

BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

EPISODE 10 BE ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED

BATTLESTAR : COXON
NOVA CLASS BATTLESTAR : INFINITY238

INFINITY238

By Ryan a. Keeton
Based on the sci-fi channel original series
Battlestar Galactica
By Ron Moore & David Eick

Series based on
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA
created by
Glen Larson

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FRIEND

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

Colonel Karla Horvath: Executive Officer, Battlestar Prometheus

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

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

Major David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

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

Captain Joshua "Shooter" Wakefield: Commanding Officer, 101st Viper Squadron "Demons"

Captain (DR) April Kaplan: Flight Surgeon, Battlestar Prometheus

Captain Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

Captain Karen Reighney: Helm and Navigation Officer

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

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

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

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



PROLOGUE
PROMISE

I HAVE SEEN THE SUNRISE AND I HAVE SEEN THE SUNSET
OVER THE VALLEY OF HOPELESSNESS AND THROUGH THE CLOUDS OF
DESPAIR

I LEAVE BEHIND WHAT I KNOW FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE
I LEAVE BEHIND THE GROUND FOR THE PEACEFUL OPEN AIR

ON WINGS OF ANGELS I SOAR, ACROSS THE VOID OF TIME
FROM THE HOME OF MY FATHERS TO THE LAND OF MY SONS
I SEEK THE PEACE AND WISDOM THAT ONLY THE GODS CAN TEACH
ME

I'LL SIT HIGH UPON NEW MOUNTAINS WHEN MY DAYS ARE DONE

I SEEK OUT NEW HORIZONS, FAR AWAY ACROSS BLACK OCEANS
I STRIVE TO BUILD NEW CITIES ON THE SHORES OF DISTANT LANDS
I'LL WALK THROUGH BLESSED MEADOWS OF GOLDEN SUNLIT
FLOWERS

ON THE GROUND OF A NEW WORLD IS WHERE I'LL MAKE MY STAND.

“The Promise of New Hope”
From the writings of Dea Minerva
High Priestess of the 13th Tribe of Kobil



Ships log
Battlestar Prometheus
Commodore Jonathan Turner
Commanding

It's been eighteen months since our journey began and a month since we arrived in the Centaurus system and today is finally the day when we find out if it has all been worth it.

After doing long range scans for the last month I am convinced that it is time to do a recon of the Earth system. To do so I'm sending a recon in force of six Raptors, under the command of the CAG, with jamming equipment and enhanced sensor packages to do a flyby of Earth. Their mission will be to listen in for any type of electronic transmissions. Once they have collected any information they can I'll have Doctor Z examine it and determine our next course of action.

I cannot begin to tell you the sense of anxiety I have over this. On one hand I am excited beyond belief that we might, at last, be reuniting with our long lost brethren.

On the other hand I cannot help but remember that the Terran Alliance, that nation of megalomaniacal tyrants were also born of the 13th tribe. It makes me wonder if we will be greeted with hostility or with open arms.

This, of course, leads us to the next question: What if they have no idea about us? According to the scrolls, the 13th Tribe wasn't exactly on great terms with their twelve brothers and sisters when they left Kobol. What if they erased any and all memory of us from their histories and started over?

That would leave me in the awkward position of having to explain to them that everything they have known is a lie and that is not exactly something I look forward to.

Excitement is building around the ship though as the crew begin to realize the historic moments that are upon us. They know that from now on, throughout the history of the Colonies, they will be able to say that they were there when the 13th Colony was rediscovered.

I just wish Jim was here to see it. He really believed in this mission, so much so that he gave his life for it. I have posthumously recommended him for the Colonial Gold Cluster. Of course, it will take at least a month for the paperwork to make

it back to the Colonies along the HPG network we have dropped along the way.

BUZZ-BUZZ-BUZZ!! "X.O. for Commanding officer."

Jonathan Turner paused his log entry and turned to the comm. panel next to his desk. "Go ahead, colonel." He said as he activated the speaker.

"Sir," the voice of Colonel Horvath said, "the CAG has the recon force standing by in the starboard ready room. They are awaiting your convenience."

"Tell them I'm on the way." Turner replied as he clicked off the speaker and returned his thoughts to his log entry.

It is hard not having Jim at my side after serving with him for so long but Colonel Horvath has done an outstanding job filling in his shoes. The crew respects her and, if she keeps up the good work, I intend to recommend her for a command of her own when we return.

Now it's off to brief my pilots and get ready for history. I only hope it judges us kindly. -END LOG ENTRY-

**STARBOARD PILOTS READY ROOM
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

"Commodore on deck!"

The officers and enlisted men assembled in the starboard pilots' ready room all snapped to attention as Commodore Turner entered from the side and approached the podium where the CAG, Major James 'Slider' Allen, awaited him.

"Major." Turner greeted him as he returned the CAG's salute. He then turned and faced the assembled group and immediately noticed that there were far more people in the room than was supposed to be.

"Take your seats." He said as he arched an eyebrow at Slider. "Is it just me or are there a few more people than expected?"

"Well sir, you know how hard it is to get reservations for this place." Slider quipped.

Turner shrugged. "You'd think that something important was going on here today."

This elicited a chuckle from the crowd and even Turner smiled briefly before continuing.

“Seriously, we all know why we are here. Today, this mission, is the whole reason we came this far. What we do today will validate this mission. It will validate the lives that were lost trying to get here and it will validate what we believe in.”

Turner paused for a moment and cleared his throat as thoughts of lost friends and crewmates began to enter his mind. “All of the people we have lost on the way here ride with you today.”

Turner watched as people began to nod their heads in agreement. “Now, let’s get down to the particulars. This will be our first penetration of the inner system. The plan is jump in behind Earth’s moon. It should shield you from any tracking stations or devices they may have.”

“Do they have anything on the surface of their moon sir?” Melody ‘Hygiena’ Moody asked.

“We have detected the remnants of some primitive spacecraft and other devices on the day side of their moon, but nothing that would be able to detect or track us.” Slider interjected.

Turner nodded. “So far we haven’t picked up any kind of signals in the Earth system but that doesn’t mean much since we have only done recon on the outer planets of the system.”

“But sir, if we’re not picking up any kind of signals in the system, how do we know we’ve actually *found* Earth?” Lt. Brad ‘Tiny’ Allen asked.

“We did a constellation scan when we first jumped in system. It was a perfect match. This *is* the Earth system.” Slider answered.

“The truth is we have no idea what we’re going to find once we get to Earth. The scroll of Pythia leaves many unanswered questions so it shouldn’t be a surprise that little about Earth is known. That’s why we’re being careful with this recon. We might be met with open arms but at the same time we might be met with gun blazing.” Turned explained.

“Great, another frakin Alliance.” A pilot in back said.

“Lock that shit up.” Captain Joshua ‘Shooter’ Wakefield snapped.

