

Amazing Altering Galactic Guardians: Episode 4

For Leonthar

By TheSpiralledEye

Toby finds himself struggling to control his feminine side while also dealing with personal drama at home and with the rest of the Galactic Guardian Team.

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Toby flipped elegantly through the air, landing in a perfect split before swinging his legs around to knock the legs out from under a Morphling opponent. He jumped to his feet, cartwheeling to the side and snapping his whip into a second and throwing it into a third. From the corner of his vision a flash made him flinch and his eyes darted to where Sara was crouched in the bushes taking photos, as always.

“Don’t you have a job or school or something?” Toby called.

“If you’d agree to an interview-!”

Toby jumped away; this was getting out of hand. He was actually starting to look forward to Morphling attacks that happened somewhere other than Seraphim Lake; just so he wouldn’t have to worry about his little sister acting as paparazzi.

“Pink! Watch your back!”

Toby felt the Morphling behind him and spun around too late to attack. The creature loomed, a great clawed hand poised ready to strike. The next moment there was a whirl of red and he was elsewhere. It took his mind a moment to catch up with his body and Toby realised it was because he was being carried, bridal style, by The Red Guardian.

“Red!” He blushed, “you can put me down now...”

He could feel Derrick's hands cradling his back, curling around his side in such a way that his fingertips were less than an inch away from his breasts. That tiny distance somehow made things feel more intimate, like his body was being teased.

Derrick put him back on his feet and held out a hand, summoning his weapon, a huge mace. Then with more power and speed than any of the other Guardians possessed, he darted forward and smashed through the Morphling that had been about to grab Toby. The display of pure power made a warmth start to burn between Toby's legs. He couldn't help but swallow slightly, his throat felt thick and his skin hot under the skin tight bodysuit.

"Snap out of it." He hissed to himself, gripping the whip tight and focusing on the fight once more.

The fight didn't take much longer; Derrick destroyed the Morphlings without even breaking a sweat while Ella and Toby were breathing heavily.

"Good job you two, just remember to focus."

Toby could hear the hear smile in his voice, but also a slight hint of condescension. Ella didn't say anything but her body was stiff and Toby could sense irritation radiating off her in waves.

"You know Pink, I think your whip and my mace make quite the pair, we should work on some combo moves."

Toby felt himself flush remembering the last time he and Derrick practised together. It was stupid, he wasn't actually a woman, he just pretended to be one sometimes, so why was he acting like a flustered school girl with a crush?

"No!"

Toby blinked in surprise at Ella's outburst; even she seemed surprised by her own words as she took a step back immediately.

"I just think we should all practice as a group, that's all." She added quickly.

Derrick crossed his arms and Toby felt the air grow tense; that had been happening a lot as of late. Ella and Derrick never argued, at least not that he saw; but they had a way of

speaking that always came across as combative. Toby got the distinct impression they were saying more without words.

“Rose is the least experienced member of the group and I'm the most experienced, it only makes sense that I be the one to help her reach her full potential.”

“I can do that.”

“Uh, guys?”

Toby tried to get a word in but they continued to ignore him.

“You're only senior to her, you did a great job to start her off but I can teach her some more advanced fighting styles.”

“Her whip is too different to a mace, you can't teach her any better than I can. And we have a better dynamic on the battlefield.”

“D-do I get a say in this?”

Toby was about to step between them when another flash reflected off his helmet and he groaned. Sara was watching, phone up in front of her face filming as she took photos with her camera.

“Maybe this is a discussion for another time.” Derrick said finally, “I'll see you both back at base later.”

He hit the button on his gauntlet and was gone, in a huff, Ella followed suit as Sara rushed up to Toby's side.

“What was that about?” She asked, “I thought you were all friends, or maybe family?”

“Look, I am sure you're a nice girl.” Toby deepened his voice an octave and stepped back. “But this is none of your business.”

Sara looked like she was going to say more but Toby didn't want to give her the chance, he punched in the coordinates for home and teleported right into his living room and

dematerialised his armour with a sigh. The long hem of his sun dress flowed out around his ankles as he relaxed back in relief. It would take Sara a while to be home, he had a few hours to himself without any bickering guardians to deal with.

