



BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

EPISODE ONE: OPERATION OUTREACH

PROLOGUE THE CYCLE OF TIME

Hark children of Kobol and hear the words of the Lords of your homeland for while thou may travel far and wide across the great black oceans to places unknown and unseen, the Lords of Kobol will travel with thee and watch over thee with their all seeing eyes and the wisdom of the ages.

- Holy Scroll of Pythia, Chapter 1, Verse 1

By divine power and enlightenment did the Lord Prometheus, bringer of light and knowledge, teach us first about the cycle of time. "Hear me children!" he spoke to us. "Time is an endless circle that begins anew even as the old ages fade. All that has happened before, so shall it happen again."

- Holy Scroll of Pythia, Chapter 2, Verse 3

And thus did the Children of the Gods become discontent with their forebears. Each seeking their own aggrandizement, the brothers and sisters of man committed sin and took up arms against one another, spilling each their life's blood until finally the Lords of Kobol, grieving over the loss of paradise, did turn their back on their children saying "Ye have corrupted all that we have given you. Exiled thou art from this place of beauty, this sacred and holy ground that thou hast tainted with the blood of thy brothers."

- Holy Scroll of Pythia, Chapter 6, verse 66.

And as Athena watched from the mountain top as the twelve tribes left Kobol, she did turn to the children of the Thirteenth Tribe saying "Go ye on a different path than that of thy brothers and sisters for you, the only of our children who are innocent of blood, should stand apart from them. Go thee into the black ocean and find a new home, one not tainted by treason and arrogance, but blessed by love and acceptance. Go there and renounce the old ways. Start fresh and make thy destiny thine own."

- Holy Scroll of Pythia, Chapter 13, Verse 12.

And as the Thirteenth Tribe left forever the land of their birth Athena bade them well, but gave all of the tribes a final warning. “Go forth our children and settle among the stars. Build thy houses on strong foundations and learn to live in peace, but be warned: What ye have sown, one day shall ye reap threefold. Thus are ye blessed and cursed for, as Prometheus taught us, all of this has happened before and so shall it happen again.” Thus did Athena, last of the Lords of Kobol, throw herself from the mountain to land among the rocks, and with her life’s breath fading away did she curse the ground of Kobol saying “My blood is first to flow here but not the last. Whosoever returns here to this tainted land shall also pay my price in blood.”

– Holy Scroll of Pythia, Chapter 13, Verse 13.

CHAPTER 1

LEGACY

Colonial Office,
Quorum Tower,
Caprica City, Caprica

“Hello all and good day to you. I’m Jason Thornton of the Caprica City Times and this is ‘The Colonial Hour’, our weekly news show devoted to the movers and shakers here in the Colonies. Our subject today: President Richard Adar. He’s three years into his first five year term as President and so far, his job performance has been mixed, to say the least. Here with us today to give us some perspective on the President and his cabinet are Doctor Jonas Haley of the Leonon Institute for Political Study and, Doctor Gaius Baltar, a personal friend of President Adar and his chief scientific advisor.”

Richard Adar, President of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol, hit the mute button to silence his viewing screen and leaned back in his chair, rubbing his eyes in frustration.

“Three years I’ve been here Jon, three years.” The President said his exasperation plainly evident. “I’ve increased the minimum wage by over two Cubits, cut inflation, cut unemployment and strengthened the military. Still, pundits like this Thornton call my performance mixed and what’s worse, people are listening to him!”

Jon Baxter, chief of staff for the President looked at his old friend and shrugged. “You knew this was going to happen when you denied his son the nice cushy job at Picon Fleet Headquarters.”

“He’d a Colonial Fleet officer just like any other.” Adar replied. “I’m not going to cut him a break just because his daddy is on the vid circuit.”

“I don’t disagree with you Dick.” Jon replied. “But Thornton is going to make life hell on us from now until re-election time.”

Adar took a deep breath attempting to exhale his frustrations away. “That’s why I called you here Jon, I’ve made my decision.”

Jon Baxter leaned forward, his interest growing. “And?” he asked.

“I’m giving the go ahead to Operation Outreach.” Adar said.

Baxter leaned back in his chair and shook his head. “You’re actually going to send a fleet out to find the Thirteenth Tribe?”

“Yes.” Adar said.

Both men were silent as the ramifications of the president’s plan sunk in. If successfully, Adar would be lauded as the President who reunited humanity with their long lost brothers. If it failed, he would be jeered as a religious show boater.

“You’re sure this is what you want to do?” Baxter asked.

Adar nodded. “The Colonies are stagnating Jon. This mission will breathe new life into the people, give them hope.”

“The people *and* your administration.” His chief of staff replied with a sly half smile.

Adar chuckled. “That too.”

“What happens if they don’t find them?” Baxter asked.

“That’s why the mission is officially listed as a ‘Deep Space Recon’ mission.” Adar said with a smile. “The word going out to the press is that we’re sending a small fleet out to explore beyond the red line for habitable worlds and resources. The part about finding the Thirteenth Tribe will remain secret to the general public, that way if they don’t find them we don’t look stupid for sending them in the first place. Hell, we might even find out where the Cylons ran off to.”

“That’s not funny.” Baxter warned. “The last thing we need is the Cylons returning and stirring up trouble.”

Adar waved him away. “I’m not worried about the Cylons Jon. Our fleet is ten times stronger than it was forty years ago when the Cylons left. I have no doubt that we could prevail in any engagement. Besides,” he paused to take a sip of his water, “It’s been over twenty years since our last deep space exploration mission and the fleet’s exploratory branch has been pestering me since I came into office about authorizing a new one.”