“It’s entirely possible we will find another government that is just as hostile to us as the Alliance was.” Turner conceded, “However, it’s also possible that this could be the opportunity of a lifetime. We have to take the chance.”

Heads nodded in agreement around the room and Turner was satisfied that he made his point. “Major Allen?” he prompted.

“Our mission will be to do a close flyby of Earth.” Slider said as he stepped up to the podium. “Shooter and his crew will make a run over the northern pole of the planet while Tiny

and Hygiëna make a run over the northern hemisphere. Tiger will run the southern hemisphere with Sheba while I cover the southern pole.”

Pressing a button the images of the Raptors appeared on the screen behind Turner and Allen along with their proposed flight paths. “We won’t be entering their atmosphere and our ECM packages *will* be active during this run. We want to avoid contact if at all possible.”

“Emergency procedures?” Sheba asked.

“If you have an in flight emergency and can make it outside the gravity well, do so. We’ll have the SAR bird on standby” Allen replied.

“And if we can’t get out of the gravity well?” Lt. Rose “Tiger” Hohensee asked.

“If you have to ditch on Earth, try to avoid any populated areas and find someplace to hide. Send the coded signal and the SAR bird, along with a team of marines, will get you out.” Turner said.

“What happens if we make contact with someone from Earth?”

The room was deathly silent for a moment as Turner considered his response. Finally, he said “Do what you think is right. You are all Colonial officers and you all have received training on how to handle contacts with lost colonies.”

“But sir, the last colony we rediscovered was twenty years ago. We haven’t found any more pre-Cylon war settlements since then.”

“Correct, but the procedure remains the same.” Turner replied. “Make friendly overtures without revealing too much information and let them know that we aren’t a threat. We don’t want to overthrow their culture in one night and we certainly don’t want them to know that a Battlestar is sitting right outside their doorstep.”

“What *is* *they* are a threat to *us*?” Shooter asked.

“Standard POW procedures apply.” Allen said, “Say as little as possible and wait for rescue.”

“All of this should be academic though.” Turner interjected. “I’ve ordered the deck chiefs from all squadrons to inspect these six Raptors. If something goes wrong, then they’ll be riding EVA all the way back home.”

This got a chuckle out of the group. “Ok folks, we’re skids up in fifty seven minutes. Check your flight assignments and man your ships.”

“On your feet!” Slider barked and everyone snapped to attention.

Turner smiled. "Today we make history people. Good hunting."

CHAPTER 1

THE HORIZON OF HOPE

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

"Commodore on deck!"

Colonel Horvath came to attention and saluted as Commodore Turner entered the C.I.C. and immediately he could tell something had changed.

"What's going on?" Turner asked as he stepped up to the situation table and returned Horvath's salute.

"What do you mean sir?" Horvath replied innocently.

"X.O., if you're testing my bullshit detector it's functioning just fine so do me a favor and *spill it*." Turner sighed as he rubbed his tired eyes.

"Yes sir, *Admiral*." Horvath replied.

This brought Turner up short. He blinked twice and shook his head to clear it, not sure if he had heard Horvath correctly. "Say *again*?"

Horvath reached out and handed him a slip of paper and he began to read.

From: Headquarters, Colonial Defense Forces, Picon
Office of the Fleet Admiral
To: Commodore Jonathan Turner, Commanding Officer
Battlestar Group 22

1. By order of the Fleet Admiral, with the special dispensation of the President of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol acting under the authority of the Quorum of Twelve, the following announcement is made:
2. Jonathan Turner, service number 51293-A is hereby appointed to the rank of Rear Admiral in recognition of

his outstanding service while on detached service in support of Operation Outreach.
3. This promotion is effective upon receipt of orders.

~Signed~
FADM Robert Torres

Turner remained silent for a long moment, his breath caught in his throat. “When—” he began before shaking his head, “When did this come in?”

“Came in this morning with the first part of our weekly update.” Horvath replied.

“First part?” Turner arched his eyebrow.

“It got cut off about two minutes into the burst from sat four-seven-nine.” Horvath shrugged. “It happens sometimes.”

“Have the guys down in the tech section run a diagnostic on the circuit just to be sure.”

“Yes sir.” Horvath replied. “We do have one problem though.”

“What’s that?” Turner asked.

Horvath smiled. “You’re out of uniform, sir.” she said as she pulled two Rear Admiral’s rank emblems from her pocket. “Attention on deck!”

Around the C.I.C., crewmen not engrossed in vital duties all stood to attention as Horvath approached Turner with the emblems in hand.

“The President of the Colonies, with the approval of the Quorum of Twelve, has reposed special faith, trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and command abilities of Jonathan David Turner. In view of these qualities and his demonstrated leadership potential, he is hereby appointed to the rank of Rear Admiral, effective immediately.” Horvath said as she removed his commodore’s emblems and pinned the rear admiral’s in their place.

“And may the gods have mercy on your soul.” She finished as she stepped back and snapped a salute.

Turner, overwhelmed by the emotion of the moment, blinked away tears of joy and smiled as he raised his hand to return the salute. “Thank you colonel.” He said as he turned to face his crew. “This wouldn’t be possible if not for all of you. Thank you.”

And as the applause from his crew washed over him he thought to himself *So much for retirement.*

**RAPTOR 471
OUTBOUND TO JUMP POINT ALPHA
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

“Sir, I have a broadband message coming in from the Prometheus.” Ensign Larry Callaghan announced from the back seat of Slider’s Raptor.

“Put it on.” Slider said as he double checked his jump numbers.

“Attention all Colonial Units:” the voice of Colonel Horvath said, “It is my pleasure to announce the promotion of Commodore Turner to the rank of Rear Admiral. The promotion is effective immediately, by order of the Fleet Admiral. All stations standby for Prometheus Actual.”

“Wow.” Callaghan breathed. “That’s two promotions in a year. How the hell does that happen? I thought that the Admiralty only selected nominees once a year.”

“You’re correct, Ensign.” Slider replied as he continued to input numbers into his computer, “However, he wasn’t *nominated* for Rear Admiral, he’s actually been promoted. Normally, all of the Admirals in the fleet review a list of the eligible commanders and vote on them. Depending on how many slots need to be filled in the Admiralty, they take the top names and submit them to the Quorum of Twelve who usually rubber stamps them. Then the president signs off and they’re promoted.”

“So how did he get promoted without the process?”

“He would have had to have gotten special dispensation from the Quorum and the President.” Slider answered. “Verify data sets and jump coordinates.”

“I’ve never heard of that happening before.” Callaghan said as he ran the numbers through his computer. “Data sets and jump coordinates verified. Transmit them to the rest?”

“Go ahead.” Slider approved as he placed his notebook back in his leg pocket. “You haven’t heard of it because it’s only happened once before. When Rear Admiral Hohensee got promoted the day of his retirement.”

