



Battlestar Prometheus
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 James L. Ryan III: Executive Officer of the Battlestar Prometheus

Commander Nigel Alexander: Commanding Officer, Gunstar Sentinel

Colonel Marco Hall: Commanding Officer, Gunstar Vigilant

Colonel Karla Horvath: Executive Officer, Gunstar Sentinel

Major Alex Tompkins: Commanding Officer, 7th Marine Expeditionary Regiment

Captain David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

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

Captain Jason 'Slider' Allen: C.A.G. Prometheus Air Wing

Captain Joshua Wakefield: Commanding Officer, 82nd Viper Squadron "Knights"

Captain Michael "Archangel" Johnston: Commander, 23rd Air Support Group (A.S.G.) "Grim Reapers"

Lieutenant Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

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

Captain Stacie "Sheba" Percival: Commander of the 101st Viper Squadron.

FOE

Sae'tzar Lucius Verenos: Supreme Ruler of the Alliance

Executor Tyranus Bane: Special Agent of the Alliance Onyx Brigade, also known as Dr. Hal Creighton

Primus Rollo Thomasi: Supreme Commander of the Alliance Expansionary Defense Fleet

PROLOGUE

LEARNING TO FLY

VIPER TRAINING SESSION BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS NEAR THE EDGE OF THE TERRAN ALLIANCE

“Viper three one four— Prometheus: You are cleared for hands on approach. Speed is one-four-zero; checker is green; call the ball.”

Officer Cadet Ashley Klave wished she could wipe the sweat from her brow inside her helmet but to do so would cause her to crash her Viper Mark 7 into the starboard landing deck of the Prometheus.

Swallowing hard, she desperately willed her hands to stop shaking and said “Viper three one four—I have the ball.”

“Roger three one four. I have you in the glide path and looking good. Twenty seconds until touch down.”

“Ok Splashdown, you’re in the glide path and doing fine.” Said her fellow Candidate, Melody Moody, from the Viper beside her.

“I don’t feel like I’m doing fine.” Ashley replied nervously.

“Ten seconds.” The flight control officer reported.

“Alright Splash, throttle back to zero nine zero, you don’t need to chase the lights.”

Ahead of her, Ashley could see the landing deck coming closer and closer and her muscles began to tense again. “It’s coming too fast Melody!”

“No it’s not,” Melody replied calmly, “you’re spot on.”

“Viper three one four— Prometheus: You’re coming in too hot, reduce speed to zero seven five.”

“Oh no...” Ashley moaned as she yanked back on the throttle.

From her cockpit, Melody could see Ashley’s Viper suddenly cut speed and nose down towards the deck. “Too much Ashley! Punch out!”

But it was too late... the Viper burst into an instant ball of flame as it contacted the flight deck before the cold vacuum of space snuffed it out forever.

“Damn it!” Ashley shouted as she popped open the canopy of her Mark 7 trainer simulator. “For frak’s sake! How many times do I have to do this before I get it down?”

Climbing out of her own simulator pod, Melody popped her helmet seal and took it off. “It’s ok Ashley, it took me sometime to get it too.”

“Bullshit,” Ashley sighed, “You got the landings down in one shot.”

Melody made to answer but couldn’t. Ashley was right, she *had* stuck the landing right from the get go.

“Again.” Ashley said as she climbed back into the pod.

Melody shook her head. “C’mon Ash, we’ve been at this for two hours already. Morning formation is an hour off and I need a shower before we face The Beast again.”

Ashley chuckled. ‘Beast’ was the nickname that had adopted for Sheba. “I have to get this down Melody. We test in two days and if I don’t have this perfect she’ll throw me out of the program. Hell, she’s already threatened to, twice! I think she has it in for me.”

“I think she’s got it in for us all.” Melody replied. “Okay, one more time but we have to hurry. I don’t want to be late again.”

“We won’t be, I promise.”

Sheba watched with a hawk’s eye from the simulator control room as Hygiena, as Sheba had come to call her, and Splashdown climbed back into the simulator pods and started another run.

“Let me know how they do on this one.” She said to the tech as she turned to leave.

Both cadets were a mystery to her. Moody had the natural ability that she wanted in a pilot but her personal appearance and physical fitness were both sorely lacking and if there was one thing that the Commodore didn’t abide on his ship, it was his officers looking sloppy and overweight.

The other one, who Sheba had named Splashdown as a play on her name of Ashley, looked to be a model officer except for the fact that it was hell getting her to

assert herself. She was so nervous and unsure of herself at times that Sheba was forced to wonder if she had paid someone else to take the Flight Aptitude Test for her. Of course, her academics had put that doubt to rest.

She and Moody had the highest ratings in the class academically and Moody was the highest rated in the simulator while Splashdown was the lowest.

Sheba knew they both had the potential to be good pilots and officers but their time was running short. The class had started with fifty candidates. Eight had been dropped the first day because of the physical fitness test and seven more had followed in the four weeks since for academic failures.

Now it was time to make another cut since only twenty one pilot's billets were available and there were still forty five cadets in the class. Only thirty would be allowed to go on from ground school into basic flight and if these two didn't pick up their performance soon, they would be heading down washout alley.

"Commodore on deck!" The Marine guard at the entrance to C.I.C. announced as Commodore Turner entered with a cup of steaming tea in his hand.

"Good morning sir." Said Captain Halloran as he approached with a folder filled with papers. "Com traffic from the mid-watch."

"Anything of note?" Turner asked as he took the folder into his free hand.

"No sir. Daily status reports are in from the fleet and displayed on the overheads for your review." Halloran replied.

"Good job, Captain." Turner said. "How did you like your first rotation as officer of the deck?"

"Was a quiet night so not that bad. Only one incident to speak of and that was more funny than anything."

"Oh?"

Halloran chuckled slightly. "Seems Sergeant Amon had a bit too much to drink last night and tried dancing on a table in the Marines common room."

Turner shook his head. "I know that didn't end well."

"Ten stitches and a broken leg."

"Ouch."

“Yes sir.” Halloran nodded. “He’s in the hospital right now. Doc Kaplan says he’ll live, he just won’t be happy about it.”

Turner raised an eyebrow in question.

Halloran smiled mischievously. “She gave him just enough painkillers to take the edge off but not enough to completely help. Says she doesn’t like to reward stupidity.”

“One area where she and I agree.” Turner said. “Okay, go get some sleep. I’ll see you this evening at dinner.”

