Transformers Set The Universe On Fire

by serindarkwolf09

Summary

The Quintessons have attacked and taken precious loved ones. Now, the Cybertronians and the human allies are determined to pay them a visit to take back what they love. And to do that, they must travel into deep space.

Notes

The war between Cybertronians is over. Earth is safe from being invaded and destroyed by alien invaders. We, the Cybertronians will serve as its protectors. No threat will ever come to this young planet again.

But I fear the fight is not over.

The creations of Unicron has struck and has taken many humans and Cybertronians as slaves.
for their dreaded empire.

The fight that my Cybertronians will encounter will test their faith in one another and even in life itself. They will be shakened by the horrors that the Quintessons will bring and have brought.

But I believe in my children. I know that they are strong enough to deal with what will be coming. All they must do is stand strong together with the humans that travel with them in the deepest parts of the universe.

A war that the Quintessons have started is about to begin.

*.*spoken by Primacron*.*
Launch Off

It was time. They had been inside long enough and it was time for them to come out.

Everyone was waiting patiently but anxiously for their newest team members to come out from within the All Spark. It was mostly four certain Cybertronians who were the most anxious about seeing their soon to be spark mates.

"Are they done yet?" Starscream asked impatiently looking at Magnus Prime.

The large red and orange Prime looked at the Seeker in irritation as he stood beside Primacron's large spark chamber. "Starscream, if you or Barricade ask me that one more time, I am going to bash your face in!" He growled.

Beside him, Optimus gently patted his shoulder to calm him. He was anxious about getting this over with and getting on a move on with the launch off into space as soon as possible. They had to wait until Primacron, Alpha Prime and Solus Prime were done though.

As of now, they could see the symbols on the All Spark lighting up brightly. It was almost time.

"Patience, Starscream. They are almost done with the transformation. You just need to wait until it is complete." Optimus said calmly.

Starscream huffed but calmed down a little. He just wanted his spark mate out of there soon. He couldn't help but wonder if things were going wrong. He hoped that nothing was. He was pretty anxious to see what Cole would be looking like after she made the transformation into Nightbird.

"You really think it's going to work with that new Cybertronian, Optimus?" Rodimus Prime asked, glancing over the older Prime.

Optimus glanced back and smiled at his younger protégé. "If Primacron can bring back life into others, Rod, I am sure he can do the same for our newest Autobot." He answered as he looked back at the All Spark.

It had been a little over three weeks since the war between Cybertronians had ended. And the death of one of their closest allies, John Keller. Everyone was preparing for what could have been a very long journey that would take the Cybertronians and some of their human allies many years to achieve. But everyone had made their minds up.

The Cybertronian ship they would be taking to travel into deep space, the Ark was prepped and readjusted and fitted with the necessary means of survival. It had taken those three weeks to stock the entire ship full of supplies for the journey.

Starscream, Skyfire and Wheeljack had done a lot of work on oxygen for the humans that would be going. They had tested the oxygen tanks and ventilation systems while humans worked in some of the sleeping quarters, getting things they needed and wanted for their temporarily homes. Human food had been stocked to the brim for them as well as energon from Cybertron. The ship was ready.

All they had to do was wait for the crew to be ready.

Most of the Primes were staying on Cybertron to rebuild their world and maintain peace between Cybertronians and mankind. The only Primes that were going were Optimus, Rodimus and even Sentinel. The others were staying.
Starscream was leaving Dirge in charge of the Seeker population on Cybertron while he was taking his trine and Blitzwing with him. Most of the Decepticons were also staying behind. It was mostly Soundwave and his subunits, Barricade and his Racetrack Patrol Team and even all of the Vehicons were going with.

As for on the Autobot side, Optimus and Elita were obviously going. So was Sideswipe and Sunstreaker. Ironhide and Chromia were determined to go, as well as Arcee, Moonracer, Prowl, and Jazz. Skyfire and his twin brother, Silverbolt would also be going with. Wheeljack was also going, as well as Mirage and Blaster. Bumblebee and Spitfire were also determined to go as back up and they wouldn't take no for an answer. Everyone else was staying behind.

For the humans that would be travelling with them, there were not that many. But it was enough. Sam, obviously, as well as Trent and Anya would be aboard the ship. There had been a short fight between the young couple and their families but they refused to back down. They wanted to help and they weren't going to be left behind. Simmons, Robert and Monique Epps, and a few human soldiers would also be aboard.

Will Lennox, Reno Banes and Vladimir Karpos would be staying behind with their families and everyone else. Rex Rory and Elena Lincoln had tried arguing their selves into the team but their parents and Cybertronian Guardians had put their foot down on the matter.

Finally after a few hours of waiting, the All Spark clicked loudly and began to open up. Bright light fell on everyone that was waiting, making all of them have to raise their arms to shield their eyes and optics from being blinded.

From within came out Primacron with Alpha and Solus, all smiling as they walked out from the All Spark.

"Everyone," Primacron spoke in his dual voice as he stepped out of the way with the two Primes. He raised one hand to motion to the first to walk from the All Spark. "Allow me to introduce you to the four newest Cybertronians. Nightbird."

A tall fifteen foot femme walked out from within, making everyone gape at her in surprise. She was a deep silver color with fiery red highlights running down her chassis and arms. Her helm looked more like a smooth helmet with a red sheet of metal traced across her lower half face while her eyes were a brilliant red optics. She had what looked like a jet's cockpit hanging low behind her lower back as well as wings hanging behind her. She was tall and slim, definitely built for stealth and speed.

Formly known as Cole Keller, now Nightbird, she actually looked more like a robotic female ninja. Starscream's mouth fell open and his optics were wide in surprise as he gazed at his spark mate. He couldn't believe how good she looked as a Cybertronian. He always thought she had been a beautiful human but she made one gorgeous Cybertronian. "Cole..." he whispered in awe.

The mask slid aside to reveal a sly smile on Nightbird's face as she walked right up to the Seeker and grabbed his chassis. She pulled him sharply down so she could kiss him. "Hey, Star. How do I look?" She asked in a metallic version of Cole's voice.

The Decepticon Leader grinned as he kissed her back, his arm wrapping around her waist as he pulled her closer. "No femme will ever compare to you, love." He said in a rather husky voice.

"Ewwwww! Guys, get in a room!" Laughed Skywarp as he and Thundercracker moved forward to greet their now sister Seeker, which it was obvious that was what she was.
Primacron chuckled as he motioned to the next femme that came out. "Roulette." He announced her.

Roulette was a much shorter femme than Nightbird but tall compared to the humans. She was almost the same size as the Arcee sisters. She was no doubt going to be a motorcycle unit like them as well. She had a felinish face and helm, deadly beautiful as a femme. She was painted completely black with silver showing from under her curvy armor.

The new femme smirked right at Barricade as she walked right up to him. "Hey, Barry. Do I look good?" She asked in a metallic version of Kris Hepherr's voice.

Barricade's only answer came as his police lights flickered and his fans kicked on. It was no doubt he was a little turned on by how his femme friend now looked. She only smirked before she did the exact same thing as Nightbird had. Tugging him down into a kiss, which made several cat call and whistle.

"And allow me to introduce you to Stiletto." Primacron spoke up, making Sunstreaker perk up in excitement.

The new femme that came walking out was as tall as Roulette and was almost as black as she was with the exception of pale golden highlights all over her form. She was also almost cat like and would no doubt be a motorbot. She smiled shyly at Sunstreaker, who grinned openly. "Hi, Sunny." She spoke with Maggie's thick Aussie accent.

The vain, sunshine colored Autobot immediately walked right up to her, scooped her up into his arms and kissed her, making her new fans click on.

Primacron looked over at Soundwave and his subunits, who had not taken their optics off the All Spark at all. "Soundwave, allow me to introduce you to your new femme. Maximum Wave." He said proudly as he looked at the All Spark entrance.

Out from within came a much bigger femme but slim and petite for what was definitely going to be a small car. Maximum Wave was a brilliant silver and electric blue femme with sharp green optics that twinkled in mischievous delight as they looked right back at Soundwave, who had stiffened. She had what looked like speakers on her shoulder plates. Her helm was heart shaped but with a spikey top and a curled metal piece dangling right over her optics. She walked with such grace and over confidence towards Soundwave. "Hey, Handsome. Come on over, baby." She spoke with Max's sly, seductive voice.

Soundwave remained impassive for a moment but a pair of his long glowing appendages stretched out to wrap around her waist, pulling her towards him where he wrapped his strong arms around her.

The subunits all clicked and cooed in delight as they practically danced around her high heeled peds. "Max!" They cheered.

Maximum Wave smiled down at them before turning to kiss Soundwave much like the other femmes had with heir mechs. 

"And finally," Primacron spoke up as he looked to see the large built mech now walking out from within the All Spark. Everyone looked to see that the new mech was large in size, bulkier than Ironhide with a long tail hanging down behind him and what looked like a really long dinosaur head wrapped around his chassis and a small slender head resting on his left shoulder plate. His optics were a bright sapphire blue. "For your final new ally, allow me to introduce you to Sludge. The fifth Dinobot who will be going with you to rescue his team mates." The Combined God spoke up
Optimus smiled proudly as he looked at the mech, who was quite curious with his surroundings. "Welcome back, Sludge. We are very glad to finally meet you. We have been wanting to meet you for a long now." He greeted the confused Dinobot.

The mech, Sludge looked directly at him, tilting his head in curiosity. "Sl...Sl...ud...ge?" He asked with some difficulty of using his voice.

Optimus smiled and nodded as he stood tall and firm, yet continued to keep a friendly manner for the Dinobot. "Yes, Sludge. That is your name, given to you by one of our Autobot femmes, Sunriser. She befriended your fellow Dinobots many months ago and has taken the liberty of wanting to take care of all of you. You do remember the others, don't you?" He asked carefully.

Sludge's optics narrowed in concentration before he slowly nodded. "Br...brothers...Slud...ge...remember..." he spoke very slowly.

The Prime nodded in approval before he frowned seriously. "Yes, your brothers. The other Dinobots. Grimlock, Swoop, Slag, and Snarl. They really missed you, Sludge. They would happy to see you again. But I am afraid they aren't here anymore. They are gone." He said slowly so that Sludge would understand.

The Dinobot frowned, confused but he slowly nodded, his face hardening. He was understanding some of it. "Brothers...where?" He asked looking around.

Optimus shook his head, now looking stern. "They were taken, Sludge. Kidnapped. They were...stolen from us." He spoke, trying to think of the right words.

However, Sludge began to growl as if he had understood what Optimus was trying to say. "Who?! Who takes Brothers?" He growled out.

"We are actually about to go save them, Sludge." Optimus said carefully. "Your brothers and Sunriser, who is your friend. We want you to come with us, Sludge. Come with us to save your brothers."

Immediately, Sludge nodded sharply, his entire frame bristling. He seemed to be understanding just fine of what Optimus was trying to tell him. "Slud...ge...come. Save...bro-brothers!" He growled, lifting his head higher.

Again, Optimus nodded before he looked around at everyone who stood to greet their new team members. He paused to look over at a smaller red Cybertronian walking towards them with Wheeljack and the jet twins in toll. The red mech was short and stubby in a way but not too stout. He had what looked like a large cannon just sitting on his shoulder. But cannons didn't really have a sheet of thick plated glass within the nozzle end. It was actually a large telescope sitting on the mech's shoulder.

"Optimus Prime, the Ark is ready to launch. We just need all of the crew now aboard." The mech spoke, his accent rather serious ad forward.

Optimus nodded as he looked at the Autobot before turning to Primacron, who smiled at him. "Thank you, Perceptor. Lord Primacron, thank you for all you have done for all of us. But I believe it is time for us to go underway with our journey." He stated.

Primacron nodded as he smiled at Optimus, placing a hand on his shoulder. "Then I bid you and your crew good tidings, Optimus. I will not have to tell you that this could be a perilous journey. But then again, you have traveled deep space before. I can only wish you good luck and a safe journey."
He told him.

The red and blue Prime nodded before looking around at everyone. "We leave soon. Prowl, Jazz, make sure everyone gets aboard just fine. Have the humans arrived?" He asked as he looked at his Second and Third.

Jazz nodded. "Yea, they're coming through the Iacon Space Bridge now. The fams too. They wanted to see 'em off. Judy won't stop crying though." He said with a chuckle.

Optimus chuckled himself. He knew very well that Ron and Judy hadn't taken it well that Sam would be going with them to rescue Mikaela and the others that had been kidnapped by the Quintessons. Then again, none of the families had. Roger and Shirley DeMarco had been the loudest to protesting that Trent went with them on their journey but their son put his foot down. He wanted to go for numerous reasons and mostly only one reason was passible to Optimus. The young human still had his Primus given power over the inner eye and he did still have a few visions.

So Trent's ability to see premonitions were the reason Optimus was even allowing him to go.

As for Anya, she wanted to go as an Intel tech, plus she wanted to be with Trent and her Guardian, Skyfire. Her opinion on Skyfire had greatly changed in the past year since he was recreated. She was as close to him as she had been with Jetfire.

Of course something that Primacron had given her right after everything settled that fateful day had helped a lot. No one knew what had been on the data disc that the God had given her but it was rumored to have been a message from Jetfire before he transformed back into Skyfire. Everyone was sure that was what it had been. Some tried asking Skyfire about it but he didn't know anything about it. He had even surprised that Jetfire had something to give to Anya.

Either way, no one continued to badger the young Russian girl about the whole thing.

Robert and Monique Epps were also going, mostly as extra protection to Sam, Trent and Anya. So were a few soldiers, who volunteered to help. One of the soldiers was also a man that not many of the Cybertronians had interacted with until recently was going.

His name was Jorge "Fig" Figueroa.

When he heard that the Cybertronians were going after the Quintessons, who had been behind the Department, who also had did massive scientific experiments on him, he immediately signed up for the mission. He basically he wanted to pay back the bastards who turned him into a cyborg because of all of the alien technology they used on him. He had a cyber-kinetic leg that he complained a lot about because of how heavy it was.

Not many really listened to him though.

"Thank you, Jazz, for the enlightenment. Other than that, is the Ark ready?" Optimus asked smiling.

Jazz nodded as he grinned up at his Prime and gave him a thumbs up. "Yepo, bossbot! Like I said, we're just waiting on the humans. That, and everyone getting on the ship." He told him. "Steve the Vehicon made Wheelie and Rice triple check all of the Ark's systems to make sure everything's top shape."

The red Cybertronian, Perceptor huffed irritably as he folded his arms. "I do not see why we are even counting on droids to run the ship, Optimus Prime. Especially when their maker was Shockwave. I do not trust them." He said in a very pompous way.
Optimus frowned as he looked at the Autobot scientist, shaking his head. "Perceptor, we have already been over this. The Vehicons are nothing like Shockwave and they had done enough to gain our trust. The Head Vehicon, Steve has done nothing to betray our trust. None of them have. We are not going to go over this again." He said sternly.

Perceptor on huffed, looking away. "Fine. I still say we should keep them monitored. Why is Red Alert staying behind again?" He murmured under his vents.

Rolling his optics, Optimus chose to ignore that. He wasn't going to argue with Perceptor about the Vehicons. He trusted them because of what they had done to help them during the war against Unicron and his MiniCon army, whom the remaining MiniCons were not allowed on Earth. They were still trying to get along with the rest of the Cybertronians and the humans bit were having a hard time. They were currently still on Cybertron, trying to learn how to co-exist with the rest of the Cybertronian race. It just wasn't easy for them though. They, luckily, did have Primacron to keep them in line. Every time they tried to start fights with Autobots or Decepticons, Unicron's half would snap out and put an end to their vicious behavior.

"We should probably start boarding the Ark then. We will want to be on our way as soon as possible." The Prime said as he started to lead everyone towards the large lift that would take them up to the surface of Cybertron.

Everyone nodded as they followed after him.

Upon reaching the surface, everyone headed straight to the Iacon Ship yard, where the massive ship, the Ark was waiting. So many Cybertronians were there mostly to see the crew off. Even some of the humans were there.

The families of the humans going were speaking to the ones that would be going. Ron and Judy were talking to Sam, though she was mostly sobbing heavily and clutching onto her son. Sam looked extremely embarrassed while several people, human and Cybertronians were either watching or laughing at his predicament.

Of course, everyone quieted down when Optimus and the others who were down deep inside of Cybertron approached. They were eyeing the new Cybertronians with awe.

Both Kylee and Jake immediately squealed in delight to see their mother in her new form and rushed over to her to get a better look. "Mom! You look awesome!" They both cheered.

Stiletto smiled as she bent down to her newly formed knee guards and gathered both of them up easily in her arms for a hug. "Thank you, you two. I'm just glad you both supported my decision to becoming Cybertronian." She said as she placed her metallic lips on each of their heads.

"Are you kidding, mom?! You becoming Cybertronian is cool! Now I can brag about it at school that I have a robot mom!" Jake said happily before looking up at Barricade, who was watching them with a gentle look. "And a robot dad!"

Barricade grinned down at him before he bent down and scooped him up, keeping him close to his chassis. "Tell 'em that you have a Decepticon dad and you're definitely the most popular kid in the world." He told him smugly.

"You got it, dad!" Jake said cheerfully and earned a chuckle from his Guardian and step-Decepticon father.

"Is everyone ready?" Optimus asked looking around at everyone.
Everyone looked up at Optimus and nodded. They were ready to get going. Everyone that was
shouldered bags and suitcases they had packed for the journey. It didn't help for Sam when Judy
started crying loudly again, making several laugh and him groan.

"Mom, just stop. I'll be back." Sam groaned in misery.

Judy just sobbed harder as she threw her arms around him and began soaking his shirt. "Sammy!
You better be careful! If anything happens to you, I will never forgive you!" She sobbed.

Sam softened as he used one arm to hug her. "Mom, I will be okay. I promise. Bumblebee will be
there and I have Autobots and Decepticons watching over me. We will be back and I am bringing
back Mikaela." He told her. He looked over at Reno, who nodded solemnly. "I promise. I will find
her and bring her home."

Reno nodded again as he walked over and offered Sam his hand to shake. "I will hold you to that,
Sam. So is Dallas and Trish. Just bring her home." He told him.

Sam nodded as he shook Reno's hand before he returned to hugging his mother, who kept on crying.
"I have to go, mom. We need to get going. The sooner we go, the sooner we will be back." He told
her in comfort.

Judy hiccupped another sob before she stepped back, trying to wipe her eyes. She didn't really have
anything else to say. She didn't trust herself to say anything.

Finally after five minutes of saying goodbye, everyone started heading towards the large ramp to
enter the Ark. A few of the Vehicons were there, offering to take the humans' bags and luggage to
their quarters.

Optimus turned to Primacron and the Primes that would be left behind. "We will try and report every
now and then. If anything happens, please do send us a transmission." He requested.

Primacron just nodded as he smiled at him. "Everything will be fine here, Optimus. You just
concentrate on your tasks. Be very careful when dealing with the Quintessons. They are very
dangerous and ruthless." He paused for a moment, looking thoughtful. "I must implore you and
everyone else to keep an open mind when on your mission. I do not know the details but I believe
you may receive an ally on your journey who will not be very welcomed by you or your team. But
like I said, keep an open mind and an open spark." He stated.

Optimus and everyone frowned curiously but chose not to question Primacron's meaning. They
would have to wait and see how this played out.

After a short while, everyone was on board and standing around in the cockpit.

"We are ready to launch, Optimus Prime." The Vehicon Leader, Steve said as he turned from one of
his Vehicons. "Whenever you are ready."

Optimus nodded as he turned to face everyone that was piled into the cockpit, who all turned their
attention onto him. He vented deeply as he looked from one to the other. "The journey we are taking,
everyone, may be dangerous. We are traveling into deep space to a whole new solar system outside
of this one. I do not know how long it will take to find our lost companions and loved ones. It may
take years before we return to Earth and Cybertron. Anyone who wishes to change their minds about
coming, please speak now. You will not get another chance once we depart from Cybertron." He
told them.

As expected, only one raised his hand but before Knockout could say anything, he was jabbed in the
side by Moonracer and glared furiously at by Starscream. He pouted but lowered his hand and kept his mouth shut.

No one spoke.

Slowly nodding, Optimus turned to Steve, his hands folding behind his back, taking the appearance of a proud leader that he was. "Commander Steve, give the order to launch the Ark." He said firmly.

The Vehicon Leader nodded sharply before he looked over at the Vehicon pilot, whom was Rice. "Vehicon Rice, activate the ship's engines and take us out." He ordered in a strong voice.

"Yes, Commander Steve." Rice said in a loud barking tone before he turned to the controls and put in the sequence.

Immediately the entire ship began to rumble and vibrate as it began moving. The landing clamps were released from the launch pad and the entire ship began hovering backwards and up. Everyone could feel the apprehension as they felt the Ark began moving and even watched as it backed away from the Iacon Ship Yard, starting to rise away from the city.

After a moment of backing away from the city at a good distance, the Ark began to tilt upwards, now making its way up towards the Cybertron atmosphere. It passed through a few wisps of clouds as it rose higher and higher until even the great city of Iacon seemed far away.

"Activating turbo thrusters." Rice spoke up as he grabbed a lever and slowly began pulling it back. "Brace your selves, humans. It has a little bit of a kick to it."

As soon as he spoke, the Ark gave a short jerk, making the humans step back a little from under their feet. They could see outside the large cockpit window as the ship shot off into the starry sky, moving into the blackness of space. They could see their ship now traveling slowly away from Cybertron, until the speed picked up and they were traveling quickly. Stars began racing past the windows of the ship.

"Sir, we are now ready to turbo jump." Rice spoke up as he looked over his shoulder at Steve.

The humans frowned at the term, not really understanding what that was. It was Epps who asked. "What the hell is turbo jump?" He asked curiously.

A second later, they found out.

Steve had nodded after glancing at Optimus before looking back at Rice. "Make the jump." He ordered, firmly as he folded his hands behind his back struts. Rice nodded back before he turned back to the control panel and pulled the same lever back all of the way before punching a few buttons next to it.

Suddenly, the ship jolted forward into space, making it a little difficult for the humans to remain standing. They had to catch their selves on some of the Cybertronians to keep their selves on their feet. But not without yelping in surprise as they felt the ship jump speedily.

"Puta Madre!" Fig exclaimed as he braced himself with his cyber kinetic leg and grab a hold of Rollerforce's leg to keep standing up. "Hey! Give us a warning next time, eh?!"

"My apologies." Rice said looking sorry to the humans who had been startled by the sudden jump in speed.

"How fast are we even going?" Monique asked in awe as stars whizzed by like streaks of light. Her
eyes, as well as everyone else.

Rice looked over at her, seemingly pleased that the humans looked so impressed. "The ship is travelling at full capacity over 1000 miles per second, according to your human standards. We practically jumped into light speed. Our location is now right beside you planet Jupiter. We should see a flash of the giant gaseous planet right about now."

And as he had spoke, everyone saw a large orb pass right by the window. The humans could only watch it go by with awe.

"All right, everyone. We are now on our way. But unfortunately we are unsure of our destination." Optimus spoke up as he gained everyone's attention. He turned to look right at a moody looking Knockout, who obviously wasn't pleased. "We need to locate the Cybertronian, Lockdown. We do not know where he is. Therefore, Knockout, will you be so kind to inform us?"

Knockout huffed, slowly shaking his head. "You really are asking the wrong mech, Prime." He stated very bluntly.

"Knockout." Starscream growled.

The red and silver medic shot him a look, growling himself. "Even if I wanted to find that slagger, which I very well don't, I don't know where he is. He traveled around for his pirating business. He hardly ever stayed in one place. The last time I saw him was at the Alpha Beta Space Port in the Draconus System. He had a lot of business operations going on there. But that was like 1800 vorns ago. He could be in the Capriconian System for all I know!"

"Hey! Wait!" Trent piped up, his eyes wide in excitement. "I know that name. I think I saw the Alpha Beta Space Port in one of my visions."

Optimus slowly nodded before looking over at the Vehicon pilot. "Then we will go there first. Rice, please put in the coordinates for the Draconus system." He told him. Rice nodded and started to do just that.

"What is the Draconus system? Another solar system like ours?" Sam asked just as curious as everyone else was about what they were about to learn on their adventure.

Starscream looked down at him and the other humans and nodded. "I guess you can say that. To be honest, your human kind sees other solar systems every night and probably don't even realize it." He received curious looks and he smirked. "You know how you have all of those stellar constellations like Leo or the dragon constellation called Draco?" The humans all nodded, their eyes widening in realization. "All of your star constellations in your night sky are actually other solar systems. We are heading to the Draconus System. Which is technically Draco the Dragon. The Alpha Beta Space Port serves as the eye of the dragon star constellations. If you look very hard at the triangular head of the dragon, there is what looks like a very distant star in the very center. That is where we are going." He told them.

The humans could not believe what they were learning. To hear that, they were very excited to see what else they would learn.

"So...we are going into the center of Draco the dragon then? You think that is where Lockdown might be?" Epps asked.

Knockout huffed but shrugged. "I actually wouldn't doubt it if he was there. The Draconus System is where most of his type is found." He grumbled.
"What...what do you mean?" It was Stiletto who asked as she stood next to Barricade.

"He means we will have to be very careful in the Draconus System. It is well known to be hostile territory. A place where we could easily be attacked by space pirates." Sentinel Prime answered with a sour tone. "Ruffians, criminals, murderers, thieves, use your imagination." He paused to look at Optimus. "We will have to watch the humans very carefully, Optimus. Because if we are heading into the Draconus System, I bet my very spark on it that some space pirates will see them and will become very interested in collecting them for profit."

Optimus nodded gravely. He knew his old friend had a point. "Yes, I know, Sentinel." He looked down at his young human friends, frowning. "When we arrive in the Draconus System, more importantly, the Alpha Beta Space Port, you are either to remain on the Ark or as close as possible to a Cybertronian at all times. Space pirates will be interested in your race and it will more than likely we will see trouble from them. Because if the Quintessons are indeed collecting humans for their slavery empire, they will more than likely be willing to pay a lot for one of you. So to be safe, stay with us at all times. For now, until we arrive, get some rest or refuel your selves. The outer rims of your solar system are dangerous and you will need all of the energy you can have to be ready for what is to come."
First Sight Of Pirates

It took two days of travelling on the Ark and the humans had learned more about the worlds outside of their own. Everyone could only ask the Cybertronians more about what lied ahead of them, mostly about the space pirates. Just the sound of those words just had them a little worried.

And the meaning of space pirates were exactly what they thought it would be.

The way Sentinel Prime had put it were they were criminal low lifes who were so selfish in their selves and they didn't care who or what they hurt for profit. He told the humans and the four new femmes that they deserved to be hunted down and eradicated from existence. He did not have a good thing to say about them whatsoever and made the space pirates sound like the worse beings to ever live, even worse than the Decepticons, which had all of the red optic’d mechs and femmes glaring at him. He wasn't making too many friends with his somewhat racial, critical remarks, that was for sure. Either way, it was obvious he had never had good experiences with space pirates before.

Optimus then explained a different version, though it wasn't entirely different to what Sentinel had said about space pirates.

"Space pirates are much like how your human pirates were in the past. They are very unfortunate beings, out casts from society, branded as criminals when they did what they thought they had to do to survive. It is true that most have probably killed others for bounties and riches but...there are some who steal and pillage for their own survival. It is not an easy life out here in space for most. Especially for those called pirates." Optimus explained while everyone was in the Ark's rec center, fueling up or eating dinner. "There a majority of Cybertronians who have claimed that space pirates have attacked and killed many of their crew mates on raids but...some have claimed that space pirates also left many alive when raiding them. I have never really experienced space pirates, myself so I can only speculate from what I have heard. But from what I have gathered, realistically, they are only people of many kinds who just want to survive the harsher side of life."

Sentinel Prime had snorted harshly at that but no one paid him very much attention.

"So...they attack ships and pillage them and sometimes kills those they attack. Sounds like we kind of stepped into a sci-fi version of Pirates of the Caribbean." Epps said as he ate a tv dinner he had chosen from the human food stock.

It was Barricade who shrugged. "It's pretty close to being true. Most of the time, space pirates do pillage ships they come across but it isn't all black and white, excuse the pun, when it comes to them. I have met quite a few pirates that actually hire their selves out for jobs. Much like Lockdown, really. They're bounty hunters, smugglers, and yeah, thieves. They do take some jobs that require them to steal. But they're doing it to survive." He said as he engrossed himself in energon with an arm dangling over Roulette's shoulder plates as she tried her energon for the first time.

"What's Lockdown like? You said he can be the most vicious Cybertronian like Megatron had been. But is he really that bad?" Anya asked as she leaned against Trent's side.

Knockout huffed loudly while Barricade shrugged and nodded at the same time. "Yeah, he can be pretty nasty. He doesn't have a whole lot of tolerance for most things and never did care for the war between Autobots and Decepticons. You would think he would be a Decepticon because of his attitude but he never wore the sigil. He said something along the lines that he didn't care for being branded. He didn't side with either side. He would work or either side as long as they had the right credits to pay him with. So, he was sort of neutral but...he still had the attitude of a Decepticon. So a
lot of Autobots branded him as one." He shot Sentinel a look when he said that.

Sentinel just turned up his sensory unit and continued to refuel himself with energon. He wasn't going to get dragged into an argument over this.

"The thing is, humans, space pirates will do what it takes to survive. They are dangerous in many ways. If the Quintessons wanted to, and they probably do and will, they will pay pirates many credits or weapon systems for slaves. And I am betting that is what Lockdown is into too." Barricade remarked, his red optics darkening at the thought. "Space pirates are no joke when it comes down to it. They are very rough ad dangerous. And if they want something, they will do what it takes to get it. The Draconus system is full of them. But there is so many pirates there that no one else from the other systems will dare band up against them. The Draconus system is kind of a haven for the low lifes and ruffians. There is so much fighting going on there that most stays away from the Dragon."

"Yeah, what about Lockdown?" Anya asked.

It was Prowl who aswered bluntly. "He is one of the worse, Anya. He is a criminal who does what he wants for the right credits. Being a space pirate, Lockdown does have the reputation that has most wanting to stay as far away from him as possible. But as a Bounty Hunter, those who want someone found and brought to them, they hire him. He is apparently the best bounty hunter recorded." He said dryly. "Rumor has it that he has never missed a target. No target has ever escaped from him."

All of the humans frowned as they watched the Autobot SIC. They heard the bitterness in his tone as he spoke of Lockdown. He did not have a high opinion of the so called space pirate slash bounty hunter at all.

"Prowl, how do you even know Lockdown? You once said he used to be an enforcer on Cybertron, right? What happened?" Sam asked as he leaned against the table, watching him intentively.

Prowl's optics narrowed as he looked away in dark thoughtfulness but he did not answer. He instead shook his head and walked away.

So, Sam looked to Barricade.

The Decepticon police cruiser grimaced but shrugged, knowing they were trying to ask him now. "Lockdown and Prowl used to be partners back on Cybertron before the war. LD is a good deal older than Prowl was but...he it made no difference. They...uh...they kind of were just like brothers, I guess. When Prowl first showed up as an noob enforcer, not many others were impressed by him. He had an impressive file but no one cared for them. He was just the youngest enforcer and a lot of us looked down on him. Treated him more like a sparkling than an equal."

"Us?" Trent asked raising an eyebrow. He was getting a clearer picture of Barricade and Prowl's relationship and it didn't seem too pretty.

Barricade rolled his optics and nodded. "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Me too. Of course I bullied anyone. Prowl isn't much younger than me, people. We are close to the same age, really. I was the noob in the enforcers before he was but I gave no one a reason to try and pick on me. I would bash some helms in if they tried." He shrugged. "But Prowl, when he showed up, this was kind of before he had his battle computer installed. He was some snooty nosed, straight up innocent kid fresh out of the enforcer academy. He wasn't always so serious and calculating like he is now. He wasn't much different from Bumblebee really."

A few glanced over at Bumblebee who perked up at he thought that Prowl had been like him. "Really?" He asked brightly.
Barricade shrugged again, smirking in amusement. "Yeah. He was all cheerful, happy, excited to get
started on enforcing the city. Brilliant too, if I have to admit it. Even before he got his battle computer
installed, he was really smart. Knew how to figure things out faster than anyone else did. Especially
when it came to crime work. Not may of is were happy about some fresh meat was a better enforcer
than some of us. So a lot of the enforcers gave him a hard time. We picked on him, harrassed him.
Tried to discourage him."

"So you bullied him?" Trent asked frowning.

Barricade nodded grinning. "Yeah, I did. That's why his opinion of me isn't too high. I will admit it, I
was one of the worse offenders. But he just made it so easy. He was so emotional. He offended
pretty easy back then." He then frowned, looking away. "Of course then it was when a few other
enforcers decided to make his life a pit when he upshowed all of us on some murder case. He figured
out that somebot in Tricon was doing some serial killer routine. He nailed the son of a glitch and
recieved high marks on it. He kind of gloated about it and it pissed off some of the enforcers. But if
you helped catch some serial killer and out smarted them, you'd want to boast about it too. Too bad it
made everybot pretty jealous of him and some decided to act out."

"What happened?" Monique asked curiously.

"So Lockdown saved his life." Nightbird said curiously.

"Yeah. And they became friends after that. Lockdown read his file and then took him under his wing.
The partnered up and started some serious tail pipe. Best team that there ever was. Barricade
remarked. "Were friends for several vorns until Prowl picked up a rumor that Lockdown was getting
into criminal activity. He didn't believe it at first. He didn't believe that Lockdown was getting
himself into such mischief and working with criminals. But he wasn't happy about it either. That
battle computer he uses...it was what Lockdown gave him before Prowl nailed him for some crimes
that he got caught doing."

"Damn. Lockdown gave Prowl his battle computer?" Epps whistled.

Again, Barricade nodded. "Yep. Surprises me that Prowl still uses it because Lockdown got it off
some battle stratgest for the Council. Of course unsetting brand new program systems that were just
barely installed can be pretty dangerous. Especially when they've been hooked up directly into his
processor. If Prowl would have taken it out right after having it installed, it could have damaged his
processor. So he obviously kept it. Never forgave Lockdown for his criminal activities and jumping
others for upgrades and selling them on the black market. Made things worse when Prowl found out
that Lockdown was kind of using him and his brand new battle computer to conducting some of his
criminal activities and piracy. Lockdown was always asking Prowl about the best strategies and such
about doing things. He claimed that he wanted to be as good as Prowl, and all that did was make the
kid preen over himself to think that Lockdown was saying he was better than he was. But after
Lockdown was caught in his crimes and was officially branded a pirate, they had a major falling out. Prowl never forgave Lockdown for somewhat using him and didn't care less when he was sent to Darkhelm Prison. Truth be told, Lockdown was only sent there because it had been Prowl who caught him.” He stated.

"And? How did Lockdown even get out of Prison?" Sam asked.

"When the war turned sour one of the first places to fall was Darkhelm." Starscream was the one to answer from where he sat. "Megatron wanted more killers in the Decepticon army so he had his optics on the prison. He freed Lockdown from Darkhelm but it kind of back fired because Lockdown didn't want to be tied down to anything. He isn't the type. Megatron let him get away with doing whatever he wanted because of his business of being the best at what he does. Like I have said before, Lockdown is the only one that could get away with back talking Megatron. And that is because if Megatron tried doing him in, he wouldn't have someone who could do some dirty work for him."

Slowly everyone nodded in understanding. They got the idea.

"So now we have to go look for him. Are you sure we should?" Epps asked with a grimace. He didn't like the sound of Lockdown.

Trent looked over at him and nodded. "He was in my visions, Epps. I'm sure he is the one we need help from to find Dawn, the Dinobots, Mikaela and the sparklings." He said determined.

Starscream nodded as he vented softly. "He is the best bounty hunter and smuggler. He knows more about the systems than even I do or any of us do. He will more than likely know where the Quintessons are. So we don't really have much of a choice on the whole matter." He stated warily.

After that conversation, everyone mostly left it alone. No one wanted to ask Prowl more about his relationship with Lockdown. Any time someone brought up the bounty hunter's name, he would grimace or scowl. So it was clear he wasn't pleased they had to depend on him at all.

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Through the next two days of being in light speed and travelling through the darkness of space, everyone mostly went about their time, talking more about the space pirates or discussing plans about how they were even going to sneak around on Quintessa, looking for their loved ones. No one really knew what to do about the whole thing. They didn't know anything about the planet or how they were even going to do. The only thing they could do was hope they would find Lockdown and hope he would help them.

But according to Knockout, it was a really long stretch to even count on him. He constantly kept telling everyone that Lockdown was one hard aft mech to deal with. And even some of the Decepticons agreed with that.

On the second day on their journey, things began growing tense on the Ark. It was because they had entered the Draconus system. Once the ship crossed the borders of the dragon, the Vehicon pilot, Rice dropped the Ark out of light speed, slowing it down.

"We will be approaching the Alpha Beta Space port in a few hours." Rice announced.

Optimus nodded as he looked around the cockpit to everyone that was there. "We will not take everyone into the space port. It will be better if we have a small group as possible. The less that goes, the less we will have problems. So therefore, the team will consist of myself, Knockout, Starscream,
Prowl, Nightbird, Ironhide and Sideswipe.” He told them.

Some of the others frowned at the team assignment while some nodded. The humans were frowning in disappointment.

"Wait, about us, Optimus? We kind of want to go." Sam said frowning.

Optimus shook his head as he looked down at him. "Sam, while I have not ever been on the Alpha Beta Space port station, I have heard a good deal about it. It is full of pirates. It would be wise if you and the other humans did not go aboard." He stated.

Trent shook his head, frowning. "Optimus, like it or not, some of us should go. We need to learn more about the space life and this is one way to do it. I know Prowl and the Decepticons know what Lockdown looks like but I think I know exactly what he looks like. I can point him out." He said trying to make his argument.

"It will be very dangerous, Trent. I do not want to risk pirates becoming too interested in you." Optimus argued back.

"Ah, just let Sam, Epps and Trent go with you, Ops." Jazz spoke up, defending the humans. "Let them learn. They gotta some time. We can't keep on the ship the entire time." He told the Prime.

Optimus frowned at his TIC before looking at the humans rather firmly. He was quiet for a moment before he vented softly. "All right. Sam, Robert and Trent will come with us but you will stay close one of us at all times. There will be no wandering off. Is that clear?" He asked firmly.

The three nodded while the other humans didn't look particular happy. But no one argued. No one dared to right now.

"You got it, Optimus." Epps said, knowing this was something to take seriously.

Again, Optimus nodded before looking around at everyone else. "In the mean time, I do want..." he was saying.

The Vehicon, Wheelie suddenly perked up from his station, looking at it intentively before he whirled around to look at Optimus. "Optimus Prime, sir! I just picked up something on the scanners! There is a small ship close by and it is scanning us!" He called over.

Everyone stiffened at the sound of that. No one was sure what they meant but no one liked it.

Optimus nodded, looking serious as he turned to look at a large screen to the side panels. "Bring up visual, Wheelie." He gave the order.

Immediately, Wheelie did as he was ordered. He punched in a few keys on his keyboard and an image of a dark metallic alloyed ship was shown. It was a rough looking piece of machinery that clearly had seen better days in its life in space. It was a large ship but much smaller than the Ark. It had some nasty looking cannons and gun turrets on the sides. A very strange looking symbol was on the right front side. It was not either human or Cybertronian. The lettering looked more like squiggly lines and symbols.

Starscream hissed none other, as did a few others. "That looks like Jharaynian." He said as he stepped closer to the screen.

"Jer-what?" Simmons asked frowning as he stared at the strange looking ship.
"Jharaynian, Simmons. It's pronounced Jar-rain-ian." Jazz said slowly for the humas, though he looked very serious to hear what Starscream had said. He and some of the Cybertronians seemed to know about what these Jharaynians were. Obviously. "They're technically large humanoid lizards. An alien race that love organic meat."

Staarscream nodded as he stared firmly at the ship on the screen. "Jharaynians are known to attack anything organic and serve them up for dinner. Intelligent or not. I am pretty sure if they knew you, humans, were on the Ark, they might try something." He stated looking seriously at Optimus.

Optimus nodded in understanding before looking at Vehicon Steve. "Commander Steve, have scanner blocks up so they cannot complete their scans and charge the ship's weapons. We will not attack but perhaps it will warn them not to try and attack us." He said firmly.

Steve nodded and shot looks to Wheelie and another Vehicon at another station. He didn't even have to say anything to give the order. They were already moving to do what they were told. Once Wheelie put up the scanner block and the other Vehicon activated the weapons system, a few lights started flashing on the screen. For a moment everyone thought the Jharaynians were going to attack.

But then a signal came through and it was Soundwave who picked it up at his consol. "They are hailing us, Optimus Prime. It seems they may want to greet us." He said dryly.

Optimus frowned but nodded. "Very well. Soundwave, open a link." He paused looking at the humans. "Stay out of sight, my friends. We don't want to risk them seeing you." He told them.

Epps and Monique both took action and motuoned for everyone else to step back behind Ironhide and Prowl, though Simmons didn't too happy about hiding. But he didn't argue because it had been a part of the deal that he made with Optimus about coming.

Once the humans were out of the way, the screen opened up to reveal a large reptillian face with horns and spikes all over. Yellow green slitted eyes peered right at Optimus since it was he who Soundwave had focused the screen on. A long thin slipped out flickering a little before slipping back in a thin scaled mouth, revealing the tips of sharp teeth.

"Ccscybertroniansssss." The Jharaynian hissed, sounding somewhat pleased but disappointed at the same time. "The universsssse sssseemssss to be full of your kind nowadayssss. What bringsssss your kind to my part of town, Isssssa wonder."

Optimus lift his head higher, looking like the proud leader he was. He remained calm while others were tense as ever. They were all very sure this was a pirate. "I am Optimus Prime and our business is our own. But I eonder who you are." He said professionally.

The Jharaynian merely sneered. "I am Ssssscropian of the Bloodlizzzzzz crew. And you are tresssssspassssssing in my realm, Prime. We have heard of you. You do not belong in our placccccce. I sssssssuggest you turn around your sssssship before we decccccide to defend our sssssspacccce."

He warned viciously.

Optimus frowned but it was Starscream who stepped forward into view, his servo on the Prime's shoulder plate.

"And I suggest you get out of our way, lizard." The Decepticon leader growled. "I am Starscream, Leader of the Decepticons ad we are going to pass through. We have business with one named Lockdown and he is expecting our ship to arrive without delay."
At the very sound of the Decepticons, the Jharaynian had tensed up, his reptilian eyes widened but at the sound of Lockdown's name, he hissed, looking as if he had gone a few shades of lighter green ad brown from his usual dark color. He immediately shot someone a look, making a hissing sound. It didn't take much to understand what he said because on the space radar, the Jharaynian ship started backing away. The Jharaynian turned back to the screen, bowing his head, looking more respectful. "Very well. Yousssss may passss. If Lockdown isssss truly whossss you meet, we will not bothersssss youssss again." He stated before the transmission cut off.

For a long moment, everyone stood dumbfounded as they watched the smaller ship make a hasty retreat. No one knew what to say for a moment.

Then after a long moment, Knockout said miserably, "Well, I think we have the right place."

The humans finally stepped out from behind their hiding and looked up at him. It was Trent who had to ask. "Why do you say that?" He asked curiously.

Knockout snorted and folded his arms. "Because if you truly know Lockdown and his business, you stay out of it. Especially if you are another space pirate. That guy...he looked pretty scared, didn't he? When we mentioned Lockdown's name? So he knew him. And he knew to leave us alone when Optimus said that Lockdown was expecting us. Anyone who messes with Lockdown's business gets destroyed by Lockdown. He don't let anyone mess with his business partners and all. I am betting the phase shifter that Lockdown has made quite the name for himself in this system. I wouldn't doubt it even in Unicron's name." He stated.

Starscream nodded as he looked at Optimus. "He's right. Lockdown must be in this system. I suggest we continue on to the Alpha Beta Space port. Knowing him, he probably has a business set up here. That is where most ships go for this kind of dealing as it is." He added his two cents.

Optimus merely nodded as he looked over at Steve. "Then we will continue on. Set the coordinates for the space port. Hopefully we will find Lockdown there or someone who knows where we can find him." He said to the Vehicon.

The Vehicon Leader nodded back and gave the order to Rice, who put in the coordinates and the ship was moving again.

"Why do I get the feeling we're not going to like this Lockdown very much when we finally meet him?" Simmons muttered out loud.

"It will mean your feeling is right on the numbers, Simmons. Because you won't like him." Ratchet muttered bitterly.
Dealing With Pirates

Chapter Notes

Songs Used:

Two Hornpipes (Tortuga)-POTC soundtrack
I've Got My Eye On You-POTC soundtrack

It was a few hours before they finally reached the Alpha Beta Space Port. There were a crew more
run ins with a few pirate ships, some a little more unpleasant than it had been with the Jharaynians.
Some of them had actually tried to attack the Ark.

But the moment the Ark's crew demanded them to stop and mentioned Lockdown, they immediately
backed off. It seemed that none of the pirates wanted to interfere with them if they did have business
with Lockdown. It even seemed that the space pirate and bounty hunter had made quite the name for
himself in the Draconus system.

Because after a few incidents with pirates and seeing more shops now they were getting closer to the
space port, they also noticed that those ships were avoiding the Ark like the plague.

"You know, at this rate, I think word might have gotten to Lockdown that we were coming to see
him." Knockout said after another pirate ship turned aft and retreated when they were told of their
business with Lockdown.

"That can be either a good thing or a bad thing." Barricade muttered.

They went on until they reached the Alpha Beta Space Port. It was a very large space station, could
have been an entire colony by the looks of it. It was even larger than the Ark but no bigger than it
could have against Earth's moon. There were ships docked in a space ship yard, though some were
leaving.

Optimus had Steve hail the ship yard, asking for permission to dock, which seemed too easy because
once the dock workers learned what the ship was called, they immediately allowed them to.

"I think you may be right, Knockout." Optimus said as the ship docked in docking bay numbered 59.

Once they were docked, Optimus looked around at everyone. "All right. We are going aboard.
Hopefully someone can tell us of Lockdown being here or not. Jazz, you and Sentinel are in charge
while we are aboard. If anything happens, contact us immediately." He stated the order.

Jazz saluted him with a cheery grin. "Right-o, Boss. I doubt we will have any trouble though." He
said happily.

Optimus nodded before bending down and offering the three humans his hand. They climbed on and
were carefully set on his shoulder, where they sat, holding on to his smoke stacks or a pipe. They
were in their space suits that they used for Cybertron, not wanting to take the chance that there was
no oxygen on the Port. "All right. Let's move. Everyone stay together while here." He told everyone.
And then they walked down a long tubed ramp that would lead into the station.

It was to their surprise that as they went in, Starscream announced that there was oxygen so it gave Sam, Trent and Epps the chance to take their helmets off and have a better look around.

As they entered the station, the team was rewarded with an amazing sight. The ship yard station was full of activity of many kinds. Cybertronians and so many different kinds of alien beings were roaming around or talking to others. A few refuel and feeding stands were set up and so were trading stations.

The three humans were amazed by the sight of different alien races. There were humanoid beings, mechanical beings, some that represented what looked like sludge and were getting yelled at for making a mess as they went. There were elfish looking people roaming around, large animalistic aliens. Sam had gaped at an alien being that looked like a large humanoid lion walking by. Most of the aliens looked tough as nails and it made the team not dare to tread close to them. It was like they had just walked into the Men In Black movie to be honest.

"Wow, look at this place. It's amazing." Sam breathed in awe.

"Hey, is that one a human?!" Epps asked startled as he pointed at a group of Cybertronians.

Everyone frowned at the group that he had pointed out before eyes and optics lit up to see that one very large Cybertronian had a young woman probably the age of 25 or so sitting on his shoulder. She was no doubt human, however.

The young woman had platinum blonde hair, spilling down in a long braid behind her. Her skin was pale from lack of sunlight but the color of ivory. She was quite pretty to be honest. She wore what looked like brown leather pants and a white long sleeve shirt and brown leather vest. She was talking to one of the mechs, not even facing the team staring at her. But from her left side of her face, they saw that she had a long scar running down from her temple to her jaw. She had most likely seen a bad side of life in space but didn't seem bothered by it.

Trent frowned as he stared at her. He couldn't help but think she looked familiar. He was sure he knew her from somewhere.

"Hey! What're you staring at?!" One of the mechs had snapped when he noticed them staring towards them. He was glaring with blood red optics, as if daring them to keep staring.

Immediately everyone adverted their optics and eyes, not wanting to cause trouble. They just walked on.

"That's right! You just keep walking, pitspawns!" The same mech yelled after them.

Prowl had to catch Sideswipe from turning around and snapping back. "We should not draw too much attention to our selves, Sides. You must remember that most of these people and bots are pirates. And most pirates band together." He reminded him stonily.

Sideswipe just grumbled but walked on with the group.

As they walked further into what looked like a trading station, it was to everyone's surprise that an alien being walked up to them. He was much smaller than the Cybertronians but bigger than the humans he was some kind of humanoid but with big buggy eyes. He definitely looked like how humans imagined aliens to look like. He was tall, with very thin limbs and a bulgy head.

However, instead of long slender fingers and hands, he had big paw like hands. Almost as if they
were tiger like. Sharp looking claws were on the ends of his fingers.

"You are the crew of the large ship that has come in, are you not?" He asked in perfect English.

Optimus looked at him before nodding as he bent down to one knee to be more level with the alien being. "Yes, we are. What can I do for you, friend?" He asked in greeting.

The alien shook his head and pointed off to the left side towards a large corridor. "Nothing for me, sir. But I can point you in the right direction. Word has come to us that you are searching for Captain Lockdown. I believe you can find some of his crew in the Bar center, the Nue-Tral Bar. They can take you to the prestigious captain." He stated before he turned and walked off before any one of them could ask any more questions. He seemed to be in a hurry to get away from them, as if he didn't want to be near them.

A little dumbfounded, Optimus watched him go before he stood up and looked right over at Knockout. "You were right, Knockout. Lockdown knows we are coming. If he didn't, we wouldn't have been greeted like that." He stated before starting to walk.

Everyone walked down the corridor, finding more stands set up. Several merchants were trying to sell or trade with them but the Cybertronians and the humans ignored them.

"I know about the Nue-Tral Bar." Ironhide revealed as they walked. "We got to be careful in there. There is usually a very rough crowd in there. Constant fights and all. We better be really careful there. Especially the humans."

Everyone just nodded.

It wasn't long before they reached the bar. Large steel doors were blocking the entrance to go inside but by the looks of it, they would slide open when approached. The name of the bar was across the top of the door in bright neon lights.

Seeing it, everyone frowned curiously, Ironhide especially. But they walked right up to the door, which slid open.

And the entire group froze in shock alarm.

"H-hey! Wait a minute! I don't remember it being like this!" Ironhide suddenly exclaimed in alarm when he and everyone was pretty much blasted by energetic exciting music.

Inside the Nue-Tral bar, it was not like how Ironhide had described whatsoever. Hornpipes were playing enthusiastically and some alien beings were laughing, joking with each other or drinking and eating. Some were actually dancing around to the energetic music booming all around the room. This was not a place where anyone was too rough and vicious like everyone was made out to believe. It was actually an amazing sight.

"Wow." Sam and Trent breathed at the same time as they looked around from Optimus' shoulder.

Sideswipe nodded, his optics bright as he took everything in. "Wow is right. Now I really wish I could find Sunriser fast. Because she'd love this." He said brightly as he followed his leader inside.

Walking into the excited fray, everyone couldn't help but look around in amazement. They couldn't believe how happy and cheerful this so called pirate bar was. Everyone, Cybertronians and other alien beings, were having a good time, enjoying their selves. They looked like they didn't have a care in the universe at all.
"What the frag? I don't get it." Ironhide muttered looking around with a frown. "This place is supposed to be..."

"Hey! Watch where you're stepping, aftpipe!"

The big black mech jumped and looked down, as did everyone and were startled to find a human woman standing right at his peds. She was a young woman, probably 25 years old or so. She had a round but pretty face with dark shades of color. It wasn't quite makeup but it was some kind of coloring. She was tall and slender but quite curved in all of the right places. Her hair was dark, almost completely obsidian black, pulled into two pony tails hanging down around her neck. She wore what looked like tight black leather pants and a black leather vest.

She was glaring fiercely up at Ironhide with icy blue eyes, her fists balled up tightly and hanging down at her sides. And did she looked pissed.

"Uh...sorry. I didn't see you there." Ironhide said sheepishly.

The girl glared harder at him. "Obviously. Start watching where you're walking, pitspawn." She growled, alarming and angering Ironhide. And before he could even squawk in protest and anger, she turned and marched away.

Ironhide looked entirely hilarious as he stood dumbfounded. He almost missed Sideswipe and Knockout snickering off to the side, both amused by how he just had been told off by a human. They stopped really fast when the Weapons Specialist shot them a deadly look.

Trent, however, was staring hard after the woman, his face twisted in confusion. He felt as if he knew that human like he had known the other woman. Both of them seemed familiar but he couldn't put his finger on it. Still he was thinking the very same thing as Sam but it was his friend who voiced it.

"Hey, Optimus. Why are there humans here? I thought only the Quintessons had humans. So how are there any here? And why don't any of the pirates look interested...?" Sam was asking.

Optimus was shaking his head, wondering the same thing. He could only speculate of how or why there were humans on the space port.

But before Sam could even finish asking what he was, it was Sideswipe who interrupted by yelping in surprise. "Hey! Is that who I think it is?!" He asked completely surprised.

Everyone's eyes and optics snapped to the silver mech before following where he was looking and the Autobots froze.

Amongst all of the dancing, almost in the very center of it all was a Cybertronian, a mech. He was almost the same size as Bumblebee and was no doubt a Praxian like him and Prowl. He had door wings hanging high behind his back. He was colored mostly silver with red checkers across his chassis and blue down his sides. He had a long red and yellow chevron on his helm between sparkling blue sapphire optics, which was full of mischievousness as he danced with a group of femmes of different alien races. He was definitely some kind of ladiesmech because he was flirting with them as he danced with them. All of them were practically dancing western style, swinging around in circles one way and then spinning around the other way.

"Yeah! That's how you do it, ladies!" The mech cheered with a young, clear voice, laughing as he danced.

Either way, the Cybertronians of the team stared in surprise to the young mech until Ironhide
growled in irritation. "That little...! I thought he went missing! Perceptor said that he got lost and the
Wreckers had to go looking for him! And here he is! In a fragging bar, playing with femmes! Typical
thing for him to do! Slacker!" He growled out.

Optimus, however, chuckled, shaking his head. He looked relieved to see the young mech.
"Smokescreen." He laughed.

"Who is he? An Autobot?" Epps asked, grinning as he watched the cheerful mech keep dancing.

Prowl, much like Ironhide, was scowling in disapproval. He was obviously not amused.
"Smokescreen is a front liner like Sideswipe is. And yes, an Autobot." He stated.

Sideswipe, surprisingly to the three humans, scowled, shaking his head. "Tch. Smokes isn't like me.
Yeah, he can be fun having around but he is so annoying! Always going off about destiny of being
great! He actually kept sprouting out that he was going to be a Prime some day! He is obsessed over
being just like Optimus!" He then grimaced when the Prime cleared his vocoder, sounding amused.
"Eh! Not that is a bad thing! He just takes it over board!"

"Looks like he is going to be coming this way in a moment." Knockout spoke out, not looking any
more amused as Ironhide and Prowl. He did not look too happy to see the young mech either.

Everyone looked to see that Smokescreen was being spun around quickly by the femmes, who were
laughing and giggling while spinning him around too quickly for him to keep up. And then let go of
him to send him flying across the bar until he crashed into a few of the patrons.

And landed right at Starscream's feet.

Laughing, Smokescreen picked himself up, looking at the femmes. "Hey! That was cheating! You're
not supposed to toss me..." he was saying as he turned on his knee guards to push himself to his
peds. He, however, froze when he found himself looking right at the Seeker's legs before looking up
into those un-amused red optics. "Huh?!"

"Having a little too much fun, Autobot?" Starscream asked dryly, his wings spread high and wide.

Smokescreen's optics flashed furiously and he was on his peds in an instant. "Starscream!" He
growled, his arms lashing out and spinning into cannons, which caught everyone's attention in the
bar.

The music screeched to a halt and everyone was looking to watch the fight that may break out.

"Son of a glitch! What're you doing here, slagger?!" Smokescreen growled, looking only at the
Seeker, ready to fight if he had to. He was looking eager to do it too.

"Stand down, Smokescreen. Starscream is with us." Optimus spoke up, now stepping forward with
amusement.

Smokescreen froze at the sound of the Prime's voice and looked at him, only to squeak as his optics
grew wide and bright. He looked more like a kid who was seeing Christmas for the first time. He
even grinned and was no doubt holding his vents as he gazed at Optimus like his very first present.
"Optimus Prime! You're Optimus Prime!" He said brightly.

"Yeah, you little slagger! What're you doing here, playing around?!!" Ironhide growled, folding his
arms.

Smokescreen flinched as if he had been lashed out at. He looked over at the Weapons Specialist,
who as glaring furiously. "Ir-Ironhide?! You're here too?" He asked uneasily.

"Yes, I am and so is Jazz! What are you doing, Smokescreen, playing around at a bar?!" Ironhide growled, glaring at him. "We got word you got lost on the way to Earth! The Wreckers are looking for you!"

Smokescreen grimaced before looking at a large Cybertronian that walked up, smirking around at the Autobots and Decepticons.

He was a really big dark silver and blue mech with burning red optics. The sight of him made the Decepticons stiffen in surprise. "These bots bothering ya, Smoke?" He asked gruffly, not seeming to even notice he was being gawked at.

"Bre-Breakdown?!" Knockout stammered out in alarm.

The large mech looked over at Knockout before he lightened up and grinned. "Well, if it isn't Knockout. The vainest mech I ever met, who always bugged me about buffing his armor out when he was scuffed up." He stated.

Knockout scowled at him but then decided to ignore that. He just looked his old partner over, frowning. "Where have you been? Like Jr Prime Wannabe here," He motioned to Smokescreen who glared at him. "You were supposed to come to Earth and join me." He stated.

Both Smokescreen and Breakdown glanced at one another, grimacing before the large mech motioned to a table in the far corner. "It's kind of a long story. Let us tell you all over there." He motioned to a large many armed alien, who resembled a humanoid octopus that was serving up drinks. "Barkeep! Several Energon cubes over here!" He called over.

The Barkeep looked up at him before nodding and began getting the order together.

"Before we tell you our story, what's yours?" Breakdown asked as everyone sat down together at the table. Sam, Trent and Epps sat in much smaller chairs on the table. "Why are you with Optimus Prime and the Autobots, Knockout? And who's the femme? Never seen her before." He added looking over Nightbird over appreciatively.

Nightbird and Starscream both glared at him. "The name is Nightbird. And if you don't keep your eyes to yourself, I will take them for earrings." She growled viciously.

Breakdown stared at her for a moment before grinning and whistling. "Damn. I definitely like you." He said brightly.

Starscream glared harder at him before placing a servo over Nightbird's when she started to stand up. "Breakdown, shut up. She is my sparkmate. Get your own." He growled.

Breakdown stopped laughing and stared at the Seeker with surprise. Then he looked at Knockout as if asking him if the Seeker was serious. He received a nod from the red and silver medic. "Wha...Starscream has a mate now? What the frag have I missed?" He asked flabbergasted.

"The entire war between Autobots and Decepticons." Ironhide answered dismissively.

So to make a very long story short, Optimus sent a data burst to Smokescreen and Breakdown, filling them in with everything that happened on Earth. Unicron's uprising with Megatron becoming Galvatron, the fight with the Department. Everything. Even the Quintessons attacking and taking their loved ones.
By the end of it, Breakdown and Smokescreen were staring with surprise, yet in the younger's case, disappointment. "Aw, mech. So that means I missed the whole thing. I was hoping to kick some serious aft." He groaned before wincing when all of the Decepticons, including Breakdown, glared at him.

"Never mind that, Smoke." Sideswipe said frowning. "Now it's your turn. What are you doing here and with a Decepticon like Breakdown? You friends?"

Immediately, both Autobot and Decepticon gave each other disgusted looks and scooted away from each other. "No!" Both groaned.

"Pit no. I am definitely not friends with him." Smokescreen remarked dryly before he shrugged, looking more docile. "But we're not enemies either." He looked back at Optimus. "You see, sir, I was coming to Earth. But I got jumped. By Quintesson's." He stated and everyone stiffened. He nodded solemnly. "Yeah, I know. Alarming. I was taking a different route than the Wreckers. Bulkhead told me not to but..." he cut off grimacing.

"Let me guess, you didn't listen, did you?" Prowl asked dryly.

Smokescreen slumped, door wings and all. "Yeah." He said grumpily. "I was goofing off. I was rounding this watery planet and bam." He slammed a fist into his other hand, making a loud clunk that made the three humans jump. "Next thing I knew, I was hit by a stunner. I offlined and when I woke up, I was in some prison block. Bunch of those five faced freaks had a whole bunch of other life forms. Cybertronians, like us. Different others. Breakdown was one of them." He motioned to the big guy next to him.

Breakdown nodded grumpily. "Yeah, they got me too. I was around the Asteroid belt when they hit me. Did the same thing they did to the kid." He said nodding to Smokescreen. "We were on some Quintesson slave ship, heading back to their planet, Quintessa. I overheard one of the Quintessons say Smokescreen and I were going to be sent to some Arena for entertainment. They were going to use us as gladiators for their games on Quintessa."

"What happened?" Starscream asked now rushed, completely enthralled. "On the ship you were on, were there sparklings?!"

Everyone stiffened at his question but Breakdown shook his head, looking apologetic. "No. Your sparklings weren't on the ship we were on. Nor were these...Dinobots or the femmes you told us about. If they were taken by the same Slaver that took us, it was well after we were off the ship. We were only on the ship for a week before we were bought by somebot else."

"Bought? By who?" Optimus asked frowning.

Breakdown opened his mouth to say but someone else interrupted.

"By me." Someone said coolly.

At the sound of that voice, everyone turned sharply to see a short red Cybertronian with one gleaming red optic. He had the purple insignia of the Decepticon on his chassis but it was scratched out. He was well known though by the Cybertronians because all of them sneered in disgust.

"What are you two doing?!" The mech snapped, his fists on his thin waist. "You were supposed to be back at the shop a mega-click ago!"

Breakdown growled at him, ignoring the growls from the others. "We don't answer to you, Swindle!" He snapped back, now standing up, facing him. "You might've bought us from the slaver.
The former Decepticon glared at him with his one optic, completely ignoring the looks he was getting. "HE sent me to find you two. So I suggest you get moving!" He then looked over at the Cybertronians and drew back as if surprised. "Huh? So that's who you were chattering up with. Autobots and...Starscream?" He asked now completely thrown off.

Starscream glared at him. "Swindle." He said coldly.

Swindle looked around at everyone but stopped his one optic onto Knockout and he sneered. "Well, well, if it isn't Knockout. It's been a long time since I have seen you last. I know someone who would be very glad to know you're here." He said slyly.

Knockout grimaced, cringing away. "Lockdown is here, isn't he?" He asked nervously.

Swindle chuckled darkly but bobbed his helm. "Yes, he is. And he would love a word with you, Knockout. Seems like you slagged off the wrong mech. He was about to come look for you." He said before looking at Optimus when he stood up. "Optimus Prime, surprising you are in the company of Decepticons. And not just any Decepticon company. The Second in Command of..."

"No, I am now the Commanding Officer of the Decepticons." Starscream growled before standing up with everyone else. "And if you know where we can find Lockdown, take us to him. Because we are looking for him."

Swindle sneered at him shaking his helm. "He doesn't see anyone without an appointment." He stated.

Starscream glared harder but then smirked over at Ironhide, who understood. The Autobot Weapons Specialist whirled his arms until they were cannons, pointing them at Swindle, who cringed. "Then make one for us, Swindle, or would you like to say hello to my favorite weapons?" He asked darkly.

Optimus held up a hand, frowning at his Weapons Specialist. "Ironhide, calm down." He looked at Swindle. "Please, Swindle. We really need to speak to Lockdown. If you know..." he was saying.

"And I said he doesn't see anyone without an appointment." Swindle said rudely.

Smokescreen, however, raised his hand, grinning. "I know where he is! I can take you!" He said brightly, willing to do anything to help Optimus Prime. Even Breakdown was nodding with a smile. He noticed everyone looking at him curiously and the young mech smiled with a shrug. "Who do you think actually bought us from the Quintessons and could actually get away with it without getting into trouble with them? Lockdown pretty much rescued us from them. Come on!" He said motioning to them to follow.

"He is not going to like this, Smokescreen!" Swindle snapped angrily.

Breakdown snorted as he took the lead with Smokescreen. "Yeah he will, Swindle. Like you said, the Boss wants to talk to Knockout. You just want them to buy the information from you." He stated.

Swindle slumped, looking moody. "I would have given them a special deal too." He drawled out sourly.

