



BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

BY RYAN A. KEETON

PANDORA

Based on the Sci-Fi Original series

Battlestar Galactica

Created by Ron Moore and David Eick

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

CREATED BY GLEN LARSON

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TERRAN ALLIANCE

Sae'tzar Lucious Verenos: Ruler of the Terran Alliance

Primus Rollo Thomasi: Supreme Military Commander of the Terran Alliance

Executor Tyranus Bane: Terran Alliance Special Intelligence Agent

CYLON

Jezebel (D'Anna): Cylon Battle Group Commander, victor of the Battle of Virgon

Eve (Six): Cylon Infiltrator

Gabriel (Leoben): Cylon Battle Group Commander

Lucifer (Cavil): Cylon Garrison Commander, victor of the Battle of Leonis

Simon: Cylon Prison Camp Commander

Lilith (Sharon): Cylon Basestar Commander

Tyranus Bane(Doral): Hero of the Alliance Campaign

COLONIAL

Admiral Jonathan Turner: Commanding Officer of the Prometheus Battlestar Group

General John Connors: Commander, Lobo Negro Station

Commander Tajalle: Commanding Officer, Battlestar Eternal

Dr. Kevin Grazier: President, Copernicus Colony

Colonel Karla Horvath: Executive Officer, Battlestar Prometheus

Major Jason "Slider" Allen: Captured, presumed dead

Major David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Major Stacie Percival: Executive Officer, Battlestar Ares

Major Joshua "Shooter" Wakefield: C.A.G., Prometheus Air Group

Captain Allain Halloran: Prometheus Operations Officer

Master Chief Petty Officer Theresa Madrid: Chief of the Boat, Battlestar Prometheus

Lieutenant Ashley "Splashdown" Klave: Pilot, Raptor Support Squadron

Ensign Melody "Hygiena" Moody: Captured, presumed dead

PROLOGUE

EMPIRE'S END

We know that life here began out there. We know how the story ends because it was our hands that wrote it. The thirteenth tribe set out into the stars from their home world of Kobol and settled new homes on distant worlds around distant suns.

There was a conflict, a struggle among the leadership and the thirteenth tribe was split in two with the more aggressive Alliance cast out on a world they called Terra and from there these cast offs, over a period of 4000 years, rebuilt their technology and forged an empire among the stars swearing that one day they would reunite all of humanity under their enlightened.

But that isn't what this story is about.

This is a story about how that empire met its end by the hands of a race that their forefathers helped spawn. This is how four thousand years of struggle, trial, tribulation and conquest, comes to an end in an apocalyptic horror brought on by the mechanical monstrosities that were forged by the Twelve Colonies, yet perfected by the descendents of the same tribe they were cast down from .

Darkness is falling on the Terran Alliance. This proud nation of warriors is about to die at the hands of an enemy that they have more in common with than they ever suspected. Why then, are they destined to die? Why then are the Cylons exterminating the decedents of their own kind?

Because one man, who fancies himself a machine, has become more human than he would ever care to admit. He has seen the future and knows what would happen to his power should his followers meet the decedents of their mothers and fathers. All his secrets would be revealed, including the truth about the final five, and that is something he just cannot allow.

The only thing that makes the Alliance better than the 12 Colonies is that is that they acknowledge their barbarity and aggression. They don't hide it and pretend that they are better than savages like the people of the Colonies do. They embrace who they are and the man once known as John Cavil can respect that.

That respect won't do anything to save them though because, in the end, John Cavil is still the spoiled child he was 40 years before when he took his first look at the five people he would call mom and dad and what he wants, he gets.

So he will once again deceive his brethren and once again, an entire race will die by his hand. Does he feel regret for killing off two entire civilizations? Does he feel remorse for the fact that he is the most barbaric mass murderer in human history? Does he lose any sleep over the fact that he has, by his actions, far surpassed the cruelty and injustice he claims man was guilty of?

No, not one bit.

CYLON BASESTAR 212 SOMEWHERE ON THE ALLIANCE FRONTIER

Pain, like a hot poker going through his mind. This is what he felt as he started awake. Feeling around with his hands he took a deep breath and noted the pool of goo he was in.

“Where am I?” he gasped as air filled his lungs.

“You’re safe,” a familiar voice said to him, “Don’t worry brother. Everything is alright now.”

He closed his eyes and forced himself to remember the last thing he had seen. “Fire,” he said, “I was burning alive...”

“That’s behind you now. Open your eyes and see your new life.”

Opening his eyes he saw a room full of familiar faces. Many of the faces were his own and everything came flooding back in a great moment of clarity.

His life, his mission, everything.

“I’m—home.” He said.

“Yes Brother.” Aaron Doral said to the man in the pool, the man with his face. “You’re home now. Your mission is complete and now it’s time for your reward: Eternal life as a hero of the Cylon.”

Everything he wanted, everything he ever desired, now his.

Tyranus Bane smiled.

It took two weeks for Bane to acclimate to his new life but he was getting used to it now. The hardest part was seeing all of the same faces all of the time, especially his own. On Terra he was one face in a sea of millions but now that sea of faces was the same as his own.

He knew his model number now: Five. Cavil had made sure to impress upon him the importance of that designation.

“It will help you to shed your human persona and embrace your new life as the ultimate machine.”

Bane had no use for the designation but, as he had learned during his intelligence courses on Terra, fitting in fast was often an advantage so he adapted. It had worked too. Cavil had taken to him quickly, saying he wasn't like the other Fives.

“You don't have that preening doltishness that seems to be endemic to the Five line,” Cavil said. “In fact, you remind me of myself.”

