

INTRODUCTION

“Damascus Falls” is an Apocalypse Galactica scenario set aboard the Battlestar Argonaut. The premise of the game is that the Argonaut, rather than Galactica saved the fleet. Because of that, none of the characters are out of the canon series, but they will mirror their roles (President, CAG, etc). The players take the roles of the major figures (like Commander of the Argonaut) trying desperately to keep the fleet together.

Damascus Falls opens with the fleet retreating from a bad FTL jump. When the fleet arrived they were ambushed by Cylons. They fled back to the last known coordinates but the cargo freighter Damascus was destroyed in the encounter and didn't make it back with the fleet. Also, just before the jump the Commander had disbanded the Quorum of Twelve after a heated argument.

When the game starts the people are outraged, many ships are damaged, and the threat of Cylons catching the fleet in this vulnerable status is ever present.

The scenario is designed for 4-5 players but could probably stretch further if needed. I run this in a four hour slot and every time it has ended with a satisfying resolution in that time.

TIMELINE CHECKLIST

NOW

- Make sure you're familiar with Apocalypse World. The hack (Apocalypse Galactica) relies on using all the principles and moves from the original game, only changed for the setting (More Frak, less Dremmer).
- Print out and cut (if you're up for cutting) the core playbooks, which can be found here <http://www.seannittner.com/apocalypse-galactica/> on letter size paper, double-sided. Select the Battlestar name “Argonaut” on the Battlestar/Fleet playbook.
- Print out and cut (if you're up for cutting) the love letters at the end of this document on letter size paper, double-sided.
- I recommend finding a token to use as XP. You want to get a sense of who is racking up the XP and who needs more attention during the game, this makes it easy. If you own the BSG board game, the plastic raiders work nicely.
- Hx does work differently in Apocalypse Galactica than AW. Take a look at one of the playbooks (besides the Activist and the Opportunist, they deviate from the norm) to see how Hx works.
- Read through this scenario, specifically the love letters and the Battlestar/Fleet playbook, that is where all the action is.

THE DAY BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Read through this scenario again carefully. Start with the love letters .
- In your head, imagine the Battlestar Argonaut. You're players will choose how it came to be the ship protecting the fleet, but you'll still populate the ship with your own imagination. Mock up a few central characters in your head, the XO, the president's aids, the Activists lieutenant, the cocky pilots, the paranoid marines. Look at the names roster and let them mull through head.
- Consider the scarcity of only 30,000 people alive. EVERY life is precious.

RIGHT BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Skim the scenario again. Bring back in to focus any ideas you want to present immediately. Also, imagine a few ways the love letter options can form PC-PC relationships or PC-NPC-PC triangles. Example: If the Pilot wants to shoot down Raiders, how might that compromise or threaten the Engineer or the CAG?
- Make sure you have all the right playbooks (character, Cylon, Battlestar/Fleet), love letters, roster of names, crisis clocks, tokens (if you're going to use them), dice, pencils, etc.

AT THE START OF PLAY

- Give everyone an intro on the hack. Explain the rules just as you would Apocalypse World if the players are unfamiliar with the system. Gloss over the differences if they know it already. One thing that might be worth pointing out (if you're this kind of MC) is the advancement option "Reveal yourself as a Cylon". This is a very popular option.
- Announce the character types you'll be handing out, in this order: Commander, President, Activist, Pilot, Opportunist, CAG, and Visionary. The characters that need to be there are the Commander and either the President or Activist (preferably both) to create some internal conflicts. I recommend having an even mix of military and civilian playbooks if possible.
- Who will be the Commander? Pass that person the playbook and love letter. Repeat for the rest of the characters. Remember to offer up the President and the Activist once the Commander is chosen, before other playbooks.
- Have the players start filling out the Battlestar and Fleet playbook by having each player check on option and pass the playbook around. The highest ranking military leader should have the first pick of the Battlestar options and the highest ranking civilian should have first pick of the fleet options.
- On an index card (or white board if you have access to one) give the highest ranking civilian the current population and tell them they need to keep track of it through the game. Everyone someone dies, instruct them to reduce it.
- Have the players start with the letters, then go on to the playbooks, and back to the love letters (to make a roll) at the end.
- Oversee character creation, introductions, and Hx (remember that Hx works a little different than in AW), as normal.
- Oversee the moves in the love letters.
- Set out two Cylon Playbooks (folded so players cannot see the content) and remind them it's a option if they want to join the winning side.
- The session starts. Players (like Commander and Visionary) make their opening moves and the game begins!

