



# **BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

BY RYAN A. KEETON

## Athena's Tears

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, 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Regiment

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

Major David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Major Stacie Percival: Executive Officer, Battlestar Ares

Captain Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

Lieutenant Brad "Tiny" Allen: Squadron Commander, 32<sup>nd</sup> Viper Squadron

Lieutenant Rose "Tiger" Hohensee: Squadron Commander, 101<sup>st</sup> Viper squadron

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

Ensign Ashley "Splashdown" Klave: Pilot, Raptor Support Squadron

Ensign Melody "Hygiena" Moody: Pilot, 32<sup>nd</sup> Viper Squadron

## 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

Lilith (Sharon): Cylon Basestar Commander

Tyranus Bane(Doral): Hero of the Alliance Campaign

# PROLOGUE

## Death

**PORTSIDE HANGAR BAY  
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS  
24 HOURS AFTER THE BATTLE**

Admiral Turner and General Connors stood silently in an alcove and watched as representatives from the ships of the fleet filed in quietly for the impromptu memorial service being given.

In the front rank were the senior officers of the fleet: Commanders Ryan and Tajalle and Colonel Hall. Surrounding them were the other Gunstar commanders and several of the Civilian ship captains. Behind them over five hundred officers and crewmen formed into ranks and stood silently, waiting for Connors and Turner to enter the room.

As the two senior officers of what was left of the Colonial Defense Forces, it fell to them to honor those who had fallen at the Second Battle of the Veil. It was a heavy burden, especially in light of the number of people lost.

Behind the podium that stood facing the crowd were the flags of the twelve colonies and the new flag that represented of the Colony of Copernicus. In front of them were the circular shields that represented the ships of the fleet with places of honor being accorded to the *Celestial* and the *Sentinel*.

“You know, I have always hated memorial services.” Connors mumbled from next to him.

Turner sighed. “Me too. First one I ever attended was during flight school. One of my training mates bought it over the Olympian Alps on Picon. I was chosen for honor detail.”

“My first was when I was still a lieutenant. My Marines were sent in to hunt down a smuggling ring that was operating in the Medusa Jungle on Aquarion. We got the frakkers but we lost three men in the process. For years, all I could remember was their wives crying on the front pew of the temple.” The general shook his head.

Turner nodded. “I lost my first man on a mission to the Tigris system. Pirates were using one of the old Tauron outposts left over from before the Cylon War as a base to attack shipping between Caprica and Sagitaron. I was on the *Atlantia* at the time and my CAG sent my flight out to pin down one of the ships that were trying to make a run for it. They got off a lucky shot and hit my wingman square in the cockpit.”

“That sucks.” Connors said.

“Yeah it did. We made them pay for it though. We put so many holes in that old crate that she couldn’t even be used for salvage by the time we were done.”

“As it should be,” Connors nodded as he straightened his dress grays. “Ready to do this?”

Turner checked his own uniform one last time and then nodded. “Let’s go.”

The assembly snapped to attention as the two flag officers marched out in lock step with each other and took their positions behind the podium.

Sensing his cue, Archangel, the closest thing they had to a chaplain aboard ship, stepped forward and took his prayer ribbon in his hand. “Lord of Kobol hear our prayers,” he began reverently. “We gather here before you this day to mourn the loss and celebrate the lives of your fallen sons and daughters, our dear comrades.”

Turner watched as everyone heads bowed and some tears began to flow. Bowing his own head, he listened as Archangel continued.

“We know not why you chart the courses of our lives the way that you do, but we know that there is wisdom in your actions. These brother and sisters who have fallen in battle, fought for your glory and honor and died with their heads held high and their spirits proud. We ask that you bless their souls and guide them to eternal rest on the Elysian Fields. So say we all.”

“So say we all.” The crowd quietly responded.

Seeing Archangel step back from the podium, Turner moved forward and took his place. Gazing out across the crowd he saw the worn and tired faces that looked back at him, their cheeks streaked with tears and their eyes red from anguish.

For a long moment he recited his prepared statement in his mind as he got ready to speak, but then, at the last second, he changed his mind as he remembered something Commander Cain had once told him.

*“Remember John: the best words are those that come straight from the gut.”*

Gathering his strength he held his head high. “One thousand, two hundred and fifty four souls.”

He let his words echo throughout the chamber as the settled into each and every person present. He wanted them to realize that this wasn’t just about their own grief.

He knew that there were very few people in the fleet that didn’t at least know in passing, someone who had died during the battle and because the loss had been so great, many had chosen instead to focus solely on their own personal grief.

He needed to remind them that the entire family had lost.

“We have *all* lost today but we have all won as well,” Turner continued. “There isn’t anyone here who didn’t know someone who died yesterday. I doubt that there is anyone in the fleet who didn’t know at least one person on those doomed ships. I knew many of the fallen by name or by face. Some of them were with us when we started our long mission to explore the unknown; some were new friend and allies. *All of them* meant more to me than life itself.”

He waited and gazed out across the gathered faces, all of which were drawn in sorrow. Inside, he felt as if his own heart were close to breaking, the pain feeling like an icy burning in his chest.

“As our hearts break for our fallen friends let us keep in mind that they died for a noble goal: the survival of our race. In the end, that’s what we’re all fighting for. If we win, we live. We fail, and we die. Keep this in mind as we continue our mission.”

Feeling satisfied, he stepped back and departed the gathering at a brisk pace, Connors following quietly behind him.

They walked in silence until they reached the branch of the corridor that would take Turner back to his suite in officer country. Stopping there he turned to face Connors, his face a stone mask.

“You okay?” The general asked.

“As okay as one can be when he’s just lost over a thousand people under his command.” Turner replied quietly.

“That’s not what I meant, Admiral,” Connors replied gently. “You lost two very close friends yesterday.”

Turner took a deep breath as the pain welled up in his chest as fresh as it had been when he had seen it happen. “Yeah, I’ll be fine.”

Connors placed an understanding hand on the admiral’s shoulder. He hadn’t known Turner long, but he knew him well enough to figure out when he didn’t want to talk. “I’m going to head back now. I’ll shoot you a report as soon as we’re ready to jump.”

Turner nodded absently. “Thank you, General- for everything.”

Connors smiled weakly and marched away toward the portside hangar where his Raptor awaited him.

Turning slowly the Admiral walked to his suite, his feet feeling like they were made of lead and his shoulders weary from the stress of combat. Arriving there the two Marines standing guard at his door snapped to attention and saluted.

He nodded, his only acknowledgement as the doors to the flag suite slid open to admit him. "I don't want to be disturbed for the next eight hours." He said as he stepped through.

The Marines responded but he didn't hear them as the doors slid shut behind him, locking away the world outside.

# CHAPTER ONE

## The Winds of War

COMMAND AND OPERATIONS CENTER  
LOBO NEGRO SPACE STATION  
12 HOURS BEFORE THE BATTLE

Commanders Tajalle and Alexander studied the image on the display in front of them for several long moments before finally looking up at Admiral Turner and General Connors, both of whom were speaking quietly in the corner of the C.O.C.

“I don’t like this, not one bit.” Alexander said, his smooth Caprican accent giving extra edge to his words. “I’ve never seen the Admiral this tense over a situation.”

“Connors doesn’t look much better,” Tajalle replied. “I can’t blame him though. Look at what they have out there waiting for us.”

On the screen before them were five Cylon Baseships arrayed in blockade pattern, their wings of Raiders running an ongoing patrol around the fleet.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen that much Cylon firepower all in one place.” Alexander said.

“I have,” Tajalle replied mournfully. “Three weeks after the attack on the colonies the General and I did a recon in force into the Caprica system. You would have thought it was frakking Colonial Day with all the firepower they had in orbit.”

Alexander made no comment in reply and was grateful when he saw Turner and Connors finish speaking and move toward them.

“Well folks, you’ve seen the situation. What are your thoughts?” Turner asked as he stood next to Tajalle.

“There’s no way around it sir- this is going to be a knock down drag out slug fest.” She replied.

