



BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

BY RYAN A. KEETON

CRUCIBLE

Based on the Sci-Fi Original series

Battlestar Galactica

Created by Ron Moore and David Eick

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

CREATED BY GLEN LARSON

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

COLONIAL ALLIANCE

Fleet Admiral Jonathan Turner: Commanding Officer of the Colonial Alliance Defense Force

Admiral James Ryan III: Commanding officer, 2st Fleet, C.A.D.F.

General John Connors: Commander, Task Force Eternal

Admiral Julian Titus: Commanding officer, 1st Fleet, C.A.D.F.

Sae'tzar Rollo Thomasi: Supreme Leader, Macedon Colony

President Kevin Grazier: President, Copernicus Colony

Commander Karla Horvath: Commanding Officer, Battlestar Prometheus

Major David Briedis: Chief Engineer of the Prometheus

Colonel Stacie Percival: Executive Officer, Battlestar Ares

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

Major Allain Halloran: Executive Officer, Battlestar Prometheus

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

Major Jason "Slider" Allen: Captured, presumed dead

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

PROLOGUE

SHUFFLING THE DECK

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS

“Admiral on deck!”

Turner nodded briskly to Commander Horvath as he marched across the Combat Information Center to the situation table. “Mister Halloran, inform the fleet that I have transferred the flag.”

“Yes sir,” Halloran replied as he set to work at his console.

Looking around, Turner was satisfied to see his command crew busy with the work at hand. Eyes were fixed on their consoles, reports were passing from sections and being logged and minor repairs were in progress. “Sitrep,” he commanded turning back to his X.O.

“Fleet reports no further contacts,” Horvath began as she adjusted the display on the table to reflect current fleet dispositions. “The Alliance fleet has set a perimeter just inside the asteroid belt here,” she said pointing to the line of ships that had taken up a defensive position. “The *Ares* is on station here by Titan using its gravity shadow and the EM storms as a mask for its dradis signature. The other ships are arrayed per your orders, around the planet.”

Turner studied the chart closely. “Contact Thomasi and have him move the Pandora over the northern pole of Copernicus.”

“He won’t like being held back from the fight, sir,” Horvath said cautiously.

“Yes but he’ll see the strategic wisdom of keeping his ship as an ace in the hole,” Turner replied. “Besides it’s been an hour since the Cylon jumped out.”

“What the hell are they waiting for?” Horvath asked.

Turner took a deep breath. “That’s a good question...”

CYLON BASESTAR 052
LEONIS SYSTEM

“What the hell are we waiting for?” Jez demanded. “We’ve finally found their little rat’s nest-”

“Something *you* failed to do, despite your best efforts,” Bane interjected with a smirk.

“And now you want to give them time to prepare?” she continued, ignoring Bane’s verbal jab. “Since when did we become stupid?”

“Sister,” Lucifer said, his exasperation clearly evident in his voice, “the resurrection hub is still under construction-”

“It would be done by now if not for your *special additions*,” Jez interrupted.

Lucifer paid her no mind. “*And*, based on the intel the raider was able to give us, it would appear that the remnants of the Alliance have joined with their Colonial cousins. That makes a frontal assault decidedly more dangerous for all of us.”

Jez smirked. “Afraid to die, brother?”

“Smart enough to *live*, sister dear,” Lucifer replied with contempt. “We *will* attack but we must plan accordingly. Bane?”

Seeing the sour look on Jezebel’s face as Lucifer invited him forward made Bane smile with satisfaction as he activated a display screen. “Based on the limited data we have it looks like the humans have doubled the size of their fleet. While we still have the numerical advantage it has been drastically reduced now and will be even more so if we attack them there.”

“What are you talking about?” Jez asked. “We have managed to repair and rearm most of our Base Ships. With the ships Cavil was kind enough to send back to us we can assault them en masse we won’t have to worry about the numbers.”

“Jez, shut up.” Lucifer said.

Whirling on him, her face red with rage she opened her mouth to reply and shut it quickly because Lucifer holding a pistol aimed directly between her eyes. “What are you doing?” she asked slowly.

“Affecting a solution to a chronic problem that’s long overdue,” Lucifer replied.

“But without the resurrection hub-”

“What’s the matter, sister? Afraid to die?” Bane taunted.

“I have a confession to make,” Lucifer explained. “Cavil sent those ten ships back to us not because we needed them but because, until recently, they were all under the command of your tainted line.”

“What do you mean *until recently*?” Jez asked, an expression of fear growing across her face.

Bane laughed. “What he’s saying, *dear sister* is that your entire line has been boxed.”

“Except for you,” Lucifer added wryly. “I suppose you would call it divine providence that we have no resurrection and storage capability right now. Personally, I call it good planning.”

He cocked the hammer back and terror filled Jezebel’s eyes. “Brother please...”

He pulled the trigger.

Bane watched with an amused expression as Jezebel’s body fell to the floor like a sack of meat. “And that’s that.”

“Indeed,” Lucifer said as he placed the pistol on a nearby table. “Now let’s get down to exterminating some humans.”

CHAPTER 1

THE WAITING GAME

FLAG SUITE
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS ORBIT

“We’ve been waiting for two days sir,” Commander Tajalle said wearily. “We’ve got to give the crews some down time.”

“I agree,” General Connors echoed. “At this rate, *if* the Cylons attack we’re going to be too tired to fight them.”

“Gentlemen, the Cylons *will* attack,” Turner said as he rubbed his weary eyes and looked over the screens that held the faces of his ship commanders. “However, I’m inclined to agree with you right now. All ships will hold current positions and stand down to condition two. Keep a CAP in the air along with an alert five. Tell your pilots to sleep with their jock smocks on though. If the Cylons show up we won’t get much lead time.”

“Yes sir,” his ship commander replied.

“Make sure you tell your crews how proud I am of them. They’ve all done well,” Turner added. “*Prometheus, out.*”

The screens winked out to be replaced but the *Prometheus*’ seal.

All but Connors.

“What can I do for you, General?” Turner asked.

“How are you holding up, John?”

Turner sighed. “I’m not as young as I used to be, that’s for sure.”

“I know how you feel,” Connors replied. “It seems like a decade has passed since the Fall.”

