



BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

BY RYAN A. KEETON

WOLF IN THE FOLD

BASED ON THE SCI-FI ORIGINAL SERIES
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

CREATED BY RON MOORE AND DAVID EICK

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 "Hygiena" 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 NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

RAPTOR 41
SYSTEM M21

Splashdown sighed deeply as she blinked away the after affects of her latest jump and checked her dradis readout from her seat in the back of her Raptor. “Jump seventeen complete.”

“Thank you.” Archangel replied, his deep voice seeming to echo in the small confines of the ship. “Start your scan and tell me a story.”

Reaching out, Splashdown activated a set of switches that started her computer running through its scan algorithms. “Scan is running, but you *know* the story will be the same.”

Archangel chuckled. “Then you need to make up a new story.”

Splashdown smiled and shook her head. “Once upon a time in a galaxy far away, there was yet more *nothing* to report that day.”

Archangel laughed out loud. “Ok, well at least you tell it with style.”

Splashdown smiled, a sarcastic remark about to burst from her mouth when suddenly the dradis console began to beep an alarm at her. Immediately her head snapped around to investigate and what she saw made her blood turn to ice water.

“New contact: bearing one-eight-zero-karem two-two-seven!” She announced as she began to bring up the war book on her computer.

“Identify.” Archangel commanded, his voice calm and smooth.

“War book identifies as Cylon Basestar. Range is forty thousand.” Splashdown replied, fear creeping into her voice.

“Very well, spin up the FTL and stand by for emergency jump.”

Splashdown quickly set to work entering the coordinates for the emergency jump but in the back of her mind she couldn't help but marvel at the calm demeanor that her squadron commander possessed.

Then she heard his voice, silent as a whisper, speaking the age old Warriors Prayer.

“Lords of Kobol, hear my prayer: Heed the words of your humble servant and come to us in our hour of need. Blessed be Ares, who teacheth my fingers to fight, and my hands to war. Blessed be Aphrodite, who calms my heart and teacheth me compassion and mercy. Hail to Zeus, father of all, who giveth me the strength to smite mine enemies and the wisdom to use such power accordingly. Hear me now and protect us from the darkness. So say we all.”

The beeping of the dradis console jarred Splashdown from her thoughts as she focused on a small image rapidly approaching them. “Missile lock, incoming ordnance ! Time to impact: fifteen seconds.”

“Time to jump?” Archangel asked, his voice still calm.

“Twenty seconds.” Splashdown replied dreadfully. “We’re not going to make it.”

“Never say die, ensign. Hold on.” Archangel said as he slammed the throttle forward as far as it could go.

Splashdown held on for dear life as Archangel began to take the Raptor through a set of evasive maneuvers that she never thought a Raptor could do. “This- isn’t- a Viper.” She grunted out as the gee forces from the maneuvers crushed her into her seat and made her stomach fold in on itself.

“Time to impact?” Archangel grunted, his exertions forcing the breath from his lungs.

Splashdown looked at the screen and was amazed to see that the time to impact was now twenty five seconds. “We’re going to make it!” she said happily.

Archangel smiled. “I never doubted it.”

And then they jumped.

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ARES VIRGON SYSTEM

“They were deploying Raiders when we jumped out,” said Archangel as he finished his report to Commander Ryan. “That was the last we saw.”

Ryan, his arms folded across his chest, shook his head and pushed his long blonde hair back out of his face. “You’re the fourth Raptor team to come back and report that, Captain.”

“Four?” Archangel asked. “Four out of the five teams we launched? That *can’t* be a coincidence.”

“I agree.” The Commander nodded. “Somehow, the Cylons have gotten wind of what we’re up to.”

“Could someone back on Copernicus be sending them information?” Splashdown asked from her position next to Archangel.

Major Percival shook her head. “No. The Admiral only wanted us to report our general sector of operations. For security purposes, he ordered us *not* to tell him our specific search grids until we complete them.”

“Which means one of two things:” Archangel said, “Either the Cylons are just damned lucky—”

“Or we have a mole on board.” Ryan finished. “X.O., call down to the General’s quarters and ask him to join me in my office. He needs to be briefed.”

“Yes sir.” Percival replied as she picked up the old style handset.

“You two hit the showers and get some rack time.” Commander Ryan said turning back to the two waiting pilots. “I want to send you out again soon.”

“Yes sir.” both pilots replied as they saluted and departed.

“Commander, I have the CAG on the line.” The communications chief called out.

Ryan nodded and was, for a moment, taken aback by how much had changed in the six weeks since he had reunited with the *Prometheus* and joined Turners’ fleet.

Most of the Centurions who had been pressed into crew duties were now back patrolling the ship and flying their Raiders since the influx of human crewmembers who had come aboard.

Initially, Ryan had balked at the admiral’s idea to put a human crew back on the *Ares* but he had relented when both Turner and General Connors had explained that the forty four thousand human refugees who were living Copernicus might become agitated and even violent should they find out that a ship run by old style Cylons was joining the fleet.

Indeed, there had been an outcry to destroy all of the Centurions but that had been negated when Ryan had brought down a team of Centurions and completed the four weeks’ worth of work on the new hospital complex in six days and while the public were still not totally accepting of the Cylons, they at least had decided to live and let live.

“Put him through.” Ryan said as he picked up his handset and brought his thoughts back to the present. “Shooter, this is Actual.”

