



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

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

Captain Stacie “Sheba” Percival: Commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Viper Squadron.

Captain April ‘Doc’ Kaplin: Flight Surgeon, Battlestar Prometheus

Captain David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Captain Joshua Wakefield: Commanding Officer, 82<sup>nd</sup> Viper Squadron  
“Knights”

Captain Michael “Archangel” Johnston: Commander, 23<sup>rd</sup> Air Support Group (A.S.G.) “Grim Reapers”

Captain Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

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

Cadet Ashley “Spalshdown” Klave: Former Viper Maintenance crewman, now in training to be a Viper Pilot.

Cadet Melody “Hygiena” Moody: Former Cooks Assistant, now in training to be a Viper Pilot.

# PROLOGUE

## GOD OF WAR

### COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS OUTSIDE OF THE TERRAN ALLIANCE

“Commodore on deck!”

Jonathan Turner waved off the pomp and ceremony as he entered the C.I.C. of the *Prometheus*. He was still buttoning his tunic when he approached Colonel Ryan who stood watchfully at the situation table in the center of the room.

“Report.”

“Sir, we’ve made wireless contact with the Battlestar Ares.” Ryan replied gravely, “The voice that answered was Cylon.”

Turner nodded and rubbed the sleep from his eyes as he collected his thoughts. It had only been two days since the gamma burst had grazed his ship and half of his crew were still feeling the effects, some experiencing moderate radiation poisoning.

He had only been asleep for an hour after staying awake for forty eight straight when Ryan had called.

Turner arched his eyebrow. “Ares?”

“Yes sir.”

Turner blinked a couple of times to clear his head and took a deep breath. “Maddie, give me wireless here and push the reply up on the speakers.” He said as he picked up his headset and activated it.

“You’re on sir.” Maddie announced.

“Battlestar *Ares*, this is the Battlestar *Prometheus*, Commodore Jonathan Turner commanding. Whom am I speaking to?”

There was static from the speakers for a long tension filled moment before an obviously mechanical voice finally replied. “Battlestar *Prometheus*, this is the Battlestar *Ares*, Cylon attaché Alpha in temporary command. Are your intentions hostile?”

“No.” Turner replied slowly, his brow furrowed in consternation, “we were just--*surprised* to find a Colonial Battlestar this far from home. Can you tell me where your human crew is?”

“I regret to inform you that Commander Rivera and the rest of the crew are deceased.” Alpha replied with a tone of regret in its voice. “They perished as a result of a hostile micro-organism that infected them after a supply gathering mission on a world not far from here.”

“It sounds almost sad that its crew is dead.” Ryan remarked skeptically.

“It probably killed the crew itself.” Halloran mumbled.

“No, I don’t believe so.” Doctor Zylman said.

“Why not, Doc?” Turner asked as he placed his headset on standby.

“Well sir, as you know my doctorates are in Colonial Theology and Military History. I know the story of the Battlestar Ares very well.”

“Go on.” Turner encouraged.

“In the beginning, when the Cylons were first created, they were used as soldiers by the various Colonies to prosecute their petty wars against each other. Eventually, Basestars were created to act as mobile defense platforms and were ran primarily by Cylons, with the exception of a small command and maintenance crew of humans.”

“We all know the history doctor.” Turner said, his patience beginning to wane. “Why don’t you tell me why you think these Cylons aren’t going to fire on us.”

“Well sir, the Ares was the first Battlestar ever created, in large part because the politicians of the time wanted to return control of the military back to human hands. Twelve Battlestars were commissioned over a period of two years to act as a counter balance against possible Cylon *malfunctions*.”

“Even back then we knew the Cylons would try something.” Halloran grumbled.

“Your opinion is *noted*, Mister Halloran.” Colonel Ryan growled quietly. “Please continue doctor.”

The doctor nodded in acknowledgement. “Thank you Colonel. The Ares was placed under the command of Miguel Rivera, a rather heroic character who had risen to fame during the Sagittarian conflict five years earlier.”

“Rivera was a maverick who liked to conveniently forget orders he didn’t agree with.” Ryan commented with a smirk.

“Yes, and he was an avid supporter of Human / Cylon relations.” Zylman said. “The Ares was on patrol for a year and was supposed to return to Picon Fleet Yards to take part in the launching ceremony of the original Battlestar *Prometheus*, but she never showed.”

“She disappeared and was never heard from again.” Ryan said. “I know the story too.”

“Yes Colonel, and since the Cylon War started two days later everyone assumed she was lost to her Cylon augmenters.”

“I need to know what we could be facing here. How many Cylons were aboard her when she launched?” Turner asked.

“Sixty Cylon Viper pilots, two hundred Centurion Marines and fifty support Cylons, like Alpha.” Zylman replied.

Turner nodded and reactivated his headset. “Commander Alpha, this *Prometheus* Actual. What is your current Cylon compliment?”

“At the present time we have two hundred and ninety three Cylons aboard ship, of which only fourteen are active.” Alpha replied dutifully.

“Probably a caretaker operation.” Zylman said.

Turner nodded in agreement. “Very well. As a Flag Officer of the Colonial Fleet, I am hereby assuming command from you. I want you to begin powering up your systems and prepare to receive a boarding party for inspection.”