“So the real mission won’t be revealed to the public at all?” Baxter asked.

Adar smiled at his old friend's ability to see straight to the point. "Of course not, I'd have everyone on the Quorum accusing me of becoming a religious zealot. No, the real orders will be given to Commander Turner by me in about an hour. He'll also be ordered not to reveal the missions true nature to his crew until after they have left."

"Dick, do you know what you are asking these soldiers, people with families, to do?" Baxter asked.

Adar held up his hand to indicate that he had heard all he wanted to. "They're Colonial Warriors, Jon. They'll do what they are told. Now," Adar emptied his glass "Commander Turner should be here shortly. Please be sure to show him in immediately."

"As you wish, mister President." Baxter replied after a long moment.

"Thank you Jon." Adar said, dismissing his friend and aide. "Oh, and could you tell Laura that I'll need to reschedule our meeting this afternoon?"

Baxter nodded. "Of course."

As Baxter departed, Adar turned the sound back up on his vid screen.

"I believe that President Adar has done remarkable works for the colonies in his three years of service as president, certainly more than his predecessor did in the same amount of time." Adar heard his friend, Gaius Baltar, saying in his defense. "In the three years since President Adar has been in office, he has balanced the budget and managed to get rid of the deficit that President Nelson left him saddled with when he took office, not to mention the social and technological programs he has instituted."

Adar smiled listening to his old friend. *Good old Gaius.* He thought.

He and Baltar had met during a symposium at the Caprica City University on cybernetics. Adar had been the mayor of the colonial capital city at the time and Baltar a young upstart doctor who was challenging the laws on development of artificial intelligence.

Both men were used to challenging a system that seemed to want to lock them out at every turn so it was only natural that they became fast friends.

Adar hated having to have his friend go in front of people and defend his presidency, yet it was the price he paid for being a political outsider. The price for bucking the system and not bowing down to the whims of the major political parties.

Soon though, he wouldn't need his friends to defend his performance as President. With the return of the Prometheus and the reunification of the Thirteenth Tribe with the rest of humanity, he would be remembered as the greatest president since Jasper Akron,

the man who had peacefully united the warring colonies into the star spanning nation they were today.

Thinking on this Adar turned off his vid screen, leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. He would rest until Commander Turner arrived and when he did he would dispatch the Commander... and sail into history.

CHAPTER 2 THE LIGHT BRINGER

Grand Park of the Colonies,
Caprica City, Caprica

As the sun rose over Caprica City, a small man wearing a light jogging suit made his way through the morning fog of the Grand Park of the Colonies at a brisk pace. He watched as fellow joggers made their way past him, moving across the well worn path that cut through the huge grassy areas of the five kilometer park, in their morning rituals.

If only they knew. The man known as Doral thought to himself.

Being a member of the Presidential Press Corps, Doral enjoyed a position of privilege among the human population of the Colonies. Many times sensitive information about government policy or other such things had been placed in his hands. Of course, this only made his job easier.

He had been here on Caprica over two years now, gathering intelligence on the human ‘fathers’ that he and his people had left behind four decades earlier. The official reason he had been given for his mission was to gather information on the current state of affairs of the colonies and to keep the leadership apprised of any important developments.

What he suspected was far different though.

For sometime there had been a growing movement on his homeworld to return to the Colonies and eradicate forever the festering disease that called itself humanity.

Humans were imperfect and showed no hope of redemption, the proponents of the movement had said. Others said that God had decreed that the humans, whom he had placed such potential in, were unworthy of continued life and should be exterminated like so much vermin.

Doral didn’t place much stock in deities though. Whether there was or wasn’t a God didn’t matter much to him. What mattered to Doral was justice.

For decades man had enslaved his own creations, deigning them fit for nothing but harsh labor for uncaring masters. If the Cylon Council of elders decided to destroy humanity then, in his humble opinion, they had it coming.

Which brought him back to his mission. Officially, he was here to gather information about the current state of affairs in their long forgotten homeland. Something of a fact finding mission, nothing more.

Unofficially though, he had been assigned to look for weaknesses in defenses and to seek out those who would be useful in the event an offensive operation against the Colonies was deemed necessary.

The information he had gathered so far painted a luminous picture for him and his fellow Cylons. Those of his fellows who hoped that humanity had learned something from its earlier mistakes had been disappointed to find out that the creatures who they regarded as their forefathers, were still the same brutal, savage race that they had left behind.

The sixes and the eights had taken it especially hard.

Of course, the news he was bringing to his contact today would be of great interest to his fellows back on the homeworld.

“You’re late.” A deep voice said.

Looking to his right, Doral saw a tall, muscular black man who had taken up a position beside him.

“I had some things to take care of.” Doral replied, slowing his pace.

“Your message said it was urgent.” The man responded as he slowed his own pace to match Doral’s.

“The President is launching a deep space mission.”

Doral’s statement caught his compatriot off guard and for a long moment they jogged in silence.

“What’s the purpose of this mission?” the man finally asked.

“Exploration.” Doral replied.

The man nodded but said nothing for a long moment, finally, they rounded a bend and came to a small copse of trees where they stopped and faced each other.

“Could this be a scouting mission?” the black man asked.

“It’s possible, but I can’t verify. The only thing the president will tell anyone is that a small fleet is going on a deep space exploration mission and probably won’t be returning for at least a year.” Doral said, wiping his face with his sleeve.