“Actual, this is Shooter,” the voice of Major Josh Wakefield replied. “We’ve completed our sweep of the Virgo Major- it’s nothing but a nuclear wasteland.”

“No surprise there, Shooter. Most of Virgons’ major cities were located on that continent and the Cylons targeted them all with heavy nuclear ordinance.” Ryan replied.

“Agreed. We’re moving to Virgo Minor now but not expecting anything different.”

“Very well, report back when your sweep is done. Actual, out.” Ryan said hanging up the handset.

“It is hardly surprising that Virgo suffered so much damage.” The smooth voice of Alpha, Ryan’s Cylon yeoman, said. “My people are very efficient when they set their minds to something.”

Ryan nodded and turned to Percival. “X.O.- you have the con. I’m going to meet with the General. Alpha, you’re with me.”

**SQUADRON READY ROOM
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

“You know why you’re here, right?” Slider asked the young ensign seated across the desk from him.

“Yes sir.” Hygiena replied, trying to contain her apprehension.

“Okay then, let’s get to it.” Slider said as he opened her personnel file. “You’ve been a pilot for just over sixteen months now and you’re in the primary zone for promotion to Lieutenant, Junior Grade.”

Hygiena nodded. “Yes sir.”

“Your squadron C.O. gave you all fours on your performance ninety day performance ratings,” Slider said, reading through the file carefully. “However, this time he’s giving you a two in physical fitness and a three in pilot performance. Do you know why?”

Hygiena’s eyes went wide with shock and her head began to spin as the impact of Slider’s words hit home with her. “N-no sir.”

Slider nodded and closed the folder. “Get up and I’ll show you why.”

Standing, Hygiena watched as Slider pointed to her flight suit. “What size is that jock smock?”

“It’s a medium, sir.” she said, looking down in surprise. “But what does that have to do with—”

Slider held out a flight book. “Strap that to your leg.”

Feeling a sinking sensation in her stomach, she took the book and slipped the Velcro straps around her leg. She pulled them as tight as she could and only then did she barely get the ends to attach.

Slider nodded. "Now walk."

She took one step and the straps came undone, the book sliding off her leg to clatter to the floor.

"You've gained twenty seven pounds since your last eval, Ensign. *That's* why your physical fitness score has dropped two points." Slider said as he retook his seat.

"That is what this is about? My weight?" Hygiena asked incredulously. "Sir, we've been at war for over a year now. It's not like I have a lot of time to get to the gym between CAP rotations and the other duties I have."

"You've found time to make it to the mess hall a lot, though."

The words stung Hygiena and she scowled. "With respect sir, not all of us are built like supermodels or natural athletes."

"Okay, let's cut the crap," Slider said, his patience growing thin. "You do your CAP rotations and you stand your watches just like the rest of us but in a time where most of us have been so busy we've lost weight because we've *forgotten* to eat, you've packed on the pounds like a bear going into hibernation. You're out of shape, it's affecting your flight performance and by regulation, I have to remove you from flight status, pending a command review, because of the two point drop in your performance score."

Hygiena was dumbstruck as she tried to find the words to defend herself. She had entered the ready room expecting to hear about being promoted. Now she was being told she may never get to fly a Viper again. Fighting back the emotions threatening to burst from her, she kept her military bearing as her world slowly crashed and burned around her.

"What-" Hygiena asked, trying to find her voice. "What am I supposed to do until then?"

"I'm assigning you to the Flight Deck Officer until your command review comes back." Slider said as he signed her paperwork. "If I were you, I would get my ass down to the gym every chance I got and get back to flight weight before your review."

"Yes sir," she replied meekly.

"You're a helluva stick Moody, but I need pilots who can fight, not pilots who bust their maneuvers because their out of shape."

"I'll get on it sir."

CHAPTER 1

THE RISING SUN

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT COMPLEX SANCTUARY CITY COPERNICUS COLONY

As he stepped off of the Raptor that had brought him down from Prometheus, Admiral Turner couldn't help but admire the newly constructed Colonial Government Complex. Five stories tall with gleaming white columns arrayed across the front, it reflected the simple style of the Sagitaron architect who had designed it.

It had been only a little over a year since General Connors and his team of colonists had set down on the barren world, and already a strong infrastructure of water and electrical services existed. Roads were now being constructed at a dizzying pace and many of the tent cities that had dotted the landscape were now being replaced with permanent buildings or temporary hard structures.

They had even opened a small hospital and were now in the process of building a building a central marketplace.

In short, civilization was coming back to the survivors of the Cylon holocaust.

“Admiral!”

He turned his head in time to see Dr. Kevin Grazier, the head of the civilian government on the Copernicus Colony, making his way down the stairs toward him.

Initially, he and Grazier had butted heads on nearly everything. He had even considered using force at one point in an effort to remove him. It wasn't until Connors had explained it to him that he had realized that the Doctor wasn't really all that bad a person, he was just extremely focused and dedicated to bringing the Colonial culture back to life on humanity's last known outpost.

“Doctor Grazier,” he greeted as he shook the other man's hand.

The civilian leader looked nothing like one would expect of a Planetary Scientist and one time science advisor to the President of the Colonies. Far from the skinny, balding, bifocal wearing image that Turner had had before meeting the man, Grazier was tall with a full head of medium length red hair and the broad shoulders and physique of an athlete.

“Good to see you Admiral,” Grazier said. “Why don’t we go into my office and we can talk?”