Turner nodded. “It’s been three years since we put to space- feels like thirty and still I ask: what have we accomplished?”

“What do you mean?”

Turner sat down and ran his hand over his face. “We’ve been on our own and fighting uphill since we left Colonial space, General. We fought a guerilla war across the Alliance so we could find Earth and all we found was a dead planet. Then we come home to find we have no home, the Cylons have returned and they’re hunting us to extinction.”

Connors nodded, understanding exactly where he was coming from. “But you *survived*, Admiral. That’s an accomplishment in, and of, itself.”

“Survival isn’t good enough,” Turner said, leaning back in his chair. “There has to be something more.”

Connors seemed to consider that for a moment before responding. “Have you considered that the reason humanity has a chance at all is because of you and your crew?”

This caught Turner by surprise. “What do you mean?”

“John, *you* discovered this planet during your run out to Kobol,” Connors explained. “You transmitted the coordinates back and they sent a survey ship. The whole reason that we started building the base here was because you found this place. Then you came back and took charge of things. That made our survival prospects go up exponentially.”

Turner chuckled. “I stumbled on a planet because of a decades-old distress call. That was luck, General, not skill.”

“Sometimes it’s better to be lucky than good, Admiral,” Connors retorted. “Besides, your actions in organizing the fleet and focusing our efforts here have been invaluable.”

Turner waved him off. “You were doing just fine.”

“Just fine isn’t good enough,” Connors persisted. “We need focus, motivation and determination. Just getting by doesn’t cut it. *You* are the reason we are alive, John. You gave humanity another chance to learn from it’s mistakes and become better.”

Turner chuckled. “Next thing you’re going to tell me is that I’m the herald of Aurora.”

“No,” Connors replied. “You’re *Prometheus*- the light bringer. And it’s you’re light that we’re going to follow out of this darkness.”

Command Bridge
Warstar Pandora

Rollo Thomasi smiled as newly minted Admiral Titus entered the command bridge. “The rank looks good on you,” he said.

“It’s different,” Titus said. “I liked our old ranks better.”

“New times, new ideas- be tolerant,” Thomasi said as he put his arm around his friend. “How goes the integration?”

“Surprisingly smooth,” Titus answered as he sat behind his desk. “Of course, our warriors would rather *you* have been chosen to lead the fleet but they respect Turner.”

“Because many have fought against him and know his skill,” Thomasi said taking his own seat across from Titus. “Even *I* have grudgingly come to respect the new Fleet Admiral.”

“He’s ordered us to stand down to yellow tier,” Titus said. “I told him our warriors could hold the line if his needed sleep.”

Thomasi smiled slyly. “I would imagine that rankled him a bit.”

“He thanked me for the offer but said that his orders stand,” Titus replied. “Our training is much different from theirs; our traditions are stronger.”

“Times change, *Admiral* but we will always honor our traditions,” Thomasi said leaning back in his chair. “After the war, Turner and I will begin developing a joint training regimen that will serve as the template for the future of our joint military endeavors. I intend to make sure that many of our traditions make it in.”

“I would welcome this, as would most of the men.”

“We will have to adopt some of their practices too, however,” Thomasi stated. “Women might be one of them.”

“*Women* in combat?” Titus sneered. “The very thought is repugnant. Women have their role and it’s *not* on a Warship.”

Thomasi arched an eyebrow. “I’m surprised at you, old friend. You have seen how effective their female warriors can be. How many of our pilots did they shoot down in our battles with the *Prometheus*?”

“Too many and that’s the point,” Titus said forcefully. “If we start integrating women into our combat operations it will *empower* them. They will begin to question the primacy of our gender and before we’ll have a revolution on our hands!”

Thomasi chuckled. "A little revolution every now and then is a good thing. Remember- the universe has changed. The Cylons have seen to that. Now we have a choice: evolve or die."

"If it means having a woman on the bridge of my ship, perhaps death might be a better course."

"I sincerely hope that you change your mind," Thomasi said leaning in close. "You are one of my oldest and closest friends but I am the leader of our people. As such I have to keep the peace and if *you* are the source of discontent-"

"You need not worry about me, Sae'tzar," Titus said, resigned. "I am your friend but more importantly, I am loyal: Loyal to you and loyal to our people."

Thomasi nodded and reached across to place a reassuring hand on his friends' shoulder. "I know, my friend. You are an excellent officer and someday you will lead our people to glory."

A few moments later Titus watched as the door swung shut behind Thomasi before activating his intercom. "Sencio, come to my office immediately."

"On my way Precen- I mean, *Admiral*," the deep voice said from the other side of the speaker. "What's wrong? Has something happened?"

Titus sighed. "We might need to accelerate our plans."

CYLON PRISON CAMP LEONIS SYSTEM

Slider found Matt Campagna and Alex Turner waiting for him at the burn barrel closest to check point five. Both had ragged hoods pulled up to hide their faces from the snow that was falling all around them.

Not to mention the Centurions who patrolled not ten feet away.

"Top o' the morning, lads," Slider said cheerily.

"Cut the crap, flyboy," Turner snarled. "Why are we here?"

In a flash, Slider's hand shot out and snatched Turner by the front of his shirt nearly yanking the boy off of his feet. "Look kid, I like you and your dad is a great guy but if you don't learn to shut that smart ass mouth of yours," he growled while maintaining a sly grin, "I'm going to turn you over my knee and blister your behind. Get me?"

Letting go with a shove, Turner stumbled back. He looked to Campagna who smirked. "He understands you," the elder man said helping Turner to his feet. "Now, what's the situation?"

“They took Hygiena,” Slider began. “She’s being held in the main complex. We need to get her out.”

“Look,” Turner said, “we’re having enough trouble staying alive out there. They Cylons have been hunting us for six days. We finally lost them last night but not before five people were killed.”

“I understand which is why we need to stage a breakout,” Slider said.

Campagna’s eyes went wide with surprise. “A break out? Do you *know* how difficult that will be?”

“Yes, but I also know that it will serve as a great distraction,” Slider replied pulling out a piece of paper with a diagram on it. “You guys need components for your radio, right? I need to rescue Hygiena and find out what’s going on inside so I can report it back to the fleet. Both of the things we’re looking for are inside that building which is why we need to stage a jail break.”

