<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Rating:</strong></th>
<th>Mature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archive Warning:</strong></td>
<td>Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category:</strong></td>
<td>M/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fandom:</strong></td>
<td>Transformers: Prime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship:</strong></td>
<td>Smokescreen/Streetwise, Jazz/Prowl, Jack Darby/Thundercracker, Chromia/Ironhide/William Lennox, Various Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Tags:</strong></td>
<td>Mech Preg, Sticky Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series:</strong></td>
<td>Part 2 of Metamorphosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**Spreading Our Wings**

by Dellessa, thephonixqueen
Chapter 1

Smokescreen’s doorwings twitched erratically. It had been all he could manage to get through the bonding ceremony. He could tell Prowl was still unhappy, but his brother let it go and tried to appear as though he was happy with the choice that Smokescreen had made. It seemed as though he had waited an eternity for this moment, but really theirs had been a whirlwind courtship as far as their species went.

“Smokey? Are you okay?” Streetwise leaned into him and pushed the energon treat closer to him. “You should eat something.”

Smokescreen looked at Streetwise and smiled before nibbling the treat that was pushed his way. “I am fine. I am just...so amazed that today had finally come. We are bonded! Can you believe it?! We bonded! I am so happy right now!”

Streetwise smiled back at him before leaning in to steal a kiss. “I am happy too. Yes, we did it. We bonded. I am still amazed that your crazy brother hasn’t killed me yet.”

Smokescreen gave him a cheeky smile, his doorwings fluttering happily, “So am I. Luckily Jazz seems to like you.”

“You think so?”

“You are still functioning,” Smokescreen said, leaning close and catching Streetwise’s lips. Streetwise pulled him close, his amusement clear in his field as the the cheers sounded around them. It seemed that all of the Bots now on Earth had made it to the celebration.

“I am,” Streetwise said when their kiss finally ended, “Thankfully.”

Smokescreen smiled at Streetwise again. He was so glad that the Axiom had been one of the ships to land here on this planet that was apparently called Earth. Many of the smaller ships had had to stay in orbit as had the biggest ship, which would never have survived the force of entry on this planet’s atmosphere. “I am glad we are here together, making our new home.”

Smokescreen tried not to feel nervous. He wasn’t sure how he felt about what would come afterwards. They had never actually interfaced, much to Smokescreen chagrin. Streetwise had insisted that they wait. It didn’t matter how much Smokescreen had begged, pouted, cajoled or whined. His bonded had insisted, and now...Smokescreen was a pile of nerves as he waited for the time for them to slip out together. A whine escaped his vocalizer, loud and high. There were so many ways this could go wrong.

“Smokey? Are you okay?”

“I’m...fine.”

Streetwise gave him a sideways glance, “You don’t sound fine. Are you ill? Should we take you to see Aid?”

“No! We don’t need to see your brother! I---I am just a little nervous.”

“Nervous? Nervous about what?”

Smokescreen blushed a little and looked down at the ground, “About tonight. When, when you take
my seals."

Streetwise revved a little. “I look forward to that. Don’t worry, darling. I promise that I will make it so good for you.”

Smokescreen’s doorwings fluttered, “But I’m—I’m really not sure what to do. I just—I don’t—I wish we had just done it before. But we didn’t and my tank is rolling.”

Streetwise leaned in, rubbing the space between Smokescreen’s doorwings, “It will be fine, I promise. You have nothing to fear or worry about. I will take care of you.”

Smokescreen’s engine gave a weak little revv. “I know you will—but—”

“It doesn’t make it any better. I know. Just try not to make yourself sick with worry, okay?”

Smokescreen nodded, “I—I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Smokescreen leaned against Streetwise and looked at all their friends who were gathered together. Some were old friends, like Streetwise’s brothers and Hot Rod, or Sunstreaker and Sideswipe who were doting on Prism who was already beginning to bulge with the twins he was carrying.

There were also new friends, like Weld who was Ratchet’s adopted sparkling and apprentice, then there was Index. Index was a shy little mech, always quiet but Smokescreen had seen a certain seeker mech watching him when Index thought he wasn’t looking.

Index was a curious mech. He looked very much like Optimus, but he did not act like him at all. Ratchet had said the mech had called himself Copy when he had come in to the medbay, rescued from the Nemesis. For all that Smokescreen knew that these two mechs had once been Rafael Esquivel and Jackson Darby it was a hard thing to reconcile. They did not act like the boys that Smokescreen once knew. They were...essentially new people. New people that spent as much time with Rung as they did with their adoptive-creators.

It was hard not to feel concern for them, and harder still not to miss his human-comrades-in-arms.

The there was Miko, or rather Flamewar. It had been shocking to see how much the predacon programming had changed the once precocious human female! Now she tended to her hatchlings who Smokescreen freely admitted were adorable. Her so called mate was still in the brig but a two way screen had been set up so she could see him and vice versa. It seemed to keep the mech calmer at the very least.

He loved helping Flamewar care for the sparklings along with Weld, they were so cute and curious to explore the world around them. They could be a servo full but it made him want a sparkling of his own even more.

He hoped that he would become sparked up soon. He knew Prowl would scold him. Tell him he was not ready. He was too young to be thinking about such things, but he wanted a little one so bad. It was something that he wanted, and he was glad that Streetwise at least felt the same. Even with the human-turned-cybertronians there were too few of their kind.

“Credit for your thoughts?” Streetwise asked, nuzzling into him.

“Just thinking about the future. I want...you know...”
“We can leave soon. Just a little bit longer, love.”


He took a small nibble, and then held the treat out in front of Streetwise. “Why don’t we share this treat, Street?”

Streetwise leaned forward and took a small bite of his own, before reaching out and cupping Smokescreen’s servos in his own. “Your turn sweetspark.”

So they slowly nibbled the treat between them. When they were finally done, Streetwise stood up while still holding Smokescreen’s servo. “Shall we, Smokey?”

Smokescreen stood up as well, “I am as ready as I am going to be.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll be gentle.”

They made their goodbyes to their guests, and Streetwise lead Smokescreen back to what was now their habitation suite. It passed in a blur to Smokescreen. He put one ped in front of the other and before he knew it he was stepping into their suite.

He felt so unready for this. He had looked forward to this for so long, but now that the moment was here- he was terrified. Smokescreen seemed to realize that and gently took his servo, pressing a kiss to it before scooping him up and carrying him into what was now their berthroom. Their berthroom.

He felt giddy just thinking about it.

Streetwise set him gently on the berth and climbed onto it as well. “Hello beautiful.”

Smokescreen gave him a shaky smile, “Hello.”

“Don’t look so nervous. It won’t be bad, I promise,” he leaned in, catching Smokescreen’s lips.

This WAS something Smokescreen was sure of at least. He leaned into the kiss, moaning. He opened his mouth when Streetwise’s glossa flicked against his lips. Their glossas tangled, and that felt nice as well. Smokescreen let his optics close and lost himself in it. It was much easier than worrying about what was to come.

Streetwise’s servo began to move down his frame, slowly caressing him. Smokescreen began to relax at how gentle Street was being. When Streetwise finally reached his aft, Smokescreen tensed and froze when he felt the touch.

Streetwise just chuckled and began to rub little circles along his aft until he had relaxed again. Then he began to knead and gently squeeze Smokescreen’s aft until he was moaning at how good it felt.

His frame started to heat up, his auxiliary fans kicked on, humming loudly. He still felt as though he was burning up inside. Streetwise seemed pleased though, and pressed kisses down his frame until he was hovering over Smokescreen’s still closed panel. He wasn’t entirely sure what he expected the mech to do, but lean down and lick the edges of the panel...was not it.

He bucked up and probably would have crashed into Streetwise if the mech didn’t hold his hips down.

He looked down his own frame and stared wide opticked at Streetwise. “You licked me!”

Street smirked. “I did.”

Smokescreen was unsure what to think. He had never heard of….it, requiring licking- down there.
“Street, you shouldn’t! It isn’t right!”

“Oh, it is quite alright. You’ll see in a moment.”

Streetwise nuzzled his panel again, leaving a cool trail wherever his gloss wandered. Smokescreen whined in protest. “Street. This i-isn’t right.”

Streetwise buckled, the vibrations his the panel and it snapped open. “Beautiful.” He said, tracing a digit across Smokescreen’s seals.

“I am not.”

“Oh, but you are, Smokey. Beautiful, and absolutely delicious looking,” Streetwise leaned forward and delicately licked Smokescreen’s spike seal.

Smokescreen squealed and tried to buck him off again. “Street! What are you doing!”

Streetwise licked the seal again and rumbled at Smokescreen, “Exploring my new world. I think there is a treasure hidden here and I want to coax it out.”

Smokescreen whined, wiggling and moaning as Streetwise lapped the seal until it began to soften and the spike pressed into it, not quite tearing through yet.

“Street...”

“Shhhhhh...” Streetwise took one last long swipe with his glossa and the seal broke. Smokescreen’s spike pressurized and rose up before Streetwise making the mech hum in appreciation. “As I said, beautiful.”

Smokescreen stared down at his spike in shock. While he had been aware that he had a spike, he had never seen his own before. It was...alright. He wasn’t sure. He had never seen another one to compare it to.

Smokescreen blushed and looked away, “You shouldn’t look! It isn’t right!”

“Why not? You have a very pretty spike, Smokey. It is lovely.”

Smokescreen flushed, “Streetwise, good mechs don’t---”

“But they do, sweets. They really do,” Streetwise said as he leaned forward licking the underside of Smokescreen’s spike. “You will enjoy it.”

Smokescreen whimpered, and would have protested had Streetwise not taken the spike into his mouth. The pressure and suction around the head made Smokescreen squeal loudly, and clench at the sheets.

“Oh---oh---what are you---”

Streetwise hummed, and swallowed the spike down, chuckling inside at the excited flare of Smokescreen’s field.

He bobbed his helm over the spike and made sure to work it slowly, licking the tip a few times when he drew off of it. Smokescreen was mewling and thrashing on the berth, so overwhelmed by the feelings that he had.

He bobbed down again and could already feel the charge frantically building in Smokescreen. He backed off the spike and held the head of Smokescreen’s spike in his mouth ready to swallow his
fluids when Smokescreen overloaded.

Smokescreen cried out, trashing as overload hit him suddenly. Streetwise swallowed the fluids down that flooded into his mouth, sucking on the spike until Smokescreen fell limp against the berth, moaning weakly.

Then Streetwise finally lifted his helm, the spike leaving his mouth with an audible pop from the suction. He watched Smokescreen with eager optics watching the mech’s reaction.

Smokescreen’s optics were unfocused and he was venting hard. Finally his helm moved and Smokescreen looked down at Streetwise with wide optics. “What, what was that?”

Streetwise laughed, “You overloaded. Did you enjoy it?”

Smokescreen blushed deeply. “I, I, I….”

“I’ll take that as a yes. Now, lets see. On to the next seal.”

Smokescreen wiggled, “N-n-next one? T-there is more?”

Streetwise purred, “So much more.” He leaned down, nuzzling Smokescreen’s depressurized spike for a moment before going lower. Smokescreen let out a little surprised yip.

“W-what are you doing?” he wailed.

“Shh, relax. You’ll like this, I promise.”

“Like wha-aaaaah!”

Smokescreen yelped as Streetwise licked his sealed valve and gave a little nip to the edge. Smokescreen had a lovely little valve and he couldn’t wait to see it stretched tight around his spike.

He would have to be careful, he didn’t want to hurt Smokescreen after all. He carefully rubbed a finger along a small part of the valve rim, trying to peel away part of the seal. Finally, he got a small part separated.

“That stings,” Smokescreen whimpered, it felt odd as he felt something being…pulled away.

“I know but it will feel better soon. This is better than simply breaking through it,” Streetwise said, and bent down, lapping at the film until it became softer and peeled away more easily. The lubricant that had been trapped behind the seal dripped out, coating Streetwise’s fingers and glossa. “It will feel wonderful in a bit. I promise.”

Streetwise finally pulled away the last of the seal and turned his attention to the rim. He lapped at it, finding each of the exterior nodes and nibbling at each one.

Smokescreen moaned and shrieked as his frame shook at the sensations that he was feeling for the first time. Each time Streetwise found a new node he would shriek and buck up into Streetwise’s grip on his hips.

“Do you like that then?”

Smokescreen moaned and tried to hide his face from Streetwise in his embarrassment.

Streetwise chuckled, “I will take that as a yes.” He crawled up Smokescreen’s body plucking at the spaces between his armour as he went. “I think you might like this even more,” he purred, and
carefully lined up his spike with Smokescreen’s passage.

He pressed in slowly, letting the unused valve adjust before he pressed in any more of his length.

He stopped, looking down at Smokescreen, and the dazed expression on his faceplates. He looked overwhelmed.

“Are you alright, sweetspark? I don’t want to hurt you.”

Smokescreen seemed to be in a stupor from the pleasure from the unusual sensation. He waited patiently for Smokescreen’s valve to relax a little bit. As soon as the opening felt less tense, he sighed and began to slowly drive his spike into Smokescreen’s formerly unknown area.

He wanted to explore every nanoinch and learn it like the back of his servo. He loved Smokescreen and all of his component parts.

Smokescreen clung to him, pushing his hips up and meeting each thrust. His optics still had the same dazed look, but instinct seemed to have taken over.

“Street, please...I need...I need...” He whimpered and gasped. “Please.”

“Smokey, you’re...so beautiful,” he caught Smokescreen’s lips again intent on dragging out every little bit of pleasure he could. “Love you.”

He slowly picked up the pace, slamming into the mech he hit the node at the top of his valve, making Smokescreen cry out loudly.

Smokescreen went wild as he began to slowly move in and out. Each time he slid back in, Smokescreen would moan. Each draw out left him whimpering and begging for Streetwise to go faster.

Smokescreen was so beautiful like this!

Streetwise slowly began to increase the speed of his thrusts, and he was unsurprised when shortly after Smokescreen bowed his back and arched off the berth as he screamed out his overload.

Streetwise followed close behind him, savouring the way Smokescreen’s valve clenched down hard, charge crackling between them. Even stretched from the overload he was still tight and hot around Streetwise. He groaned and looked down at his offlined mate. He smiled, and kissed Smokescreen till he finally came back online.

“Streetwise?” Smokescreen whispered, “I think I just got hit by a truckbot.”

Streetwise, laughed, “Oh, sweetspark. I’m not even done with you yet.”

Smokescreen stared, “Street, stop pulling my cogs.”

Streetwise leaned back down for another kiss. He slipped his glossa into Smokescreen’s mouth and savored the sweet flavor of his bonded. When he broke the kiss, Smokescreen was venting hard and staring at him with wide optics.

“I am not joking. We have one more very important thing to do.”

He gave a meaningful tap to Smokescreen’s sparkplates. “Are you going to open up?”

Smokescreen blushed and covered his plates with a servo reflexively. “But, I can’t! No one is
supposed to see my spark except a medic!

“Smokey, I am your bonded. How else would we interface or form a sparkbond if we do not touch sparks? You do want to form a sparkbond?”

Smokescreen gave him a conflicted look, “Are you sure?”

“I am positive. We have to touch sparks to form the bond. If you don’t want to...well...not all bonded couples form one. But...I really want to, Smokey. I really do.”

Smokescreen squirmed, “I---I guess.” He fumbled with the protocols, and slowly his plates slid back, bathing Streetwise in the golden light of Smokescreen’s spark.”

Streetwise gasped, Smokescreen’s spark was glorious. He had never seen a spark that was such a perfect shade of gold. He let his own sparkplates slid open and exposed his silvery blue spark. Streetwise gazed at it with wide optics. “Your spark is so pretty!”

“I was just thinking the same about yours, Smokey. You ready for this?”

Streetwise was patient as Smokescreen hesitated for a little while. “I’m ready.”

Streetwise lowered his spark and touched it to Smokescreen’s. He moaned at how good it felt while Smokescreen yelped at the sensation. He laughed and began to lightly grind them together, enjoying how good the charge of energy felt.

Smokescreen clung to him, arching up and grinding their sparks together harder, “Oh...oh....this is...” He let his optics close, savouring the feeling before the merge went deeper. The protocols unfurled leaving Smokescreen gasping. It was like nothing he had ever felt before. It was amazing.

“Are you still with me?” Streetwise laughed, nuzzling him.

“I-I-I am,” Smokescreen gasped, and suddenly he felt as though his very being was surrounded by Streetwise.

“It gets better, I promise.”

“Better?!” Smokescreen looked up at him, surprise on his faceplates.

Streetwise smirked, ::Better::

Smokescreen looked at him in shock. “What was that? How did you?”

::We bonded. Try and feel me, use your spark::

::I---I didn’t even know this was possible:: Smokescreen said in surprise, his emotion flavouring his mind speech.

The protocols began to settle, the bond drew their sparks closer. ::Wonderful, isn’t. We’ll only ever be a thought away, love:: He flared his spark against Smokescreen’s and they both shuddered as the pleasure echoed through the bond, reverberating and lingering for far longer than it had before.

::I love you::<:: Streetwise said tenderly.

::I love you too::<::
Streetwise bent over and pressed a kiss to Smokescreen’s lips.

OoOoOoOo

Weld carefully examined the area that he had just welded and then looked up and smiled. “I think I am done, Ratchet.”

Ratchet moved over and looked at the newly repaired plating. “Excellent job, Weld. Alright Gears, you can go.”

“Really, you’re gonna let the newbie fix me?! I need a real medic!”

Ratchet glared, “He is a real medic, are you questioning my teaching skills?”

Gears’ field blanched, “No Ratchet, I would never do that.” He opticed the wrench in Ratchet’s hand with obvious alarm. He had it flung at him enough time to know that look on his face and the displeased flair of his field.

Ratchet grunted, “That is what I thought. You should go, Gears.”

“You’re right. I should go,” the minibot agreed, hopping down from the berth and making a beeline for the exit.

As he rushed out, he nearly knocked over First Aid as he walked in. “Woah, cool your thrusters there, Gears.”

“You try to calm down when there is a mad medic in there!”

Aid laughed and walked over to Ratchet, “What did you do to scare him that bad?”

“He insulted Weld and my teaching ability. As if Weld couldn’t do a basic patch!”

“Aaah, he’s lucky he made it out without a dented helm then, isn’t he Weld?”

Weld preened, “It was a very neat weld. I don’t know why he was complaining. I have the best teacher.”

Ratchet patted Weld on the helm, “You did well today. Are you feeling well? Perhaps you should go recharge for a bit, Weld.”

“I’m fine, Ratchet. I’m not made of crystal. I’m not going to break.”

Aid laughed, “Well, if you need a break Weld you can come do inventories with me in the supply room. It is very low stress. How does that sound, Ratchet?”

“Hmph, I suppose. If you feel that you are getting tired, Weld, take a break. Do not try to push yourself, okay?”

“You worry too much, Papa. I’ll be fine.”

Aid stared at Ratchet, “Papa?”

Ratchet scowled back, “It’s a human term for sire. He is like my own bitlet.”

“Sure, Ratchet. I guess he is at that. You, ah, ready to go, Weld?”
Weld gave the other medic a bright smile, “I am.” He followed First Aid into the storage room, humming happily. He liked being here and doing this work. They made him feel...safe.

He liked being useful and learning things. Ratchet was a good teacher and a good papa. He was a bit overprotective though still. He treated him like he was made of fragile crystal.

Weld smiled as he followed Aid. Aid was nice, and was also so cheerful. “What do you want me to do?”

Aid smiled, “Why don’t you handle the datapad and I’ll do the counting?”

“That sounds fair.”

“Glad you think so,” Aid said, already beginning to count supplies. “What did you think of the bonding ceremony? You’ve never been to one before? Right?”

“It was interesting. They seem very happy with each other. I suppose they are very lucky,” Weld said thoughtfully.

“I think so. I envy them, really. I’m very happy for my brother.”

“I am glad for them, too. I hope they have long, happy lives together.”

“Me too. So let’s get this started. I think it starts with the spare plating.”

“It does, the list says that there should be ten boxes.”

“That is correct,” Aid said after a moment. “Next?”

“Powdered cybertronium, twenty-five bottles of that.”

“There are...twenty-six. Update it and make a note.”

Weld nodded, “Yes, sir. Noted. I think Fixit traded it with The Valient’s staff. They were short on silicone gel. I remember him mentioning something...”

“That’s fine. We will ask him when we are done.”

Weld nodded, “W-we should have 50 sheets of metaliglass on that shelf too.”

“Hmm, we only have 45. Make a note and we will update that as well.”

“Noted. Next is, 34 boxes of replacement energon line tubing.”

“There are 34. Just the right amount.”

“So, how do you like being a medic, Weld?”

“I love it! I love being useful and Ratchet is such a good teacher!”

“I am sure he is a very good teacher,” First Aid agreed, “You are fortunate to find someone who cares for you so much as well.”

Weld ducked his helm, “I know! I really am!”

“Have you put any thought into a specialty yet?”
“No...not yet. I---I do like sparklings though. I was considering something to do with them. But I think it’s too early to decide.” He flushed bright red. “Ah...the next shelf should have a case of replacement intakes. Three boxes.”

“That is correct as well,” First Aid said.

Weld smiled, and noticed First Aid smiling back at him. “What? Is there something wrong?”

“You look adorable when you smile. Do you know that?”

Weld blushed and used the datapad to hide his face. “Adorable? Me? No!”

First Aid pushed the datapad down so he could see Weld’s face. “Very adorable.”

Weld ducked his helm, a blush creeping into his cheek plating and the energon below it rushed in, unbearably hot and distracting. “I’m really not.”

First Aid smiled back, “You really are, I promise. You don’t think I would lie about something like that. Do you?”

“Oh, no. I would never say that. I...I...maybe I’m not good at taking compliments.”

“It’s part of your charm,” First Aid winked.

Weld stared, his field flushed and warmly flaring about him. “Aid!”

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to eat you. Besides, I am sure that Ratchet would kill me for even the most harmless of flirting with you. And plus, you are still a sparking- it would be just be wrong.”

Weld blinked. He was too young for whatever Aid was doing? But Knock Out....

No.

He was not going to think about what had happened then. He was thinking of happy things. His processor still wandered back to THAT, and he shifted, feeling worried. “I’m not a sparkling.”

“You are very young still,” First Aid said, shifting from ped to ped. “I didn’t mean any offence, Weld.”

“I’m not offended. I just don’t need to be treated like I will break, or---or like I’m an innocent. I’m not. You can’t---you can’t.”

Aid blinked and looked startled by his words. “Weld? You are a youngling, and I am sorry you lost so much of your innocence while you were a Decepticon prisoner. I am however going to treat you as a youngling like you deserve. You should be allowed to be a youngling.”

Weld looked at him. “Thank you. I...its nice to have someone not treat me like I am about to break every klik.”

“Ratchet cares about you, that is all. He thinks of you like his own creation.”

“I care about him too. I---remember him from...before. Bits and pieces anyway. Sometimes it’s hard to make sense of it. Rung says more will come back in time. I dunno. Maybe I don’t really want to know.”

First Aid wasn’t sure how to reply to that. “It must be hard. Not knowing.”
“It...was simpler before. When---when I was on the Nemesis.”

“Really? I suppose I can see that. You were focused on the moment and not about the things that might have happened in your past or might happen in the future.”

“Pretty much. I never had the time to think about anything except what was going on right then. I was able to study and had a little more free time when I was with Soundwave, but he just wanted to force me into be a deployer for him.”

First Aid watched Weld’s face crumble, “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine...it’s just...I thought he cared about me. I thought he loved me. Sometimes it’s hard to be mad at him, or hate him.” Weld shrugged, his tank rolling. “Had he just asked me...”

First Aid’s optics widened, “Weld...”

“It’s fine. It’s over. T-thanks for listening.”

“Sure, not a problem Weld. If you need to talk to someone, someone who isn’t Rung, you can talk to me.”

Weld gave him a slight smile, “Thanks. Um, next on the list are...laser scalpels size 4. There should be 12.”

“A dozen size 4 laser scalpels, check. What next?”

OoOoOoOo

Index sat on the berth in the room he had been given. Arcee was great, really nice and very kind. It was a nice change. He put a servo on his chest, the only thing that would have made it better was if his sparkling had survived.

He was so thankful that the nice mech had rescued him from Megatron. He saw him watching a lot...usually when he seemed to think Index wasn’t paying attention. Arcee had noticed, and it made her agitated. Index was not entirely sure why. A lot of things agitated her that made no sense at all to Index.

She had wanted them to kill Megatron and not leave him on life support in the infirmary. Index was just glad the big mech could not hurt him any longer. He wasn’t going to hurt anyone anymore, and it was what Optimus wanted. Index thought that was reason enough.

He still didn’t like to be out in open areas, or around a lot of mechs. He never felt safe when he was in those types of situations. Arcee was good about not making him go out to areas that had a lot of mechs.

The mech who had saved him, Thundercracker, had tried to come by and see him but Arcee kept sending him away. Index shifted and the got off the berth. He wanted to know why the mech kept trying to see him.

He would have been fine with talking to him, he had even told Arcee so. She hadn’t seemed happy about that at all. She had actually growled and said that he didn’t need to talk to any ‘Cons.’ What ever that meant.

He moved towards the door. It wouldn’t hurt to ask Thundercracker, he had saved him, and he’d stuck around when he was being repaired. He remembered that...well bits and pieces of it.
He peeked out into the hallway, looking around before finally stepping out. The hallway was big. So very big. He knew it was because there were some bots with very big frames, but it made him feel tiny.

He didn’t like feeling so small. It brought up so many bad memories. He shuddered as he cowered against the wall. He wanted to run back to his room.

He kept going though, edging his way down the wall. He was going to find Thundercracker and ask him why he kept trying to see him. He didn’t understand. No one wanted to see him except for a few bots. Ratchet, Bulkhead, Arcee, Bumblebee and Optimus for the most part. Optimus had only visited him once though. Arcee said that he blamed himself for what had happened to Index but no one had explained that either. There were a lot of things no one was explaining to him.

He hated that they left him in the dark. It only made everything that much scarier. He didn’t know and he didn’t understand. They were only trying to help. He realized that at least. It was tough.

He managed to make it to the intersecting hallway...and froze. He didn’t know where to go from there. He didn’t really know where anything was on the ship. He stood there shaking.

He was trying to decide what he was going to do, when he saw a familiar form coming down the hall. “W-w-weld?”

Weld stopped and looked at Index in shock. “Index! What are you doing out here? Are you looking for someone?”

Index looked down, “I, I, I want to see Thundercracker. I wanted to, to thank him.”

“Oh, why didn’t you ask Arcee to take you to him?”

Index’s optics widened, “She keeps sending him away everytime he comes to see me. I don’t think she would let me.”

Weld frowned, “I wonder why she would do that. Well...do you want me to take you to his room?”

Index felt relief wash through him, “Would you please?”

“Of course!” He offered his hand and Index took it gratefully.

Index knew he was clinging to the mech, but he couldn’t seem to help himself. “It’s so very...big out here.”

“Have you told Rung about...well...feeling that way?”

“I haven’t seen Rung. Arcee said he was meddlesome, and I just needed time. She cares, but I don’t know. I think she would be happy if I never left my room.”

Weld frowned. “You were supposed to start seeing Rung as soon as you were recovered from your surgeries. I’ll talk to Ratchet and have him make it clear that you need to see Rung.”

Index looked at Weld curiously, “Did talking to him help you?”

“It does. I see him twice a decacycle. He has been very helpful.”

“Oh. Arcee said she didn’t see how it would work. I just needed to work through it on my own. I don’t think I’m doing very well on my own though. Everything is very...scary.”
“I can imagine it is,” Weld said, and finally stopped him at a doorway, he rang the buzzer and waited for the door to slide open revealing Thundercracker on the other side.


“No, nothing is wrong. Index wanted to thank you and got a bit lost along the way,” Weld said with a smile. “Can we...ah...come inside?”

The Seeker moved aside, “Yes, I’m sorry. Come in.”

As soon as Thundercracker moved aside they walked into his quarters. Index warily looked around as Weld guided him in. He was really uncomfortable in new places. Thundercracker’s quarters seemed to be very spacious and made him relax a little bit. He didn’t feel as trapped.

“So how have you been, Index is it?”

Index nodded, “I’m all right. I- Arcee said that I should pick a new name.”

Thundercracker nodded, “It suits you. I didn’t expect to see you again. Arcee said that you did not want to see me.”

Index squirmed under his regard, “It’s not that. I did. I do. T-thank you for s-saving me. I really appreciate it.”

“It was nothing, Index. Anyone would have done the same.”

“I don’t think so. I’d be offline if it wasn’t for you!”

“No one would have left you there to die. You are a wonderful mech, Index. At least what I have seen of you. What have you been doing since you finished your recovery?”

Index blushed at being called wonderful. “I, I have been reading the datapads that Arcee gets for me. I finished them though and re-read them twice. She said she was going to get me new pads but she has been busy.”

“Why don’t you pick out your own pads? If you like I’ll take you to the archives and get you registered to check out pads. I could even show you some of my favorite datapads.”

Index’s optics widened, and he leaned in towards Thundercracker, “You would do that for me?”

“Of course I would,” Thundercracker smiled, “I would be very happy to help you in anything.”

Weld watched them both, browplates going up, “Do you think you could see him back to his room? I need to go see...Ratchet about something.”

Thundercracker nodded, “I would be happy to.”

“I’m sure you would,” Weld said, watching the mech.

Index was oblivious to Weld’s tone, or the knowing look in his optics. “Thank you Weld. I’m sorry I hijacked you!”

Weld grinned, “I wasn’t being hijacked. I was just being a friend. That is what friends are for after all. It’s nice to have a friend again, since they won’t let me see Flamewar all that often.”

Index looked at Weld curiously. He had never met Flamewar, although he did have one of her eggs
for a little while. “It is nice to have a friend again.”

Thundercracker looked between the two of them, “If you are ready, Index, I’ll show you how to get to the archives.”

“Oh, please, I would like that!”

Weld smiled and slipped out the door with them, and headed the other way. Index was so excited with the prospect of getting new datapads he completely forgot to be nervous as they walked down the hallway. He still walked close to Thundercracker, nearly hovering, but the flier did not seem to mind. His field felt calm when it brushed up against Index’s and that was reassuring as well.

“It is not the biggest data storage, but they have a decent selection,” Thundercracker said, looking down at Index. “Is there anything in particular you are interested in?”

“Everything,” Index said with a tiny smile.

“That is a pretty big subject. Why don’t you try narrowing it down just a little bit and work your way out.”

Index giggled and then froze in shock. He hadn’t laughed in…..he had no idea how long it had been. “Maybe you could help me find something?”

Thundercracker smiled at him and Index felt his spark give a little flip in his chest. “I would be glad to Index. What kind of pads have you been reading so far? Non-fiction or Fiction?”

Index felt himself blush for some reason. “I, I read mostly fiction with some non-fiction, but that is mostly history texts.”

Thundercracker nodded, “Perhaps some historical fiction then? Maybe something a bit lighter? I know those kind of text can be very heavy.”

“That would be nice,” Index said, and let Thundercracker lead him across the data storage, “This is the fiction section, there are a couple pads by Silverbird. She is a Vosian writer. One of the king’s concubines, oddly enough. The old king I mean, before Vos fell. Before it was even ruled by a trine there were kings, and they lived in these lofty towers, if you can imagine.”

Index’s opics widened, “Did you know them?”

Thundercracker laughed, “I’m old, Index, but I am not THAT old.” He grinned as he pulled a pad off the shelf and handed it to Index. “It is one of my favourites.”

Index flipped it on, “Oh.”

“Oh, I had forgotten that it was in Seeker cant. If you like I could try to find a copy that is in standard. Or…”

“Or?”

Thundercracker smiled, “Or, if you like, we could meet up for a joor or two each sol and I could read it to you as well as teaching you Seeker cant. If you like.”

Index looked at Thundercracker in shock, “You would do that? Really? I’d love that!”

“I would be happy to do it. It is worth seeing a smile on your face, Index. You do not smile enough.”
Index’s spark did another odd little flip-flop behind his chest plates, “I---I don’t done how to thank you.”

“Making you happy is thanks enough. Would you like to start today? And perhaps we could find a few more pads to bring back to your rooms as well.”

“Oh...that would be wonderful.” Index vented hard, his optics swelling with lubricant, “Why are you so nice to me?”

“Because you are worth it. You are obviously a sweet mech, who didn’t deserve anything that happened.”

Index looked down, “Bad things happened to a lot of people. I wasn’t the only one.”

Thundercracker shook his helm, “You were the worst off though. I saw you when you were rescued. You suffered terribly.”

Index looked at his peds, “I, I don’t like to think about that.”

“No, I don’t imagine you do. But, I think ignoring it is not the thing to help you either. Bad things happen to good bots,” Thundercracker said, “And in them we find ourself and our inner strength. You made it through that you survived. I envy your strength.”

Index stared at him, “I’m not strong. If---if I was that never would have happened. I would have found a way to---to get away from him. To hurt him back.”

“He would have killed you,” Thundercracker said.

“M-maybe that would have been better.”

“You should never think that, Primus don’t think that.”

“It would have been easier on everyone. You wouldn’t have had to fight him to get me free, one of the others could have been rescued easier.”

“The others’ rescues went fine. As for Megatron, someone was going to have to fight him sooner or later during the attack. At least I was able to get you away from him before he was able to kill you. I, I, I heard about your sparkling. I am sorry for your loss.”

Index ducked his helm, taking in a deep breath. “I thought I was going to lose it before. It was only a matter of time before he hit me, or after---after it emerged...I know it would have not lasted long. He was not a good master.”

“No carrier should have to think that, or have to go through that. You are a good mech, Index. You are a good mech and one day you will find a mech that takes care of you the way you should be taken care of.”

Index blinked at him, “I---I guess. I don’t think Arcee would like that very much.”

“Arcee needs to stop trying to control your life. You went through a terrible ordeal, but you need to go out and see what else is out there for you. She should be helping you, not trying to limit your contact with the outside world. What does Rung have to say about that?”

“I, uh, I haven’t seen him. Arcee said it wasn’t going to help anyway. So I just stay home where it is safe.”
Thundercracker growled, the sound rumbled through Index’s plating. Surprisingly it did not scare him. “You need to see him, you need help moving on from this.”

Index trembled, “Please, don’t be mad.”

“I’m not mad, I’m just---frustrated. You should be getting help. You don’t deserve being treated this way. You are not some broken thing to be tucked away.”
Chapter 2

Will gasped as Ironhide rocked his spike in deeper and Ironhide smirked before gasping himself when Chromia thrust hard into him. Chromia was an amazing femme and was always so commanding in the berth.

Will had taken a little while to around to the idea but so far he seemed to be settling in fairly easily. Will was taking care of Annabelle, as well as helping take care of their quarters and was even volunteering to help watch the sparklings while he was learning about being Cybertronian. Everything was going great.

Will panted as Ironhide shifted inside of him, he occasionally thought it was still strange to have a valve but with the way the Chromia and Ironhide made him feel he didn’t really have many complaints. He hadn’t been this well fragged in years.

Ironhide pulled nearly all the way out, and slammed back in as Chromia did the same to Ironhide. His spike scraped along the nodes at the top of Will’s valve leaving him gasping, and whimpering. It would have been embarrassing to come undone like this, but he just could not bring himself to. He wanted more.

Will bucked his hips up, rolling into each thrust demandingly. It only made Ironhide chuckle, and Chromia purr in appreciation. They liked to make him come undone.

He bucked up and screamed as he overloaded. His valve spasmed around Ironhide’s spike, and he moaned as Ironhide kept thrusting and drove him into another overload. Ironhide rumbled and then moaned as he overloaded filling Will’s valve and gestation chamber with fluids as Chromia overloaded in him.

They ended up slumping around Will. Ironhide on one side and Chromia on the other. They snuggled around Will in post coital bliss and listened to him try and vent properly.

Will blinked up at the ceiling, feeling limp and wrung out. It had felt nothing like this as a human. It was...different. Intense. Intense in a different way anyway. One of his hands drifted to his abdominal plating. It was still odd to think that a life was growing in there. There was only the slightest of bumps, but he was already...craving interfacing more. He felt his cheekplates heating up. He could have gone another round...or two. His valve clenched needily at the thought. He wanted it again already. He tried not to squirm. The more he tried not to squirm the more his core temperature rose, and a needy whine finally escaped his vocalizer.

“I think Will is still in need, Hide. Can you rise to the occasion or do need a few kliks?”

Hide chuckled, “I might need a few kliks, Chromia. Can you lend a hand?”

“Well, not a hand.” Chromia pulled Will up off the berth until he was straddling her faceplates. He squealed as she began to lick his valve, her glossa plunging deep into his valve.

Will panted, letting his helm fall back. Chromis seemed to know how to find the most sensitive of nodes and worked them over. Her glossa thrust deep, flicking in and out. She was a horrible tease. He wanted something else, as nice as this was.

“Please,” he whined. He wanted her spike inside of him. Instead she nibbled and bit at the rim, sucking on the nodes until he was whimpering above her.
“Mmmmm...the two of you look amazing together,” Ironhide grinned.

Chromia laughed and Will moaned as the laughter made her glossa vibrate in his valve. He squeaked as he was suddenly picked up and then he moaned as Ironhide dropped him on his spike.

“Hmm, the two of you look amazing together too, Hide.” Chromia purred as she leaned over and watched Ironhide bounce Will on his spike. Will let Hide do the work as he was bounced on the thick spike filling him so perfectly.

Will moaned, letting his helm fall back. They seemed made for each other, and it was oddly cathartic to be used like this. Hide lifted him up over and over again, letting him drop down, the tip of Hide’s spike hitting his ceiling node just right. It was on the very edge between pain and pleasure.

“More than amazing,” Chromia said, watching them with hooded optics. “You put on a good show.”

“Not a show,” Will gasped out, “I’m not--it’s not--”

Chromia laughed, “But you do Will. You are beautiful like this,” she reached out pressing a hand to his abdominal plating.

Will tried to focus by Ironhide was bouncing him faster and he felt like he was going to overload any second. He was dropped a few more times and then he screamed as he overloaded, a rush of fluids filling his valve. He slumped over and panted as he tried to catch his breath after an overload that had made him blackout a little.

Chromia chuckled and rubbed his back as he tried to catch his breath. “You are amazing, Will. We are so lucky to have found you.”

Will finally seemed to come back to himself, “I think I’m the lucky one.” He gave Chromia a wobbly little smile. He wouldn’t lie to himself, he loved them both very much. It soothed the dull ache that Sarah’s death left there. They weren’t replacements. She was irreplaceable, but so were they.

Chromia leaned in, kissing him. It was only broken when Hide lifted him up, rearranging them both in a more comfortable position on the berth. “The little one is needy, isn’t he?”

Will wiggled between them, “Needy is an understatement.” Ratchet said he was already on the big side of things for this stage of growth. Will tried not to let that scare him.

“Don’t worry, Will. Whatever you and the sparkling need, we will make sure you are both taken care of. We will not let anything happen to either of you.” Ironhide tilted his helm up to look Will in the optics.

Will gave a little smile, “I know Hide. Thanks. I think I just want to sleep for a while. I am a little tired at the moment.”

“If that is what you want, brightspark,” Chromia said. She sat up, watching them both. “My sweet mechs. I am the luckiest femme ever.” She finally settled back down, resting her helm on Will’s shoulder. She was the luckiest femme ever.

OoOoOoOo

Verity carefully opened the door to the lab and slipped inside. She knew she didn’t really have to since Percy was not the most observant mechs when it came to anything aside from what he was studying.
She had a strong suspicion that she could detonate a bomb and he wouldn’t notice unless it touched
his research. He was currently trying to find a way to hopefully reverse the transformation of the
Earth back to an organic state. It apparently wouldn’t work with the humans since the claimed that
while it had been easy to add mass from the surrounding environment when they had become mechs,
trying to remove it now would likely kill them.

As expected he was deep in study, his helm bent as he read some databad. He mumbled to himself
and jotted down notes on another pad. He didn’t move an inch, and clearly had not heard her. She
crossed the space between them, settling behind him her arms snaked around him before he even
knew what hit him.

“Verity! I-I-I am w-working! What are you doing?”

“You work too much.”

“I need to fix this,” he whined and tried to wiggle out of her grasp.

“It’s not going anywhere, Percy. I don’t even know why you are bothering. What good is it going to
do us?”

“If we can learn the manner in which the process occurred we might be able to replicate it when we
are able to return to Cybertron. Not to mention that your planet was never meant to be a techno-
organic one, and if we can revert it to an organic state we would be able to restore the ecosystem
properly.”

“Blah, blah, blag big words blah blah blah. Shut up and kiss me, Percy.”

“My name is Perceptor not—”

Verity pulled him close and drew him into a deep kiss. “You are lucky you are so cute.”

Perceptor stared at her flustered beyond speech when the kiss had ended. “I’m not cute,” he finally
sputtered once he found his voice again.

“Complete adorable,” she answered, stealing another kiss. He melted into it, leaning into her. He
always did that, and then puffed up like a disgruntled cat when it was over. He never failed to amuse
her, and she was more than ready to move their relationship to the next step. If only he would stop
his protests. They were only half-hearted at best, but he never failed to squawk on anyway.

“Don’t you like me, Percy?” she crooned, pushing him back against the table.

“Verity, we have talked about this! This is inappropriate behavior for my lab! You know I asked that
you not to do things like this!”

“Oh don’t be such a spoilsport percy! You can have a little fun, you know?”

“Verity! Not in the lab!”

She leaned forward, catching his lips and toppling them both onto the table. She didn’t understand
why he had to be so stubborn. After a moment he responded, kissing her back as feverishly as she
kissed him. He didn’t have her fooled for a moment, as cold and prim as he acted all the time he was
really the complete opposite.

“I like the lab though,” Verity finally said, nuzzling him. “It’s the only place I can seem to catch you.
It is almost as you really do not want me around,” she said. “Is that the case, Percy?” She nuzzled
him again.

“Verity. You—I— I’m a good mech,” he whined.

“The best,” she agreed.

“That isn’t what I mean. I’m a good mech, and this isn’t proper.”

“Proper? Come on, Percy! Have a little fun for once!”

“I am not going to ‘come on’. I told you, I am a good mech! I am not….doing those things outside of a bond!”

“You are such a tease! Come on, give in a little! No one will know but us!”

“I will know! My answer is no!”

Verity huffed, “Then bond with me. Why the hell are you so difficult?”

“You haven’t even tried to—to—court me. I can’t just bond with you on a whim.”

She gave him an annoyed look feeling perturbed, “Really? You make it sound like I’m hitting on all the mechs on the ship. You are such a---a---fluffhead.” Verity grumbled, “Will’s already bonded. We’ve been here for a long time. God damn it, Percy.”

Perceptor wiggled away from her, giving her an injured look, “Seals are important. They show my worth. I’m not going to just give them away only for you to-to just take them and leave me ruined.”

“You are the biggest fluffhead I have ever met. Ever.”

Perceptor froze and turned to her. He had the coldest look on his faceplates that she had ever seen which was an accomplishment for Perceptor. “Get out.”

“Percy? What-”

“Get. Out. I do not have to put up with you insulting me. Get out of my lab.”

“Percy! Don’t be like that! I-”

“Leave before I call security!”

Verity’s spinal strut stiffened, “I will not. Stop acting like this, now.”

Perceptor glared at her, and she glared right back growing visibly angry. It was almost enough to make him flinch. “You called me a fluff head.”

“You are fucking acting like one. None of these rules even matter anymore. I don’t see what the big deal is.”

Perceptor stared at her, “You’ve lost your home too. How can you say that?”

“It’s gone. It’s not coming back. Life goes on. I’m here, you’re here, and that is what we have now. You can’t live in the past, Percy.”

Perceptor stared at her in a cold fury. “Fine. If you won’t leave, then I will go elsewhere. I do not need your constant harassment when I am trying to work.”
Perceptor moved around Verity and headed for the door of his lab, intending to go to the archives and research a few items that he had been meaning to look up for his current project. Verity grabbed his arm and tried to stop him, “Percy! Come on! Don’t be like that!”

He tried to shake her off, but she clung on hard and jerked him back, wrapping her arms around his middle. “Stop it. Why are you even mad, Percy?”

“You said I was stupid! You think I’m an idiot.”

She clung on hard, dropping her weight so he had to drag her to move, “No I didn’t. You are the smartest bot I know. Just stop it. I don’t know why you think it’s okay to act this way.”

“Let go.”

“No. I will not.”

“Miss Verity, you will let go of me or else I will be filing a complaint with the security forces about your unwanted advances as well as your harassment of me!”

She stared at him in shock. “Miss Verity? What? Why are you talking like that?”

“Miss Verity, unhand me or I will bring you up on charges with the security force.”

“Perceptor, no, please don’t do this. I-I only tease you because I care about you. I thought you cared about me. Please, please don’t do this. Please.” Verity whimpered, clinging to him all the harder. As tough as she tried to act she was still terrified of being alone. Everything was new and scary.

“Please.”

Perceptor stared down at her in shock. What?

“Please, please. P-perceptor!”

“Let go of me, miss Verity. I am afraid that I must insist on your leaving and that you do not return.”

Verity looked at him in shock. Her hand went limp for less than a klik but that was enough for Perceptor to break free. “I am going to go for a short break. Miss Verity when I return I will hopefully find that you have departed by laboratory.”

Verity could not believe what she was hearing. “So what? Its over? This is the end? No! I won’t let you end it like this.”

“There is nothing to end,” Perceptor said coldly, but he shifted uncomfortable when he looked down at her and noticed the coolant pooling in her optics. Verity didn’t cry. He wasn’t going to let those cybergator tears sway him. No. He wasn’t.

“I love you. I thought you loved me. Why are you doing this.”

“You said I was a fluffhead.”

“I was only teasing you.”

Perceptor frowned down at her. “You were doing things I was not comfortable with. I told you to stop and you didn’t. It is unacceptable.”

“I was just playing around, Percy, come on! Don’t do this!”
“You push me too hard! I told you to go away, to leave me alone. I told you I was uncomfortable with what you were doing. I asked you to respect my beliefs and customs, and you dismissed all of that. You do only what you want! You take no consideration about my wants or needs.”

“Percy! I’m sorry, I didn’t know that I was that bad!”

Perceptor huffed, “How do I know you will not continue with this behavior in the future? I don’t want to be saddled with a mate that doesn’t care about my opinions and feelings.”

“I care. Do you think I would be here if I didn’t care? What do you want me to do? Beg?” That made Verity bristle, her own armour puffing up and her spine stiffening.

“Perhaps that is a good start.”

She blinked up at him, “Percy.”

“Yes?”

“I’m sorry. I should never have called you a fluffhead. You aren’t. You are smart, brilliant, a genius.”

“You don’t sound very sincere.”

“Percy, what do you want me to say? What do you want me to do?”

“I want you to show that you actually care about me. Show that you are after more that an interface. That you respect the fact that I don’t believe in interfacing outside of a bond.”

Verity blinked in surprise. “I do. I do care about you. I do want you for more that just interfacing. I don’t understand why you deny yourself but I will wait.”

“I want you to prove it,” Perceptor said looking temperamental.

Verity wrung her hands, “I don’t know what you are asking of me.”

“A proper courtship.”

“I---if that is w-what you want. I-I’m not---I don’t know what to do.”

“You will go to Prowl, and ask for his help. He knows how these things work. You will not drop in on the lab, unless you bring a chaperone. It’s improper.”

Verity stared, it sounded terribly old fashioned. “If that is what you want.”

His faceplates softened minutely, “It is.”

“H-how long?”

“A formal courtship can go on for vorns. I do not imagine you have the patience for that. We shall discuss it and the terms of our union when we draw the contract up.”

Verity started up at him looking unhappily, “I---I will talk to Prowl then.”

Perceptor nodded, “If there is nothing further you need, I will return to my work. Good sol Miss Verity.”

Verity blinked at his blatant dismissal in a mild state of shock. Had she just agreed to court Percy like
he was some dainty princess in a tower? Fine, if he wanted to be that way. She would find out what she needed to do and court him so good that he wanted to bond right away!

She got up, brushing herself off and headed out the door towards Prowl’s office. She still felt shell shocked and confused. Perceptor was a strange, strange mech, but he was HER strange mech and if he wanted this she guessed she had to do it. She didn’t want to make him feel bad or hate her. She knocked on Prowl’s door, nearly falling when the door slid open.

“Verity. What have you done this time?”

Verity blinked at the white and black mech, “I haven’t done anything. Perceptor said I should talk to you, because...I--don’t know how this freaking courting thing works,” she bit out, looking exasperated.

Prowl looked stunned, “What?”

Verity scowled, “Percy wants me to court him. He said to ask you. What do I gotta do? And why’d calling him a fluffhead piss him off?”

Prowl frowned, “You called him a what?!”

“A fluffhead. Hot Rod calls people that all the time.”

“It means he has an empty processor filled with fluffsheep wool. Obviously, it is not something he would appreciate. He is a very serious mech.”

Verity stared, “What the fuck is a fluffsheep?”

“Language, Verity. They are...cybertronian animals that produce wool that can be made into mesh. I believe there are quite a few on Earth now. Back to the topic, he sent you here for instructions on our culture?”

“Yes, I guess.”

“I think it would be better for you to speak to Jazz. He is better educated in the culture of the Hydraxian Plateau and the cities of Nova Cronium. He would be able to help you more in your...courting.”

Verity sighed, “Fine, where is Jazz?”

Prowl frowned slightly, “He is usually on this floor’s recreation room at this point or at the sparkling care center visiting Bluestreak.”

She nodded, “Thank you.”

“Good luck,” Prowl finally said as she slipped out the door like a femme on a mission.

Verity went down to the floors recreation room first, and found no sign of Jazz at all, so she headed up to the creche, and vented a sigh of relief when she spotted him playing with Bluestreak. Her spark melted a little when she caught sight of the sparkling as it always did. She wanted one. Maybe not for a while, but eventually. She had always liked children, and the robotic variety were especially charming.

“Jazz? I need your help. Perceptor wants me to court him and I have no idea what I’m doing. He sent me to Prowl and Prowl said I should talk to you and I really, really need help.”
Jazz stared, “Ah think yah need tah calm down, Verity. And explain it a bit slower this time, yer not Blurr.”

Verity blinked at him, “Oh, fine. Perceptor wants me to court him, only...I don’t know how. I don’t know what the rules are and I don’t know how to get a...chaperone. I don’t even understand how any of this works.”

“Is that all? Sure, ah’ll help yah.”

Verity relaxed and gave Jazz a grateful smile, “Thank you so much!”

OoOoOoOo

Spike huffed, and tried to wiggle out of the arms holding him tightly. His chassis felt hot. They always felt hot these days. It was impossible to lay on his back, the sparkling pressed down on his internals and it felt horrible. “Lemme go,” He squirmed more vigorously, trying to worm his way away from Grimlock.

Grimlock cracked on gold optic open, and let it fall back shut, “Him Spike don’t need to go anywhere.”

Spike glared at Grimlock, “Well, ‘him Spike’ needs to cool down! Your stupid sparking is crushing me from the inside!”

“Him Spike need rest. Me Grimlock get cooling blanket. Him Spike rest on berth.”

“I am not an invalid, Grimlock. I can do things on my own you know!”

“Him Spike is little mech. Little mech let big mech do work. Little mech rest, grow sparkling big and strong like me Grimlock!”

“I’m not little! Don’t call me little. I’m strong. You are just abnormally big. I’m perfectly capable. I’m strong,” Spike groused and tried to roll off the berth.

“Him Spike has hard processor.”

Spike’s optics narrowed, “Did you...just call me stupid.”

“Him Grimlock would never do that. Rest,” he said as he came back with a cooling blanket and tried to tuck it around Spike. “Him Spike needs lots of rest.”

“No, ‘Him Spike’ needs to leave. I need to see a medic, this baby is way too big!”

“Him Spike no had sparkling, him Spike has egg. Him sparkling hatch from egg.”

Egg? Was he serious? Grimlock expected him to lay an egg?

“Egg? I am pretty sure that you guys don’t lay eggs.”

“Them Dinobots lay eggs.”

Spike stared, “You are kidding. Right? You are joking?”

“Are you crazy? I’m not. You---this---I want to see a medic now.”

Grimlock frowned, “Him Spike not well.”

“You really have to ask that?”

“Me Grimlock think him Spike fine. Him Spike rest now.”

“I don’t want to rest. I want to see the medic! You can’t tell me that I am going to lay an egg and then act like nothing is wrong.”

Grimlock squinted at him, “Him Spike, over-reacting.” He shrugged, and picked up Spike, blankets and all.

“What the hell are you doing, put me down,” Spike squealed, but Grimlock was already heading towards the door and ignored all of the squawking he made. “Grimlock.”

“Spike, wanted medic.”

“I--seriously.”

“Him Spike fickle mech. Him Grimlock will get Spiked scanned, no recharge otherwise.”

Spike stared up at the mech. “You are crazy. This whole thing it crazy.”


“I already told you that I am not having eggs!”

“Him Spike is stubborn. Him Hoist will tell him Spike about eggs. Promise,” Grimlock said as they entered the med bay. “Him Hoist where you at!” the dinobot bellowed.

Hoist peeked around the corner, browplates lifted, “Is there something wrong, Grimlock?”

“Him Hoist needs to scan him Spike. Tell him Spike about eggs.”

“Errr...sure, Grimlock, put him down on the berth.” Hoist looked down at Spike and frowned, “You are much bigger than you should be at this stage, you’ve been missing your appointments, Spike.”

Spike glared up at the medic, “Like I want to waddle down the hallways. It’s a long walk.”

“Then you should have commed one of us medics for help. Grimlock, put him on the berth- on his side!”

“Me Grimlock hear him Hoist! Him Hoist no need yell!”

Spike sighed as he was settled on the berth. “Will you tell him that I don’t have eggs in me now?”

Hoist sighed, “Let me scan and see if you are or not before I tell anyone anything.”

Spike stared. “Wait a second, you mean I could be?”

“It is a possibility, more primitive models have been known to be egg-laying. Predacons for example, and the older Seeker models.”

