StarCraft meets Earth Part One

By Kale

Someone was mowing our lawn, I was reading on the couch, a typical summer day. After a few minutes, the person mowing the lawn walked to the side yard, done with his work. I looked up to wave to him. All of a sudden, the ground next to the person erupted upward. I jumped from the window in surprise! Good thing too, a few seconds later, the window broke, broken glass flew everywhere. The person screamed, and ran as fast as he could into the front yard, he hopped in his truck and sped away. Something followed him, the thing was so quick I missed seeing it. Mom rushed down the stairs to see what had gone wrong. As the person sped away, he took a picture of his rearview mirror. The mirror wasn’t important, the thing it was reflecting would change my life forever.

StarCraft meets Earth Part Two

A few days after the strange thing ran off, the reports of the story were on the news. Pictures were shown of the creature that had followed the truck. I looked closer, all of a sudden, realization clicked in my head. I yelled to Dad. Mom had been casting the news to the T.V. Normally, we don’t watch the news, but finding something crazy in our yard was enough to get us watching the reports on it. I yelled to Mom to freeze the video. Once she did, Dad came racing downstairs. “What is it?” he asked.

“Dad, look at that picture.” I pointed to a picture on the T.V. Dad walked over to the T.V. He looked closely at the picture on the screen. Then, he paled. “Kale…that’s a-” Dad started to say.

“-ling, a ZERGling.” I finished. “I know just what this means, and we need to evacuate the house and get……a periscope.”

A day later, we had evacuated the house. We had also gotten any necessities as well.

Finally, the day came, we walked into our yard. I poked the periscope into the ground. The periscope suddenly plunged into the dirt. I grabbed it just in time. I peered through the periscope. I looked into a giant underground cavern, filled to brimming with the worst thing I could possibly see. The cavern was filled with banglings. “RUN!!!” I shouted at the top of my lungs. We ran as fast as we could into the front yard. BOOM!!!!! The back yard exploded in a huge blast of vespiene gas. That green watery goo is the explosive fuel used by many machines, and banglings. The banglings are full of the stuff, to the point of exploding at will. We quickly raced into the back yard. Miraculously, the house was unharmed, but the yard and the small green field beyond were a smoking crater. A smoking crater full of angry Zerg. The explosion had ripped of an extra layer of rock off the ground. There had been a much larger cavern underneath that cavern. The problem was, the larger cavern happened to be a giant Zerg Hive. I stared down at the Zerg army. *Hmm. Kerrigan never attacks humans without reason. Kerrigan would be with the army, she always has something to say. Not Kerrigan, who else controls Zerg? Oh no! That’s……Amon’s army of feral Zerg! This is not good!* I thought. Suddenly, large, blue, panel-like tubes shot through the sky. The panels disappeared a second later. I smiled, we were about to get a lot more back up.

StarCraft meets Earth Part Three

Hundreds of Protoss teleportation fields thundered to the ground around me. Protoss warriors raced towards the enemy Zerg. Psconic blades clashed with claw and tooth as Zerg began falling. Still, the Zerg just kept coming. I noticed that there were additional Zerg racing from caves. A giant Ultralisk emerged from one of the caves. *Those caves must connect to additional Zerg caverns.* I thought. Thousands of Zerg raced to attack the Protoss. The Protoss, in turn, were slicing Zerg left and right, Psionic energy flowed through the air as High Templar sent raging Psionic storms on huge groups of Zerg. The Zerg just kept flowing, they didn’t stop, they didn’t tire, they didn’t care about their lives, they just kept coming. Soon, the Protoss shields were starting to weaken, they kept fighting, but they wouldn’t last more than a few minutes. Suddenly, a wave of blasts destroyed a gigantic Ultralisk battling an Archon. The Archon looked up, a huge warship had just exited hyperspace and was now destroying Zerg left and right. The Hyperion had arrived.

Thousands of explosions rocked the ground as the Hyperion blasted Zerg everywhere. More battlecruisers exited hyperspace. The sky was full of giant warships. Terran pods rained down thickly, depositing thousands of marines to battle on the ground. The tide was turning, the Zerg still were coming, and coming, but now at least we stood a chance.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part Four

High power bullets and Psionic energy flew through the air. My back yard had become a battlefield, thousands of semi-mindless Zerg attacked hundreds of well-trained Protoss and Terrans(humans). I felt a tingling sensation on my fore-head. It had been coming every once and a while months before. I found that after a while, I could summon it whenever I wanted. At the time, it did nothing, but now… I raced over to a Protoss who didn’t seem to be fighting at the moment. As I ran up, I saw that it was Artanis, Hierarch of the Protoss. He looked at me. *What do you want human boy?* He communicated telepathically. Protoss speak telepathically because they don’t have mouths. It doesn’t sound mental, it just sounds really cool and has a distinct echo! Anyway… “Can I have some Psionic blades so I can help?” I asked him. *Only those with immense Psionic power can use the blades. You are just a boy, and humans have an extremely low control of Psionic energy.* He replied. “Okay then, what about this?” I asked. Suddenly I shut my eyes and concentrated, taking that tingle in my head, and spreading it throughout my body. I then focused on growing that tingle until it washed over me. Blue mist spread around me as I began to levitate. I focused the energy yet again, now to my hands. The mist enveloped me, swirling around me. I rose higher. My hands began to have a crackle of white, then blue, then white again. The crackle grew, till my hands were covered in blue lightning. The ball of lightning grew and became nearly uncontrollable, so, I let it go.

Lightning flashed from me, hitting every Zerg in the area. The bolts raced even farther, going to every cave, nook and cranny where the Zerg hid. The Zerg began floating. the bolts of Psionic lightning pulled every last Zerg out of their caves, their battles, their nests, their cocoons, their lines, and wherever they were, into the air. The Zerg mass began squeezing into one big ball, now encircled in energy. I let the energy in, and the air exploded.

The Zerg ball exploded in a mighty blast. They all seemed to disappear, to never be again. I dropped to the ground. I opened my eyes and smiled. “Does that count?”

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 5

Every living being around stared at me. With the exception of the Protoss, who don’t have mouths, every living being around also had their jaws dropped. “Well,” I said, looking around. “I assume it worked?” Everyone slowly nodded their heads. “Alright then, how about those blades?” I turned to Artanis. He still stared at me. Exiting the story for just a sentence or two, note that Protoss are almost never shocked. Even if they are, they aren’t shocked for long, but Artanis just kept staring! “Uhh…are you okay?” I asked. Artanis stared. “Helloooo?” I waved a hand in front of his face. That seemed to work.

