

**AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY
OTHER. WHEN THREE FRIENDS UNITED TO SAVE
THE EARTH, BEFORE GOING THEIR SEPARATE
WAYS. ON THAT DAY, E.G.G. ENDED. OR DID IT?**



-EPISODE 106-

SALVATION

Josh, Eileen, Kyle, and Nestman all approached the Maya Hansen Foundation. It was well past midnight, and everyone was beat from the fight with Senator Kelly and his Purifiers.

“Well, let’s never do that again.” Josh said.

“I feel like we won’t be hearing from Kelly for a long time.” Eileen replied.

“Good.” Nestman stated. They walked in, and Josh put 344 into the keypad.

“I’m just ready for some sleep!” Josh exclaimed. The door to Egg Base opened, and they all came upon Celeste, holding Acacia in her lap, who lay unresponsive, and with blood everywhere.

“Somebody help me!” Celeste sobbed.

“Acacia!” Eileen exclaimed, getting on her knees and checking for a pulse.

“Kristen!” Josh called, rushing to the Med Bay. “Kristen where are you!”

“Get her up!” Eileen ordered, as Kyle and Nestman picked her up and hurried toward the Med Bay.

“Director?” Kristen asked, peeking out of the Med Bay. She spotted Acacia. “Shell! Bring her in here!” They all rushed in, while Kristen cleared off a table. They laid Acacia on top of it.

“Eileen, I need that dress open.” Kristen ordered. “Director Westbrook, get vitals hooked up. Agent Rice, I need an IV, 200 CC’s. Move it!”

Eileen tore Acacia’s dress open down to her waist, as Josh attached nodes to her chest, and Kyle pulled an IV over and stuck the needle into her arm.

“Is she gonna be okay?” Celeste asked through tears.

“Babe, get her out of here please.” Eileen said to Nestman. He nodded and took Celeste by the shoulder.

“Come on Celeste.” He coaxed.

“I want to stay with Auntie Acacia...” She whimpered.

“I know, but they need room to work. Come on, I’ll stay with you the whole time.” He led her away and closed the door.

“What’s going on Kristen?” Eileen asked.

“Heart rate is racing.” Kristen observed. She opened Acacia’s eye and shone a light in it. “Shock it all, she’s unresponsive.”

“Is this invention withdrawal again?” Josh asked.

“No, that wasn’t this frightening...” Eileen recalled. “What do we do?”

“Get back!” Kristen ordered, sticking Acacia with a shot of adrenaline. Acacia’s eyes opened.

“Gyah!” She screamed. Suddenly, fire shot violently from her hands.

“Ahhh!” Kyle cried, the Symbiote trashing out. Acacia kept shooting fire, scorching the ceiling.

“Acacia stop!” Eileen cried. She climbed on top of her and held her arms down.

“Vitals are erratic!” Josh shouted. “Hold on... I’m getting an energy buildup!”

“Down!” Kyle ordered.

“Eileen get off of her!” Josh cried. Kyle tackled Kristen to the ground, and Josh reached for Eileen, but too late.

“GAAHHHH!!!” Acacia screamed, as a forcefield was launched from her body, knocking Eileen and Josh across the room and blowing out all machinery in the vicinity. She collapsed, blood dripping from the corner of her mouth.

“Ow.” Josh groaned, sitting up. Kristen peeked up at the monitors.

“She’s stabilizing.” She noted.

“What’s wrong with her?” Eileen asked, slowly pulling herself to her feet.

“I have never seen anything like this.” Kristen admitted.

“It has to be related to her powers.” Josh deduced. “Seeing as how they just went crazy!”

“Maybe Acacia has more information.” Kyle suggested.

“Well she’s out cold now.” Kristen said. “You won’t get anything from her until she wakes up.”

“I’ll stay with her.” Eileen said. She pulled up a chair, sat next to Acacia, and took her hand. Josh nodded, as he and Kyle left the room. Celeste stood up with Nestman.

“Is she okay?” She asked in a panic.

“She’s stable.” Josh informed. “We still don’t know what happened, but we’re hoping to hear more info when she wakes up.”

“Let’s get you to bed.” Nestman suggested.

“No! I want to stay with her!” Celeste objected.

“Okay,” Josh agreed, letting Celeste into the Med Bay. “Well, that was scary.”

“What do you think is wrong?” Nestman asked. Josh shrugged.

“Beats me. But whatever it is, I have a feeling it’s gonna get a lot worse before it gets better.”

* * *

Acacia opened her eyes. She sat up in the medical bed and held her head.