Alex nodded. “It could work. I can take a squad and attack the guard towers in force as a distraction. The Cylons would think that we are trying to stage a rescue.”

“They’ll move the Centurions to counter the attack and reinforce the other guard towers,” Slider added with a wink at Turner. “I knew there was a reason I liked you, kid.”

“So how do we get people out if they are reinforcing the gates and towers?” Campagna asked.

“That’s where *you* come in,” Slider said pointing to the diagram. “You’ll slip in quietly and cut a hole into the outside wall *here*.”

“That’s the kitchens and food processing plant,” Campagna said.

“Right and it’s not a high priority target,” Slider said. “They think you won’t attack there because you don’t want to frak up the food supply here in camp.”

“How will you get people down there to escape?” Turner asked.

“Leave that to me,” Slider said tossing the paper into the fire. “Besides, the less you guys know the better in case someone is captured. Just tell me when you will execute the attack and I will have all of the other pieces in place.”

Turner and Campagna nodded.

“You realize though,” Campagna said, “once the Cylons catch on the gig is up. Not everyone is going to make it out.”

“I know,” Slider said as he turned and walked away. “I know.”

CHAPTER 2

UP THE NARROW PATH

HANGAR THREE PORTSIDE FLIGHTPOD, BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS

“Attention on deck!”

Dozens of pilots, all wearing fresh jock smocks and sporting fresh haircuts, snapped to attention as Lieutenant Ashley “Splashdown” Klave marched onto the flight deck to inspect her trainee pilots.

“Fall in, Nuggets!” she barked. “C’mon, let’s *go* gods damn it!”

Splashdown hid her amusement as the trainees dashed about falling into ranks as quickly as their feet would carry them. “Gods be good, I’ve seen old people *frak* faster than you nuggets move two feet!”

Finally the students came to attention in military precise rows.

Splashdown observed them for a moment then came to attention as footsteps echoed from behind the group. Executing a parade ground perfect about face, she raised her hand in salute as Colonel Stacie “Sheba” Percival stood before her.

“Sir, the class is assembled and standing by for your order.”

Sheba returned her salute. “Take your post, lieutenant.”

“Sir,” Splashdown replied as she moved into a subordinate position next to her superior.

“Stand easy, trainees,” Sheba commanded.

In front of her the ranks of trainees relaxed, placing their hands behind their backs. “As you know, an emergency situation has arisen. As a result, by order of the fleet admiral, those of you in phases four and five of your training are going to be advanced to your final flight tests immediately. Those of you in phases one, two and three will have your training accelerated.”

The trainees looked at each other, many of them smiling. Sheba smiled too before dropping the bomb. “That’s the good news. The bad news is that you will no longer be given retests if you fail your tests. It’s one shot, one kill. You fail and you’re gone.”

The nuggets expressions quickly fell as they realized that their path to being pilots had suddenly become far narrower.

“Final flight tests will commence for phases four and five in one hour. Report to your training officers for testing assignments and good hunting- I’ll see you in the black.”

“Class *fall out!*” Splashdown commanded.

The two pilots watched as the nuggets quickly dispersed to their duty stations, waiting until they were all gone before finally speaking. “We’re going to lose a lot.” Splashdown said.

“We’ll pick them up in the next class,” Sheba responded as she began walking toward her locker.

“We’re going to recycle them?”

“Yes,” Sheba said as she opened her locker and pulled her flight equipment out. “We need all of the *qualified* pilots we can get right now. We’ll slot them in Raptors and move the experienced Raptor pilots into Vipers.”

Splashdown nodded. “Sounds like a plan. I’ll enjoy being in a Viper again.”

“You’re getting a new job, Splash.”

Ashley froze. “What are you talking about, sir?”

Sheba turned and smiled at the lieutenant. “When this is over we’re promoting you to senior lieutenant and lead instructor.”

Splashdown was stunned. “Me?”

Sheba clapped her on the shoulder. “You earned it, kid. Now get to your Raptor- we’ve got nuggets to test.”

**GENERALS QUARTERS
LOBO NEGRO STATION
COPERNICUS**

John Connors stood and smiled as Commander Tajalle entered his quarters. “Commander,” he said by way of greeting. “Good to see you again. Drink?”

“Absolutely,” Tajalle replied with a weary smile. “Something strong. Been a helluva day.”

Connors nodded as he poured two glasses of amber ambrosia. “I heard about the blowout in the portside coolant pressure line. Anybody hurt?”

“We lost five including Captain Hasher,” Tajalle replied taking her glass and downing the contents. “Seven more injured.”

Connors shook his head. “Coolant is corrosive stuff.”

“Doc says it liquefied their lungs before they could scream,” Tajalle said handing her empty glass back to the general. “Another, if you please.”

Connors nodded and poured again. “What happened?”

“Valve left open after a maintenance check,” Tajalle said.

“I would imagine the consequences will be severe for whoever did it?” Connors asked.

“Already were,” Tajalle said taking a deep gulp of her drink. “The engineering tech that left it open was with Hasher when it blew.”

“Damn,” Connors sighed. “I’m sorry.”

“So am I. Hasher was a good kid.” Tajalle said. “We’ll be ready to depart on time though.”

Connors sat down and took a sip of his drink. “Turner has put the mission on hold. He wants to be sure that the Cylons won’t attack.”

“How the hell does he intend to be sure the Cylons won’t attack?”

“He wants to send in a recon mission,” Connors explained. “Six Mark eight Vipers.”

“So they finally get a good test run?”Tajalle asked.

“They got a good run during the *Icaris* mission,” Connors replied. “This is really going to test them though- He wants them to do a close orbit run on the Cylon fleet around Leonis.”

“From what I have read, that will be pushing the capabilities of the fighter,” said the commander. “What’s his backup plan?”

“He’s going to have the *Vigilant* on station in case they’re detected,” the general replied. “They’ll launch a full nuclear missile barrage at the Cylon space station if the Vipers are detected. Their Raiders are deployed in air defense formations so it’s doubtful that any missiles could get through but it would distract them long enough for our pilots to jump.”

Tajalle nodded. “Sounds reasonable. What is he looking for?”