“He got promoted the *day* of his retirement? Why?”

“You didn’t study your fleet history very well, did you Ensign?” Slider chuckled.

“Well um—sir, ah— that is, Captain Percival said she wanted us to focus more on the practical aspects of our training.” Callaghan replied sheepishly, “She said that the other non-essential stuff could wait until we had more time.”

Slider laughed. “That’s because history was her worst subject in the academy.”

“Oh.” Callaghan replied, unsure of what to say.

“Don’t worry ensign,” Slider said, “She taught you all you needed to know. Truth is that Hohensee was the third commander of the original Battlestar Prometheus. He became commander shortly after the battle of Caprica. The Admiralty tried on seven different occasions to promote him but he refused each time because promotion would have moved him off the Prometheus. In fact, the last time they tried to promote him he threatened to resign.”

“What happened?”

“He was finally transferred to the fleet academy on Caprica after the original Prometheus was retired. He taught advanced combat tactics for a year and then retired.” Slider chuckled. “They actually sent his promotion orders by certified carrier to his house the day after his retirement ceremony because they knew he would refuse it again.”

“Wow.” Callaghan replied. “So does that mean Lieutenant Hohensee—”

“She’s his youngest daughter from his second wife.” Slider replied. “You must have missed him during the launch ceremony. He was there to see us off.”

“What does he do now?” Callaghan asked. “Does he advise the fleet or something?”

Slider shook his head. “He died about a week after we launched. He’s buried in the hall of heroes.”

Callaghan made ready to reply but was cut off as the voice of Admiral Turner broke through. “Attention all Colonial units, this is your Admiral speaking.”

“Today is an historic day. For four thousand years we have heard the myths of the long lost thirteenth tribe and the distant colony of Earth. Today, we are on the brink of finding out if those myths are true or not. This recon mission will determine our actions from this day forward. I want to thank all of you for your hard work and dedication. No matter what happens today, we will return as heroes.”

Slider smiled as the transmission ended and activated his comm. “Prometheus, Slider: Our board is green and the task force is prepared to jump.”

“Slider, Prometheus Actual:” Turner’s garbled voice replied, “You are cleared for jump. Good luck.”

“Roger that, Actual. We’ll catch you on the flip side.” Slider replied as he changed his channel over to the task force. “All Raptors: Set your jump clock to thirty seconds and stand by to execute on my mark.”

"All Raptors acknowledge." Callaghan said. "Standing by for your mark."

Slider took a long look out the left side of his canopy at the sight of the *Prometheus* hanging majestically in space, the Gunstars *Sentinel* and *Vigilant* flanking her like guards.

“Mark.” He said, “Thirty second to jump.”

Behind him the jump drive began to spin up, it’s tell tale whine signifying that it was gathering its power to tear the hole in the fabric of reality that the Raptors would travel through to Earth that lay just over four light years distant.

“Ten seconds.” Callaghan announced. “All Raptors in formation.”

Slider nodded but didn’t respond as he watched the jump clock count to zero. One second prior he began to feel the familiar tingling sensation that always came before a jump.

He heard a beep that slurred into a long dragged out sound as the jump distorted space time around him. He felt his body begin to expand rapidly as the universe seemed to shrink down and get sucked into his very soul.

Looking out he saw the view that only the Gods were allowed to see: The universe in the palm of his hand, its stars providing a faint trace of heat in his palm as he gazed down upon him.

Just as suddenly he found his consciousness being sucked back down into the galaxy as his body was crammed and compacted into the space of a pinhead.

There was a flash and he found himself looking at the dark side of a dead planetoid, the light from its primary star casting a silver halo over the horizon. He blinked hard and shook his head to clear it before looking down at his instruments to confirm what he already knew.

“Jump complete.” Ensign Callaghan announced from behind him. “All Raptors accounted for and in formation.”

“Good.” Slider replied as he activated his Comm, “All Raptors: Dradis scan confirms our position is correct. Follow me in.”

With their engines flaring six Raptors fell into line behind each other and began their journey to Earth.

**CELL NUMBER 14
DETENTION AREA
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Ensign Ashley Klave rose to her feet and stood at rigid attention as Admiral Turner entered her cell. Her tank top was soaked with sweat and her legs showed the muscles that she had developed since her incarceration a month prior.

“Sir.” she greeted him, breathing heavily.

“At ease, Ensign.” Turner said as he tossed her a towel and then sat down in a chair provided by the guard.

Ashley caught the towel and wiped her brow, then returned to the formal ‘at ease’ position, her feet shoulder width apart and her hands clasped respectfully behind her back.

“Keeping up with your workouts, I see.” Turner said.

“Not much else to do sir.” Ashley replied with a smile.

“True.” Turner smiled gently. “Doc Kaplan says your injuries are fully healed. She’s ready to certify that you’re fit to fly when you get out of here.”

“That’s—good to hear.”

“You don’t sound very enthused.” Turner arched his eyebrow.

“Oh no sir, I am.” Ashley replied with a smile, “I just, I guess I didn’t think I would be allowed to fly again after the—incident.”

Turner shook his head. “You’ll be restored to full flight status— right *after* you finish your counseling program with Doctor Tyler.”

The smile faded from Ashley’s face at the mention of the ships psychologist. “Sir, I don’t need to see a shrink.”

“Doctor Tyler disagrees.”

“But sir—”

Turner held up a finger and indicated for her to be silent as he leaned forward. “Ashley,” he said in a soft, father like tone, “I’ve seen the recordings from the security cameras in here. I’ve seen how you wake up screaming from the nightmares. I’ve watched you pace the floors and work out until you’re exhausted because you’re afraid to go to sleep.”

“I can deal with it sir.” Ashley said as she shrank back onto her bunk.

Turner shook his head. “You can lie to yourself if you want to, but don’t lie to me Ensign.”

“I—I can’t sir.” Ashley said, her voice cracking and her eyes tearing.

“Why?”

“It’s personal sir.” She whispered, her tears beginning to flow down her face.

“Not good enough, soldier.” Turner said firmly. “Now tell me why.”

“Sir, I—”

Turner stood abruptly, his voice becoming harsh and hard. “I don’t want to hear anymore excuses, Ensign. Now cut the bullshit and tell me why you don’t want to talk to the doctor.”

“Because I don’t need a doctor to tell me what I already know.” Ashley snarled back as sobs began to wrack her body.

“And just what *is that?*” Turner pushed.

“*That’s it’s my fault!*”

Turner watched, his heart torn to pieces inside, as Ashley collapsed into a fetal position and began to sob loudly. He hated doing this to her but it’s what the doctor had suggested. *Tough love*, Tyler had called it, but right now, as he watched this pretty young woman cry in front of him, he couldn’t think of anything loving about it.

Gently he reached out and touched Ashley’s shoulder, feeling her flinch from the contact. Sitting down next to her he took her hand and pulled her to him, taking her in a fierce embrace like his father had done for him in his youth.

