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# BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

EPISODE 10:  
TEARS OF ANGELS  
By Ryan A Keeton

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Commander Jonathan Turner: Commanding Officer of the Prometheus and Battlestar Group 22

Colonel Nigel Alexander: Commanding Officer, Gunstar Sentinel

Colonel James L. Ryan III: Executive Office of the Battlestar Prometheus

Major Karla 'Ice Queen' Horvath: Commander, Air Group (CAG) of the Prometheus air wing

Major Aldus Argyle: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Captain April 'Doc' Kaplin: Flight Surgeon, Battlestar Prometheus

Captain Jason 'Slider' Allen: Commander of Ace Squadron

Captain Joshua Wakefield: Current Commander of Knight Squadron

Lieutenant Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operation Officer

Master Chief Petty Officer Thomas Palmer: Chief of the Boat (COB) for the Battlestar Prometheus

Petty Officer Theresa Madrid: Communications Specialist for the Prometheus.

Precentor (I) Rollo Thomasi: Commander of the Terran Alliance Battle Cruiser Kraken.

Galaxus Lucius Verenos: Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Legionary Battle Group of the Terran Alliance Expansionary Fleet.

## PROLOGUE WITHOUT A PADDLE

“Report!” Jonathan Turner said into the blackness.

“Sir, the computers, they’ve gone fracking nuts!” Maddie shouted from the communications station.

“Confirmed sir. All sections reporting massive computer failures.” Lieutenant Halloran reported from his Operations station.

“What about Coms?” Asked Colonel Ryan.

“Operational, but we’re broadcasting in the clear. All code and scrambling programming is offline.” Maddie replied as she worked furiously at her station.

“Put me through on general broadcast.” Turner ordered.

“Sir?” Maddie and Ryan both asked at the same time.

“You heard me.” Turner replied calmly. “General broadcast, all frequencies.”

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied.

“Sir,” Colonel Ryan leaned in close to whisper in Turner’s ear, “Are you sure about this? The enemy will be able to hear us.”

Turner turned to face Colonel Ryan. His face was calm and cool but Ryan saw in his eyes something he had never seen before.

*Worry.*

“We don’t have a choice Colonel. Prepare yourself to transfer over to the *Sentinel*. You’re going to take command of the battle while I try and save the ship.”

“Not a chance in hell sir.” Ryan replied firmly.

“Excuse me?” Turner asked, his eyes tightening.

“Sir, you are the flag of this Battlestar Group and we are engaged in combat.”

“Colonel, I gave you a direct...”

“Begging your pardon sir, but the X.O. is right.” Said Master Chief Palmer moving from his station down to where the Commander and X.O. stood. “We’re in combat and we have to get you someplace where you can command the battle from.”

“Sir, I have a channel open for you.” Maddie called out.

Turner was silent for a moment as he considered what both men had told him. Finally, he picked up his headset and activated it. “Attention all commands, this is Prometheus Actual. We have a one eight seven situation aboard the flagship. Consider all signals from this ship compromised until official recall codes are issued and verified. The flag will be transferred shortly and all command level instructions will be executed from that location. Until such time, Sentinel Actual is in command. All subordinate commanders will report to him time now. Wish us luck. Actual, out.”

“It’s done.” Turner said as he faced his two subordinates

“Yes sir.” Ryan replied stonily. “Now it’s time for you to go.”

Turner shook his head. “Not yet. I want a good grasp of the situation before I leave.”

“Sir...” Ryan began to protest.

“Jim, I need to know if this ship is salvageable before I leave.”

Both men stared at each other for several long minutes before Ryan nodded his head in acquiescence. “Yes sir.”

“Now gentlemen,” Turner said as he turned towards the engineering displays, “Find out what the hell is going on with my ship.”

## CHAPTER 1

### EN’ GARDE

For a long while, all was silent on the bridge of the Kraken as everyone watched the grainy image of the Fire Hellion breaking into pieces and exploding from the inside.

Sitting in his chair, Precentor Thomasi sat impassively watching the event unfold in front of him. His lower lip trembled slightly, though no one could see it and he clamped down on the show of emotion immediately.

“All fighters are launched. Estimate two minutes until they engage Colonial Vipers.” Reported Centurion Harall, breaking the shocked silence on the bridge of the *Kraken*.

“Very well.” Thomasi replied quietly. “Have them form a perimeter and try to hold off the Colonial fighters while we prepare for jump.”

“Yes...sir.”

“Do you have a problem with your orders, Centurion?”

“No sir.” Harall replied quickly, “It’s just that...”

“Just what?”

“Retreat, sir. I don’t like retreating in the face of the enemy.”

Thomasi nodded, understanding his subordinates’ feelings. “We are out numbered and out gunned, Centurion. Better to withdraw and fight again than to lose in a meaningless fashion.”

“Yes sir.” Harall replied. “Orders going out now sir.”

“Sir! New contacts bearing two point eight by one point seven, four point one by eight point nine and eleven point three by zero point six.” the tech stationed at the sensor board shouted.

“Identify!” Harall snapped as he turned to verify the readings.

“Identity based on sensor echo and bearing rates... Conqueror Class Battlecruisers sir! They’re ours!” The tech joyously announced.

“Sir!” Harall said with a smile, “Do you know what that means?”

“Yes I do.” Thomasi replied standing. “It means victory.”

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“Sir, we just lost the computer network.” Halloran reported from his station.

“All stations switch to manual.” Ryan ordered turning to Doctor Zylman, who had recently joined them. “What the frack is going on Doc?”

“Well sir, this is what I tried to warn you about.” Zylman replied indignantly, “By deleting the virus that was planted in the navigational system, we activated a subroutine that is systematically corrupting and shutting down our computer systems. The shut down of the network means that it is done replicating and delivering itself to all of our major subsystems.”

“What happens next?” asked Commander Turner.

Zylman swallowed hard. “I have tracked the virus and it has now infected the communication, dradis and engineering systems. At its current rate of progress, the computer systems that control these areas will be hopelessly corrupted and shut down within the hour.”

Turner shook his head and rubbed his eyes. “What about weapons and launch capabilities?”

“Those systems exist on a different network pathway, but eventually they too will be infected and shut down.”

“Life support?”

“Life support is not connected to the main computer network.” Said Major Argyle, the chief engineer of the ship, as he walked in. “It was designed so that if a virus took out the ship’s systems, the crew wouldn’t die.”

“Any sign that it’s been independently infected?” asked Colonel Ryan.

“No sir, but I have Captain Briedis looking into it now just to be safe.” Argyle replied.