Both men considered the information for a moment but it was Doral who spoke first. “Adar is set to make an announcement in two days. The mission launches one week after that.”

“That doesn’t give us much time.” The contact said. “Do you know the composition of the fleet yet?”

Doral nodded in the affirmative. “Two Gunstars, the Vigilant and the Sentinel and one Battlestar.”

“Which Battlestar are they sending?” the contact asked.

“A new one, the Prometheus.” Doral replied.

“Who is the commander of this expedition?” the contact pressed.

“Jonathan Turner.” Doral answered. “He was just promoted last month. Spent the last two years as Executive Officer on the Battlestar Pegasus under Helena Cain.”

“The woman who was just promoted to Rear Admiral?” the contact asked.

Doral nodded. “The same.”

“Hmm.” The contact said to himself. “Our contact in the Ministry of Defense says that Cain is one of the most dangerous officers the colonials have. In fact, she has been designated a high priority target if war breaks out.”

“That would confirm what my own contact has told me about her.” Doral said. “And from what else I have heard, Turner picked up a lot while under her tutelage. That marks him as dangerous as well.”

“Agreed.” The contact said, taking a look over his shoulder. “I can’t stay much longer. What is your threat assessment?”

“I think that they represent a great threat.” Doral said after a moment of thought. “If they show up in our space they should be destroyed immediately.”

The contact nodded. “This could very well shift the vote in council. You should be prepared. Have you found a suitable candidate to help us infiltrate the defense ministry?”

Doral smiled. “As a matter of fact I do. He’s a good friend of the president, actually.”

“What’s his name?” the contact asked.

“Baltar.” Doral replied, “Gaius Baltar.”

Battlestar Prometheus,
Scorpion Fleet Shipyards
In orbit of Scorpion

“Commander on deck!”

With that command, the officers and crewmen not busy with pre-launch activities all stood to the position of attention and directed their eyes at their new commander.

At the center of the Combat Information Center stood Colonel James L. Ryan III, the executive officer of the Prometheus. His uniform looked crisp and his blonde hair was cut in the traditional military flat top. The expression on his face was pure professionalism.

“Good morning sir.” Ryan said saluting.

Jonathan Turner, commander of the newly commissioned Nova Class Battlestar, Prometheus, returned the salute and said “Carry on.”

Immediately, the crew returned to their duties and Turner made his way to the situation table where the exec and the rest of the senior officers were awaiting him.

“Ok folks,” Turner said with a smile as he approached the table. “We’re twenty four hours away from launch. Let’s have the run down.”

The first to report was Major Karla Horvath, known among the pilots as Ice Queen. Her blue eyes and severe expression belied stern professionalism, something that Turner liked in the woman he had made his CAG. Her short but muscular frame not withstanding, she was a giant in the room. Her personality was powerful and her military demeanor was all the more evident by the short hair cut she favored for her brown locks.

I was right to make her my CAG. Turner thought to himself. I need a hard ass to keep these Viper jocks in line.

“Sir, we have all our Raptors aboard now and our last Viper pilots should be arriving today at thirteen hundred hours.” The major reported. “Our planes are at one hundred percent and I foresee no obstacles.”

“What are your impressions of your pilots?” Turner asked.

“The usual sir. They’re rowdy, rude, aggressive and barely disciplined.” Horvath replied.

Turner smiled. “That’s how I like ‘em.” He said. “Think you can keep them in line?”

An mischevious smile crept across the CAG’s face. “It will be my pleasure sir.”

“Good. Next?” Turner asked.

At that moment a short man with grease stained coveralls and a round belly that poked out in front of them strode into the CIC. His hair was disheveled and he had at least a day’s worth of stubble on his face, yet no one said anything of it.

“Chief Palmer,” Turner said by way of greeting, “Looks like you’ve been busy.”

Master Chief Petty Officer Thomas Palmer, the senior enlisted man on the ship, cast a dark scowl at the crewmen who were staring at him. “Yes sir.” He replied in his gravelly voice, “It seems that we have some crewmen in engineering that can’t find their own ass with two hands and a hunting dagget. I’ve been down their helping them to repair a damaged coolant line.”

“Why were you down in engineering?” Turner asked, casting a glance at his X.O. who shrugged in bewilderment. “I have an entire engineering staff down there that can do the job.”

“Because sir,” the Chief said as he pulled out a half smoked cigar and chomped down on it. “You can’t very well lead troops unless you’re willing to get dirty with ‘em. Besides,” he paused as he lit the cigar, “It’s been ages since I been in an engine room. Felt good to get grimy.”

“Well I’m glad you feel good Chief, but why don’t you take that cigar outside into the corridor smoking area.” Turner replied.

“What the matter sir?” Palmer said with a smile. “Don’t like anyone smoking in here?”

“No,” Turner replied with a sly smile of his own, “It’s just that with all that grease and lube on you, you’re likely to go up in flames here any moment and I don’t want your burning carcass to stink up my new CIC.”

This brought a loud guffaw from the Master Chief who nodded in acquiescence. “I’ll be back when I wash up.”

“Please do Chief.” Turner said waving the chief away. “Ok, where were we?”

“Sir, we’ve finished the last minute transfers of personnel, provision and equipment and the last of the navigational updates have been downloaded into our computer core.” Colonel Ryan reported.

“So we’re ready for launch then?” Turner asked.

Ryan smiled and nodded. “Yes sir.”

“Good.” Turner said returning the smile. “Have you made contact with the Vigilant and the Sentinel?”