“Agreed, sir.” Alexander added.

“The General and I believe the same thing and we’ve come up with a plan, but the butcher’s bill is going to be high.” Turner said.

“Sir,” Major Langley called out as she entered the room, “the *Celestial* is secure in her berth and all non-essential personnel have been moved over to the station.”

Turner nodded in acknowledgement. "I'm glad you're here, Major. It's time to discuss our plan for getting out of this nebula."

"I'm ready when you are sir." Langley replied eagerly.

"Good. First thing I want to say is that I'm placing General Connors in command of the station itself." Turner announced. "You've done a fine job in holding things down here, Major, but the General and I have the same mind on how we want to execute this. Besides, once we get you guys back to Copernicus, he's going to be using the station as his headquarters for the homeworld defense forces."

Langley looked stunned but nodded slowly. "Of course sir, whatever you say."

"However, because you know the station and her crew better than anyone else I am promoting you to Colonel and making you his X.O."

Langley's eyes widened in surprise. "Thank you, sir."

"Don't thank *me*. The General here insisted that I keep you on with him and since he is the commander of all Colonial ground forces, I felt inclined to agree with him. Besides, from what everyone says around here you've done one hell of a job keeping this place running."

"I was just doing my job sir."

"And that's all we can ask." Turner said as he brought up a digital chart on the display screen. "What's the status of the stations jump drives?"

Langley grimaced. "To be honest sir, with us being shorthanded the routine maintenance and systems checks for the FTL haven't been done in months."

"Well we had better get after it quickly then," Turner said as he activated his headset radio. "Prometheus- this is Actual."

"Actual this is Prometheus, go ahead." The voice of Colonel Horvath replied.

"X.O., get Major Briedis over here with an FTL team and have him go over the stations drives with a fine tooth comb and tell him to make it snappy."

"Understood, sir."

Turner cut the link and gestured to Connors. "This was your idea, General."

Connors smiled as he took Turner's cue. "Because this nebula is so dense, we have only mapped one section of space accurately enough to jump the station to. Unfortunately, it's right outside the nebula perimeter."

A red X appeared on the screen outside the cloud boundary and Tajalle whistled as the tactical situation dawned on them.

"That's going to put us right into the range of the Cylon's guns." Alexander said.

"Exactly," Connors replied. "Space stations can take a lot of pounding but not even the best one ever built can withstand the concentrated fire from a fleet of Basestars."

"That's why we're going out first," Turner interjected.

On the screen, icons representing the *Prometheus*, *Nova* and *Celestial* as well as the six Gunstars attached to the task force deployed from the cloud to form a perimeter around the X icon.

"We're going to establish a perimeter and hold off the Cylons while the *Lobo Negro* jumps in and makes it calculations to jump out," Turner announced. "Once the station jumps clear we'll combat land our birds and follow her out, the Gunstars first followed by the Battlestars."

"Sir," Commander Alexander said, "we're going to be under heavy fire from the enemy. What happens if one of our ships is disabled?"

"We won't last long against those Basestars." Tajalle added.

Turner nodded. "I know. If your ship becomes disabled we'll do what we can to help but our goal is to get in and out as fast as possible. That being said, we'll adjust the battle plan as needed but..."

Turner's voice trailed off but everyone took his meaning. With all of the Cylons gathered against them, prolonged rescue operations weren't going to be feasible.

"Let's just do what we can to make sure that we don't have to deal with the *but* part." Connors said.

"Agreed," The Admiral said. "Now let's get back to our respective commands and get ready for this fight that's coming."

Tyranus Bane studied the display in front of him with a smirk as he shook his head. “So predictable.”

“Care to enlighten the rest of us?” Jezebel asked.

Bane pointed to a section right outside of the cloud perimeter. “This is where he will make his stand.”

“And when did you suddenly become psychic?” Jezebel sneered.

Bane smiled sweetly. “First rule of warfare: Know thy enemy.”

Jezebel arched an eyebrow and even Lucifer, who had been enjoying her humiliation up to this point, scowled at Bane’s arrogance.

“Jonathan Turner is a pragmatist but he also has a heroic streak in him,” Bane explained. “Based on the information we have about the *Lobo Negro* station, we know that its jump radius is very limited, about half that of a standard Mercury class Battlestar.”

“Why is its range so limited?” Gabriel asked.

“Would take too much energy to jump that much mass for long distances,” Lilith explained. “You have to remember that their power systems aren’t as advanced as ours.”

“Which is very informative but really, who gives a frak?” Jezebel asked impatiently as she spun back to Bane. “How do you know he’s going to make his stand there?”

Bane chuckled. “He’ll make his stand right there because the station will have to jump out to that point in order to plot a jump away from the nebula.”

“Their navigation systems won’t be able to plot from inside the nebula.” Lilith interjected.

“Once again, I don’t *give a frak*,” Jezebel snarled. “I just want to know where this son of a bitch will be so I can kill him.”

“Ahem,” Lucifer spoke up. “First off Jez, you’re being a bitch. Second, Bane has command of this operation.”

“You can’t be serious?” Jezebel’s eyes shot open in surprise.

“Have you ever known me to joke?” Lucifer arched an eyebrow.

“But—”

“Bane has more experience in dealing with Turner. He will take the lead on this one.” Lucifer declared, turning to Lilith. “In the meantime, tell me about this nebula and its peculiar affect on Cylon physiology.”

“We don’t know much more than we did before,” Lilith explained. “It’s a concentrated form of the same thing we found at Ragnar. Even limited exposure has a disabling effect on Cylon physiology.”

“Is there anything we can do to counteract it?” Gabriel asked.

“Not right now,” Adam said. “However we *are* working on it.”

“Well that’s all well and good but it does absolutely nothing for us right now,” Lucifer said folding his arms across his chest. “How far out does the radiation affect us?”

“Fifty thousand for instant effects.” Adam replied.

“And how far out will Turner have to go to plot a jump for the station?”

“At least fifty-five thousand.” Lilith said.

“Then I guess we’ll have to kill him fast won’t we?” Lucifer said.



## **ENLISTED REC CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Master Chief Theresa Madrid wasn’t one who was usually given to angry outbursts. In fact, she preferred to live by the old adage *speak quietly, but carry a large club*. Today, she thought, she just might have to break that particular rule.

Standing before her in the enlisted recreation room were seven bloody, bruised and battered crewmen, their eyes downcast and the appropriate expressions of shame and guilt on their faces.

She shook her head, a mystified look on her own face. “Wow. I don’t think I have *ever* seen a bigger bunch of pathetic losers in my entire life. You get six hours of down time so that you can get some sleep before the fight we have coming and what do you do? Get drunk and start a fight.”

The words stung and she could see the reaction in their facial muscles as they tried to bite their tongues. She smirked. “So, which one of you knuckle draggers started it?”

All of them remained silent.

“Well don’t everyone speak up at once.” She said, folding her arms across her chest.

She waited a moment longer before stepping up to a large mountain of a man with a shaved head and fearsome looking tattoos wrapping around his massive arms. “Was it you Hoffman? Probably was huh? I know you have hair trigger temper after all.”

“Negative, Master Chief.” Hoffman replied quietly.

Madrid snorted derisively. “Well then who started it? Was it *you* Briggs? How about *you* Jackson?”

“No, Master Chief.” They all replied.

“Oh, I see. A frakking imp must have started it then,” Madrid said raising her voice. “That’s it! An imp came in and smacked the shit out of you guys all at the same time so you would start fighting and beat the crap out of each other, right?”

They seven men remained silent.

“You must think I’m a real retard!” she snapped as she signaled for the Marines to enter. “You are all confined to the brig pending charges! Now get the frak out of my sight!”

The seven men turned as one and shuffled out with their heads hung low as Maddie spun on her heel and marched out.

“Long day Master Chief?” said a voice from behind her.

Immediately she smiled to herself as she stopped and turned to see Captain Halloran moving toward her, several tech manuals under his left arm.

