

Galaxycats
Episode 3- "Mission Impossible"

We see scenes from Episode 2.

SHEBA (V.O.)

Galaxycats suffered a terrible blow when F'lar forces completely overran the city of Pardela two days ago. Now, as we struggle to hold our own against the encroaching enemy forces, I find myself crucially understaffed here in Rienne; for whilst Vanilla has been suspended from duty, the whereabouts of F'lar defector and double agent Malteazer remain unknown.

Scene switches to Vanilla being steered away by unfamiliar skimmers, then to Malteazer and Mirakova together in the F'lar outpost.

1. Flashback

MIRAKOVA

Well, Malteazer, shall we begin?

Scene fades. Title and credits run.

2. Strike Force Hangar, Location Unknown

Vanilla's skimmer has been landed next to the unfamiliar ones. A dark-haired woman emerges and guides Vanilla out. Another woman, a dark-skinned Pantheran, also exits her skimmer.

VANILLA

Where in hell am I?

WOMAN

Commander Vanilla, welcome to Strike Force.

VANILLA

I can't help feeling I missed a chunk of the conversation somewhere along the line- specifically the part where you explained what Strike Force was, and what exactly it has to do with me.

WOMAN

All in good time, Commander.

VANILLA

Look, the fact that you went to the trouble of bringing here means that you need me in some capacity, and if that's the case, then we'll do this on my terms- starting with just what the hell this place is.

The second woman laughs.

SECOND WOMAN

You have to admit she has a point, Cinnamon.

Cinnamon sighs.

CINNAMON

Maybe if everyone around here could stop running their mouths off, they might actually get the answers they're looking for. Now, as I have no intention of standing around here to chat, come with me- and you might learn something.

Cinnamon leads the way out of the hangar, followed by Vanilla and the other woman.

3. Control Room, Strike Force

A more informal control room than the type used by Galaxycats, with an open plan layout. Cinnamon, Vanilla and the other woman enter to see two more women- a redhead and someone with streaked hair who has her back to the camera. Whilst the dark-skinned woman goes over to talk to the redhead, Cinnamon guides Vanilla to a desk.

CINNAMON

Sit down, Commander Vanilla.

Vanilla makes a point of remaining standing.

VANILLA

Will somebody please tell me what in hell I am doing here?

WOMAN

Of course. *Sit down.*

Grudgingly, Vanilla sits down.

CINNAMON

As I'm sure you must be aware, not everything that goes on in Galaxycats is publicised. Every side needs its undercover intelligence forces, and we perform that function for the Alliance.

VANILLA

Are you trying to say that you're the Strike Force? I thought that was just a rumour.

CINNAMON

Tell people the truth outright, and they tend not to believe it- that's how we've managed to stay hidden for so long.

VANILLA

Fair enough, so you're a bunch of spies- what does that have to do with me?

CINNAMON

In an ideal world, very little. Unfortunately, it seems we need your services to aid us in our next mission- the liberation of Markarre.

VANILLA

What? Markarre is right in the centre of F'lar-controlled territory. Trying to take it back at this stage is madness!

CINNAMON

Not so long ago, people would have said the same thing about Rienne, but you managed it, didn't you? And trust me, we are better prepared than you could possibly have been.

VANILLA

Yes, but...

CINNAMON

Well, now that you've been relieved of official duties, we see no reason why you can't put your experience to good use in helping us retake this strategically important area.

Pause.

VANILLA

I've no idea why you think I can help, but what the heck- it's not like I have any pressing appointments right now. Consider me part of this madness.

Cinnamon nods.

CINNAMON

Well then, I'd better introduce you to the team.

Camera focuses on the black woman.

This is Blossom, computer specialist.

Camera moves to the red haired woman.

Calico, medic and all-rounder.

Camera moves to the woman with streaked hair. Now that she has turned round, we can see that she is a Fessan.

And finally, our deep cover operative, Saffron.

VANILLA

A F'lar! What are you running, Cinnamon?

Cinnamon steps between Vanilla and Saffron.

SAFFRON

Hold your tongue, Pantheran. "F'lar" and "Fessan" are not the same thing

VANILLA

They are to me.

CINNAMON

Saffron may be a Fessan, but she has long been loyal to the Alliance- much like your friend Doctor Malteazer.

VANILLA

I'm still not a hundred percent sure on her, let alone some Fessan working for a shady organisation!

SAFFRON

I hate the F'lar as much as you do; as we share a common goal, it makes sense to work together.

VANILLA

Just as long as I can trust you not to stab me in the back once your objectives are completed.

SAFFRON

I should think you could trust me more on that account than some of your own superiors- or was getting suspended from duty your own idea?

Vanilla glares but says nothing.

CINNAMON

Okay, okay, that's enough. Vanilla, since you're going to be staying here for a while, I'd better show you around.

4. Lab, Strike Force

A laboratory dedicated to studying the latest advances in technology. Various pieces are on show.

CINNAMON

This is the lab, where I spend most of my time researching the latest advances in technology.

VANILLA

Looks more like a treasure trove than a lab to me- do you actually do any work other than stealing other people's inventions?

CINNAMON

It is important to keep abreast of recent developments- one way or another- but don't think I haven't made my own contributions.

VANILLA

Really? Forgive me for being a touch unimpressed, but I've seen a real scientist at work and she didn't bear much resemblance to you.

CINNAMON

Ah, I assume you are referring to Doctor Malteazer. I am, of course, highly interested in that teleportation device of hers- if we had such a thing, our upcoming mission would be that much easier.

VANILLA

Maybe you should have recruited her, then.

CINNAMON

Perhaps. Now, let me you show something that I developed.

5. Hangar, Strike Force

Cinnamon leads Vanilla back to the skimmers.

VANILLA

Forgive me for pointing out the obvious, but I've already been here.

CINNAMON

And I'm sure at that time you noticed that our skimmers were not the normal production model. No doubt as a pilot you'd like to know more about them.

VANILLA

Anyone with half a brain can see they're just modified Suntigers- souped up a bit, perhaps, but nothing to get excited about.

CINNAMON

Ah, but that's where you're wrong- you see, these Moontigers are the first ever skimmers to be equipped with a fully operational cloaking device.