Humming happily he skipped into the bathroom and took out the little basket of bath bombs and oils he'd purchased last week. His money was still tight, but he'd managed to get by doing some odd jobs here and there and a bit of online freelance editing work. It wasn't good money, or even constant, but it kept the lights on and allowed him to treat himself once in a while.

Like the scented candles he lit and the mango body butter he set next to the bath ready for when he got out.

Once the bath was run he stripped off, tipped in a handful of pink bath salts into the warm water and slipped in with a happy sigh. The steam carried the floral scent from the bath salts into the air and he breathed it in deeply, feeling the comforting rise and fall of his breasts as he finally relaxed after a long fight. He was halfway through using his new loofa when he heard the door open and Sara call out.

"Toby's out!" He yelled, "and I'm in here."

"Rose, you won't believe what I saw!"

Sara burst into the room and Toby scrambled to cover himself.

"Jesus, Sara, a little privacy!?"

"I'm not looking." She said before screwing up her nose. "It smells like the perfume department in here."

"I'll take that as a compliment now get out!"

"Fine but check out the latest website update!"

"I will now-"

"Yeah, yeah I'm going."

She slammed the door and Toby sighed, sinking back into the water. He stayed under for a few seconds, enjoying the feeling of his long hair floating around his head like a halo before his lungs forced him to surface. Sara would probably bang on the door if he didn't read her damn website update so reluctantly he grabbed for his phone and opened it up.

'Drama among the Guardians? A love triangle?'

Toby rolled his eyes; fucking typical Sara. In her effort to discover the Pink Guardian's identity she was basically turning her website into a gossip rag. There were a few paragraphs of Sara theorising about what could have gotten the three of them whisper arguing in a public place, as well as pictures of the Red Guardian Holding him bridal style. The image made him blush. He'd never realised how much buffer Derrick was compared to him now. He looked so dainty and lady like in his arms and Toby was doubly thankful for the vizor covering his face.

There were also notes Sara planned to add to the 'master file' of information about each Guardian, specifically that Pink and Red may have even been in a relationship and that Blue was jealous of their newest member.

Toby bit his lip, remembering the tension between Ella and Derrick; could it have been sexual tension? Was Ella in love with Derrick and jealous that he wanted to spend time with 'Rose'? Or maybe, and this could be his hopeful side talking, she was jealous because she had a crush on him? The bath water suddenly felt far too hot and Toby figured it was best he got out before he got tempted to do anything salacious. If Sara walked in on that he might just die of embarrassment.

What he needed was a distraction; like that mango body butter he'd put out in preparation. Quickly he towelled off and scooped his hands into the slightly warm, butter like substance. He'd never heard of body butter before a few days ago; he'd been taking his usual walk around town post fight, enjoying wearing a new dress when the cosmetic section in the department store caught his eye. It was like a mixture of moisturiser and something else he wasn't really sure of, all he knew was that if he applied it while his pores were open from heat his skin felt heavenly afterwards.

He was so absorbed he didn't realise until too late that his body was starting to change back. Toby cursed under his breath and wiped the remaining body butter off; what a waste. It was all Sara's fault he wasn't going to get to enjoy it too. It just felt better on his female skin than his male.

Luckily, he'd started preparing for situations like this after Sara moved in. There was a set of his male clothes tucked away under the bathroom sink. By the time he'd changed he was almost fully male again and Sara started to knock.

“Are you done in there? I have to pee.”

“Just a second!” He called, making his voice as high as he could.

“Are you okay? You sound weird all of a sudden...”

Shit.

“Fine, uh, just coming down with a cold!”

He pushed open the window as quietly as possible.

“Was that the door? Could you get it?”

He didn't wait for a reply, he hopped out the window onto the fire escape and quickly slid down the ladder before racing round the building. Running at full speed it only took him two minutes to get back to the front door and open it loudly.

“Sara! Rose! I'm home!”

Sara appeared with a worried look on her face.

“Rose is in the bath but she's acting weird and won't reply- are you okay you're red as a beet!”

“I'll check her!” Toby puffed, his lungs burning from the run.

