
EVAN JACOBS
THE SYMBOL

Epic Battle: Tremont vs. Gan Terra

Tremont	Gan Terra
-Middle school life 	-Ruled by a tyrant 
-Normal weather 	-Missing Natural Resources 
-Some people fear differences 	-Erasing all differences 


HUMANS CAN FLY – NO WINGS REQUIRED.



CHAPTER 1

LOOK UP

As usual, Marina and Scott walked to school together. They were best friends. Marina couldn't wait to give Scott his birthday gift. He turned 14 today. Finally, he was Marina's age again.

Marina reached into her pocket. "Hey! Happy birthday!" She pulled out a gift card for Game Break. That was their favorite gaming store.

Scott grinned. "No way! Thanks, Marina!"

She beamed. "Sure! What are you going to get?"

Scott smirked. “Come on. You know what I’m getting.”

Marina nodded. “Yeah, yeah. The newest *Blockspire* game. It’s your favorite series.” She nudged Scott. “Maybe this means I can be the first to play it with you.”

He laughed. “Of course!”

Marina was relieved to see Scott laugh. He deserved to be happy on his birthday. This was especially true after yesterday.

He and Marina lived in the small town of Tremont. Their families didn’t blend in well with everyone else. Scott and Marina were originally from big cities. Tremont was a quiet and more rustic town. Most people had lived there all their lives. They hadn’t experienced much outside of Tremont. Marina, Scott, and their families dressed differently than others in Tremont. Both families had ways of living that differed from most in town too.

Usually, the differences weren’t an issue.

Only two people at school had a problem with them. They were Justin and Julie. Neither of them liked Marina or Scott. Justin and Julie would tease them. But they were worse toward Scott. The boy wore thick glasses. Scott was small too. He was an easy target for Justin and Julie.

On the other hand, Marina was tall. She had more confidence than Scott. Justin and Julie had trouble intimidating her. Krav maga helped too. The self-defense fighting had built up Marina's self-esteem. Marina had been practicing it since she was eight. It was fun for her. But she hoped to never need it in real life.

Yesterday, that hope was dashed. It was after school. Marina and Scott met by the same school doors every day. Then they would walk home together. That day, Justin and Julie had seen Scott first. The two cornered Scott by the doors. They were hurling insults at him.

Marina arrived. She was furious. "Stop it! Leave him alone!"

Justin and Julie laughed at her.

Julie got close to Marina's face. "What are you going to do about it?"

Justin snickered at Marina. "You're just like Scott. Neither of you weirdos belong here."

Julie pushed Marina. "And we're here to remind you."

Marina backed away. "Don't put your hands on me again."

Julie laughed. "Oh! You think you can tell me what to do?" She raised her fist to punch Marina.

That's when krav maga helped. Marina blocked Julie's punch. Julie tried to hit her again. It didn't work that time either.

Next, Justin got involved. He grabbed Marina. She used her skills to escape. After that, she put both of them on the ground.

Marina was grateful her moves had worked. She never wanted to fight Justin and Julie. But they'd attacked her. Now she just hoped they would stay away.

Scott had needed help. This seemed to embarrass him. He thanked Marina. But he didn't say much after that.

It made Marina wonder if she had done the right thing. Maybe she should've gotten help. She didn't have to handle it herself. *Should I have told a teacher instead?* she wondered.

Marina did not want to make things worse. She had fought for Scott yesterday. That might make the bullies see him as weaker than before. They could pick on him more.

She tried to think more positively. Today was a new day. Marina was just glad Scott seemed happy. "Your gift was almost something else, Scott. I know you like going to the movies. So I thought of a movie theater gift card. But you *love* gaming."

Scott nodded. "Yeah. For gift cards, nothing beats Game Break."

They walked in silence for a moment.

Scott looked at the ground. "My dad brought up moving away again."

"Oh." Marina's heart sank. "Air Force?"

"Yep." Scott glanced at her. His eyes were sad. "I know moving is part of my dad's job. But I was hoping to at least finish middle school first."

Marina hated the thought of Scott going away. Still, she tried not to sound too hurt. "I get it. And I'll miss you. But we'll stay in touch. When is the move?"

Scott shrugged. "My dad isn't sure. He has been talking about it a lot though. With Air Force stuff, that usually means it's going to happen. It could be soon."

"Maybe not this time," Marina countered. "There's no point in being bummed yet." She grinned. "Especially on your birthday!"

Scott smiled slightly. "You're right. I'll just enjoy today." His smile grew. He did a quick dance move.

Marina cracked up. Scott did too. Suddenly, something caught Marina's eye. She looked at the sky.

A circular shape had appeared near a cloud. The shape was a whitish gray color. It looked nothing like a cloud. Marina wasn't even sure if it was an object. It looked more like a symbol for something.

She pointed at it. "What's that?"

Scott looked to where Marina was pointing. "What's what?"

"That thing in the sky. It's kind of like a symbol."

"Symbol?" Scott asked. "I only see clouds."

"It's definitely not a cloud."

"Well, I can't see it."

"Seriously?" Marina pointed again. "It's right there!"

THE SYMBOL

DIVERSITY, NICE ALIENS, SAVING EARTH

BEING BULLIED, DESTRUCTION, TOO MUCH POWER

BULLIES, BAD WEATHER, AND HER BEST FRIEND POSSIBLY MOVING AWAY HAVE ALREADY COMPLICATED MARINA'S LIFE. THEN A GLOWING SYMBOL APPEARS IN THE SKY, AND MARINA LEARNS THAT IT'S THE START OF SOMETHING BIG ENOUGH TO REACH FAR BEYOND HER TOWN. NOW SHE WILL HAVE TO DIG DEEP, STAND TALL, AND DISCOVER JUST HOW POWERFUL BEING DIFFERENT REALLY CAN BE.

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