VANILLA

Cloaking device? But that's impossible. You have to be joking- no one's ever been able to complete an operational cloaking device.

CINNAMON

I have.

VANILLA

Oh yeah, so here in your little lab of stolen goodies you managed to perfect something that has eluded the finest engineers of the age.

CINNAMON

Is that so hard to believe? I just took the work that everyone else had done and elevated it to the next level. If Malteazer can achieve it, why can't I?

VANILLA

I've seen Malteazer's teleport in action- I think I'll reserve judgement on your marvellous development until I can say the same.

CINNAMON

You'll see it soon enough. Now, I suppose I'd better show you to your quarters.

6. Living Quarters, Strike Force

Furnished with bed, table, wardrobe and shelves; there is a door leading to the corridor, and one leading to the bathroom, kitchen, etc. Vanilla and Cinnamon come through the inner door and stand just outside it.

CINNAMON

These will be your quarters for as long as you stay here.

VANILLA

And how long will that be? Until this miraculous mission to free Markarre is done?

CINNAMON

Don't worry, Commander, that won't be long- you're just part of the final phase in a very long-term plan. And who knows, once you get a taste of how we operate, you may want to stay here for a while

VANILLA

I wouldn't count on it- spies may be a necessary evil, but they're not one I choose to acquaint myself with.

CINNAMON

It's early days, Vanilla- don't rule out anything just yet.

7. F'lar Outpost, Pardela

As last episode.

MALTEAZER

Why are you doing this, Mirakova? What do you hope to get out of me?

MIRAKOVA

I must fulfil my duty. I must bring you to justice.

MALTEAZER

Justice? What are you talking about?

MIRAKOVA

Don't play innocent with me! I know you were the one responsible for destroying F'lar Command- for murdering Krelston!

MALTEAZER

I don't even remember what happened back at the FC, but if I was the one who destroyed it, then Krelston is the last person I'd shed a tear for.

MIRAKOVA

How dare you!? You worked with us for years, and yet you don't turn a hair at the fact that your actions killed so many of your former colleagues?

MALTEAZER

Unlike you, Mirakova, I don't get a kick out of killing people, but you were the ones who invaded our planet- if we aren't prepared to fight back, we might as well just surrender to you now.

MIRAKOVA

To submit to the F'lar is your duty.

MALTEAZER

Duty? Is that all this war is to you? Don't you care about what you're doing?

MIRAKOVA

I am a soldier. All I need to do is fulfil my duty. You interfered with that, and now you must pay.

Mirakova exposes her cybernetic arm and prepares to show Malteazer a little 'hospitality'. Camera cuts away to

8. Control Room, Strike Force

Blossom, Cinnamon and Calico are all working on something. Vanilla has been left to her own devices, and she is clearly getting frustrated.

VANILLA

Uh, hello? Did you invite me here just to be part of the scenery or something?

CINNAMON

Patience, Vanilla- we aren't ready to use your skills yet. We have to make contact with our operative in the F'lar.

VANILLA

Maybe you should have tried that before you invited me here.

Cinnamon ignores Vanilla and turns to Blossom.

CINNAMON

It's no good- he must be in a situation where he can't risk blowing his cover.

BLOSSOM

Can we do this without him?

CINNAMON

If we leave it too long, it won't matter either way. We'll just have to send Saffron in and hope for the best.

VANILLA

Any chance of letting me in on the conversation?

CALICO

We're just laying the groundwork for this mission, that's all.

VANILLA

Well, maybe if I'm meant to be participating, it would help if you took time out of your busy schedules to explain it to me.

CINNAMON

You'll be given the information you need, when you need it. That should be sufficient. We have spent monai preparing this mission- far too long to give you a blow by blow explanation.

VANILLA

Whatever. Just call me when you need me.

Vanilla storms out of the room.

9. F'lar Outpost, Pardela

Malteazer is looking somewhat the worse for wear, but Mirakova isn't done yet.

MIRAKOVA

You must be tired of being in this situation, eh, Malteazer- trusted so little by both sides that they just use you as their plaything whenever they feel like it.

MALTEAZER

If you're going to kill me, just get it over with.

MIRAKOVA

Why would I want to kill you when I can have so much fun breaking you?

MALTEAZER
Don't- don't do it.

A slow smile spreads across Mirakova's face.

MIRAKOVA

So, even a brave Pantheran agent can be reduced to begging for mercy so easily.
Mirakova slaps Malteazer across the face, drawing blood. Malteazer's head slumps forward for a moment before she looks up again, a strange light in her eyes.

MALTEAZER

She was saying that for your sake.

It seems as if Malteazer's alter ego has emerged, but before anything can happen the wall is blasted open and an assault team led by a dark-skinned Pantheran enters. Mirakova leaps forward to attack them, but they gun her down with deadly efficiency.

SQUAD MEMBER

Is this her?

Malteazer seems ready to do something to them, but-

LEADER

Sheyana, now!

A red-haired Pantheran darts forward and injects her with a tranquiliser.

That's her all right. Let's get going.

The team release the unconscious Malteazer and take her away with them.

10. Galaxycats Control Room, Rienne

Sheba is in the command chair. Aquilegia, Marval and one other are present.

SHEBA

Well, it seems that Renna had more plans for us than just suspending Commander Vanilla- according to the latest reports, a government minister will be coming to the city.

AQUILEGIA

Yeah, now that the danger is past, the bureaucrats come crawling out.

SHEBA

Off the record, I'm with you on that one, Lieutenant- but I don't want anyone here stirring up any more awkward situations.

AQUILEGIA

I assume you'll be treading carefully as well then, Captain?

SHEBA

Of course...well, mostly.

11. Vanilla's Quarters, Strike Force

Vanilla has been idling away the time on her computer when Calico rings the doorchime and enters.

VANILLA

Oh hello, Calico, was it? Come to play with the new pet?

CALICO

Look, I'd like to apologise for Cinnamon; she's never been the most sociable of people, and this mission is important, so-

VANILLA

Yeah, whatever- I get that you're a cosy little team and I'm the outsider, so let's just have me do whatever I need to do and then go on my way.