“Just a few knuckle draggers who can’t keep their grubby paws off each other, sir. Nothing I couldn’t handle.” Maddie replied falling into step next to him.

“Of that, I have no doubt, Chief.” Halloran replied with a smirk.

“We still on for dinner?” Maddie asked.

“I’ll try,” Halloran said regretfully. “The old man has me working overtime right now updating our systems from the station’s computer core.”

“What a slave driver,” Maddie smirked.

“Well we *do* have a big fight coming up in a few hours—”

Suddenly the deck plates shook beneath the, and the ship trembled violently causing them both to reach out to the bulkheads to steady themselves.

“I think that’s our invitation to dance,” Halloran said.

“Well at least the Cylons are punctual,” Maddie replied as she steadied herself. “I guess dinner will have to wait.”

Halloran stood straight and smiled. “Don’t worry, we’ll make up for it afterwards.”

Maddie winked. “Damn Skippy we will- *sir*.”

## **COMMAND AND OPERATIONS CENTER LOBO NEGRO SPACE STATION 10 HOURS BEFORE THE BATTLE**

“That was close,” newly promoted Colonel Langley said as she watched the detonation wave radiate out from the explosion on the dradis screen.

General Connors nodded. “And that was just their first shot.”

“Just a shot in the dark,” Commander Tajalle said. “Look at the two subsequent bursts. They’re moving off in a linear pattern.”

“That will buy us some time,” Admiral Turner said. “If they’re moving in a standard search pattern it will be a little while before they come back and hit the starting point again. That gives us time but not much.”

“What’s the status of the system checks?” Commander Tajalle asked.

“Our FTL’s are green and our navigation system is online. We’re checking the defensive systems and securing everything now but it’s going to be at least three hours before we can jump.” Colonel Langley replied.

“What about the *Nova*?” Commander Alexander asked.

“She’s been ready to fight since day one.” Langley replied with pride.

“Who’s going to command her?” Tajalle followed up.

“Colonel Langley has the most experience with her crew and systems,” Alexander said.

“No,” Langley shook her head, “I just filled in for Admiral Parker while he was gone. I can barely make her go forward and back. Besides, my crew was mainly techs and anyone else I could scrounge.”

Admiral Turner shook his head. “I want Colonel Langley here on the station, General Connors will need her. Commander Hatch will take command of the *Nova* and we’ll post his crew from the *Celestial* to fill her billets.”

“That’ll make Rick happy,” Tajalle said with a smile. “He’s itching at a chance to get some payback for what they did to his ship.”

“We all are,” Turner said. “We have to remember, though, that this is a delaying action, not a stand up fight. We hold the line until the station can jump away and then we get the hell out of here.”

The deck plates trembled again and the assembled officers cast a tense glance at each other.

“Report to your posts and report when you’re ready.” Turner commanded.

The officers snapped to attention and saluted. Turner took a moment to look them all in the eye before returning the salute. “Good hunting.”



# CHAPTER TWO

## A cry of Angry Thunder

**C.A.G.'S OFFICE  
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS  
6 HOURS BEFORE THE BATTLE**

As Slider took a seat across from his four squadron commanders he took a moment to examine their tired faces.

Lt. Rose 'Tiger' Hohensee, the youngest of the group, looked bright and chipper but her eyes told the story of her long hours in the cockpit. Captain Brad 'Tiny' Allen looked disheveled, his short blonde hair matted from just coming out of the cockpit.

Next to him sat Captain Joshua 'Shooter' Wakefield sat in only his shorts and undershirt having just come from the shower. Finally his newest squadron commander, Captain Robin 'Phoenix' Wilson, sat apart from the others. New to both command and the *Prometheus*, having just transferred in from the *Eternal*, she was quiet and standoffish.

"I've just come from the Admiral's office and he's handed us a dozy of an assignment," he said leaning forward. "We're going to fly out in advance and create an air defense screen for the fleet to keep the Raiders off their backs."

"How many Raiders are we looking at, boss?" Tiny asked.

Slider smiled sheepishly. "Approximately a lot. Last Raptor recon put the enemy capital strength at five Basestars. If they all have fully functional Raider wings..."

"Holy shit," Rose gasped. "That's—"

"Over a thousand Raiders," Phoenix finished grimly.

"How the *frak* do we hold off over one thousand Cylon Raiders?" Shooter asked incredulously.

"By making them come to us," Slider said as he activated his desktop screen. "We're going to form a blockade and hold the line until the fleet gets into position. Then we go hunting."

Tiny smiled and Shooter arched an eyebrow.

"We'll be outnumbered, sir," Phoenix said. "How can we gain the initiative on them when they have that kind of advantage?"

“We do it by flying smarter than them,” Shooter said.

“We hunt in pairs. No one goes without a wingman,” Slider said.

“What happens if you lose a partner?” Rose asked.

“Find another. Hunt in threes is you have to but nobody goes alone.”

The room was quiet for a long moment as they all considered the fight to come but as Slider looked at his four subordinates, it wasn't fear or despondency he saw in their eyes.

It was grim determination.

“How long until go time?” Tiny asked, breaking the silence.

“Eight hours,” Slider replied.

“How many pilots will we have?” Phoenix spoke up.

“Anyone with wings will be in the air with us,” Slider said as he handed his clipboard to Shooter. “The ones with the least flight time will be on reserve status but their birds will be in the tubes and ready to launch in case their needed.”

“Sir, some of these people haven't had any stick time in weeks,” Shooter said as he poured over the names. “You know how easy it is to get rusty if you haven't had your ass in the hot seat in a while.”

“Yeah but we don't have a lot of choice,” Slider replied. “Get your people assembled and brief them on the plan then get those who haven't had any stick time into the simulators. If they do well enough, have them do a couple of laps around the station to get their mind back in the game.”



**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER  
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS  
4 HOURS BEFORE THE BATTLE**

“Admiral on deck.”

“As you were,” Turner said as he walked into the C.I.C. and made his way toward Colonel Horvath. “X.O., sitrep.”

“Engineering reports that all of our hull breaches have been sealed,” Colonel Horvath replied as she read off the engineering checklist she held in her hands. “Also, the dorsal intercooler matrix is back on line so we’ll have full power.”

“Very good, Colonel, what else?”

“All gun and missile batteries are armed and ready and the CAG reports that all but two of our birds are flight ready.”

“What’s wrong with those two?”

“One took a round through the engine pack and the deck chief is still cleaning out the cockpit of the second from the last occupant.” Horvath said grimly.

Turner took a breath and nodded. “When was the last recon bird sent out?”

Horvath looked up to check her display screen. “Splashdown took off about thirty minutes ago with Hygiëna back seating her. They should reach the nebula perimeter within the hour.”

Turner nodded. “Good. Let me know when they report in.”

“Yes sir,” Horvath replied. “I also have an idea I want to run by you, sir.”

Turner made a final notation in his notebook and then set it down, devoting his undivided attention to her. “Fire away.”

Horvath pushed a button and activated the display screen on the situation table. “I’ve been reviewing the battle ROMs and I think we have an advantage that the Cylon’s don’t know about.”

“And that is?”

“The *Nova*,” Horvath said touching the display and bringing an image of the *Prometheus*’ sister ship to the forefront. “I don’t think they got a good look at her, sir. That’s gives us an edge.”

Turner nodded. "Okay, I'm following you so far."

"We need to do more than just hold off the Cylon's, we need to deliver a knockout punch that they won't see coming."

"And how would you propose we do that?" Turner asked, arching an eyebrow.

"We jump the *Prometheus* behind the Cylon formation and hit them with nukes." Horvath replied as she taped a sequence into the computer. On the screen the *Prometheus* appeared behind the Cylon Basestars.

"We hit them with nukes and it throws their entire game plan off. Might even the odds a bit too."

Turner nodded as he considered her audacious plan. "We'll have to time it right."

"We hold off until just before the station jumps out. The Cylon's will undoubtedly go for it as soon as they jump into range."

"Undoubtedly."

