

## INTRODUCTION

“33” is an Apocalypse Galactica scenario set during the first episode (after the miniseries) of the re-imagined Battlestar Galactica series of the same name. During the show, one of the ships, the Olympic Carrier disappeared for several hours and when it returned, the rest of the fleet suspected it might have been infiltrated by Cylons. To protect themselves, they destroyed the Olympic Carrier, never knowing for sure if it still had the 1345 souls aboard it or if it was a Cylon trap.

The game takes place on the Olympic Carrier and seeks to answer the question, what happened on that ship. It is designed for 4-6 players, in my experience 6 works very nicely. We ran a six hour game slot, but it could be done in 4 as well, just monitor the time as you go along.

## 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).
- If you can, watch the episode “33”. It's a great show. Pay particular attention to the tension around the Olympic Carrier. There isn't actually that much about it in the show (maybe 10 minutes total) but the way the show's cast responds to the incident should flavor the communications the PCs have with the fleet. Also, it is good to get a sense of how exhausted everyone is. The game starts after five days of constant jumping, everyone and everything is breaking down.
- 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.
- 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.
- Also, get an egg timer. A cheap one costs about \$3. Trust me. Invest in this.
- 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, 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 how terrified the crew aboard the Olympic Carrier must be, and the perseverance it requires to keep jumping time and time again. Think of some of the mundane complications of food running out, people making mistakes due to fatigue, latrines being clogged up, and more than anything else, everything on the ship breaking.

## 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 Olympic Carrier could get cut off from the fleet. Communication systems failing, FTL drive out of fuel, sabotage, etc. Don't pick how it will happen, just start thinking of ideas that you could use when someone misses and it's your turn to make a hard move.
- Make sure you have all the right playbooks, love letters, Cylon playbooks, list of names, egg timer, tokens (if you're going to use them), dice, pencils, ect.

## 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.
- Tell them about the episode 33. Tell them that together you are going to find out what happened on the Olympic carrier. If you are up for it, hack together bits of the video and show them a few minutes of the show, just highlighting the parts relevant to the Olympic Carrier.
- Set the egg timer to 33 minutes and start it. It's okay if it goes off in character creation (It almost certainly will). Just interrupt what they are doing and quickly ask everyone a question about what they are doing when the clock goes off. Imagine this part like the first jump of the show. Things are frantic but still working. Use this just to show how tension is building but nothing is broken yet. Don't ask for any die rolls, assume they are successful.
- Announce the character types you'll be handing out, in this order: captain, activist, visionary, engineer, marine, businessman, and opportunist. The characters that need to be there are the captain and either the activist or visionary (preferably both) to create some internal conflicts. The engineer has a very fun and very impossible job of trying to keep the ship from falling apart, so I highly recommend that playbook as well.
- Who will be the captain, pass that person the playbook and love letter and. Repeat for the rest of the characters. Remember to offer up the visionary and the activist once the captain is chosen, before other playbooks.
- 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. The captain rolls for resources (if appropriate), and away you go.

## THE SITUATION OVERALL

### OUTSIDE

The Cylons are a constant threat, probably now more so than any other time in the series. They show up every 33 minutes relentlessly (remember to use the egg timer). They should constantly be on everyone's mind as they relentlessly attack the fleet. That is until the Olympic Carrier is lost. My recommendation is that once this happens the Cylon threat changes. Either they are lost in space and don't see any Cylons at all, or they have been boarded. But regardless, stop the clock until they catch back up with the fleet.

When the Cylons do appear, describe the timers going off, the rest of the fleet starting to jump and then turn to the characters, who will invariably be in the middle of other problems when it happens. Make it clear that it is up to them to jump the ship.

### INSIDE

Not only is everything breaking, but everyone has an agenda. Even though the show focuses on the Cylons as a threat, they are really just a catalyst for conflicts aboard the ship. Since the Cylons can't really be fought, the actual tension takes place inside the ship, as people suspect each other of being Cylons, as personal grudges flare up, and as mutiny threatens to tear the ship apart.