"Shut up." Ironhide remarked as he roughly shoved the red mech to the side and followed the group pausing to pick up the three humans and place them on his shoulder.

Knockout, however, was very hesitant in following. He looked like he would love to do otherwise.
"Well I think I will go back to...ACK!" He yelped when Starscream grabbed a hold of him and dragged him after. "Come on! You're really not going to make me...?"

"Yes." The Seeker said bluntly.

As everyone walked, Swindle included, Breakdown gave the team a warning look. "When we get to the shop, whatever you do, don't touch anything. And be warned, Lockdown isn't in the best of moods right now." He warned them.

"When isn't he?" Starscream asked skeptically.

Breakdown grinned, shrugging. "Yeah that's true. But he is in a really bad mood. A deal just went sour and he is fragged off like a nest full of stingbots that had just been shaken up by some snot nosed punk just for the fun of it." He told them.

Optimus frowned looking at Smokescreen, who looked quite passive about the whole thing. "So...you work with Lockdown now? You are a space pirate?" He asked curiously.

Smokescreen glanced at him, grimaced somewhat shamefully but nodded as he rubbed the back of his neck joints. "You could say that. Lockdown saved me from a life of slavery, sir. I kind of...owe him. And when it comes to debts, he collects in different ways. He wanted me a part of his crew so...I didn't have much of choice. It was either join his crew or stay as a slave for the Quints. I kind of took the more positive solution." He said shamefully.

Optimus smiled softly, patting Smokescreen's shoulder plates. "I am actually glad you did, Smoke. We need Lockdown's help and since you are one of his crew mates, you can help us convince him." He said softly.

The young mech grimaced as he looked up at him but shrugged. "I can try but he might not listen. He is going to be really hard to convince doing anything. I just hope you have something he might want. He is a really hard mech to get along with or make deals with." He told him.

"Oh, don't worry. I think we have something he may want." Ironhide chuckled darkly as he glanced over at Knockout.

"Why do you have to look at me when you say that?!" Knockout whined, cringing away.

After walking through a few corridors and past some rough looking crowds, they approached a large shop with the words, Death's Wish scrawled across the top.

"Cheerful name." Prowl said dryly as he optic'd the name. "Why did he have to go with that?"

Breakdown shrugged. "Who knows, really. I guess he wanted the shop's name to match his ship's name." He said uninterested.

"What is the name of the ship?" Trent asked but he only received a glance from the large mech.

Walking up to the shop, the whole group entered the slide away doors and entered. The shop was semi darkened with dim lights shining. A few shelves full of weapons and devices were out on display as well as several maps in so many different languages. Some of them looked like star maps and such.

A large table was sitting off to the side, which was where tools were sitting as well as what looked like a custom made cannon.
There was door way off to the back but no one could see inside the room. The sound of clicking metal was coming from inside it so someone was in there.

Swindle pushed past everyone, ignoring some of the growls he got. He just pointed seriously at them to stand in the middle of the shop. "Don't touch anything. Especially you." He said looking at Knockout, who was looking quite nervous as he gazed at the door.

Walking over to the door, the red mech popped his head in. "Hey, you have visitors." He stated.

"I'm busy." Came a growling gruff voice with a slight deep south accent. The voice made Knockout flinch and start backing away towards the door of the shop. But Starscream and Nightbird grabbed his arms and held him into place.

Swindle, however, chuckled. "One of them is Knockout." He said in a singsong tone.

It suddenly went dead quiet before the screech of metal sounded in the room. It sounded like a metal chair being shoved back across the metal floor. Heavy thuds began to sound from within the room, coming closer to the door.

Every one of the Cybertronians and the three humans tensed up when they heard the familiar clicks and whirs of a Cybertronian arm twisting and shifting into a cannon or a weapon.

A second later, the first thing everyone saw come out of the room was a heated cannon and a lethal curved hook that looked ready to start swing to slice and dice someone, more than likely a red and silver former Decepticon named Knockout.

The second thing they saw was a very rough, vicious looking Cybertronian that Trent instantly recognized.

Lockdown was exactly how Trent saw him in his vision. He was very talk, somewhat bulky shouldered but thin around the waist and lower half. His entire helm was smooth white metal with black tribal markings crisscrossing all over with slit red optics, which immediately glared right at a terrified looking Knockout. His chassis was acid green and his lower half was obsidian black with a few spots of gold He was not a nice looking fellow at all. He looked mean and vicious and it had Sam, Trent, and Epps cringing back behind Ironhide's head to avoid those cruel looking optics from glaring at them. Even some of the Cybertronians, mostly the Autobots, cringed away from him.

Knockout was almost a puddle of uneasy liquid metal as he was the object of the mech's complete attention. He even started rattling from terror, his ruby optics wide as he gazed back at Lockdown.

Glaring only at the red and silver medic, Lockdown leaned against the door frame, tapping the heated cannon against his leg. "Give me one damn reason why I shouldn't take this," he held up his hook up threateningly. "And take those fragging optics outta your head, Knockout?" He growled viciously.

Knockout cringed lower before holding up his right arm and prying the phase shifter off, holding it up. "Be-because I brought back this." He managed to squeak out.

Lockdown didn't even glance at it but pointed his hook at Knockout. "That don't mean slag to me. I was planning on coming after you sooner or later to get it back. And show you what happens when you steal from me. You steal from me, you pay up." He growled out. "Painfully!"

Knockout squeaked, stepping back and rattling harder in fear.

Optimus finally cleared his vocoder to get Lockdown's attention, who snapped his optics towards
him. "Lockdown, I am Optim..." The Prime was saying.

"Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots." Lockdown interrupted roughly before shrugging and shoving off the door frame and twisting his cannons away. He looked all of the team over before his optics paused on a scowling Prowl, who was standing in the far back. "Prowl."

Prowl narrowed his optics but nodded and kept quiet. He didn't have any intention of sharing words with his former partner. Not for any reason.

Lockdown finally tore his optics away from Prowl and looked at Starscream. He raised an optic ridge then shook his head. "I admit, it's surprising to see you lot together without biting each other's heads off." He said gruffly. "You must be the lot I heard that was looking for me." He added as he walked over to a machine in the wall and activated it. It was an energon converter.

Optimus nodded as he stepped closer. "Yes, indeed. We have come from a small planet called Earth to find you, Lockdown. We need your help..." he was saying.

However, Lockdown interrupted again but raising his one good hand to halt him. "Don't talk about why you are here until my Seconds arrive. I don't talk any deals without them." He said without even looking at Optimus.

Everyone gaped at him, not believing his attitude towards their leader.

"Seconds?" Prowl finally spoke, skeptically, breaking his silence.

Lockdown made an amused sound as he kept his back to all of them, consuming his energon without a care in the world. "My partners. We take any deals, we do it together." He sad dismissively.

Starscream scoffed, folding his arms. "Since when did you have partners? I thought you usually worked alone." He said darkly.

Lockdown sent him quite the stink optic but smirked nonetheless. "Things change. You don't talk about why you were looking for me until they get here." He said gruffly.

"Who are your partners?" Ironhide asked, just as gruff as Lockdown, not amused that he had interrupted his old friend like that.

Lockdown only smirked as he looked past everyone towards the door, which had slid open just before Ironhide had asked. "Them." He merely said nodding at someone.

Everyone turned and stared in surprise as two very familiar human women walked right in, both side by side. It was the platinum blonde haired woman from the ship yard and the black haired woman from the bar. The blonde looked interested and curious about the visitors while the dark haired one merely glanced at them in disinterest, pausing to glare at Ironhide, remembering him from almost stepping on her.

"Hey, LD. We're back." The dark haired woman said as she looked at Lockdown and waved a greeting. She practically lead the other right past everyone right up to Lockdown.

Lockdown nodded as he lowered his hook for the two women, who grabbed a hold of it and he lifted them both right up to his shoulder plates. "Girls, meet our possible new business clients. Mechs, Lady," he nodded to Nightbird, who nodded her approval to his respect to her. "My Seconds in Command of my crew, Isabella and Florence Jackson." He stated.

The Autobots and Decepticons and three humans stilled in alarm. Those were names they knew.
They all knew they had heard them before. From one late Aaron Jackson, Director of the former dreaded Department. These two...they were Doctor Aaron Jackson's long missing daughters.
"Jackson?!
Epps was the one who broke the very long silence. "Wait! Aaron Jackson's girls?!"

Now it was the girls' turn to look surprised as he asked that. They looked almost dumbfounded while Lockdown merely frowned curiously. It was like they had been slapped for no reason. But after a moment, the dark hired sister, Isabella frowned as if she didn't believe it. You know our father?" She asked skeptically.

Optimus blinked out of his surprise and smiled faintly at the two. "We knew him. Aaron Jackson was not exactly our friend. But we were acquainted with him for a short time." He now frowned, looking sorry he had to tell the girls what became of their father. "I am afraid I have to tell you that he has passed away. He..." he was saying.

The girls again looked surprised, though the blonde, Florence looked more despaired than her sister did. But after a second, Isabella raised her eyebrows at Optimus. "He's dead?" She interrupted Optimus.

Optimus paused but then nodded. "He has passed on to another life. So, yes he is." He said solemnly.

Everyone expected the girls to break down in grief but it stunned them to watch Isabella give a short harsh laugh, nodding. "Good." She practically barked and everyone but Lockdown and her sister stared at her in surprise. The dark haired sister just shook her head, looking quite bitter but amused. "If you knew my father, then you probably knew what he was into. Being Cybertronians, you know about the Quintessons, right?" She didn't even wait for everyone to nod and she laughed harshly again. "That son of a glitch that we called father once sold us to them as slaves. He got rid of Flo and me for his own selfish greed. So I am glad he is dead. That aftpipe deserved to die."

There was a long uneasy silence. No one expected this but they possibly should have. They had found out about these girls from Aaron Jackson, himself. Before he had passed on through the Otherworld, he had asked Optimus to find his daughters from the Quintessons and save them from the life that he admitted to subjected to doing.

But it didn't occur to the Cybertronians and three human men that they would find the girls with Lockdown of all mechs. The question of how and why was there but...they knew they should have expected some hard feelings for the man who was supposed to protect them from dangers like the Quintessons.

Before anyone could ask any more questions on the matter, Lockdown swiveled away from them and walked over to the counter with the customized cannon and plopped down on a chair no one noticed. He began working on the cannon. "So, what brings the honorable Prime of the Autobots and the treacherous Second in Command of the Decepticons to my door?" He asked uninterested.
Starscream scowled, his arms folded across his chassis. "I am now Leader, Lockdown. Megatron is gone. So that makes me in charge now." He hissed in annoyance.

Lockdown snorted, sparing a glance up at him. "What, you finally kill him like you were always screeching about?" He asked sarcastically.

Starscream growled but Optimus gently placed a hand on his shoulder to calm him down. He sent a reassuring ping to the Seeker before looking over at Lockdown. "The war is finally over. Many things happened on the planet of Earth and now all Cybertronians are as one. I can send you the entire information like I did with Breakdown and Smokescreen." He said, preparing to do so.

"I don't really care either way, Prime." Lockdown said not looking up at him but pausing in his work as the twin sisters carefully climbed down his arm to get to the table. "Just tell me what you want so I can get back to work."

Optimus and everyone frowned at the bounty hunter's rudeness but then the Prime slowly nodded. He figured it was time to get right down to business. "We need your help, Lockdown. A lot of things happened on Earth that caused the end of the war. It included facing Unicron, the Cybertronian God of Death and Destruction." He paused when Lockdown sharply looked up at him, as did the girls. He knew he now had their full attention. "We also had recent contact with the Quintessons. They attacked our base while we were dealing with Unicron, alongside with our creator, Primus. The first creator helped us defeat Unicron and in the end, they sought out to fix the relationship between them and became one as it was told in legend. The Quintessons, however, took a handful of our closest friends and our sparklings."

Lockdown now looked very interested as he put down a tool he had been using. He leaned back in the chair and swung his heavy peds up onto the table, making himself comfortable. "I changed my processor, Prime. Send me that information." He said bluntly.

The Autobot Leader nodded, satisfied he had Lockdown's interest and did what was requested.

For a very long moment, everyone watched the bounty hunter as his optics flickered and danced a little as if he was reading. He was no doubt going over all of the details and they were sure he had come to the surprise about the sparklings because he paused to glance up at Optimus, then to Starscream and then to Ironhide. He even looked right at Nightbird, looking curious.

But after a long moment, Lockdown finally turned his full attention to Optimus, tilting his head. "You want me to help you find the Quintessons." He said as if stating the fact.

Optimus nodded solemnly, barely noticing how tense the two sisters had gone. They were whispering to one another, as if discussing the matter their selves. "Yes. According to Knockout and Starscream, you are probably the only one who can help us. During your...travels, you must have come across their planet. So you must know where they are. We need your help to find Quintessa so we can rescue my children, Sideswipe's sparkmate who could spark his own sparkling at any time, one of our precious human friends and our new Autobots, the Dinobots." He then looked to Knockout, nodding him forward, who nodded nervously and moved forward to put the phase shifter down on the table. "As you only as for payment for your help, we will return the phase shifter to you. Please, Lockdown, we need your help. You are the only one who can help us." He said wearily.

For a long moment, Lockdown gave the Prime a calculating look, rubbing his hook against his chin as if thinking deeply. He then swung his peds down and motioned to Isabella and Florence. "Let me tell you how I met Izzy and Flo." He instead said the unexpected. "The first time I actually had a run in with the Quintessons were about fifteen years ago. I was making a run for some guy from the
Vokadian system and some Quintesson ship attacked mine. They overloaded my ship's systems and even mine. When I came to, I as on Quintessa, in line for the gladiator arena they have.

"They wanted me to fight their gladiators to the death and I refused. Took some good beatings and being put together to get me in line. I went up against many warriors from different worlds, killing every single one of them. And one of the entertainment matches they made me do, they wanted me to squash humans like energon perps." Lockdown said stonily. "I will admit it. I did do it. I did it to survive. But these girls, they were there, a part of the entertainment. The Primus damned Quintessons wanted me to squash these two. How old were you two again, Iz?" He asked without looking at the dark haired sister.

Izzy Jackson, who was standing impatiently beside her sister, replied in a stony dead way. "Ten. Flo and I were ten years old. A year after we were taken by those bastards because of our bastard father selling us to them."

The Autobots and Decepticons grimaced or in Starscream and Nightbird's case, growled, their burning red optics flashing dangerously.

Lockdown nodded, his optics still on Optimus. "I maybe a stone cold killer in many optics, but I do not spill sparklings' blood. No matter who orders it. I took those two and hid them inside my chassis while destroying other humans. The Quintessons never suspected that I did." He said stonily. "These girls have been with me ever since that day. We all escaped Quintessa together, barely by the skin of our dentas." He then stood up swiftly, hand and hook on the table. "Sorry, Prime. Can't help ya. I won't help ya. Not even for a piece of slag phase shifter that was mine anyways. Take it and get going outta my system." He remarked offering his hand to the twin girls.

Optimus sighed, shaking his head. He had gotten the feeling that would have been Lockdown's answer. He had been afraid it was.

"Your system?" Prowl asked dryly, not happy either way.

Lockdown looked at his former partner in a dead panned way before nodding. "My system. I pretty much own the entire Draconus system, which is why all of those pirates that you ran into won't frag with me. I and my crew has worked hard and furious to buy the respect from all of 'em all and one of the results is using all of the respect, all of the credits that came lining up from jobs to buy this entire Alpha Beta Space port. Took some helm cracking too in some dirty work but I made this station better than it used to be. You saw how the Nue-Tral Bar was when you found Smokescreen and Breakdown? It's because of me. That bar is where anyone can relax and anyone who causes trouble on my station, deals with me. I am pretty much the sheriff around here. Anyone who causes trouble in the Draconus system, they are brought to me to deal with. It took a lot of work to get it in all of the space pirates' heads that I won't let any stupid aft fighting cause problems. You won't find a single pirate that will cross me." He said acidly. "As for this whole ordeal, I don't mess with the Quintessons."

Sideswipe was now quivering in rage and pain, glaring at him. "You have to help us! Didn't you hear what Optimus said...!"

"Yes, I did and no I fragging don't!" Lockdown snapped right back shooting him a dangerous look. "I just told you, I don't mess with the Quintessons. I do not need to give them a fragging reason to come after me and my girls! Now if that is all you wanted from me, I am sorry to deny your request. That is one job I won't take. So if we are done here, get the frag out." He said coldly as he turned with the sisters to make his way back to the back of his shop.

Optimus again sighed and turned, motioning to everyone to leave. He didn't see any other way but to
However, Nightbird quickly stepped forward, looking almost panicky. She quickly opened a compartment at her waist to pull out a picture frame. "Wait!" She said hurriedly as she stepped towards Lockdown.

Lockdown growled a warning turning back to glare at her. He, however, paused when she held up the picture frame nearly up to his face so he could see its contents.

It was a picture of Starscream, Cole Keller before she became Cybertronian and their adopted sparkling, Slipstream. Cole was sitting against Starscream's chassis, holding her little Seekerlet close and all of them looked happy and loving at each other.

"This is Slipstream, mine and Starscream's little girl." Nightbird said her vocoder quivering with heavy emotion. "The Quintessons have kidnapped her and we want her back. Please." She pretty much begged, something she almost never did. "I want my little girl back." She motioned to Optimus and Ironhide, who looked as miserable as she did then to Sideswipe, whose head was hanging low in grief. They were all in a sorry state because of Lockdown's refusal to help. "Optimus wants his children back. Ironhide wants his sons. Sideswipe's sparkmate, the love of his life, his other half of his soul, Sunriser is going to spark a sparkling any time. She needs him. He needs her. Sam," she quickly pointed at Sam. "The human, Mikaela is the love of his life. None of us will survive without our children and our friends. Please, Lockdown. Help us. You are the only one who can!"

Lockdown was quiet for a very long moment as he studied the picture of the three. He stared hard at it before finally looking at her energon filled optics then over to the others. They all looked miserable. Even that sorry excuse for a mech, Knockout.

After a long moment, the bounty hunter sighed, shaking his head. "I am sorry. But I can't help you." He said deeply. His optics flickered to Izzy and Flo, who were looking very sympathetic for all of them. "I made a promise to these girls that they would never have to face those bastards again. I help you by chasing after those five facers, I am breaking that promise to protecting them. I am sorry. But you're on your own."

Nightbird slumped in misery and defeat, energon spilling from her optics. She just stared at him, with her hope lost. She flinched a little when Starscream came up behind her and gently took her hand, pulling her back away from Lockdown.

Optimus sighed a third time, nodding in understanding. "Thank you for at least seeing us, Lockdown. Listening to us. We understand your reason and we will not trouble you again. We leave you in peace." He said wearily and defeated. He motioned to everyone to start leaving.

Sideswipe whimpered but turned to start walking, pausing to allow Prowl of all mechs, to put an arm around his shoulder and try and comfort him. The Autobot SIC paused to glance over at his former partner, his blue optics full of anger and disappointment. "You never change." He merely murmured before taking Sideswipe outside of the shop.

Knockout and The Prime had paused to look over at Smokescreen and Breakdown, who were standing off to the side, looking at the entire group with concern and severe apology.

"Take care of yourself, Smokescreen. I hope one day, we will meet again under better circumstances." Optimus said softly smiling at the youngster before he turned and walked out with the red medic, who had murmured a similar thing to his old friend.

Lockdown watched them go, his optics very hard in thought. He had shared a glance with the girls,
who looked back at him with questioning looks. They looked sad by what they had heard from that
group. They looked indifferent about the whole thing, even concerned for the group that just barely
left the shop.

"Peh! Fools!" Swindle laughed harshly as he made his way towards Lockdown, ignoring the growls
from Breakdown and Smokescreen as they shot him a dark look. "They think they are going to face
the Quintessons and live? Idiots, incompetent foolish beings. They are going to die before even
reaching Quintessa. The Quintessons will find out about them and they will be fed to the Sharkicons.
Good rid, I say. Thinking they can come in here, demanding our help from us to face the
Quintessons..." And he continued on ranting.

Lockdown ignored him but stared directly at the girls on his shoulder. It was almost like they were
silently talking to one another. Both girls looked up at him for a very long time before their faces
hardened in resolve and they nodded to Lockdown. Only then did the bounty hunter's optics
hardened back and he nodded back, as if agreeing with them.

"What are we going to do, Optimus? Lockdown was our only hope of finding the sparklings and the
others." Ironhide asked miserably as he walked beside his oldest friend.

Optimus shook his head, looking down at the ground as he walked. He was sorely disappointed that
Lockdown denied their request for his help. He was going to hate telling Elita about it. She was
going to be spark broken. Their hope had been on Lockdown. But he did understand why the
bounty hunter refused to help them face the Quintessons. He had two humans to protect himself.
And if he went racing off with the Prime and all of his friends and allies to bring a possible war
down on the vicious beings, Optimus could not blame him for wanting to refuse. It was to protect
two human girls who had seen too much devastation in their lives, way too early for it in their lives.
"We will have to search the entire Alpha Beta Space port for someone who might be able to help. If
Lockdown won't help, then we have to find someone who will." He said quietly, hiding his pain as
best as he could.

Prowl scowled, not amused. He hadn't wanted Lockdown's help in the beginning but he had hoped
deep down that he would. "Lockdown is selfish. We don't need him." He said quietly.

"The problem with that, Prowl, is yes. We do." Starscream said as he held his crying mate close to
him as they walked.

"Let's just go find someone else, guys. Maybe there is someone on the port that can..." Epps was
saying from Ironhide's shoulder.

"Wait." Someone suddenly said sharply from behind them.

Everyone immediately halted and turned in surprise to see Lockdown striding out of his shop with
the girls on his shoulders, looking determined. Smokescreen and Breakdown were behind him as
well as a horrified looking Swindle.

The space pirate marched right up to Optimus, hos optics hard but determined. He looked right up
into the slightly taller mech's blue gaze before he jerked his head towards a corridor. "Come with
me." Was all he said in his gruff way before walking on.

Everyone, surprised, just looked at one another, completely taken back.

"ARE YOU INSANE, LOCKDOWN?!" Swindle was shouting as he practically ran after the
bounty hunter towards the ship yard. Everyone was behind them, waking quickly to keep up with
Lockdown's swift strides, still looking puzzled but happier than before. "YOU ARE ACTUALLY
"Yes." Came Lockdown's hard answer without even looking at the whiny Ex-Decepticon.

Swindle shook his head, looking frantic. He threw his servos into the air, shaking them wildly. "WHY?! AFTER ALL YOU JUST SAID! THE QUINTESSONS ARE GOING TO FIND OUT, LOCKDOWN! THEY WILL COME AFTER YOU! WHAT THEN...!" He was exclaiming.

Lockdown finally came to a speedy halt nearly making Swindle walk right into him. He ignored the loud protest as he turned a fierce glare onto the red former Decepticon smuggler. "One, you mean us, Swindle. Don't forget who saved you in that stellar storm." He growled. "You are coming with us and if you argue with me again, I will give you to Breakdown so he can do what he is best at. Break you." He then shook his head, shooting the group behind him a glance. "As for second, I have a reason why I am helping them. None that concerns you! Now contact the ship and tell Derezz to start preparing." He growled viciously.

Swindle squeaked but nodded. He knew better than to argue with Lockdown. He quickly opened a link to said ship while everyone was hurrying after the bounty hunter as he sped walked down the long tubed corridor.

"Lockdown!" Optimus quickly said as he pulled up beside the mech. "What made you change your processor?"

Lockdown didn't even look at him as he glared forward. "My business." He said sharply as he kept walking. "Here is the thing and you better listen up very carefully. That means you too, Kid." He added shooting Prowl a look, who glared at him. "While you are on my ship, I am in charge. I give you an order, you follow it. No questions asked. You do what I say, when I say it. Do not start any fights on my ship, you get along with my crew, and you do not shoot at my crew just because they piss you off." He shot Ironhide that look this time.

"Wait...your ship?" Optimus asked surprised. "We already have a ship. The Ark..."

Lockdown shook his head as he gave the Prime a sharp look. "Won't get you to Quintessa!" He said sharply. "The Ark will be noticed immediately once you pass through the Quintessons' space field. They will know you are coming for them the minute you fly in their territory. We go in on my ship or you don't go in at all." He then turned sharply and started walking again, forcing everyone to quickly follow. "A few more things, you want to get close to Quintessa, you are a part of my crew. It's either that, or you are slaves to be sold to the Quintessons." He added.

That nearly made everyone stop in alarm.

"What?!" Prowl demanded harshly.

Again, Lockdown halted and swung around to face the startled group. "What was your plan when arriving at Quintessa? Going in, guns a blazing? Shooting the whole dark planet up, hoping to get lucky and win? Sorry but that plan is the stupidest plan ever. The Quintessons are a powerful ruthless race. They have weapons that will be shot at you and you melt into nothing but a puddle of rust and liquid metal. They will destroy your sparks and even then Primus can't bring you back. Your kids, your lovers your team mates are slaves to them now. You want to get close to your precious ones, you go undercover as slaves. It won't be pretty but hey. You willing to do anything to save your kids and lovers and friends?" He asked bluntly giving each and every one of them a stern look.

For a moment, no one knew what to say. But it was sideswipe who spoke first, nodding. "I will do anything to save Sunriser and my sparkling." He said, in determination.
Optimus nodded firmly as did Starscream, Nightbird and Ironhide. "We all will." The Prime said proudly.

Nodding in some satisfaction, Lockdown turned sharply and started walking away again. The others had no choice but to follow. "Good. Now about your ship, you can bring it with us until we reach the Daark System but it does not go any further than outside. It does, the Quintessons will be alerted immediately." He went on. "My ship is big enough for your entire crew you have here though. Your best bet is to just leave the Ark here, stationed at the port. No worries on anyone breaking in it because if I put my sign on the ship, no one will frag with it."

"The Ark is one of the best ships ever built, Lockdown. I am sure we won't have any trouble." Optimus said frowning.

Lockdown ignored that remark but Izzy Jackson huffed in amusement. "Has it ever been in an electric stellar storm?" She asked slyly, her arms folded. She shrugged when everyone looked at her. "Our ship is the fastest, toughest ship in this galaxy. It will last a lot longer than yours will. If you want us to help you, you have to trust us. We know what we are talking about." She said before looking forward.

"Gentlemechs, Lady," Lockdown said as they entered one of the ship lots. "Welcome to my ship. Death's Head."

Everyone looked forward and froze to see the ship before them.

Lockdown's ship, Death's head was not as big as the Ark but it sure was close. It was massive in size, very much like the Decepticons' ship, Nemesis had been. It even looked somewhat similar to what it had looked like. It was a large black machine with nightmarish features. Sharp looking spikes seemed to be all over the hull with cannons and a few turrets on the sides. On the side in Cybertronian was the name, Death's Head.

All around the ship, loading supplies and crates up in the ramp were a few of the Cybertronians that the team had seen before. There were few other alien beings but not as many as the Cybertronians.

"This is your ship?" Optimus asked.

Lockdown nodded as he lead them towards the Death's Head, looking fondly at it. "Yup. This is my baby. I stole her from the Quintessons when I escaped with the girls. She saved our afts by getting us away from Quintessa. Had her ever since." He said before looking over at a pair of Cybertronians, who snapped to attention when they saw him. "Where's Derezz?"

One of the mechs pointed towards the ramp. "He's checking the shipment orders, Captain, sir. He's kind of irritated. Swindle," he shot the said red mech a look. "Called ahead and said we were leaving sooner than planned."

Lockdown nodded sharply. "And he did. We are leaving sooner than planned. I want my baby ready to fly in 12 orns." He said now making his way towards the ramp. He motioned to the Autobots and Decepticons to follow after him, which they quickly did. "One more thing, and this is one very serious rule. You try and shoot at my Third, and I am booting you out into space." He warned the team.

Everyone frowned as they stared at his back.

"Why would we shoot at your Third?" Ironhide asked suspiciously as they rounded the back of the large ship. And he suddenly froze like everyone else when they saw IT.
"Derezz!" Lockdown called, ignoring the question as he looked at the floating mass of metal that was counting crates with four long spiked appendages. "Swindle talked to you right?"

The face that was facing them lit up to life while the furthest one away dimmed, powering down so the being could turn its attention onto Lockdown. The creature's lit face was narrow and thin and looked more like carved metal. It was colored dark steel gray and gold with gleaming silver colored optics that trained directly onto Lockdown.

"Lockdown, I really wish you would have given me a sooner update on what was about to happen. We are still waiting on that shipment of..." a deep gruff voice spoke from the mass of metal.

Lockdown shook his head, slicing his hand through the air. "Frag them. Call Ry'cor and tell him we can't take the shipment. In fact, we are cancelling most of the shipment plans. We have something more important to do." He said gruffly.

"WHAT THE FRAG?! THAT'S A QUINTESSON!" Ironhide suddenly exclaimed, his cannons whirling to life while the others tensed up in alarm, staring at the Quintesson with unease and alarm.
"What the frag did I just tell you?!!" Lockdown snapped as he reached over and slapped Ironhide's cannon downward so it wasn't trained on his third in command any more. He ignored the startled looks that everyone gave him, only glared at Ironhide. "I just said don't try to shoot my third in command!"

Again, everyone looked startled between Lockdown and the Quintesson, who hadn't reacted at all but watched everyone. He didn't seem to have very many expressions with his five faces.

"Bu-but that's a Quintesson!" Ironhide stammered, still quite startled.

Lockdown glared harder at him before shaking his head. "I am fully aware of what Derezz is. But he is a part of my crew and if you threaten him again, you deal with me." He growled.

"Bu-but he..." It was Sideswipe who stammered.

But Optimus was the one who interrupted this time. He placed a hand on Sideswipe's shoulder, looking right at Lockdown. "We apologize, Lockdown. We will not attempt to harm any of your crew. But we are curious about your third in command. We have never met a Quintesson who was pleasant." He said, sending everyone in his team a warning look.

Lockdown continued to glare before stepping back away from Ironhide. He glanced behind himself at the Quintesson. "Derezz, come down here and introduce yourself." He ordered his vocoder still hard.

The Quintesson hesitated before hovering down the ramp, peering around at everyone curiously. "Hello. I am Derezz, Captain Lockdown's third in command." He spoke, his voice very deep.

Optimus, hesitating himself, smiled faintly. "Hello, Derezz. I am Optimus Prime. We apologize for what just happened. We're just not..." he paused when the Quintesson shook his whole frame.

"Do not apologize. I understand your reaction towards me. I am fully aware that my kind have never been pleasant to anyone. Especially Cybertronians." The Quintesson said, waving one appendage in dismissal.

"So what are you, an exception?" Starscream asked skeptically and he received a look from Optimus and Lockdown.

The Quintesson, Derezz, however, chuckled as if amused. "Yes, I suppose I am." He answered almost just as smartly s Starscream had.

Lockdown folded his arms as he looked around at everyone. "Derezz is an outcast. He was banished from Quintessa because he tried standing up for Izzy and Flo when they were forced into the Quintesson arena. He doesn't like what his kind is doing. Never did. When I took the girls from Quintessa, he came with. He isn't like the other Quintessons." He stated before looking at Derezz. "Like I said before, Dee. The plan has changed. We're not doing any shipments. We have something else."

Derezz looked over at him and everyone was sure he frowned. They just couldn't be sure because he didn't have the same expression functions as the Cybertronians did. "I do not understand, Lockdown. What is more important than our shipments. There are deadlines we have to meet." He said sounding confused.
Lockdown motioned to the group of Autobots and Decepticons. "They hired us to take them to Quintessa." He let out the big news.

There was a dead silence as Derezz's whole frame swirled around to face him, the silver colored optics bright with surprise. "We are returning to Quintessa? May I inquire why?" He asked, sounding startled.

Lockdown shook his head, folding his arms again. "We're going to have a ship meeting about it before we leave. It'll be better if I don't have to repeat myself. Let's just say," he paused looking over at Optimus, meeting his optics. "It's pretty serious. Something I don't even like. I want you to have the crew unload the shipments and have them returned to the clients. Tell 'em we will refund the credits they already gave us. I want Death ready in," he paused checking his chronometer again then looked back at Derezz. "Eleven orns. As soon as we have the shipments off Death, we need to collaborate with this lot and take in some of their supplies. They have more humans than them with them. And they're not used to the usual space food that Izzy and Flo are."

Slowly, the Quintesson hovered back but dipped his entire frame as if nodding. "All right. The crew won't like it but I will have them unload the storage bays again." He told him before his optics flickered and his whole frame vibrating.

Just by glancing around, everyone watched all of the mechs working around the Death's Head stiffen before visibly groaning and slumping. The crew obviously got the message. They merely glanced over at Lockdown, who was watching them sternly and they nodded their acknowledgement and got to work to doing as they were ordered.

Derezz looked back at Lockdown, shifting a little. "I will ready the ship, Lockdown. But you do know my perspective on returning to Quintessa. I hope whatever we are going there is worth it. You know how the hive is like." He stated.

Lockdown nodded as he shared a glance with Optimus. "For them, it is. For us...I am not so sure." He murmured. "Get your crew, Prime. Leave your ship here. It will be better that way. I am going to speak to the dock master here and let him know your ship is off limits to everyone. Anyone who violates that order will deal with me." He told him before he offered his hand to the girls still sitting on his shoulder. "Izzy, Flo, why don't you go with them? We don't want anyone unpleasant messing with our new clients."

Izzy and Flo nodded as they climbed onto his hand and held on as he lowered them to the ground. They both stood side by side, looking up at the Autobots and Decepticons. "Well? You going to lead the way or what?" The dark twin asked.

Optimus nodded as he looked at the others, giving them the affirmation to start going back to the ship. He wouldn't openly say it that he didn't like the idea of leaving the ship behind but if Lockdown told them to and they wanted his help, it was probably for the best. "Let's go back to the ship and prepare, everyone." He told all of them.

One by one, the team turned and started to head to the docking bay where the Ark waited.

Optimus paused as he looked down at the girls, who were already walking with the group. "Would you like me to carry you? It may be more efficient and will save time." He said now offering them his hand.

Both girls looked at him, the darker twin looking suspicious and not so friendly but the other nodded with a cheerful smile. "Thank you, Optimus Prime. That is very kind of you." Flo finally spoke for the first time as she wandered over and carefully climbed into his hand.
"Flo!" Izzy scowled.

Flo rolled her eyes and looked back at her sister. "Oh, come on, Iz. It might be fun! I know Lockdown and the crew are the only ones we let carry us but it will save us time. Besides, Lockdown does seem to trust these guys. Otherwise he would have argued with us about going on this mission." She said impatiently.

Izzy crinkled her nose before shrugging and following after her twin.

Optimus carefully lift them up and started walking with his team towards the ship lot where the Ark was docked. "So, you convinced Lockdown to help us." He said softly as he looked down at the girls.

Both girls sat in his hand, looking up at him. It was Flow who nodded as she smiled up at the Prime. "Yes. Lockdown really only listens to Izzy and me. He doesn't listen very well with others unless they are paying him to." She told him. "We...well...we have a very strong bond with him. He's like our creator. He rescued us from the Quintessons when we needed it."

Optimus smiled. "I am glad to hear that. I have heard little of Lockdown. I always did picture him to be...different." he stated.

Izzy snorted as she drew her knees to her chest and hugged them close. "What, an aftpipe? A hard aft? A ruthless mech who cares mostly about weapon upgrades and credits?" She laughed a little and nodded. "He is. Believe me, he isn't easy to get along with. But for us..." she shrugged. "We have been together for about fifteen years now. He's taking care of us, protecting us. In return, we help him."

Prowl, who had been walking next to Optimus, looked over at her, staring. "But he is a criminal. He is selfish and..." he was saying bluntly.

Izzy sent him a dry look, not amused by his words. "Prowl, right?" She interrupted him and when he nodded, she shook her head. "He told us all about you. He told us what he did to you. Yeah, you're right. He is a criminal. He is selfish and can be greedy. But you don't know a single thing about him. He regrets what he did, all right? He didn't want to do all of those things, really. But you have to do what you got to do to survive." She scowled when Prowl frowned darkly and looked away. She knew he was still harboring some strong negative feelings for Lockdown. "Just for the record, Prowlers, he had nothing bad to say about you at all. So don't insult him in front of us."

Now Prowl looked at her in surprise. He didn't know what to say after that.

Arriving at the Ark, everyone saw Sentinel and Jazz waiting to greet them. Rodimus and Arcee were further back, watching everything going on around the docks. But when the team approached them, they looked over.

"OP! How'd it go?" Jazz asked cheerfully before his optics brightened to see the two humans sitting on his hand. "Hey! Who's those pretty ladies?" He asked sending them both a wink, though he was mostly looking at Flo.

Optimus smiled as he motioned to the girls. "This is Isabella and Florence Jackson. They are the human crew mates among Lockdown's crew. Izzy, Flo, this is my Third in Command, Jazz. Sentinel Prime. Rodimus Prime and Arcee." He introduced them.

Izzy nodded as she stood, taking on a tough girl sort of look while Flo smiled shyly at everyone. Surprisingly to Jazz the most. She looked him over with shy interest. "S'up?" The darker twin said in
greeting.

Jazz, Sentinel, Rodimus and Arcee blinked in surprise at the girls' names before the silver saboteur grinned. "You mean, Jackson's girls? Department Doctor Doom's daughters? The ones he asked us to rescue from the Quintessons?" He asked brightly. "How'd you find them?"

"They are Lockdown's human wards, Jazz." Optimus told him smiling.

Izzy and Flo looked up in surprise though. "What do you mean our father asked you to rescue us?" The dark twin asked.

Optimus looked down at her, still smiling. "Your father was planning on saving you from the Quintessons. He was...trying to build an army using Cybertronian technology to do so. He may have done some wrong things in his life. But his intentions were somewhat pure. He wanted you back safely." He told them softly.

Both girls looked stunned but thoughtful about what they just heard. They honestly couldn't believe that.

Sentinel, however, scoffed, folding his arms. "Human wards? That no good criminal has human wards? Peh. I don't believe it." He ground out in disbelief.

Now, Izzy and Flo frowned as they shot him a dark, cold look. "Hey, shut the frag up! That CRIMINAL agreed to help you find your missing people, so show a little more gratitude!" Izzy snapped.

Sentinel blinked in surprise while the other three brightened. The older Prime, however, then growled. "Why you...!" He growled, now leaning forward, looking angry.

Optimus immediately held up a hand, blocking him from the girls. "Sentinel!" He chastised, sternly. "Show a little more respect."

"So Lockdown is here and has agreed to help us?" Jazz asked cheerfully deciding to divert the situation. "Sweet! Where's the old scoundrel, anyhow? Wha's the plan, bossbot?"

Optimus looked around at his four friends and nodded. "We will be leaving the Ark here. Lockdown has agreed to help us but under his conditions. We are taking his ship, Death's Head to Quintessa so we can rescue our loved ones. We won't leave the Ark unguarded, however. I think the best plan is to leave Mirage and Blaster, as well as Wheeljack and the Vehicons to continue watching over it. I also want Blitzwing to stay as well as one of Barricade's mechs. In case if something happens, we may need them to bring the Ark." He stated.

Sentinel did not too happy with that plan, however. He looked wanted to argue but Optimus gave him a warning look and pinged him not to.

Jazz, Rodimus and Arcee nodded in agreement, though did look surprised at the news. "Okay. Guess that works. Want me to lay it all down for 'em all?" The Third asked.

Optimus nodded as he looked grateful to Jazz for keeping it calm. He knew that he had questions. "Yes, Jazz and thank you. Though I do want to speak to everyone before we go join Lockdown. There is something that everyone must know about his crew." He said, knowing this tib bit of info wasn't going to sit well with them if they didn't know.

He really did not want to suddenly be surprised to learn that Lockdown's third was a Quintesson. He didn't need anyone to start shooting when they saw Derezz.
Jazz nodded as his blue visor flickered, already beginning the transmission. "Okay, I'll have everyone in the cockpit waiting for you then." He reassured them.

Optimus, again, looked grateful towards Jazz. He then turned and looked over to where his three human friends were sitting. "Arcee, Sam, Trent and Robert, why don't you take Izzy and Flo aboard the Ark and start introducing them to everyone. We will meet in the cockpit in ten minutes." He told them, mostly looking at Epps.

Epps nodded slowly, getting the message that Optimus was trying to tell them. He understood that there was something he wanted to tell the other two Primes without the girls to overhear. "Okay, ya got it." He said before stepping onto Ironhide's hand with Sam and Trent.

Together, Ironhide and Optimus carefully set the humans down and watched them go towards the Ark.

Once they were gone, Optimus looked at the others. "We should probably start getting our supplies together and moved to Lockdown's ship. The sooner the better." He stated.

Everyone nodded and started to head towards the Ark to just that. The only one who didn't go was Prowl and Jazz. They stayed right there with the Primes.

"Optimus, what's going on?" Jazz asked, now serious. He had known something was up when the Prime told them the plan.

Optimus vented softly before looked firmly at the other two Primes. "What I am about to tell you is what I was going to tell everyone before we go join Lockdown. But I think it's best letting you know now." He paused as everyone went into serious mode. "Lockdown's third in command is a Quintesson."

The three who didn't know stiffened and looked at him in shock, or in case Sentinel's case, shocked and enraged. "What?!" All three yelped.

"That dirty, no good, Decep...!" Sentinel started exclaiming.

Optimus looked at him sharply and held up a hand. "Sentinel, watch your words. It's not as bad as you..." he was saying.

Sentinel shook his head as his optics flashed. "Not that bad, Optimus?! Lockdown has one of those vile, ruthless five facers as a part of his crew?! This cannot be tolerated! He must be working for them!"

Optimus shook his head, frowning at him. "And yet he isn't. We spoke to him, Sentinel. He is actually different from the ones we have encountered. I believe he can help us." He stated.

"A fragging Quin..." Sentinel started raging.

But Jazz gently knocked against his helm to shut him up. He looked just as serious as the others did about this. "Are you sure about that, Op? What if he isn't?" He asked firmly.

Prowl was the one who shook his head, is arms folded. "This one is different, Jazz. Just by standing near him, my battle computer didn't pick up any hostility from him. He spoke calmly and didn't seem anything like the other Quintessons." He added his opinion.

"In deed." Optimus said, getting everyone's attention again. "His name is Derezz and he is Lockdown's third. If we want their help, we have to abide by it."
Sentinel growled shaking his head. "Abide by it? Optimus, those things are what we are going to face. To get your sparklings back. And you are saying we have to work with it? This is ridiculous!" He ranted again.

Optimus frowned at him sternly. "Do you not recall what Primacron said before we left?" He received startled confused looks from everyone around him. "He said we need to keep an open spark because we were going to make an unwelcome ally. I believe that ally is Derezz. A Quintesson ally." He slowly nodded when optics widened in surprise. "I think this is an opportunity, everyone. A Quintesson ally is what we can use. If we can make an ally out of, surely there is more we can make. Derezz is a Quintesson. Who will know more about the Quintessons than a Quintesson, himself?"

For a long a moment, all were silent as they took it into consideration. They understood his point and had to agree. It didn't mean they liked it.

Rodimus finally sighed and nodded. "I hope you know what you're doing, Optimus." He said gravely. "A lot of the others are not going to like this at all."

The others nodded in agreement. They knew that that the others wouldn't like it either. The Quintessons did lot to them that couldn't be forgiven. It was a wonder how anyone was going to accept this...new ally. It was going to be really hard on a few others to accept a Quintesson ally. Mostly everyone who lost a loved one to them. It must have been working Nightbird's wires to be working with a Quintesson when their kind had murdered her father. It was going to be hard on Max and Fig too after what the Department did because of them.

Who knew how Soundwave was going to take it due to having a mind battle with them before when he tried to find out the secrets that had been in Aaron Jackson's mind.

Optimus knew that too. He knew that the others were not going to easily accept the Quintesson. He just hoped things would turn out though. He meant what he had said before. To have a Quintesson ally was a really big thing. There might be a chance that others were like him. If there were, maybe they could find peace with the race. That was pushing a lot of hope, however.

After a while, the Primes and the two highest ranking officers made their way into the Ark's cockpit, where everyone was waiting. They were conversing with Izzy and Flo, all fascinated by learning who they were.

Once the higher ranked officers arrived, everyone went quiet. Ironhide pinged Optimus to let him know that none of the team who went aboard the Alpha Beta told them what happened and what was going to happen. They had all figured out that it was best to let Optimus do that part.

"So, Lockdown agreed to help, huh?" Barricade asked, folding his arms and allowing Roulette to lean against him.

Optimus nodded as he looked over at the black and white before looking around at everyone else. "Yes. We found Lockdown and he has agreed to help us. It was not easy to convince him but we have Isabella and Florence Jackson to thank for that." He motioned to the two girls, who greeted everyone with a wave. The Prime quirked a smile under his battle mask when he saw the shy look that Flo was sending under his battle mask when he saw the shy look that Flo was sending to a certain silver saboteur of his and his Third grinned back and winked at her, full aware of it. That was interesting and was only to possibly grow more. "They are Lockdown's Second In Command, both of them. And apparently the only ones he will truly listen to. Without them, we would be trying to find some other way of reaching Quintessa."

A few of the other Cybertronians and humans smiled over at the girls, nodding or openly applauding their gratitude for the twin girls.
"Further note on the matter," Optimus spoke up again. "We will be going to Quintessa on Lockdown's ship, Death's Head. The Ark will remain here at the Alpha Beta Space Port." He paused to look at Steve, who had stiffened. "Steve, the Ark will be under your command in the time being. I will be leaving a small handful of Autobots and Decepticons here. We do not want to trouble Lockdown or his crew with too many of ours." Again he paused. This was the hard part. "Which is why I am about to ask all of you to not react too negative to what I am about to say."

Nearly everyone was frowning in confusion but interest now. Elita, however, stiffened as she read the bond between herself and her mate. She knew, Optimus knew.

But to drop the bomb to the others...

"While we are on board Lockdown's ship, no one is to cause problems for his crew. Especially his Third in Command." Optimus said very sternly.

"Are we really going to work with that thing?" Sideswipe suddenly blurted out bitterly, making everyone frown in confusion at him. While Izzy and Flo frowned darkly, not amused that he insulted their Third.

But before they could say anything, Optimus cut in, looking sternly at the front liner. "Yes, Sideswipe. We will be working with Derezz. Like it or not, he is one of Lockdown's crew and we will respect his wishes not to give Derezz a hard time. Anyone who does not abide by that can stay behind on the Ark." He pressed firmly.

"Bu-but...!" Sideswipe was saying angry but uneasily.

"Sides, don't. Please don't. I know how important this mission is for you." Optimus spoke up again wearily. "Remember what is at stake. The Quintesson is not a threat until he becomes one."

Now, everyone stiffened, horror and shock now on their faces at the news. None of them could believe what he had just said.

"What Quintesson?!" It was Ratchet who demanded.

Optimus sighed softly before looking firmly at everyone. He knew this wasn't going to bode well with everyone. But he didn't see any other way of dealing with it all. "Lockdown's third. He is a Quintesson." He delivered the news.

There was a stunned silence as everyone took in the information before there was an explosion of shouts and protests.

"A Quintesson?! Seriously?!"

"We can't work with a Quintesson! They're the reason why we had to come out here in the first place!"

"Optimus! Is he a threat?!"

"We should deactivate him before he does us!"

"Where is that five faced freak?! I am going to rip him a new aftpipe!"

"Enough!" It was Prowl who snapped the order, ending all of the shouting. He gave each and every single Autobot and Decepticon a warning look as they went quiet. "Like it or not, he is a part of Lockdown's crew! If we want to reach Quintessa, we need to do as asked of us!"
This almost brought another round of protests but it was Optimus who held up his hand to keep the silence, who also looked stern. "Everyone, please. I know this isn't easy for all of us. Especially for those whose sparklings and sparkmate was taken by the Quintessons." He pressed firmly, making everyone wince in guilt. "Or whose father was killed by them." A few gazes flickered over to Nightbird, who hung her head, optics dim in sorrow at the reminder. "Everyone, I don't like the Quintessons any more than you do. But we need to do what it takes to get our loved ones and comrades back. Even if it means to work alongside the only one who doesn't condone what his own race is doing. Now, I have already spoken to the Quintesson, Derezz. As far as I can see, he is nothing like the ones we have encountered. He is polite and well-mannered and seems friendly."

"He is." Flo piped up suddenly before turning bright red when all looked at her. She ducked her head shyly as she looked apologetic to Optimus. But seeing an encouraging look on his face, she went on. "Derezz is...nice. He never yells at anyone."

Izzy snorted smugly and with humor. "Except Lockdown when he's being a stubborn aft." She remarked.

Her words made a few Decepticons snicker as they knew what she meant. And surprisingly to few who noticed, Prowl smirked. They stared at him until noticed and he returned to his stoic, emotionless look he always used.

Optimus nodded before looking around again, pausing to see his Third grinning as he watching the blonde haired girl with interest. Again, he couldn't help but think things were going to get interesting on Lockdown's ship. "Everyone, I don't know the story between Lockdown and the Quintesson but they seem to trust each other. And they are our only hope to getting Sunriser, the Dinobots and the sparklings back. I am going to ask you to bear with me. Now if you don't feel comfortable with being on the same ship as Derezz, then you may stay here on the Ark if you wish. I won't hold you ill if you do. It is your choice. But I am going. I want my children and our friends back. Speak now if you want to stay, otherwise, we need to get our supplies together and go join Lockdown's crew on his ship." He stated firmly.

There was a long silence as everyone watched him. A lot of them looked apprehensive about the news of the Quintesson but...no one wanted to be left behind. They wanted to pitch in as best as possible.

After a long moment of silence, the Prime nodded his approval. "Then let's get moving. I will have a team stay on the Ark with the Vehicons but they will be on standby, waiting for a call for backup of its needed. Let us be out the door in ten to fifteen minutes. The sooner we move, the better." He gave the order before sending the list of those staying and those going.

As everyone was making their way out of the cockpit, Izzy cleared her throat loudly to get Optimus' attention. She placed her hands on her waist, looking up at him having to crane her head back to do so. "Nice speech, Prime. There is a couple of things I need to go do before we leave. Mind loaning me one of your guys to go do it? It'll be faster that way. We will meet back at our ship when I get done." She stated.

Slowly Optimus nodded before looking around the room until his optics fell onto his Second. He knew Prowl wouldn't appreciate it but he wanted him to do it. If there was a chance that they could learn more about the situation with Lockdown and his crew, Prowl would probably be the best bet. He was very observive and wouldn't miss much.

"Prowl," Optimus called over, getting the black, white and dark purple Autobot's attention. "Would you mind going with Izzy Jackson on her errands?" He then sent a silent transmission to his Second. 'And if you can, ask her for information about Lockdown and his crew. The more information we
can get on them, the more we can understand them.'

Prowl didn't look too happy but he nodded. He walked over and offered Izzy his hand for a lift up. "Where are we to go?" He asked dryly.

Izzy raised an eyebrow at him as she stepped up but smirked anyway. "Don't sound so enthusiastic, Prowlers. One would think you are so excited to be in my presence because you like me." She said almost dramatically.

Prowl stiffened and sputtered over her words, completely taken back as he walked out with her.

Several who had been watching them go chuckled or just out right laughed. They knew that girl was going to be a handful to have around. Jazz grinned as he watched his best friend go before looking down at Optimus. "You know, Ops. If we can get Lockers to agree allowing it, we should let those two work together. It'll be hilarious to watch her make him glitch out now and then." He then winced when he heard Ratchet growl darkly at the very thought.

"I'll be okay." Flo perked up from where she stood, trying to reassure the lime green medic. "Izzy is really excited. She'll tease him and probably make him mad a little but she is harmless. Lockdown has told us all about him before, their past and all. Ever since, Izzy kind of wanted to meet Prowl. She said she'd see how may buttons she could push without him blowing up."

Optimus chuckled. "She is always like that?" He asked in amusement.

Flo nodded smiling back. "Yeah, she is. She has more ball bearings than most of the crew does and can be pretty wild. But she means well. I think she and Prowl might get along as long as he tries not to say too many bad things about Lockdown. While we are close with him, she is closer. She is just like him sometimes but it's okay." She stated with a shrug.

Jazz chuckled before swooping down on one knee guard, grinning at her. "So, Flo, want me to show ya 'round? I'd like to know more about it. And you." He added giving her a wink.

Flo's cheeks flushed but she smiled. "Are you always like that?" She asked.

"Don't encourage him." Ratchet said dryly as he shook his head. "He has a big helm as it is."

Jazz pouted but shrugged, not denying it whatsoever.
The sounds were nearly unbearable to listen to and it was almost maddening. It couldn't be helped when they started crying again.

"Shhh. It'll be okay, little ones." Sunriser said as she rocked Beta and Slipstream in her arms. She knew how they felt. She was just as terrified as they were with the situation they were now facing. She glanced over to Mikaela, who was rocking Triggerload and trying to calm Omega as he bawled, curled tightly against her side. She then looked over to her friend, Swoop who was gently petting Sizzle on the helm and cooing softly to him to calm him.

It had been a week now since they arrived in their new prison and already hope seemed very dim. Things were already turning into hell for them and Sunriser already felt as if she was going to go crazy being in this place. The things that these psychotic five facers had already done to her and her friends...she felt as if she was going to snap if Sideswipe, Optimus and the others didn't find them soon.

Already had she been roughly dragged to a nightmarish like lab to be poked and prodded and scanned, mostly it being her middle where her sparkling was kept. She would end up screaming at them in anger and fear because she knew they were too interested in her and Sides' baby. It was not a comforting thought to imagine that was mostly why they wanted her, other than the fact that she was also half human.

Many times, the Quintessons demanded her to transform down to her human form so they could examine her. But...when she refused, they would threaten the sparklings. They didn't threaten hers, thankfully. But she still couldn't let them threaten the others.

So she miserably complied, hoping that they wouldn't try and harm her sparkling.

Luckily, they seemed to want it alive and unharmed so the most they did was run scans on her. They never did do anything else that may jeopardize the unsparked youth. They didn't even seem to be too serious about harming the Prime twins or the young Seekerlet or the two grounder mechs.

The Dinobots, on the other hand, was a different matter.

Many times they had been forced to the labs, which never ended well. The Quintessons learned very quickly that they couldn't exactly drag the Dinobots by physical force. The first time they tried, one of them ended up smashed against a wall in pieces because of Grimlock.

The only way they became cooperative was the same way the Quintessons forced Sunriser to
They threatened the sparklings and Sunriser. It almost didn’t work because the Dinobots snapped into offensive but after one of the Quintessons pointed what looked like a laser right at one of the sparklings, they finally began to cooperate.

And they almost started regretting it when the experiments began.

Sunriser wasn't sure what was happening to them when they were taken away but she knew it wasn't pleasant. The Dinobots came back to their cells exhausted, cranky and weakened. She was sure they were being tortured though. Grimlock was always the most angriest when he came back. It took a lot for even her to calm him down.

Nonetheless, it had been almost three weeks since being on this dark wretched planet. And the whole lot wanted nothing more than to go home.

"How are they doing?" A deep rumbling voice spoke up from the large cell near theirs.

Sunriser started and looked over, while the Dinobots growled looking over at the owner of the voice. They were not too fond of their neighbor prisoner but Sunriser didn't have any problem with him. He was a little intimidating because of his size but...he seemed...nice.

Much like the Cybertronians, he was a mechanical being. But he wasn't exactly Cybertronian. But he was something very similar.

His name was Grimwing and he claimed to be something called a Predacon.

Much like the Dinobots, he looked like animalistic. He seemed to have the head of a mechanical eagle but the rest of his body frame looked more dragon like. He was a dark steel blue color with burning yellow optics, other than that the sharp beak was a violent red color. His wings were also like the wings of an eagle, with blade like feathers on apparatus appendages. He, honestly, looked like a vicious beast but his personality told Sunriser otherwise. He was a rather calm and collected being.

Sunriser remembered the very first day she and her friends and the sparklings met Grimwing. And at first it had terrified her, Mikaela and the sparklings while putting the Dinobots on high alert.

It had been two days after arriving on this planet that was Quintessa. She and the others had been frightened as it was after their first examinations by the five facers. And even that hadn't been pleasant.

Everything had been mostly quiet other than quiet sobs of the sparklings and strange noises from so many others in this hellish prison they had been forced into.

It was suddenly broken when there had been a loud crash that made so many startled and frightened cries rise up. Sunriser, Mikaela, the sparklings and the Dinobots jumped and flinched at the sound of metallic crashes and thuds as well a deafening roar that echoed in the whole prison. They looked just in time to see six brutish mechs stumbling in, holding large, thick energon stasis lock rods and trying to hold on. The energon loops were around the neck and legs of the largest animalistic being they had ever see. It was almost the same size as Grimlock but slightly bigger.

Never in Sunriser's life did she think she would ever see a metallic dragon before. But there it was.

The mechs and the brutish dragon were followed by the Quintessons, whose all five pairs of eyes were glowing. It was a sign that they were using their telepathic powers on the being but even then, they seemed to be struggling.
The dragon, Grimwing was snarling and roaring at all of them, snapping his eagle like beak at them. He was dripping energon and oil as if he had been in a nasty fight and it wouldn't be too long the new arrivals would have learned that he had.

Sunriser, Mikaela and the Dinobots learned later from Grimwing, himself, that he was used as a Gladiator beast for the Quintessons' entertainment. He was used as a beast for poor Cybertronians, humans and other alien beings to fight against and try and destroy. But they never seemed to succeed. They were all killed by him.

Either way, Grimwing had been shoved into the largest cell close to the new arrivals, where he was imprisoned. He had snapped his beak and slashed at the energy walls with no success to breaking free.

And then he roared out, "Primus forsaken scum! You cannot hold me forever! I am Predacon! The strongest beings to ever live! I will rip you to pieces when I am freed!"

After that, after ten megaclicks of trying to calm down, the large dragon like being noticed the whimpers and sobs of the femmes and the sparklings and he looked to see them staring at him in fear. He seemed surprised at first before completely calming down ad apologizing to them for his terrible behavior.

Sunriser and Mikaela began speaking to him after that, learning his name and what he was as well as where he was from. They were very surprised to learn that they had been creations made by the Quintessons, their selves, many, many eons ago. They were suppose to be weapons of mass destruction and once had been. But after an eon of serving as mindless beasts, one Predacon rose up against the Quintessons, gaining great intelligence and the mind of his own.

Grimwing told the femmes that had been the great leader of the Predacons, who chose his own name at the time. He was the oldest but strongest Predacon to ever have existed and his name had been Predaking.

It was told by Grimwing that Predaking was also a dragon like beast, massive in size and very powerful. He explained to them that Predaking raised up against the Quintessons, leading all of his kind against them in a travesty war before escaping from Quintessa to a faraway organic planet they discovered and the name was too hard to pronounce as it was.

There, a whole race of Predacons lived and survived with Predaking as their leader and Governor. He made the rules and laws and it had been working out for a long time. But there was something that Grimwing wasn't saying though. He didn't particular look too convinced of himself that all of the rules had been right or wrong for his world or his people.

Then questions had been asked about the new arrivals. Grimwing had wanted to know about them.

So, Sunriser, with no reason to lie, told him their story. She told them who they were, what they were, where they were from and why they were here.

Grimwing did not take that very lightly.

Sunriser smiled faintly at the large dragon bot and nodded. "They will be okay, Grimwing. Thank you for your concern. We just want to go home." She said miserably as she rubbed her middle absently.

The Predacon's yellow optics dimmed for a second then burned with determination. He looked directly at Sunriser, bobbing his eagle like head. "When my kind comes for me, I will swear to take
you back to Earth, my young friend. I will see to your freedom." He swore.

Sunriser and Mikaela both smiled faintly at him. They weren't so sure of his determination. Especially of how long Grimwing had been on Quintessa. They recalled that he had been there for a long time as it was.

"Thank you, Grimwing. But that won't be too necessary. I really believe that the Autobots and the Decepticons will be coming soon. My mate will be here for me." Sunriser told him softly. "They will free us."

The dragon bot frowned but shook his head. "You cannot possibly believe that your fellow Cybertronians will actually make it here. And if they did, they must fear the Quintessons. They will fail." He stated grimly.

"No, they won't." Sunriser said firmly. This was only one of the arguments she tended to have with the Predacon. He didn't believe in the strength of the Cybertronians or even humans. Problem was, he didn't know the Autobots or the Decepticons. He didn't know Sideswipe or Sunstreaker. She knew they were coming. She could feel it.

"Sunriser, the strength and will of the Quintessons are highly dangerous to underestimate." Grimwing stated frowning. "If your fellow Cybertronians come, they will fail. The Quintessons will overpower them. I understand you want hope in them but it must be falsified." He told her.

It was Mikaela who shook her head, looking at him with fire in her blue eyes. "You don't know them, Grimwing. The Autobots and the Decepticons. Optimus, Sideswipe. Starscream, Cole. Sam. They are so much stronger than you think. And they will come for us and win. The Quintessons will go down." She said fiercely.

Sighing and his wings slumped on his back and around his frame, Grimwing didn't look any more convinced. "I do hope you are correct in your assumption then, for your sake." He said quietly before his head jerked.

Sunriser and the Dinobots jerked as well and looked over to see the Quintesson prison guards were approaching with the brutish mechs with them. They were carrying energon electro prods and poles. The four dinosaurs began growing and moving to protect the femmes and the sparklings, who whimpered and moved closer to their guardians.

The Quintesson prison guard narrowed his vicious burning red optics at them before pointing his sharp appendage at Swoop. "Take that one to the pits. We shall test it first." He stated in a dull voice. Everyone stiffened or started growling. They didn't like the sound of this. Especially when they were trying to take Swoop.

Immediately, Grimlock, Slag and Snarl growled and surrounded their smallest member, protectively, who was cringing back and cowering behind them in fear.

The Quintesson narrowed his optics before pointing to Sunriser. "Give it to us now or we take the Cybertronian femme." He said darkly.

Sunriser's face hardened as she glared at the five facer before standing up, holding her hand up to the Dinobots. "Take me then. But don't touch Swoop. You've done enough to him as it is." She said firmly.

The Dinobots growled protests immediately and even Mikaela was shaking her head. Grimlock swiftly wrapped his tail around Sunriser pulling her back towards him, even with her lightly pulling
back in protest. Swoop had stepped forward, resting his hand on her shoulder plates, shaking his head.

"Sunriser no go. Swoop go."

The flier said miserably.

Sunriser shook her head, grabbing his arm to stop him. "No, Swoop. Alpha Trion said that I was going to become your Commander and I won't let anyone hurt you guys. If they want to hurt you, they have to go through me."

She said firmly.

Again, Swoop shook his head before placing a had onto her middle, indicating her sparkling.

"Sunriser protect babybot. Swoop protect Sunriser. Swoop go."

He argued.

"Swoop! I said no! I don't want them to hurt you!" Sunriser argued back, desperate to protect her closest Dinobot. She didn't want anything bad to happen to him or anybot.

Swoop smiled faintly as his wings perked up on his back before he lightly pushed her towards Grimlock, who tightened his tail around her, pulling her back until she was trapped in his grip.

"Dinobots protect Sunriser. Swoop go."

He turned back towards the Quintesson, sighing before moving forward. "Swoop go."

He added a little more weakly.

"Swoop! No!"

Sunriser cried as she immediately began struggling, trying to be released by Grimlock. She growled in frustration when Slag came up and helped pin her against the large T-Rex's side with his head and horns. And it certainly didn't help when Snarl helped by pressing his whole large bulky side against her legs to keep her from kicking out to escape.

"Swoop!"

The brutish mechs with the Quintesson deactivated the energy wall and reached out to seize Swoop while the Quintesson looked too smug for his own good.

And as soon as the energy wall was down, Grimlock struck. Just as planned.

With a loud, feral growl, all Dinobots snapped into action, while Sunriser dropped down into a very low crouch so that Grimlock could snap out his tail like a whip.

The only answer to that was yelps from the brutish mechs as they were batted away like baseballs, slamming into a nearby wall while the Quintessons tensed up in surprise. There was a loud crack as Sunriser struck out next, throwing her energy daggers at the Quintessons and slamming them into the vile five facers' optics.

Cries of alarm and excitement raised up all through the prison chamber as they watched the Dinobots and Sunriser act. Many imprisoned Cybertronians began roaring out to them to release them so they could help. Many humans and alien beings were cheering as the five Autobots rushed the brutish beings and the Quintessons, beginning to attack them while Mikaela was quickly gathering the Sparklings, ushering them to escape the cell.

Sunriser leapt high into the air after rushing out of the cell and came down hard on one of the Quintessons, throwing him to the ground. She glared at him as she stabbed her blade deep into his side before kicking off again to attack another.

"Sunriser!"

Grimwing roared as he raised up into his large clawed feet. "Release me! I can help you!"

He called to her.

Quickly looking over at him, Sunriser nodded and started forward to his cell when there came a sudden deafening, audio splitting shriek. She cried out, as did all mechanical beings at the assault of the sonic weapon being used on them.
A large Quintesson had showed up, a sonic disc on one of his appendages and looking fierce as ever. He was using the weapon on the Autobots and any who had been shouting until more of the brutish mechs rushed forward, seizing the five who tried starting the riot.