“Ouch...” She moaned. She looked over to see Celeste asleep in Eileen arms. “Hey you two.”

They both woke up.

“Acacia!” Eileen happily replied. Celeste rushed over and hugged her.

“Oh, well, you haven’t hugged me like this in a while.” Acacia noted.

“What’s wrong with you?” Celeste asked. “You almost died last night!”

“Yeah, Acacia, it wasn’t good.” Eileen added. “Is there something you need to tell us?” Acacia sighed.

“Yeah.” She admitted. “Where’s Josh?”

After a few minutes, Josh, Eileen, Celeste, Kyle, Nestman, Kristen, and Jocasta, all stood around Acacia’s medical bed.

“I have... no idea what’s wrong with me.” Acacia confessed. “It started happening... not long after we beat Galactus. A cough, here and there. I thought nothing of it. Then it got progressively worse. Suddenly I was coughing up blood. I went to doctors; they couldn’t figure it out. No one knew what was wrong with me. When I... vomited blood for the first time, I couldn’t breathe, I felt lightheaded, and I set the bathroom on fire.”

“You said you were trying to reheat a taco.” Celeste said.

“I worked so hard to keep it from you.” Acacia replied. “I never wanted you to worry. After that time, I passed out. It was getting worse, and that, actually... that’s why I got E.G.G. back together.”

Acacia wiped a few tears away. “I just wanted to see everybody one more time before... before I...”

“Hey now.” Josh interrupted. “Let’s not talk like that, okay? You’re at E.G.G. now. We can figure out what’s wrong with you. Jocasta, run a scan!”

“Proceeding.” Jocasta obeyed, and scanned Acacia’s body. “Acacia appears to be in good health.”

“Well, we clearly know that’s not true.” Josh groaned.

“Jocasta’s right,” Kristen confirmed. “Acacia’s vitals look fine compared to last night.”

“Maybe it’s something our scanners can’t detect.” Kyle suggested. Everyone looked at him.

“What are you saying?” Nestman asked.

“Well...” Kyle continued. “You said that this could be tied to Acacia’s powers, considering the outburst last night. So, maybe we can’t detect the problem, but someone else might be able to.”

“Who?” Josh asked.

“A Skrull.” The room was quiet.

“That tracks.” Eileen finally spoke up. “The Skrulls gave Acacia her powers, so maybe this is some kind of... I don’t know, alien side effect?”

“Acacia, anything you can remember from the day you got your powers would be super helpful.” Josh said.

“Well gee, that was years ago Josh.” Acacia said, rubbing the back of her neck. “I remember Captain America was there, and Sue Storm, and Quartermain... Elektra for some reason, Spider-Woman was unconscious, there was an old man that liked to say Excelsior a lot...”

“This isn’t helpful.” Josh sighed.

“Oh wait! My Aspirin prescription!” Acacia exclaimed.

“Your what?” Eileen asked, but didn’t get an answer before Acacia hurried out of the room. She went into the Nests, down to her bunk, then dug in her top drawer and pulled out a tiny box labeled *Acacia’s Important Things*. She dug inside and pulled out a folded-up piece of paper. She hurried back to the Med Bay and unfolded it, revealing several lines of alien writing.

“When I woke up from the Super Skrull procedure, a Skrull scientist came in with this paper!” Acacia remembered. “I knocked him out and took it! I remember joking that it had better be my Aspirin prescription! I nearly forgot all about it!”

“This could have the answers we need!” Eileen excitedly claimed.

“Great!” Josh exclaimed. He handed it to Jocasta. “Can you translate this?” Jocasta scanned the paper.

“I cannot.” She replied, resulting in a collective exasperated groan.

“Don’t you have S.H.I.E.L.D.’s latest software uploaded?” Josh asked.

“I do.” Jocasta replied. “But once the Skrull Invasion was over, efforts to decode their language ceased, as the threat was determined to be dealt with.”

“So we need someone that can read this.” Celeste said. “We need a Skrull.”

“Well.” Josh sighed. “I know of at least one Skrull.”

* * *

A sleek, purple Lamborghini with a blue lighting streak across either side pulled up on the side of a sketchy road, where several inappropriately dressed women lurked. One of them strutted up to the car and knocked on the window.

“You looking for a good time sweetheart?” She asked. The window rolled down to reveal Josh driving, Acacia in the passenger seat, and Eileen in the back. The woman froze.

“I don’t know, we looking for a good time guys?” Josh asked.

“I could use one.” Acacia said.

“I’m good.” Eileen replied.

“Well, um, you’d all better be on your way then.” The woman shakily replied, eager to get rid of them.