Bane took it as a compliment.

He had worked hard and learned many new things in his short time aboard the Basestar, as he assumed the duties expected of him, but always he felt like there was something was being held back- something he should know.

When he had asked Cavil about it, the older man shrugged it off saying that if he needed to know, he already would.

Life had proceeded apace and his days were filled with calm and peace, so much so that he thought he might grow frustrated with boredom. Then things had changed. The tempo of life had increased and tensions arose. He had asked what was going on but answers were not forthcoming.

Until today.

Now, as he stood with Cavil in a large chamber deep inside the heart of the Basestar, he could feel that something was up. Above him, floating in the air was a holographic map of the twelve colonies. Around each of the twelve planets hung tiny red dots that represented Colonial Battlestars or other military installations.

“Beautiful, isn't it?”

Bane turned to see a Six sauntering up beside him.

“It is,” Bane answered cautiously, “but what does it have to do with anything?”

Six smiled and placed her arm around him. “Today is the day, brother- the day we've been waiting for forty years for.”

Bane arched an eyebrow. “You mean-”

“Humanity's children are coming home today,” a Two copy named Julian said. “It's time for God's wrath to be meted out on his wayward flock.”

Cavil rolled his eyes. “*Again* with the God crap?”

“I know, I know- the useless, left over delusions of an angry little girl,” Six recited, as if by rote.

Cavil turned and faced those who had gathered. “The attack commences in three hours. Our mission is to patrol for anyone who tries to escape to the Alliance.”

“That’s a lot of space to cover,” a Four named Simon said as he studied the map.

“There won’t be any survivors, so what’s to worry about?” A Three said as she strode into the room.

“I’d like to be that optimistic, little sister,” Cavil said, “but I don’t count on us being that lucky. Someone will survive and escape and when they do, we’ll fix it.”

“The general public of the colonies doesn’t even know that the Alliance exists so why are we worried about them coming here?” Bane asked.

All eyes turned on him and he could tell he was being studied intently. He didn’t shrink from it though.

“I told you- not much gets by him,” Cavil said with a smile. “You’re right in that the general public doesn’t know about the Alliance. What we’re worried about is the Colonial Fleet sending a ship to try and rally support from the Alliance.”

Bane nodded as he considered Cavil’s words. “The Alliance would be quick to join the fight too.”

“Humans- always looking to jump into a war,” Three remarked snidely.

“How little you understand us,” Bane chuckled before realizing his faux pas. “*Them*. How little you understand them.”

“What do you mean?” Simon asked.

“If the Alliance came to the Colonies aid it wouldn’t be as human brothers fighting tyranny shoulder to shoulder,” Band explained. “It would be because the fighting would leave the Colonies in a much better position to be taken over after we, the Cylons, were vanquished.”

“So the Alliance would use the emergency to move in and take the Colonies?” Six asked incredulously.

“Of course,” Bane said with pride. “Never be afraid to exploit the weakness of an adversary or an ally for it’s a fine line that defines both.”

“That sounds like a holy verse for you,” Three said with a smile.

“Just about,” Bane replied. “It’s one of the basic tenets of our military doctrine, handed down for over four thousand years since the founders were first exiled.”

“Advice worth remembering should we ever lock horns against the Alliance,” Cavil said.

“We’ve just received word,” the voice of an eight interrupted over the loud speaker. “The fleet is moving to its jump points.”

“Then it’s time for us to move to ours as well. Report to your ships and prepare to move out,” Cavil commanded as he turned to Bane. “You’re staying with me for this.”

“Why?” Bane asked.

“I’m giving you command of my ship for this mission,” Cavil said placing a hand on Bane’s shoulder. “I’ll be busy managing the fleet as a whole so I’ll leave our sector of coverage to you. Its good experience and it will build some credit for you in the eyes of the others.”

Bane smiled. “It will be my pleasure then.”

“Good,” Cavil replied guiding him out of the room. “Let’s get this genocide started then.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR ARES
NEW CAPRICA SYSTEM**

Kara Thrace felt her skin crawling like never before as she walked through the corridors of the *Ares* surrounded by Model 05 Cylons. The Admiral had assured her that these Cylons had chosen to fight with humanity against their own kind but she still kept her hand on her sidearm, something she had refused to relinquish on the surface.

Suddenly, she came to a halt and stiffened visibly as she caught sight of Sheba standing at her post. “Sir,” Kara said cautiously, “that major over there-”

“Call sign Sheba,” Turner said, “and yes, I know she’s a Cylon.”

Starbuck rolled her eyes. “The news just gets better all the fraking time.”

Turner gestured for her to enter and after a long moment she moved deliberately to the other side of the table from where Sheba stood.

“Now,” Turner said as he took up a position next to her. “Start from the beginning and brief me on what happened.”

For the next hour, Kara detailed how the *Galactica* had escaped the destruction of the Colonies, the internal power struggles of the fleet, the death of Cain and the discovery of New Caprica. Then she had explained about the Cylon occupation although her memories of it were limited to living inside an apartment prison cell and being made to think she was the mother of a child.

“So what happened after the break out? Why didn’t you go with *Galactica*?” Sheba asked when Starbuck had finished.

“I-” a confused look came across Starbucks face. “I don’t know. I heard an explosion and I was knocked out. When I woke up, Leoben was dead and there was a hole in the wall so I grabbed his gun and ran for it.”

“What did you see when you got outside?” Connors asked.

“I saw Vipers hauling ass for the black with the last of the civilian ships hot on their tail,” Starbuck growled. “I saw myself get left behind.”