Spike blinked, squeaking when Hoist plugged the medical pad in and started the scan.
“Interesting,” Hoist hummed.

“I don’t like the sound of that.” Spike whined.

“It would appear that you are.”

“I am what?”

“You are carrying eggs. Five to be exact. Hmm they are quite large too. I am going to put you on berth rest. No unnecessary walking or movement. Grimlock, help him with getting around. If you can’t have your brothers help him. Spike- Spike! What’s wrong?”

Spike had begun venting hard staring at Hoist in horror before staring at his abdomen with equal horror. “Eggs? EGGS? WHAT THE FRAG IS GOING ON!?”

“You are carrying,” Hoist said calmly. “The hatchlings will be in eggs for a couple decacycles after we remove them from your frame in order to finish frame production.”

“DO YOU HEAR WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?!?!?!” Spike shrieked. he flailed as he tried to get off of the berth. “I don’t want to lay EGGS. What the fuck?!?!? I shouldn’t even be the one having them. This is the most messed up thing...EVER.”

“Him Spike needs to calm down.”

Spike glared, “CALM DOWN? YOU THINK I SHOULD CALM DOWN?”

“Spike you do need to calm down, this stress is not good for the sparklings.”

“I DON’T CARE! I SHOULDN’T BE HAVING SPARKLINGS ANYWAY! I AM A GUY! GUYS DON’T HAVE BABIES!”

“SPIKE! Calm down or I will sedate you! You are stressing out your frame and your sparklings! Calm down!”

“Him Spike need calm down. Him Spike will harm eggs.”

Spike huffed, and made a whimpering noise before bursting into tears, “I don’t wanna lay eggs. I’m a guy. I’m not—not even su-sure I want kids.”

Hoist stared at him, “I am afraid it is too late for second thoughts. It is far too late to abort any sparks. They are in their frames.”

Lubricant trickled down Spike’s cheeks, “This isn’t fair.”

“Him Grimlock not like this talk. Him Spike should be happy. Have strong, big sparklings.”

Spike started sobbing loudly, “I wanna go home.”

Hoist looked at him surprised, “Spike! Oh, it’s alright. Go ahead, let it out. I know that this can’t be easy. I am going to refer you to Rung, alright? I think talking to him would really help you out. Grimlock, make sure he goes. It is bad enough that some bots think they know better and don’t allow traumatized mechs to get counseling!”

“Me Grimlock will take him Spike to see him Rung.”

Hoist nodded, “Good, I am glad you are taking this seriously.” He patted Spike’s shoulder, “It will
be okay, I promise. They all look healthy, and we will get you better as well. I’m going to schedule
the extraction procedure for three decacycles from today. I think it will make much less stressful on
your frame that way.”

“Extraction...less stress? How the hell would they normally come out?”

“Through your valve...in the case of eggs.”

Spike stared at him and started crying all over again. “It wouldn’t fit.”

Hoist looked panicked for a moment, “No! No! You won’t have to! We will operate and remove the
eggs so they won’t come out that way. They are far too big for that anymore already.”

“What?! You are going to cut me open?! No! Nononononono! No! Get rid of them! I don’t want
them!”

Hoist and Grimlock looked concerned. “Me Grimlock say him Spike calm down. Him Spike good
carrier.”

Spike’s vents hiccuped, “I am?”

“Him Spike best carrier. Him Spike strong, brave, worthy of Dinobot sparklings.”

Spike’s vents hiccuped again, and he preened, “Really?”

Grimlock nodded, “Him Spike the best.”

Spike wiped at his faceplates, “W-will it hurt. When you---you cut me open?”

Hoist shook his helm, “No, we will dull the sensors. There is a transformation sequence that will
allow me to access your gestation tank, so there will be no exterior marks.”

“Oh,” Spike patted his chassis, “T-that is good, I guess.”

“Yes, don’t worry Spike. I will make sure you don’t feel anything when we remove the eggs from
your chamber. You will be nice and numb. We will put the eggs in an incubator and as soon as they
hatch you will have five sparklings just for you.”

“Five?! I...I could maybe handle one, but I can’t raise five babies! I don’t know how!”

Hoist patted his servo, “Don’t worry. You’ll do fine. Besides you will have Grimlock and his
brothers helping too. You will be just fine.”

“But w-won’t they be small and f-fragile. They might break. I don’t want to break them.” His
vents hitched in the beginnings of a sob.

“Spike, they are not nearly as fragile as they look. You will be fine. You have all sorts of bots to help
you and you know anyone in the medbay will be willing to answer any questions that you have,”
Hoist said patiently. “Don’t fret and make yourself ill, it will work out. I promise you.”

Spike vented softly, not looking sure about any of it. “You have no proof of that. I might burst before
you take them out. Or Grimlock might step on them.”

“Me Grimlock not clumsy.”

“I know you are not. But they are going to be small. What happens if you step on one? It will break.”
“Me Grimlock would never step on sparklings! Me Grimlock love sparklings! Them brother Dinobots love sparklings too!”

“But you are so big and they are all going to be so small! You might hurt them without trying!”

“We Dinobots never hurt sparklings! Him Swoop help him Spike watch eggs. We Dinobots all help raise sparklings!”

Spike stared at him, “Oh...okay. I believe you. I---thank you.”

“I think you can take him back to your hab suit, Grimlock. If there is any other issues please comm one of us immediately, and Rung will be contacting you within the next sol to set up your first appointment.”

“Thanks, doc,” Spike said as he was scooped up. He leaned back against Grimlock and took a careful vent. Maybe it would work out.

OoOoOoOo

“Prism, what are you doing?” Sunstreaker called from the doorway.

“I’m in the kitchen,” Prism called.

“I thought you were supposed to be off of your peds!”

“I was bored,” Prism said, peeking out of the room.

“You are supposed to be resting! You need to take it easy, the sparklings are requiring so much energy from you.”

Prism sighed, “I am not a lillith, Sunny! I won’t shatter if you look away. Come try one of these goodies and tell me if they are done enough.”

Sunstreaker came into the kitchen and scooped up Prism before setting him on the counter. “Fine, but you are going to sit down.”

Prism’s doorwings fluttered, flirtily. “Sunny, are you going to try one?”

Sunstreaker’s lip twitched up, “I will,” he picked up two of the treats that were cooling on the counter and offered one to Prism, popping the other in his mouth. “They are delicious.”

Prism purred, “You like them then? I hoped you would. I missed you.”

“I can tell,” Sunstreaker said, tickling the swell of Prism’s abdomen. “And hungry, I take it?”

“I’m not really hungry anymore. I was testing the other goodie batches pretty well. I didn’t want to have bad goodies to offer you and Sideswipe.”

“Oh, not that kind of hunger Princess. I think you are hungry for something else.”

Prism giggled as Sunny began to kiss and nip along his neck. “Sunny! Stop! The batch of goodies in the oven will burn!”

Sunstreaker reached over and shut off the stove. “Problem solved.”

“Sunny, they will still burn!” Prism laughed, only stopping when Sunstreaker kissed him. He melted
against the golden mech, wrapping his arms around his neck and pulling him close. He had wanted this all day, but they left him all alone.

“Not alone anymore,” Sunstreaker said when he pulled away, easily catching the thought.

Prism’s field flared out, demandingly only the way a carrying mech could be.

“Is that how it is?” Sunstreaker asked, nuzzling him.

“Always,” Prism panted.

“Well, I wouldn’t be a very good knight if I left the princess in distress now would I?”

He nipped along Prism’s neck before kissing up to his lips and drawing him into a passionate kiss, glossas tangling and twining together. When he broke the kiss Prism found himself venting hard and trying to cool himself down.

Sunstreaker reached down and rubbed at Prism’s panel, causing to slid open at once. “So eager for me already?”

“Wanted you all sol long! Need you!”

Sunstreaker’s panel snapped open at Prism’s needy tone, his spike pressurizing immediately. “I’ve wanted you too. All sol. It was the best sort of distraction.” He leaned in, bumping their arrays together, smiling at the gasp that escaped Prism’s vocalizer. “I imagined you between Sides and I. Maybe later this sol, when he gets home.”

“Sunny, stop teasing. Need you.”

Sunstreaker ground against him, slipping his digits into the space between his armour at his hips, “How badly?”

“Sunny! Please. I want you inside me, NOW.”

“It always amazes me that my pretty, prim princess can become so wanton so easily.”

“Sunny! Don’t tease me!”

Sunstreaker chuckled but lined his spike up and slid it home. Prism moaned as the spike spread the lining of his valve and made him shudder at how good it was. “Oh Sunny!”

Sunny began a slow, lazy tempo taking care to drag his spike along as many nodes as he could when he slid it in and out. Prism was soon moaning and trying to get Sunstreaker to go faster but he stuck to the slow and steady build up.

“Oh---oh---please just----faster---please!” Prism tried to buck his hips up, tried to make Sunstreaker go faster, but his mate only held on tighter to his him, keeping the same maddeningly steady pace.

“I want to see you come undone,” Sunstreaker panted, optics half-lidded and overly bright. He drew all the way out, hissing at the way Prism’s valve clamped down trying to draw him back in. He vented a moment, and then snapped his hips driving back in one, twice, and a third time before settling back down to the slow rhythm.

Prism let his helm fall back, moaning. He needed this. The twin sparks growing inside of him needed this. His valve clamped down hard, clinging to Sunstreaker as the mech used him through his overload.
“Now this is a perfect sight to come home to.”

Prism looked over and smiled as he saw Sideswipe walk into the kitchen. “Sides!”

“You two always look so good together. Room for one more?”

Sunstreaker slowed his thrusts, “Hmm, if you want in, we had better move to the berthroom. The berth would be safer for Prism.”

“And we want our princess safe. Let’s go.”

Prism wiggled, expected Sunstreaker to set him down. Instead the mech hitched Prism’s legs up, “Hold on,” He said and picked up Prism, leaving him still impaled. Prism whimpered, clinging to Sunstreaker. Each step made the spike inside of him twitch and rub up against the nodes inside. Prism was a quivering mess by the time they reached the berthroom.

“Frag, that is hot,” Sideswipe whistled, his optics overly bright. “How do you want to do this?”

Sunstreaker looked thoughtful, and he bounced Prism on his spike wringing a keen out of the little mech.

“Why don’t I lie back and let our Princess do the work for a little while and then you join in. Our sparklings need plenty of fluids after all.”

Prism blushed at Sunstreaker’s words, and then moaned as Sunstreaker sat down on the berth before leaning back to lie down. Prism could feel each shift of Sunny’s spike in him as he repositioned. A servo on his aft lifted off of Sunny’s spike slightly and then let go so he slid back down.

Prism gasped, rocking himself forward and impaling himself back down on the spike. It seemed even bigger from this angle, stretching him perfectly.

He slowed down, his valve clenching tightly around Sunstreaker’s spike. “Oh, no you don’t,” Sunstreaker laughed, “Not yet, princess.”

“Please, Sunny,” Prism moaned when Sunny grabbed his hips, and rolled his hips up.

“Ah, ah! You are supposed to wait for me, Princess. Try to relax, alright? I don’t want to hurt you if you end up tensing up.”

Prism squeaked as Sideswipe began to carefully slide his spike in along side his twins. “Mmm, you are always so good to us Prism. We love you so much!”

Prism panted, and whimpered when Sideswipe finally slid the rest of the way in. Both twins froze, moaning as they were squeezed tightly by Prism’s valve.

“I love you, too,” Prism gasped, his optics darkening. He wiggled, feeling his valve stretch nearly to it’s limit, the mesh pulled tight. The callipers danced and quivered before finally settling. “So much,” he said, lifting himself up and letting gravity take it’s course. “This is amazing. You are--are both so amazing.”

Sideswipe purred, running his hands across Prism’s doorwings. He pinched the edges, finding the sensors and tweaking them. “So are you.”

Prism arched his back strut at the sensation of the pinches to his doorwings and moaned, “Sides! Ooooh!”
Sunstreaker laughed, “You look so good like this Princess. You make me want to paint you like this. Put it on the wall in our berthroom. For our optics only.”

Prism squeaked and blushed with embarrassment, “No! That would be so embarrassing! Don’t you dare, Sunny!”

Sunny laughed, “Even if I never showed it to anyone but us?”

Prism squeaked again, “I’d see it! G-good mechs don’t d-do things like that,” He let his helm fall back, resting against Sideswipe’s chestplates.

Sideswipe reached around him, his finger’s closing around Prism’s spike. He pumped it slowly in time to their thrusts. “We’d be the only ones to see it, sweetspark. Doesn’t that make you a little hot? Don’t you want us to enjoy looking at you?”

Prism keened, “Sides, it’s d-dirty.”

“No, it’s not. You can ask Mirage. Nobles used to do such things,” He bit down hard on Prism’s neck plating.

“I will not! I can’t talk to my Papa about that kind of thing! I-oooooohhh!”

Prism shivered as he felt Sideswipe nibble on the other side of his neck, he felt like he would melt whenever they teamed up on him like this.

“I think you should Sunny. I would love to always see our Princess like this.”

“I agree, Sides. Two against one, Princess. Don’t worry, no one else will see.”

“T-that’s no-not fair,” Prism said, closing his optics. He know when he had lost the argument though. The thought of Sunstreaker painting him like this left him feeling hot, over-heated.

“Mmmm...but it will be perfect,” Sideswipe said, nuzzling the bite marks.

“Oh....please...just...” Prism gasped, his valve clenching down hard, the callipers rolled around the twin’s spikes. The rush of transfluid gushed inside his valve, hitting the nodes, and filling him so full the it tricked out, coating his legs, and the settling into a puddle on the berth.

Sunstreaker shifted, “I think we need to invest in a nice plug for our Princess, Sides. He seems to have wasted some of our fluids. Those were supposed to go to our sparklings, Princess.”

Prism shifted and blushed as he realized how filthy he was at the moment. He was covered in trasnfluids and his own lubricants. “Let me up, please. I need to go and get cleaned up. We are making a mess on the berth.”

“Fine, let me put this in and then we will take you to the washwracks.”
“Sides!” Prism wiggled, pouting.

“Prism! It’s for the sparkling.” Sideswipe said.

Prism narrowed his optics, “Fine. I want to go to the washrack though. I want to be polished. And waxed.”

“Of course,” Sunstreaker said with a little pleased smile.

Prism gave a little smile, Sunstreaker loved to polish him and then add facial paints. Sunny said he was his loveliest piece of art. It made Prism feel so special when either of the twins started talking about him like that.

There was a sudden odd flutter in his midsection and he froze as Sideswipe helped him to his peds. Sideswipe immediately was concerned. “Prism? Sweetspark? Are you okay? What’s wrong?”

Prism concentrated and then felt it again. He smiled as he realized that the twin sparklings he was carrying had woken up. He giggled and did his best to glare at the twins. “You two woke the sparklings!”

Both twins stopped, their optics widened, “Did they move?” Sideswipe finally asked.

Prism put a hand over his abdominal plating, “Yes, they did. It felt like...a flutter.” His lips curled up into a little smile. The little protoforms inside of him shifted again, stretching out in his gestation tank. It felt odd, but not in a bad sort of way.

Sunstreaker reached out, covering Prism’s hand with his own. “We can’t wait to meet them.”

“I’m sure they will be equally excited to meet their sires.”

Sideswipe smiled, and moved close, enveloping them both into a tight hug. “Can’t wait.”
Chapter 3

Flamewar carefully counted the hatchlings again as she herded them down the halls. This was it! This was the sol when she would get to be with her mate again and the hatchlings could be with their sire.

The stupid Autobots had decided to allow her mate to leave the cell he had been locked up in, and stay with her and the hatchlings in an area that they had designated as properly secure!

She was just happy to have her mate back. The hatchling had missed their sire so badly and the com calls were not enough.

She had missed him too. Not that she would admit such a thing. She was a strong femme and did not need anyone. She huffed, stopping to gather the stragglers, and finally they made it to the door of their new home.

Wheeljack opened the door, looking sour as he ushered them in. She knew he had argued vehemently against this, but he had lost, and she would be reunited with her mate. He said that Predaking had manipulated her. That he didn’t really care, but she KNEW he was wrong. If anything she had her mate wrapped about her littlest claw, not the other way around. Wheeljack just didn’t understand that. Neither did Bulkhead, but he was not as vocal about it, thankfully.

She looked around the new room. It was big at least. There was a pile of meshes to one side for her to make a nest with, and there was a living area like she had seen in Bulkhead’s room, with a vidscreen. There was an energon dispenser and a little kitchen area. It was...actually pretty nice.

A series of loud excited chirps and squeaks had her looking back at the hatchlings. It seemed that someone had put a crate of sparklings toys in the room and the hatchlings were now going wild with their new playthings.

She smiled, it was nice to see the hatchlings look so happy. They had had few toys at all and having so many now was a nice change. She looked around anxiously, where was her mate?

He was supposed to have been here before them. She heard the door open and she turned, only to growl in anger at what she saw. Two armed guards walked on each side of her mate as he walked in his Predacon form, a large band securing his wings and a muzzle covering his jaws.

A growl erupted from deep in her chest, “What is the meaning of this? Release my mate!” She moved close, but the mechs raised their weapons, aiming them at her.

“Stop it,” Bulkhead snapped, looming over the guards, “What the frag are you doing? Aiming a weapon at a carrier?” The two mechs stumbled back, releasing Predaking and moving towards the door.

“We were only following orders, sir,” one said.

“Whatever, just give us the restraint keys,” Wheeljack said, as much as he’d like to keep the beast chained up he knew that look on Bulkhead’s faceplates. It wasn’t going to end well for anyone if his fellow Wrecker lost it.

The guards tossed the keys to Wheeljack and nearly ran out the door. “Frag, what a mess,” Wheeljack said, pressing the key into Flamewar’s hand. She had at least stopped growling.
Flamewar snatched the keys and rushed over to her mate. She quickly released his jaw and purred as he immediately nuzzled her warmly. “Are you and the hatchlings alright?”

“We are fine. Hold still while I set your wings free.”

She shifted into her femme mode so she could reach, and ignored the surprised gasps that came from Bulkhead and Wheeljack. She had a mate to take care of. She undid the restraint and stepped back as Predaking flapped his wings a few times before he shifted into his mech mode and swept her into a kiss.

Flamewar clung to him, kissing him back with equal fervour. Bulkhead watched for one moment, before his cheekplates reddened with embarrassment and he turned away. Wheeljack glared, optics narrowing.

“My mate! I thought I would never touch you again,” Preadking said, still holding on tightly to Flamewar. “I missed you.”

Wheeljack growled, still glaring, “If I had my way we would have thrown away the key and left you there forever.”

Predaking growl, pushing Flamewar behind him, “You will not take my mate away from me again. I will offline you.”

Flamewar moved around and nuzzled against him, “They will not take me away. I would offline them myself. Now come and see our hatchlings! They have grown so much since you last saw them! Steelclaw has improved his pouncing, and Riptide is trying to learn to roar like you can.”

Predaking nuzzled his mate and then shifted back to his beast mode, wrapping a wing around his mate as she followed suit and they went to see their precious hatchlings. “So I can see, my Flamewar. They have grown large and healthy indeed. You have done so well.”

“They have missed you. I missed you.”

As soon as he sparklings saw their sire, they yelled and cheered before running at him and leaping on his, welcoming him home boisterously.

Predaking purred loudly, gathering the bitties to him, he curled around them. Wrapping his tail around them to keep them close, and flaring his wings, covering them all. “You have all grown into big, strong warriors in my absence!” he said, nuzzling the closest younglings.

The clicked back at him, excited by his presence.

“It is good that you are back with us,” Flamewar whispered, nuzzling him again. “I missed you so much. I was so...I was so scared they would keep us apart forever.”

“I would not have allowed them to do that. I would do anything to be with you. You are my life.”

Flamewar’s lips quirked up, “I love you as well, my mate.’

Predaking nuzzled at her and gave her jaw a loving nip. “Are you alright, my dear? Did the Autobots harm you while I was locked away?”

Flamewar purred and nipped her mate in return. “They did not harm me and I made sure they did not harm the hatchlings. The worst that has happened is that I had to build a new nest on my own and the hatchlings were given boosters for their anti virals.”
“Poor hatchlings. How did they do?”

“They were fine. You should be proud.”

Predaking nuzzled her back, nibbling at her neck crest, “I am proud of you all. You are strong, my little warriress.”

Flamewar purred, and turned, frowning as she noticed that Bulkhead and Wheeljack were still there watching. Bulkhead simply looked uncomfortable, Wheeljack looked disapproving. It needled her. They should accept her choice.

“We will need to build a new nest, again.” She could not help but feel testy about that as well.

Before her mate could reply, Wheeljack butted in. “You going to be okay, Miko?”

Predaking growled, “Her name is Flamewar. My little claws.”

Flamewar nuzzled at her mate, “Always yours, my King.”

She looked over at Wheeljack and Bulkhead, “We are fine. You don’t need to hover. We and the hatchlings will be fine. Can we have more nesting material? We need a bigger one now that my mate is with us again.”

Wheeljack glared at the mech in question, “Pi---”

“Sure, Flamewar,” Bulkhead elbowed him. “We will bring you some more,” He grabbed Wheeljack’s arm, and pulled, “Come on, Jackie.”

“Are you fragging kidding me?”

Bulkhead signed, “We will be back in a while,” he practically dragged Wheeljack out of the door.

Flamewar stared, Shaking her head. She didn’t even know what to make of it. She thought they should just get it over with and have some sparklings themselves. Weird, skittish mechs. They needed something to settle them down.

They were as jumpy as the hatchlings at times, and seemed to get upset over nothing in the same way. She snuggled closer to her mate for a few more kliks before she moved and headed over to the pile of meshes. “Help me make a nest. We will need a nice big one for us and the hatchlings.”

Predaking rumbled but shifted around the hatchlings. “Come along, my hatchlings. We need to help your carrier make up our nice comfortable nest.”

At his words however the hatchlings froze, then raised their tiny hackles and their crests before hissing, “No nap! No nap! No nap!”

Flamewar’s hackles raised, “Bad sparklings. Bad! Bad sparklings do not get treats, and they DO take naps. You will help make the nest.”

The smallest of the femmes burst into tears, “No naps, carrier. None.”

“Stormbreak, behave. Your sire told you to help.”

The little femme glared at Flamewar, as if trying to match her will, and failed. “Fine.”

Predaking laughed, his hatchlings had his courage and their carrier’s attitude. It would be a pleasure
and a challenge watching them grow up.

OoOoOoOo

“How could you just leave her there with that monster?! He raped her!” Wheeljack was pacing around the small living room that he and Bulkhead’s quarter’s boasted.

Bulkhead sighed, he knew where Wheeljack was coming from but he knew there was nothing he could do. “She seems to love him, and he seems to make her happy. We tried separating them and all we got was the both of them moping and demanding to see each other. Rung even tried to get through to her!”

“I don’t care! She shouldn’t be left alone with him!”

“Wheeljack. She wants to be with him. It is her choice in the end. No matter how much we want her to chose otherwise we can’t make that kind of choice for her, not if we want her to be happy,” Bulkhead said, trying to reason with the smaller mech.

Wheeljack bared his denta and growled, “He is a monster. Miko deserves better. I can’t believe you agreed to this. We should have killed him when we had the chance.”

“She never would have forgiven us, Jackie. Be reasonable.”

“I am being reasonable. I’m the only one that is, apparently,” he glared, crossing his arms over his chestplates in a stubborn manner. “We should get back there now. Scrap knows what he is doing to her in front of the bitlets.”

“I don’t think that is a good idea. They need some time alone.”

“No they don’t! They need to be supervised at all times! Who knows what he could be doing to her!”

Bulkhead sighed, “Judging by the sparklings they have, they are probably doing what we usually do when we are alone---except when you are you like this.”

Wheeljack gave Bulkhead a frown, “Can you be serious? He could be doing anything-”

“Wheeljack, they are a couple who have been separated for eight months. I am pretty sure that is exactly what they are doing as soon as they get the sparklings down for naps.”

Wheeljack glared, “Bulkhead, I can’t understand why you are all right with this.”

“I want her to be happy. Giving her a hard time over this isn’t going to do that. She’s made up her processor. I respect that. I respect her. You need to let it go.”

Wheeljack’s armour fluffed up, “You are asking for a lot.”

“I’m not really,” Bulkhead said, moving close enough to Wheeljack to grab him and drag him close. He kissed him hard. Sometimes it was the only way to win an argument it would seem.

Wheeljack returned the kiss, glossa tangling with his own. “You are a naughty tease, Bulk.”

Bulkhead smiled, “Who said I was teasing? IF you can stop ranting for a few kliks, you would notice which door I am in front of.”

Wheeljack looked and then smiled in return, “It looks like the door to the berthroom. Why wait
though? We still have parts of our quarters to christen.”

Bulkhead gave a pleased rumble, and picked the smaller mech up before he could protest. “We haven’t, have we?” He sat down on the nearest couch, and pulled Wheeljack against his chestplates, kissing him again. He would never tire of this, and for once he hoped that Wheeljack would stick around. They were getting too old for this.

“Open up for me,” Bulkhead murmured, nuzzling Wheeljack’s audial.

Wheeljack let his panel snap open and he rumbled, “Your turn.”

Bulkhead reached down and grasped Wheeljack’s spike, giving it a few pumps lazily. “Oh? So you don’t want me to play a little first?”

Wheeljack responded by reaching down and manually opening Bulkhead’s panel. Bulkhead moaned as Wheeljack slid two fingers into his valve. “Oh, Jackie!”

“So wet, You can’t tell me you aren’t ready,” Wheeljack smirked, and squirmed in Bulkhead’s grasp. His frame was already heating up and more than ready.

Bulkhead laughed, his finger’s sliding up and down Wheeljack’s spike slowly. “No reason to hurry, Jackie. We have all sol.”

Wheeljack huffed, “Just---let me---”

“Not yet.”

Wheeljack glared, and tweaked the nodes along the rim of Bulkhead’s valve. “Yes.”

“We can take our time, you know Jackie. We aren’t revved up younglings anymore. We can go slow and make it even better.”

“Yeah but where is the fun in slow. I want you too badly to go slow!”

Wheeljack added a third finger to Bulkhead’s valve, making Bulkhead moan and briefly relax his servo around Wheeljack’s spike. Wheeljack seized his chance and slid his spike free while removing his fingers from Bulkhead’s valve.

He thrust in and moaned at how good Bulk always felt. “Always so good Bulk!”

Bulkhead moaned, his calipers cycling down and squeezing Wheeljack tight. They always had fit together perfectly, now was no different. His hips rolled up with no conscious thought, his chassis moving on auto-pilot.

“That’s it Bulk, so perfect.” Wheeljack slammed into him, over and over, setting a punishing pace, and leaving Bulkhead little choice but to chase after his own overload.

“Frag, Jackie. There’s no hurry.”

“There is always a hurry,” Wheeljack laughed, his finger’s already searching for Bulkhead’s hot spots. They wiggled in between armour plates, stroking his protoform in a way that left Bulkhead panting.

Bulkhead shifted trying to get a better angle. Wheeljack was always in such a rush, and he wished that his long time, on again off again partner was more patient in the berth. Wheeljack’s thrust stuttered a bit and he frowned down at Bulkhead. “Is something wrong?”
Bulkhead usually remained quiet but this time he sighed. “I wish you would slow down and not act like you are in a hurry every time.”

Wheeljack seemed stunned by his words and stopped thrusting entirely. “Is that what you think?”

Bulkhead squirmed under his gaze, “Yeah. It seems like you want to hurry up and get it over with. Frag, it’s not like I don’t want you too, but we aren’t new builds, and it isn’t the first time for either of us. We aren’t in a warzone, Jacky.”

Wheeljack stared.

“And scrap, I want a sparkling. I’ve wanted one forever,” Bulkhead said in a rush before he could stop to even think about it. “I want a family with you. I don’t—I don’t want you to run away again.”

Wheeljack blinked down at him, staring at him as if he didn’t know the mech underneath him. “What?”

“I think you heard me.”

“Bulk? What, why didn’t you say anything before?”

Bulkhead sighed, “Because I knew that you would get that look that you have now that means you are going to run and leave me again. Just go, I won’t try to keep you here. If you leave this time though, I won’t be waiting for you to come back. I am tired of waiting for you to decided anything. I am not going to be just your steady frag. I want more.”

Wheeljack flinched, and pulled away. “I didn’t know, Bulk.”

“Would it matter either way? You don’t want more, I can tell.” he closed his panels and scooted away from Wheeljack, all heat leaving his frame. It felt like ice was running through his energon lines.

“Bulk, I—I never said that.”

“Yah don’t have to. It’s written all over your faceplates. I’m not getting any younger, Jackie. I’m sorry. I just…I can’t.”

“Bulk wait!”

Bulkhead stood up and began to head towards the doors to the hallway. “I am going to get some fuel from the mess hall. Make up your mind. If you aren’t serious, please don’t be here when I get back. I can’t deal with you blowing hot and cold at once.”

“Bulk, come on. We can talk about this!”

Bulkhead stopped, and looked back at Wheeljack. he was shaking and he did not even realize it. “What is there to talk about? You have never wanted to settle down. You run away at the first sign of trouble. I think I’m just an easy frag for you. You don’t have to commit. You think I will just be there when you show up and crook your finger.”

Wheeljack stared, “I wouldn’t keep coming back if I thought that.”

Bulkhead huffed, “Right.”

“Bulk, please. We can talk about this. I don’t want—”
“You want. It is always about what you want. What about what I want? I want to take it slow when we interface. You are always off like a shot from a plasma cannon. Yeah, it is exciting at first but it gets boring after awhile. I want us to be an actual ‘us’. You run off whenever you feel like it, without even a good-bye to me. How am I supposed to feel? You get whatever you want and I seem to get nothing except to be your ‘facing toy.’”

Wheeljack looked like he had been slapped, he was so stunned. “Bulk, you really feel like that?”

“Yes, I feel like that. I feel used. I feel like...you only want me on your own terms and it hurts like slag.” Bulkhead’s shoulder sagged. “It hurts, Jackie. Everytime you leave me it fraggin hurts.”

“I didn’t know. I---I didn’t realize.”

Bulkhead sighed loudly, “Yeah, I know. Can’t accuse you of being the most empathetic of mechs.”

Wheeljack moved from ped to ped, “No, I guess you can’t.” He looked up at Bulkhead, frowning, “I care about you. You aren’t---I wouldn't keep coming back if I didn’t care about you.”

Bulkhead frowned, and Wheeljack fell silent for a moment, before sighing. “Bulk, I didn’t know you...you wanted something more.”

“Well, now you do. You need to think on what you want. I will be back later. If your answer is no, go see Prowl so he can assign you quarters. You can keep your stuff here until you are moved.”

With that, Bulkhead went out the door and left Wheeljack to dwell on what he had done as well as what he was going to do.

He didn’t want to lose Bulkhead, he was his lover and his best friend- they had fought countless battles together. He couldn’t just let all that go. What Bulkhead wanted though was a frightening idea to a mech who had gone his life avoiding anything that could tie him down.

He had some thinking to do.

OoOoOoOo

Bumblebee sat on one of the medical berth, swinging his legs while he watched Ratchet putter around the medbay. He seemed a lot more relaxed to Bee than he had seemed on earth. He supposed it was the surrounding. They weren’t scraping things together like before. Ratchet had ‘proper medical equipment’ as he liked to point out, and proper help as well.

“You know that isn’t a toy?” Ratchet snapped, narrowing his optics at Bumblebee.

Bee laughed, “Yeah, I noticed.” His optics fell away from Ratchet, and settled on Weld. It made his spark ache to look at the youngling. He missed his friend. Missed him terribly at times.

Weld was not ready to see him though. Things that reminded him of his human life often sent him into panic attacks that were frightening to see. Bee had seen several when Weld had first been brought aboard, it had been horrifying to know his attacks were causing his mind to remember the change he and the others had undergone.

Ratchet had asked him to stay away entirely at first but slowly he had been brought in closer a little at a time. He had high hopes that he might be able to speak to his friend again. He missed being with Raf, and he wanted to be able to spend time with Weld.

His shoulders hunched, it was all more than a bit weird being here. It seemed like everyone was
finding someone. Even Weld. Even from a distance there was no mistaking the looks First Aid gave
him, although he didn’t think that Ratchet had noticed. He didn’t think he would take it well if he
did. Ratchet was far more protective of the youngling now than he had even been of the humans.
Bee couldn’t blame him. They had all been through a lot.

Arcee was equally weird about Index. He frowned at that. He didn’t think she was going about it the
right way at all, but you couldn’t say anything to her without her grinding your gears.

“Something wrong, kid?” Ratchet asked, his attention turning back to Bumblebee.

“No. I’m fine, Doc.”

Ratchet raised a browplate, “Any issues with your vocalizer?”

“No, no issues at all! It feels like nothing ever happened to it in the first place!”

Ratchet gave his usual, ‘Hrrumph’ and looked at the datapad. “I am the medic here. I will be judge of
that!”

“Yes, Ratchet.”

“Ratchet? Do you any help with this patient?”

Bee looked over, startled by the little mech’s appearance. Ratchet however smiled but shook his
helm, “Not at the moment. Why don’t you ask Bee to say the lines on the datapad on the table?”

“Of course! I can do it!”

Bee glanced at Ratchet, this really was not necessary, but he dutifully turned to Weld anyway and
looked at the datapad. “The rain in Kaon slides down the electric plain,” he said dutifully, squinting
at it. “That doesn’t even make any sense. Ratchet, I’m fine.”

“Again, you aren’t the medic here, now are you?”

“Maybe I am,” Bee said cheekily. “I know I’m fine. My vocalizer is fine. It’s not giving off any
errors.”

“We don’t know what the side effects of the cybermater is.”

“Other than reanimating the offline? I mean, frag I should be dead. This is the least of my worries.”

Weld’s optics went wide and he moved away from Bee quickly, hiding partially behind Ratchet. “He
was dead?! Is that possible? Is he evil? Does he want to drain me of fluids?”

Bee ignored the muttered “I’d like to drain your fluids, sweetspark” that he heard from First Aid and
did his best to smile and seem non-threatening. “I would never hurt you Weld. You are my friend
and I want you to be safe and happy, alright?”

Weld stared at Bee fearfully for a breem before Ratchet moved to the side and let Bee get a good
look at Raf’s new frame. He was still small by comparison but he could see why Aid was so
attracted. Raf had small doorwings that seemed to be stuck in flutter mode and they were quite
distracting. When you added in that he was always swaying and wiggling his aft and seemingly
doing it without even knowing he was. It was alluring to say the least.

“I won’t hurt you,” Bee said, letting his field unfurl and brush against Weld’s. The little mech still did
not look convinced, and that hurt a little, but Bee hid it well.
Weld shifted, his wind aflutter. He made no move to get any closer. “You say that...”

“And I mean it, Weld. I would never intentionally harm you, promise.”

“You were dead though. Why would you come back? How is that even possible?”

Bee considered his reply, “It was the cyber matter. The same material that changed you. It saved us. We are the same though. Maybe better than before. It brought Optimus back too. You’ve met him, right?”

Weld inched closer to Ratchet, trying to hide behind him, “He’s very...big.”

“He wouldn’t harm you either, no more than Ratchet or I would.”

“Ratchet wasn’t offline,” Weld said stubbornly, and grabbed the medics hand like a safety mesh, holding on tight enough to dent.

“No, he was not. But he would not hurt you would he?”

Weld held onto Ratchet’s hand and gave Bee a wary look, but he seemed to be less frightened than before. ‘Ratchet would never hurt me. He helps me and keeps me safe.”

He knew that anyone who tried to harm the small mech would have a frag of a fight on their servos if any mech tried anything. Or tried to do anything at all with him, he thought looking over at Weld. First Aid had fallen hard and Bee was happy for his friend.

“Exactly. I will never hurt you. You are going to be safe, whether we return home or stay here.”

Weld shifted uneasily before Ratchet threw something at Bee. “Stop scaring the kid!”

Bumblebee shot Ratchet an annoyed look, “I’m not scaring him, Ratchet. Look, he’s fine. Aren’t you fine Weld?”

Weld hid his faceplates against Ratchet’s plating, his wings trembled, “I’m fine,” came the muffled reply.

“Liar,” Ratchet said. “You aren’t, and Bee should be ashamed of himself.”

“Frag, Ratch, I didn’t do anything. You can’t just hide him away forever.”

“I’m not hiding,” came Weld’s muffled voice.

Bumblebee watched them both and shook his helm. “Sure. You aren’t at all.”

Weld peeked around Ratchet and scowled at Bee, “Not hiding!”

“You’re not? You look like you are hiding to me.”

“Not hiding!” With that Weld released Ratchet’s servo and took a step forward away from Ratchet.

Bumblebee smiled at him, and held out his own hand. Weld stared at it a klik before taking it. His little hand shaking as he grasped Bumblebee’s hand, and the yellow mech pulled him forward. Bumblebee hopped off the berth and enveloped the youngling in a hug. Weld was stiff for a moment before finally relaxing against him.

“See, it’s not so bad,” Bumblebee said, rubbing the space between his doorwings until the mech
relaxed completely.

“It’s not,” Weld agreed, a startled purr wrung from him.

“Not at all. You know, I haven’t seen you at the recreation room in the evening, but if you like I could take you. I could show you where everything is and introduce you to a few mechs you might get along with.”

Ratchet was glaring at him now, and so was First Aid. Weld however looked excited at the idea. “Really? You would? I could come back here at anytime though right? I don’t like crowds.”

Bumblebee smiled, “Really. I would love to take you there, and I will bring you back here anytime you want. If you don’t feel comfortable we will leave.”

Weld’s wings fluttered happily, and a big smile inched across his faceplates, “I would really like that!”

“Good. Glad to hear it!”

“C-can we go now?” Weld asked, his optics widening.

“If you want.”

Weld looked over at Ratchet, “Can I go? Can I?”

Ratchet looked torn between saying yes or no when First Aid came over and put a servo on Ratchet’s shoulder. “If you like, I can go with them as well. I can keep an optic on Weld just in case.”

Ratchet looked appeased by the suggestion and smiled at Weld. “Alright, you can go. Just be careful.”

Weld bounced a little excitement, “I will! I’ll be the most careful!”

He was still bouncing as they walked through the hallway, and chattering as fast as Blurr. “Do a lot of mechs go there? Do you think anyone I know will be there?” His wings fluttered happily, and he grabbed First Aid’s hand, holding on tightly much to the mech’s apparent surprise.

Bumblebee raised a brow, but ignored it. He wasn’t going to say something and upset Weld, not a chance when the mech was actually relaxed in his presence. “If we are lucky someone has made treats. Prism sometimes makes them and brings them for everyone. I think it makes the twins growl. They are very possessive, but then again...sometimes Sideswipe brings out his newest high grade—I don’t think you should try that though. Ratchet would never let us bring you there again if we brought you back tipsy.”

Weld’s optics widened in alarm, “You are right, he wouldn’t. I don’t know why though. He really likes high grade. I’ve seen him drink it. He won’t ever let me even have a sip. Says it’s not good for me. But he drinks it...so I don’t know how that is right.”

Bumblebee laughed, “I don’t know either.”

Aid laughed, “Ratchet is just contrary like that. He is a firm believer of doing as he says and not a he does. He means well though, and he is right. You are too young for high grade right now. It would damage your systems, they are not able to handle the resulting energy at all.”

Weld scowled, “I am not too young! I am plenty old enough! Bee! I want some high grade when we
get to the rec room!”

Bee held up his servos, “Don’t pull me into this. I don’t want Ratchet to be after my skidplate.”

Weld pouted, that was the only word fitting the way the little mech’s lower lip quivered, and his wings drooped. His optics widened, his vents coming sharply, “But Bee...I’m not a sparkling.”

“No...you aren’t, but I’m still not helping you get highgrade,” Bee said, watching the mech. He had this feeling he would be a master at manipulating mechs that way...if he ever figured it out. Bee could just imagine those optics filling up with lubricant, one look at Aid like that and the mech would crumble. The mech was already frowning, and looking like he wanted to give in if only to make Weld smile. “You don’t want Ratchet to get mad at us, do you?”

“No,” Weld said, still in full pout mode, “He doesn’t have to know.”

Bumblebee snorted, “He would notice that. He is very concerned over your well being.”

Weld sighed, “I know. But I want to do things sometimes and he won’t let me! He says that I am too young to do them! Like trying high grade! Or flying a shuttle! I want to do a lot and he says that I am still a sparkling and that I can do that stuff when I am older. I am older! I am plenty old!”

Bumblebee sighed. “You are old enough for somethings it is true but other things you are not. Ratchet is not saying that you can’t do those things because you are merely not considered old enough. It is because the things that you want to do could hurt you. Ratchet just wants to protect you.”

Weld frowned, and looked at him sideways, “Like interfacing?”

Bumblebee sputtered, this was NOT a subject he even wanted to broach with Weld. He shook his helm.

“Exactly that, Weld. It wouldn't be a good idea. We’ve talked about this. Not now, not yet,” First Aid said.

“I have already though. I don’t see what the big deal is. I’ve---”

“Weld, I don’t think this is an appropriate topic for the hallway,” Bumblebee said, his field flared out full of embarrassment and exasperation.

“I’ve seen mechs interfacing in the hallway, I don’t see why talking about it is bad.”

Bumblebee stared, “Who?”

“Spike and Grimlock.”

First Aid grimaced, “I will be having a talk with Grimlock. He should know better that and I know it was his idea and not Spike’s if it was recently. Spike is on berthrest with him carrying such large eggs.”

“Eggs?” Weld stared at First Aid in shock. “I thought only Predacons’ like Flamewar had eggs! Do all mechs?”

Bee laughed, “No! Thank Primus, no! Most mechs have just one sparkling that is born. Only Predacons and Dinobots as well as other ‘primitive’ mechs have eggs.”

“I saw Will and Ironhide one day, and one time I walked in on Streetwise and Smokey,” Weld said,
First Aid frowned, “Weld. You are too young. Your interface protocols should not even be active yet.”

“Hot Rod’ is, and I know he does things with Springer.”

First Aid frowned, “How would you even know that?”

“Prism told me. Hot Rod told him.”

First Aid shook his helm, “Hot Rod shouldn’t be doing that either. His spark isn’t mature.”

“What do you mean?”

First Aid sighed, “If mechs who sparks are not mature interface, they risk destabilizing their sparks which as an apprentice medic you know how dangerous that is. Further more, Hot Rod isn’t in his adult frame yet, just like you. Those frames are not meant for those activities.”

Weld looked worried, “So...he could get hurt?”

First Aid nodded, “He could. He could accidently bond with the mech. Immature sparks have much less control. There are all manner of things that could go wrong.”

Weld frowned, “You said he should not even have active protocols? But he does? Why would that happen?”

First Aid vented, “It just does, unfortunately. His spark is nearly mature. Sometimes...things...happen like they did with you and they are forced online. Sometimes it’s a glitch. In Hot Rod’s case, well he’s contrary.”

“Maybe I should just get my frame upgraded. Maybe he should. It would make more sense. Then we wouldn’t have to wait.”

“Weld. Your spark isn’t ready. You know that.”

Bumblebee watched them argue, optics widening. “Pretty sure this is not the place for this conversation.”

First Aid looked over at him and noticed that several mechs were now looking at them with interest. No doubt the topic of their argument had attracted them. “I agree. We can discuss this later when we are back at the med-bay, alright Weld? This trip is for you to have fun in the recreation room and for you to socialize a bit. You have been working so hard lately.”

Weld frowned but then noticed the mechs looking at them. He looked worried and tried not hide behind Bee. “Why are they staring at me?”

“Probably because you never come out here. And...” his optics flicked to First Aid, “you have promise to be very easy on the optics when you get your final upgrade. Mechs and femmes notice that kind of thing,” He opened the door to the recreation room letting them both inside ahead of him.

Bumblebee smiled, “We are in luck, Moonracer and Blaster are sitting in the corner. Just the mechs I
wanted to introduce you to.” Bumblebee winked at Weld and lead him across the rec room.

“Hey Blaster, how is it going?”

“Hey Bee! Hi Aid! Who's the little mech?”

Bee gave Weld a little nudge forward, “This is Weld. He is Ratchet’s new apprentice as well as his ward. He is a little shy and needs to meet a few new people.”

Blaster reached a servo out to Weld. When Weld reached out to shake it, Blaster seized his servo and pressed a kiss to the back of it. Weld blushed and snatched his servo back. First Aid moved Weld behind him and glared at Blaster. “Blaster! Behave yourself! He is still a youngling!”

Blaster laughed it off, “Prickly today, Aid, aren’t you. Ya know I didn’t mean anything by it. Nice ta meet you Weld. How are you like working with old Hatchet?”

Weld’s optics widened, and he relaxed, wiggling out from behind First Aid. “I like it a lot. He’s like a creator to me. I knew him before, but I don’t remember much of him. Are you a host mech? Do you have symbiotes?”

“I am, and I do. Would you like to meet them?”

Weld nodded, “I would. You--you didn’t make them---be like that---did you?”

Blaster gave him a puzzled look, “No, they weren’t made symbiotes. They were all onlined in those frames. Why would you think that?”

Weld hesitated, and First Aid stepped in, “He had a bad experience with Soundwave. Several of Soundwave’s symbiotes were not sparked as such, instead they were forced into those frame by Soundwave. Weld it seemed was supposed to be a new symbiote.”

Blaster looked horrified at the very idea. “He what?! How could any host do that? The symbiote would reject the link-”

Bee interrupted softly, “Soundwave was able to force the link, and overrode the other mech’s personality.”

Weld cringed, “I---stop please. I don’t want to talk about it any more.”

“Oh, man, I’m sorry about that,” Blaster whispered. “It’s an aberration, not something that normally happens in my clave.”

“It’s over.” Weld said, holding on the First Aid tightly.

“Yeah, well anyway, hows the kids, Blaster? They hangin’ around here? Could Weld meet them too?”

“Yeah, sure,” Blaster said, “oh, and this is Moonracer by the way, she’s a good friend.”

The green femme gave Weld an equally shy smile, “Hello.”

“H-hi.”

“It is nice to meet you, Weld. Would you like to join us? We were getting ready to play a game. Do you know how to play Helix?”
Weld shook his helm, “No, I don’t. Is it hard?”

Moonracer smiled and gave a little laugh, “Not really. Would you like to join us? I am sure that you would learn it quickly.”

Weld nodded after a moment, and sat down with them when Moonracer scooted over, “S-sure.” He looked expectantly at First Aid and Bumblebee. He looked relieve when they both grabbed a chair and pulled it up to the table.

“Hey, I’m going to go get us some cubes, I’ll be right back. Blaster do you and Moon want one?”

Both bots nodded the affirmative. “Sure Bee,” Blaster grinned.

Bee headed over, leaving First Aid to sit next to Weld. “I’ll show you how to play and explain how everything works as we go. Does that seem okay to you?”

Weld smiled at Aid, “Thanks Aid! I am glad you and Bee brought me here. I think I like it here. Will you bring me here tomorrow?”

“You can come here whenever you like as long as you are not working.”

“Yes...but will YOU take me here?” Weld asked, his wings making that flirty motion again.

First Aid stared, “If you want me to.”

Weld’s smile widened, “I do. I really do! You know I like spending time with you.” He turned his attention to the board, “So, how does this work?”

First Aid blinked at the little mech, flushing. “Well...”

OoOoOoOo

Optimus looked at Arcee who was frowning sullenly at him from her chair. “Arcee, I want you to explain to me, why you thought it was a good idea to keep Index away from Rung? You know that sessions with Rung were needed after all the Index went through with Megatron, so why did you deny him help?”

Arcee scowled, “Rung is no use at all! All Index needs is time to adjust. He is my responsibility and I know best how to take care of him.”

“That is clearly not the case. Since he has been in your care, he has become more withdrawn and isolated to the point where he barely leaves your quarters anymore. He is supposed to be getting better, not worse.”

“I just want to keep him safe. He’s scared,” Arcee snapped, already losing her cool.

“He needs to learn to live, Arcee, not be hidden from the world. You are not doing him any favours by keeping him locked away,” Optimus continued patiently. “He will be seeing Rung from now on. He will have visitors. Thundercracker will be seeing him several times a week as well to help socialize him.”

Arcee reared back, “That Con? He’s been trying to see Index for days. He came to you, didn’t he? He wants him, I can tell, and that isn’t right. HE’S A CON!”

“He is one of us.”
Arcee trembled, “Optimus.”

“Arcee, despite what you think of him, Thundercracker has never been a Decepticon. He in fact lead most of the Seekers and Aerials that we have to the Autobots in the first place. He and his trine mate Skywarp were two of the ruling Triad of Vos before they were betrayed and then banished from their home.”

Arcee refused to look at him. “Arcee! Enough. You are behaving like a youngling being told to do something they don’t want to do. Index will be seeing Rung and Thundercracker. You will allow him to socialize. If you continue to hamper his healing, then I will have no choice but to remove him from your care.”

Arcee looked up, real fear in her face, “You can’t do that. Somewhere in there...Jack...I already lost him once. Please don’t. Please. I failed him once already.”

Optimus vented, “I know you hurt, but he is not that boy any longer. You need to allow him to learn to be who he is now. He needs to find himself, Arcee.”

She ducked her head, “Thundercracker wants him.”

“I have no doubt about that, but he is a gentlemech.”

“Yeah, right!”

Optimus sighed, “He has promised to wait until Index is in his final frame before he begins a formal courting. Until then, he has sworn to only seek Index’ friendship. Thundercracker has never broken his word once he has given it.”

“I still don’t trust him! He just wants to hurt him, use him! I won’t let that happen ever again!”

Optimus tilted his helm, “Arcee...he was the mech they sent in to bring Index out of the Nemesis. He has already saved his life, and I cannot doubt his sincerity. He already cares for him greatly. We discussed it at length. He...never thought he would find a love match and he thinks he has found that with Index. He is a patient mech, and I cannot help but believe he will be more so in this case. He is terrified of messing this up. If anything Index is in the best of servos with him. I have felt it in his field. That does not lie.”

Arcee glared, “I don’t care. I can’t trust him. I won’t trust him.”

“I fear you have no choice in this matter.”

Arcee flinched, “Optimus.”

“Index does not deserve to be stifled like this,” Optimus said, “He has lost much. He has lost his mother, his identity, do you not think he deserves a real chance at happiness?”

“Of course he does! But that Con is not the way!”

“As I told you before, Thundercracker is not a Decepticon. In fact, I will inform Thundercracker that since you cannot escort Index to Rung’s office for his sessions, he is requested to do it for you.”

“What?! You can’t be serious!”

“Oh, I am quite serious Arcee. If you were anyone else, I would have taken Index away from your care and given him to another. This is your final chance. Fail him again and I will find him a new
guardian.”

Arcee stared, “Optimus!”

“You have one final chance, Arcee. That is it. Do not fail this.”

Arcee vented hard, ducking her helm, “I won’t Optimus. I won’t. I will try my best. What else can I do?”

“Exactly,” Optimus agreed.

Updraft sighed as she looked at Blades. He had given up on making her go away and she took that as victory. She was slowly wearing him down and his brothers all liked her already so she was getting close! She just had to get him to let her in.

“Blades, come sit down! I want you to try this oilcake I made!”

He looked at her mulishly, “I’m not in need of fuel.”

“Sure you are. Just eat it. Tell me what you think,” she tried again, smiling.

He frowned and shook his head, “I don’t want any, really. I don’t even know why you are here.”

She pushed the plate towards him, “You don’t?”

He flushed, looking flustered. “I—I—really don’t.

His brothers laughed from where they were sitting nearby. “If he doesn’t want that oil cake, then I will! It looks delicious!”

Updraft laughed, “You can have a slice if you like. Give me a klik to get you some.”

Groove cheered and did a little dance in his seat. “Woo! Oil Cake! Aww yeah!”
Updraft laughed as she put another slice of oil cake on a plate and passed it over to Groove, “Enjoy!”

Grooves winked at her, “You know I will.” He cut into it, eating it slowly. “Awesome as always. You don’t even know what you are missing Blades.” He gave Updraft bumblepuppy optics, “You should bond with me, you know I’m better than Blades.” Blades glared across the table.

“Groove.”

“I’m all kinds of serious, I’m a hot piece of aft,” Groove said, waggling his browplates.

Updraft laughed, “Groove, you know I find you adorable.”


“Cut it out,” the rotarymech snapped, and pulled the plate to him, eating the cake Updraft had made him, glaring at his brother the whole time.

Updraft gave Groove a wink. He had been right. Blades was testy when it came to his feelings. You just had to know how to get them to come out. As soon as Blades finished the cake, Updraft hurried over and leaned in close. “So did you like it? Was it good?”
Blades grunted and looked away. “It was alright. I guess.”

Updraft smiled, in Blades-speak that meant that he had loved it.

“Good, I’m glad. I was thinking of making crystal cakes tomorrow. I could make one just for you if you would like,” She caressed one of his rotorblades, he didn’t even complain any more, just frowned… and maybe shivered a little.

“That might be okay,” he shrugged, and tried to look disinterested.

He failed terribly. Updraft hid her smile. He was an amusing mech. All prickly on the outside. She loved him for it.

He only seemed to be soft on the inside but he wasn't fooling the ones who knew him.

She looked up as Hot Spot walked in and waved to him. She got along great with all of Blades’ brothers except for Streetwise whom she had hardly seen since he had gotten bonded.

She hoped she would get the chance to know him and his bonded later, they both seemed nice, and maybe soon she would have more in common with them. She would get Blades to bond with her yet...even if she had to drag him to the Prime herself for a bonding ceremony. He was, at least, seemingly warming up to the idea.

“Well…” Updraft made a humming noise. “I had made them for you, but I didn’t think you liked them.”

Blades glared, “You know I do.”

She gave a little laugh and slid the slice over to Blades. “Sit down, Hot Spot. I’ll go get some more. Would anyone else like some?”

Both Groove and First Aid eagerly said yes at once and she laughed again, pretending to not see the way Blades was glaring at his brothers. Blades was fond of sweets and tried to pretend he didn’t. She had made several oil cakes just to make sure that she had plenty.

