

The Battle of Escalon

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Jack Lipton and Thinking Horndog for letting me play in the Sa'arm Cycle!

The Sa'arm invasion finally came to Earth. After years of buildup, preparation, speculation, exhortation, and just plain denial, it happened.

"So what?" Mabel said, shaking her head as she got her kids ready to go outside for the morning. It had been on the news, on TV for the last ten hours or so, ships landing everywhere, big ships, little ships, medium ships. All attempts at communication had failed. And where people fought, people died. That's the other thing the TV told them and showed them. Something might work once, but it probably wouldn't work twice. And people died.

A voice on the TV in the kitchen spoke once more about attempts at communication failing.

"I know all about *that*, honey," she muttered as she made sure Timmy's helmet was seated properly -- he'd been banging his head into things again. And the tape around the cuffs of the long sleeves on his denim shirt was secure -- he'd been scratching at his arms again. At 16, tall and gangly, they had to get adult size shirts for him at the second-hand store. Amy, the other severely autistic child she cared for, was easy in comparison -- as long as gates and doors were kept closed and secure -- Amy would wander if she could, and if the weather was good, she'd shed clothing along the way. Cute at six, less so at fifteen.

Mabel took care of them, day after day, one of the resident caretakers at the home. She also helped Hortencia, who worked more with their trainables, the kids who could be trained to do basic things, but still needed continuous supervision.

After the years of preparation, of CAP testing, of exodus, they were the ones left over.

And in spite of what the TV in the other room was blaring, their life seldom changed. Get the kids up, get them dressed and fed. Make sure they went to the bathroom. If the weather was good, and it was most of the time in their little town at the foot of California's Gold Country, Timmy and Amy would go out in the yard.

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As Mabel checked Amy, she saw Timmy moving toward the back door. She took a breath to call for him to wait, but let her breath out with a sigh. Like the TV said, attempts at communication had failed...

“Let’s go, dear,” she told Amy, helping her stand and leading her to the door. “Timmy’s skirls are waiting.”

In the yard, Amy would sit in one chair and rock back and forth almost continuously, hour after hour. And Timmy would sit on the ground, in one of a few places, to watch and play with the squirrels. About the only word he said, the only word any of them could remember him saying, was “skirl.”

Mabel opened the door to let Timmy out, leading Amy out and securing the door after them. Another pleasant morning. Around noon, Hortencia or one of the girls would bring them sandwiches. Timmy would eat his, pulling off the crusts and breaking them into small pieces for his “skirls.”

It was cool still. Mabel guessed at which spot Timmy would pick... It should warm up, so she guessed at one spot. Nope, he went to the other, one which had a little more sun shining on his back. Mabel pulled her chair around to one of the trees, an area near the fence separating them from the road, a little higher than the rest of the yard. She could watch from there.

Mabel watched. Amy rocked. Timmy sat and the squirrels frolicked around him.

Mabel looked up, hearing a strange noise. Her heart skipped a beat; she shook her head and sighed. “Well, kids, the Invasion has made it to Escalon,” she said out loud, watching as the odd-shaped ship settled silently into the pasture on the other side of the road, about a hundred feet away.

From what she’d heard on the news, the Sa’arm ship was one of the small ones, only carrying about...

“Yep,” she said as the side of the ship opened and creatures started coming out.

“Don’t know why they call ‘em hive things,” she muttered with a shudder, “they looks more like lizards to me.” Tall hive things, with three legs, just like she’d seen on TV, three weird arms, two big eyes in front of their heads, and one in back. “Not gonna sneak up on you, that’s for sure.”

“Got some sense, though,” she added. The ship had landed in the Jensen’s goat pen. The goats milled away from the new visitors. That’s what the TV was telling everyone, stay inside, leave them alone and they’ll leave you alone. She thought she heard shrieking from inside the home.

A bunch of them came out of the ship, heading off in different directions.

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“Now I don’t like *that* at all,” she said, watching as one approached the fence separating the goat pen from the larger pen that belonged to the Jensen’s bull, Rufus. “An it don’t look good for Rufus, either.” Rufus was at the other side of his pen, looking over the fence at the adjoining pen containing his cows.

Mabel nodded in appreciation at the smoothness with which the thing moved and climbed over the fence.

“Oh no, Rufus, you leave that thing be!” Mabel warned.

But to no avail -- Rufus detected an invader in *his* pen, and charged.