“Sir,” Alpha’s smooth voice broke in, “our detachment on the surface reports that they have discovered a command facility underground with colonial radio equipment still there. They also found the body of a woman, approximately 40 years of age with blonde hair. It looks like she’s been poisoned.”

Turner nodded. “Check the site for any valuable intel and then bury the body.”

“Yes sir,” Alpha replied.

“General,” Turner said facing Connors, “I want to do a thorough sweep of the site and recover any usable equipment we can but I also want to get out of here as fast as possible in case the Cylons decide to come back.”

“Agreed,” Connors nodded. “We can be done and gone in twelve hours I think.”

“Twelve hours then.”

“Sir, the Cylons won’t be coming back,” Starbuck said. “By now they’re out chasing the *Galactica* again.”

“Do you have any idea where Adama will go?” Commander Ryan asked.

“I assume that he’ll start searching again,” Starbuck shrugged.

“Searching for what?” Turner asked.

“I thought I told you,” Starbuck said. “The whole reason we were out here was to find Earth and use it as a new home for the survivors.”

Turner’s eyes went wide. “Then he’s in for one helluva disappointment.”

“What do you mean?” Starbuck asked.

“We already found Earth- it was a burned out cinder.”

CHAPTER ONE

Home, or something like it

ALLIANCE PANTHEON
CITY OF ROMALIN
TERRA, TERRAN ALLIANCE

Tyranus Bane watched with careful eyes as he made his way, under guard, to the office of newly anointed Primus, Rollo Thomasi. It had been only a few months since he had ‘disappeared’ tracking the *Prometheus* and he knew he would have to answer some tough questions from his superiors, but he and Cavil had prepared well for the eventuality.

“Now that the Colonies have been burned to ash, we can turn our attention to the Alliance.”

“It’s more important than ever now,” Cavil replied. “If *Galactica* or any other survivors make contact with the Alliance, we could be facing a helluva fight.”

“You really think Adama will find the Alliance? His fleet is going in a completely different direction.”

“I don’t want to take the chance,” Cavil said. “Turner and the *Prometheus* already found them.”

“Because of misinformation that *I* gave them,” Bane retorted.

“Irrelevant. Turner transmitted his course and findings back to the Colonies. All it would take is one clever little human to put two and two together.”

Bane shrugged. “Why are you even concerned about this? The technology level of the Alliance is, at best, *decades* behind the Colonies and we just burned them to the ground in less than thirty six hours.”

“The Alliance has far greater numbers than the Colonies did,” Cavil replied. “In addition to that, they don’t have the sophisticated computer systems that allowed us to infiltrate and shut down the Colonial Defense Forces.”

“Which means it would be a stand up fight.”

“Exactly.”

Both men had studied the map of the Alliance for a long moment before Bane spoke again. “They have another weakness.”

Cavil turned. “And what would that be?”

Bane tapped on his right temple. “Psychological.”

“Explain.”

“The Alliance military,” Bane said, “is not the most independent minded organization in the universe. They rely heavily on orders from the top leadership.”

“And?” Cavil asked impatiently.

“During times of crisis,” Bane smiled, “the central command of the Alliance, including Sae’tzar and the Primus, are located in a bunker below the Pantheon. From there they issue instructions to the fleet and the army.”

“That’s very enlightening,” Cavil sneered. “Now tell me why I should give a frak.”

“We capture that bunker during the attack, we can paralyze the entire Alliance.”

Cavil arched an eyebrow. “It sounds a bit,” he paused as he considered his words, “*ambitious*. How would we capture the most secure facility in the Alliance? I mean we can’t just waltz in-”

“Maybe we can,” Bane cut him off. “You see, I still hold the title of Executor. That allows me a certain amount of privilege and leeway in Alliance.”

Cavil folded his arms across his chest. “Elaborate.”

Bane explained his idea and that had been the seed of the plan. Now, as he marched down the hallways of power in the Pantheon of the Alliance, he braced himself for the intense questioning he knew he was about to receive.

As the massive doors to the Primus’ office swung open, Bane felt a familiar sense of comfort wash over him. Cylon though he was he still had the heart of an Alliance Officer, and at that moment his heart was awash with the sensations of being in the halls of power again.

As the Primus rose to meet him, Bane adjusted the uniform that had been handed to him only a few hours ago. It had no rank insignia or any indication of the numerous awards he had earned in the service of the Alliance. For all intents and purposes, he was nobody.

“Primus,” he said snapping a crisp salute to the military commander of the Alliance.

Rollo Thomasi lazily returned the salute and waved away the guards that had escorted Bane into his presence. As the heavy doors clanged shut behind Bane, he fixed his gaze like a laser on the man.

“The only reason you are alive, Executor,” Thomasi rumbled, “is because Sae’tzar believes that you have valuable information for us.”

“I do,” Bane replied stoically.

“You left here with one mission: recapture the *Prometheus*. You failed and your ship, with all hands, was lost,” Thomasi sneered. “That is to say, all *but you*. You survived where over one thousand others didn’t.”

The Primus sat down behind his massive desk and stroked his goatee. “Just how *did* you manage to escape that anyway?”

Bane took a deep breath and explained the story of his miraculous escape, just as he Cavit and another #1 model named Lucifer, had devised it. How he had found an escape pod shortly before the destruction of his ship and how he had drifted for four days before a group of Borellian Nomen had found him and taken him prisoner.

“The Nomen are mercenaries. What use did they have for you?” Thomasi asked.

“At first they thought to ransom me,” Bane replied. “However they decided against that. They began interrogating me for information on Alliance defenses.”