Some of the specific problems (which you'll see in the love letters):

The Fathers of Kobol. These people are civil disobedients with the best intentions. During the miniseries (which happens just before the episode "33") many ships without FTL drives were left behind. This wasn't a clean break; it separated families from each other. The audience saw, but no one on the show knows what happened to those ships left behind. The Fathers want to go back for their families. They will try to seduce both the Visionary and the Activist to joining their side and try to use this time of chaos to take over the Olympic Carrier and seek out the ones left behind.

Marines aboard the ship are terrible at crowd control. Given the outbreaks things are worse than normal. The marines are the only semblance of military law on the ship but they are outnumbered five hundred to one. They aren't the best independent thinkers and are confused by an enemy they can't shoot.

Several of the crew members and passengers pose specific threats:

- Dr. Amarak – He knows information that implicates Gaius Baltar. Amarak is like Pandora's Box. Him talking (or the potential of him talking) is exactly what gets the ship blown up in the show. Remember that when the players are handling him. However, DO NOT let him steal the show. Amarak is meant to be a threat, not a get out of jail free card or a protagonist. He should be like a live grenade everyone is playing hot potato with.
- First mate Mikah has broken under the stress. He doesn't know what to do and doesn't have any confidence that the Captain does either. If ever you need a weak link to break, it's him. He can botch a jump, communicate implicating information to Galactica, or even mutiny on the captain if the Fathers (or the Activist or Visionary) get to him. He's got no business being at his post but there is no one else to do it. He's not a bad person, he's just soft.

- Polati, the marine. Polati is my favorite. He's like Dremmer, he ends up in all of my Apocalypse Galactica games. He's a paranoid nut. If the paranoia on the ship isn't running high enough, bring Polati in. He's certain that one of "us" is actually one of "them". Here's the horrible part, he's probably right.
- The Visionary, the Activist and the Businessman all have plans for the ship, all of which probably conflict with the captain on at least some level. They may be able to find a common enemy with the Fathers of Kobal, or they may just add another problem to the Captains already very long list. Yeah, this game is like that, just a cascading snowball of disaster.

The ship is literally falling apart under all the strain of constant jumps (and possibly efforts to sabotage it). Picking what to fix is usually the hardest part. Communications, FTL, and life support are all fair game.

Finally, everyone has a personal option to suffer some gnarly punishment because of something they did, like being shot, exposed to radiation, etc. I put those in there for players that don't like forming relationships before the games starts. Some just want to focus on themselves, so I made it an option, but a costly one and one that requires action (and presumably interaction with other PCs). If you see a lot of the players choosing the third option, you're game is going to be less about character growth and relationships as it is about overcoming adversity. Either one is fine, just know this is a self-selecting option for the players.

## **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 what happened to the Olympic Carrier. It doesn't have to match the show at all (though my players have made that happen) but we want to know its fate, so make sure to push very hard for a definitive answer. Are they blown up by Lee like the show, do they self-destruct, are they taken by Cylons, are the lost in space looking for the abandoned fleet?

Remember that at the beginning of the game you told he players they were going to find out what happened aboard the Olympic Carrier, make sure to come through on that promise.

All the tools you need to do that are baked into the game:

- Hard moves = opportunity to cut the ship off from the fleet, ramp up the crisis and really make it there story.
- The timer, every 33 minutes consider how much time is left. Push hard at the end to wrap.

Print the pages below

After 40 years you had forgotten they existed. Everyone had. But the Cylons didn't forget you. With no warning and leaving you no time to prepare, they attacked the 12 colonies and destroyed civilization. Now all that is left is Galactica and a small fleet. A few thousand souls are all that separate humanity from extinction.

Even after all of the destruction they will not be satisfied until everyone is dead. Ever since the stop at Ragnar Anchorage they have been chasing the fleet relentlessly; they keep finding you, and the fleet jumps away. They find you, the fleet jumps... they find you, the fleet jumps. Over and over for the last five days. Every 33 minutes they find you, every 33 minutes you jump. There is no time for rest; there is no time to consider what might be happening. All you can do is jump and pray, pray to the Lords of Kobol that this time will be the last...