Soon enough, the five technorganics were pinned down with energy prods or stasis lock cuffs.

"Foolish!" The largest Quintesson snarled as he deactivated the sonic weapon and glared down at them.

Panting painfully and weakly, Sunriser glared up at him, struggling to break loose. "You really think we are going to take this quietly?!" She snapped, struggling. "We will keep fighting! We are Autobots! We want to go home!" She snapped. She barely noticed movement off to the side from a cell far down from her own but she paid no mind to it. She just glared at the Quintessons.

The large Quintesson glared down at her before hovering closer. "You have no choice, slave!" He snapped darkly before shooting the brutish mechs dark looks, as well as his fellow Quintessons. "Take them to the Derezziation chamber! Deal with them and then send the wild animalbots to the pit!" He then stiffened, looking around before snarling. "The human! Where are the human and the infant Cybertronians?!"

Everyone looked around to see that Mikaela and the sparklings in deed were missing.

"Come on, guys! Hurry!" Mikaela said as she ran with the sparklings through a dark hall. They were trying to stay as quiet as possible but hurry nonetheless. They needed to find somewhere to escape and hide.

Anywhere!

As it was, she was holding Beta and Omega's hands, while Triggerload was holding onto her back. Slipstream was flying slightly ahead but kept circling back to stay with the group as Sizzle was far ahead.

"Sizzle! Don't go too far!" Mikaela whispered loud enough but not too loud so that no one else would hear.

Sizzle screeched to a halt as he came to a corner before looking around it as if he was a scout. He immediately whipped his head back around and looked fearfully at Mikaela, shaking his head.

Frowning Mikaela slowed down, ushering the twins to do the same. She carefully peered around the corner to see what he had seen only to slump to see a bunch of those brutish mechanical beings were there, searching for something, or someones. She sighed heavily as she leaned against the wall, trying to think of what to do. They were trapped. They couldn't go back the way they had came. It only lead back to the prison they had just came from.

It was then, Slipstream whistled, catching her attention. She was on the ground, right by what looked like a ventilation shaft.

Mikaela gasped before rushing over to it with the sparklings. "This might work, Slip!" She whispered, smiling before releasing the twins and began prying at the vent. It was a small shaft, but big enough for them all to crawl through.

However, the vent refused to budge.

"Come on!" Mikaela hissed as she tugged and pulled as hard as she could. She even placed a foot against the wall and pushed and pulled as hard as she could, trying to pry it loose.
Suddenly, there was a roar behind her and something grabbed her from behind, ripping her and the vent away from the wall.

Mikaela screamed in fear and alarm as she was raised so high into the air. She whipped her head around to see that she was caught by one of the brutes. She knew there was no way to escape now. But...

J jerking around, she looked to see that the sparklings were still there, looking terrified at what was happening. She knew they had to escape. Even if she didn’t. "Run! Run, guys! Just go! Hide!" She screamed at them as she thrashed and kicked to get away from the brute holding her.

Slipstream was the first to react. She nodded sharply before snapping her attention to the nearest younger Sparkling, which happened to be Omega. She immediately snatched his hand and bolted for the vent, swirling at Sizzle, who grabbed both Beta and Triggerload, diving after them.

Swearing in a growling language, one of the other brutes dove after them, his sharp servos banging hard against opening. But he was too late. He couldn’t even get his big bulky servo inside the vent.

Mikaela laughed weakly, knowing the sparklings were safe...her eyes snapped wide open when the big brute twisted and shifted his servo until it was a cannon, which he slammed up against the opening of the shaft. "NO!" She screamed in horror.

But the brute ignored her and opened fire right into the vent.

There was a loud boom and explosion within and fire exploded from the opening, causing the brute to leap back.

There was no way the sparklings could have survived that explosion.

Mikaela screamed, tears streaming down her face as she watched in horror as the brute began tearing at the now dented and glowing red vent, to see if he succeeded to destroying the runaways. He peered in before chuckling darkly ad looking at his fellow Sharkticons, nodding. And the human’s heart fell in painful sorrow.

The sparklings...all of them were gone.

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When it hit, it had hit hard.

The excruciating pain struck through his back first and then into his spark. He felt like someone had shot him from behind and it burned. He could not stop the startled painful yell as he stumbled from boarding the Death’s Head before stumbling and having to catch himself on Sentinel, who caught his fellow Prime before he fell.

A second later, he heard Elita do the same, screaming softly as if she had been shot and he felt her pain as well. They both had felt it.

"Optimus!" He heard Jazz call out as he and the others quickly spun to look at him in alarm.

Optimus could still feel the dull pain in his back and he jerked his head around to see if someone had opened fire onto him but found nothing. "Wh-what...?" He murmured in shock, looking around.

"Optimus! What happened?!" Sentinel demanded, still holding him up.
Optimus looked over at Elita, who looked back with the same pain. It didn't take much for them to understand. They could feel the same dull pain. It was more like an ache but they knew that pain. They could feel it. They knew the signature.

"O-Om-Omega...Beta...they're hurt..." Optimus said weakly, his spark seizing.

Everyone gaped in shock before another set of pained cries followed after and everyone looked to see that it was Ironhide, Chromia, Starscream and Nightbird's turn to nearly collapse. They felt the same pain.

"Anyone...else feel like their fragging back is on fire?!" The Weapons Specialist asked, his vents hitching in pain ad panic.

The other two couples and his spark mate nodded weakly.

"I feel like I have been shot." Nightbird said, her vocoder starting to get emotional. She saw Starscream nod in agreement. "What is that?!"

"It's the bond...we are feeling the bond between our children." Elita spoke up, heavy pain and sorrow in her tone. Energon tears began to fall from hers and the others' optics. "The...they're hurting our sparklings." She added weakly. "They have hurt them. Terribly."

Several growls of anger and shock at the revelation, even from some of the space pirates that was Lockdown's crew. Lockdown, himself, frowned darkly before looking over at Derezz, who met his gaze. They both nodded as if speaking to each other about something then looked back at the Autobots and Decepticons. "We are leaving soon. Get aboard." He paused to look at Flo, frowning. "Where is Izzy and the Autobot, Prowl?" He added, catching some's attention.

Flo shook her head from where she stood next to Jazz. "I don't know. She just said she had a few errands to run before leaving. But...I think it might have something to do with Double..." she was saying.

Lockdown growled loudly, now snapping into action. He immediately stomped down the ship's ramp, looking like a mech on a mission. "Breakdown! You're with me!" He snapped, now not happy. "Everyone else, get on the ship! Derezz, once everyone is on, have Death's engines hot! If Izzy is doing what I think she is doing, we need to have the ship ready to go fast!"

Everyone had stiffened at the tone of his voice, not liking where this was going. Optimus, finally, stabilizing, himself, moved back down the ramp. "Lockdown, what's wrong? Is Prowl in danger? Is your young friend...?" He was asking.

Lockdown growled as he shot him a glance before looking over all of the Prime's crew then nodded to Bumblebee. "Your little scout, there. Stingbee, wasn't it?" He asked disinterestedly.

"Bumblebee." The scout in question and his sparkmate replied in irritation.

Lockdown shrugged, turning away. "Whatever. I heard you are one of the fastest if not the fastest Cybertronian on wheels. You come too. Might need'ya." He said in a gruff.

Bumblebee looked surprised but sent a glance over to Optimus, almost asking him for permission to go with Lockdown.

"Lockdown, what is it? Why do you need...?" Optimus was asking.

"Better take Barricade too, since he's fast." Lockdown growled out, almost ignoring Optimus. And
when the Prime huffed, he looked back over to him, irritated. "My girl is picking a fight, that's what she is doing. And she dragged Prowl along." He snapped out.

Optimus and the others stiffened but slowly nodded. They didn't know what was going on but right now, they didn't care. "Bee, Barricade, go with them. Make sure Prowl and Isabella Jackson is safe." The Prime said firmly.

Bumblebee and Barricade both nodded as they hurried to follow Lockdown and Breakdown.

"So who was Florence talking..." The black and white Decepticon was asking.

Lockdown shot Barricade a look, fully intending not to answer that. He didn't see it being his business to know exactly who was in bad rep with him at the moment. He just shook his head and picked up his speed, walking on, leaving the Decepticon and the Autobot flabbergasted.

"His name is Doubledealer." Breakdown suddenly spoke up as they walked after Lockdown. The two glanced over at him, frowning. But the large dark blue red mech shook his head. "Doubledealer is kind'a like Swindle, only worse. He, like us, is a Space pirate and smuggler. Kind of our rival, really. Lockdown hates him and for good reason. Doubledealer sometimes works with us, but there has been too many times he has slagged us over. He and his crew is why Lockdown was pissed off and is in a bad mood. He was supposed to help us out on a deal and he backed out because Lockdown refused to give him 60% of our pay. It was supposed to be fifty fifty but the slagger wanted more."

Barricade and Bumblebee glanced at each other, warily. They didn't think the others would like the sound of this. Trouble with another space pirate was not what they needed right now. Not with too much at stake.

"So why is Izzy taking Prowl with her to cause trouble with this...Doubledealer?" Bumblebee asked frowning.

Breakdown sighed, shaking his head as he walked after his leader. "Izzy pretty much has it in her mind that she can do whatever she wants because even Doubledealer is hesitant to fragging with Lockdown. He don't care for humans, especially ours. Izzy doesn't get it that she shouldn't mess with Doubledealer. Even if Lockdown has warned her before not to do this. Flo said it before. But...Izzy is pretty wild. So she's going to be in trouble. Your boy, Prowl, he good at fighting and defending humans?" He remarked.

Again, Bumblebee and Barricade glanced at one another, now looking worried but both nodded.

Breakdown nodded back, satisfied. "Good. Let's just hope he is. Cause if Iz pisses Doubledealer off, like we think she's going to, he is gonna need to fend off Knok and Skar. Doubledealer'll probably sic them on the two." He remarked again.

"Uh...who're Skar and Knok?" Barricade asked, frowning.

"Doubledealer's plug in partners. He takes on two different transformations. Kind of a combined form or something. A small jet and a small war tank. Don't know it works but I guess if he connects with Knok, he can shift into his tank form. With Skar, some kind of large batbot, he shifts into his jet mode. Double's kind of a weird one but really ruthless. Just like how Lockdown can be." Breakdown explained.

"Are you lot fragging done?!" Lockdown suddenly snapped, whirling around from where he had been walking. He looked very irritated so it was obvious he had been listening. "Breakdown, shut
"Stop asking questions!" He snapped before whirling around and walking on. Barricade grimaced while Bumblebee stared after him. "Well...he definitely hasn't changed that much." The black and white stated dully before walking on after Lockdown and Breakdown. Bumblebee merely shrugged and followed after.

"So...you and Lockdown used to be friends, right?"

Prowl frowned, a hint of irritation in his optics before he looked down at Izzy Jackson sitting in his hand. He really didn't want to even get into that. He didn't even want to think of Lockdown, even though he was failing that.

To think he had to work with him again wasn't pleasant. Prowl knew it had been a long time ago when Lockdown used him and normally he didn't hold grudges. He learned that holding grudges just caused problems. It was just he still couldn't forgive Lockdown for lying to him, using him, making him believe they had been friends. And it certainly didn't help that the battle computer that he used had been stolen in the first place. It was like a bad reminder of what Lockdown had done. If it hadn't proven to be so useful, Prowl would have shut it down a long time ago and never used it again.

Thing was, the battle computer was useful and it had saved lives, even though its first owner had been deactivated when Lockdown had gotten done with him.

"No." Prowl said bluntly.

Izzy frowned, tilting her head as she looked curiously up at him before taking a strand of her ebony hair and twirling it around her finger. "But he said you guys were." She stated.

"I am sure Lockdown said a lot of things. And most of those things were probably lies." Prowl said dryly as he looked forward and kept walking in the direction that Izzy had told him to go. He just wanted to get whatever this errand was done and get back to the others. He was sure they would be needing to leave soon. He just couldn't shake the feeling that there was something wrong about what Izzy had told him about though. There was just something that she wasn't telling him that she was up to. And he wasn't sure if he was going to like it or not. He would just have to wait and see.

Frowning sourly, Izzy slowly shook her head as she stared curiously up at the black and white and purple mech that was holding her. "You really don't like him like you used to, do you? All because he did back on Cybertron." she stated, dryly.

"No." Prowl said bluntly.

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Prowl glanced down at her but chose not to say anything to that. He didn't want to get into that. He wasn't sure of how much this human knew about that whole ordeal but he didn't really care. He wanted nothing to do with Lockdown and he was determined that wasn't going to change. Even though at the moment, there wasn't much of a choice. He just hoped that this whole thing with the Quintessons would be over soon. That way he could just go back to Earth or Cybertron and never have to see Lockdown again.

Izzy seemed to take his stubborn silence as a confirmation and she rolled her eyes. "That whole thing was like a thousand vorns ago. Just get over it already. Lockdown has." She stated moodily before looking forward and then stiffening. "There they are." She said more to herself than to Prowl.

Prowl looked forward to where she was looking and found that they had approached a shop where a few Cybertronians were standing. None of the Cybertronians looked very pleasant and that had the
Autobot SIC tensing up. There were about four of them, all somewhat larger than he was. There was only one that about his size and he didn't like the looks of that one. All four of the Cybertronians looked rather lethal and definitely dangerous. They were no doubt space pirates by the looks of them.

"Why are we going to them? Who are they?" Prowl asked after a moment as he slowly approached the mechs.

Izzy steeled herself, now looking deadly serious as she stood up on his hand. She was taking on a whole different persona that Prowl had only seen before when Optimus had mentioned her father, Aaron Jackson. "Don't talk. Don't even say a word, got that? You're going to pretend to be a slave and body guard to me, all right? You do exactly what I say." She told him in a low voice.

Door wings stiffening, Prowl immediately halted and gave her a steeled look. He didn't like that whatsoever. There was no way he was going to...

"Listen to me, Prowl." Izzy said coolly, sensing that he was about to argue. "Just do it. If you go up there and pretend to be one of our crew, they'll try to bait you into a fight. They like picking fights with us, got that? And those guys are dangerous. If you're a slave, they'll be bugging me about trying to buy you. But no worries. I won't let them hurt you." She said more slyly than before and sending him a wink, causing the Autobot to stiffen in surprise again. Her sly look melted away again and she returned to becoming cold and collected as she looked right over at the group of mechs, who finally realized that they were there. "Just follow my lead."

Prowl glanced up at the mechs before he vented in irritation. He figured she knew what she was talking about and it was probably just better to go with it. The sooner they did whatever she was planning, the sooner he could return to the others.

"Well, well, well. If it isn't Lockdown's little squishy pet." One of the Cybertronians sneered unpleasantly as he and his fellow crew mates lined up in front of them. "What do you want, bug?"

Izzy narrowed her eyes dangerously at him as she placed her hand on her hips and shifted her weight. "Where's Doubledealer?" She asked coldly.

"Don't matter to you, bug." Another mech sneered down at her with gleaming red optics. "Where's LD? I thought you were'nt suppose to go any where without him. Isn't he letting you off your little leash a little too soon after what happened in Dadogada?"

Huffing in irritation, Izzy was trying very hard not to be baited into this fight. She would have loved giving these idiots a few threats about tearing their ugly optics out of their helms but she knew better than that. She was familiar with Prowl's history and battle techniques because of Lockdown but she didn't want anything to start up right now. She knew better than that. "I have a message from LD, Snaptrap, for Doubledealer. And you better get this right. Because if you don't, it's the end of you." She said her voice ice cold as she glared at the now not amused Cybertronians. "If Doubledealer ever pulls his name on Lockdown again, we will take Death's Head and destroy everything that you idiots own and possess."

The Cybertronians stiffened for a moment before they snarled, taking a step forward. They weren't going to take that threat very well.

Prowl, however, immediately raised his free arm and twisted it into his blaster cannon. He hadn't liked that threat any more than these pirates did but he wasn't about to let them try and harm her for her foolishness. "Do not take another step." He warned coolly. He saw Izzy glance up at him and smirked but his optics were only on the four mechs that were now looking at him in warning.
"Who the frag are you?!" One of them demanded.

Izzy, smirking, shifted her weight and lightly tapped Prowl's hand with her foot. "This is one of our new slaves and my bodyguard, boys. You mess with me, not only do you mess with Lockdown but you get to mess with him. And he's one cold, mean son of a glitch. So don't even think about threatening me again. By the way, tell Doubledealer that the deal that he blew off is over. He isn't getting a single credit for the information that he even gave us." She said coldly.

The Cybertronian pirates growled again and the one called Snaptrap started forward again, not seeming to be too concerned about a blaster aimed at him. He just looked like he was ready to rip someone, Izzy apart from limb to limb.

Prowl tensed up again, ready to fire his blaster if he needed to do so. He even pulled Izzy back a little, as if trying to shield her from the pirate's fury.

Suddenly an arm swung around from over Prowl's shoulder, making him jump and turn with a jerk that almost sent Izzy off balance, causing her to cry out. He was startled to see connected to that arm was a lethal looking cannon and it belong to Lockdown, himself. Behind him stood a pair of uneasy mechs; Barricade and Bumblebee while Breakdown was just standing there, looking like the brawns of the whole thing much like how he truly was. He looked ready to react if he was given the order. Prowl had to step back a little to avoid his personal space being invaded like that but he didn't move too far away. The four Cybertronian pirates, however, immediately halted, looking shocked and uneasy when they saw the deadly look upon Lockdown's face as he glared right at them. They could see the look of daring that he was giving them to continue with that threat that they had given to Izzy.

"Now hold on, Lockdown. My mechs didn't mean anything by that."

Lockdown's burning red slanted optics narrowed as a tri colored Cybertronian stepped forward and past the other four. He just watched the sky blue, red and dark gray mech push forward. He didn't pay any mind to any of the others that were behind him, looking uneasy. "What did I warn you, Doubledealer, about having your mechs threaten my girls?" He asked, his vocodor very dark and threatening itself.

The mech, Doubledealer just raised his servos as if to calm the entire situation. He was smiling friendly like but the Autobots and the Decepticons, as well as the two space pirates could see the poisonous look of his smile. They knew they could not put their guard down around this one. "Your girl just slagged them off a little. She should watch what she says to her superiors." He said still friendly like.

Izzy huffed in disgust and glared at him. "Superior my aft...!" She was snarling, angry of his comment.

"Izzy, shut it." Lockdown said lowly without even looking over at her. He waited till she was completely quiet before dipping his head down and glaring harder at Doubledealer. "Don't insult Iz, Doubledealer. Ya know how I take that kind'a slag." he growled his only warning.

Doubledealer merely shrugged as if he wasn't concerned one bit. "I'm so sorry, Lockdown." He said without even sounding at least a bit apologetic. "It's just what she just said. Stating that the deal we made and how I'm not getting my credits you owe me and..." He was saying.

"Deal's off, you ain't getting the credits." Lockdown interrupted harshly, his cannon heating up. He completely ignored the startled look that Doubledealer was now giving him. He only shook his head narrowing his optics to mere deadly slits. "You double dealt, Doubledealer. I got word from a contact of mine that you sold the same information to the Kodidian crew. That don' fly in my
Now, Doubledealer looked angry. His red optics flashing as he glared right back at Lockdown. "We
had a deal, Lockdown! You can't cut me out!" he snapped, now furious.

"Well, I just fragging well did, DD. 'Sides, you cut me out first." Lockdown growled, his cannon
now starting to steam from with-holding its charge, ready to fire at any second. "I got a new job
anyway. One that won't deal with you. When I get back from this job, if yer still on my space station,
ya'll be sorry. Ya cause trouble, I'll hunt you and your crew down like the scraplets you are and take
you to my chop shop." He then deactivated his cannon, dropping it down immediately and looked
right over at Prowl. "We're leaving in a few megaclick. Let's get back to the ship." he growled out
before turning and starting to walk.

"Lockdown! I am going to make you pay for this!" Doubledealer hollared after him, completely
fragged off from what he had said.

The only thing that Lockdown did to answer that was wave a hand. He wasn't going to waste any
words on Doubledealer. Prowl merely shared a glance with Barricade, Bumblebee and Breakdown
before all four began following after him. They didn't see any point of even asking what that whole
thing was about. It wasn't any of their business as it was.

"That was awesome, Lockdown! You really showed..." Izzy was saying smiling brightly from
where she still stood on Prowl's hand.

Lockdown jerked his head around, still walking and gave Izzy a look that even made Prowl faulter.
"Izzy, I told you not to go bug Doubledealer and his minions." He growled, stumping her
completely. He then reached out and grabbed her, though gently not to injure her in any way, while
Prowl, Bumblebee and Barricade had tensed up. He ignored them as they watched him very
carefully, making sure he wasn't going to punish her in any way. "Do that again and you'll be stuck
on space barnical duty for a month."

Izzy winced but nodded as she sat in Lockdown's hand, looking rather sheepish. "Sorry." She
murmured.

Lockdown vented in irritation before looking forward again and continued leading everyone back to
the Death's Head. He ignored the inquiring look that Prowl was giving him, knowing fully well that
his optics were on him. He didn't care at the moment.

It didn't take too long to reach the ship yard, where it was being prepped and ready.

Optimus was speaking to the team that would be left behind on the Ark but as the small group
approached them, he stopped talking and looked back at them. "I see that things didn't go that bad.
What...?" He was saying.

"Just get on Death's Head, Prime." Lockdown growled out as he completely passed by the slightly
taller mech, startling him as he just went to the ramp.

Blinking in surprise, Optimus looked back at his two Autobots and his Decepticon ally, who merely
all shrugged. They didn't know what to even tell him about what just happened. They were just glad
that a fight hadn't broke out like Breakdown said it would. They didn't need the trouble right now.

Turning back to Mirage and Blaster, Optimus nodded. "Okay. Well, looks like we will be on our
way. I want you to mostly stay on the Ark. Perhaps now and then move about the Alpha Beta Space
Port and find out more information about Lockdown and his crew here. The more we can understand
about them, the better. If anything happens, contact Soundwave immediately. And if anything happens with us, we will do the same. We will let you know if we need your support." he told them firmly.

Mirage and Blaster both nodded as they saluted Optimus. "Just be careful out there, sir. Come home safely." The older of the two said softly.

Smiling faintly, Optimus nodded and patted both on the shoulder plates before he turned and moved towards the ramp where everyone was boarding the dark interior of the Death's Head. He had paused to glance around at the halls. They were very spacious for Cybertronian kind but rather dimly. There were only energon strip lights lined along the corridors as he went straight to the main cockpit where Lockdown was with Derezz, Starscream and even a few others just standing outside in the corridor.

"Are we ready, Captain?" The Prime asked in a friendly way, just trying to humor Lockdown.

Lockdown merely shot him a look before he turned back to Derezz, who seemed to be doing the piloting as of now. He nodded to the five faced being, who bobbed in the air and turned his full attention on the controls. With his many appendages, Derezz began to push buttons and pull levers. "Unleashing landing clamps." He stated in a firm voice.

There was a loud click and the whole ship began rumbling. They could feel it moving from under their feet and their peds. A few could only glance out the massive sized windows of the ship and see that the ship was moving backwards away from the ship dock.

"Heading to the side board, Lockdown." Derezz spoke up again before grabbing a large lever and slowly pushing it forward and everyone could feel the ship now moving that way. He just looked forward through the massive blast shield window, as did everyone else to see the ship now facing outward towards the open dark space. "Pulling from the Alpha Beta Port shipyard, sir. Coordinates are already set. Permission to hit full throttle?"

Lockdown folded his arms, both of the twins sitting on his shoulder plates without any care in the world. The Space Pirate Captain merely nodded, his optics trained on the open space before his ship. "Permission granted. Derezz, take full control. We'll head straight through the Draconus wing span and head off into the dark regions from there. You know the way. So take us there." He turned after a second to face Optimus. "We're on our way, Prime. Get your people together in the main hangar and tell them the same rules I already gave ya. Remind them strongly that if any one of them breaks my rules, they're getting booted out of Death's Head. Human or not. Into space or not. My ship, my rules. And my decision." He said coolly before he turned back to Derezz.

Optimus didn't pay any mind to that threat against his human friends. He knew that it would do no good to arguing with the one mech that could be their only help of getting to the sparklings and the others. "Thank you again, Lockdown. I appreciate it. And I will see to it that my Autobots and Decepticons will behave their selves on your ship." He said softly before turning and moving to go just that.

He was just happy that they were on their way finally, heading for Quintessa. And he knew that the others, Sideswipe, Sam, Starscream, Nightbird, Ironhide and Chromia and just pretty much everyone was thinking the very same thing. They were finally on their way and ready to rescue their treasured loved ones.

And hopefully, in time.
It was not easy for most of the Autobots and Decepticons to get along with Lockdown's crew. They discovered that not too long after they had left the Alpha Beta Space Port. Most of the crew were always staring at the large group that almost always stayed together everywhere they went. They were always in their rooms or wandering into the ship's rec center. And always the space pirates were watching them, whispering and few glared.

"You think they never seen Autobots and Decepticons before." Grumbled Sentinel as he and Optimus walked into the rec center.

"They probably haven't seen our fractions together as one before, Sentinel." Optimus said reassuringly. "Most of them were neutrals like Lockdown."

Sentinel sniffed in irritation as he optic'd a few pirates. He did not like some of the looks that some of them were giving them or their human companions. There were a fair few who were watching them with suspicion or deviousness. It was no doubt that some of the space pirates were up to something. "I don't like this, Optimus. We cannot trust pirates like these." He murmured more quietly to his old friend.

Optimus could only shake his head before he caught sight of a few of his companions at the refueling station. He smiled faintly as he watched Maximum Wave getting eight energon cubes for herself and Soundwave and his subunits. But his smile immediately vanished when he saw some of Lockdown's crew wandering over, with the looks of trouble surrounding them. "Optimus Prime to Lockdown, I think you may want to pay a visit to the rec room." He quickly sent the transmission to the captain of the ship.

Max was smiling as she shared her thoughts with Soundwave, who was still seated in a far corner of the rec room. She had argued with him earlier about who was going to get the energon for their team. He hadn't wanted her to do it but she put her foot down and told him to sit and relax with the subunits. He relented, knowing she was ever so persistent.

After filling two large cubes and six smaller ones for the subunits, she turned to carry all of them back to their table when she suddenly found herself facing some of the space pirates. She immediately recognized the troubling, lecherous looks they were giving her and knew they were only going to bring trouble.

Immediately she glanced across the room at her new sparkmate, seeing how stiff he and the subunits were. She shook her head when Soundwave started rising to his peds to come rescue her.

'Don't, handsome. I can handle this. Just stay there.' Max pinged him before turning her optics back to the mechs standing before her. "Can I help you?" She asked in her coy friendly way.
The space pirates sneered at her before one moved a little closer and then pointed at the cubes. "Yeah, you can hand over all of that energon. A puny little femme like you don't need that much to yourself." He sneered.

Max's optics narrowed in un-amusement but she kept a cool smile on her face. "It's not all for me. I am feeding my mate and my family. Now if you excuse me..." she was saying as she started to move around the group.

But the mech who spoke to her swung his hand and slapped the energon cubes right out of her hands, sending the cubes crashing to the floor and shattering.

Immediately, everything went completely quiet as everyone jerked around to watch and listen. The tension in the air was so thick that everyone could feel it like a tight drum string ready to snap at any second.

Max stared down at the cubes for a second before she snapped up a hand towards Soundwave as he began growling loudly and making to stand up. 'Handsome, stay there. I will deal with these rude idiots, myself.' She shot over at him before she looked up at the mech with narrowed optics. "That was very rude." She said bluntly.

The pirate sneered as he leaned in closer. "What're you going to do about it? From what I hear about your lot is you're all goody goody little two peds. You should have stayed home like a little femme you are. You weak, pathetic goody goody Autobots don't belong..." he was growling.

Max smirked as he was speaking before she lashed out before any one of the pirates expected it, grabbing the now startled pirate by a vocoder pipe, yanking him down closer to her. She made a point to look as vicious as she could. "One, you don't know shit, buddy. And two, be careful of who you insult. I may be a femme and I certainly don't like having confrontations with anyone but you are bringing this upon yourself." She growled, tightening her grip until it nearly became painful for the mech. She ignored his groan of pain as she kept tightening her grip. "Now, you are going to be a gentlemech and get me some new energon for me and my family and then you are going to clean this mess that YOU made up or I will show you what happens when you mess with a girl who lived in Las Vegas, which has more crime and violence than most thinks." She then released the mech and placed her hands on her waist.

"You glitch!" Snarled the pirate before he whipped back a fist to send flying at Max's face.

There were several shouts and roars of anger as the Autobots and the Decepticons leapt to their feet, weapons charging to defend Maximum Wave. Max never even flinched as she stood glaring at the fist that came inches of slamming into her face.

But before it could connect, glowing appendages snapped around the pirate's wrist and halted it.

The space pirate blinked before turning to follow the appendages onto find a scarily glaring Soundwave now lumbering over, his subunits snarling as they followed after him, moving dangerously closer to the group.

"Big mistake, moron." Max stated dryly as she glared at the pirate who threatened to hit her.

"Desist." Soundwave growled now towering over the pirate, who glowered right back. "Apologize to Maximum Wave."

The pirate snorted as he shook his head. "No way. The glitch had it coming by back talking...WHOA!"
Soundwave growled at the pirate's words before he spun around and sent the pirate flying and crashing against a wall, causing the room to vibrate with a deafening metal crashing sound. Several had to leap out of the mech's path to avoid collision.

"You stupid son of a glitch! We'll have your head!" Several of the mech's friends had shouted angrily as they started to leap at Soundwave, who calmly looked at them from his burning visor. His many appendages waving threateningly around him. He didn't glance at Max as she snapped into a stance right beside him to help fend them off if they even thought about touching her mate.

"STAND DOWN NOW!" came the loud, snarling voice of Lockdown.

All but one mech snapped to attention, screeching to a halt before they could attack Soundwave and Maximum Wave. The last seemed to not have heard Lockdown or didn't care. He just lashed out a fist, aiming it directly towards Soundwave's face, who didn't flinch.

Suddenly there was a dull vibrating noise before the pirate's optics widened in alarm and he suddenly dropped down to his knees right at Soundwave's peds. He cried out as he whipped both servos to his audios and curled into himself, yelling in pain.

For a moment, everyone thought it had been Soundwave who did it but when they saw the inquiring look he wore, they knew it wasn't. They looked around before stiffening in surprise to see the five faces of Derezz all activated. All five pairs of optics were glowing various, bright colors and his entire frame was vibrating. He was hovering right next to Lockdown, who was glaring at his crewmate furiously.

"The captain ordered you to stand down, Singe. Do not make him have to repeat himself." Derezz spoke, his voice so very cold that it made others shudder. And then he stopped vibrating.

Lockdown glared around the room, though he mostly glared at Soundwave and his crew mates. He did not look happy, whatsoever that a fight had broken out. Especially after he had just warned everyone to not fight on his ship.

Turning his slanted red optics over to Optimus, he nodded. "Who started it, Prime?" He asked, ignoring how stiff and alarmed his crew mates had gotten.

Optimus smiled faintly before pointing over at the space pirates. "They did, Lockdown. Maximum Wave was only..." he was saying.

The group of space pirates burst out with angry shouts and protests. But they went dead quiet when their captain shot them a dangerous look. They knew he was in no mood for anything stupid right now.

"Lockdown," a small voice spoke up making everyone turn and look to see Flo shyly stepping out from behind Jazz, whom she had been talking to at the time that the fight nearly broke out. She had tried speaking up to stopping it but it had happened too fast. "They did start it. They started harassing Maximum Wave and being rude by insulting herself. She tried to defend herself and Ragepit tried to hit her for it. Soundwave only came to his mate's defense."

"Th-at's a lie...!" The mech called Ragepit started to sputter out.

But suddenly Lockdown was in front of that mech, his hook now hooked onto his vocoder pipe, yanking down hard. The pipe groaned at the strain and Ragepit yelped in pain as he was forced to his knee guards. "Call my girl a liar, Ragepit?!" He growled threateningly. "I will believe her over you any day! That goes for all of you!" He snapped, glaring around at his crew. "She is Second in
Command of my crew! You follow her orders or you can get the pit off my ship! You disrespect her, you deal with me! Now," he swung back to glare at the group who caused the mess. "You lot will clean the entire rec room until it is sparkling! If you don't, you go to the brig and by the next port we reach, you're off my ship! Do I make myself clear?"

The group of mechs quickly nodded, looking rightfully afraid of their captain. They even barked yes to him as they started to move.

"One more thing," Lockdown growled as he released Ragepit. "You provoke our guests again, I am just going to stand by and watch one of them rip your sparks out! And I won't lift a servo to stop them. Now get back to work." He growled before shoving the large mech away from him. He swung around to face Optimus."That also goes for your lot too, Prime. They provoke my crew, you all are off my ship at the next port."

Optimus nodded smiling faintly. "Understood, Lockdown. We apologize for the confrontation." He said calmly.

Lockdown shook his head as he glanced over at Maximum Wave, who was rubbing Soundwave's chassis to calm him down, since he was still growling in anger of the space pirates. "No, I apologize for the confrontation. If it happens again, you call for me and I will deal with the idiot who is causing trouble." He stated firmly.

"You have our gratitude once again then." Optimus sad and many of the others nodded in agreement.

"Captain Lockdown!" Came Smokescreen's voice over the external comm link. "I think you better come to the cockpit to see this!"

Everyone frowned at the urgency of Smokescreen's voice and was curious to know what it was that seemed to have him spooked. It was no surprise that nearly everyone went to see what it was that had him uneasy.

As it was, the moment that everyone entered the main cockpit and looked out the large blast window, they froze.

"Oh my Primus." Elita One gasped, her hands over her mouth in horror.

Outside the ship, before everyone's optics and eyes, it looked like there had been a space junk yard. There were massive metal chunks and debris just floating around. Some of the pieces were nearly as big as the ship and some tinier than the humans aboard the ship. But one thing was for sure, something had destroyed something big.

"Oh my god." Monique Epps whispered, breathlessly.

"Derezz, which one was this one?" Lockdown asked gravely as he looked out the massive window at all of the bodies.

It took a moment for everyone to notice the bodies, however.

There were all kinds of bodies of different beings. There were torn and blasted bodies of Cybertronians and organics floating among the debris. It was a horrific sight. And it didn't take much to realize that the destroyed debris was either a ship or a space station.

"Oh my god." Monique Epps whispered, breathlessly.

"Derezz, which one was this one?" Lockdown asked gravely as he looked out the massive window at all of the bodies.

The Quintesson moved closer to get a better look at the mess before glancing at the star screen that was up. He stared at it for a moment before venting a deep sigh, his entire frame sinking in misery.
"It was the Elise Space community, Lockdown. There were quite a few families living here. I am
detecting only one life source amongst the wreckage." He announced.

Everyone stiffened at the news. They didn't like the sound of this.

"We must do something for that life. Lockdown, is there any way we can...?" Optimus was saying in
worry.

Lockdown growled but shook his head as he stared out at the mess outside. He pointed his hook at
something that everyone almost missed. It took them all a second to see the small cloud of very small
metallic beings but they saw them. "Sorry, Prime. But the time we locate the survivor, the scraplets
would have gotten to them first. It will do no good." He stated gravely.

And as he had said it, Derezz sighed, pointing a claw at the screen. "The scraplets are on the life
source. It has just gone out. If we had arrived an hour before, we could have saved it." He said
gravely.

Heads bowed in sorrow and sympathy of whatever had been caught by the scraplets. They wished
there could have been something they could have done but now it was too late.

"What did this? To all of the people here?" Nightbird asked as she looked at the massacre outside the
ship.

Lockdown shook his head as he walked closer to the window, looking out at the mess of debris.
"The very ones you're after. The Quintessons do this to communities that refuse to allow their take
over. Or even fight back. This is the work of a Quintesson warship." He stated.

No one could say anything to that. They didn't like this. The Quintessons were getting worse and
worse the more they heard about them.

"But didn't you say there were families here? What about children? Were there kids here?" Roulette
asked, frowning.

Derezz nodded as he looked over at her. "Yes, here was. But my former race do not care or share
any sympathy or leniency to those who refuse them. This is only an example they made out of this
community. It's to warn any who wishes to confront or stand against the Quintessons. This is what
will happen if the Quintessons hear of any rebellions against them. They will destroy lives, whether
there be children or not." He stated.

The Autobots and Decepticons and humans shook their heads, disgusted more and more than before
for the Quintessons. They were starting to see the five faced race as monsters. They didn't care for
life, just like how they all had been warned over.

"Captain," Breakdown spoke up from speaking to a smaller mech at a control panel. "Hijack has
picked up a 5 class solar storm picking up in our path to the Dark regions. We will probably need to
make a detour through the Archnia space ways to get around it."

"A 5 class solar storm? That's bad right?" Epps asked looking up at Lockdown, who scowled.

The space pirate merely nodded to Breakdown. "As much as I would rather stay away from Archnia,
it's the fastest way to get to the Dark regions. Breakdown, make the order and see to it being done."
He turned to look at Derezz. "Derezz, you better make the call to the Arachniadians and make sure
they know we're in the area. We don't want any unsuspecting attacks by them." He ordered.

Derezz bobbed his whole frame up and down before all optics began glowing.
"Lockdown, are the Arachniadians who I think...?" Optimus asked, quite tense.

The space pirate and bounty hunter nodded as he glanced over at him. "The Spider mech colony. We will have to be careful venturing into their territory. The spiders don't like trespassers. We might have to pay their leader, Tarantulas a visit before going any deeper into their space air. Like I said, they don't like trespassers. And once we set one thruster in their space, they will know we are there." He stated.

Sam and his fellow humans frowned, curious about these...Arachniadians. But it was Trent who remembered. "Wait...spider mechs...?! You mean like that spider bitch we faced off a year ago?!” He yelped and even Sam and Epps stiffened at the memory.

It was Elita One who nodded as she looked gravely down at them. "Yes, Trent. Like Blackarchnia.” She stated wearily.

Lockdown looked over at her, an optic ridge raised. "You ran into Blacky? Spider bitch with a really bad attitude?” He received a nod and shrug from the Autobots and Decepticons. "You know where I can find that spider bitch?"

Barricade snorted and folded his arms. "Sure. The pit where she belongs. Cause she's dead. Elita and I killed her. Stupid glitch killed my sister so I paid her back for it.” He said smugly.

The bounty hunter scowled. "Damn. I kind of wished you didn't do that. It'd made things easier for us then." He received startled, confused looks and he shook his head in result. "Blackarachnia was one of Tarantulas' many offspring. His daughter. He won't be happy if he finds out you lot killed her.” He told them.

"Dude, she was trying to kill us first!” Trent exclaimed flabbergasted, his hands thrown up in the air. "Besides, she was working for Unicron! What else were we supposed to do?"

Lockdown snorted as he looked down at the human, almost amused. "You could have just put her in stasis lock and waited till I came around. Bitch owed me credits. I was looking forward collecting from her. Then I would've let ya kill her.” He stated, amused.

Everyone gave him a dull look, knowing fully well this was about him and collecting a debt.

"Well, she's dead now. So don't be expecting anything from her.” Barricade grumbled sourly.

Shrugging as if it wasn't a big deal, Lockdown nodded to Breakdown. You have the controls, Breakdown. You know the way. Derezz will contact the spiders and ask for permission for passage. If we don't get it, we'll go through anyway but watch out for the web nets.” He stated before turning away, pausing to share a glance with Flo. "Flo, it's time. Get Izzy and meet me in the simulation room.” He told her before walking away.

Everyone watched him go, frowning in confusion. Jazz looked down at the pretty blonde, who was smiling with excitement as she started to follow after her Guardian. "Wha's he talking about, pretty lil' lass?” He asked.

Flo smiled up at the curious looks that every one of the Autobots, Decepticons and humans were giving her. "Training time. Lockdown trains us to fight. We have to be able to defend ourselves. We can't always depend on him to be there to protect us. So he teaches us how to do that." She explained.

Smokescreen grinned as he looked down at her. "Yeah, no kidding. And you should see how good these two have become. Lockdown's taught them pretty well. Izzy is pretty much the strategist of the
crew. Her plans kick aft! And Flo is one fast little human when she wants to be. She is really good at stealth too. She can even beat Lockdown's scanners and sometimes surprises him by popping up in the most interesting places." He said fondly.

Now, everyone looked interested. Optimus had even saw interest in Prowl as he had perked up to hear that Izzy was the strategist. He smiled, raising an optic ridge before looking down at Flo. "Florence, do you think Lockdown would mind if we stood by and observed your training?" He asked curiously.

Flo stopped by the door, smiling and shaking her head. "No, he won't mind. The crew likes to stand in the observation deck when we're training and watch us. You are more than welcome to watch too." She told him before she turned and walked out.

"Oooooh! I have got to see this!" Jazz cheered now hurrying to follow. He was not the only one to hurry after. The whole team were interested in seeing this.

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The ship's simulation room was very large indeed. It was at the belly of the ship, taking up the majority of the bottom. It had many projector screens along the walls, which were activated, showing the ruins of a heavily damaged ship as if there had been an attack. Masses of metal were everywhere as cover points for battle. There were even projections of fire and debris all over the place. Several projections of enemies were all over, firing all around the room as if searching for their targets.

From the observation deck, a room with a very thick plated window, many of the observers watched as the projected enemies searched the entire simulation. They had already spotted Lockdown from where he was hiding behind a massive chunk of metal, crouching low behind it, watching the enemies as they went. His twisted and lethal cannon, raised and ready to use.

"Izzy, plan?!!" The space pirate spoke into his com link, which also was emitted into the observation deck so the Autobots, Decepticons, humans and even some of the pirates could hear.

There was a pause before everyone saw movement from a massive hole in the wall, where Izzy was revealed to be hiding. She had a smaller but nasty looking space gun her hands. It was definitely something that none of the humans had ever seen before.

"How about Plan 30A? We take them by surprise by firing from random areas, getting their attention on to those points while we move back around them and shoot them from behind?" Izzy spoke softly into her com link, which was what looked like an ear piece with a small mic clicked to her black vest.

"These sentinels are a little tougher than last time, Iz. Try something a little more complex." Lockdown spoke, surprisingly calm and patient. Something not many had ever seen him do before.

Izzy pulled a face before she looked harder at the Cybertronian projections. She stared hard with concentration before she smirked and slowly nodded. "Got it. Plan B00-45." She stated.

"What the pits are these plans she's talking about?" Ironhide asked from standing in between Optimus and Derezz.

Smokescreen grinned up at the black mech before nudging him. "Just watch, Hide. You're about to get the surprise out of your life." He said, sounding excited, bouncing on his peds, optics locked on what was happening in the next room.

From aside glance, Optimus optic'd both Prowl and Jazz, who were watching intensely, optics
scanning the entire simulation. He smiled to himself, nodding.

"Still can' see where Flo is. Where is she hiding?" The silver saboteur asked, looking around.

"You won't ever see her until she wants you to. She is surprisingly very good at blending in with her surroundings." Derezz stated, in amusement as he used one of his side faces to glance at the Autobot TIC.

"All right then. Plan B00-45 it is then. Flo, you read?" Lockdown spoke up, his red optics carefully scanning the entire area for one of his Seconds.

"Loud and clear, LD." Came Flo's voice but she was still not revealed anywhere on the sim floor. "Duck and down?"

Lockdown shook his head. "Nope. You know the drill. You take the low road, Iz, the high road and I plow right through the barriers. Got it?" He spoke, now tensing up his entire frame.

"Yes, sir!" Both twins spoke up, Izzy giving a thumbs up and Flo still nowhere to be seen.

The projected enemies were now halfway in between where Izzy was and Lockdown were hiding. They were searching past many debris, some firing into those piles as if they found something alive to shoot at. It had many sparks and hearts tense up, expecting it to be Flo. But when they tore apart the debris to search, they found nothing.

"Mark! Flo! Go!" Lockdown suddenly shouted now leaping up from his hiding spot, aiming his cannon at the projections, which whirled when they saw his movement. They immediately began to fire at him, which he had no trouble to dodging the blasts coming at him. He dove right over his shelter, barrel rolling forward until he was crouched low.

Suddenly out of nowhere, Flo came running, a hook and thick cord wrapped around her hand and elbow. She was fast on her feet as she raced right under a projection's ped, that nearly came down right on top of her. She used the momentum of her speed to drop down and slide right past one ped, where she hooked the hook to a pipe. She used one foot to catch herself from slamming into a metal pile, where she kicked off back to her feet and was racing around three projections, practically tying them all together.

The enemies had realized she was there and turned their attention down at her, cannons trying to stay trained on her.

However, Flo kept running around and even between their legs, loosening a loop of the cords as she went. She was too hard for them to even follow with them whipping around, getting their selves tangled up even more.

By that time, Flo was at the end of the cord, which had what looked like a small anchor. She immediately dove over a servo that swiped at her, barrel rolling past it before throwing the anchor into a pile of metal where it jammed in between two pipes.

Whipping around on her heels, long platinum hair whipping around her face, she looked up at one of the mechs reaching for her. She smiled almost wickedly as she raised a hand pointing with her index and thumb, almost like a gun. "Bang," She said almost innocently.

Suddenly, with a wire and cord in hand, Izzy leapt from where she had been hiding, swinging fast above the enemies' helms. She pointed her wicked looking gun and fired.

To the observers' surprise, a rapid shot of glowing green bolts fired from the nozzle, slamming into
the mechs. As soon as the bolts hit them, green sparks of electricity began swarming all over them, causing them to jerk and vibrate violently.

Still swinging high above, Izzy released the cords and flipped through the air until she landed heavily on a metal pile, where she did slip a little but managed to catch herself from sliding down the pile. She jerked around to see one of the electrified mechs were reaching for her. Her face stony, she raised her free hand, revealing what looked like a controller and jammed down a red button.

Suddenly, the cords wrapped around the mechs began to glow a fiery hot blue. The cord seemed to have heated up greatly like the hottest flame and it proved to be so because the metal of the mechs began glowing fiery hot until they started to melt. The projected mechs seemed startled and looked down at their melting frames.

That gave Lockdown the time to charge right in, just as Izzy pressed the button again, killing the cords' power. The glowing blue was gone just in time as the lethal bounty hunter was swinging his hook right up into one of the mech's helms, hooking onto the side before he jerked it down hard to rip the helm and several wires right off the mech's shoulders.

Swinging his cannon up, he slammed the end of it into another mech's chassis where he fired and sent metal and fire exploding right out from its back. Both projections exploded into light as they were deactivated immediately.

The last two enemies were swinging their cannons up at Lockdown, already firing.

But by that time, Lockdown was ducking down again, allowing both blasts to sail right over his head before he swung swiftly across the ground, kicking out until he slammed his ped into the melted and dented metal, weakening the damage even more.

Both projections went down hard with thunderous crashes.

Lockdown, smirking, stood up, glancing at Izzy and then to Flo as they stood up, also smirking down at their training sims before all three aimed their lethal guns and cannons, firing on the last two until they exploded into simulation lights and deactivated.

"Whoa!" Jazz laughed, just as impressed as everyone else was. "That was awesome!"

Prowl slowly nodded as he stood up fully, his hand rubbing faceplates, thoughtfully. "In deed. That was very impressive. I cannot believe that two humans could pull that off like that." He said.

"What's that suppose to mean?" Epps asked, frowning up at the black and white and dark purple Autobot.

Prowl shook his head as he glanced down at him. "I recognize that maneuver. It is similar to one that Lockdown and I did when we were still in the Enforcers on Cybertron. Though, the part of Izzy swinging in like she did is new." He stated before looking back at the room as it shut down and became an empty large room again with only Lockdown, Izzy and Flo standing together, praising each other with smirks and nods.

"Yeah, well, LD taught that move to the girls but it was Izzy's idea to add her part." Smokescreen stated, smiling over at Prowl. "They're pretty good at pulling Izzy's strategies. She may be human but she's real smart. So is Flo."

All humans there turned dry looks onto the young Cybertronian, not amused of the way he said that. Even four certain femmes looked annoyed at him.
"What's that supposed to mean?" Nightbird asked looking just as annoyed, her cannon blaster whirling dangerously to life.

Smokescreen winced, raising his hands to defend himself. He had almost forgotten there were humans and four Cybertronians who used to be human next to him. "Uh...I mean..." he stuttered heavily.

Suddenly there was a loud rumble all around them and the ship shook violently, causing many of the Cybertronians to stagger. The poor humans, on the other hand, yelped as they stumbled and staggered until they either fell to the ground or had to catch their selves on their Cybertronian counterparts.

"Whoa! What was that?!" It was Bumblebee who yelped out as he looked around with wide optics.

Immediately Lockdown was out of the simulation room with the twins sitting on his shoulder plates. His burning optics narrowed as he ignored everyone as he went straight to the control panel in the observation deck. "Breakdown!" He growled out before the ship rumbled violently and shook again. "Who is attacking my ship!" He snarled, making everyone stiffen in alarm to hear that.

There was a moment's pause before the communications crackled to life with Breakdown speaking in a dark tone.

"Kalis' Lament, Captain. Looks like Doubledealer wants to pick a fight with us."

Lockdown only growled, his fist balling up tightly while his hook flashed in the light as he raised it to look at it. "If it's a fight that backstabbing pitspawn wants, then he's going to fragging well get it." He snarled. "Breakdown, sound the alarms! I want all of the crew at their stations! No one attacks my ship, scratches my ship or shoot at her without paying for it!"
"Bring up the energon shields to half capacity, Breakdown! Derezz, get on the coms and hail Doubledealer! I want a word with that son of a glitch! Smokescreen, heat up Death's main cannon! I want them glitches to be look Death right in the optics for attacking us!" Lockdown barked as he led everyone straight into the main cockpit.

"Yes, Captain, sir!" Many barked as they got to work.

"Lockdown, perhaps we can be of assistance." Optimus said as he stepped into the room, moving closer to the space pirate.

Lockdown pretty much ignored him as he pointed towards the wall where a line of seats were. "You can take a seat, Prime, and just stay out of my way. This is pirate business that you don't want to get involved in. This is between my crew and theirs. It was my Second In Command who pissed them off," he paused glancing at Izzy, who grimaced apologetically at him. "So I deal with it. If you know what's good for you, stay out of it." He told him.

Optimus sighed but did what he was told. He figured that Lockdown might be right about this whole ordeal. He didn't know too much about pirate politics as it was.

After a moment, the large communications screen lit up, showing the very angry Doubledealer glaring directly at Lockdown.

"Doubledealer," Lockdown growled viciously. "You have ten megaclicks to explain why you are attacking my ship and twenty to turn your aft around and fly away before I have Death's Head's main cannon blast you into cyberdust!"

Doubledealer sneered at him. "Lockdown, did you really think you could walk out on our deal and live? No one walks out on our deals and remains intact." He growled right back, motioning to someone off screen.

Lockdown growled again, his optics narrowing. He merely glanced over to Derezz, who nodded and swiftly began pushing buttons and pulling controls. The whole ship began vibrating and rumbling as if preparing for something. "Doubledealer, you walked out on the deal first and tried to stab me in the back! If anyone should be pissed, it'll be me! Now back the frag off or I will fire upon your ship!" He snarled.
"Oh, this isn't about the deal anymore, Lockdown." Doubledealer sneered again. "This is about your guests you have aboard your ship." Everyone tensed up and a few pirates glanced over at the Autobots and Decepticons in the room.

"What about them?" Lockdown growled, looking suspicious.

Doubledealer smirked as his optics flickered over to Optimus Prime, in the back. "Optimus Prime and his Autobots. And the Decepticons. I have a new deal for you, Lockdown. Hand over them to me, and I will cease to attack." He sneered.

Optimus couldn't hold out on this one. He knew there was something that Doubledealer wanted so it was best to just have it out. He stood back up and made his way to Lockdown's side, who glanced at him but made no intentions to stop him from speaking to his former backstabbing partner. "What do you want, Doubledealer? What business do you have with us?" He asked firmly.

Doubledealer grinned vilely. "Optimus Prime, I am a mech of business. I adore credits, riches, fame and weapons. I know of your business. I have heard a great deal of you. I have had sources tell me of what you are seeking." He lifted his head higher, while Optimus dipped his down, his battle mask suddenly sliding into place to hide the scowl he now wore. "Surrender to me, yourself, your Autobots, and your allied Decepticons. And I will take you directly to Quintessa."

There were a few murmurs from everyone, Bots, Cons and pirates all the same, all questioning the same thing.

"For what reason, Doubledealer, would you make that generous offer?" Optimus asked, calmly, though he had a feeling he knew the answer already.

"Generous? Yes, I suppose it would be generous." Doubledealer sneered. "At least, for me. I am going to take all of you and sell you for weapons of mass destruction that can destroy whole planets. To the Quintessons. I hear they would pay anything to add such a prestigious amount for three Primes and a whole new army for their collection."

Optimus narrowed his optics and was grateful of how calm his mechs and femmes were being at that threat. They were keeping quiet, other than a few hisses and cursing promises of what they wanted to do to this pirate. "Your offer is tempting, Doubledealer. But I am afraid I will decline that offer. You see, we made a deal with Lockdown first." He stated firmly. "Therefore, we will remain with him and his crew." He then turned to Lockdown. "Lockdown, as long as you deliver us to Quintessa like we discussed, we will do anything you need us to do. What is your answer to Doubledealer's offer?"

Lockdown smirked before looking viciously back at Doubledealer, who had stiffened. He merely pointed his hook to Derezz, nodding. "Derezz, give Doubledealer our answer." He said darkly.

Derezz bobbed his entire frame and pressed a large red button. "Firing main cannons. Target, Kalis' Lament." He stated blankly.

Suddenly the whole ship shook as a deafening boom sounded all around everyone. A blinding fiery red explosion shot out of the large cannon at the nose of Death's Head and shot towards the rivaling pirate ship. The blast slammed into the aft of Doubledealer's ship, sending it sliding sideways from the impact.

On the screen, Doubledealer looked shocked but angry. He whirled around, listening to shouts from his crew before he was spinning back to glare back at Lockdown. "That's it, Lockdown! You want a fight! You have it! I will destroy every last one of your crew! I will make sure you are the survivor of it all just to watch as I steal your precious humans from you and shoot them off into space by my
cannons so you can watch them die horribly as they suffocate!” He snarled.

And the connection went dead.

But just as it did, Kalis' Lament fired all of its cannons, sending waves of blasts flying towards Death's Head. Seeing the blasts coming, there were cries of alarm from the Autobots and Decepticons.

Immediately, Lockdown was at the head of the controls, shoving one of his pirates to the side. "Derezz, full shields! Breakdown, get on the main cannons and start firing at Kalis' Lament! I want that ship shot to pieces!” He snarled before he noticed something on the large screen only then did he whirl around to face Optimus when he came closer. "Prime, you may want to have your humans strapped down for this." He stated in a growl.

Optimus frowned before giving the quick order to his Autobots and Decepticons to gather their humans and make sure they were strapped in their vehicle forms or held firmly in their grips.

It wasn't a moment too soon when all humans were safely tucked in their allies' cabs or in their hands and servos when the Death's Head gave a mighty jerk and it felt like a few stomachs and tanks got left behind as Lockdown took control of the ship to avoid being shot by the many waves of blasts. It was like a space roller coaster ride with his piloting but it was clear he was very good at what he did.

The ship sped through the wave of blasts, surprising all of how it danced through the attacks without being hit. A fair few exploded close to the hull but it seemed that the energy shields were holding up nicely.

Nonetheless, it was starting to get lethal, this fight between pirates.

"Firing main cannon!" Breakdown announced before hitting the same red button as before.

The ship rumbled and vibrated again before the blinding red light shot out at Doubledealer's ship. Everyone could only watch as the blast slammed into the aft of the ship again, sending Kalis' Lament spinning slowly in space. Several blasts from the opposing ship went flying elsewhere, out into the cold, darkness of space.

No one paid much mind to them, though.

Until there was a surprising explosion as if one of the blasts had actually hit something that didn't seem to be there.

That had at least caught Lockdown's attention. He frowned when he saw smoke and fire trailing from the darkness before something shifted, turning towards both battling ships. It was almost too hard to see it but everyone could see a dark shadow of something.

"What the frag?" Breakdown said as his servo hung over the main cannon activation button. "What is that?"

There was a long pause, from both Death's Head and Kalis' Lament, no doubt both pirate parties were thinking the same thing.

"Oh, frag." Lockdown suddenly growled out when the dark silhouette began moving closer to the ships. "We have Arachniadians."

Everyone stiffened but not a moment too soon, the large dark object was now in range of both ships' outer space lights.
Optimus and his mechs and femmes stiffened to see what looked like a very large metallic spider. It was about the same size as both ships with long spiky legs and eight burning red optics glaring at all of them. It did not look pleased that it had been fired upon. Even if by accident.

What made it seem stranger, the giant spidermech seemed to have engine thrusters and all of its legs. Door hatchways were seen from its large metal thorax area, stating that it could be holding something inside. There were many cannons shown one some of the legs and two very lethal looking cannons served as mandibles at the head. What looked like a mouth looked more like the end of a main cannon.

And it was from that mouth a nasty looking acid green beam shot out directly at Death's Head. It was like an energon string of glowing acid green as it snapped out and slammed into the energy shields, which suddenly caused the entire ship to shudder and jerk.

"Captain! All shields are down!" Derezz shouted from his station. "The Arachniadians are draining our energy shields!"

Lockdown nodded as he gravely watched as from the glowing acid green energy as his ship's shields flickered and then died, allowing the same acid green energy to swarm around his ship.

But to his satisfaction, the giant spidermech seemed to show no favor towards Kalis' Lament, because the cannons on its mouth lit up and sent the same coloring of blasts towards it.

Several blasts slammed into Doubledealer's ship, sending it sailing backwards but all lights died from being hit. It was immobile in the space.

"Captain, orders? Should we fire upon the Arachniadians?" Smokescreen called over, his hands no doubt itching to just do that.

Lockdown vented in irritation as he looked over at the youngling before he shook his head and went over to a large seat in the middle of the main cockpit. He sank down, looking like he was going to get comfortable. "Nope, Smokescreen. We can't fire upon their ship. They're using their ship paralyzers. We ain't going anywhere other than them dragging us back to their planet. Looks like we entered their space field without noticing because of Ol' Slaghead Dealer." He stated as he raised his hook and rested his helm against it watching the large screen.

"Ship?" Optimus asked, his optics widening in sudden realization.

Lockdown glanced over at him and nodded. "That giant spider we're looking at isn't an Arachnidan, itself. It's one of their scouter ships. That, people, is the Arachniadian ship, FunnelWeb. And we, gentlemechs, ladies and humans, can't move because it just paralyzed our ship's functions with that glowing green energy line. It's going to be dragging us to Arachnia, which was where we were going anyway. So if I were you, I'd just sit and try and relax. We can't do anything right now.

Optimus, his Autobots and Decepticons just stared out the large window with surprise at the giant spider ship as it turned away from them and started practically crawling through space. It even moved like a spider, its legs moving like one began dragging the Death's Head after it.

"This is weird. A space ship spider. Never could imagine that." The human, Fig remarked as he stood beside Epps at Ironhide's peds.

Epps shuddered at the thought. "I don't like spiders. Ever since that spider bitch, Blackarachnia, they've gave me the creeps."

"That's too bad,
human. Because you're about to meet a whole next full of spiders once we arrive to the spider mech planet." He told everyone.

Again, Epps shuddered at the thought.

What seemed hours later of silence on Death's Head, which was only one hour of sitting around or calibrating the engines and weapons systems, did the announcement finally come in.

Everyone had been wondering what to have expected and questions have been asked.

"What is Tarantulas like?" It was Sam who asked Smokescreen while they were awaiting what seemed to be their somewhat appending doom.

Smokescreen looked down at Sam as he got a cube of energon from the energon convertor before shaking his head. "Actually I don't know. I haven't ever met any of the spidermechs. I think Derezz has. And obviously Lockdown. Maybe some of the other crew. I don't Breakdown has. He seemed kind of clueless as we are when we mentioned them before. Ask Derezz. Lockdown, knowing him, probably won't even say anything." He told the human.

Sam grimaced. That was the last thing he wanted to do was interacting with the five facer. But he wanted to know so he glanced around the ship's rec center and sure enough spotted the Quintesson in a secluded corner.

It seemed that even the pirates were too intimidated to be around the Quintesson. Almost all of them were seated far away from him and those unlucky few that had to sit close to his own table had obviously tried scooting their chairs way from, not turning their backs on him.

Sighing deeply, Sam shared a glance with Trent and Anya, who both had gone with him to find out about this Tarantulas, before they made their way over. They saw some of their allied Cybertronians watching them with surprised looks but they chose not to let it bug them.

Approaching the Quintesson had caught some attention. A few mechs, pirates, Autobots and Decepticons went a little quiet and watched them go. Bumblebee and Spitfire had been talking with Knockout, Moonracer, Barricade and Roulette but even they stopped to watch carefully over their three human companions.

Derezz didn't seem to care either way as he was staring out one of the large windows into open space. It was either that or he didn't know they were coming towards him. But once the three humans were near his table, the darkened face facing them lit up and he turned his attention to Sam, as if knowing he was the ring leader of this whole ordeal. "Sam Witwicky, you have something to ask?" He asked, his deep voice calm and collected.

Sam blinked in surprise. "Uh..." he muttered.

Derezz chuckled even if it didn't look like he did. "I am Quintesson, Sam. A robotic organism much like your friends. I do have long range hearing. Besides, Quintessons are telepathic by nature. I can pick up your thoughts even without purposely doing so." He stated before motioning to the table. "Would you like to be placed on the table so you do not have to look up?" He asked in a friendly way.

Sam, Trent and Anya, all, hesitated before they slowly nodded.

Derezz bobbed his entire frame back at them before one of his long appendages trailed from a
compartment, offered to them. He was fully aware of how stiff many of the Autobots and Decepticons went at the action went ignored.

Again, the three hesitated then grabbed a hold of it so he could lift them up onto his table.

Once in optic range, Derezz looked directly at all three in the eyes. "I have met Tarantulas before on a few accounts, and with Lockdown and the girls. None of the others of the crews have been to the spidermech planet. Only us." He explained. "We came across Arachnia on our escape from Quintessa. Our ship had suffered some damage from Quintesson war ships and we very well nearly crash landed upon their planet. But as you have seen Lockdown is an extraordinary pilot. Upon arriving, we encountered the spidermech colony. Most of them were organics, originally a spider like alien species but amongst them were once Cybertronian."

Sam, Trent and Anya stared in flabbergast. "Cybertronian? What do you mean?" Sam was the one to ask.

Derezz bobbed up and down as if shrugging. "Apparently, long ago, Tarantulas was Cybertronian. He along with two of his offspring. They were a part of a scientific expedition, traveling on a ship to discover new worlds and do research on them. Lockdown and I discovered from Tarantulas, himself, that they came across a planet full of giant spiders. They had suffered from an astral storm that nearly destroyed their ship and crash landed on the planet. Critically damaged, he and his offspring were rescued by these sentient spiders and treated. From what I gathered from Tarantulas' thoughts during our first meeting, he and his daughters would have deactivated if they were not treated like they had been. When awoken from stasis offline, they were in new forms. Half Cybertronian, half organic spiders. I did not gather what their names were before they became spidermechs but they changed their names to fit amongst the spider colonies. Eventually with his intellect, Tarantulas had been chosen to lead the spiders' planet." He explained further.

"Tarantulas is a formidable leader, very wise and cunning. But even with his new spider instincts, he had become quite...I suppose you could say, twisted. His processor was very dark and twisted from the glimpse I received. He did have a touch of greed inside himself and as I have warned Lockdown before, if given the opportune moment, he would use it. So we must be on our guard when meeting him."

Sam frowned as he took it into thought. He could understand it, everything he was saying. It did make some sense.

"So is he anything like Blackarachnia?" Anya asked looking up at Derezz.

Derezz bobbed again as if nodding. "In a way. As I have said before, she was his daughter. The spiders do have a knack of being...well, energon thirsty. They do bite and consume energon from others. But unlike Blackarachnia, Tarantulas made it a serious rule that they would only consume enough to satisfy their fuel tanks. But never completely drain one to complete deactivation. From what information I had gathered, Blackarachnia did not like that rule. She drained many mechs and femmes and organics until they had no energy source left." He explained. "That is why Tarantulas had no choice but to banish her."

"Whoa! You mean he banished his own daughter?! Really?!" Trent was the one to ask.

Derezz bobbed again. "Yes. He didn't have much of a choice. She was killing too many to satisfy her own thirst. And she was never satisfied. Tarantulas warned her several times to stop but she never really listened. So he exiled her from Arachnia. They never really saw her again. The news you gave Lockdown would be the first they would hear in generations. Though, the Captain is right. You would do better if you did not tell him that your friends Elita One and Barricade killed her. He
may not take it well." He told them.

Frowning, Sam had suddenly thought of something. He had caught something that Derezz had said. "Wait...two offspring, ...daughters? Who is the other one?" He asked bewildered.