Before Sara could say anything he pushed past her and ducked into the bathroom.

“Hey Babe, how are you feeling? I know you mentioned a cold coming on?”

“Oh yes, do you think Sara could get me some tea from the shop?”

“Oh yes I'm sure she'd be happy to!”

Toby was red in the face for a whole other reason now, he felt ridiculous having a conversation with himself. After waiting a beat to get his breath back entirely he opened the door just enough to stick his head out where of course, nosy old Sara was waiting.

“She’s fine, just a bit under the weather. I’ll stay and look after her, do you think you could go down the street to the chemist and get her some cough drops?”

“Can’t you do it, she’s your girlfriend.”

“I have to stay here and...comfort her.”

Sara raised an eyebrow.

“Is that what they’re calling it these days? Fine, I’ll go but only because I don’t want to hear you two going at it. If you ask me, her throat is sore because of all those candles and bath oils and shit she uses constantly. Your girlfriend is the girliest damn woman I have ever met.”

Fortunately, Sara was too busy complaining to see the thunderstruck expression on Toby’s face as she turned and headed back down the hall to get her purse. The front door slammed and Toby glanced over his shoulder at the bathroom; bath bombs, essential oils, candles, even a drawer full of makeup; all his. It had all been slowly accumulated so he hadn’t realised just how feminine things had gotten around here.

He blushed, realising that part of him had been eager to get Sara out of the house so he could transform again and get back to applying his mango body butter and fully enjoy walking around naked for a bit with that super soft skin. What sort of man did that? When had Rose started to become a full on second life instead of a secret identity?

“Pink Guardian? Come in Pink?”

The voice crackled over his altering stone band. It was Derrick.

“Hey, I am sorry about earlier, I really do just want to help. If you want I am up at the nexus if you want to train.”

A strange tingle went through Toby; excitement, trepidation and...something else he didn’t want to acknowledge right now.

"I'll be there." He replied, hitting the altering crystal and trying not to feel quite so happy to be back in his female body before teleporting up to the Nexus.

The training hall was empty, save for Derrick sitting on a bench, he was suited up but with his helmet removed and Toby did the same.

Toby looked as his pink suit shone under the artificial lights of the Nexus; it highlighted every curve and shape of his body. A part of his mind wondered if Derrick could see them, if he could, what did he think? Toby shook the thoughts away and summoned his whip, twirling it a few times just to show he wasn't some green recruit and Derrick chuckled.

"Alright, why don't we do some sparring to warm up. I can observe and find any holes in your fighting style that need to be adjusted."

There was that tension again, not the one from earlier but from the other day when Derrick had pinned him. Toby felt his body responding, growing warm and his nipples hard. He grit his teeth and ignored it; this was just training, nothing to get excited about, especially not with another man. *Especiallly*, Especially when he wasn't gay, not even for Derrick with his big muscles and fit physique.

As they clashed, their banter filled the air, blending with the sounds of their combat. Toby couldn't help but laugh as he deftly dodged Derrick's strikes, his eyes sparkling with mischief.

"Come on, Derrick, is that the best you've got?" he teased, a playful smirk on her lips. "After all that big talk I was expecting fighting you to be hard or something."

Derrick grinned, his eyes alight with determination. "Oh, you haven't seen anything yet, Rose," he replied, his voice tinged with playful challenge. "I'm just warming up."

Their movements became a blur as they sparred, each one pushing the other to their limits. Toby had this strange desire to prove to Derrick he was capable but also burn off all this arousal before things got out of hand. Derrick flashed a cocky grin as he narrowly avoided one of Toby's attacks, his eyes sparkling with amusement.

"Careful, Rose, wouldn't want to hurt that pretty face of yours," he teased.

Suddenly, Toby realised just how close they were, how thin his body suit was and his face turned red. The distraction was all it took for Derrick to knock his feet out from under him and suddenly, Toby found himself pinned. He could feel Derrick's body pressing against his own and his body was responding. No matter how hard he didn't want to admit it; his body at the very least was attracted to this asshole. The hot, stupid, sexy asshole.