THE SITUATION OVERALL

SECURITY CRISIS

The Cylons are a constant threat, which manifests in several ways:

The Miya San (Captain: Sherri Nisset) has a dirty nuke on board that just had a containment breach. People are going to get sick from radiation poisoning at the very least, the nuke might go off and blow up half the fleet at the worst.

The Condor (Captain: Karina Halphen) lost their FTL drive in the last jump and can't make another one until that is fixed. There is some question (from the pilot and engineer) about whether or not this was sabotage.

If the Cylons knew the fleet's location last jump, maybe they know where the fleet is now? This can come to light by the question of a traitor in the midst (see below), raiders making it back (from the Pilot's love letter), or a Cylon player taking the "Ambush" move or resurrecting with the fleet's location.

Due to all of these factors the Security Crisis clock should start at 6:00 (If the President is in play, give them the clocks to manage, their love letter will tell them to set it).

MORALE CRISIS

Morale is Frakked. Here are the major points of contention.

The coordinates were scouted by a Raptor pilot (Touchdown) and supposed to be safe? Did Touchdown make a mistake, or maybe it was the Electronic Communications Officer (ECO) in charge of surveillance? Or is one of them a traitor, or worse, a Cylon? The idea that Cylons can look like humans is spreading and causing a lot of people to become overly paranoid and suspicious of each other.

The Commander disbanding the Quorum of Twelve cost the military support from the fleet. The President (if no one else) will demand an explanation and that the situation be rectified. This won't be easy, even if the Commander consents, the Condor is already on its way to mutiny.

Only the Battlestar stay around long enough to see the Damascus destroyed, the rest of the fleet jumped first. Civilians are taking notice though and looking for answers. Nobody wants to hear that a ship was left behind. What if it happened to them?

Due to all of these factors the Morale Crisis clock should start at 6:00 (If the President is in play, give them the clocks to manage, their love letter will tell them to set it).

PLAYERS AS CYLONS

Cylons, besides those that appear in space, or with chrome domes, are never controlled by the MC. I mean, sure, if you want someone to be a skin job, that is your prerogative, but I don't recommend it. When someone gets 5 XP and they are ready for an advancement, give them a little raised eyebrow and suggest "want to be on the winning side?"

Cylons as PCs, especially because they don't come out till midway through the game (thanks to it requiring XP) add the final piece of paranoia and dread the game needs to capture the desperation of the show.

WRAPPING IT UP

At the end of the session, we want to know if the fleet makes it and with who still alive. Do the Cylons find them, is the Condor abandoned? Push hard to reach an outcome that leave everyone feeling like that was a thrilling episode of the show.

END OF SCENARIO

Print the pages below

40 years after the First Cylon War, the Cylons have returned and their wrath has brought humanity to the brink of extinction. The remaining humans, led by the crew of the Battlestar Argonaut, have fled in hopes of finding a new home, known by legend as Earth.

After the initial onslaught, a new terror was discovered. The Cylons can now appear human and have infiltrated the fleet from the inside...



DEAR COMMANDER,

The Battlestar Argonaut is yours to command. The last vestiges of humanity, just over 30,000 souls, depend on you for their survival.

Your last jump was bad. Moments after you arrived, a Basestar and several Raiders appeared and attacked. Vipers and ship weapons were able to hold their forces at bay just long enough to warm up the FTL and jump back to your original location.

Damage report indicates 3 civilian ships were damaged and the DRADIS shows the Damascus, a cargo freighter, didn't make it back. Unless the President has already done it, drop the ship count by 1 and population by 634.

Losing the Damascus isn't your only concern though. Before the last jump you got into an heated argument with the Quorum of Twelve, who insisted on arming civilian ships. With what supplies and what personnel? After they refused to see reason, you had no choice but to disband them and put them under house arrest. You'll catch hell for that move.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+hard. On a 10+, pick 2. On a 7-9, we'll each choose 1. On a miss, you get them all.

❑ The Quorum didn't go peacefully. You deployed your platoon of marines to escort them back to their ships to quell any resistance but during the attack, you received a brief communication from marines who escorted captain Karina Halphen back to the Condor. "They have us surrounded. Do we have permission to use force?" That was the last you heard.

❑ Godsdamn the Argonaut took a beating. 15 of your crew died in the attack, another 40 were injured, and your weapon systems were damaged. Antiship guns and nukes, if you have them, are offline until you get it repaired. 4-supply is needed for all these repairs. Drop population by 15.

❑ A Gemenon ship, the Miya San, is requesting military aid. Their captain, Sherrie Nisset, a former member of the colonial navy, was granted entry on the Argonaut and she is waiting for you now.