“Actually, I was kind of enjoying the sunshine on my face. It’s been a while.”

Grazier nodded. “Why don’t we walk over to the new hospital then? “

“That sounds good.” Turner said as he fell into step next to him. “Seems that things have picked up pace since the Cylons from the Ares volunteered to help out.”

An uncomfortable look batted across Grazier’s face. “It has but some of the public are-” he paused as he considered his words, “well they’re pissed off, Admiral. They want to know why we’re associating with a race of beings that destroyed our homeworlds.”

Turner sighed. “The scary thing is that I can sympathize with them on that.” He shook his head, saying “I still wake up some days wondering what the frak I was thinking when I didn’t order them destroyed right away, but then I have to remember that these Cylons deliberately turned away from that course decades ago. These aren’t the same Cylons that destroyed the Colonies.”

“There are many here who would disagree with that school of thought,” Grazier replied.

“That many you speak of wouldn’t happen to be led by Tony Yuri, would it?”

Grazier laughed. “Before the Cylons got here, Councilman Yuri was just a minor annoyance; a narcissist out to promote himself at all costs and everyone knew it. Now though, he has latched onto the Cylon issue and made it his own.”

“And people are listening.” Turner said.

“Some are. Mostly angry radicals at this point but he is gaining followers and with the question of elections and the reestablishment of the Quorum coming up, he could be a major source of trouble.”

“Then you have to put out a counter message. Tell the people that holding these Cylons responsible for the destruction of the Colonies would be like *them* holding *us* responsible for their enslavement decades ago. Tell them that it was that mentality on the Cylons part that got us here in the first place.”

Grazier nodded approvingly. “That’s good. You should have gone into politics, Admiral.”

“Two years on the debate team in High School and I wouldn’t go into politics to save my life,” the Admiral said with a wink, “you guys are too dangerous for me.”

**JUNIOR OFFICER OFFICERS QUARTERS
BATTLESTAR ARES
AQUARION SYSTEM**

“Did you hear the news?” Splashdown asked as she entered the crowded room and began to shed her jock smock. “Lefty and Pookie just got back from a run into sector twenty one.”

“This is just a wild guess- they got jumped by Cylons?” asked Helen ‘Shark’ Armstrong, a Viper pilot on loan from the Battlestar *Celestial*.

“They made it back on one engine only.” Splashdown replied pulling on a pair of fresh fatigues. “At this rate we’re never going to find that shipyard.”

Shark laughed harshly. “This mission was a frakking loser to begin with.”

“What do you mean?”

Shark looked at her incredulously. “Our X.O. is a Cylon traitor whore, one third of our crew are Cylons and the mission is one point short of insane!” She took a long swing from the amber liquid in her glass. “We were fraked from the get go.”

It only took an instant for Splashdown to go into action. Drawing back she thrust her fist out, connecting with Shark’s nose and sending her sprawling from her chair, blood flying everywhere.

She didn’t stop there though. With blinding speed she pounced on the stunned pilot and pinned her down, one hand at her throat and the other drawn back for a killing blow.

“Let’s get one thing straight:” she growled, her voice low and menacing, “Sheba may be a Cylon but she is not a whore or a traitor. She has given more than you ever will for the rest of us and asked nothing in return.”

“Opening her fist, she lightly slapped Shark on the cheek twice as she applied slight pressure to her throat. “If you *ever* say anything like that within my ear shot again, I’ll break every bone in your miserable frakking body and toss you out an air lock.”

Standing quickly, she reached down, grabbed the front of Shark’s now bloody uniform top and hauled her to her feet. “Go get that nose checked out. I’m going to report myself to the X.O.”

With that, Splash down turned and marched from the room leaving everyone behind stunned into silence.

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR ARES
AQUARION SYSTEM

“You did *what*?”

Sheba had her arms folded across her chest and an angry expression on her face as she stared at Splashdown, yet inside she felt her heart tugged in different directions. On the one hand she felt overwhelmed that the junior officer had taken up her defense.

On the other hand she had assaulted a superior officer and sent her to the infirmary with a broken nose. It was a serious offense and one that Sheba couldn't take lightly, considering Splashdown's past.

“You know that Shark won't be able to fly for forty eight hours now, right?”

Splashdown nodded. “Yes sir and I am prepared to accept the consequences of my actions.”

Sheba took a deep breath as she considered the situation. Commander Ryan wasn't aware of the infraction yet and chances were that he would allow her to use her discretion in disciplining her and while she dearly wanted to shake her hand and thank her for standing up for her, the fact was that as X.O. she couldn't. It would set a bad example.

“I can't let this one pass Splash.” She said heavily. “Report to the brig. You'll still be allowed to fly but you will spend all your off duty hours there for the next two weeks.”

“Yes sir,” Splashdown replied, “it's nothing I haven't dealt with before.”

“*That* is why Doc Tyler will be coming to see you once a day, every day, until you get out.”

Splashdown's face screwed into a mask of confusion. “The shrink? Why the frak do I need to see her, sir?”

“Because you have a history of violence, Ensign. You've shot one man—”

“Who frakking deserved it.” Splashdown grumbled.

“And *now* you've assaulted a superior officer. You have an anger issue, Ensign and it's going to get you into trouble.”

Splashdown gritted her teeth. “Yes sir.” she said. “Will that be all?”

“Just one more thing—thank you.”

