

(Editors note: Many words in this text are use figuratively, to better translate their meaning into the english language.)

"Five minutes until manoeuvre execution!"

Kreasha smiled and settled herself in the cockpit. The upcoming exercise wasn't really to test the pilots, instead it was one of the few exercises designed specifically for the bridge crew. Combat manoeuvring above the earth, the ship would stop directly above the south pole, pointed straight "up", and hold there while the Valkyries launched, before igniting the engines and blasting away. The real trick here was for the ship's pilot to get the 225 metre long ship to a dead stop in such a precise position... all she had to do as a Valkyrie pilot was accelerate out of the bay. Still, it was a manoeuvre she enjoyed, as once the 8-ship left the hanger, they all split up to perform an upward bomb-burst, and she enjoyed performing that, and the view of the ship silhouetted above the earth. All in all, it should be a fun day.

She quickly checked the cockpit, then stared out the open hanger doors into space. She didn't know why she began to reminisce about her past... perhaps it was having glanced at the pictures she had of herself and her mother, placed in the cockpit, a habit she'd picked up from the humans. Whatever the reason she decided to let it continue. Her VF-XX was all set for launch and she really had nothing to do for the next few minutes...

Her mother was a very strong and respected individual, having participated in the last Cizerack/Python war. She was exceptionally gifted, in speed, strength and leadership. In earth standards, she would have been a very decorated soldier, but the Cizeracks didn't believe in such material recognition, instead, her influence and honour grew. She easily became the clan-leader at the end of the war, and under her guidance, the clan grew, gaining much territory on Cashoulis. Race wide, the Purédor name became highly respected. It was only a matter of time before her mother became the

Her father she did not know... but what did it matter? Though her mother rarely followed the practice of killing the mate once birth had occurred, who cared? Kreasha couldn't help but grin as she wondered how much she'd been tainted with the human influence.

The first of 8 females birthed by her mother, Kreasha was now 16 earth-years old. At an early age, she too showed signs of masterful promise. After her several years of standard schooling, unusual for the fact that there were 4 males in her class, she followed her mother's footsteps and entered the military path of schooling. She trained very quickly, and was always top of her pack. She showed well her mother's traits. Her other siblings were fairing well too. It was certain that their bloodline was definitively gifted in an extraordinary sense, and that they would continue to lead the Purédor clan. Kreasha was already being revered as the heir to the throne.

Kreasha smiled in her helmet as she thought of the surprise when she made the declaration. It truly shocked everyone when she announced that instead of taking the offered position in the Cashoulis Elite Marines, she'd decided to travel to earth and join their military. To this day she wasn't sure why she'd decided to do that... the Earthlings had been discovered only a short while ago, and there was really no reason to go there. Perhaps it was the desire to explore, perhaps the attraction to those magnificent transformable vehicles, perhaps some destiny. Recently, she'd begun to think that it was simply the Cizerack's value of self and their work ethic: to travel to the earthlings and prove to them how capable the Cizerack race was, as well as demonstrating to herself and her fellow Cizerack's her abilities and strength. Whatever the reason, she learned as much as she could about the mysterious naked race before leaving Cashoulis for the journey to earth.

Upon her arrival, she decided to attempt entry into the elite Meltran forces. To succeed would mark a great accomplishment... the Meltran forces were strictly Meltran, and were the true elite of all the Terran troops. As a

bonus, she'd feel more at home in the company of the all-female units. Her initial approach to the Meltrans met with much laughter and amusement... until they began to realize she was not kidding. That another was willing to stand up to them impressed the Meltrans, and they decided to give this cat a try. A series of tests were organized, above and beyond the standard Meltran entrance trials, to test the feline. Kreesha managed to pass these with ease... prompting the Meltran to challenge her to a final set of tests, several one on one duels. When Kreesha had managed to defeat 4 Meltran warriors within a few minutes, the Meltran called an end. This was no simple cat, this was a warrior equally strong and fierce as themselves, with the piloting skills to back it up in the modern world of high-tech combat. Kreesha was admitted into the Meltran ranks, and began her new training as a Veritech warrior.

"Two minutes to Valkyrie Launch!"