SO SAY WE ALL!



COMMANDER

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DEAR CAG,

You are Captain of the Air Group, and in charge of a lot of hot-headed Viper jockeys and wise-cracking Raptor pilots.

Your last jump was bad. Coordinates that were reported safe landed you right in middle of Cylon forces. Moments after you arrived, the fleet was attacked by a Basestar and several Raiders. Because of the ace flying of your Viper squads you were able to hold the Cylons off long enough for the fleet to warm up the FTL and jump back to your last coordinates.

Before the games starts, I'll ask you to roll+sharp. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

The Quorum of Twelve chose you to be their military Liaison. Just before the last jump, Karina Halphen the Sagitarion representative and captain of the Condor sent you an encoded message "The commander has disbanded the Quorum. We are under house arrest on our ships. Please advise."

One of your Raptor pilots, Touchdown (Selena Valakis) reported the coordinates safe before you launched. She's missing and so are two Viper pilots Ricoh and Boards.

Too little sleep is wearing on you. You've been snapping at people that don't deserve it or missing their mistakes. Name one of the players that you either tore into without reason or let get away with something you should have caught. What are you going to do to fix it?

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CAG

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DEAR PILOT,

You were the one out there blowing away the machines. You got 6 confirmed kills just in that fight alone. Godsdamn you are good!

It happened all the sudden. The fleet was making a routine jump and the next thing you know a report from the CIC says there is a Basestar and 20 Raiders on the DRADIS. With your flight suit barely on, you launched and saved the day, but it was close. Your ship took a beating; mark 1-harm and activate the ship's weakness until you get it patched up.

The fleet jumped back to the last know safe coordinates, but but the civvy ships took some serious damage and the Argonaut hanger bay is a mess.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+cool. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

- A small group of Cylon raiders made the FTL jump with you. 2 are charging towards the fleet right now. Frak!
- The commander sent the fleet back to our original coordinates? The Cylons were in wait for us there, how can we know they aren't here? We need to jump, now!
- You saw the fleet jump. The Condor took too long to sping up their FTL drives. Someone on that ship was trying to hold the fleet back. There is a traitor on that ship that endangers the whole fleet!

SO SAY WE ALL!



PILOT

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DEAR ENGINEER,

You knew. Just a split second before the FTL engaged, something in your bones told you not to jump. But it was just a hunch, right? You can't tell the commander of a Battlestar not to jump because you have a hunch. The jump was bad. A Basestar and Raiders were waiting for you. You got the Viper jockeys in their jets and worked on warming up that FTL as fast as you could, but the Battlestar can't leave until the fleet is ready, so you watched and waited as every ship in the fleet jumped back to the last known safe coordinates. Every ship but one. The Damascus. Her jump drive never fired up. DRADIS must have malfunctioned and reported "all clear" because the Argonaut engaged the FLT anyway. The Damascus was left behind.

The Argonaut is all torn up, Vipers are damaged, and cries for aid from civilian ships fill up the comm waves. So much for taking a break ever again.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+sharp. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

Sherrie Nisset, captain of the Miya San, just came aboard and went straight to the commander's quarters. You worked with her before and that lady is trouble. She used to be part of the Colonial Navy. Why was she discharged?

Everything is frakked. Between civilian ships, the Battlestar's systems and the Vipers, there is too much to fix and not enough materials or manpower to do it with. You can salvage 1-supply from the wreckage if you're willing to scrap something. What is it and who are you going to piss off if you do it?

Lords of Kobol! FTL drives keep failing! The Damascus didn't make the last jump and you were the one who personally supervised the last maintenance on it. Why are all these FTL drives acting up? Was it something you did? Name 1 other ship you personally worked on recently (Miya San, Condor, Colonial One, Battlestar Argonaut).

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ENGINEER

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DEAR PRESIDENT,

You were aboard Colonial One when the fleet jumped. Suddenly you're in the middle of Cylon ambush. Thank the gods the fleet was able to jump back, but the Damascus, a cargo freighter, didn't return.

Now you have to keep everyone calm before there's a witch hunt. Was it a trap? Is there a Cylon in the fleet? It doesn't help that moments before the jump you received word that all 12 members of the Quorum have been put under house arrest. Your people are panicking.

Unless the Commander has already done it, drop the ship count by 1, population by 634, and raise the Morale Crisis and Security Crisis to 6:00.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+cool. On a 10+, pick 2. On a 7-9, we'll each choose 1. On a miss, you get them all.