“Is that tonight sir?” Halloran asked, embarrassed.

“Did you forget about the senior officer dinner, Captain?” Turner asked with mock indignation.

Halloran shrugged. “Sorry sir. The days have been running into each other for about the last week.”

“I know how you feel.” Turner replied shooing him off. “Dinner’s at eight. Dress casual.”

“Yes sir.” Halloran replied as he ducked out the door.

“X.O. on deck!”

Turner turned to see Colonel Ryan entering the C.I.C.. He was still walking with a slight limp but the cane was gone and his morale seemed to have improved a bit in the two months since his liberation from the Alliance prison.

“Morning Commodore.” Ryan said as he approached the situation table.

“X.O.” Turner greeted. “How’s the leg treating you today?”

“It’s there.” Ryan replied wryly. “The pain is a constant reminder of *that*.”

“Admiral Cain used to tell me that a pain is a good sign that you’re still alive.”

“She was right.”

Turner tapped a button and the daily status screen appeared on the X.O.’s data screen. “Take a look.”

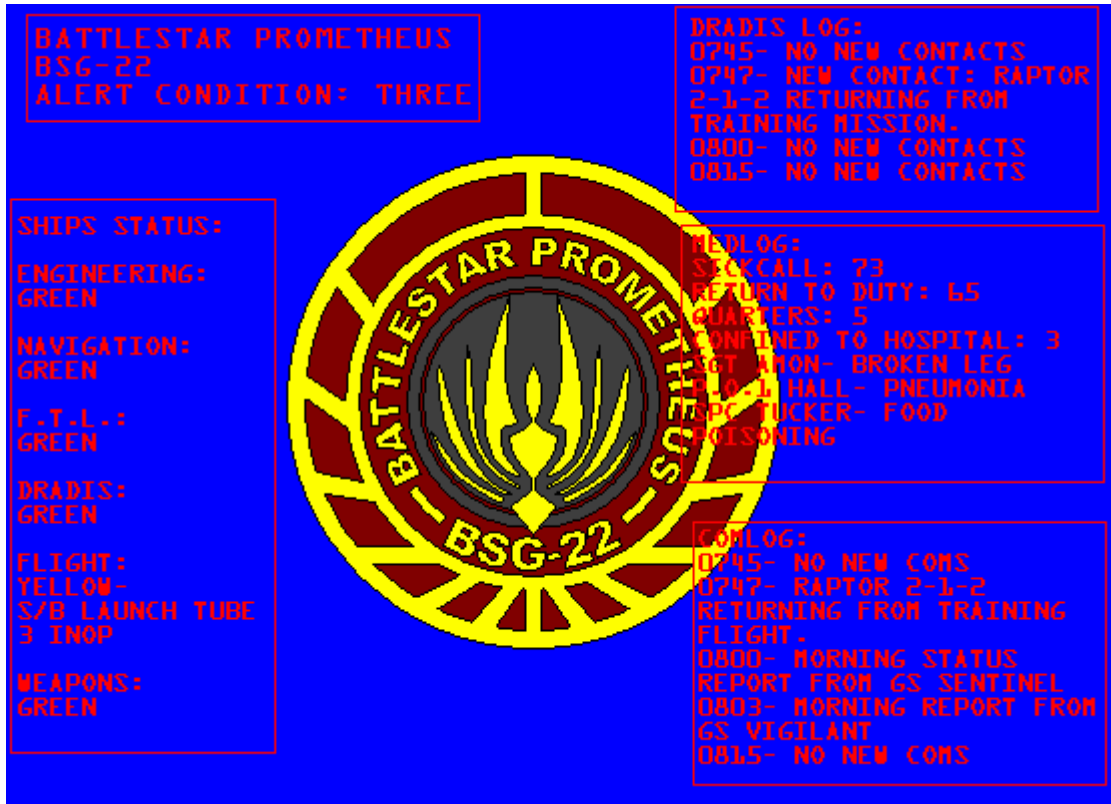
Ryan examined the report closely. “Starboard 3 is down?”

“Yep, fourth time this month. Same problem each time.”

“That’s not a coincidence, that’s someone being sloppy.” Ryan said furrowing his brow. “I’ll get on Briedis and find out what’s going on.”

“Let him know that I am *not* happy about this.”

“Yes sir.” Ryan replied looking back down at the display. “What happened with Sergeant Amon?”



Turner’s expression turned sour. “Stupidity.”

“That’s been going around a lot lately.”

“I know.” Turner said closing his folder. “I want a meeting with all senior officers and department heads in one hour.”

“Yes sir, I’ll put out the word.”

Turner faced towards the hatch and began to move away, his folder under his arm. “You have the con, Colonel. I’ll be in my quarters going over the status reports if you need me.”

Ryan snapped a salute. “I have the con, aye sir.”

It was going to be a long day.

CHAPTER 1

ROLLING THE HARD SIX

GROUND TRAINING STARBOARD HANGAR # 4 BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Class: Atten-SHUN!”

Melody Moody cursed to herself as she heard the class being called to order while she ran towards the open door to hangar four.

“Oh frak, Sheba is gonna kill us!” said Ashley Klave from beside her.

Both cadets appeared in the door to find Sheba waiting with her hands on her hips. “So wonderful that you could join us this morning cadets.” She snarled with her usual tone. “I hope we didn’t interrupt your morning coffee.”

“No sir!” both cadets responded as they snapped to attention.

“Well good because I would certainly hate to think that I inconvenienced you in some way.”

“Sir, it’s my fault! I—” Ashley began.

“Can it Cadet!” Sheba barked. “You’re both late, end of story. Five demerits for each of you. Now fall in for inspection before I change my mind and throw you both the frak out of my class.”

FLAG SUITE BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Group: Atten-Shun!” Colonel Ryan barked as Commodore Turner entered the Flag Suite.

The senior officers and enlisted that were gathered snapped to attention. Turner walked in and left them that way for a few moments as he looked over their uniforms.

“Stand at ease.” He finally said as he opened the ships log book. “Does anyone know why we are here?”

The room was silent for a long tense moment as Turner swept his gaze around the room. “Major Allen, do you know why we’re here?”

“Sir, no sir.” Allen replied.

“What about you, Major Briedis?” Turner asked as he fixed his gaze on his chief engineer.

“No sir.” Briedis replied.