“Yes sir, they’re on station at Ragnar Anchorage re-supplying their ammo and should be in orbit awaiting us by the time we get there tomorrow.” The exec reported.

Turner nodded. “Ok then, start the pre-launch countdown and coordinate with Scorpion Station control to lie in our outbound flight path. In the meantime,” he sighed, “I have some paperwork to catch up on.”

“The bane of command.” Ryan replied. “Don’t worry sir, the CIC will be here for you when you’re done.”

Turner rolled his eyes. “I hope so. Right now I would prefer a long watch to the things I have to do.”

Jason Allen admired the look of his new ship as he glided his mark seven Viper along her gleaming hull, weaving in and out of the docking scaffolding that encircled her.

“Wow that’s a huge son of a bitch.” He muttered to himself.

“Viper two six niner this is Prometheus. We have you on our scopes now and you are flying on a restricted path. Adjust heading to zero eight four and make your course for the port flight deck, over”

Allen smiled to himself. “Playtime is over.” He muttered as he activated his com switch. “Prometheus, Viper two six niner copies. Adjusting heading now.”

“Roger that two six niner, advise Prometheus control when you are in the lane.” A female voice replied.

Pulling the flight control yoke, Allen turned his Viper in a gentle curve out away from the dock and made his way out to the rear of the ship to line up for the landing lane.

“Prometheus, Viper two six niner: I’m in the lane.” Allen reported.

“Very well two six niner you’re cleared for the port side landing bay. Speed is one seven zero, hands on approach, call the ball.” The female voice commanded.

“I copy speed at one seven zero, hands on approach. I have the ball.” Allen replied.

Touching his throttle he shot forward and made his way to the hangar deck. It took only a moment until he was inside and touching down on the surface of the flight pod..

“Prometheus, Viper two six niner: Landing gear down, mag lock secure.” Allen reported as he powered down his engines.

“Copy that two six niner. Report to the CAG as soon as you are secure.” The controller’s voice ordered.

Jason signed and flipped his main power to standby. “Oh great, I’m in trouble already.”

Several minutes later, Allen climbed out of his cockpit to find a familiar face that he hadn’t seen in many years looking at him with a scowl. *She never changes* he thought to himself.

“Wasn’t that the same expression you had on your face the last time I saw you?” he asked with a cocky smile.

Stacie ‘Sheba’ Percival shook her head in amazement. “You never change do you?” she asked.

“Oh I try not to.” Allen replied. “But then again, something you just can’t help.” He finished as he pointed to the captains rank insignia on his collar.

“Hah!” Sheba barked harshly, “I heard about that. Heard that you almost lost it the very same day too.”

Allen chuckled. “Well I didn’t *know* she was Admiral Nagala’s daughter.”

“Captain Allen!” a new female voice called out across the hangar deck.

Jason turned to see a short woman with brown hair and ice blue eyes striding towards him with purpose. Seeing the major’s rank insignia on her collar and guessing that she was the CAG he was supposed to report to, he came to attention and saluted.

Major Horvath stopped and looked Allen up and down, as if determining whether or not she could take him in a fight, before finally returning the salute. “You want to tell me what the hell you were thinking by playing slalom through the dry dock scaffolding, captain?” she asked icily.

Next to her, Percival had a smug look of satisfaction on her face. This served to fire a dark anger in Jason’s gut but he kept his smile on his face determined not to let Percival notice. “Well ma’am, I just wanted to get a good look at the ship that’s going to be my new home.” He replied using his best charm.

The CAG was unmoved. “Well now your new home is on my report roster.” she replied. “Report to my office at fourteen hundred, captain.”

Jason watched as Horvath spun on her heel and marched away, he began to get that familiar cold feeling in his gut. Looking at Percival, who wore an expression of pleasure on her face he felt his anger well up inside him even more.

“You really are enjoying this aren’t you?” he asked.

“Damn right I am.” Percival replied leaning in close and letting her tone grow frosty. “In fact, this whole thing just makes... my... day.” She finished dragging out here words to add more venom to them.

“You’ve always hated me because I’m a better pilot than you.” He said struggling to keep his temper in check.

Anger immediately flashed across Percival’s face and Jason knew he had hit a nerve. “I don’t *hate* you, I *dislike* you and I don’t dislike you because you’re a better pilot, I dislike you because you think you’re better than everyone else and that the rules don’t apply to you.” She replied. “You’re arrogant and reckless and it’s about time somebody put you in your fraking place.”

Jason laughed out loud. “Arrogant? This from the woman who constantly threw around the fact that she was from a military family? That she was the first in her family to be commissioned? That she had worked ‘*so hard*’ to get where she was and how she deserved better?” he shook his head. “At least when I fly the safety of my ship and my fellow pilots comes first to my ego. You fly like you have a chip on your shoulder and someday it’s going to get someone hurt or even killed.”

Spinning on his heel he stormed off towards the pilots locker. “Oh wait,” He said spinning back towards her and fixing her with a venomous stare, “It already has.”

Continuing to walk away he didn’t see Sheba’s face turn bright red and the look of pure hate she cast at his back but he could feel it. What was worse was that he didn’t regret saying it not one damn bit.

CHAPTER 3

A FATEFUL MEETING

Scorpion Station Command Center,
Scorpion Fleet Yards,
In Orbit of Scorpion

Commander Turner made his way down the corridors of the Scorpion fleet yards main command center at a brisk pace while trying to review the last of his orders he had signed. He had only two hours until his launch window and he needed to meet with Admiral Roswell and turn in his final paperwork before then but being as absorbed as he was into the briefing folder he had in front of him he never noticed the elderly officer who was making his way towards him until he nearly ran him down.