**DEAR CAPTAIN,**

You are captain of the Olympic Carrier, a passenger liner filled with people from all 12 colonies. Life has been a living hell for the last five days. You haven't slept, you've barely eaten, and your exhaustion is well past getting the better of you.

Just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, the passengers aboard your ship have rallied against you and against the fleet. A militant group that calls itself the Fathers of Kobol has taken over portions of the ship, and demands that you yield the ship to them. Gods damn, you catch enough heat from the brass on Galactica as is. The last thing you need is a mutiny. They would sooner blast you out of the sky than lend you aid. And no one has time to help; they are all watching the clock.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+cool. This is to find out how many good calls you made that went horribly wrong. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

The Fathers announced across the ship's communications that they were taking over. You couldn't let the fleet find out, so you ordered Mikah, your first mate, to shut down the comm systems. Only now they won't come back up. You're radio dead, you cannot report to Galactica, and you cannot receive new coordinates. Frak it! Mark experience.

You had two marines on board (Polati and Sadik) that you ordered (despite not having authority over the navy) to disperse the uprising. Polati was injured and fell back. Sadiki was captured taken hostage. Galactica expects them to report in after every jump. The Galactica Executive Officer Saul Tigh is NOT a patient man.

You tried to talk to Cyrus, one of the Fathers, in person and earned a bullet for your efforts—maybe because you came with a weapon yourself. Either way, you've been shot and it's clouding your head. Mark your harm at 3:00 and take -1 ongoing until you have someone look at it, or at least get some morpha to stop the pain.

**SO SAY WE ALL!**



CAPTAIN

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**DEAR ENGINEER,**

Thank the gods you are here; this ship needs you. The direness of the situation became immediately clear once you arrived. The Carrier was never meant to make this many consecutive jumps all at once. She's going to tear herself apart.

You'd been working yourself to the bone trying to put out fires when things suddenly went from bad to worse. There was shouting in the hallway, loud enough to be heard over the engine noise, and then gunfire. Two shots rang out like thunder. There was a brief message sent over the ship's comm:

"We are the Fathers of Kobol. Commander Adama and President Rossilyn have betrayed us and they have betrayed you. We are taking over control of the -" The message was abruptly cut off.

Before the game starts, I'll ask you to roll+sharp. You've done everything you can, but today that isn't enough; there are more things breaking than one person can fix. Let's find out what you've missed. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

Frak! You haven't had time to check every hatch and relay. Somehow a passenger named Yori got into the engine room and fell into the reactor array. She is safe for now, but one wrong step down there and she'll be incinerated. The only way to get Yori out safely is to spin down the FLT drives. They take 20 minutes to spin back up, if you're lucky. And you know if you do it without the Captain's approval, your head is on the block.

Two armed men just entered the engine room. "We've taken over the ship. The people have spoken." You're trapped in the engine room. They have guns, you have a wrench. Name one other character at the table that knows you are trapped.

It's gotta be the stims. They've always messed with you. Now it's worse than ever. Between jumps you've seen things. Time stands still and for that brief moment you sense luminous bodies speaking to you. Hallucinations surely, but they seem to have a message: maybe even a way out of this whole entire mess. If only you could understand. Take -1 ongoing until you can get these voices out of your head.

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ENGINEER



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**DEAR MARINE,**

Being stationed on the Olympic Carrier was supposed to be an easy assignment, but nothing is easy after five days of constantly jumping. This ship is falling apart, and you're the only person keeping it in one piece.

You were never trained in crowd control, and yet now you're the voice of authority on a ship filled with a thousand ingrates who are never satisfied with anything and expect you to move star systems for them.

The tension of this constant chase is more than most people can handle. You've had years of training and even you are starting to crack... the passengers have lost it. An independent faction has announced its intentions to take over the ship. A group called the Fathers of Kobol is not only armed but they've rallied the people to stand by them. It's a mutiny!