“Probably looking to expand their pirate activities,” Thomasi said.

“As I too though at first,” Bane said. “But I was wrong.”

Thomasi leaned forward. “How?”

“The Borellian tribes are uniting,” Bane said. “They’ve thrown in their lot with the Free Worlds resistance.”

“That doesn’t make sense,” Thomasi said shaking his head. “The Free Worlds resistance is all but broken. Their fleet was routed at Malachor four months after you *disappeared*.”

“Nevertheless, they are regrouping,” Bane said as he folded his arms across his chest. “I was on Borella when the Nomen called a Tribal Grand Council. They paraded me in front of their Chieftains as a prize of war. I saw Sae’tzars’ son there as well.”

This caused Thomasi to sit up. “Lucas Verenos was on Borella? When?”

“Two months ago,” Bane responded. “I watched with my own eyes as he and the Borellians agreed to regroup together and press the attack.”

“Even with their combined fleets, they wouldn’t stand a chance attacking any of the worlds of the Alliance. They could never hope to hold it against the combined power of the fleet.” Thomasi said.

“They could if they attacked *here*,” Bane stated and Thomasi’s blood ran cold with the thought.

“They wouldn’t dare-”

“That is *precisely* what they are going to do” Bane said as he leaned forward, “and if we don’t take action fast, everything that we have built will be overthrown in the span of a day.”

Thomasi took a deep and calming breath. “How do you know of all of this?”

“I’m an intelligence operator, Primus- my job is to get information.”

Bane explained how he had developed networks of informants among the other prisoners of the Nomen; of how they had supplied him with vital information about movements and logistics and finally, with a way of escape.

“I still don’t understand why they would attack *here*.”

“Because Terra is the most lightly defended world in the Alliance,” Bane explained as if he were telling a child. “Nobody thinks to reinforce Terra because of the laws that forbid anything but the small sector defense fleet from being in the corridor.”

“And with the current situation in the Conclave,” Thomasi said as he mulled it over out loud, “an attack here could prove the undoing of the Alliance.”

Bane nodded. “How many worlds were in upheaval after the *Prometheus* burned Carolon? How many in the Pantheon wanted to completely dismantle our way of life? If the Free Worlds resistance were able to capture Terra-”

“Half of the worlds of the Alliance would secede,” Thomasi finished for him. “It would be full blown civil war.”

“Which is why we need to act *now*.”

Thomasi nodded. “It seems I was wrong, Executor. You have done well in your absence.”

“*Meus vita est ministro*, Primus,” Bane said bowing deeply.

“Of course,” Thomasi said with a smile. “Now go get your uniform fixed and be prepared to brief Sae’tzar in two hours. We’re going to crush this resistance and finish this problem once and for all.”

**SENIOR OFFICER QUARTERS
BATTLESTAR ARES
NEW CAPRICA SYSTEM**

Major Stacie Percival shot awake, cold sweat running down her brow as she fought to get her breathing under control from the nightmare she had been experiencing. Blinking her eyes several times she forced the images of her Cylon brethren from her mind as she made her way to the bathroom sink and splashed cold water on her face.

Looking in the mirror as her racing heart calmed down she stared into her own eyes and took a deep breath, mentally chastising herself for allowing the same recurring dream to keep driving her awake.

Drying the water off she quickly dressed in her physical training gear and began jogging down the corridors to the gym. Passing by some of the human support crew of the ship she acknowledged them as they saluted or gave her the customary greetings but pressed ahead without looking at any of them.

Arriving at the gym she spotted another figure there working on the punching bag. Paying her no heed she moved to the weight machine and began doing leg presses.

“I didn’t realize Cylons needed to exercise.”

Stacie looked up and recognized the face of the woman working the punching bag. “It’s how I relax. Besides, I have to stay in shape so I don’t lose my flight rating.”

“Ah,” Starbuck replied as she punched the bag harder. “I was told that you guys had some kind of body function that kept your muscles in shape at all times.”

Stacie pushed hard and extended her legs against the opposing weights. “So *that’s* why I twitch so fraking much in my sleep.”

“Guess so,” Starbuck replied as her breathing tempo picked up. “Although I don’t know why you still sleep. Leoben said that you skin jobs didn’t have to sleep. He said he did it just so he could dream and get close to his sweet and fluffy God.”

“I’ve never minded sleeping,” Stacie said exhaling hard. “Until these damned nightmares started, that is.”

“Poor you,” Starbuck sneered. “Is that why you’re here? Because of a bad dream?”

“Yeah,” Stacie replied trying to ignore the angry tone in Starbuck’s voice. “I’ve been having them ever since—”

“Since when?”

Stacie let the weights down with a clang and stood up to stretch her legs. "Since I was outted as a Cylon."

Starbuck gave the punching bag one last whallop and turned to face Stacie, her face flushed with the effort of the punching bag. "I guess I should feel sorry for you- but I don't."

Stacie's patience, already thin because of the nightmare, finally snapped as she stepped forward to stand face to face with her tormentor. "What the hell is your problem, captain?"

"My problem?" Starbuck sneered. "My problem, *major* is that one of your Cylon brothers kept me in a dollhouse for his own fraking amusement for three months, then I escape to find everyone I know and love leaving me behind and when I finally get rescued it's by *you!*"

"You're lucky to be getting rescued at all," Stacie replied. "Maybe you would have liked it better living out the rest of your days down on that rock."

Starbuck swung hard going for Stacie's head. Without even thinking her hand jumped to catch the oncoming fist. Starbuck tried to jerk it back but it stayed put inside Stacie's iron grip. "Bitch," she spat.