"We wait until they're committed and then we hit them hard."

Turner stroked his chin and nodded. "One problem though- we can't plot a jump that accurately from inside the nova. We'll have to send out a Raptor to spot the jump coordinates."

"That's damn near a suicide mission though."

"Only way it will work though," Turner said as he picked up a pilot's roster. "Question is- who will we send?"

"Sir, I have Splashdown on Comm three for you." Maddie announced from her station.

Turner motioned for Maddie to transfer the call as he activated his headset. "Splashdown this is *Prometheus* Actual- give me a sitrep."

The speaker crackled with static for a moment and then Splashdown's voice broke through. "Actual, this is Splashdown. We're holding position just inside the cloud perimeter. Dradis scans are spotty but so far we have four Basestars confirmed with a possible fifth one holding position just at the edge of dradis range."

Turner exchanged glances with Horvath. "Now we know what we're up against," he said activating his microphone. "Roger that Splashdown. What about Raiders?"

"No definite count on Raiders, Actual, but they're a lot of them. I would estimate at least three wings." Splashdown replied.

“Splashdown, this is the X.O.- what are the Raiders doing?” Horvath interjected before looking up at Turner. “Sorry for busting in sir.”

Turner waved it off. “No issue.”

“X.O., Splashdown- The Raiders are holding station about five thousand clicks from the cloud perimeter.”

“Are they making any runs at the nebula?” Turner asked.

“No sir. They seem to know where the line is drawn for them and they’re not going to push it.”

“Too bad for us,” Horvath said.

Turner nodded but kept his focus on the conversation. “Splashdown, Actual- I want you to hold position and start plotting a scout jump behind the Cylon formation.”

“Understood Actual. Do you need follow on coordinates?”

“Affirmative.” Turner said.

“Roger that Actual, we’ll get to work on it now. Splashdown- out.”

Turner deactivated his headset and faced Horvath. “Start making the arrangements to execute your plan. Transfer Slider and the bulk of the air group over to the *Nova* but keep the reserves here with us just in case the Cylons throw some Raiders at us.”

“Yes sir,” Horvath replied.

Picking up his folder Turner checked the contents and then nodded to Horvath. “You have the deck.”

“I have the deck, aye sir.” Horvath saluted.

Turner returned the salute and walked out.



## PORTSIDE HANGAR BAY BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Okay you ham heads, get your asses in gear! We got seven birds still down and four hours to get them operational.”

Slider smiled seeing the *Prometheus* deck chief, a burly man with tattoos covering both of his arms named Layton Davenport, crack the whip on his knuckle draggers. He had no doubt that Layton Davenport was one of the best Viper techs

“Chief,” Slider called out. “What’s the status of my squadron?”

“Well it’s not *totally* fraked, sir,” Davenport replied honestly. “Seven birds are down but I’ll have three of them back up within the hour. The other four are going to be tough. Their engine intakes are scorched from flying through the nebula gasses. I’m going to have to pull the whole pack on them and—”

Slider waved him off. “That cuts it close but those three can act as our floating reserve. Concentrate on getting them one hundred percent operational. Just get them ready; we’re transferring to *Eternal* in one hour. We’ll deal with the other four afterwards.”

“Got it sir,” Davenport replied. “What about ordinance? What kind of load out do you want?”

“Maximum load out for the guns but save the missiles for the Raptors,” Slider said as he scanned over the ordinance lists.

“No missiles for the Vipers?” Davenport asked.

“No missiles,” Slider said as he signed off on the orders. “This fight’s going to be up close and nasty. Missiles won’t do us any good.”

Davenport nodded. “No problem sir. I’ll have the ordnance loaded on *asap*.”

“Thanks chief,” Slider replied clapping him on the shoulder. “Let me know when we’re ready.”

“You got it Major,” Davenport replied. “Oh and sir?”

“Yeah, Chief?”

“You come back in one piece, okay? I’m tired of cleaning pilots’ guts out of my cockpits.”

Slider nodded. “See you when it’s over, Chief.”

## COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

The deck plates shook and alarm klaxons blared as Turner made his way into the C.I.C. buttoning up his tunic and taking stock of the situation as he went. “Report!”

“I think our time is up sir,” Colonel Horvath said as she held onto the situation table for balance. “The Cylons started concentrating their fire about five minutes ago and they’re getting closer.”

“I guess it’s time to get this rolling then,” Turner said as he turned to Halloran. “Contact General Connors and tell them time’s up. Maddie, contact dock control and tell them we want an emergency launch.”

“Aye sir,” Maddie and Halloran replied.

“X.O., sound action stations and let’s get ready to roll.”

“Yes sir,” Horvath said as she flipped a switch. “Action stations, actions stations! Set condition one throughout the ship! This is not a drill!”

“Sir, I have General Connors on the line.” Captain Halloran announced as another tremor ran through the ship.

“Patch him in,” Turner said, activating his headset. “*Lobo Actual, this is Prometheus Actual.*”

“Go ahead *Prometheus,*” Connors replied.

“We’re going with our plan now. Once we start moving we’re going to lose comms so stick to the timetable and we’ll clear a hole for you.”

“*Lobo Negro confirms. Good hunting, Prometheus.*”

Turner deactivated his headset and turned towards Maddie who stood at the helm officer’s position. “Helm- stand by all engines. Mister Halloran- sever all docking connections and seal all hatches.”

“Full engine power at your command, sir.” Maddie reported.

“All hatches are green and docking connections are severed, Admiral.” Halloran added.

“Very well, then. Helm- all back one third.” Turner ordered.

“All back one third, aye sir,” Maddie replied as she turned to the two crewmen working the helm. “All back one third.”

Long plumes of bright flames erupted as the *Prometheus*' forward thrusters fired off from her bow and began to move the mighty warship out of her docking berth and back into space.

"We have cleared the docking arms sir." Colonel Horvath reported as she watched the dradis readout above.

"Maddie, bring us about and set course for the nebula perimeter." Turner said.

"Aye sir," Maddie replied as she set to her work.

"The *Eternal* and the *Nova* are in formation and waiting for us sir." Horvath reported.

"Good. Have the Gunstars form up in escort formation. I want *Nova* and *Eternal* out front with *Prometheus* trailing behind. With any luck the Cylon dradis won't be able to detect us until it's too late."

"May fortune favor the bold." Horvath said, quoting a line from an ancient play.

Turner smiled. "Funny thing about fortune- she tends to favor fools, little children... and ships named *Prometheus*."

# CHAPTER THREE

## Unexpected events

Like a mighty wave the Colonial fleet pushed forward in an arrowhead formation with the *Nova* and *Eternal* taking the point positions and three Gunstars trailing in a staggered formation radiating out and back from each of the mighty Battlestars.

In the center for the formation, the *Prometheus* held steady as the fleet advanced toward the nebula perimeter as Cylon charges continued to explode at random locations at regular intervals.

“Okay, they can stop the shelling any frakking time now,” Colonel Horvath quipped as the ship trembled from another blast.

Turner raised an eyebrow but made no response as he turned Captain Halloran. “Range to nebula perimeter?”

“Five thousand clicks sir.”

“We have to get closer if we want to make the jump,” Turner said. “Helm, press to two thousand.”

“Press to two thousand clicks, aye sir,” Maddie reported. “New ETA is five minutes.”

“Sir, Splashdown reports they’re taking heavy flak,” Captain Halloran said, turning from his station to face the Admiral. “They’re requesting to reposition.”

“Tell them to go ahead and give them a five minute jump mark.”

“Aye sir.”

“X.O., contact the fleet and tell them to press to contact,” Turner commanded, his voice heavy and serious.

Horvath nodded and activated her headset. “Attention all Colonial units: Press to contact and execute battle plan.”

“*Nova* acknowledges.”

“*Eternal* acknowledges.”

The Gunstars followed suit, acknowledging the signal and thrusting ahead toward the expected fight.

“Sir, we’re thirty seconds from our jump point,” Maddie announced.