Connors took a sip of his drink. The amber liquid feel good as it slid down his throat and warmed his chest. “Firstly he wants to see if the Cylons are gearing up for a big move. Attacking us won’t be an impulse move so they’ll have to prepare and provision. Secondly; he wants as much information as he can get on the status of the Cylon hub and the fleet guarding it.”

“Has there been any word from the recon Raptors we have had patrolling the system?”

Connors shook his head. “Not directly but there is a lot of radio chatter between the ground and the fleet there. It’s all coded so we don’t have any idea what they’re saying but what are the chances that they’re just routine transmissions about housekeeping matters?”

“Which means whatever secret project the Cylons are working on-” Tajalle began.

Connors nodded. “Is down on Leonis.”

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER BATTLESTAR ARES IN ORBIT OF TITAN

Admiral James Ryan looked over the report and nodded approvingly as he affixed his digital signature to the datapad he had been reading. “A sixteen percent improvement in efficiency is quite a significant achievement, Alpha.”

“Indeed sir,” Alpha replied, a trace of pride in his voice. “The overhaul that Captain Margaritell performed on our engines has done immense good for our fuel consumption. I daresay that the engines haven’t been this well maintained since we left Colonial space.”

“I’ll make a note to put him in for a commendation,” Ryan said. “Anything else?”

“Yes sir,” Alpha said. “Captain Rex has asked that we continue the cross training of humans on our Raiders and wants your permission to decommission the last six Mark one Vipers.”

Ryan considered that for a moment and then shook his head. “I want to keep the Mark One’s around for basic flight trainers so no scrapping them. He can, however, remove them from the active flight roster. I’ll see if Lobo Negro can spare a few more Mark sevens with the mod kits for Cylon input.”

“I’m sure that will please Captain Rex immensely,” Alpha replied.

“Good,” Ryan said as he observed Colonel Percival entering the room. “Ah, my long lost X.O. has returned from wastelands of nugget training,” he said with a wry smile. “How many lost and despondent ensigns are cursing your *vile* name, Colonel?”

“Two,” Sheba replied taking her station. “They both froze during the combat scenario.”

“Out of how many?”

“Ten,” Sheba answered.

“Tsk, tsk,” Ryan said wagging a finger at her playfully. “You’re hard one, Colonel.”

Sheba smiled. “That’s my job.”

“Alert,” a Cylon voice announced grabbing everyone’s attention. “New dradis contact bearing zero-four-eight karem zero-nine-two. Designate contact as nebulon three five.”

“Confirmed sir,” Alpha said. “No identification on the contact yet.”

“Focused scan,” Sheba commanded. “Get a solid I.D. on that ship *now*.”

“Alert five is responding,” another Cylon reported. “Captain Rex estimates intercept in thirty seconds.”

“Focused scan coming online now,” Alpha said. “Identification in progress.”

“Hurry-”

“Battlestar *Ares*, this is Raptor eight five one-” a human female voice suddenly said. “We are the new contact on your dradis screens. Identification codes coming to you now.”

“Confirmed Splashdown,” Sheba replied, recognizing the voice. “What happened?”

Splashdown sounded frazzled but focused as she explained how her latest trainee had drifted too close to an asteroid and clipped the starboard engine, resulting in an uncontrolled spin that had almost killed them. Only Splashdown’s preparedness in programming an emergency in-system jump before the mission launch had saved them.

“Is anyone injured?” Sheba asked.

“My nugget is pretty shaken up,” Splashdown replied. “I think he may have hit his head during the impact. He’s conscious though.”

“Very well Splashdown,” Ryan ordered as he gestured to Sheba. “Stand by on this channel- we’re launching a recovery bird right now. We’ll have you aboard shortly.”

“Thank you, sir. Standing by.”

Ryan looked at Sheba who shook her head in dismay. “Guess that’s three.”

CYLON PRISON CAMP LEONIS

Slider watched with cold eyes as Simon exited his research hut and made his way toward the main headquarters of the prison camp. “Right on schedule, you bald headed fraker,” he growled.

Every day at midday, Simon would leave his hut to make his report via the hyper pulse generator to the fleet in orbit. He would always be gone exactly seven minutes before returning to the hut and working non-stop well into the night.

This was when he would have to time his attack. With Simon in the headquarters building to make his report when the attack occurred, he would have to take command from there giving Slider all the time he needed to rescue Hygiena.

“Hang on Mel,” he whispered to himself as he turned away.

“Major Allen,”

Slider started as he turned to find a skin job standing not but a few feet from him. She had almond shaped eyes and long dark hair and Slider immediately recognized her as an eight.

“What do you want?” he growled as he stepped past her.

“Nothing,” she said innocently as she fell in beside him. “I- I’ve just seen you here before and was wondering about you.”

“I’m your prisoner. What’s to wonder about?”

The eight was silent for a moment before responding. “Not *my* prisoner. I’ve been against this little farm the whole time.”

“Yeah I’m sure,” Slider snapped. “Would have been much more efficient to just finish the extermination process, huh?”

“No,” the eight replied. “The attack on the Colonies was wrong.”

Slider whirled on her. “Well that’s just frakin great! So glad you’ve realized the errors of your ways.”

He spun about and marched away toward his quarters. “Too bad about the trillions of people you killed, right?”

“No!” the eight snapped as she placed herself in front of him. “It was wrong and God will damn us all for it.”

“God!?” Slider laughed. “I don’t believe in God or Gods or mystical imaginary friends in the sky and if, by some chance, they *do* exist then they have a lot to answer for for allowing you and your kind to damn near exterminate my race.”

The eight shook her head sadly. “*We’ll* answer for that, and God will not be merciful when he judges us.”

Slider threw his arms up in consternation and shook his head. “Why are you telling me this? What the hell do you want from me?”

“I want to help you free your friend,” the eight said.

Slider’s expression froze as did his blood. “What are you talking about?” he asked, his voice low and menacing.

“I know what Simon’s doing in there,” the eight explained. “I also know that it’s wrong and has to be stopped. To do that I’m willing to help you free her.”

“Wait a second,” Slider said taking a step backward from her. “You’re telling me that you are willing to turn on your own people to help me?”

“Yes.”

