#2 The Visitor

I decided that I don't care what it takes, or how many risks I have to run. I don't care what happens to me. I hate these Yeerks. I hate them. I hate them. And I will find a way to stop them.

#17 The Underground

Unlike Cassie, unlike Tobias perhaps, I'm ruthless at times. But even I have enough sense to know the words "we have to win" are the first four steps on the road to hell.

#22 The Solution

“I worry about you, Rachel. More than any of the others except Tobias. I feel like this war is to you like booze to an alcoholic. Like I don't know what will happen to you if it all ends someday. What are you going to do? Go back to being the world's greatest shopper? Go back to gymnastics and getting good grades?”

#27 The Exposed

This is why we fight. And to be honest, I like a good fight. The adrenaline spike of battle. The rush. The challenge.

And now that I've admitted that, I'll admit something else: Lately, it's been scaring me that I like it. That I look forward to it so much.

My father thinks I'm as tough as any boy. My cousin Jake says my specialty is kicking butt. Marco calls me Xena, Warrior Princess, and jokes that I'm always the first to want to fight.

He's right. I'm front and center. Head of the line. "Let's do it," I've said, more times than I can count.

And I'm afraid that if I keep giving in to the urge, sooner or later I'll forget how to do anything else. Forget how to do the things I used to like to do.

#32 The Separation

I used to look forward to it. The fighting. The missions.

And yet, when I thought back on it now, it wasn't all Mean Rachel. I was there, too. I'd been scared. It wasn't that I wasn't scared. It was just that Mean Rachel had gotten us past it. She'd made us brave, with a mixture of courage and recklessness and desperation and insecurity.

And then there had been insanity, too. Something down deep inside that was dark and hard and cruel.

I wondered about the others, my friends. If they had been split like this, what would they have become? Did Jake have a Mean Jake inside him?

Oh, yes. Definitely. And Ax. Neither of them might be as wild or out of control, but they had that same core of darkness.

#37 The Weakness

Marco grabbed my arm. I jerked it away. He looked as angry as I was. "Listen to me, you mall-crawling psycho, we have one hour and ten minutes to get Cassie out of the Yeerk pool. Now, I can come up with a clever plan. I can work all the angles. I can see the perfect solution. But all that takes time. We don’t have time, Rachel. We don't have time for clever and subtle. We need reckless. We need impulsive. We need dangerous. We need out-of-your-mind, pure adrenaline, butt-kicking, total out-there insanity."

He stabbed his finger in my face. "We could have used me, back at the Community Center. But right now we need you. We have an hour to save your best friend, Jake's girlfriend, and the entire human race. You got us into this, now get us out."

#48 The Return

My deep, dark secret was like an elephant in the living room. A big purple one. With polka dots.

Nobody talked about it.

But everybody knew it was there.

The secret was that whatever we'd been doing, I did like it.

And the good guys aren't supposed to like it.

- SPOILERS FOLLOW FOR THE REST OF THE SERIES -

#52 The Sacrifice [Ax]

I heard a sound that was even worse. Cries of victory and satisfaction from Rachel as she downed another of the falcons.

The other Animorphs and I truly worry about Rachel.

On the Andalite home planet, when a warrior becomes too fond of war he is shunned. A warrior should love only the cause, not the killing.

#53 The Answer [Jake]

Rachel laughed. Rachel's not a person who'll be one way with her friends and another way with her family. There's only one version of Rachel. "Mom, if we go, I go. If we don't go, I still go. Visser One parks his Pool ship right out in the open and we're not going to ram it down his nonexistent throat? Hah! I'm with Marco: Blow it up. Blow it up real good."

I hid a grin. Rachel is the original Nike girl: Just do it. Just do it, and if that doesn't work, do it harder and meaner.

"We blew up one Yeerk pool," Rachel said cockily. "So we blow up another. Badda-boom. Nothing to it."

She knew better, of course. She was just playing her part. Not for the first time I wondered what on Earth would happen to her if this war ever ended. Off to college to study prelaw or whatever? She was the goddess of war, my cousin was. Sixteen years old and a veteran of more battles than a World War II veteran. So was I, but Rachel loved it in a way I didn't. She needed it.

#54 The Beginning

Jake gave me the job because he knew that only I could do it. Would do it. Ax might have, sure, but he was needed for his skills. Me, I'm not the computer genius. I'm the one you send when you need someone to be crazy, to do the hard thing.

I don't know whether I'm proud of that or not.

For a wondrous, frozen moment we all waited, stared, breathed, tensed, expectant.

I felt...

I felt exalted.

It was my moment. This was my place and my time and my own perfection.

I was no longer afraid. Weird. If I'd had a mouth I'd have smiled.

<Well?> I said.

No one moved.

<Scared?> I asked.

No answer.

<You should be,> I said, almost laughing.

I told the dying human, "Now you know who I am. What I am."

"Yeah. You were a kid. Like me in some ways, a kid who got in way too deep and couldn't get back out."

"A kid."

"You were trapped. You still are. I've been trapped."

"Yes," I said.

"Was I one of your game pieces? Were all six of us just game pieces?"

I considered that for a moment. Who is to say who is piece and who is player? How often had I wondered whether I myself was just a game piece in a still larger game whose players laughed at my pretensions?

"I did not cause you to be one of the six. You are... you were... a happy accident. An unwitting contribution from the human race to its own survival."

The human was silent. No begging, no pleading for life. At the end, acceptance came even to this strong, turbulent spirit. "You said I could ask one more question."

"Yes."

"I can't ask if we win, I can't ask if it will all turn out okay."

"I don't know those answers."

"Okay, then answer this, Ellimist: Did I... did I make a difference? My life, and my... my death... was I worth it? Did my life really matter?"

"Yes. You were brave. You were strong. You were good. You mattered."

"Yeah. Okay, then. Okay, then."

A small strand of space-time went dark and coiled into nothingness.