Splashdown nodded, turned and marched out of the C.I.C. with her head held high.

**GUEST OFFICERS QUARTERS
BATTLESTAR ARES
AQUARION SYSTEM**

The knock on the door jolted General Connors from the book he had picked up several hours prior and become so absorbed in. It was a historical text about the Battle of Caprica written just prior to the downfall of the colonies by an up and coming author whose name he couldn't remember.

Yet another thing we've lost he thought to himself as he put the book down and went to the door.

It groaned with age as he swung it back to reveal Commander Ryan, his Cylon aide Alpha at his side. "Come on in, Commander."

Ryan ducked his head and stepped into the room, Alpha not far behind him. "Two more Raptor crews just checked in."

"What did they find?" the general asked as he sat down on his bunk and directed Ryan to a chair.

"I could tell you but you probably already know." Ryan said grimly.

"Cylons."

Ryan nodded. "They've now hit just about every recon mission we've sent out. Obviously they're onto us."

"The question is: who is feeding the toasters the information?" Connors asked, his eyes going to Alpha.

"I have now scanned the Cylon node three times and found no viruses or software that would allow the enemy to track our movements." The Cylon reported.

"What about you, Commander? What do you think?"

Ryan cracked his neck and sighed wearily. "I trust my Cylon crew sir. They've not led me wrong yet and I don't think they're about to now."

"Well I'm glad you have faith in them, Commander, but that still doesn't solve our problem. We have a security leak and we need to fix it." The general said as he sipped on a glass of water. "Alpha, would any of your Centurions be able to recognize a skin job on sight?"

"I'm afraid not, sir. The flesh models we're not invented until long after we departed Colonial space, therefore we wouldn't be equipped with the correct programming to recognize them."

“What about your uplink with the Cylon collective database? Is there a way you could tap into that? We might be able to find out from that direction.” Connors asked.

“All of the Cylons aboard ship burned out their transceivers before they departed Colonial space.” Ryan said, shaking his head.

“But it could be done sir.” Alpha spoke up.

Ryan’s head snapped around as he fixed his gaze on his Cylon counterpart. “You said that there was no way—”

“Incorrect, sir: I said it would be *extremely difficult* and it would be, as well as dangerous.” Alpha replied.

“Explain.” The general commanded.

“We have inactive transceivers aboard ship sir. All we would need is an engineer familiar with Cylon design to re-install it in a volunteer. That volunteer would be able to access the Cylon database.”

“But what about the *danger* part?” Ryan asked, his concern evident in his voice.

“As much as we would have access to the Cylon database, they would also have access to our volunteer. They could conceivably download everything that Cylon knows including the location of Copernicus Colony and our current location.” Alpha said. “Which is why *I* have to be the one to do it.”

“No.” Ryan said flatly.

Connors held up his hand to forestall the younger man’s argument though. “Why you?”

“Because I am the only one aboard with the capacity to resist Cylon counter-programming. In addition, if I do become compromised, I am the only Cylon aboard with the capability to self terminate.”

Connors stroked his chin in thought for a moment. “Are you volunteering for this?”

“As always, I am proud to serve.” Alpha replied.

“Very well then. As soon as you’re ready, let me know.”

Ryan, stunned by the sudden turn of events, stood mutely and followed Alpha out the door. It wasn’t until it closed behind them that he spoke.

“What the hell are you thinking Alpha?”

“I am thinking that this holds the greatest possible chance of success for our mission, sir.” the Cylon replied as he moved down the corridor towards the engineering section of the ship.

“I could order you not to.” Ryan said.

Alpha stopped, turned slowly and placed his right hand on Ryan’s shoulder. “You could sir, but you won’t because you know, as well as I do, that finding this shipyard and recovering its technology could be the best and *last* hope that the human race has for survival. I thank you for your concern though.”

Ryan was at a loss for words so he simply nodded.

Alpha, seeing that the conversation was at an end, turned and marched away, his back straight and a sense of pride in his step.

PORTSIDE LANDING BAY BATTLESTAR ETERNAL COPERNICUS SYSTEM

“Welcome aboard, Admiral.” Commander Tajalle said as she extended her hand.

“Good to be back, Commander.” Turner replied as he took her hand and shook it firmly.

Looking around the bay quickly he saw the senior officers standing in ranks, their crewmen at rigid attention behind them. “Your crew looks good, Commander.”

“They’re the best.” Tajalle replied with pride.

Turner chuckled. “I think the crews aboard *Prometheus* and *Celestial* might have something to say about that.”

“Maybe after things get settled we’ll be able to arrange a competition. Perhaps the Poseidon Pennant?”

Turner nodded. “Why don’t you work the idea up? I think it might be good for morale.”

Tajalle nodded. “Very good, sir. In the meantime, the crew of the Eternal awaits your inspection.”

Turner inhaled deeply. “Let’s get to it then. Major Briedis will check out the engineering sections while Major Allen takes a look at your fighter squadrons.”

“Yes sir. The CAG and CEO are already waiting for them.”

“Good to go. In the mean time, Captain Halloran will take a look at your CIC while you and I discuss officer reviews.”

“Yes sir.” Tajalle replied as she came to attention and did an about face. “All section leaders and crewmen report to your stations for inspection. *Fall out!*”

Tajalle and Turner watched as the honor party moved quickly away to resume their duties. “Big improvement from when we found you, Commander.”

“It helps that we have a *fleet* officer in charge again.” Tajalle replied.