“Good. Keep at it Major.” Turner commanded, “Let me know if anything else goes wrong.”

“Sir, new scope contact! Make, that multiple scope contacts!” Halloran announced.

“Report contacts.” Colonel Ryan ordered.

“Sir, dradis is down. Observation Post Three reports multiple jump flashes dead ahead and off the starboard stern.”

“Very well, assume they are hostile.” Turner replied as he turned back to the group at the table. “Gentlemen, we need to fix this problem. *Now.*”

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Colonel Nigel Alexander, Commander of the Colonial Gunstar *Sentinel* studied the dradis readout in front of him with a stern expression. “Fine mess this is,” he mumbled to himself.

“Sir?”

“Nothing Major.” Alexander said as he waved off the comment. “Report on those new contacts?”

“Sir, new contacts are unidentified.” Replied Lieutenant Hatfield from the Operations station.

“Very well, contact Archangel and have him dispatch Raptors to close with and identify.”

“Yes sir.”

“Major Tompkins, contact Slider and patch him in directly to me.”

“Yes sir.” The Sentinel’s X.O. replied.

A moment later, Slider’s voice rang through on the loud speakers. “Go ahead actual.”

“Slider, Sentinel actual here.” He said, his smooth North Caprican accent adding flair to his voice, “We have three new contacts on dradis, probably hostile ships. What are your recommendations?”

“Sir?” Slider’s voice came back.

“I’m a Marine, not a pilot, Captain. What are your recommendations regarding the deployment of your fighters to cover this new threat?”

The line was silent for a moment. “Actual, Slider. I’ll reposition Knight Squadron closer to Prometheus to cover any attempts to make a run on the ship.”

“Very well. I also want you to dock here as quick as you can.”

“Sir, I m...”

“Captain, I need you here to help me coordinate the fighter defense. Bring yourself aboard immediately.” Alexander ordered.

“Yes sir. Slider out.”

Inside his cockpit Slider felt his anger rise a notch as he was ordered to return to the Sentinel. “Shooter, deploy Knight Two and Three to cover Prometheus. I’ve been recalled to the flagship so you have command out here until I come back online from the *Sentinel*.”

“Roger that.” Came the voice of Captain Joshua Wakefield. “Try not to kill anyone while you’re there.”

“Yeah right.” Slider said under his breath, rolling his Viper over and setting a course for the Sentinel. “Ok kid, you got it.”

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“Sir,” said Centurion Harall as he approached the command chair of Precentor Thomasi, “Precentors Thadius, Maximus and Giovanni send their compliments and are requesting deployment instructions.”

“Inform Precentors Thadius and Giovanni to take the *Lobo Negro* and the *Serpentis* and flank the Prometheus. They are to engage and fix her there while Precentor Maximus takes the *Medusa* and engages her escorts.” Thomasi commanded.

“Yes sir.” Harall replied, “And, what about us?”

Thomasi smiled. “We, Centurion, are going in for the kill.”

## CHAPTER 2 RIPOSTE’

“Lords of Kobol hear the prayer of this humble soul who seeks your divine enlightenment in this, our darkest hour. Hear me, oh Lords of the Cosmos and forgive me of the trespasses I have committed against thee.”

“What was that?” asked Elena ‘Lefty’ Diaz from the back seat of the Raptor she shared with Archangel.

“Just a quiet prayer for strength.” Archangel replied. “Are you getting a good read on those ships?”

“No, they have some kind of static interference broadcast going up. We’re going to have to get close.”

Archangel nodded and pulled the yoke of the Raptor over, setting it on a direct high speed approach. “Full scan forward.”

Lefty shook her head. “Still nothing. Static is interfering with the vis-light equipment.”

“Switch to magnetic resonance.”

“Mag-res pulse... active.” Lefty said.

On the dradis readout a blue bubble radiated out from the Raptor clearing away the hazy static that clouded the screen. Suddenly, the readout beeped and three red shapes appeared.

“Contact!” Lefty said. “Alliance Conqueror class Battlecruiser. No wait! Make that three Battlecruisers!”

“Sweet Lords of Kobol.” Archangel gasped as he switched over his comm channel. “Sentinel, Archangel. Confirmed contact with three Alliance Battlecruisers. They’re on a course to surround the Prometheus. Request instructions.”

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Inside the C.I.C. of the *Sentinel*, Colonel Alexander looked away from the dradis screen in time to see Slider walk in, his helmet still in his hand.

“Sentinel, Archangel. Confirmed contact with three Alliance Battlecruisers. They’re on a course to surround the Prometheus. Request instructions.”

“Have they launched fighters yet?” Slider asked, setting his helmet on the situation table.

“It doesn’t look like it sir.” Replied Lieutenant Hatfield. “However, mag-res scans are inconclusive at this range.”

“Why are we on mag-res?” Slider asked.

“The enemy ships activated a static jamming field when they jumped in.” replied Major Tompkins.

“What about the Vigilant?” Lieutenant Hatfield asked. “Her ECM systems could cut through that and maybe even jam them.”

“No.” Slider replied shaking his head, “She’d get cut to pieces in a stand up fight at that close of range.”

“Glad we agree.” Alexander said. “Now the question is: What do we do about these Battlecruisers?”

“I have an idea sir, if you’ll allow me.” Slider said.

Alexander nodded and Slider picked up the handset. “Archangel, Slider. I’m having Scimitar squadron form up on you along with Ace One and Two. I want you to make a run on the nearest cruiser and try to disable their engines if possible.”

“Roger that Slider.” Archangel’s deep bass voice replied over the C.I.C. loudspeakers. “I’ll contact you when I’m inbound.”

“Very well. Shooter, this is Slider. All Vipers are to break station and protect Prometheus except Ace One and Two. Have them escort Raptor and Scimitar squadrons on their bombing runs.”

“Roger that Slider.” Replied Shooter.

“Ok sir,” Slider wiped his brow, “We should be able to make at least one run on them unopposed but after that it’s going to get ugly fast.”

“How fast?” Colonel Alexander asked.

Slider shook his head discouraged. “If we can’t get the Prometheus back into the fight...”

Slider didn’t need to finish his statement; Alexander knew perfectly well what he was trying to say. If there wasn’t a way to get the Prometheus operational again, the fight was over and they would have to scuttle the ship.

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“Sir, our gun positions report targeting solutions on enemy vessels.” Colonel Ryan reported. “Our Com systems are down though so we’re stuck using hand held radios and runners to relay information.”

Turner shook his head in frustration. “Order all batteries to open fire as soon as targets are in range and send a runner down to Major Argyle in engineering to find out if our jump systems are still online.”