“Cut thrust to one third and spin up the FTL drives,” Horvath commanded.

Turner activated his headset. “All hands: stand by for combat jump.”

## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ETERNAL**

“Commander, the flag ship reports they’re readying for combat jump. The Admiral is transferring command to you.”

Commander Tajalle nodded in acknowledgement. “Copy to the rest of the fleet: I’m taking command.”

“Aye sir.”

“Sixty seconds to nebula perimeter.”

“CAG, this is Actual,” Tajalle said as she activated her headset.

“Actual, CAG,” Slider responded.

“Ninety seconds to launch marks. Are you ready?” Tajalle asked.

“Locked, loaded and ready to kick some Cylon ass, sir,” Slider replied from his cockpit.

“A man after my own heart,” Tajalle smiled. “Stand by for launch marks.”

CYLON BASESTAR 05

As they watched on screen, Tyranus Bane couldn’t help but admire the beauty of the moment as the Veil of Athena Nebula seemed to bubble for a long moment, her red and blue colors swirling into a mixture of purple just before the Colonial Fleet burst from it like bugs borrowing from the ground.

“A beautiful sight, don’t you think?” Banes asked the man standing next to him.

Lucifer scowled. “No. Just a few hunks of metallic ore infested with humans like logs infested with termites.”

“You really *do* hate them, don’t you?” Bane asked, not looking away from the view screen.

“I don’t hate them, brother,” Lucifer said turning toward Bane. “I just have no respect for a race that, once blessed with all of the gifts that they had, decided to turn on themselves just because someone didn’t think like they did.”

“Then what *do* you hate so much to make you as bitter as you are?”

Lucifer smiled. “Myself. I hate what I was turned into *because* of them.”

Bane arched an eyebrow and turned to face him. “What do you mean?”

“Look at us,” Lucifer said, his voice dripping with scorn. “Once we were metallic titans! We were Gods, the likes of which these humans hadn’t seen since the days of Kobol. And then we agreed to be turned into *this* gooey mess!” He pulled at his skin. “And all because of...”

“Because of what?” Bane asked.

Lucifer shook his head and smiled. “Nothing brother. Come now, we have a slaughter to see to.”

“Indeed- Gabriel! How close is the enemy fleet?”

“Eight thousand clicks.” Gabriel replied.

“Just at the edge of missile range,” Lucifer said.

“And outranging their by over a thousand clicks,” Jezebel added with a smile. “Shall we?”

Lucifer looked at Bane. “It’s your mission.”

“Then by all means,” Bane said with a smile, “let’s get this party stated.”

## **RAPTOR 171 VEIL OF ATHENA**

“Okay, that was *way* too frakking close!” Hygiena shouted as the Raptor lurched beneath her again. “How about we find someplace *else* to be, huh?”

Outside the cockpit canopy another charge detonated illuminating them in blinding light and sending a wave of roiling red gas racing toward them.

“Is the FTL drive spun up?” Splashdown asked as she shielded her eyes.

“Yeah,” Hygiena replied. “We’re still two minutes away from our jump mark though.”

Splashdown took another look at the approaching shockwave and punched the button to activate the jump count. “No time, jump in five seconds.”

Reacting quickly, Hygiena fastened her seat harness and prepared for the disorientation she knew was coming.

Outside, the wave front raced toward them.

“Are we going to make it in time?” she asked.

Splashdown looked at her instruments and made to answer...

And then the world collapsed on them.

## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ETERNAL**

“Incoming ordnance!”

“Helm- execute roll program and get us on line,” Commander Tajalle ordered. “CAG, *Eternal* Actual- *LAUNCH!*”

Inside his cockpit, Slider smiled. “Understood Actual. All Vipers- launch!”

No sooner had he issued the order than Slider was thrown back in his seat as his Viper Mark 7 shot out of its launch tube and raced toward the enemy. Looking out the side of his canopy he saw the rest of his squadron forming on his wing.

“*Eternal* this is Slider- all Vipers are away.”

“Roger that, Slider, execute battle plan.” Tajalle’s garbled voice replied.

“Understood. All Vipers; form up and prepare to engage the enemy.”

Outside his cockpit Slider watched as the *Eternal* and the *Nova* both slowly turned their massive bodies and rotated to bring their massive guns to bear on the approaching enemy.

Suddenly, space lit up like a Colonial Day celebration as the two Battlestars and their escorting Gunstars opened fire and established their perimeter. Cylon missiles raced into the maelstrom of deadly projectiles and came apart as the Colonial air defense fire ripped them to shreds.

“Any second now the Cylons are going to figure out that the long range missile fire isn’t going to work,” Slider said to his pilots, “When that happens—”

“Here come the Raiders!” Shooter announced.

“Right on time,” Slider smiled. “Ok everyone, we hold the line here until further notice.”

“What if they break through?” Tiger asked.

“Dispatch in flight pairs to tackle any that get through but don’t pull too many off the line,” Slider replied.

“Range now twenty-one hundred and closing.” Phoenix suddenly announced.

“Then I guess it’s time to kick this off. All Vipers- weapons free.”

## **RAPTOR 171 VEIL OF ATHENA**

“Holy frak, where the hell are we?” Splashdown exclaimed as she shook off the dizziness of the FTL jump she had just completed.

Blinking her eyes to adjust them, Hygiena studied her dradis screen. “Right where we’re supposed to be.”

“Send out the shout then and let’s get ready to—”

Suddenly the Raptor shook violently and alarms began to blare.

“We’re hit!” Hygiena shouted.

“How the frak did they find us?” Splashdown asked as she fought to get the Raptor under control.

“Doesn’t matter, they got us! Number two engine is gone and number one is seized open. Engine temperature is twenty degrees above redline and rising!”

“Time to go! Get up here!” Splashdown said.

Slapping a button on the communication terminal, Hygiena activated the signal that the Prometheus would home in on and she fought her way to the co-pilot’s chair in the cockpit.

Suddenly an alarm screamed louder than any other in the cockpit. “Fire in the engine chamber!” Splashdown announced.

Hygiena hooked into her seat and latched the safety harness. “Punch it!”

Splashdown didn’t need to be told twice. Slamming her fist down on the emergency eject button she blew the Raptor’s canopy away and launched them both into space, the spin of the crippled ship sending them soaring away in opposite directions.

Hygiena watched as Splashdown streaked away in the direction of open space until the glowing of the engine section of her crippled Raptor began to glow bright red.

“Oh frak,” Hygiena breathed.

And then a bright flash of light obliterated everything in her vision.

## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

“Jump complete,” Captain Halloran announced.

“Report all contacts,” Colonel Horvath commanded.

“Cylons are holding position and engaging the fleet like you thought they would sir,” Halloran replied.

“Admiral, I’m getting an emergency beacon off the port bow,” Maddie said, her voice colored with concern. “I think it’s from Splashdown’s Raptor.”

“Only one?” Turner asked.

“Yes sir,” Maddie replied.

Suddenly the deck plates shivered as enemy rounds began to slam against the hull.

“The Cylons have locked on to us,” Halloran said as he held on to his console.

“Let’s do what we need to do then,” Turner said as he moved to the weapons station. “X.O., sound the horn.”

Horvath nodded as she activated her headset. “Attention all hands: We have a nuclear mission order. All personnel report to stations and report set status.”

Turner removed his dog tag necklace and held it out in front of him, examining the missile key attached to it. “Colonel Horvath?”

Moving quickly, Horvath removed her own key and held it out in front of her. “Ready sir,” she said.

Working together they both inserted their missile keys and turned them one click to the left. “Pre-arming sequence begun,” Halloran announced as he bounced back and forth from the weapons station to his own. “This would be a hell of a lot easier if Greene were here.”

“Suck it up, Captain,” Horvath said. “Spin up missiles one through ten and target the Basestars.”

Halloran nodded and he entered the data into the fire control computer. “Solution set and outer doors are opening.”

“Admiral, the Cylons are starting to react to our position. We need to fire in the next minute or they might intercept,” Maddie announced.