Turner cocked an eyebrow. “I thought you were fond of General Connors.”

“Oh, I am. He’s a great leader. We wouldn’t have survived this long without him.” The Commander replied quickly. “But- he’s not exactly a ‘by the book kind’ of guy, if you take my meaning.”

Turner nodded. “It comes from his Special Ops background. They’re not known for coloring inside the lines.”

Tajalle chuckled. “That’s for certain.”

Slowly, the two officers began to walk down the flight bay towards the access ramp where they would board the lift that would take them two stories up to the main transport causeway.

“I can’t blame him for doing what he thought was necessary to survive. Still,” Turner said as he made his way into the lift, “we have to do *more* than just survive now and it’s up to us to set the standard and rebuild the fleet.”

“Understood sir.” she replied as she punched in the code to get the lift moving. “Want to start in the C.I.C.?”

“Might as well get this over with,” Turner sighed, shaking his head. “I always *did* hate inspections.”

CHAPTER 2

DEAD SPACE

BRIG
BATTLESTAR ARES
AQUARION SYSTEM

Splashdown wiped her brow as she rose from her latest set of pushups and looked toward the brig entrance to find Archangel standing there, his arms folded and a patient smile on his face.

“Good to see you’re keeping your exercise regimen up.” He said, his deep voice booming in the small confines of the brig.

“Have to keep ready for when I am needed sir,” Splashdown replied breathing heavily. “Besides, it’s the best way to pass the time.”

“You could be passing it by talking to the Doctor like you were *ordered* to.” Archangel suggested.

“That frakking quack?” Splashdown said waving him off. “She couldn’t find her own ass with two hands and a hunting dog.”

Archangel shook his head as he pulled up a metal chair and swung it around to sit on it backwards. “You can’t just blow off orders like that.”

“Why not? My personal issues are just that- *mine*.” She said taking a seat on the floor of the cell. “Besides, I have no desire to talk to some so called expert on how society behaves who just graduated from school a month before that same society was vaporized.”

Archangel chuckled. “I can see that. Still, you need to do something about this anger issue you have.”

“Why?” Splashdown asked as she abruptly stood and began pacing the cell. “Why do I need to do anything about it? It’s *my* anger after all! *I* was the one who was raped by some dumb ass knuckle dragger! *I* was the one who had to shoot all of those escape pods down back at Zeta four-one-two! Both of those times Sheba saw me through the rough patches and now some dumb ass from a ship we just met a month ago wants to down her because she’s a Cylon? Well *frak her!*”

Archangel continued to stare at her, that same peaceful expression on his face that he always had coloring his expression.

Then she looked in the mirror behind him.

She was standing and holding the bars of the cell with a white knuckle grip, her teeth bared in a snarl and her face so red that she could make out the enlarged veins pulsing under her skin.

Repulsed by what she saw she staggered away from the bars and collapsed against the opposite bulkhead. “Oh my gods.” She said, her voice barely a whisper.

Now Archangel stood and gestured for the Marine to open the cell, which she did. Stepping inside, the door clanked shut behind him as he moved to kneel down in front of Splashdown.

She had her knees pulled up to her chest and wracking sobs were shaking her entire body as he reached out and placed a gentle hand on her head and whispered a prayer.

“Lords of Kobol hear my prayer and answer the call of your most humble servant. Lift the burdens from your troubled child and restore her broken spirit. Teach her to find in herself the power to forgive and comfort her in her hour of need.”

It was a long time before the sobbing stopped and Splashdown raised her red and swollen eyes but when she did Archangel was gone, the lights were dimmed for night rotation, her heart seemed lighter and for the first time in months she felt something new.

She felt hope.

**OFFICERS MESS
BATTLESTAR ETERNAL
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Turner straightened his dress gray uniform for what seemed like the fiftieth time as he took a deep breath and stepped into the officers’ mess.

“Admiral on deck!”

The din of activity came to a halt as the gathered officers stood to attention.

“As you were.” He said moving to a place set for him at the head table.

“Welcome to happy hour, Admiral.” Commander Tajalle said as she stepped to his side. “Allow me to introduce you to some of my officers.”

Turner nodded as she led him down the table.

“This is Captain Brittany Lundsford, my CAG.” Tajalle said introducing the athletically built blonde who stood to attention.

“At ease captain.” Turner said, patting her on the shoulder.

Lundsford relaxed but said nothing, her military discipline standing firm.

“What’s your callsign, Captain Lundsford?”

“Slayer, sir.” Lundsford replied.

Turner nodded. “Good stuff. Good hunting then, Captain. Carry on.”

Tajalle continued on down the table introducing her Chief Engineer, her Chief Medical Officer and the rest of her senior staff until they finally came to the two places set for them.

Picking up his glass he raised it in salute. “To the Twelve Colonies.”

“To the Colonies.” The officers replied.

Turner took a sip of the sweet liquid and sat his glass down, casting his eyes out across the room. “I know that this hasn’t been easy on you. After so long on the run by yourselves you had gotten used to doing things a certain way.”

Turner paused for a moment allowing his words to sink in. *This is a semi-hostile audience* he reminded himself. He would have to choose his words carefully.

“I know many of you aren’t happy about the changes I have made since assuming command. I know many of you are expecting a reprimand for your actions under General Connors. Well, that’s not going to happen. You *survived* the best way you knew how. You kept hope *and* the human race alive and if you bent or *broke* a few rules to do it,” he said with a smirk, “well then I guess I can live with that.”