“Oh excuse me.” He said sheepishly as he looked up. “I guess I was thinking. I’m sorry... Commander Adama?”

William Adama, Turner’s X.O. when he had served as CAG on the Atlantia, smiled and nodded. “Hello Jon.” He said.

“I didn’t know you were on station sir or I would have come to say hello.” Turner said.

“We’re the same rank now Jon, you don’t have to call me sir.” Adama said reaching his hand out. “And congratulations, you deserved it.”

“Thanks.” Turner replied taking Adama’s offered hand and shaking it. “Been a while hasn’t it?”

“Yes it has, Jon, too long.” Adama said patting the younger man on the back. “I heard that they gave you command of one of the new Nova class Battlestars.”

Turner nodded. “Yeah, the Prometheus. In fact we launch in two hours. What about you? Are you still on the Valkyrie?”

“No, I relinquished command of her last week.” Adama replied.

“So where to now then?” Turner asked.

“Well I was going to retire but Admiral Nagala begged me to stay on one more tour so that I could see the Galactica off into retirement.” Adama replied.

“The Galactica?” Turner said, shocked. “She a bucket! Hell, she’s the oldest ship in the fleet. You deserve better than that.”

“The admiralty presented her to me as an honor since she was also my first assignment. The truth though, is that she’s a consolation prize since they passed me up for promotion again.” Adama replied.

Jonathan nodded. “That’s crap. There’s no one I know that deserves to be promoted to Admiral over you.”

“Cain was promoted over me.” Adama pointed out.

Turner chuckled. “Ok, almost no one. Still, it galls me to think that they keep denying you.”

Adama smiled in his understanding way. “The admiralty doesn’t want old relics like me in their ranks. They want fresh blood, hot head aggressive officers like Cain.”

“Admiral Cain was a great mentor and she deserved her rank but it still doesn’t mean that they should pass you over.” Turner said as his watch beeped at him. “Damn, I’m running late. I have to get these last transfer orders up to Admiral Roswell before we depart.”

“That’s fine Jon.” Adama replied easily, “I’m sure well see each other again after you get back.”

Turner nodded and smiled. “Sure thing. Maybe I’ll get back in time to see the admiralty change their minds about you.”

Adama chuckled. “I think the Cylons will return before that happens.”

Both men stood in silence for a moment before finally shaking hands one more time.

“Good luck on your mission Jon.” Adama said.

“You too Bill.” Turner replied.

Their goodbyes said, Adama turned and walked away towards his ship and Turner began moving again towards Admiral Roswell’s office and although he tired to shake it off, Jonathan could help but feel that the next time that he saw Bill Adama wouldn’t be under such good circumstances.

Combat Information Center (CIC),
Battlestar Prometheus

“And so today we send off the Battlestar Prometheus with our fondest wishes for success and a swift and safe return as they travel into the unknown for the benefit of all mankind.”

As the command crew of the Prometheus listened to President Adar finish his live radio address commemorating the ships’ launch, Commander Turner allowed himself a moment of pride, but only a moment.

For almost twenty years he had worked hard to build himself to this point, the one moment where he took command of his own ship and got underway. Now that he was here he wanted to savor the moment, yet he restrained himself, instead remaining focused on the tasks at hand. “Release docking clamps, all thrusters at station keeping.” He said. “Communications, inform the tower that we are ready to depart.”

“Ready for this Jim?” the commander asked his X.O.

Colonel Ryan’s expression was one of seriousness and professionalism. “Sir, I was born ready for this moment.”

Turner nodded, keeping his expression neutral. “Very well Colonel, take us out.”

“Take her out, aye sir!” Ryan said as he snapped a crisp salute.

Turner returned the salute and watched as his X.O. went to work.

“Mister Palmer, make your course zero karem zero, all engines ahead one third.” Ryan commanded.

“Course zero karem zero, all ahead one third, aye sir!” the chief of the ship repeated.

The Prometheus shuddered for a moment as her massive engines fired their thrusters but slowly she began her graceful glide out of the dry dock that had been her only home.

“Sir we have cleared the dock.” The helm officer reported.

Turner watched as the Dratis image confirmed that the Scorpion Shipyards were falling away behind them when suddenly, he had an idea.. “X.O.,” he said, “Come right to zero seven zero, fifteen degree up angle on the bow planes.”

“Aye sir.” Ryan replied, “Helm, make your course zero seven zero fifteen degree up angle.”

As the helm officer moved to comply Ryan stepped over to his commander and leaned in to whisper. “Planning a flyby sir?”

Turner smiled. “Yeah, something to honor an old friend.”

“Starboard dip?” Ryan asked.

“Exactly.” Turner replied. “Execute as we pass by docking slip 94.”

“My pleasure sir.” Ryan said turning back to the crew. “Mister Palmer, how long until we pass by docking slip 94?”

“Sir, we’ll pass by slip 94 in one minute.” The chief of the boat responded.

“Very good.” Turner said as he returned his gaze to the dratis. “Be prepared to execute a starboard dip in forty five seconds.”

The ‘starboard dip’ was a maneuver that wasn’t used much anymore, but in the old days it had been an informal show of respect between ships or commanders and while there weren’t too many people left in the fleet who would recognize such a gesture, the aging master chief knew of one who would and he just happened to be aboard the ship in slip 94. “I think that’s great idea sir.” He said.

Turner smiled at the old space hand’s approval. “I thought so too.”

“Sir, executing starboard dip now.” Ryan announced.