*“How? How did you do that!??”* Artanis finally exclaimed.

“Simple, I think I concentrated intense brainwave electricity to every Zerg in the area. I simply manipulated the electricity to pull the entire Zerg mass into one large ball, then sent the electricity into the Zerg infrastructure causing a collapse effectively vaporizing each and every Zerg. Either that, or I have no idea.” I explained. Artanis stared. “I believe you call that Psionic energy.” I told him. Artanis kept staring. “You know, Psionic storms.” I reminded him. Artanis just stared. “Don’t you guys have an unspoken law that you can’t be speechless?” Artanis stared. “PLEASE STOP STARING!!!” I yelled at him. He looked like he had just woken up from a century-long nap.

*“I do not understand, humans do not have the Psionic might of the Protoss, that just superseded everything Protoss know.”* Artanis finally wondered.

“Well then, I guess there’s a certain someone who made me that way.” I hinted.

*“Well, your planet needs you, Amon has targeted this sector, and now, we know we need your help.”* Artanis told me as he sent a Protoss warrior to go get some blades for me.

“Well, I’m going to need some armor.” I told him. “Before you get some, I’m going to try something. This time, don’t stare for so long.” I again closed my eyes, but this time, I focused the energy into a solid form. I made a few tweaks to make it stronger and opened my eyes. I found myself in sleek, Protoss armor, only this stuff was blue. “Hey, isn’t this supposed to be gold?” I asked. Artanis stared again, but, remembering what I had told him, stopped a second later. “Here, I’ll go dye it, I want to look right.” I ran back into the house. I grabbed a gold paint tube and opened it. Then, I closed my eyes. Doing the armor thing like before, I used my newfound powers to draw the paint out of the tube. I infused it with my armor, and voila! I had gold armor just like the other Protoss. I walked out again. Raydon walked up to me.

“Hey! You look great!” he told me.

“Oh, I see that look on your face. I see Raynor helping the authorities with clean-up, how about you go ask him for one.” I replied. Raydon brightened, and ran off to Raynor. I saw him point to me, then himself, obviously identifying himself. Raynor quickly handed Raydon a standard Terran gun. Raydon immediately dropped it on the ground. Raynor laughed and they tried a variety of guns. Eventually, Raydon ran up to me, sporting a sniper rifle.

“Look! Raynor said it’s an ultralight sniper! I can’t wait to try it out!” he exclaimed.

“Well, you have your weapon, now, let’s get mine.” I told him as I watched the Protoss warrior running up.

I slipped on the weapons excitedly. Once I had them on, everyone backed away. I didn’t even have to close my eyes. Kshouw! Kshow! Twin blades ignited.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 6

“This is awesome!!!” I yelled as I whirled around, swinging at invisible enemies. The blue blades flashed as I jumped and stabbed. After a few minutes of imaginary combat, I settled down. The blades evaporated. I looked at my armor one more time, before letting that dissolve as well. Suddenly, I was a kid again, a kid who would never be the same again. Artanis, walked up.

*“You show talent with the blades, now, we must depart for the planet you call Mars. Amon is setting up a Zerg hive on that planet.”*

“More Zerg!!!??? Where does he get them all??? Yes, that was a rhetorical question Artanis. Is Kerrigan going to help any time soon? Can I ride on the Spear of Adun?\*” I asked in rapid fire.

*“Kerrigan is defending Neptune. Amon has sent Mobius Core to gather the gas, as it is an excellent resource. Besides, Protoss are the best at burning Zerg infested worlds. There is nothing valuable on this planet, correct?”* Artanis replied.

“Not unless you are in a certain alternate movie dimension. Other than that, no, there is nothing there that’s important. I expect the Mars rovers to be useless now.” I told him.

*“Well, then let us be off! Yes, your Psionic powers and actions shown today have made you…what would you humans call it…ah, an honorary Templar.” Artanis told me.*

“THANKS!!!!! I’ve always wanted to be a Protoss! Hey, before we go, we should dub Raydon an honorary Marine, and Mom and Dad Honorary Marine and Templar parents!”

\*The Spear of Adun is the ancient Protoss battleship that the Protoss found in the Legacy of the Void campaign. It has become the Protoss flagship

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 7

I walked over to Artanis. “So, when are we going to go?” I asked him.

*“As soon as we are ready, the Spear of Adun should be here soon.” he replied.*

Soon enough, the gigantic Protoss warship was soon sighted in the outer atmosphere, being too large to land.

*“We shall warp to the ship soon.”* Artanis told me.

“Don’t forget the rest of my family!” I pointed to Raydon, Mom, and Dad.

Note that Mom and Dad, were still staring with their jaws dropped. As they had been as the past three or four parts have played out. My gesturing to them seemed to break the trance. Dad ran up.

“What. Just. HAPPENED!!!!” he asked me, confused.

After a detailed explanation, Dad calmed down. Then, his eyes went wide after I told him the part about Raydon and I being awesome battle heroes. Then, he nearly fainted. The same thing happened with Mom, only she just stared.

“Don’t worry Mom, I’ll be safe aboard the Spear of Adun, no one could hurt me in a ship full of Protoss, I’m even an honorary Templar!” I told her. “You should come along!”

“Question: which is safer?” Mom managed to ask.

“Hmm, let’s see here, a planet under siege by Zerg, but safely guarded by the best Protoss and Terrans around, or the incredible Protoss battleship with no Zerg currently on it escorted by a gigantic fleet of Protoss battleships, but attacking a Zerg Hive. No, I can’t tell which one, but I’m getting on the latter. Do you guys want to come?” I said to her.

‘Well, if you’re going to be in danger either way, it sounds like you won’t be as in the thick of things. I guess that means I’m in too.” Mom told me slowly.

“I’m ready!!!!!” Raydon raced up. “Don’t forget me!!!”  
 “I’m not going to be all alone, let’s do this thing!” Dad told me. I smiled.

“Okay, Artanis, make sure to warp Mom, Dad, and Raydon too!” I told him.