Stacie pushed hard sending Starbuck stumbling back a couple of paces. "That may be, but I am still your superior officer, *captain*. You swing on me again and I'll have you locked up."

Starbuck smiled savagely. "It wouldn't be my first time in hack."

Stacie turned to walk away and Starbuck struck, folding her hands together and slamming them into the base of her neck. The impact was heavy and it sent Stacie flying forward with Starbuck hot on her trail and ready to pounce.

Landing face down Stacie rolled over in time to see Starbuck descending on her like a hammer blow. She put her arms up and caught her by the neck, holding her in place as she rose up slowly and lifted Starbuck off of her feet. "What have I ever done to you?" she said.

"You're a Cylon," Starbuck rasped back. "Your whole fraking race deserves to die for what you did to the colonies."

Stacie's eyes flashed with anger but she reined it in quickly, dropping Starbuck to the floor where she gasped and wheezed air into her sorely deprived lungs. Watching for a long moment Stacie finally knelt down next to her and looked her in the eyes.

"I am *not* like the others Cylons just like these Centurions aren't. We have all made a choice to fight back knowing that it will probably lead to us dying but we don't care. Now you have to make a choice- leave your hatred behind and join us, or don't and let it consume you."

Starbuck watched as Stacie slowly stood over her and moved to the hatchway. “I don’t particularly care which one you choose but do it soon,” The major said. “I don’t have time to babysit you.”

CHAPTER TWO

Of terrible things in the dark of night

ALLIANCE PANTHEON
CITY OF ROMALIN
TERRA, TERRAN ALLIANCE

Tyranus Bane had always sensed something peculiar about Count Iblis, the member of the Alliance Conclave who represented Babylon. Now he knew why.

Iblis was a Cylon.

A perfect copy of the one he knew as Cavil, to be precise. Iblis shook his hand and smiled as he welcomed Bane into his office waiting for the doors to shut before finally speaking.

“Welcome, brother,” Iblis said, offering a glass of tea to Bane. “I’ve watched you a long time and waited for the day I could say that.”

“It’s good to finally understand my purpose,” Bane replied taking the glass.

Both men sipped their tea in silence before setting the cups down and focusing on the business at hand.

“How go your preparations?” Iblis asked the younger man.

“All is well,” Bane replied with a smile. “Sae’tzar has given the orders to assemble the fleet just short of the corridor line. Once the Free Worlds fleet jumps in to attack, he will order our fleet to jump in and destroy them.”

Iblis chuckled. “These poor bastards. If only they know *we* were behind the impending attack.”

“What about the preparations for our surprise?” Bane asked, ignoring Iblis’ gloating,

“I talked to Cavil yesterday,” Iblis said as he sipped his tea. “The fleet is en route and will be ready to pounce as soon as the battle is over. Mopping up should be relatively easy, especially after you take out the central command bunker.”

Bane nodded. "And Verenos? You've contacted him to make sure that everything is still a go?"

"Indeed," Iblis stated proudly. "I've convinced him that I will publically support his calls for reform once Terra is captured. In two days, he'll attack."

"Good," Bane said suddenly standing.

Before Iblis could react a quiet thump slammed him in the chest and sent him sprawling out onto the floor, blood leaking from a wound above his heart.

"W-why, brother?" Iblis gasped.

"Apparently you've been digging into files that Cavil told you not to," Bane shrugged as he put his silenced pistol away and pulled out two data discs. "That and you're too much of a liability at this stage of the operation."

Bane set the discs down on the table. "Sorry brother, but it has to be this way."

"When... I download.... I-"

"No, Cavil's having you boxed," Bane said as he turned and dropped a packet of papers on the table next to the discs. "You should have listened when he told you not to look into the whole Final Five thing."

Turning on his heel Bane marched to the door and opened it. "Guards, I've just executed Prefect Iblis on charges of treason. His death warrant and the evidence convicting him are on the table. See to it that it gets down to Conclave Justice."

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR ARES
NEW CAPRICA SYSTEM**

Admiral Jonathan Turner rubbed his tired eyes as he read the final report from the ground team that had been surveying New Caprica. "So that's it?"

"Yes sir," Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Kelly replied. "They left in a hurry so we found a lot of usable stuff, even if it is old."

"Better that than nothing," Commander Ryan said. "Besides, I'm sure Doctor Grazier will be pretty pleased to have that stuff back on Copernicus."

"You mean the President?" Turner asked with an arched eyebrow.

Ryan smiled sheepishly. "Yes sir."

Turner nodded and took a deep breath. Well I'm guessing we've found all we can here. Recall the teams and let's get under way for home."

Standing beside Turner, Kelly chuckled.

"Something funny, colonel?" The Admiral asked.

"Not really sir," Kelly replied. "Just wondered when we started thinking Copernicus as *home*."

"When it became the only thing the Cylons left us," General Connors said as he strode into the room.

Everyone in the room nodded silently in agreement.

Clapping his hands, the Admiral got everyone back into the moment. "Ok folks, let's pack it up and head home."

A Chorus of "yes sir" replied to Turner's command as the group broke up and moved to their stations.

"Admiral," Connors said leaning in. "When we get back, I need to speak with you about something."

This caught Turner by surprise as he gathered up the reports he has just been handed but he kept his reaction neutral. "I have time right now, if you like. I'm just going to drop this off in my quarters."

"No, it can wait until we're back," Connors chuckled, "*home*."

Turner nodded. "Okay, once we're home then."

Connors smiled. "Thanks."