“Ashley,” he began quietly, “I can’t begin to understand what you’re feeling but I can tell you this much: This was *not* your fault.”

“How can you say that?” she sobbed into his shoulder. “I was the one who was so stupid! I was the one who allowed myself to get into a situation I knew could be bad.”

“No,” Turner replied, “all you did was seek the company of your fellow crewmates. *He* took advantage of that. *He* assaulted you.”

“But if I hadn’t gone in there—”

“He would have found another place, another time and done it anyway.” Turner explained, “He’s a predator. Doc Tyler says he’s been having rape fantasies for a long time.”

“How does she know?” Ashley asked as she looked up.

“I authorized her to do a narco-interrogation on him.” Turner said reluctantly. “She says that he admitted to having sexual fantasies about raping women” he paused as he felt the bile rise in his throat, “and that you *aren’t* his first victim.”

“Oh my gods.” Ashley gasped as she covered her mouth in surprise. “You mean, he’s done this *before*?”

Turner nodded sadly. “Three crewmen have come forward so far. We expect more.”

“But--” she shook her head, still in shock over the revelation, “why didn’t they say something?”

“They were afraid. Afraid of what he would do to them. Afraid of what people would think. They all felt like you: Like it was *their* fault.”

“Oh gods.” Ashley choked as she felt her lunch begin to come up.

Turner grabbed a trash can and waited patiently as she threw up in it. When she was done he handed her a towel and allowed her to clean up.

“I’m sorry sir.” she apologized.

“I did the same thing when I found out.”

“If only they had come forward.” Ashley whispered, an agonized look on her face. “It wouldn’t have happened to me.”

“True.” Turner admitted, “But you can’t hold them responsible for being afraid.”

Ashley blinked hard to clear the tears from her eyes. “Do you know what he took from me?”

“I can’t begin to imagine—”

“I was *saving* myself for marriage, sir.” she said, anger clouding her voice. “I’m from Geminon. It’s tradition there to wait.” She covered her face with her hands as a look of horror came over her face. “Oh my Gods, my parent will disown me.”

“No,” Turner shook his head, “they can’t disown you for this. This wasn’t your fault.”

“Sir, my family is of the ultra conservative Sol denomination. They believe that *any* sexual contact before marriage is immoral and punishable by eternal damnation.”

“They also believe that sex should only be initiated once every month in order to procreate and that two people should do everything they can not to enjoy it, if I remember correctly.” Turner added.

Ashley nodded.

“Is that what *you* believe?” Turner asked.

Ashley shook her head. “No sir, but it won’t matter to them. As far as they are concerned their daughter will be a slut who should have committed Ah’Shala rather than live with her disgrace.”

“I don’t think ritual suicide is the answer.” Turner said. “Besides, I think your parents might be a bit more understanding than you believe them to be.”

“No sir. As soon as my family finds out, they’ll perform a ritual of abjuration. As far as they’re concerned, I’ll be dead to them.” She shook her head and sighed. “I’ll be alone.”

Turner patted her on the shoulder. “That’s where you’re wrong, Ensign. So long as I live, you’ll always have a place in my family and you will *never* be alone.”

Ashley smiled slightly. “I appreciate it sir.”

Turner stood. “Pack your gear. You’re going home.”

“Sir?” Ashley asked, suddenly confused. “I still have fifteen days left.”

“Committed due to good behavior.” Turner winked. “Besides, I need all the good pilots I can get right now. Now get your gear together and report to your bunk. You’re restricted to quarters for the next forty eight hours after which you’ll return to duty under Captain Johnston.”

“Yes sir.” Ashley said as she rose to her feet and saluted.

Turner returned the salute. “You still have to see Doc Tyler, but that can wait until the morning. Take tonight and get your bearings back.”

“Understood sir, and—thank you.”

Turner nodded and left the cell. Ashley looked around and grabbed her towel. "I'm ready." She said.

And then she left her cell, and everything that went with it, behind her.

CHAPTER 2

THE ASHES OF OUR DREAMS

**RAPTOR 416
SOMEWHERE OVER THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
EARTH**

Joshua 'Shooter' Wakefield watched his instruments closely as his ship just grazed the ionosphere of Earth leaving a wake of mist behind him.

"Slider, Shooter: We're in position now." He announced over the radio.

"Very well, commence scan." Slider's voice replied.

"Roger that." Shooter said as he turned back to face his EWO. "Spunk Monkey; set up for a wide beam scan on mag-res and infrared wavelengths."

"Copy that." Replied Jack 'Spunk Monkey' Carlyle, Shooter's Electronic Warfare Officer for this mission. "Scan is active. Beginning sweep one."

"Hygiena, Shooter: What's your position?"

"I'm about eight hundred clicks south and just over three hundred clicks forward of your position." The voice of Hygiena replied via radio. "Not getting much though. Seems to be a lot of interference."

“Same here.” Lt. Rose ‘Tiger’ Hohensee added. “But it looks to be heavier in the northern hemisphere, up where you are Shooter.”

“I noticed that.” Shooter replied. “Hygiena, what kind of terrain are you looking at?”

“I’m over an island chain approximately one hundred and forty clicks south of a large peninsula on the southern part of the northern continent.” Hygiena replied. “The eastern edge of the peninsula goes up almost all the way to the northern polar region.”

“What do you have in front of you?” Slider asked.

“Lots of ocean.” Hygiena replied.

“I’m should be coming over the eastern edge of the northern continent in a few minutes.” Shooter said.

“I’m getting something on mag-res.” Spunk Monkey suddenly announced.

“What do you got?” Shooter asked.

“A lot of static but I am picking up a lot of metallic content up ahead. It could be an indicator of manmade structures.”

“Or it could be a large ore vein.” Tiger replied.

“Only one way to find out.” Shooter said. “Boss, what’s say we take her down for a closer look?”

“Negative Shooter.” Slider replied. “This is long range recon only.”

“We can’t get any good information from up here.” Shooter continued. “Besides, we’ve got no indication that they know we’re here. Hell, we’re not picking up anything but static.”

“That’s what worries me.” Slider replied somberly. “Switch your scans over to search for isotopes.”

“What? You think this could be nuclear?” Tiger asked.

“I don’t know.” Slider replied. “Divert from your present course and come in behind Shooter. Scan the areas he’s picked up on mag-res for presence of radio isotopes.”

“Gods I hope you’re wrong.” Tiger mumbled as she adjusted her course heading.

“Me too.” Slider replied as he turned back to Callaghan. “Prepare to send off a data burst to the *Prometheus*.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

“Chief, I think we have an issue here.”

Master Chief Petty Officer Theresa Madrid turned from the fresh cup of coffee she had been drinking and moved to the communications station where a young specialist Named Harmon Thayer sat with a worried expression on his face.