Artanis nodded. Suddenly, a strange sensation flew through me. I saw the warp squares running around me, as if analyzing me. All of a sudden, a flash of blue light, and then, *“Welcome, to the Spear of Adun!”*

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 8

Shining, gold walls surrounded me. I strolled across a light blue, and transparent floor. The Spear of Adun’s interior would take hours to describe, the outer, days. The aerodynamic and technological might of the Protoss was incredibly shown in the magnificent ship in which I stood. I looked over to Artanis. “So, can we get settled in?” I asked

*“Of course, Raynor has supplied us with your…beds…food, and other human necessities. He has also provided us with the means of which to prepare and store your food. I admit that us Protoss do not require food, so we cannot aid you in preparation.”* Artanis told us.

“That’s all right, I’ll cook. I just hope the cooking supplies aren’t too futuristic.” Mom announced.

*“Do not worry, I have found that among the Terrans’ latest achievements, cooking is not one of them.”* Artanis told her. (By the way, that is about as funny as Protoss get.) *“Follow him to your rooms.”* Artanis gestured to a Protoss standing nearby. The Protoss guard quickly walked over, and we were off to our rooms.

As we walked, I became increasingly amazed at the size of the Spear of Adun. In the video game, only certain important rooms were shown. I recognized the bridge, war council, and other rooms as we passed, but many others were now in view. I saw several squads of Protoss warriors running around. I also saw a couple large stalkers. We even passed a massive pair of colossi walking about. I marveled as a phoenix soared overhead. (Not a bird, a large, gold and blue ship. I don’t know why they call it a phoenix.) Finally, we came to our rooms. A door slid back into the wall to our left. I looked inside. In the first room, a nice couch stood in front of a futuristic-looking T.V. In the second, a kitchen. In the next two rooms, were several beds. It could almost pass for a human house, except for the T.V. and the textured, golden walls. Several clear-as-air windows looked out over Earth. I looked around, “Thank you, you guys must have worked really hard to get this to look like home.” I thanked the guard. The guard nodded and walked out of the cozy “house.” Mom quickly got to work preparing lunch. I then remembered that it had been a long time since I had last eaten. I was starving.

After lunch, we walked over to the bridge. Luckily, Dad had made sure to remember the way there. When we got there, Artanis looked up from the hologram he had been consulting.

*“Ah, you must be settled in. Now, are you ready?”*

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 9

The bridge was very large, the tunnel entrance opened out to a gigantic room, with the floor floating above a giant window, which completely encircled the bridge. I had a vast view of space from up here… I also saw some Protoss technicians at the many control panels around the bridge. In the center of the bridge, a large hologram table took up a lot of room. Artanis and a few other Protoss I recognized stood around it.

“Ooh! I recognize you guys, though you probably don’t know why! Vorazun, Fenix…Oops, I mean Talandar, and Karax. I assume the rest are off saving the galaxy elsewhere.”

Those named turned and stared at me. *“You were right Artanis, there is more to these humans than it seems.”* Vorazun, leader of the Dark Templar, told Artanis.

*“Indeed, but now we must include him and his family in our plan of action.”* Artanis gestured to us. *“Come, we have much to discuss.”* Artanis pointed to the map *“We will soon be in orbit around Mars. The plan is to burn from the air. The process is simple, so this will be an excellent first mission for our young Templar to observe.”* Artanis gestured to me.

“So, you’re saying it’s easy.” I asked him.

*“Yes”* Artanis replied.

“Okay!” I told him, “It’s just cool to see you guys in action! I might need a hint of training before I can use these.” When I finished, I closed my eyes and summoned the familiar tingle. My armor and weapons solidified into being. All but Artanis stared at me.

“Let’s not go through this again. Please stop staring.” I told them. “Anyway, I don’t think I’ll get by with just superpowers!” I grinned.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 10

*“We are entering orbit now.”* Artanis told me. *Now, I will take you to the viewing room. We have Observers in many key positions around the planet. You will be able to see every point of battle from here. We didn’t just build it for you, though, this room is for all Protoss to view.* My eyes widened, “Awesome! You can read my mind!!!” I exclaimed.   
 When we got to the viewing room, the battle was already in progress. All manner of Protoss were in a gigantic hall, the hall’s wall was covered in holoscreens. All the Protoss stood with rapt attention to the screens, occasionally walking to a different screen to get a better view. Here is an accumulation of what I saw:

Thousands of powerful Protoss Scout ships flew down to the planet. The Scouts quickly got to work burning a good deal of small Zerg Hives, before leaving the atmosphere to do battle with the aerial Zerg. Scouts zipped around space, dodging Mutalisk spikes and sending huge blasts of energy into some Locusts. Their shiny hulls gleamed as they flew for the Mutalisks. The multi-eyed Mutalisks sent their glaive wurms flying into the air. The Scouts sent their powerful anti-air energy blasts into the Zerg forces. Mutalisk bodies were quickly evaporated and the air threat soon was quenched. The problem was, the air battle had given the Zerg time to regroup and install an incredible amount of air defenses. Luckily, the Protoss just sent their traditional Purifiers blow each Zerg Hive to ashes. The huge Purifiers, looking like the Protoss had tried to replicate a UFO, were nearly invincible and therefore, the Hives were defenseless. The gigantic, pristine Purifiers vaporized each and every Hive, leaving a huge crater behind. The remaining Scouts came in to pick up the last few Hatcheries, and the battle was over.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 11

*“Well, that was easier than normal. Amon seems to be holding his forces back”*Artanis told me after we had gotten back to the bridge. *“We must take care.”*

*“Hierarch! Hierarch! We have received a transmission that there is a huge Mobius army gathering on Venus! It looks like they’re trying to harness the immense heat. Also, Kerrigan is still held up in orbit of Neptune. Mobius has left their air forces there.”* Karax ran up and said in rapid fire.

*“Then we shall do as we did with the Zerg, we cannot let Amon get the upper hand!”* Artanis told him.

*“Sir, the high-pressure atmosphere is too much for our ships, they can’t fly in this. Only shielded ground forces can get in without harm.”* Karax replied.

*“Then it looks like our young Templar is going to get his first mission.”* Artanis said to him.

“Awesome! I get shields!!!!!!!! Don’t worry Mom, I’m surrounded by the best warriors this side of the universe!” I yelled. “So, we’ll have to warp down, what’s our plan of attack?” I asked.