They were both breathing heavily, Derrick leaned one hand on his mace that pressed into the ground right next to Toby's head, his mouth was parted. Then, slowly, he started to get closer and Toby's mind screamed; he couldn't kiss Derrick! Why wasn't he saying anything, why was he puckering his lips ready!?

"What's going on here?"

Metaphorical ice water was dumped over them and Toby turned to see Ella standing there, mouth agape.

"Ella!" He cried, "This isn't what it looks like!"

"Isn't it?" Derrick chuckled arrogantly before getting up and offering Toby a hand, he didn't take it.

"We were just sparring..." Toby croaked but Ella pressed her lips into a thin line and turned on her heels.

"Whatever, just...do whatever you want." She said tersely before walking away.

Desperately, Toby got to his feet and rushed after her, not bothering to give Derrick a second glance.

"Ella, wait!" Toby grabbed for her hand, forcing her to turn and face him; but was struck dumb when he realised her cheeks were pink and there were tears building in her eyes.

"Look, it's nothing, I misread the situation between us." She muttered, "I didn't know you were...gay."

"I'm not!"

“Well, the way you were looking at Derrick says otherwise, female body or not.”

“Shhh, he might hear you!”

“Oh, worried what might happen if your boyfriend finds out you’re not actually a woman?” Ella taunted bitterly.

“No! I swear it’s not like that, Derrick is hot but he’s a bit of a prick...”

“Yeah,” Ella crossed her arms. “I know.”

There was something about the way she said it that made things click into place and suddenly Toby felt very, very stupid.

“You guys were...?”

“Yup.” She popped the P in the word. “When I first joined he made me feel so special, like he really cared about me but he didn’t. He just wanted a woman to admire him and follow his lead all the time.”

“You broke up with him?”

Toby felt his heart grow a little lighter as she nodded, at least she wasn’t still pining for Red.

“And that’s when he decided I was too inexperienced to join them on the deep space mission and I got left here, alone with a whole damn planet to protect and barely any thanks when they returned.”

Guilt swirled in Toby’s stomach; poor Ella, she didn’t deserve this. And he’d made it all worse by giving into these weird feminine impulses. He knew he couldn’t exactly blame scented candles and pretty outfits for his predicament but they sure hadn’t helped. Without thinking he loosened his grip on Ella’s wrist and slid his hand down to meet hers and squeezed it tight.

“Ella, you’re the most amazing member of this team, hands down.”

She sucked in a breath as her eyes went wide.

“You’re brave, strong, kind and so selfless. You deserve a damn parade for everything you did all by yourself. Hell, you found and recruited me, not to mention helped me adjust to this whole Guardian thing with my special...circumstances.”

Toby could feel his heart beating wildly now.

“And I’m sorry I let Derrick sweep me up, it was all physical I swear and that’s never happened before. Not with a guy anyway, normally I like girls and well...I sort of...like you.”

The final words hung in the air for a moment and Toby cringed inwardly; that had been the worst confession ever. It was like something out of a cheesy teen show, not the sort of thing grown men and women said to each other.

“I...like you too.” She whispered and Toby’s breath caught in his throat. “But-”

“Aw, isn’t that cute.”

The two of them jumped apart, Toby hadn’t even realised how close they’d gotten until Sam’s voice cut the tension like a knife. The Black Guardian was leaning casually on the doorframe of a nearby room and Toby realised to his horror that they were talking right outside the lab where Sam spent most of his off time. How much had he heard? The idea that somebody outside of Ella could know he was really a man made a cold sweat break out on the back of his neck.

“Sam, don’t be an ass.” Ella groaned.

“Oh, I’m sorry, am I ruining your little plan?”

Toby’s brow furrowed.

“Plan?”

“It’s not a plan! Sam stop making drama where there isn’t any!” Ella hissed, but there was a desperate edge to her voice that put Toby in an uneasy mood, once again he felt like he was missing something.

“You're the one who makes drama, jumping the bones of every team member.” Sam replied and Toby felt his jaw drop, making the Black Guardian cackle.

“Aw, did she not tell you that she's dated all of us at some point? I think she got off on being the special snowflake on the team, being the only girl.” Sam rolled his eyes.