Turner slowly continued walking around the room looking the officers in the eye like a predator who was calmly stalking his prey. “Major Tompkins, would you care to venture a guess?”

“Sir, I believe we are here due to the incident involving Sergeant Amon, sir.” Tompkins replied. “I wish to add that I accept full respons—”

Turner held up a hand to forestall Tompkins apology and continued to stalk the room. Finally, he returned back to his place at the head of the circle. “Master Chief, what is your opinion of ships discipline as it stands right now?” he asked Maddie, who stood beside him with a fierce expression on her face.

“Sir, ship’s discipline *sucks* right now.” Maddie replied frankly.

“And why do you think that is?”

“Sir, because we haven’t been doing our frakking jobs, sir!” Maddie almost snarled.

Turner nodded. “How many of you would agree with that assessment?”

Slowly, like kids caught doing something wrong in class, all of the officers hands raised up.

“I’m glad you agree.” Turner said handing the log book to Maddie. “COB, read me the entry regarding Sergeant Amon.”

“Sergeant Amon was taken by litter to Med Ward Six for injuries sustained in the Marine Common Room. Alcohol level was point one-one. Injuries included one laceration across the forehead requiring ten stitches and a tib-fib fracture to the right leg. Patient was assessed and treated and will remain under observation for twenty four hours due to high alcoholic content in the blood. Service member was not on duty at the time of the incident.” Maddie recited.

Turner took the log and handed it to Slider. “Major Allen, would you please read entry number 8472.”

Slider cleared his throat. “Lieutenant Akon was placed on report for disrespect to a superior officer and insubordinate behavior for an incident that took place in the 31st Squadron ready room at 2130 hours. Captain Johnston had informed the lieutenant that he was going to have to pull an extra shift on Combat Air Patrol due to the fact of his replacement being taken to Med Ward for a stomach illness. Lieutenant Akon was quoted as saying ‘Frak that, he’s faking it’ and refused to perform his extra shift.”

Turner nodded and took the book from Slider, handing it to Briedis. “Major, read entry number 8511.”

Briedis took the log in his hands and began to read. “Maintenance incident report: starboard launch tube number three failed to launch CAP fighter piloted by Captain Wakefield today due to a failure in the catapult system. Repair crew has been dispatched with a level one priority.”

Briedis handed the book back to Turner who closed it with a loud *THUMP*.

“I am going to be honest with you,” Turner began slowly, his voice low and tight, “Right now I think that the cadets down on Sheba’s flight deck have better discipline than everyone in this room.”

The Commodore paused for a moment and cast his gaze about the room while the comment sunk in with his senior officers. “I realize that there was an adjusting period after the rescue operations we conducted and that our soldiers needed time to acclimatize back to a military environment but that time is over—*now*.”

“Sir, if I may—” Slider began.

“*You may not.*” Turner growled, cutting Slider off. “There is absolutely no frakking excuse for the behavior of this crew. I’m going to tell you something else-- I don’t hold the crew responsible for this, I hold all of *you* responsible and I hold *myself* to account for it. You are the senior officers of this ship and as such, you set the example for our soldiers but more importantly, *I* have failed *you* in not setting the proper example for you as your commander. Well that ends today.”

“This lack of discipline is eroding unit cohesion and morale and compromising the safety and security of this ship and I won’t stand for it any longer. I’m giving each of you one week to get your house in order. Take whatever actions you feel necessary, including confinement, extra duty and demotions. This ends *now*. Am I understood?”

“Sir, yes sir.” The group replied quietly.

Turner spun on them and his eyes flashed with anger. “*I said, am I frakking understood??*”

“SIR, YES SIR!” the officers responded.

Turner fixed them all with a laser stare that threatened to burn through their souls and he could see that the point was starting to be made. “X.O., you are my avenging angel in this. If I have to get involved again, I’m going to find someone else who can get the job done, am I clear?”

“Sir yes sir!” Colonel Ryan replied.

“Then I leave them to you.” Turner said as he picked up the log book and walked towards the door.

“Group: Atten-Ahun!” Ryan commanded.

Everyone snapped to attention, back parade ground straight, like they were back at the academy.

Turner approved and quietly stalked out of the room leaving behind a group of rebuked but motivated officers.

BATTLESTAR ATLANTIA SCORPION FLEET YARDS SCORPIA

Newly promoted Fleet Admiral Richard Torres smiled as he stepped to the podium and looked out over the officers, crewman and civilians assembled in the port side hangar bay of the Battlestar Atlantia.

He smiled looking at the pristine white of the hangar bulkheads. *Nothing like the look of a brand new Battlestar* he thought to himself as he cleared his throat.

“Twelve months ago today,” he began, “we launched the first of a brand new class of Battlestar: The Prometheus. In the year since she left us she has reached out beyond our known space and explored hundreds of new worlds. She has expanded the red line of navigation by over fifty parsecs. Not bad for a maiden voyage I think.”

His comments were met by brief applause before he continued. “Today, we have the honor and privilege of launching the second of our new *Nova* class Battlestars, the Battlestar *Atlantia*.”

Louder applause and some cheers followed Torres words this time and he had to hold a hand up for silence. “The *Atlantia* has a fine heritage. Indeed, she is the successor to a brave ship that fought hard and survived the Cylon War almost forty years ago. That ship served as the flagship for the Colonial Seventh Fleet. This ship continues that heritage as the flagship for the *entire* Colonial Defense Fleet.”

Turning to the people gathered on the podium he ushered a man with Admiral's rank on his collar. "Officers and crewmen of the *Atlantia*, I can think of no one better to entrust your lives to than the man I appoint as commander of your ship today. Admiral Nagala is my Deputy for Strategic Operations. He has served in the Colonial Fleet since just before the end of the Cylon War and has one of the keenest minds of anyone I know. If there is anyone I can trust to be my field commander in times of war, it is him. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am proud to give you the first commander of the new Battlestar *Atlantia*, Admiral Nagala."

Applause rang out as Nagala stepped forward and saluted the Fleet Admiral. Torres returned the salute and shook his hand before stepping back and allowing Nagala access to the podium.

"Officers and crew of the Battlestar *Atlantia*," Nagala began, "I cannot begin to tell you how honored and humbled I am by this. What the Fleet Admiral neglected to tell you was that my first assignment during the Cylon War was as an aide to Admiral Roddenberry aboard the first Battlestar *Atlantia* and after looking around this fine ship and speaking to her crew, I can honestly say this ship is more than a worthy successor to the legacy of the original."