Derezz hummed and started to say but his optics suddenly lit up and he went completely silent. He was like that for a moment before starting to rise higher. "I must take my leave. Captain Lockdown is calling for me. I believe we have arrived to Arachnia." He told them before pausing to look down at the three. "Would you like to come see the planet? It is quite a fascinating but intimidating sight to behold?"

Sam, Trent, and Anya paused before nodding with smiles. They were very curious about seeing a whole new planet. They had been on Cybertron, of course but other alien planets were definitely on their lists.

"Sure." Each said as they made their way to the edge of the table, pausing to figure how they were going to get down from it.

But to their surprise, Derezz raised three of his appendages and picked them up to place them down on the ground. They were fully aware of uneasy murmurs from some of their Cybertronian friends but they weren't too worried. So far, Derezz had done nothing to threaten them. They were starting to feel the tension of distrust for the obviously kind Quintesson melt away.

Making their way after the floating mass of metal, Sam, Trent and Anya became aware that some of their Cybertronian friends were following after. They only had to glance back to see Bumblebee, Spitfire, Knockout, Moonracer and Barricade, all watching them and the five facer carefully.

So it was obvious they were still uneasy about the whole ordeal with him. It didn't bother them. They knew it was because of Derezz's origin that had them leery.

Upon arriving in the cockpit, they all found mostly the leaders of each group there, looking out the large blast window.

Optimus stood with Elita near Starscream, Nightbird and Lockdown nearest to the window. Jazz was off to the side, once again talking to Flo and seeming to be enjoying himself a little too much. And judging by the sharp glances from Lockdown, it was bluntly obvious that the pirate captain wasn't pleased.

Off to the side, looking more like a stiff metal statue, Prowl was trying to ignore Izzy, who was clearly trying to interact with him. She was asking him questions about Earth and he didn't have a choice but to answer.

In the far back of the room, nearest to the main doors, Sentinel, Rodimus and Soundwave were watching all of the pirates in the room carefully.

But as soon as the Quintesson entered with the small group, they looked at him to watch him with even more blunt wariness. Though, surprisingly, Soundwave looked more relaxed than before. He was gazing carefully at Derezz, whose face that was turned towards the telepath, lit up as if turning his attention towards him.

There was a short pause between the two, almost as if they were communicating with each other. And then Soundwave smirked, nodding, proving that they were. And he seemed pleased by whatever the five facer said because he moved closer to him before both moved over to a consol.

The actions did not go un-noticed and it had many glancing at them with surprise.
"Do I even want to know?" Starscream muttered mostly to Optimus.

Optimus shrugged. "I can only speculate that Derezz is allowing Soundwave to scan his processor. Possibly allowing him to see his true intentions. We can ask Soundwave later." He murmured back before looking out at the sight before them.

And then, the three humans who had entered saw it.

A large planet was before the ship. It could have been the same size of Earth to be honest. It even sort of looked like Earth with the exception of their being more land than water. It was quite a lush green and dark spotted place from the atmosphere point of view. But what surprised most was the strange glowing green threads of energy circling around the entire planet.

It was to one of those threads that the spider like ship push Death's Head towards until there was a dull clang, stating that they were locked in the path.

"We are now locked into one of the web nets, Captain." Breakdown announced from his consol.

Lockdown merely nodded to him before looking at the large vid screen when it suddenly flashed. "Looks like we have someone who wants to talk. Open up the communications, Derezz." He ordered.

Derezz bobbed before turning slightly to look at Soundwave, who did as Lockdown ordered his Third. He turned back to Lockdown, who had seen the movement of the Decepticon and raised an optic ridge. "Third in Command, Soundwave has requested to be a little more use to us, Captain. I am only allowing him to do such." He answered the unasked question.

"Peh, whatever." Lockdown said in disinterest before looking up the screen again.

At that moment, a very curious but alarming sight greeted them.

The image of a Blackarachnia look alike had appeared.

A spider like femme who looked almost exactly like the former activated spider bitch from Unicron's circle. She was almost complete black but with dark purple and golden markings all over her form. She was in bot mode so the whole group saw what she looked like. Her helm was almost cone shaped but quite lovely for some dark creature. It was a very dark metallic coloring with golden trims along the pair of twisted horns around the top. Her frame was quite thin but built strongly much like a deadly assassin's frame. Her chassis armor seemed to cut short above her protoform, showing gears, wheels and wires. She had long legs covered in dark purple and black armor, giving them a slender but powerful look. Her peds looked more like stylish knee length black and purple high heeled boots. As for her optics, they were an almost poisonous but seductively beautiful shade of glowing purple. And on her back, hung eight long blade like legs.

"Well, well, well. If it isn't Lockdown. It's been a long time, LD." The spiderfemme spoke, her voice dark and seductive much like Blackarachnia's had been.

Everyone, Elita and Barricade, especially looked at this Blackarachnia look alike with alarm. They could have sworn it was her.

But Lockdown chuckled, nodding to the spiderfemme, almost in respect. "Hey there, Airachnid. Thought we would come for a visit. You're looking darkly pretty as ever." He told her.

And the spiderfemme, Airachnid, smirked, revealing very sharp looking fangs.
Along Came A Spider

Chapter Notes

::Songs Best Used::
Sahara-Bond
Requiem for A Dream-Jennifer Thomas

Only a few of Death's Head's crew and the visitors were allowed to go on the planet. The others were to stay aboard the ship and wait for the verdict of what was to come.

Lockdown chose to take the twins and Derezz only since they were only ones who had met the spidermechs before. Smokescreen was allowed to go as their guard but Breakdown was left on the ship to keep the peace with the pirates and the guests left aboard the ship.

Optimus chose to take Starscream, Elita One, Barricade, Ironhide, Prowl, Jazz, along with Sam, Epps, And Figg, since he practically begged to go because he needed to get off the ship. Knockout was also allowed to go, since he was a medic and it was Airachnid who asked them to bring one. No one knew exactly why she wanted a medic but it could have been that the spiders might need one.

It was decided that Knockout be the one because he was the more brash out of himself, Ratchet and Groundhog. That being said, it was more than likely he would get himself in trouble if left behind.

The spider ship, FunnelWeb provided a small shuttle to take the group onto the planet which everyone was surprised to see how lush and dark green the whole place was. They were treated to a sight of a vast, wild jungle like forest as they flew down to the planet. It was no doubt a spider's home with thread like substances everywhere in the trees. The webbings gave the whole jungle an eerie look but beautiful nonetheless. Only few non-spider organisms could be seen trapped within the webbing, ready to be used as a meal or to be freed. It was eerie and intimidating.

The shuttle finally came to what looked like a citadel carved in a large mountain. It was quite elegant for a stone carven palace. Spider threads hung from everywhere, some woven in beautiful artistic sceneries and such.

A large platform was where the shuttle landed and it was there, everyone was greeted by a beautiful but dark spiderfemme that all recognized as Airachnid.

As soon as the shuttle doors opened, the group was lead by Lockdown to be greeted by the spiderfemme.

"Lockdown," Airachnid greeted in her dark seductive voice as she stepped forward and offered her hand to the space pirate. "It is good to see you again, my old friend. Welcome back."

Lockdown took Airachnid's hand and surprised some with the elegant bow he gave the spiderfemme before tapping his forehead against the back of her hand. "Airachnid, vid communications can never measure for the real sight. You look even lovelier than ever." He gruffed softly before standing tall and firm again as he swept his hook towards the group. "I have brought some guests to meet you and your father."
Airachnid's optics looked from one mech to femme and on before smiling, her fangs clearly in sight. "Oh, Lockdown. They all look marvelously delicious. You shouldn't have brought us lunch." She teased in a dark way.

But nonetheless, everyone stiffened, on their guard.

Lockdown chuckled as he glanced at the Autobots, Decepticons and the humans. "She is kidding. Relax, Prime and Screamer." Who scowled at the usual insulting nickname. He turned back to Airachnid, who smirked deviously. "Be nice, Legs. They're my clients."

Airachnid snickered before turning to Optimus and nodding. "A Prime, hmm? And not just any, but Optimus Prime. You are well known even out in these parts of the Universe." She then curtsied all eight legs on her back. "Welcome to Archnia. As Lockdown probably said, I am Airachnid of Archnia, pretty much the Head Mistress of all Arachnidiens. Do not be so tense, Optimus Prime. You nor any of your people, Cybers and organics will be harmed. Not under my guard anyway."

She said offering to shake his hand.

Optimus immediately turned on his Prime mode and took her hand. He followed Lockdown's example by tapping his forehead to her hand before standing up straight. "Thank you for your graciousness, Lady Airachnid, and your welcome."

He spoke gently.

Airachnid smiled coyly as she tilted her head to the side, observing him. "And as such rumors, you are quite handsome and noble. Too bad you are already taken. Otherwise, I would have loved to fill in the peds of your mate." She said obviously teasing.

But either way, it could be heard that Optimus' vents clicked on in embarrassment while others snickered.

Elita One scowled for a second before stepping forward and wrapping her arm around her mate's. "Yes, that is a shame. Too bad he is mine." She teased right back and bumped her hip against Optimus' to get his fans under control.

Airachnid smiled, a little more warmly. "Ah, the prestigious and beautiful, Elita One. Your reputation precedes you here too." She then sobered, as if serious to a fault. "I also heard a rumor that you have come across a certain black widow sister of mine." Everyone tensed again but the spiderfemme paid no heed to it. "Blackarachnia will be punished severely if she is ever found. What she did back on that back water planet to your team of femmes is unforgivable."

Again, everyone relaxed, realizing that Airachnid was implying on what happened vorns ago before Earth.

"Thank you for your consideration, Airachnid. But that won't necessary. One day, Blackarachnia will see what is coming to her, if she hasn't already." Elita said with a sad smile.

Airachnid stared intensively at her before she slowly nodded and then swept her hand and legs to the side. "Please, follow me. I am sure you would like to meet my creator and discuss business." She told them before starting to walk.

Slowly, everyone began to follow here inside the citadel. They couldn't help but look around as they went. It was like entering a giant palace, only creepier. It was dark along the halls with the exception of glowing green energon lights stringed along the walls. Everyone could feel the eeriness as they went.

It was mostly quiet as Airachnid lead everyone down the halls, but she had paused to glance over
one of her legs at the humans. She smirked over at them, noting that only one was staring at her while the others were looking around. "Is there a problem?" She couldn't help but inquire making all now pay attention.

The human who had been staring winced, realizing he had been caught. "Sorry. I'm kind of new with the whole Cybertronians human thing. I'm not used to you guys like these guys are." Fig murmured sheepishly.

"I see." Airachnid said sounding highly amused. "And I am betting you haven't seen anything like me, have you?"

Fig shook his head still sheepish. "Not really, senorita." He grimaced again when the spiderfemme gave him a questioning look. "Uh...that's Spanish for ma'am. Kind of an...honorific title for ladies." He explained.

Airachnid smirked, her optics lighting up while Lockdown snorted in humor. "Trust me, human. She isn't a lady." He remarked.

The spiderfemme didn't seem offended but she shot him a dark smile either way. "Please, Lockdown. I beg to differ. It's true that I am not as lady like as Elita One or her femmes but I AM lady. I don't suppose that remark isn't about that one time we first time we met, is it?" She asked darkly amused.

Lockdown smirked right back but shrugged. "My lovely spider, the first time we ever met, you bit me." He shot at her.

Everyone stared wide eyed or wide optic'd between the two. They were getting the feeling that they really didn't want to know the details.

Airachnid, however, chuckled darkly as one of her long thin legs twitched at the space pirate. "It was just a small nick, LD. Besides, you caught be at a bad time. I was hungry when you, Derezz and the girls came across my nest. Tell me, would it have been better if it had been one of your girls I bit or you?" Her wicked smirk deepened when Lockdown scowled at her, clearly not amused. "That's what I thought. Speaking of which," she slowed down so that she was walking beside Lockdown and looked at the twins on his shoulders, who smiled back. "It's been a while, Izzy and Flo. My, my. You two have grown marvelously. Pretty as a energy butterfly's wings. How is life with this grouch going?"

Izzy and Flo both snickered at Lockdown's scowl before it was Izzy who carefully stood up and hopped over towards the spiderfemme, who allowed her to climb on her pointed shoulder plates. Even while Lockdown's scowl grew darker.

"It's been going great, Aira! Lockdown has been teaching us how to fight like you suggested. We are getting better." The dark twin remarked.

"Wait...she convinced you to..." Jazz was asking Lockdown in bewilderment.

Airachnid snorted unattractively as she turned her sharp optics onto him as she reached up and gently petted Izzy's hair. "Of course it was me. What, you don't agree? Like it or not, whatever species you are, a girl has to be able to defend herself. We, femmes, can't always depend on mechs to protect us all of the time." She remarked darkly but continued to smirk.

The femmes of the group all nodded while the mechs grimaced.

"Ah, here we are." Airachnid interrupted any more squabbling as they approached a large spider
webbing curtain, which strange music was booming from behind it. It sounded like classical but with a rocking beat to it.

Before going in, the spiderfemme paused to look sharply at the guests, a severity of sternness to her glance. "Whatever you do, don't inform Tarantulas that you killed my older sister." She spoke softly but darkly.

Everyone tensed up, looking at her in surprise and unease.

"How did you..." Barricade was asking nervously.

Airachnid gave him a serious, dark but impatient look. "I am not stupid. I can figure things out, mech. But if you know what is good for you, you won't even mention Blackarachnia." She told them sternly as she turned to enter through the curtains.

"Airachnid, you are not going to...?" Elita asked in concern.

The spiderfemme glanced over at her, her optics narrowed. "Blackarachnia and I had a falling out a long time ago, Elita One. We never got along after our upgrades to spidermecha happened. So, no. I don't care what happened to her. And I won't tell my creator if you are worried about it. But if you are wise, you won't say anything." She stated before scowling away from all of them.

It couldn't be denied by anyone that they all saw the look on Airachnid's face. The mere mentioning of Blackarachnia...it seemed that something must have happened between the sisters. Something bad that caused a strong dislike for the very name of Blackarachnia.

Airachnid no doubt hated her sister.

The question was...why?

Finally pushing past the curtains, Airachnid lead all of them into a humongous chamber that practically took everyone's breath away. It was massive in size and lights were flashing in one particular area. There were hundreds of spiders hanging or clinging onto the walls, optics of many colors blinking and flickering as they were looking directly towards the same place.

There was a stone platform at one side of the room where a massive robotic spider was, long, powerful and spindly legs plucking at glowing strings, announcing him to be the source of the music that was amplified throughout the entire room.

The spidermech was like a giant tarantulas. His body was large and covered in needle like spines. Some of them looked so sharp that they could probably shred through metal. He was mostly black with glowing red and yellow rings around the joints of his legs and even around his underside. Each of the legs were dancing along the glowing strings, which emitted sonic waves like violins and even one or two of his legs were gently tapping what looked like giant glowing drums.

Airachnid had paused from leading the group further into the room, holding up her servos to tell them to wait and keep quiet.

Everyone could only watch and listen with awe as the spidermech created some of the most haunting beautiful music they had ever heard. It was obvious that all spiders in the room were being entertained to the music. In fact, some looked like they were in a trance as they listened.

A few spiders were even weaving threads high above their heads, almost dancing to the music.

After almost going into a trance their selves, the Autobots and Decepticons, and humans blinked
when the music finally ended. They paused in joining the polite applause that all hundreds of spiders gave for the large spidermech, who clicked and rotated as he transformed before all to take a bow.

The spidermech was just as large as his spider body had been. It seemed only his head and thorax was the only change as his mech form was now sitting in the middle of four spider legs while four were hanging behind his back. His large thorax seemed to the connection part to his legs and upper half.

And he had acid green glowing optics that immediately found the new arrivals.

His fangs clicking, the large mech now made his way towards them, whereas Airachnid immediately bowed at the waist to him and everyone quickly followed when Lockdown, the twins and even Derezz bobbed into bows for the mech.

"Captain Lockdown." An aged but dark and twisted voice come from the mech, his fangs being the only thing moving on his faceplates. "I see you have returned. And not terrible timing either. I was just thinking about contacting you for a job. Welcome back to Archnia."

Lockdown remained bowing at the waist before standing fully when the large spidermech waved a spindly leg at the group to stand upright. "Lord Tarantulas." He greeted in his gruff way. "Always a pleasure. We can discuss a business contract later. I am unfortunately working a job as of now." He then motioned to Optimus and Starscream, who both straightened. "You have heard of my clients before, I imagine."

Tarantulas turned his eight glowing optics onto them, which brightened. "Ahhh. Optimus Prime, Leader of the Autobots. And Starscream. I remember you, Seeker." He seemed to smirk when Starscream blinked in surprise, as did everyone. "You would not know me, of course. We have never met personally. But I have heard of your reputation at the Crystal City Scientist Academy. You raised quite a lot of optic ridges in the glory days of Cybertron. Quite brilliant ideas you had but was ignored by the Science Council."

Starscream scowled, growling at the memory. "Please don't remind me." He grumbled.

Tarantulas chuckled as he folded his mech arms. "Yes, I did caution some of the council not to ignore your ideas. In truth, I was one of them." He chuckled again when everyone, Starscream blinked in surprise again. "Back then I was known as...well it isn't important. But I was the only supporter of your science experiments. Your idealistic experiments on creating solar projector energon converters would have been beneficial to our energon problem." He stated.

Starscream blinked in surprise before he brightened. "You actually read up on my experiments?" He asked enthusiastically.

Tarantulas nodded smiling. "Of course I did. I always read every scientists' reports. Your reports were highly advanced out of everyone else's. It really is a shame that the Science Council were so high of their pride." He scowled, shaking his head. "They were foolish."

"Why do you say that?" It was Jazz asked, frowning.

Tarantulas scowled again, as did Starscream. "The entire Science Council were ground based Cybertronians with the exception of a few aerials. But Starscream was the only Seeker in the entire academy. As you may all remember, Vosians, Seekers were not well liked by others. So there were much prejudice against Starscream. And it did not help that Starscream had such a brilliant processor. Many of the Science Council were jealous of his brilliance. So he was treated quite poorly by many of his fellow scientists." He explained.
"Well, that is all fine and dandy, all that science talk. But we really should talk business, Tarantulas."

Lockdown said gruffly, clearly bored of it all.

Tarantulas rolled his optics before he nodded and motioned for all of them to follow him to a large stone carved table.

When everyone was seated, Tarantulas had a spidermech bring a large tray of energon cubes for the Cybertronians and some strange looking glowing liquid in small glasses for the humans.

While Izzy and Flo immediately downed the drinks given to them, Sam, Epps and Fig, who were eyeing the drinks with uneasiness discontent. The three men glanced over at the girls, seeing them enjoying the drink before it was Epps who shrugged and took a sip of his.

Eyes lighting up, the soldier nodded to his fellows. "Hey, this is really good! It tastes like Hard Mike's lemonade! What is this called?" He asked now drinking more.

Tarantulas and Airachnid both smiled as if proud that the humans were enjoying their refreshments. "We call it Organica Butterfes. Mixed from the finest solar worm found here on Archnia." The older spidermech remarked.

"PUFFFFFFTTTTT!" Epps suddenly spewed all of his drink across the table while Sam and Fig withdrew their hands from their glasses so fast it almost seemed impossible. "SAY WHAT?! I'M DRINKING BUG JUICE?! EW!"

Some of the others snickered while others looked concerned. Tarantulas and Airachnid now didn't look amused.

"Aw, come on. It isn't that bad. Sure it is juice from a bug's innards but it's good for you. Protein!" Izzy snickered as she watched Epps try and scrub his tongue.

"Iz, I don't think that's helping." Flo said watching Epps retch a little at the thought of drinking organic fluids from a space bug. She was amused and would have laughed but she knew that would have just upset human soldier more.

"So, Lockdown." Tarantulas spoke up again now looking at the addressed. "Besides being in a fight with that idiot, Doubledealer, what brings you to our system?"

Lockdown sat back, relaxed in his seat as he drank deeply from his energon. "Passing through. Taking this lot of Autobots, Decepticons and humans to Quintessa. We need permission from you to take the short cut." He stated.

The two spiders now looked surprised at him. If not taken back by the words that he had just given them.

"Quintessa? I thought you said you would never go back after what happened last time." Airachnid said now sounding concerned.

Lockdown nodded as he motioned to his guests with his hook. "I did. But it seems that the Quints went and kidnapped their sparklings and two femmes. As well some Technorganic dinosaurs. These guys want them back. So they came to me for passage there. I took pity on 'em and decided to take them. It don't settle too well to me that those damn five facers went and snagged a bunch of kids for their own uses." He told them. He paused to glance apologetically to Derezz who didn't look offended at all.

Tarantulas frowned but nodded slowly. "I see. Sparklings, hmm? As in Cybertronian? I thought that
wasn't possible anymore." He said with interest.

It was Optimus who smiled faintly and leaned forward. "Much has changed, Tarantulas. It is a long story to tell but I can send you a data link report to explain it." He stated.

The spidermech paused before nodding. He was very curious to know the whole story of what was going on. He only had to wait for a moment before his acid green optics flickered as he began taking in the news.

During the time, Lockdown felt Derezz poke his side to get his attention. He glanced to his Third before looking back at the spidermech. 'What is it, Derezz?' He asked in transmission.

'Lockdown, I do not like this. Tarantulas is up to something. He isn't taking it well that we are going up against the Quintessons.' Derezz sent back.

Lockdown frowned deeply, his optics narrowing. 'What are you thinking?' He asked seriously.

Derezz bobbed slightly. 'I cannot be sure. He is shielding his thoughts. He is hiding something.' He reported back.

'What about Airachnid? See what you can get out of her.' Lockdown ordered softly.

Derezz bobbed in confirmation and his optics flickered over to Airachnid. He merely frowned to himself when he came across a firewall to the spiderfemme's processor. He didn't like this. The spiders were hiding something. He couldn't really push too much harder against their processors without alerting them.

After a moment, Tarantulas looked bewildered as he looked everyone over. There was a brilliant spark in his optics that only some of the guests knew. He had his interest spiked. "My, you lot have been busy! War on Earth, Unicron, and now Primus returning from the other worlds. And humans turning into Cybertronians! I would love to meet some of your femmes." He said excitedly.

It did not put the Autobots or Decepticons at ease with that one.

"They are not scientific finds for you to poke and prod at, Tarantulas." Starscream growled, knowing fully well that the scientist in the spidermech was on.

Tarantulas merely frowned but sighed. "Forgive me. I am merely curious, Starscream. The scientist in me is intrigued. I mean you no harm." He paused waving to a spiderfemme to bring more energon. It did not go amiss that his optics had flickered.

"Perhaps we can arrange a meeting with our changed femmes. I am sure it won't hurt." Optimus stated in understanding. "But we are pressed for time. We would really like to retrieve our missing companions soon." He paused when a sudden ping reached his transmissions. "Pardon me for a moment." He said politely before opening the transmissions. 'Optimus Prime. Go ahead Soundwave.'

'Opmius Prime, we may have a difficult situation as of now.' Soundwave spoke gravely. 'The spider ship is sending a shuttle towards the Death's Head. I believe they are going to try and board the ship.'

Optimus frowned in alarm.

"Please, enjoy more of our energon." Tarantulas spoke up as if not bothered at all by the interruption. He shared a glance with his daughter, who did not happy at all. "Now then. So you wish for permission to cross our space. I think that can be arranged. I believe a solar storm is brewing though. It would be best if you stayed for one night. Then tomorrow we can arrange an escort."
"I don't think that will be necessary, Tarantulas." Lockdown said as he took another energon cube from the spiderfemme who offered. He did not look relaxed. "Like Prime said, we are short of time. The sooner we get your permission, we need to leave."

Tarantulas looked disappointed as he slouched in his chair. "Oh, you are such a party pooper, Lockdown. I was really hoping you would stay a little longer. We are old friends, aren't we?" He asked smiling as he watched some of his guests drink from their energon. There were only three who wasn't drinking though. He was sorely disappointed when Lockdown, Derezz and Knockout were optic'ing their energon curiously. The red medic was frowning as he stared hard at his energon, as if searching for something. "Come now. Drink up. And we will discuss..."

None of the mechs did as they watched the spidermech, cautiously while the others drank their energon to be polite. But then Knockout's optics flashed and he looked sharply at the Cybertronians that were enjoying their energon. He started to say something to them before sighing when he knew it was too late. He instead frowned directly at Tarantulas. "Why?" He suddenly burst out, his tone very hard as he held up his cube, turning it so that the others could see the fizzle on the bottom. "So you can drug us?"

Everyone tensed up in alarm before staring at their energon cubes to see the fizzle. They were all immediately on alert when they realized they had been compromised.

Tarantulas sighed, his expression darkening. "I can see we do have a problem then." He said darkly. His entire frame was tensing up as if he was preparing for something.

Suddenly it seemed to all explode into chaos as Tarantulas snapped up from his seat and the others were moving just as fast. At least, Lockdown, Derezz, Knockout and surprisingly, Prowl was. They were immediately up and whipping out their cannons while the others stood up quite sluggishly. They did not feel so good. Izzy, Flo, Sam, Epps and Fig yelped at the sudden action and scampered to safety.

However, it seemed that the spidermech was true to his nature. He was faster.

Whipping up his arms, Tarantulas spewed what looked like glowing green threads at the four mechanical beings and hit them hard. The threading sent all four flying backwards until they hit the walls with angry grunts.

"What the fuck?!" Fig yelped before whipping out his gun. Only to free when he found a cannon blaster trained on him and the other humans.

'Optimus Prime! Soundwave's voice came from the Prime's transmissions. 'We are under attack! Repeat we are...urk!'

'Soundwave! UGH!' Optimus heard Maximum Wave scream from the back ground.

All around the chamber, spiders were hissing excitedly as they watched everything unfold. Some even reared back as if to join in but it was Airachnid who held up her hand to calm all, while aiming her blasters at the humans. She did not look happy.

"TARANTULAS! WHAT THE FRAG ARE YOU PLAYING AT?!!" Lockdown roared from where he and the other three were trapped by the thick spider webbing.

Tarantulas sneered as he stalked closer, a trail of green webbing still attached to the trapped mechs. "I apologize, Lockdown. But I am afraid none of you are going anywhere. You see, we, the Arachnidians now have a contract with the Quintessons. We come across any who rebel against..."
them, we capture them and dispose of them or we hold them until it is reported. All of that to protect my spider colony. It was either you or my family. And I am sorry. But I choose my spiders over you any day." He stated before an electrifying jolt sped down the webbing and into the four mechs, making all of them roar in pain and rage.

A moment later, they were off line.

The dazed and drugged Autobots and Decepticons staggered, cannons out but were unable to fire. They stumbled over each other until they fell to the cavernous floor, their hub screens flickering into black.

"I am sorry, girls." Airachnid said gravely as she looked at the twins, who watched in horror at what she was doing.

"Aira! How could you?! I thought we were friends!" Izzy snapped angrily as she and the other humans could only watch helplessly as all of their mechanical friends were motionless.

Airachnid shook her head as she raised one of her legs and aimed what looked like a nozzle. "You thought wrong, honey. But I am truly sorry." She said before blasting all of them with sleeping gas.
When everyone finally came to from their darkened stasis or sleep, it was easy to say that they were in a whole heap of trouble.

As optics on lined, many mechs and femmes found their selves in a huge catacomb like chamber. There were so many and many openings had glowing green webbing over them. And many of the Cybertronians found their selves either webbed to walls or had their arms trapped behind their backs with webbing.

"SLAGGING PITS! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!" They all could hear Ironhide roaring from his chamber cell.

"Ironhide, I think that isn't helping..."

"SLAG THAT, OPTIMUS! WE ARE NOW CAPTIVES OF THOSE FRAGGING SPIDERS! THIS IS ALL LOCKDOWN'S FAULT!" It was Sentinel who snarled now leaning forward to glare down where Lockdown was trapped against one of the walls, scowling darkly at their situation.

"How was I suppose to know that Tarantulas and Airachnid was going to stab me in the fragging back?!"

"Sam! Sam, are you all right?! What happened?! Why did the spiders attack Death's Head?!!" Trent asked from his cell next to Sam, Epps and Fig's.

"Will everyone just calm down for a moment? Let us think about this for a moment!" Optimus called back to settle all of the grumbles and yells of anger. He waited for a long moment because no one seemed to be listening. They were all just yelling angrily or trying to ask each other if they were okay. The Prime sighed wearily.

"Okay, will everyone just shut up! Let Optimus speak for Primus' sake!" It was now Rodimus who yelled from his and Arcee's cell.

Slowly, it finally quieted down.

Optimus sighed in relief before nodding. "Thank you, Rod." Then he looked out from his cell at the ones he could see. He noted that even some of the pirates were there. It seemed the spiders had flanked the entire Death's Head and brought everyone down. He had to admit being impressed when he could see the Dinobot, Sludge just sitting there, looking calm unlike everyone. It was like he was just waiting for something or someone to do or say something.

"All right. Who is all here, for one?" Optimus asked calmly. Names rattled off and it proved that all but one or two were there. The Prime frowned when he didn't hear Monique Epps' name or even Ravage's. He glanced towards Soundwave who was only next to Sludge's cell, stuck with all of his subunits. He noticed that there were two missing from him.
Ravage and Ratbat.

'Soundwave, where is your two subunits?' He sent a thought towards the telepath.

Soundwave turned his visor towards him before looking quite smug. 'Ravage and Ratbat are still aboard Death's Head, Optimus Prime. I sent them into hiding when the Arachnidians started attacking the ship. I do not believe they were found when we were taken. The human, Monique Epps is also unaccounted for. I believe she also hid herself on the ship.' He sent back.

Optimus nodded in determination. It seemed that they did have luck on their side, though it wasn't much at all. The three missing were their hope of getting out of this. 'Good.' He thought back to the telepath.

"All right, everyone. Now let's be rational about this. We expected the Arachnidians were going to help us but they instead turned on us. Apparently, Tarantulas and Airachnid are working for the Quintessons. But as I understand it, they are trying to protect their people here from them. So I will not pass any harsh judgment of blaming them." Optimus stated.

"You're too fragging soft, Autobot! I say when we get out of here, we destroy all of the spiders!" A pirate snapped from his cell.

"Brisko, shut up!" Lockdown snapped from his cell. "Don't interrupt! Prime has a point! Tarantulas and Airachnid are only trying to protect their nest! We invaded it with our problems and now they are doing what it takes to get us out of it! So shut up and listen!"

There was a pause before there was another uproar of shouts. The pirates were not happy. Some of them were listening but some were not.

"The fragging Cybertronian Prime is right, Lockdown! This is all your fault! You trusted the spiders! And they turned on us! It was you who brought us here! And now look where we are! The spiders eat our kind, remember?!" The same mech, Brisko snarled.

"Brisko is right! This is your fault, Lockdown! Ever since you got those fragging humans, you have softened up! We didn't choose to follow a soft sparked fool like you! We chose to follow the sparkles pirate that you're suppose to be!"

Lockdown growled, his optics narrowing dangerously. Oooh, he couldn't wait to get his hook in those two, Brisko and Rivet. He was going to show how soft he really was.

"Shut the pits up, Brisko and Rivet! How dare you speak to your captain like that!"

"Izzy, never mind them. They'll get what's coming to them when I get out of this cell." Lockdown called to his Second.

"OH, SHUT UP! YOU PATHETIC WEAK FRAMED HUMAN! IT'S YOU AND YOUR FRAGGING WEAK SISTER'S FAULT THAT LOCKDOWN HAS BECOME SO WEAK! UNLIKE HOW HE USED TO BE! BEFORE YOU, HE WAS A HARBITTEN SON OF GLITCH WHO WOULDN'T TAKE SUCH CAUTIONS LIKE HE HAS BEEN DOING! HE WOULDN'T HAVE PUT ANY TRUST IN ANYONE AND WOULD NEVER END UP IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS! YOU PATHETIC HUMANS ARE THE CAUSE OF ALL OF THIS! AND WHEN I GET THE CHANCE, I AM SO GOING TO DO WHAT LD SHOULD HAVE! SQUISH YOU AND YOUR UGLY PATHETIC SISTER...!" The pirate was yelling, even while Izzy started snapping back.

"Hey! Don't ya be insulting them like that!" Jazz could be heard shouting.
Suddenly there was a low vibration through the entire chamberous room before everyone noticed a shadow from the ceiling dropped down in front of the cell where the raging pirate was at. Everyone stiffened when they saw that it was Airachnid, herself. And did she look lethal as she glared at the pirate in the cell. She didn't wait for a moment as she grabbed the webbing over the cell and ripped it clean off before diving inside.

There was a sudden scream of pain and fear from the pirate, Rivet that sent shivers down everyone's struts and spines. Any who could see what was happening looked on with horror and disgust at what Airachnid was doing.

Optimus frowned before looking at the emotionless block of a Decepticon, Soundwave, who seemed preoccupied with something else. He noted the telepath's visor was flickering as if he was talking to someone.

A moment later, it went eerily quiet before Airachnid came walking out, wiping her mouth from dripping energon. It was now obvious of what she had done.

The spiderfemme was still scowling darkly as she walked to the cell that held Lockdown, who glared viciously at her. She didn't care of how deathly quiet it was as everyone stared at her with fear and anger. She just looked right at Lockdown. "I am sorry, LD. I really am." She said quietly but loud enough for everyone to hear.

"I know." Lockdown growled at her. "You didn't have a choice."

"The frag she didn't!" Sentinel snapped angrily from his cell. "You could have warned us!"

"Sentinel." Optimus said wearily.

"No, he's right." Airachnid interrupted, startling all. She glanced over at Optimus then to Sentinel then finally back to Lockdown. She folded her arms and shifted her weight. "Look, the past few years has been hard on us, the spider colony. The Quintessons found us and made an attempt to attack. We barely even survived the attacks. It was my father who made the bargain. In the beginning it was to protect our colony." She then frowned darkly. "That was years ago, Lockdown. Right after you left with Derezz and the girls. It's not like that anymore. Things changed. Tarantulas has changed. He isn't what he used to be. He has become...something else."

Everyone frowned at the thought before it was Optimus who asked. "What do you mean?" He asked.

Airachnid looked at him before shrugging, her face still dark. "He has become twisted, darker. The Quintessons emotionless twisted actions have been influencing him. He has obsessed with his science again. Even to some of our own, he has been conducting a few experiments. Creating more spidermechs. Sometimes even altering their DNA. He isn't the same Tarantulas you remember, or me. I don't like it, Lockdown. So, I am going to make a deal with you."

Lockdown narrowed his optics but nodded for her to go on.

"I help you, you help me. I have to figure out what is going on with Tarantulas. That is why I asked you to bring a medic. I was hoping he could scan my creator and figure out what the Quintessons have done to him." Airachnid said darkly.

"And what do we get out of that?" Lockdown growled, his optics narrowing.

Airachnid shook her head as she sighed and bowed her head. She had to think very carefully on this. If she said one thing wrong, it could become worse than before. "If we can figure out how to help
Tarantulas change back to the mech he used to be, I will be in your debt, Lockdown. I will see to it that you are freed and taken to the edges of the Dark regions, myself." She told him.

Lockdown was quiet for a long moment before slowly shaking his head. "Airachnid, like it or not, Tarantulas isn't the mech he used to be. He will not change back. He has been a lost mech since Blackarachnia, and you know it." He remarked.

The spiderfemme growled but turned away from him. "That may be. But he is my creator." She paused before looking back at him. "You may be right. Since Blackarachnia left, it has always been about her. He misses her more than ever. It was always about her. He even tried getting me to change my coloring to look exactly like her." She sad before scowling. "That is why I am happy that you killed her. Blackarachnia was a twisted, darker version of herself. Always selfish, always willing to do all of the killing. Tarantulas banished her for it. But since the Quintessons attacked Archnia, he hasn't been the same. He is already talking about what he is going to do with all of you."

Turning from Lockdown, Airachnid looked over at Optimus. "He wants to conduct experiments on your human changed femmes. To see how they are now Cybertronian. You would do best to just work willingly with him. If you don't, he will make it worse." She warned them.

"Fuck that!" Nightbird snarled from her cell. "He comes near me, Max, Maggie or Kris, I will rip his fucking legs off!"

Airachnid turned her dark violet optics onto her, scowling. "You don't know what kind of power he has. He is a powerful mech, Seeker human. What he is capable of...it is going to make this hurt for you." She growled.

Nightbird narrowed her burning red optics back at her, her fists balled up tightly. "And you don't know what I am capable of. He touches any one of us, Autobots, Decepticons or our humans, he will soon know." She hissed, her optics flickering violently.

"You are a fool then." Airachnid said before turning away starting to leave.

"Yeah? Well you're a bitch! Using Lockdown's trust like that! That was low! He trusted you and since we trusted him, we trusted you! You better hope I don't get out of this cell any time soon! Because when I do, I am going to show you what kind of bitch I am!" Nightbird growled glaring after her.

Airachnid scowled before pausing. She frowned as if she thought of something and turned to search the cells until she spotted the one she wanted to address. She walked over to the black, white and purple police cruiser, frowning. "How did you not be influenced by the energon that Tarantulas gave you? You drank it but you weren't affected by it." She asked him.

Prowl, much like the others, was trapped against the cell wall with the green threading. But he shook his head, looking stonily. "I did not drink it. I calculated that something was wrong. Tarantulas acted suspiciously the moment Lockdown mentioned that we were going up against the Quintessons. I merely gave the illusion that I drank the offered energon. I would have warned Optimus and the others but they were already consuming their energon. It would have been more logical to just go with what happened." He said blankly.

Airachnid smirked, her arms folded tightly across her chassis. "Hmm. You are a clever one. I suppose you are the strategist then of the group. Have an escape plan yet?" She asked slyly.

"I am working on it." Prowl said coldly.
Airachnid smirked before she swiveled away from him and walked towards the chamber's exit. She paused again in the door way to glance back, looking concerned. "Be ready for the pit of your lives, mechs and femmes. Because once Tarantulas gets started, it is going to hurt." She said before leaving.

There was a long silence before it was Lockdown who jerked his head in the direction where Prowl was locked up. "Prowl?" He called over.

Prowl only shuttered his optics off as if going into recharge. He, in truth, was working his processor and Battle Computer to the limits, trying to work out his plans. "As I said, I am already working on a plan. Soundwave," he then opened his optic shutters and looked towards the large silence Decepticon.

There was a long silence between the two and it was obvious that they were having a silent conversation. It was also obvious that Derezz was listening in because he chuckled.

"Affirmative." Soundwave finally spoke up, his vocoder serious and grim but there was just a hint of amusement in it as his optics flickered.

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"I suppose you think you are so smart, don't you?" Came the question as soon as she entered the hall way.

Airachnid immediately was on guard, her eight legs tensing on her back as her optics grew wide. She turned with a jerk to see Tarantulas leaning against the wall, his arms folded and was looking at her dully. She glanced back where she had come from uneasily before looking back. "Father, I..." she was saying.

"Save it, Airachnid! I heard enough!" Tarantulas snapped, standing up right and marched towards her. He ignored her as she cringed back as he towered over her. "You are unlike your sister! You have been weak and pathetic! At least Blackarachnia knew what she wanted and did what she wanted to get it! You, on the other hand, don't! Airachnid, why can't you just be more like her?!" He snapped at her.

Shaking her head, now disgusted, Airachnid balled up her fist. "Tarantulas, she is gone! Why can't you accept that?! What she did was wrong! She was killing Cybers and our sources of food! You even said that...!"

"Forget what I said and did, Airachnid! I am starting to see that there was a point to Blackarachnia's actions! She was right! We should be doing what we want to feed, to rule! We are a top of the food chain now, with the Quintessons!" Tarantulas snapped. "And with you trying to plot behind my back with that pirate, with the Primes, I can see you are choosing your side!"

Airachnid drew back uneasily as she shook her head. "I don't...I am not choosing them over you, creator! I just want to help you! You're not yourself anymore! I don't understand...!" She was yelling.

But a swift servo across her face shushed her immediately in alarm. Tarantulas glared at her. "I am more of myself than you think, Airachnid! I have opened my optics because of the Quintessons! They are correct with what they want! And I am not about to let you destroy everything we have now because of them!" He jabbed his servo back towards the catacomb like prison that their prisoners were kept. "You decide what side you are on, my dotting creation! Because if you choose them, I will send you to the Quintessons so fast that your optics will be spinning in your helm! I have no need for a weak sparked daughter who turns on me!" He snarled before turning towards the
prison and starting towards it.

Airachnid, hand against her stinging cheek, watched him go with anger and pain in her optics. She knew where he was going. She should have realized that he would have done this before and overheard her speaking to Lockdown about a deal.

She knew it was the scientist who was driving him to his goals. And did she feel bad for the Cybertronian femme that had once been human.

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It was mostly quiet with only an exception of the scuttling feet of the spiders that were searching the ship. There were organic spiders and spidermecha together, searching the ship to see if they had left any behind.

So far, they weren't finding anything.

Deep in the vents, a single optic were watching some of the spiders, a very low hiss escaping from the pantherbot's vocoder. Ravage was angry and worried at the same time.

When all pits broke loose, when the spiders had boarded Death's Head, Soundwave had shoved the youngest subunit towards Ravage and ordered him to hide. He knew they had not been the only ones to escape from being stung with paralizers. Ravage was well aware of the human, Monique Epps had escaped as well.

Together, all three had watched as all of their companions and the pirates had been stung and taken aboard shuttles to go planet side.

As of now, Ravage had left his youngest brother with the human deep in the vents in the safety from being discovered. For now.

The pantherbot was pretty sure that the spiders would start looking in the ventilation shafts to see if there were any hiding in them. He knew they would need to move very soon and finding a new hiding spot. He had to protect Ratbat and Monique as best as he could before even attempting to come up with an idea of how to help his creator, his step carrier and his brothers, as well as the others.

'Ra...ge...co...n...is...wave..." he suddenly heard his transmissions crackling alive.

Ravage stiffened before quickly scurrying back and putting his transmissions on mute, connecting it to his very processor so there was no audio but just subtitles. He saw one of the spiders spin to look in his direction but it didn't seem it had seen him.

Being as quiet as he could, Ravage moved along the vents, hurrying back to Monique and Ratbat, whereas his youngest brother was chirruping and whimpering, terrified of what was happening and what had happened to their creator.

Ravage sighed as he leaned in ad bumped the young batbot's head as he clung onto Monique before looking at her. "We need to move. It won't be long before the spiders come here next. I received a transmissions and I think one of the spiders heard it. We need to find somewhere else to hide." he warned them.

Monique grimaced but nodded as she stood up, lifting up Ratbat, who still clung onto her, whimpering. "Okay. We better move then. Where would be the best place to hide? I didn't get to see much of the ship like you two did. I mostly just stayed in mine and Robert's room." She stated.
Ravage frowned as he took the lead, heading deeper into the ventilations. He knew it couldn't be just anywhere. There were spiders all over the place. They needed something really good. Somewhere that the spiders would have such a hard time finding them even while they were right under their...

A light bulb seemed to click on as he thought of a desolate looking room where it had been so hard to see anyone in.

"Lockdown's hologram room. The training grounds. If we can get in there and program the holodecks, we can trick the spiders. And maybe even trap them." He said, his tail flicking.

Monique smiled and nodded for the pantherbot to lead the way.

It took a little while to find and the three nearly had some close calls with being discovered by the spiders. But they eventually reached the large room and entered the control room through a tight spaced vent. It was there that Ravage had to help Monique work the controls to create the same program that Lockdown and the Jackson twins used.

All the while, the pantherbot opened up his recorded transmissions and read what it had said. He saw it was from Soundwave and it made his spark flip happily to know that he was okay.

"The message is from our creator." He announced to Monique and Ratbat, who squeaked happily to hear it. "He says they are in the spiders' prisons and everyone is fine for now. He also said that Tarantulas and Airachnid are the ones who ordered the attack. Something about being involved with the Quintessons." He growled the last bit.

Monique scowled herself, her hands on her waist. She didn't like that anymore than the Cybertronians did. "We really stepped into a pile of sh...crap this time, didn't we?" She asked pausing from swearing in front of the sparkling subunit. "What now? What does he want us to do?"

Ravage paused looking at the message again reading more into it before growling and shaking his head. "Standby. Keep hiding from the spiders. According to the boss, the Autobot, Prowl, is thinking up a plan. He wants us to hide until then." He sighed before sinking down, his audios flat in irritation. "I don't like this. I hate hiding when I could be fighting. I am a Decepticon warrior, Primus damn it!"

"Soundwave probably just wants us to protect Ratbat, Ravage. He is just a sparkling after all." Monique said, though not sounding any happier about their orders.

"Yes, a sparkling who was programmed to fight anyway." Ravage growled but sighed, his head lowering until it was on the ground.

Ratbat squeaked, now sounding annoyed. He looked right at Ravage, his bright red optics flickering.

Ravage raised his head again, frowning at him. "Well what else are we suppose to do, Ratbat?! Soundwave ordered us to stay hidden. It isn't like we can do anything! The ship is overrun with spiders! If they see us, they will attack us and then what next?! We will end up just being in the same ship as the others." He growled, his tail curling around him.

The batbot seemed to scowl before he turned and clambered up onto the control panel. He seemed to glance around at the controls before a wide fangy grin formed as he began pushing buttons with his claw like wings.

Ravage and Monique both frowned as they watched him before something caught their attention.

The holodeck room had changed. It looked as it did before, as if there was no hologram activated.
But there was now a difference. There were shimmering sparks in the room. It took a moment for
Monique and Ravage to realize what they were. And it made them frown.

Energy bugs. Holographic Insecticons buzzing around the entire room.

"Ratbat, what are you...?" Ravage was asking in irritation and confusion before he suddenly cut off
as his optic brightened. A toothy grin formed and he jolted up to his feet. "Ratbat, you are a genius!
For a Sparkling subunit! That's a great idea!"

Monique frowned as she stared between the two subunits. "What? What is it?" She asked
suspiciously.

Ravage grinned at her before nodding towards the holodeck floor. "I think you better just sit back
and relax, Monique. Because I think we are about to have a little too much fun with this." He
remarked.

"Huh?"

"Let's think about this for a minute." Ravage said his grin still in place. "What does spiders eat?"

Monique blinked still confused before her eyes brightened as she looked back at the holodeck.
"Bugs!" She then frowned. "But wouldn't the spiders know the difference? Those are just
holograms. They would know if they were real or not, wouldn't they?" She asked.

Ravage's fang filled grin widened. "Yes. But...if you recall, most of your Earth's spiders are
technically blind. They use senses to catch their prey. And how do they catch their prey?" He asked
carefully.

Frowning, Monique thought for a moment. "By their webbing. But these aren't Earth spiders,
Ravage. They are not blind. So how...?" She was asking before her eyes lit up. "But...even if they're
not blind, they will still see bugs. Insects. Food."

Ravage nodded as he looked into the holodeck room. "Exactly! These spiders are more like the
common jumping spiders. They see prey and go for them. So if they see the Insecticons, they might
just go for them! And if we can program the holodeck to have a full nest in there, they can't be able
to resist the bait!" He said excitedly.

Monique grinned at him before reaching over and scratching Ratbat's helm, between his over large
audios. "Good job, Ratty! You really are a genius. Now let's just hope this works." She said now
looking into the holodeck room.

Ratbat beamed at the other two before he turned and pressed a single control button that seemed to
turn on the whole holoform program.

The three were treated to watching the Insecticons begin moving around and buzzing loudly, making
quite the loud noise. A door had slid open to the room so that the sounds could reach out to the rest
of the ship.

It was not long before something or two came scuttling into view.

Two spidermecha suddenly appeared, quite alert and surprised as they peered into the room, seeing
large Insecticons in the room, and so many. They didn't seem to believe their optics as they gazed at
the overly large bugbots with alarm but excitement. It was not hard to figure out that they saw a meal
out of all of them.
Hissing in excitement, the spiders glanced at one another before nodding. One flickered his optics as if speaking into his comms. The other began creeping inside, carefully and quietly transforming into his spider mode. He began sneaking into the room, crouching low to the ground as if on the hunt, much like how an Earth spider would do.

Grinning at each other, the three hidden survivors couldn't help but high five each other, silently tapping their hands and claws against one of the others.

Because there were so many programmed in the room, more spiders, Cyber and organic showed up and began their own hunt. None of the spiders had caught any bugs yet but waited for back up to arrive. They began silently speaking to one another and began circling the bundle of Insecticons in the room, zeroing in on one or two of the bunch, who some were programmed to had noticed and were buzzing threateningly and moving away from them.

There were now several spiders in the holodeck training room, surrounding many of the bugs, creeping on them or looking just as aggressive as the Insecticons that were buzzing back at them just as threateningly.

"Do you think that might be all of them?" Monique whispered to Ravage.

"Hang on a megaclick." The pantherbot whispered back before going to a computer system and hooking a plug into the I/O port. His single optic flickered as he hacked into Death's Head's security system. He began looking through the many security screens, looking for any more spiders that they might have missed.

But he didn't see any more.

Even looking at the exterior security systems, looking at the spider ship, he did see that there were spiders there but they didn't seem to have interest in coming aboard the ship.

Ravage looked over at Monique and Ratbat, shaking his head. "We need to move quick. All of the spiders aboard our ship are in the holodeck room but there are still some on the spider ship. We will need to take control of the ship immediately if we want to rescue the others. And that might mean turning on the ship's defenses." He stated.

'That won't be necessary, Ravage. The plan you have is all you need.'

Ravage stiffened in alarm before turning his full attention back to the system he was hacked into. He didn't know where that sudden transmissions had come from but it did sound awfully like...

'It is me, Derezz.' Another message popped up. 'I have a direct link to the ship's main frame. I was finally able to set up the link due to a plan Prowl and Izzy started to work out when things started going out of control here.'

Ravage frowned as he tilted his head. He wasn't sure exactly what was going on. So he asked. 'So what is exactly going on? Monique Epps, Ratbat and I are at a loss up here. We don't know what happened?' He sent back to Derezz.

'As we understand it, Tarantulas and Airachnid are working with the Quintessons. They attacked us to keep us in captive for them. While Airachnid is willing to help us, she does want us to help put her creator straight. But I am afraid that is impossible. Tarantulas is a very twisted and dark mech. He will not change. So our only option is to escape.' Derezz explained. 'As of now, Tarantulas is...well, he is performing a few experiments on your newly transformed from human to Cybertronian females.'
Ravage growled at the thought, his processor immediately going to his creator's new spark mate. He swore if Tarantulas hurt Max, there was going to be Unicron's spawns to pay.

As if reading his processor, Derezz sent a reassuring pulse, though it didn't to help either way. 'It is the femme, Nightbird. She refused to allow Tarantulas to touch the femmes, Maximum Wave, Roulette and Stiletto. The Seeker, Starscream, nor his brothers were pleased. Optimus Prime is still trying to calm them down.'

'I bet.' Ravage growled, not any pleased than ever. He liked Nightbird. He knew she was tough. But if anything happened to her, he would gladly help the Decepticon Leader and his trine rip Tarantulas' legs off. 'So what's the plan?'

'It started out as Prowl's plan first but then Izzy pitched in some of her ideas. So they began working out something together. It was Lockdown who mentioned that I had a connect line with the ship. The only reason I couldn't get through because of the web nets the ship is trapped in. The spiders must have turned off the paralyzers.'

Ravage smirked to himself, pausing to see that the spiders in the holodeck room were now attacking the Insecticons. 'Sounds like they are getting ahead of their selves then. Becoming too confident. They don't know who they are dealing with.' He growled in dark humor. 'We are Decepticons, and Autobots.'

'In deed. I have learned to never underestimate your kind. Cybertronians, as well as humans are quite resourceful. Tarantulas seems to have forgotten that.' Chuckled Derezz.

'Well we are running interference with the spiders aboard. Whatever you're going to do, we better do it fast.' The feline subunit sent back, waving his tail at Monique when she began looking at him curiously and impatiently.

'I think I can help out with trapping them, my feline friend.'

Suddenly the ship rumbled to life making all three companions stiffen and look around with surprise. They saw that they were not the only ones. They saw the spiders immediately stop fighting with the holographic bugs and look around in alarm.

Before anyone knew it, the door to the holodeck snapped shut. The spiders whirled around and rushed the door to escape but once approaching the door, they found it sealed shut and locked.

As if that wasn't enough, the ship rumbled again and there was an explosion from the outside.

Glancing at one another, Ravage, Ratbat and Monique knew something was up. They nodded to each other before the feline unhooked himself from the I/O port and all three rushed out of the control room, heading straight to the main cockpit.

When they got there, they were treated to a sight that stunned them. The spider ship, FunnelWeb was smoking from a blast in the side. Death's Head had seemed to have activated its weapons and was now firing upon the ship, seeming to only hit the spots to disable the ship. If that wasn't enough, a few blasts sailed fast and hard towards the planet, itself.

"Wow. Talking about harsh." Monique said wide eyed. Ravage and Ratbat only grinned, wickedly. They knew what was happening. It was time to strike.

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When the explosions began, the whole structure shook and vibrated. The spiders who guarded the
prisons were shaken in alarm and began scuttling everywhere, orders being shouted.

Many eyes and optics watched and many smirked as they knew it was time.

"All right, everyone. Let's do this." Lockdown said immediately as he shifted his hook into a clawed blade and sliced at the spider threads that held him bound while the others freed their selves from their own binds, thanks to the humans trapped with them. Soundwave had no problem using his many tentacles and appendages to free himself, his subunits and mate.

As it was, it was Prowl and Izzy who smirked at one another, nodding to each other for coming up with this plan.
A half an hour before the attack-

When Tarantulas came into the prisons to collect one of the femmes who had been transformed, there had been an uproar about it from Autobots and Decepticons. No one were happy to what he was up to. They refused to allow him to take any one of them. It was when Tarantulas chose to go after Stiletto, and earning vicious snarls from Sunstreaker for it, did Nightbird immediately volunteer. She wasn't about to let Maggie be taken as some science experiment. She had to send reassuring calm pulses to Starscream, who shrieked that if Tarantulas harmed his mate in anyway, he would destroy everything the spider held dear.

It was still quite noisy with Optimus trying to calm the Seeker but nothing seemed to be working.

"So...have you come up with a plan yet?"

Prowl jolted from his thoughts, looking down in surprise at someone who had not been there a second ago. He was alarmed to see Izzy standing in front of him. "Wha-? How did you get in here?"
He asked startled and didn't notice that everyone else was just as startled.

Izzy shrugged as she pointed at the wall of Prowl's cell. "There was a hole in mine and your's cell. I was right next to you. We didn't notice because it was dark in the corners." She said before she began looking him over, noting the spider threads wrapped around his arms and legs, keeping him trapped against the wall. She shrugged before moving over to him and digging into one of her boots.

It was to his surprise, she pulled a small blade wrapped in a cloth. He could only watch as she began sawing at the threads.

"What are you doing in here?" Prowl finally asked her.

Izzy shrugged again, now snapping threads with the sharp blade. "We're both strategists, Prowl. Maybe we can work together and come up with a plan to escape." She told him as she cut through the threads before freeing one of his legs and then moving to the other.

Prowl stared at her blankly before shaking his head. "I highly doubt that you can help with a battle plan." He said drily.

Izzy scowled up at him, pausing to have to push long black bangs from her eyes. "I am helping you now, aren't I?" She shot back at him.

Prowl stayed quiet.

Izzy nodded in determination as she continued to cut through his bonds before slowly starting to climb up his frame to get to his arms. She ignored the way he tensed up, watching her carefully as
she climbed up onto one arm and began sawing at the threads that held him in place. "So, what do you have so far?" She asked as she worked.

Prowl blinked at her before sighing in relent. "I am afraid I do not have a decent plan. Only one act of desperate attempt. I'm still running over several scenarios with my battle computer. Before we were captured, I did place an explosive under the table that I have yet to detonate. But it would be worthless to use if we cannot get out of here." He stated.

Slowly Izzy nodded, seeing his point as she finally freed one of his arms, which allowed him to pull free from and began grabbing at his last bonds. She only held onto his shoulder plate as he freed himself from the last bonds and was finally able to sit down carefully to think more on the plan. "Well... the explosive could be used as a distraction. But you do have a point. It would be pointless if we couldn't get out." She frowned, thinking before her eyes lit up. "But I think I have an idea!"

Prowl blinked in surprise as he looked at her from a side view. "Do you? What may it be? I can run it through my battle computer to see the outcomes." He said.

Grinning, Izzy leaned in close to his helm and began whispering softly into his audios for only him to hear and two certain telepaths to invade their thoughts. But nonetheless, Prowl's optics brightened as he immediately began running the scenario she just gave him through his battle computer, searching every angle of the plan.

After a moment, Prowl was immediately up on his feet, his hand around Izzy to keep her stable as he moved to the glowing spider threads across his cell. He looked over at Derezz, as if asking him something. "Derezz?" He asked simply, making others frown.

Derezz chuckled in amusement as he read Prowl's processor and dipped as his optics flickered. "I can see if I can. It will be very risky but if I adjust a laser ray, I may be able to do it." He announced.

Immediately everyone was on alert, looking between the two cells. They knew something was up. "What's going on, D? Prowl? Izzy? Talk to us." Lockdown called over now very interested.

Prowl, for once since they met up again, smirked as he looked at his old friend. "Izzy has come up with a plan that will be beneficial if we can get it to work. I believe we may be able to work out a plan that will allow us to escape and even confront Tarantulas." He stated.

Immediately, everyone began talking at once, demanding to know.

But Prowl kept silent as he and Izzy looked over at Derezz, whose all pairs of optics were glowing. "Derezz?" He asked again.

For a moment, Derezz didn't say anything before he chuckled as if finding something amusing. "I now have connected to the ship's main frame. It seems that our three missing companions are causing trouble for the spiders on board Death's Head." He announced.

Everyone brightened in surprise or awe.

"Monique?! Is she okay?!" Epps called over.

Derezz dipped in the air as if nodding. "She is fine and safe from what I can see on the security feed. She is with Ravage and Ratbat. They are hiding in the holodeck control room, creating a little trap for the spidermecha that are aboard the ship. And from what I can see, it is working. They are quite bright." He reassured Epps, who smiled.
"Derezz," Lockdown spoke up, now sounding suspicious but now amused. "Exactly what are you three up to? What's the plan?"

Prowl and Izzy shared a glance with each other and then Derezz and Soundwave before they all smirked devilishly. The former two knew the two telepaths were aware of what they had in mind. "Be ready to move in a minute, everyone. If there is any way you can access your weapons to freeing yourselves from your bonds, I suggest you do it now. Once Derezz initiates the Death's Head's weapons and begins the attack, we need to free ourselves and move fast. What I suggest we do is move to the shuttles the Arachnidi ans have and make to the ship so we can take our leave."

"Not until I pay Tarantulas a visit first. Not leaving until then, Prowl." Lockdown growled.

"Lockdown, I don't think it's wise to..." Prowl was saying now seriously.

"Like it or not, kid, we got to put him straight. Ya really want to just leave Archnia and let Tarantulas call the Quints and warn 'em that we're coming, if he hasn't already?" Lockdown argued hotly. "If the Quintessons know who we are, why we are even going in the first place, I can guarantee you it will cause problems. You're little surprise to save your kids, your femmes and your pet dinosaurs," he ignored a growl from the fifth Dinobot, who didn't like that at all. "It will be all over. Game over. They will come after us. And I ain't putting my girls in danger like that. You're lucky enough that after this whole thing I don't drop ya'll off somewhere and turn aft on the whole deal. I need to make sure that the spider bastard hasn't given the Quints a heads up. And I have to make sure he don't."

There was an almost chilling silence as both former friends and partners glared at one another before Prowl slowly nodded as he glanced down at Izzy still on his shoulder.

"You're right."

"Prowl." Optimus said, now sounding uneasy. He didn't like this. He and the others were getting an idea of what the two were talking about. And none of them liked it. "What you're talking about is..."

Prowl shook his head as he turned a stony glance towards his Commander. "Optimus, he's right. We have to do this. It's for the sparklings, for Sunriser, for Mikaela, for the Dinobots. We left Earth determined to save them. And we have to do what it takes to save them. If Tarantulas, Airachnid and their spider colony threatens that, we have to make sure they don't. I don't like it any more than you do. But Lockdown, and you know I hate to even say this, is right. We have to stop them. Even if it means destroying them." He said gravely.

Everyone was grave at that news. They saw his point, Lockdown's point. By letting Tarantulas get away with knowing who they were and working with the Quintessons, it endangered Sunriser, Mikaela, the Dinobots and the sparklings.

Sighing, Optimus slowly nodded as he looked away. "We will leave Tarantulas to you, Lockdown. But I would rather us not being involved with his destruction. It isn't our way." He told the space pirate.

"Prime, sometimes you really are too soft. But I understand your internal dilemma." Lockdown said before glancing over at Derezz. "D? You ready?"

Derezz nodded before all five pairs of optics flashed brightly.

For a moment, nothing happened.

But the next moment, there was a loud bang before an explosion rocked the entire prison. Everyone stiffened, awaiting for what would happen next before there was another explosion and this time, it
rocked the entire structure. Some of the cells collapsed when a small blast came slamming through the roof of the prison, making all flinch away from it. But nonetheless, some of the Cybertronians and the humans were freed.

Slowly, one by one, everyone smirked as they tore through their bonds.

Lockdown, after shifting his hook into a curved blade so he could slice through some of his bonds, smirked as he stepped out from his prison. "All right, everyone. Let's do this." He said as he looked around at everyone. "Attack the spiders and get to the shuttles. Breakdown, Smokescreen, you're the escorts! Get the Autobots and Decepticons and their humans back to Death's Head and prep her! I will hunt down that son of a glitch, Tarantulas and make sure he's silenced for good!" He ordered.

Breakdown and Smokescreen nodded with sharp salutes. "Aye, aye, Captain!" Both barked.

Everyone started to follow but it was to some's surprise that Starscream, Prowl, and Knockout moved over to Lockdown, who frowned with everyone else.

"I am not leaving Nightbird!" Starscream growled threateningly when he received inquiring looks.

"Prowl? Knockout?" Optimus was the one to ask the two.

Prowl shook his head as he looked at the Autobot leader. "I think it would be best if I went along to ensure that nothing gets out of hand. Just in case there is any kind of information we can get from Tarantulas." He stated firmly.

Knockout nodded as he glanced at Moonracer when she touched his arm with a worried look. "I am still curious to know why Airachnid wanted a medic. She obviously wanted one of us," he motioned to Ratchet and Groundhog. "For a reason. I think I should find out before we leave. Besides, if Lockdown is injured in a fight with Tarantulas, we have a problem if he is in need of a medic and we aren't there."

"Peh! Likely story. I never lose a fight." Lockdown growled out with a dark chuckle. "You just want to see if I do get hurt, you have a reason to save my aft so I will forget you still owe me for stealing the phase shifter."

Knockout scowled but he didn't deny it.

Optimus sighed before he went over and placed both hands on Prowl's free shoulder and Knockout's. "Then be careful. If you need any help, call us for back up." He stared.

Starscream huffed but nodded. "We'll be fine, Optimus. We are not about to be caught off guard again with this blasted spider. He is going to be hurting though if he hurt Nightbird. She has been through enough, as it is." He growled.

Optimus nodded slowly before looking at Breakdown and Smokescreen. "Very well. I think it is best if we make way to the ship. And if we are attacked along the way, we will defend ourselves." He stated.

Everyone nodded and started to move.

Lockdown glanced over at Prowl, who still had Izzy on his shoulder. He frowned at her but she shook her head. "Iz, you need to go with them."

"Pit no, LD. I want to go with you guys. I want to be a part of this. Tarantulas betrayed our trust. And I want to see him pay." Izzy said stubbornly.
Prowl shook his head as he frowned at her, not amused. "This isn't a game. You are a human and what we are about to do is dangerous. You should go back to the ship." He said firmly reaching for her now.

But Izzy evaded his hand ducking behind his helm and practically hiding behind it. "I'm going! Lockdown, come on! Let me come! Please!" She called as she ducked under Prowl's grasping hand still reaching for her.

Lockdown reached up behind Prowl's helm and carefully grabbed Izzy, who pouted as he took her off his former partner. But instead of sending her after the others, he placed her onto his own shoulder. "Stay low then. If it gets bad, take cover." He gruffed before swiveling away and starting to walk.

"Lockdown, she should go back to the ship where it is safer." Prowl began protesting as he quickly followed with Starscream and Knockout behind.

"Yeah, she should. But I can guarantee you if you try and force her to do something she don't want to do, she will yap your audios off. And trust me, she won't shut up if you try to make her." Lockdown said as he took to the lead.

Prowl frowned but chose not to keep arguing.

They hurried through the stone corridors, surprisingly not coming across any spiders as they went. They heard blasts and explosions on the distance, and it didn't take much to figure that the others must have been under attack by the spiders. But no one was worried. They could take care of their selves.

As the four mechs came around a corner, they immediately found a problem standing in the way.

Airachnid.