CALICO

You know, we wouldn't have asked you here if we weren't hoping that you might think of staying for more than one mission.

VANILLA

Well, you can forget about that here and now. I joined up with Galaxycats, not you.

CALICO

Maybe you'll change your mind after you actually see us in action. Cinnamon wants you to fly out with her to Markarre tomorrow and make contact with Galaxycats. You'll get to take one of the Moontigers, of course.

VANILLA

I very much doubt that your modified Suntigers will impress me all that much- and you can tell Cinnamon to stay home. I've never needed a wingman before, and I'm not starting now.

CALICO

It's not our policy to send newcomers out alone. Besides, Cinnamon needs to be there to supervise the operation of the cloaking device.

VANILLA

Great. Just great.

12. Control Room, Strike Force- Evening

Saffron, Blossom and Calico are sitting round the centre table. Cinnamon enters, and joins them.

BLOSSOM

Ah, I see Commander Vanilla hasn't yet been persuaded to spend time with us.

CINNAMON

It's probably for the best- she hardly seems too enthused to be here.

CALICO

And whose fault is that, Cinnamon? If you were a little more pleasant yourself, I'm sure it would do wonders.

CINNAMON

Who cares, really? We just need her help on this mission and then we can get back to normal.

CALICO

Really? I thought we were trying to recruit her on a more permanent basis.

SAFFRON

I doubt she would even want to work with a Fessan on a permanent basis.

BLOSSOM

Don't take this the wrong way, Saffron, but in her line of work she has to shoot down F'lar every day. Don't you think that's a hell of a lot easier if you persuade yourself to hate the enemy?

SAFFRON

I am not the enemy.

CALICO

Vanilla's only been here a short while. She just needs time to get to know you- to know all of us.

Vanilla enters.

VANILLA

I see talking about people behind their backs is one of the standard operating procedures at Strike Force.

Blossom and Calico have the grace to look embarrassed.

I shouldn't worry about it too much- there's not a great deal of scope for my opinion of you all to get much lower anyway.

Vanilla stalks back out.

BLOSSOM

That could have gone better.

13. Strike Force, Exterior- Next Day

Vanilla and Cinnamon take off in Moontigers.

14. Control Room, Strike Force

Blossom and Calico are seeing off Vanilla and Cinnamon, who are onscreen.

BLOSSOM

Cinnamon, Commander, you're good to go. Good luck in Markarre.

VANILLA

Yeah, whatever.

15. Int. Vanilla's skimmer

Cinnamon is onscreen.

CINNAMON

Okay, we're clear of Strike Force- prepare to engage cloaking device.

VANILLA

(sighs)

Very well. Vanilla out.

16. Fringes

The skimmers shimmer away into distortions, then nothingness.

17. Underground Cell, Pardela

The leader of the assault squad that rescued Malteazer- Tighe- is there. Malteazer herself is handcuffed and blindfolded.

MALTEAZER

You know, this is getting old- just once I'd like to wake up in my own bed.

TIGHE

Doctor Malteazer, I'd like to extend my apologies to you.

MALTEAZER

A better apology might be to untie me and get this blindfold off.

TIGHE

I think we both know the dangers of letting you make eye contact with me, don't we?

Malteazer says nothing.

Oh come now, Doctor, there's no need to be so coy- Renna already informed us of your telepathic abilities, and in due course, we will know everything we need to about the extent of them.

MALTEAZER

You won't find anything- just let me go and it will be better for both of us.

TIGHE

Someone as dangerous as you can never be let go. I'm afraid you're stuck with us for a very long time.

18. City Streets, Markarre

Vanilla and Cinnamon reappear as they enter the city.

19. Int. Vanilla's Skimmer

Cinnamon is onscreen.

VANILLA

Hey, what's going on? Did you mean for your vaunted cloaking device to fail right in the middle of the F'lar sector?

CINNAMON

Damn- I must have miscalculated the power requirements!

VANILLA

Oh well, it'll just take some smart flying to get us to Galaxycats- nothing I can't handle.

Vanilla goes to the controls, but her vision blurs. She shakes her head.

20. Control Room, F'lar Command Markarre

Fessan Colonel Vanyav is in command. One of his subordinates has just picked up Vanilla and Cinnamon's skimmers.

FESSAN

Sir, two enemy skimmers have just appeared in sensor range!

VANYAV

What? They can't just show up out of nowhere!

FESSAN

I'm sorry, sir, but-

VANYAV

Oh, never mind- just dispatch a squad to finish them off.

SAFFRON

That would be unwise, sir.

Camera swings around. Saffron is there, wearing the uniform of a F'lar Lieutenant Colonel.

VANYAV

Would it now? And just who exactly are you?

SAFFRON

Lieutenant Colonel Saffi Renavia, sir. I'm from Special Operations- I just transferred here last night.

VANYAV

Renavia, eh? I've heard all about you Special Operations people- you think you can just waltz in and take command whenever you feel like it. Well, I'm afraid it doesn't quite work that way when I'm around. Now get those skimmers out there!

FESSAN

Aye, sir.

21. Int. Vanilla's Skimmer

Cinnamon is onscreen. We hear an alarm-clock like beeping.

CINNAMON

Looks like a squadron of F'lar skimmers have been dispatched.

VANILLA

Yeah, thanks, I can read my own monitor perfectly well- but I thought you said Saffron had some influence at the FC here.

CINNAMON

I guess it wasn't enough. We'll just have to rely on your piloting skills, won't we?

VANILLA

Whatever- just don't get in my way.

22. City Streets, Markarre

Vanilla and Cinnamon attempt to flee, but the F'lar skimmers intercept them and a dogfight begins.

23. Int. Vanilla's Skimmer

Something is wrong with Vanilla- her vision is blurred and she keeps having to wipe sweat off her forehead.

VANILLA

What a time to come down with something.

There is a flash of light as her skimmer is hit.

CINNAMON

Vanilla, power to the cloaking device is recharged! Retreat!

24. City Streets, Markarre

Cinnamon cloaks her skimmer and retreats, but Vanilla is unable to do the same. The smoking wreckage of her skimmer streaks further into the city.