She went to where she had stashed the extra oil cakes and bought out a nice whole cake to the table. Once she had set it down she began to slice the cake into four equal parts and set a large slice down before each of the mechs.

They each began to greedily devour the cake, while Blades glared at his brothers while he guardedly ate his cake as well. She tried not to laugh, Blades was so adorable.

She picked up her own plate and ate it slowly. Taste was so different now from what she remembered as a human. Oil cakes tasted heavenly… she was so glad that Prism showed her how to make them. He was such a sweet mech.

“Do you like it?” she asked the mechs around the table.

“Best oil cake I’ve had in an age,” Groove crowed. “You should bond with me, baby.”

Updraft laughed, “Groove! I thought you were going after that mech… Wasn’t his name Skids?”
“Ugh, no...he finally made it official with Rung. Don't know what is sees in the skinny thing. Those browplates.” Groove winced.

Updraft snickered, “Be nice.”

Groove laughed, “That is me being nice! If I wasn’t being nice, then I would have mentioned his-”

“Groove!” She laughed and shook her finger at him in mock annoyance. “Shame, Skids is a nice mech!”

Groove smirked and returned to eating his cake gleefully. Blades she noticed was watching the two of them closely from the corner of his optics. Hee, so he did care. She loved to poke at him to make certain that she was right.

“What are your plans, Updraft? First Aid mentioned you had approached Ratchet for training? You want to be a medic?” Hot Shot asked.

“I have. I haven’t been assigned to a medic yet. I will be soon though,” Updraft beamed.

Hot Shot nodded, “Congrats then, I’m sure you will make a good medic. Don’t you think so, Blades?”

Blades glared, “Yeah. She will.”

Updraft sidled close to him, “You think so?”

He shrugged, “Yeah, I guess.”

Groove finished his cake and moved so he was right next to Updraft. She looked over at him and he took one of her servos in his, “If you ever need someone to play medic with Updraft, let me know!”

Updraft laughed at how silly Groove was being, but stopped when she heard Blades growling on her other side.

“What Blades? I am just letting this lovely femme know that my frame is ready for her whenever she asks.”

Blades growled louder, a menacing, rumbling noise, “Cut it out!”

“Hey, she’s hot, of course I want to help out,” Groove continued in an oblivious manner. “Frag, who wouldn’t want her working on you.” He gave Updraft his brightest smile.

“Shut the frag up,” Blades said, snaking his arm around Updraft, and pulling her close, “You aren’t going to...to...no. I won’t let you.” He glowered at Groove, a dangerous look in his optics.

“Blades, he’s just joking.”

“No he’s not. I see what he’s trying to do.”

“What is he trying to do, besides being nicer to Updraft than you are?”

“I can’t help it, Blades, if a lovely femme like Updraft prefers a suave mech like me over a grumpy gruff mech like you. Who wants someone so dull when they could have someone as fun as me in their berth?”
Blades’ rotors flexed in an odd way and he growled deeper, “She is never going to be in your berth Groove! She is mine!”

Hot Spot gave Blades a stern look, “She is not. She is her own femme, she does not belong to anyone.”

First Aid looked over and gave a half smile, “Well, actually Spot at the moment she belongs to me.”

Blades looked at his brother and tightened his grip, “What!?”

Updraft looked at Aid and blinked, “What do you mean, First Aid?”

Aid smiled fully, “Ratchet just assigned me as you tutor.”

Blades scowled, “I know what medics do to their apprentices. If I find out---”

“I don’t know what you are even talking about, Blades. Get your mind out of whatever gutter it fell into. That isn’t how it really goes.”

“Liar,” Blades said.

First Aid laughed, “I am not. You need to stop believing those...those pornos you saw were real. Do you really think Ratchet would do something like that with Weld? Pretty sure he wouldn't.”

“What are you talking about?” Updraft asked. She wiggled onto Blades lap, perfectly happy to be perched there.

“I can show you if you want,” Groove crowed enthusiastically. “Hold on, lemme get the vid cued up.”

Hot Spot stared, “Groove.”

The cyclebot crossed the room, turning on the vid screen.

“Groove,” Hot Spot said louder, but his brother still ignored him.

Blades tightened his grip on Updraft and pulled her tight against him. She giggled and settled in on his lap. Suddenly really tacky music began to play and she heard...moans? She looked over to see what was going an froze in shock at the image of a mech getting....

A servo covered her optics, “Don’t look! Groove! Turn that slag off! There is a lady present!”

Blades sounded so angry but Updraft didn’t care. She felt all warm and tingly at being called a ‘lady’ by Blades. He was so sweet and protective even though he didn’t like to let it show very often.

The sounds cut off abruptly and when the servo over her optics moved away she saw First Aid dragging Groove back to the table.

“That does not happen, you glitch,” First Aid said. “Do you really...ugh...I can’t believe you even put that on. I'm sorry, Updraft. Groove was dropped too many times by our creators as a sparkling. Don’t even mind him.”

“HEY!” Groove squealed, “I was not. I was just trying to be helpful.”

Blades growled, “Helpful my aft. You don’t do things like that when a femme is present. OR EVEN WHEN SHE ISN’T.”
Updraft tuned out the argument, her engine purred. Blades didn’t even seem to realize he was holding her tightly. It was wonderful.

As the brothers continued to argue around her, she looked up and studied how handsome Blades was. His brothers were handsome mechs as well but Blades was the most handsome to her.

As the argument began to cool down, Updraft felt a familiar urge. She was in the perfect spot for it too. So when Blades turned his face away from his brothers, she leaned up and pressed a soft kiss to his lips.

Blades froze and stared at her in shock but he didn’t pull away. She wrapped her arm around his neck and when she broke the kiss she rested her helm against his warm chest.

Blades stared down at her, his optics as wide as saucers, and he didn’t move, as if unsure what to do. The purr of his engine matched her own though, and Updraft’s lips curled into a pleased little smile. He felt good against her. He field felt good too, full of shock, but warmth as well, and not a little bit of wonder.

He didn’t say anything, still looking shocked kliks later as his brothers finally turned and watch him.

“You okay, Blades?” First Aid asked.

Blades’ grip on her tightened briefly before he let go a little, giving the area he had gripped a little rub as though he was checking that he hadn’t dented her. “I’m fine.”

His face had gone back to its usual surly sneer but his optics kept darting back to her over and over again. She smiled, she had liked that kiss. In fact she wanted to do it again.

She leaned up and pressed another kiss to Blades’ lips and was pleased when he kissed her back. It felt so nice! He was a good kisser.

His arms pulled her tight again, and the kiss lingered, their glossas tangling until someone around the table coughed loudly. They pulled away, both looking dazed as they looked back at Blades’ brothers and tried to figure out who exactly had interrupted them...and why.

A little needy moan escaped Updraft’s lips and, Blades was kissing her again. He was such a fast learner, not like the clumsy boys she had kissed as a human.

“Frag, you two looked hot. Gonna keep going and give us a show?”

“Groove!” Hot Spot slapped Groove in the back of the helm. “Show some respect! Leave Blades and Updraft alone.”

“Aww, come on Spot! They look so hot! Bet she would look even hotter riding his sp-”

Hot Spot slapped him again, “Groove! Show her some respect!”

Groove whined, “But Spot!”

Blades was growling and glaring at Groove while holding Updraft tight.

Updraft wiggled, “Maybe we...should go somewhere else.” She leaned in, stealing another kiss making Blade’s engine roar.

Blades looked past her, glaring at his brother’s, his gaze settled on Groove for one moment before he stood, picking up Updraft.
She let out a little squeak of surprise, and he was striding away before anyone had a chance to say anything.

OoOoOoOo

Hot Rod moaned as he bounced on Springer’s spike. It felt so good in him, spreading him so wide and perfect! “Oh, Spring! You’re big and perfect! I love your spike!”

Springer laughed and gave a small thrust up into Rod. “I know I love your valve, how you stay so tight when we frag so much, I don’t know!”

Hot Rod clenched around the spike inside him, tightening around it even more as he bounced up and down, riding the spike so that it hit all the right nodes in him. He was so close!

Springer roared and grabbed his hips, pulling him down tight and giving a couple of thrust before he overloaded, the rush of fluids enough to trigger Hot Rod’s own overload.

Hot Rod sagged against him, panting. His vents opened as wide as they could, sucking in cool air. “Frag, that was amazing.” Hot Rod looked up and gave Springer a silly little grin.

“Always is, Roddi. Don’t think I will ever get tired of pounding into that tight little aft.”

Hot Rod giggled, wiggling. “Well...yeah. I was thinking though...”

Springer raised a browplate, “Oh? About what?”

“Well...that...mech that came on with Prime. Ultra Magnus. He’s kinda hot. He’s all stern. Don’t you think it would...”

Springer snorted, “Roddi. I know where you are going with this.”

“You do?”

“Yep, you want to ride his spike. I don’t mind as long as I get to watch.”

Hot Rod beamed. “Sure! That would make it even hotter! Me riding that spike, you know it has to be huge! You watching me, maybe telling me how to ride it.”

“Mmm, that sounds amazing!”

“I love when you order me around in the berth!”

Springer purred, “I know you do. How do you think we should go about it though? He’s not very...approachable.”

Hot Rod hummed, and nibbled at Springer’s jaw as he considered the problem. “Perhaps I could just sneak into his berth. Show him what he’s missing.”

“Could make him mad.”

“Pffft...who would get mad if they woke up with my tight little valve around them?”

Springer shook his helm, “I could think of a few bots.”

“Name one.”
Springer snickered, “Prowl, Jazz, Prism, the twins, Ironhide, Chromia---”

“Okay, I get the picture.”

“So, you have a plan that might actually work?”

Hot Rod frowned, “I’ll think of something. Just you wait. I am going to get to ride on that spike!”

A few sols later saw Springer picking the lock on the door to Ultra Magnus’ quarters. “I still say this is a bad idea!”

“You have no sense of adventure!” Hot Rod winked, “Come on. It can’t be that hard. I used to get into your room all the time.”

“I wanted you in there.”

“Pffft...he will want us there. I know what I am doing.”

The lock snapped open, And they stepped inside the dark room.

Carefully they made their way through the darkened room into the berthroom. Luckily most quarters had the same layout so it was not as hard as it could have been. When they peeked into the berthroom, Ultra Magnus lay asleep on his berth beneath a plain mesh.

Hot Rod moved forward and carefully moved the mesh to the side. He knelt next to Ultra Magnus and began to lightly rub at his interfacing panel. It didn’t take much before the panel snapped back and bared his interfacing components.

Hot Rod stared, even with the spike still recessed he could tell that Ultra would be the thickest mech he had ever seen. He leaned over and gave a little lap of the very tip where it peaked out and smirked when the spike began to pressurize. He hummed against the tip, making a pleased sound when it fully pressurized, hitting the back of his intake. He swallowed it down, moaning at the feel of his intake being stretched so wide. It felt nice, but he knew it would feel even better around his valve. He was already wet and clenching. More than ready for it.

He looked back, smiling at Springer, and moved up Ultra Magnus’ frame. He was such a big mech in every way. Hot Rod’s legs splayed wide as he straddle the mechs hips and slowly lowered himself onto that big spike.

He moaned as he slid down, his wet valve making the huge spike slide right in. It felt so good.

Springer sat down on the berth and rumbled softly. “You look so good like that! Take it all the way down!”

Hot Rod squirmed and worked himself down, Ultra Magnus was so huge! He was finally able to take it all the in and sat on the mech’s pelvis as he shuddered at how full he felt. It was amazing. Every little shift of movement he made caused his valve nodes to crackle to charge. He began to work the spike in and out, riding it faster as he adjusted to the stretch.

Hot Rod missed Magnus’ optics cracking up and watching him. He did not miss the mech’s hands settling on his hip, gripping him almost hard enough to dent. He squealed as Ultra Magnus rolled them over and he found himself being pounded into the berth. The mech looked mad, menacing.

Springer started to get up, maybe to pull Magnus off of Hot Rod, but the look Ultra Magnus gave him froze him in his tracks. “Sit back down. NOW.”
Springer’s optics widened, and he found himself sinking back down before his processor even registered it. Ultra Magnus gave him a stern glare that made it clear that he was to stay there. Hot Rod cried out as Ultra Magnus pounded into him hard, bringing him to overload and pounding him through it into another. Finally Hot Rod slipped into recharge, too exhausted to do anything else.

Once Hot Rod went limp, Ultra Magnus slid out of his valve, his huge spike still stiff and ready. Ultra Magnus turned to Springer and grabbed him, knocking him flat on the berth. “It seems that certain mechs need to be punished.”

Springer struggled to get back up, “What the frag---”

“Stay down,” Magnus growled.

Springer stared up at him in shock, his optic widened when Ultra Magnus reached down and found the manual release, bearing his interface equipment. Ultra reached into his subspace and pulled out something Springer didn’t recognize at first. When he did recognize the spikecap he squeaked, the most undignified of noises, and tried to scramble away.

“I’m not a valve mech,” Springer shouted.

“You will be, and you will like it,” Ultra said grimly, easily sliding it into place and locking it there.

Springer tried to squirm away but even with a hook for one servo Ultra Magnus had a tight grip on him. Before he could get away, he squealed as that thick spike thrust into his valve. He whimpered as Ultra Magnus worked it deep inside him until it was fully seated and only then paused. “You like that don’t you? And you claimed to not be a valve mech.”

Before Springer could reply, Ultra began to thrust, building speed until Springer was crying out as he was forced through one overload and then another. Everything finally went dark and he fell in recharge as his frame shuddered through another overload.

When he woke up he looked around blearily and tried to sit up, only to find himself unable to do so. He looked over and saw Hot Rod next to him. Judging by the way he felt he could assume that they were both restrained the same way.

There was a spreader bar at their knee joints and they were attached to restraints that bound their arms behind their back.

Slag.

“-ime, I intend to deal with their punishment myself. I am certain. Thank you, Prime.”

Ultra Magnus walked around them, optics narrowed. “Do you realize the severity of your offence? You forced your way into my room. Took advantage of my frame without my consent. I could have you court martialed, Springer, and I could have YOU locked up in the brig until you are as old as Kup, Hot Rod.”

Hot Rod whimpered, “I’m sorry. Please. I’m sorry.”

“I don’t think you are,” Ultra Magnus growled. “But I am a fair mech. I will give you a choice. I can turn you over to Prowl, and we will never talk of this again. He will not know the details of your offence. Or...” He reached out, caressing Hot Rod’s aft, “You can stay and take what punishment I dole out.”

Hot Rod whimpered again, struggling against his bonds.
“Well, what will it be?”

Springer looked over at Hot Rod and the younger mech gave a sort of shrug. “We’ll take your punishment.”

Ultra Magnus smiled and Springer felt a shiver down his back strut. “Good, I am going to do this. You and Hot Rod may even enjoy this as well. Naughty mechs need to be punished after all.”

Hot Rod shifted in his bonds and did his usual ‘I am so adorable and just a youngling look’ that he liked to try and use to get out trouble. Ultra Magnus just laughed, “You can make that face all you like, mech. You are still in trouble.”

Ultra walked behind Springer and Springer squeaked as he felt Ultra slid the tip of his hook into his valve. The metal was cold and he had had no idea that he was still bare. “Since Hot Rod seems to be the eager one, he gets to watch for now.”

To his shame he felt his valve start to become wet, the lubricant slowly dripping out. It was a relief when Ultra Magnus removed the cold metal and moved away, but Springer could not see what Ultra magnus was retrieving from the other side of the room.

His spark clenched when he heard the mech return. He didn’t know what to expect. The first hit to his aft received a startled yelp. It didn’t hurt...not exactly, but the metal heated up quickly, and he could not help but flinch. Ultra Magnus was unpredictable, not hitting on the same spot in a row.

After a while the heat turned into a tingle, and then an insistent sting which made his valve clench down hard, and the lubricant gather faster. He knew his legs were slick with it.

He didn’t know what was wrong with him. He shouldn’t be lubricating like this! It wasn’t right! Sure he got revved up when he was fighting but most mechs did, he thought it was just from getting his pump going so fast. Perhaps not.

After awhile, Ultra Magnus stopped spanking him and put his servo on his aft. “I think you are ready now.”

Ready now? For what?

His unspoken question was answered when Ultra Magnus thrust into his leaking valve and seated himself in one go. It was delicious and painful at the same time and the heady mix nearly made him overload on the spot.

Somehow he did not, his frame felt as though it were on fire. His fans roared loudly in the silence...and then...then Ultra Magnus moved. Springer shrieked underneath him, and the shriek became a whimper as overload overtook him. Magnus used him through it, pounding into him without slowing his pace.

Hot Rod watched, his optics wide, and full of shock. It was easily the hottest thing he had ever seen. He knew he was dripping just from watching it. Magnus just...kept going.

Springer moaned as he was pounded into, it felt far better than it should have! Magnus was filling him and his valve seemed unable to get enough, clinging to it and trying to draw it in deeper. “For a mech who claimed not to like in the valve, Springer, you have a very slutty valve. Look how it swallows my spike so easily. It is better to be honest, you see?”

Springer tried to respond but all that came out was another moan. Ultra laughed, “Mechs like you and the pretty mech beside you need discipline, someone to be in control, to bring you the most
pleasure. If you two do a good enough job taking your punishment, I just might keep you as my pets.”

Springer pressed his faceplates into the berth, and clenched the mesh. Oh, Primus. He wanted that. He wanted this mech to make him feel this way. It was new, and heady. He didn’t want it to stop.

His optics met Hot Rod’s. The poor little mech was panting, his fans cycled as high as they could go. He wanted it, and badly. Springer could not think of a time that red mech had ever been denied, not in interfacing anyway. Ultra Magnus was working him up into a frenzy without even touching him.

“Please,” Springer managed to whine. “I need, I need…”

“You are being punished. You are in no position to make demands,” Ultra Magnus said emphasising each word with a hard, deep thrust. Each one hit Springer’s ceiling node, and left him gasping.

Springer moaned as Ultra Magnus pounded into him over and over again. It was so strange how good this felt! He had never been a valve mech before this but all he wanted now was more!

Springer screamed when he overloaded and he could see Hot Rod shifting and whimpering as he tried to get Ultra Magnus to frag him as well. Ultra Magnus however continued to pound into Springer over and over again, pushing him through one overload and into another.

Only when Springer finally slumped forward in recharge did Ultra Magnus stop fragging him. By that point Hot Rod was leaking down his legs and whimpering with need. “Please! Please frag me! Please!”

Ultra Magnus watched him, “No, not yet. You have not proven that you DESERVE a reward.” His optics narrowed, “Clean me off.”

Hot Rod moaned. Ultra Magnus did not seem to be willing to help him move over the way. He wiggled, rolling over onto his back, and after a few kliks he managed to scoot to the edge of the berth. His balance was precarious with his hands tied behind his back.

He looked up at the large bot and whimpered as he managed to lower his mouth to the tip.

“You are going to have to do better than that. You don’t deserve a spiking with such a poor showing.”

Hot Rod whimpered and wiggled forward so he could take more of the spike into his mouth. He was determined to get spiked by Ultra Magnus again. The mech was an interfacing god and knew how to use his huge spike in ways that made Hot Rod melt inside.

Hot Rod leaned over and slid the thick spike into his mouth, it tasted so good and stretched his throat perfectly. He hummed happily, swallowing it down until his lips brushed against Ultra Magnus’ housing. It felt amazing.

His glossa rubbed against the nodes, traced the ridges until he finally elicited a moan from the mech above him. His spark pounded. it was the most satisfying noise he had ever heard in his short life.

Ultra Magus rumbled with pleasure, and petted his helm encouragingly. “Yes, very good.”

Hot Rod moan, soaking up the encouragement. He wanted to hear more. He needed to hear more. He single-mindedly began to work on Ultra Magnus’ spike. Perfect.

Hot Rod used every trick he could think of to try and please Ultra Magnus, flicking the tip of his
glossa along the spike and clenching his intake around it as well. Ultra didn’t seem too impressed though, since he didn’t make any further sounds. He needed the praise now, wanted to be told he was doing well otherwise he was failing!

“Is that the best you can do? I’ll have to train you better, if you remain my pet.”

Hot Rod whimpered. He had never been...criticized in such a manner. Springer was always happy with him. He always praised and appreciated his effort.

Ultra Magnus stared down at him, scowling, “Are you going to cry little bot? Perhaps you should stop right there. I will not tolerate such behavior. You claim you are not a sparkling...act like it.”

Hot Rod flinched, and stopped what he was doing, looking up at Ultra Magnus in shock. He pulled away, “I’m not a s-sparkling. I’m an adult. I—I—”

“Then act like it, Hot Rod. Take your punishment and stop snivelling.”

Hot Rod flinched at the cruel words from Ultra Magnus and he bent back over the spike as he felt the tears leaking from his optics. He did his best, bobbing on the spike and adding as much suction as he could.

“Shh, shhh, don’t cry little one.”

Hot Rod didn’t reply and just did his best to work the spike in his intake better to try and please the mech. He had never had to work for his fraggings before and didn’t think he liked it.

Tears kept trickling down his cheeks. His chest felt so tight. It hurt. He didn’t like feeling like this. This was difficult. He couldn’t tell if Ultra Magnus even liked what he was doing. The mech stopped snapping at him though, and continued to murmur encouragingly and petted his helm. That felt nice.

He wanted to please Ultra Magnus so badly.

It seemed to take forever, but finally the hot fluid hit the back of his intake. He swallowed it down eagerly, careful not to miss a drop.

By this time, Springer had woken up from his stupor and he glared at Ultra Magnus when he saw the tears running down Hot Rod’s face. “What did you do to him?! Hot Rod, are you okay? Did he hurt you?”

Hot Rod looked at Springer and felt more tears running down his faceplates, Ultra was going to tell Springer how bad he was, he just knew it. He was terrible in the berth and Springer had just been humoring him. He was going to leave him now, and get fragged by Ultra Magnus.

“Sssshhhh,” Ultra Magnus untied Hot Rod, and hugged him close, letting him cry against his plating.

Hot Rod only cried harder, he buried his face against Ultra Magnus, and was not able to look at Springer. “I’m a horrible frag, he’s going to leeeave me.”

Springer stared. What? “You are an awesome frag, Roddi. What in...” he struggled against the bonds and glared at Ultra Magnus. “What the frag?”

“I am. I’m horrible. You---you are going to leave me for him.”

Ultra Magnus sighed, “No one is going to leave anyone.” He pulled a mesh out of his subspace and wiped at Hot Rod’s cheekplating. “You tried very hard, that is commendable, Hot Rod. You are a
very good mech.”

Hot Rod just continued to cry and Springer glared at Ultra Magnus even harder, “What did you do?”

“Shh, relax little one. You are doing so well, I think you have earned your reward.”

Ultra Magnus turned Hot Rod so he was on his back and his helm was close to Springer’s. Springer bent over and gave him a kiss, glossas tangling together. “Are you okay, sweetspark?”

Hot Rod vented softly, looking unsure up until the moment Ultra lifted his hips up and began to slowly and languidly press into him. He mewed, and reached for Springer again. He pulled their lips together, kissing Springer again. “Oh...oh...that...”

“Such a good little mech,” Ultra said, still taking his time. He pulled all the way out before pressing in again. “Is this what you want?”

Hot Rod moaned, “Yes, please. Please...”

“Good little mechs get rewarded. You are going to be a good little mech from now on, right?”

Hot Rod moaned, “Yes! Yes! I’ll be good! So good! Please! More!”

Ultra Magnus continued the slow pace, sliding in and out of Hot Rod with an almost lazy pace. “You feel so good, pet. So nice and tight for me.”

Hot Rod kissed Springer, but made a pleased rev at his praise.

“So eager. You were made for this, weren’t you?”

Hot Rod’s engine gave a louder rev. He was. He was made just for this. Springer’s mouth was warm against his own. Their kisses turned as languid as Ultra Magnus’ pace.

“So beautiful. You will be the best of pets. You just need a gentle hand,” Ultra said. Charge crackled across his plating arcing over Hot Rod’s.

Hot Rod mewed as Ultra slowly rocked in and out of him while he was snuggled against Springer. He was a good mech! He was!
Jazz smiled and looked down as Blue lay on the floor coloring on his datapad. He had said that he wanted to help welcome his new sibling by coloring pictures for the nursery. So Prowl had found sparkling appropriate images and uploaded them on Blue’s pad for him to color.

Blue was such a good spark, he was so lucky. Bluestreak looked up at him, and gave him a little wave. his blue optics sparkling. So precious. Blue coloured carefully. Far more carefully than he usually did that sort of thing.

“‘Tor?” Bluestreak chirped. “Loff you.”

“I love you too, bitty. Very much.”

Bluestreak nodded, “Pretties?” He held the datapad up proudly.

“It’s beautiful, sweetling.”

“Pretty for spark’ing! Spark’ing now?”

“No, sweetling, the sparkling isn’t coming now. Soon though. Are you excited?”

“Yus! New spark’ing to pway with!”

Jazz smiled, and bent down as best as he could. It was awkward these days. The sparkling was due any sol. It shifted inside of him, stretching, and humming along the bond. It was a happy little thing.

“I’m sure you’ll love each other very much,” Jazz said, and kissed Bluestreak on the top of his helm.

“Meet new spark’ing now, pwease ‘Tor. Pwease!”

“Soon enough, I’m sure.”

Bluestreak heaved a sigh and looked up doing a wonderful impression of bumblepuppy optics, “Pwease, ‘Tor.”

“Sorry, little blue. That is not up to me, it’s up to yer new sibling. They seem happy to stay in here for the moment.”

Jazz gave his distended abdomen a rub and smiled as he felt the sparkling inside shift. To his shocked surprise, Blue frowned at his abdomen and gave it a smack. “Bad spark’ing! Out! Out! Come out now!”

Jazz grunted, surprised at how much it hurt, and the sparkling’s answering kick did not feel any better, “Bluestreak, bad! Very bad! You do not—” Jazz frowned, in looked down in surprise at the wash of liquid that splashed to the floor at his feet. He stood frozen, staring at Bluestreak. “Frag.”


Jazz froze, his processor felt like it was going to glitch for one long minute, right up until the first contraction hit. It nearly buckled his knees, but by some miracle he stayed upright.

::Prowl...I think you need to come home now. Please. Right now::
::Jazz? What is wrong? Is it the sparkling?::

Jazz gritted his dente as another contraction rocked through him. ::I think Bluestreak just scolded the sparkling into being born now::

::What? Jazz you aren't making sense! What is going on?::

::I am in labor! That is what is going on!::

There was a long pause on the other end. ::I am getting First Aid. We will be there momentarily::

::Hurry. Please. It hurts::

::I know, sweetspark. Just hold on::

::I don't think you understand. Bluestreak bopped my on my tank, and then....frag....and then he cursed. I need you here now. NOW::

::Calm down, love::

::I AM CALM! I NEED YOU HERE NOW!:: Jazz stood in the puddle, shoulders hunched. He was afraid to sit down. As fast as that was going it could start...he didn’t even want to think about it. Bluestreak was staring at him though, and looked scared.

“’Tor...mad’ah mess. Messy puddle,” Bluestreak said, taking a step away. “Papa’ll be mad. No like mess.”

Blue frowned at the mess and then bounced away. Jazz vented trying to remain calm and slowly moved towards one of the chairs in the living room. He needed to sit before he fell on his faceplates and terrified his sparkling.

Blue returned, several of the absorbent towels from the washrack in his arms. He plopped several of them down and began to smoosh it around with his peds and then beamed over at Jazz, “All c’ean, ‘Tor! Mess all c’ean!”

“G-good job, Baby Blue. Su-such a good helper.”

Bluestreak bounced on his peds, “I is ‘elper!” He stopped and looked at Jazz, “’Tor ‘ick?”

“No, ahm not sick, B-baby. Jus’ restin’.”

“’Tor looks ‘ick. Papa ‘elp?”

“Soon baby, He’ll be here soon, or ah’ll kick im.”

“No ‘Tor! Bad! Bad! No kick Papa!”

Jazz stared. His bitty was as bossy as Prowl was. “Sure baby. Ah’ll be good.” He winced as a contraction rocked through his frame. It hurt far worse than he remembered it hurting when he had Bluestreak.

Bluestreak squinted his optics and looked at him as if he did not believe what Jazz was saying.

“I t’ink ’Tor fib! Tor fibbing?”

“No, baby. I’m not fibbing. I am not sick. Your papa should be here any klik now.”
Where was Prowl and First Aid? He needed them now!
::Prowl? Where are you?! This bitty isn’t wanting to wait!::

::Almost there now, Jazz. Hang on just a little while longer:::

Jazz growled, his body clenching in another contraction. He dug his fingers into the arm of the chair and tried not to scream. He didn’t want to scare Bluestreak. He only half succeeded, and loud whine escaped his vocalizer, it trailed off into a whimper.

::Can’t wait much longer. Get your aft over here!::

He would have continued on, but the door slid open, and Prowl came in, with First Aid trailing behind him with a portable med berth. “Can you get up?” First Aid asked, move close and plugging in a medical pad.

Jazz gritted his denta, “Ah don’t frakin’ know.”

First Aid nodded to Prowl who got on Jazz’s other side and helped First Aid maneuver him over to the berth. Somehow they got him on it, but Jazz looked less than happy.

“It hurts,” he moaned, curling in on himself.

Prowl was instantly by his side, “I know it does, Jazz. Try to bear through it. You are almost done. Our sparkling is almost here. Soon you can hold them in your arms.”

“Sire? What wrong with ‘Tor? Tor okay?”

Both mechs were chagrined to realize that they had forgotten that their sparkling was still there. “I’m okay baby Blue. Your sibling is just ready to come out now.”

“Spark’ing? New spark’ing? Where?”

“It will be here soon,” Prowl said, “In the meantime your Uncle Smokey is on his way to get you.” Prowl picked Bluestreak up, and followed First Aid as he guided the med berth towards the medbay.

“I have a pain blocker to give you as soon as we get into the meday,” First Aid said, “I need to get you settled in the room before. It will be hard to move you otherwise.”

Jazz just whimpered in reply. “Please.”

“Almost there. Hang tight. We need to get you prepped.”

“Papa, PAPA! Wha’s wrong wit ‘Tor? Wha’s wrong!?!?!?” Bluestreak hollered.

“Come on Blue. Why don’t you come with me?” Smokescreen said as he walked up.

Blue latched onto the table and held fast! “No! No! Need stay wit’ Papa and Tor!”

Smokescreen sighed, “Papa and ‘Tor are busy right now little mech. They are helping your sibling being created. Why don’t we check on the nursery and make sure it is ready, okay?”

Blue looked at his with wide optics, he wasn’t sure what to do. He needed to make sure ‘Tor and Papa were okay but Uncle Smokey needed his help too! What was he supposed to do?

He finally let go of the table and let Smokescreen pick him up, “Nurs’ry? Fix tings for spark’in?”
“Yes, we can do that, and maybe we could go to the rec room and get you a snack. Would you like that?”

Bluestreak’s lower lip quivered, ‘But ‘Tor. Hurt!”

“He’ll be fine. I promise,” Smokescreen said, already heading towards the door. “It’s going to be okay. I promise. Has Uncle smokey ever lied to you?”

Bluestreak’s optics widened, “No, Un’ca Smokey.”

“That is what I thought, squirt.”

Blue frowned at his Uncle Smokescreen and looked back over at his Papa, ‘Tor and Aid. “‘Tor okay?”

“Yes, your creator is fine. Now let’s go get the nursery ready for your sibling. You can help me put fresh meshes on the crib and then we can hang up your pictures you have been coloring. Then we can get you a snack as well as a cube of sparking grade to get ready for your sibling too.”

Blue bounced in excitement. “I can help! My pretties go up?! Yay!”

Smokescreen grinned, “Yes, your pretties will go up.” He hugged Bluestreak. Smokescreen hummed, he loved his little nephew, and could not wait to have a few of his own. It was...an exciting thought.

“Un’ca Smokey make pretties?”

“I sure will kiddo. We will make the nursery the best nursery ever. Right?”

“‘Ight, Un’ca Smokey.”

“That’s what I thought.”

OoOoOoOo

Verity stared down at the crystal in her hands. She had no idea why she had to give Percy this stupid thing in order to even request that he consider accepting her courting. Which was confusing as hell! She had to give a gift to even get him to think about letting her court him? Not even to ask if he would, but if he would /think// about if he would?

This was so stupid! And complicated!

Trust Percy to want so much stupidity! How could so smart a mech be so slow?

“Miss Verity?” Perceptor said with an air of formality. “To what do I owe this visit?”

She opticed him, the daft thing knew very well why she was here, but she decided to play along. “I--I have a gift for you,” she said, moving from ped to ped and generally felt stupid standing there with said present.

Perceptor positively beamed, “Come in then. You said you have a gift? What sort of gift?”

Verity stared, “Ah...well...um...I was hoping that, you know.”

Percy just stared at her, waiting for her to finish her sentence. She hated him so much for making her do this. At the same time, she loved him so much. She just wished that he would make this easier on
her. “Ah, that is, would you, sort of think about um, courting, that is me courting you?”

Percy blinked a few times, before he gave a soft sigh and a small chuckle. “Yes, I will consider
allowing you to court me.”

She stared, “Ah...thank you.” It sounded rather lame. The whole thing was lame. He would only
‘consider’ it. She nodded and tried to hide her frustration. “Thank you.”

“Was there something else you needed?” Perceptor asked, seemingly ready to send her away.

“I--um---I guess not,” she frowned, and wondered for the millionth time if this was worth it. He
didn’t even seem to like her or her company. His easy dismissal just hurt.

She gave him a hurt look, and headed out of his lab. How could he treat her like this? She was so
upset right now. She needed to talk to someone.

She paused as she saw Edna heading out of her quarters. “Edna? Can I talk to you?”

“Of course, darling. What’s wrong?”

“Its the guy I like. He is being a jerk!”

The old femme nodded, and patted Verity on the shoulder, “Oh darlin’, I’m sorry to hear that.”

“I can’t even tell if he likes me. He just---it’s so upsetting,” Verity said, her shoulders falling. This
was so hard.

“Come on, let me fix you a cup of highgrade, and you tell Edna all about it.”

“Thanks,” Verity said, and let herself be led by the older bot.

After they sat down in the rec room, Edna looked at Verity expectantly, “Well? Tell me what is
wrong.”

Verity sighed, “He was very demanding, saying that I was crowding him and making him
uncomfortable. So he insists that I ‘court’ him properly but when I do, he acts like it is a bore and a
bother. I took the first step today and he acted like he couldn’t wait to get rid of me.”

“Oh my that is a problem!”

“I know! I mean, does he like me or not? What am I supposed to do? I mean, I like him but I am
getting nothing from him!”

“And you are now not sure at all that he feels the same?” Edna asked.

Verity nodded, her lower lip quivering. “He acts like he hates me. I don’t understand why he would
p-put me through this if---if---I just don’t understand.”

“Maybe you should just give it some time. Maybe he doesn’t realize he is acting that way.”

Verity frowned, “He might not. He’s...I don’t know...kinda socially awkward.”

Edna nodded sipping at her high-grade, “And maybe you should do some thinking yourself. You
know he is not going to change. You can’t expect people, or bots to change because you don’t like
their behavior.”
“I know.”

“So the real question is, if his behavior is irritating right now are you going to be able to put up with it forever? I can already see how upset you are, and while I understand it I think that you are setting yourself up for a lot of pain. He is demanding you change while he isn’t changing anything.”

Verity looked away, “I am trying to respect his culture and—”

“And while that is great, has he expressed any interest in learning about your culture? Respecting your culture? Courting you in return?”

Verity’s optics widened, “No...he hasn’t. I didn’t even think to...to demand that he court me back. It would only be fair.”

Edna nodded, “If he is unwilling to...maybe he is not worth the heart ache. You just don’t give yourself enough credit, you deserve to be happy too.”

Verity noded, hugging herself. “Maybe I should talk to him. Kinda not helping keeping it all bottled up.”

Edna smiled, “There you go.”

Verity sighed, “Thanks Edna. I think I am going to go back to my quarters and think about this. I am very confused.”

“Good idea. Take some time, organize your thoughts and then talk to him. See what he wants and expects, then explain to him what you want and expect of him.”

“Thanks Edna. Thank you for listening to me.” Verity hugged the older bot before striding off. Her processor trees still all in a jumble. She had to decide what she wanted, because she did not think she could continue on this path. She was so stressed out, so upset, and while she dearly loved Percy....she didn’t want them to end up in a bad relationship.

Maybe they just weren’t right for each other. It hurt to think of that. She wanted him, and she wanted them to be happy.

Her room was quiet when she reached it, she moved to her berth, and curled up, pulling the meshes over her. Her spark hurt.

She was so torn. She might have to give up the mech she had fallen in love with because he was an aft. She sighed, she was so confused.

She might go and see Jazz to ask what he thought of the situation. He could hopefully give her some insight into what was going on with Percy. She had no idea if what he was doing was normal or not for Percy’s culture.

“Something wrong,” Carly’s voice chirped as she walked into the room, “Why are you hiding.”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” came Verity’s muffled reply. She turned onto her side, and hid her face in the mech. Carly was the last bot in the world she wanted to talk to.

“Oh, comon, Ver. Percy troubles again?”

“Leave me alone.”

“Veeeeeer,” Carly said, walked over and pulled the meshes away from Verity. “Stop being like this. I
want to know what’s wrong.”

“Percy is…..so cold. What if that is just the way he is? I don’t think I could deal with that.”

“Oooh. Serious Ver. What happened?”

“I went to start this stupid courting thing of his and he acted like he couldn’t wait to get rid of me. It was terrible! If that is how he is usually, I don’t think I want to go through with this.”

Carly frowned, “Oh, that sucks. maybe you should talk to him. He seemed so crazy about you at first.”

Verity shrugged, “At first. Then is started to get serious and he started to act all weird.”

“Maybe you should talk to him. I don’t think moping around here is gonna help anything.”

“Probably not,” Verity said. “I should go talk to him. I’m just scared.”

“Who wouldn’t be.”

“I might go talk to Jazz about it. He gets Percy’s culture and might be able to help me understand what is going on. I just don’t get him, he blows hot and cold at the same time.”

“I can’t imagine how upsetting that must be for you. I am so sorry.”

“But your fault, Carly.”

“I know, but I still feel bad. We all want you to be happy.”

Verity nodded, “I know you do.” She vented hard, and finally stood. “I guess….I guess I will go talk to him.” She stood, shakily, and finally moved. “Thanks, Carly.”

She slipped through the door, her tank rolling as she moved towards the lab. She wasn’t even sure if Percy would still be there.

When she got there, she opened the door to see Percy still at his work bench, her gift set on a side table and apparently forgotten. She felt so upset! Why ask for the damn thing if he didn’t even want it? What was the point?

“Perceptor. I think we need to have a talk.”

“Verity, not now. I am very busy. We can discuss whatever it is later on when I am not so busy.”

She stiffened, “No. If you are so busy we don’t need to talk. I don’t know what I was thinking. You are too busy for w-whatever I thought was between us.” She didn’t know whether to yell, cry, or strike out at him.”

Perceptor frowned, “I really am busy.”

“I’m sure you are,”

“I don’t know what you are going on about,” Perceptor huffed. “You are interrupting my work.”

“That is all you have to say? That I am interrupting your work? That is it. I am done. I have tried, I have bent over backwards for you and you won’t even try to meet me halfway. Forget it Perceptor. I am done. Don’t bother to ‘think about accepting’ a courting. There won’t be one.”
She gave a growl that was part choked back sob, and spun around before rushing out the door. She was not going to let that ass see her cry.

She was almost back to her room when she heard the steps behind her. “Verity! Stop. What is the meaning of this?”

“I thought I was perfectly clear,” she snapped, her sharp words soften by the sob that escaped her lips. “Leave me alone.”

He didn’t stop following he, “I don’t understand,” he said, catching up with her as she stopped to punch the code into her door.

“Go away.”

“No. Explain yourself.”

“Get out of my room, you----you jerk. Just go away.”

She gave Percy a shove and when he was clear, keyed the door shut and locked it. As soon as she was sure that Percy couldn’t get in, she lay on her berth and sobbed. How could he do this? Edna was right, he would never change.

OoOoOoOo

Perceptor stared at the door that he had just had shut in his faceplates and blinked several times. What was going on? He had been pleased that Verity had agreed to court him, then she interrupts him while he is workings, yells at him, and calls off the courting. What was going on?

He stared at the door, trying to decide on the best course of action. This would not do. Not at all. Perhaps she had a glitch. She was a very high-strung bot and he had long suspected that she had not made it through the extinction of her species unscathed. She acted crazy sometimes, but he didn’t love her any less for it.

He knocked on the door and no one answered. She didn’t answer he comm. He was just starting to hack into the door lock when Will strolled by. He went right passed, but stopped in a few strides before he stopped and turned.

“Perceptor, what in God’s name are you doing? I don’t think Verity will appreciate you breaking her door.”

Perceptor stopped, “I have to save her. She’s sick. She came into my lab. She yelled and carried on and said I didn’t love her and then stomped off. She shoved me and locked me outside. I do NOT understand any of this, but I can only assume that she is sick and needs to visit Ratchet.”

Will stared, “What?”

Perceptor looked at the mech. Perhaps all the mechs who had been human were suffering from some kind of processor failure or degradation. “She is acting irrational! She yelled and called off our courting. She is being illogical!”

Will gave him a sad look, “Perceptor, she is mad at you. She is not sick, she is mad. Maybe try going over what you did wrong and find a way to apologize to her. Maybe get her a gift or something.”

Perceptor blinked at him, “I didn't do anything.”
“I can’t imagine she is mad for no reason. She said she was giving you a bonding gift today...you did thank you for it?”

Perceptor frowned, “She came in when I was in the middle of an experiment. I put the crystal off to the side so it wouldn’t get damaged.”

“You are always in the middle of an experiment. Are you telling me you don’t think she is worth the time to stop?”

“Of course she is. I love her. I was just busy,” he said becoming flustered.

“I’m pretty sure she doesn’t know you feel that way. Kinda sounds like she thinks you don’t care. I think you forget how young she is. She wasn’t even an adult by my culture’s standards.”

“I, but, that is, I thought that, well, it would be apparent. That I care, I mean.”

“Perceptor, when it comes to these kinds of things, even if you show that you care a lot, even all the time, it is still a good idea to say it.”

Perceptor flushed, he could feel his plating beginning to heat. He was not used to such blatant talk about his emotions. It was further compounded when Ironhide walked up and drew Will back against his chestplates. “What is wrong Will?”

Ironhide’s hands moved to settle on the gentle swell of Will’s abdominal plating. If anything Perceptor’s cheek’s flushed brighter, his field flared full of embarrassment.

“Perceptor is having...Verity issues.”

Ironhide snorted, “She throw you out of her berth.”

“I---I---IRONHIDE that isn’t something to---to talk about in the hallways,” Perceptor squawked. “I---I never. I’m a good mech.”

“That might be the problem there. She has needs, Percy.”

Perceptor flushed darker and looked away, embarrassed. “This is not right! We are in the hall! This is so inappropriate!”

“Oh relax, Percy. Now what’s the problem?”

“He and Ver had a fight. He doesn’t seem to get that he might have hurt her feelings. He didn’t even thank her for his bonding gift!”

Perceptor vented loudly, his plating shaking, “I thought she understood. I wouldn’t have accepted if I didn’t want her.”

“Frag, Percy, what was you doing? You can’t just do slag like that to a femme.”

“I---I---,” Perceptor whimpered, “I didn’t understand.”

“Obviously,” Ironhide said under his breath.

“What should I do?”

“Beg, apologize, grovel and hope she still thinks your stupid-aft is worth all of the bother.”
“Why? What did I do wrong?! I did nothing! Why is she so upset?!”

“She is upset because you did nothing. Let’s see where to start. Ah! You demanded that she court you, right? Did you ever think to court her back? Or ask what our species did? Have you tried to learn anything about her? No. No, you have no because you are an idiot.”

Perceptor gasped at the accusation. How dare they!? “I am not an idiot!”

“Then stop acting like one.”

Perceptor stared, shaken. “But---but---”

Ironhide growled, “No, you listen to me, Perceptor. You have hurt the little femme. you will fix this if you know what is good for you.”

He didn’t do nothing wrong though...did he? “Fine,” he said, wilting. “Maybe you are right.”

Ironhide nodded, “You shouldn’t cling to the past, anyway. Not enough nobles left.”

Perceptor shook and turned back to the lock, intent on opening it. He began to carefully use an algorithm that would open the door for him, based on the number of possible combinations and the most likely choices.

He smiled when the door pinged and slid open, but stepped back in shock as Verity sat up from her berth and began to scream at him to get out, and to leave her alone! She didn’t want anything to do with a mech who was obviously so repulsed by her!

He was taken aback at her words. She thought he hated her? That she repulsed him? How had she come to that erroneous conclusion?

He stepped inside, and frowned at the crying that could be heard from the common area. It hurt his spark to hear it. This should be a joyous occasion, the start of their courting, and their bonding not far off. Verity shouldn’t be crying. She should be happy.

They were right. Perceptor was a horrible mech and he hurt Verity. Not something he imagined.

“Verity,” he said, standing in the doorway. “Verity?”

The crying stopped, and Verity raised her helm, her optics were not a little mad.

“What do you want? Go back to your precious experiments! They are all you care about.”

She shifted and buried herself beneath the mesh on her berth. He felt terrible. This was nothing like the bright and vivacious femme that had flirted with him. He had turned her into this depressed and weeping figure.

Ironhide and Will were right. He was terrible.

He wrung his hands, trying to figure out what to do. He had to fix this. “Verity...I think there has been a great misunderstanding.”

Verity did not even shift.

“Verity....I love you. I’m sorry if I lead you to believe otherwise. I---I---I am so sorry. I never meant to hurt you.”
“Lies,” came Verity’s reply, muffled by the meshes.

“No they are not. I love you, and I’m—I’m a fluffhead for treating you this way.”

She snorted and laughed briefly but stayed under the meshes. “Go away. You have proven that I will always come second to you. There is nothing more to say. Just leave, it is quite clear to me now that I misjudged you.”

He was taken aback by her words, “Please, Verity. Let me make it up to you!”

She pulled the mesh away and glared, “How do you propose to do that?”

“I---I can court you in return.”

Her optics narrowed, “You discarded my gift. Why would I do that?”

His optics widened, “I did not. I put it to the side so it would not get damaged.”

“I see,” she did not sound convinced.

“So you will forgive me then?”

“I will ‘consider’ forgiving you. I think you need to leave. I really don’t like you right now. I, we can talk tomorrow. Just go away, Percy.”

Perceptor began to try and convince her, but she just shushed him and gave him a weak shove. He took a step back before he resignedly sighed and then left the room. Perhaps he should go and talk to Ironhide further, or even Chromia. She might understand why femmes were so glitched.

OoOoOoOo

Thundercracker walked through the aisles of the data storage room. He had been hoping he would run into Index. The mech was not in his room, thankfully. This was usually where he was hiding, but he was not in any of the private rooms or in any of the cubbies. It wasn’t like him to wander off, so Thundercracker could not imagine him going to the recreation room.

His optics moved over a shadow in one of the nooks and would have moved passed it had he not caught the glitter of optic light. He moved closer, quietly and stared.

Index had apparently found a small nook, less than that really, tucked between a large shelf and a part of a support strut that stuck out, creating a small space that was virtually invisible from the rest of the room. If it had not been for a chance reflection of light from his optics he would never have seen him.

Index had brought mesh pillows and berth meshes into the space and nested in them as he read his datapads.

Thundercracker watched him for a few kliks. He didn’t want to disturb the mech, not when he looked some comfortable where he was, but he also walked to talk to the mech badly. He battled with himself for a moment before finally stepping forward.

“Index? Are you well?”

The mech peeked out, “Thundercracker? Yes, I am well,” Index said, his tone as shy as it ever was. “Were you looking for me? It’s not the usual time we meet.”
"I know, but...I wanted to see you."

"Oh," Index wiggled out of the mesh, "See me for what?"

"I wanted to make sure that you were doing well and that you were feeling better. You had me, that is, a lot of people were worried."

Index flushed and looked away, looking so sweet and innocent that it stole Thundercracker’s breath away. Index was just so lovely, and so kind. It was monstrous that he had been made to suffer so horribly at the hands of a madmech.

"I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to make everyone worry."

"No! Do not apologize. It is not your fault, we worry because we care about you."

"You do?"

Thundercracker couldn’t stop his wings from fluttering. He was relieved that Index did not understand wing language. He did not want to scare the mech away, certainly not with his eagerness. "I do. Very much."

"---I like you too," Index said, completely flustered. "Do you think---I mean---I guess I should go fuel. Do you want to go with me?"

Thundercracker stared, and Index took it as a refusal. "It’s okay. you don’t have to go it you don’t want to."

"No, no! I would love- I mean, I would like to share a cube of energon with you. Perhaps we could talk about what pads you have been reading? Have you found anything really interesting of late?"

Index gave him a small but breath taking smile. "Really? Thank you! I did! I read an amazing tale! Its about an adventurer! He goes to different lands, and there is one where the people are huge compared to him! And another where there are all these crazy scientists who live in a floating city!"

"Really? That sounds fascinating indeed!"

"It is," Index said with wide optics. "I’m almost done with it...if...if you would like to read it." He flushed.

Thundercracker offered him a hand, "You are very sweet."

Index rose to his peds, and wobbled for a moment. "Oh---oh----I am?"

"Very much so," Thundercracker said, and tucked Index’s hand in the crook of his arm. "The sweetest mech I have ever met."

Index flushed more brightly, "You lie!"

"Never," Thundercracker laughed. "You are." And tempting too...but he couldn’t just tell Index that.

Index seemed to freeze as soon as they walked into the rec room, moving so he partially hidden behind Thundercracker’s wing. Thundercracker paused to let the smaller mech calm down and grant him the privacy he seemed to want. "Are you alright, Index?"

Index moved closer to him, actively hiding behind him now. "I, I didn't think there would be so many mechs in here!"
Thundercracker looked around the rec room. There were maybe a dozen mechs or so, all sitting or standing in little groups scattered around. He could tell that Index was overwhelmed though by even so small a gathering.

“We could leave if you want. Perhaps someplace more quiet,” Thundercracker said carefully.

Index clutched at him, and he thought for a moment he might agree. “No...I can’t always j-just run away.”

“I am here for you then. Let’s get our cubes.”

Index hid behind him, nearly attached to his side as they crossed the room to the dispenser.

“What would you like? Midgrade?”

“Please,” Index whispered.

Thundercracker pushed the cube into his hands.

Index took the cube gratefully and then followed Thundercracker to a fairly empty corner, where no one else was going very near to. Thundercracker made Index take the seat against the wall so Index would feel more secure. He could tell that the poor mech was very uncomfortable but he was impressed that Index was refusing to bow to his fears. “So tell me more about this adventurer you were talking about?”

Index smiled again, and Thundercracker felt his spark pulse harder at the beautiful sight. “It is very good! It is a tale from Earth that Ratchet and Optimus Prime had downloaded to their database. There are more, but I haven’t had a chance to read through them yet.”

“Oh. Do...you...do you remember some from before?” Thundercracker finally asked.

Index shook his helm, “I remember very little. Ratchet seems to think it’s because---because of the trauma. Everyone seemed to have reacted to the change differently. I---I guess I’m lucky that I was not one of the mad ones. Weld talks about them sometimes. First Aid has been looking for a cure I guess. Weld uses a lot of big words and sometimes I have no idea what he is talking about at all.”

“I know a lot of mechs like that,” Thundercracker said.

“Really?”

Thundercracker laughed, “Yes, really. My cousins...well...they are science mechs.”

“Oh. Not Skywarp though?”

“Oh, frag no.”

Index blinked in surprise at how vehement he was about that. “Why did he not become one as well?”

“Because he is so scatter-minded that he burnt down our first lab when he forgot he left a burner on. It only went down from there. Eventually he was just banned from it entirely.”

Index blinked and looked at him in shock as though he was not sure if Thundercracker was serious or not. “Really? He did that?”

“On my spark, he did. He’s...special. It’s because he warps. It takes up a lot of processing power. It isn’t that he isn’t intelligent...he’s just very...distracted.”
"Is that normal? I guess not a lot of bots can do what he can..." Index said.

"Very, very few. I would like to think that Primus blessed us, but some days it feels more like a curse," Thundercracker said.

"Oh. I’m sorry," Index said, touching Thundercracker’s shoulder.

"You have done nothing to apologize for, Index. Skywarp is my brother and I love him. I will support him as much as I can and he will allow. He is a good mech at spark with a wonderful sense of humor."

Thundercracker heard a faint popping sound that was familiar and was horrified to see his brother appear right next to Index. "You say the nicest things, TC! So this is the mech you rescued?"

"It is," Thundercracker said cautiously, frowning at Skywarp, and poking at their bond. Skywarp's side was closed, but he got a sense of mischief. That never boded well.

"So, he's the mech you've been mooning over? He's cute," Skywarp purred, wings fluttering in a flirtatious manner.

Index stared for a moment, his cheeks slowly flushed with energon and brightened to a cheery shade of red.

"Skywarp!" Thundercracker hissed, "What do you think you are doing."

"Pffft, I know how you are."

Index was staring at Skywarp in shock still, his venting increasing at an alarming rate. His entire frame was trembling and Thundercracker realized that the small mech was having an anxiety attack. ::Ratchet! Emergency! Third Floor Rec room. Index is having an attack.::

Thundercracker gingerly reached out and set a servo on Index's while giving his brother a look that quite plainly said that he was to shut up. "Index? Are you alright? Try to calm down. You are alright. No one is going to hurt you."

Index cringed, away from Skywarp, and scooted closer to Thundercracker hiding against his side.

Skywarp stared, looking confused. "What did I do?"

::Thundercracker? What is he doing? What happened?::

::Skywarp upset him. I...I don't know what to do he's really upset.::

Index shook harder, and it took Thundercracker a moment to realize the mech was sobbing silently. "Index?"

The mech looked up at him, opened his mouth but no sound came out. his shoulder hunched and he held onto Thundercracker hard enough to leave dents.