She was just standing there, arms crossed over her chassis as if she had been waiting for them the entire time. She looked grave about what was happening but she did not move as the four mechs carefully approached, weapons drawn onto her.

"Where is my mate?" Starscream growled viciously.

Airachnid's violet optics flickered to him before she motioned with her helm to behind her. "Don't try and stop us, Legs. Your creator did us wrong first." Lockdown growled at her as he started bypassing her. He only stopped to glare at her when she reached up and placed a servo against his chassis to stop him. He growled at her in warning.

But Airachnid shook her head as she refused to look at him. "I am already calling off all of the Arachnidians from attacking your friends and companions. When we face Tarantulas, I will deal with him." She said firmly.

Lockdown frowned at her while the others were surprised. "Airachnid," he started.

"I am not in the favor of Tarantulas like I used to be, LD, because I am not Blackarachnia. He always favored her over me. And when he was forced to banish her because of what she was doing, he went mad. It was only when the Quintessons came did he go overboard. I wanted to change him back to what he used to be. But you're right. I can't." She paused to look over at Knockout. "I asked you to bring a medic because I wanted you to be warned of what Tarantulas might do. Only a medic may would have noticed the drugs that we put in the energon we gave you. Or someone very
observant." She motioned to Prowl. "I would have warned you, myself. But..."

Lockdown slowly nodded in understanding. "You're loyal to your creator." He stated the obvious.

Airachnid looked away, sighing. "Or what used to be my creator. He was never like this until we came here and was changed. We adore the Arachnidians. We really do. They are a good species. But because of Tarantulas, who used to be called Codex," she ignored the sharp intakes from Prowl and Starscream. "They, too, have become twisted."

"Codex?! He used to be Codex?!!" Starscream asked in alarm.

"Who is that?" Knockout asked frowning in confusion. He wasn't sure of that name. He had never heard of it before.

Starscream shook his head, scowling darkly. "Of he used to be Codex, then he has never changed. You just didn't want to see it!" He growled now picking up his speed.

"Who...?" Izzy was the one to ask now confused.

Prowl shook his head, his optics dark from the thoughts running through his processor. "Codex was a master scientist. He was brilliant in his research. But...he had a problem with doing in-Cybertronian, inhumane experiments. He was known for using Cybertronians as his research projects. Twisted one's CNA, changing them into other worldly creatures. He is the one who created what we call Terrorcons." He stated.

Knockout vented sharply as his optics widened. "Te-Terrorcons?! He created those abominations?!" He yelped.

"Okay, what?" Izzy asked frowning.

"Vampiric zombies is the best way to putting it." Lockdown stated dryly. "Cybertronians who had a deadly virus altered into their CNA. They became energon draining, Cybertronian eating freaks. Worst than scraplets. There was a bad infestation at the beginning of the war on Cybertron. That was what I was working on before I met Prowl. It was in between hunting down the infested Cybertronians and finding the source of them. By that time, the source took off planet." He stated.

Airachnid nodded slowly. "I didn't know what he was doing until he started up on the project again. After you left, LD." She said frowning at her old friend.

All four mechs stiffened, looking at her in alarm. "There are Terrorcons here?" It was the medic who squawked.

Airachnid shook her head as she looked at all four and the human seriously. "No. They're gone. Consfigated by the Quintessons. As far as I understood it, the Terrorcons are used in the arenas on Quintessa. As shows for entertainment. Though I am sure that the Quintessons will try and use them as weapons against rebellions. I won't be surprised if you end up running into some eventually."

"Primus forbid we run into those monsters." Starscream growled and the other two of his companions nodded in agreement.

Lockdown then looked forward, his HUB picking up a signal. "I think we better end this soon then. The sooner we get this done and over with the sooner we can be back on the road." He said now raising his cannon and starting to hurry forward.

Especially when they heard a screech of anger and fear.
Starscream’s spark seized as he recognized it. He sensed that Nightbird was fighting. "Cole!" He whispered before practically running forward.

The others also picked up their speed, Airachnid with them. They knew they needed to hurry. They needed to reach Nightbird before...

There was a sudden crash as they approached a room and everyone was treated to seeing a spidermecha on his back, thrashing and screaming with a smoking red hot hole in his chassis. His legs were starting to curl inward, announcing his deactivation.

Looking into the room, they found it was some kind of laboratory of some sort. There were machines everywhere, some sparking from blasts slamming into them. There was a large berth in the middle of the room where they saw Nightbird thrashing against glowing green threads, where they were coming from Tarantulas, himself. Her arms were trapped against the berth but she had one of her orange hot energon blades out, trying to slash the threads. The more she sliced through them, the more threads that Tarantulas would use.

"Hold still, you fragging femme! It will not hurt as much as it would if you would stop fighting!" Tarantulas snarled as he kept spewing green threads at her.

Nightbird snarled as she whipped her energon blades, slicing more and more frantically. "Stay the fuck away from me, you creepy ass, ugly spider! Let me go before I start tearing off legs!" She spat.

Tarantulas growled before he whipped up one of his legs and shot something at her. It looked like a dart of some kind. He was done playing games with this ridiculous femme!

However before the dart could even come close to Nightbird, a violet colored blob shot out from beside the four mechs and one human. The blob made contact with the dart and pinned it to a wall, startling Tarantulas ad Nightbird.

Both jerked around to see glowing cannons aimed at the spidermech, but the owners had paused to look at Airachnid, who was glaring at her creator.

"What?! What are they...?!" Tarantulas started to demand in shock.

Airachnid raised her blaster and aimed it at him. "That's enough, Tarantulas. Let her go. Now!" She snapped.

It was Starscream who took the advantage of Tarantulas being stunned to rush over to his mate, grabbing her blades and slicing her free. He pulled her against his chassis once she was freed and Cybertronian kissed her before turning to glare at Tarantulas.

The spidermech narrowed his acid green optics at Airachnid who slowly moved forward and they began circling each other. "What are you doing, Airachnid? Why have you brought them here? I thought I made it clear that you were apprehend them while I dealt with the human Cybertronian." He growled, not amused.

Airachnid bared her sharp fangs, her eight legs snapping out threateningly. "And I am ignoring that order, Tarantulas. I am helping them!" She growled right back.

Tarantulas spat energon on the ground in disgust as he circled with Airachnid. "You weak, pathetic femme! This is absurd! You betray me for them?! For him?!!" He jabbed one leg towards Lockdown. "I always knew you were weak! Pathetic child! I knew I should have never created you! I should have destroyed you when Shockwave warned me that your CNA was unstable!" He snarled, legs twitching.
Everyone, Airachnid stiffened in surprise and alarm.

"What are you talking about?!" The spiderfemme demanded.

Tarantulas sneered in disgust, chuckling in dark amusement. "You are not my creation by CNA, foolish femme! You are an abomination! Created through science! A fragging clone! I grew you from a glass tube and from energon, using CNA from Shockwave, himself! You are nothing but a drone! A science experiment to have solved the lack of useful Cybertronians! I created you from Shockwave!" He snapped.

"Whoa." Knockout muttered grimacing. "So the truth comes out. She is actually Shockwave's creation. Not his."

"Indeed." Tarantulas growled not even glancing at the red medic. "What you are, Airachnid, is nothing more than a tool for me to use. And guess what? Your usefulness is done and over with! I have no use for a tool who don't listen!"

Airachnid, still stunned, stared for a long moment before she lowered her head, as if hurt by his words. No one knew what to say to that. They wanted to say anything. But they couldn't find the words. But then she did. "Well then." She spoke softly before she snapped her attention back to Tarantulas, a wicked grin on her face as she tensed her entire frame. "I won't have a problem killing you then!"

And she struck.

Airachnid snapped forward, her legs lashing out at Tarantulas as she quickly approached him. Her sharp leg blades met with his with sparks flashing. A hideous hiss escaping from her as she struck each time. Everyone could only watch stoically as the two spiders fought viciously. Like black flashes, both moved in and out from striking out at each other. It looked like a battle to be epic of spider proportions. Both moved with such speed and agility that could have made any envious.

Airachnid, however, seemed to be faster because of her size. She struck out with a blade, slicing into Tarantulas' side, spilling acid green energon from his under belly. She ducked and danced away from his needle sharp blades until she was nearly up into his face.

It was right at that moment did Tarantulas struck.

With an agility so swift, he transformed into his spider form, fangs flashing as they came at her. He almost sank those poisonous dripping fangs right into her chassis.

But a flash of green, white and black, Lockdown was there in between them, his hook stabbed into the giant tarantula's mouth and hooked outside the bottom. Energon dripping down his arm, the vicious space pirate, yanked harder until he sliced right through Tarantulas' jaw.

Airachnid stared wide optic'd at Lockdown's back, surprised that he had even jumped in like that. "Lockdown..."

Lockdown glared viciously at Tarantulas who stumbled back before he moved in a blur, spinning on his peds to slash the giant spider across the optics.

Tarantulas screeched as he threw himself backwards, front legs hitching up to cover his face in pain. His other legs were starting to scrunch up from under his frame from the alarming pain running through him. He scuttled backwards until he came a little too close to the others waiting. He sensed them behind and lashed out one leg nearly hitting Prowl and Izzy in the process.
However, Prowl quickly grabbed her and ducked under the lash out before he slashed upward with an energon blade in hand.

Tarantulas screeched again as his spider leg clattered to the ground spilling energon across the floor. He tried to lash out again, but this time he was intercepted by a sparking electro rod. He thrashed and screeched from Knockout's vicious attack before throwing himself backwards where he met Starscream next.

The Seeker snarled as he grabbed the spider from behind, using all of his strength to yank him up into the air and swung him around to slam down on the berth where he had trapped Nightbird. He, along with Nightbird, Lockdown, Knockout and Airachnid, pinned the thrashing spider down while Prowl rushed up and began strapping him down to the berth.

It was not easy with all remaining seven legs waving and whipping about. Airachnid, however, offered a solution to that as she quickly began un-spinning spider webbing, tying some of the legs together and even trapping them in threads that stuck to the wall.

By the time they were even done, Tarantulas was completely neutralized like a spider stuck on its back.

"Now then, Tarantulas," Lockdown growled holding his lethal hook up to the spidermech's eight optics threatening. "I suggest you get talking. We go some questions fer ya and if you refuse to answer, a leg comes off."

The spider growled, still thrashing to break loose. "If you think I am going to say anything, Lockdown, you are a fool."

Lockdown snorted before looking over at Knockout. "Doctor." He simply said.

Knockout smirked at him before nodding in understanding as he turned his ruby optics onto Tarantulas. He raised his arm and it shifted quickly into one of his saws.

With a flash of silver and a screaming buzz, Knockout sliced through one of the spidermech's legs before tossing it to the side, completely ignoring the pained screech from his 'patient'.

"Now, let's try this again." Lockdown growled before hovering his hook over Tarantulas' eight optics. "The question we want to know is did you contact the Quintessons yet?"

Tarantulas growled, looking defiantly at him.

But Airachnid snorted, looking at the space pirate. "That is what you wanted to ask him? What else?" She asked skeptically.

Lockdown looked back at her, shaking his head. "That's pretty much it. Depending on what he says there might be more questions. Why?" He asked frowning.

Airachnid smirked at him before turning sharply to face Tarantulas and lashing out at his chassis, stabbing deep and hard with a sharp leg. She ignored the startled looks she had gotten as she stabbed deep into her so called creator's chest until she found his spark chamber. She did not stop there as she released a toxin directly into it, causing Tarantulas to screech and thrash around. "You don't need him alive for that then. Because he hasn't contacted the Quintessons yet. He wanted to perform his experiments first on your femmes." She said coolly as she watched Tarantulas thrash and writh until his legs curled into their selves and his spark died.

Everyone frowned as they watched Tarantulas die before them. It bothered Prowl to be honest to
have done this. But he knew Tarantulas had been such a threat to them. He could only watch blankly with Izzy still in his hand.

Lockdown turned to Airachnid, frowning. "So he didn't contact the Quints, huh? What now then? You gonna let us go?" He asked her.

Airachnid folded her arms, looking back at him before shaking her head. "I will. But the Arachnidians won't. They will keep trying to capture you. I can draw them away from you for now but..." she looked deadly serious now. "I want to go with you, LD. I want to join your crew. There isn't anything here for me anymore. Take me with you." She said firmly.

For a long moment, no one spoke but then Lockdown nodded and held out his hook towards her. "You willing to take orders from me? Cause if not, you stay here." He growled out. He waited until Airachnid nodded as she took a hold of his hook and shook it up and down. "Then welcome to the crew. Let's go."

Everyone turned away from the deactivated Tarantulas and began rushing through the halls. The sooner they got off the planet full of spiders, the better.

As they ran, Lockdown pulled up beside Prowl, smirking at him. "Good job back there, kid. Keep it up and we can make a pirate outta ya." He stated.

Prowl's optics flashed as he turned to glare at him, his hands still holding Izzy carefully in his hands so not to jostle her. He did not want to hear that from Lockdown of all mechs. "Never, Lockdown. I am an Autobot." He growled back at his former friend and partner.

Lockdown chuckled before he pushed forward, hurrying towards a shuttle awaiting for them. They could see many shuttles already taking off, heading for the atmosphere, for the ship. No one paid any attention to the spiders and spidermecha snarling after them.

"What about the Arachnidians? They're without a leader now. Who is going to take care of them?" Izzy asked as they boarded the shuttle and began speeding up towards the sky, heading out of the planet's reach towards Death's Head that was taking everyone back aboard.

Airachnid looked back towards the planet, smiling faintly. "They will be fine, Izzy. They will adapt and choose a new leader to lead. They were doing fine before Tarantulas, Blackarachnia ad I even arrived. They are a little more advanced now because of what we taught them but they will be okay on their own. And they won't come after us. They are not a vengeful lot. As it is, I did say that Tarantulas was using some of them in his experiments. So it is more than likely they will be happy when they discover him dead. Trust me, they will be fine." She told the human.

Not long after they boarded the ship, Lockdown immediately had his crew send the spidermecha back on the shuttles, sending them back to the planet.

It was not long before Death's Head was soaring through the spider territory, towards the boundaries to leave.
The Death's Head soared through the darkness of space, moving at a good speed to put some distance from Archnia. It was mostly quiet.

On the outside.

"What the frag is she doing here?!!" Ironhide roared glaring at Airachnid, who stood behind Lockdown, watching everyone glaring at her. He, like everyone else, was uneasy that the spiderglitch was even there.

Airachnid made no comment, knowing it would only goad everyone into a fight. She would rather avoid that for now. She didn't need to make Lockdown's...clients more aggressive towards her than she had already done. So she decided to keep her mouth shut.

Lockdown, however, frowned at Ironhide before sighing and shifting his weight. "Airachnid has joined my crew. She is the one who killed Tarantulas." He looked over at Optimus, who was frowning. "I am not going into the details, all right? Your Second can do that. Right now, we need to put some distance between us and Archnia. Then we will discuss this situation." He stated before turning and starting to leave.

However, he stopped as he caught sight of some of his crew hovering together, whispering. Frowning, the Space Pirate narrowed his optics at one before he marched right over. "Rivet." He simply said to get the pirate's attention. And when he had it, he lashed out and sank his hook deep into the mech's shoulder plates, causing him to screech in pain as enenberg began streaming down his side from punctured lines. "I am going to make this very clear to you and any of the others who dare questioning me and my decisions again. If you ever threaten my girls again, all because you don't like something that I decided, I will rip you apart and then do this!" He growled as he suddenly began dragging the pirate towards the main hatch of the ship.

Everyone, Autobots, Decepticons, humans and pirates stiffened in alarm as they watched what Lockdown was doing. But when they saw him reaching for the latch to open it, they all scampered to grab the humans and hold on as the door opened and a powerful wind blew into the hangar before sucking back out. Everyone cried in alarm as they braced their selves from the powerful pull.

Lockdown growled as he lift a terrified Rivet up with his hook, glaring him straight into the faceplates. "Now, decide! Are you going to listen to me from now on or do you want off my ship?!!"

Rivet, clinging to Lockdown's arm, nodded furiously as he glanced fearfully into the darkness of space. "YES! I WILL!" He cried.

"Yes, what?!" Lockdown snarled at him, shaking him closer to the open hatch.
Rivet cried out in fear again and clung tighter to his captain. "Yes, Captain! I will listen from now on! Now please, Captain! Please don't throw me out!" He begged kicking at the powerful pull that threatened to take him out to the pressurized emptiness of space. "Please!"

Lockdown growled once before turning and throwing Rivet across the hangar as he slapped the latch again, closing it with a loud clang. He glared around the room at all. "If anyone else thinks about questioning my word of law again, you take a trip out into space like Rivet almost did! This is my ship! You are my crew and I am the boss! Do what I say or jump ship!" He snarled before he turned and marched towards the door to the corridor. "Derezz! Let's move!"

Derezz bobbed once before hovering after Lockdown, pausing to glance at all of the uneasy stares following them. He sighed before following.

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It took a while for everyone to calm down after that episode. Prowl had given the three Primes his report of what happened with Tarantulas. It went to say that none of them were eased by it.

"Optimus, we are playing a dangerous game here." Sentinel said grimly. "If Airachnid is Shockwave's creation, we may be in danger. Who knows what she has been programmed to do."

Optimus saw his point but knew as long as the spiderfemme was Lockdown's crewmate, they couldn't do anything about her. "We will have to go with it for now, Sentinel. We can only watch her closely until she decides to act. For now, we need to rest and prepare. We don't know what else will happen on our travels to Quintessa. We need to be prepared for everything now." He said gravely.

Rodimus nodded as he watched Optimus and Sentinel. "You're right. We should probably prepare the humans too. Especially of what Prowl says is true, that the Quintessons have Terrorcons. You remember what those were like." He said shuddering.

Optimus nodded, remembering fully well what Terrorcons were like. He could remember all of the fear when they were running around Cybertron. A lot of Cybertronians had died when they were around. "Yes. You are right, Rod. The humans need to know more about all of them. Terrorcons, Sharkicons, even the Predacons. We are not sure if they even are alive after so long but...I don't want to take the chance. I will explain to them. But for now, let's get some rest." He stated. He paused to look at his Second in Command, smiling faintly. "Prowl, you did well. Rest for the time being."

Prowl nodded before turning swiftly away and walking put. He didn't have the intentions to rest though. The sooner he had a plan to rescue their stolen allies and loved ones, the sooner he could be prepared.

"So...how'd it go?"

Prowl immediately halted and looked down to see Izzy leaning against a wall, looking as if she had been waiting for him the entire time. He didn't understand this human. She was always waiting for him, wanting to talk to him. But she was Lockdown's charge. And he didn't trust Lockdown. So why was she always watching him?

"Pardon me?" Prowl asked confused.

Izzy smiled up at him shrugging. "Your report. Did you tell the Primes anything fun?" She asked.

Prowl blinked down at her before grimacing. He didn't see it her business. But it was impolite to ignore her. "It...was efficient." He said before starting to walk again. He held back a groan when he
heard her following. "Is there something you need?" He asked stopping again and making her stop.

Izzy grimaced right back at him before folding her arms and shifting her weight. "You really can't stand me, can you?" She almost laughed at his puzzled alarmed look. "Because I am Lockdown's adopted, huh?" She added.

"I am...I am afraid I don't understand." Prowl tried.

Izzy snorted before shaking her head and shifting again. "You don't want to talk to me. Here I am, trying to have a conversation and you keep walking away. Is there something wrong that you don't like about me?" She asked frowning.

Prowl stalled, staring at her before shaking his head. "No. There is nothing wrong. I am just busy with my duties." He told her.

Izzy snorted again and looked at him skeptically. "Busy. Right." She drawled.

"I am the Second In Command of the Autobots, Isabella Jackson. I do not always have time..." Prowl was saying in irritation.

"I don't care what you are, Prowl." Izzy interrupted just as irritably. "I just want to get to know the REAL you. Not the soldier. Not the Autobot. You. Has this war really changed you that much?"

Prowl was struck dumb. He looked at her as if she was crazy. He wasn't used to people asking about him. But...now that he thought about it, no one ever had. No one asked him about his likes or dislikes. The only ones who ever had were Optimus and Jazz, his two best friends.

For a long moment, he stood there, pondering over it before he decided. He did want to get to know Izzy and Flo, now that he thought hard about it. He wanted to know about them.

So he offered his hand to Izzy, who grinned and stepped up onto his hand.

"All right. What is it you want to know?" Prowl asked.

Izzy thought about it before shrugging. "Well, I have lots of questions. But I don't know which one to ask first. So...why don't you ask first. Surely you want to ask me something." She said knowingly.

Prowl started walking, not really having a destination. But he nodded as he looked at the human. "Very well. There is one. You don't have to answer but...everyone...well, I would like to know what exactly happened with the Quintessons. How did you meet Lockdown?" He asked carefully.

Izzy stared up at him for a moment before smiling bitterly and looking away. "I knew that would come up sooner or later." She heaved a deep sigh and stared down at her hands as she sank down to sitting in Prowl's palm. She took a deep breath and then looked back up at him, frowning firmly. "I already told you how we met Lockdown. But if you really want the details, fine. Flo and I were ten when our father sold us to the Quintessons for power. It was a day I will never forget or forgive him for."

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Ten year old, Izzy saw her father's hands were shaking as he drove the car through the darkened streets. She couldn't help but frown as she saw him trembling in the driver's seat. She knew something was wrong. Something...wasn't right.

Why did her father wake her and Florence up in the middle of the night, telling them that they were
going on a trip? Why was he shaking like that?

Why was he crying?

"Daddy?" Izzy whispered, her fingers trailing through her waist length black hair. She didn't want to wake up Flo, who had fallen asleep in the back seat.

Aaron Jackson blinked, flinching a little as if he had been struck suddenly. He looked over at Izzy, surprised she was awake. "Oh, Isabella. You're still awake. Are you all right? Did you...have any bad dreams?" He asked as he looked forward again.

Izzy shook her head, her tired eyes blinking softly. "No, daddy. Where are we going? Why so late?" She asked, her soft childish voice squeaking a little. "Why are you crying?"

Aaron Jackson stared forward, his eyes blinking rapidly before he began wiping the tears away. He felt so foolish revealing his pain and guilt to his daughter. Not after what he was about to do. She didn't deserve this. Her or Flo. But he had to do this. It was the only way.

"I am not crying, honey." He lied. "My eyes are just...tired."

Izzy frowned at him but nodded. "Then why are we going somewhere? Can't we just go home and go back to bed. Flo and I have school tomorrow." She said peering up at him curiously.

Aaron Jackson grimaced, his face twisting more into pain but he tried to hide it. "Izzy, Flo and you are not going to school tomorrow. We...um...I want to show you something, honey. I have...a surprise for you and Flo." He said, his voice quivering a little.

Izzy's face lit up at the sound of that. She and Flo loved surprises! She couldn't wait to see what it was! "Okay!" She said excitedly before turning and poking at Flo to wake her. She didn't want her sister to miss this. She would be mad if she did.

Aaron Jackson, however, sighed softly, looking at the road ahead with pain, tears threatening to show their selves again. He felt the ugliness of guilt striking his heart even deeper, like a rusty blade. 'I am so sorry, my precious ones. I am so sorry.' He thought towards the girls though he would never tell them that. Ever.

The car pulled up into a dark warehouse parking lot. It was near the docks and well isolated from prying eyes and ears. Only one car was there, waiting for them.

Izzy and Flo were rubbing sleep from their eyes, still excited about their surprise. They had been talking about it on this long drive to this place. But now seeing the dark building made them frown curiously.

"Come, girls." Aaron Jackson said his voice still soft and trembling but he was obviously trying to steel himself. He climbed out of the car and waited for the girls to do the same. He took them by the hands and began pulling them towards the building, where a man was waiting. He looked slightly older than their father.

And cold.

Izzy and Flo didn't like the looks of this man. He looked cold, uninteresting. He reminded them of a doctor that they both hated.

"It's about time, Jackson. They have already arrived and are waiting impatiently." The man spoke, his voice cold just as he looked.
Izzy felt Flo suddenly grab her arm and clung close to her. She knew how scared her sister easily got. And she didn't blame her with this one. She felt nervous of this man too.

Their father scowled as he tightened his hand on Izzy's, having to let Flo go when she ducked behind him to her sister's side. "You be patient, Alexander. I told you I would get here when I got here. They even knew that." He said, his voice now cold like the other man's.

Izzy and Flo stared up at him now surprised. They had never heard him speak like that before. Not to anyone.

Alexander Hollander just gazed dryly at his partner before shaking his head and turning towards the open door. "Let's just get this over with. I have too much work to do. I am already starting the plans for Project Machination. If we can get the equipment from the Quintessons, I can start the tests." He said now entering the building.

Aaron Jackson hesitated, his breath catching for a second before he let it out again and turned to the now completely confused girls. He gave them such a sad smile as he bent down in front of them and gave them such a tight hug. "Girls, don't ever forget of how much I love you two. No matter what happens. I love you two so much." He spoke to them so softly. "And I am so sorry."

"Daddy, what is happening? Where are we? Where is our surprise?" Izzy asked frowning.

Aaron smiled faintly before taking her hand again and standing. "Inside, Isabella. Your surprise is inside. Now...I need you both to keep quiet. Do not say a word. Or you..." he swallowed a hard lump in his throat, trying not to break down again. "Or you will scare them away."

Flo and Izzy both stiffened, eyes going wide but they nodded. What could it be that they shouldn't scare away? Why couldn't they talk?

Steeling himself again, Aaron Jackson took both girls by the shoulders and lead them straight in to the darkened building.

Not long later, there were two sets of screams and pleas for their father. They screamed and begged him to save them. To take them home. But he said his piece to Them and then left.

Eyes hard, Izzy glared away from Prowl, her face set into stone. "There they were. Just hovering in the dark warehouse. Waiting for us. It scared me and Flo. But we clung to our father, remembering him telling us not to say anything. I can't remember everything that our father, Aaron Jackson said to those five faced monsters. I was too busy staring at them. I think Flo doesn't remember either." She paused for a moment. "But I do remember our father pushing us towards them. I remember them grabbing us with their tentacles and shoving us into glass containers. I remember screaming for our father. Flo was screaming and crying. We begged him to save us. To help us. To take us home."

Prowl was still walking but he wasn't caring where he was going. He just listened, his optics hard as his processor raced, piecing together the images he heard from Izzy's words. From her story where her own father betrayed them, sold them to the Quintessons.

"What happened after that?" He finally asked after a long time.

Izzy glared away from him but shook her head. "I don't remember too much of what happened after that. I just remember a really bright light and then darkness. I just remember waking up in a cage with Flo next to me. We were already on Quintessa when we woke up again. I believe the Quintessons placed us into stasis pods, putting us to sleep for the trip. I just remember feeling really
cold while I slept." She sighed harshly. "Not much to say about being on Quintessa. We mostly were left alone in a cage, in a room with only one light shining down on us. We had a bed, a box of clothes to wear, a waste ejection unit, and that was about it. Our first day waking up in that cage, we met him."

"Lockdown?" Prowl asked curiously.


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Flo was crying, Izzy was crying. They remembered what had happened but they didn't remember how they got into this cage or where here was. They just remembered the betrayal their father had done. Flo had asked Izzy what they had done to make their father do this to them. But the eldest of the twins didn't know how to answer.

And then a door opened, swishing to the side much like a grocery store's door would do when one walked through it.

And through that door came one of those five faced monsters.

Immediately both girls started crying and clinging to one another. They stared at the five faced creature with fear and in Izzy's case, hate. "Who are you?! What are you?! We want to go home! Take us home!" She shouted angrily, her long black hair mixing with Flo's blonde.

The five faced creature floated closer to the cage, dipping down to get a better look at the two girls. Icy gold eyes or lights blinked at them while the face was etched like a snarling monster's.

"My name," a soft but deep voice came from the monster. It was not like the monster's appearance at all. "My name is Derezz, young ones. And you are home now. This is your home now. It's called Quintessa."

Izzy and Flo stared at the monster in horror and anger. They didn't believe it at all. "This isn't home! We want our daddy! Where is our daddy?! Are you going to hurt us?! What are you?!" The older sister asked, trying to be fierce.

A deep chuckle raised from the one who called himself Derezz but he bobbed in the air. "Your...daddy gave you to us, young femme. You are ours now. He didn't want you." And he sounded sad when he said that. "I apologize but you are home now. As for what I am, I am called a Quint..." he was saying.

Izzy snarled while Flo sobbed harder. "Liar! You are a liar! Daddy did want us! He would..." she was saying.

The Quintesson sighed, his optics dimming softly. "I apologize, young Isabella Jackson, but your father gave you and Florence to my people, the Quintessons as gifts, or rather guests. We give him necessary means to further his scientific research and become very powerful on your own planet, he gave you both to us. It was a part of a contract we made with him to ensure his loyalty to us. He sacrificed both of you to us. You will become servants to the Quintesson world. I, Derezz, have been placed in charge of you until it is decided which Quintesson unit you will become the property of. I apologize if this frightens you. But...you are now slaves to our people, much like many other humans we have taken from your world."

Izzy and Flo stared in horror at him. They didn't understand all of what he said but they got the idea of what he meant.
Slaves. They were to be slaves.

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"At the most part, we just stayed in the cage. Derezz was nearly the only Quintesson we ever saw or met besides one. An evil aftpipe called Derodomontatus." Izzy snorted when she spotted Prowl's optic twitching at the name she just spoke. "Yeah, I know. A real mouthful of a name if you ask me. Flo and I called him Monty, just to piss him off. It...it really wasn't smart to be honest. He was not the kind that would hold back a telepathic strike to punish us."

Prowl frowned deeply and grim. "He hurt you." He stated the obvious.

Izzy looked away, her eyes faraway with a haunted memory. "Yes. He did. Every time we misbehaved or spoke without permission. He would hurt us with his telepathy. He made us see monsters and have mind screaming headaches. He tortured us, Flo and I." She said before her face set into stone again as she looked up at him. "Didn't stop me from trying to fight back. And that was when he judged us."

"Judged...you?" Prowl asked frowning.

Again, Izzy nodded. "I wouldn't stop fighting him or Derezz. I kept misbehaving, taking my torture like always but never breaking. One day, I got a hold of a sharp pipe and used it to stab into Monty's optic when he came to beat me for misbehaving. I got him really good too because it destroyed his Wraith face's optic. I stabbed his optic so deep that it destroyed the optic fibers. It couldn't be fixed so he is half blind." She explained, smirking mirthlessly before it faded again. Her eyes dropped back down to her lap. "Because of what I did, he judged Flo too. He did it to spite me, to hurt her to hurt me. We were placed into the Arena to die."

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The sounds the twins heard all around them sent terror striking through their very core. They heard screams and roars from behind the large metal doors. They heard the clashing of metal and booms of cannons going off.

It scared them.

Izzy and Flo were amongst a group of humans, who also were shaking and crying in fear. Some had weapons in hand but they didn't look brave enough to use them.

The twins hovered together, gripping each other in their moment of fear. They knew that any minute, those doors were going to open and they would face death. They heard Monty and Derezz arguing about it. They remembered how Derezz tried fighting for them. He tried standing up for them.

But in the end, they had been judged and now they were going to die.

Suddenly the doors clanged loudly, making both girls jump and cry in fear with everyone else. They watched in terror as the doors opened and blinding light fell upon them. They were greeted to a terrible sight.

The arena used for the Quintessons' entertainment was enormous. It towered over them like mountains stacked upon mountains. And so many glowing optics were twinkling down as they watched them come out.

In the arena, dead bodies of metal beings, aliens and humans littered the ground. Blood of many colors were splattered across the ground and on the high towering walls.
And that was when the girls saw him.

"We saw Lockdown right there for the first time, in the middle of all of the bodies." Izzy told Prowl.

The Cybertronian was splattered with liquids of many kinds. His weapons in hand and a curved, deadly hook as the other. He had obviously been fighting a moment ago but now, he was about to face his new adversaries. He was going to slaughter the humans who now stood before him with terror in their eyes.

His name was Lockdown. And he was fighting to destroy others to survive.

Burning red optics glaring at the smaller beings, he readied himself. He didn't want to do this. But he didn't have a choice. He was doing it to survive now. The damned five facers made it clear that if he didn't do it, he would be the one to die.

So when a blasting horn went off, Lockdown charged.

The group of humans screamed in fear as they scattered, running in different directions as the giant metal being gave chase. Most didn't get away in time as he ran them over, crushing their bodies under peds and even shot many with his cannons, incinerating most.

Hearing a strange scream from below, Lockdown jerked his head down and aimed his cannons to shoot at his new victims.

And he froze, optics flashing.

Two small humans, two young femmes stared up at him, open mouthed and fear glinting in their tear streaked eyes.

Lockdown frowned, still taken back by what he was seeing. He recognized both as sparklings, human children. They couldn't have been that old. They were the size of Cybertronian sparklings and covered in black and nearly white hair, their optics both bright blue but full of terror.

The two were clinging onto each other, crying as they stared up at him, waiting for their turn to die.

Lockdown frowned deeply, his optics flickering upwards at the Quintesson audience who roared for death and blood. He knew he had to kill these two. But...he just couldn't find it in his spark as he looked back down at the two. He knew if he didn't, the Terrorcons or Sharkicons would. Any he didn't slaughter usually had those monsters unleashed on them.

Gritting his denta, Lockdown threw himself downward at the girls and nearly rolled right over them. But at the last second, he snatched both up with his hand, curling them into his palm as he rolled back to his peds while opening up his chassis to stuff the screaming and crying girls inside.

"Be quiet!" Lockdown hissed at them as he quickly shit his chassis before he began his slaughter again.

Izzy and Flo found their selves squished together against warm metal, listening to bangs ad clashes from outside. But they both kept as quiet as possible, in fear of them angering their metal captor. They could only wait for their possible doom.
But it never came.

Even when it went quiet outside after listening to all of the slaughter they knew that was happening. They expected the metal monster to just open his chest up and smash them.

But he didn't.

It took a while and by the time that Lockdown opened his chassis, the girls had started to fall asleep, exhausted from the terrible excitement they had been through.

However, when they heard a metallic click, they opened their eyes to see their prison cell opening and a hand was hovering over the opening. Flo whimpered and began crying into Izzy's shoulder while she was held tight.

"Come on out now. It's safe." They heard the metal being tell them.

Neither girls moved to listen to him. They just cowered deeper into his chassis, whimpering in fear.

Lockdown growled softly but looked down into his own chassis, seeing them. "It's all right. I won't hurt you. I promise." He gruffed in a low voice.

Trembling, Izzy moved first, her hand clutching Flo's as they carefully climbed out onto his hand. They looked tearfully and terrified up at him, wondering if he was going to crush them now.

But instead, he looked down at them, studying them. He looked each over before lifting them up to right in front of him. "Are any of you hurt?" He asked in a quiet voice.

Both twins were taken back by his words but it was Izzy who shook her head. "N-no. Maybe a few bumps and bruises but...but we're okay." She paused, still afraid of him. "Wh-who...who are you? Are you...like...them?" She added.

Lockdown growled, optics narrowing but he shook his head as he looked her right into the eyes. "No. Not a five faced freak. I am a Cybertronian. Name's Lockdown. You are?" He asked keeping his voice steady and calm.

Izzy and Flo cringed a little, both sharing a glance before looking back up at him. "Izzy and Flo." They both said in unison.

"Are...are you going to...going to kill us?" Flo asked in a trembling voice.

Again, Lockdown narrowed his optics but he shook his head as he looked her right into the eyes. "No. Not a five faced freak. I am a Cybertronian. Name's Lockdown. You are?" He asked keeping his voice steady and calm.

Izzy and Flo slowly smiled at one another before they scampered forward and hugged his hand. "Thank you, Lockdown! Thank you!" They said brightly happy tears flowing down their cheeks.

Lockdown stared down at them for a moment before he softly smiled and brought both girls close to his chassis, allowing them to embrace him, even as his spark only became lighter.
However, unaware by all three, a pair of red optics were watching them but not in ruthlessness like his fellows. He had known that the Gladiator had the two human girls. He had seen the mech take them. And he had gone down to the pits to get them back.

But once he saw what he was seeing now, if only he could, Derezz would have smiled, feeling warmth deep inside of him. He didn't know what the feeling was called but...he liked it.

="/After that, not too much longer, Derezz helped us escape from Quintessa. He let us out of Lockdown's cell and helped us escape on Death's Head. He came with us, knowing if he stayed, he would be destroyed by the other Quintessons." Izzy finished explaining to Prowl, who looked thought. "We have been together ever since. Traveling through the stars, world to world, gathering our crew we have now. We...I suppose we are kind of like a family."

Prowl stared away from Izzy, looking thoughtful. He never would have expected that just by one look, Lockdown would take up Guardianship for the girls. He knew Lockdown as a selfish, greedy, son of a glitch who didn't care about anyone but himself.

But hearing what Izzy said about him, he couldn't help but wonder if something had changed in Lockdown. He knew the only way to find out was asking the mech, himself.

However, Prowl wasn't sure if he could do that. He had so much anger for Lockdown for his betrayal back on Cybertron.

But...perhaps...maybe his anger for Lockdown was petty. He didn't think so. There had been so much that Lockdown had done. That no one but Lockdown and himself knew. Not even Jazz or Optimus knew what truly happened between him and his former partner and best friend. It was something that...that he was sure no one would understand. He didn't understand it, himself.

"Prowl, here is my question." Izzy spoke up finally after watching him for a long moment. she waited until he was looking at her before tilting her head, her two pony tails draping over her shoulders. She looked almost childishly innocent with her bright blue eyes. "What happened, Prowl? What happened between you and Lockdown? He said you two were best friends back on the Cybertronion Security Force. You were like brothers. So...so what happened?"

Prowl stared hard at her for a moment before he sighed and looked away. "$He betrayed me, Isabella. And I was the one who let him go. Escape from Cybertron, without knowing what he had done until he shot me point blank in the chassis, leaving me for deactivation." He said in a low voice.

Izzy stared wide eyed at him, not being able to believe that. "$Wh-what?" She asked uneasily.

Prowl slowly nodded as he reached up with his free hand and gently placed his hand against his chassis where he hid a nasty scar under his armor, on his bipedal form. He remembered it all too well.
Prowl's Story

Chapter Notes

::Songs Best Used::
A City of Hope-Audiomachine
Assassin-Audiomachine
Waking The Demon-Audiomachine

Vorns and vorns ago-Cybertron

It was an exciting day for the young Security Detail Trainee called Prowl.

It was the day he would be joining the Iacon Security Detail, becoming an officer of the law and security of the city and for Cybertron. He had graduated the Security Academy of Praxus with high scores and grades and it was the magnificent city of Iacon who requested him for their forces.

Ever since he had been sparked from the Well of All Sparks and had grown from his sparkling stage to his youngling stage, Prowl had always wanted to do some good in Cybertron's finest.

So when he was old enough, he joined the Security Academy.

Throughout the vorns of being in the academy, he showed great potential as a Security detail. He had worked so hard and it eventually paid off. He graduated at the top of his class and now he was in the Iacon Security Command Station, ready to start his first day.

The Iacon Security Command Station was said to hold the best Security Detail Officers of all of Cybertron, other than Praxus, Prowl's home city. That was why Prowl wanted to be in Iacon. He wanted to work with only the best. He wanted to solve crimes, protect the innocent bots in the beginning of this Primus awful war. He wanted to do good.

And now he finally had his chance.

Driving up in front of the Iacon Security Detail Headquarters, Prowl felt the thrill of excitement deep inside his spark as he gazed up at the glorious building before him. He marveled the golden and silver and white metallic building as he shifted from his vehicle form, staring up at it with bright blue optics. He was finally here.

Finally after a moment of his gazing of the building, the young security detail graduate made his way up to the front entrance. He held his head up high and even puffed up his chassis as he walked into the building and went straight towards a receptionist's desk, where a femme was sitting typing away at her computer.

When he approached, she looked up at him with bright white optics and smiled in a friendly way. "Hello. What can I do for you?" She asked him.

Prowl bobbed his helm in greeting to her, smiling just as friendly to her. "Greetings, I am Prowl, a Security Detail graduate from Praxus. I have just been transferred to start here in Iacon. I am looking for the Security Detail Commander Safeguard. He is expecting me." He told her.
The receptionist's optics lit up as she straightened in her seat, her hand already hovering over a communications device. "Oh! Yes! I know about you! I was told you may be showing up today! Hold on a mega click." She told him before turning her attention to her communications. "This is Shyster calling from the front entrance station, Commander Safeguard. Your new officer has just arrived!"

There was a moment's pause before the receptionist nodded smiling before looking up at Prowl. "Hold on a breem, Officer Prowl. Commander Safeguard will be right down!" She told him brightly.

Prowl felt nervous but delighted to hear that. He couldn't believe that the Security Detail Commander, himself was coming to greet him. He nodded his thanks to Shyster before looking himself over. He wanted to make sure he was presentable for the Commander.

Of course, when he saw one little scuff on his chassis, Prowl immediate unsubspaced a buffing clothe and began wiping at it, never minding the amused giggle that came from Shyster.

Continuing to rubbing out the scuff, he didn't notice a large black and blue mech approaching him, but when he heard that mech chuckle when he noticed what the young Security Detail was doing, Prowl looked up with wide optics.

"Prowl, is it?" The mech asked in amusement.

Prowl felt his face plates heat up as he scrambled to put the buffing clothe away before standing up straight, hands folded behind his back. "Yes, sir!" He practically barked in a military way.

The mech laughed, shaking his head before waving at him. "At ease, soldier. No need to be military formal." He then offered a bowing of his helm. "I am Commander Safeguard of the Iacon Security Detail. Welcome to Iacon. We are definitely looking forward to having you work with us."

Prowl smiled sheepishly as he rubbed at the back of his helm. "I apologize, Commander. It's just I am from Praxus and we are trained to be formal." And then he brightened again. "I am also looking forward to working with Iacon's...no!" He looked embarrassed again. "Cybertron's finest Security Detail!"

Again, Safeguard laughed and Shyster giggled. "Relax, Prowl! You don't need to be so modest! Come, I will show you around." The Commander said motioning Prowl to follow.

The tour around the Security Headquarters was very enlightening to Prowl. He was shown where all of the offices were, the interrogation chambers, the Brigg cells. He made sure to build up a collected map in his processor so he wouldn't get lost.

Of course, it was in the Brigg that things went a little awry. Prowl was looking around the cells, noting a few unruly looking mechs and femmes, while listening to Safeguard explain the rules and regulations for the Brigg when he backed up against somebot he hadn't noticed.

"WHAT THE FRAG!" The mech he backed up into roared stumbling forward a little. He spun around and treated an uneasy Prowl to the most menacing red optics he had ever seen.

The mech was about the same build frame as Prowl and was no doubt a Praxian like him. He was black and white colored with bloody red optics that glared at the younger Cybertronian furiously. His door wings twitched in anger, something Prowl recognized very well. He knew he may have just bumped into someone with a bad temper, judging how he was twitching and glaring.
"I apologize. I did not mean..." Prowl began.

The mech growled viciously before lashing out and grabbing Prowl by the chassis, yanking him closer to him. "Why don't take that apology and stuff up your fragging aftpi...!" He snarled.

"Barricade!" Safeguard suddenly spoke up in warning as he hurried over to the two mechs after seeing and hearing what was going on.

The mech, Barricade immediately released Prowl and stepped back, still grumpy as ever. "Commander Safeguard." He greeted dryly.

Safeguard gave Barricade a look of warning as he placed a servo on Prowl's shoulder plates. "Barricade, check that temper of yours. We don't need you being vicious to our newest Security Detail." He paused before looking between the two Praxians. "Barricade, meet Prowl, the new Security Detail. Prowl, this is Barricade, one of our other new enforcers." He introduced the two.

Barricade and Prowl looked back at one another, one friendly and the other...not so friendly.

"It is a pleasure to meet one of my new colleagues. And I apologize again. I am afraid I was just overwhelmed by the scenery. I have always wanted..." Prowl was saying with a smile.

Barricade huffed irritably before wiving impatiently at him. "Yeah, yeah. Shut it. Welcome to the force. Now start watch where you're going from now on. Be glad I'm in a semi good mood today." He grumbled before walking off.

Prowl could only stare after him bewildered. He didn't understand. Here he was trying to apologize and the other Security Detail brushed him off as if he was scrap.

Beside Prowl, Safeguard sighed. "Be careful, Prowl, of that one. Barricade is not exactly...the most friendly of our Detail Officers. In fact, he is the least friendly one. I would try and stay away from him, if I were you. He is known to become...well, slightly aggressive towards even to his fellow Security Details." He said wearily.

Blinking and looking at him, Prowl frowned. "What was his problem? Did I do something wrong?" He asked in worry.

Safeguard shook his head, looking grimly at him. "No, you did not. Like I said, Barricade is the least friendly Detail on our force. He has a very bad temper and even the slightest tick can set it off." He explained.

"Then why is he a Security Detail if he is that bad?" Prowl asked still frowning.

Safeguard shook his head again, smiling faintly. "Because Barricade is the fastest damn Cybertronian on wheels, Prowl. He is efficient at what he does. And normally he is the one who goes chasing criminals when they run. No one else can keep up with him. Civilians or other enforcers. Very few can but we have yet to see it. Barricade is a good officer but he just has a bad temper. Just stay clear of him. It will serve you better that way." Then he brightened and clapped his servos together. "Anyway, let's get you started!"

That was only the first day.

After that, Prowl found it easier for him. He was given data work to do at first before he started patrols around the city state. He proved to be very efficient at his work and he worked hard.

Most of the enforcers didn't mind him. They teased him relentlessly about being the rookie. He didn't
like it and did have a few blow ups for being teased but all it did was make everyone laugh.

That is until he began showing everyone up for being quite bright and very good at solving crimes.

Then no one was laughing any more.

In fact, Prowl proved to be very good at solving crimes and problem solving that Safeguard decided to put him on a few cases. He was so good at figuring things out and figuring them out fast.

Eventually after his first vorn, he ended up busting a few mechs who were into illegal street racing and that included a couple of the other Security Detail officers, not that he wanted to do it. But they had been breaking the laws of Cybertron's Council. He had had no choice.

What made it worse was they swore revenge against him.
It also didn't help that some of the former enforcers did have friends still on the force and they tried very hard to make Prowl's life miserable. They played jokes on him, they teased him furiously, and sometimes they would mess up his office, saying it was just pranks. One had even put bad oil in his energon once and that had sent him to visit a medic for medical energon.

However, because of the unwanted attention he already had, he didn't complain to Safeguard about all of the harassment he was getting from his fellow enforcers. He was also fully aware of some of the others talking behind his back, calling him names and such. He just didn't let it get to him.

Eventually, it only got worse.

Especially when a series of murders of Cybertronians started up.

At the time, Prowl hadn't been on the case. He heard about it but he was on something different. He was aware of another enforcer was on the case. One he hadn't met yet. He couldn't remember the mech's name. He was sure it was something-down but he never did ask. All he knew was how he ended up solving the case. And how that day had ended with him ending up on the ground, getting the pits kicked out of him.

It was the day he made a new best friend other than what seemed a simple Space Bridge Builder named Orion Pax and a quacky Janitor, who seemed so much more than what he looked like, Jazz.

Prowl had had a breakthrough in his own case and was looking for Safeguard. He knew he needed to report this as soon as possible. It dealt with more illegal street racers and he was sure he had a Gang Leader's designation. He soon found Safeguard in one of the other offices, looking over series of holographic images and reports on this case. And did he look troubled about what he was seeing.

"Commander Safeguard, would now be the time for me to make my reports on my case?" Prowl asked politely as soon as he interrupted, his faceplates heated in embarrassment for intruding like he had.

Safeguard sighed heavily but nodded as he turned from a mech that Prowl had never seen before. The mech was a tall lanky looking fellow but was definitely one Prowl knew not to underestimate. He may have been a little lanky on one side but he sure had the look of 'Don't frag with me.'

The mech was slightly taller than Prowl but with wide broad shoulder plates. It couldn't be helped that the young Security Detail glanced curiously and uneasily at the sharp looking spikes on them. He took in the acid green and obsidian black color of the mech's frame and then peered shyly at the white helm with black tribal markings crisscrossing all over the back and faceplates of the mech. His optics was slanted and blood red.
"Yes, Prowl. It will be all right. I think we can take a break from this for a moment anyway."
Safeguard remarked wearily before glancing at the other mech, the extremely bad aft and tough
looking one in the corner from where he was lazily looking Prowl over. "Lockdown, why don't you
go get yourself a steaming oil cube? You have been working pretty hard this past solar cycle as it is."
The mech called Lockdown lazily glanced over at him before shrugging and then lifting a steaming
oil cube to prove he had already done that. "M'good, Commander. Just go ahead with your business
with the obvious Rookie." He gruffed out before taking a swig.

Normally Prowl would have bristled at the usual taunting name he was continuously called every
day. But instead, his optics was wide as he glanced at all of the holographic images around the room.
His processor was racing from the mere sight of brutalized and mutilated Cybertronians.

"Come on, Prowl. I know these are very disturbing to see but..." Safeguard was saying now moving
towards the young mech.

But Prowl held up a hand, not taking his optics off the images. He looked from one image to the
other then to reports clear before him. "Wait a megaclick, sir." He said slowly before moving closer
to a few of the images.

Narrowing his optics and ignoring the curious looks he was now getting, Prowl optic'd an image of a
severely cut up Cybertronian. He saw the gashes in the mech's armor and frowned. He glanced to
another image and saw something else. He frowned at images of pedprints near a body left in a pool
of energon.

"Prowl?" Safeguard asked seriously before his optics lit up and he stiffened. "Prowl, what do you
see?" He now asked sounding urgent.

Prowl was quiet for a long moment as his optics danced across the images before he pointed at one
image, one of a pedprint. "Sir, do you know who those pedprints belong to?" He asked carefully.

"Pft! If we knew, kid, we wouldn't be sitting in here staring at them all fragging day." The gruff
mech in the corner growled out.

Prowl chose not acknowledge that remark. He, instead, narrowed his optics at some images of mechs
and femmes that were labeled suspects. He stared hard at them, noting their very frames and even
ped prints that had been taken. And then he pointed at a mech in one image. The mech was steel
gray, tall, slender frame build with tri shaped peds. One with icy, cold blue optics that appeared to be
unconcerned for why he was getting a mug shot or having his peds recorded.

"Commander, I believe the ped prints near the bodies of the victims belongs to that mech, labeled as
Dealer." Prowl said firmly. "I believe he may be your serial killer."

Both, Safeguard and the mech, Lockdown froze, looking at him in alarm.

"What? How do you figure that?" Safeguard asked frowning curiously now but there was a spark of
excitement in his optics.

"They ain't the same ped prints! So how can ya know that Dealer's a killer?" Lockdown growled out
irritably.

Prowl glanced at the acid green and black mech, frowning but then pointed at the ped prints. "Sir, the
ped prints do not match the mech, Dealer. But...they don't need to match. Judging by his frame,
Dealer has an un-attachable right leg." He pointed at Dealer's image near the knee guards. There
were latches on his right leg, showing that it could possibly be detached. "Also," Prowl pointed at
the murderer's ped prints next. "As you can see in this image, here, one ped print is deeper in the rust ashes than the other. Meaning, that one leg is heavier than the other. It could only be one thing. The murderer who killed these bots had been leaning more on his left leg than the right. The right ped must have been more unstable than the left."

"Okay, Prowl. I can see what you mean. But that isn't an exact evidential science." Safeguard said frowning. "Some Cybertronians have lost legs before and have had to replace them with another. Is there anything else that you can see that might be evidence towards Dealer?"

Prowl nodded as he looked firmly at the Commander before holding up his data reports. "Dealer is a name from my own case, sir. I have a reliable source stating that Dealer is involved in the black market as well as street racing. This image was taken only a few solarcycles ago, seemingly shortly after these images were He then flipped on his data pad to project a holographic image and showed it to Safeguard and the mech.

It was an image of Dealer with mismatched legs. His left matched the same in one of the other images while his other didn't. It was a round, spiked ped with a dull pink splash on the tip of his hooked toes. It sure looked like energon, the blood of a Cybertronian.

Frowning, Safeguard and Lockdown looked from Prowl's report to the image of the murderer's ped prints, where there was a splash of energon in one of the prints.

"Seems to me, Commander, that either Dealer hurt himself and didn't clean himself up properly or that is some other bot's energon on his peds." Prowl said firmly. He then motioned to one of the victims in the images. A short, burly mech who had been torn to pieces. He was also missing several parts from his chassis. "I also have word that Dealer has been selling spare parts in the markets. Now the question is, where has he been getting those spare parts?"

Safeguard and Lockdown both steeled their selves as they glanced at one another. They seemed to share a private conversation because the mech that Prowl wasn't introduced to nodded before swiftly leaving the room without a word.

Prowl watched him go before looking at Safeguard, who was now smiling. "Sir?" He asked frowning.

Safeguard only smiled and nodded. "We shall see, Prowl. We shall see where this goes in the next solar cycle. If you're right, you just solved a two vorn old murder case that we have been working so hard on to solve." He simply said.

And it was soon shown that Prowl had been right.

The mech, Dealer, had tried running when he was confronted by Security Detail enforcers. He had tried but failed and now he was in line for a trial by the Council.

It couldn't be helped that Prowl beamed when Safeguard announced that he had solved the case and quite proudly at that. He preened over the young Security Detail in front of the entire force, whom most cheered on Prowl's name for his sudden swift thinking and excellent problem solving.

But some did not. Some enforcers, surprisingly Barricade not included, glowered with jealousy while they watched many of their fellows pat Prowl on the back. And some even growled when they noticed a certain tall, green, black and white mech watching from a far back corner, smirking as if amused that the young Security Detail received all the credit for solving the case. He didn't seem to care at all that his name hadn't even been mentioned.
But those enforcers sure did.

It proved that they did care about some rookie Security Detail suddenly jumping up to the Criminal Investigations unit, which was known to take many vorns to even get into.

That night, after celebrating his success with a few of the other enforcers and even his two best friends, Orion and Jazz, Prowl made his way out of the High Grade Fueling station, with the intent of going back to his personal quarters and recharging off some of the High Grade that Jazz had kept buying him. He was more buzzed than being drunk unlike many others at the celebration. He was known to have a high intolerance to High Grade as it was.

Still, as he started walking away from the fueling station, Prowl was just about to transform and begin a very slow drive back to his quarters when he heard sudden movement behind him.

Frowning, he started to turn around to see what he had heard when a powerful fist slammed right into his face, sending him yelping and staggering into an alley he was next to.

Stumbling and reeling from being hit like that, Prowl ended up tripping over his own peds into the alley before going down hard on one of his door wings. And as it was, much like a Seeker's wings, his door wings were highly sensitive. He couldn't stop an excruciating cry from his vocoder as he felt his door wing crack from his fall. He heard glass shatter and he was sure it was his windows. It just didn't help that his visual was white and staticky from the pain coming from his door wing.

Before Prowl could blink back the white from his optics, he suddenly felt a sharp tipped ped slam into his chassis next, making him screech in more pain. He felt his vents seize and stall, making it harder for them to keep spinning. He cried out again when another kick to his other side, denting his chassis badly.

A series of blows began raining down on him and all Prowl could do was cover his helm, trying to shield himself. He tried scampering from the blows but they seemed to be coming from everywhere. He cried out from pain and even felt a few energon lines rupture. He felt energon spilling from wounds all over his frame.

Prowl even tried shouting at his attackers to stop. But he was ignored.

"You fragging goody goody Rookie! Think you can come into our headquarters and show off!" He heard one of his attackers snarl.

"Praxian trash! Think you're all high and mighty!"

"Worthless piece of slag! We'll dismantle you!"

"This is for our friends that you got into trouble!"

Prowl cowed under the blows, trying to look to see who was beating on him. But he found that one of his optics were shattered and with peds slamming into every inch of his frame, he could barely see anything. But then...he caught a glimpse of one mech standing behind his attackers. Those burning red slanted optics glaring at the attackers. He saw that terrifying white and black helm flash right behind one of them and a black servo grabbed that one, yanking him back with a furious roar of rage.

By that time, everything went black for Prowl and he saw nothing else. He only could register cries of pain and metal slamming into metal through his audios before that even went dark.
When Prowl came to, he found himself in dull pain. He ached terribly and it was pretty difficult to see through a cracked optic. He could only groan as he shifted his head and try and peer through his cracked optic and the good one.

"You shouldn't be out of recharge yet. I am not done with your repairs."

Prowl jolted a little before following the voice he heard to see a blurred form near his left side. He could only make out red and white, however. He just couldn't see the frame build very well.

"Wh-who...who are...whe-where...?" Prowl stammered weakly.

"Hmm. Having a hard time seeing?" The obvious mech asked as he came closer and Prowl could barely see blue orbs peering at him, now looking him over. He felt pressure on the side of his helm before his visual cleared. "How is that?"

Prowl blinked his one good optic up at the mech and found that the mech was a good deal older than he was. He was red and white colored with obvious medic symbols on his shoulder plates and chassis. He was a kind looking fellow for a first glance.

"Who...what...?" Prowl asked confused.

The mech smiled as he continued to adjust the young mech's optic before grimacing at the other. "We will have to fix that one as soon as I can get to it. You had some pretty serious injuries done to you." He paused at Prowl's questioning look. "Oh, that's right. My designation is Ratchet. I am one of the Head medics of the Iacon Medical Facility. I have been repairing your damages all night since that Security Detail officer brought you in. As for why you are here, do you remember what happened last cycle?"

Prowl frowned, his optic narrowing which only a little discomfort. He tried to think but it came as a blank. Only the memory of his successful...his optic widened as he remembered. "I was...I was celebrating with my friends! Some mechs! They...they attacked me! But why?!" He asked now in a panic.

Ratchet held up a hand to calm him down. "Hold on, you! We don't need you glitching out on me. I think only one can answer that. But before I bring him in to explain, I think I better tell you what happened to you. Yes, you were jumped by a few mechs. But I can guarantee you, they are in worse wear than you right now after what your rescuer did to them." He paused for a moment. "What they did was pretty low. They could have deactivated you but luckily your rescuer stopped them from doing just that. You do have a few ruptured lines, some breaks and obviously a shattered optic. We will have to replace that. Your left door wing took some substantial damage as well and you will have to be put back under to repair it. But other than that, it is mostly cosmetically repairs we have to do. But for now, I believe somebot would like a word with you. I think you can have at least one visitor for now." He stated before looking over his shoulder.

Prowl looked past him and nearly jumped up to see a very grave looking Safeguard. "Co-Commander!" He cried out before wincing as pain struck through his pain receptors.

Ratchet scowled as he placed a hand on his shoulder plates and pushed him back down. "Don't even think about getting up, young mech." He suddenly growled, making Prowl cringe back own. "If you move again, I will clock you over the helm with this," he held up a wrench. "And then I will put you back into recharge. So do not move again."

Grimacing in apology, Prowl nodded before looking back at Safeguard, who was smiling faintly.
"You have only a breem, Commander Safeguard. The more recharge Prowl gets, the faster he can be repaired." Ratchet said before he turned and walked out of the room so that the two could speak.

Prowl glanced back up at Safeguard before dropping his optic, feeling guilt and a spike of self loathing. He couldn't believe this. He had just gotten a promotion in the Security Detail and then he went and blew it by getting beaten up by thugs. He was sure he was quite a pathetic Security Detail in Safeguard's optics now.

"For one, Prowl," Safeguard started, his voice in complete apology and sympathy, surprising Prowl. "I must apologize for what had happened to you. I received the news of what was going to happen to you too late. Another, your attackers," he suddenly growled out, his optics flashing angrily. "They will see to the proper punishment for what they had done."

Prowl blinked in surprise before frowning. "What about my punishment then?" He couldn't help but ask meekly.

Safeguard frowned but shook his head. "You did nothing wrong, Prowl. All you did is a pit of a good job and some jealous ridden idiots of the Security Detail couldn't handle it." He looked grim when Prowl looked surprised. "Your attackers were some of our very own Security Detail officers, Prowl. They attacked you because they envied your position in the enforcers and because you did a very good job on cracking a case that even they failed at. The enforcers responsible will see to trial for trying to deactivate you, that is if they don't deactivate after what Lockdown did to them."

Again Prowl blinked in surprise, his memory immediately going back to the mech from before. "Lockdown? The mech from yesterday? A...civilian? What did...?" He was saying.

Chuckling, Safeguard shook his head. "Lockdown isn't a civilian, Prowl. Nor is he some bad aft informant for our forces, as you may think he is. He is actually a Security Detail like you. Well...more like an upper rank from you. He is one of our head criminal investigators. The case that you solved happened to have been his case, Prowl." He told him.

Prowl winced, now feeling guilty again. He now felt like he had stolen a case from another enforcer when it hadn't been his.

"Don't worry, Prowl. If Lockdown had held you in contempt for solving his case, he wouldn't have saved your life last cycle." Safeguard said with a chuckle. Then he grew serious again, with only a hint of a smirk. "He sure messed up the enforcers who beat you up. All five of them are currently in a Nano Restoration Chamber. He beat all five of them until they were nothing but twitching scraps of metal. Anyway, Prowl, for what your fellow enforcers did, you may be called to write up a statement and perhaps called as an evidential witness at their trial. Would you like to press charges against them?"

It didn't take more than a megaclick for Prowl to shake his head. "No, sir. I understand why they attacked me. I am afraid I may have..." he looked embarrassed and shameful. "Gloated a little at last cycle's celebration. I believe my boasting may have triggered these events. What happened to me was well deserved..." he was saying.

Safeguard scowled, thrusting his servo to the side impatiently to silence the young mech. "Do not even go there, Prowl. I have it under reliable sources that the enforcers responsible for your pain have been planning to do this for a while now. What they did to you was not something you deserved. You are a brilliant enforcer, well better than most of the mechs on my forces. What they did was acts of cruelty and jealousy and if they cannot handle a little competition without striking out like they did, then they are no better than those rebellious thugs that are calling their selves Decepticons." He growled before straightening when Ratchet started to come back. "I believe our
time is up, Prowl. Get repaired soon. We still have much to do." He added smiling.

Prowl smiled faintly right back as he watched his commander take his leave.

"All right, Prowl. Time for you to go back into recharge." Ratchet said as he approached with a young electric blue mech and a ruby red mech with ruby red optics. "We need to get working on that door wing of yours. And unless you can handle extreme pain, it will be better if we put you under. Jolt, prepare the tools, if you will. Knockout, can get my subspace solar driver?"

"On it, Hatchet." The ruby colored mech sad snickering and ducking when Ratchet snarled and threw a wrench at him.

Prowl was soon out.

A cycle later...

"So, you look better than the last time I saw you. Seems to me Ol' Hatchet still got what it takes to make decent repairs."

Prowl blinked out of his deep thoughts and from reading a datapad to exercise his newly replaced optic before looking up to see a familiar green, black and white mech leaning against the door frame. He felt his vents catch before looking down, nervously.

Lockdown snorted, his arms still folded across his chassis. He seemed amused. "What, not going to say hello?" He asked in an almost teasing way.

Blue optics flicked back up to Lockdown, Prowl smiled forcefully. "Lockdown, I presume. I...um...I should thank you for saving my..." he was saying.

Lockdown suddenly waved his hand at him as he stepped forward and offered his other one to Prowl. "Kid, don't mushy on me. You don' need to thank me. I saw those idiots beating the pits outta you and it pissed me off. Five against one and not even making it fair, that is what rubs me the wrong way. I am always up for a fight but only as long as it's fair. Sides, the only one who should be offended of you is me for solving my case." He waved his hand when Prowl cringed after shaking his hand. "And I'm not. I have been scraping my head against the walls trying to figure out that case for two fragging vorns since those damn murders started. And you came and solved in one breem. That case was driving me nuts, kid. Because of you, there is a killer off the streets of Cybertron. No more good mechs and femmes will be getting hurt. So I thank you. Now how about a real introduction. Name's Lockdown."

Prowl smiled and nodded. "I am Prowl. It's a pleasure to meet you, Lockdown." He said now sounding proud of himself.

Lockdown nodded with a smirk as he stepped back again to give him some more room. "You are a smart rookie, Prowlers." He chuckled when Prowl groaned at the nickname. "I could use somebot with smarts like yours. I already talked to Safeguard about it but wanted to talk to you about it before we make it official. How about you become my partner, Prowl? Wanna help me take down some bad guys?"

Blinking in surprise, Prowl stared up at him, not believing what he was asking. "Wh-what? You want me to be your partner?" He asked in bewilderment.

Lockdown nodded, his arms folding across his chassis. "Pit yeah. Like I said, you're smart. You
figured out a two vorn case within a breem. I read your data files. You were the top of your class back in Praxus. So, yeah. I want you as my partner. And before you ask why, I gotta let you know. I don't usually like working with others. I usually play solo. But meeting you, reading your files, you cracking a big case like that one, I can't afford saying I don't need your help, Prowlers. I have a lotta cases on my servos and if you can figure out one of the biggest pain my aft that I ever had, then, yeah. I want you as my partner. So what do ya say?"

Again, Prowl smiled and nodded. He would have been delighted to be partnered up with Lockdown. "All right. Partners." He said offering his hand again.