“What’s the problem, Harm?” she asked as she came up behind him.

“We started receiving the normal update package again about a minute ago and then it was cut off by this.” He explained as he handed the Chief of the Boat a paper copy of the message that had caused his concern. “This was broadcast in the clear. No encoding whatsoever.”

Maddie arched an eyebrow. “In the clear?”

“Yes Chief.” Harm replied. “Do you think—”

“I don’t know.” Maddie cut him off as she turned to face the situation table. “Watch officer.”

Captain Allain Halloran looked up from the status reports he had been reading. “What’s up Chief?”

“I think you better see this.”

Halloran made his way quickly from the table to the comms station where he took the document from Maddie and read it twice before looking up.

His expression told Maddie everything she needed to know. “I’ll call the admiral and the X.O.”

Halloran nodded and activated his headset. “Attention all hands: Set condition two throughout the ship. I say again: Set condition two throughout the ship. All section commanders stand by for orders.”

“The Admiral and X.O. are on their way.” Maddie reported as she hung up her hand set.

Halloran nodded absently and reread the message.

“More coming in sir.” Harm reported as he began to print out the latest communications. “Oh my gods.”

“What is it?” Maddie asked as she snatched the paper from his hands. “Frak me,” She said somberly, “it’s real.”

“What is it?” Halloran asked.

Maddie’s became hard. “Initial casualty reports.”



“Admiral on deck!”

Turner breezed by the marine guards at the entrance of the C.I.C. and made a beeline for the situation table where Captain Halloran and Chief Madrid awaited him.

“Sitrep.” He said as he returned their salutes.

“Sir, at approximately eleven hundred hours the data package from home was cut off again. Two minutes later we received this.” Halloran reported as he handed the communiqué to Turner.

Turner took it and read it aloud. “To all Colonial Units: Cylon attack underway. All commanders are to set condition one immediately, report status and position and stand by for instructions.”

He looked up. “Are you *serious*?”

“This followed it sir.” Maddie said as she handed the casualty report to him.

As he read the casualty report his expression became grim. “Thirty Battlestars—” He shook his head in disbelief.

“What’s going on sir?” Colonel Horvath asked as she entered the C.I.C. in a hurry. “Did one of the Raptors go down?”

Turner handed her the documents and lifted his head, a spark of fire in his eyes and Maddie could see that the moment of shock he had experienced was over now.

Now he was *mad*.

“Holy Gods!” Horvath breathed. “How the frak did this happen?”

“Doesn’t matter now.” Turner replied. “Contact Colonel Hall and Commander Alexander and tell them I want them in my briefing room in fifteen minutes along with all their senior officers.”

“Yes sir.” Horvath replied. “What about the recon mission?”

Turner considered the question for a long moment. “Recall the Raptors,” he said heavily, “we’re going to war.”

RAPTOR 402 SOMEWHERE OVER THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE EARTH

“I’m getting heavy gamma readings here.” Tiger reported as she scanned what appeared to once be a major city. “It’s within tolerance for our anti-radiation drugs *now*, but based on the readings I’m getting, this didn’t happen recently and it’s not naturally occurring.”

“What are you saying?” Hygiena asked. “That there was a nuclear war here or something?”

“Or maybe an accident,” Tiger speculated, “but either way, something bad went down here.”

“So this whole trip has been for *nothing*?” Hygiena asked incredulously.

“Can it, Hygiena.” Slider cut it, “Tiger, get a good read of the area and get it ready for a data burst back to *Prometheus*.”

“Yes sir.” Tiger replied.

“Shooter, you still feel up for a deck run?” Slider asked.

“Hell yes.” Shooter replied.

“Good. Take Hygiena, push over and drop down below the cloud cover. Give me a good surface read with visuals.” Slider ordered.

“Roger that boss man. Hygiena, form on my wing and follow me.” Shooter said.

“Tally ho, I’m on your six.” Hygiena responded.

Both Raptors rolled over and dove down through the clouds to emerge above the ruins of what had once been a great city.

“My gods, look at it.” Hygiena breathed.

“Recorders are on.” Shooter said, ignoring Hygiena’s comment.

“Roger that.” Hygiena replied, recovering her composure. “Recorders are active.”

“Try to find a landmark of some sort.” Shooter said.

“How about that?” Hygiena asked as she identified a structure on her screen and transmitted it.

“Looks like it used to be a giant statue.” Shooter said, but it’s not made of stone.

“Mag-res says it’s a copper alloy.” Hygiena replied as her Raptor circled the wreck. “Looks like it used to be some sort of person holding a tablet.”

“Looks like it’s missing an arm and a head.” Shooter replied. “What else have you found?”

“Shooter, Tiny—” the voice of Lt. Bradley Allen chimed in, “I’m about three hundred and eight clicks south west of your position and I think I found something.”

“What is it?” Shooter asked.

“It *was* a city but I’m seeing a lot of ruined monuments and other structures here. I think it might have been the capital.” Tiny said. “I’d like permission to put down and have a look around.”

“Stand by.” Shooter said, “Slider, did you copy that?”

“I copied.” Slider said. “Tiny; any signs of life where you’re at?”

“Skipper, I don’t even think *roaches* are alive down there anymore.” Tiny replied.

Slider sighed. “Ok. All Raptors converge on Tiny’s position and set down to form a perimeter. I want full security measures and everyone gets a dose of anti-rad meds. Sheba, I want you to stay airborne and keep your eyes out for any contact, enemy or otherwise.”

“Understood boss.” Sheba replied.

Several minutes later, Slider found himself enduring the pain of a needle stick in his neck as Hygiena administered the anti-radiation medicine he had ordered everyone else to take. “Ok, that officially sucks.” He said as she withdrew the needle and disposed of it.

“You’re the one who made us do it sir.” Hygiena replied.

“Yeah.” Slider replied, “Better that than dying of radiation poisoning. Still, I’m glad you’re a pilot and not a doctor.”

“So am I.” Hygiena replied.

“Ok,” Slider said taking out his sidearm and loading it, “We split into teams of four. Shooter you and Hygiena take your Raptors and head south towards that tall monument. Tiny, you and Tiger head east towards that dome shaped building. I’ll stay here and monitor your movements. Understood?”

All heads nodded and Slider crossed his arms. “If you run into any native life, back off and return to orbit. Do not make contact if at all possible. Remember, this landing is on my discretion so it’s *my* ass on a limb here. Don’t go gettin’ me hung out to dry.”

Everyone chuckled, including Slider. “Make sure you get good pictures and samples. Doctor Z will want to go over them when we get back. Now get after it.”

The pilots tossed lazy salutes at Slider who returned them just as lethargically before climbing back into his Raptor. “Sheba, Slider: I’m sending a data burst up to you now. I want you to retransmit it to *Prometheus*.”