Applause rang out and the crew whooped and cheered at Nagala's words and he found that he couldn't hide the prideful smile he felt on his face. "Ok, settle down now before this turns into a *real* party." He said eliciting chuckles from the crowd.

"When I found out that I was going to be given command of the *Atlantia*, I knew that I would have to have a strong right arm to do so. It's hard enough to command a Battlestar like this but near impossible to do that *and* command the fleet during war time. I wanted to entrust this ship to someone I could count on to keep her going while I did what I had to do. I am happy to say that in Commander Lucas, I have found such a person. He will be my right arm and my conscience. And if you guys have any screw ups, that funny sensation you feel in the seat of your pants will be his boot."

This got a laugh from the crowd and Nagala smiled. "But I know that you guys are better than that. Many commanders *say* that their crew is the best, but I *know* mine is."

Another round of applause followed and Nagala waited patiently for it to end before he finished his speech. "Admiral Torres, I hereby assume command of the Battlestar *Atlantia*, sir. All standing orders and regulations are remain in effect, duty officer, so note in the ships log. Officer of the deck, set condition three throughout the ship and post the first watch."

"Post the first watch, aye-aye sir!" a young captain replied from the side of the stage as he lifted a handset to his mouth and activated the public address system. "Attention all hands, set condition three throughout the ship and post the watch."

FLAG SUITE BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

Slider arched his eyebrows in surprise as the doors slid shut behind Commodore Turner as he exited the room. “What the frak was that all about, sir?”

“It’s about us being off our game.” Ryan replied as he brushed past the others to get to the table at the center of the room.

“Off our game?” Major Briedis asked. “Has he seen what we’ve been dealing with? We’re still repairing damage from the last attack! I have guys that are working their asses off doing double shifts to cover everything!”

“Not to mention that I still have guys who are having issues regarding their captivity—” Major Tompkins began.

“I don’t want to hear that shit!” Ryan snapped as he spun on the others. “I was *there*, remember? I went through that shit too and I am on the job every damn day doing what I’m supposed to be doing!”

Tompkins and Slider each took a step back from Ryan and he realized that he must look like a raving lunatic. Taking a deep breath he calmed himself.

“The Commodore is right gentlemen,” Maddie said as she took a step to Colonel Ryan’s side, “We have failed as leaders and we need to start jerking some knots into these soldiers’ asses. If we don’t, we’re going to start seeing people get hurt or worse.”

Slider looked ready to argue but he stopped and nodded. “Yeah, I see your point Chief.”

“Me too.” Tompkins nodded. “And now is as good a time to start as any.”

“Where you going?” Ryan asked as Tompkins made his way to the door.

Tompkins stopped and turned back for a moment. “Heading down to the training deck. I know of some Marine knuckle heads that are in desperate need of some hard physical training.”

Maddie smiled. “That sounds like a good idea. Think I’ll head down to the flight deck and see what my knuckle draggers are doing.”

Slider shrugged. “Can’t be the odd man out now can I?” he said as he turned to leave. “Don’t be surprised if my pilots come to you saying the CAG is an ass.”

“Don’t worry,” Ryan replied. “If they think the CAG is an ass, wait till they get a load of the X.O.”

CHAPTER 2

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

VIPER TRAINING SESSION BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Viper one-oh-five—Prometheus: You are cleared for hands on approach. Speed is one-four-zero; checker is green; call the ball.”

“Roger Prometheus. Speed one-four-zero, hands on approach, I have the ball.” Melody replied as she cruised the simulated Viper in towards the port side landing bay.

“Viper one-oh-five—Prometheus: Throttle back to one-zero-zero and begin final approach to pad constellation.”

“Copy, throttle down to one-zero-zero and approach pad C.” Melody replied.

Outside the sim-pod, Ashley watched closely on a nearby view screen that showed not only the view from inside the cockpit, but a computer sim of the Viper as it made its landing.

“Ten seconds.” The flight controller said as her Viper entered the cavernous landing bay.

“I have sight on pad C, throttling back and beginning descent.” Melody reported.

“Roger that, I have you over pad C.”

Slowly, Melody’s simulated Viper lowered itself onto the pad that would take it back down into the hangar bay. The simulation ended with the sounds of her skids touching down on the hard surface.

“Viper one-oh-five—Prometheus: Skids down, mag-lock secured. Good job Cadet.”

“Thank you.” Melody replied as she cracked open her sim-pod.

“Good job Cadet.” Sheba said as she walked up. “But I’m docking you five points for bad radio procedure. You touched down on landing pad *constellation*, not pad *C*.”

“Understood sir.” Moody replied at the position of attention.

Sheba stopped and looked at her flight suit for a moment. “You gaining weight again, Cadet?”

“No sir!” Melody quickly replied. “I mean, I don’t think so sir.”

“You don’t *think so* Cadet?” Sheba asked. “Have you been maintaining your diet?”

“Yes sir! I mean, for the most part I have, sir.”

“For the most part? What about your exercises?”

“I report to the gym everyday like I’m supposed to sir.”

Sheba shook her head. “You and Splashdown meet me on hangar deck five in thirty minutes, geared up and ready to fly.” She said disgustedly.

“Yes sir!” Melody replied.

Both cadets exchanged an expression of confusion as Sheba walked away.

“What’s this all about?” Ashley asked as she stepped closer.

“I don’t know,” Melody replied, “but I don’t think it’s going to end well.”

C.A.G.’s OFFICE BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

Sheba entered the office of the CAG dressed in her flight suit, her helmet under her arm and her side arm strapped to her leg.

“You’re all dressed up.” Slider commented as he looked up from the mountain of paperwork on his desk. “Hot date?” he added with a wink.

Sheba smiled. “That’s later, hot shot.”

Slider put his pen down and stretched back in his chair. “What’s the occasion then?”

“Taking a couple of my cadets out for a Raptor training run.”

“Ah.” Slider replied with raised eyebrows. “Got a compliment of sorts from the Commodore about your cadets today.”

“Really?”

“Yeah,” Slider replied with a smirk, “He said your cadets had more discipline than most of the crew, senior officers included.”

“I won’t argue with that.” Sheba replied flatly. “The crew has been acting like they’re on a working shore leave since we got rescued.”