A few heads nodded and Turner felt a glimmer of hope that his message was getting through. The next part would be the toughest though.

“I know that many of you are questioning my decision to allow the Cylons on the Ares to continue to serve with us. Believe me when I tell you that I thought long and hard about it and it took every fiber of my being not to line them all up and shoot them.”

Turner paused and looked around the room again. Those same heads that had been nodding with him a moment ago were now stony and silent.

“But I remember something my father, who served aboard the *Galactica* during the first Cylon war, said to me when I was a child. He said ‘Son, those who judge the whole by the actions of their brethren are idiots’. The Cylons on board the Ares could have easily fallen in

with their own kind during the first war but they didn't. They chose a different path. They decided to leave the colonies behind and forge a new life of peace for themselves and their human friends."

"So if they chose peace, why are they so willing to fight for us now?" Captain Lundsford asked.

"That's a good question," Turner nodded as he replied "and the answer is going to surprise you. They want to fight now because they failed."

"What do you mean?" Lundsford demanded.

"That's what do you mean, *sir*, Captain Lundsford." Commander Tajalle growled from beside Turner.

"What do you mean, *sir*?" Lundsford repeated, her tone still icy.

"What I mean is that not all of the Cylons were on board with the idea of destroying humanity during the first war. The Cylons aboard the *Ares* believed that if they took a stand and left to avoid the fighting, enough of the Cylons who believed like they did, would do the same thing. They sent a message to their fellow Cylons asking them to follow them. Unfortunately, the insurrection download made that impossible. It wiped all free will from the centurions."

"So why didn't the Cylons on the *Ares* rebel?" an officer from the back asked.

"They were already out of comms range when the download occurred. Besides, they burned out all of their transceivers when they made the decision to leave."

Heads nodded around the various tables and Turner took this as a sign of encouragement. "The fact is that right now, we as a species are on the verge of extinction and we need every willing hand we can get to rebuild our society. We have a home and a base of operations, and thanks to your efforts, thousands of people have survived this long nightmare."

Turner raised his glass to the audience. "Here is to rebuilding our civilization."

"Here's to kicking Cylons ass!" Lundsford shouted back to a loud chorus of *HOOAH!*

Turner nodded and smiled grimly. "That works too."

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR ARES
AQUARION SYSTEM**

The alarm klaxon buzzed and red lights flashed throughout the corridors of the Ares as Commander Ryan jogged toward the C.I.C. with several junior officers following closely behind.

“Out of the way, *out of the way!* Make a hole, gods damn it!” he shouted as he navigated his way through the rushing crewmen.

Finally reaching the open door he made his way to the situation table to find his X.O. waiting for him. “Report.”

“Cylon Basestar just jumped in over the northern pole of Aquarion.” Sheba reported.

“What’s our position?” Ryan asked.

“Seven degrees south of the planetary equator.”

“The Cylons are launching Raiders!” the operations officer announced.

“Time to put our plan into action. X.O.: Launch all Vipers.” Ryan said as he lifted the handset to his mouth. “Get Alpha up here.”

“New Dradis contact bearing two-seven-zero, karem two-zero-one! Range: thirteen thousand. Contact designated as Constellation Two.” The Ops officer shouted.

“Identify.” Ryan commanded.

“Constellation Two identified as a Cylon Basestar. Her weapons went hot the moment she jumped in.” the Ops officer replied.

Sheba’s eyes tightened at the corners, the only concession she gave to her worries. Ryan saw this and winked. “Looks like the game is afoot, X.O. Let’s make this look good and be ready to go when the curtain comes down.”

“Aye sir.” she replied. “All guns, set target perimeter and open fire.”

“Sir, I have come as ordered.”

Ryan turned to find Alpha standing beside him, his head dome opened to reveal the flashing lights inside his CPU.

“Does it- hurt?” Ryan couldn’t help asking.

“I appreciate your concern, but no sir.” Alpha replied inclining his head. “That part of my damage detection system has been disabled for the time being. However, if I may be so bold, perhaps we should save this conversation for *after* the mission.”

“Agreed.” Ryan nodded. “Are you ready?”

“I am sir.”

“Very well, execute.”

“Wait.” Alpha said. “Sir, I request that you place a Marine guard on me until this is complete.”

“Why?” Ryan asked.

“In case the enemy is able to over ride my firewalls. I could become a very dangerous liability if that happens.”

Ryan nodded and gestured for a marine to take station. “Only on my command, understand?”

“Yes sir.”

“Sir, Vipers have engaged enemy Raiders and we have established an A.A. perimeter.” Sheba reported.

“Good. Alpha, do your thing.”

“By your command.”

Alpha was a Cylon, a model 0003 Cylon to be exact. He had originally been built in Caprica City and programmed to work as an administrative assistant. For the first two years of his life he had worked in the Caprican Defense Force Headquarters as clerk in the accounting department.

Then he had been reassigned to the top secret Battlestar Project. He had been programmed with all of the specifications and information that he would need he was assigned to the Ares as the Cylon counterpart to Commander Rivera.

Through him, the Cylons aboard would work to defend the fragile peace between the Colonies.

So dedicated was he to the peaceful concept of life among the Colonies that it had only taken him a micro second to consider and approve of the plan that Rivera had come up with to leave the Colonies and avoid the terrible war that was sure to come.