“Got it.” Sheba replied. “Do you really think they’ll find anyone *alive*?”

“I don’t know, and to be honest, right now I’m not sure if I want them to.”

CHAPTER 3

BLOOD, FEAR AND TREACHERY

STRATEGIC COMMAND CENTER

BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS CENTAURUS SYSTEM

Turner sat with his back to the door as he studied the tactical readout on the large screen in front of him. It showed several formations of Cylon Baseships over just about all of the colonies save for Leonis and Virgon, where two massive Colonial Fleets had gathered.

“Admiral.” A cultured voice said from behind him causing him to turn around.

“Commander Alexander, come in.” Turner said.

Alexander, tall and skinny yet toned and fit, entered the room and stood next to where Turner was studying the scene before them. “My ship is at condition two and all section leaders have been advised to stand by for orders.”

“Good.” Turner replied as he deactivated the screen and brought up the lights. “I’m glad you made it here first. What I have to say is important and I am going to need you more now than ever.”

“Of course sir.” Alexander replied, “As always, I am at your service. Now, if I may be so bold, what the *exactly* is going on?”

Turner took a deep breath. “The Cylons have attacked the Colonies.”

Alexander’s face went ashen. “My Gods,” he breathed, “that means—”

“It means we’ve been at war for the last month that it took for the message to get here.” Turner finished.

“Have we been recalled?” Alexander asked.

“No.” Turner shook his head, “But that doesn’t mean anything. We lost our data feed just after we received the latest tactical update.”

“That could just be a glitch in the system.”

“More likely, the Cylons took out one of our relay satellites.” Colonel Horvath said as she entered the room. “We just ran our third diagnostic and so far everything seems to be functioning.”

“What are we going to do then?” Alexander asked as he folded his arms across his chest.

“If we turn around and go home, we do so with the knowledge that we were on the verge of accomplishing our mission.” Horvath said.

“But we can’t be out here on an *exploration* mission while our people are back home fighting for their very survival.” Alexander protested.

“By the time we get home the war could be over and then what would we have to show for our efforts?” Horvath countered. “Besides, has anyone considered the possibility that we might be able to find *help* on Earth?”

“We’re not going to find help on Earth.” Turner said quietly. “If they had anything that could be of use to us we would have detected it by now.”

“But sir—” Horvath began.

Turner cut her off with an upraised hand. “We can’t make any decisions until we get a report from Slider and his team.”

“Halloran just contacted them.” Horvath said. “They should be back within the hour.”

“Good.” Turner nodded. “Until then, continue to conduct pre-combat checks. I want us to be ready for anything.”

RAPTOR 471 EARTH

As Slider sat quietly on the wing of his Raptor and enjoyed the feel of the breeze on his face for the first time in months, the sense of history that pervaded the moment wasn’t lost upon him.

For thousands of years, the people of the colonies had wondered about the ancient stories surrounding the lost 13th tribe of Kobil. Now here he was, sitting on the wing of his Raptor, as he stared out over the ruined ground of the once mythical world that had been their home.

It filled him with a sense of sadness that they had traveled so far only to find a ruined husk of a world at the end of their journey. *But at least we know now* he thought to himself.



Several clicks away, Tiny and Tiger were making their way through what had once been a grand hall, paved in marble and decorated elaborately.

As he looked above them, Tiny could imagine what the dome that had once capped the building looked like in its pristine state, before the cataclysm that had ruined it.

“I’ve got something interesting here on the scanner.” Tiger said from beside him.

“What is it?” Tiny asked as he looked over.

“It looks like some sort of room but the deep sonar is having trouble penetrating it.” Tiger replied as she worked the controls of the large handheld unit.

“Hold on a second.” Tiny said as he reached for the backpack unit that made of the scanner’s main computer. “I’m switching you to mag-res.”

“Why?”

“Just wait and see. If I’m right—”

Tiny flipped the switch and the image on the handheld display that was attached to the backpack computer via a long flexible cable changed from a cool blue to a bright red. “Holy frak.” She said, “That did it.”

“What do you see?”

“The walls are made up of a thick titanium alloy.” Tiger said. “Could it be a bomb shelter?”

“Only one way to find out.”



“Slider, Sheba.”

Slider snapped out of his reverie and sat up as the sound of Sheba’s voice intruded on his thoughts. “Slider, Sheba: Respond please.”

Moving quickly he made his way inside the Raptor, jarring Callaghan awake as he did, and groggily activated his comm. “Sheba, Slider: you just woke me out of a good dream so this better be important.”

“It is.” Sheba replied, “I just got a burst from *Prometheus* Actual. We’ve been recalled. He wants us back aboard ASAP and you to report to him in the S.C.C. as soon as you touch down.”

“Any idea what’s going on?” Slider asked, now fully awake.

“No but it must be important if he’s recalling us.”

Slider nodded to himself. “Agreed.” He said as he switched over to the broadband frequency. “Attention all units: Emergency recall. You are to board your Raptors and make for the rendezvous point immediately.”

“Slider, Shooter: Roger that. Hygiena and I will be airborne in ten.”

“Slider, Tiny: Roger. We found something down here though and I think it might be important.”

“What is it?” Slider asked as he began his preflight checks.

“I think it’s an archive.” Tiger replied, “There’s loads of documents and data devices down here.”

“Grab some of it and get back to your Raptor. We’ll let Doctor Z check them out when we get back.”

“Roger that. We’ll be airborne in fifteen minutes.”

STRATEGIC COMMAND CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS CENTAURUS SYSTEM

Admiral Turner looked around the S.C.C. at the faces of the gathered section leaders and chiefs and knew his next words would probably be the most difficult he had ever had to speak in his career. Even with that in mind, he knew that his officers and enlisted deserved the truth about what was going on back home.

Already, rumors had begun to spread around the ship like wildfire that some catastrophe had befallen the colonies. He had heard the entire spectrum; some saying that an asteroid had hit Caprica and wiped out all life on the northern continent. Another rumor said there had been an accident at a secret government bio-weapons plant on Virgon that was already killing millions.

The best one though, had been the rumor that another civil war had broken out and that the Colonial government was dissolved.

Steeling himself, he took a deep breath and activated the general comm. system that would spread his voice out through the ship and to the Gunstars *Sentinel* and *Vigilant*. “I know that there are rumors going around,” he began, “of a catastrophe having occurred back home. I wish I could say that these were *just* rumors and that they had not merit to them. Unfortunately, I cannot.”

Pausing for a moment he saw the anxious looks on the faces of all of his subordinates. All, that is, except for Commander Alexander, Colonel Hall, Colonel Horvath and Maddie whom he had already briefed. Their looks were somber and determined.

“I don’t want to drag this out so I’ll break it down succinctly: The Cylons have broken the truce and launched an all out attack against the Colonies.”