“This really what you’re doing with your time now Ailemara?” Josh asked.

“I don’t... I’m sorry who?” She replied.

“Eileen!” Josh called.

“Skrull Detector is going crazy.” She said, leaning over the front seat and showing it to the woman.

“Jigs up Ailemara.” Acacia said. The woman suddenly formed a fireball on her hand and chucked at them.

“Ah!” Josh shrieked, rolling up the window. “Well, that’s definitely her!”

Ailemara took off down the street. Josh floored it and drove after her. He looked at the speedometer.

“Eileen! This thing is barely pulling 45!”

“What’s the problem?” She asked.

“The Lightmobile should be a lot faster!”

“Josh, this isn’t the actual Lightmobile!”

“What!?”

“This is the one they use in commercials and stuff. I’m not actually gonna let you drive my car. That’s just crazy, I love that thing. And you’re reckless.”

“We’re gonna lose her!” Josh cried.

“No we aren’t.” Acacia said. She opened the door, tumbled out of the car, got to her feet, and started running.

“Son of a...” Josh said in amazement.

“She’s heading down 42nd!” Eileen cried. Josh made a sharp left and got honked at a few times. Acacia continued on foot. Ailemara ran, just ahead of her, and phased through a wall.

“Crap, crap, crap!” Acacia braced herself as she crashed through the window, determined not to lose Ailemara. She looked into the clothes store, people staring and pointing in shock. She noticed a man in a red shirt and glasses pointing at her. She also noticed that same man slipping out the back. Acacia activated her comms and rushed towards the back.

“She shifted!” She warned. “Man, red shirt, glasses!” Josh banked the turn and spotted him strolling down the street.

“Confirm.” Josh said to Eileen, who was studying the Skrull Detector.

“It’s her! Go! Go!” She cried, as Josh swerved between cars. Ailemara looked back, then began running again. She ran into a crowd, shapeshifted into another woman, and kept going. Acacia made it out of the store and rushed into the crowd.

“Sorry in advance!” She called, as she slammed the ground and trapped everyone in a 30-yard diameter in a force field.

“Hey!”

“What the?”

“Let us out!”

The Lambo skidded to a halt. Josh and Eileen got out.

“Official E.G.G. business!” Josh announced. “Everyone remain calm!”

“What the heck is E.G.G.?” Someone asked.

“Really?” Josh groaned. Eileen slowly moved around the perimeter of the force field, looking at the Skrull Detector. Suddenly it started beeping. Eileen looked up to see a red-headed woman staring angrily at her.

“The red head!” She called.

“Gyah!” Acacia shouted, throwing a fireball.

“Ah!” Ailemara shrieked as it crashed into her. She hit the force field, turned back into her natural Skrull form, and fell unconscious. People screamed in fear and scattered as Acacia dropped the force field.

“We got her.” Josh sighed with relief. “Let’s load her up.”

* * *

Ailemara slowly opened her eyes. She found herself restrained to a chair by electric ropes, in a room with three metal walls, and an energy barrier as the fourth.

“Electric current should dissuade phasing.” Josh said, leaning against the wall and smugly biting into an apple.

“Where am I?” Ailemara angrily asked.

“The Coop.” Josh said. “Aka, our prison cells!”

“Cell.” Eileen corrected, entering with Kyle and Acacia. “We have one.”

“Well it’s one more than we’ve ever had!” Josh cried.

“I wasn’t bothering anyone!” Ailemara shouted. “What do you want from me!?”

Acacia held the paper up to her.

“We want you to read this!” She ordered. Ailemara looked at it, and looked at them.

“And then what? You turn me over to S.H.I.E.L.D?” She asked.

“Yup.” Josh said. Eileen elbowed him. “Ow.”

“We can work something out.” She offered. “Please, Mara, we need your help. Acacia’s life is on the line.”

Ailemara looked at the four of them, then looked at paper, then back at them.

“No.” She defiantly stated.

“Alright, call Fury Kyle!” Josh said.

“Why should I?” Ailemara asked.

“Look, we said we’d work out a deal.” Acacia impatiently repeated.

“No, why should I help you! Humans!” Ailemara hissed. They all looked at each other.

“What are you talking about?” Eileen asked.

“You. Humans.” Ailemara growled. “You, who would call us violent. Call us the monsters. Look at what you’ve done. You slaughtered my people!”

“Correction, your people invaded Earth!” Josh shouted.

“And what about when the invasion was over?” Ailemara asked. “What do you think happened to all the Skrulls that were left?”

“I don’t know, they packed it up and went home?” Josh guessed.