25. Underground Cell, Pardela

Tighe enters, carrying a bowl of soup. He bends down to give it to Malteazer.

TIGHE

I thought you might want something to eat.

MALTEAZER

Thanks. Since I'm a captive already, I'm going to assume it's not poisoned.
Malteazer drinks some of the soup.

So, when exactly are we going to get down to business?

TIGHE

If I were you, I wouldn't be wishing for that to happen too quickly. This isn't going to be pleasant for either of us.

MALTEAZER

The difference being that at least you have a choice in the matter.

TIGHE

When a dangerous telepath is involved, there is very little choice.

MALTEAZER

For the gods' sakes, I'm not dangerous! I've never harmed anyone.

TIGHE

There's more than one person out there who would disagree. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have other matters to attend to.

Tighe leaves.

26. Galaxycats Control Room, Markarre

Captain Tawny is in command; several junior officers are present.

GALAXYCAT

Sir, an unknown skimmer has just entered our airspace! They're hailing us.

TAWNY

Let's hear it.

A somewhat the worse-for-wear Vanilla appears onscreen.

VANILLA

Galaxycats, this is Commander Vanilla, requesting permission to lend.

TAWNY

Permission granted, Commander. Lieutenant, open the hangar bay doors- and tell Spira and Angel to greet our guest.

27. Galaxycats Hangar, Markarre

Vanilla has landed her Moontiger; she opens the hatch and staggers out. Commander Spira and Doctor Angel are waiting for her. They both move to support her.

SPIRA

Welcome to Markarre, Commander Vanilla. I have to say we weren't expecting to see you here, much less receive a distress call from you in the middle of a battle.

VANILLA

It wasn't really my idea of an entrance either, but there you go.

Spira moves towards the Moontiger. Angel removes a medical scanning device and starts to scan Vanilla.

SPIRA

Interesting skimmer- I haven't seen these modifications before.

VANILLA

Yeah, it's a bit of a long story, but it all ties in with why I'm here- now, if you wouldn't mind taking me to see your commanding officer.

Angel finishes scanning and puts the medical instrument away.

ANGEL

Commander, you can barely stand- the only place you're going is the infirmary.

VANILLA

That can wait- what I have to say is urgent.

SPIRA

I'm sorry, Commander, but even I can see you're in pretty bad shape. Get yourself down to the infirmary, and I'll inform Captain Tawny that you're here.

VANILLA

That isn't good enough!

SPIRA

I'm afraid it will have to do. Angel, she's your patient.

ANGEL

Let's go.

Vanilla is too weak to resist being taken to the infirmary.

28. Strike Force- Exterior

Cinnamon's skimmer enters the hangar.

29. Hangar, Strike Force

Cinnamon staggers out of her skimmer. Calico is waiting there.

CALICO

Cinnamon, what happened? Where's Vanilla?

CINNAMON

I, uh-

Cinnamon collapses.

30. Corridor, F'lar Command, Markarre

Saffron is walking down the corridor when Vanyav catches up with her. They stop.

VANYAV

Lieutenant Colonel, a moment of your time, please.

SAFFRON

Yes, sir?

VANYAV

I like to keep a close working relationship with my most...promising...officers.

What would you say to dinner in my quarters tonight?

SAFFRON

I would say that you're probably trying to seduce me.

VANYAV

Heh, it's been a while since anyone's dared to talk back to me- but I suppose it's to be expected from you Special Forces people.

SAFFRON

Everyone needs their ego held in check, sir.

VANYAV

I'm sure you think you're safe to say such things, but Special Forces people aren't immune to the chain of command. If you were to ally with me, however, it might be beneficial to both of us.

SAFFRON

Indeed, sir.

VANYAV

Then I'll see you this evening, Renavia.

Vanyav leaves.

SAFFRON

Beneficial for me, perhaps.

Scene fades.

31. Infirmary, Strike Force

Cinnamon is lying on a bed. Calico is standing over her.

CINNAMON

What happened? Where's Vanilla?

CALICO

We just received a message from her- she's not in the best of conditions, but she made it to Galaxycats.

CINNAMON

I feel awful- did we both contract an illness or something?

CALICO

Not quite. It looks like you're suffering from radiation poisoning; we haven't had time to run any proper tests, but the most likely culprit is the cloaking device.

CINNAMON

What? That can't be right! None of the lab tests indicated this would happen.

CALICO

Well, they do say the field is the place where things go wrong- and what you've achieved already is significant. Perhaps if you got some more people in to work on it, you could figure out the problem.

CINNAMON

No, I won't do that- this is my project, and I won't have anyone else coming in to mess it up.

CALICO

Mess it up? As it stands, your cloaking device is a killer! It's not good for anything.

CINNAMON

Then I'll go back into that lab and I won't leave until I figure out how to fix it!

CALICO

And what about the mission? I suppose that doesn't matter.

CINNAMON

You don't understand- if I don't do it first, someone else will! I just want to be the one who achieves something great, the one who gets remembered- is that really so bad?

Calico moves to sedate Cinnamon.

CALICO

Sweet dreams.

32. Vanyav's Quarters, F'lar Command, Markarre

Lavish quarters, as befitting a commander. Saffron and Vanyav have just finished dinner.

VANYAV

Ah, there's nothing like all the old delicacies from home, is there, Renavia?

SAFFRON

Quite a lavish expense, I would have thought.

VANYAV

There's no need to stint ourselves just because we're on another planet- and I'm sure in due course we'll capture enough of Panthera's resources to justify a little luxury.

SAFFRON

Perhaps.

Vanyav pushes back his chair and gets up.

VANYAV

Well then, shall we...?

SAFFRON

Do you always talk this much?

As Saffron gets up, Vanyav moves in for a kiss. Saffron appears to embrace him, but Vanyav jerks back as if he stung.

VANYAV

Is there an insect in here?

He staggers back and then crashes to the ground. Saffron fingers the ring she just used to poison him.

SAFFRON

No, just a little fast-acting neural toxin. Don't take it personally, but I really can't have you messing up our plans...

Saffron drags Vanyav into his cupboard and locks him in.

...and I'm afraid you'll just have to imagine what I would have been like.