He waited before continuing again as gasps of shock echoed through the room. “The data we have received is over twenty eight days old, but it suggests a massive assault against Colonial Defenses. Initial casualties are high: Thirty Battlestars and their respective support vessels were destroyed in the opening attacks. Our last update said that Admiral Nagala had taken direct command of the fleet after the destruction of Colonial Defense Forces Headquarters on Picon.”

“Our data feed was cut off after that, probably due to the Cylons discovering and disabling our HPG relay network. However, as soon as we hear more data we will disseminate it down through your section leaders. That is all.”

Turner deactivated the comm. and the room burst into shouting voices each asking questions over the other. He raised his hands for silence but when that didn’t work, Master Chief Madrid stepped in.

“*Shut the hell up!*” she shouted.

A stunned silence came over the room as Maddie gestured to the admiral. “Floor is yours sir.”

Turner nodded. “Thank you chief. Now, one at a time, what are your questions?”

Almost everyone raised their hands but it was Lt. Col Kelly who Turner called on first.

“Sir, you didn’t mention anything about the Colonies themselves. I don’t imagine the Cylons have kept their attacks to military targets.” Kelly said.

“You’re right,” Turner replied heavily, “at last report Caprica, Picon and Tauron had all suffered heavy nuclear attacks. Caprica City itself was destroyed by a fifty kiloton airburst.”

“What are we going to do sir?” one of the Chiefs from the Engineering section asked. “Have we been recalled?”

“The answer to that question is no, we haven’t been recalled and I haven’t decided on a course of action as of yet.” Turner replied.

“How long would it take us to get home if we *were* recalled, sir?” another voice asked.

“We were diverted from course on the way here by Doctor Creighton. As a result it added several months to our journey. The return route will be much quicker.” Colonel Horvath said.

“But *how long* will it take?”

“Approximately eight months.” Turner replied.

The multitude of voices erupted again as the impact of Turner’s answer sank into the minds of those gathered in the room “The war could be over by then!” one voice shouted, only to be followed by “There has to be a faster way!” “We should leave the Gunstars behind!” “There may be nothing left to go back to by the time we get home!”

“THAT’S ENOUGH!!!”

All eyes snapped forward to Turner whose expression and demeanor brokered no argument. “I’m not making any decisions until Slider returns with his recon data.”

“Is it possible we could find help on Earth?” a voice asked.

“NO.” Slider said as he entered the room. “There won’t be any help coming from Earth.”

Turner waited as Slider approached and saluted. “I heard the announcement on the flight deck.” Slider said as he handed a silver disc to the admiral. “This is our recon data, sir. Earth is a dead planet.”

CHAPTER 4

WHAT WE HAVE BECOME

*FAR ACROSS THE BLACK OCEAN I SAIL
I WANDER THE STARS OF THE NIGHT
FOR GLORY AND HONOR AND ADVENTURES UNTOLD
ON THE WINGS OF FIRE I RIDE*

*MY HEART BELONGS TO THE SHIP I COMMAND
HER SPIRIT IS BONDED TO ME
TOGETHER WE WANDER FROM PORT TO PORT
ALONE ON THE EBONY SEA*

*UPON THE HORIZON MY FUTURE AWAITS
CERTAIN AND YET UNKNOWN
FOR WHEN MY DAYS ARE DONE IN THIS LIFE
FOREVER MY SPIRIT WILL ROAM*

-The Ballad of the Star Sailor

**SCIENCE LAB FOUR
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

Doctor Zylman shook his head, his eyes wide with curiosity, as he thumbed through the yellowed documents that Lt. Hohensee had brought back from Earth. His excitement was so intense that he almost feared what his racing heart might do if left unchecked.

“This is absolutely incredible.” He breathed as he pulled out one document in particular. “These documents must be hundreds of years old yet they are still in excellent condition.”

“That’s great Doc but can you tell me what they say?” Admiral Turner asked impatiently.

“Not yet, but I’m working on it.” Zylman replied. “The language is a derivative of ancient Kobali so I can see common roots in the symbols but figuring out the syntax and the grammar might take a while.”

“We don’t have a while, Doctor, we have three days.”

Zylman spun around. “What did you say?”

“I’ve made my decision. We’re going home.”

Zylman sat, stunned into silence for a long moment before he could finally respond. “But sir,” he began, “we’ve come so far. We can’t leave now, not when we’re so close.”

“There’s a war on Doctor, and from the looks of it they need every ship they can get back home. We have to go.”

“Admiral, this is the greatest discovery of our lifetime! Of *any* lifetime!” The Doctor protested, “We can’t just leave!”

Turner ignored the doctor’s words and turned to leave.

“But this was our *great mission!*” Zylman shouted. “How can you leave it incomplete!?”

“Doctor, millions of our people have died back home and whomever is left is fighting for their very survival!” Turner snarled as he spun on Zylman, “And all that we found at the end of this *great mission* is a dead planet! Face it Doc, this is an archeology mission now.”

Both men continued to stare at each other for a long moment, their anger fading away like fire cooling to an ember.

“You’re right, of course.” Zylman said quietly. “Saving our people back home is the most important thing.”

Turner nodded. “Thank you doctor.” He said as he turned.

“Wait.” Zylman said, causing Turner to look back.

“What is it?”

“You said we’re leaving in three days, correct?” Zylman asked.

Turner nodded. “Major Briedis asked for some time to overhaul the jump drives before we started back.”

“Then let me take a science team down to Earth’s surface, where Lieutenant Hohensee found these documents. I’d like to study and recover as much as possible before we depart.”

Turner considered the notion for a moment and then nodded his assent. “We spent this long getting here, we might as well have *something* to show for it when we go home.”

Zylman stood. “I’ll start packing.”

“You have three days, doc. If you’re not back by then we leave without you.”

“Understood.”

Turner ducked out the open hatchway and left Zylman standing alone in his lab. “Three days to collect a life’s worth of work.” He said to himself, “I’d better get started.”



3 DAYS LATER...

Admiral Turner waited on the flight deck as Doctor Zylman supervised the unloading of the artifacts he had found and returned to Prometheus aboard his shuttle.

Next to him, Horvath shook her head. “Did he bring back the whole frakin safe?”

“I’m sure the he would have if he could have.” Turner said as he began to move forward. “Welcome back, Doctor.”

Zylman turned and smiled. “Admiral! Thank you so much for allowing me to go!” the doctor gushed, “This is quite possibly *the* most fascinating experience I have ever had!”

“What were you able to find out?” Horvath asked.

“Well, I am still having trouble translating their language, but from the video records I’ve seen it appears that there was a war sometime in the past started over natural resources, oil from the looks of it. It engulfed the whole planet in a nuclear conflict and within fifty years the entire population became extinct.”

“So they destroyed *themselves*?” Horvath asked incredulously.

“It appears so.” Zylman replied sadly.