*“We must sneak in and place explosives at several locations around the base”* Artanis gestured to several marked locations on the holo-map. *“These explosives will in turn, take out all the main facilities. Then, when Mobius is recovering, we shall strike and destroy the entire base. I am sending my scout warriors with bombs now.”* Artanis motioned to several see-through figures warping in on the holo-map.

“Dark Templar!” I exclaimed

BOOOM! BOOOM! BOOOM! The bombs exploded. *“Now, let us attack!!!”*

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 12

Raydon insisted on being in on the battle, so we got an extra set of shields for him. I was too focused on my shields to notice. I used my abilities to strengthen the shield until they were nearly indestructible. I also found that I could change my shields so they would send a high-power energy pulse through anything that touched it. I made sure to turn that off until battle. Note: do not touch energy pulse shields. Ouch! At least it wasn’t as bad because I was controlling the energy. I also discovered that the shield ran on psionic power, stored. I experimented, and found that I could put up a small shield up to ten feet away. I could only make 2D shields, so I couldn’t make a full body shield. When we were all ready, I looked over our squadron of fighters. 2 immortals, 10 zealots (That’s what the Protoss warriors themselves were called), 5 stalkers, Fenix... oops Talandar (Right, he changed his name) (leading the mission), Raydon, and me. I had my blades and psionic armor at the ready. Raydon was decked out in a sleek Ghost suit (custom made) and had his gun loaded and ready. He even had a cloaking device! That gun had taken a long time to get used to, but now Raydon was very skilled with it. We all were ready to teleport down. *Whoosh!!!*

Talandar gestured to a base nearby, *“That, is our target. The other squadrons will take out the rest.”*

I stared at the base, it was huge! Talandar gave the signal to attack.

We all raced toward the base. The immortals began slamming the nearest building with their cannons. Hundreds of marines raced at us. Talandar jumped ahead, spinning around and incinerating the army within seconds. Some marauders lumbered toward us, sending their powerful blasts surging into the stalkers. Raydon, shot them and took them down with some well-aimed shots. A hellion raced around a factory. When it blasted its fire, I dodged and put up a shield around the fire hole. When the hellion blasted again, it imploded from its own fire. A couple marines raced from behind a mineral field. I thought of something, I couldn’t get to them before they got close enough to shoot me. I thought of my lightning attack that I had used earlier. Maybe I could size it down? I extended a pointer finger, and a beam of psionic lightning shot from it. The marines quickly fell before they even could fire. A few SCVs picked up some courage and tried jabbing at me with their mining tools. My blades were too small to do any damage on their own. Then I thought, what if I could manipulate the psionic energy in the blades to make something larger. As soon as the thought registered, the energy from my blades grew and transformed into a giant hammer. I quickly demolished the mining robots. Soon, all the enemies were obliterated. The next job was a little different, we needed to destroy the buildings. I walked over to the empty command center. There was no way any of my known abilities would help blow this massive building up. Then, I thought, if I have so many abilities, then why couldn’t I keep finding more? I thought of hellions. My hands erupted in a new ability: psionic fire. The fire didn’t hurt me, but when I touched the Command Center, the entire building went up in flames.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 13

After we finished with the base, we warped up to the Spear of Adun. “That was awesome!” Raydon commented. I thought that went quite well. “Can I have a sword? That would help me get the guys near me.” Raydon asked.

“I’m afraid a metal sword wouldn’t cut through armor.” I told him

“So, make me a Psionic one!” he told me.

“Uh, huh, how are you going to activate it without Psionic energy.” I asked him.

“Seriously, get me a lightsaber then. Put the energy stuff in a capturing thing, and then make a button that makes some energy stuff come up in a blade. Then make another button that takes the energy stuff back in to the capturing thing.” Raydon grinned. Apparently, he had it all figured out. I stared at him, “You know, that might work!” I called over Karax. I explained to Karax that we needed something that could contain Psionic energy, then release it using a button. We worked over designs and came up with a blade with an intricate gold handle. Raydon insisted on a yellow blade. A few hours later, he was swinging a glowing blade and cutting up the Psionic practice dummies with surprising accuracy. I soon found what came to be known as my last ability: Psionic replication. I could replicate pretty much anything with a Psionic replica, the only problem being, the replicas would vaporize on contact with anything but the ground. Still, it made a good getaway tool. I did find though, that I had a limit on my abilities. Some, like the lightning explosion (as we were calling it) drained all my Psionic strength. Some, like the armor, blades, and shields, barely took any energy. The fire drained fast, but the flames didn’t require maintaining. The little hand blasts took minor amounts of energy, but were better for individual takedowns. Luckily my Psionic energy wouldn’t affect my physical energy much, being full on energy did give a bit of strength, though hardly noticeable. Both my brother and I were very happy with these cool weapons and powers, but I knew that they would hardly put a dent on some of the enemies we were soon to meet.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 14

“You know, I kind of like having these awesome weapons,” Raydon was saying. “But you have a lot of powers, and I want to have a bunch of cool weapons as my thing.”

“Well,” I replied to him. “I guess you could ask Swann\* about that.”

“Thanks!!! I can’t wait!” Raydon called as he ran off.

A few hours later, Raydon warped back from the Hyperion. “Look! I have so many awesome weapons!! Swann gave me a cool way to keep everything in these little marble things! I just have to tap one and it turns into a weapon! I even have nice little pockets to keep the guns! I have so many guns! Then, there’s a big room with a bunch more weapons! Swann said that room is all mine to keep my weapons and gadgets and grenades and vehicles and really cool stuff! Swann made it so my sniper can turn into a regular Marine gun, though very light.”

“Wow, you sure got your wish.” I commented.

“I’m going to go tell Mom and Dad!” Raydon yelled as he raced off. I suddenly felt very tired. I realized that I hadn’t slept for at least three days. I quickly ran back to our spaceship home and into my room. I got my pajamas on and got into bed.

\*Raynor’s chief engineer

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 15

That morning, when I woke up, I heard Protoss voices. I got out of bed and got changed for the day. When I walked outside, I saw Artanis talking with Karax.

*“There is another human, this one is a girl. She has Psionic potential, but unlike the boy, she has not long known of us.”* Karax was saying.

*“How are we to get her to help us?”* Artanis asked.

“What are you guys talking about?” I asked, walking up.