You've tried to be firm but fair by following Adama's example, but he never had to deal with a thousand angry and violent people trying to tear his ship apart. Before the game starts I'm going to ask you to roll+hard to see how your attempts to discipline the ship's passengers have backfired. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

You shot someone. Yeah, you know you weren't supposed to, but gods damn it, she had lost her mind and was going to open an airlock on the ship. You had to stop her. Now she's bleeding to death. Her name is Tara, she's got a family here, and she's hanging over your shoulder.

You've sealed a bulkhead with four members of the Fathers in it. It was a good way to isolate the problem without someone getting hurt. Then you realized locking them in meant locking yourself out of environmental controls...and it's getting warmer.

You heard something on Ragnar Anchorage that chilled you to the bone. Cylons can look like us now! You mentioned this to another marine named Polati, and you've watched him unravel over the last five days. Now he's out there looking for Cylons everywhere. You're convinced he's going to make an example out of someone, Cylon or not.

**SO SAY WE ALL!**



MARINE

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**DEAR OPPORTUNIST,**

You've seen how this goes down. When people panic they stop thinking rationally and go into survivor mode. Survivors don't need ships full of useless passengers. To survivors the Olympic Carrier is a liability, not an asset. Commander Adama is a survivor—you've seen it in his eyes. You need to make yourself invaluable, and fast.

Thankfully in times of turmoil, opportunities are always presenting themselves. A group of anarchists that call themselves the Fathers of Kobol have started an uprising on the ship. Corridors have been blocked off to ship personnel, at least one hostage has been taken, and you've heard rumors they are armed. Lines are being drawn in the sand.

The Olympic Carrier was supposed to represent the brightest stars in the fleet, and now some of the pawns you've moved into position have inadvertently been taken off the table or turned against you. Before the game starts I'm going to ask you to roll+hot to see how your political maneuvering has complicated matters for you and the ship. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

❑ When you found Dr. Amarak he was afraid to speak—afraid his knowledge of the Cylon attack would implicate him as a traitor. You finally coaxed him into presenting the information to the fleet, but becoming emboldened by his convictions, he decided that he agreed with the Fathers' ideology and joined their faction. You need him back.

❑ You've got the captain's first mate, Mikah, wrapped around your finger. What you thought would be your eyes and ears on the Flight Deck has turned into a liability. Mikah needs constant assurances of your love, is fearsomely jealous of you, and is on the way to being reprimanded for what is obviously unprofessional, if not insubordinate, behavior. Mikah can think only of you, and voices this often. Your welcome among the senior staff is running thin.

❑ You're scared. No...you're terrified. You play it cool most of the time, but everything you ever cared about was destroyed in the Fall and you're afraid that even if you do survive this, you'll have nothing to live for. Tell me one thing or person you care about on this ship; you're at -1 ongoing until you can ensure their safety.

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OPPORTUNIST

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**DEAR VISIONARY,**

You've read the oracle and her prophesies. She wrote "And the Lords anointed a leader to guide the caravan of the heavens to their new homeland. And unto the leader, they gave a vision of serpents, numbering two and ten, as a sign of things to come."

Aboard the Ragnar Anchorage you met a man named Leoben. He claimed that there are not twelve gods, but one true god. Your brief discussion with him stirred something powerful in you, making you question your own faith in the Lords of Kobol.

Since then there have been trials at every turn, but signs as well. Serpents, two and ten. Two Viper pilots found you speaking with Leoben and escorted you back to the Carrier, where you were met by ten of your followers, who all had tattoos of snakes on their arms. You know what this means, You are meant to guide this ship and this fleet to the new homeland!

Not all are ready to receive your fervor however, and some are even angered by it. Others misunderstand your message. Before the game starts I'm going to ask you to roll+faith to find out what trials your visions have presented you. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

Name one of the other player characters. You have promised them to your flock. Change your Hx with them to +3. Once they have made a sign of faith to your followers (ingesting Chamalla root) you can both mark experience. Until then you are acting under fire whenever you interact with your followers.