“Well it’s coming to an end today.” Slider said. “Commodore said to start jerking our people into line or he would find someone who could.”

“So that’s the funny thumping sound I’ve been hearing all over the ship then.” Sheba quipped with a smile.

“Oh yes. Foot being applied to ass does have a unique sound all its own.”

“Attention all hands: E.V.A. now in progress in section forty. All radiating devices in that section should now be switched off. Captain Percival, report to starboard hangar one. I say again—”

“That’s my cue.” Sheba said as she heard her name announced over the intercom. “I should be back in about an hour.”

“Okay. Make sure you check in with flight ops before you boost out.” Slider reminded her. “Oh, and don’t forget about the dinner tonight. Commodore is expecting all of us.”

Sheba smiled. “Wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

Allain Halloran arched an eyebrow and fought hard to keep a smile from his face as he neared the scene outside the C.I.C. that had caught his attention.

Standing against a wall at the position of Parade Rest were two slovenly crewmen who had almost gone white with fear as Master Chief Madrid chewed them up one side and down the other.

“Jacobson, your uniform smells like you slept in a bowl full of ass for the last three days.” She growled as her face turned red and her eyes flashed. “And what the hell are *you* smiling at Hale? You look like you got hit by a sack full of *what the frak!*”

“But Chief, we haven’t had time to—”

“Oh my gods, *please* tell me that you are *not* going to try that excuse with me again!” Maddie barked. “What? Do you think I ate a bowl of *stupid* this morning for breakfast? You two have been off for the last forty eight hours and I know exactly what you’ve been doing so don’t try that shit with me.”

Both men went silent as Maddie continued to glare daggers at them for a long moment. “Both of you have exactly *one hour* to report to me in a state that reflects your status as Colonial Soldiers. If you don’t, I swear your next duty shift will be outside on the hull probing for solium leaks. Am I understood?”

“Yes Chief!”

“Get the frak out of my sight.”

Maddie watched as both men hurried off and then noticed Halloran standing not far away.

“Sorry you had to see that sir.” Maddie apologized coming to attention and saluting.

Captain Halloran smiled and returned the salute. “No problem Maddie. I like seeing a good ass ripping from time to time. By the way, remind me to never piss you off.”

Maddie smiled. “You better not sir. I have a hard enough time getting the damn knuckle draggers in line, I don’t need to baby sit officers too.”

“I’ll endeavor to do my best.”

Maddie smiled and turned to leave.

“Hey Chief,” Halloran called out. “What are you doing for the next few minutes?”

Maddie shrugged. “What I do best sir: Kick ass and take names.”

Halloran almost laughed. “Why don’t you give your foot a rest and join me for a bite before I rack out? I could use some good company.”

Maddie arched her eyebrow for a moment. Halloran had always been friendly to her in a professional sort of way, but also distant and aloof. She had always credited that to the fact that he was an officer and she was enlisted but the events that had transpired during the previous six months involving the capture and subsequent liberation of the Prometheus and her crew had shown her different.

Needless to say the request had caught her off guard since she too tended to keep a professional distance from those she worked with.

Still, it had been a while since she could just relax for a few moments and have some decent conversation. “Sounds good sir.” She replied with a shrug as she turned to follow him.

“Action stations! Action stations! Set condition one throughout the ship! This is not a drill! I say again: Action stations! Action stations! Set condition one throughout the ship! This is not a drill!”

“What the frak?” Maddie said as she turned and dashed for the C.I.C. with Halloran hot on her tail.

That’s when the lights flickered and went out.

RAPTOR 215 TRAINING MISSION BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

Sheba was silent as she lifted the Raptor from the flight deck and took it out at high speed towards the back of the Prometheus. Off in the distance she could see the small gleaming image of the Gunstar *Sentinel* and she smiled.

She always enjoyed the view she got from the cockpit.

“Hygiena, take second seat.” She commanded.

“Yes sir.” Melody Moody replied as she slipped up into the seat to Sheba’s left. “Locked in.”

“Good. Take the stick.”

“Sir?” Hygiena asked, her voice betraying her surprise.

“You heard me Cadet, take the stick.”

“Yes sir.” Hygiena replied with a smile.

Grasping the stick she took control of the Raptor. Immediately it jumped in her hands and surprised her.

“A lot different than the sims isn’t it?” Sheba asked.

“Yes sir.” Hygiena replied as she worked to control the vessel.

“The sims don’t have the correct pressure and resistance ratio on their controls. Their only meant to familiarize you with the craft, not perfect your feel of it.”

Hygiena nodded but didn’t reply.

Suddenly, Sheba grasped the stick and slammed it forward putting them on a diving course for the port side of the Prometheus. She then let go and sat back.

“What the hell are you doing?” Hygiena exclaimed.

“Making a point, cadet. Pull us out.”

Hygiena pulled hard on the stick but the ship didn't budge from its course. Taking a deep breath she tried again. Nothing.

“You see, once you get close to anything with mass, especially a ship with artificial grav plating running through it, you become subject to the law of gravity.” Sheba explained. “Hence why you have to have physical strength to be a pilot.”

Hygiena continued to pull against the control yoke which seemed to be resisting her more and more as the Raptor got closer to the Prometheus.

“We're well inside the Barge's gravity shadow now, Cadet. Might be a good time to pull us out of this dive.” Sheba quipped.

“I'm— trying.” Hygiena strained.

“We're getting closer.” Sheba said, her eyebrow raised.

“Frak! I need help!” Hygiena growled in reply.

Outside, the letter that spelled out the name Prometheus alongside the port flight pod occupied almost the entire window. Sheba waited for another half moment than grabbed the stick and hauled it back with a grunt of effort.

The Raptor skimmed the surface of the flight pod so close that Hygiena could actually make out people staring out some of the portholes of the ship.

“Raptor two-one-five, Prometheus: Everything ok out there?”

“Everything is fine, Prometheus. Just a high G training maneuver.” Sheba replied.

“Roger that. Give us a warning next time.”

“Wilco.”

Hygiena sat back in her seat, her hands still shaking on the yoke.

“Not as easy as the sims make it look, eh Cadet?” Sheba asked.

“N-no sir.”

“Now you understand why I say your physical conditioning needs to come up. You won’t have any help in the cockpit of a Viper.”

“Understood sir.” Hygiena replied quietly.

Suddenly, the alarm began to blare and Sheba sprang into action as she checked out the data screen in front of her. What she saw made her eyes go wide with terror.