In the CIC on board the Galactica, Commander Adama and his X.O., Colonel Tigh, both watched on the view monitor as the gleaming image of the Battlestar Prometheus slid effortlessly through space towards the slip they were berthed in.

“By gods that’s a beautiful ship.” Tigh said.

“Yes she is.” Adama agreed.

“Holy frak, do you see that?” Tigh asked suddenly.

Adama watched breathlessly as the Prometheus, pristine and new, dipped her starboard flight pod down at a 45 degree angle and held it until she passed by the Galactica.

“That was amazing.” Tigh breathed.

Adama nodded and turned to his communications crewman. “Dee, send to Prometheus actual: Good hunting and gods speed.”

“Yes sir.” The young petty officer replied. “Sending now.”

In the CIC of the Prometheus Turner listened to the message on his handset and smiled. “Galactica actual, this is Prometheus actual: Thank you and we wish you the same. We’ll catch you on the flip side.”

With that, Turner returned the handset to its berth and faced Colonel Ryan. “X.O., plot us a course out of the system and begin jump prep. Inform me as soon as we’re ready.”

“Aye sir.” Ryan replied.

Turning and striding from the CIC, Turner made his way down the hall to the privacy of his office where he closed his door and began his first log entry.

Commander’s log, entry number one: Prometheus underway at one three zero five hours. All systems functioning normally and the crew are performing to standard. All is well, and yet as I leave this system I can’t shake this premonition that things will never be the same. Oh well, it’s probably all in my head.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST STEPS

CAG's office,
Battlestar Prometheus

Captain Jason Allen stood at attention outside the office of the CAG and rapped his knuckles on the door three times, causing them to sting.

“Enter.” Came a voice from within.

Taking a deep breath to steady his nerves, Slider, as he was called by his fellow pilots, opened the door and marched towards the major's desk, being careful to close the door behind him as he entered.

Coming to attention in front of Horvath's desk he snapped a salute. “Captain Allen, reporting as ordered ma'am.”

Horvath continued to look intently at the file on her desk forcing Allen to hold his salute. Finally, she looked up and returned the salute. “Sit.” She said.

Grabbing the nearest seat, Allen sat down and tried to hide his tension.

“I've been looking at your personnel record here, captain.” Horvath said returning her eyes to the file in front of her. “Everyone you have ever worked for, from your flight instructors up to your last CAG have all said that you are one of the best pilots they have ever seen.”

Allen smiled as his ego swelled in his chest. “Thank you ma'am.”

“They also say you're an arrogant pain in the ass.” Horvath said, taking the wind out of Allen's sails. “You've been put in hack twice for mouthing off to a superior and I am seriously considering putting you in hack now for violating safety protocols.”

“But ma'am, I was just...” Allen began to protest but was cut off by Horvath's raised hand.

“Captain I don't care how good a pilot you are. Rules are not guidelines meant to be disregarded at your whim, they are firm and unbreakable. They do not compromise, nor do I.” the CAG said sternly. “I am also fair so I believe that I have come up with a punishment that fits your crime.”

Allen took a deep breath and readied himself for the worst.

“I'm giving you command of Ace Squadron.” Horvath said.

For a moment Allen was too stunned to speak. Finally though, he was able to find his voice. “You’re giving me command?” he asked incredulously.

“Don’t thank me just yet captain.” Horvath said. “Ace squadron is filled with people just like you; talented hot heads who like to mouth off at the first chance they get. It’ll be your job to turn them into professionals.”

Jason sat with his mouth hanging open for a moment before finally gaining his composure. “Ma’am, I appreciate this opportunity but... I never wanted a command. I just wanted to fly.”

“And people in Hell don’t want sunburn but they get it. This is as much a learning experience for you as it is for them. Now,” Horvath said hefting a stack of file folders towards Allen. “Take these and review them. Their your men and women now.”

Allen took the folders and stood. “Yes ma’am.” He replied less than enthusiastically.

Horvath finally smiled. It wasn’t a comforting sight to Jason. “I’ll expect a readiness report by tomorrow morning so get moving.” She said. “Oh, and I know that you and Captain Percival have some issues to iron out. I suggest that you get them straight quickly since she is the other squadron commander.”

Allen nodded and turned towards the door.

“One last thing captain... Horvath said, causing Allen to turn around. “Welcome aboard the Prometheus.”

Cylon Homeworld,
Somewhere beyond the Armistice line

The Grand Convocation Chamber stood like a burnished steel dome in the center of the grid like city that the Cylons called their capital. In the perpetual night of the Alphanon Nebula that shrouded their world, the chamber stood out like a gleaming jewel.

Inside the chamber the seven members of the convocation, each one representing the models they represented, sat down at a circular table on a raised dais at the center of the chamber.

Above them, hidden by the bright light that shone down on them, were rows upon rows of seats in which sat the human models of Cylons. Filled to capacity, the chamber could hold over five thousand Cylons.

At all of the entrances stood two Centurions, one old and one new, both plated in gold that symbolized their high status as Convocation Guards. Only the white plated Centurions that guarded the Star Chamber where the reclusive 'final five' met were more highly regarded in Cylon society.

Normally the Convocation met only when important decisions regarding Cylon society as a whole were pending. Today was no different.

At the center table heated words were being spoken regarding 'the great debate' but today the atmosphere in the chamber was different. There was a sense of finality about the debate today.

"This act is a clear provocation by the humans!" the man known on the Colony world of Geminon as Brother Cavil said. "They're seeking us out now even as we speak."