“We don’t have a home!” Ailemara screamed, tears in her eyes. “We came to Earth to seek refuge. Galactus, that monster you saved *your* planet from a year ago? We weren’t so lucky! He destroyed my home when I was a girl! I watched my planet get blown to pieces and consumed!”

“... I... I didn’t know that.” Josh said. “But you didn’t have to invade our planet! You could’ve just asked nicely!”

“Really?” Ailemara scoffed. “Humans can’t even tolerate their own kind if their skin is a little darker. Do you actually believe us Skrulls would have been welcomed with open arms?” Josh cleared his throat and looked down.

“What happened?” Eileen asked. “To the other Skrulls?” Ailemara looked toward Kyle.

“Ask him.” She said. “He was there. Operation Green Rain.” Kyle became alerted. “You remember? Don’t you? The tactical hunting and destruction of any and all Skrulls left on Earth. Hiding, trying to blend into society.”

She looked around the room at everyone.

“But no, you people wouldn’t have it. Using the Skrull Detector you three invented, S.H.I.E.L.D. sent Strike teams all around the planet to wipe out what was left of us. Howling Commandos. Secret Warriors.” She looked squarely at Kyle. “Wolfpack. Murderers.”

“Ailemara...” Acacia began. She was at a loss for words. Kyle merely stood, breathing intensely.

“You know, after the Masters of Doom abandoned me, I tracked down Queen Veranke.” Tears began to fall. “I found her... cut to pieces, in some S.H.I.E.L.D. lab. Her organs floating in jars. It made me sick to my stomach. We’re the monsters? Us? Look in the mirror. I won’t read that paper. I won’t help you. You may as well kill me.” She looked at Kyle. “Shouldn’t be a problem for you, Chaos.” Kyle left abruptly.

“Kyle!” Josh called, as they rushed after him. He leaned against the wall and held his head in his hands.

“Hey, come on.” Josh said. “You can’t blame yourself for that!”

“Easy for you to say.” Kyle replied. “You weren’t a willing party to genocide.”

“The Skrulls were a threat!” Josh said. “They replaced your team, they tried to replace you!”

“You know, that’s what I told myself.” Kyle revealed. “Every time I cut one down. Every time my blade sliced them to ribbons. I told myself they were a threat. They would destroy the planet. But you heard Ailemara. They were hiding... they lost the war, they were scared, and they were hiding! They should’ve been P.O.W.’s! Not... not slaughtered...”

“You didn’t know.” Eileen warmly replied, placing her hand on his shoulder.

“You know, Trevino and I would make a game out of it.” He recalled, a tear coming down his face. “Who can bag more greenies? I won. I always won. That’s why my codename was Chaos... Because that’s all I left behind...” Kyle slunk to the ground, face buried in his hands.

“Well... now what?” Acacia asked.

“We should just let her go.” Eileen said. “We’re all smart people, we’ll decode the language.”

“Alright.” Josh agreed. “Come on.” They walked back to the Coop. “Alright, Ailemara, you’re off the hook.” Josh deactivated the ropes. She stood up and rubbed her wrists.

“Feeling guilty all of a sudden?” She asked. “Well, I’m afraid you’re 8 years too late.” She began to leave when she spotted the hangar, and the Egg Jet. She stared at it, almost as if entranced.

“Exit is this way.” Josh ushered. She turned to him.

“Can your jet go to space?” She desperately asked. Josh raised his eyebrows, taken off guard by the question.

“Um, not far, but yeah, essentially. Why?” She looked back at the jet. Josh cocked his head.

“Ailemara?” She looked at him, then closed her eyes, and sighed.

“I’ll read the paper if you take me to space.” She said.

“Wait, what? Really?” Acacia asked.

“Where in space?” Eileen asked. Ailemara looked nervously between them, as if she were second guessing herself. Finally, she spoke.

“Do you remember Kl’rt? The Super Skrull?” She asked.

“Ugh.” Josh groaned.

“That guy.” Eileen sighed.

“Don’t remind me.” Acacia said.

“Well, a few years ago, when the Masters of Doom attacked the Peak, I freed him from their prison, and he told me of a ship in Earth’s orbit. It’s called the Salvation. And it houses millions of Skrull embryo pods, waiting to hatch! Our race reborn, he called it. We were to use it here once the Skrulls took the planet. They were waiting for word from Queen Veranke, but...”

“Wait, there’s been a ship up in space with a bunch of baby Skrull eggs just floating around for 8 years!?” Josh exclaimed.

“Yes. And if you take me there, I can be reunited with them. My people. I can finally leave Earth.” She clasped her hands together. “Please. I’ll read your paper. Please!”