“That's not true!”

“Didn't know she was into girls too though, or maybe she just wants to complete the set.”

“Stop it Sam, you're such a bastard!”

Sam blew his fringe out of his face and shrugged.

“Whatever, I'm not the team heart breaker.”

He breezed down the corridor and Toby felt his heart starting to ache. He felt oddly betrayed that Ella hadn't mentioned it to him early but also strangely jealous he was apparently the only one she hadn't slept with. It was irrational, but that didn't make it hurt any less.

“Is that true?” He asked.

“Okay, I have been with all three of them.” Ella admitted, “But it wasn't like, I didn't hop from guy to guy or anything! Things used to get really stressful here and well...sex is a good way to blow off steam, I thought it was just all in good fun you know? But then I realised they were starting to sort of see me as the team stress ball or...the team slut.”

She winced.

“Maybe I was. But you're different Toby, I swear. I really like you!”

Toby opened his mouth, unsure as to what exactly he was going to say when the alarms began to blare.

“Morphling attack! Morphling attack!” GAIA announced, “Seraphim Lake, northern end of the park.”

“Really? Now?” Ella groaned before grabbing Toby’s hand once again and giving it a tight squeeze. “We’ll talk after the battle, okay?”

“...Okay.”

Part of him was glad, he didn't know how to move on from this right now. For once a Morphling attack was a welcome distraction, beating up a bunch of monsters was exactly what he needed right now.

They met the rest of the team on the teleportation pad; an uncomfortable aura hung over the group as they prepared to fight. Even Tim who hadn't been privy to any of the goings on yet seemed to pick up on the tension in the air, but said nothing. In a flash of light they were down in a familiar park with the Morphlings causing a muck as usual; ripping up trees and attacking random passersby.

“Guardian’s, let’s go!” Derrick announced, summoning his mace. “These people need our protection!”

“Rose Thorn Lash!” Toby yelled, summoning his whip and diving into the fray.

Even after their little fight in the hall, Toby felt himself falling in line with Ella. They spun around one another, watching each other’s backs as they formed a deadly dance. Toby would unbalance an enemy with his whip, flip backwards and Ella would appear to rive in the killing blow. Their bodies moved almost as one, sliding across one another without ever risking their weapons harming each other. Even now, fighting with her was as easy as breathing.

Toby could feel something more, the sparks flying between them. It was more than attraction and he swore he could sense Ella’s smile behind her visor; she could feel it too. Maybe there was hope for this relationship to be more after all.

A scream pierced the air and Toby felt his blood run cold; that sounded like his sister! The sound came from a grove of trees and he watched as several Morphlings began heading in the direction, splitting off from the main force occupying them now. He didn’t wait for permission from his leader, Toby sprinted across the grass and burst through the tree line. The Morphlings had Sara surrounded, her phone smashed to pieces in front of her.

“You get away from her!” He growled, readying his whip. “Now you have hell to pay!”

He dispatched one, then another, then another. The sound of tiny Altering crystals tinkled as they hit the ground until a Morphling with a wolf-like jaw latched onto his wrist and clamped down hard. The strange putty-like teeth didn't penetrate his armour but Toby could feel the creature trying to pry his Altering Crystal loose. If that happened his armour and powers would vanish and then he'd be in real trouble! Frantically he brought the butt of his whip down on the creature, over and over again until it thankfully shattered into shards, leaving his Altering Crystal slightly loose, but still intact.

"Th-thank you!" Sara trembled, scrambling back from the fight.

"Run you fool!" Toby yelled as he continued to fight off the remaining Morphlings, all of whom were now trying to get at his loose crystal.

But Sara stayed still, at first frozen with fear but then, to Toby's horror a look of recognition passed over her features.

"That voice...Rose?"

"Stupid creatures!" A voice hissed, "Do I have to do everything myself?"