“I am sorry sir, but I cannot allow that.” Alpha replied.

“Say— again?” Turner replied, his patience coming perilously close to an end.

“I apologize sir, but it would not be proper for me to allow you access to this ship or its materials unless you first verify your identity by proper procedure.”

“Stand by.” Turner said. “Mister Halloran, search the data banks for the command codes of the Ares.”

“Yes sir.” Halloran replied and after a brief moment, he had the answer. “Bravo two one five niner sir.”

“Battlestar *Ares*, this is *Prometheus* Actual: Accept priority command authorization Bravo two one five niner.”

The speakers were silent for a long moment before Alpha replied. “Priority code accepted sir. All command functions now transferred to you.”

Turner breathed a sigh of relief. “Very well. I am sending a boarding party led by my Executive Officer, Colonel Ryan. He is to assume command of the ship upon arrival.”

“Very well sir. Aries, out.”

As the line went dead, Turner took his headset off and wearily tossed it onto the situation table. “Colonel Ryan, take Doctor Z and a contingent of Marines with you and board the ship. Assess the situation and report back immediately.”

“Yes sir.” Ryan saluted. “Come on Doc, let’s get after it.”

Turner rubbed his weary eyes again as he watched the two men go and did his best to gather his mental strength.

It was going to be another *very* long day.



## CHAPTER 1

### **THERE, BUT FOR THE GRACE OF THE GODS, GO I**

**PORTSIDE DOCKING PORT # 3  
BATTLESTAR ARIES  
OUTSIDE OF THE TERRAN ALLIANCE**

“Prometheus; Shuttle two-one-two: We have hard dock.” Slider said as he heard the resounding clang of the docking collar sealing against the portside docking port.

“Acknowledged, two-one-two.” The voice of Petty Officer Madrid replied. “Send regular progress reports.”

“Acknowledged Prometheus.” Colonel Ryan said as he turned to Major Briedis, “Once we’re in I want you and your team to give me a full engineering report as soon as possible.”

“Yes sir,” Briedis replied. “I’m sending Margaritell to Engineering while I check out the C.I.C.. We *should* have an initial report for you inside an hour.”

Ryan nodded his approval. “Remember folks, we’re dealing with Cylons here. They *say* they aren’t hostile but actions speak louder than words. That being said, we don’t make any aggressive moves unless ordered to do so. Clear?”

“Clear sir!” the Marines replied.

Ryan watched them for a moment to make sure that they understood and then nodded to Briedis who cycled open the airlock.

Looking out the hatch, the environment suits they were wearing the only protection they had against the hard vacuum that surrounded them, Ryan could see that the armor plating of the old Battlestar had taken a beating in the years since it had disappeared.

“I don’t see any power on the hatch controls.” Lieutenant Margaritell remarked as he floated through the docking tube and attached his mag boots to the outside of the ship.

“Use the manual control.” Briedis ordered.

“Yes sir.” Margaritell replied as he pulled out the power crank for the manual release control.

It took only a moment for the crank to turn the old and corroded lock device to the open position. Once there the airlock slowly cranked open, belching out a vapor cloud of condensed atmosphere and the dust of four decades, not too mention several objects which the men rushed to grab.

Ryan grasped a piece of paper, a maintenance status report from the looks of it, and read it closely. “This was generated six months after the date they disappeared.” He said handing it to Slider.

Slider took the paper but the words on it didn’t matter to him. The brown stain at the bottom did. “That’s blood.”

Ryan looked it over and nodded. “Okay, anything we find we keep a hold of. I want as much information as we can get.”

Getting acknowledgements from everyone, Ryan took a place in front of the group and began to make his way across the access tube. “Follow me.” He said and made his way into the dark ship that awaited them.



**COMMAND BRIDGE  
BATTLECRUISER STORMCROW  
SYSTEM J-357**

Executor Tyranus Bane studied the maps laid out before him with a scowl. He wasn't happy and his subordinate officers knew it, hence why they stood an extra step away from the map table.

Bane didn't mind. Fear could be a useful tool when utilized properly. That was one of the first lessons he had learned in his life's education and one he had mastered early.

"Have all of the scout ships reported in yet?" Bane asked.

"No sir." Precentor Attonos, his fleet commander, replied. "We have one more we are awaiting."

Bane arched an eyebrow. "Why?"

"They said that they had discovered an interesting reading in their search sector and wanted to check it out to be thorough." Attonos replied.

Bane considered this and looked at the man for a long moment before nodding and turning towards the bridge entry and striding away. "Inform me the moment they are back on board."

"As you wish sir."

Attonos watched as Bane exited the bridge and then turned to his men. "You heard the man's orders. *Move.*"

Immediately the crew sprang into action and Attonos watched with satisfaction as they went about their duties. He found the activity soothing and it allowed him to calm his nerves after his interaction with the arrogant Executor.

He would never allow his crew to see it, but in truth he despised the man to whom he now reported. Attonos was one of the elite, a rising star in the Alliance Fleet. Personally commended by his superiors and even the former Sae'tzar himself.