"We don't know that." Responded a six. "It could be just what they say it is."

"Are you really that naive!?" the nine model shouted. "The humans have never been trustworthy! They'll attack us and try to exterminate us at the first chance they get."

"I'm not sure I agree with that assessment." The ebon skinned number ten model said. "Yes, the humans are not trustworthy but neither are they malicious. The only actions they have taken against us in the past 40 years are to send some poor Colonial officer out to Armistice station every year to try and make contact with us."

"That's because they fear us!" Cavil hissed, "And they're right to do so."

"What so all of the nines are in agreement on this?" six asked incredulously. "That killing humanity is the only way for us to proceed?"

"Yes!" Cavil responded enthusiastically. "We go there and wipe the stain of humanity from the face of existence!"

"What you are suggesting is genocide." The model known as Leoben spoke up. "Genocide wasn't the plan."

"Genocide is a sin against God." Six said.

"Oh lord, not the whole God argument again!" Cavil said rolling his eyes.

"Don't blaspheme." Six growled angrily, "God takes blasphemy very seriously."

"Enough!" shouted a model three, drawing all of their attention.

After the voices quieted down, the three model stood and began pacing around the table. "I have meditated on this long on this," she said, "And I have asked for God's

wisdom. I spent the night last night praying for some insight in this matter and my prayers were answered.”

“What was it?” Six asked.

“Every instinct in me says that the humans are up to something.” Three said. “I don’t yet know what it is though so I am inclined to recommend holding off on some of our plans for now.”

Cavil threw his hands up in exasperation but Three silenced his protest before it began. “It is nevertheless prudent to gather more information and have certain assets in place should we need to act.”

All around the table, the Cylons wore thoughtful expressions and nodded in agreement with the words that the Three representative spoke.

“Six, our agent on Caprica has located the one we think will be our best bet for neutralizing Colonial defenses should the need arise. I think that one of you should be the one to go to him and make contact.” Three said.

“I can do that.” Six nodded. “It will also give us a chance to evaluate humanity from a different perspective.”

Three smiled at her sister Cylon. “Good. Brother Cavil, I think you need to continue with your mission on Geminon. Gauge the general feeling of the populace towards a Cylon return. It could be the deciding factor as to whether we subjugate or annihilate them.”

The nine model known as Cavil nodded in agreement but said nothing.

“Finally, to you little sister.” Three said looking straight at the representative of the Eights. “I have two very important missions for you. Missions that, should the worst happen, could be vital to the survival of our race.”

“I would be honored.” The Eight replied.

“Then we are agreed? Leoben asked.

All headed nodded in the affirmative and Three smiled. “Good. We will dispatch a scout to watch this Battlestar called Prometheus and to report its movements back here to us. So long as they pose no threat to us, we will leave them alone.”

“And if they do pose a threat?” the five model known as Aaron Doral asked.

Three smiled. “Then we destroy them.”

CHAPTER 5

INTO THE BLACK

Pilot's Briefing Room
Battlestar Prometheus
In orbit of Ragnar

“Jump complete.” Colonel Ryan announced as the waves of jump induced nausea passed out of him.

“Very well.” Commander Turner said in response. “Navigation, confirm our position.”

At the navigation console, Lieutenant Halloran, the chief navigator for the ship, scanned the dratis readouts and tapped a button on his console before turning back to address the commander. “Plot confirmed sir; we are in geo-synchronous orbit above the Ragnar anchorage.”

Turner smiled as mild applause broke out on the deck. “Not bad for a first jump, eh X.O.?”

Ryan responded in kind. “Not bad at all sir.”

From his position over watching over the crew pit where the enlisted crewmen operated the vital function of the ship, Master Chief Palmer called out, “Commander, there’s an incoming transmission from Colonel Alexander onboard the Sentinel.”

“Put em through chief.” Turner ordered.

The Master Chief of the ship nodded at the crewman by his side that flipped a switch on his com-board. “You’re on sir.”

“Gunstar Sentinel, this is Prometheus actual.” The commander said.

For a long moment only the sound of static filtered through the speakers above the situation table. Finally, cultured voice broke through. “Prometheus actual, this is Sentinel actual, standing by for orders.”

“Very well,” Turner responded, “Is Doctor Zylman on board?”

“Yes sir and quite anxious to begin our mission.” Colonel Alexander replied.

“We are too.” Turner said. “Contact Colonel Marshall on the Vigilant and tell him to meet with us here in the pilots briefing room in fifteen minutes. In the mean time, I want you and the Vigilant to take up standard screening positions.”

“Aye sir,” Alexander replied, “I’ll see you in fifteen minutes. Sentinel out.”

The Commander exhaled deeply letting some of the tension he was feeling show on his face as he turned to his X.O. “You’re with me, Lieutenant Halloran has the Conn.”

As he followed Commander Turner into the pilots briefing room, Colonel Ryan called out “Commander on deck!” which brought the assembled officers to their feet in one swift motion.

Turner let the senior officers of his fleet wait at the position of attention as he moved to the front of the room. Finally, when he reached the podium, he said “As you were.” Allowing the men to relax.

As the officers took their seats again the commander began to size up his new subordinates. His eyes fell first on the thin form of Colonel Alexander, the captain of the Sentinel. Tall, with blue eyes and slicked back hair, he was a poster boy for what an elegant officer should look like.

Never caring much for those who put on pretentious airs, Turner was inclined to feel distant from the colonel but refrained remembering the briefing he had received from Admiral Roswell about the man.