33. Briefing Room, Galaxycats, Markarre

Captain Tawny and Commander Spira are on one side of the desk. Opposite them, and to their right and left, sit Dr. Angel, Lt. Commander Silver, Lt. Commander Kyata and Commander Vanilla.

VANILLA

I don't have time to play around, so I'll get straight to the point. I'm here to represent a group who believes that together we have a good chance to launch an offensive that could retake the city

KYATA

Oh, really? And just what exactly have we been trying to do all this time, then?

TAWNY

Quiet, please. Commander, it is a little odd for you to show up out of the blue with a proposition like this, but I know the contribution you made to freeing Rienne. I'm willing to hear you out, and I would ask that everyone here give Commander Vanilla the same courtesy.

VANILLA

Thank you. Now, as I was saying...

34. Underground Cell, Pardela

Malteazer is still there. Tighe enters once more.

TIGHE

Okay, Doctor, it's time to go.

MALTEAZER

Am I finally going to get some answers?

TIGHE

Perhaps.

Two guards enter to escort Malteazer away.

35. Underground Meeting Room, Pardela

Tighe and the guards lead Malteazer in and secure her to a chair. Sheyana and another Pantheran, Krista are already there. Krista injects Malteazer with something before ripping her blindfold off.

MALTEAZER

What are you doing to me?

SHEYANA

It's just a little telepathic inhibitor. We gave you a dose earlier, but the guards still insisted on the blindfold. They're superstitious like that, but I guess I can understand.

MALTEAZER

Those drugs are dangerous! They were banned from the market years ago!

SHEYANA

Unfortunately for you, we don't have to follow the official rules. You see, you have been deemed a threat- and that means we get to deal with you in any way necessary.

MALTEAZER

I can see I'm not going to be getting a say in this.

SHEYANA

I can see you're as clever as they say. Now, what say we take a look inside that pretty little head of yours?

Sheyana prepares to telepathically scan Malteazer.

35. Vanyav's Quarters, FC, Markarre

Saffron has just been working on Vanyav's computer. She logs off and activates a Strike Force communicator.

SAFFRON

This is Saffron. I'm in position- we're good to go.

36. Control Room, Strike Force

Blossom and Calico are there.

BLOSSOM

Acknowledged- we'll inform Commander Vanilla.

Blossom turns to Calico.

BLOSSOM

Is Cinnamon going to be well enough to contribute to this?

CALICO

I'm afraid her physical health is less of an issue than her mental state. She's always been obsessed with that cloaking device of hers, and I doubt very much that we can distract her from it now.

BLOSSOM

Damn! Oh well, I guess we don't need her that much- Calico, you handle communications. I'll see what I can do with this remote link Saffron gave me to the F'lar's computers.

Calico nods and starts sending a message to Vanilla.

37. Underground Meeting Room, Pardela

As before. Camera zooms in on Sheyana and Malteazer.

38. Int. Malteazer's Mind

Malteazer is there, her memories swirling all around on the walls of a labyrinth. Sheyana appears.

MALTEAZER

You're a telepath?

SHEYANA

Yes- and a well-trained one at that. There's no mind I can't crack, no secret I can't find.

MALTEAZER

And you call me dangerous- you're the one violating people's rights!

SHEYANA

People like me are a necessary evil for dealing with rogues like you. According to the reports, you're strong, but I'm not worried- not with that little injection we gave you. Now, let's take a little look-see, shall we?

Sheyana begins pulling out Malteazer's memories, exposing private moments of her early years and her time in the F'lar.

MALTEAZER

Stop it! Get out of there!

SHEYANA

Now, now, Malteazer- if you've done nothing wrong, there shouldn't be anything to hide, should there? Hmm, what do we have here?

Sheyana and Malteazer encounter a dark, sealed door.

MALTEAZER

Don't open that!

SHEYANA

My, my, could it be that we're afraid? Do even you know what's in there?

Sheyana puts her hands on the door and concentrates, as if trying to mentally blast it open.

Malteazer tries to stop her, but mental chains encircle her.

Now, now, Malteazer- don't forget you're cut off from your powers right now.

As Sheyana finally forces the door open, there is a blinding flash of light. Memories of what happened at the FC in episode one and later at Renna's interrogation flood out.

MALTEAZER

What is this? I didn't do any of this!

An alternate version of Malteazer appears in the opened doorway, silhouetted against the light. She steps out and takes hold of Sheyana's face.

DARK MALTEAZER

She's right, little girl- you never should have opened this door.

SHEYANA

What? Who are you?

DARK MALTEAZER

I'm the one you've been looking for- and unfortunately for you, you found me.
Dark Malteazer turns her mental powers on Sheyana, throwing her backwards and lighting her on fire. Sheyana screams.

DARK MALTEAZER

I haven't even gotten started yet.

The chains around Malteazer fade.

MALTEAZER

No, stop!

DARK MALTEAZER

Spoilsport. Well, as you wish.

Sheyana vanishes.

39. Underground Meeting Room, Pardela

As before. Sheyana's eyes roll up into her head and she staggers backwards.

TIGHE

What's going on? Sheyana?

40. Int. Malteazer's Mind

Dark Malteazer turns to Malteazer.

MALTEAZER

I - I - what's going on? Who are you?

DARK MALTEAZER

What, you've forgotten already? You were the one who created me to protect you, remember?

Pause.

MALTEAZER

No...no. The dreams, they're all real?

DARK MALTEAZER

I'm afraid so- but there's really no time to explain. Come on, I'll help you get out of this place.

41. Underground Meeting Room, Pardela

Malteazer snaps out of her trance to find Krista holding Sheyana whilst Tighe and the two guards have guns trained on her.

TIGHE

What did you do to Sheyana?

MALTEAZER

She only got what was coming to her. Now, let me go if you don't want to suffer the same fate.

TIGHE

You're too dangerous to be set free- I'd rather die than release a monster like you!
Malteazer shrugs.

MALTEAZER

Fair enough.

Malteazer takes controls of Tighe and the guards, forcing them to turn their guns on themselves. She steps over their bodies and leaves.

42. Int. Malteazer's Mind

As before.

MALTEAZER

You killed them! How can you be any part of me?