Thundercracker was beginning to feel panic rising in him as well. "Index?"

Ratchet commed him back, ::What is going on? Can he tell you what is wrong?::

Thundercracker shook his helm, ::He keeps trying to talk, but nothing is coming out. He is not making a sound at all Ratchet! What are we supposed to do?::
Index looked up at Thundercracker, his beautiful bright blue optics looked larger than ever and were full of optical lubricants that were freely running down his face.

Thundercracker cautiously put an arm around the mech, and turned himself so his wings shielded Index from Skywarp and the rest of the room. He was half afraid that the mech would pull away in fear from him, but if anything he held on more tightly.

::Just keep him as calm as you can. I'm almost there::

Index tucked his face against Thundercracker's neck, holding on like a cybernetic barnacle. his vents hitched loudly, but not as much as before.

"Thundercracker?" Ratchet said coming up behind him.

The sound of Ratchet's voice made Index cling tighter to Thundercracker. "Ratchet, he can't talk, he is shaking so hard and he is so upset! What do I do?"

Ratchet scowled, "Slag, that is not good. He hasn't had an attack this bad in a while! What triggered this?"

Thundercracker looked at Skywarp with a frown. "My brother thought warping in right next to a traumatized mech was a brilliant idea. He started freezing up right after that."

Skywarp looked affronted. "I didn't do anything to him!"

"Warp, sometimes...frag. He’s traumatised." He sighed, "You just have to be careful."

Index started to relax slowly. He made little clicks like a distressed sparkling, but finally let Ratchet get close enough to plug in and start to dismiss the errors.

"That should fix things," Ratchet finally said. "Why don’t you bring him to the medbay, Thundercracker, we can run some test just to make sure there are no other...issues."

Thundercracker nodded, Sliding out of the booth he picked up Index. The mech curled against him, and hid his face against Thundercracker’s plating.

Thundercracker felt his spark breaking, Index was so small but precious and he wanted to protect him from the rest of the universe. He was constantly amazed by the small mech who proved how strong and resilient he was. He had suffer so much but he could still be so sweet and give such sparkbreaking smiles.

"Are you feeling a bit better, Index? I’m sorry that you were so frightened."

Index clung to him, but nodded slightly. He looked up at Thundercracker with his huge optics, and Thundercracker felt his spark just melt. How could ever lose this mech?

Thundercracker had never expected to fall in love, but he could think of no other word for the way he felt about this mech. He wanted to protect him at all costs.

They finally reached the medbay, and Thundercracker was reluctant to release his hold on Index. He felt right where he was. Perfect.

“Put him down,” Ratchet said, breaking through the spell Thundercracker had been under.

“Oh...sorry,” Thundercracker said reluctantly.
Index grabbed Thundercracker’s hand, and held on tightly once he was on the exam table.

“I won’t go, Index. I promise.”

Index gave him a small smile while Ratchet began to fuss over his frame. Thundercracker watched carefully as Ratchet conducted his examination. He knew that Ratchet was one of the finest medics that Cybertron had ever produced but he still worried over Index.

“Get the frag away from him, Con Scum!”

Thundercracker turned to find Arcee glaring at him. “Hello, Arcee.” He did not move an inch, and if anything Index’s hand tightened.

“Don’t go,” Index croaked, his voice full of static.

“I won’t,” Thundercracker said, and looked back at Arcee who was staring daggers at him.

“What did he do to you, Index?”

“N-nothing,” Index said, shivering.

“Excuse me if I have a hard time believing that,” Arcee snapped.

“Well, then you have a problem, since he didn’t do anything.” Ratchet gave Arcee a flat look, as she loomed over Thundercracker, or tried to. “If you continue to scare him, Arcee then you are the one who is leaving. Thundercracker has behaved perfectly since Index had his attack.”

“And what brought on his attack? I told you we shouldn’t allow the slaggin’—”

“Arcee, Index’s attack was brought on by the fact that Skywarp decided to pop in on his brother without thinking that he might have company that didn’t appreciate having people appear right beside them like that.”

Arcee scowled, and threw up her hands. “That is exactly what I mean. Fragging Cons don’t know know to behave.”

Index quivered as her voice rose, he practically threw himself into Thundercracker’s arms. His fingers dug between the spaces in his armour, holding on tightly enough that Thundercracker didn’t dare try to pull him away.

“I think you should go,” he said quietly. “You are just exacerbating the situation.”

Arcee stared, cursed, and would have flung herself at Thundercracker had Ratchet not neatly placed himself between them. “I know you mean well, Arcee. I understand that you care for Index...but I think it would be better if you left. This is not helping Index.”

“You can’t---”

“This is my medbay. I can. If you do not leave I will have you escorted out.”

“What!? Why? I am his guardian! I have a right to be here!”

“Arcee! You only have a right to be here when you aren’t making his attack worse! Get the frag out before I comm Optimus down here to have him revoke your guardianship of Index! You have been warned about this before!”
“He’s my responsibility. Not his. Why are you letting him manipulate you, Ratchet?” her voice rose in pitch.

“No, Arcee. I’m really sorry, but he is not. You are not, and have not been acting in his best interest. I don’t let this go on,” Ratchet said gravely, already comming Prowl to have someone sent down. “It isn’t in his best interest.”

Index shook in Thundercracker’s arms, the commotion that Arcee caused making him click in distress.

Thundercracker trilled back, the purr of his engine soothing the little mech, and somewhat drowning out Arcee’s protests.

“Shh. You are safe, Index. It’s alright, you are safe. No one is going to hurt you. You are safe. Ratchet and I will not let anyone harm you.”

Index clung to him and chirped in distress but his trembling slowed down a little. Thundercracker looked down at Index, he hated seeing the little mech so frightened. He could still remember how depressed and frightened Index had been when he had rescued him from the Nemesis.

How any mech could treat a sweet mech as badly as Megatron had was beyond him. How Optimus could insist on keeping the mech alive was still beyond Thundercracker as well.

Gradually Index’s shaking let up, and his grip loosened. Index purred back at him, trilling quietly. He blinked up at Thundercracker, optics dim.

Ratchet sat back, and watched them, looking thoughtful. “Index, can you talk to me?”

Index peeked at Ratchet, seemingly unwilling to move away from Thundercracker. He clicked, drowsily and shook his helm.

“Just vent slowly then, I’ll give you a sedative soon if it doesn’t get any better.”

“Are you going to keep him here for observation?”

“For a little while. We will see if he will be going back to Arcee’s or staying here tonight.”

Index whimpered at the mention of Arcee’s name. Thundercracker would love to beat the arrogant femme for upsetting Index like this. He didn’t need to be upset even more than he already had.

“I think he had better stay here or with you and Weld. He is in no shape to deal with that femme and her issues.”

Index’s brows knitted together as he followed the conversation. He looked down at where he held Thundercracker’s hand and made a little huffing noise.

“I can’t watch you, Index,” Thundercracker said, “As much as I would like to it is not appropriate at this moment.”

Index huffed, opening his mouth, but no sound came out be clicks which only seemed to infuriate him.

He became increasingly agitated until Ratchet finally brought the sedative, and carefully injected it into Index’s main energon line. Kliks later Index began to feel the effects. He wobbled where he sat.

“Such a good mech,” Thundercracker murmured.
Ratchet put a servo on Thundercracker’s shoulder. “He is in recharge. I agree with you, Arcee is in no state to help him with his recovery. Her issues have gotten worse instead of improving. It seems that I may be gaining a new addition. Depending on Optimus’ ruling, would you be willing to help move his things to where he ends up staying?”

Thundercracker lightly traced along the little mech’s faceplates as he rested. “I would be glad to help if it makes him happy.”

Ratchet nodded not surprised by Thundercracker’s answer, “Good. He needs all of the friends he can get. I know Arcee means well, but it is hard to miss the damage she has done.”

Thundercracker nodded, “I wish things were differently. He is the least deserving of such treatment of any bot I’ve ever met.”
“I know. I saw what that monster did to him,” Ratchet said. “It is...unfortunate.”

“That is putting it mildly. I do not understand why Optimus does not have that monster removed from spark support.”

“Politics. You ruled Vos with your co-rulers, Thundercracker. You know how politics work. Try and take comfort that the mech who terrorized galaxies is currently reduced to the level of a human toaster.”

Thundercracker laughed in spite of himself. “You have a way with words, Medic Ratchet. Let me know if there is anything that I can do to help Index.”

“I will. You can be sure of that,” Ratchet said. “You will be the first bot I would ask. You at least seem to have Index’s welfare at spark. Even when it inconveniences you.”

Thundercracker frowned, “I am that obvious?”

“You are as transparent as metaliglass where Index is concerned.”

Thundercracker cracked a smile, “I guess I am at that.”

Ratchet gave him a small smile. “It is not such a bad thing. The fact that even though it is clear to some of us, you are remaining true to your promise to wait to court him after he is a full adult.”

“He is still so young, Ratchet. So young to have suffered so much. How Megatron could force himself on a mere sparkling I will never understand.”

“He was mad, completely out of his processor. He had convinced himself that Index was Orion Pax. Orion had been an adult for decavorns, and so Megatron saw no issue. Nothing like what happened with Weld. Knock Out was a sick fragger and Soundwave was the same in his own way. Oddly, Flamewar had the best treatment with her predacon. He at least never hurt her on purpose.”

Thundercracker nodded, “And the Prime feels responsible for him as well...doesn’t he?”

“They were bonded mates before the Matrix was given to Orion Pax.”

Thundercracker stared, “I did not know.”

“Not many mechs do. Orion was carrying at the time. The council...knew, but they put the Matrix in him anyway, and it extinguished the spark. I knew him...before. Orion would have been devastated. Optimus knew nothing of it though.”
“He remembers nothing? That is shocking! The Matrix erased his bond and his memories of it? As well as his carrying a spark and then losing it? How could the Council, nay how could Primus allow such a thing Ratchet?”

“I don’t know, Thundercracker. Perhaps it was thought that it would be more comforting for the new prime to not have such burden on him.”

“Did, has Optimus ever realized? About the sparkling I mean?”

“I...am not sure. I don’t even know how to approach the subject. I’m not sure it would even be a good idea.”

“What a pity, and a loss. Had the Council gone about things differently perhaps we would never have had this war,” Thundercracker said.

“I have thought that so many times,” Ratchet sighed.

“And yet...I cannot regret it.”

Thundercracker looked over at Index. “Neither can I.”

“You are a good mech, Thundercracker. I think you will do well by Index but know this: If you ever give me reason to regret trusting you with his spark, then they will never find your frame.”

Thundercracker smiled but nodded, “I would expect, and deserve nothing less. He is so sweet and kind. I could not bear it if I ever hurt him, whether on purpose or deliberately. He deserves so much better than he has gotten.”

“Not true, not anymore anyway. Now he has you after all.”

“He does. He has all of my spark, even if he does not realize it yet,” He cracked a smile, “I never thought I would turn into a romantic in my old age.”

Ratchet laughed, “You are in your prime. It’s not like you are like Kup. Mechs older than rust.”

“That he is,” Thundercracker cracked a smile.
Chapter 5

Wheeljack paced. Bulkhead was avoiding him. He had thought things would fall back into place. But they just didn’t. He didn’t leave, but he also couldn’t get Bulkhead to talk to him. He seemed very...out of sorts.

He refused to talk to him even when he had got him alone. No matter what he did, he felt like he was losing his best friend. He still wasn’t sure what to think about the ultimatum that he had been given.

He was used to roaming around, not being tied to anyone or anything. He wasn’t sure if he would be able to do what Bulkhead wanted or if he even could. Settlin down was a big commitment.

Larger than he had ever made to anyone or anything since the Wreckers, and look how that had turned out!

It was terrifying. It kept him from recharge at night. Not that he was getting much. The sofa was not a good berth to say the least, but he hadn’t ask to take his place back in Bulkhead’s berth. He was really surprised the mech hadn’t kicked him out on his skidplate.

It was a sobering thought.

What did he want? Wheeljack just didn’t know. Time was running out for him to make a choice. Bulkhead was running out of patience, Wheeljack could tell.

The fact he was even thinking about it though, hinted strongly that he had already made up his mind about what he was going to do. He would never hurt Bulkhead for the entire Universe itself.

How could he disappoint him?

He had been coming back to him for vorns now and now that he actually thought about it, he had been an aft to Bulkhead. He had waltzed in and just expected that Bulk would want a quick roll on the berth or two and then he would waltz right back out.

The real question was how Bulkhead had put up with him for long.

Wheeljack didn’t know. There were few mechs that would have put up with this. Wheeljack realized it now. It was still hard to make himself beg for forgiveness, and a future.

The thought of sparklings though...that was terrifying. They were so small. So fragile. So very breakable. How would he ever care for such a thing?

Neither he or Bulkhead were the most gentle of mechs, and the idea of the two of them with a small sparkling that would be dependant on them was enough to make his spark freeze. How would be able to even touch something like that without breaking it.

However, he had to admit he liked the idea of a miniature Bulkhead running around, with tiny katannas matching his. It was a pleasing thought indeed.

“Jackie?” Bulkhead said, startling Wheeljack out of his revelry.

“Yeah, Bulk?”

“Made up your mind yet? Cause I’m not going to wait forever.”
Wheeljack huffed, “Do you really think I would be here if I had decided otherwise? Frag, Bulk. I’m not going anywhere.”

Bulkhead nodded slowly. “Good. I was hoping...hoping you’d stay.”

“Not sure I would be a good parent. I’m not sure I can handle this,” Wheeljack said.

“You will do fine. I know it. We will be good parents and train up the toughest new mechs! We can start the Wreckers back up!”

Wheeljack gave Bulkhead an odd look, “Why don’t we start with just one, before you start dreams of empire building and breeding our own army.”

“Spoilsport! We could have fun with the making part anyway!”

Wheeljack’s lip twitched up, “We could. A lot of fun. Maybe we should start now.”

“We could,” Bulkhead purred. His fans whirled loudly as he grabbed Wheeljack’s hand and pulled him into the berthroom.

Wheeljack laughed, Bulkhead was eager, but then he had always been. His spike tried to pressurize under it’s panel clanging loudly. His own engine revved.

“Why don’t you let the little ‘jackhammer’ out to play, Jackie?”

Wheeljack moaned at Bulkhead’s words. He loved when Bulk talked dirty to him. “Oh, you have no idea how much I want to pound you with my hammer right now, Bulk.”

“Oh, I think I do. I was celibate too, remember?”

“So why don’t we clear out those cobwebs?”

Wheeljack laughed, “Cobwebs?”

Bulkhead snorted, “It’s an earth thing...yeah...well...you know.” He sprawled back on the berth, “Whatcha waiting for, Jackie?”

Wheeljack pounced on him, “Frag you are the worse kind of tease. Open up.”

Bulkhead laughed, “No, I think you are going to have to work for it this time.”

“Bulk! Com’on!” his fingers were already tracing across Bulkhead’s panel, but it remained stubbornly shut.

“Nope, you want to get it so badly you are going to have find your own way in.”

Bulkhead smirked at Wheeljack who stared at him disbelief. “So you want to play it that way do you? Well, I’m always up for a challenge.”

“Oh, I know. Too bad your taste of adventure seems to leave you pretty quickly.”

Wheeljack glared, and wiggled his way back down Bulkhead’s chassis. Bulkhead bit back a laugh as he heard Wheeljack grumbling, ‘I’ll show you.’

Bulkhead didn’t bother to stop the moan that escaped his vocal processor when Wheeljack proceeded to ‘show’ him. He had always had a talented glossa, and he didn’t fail this time either. He
lapped at the panel, laving his glossa against the seams until Bulkhead knew that lubricant was starting to seep out.

Somehow, by sheer force of will he kept the panel shut. He wasn’t going to give in that easily, not after all the stress Wheeljack had put him through. “You can do better than that.”

“So, you’re going to play tough are you? Well, there hasn’t been a fortress I couldn’t penetrate yet.”

Bulkhead had to laugh at that one. “Big talk Jackie, but it hasn’t gotten you in the gate yet.”

Wheeljack went back to lapping at Bulkhead’s panel while his servos caressed the seams that lined his thighs. Bulkhead groaned in pleasure at how good he felt under Jack’s ministrations.

Bulkhead let his helm drop back, his optics flickering with pleasure. “Yees, that’s better.” His valve clenched behind the panel. It was torturous. Heat flickered through his chassis. “Yes,” he moaned as his panel finally snapped open.

Wheeljack crowed in triumph. His glossa flicked against the exterior nodes, making Bulkhead writhe.

“Well, well, once the gates opened it seems the fortress is unguarded.” Wheeljack moved up along Bulk’s frame and drew him into a kiss.

“You haven’t conquered anything yet.”

“Oh really? Then I had better break out my battering ram.”

“Oh no. Not the battering ram.”

Wheeljack snickered, unable to keep a straight face as he claimed another kiss. “You want it, you know you want it.”

“Mmmm....maybe I do,” Bulkhead said, wiggling underneath him, impatient now. “Well?” His engine revved loudly.

Wheeljack’s panel snapped open. “Patience.”

“Pfft, you wouldn’t know the meaning of the word,” Bulkhead chuckled, wiggling encouragingly.

Wheeljack lined up his spike with Bulkhead’s valve and grinned before he thrust in with one go. “Nope. I don’t know that at all.”

Bulkhead moaned at the feeling of being spread so wide. Wheeljack had always been gifted when it came to certain parts of his frame. Wheeljack began to draw in and out, making Bulkhead moan.

They moved together, and it felt absolutely perfect. Bulkhead arched up, rolling into each thrust. “Frag, yes....I missed this.” His valve clenched tightly, rolling around the spike inside of him.

“You’re so tight,” Wheeljack said, punctuating each word with a hard thrust. “Scrap, I love you.” He nipped at Bulkhead’s sparkplates, “Open up, let me see your spark.”

Bulkhead thrashed underneath him, but finally the plates slid open bathing Wheeljack’s faceplates in the diaphanous light.

Wheeljack stared at Bulkhead’s spark in awe, it was glorious. He had never seen something so beautiful. He slowly opened his own sparkplates and bared his spark to Bulkhead. Bulkhead gasped
and arched up, lightly touching their sparks together.

Wheeljack screamed and rocked his spark against Bulkhead’s over and over, while driving his spike in and out of Bulkhead’s tight valve. “So good to me, Bulk. So good!”

Bulkhead panted underneath him, arching up into Wheeljack’s thrusts. It was too much. His spark surged and his valve clenched tightly around Wheeljack as the overload rocked through him. It felt more intense than anyone he had ever had before. It crashed through him leaving him screaming, and eventually knocked him offline.

He slumped back against the berth. It was several moments before his optics flickered back on. He moaned beneath Wheeljack’s deadweight. “Frag, Jackie?”

Wheeljack stirred, purring happily. “That was amazing. Lets do it again.”

Bulkhead laughed, “Only If I am on top this time. You are too heavy.”

Wheeljack smirked, “I would love to see you ride my spike, Bulk. You look so good like that.”

Bulkhead laughed, “I was thinking of something a bit different.”

Wheeljack laughed, “Ah, you want to capture my city? Is your battering ram up to the task?”

“Always,” Bulkhead smirked, rolling them over he caught Wheeljack’s lips in a long lingering kiss. His hands already moving down Wheeljack’s body. His fingers wiggled down, pushing into Wheeljack’s valve and scissoring them.

“Frag, in a hurry?” Wheeljack asked squirming, and canting his hips up into the touch. “I thought we were going to take it slow.”

“Change of plans,” Bulkhead smirked. “You’re so wet. I just want to bury myself in that warmth. You want that too, don’t you.”

“Mmm, yes. You always know how to make me wet, Bulk.”

Bulkhead released his spike and lined up with Wheeljack’s valve as soon as he removed his fingers. Wheeljack moaned as Bulkhead slid inside of him. Bulkhead had the thickest spike he had ever taken, and it made his nodes burn with charge at each thrust. “Mmm, so good Bulk! So, so good! Take me! Please!”

Bulkhead chuckled, thrusting in fast and hard. It was rare enough that they did this. Wheeljack normally liked to be the protagonist in their little games, but every time was still amazing. Wheeljack bordered on being painfully tight, he couldn’t even imagine the stretch. The smaller mech thrashed, yowling and pleading.

Bulkhead slowed the pace, dragging it out as long as he could. “Scream for me, Jackie.”

Wheeljack moaned at the feeling of that thick spike spreading him so wide, charge crackling along his nodes. He knew he wouldn’t be able to walk properly for a few sols after this time. Bulkhead was far too good with that fat spike of his.

“More, Bulk. More! Frag me!”

“Greedy today, aren’t you?”

“I---I need---”
“I know, I’ll take care of you,” Bulkhead purred, grinding against the ceiling nodes at the peak of Wheeljack’s valve. It was enough to finally make him scream, and scream loudly.

“Yes, frag yes,” Wheeljack shrieked, arching up.

Charge crackled along their plating, peaking and pushing the both into overload. Bulkhead rolled over, cradling the limp mech against his chestplates.

OoOoOoOo

Will pulled the meshes close to him. Edna was watching Annabelle, thankfully. As much as he loved his little munchkin he just didn’t have the energy to chase after her at that moment. The little one inside of him was demanding. If his frame wasn’t craving supplements it was craving donations of transfluid. He squirmed at the thought.

Ironhide and Chromia made sure he wanted for nothing, and were always eager to donate more transfluids. He would swear that he should be swollen to the size of a parade balloon from all the fluids that had been ‘donated’ in him.

He rubbed his bulging abdomen and sighed, it seemed so strange to be the one who was carrying the baby. Ironhide and Chromia as well as the other mechs had acted as though it was normal though, so perhaps to them it was.

Normal or not it was still a hard thing to accept that something was growing inside of him, that he had made a life with the two bots he had come to love. He wasn’t sure how he had gotten so lucky or how fate had seen to putting him where he had been. The probability of finding them...

He shook his helm, and winced as the little one in question stretched inside the gestation tank. Ironhide was of the mind that it was going to be a big mechling, and from the way it moved inside of him Will could not dispute that.

He just wished that the sparkling growing in him was out already! He felt huge and he knew he was getting out of shape! He hadn’t been allowed to train or spar for weeks! He sighed and tried to find a comfortable position. It was getting harder and harder to get comfortable at all.

He sighed with relief as the baby seemed to calm down at last and he was able to relax as well. He wanted to get him out now!

He wiggled, and frowned, his chestplates felt...odd. Odd in a bad kind of way. He reached up and touched...something wet. He lifted his fingertips and could not stop the shriek that left his vocalizer. Energon was covering his fingertips, bright and blue.

::Hide! HIDE GET IN HERE NOW! I’m dying! I’m bleeding out! Get here NOW!!!!:: He shrieked over the comm, panicking in a way that he never would of as a human.

::What’s happening? We’ll be there in a moment. Just calm down, sweetspark.::

::I’m BLEEDING!::

The door slip open and Chromia and Ironhide came running in, both mechs clearly worried about their mate.

They both rushed over to him, all in a panic. “What happened? Where are you bleeding?”

Will trembled and gestured to his chest where the energon was gleaming bright blue. Ironhide and
Chromia stared at his chest before both of them gave loud revs. He watched as they both rushed over and one stood on either side of him. “You’re not bleeding, Will.”

“I’m not? Then what the frag is this?”

Ironhide leaned over and rubbed at his chest, causing a panel to split open and a rush of fluid spilled out on his chest. “You’re leaking. Mmmm, look at you. You look delicious.”

Will looked down, “What the fuck...is that.” Energon smeared his chest, and stared back at his seemingly unhelpful mates. “Delicious....what is wrong with you.”

“It’s sparkling energon,” Chromia said, “Frag that is hot.”

“I fail to see...damn it...it’s making a mess.”

“Well...feeding pouches are rather...rare. It is pretty hot.”

Will gave him a flat look. “You have got to be kidding me? This is...ugh...”

“This is perfect.” Chromia purred as she leaned forward, looming over Will. “Why don’t Hide and I clean you up?”

Will reached out a servo, the sooner he was clean the happier he would be. To his surprise, Hide and Chromia pushed him back on the berth and began to lick the energon from his chest. “Hide! Mia! What are you-? Oooooh!”

Hide had taken a small nub into his mouth and begun to suckle it, which felt amazing!

He moaned, feeling his chassis heat up, and his valve began to lubricate. It shouldn’t feel this good.

Chromia nuzzled the other nub before taking it into her mouth and sucking on. If it felt amazing before...well he did not have the words for this. This was...he whimpered and let himself over to it.

“Yes...please,” Will whimpered, his hands reaching out and touching both of his mates, stroking them encouragingly.

Hide and Mia purred, making the nubs vibrate slightly and Will groaned at how good it felt.

Chromia chuckled, and reached down his frame to rub at his interfacing panel, which sprang open at her touch. She began to scissor her fingers in his valve, making him moan as his valve spasmed and tried to squeeze her fingers for more contact. “Please, Mia! More! More, please!”

She worked a third finger in, pumping them in and out. She hummed against the nub in answer, her fingers finding one of the exterior nodes and rubbing.

“She worked a third finger in, pumping them in and out. She hummed against the nub in answer, her fingers finding one of the exterior nodes and rubbing.

“Please. PLEASE!” he cried out, spreading his legs wide and shamelessly. He couldn't concentrate. It felt amazing. He needed MORE. “PLEASE,” he begged mindless of the words coming from his mouth.

“You beg so prettily, Will. Relax, let us take care of you. Let go! Overload for us!”

Will’s frame jolted and arched off the berth with the force of his overload. He screamed as his frame trembled while Hide and Mia continued to suck and tease his nubs. He had never felt so good!

“Such a pretty mech, Will. Such a lovely image when you overload.”

Will shivered, pleasure still thrumming through his strutless frame. “Mia,” he whimpered, Squirming as he came back to himself.
Chromia chuckled, nipping at the nub, lapping.

Will’s vents stuttered and the charge never entirely dissipated. “I need you.”

Chromia hummed, her optics flickering to Ironhide. ::Hide? Do you want our pretty mech first? Or....:: She smiled against Will’s plating. He was so fun to tease.

::I would love to see you take him, while I keep enjoying how good he tastes.::

::Mmm, he is delicious. I think I love him even more for this.:: Chromia nipped the nub she had been suckling at and smiled at the moan that Will made.

“Such a pretty moan, Will. You are too good to us! Mmm, such good energon you make as well. Our sparkling will be the strongest ever with such fluids.”

Will looked at her, his optics dim. He was probably too lost in the pleasure to comprehend. He was so delightfully sensitive. She move between his legs, her own spike pressurized when she opened her panel. Her spike nudged Will’s valve opening and it snapped him out of his trance. He rolled his hips up, impaling himself.

“Will, you little minx,” Chromia said, grabbing his hips.

“Mia, I need, I NEED IT!”

She held his hips and guided them back onto the berth. “Sh, I know. You need to be careful though. I would never forgive myself if I ended up hurting you.”

Will whined as she slid out of him and gently slid a finger in to check that nothing had torn. She sighed with relief that everything felt like it was supposed to. She looked down at his bare valve and licked her lips. Perhaps she could have a taste of something just as sweet as his sparkling energon.

He whined when she pulled out and didn’t press back inside. He felt empty. He valve clenched, rolling needily, begging to be filled, but she didn’t push back inside him. She slid down his frame. She lapped at the rim, sucking on the exterior nodes. It felt wonderful, but it wasn’t what he wanted.

“Mia, please. P-p-please. I need you.”

“You will have me, eventually, love,” Chromia promised, kissing his valve her glossa flicked inside rubbing against the nodes until the were crackling.

“Frag, that is hot,” Ironhide purred, sitting up and watching.

“Mmmm, I don’t know which is sweeter his lubricants or his sparkling grade.”

“All of him is delicious. He is so beautiful in pleasure isn’t he?”

Will mewled as Chromia continued to lick and nibble along the opening of his valve, her glossa flicking in and teasing nodes. He was going mad with the feelings that Chromia was creating in him.

A whimper escaped his vocalizer, a desperate one. “Please Mia, please. I hurt,” he moaned.

“Shhhh....don’t cry. Will.”

“Just spike him, Mia,” Hide rumbled beside her.

Chromia huffed, nibbling her way back up. “Oh, my sweet mech, what am I going to do with you?”
Chromia asked. She kissed him as she pressed inside. Will cantled his hips up, demanding more.
“Always so tight. So perfect. Such a sweet little spike slut.”

Will growled beneath her, glaring. “I am not.”

“Shh, you are perfect. Our perfect little mech. Our sweet slut.”

“Not a slut!”

“It’s a good thing. You are our slut. Just for us. So perfect and wanton for us. You are a dream come true.”

Will growled angrily, “No. I’m not.” The growl ended in a whimper.

Chromia rolled her hips sheathing herself completely. “It’s not a bad thing, Will. We love you. We’re glad you want us.”

Will moaned, “Noooo...no. I’m not.”

“Sssssshhh...it’s okay, Will. It’s okay,” Ironhide said, petting his plating. “Don’t get yourself all worked up. Chromia’s just glad we found you. We love you dearly.”

Will closed his optics, and let his be fall back to the berth. He still felt upset, but he wanted this still. His fans roared, his frame heated up, and he could feel the overload teasing at his circuits.

“We love you,” Chromia murmured, nuzzling him.”

Will moaned as he felt himself so close, “Please, Mia! Oh, please!”

Chromia laughed and kissed him. “So needy. Such a good mech.”

She began to slowly thrust into him, taking care to rub as many nodes as she could. Ironhide bent back over his feeding pouch, nipping at the node briefly before starting to suckle again.

Will’s vents stuttered. It was too much. He arched up, his vocalizer seizing up as the overload tripped through his circuits. The wash of transfluid set off waves of smaller overloads that followed the first like an echo. He clenched at Chromis, holding on tightly.

He fell back, feeling strutless, his processor still in a haze.

Ironhide never stopped drinking, and his core temperature rebounded, rising already. “Hide?”

“So good,” Ironhide purred.

OoOoOoOo

Ricochet headed down the the brig, he wasn’t sure how he drew the short rust stick, but it would seem that he had. He hated guard duty. It was worse than being sent up to the bridge for monitor duty.

The room was quiet, too quiet, and when he spotted Tracks slumped across the floor he knew something horrible had happened.

He raced over to Tracks and was thankful when he felt a sparkpulse. At least Tracks was still alive. Ricochet looked at the cells he was supposed to be guarding and then immediately commed to Prowl, “Prisoners escaping! Prisoners escaping!”
Immediately, sirens began to blare and Red Alert could heard screaming for all personnel to report to their battle stations. That they were to fight to the last mech in this epic endeavor.

Typical Red Alert melodrama. In this case though, it might be founded. “Frag, where are they?” Ricochet curse, waiting until the emergency squad came running in.

The alarms blared loudly. Inferno came rushing in with Prowl and Streetwise, “What happened?” The large red mech asked, looking around in shock.

“Not sure,” Ricochet said, no sign of them here. “Is Red going through security footage?”

“Yes,” Inferno agreed. “He’ll find them.”

“Good. Help me with Tracks. We need to get him to the med-bay. He is online but he has lost a lot of energon.”

Inferno moved over and grasped Tracks by the shoulders. “I’ll get this end Ricochet. You grab his peds and we can get him there sooner. I’ll comm Ratchet and let him know we are en-route.”

“Good thinking, Inferno.”

Ricochet hefted the mechs legs and the hurried towards the medbay as fast as they could go. Tracks groaned, and moved in their grasp.

“Wha’ ‘appened?” he asked confusion filling his tone.

“Shhhh... you were hurt,” Ricochet said.

“Lemme go,” he whined as they finally reached the medbay.

“Get him on the medberth,” Ratchet said, frowning. “Prime wants both of you to stay here and help secure the medbay.”

“Got it, Ratchet. Do you have any patients in the bay at the moment?”

Ratchet looked at Ricochet, “Yes. Jazz is in private room #3 with his sparkling. Bluestreak and Prowl are in there visiting right now.”

Ricochet stared at Ratchet. “So we have Cons on the loose, and two bitties in the bay?!”

“Pretty much,” Ratchet said grimly, “Springer and Kup are securing the sparkling creche, so you don’t have to worry about Meister.”

Ricochet's optics widened, and he wobbled on his peds. “I...are you sure? Maybe I should....”

“No. They will be safe. Help Inferno bar the doors. We should have backup in a klik or so, but in the mean time we can’t have the cons trying to break in here.”

Ricochet nodded. He didn't like it, but what choice did he have? “Sure.”

“Don’t worry,” Inferno said, patting him on the back. “It’s going to be okay.”

“What about Flare-up?”

Ricochet looked at Inferno, knowing that he and Red Alert loved their little femme to bits and pieces. “Red is keeping an optic on her with the cameras. If the Cons start moving towards the creche at all,
Verity sat down at the table with Updraft, she wanted to talk to the other femme about how her courting was going with the oddly adorable Blades as well as admiring her new altmode. Updraft had just undergone the procedure to receive her rotary altmode and wanted to show it off a bit. The rec room was fairly empty, with no one else there except for at one other table where the very sweet, and very pregnant Prism was sitting with the really shy Index mech.

She felt bad for the little mech, she had heard rumors of what had happened to the little mech. How anyone could be so cruel and insane was frightening.

She had just taken a sip of her fuel when the door opened and there was a loud boom. She jumped at turned to stare and saw a winged mech with a blaster pointed at her.

Verity stiffened, looking up in shock. Who was this? What was going on?

“What do we have here?” the winged mech purred, looking past Verity to settle on Updraft. “So kind of the Bots to leave such sweet...treats.” The mech cackled.”This is perfect.”

Verity scowled at the mech. How dare he! The words almost left her mouth and would have if Updraft had not grabbed her hand under the table and gave it a warning squeeze.

Verity watched out of the corner of her optics as Prism wrapped his arms around his middle protectively and Index seemed to shrink in on himself, shaking with fear.

Updraft shifted so she was closer to Verity as the winged mech moved towards her, her rotor blades twitching. Verity stared at the mech and his large wings that flared out as he moved closer. “No one move. We will kill you if you don’t obey.”

The door opened and two grounder mechs came in with drawn blasters as well. The winged mech pointed his blaster at Prism and Index while still staring at Updraft. “You two, get over here so I can keep an optic on you as well.”

Prism and Index trembled and huddled together as they scurried over to behind Updraft and Verity. “Are you two alright?”

Index whimpered, clinging to Prism. “Y-yes,” he whispered. His optics never left the flier, and clearly he was terrified.

Verity glared at the winged mech, barely holding back a growl. This wouldn’t do at all. ::Percy. I need help. There is...a situation in the rec room.::

::Verity? What exactly do you mean?:

::We...are being held captive.::

::Captive? Verity, I am in the middle of an very important experiment, could we play your game a bit later?:

::I am not playing! Three mechs are in the rec room with guns.::

Loud sirens began to blare and red lights activated in the ceiling. “Prisoner escape. Prisoner escape.
All personnel be aware, Decepticons have escaped from the brig.”

Verity stared at the winged mech as he began to curse at the announcement. “Frag! Steve, watch these three. Knock Out short the door. We are not letting them take us this easily. We are getting out of here whether the Autobots like it or not. Perhaps with a prize to pass the time.”

The mech grabbed Updraft and yanked her from where she had been to the side as well as a little to the rear of Verity. “Let her go!”

“I don’t think you are in a position to be giving orders,” the winged mech leered at Verity. “Grab her Steve. Lets get out of here before the Autobrats show up.”

“Sir?”

“You heard me, grab the femme. I’m sure we can find a use for them.”

“What about the other two?” Steve asked, his optics settling on Index, “Isn’t that the consort?”

Index whimpered, shrinking as far away as he could and still keep his hold on Prism.

“No. Lord Megatron had better taste than to touch that slag. Besides, I have no need with Megatron’s used up whore when I have such a tasty little treat to enjoy.”

He dragged Updraft closer against his frame and ran his glossa along her faceplates. Updraft gagged and tried to get free of the mech’s grip. The mech shoved her against the wall, denting one of her rotor blades, and pinned her wrists together. “Don’t fight me, femme. You are mine now.”

Updraft screamed, and kicked at him, but the mech didn’t budge. He only laughed which made Verity see red. She lunged after the mech, but was grabbed by Steve before she could do any damage. The mech tossed her onto the floor hard and she impacted hard enough to see stars, crying out in pain when she tried to get back up. She had definitely broken something. What, she didn’t know, but fluid began to collect beneath her.

“Verity!” Updraft cried out, and watched her friend crumble to the ground.

The winged mech kept a tight grip on Updraft and slammed her against the wall again when she tried to go to Verity’s aid. “Good job Steve. Femmes are like cyberhounds: they have to be trained to know their place.”

Updraft watched as Prism and Index huddled together fearfully, and the Steve mech seemed to loom over Verity as she lay helplessly on the floor. Updraft felt panicked at how fast everything had gone awry. ::Blades! Help!::

::Updraft? I’m busy, I am searching for the missing cons. What’s up?::

::Your cons are here! In the rec room. Verity is hurt and both Index and Prism are here too!::

::WHAT?! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?! GET OUT OF THERE!::

::I can’t! The one with wings has me pinned against a-! EEP!::

::UPDRAFT?! UPDRAFT!!?::

::BLADES HELP! HE IS TOUCHING ME! MAKE HIM STOP!::

Blade growled across the comlink and it went ominously quiet. Updraft tried to squirm away from
her captor, she was so preoccupied that she nearly missed the pounding of peds on the floor and the breaking of the door.

“Let her go, you fragger,” Blades said, leveling a blaster at the winged mech’s helm. “So help me if you don’t I will make you sorry for ever living.”

The winged mech laughed. “You hurt me, I hurt her. I could tear out her spark before you would even get near me.”

Blades was so mad he was quivering. “I’m gonna kill you.”

“You wouldn’t dare,” the wing mech said, holding Updraft close he nuzzled her neck. He groped at her, forcing back her panel. Updraft gasped and keened as the seal beneath was revealed. “What do we have here? He’s not yours at all it would appear.”

“Please, no. Please don’t,” Updraft whimpered. “Please.”

“Draft?! Are you okay?! Get away from her! Don’t touch her!”

The wing mech laughed, “I think I will keep touching her. Pretty femmes are rare but femmes with their seal still intact are even rarer.”

Blades looked stunned at the news that Updraft was still sealed, but it quickly turned into rage. “Get your filthy servos off of her!”

“Why would I do that?” Blades watched as the winged mech traced a single finger along the valve seal that was bared to his view. “She seems like a sweet pet when she is trained properly.”

Blades’ optics brightened dangerously. “She isn’t a pet. Let her go!”

The winged mech purred. One sharp claw pierced the seal making Updraft cry out loudly in pain.

“No! Let go!” Updraft panted, her struggling renewed. “Stop it! STOP IT!!!” She turned in the mech’s arms, bearing her denta. “I’ll kill you!”

“You won’t be killing anyone, little femme.”

“I will kill you!” She said,

The mech laughed. “You will be begging me for my spike before too long, and calling me Master. You will make a lovely pet, when you are tamed.”

Blades growled, and his rotors flexed and flared with rage. “Put down your weapons or I will shoot! She is not a pet! She is smart and funny and kind and amazing and brave. Get your unworthy servos off of her.”

The winged mech’s wings flared out at the insult. “Unworthy? I’ll remember that when she is chained to my berth in protoform and she is broken as my pet.”

“Never. I will never be your pet,” she yelled, twisting in his arms she clawed at him instinctively sinking her claws into gaps in his armour. They ripped at protoform and wires making the winged mech screech and abruptly let go of her.

She fell to the floor and scuttled away before he could grab her again, leaving her cowering behind a clearly enraged Blades.
“I will kill you for that,” Blades said coldly, leveling his blaster at the winged mech.

“Let’s not be too hasty,” the winged mech said, holding his hands out in front of him.

Blades growled and was about to fire when with a loud yell two blurs of red and yellow rushed in. Steve yelped as he went down hard. The blurs settled into Sideswipe and Sunstreaker, and Sunstreaker punched Steve over and over while Sideswipe rushed to Prism. He tucked Prism against him tight, and pointed his blaster at Knock Out. “Drop your weapons!”

Index rushed over to Prism and cowered against him and Sideswipe. He was eerily quiet not making a sound even though tears ran down his faceplates. The poor little mech was shaking and trembling, and did not look well at all.

Another mech with wings came in, and hurried over to Prism and Index. Index rushed over to the other mech with wings and clung to him.

“Shhh...I got you,” the blue, winged mech said, and picked Index up, cradling the mech against his chestplates. His gaze turned cold as it settled on the other winged mech, “Starscream, I thought I warned you about crossing my path again.”

Starscream cringed away, “Thundercracker, please! We should be on the same side!”

Thundercracker laughed, the sound bitter and humorless. “Ally myself with you? After all that you did in Vos and have done since? You murdered your cousin to steal his seat in the triad, along with his mate and sparkling! You betrayed our city, sold our people into slavery with Megatron!”

Starscream was looking around trying to find a way out of the room, still trying to find a way to get out this. However the arrival of Perceptor in the doorway made the Seeker freeze.

Perceptor looked around the room, a long sniper rifle in his servos looking for a certain femme. He frowned when he didn’t see her among the mechs standing around the room. He looked again and froze in horror at the sight of an unmoving frame lying on the floor in a puddle of fluids.

Perceptor raised the rifle, taking a single shot before he let it fall to the floor and ran to Verity. Starscream crumpled to the floor, the hole through his spark chamber smoking even as Perceptor pulled a first aid kit from his subspace and began to work on Verity.

The rest of the rooms occupants froze in shock, and stared at the greying frame of the Seeker.

“Verity? Can you hear me?” Perceptor asked as he worked on sealing the femme’s wounds.

Verity’s optics flickered on, far dimmer than normal. “Percy?”

“I’m here. I will fix you.”

Verity ex-vented softly, “I don’t feel right.”

Perceptor continued his repairs, “Try not to move, Verity. You are injured and may exacerbate your wounds. Allow me to finish my repairs and transport you to the med-bay.”

Verity laughed weakly, but began to cough up energon that ran down her faceplates. Perceptor frowned worriedly and gently picked her up, cradling her to his chest protectively. “I will take Verity to the medics. A security team is on their way.”

Blades nodded to Perceptor as the scientist walked out carrying the injured femme to the med-bay.
Updraft still was behind him, keeping him between her and the rest of the room as she cried softly. He wished he could sweep her up and keep her safe in his arms.

The red Decepticon glared at him sourly though, and there was no way he was putting his blaster down until he knew the con was locked up again. Blades’ spark pounded behind his chestplates. he couldn't allow this to happen again. He couldn't lose Updraft. He loved her. He just had not realized how much until he had seen that stupid Seeker groping at her. She was his femme.

Updraft shivered behind him, her field finally relaxing as the backup streamed into the room. As soon as he could he turned, taking her into his arms and held her tightly.

“I was so scared. I though---I thought---and Verity---” she whimpered, hiding her face against his armour.

“Shh, shhh, you’re safe. I’ve got you. He will never touch you again. No one else will ever touch you again. “ He soothingly stroked her helm, his spark aching at each small sob that Updraft let out.

He bent and carefully picked her up. “Let’s get you to the med-bay. I want the medics to make sure that slagger didn’t hurt you.”

Updraft clung to him and buried her face in his shoulder. She still was crying but her sobs were softer. “They all saw me! They saw him, and he- he...”

“He is gone. He can’t hurt you. No one will ever hurt you.”

“He can’t...” Updraft agreed, but did not lessen her grip. “I---I still feel dirty.”

“You aren’t though, love. I promise. No one thinks less of you for that.”

“You don’t know that,” she said.

“I do though. You are strong and courageous. I love you.”

Updraft looked up at him, her faceplates still wet, “I love you too.”

OoOoOoOo


“I’m fine, Sides. Just shaken up,” Prism said, trying to put up a brave front.

::You had us so worried, Princess. We thought that we were going to lose you!::

::I know. I was so afraid too. I thought I would never you two again! Never get to see our sparklings::

“Are they doing okay? Those fraggers didn’t hurt our bitties did they?” Sunstreaker looked at Prism assessingly. He frowned and ran a servo across Prism’s abdomen where it bulged with their sparklings within.

Prism smiled and set his servo atop of Sunstreaker’s. “We are all fine. Nothing is wro-oooooh!”

“What’s wrong?” Sunstreaker said, optics widening. “What happened?”

“I---oooooohhh---ohhhh---it hurts!” Prism cried out, writhing in Sideswipe’s grasp. “I---I think I’m
having them now. We need to get to the medbay!"

“What?” Sunstreaker asked, confused.

Prism whimpered, “Medbay, NOW!”

“Prism?”

“Frag you heard me, the twins are emerging! Take me to the medbay, NOW!”

Sideswipe’s optics widened in alarm. Their Prism never did this. He picked the mech up, carrying him hurriedly out of the room.

Sunstreaker raced along their side as they hurried to the med-bay. Prism was moaning and crying in Sideswipe’s arms. He cried out and Sideswipe ran even faster, sliding into the med-bay. He rushed Prism to a berth and set him down carefully. “First Aid, we need you right now! Prism is having the twins! Get over here! The Sparklings are coming!”

First Aid looked up at the three of them in alarm. “What?! He isn’t due for his separation for another two decacycles!”

He rushed over, and then turned to his assistants. “Fix-it! Patches! Get over here! Sparkling emergence for premature twins!”

Prism whimpered, and grabbed ahold of Sideswipe’s hand. He squeezed it tight enough to make the metal grown in protest and for Sideswipe to wince.

“It hurts!” he wailed, “Why does it hurt so much!?!?!”

“Shhhhh...it will be okay,” Sunstreaker said, which only earned him a glare.

“Stop lying to me. It will not be okay! It won’t. IT HURTS!”

First Aid finally came over, while Fix-it prepped the area, “I’m going to give you an injection, it will ease the pain a bit.” He stuck the needle in Prism’s main line, which earned him an angry hiss.

“What are you doing?” Prism asked, trying to squirm away from the pain.

“Give it a moment, it will help relax you and make the emergence easier.”

“Why is he still hurting so much, Aid? Do something! Make him more comfortable!”

“I am doing all that I can, Sunstreaker! If you and your twin can’t calm down, I will have my brothers escort you out and you can wait in the hall until this is done.”

Sunstreaker stared, and then glowered, “I’ll calm down if you fix him. Why is it hurting so much?”

“It is part of it, I am afraid,” First Aid said. “The transformation is always a painful one, but it will ease once the sparklings are out.” He sat the berth up and helped Prism get comfortable, as comfortable as he could be, and started an energon drip.

“This isn’t normal though....” Sideswipe said.

“No, but Patches is setting up a incubator berth for the twins. They will most likely be staying in the infirmary for a while.”
“What? Why? Why can’t we take our sparklings home?!”

“They are emerging prematurely, Sunstreaker. They will need special care until we are certain that they will be able to function properly. Once we are sure they are ready, then you can take the home.”

Prism moaned and thrashed on the berth, drawing the twins to his side as each took a servo in theirs. “We are here, Princess. We have you, you are doing so well.”

“Shut your pit-slagging mouth you fragger! This is all you two’s fragging fault! I am going to rip your spikes out and shove them down the other’s throats! Primus damn you both!”

The twins both turned, and stared in shock. “Princess?” Sideswipe finally managed.

“I’m going to offline you both! This is all your fault,” he howled, backstrut boughing with the pain. “All your fault,” he whimpered. “Stupid, jerky, slaggers. I hate you. You...you are going to pay.”

First Aid sighed, “Don’t take it personally, he doesn’t know what he is saying.”

“I fragging well do to. I’m going to rip off their spikes and make them go through this,” Prism yelled.

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker stared, not entirely knowing what to make of this. This was not their sweet Princess.

Prism growled and squeezed their servos hard enough to make the struts in their servos begin to squeak. The twins were surprised by how strong Prism was since he often seemed so dainty and delicate.

Prism screamed and squeezed harder still as his frame shook and trembled. First Aid stroked Prism’s helm, “It’s okay, Prism. The blocker should kick in any klik now.”

Prism was about to scream at Aid when his frame sagged and he sighed in relief.

“Good, good, are you still with me?” First Aid asked, getting Prism’s attention. it was clear that the mech was having troubles concentrating on him. “Okay, we are going to get you up,” he pushed the berth into a semi reclining position, “and it looks like the transformation isn’t going to initiate right, so I’m going to help it along, it’s going to feel weird, but it will be over soon.”

Prism nodded, looking like he was half in recharge.

“You got to stay awake for me, though. Can you do that?”

“Yeah, can---” Prism slurred.

“You are fine, you don’t have to try and talk. Just relax and let me help your transformation along, alright?”


“Yes, Sunstreaker has helmfins. There, you are all ready now. Try to avoid moving too much, you are in the proper position for the sparklings to emerge.”


“Yes, Prism, just stay right there, it’s starting. It’s going to...tickle a bit. There you go. It’s moving along smoothly. Just lay there.”
“Treat?”

“What?” First Aid asked, distracted.

“Made treats...’fore. Need one.”

“Pretty sure you don’t,” Sideswipe said, optics just as wide. He looked as though he wasn’t sure if this was any better than the yelling.

“Shuts.”

“What?”

“Shuts up, Swipe.”

Sunstreaker laughed, “Yeah, ‘Swipe’ Shut up.”

Prism looked over at Sunstreaker and reached up trying to grab his helm fins again. “Fin! Fins sunny! Sunny, fins!”

Sunstreaker laughed and bent over, letting Prism grab his helm fins. Prism began to pet the helm fins and giggle. “Fins. Fins. Sunny fins.”

“Yes, I have fins. You are kind of cute like this.”

Prism giggled, and let his helm fall back. “Charge. ‘cargo now. Sparklin’ visit laters.”

“I’m afraid not,” First Aid said, giving the bot a tiny shake, not enough to dislodge him. “I need you awake for this. The first one will be out soon. The final...there we go. The gestation tank is exposed.”

Sideswipe made a face. It looked...odd. “Are you sure it’s...”

“Positive,” First Aid said, reaching into Prism’s chassis, and was disconnecting the first twin from what looked like a series of wires and tubes. He was already halfway disconnected, and squirming about. “Get a mesh, now.”

The twin’s fields both blanched at the energon welling up. They were battle scared warrior, but the site of this mech’s lifeblood was enough to turn both of their tanks.

“I don’t have all day,” First Aid said giving his best Ratchet impression.

Sunstreaker was frozen at the sight of the fluids, so Sideswipe went and got a mesh. First Aid took the mesh and wrapped the sparkling in the mesh. “Patch, check this sparkling and put it in the incubator berth.”

Sideswipe wanted to go with their sparkling but he knew there was another one on the way. he needed to stay with this sparkling and then he would go with them. Sunstreaker would stay with Prism and then they would be able to watch over their family.

They would keep them safe.

“Nearly got the second one out, Prism,” First Aid said, “Then we will get you put back together, and you can recharge. That sounds good doesn’t it?”

“Charge,” Prism agreed, “Need----need----things.”
First Aid nodded, “I’m sure you do. There,” he said lifting out the second sparkling. He didn’t have to ask for the mesh this time, Sunstreaker had it ready, and swathed the sparkling in it. “Go on to the incubator, Patch will help you get him hooked in.”

Sunstreaker frowned as he left Prism’s side. “I’ll be back in a moment.”

First Aid began to manually transform Prism’s parts back into place. It took longer than the whole emergence, but once Sunstreaker did make his way back the medic was cleaning off Prism’s chassis and tucking a mesh around him. The mech on the berth was already deep in recharge.

“It’s going to be a joor before he comes back online. It takes a while for the meds to burn out of his system.”

“Will he be okay? The sparklings are so early, and he was in so much pain earlier.”

“He will be fine. The sparklings are being examined now. We will do all we can to make sure that they are able to go home as soon as we can.”

Sunstreaker sighed with relief and settled down next to the berth that Prism was lying on. “Thank you, Aid. You saved our family.”

“It is my pleasure, Sunstreaker.”

Sunstreaker looked down at Prism, still scared in spite of himself. He knew he would not feel any better until they all left the medbay. It was terrifying seeing the mech he loved in so much pain.

“I’ll be back to check in on him in a bit. Get some rest if you can.”

Sunstreaker didn’t think that would be possible. Not with the way his spark was racing under his chest plates. “Okay, Aid.”

The medic finally left the room, no doubt to check on the newborn twins. Sunstreaker really hoped they would be okay. They were so tiny. As tiny as a symbiote’s sparkling. It was terrifying.

He had had no idea that their sparklings would be so small when they emerged. He had expected that their sparklings would have been much larger and rambunctious just like he and Sideswipe were or perhaps one of them being a dainty mech like Prism was.

The idea of the a dainty mech like Prism in miniature was delightful. They would spoil such a mech rusty.

Instead, they had two tiny little...sparklings. Sunstreaker was shocked as he realized that they had not been told what the sparkings were. “Aid? Are they mechs or femmes?”

“You have two adorable little mechs.”

Sunstreaker nodded, “Thank you...for everything.”

First Aid nodded, “You know I will help in any way I can.”

“We appreciate it.”

“I won’t lie to you. The next few decacycles are not going to be easy. They are...very early. I have faith they will make it through, but it is going to be a struggle.”

Sunstreaker absorbed the news and nodded. Prism would be devastated...they all would if something
happened to the sparklings. “Thank you. I’m glad you at least tell the truth.”

“They are stable. Don’t worry too much. We will need each of you to spend time with them though to strengthen the creator bond. Spark exposure will help as well.”

“Whatever they need, they will get. They will lack for nothing. We will all do whatever it take to make sure that our sparklings are healthy.”

First Aid smiled, “That is good. They are little right now, but they seem strong. I am sure they will be just fine.”

Sunstreaker looked down at Prism, he already knew that Prism would not be happy to have to leave their bitties in the med-bay. Neither he or Sideswipe were happy either but he was quite sure that Prism would take it harder.

“I’m sure they will be,” Sunstreaker agreed. it did not make it any easier.

First Aid left, leaving Sunstreaker in the quiet room with Prism. The mech looked peaceful. There was none of the rage from before.

“Sunny?” Sideswipe said, standing in the door. “They are both sleeping. I can’t believe they are so very small.”

