hour ago. They say that they’re the old models though, from the first Cylon war.”

“And Turner is meeting with them right now?”

“As we speak, sir.” Layton replied as she brushed a strand of platinum blonde hair out of her face. “What’s more, his former X.O. seems to be the one in command.”

“What the frak?” Connors exclaimed, nearly spitting out his coffee. “You mean the same one that *died* over a year ago?”

Layton, her face impassive, arched her eyebrow. “I guess he wasn’t as dead as the Admiral was led to believe.”

“No shit.” Connors replied drily. “Which begs the question: Is he a Cylon too?”

“The Admiral or Colonel Ryan?”

“Yes.” Connors replied.

“The Admiral is not, of that I’m certain. As for Colonel Ryan, I’ll have to get close enough to sense whether he is or not.” Layton replied.

Layton was Connors biggest secret at this point. Known as Talon by her fellow pilots only a select few knew that she was truly a Cylon agent who had turned on her people to save Connors life months earlier aboard the Battlestar Atlas.

She also had knowledge that had helped Connors defeat the Cylons on numerous occasions.

“Get your Raptor ready, Lieutenant. I want to be on the way to Prometheus in fifteen minutes.” Connors commanded.

“Yes sir.” Layton replied firing off a quick salute. “Shall I radio ahead that we’re coming?”

Connors shook his head and set his jaw grimly. No. Admiral Turner seems to be in a mod for surprises today so I figure it’s our turn.”

“He’s not going to like that sir.” Layton warned.

Connors took one last swig of coffee and stood up. “Right now lieutenant, I don’t give a frak.”

**FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Admiral Turner stood with Colonel Horvath at his side as Colonel Ryan was escorted into the flag suite by Slider and Maddie. “Welcome home, Jim.”

“Love what you’ve done with the place.” Ryan said, a trace of his old easy smile coming forth. “Karla, congrats on the promotion.”

“I’m just keeping your seat warm, Jim.” Colonel Horvath replied.

“No,” Ryan replied shaking his head, “The *Ares* is my home now. I couldn’t leave my crew.”

“So you want to stay aboard the *Ares* then?” Turner asked, his face expressing his consternation.

“Yes sir.” Ryan replied. “They have earned my respect and my loyalty. I can’t see serving anywhere else.”

“But they’re Cylons, Jim. They’re not real people.” Horvath said.

“Karla, these guys are as real as we are. They think, they live, they make decisions just like we do. They *chose* to help the old *Ares* crew escape the first war and they chose to help me when I was injured.”

Turner nodded. “I understand Jim, but there are larger concerns to be addressed. This colony is the only bastion of human life left and those humans aren’t too fond of the Cylons right now seeing as they destroyed our homes and killed everyone we ever knew.”

Ryan kept his serene expression. “I understand sir, but these Cylons didn’t do that. In fact, they’re the ones who have found out what might be the key to winning this war.”

Turner was about to ask what he meant when suddenly a loud knocking at the door drew his attention elsewhere. “This better be important,” he grumbled. “Enter.”

General Connors strode through the door, his massive frame casting a shadow over the entry way, as he made his way to where the three officers sat. “Admiral, we need to talk.”

“I agree General. Why don’t you have a seat?” Turner replied cautiously as he gauged the mood of the obviously agitated general.

Connors looked over the group for a long moment and then nodded, taking a seat next to Horvath and Slider.

“I’ll make this simple,” Connors began. “I’d like to know why I wasn’t informed about *this*.” he gestured at Ryan.

“You mean the same way we weren’t informed about the Cylons looking human?” Horvath shot back, her temper flaring.

“That was different—” Connors began to say, only to be interrupted by Turner slamming his fist down.

“That will be enough!” the Admiral growled as he turned a withering gaze on his X.O. “Colonel Horvath: General Connors is your superior officer. I suggest you remember that in the future.”

“Yes sir.” Horvath replied quietly, her face still a mask of anger. “My apologies, General.”

“No blood, no foul, Colonel.” Connors nodded. “I apologize for allowing my bearing to slip, but when I receive a report of the fleet commander meeting with Cylon agents I tend to get antsy.”

“Colonel Ryan is no Cylon, General.” Turner said.

“But his crew *is*.” Connors replied. “Do you know what kind of panic this will set off if Grazier or his civvies find out?”