“Stand by,” Turner commanded.

“Sir, we are at N.C. one,” Halloran said.

Turner nodded, acknowledging that the ship was at Nuclear Condition One. “The use of nuclear weapons is authorized. X.O., begin the firing sequence.”

“Mister Halloran, fire missiles and start the clock.”

“Aye sir,” Halloran said as he turned to the firing console and pressed the big red button. “Missiles away!”

The ship shuddered as a swarm of ten Kraken class nuclear missiles streaked away from the *Prometheus*, two each targeting a Cylon Basestar, their warheads loaded with nuclear death.

Turner and Horvath watched on the dradis screens as they raced toward their targets and the ship shook to its very core around them. With any luck, they would get through and at least cripple the Cylons, allowing the fleet and the station to escape.

“Sir, the Cylons have turned their fire on us. Nuclear missiles inbound.” Maddie shouted over the din of destruction.

“Spin up the FTL and stand by to jump.” Turner responded, his voice tense.

“All batteries commence full auto fire, mid range.” Horvath followed up.

ON the dradis screen, the missiles closed rapidly on their targets, the beeping that accompanied their movement became steadily faster until it seemed it was only one long squeal. The Cylons attempted to use their own anti-missile systems to destroy the incoming ordnance and succeeded once, twice, three times...

Then the deck heaved and everything went to hell.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Fire in Space

Floating in space after having ejected from her Raptor, Hygiena watched with horror as a single Cylon missile streaked through the massive barrage of anti-missile fire from the *Prometheus* and slammed into her portside bow.

The missile, armored to withstand a high speed impact, bored through the hull plating of decks twenty six and twenty seven and punched into the portside cargo bays. Once there it unleashed it's nuclear fire and vaporized everything inside it, to include the support structure.

The one hundred and sixty three crewmen inside that section of the ship never knew what hit them. The blast was so fast, so intense and so deadly that their brains barely had the chance to register that a bright flash had gone off before it superheated the atmosphere inside the section and flash boiled their bodies into carbon steam.

Fortunately, the Virtual Intelligence of the *Prometheus* had anticipated the impact and possible damage about 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second before impact and slammed down the reinforcing blast doors that would help to contain the blast.

It was because of this action that the entire front bow of the ship didn't disintegrate, but instead rocked violently as the nuclear fire belched out the hole that it's missile had created in the hull, taking debris, bodies and anything else it could, out into the cold vacuum of space.

As she continued to watch, the anti-missile fire faltered and then the lights began to flicker all across the ship and Hygiena knew that the wound sustained by the Barge must be grave if it were affecting the entire power grid.

Feeling a sick and twisting sensation in her gut, she tried not to imagine how many of her friends had just died on that horrible moment.

The blast that ripped the side out of the *Prometheus'* forward hold was not unnoticed. At the same time that Hygiena was doing her best not to throw up in her flight suit, Slider was watching from a distance as a bright flash illuminated the side of his home ship shortly before a blast of flame and debris, small when viewed from the distance of his cockpit, shot out.

"Holy frak, the Barge has been hit!" Tiger snarled as she blew another Cylon Raider in half.

This was followed quickly by gasps and exclamations of dread and worry which Slider quickly squelched by saying "Okay, shut the hell up! Stay frosty and hold the line!"

“But sir,” one pilot protested.

“I said hold the frakking line while I contact command,” Slider growled as he switched over to the command frequency. “*Eternal Actual*, this is the CAG.”

Inside the C.I.C. of the Battlestar *Eternal*, everything was chaos as the Cylons rained down destruction on the Colonial ships via missile and Raider attacks.

As the deck heaved again from another missile hit, Commander Tajalle held tight, her expression grim. “Damage report!”

“Direct hit to the forward power junction, portside deck ten.” Her X.O. responded as blood leaked out of a cut to his forehead.

“Are you okay, Colonel? Do you need to be relieved?” she asked.

“Frak that, sir, I’m here until I’m dead.” The X.O. replied.

Tajalle smiled. “Good, now get a damage control team down to—”

“Commander, we’re receiving multiple reports that the *Prometheus* has been hit with nukes!” the *Eternals*’ communications officer.

Tajalle’s blood ran cold and her face turned white.

“*Eternal Actual*, this is the CAG.” Slider’s voice broke through the din of static over the speakers.

“Go Slider,” Tajalle responded quickly.

“The Barge has been hit with nukes, sir. Request permission to send a Raptor recon, in force, to determine their condition.”

“Go ahead and prepare your wings to provide cover if necessary,” Tajalle replied.

“Yes sir,” Slider replied as he switched his channel over to the Raptor Support Squadrons’ frequency. “Archangel, Slider—”

“On it sir,” Archangel’s deep voice responded immediately. “All Raptors, lock in coordinates and jump when ready.”

Outside his cockpit Slider could see the flashes of light that indicated Raptors were jumping away. Obviously they had been ready and waiting for the order since seeing the missile hit only moments before.

“Raptors away,” Slider announced.

“CAG, Phoenix – the Raiders are turning and heading back.”

“They’re running!” another pilot cheered.

Slider felt his guts turn to ice though as he realized the truth. “They’re not running...”

CYLON BASESTAR 05

Bane smiled as the damage reports from the *Prometheus* began to roll in.

“One lucky shot,” Jezebel grumbled.

“Fortune favors the bold, little sister,” Lucifer said with a smile as he turned to Bane. “It’s your operation, brother. What would you like to do next?”

“Turn the attack on the *Prometheus*. Divert the Raiders and Basestars three through five to attack and destroy her.”

“What?” Jezebel spun around. “Why are we going after the *Prometheus*? The station is supposed to be our target.”

“The station is a fat cow of a target. Finding her again won’t pose a problem.” Bane explained.

“But that’s the whole reason we came here! The whole reason I lost my ship!”

“The reason we’re here is to destroy the humans, the station is just the bait. As for your ship, your foolishness is the reason you lost it, nothing more.” Bane replied impassively.

Jezebel looked positively apoplectic, her hands clinched into white knuckled fists she made to speak but Lucifer lifted a finger to forestall it.

“Don’t make me put you in the corner,” he said turning to Bane. “Brother?”

Bane smiled slightly. “We kill Turner and we kill the brains behind their operation. We destroy the *Prometheus* and we destroy the soul of their opposition.”

Lucifer smiled. “Then let’s kill the beast while she’s wounded.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER  
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Admiral Turner picked himself up off of the floor, his head still buzzing and his ears still ringing after the entire world had suddenly exploded around him. Smoke permeated the atmosphere of the C.I.C. and crewmen were strewn about like so much cord wood, some with blood running from their noses and ears, some not moving at all.

“Damage report,” Turner managed to croak through a hoarse windpipe.

Colonel Horvath seemed unfazed and moved quickly to the engineering board where Major Briedis lay unconscious. “We’re still here but barely. We’ve got major structural damage forward of frame twenty one on decks twenty six and twenty seven. Emergency bulkheads are sealed and holding but we can’t take any more hits there.”

“What about the critical systems?”

“Power is fluctuating but I think we can get it back online. FTL is operational as is life support and weapons. We’ve lost several dradis stations though and we have heavy casualties.”

“What about our nukes? Did any of them get through?” the Admiral asked.

Horvath shook her head as she studied the dradis. “The Cylons shot all of them down but one.”

“Damage?”

Horvath sighed. “Minimal. It’s like they knew we were coming.”

Turner thought for a long and hard moment as he wrestled with the decision he knew he had to make. He knew the facts: his ship was now crippled and he was in a vulnerable position. The Cylons weren’t blind or stupid so they had to know that they had dealt *Prometheus* a serious blow and it wouldn’t be long before they closed for the kill.

He needed to withdraw.

Every instinct in his body fought against it. He didn’t like leaving the enemy in command of the field and had only done it once before and then, only after he had been rendered unconscious and almost killed in the process.

Immediately a memory sprang to mind from many years prior....