Now here he was, commanding a task force given to him by the Primus and tasked with a mission that would catapult him to glory and he was under the thumb of some snout nosed bureaucrat who would undoubtedly steal the glory for himself.

Attonos nodded to himself as he considered this for a moment. *Yes*, he thought, *something is going to have to be done about this.*



Colonel Ryan kept a tight handhold to the side railings as he floated down the service tunnels of the Battlestar *Aries*. They had been aboard for fifteen minutes and had seen no sign of activity.

And no contact from the Cylon either.

Ryan didn't mind admitting to himself that he was getting a distinctly bad feeling about the situation.

As he looked around the darkened corridors of the Battlestar *Ares*, his mind began to wander and he found himself thinking about the fate of the *Ares* crew. He was certain that none of them were still alive considering the status of the ship, but he couldn't help but think about how their last moments might have been spent.

In truth, he wasn't sure he could trust the Cylon account of the crew dying because of a bug. Of course this made his mind race with thought of what *could have* happened.

Had they died of natural causes? Had they ran out of food and starved? Had the Cylons turned on them like the rest of their brethren had done in the Colonies? Had they suffered at the end or died a peaceful death? None of it mattered, but he found that he couldn't help wondering about it.

Realizing that his thoughts were distracting him from his mission, he pushed them from his mind and regained his internal composure while he activated his vac suit's communicator. "*Prometheus*—this is *Ares* Team Lead"

"Lead, this is Actual: Send it." Commodore Turner's voice replied.

"Sir, we've been here a good while now and were still not finding any signs of activity."

"What's your location right now?"

Ryan checked his datapad. “Looks like we’re right outside of Storage Hold Two.”

“Ships status?” Turner inquired.

“Sir, there are no signs of structural damage yet but we’ve only explored a small part of the ship.” Major Briedis reported. “No power though. Grav plating and life support are offline as well.”

“Very well,” Turner replied after a moment of static, “Colonel Ryan: send your engineering team aft with a squad of Marines and get power back online. I want you to proceed to C.I.C. and report once you’re there.”

“Yes sir.” Ryan replied, “And—”

He suddenly stopped and snapped his pistol out in front of him as a red glow came out of the darkness. He felt his guts turn to ice and his first instinct was to pull the trigger on the form approaching him.

“Halt!” a Marine from behind him commanded as the sounds of rifles being locked and loaded echoed in the silent halls of the dead Battlestar.

Immediately, the form froze and allowed itself to be seen in the light.

Ryan recognized it from pictures he had seen in fleet history books. This was a Yeoman model Cylon. Roughly humanoid shaped and shiny like his Centurion brothers. It had one red eye that traversed back and forth along its route at regular intervals.

It also had a face that was humanoid, not like the Centurion models that made them look so fierce.

“What’s going on?” Commodore Turner asked urgently.

“Sir,” Ryan replied cautiously, “We’ve found a Cylon.”



Matthew Campagna studiously poured over his notes from the latest Quorum of Twelve session that had lasted well into the night. He found it fascinating how President Adar had maneuvered the Quorum into accepting what was a blatant violation of the laws against artificial intelligence by a margin of ten to one with one colony abstaining from the vote.

“Big news today, eh?” said Nat Tubanos as she entered the office with two cups of steaming coffee in her hands.

“Huge.” Matt replied with enthusiasm. “I never thought I would see the day.”

“What? It’s just a computer program for calculating FTL jumps.” Nat replied as if she didn’t care.

Matt knew better though. She was just trying to goad him. “Not today, Nat.” He replied with a smile. “You’ll have to work harder.”

Nat snapped her fingers acting disappointed. “Damn. There goes my fun for the day.”

“Guys,” said one of the news researchers as he poked his head into the door, “this just came down from top office.”

Nat looked up and took the note from the man as he slipped back out the door. She read it and a curious smile formed on her face. “Seems that you have become popular.”

Matt took the note and read it twice before he commented. “They want me to come aboard the new *Atlantia* and do a report on the daily lives of Colonial Fleet Troopers.” He said shaking his head, “*Why?*”

“Look at the seal on the letterhead.”

Matt looked and his eyes widened in surprise. “Office of the President.”

“I think Adar knows that you have something on him.” Nat said.

An evil smile crossed Matt’s face as the implications of the note began to dawn on him. “This tells me two things,” he said triumphantly, “first, Adar has confirmed what I learned in that memo.”

“And the second?” Nat asked.

“He’s going to give me *everything* I want.”

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRO PHANTASMA MACHINA

“Please lower your weapon sir.”

Ryan continued to stare silently at the Cylon that had spoken to him, his combat instincts fighting with his mind on what to do. He was able to overcome his fight or flight instinct though. “Identify yourself.”

“I am Alpha Delta one seven two one six, Commander’s Yeoman and temporary commanding officer of this vessel.” The Cylon replied, “Am I to assume that you are Colonel Ryan of the Battlestar *Prometheus*?”

Ryan nodded. His weapon remained trained on the Cylon for a moment until he realized that everyone was watching him for a cue. Cautiously, he lowered it. “Yes, I am. Under authority of Colonial Regulation two dash one I hereby assume command of this vessel.”