“Sir, even if the jump systems are online the navigation computer is fracked. We can’t even plot a *short* jump.” Said Lieutenant Halloran.

“Then stand by to execute a blind jump.”

“Sir?” Halloran asked incredulously.

“You heard me Lieutenant.” Turner said. “Under no circumstances can we allow this ship to fall into enemy hands.”

“Sir,” Ryan said leaning close to Turner, “I don’t disagree with you at all but that makes it more imperative that we get you off this ship *now*.”

“Colonel I told you already, I’ll leave when...”

“Damn it sir, *no!*” Ryan growled.

For a long tension filled moment, both officers stared each other down with determination in their eyes. It was Ryan who finally broke the silence.

“Sir, this ship is about a hair away from going down and taking you with it. You need to go. *Now*.”

Turner continued to stare hard into Ryan’s eyes for a long moment, then his features softened and he nodded. “You’re right Colonel. It’s time to transfer the flag.”

“Yes sir.” Ryan replied, standing to attention and snapping off a salute.

Turner returned the salute and then reached out and shook his X.O.’s hand. “The ship is yours Colonel. Good hunting.”

“I have the ship, aye sir.” Ryan replied his own grip firm on Turner’s hand. “We’ll see you soon.”

“Sir,” said Maddie from the Communications station, “Report from the flight deck. They have Major Horvath back on the ship.”

“What’s her condition?” Asked Turner.

“She’s up and around but needs to be seen by a doctor.” Maddie replied.

“Have Doctor Kaplan meet us at the Raptor and redirect her there. She’ll be evacuating with me.”

“Yes sir.”

“Ok Jim, I’m on my way. I’ll try and contact you...”

“Begging your pardon sir, but you’re not leaving without us.” Said Lieutenant Halloran as he stood to join him.

All eyes then turned to the young lieutenant as he pulled out a bag from under his console and opened it. From inside he pulled two strap on armored chest pieces and tossed one to the Commander.

Turner took the armor and gave it a long look before handing it over to Colonel Ryan. “He’ll need it more than I will.”

Halloran, his expression now one of steely determination, looked ready to argue the point but finally nodded. “As you will sir.” He strapped on a large pistol to his belt and grabbed two swords out of his bag. “I didn’t think you would want to leave without this so I took the liberty of having it retrieved from your quarter’s sir.”

Turner smiled as he took his Vibro-Sword from Halloran. “Thank you Lieutenant.”

“Your welcome sir.” Halloran replied as he slipped on his final uniform piece.

A black beret.

“Time to go.” Said a voice from outside the C.I.C. hatch.

Turner looked and saw no less than five troopers, all wearing the black beret that signified them as the Colonial elite. “Let’s go.” He said.

And as Turner marched proudly out of the C.I.C, his head held high and his expression determined, he looked over his shoulder one last time and although he was always a man of optimistic faith, he couldn’t shake the awful feeling that he would never see the place again.

Colonel Ryan watched as his commanding officer reluctantly marched out of the C.I.C. and he felt sympathy for the man. Turner had worked hard for the better part of two decades to earn a command of his own and now he was being forced to abandon it.

*Well, Ryan thought to himself, I'll just have to make sure that I bring it back to him in one piece.*

Suddenly, the deck beneath him heaved and nearly threw him to the floor.

“Report!” he commanded.

“The enemy has opened fire against us sir.” Maddie reported from the now vacated Operations station. “Damage and casualty reports coming in from all over the ship.”

“Damn! Order all batteries to have at these bastards until they can't shoot anymore and have Argyle report to me ASAP on repair status.”

“Aye sir!”

“Chief, can we still maneuver?” Ryan asked.

“Yes sir, helm is still responsive but I don't know for how long.” Replied Chief Palmer.

“Very well.” Ryan said as he studied the last known position of the ship on the screen in front of him. “Maddie, on the I.M.C.: All hands, stand by to maneuver.”

“Sir, the I.M.C. is down along with external Coms.” Maddie reported.

“Then dispatch runners and let's hope that everyone holds on.” Ryan replied turning back to Chief Palmer, “Chief, left full rudder, five degree up angle on the bow planes, roll left one zero degrees.”

“Left full rudder, five degree up angle, port side roll program one zero degrees, aye sir!” Palmer repeated back.

“All engines ahead flank!”

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“Have they gone mad?” Major Tompkins asked as he observed the Prometheus begin to move from the *Sentinel's* command center view port. “At last report they had no sensor readings at all. They're trying to maneuver blind!”

“No Major, they haven't gone mad.” Replied Colonel Alexander from the situation table in the back of the command center. “They know that they're sitting ducks if they don't do something so they are trying to buy time.”

“But buy time for what?” Tompkins continued, “The entire ship’s systems are crashing on them. They’re done for.”

Alexander chuckled humorlessly. “That, Major, is why you will never have a command of your own.”

“Sir, I recommend we redeploy Knight Squadron to cover the Prometheus as long as they can.” Slider said, ignoring Major Tompkins’ comments.

“Make it so.” Alexander replied turning to his X.O., “Contact Colonel Hall and put him through to me here.”

“Yes sir.” The chastised Major replied.

A moment later, Colonel Hall’s gruff voice could be heard on the loudspeakers.

“Vigilant Actual here, go ahead.”

“Vigilant Actual, this is Sentinel Actual. I want you to target the ships attempting to flank the Prometheus with your Phoenix Hawk missiles and destroy them.”

The com line was silent as the impact of Colonel Alexander’s words registered across space to Colonel Hall.

“Sir, Colonel Hall requests a direct link.” Tompkins reported from the communications station.

Alexander nodded and picked up his handset. “Sentinel Actual, go ahead.”

“Nigel,” Hall said softly, “You *know* that the only one who can authorize me to use those is Commander Turner.”

“Commander Turner is not available right now. I am in command Marco, now use the *damn* missiles.” Alexander replied.

The line was once again silent as Colonel Hall considered his options.

Use of nuclear weaponry could only be authorized by the senior task force officer, usually an Admiral, but in this case, Commander Turner. To do so otherwise risked a court martial and possible death penalty.

Still, these were extraordinary circumstances and lives hung in the balance.

“Very well sir.” Colonel Hall replied finally, “But I want it logged that I obey under protest on legal grounds.”

Alexander chuckled. “Your arse is covered, Colonel Hall. Execute as soon as possible.”

“Yes sir.” Hall replied and the line went dead.

“Major Tompkins,” Alexander said as he replaced his handset in its holder, “Send a strike warning to all commands. Tell them that being any where near those three ships attacking the Prometheus is a very bad idea.”

“Yes sir.”