Grinning, Lockdown took Prowl's hand with his servo with a loud metal slap and heartily shook it. "Partners." He confirmed it.

After their partnership was made, Prowl suddenly found that no one, not even Barricade would mess with him. No one teased or taunted him or pulled pranks on him. They left him completely alone unless they had business needed to be done with him or Lockdown.

The partnership with Lockdown eventually turned into something more. They would talk whenever and get to know each other and eventually, Prowl saw his partner as his new best friend. They got along just fine, only having a few squabbles now and then. They were almost complete opposites from one another.

While Prowl was calm, collected, sometimes sparklingish innocent about certain things, Lockdown was rough tempered, brash, loud and could be extremely crude. He was an angry mech too, sometimes his temper exploded. But Prowl was always able to calm him back down and keep from bashing helms in when somebot pissed him off. He learned from the mech, himself, and many others, that Lockdown was quite a sharp shooter. He never missed his intended target. He even showed off one day, teaching Prowl how to hit a target dead straight on.

As it was, they solved more cases than anyone else in the Security Detail forces.

A few times, even Prowl managed to save Lockdown's life when they went on criminal runs. There had been a few times that his partner would just go running in without looking and Prowl backed him up. He ended up saving Lockdown from getting shot in the helm with a laser cannon once and it would have killed his partner.

In return, Lockdown began teaching Prowl how to fight hand to hand combat. He taught him how to defend himself when in sticky situations and how to avoid them.

In more ways, Lockdown was the teacher and best friend that Prowl ever had. Besides Orion Pax, whose turn of events began showing other things serious and Jazz, who Prowl found out with a few contacts and even Lockdown's help that his shorter but very out going friend was actually a Confidential Investigative Agent for the Council. In other words, a spy.

It didn't bother Prowl one bit that he was learning new things, new secrets nearly every cycle. He was just happy enough to be learning new things and how to deal with them.

However, then a brand new case came up.

There was a new case of kidnappings of mechs and femmes and it was just as the new war was starting to really get out of hand. Cybertronians would go missing for the next two solar cycles before showing up again. It was almost like that one case with the serial killer, Dealer. Only this
time, no one actually ended up dead. They were just in forced recharge but were missing specialized weapon upgrades.

A lot of upgrades were going missing from Cybertronians. Someone was mugging these poor innocents, kidnapping them and stealing their upgrades. It was also very sad to say that one of the victims that turned up again happened to be the kind but also strictly serious medic, Ratchet. Even he seemed to have been targeted by the criminal who was doing all of this.

It was when an Iacon Senator went missing did things really go insane.

Prowl had been working on the case with Lockdown but he couldn't help but feel something was wrong about the whole thing. He didn't know what it was, but he just couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong with Lockdown.

Lockdown seemed too eased by the case, even with it not going so well. He didn't seem to be too worried about the kidnapped Senator, when everyone else was going crazy.

"If the Senator is like any of the other victims, Prowl, then he will turn up safe and alive. So, yeah. I ain't worried about some political jerkoff." Lockdown said coolly when Prowl tried asking his friend about why he was so calm.

But after that, Prowl didn't push it.

Eventually a short time after that, Lockdown presented him with a gift. A new battle computer.

"Just thought you might want an upgrade, Prowlers. You're smart enough without it but...I kind of figured ya might want one. Ya know? Just to have if you ever run into something you can't figure out." Lockdown told him as he gave the younger mech the upgrade.

Prowl smiled feeling pride and excitement wash through his lines like bubbling energon. He couldn't wait to get it installed. He didn't think he would ever need or even get a battle computer but he always did want to have one. But battle computers were hard to come by as it was. How Lockdown managed to get one, he honestly didn't care.

For the moment.

After having the battle computer installed, Prowl was surprised to find some tactical simulations already programmed into it. Some were so amazingly perfected that they were almost a Primus given gift to him.

Shortly after Lockdown's gift was given, things went very wrong.

The Senator eventually showed up again. Only this time, unlike all of the others, he was deactivated. It was a sad day for Iacon. The Senator had been one of the Council who fought so hard to making a difference in the war. He even supported the idea that a war criminal like Megatron needed to be highly supervised. He was the one Senator who knew Megatron was the true Leader of the Decepticons and because of the Senator's deactivation, a lot of city-states were now being destroyed.

Prowl's city-state, Praxus was one of them.

"Ya all right, kid?" Lockdown asked when the news of Praxus' destruction came.

Prowl glanced up from the news datapad he was reading on the matter before sighing, door wings hanging. "Yes." He said quietly.
Lockdown stared at his partner and friend, knowing he was lying. But he wasn't about to push it. He knew that the 'kid' didn't want to talk about it. "They said there were a few survivors, kid. Maybe we should be grateful to Primus for that."

Prowl scoffed softly, his optics hard as he shook his head. He seemed almost offended but not towards Lockdown. "Primus." He growled out before whipping his head up, looking at his friend. "Where is that pit forsaken God of ours when we need him, Lockdown? Where was he when mechs started killing each other? Where was he when those damn Decepticons started destroying our city-states?! Where was he when my home was destroyed with my mentors?! All of those lost lives! Cybertronians are dying and he isn't here! Primus is dead! He doesn't exist!" He growled, emotion thick inside of him.

Lockdown only watched him rant and rave calmly. He just let the young mech have at it. And when he was done, the older mech reached out and patted his shoulder plates, with a small forced smile. "That is the question of our lives, ain't it?" He stepped back and turned away. "Anyway, I have some business off planet. I probably won't be back for a little while. You take care for now until I get back, Prowl."

And he left.

It wasn't long before Safeguard came around Prowl's office, looking concerned. "Prowl, have you seen Lockdown?" He asked.

Prowl looked up at him and nodded. "He just left, Commander." He told him.

Safeguard sighed, shaking his helm. "Damn it. I needed to talk to him about the missing battle computer upgrade before he left for the cycle." He grumbled and started to turn away.

Prowl stiffened and looked up at him with wide optics. "What? What battle computer upgrade?" He asked now uneasily.

Safeguard looked back at him, looking tired. "The one that was taken from the Iacon Senator. It was the upgrade that was stolen. A really efficient one too. It had a few battle simulations that was important to the Council." He told him.

Prowl felt his spark spike ice cold with horror as he slowly reached up and touched his helm where the battle computer Lockdown had given him was installed. His processor was now racing with so many thoughts and it began to burn his spark with ice fire.

The battle computer.

Lockdown had given him a battle computer, which so hard to get a hold of as it was.

"N-no..." Prowl murmured his horror. His optics flashed and he jolted up to his peds. "No! Lockdown! What have you done?!" He yelped.

Now Safeguard was stiff with surprise, looking at the young enforcer. "Prowl?! What is it?!" He asked uneasily.

Prowl shook his head as he hurried around the desk and started for the door. "I don't know! But I will find out!" He exclaimed now racing out.

It took a little bit of time and some speeding through Iacon to find out where Lockdown was at. Prowl knew he needed to hurry. He needed to rush. He needed answers. And he did not have much time to get it done. He needed to find Lockdown before he was gone.
And he found him in a very suspicious looking space port, getting ready to board a shady looking ship.

"Lockdown!" Prowl yelled as he made a quick transformation into his bot form, stumbling a little at the sudden transformation.

Lockdown immediately halted from boarding the ship and turned to face Prowl, not looking surprised to see him at the least. "Prowlers, what are you doing here?" He asked not sounding the least bit curious at all.

Optics flashing furiously, Prowl walked right up to the ramp and glared. "It was you, wasn't it?! You kidnapped all of those Cybers! You stole their upgrades! You killed the Senator!" He exclaimed.

Lockdown just stood there, looking emotionless before he slowly nodded. "It was me. The death of the Senator was an accident though." He said grimly. "Knew you'd figure it out, kid. You were always good at that. That's why I am leaving. And I am not coming back."

Prowl felt a horrible shock go through his entire frame. He couldn't believe this. It didn't make any sense. "Why, Lockdown?! Why did you do this?! To all of those bots?! Why the Senator?!" He demanded still horrified.

Lockdown remained calm as ever as he gazed back at Prowl. "Made some deals with the wrong mechs, kid. Borrowed credits and I needed to pay them back. The black market is where the creds were at. The case with Dealer gave me the idea. No one was suppose to get hurt. It was just stolen upgrades." He said with a shrug.

Prowl shook his head in horror, disbelief and disgust. He couldn't believe his best friend and partner. "Lockdown..." he was saying.

"Come with me, kid. Leave Cybertron behind. Join me to a life of piracy and crime. I still could use you." Lockdown said now offering his hand to him. "Come be my partner. Together, you and I, we can build a business. We will be the best Bounty Hunters and Black Marketeers out in the entire solar system."

Slowly Prowl shook his head, his entire frame steeling himself. He wasn't going to do this. He couldn't. He couldn't turn his back on what he believed and that was still what was right and good. "No." He said firmly before his arm shifted into a cannon blaster. "And you're not going anywhere, Lockdown. You have to face what you have done. I have to take you in."

Lockdown narrowed his optics before slowly moving off the ramp to ace Prowl. "Sorry, kid. I can't do that. I made a deal with Megatron and if I back out now, he will send his Decepticons after me."

Prowl froze in shock.

And that gave Lockdown the time to whip up his own cannon and fired.

The energon blast slammed into Prowl's chassis, sending him reeling back until he slammed down into the ground. He cried out in pain as he landed heavily on his door wings, hearing glass shattering.

Before he could act next, Lockdown slammed a foot down on his chassis, denting it painfully and aimed his cannon into Prowl's face. "Sorry, kid. But I got to go. Don't make me hurt you any more than I have to." He said before turning to leave.

However, Prowl lunged back up and grabbed his left arm before quickly snapping stasis cuffs on his wrist and then his own.
Lockdown frowned, whirling to look down at his wrist before growling and turning to face Prowl again. "Damn you." He growled.

Prowl glaring back at him and braced himself and his trapped wrist, trying to tug his partner back with him. He had to keep his friend from making the biggest mistake ever. "Lockdown, I won't let you leave! You are a criminal now! My duty is to arrest criminals! You have to face the consequences of what you have done!" He exclaimed.

Lockdown slowly shook his head as he faced Prowl again, his optics narrowed dangerously. "As I said, I am sorry. But I can't do that." He said before lashing out and grabbing the young mech by the chassis and slamming his helm against his.

Dazed and shocked, Prowl reeled back as he found himself falling, yanking Lockdown with him. He felt a fist then connect with his head again, nearly knocking him offline.

Lockdown raised his cannon again and aimed right at the downed enforcer before pausing. He gritted his denta, shaking his head. He couldn't do it. He couldn't deactivate Prowl.

Glancing down at his trapped wrist, the ex-enforcer glared at the cuffs before his cannon shifted again ad this time it was a lethal sharp blade. "I am sorry, Kid." He said simply before swinging the blade at their trapped wrists.

Prowl stiffened in horror and fear as the blade came down, slicing through the trapped wrist. He cried out in horror and pain as he watched Lockdown slice off his own wrist, spilling energon everywhere, even on the young mech.

And then he saw Lockdown's ped come down hard against his faceplates. He saw nothing else. But he did feel that last megaclick pain as Lockdown shot him in the chassis.

Back to the Present.-

"When I came back online, I was back in the medical facility. I had taken heavy damage to the chassis and faceplates. I also had damage done to my processor. So it is because of Lockdown that I glitch out when things become too strained on my knowledge of the unusual. And Lockdown had gotten away." Prowl finished telling Izzy, who was frowning. "I had failed to apprehend him. But it wasn't long after the Decepticons attacked Iacon and I joined the Autobots."

There was a long silence as Izzy took it all in. She looked grave but thoughtful about what Prowl had told her. She understood his anger but there was just something that wasn't adding up.

"Why didn't he kill you?" She suddenly asked.

Prowl blinked, looking down at her in surprise. He didn't understand her question. "I am sorry?" He asked her.

Izzy looked up at him, frowning. "If your friendship towards Lockdown didn't matter to him, then why didn't he kill you? He had the chance when you were off line? Why did he slice off his hand when he could have done that to yours? He could have sliced you up, taken back the battle computer but he didn't. So why didn't he?" She asked him firmly.

Optics growing wider at the questions, Prowl did see the logic in them. He could only frown, looking away, now asking himself those very questions.
Izzy smiled slowly as she looked up at him. "You see? He couldn't. He couldn't kill you. He couldn't do that to you. Because you were his friend. He cared about you. He turned his back on to killing you because he didn't want to hurt you." She told him, smiling brightly. "Your friendship meant too much to him, Prowl. He won't admit it but he still sees you as a friend."

"I am not so sure about that." Prowl said now reproachful. "It has been vorns since our friendship turned ugly like that."

Still smiling, Izzy shrugged, looking ever so innocent. "Why don't you ask him then? Ask him why he didn't kill you. There is only one way to find out." She told him.

Prowl looked thoughtfully away. He might just as well do that. He didn't see any harm in doing it. And he might just get the answers he deserved.
Can't Cut A Break

Chapter Notes

::Songs Best Used::
Apotheosis-Audiomachine
Wounded Heart-Audiomachine

"Lockdown!"

Lockdown turned from speaking to Derezz about the new turn of events that was sitting right outside the ship. It was turning pretty serious and not many knew just yet of how.

But seeing Prowl practically marching towards him with Izzy sitting and grinning on his shoulder, Lockdown frowned before shaking his head as he turned away. "Not now, kid. I am..." he was saying.

But Prowl side stepped and forced Lockdown to face. "Why didn't you kill me back at that space port?" He suddenly burst, his optics hard with determination, never minding the awkward silence that followed.

Lockdown turned to stare at him, frowning in confusion. "Huh? What're you talking about?"

"Back on Cybertron, when you betrayed me. When you had the chance to deactivate me back at that space port. Why didn't you shoot me? I had not told Safeguard you killed the Senator and given me his battle computer. You could have silenced me. But you didn't. Why?" Prowl asked firmly.

Lockdown stared at him for a moment before shaking his head slowly. "Prowl, we don't have time for this. We have a problem to deal with first." He growled.

"You're avoiding telling me the truth..." Prowl growled irritably.

Lockdown growled right back turning to face him again before whipping up his hook to point at the large window. "No, I am trying to avoid that!" He snapped.

Prowl blinked and looked past Lockdown to see what he was talking about before freezing. He was not the only one to have frozen at what was outside Death's Head. Everyone was looking uneasily at it.

There was an asteroid field blocking the path of the ship. There were asteroids the size of the ship and some even bigger. But that wasn't what everyone was looking at.

No, it was the glaring giant beast sitting right on top of the largest asteroid. A huge, metallic dragon glaring at them with piercing golden optics. Huge metal bat like wings were folded on its back and sharp spikes and horns surrounded its head, making it look almost demonic.

"What the fuck is that?" Fig was the one to ask in shock.

Everyone stared at the metallic dragon that was watching them carefully.
"Dude, is that a..." Sam was asking in surprise.

"That," Airachnid spoke up grimly as she stared at the dragon. "That is a Predacon, everyone. The Predacon Leader. What Predaking is doing out here, I don't know. But judging by the looks of it, he is scouting us out."

Everyone glanced at her, surprised. Lockdown moved over to her still watching the dragon carefully. "A Predacon? All the way out here? How do you know about him? I heard Predaking was only a legend from the Quintessons." He said frowning.

Airachnid shook her head as she watched the dragon carefully. "Trust me, I am surprised as you are to see him. He never leaves his planet. I met him only once and that was because our Arachnidian ship wandered too close to his planet." She sighed as she glanced around outside the ship away from the dragon. "I wouldn't put it past the thought that there are more Predacons somewhere nearby. He has personal guards that stays close to him and even he doesn't need them."

"What are we going to do? Will he attack us if we try and move?" Optimus asked seriously watching the dragon.

"It's possible. Predaking is rather unpredictable and territorial. If we get too close to him, he might attack." Airachnid said gravely. "And we best not let him know we have a Quintesson aboard."

"Why?" Several asked curiously.

"Because he hates Quintessons. The Quinths are what created his kind and tried enslaving them." Airachnid told them.

Everyone stiffened to hear that and it brought a few ideas out in Prowl. "Can we not speak to him? Maybe he will help us then." He said and several nodded in agreement.

Airachnid, however, shook her head as she looked at the Autobot SIC. "He is a loner, Autobot. He and his kind are a desolate kind. They stick only to their selves. They would never do anything to help others out. With Predacons, it is to each of their own." She stated.

"Well either way, we still have to get around him. He is blocking the way. So we best make contact anyway." Lockdown said before looking over at Derezz. "Make contact, Dee. And stay out of sight. We don't need a huge aft dragon coming after us."

Derezz bobbed and floated backwards until he was in an isolated corner of the main cockpit. His optics began glowing as he began activating the exterior communications of the ship. "It is ready, Captain." He said after a moment.

Lockdown nodded and turned his full attention onto the large screen, which centered directly on the dragon's large head. It did not help some nerves or gears that they all got a pretty good look at those fangs the dragon had. "This is Captain Lockdown of the ship, Death's Head. Am I right that you are Predaking, the Leader of the Predacons?" He spoke out.

The dragon's head came up and his head spikes twitched as if acknowledging that he heard the Space Pirate. He lifted his head higher, still watching the ship before him before his burning golden optics narrowed and he dipped his head again. "I am." A growling voice echoed into the ship's speakers.

It surprised everyone that the dragon could even speak. But they were glad that they could communicate with him.
Lockdown nodded as he lift his own head higher. "Very well then. Predaking, we are merely travelling through this quadrant. Obviously, we have spotted you and we would very much like it if we can get by without any incident. Especially being attacked by a huge aft dragon such as yourself."

Everyone stiffened, expecting some type of offence by the dragon.

But it was to their surprise, the dragon's metal scaled mouth curled up as if he was smiling, one optic narrowing. "I see. Captain Lockdown, was it? I will let you pass if you can answer one question of mine." The dragon spoke.

Lockdown frowned but nodded as if the dragon could see him. "All right. What's the question?" He asked carefully.

"I am missing one of my kind. He has been taken from my world that I and my Predacons call our own. Stolen from us. And I would like to know his whereabouts. You have not seen him, have you?" Predaking asked with a slight hiss.

"I am afraid you are the only Predacon I or any of my crew has ever seen. We were under the impression that your kind were extinct." Lockdown immediately answered. "What is his name and what kind of Predacon is he?"

Predaking's optics narrowed and glowing red steam began trickling from his large snout. He did not look convinced. "You are lying. You have seen another Predacon."

Everyone, Lockdown included stiffened. They didn't like this at all.

After a moment, Lockdown vented gravely and nodded. "All right. There was only one Predacon I have come across in my time." He looked serious as ever now. "His name was Grimwing."

The dragon's head came up sharply at the sound of the name, interest clear. "Grimwing, he is my missing Predacon." He then looked back at the ship, almost glaring at Lockdown through the ship. "Where?" He practically demanded.

"He was on Quintessa the last time I saw him. In the arenas." Lockdown said shrugging lazily.

Predacon hissed angrily, his optics flashing as he looked away from the ship. His wings twitched as if he was about to take off. But he didn't. "Quintessa." He growled viciously before his wings slumped as did his head. "Then all is lost."

Everyone now frowned at the words. It sounded like the dragon lord was already giving up just by the mentioning of the wretched planet.

Optimus stepped forward, looking at the dragon through the screen. "Predaking, perhaps we can be assistance then." He said pausing to look at Lockdown when he hissed at him and sliced a servo across his neck as if telling him to shut up. He frowned at him wondering exactly what the problem was.

The dragon, however, perked up at the new voice. "That is not the same voice. You are not the so called Lockdown." He said with a slight growl.

Optimus turned his attention back to the dragon, not exactly caring that Lockdown was trying to get him to shut up. "My name is Optimus Prime, Predaking. And I..." he was saying.

A snarl was what shut him up and made everyone tense up when the dragon snapped his jaws and
his wings raised almost threateningly. "A Prime?! One of those wretched leaders of Cybertron who wished to enslave my kind?!" He snarled, glowing red steam now pouring from the dragon's mouth and snout. He looked ready to breath fire any moment.

Lockdown swore and pointed over at Breakdown. "Raise the shields, Breakdown! If he attacks we need to be ready! Smokescreen, get on the laser cannons! Prime, shut up! Predacons don't like Primes!" He growled.

The three Primes in the room looked startled at the outburst from both the dragon and their host.

"What?! Why?!" Rodimus asked uneasily.

The dragon was snarling, his wings now stretching outward, ready to attack. He was definitely poised to do so any moment.

"Didn't you ever read Cybertron's history files, moron?!" Lockdown growled glaring over at Rodimus, who glared right back. "Long time ago, it was Megatronus Prime, the Fallen Prime who tried to enslave the Predacons when he found out about them! Because of him, Predacons don't trust Primes!"

Everyone winced as they glanced at Optimus who frowned and stepped closer to the screen. "Predaking, I implore you not to attack us because of me. I have no intention to enslaving anybot or anything." He said quickly to resolve the problem he may have just caused.

The dragon only snarled, his frame starting to tense up.

"Predaking, we have a common enemy." Optimus tried. And then sighed softly when the dragon halted from starting to inch forward to ready his attack. "Captain Lockdown is taking myself and many of my mechs and femmes to Quintessa because of the Quintessons. I understand that they created you and tried using you as enslaved beings. But I strongly believe in the right of choice. Every sentient being has a right to choose for their selves. Not to have their rights taken away by some ridiculous idea of enslavement. The Quintessons have stolen my sparklings, Predaking. So I beg of you not to attack us. I only want to rescue my sparklings as well as everyone who the Quintessons have taken."

Now the dragon was standing on the asteroid, his optics narrowed. "Sparklings? You mean hatchlings, correct?" He asked now seeming to relax.

"Yes. My hatchlings as well as a few others. The Quintessons have stolen something from both of us. I just want them back. And if I and my mechs and femmes can, we will be willing to assist you in any way to saving your own." Optimus sad calmly.

Predaking narrowed his optics to slits before he settled back to just sitting on the asteroid. It seemed like he was calming down now. "I have no intention of going to Quintessa, Prime. Not even for Grimwing. Quintessa has done much wrong to my kind. We will never return to that planet. You are fools if you go to that wretch place." He growled before glancing to the side as a new beast appeared. This one looked more like a gargoyle. They seemed to speak to each other but the mechs and femmes and humans couldn't hear what they were saying.

Everyone frowned at one another on the ship, wondering what was going on. They hoped it wasn't about to get out of hand soon.

After a moment, the dragon turned his attention back to the ship. "You may pass then, Cybertronians. We take our leave in other business. But be warned of more than one, there is danger
ahead. Do not be fooled by a sight of innocence or endangered. And I still say you are fools for going to Quintessa.” He said before stretching his wings out and nearly taking the breaths out of everyone aboard the ship by the mere size of them. They were extremely wide in wing span.

But that was short of what else the Cybertronians and human would see.

With a roar into space, the dragon lift up in flight with such grace. But behind him, raised so many different kinds of metallic beasts. There must have been a hundred of them, hiding behind the asteroids. They must have been there the entire time but no one had realized it.

Everyone could only watch as the enormous dragon lead the cloud of metallic beasts away, however pausing, allowing all to pass him.

The dragon turned his head, looking back at the ship. "I wish you well, Cybertronians. If you manage to succeed in rescuing your hatchlings, and perhaps my own, you will be welcomed to our world." He said before turning and flying on.

It wasn't until the beasts were out of sight that everyone breathed easily. That had been extremely tense if not a little disappointing.

"Well, I guess we better get going again." Lockdown said as he looked to Derezz, who slowly came out from hiding. "Derezz, status on the ship."

Derezz's optics glowed for a moment and his entire frame began vibrating. He was silent for a long moment before he turned his attention to Lockdown again. "Captain, the damage sustained from Archnia is at approximately 75%. It seems to me the Arachnidians were not quite careful when being aboard Death's Head. I suggest we stop by the nearest space station for repairs." He stated.

Lockdown growled, shaking his head. He spared a glower towards Airachnid, who grimaced and looked apologetic. "We don't really have time for that, Dee. Can we make it to the Dark regions with what we have?" He asked seriously.

Derezz bobbed slightly. "Aye, we could. But the damage could possibly multiple by that time. And I highly doubt my fellow Quintessons will allow us to repair our ship in their quadrant. The sooner we get the repairs done, the better." He said firmly.

Again, Lockdown growled in frustration as he looked away in deep thought. He obviously didn't like the delay. But his ship was damaged. He really hated that. "Fine. Derezz, locate the nearest space port and make way to it. I will get started on the repairs, myself." He said grumpily.

"Lockdown," Prowl tried to say. "I still would like to..."

Lockdown whirled around glaring at him. "I don't time for this, Kid! Nor do I want to be reminded of the past! So do yourself a favor and forget about it! It's in the past! Leave it there where it belongs!" He snapped.

There was a cold silence as everyone stared flabbergasted at the unsettling scene before them. No one knew what to say or wanted to say anything.

Prowl, startled for a moment stared at Lockdown before his optics narrowed with a certain chill in them. He simply shut down and glared back at his former partner and friend. "Fine." He said coldly before carefully taking Izzy from his shoulder and setting her down at his peds. He gave Lockdown another cold look before turning and walking from the cockpit.

Izzy looked worriedly between the departing mech and then to her adopted Guardian. "LD, would it
really hurt to...?" She was asking.

Lockdown sent her a warning look that caused her to flinch and immediately silence herself. "Izzy, mind your own business! And quit putting ideas in the damn kid's head!" He snapped at her furiously. "From now on, stay away from him! I will not tell you again!"

Izzy cringed as did a few others. "I...I was ju-just trying to help, Lockdown." She stammered in embarrassment, her face flushed and her eyes starting to prickle.

"If I want your help, I will ask for it! Now stop meddling! The kid's past and mine is none of yours," Lockdown snapped before shooting everyone in the room a dark look. "Or any of your's business! There is nothing to fix between me and Prowl! I don't want to hear any more of it, got that?!"

No one said a word but glanced uneasily between Lockdown and the young human, who looked hurt and ashamed. They all knew this was something they shouldn't get into. It was something that Lockdown had to do all on his own.

Izzy, however, stared now tearfully up at her Guardian before slowly and meekly nodding. "I...I'm so-sorry." She stammered.

Lockdown continued to glare down at her before nodding sharply. "Good! You should be! Now you and Smokescreen report down to engine room! Find out if anything is damaged down there and then let me know! If anyone needs me, comm me!" He snapped for another time before stomping out.

Everyone stared bewildered at where he had left. No one wanted to say anything or do anything that might provoke Lockdown from coming back to bite more heads off.

"Iz..." Smokescreen started, now sounding worried.

Izzy, who had tears in her eyes, shook her head furiously before wiping her eyes. She steeled herself, looking very much like a human, femme version of Lockdown. "All right, everyone! Let's get back to work! Lockdown is right! We've messed around enough!" She said rather harshly before turning and starting towards the door. "Come on, Smokescreen!"

Smokescreen winced but hurried to follow after her. He knew better than to ignore her or hesitate. Not with the mood she was in.

Jazz huffed before he looked over at Optimus who shared a concerned glance with him. "Should I go after Prowl?" He asked.

Optimus shook his head as he looked towards the door. "No. We better give him some time to cool off. He is angry right now. But as it is, Lockdown is right. This is between them. They need to work it out on their own." He said before looking at Soundwave. "Soundwave, can you connect with the Ark? I want to make sure things are well on their end."

Soundwave nodded as his visor began glowing brightly. "Affirmative." He said as he began making the connection.

Quintessa-

Sitting in a corner, her head hung low as tears streamed down her cheeks, Mikaela wasn't doing so well. She couldn't believe it. She couldn't believe this was happening. She couldn't have done anything. She wanted to but she couldn't now.
The sparklings were gone.

Mikaela had screamed and cried, begging to go into the vent to find them, to see if they survived. But the Skarkticons wouldn't let her. They just carried her away, back to her cell where Grimwing was waiting with a grim look in his optics.

Sunriser and the Dinobots were nowhere to be seen.

"Wh-where are they?" Mikaela asked weakly.

Grimwing shook his head, still looking grave. He didn't look particularly happy to be the one to tell her. "They were taken to the Derezziation Chamber." He shook his head with a sigh, his wings hanging low. "The Derezziation Chamber is where they fix the problems that the most feisty causes. It is a way of...reprogramming one, sort of speak." He told her.

Mikaela only frowned in confusion but the Predacon refused to go more into details. He figured she would get the idea soon.

And not soon enough there was a loud clang as the doors to their prison opened and several large Sharkticons came in, dragging each of the Dinobots, who did not look so well. They looked half dead, actually. The Sharkticons literately had to drag the three largest Dinos, while one carried Swoop to their cages and pretty much just dropped him onto the ground.

Finally, one came in with Sunriser curled in his arms and unlike the others with the Dinobots, he carefully set her down in her cage before leaving her locked in.

Mikaela scrambled over to her friend's cage and peered in at her. She felt fear striking through her when she saw how dark her optics were. She almost feared the worse. She hoped that Sunriser was all right. "Sunriser." She called.

There was no response.

"Sunriser? Dawn, are you all right?" Mikaela tried again now desperately. "Sunriser, wake up!"

After a moment, the sun rise colored Autobot groaned and her optics lit up but weakly. "Huh?" She forced herself to sit up and rubbed her helm. "Wh-what?"

Mikaela sighed in relief before smiling forcefully. "Sunriser, are you okay? What did they do to you?" She asked worriedly.

Su riser groaned again, still rubbing her helm before looking around, almost confused. She frowned then looked at Mikaela and Grimwing who still watched her carefully. "Hmm?"

"Sunriser, are you all right?" Mikaela asked still worried.

Blinking at her and strangely looking confused, Sunriser slowly nodded. "My helm hurts but I am okay. I guess I did something wrong that deserved some kind of punishment." She didn't seem to notice the confused look Mikaela had now. She just looked around her surroundings before sighing and bringing her legs close to herself. "I just can't remember what I did to be punished though."


Sunriser frowned towards her now, looking agitated. "I already said that I was." She then tilted her head raising one optic ridge. "I'm sorry. But who are you? How do you know my name?" She asked confused.
Mikaela's heart nearly stopped with horror. She couldn't have possibly heard right, had she? Sunriser couldn't possibly not know who she was. "What?! Sunriser, are you serious?! It's me, Mikaela!" She said horrified.

Slowly shaking her head, Sunriser still looked confused. "I am sorry. But I don't know that name." She said firmly.

"I am afraid that Sunriser doesn't know you any more, human." Grimwing said gravely as he looked at the horrified look on Mikaela. "That is what the Derezziation Chamber does. Once you go into the chamber, your memories, your very self is erased. Or at least confined. You are completely reprogrammed. It works on organics as well. A mere...amnesiac weapon I suppose you can say. Anything you say or any names you ask her about, she won't know them. She probably has been programmed to think she is a slave to the Quintessons."

"Well, of course I am a slave to the Quintessons. They are my masters. I have been with them as long as I can remember." Sunriser said, sounding confused and irritated.

Mikaela, still gaping at her friend in horror, just couldn't believe this. She couldn't believe that Sunriser didn't know her. But...did she remember...

"Sunriser, please tell me you remember Sideswipe. Please?" The young human asked weakly.

Sunriser looked at her, frowning, her blue optics narrowing. "Who?" She asked ever so innocently, even though the innocent question was more like a death melody for Mikaela's ears.

"No." Was all the human could say weakly and painfully.

Chirruping and small sniffs of fear and sorrow, they made their way through the darkness.

The oldest two were working together to carrying younger one and the other two youngest followed behind, sniffing and whimpering as they followed the oldest three. They were worried about their injured brother and friend.

They did not need to be told that he was hurt very bad. The smoldering black mark and blistered metal on his back said enough.

"I wan' mama and papa." Sniffled the youngest femme as she held the youngest of them all close to herself.

The oldest femme looked over her wings at her friend, sadly but kept a good grip on poor Omega. "I kno', Beta. I want mine too. But righ' now, we have to find somewhere to hide. Auntie 'Kaela said to hide so we need to hide." She said sorrowfully.

"But wha' bout Omega? He has ouchies. Only mama and papa and unc'a Ratch knows how to fix him. Wha'can we do?" Beta asked sniffling, tears threatening to spill from her optics.

Slipstream shook her head as she turned slightly to look back at Beta and Triggerload again. "I don' know, Beta. But we have to..." she was saying.

Suddenly the vents began rumbling and shaking violently all around the sparklings, making them look around with fear and alarm.

And then, the ground seemed to give out.
There was a loud snap and the vent shifted downward, making all of them slip and slide with loud clanging metal throughout the vent. It could not be helped that all of the sparklings chirred and cried in fear as they slid through the vent until they came to what seemed to be a break.

The sparklings found their selves fall right out of the dark vent, and right into a pair of servos. Two of them.

"Well, well, well. Look what comes falling into our hands, brother? So this is what we heard creeping around in the vents. Sparklings. I was sure it was those damn scraplets that kept chewing on your wings." A deep, booming voice rumbled before them.

"Sparklings? But I thought they couldn't be created anymore." Another deep, booming voice said sounding confused.

The Sparklings blinked at the bright light before looking up to see who now had them. And to their surprise, it was a large midnight blue Seeker and a golden beige Seeker with silver wings. Both had burning red optics.

"Oh, dear. Skyquake, do you still have that stolen medkit you took from the damn five facers? Looks like one of them are hurt." The dark Seeker said lifting up the Sparklings and looked at Omega.

"Uh...sure, Dread. Hang a megaclick." The beige Seeker said now shifting the sparklings he held into his other servo and began poking around in his inner compartments.

"Wh-who are you?" Sizzle was the one to ask uneasily as he and the others looked around, noting that they were in a very dark chamber. It almost seemed that this place was underground somewhere.

The dark Seeker looked to the young grounder and smile as he brought them closer to him. "It is all right, young ones. We won't hurt you. We're just a few Gladiators that those damn five facers have, here. You're in the pits, the Gladiator prison cells. Don't worry, though. None of the others will hurt you. The Terrorcons might but the five facers keep them isolated away from our Gladiator slave chambers. My designation is Dreadwing. And that is my spark brother, Skyquake. We will keep you safe here." He said in a soft rumble before taking the offered medkit from his brother.

Setting the sparklings down softly at his peds, the Seeker, Dreadwing, began carefully tending to Omega's burns, shushing him softly and in comfort when he whimpered in pain. Beta whimpered a little as she felt a dull sting through her bond with her twin brother. But a gentle servo lightly trailed down her back, as if knowing.

"It will be all right, little one. Dreadwing will take good care of him." The beige Seeker, Skyquake said softly as he moved a little closer to the shaking, terrified and exhausted sparklings.

For now, it seemed that they were in good servos.
It was really tense in the engine room. None of the pirates wanted to say anything in worry that their Second In Command might snap. She was furious, no doubt, with how she was practically slamming things down and roughly throwing compartments open to check the machinery behind them.

It was after she sighed, almost defeated that Smokescreen approached her.

"Iz, are you okay?" The young mech asked in concern.

Izzy didn't look up at Smokescreen but nodded anyway, though not very convincing. "I will be fine, Smoke." She said dully.

Smokescreen optic'd her for a moment before shaking his head, looking down at her. "Bull slag. You're not fine." He held up his hands when Izzy gave him a dry look. "Look, Izzy, as your friend, I just gotta say this. You're hurt because of what Lockdown said. What he said hurt you pretty bad. He didn't like what you did, trying to fix it between Prowl and him. And he lashed out."

"Well aren't such a brilliant Psychologist." Izzy said sarcastically, rolling her eyes.

Smokescreen snickered before bending down to one knee next to her. "Why is it so important to you to fix their friendship anyway? Why are you even trying to help? I mean, I like the boss and all, but even I would mind my own business around him. And I don't know too much about Prowl. He seems such a stiff." He remarked.

Izzy snorted as she looked back up at him, nodding. "He is. But even stiffs like him have a little fun streak deep inside of him. He isn't what he seems, Smokescreen. I know he isn't. I know not many sees it but I do. Prowl isn't as serious as he is cracked out to be. I know there is something deep inside him that he is trying to hide. He used to be fun loving, innocent, kind. He is just hiding it under all of the serious, workaholic aura he is showing. I think he is actually softer than he looks. I want to bring that side out of him." She said smiling.

Smokescreen gave a light laugh and gently prodded her side. "Look who's the psychologist now." He then frowned tilting his head. "But why? Why is it so important to you?" He asked now seriously.

Izzy shook her head, looking thoughtfully away. She looked as if she was asking herself that. "To be honest, I don't know. But...Lockdown has done so much for me and Flo, Smoke. He saved us when he should of...could have killed us. He saved us and took us away from that place that we're going back to. He...is like our father. And the one thing that I know that hurt him the most from his past was breaking his ties to Prowl back on Cybertron. I know he doesn't show it but I know it does. I
want to try and help him and Prowl. They used to be like brothers, best friends. Yeah, Lockdown did one little thing wrong. But he can try to make it up. All he has to do is answer one little question. And he won't." She said miserably.

Smokescreen shook his head as he looked down at her. He wanted to help her in anyway but knew he couldn't. He knew she couldn't now either. Lockdown would never allow it. But a light turned on his helm and he straightened. "Hey, I think...I think I might have an idea. It will be kind of risky but if it works, it might help." He told her smiling.

Izzy looked up t him in interest. She could use all of the help she could get to get the friendship back between her Guardian and the Autobot she liked the most.

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"Hey, Flo. Whatch ya doing?"

Flo looked up from the reports she was looking at on the datapad and lo and behold, there was the mech she was highly interested in. She couldn't help but smile up at Jazz as he sauntered up to her. "Hi, Jazz." She glanced back down at the reports in her hand before shrugging. "Just going over some reports for the ship. That's usually what I do." She told him.

Smiling, Jazz bent down and offered his hand to her to step up. He grinned when she obliged him and carefully stood up. "Sounds like fun. Me, I usually do one sentenced reports and it irritates Prowlers but hey, what can he do?"

Flo giggled, amused.

"So...you like music?" Jazz asked still smiling as he began walking.

Flo smiled back up at him, nodding. "Who doesn't? I listen to music when I can but with my duty, I don't usually get to." She told him.

Jazz slowly nodded as he looked thoughtful. "Yeah, that's why I have a huge playlist downloaded into my processor. You familiar with Earth music?" He asked her.

Flo shook her head as she grimaced. "No, not really. We never did get around to being around Earth. I have only heard some of the music but not much. Neither has Izzy or anyone on the ship." She told him.

Jazz teasingly looked shocked before grinning at her. "Flo, my lovely lil' lady. You have no idea what you're missing out on." He told her before his optics lit up. "Does that mean you don't throw parties on the ship?"

Flo smiled suspiciously but shook her head. "A ship in space isn't a place we can throw parties. We have never had a reason to throw any parties as it is. We never have time for them." She said still looking suspicious.

Grinning, Jazz shook his head as he dipped down closer to her. "No reason? No excuse! There is always time for a party! Want to throw one anyway? Livin' up the place a bit? Everyone needs to learn how relax anyway! 'Specially Ol' Lockdown! Come on, lovely lady! Let's throw one! Have a little fun! Get everyone groovin' and moving and maybe it will be a way to get to know each other more." He said sparing a wink at the pretty blonde.

Flo bit her lip somewhat nervous but anxious. She would love to do it. Her only worries were Lockdown. She wasn't sure how he would take a party being thrown. But she was anxious about
how it would turn out.

If Jazz's party idea worked, it would mean everyone would get to know each other and maybe get along.

So Flo smiled and nodded to Jazz. "Okay. I think it is a good idea. And..." she dipped her head a little, almost shy to look up at the grinning Autobot Third In Command. "I would love to...get to know you." She added meekly.

Jazz smiled and carefully lift her head with his finger so she could look him in the optic. "Flo, Lil' Lass, I am already getting to know you and I'm likin' what I see. You are definitely a one of a kind." He told her softly.

Flo blushed but smiled brightly up at him as she reached up and touched his finger. "You are so strange, Jazz. But...sweet. I am liking you too." She said still shy.

Jazz just grinned before his optics brightened. "Oooh! I know who we can talk to about party music! Our two best music players! Let's go find Sounders and Max!" He said now hurrying down the hall with Flo laughing as she clutched onto his hand, loving how fast he was going, even while holding onto her carefully.

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It took some convincing Soundwave but Maximum Wave was all up for it. She was the one to convince her mate for throwing a party. They only could hope it didn't blow up in their faces when Lockdown found out about it.

So during the night's ration hour, Jazz was making sure everyone was there before he grinned and looked over at Soundwave and Maximum Wave, nodding. Both nodded back as they popped open their speakers and began blasting rock music from them.

Everyone in the fueling station jumped at the sudden blast of sound and looked over at Soundwave and Maximum Wave, wondering what they were doing.

But all optics and eyes snapped over to Jazz as he came running through the tables before dropping down and sliding across the ground and began singing The 69 Eyes' song, We Own The Night. It didn't help that Flo came running up and began singing along with him and dancing along. It was only then did some roll their eyes or optics while smiling. They knew what Jazz was up to.

Jazz then motioned to several to get up and start joining in. Some tried to ignore him until the music shifted to LMFAO's Sexy and I know It.

Only then did Knockout snicker before grabbing Moonracer and began dancing with her. She laughed and decided to humor him as she began dancing along.

Slowly, one by one, Autobots and Decepticons began joining in. Stiletto and Roulette dragged their mates into the middle and made them start dancing. Maximum Wave was even dancing around an amused Soundwave while the subunits were running interference and dragging others into dancing.

Smokescreen even joined in, bringing Izzy onto the dance floor, who only laughed, her depression suddenly forgotten.

Even some of the pirates started dancing, not helping bit getting into the groove of the music. Everyone was soon laughing and dancing. Hardly anyone was missing out into joining their selves.
Except one.

Sideswipe watched from where he sat, smiling faintly but he didn't want to join in. He knew Jazz was just trying to help all of the tension between their crew and the pirates. But he just couldn't find it himself to enjoy it. Not without Sunriser. He was glad that even Ironhide and Chromia were enjoying their selves.

Still, Sides just couldn't.

"What is going on here?"

Sideswipe looked up at the sound of Prowl's voice and he smiled as he pointed at Jazz. "Jazz did it. You know how he is. I guess he talked Soundwave and Max into playing the music." He stated.

Prowl frowned looking at his friend, who was dancing with Flo before his optics flickered over to where he spotted Izzy dancing and laughing with Smokescreen. He frowned at the sight before shaking his head and sitting down beside Sideswipe. "That is just like Jazz." He murmured with a scowl but there was a hint of lightness to it.

Sideswipe smiled faintly as he glanced in the direction of Izzy, noting how Prowl was watching her and Smokescreen. "You know, Prowl. I think I like Lockdown's twins." He said being careful of his words, making Prowl look at him with a raised optic ridge. "They really are good girls. Flo is sweet and Izzy is kind of wild but she seems to have a good heart in her. I hear she has been bugging you though. Been trouble?"

Prowl frowned, somewhat suspiciously at him before shaking his head. "Not really. She says she wanted to get to know me. But she hasn't really bothered me." He stated blankly.

Sideswipe nodded slowly still watching him. "Okay. What is she like? You like her?" He pried.

Prowl now narrowed his optics at him. "I do not dislike her, if that's what you mean." He told him.

"Yeah, but do you think she's neat? Is she nice? Is she too much for you? What?" Sideswipe tried again, still smiling.

"Sideswipe, what are you getting at?" Prowl asked irritably.

Sideswipe scoffed as he looked at him before shrugging and leaning against the table to face his higher Commander. "Okay, you want it bluntly? Fine. Izzy likes you, Prowl. And I mean she likes you like Flo likes Jazz. It is so obvious because of how she keeps bugging you. She actually asked you about your past. Has anyone really done that? Even out of the Autobots, 'sides Jazz? She actually tried to help you with Lock..."

Prowl scowled, looking away from him though there seemed to be a new spark in his optics. "She is wasting her time then. Because I cannot even fathom the idea of such a relationship..." he was saying.

Sideswipe scowled right back as he lightly slapped the table to get Prowl to look back at him. "Prowl, is it even logical for Ultra Magnus being with Strika? He is an Autobot who has been fighting her for eons. She is a Decepticon, who wanted to kill him a while ago. I mean, come on. Starscream is with Cole, who is Nighthawk now. And me..." he paused with a pained look on his face. "I fell in love with Dawn. I got her into all of this, and I don't regret it. I just regret not being there to protect her." He said, his shoulders slumping in misery.

Prowl looked at him softly, knowing how much he was hurting without Sunriser. He reached over
and gave Sideswipe's arm a light squeeze. "We will find her, Sides. She will be fine." He said gently.

Sideswipe sighed, his head hanging low. "I hope so. I can't take this anymore. Losing her so many times. If anything were to happen to her..." He choked a little, an electric sob threatening to break out of him. He pushed a little back when he felt Sunstreaker sent him a prying touch through their bond. He glanced up towards his twin, seeing him now looking over with concern but he smiled, shaking his head.

Prowl sighed as he lightly squeezed Sides' arm again. "Nothing will happen, Sides. The Dinobots won't let anything happen to her. We will find her and your sparkling. I promise." He swore softly.

"I know. I just can't help worry. I just...something is wrong, Prowl." Sideswipe said looking up at him with wet optics. "I feel...I feel it. Something is wrong with Sunriser. And we're not getting there fast enough."

Prowl frowned softly but chose not to pry. He didn't know what he could say or do to make things better for him. "She will be fine, Sides. Sunriser...Dawn is strong." He said smiling faintly.

Sideswipe smiled back weakly before blinking and shaking his head, almost forgetting what he was trying to do in the first place. "Anyway, Prowl, you should try and get to know Izzy more! She might surprise you. Go ask her to dance." He said now brightly.

Rolling his optics, Prowl shook his head. "I don't dance, Sides. And I hardly think I am her type, even if she was interested. Besides, why in Primus' name makes you think I am even interested?" He asked optics staring off.

Sideswipe smirked before raising a hand and pointing towards he was looking. "Because you keep looking at her. Or at least in her direction." He said slyly.

Prowl blinked in surprise, glancing at his hand before focusing to where he had been looking and he was surprised that he had been looking at Izzy, still dancing and laughing with Smokescreen. He scowled and looked back at Sideswipe. "I am not interested, Sideswipe. I wasn't looking at her." He said sourly. "Besides, I highly doubt she would even want to..."

"Hey, Prowl!" Both mechs turned to see Izzy looking over at them and waving at him. "Come dance with me!" She called over.

Prowl blinked in alarm while Sideswipe started laughing and hard. He was practically rolling in his seat from laughing so hard.

But after a moment, Prowl frowned and shook his head, now making his way to his peds and turning away. "I think I am going to go back to my quarters now." He said to Sideswipe, who stopped laughing and scowled darkly after him.

The silver swordsmech had seen the disheartened look on Izzy's face, her smile gone and she looked disappointed. He narrowed his optics after Prowl before standing up, shooting a glance towards Sunstreaker, who looked back and smirked. "Let's do it, Sunny." He said now full of determination.

Sunstreaker nodded just as determined and sly before looking over and Jazz, who hadn't noticed. He leaned over the much shorter mech and whispered something to him.

Jazz blinked in surprise, in mid dance with Flo before looking to where Prowl was starting to make a retreat from the room. He scowled, but smirked devilishly before looking over to Soundwave next, who met his optics. 'Sounders, interference time, mech. Stop Prowl from leaving.' He thought towards the telepath.
Soundwave frowned but nodded as he looked towards the black and white and purple Autobot, his visor flashing red.

Prowl immediately stopped as if surprised before looking over his shoulder at Soundwave, frowning.

Suddenly he jumped when his arms were seized and he looked at Sideswipe and Sunstreaker, who had twin smirks on their faces, one's they saved for pulling pranks. "Sideswipe, Sunstreaker..." The Second in Command began in warning.

"Sorry, mech. But you are having at least one dance before you leave." Sunstreaker sad sly before he and Sides began hauling a now scowling Prowl through the dancing crowd, where they met with a smirking Maximum Wave.

"Darling, you ain't leaving yet." She said with determination before seizing Prowl by the arm, who stiffened, looking at her with wide optics. She swung him around to face her before she began moving to the now energetic electronic beat now playing. And she began to sing loud while dancing close to the disturbed Prowl.

Smirking from where they stood, Nightbird, Stiletto and Roulette nodded as if they received a message from Max when she tossed her head towards them and jerking it for them to join in.

"What's going on now?" Starscream asked raising his optic ridge at his mate.

Nightbird smirked devilishly before looking at him. "The twins are setting a trap for Prowl. Jazz's orders. Remember what happened that night when we had our first dance off?" She asked and nodded when Starscream's optics widened. She quickly kissed him before scurrying over with the femmes to join Max trapping Prowl in the middle.

Prowl was stiff as a board in the middle of dancing femmes and even Jazz, Sideswipe and Sunstreaker dancing around him. He knew what they were doing but he refused to be goaded into it. He wasn't going to play this stupid game. "You're wasting your time." He scowled at everyone around him.

"Is that so?" Nightbird asked as she danced next to him before grabbing his shoulder spinning him to face her. "Well, if you want to just stand there, like a pole, then you will be one." She said evilly as she looked at the other femmes, who smirked.

Immediately Prowl knew he was going to regret this.

Especially when Nightbird began dancing suggestively, only looking at Starscream as she practically used him as a dancing pole.

His optics wide and his fans clicking on in embarrassment, Prowl grew stiffer while the other femmes even started dancing seductively, optics on their mates, who were smirking or looking a little jealous. His optics quickly flicked around the room for anyone that would be willing to help him out with this.

But to didn't seem like anyone would.

His optics then landed on Smokescreen, where Izzy was frowning rather darkly. She did not approve of what they were doing at all. She actually looked pissed.

Suddenly, there was a flash of green from above, making Izzy look up to see a string of spider webbing swinging her way.
Smirking from where she was hanging on the ceiling, Airachnid motioned to the string. "Well, you don't like it? Do something about it." She said folding her arms and clicking her spider legs against the ceiling to the beat of the music.

Smirking back, Izzy nodded as she glanced at Smokescreen, who smiled and lift her up so she could grab a hold of the swinging string. She kicked off hard from the young mech's shoulder and swung over and around many dancing mechs and femmes until she came right next to Prowl. She grabbed a hold of one of his shoulder pipes and climbed on, folding her arms, giving everyone her best glare to back off with trying to fight off a smirk.

The femmes dancing around Prowl smirked back, raising their hands in mocking defeat as they moved back.

Prowl, still uneasy, looked at Izzy who smirked back at him before she began spinning on her feet to the beat of the music, dancing across his shoulders. She spun across his back struts, coming to the other side where she slid down his arm.

Having no choice other than either raising his arm to steady her from falling or just letting her, Prowl raised his arm so she could stand back up and began dancing to the beat of Gia Farrell's Hit Me Up, moving and swinging to the beat. She moved at the right beat, twisting and spinning at the rhythm.

Prowl watched her with wide optics as she danced up and down his arm before quickly raising his other when she made to step off him. He allowed her to start dancing and moving across his palms until she turned to face him, still dancing and smirking up at him.

It couldn't be helped but there was a hint of a smile now on the Autobot's face, making several observers smirk or grin as they high fived their neighbors. They saw the fascination in his optics.

"Come on, Prowl. You really going to let me dance alone?" Izzy called over the loud booming music.

Prowl snorted as he tilted his head and raised his optic ridge at her. "I think you are doing fine on your own. Besides, I do not dance." He said somewhat dryly but he couldn't hide the amusement in his tone.

Izzy grinned as she glanced down off his hand before she pointed down. "Oh, yeah? How come your peds disagree?" She asked before she reached out as a string of webbing came swinging towards her.

Prowl blinked in surprise and looked down at his peds and to his bewilderment, one of his peds was actually tapping to the beat of the music. He hadn't even realized it.

"Hey, Prowl!" Izzy called as she swung around him on the string, making him look up again only to jerk around as she swung in circles around him. He stood his ground but looked at her as she swung on the strings, spinning on it and even dropping down from it.

His spark leaping, Prowl quickly reached out to catch her.

Izzy, however, balled up and barrel rolled onto his palm as the song started to come to a close. She spun one leg under herself and was back on her feet, her long black hair now had fallen out of their pony tails, hanging around her face as she practically jumped over onto his chassis, which he quickly caught her with his hand as carefully as he could.

Prowl, holding Izzy close to him to keep her from falling couldn't help but shake his head as he looked down at her with a hint of a smile on his face plates. "You are crazy. You could have injured
yourself.” He said shaking his head.

Grinning up at him, her hands clutching at the seams on his chassis, Izzy winked. "Oh, come on, Prowl. I know you would catch me, wouldn't you?" She asked almost flirtatious.

Prowl only shook his head, trying to fight back a smirk bit failing.

"WHAT THE FRAG IS GOING ON HERE?!" Lockdown's voice suddenly boomed into the room.

The music suddenly died off and everyone jerked to see the now pissed off looking Lockdown glaring around the room at everyone. Especially when his optics fell onto Izzy and Prowl, his optics flashed dangerously. He was no doubt one very angry Guardian, seeing Izzy clutching onto Prowl and then seeing Flo cringing against Jazz, who winced.

Everyone knew they were in trouble now.
Everyone cringed when they could hear the shouting behind the closed Captain's quarters. They knew Lockdown was pissed. But no one knew exactly why it was Flo and Izzy who was getting yelled at. It wasn't like Izzy really any part to it.

As it was, it had been Jazz's idea in the first place, who was currently being held back by Optimus from storming into the Captain's quarters to get Lockdown's focus off of Flo and Izzy.

"WHAT DID I FRAGGING SAY, IZZY?! DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM PROWL?!!" Lockdown shouted at Izzy as she stood on his desk, glaring at him. He switched his attention to Flo next. "AND YOU! WHAT WAS WITH THAT RACKET IN THE FUELING STATION?!!"

"We were just having fun, Lockdown!" Izzy snapped back from where she glared at him.

Lockdown jabbed his hook towards her, pointing it. "By making too much noise! On! My! Ship!"

"Our ship, Lockdown!" Izzy snarled back, her eyes ablaze while Flo looked uneasily between the two. It was like a shouting stand off now. "It is OUR ship! Mine, Flo's and yours!"

Lockdown glared down at her before slamming his hand and hook down on the table beside the girls, making Flo flinch away while Izzy stood her ground, hands balled up tightly. "Who saved you from Quintessa, Izzy?! Who got you out of there?! ME! On this fragging ship!" He snarled into her face.

"Technically it was Derezz who rescued us, Lockdown! He gave us the ship to escape on!" Izzy snarled back.

Snarling, Lockdown pointed his finger at her, still leaning heavily on the desk. "Izzy, I am not going to tell you again! Stay AWAY from the kid! And you!" He snapped now glaring at Flo, who was on the verge of tears. "Stay away from Jazz! He is trouble! Always has been! Do you even know what he is capable of! Has he even told you that he wasn't just a spy back on Cybertron?! He used to be an assassin too! He is dangerous! So stay away from him!"

"Oh, like you haven't killed anyone, Lockdown!" Izzy snapped now coming to her crying sister's defense. She didn't like how hurt and upset Flo was getting. She didn't like how Lockdown was yelling at her.

"You stay out of this, Izzy!"

"YOU STOP YELLING AT FLORENCE!" Izzy yelled right back into Lockdown's face, their faces very well a foot apart now, glaring at each other. "She likes him! He likes her! So what is the fucking big deal?!"

Lockdown snarled now stepping back, his fist balled up with a metal groaning vice grip. "The deal is they aren't staying with us, you two! They are Autobots! They're not even the same species as you!"

"So fucking what?! It didn't stop the others, did it?! Nightbird, Roulette and Stiletto used to be humans like us! And apparently so did Sunriser, Sideswipe's mate! And they worked it out!" Izzy snapped before folding her arms. "Why don't you really tell us what this is about, Lockdown?! What
are you scared of?! Why won't you try and work it out with Prowl?! You had one little fall out! But even fall outs can be reversed! He wants to talk to you...!"

Lockdown snarled again before kicking out and slamming his foot against one of his chairs, sending it flying back until it slammed into the wall. "THAT'S IT! I HAVE HAD IT!" He roared angrily before whirling away from them, stomping towards the door with the girls watching with unease.

Throwing the door open, the Space Pirate captain stomped down the hall to where he found everyone either standing around in the Chambers corridor or kind of hiding in their rooms.

"Derezz, when do we make port at the nearest space station?!" Lockdown practically snarled as he looked at his Third.

Derezz turned to face him and did not look too pleased at being snapped at. "Lockdown, do I need to remind you that shouting will not answer anything?" He huffed when Lockdown glared at him. "We will be arriving at the Equinox Beta Space port in an orn." He stated dryly.

Lockdown nodded sharply before swiveling to face Optimus who grimaced, still holding onto Jazz to keep him from causing a scene. "Prime, ready your entire crew! You all are off my ship!" He snarled.

Everyone froze in shock and alarm. They weren't expecting that one.

Optimus let his hand fall from Jazz's shoulder, now looking worried. He knew this wasn't good. They needed Lockdown's help and being thrown off the ship wasn't helping. "Lockdown, can we please just work this out? We need to go to..." he was saying.

"No! Since your lot has been on my ship, I have had nothing but trouble! I have probably lost a few clients because of your fragging self righteous mission! I am not even getting paid for helping you! My ship is a wreck! And while you're throwing raves, I am the only one fixing it! And now two of your fragging bots are after my girls!" Lockdown growled, his slanted optics flashing dangerously.

"We are not..." Prowl scowled.

But Lockdown whirled to face him, jabbing his hook towards him. "Then what was that, kid?! Tell me that I didn't see you up and close to Izzy!" He snarled viciously.

Prowl narrowed his optics, his door wings stiff with fury. "I have no interest in her, Lockdown! What that whole thing was, it was myself preventing her from falling and hurting herself! Do not assume that I am even interested in Isabella! As for the party, it was one of Jazz's ideas to bring peace between your crew and ours! You wanted us to get along and so he was trying to make that possible in the only way he knows how to do it! Through a celebration! A party!" He snapped.

Lockdown glared fiercely into Prowl's optics, both nearly face to face now. "I want all of you off my ship! I have never had so much trouble before all of you came around! And believe me, I have had trouble before!" He growled.

"Why don't you tell is what this is really about, Lockdown?" Prowl growled right back.

Still glaring, Lockdown shook his head as he finally stepped back and folded his arms. "I want you off my ship. All of you! When you make port, you get off! We ain't going to Quintessa anymore. I got better things to do." He growled before swinging away and glared at the girls still on his desk. Though it didn't miss anyone's attention that both looked hurt and angry. However, Flo was glaring at Lockdown while Izzy was looking at Prowl. "Izzy, Flo! You are confined to your rooms until these guys are off the ship! Then we will talk about your insubordination later!"
"I hate you."

Everyone froze at those words, Lockdown included. They all looked at the one who said that and was almost shocked that Flo had even said that.

"What?" Lockdown asked surprised.

Flo just shook her head as she glared hard at her Guardian. She looked furious, with tears now streaming down her cheeks, her hands balled up. "I said," She said quiet before raising her voice. "I HATE YOU! HOW DARE YOU, LOCKDOWN! HOW DARE YOU DO THIS TO THEM! THEY NEED OUR HELP AND HERE YOU ARE PROVING PROWL RIGHT! YOU ARE SELFISH! YOU CARE ONLY ABOUT YOURSELF! I LIKE JAZZ! SO THE HELL WHAT?! HE IS FUNNY AND CHARMING! I DON'T CARE IF HE USED TO ASSASSINATE OTHERS! HE ISN'T LIKE THAT! I HATE YOU SO MUCH!" She practically screamed before hurrying over to the table edge and she climbed down to the ground.

With another fierce glare shot at Lockdown, Flo ran down the hall to where her quarters were, tears flowing down her angry red cheeks.

"Flo." Jazz said sadly, watching her go. He wanted so much to go after her but he knew it might cause bigger problems that he seemed to already have caused.

Almost stunned, Lockdown stared after his younger ward before glancing at Izzy, who was carefully climbing down from the table and hurrying to follow after her twin. "Iz..." he was saying.

Izzy spared him her own fierce look before shaking her head, her eyes full of their own tears and rage. "Don't talk to me! You have done enough!" She snapped before looking over at Prowl, her shoulders shaking from anger and pain. "You too! Why don't both of you go sink your fat heads in a bowl of acid!"

And then she hurried down the hall to go find Flo.

Prowl was startled by her words but knew why she said it. He knew his own words, when he said had no interest in her had hurt her. His door wings slumped down behind him before he vented a sigh. For once, in a long time, he felt ashamed of himself. He should have never said those words but he couldn't very well take them back. Not after he already said it.

There was an unsettling silence between everyone as they all either looked at Prowl or Lockdown, who were obviously upset by what just happened.

But after a moment, Lockdown whirled away from everyone and stomped back into his quarters, slamming the door shut. He didn't need or want to say anything to anyone.

"Optimus? What now?" It was Sentinel who asked the dreaded question.

Optimus sighed, his head lowering. He didn't want to say it but he didn't have a choice. "Round everyone up and tell them to prepare to un-board the ship once we arrive to the space port. We can only respect Lockdown's wishes to get off." He said gloomily.

Everyone sighed in sorrow and disappointment. No one wanted to hear that. Especially Sideswipe as his shoulder plates slumped an electric choke escaped from him. He allowed his twin brother to wrap an arm around him his own sorrow, knowing just how upset he was. They, and everyone, knew that Lockdown had been their only hope to finding their beloved ones. And now, that hope seemed lost.

Jazz slumped, his entire frame riddled with guilt, shame and sorrow. "I am so sorry, guys. This is all
my fault. I should' neva' talked Flo into throwing that party." He said gloomily.

"You were just trying to help the situation, Jazz. It isn't your fault." Optimus said trying to be reassuring.

But it didn't help.

The Equinox Beta space port was not colonized port like Alpha Beta had been. It was more like a rest stop for ships. It wasn't even that big but it was enough for Death's Head.

Everyone was in a solemn mood. No one wanted to say anything. Not even the space pirates. None of them seemed happy any more with Lockdown's decision. Not even the pirates who protested the Cybertronians and humans being on the ship. They had gotten to know them at the party and even started to like them.

But as it was, Lockdown's word was final. He wanted the Autobots and the Decepticons and their humans off. So they had no choice.

"You're making a big mistake, Lockdown." Derezz said as they started to dock the ship.

Lockdown scowled at him as he watched the proceedings. He didn't want to hear a lecture from Derezz right now. "Don't even start, Dee. I mean it." He growled as the ship docked and started locking on the space port docking bay.

Derezz vibrated in disapproval as he floated next to his old friend. "They need our help, Lockdown." He said still in disapproval.

"We ain't getting paid. Who fragging cares?" Lockdown growled back.

"They will not make it on time to saving their sparklings and beloved ones."

"As I said, who fragging cares!"

Derezz scowled, his tentacles twitching in irritation. "Izzy and Flo does."

Lockdown growled but didn't reply.

"Lockdown, you are going to lose the girls." Derezz pressed again.

"I already fragging lost them, Derezz!" Lockdown snarled now whirling to face his five faced friend, glaring mirthlessly. "I lost them to those goody goody drum barrels of slag! Prowl and Jazz has meddled...!"

"Why don't you say it already, Lockdown?" Derezz interrupted fiercely. "You're afraid to lose the girls completely. You don't want them falling for Jazz and Prowl. Well, guess what, old friend? They already have. And with you now refusing to help mechs and femmes in need, in saving lives from my brethren, you are proving Prowl right. You are being selfish. You want to keep the girls for your own, Lockdown. But you cannot. You are their father, their creator, their Guardian. How can you protect them if you do not allow them to grow up. They are humans, not some prized possessions. They are full grown now. They are not sparklings anymore."

Lockdown growled but looked away. "I know that, Derezz. But why them? Why a fragging former spy and killer and the kid?" He growled in frustration.
Derezz bobbed and twisted as if shaking his head, which was his entire frame. "Why not? The stories you told them about Prowl, Lockdown, that is where it all started for Izzy, you know that. He is not..."

"He don't even care about her." Lockdown growled viciously.

"Oh, but he does, Lockdown. He doesn't know it yet. He cannot see his own feelings clearly because of his hatred for you." Derezz spoke calmly. "You did something wrong in many ways. You should take to him, explain to him why you left him alive back on Cybertron. He would understand if you just told him the truth."

Lockdown grumpily looked away. "I can't tell him that, Derezz. How the frag can I tell him that? He doesn't need to hear that our..."

"I think otherwise, Lockdown." Derezz said, before patting his friend's shoulder with one of his appendages. "He needs to know how you really are to him. And he will understand. He will not hold you in ill. As for the girls, you need to make amends and allow them to grow. If they wish to fall for Autobots, more or less, your former partner, you should let them. Who better than the one mech you know the most, who will be good to her, maybe even tame her a little?" He added with a chuckle.