“Command authority has been transferred.” The Cylon replied. “What are your orders, sir?”

Ryan took a deep breath realizing that the first great hurdle was now past him. “Report status.”

“The Battlestar Aries is now currently on reserve battery power with only three sections at full activity due to emergency power conservation protocols. These measures were enacted after the last human crewmember died seventeen years, four months and three days ago.”

Ryan shook his head, amazed at the whole situation. “Where are the other Cylons?”

“All Cylons, except for myself and Engineer’s Mate Omega Unicorn eight one two five, are currently in power save mode. Shall I reactivate them?”

“No!” Ryan answered too quickly, “No, Alpha. We’ll reactivate them in good time. Right now I want to concentrate on getting the ship back to operational status and learning about what happened to her crew.”

“By your command, sir.” Alpha replied.

Ryan took a moment and let the comment slip by him before he ordered Briedis and his crew to engineering to start with the power problems. After that he followed Alpha towards the C.I.C.

It was his first time speaking to a living Cylon and he didn't quite know how to react. He felt like he was doing well but that feeling of dread wouldn't stop gnawing at his gut.



## **SHIPS HOSPITAL, WARD FOUR BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Cadet Ashley Klave looked at the still forms of Melody Moody and Stacie Percival as they lay inside their isolation chambers recovering from radiation poisoning and took a deep steadying breath.

Melody's face was red and blistered and swollen. Stacie looked the same except that her lips were cracked and flecked with dried blood.

"They'll be okay, thanks to you."

Ashley spun to see Dr. Kaplan standing behind her, her long red hair pulled back into a ponytail and her datapad in her hands. "Holy hell, Doc, you scared me." Ashley sighed.

"Sorry." Kaplan replied. "Both of them are doing better. The last traces of radiation have been purged from their bodies. Now it's just a matter of letting them heal."

"Will they wake up anytime soon?"

"No. I'm keeping them sedated for another forty eight hours. If they try to move now they'll undo everything we've done to help them."

Ashley nodded. "Would you mind notifying me when they wake up?"

Kaplan smiled. "No problem, Cadet. Just get some rest yourself okay?"

"Yes sir." Ashley said as she saluted.

Kaplan returned the salute and moved off on her rounds.

Ashley left the medbay and began to wander. The rest of the ship was abuzz with activity but Ashley had been told by the CAG to take the next twenty four hours off, baring a condition one situation. This left her with nothing to do and very few people to do it with.

Making her way through the crew section she stumbled on a room where several of her fellow knuckle draggers from Viper Maintenance were gathered playing cards. She was about to pass them by when one of them, a Crewman 1<sup>st</sup> Class named Hett, called out to her.

“Hey Klave! We heard about what you did! Why don’t you join us for a round?”

Ashley smiled and shook her head. “That’s okay guys, I’m going to go catch some rack time. Thanks anyways though.”

“Oh, too good for us knuckle draggers now?” Hett quipped.

In truth, Ashley was tempted to join them but the presence of Hett made her wary. He had expressed a more than friendly interest in her on many occasions, only to be turned down. He had a reputation for getting around among the female crewmen and Ashley wanted none of that. Still, several of her friends were in the room with him so she felt somewhat secure.

“Fine.” She sighed. “Pour me a shot and deal me in.”



## **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ARIES**

The C.I.C. of the Battlestar Ares was dark and cold and James Ryan couldn’t help feeling like he was trespassing in a tomb. Looking around the chamber, his helmet light penetrating the blackness like a ray of sunshine, he could see the darkened displays and the empty seats once occupied by the Ares crew and he found himself feeling like he was being watched.

It was as if the ghosts of those men and women were still at their posts, staring at him in silent question, and it sent a chill down his spine.

“Alpha, what was your human crew compliment when you left Colonial space?” Ryan asked as he pushed his feelings down.

“Our compliment was one thousand nine hundred and sixty one human enlisted, one hundred and seventy four human officers, sir.” Alpha obediently replied.

Ryan nodded and activated his suit communicator. “Margaritell, what’s your status?”

“Sir, the main reactor is stable and in standby mode. It will take me about two hours to do a full systems diagnostics check on it though.” The junior engineer replied.

“Is there any way to speed up the process?”

Margaritell hesitated for a moment before replying. “Yes sir, but I would advise against it.”

“Why?”

“Sir,” Major Briedis interjected, “that reactor system has been in cold status for years. We’ll need to check the fuel injectors, make sure the reaction rates are set and that the regulator system is working before we run it up to even ten percent. If we don’t we could wind up blowing the ship all the way back to Caprica.”

Ryan nodded. “Do we need the main reactor online to get life support and grav plating back?”

“No sir.” Alpha replied. “Those systems can be restored using reserve battery power.”

“Okay make that your priority, Mister Briedis. Margaritell, you can start the reactor diagnostic when you’re ready. I want a full systems report as soon as possible and have Slider do a flyby over the hull and check for damage.”

“Yes sir.” Both men replied.

Ryan turned toward the Cylon, still not one hundred percent comfortable working with a being that he had been raised to mistrust and even despise. “Alpha, take me to the commander’s ready room. I want a look at the ships log.”