“We’ll do it.” They all turned to see Kyle. “We owe you that much.”

“Are there any warriors?” Eileen asked.

“Very few.” Ailemara informed. “Just to guard the babies. I’ll tell them to stand down.”

“What about weapons?” Josh asked. Ailemara paused.

“The ship is equipped with a nega-bomb... powerful enough to wipe out all life on Earth.”

“Aw geez.” Josh groaned.

“Well we can’t let that happen.” Acacia said.

“We won’t! It won’t! Please!” Ailemara begged.

“Better to get Earth out of the crosshairs.” Eileen said. “We’re going. We’ll reunite with your people Mara.” She took her hand. “I promise.” Ailemara smiled, then hugged Eileen tearfully.

“Thank you.” She whispered.

* * *

“So we’re actually going to space!” Miles exclaimed, loading gear into a crate. “Like, outer space?”

“You got it Miles.” Josh confirmed, checking Egg Jet readings on a tablet.

“That is so cool!” Miles exclaimed. Ailemara walked into the room.

“How’s it look?” She asked.

“Based on the coordinates you gave us, I think we can make the trip.” Josh replied.

“Whoa...” Miles said, looking at Ailemara. “Are you, like, a for real alien?”

“You’re not... afraid of me?” She asked.

“No way!” He exclaimed. “I’ve never met an alien before!”

“And you don’t find my appearance frightening?”

“Well, not really. I mean, we got a green girl at my school, part of the Mutant Outreach Program. She’s super chill.”

“And... the invasion?”

“The Secret Invasion?” Miles asked. Ailemara nodded. “Yeah, well, I was really little when that happened. I mean, we learned about it in school, but it doesn’t seem any different from any other war in US history... So nah, I’m not holding that against you. You probably had nothing to do with it.”

“I wouldn’t say that.” Acacia chided, walking past with a crate.

“You are... kind, Miles Morales.” Ailemara noted.

“Thanks.” Miles replied. Eileen peeked out from the cockpit.

“Josh, what are we looking like?” She asked.

“Everything looks set for the trip.” Josh called up to her. Kyle walked in, hoisting up a backpack.

“We good?” He asked.

“As good as we can be.” Josh replied. “Let’s load up!” Nestman, Celeste, and Jocasta walked in.

“We really can’t come?” Celeste asked.

“Jocasta needs to watch the base,” Josh replied. “And you need to watch Jocasta, and Nestman needs to watch you! So no, you can’t come.”

“I’ll bring you a souvenir!” Miles called, rushing onto the jet. Eileen leapt down and kissed Nestman.

“Be careful.” He said.

“Babe, we lived in space forever.” Eileen reminded.

“Yeah, but... Westbrook rigged this thing up, so, you know...”

“I heard that!” Josh called.

Acacia approached Celeste.

“See you in a bit?” She asked. Celeste hugged her.

“Get better, okay?”

“You got it kiddo.” Acacia agreed. Josh, Kyle, Eileen, Acacia, and Ailemara all boarded the jet, and it took off.

They flew out of the Maya Hansen Foundation and up into the atmosphere.

“Brace yourselves!” Josh ordered from the pilot seat. Eileen, as copilot, hit a few buttons and activated the afterburners. The jet threw everyone against their seats. Ailemara clutched her armrest. Soon, Acacia took her hand, and nodded at her. Ailemara smiled and nodded back. Miles looked out the window, and watched as the city faded away in the clouds.

“Breach in 3...” Eileen said. “2... 1...” The ship sped up, and soon, Earth was behind them. Miles looked back in amazement.

“No way...” He said. “Space... I’m in SPACE!”

“Psh, newbie.” Josh teased. They flew up, and forward.

“Okay, we’re approaching the coordinates, but I don’t see anything...” Eileen noted.

“It’s cloaked.” Ailemara said.

“Then let’s uncloak it.” Josh tapped a button and initiated a scanner. It scanned past a certain area, and revealed a large space station, floating there.

“No way...” Acacia said. They flew forward and into the hangar, boarding the ship. The ramp came down and they all exited.

“Sweet!” Miles exclaimed, rushing off and taking pictures with his phone.

“Hey, stay close!” Josh called. Ailemara took a deep breath, and began to cry tears of joy.

“It smells like home.” She said. Suddenly several doors opened, and Skrulls began to walk out, armed with blasters.

“Miles!” Josh called. Eileen lit up her hands.

“Hold up!” Acacia called, standing between them all.

“We come in peace.” Kyle announced, holding his hands up.