Snorting in dry humor, Lockdown shot him a look. "Izzy don't need tamin'. She is fine how she is. The kid just needs to lighten up." He said sourly.

Derezz gave Lockdown quite a sly look for someone who couldn't even change his expressions. It was all the nature that the space captain knew how to pick up from the five facer. "Who better to lighten Prowl up than Izzy?" He asked almost secretly before floating out of the room.

Frowning, Lockdown looked after him before looking back out the window at the Equinox Beta space port, almost thoughtfully.

It was time.

The Autobots and Decepticons and their humans knew it was time to leave Death's Head and no one was really happy about it. They were all upset that Lockdown had ordered them off ship. They had no idea what they were going to do now.

Optimus had Soundwave contact the Ark already on their way to the port and asked for assistance. He told their comrades and friends that they would need to come pick them up from the Equinox Beta space port so they could continue onto Quintessa. They were not going to give up on their mission. No matter what they were going to do, they were going to push forward to rescue their beloved ones.

So as far as they knew, The Ark would be on its way to pick them up.

Once the ship was docked, Lockdown went to find Optimus, who was instructing the Autobots and Decepticons to start unloading all of their equipment on the space port grounds. He was also talking to Prowl, who took one look at Lockdown and glared before turning back to Optimus.

"I will get started searching the space port for any space worthy ships that will be willing to take our mission, Optimus." Prowl said rather icily before he turned and started walking away.

"Prowl, I would rather you didn't go alone..." Optimus was saying.

But Prowl was already gone, leaving down the docking ramp in quite a huff.
Optimus sighed as he watched his Second march away without so much as a glance behind him. He knew Prowl was still very steamed, if not upset with how things were turning out. Jazz was the same. The Third was in guilt mode at the moment, feeling that it was his fault that everything turned into the Pits. No matter what anyone said, he blamed himself.

"Kid still fragged off, huh?" Lockdown asked as he sidled up to the Prime.

Optimus gave the captain quite a dry look, shaking his head. "Can you honestly blame him, Lockdown? You not only accused him of certain things that cannot be helped but you are also abandoning us when we need you." He said sourly before he too walked away.

Lockdown huffed in irritation before looking over at Derezz as he instructed some pirates to helping the Autobots and Decepticons and their humans to packing stuff up and unloading them.

For a long moment, the pirate was quiet, thinking deeply about the whole thing. He only looked over when he heard someone approaching him. He didn't say anything against it being Airachnid. "You gonna lecture me too?" He asked when he saw how serious she looked.

Airachnid slowly shook her head as she looked at him. "You know this isn't right, LD. While I am usually up for self important things, even I have to say it. They need your help. Lives are at stake here. Sparklings' lives. Knowing that, I would want to help out as much as possible. Abandoning them just because a couple of their mechs are falling for your girls and your sensory units are ruffled like a big over protective Grizzly Papa Bear, it just isn't right. You better rethink your priorities or you will truly lose Izzy and Flo." She said before huffing and folding her arms. "You know you want to protect them but this isn't the way to do it."

Lockdown was quiet, looking off with a moody look. He didn't want to listen. He wanted to do things his way. He always had. It was how he survived.

But...

Sighing, Lockdown forced a smirk aimed at the spiderfemme, who smirked back and arched one of her optic ridges at him. "How is it you always know what to say to make me feel like an idiot?" He asked sarcastically.

Airachnid's smirk widened as she shifted her weight. "Because I am your future spark mate, that's how. You know I'm right. I am always right." She said before leaning over and bumping her spider thorax against his hip.

Smirking, Lockdown gave her a sly look before he frowned seriously and looked around at everyone still starting to unload the supplies. He vented deeply, his optics shuttering for a moment and then snapped them open in a stern way. "Crew!" He snapped very loudly and almost angrily, making everyone jump and turn to see what had him mad again. "What the frag are you doing?!"

Everyone but Airachnid and slowly Soundwave looked confused. The large Decepticon's optics lit up and he smirked.

"Uh...helping the Autobots and Decepticons unload their stuff." One pirate called out, sounding uneasy.

Lockdown glared at that pirate, as if furious with him. He balled up his fist and practically marched down the ramp to where everyone was looking uneasy. "Well, get all of that slag back on the fragging ship! Once we've repaired the ship, we're taking off again! We don't have a whole lot of time left if we want to reach Quintessa to save those sparklings and the femmes and dinosaurs!" He
snapped.

Everyone froze in shock.

And then slowly, one by one, mechs and femmes smiled as they realized what he meant. Even the pirates. They knew he had suddenly changed his processor.

"Well?! Get to fragging work! Get this slag back on the ship!" Lockdown roared, trying to hide a smirk from everyone.

Immediately, everyone got moving and quickly. Pirates began grabbing supplies and practically running back to the ship while the Autobots and Decepticons cheered and high fived each other and the humans looked relieved. Even Jazz perked back up, smiling with Sideswipe and Sunstreaker.

Optimus made his way back over to Lockdown, smiling gratefully. "What made you change your mind?" He asked softly.

Lockdown huffed as he motioned to Airachnid. "Just be lucky I do value some's opinions, Prime." He paused before sighing and glancing over at Jazz, who was looking quite happier now. "M' gonna want to be talking to your Third about him even thinking about courting my girl. The kid too." He glanced over at Derezz, who was watching them with twinkling amused optics. "I think I better have a long chat with Prowl too. There's...something I have to talk to him about." He added.

Optimus smiled but nodded. He knew it was between Prowl and Lockdown only. So he would keep his sensory unit out of it. "Thank you, Lockdown. This does mean a lot to us." He said softly.

Lockdown waved his hook at him as if brushing him off. "Don't get mushy on me, Prime. I am still having second thoughts about this deal of ours." He grumbled.

Chuckling, Optimus nodded, knowing that the pirate was half lying.

"Uh...Cap-Captain?"

Lockdown, Optimus and Airachnid looked over to see quite an uneasy Smokescreen approaching them and it made all of them frown. It couldn't be helped that they felt like something was wrong.

"What, Smokescreen?" Lockdown growled out.

Smokescreen ducked his head, looking almost terrified. His door wings were twitching in anxiety and he was wringing his hands together. "Uh...I...uh...

Lockdown huffed in irritation, glaring at the young mech. He didn't have a whole lot of patience right now and Smokescreen was pushing it. "What?! Spit it out already!" He said sharply before shooting Optimus a look as if telling him to calm down.

"Smokescreen, what's wrong?" The Prime asked calmly, looking at the young Autobot/Pirate.

Smokescreen had flinched when Lockdown snapped at him but then looked just as uneasily at Optimus as he met the calm and caring blue gaze. He vented softly before steeling himself like a true soldier, door wings still twitching nervously. "It's Izzy and Flo, sirs. I think they might have ran away once when landed on the port's docking bay.

Optics snapped wide open in shock and alarm before Lockdown simply roared out, "WHAT??"
"Come on, Flo. We need to find a good place to hide." Izzy said as they ran down the corridors of the space port, as if a Terrorcon was chasing them. They knew they needed to find somewhere to hide so that Lockdown or any of the crew wouldn't find them, though they were sure that no one was looking for them right now.

As it was, the twins were supposed to be in their quarters on the ship.

It had been discussed the night before, after Lockdown and the girls had their fight. The girls had been so upset of what happened that they decided to leave. They loved Lockdown but they just couldn't follow through with his order. They wanted to help the Autobots, Decepticons and their humans.

Even if Izzy was pretty pissed at Prowl for what he had said.

They just didn't sit too well with the idea that they couldn't help the group with rescuing their loved ones. They wanted to help. And Flo really did like Jazz. She openly admitted it to her twin and that was why Izzy suggested this. They wanted to stay with the travelers. Even if it didn't mean Izzy could win Prowl over.

So the twins decided to hide until Death's Head was gone before they approached the group and tell them that they still would help.

Izzy and Flo knew Lockdown would be pissed but they didn't care. They knew that it would make the Autobots uneasy and probably the Decepticons and their humans, but they didn't care. They knew the group needed as much help as they could get and they were willing to help. It was their choice. So if Optimus Prime was serious about free will and choices, they knew he would respect their choice to help them.

So they made their way, quickly down the halls of the space port, searching for somewhere to hide.

And that was when they rounded a corner and then squealed in alarm as a foot came down right in front of them.

Jerking back, both looked up with wide eyes only to see an equally surprised Prowl there as he looked down at them. He hadn't even noticed them at all. But there they were.

"Isabella? Florence?" Prowl asked in bewilderment.

Izzy immediately started glaring at him, her arms folded across her chest. She was still furious with him and refused to speak to him more than she had to.

"What are you two doing here? I thought you were confined to your quarters." Prowl said frowning as he carefully bent down to one knee guard to level with them.

Izzy looked away darkly while Flo winced. They didn't know what to say. But it couldn't be helped that the more innocent of the two looked shamefully down at the ground. She couldn't lie. She never could. "We...we...um...sort of ran away."

Prowl blinked in surprised at them. "Wh-what?" He asked now uneasy.

Izzy finally looked up to him still scowling. "We want to still help you find your sparklings and friends. So we snuck off the ship and we are going with you to Quintessa." She said fiercely.

Blinking in surprise again, Prowl let her words register in his processor before he frowned sternly and shook his head. He couldn't believe them. He couldn't believe they would put their selves in
such danger. He couldn't let them. "No." He said sternly.

Both girls blinked in surprise before it was Izzy who glowered darkly at the Autobot. "What do you mean, no?" She asked almost in warning.

Prowl met her eyes just as firm and shook his head as he raised his door wings high. "I mean no, you cannot come with us. It is too dangerous and we do not need Lockdown coming after us because of you two." He said now holding his hand out to them.

Immediately Izzy snapped backwards, dragging Flo back away from him. She glared fiercely at him as she continued to walk backwards. "Fuck that!" She growled. "We want to help, Prowl! You need our help! It's our choice! Can't you respect that!"

Prowl huffed in irritation as he glowered at her. "Not if it means you are in danger, Isabella. And like I said, we do not need Lockdown coming after us because you want to help us." He told her sternly.

Izzy shook her head as she glowered right back at him. "Lockdown is being selfish! You were right! He doesn't care about anyone but himself..."

"He does care about you, Izzy." Prowl argued. "And that's why he doesn't..."

"Then how come he doesn't let Flo be happy?! She likes Jazz! And I li...well, I just want her to be happy!" Izzy said, sounding a little emotional but trying to hide it.

"Izzy..." Prowl said with a sigh, knowing exactly what she had been wanting to say before cutting herself off.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here? If it isn't Lockdown's girls."

All three froze when they heard the familiar voice. The girls gasped and snapped together, arms wrapped around each other as if shielding each other from the owner. Prowl whirled away from them, turning on his heel and knee to look at the mechs that were behind him. Eyes and optics fell directly on the one mech that none of them wanted to see.

Doubledealer.

Lockdown's rival and most hated enemy was surrounded by his body guards, all sneering as they looked at the three. Their weapons were out, charged and on Prowl, due to him being the bigger threat. One or two were on the girls, probably as a warning to him that they would fire if he tried anything.

"So, since you are here, I guess Lockdown is too. And that works out just for us." Doubledealer sneered as he optic'd the girls with a hunger that even Prowl didn't like. "I guess we have our leverages after all."

Prowl slowly stood, his blue optics burning in serious determination as he raised a hand, waving at the girls to move behind him out of Doubledealer's sight. "Doubledealer, was it not?" He asked working on his battle computer for any kind of plan that didn't involve the girls getting hurt. He wasn't finding very good options.

"Doubledealer looked at him, his smirk growing vile. "An Autobot too, eh? Good. Take him down." He said coldly as he jabbed his servo at him. "But don't deactivate him. I think we could put some use into him."

Prowl's door wings snapped up, his optics flashing before he jerked his arm up, twisting and shifting
it quickly into his blast cannon. He heard Izzy and Flo scream when the firing started but he remained between them and the fiery blasts coming towards them, determined to keep them safe.

"NO!" Izzy, screamed over all of the blasts now echoing through the halls. "PROWL!"
Dealing With The Beast

Chapter Notes

::Songs Best Used::
Danuvius-Audiomachine
Ironwing-Two Steps From Hell
Archangel-Two Steps From Hell
All Nightmare Long-Metallica
Color The Sky-Two Steps From Hell
(Really listen to this song at the end of this chapter)

Everyone was in a rush.

Once the words had been out of Smokescreen's mouth, and Lockdown was roaring in anger, the orders came out. Everyone was to spread out and search the space port for Izzy and Flo. They were to locate them and bring them back to Death's Head. That also included the Autobots and Decepticons and their humans. Everyone was searching for the twins. Optimus was currently trying to reach Prowl but for some reason, his Second wasn't answering the calls. He tried and tried and eventually told everyone to be on the lookout for him, just in case Prowl had turned off his communications because of how furious he was with Lockdown.

Still, it worried everyone. Even after they spent a whole hour searching for the twins and even the Autobot Second in Command. No one knew where to find them. So when several turned back up to the ship to report to the Primes and Lockdown, no one had any happy news for them.

"We have looked everywhere, even asked some of the locals if they have seen them but nothing." Thundercracker told the four.

Optimus frowned, wearily. "And no word from Prowl?" He received shaking heads from everyone and he sighed, now looking worried. "Soundwave?"

The large Decepticon looked over at him from speaking to his subunits, who made their reports. He also shook his head. "Negative, Optimus Prime. Laserbeak has reported residue of a fight on the West side of the space port but it cannot be determined if it is any of our comrades. Possibly a disagreement between other life forms. But still no word." He reported.

Sighing heavily Optimus looked around with worry, only to pause as Derezz came whizzing up towards them. He frowned at the sudden urgency of the Quintesson, hoping he might have something.

"Captain, we just received a transmission." Derezz said urgently. "It's from Doubledeler."

Lockdown growled at the very name before waving a dismissal to his five faced friend. "We don't have fragging time from that back stabbing son of a glitch, Dee. Tell him to frag..." he was snarling as he turned to face another one of his pirates.

But Derezz quickly caught Lockdown's shoulder with one of his appendages and forced him back around. "No, Lockdown. I think you better come see this transmission. Doubledeler has the girls
and the Autobot." He said almost coolly.

Everyone looked at him in wide optics before they bolted towards the ship.

Entering the main room, Lockdown, the Primes and nearly everyone was treated to a horrible sight on the big vid screen.

Doubledealer was in the center of the screen, smirking evilly at those before him. He looked like a devil, who had gotten his way. Right behind him on his left, one of his goons had Izzy and Flo in his grasp. Both looked all right, except their faces were pale and they had tears streaming down their cheeks. Izzy was looking away from the screen across the way from behind Doubledealer.

On the right, there was a mech blocking the view of where Prowl obviously was. No one could see him just yet. But judging the look on Izzy's face, it probably wasn't good.

However, it came to a surprise that the mech did look a little beaten up. He had dents all over his frame and energon stained his chin. He had definitely been in a fight. Though, now that everyone did look around at some of Doubledealer's mechs, some did look pretty beaten up. They had been in a fight and by the looks of it, it was not too long ago.

"Doubledealer!" Lockdown snarled in rage as he glared hatefully at his enemy. "Let the girls go before I rip your vocoder out! Where is the Autobot?!"

Doubledealer sneered before waving his servo to his right and his goon stepped aside to show Prowl.

There were hisses of shock, pain and alarm when they saw him.

Prowl was on his knees, almost hunched over. There was dents and gashes all over his frame, spilling energon down his sides. His hands were trapped behind his helm with what looked like an electricity beam sitting directly on his shoulder plates. One of his door wings looked like it was hanging on by the hinges. And from his mouth, there was thick trail of energon spilling. He was beaten up pretty bad. But he was alive and he was online, glaring furiously at Doubledealer's back.

"Doubledealer! Let them go, you fragger!" Lockdown snarled, amongst a few others who looked furious with Prowl's condition.

Doubledealer put a thoughtful look on his face as if considering it before he sneered. "How about no? At least not without making a deal first." He said smartly.

Lockdown and several others snarled in rage. He knew that was going to come up sooner or later. That was how Doubledealer was like. He made deals. Much like a certain red one optic mech. He growled, now glancing around to see if he could see that idiot, Swindle, but like for most of the trip, he was nowhere to be seen.

"What do you want, Doubledealer?" Lockdown growled turning his attention back to his enemy.

Doubledealer smirked vile back at Lockdown before shrugging. "Right to the point as always, my old friend. That's why I like you." He cleared his vocoder as if getting ready to deliver a lecture. "I will give you your humans back under the condition that you surrender your guests to us. We want the Autobots and the Decepticons." He said smugly.

There were several growls from around the room as all glared at Doubledealer. It was the same thing as before. The damn same demands that he was making.

Lockdown, however, snorted as his optics flicked at Prowl then over to Doubledealer's mechs,
noting their beaten forms. He chuckled darkly, making everyone frown at him. "I see you still have those skills." He said out loud, again making everyone frown. He looked directly at Prowl again. "Beat them pretty good, did'ja?"

It was finally everyone realized he was talking to Prowl and optics and eyes flickered over to him.

Prowl, still glaring at Doubledealer, spared a light smirk before his optics flickered over to Lockdown. "I will not go down so easily without a fight, Lockdown. You taught me that." He said darkly amused.

Lockdown smirked right back, slowly nodding. "They're gonna be paying for this, kid. For hurting you and threatening my girls. To underestimate you, big no-no." He then snapped his attention to Doubledealer, his optics sharp. "When I find you, Doubledealer, you are dead. I am going to rip your spark out for messing with my girls and my brother." He growled.

Everyone froze at the words, surprised. Even Prowl frowned.

"You're what?" Doubledealer asked, his vocoder surprised and uneasy. His optics were wide as he gazed between Prowl and Lockdown, his entire frame stiff.

Lockdown smirked cruelly as he pointed his hook at the screen, directing it to Prowl. "Prowl is my brother, moron. We became brothers when he became partners. That's why I didn't kill you, kid." He looked at Prowl, who was looking quite surprised. "Ain't no bot I ever cared for until you came around. You were my friend and I threw it all away for reasons you wouldn't believe. I left because of what I was doing. I didn' want ya to get hurt, Prowlers. Had a couple of my back stabbing partners in the black market threatening ya. So that's why. I broke ties to protect you." He growled before shooting Doubledealer a dark, threatening look. "And now, looks like I'm gonna go hunting. When I find you, DD, you are dead. If you hurt them anymore, I am making your deactivation ten times more painful. That is," He paused smirking darkly as his optics flickered to Prowl. "If Prowl doesn't do it first."

Everyone frowned in confusion and alarm, wondering what he meant by that. And then Prowl smirked back at Lockdown before his frame gave a mighty jerk, his arms snapping against his binds hard and fast.

It happened too fast for everyone to register so quickly.

Prowl had actually snapped the electric bindings and was leaping to his peds. He threw the broken beam away from him hard until it slammed into one of Doubledealer's mechs' faceplates.

There were shouts of alarm from Doubledealer's side as everyone on Death's Head looked startled at what was happening. Lockdown, however, turned with a jerk, pointing at Derezz. "Derezz! Where?!" He demanded without really having to piece together the question.

All of Derezz's optics flashed brightly as his appendages whipped out around his frame. "Doubledealer's ship is getting ready to undock from Sector Thirty, Lockdown! Run now and you can possibly make it in ten klicks!" He yelled.

Immediately, Lockdown was moving, turning with a fast bolt from the room. He ignored the shouts of alarm from everyone around him as he ran, pistons and gears pumping fast. He didn't hesitate for a moment when he heard the squealing of tires behind him. He just ran down the ramp as fast he could before glancing side wards to see the sleek silver Pontiac Solstice speeding along side him. He recognized the energon signature as Jazz.
"Wheels are faster, LD!" Jazz yelled through his transmissions.

Lockdown glared at him for only a second before smirking, nodding in agreement. He took a giant leap into the air, making a swift transformation into his vehicle form. An acid green and black spiked Cybertronian car with a Cybertronian skull on the hood. It was a deadly looking thing with four exhaust pipes; two sticking out of the hood and two under the bumper. The two in the hood were spitting black flames from the tops as it raced alongside the Earthly shaped Pontiac.

Both sped through the streets of the space port.

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Back on the ship, Death's Head, everyone was in a frantic, wondering what to do. Some tried to go after the two but the ramp closed up tight and the ship began to shake and tremble, announcing take off.

Optimus immediately went to Derezz's side as he hooked himself up to the ship's control panel and was obviously controlling the ship. "What's the plan?!" He asked from beside the Quintesson.

Derezz mostly concentrated on flying the ship, controlling it to leaving the docking bay. "We will pursue after Doubledealer's ship, Kalis' Lament and slow it's retreat down so Captain Lockdown and Jazz can get aboard. We will offer all of the support we can." He stated as he piloted the ship away from the space port.

Optimus nodded as he turned to look at Starscream, who looked back. "And we will help. Even if we cannot be aboard the ship to rescue Prowl, Izzy and Flo, we will do what we can." He said firmly.

Starscream nodded in understanding. He got the idea pretty quickly. "Very well, Prime." He stated before snapping his attention to all of his Seekers and even to Skyfire and Silverbolt. "Be ready, fliers! When we approach Kalis' Lament, we begin the attack!" He ordered.

All of the Seekers nodded sharply, determination in their optics.

"Smokescreen, Breakdown!" Derezz barked turning one of his faces to the two. "Take the gunners! Get on the laser cannons and be ready to start firing upon the Kalis!"

Smokescreen snapped to attention, saluting before he and Breakdown turned and rushed out with a few pirates right behind them. They knew what to do when the time came. They had their orders.

"What about the rest of us?" It was Ironhide who asked, now excited about a fight.

Derezz glanced at him before waving his appendage after Smokescreen and Breakdown. "We have plenty of laser cannons. If you are an adequate shot, join our gunners. As for the rest, start praying to your Gods that we succeed." He said before turning his attention back to piloting the ship.

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Lockdown and Jazz sped through the streets, engines roaring loudly as they went. Many a different species and Cybertronians of the space port had to dive out of the way because they were not slowing down. Side by side, the two fast vehicles quickly approached port docking bay Thirty, seeing Kalis' Lament already starting to pull away from the docking bay. The loading ramp was still open in the aft of the ship but was on the verge of closing. Lights were flashing inside and a blaring alarm was going off. So something definitely was going on aboard.
Kicking it into high gear, both Cybertronians sped faster, heading towards the ship. It was starting to get away! There was no way they were going to make it!

"Lockdown! Ramp!" Jazz yelled now veering to the right, aiming straight for a docking ramp where the ships usually locked into.

Immediately Lockdown was speeding after Jazz, speeding towards the ramp.

Jazz hit the ramp first, speeding upward and then right out of the docking station, aiming straight for the Kalis' ramp. He quickly transformed mid leap and grabbed a hold of the ramp grates before looking to see Lockdown hit the docking ramp next and coming short from the ship.

"FRAG!" Lockdown snarled as he quickly transformed in mid leap for the grates only to miss the ship by inches. He started falling back, cursing violently.

Suddenly Jazz lashed out with his free hand, twisting it into his magnetizers and activating it to the strongest level.

Lockdown's frame jerked at the magnetic pull and snapped against the Autobot's magnetizers. He looked up at Jazz in surprise as he found himself locked to the spy's magnetic weapon.

Jazz smirked as he held as tight as he could to the ramp grates, only to grimacing as he started slipping. He jerked his attention back to the grates, seeing he was starting to lose his grip. "Slag." He groaned as his fingers began scraping against the metal.

That is, until Lockdown kicked himself up and hooked his hook into the grates, pulling himself up and pulling Jazz right with him. It wasn't a moment too sooner when the docking door finally shut, trapping them right where they wanted to be.

They paused as they climbed to their peds, hearing distant cannon blasts from within the ship. They almost couldn't hear it because of the alarms going off.

"Sounds like Prowl started the party without us." Jazz said with a chuckle as he deactivated his magnetizers and released his grip on Lockdown.

"Well, then, let's crash the party." Lockdown growled now standing up, his other arm shifting into his nasty looking cannon.

Not too long before, Prowl had taken Doubledealer's crew by surprise when he broke out from the stasis beam. He immediately began moving, throwing his blaster up and opening fire on anyone around him. He even aimed at Doubledealer, who yelped and dove behind one of his bodyguards, who took the hit. All of the Kalis' crew were shouting and now opening fire onto the black and white and purple Cybertronian, who merely dove towards the ground, barrel rolling past all of the shots coming at him before firing right back.

Popping back up to his peds, Prowl jerked to face the startled mech who held Izzy and Flo hostage. He growled, door wings flicking once before he charged forward and threw a fist up into the mech's chin plates, sending him flying backwards and letting the girls go.

Screaming as they fell, Izzy and Flo flapped their arms and kicked their legs. But they did not fall far as Prowl's hand was immediately under them, catching both of them and then securing them close to his chassis.

Once he had them safely against his chassis, Prowl spun around, ignoring the excruciating pain in his
broken door wing and started running.

"AFTER THEM! DESTROY THAT INFERNAL AUTOBOT! KILL THOSE HUMANS!"
Doubledealer snarled as he leapt to his feet.

Immediately his body guards and several others were giving chase after the fleeing Autobot. Cannon fire followed right after him and the two humans, coming close to hitting the mech from behind.

Prowl ducked his helm low when he saw blasts sailed past him but he kept moving. He wasn't about to stop for any reason. He needed to get Izzy and Flo to safety so he could be able to return fire. He hissed lightly when one blast skimmed his injured door wing but didn't slow down. He just kept his gears pumping as he ran fast down the halls of the Kalis.

"Prowl! Watch out!" Izzy shouted pointing up ahead.

Prowl's head came up as one of Doubledealer's pirates suddenly appeared up ahead, trying to block his path with a raised cannon burning hot. He frowned seriously before his optics flicked to an open door way. He immediately took hat turn as soon as the mech fired at him. It missed him by inches and slammed into his pursuers.

The room he had just ducked into was a rec room. There was only one door and it was the one Prowl had just entered.

Turning with a jerk, Prowl spied the locking mechanism for the room so he slammed his fist against it to shut the door and lock it, even when the pirates on the other side began banging and firing at it to break it down.

Hurrying to a table in the room, Prowl set the girls down and rushed back, grabbing a large table in the process, swinging it around and slamming it against the locked door. He turned and began doing the same to a few other tables before rushing back to the girls and picking them up carefully.

The banging on the doors was getting louder and the meta began glowing fiery red as the many blasts began melting the metal.

"Prowl! What are we going to do?! We're trapped!" Flo cried in terror as she and Izzy clutched onto the Autobot.

Prowl didn't answer as he quickly looked around the room, trying to find any solution. He was very limited, however. He didn't have many options to choose from. The room had only tables, seats and a bar.

It was the bar that he ran for, hurrying around it and then finding a place to set Izzy and Flo down. He looked back towards the melting door where the pirates were starting to break through. He narrowed his optics before raising his cannon, aiming it directly at the door.

"Prowl! Can you even take them all down?!" Izzy asked from where she and Flo stood.

Prowl tilted his head towards her but shook it. "The probability of us surviving this is at 20%, Izzy. I will be able take some of them down but all of them..." he sighed before growing firm as fists began breaking through. "I am sorry. You two should probably find somewhere to hide. I will distract them. I promise, I won't let them find you. Just hide somewhere." He told them.

Izzy and Flo stared at him uneasily, fear in their eyes and hearts. They knew what he was getting at. "Prowl, you can't fight them alone! You need help!" The older of the two shouted.
Prowl glanced over his door wing at her, frowning. "Izzy, no matter what you do, you will only be in danger! I will do what I can to protect you! But for now, all you can do is hide!" He said sternly before snapping his attention back to the melting doors. It wouldn't be long now.

"Prowl! You will die!" Izzy shouted in fear and frustration. 
"Then I will die protecting you!" Prowl shouted back not taking his attention off the doors, waiting and waiting.

"Why?! Why protect us?! We are the reason that...!" Izzy was shouting.

Prowl hissed in frustration before slamming a fist down on the counter and turning to look at her.
"Because I lied, Isabella!" His words startled the twins, making them stare in bewilderment. "I lied to Lockdown! About you! You do interest me! And I will not see you be hurt without me fighting for you!"

"Wh-what?" Izzy asked startled.

Prowl looked her right in the eyes, almost frustrated as he used a hand to cover his chassis, above his spark. "You are confusing me, Isabella! Ever since we paired up to plan the escape from Arachnia! I cannot even get you out of processor! To make it worse, the story you told of how you became the Quintessons' prisoners! And then at the party! Seeing you dance! I am not used to feeling anything like I am now! I have never had such emotions since I tried locking them away after Lockdown betrayed me on Cybertron! But then you came and forced me to break the emotion seals without realizing it! I lied to Lockdown so not cause problems between you and him! I do care about you because of my spark! And I will protect you, even if it gets me deactivated!" He said firmly.

Izzy stared at him, almost hearing nothing but a gentle thrumming as she gazed. She couldn't believe him. "Prowl..." she said softly.

"PROWL! WATCH OUT!" Flo screamed now pointing.

Prowl's optics snapped wide open as he jerked back around to see that Doubledealer's pirates had finally broken down the door and were now aiming at him, through the broken doors.

They fired before he even had a chance to fire.

Throwing one of his arms above his head and quickly snatching up the girls with the other, Prowl threw himself down as several blasts came right at him and began smashing the bar up with fire and smoke. They just kept firing until the wall and the bar counter was a smoking, melting black mess.

"Did we get him?" One pirate asked as soon as they stopped firing.

There was a pause.

And then Prowl snapped up from behind the bar, both arms twisted into his canon blasters as he began firing. He rapidly fired one blast after the other, slamming his charges into the unprotected and unshielded pirates.

There were shouts and roars and screams of alarm and pain as blasts came at them, slamming into some sending them flying back into smoldering piles of hot metal. Prowl quickly kicked off the ground, jumping over the bar counter when his firing took the remaining pirates by surprise. He charged, blasters blazing before he was upon them. He threw a quickly transformed fist right into one of the pirates' face plates before whipping up a side kick right into another. The pirates around him began swinging and slashing at him. But he moved with such grace and swiftness, lashing out at the pirates, slamming his fists in their faces. He ripped his fist into one pirate's face before kicking out
hard into another's chassis.

"PROWL! BEHIND YOU!" Izzy screamed from by the burning bar counter with Flo watching with terror and awe.

And then turned to slam a fist into one large red and gray pirate's chassis.

But all it did was clang.

Optics growing wide, Prowl looked at the large bulky mech before him, recognizing him as Doubledealer's large body guard, Knok. And judging by the looks of him, it was going to be tough fighting him.

Knok sneered at Prowl before lashing out a steel fist and slamming it against his face.

Prowl went spinning on his peds until he tripped over his own peds and came down hard, luckily on his chassis. He scampered up to get back on his peds but a swift kick in the side of his chassis and already dented metal cracked. He could not stop from crying out in pain as he curled up into himself.

"Prowl! No! Leave him alone, you son of a glitch!" Izzy screamed, watching in horror as Knok began kicking Prowl hard in the chassis, earning more pained screeches from the Autobot.

It was then Doubledealer crawled through the damaged door, looking furious at what was happening on his ship. He took one glare at Prowl before pointing at him. "Knok! Destroy him!" He ordered. He jerked his head to look at the human women when they cried out in shock. He glared hard then pointed at them next just as his other body guard, Skor appeared. "Skor, kill them!"

"With pleasure, master." Skor hissed before starting after the girls, who scampered to run away.

Prowl heard and tried harder to get to his peds. He needed to get to them before the savage bird like mech did. He, however, had another kick delivered to his chassis had him screech in pain and cover his severely damaged side with his hand. Another kick to his arm propping himself up set Prowl to the ground before he felt a ped slam down on his back, slamming into the ground. He groaned before another painful screech escaped from him as Knok roughly grabbed his broken door wing. He couldn't stop from thrashing in pain as the pirate's grip tightened on his wing.

"You really are trouble, did you know that?! First back on Cybertron and now here! You have pretty much ruined everything for me whenever we meet!" Doubledealer snarled as he moved to stand in front of Prowl.

Blinking in surprise, Prowl looked up at him, frowning in confusion. "Wh-what?" He asked in pain.

Doubledealer sneered as he bent over, arm on his knee to look the Autobot in the optics. "So you don't remember me?" He asked in a taunting way.

Optics narrowing in confusion, Prowl didn't understand. He just frowned, staring at the mech before his optics flickered all over him until they widened at the sight of Doubledealer's right leg. There were latches near the knee. His leg...his right leg was detachable.

His spark seizing, Prowl knew who Doubledealer really was. He remembered that bit of information from anywhere. He knew...

"Dealer?!!" Prowl yelped in alarm.

Doubledealer sneered as he looked Prowl right into the optics before he reached up tapped his red
and gray helm, deactivating something. It was to Prowl's alarm that the lens over the red optics slid back, revealing cold ice blue optics. It became very clear to him of who Doubledealer was. "That's right, Officer Prowl. It's me. Dealer, the mech you busted for all of those murders back on Cybertron. You sure got me into a heap of trouble back in Iacon. Destroyed my building business of killing a few mechs and femmes just because of all of those parts I was selling in the black market. I was making some good credits too! And then you ruined it for me!" He snarled before lashing out and grabbing Prowl by the neck in a crushing grip. "And now! You! Are! Destroying! My! Ship!"

Prowl gritted his denta before flinching when he heard Izzy and Flo scream as Skor threw a table aside to get to them. "No! Izzy! Flo!" He yelled now trying to thrash free.

"Rip his head off, Knok!" Doubledealer snarled as he released Prowl and stepped back to enjoy the show.

Knok nodded as he grabbed Prowl by the head and began to pull up, straining his neck a little. He grinned evilly as the black, white and purple mech cried out in pain ad slight fear as he began pulling up, ready to tear his head off his shoulders.

"PROWL!" Izzy screamed as she saw what was happening as she ad Flo cowered from under Skor who rose a fist to bring right down on top of them. They clutched each other, eyes closing so they wouldn't see their doom.

"GET THE FRAG AWAY FROM THEM!" came a furious, familiar roar as a flash of silver came bounding across the room before slamming into Skor and thrusting a long blade deep into his chassis. Doubledealer saw him first before Knok felt the sharp pain slash right through the back of his helm. He jerked violently as he watched a nasty curved hook appeared, covered in energon right out from his own mouth before he felt a violent pull. Knok's helm was sliced in two as Lockdown ripped his hook from the side of his head, sending the large mech flying side wards and leaving Prowl laying there for a moment.

Instead, slanted, furious red optics turned directly onto Doubledealer, who backed away with his hands raised in shock. "Dealer!" Lockdown snarled now standing protectively over Prowl.

"Lo-Lock-Lockdown?! How did you get on my ship?!" Doubledealer cried out in fear before whisking around for Skor. "Skor! Help...me?!" He squeaked when he saw his other bodyguard hanging limp and covered in energon in Jazz's hands, who was glaring across the room at him with the girls at his peds.

"Ain't no helping ya now, scumbot." Jazz growled, his voice completely cold.

Doubledealer squeaked again before whisking to face Lockdown, who threw his fist against his face and sent him flying across the room.

"Prowl, ya okay, kid?" Lockdown growled not even looking down at the black, white and purple mech.

Prowl looked up at him in surprise before his optics lit up and he slowly and painfully climbed to his peds. "You sure took your time." He said darkly, his hand crossed his chassis to touch his dangling broken door wing. His optics hardened as he turned to look over at Doubledealer, who was staggering back to his peds. "Did you know...?"

"Yep. I did. Knew it was Dealer from the moment I saw him. Just because he changed his colors a bit don't mean I didn't see it." Lockdown answered from beside Prowl. "And seeing he made an
Prowl's optics hardened but he nodded as he dropped his hand and shifted it to his cannon, which Lockdown did the same. "Yes. He escaped justice and trial for his crimes of the most horrible kind." He then lifted his head higher, trying to raise his door wings high but not without a hiss of pain following. "Dealer!" He snapped, catching the murdering Cybertronian's attention. "By order of the Council of Cybertron, a long overdue sentence will be delivered. It is my duty," he paused before motioning to himself and Lockdown."...our duty as Security Detail Officers to perform this sentence that you were given. Due to your escape, it's time to face justice for the murders of over fifty mechs and femmes, that you greedily slaughtered for their parts. Any last words?"

Doubledealer snarled in rage before starting to charge, his cannon up and ready to fire.

"Guess not." Lockdown merely said with a growl before he and Prowl and fired at the same time.

The blasts slammed into Doubledealer, sending fire and energon and metal flying in many directions as his now deactivated frame slammed into a wall.

For a long moment, there was nothing but silence other than fire crackling in the room. All three mechs and two human women watched as energon spilled across the floor.

"Well, that's that." Jazz said as he dropped the deactivated Skor to the ground before looking down at Izzy and Flo, though his optics were only on the lighter twin. His optics softened as he bent down ad offered his hand to her. "Flo, you 'n Izzy okay?" He asked softly.

Flo brightened before she quickly climbed up into his hand and embraced a finger. "Jazz! We're okay you found me! I can't believe you came for me!" She said tears spilling down her cheeks.

Jazz smiled softly as he brought her close to his chassis and gently ran his other fingers through her blonde hair. "Course I came, sweetheart. I'll always come for ya. And I'll always find ya." He said before frowning and looking over at Lockdown with Flo, uncertainly and expecting another blow up.

Lockdown was glaring at Jazz for a moment before his optics softened and he slowly smiled and nodded his approval.

Both Jazz and Flo brightened before looking back at one another. They smiled happily before the silver spy broke Flo close to his helm, which he gently pressed it against hers, making her smile and giggle at the gentle static feeling coming from him as he Cybertronian kissed her.

Prowl, still in pain, however, looked down at Izzy as she hurried up to him. He looked softly down at her before bending down to one knee and lightly touching her chin with one finger. "Isabella, are you hurt?" He asked softly ignoring the groan from Lockdown beside him.

Izzy shook her head as she looked him over. "No, but you are! You're hurt, Prowl! You need a medic!" She cried out in worry.

"And we got three good ones back on Death, so let's get moving." Lockdown grumbled, pausing to give Prowl and Jazz a promised look of them sitting down and talking later about the whole thing later. It would definitely be an awkward talk between all three of them but it needed to be done. It was the only way of being able to push forward with the new building relationships.

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It was not too much later that Death's Head fired all it had at Kalis' Lament, blasting it apart and into
a great ball of fire in space. The opposing ship was destroyed completely as all; Autobots, Decepticons, Humans and pirates watched its destruction.

"Well, Derezz. Take us back to Equinox Beta and let's get Death's Head repaired so we can get back on the road to Quintessa. We still got a long ways to go." Lockdown said as he stretched his back struts from where he stood.

"Aye, Captain." Derezz said before he piloted the ship back towards the space port.

Lockdown, and many others, paused to look over at two mechs and two human women smiling at each other. Jazz had Flo sitting comfortably on his shoulder while Prowl was allowing Izzy to sit on his lap as Ratchet was cursing as he began repairs on the damaged door wing.

"Well, this is a sure change." Sentinel chuckled as he optic'd Prowl smiling softly back at Izzy, ignoring Ratchet as he cursed him out for getting so damaged. "Prowl actually does have emotions."

Optimus chuckled shaking his head. "Of course he does, Sentinel. He just...just had a hard time expressing them. But I think Izzy might be just the one who can help him get more in tuned to his emotions. And perhaps..." he paused glancing over at Lockdown, who was watching both girls with a soft smirk on his face as they talked to the two Autobots. "And perhaps, more."
It took two orns to get Death's Head repaired of the damages done on it. And a lot had gotten accomplished during that time. Not only on the ship but in relationships between everyone. Everyone was getting along now. And all of them worked together to fix the ship, working in harmony if not picking on each other with jokes.

Lockdown had settled Prowl and Jazz down to talk to them about the girls, asking them what their intentions were for them.

The answers were the same.

"I fully intend to court Isabella, but only with your permission, Lockdown." Prowl had answered the question.

Jazz nodded with a smile. "Yea, me too. Just with Florence. And ya already gave the approval, righ'?" He asked grinning at Lockdown, who scowled only a little.

Pointing at both with his hook, Lockdown nodded but with a stern look. "Now ya listen to me, both of ya. If you hurt them in any way, their hearts for one, I will rip ya both new afts. Got that?" Both Autobots nodded smiling or looking at him at attention. The space pirate paused before his optics softened. "Okay. You get to court my girls. But the curfew for them to be returned to their rooms is nine."

Jazz pouted and Prowl scowled. "Fer real?!" The silver spy groaned loudly.

"All right! All right! Ten!" Lockdown growled.

"Eleven." Prowl said firmly.

Lockdown snorted as he optic'd his old partner and friend before nodding as he set his had and hook down on his desk. "Fine. Eleven. But no later." He said just as firmly.

Prowl and Jazz both nodded with smiles.

And thus, the courting began.

Prowl and Izzy could be seen walking the halls, smiling at one another and talking strategies for when they arrived to Quintessa. They were also getting to know each other better, talking about their likes and dislikes. Prowl even told Izzy more about Earth and even showed her pictures of how beautiful the planet truly was. He even showed her images of Cybertron and she was at awe of how the Crystal Guardians of Praxus had been and was.
Jazz and Flo was always together, listening to the many songs that he had downloaded. They listened to all of the varieties that he had to offer and he even got her singing some of them. She was very much in love with dance music, especially for Cascada. She loved it all.

As it was, even it seemed Prowl's broken friendship with Lockdown seemed mended. They were now talking to each other more civally and even talking about the old days. They eventually started being friends again.

Once the ship was repaired, they were on their way again. It took a few days to get anywhere though.

During that time, everyone took some time to train in Lockdown's training simulation. Everyone learned how well Prowl could work with Lockdown when they decided to go a few rounds together with the girls and even Jazz. They worked almost perfectly in sync when working on strategy simulations. They even seemed to perfect some of Prowl and Izzy’s ideas.

As it was, Smokescreen was also becoming better friends with Sideswipe and Sunstreaker. They had not been too close before but they sure were now.

Knockout and Breakdown were normally seen all over the place and even Moonracer. The large navy blue pirate welcomed her warmly when he found out she was with his best friend. And they eventually became close. He even got along with her sisters. He enjoyed target practice with Ironhide and Sentinel Prime, who finally got off his high horse and started trusting the pirates. He was no longer being a snob about them, not since Lockdown helped save Prowl and the girls.

The only one who could be seen avoiding the Autobots, Decepticons and the humans was Swindle. He mostly spent time in his quarters being extremely unsocial. He refused to interact with the ship's guests. There wasn't much for Lockdown to do about it. He argued with Swindle a few times but he didn't try and push the smuggler.

It was after three days of travelling into deep space did the ship finally get somewhere.

They reached the Dark Regions.

Mostly the Leaders stood in the main cockpit, looking out into the darkness. And darkness it was. There were hardly any stars out in the distance. It was like they were on an Earth boat and there was no moon light, just darkness. They couldn't see anything even with the exterior lights shining outside the ship. There was almost nothing out there.

Just darkness.

"Whoa." It was Rodimus who said what everyone was thinking. "Now I get why you call it the dark regions. I mean...I know space is usually dark but this...this is just way beyond dark." He added staring.

Lockdown nodded slowly as he looked seriously outside the ship's large window into the pitch black of nothing. "Make it worse, scanners don't work out here so well. Our only optics of where we will be going will be Derezz's. He's the only one who can really see out there."

"Negative."

Lockdown's optics and everyone elses' turned to look at Soundwave in surprise. They noted him staring hard out into the dark space, his visor shining brightly. Even his glowing appendages were brighter than before. Anyone who knew him well, as well as the five faced telepath knew he was using his telepathy.
"Huh?" The space captain asked.

Derezz made an amused sound as he hovered closer to the large Decepticon. "He can see as well, Lockdown. His telepathic ability is as sharp as my own. Together, we will be able to see at least 20 Hic around the ship. That is, unless I unlock..." he was saying.

"No, you just keep that damn thing sealed up. We don't need you causing the humans to have headaches or leaking fluids and we certainly don't need Bots complaining of malfunctioning sensors or having any of them off lining." Lockdown ground out.

"Um, what?" Sentinel asked just as confused as everyone else.

Lockdown growled in irritation but shook his head. There was no point hiding it. "Derezz has a level scale of his telepathy. The highest setting he has is sealed up for a good reason. If he were to use it, it could be a little harmful." He ignored the uneasy looks now he and Derezz was getting. "He don't use it because last time he did, the girls had some nasty nosebleeds. So relax."

No one really did.

"Anyway, what're you seeing now, Derezz?" Lockdown went on.

Derezz rumbled but shook his entire frame. "Not much. Mostly space scrap. We are wide open. I will try and keep mental blocks up around the ship so we are not noticed by my brethern. I will need Soundwave to keep an optic outside the ship. With my telepathy, we cannot afford myself looking other than that. For now, all we can do is enjoy our free time until we can reach Quintessa. It will not be long before we do. I can only predict we will reach my home planet in the next ten orns if not sooner. My suggestion, start training some of the Autobots and Decepticons the ways of piracy and slavery. It's the only plan we have right now when we reach Quintessa." He told them.

No one liked the idea but they knew he was right. The only way of getting into Quintessa was being pirates, smugglers or slaves. It was the only way.

Lockdown nodded, looking at Optimus and the other Primes. "He's right. The only way you're even getting close to your sparklings and comrades is being slaves to sell to the Quinxs."

Optimus and the other two Primes shared a glance before sighing and nodding. "All right. We will begin training our bots tomorrow. I think tonight we should relax before we begin getting very serious. It will give us time to prepare."

Lockdown nodded. "All right. Then we will do that. Derezz, you get those mental blocks up. Alert me immediately if we get scanned out by the Quinxs."

Optimus sighed, his head dipping down for a moment before he looked back up and nodded. "I will do what it takes." He said firmly.

"It also means that whoever will be pirates needs to change their destinations. The Quinxs will
probably most likely know your real names. So you need to come up with hard core names."
Lockdown paused before looking over at Jazz. "I already know where you're going to be, Sabatuer.
You will be a slave. I know for a fact that the Quintessons have been wanting to get their tentacles
on you for a long time because of what you can do. So we will need you as Meister."

Jazz slumped with a loud groan while several looked at him curiously. Not everyone knew what
Lockdown was talking about.

"What? Who's Meister? Why does that name sound familiar?" It was Rodimus who asked.

"Jazz, you're Meister?!" Starscream asked bewildered.

Jazz groaned again before nodding. "A long time ago. But I stopped using that name. Didn' like it
much being Meister. The things I did as him...uh-uh." He said miserably.

"Who was Meister? What kind of mech were you when you were that name?" Sam asked frowning.

Jazz just looked miserable to even think about it but it was Sentinel who sighed as he looked at him.
"Jazz is not his original name. It actually was a cover name. Meister was one of his cover names too
but it was what nearly everyone knew him by." He announced making everyone look surprised.

"So...if Jazz isn't your real name then..." Figgs was asking.

Jazz shook his head as he looked around at everyone. "No, it is my real name. It's the name I chose
to stay the rest of my being. To be honest, I don' really have an original name. Nev'a had one when I
was sparked. I had a code number. I was immediately put in the Black Ops manufacture caste when
I was a wee sparkling. Trained to be a spy and..." he paused with a grimace and a sigh. "An assassin.
I took up the name Meister when I became a botling, started some heavy duty missions. I can...I also
can sorcell." He said heavily.

Many of the Cybertronians blinked in surprise and shock while the humans looked quite confused.

"Sorcell? What's that?" Trent asked frowning in confusion.

"Sorcelling is a very rare upgrade that many usually can't handle." Ratchet said seriously optic'ing
Jazz firmly. "It is almost like what the Pretenders and Sweeps used to do. Changing their forms and
appearances. Only Sorcelling is more a physical ability. Jazz can take on several appearances from
shapes and even signatures. It is the perfect spy's ability. It can fool anyone." He stated.

"Really? Can we see an example?" Simmons asked very interested in seeing it.

Jazz grimaced, looking around at everyone before looking at Sentinel and Optimus. He waited for
them to nod their approval before heaving a deep vent and steeling himself. It was a dead serious
look that not may was used to seeing. It was a look of one who was not the kind to mess around
with.

Suddenly, Jazz's entire began to shift and crackle with electricity, alarming everyone that was
watching. His entire frame bega moving and cracking. The colors even began changing in dark
rainbow flashes as Jaaz seemed to melt away revealing dark silver. His frame cracked unpleasantly,
making several flinch at the sound.

A moment later, Jazz no longer stood there.

A tall, slender almost needle like mech did. He had flat blade like black and violate panels on his
arms while his helm was more triangular with lethal sharp spines sticking upward. His faceplates was
dark silver with vicious purple optics and markings crisscrossing his face. His servos were sharp blade like that could probably slash through anything. He looked more like a living shadow even in the bright lights of the cockpit.

Everyone could only stare with unease at the mech standing before them.

"Everyone, meet Meister." Sentinel said seriously as he looked at the mech.

The mech stonily looked around at everyone not even grimacing when some cringed under his emotionless gaze. "I really do not like using this, especially. It's really uncomfortable when I do use it." He said with a deep husk of a voice. It was not like Jazz's usually warm and happy voice at all. It was cold, mirthless and unforgiving.

"Meister, go ahead and shift back." Optimus said with a sigh now moving forward to stand before him.

The mech, Meister nodded and the same thing happened only he became Jazz again. A Jazz who looked worn out. His frame was crackling like metal under an extremely hot sun. He ended up having to lean against Optimus when he shifted back.

"That...that was kind of unsettling." Monique spoke up after a long silence.

"No. That was fucking scary. Is that you used to look like? And why do you look so drained?" Epps asked wide eyed.

Jazz huffed wearily as he leaned against Optimus, who kept him supported up. "Because it is draining. Haven' Sorcelled in a while now. It takes energy when I do it. And yeah, that's what I used to look like." He said wearily.

"Yeah...I think I like you more." Trent said with a weak smile.

Jazz smiled weakly right back before looking over at an uneasy looking Flo. He grimaced, looking apologetic towards her. He knew that must have scared...

But then Flo smiled, an understanding look on her face. She nodded to him to let him know it was okay. "So that's why you want him as a slave." She said looking at Lockdown, who smirked and nodded. She looked back at Jazz. "Jazz can change forms. If he was to be able to go into the slave chambers, he could probably take a Sharkticon form and be able to move around more freely. See if he cannot find your sparklings easier that way." She stated.

Optics and eyes lit up in surprise and realization. They all saw the point of Lockdown's decision.

"Hmm. Not a bad idea whatsoever. Problem is, if the Quintessons know about Meister and his sorcelling, they might be expecting that." Prowl said, hating to burst the bubble of everyone.

"Yes," Derezz stated easily. "But even we cannot tell who is the one sorcelling. They will want to keep a good optic on him once he arrives but they will not be able to if there are problems within the slave chambers. If we were to have a diversion at one time, they will be forced to take their optics off of him. Which is why," he paused turning one of his faces towards Soundwave, who straightened. "Soundwave will have to be one of the slaves, as well. If you truly have faced my bretheren once, they will know your telepathy and will want to keep an optic on you as well." He said informing the telepath and everyone.

"Well, I am definitely going in as a slave." Sideswipe said firmly. "I want to find Sunriser and my sparkling."
Lockdown nodded as he looked at both twins. "I figured as much. I can see both of you becoming Gladiators too. The five facers will want to see most of you in the arena, to weed out any fighters. Gotta warn ya though. If you don't end up as Gladiators, you will be expected to kill anything in that arena." He paused looking over at his two wards, who looked just as grave as he did. "Even if it ends up being humans you have to face."

"We will not kill humans!" Sunstreaker hissed.

"You won't have a choice." Lockdown growled in warning at them. "If you don't kill what they want you to, you will end up as scrap."

Sideswipe shook his head as he stood firmly. "They can try. But we will refuse. We will not kill anyone. And I mean that." He stated.

Lockdown shook his head, frowning. "Then you will die." He growled.

Sideswipe and Sunstreaker smiled bitterly, both shaking their heads. "We won't die so easily. Never have, never will." The latter said strictly.

Lockdown snorted before he looked towards the large screen. "Stubborn. Just how I like 'em. And how the five facers won't. Whatever. Do as you want but you will see. Derezz, mental blocks up. We're going in." He said now serious.

Derezz bobbed in the air before all of his optics flashed on, which is how he stayed for the rest of the journey.

Later on, everyone did their own things. They either began planning on what to do when they arrived to Quintessa. Prowl and Izzy were together, beginning the plans and talking to each other about plans of the future. They enjoyed the talks they eventually got into.

The training for everyone began the next morn just like how Lockdown ordered. It was done in the training chambers. It was mostly Lockdown who took that over, telling everyone what they would need to know about being slaves.

"One thing you have to know is that when you are slaves, the Quintessons will be expecting somber mechs ad organics. You keep your heads down, never look your master in the optics. You do what your told at all times. You don't, you get beaten." Lockdown stated firmly. He then smirked as he glanced at a few. "Of course, there are some slaves who will be defiant. The most fiesty ends up in the Arenas. It will be there, you will find the true Pits. They will try and break you. So if you fight, you fight for your lives. The battles in the Arena the death. So be prepared. You will probably end up facing Terrorcons and Sharkticons. And they are bad news."

"What exactly are they?" Epps asked frowning.

Lockdown looked at him seriously before looking at the control booth where Airachnid was. He nodded to his female friend before turning back to everyone in the training room.

Beside Lockdown, forms began to shimmer to life and sights that had everyone tensing up at the mete sight of these mechs and even females. The beings beside Lockdown were like torn and beaten and even ripped apart Cybertronians. Vicious dead purple optics and glowing trims were all over the beings. But it was the mouths of the Terrorcons that had everyone stumble back from terror and unease. There was a split on their lower jaws, allowing them to open up wide and spread out like three plates of metal full of razor sharp fangs and a long piercing glossa, tongue that even had fangs, which snapped out at everyone around it. It was like looking at a metallic version of a Predalien from
the Earth movies, Alien vs Preditor.

"Madre puta!" Figgs swore looking at the twisted Cybertronians before them.

Lockdown nodded with a darkly amused smirk. "Terrorcons are dangerous to no matter who. Dead Cybertronians come back to life like vampiric zombies. They drain the energon right out of you to keep their selves active." He said darkly.

Airachnid walked out, motioning to the Terrorcons beside Lockdown. "They are also like zombies, carrying a virus. They bite you, you will die and become one of them. It's mostly that glossa you have to worry about though. If the Terrorcon bites you with its normal fangs, fine. You will only get really sick. But if that glossa bites you, say goodbye to your loved ones. Because you will be after their life force. There is a cure but that died with Tarantulas. Even I don't know the antivirus formula." She said strictly.

"So...if we become one of them, there is no way to turn back? Not even by the All Spark or Matrix of Leadership? Primus?" Rodimus asked uneasily.

Airachnid shook her head gravely. "No, not even those artifacts will help. You become one of them, you will die. The best way to kill them is their heads. You have to dismember the head from their shoulder plates and even then, destroy it. Without their processors, they will cease to function." She sighed now thoughtful. "As I can recall, there was only one of my pretend creator's experiments that functioned well as a Terrorcon. I don't onow what happened to him. But he was one of them but...he was alive. He didn't thrive like the others. He had a processor of his own but didn't kill his victims. Kind of like...well I suppose a zombie who knew what he was but chose not to kill. Tarantulas believed an antivirus formula was inside of him but like I said, I don't know what happened to him."

Everyone slowly nodded in understanding.

"Well, we are going to work on this bit. You will most likely end up facing Terrorcons so let's get you trained on how to kill them." Lockdown said before nodding to Airachnid. "Set something up for us and we will begin that." He told her.

And the training began. It was some of the roughest and terrorfying training the Cybertronians and humans ever had to do.

When the Terrorcon training began, everyone found out how terrible and wild they could be. The Terrorcons were like savage, brutal beasts, charging at them with fangs snapping and screaming like wild animals. Many times did each and everyone fail to beat the Terrorcons and ended up "dead" in a way.

But nonetheless, things were getting done.

Everyone was learning how to become slaves and pirates. It was rough but it had to be done. Some of the mechs and femmes didn't like how they had to act cruel and vicious towards one another or even had to pretty much bow down like slaves whenever they were given orders.

Eventually, everyone learned. It didn't mean they had to like it. It was tiring and it wore down some of the spirits. It even began making everyone question their courage of their selves.

The only thing that kept them going was the thought of Sunriser, Mikaela, the Dinobots and the Sparklings. It was that determination that would keep them going. They would do what it took to rescue them and even end the tyrannyc of the Quintessons.
It took many orns, days of travelling through the darkness of space. It almost seemed like they were getting nowhere. It was too dark around Death's Head and no one could see where they were going. Not even on the scanners. Everyone was finally getting somewhere in their training, however. The Cybertronians were finally able to take down Terrorcons but not without difficulty.

Spirits were not effectively high, however. Everyone couldn't help but worry about what their missing comrades and loved ones were going through. They were sure they were being tortured in horrible ways. And it didn't help to think that either.

Eventually, while everyone was training, the call from Derezz came through for Lockdown and the Fraction Leaders to come to the cockpit.

Naturally, everyone went.

There was a ship outside before Death's Head. It was just floating there, lifelessly. It had no lights on or it wasn't moving other than just drifting. It was as if no one was even home. The engines didn't seem to be on.

"So, what is that? Is there any life even on it?" Starscream asked frowning.

Lockdown frowned before looking over at Derezz, who bobbed and shook before pointing at Soundwave. So he looked to the large Decepticon instead.

Soundwave frowned as he stared hard at the ship, his visor flickering before flashing brightly. "Affirmative. There are signs of life on the ship. But it is very weak. Whoever it is, they are damaged heavily. I am not picking up any more than three life signs. I cannot completely scan the ship due high radiation energy surrounding the ship. Suggestion: No humans should go aboard if there will be an investigation. They will be unable to withstand the radiation." He stated.

Lockdown frowned seriously before looking back at the ship. He wasn't exactly comfortable with the idea of sending anyone over to the ship. "We're leaving it. By the sounds of it, whoever is on the ship is dead anyway." He said before starting to point at Derezz.

"Lockdown, we cannot leave injured beings to die. It won't be right." Optimus said gravely not liking it at all.

Lockdown turned to face him, frowning. "Prime, it might be too dangerous. In fact, it might be a Quintesson trap. They are known to do stuff like this. Forget the three injured beings." He said firmly.

Optimus slowly shook his head, sighing. "I cannot, Lockdown. It would not sit well with my spark if
we left dying mechs or femmes when we could do something to save them. Please, Lockdown. Allow us to board the ship and locate the injured." He said softly.

Glowering, Lockdown didn't say anything for a long moment before he vented and nodded. "All right. You win, Prime. We will do this. But if it gets too dangerous, we're pulling out and leaving the injured." He looked around at his crew, frowning. "I won't order any mech to join in this rescue mission. But if you want to volunteer, then I won't stop you." He said firmly.

For a long moment, none of the pirates spoke. That is until Smokescreen stepped forward, raising a hand. "I will go with them. I want to help." He said.

Lockdown frowned at him but nodded. "Anyone else?" He asked looking around at his crew.

Breakdown grunted before nodding and lifting his servo. "I'll go. Might need some brawns over there." He stated as he went to stand next to Smokescreen.

Airachnid nodded as she stepped forward, her optics taking in on Lockdown, firmly. "I will go as well. There may be some tight spaces for them to need to get through. I can squeeze through almost any tight space." She said firmly.

No one else volunteered, however. No one really liked the idea that the ship might be a Quintesson trap. Either way, Optimus nodded his thanks to the two pirates that volunteered. He looked to Lockdown next to see what they would have to do.

Lockdown nodded as he looked back. "I'm not taking Death's Head closer to the ship. So I suggest your big mech there take your rescue team over." He nodded to Skyfire, who nodded in agreement. "We will standby, keep watch for any problems. When you need help, we will give it immediately." He told him.

Optimus nodded thankfully before looking around at everyone. "All right. It will be a small team lead by myse..." he was saying.

Sentinel, however, stepped forward and placed a hand on his shoulder, shaking his head. "Not you, Optimus." He shook his head again when his younger friend frowned. "I'll lead the team. We need you and Rodimus to stay here with Lockdown. If something bad happens, you two need to lead the rescue on Quintessa. It's time for me to step up and start doing things, OP. I haven't doing anything but jabbering off my mouth. I will take lead of this one." He told him firmly.

For a moment, Optimus said nothing but then he nodded and patted Sentinel on the shoulder plates before looking around at everyone. He grimaced, not wanting to make anyone go to the damaged ship but he couldn't allow anyone injured just die. "Prowl, Chromia, Bumblebee and Sludge, I want you carefully go over there. We may need a few Seekers around Skyfire while they are aboard." He said looking at Starscream.

Starscream nodded looking at his Seekers. "Thundercracker and Skywarp, you're with me." He stated.

"What about me?" Nightbird asked seriously.

Starscream frowned at her shaking his head. "It might be dangerous, Nightbird. I don't want you to be in any dang..." He was saying.

Nightbird scowled at him as she walked forward to stand in front of him, her red optics flashing in warning. "I am going too, Star. I need to learn how to fly anyway. Besides, try and stop me." She said before quickly kissing him and looking around at everyone, daring them and Starscream to even
argue with her.

Starscream scowled but another look of warning from his mate stopped him from saying anything. It was almost scary that Nightbird was still intimidating when she wanted to be.

Silverbolt then stepped forward, his head held up high. "I would also like to offer my services. I still have yet to contribute any efforts of support to our group." He grimaced looking at Skyfire, who smiled kindly at his twin. "It is the least I can do even after all the trouble I caused as Jetstorm."

"That wasn't your fault and you know that, Silverbolt." Starscream scowled out everyone's thoughts. "That was Unicron's fault when he was crazy. You didn't know what you were doing when you were Jetstorm. So it doesn't matter anymore. And you're welcome to help out

Silverbolt smiled weakly but gratefully. He looked to his twin again and received another gentle smile.

"If there are injured mechs aboard, we will need a medic to come as well." Sentinel stated firmly looking at the three medics in the room. His optics fell on Knockout, who groaned, knowing that he was the one chosen. "Knockout, do not even think to complain. It would be best if Ratchet stayed aboard Lockdown's ship, just in case it gets fragged over there. He will need to prepare the infirmary if there are too severe of damages on the survivors. Unless you want us to take Moonracer. But I highly doubt that you want her to go."

Knockout's optics flashed brightly before narrowing defensively at the Prime. He even put an arm around his sparkmate as if protecting her from the decision. "Frag, she isn't going!" He growled but settled immediately when Moonracer touched his wide shoulder plate to keep him calm.

There were a few red flags popping up in everyone's processors. They immediately something was up by the way Knockout was acting.

Ratchet, however, growled now looking at Knockout and Moonracer suspiciously. "Is there something you need to inform us, you two?" He demanded.

A few of the Cybertronians groaned as it clicked, Lockdown, for some reason, being the loudest as he slapped his servo to his face. "Tell me that you didn't do it on my ship!" He hissed from under his servo.

"Huh? What? What're you talking about?" Sam asked frowning equally confused as the rest of the humans.

Knockout and Moonracer both winced, cringing under the bewildered and confused looks, as well as snickers and amused chuckles from others. "Uh...can't really promise that, Lockdown..." the red and silver mech muttered uneasily as his ad his mate's fans clicked on loud, earning another loud groan from the pirate captain.

"What?! What're you all talking...?!" Now it was Figgs who was asking.

Chromia, highly amused with Arcee, smirked and folded her arms as they both looked at their youngest sister. "Moonracer's sparked." She practically sang happily.

Eyes and optics snapped wide open from the sudden revelation as all looked at the pretty pink Femme, whose fans were spinning loudly now. It even looked like she was heating up around the face.

"Wha-what?! You mean she's gonna have a sparkling?!" Smokescreen exclaimed in shock.
"Just what we need, a fragging sparked femme on my ship." Lockdown growled irritably before glowering around the room at all of the femmes. Only one or two were looking away as if they didn't dare to look at anyone or say something. "Anyone else?" He growled, optic'ing those two.

Everyone looked cautiously at the femmes whose fans clicked on and then at their husbands, who grimaced and rubbed the backs of their helms sheepishly or gaped at his mate in shock.

"All right! That's it! I want Spitfire, Moonracer and Chromia in the infirmary! Now! Especially you, Chromia! You just had Triggerload little under a year ago! You and Ironhide need to take it easy for Primus' sake! We still are learning about sparking sparklings! We don't even know if you're even ready for more!" Ratchet snarled.

"Chrome? Yo-you're...we..." Ironhide was asking in shock.

Chromia rolled her optics before already starting to move towards the door after a grumpy aft of a medic, who was grumbling about the delicate situations of sparklings. "Yeah, yeah. I'm with spark again. So what? It's not like it's going to kill me. Besides, it's your fault! If you'd just keep it behind your codpiece every cycle, we wouldn't be sparking like petrorabbits!" She called back from over her shoulder as she left with Spitfire, Moonracer and Ratchet.

There was an awkward silence as many had wide optics or were grimacing.