“Yes, I do. That’s why they are remaining on outer orbit patrol for now. I want you and I and Colonel Ryan here to meet with Doctor Grazier first and explain the situation to him before we bring them in any closer.”

Connors nodded. “That’s acceptable to me, Admiral, but I am not as trusting as you are. A copy of the one you call Sheba tried to kill me not long ago and it took one of my officers risking everything to save me.”

“Sheba?” Ryan asked sitting up. “Sheba is a Cylon?”

“Yes.” Turner admitted. “We didn’t know until the General here informed us.”

“Yes well there is something else you need to know.” Connors said.

Turner and the rest of them leaned forward and listened as Connors revealed his secret.

BRIG BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS COPERNICUS SYSTEM

Sheba stood as the platinum haired pilot wearing a lieutenant’s rank entered the brig and made her way over to the bulletproof glass that enclosed her. Immediately the hairs on the back of her neck stood up and a tingling began moving up and down her spine.

“You feel it, don’t you?” the newcomer asked.

“How- how do you know?” Sheba stammered.

“It’s not hard. You get that feeling whenever you come close to one of your own, sister.”

Sheba gasped and flung herself back against the bulkhead. “Stay away from me!”

Robyn Layton shook her head. “I’m not going to hurt you. I’m here to help.”

“Stay the frak away from me, you Cylon bitch!” Sheba snarled. “You and the rest of your kind are the reason I’m in this mess!”

“My *kind*?” Layton asked with a smile. “They’re your kind too, sister. They always have been.”

“Stop calling me that! I am *not* your sister! I am Stacie Ann Percival! I was born on Arelon and went to the Caprica Fleet Academy! Whatever you did to me after I flew that nuke into that Alliance cruiser, you can’t take away the fact that I was once human!”

Layton sighed. “You were *never* human, sister. You’re a Cylon and you’ve always been one. All of your memories, all of your past, is a lie. A story concocted to help you blend in.”

Sheba shook her head. “No, it’s can’t be. I had a mother, a son!”

“Your *mother* is a three who was used to help bolster your cover.” Layton explained.

“No.” Sheba whispered as tears ran down her cheeks. “My son?”

“A memory implant, nothing more.”

Sheba sank to her knees as racking sobs over took her body. It wasn’t until a moment later she realized that Layton was now in the cell with her, her arms wrapped around her tightly as she rocked her back and forth.

“It will be okay, sister. It will all be okay.” She whispered.

Suddenly the brig doors flew open and armed marines entered, their weapons trained on the two of them.

Layton stood up and placed herself in front of Sheba. “What’s going on here sergeant?” she asked, addressing the woman in charge.

“Sirs, Admiral Turner wants to see you both in his suite immediately. We’ve been ordered to escort you there but you’ll have to relinquish your weapon.” The marine sergeant replied.

Sheba stood straight, wiping the tears from her eyes as she did, and adjusted her uniform top. Seeing this, Layton pulled her pistol from its holster and dropped the magazine, handing both over to the nearest marine.

“I’m ready, sergeant.” Sheba said, a trace of the commanding presence she once had coming back to her. “Let’s go.”

**FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Turner, Connors and Ryan all watched carefully as Sheba and Talon were escorted into the flag suite by a squad of heavily armed marines. Both officers stood to attention and saluted.

Turner, his own feelings still mixed after his conversation with Connors, returned the salutes. “Sergeant, you and your marines are dismissed.”

“Sir?” The female sergeant asked.

“I said you are *dismissed*, sergeant.” Turner reiterated with emphasis.

Realizing that the Admiral *was* in his right mind, the sergeant saluted and withdrew from the suite quickly, her marines following closely behind.

Folding his arms across his chest, he took a deep breath. “Captain Percival, after much discussion we have come to a decision regarding your future with us.”

“I understand sir.” Percival nodded. “I hold myself responsible for my actions and am prepared to—”

Turner held up a hand to forestall any further words from her. “Captain Percival, for lying to a superior officer I am revoking your flight status.”

Sheba’s mouth dropped open and she prepared to protest but the admiral cut her off again. “However, in light of your outstanding record of service I am transferring you to a posting that you are uniquely suited to.”

Sheba was silent for a long moment feeling like the wind had been knocked out of her, before she found the strength to ask the obvious. “Where is my new assignment?”