*“We have found another human with powers like yours.”* Artanis told me. *“The human is different though, she is female. Her name is Ada.”*

“What! My brother and I are friends with her and her brother, Jacob!” I exclaimed. “How in the world are you going to get her to help us?”

*“We do not know, she only has heard about us on your “news.” That would make her very nervous fighting alongside aliens. Her parents would be very nervous.”*

“Wait a sec, I have an idea!!!

I asked Artanis if I could call Ada. He said yes and handed me a transmitter.

“Hi Ada? Do you wanna go on an adventure while Jacob is gone? Raydon and I are going on it and it’s going to be really fun! Ask your mom! Yes, Cool, See you then! Bye!”

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 16

A few hours later, I teleported down to our house. Dad got in the car, which miraculously was unharmed along with the house. (Later, I found that the Protoss had placed a shield over our house. Somehow , the fish pond was completely unharmed even though it had no shield. ) Dad drove Raydon and I over to Jacob and Ada’s house. When we got there, Ada was waiting at the door with a backpack. She said bye to her mom and got in the car. On the way back, I began my attempt to keep Ada from being frightened to death from the surprise. “So, Ada, you know that one thing on the news about me saving the world with aliens?” I asked her.

“Yea, I thought the reporters were crazy. What about it?”

“Well, let’s just say, I do have those powers and I am saving the world with aliens.”

“What! I thought you were starring in a movie!”

“Nope, and you just might have those same powers. Has anything weird happened to you lately.”

“Uhhhh, my head tingles.”

“Great, try focusing on that tingle.”

*“Okay.”*

“Uhh, y’know, that didn’t come out of your mouth.”

“What!!!!!!”

I grinned, “Try imagining something with that tingle.” A blue puppy appeared in her lap.

“Ack!!!! What in the world!” she exclaimed.

“Aww! So cute! Just what I always wanted!” Raydon began petting the psionic construct.

Ada stared at the construct in her lap.

I just laughed.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 17

A little while after Ada calmed down, we began figuring out her abilities. We already had figured out that she could speak telepathically and make Psionic constructs that were much stronger than mine.

“So, Ada,” I was saying, ”Let’s see if you have any other abilities.”

“Uch, I wish we were there already.” She told me.

All of a sudden, in a whirlwind of sound and noise, we found ourselves in the driveway of our house. “Whoa!! You can teleport!! Nice! That could be really helpful!”

“Cool. This’ll be interesting!” she commented. When we got out of the car, Raydon asked Ada what she had thought it was I meant by “adventure.” She said I thought I meant a camp.

I grinned, “Well, in that case…” All of a sudden, we were instantly teleported onto the Spear of Adun. “…Welcome to Camp Save the World!!”

I swiftly introduced her to all the Protoss while she stared around at the huge, amazing ship. I had remembered to prepare her somewhat enough so she wouldn’t freak out when we came aboard. She still freaked out. It took a few hours to get her to stop screaming and hiding every time she saw Alarak. I admit, he had me creeped out too, and I actually had seen him before. If anyone has an ego, it’s Alarak, but’s that’s not the scary part. Imagine a mouthless human, with white skin, glowing red eyes. He also wears pitch black armor with glowing red lines. Couple that with an ego that would rival Iron Man, he makes a terrifying character. He’s also absolutely heartless. For some reason, he actually is on our side…to an extent.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 18

A few hours later, Ada had gotten settled in her room. In, as I was starting to call it, ‘The Human Module,’ or, the HM. Hmmm…😊 After that, Ada, Raydon, and I went into the training room, where Artanis was waiting. The training room was a huge room full of hologram projectors. Some were built into the floor, some others, the ceiling. It had a great view too. A huge window dominated one wall of the room. There, many Protoss practiced their skills. The room was divided into many invisible shields, that way multiple training simulations could be used at one time. Today, we were in a larger simulation chamber. Artanis, Karax, and Swann were waiting in the center. Artanis walked up to us as we entered.

*“Greetings, Ada. We are glad you could join us.”*

“Thanks!” She replied.

*“So, what of your powers?”* Artanis asked.

*“Well, I can speak telepathically.”* Ada smiled. *“I can teleport.”* She teleported to the other side of the room and back. *“I can make anything I want, though it takes a lot of energy for big things.”* She made a ball and a puppy. Raydon began playing fetch with the dog. He was disappointed when it disappeared. Ada seemed to be very tired now. “I also get tired if I use too much energy.”

*“We may be able to remedy that, as well as young Raydon’s disappointment.”* Artanis told us. Karax came forward to Ada and me, holding two necklaces with glowing stones.

*“These are Kalyhadrahin\* crystals.”* Karax told us. *“They are used by High Templar to boost their power. These should help you gain additional strength.”* He handed them to us, and we put them on. We both reached up to finger the stones. As soon as I touched mine, the tingle in my forehead turned to a roar. The stone shone brightly. Suddenly, my abilities seemed to be multiplied. I summoned my armor and weapons with a thought. Psionic fire raged in my hands. Lightning flickered. Ada had just done the same, and I realized our eyes were glowing. Mine shone blue, the color of the Templar. Hers showed pink, Artanis later explained that those of incredibly strong will would have the eye light of a favorite color. I had the glow of a templar, though I had a slight tint of vibrant green, as like some of the ways of a Dark Templar. Ada began sprinting and teleporting everywhere. We later found that her Psionic power did affect her physical body more than mine did. When the first energy surge came, I let go of the crystal, about ten seconds later, the surge wore off, and my armor and weapons evaporated. Ada did the same, though she had no armor. While Artanis pulled Ada and I aside, Karax and Swann walked up to Raydon.

“My Protoss buddy Karax and I have been working on something for ya!” Swann told Raydon. Karax held out a little probe shaped robot, and pressed a button. A shield, guns, and armor sprang from the robot, it also began floating. “Bweeow Bwap!” The little robot beeped.

“It’s a state of the art battle bot, but it has a cute aspect I thought you’d like. I also added the A.I. for playing fetch, while Kale and Ada did their whole glowy-eye thing.” Swann told him.

“Yay!! Thanks!!!! I’ll call you Probie!”

“Bweow Bwap!!” Probie cheered happily, and Raydon’s eyes just might have been a bit brighter than usual.

\*Author’s Note: I did not spell that right.