The call woke her from her reverie. She stretched once more, trying to make the best of a space-suited tail. All things considered, she'd done quite well for herself. She'd carved a very distinguished career as a VF pilot, currently standing as the 2nd in command of the highly elite Azaria Meltran Unit, stationed on the Khyress UN-Spacy dropship. Not bad for just four years. She looked ahead at the two fighters in front of her, the brand new VF-MS Metal Sirens. She grinned. Not that her commanders hadn't done well for themselves. Directly ahead of her was the VF squadron's leader, the remarkable Meltran Ace Myleen. For her, Kreesha had lots of respect... in a sense, Myleen had become Kreesha's mentor. Born and raised near Quebec city, Myleen had been part of the UN-Spacy for 8 years, earning her a high command among the Meltran/Zentran forces. In true Meltran fashion, she stayed with the fighter arm, rather than dispatch herself to a removed command job. She was definitively one of the hottest pilots in the entire fleet, and with her at the command, the Azaria squadron continually defeated all-comers in the combined UN-Spacy wargames.

The other fighter was filled with Commander Thaegar Randil, a third-generation pure Zentran. Kreesha had to admit he was good, and that she had some respect for him, despite the fact that he was male. She chuckled... of all the things that she found the hardest to get used to was the amount of males allowed in the military... and that the male was actually often held in higher regard than the female! Male or not, though, Thaegar was skilled, and the Metal Siren he piloted was a good testimony to his prowess. He was a fair leader as well, a stark difference from many of the other Zentran she'd met.

"One minute to execution. All VF crews prepare to launch!"

Kreesha placed her paws on the controls and looked around her own fighter. In practically all respects, it was a standard VF-XX Valkyrie fighter. It was, in her opinion, a far better craft than the VF-2Sap and Sap Specials... though not as heavily armoured, and with slightly less firepower, its speed was far, far greater, being transatmospheric, and its agility superior, though it didn't match the VF-MS. Not that the VF-XX was any slouch in the weaponry department. With three plasma cannons and plenty of missiles, it could easily hold its own, giving plenty while frustrating the opponent with incredible dodges and leaps. Her own VF-XX, however, had a slight modification... the entire cockpit! Totally modified to suit her unique physique, the modifications rendered the craft virtually un-flyable by a non-cizerack, or, at the very least, they'd be very, very uncomfortable! That the terrans would go to such lengths to accommodate her and her skill proved that they were a noble species, and worthy of her total devotion. Unless they entered war with the cizerack, which was certainly unlikely, she knew she'd give her life to defend them.

"Fifteen Seconds. Valkyrie crews standby!"

Kreesha felt the ship begin its final turn, and she watched the earth drop away from sight. The odd sensation of vehicle deceleration came and passed, as her chronometer counted down the seconds. 5.4.. she felt the clamps release her VF..3..2..1.. Go! Kreesha slammed the throttle forward, impressed with the precise timing...

indeed, her bridge crew was as elite as the rest of the pilots.

Suddenly, as she jammed the throttle forward, a blinding blue flash enveloped all of space! Her fighter screamed out of the launch bay, and she moved to perform her part of the manoeuvre, blinking slightly to clear the afterimage of the strange blue light... as she came about, she gasped in horror. Her baseship was covered in azure lightning, which was erupting from the planet itself! Erupting from what seemed every corner of the globe, save for straight down, the beams of energy cascaded over the entire ship... she checked her sensors and noted that there were only three of them flying in space... the rest of her squadron was trapped within the ship!

Helpless, she watched as the energy beams abruptly ceased, and the ship began to plummet rapidly, as if pulled downward by some powerful source. She formed up with her wingleaders and they followed the Khyress down. The lightning storm seemed to have shorted out all power on the ship, for it was frighteningly dark within the hangar bay, and, of course, the engines did nothing to stop the plummeting ship. Staring intently at the ship, and wondering how they might stop her, Kreesha almost didn't notice the massive debris cloud they'd just flown through... she looked at the Kyress once again to see that it had been severely pelted by the space-junk, and had they not been flying so closely behind, they might have been shredded by it.

The escort carrier continued its elevator descent to hell... the altitude dropped faster than could be imagined, and it seemed sure that the ship would splatter itself over the antarctic continent with an unquestionable fate. Kreesha couldn't help but think of the pilots within, and how she might save them... then, without warning, the engines blared to life, and the ship began to slow... Kreesha's hopes flared momentarily... until she realized that it was too late. There was nothing that would stop the ship now... but it might just be enough...