“As you wish sir, but I don’t think you will like what you are going to read.” Alpha replied.

“I didn’t think that I would.” Ryan took a deep breath. “Let’s go.”

Alpha bowed politely. “By your command.”

Ryan raised his eyebrows, not sure he could *ever* get used to someone saying that to him, and followed the robot out of the room.



**COMMAND BRIDGE  
BATTLECRUISER STORMCROW  
SYSTEM J-357**

Precentor Attonos looked over the latest recon images and stroked his black goatee as he considered them. After a long moment, he spoke. “And you’re sure they didn’t detect you?”

“No sir.” A pilot dressed in a traditional black flight suit replied. “Our position was covered by extra-stellar debris from a nearby asteroid field.”

Attonos nodded. “Very well, you’re dismissed.”

The pilot saluted and then retreated out the exit hatch of the bridge while Attonos and his staff continued to examine the pictures.

“I don’t think there is any doubt sir.” His operations officer said.

“I agree,” added his first officer, “that’s the Prometheus.”

“I concur.” Attonos finally said. “However, I am concerned about this additional image. At last report the Colonials only had three ships in their task force, yet we see four here.”

“Is it possible that they have made contact with Colonial reinforcements?” The first officer asked.

“Unlikely,” the operations officer said. “More likely is that they have made contact with the Borellians.”

“Great,” the first officer rolled his eyes, “that’s all we need. Last time the Nomen decided to get adventurous it was all we could do to fight them to a standstill.”

“There is only one way to be sure,” Attonos said, “Dispatch a stealth scout ship to the system and get some up close images so we can find out what’s going on.”

“As you command sir!” The Operations officer replied as he saluted and moved away to dispatch the scout.

“Shall I inform the Executor?” The first officer asked.

Attonos shook his head. “No. I want solid information before we report to him.” “He’ll be upset at being left out *again*.” The first officer warned.

“Let him be upset.” Attonos replied confidently. “I’d rather listen to him rave about being left out than have him lead us blindly into a potential disaster.”



## COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

Commodore Turner rubbed his eyes as he checked the latest batch of reports from engineering and flight. With Colonel Ryan aboard the *Ares*, Turner had taken up the slack in the X.O.’s duties. This had the effect of leaving him less time to sleep.

“Sir, status report coming in from Colonel Ryan.” Maddie reported.

Turner nodded wearily. “Push it up on the speakers, Maddie.”

“Battlestar *Prometheus* this is the Battlestar *Ares*.” The voice of Colonel Ryan said.

“This is Prometheus actual, go ahead.” Turner replied as he activated his headset.

“Sir, we’ve restored life support and grav plating but it will be two more hours until we have the main reactor completely back online.” Ryan reported over the static background.

“What about the Cylons?” Turner asked.

“Both Cylons we have encountered have been cooperative so far.” Ryan replied. “I have begun examining the *Ares* command logs but nothing solid yet. I think the best answers we’re going to get are from Alpha.”

Turner nodded. “Agreed. I’m sending over another engineering team as well as several knuckle draggers from the flight deck to assess your fighter capabilities.”

“Very good sir. Any other orders?”

“Have Slider report back here to mind the house. Other than that, just stand by for my arrival. I’ll be on the next Raptor over.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea sir?” Ryan asked cautiously. “I mean, having all of the senior staff here...”

“Sir!” Said Captain Halloran from the Operations section, “We have a security alert in section twenty four, deck seven.”

“Stand by on this channel.” Turner ordered to Ryan as he faced Halloran. “Security alert? What happened?”

Halloran looked as shocked as possible as he read the report from his data screen. “One of the Flight Cadets has been assaulted sir. She’s in bad shape. Doc Kaplan is taking her to medbay now.”

Turner nodded and activated his headset. “Okay Colonel, my visit will have to wait. We just had an incident here that I need to look into.”

“Understood sir. I’ll keep you posted. *Ares* out.”

Turner deactivated his headset and turned to Halloran. “I’m going below to assess the situation. Maddie, you’re with me.”

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied as she stood up and moved to Turner’s side.

“Who was it that was injured?” Turner asked.

“Cadet Klave, sir.” Halloran replied.

Klave was a hero who had just saved two of her fellow crewmen’s lives. Turner’s eyes clouded over and his voice dropped to a growl. “You have the conn, Mister Halloran.”

Halloran stood and saluted. “I have the conn, aye sir.”

As he watched Turner leave, he felt the storm of anger that was over the commodore’s head go with him and he found himself feeling sorry for whomever had attacked the young girl because what Turner was going to do to him was going to be far worse than anything the assailant had done to Klave.

## CHAPTER 3

### **THE FIRES OF HADES**

#### **COMMAND BRIDGE BATTLECRUISER STORMCROW SYSTEM J-357**

Executor Tyranus Bane stormed onto the command bridge of the Battlecruiser Stormcrow and made a direct line for Precentor Attonos, who was reviewing a systems status report. Looking up from it he saw the approaching man, noted the angry scowl on his face and braced himself for the tirade he knew was coming.

“Precentor, a word if you please.” Bane growled, barely keeping his temper in check.