The thing didn’t break stride or change direction. Mabel thought she saw one of the smaller arm things pointing something -- and a charging Rufus turned silently into a Rufus-shaped cloud that dissipated in the morning air.

“Well, least it looked painless,” she commented.

She sensed something, and turned -- one had crossed the fence at the back of their yard! She gasped and froze where she was.

Its head was about seven feet off the ground, two large eyes looking at them, two big arms and one smaller arm. The hand at the end of the smaller arm was holding something.

It approached Amy, who ignored it as she ignored the rest of the outside world, preferring her own, sitting and rocking back and forth. The thing pointed a rod with a ball at the end at Amy, and Mabel caught her breath.

But nothing happened.

The thing moved again, heading to Timmy.

A squirrel bounded across the yard, and up one of the thing’s large legs!

As fast as the squirrel moved, Mabel was astonished at how quickly one of the thing’s big arms moved, grabbing the squirrel and holding it out to the side, the thing’s head tilting slightly as the smaller arm pointed the rod and ball thing at the squirrel.

The squirrel screamed in all its fury, thrashing, clawing, and trying to bite its captor.

Mabel heard its screams choked off, then sounds like twigs snapping. The squirrel went limp in the thing’s grasp, the squirrel’s head hanging off to the side in a most unsquirrel-like way.

The thing moved the rod and ball thing a bit more, then dropped the dead squirrel, starting to move again.

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Timmy shrieked, and got to his feet!

“No!” gasped Mabel, still too terrified to move.

But Timmy stood, face to face with the creature. “No hurt skirl!” he shouted. “Bad izzard! Bad izzard hurt skirl!” Timmy pointed at the deceased squirrel.

The thing leaned down, eye to eye, and pointed the rod and ball thing at Timmy.

But Timmy kept shouting. Mabel hadn’t heard so many words from him in years!

“Bad izzard! Bad, bad izzard! No hurt skirl! You go way! Go way! Go way NOW!” Timmy pointed across the street. “Bad izzard go way NOW!” Timmy stamped his feet and pointed. Mabel could see tears streaming down his face.

Timmy dropped to his knees, then sat on the ground, picking up the dead squirrel, holding it and crying out loud, only pausing to yell out, “Izzard go way NOW! Go way! NOW!”

The thing tilted its head one way then another, moved the rod and ball thing, and then moved quickly across the yard, passing the still terrified Mabel, scaling the chain link fence with ease, crossing Escalon-Belotta Road, and heading back to its ship!

Timmy held the dead animal, crying and occasionally saying, “Skirl, skirl.”

Amy stopped her rocking, moved over to Timmy, and held him silently.

Mabel shook her head, turning to watch as the things got back into their ship, and in under a minute, took off.

It was still five minutes or so before she could move.

When she did, she was shaking all over as she got up to check the kids. She wiped Amy’s nose, and Timmy’s face.

Timmy looked up at her, gently cradling the dead animal. “Skirl... Bad izzards go way...” He looked down again and moaned, “Skirl...”

Amy moved back to her spot and resumed rocking.

Mabel wasn’t sure what to do, what Timmy understood. “Timmy, should we bury the squirrel?” she asked.

Timmy started to stand; Mabel helped him.

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Timmy looked around and walked to a tree near the fence. He reached up as high as he could and put the squirrel's body up in the tree. "Good skirl," he intoned. "Bye-bye."

Then he turned and burst into tears again. Mabel held him, gently at first, but he held her as he cried.

After a few minutes he paused, sniffled and looked up, turning his head and looking into the air all around. "Bad izzards go way," he said again.

Mabel tried to dry his face, but Timmy pushed away and returned to his previous spot. The other squirrels had already returned to their routine.

Mabel sighed and returned to her chair.

She was startled some time later by sirens and church bells going off. It sounded like every siren and every bell in Escalon was sounding, and maybe the fire station down the road in Farmington as well! She stood and looked around, but nothing looked different. Nothing looked different to the kids and the squirrels either, so she sat down again.

A minute or so later, Maria, one of the housekeeping staff ran out, crying, "Miss Mabel, Miss Mabel! Our prayers, they are answered! The demons are leaving! All over the world, they are leaving! The TV says so! They are leaving!"

Mabel sighed, relaxing a bit. Amy kept rocking. Timmy sat, playing with the skirls.

Maria cried out, "It's a miracle, Miss Mabel, Jesus has saved us all!"

Mabel noticed a change in the air, and got up. "That's nice, Maria -- go tell Hortencia I need her help. I think Amy pooped her pants again."

End
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