This time it was Ryan who spoke. “You’re going to be working for me.”

Sheba’s eyes went wide with surprise. “Aboard the *Ares*?”

“Yes.” Turner said. “We’ve just promoted Colonel Ryan here to Commander, and he’s going to need a human crew to include an X.O.”

The world seemed to spin around Sheba as she began to grasp the implications of Turner’s words. “You want me to be your X.O.?”

“The *Ares* needs you, Sheba. What’s more, I need you. You’re a good officer and I need as many as I can get.”

Sheba thought about it only a moment before nodding. “In that case, I accept sir.”

“In that case, Major, you’re out of uniform.” Ryan said as he stepped forward and pinned her new rank insignia on her collar.

“What about the lieutenant here?” She asked as Ryan finished.

“She works for me.” Connors spoke up. “However, I have no problem allowing her to assist you in adjusting to your new role.”

“I would appreciate it, sir.” Sheba replied.

“Major, get your kit loaded on my Raider and have Rex take you back to the *Ares* along with these,” Commander Ryan ordered as he handed her a packet of papers. “Inform Alpha that you’re in command until I get back and continue with repairs.”

“Yes sir.” Sheba said executing a salute before she turned to face Turner. “Admiral-thank you.”

Turner nodded and she turned to face Slider, a lump forming in her throat.

“I—” she began.

“Congratulations Major.” He said stiffly. “Good luck.”

The words stung her but she kept her face neutral. “Thank you, Major.” She said as she executed an about face and strode out the door.

Slider watched as she marched out, his heart heavy and aching but he kept his emotions in check in front of the other senior officers.

Instead he watched her go and as he did, he realized that the only woman he had ever loved was now gone and that a chapter of his life was now closed forever.

EPILOGUE

THE BLACK WOLF

CONFERENCE ROOM TWO BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS COPERNICUS SYSTEM

As Turner looked out in the audience of the gathered commanders of the fleet, he felt a thrill of excitement run down his spine. It wasn't just the intelligence that Commander Ryan had given him, it was the thrill of the hunt.

For the first time since coming home, he was on the offensive.

Pressing a button, he activated a chime that silenced the room and brought everyone's attention to those seated at the table reserved for he and General Connors.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "some new information has come to light and it could mean everything to our war effort."

This caused some murmuring in the crowd but he quickly silenced them as he brought up a schematic on the over head projector.

"This is the Lobo Negro shipyards, where the initial construction on the *Prometheus* was undertaken. This is also the place where the Colonial Fleet builds, tests and stores all of its experimental ships."

"Sir," Commander Tajalle said as she raised her hand, "forgive me for asking, but I thought Lobo Negro was destroyed during the attack."

"I thought that too until Commander Ryan brought me this information." Turner replied as pictures of Battlestar appeared on screen. "This is the Battlestar *Nova*, prototype for the class that the *Prometheus* belongs to. Seen here, she is under her own power with Vipers flying escort. This picture was taken by Raptor recon two weeks ago."

This got the officers talking as they realized the implication of the news. Another Battlestar added to their compliment would be a boon to their cause but a *Nova* class Battlestar, the top of the line in Colonial engineering, could well even the odds against the Cylons.

"The Lobo Negro shipyard is a mobile facility capable of making FTL jumps. Currently, is it located somewhere in the Olympus Head Nebula." Turner explained. "Beginning tomorrow,

we are going to send out long range scouts to check the area for enemy activity and to try and locate the facility. If we can find Lobo Negro, we will have access to a fully functioning shipyard with the capability to repair ships and fabricate new parts.”

“How are we going to find it though? The Olympus Head Nebula is huge and we have limited ships and resources.” Another officer asked.

“We’re sending the Ares out under Commander Ryan to scout the area. His Cylons are tapped into their network and can keep one step ahead of their movements.” Turner said.

“So we’re sending the Cylons out to look for it?” One of the pirates asked. “That’s the dumbest frakking idea I’ve ever heard.”

“Maybe,” Turner admitted, “but this is our chance to put the war back on balance. We find this shipyard and we can begin making and repairing ships again. This is our chance to do what I have wanted to from the very beginning.”

“And what is that, Admiral?”

Turner smiled. “Take the fight back to the enemy.”

TO BE CONTINUED...