**ALLIANCE PANTHEON
CITY OF ROMALIN
TERRA, TERRAN ALLIANCE**

“We’ve got incoming ships,” said the calm voice of a flight director as he studied the readout at his station inside of the Central Command Bunker. “I count seventy five contacts in the first wave with energy signatures ranging from freighter to mid heavy classes.”

“Right on time,” Primus Thomasi said as he stood next to Sae’tzar Verenos. “Your son is punctual.”

Verenos scowled at him. “Indeed. This is your operation- handle it.”

“Audio quod ego pareo, meus senior,” Thomasi said, bowing respectfully as Sae’tzar passed by. “Bane, execute phase one.”

“As you command, Primus,” Bane replied turning to the flight directors. “Broadcast standard challenges and alert the sector defense fleet to move to intercept.”

“Yes sir.”

With only twenty ships in the sector defense fleet, they will think that this battle is easily won Bane thought to himself with a smile. *Just wait until they see what’s coming next.*

“Central Defense Command,” a youthful voice suddenly boomed across the loud speakers. “This is Admiral Lucas Verenos of the Free Worlds League. With your fleet spread out among the worlds of the Alliance in a vain effort to contain our insurgency, you are outnumbered, out gunned and have no hope for reinforcement- we ask for your honorable surrender.”

Thomasi smiled. “Patch me through.”

“You’re on sir,” Bane replied.

“Lucas Verenos- you have defiled the good name of your father, Lucius and turned traitor to our homeland. You have even adopted a title from our enemies in the Twelve Colonies. We will not surrender and we will not accept yours. *Sic semper pro proditor!*”

Thomasi silenced the line with an angry wave of his hand and for the first time Bane could see how personal of a betrayal this was for the man.

“Executor Bane,” a controller said, “Galaxus Ribald reports that his ships are taking up standard defensive positions and he requests permission to engage the enemy.”

“By all means,” Bane replied with a smile, “open fire.”

On the massive display screen Bane and Thomasi watched as the Alliance ships began to move toward their Free Worlds counterparts and although they couldn't see the weapons fire being exchanged above them in space, they both knew that it was violent and deadly.

“Engage at seven seven two, point two one-”

“*Falconer* is taking heavy damage-”

“*Tyrannic* is moving to assist-”

“Jupiter's rodding stone! *Falconer is gone!* Command, Galaxus Ribald is dead-”

Thomasi frowned. “Ribald was a good man, let's make sure he doesn't die in vain. Bane, send the signal for phase two.”

“Yes, Primus.” Bane pushed a button and a hyperlight signal went out to the second and fifth fleets that were waiting hidden behind the sun. A moment later he received confirmation from them. “They're jumping in now.”

On the screen Bane saw the images of the newly arriving warships, all forty seven of them, jumping in directly behind the main Free Worlds taskforce. “The new ships are engaging sir. The enemy is trying to run.”

Thomasi shook his head. “We'll have none of that now. Send in the final wave and seal them in.”

Bane reached out and sent the specially coded signal he had devised with the former Count Iblis. It would reach the Alliance fleet and inform them to seal the trap shut on the doomed Free Worlds resistance fighters but also reach the Cylon Fleet, loitering several star systems away and notify them that the time to attack had come.

“The message is away,” Bane said.

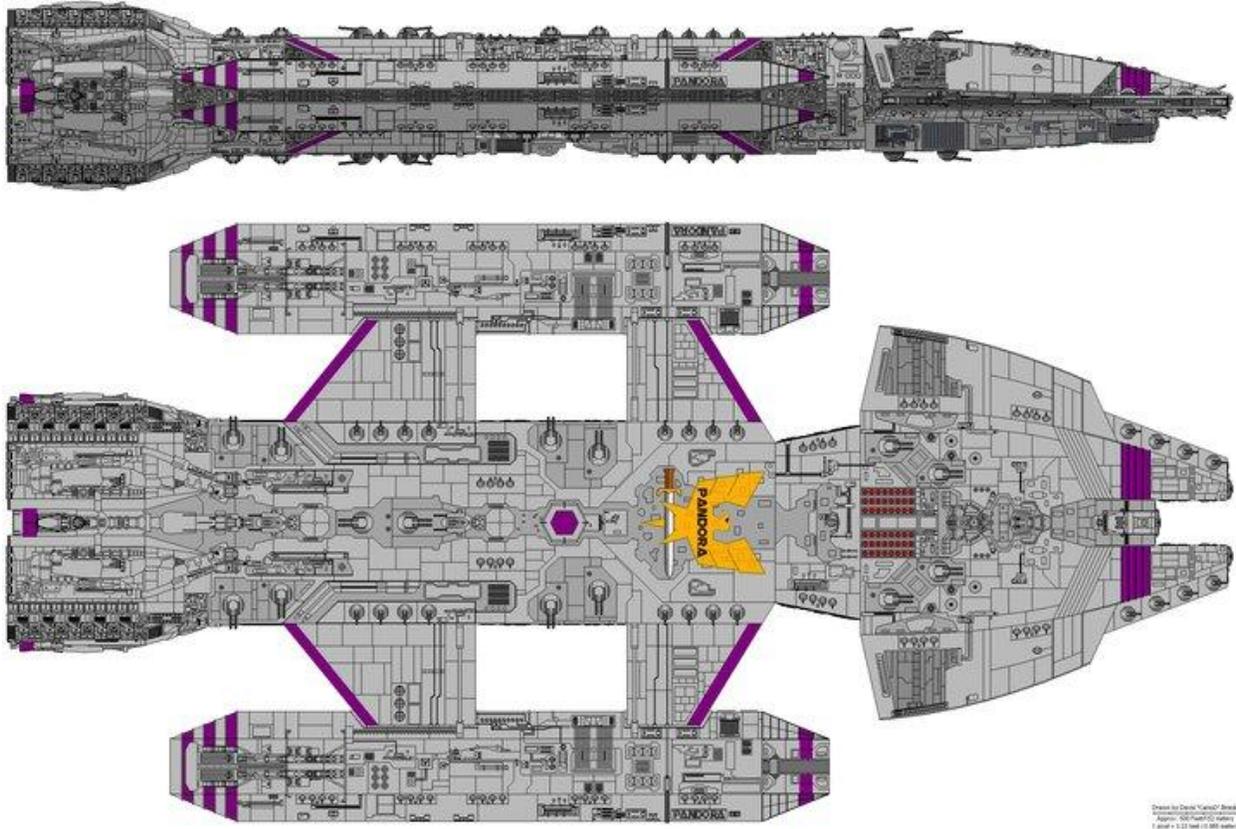
“Very well,” Thomasi said turning to Bane. “I'm leaving you in command here, Bane.”