“Mmm...I know they are tiny. Aid said they will have to stay here for a while. They are too small for us to take them to our rooms. I don’t think Prism’s going to take them well at all.”

“No, he won’t,” Sideswipe agreed, settling himself beside his brother.
Index clung to Thundercracker long after everyone else had left the recreation room. He held on tightly, afraid that Thundercracker would disappear and he would find himself back with those bad mechs.

“Index? You can let go now. it’s okay. You are safe.”

“No. No! I can’t! No, Teecee.”

“Shhh, you are safe. They can’t hurt you anymore. No one will hurt you ever again if I can prevent it.”

Index clung to him, and began to softly sob. “I was so scared. They knew who I was! They knew I was his whore! I don’t want to go back! I want to stay here with you!”

“You are not a whore! I will kill any mech who dares to say such a thing! You are a sweet, wonderful mech.”

“Don’t make me leave. Please. I want to stay with you, you keep me safe.”

Thundercracker frowned, feeling conflicted. He wanted to protect Index. He wanted to more than anything, but keeping him dependant was not an answer either. “Sweetspark…”

“Please.” Index clicked in distress.

Thundercracker sighed, petting the small mech’s plating. “You know I care about you a great deal. I will protect you as best as I can. I can promise you that.”

Index vented hard on the verge of a full blown panic attack.

Thundercracker was unsure of what to do. He loved Index, but he wouldn’t try to pressure him into anything. Index needed to become his own mech, and not try to be whatever he thought he was supposed to be.

Index had done that enough when he had been forced to do so to save his life.

Index was a brave and amazing mech, but he had to learn that about himself. The smaller mech was still no injured and he needed to fully develop into the mech that Thundercracker knew was inside of him.

“Index, you are strong. You...got through this, but I can’t be a crutch for you. You would end up hating me for that and...I couldn't bear it.”

Index blinked up at him, frowned, and looked like he was on the verge of saying something. “I don’t want to be a burden to you.”

Thundercracker snorted, “You aren’t. You never would be, but I would like you to be my partner, my equal. I think you could be that. I know you could.”

Index vented, thinking it over. He seemed to calm further. “I love you,” he said forlornly. “I don’t know what to do w-with myself though. I’m so scared all the time. I only feel safe when I’m with you.”
Thundercracker gave Index a hug. “I love you as well. I know that you are so frightened and the entire world seems so scary. I also know that you are more than capable of overcoming this and showing the whole world how wonderful you are.”

Index looked up at Thundercracker, “You really think that?”

“I know it is true, Index. You are so lovely and perfect.”

Index looked away, “I-I’m not. I-I-I...I’m dirty. They all know what HE did to me.”

“There is nothing wrong with you. You are not. You are wonderful, beautiful, smart, and...I love you dearly. I would hope that would mean something.”

Index was quiet. It was hard for him to believe. “I guess.”

“I know, you are a remarkable mech. I am honored that I get to see you grow and develop into a fine young mech.”

Index blushed and looked away. “You are just saying that.”

“I am not. You are a remarkable and wonderful mech.”

Index stared, “I---I don’t know what to say.”

“You don’t have to say anything. We will work through your problems, and then well we will see what happens then,” Thundercracker said.

“What do you mean?”

Thundercracker tilted his helm, “I just want you to be sure.”

“I am sure. It’s not like I would change my mind. I love you. I love you so much it hurts. You make me f-forget about him. I wish I was a better mech for you. You deserve someone strong and good.”

“You are strong and good. In fact, you are better than I deserve. You are so sweet and gentle too, that I am in awe of you. How any mech could be as perfect as you is just amazing. I am honored that you have chosen me.”

“I am so glad I have you.”

“You...do realize that we need to wait, don’t you?”

Index heaved a sigh, “I know...I’m...I’m not ready. I want to be...but I need more time. Time to forget. I guess. Rung says it will get better. Somedays I think he’s right.” He sighed again. “Can---can I stay though. I just want you to hold me. Please.”

Thundercracker hugged Index tightly, and considered it. “It’s not...strictly proper.”

“I know but...does that really matter anymore?”

“It does if we are to be accepted by the others and I will not be the cause of you being ostracized by the rest of the crew. We will have to play by the rules of society.”

“I don’t want to. I want to stay with you.”

“I know sweetspark.” Thundercracker pressed a kiss against the top of Index’s helm. “I don’t want
you to...come to regret us.”

“I would never---”

“Never is a very, very long time, my love.”

Index’s optics widened, “It is. I---I’m sorry.”

“Shhh....it’s fine. We will...work things out eventually,” Thundercracker said cautiously.

“How long will we have to wait?”

“I am not sure. It will depend on how old the medics determine you to be. I believe that you
shouldn’t be more than two or three vorns from your majority.”

“A vorn? But that is so long! I don’t think I can’t wait that long. I want to be with you now.”

“I know. I wish the same thing. We will ask the medics how long you will need before you are a
mature mech, how does that sound?”

Index shook, “I----I guess that is better than not knowing.” His field refracted, pulling in tightly
against his armor. “Maybe it will be soon.”

“We shall see then,” he said, hugging Index again. “It is something to look forward to, then. I want
to make you happy, and give you the best courting.”

“I’d rather have you.”

Thundercracker smiled, “So direct. You are very different from the Seeker’s I grew up with.”

Index didn’t even know how to answer that. He only remembered pieces and bits of his life before.

“I, I’m sorry. I’ll try to be less direct and start being more diplomatic.”

“No, no! I love you just the way that you are.”

“But, I am so...awkward. I can’t seem to do anything right. I will just embarrass you.”

“You will not. I would be honored to teach you about my culture if you are so worried.”

“You would? Really?”

“Of course. I would have my wings removed for you, Index.”

“Don’t say that, Teecee,” Index said, looking positively horrified. “Just---don’t---don’t say that.”

“Love, I did not mean to upset you---”

“I---It’s not that. It’s just...your wings are beautiful, and I know how much you love flying. I can feel
it. It would crush you to lose that.”

“It would be worth it,” Thundercracker said solemnly. “I love you that much.”

“I love you as well, Thundercracker. You are too good to me.”

“You deserve to be pampered like a princess. You are so precious to me.”
Index blushed and looked down, but Thundercracker reached out and tilted Index’s helm back up, “You are the loveliest mech I have seen, and I love you so much.”

OoOoOoOo

Perceptor sat in the waiting area as the medics worked on Verity. It wasn’t his choice. He had hovered, tried to help, and finally First Aid, of all mechs, had shoved him from the room barring the door.

He wrung his hands in worry. What if she didn’t make it? What if---he couldn't even think about it. It was unconscionable.

He had just found her, he couldn’t lose her like this. It..it was not allowed! He was so happy when he had met her, and he was not going to lose her now. Not like this.

When he had found her, lying so still and weak on the floor he was certain his spark had stopped. She had seemed so small. She had always seemed so much bigger. He could not think of continuing on without her. She completed him.

The thought of Verity being gone: her vivacity, her exuberance, her vitality...well it was unthinkable.

He moped in the hallways until First Air finally came out to retrieve him, “We’ve patched her up, but she isn’t coming out of stasis. I have never seen anything like it. I’m sorry, Perceptor.”

Perceptor froze, “What do you mean? She...what is wrong?”

“We do not know. it will take some studying. Their physiology varies slightly from our own...just as the Predacons and Seekers do. The Earthlings...well...none of the treatments we would usually use is working. I’m sorry Perceptor.”

“Stop saying that,” Perceptor snapped, shaking. “Stop saying that. She will be fine. She will be!”

First Aid made a face, “We hope that she will. There are no guarantees.”

Perceptor wasn’t listening though, he brushed past First Aid and pulled a seat up beside Verity. The new weld marks made him cringe.

Still, she looked like she was merely in recharge. He could pretend that was the case.

It was still unnatural to see Verity lying so still. She was always so busy, bustling around, a constant blur of motion. She always was up to something, usually something for him now that he thought about it. She was always bringing him fuel, making sure he recharged as well as just visiting with a few goodies and treats.

She was so thoughtful and he had taken it for granted.

“Oh Verity. I am a fool. How could I take you for granted? Why did I never tell you how dear you are to me?”

He took her limp servo in his and pressed a soft kiss on it.

She didn’t wake, or even stir. It make made Perceptor cringe inside. He didn’t want it to be like this. He needed to see her shining optics, or her ready smile. He needed HER.

“Verity, you much wake up. I need you.”
She made no sound but the even vents as air was cycled through her systems.

“Please Verity. Please. I need you.”

Nothing.

OoOoOoOo

Blades rubbed at Updraft’s backplates, marvelling at how beautiful she looked. He had frozen when he saw her in the rec room, she was so beautiful! He had felt his energon boil in rage when he had realized that that foul seeker had been touching his Updraft and dented her beautiful new rotor blades.

He had been supposed to join her in a joor for fuel, and he suspected that he was supposed to have been surprised with her new appearance then. Instead he had been forced to defend his femme’s honor and fight that slagging seeker to get him to take his servos off of her!

Now he was holding his femme and letting her sob brokenly against his chestplates while they waited for his brother or one of the other medics to come and help her. Apparently Prism had gone into emergence early and all medics were needed to try and save the sparklings. He wished they would slagging hurry though.

“I’ll protect you. It’s going to be okay.”

She shivered, holding on to him more tightly. “Blades don’t leave me. Please. Stay with me. I don’t want to be alone. Please. Please.”

“Shhh...I won’t leave you,” Blades promised, and frowned. He did not like seeing his femme hurting and cowed like this. She was still shaking, if anything that made him more angry. If the Seeker wasn’t dead he would kill him all over again.

What a monster.

How dare he lay a filthy servo on Blade’s femme! Updraft was….perfect!

She was so sweet, and kind with always something nice to say. It made his spark hurt to look back and remember how close he had been to losing her twice now: once when he had rescued her on the planet when she had nearly been stolen by those glitched eradicons and now when that slagging seeker had tried to….tried to….he didn’t even want to think about what had almost happened.

He sighed and pressed a soft kiss to Updraft’s helm, she had been lovely before but now, now she was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. She appeared to be a rotary wing alt like he was but much much smaller, she was dainty and delicate and oh so gorgeous.

“You look so beautiful, love. You wanted to show me this, didn’t you?” He pet her rotors, a calming motion that he knew would make him feel better.

“I did,” she vented raggedly, too tired to cry any longer. “Oh, Blades. I feel so...dirty. It’s horrible.”

“I will take you to the washracks as soon as the medics look you over. I promise.” That seemed to calm her. She settled down and settled against him.

“Thank you. You are too good for me.”

“I’m not really,” he said, pressing a kiss against her helm.
She sniffed, optics tearing up again, “But you are. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I love you so much.”

Blades sighed, “I love you too, sweetspark. Frag...I’m sorry I...just...love you.”

“You make it sound like it’s an affliction,” she laughed through the tears.

“Maybe it is, but I don’t mind.”

Updraft smiled up at him. It was shaky smile, and her optics were still filled with tears but she was so brave, trying to reassure him when she was the one who had been so violated. He felt his rotors flex in rage as he remembered the way she had cried out when that slagging seeker had put a hole in her valve seal.

How dare he!?

Updraft was a lady and deserved to be treated like one!

Fix-it finally came into the room, “We can see her now.”

Blades didn’t waste a moment in scooping Updraft up and hurriedly following the small mech into one of the private rooms in the medbay. He carefully sat Updraft onto the medberth and paced fitfully as Fix-it jacked into Updraft with a medpad. and began to carefully straighten her rotor blade.

“Doesn’t look like he did any physical damage, aside from the obvious. I think...it might be a good idea to schedule you a meeting with Rung.”

“I’m already seeing him,” Updraft interrupted.

Fix-it paused and then looked at something on his medpad. “I will make a note for him in your file. Please remain here, I will have Rung come here now to speak with you. Please, make yourselves comfortable.”

Fix-it walked back out of the door and let it close behind him. Blades stared at the mech, frowning hard. He wanted his brother here. There had to be something that the medics could do besides telling him that his Updraft needed to see Rung.

::Aid? Are you free?::

::Blades, I am busy. Prism is having these sparkings far too soon. Contact another medic.::

::Updraft was hurt. I need a medic I can trust.::

::Fix-it is a good medic,:: First Aid said.

::Aid! That monster punctured her seal!::

There was a long pause, ::As traumatising as that is it is not a life threatening injury. Seals are meant to be broken.::

Blades’ rotors quivered, ::How can you say that!?!::

::It cannot be undone, Blades. I can’t fix that. I have my hands full at the moment. Verity was gravely injured. I can’t get her to come out of stasis. I’m sorry but I just...can’t fix Updraft.::

::What do you mean?! Of course you can fix her! Come here and work your medic mumbo jumbo so
she is better!:

::It, it doesn’t work like that Blades. I am sending Groove and Streetwise to you. They will be able to help you.::

Blades sounded hesitant and unsure when he replied, ::You are sure you can’t help?::

::I am sorry Blades.::

::I suppose. Tell Groove and Street to hurry. She is real upset. I hate when she cries.::

::I know you do. It’s going to be okay, Blades...it really will be.::

Blades frowned, he didn’t understand why First Aid just wouldn’t help. ::She’s upset. Are you sure--::

::I’m positive.:: First Aid said, signing on the other end of their bond.

“Blades? You in here?” Streetwise asked, peeking around the corner.

Updraft squeaked in shock and burrowed tight against Blades’ chestplates. “Blades?”

“Shh, it is okay. It is just two of my brothers. You remember Streetwise, don’t you? He won’t hurt you. You are safe.”

“Streetwise? Yes, I-I think I remember him. He is the one with the doorwings?”

“Yes, that is him.”

Streetwise came forward and smiled, “Hello again, my dear. I had no idea that you would look so beautiful as a rotary femme. You are a vision of loveliness!”

Updraft looked at the mech with suspicion. “Blades? Are you sure he is safe?”

Blades smiled, “Streetwise is always safe. Groove is a bit suspicious at times but otherwise my brothers are safe and they will always protect you if I cannot.”

Updraft relaxed, trusting Blades at his word. “Can we go now? I want to go to the washrack. I don’t want to be here.”

“Rung is on his way,” Streetwise said, “Aid thinks you should talk to him before you go.”

Updraft squirmed, she did not want to talk to the thin mech, clearly. “I just want to wash up. Please.”

Blades frowned, “Soon. I will help you clean up, and...I will stay with you if you want me to.”

Updraft’s optics brightened, and he little rotors quivered, “You will?”

“I-if you want me to,” Blades said uneasily. He didn’t like the idea of leaving her alone. He didn’t think she would hurt herself, but there was a niggling worry. he was scared for her.

“I do,” she said quickly. “Please.”

“Of course. I would do anything for you, Updraft. You have nothing to worry about while I am with you. I won’t let anyone hurt you like that again!”

Updraft leaned against Blades chestplates, “Thank you, Blades. You always make me feel safe.”
Streetwise watched the two of them closely. ::Blades? What happened?::

::One of the slagging cons got a hold of her.::

::And?::

Blades didn’t even know how to answer that. ::He was going to---going to---rape her. He broke through part of her seal.:: His tanks rolled.

::What?!!?!?!:: Streetwise and Groove said simultaneously over their bond.

::He’s dead. Perceptor shot him through the spark. It was crazy.::

::Frag. Is she going to be okay?:: Groove asked.

::I dunno. I really don’t know. It scared her badly. And...I just...I feel sick about it.::

Groove moved to next to Blades and put a servo on his shoulder. ::I am so sorry, Blades. Is there anything we can do?::

::C-could you get a damp cloth so she can clean herself up a bit? I- She keeps saying that she is dirty.::

:: Poor femme. I can. I will be right back.::

::Thank you. She needs something to do while we wait to see Rung before she can have a proper cleaning.::

Groove hurried off and came back with solvent and a few cleaning rags. “Here. This might help.”

Updraft took them with a grateful look on her faceplates. “Thank you,” she said, and blushed. “Could you close the screen while I use these?”

“Yes,” Blades said, and nearly pushed his brothers out of the way. “Just let us know if you need anything.”

Blades listened to the sounds of splashing solvent on the other side of the screen. It wasn’t long before she called them back into the room. “That’s better,” she said, looking like she really meant it.

He could however see the faint trembles of her servo. She was trying so hard to act as though she was fine. He reached over and took her servo in his before pressing a kiss to it. “You do not have to pretend, Updraft. I am here for you.”

Updraft gave him a sweet smile, “I know. Thank you. I love you, Blades.”

“I love you, too. I don’t think I told you that I think you look lovely in your new altmode. If, if you want I could teach you how to fly with it- if you want that is.”

Updraft looked at him in shock, “You mean it?!”

Blades gave Updraft a brilliant smile, “Yes. I mean it. I would love to teach you. M-more than anything.”

“I---I don’t even know what to say,” Updraft said. “You are too good for me.”

“No, I’m not,” he shuffled from ped to ped looking embarrassed. “Yeah. Probably the opposite.
You’re a good femme.”

Updraft’s field slowly relaxed and unfurled, mixing with Blades’. “Thank you. T-thank you so much.”

OoOoOoOo

Jazz sat up in the medberth, a sleeping sparkling cradled against his chestplates, and Bluestreak cuddled against his side.

“‘Tor, go home now? Pwease? Home?”

“No, bitling, not yet. Ratchet hasn’t released us yet. Might be here awhile.”


“We can’t Baby Blue. We need the medics to say that yer new brother and ah am well enough tah go home.”

Bluestreak frowned, “Want ‘Tor home! Want to take Sil’ste’k home!”

Jazz laughed, “I know that you do. You are going to be a good big brother.”

Blue puffed out his tiny chest, “I is the bestest brother ‘Tor! Bestest brother ever!”

Jazz hugged the little sparkling close, “I know you will be. You are a little sweetaspark, aren’t yah?”

“Home now?” Bluestreak asked hopefully, his tone turned weeding, “Pwease, ‘Tor. Pwease.”

“Ah dunno, little mech. Might be a while before we can leave. Aid is very busy right now.”

“Nuh uh. ‘Irst Aid come here now. Now, ‘Tor.”

“No, not now, Baby Blue.”

Bluestreak’s lower lip pushed forward, quivering. “‘Tor! Pwease!”

“Beg all yah want bitty, it’s not gonna work.”

Blue pouted, “But ‘Toooooooorrrrr! Want you home! Want Sil’ste’k home! Want ‘Ire home!”

Jazz sighed and drew Blue against him with one servo, the other still holding onto Silverstreak with the other. “I know you do, Baby Blue. We have to wait though. Have you and your Uncle Smokescreen finished getting the nursery ready for little Silver?”

Blue bounced a little, “Yes! My Pretties on da wall! Sil’ste’k come home?”

“All the pretties. Ahm sure it looks wonderful, little mech.”

“Ima be the bestest brother eva. All the pretties on the walls. ‘Elded Unca ‘Mokey make Sil’ste’k’s berth. All up. All perties. Go see! Now?”

Jazz narrowed his optics, “Yah aren’t foolin’ me, yah sneaky lil’ mechlet. We aren’t goin’ home yet.”

“‘Tor...mean. Mean mean, meanie. Wanna go home.”

Jazz sighed and pressed a kiss to Blue’s helm. “I know you do, Bluestreak. I want to go home and be
with you and your Sire. However, we have to wait. The medics need to be sure that your brother is alright to go home with us and that I am ready to go back after he separated from me.”

Blue scowled cutely, “But want home /now//, ‘Tor! Want home now!”

“You aren’t the only one. Don’t you think I miss home to?”

Bluestreak huffed, “‘Tor like tah stay ‘ere. Don’t wanna come back home. Mean, mean ‘Tor.”

“Bluestreak, don’t be naughty. Be a good botling for your ‘Tor. We will be home soon enough. I don’t think your sire would like you acting like this, do you?”


“Never said you were, little bot, but you know better.”

Bluestreak gasped and clased his tiny servos over his mouth. “I bad, “Tor? I Bad?”

Bluestreak’s little optics grew large and welled with lubricants. Jazz felt the urge to laugh but managed to keep it from slipping out. “No, Little Baby Blue. You’re not bad. A little naughty but not bad.”

Bluestreak’s lip trembled and a few tears ran down his cheeks. “I sorry ‘Tor.”

“Ah, it’s fine, baby. Just give me hugs and all is forgiven.”

Bluestreak wiggled, finally throwing his arms around Jazz, “Loff you, ‘Tor.”

“Oh, I love you too, Baby Blue. Never forget that. i love you very, very much.” He pressed a kiss onto Bluestreak’s helm. “You are wonderful, and I adore yah.”

“‘Dore yah too.”

Jazz cuddled his two bitlets, smiling at the little yawn Silverstreak gave. “Ah am the luckiest of mechs.”

“Lucky? ‘Tor lucky mech? Grant wishes? ‘Tor grant wish?”

Jazz smiled, “You got a wish little mech?”

Bluestreak nodded solemnly, “Wish Sil’ste’k bigger so can play!”

Jazz laughed, “Oh Blue. you are just going to have to wait for him to grow up. You can play with him, but gently and only certain games.”

Bluestreak’s face scrunched up as he considered it, “‘Kay. Plays softly. Soft. That what ‘Ire said. Gentie.”

Jazz chuckled, “Exactly that.”

“Loff Sil’ste’k,” Bluestreak said, reaching out to touch his little brother, “‘Tect him.”

“I know you will protect him. Your sire and I are very proud of you, love. Very proud.”

“P’oud of Un’ca ‘Mokey and Un’ca Tweat’ise?”
Jazz snickered, “We are.”

“Dey have ‘park’ing soon?”

Jazz blinked down at him, “Where did yah hear that my mech?”

Blue looked away sheepishly, “Heard mechs. They no see me. I listen to them.”

Jazz laughed, “So you were eavesdropping my little bitty? I see.”

Blue looked at Jazz curiously, “I no drop eave ‘Tor? What eave? Why drop?”

Jazz laughed at the adorable look of confusion that Blue had on his faceplates.

“Spying, my little mechlet, you were spying.”

“I no pie. What dis?”

Jazz snickered, “Ask your sire when you see him.”

“‘Tor ‘fusing.”

Jazz laughed a little louder, “Oh you think so?”

“Ire say dat. Dat Jazz, he ‘fusing.”

Jazz laughed hard enough to jostle Silverstreak awake. The bitlet whimpered, and then settled back into recharge.

“C’azy and ‘fusing.”

“Oh you have no idea, my sweet bitty. I am gonna have a little talk with your ‘Ire.”

Blue frowned and his tiny doorwings drooped. “Did I get ‘Ire in trouble?”

Jazz laughed, “No, Sire got himself in trouble. You didn’t. You are ‘Tor’s good little bitty bot, right?”

Blue perked up, “Yus! I good bitty! Bestest!”

“Yes, you are. The best. My sweet, sweet little bitty.”

Bluestreak purred, his diminutive wings flapping happily, and that was how Prowl found them when he finally came into the medbay.

“How are my favourite mechs?”

“‘Ire! ‘Ire!” Bluestreak lept up and ran at Prowl. “‘Ire! You back! ‘Tor! ‘Tor, ‘Ire back!”

“So I see. How was work, Prowl?”

“The usual, Jazz. How are you feeling? Have the medics said anything about when you can return to our quarters? Blue is getting anxious to have you come home with Silverstreak.”

“So I’ve noticed,” Jazz laughed. “Bitlets talka little else. Well...other than him thinkin’ Smokey would have a bitlet soon. We have a little spy on our servos.”

Prowl stared, “What?”
“He heard some bots talkin’. Oh…and he also said you have been sayin’ I’m…what was that, Blue? ‘C’azy and ‘fusing.’ Yeah I think that was what it was.”

Prowl froze and stared at Jazz with wide optics that told Jazz that Bluestreak had overheard something that Prowl would have rather kept quiet. “I...that is, I...ah, so to speak that is…..”

Jazz laughed, “Don’t worry Prowler, ah’ll make yah pay fer that later when ah get outta here.”

Prowl’s wings twitched and he gave Jazz a wary look. “Very well.”

Blue looked from his creator to his sire and blinked, “I get ‘Ire in trouble? I sorry. I bad.”

“No, yer not, Baby Blue. You are my little sweet spark. Like ah said your sire gets himself in trouble. He doesn’t need yer help. Ah promise. Right, Prowler.”

Prowl’s wings twitched. “Right. I’m capable of it all on my own, bitlet. You aren’t bad.”

Bluestreak wiggled, not looking sure of himself. “I no bad?”

“Definitely not,” Prowl said, moving close enough to pick Bluestreak up. “You are the sweetest best mech ever.”

Jazz nuzzled Silverstreak’s helm. “You and your brother are the sweetest, adorablest and cuddliest, bestest mecha ever.”

Blue beamed and bounced, his tiny doorwings fluttering. “Bestest, bestest! Sil’ste’k an’ I bestest! ‘Ire see pretties? Unc’a Smokey put pretties on wall!”

“Yes, I saw your drawings in the nursery. They are very lovely. You did a good job. You are quite the little artist.”

“I artist?”

“Yes, you are. Perhaps you can get lessons from Sunstreaker when you are older.”

“Prowler, I dunno if that is a good thing to suggest,” Jazz said, frowning.

“I don’t see why not. He’s been behaving and has bitlets of his own.”

“Yeah, sure. I guess.”

“I be da best artist. I paint tings.”

“Yes, you do, sweetling,” Prowl said, hugging him.

Blue wiggled in his hug and then looked up at Prowl. “I te’ch Sil’ste’k paint?”

Jazz laughed and rocked Silverstreak in his arms, “Not just yet, bitling. Yer brother is still a bit young for painting. Maybe when he is bit older.”

“Did your creator not tell you, Bluestreak? You are scheduled to begin attending the lessons at the sparkling center. You will be going to the half sol classes with the other young sparklings.”

Bluestreak stared at Prowl. “But, ‘Ire, you no want me around?”

“I do, sweetling, but you need to learn, and meet other sparklings.”
“No! No! Don wanna. Wanna stay with you and ‘Tor! Don’t send me ‘way.”

“We aren’t, sweetling,” Jazz said. “It’s just part of a sol. Yah will spend the rest of it with me and Silver.”

Bluestreak frowned, “Pwease lemme stay.”

Jazz frowned and reached out to Bluestreak, who burrowed into his creator’s chest. “No want go, ‘Tor! No want go! Sil’ste’k take place?”

Jazz pressed a kiss to his helm. “No, sweetspark, Silverstreak is not taking your place. How about this, ah’ll go with ya on yer first sol? Ah’ll bring Sil’ste’k and we will stay with ya for yer classes.”

Blue looked up and stared at Jazz with a look of surprise. “‘Tor come with? Sil’ste’k too?”

Jazz smiled, “Yes, we will. I will even bring some gelled energon treats to bring with us. Would you like to help your creator make them?”

“Yes, ‘Tor! Yes! Tweaks! I help! I help!”

“I’m sure you will be a great help,” Jazz smiled.

Bluestreak hugged Jazz, “Loff you.”

“I love you too, bitlet. Very much.”

OoOoOoOo

Spike sighed and shifted uneasily on the berth. He had been confined to it by the medic for almost two decacycles now and he was going mad with boredom. He felt like his internals were being crushed by the weight of the stupid huge baby inside of him. He had no idea how this had happened! He was a guy, and wasn't supposed to be pregnant.

Grimlock was no help at all. He just purred proudly and bragged to his brothers about how great he was and how big his sparkling was growing.

Bastard!

Spike glared and narrowed his optics when the jerk in questions came strolling into the room. If he could move he would saw the mechs spike off.

“Him Spike need to refuel?”

Spike just glared, a growl rumbling through his chest plates. “No, him Spike is fine.”

Grimlock made a clicking noise, “Him Spike needs fuel. Sparklings get strong.”

“I’m fine,” Spike snapped.

“Him Spike seems upset. Him Spike talk to him Grimlock.”

“I said that I’m fine!” Spike glared at Grimlock.

Grimlock nudged at Spike with his nose. “Him Spike lying! Him Spike talk to him Grimlock!”

“Him Spike doesn’t want to talk,” Spike grumbled, “I want to be left alone.”
“Him Spike grumpy.” Grimlock nuzzled him.

“I am not! I’m fucking mad. Look what you’ve done to me!”

Grimlock looked confused, “What him Spike accuse him Grimlock do?”

Spike glared at Grimlock and hissed at him, “You knocked me up! I am huge! I look like a blimp! I hate you! I fragging hate you!”

Grimlock just rumbled, “Him Spike feisty, me Grimlock like!”

“I’m not feisty! I’m pissed. You...you just messed me all up. I’m huge. I can’t move. I literally can’t fracking move.”

“Feisty.”

Spike growled, and squirmed about trying to get up. “I’m going to rip your spike off.”

“Him Spike will not. Him Spike would regret it later.”

“No I will not! It will mean that you can never knock me up again!”

“Him Spike love what him Grimlock’s spike does to him Spike! Him Spike moan and cry for me Grimlock.”

“Shut up! Shut up you, you, big dummy!”


Spike stared at the mech for a long, and very quiet moment before sniffing, and then suddenly bursting into tears.

“Him Spike don’t cry. No. Him Spike be fine.”

“No I am not! I am getting crushed by your stupid baby! I hate you! I hate being a stupid robot that can get pregnant! I hate you! I hate you!”

“Him Spike upset. Him Spike need be calm for sparkling.”

“Screw the damn baby! I want it out! I don't care what you do with it. I just want it out!”

“Him Spike don’t mean that,” Grimlock said solemnly. “Him Spike will love sparklings. Him Spike just need to see them. Him Grimlock promise. Him Spike need to calm down. Not good for him Spike or sparklings.”

Spike huffed, “I don’t care.”

“Him Spike need nap. Me Grimlock bring him Spike fuel. Him Spike drink then him Spike nap.”

Spike glared at Grimlock. “I am not taking a nap. Go the frag away!”

Grimlock nudged at Spike and growled lightly. “Him Spike not the boss of Me Grimlock!”

“Go away! This is all your fault! Go away and, and, and, get hit by a car or something!”

“Him Spike all wound up, Him spike needs to be calm. Him Spike going to glitch.”
“I don’t care! I don’t care! I hate you, and I hate these things inside of me. I’m huge. Why the frick am I so huge?”

“Him Spike having five eggs. Him Grimlock proud.”

Spike struggled to get up all over again.

“That’s it! I am done! I am getting out of here! I don’t care what the medic say, I am leaving here and moving somewhere else!”

Grimlock stared at Spike in shock for a long moment, and then growled. “You Spike go no where! Me Grimlock not allow him Spike to harm sparklings.”

“Won’t allow? Won’t allow?! How dare you!? Who the frag do you think you are?!”

“Him Grimlock is him Spike’s partner. Him Grimlock is sire of him Spike’s sparklings. Him Grimlock loves him Spike.”

Spike stared, and then sniffled, “Shut up. You do not. If you did you wouldn’t have done this to me.”

Grimlock chuckled, “him Spike have it backwards.”

“No I don’t. I don’t want this.”

“Him Spike too late.”

“I don’t care!” Spike rocked on the berth until he was able to roll onto his side and then slowly wedged himself onto his feet. His legs nearly buckled from the weight and then he slowly stood up.

Grimlock looked at him in distress, “Him Spike lie down! Him Spike hurt himself!”

“No! I am getting out of here! I am going to get a medic to get these...these parasites out of me!”

Spike took a step, wobbled, and then his legs did buckled, sending him crashing to the floor.

Grimlock transformed into mech mode, and gathered Spike up into his arms, “Him Spike hurt?” The mech hoisted Spike up, and was rushing out the door towards the medbay, “Him Spike hurt?”

Spike only groaned.

“Him Ratchet, help him Spike, now!!!” Grimlock yelled, setting Spike down on a medbay berth.

Ratchet rushed over and began to scan Spike. “What the frag happened? What did you do?! How did this happen?! Oh Frag! First Aid! Get over here now! We are going to have to remove these eggs right now!”

First Aid hurried over and gasped as he looked at the medical pad. “Sweet Primus! How did this happen?! He was supposed to be on berthrest to prevent this from happening!”

Grimlock roared, “What wrong with him Spike?”

“His pelvic array has broken from the weight of the eggs.”

Spike whimpered weakly, offlining his optics, “It burns. Please, please make it stop. It hurts.”
“Shhh...it’s gonna be fine, “ First Aid said, already grabbing a syringe filled with numbing solution. “We’ll fix you. What happened, Grimlock?”

“Him Spike got mad. Him Spike got irrational. Him Spike tried to stand up, and then him Spike fell.”

Ratchet wheeled a cart over, “ Probably best if we put him under.”

“It hurts,” Spike mumbled, whimpering.

“Shh, I know it does. It will all be over soon. We will be taking care of you. You will be just fine in a little while. Do you want Grimlock to hold your servo?”

“No! I don’t want him anywhere near me. This is all his fault! I hate him! I hate him!”

First Aid and Ratchet exchanged a look, and then First Aid patted his servo. “Okay, Spike. Just relax.”

Ratchet patted Grimlock’s shoulder, “All carriers say things like this. He doesn’t really mean it.”


“I’m sure he didn’t mean it,” Ratchet tried again.

“Him Grimlock raise Bitlets alone. Him Spike doesn’t want us.”

“Don’t say that, big guy. it will be fine.”

“Him Spike mean.”

“He is in a lot of pain. He doesn’t know what he is saying. Talk to him afterwards, he will be fine.”

“Me Grimlock not think so. Me Grimlock and them Dinobots raise sparklings. Him Spike not want.”

“He is upset and concerned. He has never been through this before and his species only had one half that could bear sparklings. It wasn't even the half he was a part of, so this is a bigger change that you may realize.”

Grimlock frowned, and tried to puzzle out what Ratchet was saying. “Him Spike...really not mean to have sparklings? Him Spike not crazy?”

“No, he’s really not,” Ratchet said. “He’s just scared, Grimlock. Don’t delete him out yet. He might surprise you.”

“Him Grimlock see. If not...them Dinobots happy to help. Them Dinobots happy for another bitlet.”

“I know. You will be great creators. I know it. You are all so good with little Paddles.”

“Him Paddles good sparkling. We Dinobots love him Paddles.”

“We know. Isn’t he due to start the sparkling classes?”

“Yes, him Paddles start soon. Him Paddles smart.”

“Good. Now, when First Aid is done prepping Spike, we will start removing the eggs and putting them in an incubator until they are ready to hatch.”
“Them eggs too early?”
“A bit, but they are developed enough it will be fine.”
“Him Grimlock understands. Him Grimlock sad they have to stay here, but understands.
“Good, good. I’m glad. It won’t take long, thankfully.”
“He’s stabilized,” First Aid said.

Ratchet patted Grimlock on the back before going to help First Aid.

Carefully, they opened up Spike’s carrying chamber and began to gently remove his eggs one by one. Each one was carefully examined, before it was settled into an incubator that Grimlock watched carefully.

Finally, Spike was empty and Ratchet began to repair Spike’s pelvic array. He cussed as he found the damage was more severe than he had originally thought. No wonder that Spike had been so upset. The eggs had been larger than he had thought.

First Aid and Ratchet worked for nearly a jour, but finally had Spike put back together. Weld lines dotted his lower chassis. First Aid smeared nanite cream across the fresh welds and put mech over them to help them absorb faster.

Finally they brought the mech out of stasis.

“Wha-? Where am I? Ratchet?”
Ratchet moved to his side. “Don’t try to move Spike. You are in the medbay. How do you feel?”

“What?! Don’t move? Why? Ahhhhh!” Spike writhed as he tried to sit up and a weld tore along his abdomen.

“Don’t move! First Aid, get me the welder! Spike try to not move!”
Spike whimpered, “What happened, why am I here?”

“We had to remove the eggs early. You need to say still,” Ratchet said as First Aid worked to seal the wound back up.

“Wh-what?” Spike whimpered, “Where are they? Did they make it?”

“They are fine, in an incubator. It will be okay. When the welds set we can take you to see them,” Ratchet said.

“I hurt,” Spike said, wiggling a bit, but not enough to damage himself.

“It will pass soon, First Aid has more numbing agent.”

Spike sighed in relief as the bot in question injected his main line with the medicine. “Thank you, that feels better.” He craned his neck, looking around, “Where is Grimlock?”

Grimlock looked up from the incubator filled with their eggs. “Him Spike want me Grimlock?”

Spike tried to look over at him, but couldn’t due to the welds. “Grimlock? What is going on? Are the eggs okay?”
Grimlock came over and stood next to the medberth. “Him Spike worried about them Eggs?”

Spike looked confused, “Why wouldn’t I be worried?”

Grimlock’s brows knitted together, “Him Spike said him hated Grimlock and them eggs.”

“I wouldn’t’ say that,” Spike said, “I love you.”

Grimlock inched closer, a look of mistrust on his faceplates. “Him Spike sounded very sure.”

“You much have misheard things,” Spike said, trying to sit up.

“Told ya’,” Ratchet mumbled as he pushed Spike back down.

Spike looked from Ratchet to Grimlock in confusion. “What is going on?”

Ratchet patted Spike’s shoulder. “The eggs were larger than we thought and began to damage your internals. At the end, the pain was bad enough that you starting saying some things and tried to walk out of the room. It damaged your pelvic array pretty badly.”

Spike frowned, and tried to relieve the datafiles, “I think...I have a glitch...the memory files are scrambled, and I just...I’m sorry.”

“Don’t worry, it it normal. I’ll have Perceptor take a look at you later. All of the physical damage has been repaired, and the eggs are doing well.” Ratchet patted Spike’s shoulder. “It’ll be fine.”

Grimlock moved closer, reaching out to touch Spike’s side, “Him Spike not hate Him Grimlock?”

“Frag no. We are awesome together.”

Grimlock nuzzled Spike, “Me Grimlock glad him Spike not hate him Grimlock or them Eggs.”

Spike looked at him, “I could never hate you or the babies. Why would you even think that?”

Ratchet patted Spike’s shoulder again, “You said something along those lines when you were in pain. It was more wanting the pain to be over than anything though, in my opinion.”

Grimlock nodded. “So him Spike just hurt so Him Spike yell?”

“Pretty much,” Ratchet said. “He should be fine to move in a few breems, although...I do suggest we put in an implant. All things considered I do not think it would be a good idea for Spike to carry again. He is too small. You were lucky this time. next time that might not be the case.”

“Him Grimlock...think that a good idea. Him Spike not good with pain.”

Ratchet snorted, “Who is?”

“You really think that is necessary?” Spike asked.

“I do. It seems that you earthlings are much more...fertile. You could spark back up pretty easily, and that is the last thing we want.”
Chapter 7

Smokescreen rubbed lightly over his chest. He knew that there would be a lot of changes coming in his future. He had just been to see Ratchet, he had had to avoid First Aid since whatever one person of a gestalt knew they all knew.

Ratchet had confirmed what he had suspected from the symptoms he had developed.

He was carrying.

Now he just had to tell Streetwise.

He squirmed at the thought of telling Streetwise. he hoped his bonded would be happy, but they hadn’t REALLY talked about it, boy he was unsure. He kept their bond shut tight, not wanting to let the news slip until he could look his mech in the optics.

His wings were practically fluttering by the time they reached their habsuite. “Street?”

“Something wrong?” Streetwise asked. Smokescreen could feel him prodding at the bond trying to coax it open.

“I’m fine. I have something to tell you, actually.”

“Are you hurt? What’s wrong?” Streetwise asked moving close enough to check Smokescreen for injuries.

Smokescreen shifted nervously, “I think you should sit down, Streetwise.”

Streetwise looked at Smokescreen worriedly. “Smokescreen you are worrying me. What is wrong?”

“I. I need to tell you something really important. Please sit down?”

“Is there someone else? A-are you having second thoughts? I know we rushed into things, but it felt so right. I love you, Smokey. So much.”

Smokescreen snorted, nothing like that. “I love you too. I just—-I went to talk to Ratchet today. I’ve been feeling off.”

“You’re sick?”

“No,” Smokescreen laughed, "let me talk. I’ve been feeling off so I went to see Ratchet, and he confirmed what I thought was going on....I’m carrying.”

“What?”

“Are---are you not happy? I’m sorry. I know we haven't talked about having sparklings or anything and that you may not want them-”

“Smokescreen, calm down. I couldn’t be happier! We are having a sparkling! I am so happy! We’re having a sparkling!”

Smokescreen looked at Streetwise and saw the large beaming smile that was on his bonded’s faceplates and felt so relieved. “Will you help me tell my brothers?”
Smokescreen nodded, a feeling of relief flowing through him. He let the bond open, and felt Streetwise’s joy. It was like a balm to his spark. “I would love to! Then...we...ah...should probably tell my brother.”

Streetwise pulled a face. “He’s going to kill me.”

Smokescreen wanted to refute it, but he knew that it was likely true that his brother would be very upset that he was carrying so soon after their bonding. “Not kill you, we are bonded. He will be very upset and disappointed though. He thinks I am still just a sparkling myself.”

Streetwise groaned, “Great, so he is just going to horribly maim me and take my doorwings.”

“I wouldn’t let him do that,” Smokescreen said, petting those very doorwings. “I would make him very sorry if he tried. Besides, I don’t think Jazz would let it go that far.”

“You really think so?” Streetwise asked, pulling Smokescreen into his lap.

“I do.”

“I love you,” Streetwise hummed.

“I love you more.”

Streetwise put a servo over Smokescreen’s chest, “I love you most.”

Smokescreen giggled and pressed a kiss to Streetwise’s lips. He cuddled up to Streetwise and his doorwings fluttered in contentment. He loved Steetwise so much. He made him so very happy.

Streetwise’s hands wandered, petting Smokescreen’s doorwings. “I’m so happy about this. I can’t wait to meet our bitlet.”

Smokescreen purred, “How happy are you?”

Streetwise chuckled, nuzzling Smokescreen’s neck. “So very happy.”

Smokescreen rumbled happily and nuzzled back at Streetwise. “I’m glad. You are the best thing that ever happened to me. I love you so much.”

Streetwise pet his helm. “I love you too. We have a lot of stuff to prepare for the sparklings arrival.”

Smokescreen smiled at him, “Yes, we need to prepare a nursery and get a crib and so many other things! I will ask Jazz what all they bought for Silverstreak.”

“Good Idea, my love. We can ask them for tips and maybe offer to watch Little Silverstreak so we can have practice.”

Smokescreen smiled at that idea, and finally wiggled free. “Let’s tell your brothers...and then brave my brother’s wrath....cause honestly I’m going to lose my courage if we don’t go soon.”

Streetwise got up, dropping another kiss on Smokescreen’s lips. “Come along then, lets go.”

They made their way to his brother’s habsuite, buzzing and nearly stumbled back when First Aid opened the door. “What is going on? Is something wrong? There was all kinds of odd feelings coming down our bond...we were about ready to go out and find you!”

Streetwise beamed, “Everything is just fine. Can we come in? We need to talk to everyone.”
First Aid gave them a skeptical look but moved to the side so that they could enter. “What is going on?”

When they entered they moved to the living area where Hot Spot and Groove were sitting. “What’s going on? Streetwise! There you are! What’s wrong? We felt your emotions going crazy.

Streetwise sat down and pulled Smokescreen onto his lap before snagging a kiss. He looked at his brothers, “Is Blades not here?”

“No, he’s still with Updraft. What’s wrong? Did something happen?” First Aid said, sounding stressed.

“Nothing bad,” Smokescreen said. “I was feeling funny so I went to see Ratchet...and it turns out we are going to be creators.”

First Aid stared, before taking a pad out of his subspace, “Are you sure? Let me scan you!”

“Ratchet already did!” Smokescreen said grinning.

“Yeah...but...just let me....please! What if something is wrong!”

“He’s fine,” Smokescreen said.

“Mech or femme?” Groove asked. “This is so cool!”

Streetwise looked at Smokescreen as he realized that he had no idea. Smokescreen smiled softly, “We are having a mech.”

Groove bounced in his seat with excitement. “That is so awesome! What are you going to name him?”

Streetwise smiled at Smokescreen, “I don’t know. Do you have any ideas Smokey?”

Smokescreen gave him a small smile. “I was thinking about seeing what you thought about naming him after my Sire.”

Streetwise smiled, “If that is what you want to do, then he can be named after your Sire. What is his name then?”

Smokescreen put a servo over his plates, “Nightbeat. My Sire was Nightbeat.”

All of the Protectobots stared at Smokescreen in shock. “Your Sire was Nightbeat? The famous detective?”

“Well, he was more than a detective. He was my creator, and the head of our house. He was a great mech. I miss him and my creator. So much.”

“I like the name,” Streetwise said. “I would be honored!”

Smokescreen beamed, “Wonderful. Thank you. You don’t know how happy that makes me.”

“I think I do,” Streetwise said, holding his bonded close.

“So....can I scan you now?” First Aid asked.

Smokescreen sighed, “Fine, if it will make you feel better.”
First Aid immediately attached his med-pad to Smokescreen’s access port. “Hmm, yes. Everything looks fine. He is a healthy little mech. So big already too!”

Streetwise puffed up with pride. “Would you expect anything else?”

Hot Spot and Groove laughed. “You are so full of yourself! Congratulations Smokescreen. Good luck dealing with Streetwise’s inflated ego while you are carrying.”

Smokescreen laughed, “He’s not the only one who is proud. I can’t wait to see our bitlet. He’s going to be awesome.”

“How’d Prowl take it?” Hot Spot asked.

Smokescreen and Streetwise exchanged a glance. “We haven’t told him yet,” Smokescreen mumbled. “Kinda dreading it.”

“Frag. He’s gonna be mad,” Groove said.

“I know,” Smokescreen said miserably.

“Do you want us to come with you as moral support and to keep him from killing our brother?”

Smokescreen giggled, “Would you? It might be safer. Or I can ask him to come here if you guys don’t mind.”

Hot Spot Laughed, “That is fine. Have him come here so he is on our ground.”

Smokescreen giggled again before getting on his comm, ::Prowl, you busy? I need to talk to you about something important.::

::Sure. Jazz was just released from the medbay. Where are you?::

::Street’s brother habsuite. Could you just meet us here?::

There was a long pause, ::Sure...are you okay? Did something happen?::

::I’m fine. I promise.::

::I will be there in a breem.::

Smokescreen slumped when the comm-line disconnected. “He’s gonna be so mad. I know he is.”

Streetwise picked up his servo and pressed a kiss to it. “If he is, then he can be mad at both of us. I am right here next to you. We are in this together, sweetspark.”

Smokescreen looked at Streetwise, “You are too good to me, Street. I love you so much.”

“I love you too, my spark.”

Streetwise pressed a kiss to Smokescreen’s plates. “And I love you too, tiny sweetspark. Oh, Smokey. We are going to be creators!”

Smokescreen’s winglets flicked happily. “Yes.”

Still he stiffened when the door buzzed and Prowl came in, followed by Jazz who was holding Silverstreak against his chest, Bluestreak toddled in after.
“Smokescreen? What is wrong?” Prowl said, looking his brother up and down and giving Streetwise the stink-optic, as if the mech was the cause of all troubles.

“I’m fine,” Smokescreen said. “We just have some news for you.”

“What kinda news, mah mech?” Jazz asked.

Smokescreen wiggled, “Well…”

“Yer sparked, aren’t yah?”

“No he’s not,” Prowl snapped.

Smokescreen looked down sheepishly, “Actually Prowl…”

Prowl’s doorwings snapped up and he glared at Streetwise. “You sparked up my sparkling brother!”

Jazz reached out with one servo and tugged on one of Prowl’s doorwings. “Calm down! They are bonded! They were going to spark some sol. Do you know if it is a mech or femme, Smokey?”

“We are having a mech, Jazz. And...we already picked a name out.”

“Really? Whatcha pick?”

“We, that is, I wanted and Streetwise agreed, to name him after Prowl and I’s Sire Nightbeat.”

Prowl stared, “Really?”

“Yes,” Smokescreen beamed, his doorwings fluttering happily. “Isn’t it wonderful?”

“Wonderful, right. You are too young for sparkling. You are barely more than a sparkling yourself. How could you?” He turned on Streetwise, bearing his denta.

“Ah think yah need tah calm down, Prowler. We are very happy for you both, ah promise. Don’t mind Prowler, you know how he gets,” Jazz said trying placate the situation.


“Uh, he is upset that you are going to get a cousin. I am going to have a sparkling.”

“Why ‘Ire mad? ‘Tor had spark’ing?”

“Your sire thinks that I am too young to have a sparkling. Your creator is older than I am.”

“I t’ink ‘Ire silly.”

Jazz chuckled, “From the mouths of sparklings.” He gave Prowl a pointed look, “As I said, we are happy for you both, and I bet Blue will be happy for another playmate. Won’t you, bitlet?”

Prowl grumbled, “We are, congratulations.”

Bluestreak squealed, “‘Nother spark’ing! ‘Nother!!!”

Smokescreen snuggled Bluestreak, “Exciting, isn’t it.”

“‘Citing!”
Smokescreen laughed, “It will work out, you shouldn't worry, brother. Street will take care of me.”

Bluestreak reached over and lightly tugged on Smokescreen’s doorwing. “Un’ca Smokey? I make pretties for spark’ling?”

“I would be honored if you made some pretty pictures for the nursery. You could help me hang them up too. Would you like that?”

“Yay! Pretties! Make more pretties! All the pretties!”

Jazz laughed, “Well, yah won Blue over already. If yah need any tips for getting ready or practice with little Silver here, just ask.”

“Thank you, Jazz.”

“Yer welcome, Smokey. Yah know we will do anything to help, yer family.”


“Oh, I love you too, little Blue.”

“You will be a good creator, I’m sure,” Prowl finally said. It was clear he did not think the same about Streetwise. “You will make our creators proud, and I am glad that you are carrying on our line.”

“Thank you brother. Street will make a good sire too. I don’t know why you are still holding out a grudge. We are bonded. He loves me...and I love him.”

Prowl glared at Streetwise, “He is older than you. He should know better. You are barely out of your sparklinghood. You should still be in the midst of courting, attending cotillions and balls. Instead you are bonded and sparked, after having been forced to be a soldier. You were supposed to have been an artist, or craftsmech; you had such promise as a sparkling.”

Smokescreen gave Prowl a small smile. “I would like to try working with my servos again, I never lost my love of art Prowl. It just had no place in a war.”

Prowl’s wings quivered, conveying his sorrow. “I am so sorry, sweetspark. So sorry. I should have done better for you.”

“Prowl....you did the best you could, and I am happy now. Please don’t be sad. Be happy for me. I’m happy...please....just be happy for me. It hurts me that you think things are not good for me now.”

Prowl’s vents hitched, “You are right....what is done is done. I will support you whatever you do, or wish to do.”

Smokescreen beamed, “Thank you.”

Prowl still shot glares at Streetwise but he smiled at Smokescreen. “I am...happy that you are happy. Even if I wish, well, what I wish doesn’t matter. As Jazz said, if you need any help please come to us. We will help you establish your nursery as well as showing how to care for a sparkling with Silverstreak.”

“Thank you, Prowl. I know that we are both thankful that you will be helping. How are you all doing? I heard that Jazz and the sparklings were in the medbay while the cons’ escaped.”
Jazz laughed, “We were. What a mess. Honestly...pretty much missed it all. Wouldn’t have known anything had happened if Ricochet hadn’t came to check on us. He was all kinds of wound up. Can’t say I blame him, His bitlet was in the creche. I heard Barricade raised a big stink...and...frag...poor Percy.”

“She still hasn’t woke up?” Smokescreen asked.

“No, he’s taking it like a trooper. Been stayin’ at her side. Poor thing.”

“I hope she wakes up soon. I don’t know what Percy will do if she doesn’t. I had no idea that he had gotten so attached to her already. Normally it takes Percy awhile to warm up to mechs.”

Jazz nodded at Streetwise’s words. “I know, Street. Speaking of that sol, how is your brother Blades? I heard something had happened to his femme?”

Hot Spot held up a servo, “It is not something that should be discussed with sparklings in the room. He is doing alright, she is having a few setbacks. It really shook her badly. She seems to be doing better overall though.”

“That is good tah hear,” Jazz said. “She seemed lika nice femme from what I could tell.”

“She is,” Streetwise said, “She’s good for Blades. Makes him less of a rusthead.”

Smokescreen laughed, “Yeah, he’s positively cheery...if you can imagine.”

“Ah really can’t,” Jazz smiled.

“Yeah, it’s hard to imagine,” Groove agreed, “But it’s true.”

“Really? Well, I think I’ll have to meet this femme then. She sounds amazing.”

“Oh, she is! Say, did you hear about how they met?”

“No, I hadn’t. What happened?”

“We rescued her on Earth, she was nearly caught by the Eradicons. So Blades swoops down and literally sweeps her off her peds. She took the change poorly and thought she was hallucinating the whole thing. She groped his rotors and made him blush. It was hilarious.”

Jazz stared, “Sounds like it. She stuck around though...”

“Yeah, she’s a good femme, and she loves him. Very much. I’m glad they found each other.”

“Well, we hope she recovers quickly,” Prowl said, putting a hand on Jazz’s shoulder. “We should be going. It is recharge time for the bitlings.”

Jazz laughed, “Guess it is at that. Congrats again, Smokey. We are all happy for yah.”

“Thanks,” Smokescreen said, flushing.

Blades smiled as he looked at Updraft. She was so beautiful. It always amazed him that she had chosen to be with him. She was so...perfect. “Are you ready, Updraft?”

She looked at him, her beautiful golden optics wide, “Do you think I am really ready?”
He took her servo and gave it a light squeeze. “I am right here, I won’t let anything happen to you.”

She gave him a slow smile, “I know you will protect me.” Her rotors quivered. She transformed. It wasn’t as smooth a transformation as Blades would have liked, but it was a good start.

::Now we are going to work on hovering,:: he said. ::You want to become comfortable with the movement before you go to high off the ground.::

::Okay...so....what now?::

He laughed over the comm, ::Start your rotors up...::

::Umm, okay."