Attonos glanced at his second in command, his expression businesslike and calm. “You have the bridge.”

The first officer acknowledged and Attonos followed Bane into the small office he kept just off the bridge. As soon as the door clanged shut, Bane spun on him.

“Did you really think that you could keep something like this from me?” Bane asked angrily.

Attonos was unfazed. “I assume you are speaking of the recon photos that were brought back several hours ago?”

“You know damn well what I am talking about!” Bane shouted as he slammed a fist down onto the desk. “Do you think that I am some kind of fool? Did you actually think that word of this wouldn’t reach my ears?”

“No.” Attonos said, calmly shaking his head. “I assumed that you would hear of this and that we would wind up having this conversation. I just wanted some time to enact my plan.”

“Bah!” Bane spat. “Your plan to rob me of my glory? To get rid of me and claim the Prometheus as your prize? Not going to happen.” He finished by pulling out a gleaming service pistol.

Attonos shook his head sadly and in a blur of action snatched the pistol right out of Bane’s hand. Bane looked stunned and Attonos smiled.

“You see, *Executor*,” Attonos paused and allowed the scorn in his word to drip down from his mouth, “I understand that you are a creature of darkness, a back room dealer who is more political than anything else. I, however, am not. I am a military man and as such I operate in the open using tactics and strategy.”

Attonos moved past Bane to his desk where he picked up a cup of tea that had been awaiting him. “You see,” he said as he took a sip, “I knew that if you saw the photos you would want to go in, all guns blazing right away. And while I do have a certain admiration for good old blood lust, I also have to temper it with intelligence.”

Attonos pulled out the pictures from the recon and showed them to Bane. “How many ships are supposed to be in the *Prometheus* fleet?”

“Do not condescend to *me*, Precentor, or your next words will be from outside the primary airlock.” Bane snarled.

Attonos smile knowing that not one a single one of his subordinates would carry out that particular order. “The colonials have made contact with an unknown ship. Even *you* must agree that it would be prudent to gather more information before we act.”

Bane examined the photo closely and was surprised to see a fourth ship in the group. He nodded approvingly. “You acted with due caution then. I approve.”

“I thought you might.” Attonos replied setting the cup down. “This is why I waited. Here, in my office you and I can see reason. Out there on the bridge, appearances must be maintained.”

“Indeed.” Bane replied.

“I have a recon flight out now ascertaining data on that fourth ship. Once we know more we can proceed with haste.”

Bane nodded. “Keep me informed, Precentor.”

Attonos smiled. “Of course.”



#### **WARD FOUR, MEDBAY BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

As Commodore Turner looked on the form of Cadet Ashley Klave he felt his anger rise. It wasn't very often that his temper got the best of him but on this occasion, it truly threatened to overwhelm him.

The girl's face was black and blue and her eyes were swollen shut. Her lips were split and caked with dried blood. He could also see bruises forming on her arms and blood and tissue under her nails.

She hadn't gone down without a fight.

“Sir.” Doc Kaplan greeted quietly as she approached him.

“How is she?” Turner asked not taking his eyes from the girl.

Kaplan shook her head. “Whoever did this to her did a number, that's for sure.”

“Save the colorful narrative, doctor, and give me the details.”

Kaplan was momentarily taken aback by the barely contained hostility in Turner's voice but she continued, as usual, in her most professional poise. “She has two broken ribs, a broken wrist and multiple contusions to the face with micro-fractures along the superior ridge of the orbit of the left eye. She also had some internal bruising in the abdomen, most likely from someone kicking her.”

“Dear gods.” Maddie said.

“That’s not the worst of it.”

“What is it?” Turner asked.

Kaplan swallowed hard. “She was sexually assaulted sir.”

Turner closed his eyes and took a long and deep breath to steady his emotions.

“Did you do a rape kit?” Maddie asked, taking up Turner’s inquiry.

“Yes. I have the kit down at the lab right now.” Kaplan replied.

“Put a priority on it.” Turner said, his voice regained.

“Yes sir.”

Turner took one last sad look at the bruised and battered girl in the hospital bed. “I’ll be in Combat. Keep her as comfortable as you can.”

Maddie followed closely as Turner stormed down the corridor that led from sickbay. “This is what happens when we let discipline get lax.” She muttered.

“I want all crewmen confined to quarters while not on duty.” Turner commanded.

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied.

Turner stopped and spun on Maddie. She actually stepped back, alarmed by the fire in his eyes. “I’m putting you and Halloran in charge of this investigation. I want this guy found, *now*.”

“What do you want done when we do?” Maddie asked.

Turner took a deep breath. “I don’t know yet, but he would probably be doing himself a favor if he tossed himself out an airlock.”



**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER  
BATTLESTAR ARES**

Colonel Ryan nodded with satisfaction as he watched the main lights come up in the C.I.C. of the Battlestar Aries. Inside his heart he began to feel a sense of pride and hope as he slowly brought the old Battlestar back to life.

“Main power restored sir.” Major Briedis reported. “All systems coming back online.”

“Good. Do a system check and then get the main drives back online. I want to begin maneuvering as soon as possible.” Ryan commanded.

“Yes sir.” Briedis replied.