DARK MALTEAZER

I'm the same darkness that lurks in anyone's soul- you just have the misfortune of being able to communicate with me directly.

MALTEAZER

I won't let you take control anymore! Tighe was right- you are a danger to everyone.

DARK MALTEAZER

All I am is a part of you.

MALTEAZER

Not anymore!

A mental battle of wills begins between the two Malteazers. The original is able to fling mental chains around Dark Malteazer, dragging her back towards the doorway.

DARK MALTEAZER

This is the thanks I get for saving your sorry backside? If I was at full strength, you would never-

The doorway slams shut on Dark Malteazer. Is this the last we will see of her?

43. Briefing Room, Galaxycats, Markarre

Vanilla and the Markarre senior officers have gathered together once more.

TAWNY

Okay, we've made all preparations for the assault on F'lar Command- Commander, do we have the go-ahead from your mysterious allies?

VANILLA

I just received a message from them- they have an agent inside F'lar Command working on disabling the internal defences. We'll still have a tough fight on our hands, but not an impossible one.

SPIRA

This is a fool's mission if you ask me- we'll be lucky to survive this, let alone win.

TAWNY

Your objections have been noted, Commander.

SPIRA

And I suppose they carry less weight than the word of the great Commander Vanilla, just because she happened to be in Rienne when it was freed?

VANILLA

Why would I lie to you all? I never said I could guarantee that this plan would work, but what would ever possess me to knowingly send fellow Galaxycats to their deaths?

SPIRA

Oh I don't know; they do say you've been spending a lot of time in the company of a F'lar lately- it's not too much of a stretch to start wondering who you're really working for.

Vanilla stands up sharply and grabs Spira.

VANILLA

Don't you ever question my loyalties again!

Tawny moves to separate the two commanders.

TAWNY

Vanilla, Spira- stand down! This is hardly the kind of conducting befitting two high-ranking Galaxycat officers.

A pause whilst Vanilla slowly sits down.

I am the captain of this base, and the final word rests with me. We've gained nothing by sitting tight and fighting a war of attrition- this mission is the best chance we have to finally get rid of the F'lar. Understood?

Murmurs of agreement.

All right then- move out!

44. Ext Galaxycats, Markarre

Skimmers stream out of the hangar.

45. Int Vanilla's Skimmer

Vanilla is piloting, Silver is in the co-pilot's seat.

SILVER

For what it's worth- I believe in you.

VANILLA

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who believes in me- I'm going to make this work.

46. City Streets, Markarre

Vanilla and her squad of skimmers break through a F'lar defence line and land. Various Galaxycats get out- most are in armoured suits.

VANILLA

Okay team- we can't go any further until we take down the F'lar defence bunkers. Move out!

Vanilla, Silver and Spira form one team. They move to a nearby defence bunker and start setting charges on the hatch.

47. Bunker MA-27, Markarre

Basically, it is a F'lar control room with a door leading to personnel quarters and a ladder leading from the ceiling hatch. A Fessan sits in the command chair, while a Haynar is scanning at another console. We see a schematic showing the 3 Pantherans above as dots.

HAYNAR

Potential intruders overheard, sir.

FESSAN

Not for long- bring weapons online.

There is an explosion and Vanilla's team drops down. They shoot the surprised F'lar, stunning them.

SPIRA

Silver, get to the computer system and bring it under our control!

Silver rushes to the computers and starts working.

SILVER

Automated defences are down- looks like Vanilla's ally left us a back door into the system after all.

VANILLA

I told you this would work.

Unfortunately, the Fessan that Vanilla disabled is still conscious- he draws his laserknife and throws it at Vanilla.

SPIRA

Vanilla!

As Vanilla dodges, Spira fires on the Fessan several times, killing him.

VANILLA

You didn't need to kill him!

SPIRA

Better him than us- and anyway, I thought you hated the F'lar.

VANILLA

I do- but I hate people who take lives unnecessarily even more.

It seems as if there is about to be another stand-off, but Silver interrupts the two women.

SILVER

Reports are coming in- it looks like we secured the perimeter with minimal losses.

VANILLA

All right- now comes the hard part. Silver, you stay here and keep an eye on things- it's time for the rest of us to storm F'lar Command.

Vanilla shoulders her equipment, and she and Spira move out.

48. Control Room, Strike Force

Blossom and Calico are keeping up with reports when Cinnamon enters.

BLOSSOM

Ah, Cinnamon- I see you weren't too busy to join us after all.

CINNAMON

How are things going out there?

BLOSSOM

We're getting intermittent reports, but it looks like the invasion of F'Iar Command has begun. Saffron's given us remote access to their prized computer systems.

CINNAMON

If we had the cloak, we could drive a wedge right into the middle of their defences.

BLOSSOM

But we don't, do we? So we'll just make do with what we can rely on.

CINNAMON

Are you trying to accuse me of something, Blossom?

BLOSSOM

Hmm, let's see- where to begin?

CALICO

I don't think petty bickering is going to help anyone right now, is it?

Pause. Blossom turns back to her computer.

CINNAMON

Whatever- I'm going out there.

CALICO

Cinnamon, no-

Cinnamon turns and leaves, ignoring Calico.

49. Strike Force, Exterior.

Cinnamon launches her Moontiger.

50. Corridor, F'Iar Command, Markarre

Saffron is walking along when she is confronted by a junior Fessan officer.

FESSAN

Lieutenant Colonel Renavia!

SAFFRON

Yes?

FESSAN

We haven't heard from Colonel Vanyav in a while- the head of security is beginning to get worried.

SAFFRON

Is he now? Perhaps I should liaise with him

FESSAN

Or perhaps you should get your secret mission over with as fast as possible, eh?

Saffron is well trained, but even she cannot disguise a trace of nervousness.

51. F'Iar Command Perimeter, Markarre

Vanilla, Spira and Silver have met up with other Galaxy cats, including Kyata, Lieutenant Rathan, Ensign Mithel and Ensign Ginger. They are about to assault the main compound.

VANILLA

We've had an easy time of it so far, but I think we all know it's only a matter of grads before the F'Iar mobilise their resistance. Everyone ready?

General nods.