StarCraft Meet’s Earth Part 19

“So, do I get any weapons?” Ada asked. We were in the training room, a few hours later.

*“What would you like?”* Karax asked always wanting to help. Karax was originally a phase smith. The phase smiths were the elite engineers of the Protoss. When the war with Amon began, Karax found his place with Artanis, fighting Amon and his minions. Through various battles, Karax realized that he must become a Templar as well to help in the war. Karax himself is like no other Protoss I have ever seen. First of all, he has a beard. I have never seen a Protoss with a beard. Also, Protoss foreheads are very tall. Karax was no exception, but his fore head had a distinct hexagonal shape. He also had some very cool robotic arms built in to the back of his head.

Anyway, Ada asked for a lightsaber like Raydon’s. She and Karax teleported to the Solar Core to get some designs. The Solar Core is the power to the entire ship. It also is the center for Karax’s studies.

A few hours later, Ada came back to the training room with her new weapon, or weapons. She and Karax had made two blades and made them slightly longer and thinner than Raydon’s sword. The handles were a startling black. When she ignited them, one of the blades shone pink, the other, turquoise. Those were her favorite colors. They made for an amazing sight in action. The blades became a whirlwind. Holograms were evaporating like mist to add to the swirling storm. When she took out all of the 1,000 Holograms in the training area. Artanis stared shocked. Even the best of the best had gotten them all in twenty minutes. Ada did it in two seconds.

StarCraft Meet’s Earth Part 20

We later found out that Ada had used her crystal, but still, the sight of her training was awe inspiring. Of course, Raydon and I did some cool stuff too. I was able to send a hundred lightning bolts at once when in stone mode, as we were calling it. Raydon was able to hold two of his guns at once, as they were extremely light. He then would fire rapidly and tell Probie to launch a missile, taking out huge groups at a time. All in all, training was getting pretty fun! After a few days training, we really wanted to go on a real mission. We had already beat Ada’s record. By working together, we managed 16.5 milliseconds. I still wanted to go and beat some real Zerg again. I hadn’t really fought Zerg since that first time when I found my abilities.

One day, we were busy reading books in the living room of the HM when a Protoss raced into the room. *“Artanis needs you at the bridge.”* We quickly put our books away and Ada teleported us to the bridge.

“What do you need?” I asked.

*“There have been reports of Zerg activity on the outskirts of the Mar Sara desert!”* Artanis told us.

“Finally! A mission!” I exclaimed.

“Wait a sec, we should find a team name.” Ada reminded me.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 21

“How about, ‘The Three Kids Who Saved the Worlds?’” I suggested.

Ada gave me a death glare. “No way. How about, ‘Super Team Three?’”

I returned the glare. “Not happening! This is way better: ‘The Psionic Kids.’”

“Ha! Not a chance! Try this: ‘The Battle Express.’”

“What kind of name is that? Besides, this is good: ‘Awesome Alligators.’”

“Where’d you get that from? We’re not a menagerie! ‘The Battle Express!’”

“Fine, but The Psionic Kids is way better.”

“The Battle Express!”

“Psionic Kids!”

Raydon, who’d been watching the heated argument in silence, spoke up, “How about ‘The Five Bladed Friends.’ Ada has two, Kale has two, and I have one. Five blades. Then, we had better be all friends.” He glared at both of us.

“You know, that’s actually pretty good.” Ada and I said at the same time.

Artanis continued. *“I find human arguments amusing, but now that this one is settled, we have plans to get to.”*

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 22

The Spear of Adun was warping to the planet Mar Sara, home to Jim Raynor. We all were on the bridge, excitedly and attentively listening to Artanis. Artanis, in a strong, commanding voice, briefed us on the mission.

*“We will send a large squadron of stalkers down on the surface here.”* Artanis gestured to a spot on the holo-map. *“We will need to clear the area of Zerg. We will then send down some Dark Templar to take out a nearby hatchery. Once that is complete, we will warp a large number of probes to set up a Nexus, so we can warp in additional warriors. Then-”* Artanis gestured to Ada, Raydon and I. *“-you three will be warped down to the Nexus point. You will then group up with a small squad of warriors. Your squad’s mission is to investigate the caves nearby. This is a reconnaissance mission, but it would be best if you could take out a Hive down there. Now, any questions?”*

“Yes, can I please have some shields?” Ada asked.

*“Yes, you may.”* Artanis signaled a warrior to grab a set of shields for her. I spent a few minutes strengthening them as well as electrifying them. We were all set.

We began by watching the stalkers and Dark Templar do their work. The stalkers were able to teleport around, confusing their foes, while the Dark Templar were entirely invisible, except to us.  
 The probes then began warping in a Nexus, the key building to a Protoss base. Soon, we were ready to warp down.

“Here we go!” I exclaimed. Zwarp! We landed on the brown sands of the Mar Sara Desert.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 23

Ada looked around, awestruck. She had only once seen a Protoss base, and that was when I was showing her the game, months earlier. Since we were in real life, everything was…the ultimate High Def. The Nexus towered over everything else, with it’s intricate, geometric crystal on top. Many other rounded crystals were embedded in the sides. Even the basic pylons were amazing. A lot larger in the game, these huge Kalyhadrahin crystals supplied warp energy, enabling more units to come down from the Spear of Adun. The Gateways were also amazing. The huge structures warped in warriors. The huge crystal in the center created an awe-inspiring sight. The photon cannons were a bit smaller, but still an example of why Protoss are my favorite of the three races. The floating ball in the center could detect cloaked units. It also shot large balls of energy into our enemies.

Raydon immediately began scanning the surrounding area. He deduced that the main Zerg Hive complex was just a few miles north of our base. We then met up with our squad. We got the really cool guys, Dark templar, Dragoons, Purifier Zealots, High Templar, and some Stalkers. Some phoenixes flew nearby, contacting telepathically that they would join us. Remember that these phoenixes are piloted by some of the best Protoss aircraft experts. All in all, this was looking pretty good. Ada teleported us all near the cave. Immediately, ten Zerglings raced out of the cave to attack us. I quickly spun around. When the revolution was complete, I was in full armor, ready to fight. Raydon aimed his sniper and took several Zerglings out before they even reached us. Ada quickly sent several Psionic icicles into her few opponents. I decided to change my blades for a better attack, so, using my ability to draw from my blades’ energy, I lengthened my blades to make swords, which made quick work of the remaining Zerglings. Ada flipped her hair, “That was easier than that one training session a while ago, the one with the hundred or so Zerglings.” She grinned. Of course, then we realized we were right next to several Zerg Hives. There were about a hundred Zerglings, as well as at least fifteen Hydralisks. Hydralisks are huge, snakelike Zerg who shoot deadly spines.