“Sir, we need to send a signal to Prometheus as well to brace for shock.” Slider interjected.

“How do you propose to do that? They don’t have communications, Captain.” Tompkins said.

“Have Archangel use his signal lights on his Raptor.” Slider replied.

Alexander nodded. “Do it.”

## CHAPTER 3 GAMBIT

Inside the cockpit of his Raptor, Archangel was focused intently on the fight unfolding in front of him. Two Viper Mark 7's were to the right and left of his ship and plowing anyone stupid enough to get in his way with their guns.

"Get ready to fire that Target Beacon Lefty!" he ordered.

"Beacon loaded and ready." Replied his EWO.

Archangel nodded and returned his attention to the course he was plotting towards the bridge of the enemy ship. Feeling the anxiety of the moment threatening to break his calm, he began to pray softly.

"Blessed is the Lord Zeus who giveth me the strength to stand against my enemies. Blessed is the Lady Athena who leadeth me into battle with courage and honor. Blessed is the Lord Aries who teacheth my fingers to fight and my hands to war. Oh great Lords of Kobol, guide my actions this day and inspire me unto victory. So say we all."

"So say we all." Lefty repeated from behind him.

"Sorry if I was too loud." Archangel said sheepishly.

"I'm sorry if I interrupted you." Lefty replied. "I just figure that we could use all the help we can get right now."

"Ain't that the truth."

"Archangel, Sentinel." Slider's voice said into his helmet.

"Archangel here, send it."

"Once you fire off your T.A.G. beacon I need you to make your way to the Prometheus and signal them that there is an inbound strike from the Vigilant on its way." Slider said.

"Roger that." Archangel replied, "Lefty, launch the beacon."

"T.A.G. beacon is away!" Lefty reported as the Raptor bucked from the launch.

Archangel could see as the Target Acquisition Gear beacon streaked away from his Raptor and impacted on the surface of the Alliance Battlecruiser below. "All bombers make your run on that target and get out!" He said as he pitched the Raptor over and set a speed course for the Prometheus.

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From his command chair, Precentor Thomasi watched the battle unfold in front of him with satisfaction.

“Sir, all ships have engaged the enemy. The *Lobo Negro* and the *Serpentis* report that they have engaged on the Prometheus, however, they are only receiving sporadic counter fire.” Reported Centurion Harall.

Thomasi stroked his gray goatee. “Peculiar.” He said to himself. “I wonder if our agent was successful...”

“He was.” Said a voice behind him.

Turning, Thomasi saw the tall and slender form of a man in the black and silver trimmed uniform of an Alliance Intelligence officer.

“So, you are Executor Baine?” Thomasi asked as he stood to greet the new comer.

“Executor Tyranus Baine, at your service, my lord.” The man said as he bowed politely.

Thomasi waved him off. “My father was Lord of Titanus, not I. Please refer to my military rank.”

“As you wish, Precentor.”

“Please inform me as to what you have done to the Prometheus.” Thomasi ordered as he guided Baine to a place next to him.

“During my time on board, I was able to infiltrate their computer networks. I used their own advanced coding techniques against them and planted a virus in their vital systems. By my calculations, their computer systems should be corrupting and shutting down as we speak.” The Executor explained.

Thomasi nodded approvingly. “Well done, Executor. What systems will be affected?”

“Engineering, weapons, sensors, security and flight systems, sir.”

“Good, then we can still capture her intact.”

“That *was* the idea, sir.” Baine replied proudly.

“You have done well, Master Baine.” Thomasi nodded approvingly. “Now we begin the endgame.”

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Colonel Marco Hall hung up his handset and looked to his X.O., a Captain named Laura Black. "X.O., set condition One S. Q. for missile launch."

"Aye sir." Captain Black responded quickly as she picked up the handset and set it to broadcast throughout the ship. "All hands, set condition One S.Q. for missile launch. I say again, set condition One S.Q. for missile launch."

"Helm, make your heading zero one five karem zero one zero. All ahead flank." Colonel Hall commanded.

"Make my heading zero one five karem zero one zero, all ahead flank, aye sir." The helm officer replied.

"Weapons officer, release the missile launch keys."

Moving quickly the weapons officer, a short lieutenant named Tyson, retrieved the two sets of missile keys from the weapons safe and placed them into the hands of Colonel Hall and Captain Black.

"Key number one seven five dash two." Hall said, reading off the numbers that were stamped into the key.

"Key number one seven five dash two." Black echoed.

Lieutenant Tyson nodded. "Keys are correct." He said as he verified the numbers in his notebook. "Do I have command authorization to spin up the missiles sir?"

Hall took a deep breath. "On my authority, you are ordered to spin up missiles one through five for quick strike launch."

"Yes sir. The use of nuclear weapons has been authorized." Tyson replied.

Hall nodded. "Get to it."

"Helm, ETA to Optimal Firing Distance?" Captain Black asked.

"ETA six minutes." The helm officer replied.

"Any sign that we've been spotted?" Hall asked.

Black shook her head. "No sir. Looks the like ECM suite is doing it's job."

"I sure as hell hope so." Hall replied. "If they spot us, we're dead."

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Commander Turner steadied himself against the bulkhead as another blast rocked the Prometheus and caused the floor to heave under him. “Damn, we must be getting pounded.”

“Keep going sir!” Lieutenant Halloran said from behind him. “There’s nothing we can do here now.”

“The hell there isn’t!” Turner replied. “I should be in the C.I.C. right now.”

“Sir, that’s the last place you need to be.”

“What do you mean?” Turner asked as he continued forward.

“Sir,” Halloran said gripping Turner and looking him in the eyes, “The ship is lost. Any minute now we’re going to be boarded. And you can’t be here when that happens.”

Halloran’s words hit Turner like a blow to the chest and he visibly recoiled, for while he had known in the back of his mind that the situation was grim, he hadn’t wanted to acknowledge that all was lost.

“Sir, you are the only one with the command codes to reinitialize the systems on the ship.” Halloran continued. “Without you and your command key, this is nothing more than an over sized cruise ship. Once we get you out of here we can re-group and make plans to retake the ship but if they capture you, then we just handed them the most advanced war ship in the Colonial Fleet.”

Turner nodded, accepting the wisdom in Halloran’s words. “Then let’s get the hell out of here.”

“Right behind you sir.” Halloran said.

“And,” Turner added sadly, “Let’s hope that everyone will still be here when I return.”

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“Sir, all weapons systems just went inactive!” Maddie reported to Colonel Ryan as he struggled to help Chief Palmer from the floor.

“Damn it.” Ryan cursed as another blast rocked the ship, “Helm, try and get us out of here.”