Her rotors slowly began to spin, and he took a moment to admire how lovely her altmode was. she was so beautiful, with the perkiest rotors that he had ever seen. He bet that she would be even more gorgeous when she was flying. ::Good! Good! Now increase your speed, slowly.::

::Are you sure? What if I do something wrong?::

::You’ll be fine. Just ease into it.::

Her rotors began to spin faster, finally lifting her a few feet off of the ground. ::Perfect, now see if you can maintain that.::

::Wow...it’s a lot harder than it looks. The balance feels...weird.::

::You will get used to it,:: he promised, a appreciative purr in his voice. ::Did I ever tell you how hot you were?::

::Not in the last five minutes,:: she chuckled, rising up another two feet, wobbling a bit on her axis.

::Careful! Be certain to watch your gyroscope. It will help keep you level when you fly.::

::O-okay. I’ll try.:: She wobbled a bit but went up another three feet.

::You are doing great! Now, try and hold that altitude.::

::I’ll try! How long do I need to hold it?::

::Try for five breems. We can go from there to try and build up your endurance.::

She weebled, and wobbled., but managed to stay up for five breems before making an equally wobbly landing. She transformed, still wobbly on her peds. “I didn’t think it would be that hard.”

Blades transformed, grinning, “You did awesome. We’ll build up your endurance. Eventually it will come easily. I promise.”

“It was fun though. Tiring. but fun. I can’t imagine actually flying.” Her rotors quivered anxiously.

“You can do it,” he purred, tweaking her closest rotor. “You are the strongest femme I know. The best.”

“Blades!”

Blades laughed and drew her into a kiss. “what? You are smart, beautiful and strong. I know that
you will be flying before you know it.”

Updraft looked down shyly, “Do you really think so? I mean, I am no good at it. I can barely stay up for five breems.”

“You did wonderful. I barely stayed up that long for my first flight.”

“You’re lying,” she smiled, “I bet you stayed up a whole joor.”

“Really, I’m not. You’ll do great.” He leaned in, stealing another kiss. “Better than great. You will do amazing because you are.”

Updraft purred, “Next sol than?”

“And the one after,” he agreed, “Until you can do it on your own and it is as easy as venting.”

“I like that.”

“Me, too. I love spending this time with you, just you and me.”

Updraft looked to the side. “I like this too. I love you.”

Blades smiled and tilted her face up to him, “And I love you.”

He drew her into a deep kiss.

OoOoOoOo

Will squirmed, trying to find a comfortable position to lie in. It seemed impossible. The sparkling inside seemed to press against something no matter which way he moved. It did not...hurt exactly...not exactly.

A while left his mouth. How undignified. He wondered, for a moment, if this was how Sarah had felt. The thought left him flushed. He missed her...but he seemingly thought of her less and less.

“What’s wrong?” Ironhide asked, hitting on the edge of the berth and rubbing Will’s plating.

“I’m fat. Fat and huge and useless!”

“You are not!” Ironhide pet Will’s swollen bump. “You are carrying our sparkling Will. That is very important. You are not useless.”

“I am fat! Fat and huge!”

Ironhide chuckled, “Well, let me help then.”

Will looked at his quizzically. “What are you-?”

Ironhide grabbed Will’s knees and spread them before he reached out and flicked open Will’s panel.

“Hide!”

“It will feel good, I promise,” he said kneeling between Will’s spread thighs before leaning over him, glossa flicking out against the rim of Will’s valve.

“Hide,” Will said again, but his protest was much less vehement. He wiggled, tilting his hips up to give Iron his better access and melted back against the berth. “That feels...amazing.”
Ironhide hummed against the rim in agreement, making the nodes fire and spark.

Will whimpered and reached down to grab Ironhide’s helm. “Don’t stop. That feels so good.”

Ironhide nipped at an external node and made Will yelp. “Oh, I don’t plan to.”

The sound of the door opening was barely audible over the sounds of their venting. “Well, this is a wonderful sight to come back to. My two mechs playing so nicely.”

Will moaned, his valve clenching needily at the sound of Chromia’s voice. Ironhide worked his glossa inside, flicking against the walls making Will gasp and wail, pleading for more.

Chromia walked around them, her field reaching out like a caress. “Such good mechs. I love when you put on a show for me.”

“Please, please, PLEASE!” Will whimpered.

Ironhide shoved his glossa in deep and moaned into Will’s valve. Will looked down and saw that Chromia had opened Ironhide’s panel and was drilling his valve steadily while Ironhide continued to eat out Will’s valve. It was so hot to see.

Chromia’s big, thick spike was sliding in and out, shining and slick with Ironhide’s lubricants. It made him want her in him instead. She always stuffed him so full with it, stretching his valve to it’s limits. It was amazing! “Please! One of you! Don’t tease me! I need more!”

Ironhide chuckled, and continued to do just that.

Chromia hummed behind him, “Always so eager, Will.”

Will whined, valve rippling. “I need more, now. NOW!”

“You just think you do,” Chromia said, petting Ironhide’s helm in an encouraging manner, “Ironhide is doing such a good job.”

Will whined as Ironhide slowly lapped at his valve, taking his time as he worked over nodes and nipped at the edges. He was going mad with the feeling! “Please! Please, Mia! I need you!”

Chromia slowed her thrusts into Ironhide and smirked at Will. “Oh you need me? Well. that will never do.”

She slid out her spike out of Ironhide and slapped his aft. “You can put that glossa to work in me, Hide. Will says he needs me, so he gets to go for a ride.”

She laid on her back next to Will before scooping him up and sliding his dripping valve down onto her spike.

Will moaned, sinking down fully. Chromia ground into him, rubbing against the nodes. He felt so...full. Stretched so wide. This was what he needed. He lifted himself up, whining quietly as he let himself fall back onto the spike. “P-perfect. Oh, Mia!”

He let his helm fall back. “Yes. YES!”

“Such a lovely picture you make, Will.” She thrust up, making him yelp. “The loveliest. I want you to scream for me.”

Will screamed as he slid back down the spike, taking it deep inside him again. He bounced back up
when he felt something try to slide in along with the spike. He was almost off of the spike when Chromia grabbed his hips and laughed. “Didn’t you like Hide’s surprise?”

Will looked down and saw Hide smirking up at him, as he licked at Chromia’s valve. Chromia tugged at his hips and eased him back down her spike.

Will whined as Ironhide did it again, glossa flicking out. “Yes, please, more.”

Ironhide snorted, “Getting demanding, isn’t he?”
“No,” Will panted, relegated to single syllables. “No.”

“Yes, Will, you are,” Ironhide nibbled and looked to Chromia, “Room for me in there? Bet we could stretch him wider.”

Will panted, optics widening as he tried to make sense of what Ironhide was saying.

“Hmm, he should be able to. Make sure you stretch him very well. We don’t want to hurt our sweetspark.”

Hide rumbled as he slid his glossa into Will’s valve alongside Chromia’s spike. Will squealed at the feeling and Chromia began to thrust up into him again. Ironhide resumed licking out Chromia’s valve and slid a finger in along with Chromia’s spike in Will’s valve.

Will moaned at the added stretch. It was more than he was used to but it felt so good!

“Mmm....how does that feel, Will?” Ironhide ask, working in a second finger.

Will opened his mouth but no sound came out. It felt amazing...and also a bit odd.

“More?” Hide asked, flicking the tip of one finger against the rim of Will valve.

“Slow, Hide. We don’t want to hurt him.”

“Mmmm...I know. He can take it though, can’t you will?”

Will moaned incoherently at the feeling, it made him feel like he was too full but at the same time it felt so good.

“Take it easy, Hide. Slow down. It’s Will’s first time at this kind of game. Don’t rush it.”

Hide laughed but slowed down, gently working his fingers in and out at a gentle pace in Will’s stretched valve.

“Think he’s ready,” Ironhide hummed. “Ready, Will?”

“Please,” Will panted, optics closed as Chromia still worked her own spike inside of him. His vents stuttered when Ironhide started to push in. It felt odd, with an edge of pain to it. He had not expected that, and whimpered.

“Shhhhh....almost there.”

“No. It hurts.”

As soon as he said that it hurt, both Chromia and Hide stopped at once. “Will? Are you okay?”

Will whimpered again, and squirmed trying to get the spikes out of him. Chromia reached out and
grabbed his hips. “Don’t move. Just try to relax, alright? Let me and Hide slid out, so we can check you for tears.”

Will whimpered but held still.

He vented heavily as Hide picked him up, cradling him against his chest as Chromia examined him with a frown. “This was such a bad idea. He’s torn pretty badly.”

“Better get him to Ratchet then. He’s gonna kill us.”

Will’s vents stuttered, and he looked at them with pain filled optics, “I don’t want to go.”

“You have to, sweet spark. You are leaking energon.”

He tried to turn in Ironhide’s arms, and buried his face against the other mech’s plating. “No!”

“Yes, Will, you have to go.”

“I don’t want to. Ratchet will yell.”

“Most likely he will, but it will at Hide and I and not at you, Will. We are the ones to blame here. We pushed you into it. We are so sorry, Sweetspark.”

“I’ll be fine! Why can’t we just stay here?”

“No,” Hide said, pulling Will into his arms, and already heading for the door.

Will wiggled and whined, but Ironhide marched him over to the medbay, with Chromia trailing behind. “I’m sorry, Will. We have to. You might be seriously hurt. We love you and we want to protect you.”

“Then take me back home.”

“No, Will. I can’t.”

Ratchet scowled as they came into the room. “What’s wrong?”

“Will is hurt. We need to have you repair him.”

“What did you two do?”

Will looked away from them, “I want to go home!”

“We were a bit… overzealous in the berth.”

Ratchet scowled, “If you two idiots tore his valve while he is carrying I am going to reformat you into energon dispensers!”

“I want to go HOME!” Will bellowed, twisting in Ironhide’s grip and struggling in earnest. “Let me go.”

“Sweetspark, calm down. He’s torn, Ratchet. Frag, reformat us into whatever you want, just please fix it,” Ironhide pleaded.

Will vented hard, and eventually Ratchet retrieved something to sedate Will with. The mech was still struggling even as Ratchet pushed the injection into his main line.
As soon as Will went limp, Ratchet reached down and opened Will’s panel. He stared at the damage before throwing a glare at both Chromia and Ironhide. “What the frag did you think you were doing? Will is already so much smaller that the two of you and you two do this? What the frag were you doing? Trying to frag him at the same time?”

“Just fix him, please. You can lecture us later.”

Ratchet growled, but went to work, shooing them both away.

Ironhide fretted, pacing in the waiting area as the medic worked. “What was I thinking. This was the worst idea I’ve ever had. And now he’s hurt. I hurt him, Mia.”

“He will be fine,” Chromia said, trying to soothe her upset mate. “It will be okay.”

“No it won’t,” Hide ranted. “We hurt him.”

“Hide, he will understand. He will forgive us. We will just have to make it up to him is all.”

“No! No, ‘Mia. We hurt him! We said that we would never hurt him and we did. We broke our word to him. Even if he forgives us, I don’t think that I can.”

“Oh, Hide.”

Ironhide shook, “WE HURT HIM.”

“We did, but it was not purposeful, or malicious. It was an accident, and not one we will ever repeat again,” Chromia said trying to reason with her mech. “Please see reason Hide. He will not leave us for this. He loves us as much as we love him. Can’t you feel it through the bond?”

“I can feel his pain,” Ironhide said, shaking his head and trembling.

“I know. Ratchet is working on him though. He will fix him. You have to have faith in that.”

“I know Ratchet can fix him. He shouldn’t have to be fixed though! He would be fine if it wasn’t for us! We hurt him.”

“I know, Hide. It was an accident. Will knows that, he won’t blame us. You are not to blame. We both tried it. Will agreed to try it. No one is to blame.”

“I...maybe he didn’t understand. Maybe...I don’t know. I just...feel horrible about it,” Ironhide said, looking forlorn.

Chromia leaned in, wrapping her arms around Ironhide, “Oh, Hide. Sometimes I just don’t know about you.”

“Neither do I, Mia. I feel like the worse kinda slag.”

“You shouldn’t though.”

“Maybe not,” Hide agreed.
Chapter 8

Thundercracker smiled and looked down next to him. Index was curled up next to him on the couch, reading a datapad. The smaller mech was engrossed in his text and seemed to not notice the Seeker’s regard.

It had been two decacycles since the incident with the Decepticons in the rec room. Index was slowly recovering and was making good progress. He would walk to the library with Thundercracker again, and curl up with him in the reading area therein.

It had become Thundercracker’s favorite part of the sol.

Index reached the end of that datapad and looked up, smiling at Thundercracker. “It’s very kind of you to stay with me.”

“It is my pleasure,” Thundercracker said tentatively reaching out. “You know I am more than happy to help you.”

“I know,” Index wiggled against him. “I---just---I really appreciate you.”

“I really appreciate you as well, Index. You are a very sweet mech. Have you heard back from the medics about your appointment to determine your approximate spark age?”

Index nodded and blushed, looking away and staring intently at his servos holding the datapad. “Yes. They can see me next sol. So, I shall find out then. Do we really need to wait? I want you, Thundercracker.”

“I am afraid so, my spark. It would not be right otherwise.”

Index sighed, “I really do not care what people think. I just want you. I love you.”

Thundercracker vented softly. He was so hard to resist. He wanted nothing more than to sweep Index up into his arms and never let him go. “I know, we'll be together in time, my love. I promise you.”

“Will you go to the medic with me?”

“If you wish me to.”

“Please! I don’t like going by myself and Arcee isn’t allowed to come in with me any more unless it is an emergency.”

Thundercracker looked surprised at that, “Why is that?”

“Arcee started threatening mecha in the med bay if they looked at me in a way she didn’t like. Ratchet and First Aid said she is banned unless it is an emergency.”

Thundercracker’s optics widened, “Why would she do that?”

“I don’t know,” Index wharbled. “She’s too protective. She smothers me. I love her like a creator, but...I....I just can’t.” He clicked like a distressed sparkling, falling back in binary.

Thundercracker pulled him close, lightly petting his plating until he calmed again.
“I...I just wish that would stop. It makes everyone stare at me so. I don’t want them looking at me like that.”

Thundercracker gave a hug, stroking the back of his helm. “I know. You are okay though. You will be fine. It will get better, and I will stay by your side.”

Index looked up at him with his deep blue optics, “You really will? I know I am….whiney, and annoying-”

Thundercracker’s wings flared up angrily. “Who said that?!?”

Index’s shoulders hunched, “Mechs...does it matter?”

“Yes it matters. It matters very much. Tell me.”

Index clicked, “Tracks. He...he...says mean things. He says you are too good for me.”

Thundercracker growled, “You know that isn’t true.”

“But it is, you are too good for me. You are so wonderful and kind and sweet! And I am....not.”

Index looked away, staring at the floor.

Thundercracker reached down and tilted Index’s helm back up. “You are one who is wonderful. You are the sweetest and gentlest mech I have ever known. I am the one who is unworthy of you.”

Index blushed deeply. “Thundercracker...”

“You are. I had never hoped I would find what we have. I had only hoped for a political alliance. Perhaps one that would even end in friendship...and a mutual caring. This is so much more than I had hoped for. YOU are so much more than I had hoped for. It makes the waiting easy because I know that one day I will be with the mech I love more than anything.”

Index trembled, and looked up at Thundercracker. “I feel the same way.”

“I know you do.”

“I...I wish I was older. Then we could be together and you wouldn't have to leave me. I could recharge with you and spend all sol with you.”

Thundercracker rumbled, “You tempt me with things I can’t have, my sweetspark.”

Index blinked and looked at Thundercracker in curiosity. “Sweetspark?”

Thundercracker blushed but looked at Index lovingly. “It is a term of endearment.”

“Oh...” Index blushed brightly. “I see. I-I like it. You make my spark flutter.”

“You make mine flutter as well,” Thundercracker grinned. He know he looked and sounded like a lovesick youngling, but he just didn’t care anymore.

“Good. I’m glad. I...I can’t believe how happy you make me.”

“Neither can I. I have never been as happy as I am, with you. You make my life so much better just by being in it. You are the star the shines in my darkness.”

Index looked at Thundercracker with wide optics shining with love. “I love you so much,
Thundercracker!

Thundercracker gave him a soft smile, “And I love you, Index. So very, very much.”

OoOoOoOo

Prism followed the twins down the hall, a little smile on his face when he watched the twins holding their bitlets. They were still small, but they were well enough to function outside the incubator. Their tiny little winglets flapped contently as they rested against their sire’s chestplates.

“I’m so glad to be going home,” Prism sighed softly.

“We are so glad you are coming home too,” Sideswipe said cheekily. “I think Ratchet was getting tired of seeing us.”

Prism laughed, “I know I was getting tired of seeing him. I wanted to be home with you and our sparklings. They seem much calmer now that they are with their sires.”

Sideswipe adjusted his hold on Spectrum, “I know that we love being able to hold them finally. Isn’t that right Sunstreaker?”

Sunstreaker smiled down at Whitelight. “Yes. Look how perfect they are, Prism. We made them and they are perfect!”

Prism gave them both a goofy little grin, “We did and they are. So perfect. I’m so proud.”

They stepped into their habsuite, which had been sparkling-proofed nearly a decacycle ago by Mirage. It was cosier now. Mirage had brought in more seats covered in soft meshes, pillows, and blankets so Prism could curl up with his sparklings in comfort.

“This is different,” he said, looking around.

“Mirage wanted to make sure that we were ready for the sparklings. He brought over the meshes and pillows to make sure that there were plenty of soft things for the sparklings.”

“That was very nice of him. I’ll have to thank him for being so generous.”

“He also sent some of your old toys and things for them as well.”

Prism trilled, “Very kind of him. This is good. I was not expecting such a gesture. He was so...well you know.”

“I know,” Sideswipe said, “But I also know that he loves you.”

The twins settled down on the couch, holding the sleeping sparklings. Prism watched them, a smile growing on his face. “You both look good like that.”

“Why don’t you come and sit with us. Then everything will be perfect. We will all three of our sweetsparks with us.”

Prism laughed and carefully walked over to where they were seated on the couch. He sat between the twins who turned and nestled the small sparklings on Prism’s chestplates while they cuddled against Prism with a servo resting on one of the sparklings. “There now everything is perfect!”

OoOoOoOo
Flamewar curled up tight around her fledgelings. They were growing so very fast. They had already doubled in size and were slowly being weaned off of the sparkling energon she had been providing them.

She cracked and optic open and watched Predaking watching her. He was different now. Quieter, and kept a constant optic on her...as if he believed she would disappear.

“What is wrong, my mate?” She finally asked.

“What does it matter? I will not be that for long.”

“Predaking, what is wrong?”

“I know that you are looking at finding a new mate. You do not need to pretend. I see the way that the others look at you. You are going to cast me aside when the hatchlings have grown a little more.”

Flamewar stared at her mate in shock. “I have no idea what you mean! Why would I give you up?”

Predaking growled, “They will never accept you if you are my mate. I hold you back.”

“Do you think I care about something like that?” A growl rose from her own chest rousing the fledglings. Her hackles rose. “You are mine. MINE.”

He jerked back, staring at her, surprised by the anger in her voice.

“You cannot mean that.”

“I do, and you will not forget it,” Flamewar snapped.

Predaking nuzzled her lovingly, “You are a wonder, my love. I don’t deserve you.”

“But I deserve you. In fact, the fledglings are in recharge. Why don’t we go to our berthroom and you can give me what I deserve.”

Predaking purred deep in his chest. “I would like that, my queen. I would like that very much.”

She stood, circling him in a predatory manner. “Yes, you should treat me as one. Your Queen.” She moved close, nuzzling into him. “You do love me?”

“You know that I do.”

She rumbled again, rubbing her jaw against his before heading into the berthroom in her altmode. Predaking eagerly followed her into the room, “You are such a temptation my Flamewar.”

She laughed and then rolled over, baring her nubs to him. “Would you care to help drain my pouches?”

She gave a little shimmy, making the slightly swollen pouches jiggle. Predaking revved loudly and leapt forward, pinning her down on her back. He nibbled on the nubs, making her moan at how good it felt.

He nibbled, nipped and sucked, making her keen beneath him.

“Yeeesss...that is what I need.” She nipped at his neck, encouraging him. “More. Please. Please.” This was nice. Wonderful. But she wanted more. She always wanted more. She arched beneath him, moaning loudly. “My king, I need you.”
Predaking growled above her. “You do.”

She moved her tail to the side, baring her valve and he rumbled with desire. His spike slid out and he eased it into her slowly. “You are so lovely my queen. Shall we have another clutch? Our hatchlings are nearly grown.”

Flamewar rumbled and batted at his muzzle. “Don’t you dare! I want time with you and this clutch before we have another.”

He nipped at her shoulder, “I would like that as well.”

She tilted her hips up, and he moved into her languidly, savouring the way her head fell back and she purred. “Just like that,” Flamewar said her voice thick with pleasure. “Faster.”

Predaking chuckled, “Is that what you want?”

“Yeeeees!”

Flamewar moaned as Predaking picked up the speed of his thrusts, his spike rubbing against her nodes in all the best ways. Her mate had the best spike and knew how to please her better than any other mech would ever be able to.

She nuzzled him and gave his jaw a nip as he loomed over here. “Take me my King! Take me!”

Predaking thrust harder, driving into her and pushing her closer to an overload.

Overload washed through her and she screamed loudly. He kept moving, drawing it out until he reached his own peak. He roared above her, and collapsed to the side.

Flamewar purred feeling sated and content. This was the way it should be. He pulled her close, and she wiggled her hips making the spike that was still inside of her move. Her valve clench tight around him, and he groaned.

“Always so insatiable my queen! You are always so eager for more!”

Flamewar looked at him and smirked as she squeezed around his spike, “Always ready for you, my love. More! Give me more! I want you!”

Predaking began to lightly thrust into her again, growling lowly as he worked in and out of her tight valve. “So good, my queen! So perfect! So tight!”

Flamewar groaned at the quick pace. It felt so good! Predaking nipped at her jaw, tiny teasing nips that made her clench tighter around him. “So good! Yes! Yes! My love!”

The knot rubbed against the rim, hitting nodes and making them fire all over again. Flamewar’s valve rippled, and finally clamped down as another, smaller overload rolled through her systems. “So perfect,” she moaned, rocking against him. “Like we were made for one another.”

Predaking hummed in agreement. “We were. We are. We should be the rulers of Cybertron. Of our own kingdom.”

“I am content to just be your Queen, that is all that I need to be content my love. I need no kingdom, or Cybertron. I only need you.”

“You are too good to me my love. I will make you a Queen, even if you need only me. You deserve to be showered in riches and have all others bow before your loveliness.”
“I need no such thing, my love. I will help though if that is what you wish.”

Predaking nuzzled her neck, “I only want to please you, my brightspark.”

Flamewar purred, “A very noble pursuit.”

Predaking laughed, and settled around her, curling around his mate, and draping a protective wing over her. “You make me want to be.”

“You were always noble, my king. Always.”

OoOoOoOo

Weld shifted uneasily as he waited for Ratchet and First Aid to come into the med-bay. He wasn’t sure he was ready for what was going to happen. This was the sol that he was going to be taking his medical exam. He had to prove that he had learned enough from his instructors to become an official apprentice.

He had worked very hard and studied extra before he went into recharge last night. He hoped that he was able to do well and that it wouldn’t be too hard for him. He really wanted to be a medic and learn to help people.

“Are you ready?” Ratchet asked as he came up behind the smaller mech, and put a hand on his shoulder.

Weld gave a nervous nod, “As I will ever be.”

“Good, good. I’m sure you will excell.”

Weld was not so sure. He was really a bit worried. What would happen if he were to fail? He would not only be letting himself down, but Ratchet as well. “Thank you, Ratchet. I’m glad you think so,” he found himself saying.

“Good luck,” First Aid said, winking.

Weld flushed, and ducked his helm to hide it.

“Alright, are you ready to begin, Weld?”

Weld gulped, trying to keep from purging on either of the senior medics. “I-I think that I am. I-is the test really hard?”

Ratchet gave him a kind smile. “I am sure that you are going to do just fine.”

First Aid pointed to a small console in the back of the bay. “We set up your testing station there. I will be nearby so that if you have any questions, I can answer them if I am able to.”

Weld nodded, trying not to shake. He was terrified, but he tucked that feeling away as best he could as he sat down in front of the consul. He could do this. He had to do this.

The terminal turned on, and queued up the test. He could do this. He knew he could do this. He answered the questions slowly, losing his anxiety as he fell into the familiar rhythm of working through the test.

It went more quickly than he expected.
He wasn’t sure how long he was working on it but time seemed to have flown by.

He wasn’t sure how he had done but both Ratchet and First Aid were smiling at him. “Alright, Weld. It is time for the practical portion of the exam. We have the practice frame set up for you.”

Weld gulped, this was the part that he was most afraid to take. He was terrified that he would mess this part up and end up ‘killing’ the practice mech! He just knew that he was going to shame Ratchet and First Aid’s teaching!

He shuffled from ped to ped nervously, “Sure.” He took an invent, steadying himself. He had to have faith. He could do this. He just had to have faith in his abilities and Ratchet’s teaching.

He approached the practice frame, and picked up the datapad with the case information. “Diagnosis trials first?”

“Yes,” Ratchet said. “Good luck, kiddo.”

“Thank you, Ratchet.”

First Aid smiled at Weld, “For this portion, you will review the datapad, examine the ‘patient’ and make your diagnosis. Take you time, and be thorough”

Weld nodded and began to examine the patient. He slowly worked his way through case after case and then frowned at the final pad in his stack. “Aid? This pad doesn’t match this patient.”

Aid and Ratchet smiled, “Excellent job, Weld. You noticed that the symptoms on the datapad do not match. What do you do next?”

“I---I need to find the correct file,” he said, already scrolling through the test directory, until he found the file with the patients number. “Found it,” he said triumphantly, and completed his assessment. He was feeling much more relaxed by the end. He could do this. He knew he could.

First Aid took the finished pad from him, giving him a little smile. “Now on to second part of the practical..treatments. Ready?”

Weld gave a minute nod, “As I will ever be.”

First Aid handed the pad off to Ratchet who started sorting through the data. “Let me set up the simulation. Just give me a klik, and we will test your basic skills.”

Weld nodded, feeling overwhelmed. It was so much. So much. How would he ever be half the medic that his mentors were?

First Aid worked for a moment on a nearby training mech. “Alright, Weld. This is your patient. Examine him and make repairs.”

Weld walked up to the training mech frame and then took a step back in shock. The frame had a large gash that seemed to be leaking energon!

“Well, Weld? Repair your patient.”

Weld blinked and pulled his small toolkit from his subspace. He began to examine the ‘patient’ and then started to weld shut the large gash. He took his time to ensure that the weld was as neat as possible.

First Aid nodded, making notes on the datapad he was holding before moving to program on the the
next simulation. This one was more complicated than the last. Viral infection. Rust rash. Broken cables. He finally reached the last simulation, feeling all wrung out.

“Very good,” First Aid said. “Very, very good.”

Weld ducked his helm, “Thank you. How long b-before you get my scores?”

“No, Weld. Don’t worry. I’m sure you passed with flying colours.”

Weld gave him a wobbly smile. “I hope so.”

Ratchet came up behind him and put a warm servo on his shoulder. “I am sure that you did fine as well. Why don’t we go to the recreation room and get you something sweet to celebrate?”

First Aid watched his former mentor and smiled. ::You really have adopted him as your own sparkling haven’t you?::

Ratchet shot him a brief look that was stern and unyielding. ::I have. If anyone even looks at him the wrong the way… Aid, he is the sparkling I always desired. You were a joy to teach but you always had your brothers and family. Weld is just mine.::

::He is lucky to have you, Ratch,: First Aid finally said. ::I’m glad he has you.::

Ratchet’s optics narrowed, ::He went through a lot of bad things, Aid. You have no idea how bad it was, and I would never stand around and let someone put him through that again. I would offline them.::

::I have no doubt you would,: First Aid said trying to stay neutral.

“Something sweet would be nice,” Weld said, oblivious to the conversion going on around him. “I would love some sweet energon. Or…crystals. Do you think we could get some?”

Ratchet smiled down at the little mech, “I think that such an important occasion dictates that we get both.”

Weld looked at Ratchet in surprise and then bounced happily in place. “Really? Do you mean it? That will be amazing! Aid! Do you want to come too?”

First Aid had to smile, the little mechling was adorable and had bounced back better than they had ever dreamed. “I’ll catch up in a little bit, Weld. You and Ratchet go get your sweets.”

Weld wilted slightly, “Please, Aid. You helped me so much.”

“I’m glad you think so,” First Aid said, “But I’m sure I would just be in the way.”

Weld’s winglets fluttered, “You wouldn’t though. Would he, Ratchet?”

Ratchet grunted, “He’s got things to do, bitty. Let’s go get your treat.”

Weld frowned, something was going on and he did not entirely understand what. “I…I guess,” Weld said, full of uncertainty as Ratchet lead him away.

First Aid hated seeing the little mech so sad. “Have fun, Weld. I’ll work on getting your results from your exams. As soon as I get the results, I’ll come tell you how you did.”

Weld looked back at him in surprise. “Really? Okay! Then you can join us for the treats!”
Aid glanced at Ratchet briefly, “If you haven’t finished by the time I get there, then I will have some energon with you two.”

“Yay! Come on Ratchet! Let’s go get the treats! What kind of crystals do you want?”

Ratchet laughed, “Let’s see what they have first, bitty.”

Weld giggled and let Ratchet lead him out of the room, he glanced back watching First Aid before he was finally out of sight.

OoOoOoOo

Bulkhead stretched out underneath Wheeljack’s frame. Ratchet had told them that it would take time to get sparked up. Before the war it had taken some couples vorns of trying. Living with the humans had gotten him used to operating on their time though, and the thought of all that time stretched before him left Bulkhead feeling impatient.

“You okay, Bulk? You’ve been quiet all sol.”

“I’m fine, Jackie,” Bulkhead said, nuzzling into the other mech.

“You sure? You’ve been acting all...weird the last few.”

Bulkhead laughed and pressed a kiss to Wheeljack’s lips, pleased the mech wasn’t wearing his facial shield with him. “I have just been thinking.”

“About what?”

“How amazing a sparkling of our is going to be. How much I can’t wait to carry for you.”

Wheeljack laughed, “Is that an invitation to donate more fluids and trying again?”

Bulkhead allowed his panel to retract, “You are always welcome, you know you don’t need an invitation.”

Wheeljack purred, “That is what I like to hear.” He moved between Bulkhead’s legs, making himself at him. “You are always so wet, so ready.” His engine revved, as he pressed one digit inside Bulkheads valve and nearly moaned at the heat. “Want you.”


Wheeljack worked a second digit in, stretching the valve before him wide. He wanted the bitlet as much as Bulkhead, and he had been right...working at it was just as much fun as he had hoped.

“Jackie. I need you.”

“How could I deny such a plea?”

He slid his fingers out of Bulkhead’s valve and lined up his spike before slowly thrusting in. Bulkhead moaned beneath him as he slowly worked his spike inside of his dearest friend. Bulkhead looked so good like this, lost in pleasure.

He began to increase his thrusts, savoring the way his charge was building in his spark. Suddenly he felt and odd tugging sensation in his spark. What the frag was that?!

The pain hit again, more sharply this time. He doubled over, crying out. It hurt! It hurt so bad. He
had not realized he had even fallen over until Bulkhead was staring at him in shock.

“Jackie! What’s wrong?”

“Hurts. Hurts so bad.”

Bulkhead gasped and got up, pulling Wheeljack into his arms. “It’ll be okay, Jackie. I will get you to the medbay. They’ll fix you. Oh Jackie!” Bulkhead ran down the hall, Wheeljack was lax in his arms by the time he made it into the medbay. “Ratchet! I need your help! There is something wrong with Jackie?!”

Ratchet stared, “What did he do now?”

“I don’t know! We were, uh,-”

“Did you two try to spark? Well what else is news? What happened?”

“He was, uh, trying to spark me and he collapsed in pain!”


“No,” Bulkhead shook his helm, looking down completely mortified at Ratchet’s line of questioning. “Ratchet!”

“I had to ask,” the medic said. “Well….open up Wheeljack. Let me see what is going on with you.”

Wheeljack moaned, and tried to curl up into a ball. “No. Don’t wanna. Hurts.”

Ratchet huffed, “Oh, for rusts sake. Open up. I can’t fix you if I can’t see what is going on.”

Wheeljack groaned and let his plates open. Ratchet plugged in his diagnostic pad and leaned in, prodding at the mechs spark before leaning away. “Well, that would explain things. You are sparked.”

Wheeljack stared at Ratchet for a long klik and then his whole frame slumped on the table. Bulkhead started at the shocking sight and blinked hard. What had just happened?! “Ratchet?! What happened?! Is he okay? What do you mean he is sparked? I am the one who is supposed to carry!”

“Tell that to the sparkling, Bulkhead! His spark is the one the sparkling is on. And the big idiot is fine. He just fainted in shock.”

“Are-are you sure? I mean…we were…were were trying to spark me up. I was supposed to be the one carrying.”

“Well, I’m sorry, but you aren’t this time around, Bulkhead. Wheeljack’s sparkling it pretty far along. It should be moving down to his gestation tank. And honestly…it’s energy is lower than it should be. He was in pain because you need to make more energy donation. It was leaching off of his spark.”

Wheeljack moaned, “Bulkhead…I had the oddest recharge flux.” He onlined his optics and froze. “Frag…I wasn’t dreaming.”

“No, you really weren’t,” Ratchet agreed. “Let me get you some energon, that will raise your energy levels.”

“How did this happen? Bulk is the one who is supposed to be carrying!”
Ratchet gave a vague shrug, “Your spark seemed best to the sparkling. Take it up with it. It seems to be quite content with where it is.”

“It? When will you find out if it is a mech or a femme?”

“It varies from mech to mech, Wheeljack. We’ll keep monitoring both of you and will let you know as soon as we know for sure.”

“This makes no sense though! Bulkhead was the one who was so determined to spark!”

“Sometimes things do not work the way we think it will,” Ratchet shrugged. “I would think you would be more worried about your sparkling’s well being than your own comfort.”

“Of course we care about the sparkling!” Bulkhead said, looking offended. “We both want it very much. I guess it doesn’t matter who carries it as long as it’s healthy.”

“Good,” Ratchet nodded. “Despite everything it is developing at the right rate. You need to make sure you share energy more regularly, and I will send some mineral supplements home with you. I think it’s best if you go on berthrest for the time being. I want to monitor your energy levels to make sure everything really is going the way it should.”

Wheeljack looked shaken at that pronouncement.

“What do you mean by that? Is something wrong?”

“Your sparkling is undernourished but otherwise healthy. You two will be coming back every three sols so I can monitor your progress.”

“Of course Ratchet!” Bulkhead leaned closer to Wheeljack, taking his servo in his own. “Whatever is best for our sparkling.”

Wheeljack stared, “Yeah...whatever the kid needs.” he looked completely overwhelmed. Overwhelmed in a what he had not even been on the Nemesis.

Ratchet nodded, “Good. Let me get some additives for you and you can be on your way again. I want to see your aft back in three sols. Do you hear me?”

“Yeah, doc. We’ll be there. I promise,” Wheeljack said, still looking dazed.

Ratchet went to the cabinet and came back with a jar that he pushed into Bulkhead’s hand. “He needs a full scoop of that in his energon. We need to get you on a schedule. There is no waiting around until your tank is full. One cube at least once a joor. We might up it from there, but I want to take your readings before we do anything more drastic.”

“Frag Doc, my tank isn’t that big.”

“Your tank is fueling for two. You need to keep it as full as possible. You are to keep sipping on a cube at all times until you are about to purge. Your sparkling needs all the energy it can get.”

“I guess.”

“Don’t guess. Do. Your sparkling need that fuel and either you feed it or I strap you to a table and put an energon line in you.”

Wheeljack’s optics widened. He didn’t doubt that Ratchet would too. “Sure Doc. I’ll do that.”
“I’ll make sure he does,” Bulkhead chirped in enthusiastically.

Wheeljack glared. It wasn’t supposed to be this way. He wasn’t supposed to be the one stretched out on the medberth and ordered to fuel until his tank hurt. It wasn’t fair. He huffed, and would have said something snarky if he wasn’t suddenly picked up and cuddled against Bulkhead’s chest. It was undignified.

“Take care of him,” Ratchet said.

“Will do, Ratch.”

“See that you do! Take your mate back to your berth, Bulkhead.”

“Yes, Ratchet. We will see you in a few sols.”

“Hrmphh.”

OoOoOoOo

Perceptor looked down at the limp frame that lay on the medical berth, far too still for such a vibrant personality. What had those brutes done to her? She should never be so still. Nothing had changed in the last decacycle, and she remained unresponsive.

He took his customary seat, and took her hand into his own. Her plating was cold to the touch. The only thing that would have been more worrying would have been if she was greying at the edges. Luckily they were spared that. It didn’t make her wake up, though.

She had been nearly lucid when they had brought her to the medbay, and had not woken since. It was terrifying to perceptor. he kept thinking that he had lost her. He would never hear her beautiful voice again, or see her shining optics.

It was...unconscionable.

“Verity. Please wake up. Please. I love you so much.”

He had not treated her as well as he should, often making her feel like a bother. He should have made more time for her. She deserved more, deserved better. When she woke up, he would make it up to her.

He had been working on research into the culture of her original species to try and discover what she would like for him to do during their courting. He had found a few ideas that he thought she would enjoy.

Now, she just had to wake up and come back to him.

Had he not been paying such close attention to her he would have missed her finger twitching slightly. He gasped. His ventilation caught as she squeezed his hand ever so slightly.

“Percy?” she croaked, her optics coming on dimly. “Where...am I?”

“Verity!!! Oh Primus! RATCHET! RATCHET! SHE’S AWAKE!”

Verity winced at the noise, offlining her optics, “Head hurts,” she said, her voice going to static.

“I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry. I thought I had lost you,” Perceptor babbled. “I thought you were never going to wake up again and I just...I just don’t want to think about a world without out.”
“Move out of the way, Perceptor! I need to exam her!” Ratchet pushed Perceptor to the side but he still watched Verity with wide optics. He felt a rush of hope and joy in his spark at seeing her open her optics again.

Ratchet began to examine her frame, scanning her with a medical pad. Perceptor felt his spark freeze when he saw Ratchet frown at the readouts. “Ratchet? Is she okay? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing rest and some good energon won’t cure,” Ratchet finally said. “There doesn’t seem to be any processor damage.”

“Good to know,” Verity snorted.

“No lip from you, young lady,” Ratchet said, and fiddled with the drip, increasing the flow. “We were very worried about you.”

“I can tell,” Verity said, her optics falling on Perceptor. “W-what happened?”

“You were attacked by a ‘Con,” Perceptor said, shifting from ped to ped.

Verity stared at him and then her optics widened. “Updraft! Is she okay? What happened to the Cons? What about Prism and Index? Are they okay?”

Perceptor gave a small smile. How like her to wonder how others were doing. “They are alright. Prism has had his sparklings and Updraft was rescued before things got too bad.”

She sighed and leaned back on the medical berth. “I am so relieved. They were so scared and that horrible mech with the wings! He kept pawing at Updraft and she was so upset.”

“He was...taken care of,” Perceptor said.

“Good. i’m glad. Can I leave here now. No offense Ratchet, but I don’t like handing out in the medbay.”

“I’m afraid not, Verity. I need to monitor you for a few more joors...and there is the other issue.”

“Other issue?” she frowned, “What do you mean?”

“Move your legs, Verity.”

She tried to, Perceptor could tell, and then she started to panic. “I can’t! I can’t. What the fuck? Am I paralyzed?”

“Nothing so serious,” Ratchet said. “Your neural relays are healing. It just take time with this sort of injury.”

Perceptor held Verity and looked at Ratchet, “How long until her relays have healed?”

Ratchet didn’t make optic contact with either of them. “No less than a vorn. Maybe longer. Neural relays are delicate and the nanties take awhile to repair them.”

Verity stared at Ratchet in shock. “A vorn? 83 fucking years of being paralyzed? Maybe longer?” Perceptor put a servo around Verity. His poor femme. She was always so active and full of energy. To be laid so low must be devastating to her.

“I am afraid so,” Ratchet said. “It will be slow going, but I know you have the strength to pull through this.”
Verity panted, her core temperature rising as panic set in. “H-how am I going to...How....I don’t...”

“It will be okay, Verity. We will get through this together,” Perceptor said. I promise.”

Verity’s optics widened, “Percy?”

“We will get through this together,” Perceptor said again. “I---I love you, Verity.”

Verity stared at him for a long moment. “Oh Percy!”

Perceptor gave her an attempt at a smile. “I apologize. I have been most inattentive and an unmitigated boor by expecting you to fulfill my culture’s courting requirements but learning nothing of yours. I have treated you shamefully but I vow that I will make it up to you.”

Verity blinked at him, and unraveled what he was trying to say to her, this time at least it was easy enough. She gave him a shaky smile. “I love you too Percy. I really do. I didn’t like us...uh...fighting. Not at all.”

Perceptor gave her a brilliant smile,”I have been thinking about it, and I have a few ideas on how we might endeavour to compromise. If you are willing to listen...”

“I’m always willing to listen,” she said, lip twitching up in amusement.

“Good, good. I am happy to hear that. Very happy, in fact. Perhaps we can try this thing called dating.”

“I think we were already doing that, sweetheart.”

Perceptor looked at her in surprise. “Not really. I want to do it properly, you deserve that. You have been trying so hard to give me the courting that I always hoped to have, please allow me to do the same for you.”

Verity looked delighted but then frowned. “I love the sound of that. Our dates won’t be much fun though. I can’t exactly go many places at the moment now can I can?”

“I can carry you,” Perceptor said. “Wherever you want to go. It would be my honor.”

Verity stared, “Really? Are you...ah...sure about that, Percy?”

“I’m positive,” Perceptor said and took her hand in his own again. “I do not want to be parted from you again. I---I had much time to think on this, Verity. Please trust my intentions.”

Verity stared at him and finally nodded, “I....thank you then.”

“You have nothing to thank me for. I have been, forgive the expression, but an aft. You deserve better and I will strive to be better for you.”

Verity looked at Perceptor with soft optics and smiled at him. “You are all that I want, Percy.”

“Enough of this drivel you two! Perceptor! Get out of my medbay! Go wash your frame, drink a cube or two and get a proper recharge. Verity will be here in the morning. You can visit again then.”

Verity frowned, as did Perceptor. “I don’t want him to go! I love him!”

Ratchet gave her a perturbed look. “Whose medbay is this, Verity?”
“It’s yours but---”

“No buts. You need rest,” Ratchet said.

“I’ve had nothing BUT rest for...what...a month now? Fuck, Ratchet, let me spend some time with my boy.”

Ratchet threw up his hands and grumbled. It sounded like ‘stupid younglings’ to Verity’s audials, but she chose to ignore it. “Whatever. Don’t make a racket. There are other mechs in here.”

“Not like we are going to be doing anything naughty,” Verity huffed back. “What do you think he is going to do? Ravish me in the middle of the medbay?”

“Stranger things have happened in this medbay, missy. So that is enough of your sass.”

Perceptor blushed and couldn’t make optic contact. “Ratchet! May I remind you that Verity is injured and in no condition for such shenanigans.”

Verity smiled, “Not to mention, Ratchet, that eager as I am to share myself with Percy this is not the location I had in mind for claiming his seals.”

Ratchet opened his mouth, and ended up shutting it with a snap. “Again, stranger things have happened.”

“We will behave,” Perceptor said primly and took the seat beside Verity. “I promise you that, on my honor as an alpha.”

“From anyone else that would be an absurd claim, but from you I will take it.”

Verity leaned back, letting herself settle back against the meshes. “Thank you. I really appreciate it.”

Ratchet shrugged, walking away he finally gave them their privacy.

“Are you okay, Percy?” Verity asked, watching the red mech beside her.

“I am now. You are online. That changes everything.”

Verity nodded, not sure how to take that comment. “I guess so.”

“I was so worried when I saw you lying there on the floor of the rec room. It became worse when I found out that you were not waking up. I spent as much time as I could here with you so you would not be alone when you did wake up. You were unconscious for so long that they were not certain whether you would wake up or not. I don’t know what I would have done if I had lost you. You are so dear to me already.”

Verity looked at Percy in surprise at his spark-felt words to her.

“I just...I don’t want to imagine life without you again,” Perceptor said, holding on tightly to her hand. “I was so terrified, Verity. So terrified. You were just so still.”

“I’m here, Percy. I’m not going anywhere. Promise,” she gave him a shaky little smile. she was still worried about her legs, but it could be worse. At least she would be able to walk eventually.

OoOoOoOo

Will shifted on the berth. It was impossible to get into a comfortable position at this point. His spinal
strut ached in the worse sort of way. He was awkward, and big. So big it was nearly impossible for him to get around without help.

“How are you feeling?” Ironhide asked, perching on the edge of the berth.

“Go away! You have done enough damage as it is! I hate you!”

Chromia walked in, “Why don’t you get him some warm energon to sip, Hide? He is getting close and has to be aching something fierce to be this grumpy.”

“Good idea, Mia. I’ll go get-”

“I don’t want any slagging energon! I want you two to- Ahhhhh!”

Ironhide and Chromia immediately hurried over to him and took his servos in theirs. “Will? Are you okay?”

Will whimpered, curling in on himself. “Hurts. Hurts so bad.”

Chromia and Ironhide exchanged worried glances.

“Pick him up Hide, let’s get him to the medbay,” Chromia finally said with a frown.

“Leave me alone,” Will moaned and tried to push Ironhide away. “Let go of me.”

“Can’t do that, sweet spark,” Ironhide said as he picked up the smaller mech.

“Put me down.”

Ironhide carried him towards the door, and out on the hall.

“I hate you both. Hate you. This is all your fault,” he said, his vocalizer spatting static.

“Shh! We will be at the medical bay soon! Ratchet will be able to help you!”

“You two did this to me! I am going to kill you!”

“Shh, take it easy Will. Ironhide and I will get you to the bay in time. You will be done in no time.”

Will’s vents came fast. “Put me down! Just leave me alone.”

“I can’t do that,” Ironhide said. He hugged Will to him. “Just calm down. We are almost there.”

“It will be okay,” Chromia murmured. “It will be over soon,” Chromia said, touching his arm.

Will cried out, arching against Ironhide. His cry rose into a shrill scream breaking the quiet of the hallway.

Mechs looked up and back to see who had made such a sound and then they all hurried to the sides of the hall to get out of their way. Ironhide rushed through the halls as Will moaned and screamed in his arms.

“Hang on just a little while longer, sweet spark.” Chromia crooned at him as she raced alongside Ironhide. “Soon we’ll have our sparkling out of you and you will feel so much better.”

“I am going to kill you both! Kill you and destroy the evidence! They will never find your frames!”
“It’s okay, darling. We know that you hurt. You’ll be fine as soon as we get you to the med bay.”

“I won’t be fine! i will never be fine,” he hissed thrashing as they finally went through the medbay doors. “I’m going to offline you both. I hate you! I HATE YOU!”

Ratchet stared for one moment before motioning them to follow him into one of the private rooms. Ironhide sat Will gently down onto the medberth, moving out of the way as Ratchet started working on Will. He set up an energon drip as soon as the mech was resting on the berth, and went to the draws bringing back several syringes.

“This is gonna hurt, Will. I can numb the pain, but I need you lucid.”

Will vented hard, leaning back against the berth. “I thought you said this wouldn't hurt! You lied!”

“Shh, you are okay. I don’t know why it is hurting you so badly. It shouldn’t be this painful for you.”

“Liar! Fragging liar! I hate you both! You two are never touching me again!”

“Ratchet. Why is he hurting so badly? It should not be so painful! Help him!”

Ratchet jacked in, and looked at his diagnostic pad, “There is pressure on his neural lines. He needs to calm down. He’s upsetting the sparklings and they are trying to tear their way out.”

Will whimpered, “It hurts.”

“Give it a klik. The medicine will start working in your systems. I’m going to go in a block some of your pain centers. You need to ex-vent and calm down,” Ratchet said in an even tone.

Will finally relaxed against the berth and offlined his optics. “I want to go home.”

“Sorry, sweetspark, but you have to be here. The medics are going to help you. You are going to be just fine. The sparklings will be here before you know it.”

“I hate you! You both suck! I hate you and the sparklings! You have ruined my life!”

Chromia and Ironhide both looked hurt at that. “Sweetie, you don’t really mean that, surely. We love you.”

“You don’t! You just wanted someone to frag! Well, you got what you wanted. Now leave me alone!” He vented hard, lubricant began to drip down his cheekplates. “You don’t care about me. You just wanted me to have your sparklings.” He cried harder, on the edge of hysteria.

Ratchet scowled at them both, “I think if might be best if you waited outside.

“Ratchet,” Ironhide said, “He’s---”

“He needs to calm down, and you are both upsetting him.”

“Fine, we'll wait outside,” Chromia said, and grabbed Ironhide’s arm. “We love you Will. Please remember that.”

Will whimpered, “Don’t. You don’t. No one cares.”

Ratchet gave the two of them a stern look, “You two out! We are going to have a talk before you two get back in as well.”
Chromia and Ironhide frowned at Ratchet, but First Aid began to herd them out the door. “We deserve to stay here! Those are our sparklings too!”

“Get out already! We have bigger issues than you right now!”

First Aid shut the door behind them as he pushed them out and turned back to Ratchet. “What is his status?”

“Transformation is beginning, but it’s going far slower than we want. Lay back, Will, I need to look into your systems again.”

Will whined but did as Ratchet asked. He stared up at the ceiling, drifting in and out of recharge as the mech’s worked on him.

“This isn’t right,” Ratchet said, motioning First Aid to step beside him. “The transformation sequence is nothing like...oh frag....”

Aid looked at him in worry, “Ratchet? What’s wrong?”

“He isn’t transforming in the normal sequence because he is having this sparkling the way human females do- did. They are going to emerge through his valve.”

First Aid stared at him in shock, “Through where?!!”

“His valve. He is delivering in the same manner as human females would when they were organic.”

Will whimpered from the medberth. “Please make it stop hurting. Please. It hurts so much.”

“I know,” Ratchet said, hooking up a full frame scanner. “I’m sorry Will, we can’t numb you completely. It will be over soon, and you will feel better. Just think about your sparklings. You will have them in your arms soon.”

First Aid watched the scan, frowning. “I see. This is fascinating. Do you think they will all be like that?”

“More than likely. It merits investigation, and should be updated in their medical files if that is the case.”

Ratchet moved around to the end of the berth, “Come on, Will I need you to move so I can check your progress.”

Will moaned and didn’t move. “No! Hurts! Go away! Get these things out of me! They said it wouldn’t hurt! They lied! All they do is lie!”

First Aid moved next to Ratchet, “He is really going to-? Out of his valve?! Primus! That sounds terrible!”

Ratchet sighed, “It is. It was the main cause of death for females for most of humanity’s history.”

He turned, studying the readouts and the scan. “I think...the bitlet is moving into position. It shouldn’t be long.” He turned back to Will, “I’m going to need you to pull your legs up...I need to see---”

“Don’t touch me!” Will howled, a contraction rippling through his frame eliciting a scream. “Leave me alone!!!”

“I can’t do that Will,” Ratchet murmured and pushed Will’s legs apart. He looked down, not surprise
that Will’s valve was already bared and the first sparkling beginning to crown. “I need you to relax and vent. It isn’t going to be long. The first one is in position. It’s just going to take a few pushes.”

Will groaned. His back boughed as a contraction wracked his frame, and he fell back limply onto the berth.

“Stay with me, Will. You are doing fine! Keep going. Push.”

First Aid stared in horror at the image of the sparkling emerging from the other mech’s valve. It looked nothing like the normal emergences that he had assisted with before. This was a strange and freakishly bizarre occurrence!

“How long does this take usually Ratchet?”

“I have no idea! Just be ready to take this sparkling so I can catch the second one afterwards.”

First Aid stared, “Ah...sure.”

Will gave one last push, screaming as the sparkling was pushed out the channel. Ratchet caught the little mech, and grabbed a cooling blanket before passing the sparking over to First Aid.

It took it’s first intake of air, and let out a bellow. “Oh, he’s beautiful,” First Aid cooed at the sparkling, Wiping him down before wrapping him a clean cloth.

“Doing good, Will. The other sparkling is lined up. I need you to give me a good push, okay?” Ratchet said.

“Please,” Will whimpered. “I don’t want to. It hurts.”

“Just a little more Will and then you won’t hurt anymore. The quicker you finish, the quicker you will stop hurting.”

Will moaned as his frame trembled as he tried to push the second sparkling out of his frame. He grunted and groaned as he tried to get it out of him. He wanted this to be over as soon as possible. Then he could give the things to Chromia and Ironhide, and he could get back to caring for Annabelle.

He gave one final push and it was out. His frame felt wrung out, and weak. He collapsed back against berth, venting hard.

“It’s a femme,” Ratchet said, cleaning off the squalling creature.

Will used what strength he had, and rolled onto his side, his back to Ratchet. “Make it stop hurting,” he said, curling up.

“Do you want to hold them?” First Aid asked. “They need to be close. It helps the creator bond.”

“Don’t want them,” Will whimpered, curling into a small ball.

“Will, they need you,” First Aid said frowning.

“Aid, go put them in an incubator, please.”

“But---”
“Aid. Do as I say,” He crossed around the other side of the medical berth, and increased the flow of the numbing agent in the energon drip. “Will, look at me. What’s wrong?”

Will curled up into a ball and said nothing, looking through Ratchet like he wasn’t there. His optics were wide and blank. It was very worrying. “Will? Will?!”

When there was still no response, he turned to First Aid. “Watch Will and the sparklings. I need to go have a little chat with two afthelms!”

Ratchet stormed out of the medbay over to the two mechs who were standing in the hallway outside. “What the frag did you two do that mech?”

Ironhide and Chromia looked up at him in shock, “What do you mean? Is Will okay? Are the sparklings alright?”

“The sparklings are fine,” Ratchet snapped, “Will is not. What the frag were the two of you thinking. He is an emotional mess.”

“What?” Ironhide asked, optics widening.

“He thinks you just used him for the sparklings. He doesn’t think you love him. You were going to bond with him? Weren’t you?”