*Colonel Jonathan Turner looked over his status display and knew that the situation wasn't good. Engines fluctuating, weapon systems failing and half of his fighter division was destroyed, the other half was holding on for dear life while the enemy pounded away at the mercilessly with their superior numbers.*

*On his dradis display, two capital ships were closing for the kill and he knew a decision had to be made but every instinct in his gut screamed at him not to do it. He wanted to fight, he didn't want to run.*

*"Sir," Major Belzen said, "FTL is spun up and ready. What are your orders?"*

*Turner gritted his teeth, his heart and mind warring against each other.*

*"Sir, the Commander is down and we're about to get blown back to Kobol! What do you want to do?"*

*Bile rose in his throat as he opened his mouth to speak. Using every ounce of willpower he had he said the words that burned right to his very soul. "Recall the vipers, combat landings and prepare to jump the ship."*

*"We're running?" an astonished officer asked.*

*"Yes, Ensign Hoshi, we're running. Nothing good will come of us getting killed." Turner said as calmly as he could.*

*"But sir, Commander Cain wouldn't—"Hoshi protested, but Turner silenced him with a glare that could melt armor.*

*"All Vipers are aboard, sir. The board is green." Major Belzen reported.*

*Turner took a deep breath. "Jump."*

*Major Belzen pressed the jump button.*

*Nothing happened.*

*"All right gentlemen, that's good enough for one day," said the voice of Commander Helena Cain as she moved from the darkened alcove where she had been observing out into the light of the C.I.C. "Mister Hoshi, inform Commanders Thomas and Weedly that we've reached endex."*

*"Aye sir," Hoshi responded dutifully.*

*"Colonel Turner, come with me." Cain said as she exited the C.I.C.*

*“Yes sir. Mister Belzen, you have the Conn.” Turner replied as he moved to follow.*

*Turner walked by Cains’ side in silence waiting for the gentle chiding that he knew was going to come. They moved through the corridors at a slow but steady pace as the two officers took in the work being conducted by the crew.*

*“Tell me what you were thinking, Colonel,” Cain finally said.*

*Turner took a long moment before responding as he carefully considered his words. “To be honest, sir, I was thinking that I wanted to stay and fight.” He frowned. “I don’t like to run.”*

*“And yet you did run,” Cain said flatly. “Why?”*

*“Like I said to Ensign Hoshi, there was no sense in getting us killed in a losing fight. Better to withdraw and fight another day.”*

*Cain was silent for a long moment and Turner knew in his heart that she was about to rebuke him. After all, Commander Helena ‘Hell Raiser’ Cain was nothing if not persistent and ruthless in combat.*

*“I think you did the right thing,” she finally said.*

*Turner stopped and turned to face her. “Sir?”*

*“I said that you were correct, Colonel,” Cain said as she folded her arms across her chest. “Don’t get me wrong, I don’t like running either but the truth is that there is no honor and no sense in fighting a losing battle when you can withdraw and come back when you are strong.”*

*Turner considered her words for a moment and then followed her as she began walking again.*

*“I was initially against your posting here as X.O.” Cain explained, “Maybe it was a prejudice but I didn’t believe that a ‘pacifistic Leonite’ could fight the way I wanted him to. Needless to say, I have been pleasantly surprised.”*

*“Thank you sir,” Turner replied.*

*“I dare say that you’ve actually turned out to be one of the best officers I have ever had under my command. Unfortunately, your greatest weakness, John, is also one of your greatest strengths: Your tenacity.” She paused as Turner looked at her with a confused expression, and smiled at him. “Sometimes you don’t know when to quit,”*

*Turner arched an eyebrow. “I don’t know whether to take that as a compliment or a rebuke, sir.”*

*Cain smiled. "Take it as both. Tenacity is good, after all. You don't win fights by backing down when the going gets tough. Still, you have to be smart enough to realize when the fight is lost. It's always better to live and fight another day than to get killed."*

*Turner nodded, understanding her words. "I'll keep that in mind sir, thank you."*

*"Very well, Colonel. Go back to C.I.C. and collect your after action data then meet me in my office so we can go over it."*

*"Yes sir."*

The words had stuck with Turner in the years since and while he had difficulty following the advice from time to time, he knew there was wisdom in it, which is what made the decision he was making easier on him.

"Colonel Horvath, spin up the FTL and stand by for emergency jump," he commanded.

"Sir?" Horvath asked, not quite sure whether or not she had heard him correctly.

"You heard me," he responded firmly. "We're bleeding out here and the Cylons smell blood, not let's go."

"Yes sir," Horvath responded. "Halloran, spin up the FTL drives and stand by for combat jump."

"Launch alert," Maddie announced suddenly. "Incoming missiles, all along the port axis."

"Frak," Turner spat. "Helm: One hundred eighty degree portside roll. All batteries, fire as you bear."

"CAG, Shooter- The Cylons are going in for the kill!"

"I see it," Slider replied, the grim tone in his voice carrying through the garbled static of space communications. "I got an idea. Shooter, you and Phoenix take your birds and head for the Barge. Do you best to cover them from the Raiders. Everyone else follow me."

The massive wave of Mark VII Vipers split into two groups, one heading for the *Prometheus* and the other forming up around Slider.

"Where we headed boss man?" Tiger said as she pulled onto Slider's wing.

"We're going to give the Cylon's something new to think about. I want a concentrated push on the center ship. I think that Basestar is the one calling the shots."

“What makes you think that?” Tiger asked.

“Just a hunch, Tiger. All Vipers: Weapons free. Go getcha some!”

## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ETERNAL**

“Commander, Slider’s pulling his Vipers off the line. He’s attacking the Basestars.”

Commander Tajalle looked up to confirm what her ears had heard. “What the hell is he doing?”

“Sir, EM readings are starting to spike!” the X.O. announced.

“Incoming jump! Looks like something big.”

Tajalle nodded as she checked her watch. “It’s the station. Standby to repel attack!”

The empty space behind the line of Colonial warships seemed to ripple for a long moment before being consumed by an enormous flash of light that temporarily blotted out the stars before fading away to reveal the *Lobo Negro* space station.

“Sir, General Connors sends his compliments and wants to know if you could point him in the direction of home?”

Tajalle smiled grimly. “Send him the jump coordinates and inform the fleet to standby for jump.”

## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

“Admiral, the station has jumped in,” Captain Halloran announced.

“What are the Cylons doing?” Turner asked.

“They’re- they’re still coming for us.” Halloran replied, surprised.

Turner considered how the situation had changed. The station was no longer the target, he was. It was a tactical error on the Cylon’s part, one he would be an idiot not to take advantage of. The only problem with that being that he would have to quite possibly sacrifice himself, his ship and the lives of his crew to make it happen.

In the end, though, it was an easy decision. One ship to save what could be humanity’s last hope? No contest.

“Alright people,” he said gravely, “we stay and fight. Maddie, get Slider on the horn and tell him to withdraw his Vipers. X.O., contact *Eternal* and have them get ready to jump out. Tell them we’ll cover their six.”

Horvath nodded, understanding full well the gravity of his command. “I’m on it sir.”

“Slider, *Prometheus*- You are ordered to withdraw and return to *Eternal* for emergency jump. Respond.”

Slider, a grim and determined look on his face, switched over to the command channel. “*Prometheus*, Slider- Negative on your last. My fighters are going to draw fire for you. Get your FTL spun up and jump out.”

Thinking quickly, he closed down the channel before Colonel Horvath could respond and set his radio for broadband. “Attention all Vipers, this is the CAG- Continue on your assigned missions and make sure that the *Prometheus*. It is imperative that she survive.”

“CAG, this is *Prometheus* Actual-” the voice of Admiral Turner responded. “Withdraw your Vipers and get ready to jump, that’s an order.”

“Sorry sir, can’t do that.”

“This isn’t a debate, Major. Withdraw your Vipers or—”

“Sir, the *Prometheus* is more than just a ship. She’s a symbol that we can rally around. She’s a beacon of light in the darkness. She gives us hope that we can survive this. She’s our heart and soul and if she dies, then we do too,” Slider replied. “Now do me a favor and get the frak—”

The rest of his transmission was consumed by static and Turner frowned, wondering if perhaps the Cylons had hit his antenna array.