“They do!” Ailemara reassured. “Brave Skrull Warriors, stand down! I am Ailemara, Infiltrator Agent 27225. We are here on a peaceful mission. Who is your commander?” A Skrull, a tad larger than the others and with a more decorated purple and black robe walked through to the front.

“I am.” He replied in almost an Australian accent. “General Talos.” He looked at Eileen. “No way, Lightstream!”

“Wait...” Eileen powered down. “How do you...”

“Oh, I’m a huge fan!” Talos replied. “Ever since we hijacked Earth television signals, oh, your TV show was all we watched!”

“It got canned after one season.” Josh chimed in.

“A sin and shame, I really wanted to know the secret identity of Scramble!” Talos replied.

“Rumor has it that it was gonna be her husband Josh Nestman!” Josh exclaimed.

“No! Really? I liked him!”

“I know right!”

“Is... is this really happening?” Acacia asked.

“It’s Josh, what do you expect?” Kyle asked. He stepped forward. “General Talos, we wanted to bring Ailemara home.”

“Oh, well, come on then! Men, put those guns away! You’re all terrible shots anyway!”

“Not cool Talos!” A Skrull shouted. Talos waved him down.

“Come. Come! Hey, boy!” He called to Miles, who was messing with a control panel. “Don’t play with that please, you’ll suck us all out of blasted airlock!”

“Get over here Miles!” Josh ordered, as Miles hurried over.

“Sorry, I’m just really excited!” He replied. Talos led the way and they entered into a vast space station filled with Skrulls of all ages.

“The embryos...” Ailemara said.

“Yeah, they hatched!” Talos said. “Some just naturally, over time. But about a year ago, something with an energy signature very similar to Galactus hit us! We lost life support and had to make some quick repairs and judgment calls. Most are still intact, but we had to free a lot of them!” A group of Skrull children spotted Eileen’s Lightstream suit and excitedly rushed over to her.

“Oh! Hello there!” She exclaimed, kneeling down and greeting them.

“Hey man, sick kicks.” A teenage Skrull complimented Miles.

“Oh, thanks bro!” He said, fist bumping him. “Check it, I leave ‘em untied... on purpose!”

“Really? Why?”

“To show everyone that I ain’t trippin’!”

“Eyyy!” They simultaneously exclaimed with a high five.

“This is not at all what I imagined.” Acacia said.

“What did I tell you.” Ailemara said. “We’re not all bad.”

“Talos.” Kyle said. “I wanted to... apologize. Personally, to you and the Skrull race. During the war, I...”

“Stop right there, young man.” Talos interrupted. “It’s exactly as you said it was. War. People do things, that maybe they aren’t so proud of looking back. We’ve all got some dirt on our hands. It’s not about what we’ve done in the past, it’s what we do moving forward that defines us.” Kyle smiled, and took Talos’s arm into his.

“Thank you.” He said. Talos nodded.

“Are you happy now, Mara?” Josh asked. She smiled.

"I am. Thank you. You have no idea what this means to me."

"No problem." Acacia said. "And not to be pushy, but..." She held up the paper.

"Yes, of course!" Ailemara reached for it, when suddenly there was an explosion and the ship shook.

"What the shell was that!" Josh exclaimed. Talos motioned to a group of Skrulls, and they pulled up images on monitors of star-shaped ships outside, blasting the Salvation.

"It's Nova Corps!" Talos exclaimed. "How'd they find us?"

"Our cloaking is down sir!" A Skrull replied.

"Dang, that's on us!" Josh replied.

"Well we can't fire back! We have no weapons!" Talos exclaimed.

"Not even the nega-bomb?" Josh asked.

"No way! When our life support went down, we had to strip that thing for parts! We're defenseless!"

"We'll stop them." Eileen heroically replied, as the children cheered for her.

"Not alone you won't!" Talos said. "Arm up men! Guns on stun, we don't want to hurt Nova Corps!"

"Miles, stay with the civilians!" Kyle ordered, as he, Josh, Eileen, Ailemara, Acacia, Talos, and a squad of Skrulls rushed off.

"Got it!" Miles exclaimed. "Okay everyone! Stick together! Find a place to hide! Let's go!"

E.G.G., Talos, and Ailemara rushed down the corridors to the other end of the ship, where some Nova craft had docked. Nova Corpsmen were searching around, along with Agent Abigail Brand.

“This Skrull craft just came out of nowhere and it’s way too close to Earth!” She shouted.

“Search it to the last bolt!”

“Abs?” Josh asked.

“You know her?” Talos replied.

“Yeah! If I can get to her, I can explain everything!”

“Alright then! Cover him men!” The Skrulls charged out and began firing.