“No frakking way.” She breathed as she activated her com system. “Prometheus, Sheba: I have a radiological alarm. I believe it to be a heavy gamma particle burst.”

Static was the only reply she received.

“Prometheus, this is—”

Suddenly a blinding light flashed in the front viewport and Sheba slammed her eyes shut as she reached back and closed the door that lead into the rear compartment.

In the back, Ashley Klave, having just recovered herself from the near miss of the Prometheus’ hull, found herself closed in as the ships systems flickered and then went dark.

“Sheba! Hygiena! What’s going on?” she said as she moved forward and reopened the door.

Peering into the cockpit she saw both women unconscious in their seats but that wasn’t the worst of it. The ship was out of control, without power—

And drifting towards the ever growing sight of the Gunstar *Sentinel*.

CHAPTER 3

FIRE IN THE SKY

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

The C.I.C. was a buzz with activity as medics attended to several injured crewmen and officers hurried around getting reports of status. Colonel Ryan walked into this and immediately sprang into action.

“SITREP.” He commanded.

“Sir, we experienced a power surge in all systems.” Said Major Briedis from the engineering board. “Safeties kicked in and guarded all the vital systems but I’m showing blow outs in half the power conduits on the ship.”

“What the hell hit us?” Ryan asked.

“I don’t know sir, I just got here a minute before you did.” Briedis replied.

“Who had the deck?” the X.O. called out.

“I did sir.” Captain Green replied. “It came out of nowhere. We got a radiological alarm and before we could even verify consoles started exploding. We had two crewmen go down from that.”

Ryan nodded. “Has anyone contacted the Commodore?”

“I sent a runner five minutes ago.”

“Good work. Mister Briedis, continue with damage assessments. Mister Green, contact Sentinel and inform them of our status.”

“What’s going on sir?” asked Captain Halloran as he entered the C.I.C. with Maddie right behind him.

“Power surge.” Ryan replied. “Check the vital systems and get them back online ASAP. Maddie, start sending runners to all sections. I want Status Casualty and Operations Reports as quick as we can get them.”

“Score reports ASAP, aye sir.” Maddie replied as she turned to snatch up a crewman for the mission.

“Commodore on deck!” the Marine at the entrance announced.

“What’s going on X.O.?” Turner asked as he finished buttoning his jacket.

“Radiation spike followed by a power surge sir.” Ryan reported.

“Weapons fire?” Turner asked

“Unknown sir.” Ryan replied gravely.

Turner nodded. It was never a good thing to not have situational awareness when you were in space, not to mention hostile territory. “Mister Halloran, get the dradis back up as quick as you can. Mister Briedis, I need a full damage assessment ASAP. Captain Green, contact our observation posts and have them report our position. Captain Reighney, get the crews to their guns and have them assume manual control until further notice.”

The officers chorused “Yes sir.” to him as he turned to face Colonel Ryan. “X.O.— Actions stations.”

“Oh my gods.” Maddie gasped.

“What?” Ryan asked as he spun around on her.

“Sir, the radiation readings are damn near off the scale.” She replied. “Not even a nuclear weapon could give these readings.”

Turner leaned in and examined the readings closely himself as a cold fear began to form in his gut and realization dawned on him.

“Is it possible that this is an instrumentation failure?” he asked.

“No sir.” Briedis replied as he shook his head sadly. “That system wasn’t affected by the power surge.”

Turner nodded. “X.O., contact Doctor Kaplan and inform her to expect large numbers of radiation casualties in the next hour.”

“What is it sir?” Ryan asked.

Turner stood and Ryan could see something in his eyes that was rarely seen there:

Fear.

“We’ve been hit by a Gamma Ray Burst.”

**PORTSIDE DOCKING BAY
BATTLESTAR ATLANTIA
SCORPION FLEET YARDS**

Admiral Nagala and Fleet Admiral Torres stopped and faced each other as they reached the shuttle that would take the commanding officer of the Colonial Defense Forces back to fleet headquarters on Picon.

“You sure you don’t want to stay aboard sir? We can have you home in two days at sublight.” Nagala said.

“Thank you, but no.” Torres replied. “I wanted to stop by the *Pegasus* while she is out over Arelon and see Admiral Cain.”

Nagala chuckled. “She’s been wanting you to stop by since you accepted the promotion.”

“Yeah well I figured a stop over would be good for the *Pegasus* crew since they have been out for six months straight.”

“True.” Nagala replied. “Of course, I think she is just politicking for another promotion.”

“You better watch out, she’s going to be Fleet Admiral someday.” Torres replied with a laugh.

“She can have it.” Nagala said with a gesture of dismissal. “I saw what it’s done to the last two guys who had the job and I don’t look good with gray hair.”

Torres laughed again. “Who says you look good now?”

Both men shared a chuckle before becoming serious. “Are you sure you don’t want this ship sir?” Nagala asked. “It’s not too late for me to step down and—”

Torres held his hand up to stop him. “This is *your* ship Admiral. My days on a Battlestar are done. Besides, I find it easier to command from HQ Picon.”

Nagala nodded. “I suppose it is. Still, others have commanded the fleet from the flagship.”

“Yeah, but my name isn’t Gastineau and this isn’t the *Prometheus*.”

“That’s what this is all about isn’t it?” Nagala asked as realization dawned on him.

Torres smiled. “Guilty as charged pal.” He said as he moved to the hatchway. “The *Prometheus* was the only other ship I ever wanted command of and now she’s thousands of light years away because our President got a wild hair up his ass and sent it chasing a fable.”

“Yeah but look what they have found out there. Human and non human life, new worlds for us to colonize.”

“And quite possibly the greatest threat we have known since the Cylons.” Torres finished. “I just hope that Turner is able to deal with them.”

“I’ve known him for a long time sir. If anyone can be trusted out there on their own, it’s Jon Turner.”

Torres nodded. “I hope you’re right.” He said as he straightened to attention. “Ship is your admiral. Permission to depart?”

“Granted sir.” Nagala replied snapping a salute.

Torres returned the salute. “Have fun on your maiden voyage.”

Nagala smiled. “Tell Helena I said hello.”

Torres nodded and made his way inside the shuttle that awaited him.

“Something to drink sir?” the yeoman asked as the hatch sealed behind him.

“Water please.” The Fleet Admiral replied as he took his seat.