You need to make a statement to the people quickly, before rumors of Cylons in the fleet become rampant. You have no intelligence yet, however. Officers on the Argonaut haven't responded to your request for information, you're going to have to speak with one of the military leaders to find out what happened.

You need the Quorum back, and now! Without them, there is no chance of keeping the Fleet's confidence. Who the Frak gave the order to disband them?

The Condor, an agricultural ship responsible for a significant portion of the fleet's produce, was damaged during the fight. Their FTL engines burnt out and it's a miracle they made the jump back with the fleet in the first place. If their FTL isn't fixed, they won't be able to perform the next jump. If the Cylons know where you are, that could be any moment.

SO SAY WE ALL!



PRESIDENT

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DEAR OPPORTUNIST,

You were in the commons on the Condor, having a glass of ambrosia when the fleet jumped. And came under fire! Aren't they supposed to have intel, recon, something that would prevent the whole fleet from jumping into a Cylon ambush? Thankfully the fleet—or most of the fleet—made it back.

Your little birds are all a-twitter. Was the Damascus destroyed or left behind? Who didn't do their job, leading to the bad jump? Is there a skin-job in the fleet? There's a lot of power behind these questions, and power behind those who can find the answers, too.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+hot. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

- What was Captain Samuel Hsing thinking? He barely got the Condor safely back with the fleet. He is a member of the Quorum of Twelve, but word is that the commander placed him under house arrest. He is NOT the man fit to captain the Condor. How are you going to make sure he is replaced?
- What this fleet needs is a hero they can believe in. Pick another player character you have in mind. Earn 1-favor if you can get them recognized as a hero in the fleet.
- Commanders need advisors to talk to the people. You're just the person; you just need to prove it. Name a character (NPC of importance or PC) that you need to get out of your way first!

SO SAY WE ALL!



OPPORTUNIST

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DEAR VISIONARY,

You never asked to see the divine. Mystics never do. Was it divine will that brought humanity these trials or simply our own hubris? Will all of this make sense one day or is your faith as superstitious and ludicrous as most people believe?

Space compacted around you and for a brief moment the entire fleet was everywhere and nowhere at once. When the jump completed, the skyline was not filled with stars, but Cylon warships. There was fire in the sky and a blazing battle broke out around you. The ship you and your followers live on, the Miya San, was damaged during the fight and two of your people were killed in a fire that broke out onboard.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+faith. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9 choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

- One of the pilots, a man named Alley Cat, saw something extraordinary while he was flying his Viper through the Cylon attack. You need to know what that is before political machinations silence him, and determine if he too has touched the divine.
- Your followers aren't safe on the Miya San; you've heard that there is a radiation leak on the ship. The Argonaut is massive, surely they could suffer your small congregation for a short while. Name a player character you need to get cooperation from to make this happen.
- You've heard that one ship, the Damascus, didn't make it back. There were hundreds of souls on that ship. Someone needs to be looking for them, even if it is just a scout, to find out if any are still alive. Perhaps they can still be saved. Go save them.

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VISIONARY

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DEAR ACTIVIST,

These are the times when the worst atrocities are committed. Fallout from the first Cylon war 40 years ago still shows the separation of classes today. Capricans command ships, take office, and invest the Colony's resources in their own interests. Meanwhile Sagitarians are lucky to get work on a fuel refinery ship.

Some people say now is the time to follow orders, to show your support. Frak that. Now is the time for change!

The Quorum of Twelve, the only semblance of democracy simultaneously resigned. Not a day later, the fleet jumped into a Cylon ambush and took heavy losses. How can anyone have faith in the military and politicians when they continue to fail and betray us at every turn! The Damascus didn't make it back. Was it destroyed or just left behind?

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+hard. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9 choose 2. On a miss, we'll each choose 1.

The Quorum may not have been a good government, but this is martial law! One of the Quorum members, Karina Halphen (captain of the Condor) has made you an offer. Give her aid, and she'll side with you and give you 4 Colonial Navy hostages. Your criminals are eager to make this happen!

You have a dirty bomb, an old nuclear warhead, aboard the Miya San. It was never meant to go off, just leverage in case you needed it. The ship was hit during the attack and the report you received from the guards you posted around it was that the containment (which was never very good) was damaged. What are you going to do about this mess?

Control the Battlestar Argonaut and you control the fleet. With so many systems damaged and so much chaos, there is no better time to make your coup d'état. Name one of the player characters and tell us what you need from them so you and your criminals can make a grab for power.

SO SAY WE ALL!



ACTIVIST