“Skrulls!” Brand shouted. “Open fire!” The Nova Corps took cover and fired back. Josh ran across the battlefield to reach Agent Brand. Acacia jumped out and set up a force field, protecting the Skrulls, while Eileen flew up and blasted lightning at the Nova.

“Super Skrulls!” Brand exclaimed. “They’ve simmed Eileen Nestman and Acacia Blanco! Take them out first!”

“We’re not Skrulls!” Eileen shouted.

“Funny.” Eileen turned in the air, and found herself face to face with none other than the one and only Captain Marvel herself. “That’s exactly what a Skrull would say.” Eileen’s mouth fell open.

“Cap-Cap-Captain Marvel!” She exclaimed.

“Hi.” She powered up her fist with photon energy and punched Eileen clean across the ship.

“We’re dead.” Talos said.

Kyle engulfed himself in the Symbiote and started webbing up Corpsmen.

“A Klyntar! Take it out!” A commander ordered, as they focused their fire on Kyle. While they were distracted, Ailemara hurled a fireball at them, and took them out. Acacia began to sweat under the strain of the laser fire on her force field.

“Fall back!” She called, dropping it, as the Skrulls took cover and continued to fire stun blasts.

Josh weaved and bobbed around as lasers and explosions flew this way and that. He tapped the Signal and was covered in blue and red Joshinator armor. He punched out two Nova, kicked a third, and ran for Brand.

“No you don’t.” She said. She aimed and fired, hitting a servo.

“Yahh!” Josh cried, tripping and tumbling to the ground. Brand walked up and aimed the gun at his head.

“No, wait! Wait!” Josh cried. “Abs! It’s really me!”

“Prove it.” She said, finger on the trigger. “You got 2 seconds.”

“Well, for a girl whose theme is green, you’ve got a whole lot of pink bras!”

“Ugh.” Brand sighed in disgust. “Westbrook? What, in the actual hell, are you doing up here? Why are you always at the center of trouble!”

“I’ll explain later, but we should probably stop Captain Marvel before she pummels Eileen into cheddar and broccoli soup.”

Eileen slammed into a wall, practically destroying it.

“Ow...” She groaned. She looked up to see Captain Marvel flying straight for her.

“Oh shell!” She shot off three blasts, all hitting but having no effect, and Captain Marvel crashed into Eileen, taking her through the wall and slamming her into the ground.

“You’re tough, Skrull.” She said.

“I’m not a Skrull! I’m Eileen Nestman! I’m also known as Lightstream!” She exclaimed.

“Sure you are.” Captain Marvel powered up her fists and blasted Eileen with a photon blast. Eileen tried to create an energy shield, but it was easily shattered and Eileen was tossed into a ship, causing it to explode. She tumbled out, coughing. Captain Marvel slowly approached her.

“Wow. Resilient. They must have improved the Super Skrull procedure.” Captain Marvel commented. Her eyes lit up yellow, and her body began to radiate with energy. “Don’t worry, this’ll only hurt a lot.”

“Please! I- I was an Avenger!” Eileen exclaimed. “I never met you, but Cap showed me your room! I petted your cat Goose!”

“You infiltrated the Avengers and went into my room!?” Captain Marvel exclaimed.

“Uh-oh...” Eileen suddenly realized how bad that sounded.

“That intel won’t serve you now Skrull.” She relied, preparing a blast. “Kiss your second invasion goodbye!”

“NOOO!” Eileen shrieked, cowering in fear. Captain Marvel unleashed a powerful cosmic level photon blast. Right next to Eileen. Eileen opened one eye, then both.

“You... didn’t eviscerate me?” She asked.

“You called Goose a cat...” Captain Marvel realized.

“... Yeah... she’s a cute little kitty...”

“Goose isn’t a cat. She’s a Flerken and Skrulls know that.” She squinted suspiciously. “What exactly is going on here?”

“Carol!” Brand called, rushing into the room.

“Did she kill Eileen?” Josh asked. He spotted Eileen. “Oh! Eileen! You’re still alive!”

“Thanks for the concern.” She sarcastically replied.

“They’re human.” Brand confirmed. “Apparently this is all some kind of big mix up.”

“Oh.” Captain Marvel rubbed the back of her neck. “Well then, it seems like I owe you guys an apology.”

“Shove it up your bathing suit Ms. Marvel!” Josh shouted. Captain Marvel looked at him, her eyes lighting up. Josh cowered behind Eileen. “I’m sorry, please don’t blast me Jupiter!”

“I’d blast you Knowhere.” She retorted. “Now, someone please explain what’s going on.”