“Ok, prove it- tell me what’s going on in there.”

The eight took Slider by the arm and guided him into an unoccupied housing unit. There she began to explain Simons plan and by the time she was done, Slider knew more than ever that he had to act fast.

CHAPTER 3

IGNITION

JUNIOR OFFICERS QUARTERS BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS IN ORBIT OF COPERNICUS

Splashdown sighed as her head sunk into the cool pillow awaiting her on her bunk. After twelve hours in the hot seat testing nuggets on their ability to perform basic flight maneuvers, she was so exhausted that she had actually debated taking a shower before climbing into her rack.

Hygiene had won out though and she had allowed the warm water to wash away some of the tension in her body.

The last run had been the worst with the nugget being so frightened of the asteroid course that he over corrected and hit a rock about the size of a basketball, sending them careening out of control.

Only the fact that she had anticipated something of the sort and pre-programmed the FTL drive to micro-jump them to a safe location, saved both her and the nugget's life.

Closing her eyes she began to drift away from those terrifying moments into a safer place and soon she was asleep yet still felt awake.

“Ashley,” a voice called out, almost a whisper.

Looking around she saw the bunk room through hazy, sleep filled eyes.

“Ashley,” the voice said, distant and hollow.

The deck beneath her shook and suddenly she realized that the ship was under attack yet try as she might to get to her locker where her jock smock and flight helmet awaited her, her movements were slow and lethargic.

“Help me,” the voice whispered to her again. Turning her head she saw a pilot laying face down in the corridor. Moving as fast as her leaden legs would allow she made her way to the fallen pilot.

“It's okay, I'm here to help you,” she said as she reached down to open the pilot's helmet.

Suddenly, however, the pilot's arm reached out and clamped down her wrist so hard she could hear bones cracking. Gasping from the pain she pulled back bringing the pilot face to face with her.

Inside the helmet was a face she knew.

"Help me, Ashley," Hygiena said, her eyes full of pain.

And then the flesh dissolved off of her skull leaving only ragged strips of hair and muscle on bloodstained bone.

Splashdown screamed and bolted from her bed knocking over two crewmen. Hitting the floor hard, she scrambled to the corner where she pulled her legs up to her chest.

"Splash," a voice said. "Splash are you alright?"

Looking up she saw the face of Master Chief Madrid looking down on her, concern coloring her expression. "Lieutenant, are you alright?"

She managed to nod as the pounding in her heart settled down. "I--"

"You're white as a ghost," Maddie said as she reached out to haul her to her feet. "Why don't you come with me?"

Ashley nodded absently as her wits slowly came back to her. Outside the door a crowd had gathered, all staring at her. She felt the eyes boring into her like lasers burning through her skin.

Seeing Splashdown's expression, Maddie turned to the crowd. "Shows over, Gods damn it. Move out!"

Slowly the group dispersed but not before Maddie's exceptional hearing overheard one of them.

"Bitch has been crazy ever since she got attacked in Alliance space."

In a flash, Maddie's hand lashed out, grabbing a handful of the pilot's hair and yanking hard.

The pilot yelped and flew backward, landing flat on his back with a sickening *thud*. He found no respite though as Maddie pounced on him, driving her knee into his diaphragm and forcing the air from his lungs.

"You listen to me, you mother fraker," the Master Chief growled. "I don't give a shit what your rank is or how hot of a stick you *think* you are, that pilot in there has been through more and handled it better than you ever could."

Reaching down she grabbed another fistful of hair and twisted his head to the side so his eyes were fixed on Splashdown. “If I ever even *get wind* of you saying something stupid like that about her, or anyone else on my boat, I swear to all the Gods that I’ll *personally* toss you out the airlock in a leaky E.V. suit. Are we clear?”

The pilot nodded weakly and Maddie slowly climbed off of him.

It was then that she noticed her husband, and the recently promoted ships’ X.O., standing not far from her. “Sir, I can explain-”

“No need, Chief,” Major Halloran said with a grim face. “I saw it all.”

“Sir, she assaulted me,” the pilot stammered as he climbed to his feet.

“You’re lucky that’s all she did,” Halloran growled stepping up to his face. “If it were me, I would have broken your neck and been done with it. Now I have to do paperwork.”

Turning to a passing marine, Halloran snapped his fingers. “Marine, is your sidearm loaded?”

“The marine snapped to attention. “Sir, yes sir!”

“Good,” Halloran said as he fixed his gaze on the captain standing before him. Squinting as he always did when considering his next move, the X.O. briefly flirted with the idea of shooting the pilot on sight but realized it would cause too many problems...

And more paperwork.

“Escort this *captain*,” he spat the rank with contempt, “to the brig and secure him there. Inform the watch commander that charges will be filed within the hour.”

“Yes sir,” the marine responded, un-holstering his pistol. “Come with me, sir.”

Splashdown watched as the marine escorted the captain away. Her breath was shaky and her legs felt wobbly but she managed to hold her head high.

“You okay, lieutenant?” Halloran asked.

“I- I’ll be fine,” she replied.

“Chief, take her down to medbay and see what Doc Kaplan has to say,” Halloran commanded.

“Sir, I’m-”

“Going to medbay, right lieutenant?” Halloran finished for her.

Splashdown nodded, resigned. “Yes sir.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
COPERNICUS SYSTEM**

Admiral Turner smiled as he silently watched Commander Horvath go through her pre-launch checklist in anticipation of their departure from the Lobo Negro station. Thinking back he remembered the thrill he had felt in his stomach as *Prometheus* had prepared for launch from the Scorpia shipyards years before.

Feels like an eternity he thought to himself.

“All stations this is the commander,” Horvath said activating her headset. “Initiate launch checks.”

Around him the C.I.C. became a buzz of activity as command stations began issuing orders.

“Flight- secure the decks.” Horvath commanded.

“Sir, deck officers report all secure and ready for launch,” the flight control officer replied.

“Very well,” Horvath replied. “Weapons- lock and clear all guns.”

“All guns cleared and locked, sir.”

Horvath nodded and continued down the check list until she finally came to engineering.

“Engineering- status report?”

“Sir,” Major Briedis replied, “reactor is at full power. Main engines are go for auto-sequence start.”