Yori loves you. Your words gave her purpose after she lost everything dear to you. She wears the tattoo of the serpent proudly. When you quoted Pythia and said that some must perish so others may survive, the crazy girl got it in her head that she must be one of the sacrifices. She has disappeared. Have you sent her to her death?

On the outside you are confident, but the truth is you are filled with doubt. Leoben's faith was incredible and insurmountable, a giant pillar of light compared to the crumbling rubble of your preachings. The gods have never spoken to you as his god has spoken to him. What if you're wrong? Take -1 ongoing until you are inspired to believe again.

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**VISIONARY**

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**DEAR BUSINESSMAN,**

The harder things get, the more people need you. They need your lies to comfort them and your indulgences to intoxicate them. Yet the situation is more dire than even you are prepared to tolerate. For days the fleet has been running, one jump after another. In times like these nobody wants you around, but they all need you.

But business is complicated. On the one hand everyone needs your goods and services. On the other, communication across the fleet is next to impossible. Since you've been jumping every 33 minutes inter-fleet comm channels and transports have been restricted to official military use only. What's worse, some upstart group of rag-tag vagrants calling themselves the "Fathers of Kobol" is trying to push their political agenda, and they are doing it with guns. You don't need all that attention. It's bad for business.

You know what they say about the best laid plans. Choices you have made haven't turned out as you expected they would. Before the game starts I'm going to ask you to roll+hot to find out which of your deals have gone sour. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

- You sold the Fathers their guns. Arming your own ship and letting some other group bleed for you seemed like sound business at the time. You didn't know they were zealots planning to take the entire ship hostage. Cyrus was your buyer; if word gets out that you supplied this uprising, people are going to want your head.
- A woman named Tara wanted schematics of the Olympic Carrier. She said it was to find a safe place to put her family. You told her to use the cargo hold and be gone, but when she offered a case of Virgon Brew, she got your attention. You made the deal and soon afterward one of your stashes was broken into. Mark off 1-supply and bear the reputation of a dupe until you get it back.
- A nuclear warhead was just impossible to pass up, it is the only offering you can make that would get Commander Adama's attention. Smuggling it from Ragnar Anchorage, however, meant exposing yourself to the unshielded reactor core. Mark harm at 3:00 and increase it every time the fleet jumps until you get sufficient anti-radiation treatment. Add a nuclear warhead to your gear.

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**BUSINESSMAN**



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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 colonies resources into their own interests. Meanwhile Sanitarions are lucky to get work on a fuel refinery ship.

These are the times when social structures are formed. The iron is hot and if left alone, will be forged by the same masters that gave themselves privilege forty years ago. Some people say now is the time to follow orders, to show your support. Frak that. Now is the time for change!

Amidst the chaos of the last five days of constant jumps, many have heard your rallying cries for responsibility in government. Some have taken up their own cause. Namely, a faction that calls themselves the Fathers of Kobol, a thieving pack of anarchists that don't understand that change needs a belief and a leader to carry that belief to the masses.

To keep your voice from being drowned out by the rabble, you've had to be hard. Sometimes too hard. There have been some regrettable consequences. Before the game start I'm going to ask you to roll+hard to see how bad things are. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two, On a miss, we'll each choose one.

Before you realized the Fathers were a real threat you had two of your criminals silence one of them; a man named Amarak. They gave him a beating but he fought back and called on more of the Fathers. Things have escalated. One of your men is dead and the rest want blood. Can you keep them from tearing the Carrier apart to get it?

One of your criminals is a plant, or they were loyal and turned against you. Either way, you've found evidence they've been sending communications to Galactica. The Marine and the Opportunist know who is a traitor in your midst. Clean up your house now or be prepared for a betrayal soon.

Everyone thinks you're aligned with the Fathers. They can't appreciate the difference between getting the attention of the Fleet's leaders, and taking a ship's worth of civilians hostage. Take a -1 ongoing until you can distinguish your cause from the Fathers.

**SO SAY WE ALL!**



**ACTIVIST**