Ryan turned his attention back to the command logs that Alpha had provided him. “The logs end on the date you disappeared from the Colonies.”

“Not completely.” Alpha replied. “Commander Rivera kept a personal log in his quarters. It is my understanding that he chronicled our journey, after we left the Colonies, in that.”

Ryan nodded. “Alpha, can you tell me why Commander Rivera took the *Ares* out here?”

“Of course sir.” Alpha replied. “Three days before we left I received word from the Cylon mainframe of the intentions of my brothers. I felt compelled to inform Commander Rivera and together we decided that the war that was coming would have been too costly to fight and that if anyone won, there would be only ashes left for their troubles. Foreseeing this, we docked at Ragnar anchorage and took on as much supplies as we could. We then transmitted private messages back to the crew families to meet us at certain rendezvous points. Once we had gathered all that we could, Commander Rivera ordered that we depart from Colonial space forever.”

“But why didn’t you warn the Colonial Defense Force?”

“Quite honestly, because the Commander and I both felt that nobody would have believed us.”

Ryan rocked back on his heels and considered what Alpha had told him. His thoughts were interrupted as Major Briedis announced “Ten seconds to main engine start.”

Ryan looked up at the dradis display as the clock counted down to zero, then the faint rumbling under his feet that he was so used to on board the *Prometheus* began to vibrate through his soles.

“Main engines are back online sir. We are clear to maneuver.” Briedis reported.

“Very well, bring us into standard diamond pattern defensive formation.” Ryan ordered.

“Aye sir.”

“What’s the status on the rest of the ships systems?” Ryan asked.

“Coming along slowly sir.” Lieutenant Margaritell replied. “We just don’t have enough people to do it all.”

“Well we’re going to have to make due. Prometheus can’t spare anyone else.”

“Sir, if I might make a suggestion?” Alpha interjected.

“Go ahead.”

“If you activate the Centurions, you will add more available help to your staff and, unlike you, they don’t require sleep.”

“I don’t know Alpha.” Ryan replied skeptically, “How will they feel after being deactivated for so long?”

“I should imagine that they will be as loyal now as they were when we left. After all, everyone who stayed on board, Cylon and human alike, *volunteered* to do so.”

Ryan inhaled and considered it for a moment, then nodded. “I’ll consult with Commodore Turner about it.”



## **WARD FOUR, MEDBAY BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

Sheba awoke feeling sore and dizzy. As she opened her eyes and forced them to focus she found herself in a hospital bed her hands covered in bandages and I.V. tubes running into the veins in her arms.

“Hello?” she said, her voice a hoarse whisper in her dry throat.

“You’re awake.” A voice said from beside her.

Sheba turned and tracked the voice to find Melody Moody in the bed next to hers propped up and eating an ice cream cone. “What’s going on?”

“You’ve been out for two days.” Melody replied. “We took a heavy dose of Gamma energy.”

Sheba closed her eyes and the memory came pouring back: The sudden light, the searing pain and then... nothing. “How are you?” she asked.

“Still feeling a little woozy but my appetite is back.”

“Good,” Sheba smiled, “just don’t eat too much. I’d hate to have to kick you out of the program because you got fat in Medbay.”

“I doubt that would happen.” Said Doctor Kaplan as she walked up to Sheba’s bed. “You both lost a good amount of water weight the first twenty four hours. It’s lucky you didn’t die of dehydration.”

Sheba nodded. “Thanks Doc. How did Klave come out?”

A pained look crossed Kaplan’s face but only for a millisecond before she covered it with the smile she always used for patients. “She came through the Gamma burst just fine. You saved her life by closing the hatch when you did.”

“Then why is she over there in a bed?” Melody asked.

Kaplan paused and looked over her shoulder. She had forgotten that Klave’s bed was no longer concealed by the privacy curtain and it was plain to see that she was in rough shape.

“Klave saved your lives by landing the Raptor. That’s all you need to know for now.” Kaplan said.

Sheba began to feel the telltale signs of her anger rising to the occasion. She didn’t like being left in the dark, especially when it concerned one of her pilots. “Frak that.” She croaked, “That is my soldier over there and I want to know what the hell happened to her—*now*.”

Kaplan took a deep breath and sat down between the two. Then she told them what happened.

Sheba listened and felt her anger threatening to overwhelm her while Melody appeared shocked and on the verge of tears. When Kaplan had finished and left them to contemplate the situation, Sheba turned to Melody.

“We need to get well and fast.” She said. “Halloran is good, he’ll find him fast. I want to find this miserable frak before him though.”

“But why?” Melody asked. “Won’t the Commodore deal harshly with him when he’s caught?”

Sheba shook her head and leaned back against her pillow. Inside her she felt the anger and pain and frustration that any woman would feel in such a situation but hers was far more profound. Klave was *her* soldier, *her* responsibility. It didn’t take long for her to make the decision and accept the possible consequences of it.

Swallowing hard, she replied to Moody’s question: “Not as harshly as I will.”



## CHAPTER 4 **PREDATOR AND PREY**

### **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS**

“You want to do what?” Commodore Turner asked incredulously to the plan proposed by his X.O.