“We talked about it,” Chromia said, “but...it just...never quite seemed like the right time.”

“Well, congratulations. You’ve made a mess of things,” Ratchet snapped, “It’s going to be hard to fix.”

Ironhide stared, “I--oh frag.”

“Where did you think this was going to lead? He is convinced that you two used him to carry the sparklings and that you don’t really want him- just the sparklings!”

“He- what?! He said that?! We would never! We love him! We love him, his sparkling and our sparklings! I thought it was clear to him how we felt!? He had to feel it in our fields!”

Ratchet gave Ironhide a flat look. “Read it in your fields? You’re kidding right? He can barely tell when he is projecting a field let alone read other peoples!”

“I---I didn’t realize that,” Ironhide said, shifting from ped to ped. “I---we---oh frag. We love him so much. I thought he understood. We love him and Annabelle so much.”

“Then you’d better fragging tell him because he’s near catatonic,” Ratchet growled.

“We will fix this,” Chromia said looking just as shaken. “Can we...can we go see him? Please?”

Ratchet growled, “Fine. Don’t make it worse or I swear I will reformat you into a toaster.”

Ironhide and Chromia exchanged frowns. Neither were sure what a toaster was, but it didn’t sound good at all.

They had to fix this. For Will and the sparklings’ sakes if nothing else.
Chapter 9

Updraft shivered and moved closer to Blades as a group of loud and overcharged mechs staggered out of the rec room. Blade’s pet her rotors gently until she finally relaxed against him.

“They wouldn't hurt you,” He said, opticing the mechs making the ruckus. “I wouldn't let them.”

She ex-vented slowly, trying to make the panic rising through her systems abate. “I know. I know. But I can’t--I---”

“It’s okay,” he said with far more patience than he had for anything thing else.

She leaned against him as they entered the rec room, she hated coming in here anymore. She just wanted to grab their cubes and get out of there. It was always too loud and noisy here!

Blades led her to a quieter section and an open booth. “Here, you sit here and I will grab our cubes. I will be right back.”

Updraft shifted nervously in her chair. She still didn’t feel safe when he left her, even when she was safely within the confines of the base. She hugged herself, hunching down until Blades finally returned.

Everyone kept telling her it would be better, but it really didn’t seem like that was the case. Each sol was a trial. If it wasn’t for Blades she would not even bother to get out of her berth. He took very good care of her.

“Here, drink this,” he said gruffly, and pushed a cube towards her.

She gave him a small smile and took the cube gratefully. “Thank you, Blades.”

Blades just gave her a brief flash of a smile and a grunt of acknowledgement. She turned to her cube and took a small sip. She still wasn’t too thrilled with the taste of energon, it wasn't bad by any means but it was...plain. She wished it had more flavor.

Her thoughts were interrupted when a servo was slammed down in front of her on the table and two mechs stood at the side of the booth she and Blades were at. “Hey there, femme. What is a hot looking piece of aft doing with a loser like this mech?”

Updraft trembled as the mech loomed over her, and gave her a lascivious once over that made her feel dirty.

Blades narrowed her optics and put a protective arm around Updraft, “Go away, Roughshod. We don't need your kind here.”

The mech barked a laugh, "My kind?"

"Processorless jerks," Blades said sweetly.

Roughshod roared and threw a punch at Blades. Blades easily caught it and returned the favor, punching Roughshod hard in the faceplate and knocking him back a few steps. “There! I told you that you aren’t wanted here!”

Updraft shrank in her corner of the small booth, her optics wide at the fight between the two mechs. She hated when people fought, she had never liked it. She was about to ask Blades if they could just
leave and go somewhere else when a servo on her shoulder made her yelp. She found herself dragged from the booth and held against one of the mechs who had arrived with the one Blades was fighting “Hey Boss! Let’s make it interesting! Winner gets the femme!”

Updraft’s spark stuttered and she fought against the mech, turning in his grip her claws sank into armour plating, ripping. “NONONONONONO! I will KILL YOU!”

The mech roared in pain and tried to push Updraft away, but the femme clung on, her rotars flaring out in agitation, and then anger.

“I’ll kill you!” She screamed, loosing what little grip she had on the present, and probably would have killed the mech had she not been bodily lifted off the mech by Springer, who ran up with Prowl.

The Praxian’s wings flared up angrily, “What is the meaning of this?”

The mech who had grabbed Updraft began to point at her, “The femme and Blades went crazy and attacked us for no reason!”

Blades had Roughshod in a headlock and had dragged him towards Updraft when she had begun to scream. “Prowl, sir. Updraft and I came in for a cube. We came over here since Updraft has….been nervous around crowds since the incident. This corner is deserted so we chose the booth to have our fuel. Roughshod here came in and started hitting on her. I told him to go away and he tried to punch me. So, I punched him back. we started to fight and then I heard that mech say that ‘the winner got the femme’ and Updraft started to scream.”

Prowl’s wings flared higher for a minute and then turned to Updraft. Updraft was trembling and shaking in Springer’s grip, tears running down her face. “Updraft what happened?”

Updraft pointed at Roughshod. “Blades and I were fueling when he came up and started...oogling me. Blades tried to get him to go away but they started to fight.”

She paused, hiccuping, then pointed at the mech she had attacked. “He grabbed me and pulled me from the booth, saying that the ‘winner’ got to keep me. I...I panicked and I kept seeing...seeing /him// again and, and-”

Prowl held up his servo. “That’s fine, Updraft. I have heard enough.”

Her vents hiccupped and she whimpered, crying silently. Springer sat her on her peds and put a comforting hand on her shoulder. “Why don’t I take her to the infirmary Prowl? She seems...distressed.”

Prowl considered it for a moment and then nodded, “A good idea. I will deal with the rest of them.” He focus settled on Roughshod and Skyshift, “We have spoken about you starting fights far too many times. Report to the brig, now.”

Roughshod opened his mouth to protest, but was cut off by Prowl before he could, “You won’t be leaving the brig if you say anything. Primus help me, I am tired you causing incidents like this.”

Roughshod and his crew scurried away, with Prowl glaring at them. As soon as they were gone, Prowl turned to Updraft and Blades. “Blades, you have been warned about fighting, no matter who started it. You have three cleaning details over the next decacycle.”

Blades scowled but nodded. He knew that it was fair even if he didn’t like it. “What will happen to Updraft?”
“Nothing. She was defending herself if I am hearing this correctly. She was afraid of bodily harm. There is not punishment for that,” Prowl said.

Blades nodded, “Good. Can I go see her...please?”

Prowl looked at the mech, “You may. Try not to get into anymore trouble.”

“I won’t,” Blades said, running away.

OoOoOoOo

Spike moaned as Grimlock spread his fingers in his pussy. He had had no idea how good it felt! Girls had gotten the better end of the deal that was for sure. Sure, screwing was fun, but letting Grimlock screw him was the best ever.

Grimlock removed his fingers from his pussy, making Spike moan. “Me Grimlock think him Spike ready for me Grimlock’s spike. Him Spike want me Grimlock’s spike?”

Spike hated when Grimlock made him beg. He spread his legs and reached down to spread his pussy open to Grimlock’s eyes. “Fuck me, Grimlock! I want your spike! Take me, hard!”

“Me Grimlock don’t know...does him Spike really want it?”

Spike groaned, “Stop being mean and fuck me already!”

Grimlock made a tutting noise, “Him Spike have a dirty mouth today.”

“If you are a good mech and fuck me already I will show you just how dirty my moth can get,” Spike said and hitched his hips up. “Come’on.”

Grimlock laughed, “Him Spike in a hurry?”

“Yes, I’m in a hurry. The minute Rex starts crying Sludge will march him right back here. Now hurry up.”

“Him Spike silly, Him Sludge knows how to take care of sparklings.”

Spike moaned, he wanted Grimlock to fuck him already. He was so wet now and more than ready to get fucked. He didn’t have to worry like he did at first, the reformat that First Aid had done made it so much easier for Grimlock to fuck him. His brother’s too!

That had been a surprise to learn, that the dinobots had expected to share him. A good surprise anyway, he was always getting banged by one of them anymore it seemed. He honestly had no idea which one was Rex’s father, but going by looks it was definitely Grimlock’s.

“Hurry up and fuck me or I’ll go find one of your brothers!”

Grimlock growled, “No, him Grimlock not sharing this sol.”

Spike snorted, “Oh? You think so?”

“Him Grimlock knows so,” he said, and pushed Spike’s legs up and entered him with one hard thrust.

Spike threw his helm back, moaning. This was exactly what he needed, “Yeees!”
Grimlock set a brutal pace, driving his spike in and out at a frantic pace that made Spike shiver all over. Grimlock always made sure that he could barely walk the next day when he got into one of these moods.

Spike was pretty sure it was one of those moods that had resulted in little Rex. He moaned as Grimlock hit the end of his pussy, it always felt so good when he did that! “Him Spike moans so pretty for me Grimlock!”

Spike’s only answer was another groan and a little whimper. It felt so good to be stretched like this.

“Him Spike have the tightest valve. Made for me Grimlock.”

Spike rolled his hips up, grinding himself against Grimlock, “Of course I was. I’m the best.”

Grimlock pulled Spike’s hips up, changing the angle, making Spike writhe beneath him. “Him Spike is.”

Spike moaned and thrust up to meet Grimlock’s thrusts. “Yes! Give it to me! I want more! Grimlock!”

Grimlock growled and gripped Spike’s hips harder as he pounded into the small frame. Spike loved it when Grimlock really took him like this. He had never imagined that he would ever like things like this but he did. “Me Grimlock make sure him Spike knows him Spike belongs to Me Grimlock.”

He was going to be so sore tomorrow, but right now...it felt amazing. It felt so AMAZING. More so when the overload finally hit him. He screamed, falling limp against the berth. “Frag yes, I’m your mech.”

Grimlock pulled out, still hard as before making Spike whimper as the mech rolled him over onto his front. He clutched at the mesh weakly as Grimlock slid back in.

“Him Spike so pretty taking Me Grimlock’s spike. Me Grimlock frag him Spike all sol.”

The idea of spending the entire day getting fucked through the bed made him clench around Grimlock inside him. He loved Grimlock’s cock, spike, whatever so much. It made him feel so good and Grimlock definitely knew how to use it. “Yes! All day! Take me!”

“Him Spike so greedy! Him Spike is spike slut.” Grimlock laughed at his own joke.

“Oh, I am,” Spike agreed, and rocked back into each thrust. Charge was already building up again, making him whine pitifully. “Yeees, harder! Now.”

“Him Spike demanding,” the mech laughed again, but did as Spike wished, slamming into him until Spike was seeing stars.

Spike let Grimlock take control. He knew that he had nothing to fear from the huge mech. Grimlock had been an amazingly considerate partner even when he had been his original size. “Course I am demanding. I want more of you. You fill me up so good! Always want more!”

“Me Grimlock give him Spike much more. Him Spike good mech, takes me Grimlock’s spike so well!”

Spike purred, “I do.”

OoOoOoOo
Will curled around Annabelle. The child was fast asleep. Her warmth and presence dulled the ache in his spark. He could still feel the sparklings reaching reaching for him, but he kept his side of the bond sealed tight. They weren’t his. They would never be his.

Chromia and Ironhide had what they wanted now. They would leave him and Annabelle alone now. He felt so used. His spark yearned for the sparklings that he would never see but he knew it was useless. Just like him. Useless.

Annabell shifted and he pressed a kiss to her head. She was all that he had left. His only reason for existing anymore. Just her and him.

Like it had been before. It hurt so badly. It burned like Sarah’s lost. He stiffened at the footsteps, and curled protectively around Annabelle.

“Will? Can I talk to you please?” Chromia asked, coming into the room.

“I think you have said enough,” Will mumbled.

“Please, Will? I need to talk to you. The sparklings need you. Please? Can’t you feel them?”

“Go away. You got what you wanted from me and my frame. I am tired of being used. Leave us alone before you wake my daughter.”

He made sure that Annabelle was still asleep and comfortable, adjusting the blanket that covered them both to keep her warm.

Chromia shook her helm, “No, Will. You don’t understand. We weren’t using you. We just...we lost sight of things. We should have bonded you...it’s just with the sparklings coming. We thought it could wait. We thought you would understand. But...I just...we forget that you weren’t born one of us. We forget you don’t understand fields. We failed you, and I’m so sorry for it.”

Wil hunched in on himself, “I don’t understand.”

“Oh, Will. I know. We made a lot of assumptions and we didn’t think. We are so sorry! Ironhide is with the sparklings now. We should have explained things to do you. Please, give us another chance? Please?”

“I don’t know. I---I don’t know if I can trust you. I don’t know what to do or what to think. Your hurt me.”

“I know we did. We didn’t mean to. I don’t know what I can even say to fix it,” Chromia said, inching closer. She reached out and touched Will’s side, “Merge with us. Let us explain.’

“I don’t trust you enough for that.”

Chromia looked down. “Please? I know you don’t trust us but it is the only way I know to show you how we feel and explain.”

Will shifted, looking at Annabelle. “No. Go away. I won’t let you trick me again. You already got what you wanted.”

“No, we haven’t. We want you. We’ve always wanted you! We love you. Do you really honestly believe we invite just anymech into our berth? Frag. No. We don’t.”

Will glared at her, “You lie.”
“No. I don’t.”

“Yes, you do. You just wanted someone to carry your kids. You and hide were too busy to carry on your own so you needed someone to do it for you. Now you got what you wanted! Leave me and my daughter alone. Go be with your sparklings and stop bothering us!”

“They are your sparklings too! They need you! Can’t you feel how much you are hurting them,” Chromia’s armour rattled with her distress. “Sparklings can offline from this. Is that what you want? I understand you are upset with us. I’m sorry we screwed up. I’m so sorry, but don’t punish them too.”

Will shivered, shrinking in on himself. “You are lying. They wouldn’t...”

“Ask Ratchet,” Chromia snapped.

Will looked away. “Send him in then.”

Chromia moved to the door, “Ratchet! Come here please! Explain to Will he is hurting the sparklings!”

Ratchet came in and gave Chromia a flat look. “Go back to Hide and the sparklings, Chromia.”

Chromia quivered, “Not until you explain to him what he is doing. He doesn’t believe me. Please.”

Ratchet frowned at her, “Chromia.”

“No. I don’t want my family torn apart by some stupid misunderstanding.”

Ratchet scowled, “You should have thought about that before the sparkings detached, Chromia! You and Ironhide ignored Will when he was carrying beyond what you wanted to see. You two helped make this mess and you two are going to have to make it better.”

Chromia frowned, “That’s not fair-”

“Not fair is making a mech that is carrying become stressed out to the point that he refuses to see his sparklings and completely withdrawn.”

Chromia shrunk away from him, and Will couldn't help but feel sorry for the femme. maybe she was telling the truth. He wanted to see his sparklings...maybe.... “Fine. I will humour you.”

“Y-you will?”

“If I don’t like what I see you will leave me alone.”

Chromia nodded, “I—I will, yes. Please. I will do anything.”

Ratchet scowled, “I will monitor the merge. Will’s spark is still sensitive from the detachment.”

Chromia frowned but nodded. “Whatever is best for Will.”

Ratchet grunted, “It’s about time you put him first.”

Chromia hunched her shoulders, looking uncomfortable. “So...how...”

Ratchet rolled his optics and took Annabell from Will, and placing her in a warm sparkling berth. The bitlet never stirred. She was exhausted.
“The same way you normally do,” Ratchet snapped.

Chromia moved onto the berth, reaching out hesitantly towards Will. Will flinched away from her at first, she felt her spark ache at the hurt in his optics. What had they done to him?

His plates parted slower than they ever had before and she knew that even if the merge helped, she and Ironhide would have to work hard to win back his trust. She gently lowered her spark onto Will’s and had to force back a whimper. All she felt was sorrow and grief, along with images of a strange being who must have been Will’s former mate.

It made her spark hurt to see so much sorrow in his spark, it hurt. She pulsed gently at him, sending her own love and concern, before deepening the merge. Will’s spark fluttered back at her, pulsing and full of confusion. He moan beneath her, arching up, and grinding their sparks together.

She focused on soothing the ache and sorrow in his spark, sending him the love and regret that both she and Ironhide felt for what had happened. They had never meant for this to happen, they had made assumptions that were horribly, terribly wrong. They loved him so much, but had gotten so caught up in the excitement of the coming sparklings that they had not given his sadness proper attention.

Will searched through her memories, those the were the closest to the top. He wasn’t gentle, and she winced at the pain, but did nothing to stop him. If anything the pain increased.

“Will...” Chromia said and tried not to flinch at Will’s enthusiasm.

She must have shown it though, despite her intentions because Will withdrew quickly, fearfully, like he thought she would harm him. That hurt far more than his enthusiasm had.

“Please Will. I won’t hurt you. Please.”

Will slowly edged back into the merge, and the first thing she could feel from him was fear and distrust.

She coaxed him back, slowly feeding him images and feelings. She usually did not have much patience for such things, but she did her best to ease his fears until the merge finally deepened, and the edges between them blurred, disappeared.

~Chromia?~ Will asked, his confusion shining through. ~I don’t understand any of this.~

~I know Will. i know. I love you though. WE love you. So much. Can’t you feel it?~

Will mentally pulled away. ~Just lust. Love for the sparklings. Lies. All lies!~


Will seemed to relax a little but he was still very wary of her. ~Lies. Tricks. Just want more sparklings out of me.~

~No lies. If you never had another sparkling would would love you still. We will always love you. We are not complete without you. Please, Will.~

Will huffed, ~I want to spark up Ironhide. I want someone else to carry.~

~We would have to ask him, Will...I can’t imagine he would be unwilling. He loves you, and he’s
always wanted a large family.~

Will shifted, and Chromia could feel that he wanted to believe her. ~Please Will. Give us another chance. We will talk more, communicate better with you. We shouldn’t have assumed that you would know how we felt through our fields.~

Will frowned, ~Your fields? What do you mean?~

~Our...EM fields. They convey emotion. Perhaps you never had the files installed to read them, to understand. I’m not sure. I...I just assumed you could feel what we were feeling. I’m sorry Will. I’m so sorry.~

~There is something wrong with me then?~

~No, Will. There is nothing wrong with you. You are special.~

Will’s spark quivered. He wanted to believe her so badly. He wanted her comfort. He hurt so badly from the loss of Sarah, and their fight. He missed his sparklings.

~I guess I can give you a chance. I don’t trust you, but you can have a chance. I want my sparklings.~

Chromia turned to Ratchet, “Get the sparklings in here, Ratchet! He wants to see them!”

Ratchet quickly crossed out of the room and returned with the two sparklings cradled in his arms.

Will shivered, and reached for them, taking them into his arms as soon as they were within reach. Both sparklings curled against him, latching onto his sparkplates. “I can feel them. In my spark.”

“That is normal,” Ratchet said. “Do you want to feed them?”

Will blinked at him, “Can I?”

“They are your bitties, Will. Of course you can.”

Will nodded, “I...oh...how?”

Ratchet gestured to Will’s chestplates. “You use your pouches. The sparklings will know what to do when you expose them. Go ahead, it isn’t anything I haven’t seen before.”

Will reluctantly parted his chestplates to reveal his pouches. He hadn’t had them out since the last time Chromia and Ironhide had helped to drain them. The sparklings immediately latched onto the exposed nubs on his pouches.

Will made a face, it felt odd. Not entirely unpleasant, but very...odd. The sparklings were warm against his chest, and it felt good to have them so close. It eased the pain in his spark. He pat their small backs and looked them over as he did. They were mostly silver with the smallest hints of colour. The mech was much bigger than the femme, but she seems so much more aggressive. Her little hand tightened into fists with the energon didn’t come out fast enough.

Chromia chuckled a little at the sight at the tiny femme gave fitful twitches of her fists like she was trying to punch th pouch she was suckling at to make it go faster. “She seems to be a bit impatient. Is she hurting you, Will?”

Will shook his helm, it didn’t hurt and it was amusing to see. The little mech seemed calmer, although no less hungry than his sister to judge by his rapid suckling. Chromia reached over and
gently stroked the two sparklings helms before leaning over Will and kissing him softly.

“I missed you,” he whispered, leaning into the touch.

“We missed you too. So much. We love you so much,” her voice spat static. “We would like to bond as soon as you are well...if you will allow it.”

“I’ll think about it,” Will said softly.

Chromia kissed him again. “Please do. That is all we ask, that you consider allowing us to bond our sparks together.”

OoOoOoOo

Smokescreen groan on the berth, making Streetwise rush over. “Are you alright? Do you need something. Just relax, I’ll get you whatever it is you need.”

Smokescreen sighed, “Street, I can still walk. Sort of.”

“Are you sure? I can go get you anything! Do you need to refuel? Do you want a snack? I can go get you something!”

Smokescreen wiggled, until he was sitting up against the back of the berth, “I’m fine, I promise. Bitlets just...active this sol. He’s ready to come out. He’s being impatient about it. Bitty is as chatty across the bond as Bluestreak.”

Streetwise’s lips curled into an amused smile, “I know.”

Smokescreen rubbed his hand across his abdominal plating. The bitlet had finally moved down into it’s frame. It moved about too much, pushing at the gestational chamber walls impatiently.

“Hey in there. Stop being so rough. You’re hurting your carrier. I know you are anxious to come out and see the world but you have to wait a little longer.”

Smokescreen laughed. “I don’t think he is listening to you, Street. He is as impatient as your brother Blades.”

“Not surprising at all,” Streetwise said, and sat down beside Smokescreen. He put his arm around the mech holding him tightly. “We were all active sparklings. As I am sure you were as well if the stories your brother tells are anything to go by.”

Smokescreen made himself comfortable, resting against Streetwise’s shoulder. “Ah...he told you that?”

“He did indeed.”

Smokescreen looked to the side, “I am amazed he even knew about some of what i got up to. He usually dropped me off with someone else while he worked. I would only see him when he dropped me off at the start of the sol and then at the end of the sol when he picked me up.”

Streetwise put an arm around Smokescreen, “Don’t dwell on it, Smokey. We will keep our sparkling close and give him a great sparklinghood.”

“We will. We will give him the best sparklinghood. He will have a lot of people that love him and other younglings to play with.”
Streetwise leaned in and pressed a kiss against Smokescreen’s cheek, “And lots of brothers and sisters.”

Smokescreen flushed, “You want that?”

“I do. I really do.”

“Good,” Smokescreen purred.

Streetwise pressed a kiss to Smokescreen’s helm. “We can start working on the other ones after this one is out and you have had a chance to recover.”

Smokescreen pulled Streetwise into a proper kiss. “I like that plan. Got to give our sparkling lots of siblings.”

Streetwise deepened the kiss. “Oh yes we will.”

Smokescreen purred, “Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For being you,” Smokescreen laughed. “you make it all worth it, and I just can’t wait to meet out bitty.”

Streetwise nuzzled him, “Primus has blessed us, certainly.”

Smokescreen trembled a little. “I suppose if you believe in that.”

Streetwise drew back a little. “What do you mean?”

Smokescreen looked away, “I don’t really believe in him any more.”

Streetwise frowned, looking at Smokescreen worriedly. “Really? why? Is it something you want to talk about?”

Smokescreen shook his helm, “I just...don’t understand how he could let all the horrible things happen. There has just been so much.”

“I don’t think it works that way, love,” Streetwise said. “He wants us to live our lives.”

“He’s a cruel god, Streets. Cruel.”

“It’s alright Smokey. You don’t have to believe if you don’t want to. We all chose our relationship with Primus and that includes not having one. I love you no matter what. If and when you ever want to talk, I am here for you and our sparkling.”

Smokescreen rested his helm against Streetwise’s shoulder. “I love you too. Thanks Street.”

“You are always welcome, Smokey. Always.”

“You know...you are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I feel so lucky to have you and I’m so happy you...I’m just so happy with all of this. His vents hiccuped and his optics over-flowed with lubricant. I thought I would always be alone and unwanted.”

“Oh, Smokey. You were never unwanted.”
"I know...but it felt that way. And on t-the p-prison ship---it was horrible."

"Do you feel up to talking about it? We don’t have to if you don’t feel up to it.”

Smokescreen moved closer to Streetwise. “I don’t know if I can. I don’t want to think about what happened.”
"I know you told Prowl you were stasis for most of it. I take it that wasn’t the case?”

Smokescreen shook his helm. “Prowl feels guilty enough. I...I don’t want him to know.”

“That may be, but you know I’m always here for you, sweetspark. You can always talk to me about it.”

Smokescreen clutched at him, “I know, and...and knowing you are there helps. You’re right. I wasn’t in stasis the whole time. Things happened, bad things.”

Streetwise rubbed between Smokescreen’s doorwings, that always seemed to calm the mech.

“Do you feel up to talking about it now, sweetspark?”

Smokescreen looked up at Streetwise’s earnest faceplates. “I’ll try. When we left Cybertron Alpha Trion and I were on a small ship. I don’t know where Alpha got it from and at the time I didn’t care. I just wanted to get away from Cybertron.”

“Nothing wrong with that, Smokey. Cybertron might have been our home but it was dying when we left, so it must have been nearly dead when you left.”

“No, -but then we were c-captured. They f-forced us into stasis. I was so scared, and then I just...I didn’t think I would ever wake up again.” Smokescreen hid his face against Streetwise’s plating. “I thought I was going to die there.”

“Oh, sweetspark.”

“When I did finally wake up, I had, I still have no idea how long I was in stasis. My chronometer wasn’t working properly and even now that it is fixed I have trouble with old timestamps.”

Streetwise frowned. “I can ask First Aid to take a look if you want? He might be able to fix it for you.”

Smokescreen shook his helm. “Maybe another time. But when I did wake up, I was alone. I never saw Alpha after we were captured. I have no idea what happened to him.”

“That makes things harder, doesn’t it?” Streetwise asked. “You were close to him?”

“Yes...and no. I think he found me to be a pain,” Smokescreen whispered.

“Oh, love. Don’t think that.”

“It is the truth though. Alpha treated raising me like I was just another task he had to do, like reshelving datapads or refining solar energon for our fuel. He never really seemed to care about me aside from that. He even rushed my upgrades as much as he could so I would be more ‘self-reliant’ and ‘less of a burden’.”

“Oh Smokey, you are never a burden! If Alpha Trion was here now, I’d punch him in the faceplates for saying that to you!”
"You can't though. He's offline, I just know he is," Smokescreen's doorwings fluttered in distress. "I only ever wanted to make him and Prowl proud of me."

Streetwise hugged him tightly, "Prowl /is/ proud of you."

"I guess. He never says anything about it. Mostly he just lectures me on my duties to our family and clan and how I have to uphold the family name."

Streetwise pressed a kiss to Smokescreen’s helm. “He is very proud of you. I can tell. He loves you and so does Jazz and the bitties.”

Smokescreen rubbed his servo over his protruding abdomen. “Do you think they will be friends with our sparkling when he is big enough?”

Streetwise nodded, "I think they will be the best of friends, love."

"I'm sure you're right," Smokescreen agreed. "I can't wait until I can hold him in my arms."

Streetwise kissed Smokescreen, reluctantly breaking it after a few kliks. “Neither can I, sweetspark. I can’t wait to see our little bitty for the first time. I can’t wait to see you holding our sparkling in your arms. To see our family.”

Smokescreen looked up at Streetwise with loving optics. “Our family. I like the sound of that. I love it in fact. Our family. I can’t wait to see our sparkling either. I wonder whose colors he will have?”

“Mmmmm...hard to say so soon. I wouldn’t be surprise if he has a lot of white and black,” Streetwise said, “I’m sure he will be beautiful.”

“I know he will,” Smokescreen smirked.

Streetwise laughed, “Yes, he will be beautiful like his carrier.”

Smokescreen chuckled, “Or he will be handsome like his sire. At least he is likely to have sensor wings since both of us have them and chevrons.”

“That is true. Have..have you had any thoughts on what to name him?”

Smokescreen frowned. “I have a few ideas, but I want to wait until he is here to name him. I want to make sure it will fit him.”

“Oh?” Streetwise asked, “Is it a secret?”

Smokescreen smiled, “Maybe. I think you will like it though.”

“Oh, why is that,” Streetwise wheedled.

“I just have a feeling.”

“Brat!”

Smokescreen laughed, “And you love me for it.”

“Of course I do. I love you so much. I am sure that whatever names you are thinking of will be perfect. I can’t get even a little hint though?”

Smokescreen shook his helm. “Nope. No hints. How are your brothers doing? Has there been any
news with Blades and Updraft?”

“Nothing new. He’s courting her. She’s still understandably flighty after that incident, but she seems to be doing better. Guess Blades got cleaning duty because there was an incident in the rec.”

“Yeah, I heard that. Ugh. Roughshod is a piece of slag.”

“That is putting it mildly,” Streetwise snorted.

“Is Updraft alright? Did he hurt her?”

Streetwise shook his helm. “She got really shook up, had to go back to medical. Apparently she had a really bad flashback. Blades got to sit with her while she recovered before his cleaning detail.”

“I’m glad. He is so kind to her. He seems like an entirely different mech with her around.”

Streetwise nodded, “I think she is the best thing that has happen to him, honestly. He seems so much happier. Not as temperamental.”

“I’m glad he’s happy,” Smokescreen nodded. “The rest of your brothers need to find someone.”

Streetwise laughed, “Maybe one day.”

Smokescreen smiled, “I just want them to be as happy as we are. I think Groove will be the last one to find someone though. He is such a loner. He keeps everyone at a distance it seems. Except for you and the rest of your brothers.”

“And we are all in each others helms. That tends to make it hard to keep distance between us.”

“Yeah, it does, but I don’t think that is a bad thing. I am glad we have our bond. I like knowing you are there,” Smokescreen finally said.

“I like having you close too. I’m so glad we found each other. I love you. I love our sparkling.”

Smokescreen purred, “I can’t tell you how glad I am to hear that.”

OoOoOoOo

Index shifted on the edge of his berth. He didn’t want to do this, meet with...with.../him//.

Thundercracker and Rung thought that it would be good for him though. He didn’t want to let them down.

He still didn’t want to do this though.

He heard the door chime sound and he sent the signal to open the door. This was it.

His armour clamped down tightly as he opened the door, and stared at the bot taking up the doorway. He was big. Much bigger than Index. “Ah...hi.”

“Jack, can I come in?”

Index’s field flared with distress before he was able to reign it back in. “My name is Index now.”

“Ah...I am sorry, Index.” He stepped inside when Index finally moved to the side, reluctantly letting the mech into his safe space.
“It’s fine. You...you knew me before. R-rung said it would be h-hard for those that knew me before.”

“I did know you...before. I am sorry that you have had to go through all of this. None of this should ever have happened. How are you….settling in? Is there anything you need?”

Index started to shake his helm, then paused. “Do you, do you know if anyone found what happened to a turbofox on...the ship?”

“I have not heard anything, but I can ask for you.”

Index nodded, “Megatron brought me one. I’m not sure what happened to him in the chaos. I didn’t think to have Thundercracker look for him.”

“You are close to the Seeker?”

“He is going to court me,” Index said defiantly, expecting the same reaction that Arcee had given him.

Optimus however just frowned. “If you are certain, that is what you want. I would rather that you two have a long, formal courtship for your sake. I would like you to be very certain, and not rush into anything.”

Index blinked in surprise at not being immediately told that it was forbidden.

“Bonds are not easily broken. You should be sure before you do this.”

“I am sure. I would bond with him now if he would allow it. He says it’s not appropriate until I get my final upgrades. Until my spark is mature. He loves me enough to care. Enough to do this right.”

“Then you are a most fortunate mech,” Optimus said slowly.

Index blinked again. This conversation was not going at all like he thought it would. “Thank you? Why aren’t you forbidding me from seeing him? Or acting more outraged?”

Optimus sighed, “I am not entirely happy you are so set on a bond so young. It is however your life and you have the same right to make your own choices that everyone has.”

index shook his helm, “Really?”

“Yes, really. It is your life, it is your choice. I only want your happiness.”

“You do?” Index asked, completely confused.

“I do,” Optimus said firmly.

“Oh. I thought you would be more upset, like Arcee was.”

Optimus looked away and sighed. “Arcee should not have projected her issues with certain frame types onto you. It is something she will need to overcome. Whom you love however is your choice.”

Index nodded, looking confused. “I do love him. Very much. He makes me feel safe. I never feel safe anymore...not unless he’s near.”

“I’m sorry.”
“It isn’t your fault. It isn’t my fault. Rung says so. And He says if I say it enough I will believe it. I’m not so sure.”

Optimus reached out to touch Index’s shoulder to reassure him, but the mech flinched as soon as he raised his servo. As soon as he saw the mech flinch, Optimus lowered his servo. “I’m sorry, Index. I didn’t mean to upset you.”

Index shifted, “It’s not your fault. I am just a bit jumpy.”

“That is understandable,” Optimus said softly.

Index frowned at him, “Why is Megatron still alive? Why do you want him to be here still. I don’t understand.”

“I won’t take his life. He was not well, Index. If would not be right to destroy him.”

“He hurt me.”

“I know and I am sorry for that. It was not right of him to do that. However, I would be just as wrong if I hurt him as well.”

“I suppose. Is...is he going to recover?”

Optimus shook his helm. “It is very unlikely. He had severe processor damage that was only compounded by his addiction to dark energon and then the damage from our last fight.”

Index frowned, “Then why let him linger? It seems...cruel.”

“He is not suffering,” Optimus said finally. “it is more of an endless recharge.”

“I really don’t understand,” Index whispered, and looked hard at Optimus. “You care for him? Don’t you?”

“A part of me will always care for him. I am not sure if you were ever told but before I became Prime, Megatronus and I were bonded. After that he changed his name to Megatron and declared me an enemy.”

“He told me. He thought that I was you. He...he said that you two had a sparkling.”

Optimus gasped, “I...I am sorry. He was mad in the end. He...was never right after...after the senate took me away. At least I’ve been told. I don’t remember.”

“You don’t remember your own sparkling?”

“I only...it’s like a dream. A very distant and faint dream.”

“I’m sorry. It must be very hard to know that you had something like that and not really remember it.”

“Thank you. I...I think it was the breaking of our bond that tipped him over the edge into madness.” Optimus looked up, offlining his optics. “I wish things had been different.”

“I’m sorry you had to go through this,” Index said. “You seem like a good mech.”

“So do you. I hope Thundercracker brings you happiness.”
“He will,” Index said quickly. “He already does.”

“Then he has much to recommend him already. I hope that you have a good relationship with Thundercracker. He is a good mech and a proper noblemech at that. He will make certain that you are treated properly.”

“Thank you. He does treat me well. He is wonderful.”

“I am glad you have someone. We all need a support system. And...if you need anything...I am here for you as well.”

“Th-thank you. I-I appreciate it,” Index whispered.

“You are welcome, Index.”

Wheeljack walked beside Bulkhead as they made their way across the compound to see Flamewar. She seemed to be doing good, and the sparklings had been growing by leaps and bounds.

Far faster than the sparkling growing inside of Wheeljack. The sparkling seemed to be growing as fast as metaligrass.

It was so strange to think that the little things had come out of Flamewar, let alone that they were so adorable when their sire was…..

Was glaring at him right now because he had gotten to close to Flamewar for his liking. Predaking was still an aft. Wheeljack glared back at the overgrown lizard. Miko still deserved better, no matter what she called herself now.

“They are growing so fast,” Bulkhead exclaimed.

“Of Course they are. They are strong. THey will be strong warriors soon,” Predaking grumbled.

Wheeljack stared. “Seriously, they are just bitlets. Maybe they won’t want to be strong warriors. What yah going to do then lizard lips?”

Flamewar looked over and sighed, “Then they will be strong Predacons regardless. We will help they choose their own paths, ones of honor.”

Predaking looked at her with a disgustingly sappy look, “Such wisdom, my mate. Our hatchlings shall conquer whatever task they set themselves.”

Flamewar lifted her helm and nuzzled the larger predacon. “Indeed.”

Wheeljack rolled his optics and finally sat down on the floor, despite the glare that Predaking threw him. “Come on Bitties, come see uncle Jack.”


“Well, maybe not now, bitty. I didn’t bring in any datapads.”

The sparklings all looked sad and Quickstep pouted. “No story? Please? Please Unca ‘ack! Tell story!”
Wheeljack sighed, “Sparkling, I didn’t bring the story pad-”
Bulkhead gave his shoulder a nudge. “Yeah, but I did. Read the sparklings a story, there are some classics on this one.”

Quickstep cheered, “Yay! Story! Unca ‘ack! Story! Story!”

Wheeljack laughed, “Demanding today, bitty, aren’t you? Are you ready to meet your new cousin?”

“C’sin?” the sparklings asked, “Where? New bitty?”

“Yes a new bitty,” Wheeljack agree.

Quickstep gasped, “Where?”

“Here,” Wheeljack laughed, and packed his abdominal plating.

Quickstep looked amazed. “You has an egg? In your belly?”

Steelclaw frowned, “Just one egg? Why no more? Should have lots a eggs! Lots and lots!”

Wheeljack blinked but Bulkhead just laughed. “We’ll have more soon enough.”


“Soon enough,” Bulkhead promised.

“Only one? Why only one?” Quickstep asked, still stuck on the fact there would only be one sparkling. “Un’ca Jack sicks?”

Wheeljack frowned, “No, I’m not sick. Why?”

Quickstep frowned, “Then why only one egg? Should have lots of eggs. Lots and lots of c’sins.”

Wheeljack stared at the sparkling and tried to think of an appropriate way for him respond to that question. “Uh…”

“It’s different, bitty. We don’t lay eggs,” Bulkhead finally said.

The sparklings stared, optics widening in shock. “Un’ca Bulk...lies. Lies!”

Bulkhead laughed, “I’m not lying, bitty. We don’t lay eggs. Only Predacons, and Dinobots...and maybe some Seekers lay eggs.”

The sparklings regarded him with suspicion. They looked towards their parents for confirmation. “Carrier? Is true?”

Flamewar rumbled with laughter. “Yes, it is true. Mechs such as they carry but one egg at a time and do not fuel their hatchling as we do.”

Quickstep looked concerned by this. “Carrier? No brothers? No sisters?”

Predaking rumbled, “No, no nest brothers or sisters. Just the one.”

Steelclaw whimpered, “All ‘lone. Poor babu. All ‘lone.”

“Don’t be sad, love,” Flamewar said. “He won’t be alone. I promise. Bulkhead and Wheeljack will take good care of him.”
Steelclaw sniffled, and burst into tears, “All ‘lone.”

Flamewar scooped up Steelclaw and pet his frame soothingly. “He won’t be alone. Just think he will have all of you as cousins and friends to play with. You will be a friend to the hatchling won’t you? Help keep them from getting lonely?”

Steelclaw blinked up at his carrier in surprise. Her words made sense though. “Yes! be best c’sins and he not ‘onely.”

Flamewar smiled, “You are such a good spark. So thoughtful. He will be lucky to count you as a friend, bitlet.”

Steelclaw gasped, “’ucky?”

Flamewar laughed, “Yes. Very lucky.”

Steelclaw looked over at Wheeljack, “Hatch’in’ ‘ucky? No ‘lone?”

Wheeljack smiled, “Yes, our sparkling will be lucky to have you as a friend. I am sure that you will keep him from being lonely.”

Steelclaw smiled a little, “Best friends and c’sins. Bestest!”

Bulkhead laughed, “The very luckiest, bitty. Thank you, Steelclaw. I’m sure you’ll make him happy.”

“’Appiest! ’Appiest!” Steelclaw giggled.

Flamewar smiled at her bitlets, “He will be with friends like you.”

Steelclaw patted at Wheeljack’s chest. “When he come out? When new friend come?”

Bulkhead wrapped an arm around Wheeljack. “In a little bit. You’ll have to wait a little I am afraid.”

“Awww! What friend now! What play with c’sin!”

“Oh, bitty, he won’t be able to play for a while. When he comes out he will be very small. Much smaller than you are,” Bulkhead said. “Small and fragile. You will have to be careful with him.”

“Car’ul,” Steelclaw agreed.

The other bitlets toddled over and curled up against Wheeljack, chirring at him quietly.

“Story? Story unc’a Jack? Pwease?”

Wheeljack sighed and turned on the datapad. “Alright, you win. Once upon a time…. .”
First Aid watched Weld working his way through the simulation. His fingers itched to reach out and touch the mech, but it was impossible to ignore Ratchet’s glowering presence at the back of the medbay.

It also did not stop Weld from brushing his field and plating against him at every opportunity. He would have thought it was unintentional...accept for the little smile the mechling kept throwing him. When did he become such a tease?

The mech in question stepped back from his work, “How is that?”

First Aid started to move forward, but Ratchet moved in front of him. “It is very good Weld. Why don’t you go and grab a cube of energon and then we will go over how you did and what you could do to improve.”

“Alright, Ratchet! Do you or First Aid want one too? I could grab you one!”

“That would be very nice of you, Weld.”

“Thanks Weld,” First Aid said, and watched the little mech go. “What’s eating you, Ratchet?”

“I see what you are doing.”

“What?”

“Flirting with my bitty. He’s too young for you,” Ratchet snapped. “We’ve talked about this! He’s too young! He’s been through too much!”

“Then tell him to stop flirting with me. He is young but….”

“But nothing! He is the equivalent of a youngling in their second frame even if he is in his third frame. Either way, he is far too young for such things!”

First Aid glared, “Stop acting like it’s just me and I’m trying to rob him from you. Primus, Ratchet. You know me better than that.”

“He’s too young.”

“You keep saying that, but he isn’t. Not really.”

“You are right, he isn’t. He is even younger. He had not even seen his first vorn, slag he has barely seen more than a single decade of this planet’s solar cycle!”

First Aid froze and stared at Ratchet in shock. “What? What do you mean he hasn’t seen a vorn yet?”

“They don’t age like we do. They didn’t. He was far from an adult when he was taken, Aid. Barely even a mechling. You must understand.”

First Aid’s armor ruffled up in distress. “He doesn’t act like a mechling.”

“He is. Frag...he is. He would have lived with his creator for many years before he went off on his own. I won’t deny that he is brilliant, and very mature for his age. He is.”
“So what you are telling me, is that Weld is a sparkling in a mech’s frame. A very smart sparkling but a sparkling all the same.”

Ratchet nodded, “That is what I have been trying to tell you.”

First Aid frowned, “I thought you were saying it was like with Smokescreen where he was upgraded early into his final frame. Not something so….extreme.”

“I wish that was the case. I honestly do. He didn’t deserve this. He deserved to grow up in his own time,” Ratchet grunted, “But there is no chance of that now.” The medic huffed. “If you feel the same in a vorn you have my blessing, but until then Keep your paws off. I don’t care what he does or how much he flirts with you. Don’t. Just...don’t.”

First Aid nodded, “Fine. If we still feel that way I will ask you in a vorns time. I don’t...I don’t want to ruin it between us. I really do care for him.”

Ratchet gave First Aid an assessing look. “Good. I want him to get to have at least part of the younglinghood he should have had. It is bad enough that being our ally did this to him and his world but what he has personally suffered is unforgivable.”

First Aid nodded, “I will wait for him. He is worth waiting for. Try to have a talk with him about this too, though. He has been flirting with his field all sol and I may have to recuse myself from teaching him with you if he keeps it up.”

“I will talk to him about it. I would like to think that he doesn’t realize he is doing it...but I doubt that is the case. His time with Knock Out and Soundwave...”

“I understand,” First Aid whispered, “I really do.”

Ratchet nodded, “I know, and i will talk to him. Hopefully he will listen.”

“Listen to what?” Weld said, as he came back into the room.
First Aid looked at the handsome mech and ducked his helm. “Ratchet will explain. He needs to talk to you in private though. I’ll got take inventory down in the storerooms.”

“Thank you Aid. That has been needing to get done for a while now. Weld, we need to have a talk.”

“About what?” Weld asked, crossing his arms over his chestplates defensively. “I haven’t done anything wrong.”

“I didn’t say you did, bitlet, but you need to stop pushing at Aid. It isn’t fair to tempt him like that.”

Weld bristled, “He likes me. I don’t’ see what is wrong with liking him back. I want to be with him.”

Ratchet sighed. “I know you do, Weld, but you are still too young for such things-”

“I am not,” Weld snarled and glared at Ratchet, “Why is it when I am forced to do things, it is okay but when I want to do the same thing- it is suddenly ‘bad’ and I am ‘too young’ for it!?”

Ratchet sighed and looked away. “You were always too young for it, Weld. What Knockout and Soundwave did was...unforgivable and never should have happened to you.”

“It’s a little late for that. They already did it, and now you are denying me the one thing that I want. Why are you punishing me like this? What have I ever done to you that you are going to take away what little happiness I have. Why do you hate me so much?”
Ratchet stared at the mechling, “I don’t hate you, Weld. I love you like my own sparkling.”

“But I’m not, and I don’t need you telling me what I can and can’t do. You aren’t my creator. You clearly don’t even care about me.”

Ratchet looked stricken at Weld’s words. “I am sorry that you feel that way. I think of you as though you were my creation, and I love you as though I sparked you myself. I just want you to be able to have the younglinghood you should have had before the Decepticons stole your innocence and took advantage of you.”

Weld gave Ratchet a flat look. “I am not a youngling anymore. I am a grown mech!”

“Weld...you really are not. Your spark isn’t mature.”

“Then I won’t merge with him. It’s not like the rest of my equipment isn’t well broken in.”

Ratchet vented sharply, “Weld please...please listen to me.”

“No, you listen to me. I don’t need you to take away the one comfort I want. I don’t need you to treat me like a child. I’m not,” Weld snapped. “I don’t need you.”

“Weld, please. Calm down before I have to sedate you. You are getting too stressed. It’s not good for you.”

“You are not good for me! I am a grown mech! My seals are already gone, why shouldn’t I frag whoever I want?”

Ratchet shook, “Weld...”

“Don’t Weld me. Stop it. Just stop it. JUST STOP IT,” he shook, panting and in distress.

“You need to calm yourself. You are going to glitch. Please Weld. Please. Don’t do this. Please. I only care for you. I only want to protect you.”

Weld’s doorwings fluttered. “It’s too late to protect me.”

“It’s never too late.”

“Don’t try and lie to me! If you had wanted to protect me, where were you when I was being raped by Knockout? Where were you when Soundwave was trying to turn me into a symbiote?”

Ratchet frowned, “I was locked in a prison cell. You know that, you visited me in the cell.”

Weld scowled, “You could have done something! Anything! You-”

Ratchet stared as Weld’s optics went blank and he slumped, falling to the ground.

“AID, frag! Get in here! I need help!” Ratchet bellowed, and picket Weld up carefully. “Weld? Weld? WELD!” The mechling didn’t respond. He was still limp in Ratchet’s arms when First Aid came running in.


“He glitched. We...we were arguing, fighting, and he just glitched! I think he just got too stressed out.”
First Aid looked upset at Ratchet’s words, “I thought you were just going to tell him it was unprofessional to flirt with his instructor during lessons!”

Ratchet looked away, “I...he got upset about me telling him he is too young for what he wants to do.”

“He would. He doesn’t think of himself that way,” First Aid said, looking distressed as he hooked Weld up to the sensors on the berth, and started an energon drip.

“So I gathered,” Ratchet whispered. “He hates me.”

“No, he doesn’t,” First Aid said. He plugged a pad into Weld’s medical port, and frowned at the errors it showed on the screen. “He’s just frustrated with the situation. He’s trying to make sense of a world he never wanted to be thrown into. He’s unhappy. He’s scared. And he feels alone.”

“He argued quite vehemently about being with you.”

First Aid paused, looking shaken. “I don’t know what to do. I don’t want him to hurt.”

“Neither do I,” Ratchet whispered, still distraught.

“I want him to be happy.”

“So do I.”

“This isn’t making him happy, Ratchet. I know you want to give him his youngling hood back, but I’m not sure that is possible.”

“I still want him to have as much of it as he can. He deserves it. He never should have lost it. I….I should have protected him better. I should have done more. He is right. I failed him, repeatedly.”

First Aid frowned, he had never heard Ratchet sound so depressed before. However, he worked on repairing the errors in Weld’s files. “You didn’t fail him. You did everything that you could. It was not your fault.”

“He doesn’t feel that way,” Ratchet said, his spark breaking all over again. “I failed him, and now...look what I’ve done.”

“Stop it, Ratchet. Just stop it,” First Aid said. “Please.”

Ratchet trembled, “I’m sorry...I just...I don’t know.”

“You are doing your best, Ratchet. I know you are.”

“It is obviously not good enough. It is apparent what I have to do….”

Ratchet sighed and then looked down as Weld began to wake up. When Weld’s optics were mostly online, Ratchet looked over at Aid. “Run a few scans on him and let me know when they are all clear.”

First Aid scanned Weld as Weld left his recharge and looked around. When he saw First Aid, he beamed happily but it became a frown when he saw Ratchet. “What are you still doing here Ratchet? I told you-”

“And I am here to tell you that since you feel so strongly about me as your guardian, as soon as you
are able to head to your quarters I will request that Prowl find you a new guardian. As I am no longer needed or wanted by you, I am sure he will see that it will be better for your mental status to have a different guardian.”

Weld stared, optics going wide. “You would leave me? Fine, whatever. I want Aid to be my guardian then.”

“Weld, you know that would be a really bad idea...” First Aid said slowly. “It wouldn't be a good idea with the way I feel about you.”

Weld vented sharply, “So you are both just getting rid of me?”

“It’s not like that,” Ratchet whispered, “You said yourself---”

“Whatever. Everyone leaves me. I should expect it.”

First Aid bristled, “Stop it. Just stop it, right now. I love you, Weld, but you need to stop. Ratchet loves you, and you have said horrible things to him. He has tried his hardest to do the right thing for you. It isn’t because he wants to ruin your fun, or keep us apart.”

Weld started, his doorwings twitching in distress. “Aid?”

“If you want to be treated as an adult you need to act like one, and you aren’t. You are acting like a spoiled brat.”

Weld stared at First Aid, mouth agape. “I...I thought you liked me…”

First Aid sighed, “I do like you. I like you a lot. That is why I am telling you this. You are hurting, and I understand that. However, because you are hurting and confused you are lashing out at everyone around you. Especially at Ratchet. That is the reason he is thinking about resigning as your guardian. You drove him away.”

Weld vented hard, lubricant welling up in his optics. “He...”

“No. He has done nothing but care about you, and worry for your safety. As I said, I care for you greatly. I really do, Weld. But it hurts my spark to see you acting like this.”

Weld hung his helm, hiding his faceplates. “You think I’m worthless.”

“I really don’t. I just don’t think you are being fair.”

“You hate me, everyone hates me! You think that I don’t know? I know! They are stare at me, they know that I am dirty! How can I not be?!”

First Aid tilted Weld’s helm up, forcing him to look Aid in his optics. “Listen to me, /Raf/. You are not dirty. You are not to blame in anyway because of what was done to you. No one hates you. Ratchet and I both love you, although in very different ways.”

Weld looked up at him, “I’m not?”

“No, you are not, love. You are a good spark, and we only want what is best for you. I know a vorn seems like a long time, but it isn’t. It’ll pass, and we will be together...if you still want me. In the mean time I will court you. A vorn isn’t a long courtship by any means, and I think Ratchet will agree to that,” First aid said, stroking Weld’s cheek.

“No, I wouldn't object to that,” Ratchet agreed. “It will give you time to get to know one another and
for Weld’s spark to mature.”

Weld stared, his shoulders hunching, “You would let me do that? Y-you do care about me?”

Ratchet vented hard, “Do you think I was lying when I said I thought of you as my own creation?”

“No. I guess not,” Weld whispered. “I’m sorry, Ratchet. Saying those things was cruel, and they aren’t true. I love you too. I don’t want another guardian.”

Ratchet moved to Weld’s side, wrapping arms around the smaller frame. “It’s alright, Raf- Weld. I love you too. I don’t want another youngling or to share you with another guardian. You said nothing that wasn’t true. I should have tried harder to protect you.”

First Aid frowned, he knew how hard Ratchet had worked to get the three human-turned-mechs free of the Decepticons. Ratchet however just held onto Weld in a tight hug.

“You did the best you could,” Weld said. “I know you couldn’t have gotten free. Th-they would have offline you, and then no one would have ever saved us.” Weld whimpered, “Soundwave would have...he would have...” The little mech shivered. “I don’t want to be a symbiote. H-he never would have let me free, and I never would have met Aid.” The more he talked the more distressed his voice became.

“Shhh, don’t think about it now. It is in the past, let it stay there. You are here, safe and free. No one will hurt you ever again. You are my sparkling- youngling now. First Aid has asked to court you, and I have given him my blessing- provided you still wait the vorn before becoming... intimate.”

First Aid leaned over and pressed a soft kiss to Weld’s cheek. “I would be honored if you would let me court you.”


First Aid’s lips curled into a smile, “Good.” He pressed another kiss to Weld’s cheek, “I love you, Weld.”

“I love you, too,” Weld whispered. “So much.” He sighed then, “It’s going to be a long vorn.”

OoOoOoOo

Sunstreaker set down his stylus for a moment, looking across from his seat at his current muse. Well, muses. Prism sat in a rocking-chair, their twin sparklings in stasis on his chest-plates as he slowly rocked and hummed to them. The peaceful look on Prism’s face was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

It was the reason he had begun to sketch it out. In fact, it made him want to paint for the first time in ages, to capture this precious moment forever on canvas.

They were so beautiful, it made his vents catch. He stared, entranced by the scene. How had he got so lucky to win this mech? This mech that made his spark thump in his chest, and made him want to do anything in his power to protect him.

The twins dozed. Their little hands hanging onto their carriers armor. They were still so very small. Nearly half the size of Jazz’s sparkling. It had been a relief when they could finally take them home, but both the twins still worried for them. They were so small and fragile.

Luckily, their Prism proven to be the best of carriers.
It had been terrifying in the brief hours of the Decepticon escape, finding their beloved trapped with the slagging cons! The sight of a weapon being pointed at their bonded had sent their rage surging through both himself and Sideswipe.

The resulting early separation of their sparklings had made their sparks nearly go out from the worry. The strain had only gotten worse when their incredibly tiny sparklings had to be placed in an incubator for nearly three decacycles. Prism had spent long sols in the medical bay with one of them there at all times.