“Here’s those hundred zerglings you asked for!” I yelled as I sent a stream of Psionic fire into a bunch of Zerglings.

Ada sent a hailstorm of Psionic stones onto the Hydralisks. The problem was, these Zerg were well upgraded. The stones more or less bounced off the thick carapaces. In turn, the Hydralisks were sending hundreds of spines at us every second. I made a huge shield out of my blades, and deflected the spines back. The Dark Templar began slicing the Hydralisks from behind. The High Templar sent Psionic storms into the Zerglings, quickly obliterating them. Once the Hydralisks were destroyed, I changed my blades to hammer the Hives. Soon, we finished our first full battle, or at least I thought. As we crept into the caves, I realized that this was only the beginning.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 24

As we crept down the long and large tunnels, I felt some one was watching us.

“Ada, AM?” I said, speaking in a code we had come up with a few days ago.

“Hmm, MB. B RD.” she replied. Raydon nodded.

Subtly, my armor materialized, as did my weapons.

Suddenly, thousands of Zerglings burst through the walls. My blades ignited and lengthened, Ada and Raydon ignited theirs. I charged at the enemy swinging wildly and slicing scores down in single swipes. I also set several Zerglings on fire and they, in turn, caught fire to others. Raydon hoisted a huge rocket launcher and obliterated several Hydralisks that had emerged from the ground. He then switched to his machine gun. Now, the average machine gun wouldn’t be nearly powerful enough to kill a Zergling. The thing is, Raydon’s shots are a foot long and about a millimeter in diameter. Did I mention they’re going at the speed of sound? Yea, he took out a couple hundred with that thing. Ada was able to swing so swiftly, the Zerg were dead about fifteen seconds before they hit the ground. Her blasts of Psionic icicles came in the hundreds. Still, even though the dead Zerglings piled up, there were at least fifteen more to take one’s place.

“Ada! Get us out of here! HURRY!” I yelled. Suddenly we were all enveloped in a whirl of light. Suddenly, we were back at the base. IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE! The Zerg were overwhelming the entire base. The warriors were not going to last long.

“Ada! Teleport everybody to the Spear of Adun! NOT THE ZERG!” I yelled over the din of battle.   
Ada gave a cheeky grin, “And you think I’m going to do that?” *Whoosh!*

We made it!

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 25

Of course, then, all three of us had to do this whole theatrical-like faint. The difference being, we weren’t trying to. Actually, I was more worried about breathing properly after waking up. We were all exhausted. Ada and I actually had to use our Kalyhadrahin stones just to get into bed. Raydon didn’t need one, him being really energetic. I’m pretty sure we actually managed to sleep for a full 25 hours. (hence this being part twenty-five) Anyway, we were fairly alright about noon the next day. Mom helped get us some good food. I realized I was starving. Why do I always not notice these things until they’re nearly unbearable. Uch. That day, the only thing we used our powers for was making extra cushions for our pillow fort (Ada), and grabbing a cup of water from the fridge using lightning bolts (Me) Well, that was fun. After we stopped whacking each other with pillows, we started using snowballs. Ada made those. Even though we made them not to be cold, Mom still got us some hot chocolate. Over hot chocolate I told Ada some StarCraft history. “-and then the Overmind was destroyed by Tassadar’s awesome super powers. Tassadar used the power of both the Dark Templar, and the Templar.” As well as some of my favorite moments in the game. “Then Artanis destroyed hundreds of Zerg. Just as the temple blew up, Artanis teleported to the Spear of Adun. You should have seen the cut-scene!”

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 26

Well, the next day, we had fully recovered and relaxed. I, however was not keen on getting back into a war zone. I still kind of had to do that whole save the world thing. Sigh saving the world does not happen once a few zerglings are destroyed. Artanis called us up to the bridge. I’m sure glad one of us got the ability to teleport, it’s a long way to walk. When we got there, Artanis was consulting the holo-map.

*“….If we deploy……..maybe we could…..NO……..What if………..Then how would we….”*

That’s all I could make out from Artanis and Karax’s conversation. Clearly, I wasn’t the only one who was having trouble with that amount of zerglings.

“Hi.” I said, not really wanting to intrude.

*“Ah, hello you three. I hope you have had a good rest?”* Artanis asked. (Wow, Protoss sure are patient…This “rest,” took two and a half days)

“Yea, I could have ‘yawn’ used some more… What’s the plan?” I asked. (Sorry if I seem a little blunt. I had just got up that morning. At five in the morning)

*“We…don’t have one yet…I was hoping you had some ideas?”* Artanis answered.

“Hmm let’s see what we’ve got.” I looked at the map “Aha! Once I watched this show about history. You see, there was this guy that wanted to conquer Rome. He didn’t win the whole war, but his battle tactics might win it for us. The guy didn’t have many men, so, he separated his men to surround the Romans. The Roman, having a larger army, ran right into the trap, when the guy had the Romans right where he wanted them, he just told the split guys to close in. The Romans didn’t stand a chance. So, if we send a few immortals, combined with a few zealots here...” I pointed to a spot some way from the cave entrance. “The Zerg will come attacking right there. I think we should use those units because they are the strongest. They should be able to hold out long enough for two groups of Archons, Zealots, and Stalkers to close in.” I whispered to Ada and Raydon for a few seconds. They nodded. “Okay, I’ll lead the frontal approach, Ada and Raydon can lead the side forces.”

Artanis’ eyes gleamed. “Well, I like the plan very much…How do you humans say it?.......Ah, yes…Let us do this!”

*“So much for staying out of the war zone…”* I gave a nervous smile.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 27

Of course, pre-battle stuff could take days. I was showing the particulars of the battle tactics used by the guy I mentioned earlier. Also, his name was Hannibal, if you want to look him up. Anyway, Ada ran up to me. “I thought we should all have some pets, so I got my own.” she gestured to her shoulder. My jaw dropped. Perched on her shoulder, was a small dragon. When she petted the cute thing, I realized that it was a detailed psionic construct.