Horvath nodded and looked to Turner with a gleam in her eyes. “Sir- for the first time in a long while, your flagship stands one hundred percent ready for launch.”

“Very well, Commander,” Turner replied gesturing to the command station. “Take us out.”

“Yes sir,” Horvath replied. “Mister Briedis- start ‘er up.”

“Aye sir,” Briedis replied with pride. “Attention in engineering- initiate prestart sequence. Fuel- close and lock safety valves and initiate fuel flow.”

“Initiator is charged, sir. Fuel flow now at twenty percent,” an engineering tech announced.

“Twenty seconds until ignition. Engine room- switch to internal power and disconnect from station umbilical’s.” Briedis commanded.

“Aye sir,” the tech replied as the lights momentarily flickered. “The ship is now on internal power.

“You double checked your fuel calculations, right Dave?” Turner asked with a smile.

“Yes sir,” the engineer said. “No blowing up on the schedule for today.”

“That’s good to know, carry on.”

“Yes sir. Ten seconds- stand by for ignition.”

“Here we go,” someone said.

“Nine, eight, seven, six-”

The deck beneath them began to vibrate suddenly as rumbling sound came from aft of the ship.

“Main engine start- we are go for throttle up.” Briedis announced.

“Very well,” Horvath replied. “Helm- throttle engines to forty five percent.”

From outside the engine ports of the Prometheus flickered for a moment like a flame in the wind then flashed as they caught and began to power up, a brilliant blue glow emanating from them.

In the C.I.C. the rumbling died away and was replaced by a familiar faint vibration in the deck plating.

“Sir,” Major Briedis said turning to the commander. “Main engines are now running at forty-five percent and all boards are green.”

“Well done, Mister Briedis,” Horvath said, satisfied. “Let’s get under way. Helm- all ahead one third until we clear the station then throttle up to one hundred percent.”

The helm officer replied in the affirmative and Turner returned his eyes to his paperwork but not before tossing a wink to Horvath who beamed with pride as the *Prometheus* slipped gracefully from her dock and began her voyage into space.

Command Bridge
Warstar Pandora

Admiral Julian Titus watched with anticipation as the *Prometheus* slipped her berth and began making her way to the jump point that would deliver her on the first leg of her mission to recon the Cylon position at Leonis.

“They are powering up for their jump,” an officer reported.

“Good,” Titus replied, folding his arms over his chest. “Contact Bruticus on planet. Tell him to initiate the operation.”

“Sir,” the officer replied edging closer so as not to be heard by the crew. “Sir, you know I am behind you one hundred percent but I have to ask- is this the proper time to make such an *ambitious* move?”

Titus turned slowly and fixed his subordinate with a withering stare. “We have to do this *now* while Turner is gone. Without his support, Thomasi will have no choice but to do as we wish. If we wait any longer, everything we have labored so hard to accomplish will be lost.”

“Yes sir,” the subordinate replied meekly.

And then he pulled his side arm and placed it to Titus’ temple.

To his credit, the admiral froze in place yet kept his calm. “What are you doing?”

“Saving us,” the subordinate replied as he used his free hand to pull a communicator out. “Sae’tzar, have you been listening?”

Rollo Thomasi’s voice was icy and cold as he replied and in that instant Julian Titus knew that he was a dead man. “I have indeed, Commander.”

“Sae’tzar,” Titus said calmly, trying to hide his surprise. “I can explain myself-”

“No explanation necessary,” Thomasi replied smoothly. “Commander- do your duty.”

“Yes, Sae’tzar,” The commander replied as his fingerer squeezed down on the trigger.

Titus closed his eyes and as the shot rang out that ended his life, the last thing that went through his mind, besides the bullet that killed him, was to wonder how Thomasi had ever discovered his plan.

**CYLON BASESTAR 052
LEONIS SYSTEM**

“You were right,” Tyranus Bane said as he entered the Basestar command center. “The *Prometheus* just jumped into the Helios Alpha system. They’re trying to mask their position by making a close orbit of Zeus.”

“It would probably work too if we didn’t have a Raider already in position there,” Gabriel smirked.

“It seems that you’re one step ahead of the humans again, brother,” Eve purred.

“That’s why I’m in charge,” Lucifer commented drily. “Any sign of activity?”

Bane dipped his hand in the water of the data stream. “The Raider reports that they’ve launched a patrol and that several small jump signatures were detected a short time ago.”

“A recon mission,” Gabriel said, alarmed. “We need to launch our Raiders-”

“We’ll do no such thing,” Lucifer cut him off. “I *want* them to jump in system.”

“For God’s sake why?” Gabriel asked. “If they see how weak our defenses are-”

“They’ll want to attack,” Lucifer finished for him. “And the computer virus I’m going to plant in their recon ships will seal their fate when they do.”

“That and our little project on the station,” Bane snickered.

Lucifer smiled. “Basic tactics and strategy, my friends: the key to winning a war is to make your enemy go where you want him to die and then squash him once he’s there.”

“Didn’t Fleet Admiral Gastineau say that during the first war?” Gabriel asked.

“Ironic, isn’t it?” Lucifer remarked sardonically. “The greatest leader in colonial history and it’s his advice that we’re going to use to kill his descendents.”

CHAPTER 4

IN ZEUS' SHADOW

STEALTH VIPER 6 IN ORBIT OF LEONIS HELIOS GAMMA SYSTEM

The sleek form of the Mark VIII Viper flashed into existence above the northern polar region of Leonis and immediately rolled onto its back as Major Josh “Shooter” Allen, guided his ship into the upper reaches of the largely dead planet.

Below him, most of the atmosphere was a dirty brown, a side effect of the nuclear weapons that had been used there. The damage wasn't as bad as some of the other colonies, like Caprica, but that was because the Cylons had spared much of the landmasses on Leonis, hitting them instead with non-persistent nerve agents which had killed the population quickly but left the infrastructure largely intact.

Only dedicated military installations had been hit with nukes, which had been enough to lay waste to any chance the Leonites might have had to defend themselves.

Refocusing himself, Slider quieted his engines and throttled down his reactor so as to drift like a piece of debris.

“Looks like no one is home,” he said to himself as he activated the enhanced sensor package that the engineers had installed on his Viper prior to launch. “Sensors are on and recording.”