All of these thoughts and more came floating to the surface of his mind as he began to search through the Cylon network.

It felt much like swimming in a calm and cool stream, or what he imagined that would feel like since he had never done so before. All around him, like tiny points of light he could see the minds of other Cylons going about their work. He was tempted to reach out to them; say hello.

He restrained himself though because he knew the dangers inherent in such an act.

Instead he focused his attention on the distant light that was an information node. Quickly he swam to it and delved into its secrets.

Access was simple. The hybrid controlling the node immediately recognized him as kindred and welcomed him in with open arms and he had to admit, it felt nice to be welcomed home by his family.

Until he discovered their plans.

“Launch warning! Incoming missiles from Basestar two!”

“Switch starboard batteries to air defense pattern.” Commander Ryan replied calmly as he turned to look at Alpha.

His Cylon aide had been in the network for less than a minute but already the enemy attacks were increasing.

“Raiders are pressing hard sir. We just lost two more.” Sheba reported as she studied the Dradis readouts.

“Have the squadrons fall back to final defensive lines and spin up the FTL. It’s starting to get too hot.” Ryan commanded.

“Aye sir.” Sheba replied.

Suddenly Alpha stood upright and turned to Ryan. “Sir, it is imperative that we leave right *now*.”

Ryan frowned and was about to ask why when the ship shook violently.

“Report!” he commanded.

“Multiple missile impacts on the forward hull.” One voice shouted over the din of activity.

“Decompression alarms in sections seven, twelve and nineteen.” Another added.

“New Dradis contacts bearing one-eight-zero, karem two-zero-three. Cylon Basestars.” The Ops officer suddenly announced.

“What the frak is going on, Alpha?” Ryan asked.

“The enemy knows we’re here and they know I have access their plans. We have to leave now.” The Cylon replied.

The ship shuddered again and Ryan had to fight to remain on his feet.

“Direct hit to the port side flight pod. Fires in sections sixty-one and sixty-three.” Sheba reported.

“Emergency vent of the affected sections.” Ryan ordered as he turned to the Flight Control Officer. “Flight- Get our birds back on the deck! Combat landings authorized!”

“Aye sir.” the young ensign replied. “All squadron leaders, this is Ares Flight- Fall back to the nest ASAP. Combat landings are authorized.”

“Spin up the FTL drives and stand by to jump as soon as the flight pods are retracted.” Ryan said turning toward Sheba. “I want a good count of all our pilots before we jump. I don’t want to leave anyone behind.”

Sheba nodded.

“Did you find what you were looking for?” Ryan asked his Cylon counterpart as he directed his attention back to the battle unfolding around him.

“Yes,” Alpha replied heavily. “I found out everything- why the war happened, what their plans are, everything.”

CHAPTER 3

BEST LEFT FORGOTTEN

FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM

He was dreaming again. He knew it from the surreal feeling that permeated his mind as he walked the halls of a ship he hadn't served on in over three years.

The crew moved around him like he wasn't there but he felt their presence as surely as if he was. The alarm klaxon was buzzing and people were moving with a purpose. He knew this scene all too well.

The Battlestar *Pegasus* was at war.

He made his way down the corridors to C.I.C. and her gleaming glass doors opened for him. He shook his head. He had always *hated* those doors. He much preferred the sliders he had on *Prometheus*.

As he stepped in he expected to see the familiar form of Admiral Helena Cain at her post, her imposing presence filling the room with confidence and fight but instead he saw a young man with commander's rank whom he didn't recognize standing in her position.

He frowned, thinking *Where's the Admiral? Where's Belzen and Fisk?*

"Cylons are making another run on us sir." Announced a man that Turner instantly recognized as Lieutenant Louis Hoshi.

"Direct Starbuck to intercept." The young commander said without even glancing away from the Dradis readout. "Major, direct the forward batteries to switch to salvo fire. We need to protect the flagship."

"Aye sir." a severe young woman with dark hair and a strong accent replied.

Flagship? Turner thought. *What the Frak is going on here?*

"Doesn't make a lot of sense, does it?"

Turner spun around quickly, his mind reeling at the sound of a voice he knew was gone forever.

"Hello son."

Turner's eyes went wide as he took in his father, dressed in an old style Colonial Lieutenants uniform and standing there with a smile on his face.

"How-?"

"We'll get to that later, son." His father said. "Right now we need to talk. Some things have changed and you need to know."

"Yeah. That whole *Herald of Aurora* thing went to shit fast didn't it?" Turner asked sarcastically.

"Don't get smart with me boy." The elder Turner said sternly. "Something changed everything."

"So you said."

"The Cycle of Time has been disrupted."

The Admiral turned to look at his father with an arched eyebrow. "You mean that *all this has happened before and will again* bullshit?"

This time the elder Turner reached out and popped his son in the mouth. "That's for blasphemy."

Turner put his hand to his cheek as his father continued.

"You weren't supposed to make it back to the Colonies. You were supposed to find the human survivors and guide them to a new home on Earth."

"Dad, I found Earth. It was dead. Nothing there but burned out ruins of a once great civilization."

The elder Turner shook his head. "There was something more there. Something buried that you haven't discovered yet and it's the reason that everything changed."

"So what is it?"

His father smiled. "Come on, boy-o. I didn't raise you to go for the easy way out."

