

## 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