It was close. The ship had slowed enough to allow the engines to melt a half decent hole before the momentum of the ship carried it into a richter scale landing. With a crunch that Kreesha could hear in her cockpit the craft slammed into the ice, crumpling the engine section like tin-foil, and buckling the bulkheads and structure throughout the ship. Kreesha switched to battloid configuration and landed her craft, the other two surviving pilots doing the same and touching down next to her.

The heat of the crash hit her as she popped open the cockpit. Through the steam, it was easy to see that the ship would never fly again... with the ice now forming around the carved hole, it would be tough enough to ever move it. She dismounted... perhaps there were survivors... she hoped there were. She began to run towards the ship, not waiting for orders from her commander. She knew what to do.

"They're all gone..."

It was 6 hours since the ship crashed. Kreesha sat alone in the wrecked hangar bay, staring at what was left of the fighters. Many of the pilots had been torn in half by the lightning or the landing... she wasn't sure which. The rest of the ship's crews suffered the same fate... or worse, when airlock doors blew open and explosive decompression followed. She might not have the psionic powers that the Chatillian or the Zel might have, but her limited empathy felt the pain and suffering, and the last terrible moments of her squadron... and this, coupled with her own pain from the loss of so many friends... So she sat there, staring blankly into space...

"And that's not the strangest thing."

Thaegar was speaking as she entered the remains of the bridge. It seems that the bizarre lightning wasn't the only piece of the puzzle. Though the ship's computer was still functioning after the electric blast, in fact, that's what "saved" the ship by re-igniting the engine, and though it was still running under reserve power, he couldn't, no matter how hard he tried, to reach any of the UN-Spacy bases. He could get his MS just fine, so the equipment was still working... it was as if the entire UN-S force had disappeared. Kreesha joined the

conversation by pointing out that no UN-S rescue team had come to give them a hand... what was going on here?

"Where are we?"

They left the ship to do a recon of the area. They were still on earth, that was for sure... their geo-maps matched the terrain underneath them perfectly. But something was different, they soon learned... miles upon miles of forest and jungle where cities and roads should have been. And the cities they did find were better described as remains or ruins... whatever had happened had been big. And then there was the walls of power, as they came to name them, 30' high walls of lightning that went on and on for kilometres...

The first monster they ran up against surprised them. It leapt up from the ruins of a city as they picked their way through the streets. It grabbed Myleen's VF-MS and began to rip it limb from limb with it's bear hands! Shocked and totally caught off guard by any monster, let alone a 40' tall winged beast, Thaegar and Kreasha stood stupefied for several seconds before moving in to act. Their weaponry dispatched the monster, but two more came and took its place. As they battled the newcomers, two more emerged and assaulted the downed MS. Thaegar and Kreasha continued to fight, pressing towards their commander when the MS went up in a ball of flame... apparently from the self-destruct mechanism. This seemed to enrage the monsters, for they began another ceaseless attack on the remaining two. A quick decision was reached... igniting thrusters, the two screamed to the stratosphere and returned to base.

"Well, all we have left is..."

Survival was the key now. Wherever they were, it was an earth far different from their own. And with creatures like that, they'd better be prepared. Scavenging the ship, they secured what they could. It wasn't much, unfortunately. Lots of spare parts, but only one extra working VF-XX and one VF-2Sap Special. Most of the missiles had been damaged, but there were still 116 mini missiles still in working condition, and 37 missiles for the MS. Other ammunition was in good supply... plenty of 2SS gunpods, GU-3s and BC-60s were around, with enough ammo to last the two of them for a real long time. Rat-Packs and standard equipment was also in good supply. They divided the equipment, and packed it deep within the ship in the two most secure areas in the ship. Saying their final farewells to Myleen, the two left the ship to explore the world.

Lazlo

The earth continued to shock them. Doing high speed reconnaissance, they were amazed at how much of civilization had been wiped out. It took them a week to recon most of the planet, and it came time to make a decision. They'd seen many population centres, with what appeared to be humans, but where to go? In the end, there was no real logical conclusion... they'd been based out of Toronto, at Fort Henry, so they decided to return there. There was no telling how the people of this earth might react to a talking cat, but it was a risk they decided to take.

They spent the next 10 months at Lazlo, learning much about the world as it is today. Magic, psionics, high tech, the CS, NGR, Erin Tarn, and so on. The choice here was easy... Lazlo was the place on earth most like their time, in terms of tolerance and life quality. 10 months later, they were much wiser about the world, and very respected members in Lazlo's militia. Kreasha accepted this as her new home. If this was the best the planet had to offer in terms of civilization, than it was worth defending until her death.