Toby didn't have the chance to worry that Sara might have recognised one of his personas, he had to turn and face the new threat. It came in the shape of a woman, but tall, far taller than a normal human. She was almost eight feet tall, with blue skin, curvy hips and a large chest that at first seemed to be naked. It was only when Toby noticed the cuffs near her ankles and wrists that he realised she was wearing a bodysuit so skin tight it was almost invisible. Her silver eyes and hair glowed softly in the afternoon light and Toby couldn't help but think she would have been beautiful were her face not twisted into a sneer.

"I've been sending these Morphlings for months and what do I have to show for it? Not a single coloured Altering Crystal." She said, "I didn't want to have to get my hands dirty but if that's what it takes..."

Her hand stretched out and next minute Toby was flat on his back, knocked back by a huge energy blast. Whoever this woman was, he knew there was no chance he could defeat her alone, especially if she was after his crystal. He slammed down on his gauntlet.

"Guardians help! There is some sort of-Ah!"

Another blast and Toby was flying through the air and into a tree, the wind was knocked from his lungs and he felt his armour dematerialise around him. Sara was still on the other side of the clearing, her hand over her mouth in shock.

“Rose! It *is* you.”

“Run, you idiot!” He gasped, reaching for his loose crystal and forcing it back into its brace. He had to get his armour back up or this was going to go badly...

The woman was stalking toward him, a cold smile on her face as she reached down to take the source of his power only to be swept aside a second later by a wave of ice sharps and a blur of blue.

“EI-Blue!” Toby cried gratefully.

“I don’t know who you are but if you mess with one Guardian you mess with us all!” Ella announced as Yellow, Red and Black appeared at her side, forming a human shield between the strange giant woman and Toby. Sam helped him to his feet and the blue woman clicked her tongue in annoyance.

“Fine, we’ll see how well you fare next time. All I need is one of those coloured crystals and the rest of you are finished!”

She snapped her fingers and just like that, she was gone.

“She’s got a transporter.” Sam muttered.

“Toby, are you alright? Your armour was knocked right off!” Ella cried, turning and enveloping him in a warm hug.

“Yeah, I’m okay.” He smiled, “Luckily I picked a cute dress to wear today, huh?”

“Did you say...Toby?”

Fuck, he’d forgotten Sara was here. The other Guardian’s were looking at him strangely too and Toby stiffened.

“Who was that?” He asked, hoping it would distract them.

Tim started to speak;

“Derrick, it looked like-”

“Something not to be discussed here.” Derrick interrupted, giving Tim a hard look that shut him up. “We need to discuss this back at the nexus.”

He turned to Sara who was still hovering at the edge of the trees, eyes darting between her destroyed camera and the group of Guardians.

“And we need to discuss this little...breach of security. You’re coming with us.”

Sara’s face brightened with excitement.

“To your secret base!?”

“Unfortunately.” Derrick muttered, punching in the coordinates on his bracer and grabbing her hand. “All of you, to the Nexus now, we have a lot to talk through.”

Derrick disappeared with Sara in tow, followed swiftly by Sam and Tim leaving Toby alone with Ella.

“You’re sure you’re okay?” She asked.

“Fine,” He said tersely, “but why did you have to say my name!”

“It was an accident-”

“Now they all know or at least suspect I’m really a guy! Not to mention my fucking sister is being brought in on this now!”

Ella crossed her arms over her chest; Toby could practically feel her eyes narrowing at him behind her visor.

“Look, I’m sorry but I think we have bigger issues to deal with right now.”

“How convenient.”

“Come on, Toby-!”

“Stop calling me that while I look like this!” He cried, sweeping a hand over his female body. “Rose okay? How hard is it to call me Rose! You’ve ruined everything!”

“Well sorry for worrying more about your life and the eight foot tall alien woman who was about to end it!”

She huffed.

“I’m going to the Nexus to find out who she is and what she wants. If you’re going to be petty you can just stay here.”

A flash of blue and he was alone; Toby couldn’t help it, he screamed in frustration. He hated that she was right; his identity was small peanuts right now but after everything that had happened lately the tension was just too much. Toby pouted and grit his teeth; much as he didn't want to admit it right now, Ella was correct. He needed to be the bigger man; or rather, the bigger person.

His hand slammed down on the Altering Crystal, transforming him back into The Pink Guardian and he was transported up to the Nexus to face the music.