“Awesome! What can it do?” I asked excitedly.

“This.” Ada’s dragon suddenly shot up in the air and psionic flames raced after it. Flames flew high above our heads. Ada dispersed them by teleporting them out to space, where they instantly disappeared. “So, what do you think?” she asked. Remember back in part 5? When everybody was staring at me? I was imitating that. After calming down, I decided that I wanted a pet too. I thought for a bit, and smiled. “What are you doing?” Ada asked. I had lightning in my hands, but I didn’t shoot it. Instead, I directed the energy blasts together. It looked like I had my own 3D printer in my hands, only supercharged. Soon, I had a cute kitten in my hands. I added a touch from my ability to create moving, yet not stable, constructs, and it was done. The kitten jumped out of my hands, and began rubbing my legs gently. First of all, the kitten was blue. Second, the kitten had lightning zapping across it. All in all, it was very strange.

“Oh, just making my own pet.” I told her, answering her question.

“What can it do?” Ada imitated my question.

“Watch.” I whistled. Suddenly, the kitten seemed to grow incredibly fast. Soon, it was a tiger. A huge, lightning tiger. The tiger roared and sent lightning flashing everywhere! I whistled again, and my little kitten was back again. Now Ada was imitating part 5. Anyway, Raydon ran up just then.

“Hi guys!” he greeted us. We showed him our new pets. He was pretty amazed. Karax walked into the room.

*“Greetings Raydon, I have a surprise for you!”* he told Raydon. I was getting pretty excited with all the new stuff we were getting. Raydon’s surprise was awesome indeed. Karax presented a black handle, like Ada’s. Raydon took it, and ignited it. Kshow! The blade shone a bright blue.

“Awesome! Let’s go test it out!” Ada exclaimed. Instantly, we were teleported to the training room. Then, Raydon swung the lightsaber at several holograms nearby. The holograms vaporized instantly, and the sword showed blue fire.

A while later, I was getting pretty tired with all the training we did with our new gifts. The training room was cold too. That night, Mom gave us each some warm milk, and something awesome happened yet again. Mom waved her hand at each of us, and I felt like a warm blanket was wrapped around me. My bruises vanished, and I felt really good. “What was that?” I asked sleepily.

“Oh, Artanis has been teaching me a few things” Mom smiled.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 28

“Here we go!” I shouted as we warped down. I assumed my position with the immortals and zealots. Ada teleported north of the entrance, while Raydon took the south. An adept ran into the tunnel. When the adept had been spotted by the Zerg, every last Zergling and Hydralisk raced toward her (all Adepts are female). The adept raced outside as fast as possible. The Zerglings had just caught up with her, when all of a sudden, she teleported to Ada’s squad. Adepts are definitely awesome that way. Anyway, the zerglings charged out into the open area, right toward me!

The immortals sent enormous blasts into the Zerglings. Zealots raced into combat. I realized that we would have never stood a chance. My kitten swiftly morphed into a tiger. When the tiger roared, lightning shot from it and took out hundreds of Zerglings. That wasn’t the only thing my tiger could do though. He lunged at the Zerg around him. Any Zerg hit was electrocuted! Also, being made of lightning, my tiger couldn’t get hurt. I gave the signal, a lightning bolt to the sky, and Ada and Raydon’s squadrons raced into combat. The Zerg were crushed. Raydon slashed hundreds with his blade while blasting yet more with his sniper. Probie sent blasts into Zerglings and Hydralisks alike. Ada was a whirlwind yet again. Nothing touched her. Her dragon sent tongues of flame racing through the Zerg lines. The other Protoss were also doing amazing. Stalkers teleported in and out of combat and blasting Zerg everywhere. Zealots were charging everywhere. We made quick work of the later counted, MILLION Zerg out there that day. I slept for a week.

StarCraft Meets Earth Part 29

“Well, that was fun!” Raydon exclaimed after we had all woken up.

“Sooo fun…” I sleepily agreed.

“Hey, you know, it’s almost winter!” Ada told us. “That means snow! Let’s have a snowball fight! I can make the snowballs!”

That day was very fun indeed. We asked Artanis if we could have a snowball fight in the training room. He said yes, and asked what a snowball fight was. We spent the next hour telling about what you do, various ways to play and more. Artanis thought that his troops could use some time off. Surprisingly, Artanis actually asked a few of his warriors if they wanted to play. They actually said that sounded like a great idea. Soon, we had a bunch of Protoss ready to play. Ada supplied the forts, as well as an enormous amount of snow. The forts were more like gigantic castles. Having sort of known about how Protoss…are, I can say that seeing Artanis throw a snowball was actually a little creepy. Epic snowball fights with aliens are AWESOME!!!!

StarCraft Meet’s Earth Part 30

“Now, that snowball fight was so much fun! Did you see Artanis hit Alarak with that snowball?” I laughed a few hours later. “I’m pretty sure the ground around Alarak actually melted!”

“Also, Vorazun has a really good aim!” Ada rubbed her bruised arm.

Just then, Raydon walked into the room. He had stayed a few minutes longer to play. His head…was two huge snowman-sized snowballs squished together. Ada had to teleport them off. Raydon gasped for air. After he stopped crying, he told us what had happened. “Immortals started playing.” Raydon winced. “I got caught in the crossfire.” Apparently, the Immortals loaded snow into their cannons.

“Oh no! Are you okay?!” Mom raced in from the kitchen. She quickly waved her hand, and the huge purple bruises disappeared from his face.

Artanis walked in a few minutes later. *“There is… A problem back on Earth. Humans are trying to manipulate Zerg there. We will need you to go back to Earth.”*

“What about Amon?” I asked.

*“Amon has retreated back to the Koprulu Sector. Raynor and Kerrigan are holding off his forces there.”*

“Kale and Raydon do need to get back to school.” Mom said.

“Mom and Dad will be missing me.” Ada agreed.

“I haven’t beat Starcraft yet.” I also agreed.

“I need to get back to work” Dad said, coming in.

“I’m not going to be the only human on a Protoss ship.” Raydon finished.

It was decided. We would head home. Artanis would still stay in orbit, and help take out some underground Zerg Hives. Ada, Raydon, and I would go home, and act like this never happened. Unless we had a mission. This time, we would be super spies, with super powers. I realized again, the adventure was just starting.