Then let's do it.

The team starts laying charges outside the compound. On a signal from Vanilla, all the Galaxy cats take cover and remotely detonate them. The entrance to the FC explodes.

52. Corridor, F'Iar Command, Markarre

As before.

FESSAN

Colonel Renavia, or should I say- Saffron?

Saffron's hand goes to her ion gun, even as an intruder alert sounds.

I think you're going to need my help.

SAFFRON

What?

FESSAN

Strike Force agent Mask, at your service.

SAFFRON

The legendary Mask...here? I thought you were a Pantheran!

MASK

Let's just say surgery is easier than it used to be. Now, I suggest we get to the control room and help out your Galaxycat friends with a few tricks I put in place for just such an occasion.

Saffron seems a little uncertain.

Come on now, if I wanted to kill you, I'd have done it already.

SAFFRON

This mission is crazy enough as it is- I guess trusting you won't make much difference.

Saffron heads off to the control room.

53. Loading Bay, FC, Markarre

Vanilla's team is engaged in a firefight with F'lar security and the automated internal defences.

54. Control Room, FC, Markarre

The control room is in a state of emergency as Saffron and Mask enter.

FESSAN

Colonel Renavia, thank the gods! We're receiving reports of intruders and I can't raise General Vanyav! Should we initiate lockdown procedures?

Saffron and Mask raises their guns and shoots the F'lar on duty before they can react.

SAFFRON

Actually, that won't be necessary.

MASK

Not bad. Now, let's see what we can do about taking control of this place. I'll lock down engineering- you see about switching off those internal defences.

55. Loading Bay, FC, Markarre

As before. The internal defences suddenly shut down.

VANILLA

Now- forward!

The Galaxycats charge the F'lar, shooting them down. They continue forward into the facility. Vanilla's communicator beeps and she answers it.

Vanilla here.

SAFFRON

This is Saffron- I've managed to secure the F'lar control room. We're going to pump gas into the facility, so make sure all your teams are prepared.

VANILLA

This is it! Masks on, everyone.

The suited Galaxycats don gas masks.

56. Control Room, FC, Markarre

As before.

MASK

All right, we're good to go.

SAFFRON

Releasing gas.

57. Corridor, FC, Markarre

Masked Galaxycats proceed down the corridor, where unconscious F'lar lie on the floor.

VANILLA

Okay teams, we need to take these F'lar into custody.

SPIRA

If you ask me, we should spare ourselves the effort and vaporise them.

VANILLA

I wasn't asking you. Now, I'm going up to the control room.

58. Control Room, FC, Markarre

Vanilla and Spira enter.

SPIRA

What are these Fessan doing here?

VANILLA

Relax, they're our allies- or at least one of them is. Saffron, who's your friend here?

SAFFRON

Another agent.

SPIRA

Agent of what?

VANILLA

Best not to ask, Commander. Now, let's get in contact with Tawny...er, how do you work the controls here?

Saffron helps Vanilla open a communications channel with Tawny.

TAWNY

Tawny here. I take it from the location of your broadcast, Commander, that the mission was a success?

VANILLA

We've taken control of F'lar Command, but we're going to need help holding onto it. Are your pilots ready?

TAWNY

Ready and waiting.

VANILLA

Excellent. I'll be joining them shortly- Spira, I take it you have no problems remaining here with a skeleton crew.

Spira nods her assent, although she hardly seems pleased at the way Vanilla has taken command here.

All right- Vanilla out.

The communication terminates. Spira turns to Saffron and Mask.

SPIRA

You people- Vanilla's mysterious friends- if it's this easy to take over a city, why have we grunts been fighting so hard?

SAFFRON

My people and I have been endangering ourselves for years to lay the groundwork for this mission. Don't assume it was easy just because you came in at the end.

SPIRA

If you've been endangering yourselves so much, how come I haven't seen you on the front lines?

SAFFRON

I was there- fighting against my own people.

SPIRA

If that's how you feel, maybe you should persuade your people to go back home!

VANILLA

I can't believe I'm defending a Fessan, but Spira- lay off her. Who cares about the details- we're within arm's reach of freeing Markarre! And if you'll excuse me, I'm off to do what I do best.

Vanilla leaves.

59. City Streets, Markarre

The remaining F'lar have mobilised their skimmers to fight Galaxycats.

60. Galaxycats Control Room, Rienne

Aquilegia, Sheba and several other officers are there.

AQUILEGIA

Captain, we're receiving reports from Markkarre- Galaxycats have taken over F'lar Command and are mounting a full scale assault. And apparently, Commander Vanilla is leading it!

SHEBA

I should have known. Well, we might be a bit late to the party, but send out our pilots. We'll never have a better chance to save Markkarre.

61. Control Room, Strike Force

Calico and Blossom are there.

BLOSSOM

Galaxycat forces are holding firm against the F'lar assault- we might just make it.
Cinnamon enters.

CALICO

Cinnamon!

BLOSSOM

Not out there on the front lines, I see?

CINNAMON

What's the point? They're doing fine without me, just like they always have. And when people look back on this day, it's Vanilla's name they'll remember, not ours.

CALICO

That's the price we paid for being able to do this job. There's no point regretting it now.

CINNAMON

Maybe so- but is it so wrong to want to have something I can put my name to? Something I can point to and say to everyone- "that's mine"?

BLOSSOM

Who cares about that? If we can make Panthera safe again, then it doesn't really matter one way or another.

62. Tawny's Office, Galaxycats, Markkarre

Vanilla is meeting with Tawny.

TAWNY

It will take a while for this conflict to blow over, but the F'lar certainly seem to be withdrawing from Markkarre. We've alerted the other city-states to be on guard- now we've got them on the run, we won't let up.

VANILLA

It's not going to be easy, but I don't see that they'll have much choice but to withdraw from Panthera.

TAWNY

Yes, and we couldn't have done it without you and your mysterious allies- although you did fail to mention that you had been suspended from duty.

Vanilla shrugs and laughs weakly.

Well, in the end I suppose it doesn't matter- we got the result we needed. I hope you appreciate that I can't really let you stay here, though.