Turner closed his eyes and rubbed his temples. "Dad, everyone I ever loved is dead. My home worlds are gone and we're back to square one on the civilization chart. I'm tired of the hard way, Dad."

Frank Turner smiled gently and placed a hand on his son's shoulder. "The answers you seek are closer than you think."

Turner awoke with a start, the sensation of his father's touch still fresh in his mind as the incessant buzzing at his door brought him back to reality.

Rubbing his eyes he rose from his bunk and made his way to the door. Leaning against the bulkhead he touched the button that would open his door.

It slid open to reveal Colonel Horvath standing there. "What's going on Colonel?" he asked stifling a yawn.

She smiled. "Hyperpulse message from the Ares sir. They got the information."

"The infiltrator?"

"Identified."

Turner nodded. "And the Ares?"

"Under heavy attack. Trying to jump away." She replied grimly.

"Action stations, Colonel. Spin up the FTL's to full charge. We need to make the jump in one shot if possible."

"On it sir."

The door slid shut and Turner picked up the handset next to it. "This is the Admiral- get Commander Tajalle on the horn for me *now*."

STARBOARD HANGAR DECK BATTLESTAR ARES AQUARION SYSTEM

General Connors watched from above as Vipers and Cylon Raiders were dispatched quickly to get into the fight with the attacking Cylons and, not for the first time, felt like spectator in a sport where he was supposed to be the star player.

In the months since the arrival of the *Prometheus* he had found himself more and more relegated to the sidelines as Admiral Turner took control of the fleet. Granted, he was still the commander of all home world defenses but after being in command of a Battlestar and raking the fight to the Cylons...

It just wasn't the same.

In truth he felt as if his life had been yanked out from under him. First he had lost his position as Commander of Colonial Special Operations, then the colonies had been destroyed, then Adama was lost at Ragnar and finally, just as he was getting used to the idea of being supreme commander of Colonial Forces, Turner had shown up and taken that away too.

Now he was the guy on the ground wishing that he was back in space.

“Crewman Yates stand to!”

The shout from below drew Connors attention to the fully armed Marine squad running onto the hangar deck, weapons raised and ready to fire.

“Crewman Yates, step forward with your hands raised *now*.” The sergeant said again.

Connors watched as the one identified as Yates stepped forward cautiously with his hands raised. “What’s going on?” the tall black man asked.

“Place your hands behind your head and kneel down on the floor, Crewman.” The sergeant said and he edged forward.

Slowly, Yates placed his hands behind his head and the sergeant stepped forward to take custody...

And in a flash Yates had the sergeant in front of him using him as a shield as he took his weapon into hand and unloaded into the squad, dropping them one by one as the rest of the deck crew dashed for cover.

Looking around quickly and seeing all of his opponents writhing in pools of their own blood, Yates dashed for the ladder up to the walk way. He climbed fast and furious to the top...

And jerked back as Connors bullet ripped through his skull followed by a spray of blood and bone fragments.

The general looked down on the fallen body as Marines rushed in to surround the dying crewman.

“Nice shot.”

Connors spun to find Commander Ryan standing behind him, Alpha at his side.

Connors lowered the gun. “How did you know?”

“Alpha found out while he was in the Cylon nexus. He’s been reporting our movements but that’s not the most important thing.”

Connors waited for a moment for the Commander to answer but all he did was smile.

And then the ship jumped.

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
RALLY POINT DELTA**

Admiral Turner smiled as his old friend strode into the *Prometheus* C.I.C. with General Connors at his side. “Well done, Commander.”

“Thank you sir.” Ryan replied as he sat a star chart on the situation table.

“So what’s the story?”

“Good news, bad news scenario.” Ryan said as he unrolled the map. “Good news: We were able to draw out the infiltrator and gain the intelligence we needed to proceed. The bad news is that the Cylons are searching for Lobo Negro too.”

“Well, while you were gone Slider and his scout teams were able to verify some activity where we think Lobo Negro is. The fleet will move in force once we get back and see to your battle damage.” Turner replied.

Ryan shook his head. “There’s no time, you have to go now.”

Turner cocked an eyebrow. “Something you want to fill me in on, Commander?”

“The Cylons are gearing up to leave. Apparently they’ve found bigger fish to fry.”

“They’re leaving?” Colonel Horvath asked. “What about all the work they did to rebuild the Colonies?”

“They’re just leaving it.”

“So how does the Cylons leaving the Colonies affect our timetable?” Turner asked.

“Because they are leaving a token force behind to take care of any survivors and they want to make sure that Lobo Negro is out of the equation before the bulk of their fleet departs.” Ryan said as he looked around the room to gauge the others reaction. “They’re looking for Lobo Negro right now and if they find it before we do...”

“Frak.” Horvath said.

“My thoughts exactly.” Turner replied. “Return to your ship and prepare to jump back to Copernicus. Colonel Horvath, recall the CAP and stand by to jump.”

“Yes sir.” Turner’s X.O. replied.

“That just leaves us with two questions: Where are the Cylons going and why?” Turner asked.

“I can tell you but you won’t believe it.”

Ryan told him and he was right...

He didn’t believe it.

TO BE CONTINUED...

AUTHORS NOTE:

**THIS EPISODE IS DEDICATED TO MY DEAR
FRIEND AND BROTHER IN ARMS
SFC JOHN ELLIOT OF MORTAR PLATOON HHC,
1- 66, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION
FT. HOOD, TX
WELCOME HOME BRO!**