“I can’t sir, I just lost helm control.” The junior crewman at the primary helm control replied.

“Sir, the starboard bow thruster is locked open. We’re in a flat lateral spin.”  
Reported Captain Briedis from the Engineering station.

“Ok, get down to the forward auxiliary control suite and see if you can’t lock it down manually.” Ryan ordered.

“Got it sir.” Briedis replied.

“No!” said Major Argyle from beside him, “I’ll go. You stay here and keep working the computer problem with Doctor Zylman.”

“Yes sir.” Briedis replied, turning to the Doctor. “What do you think, Doc?”

Zylman shook his head in frustration. “I only minored in computers, Captain, my forte is ancient history. You need Gaius Baltar, not me.”

“Well we don’t have the pleasure of Doctor Baltar’s company, Doc, so you’re going to have to do your best.” Briedis replied sympathetically.

Over at the situation table, Master Chief Palmer steadied himself as a medic applied a bandage to the bleeding wound on his forehead.

“How are you Chief?” Ryan asked as he looked up from the latest batch of damage reports.

“Tolerable sir.” The old non-com replied.

“Good. I need you right now.”

Palmer nodded. “I’m ready sir.”

“Sir, O.P. three reports signal traffic from a Raptor. Message states: Brace for shock wave.” Maddie reported.

Ryan’s eyes widened as he realized what was about to happen. “Sweet Lord of Kobol.” He breathed, “Sound collision! All hands, brace for impact!”

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“X.O., helm: We have reached O.F.D.” the Vigilants’ helm officer reported over the C.I.C. loudspeaker.

“Very well, helm.” Captain Laura Black replied, picking up her hand mic, “Weapons, X.O.: What’s your status?”

“X.O., weapons: One minute until One S.Q.” replied the voice of Lieutenant Tyson.

“Very well.” Black replied turning to Colonel Hall. “One minute sir.”

“Load target package Sierra seven one.” Hall ordered.

Black nodded and entered the targeting information into the computer. “Targets are locked.”

Hall nodded. “Send the strike-warn to the flagship.”

“Gunstar Sentinel, this is Gunstar Vigilant: Strike Warn, Strike Warn, Strike Warn!” the crewman at the communications station announced as he transmitted the computer data on the strike.

“Vigilant, this is Sentinel Actual: Ships are closing on Prometheus and I believe they intend to board her. I want you to dissuade them of that notion.” Said the voice of Colonel Alexander over the loud speakers.

“Sentinel Actual, this is Vigilant Actual: Be advised that as soon as we fire, they are probably going to lock in on us and try to engage us. If that happens we’ll have to withdraw.”

The air was silent for a moment before Alexander replied. “Understood. If you have to withdraw, jump to rally point Constellation. We’ll join you as soon as possible.”

“Roger that actual.”

“Good hunting, Vigilant. Sentinel out.”

“Con, weapons: Missiles are now at one S.Q.” the voice of Lieutenant Tyson reported.

“Very well.” Colonel Hall replied. “X.O., ready weapons key.”

Like a pair of choreographed dancers, both officers pulled their launch keys from their pockets and held them up to each other.

“Weapons to stand by.” Hall ordered as he placed his key into the key hole and turned it one notch to the left into the stand by position.

“Stand by.” Captain Black echoed.

“On the three count, weapons systems to active. One.... two..... three.”

On cue, both officers turned their keys and activated the missile systems.

“Missile systems active.” Black reported.

“Very well, stand by to fire.”

Looking down and confirming the target package, Colonel Hall lifted the safety catch on the fire button. “Open outer doors.” He commanded.

Outside, on the top of the Vigilants hull, missile doors swung upwards revealing the menacing looking weapons housed inside.

“Outer doors clear sir.” Captain Black said. “Let’s send these bastards a message.”

Colonel Hall smiled. “FIRE.”

A plume of gas that looked like steam erupted from the five silos that housed the deadly missiles that Colonel Hall had just fired. The missiles themselves burst from the clouds of propellant and their engines ignited sending them streaking towards their intended targets.

“Missiles away sir.” Captain Black reported.

“Very well. Helm, Con: Execute escape course. All guns stand by to return fire.” Colonel Hall commanded. “Sentinel, Vigilant: Missiles away.”

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“Strike Warn! Starke Warn! Strike Warn! All Vipers break contact and retreat to safe distance!” Slider’s voice echoed inside of Shooter’s helmet.

“Oh frack! All Vipers: Break, break, break!” Shooter exclaimed as he hauled back on his yoke and sent his ship rocketing away from the enemy ships he had been engaging.

The tangled melee that been going on above the Alliance Battlecruiser *Serpentis* suddenly flew apart as all of the attacking Colonial Vipers suddenly disengaged and retreated at high speed.

On the bridge of the Kraken, Precentor Thomasi watched the withdrawal with an expression of curiosity on his face.

“Sir, enemy fighters disengaging from the *Serpentis*.” Harall reported from behind him. “They are continuing to close on the *Prometheus* unopposed.”

Thomasi shook his head. “Something isn’t right.” He said to himself. “Their flagship is disabled and they run...”

And like a hit to the gut, the answer came to him.

“Scan for incoming weapons!” The Precentor snapped.

“Sir, I have five inbound objects moving at high speed!” one of the bridge techs reported.

“They just went radioactive sir!” Harall said, his voice filled with tension.

Precentor Thomasi looked to the sensor screen in time to determine the weapons position and speed and he knew it was too late.

“Brace for impact.” he commanded.

In the C.I.C. of the Vigilant, Colonel Hall and Captain Black watched on the dradis as the missiles streaked towards their targets.

“Sir, the warheads have just armed.” Black reported when she saw the indicator light come on.

Hall nodded but didn’t answer as he watched the first missile impact into its target.

# CHAPTER 4

## COUP

Space combat 101. All Colonial Officer Cadets have to take this course in the first semester of their second year at the academy. It's the class that every cadet looks forward to from the time they enter the academy grounds. This is where they start learning how to become combat leaders.

The first year of any Colonial Armed Forces Cadet is spent in drill, ceremony and all of the other basics that every member of the Colonial Armed Forces trains on whether officer or enlisted. That first year is tedious and back breaking. If someone is going to drop out, they will usually do it by the end of the first year.

Most don't though, because they know that when they get to the second year, that's when the good stuff begins. That's when they learn how to be Warriors of the Ebon Ocean.

And the first class they have to take is Space Combat 101.