“I want to reactivate the Cylons.” Colonel Ryan replied. “We’ve been at this for a day and a half, sir, and Major Briedis says it will take another two, as is, before we are fully operational. With the Cylons help we can have the *Ares* back to fully operational status within three hours since they can access the Cylon network and use it to activate ships’ systems.”

“I understand that Colonel, but these are Cylons we’re talking about here. Are you ready to trust them with the lives of your crew?”

“Yes sir. Everything I have read in the logs and evidence we have found onboard confirms what Alpha has told me about Commander Rivera and their decision to leave the Colonies,” Ryan replied, “*However*, I have a contingency plan in place just in case.”

Turner smiled. “There is that suspicious young man that I know so well.”

“Mother didn’t raise a fool sir.”

“Sir! The CAG has flash traffic on the Emergency Action Frequency.” Maddie announced.

“Stand by Aries.” Turner commanded. “Go CAG.”

“Prometheus Actual- Slider one-one-four-six, Raptor inbound to the port landing bay: Shooter just radioed and is in contact with an Alliance scout vessel in grid sector three seven. Request that you launch Alert Vipers.”

“Acknowledged CAG, stand by.” Turner replied as he turned to Maddie. “Action Stations, bring the fleet to Condition One.”

“Yes sir.” Maddie replied as the alarm klaxons began to blare.

“Duty officer, contact the flight deck and launch all alert Vipers.”

“Yes sir.” Captain Green replied.

“Helm, spin up the FTL drives and plot two jumps: one within the limits of the Aries and one in normal range.”

“Yes sir.” Captain Reighney responded.

“Aries Actual- this is Prometheus Actual: Move your ship a safe distance away from us and stand by for orders.”

“What’s going on sir?” Ryan asked.

“We’ve been found.”



**COMMAND BRIDGE  
BATTLECRUISER STORMCROW**

## SYSTEM J- 357

Precentor Attonos strode onto the command bridge in time to see Executor Bane enter from the other side. Pushing the arrogant man from his mind, he turned to his first officer. "Report."

"Sir, Recon one six just called in hot. They were discovered by their prey and have jumped out. They are transmitting data and requesting link up instructions."

Attonos nodded. "Instruct them to link up with us at Rally Point Alpha and then put their images up on the main viewer."

"Yes sir."

Attonos watched as the images of the four ship Colonial group began to appear on the screen above him. "That's a Colonial Battlestar." He said as he stroked his chin thoughtfully.

Bane, who has silently made his way up beside him nodded in agreement. "It's *Ares* class, one of their first such vessels."

"Armaments?" Attonos asked, not taking his eyes from the viewer.

"Comparable to a Conqueror class Battlecruiser." Bane replied.

"Sir, Recon one six reports that the enemy is activating their jump systems and preparing to leave the system." The first officer reported.

Attonos considered the situation and came to his decision quickly. "Very well. Alert all commands: Prepare to engage the enemy."



## COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

"Sir, multiple dradis contacts at the outer edge of the system." Captain Halloran announced.

"Scans confirm that the contacts are Alliance Battlecruisers." Maddie affirmed.

"How many?" Turner asked.

“I count at least ten, sir. They’re deploying out to cover all vectors” Halloran replied.

“Status on the *Ares* Jump drives?”

“They’re coming online right now sir but it’s going to be at least 30 minutes until we can safely jump.” Ryan replied over the wireless system.

“Sir, if we stay here we’re dead.” Said Captain Green.

“If we go, the *Ares* and everyone aboard her are dead.” Maddie replied.

All eyes turned to Commodore Turner as he considered his next move. Inside, his guts were like ice and his thoughts moved at lightspeed as he thought about the options available to him.

*I can’t leave the Aries and sacrifice the two hundred men I have aboard her. No, I have already done that once and I refuse to do it again* he thought to himself. *At the same time I can’t redeploy the fleet to give them a chase. They would pick us apart piecemeal and the Aries would be a sitting duck.*

Turner nodded and took a deep breath. “A mentor of mine once told me: *when faced with untenable alternatives one should consider his imperative*. Look around you people.” He gestured all around the C.I.C. “Those are our friends out there on the *Aries*, our brothers and sisters in arms. I left my people behind once, but *never again*.”

Turner shifted his gaze around the room and met the eyes of everyone he could. He saw in them their fire, their desire to stand their ground for their friends. It was in that instant he knew he was making the right decision.

“We can’t withdraw and we can’t redeploy so we stand and fight.” He said, his voice growing louder with emotion. “Our brothers and sisters are counting on us and we will not let them down. Survival is our imperative and to do that we’re going to have to fight, so we will! We’ve run far enough, people, and I am officially *sick* of it.”

The room was silent for a moment and then, as if a great dam had burst, a loud cheer went up from those gathered.

“Mister Green: bring the ship around and prepare to engage the enemy. Mister Halloran: Launch all Vipers. Maddie, have the *Vigilant* and *Sentinel* assume standard defensive formation around the *Aries*.”

Turners orders were followed by a chorus of “Yes sir” from his subordinates. He nodded, satisfied with the response from his crew.

“If these bastards want a fight, I’m going to give them one.”



**TO BE CONTINUED...**