“What?” Bane asked incredulously. “You're *leaving?*”

“I'll be aboard my flagship watching the fight personally.” Thomasi said proudly. “Besides, I want to see the looks on their faces when they see *Pandora*.”

“What is *Pandora?*” Bane asked.

“The result of the information we took from the *Prometheus*,” the Primus said as he brought up a display of the *Pandora*.



“Oh my God,” Bane breathed.

Thomasi smiled. “Indeed. I’ll contact you once I’m aboard.”

CHAPTER THREE

Beautiful Lady

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM

Admiral Turner nodded approvingly as he surveyed the C.I.C. of his flagship and patted Captain Halloran on the back. “Seems that you’ve been busy while we were gone.”

“Yes sir,” Halloran replied. “All hull breaches are sealed and the affected sections have been repaired. We even managed to upgrade our systems with some of the experimental software from the Wolf.”

Turner smiled as he saw all of the familiar faces that had risen to greet him upon his return. “Good work, all of you,” he said to the repair crews who had stopped to watch the exchange.

“It’s good to have you back sir,” one of the crewmen said, garnering a hard elbow from one of his petty officer supervisors. Turner chuckled. “It’s good to be back. When can we put to space again?”

“We finished primary fueling this morning Sir,” Colonel Horvath replied with a smirk as she approached from the gunnery station. “All ordnance is loaded and ready as well. All we need is to get our birds back on board from your little field trip—”

“ALERT!” a voice shouted from one of the sensor stations.

“Report,” Horvath commanded as she moved to the command table.

“Multiple dradis contacts at the edge of the system, Sir,” the technician announced. “I count fourteen capital class power signatures, CBDR. Range: seven fifty.”

“Who do we have out there?” Turner asked.

“Two of General Connors picket ships,” Horvath answered.

“Never a dull moment,” Turner said. “Actions stations, all ships set condition one and stand by for orders. Halloran, get my ship free of the dock.”

“Preliminary I.D. coming in now,” Horvath said, a puzzled expression on her face.

“How many Cylons am I dealing with Colonel?”

“Not Cylons Sir,” Horvath said looking up from her display. “These power signatures are Alliance.”

Turner shut his eyes. “You have got to be frakking kidding me...”

“Admiral, I have Commander Ryan on the line for you,” Halloran announced.

“Jim,” Turner said abandoning formality “they caught us with our pants down.”

“Who did?” Ryan asked.

“Our scopes say their Alliance.”

Ryan went deadly quiet at the mention of the Alliance and Turner felt sympathy for the man. He and many members of his crew had been brutally tortured by the Alliance for weeks after the *Prometheus* had been captured.

“What are my orders, sir?”

“Deploy your fighters as a screen,” Turner commanded. “*Eternal* and *Prometheus* will be taking station with you on the main line while our six Gunstars run harassment.”

“Do we have permission to engage?” Ryan asked.

“Not yet, I want to challenge them and see if we can do this without blasting each other. That being said, go in weapons hot.”

“The Alliance respects strength, Admiral.” Ryan said, his voice cold and hard. “If we go in soft we could be in for a world of hurt.”

“Let me worry about that, Commander. Get your ship ready for action. I want us going in hot and ready.”

“Yes sir,” Ryan replied.

“General,” Turner said to Connors, “I’m hoping this doesn’t come to a fight but if it does-”

“I’ve got a total of five hundred Marines, both human and Cylon, that will be ready to chew bubblegum and kick ass.” Connors replied.

“Ah, sir, I don’t recall bringing bubble gum with us,” Lt. Col. Kelly said from behind him with a knowing smile.

“Well then I guess we know what we’ll be doing, eh colonel?” Connors said with a wink.

“Yes sir!” Kelly replied.

Turner and Connors watched as Kelly stalked out of the CIC, snatching up Marines as he went.

“He’s a good kid,” Connors said. “He’ll be a general someday.”

“I hope so,” Turner replied. “He’s fought the Alliance before- he’ll know what to do.”

“I read your report. Sounds like they are very nasty to deal with.”

Turner nodded, remembering the brief glimpses of the brutal training Alliance soldiers went through while on Terra. “These guys are as tough as it comes. If we have to slug it out with them it could get very bloody.”

“Begging the Admiral’s pardon,” a metallic monotone voice spoke up, “these Alliance soldiers have never encountered Cylons before. I think they will be in for quite a shock.”