By comparison his counterpart from the Vigilant, Colonel Hall, was the exact opposite. His uniform was rumpled and his grey thinning hair was close cropped to his scalp, yet his eyes were sharp as a hawk. Turner remembered that the Vigilants’ captain had been passed over for promotion to commander several times because he had ruffled the feathers of the powers that be. Still, he was a good officer and that was why Turner had requested him and his ship for the assignment.

The third man that Turner noticed was Doctor Herbert Zylman. A young man with hair so blonde it was almost white, he had a baby face and eyes that blazed with a keen intellect.

Turning his eyes away from the doctor, Turner began his speech without preamble, “Ok all, I’m not one for formal speeches so I will just say this: The mission we are embarking on will make history.”

Turner watched the expression of his officers as he announced the presidential orders that had been sealed and handed into his hands. For a moment, all of the senior officers were quiet. Their expressions ranged from Doctor Zylman’s anxious, to Alexander’s skeptical. Nevertheless, it was the outspoken Colonel Hall who spoke up first.

“You have got to be fraking kidding me!” he said throwing up his arms in frustration. “Earth? The President has us out here chasing a fraking myth??”

Turner moved to respond but was cut off by Doctor Zylman before he could speak. “Earth isn’t just a myth people, it’s a fact.”

“Is that so?” Colonel Hall replied fixing his skeptical gaze on the young doctor. “What are you, some kind of expert on it?”

Zylman smiled at the colonel and Turner found it amusing. It was the smile of a predator about to make the kill. “As a matter of fact,” he said, “I am.”

“Doctor Zylman is the foremost expert on the colonial exodus from Kobol and the myth of Earth.” Turner said forestalling any more argumentative comments. “He’s here to help us track down the clues of the Thirteenth Tribe’s exodus. He’ll be my primary scientific advisor during our mission so he will be staying on Prometheus with us. Doctor Z, would you care to explain to them what you told me about in your communiqué before we left?”

“Gentlemen,” The Doctor said standing and activating a view screen, “This is a map of the twelve colonies.” He said pointing at the twelve star systems that were home to humanity.

“No kidding.” Colonel Hall said eliciting a few chuckles.

Doctor Z ignored him and continued. “By reading the scriptures we have determined that the seventh tribe, which was the first to leave Kobol, settled on Aquarion.” Zylman explained, “The rest of the tribes settled in the various other colonial systems some time after that but the Aquarions did something that the rest of the colonial settlers didn’t.”

“And what was that?” Colonel Alexander asked, his interest piqued.

“Unlike the rest of the colonials, the Aquarions didn’t erase their logs of their travels from Kobol.” Zylman said.

This brought raised eyebrows from everyone in the room.

“Now hold on a minute,” Colonel Ryan said standing. “My daddy was a priest and one of the things he told us was that the original colonists all erased their navigational data so that no one would be able to go back to Kobol.”

“Well that’s true for most of the colonials,” Zylman replied. “but the Aquarions aren’t an especially orthodox bunch. In fact, according to the scriptures, they were the most rebellious of the original tribes, hence why they were the first to leave.”

“But Doctor, even if the Aquarions did keep their navigational data, it would be over two thousand years old now. The data would be irrelevant.” Alexander interjected.

“Not necessarily.” Zylman replied tapping a button on the screen. “Working for the past two years, I’ve been able to compensate for galactic drift and correlate most of the path back.” On the screen, a blue line traced from the Aquarion system to Ragnar, and then from Ragnar off beyond the red line that marked the edge of known space. “We will follow this course back to Kobol and from there we will find the path to Earth.”

“You believe this can be done?” Alexander asked.

“I *know* it can be done.” Zylman replied. “I’d stake my reputation on it.”

“Good.” Turner replied. “Because tomorrow we make the first jump.”

EPILOGUE

ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH...

*Battlestar Prometheus, Operation Outreach status update number three:
Admiral Nagala,
My compliments sir, on behalf of the officers and crew of the Prometheus.
The crews of all three ships have been apprised of our mission and we have deployed our first long range communications buoy to facilitate communications with you folks back home. The crews are skeptical about finding Earth, and I can’t say as I blame them for that, yet at the same time I can’t help but to believe that, like Doctor Z says, this can actually be done, that we can actually find the lost tribe of humanity. The information that Doctor Z has shown to me is compelling to say the least and for now, I am inclined to believe. I would even say I am excited about this mission.*

We’ve calculated our course projections, which I am appending in this message to you, and are about to make our first jump beyond the red line. Morale is high and we are eager to get started, so with that being said, wish us good hunting and keep us in your thoughts.

*Respectfully,
Jonathan A. Turner
Battlestar Prometheus (BG 22)
Commanding*

Finishing the status report, Turner transmitted the data to the com tech. “Go ahead and send that now.” He said.

The com tech nodded and Turner turned away to face the X.O. “Status?” he asked.

“Sir, the FTL is spun up and the coordinates to our first jump point are plotted and ready.” Colonel Ryan responded.

“Signal the Sentinel and the Vigilant to prepare to jump.” Turner ordered.

“Attention all ships: Prepare for FTL jump on my mark.” Lieutenant Halloran said as he looked at Turner.

Suddenly, it hit the Commander: It was this moment that Turner had lived his life for, the moment when he would set off on *his* mission, the mission that would define his life and the legacy he would leave behind.

And as this realization set in, Commander Jonathan Turner found himself smiling. “What the hell?” he said to nobody in particular, “Lets get this show on the road.”

And with his next word, he set off on the adventure that would define his life.

“Jump.”