“I find that hard to believe.” Horvath replied shaking her head. “The Thirteenth tribe was supposed to be the best of us. How could they have allowed that to happen?”

“The answer is simple, Colonel: They were human.” Zylman replied.

Turner chuckled. “Nobody knows how to frak over another human being like a human does.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
CENTAURUS SYSTEM**

Admiral Turner looked around the C.I.C. at the faces looking back at him. All of them knew the importance of the moment. All of them knew that uncertain times awaited them yet all of them were determined and dedicated to the course of action he had laid out.

“Sir, the board is green. All ships report ready to jump.” Maddie announced.

“Thank you.” Turner replied quietly as he activated his headset. “On the one M.C., please.”

Around the ship, the P.A. system rang with the familiar horn of a general announcement and all activity stopped as the crew listened to their admiral’s words.

“Attention all hands, this is your admiral.” Turner said, “Eighteen months ago we started out on this mission to find Earth and reunite the thirteen tribes of humanity. Today, we know that the thirteenth tribe is gone and that our twelve colonies are under attack by a ruthless enemy. We

find ourselves at a crossroads, a grand decision. Do we stay and finish our mission to Earth, a world we know to be dead, or do we return home and defend our home worlds against this old enemy who has come back to haunt us. For me, the answer is clear: we're going home, and when we get there, we're going to make the Cylons sorry that they started this war again."

A great cheer went up from the C.I.C. as Turner turned to face the Colonel Horvath.
"X.O., take us home."



EPILOGUE

BE ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ETERNAL LEONIS SYSTEM

General Connor watched the dradis display intently as he listened to the moment to moment reports coming in to him from the surface of Leonis. Next to him stood Commander Tajalle, who was equally intent on the situation but possessed a grace that Connor could not help but to admire.

“The Spirit and the Saber have both left the ground sir.” she said easily.

Connor nodded tensely as he watched the symbols of both Gunstars rise up from the planet. “Good. Tell them to spin up their FTL’s and be ready to jump as soon as they are out of Leonis’ gravity well.”

“You still think this is a Cylon trap?” Tajalle asked.

Connor fixed her with a laser sharp stare. “You *know* I do, Commander. We’ve been running these rescue missions for ten months now and *each time* we have met hard resistance. Now, all of a sudden, the Cylons pull out?” he shook his head. “I don’t think so.”

“But if they were going to attack, they would have had their best chance while the Gunstars were on the ground.” Tajalle countered. “The Cylons aren’t stupid, sir.”

“I know and that’s what has me worried.” He said as he turned and faced away from the table. “First, we get rumors of a large group of survivors on Leonis, more than we’ve found on any of the other colonies.”

“That’s the easy part to explain. The Cylons only used nerve agents on Leonis. For some reason they didn’t want to damage to the planet as extensively as the other colonies.”

“Yes but that doesn’t explain the survivors all gathered in one place.”

“You mean the only clean area on the planet?”

“Cylons don’t make those kind of tactical mistakes.”

Tajalle sighed. “I know. A girl can hope though.”

“Dradis contact!”

“How many and where?” Connor asked as he spun towards the operations station.

“Three Cylon Basestars sir, bearing three one five karem zero eight four.” The Ops officer reported.

Connor studied the dradis readout and it was immediately apparent that they were in deep trouble. “They’ve isolated the Gunstars from the *Olduvai* and us.” He said.

“They’ll use one Basestar to pound the Gunstars while the other two hold us off.” Tajalle said as she picked up the handset to the flight deck. “Launch all Vipers.”

“They’re launching Raiders.” A voice reported.

Suddenly the C.I.C. began to buzz with alarms. “Radiological alarm! Nukes inbound!”

“Frak.” Tajalle cursed, “Turn us into the closest Basestar and open fire on it.”

“Twenty seconds to impact.”

“Activate the anti-missile system.” Connor ordered.

“AMS is online and tracking sir.” the weapons officer reported as the deck began to vibrate under Connor’s feet.

“Sir, I’m tracking over one hundred inbound missiles moving towards the *Olduvai*’s position.” A voice shouted. “Some of them are nukes.”

“Their AMS can’t handle that load.” Tajalle said.

“Have *Olduvai* spin up their—” Connor began.

“Too late.” Tajalle whispered helplessly as she watched the missiles streak towards their sister *Battlestar*.

It didn’t take long. The *Olduvai* shuddered under the heavy impact and stood tall longer than any ship could be asked to but finally succumbed to the nuclear power that exploded against her hull.

The port flight pod went first as the full stored in her tanks exploded from the impact of the weapons against them. The explosions quickly followed the fuel lines back to the main tyllium storage tanks. The pressure built inside them like a bomb until finally the Olduvai exploded into a fiery shower of spaceborne shrapnel.

“Oh my gods, *Olduvai* is gone!” One of the crewmen shouted.

Suddenly the deck pitched upwards hard as two nukes slammed into the nose of the *Eternal*.

“Hull breaches across the forward quarter!” one of the engineers announced.

“We’re venting atmosphere from decks seven through thirteen.” Tajalle reported, “Casualty reports coming in as well.”

“Forward cannons are out and we have fires in the missile magazines.” The weapons officer said.

“Evacuate the affected sections and prepare to vent the missile tubes.” Connor ordered as the deck continued to buck under he feet.

“More inbound nukes.” Tajalle said with a note of finality. “AMS is down.”

“Time until impact?”

“One minute.”

Connor shook his head knowing that the end was drawing close. “Well, we made a good run of it.”

Tajalle smiled sadly. “Yes we did.”

“Sir, I.R. spike! Incoming ship!”

“E.M. confirms sir! We have a ship jumping in right on top of us!”

“What the hell is it?” Connor asked.

“From the size of the energy surge it *has* to be another Basestar.” Tajalle commented. “They’re jumping into their own line of fire.”

“Fine by me,” Connor said, “We’ll take one of them with us.”

“Ship is jumping in now sir. Reading IFF codes—” the crewman’s voice trailed off.

“What is it?” Connor demanded.

Suddenly, an icon appeared on his dradis readout. He stared in shock as the reality of his situation began to wash over his emotions. “*You have got to be frakking kidding me.*”

*Be all my sins remembered
From now until judgment day
From the day I was born 'til the day that I die
'til I'm under six feet of clay*

*Transgressions never forgiven
And joy is just a memory
The hell that awaits me, a foregone conclusion
And all that is likely to be*

*Be all my sins remembered
I count each and every one
For the crimes I've committed, these dreams I have ended
For all the damage I've done*

*For heartache and hurt by my actions
For selfish and evil gain
For the lives I have trampled under my boot heels
I now must accept the pain*

*Be all my sins remembered
Yes each and every one
From the day I was born 'til this day that I die*

For I was wrong—

Yes I was wrong—

So wrong...

“Be all my sins remembered”
-From the book of Laments

BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

Returns Friday, October 17th 2008.