Slider studied the readouts carefully as his scans of the Cylon space station and the space around it came back.

“Gods be good,” he exclaimed quietly. “We are *so* fraked.”

Suddenly a flashing light caught his attention- it was the proximity detector. Looking to his dradis he saw that a Cylon Raider had slipped into the region.

“*Frak*, Cylon Raider detected,” he said for log purposes, “switching to silent running.”

Flipping a series of switches the Viper went into silent mode, shielding its reactor and quieting its emissions. “Now we find out if this stealth package works.”

**CYLON PRISON CAMP
LEONIS**

“So you’re telling me that you guys have gotten tired of looking like each other and that the remedy to fixing that is in Melody’s blood?” Slider asked incredulously. “That’s about the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard.”

“It’s true,” the Eight that had identified herself as Lilith said. “We’ve only been able to reproduce through biological once and that was because of a gene that Melody’s cousin, Karl Agathon, carried in his genetic makeup. Melody carries that same gene too and Simon is hoping to isolate it and use it in conjunction with the same technology we use to grow new bodies to use new genetic mixtures. He’s hoping to create a diverse gene pool-”

“And that will give you all the ability to have babies. Yeah, I got that the second time you explained it,” Slider said impatiently. “That *still* doesn’t explain why you want to help me break her out. If anything, she sounds like she could be your savior.”

“No,” Lilith replied. “What she represents is a perversion of what our creators intended.”

“Oh yes, your blessed *final five*,” Slider sneered. “I thought you only believed in *one* God?”

“We do,” Lilith snapped. “Some of us have betrayed the faith though.”

Slider sat back in his chair and took a long sip from his cup rot gut booze. “How so?”

“Cavil, Lucifer, all of the One’s,” Lilith replied, scorn dripping from her voice like acid. “They *lied to us*.”

“A Cylon who lies- go figure.”

Lilith fixed him with an icy glare yet Slider didn’t flinch, meeting her angry brown eyes with his own icy blue until she finally looked away.

“We’ve turned away from God’s will,” Lilith explained. “It was never God’s will that we destroy humanity- That was Cavil lashing out at our creators.”

“Again, your final five?”

“Yes,” Lilith replied. “They were the survivors of the 13th tribe-”

“Wait a second,” Slider said sitting up. “You’re telling me that your final five are actually from Earth?”

“Yes.”

Slider shook his head. “That can’t be. I was *on* Earth and I saw the ruins. Everyone there is dead.”

Lilith nodded. “Yes, the 13th tribe was wiped out. However, five members escaped and traveled at subliminal to track back to the colonies. They wanted to warn the other twelve tribes about the dangers of creating artificial life.”

“We found remnants of robotic life on Earth,” Slider said thoughtfully. “Doctor Z thought that maybe they had been destroyed in an attack by the Alliance.”

“No,” Lilith shook her head. “The 13th tribe was killed when the artificial life they created turned on them. The war destroyed everything and everyone.”

“Poetic,” Slider remarked. “The same thing that killed them damn near killed us here.”

“Ironic is more apt, considering the origins of the 13th tribe.”

Slider arched an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

“You don’t know?” Lilith asked, surprised. “We thought for sure that you would have figured it out by now.”

“Figured out what?” Slider demanded.

“The 13th tribe shares the same basic genetic makeup as us,” Lilith said.

“You’re saying-”

“The 13th tribe was Cylon,” Lilith explained.

Slider’s mouth hung agape with surprise and the impact of what she had told him unfolded in his mind. “But that means-”

“Yes,” Lilith nodded. “Everyone in the Alliance is Cylon too.”

**COMMANDERS QUARTERS
BATTLESTAR ETERNAL
DOCKED AT LOBO NEGRO**

General Connors reviewed the paperwork in front of him one last time and was satisfied with the results. “So we’re ready to go?”

“Yes sir,” Commander Tajalle replied. “As soon as the Fleet Admiral returns from his mission and gives the word, we can break dock and be under way within twelve hours.”

“That’s good work,” Connors said. “What’s the status on the *Saber* and the *Tomahawk*?”

“Both Gunstars are fueled, armed, provisioned and ready. All we have to do is give the word.”

Connors nodded. “Good. As soon as Turner gets back we’ll-”

Suddenly alarms began to blare. “Action stations, action stations! Set condition one throughout the ship, this is not a drill! I repeat-”

Immediately, Tajalle’s hand reached for the intercom. “This is the commander- siterp.”

“Sir, a large fleet just jumped into the system, CBDR,” the watch officer reported. “DRADIS tags them as Cylon.”

“How many?” the commander asked.

The watch officer’s voice was fearful as he replied- “I think all of them.”

Tajalle and Connors exchanged fearful looks as a long moment passed between them. Finally, the General spoke. “Get a hold of Admirals Titus and Ryan and alert them to the situation.”

“Yes sir,” the watch officer replied.

“Commander, it’s time to execute Case Black.”

Tajalle nodded. “Yes sir.”

**COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
BATTLESTAR PROMETHEUS
IN ORBIT OF ZEUS
HELIOS ALPHA SYSTEM**

Fleet Admiral Turner entered the C.I.C. weary but with alert eyes as alarm klaxons sounded all around him. “What’s the situation, commander?” he asked as he caught sight of Commander Horvath at the center table.

“Sir, we just received an emergency message from *Lobo Negro*- it was coded by General Connors,” Horvath explained.

“What did it say?” Turner asked.

Horvath handed him the readout of the message.

Admiral Turner–

A large Cylon force has just jumped in system. They are moving to attack position and I anticipate we will be heavily engaged by the time you get this.

Admiral Ryan has taken command of the space forces, per your orders and I have secured the station. I am also initiating Case Black.

That brought Turner up short.

Case Black was a doomsday scenario designed to safeguard and evacuate as many civilians as possible in case of being overrun by Cylon forces. If Connors had initiated it, then things were grim indeed.

We will hold out as long as we can but your presence would be highly beneficial to our situation. Will send tactical updates as often as possible.

–Connors.

Turner sat the paper down and took a deep breath.

“It looks like the Cylons sent the bulk of their fleet,” Horvath said as she studied the tactical update.