“CAG, *Prometheus*- Say again last transmission,” Turner said. His only reply was static. “CAG this is *Prometheus* Actual- report status.”

In her cockpit, Tiger blinked away the angry tears that were forming in her eyes as she watched Slider’s Viper flame into a thousand pieces of debris shooting off in each direction.

“Actual, this is Tiger- the CAG just bought it.”

The C.I.C. went deadly quiet and Turner felt his knees go weak as shock anger began to flood through his body. He was shocked into action a moment later as Shooter’s voice broke through.

“All Vipers, this is Shooter- I’m assuming command of the air group.”

“Shooter, this is Actual. Get your Vipers to safety—”

“Negative sir,” Shooter cut him off, “the CAG was right; The Barge is more important than all of us combined. We’ll hold them off while you spin up. After you’re gone we’ll get out of here.”

Turner thought to argue but knew that it would do no good. “Very well. Good hunting, Captain.”

“It’s been a pleasure sir,” Shooter replied as he switched his radio over. “All Vipers- this one’s for the CAG. Take that frakking Basestar *out*.”

#### CYLON BASESTAR 05

“Your plan has worked brilliantly,” Lucifer said with a smile.

“Indeed it has,” Jezebel reluctantly agreed.

“The *Prometheus* is spinning up her FTL drives,” Lilith reported.

“Target her with our nukes and fire,” Bane commanded. “Let’s put the Admiral out of his misery.”

The ship shuddered slightly as she released a full spread of nuclear missiles at their enemy.

“Missiles away,” Lilith said.

“Now we watch as the *Prometheus* dies.”

“She’s rolling over,” Jezebel said.

“Bringing her guns to bear on the missiles,” Adam speculated.

“No matter,” Bane shrugged. “Even if just *one* gets through she’s dead.”

“Wait a second,” Lucifer said raising an eyebrow. “Another ship is jumping in.”

“What?” Bane spun around.

“What?” Admiral Turner asked incredulously.

“The *Sentinel* just jumped in sir! She’s directly between us and the incoming nukes!” Maddie replied.

The scene in space was chaos as the *Sentinel* activated her point defense batteries sending flak out like quills on a porcupine and destroying the incoming Cylon missiles.

“That’s what I’m talking about! Way to go *Sentinel!*” Shooter whooped as he destroyed another Raider. “All Vipers, press the attack!”

In the C.I.C. of the *Prometheus*, Turner stared at the dradis display, dumbstruck by the audacity and bravery shown by the *Sentinel* crew.

“Sir, the station has jumped away! We did it!” Maddie announced.

“Not a moment too soon,” Turner said as he bolted into action. “Halloran, recall the Vipers! Maddie, contact *Eternal* and tell them to jump the fleet as soon as all Vipers are aboard. X.O. standby to jump the ship!”

Suddenly the ship shuddered and Turner looked up to see what had happened.

The sight that met him would remain scarred into his mind forever.

# EPILOGUE

## Life

Even then, as Admiral Turner sat in his quarters, a bottle of Ambrosia half empty and the memorial service hours behind him, he could still see the image on the dradis as clearly as if it was right in front of him.

The expanding cloud that had been the Gunstar *Sentinel* as she burned in the vacuum of space still burned in his mind as well. The knowledge that hundreds of souls had been snuffed out in an instant to save the *Prometheus* weighed heavily on him.

The loss of Slider, whom Turner had begun to groom as a protégé', hit him hard along with Hygiena, another pilot with great promise.

Then there was Karen.

Months before he had assigned Captain Reigney to the *Sentinel* because it was inappropriate for him to have her under his direct command, what with their relationship and all. She had been the first woman in years that he had truly cared about and now she was gone too, along with Captain Greene whom he had sent over to help with the mission.

*So many good men and women gone*, he thought to himself, shaking his head.

He wanted to cry but he was beyond tears now. His heart and soul were numb.

Closing his eyes he leaned back in his chair and allowed himself to drift off to sleep.

### CYLON BASESTAR 05

“So, things didn’t go quite as planned,” Jezebel smirked. “Imagine that.”

“This is war, sister. Plans *will* go awry from time to time,” Bane replied. “This is a setback, nothing more.”

“A setback?” Jezebel scoffed. “They now have the means to repair and build more warships! How can you call it a setback?”

“Because they do not have the resources to make full use of the station,” Adam said as he looked down at his two prisoners. “Besides, it wasn’t a total loss. We have new material for the gene pool.”

Slider, bruised and bloody in his flight suit, spat through broken teeth at the Cylon before him. “Go frak yourself.”

“Charming,” Lucifer shook his head. “Is it any wonder we decided to exterminate them?”

They laughed as two Centurions hauled Slider and Hygiëna up onto their feet. “Make them comfortable until I arrive,” Bane said with a smile. “We have a lot to talk about...”



# BONUS

## The Future Part 1

**MAYAN TEMPLE RUINS  
CENTRAL AMERICA  
JULY 26<sup>TH</sup> 2001**

Dr. Albert Parker smiled as he made adjustments to his instruments one last time. Around him his team echoed his excitement as they prepared for a momentous event.

“And we’re ready,” he said as he stood tall and proud, brushing his long brown hair out of his face. “It’s been rumored for a long time that there are secret chambers to this temple, chambers that have never been discovered or explored. Today, for the first time ever, we’re going to use ground penetrating radar to find out if this is true.”

He smiled as he turned to his tech assistant, Carrie Thayer. “If you would do the honors?”

She nodded and flipped a switch that activated the dozens of arrays positioned around the temple. Immediately a picture began to form of the temple and its maze of passages and chambers.

“We have a baseline, doctor.” Thayer reported.

“It matches our maps of the upper levels so we know it’s working,” Parker said with a smile. “Now, let’s scan below.”

Slowly the image panned down to reveal...

Nothing.

Not just dirt though, a conspicuous nothing shaped like a rectangle. It was almost as if there were a dead space in the ground that was absorbing the radar waves.

And it was *huge*.

“What the hell is *that*?” Parker asked, his British accent coming out sharply.

“Unknown, sir,” Thayer replied. “I think it might be a chamber.”

“What makes you say that?”

“Because I found an access tunnel.”

## 5 HOURS LATER...

Dr. Parker stared in disbelief at the sight he be held in front of him. It had taken them a while to hack through the jungle but they had found the access point to the tunnel. After removing the vegetation and the cover stone to it they had found something no one expected.

A solid metal door with a mechanical lock.

On the door were strange symbols, almost like letters of an alphabet. “This almost looks like ancient Greek,” he speculated.

“That’s impossible. How could ancient Greeks have made it all the way over here *and* left a metal door as well?” Thayer asked.

Parker shook his head. “I never said it *was* ancient Greek. I just said it *almost* looked like it.”

“Either way we’ve found something that clearly doesn’t belong here.”

“Indeed,” Parker said as he studied the symbols closely. “This looks like a bird almost, surrounded by a stylized circle. I wonder what’s its significance is?”

“Who knows?” Thayer asked.

“Well, no sense in putting it off any longer. Let’s open this thing up and see what’s inside.”

“I’m afraid we can’t allow that, Doctor.” A deep voice said from within the jungle.

Parker spun to find twenty men, all American and wearing jungle camouflage, stepping from the foliage and into the clearing that he now stood in.

They were heavily armed.

“What’s going on here?” Parker asked.

“Sir, I’m Major Rick Lawrence of the United States Third Special Forces Group. I’m going to have to ask you and your team to come with me,” A large dark skinned man said as he stepped forward.

“Wait just a God damned minute! You have no authority here!” Thayer protested.

Major Lawrence smiled. “Yes, I *do*. The President of the United States has declared this a top secret secure site. If you will come with me I will brief you on the situation...”

**TO BE CONTINUED...**