Commander Tucker, the aged instructor of the class, was the X.O. of the *Atlantia* during the Cylon War. He had taken command of that august ship when his commander was killed. He then led the *Atlantia* on to glory by beating off three Cylon Base Stars that were trying to launch an assault on Tauron.

One battered Battlestar against three enemies. He had destroyed two with his hit and run tactics by the time the third one decided that it wasn't smart to hang around anymore.

In the end he had received the Presidential Medal of Distinction for his actions.

They had tried to promote him to Admiral on many occasions but he had refused each and every time saying that his destiny was commanding a Battlestar, not flying a desk.

Finally they had threatened to retire him unless he accepted promotion and he had called their bluff on that one too.

In the end he offered them a deal. He was too old to command a Battlestar anymore but he refused to become an Admiral. "I've spent my whole life sticking it to the man!" He had said. "I'll be damned if I'm going to let you turn me *into* the man!"

So the Admiralty stopped offering to promote him and he went to the Academy to teach Space Combat Tactics.

By the time he left the C.I.C. of Atlantia he had served as its commander for two and a half decades, a record never broken by anyone else.

The first thing Commander Tucker told cadets at the beginning of the second year was to forget everything they knew about how to fight. “In space,” he said, “All of the rules changed.”

Nuclear Weapons were a prime example of this.

On a planet’s surface, the pressures created by the explosion were due to the atmosphere surrounding the detonation. As the atmosphere was displaced, destructive forces were created that mowed down entire cities in its path.

Because there was no atmosphere in space, nuclear weapons lost most of their effects. Unless, of course, you could find your way around that.

Most Colonial space based weapons systems were ballistic in nature, the thought behind it being that if you punched enough holes in an enemy spacecraft, it would no longer be able to function.

Nuclear weapons in space took on a whole new tactic though. A solid impact and detonation against a ship would do nothing more than radiate the crew and there was armor plating that had been proven effective in keeping out the hard stuff. Therefore, to make a nuclear detonation effective the missile would have to penetrate the hull and detonate inside the ship.

This is what the Vigilants ship to ship nuclear missiles were designed to do, what they did perfectly when they impacted the Alliance Battlecruisers *Serpentis* and *Lobo Negro*.

The first of three missiles impacted into the forward section of the *Serpentis* just below her bridge. The second and third both burrowed into the vulnerable midsection of the ship.

The other two missiles both struck the *Lobo Negro* amidships and burrowed into the area between the command decks and the hangar bays.

All of the missiles detonated at the same time however, shredding the ships from the inside out and sending white hot debris shooting out of an ever expanding gas cloud.

From far away it was a horrific yet beautiful sight. From up close, it was a miserable and hellish scene.

Precentor Thomasi watched, that cold sense of icy anger forming in his gut again, and then he turned to Centurion Harall. “Order the Medusa to find the Vigilant and reduce her to scrap.”

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Inside the Prometheus, Commander Turner was thrown to the deck as the shock waves from the explosions of the *Serpentis* and the *Lobo Negro* reached into the giant ship and tossed everyone around like rag dolls.

Inside the corridor, the lights flickered and the sounds of electricity arcing from short circuits could be heard everywhere. The ship was hurting and Turner could feel it in every fiber of his being.

“Glad we didn’t take the elevators.” He said as he rose to his feet. “Everyone all right?”

“Yes sir.” Lieutenant Halloran replied. “But we need to hurry. The hangar bay is only a hundred meters away.”

Turner nodded and began to move.

“What do you think happened?” one of the younger Black Berets asked.

“Impact from another ship?” one of the other Marines offered.

“Shockwave.” Turner replied. “One of the attacking ships must have been destroyed.”

“Good.” Halloran said. “One less for us to worry about.”

\*\*\*

“Sir, I have one Alliance cruiser breaking away from the main fight.” Captain Black reported as she studied her dradis screen. “I think she may be looking for us.”

“All stop, quick quiet.” Colonel Hall ordered.

Immediately, the crew went into action.

“Answers all stop.” Replied the helms man.

“All systems now at minimal power.” The X.O. said.

“Status of the ECM suite?” Colonel Hall asked.

“Functioning at one hundred percent sir.” A tech reported.

“Good. Stand by on quick charge to the FTL engines.”

“Quick charge standing by.” Black replied.

Hall nodded and returned his gaze to the dradis screen. “Now we wait and see if she sees us.”

\*\*\*

“Sir, the approaching ship has broken off and is out bound.” Major Tompkins reported from the operations station of the Sentinel.

“Probably looking for the Vigilant.” Colonel Alexander said, “Slider, direct our fighters to harass that ship. Let’s not make it easy on them.”

“Agreed sir.” Slider replied with a smile.

“What is the damage assessment from those strikes?”

“Sir, both Battlecruisers were destroyed and a significant portion of the enemy fighters have been destroyed as well.” Tompkins replied.

“Good. We might just win this one after all.” Alexander said with a confident smile, “Helm set a course for the Kraken and being pounding her with everything...”

“Sir, new dradis contacts!” Tompkins called out from behind them. “Four more Alliance Battlecruisers just jumped into weapons range of the Prometheus.”

Alexander rubbed his temples for a moment and then shook his head. “That’s it then, it’s over.”

“What?” Slider asked incredulously, “You can’t mean...”

“Yes I can, Captain.” Alexander replied sadly, “Spin up the FTL drives and prepare to jump to Rally Point.”

“NO sir!” Slider exclaimed. “We can’t leave the Prometheus behind!”

“Then what should we do, Captain?” Alexander asked, his voice full of tension. “We can’t possibly tow the Prometheus out of danger and we can’t fight off that many ships.”

“Wait for the commander.” Slider replied. “They obviously want to take the ship intact so we wait for him.”

“Why should we wait for him?” Major Tompkins asked.

“If he follows protocol, he’ll transfer his flag here. Once that’s done and it looks like the ship is going to be taken, Colonel Ryan will initiate a wipe of all the systems on the ship. Only Commander Turner has the codes to get the ship fully functional again so if we have him here we remove the threat of the Prometheus being used against us.”

“But what about her crew?” Colonel Alexander asked.

“We couldn’t take them all onboard if we wanted to. Besides, they’ll need the crew to try and make heads or tails of the ship.”

“You’re already thinking of a rescue, aren’t you?” Major Tompkins asked. “My gods man, are you insane?”

Colonel Hall nodded. “We’ll have to withdraw and make repairs but, yes I think it can be done.”

“Sir! You can’t possibly...” Tompkins began.

“Stow it, Major!” the Colonel cut him off sharply as he turned to his navigation officer. “Prepare to make the FTL jump as soon as Commander Turner is aboard.”

“Yes sir.”