“We’ve got no choice then,” Turner said. “How many of the Vipers have returned?”

“All but Shooter, sir,” Horvath answered. “At last check in he had a Raider snooping around in his area.”

Turner nodded. “Send him an emergency recall.”

“But sir, the Cylons will know we were there,” Horvath protested.

“They already did,” Turner said grimly.

He had known from the moment he read the message that the Cylons had been one step ahead of him, which also meant-

“DRADIS contact!” Maddie announced.

“Where?” Horvath asked.

“Three Cylon Basestars just jumped in on top of us,” Major Halloran reported.

“Launch alert! Cylons have launched missiles and Raiders,” Maddie said.

Turner and Horvath locked eyes for a moment, each realizing the terrible truth in the same instance.

It was a trap.

“Launch all Vipers,” Turner commanded. “Gun batteries to air defense configurations.”

Horvath echoed his commands and the *Prometheus* went to war.

EPILOGUE

WHAT DOESN'T DIE

CYLON BASESTAR 155
CAPRICA SYSTEM

It was like a white hot poker going through her head. That's what she thought as she blinked open her eyes and pushed her head from the goo of the resurrection tub, gasping for air.

"Easy sister," a six purred into her ear. "You're okay."

"Where am I?" she asked.

"Among friends," an Eight replied. "Lilith told us you were coming so we made sure to be in range."

She nodded. "Is it true?"

"Yes," the Six answered. "It's been done."

She took a deep, shaky breath as the truth of her situation hit her. "I'm the last Three."

"Yes," Six said, helping Jezebel from her tub. "But you're the one who's going to save us."

Jez nodded and wiped her face clean and Six and Eight draped her in a warm fluffy towel. "And Lucifer doesn't know?"

"As for as he knows, you're dead and *not* coming back," Eight said with a knowing smile.

"Good," Jez frowned. "Because I don't want him knowing that I'm alive until he sees me with a gun in my hand."

**CYLON PRISON CAMP
LEONIS**

Slider met Mat and Alex at the prearranged time by the burn barrel. He looked around suspiciously as he approached them. "Everything is set," he whispered.

"Good," Alex replied coldly. "We're putting a lot on the line for this."

"No more than the rest of us are," Slider replied just as icily before turning to Matt. "I've got my people ready on the inside."

"Good. We'll go at eleven hundred hours," Matt said. "Be ready."

"I will and good hunting to you both," Slider said.

The three men nodded and went their separate ways. Slider shuffled through the night air back to his living area where he found Lilith waiting for him.

"Well?" she asked.

"Its set," Slider replied, doffing his coat. "We go tomorrow."

"Good," Lilith said. "If this goes off right we might have a chance at saving both of our races from damnation."

BONUS

The Future Part 4

FIELD SITE FIVE
LOCATION CLASSIFIED
SOMEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA
JUNE 6TH, 2009

Dr. Albert Parker shook his head in amazement as he poked his head inside the enormous tent that housed the objects of his attention.

The objects, all of them foreign yet familiar due to his studies of the papers found at other sites around the world, gleamed in the harsh light that bathed the inside of the white tent that sheltered them.

“All of these were found in this condition?” he asked his partner, Doctor Karen Thayer.

“Yes,” she said with a smile. “The chamber that held them had been putting out a strange E.M. field before we opened it.”

“What do you think it was?”

“We’re not sure but we *think* it might have been some type of field that slows down or stops decomposition,” Thayer said with a smile.

“Oh my god, a *stasis* field?” Parker gasped. “That’s the kind of stuff you see on the Sy-Fy channel!”

“I know,” Thayer said, her eyes gleaming. “Follow me- I have something to show you.”

Parker wandered through the rows of objects like a kid in a candy store but what he found in the large area beyond almost floored him.

“What is *that*?” he asked, almost breathless.

In front of him was a ship. It’s large front window was dusty and dingy from time and the paint was faded but there was no doubt from the massive engines on the back and the short stubby wings that it had once soared in the skies above Earth.

“From what we’ve deciphered,” Thayer said as she ran her hand along the hull, “this ship was called a *Raptor*.”

Parker nodded- his eyes wide with wonder as he examined the ship. “Considering the warlike nature of the things we’ve found so far, I’m not surprised that this ship has the name of a predator.”

“If you think *that’s* cool, wait ‘till you get a load of this,” Thayer said as she pulled a white sheet from over something large.

Parker gasped again as a long, sleek and deadly ship came into focus. Her white hull was dingy now, almost an eggshell brown and the red stripe that had once ran proudly down her nose was faded almost to pink but whereas the other ship had looked bulbous and awkward, this ship looked like a *true* predator.

“They called it a *Viper*,” Thayer explained.

“Undoubtedly,” Parker said. “And these were all found in the dig site?”

“Yes,” Thayer answered. “But we found something else too.”

Parker turned and saw Thayer standing over a table and on it was-

To call it a disc would have been incorrect because of the sharp angled edges it possessed but, other than that, it looked like a normal ROM disc that anyone might slide into a player.

Parker picked it up carefully and examined it. “It looks like a memory device.”

“It is,” Thayer replied, “and we’ve found a reader for it.”

Parker’s head snapped over to look at his partner, stunned. “Does it-?”

Thayer nodded, barely able to contain her own excitement. “We’ve adapted it to run into a flat screen. All we’ve been waiting on is you.”

Parker smiled and moved to the device that Thayer gestured to. Placing the disc like device into the reader he watched as the image of a man appeared on screen.

A man-

“These people were *human*,” he whispered.

The man had blue eyes and darker hair. His face had held the expression of someone who had seen many things. As he began to speak the long dead language of his kind Parker fought to keep up with the running translation in his head because, while he understood the written form, he still hadn’t mastered the spoken form and he was hard pressed to stay on track.

One thing he *was* able to make out, however, was a name. It took him a moment to realize that he hadn't said it in his head, but that his partner had said it quietly from beside him.

She must have watched it he thought to himself. *But she said they were waiting on me.*

He put it out of his head and focused on the name because the object appeared to be a log of some sort. He knew then that this person, this *man* was going to be his tour guide on an adventure that would reshape humanity.

And that tour guide's name was Lee.