VANILLA

Of course not- I've been treading on all your toes for long enough. Anyway, it's probably about time I went back to Rienne; I didn't realise how much I'd actually miss the place when I left.

Vanilla stands up and prepares to leave. Tawny also stands and grasps her hand.

TAWNY

Thank you, Commander.

63. Exterior, Galaxycats, Markkarre

Vanilla's skimmer takes off- she is going home, although first there is one more stop to make.

64. Galaxycats Control Room, Rienne

Aquilegia, Sheba and others are there.

AQUILEGIA

I'm receiving an incoming signal.

SHEBA

Is it a report from Markarre?

AQUILEGIA

It seems to be originating from within the city- wait, it's from Doctor Malteazer!

SHEBA

Malteazer? Put her onscreen.

Malteazer duly appears on onscreen.

Malteazer, where have you been?

MALTEAZER

It's a long story- and I can't say I'm entirely sure of the facts myself. I'd like to request permission to return to Galaxycats.

SHEBA

Permission granted, Doctor. I'll send someone out to pick you up.

65. Control Room, Strike Force

Calico, Blossom, Saffron, Cinnamon and Mask are there when Vanilla enters.

BLOSSOM

Vanilla!

VANILLA

Ah, there you all are- leaving Galaxycats to do the clear-up as usual, I see?

CINNAMON

We did plenty already.

VANILLA

Well, the others did, anyway- the only thing you managed to achieve was to nearly kill us with that cloaking device of yours.

Cinnamon tenses but says nothing.

So, what's next for the great Strike Force?

SAFFRON

We had to use all the intelligence we gathered on the F'lar to make this mission possible, and blow our cover in the process- it will be a long time before we can make such a bold move again.

VANILLA

I guess I won't be hearing much from you all from now on, then.

Vanilla turns to go.

CALICO

Vanilla, wait! The offer for you to stay is still open, you know.

VANILLA

No thanks- I was your little go-between on this mission, but that's as far as it goes. I like to work with people I can trust.

CALICO

Given enough time, you might come to trust us.

CINNAMON

Leave it, Calico- we don't need her.

BLOSSOM

Right now, Cinnamon, it's debatable how much we need you.

VANILLA

I think I'll leave you to your little family squabble. See you around- or not, preferably.

Vanilla leaves.

66. Sheba's Office, Rienne

Sheba and Malteazer are there.

SHEBA

And that's really all that happened?

MALTEAZER

Yes.

SHEBA

I don't believe it for a moment, but I understand why you feel you have to lie to me.

MALTEAZER

Captain, off the record...there are some things I just can't tell anyone. Although I suspect it doesn't make much difference- I can't see that I'll be welcome here any longer.

SHEBA

Doctor, for what it's worth, I respect you- and the risks that you've taken for Galaxycats in the past. I won't let the upper brass toss you out into the cold.

MALTEAZER

Thank you, Captain.

Sheba's desk communicator bleeps.

AQUILEGIA (V.O.)

Captain, we've got an incoming skimmer- Commander Vanilla's back.

SHEBA

Looks like they're all coming home to roost, eh? Very well, Lieutenant- I'll go and meet her in the hangar.

Sheba turns back to Malteazer.

Are you coming?

MALTEAZER

I doubt the commander would be pleased to see me.

SHEBA

Oh, I don't know- seems to me the two of you are more alike than you know.

67. Galaxycats Hangar, Rienne

Sheba and Malteazer enter as Vanilla lands her skimmer and gets out.

SHEBA

Back early, I see, Commander.

VANILLA

Sorry about that, Captain- turns out it's more complicated outside of Rienne than it is right here.

SHEBA

Well, given that all reports indicate you were instrumental in the liberation of Markarre, perhaps we can get you back on duty sooner than scheduled.

VANILLA

Sounds good to me.

Vanilla notices Malteazer.

What's this? Even Malteazer's here to welcome me back? By the way, Malteazer, I met an admirer of yours recently; she reminded me how annoying all you scientists are.

Malteazer shoots an 'I told you so' look at Sheba.

SHEBA

You know, given the circumstances, I don't see why we can't take time off to celebrate a little. I'll see you at Russet's Bar later-

Sheba sees that both Malteazer and Vanilla are about to protest.

-and consider that an order.

68. Digital News Report

A typical newsroom, complete with Pantheran reporter.

REPORTER

Galaxycats has issued an official report stating they have reclaimed the major city-state of Markarre, the last major F'lar stronghold on our planet. With our forces now continually harassing the remaining invaders, it seems inevitable that the F'lar will be forced to withdraw from Panthera, ending the long years of occupation.

69. Control Room, Strike Force

Saffron, Calico, Blossom, Cinnamon and Mask are there, watching the news.

CINNAMON

Galaxycats indeed.

MASK

Maybe one day, we'll get to tell our side of the story.

70. Russet's Bar, Rienne

Vanilla enters and goes up to the bar, where Malteazer is waiting. Russet comes over to serve her.

VANILLA

A Velassian Sunset, please, Russet. Has the captain arrived yet?

MALTEAZER

Apparently she's busy and can't make it tonight.

VANILLA

You mean she set us up, right?

MALTEAZER

It would seem so.

Vanilla sits down.

VANILLA

Oh well, Panthera's effectively been freed- I suppose I can get into the spirit of things and share a drink or two with you.

They toast to the freedom of Panthera.

MALTEAZER

It's not over yet, though. As long as the F'lar are still out there, they won't give up on their ideals.

VANILLA

It's a fine bunch of ideals that leads you to attack other planets. I don't care how long it takes- I'm not going to rest until I find the one responsible for all this.

MALTEAZER

I think that's something that we can both agree on.

71. Space- K'trakan

We get our first glimpse at the F'lar home world.

72. F'lar Meeting Room, K'trakan

The upper echelons of the F'lar are meeting.

WARLORD

Our forces have been stretched too thinly- we have no choice but the withdraw from Panthera.

WARLORD #2

This venture was foolish from the start- we should cut our losses and put an end to the war before Galaxycats brings us to our knees.

General dissent from the gathered warlords.

WARLORD

Do we really believe so little in our cause as to give up now? It will take time, but we will come up with a counterattack.

TO BE CONTINUED...