Finally though, their family was home. Things were still hard. The sparklings required extra care, and special additives to their energon intake. Sunstreaker did not envy the mineral sludge that Prism had to consume.

Still, their mech was happy, and so were the sparklings. For all that they had gone through they were good little sparks. They didn’t fuss or cry like so many did. They also seemed to be taking after Prism a great deal, Spectrum’s armor was starting to take on the shimmering effect of his carriers, but Whitelite was something else. Some of his armour was transparent. It was alarming, but Ratchet said he was otherwise very healthy.

Prism had been beyond ecstatic to simply be able to have his sparklings back with him, to hold them close to his spark again. Sunstreaker and Sideswipe had been happy to have their family together again, even if they were terrified to touch their sparklings for fear of hurting them.

Prism laughed at them when they had spoken of their fears. He had said, ‘You two would never hurt our sparklings. They love you as much as I do.’ and then had kissed them both before turning back to the sparklings who were making chirping sounds of hunger.

Sunstreaker shook his helm and picked his stylus again, he wasn’t so sure about that. They were so tiny. They looked breakable. It made both he and his twin nervous to pick them up, but they still did. They took turns feeding them during the night cycle to give their carrier a rest. It was still awkward at first making the bottles with the sparkling energon and supplements that Ratchet had provided. It wasn’t as good as a carriers energon, but it was still good for them. They seemed to do nothing but fuel and recharge.

“How is it looking?” Prism asked.

Sunstreaker grunted, “You can see it when I’m done.”

Prism sighed and shook his helm as he chuckled. “I don’t know why you are so secretive about your work, Sunny. It is always so beautiful! I hope our sparklings are as talented as you are.”

Sunstreaker looked away, not knowing how to reply to his bonded’s encouragement. “I want it to be a surprise for you.”

“I’m sure I will love it,” Prism said serenely. “I’ve never seen you create something I do not adore...our sparklings included.”

Sunstreaker shifted in his seat and focused on the drawing, “Yeah. Thanks. I--ah---love you too.”

Prism’s lips curls up into a smile, “You know, I’ve never been so happy.”

Sunstreaker vented. He always found it hard to talk about such things. Emotions. And yet he found himself nodding. he went back to sketching, wanting to get as many details in as he could before the sparklings woke up. Once he had the details he could transfer it to canvas and paint it at his leisure.
Prism looked so radiant this sol as well, bright and shiny as though he had been polished a klik ago when that was not the case at all. Prism always seemed to look so lovely. It was a mystery that Sunstreaker loved because it was one just for Sunstreaker and Sideswipe to marvel at.

“They are sleeping, Love. I’m going to put them down for recharge,” Prism said, getting up to his peds. He walked into the next room, and carefully put the twins down, tucking them in under the thermal meshes. He smiled down at them, they looked so precious. Whitelight’s little, nubby winglets wiggled in his sleep.

Prism finally, reluctantly left them, “They are recharging hard,” he said to Sunstreaker.

“They were exhausted...they’ve been up most of the sol,” Sunstreaker said. “I’m glad to finally get you to myself.”

“Oh? Why would that be?” Prism smiled as he sat next to Sunstreaker who had already put away his sketching materials.

Sunstreaker drew Prism closer to him, pressing a slow kiss to his bonded’s lips while one servo rubbed the spot between Prism’s doorwings. “Because now I can touch all the parts of you that I have been looking at all morning.”

A purr left Prism’s vocalizer. He pressed back into Sunstreaker’s touch, and let his field unfurl. “I want you to touch all of those parts,” Prism said, melting against his bondmate. “All of them.”

“I can feel it,” Sunstreaker hummed.

Prism curled up on Sunstreaker’s lap, resting his helm against Sunstreaker’s sparkplates. He moaned as Sunstreaker’s clever fingers found the sensor bundle between his doorwings. “Oh Sunny!”

Sunstreaker pressed another kiss to Prism’s lips, “You also sound so wonderful, Prism. How did we get so lucky to win you?”

“How did I get so lucky for you to find me?” Prism moaned softly as Sunstreaker’s hands worked their way up his doorwings.

Sunstreaker kissed him in lieu of an answer, pulling the mech’s chassis flush with his own. “So beautiful,” Sunstreaker whispered, “You know you are my muse. My inspiration.”

Prism trembled. It was the highest of compliments where Sunstreaker was concerned. Prism pressed a kiss to Sunstreaker’s lips, whispering, “I’m honored, my spark.”

Sunstreaker froze and stared at Prism in shock. “Oh, Prism. I am the honored one. You are so beyond what I ever imagined.”

Prism leaned in for another kiss when the sound of one of the sparklings crying came from the nursery. Prism sighed, ‘I’ll go check on them. You remember where we were when I left.”

Prism entered the nursery, frowning at the way Spectrum was yowling. It was so unlike his little one, “Spectrum, sweetspark, what has you so upset?”

Prism leaned against the crib and froze, the blanket was pulled back leaving Spectrum uncovered...and Whitelight....Whitelight was gone. Prism screamed, high and loud. “He’s gone. Sunny. He’s gone!”

“Prism? Prism? What’s wrong?” Sunstreaker ran into the nursery and skidded to a halt next to where
Prism had collapsed next to their sparklings crib. A single look in the crib made Sunstreaker’s spark freeze, prompting a frantic Sideswipe trying reach him through their bond and his comlink.

::Sunny Whats wrong?::

::Sides! Its Whitelight! He’s gone! Someone stole our sparkling::!

::WHAT?!?!:: Sideswipe shouted over the comlink. ::I’ll be right there. I’ve...I’m comm’ing Prowl::.

Prism keened, and took Spectrum in his arms. He held his sparkling close, terrified that someone would take Spectrum away as well. “Someone took him. They took him,” Prism whimpered.

Sunstreaker took him into his arms, “We will find him.”

Prism sobbed, holding tight to their remaining sparkling. “I want my sparkling back! He still needs his special energon and his medicine! What if he doesn’t get them?”

“Don’t worry. We will find him before it becomes an issue. We will find him.”

“What if we don’t though?”

“We will,” Sunstreaker said firmly. “We will. Don’t think otherwise, my love.”

He whimpered, “But what if we don’t. What if they kill him. We don’t even know who took him. Or why they took him. Why would they take him?”

Sunstreaker drew him close, “I don’t know, dearest.”

Prism wept, Spectrum crying in his arms as Sideswipe ran into the room, Prowl right behind him. “Prism! Are you alright? What happened?”

Sideswipe knelt next to his brother and wrapped his arms around Prism and his twin. Prowl cleared his vocalizer. “Can you tell me what happened, Sunstreaker?”

“Prism came in, put the sparklings in their crib and came back out to the couch. We were...cuddling when we heard Spectrum screaming. Prism came in, and...and...Whitelight was gone.”

Prowl frowned, looking around the room, he stopped by the vent, and tugged at the edge. It lifted right up. “They took him out through the ventilation system. This was well thought out.”

“Sideswipe, please get Jazz and Blaster. I need his symbiotes to go through the vents.”

“I’ll be right back,” Sideswipe said, looking happy to be doing something other than fret.

“Why would they take him?” Prism whispered.

“Because he is a crystal framed mech,” Prowl said. “They are...so rare, and some consider them to be lucky. There was a trade in them during the golden age.”

“What kind of trade?” Sunstreaker frowned as he held Prism and Spectrum. Prowl shifted, “They were kept like pampered pets, in the best cases.”

“And in the worst?”

A private com came through. :In the worst they were sold as the most expensive pleasurebots.:
Prism looked up, “What aren't you telling me? What is the worst?”

Sunstreaker shook his helm, “Prism. It’s better––”

“No! You tell me! TELL ME!” Prism demanded.

“They---they----Prism...you don’t want to know. We will get him back,” Sunstreaker said, glaring.

“Just tell me.”

Sunstreaker exchanged a glance with Prowl and ducked his helm, “Pleasurebots, Prism. They used them for pleasurebots.”

Prism shook, “My poor bitty.”

“Don’t think about it, Prism. We will get him back! He will be back with us in no time at all. Prowl will not let us down.”

Prowl nodded as the door opened and Sideswipe returned with Jazz and Blaster behind him. As soon as Jazz saw Prism curled up in Sunstreaker’s arm with a wailing sparkling, he hurried over, “Prism? Twins? What happened?”

“My sparkling is gone!”

“Someone came in through the vents,” Prowl said. “and took him. Blaster, can you send your symbiotes out?”

Blaster nodded, “Sure thing boss,” he opened his dock, releasing Steeljaw and Nightstalker. The felines ran into the vent, “they’ll find anything...if there is anything to find.”

While they waited to find out what the symbiotes found in the vent, Prowl and Jazz went over the nursery. They let Sunstreaker and Sideswipe hang onto Prism, as he sobbed and trembled.

“They have a trail,” Blaster said, his optics going dim.

“Come on then, they might need back up,” Jazz said. “Are they out of the ship?”

“Yes,” Blaster said. “Follow me.”

Jazz and Blaster hurried out of the room. “Come, on Blaster. We are not letting someone steal a sparkling!”

Blaster nodded. “I can’t even imagine the pain that Prism has to be in right now!”

Jazz nodded as the entered the shuttle bay, “Me either. I couldn’t bare to lose either of my bitties!”

They headed out of the shuttle bay, They spotted the felines, running through the metalgrass. Jazz and Blaster ran after them as they traced the scent. Jazz hoped the mech that stole Whitelight didn’t have that far of a lead on them. They HAD to find the bitlet before something bad happened to him.

Jazz crouched down and followed the trail with Blaster stalking behind. The felines were hot on the sparkling-knappers trail, and Jazz followed as closely as he could. After a little while Jazz looked back. “They are still going strong. We’re going to need to use our altmodes to catch up.”

Blaster transformed followed by Jazz who tucked Blaster’s small frame in his own. They tore through the metalgrass, keeping the felines in sensor range. They had the mechnappers now!
The clearing they came to appeared empty, but Jazz’s sensors screamed that it was not. He could feel the ship’s flat EM field. It was cloaked, certainly, but it was just a ship. There was no AI attached to it, and no perimeter sensors from what jazz could feel. It made him curse softly and wish they had brought Mirage along. It would have made things easier.

He transformered, and waited for Blaster to do the same. “What the frag is this?” he hissed. “Cons? I fragging thought we had caught all the slaggers.”

“Looks like we missed a few,” Blaster whispered back, “Looks like Swindle’s ship.”

Jazz nodded, “Should have know that credit hungry slagger would be behind this. Comm the ship, have reinforcements here ASAP. We are getting that sparkling back before he can lift off. Have your cassettes take out a few vital systems to keep him here.”

“On it! Got a lot of volunteers wanting to help frag this mech up.”

Jazz snorted, “I’m sure. Let’s get inside. I want to disable the ships systems before anything else.”

Jazz was still grumbling once he got them inside. He found the nearest terminal and hacked into the ship’s systems, disabling it. “You know Sunny is gonna offline the glitch.”

“Yeah, I know,” Blaster agreed sounding anything but sorry.

“Let’s start looking for Whitelight. If we can find him before the others start trashing the place, we can ensure that he will stay safe.”

“Good idea, Jazz. I’m having Steeljaw slip in the vents to find him. Once he finds Whitelight, then we can go and get him.”

Jazz smirked, “Sounds like a plan then. Let’s get ready to make Swindle regret even thinking about taking a sparkling.”

Jazz watched Steeljaw slip into the vents, hopefully it would not take much time. He wanted to get the bitlet back to Prism. Poor Prism.

It wasn’t long before steeljaw came back, “Found them, Blaster. They are on the other end of the ship. I’ll lead you there.”

Steeljaw hopped into the vent leaving Blaster and Jazz to exchange a startled look, “They?”

Jazz and Blaster quickly climbed into the vents, crawling their way through the ship, until Steeljaw moved a vent aside. Steeljaw hopped on down and looked up expectantly. “Are you coming or not?”

Jazz looked over his shoulder at Blaster, “He always this snarky?”

Blaster gave Jazz a flat look, “You have no idea.”

Jazz barked a laugh, “Yeah.”

“Hurry up,” Steeljaw hissed as they rounded a corner and came faceplate to faceplate with Swindle.

The mech froze, and then whipped around trying to run. Jazz bellowed, and flung himself at the mech. “No you don’t, you fragging glitch.”

Swindle ducked and scurried around the corner. Jazz ran towards the mech, only to freeze when he heard a sparkling start to cry in a near-by room, along with an odd clicking sound. Jazz hesitated but then headed for the sparkling.
He followed the sound to a locked door, that he swiftly hacked open. He dashed into the room as soon as the door opened and blinked in surprise at what he saw. Whitelight was in a small cradle, crying, along with a…tiny insecticon of some sort that was chirping and nuzzling the sparkling. Or at least it had been until it saw Jazz, and then it had moved so it was above the sparkling and brooded the sparkling under his frame protectively.

It chittered at him, scolding him. “The frag.”

“No...I think it’s an immature nurse Insecticon. I didn’t think they ever came out of the hive. I’ve seen images of them, but never actually seen one. They take care of the queen’s eggs.”

“Yeah...so why is it hovering over Whitelight?” Jazz said, cautiously moving closer to the chittering bug and the wailing sparkling.

“Probably stole it to take care of Whitelight. Can you really imagine Swindle doing that?”

“You have a point, Blaster. The real question is, how do we get it away from Whitelight?”

Blaster shrugged, “We don’t. Comm Prism or Sideswipe to come and get Whitelight. The insecticon will feel the harmony in their field and let them get Whitelight.”

Jazz blinked, “Really?”

Blaster nodded, “Yeah. They will probably end up with the thing as a pet though. It looks like he has already imprinted on Whitelight.”

“Imprinted? They do that?”

“Yeah, they do that. They usually only have one charge. They imprint and care for it until they aren’t needed anymore.” Blaster pulled a face. “You don’t even know what happens to them then.”

Jazz’s optics widened, “That bad.”

“No one can ever blame an Insecticon of being civilized.”

Jazz shook his helm, “I guess not.”

Blaster laughed, “Just proves that even Swindle can accidentally do something right for someone else.”

Jazz shook his helm. “I doubt he meant to. The poor thing would probably get voided into space after he sold the sparkling if the buyers didn’t want it around.”

Blaster shivered, “Poor thing doesn’t deserve it, any more than he would have deserved to be devoured.”

Jazz nodded, and leaned against the door, watching the little insecticon hover over the sparkling, clicking to it when it realized Jazz and Blaster were no threat to it’s charge.

“Is m-my sparkling here?” Prism’s voice wibbled from behind them.

Jazz moved to one side so that Prism and Sideswipe could enter the room. “Yeah, we found him. You or Sides will need to get him though. Apparently the mech who stole him arranged for a caretaker of sorts.”

Sideswipe walked in and stared in shock at the Insecticon chirping sweetly at Whitelight. “What the
frag is that thing doing near our sparkling?"

“It’s an immature nurse Insecticon,” Blaster said. “You might want to keep the poor thing. It’s imprinted on Whitelight.”

“Are you kidding me,” Sideswipe snorted.

“He has a point,” Prism whispered. “I’ve read about them. They are very rare...outside of a hive. Tower mechs used to purchase them to care for their sparklings. They are very protective. They would give their sparks for their charges.” He moved closer, letting his field flare. The Insecticon chittered, but backed away and let Prism pick up the sparkling.

As soon as Prism picked up Whitelight his sparkling stopped crying and clung to Prism with all his newspark strength. Prism rained kisses down on Whitelight’s helm while Sideswipe gingerly picked up the insecticon. “So I take it you want to keep the bug?”

Prism nodded, “We can’t leave it here, it would just try to follow after Whitelight.”

Sideswipe sighed. “Fine. You’re the one explaining this to Sunny and Prowl.”

Prism shrugged, “Fine. I will explain it to them. If we leave it it will just end up offline. I’m not that cruel.”

Sideswipe huffed, “No, you aren’t. You are a leaking spark, but...I can’t fault you for it.”

“No, you really can’t.” Prism agreed and nuzzled Whitelight. The sparkling trilled at him, clearly happy to see his creator. The Insecticon clicked, and wiggled in Sideswipe’s arms, whining softly when the mech didn’t put him down.

Sideswipe frowned, “Now what’s wrong with it?”

Blaster laughed, “It wants to be closer to your sparkling. Nurse Insecticons grow up with their charges, bonding with them and carrying for them. Put it next to Whitelight and it will calm down. It can’t sense him at the moment and is getting overly stressed out.”

Sideswipe grumbled, “This is crazy. You sure we can’t just leave it?”

Prism glared, and reached for the small insecticon. It latched on, clinging to Prism’s armour, and chittering happily at Whitelight. “I’m completely sure,” he said. “Completely.”

Prism turned away, and made his way out of the ship. He didn’t wait around to see if the other mechs were following him. He was taking his sparkling home.

He wondered what Mirage would say when he saw the Nurse Insecticon. Mirage had been the one who had mentioned they had been popular among the nobles and tower mechs. Hopefully his creator would know how to care for it properly.

At least it kept Whitelight calm and entertained. Now he just had to figure out how he was going to get both of them home with him.

OoOoOoOo

Prism watched the little Insecticon rock the two little sparklings. He was so very careful with them. He cooed and clicked, and they cooed and clicked back. It was...fascinating to watch. In his opinion. The twins did not seem to agree, though.
“That is still so slagging strange! What if it tries to eat them or something?”

“Yeah! How do we know that it won’t get violent?”

Prism sighed, “He is fine. Nurse Insecticons are so loyal to their charger that they allow themselves to be eaten when their charge matures. He will literally never harm them.”

“What?” Sunstreaker asked, looking horrified.

Prism sighed, “When their charges mature they devour the caretaker. They use the nutrients for one final growth surge. They have no other use for the caretakers. They are not warriors themselves.

“That is disgusting,” Sideswipe said.

Prism nodded, “It is very sad. At least he is here and safe. He takes very good care of the sparkling, they got right into recharge for him. He seems to adore them in return.”

Sunstreaker frowned at the sight of the Insecticon, “I still don’t like the bug being so close to our sparklings.”

Sideswipe nodded, “I am a little uneasy as well.”

The sparkinglings chirped and shifted in a deep recharge while the Nurse Insecticon crawled down and past the three of them before returning while dragging an energon cube. Prism smiled and took it from him. “Thank you.”

The insecticon clicked and chirred at Prism, sitting back on it's hind legs it watched the little Praxian. It wiggled closer, chittering excitedly when Prism sipped the energon.

“I think it likes me,” Prism laughed.

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker exchanged a look. “Why does he keep bringing you cubes anyway? It is weird.”

A laugh from the doorway made Prism look over and then smile, “Creator!”

Mirage stepped in and drew Prism into a hug. “I am so glad to see that you and your sparklings are alright. I can see you are in good care though with this little one to do so.”

“Creator? Do you know why he keeps bringing me fuel? I thought he only was supposed to care for the sparklings.”

Mirage chuckled, “Not just the larvae, but the queen as well. It thinks that is what you are.”

Prism’s optics widened. “Oh, wow. That is different.”

“What?” Sunstreaker said, looking puzzled. “What do you mean?”

Mirage rolled his optics, “Insecticons form hives. The hives are ran by a Queen.”

Sunstreaker frowned, “Are you saying the bug thinks Prism is the Queen of a hive?”

Mirage nodded. “Why would he not? After all, Prism is the center of the house you three have created. You and your twin dote on him while he raises the sparklings. He is the center”

Prism giggled, “I’m the Queen? Hee. Sunstreaker, you may need to paint that for me.”
Sunstreaker raised a brow, but he was unable to hide his interest. “I might. You would look good like that.”

Prism’s lips curled up, amused and full of mischief. “I’m the Queen of the hive. Amazing, isn’t it?”

Sideswipe shook his helm, “Yeah...”

Mirage moved over to the little insecticon, and knelt down to his level. He then reached out and rolled the insecticon onto his back and rubbed his exposed stomach a little before letting him roll back over.

Prism blinked, “What was that for?”

Mirage grinned, “I want him to accept me into his hive.”

The Insecticon chirred and wiggled, sidling up to Mirage, and he did the same thing. He pushed the little Insecticon onto his back, and rubbed his stomach again before letting him go. He repeated it over again several more times before the insecticon finally curled up at Mirage’s feet, dozing.

“He’s a cute little thing,” Mirage said.

“What the frag was that,” Sideswipe stared. “Are you some sort of Insecticon whisperer.”

Mirage frowned at him. “Have you done no research about him at all? That is a basic dominate insecticon position. They however nip at the exposed under section instead of lightly rubbing it. It means that he now sees me as dominate to him. Not as high as ‘Queen’ Prism here, but certainly higher than you two ‘drones’.”

Sunstreak bristled at that, “What the frag is that supposed to mean? Who are you calling a drone, you-!”

“Sunny! Please! I am sure that he will explain and apologize for calling you that.”

Sunstreaker huffed and looked at Mirage expectantly.

“It is what he sees you as. Drones impregnate the Queen and they are either devoured...or their die in the process,” Mirage’s lips twitched up. “I’m sure he is very confused why you are still sticking around.” Mirage reached down and stroked the Insecticon’s antenna, which earned another purr.

“You are joking, right?” Sunstreaker finally said.

Mirage laughed again, “No, I’m completely serious. I had considered procuring a few of these guys before things went...awry.”


Mirage gave him a flat look, “There are no words to describe the horrors of this war properly so I will describe how I choose.”

Sunstreaker scowled, looking from Mirage to the Insecticon. “So we just have to do that to get him to respect us too?”

Mirage frowned, “It should. I am not sure how firmly he has you placed as the drones for the queen.”

“And if he is completely set on us being drones?” Sideswipe said.
“Then he will never truly respect your authority….maybe. He might even think you are just clones. Insecticons…are….very different than our own kind.”

“Clones? What the frag?” Sunstreaker bit out, scowling at the little insecticon that was still dozing at Mirage’s feet.

Mirage chuckled a little, “The drones are usually quite literally clones of the previous drones, ensuring that the Hive remains stable. He may have set his processor to regard you two as a series of clones.”

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker exchanged unamused looks, “How do we fix that?”

“Try rolling him like I did for a little while each sol. He will learn eventually. They are fairly intelligent, he however is more concerned with your sparklings than with you.”

“He is so very good with them,” Prism chimed in. They sleep so much better, and it’s nice to be able to catch a little bit of recharge.”

“Indeed,” Mirage agreed. “That is why they were so in demand.”

Sunstreaker grunted, “Still think it’s odd.”

“Well, he is great with the sparklings at least.” Prism smiled and looked down at the Insecticon, “He needs a name.”

“Just call him Bug. It’s what he is after all.”

Prism frowned, “I think we can do better than that.”

Sunstreaker’s armor fluffed up, “You are very attached to him.”

“He is sweet and cute, and he takes good care of the bitties. Sure I’m attached to him. He is making my existence easier,” Prism chided.

“He is a sweet little thing,” Mirage agreed. “Adorable.”

Prism nodded, “He is! The sparklings adore him and he seems to adore them.”

Sideswipe grunted while Sunstreaker scowled. “I still don’t like it being around our sparklings. It could still be dangerous. How do we know it won’t attack?”

Mirage shook his helm. “He would never hurt the sparklings. He will let himself be offlined before they are harmed.”

“So you say,” Sideswipe said, “But I see no proof of it. It could just be biding it’s time. Waiting for us to trust it.”

Prism snorted, “You are being silly.”

“No he’s not. We are concerned for the safety of our sparklings,” Sunstreaker exclaimed.

“No. You are being bratty because he thinks you are drones,” Mirage teased.

Sunstreaker scowled, “That has nothing to do with it. I want our sparklings safe that is all!”

Prism leaned up against Sunstreaker and pressed a kiss to Sunstreaker’s lip. “I love you. I know that
you are not drones and I will help get the Insecticon from thinking you two are ones.”


Prism smiled, looking amused, “You will learn to appreciate him. I know you will.”

“If you say so,” Sunstreaker grunted.

Sideswipe bent down and touched the little Insecticon that was still sleeping at Mirage’s feet. It cracked one optic open and stared back at him, chittering. “Still think he’s weird.”

“He’s a helper, a wonderful helper,” Mirage said, and bent over, stroking the Insecticon’s helm.

The bug chirped back at Mirage happily.

Prism laughed, “He really seems to like you, Creator. I am glad that you two get along so well.”

Mirage smiled, “You are lucky you have such devoted assistance now.”

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker frowned, “And what are we? We help with our sparklings too, you know.”

“We help all the time,” Sideswipe grumbled. “You make us sound like lazy afts.”

Mirage made a tutting noise, “Sounds like someone is jealous.”

“I’m not jealous of that,” Sunstreaker snapped.

“Methinks the mech does protest too much,” Mirage snickered.

Sunstreaker scowled and rumbled, “I’m going to go work in my studio,” his faceplates softened as he looked at Prism, “if you need me, just let me know, sweetspark.”

Prism smiled and pressed a kiss to Sunstreaker’s cheek. “Are you going to work on your sketch of me and the sparklings?”

Sunstreaker smiled at the kiss. “A bit. Maybe work on a few more projects.”

Prism smiled back, “I love you, Sunny.”

“I love you too, Prism.” He strolled out of the room, casting Mirage an annoyed look as he left.

“Frag, you are a real jerk, Mirage,” Sideswipe said when Sunstreaker was out of audial range. “You know he’s sensitive. Stop fragging picking at him.”

Mirage rolled his optics, “Stop behaving like a sparkling.”

“ME!??!!?”

“Yes, you,” Mirage said.

“You two are both acting like sparklings towards the little Insecticon. He is making life easier for your bondmate. One would have thought you would appreciate that.”

Prism frowned slightly. “It is fine, Tor. Don’t lecture them please. It will all work out. We all just need to grow used to each other. I am sure they will grow to like one another.”
"I am sorry, dearspark. Sometimes I can't help myself."

"I know 'Tor. It will work out though. You just wait and see. It Will work out for the best."

Mirage nodded, "You are….right. Certainly."

Prism pressed a kiss to his cheek. “Of course I am. Have you heard anymore about what else was found when they raided that ship? I heard they found some others mechs as well?”

Mirage nodded, “A few from what I heard. Swindle is down in the brig and the other mechs are trapped in Ratchet’s clutches.”

“Oh, those poor things,” Prism exclaimed. “They aren’t hurt are they?”

“I’m not sure,” Mirage said. “You know how Ratchet is. Sometimes it’s best to just stand back and let the dust settle.”

Sideswipe snickered, “That is an understatement If I’ve ever heard one.”

Prism sighed, “Ratchet might be a little rough around the edges but he has a good spark!”

Sideswipe pressed a kiss to Prism’s helm, “Only you see that, sweetspark. You bring out the best of everyone even Ratchet the Hatchet.”

Prism smiled in the kiss but then swatted Sideswipe at the nickname. “That isn’t nice at all, Sides!”

“No nice, but it’s pretty close to the truth, Princess,” Sideswipe said.

“I think I would like to meet them, the new mechs,” Prism said.

“I’m sure you will get to, eventually,” Mirage said. “I’m sure we all will. Ratchet won’t keep them forever.”

“They are so luck that they got away from Swindle. Who knows what he was going to do to them,” Sideswipe said.

Prism nodded. “Very true. I am so glad you all saved our sparkling. I was so worried for him! I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t!”

Sideswipe wrapped an arm around Prism. “Don’t stress yourself thinking about it. Both our sparklings are home and safe. No one will ever threaten our sparklings again.”

Prism held on to them tightly, “I know. You saved him. You are so brave and wonderful. So good to us. My protector.”

Sideswipe hugged him a bit more tightly, “That is what I’m here for.”

OoOoOoOo

Perceptor adjusted the thermal blanket that was draped across Verity’s torso. He fluffed the pillow behind her backstrut and finally took up the seat beside her. “How are you feeling today?”

“Same as before, Percy,” Verity said with a sigh. It was already very tiring. The therapy. The nanite injections. It would be so long before she could walk again. Sometimes it was very hard not to despair.
“Would you like me to continue reading the…datapad you selected?”

Verity gave a small grin. “Sure. Thanks again for reading to me.”

Perceptor gave her a small smile, “It is my pleasure, Verity. Even if I suspect you select the material from your planet from what you know will be awkward for me to read to you.”

“I do like to listen to your voice though, Percy. You have such a lovely voice.”

Perceptor snorted, “I cannot say I have ever heard anymech describe my vocalizations as…lovely.”

“Humor me, please,” Verity’s lips curled into an amused smile. “Please.”

Perceptor ducked his help, field flush with embarrassment.

“It is kind of you to say that. I do wish you would pick less….lewd material for me to read.”

Verity laughed, “Lewd? It is just a little romance novel.”

Perceptor frowned, ‘Still, I am informed that your world had a wide variety of literature. I think we can find more appropriate material than… ‘The Damsel’s Deflowering’. You have not explained why the removing of plant growth is so critical to the plotline.’

Verity’s lip twitched up. “It has nothing at all to do with greenery, Percy. They are talking about the human equivalent of breaking seal.

Perceptor sputtered and dropped the book to the floor. “Verity! That is...that is...” For once he seemed at a loss for words.

Verity snickered, “You are so cute when you’re flustered.”

Perceptor frowned at Verity, “You picked that work on purpose didn’t you?”

Verity laughed and nodded, “But of course! You are so adorable when you get all blushy like that.”

Perceptor huffed and turned his helm to the side. “Please pick a work of literature that is not...crude.”

Verity laughed again, “I don’t think I will. You don’t have to read to me if you don’t want to.”

“You know I do. I want to be with you. You have no idea how horrible it was when you didn’t wake up for so long. I thought I had lost you.”

Verity sighed, “Percy...”

“I did though. I thought I would never hear your voice or see your optics online again. You were so still for so long, and it was the worse thing I’ve ever had to go through.”

Verity canted her helm and watched him, “I love you too.”

Perceptor looked away in embarrassment. Verity smiled, he really did look so cute like that. “Fine, if you refuse to read me ‘crude’ material then I will pick something else. How about you read me….Alice in Wonderland?”

Perceptor looked back and smiled, “Thank you for picking something else for me.”

“You are welcome, sweetie,” Verity said, and pulled the blankets up closer. “I want you to be
happy...even if I want...well...you know....”

“I know. I’m not ready though. I’m really...not.”

“It’s okay. I can wait it out. Not like I have much of a choice now.”

Perceptor sighed, “I wish you were well again, there is so much I want to share with you as we explore your world. I brought something back for you.”

Verity looked at him in surprise. “You brought something for me? What is it?”

He reached into his subspace and pulled out the delicate thing he had found, “A crystal growth. It’s so unlike those that grow on Cybertron.”

Verity gasped, “It’s a rose. Oh. It’s beautiful, Percy.” She took it from him gingerly, and touched the crystalline petals. “Wherever did you find it?”

“There was a whole garden full of them. We’ve found several.”

“Oh. I see. That’s sad. Someone once cared for them.”

“If it makes me feel any better, Thundercracker and Index have begun tending it along with Prowl, Jazz and several of the Protectobots. They are talking of creating a memorial garden that mixes Earth gardening techniques as well as those from the famed Praxian Crystal Garden.”

Verity smiled softly, “I am glad that it is being cared for again. You should take this back, and replant it so it can grow. I bet it will be even prettier with the others around it.”

“I could pot one for you. Wouldn’t you like something to brighten the room?”

“That would be nice too,” Verity said. “Could you bring me back some pictures of the garden? I would really like to see it.”

“Of course I can, Verity. I’d be happy to do that for you.”

“I want you to be happy,” Perceptor said earnestly. “I...I wish I could take you to it, but I think that would be too dangerous.”

“Still having issues with the guys who went crazy?”

Perceptor paused for a moment as he worked his way through her words, “Yes, the disturbed mechs and femmes are still proving to be an issue. We are capturing as many as we can and putting them into stasis until they can be repaired. In most cases, the causes are...well they are still serious but they are fixable.”

Verity smiled, “I’m glad you can help them. I would hate to have ended up like them and it seems like the odds were in favor of making more mad machines than sane ones.”

“Unfortunately, yes. The trauma of the change left so many of them crazed and unhinged. It is a pity. We are doing what we can for them.”

Verity reached out and patted his hand, “I know you are sweetie, and that is what counts. You’re a good mech, Percy.”

Perceptor ducked his helm, “I want to be worthy of you.”
“You already are too good for me. If you try any harder, I’ll never catch up.”

Perceptor blushed and looked to the side. “Why don’t I start reading? ‘Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, ’and what is the use of a book,’ thought Alice ’without pictures or conversation?’”

Verity smiled and settled on her berth listening to Percy read, content for the moment.

OoOoOoOo

Will packed up the last of his meager belongings. Most of his possessions were already in his new habitation suite. The nursery was already set up, and his children were dozing inside of it. Chip and Carly were nice enough to watch them as he finished up moving his things.

Ironhide and Chromia watched him gather his things, their faceplates clearly showing how little they liked this. “Will are you sure this is really necessary? I mean-”

“Yes it is. You will get to have time with the sparklings don’t worry. You two can visit my suite for evening fuel and spend time with them then.”

“It’s not just the sparklings,” Ironhide spat out.

“You want to court me?” Will finally stopped, “Then you will do it right. I’m not living with you until we are properly bonded. You agreed to this.”

“Doesn’t mean we have to like it,” Ironhide said. “We worry about you.”

Will gave him a flat look, “Sure.”

Ironhide and Chromia exchanged a sad look and sighed. “We know we messed up, Will but-”

“But nothing. Be glad I am still giving you a chance! I...I am trying to trust you two like I said I would but you have to give me space!”

Ironhide shrunk away, pauldrons drooping. “I’m sorry, Will. You are right. I-it’s just hard to watch you go. We love you.”

“That remains to be seen,” Will said, still looking irritated.

“We are very sorry, Will,” Chromia whispered.

Will sighed, “I know you are.”

Ironhide moved forward, “Would you like me to carry your box for you? It looks a little heavy for you.”

Will sighed, “Fine, you can carry the box. If you two find anything that I have left, just bring it to my suite okay?”

They both nodded, “We will,” Ironhide added. “We promise.”

Ironhide took the box and followed Will as they made their way through the corridors to the suite Will had claimed as his own.

“Is there anything else you need?” Chromia asked, looking just as cowed as Ironhide.
Will shook his helm and opened up the door to the suite. “No, I think that I have everything. I need to get back to the babies. Chip and Carly are still pretty young themselves.”

They both followed him in, Ironhide sat the box down and looked awkwardly from Will to Chromia and back. “This is nice, very roomy. It’s bigger than ours.”

“I know. There is a lot of room for the children.”

Ironhide nodded, “Plenty of room for them to play in. They’ll be real happy here I can see. Do you need help moving anything else in?”

Will shook his, “No, that is the last of it. If you two want to go look at the sparklings, go ahead. Its why you’re here after all.”

Ironhide trembled, “You are why we are here, Will.”

“That remains to be seen,” Will said.

“Come one, ‘Hide. Lets go see the sparklings,” Chromia said in a subdued voice.

Ironhide nodded but the look of hurt never left his face. “Sure, Mia. If you want.”

Carly and Chip headed out of the nursery as soon as the two had headed in. “Hi, Will! They are all sleeping! Annabelle was very good! She kept wanting to help feed the little ones. It was so cute! Chip got pictures for you!”

Will smiled, “That sounds like Belle. She loves being a big sister.”

“She’s such a good little girl,” Carly said. “You know I’ll watch her anytime you want.”

“Thanks. I really appreciate it,” Will said.

The kids finally left and he wandered into the childrens room, and watched Ironhide and Chromia. They were very good with the kids.

That was at least one point in their favors at least. They would be good parents to the sparkings. That did nothing to dim the fact that he still felt as though he had been used as a broodmare for them.

He still couldn’t trust them, not when they had betrayed him before.

But for the sake of the children, he would try.

OoOoOoOo

The warnings that flashed across Smokescreen’s HUD were not entirely unexpected. He knew it would be any Sol. ~Sweetspark, I need you to come home now. I need help getting to the medbay.~ Smokescreen felt surprisingly calm as he talked to Streetwise across their bond.

~I'll be right there.~

Streetwise arrived far faster than Smokescreen anticipated, his field radiating panic. “Are you okay? Smokey? Do I need to carry you? Are you going to make it there?”

Smokescreen laughed. “I’m fine, Street! Calm down, I can walk. Yes, I’ll make it- if I don’t rupture a strut from laughing at you panicking.”
“You do look pretty funny, Street.”

Smokescreen turned to see Hot Spot sheepishly looking in with Groove who smirked at Street. “Hi Smokescreen. We can to give Streetwise a servo in getting you to medbay. He seemed a little frazzled.”

“A little bit,” agreed Smokescreen as he waddled towards the door. “I can walk, really. It’s not that bad yet. Ratchet told me what to expect and we aren’t even past stage one.”

“Are you sure?” Streetwise asked.

“Positive. We have a good joor before the bitlings come out.”

Groove laughed, “At least one of you was able to remain calm. Streetwise has been panicking since you called. He started making these elaborate contingency plans in case anything went wrong,”

“Nothing is going to go wrong,” Smokescreen said. “The bitty is ready to come out, and Ratchet is a very good medic. It will all be fine.”

“Are you sure you don’t need help?” Streetwise said looking nervous.

“I’m fine,” Smokescreen said again.

Hotspot laughed, “He said that he was fine, Street. How about this: we get him to med bay while you grab his things for his stay in the medbay. That way he will be there in plenty of time and have everything that he needs.”

Smokescreen pressed a kiss to Streetwise’s helm. “Why don’t you go get my bag, Street? I’ll wait and then we can head to the med-bay. How does that sound?”

“But what...but what if we don’t make it to the medbay!” Streetwise gasped. “What if---”

“Street, it’ll be that fine. He’s in no hurry. Get the bag. it’ll be fine.”

Streetwise frowned, but ran back into their habsuite and grabbed the bag before hurrying Smokescreen down the hallway. His brothers watched, and shook their helms.

Groove looked at Hot Spot, “Maybe he will get more relaxed when the sparkling is here?”

“Doubt it. More likely he will not be back to himself until the sparkling is grown up and bonded. Although they probably will have another bitlet by then so of course that is a restart of the clock.”

“Hush you two,” Smokescreen said, “He’s going to be fine. This is all going to be fine. And...I think we should start walking to the medbay...now.”

“Now?” Groove asked.

“Unless you want to help him emerge I would suggest we hurry.”

Streetwise yelped and scooped up Smokescreen, sprinting down the hallway towards the medical bay. He screamed for everyone to get out of the way as he ran. Smokescreen laughed as he was carried. “Slow down, Street! I want to make it to the medical bay alive.”

Streetwise was not listening though, he skidded into the medical bay and set him on the closest medical berth. “Aid! Aid! The sparkling is emerging! Get over here!”
Smokescreen was still giggling when Streetwise ran off to find First Aid. He let himself settle back onto the beth, carefully arranging his winglets.

“Hi, Smokey,” Weld smiled as he came into the area. “Aid should be here shortly. Do you mind if I jack into your medical port to check your progress?”

Smokescreen offered his wrist to the diminutive mech. “I don’t mind at all. Not getting any warnings. I think Street might need a sedative though. He’s out of his processor.”

Weld laughed, “I’ll let First Aid know. I think he’s already is aware though. I think one of his brothers gave him a warning over the gestalt bond.”

“Good at least he is prepared then. Streetwise has been acting like a mad mech all morning since I got him out of recharge.”

“I think that happens a lot. First time sires are often as nervous as first time carriers. At least that is what Ratchet says.”

“I don’t feel nervous at all,” Smokescreen said. “I’m ready for him to be out, and to snuggle him in my arms.”

“You will get to soon enough,” Weld said with a smile, and scanned through the pad he was holding. “Everything looks good. Just relax.”

Streetwise reappeared, dragging First Aid behind him, “Hurry up! Hurry, Aid! The sparkling is coming! We have to hurry! Hurry!”

Smokescreen laughed, “Street, sweetspark, calm down. I’m fine and so is our sparkling. You are over-reacting. I’m so sorry, Aid. He has been like this since we got up.”

“I know! I felt it through the bond, he is so excited!”

“He is looking good,” Weld said. “The actual sequence should be starting momentarily.”

First Aid nodded, “Think you’d better calm down, love. We need you to stay calm so the sparkling stays calm,” he said looking to his brother. “We don’t want him to try to fight his way out. It would only hurt Smokey.”

“That can happen? Oh, Primus! Smokey are you okay!?”

Smokescreen sighed. “We are both fine, Street. You do need to calm down though. You are getting really stressed out.”

First Aid guided Streetwise to a chair. “Sit down, Street and try to calm down before I need to sedate you.”

“I don’t need to be sedated! I need to be awake! I need to help my bondmate and my sparkling,” Streetwise said. “I need to help.”

“You need to calm down,” First Aid said, easing close to his brother he pushed a needle into the mech’s energon line before he realized what had happened.

“What are you doing?” Streetwise shrieked.

“You need to calm down,” Aid said again.
First Aid watched as Streetwise slumped slightly in the chair. Smokescreen giggled as the odd look on Streetwise’s faceplates but then gasped. “Aid? I think the sequence is starting!”

Aid hurried over and scanned Smokescreen quickly. “You are correct, your sequence has started. Just relax and allow your frame to do as much as possible. Try not to force anything just yet.”

“It feels odd,” Smokescreen frowned as the transformation began. Plates peeling back in was that Smokescreen was sure they should not.

“I know it does, but that will pass. You are doing so very good. Transformation is going smoothly, then we will get the sparkling out.”

Smokescreen looked down and could see where his plates had shifted to allow the sparkling to emerge. He felt a flutter in his spark. He would hold their sparkling in his arms today!

The doors to the medical bay opened again and Hot Spot, Groove, Prowl and Jazz walked in. “Prowl, Jazz! You made it! I am so happy! My sequence just started.”

Prowl hurried to Smokescreen’s side and pressed a servo to his shoulder. “Of course we are here, Smokescreen.”

Jazz took his hand. “Excited? I can tell you are.”

Smokescreen nodded, “I am. It feels funny. It doesn’t hurt.”

“Usually it does not, as long as he doesn’t get caught on anything coming out,” Jazz said. “I’m sure it will go smoothly.”

“I want to hold him so badly.”

“I know you do,” Jazz smiled.

“Was it that way with you? When you had Bluestreak?”

Jazz smiled, “With Bluestreak and Silverstreak. I think all creators feel that was where their time comes. It is a special time.”

Smokescreen relaxed against the berth, it still felt odd to have his insides moving about like they were. It didn’t hurt, but it was very, very uncomfortable. He could also feel Interceptor pushing against the gestation tank walls. Impatient now, but Smokescreen couldn’t blame him. He was feeling impatient as well.

“You are doing so well,” Prowl said, and pat his shoulder gently. “Our creators would be so proud of you. I am so proud of you.”

“Do you really think so? I wish that they could be here. I wish they could meet their grandspark.”

“I am sure. Just as I am sure they would have loved your sparkling and spoiled him rusty.”

Jazz leaned over and grabbed Streetwise’s servo. “Well, don’t worry. I’ll make sure he is spoiled rusty. I hope I can trust your help First Aid?”

“Of course Jazz. Streetwise and Smokescreen are making us uncles! We are spoiling our nephew as rusty as possible!”

Smokescreen chuckled, “Then he is in very good hands.” His attention shifted and he gasped as the
transformation finished. He could feel Interceptor stir inside of him, and begin to climb up and out. It was slow going, and exhausted the little sparkling, but soon his small hands reached Smokescreen’s side, and he pulled himself up, and lay limp against Smokescreen’s plating for a moment before Smokescreen’s hands wrapped about him and pulled him close.

Streetwise moved to Smokescreen’s side and cooed at the sight of their sparkling. “Oh, Smokey! Look at him! Oh, thank you! Thank you for our sparkling, darling. He is perfect!”

“I know, Street! Look at him. He is perfect. We are so lucky.”

Hot Spot and Groove moved to the edge of the berth. “Oh Street! Look at him! Oh! Spot look! The bitty is looking at us!”

Interceptor looked around with curious and wonder filled optics.

Prowl looked at the small sparkling and looked Smokescreen. “What are you two naming him?”

“I had an idea and Street said that he didn’t mind. I...We are naming him Interceptor. After Sire.”

“Oh, Smokey, that is wonderful!” Prowl explained, his wings fluttering with far more emotion that he usually showed. “Thank you, love. Thank you.”

Smokescreen pulled Interceptor against his sparkplate, seemingly oblivious as First Aid manually reversed the transformation, and put him back together. His full attention was on the sparkling. He activated his feeding lines and offered one digit to Interceptor. He latched on sucking on the line and downing the energon at an almost ravenous pace.

“Hungry little bit isn’t he?”

“Of course he is. He did just emerge! That is pretty hard work you know!”

“That is very true, Aid. You two have a beautiful sparkling, Street.”

“Thank you, Spot.”

“Oh of course he is beautiful,” Prowl said.

Smokescreen smiled, lips curling up gently, “Yes.” The sparkling finally let go of the energon line, and cooed softly. His optics dimmed and soon he fell into recharge. “He’s perfect.”

OoOoOoOo

Flamewar surveyed the area around the cave Predaking had found. She was still surprised that the bots had let them return to cybertron, but the sparklings were growing so fast and taking up so much room...and supplies perhaps it was not so big of a surprise. There was also the rumours of other predacon sightings. THey were supposed to investigate that as part of their agreement with Prowl to go to Cybertron.

In exchange for watching for returning Decepticons, exploring Cybertron’s remains and investigating rumors of other predacon as well as spark-eaters and horror-terrors they were being left in peace with energon shipped over a few times each stellar.

Flamewar nuzzled the hatchlings, they were getting so big! They were usually much more active but at the moment they were in a need recharge after playing all morning. She checked them once more and then headed out of the cave.
There was a lot of debris scattered in front of it and it was in need of clearing.

It was hard work, but it was satisfying to make this place into a home. It would be nice when the fledglings were big enough to be left on their own. A part of her spark longed for the skies and to soar across the horizon. That would come soon enough.

Her sparklings were strong and going stronger everyday. She did worry for them though. She didn’t want them to be alone.

There had been very few Predacons found among the human-turned mechs and femmes and most of them had remained on Earth with the Autobots as they worked to help the new mechs and femmes adjust to their new circumstances.

A snap made her look up and she growled loudly when she saw a strange predacon standing on a rubble pile. How dare he come so close to her nest!

She growled deep in her chest, and flared her wings out in an attempt to make herself look bigger. **HOW DARE HE.** Her armour puffed out, and her hackles raised.

The strange predacon moved closer, and clicked at her threateningly. “What is a pretty thing like you doing all alone?” It circled around her slowly.

“What do you want?”

The predacon moved slowly closer but a sound behind her was the only warning she had before a second strange predacon charged at her and knocked her to the ground. The new arrival stood on one of her wings, pinning her down and keeping her from transforming.

“Such a pretty little femme. Why are you all alone? Don’t worry, we will keep you safe now.”

“Let me go! LET ME GO!” The weight on her made the metal of her wings creak. ::My Love! My Mate! Save me! Save me!:: she screamed across the bond.

::My Love? What...what is wrong? What has happened!?!::

::Two predacons attacked me. They have me pinned. Come quick! Hurry! They could hurt the younglings!::

::I am almost back, My love! It will be okay! I will not allow them to harm you or our hatchlings!::

“Back off, Darksteel. You are about to tear her wing. We don’t want to hurt our pretty new femme.”

“Shut up, Skylynx! You are not the boss of me! I am the one who caught her!”

“You said we’d share,” Skylynx huffed. “You promised we’d share!”

“Maybe I’ve changed my mind,” Darksteel growled. “You’re not my boss. Get away!”

“Get away from her,” a new voice roared, and Predaking crashed into the clearing. “Get away from my mate!”

“Ha! If you wanted her you shouldn’t have left her!” Darksteel snapped. “She’s ours now.”

“How dare you! My mate is not some tawdry possession one can claim!”

Predaking charged at the predacon standing on her wing and barreled into him, freeing her wing. As
soon as she was free, she transformed to avoid becoming trapped again. She then charged at the other strange predacon. No one threatened her sparklings!

Skylynx scuttled back away from the crazy femme. She roared and clawed at him like a thing possessed. The other predacon was just as crazed. He ripped and clawed at Darksteel making the other predacon squeal.

“You will not take me mate!” Predaking roared. “I will rip you apart!”

Flamewar tore into Skylynx’s wing, ripping a large tear into it. The mech squealed in pain and went limp trying not to anger the femme further.

Predaking beat the mech over and over until he went limp in his grasp. He roared in triumph before turning to Flamewar and hurrying to her side. “Are you alright my love? Did they harm you? Where are you hurt?”

“I am fine,” Flamewar said, a growl still in her voice. “Who are these intruders? Why would they get so close to my nest. Why would they dare?”

“They thought to claim you for their own,” Predaking growled. “You are mine. I would not let them take you from me.”

Flamewar raised a browplate, “You are mine.”

“I am.”

She nuzzled her mate and pressed a kiss to his lips. “Good. I love you, my mate.”

“I love you as well, my mate.”

“What about the intruders?”

Predaking looked over at the mechs laying on the ground. “I will speak with them and make them either join us or run them out of our territory.”

Flamewar nodded, content to trust him with this. "What do you think they will do?"

"It is hard to tell, my mate. Very hard to tell. It would be a pity to destroy them. There are so few of us."

She nodded, "Yes. It would be a pity."

“Perhaps now that they have been shown their place, they will be more inclined to obey their king.”

“I shall leave it to you then, my love. I wish to check on the hatchlings and make certain they unharmed and did not wake from their stasis naps.”

“Very well. You are the finest of carriers, my love. I can think of no one better to care for our hatchlings.”

Flamewar’s lips curled up into an amused smiled, “And you had better never think of anyone.” She transformed, brushing up against him. “In fact, it would make me very, very angry.”

She moved around him, purring as she finally moved away, and flicked her tail up teasingly.

Predaking rumbled and took a half-step towards her. “You are a wicked tease!”
“Who said that I was teasing. Go deal with our uninvited guests, my mate. Then come and claim your reward for coming to my aid.”

Predaking watched her stalk into their cave with optics darkened with lust. “I shall hold you to that, my little Flame.”

“Good,” she purred, “I would be very disappointed if you did not.”

Predaking turned his attention back to Flamewar, and let his focus fall on the two offline mechs. He prowled around them, watching as they finally began to rouse.

“Who are you and why are you in my territory? Why did you attack MY mate?”

One of the intruders shook himself as he got to his peds. “We did not know the femme had a mate or that you were here.”

“You know now. You are in my territory, and have assaulted my mate. Will you submit to my authority or would you rather perish?”

The mech laid on the ground. “I would rather remain alive. I am Skylynx and that is Darksteel.”

Predaking watched him, golden optic narrowing. “You will do as I say then, if you want to remain here.”

Skylynx moved closer, belly rubbing the ground. “Yes. I will.”

The other mech, Darksteel if the first mech had spoken correctly, had begun to stir as well. “Lynx? Wha-? What are you doing? Oy! Get away from him!”

The second mech charged at Predaking, shrieking a battle cry. Predaking stepped aside and let the mech run past, skidding to a halt.

The mech whirled around, roaring in rage. Predaking whipped around and charged the other mech hitting him hard and pinning him to the ground. His claws bit into metal plates and made the creak.

“Fight me and I will offline you!” Predaking growled and watched the resistance fade from the other mech’s optics.

“I am sorry. Forgive me,” Darksteel squeaked.

“You will address me as your King! You and your comrade attacked my mate, why?”

The mech he was pinning to the ground gulped. “We did not know she was your mate! She is the first femme we have seen in a very long time!”

Predaking eased the pressure that he was using on the mech. “If either of you so much as look at her disrespectfully, then you will feel my wrath!”

“O-of course my k-king,” Darksteel shivered. “W-we will behave. W-won’t we Skylynx?”

“Good. You will stay in one of the other caves. There is one close. I expect you to help guard our territory.”

Skylynx ducked his helm, “Of course my liege.”

“And you will listen to my mate. Her word is my word. Do you understand me?” Predaking asked.
“What? I refuse to obey a femme! Femmes are meant to serve, to bare the eggs!”

Predaking swatted Darksteel and pinned him down. “You will obey her or I will allow her to demonstrate why you will do so. Flamewar is a worthy warrior in her own right.”

Darksteel glared balefully at Predaking. “Very well. I will obey the femme.”

Predaking nodded, satisfied that Darksteel would obey him in this. He lead them to the cave, “There. It is not bad. There is an energon spring towards the back.”

Skylynx perked up at the mention of food. “Thank you, your majesty. Thank you!”

Predaking inclined his helm graciously. “You are welcome.”

He watched as the two mechs headed into the cave and once he was certain that they were staying put, likely fueling, he went back to the cave that he shared with Flamewar.

Flamewar was curled around their hatchlings protectively, keeping watch on the cave opening. “What happened with them? I heard another incident outside. Are you alright?”

Predaking padded across the cavern and curled around Flamewar, “Everything is well, my love. They just needed a firm claw.”

“I see. Where did you take them?”

“To one of the nearby caves,” he said, nuzzling her.

“Not too close, I hope,” she murmured.

“No, not too close.”

“Good. I will keep watch on the hatchlings regardless but it is nice to have them further away.”

“They will not live if they threaten you or our sparklings, my love.”

“Indeed. Either by your claws or mine.”

Predaking nuzzled his mate, “A fact a made quite clear to our new guests.”

She nuzzled him back, “Good. Very good. I will not tolerate a repeat of what happened before.”

“Of course not,” Predaking chuckled, “I would not expect you to. You are so strong, my mate.”

She preened, happy that he thought her more than capable. “I love you, my mate.”

”I love you as well, my mate. Are the hatchlings alright?”

“They are fine. Most of them did not even wake from their stasis nap.”

“Excellent. I am glad they were not disturbed.”

“As am I. They are the luckiest of sparklings to have you for a carrier.”

“And I am the luckiest femme to have a mate such as you,” she leaned into him, warm and comforted. The future looked bright.
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