Turner and Connors both turned to see the gold plated form of Centurion Commander D3DY, or Deadeye as he had been nicknamed. “My Cylon Marines are ready for action, General.”

Connors nodded. “It’ll be good to have you with us, Commander. Go prepare your troops for deployment.”

“By your command.”

Turner winced but said nothing as Deadeye walked away to carry out his orders. “I hate it when they do that,” he said in a low voice.

Connors nodded. “I agree. Still, I’m glad they’re here.”

“Especially now,” Turner agreed. “Good hunting, General.”

“You too.”

“Sir,” Halloran called. “Incoming communication from the Alliance Flagship. They want to parlay.”

Turner arched his eyebrow. “Seems the surprises never stop...”

**COMMAND BRIDGE
WARSTAR PANDORA
IN ORBIT OF TERRA, TERRAN ALLIANCE**

“Primus, welcome aboard!” Precentor Julian Titus said as he rose to meet his superior. “We are prepared to move on your command.”

“The command is given, Precentor.”

Sliding from the massive docking complex at Isis station, the Pandora began to move forward, her mighty engines causing the deck plates to rumble beneath their feet. Thomasi smiled as he felt the power of the ship wash over him.

“Maneuver us to the enemy flagship,” the Primus commanded. “I want to see her go down in flame myself.”

“It would be my-” Precentor Titus voice was cut off by a sudden gasp and a bright flash of light from the computer displays.

“What in Hades what that?” Thomasi demanded.

“Sir, I have massive nuclear detonations from the fleet!” a crewman announced.

“Another detonation from the surface, sir!”

“What?” Titus and Thomasi both said.

“Seventy Five Meg nuclear detonation, Primus,” the ship’s second said. “It came from- oh Jupiter no!”

“Where the hell did it come from?” Thomasi demanded.

“From Romalin, sir. The capital is gone.”

Suddenly the ship rocked violently as an impact tore into its armor. Thomasi was thrown to the deck smacking his head hard on the floor. He tasted blood in his mouth.

“Report!” Precentor Titus shouted.

“Nuclear impact on the starboard flight pod sir.”

Thomasi looked around as he stood up and regained his footing. “The rebels don’t have nukes.”

“It’s not rebels firing on us.” Titus said pointing to a picture on the display screen.

Thomasi had never seen the six pointed star shaped ship design before but he had a sinking suspicion about it. “They’ve come here.”

“Who?” Titus asked.

“The Colonials call them Cylons,” Thomasi said as everything began to dawn on him.

Bane was a traitor. He had set them all up for the biggest ambush in Alliance history and now, with four fifths of the alliance fleet here and engaged in battle, the trap was being sprung. In one fatal move the Alliance had gone from being victorious lions to being lambs set for slaughter.

“Primus, we’re losing ships in droves. Forty five Conqueror class already gone.” Titus said quietly.

Thomasi nodded grimly. “This fight is lost. Send over coded channel red two: Fall back to Rally Point four.”

“We’re retreating?” one voice asked incredulously.

“Terra is being bombed as we speak and our fleet is being shredded. Better to fight another day,” Thomasi snapped. “Lay in the course and get us there before we get killed.”

The Primus spun without waiting for an answer and stalked over to a viewport where he saw the horror being unleashed on the planet below. Isis station was in flames and beginning to de-orbit and burn up in Terra’s atmosphere.

Already he could see bright explosions blooming from the surface of the planet where all of the major cities should have been.

“Primus, jump coordinates are in.” Titus said from behind him

“Jump.”

**COMMAND CONFERENCE ROOM
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

“And that is how we ended up here.”

Turner, seated across from Sae'tzar Thomasi, nodded sympathetically. “I know it sounds rather shallow, but I mourn for your loss. I know how it feels to have lost everything.”

“Your sympathy was not solicited,” Thomasi said waving his hand dismissively. “We fought a losing battle for two months before finally withdrawing and seeking you out. It was nuclear detonations that lead us to the nebula where we were able to find you.”

“Did you see the other ships there?” Connors asked anxiously.

“Yes,” Thomasi replied. “We watched two of your Battlestars face off against four Cylon ships. The one called *Pegasus* destroyed two by herself.”

Turner felt a pang of bittersweet pride at the mention of his former ship but pushed it down to stay focused on the moment. “So why didn't you follow the other ships?”

“We didn't get a fix on them after they jumped. We only knew a general direction. Besides,” Sae'tzar said with a sly grin, “we know *you* were here.”

“Indeed,” Turner replied. “So now that we're all here, what is it you want of us?”

Sae'tzar swallowed hard and Turner could imagine the bitter taste of pride in the back of his throat. “We ask for sanctuary here with you.”

“Hah!” Ryan barked. “You want *us* to shelter *you* after what you did?”

Turner cast a sour look at his friend and Ryan frowned. “Sir, you can't seriously-”

“As you were, *Commander*,” Turner said, his voice hard as iron. “The commander is correct- why should we? You've done nothing but plot our destruction and downfall since we met you.”

“We have nothing left,” Sae'tzar said quietly. “Our only goal is to try and rebuild to the point where we can exact revenge on these beasts that have destroyed our homes.”

Turner nodded. “I can certainly understand the sentiment, but how can we trust that you won't turn on us?”

“Because,” Sae'tzar said as he placed a data disc on the table, “I would offer you this. It is the true account of the 13th Tribe including the Exodus War. It is also my pledge that our

forces will work under your command. All we ask is an area of land to establish an enclave where our way of life will not perish.”

Turner considered his remarks for a moment and then extended his hand. “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

TO BE CONTINUED...