Slider took a deep and steadying breath, trying to banish the thoughts of Sheba and every other pilot he had lost this day and as he looked around the C.I.C. of the *Sentinel* and at the gloomy faces he saw on the crewmen, he determined one thing.

Losing sucked. Bad.

\*\*\*

On the bridge of the *Kraken*, the mood had shifted from gloomy to optimistic

“Precentor, four more ships have jumped in and are offering their assistance.” Centurion Harall reported from his station.

“Good. Have them move into flanking position and prepare to board the Prometheus.” Thomasi replied.

“Um sir...”

“What is it Centurion?”

“Sir, we just received word from the Battlecruiser *Jupiter*.”

The collective intake of breath as Centurion Harall announced the name of the Alliance Flagship belied the importance of the vessel.

“The Primus is on board and awaiting your report.” Harall finished.

Thomasi kept his face neutral but inside he seethed with anger. He knew full well why the Primus had come. He was here to snatch the glory of victory from him and claim it for himself.

Yes, he could see it now. How Poor Precentor Thomasi had been fighting and struggling to subdue the invaders and how the Primus, by the fortune of the Gods, had arrived in the nick of time and saved the entire mission. He would probably even say that he had single handedly subdued the Prometheus and that Thomasi’s efforts had been nothing more than a support action.

“Inform the *Jupiter* that I will make my reports once the battle is completed. Until then the Primus is invited to join in our victory.” Thomasi said.

“But sir, the Primus...” Harall began

“Damnation man! We are in a fight for our lives! Damn the Primus, he can wait!”

Harall backed off and attended to his duties as Thomasi turned back to watch the battle.

No one was going to take this victory from him.

No one.

\*\*\*

“Observations posts report that the enemy is closing on us and preparing to dock sir!” Maddie reported as she listened intently to the hand held radios they had broken out to communicate with.

“Stand by to repel borders.” Colonel Ryan replied calmly as he turned towards Captain Briedis. “Where is Major Argyle?”

“He was forward when the debris from the enemy ship hit us sir.” Briedis replied sadly. “We haven’t been able to reach him on the radio and we’re showing a massive hull breach in that area.”

“Damn.” Ryan cursed to himself, “Then you’re it.”

“Sir?” Briedis asked, confused.

“Captain Briedis, the ship is about to be captured. On my authority, I am ordering you to enact protocol Alpha six-six.” Ryan said.

The entire C.I.C. became quiet as the import of Ryan’s words hit them. He was ordering a total wipe of the ships systems.

“Alpha six-six, aye sir.” Briedis replied.

“Maddie, order all non-essential personnel to the shelters in the center of the ship. All Marines are to stand to post and prepare to repel boarders.”

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied.

“What about me sir?” Chief Palmer replied.

“Chief, I want you to go to the shelters and coordinate with the senior officer present. Make sure you keep our people safe.”

Palmer laughed out loud. “Like hell sir. You think I am going to leave you alone up here to face these bastards? Not on your life.” He patted his side arm.

Ryan prepared to argue the point with the old chief but he saw the look in his eyes and thought better of it. “Fine, you’re here with me. Maddie, report to the Shelter.”

“But sir!” she began to protest.

“Maddie,” Ryan said softly, “You’re in charge until someone senior relieves you. Take care of the ship and the crew.”

Maddie nodded, her eyes filling with tears as she realized that Ryan was planning to fight to the death. Slowly, she stood and saluted the X.O. of the ship.

Ryan returned the salute and said “That goes for all of you. Abandon the C.I.C. and report to the shelters.”

As everyone filed out, Ryan walked over to the engineering station and stood by Captain Briedis who was about to enter the final command to wipe the Prometheus computer systems.

“Last chance to change your mind sir.” Briedis offered.

Ryan shook his head. “Do it.”

Thirty second later, it was done.

“Now all she is, is a big paperweight.” Palmer said.

“You know that they will be able to reinitialize the systems once they find the back ups.” Briedis commented.

“Yeah, but they won’t be able to use the weapon systems without Commander Turner and his key.” Ryan replied. “He is the linchpin to all of the systems here.”

“Has he left the ship yet?” Palmer asked.

“I hope so. He’s been gone twenty minutes so I would assume that he has made it to the hangar bay by now.”

\*\*\*

“Sir! Our troop ships have just boarded the Prometheus in her portside flight pod!” Announced a proud Centurion Harall.

“Good.” Precentor Thomasi replied. “Inform Kommandant Jocasta that I will be accompanying him as he boards the ship.”

“Sir?” Harall replied. “You’re going over there?”

“Yes Centurion, I will claim this prize personally.” Thomasi replied as he stood and adjusted his cape. “You have the ship until I return.”

“Yes sir.” Harall replied.

“Oh, and Harall?”

“Yes Precentor?”

Thomasi smiled. “Find a suitable replacement for you before I return. I grow tired of your stupidity.”

\*\*\*

“There’s the Raptor sir!” Lieutenant Halloran said as he pointed to where a Raptor sat.

“Hurry up, we’re being boarded!” said Captain April ‘Doc’ Kaplan from inside the ship.

“What are you doing here, Doctor?” Turner asked as he approached.

“I came down to check on her.” Kaplan replied pointing to Major Horvath in the Pilots seat.

Turner smiled. "Good to see you Major." He said.

She nodded wearily and was about to respond when a loud explosion ripped through the bay door at the other end of the hangar and Alliance troops began pouring in through the smoke.

"Shit!" Halloran exclaimed as he leveled his rifle. "Get on board sir!"

Halloran dropped to the deck and began firing his rifle at the incoming troops who, blinded by the smoke, were easy targets.

"Go! Go!" Turner said to Horvath as she began to power the engines.

The firing from both side was growing louder as the surprised Alliance soldiers began to get their bearings and return fire on the small force that held them at bay.

"Let's go!" Halloran said as he stood and charged forward, drawing his sword.

Behind him, the other five Black Berets pulled their own swords and followed their courageous leader into combat.

The swords emitted a high pitched hum and began to glow slightly as the soldiers activated their vibration cells.

Turner watched in awe as five men took on fifty and began cutting through them like a hot knife through butter.

Suddenly, an explosion sent the men flying.

Turner watched as four of the men stood back up.

Halloran did not.

He lay on the floor, his face bloody and his legs obviously broken. "Get the Commander out of here" he shouted to the others.

Before he even realized what he was doing, Turner leapt off of the wing of the Raptor and drew his own sword, activating the vibration cell.

Coming quickly to Halloran he swung the sword and decapitated an Alliance soldier who was attempting to capture the fallen lieutenant, yet as quick as that one fell two more were upon him. Without thinking Turner began fighting.