“Welcome aboard, Admiral Torres.” The voice of the shuttle captain said over the speakers. “We’ll be departing for the Battlestar *Pegasus* in five minutes. Please make sure you are secured for lift off and if you need anything, please call upon the yeoman and he will be happy to assist you.”

Five minutes later the shuttle vibrated and lifted off the flight deck of the *Atlantia*, exiting out the front of her portside flight pod, Fleet Admiral Torres had a great view of the pristine new Battlestar sitting in its berth.

It was a beautiful sight but for some strange reason he couldn’t fathom, he had this sad sinking feeling...

Like he would never see her again.

**RAPTOR 215
TRAINING MISSION
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Splashdown did a double take as she saw the form of the Gunstar *Sentinel* getting closer and closer. Thinking quickly she shook Sheba by the shoulder. “Wake up sir!” she said.

Sheba moaned but didn’t stir as Ashley tried to wake her.

“Wha- what’s going on?” Hygiena groggily asked from beside her.

“Sheba’s out and we’re on a direct course with the *Sentinel*.” Ashley replied with fear in her voice.

Hygiena struggled to sit up but found that her muscles were too weak to accomplish even that. “You’re going to have to move Sheba and take the stick Ashley.”

“What!?” Ashley exclaimed as she spun around, her eyes wide with anxiety. “You’re frakking kidding right?”

Hygiena shook her head weakly. “No- you have to do- this- or we- die.”

Ashley looked back at the unconscious form of her flight instructor and then back to the *Sentinel* which was growing larger in the window every second. It took only a moment for her to make up her mind.

Quickly unbuckling Sheba from the seat she grabbed her shoulder pads and pulled her into the back seat where she fastened her into the safety harness.

Moving back to the front she rapped her knuckles on Hygiena’s flight helmet. “Stay with me, I can’t do this alone.”

“I’m- here.” Hygiena breathed heavily.

Ashley strapped herself into the seat and put her hands on the stick. “What do I do now?”

“What do you mean?”

Ashley swallowed hard. “I’ve never trained on a Raptor before.”

“You were supposed to.” Hygiena replied weakly. “We were supposed to put in equal hours.”

“I know but I wanted to concentrate on the Viper.” Ashley replied. “I didn’t sign up to fly Raptors after all.”

Hygiena took a deep breath. “I don’t feel well.”

“I know Mel but I need you so please don’t black out on me.” Ashley pleaded.

“Okay.” Hygiena said taking a deep breath and gathering her strength. “What’s our condition?”

“Main power is coming back. Radiation alarm is going off like crazy.”

“What-- kind?”

“Looks like large dose of Gamma.” Ashley replied.

Melody immediately knew they were in deep trouble. “How long?”

“It’s been ten minutes.”

“Ok, you have to get us back to—Barge.” Hygiena made a sound similar to throwing up and Ashley reached over and released the pressure seals of her helmet. As she pulled it off though she was horrified by what she saw.

Blood was dripping from her eyes.

“Oh my gods.” She gasped.

“Radiation sickness.” Hygiena said. “You have to get us back or we’ll die.”

Steeling herself inside, Splashdown nodded and took the control yoke back into her hand. The Sentinel was very close now and she needed to act fast. “What do I do?”

“Main power from standby to active.”

Splashdown located the toggle switch and flipped it upward causing the lights to flicker and come back as well as all of the primary data screens. “What’s next?”

“Open—the engine control panel.” Hygiena said. “Getting—harder to—focus here.”

“Stay with me Mel.” Splashdown said as she opened the panel. “Okay, two toggle switches and two push buttons.”

“Flip switches up from off to on.” Hygiena replied, her voice barely a whisper now.

Splashdown flipped the switches upward and was rewarded by the hum of the engines becoming active. “Okay, what next?”

“Push—buttons...” Hygiena said and promptly went unconscious.

“Oh great.” Splashdown cursed as she pushed the two buttons.

Suddenly the Raptor began to vibrate beneath her as her two main engines went active causing the ship to lurch forward. Splashdown’s eyes went wide as the *Sentinel* now raced towards her.

Splashdown’s mouth went dry. “Oh frak me.”

CHAPTER 4

AFTER GLOW

“A gamma burst? That shouldn’t be.” Captain Green said.

“Yes, well what *should* and *should not* happen and what *does* happen is hardly ever the same thing.” Colonel Ryan replied.

“Commodore,” Doctor Lucian Zylman said as he walked into the C.I.C. “May I have a word for a moment?”

“It’s not really a good time doctor.” Turner replied patiently.

“Yes, I am aware of that sir but you really need to see this.” Zylman persisted.

“What is it Doctor?” Ryan said as he stepped up beside him.

“As it so happens,” Zylman began as he laid out several photographs, “I was in the observatory updating our navigational charts when this gamma burst hit and I was able to plot the distance.”

Ryan’s eyes went wide. “That means we can get an accurate estimate of the rads we took.”

“Yes but that isn’t the most intriguing part.” Zylman said as he produced another photo. “I had this one enhanced.”

Turner looked at it and almost gasped. “Is that what I think it is?”

“Yes sir.” Zylman replied. “I was able to use the light generated by the burst to illuminate some of the surface markings and there’s no doubt—she’s a Colonial Battlestar.”

Turner nodded. “That is definitely interesting doctor. We’ll investigate as soon as we have dealt with this situation.”

“Sir,” Captain Halloran called out, “Raptor two one five is on approach now. The C.A.G. said you wanted to be notified.”

“On my way.” Turner replied as he turned to face Colonel Ryan. “Get me SITREP as soon as you can Colonel and have someone plot a jump to those coordinates.”

“Oh frak me, *frak me, FRAK MEEEEEE!*” Splashdown cursed as she yanked on the yoke and sent the Raptor soaring up and over the *Sentinel’s* forward section with only a few feet to spare.

Taking a deep breath to calm her nerves she looked down and saw the radio system active. “Kryptor, Kryptor, Kryptor! This is Raptor two one five declaring an emergency.”

She only received static as an answer and her guts began to twist into a knot. *What if they can’t hear me? What if they are so damaged that they can’t get out to us?*

“Raptor two one five- Prometheus: This is the C.A.G. who am I talking to?”

Splashdown’s heart leapt in her chest as the calm voice of Major Allen replied. “Sir, this is Splashdown.” Ashley replied. “Sheba and Hygiena are down with radiation sickness. They’re in bad shape.”