* * *

Captain Marvel watched as Skrull children ran around playing. Nova Corpsmen and Kyle were helping repair the ship. Ailemara approached Agent Brand with Talos, Eileen, Acacia, and Josh.

“So, as you can see.” Ailemara said. “We’re just trying to live here. In peace.”

“I’ll be the first to admit I was wrong.” Brand said. “S.W.O.R.D. was founded because of the Secret Invasion, to make sure nothing like it ever happened again. When I got the alert on Xandar that there was a Skrull vessel this close to Earth, I feared the worst.”

“We both did.” Captain Marvel replied, approaching. “I see now that going into a situation with preconceived notions isn’t good for anyone.”

“Thank you Captain.” Talos said. “We just want to live in peace.”

“Yeah, about that.” Josh said. “I have a friend I sent up to space last year. He lost his people too, and I suggested that he go find a new home in the stars. I just contacted him, and he’s gonna help you guys find a new place to crash.”

“Who are you friends with in space?” Eileen asked.

“Mr. Westbrook!” Miles exclaimed, rushing up with a bunch of excited Skrulls. “There’s a giant green dragon outside!” Josh smirked.

“Talos, Fin Fang Foom will happily guide you and the Skrulls to a new planet to call home!”

“Wait... that story of you fighting Fin Fang Foom was real!” Eileen cried.

“Why does no one ever believe me?” Josh asked. Ailemara tapped Acacia.

“Acacia. A word?” She asked. Acacia nodded and followed Ailemara to a private room.

“What’s up Mara?” She asked.

“I read your paper...” She said.

“Great! What’s it say?” Acacia eagerly asked. Ailemara clutched paper, looking down quietly. Acacia’s face straightened. “That bad?”

“Acacia, I feel like I know you better than anyone, sometimes it’s hard to keep your memories and mine straight in my head. I cried when Harry died. Sometimes, I wake up in the night wanting to hug Celeste. I miss Fumiko, very, very much. I know who you are. And I say from the bottom of my heart,

that I am so, incredibly sorry, for what my people did to you.” She wiped a tear away. “You don’t deserve this.”

“Ailemara. Just give it to me straight. Am I dying?”

“Yes.” Ailemara answered. Acacia’s heart sunk. She cleared her throat.

“How long?”

“Months at best, maybe you can stretch it to a year.” She replied. “The Super Skrull procedure... it didn’t take to your biology. This diagnosis gave you a decade, but the more you used your powers, the more rapidly you began to... devolve. For eight years, it’s been changing your cells, mutating them, but you’re a human, so the new Skrull cells created in your blood are poisoning you.”

“Can I... fix it?” Acacia asked, fighting tears.

“All you can do is delay it. Decrease the use of your powers, or stop using them altogether. It’s too late to save you Acacia, I’m sorry.” Acacia nodded.

“Thank you, for telling me.” She turned to leave. Ailemara caught her arm, then pulled her into a hug.

“I love you, Acacia.” She said. “You, your memories, your life, showed me what it’s like, to be human.”

“I’m glad.” Acacia replied, quietly crying. “Now show them.”

“I will.” Ailemara promised. “Goodbye, Acacia.”

“Goodbye, Ailemara.” Acacia said.

* * *

Soon, all the members of E.G.G. were loaded onto the Egg Jet. Captain Marvel and Agent Brand loaded up with Nova Corps and flew back to Xandar. Josh powered up the jet and lifted off. Talos stood by Ailemara, as they and the other Skrulls waved goodbye.

“This was so cool!” Miles exclaimed.

“Glad you enjoyed yourself.” Josh replied. “Oh! Acacia! What’d your thingy say? Did Ailemara read it?”

“Yeah, do you know what’s going on?” Eileen asked. Everyone looked at her. Acacia closed her eyes, then smiled.

“Yep, it’s like, the Skrull version of the flu or whatever.” She dismissively stated. “It only seems bad ‘cause I’m a human, Mara said give it a few more months and I’ll be right as a chimichanga!”

“That’s great!” Josh exclaimed. “Psh, and Kyle said you were dying!”

“Wha- I did not!” Kyle defended.

“You did. We all heard you.” Josh lied. “Next stop: Earth!” The Egg Jet took off. Acacia looked back, as they left the Salvation behind. Fin Fang Foom roared and began to fly off.

“Follow that dragon!” Talos ordered, Skrulls powering up the ship. Ailemara walked up to the window, and placed her hand on the glass, as the Egg Jet faded into the distant. She smiled, a tear falling down her face.

“Godspeed, Acacia Blanco.”

The End