Two more down. He turned. Another soldier approaching. He swung his sword. Four down. Another three men ran at him. He swung again and again, they screamed and went down.

“Sir! We have to go!” a voice shouted from behind him.

Turning to look he saw that the Black Berets had dragged Halloran to safety and he hadn't even noticed. Looking down he saw his hands and chest covered in enemy blood.

The next few seconds were like slow motion for Turner. He turned and began a headlong sprint for the Raptor which was now moving through the open launch door. Inside, Doc Kaplan and one of the Black Berets held out their hands to pull him inside.

Turner looked back and was able to see a tall man emerging from the smoke of the battle. He looked hard and suddenly he came to a screeching halt as he recognized the man's face.

It was a face he knew from his own crew. A face that he believed was dead.

The man listed a weapon... aimed it at him... and then....

Darkness.

# EPILOGUE

## ENDGAME

Precentor Rollo Thomasi entered the C.I.C. of the Battlestar Prometheus with a smile on his face knowing that he was now its master.

Seeing Colonel Ryan and Chief Palmer under heavy guard at the situation table he knew that victory was his.

“Colonel Ryan.” He said by way of greeting. “I am... sorry it had to come to this. I actually respect you and your gallant crew very much.”

“Blow it out your ass.” Palmer said from beside Ryan.

Ryan held up a hand to forestall further comment from the aging Chief and Thomasi nodded.

“I see that you understand the protocol of warfare, Colonel. We are officers and gentlemen first.”

“Absolutely.” Ryan replied. “But before we continue I want to know what the status of my crew is.”

Thomasi nodded as he walked closer to them. “Very good, Colonel. I can appreciate a leader who worries first for his crew.”

“Enough with the pleasantries damn it! He asked you... OOF!” Palmer’s words were cut off as an Alliance soldier drove the butt of his rifle into the old man’s gut.

“Hey!” Ryan snapped as every weapon in the room was simultaneously pointed at him.

“Keep your servant quiet or I will silence him for you.” Thomasi growled.

Ryan stared dagged at the man for a moment then finally nodded. “You ok chief?”

“Yes sir.” Palmer replied as he stood.

“Now, as to the status of your crew.” Thomasi said. “Their... disposition, depends entirely upon you Colonel.”

“What do you mean?” Ryan asked.

Thomasi didn't respond. Instead, he began a slow stroll around the C.I.C., looking it over as if he were about to buy it. Once he had finally completed the trip he turned and faced the X.O.

"Your ship has suffered great damage in this engagement but all is not lost." He said slyly, "So long as your crew helps me repair the damage and restore the Prometheus to operational status, none of them will be harmed. In fact," he raised his finger to emphasize the point. "They will be treated well."

"And if I don't?" Ryan asked.

Thomasi smiled as he gestured toward the C.I.C. door and the tall figure waiting there. "I'll let Master Baine explain it to you."

Ryan watched in horror as the man in the doorway walked in wearing the uniform of the Alliance.

It was Doctor Creighton.

"I will start by torturing each and every member of your crew one by one until you do as the Precentor asks." Creighton said with a smile. "After that, I will begin killing them"

"You're..."

"Dead?" Creighton finished with a smile. "No, not quite. After all, I couldn't have survived the last five years in the Colonies and then these last months on your ship if I didn't know a little something about self preservation. Oh, and thank you for bringing me home."

Colonel Ryan felt his guts turn to ice as he realized the depths to which they had been betrayed. It was Creighton who had sabotaged the ship. He had, in fact, played them from the start.

Inside, Ryan was glad that Turner wasn't there. The Commander would probably have killed the man without batting an eyelash. As it was though, he couldn't even entertain the notion. He had a painful decision to make, one that the lives of his crew rested on.

Ryan shook his head, and a sense of futility and gloom washed over him as had never happened before. "Very well," He said quietly, "As commanding officer of the Prometheus...."

"I offer you my surrender."

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Six hours after the battle, Doctor April Kaplan walked out of the Sentinel Surgical Theater to find Colonel Alexander, Slider and Major Tompkins waiting for her. Her surgical gown was covered in blood and she wore a haggard look on her face as she removed her face mask.

“How are they?” Slider was the first to ask.

“Halloran took shrapnel to the left side of his body. He lost some blood and will be sore for a while but he should make a full recovery.” Kaplan reported. “Horvath had some nasty injuries consistent with torture and abuse. Evidence suggests that she was sexually assaulted numerous times. She’ll heal up just fine but the mental scars are going to be hell.”

“What about the commander?” Colonel Alexander asked.

Kaplan shook her head sadly. “He took a lot of shrapnel to the back because he turned away from the blast. His left arm is broken and he has numerous rib fractures along with internal injuries.”

“Will he survive?” Slider pressed.

“Well,” Kaplan said taking a deep breath, “The internal bleeding has stopped and he is stable but that isn’t what I’m worried about. He took a nasty shock to the head from the grenade that exploded in front of him. He has a major concussion and is in a coma.”

“When will he come around?” Slider asked.

Kaplan looked Slider in the eyes and the sadness there sent a chill down his spine as she said “I don’t know if he *ever* will.”

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Warm soft light, like the touch of God.

That was the first thing she felt as her new life began. Then there was pain, a cold, electrifying pain that coursed through her body and caused her breath to come in ragged gasps.

“Breathe little sister.” She heard a soft voice say, “The first time is always the hardest.”

Inside her mind she saw flashes of her life: Her childhood, her days at the academy and life among the stars. Everything.

Her time on the homeworld. The red eyes of the Centurions. Her mission.

She sat up and took a deep breath as her eyes opened and adjusted to the soft light.

Looking around her she saw the faces. All of them.

But the ones that struck her the most were the ones that looked exactly like her.

“Its ok little sister, you’re home now.” One of the ones that looked like her said.

She struggled to remember more and suddenly a number popped into her head.

“Six.” She gasped. “I’m a six.”

“Yes.” One of her fellow sixes said with a smile. “Yes you are and you’re home now, safe.”

“Safe?” she asked.

“Yes, safe here with us.” One of the ones she identified as an eight said to her.

“You’re a hero.” Said another female voice, a three. “You were able to find out about the only Colonial ship that could possibly come close to our technology level.”

“What... what do you mean?” she asked.

And then it hit her.

She was a Cylon.

Raging emotions, like thunder clouds on her soul, began to build up inside her, growing rapidly to an explosion point as her memories, her mission, everything about her came flooding back, and with a sick feeling in her stomach and tears in her eyes--

Sheba screamed.