The line was silent for a moment and then Allen replied. “Okay Cadet. Stay calm and help me work this and we’ll get you home just fine. What’s the status of your bird?”

“All systems operational sir.” Splashdown replied.

“Good. Now here’s what we’re going to do: You’re going to bring your Raptor in and land her on the deck.”

The fear in Ashley’s gut returned. “Sir—I haven’t trained on a Raptor before. Hygiena had to tell me how to start her up.”

“That’s okay Cadet.” Slider replied calmly. “I’m going to talk you through it.”

“Okay sir.”

“Okay, now piloting a Raptor is essentially just like piloting a Viper only it moves a lot slower. Now take a look at your course monitor. What does it say?”

“One three zero karem zero six two.” Splashdown reported.

“Okay, you are heading away from the ship. I need you to get back towards us. We’re going to flip you over and get you pointed back towards us. Then we’ll use your main engines to get you back to us.”

“Okay sir. Stand by.”

Splashdown took good hold of the yoke and pulled back sending the Raptor into a back flip. She then touched the right foot pedal and flipped the ship back up to its proper side. The whole procedure had taken only a second.

“Done sir. I’m activating main engines now.”

“Good. Throttle up to three quarter thrust for thirty seconds then throttle back.” Slider replied.

“Yes sir.” Splashdown replied.

Grabbing the throttle she eased it forward until the thrust readout said three quarters. Ahead in the distance she could see the tail end of the Prometheus getting larger. “Man, she’s got a big ass.” She mumbled to herself.

“What was that?” Slider asked.

Embarrassed, Splashdown looked down to see her com was set to voice activation. “Nothing sir, just mumbling to myself.”

A few moments later she throttled back as the rear entrance to the Prometheus’ landing bay drew nearer. “Prometheus-- Raptor two one five: I am in the lane and ready to activate auto landing sequence.”

“No can do, Splashdown.” Slider replied, “The Auto Lander is down. You’re going hands on for this one.”

Splashdown swallowed hard. “Hands on?”

“You can do this Cadet. Just follow my instructions and you’ll be fine.”

“Y-yes sir.” Splashdown nervously replied.

“Okay, you’re at the outer marker now. Cut forward thrust.”

Splashdown eased back on the throttle. “Forward thrust at zero.”

“Good, now on my mark I want you to fire your braking thrusters for two seconds.”

“Ready sir.”

“Wait—wait—now.” Slider said evenly.

Using the thumb control on her throttle, Splashdown fired the forward facing brake thrusters for two seconds and watched her speed fall to almost zero as gravity pushed her forward in the harness.

“Done sir.”

“Good. You’ll be over the mag trap in ten seconds. Lower your altitude to five meters.”

Splashdown fought hard to keep her fear under control. This is where she always lost it in the simulator. Flipping a switch she fired a quick burst on her top thrusters and dropped altitude.

“Standby Splashdown, you’re about to enter the mag trap. When you do you’ll need to give a quick quarter burst on your under thrusters to keep from coming down too hard.”

“Okay sir.”

She felt the sudden lurch of the mag trap and braced herself for the worst as the world seemed to drop from under her. Then she heard a hiss and a loud thump.

Looking around quickly she checked to find the hull breach she was sure would be there but found nothing.

“Raptor two one five, skids down, mag lock secure. Welcome home Splashdown.”

Ashley looked around for a moment not realizing what had happened. Then she sagged against the seat and started laughing.

**FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
TWO DAYS LATER**

Slider entered the Flag Suite to find the rest of the senior officers already seated at the dinner table. “Sorry I’m late.” He apologized.

Turner, who had a glass of Ambrosia in his hand, waved off the apology. “No blood, no foul, Major. How is Sheba doing?”

Slider smiled as he took a seat next to Colonel Horvath. “Doc says she should be able to resume duty in another day or two. Same for Hygiena.”

“Good.” Turner replied. “They’re lucky that the shielding in the EWO area protected Splashdown from the radiation they took.”

Everyone nodded but didn’t comment as Turner stood and raised his glass. “One year and two days ago, we started out this voyage.” He began. “Our mission was to find habitable worlds to colonize and to explore space but most of all, to find Earth and the lost Thirteenth Tribe.”

He paused for a long moment as memories flashed through his mind of every thing that they had been through in the last six months. “We’ve suffered greatly and lost good friends along the way but it has been worth it. With this last jump we made several hours ago, we’ve now made it out Alliance space but that isn’t the best part.”

Everyone leaned forward as Turner allowed the anticipation to build. “An hour ago, Doctor Z told me that he had matched the scans we have taken of this region of space to the information we recovered from Kobol and from the Alliance.”

“What does that mean sir?” Colonel Hall asked.

Turner smiled. “It means that the legend was true. Doctor Z has the location of Earth—and it’s closer than we think.”

EPILOGUE

WHAT WAITS IN THE DARK

C.I.C. BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Jump complete sir.” Captain Halloran reported as Colonel Ryan fought down the wave of nausea that always followed a jump.

“Very well.” The X.O. responded. “Report all contacts.”

“My only contact is Colonial Battlestar One and the rest of the fleet sir.” Halloran replied.

“Okay Maddie, are we getting any kind of signals from her?”

“No sir, just sta— no wait! I *am* getting something.” Maddie replied. “Open signal from the Battlestar.”

“How is that possible?” Doctor Zylman asked. “When we flew over her in the Raptor we got no readings of power or life support. We couldn’t even make out her name on the hull.”

“Who knows.” Ryan shrugged as he leaned in over the situation table. “Maddie, give standard hostile challenge and I.D. and then push the response up on the speakers.”

Maddie nodded as she activated her com system. “Attention Colonial Battlestar, this is the Battlestar Prometheus. Identify yourself and state your intentions or you will be fired upon.”

Ryan listened as static hissed through the speakers for a long moment. When he finally did receive a reply the voice froze him in his tracks and made his blood run cold.

“Action stations! Set condition one!” Ryan snapped as the crew jumped into motion.

Picking up the handset in front of him he punched the button for Turner’s quarters. “Sir, we got a problem.”

“What is it?” Turner replied groggily.

“We’ve made contact with the Battlestar sir. We got a reply.”

“A reply?” Turner asked his brain suddenly alert.

“Yes sir.” Ryan said gravely, “It’s a Cylon.”

Continued Next Episode...