Lockdown huffed loudly before shooting looks around at all of the bonded couples. "Okay, note to self: scrub Death's Head after we get rid of all of you. And no more interfacing! The very thought curdles my tanks! Keep your codpieces on, slaggit!" He growled.

Everyone grimaced or looked embarrassed about the awkward conversation.

"Okay, moving on. Let's get this show on the road. We have a few injured beings over there that need our help." Optimus said, sounding embarrassed by the very conversation they all just had. He ignored the fact that a few mechs were patting Bumblebee on the back and congratulating him on his new sparkling.

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It didn't take too much longer to get everything organized and the rescue team in order. Because of Chromia's new situation, she wasn't going now, which had her almost spitting fire. She didn't want to be held back from duties just because she was sparked. But Ratchet, Ironhide and Optimus put their peds down on the matter.

So as her replacement, it was decided that Maximum Wave to go, much to Soundwave and their subunits' unease on the matter. But she had volunteered, stating she wanted to start pulling her weight around the group. So, without any real reason of her not going, no one argued about it.

Skyfire was carefully guiding himself towards the drifting ship with the five Seekers surrounding him. It was pretty much the first time Nightbird had showed off her new jet form. She was a sleek silver and scarlet red Lockheed FY-22. Scarlet red lines ran mostly along her fuselage and wings.

It was a little obvious that she was still learning how to fly with her jet form wobbling a little in space but she seemed to be catching on as she sailed beside Starscream.

Once Skyfire approached the side of the large ship, he mostly hovered around the aft ramps, waiting for Silverbolt to override the ship's docking doors.

Once the sleek silver and white Seeker managed to get the doors open, Skyfire lined up beside the
ship and locked on right to it before opening his doors so that the rescue team could board.

It was not pretty to be honest. Sentinel lead everyone down Skyfire's locking ramp into the darkness of the ship. They could barely see at all. There were no lights, whatsoever. No power either. So it wouldn't be possible to turn them on from a control consol.

"The power grid must be down. If we can find the power core center, we might be able to shed some light on what we're dealing with." Sentinel said as he looked around the darkness before reaching and tapping his headlights on. "Headlights activated, mechs and femmes."

Everyone nodded as they followed suit and turned on their lights.

They almost wished they didn't when they did.

Gasps escaped from all of them when they saw dried energon and fluids scattered across the floor and even on the walls. There had been a massacre here, no doubt. Stains of fluids were everywhere and even indictations that there had been bodies too.

Problem was, there were no bodies.

"Oh my Primus." Prowl said horrorified as he looked around with everyone.

-Sentinel, report. Anything yet?- came Optimus' voice over the com link.

Sentinel took in the horrific sight, moving his lights around the obvious supply station. He noted that there was a lot of energon spilled everywhere. There were gouges and scars of claw marks in the walls, energon blast residues as well. He knew very well that a battle took place here. And it didn't look good.

Tapping his com link, Sentinel gravely replied. "Affirmative, Optimus. Looks like we missed one pit of a party. There was no doubt a battle on this ship." He then took snap shots and sent the image reports back to Optimus. "It was a massacre here."

-Primus! What happened over there?!- Optimus spoke up once he saw the images.

Sentinel shook his head as he shared a glance with the other rescue team members. "I do not know, Optimus. But whatever happened, we might be over our helms on this. I am going to set for the cockpit and see if I cannot find a data log. Perhaps someone left something for us. I will report back once we find something. Sentinel Prime, out." He stated before looking at the others. "All right. Something bad obviously happened here, femme and mechs. The ship looks to be deserted other than the survivors. I want answers. So we will split up. I am going to go see if I can't find information on what happened. Smokescreen, Maximum Wave, you're with me. Prowl, Sludge, and Bumblebee, see if you can't find the power grid. Get it up and running if you can." He looked to Breakdown, Knockout and Airachnid next. "You three, find the survivors, get them patched up and then get back here and on Skyfire. If they are coherent enough to tell you what happened here, report it to me immediately." He stated firmly.

Everyone nodded immediately as they sorted out in their teams.

"Also, be careful. If you do find the survivors, be prepared. They just might be the very ones responsible for this." Sentinel said seriously. "Keep on your guard. Report back to me every ten megaclicks. If you find hostiles, you already know what to do. Defend your self and your team. May Primacron be with us on this."

Again everyone nodded and then they began to wander, carefully looking around, listening hard to
"Why do I have a bad feeling about this?" Sentinel mostly asked himself as he lead Smokescreen and Maximum Wave into the depths of the ship, wanting to find information as quickly as possible.

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"So...Prowl, what do you make of all this? Do you think we will find the survivors? What do you think happened?" Bumblebee asked as they wandered down a dark, energon stained hallway.

Cannon blaster out and door wings pitched up high, Prowl looked around at all of the mess as they wandered down a corridor that had a large five on the walls in Cybertronian. "I do not know, Bee. But whatever it was, this may be dangerous. So try and keep quiet." He said softly looking around. He paused to glance back at Sludge, who was making a little bit of noise because of his big, heavy frame. "Sludge, try and walk softly." He whispered.

Sludge merely glanced at him but nodded in understand. He practically began tip toeing just to walk quieter.

"Hey...uh, Prowl?" Bumblebee asked quietly as he kept checking around corners, blaster raised and ready just in case.

"What, Bee?" Prowl asked, slightly irritated but calm nonetheless.

Bumblebee grimaced apologetically as he walked beside Prowl. "Um...me and some of the guys have been wondering. How did...how did you break that electro charged stasis cuffs when Doubledealer caught you and the Jackson girls? You broke them like they were nothing. So how did...?" He was asking.

Prowl grimaced, sparing him a glance before carefully peering around a corner they came to. "Kaonian electro stasis beam, Bee. I recognized its make when they put it on me." He paused before continuing on. "It was a low class stasis beam. They work pretty well, keeping a captive in lock but there is a rhythmic charge that flows through the beam. It over works one's systems, keeping them subdued. But with every once in a while, there was a disruption in the charge. I counted the metaclicks while I was locked into it. The disruption had a few weak points. All I had to do was wait for the charge to weaken for a metaclick and then break it when it did." He explained.

"Oh. So...it was faulty?" Bumblebee asked frowning.

Prowl spared a short, flash of a smirk towards the Scout before nodding as he looked forward again. "Yes, Bee. It was faulty. Whoever sold Doubledealer the stasis beam ripped him off." He stated smiling.

Bumblebee grinned at him before lightly flicking his own door wing against the other Praxian's. "Dude, Prowl. I have to say it. But that was way cool the way you broke free and kicked aft pipe. And then Lockdown and Jazz went after you and the girls. He seems...pretty chill. For an asshole." He said in the human version of a swear word.

Prowl chuckled as they found a new corridor to go down, though it had black blast residue and dried energon too. "Yes, Lockdown is an asshole, Bee. But...he is softer than he makes himself to be. It took me a long time to see it and even remember it." He said a hint of sadness at the memories in his processor.

Bumblebee smiled weakly, knowing it was a sore subject to remind Prowl of. But..."He was trying to protect you, wasn't he? I mean, you're friends again, right?" He asked carefully.
Again, Prowl nodded as he lead his two companions down the corridor. "We are working on it, Bee. We will have to see where it goes. Lockdown...he has changed, that's for sure. I suppose Isabella and Florence have been both good for him." He said smiling fondly at the first name.

Again, Bumblebee grinned and nudged Prowl again with his own doorwing. "So...how is it with Izzy? You really like her?" He asked almost slyly.

Prowl softened at the thought of Izzy before slowly nodding. "I suppose I do, Bumblebee. I...I did not think it were possible. But my spark calls for her. I did not hear it until we had more interactions with one another. She is..." he paused trying to think of the right things to even describe the human.

"Beautiful? Wild? Makes your spark spike like crazy?" Bumblebee asked with a grin.

Glancing at him with a hint of embarrassment in his optics, Prowl did smile and nodded. "I would have never admit it but...yes. Isabella is beautiful. She...makes me...laugh." he scowled and chuckled softly at the same time when Bumblebee gave him a teasing shocked look. "Yes, Bee. She makes me laugh. Just because I don't do it out loud doesn't mean I don't laugh. Want me to go on or not?" He asked playfully scornful of the Scout, something that the Scout nor anyone was used to. "Isabella also is very intelligent. The strategies she has are amazing and quite well planned out. I am not saying that humans are not intelligent but...she surpasses many strategies that even some of Earth's militaries could not ever think of. I suppose it is Lockdown's doing but...she does know how to figure things out on her own."

"So, beautiful, smart, funny, makes you laugh, a strategist like you? Sounds like your other half. You have so much in common." Bumblebee said happily.

Prowl smiled and shrugged his doorwings. "She is opposite of myself. While we do have things in common, she is outgoing and quite...wild. I am not. I usually do not care for the qualities she has but...it seems my spark does. Every move she makes, my spark seems to move like a mirror to her." He said in a fond, low voice.

"So, you are in love with her?" Bumblebee asked slyly and playfully.

Again, Prowl smiled and shrugged again. "It would seem so, Bee." He said, Izzy being the sole thought in his processor now.

All the while they were talking, Sludge kept twitching and jerking his head around, looking into the darkness. His burning optics narrowed at one point, staring off hard into the invisible shadows. He wouldn't say it just yet but he could have sworn he just saw something move in the darkness.

Still, even Sludge wasn't sure. He was still learning about everything. But one thing he had learned that sometimes the darkness played tricks on the optics. He remembered once he thought he saw something in the dark back on the Ark and he got into trouble for putting a nasty dent in the floor grates by Wheelie.

Until he knew for sure, he wouldn't say anything yet to Prowl and Bumblebee.

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It didn't take too long for the three to get creeped out but only one kept his reserve to himself. It was a shame that Smokescreen seemed to be pretty jumpy.

"What was that?!"

Sentinel huffed in irritation as he shot a look at the young Praxian for jerking around and almost
firing off his cannon blaster. Again! It was a miracle that Smokescreen had forgotten to take the
safety off because it would have been loud and the Prime wasn't sure he wanted to attract possible
unavailable attention towards them.

"It was my foot hitting the floor again, Smokey. Calm down. It's just us." Maximum Wave said as
she lightly rubbed the young bot's shoulder to help him keep calm.

Smokescreen sighed relaxing again before he frowned, looking at Maximum Wave. "So...you're
Soundwave's femme, right? What's it like being with an emotionless block of steel?" He asked
frowning.

Max gave him a smirk and raised optic. "He isn't emotionless, Smoke. He just hides it well. He is
actually full of emotion. He just shows his emotions through music most of the time." She told him
before smiling. "You know, if you really knew him, paid attention to him, you would find that he is
actually a very kind and comforting mech to be around."

Smokescreen grimaced, door wings twitching. "But...he's a Con." He stated carefully.

Max now glowered at him before pouting to the right side of her chassis to show him the purple
emblem she had there. "So am I. But it don't matter. There are no Autobots and Decepticons any
more. We are all Cybertronians. Equal. We share the same energon." She said.

"Yeah bu-but...Decepticons were suppose to be bad guys! They killed a lot of innocents! They were
blowing up city states! They destroyed the Cybertronian Council who did nothing..." Smokescreen
tried.

"Give it up, kid." Sentinel said firmly and irritably. "The Cybertronian Council were greedy,
controlling. A lot of them were good mechs but even they had their faults. Now, I am not saying that
the Decepticons were doing right. Pit no. I still don't trust all of them. And I am suppose to be a
Prime. I died and lived in the Other Realm, watching everything that went on. But...I will admit it. A
lot of the Decepticons have changed." He said sourly as they wandered down a corridor.

Smokescreen sighed, his doorwings slumped. "Yeah, I noticed. I guess, I am just upset that I missed
some of the fighting. I still do. I became an Elite Guard so I could fullfill my destiny! I was suppose
to..." he was saying.

Sentinel scoffed loudly and gave the young mech a look. "You still go on about being a great warrior
and being the best?! It's not about destiny, Smokescreen! You make your own destiny! Besides, I
remember you from the recruiting camps. You were and are still cocky. I remember the one time I
visited the recruitment camps, you were pushing yourself too hard to show off that you ran into
another mech and pushed them into a pit of static electricity during the obstacle course. And you
were hopping backwards! It wasn't smart trying to go backwards and not paying attention It was
stupid!" He scowled.

Smokescreen looked alarmed for a moment. "Yo-you WERE watching?! I thought..." he was saying
before scowling. "Yeah, well, like you have done better!"

Sentinel now turned to glare at him while Max sighed and stepped in between them. "Guys, knock it
off. You're getting too loud and we should be trying to find information on what happened here."
She tried to break up an obvious building fight.

"According to my title, I did do better than you! And I am better than you! You failed the Elite tests,
remember?!!" Sentienl growled darkly. "You were placed as a guard!"
"Guys! Come on!" Max hissed now placing her hands against their chassis because now they were inching towards each other, glaring at one another.

"Says you! You weren't even a good Prime! Everyone hated you because you were so full of yourself! You always put others down! Trying to make yourself look better! You were a pompous aftpipe." Smokescreen exclaimed right into Sentinel's face.

Sentinel paused, optics flashing with a hint of hurt before they flashed in anger. "At least everyone knew who I was! No one knew who you were!" He snapped back at Smokescreen. "And I am fully aware of how I used to be, botling! I am aware that not many liked my decisions! I am aware that my pompous ways also got myself killed! But I have been given a second chance! Unlike you! You are still the sparklingish botling who sprouts out about a greatness that you do not have! You could never even add up to Bumblebee, who risked his own vocoder to ship off the All Spark to keep it away from Megatron! Now what have you ever done?! Nothing but whine and sprout nothing important about a greatness that you will never have! Unless you have a greatness of being loud mouth! All I have seen from you so far since Cybertron and up until now are worthless acts of stupidity! You are a poor excuse of an Autobot! You will never show any signs of greatness, if you ask me!"

For a moment there was only silence other than Maximum Wave grumbling and glaring at both of them.

Smokescreen stared at Sentinel, hurt and angry. He couldn't believe he had the nerve of saying something like that. Even when the greatness of being a loud mouth was his own.

"Now if you are finished being a sparkling, I am a Prime and I am leading a mission here! You are a worthless pirate who volunteered to be under my command! So do yourself a favor, disable your vocoder and start taking orders or go back where you belong back on the pirate ship!" Sentinel snapped, almost echoing off the ship walls.

Glaring darkly at the Prime, Smokescreen slowly shook his head before his doorwings flicked up. "You are not a Prime! You're a joke!" He spat back before whirling away from him and starting to march away.

"Smokescreen, where are you going?" Maximum Wave asked, now very concerned.

Smokescreen balled up his fists, doorwings quivering in rage and hurt as he went. "I am going to find Breakdown, Knockout and Airachnid! They'd make better company than that aftpipe!" He snapped over his shoulder before he turned a corner and was gone.

For a long moment, there was only silence between Sentinel and Max, who finally turned to glare at the Prime.

Sentinel noticed and glared back. "What?!" He demanded angrily still revved up from the fight.

Max shook her head and folded her arms as she shifted her weight. "What the hell was that?" She asked darkly.

"He was being disrespectful! I was putting him in his place..." Sentinel scowled.

Maximum Wave scoffed loudly, throwing her hand out towards the hall Smokescreen left down. "Yes, he was! And no you weren't! I agree that he was being a tad bit disrespectful! But he is practically a kid, Sentinel! He still needs to learn but you weren't teaching him! You were putting him down! All because you were angry about what he said! You were disrespectful too! You threw
a bunch of faults at him! Yes, he threw some back at you but you are a Prime! Aren't you suppose to
be...I don't know! More understanding? A teacher?! Not a jerk?!” She asked harshly.

"You are a human turned into a Cybertronian! Don't talk about something that you cannot even
fathom to understand! You are practically a sparkling compared to us!” Sentinel growled at her.

Max glared harder at him before shaking her head and turning to continue on.

"Hey! We are not done...!” Sentinel was saying.

Max whipped around and pointed one of her sharp fingers at him, nearly stabbing him in the
chinplates in the process. "I may be younger than you by hundreds of years, Sentinel! But here is a
grown up thing I will do! I am going to walk away before I say or do something I will regret later!
It's a grown up thing in a way! Keeping my mouth shut and swallowing my pride even when I am
pissed off instead of sprouting out childish squanders! That is a problem for a lot of people; men and
women both! When there is too much anger going on and not enough leveled heads, it's better to
keep one's mouth shut, think about what went wrong and then work out the problem for the parties
involved in the fight! Calmly instead and spitting it out like poison! So there you go! I am walking on
to continue the mission until my head is clear! We have to find out what happened here, Sentinel! So
let's go find out!” She snapped before going on.

"I am a Prime! You cannot just talk...!” Sentinel sputtered angrily and shocked by her words.

This time, Max didn't turn around but kept walking. "Then act like it! Think before you speak
irrationally like you just did with Smokescreen!” She said darkly from over her shoulderplates.

Sentinel sputtered on his words. He couldn't believe the nerve of that femme. But...why was it he
had a feeling she was right? That he could have handled the fight with Smokescreen better than he
did?

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"Fragging son of a glitch! I can't believe him! The nerve! I hope he gets caught be scraplets! Torn
apart! Why did Optimus Prime have to bring him along?! What was he thinking?! There is no way
he would do that! Not after all that...that...that aftpipe put him through back on Cybertron!"

Smokescreen had not yet stopped ranting to himself as he stormed through the dark corridors, his
head lights the only source for him to see. He was so mad that his frame was hot against the cool air
and steam was literately trickling off of him.

Still, he wasn't even really looking where he was going. He just glared furiously at the ground, hands
balled up into metal crunching fists and stomping loudly down the hall.

"Sentinel fragging Prime! Ha! What a laugh! He is still a self devoted aftpipe! He isn't worth being
Prime! He is still selfish, pompous, stupid! Still thinks he is Primus, himself! He still thinks he's worth
more than me?!” Smokescreen snarled, his optics narrowing at the ground, his doorwings quivering.
"He doesn't know anything! I could make a better Prime than him! At least I wouldn't put others
down like that! I would try and mae them feel better about their selves! A Prime is suppose to be a
Leader who lift spirits up, not bring them down!"

But even as he ranted angrily under his vents, Smokescreen began to slow his angry pace and his
doorwings trembled, falling down his back struts, while his face fell.

The problem was, deep down, Smokescreen knew Sentinel had a point. About him. Not many
Cybertronians knew of him and if they did, they knew of his no short lack of cockiness. Even he
admitted it, if not to himself, that he could be pretty cocky.

As it was, Sentinel had been right. There were not that many attributes that Smokescreen had done. He spent most of his time in a medbay than on the battlefield, fighting Decepticons.

There was not really one shred of success did Smokescreen perform on the battle field. He always ended up fighting for only five megaclicks before getting shot, all because he wanted someone to notice him. He would always glance over his shoulder to see if one of the Commanders were watching, or Optimus Prime, himself.

Numerous times he had had his helm slapped by someone's hand or Ratchet's wrench because of some stupid move he did.

Sighing heavily, Smokescreen slumped, his arms hanging loosely beside his frame in misery. He knew Sentinel was right. He had no successes to speak of. He was, to be honest.

"Yeah, but so is Bumblebee." Smokescreen tried to reassure his runaway thoughts. He slumped even more, his doorwings hanging lower until they became a little strained from hanging so low. "A rookie who took on Megatron. He got a chance to fight more than me." miserably.

Stopping from storming on, Smokescreen just stood there, feeling pitiful. He was pathetic. He knew that. It didn't help at all that he had back talked a Prime. It might not have been his favorite Prime but Sentinel was still a Prime, if not a poor excuse of one.

"Slag me. I really fragged up this time." Smokescreen groaned now slapping his hands over his faceplates and rubbing them. He groaned miserably again before growling in anger and lashing out a ped against the wall. "Frag! Frag! Frag! Frag! Smoke, how could you do that?! You know it's gonna get back to Optimus Prime! He to be so disappointed in me!"

There were a few echoing bangs as he kicked the wall before finally stopping and leaning against it.

"Nice going, Smoke. You fragged up big ti..." Smokescreen was saying.

Suddenly there was a loud clang, making the Praxian jump and whip up his cannon to look wide optic'd down the corridor where the sound had come from.

"He-hello? Anyone there?"

No answer.

Just eerie silence.

And small, almost barely audible clicks as if someone was walking down the dark hall way.

Smokescreen pitched his doorwings up, trying to keep them from rattling against one another from the unease he was feeling. His cannon arm was shaking as he slowly began making his way down the corridor, optics dancing back and forth for any sign of movement.


Still no answer but small silent clicks.

"Guys, this isn't a game! We're suppose to saving some survivors from this ship!"
Still nothing.

Swallowing hard, Smokescreen creeped along the wall, optics dancing back and forth through the darkness. He didn't like this. It was too quiet. Something was not right here. His doorwings trembling, Smokescreen crept towards the intersection of the corridor and peered around the corner. His gaze was met with nothing but darkness.

Carefully rounding the corner, Smokescreen shifted the light to get a better look down the corridor. He knew something was there. There had to be. "Come on out! I know you're there. I can hear you moving around!" He called softly, optics flicking back and forth.

There were still nothing to answer his calls.

Slowly, Smokescreen lowered his cannon blaster towards the floor, his vents slowing down. He didn't see it. He didn't hear it any more. There was nothing there.

"Primus, I think I'm going crazy. Hearing slag now." The young Praxian muttered miserably.

Suddenly, there was a clatter from behind him.

Smokescreen's doorwings snapped up, stiff and alert. He became very clear that there was something behind him. He could feel a gentle whoosh of air on his sensory panels of his doorwings.

Slowly he turned around, his cannon slowly raising and ready to fire at any second. He turned to see what was behind him...

Nothing.

Sighing in relief, Smokescreen drooped his doorwings again, relieved to have found nothing there. He was so sure he crazy now. He was definitely going to have some high grade energon tonight. He wasn't sure of how much he could take right now.

Shaking himself out of his own thoughts, Smokescreen turned to continue investigating the corridor. He still needed to find Prowl, Bumblebee and that dinosaur mech again. 'What was his name again?' He asked himself turning to go on.

And that was when he found himself staring into a visor of vicious purple with purple under lights shining through the armor. That was only one thing he noticed. The other thing he noticed was a triple split wide open, sharp fanged mouth right in his face. The last thing he noticed was lethal sharp, fang snapping glossa or tongue now coming at his face.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!" Smokescreen's terrified scream echoed off the walls of the ship.

Three pairs of heads whipped around when they heard a distant scream, optics wide open with alarm. It had been so quiet as they searched for the survivors that it was too easy to hear the scream.

"What the frag was that?!" Knockout yelped, his buzzsaw immediately whipped out.

Breakdown and Airachnid also took out their weapons and readied them. They didn't like this. There was no good coming from a scream like that.

"Don't know, KO. But it sounded like Smokey. Ya think he's in trouble?" Breakdown asked now
tense and itching to run off to find his fellow pirate. He might not have been too close to the young mech but he did somewhat consider him as a friend.

"We have injured beings we need to find, mechs." Airachnid reminded them, her legs on her back twitching nervously. "Smokescreen should be with Sentinel Prime and Maximum Wave. Maybe he just heard a noise. That kid seems to be the kind who jump at everything."

Breakdown frowned as he glanced at her but shook his head. "That's the thing, spiderfemme. Smokescreen doesn't. He is one brave youngling. Yeah, he is easy to scare but he never screams like that unless he is being threatened." He said before venting deeply. "Okay, I am going to go find him..."

"Breakdown, we need to stay together." Knockout said sternly, looking up at his friend. "We have no idea what happened on the ship and what could be going on around here. Maybe Sentinel accidentally scared Smokescreen. He is kind of an ass like that." He then grimaced. "Then again, he is really strict. So maybe it was an accident."

"I don't like this, Knockout. Smokescreen and Sentinel are completely different from each other. I wouldn't surprised if their personalities might have clashed..." Breakdown was saying.

Suddenly there was a scuttling noice from behind them, making all three jump and spin around, weapons raised. They knew they had heard something. They could hear something right now! There were quiet little taps as if someone was trying to walk as quietly as they could on the metal ground. And it was coming from around the corner down the hall.

"Who's there?!" Breakdown rumbled, his large cannon aimed straight at the corner while Knockout was scooting back behind him and Airachnid.

The little taps stopped.

"Show your self, now! Or call out or we will hunt you down!" Airachnid growled, her spider legs now spreading out threateningly as she readied her poison acid blaster.

For a moment nothing happened.

And then slowly from around the corner, a pair of big glowing optics peered carefully around the corner. All belonging to a small helm with round bumps on top, making it look almost like two buns in a human's hair.

It was a tiny Cybertronian femme.

All three, Knockout, Breakdown, and Airachnid slowly relaxed, surprised that they had even found someone. More or less, a survivor like they had been looking for. Breakdown's lights carefully shone on the little femme, making her flinch away from the bright lights but it gave the three a clear picture of her image.

She was smaller than Knockout in shape and size. She was petite framed, slender with small armor. Her coloring was a sapphire shining blue with golden yellow trims along her shoulderplates and even on her peds. Her shoulder armor seemed to a little big on her, rounded out almost leveled with her bright blue optics while her leg armor seemed to flair out. She simply looked like a Cybertronian version of an Earth's 70's flower power girl. The bumps on her helm were now obviously sensor horns, though in a human way of seeing it, buns on her head.

However, even as small and petite as she was, it was no doubt she saw some kind of horrors because of her scrapped up, dented and even energon stained armor. She even had fluid stains on her silver
protoform faceplates, trailing down from her optics. No doubt she had been crying optic fluids.

"Hey there." Airachnid now spoke softly, lowering her weapon and motioning to the mechs to do the same thing. "It's okay. We won't hurt you. Come on out."

The little femme cringed, nearly disappearing back around the corner at the sudden movement.

"Wait, don't go. We came to help you." Airachnid spoke carefully stepping forward again, her now transformed hand stretched out as if to stop the femme from leaving.

The little femme didn't disappear but peered at them with fear. She just stood there, hugging the corner of the wall. "We...were...you bitten?" She finally spoke, her voice small and very soft.

Airachnid, Knockout, and Breakdown frowned, now confused of her meaning. They didn't understand.

"She asked you a question! Were you bitten?!"

Optics flashing, all three spun around only to find a pair of cannons trained on them from the mech who stood behind them. They hadn't even heard anyone coming up behind them.

The mech was slightly bigger than the femme, almost the same size of Knockout. He was actually the same size of Jazz and even looked very much like him. He was sleek emerald green with some rust spots on his armor and even the sharp horns on his helm, much like Jazz. Though, by the looks of it, he was just as stained and dented as the femme was, if not worse. He had an energon stain on his side and it looked like a medical patch was wielded on, from a nasty looking wound. He even had a glowing blue visor, which flashed dangerously as soon as he saw the Decepticon emblems on Knockout and Breakdown's chassis.

"Decepticons!" The mech growled, his cannons rumbling to life.

"Whoa, whoa. I wouldn't do that, mech." Knockout said, his cannon out and now trained on the mech but he made no move to fire. He waited for the mech to hesitate before shifting his cannons and buzzsaw away to reveal himself unarmed.

Breakdown and Airachnid slowly lowered their weapons as well, though she kept looking behind them at the femme, who made no move to join her obvious friend to pointing weapons. She just looked terrified, hugging the corner tightly.

The mech growled but didn't fire. He just kept his cannons on the three. "Why the frag not, Con?! Who are you?! What are you doing here on this death trap of a ship?!" He demanded.

"Okay, okay, mech. My name is Knockout. And I am...was a Decepticon medic." The sleek red mech spoke up, servos raised as he shifted his weight. He flicked one servo towards Breakdown. "This is Breakdown and that is Airachnid. We're not exactly Decepticons any more. In fact, the lines between Autobots," he motioned to the clear red Autobot emblem on the mech's shoulderplates then to his own Decepticon emblem on his chassis. "And Decepticons is gone. There is no war any more. Autobots and Decepticons are one now. We're Cybertronians. There are no fractions. The war was over a while ago."

The mech growled, shaking his head and raising his cannons higher, making all three tense up. "Bull slag! That is a Decepticon trick!" He growled, now ready to fire.

The little femme suddenly gasped, her optics widening as she stepped out from behind the wall and stretched out her hand towards him. "Ta-Tap-Out!" She whimpered in fear.
The mech, Tap-Out stiffened before he felt something prod the back of his helm. He didn't have to look to realize someone was behind him, aiming a cannon directly at his helm. He vented in anger and frustration before slowly lowering his cannons, deactivating them. "Fragging Cons!" He growled.

"You are mistaken." Prowl's calm, strict voice spoke up from the shadows. "Now, put your cannons away, completely."

Knockout huffed, his servos dropping from the air. "Primus, Prowl. Cut it a little too close, why don't you?" He asked now smirking. He then frowned again, staring at the black, white and purple mech and his two companions. "What are you doing here, anyway?"

Prowl looked back at him, shaking his head as he kept his cannon trained on the green mech before him. "We heard screams. We came back to check it out. Along the way, we heard you talking with these two." He explained with a shrug of his doorwings.

The mech growled at the order he was given but he did it nonetheless before turning to glare at the Decepticon...his optics widened to see a pair of stern blue optics on him from the black, white and purple mech that stood a little over him. He noticed the red Autobot emblem in the center of the Autobot SIC's chassis immediately.

And even the yellow and black Scout's and the huge Dinobot's chassis and shoulder plates, who both had their weapons trained on them.

"What the...?! Autobots?! With Decepticons?!!" The mech, Tap-Out yelped in alarm, gazing at Prowl, Bumblebee and Sludge in shock. He then growled, threateningly. "Traitors, are ya, then?!!"

Prowl narrowed his optics before stepping back and lowering his weapon, motioning to Bumblebee and Sludge to do the same. "No. We are not. The Autobot ad Decepticons fractions do not exactly exist any more. And even if they do, we are two of one fraction. The war between our fractions are over. There is no more fighting between us. We are one now. Cybertronians." He then motioned to himself. "I am Prowl, Second In Command of the Autobot forces, or rather was. This is Bumblebee, an Autobot scout and this is Sludge, a Technorganic apart of what we call the Dinobots division."

The mech and femme now looked astonished as they gazed all six of the mechs and femme. But it was Sludge that the femme was staring at as she now walked past Knockout, Breakdown and Airachnid, no longer looking terrified. She actually looked fascinated as she walked right up to the Dinobot, who frowned and gazed curiously right back down at her.

"Facinating! A Technorganic!" The femme said, a smile now on her face before she reached up and began poking at his armor.

Knockout snorted as he recognized her fascination and folded his arms across his chest. "Oh, look. She's a scientist. I recognize that from anywhere. It's like that nerdbot, Perceptor whenever he found something to stare at back on Earth." He muttered.

The little femme gazed, whipping back around and looking at him with wide optics. "Per-Perceptor?! You know Perceptor?! He is alive?!" She asked brightly.

All six now frowned curiously at her, while her 'bodyguard' moved closer to her, almost protectively as if daring anyone of them to try and harm her.

"You know Perceptor?" Prowl asked curiously.

The femme bobbed her head enthusiastically with a now bright smile as she tucked her hands
together in front of her. She was an image of innocense to be honest. "Yes! He was once my
Instructor back on Cybertron, at the Iacon Science Academy! I mean..." her fans clicked on from
embarrassment. "He didn't know me but he was the reason I even became a scientist. His studies
were so facinating! I wanted to follow his pedsteps and become a Bioengineer Scientist and
somewhat did. But then..." her voice trailed off, now looking miserable. "The war happened."

Everyone understood that. They knew that her dreams were probably dashed when the war broke
out. A lot of dreams, wishes and hopes had vanished when the war destroyed it all.

Prowl lift his hand towards the femme, who smiled while her friend did not. He had grabbed her
shoulderplates and practically shove her behind him, glowering at Prowl, who smiled faintly,
recognizing the nerve to protect the femme. "It's all right. We will not harm any one of you. As
Knockout said before, we came across your ship and found weak traces of life. We are here on a
rescue mission. We are just here to help you. Are either of you hurt?" He asked, optic'ing the medical
patch on the mech.

The femme smacked the growling mech's unijured side, glaring up at him and hissing at him to
knock it off. "Tap-Out is. I am not. It's not a bite, though. Just a slash in his side. I patched it up as
best as I could, but I'm not a medic. So it's probably not that good. It's been healing on it's own. My
name is Glyph. Thank you so much for coming to our rescue. We were beginning to think no one
would be coming to save us." She said her voice now lowering as did her helm.

The three Autobots and three former Decepticons or such frowned, now looking around in the
darkness. They knew this was their chance to find out what happened.

"What happened on this ship? Are there any more survivors?" Prowl asked frowning at Glyph.

Glyph and Tap-Out glanced at one another, both a signt of unease and sadness before they looked
back at Prowl. "There are just three of us. Our companion is really badly injured from protecting us
from...from those monsters." She told them.

"Monsters? What monsters?" Bumblebee asked, his doorwings twitching in unease.

Tap-Out slowly shook his head, still holding on to Glyph in a protective embrace. "We...uh, don't
know what they are. All we know is how it all started. It must have been two vorns ago. Our ship," he
motioned to the walls around them. "Sojourner's Passage, was a Science Research ship. At the
beginning of the war, a handful of scientist were sent out on it. Me, included as an Elite Guard. My
commander was Kup, and he is who is hurt." He explained.

Optics flashed in surprise as Prowl and Bumblebee stiffened. "Kup?! He's here?! Alive?!" The
younger Autobot asked in surprise.

Glyph and Tap-Out frowned but nodded. "The old Weapons Specialist of Alpha Prime. He is still
alive but barely. I have been trying to patch up his injuries but everytime I do, one of the monsters
shows up and attacks us and he gets hurt again. This last time, it nearly ripped out his throat. He is so
lucky to be still active. Though I don't know for how much longer." The femme said sadly.

Again, everyone frowned.

"What monsters?" Breakdown asked frowning.

"That's what we're trying to tell you. So if you would just let me finish." Tap-Out growled irritably.
And whrn no one said anything, he nodded. "Anyway, Commander Kup and a bunch of us, Elites
were sent with the scientists on this ship to travel the solar system, looking for new energon deposits
on other planets. We were...attacked some vorns ago. By this massive, nasty looking warship. It just came out of nowhere, no warning, no anything. They just captured our ship and remained quiet for an orn. And then...they sent some of those...those things onto our ship!" He growled, viciously.

"It was terrible!" Glyph whimpered in terror. "They looked like Cybertronians but there was something off about them. They...they just started attacking our people. Killing them. And then..." she was saying.

Airachnid hissed, her violet optics widening in realization and horror. "The dead started coming back to life, killing more of your people and the cycle just kept repeating!" She said gravely.

Glyph and Tap-Out looked at her and nodded.

It was starting to dawn on the others too. Their optics widened in horror and realization before Prowl whipped around and away from the others, his hand slapping against his com system. "Prowl to Sentinel Prime! Come in, Sentinel, now!" He barked sharply into the coms.

There was a moment's pause before his coms came on line. -Sentinel Prime to Prowl, what is it? Did you find...?- The Prime started.

"We need to regroup now! Medical Team has found the survivors! Two of three! We need to find the third survivor and get off this ship! There are Terrorcons on this ship!" Prowl barked into the coms.

Dead silence. Then an unsettling crackle of the coms. -Terrorcons?! How many?/- Sentinel asked now alarmed and a slight hint of fear.

Prowl looked sharply at Glyph and Tap-Out for the answer. "How many Terrorcons are there?!" He asked sharply. The two shook their heads, looking afraid now. "How many were sent over here and how many Cybertronians were there on your ship?" He tried again.

Glyph shuddered in growing fear, shaking her head as she tried to think. "Uh...fo-four of those mon- monsters and there were...um..." she stammered.

"Thirty scientists, Glyph included, fifty civilians and forty guards to protect them, me and Kup included." Tap-Out finished sounding uneasy but braver than her.

Prowl and the other five looked startled but nodding. That was not good whatsoever. "One hundred and thirty, give or take, Sentinel! We have to get the survivors and our selves off this ship! And then have Lockdown blow up this ship with all of the Terrorcons on it!" He said firmly into the com.

"LOCKDOWN?!" Both Glyph and Tap-Out cried out in fear and anger.

Prowl turned to look at them, frowning. He saw the others looking confused as well. It was obvious that they knew of his old friend. "You know Lockdown?" The SIC asked frowning.

Tap-Out growled angrily, while Glyph just looked terrified. "Yeah, we know that son of a glitch! He's the fragger who abandoned our ship when everyone started dying and becoming those monsters! He took our only shuttle and left us to die!" He snarled, in rage.

Prowl and the others stared at him with unease, knowing this was not going to be good. If they hated Lockdown, this was going to cause problems.

Suddenly, in the distance, there was an unearthly screech, echoing off the walls. It made all of them jump and spin around, activating their weapons. Glyph cried out and clutched to Tap-Out as if he
were her life line. "It's them! They're awake!" She whimpered fearfully.

"What does that mean?" Bumblebee asked before jumping when another screech reached their audios. It sounded closer.

Tap-Out shook his head as he clung on to Glyph, holding her closer with his cannon raised. "They recharge just like us! But not even close to being like us! If something catches their attention, they start hunting!" He jumped when more screeches sounded, some close, some faraway. "Sounds like they're hunting now. How many are there? Did you bring to save us?!" He asked looking uneasily at Prowl.

Prowl shook his head as he looked back. "Nine of us on the ship. We have six Seekers surrounding our ship. All of the others of our group are our ship just a few Hic away from this one. Lockdown didn't want to bring his ship any closer to this one." He shook his head, looking stern when Tap-Out growled at the name. "Look, I know you don't trust Lockdown, I do understand. But right now, you have to trust us. We can discuss this later with him! But we have to get off this ship!" He said strictly before turning his attention back to his coms. "Sentinel! Take Maximum Wave and Smokescreen back to Skyfire! Be care..."

-WHAT?! SMOKECREEN ISN'T WITH YOU?!- Sentinel interrupted loudly and alarmed.

Everyone stiffened at the exclamation from the Prime. Breakdown hissed, his entire frame tense and his burning red optics flashing.

"What do you mean, Sentinel?! Why isn't Smokescreen with you?!" Prowl suddenly demanded tense as ever.

-...We got into a little spat. He stormed off, fragged at me, saying he was going to look for Breakdown.- Sentinel spoke almost sheepishly.

"FRAGGING PITS! THAT SCREAM! IT WAS SMOKECREEN!" Breakdown roared in shock and unease. He started forward but Prowl quickly intercepted him. "MOVE! I HAVE TO GO HELP HIM!"

Prowl shook his head looking up at him. "Breakdown, we have to stay together this time! I want to help Smokescreen as much as you do but we cannot separate! We need to find Kup first, regroup and then get the frag off of this ship!" He said sternly.

Breakdown shook his head, looking torn. "Prowl, Smokescreen is by himself! He needs our help! He is probably being attacked right now! I have to find him! He is my fellow pirate! My...my friend! I have to help him!" He argued.

"The one problem is, Breakdown, is we don't know where he is and there are probably over a hundred Terrorcons now wandering the ship! We need to stay together!" Prowl argued back.

"We're slagged! We are so slagged!" Bumblebee sad, now his doorwings trembling in fear. "Can't we call for reinforcements?! Optimus would send help for us!"

Prowl and Airachnid both shook their heads, almost thinking the same thing. "We can't, Bee. With how many Terrorcons are on this ship, the more mechs we bring on the ship, the more possibility that someone will get bit and infected with the virus! And then we will have a huge problem on our hands! Lockdown will not want an infected mech on his ship! You do remember what he said about Terrorcons and what Airachnid said. They don't have an antivirus formula! We cannot allow a single bite at all." The Autobot SIC said firmly. "And with too many reinforcements wandering around in
the darkness, there is a greater possibility that someone will become infected."

Airachnid nodded in agreement, her poison acid cannon prepped and ready. "He's right. Lockdown will not even allow your Primes to send anyone over. He will think the same way as Prowl is right now. We will be on our own on this!" She said firmly.

"Okay, why the frag are we just standing here, talking?! If there are Terrrcons wandering around, let's get moving!" Knockout snapped after listening to all of the arguing.

Prowl looked at him and nodded sharply. He knew the medic had a point. "We need to move! Now!" He turned to look at Glyph and Tap-Out, who was looking uneasily down the hall. "Glyph, Tap-Out, where is Kup? We need to find him immediately and then get out of here."

Both looked at him before shaking their heads. "We have been keeping him locked up in a storage chamber." Tap-Out said now a little withdrawn. "We can take you to him right now but we need to move really fast. The monsters are on the hunt. If one even sees us, it will call to the others and then we are in trouble."

"Wait! What about Smokescreen?! We can't just leave him to fend for himself!" Breakdown exclaimed.

Prowl swore, now looking torn. He didn't like this. But he knew he was torn between two choices. Go find Smokescreen or go find an injured Kup. He didn't want to seperate the group. It was too dangerous.

Sludge grunted before stepping forward. "Me find Smokescreen. You bots find injured bot."

Prowl looked up at him and shook his head. "Sludge, it's too dangerous for you to go alone. There are too many Terrorcons for you alone."

Sludge shook his head as he reached up and slapped his wide chassis. "Sludge no afraid! Me smash bad bots! Me 'member what Lockdown said to kill bad bots during training. Smash heads! Sludge smash! Me find Smokescreen and then we come back to Skyfire. You bots find injured."

Again Prowl shook his head, looking frustrated. "Sludge, you don't know your way around. You get lost." He said strictly.

While Prowl was arguing with Sludge, the two new Cybertronians were arguing over their private com likes. Glyph seemed to be trying to talk Tap-Out into something but he just kept shaking his head and motioning to their rescuers, making it obvious that they were speaking privately.

"Tap, please!" Glyph suddenly spoke out, pleadingly with big bright blue optics. She made everyone stop what they were doing and look at her and her companion.

Tap-Out sighed, shoulder plates slumped before he slowly nodded and turned to face Prowl seriously. "Glyph will take you to Kup and then will guide you guys through the fastest route to your...Skyfire. She knows all of the safest short cuts through the ship. We both do. We spent so long here, getting to know the entire ship. I will take your large friend to find this Smokescreen." He said stepping forward.

Prowl frowned but then sighed, nodding. He knew fairly well that it was the only way. He looked around at every one of his companions before nodding. "All right. We will seperate. Breakdown, Knockout, Bumblebee, you go with Glyph and find Kup. Get him on Skyfire immediately once you have him. Airachnid and I will go with Sludge and Tap-Out to find Smokescreen and then Sentinel
and Maximum Wave. We meet back up at Skyfire to get the frag off this dreaded ship! Com links wide open. If you get bit..." he paused grimacing in pain. "Just don't get bit by the Terrorcons. Remember what Lockdown taught us about killing them. Do NOT hesitate on shooting it." He said firmly.

Everyone nodded.

Tap-Out stepped closer to Breakdown, Knockout and Bumblebee, pointing at Glyph, who sighed knowingly. "You three better protect her. If she gets hurt in anyway, you are responsible. I will kill any one of you if anything happens to her, got tha'?" He asked dangerously.

Breakdown and Knockout both snorted, looking at him as if he were joking but Bumblebee nodded as he stepped closer to Glyph and lightly set his hand on her large shoulder plates. "I promise, I will keep her safe

Tap-Out glowered at him for a moment before his visor softened and he nodded sharply. He looked at Glyph and gently patted her helm. "Be safe, Glyph. I will be back, okay?" He told her.

Glyph smiled up at him and nodded before looking at the former Decepticons and Autobot. "Come! We need to move fast!" She said urgently then turned and started running. The three ran after her quickly, weapons out and ready to use at any sign of Terrorcons.

Prowl looked to the others and nodded. "Let's hurry and find Smokescreen, Sentinel and Max and then get back to Skyfire!" He said quickly before starting to move. He tapped his com link as he went. "Sentinel! You and Max start getting back to Skyfire! Meet us there!"

There was only crackling static for a long moment, making Prowl start twitching his door wings nervously.

Then...-Prowl! We already have him! But we're pinned down in what looks like the refueling station! Smokescreen is injured but not terribly! We're being attacked...! Maximum, behind you! Watch ou...!-

And the transmissions cut out.

"Sentinel!" Prowl exclaimed into the link, his optics wide. "Sentinel! Are you all right?! Maximum Wave! Smokescreen?!" He received no reply. "Fraggit!" He sharply looked back at the others, now running. "Tap-Out, where is the refueling station?!"

Tap-Out rushed to take point, his cannons out and ready. "This way! It's on the other side of the ship! Too far away from us considering on how many of those monsters are on board! We need to hurry if we want to get to your friends on time! Though I wouldn't be surprised if they're being ripped apart right now!" He called as they all ran.

Prowl swore as he ran behind Tap-Out and beside Sludge and Airachnid. They knew that they needed to hurry and find the others before something bad, or worse happened.

If it hadn't already.
Terrorcons

Chapter Notes

::Songs Best Used::
Otherworld-Two Steps From Hell
Power of Darkness-Two Steps From Hell
Orion-Two Steps From Hell

Several moments before everything went to the Pits, Sentinel and Max had reached what looked like the cockpit. They were not talking to one another, still fuming about what happened not even five minutes ago. The only thing that was said was to look around for datapads that might have been lying around. So, both started looking. It did not help whatsoever that the entire cockpit was trashed. There was energon stains all over the floor and walls and even on the consoles. It also didn't help the fact that Max ended up jumping in alarm when she found a severed arm.

There was one other thing that Sentinel noticed, something very odd. He had been searching the control console for the whole ship when he suddenly noticed a blinking red light going off on the panel. He frowned and moved closer.

"What the frag? There's no power on the ship yet. So what is this...?" The Prime started asking.

And then it happened; they heard a distant scream from within the ship.

"What was that?! Was that Smokescreen?!!" Max yelped in alarm and worry as she spun around to look wide optic'd at the corridor they had come from.

Sentinel frowned but shook his head. "It was probably nothing. Maybe Smokescreen is scaring himself again. I swear, I have never seen a more cowardly..." He was complaining.

Max turned a glare onto him daring him to finish that. She was already getting tired of his biased complaining about the young Autobot slash pirate. It seemed that the Prime got the message because he shut himself up and went back to looking for information.

It was when they heard distant clanging and shouts did they stop again, frowning and listening hard.

"What the frag is going on out there?" Sentinel asked now starting towards the door.

-Prowl to Sentinel Prime! Come in, Sentinel, now!- His transmissions suddenly crackled to life.

"Wha-?! How dare he...!" Sentinel grumbled at the sudden demand from Optimus' SIC. He tapped his com link, irritably. "Sentinel Prime to Prowl, what is it? Did you find...?"

-We need to regroup now! Medical team has found the survivors! Two of three! We need to find the third survivor and get off this ship! There are Terrorcons on this ship!- Prowl barked sharply into the com.

Both Sentinel and Maximum Wave felt their sparks nearly stall as they let Prowl's words settle in. A fear they knew all too well from training with Lockdown struck through their very core.
"Di-did he just say...?!” Max asked uneasily.

"Terrorcons?!” Sentinel interrupted her, demanding Prowl the answer. "How many?!!"

There was a long unsettling pause as they awaited Prowl's answer. It was too long for them, making them think that something might have happened to the other team to make them delay answering.

And even so, Max stiffened and jerked her head around as she looked worriedly towards the corridor. "That scream before! What if it was Smokescreen?! What if he is in trouble?!” She asked concerned.

Sentinel huffed, looking at her in irritation. "I am sure he's fine, Maximum Wave. He is probably with the other teams. I bet it was him and the others scared him." He said now pulling out his energon lance and activating his shield. "We need to regroup with the others, so let's get moving!"

Maximum Wave still looked worried but nodded as she started to follow him.

-One hundred and thirty, give or take, Sentinel!- Prowl finally answered making both halt in shock and alarm. -We have to get the survivors and our selves off this ship, Sentinel! And then have Lockdown blow up this ship with all of the Terrorcons on it!-

In the background, Sentinel and Max heard a pair of unfamiliar voices exclaim the very name of their pirate host.

By that time, both Sentinel and Maximum Wave was now moving down the corridor at a fast pace. They didn't like the sound of this at all. Especially on how many Terrorcons Prowl just said were even on the ship.

"If there are so many Terrorcons on the ship, how come we didn't see any?!” Maximum Wave asked as she ran beside the Prime.

Sentinel shook his head, not exactly understanding it, himself. "I don't know! You would think we would have ran into some by now! But we haven't...!” He was yelling back as they started to turn a corner.

Only to come a screeching halt as their vents hitched sharply when they saw a great number of silhouettes just down the corridor, now blocking their path. Silhouettes with vicious purple under lights in their armor.

And vicious purple optics and visors turned when they realized they were not alone.

And those vicious purple glowing under lit beings took one look at Sentinel Prime and Maximum Wave before their chin plates seemed to split open in three ways as a waving, long evil looking glossa flicked in the air and they emitted a very high pitched screech that had both mech and femme gasp and cover their audios from the disrupting sound.

The Terrorcons lurched forward, razor sharp claws and their wicked looking glossa snapped its insane looking fangs as they came at the two with screeches.

"HOLY FRAGGING PRIMUS!” Sentinel roared in alarm before throwing up his lance and shield, pointing them at the charging monsters.

Maximum Wave gasped, leaping backwards as she raised her cannon blaster and began firing at rapid speed as the monsters came at them both. Rapid energon blasts slammed into Terrorcons, sending them staggering backwards, though quite a few lucky hits caused their helms to explode on
impact. Some of the other Terrorcons charging ran directly into Sentinel's lance, piling on it through the chassis'.

It was a Primacron sent miracle that each and every one had been shot down by Maximum Wave or had ran head long into the sharp lance, killing their selves. It seemed to go as showed that they were not that intelligent to dodging.

-Sentinel!- Prowl's sharp voice exploded again, making both jump and gasp as they had been startled. The Prime swore he was about to have a spark rupture if he received any more scares like that! -Take Maximum Wave and Smokescreen back to Skyfire! Be care...!-

At the same time and at once, Sentinel and Max felt their sparks clench in shock and growing fear, especially on what Prowl just said. "WHAT?! SMOKESCREEN ISN'T WITH YOU?!" The Prime boomed before wincing when he and the femme heard screeches from behind them.

Both turned sharply to see glowing vicious purple light now starting to shine on the walls from around the corner, now moving closer to them.

-What do you mean, Sentinel?! Why isn't he with you?!- Prowl suddenly demanded from over the com links.

Sentinel grimaced, watching the vicious lights of the Terrorcons now coming closer. He grabbed Max's shoulder plates and started backing up with her, weapons raised. "...We got into a little spat. He stormed off, fragged at me, saying he was going to go look for Breakdown." He admitted sheepishly and guilt now in his spark. He knew right then and there that the scream they heard earlier must have been Smokescreen being attacked by Terrorcons.

There was a furious exclaim in the background that obviously had been Breakdown. It ended with a click, though, stating transmissions were cut.

"Sentinel, we have to find Smokescreen! He could be hurt!" Maximum Wave said now backing up, her cannons raised just as the approaching Terrorcons rounded the corner.

Sentinel nodded as he, too, backed up before turning and running as fast as he could with Maximum Wave right behind him. They heard the screeches of the Terrorcons, knowing fully well that they had been spotted. They just ran.

Running from the Terrorcons was not helping whatsoever, in this case. Even as they ran, the monsters were right behind them, screeching and hissing.

Just as they rounded a corner, Sentinel felt something slam right into him, causing him to stagger back from the impact with a loud startled cry. He immediately held up his lance ready to slam it into his attacker's...

"WHOA! WAIT A MINUTE! IT'S ME!" Smokescreen yelped, holding up on hand and leaping back to avoid being decapitated by a glowing lance.

"Smokescreen! Are you all right?!" Max exclaimed before whirling around when she heard screeches behind them. Her spark caught in her chassis when she saw the rushing Terrorcons coming after them. "Shit! Here they come! Run!" She started to rush past Smokescreen, who caught her around the waist, hauling her back.

"Not that way! Trust me! Come on!" The young mech yelled now turning to run down a third corridor with the two behind him.
It took a moment to realize it but Max noticed a trail of energon flowing down Smokescreen's shoulder. There was a nasty looking gash just behind his armor and it didn't look too good.

"Smokescreen! You're hurt!" Max cried out as she ran beside him.

Sentinel merely glanced at the younger mech, frowning before continuing to run. "Did one of the Terrorcons bite you?!" He demanded as they came to another corner only to screech to a halt as they saw Terrorcons crawling out from large cracks in the walls. "Slag! They're hiding in the walls! That's why we haven't seen them!"

Smokescreen looked frantically around before spying a slightly open door. "There!" He yelled now booking for it.

Maximum Wave and Sentinel Prime quickly followed him, diving past the door into what looked like the refueling station of the ship. They quickly spun around and began shoving at the rusted door, trying to force close it.

Managing to close it by a fraction but not enough, all three yelped as they jumped back when Terrorcons suddenly lashed out at them through the door crease, some of their dangerous glossa snapping at them and screeching. One of them had come millimeters from snapping onto Max's arm before Smokescreen grabbed her and yanked her backwards when he saw it coming.

All three Cybertronians quickly retreated further into the room, watching with wide terrified optics as Terrorcons were practically engulfing the doors, trying to pound it open or squeeze through.

"Start shooting, people!" Sentinel barked now aiming his cannon and firing at a few, blasting the monsters' heads apart. "Smokescreen! What happened?! Did you get bit?!"

Smokescreen, somewhat nursing his injury, shook his head as he, too, aimed with his cannon and began firing at the Terrorcons trying to break through. "No! One almost did bite me but I jumped back in time when they started attacking me! It's just a scratch!" He tried to reassure them. "They have deadly sharp claws on them, that's for sure!"

-Sentinel! You and Max start getting back to Skyfire! Meet us there!- Sentinel's com link crackled with Prowl's voice.

Sentinel paused a moment while the other two kept firing at the Terrorcons. "Prowl! We already have him! We're pinned down in what looks like the refueling station! Smokescreen is injured but not terribly! We are being attacked!" He suddenly saw movement from the side near Maximum Wave and he jerked to see what it was. His spark clenched to see that Terrorcons were now creeping towards them from behind. He hadn't even noticed a crack in the wall in the room, where a few Terrorcons were now crawling in through. "Maximum, behind you! Watch out!" He roared racing forward and swinging his lance towards the Terrorcon. He slammed the sharp tip right through its head, sending the now deactivated monster flying through the air and crashing across the room.

Maximum Wave spun around, looking stunned at the monster that had almost attacked her. She couldn't believe that she had almost missed it. "Th-thanks, Sentinel!" She stammered.

Smokescreen had both of his cannons out now, ignoring the searing pain coursing through his shoulder. He looked frantically around at all of the Terrorcons now coming at them. "Slag! There's too many!" He exclaimed before firing and hitting that nearly caught Sentinel off guard.

"Back to back! Don't let any get behind us!" Sentinel yelled before turning his back towards the other two, who quickly pressed their backs against his. "Give these monsters all you have!"
Maximum and Smokescreen nodded as they began firing as rapidly as they could, hitting any Terrorcon they saw now flooding the room.

It was not helping though. Even as one fell, another took its place. They just kept coming. And coming ever closer. They were almost upon the three now, making all of them hiss in fear and unease. They kept firing everything they had and it was starting to wear them down.

"Slag! I am starting to lose power, here!" Smokescreen exclaimed before gasping and shoving Max to the side as he jumped to his other side as one of the Terrorcons came at him with a Baen claw. He spun quickly around and kicked the Terrorcon hard in the side, sending it flying backwards with a screech.

But not without it raking its claw down his legs, slashing open his armor and spilling energon.

"AHHHH!" Smokescreen cried out in pain as he toppled over and hit the ground hard with a clamor.

Max gasped spinning around, looking at him with shock and concern. "Smokes!" She cried out.

"Maximum Wave!" Sentinel exclaimed seeing a Terrorcon coming at her turned back, sharp glossa and even fangs snapping at her. He threw out his arm to protect her and practically shrieked when the Terrorcon sank its sharp fangs into his arm.

Max and Smokescreen looked up in shock and horror seeing the Terrorcon biting him. "No!" Both gasped seeing the energon now trailing down the Prime's arm and onto the floor.

Suddenly there was a roar and something came flying at the Terrorcons starting to lunge on the three in the room. A whip like tail slammed into many of the monsters, sending them flying in many directions with screeches. A blast struck Sentinel's attacker, knocking it forward against him, which the Prime took advantage of and thrust his lance with through the Terrorcon's fore helm, killing it immediately and forcing it to release him.

More blasts entered the fray, making all three look up to see that Prowl, Airachnid, Sludge and a green mech they did not recognize jump into attacking the Terrorcons, every one of them attacking the monsters furiously.

"Sentinel! Are you harmed?!" Prowl yelled as he fired at any Terrorcon in his sight.

Sentinel shuddered, holding his heavily gouged arm close to his chassis but he shook his head, looking worn but keeping a forced smile on his face. "Please, Prowl! As if a scratch is going to bring me down!" He called over before starting to shoot his cannons again.

"Sentinel! You were...!" Maximum Wave cried out in alarm, realizing he was trying to lie his way out of worrying the others. It became quite clear that they hadn't seen the Terrorcon actually latched on the Prime's arm like it had been.

Sentinel shot her a warning look and shook his head. "I am fine! Let's kill these things and then get off of this damned ship! Where are the others, Prowl?!" He demanded looking back at the Autobot SIC.

Prowl blasted a Terrorcon between the optics before turning his cannons back onto more. He hesitated when he saw the green mech bashing Terrorcons hard from behind with his silver protoform fists, avoiding them quite well. He seemed to be doing very well with hand to servo combat. "They're retrieving Kup, Sentinel!" He called back to the Prime, who started and looked at him with shock. "We can retrieve information from Tap-Out and Glyph, two of the survivors, later! Let's move! Sludge, clear the path to the door!" He yelled as he rushed towards the other three and
helped Smokescreen to his peds. "Lean on me if you have to, Smokescreen!"

Sludge was half way in mech and dinosaur transformation, swinging his large tail hard from side to side, practically crushing the Terrorcons and even stomping hard onto their helms, crushing them like cans.

Once the path was open, Prowl began walking fast with Smokescreen's arm trailed across his shoulder plates and the others were providing protection for them. Sentinel ignored Max as she kept beside him, looking at him in concern as she fired her cannons at the monsters.

Finally leaving the refueling station, the whole group were hurrying as quick as they could, the green mech in the lead, shooting any Terrorcon that came into view.

"Hey, Prowl! Who is that guy?!" Smokescreen asked as he quickly moved with the SIC.

"Name's Tap-Out! Did you get bit?!" Tap-Out called over his shoulder, before Prowl could even say anything.

"No." Smokescreen called back, frowning.

Tap-Out nodded before blasting at Terrorcon in the helm for even daring getting in the way. He motioned to the others to hurry after him. "Good! Cause if you did, I have no problem shooting you right here and now to save you the suffering of becoming one of those things!" He called again.

Maximum Wave looked worriedly at Sentinel, who glanced back. She saw that he was starting to look worn down, as if overheating. He was still clutching his arm close to his chassis, hand over the bite mark as if protecting it from view. "What happens if you get bit?!" She suddenly blurted out, looking back at Tap-Out.

It was Airachnid who shook her head, scuttling quickly beside everyone on her eight legs. "You will die, painfully! And then become one of them!" She explained, earning a curious frown from Tap-Out. "If you ever get bit, it will take a few orns, days for the virus to start settling in, shutting down all of your systems. It isn't pleasant from what I have seen! It's painful!"

Max fought herself not to look in Sentinel's direction, knowing he would be angry if she pointed him out. She caught Smokescreen looking at the blue Prime too with worry, and she knew that he knew, he had seen it too. But he wasn't saying it out of respect of the Prime's wishes.

"Come on! We need to hurry! What we have killed already isn't even the half..." Tap-Out was saying.

There was sudden blast fire from up ahead and a shrill, terrified scream that sent chills through everyone's sparks. They were very sure that was Glyph who was screaming.

"NO! GLYPH!" Tap-Out roared in alarm and bolted forward as fast as he could to reach the end of the corridor.

As much as they could, the others tried to keep up, running as fast as they could or what their injuries would allow.

Bursting into the same supply station where they all had come from, everyone saw the other group on the far side of the room, near another corridor. Bumblebee, Knockout, and Breakdown were standing in between a horde of Terrorcons and two Cybertronians; Glyph and a large bulky looking mech, who was on the ground.
He was a large mech, but no larger than Breakdown. He was bulky with wide shoulders and chassis. He looked pretty well built, if not quite rusty and aged in some spots. He kind of resembled the same war build as Ironhide if not more rundown and with a round helm, making it look more like a helmet. His coloring was almost gray, sky blue to be honest with rust on the edges. He was quite battered with medical wields all over his dented and cracked frame. He was off line for now, probably unaware of everything going on around him.

Glyph was knelt beside his helm, arms wrapped over her own helm and curled into herself, trembling violently, obviously in fear. She was screaming into her own arms as Terrorcons attacked Knockout, Breakdown and Bumblebee, who did not waver or move away from her and the old mech. They were not going to leave her undefended, even as Terrorcons were moving ever so closer.

It didn't help that a Terrorcon was creeping out from the shadows behind them and moving towards Glyph.

"NO! GLYPH, BEHIND YOU!" Tap-Out cried out, in a panic as he started running towards her, ignoring the Terrorcons around him. He just wanted to get to her, wanting to protect her.

Glyph jumped to sitting up and spinning around with wide terrified optics to see the Terrorcon now closing in on her. She screamed, wrapping her arms protectively around herself before flinching as it lunged at her, sharp glossa snapping.

CRACK!

There was a vicious purple flash of light before something very large practically warped into the ship and slammed an arm against the Terrorcon batting it swiftly across the chamber, towards a now surprisingly open ramp door. Where Skyfire had been, and still kind of was still there, only drawn back a little from the ramp to allow the Seekers in to join everyone to shooting the Terrorcons.

Standing practically above Glyph, Skywarp slashed his servos across any Terrorcon that came too close to him, the femme or the old off lined mech. His wings were spread out wide and threateningly as he glared viciously at the monsters all around him.

A flash of fiery red caught everyone else's attention and they all turned to see Nightbird diving into the ship, her laser swords flashing and spinning, slicing into Terrorcon helms and deactivating them immediately. She was moving as such a pace and speed, it almost seemed impossible to see her actually move.

"Get to Skyfire, all of you!" Starscream snarled as he began firing his Gatling guns at the Terrorcons, ripping many of them into pieces. "Skywarp! Grab that femme and the old mech and get them on Death's Head immediately!"

Skywarp shot his Trine Leader a serious look and nodded before turning around sharply to reach for Glyph and the old off lined mech, only to pause, his optics flashing in surprise.

His gaze was on Glyph.

Glyph looked right back at him, her optics wide in almost the same amount of surprise as him. She seemed...almost frozen as she looked up at him. She seemed to have stalled when she saw him, doing nothing but staring at him as if...awed by his very appearance. She slowly even sat up, staring up into his red optics, which stared back as if equally awed.

"SKYWARP! MOVE IT! STOP STARING AT THE FEMME! JUST GET GOING!" Starscream roared when he noticed his trine mate not even gone yet.
Shaking himself out of his stupor, Skywarp shot a glance back at Starscream before looking back at Glyph, who was still frozen. "Uh...hi! My name is Skywarp!" He said almost too brightly for the situation that was happening all around them all.

Glyph only blinked up at him before flinching when a Terrorcon shrieked as it came wandering over. She cringed against the old mech, terror in her optics. But, without even looking away from her, Skywarp whipped out his servo and smacked the Terrorcon away from them, sending it Thundercracker's way, which he slammed his ped down hard on top of it.

Looking back up at Skywarp, Glyph finally managed a meek smile before slowly standing up. "I'm Glyph. It's nice to meet you, Skywarp." She told him, her voice still trembling a little from the fear she had been feeling from the attacks.

Grinning at her, Skywarp motioned towards the old mech. "We better get outta here. Hop on him. I can carry you both at once if you do." He told her.

Glyph frowned curiously before she turned when she heard a shout from Tap-Out. She looked over towards him before gasping in horror when she saw him practically surrounded by Terrorcons. "Tap!" She gasped, stepping forward as if she wanted to go over to him.

But Skywarp raised his servo, blocking her path. "He'll be okay! I promise!" He motioned to everyone fighting all of the Terrorcons and killing so many, even though more and more were showing up. "All of my friends here will protect him. They have a really annoying noble streak in all of their wiring. Come on! Let's get you to safety first!" He told her.

Glyph looked worried for Tap-Out but she slowly nodded and went over to Kup, carefully sitting in his chassis and looking up at Skywarp. "Wh-what...how are you going to get us to your ship? Kup is really heavy. It took Tap-Out and myself a while to even drag him to the storage room when he..." she was saying.

Grinning, Skywarp went over, practically towering over the large mech and wrapping his servos around the large mech's shoulder plates. "Like this!" He said proudly

CRACK!

A flash of purple lit up the room, catching everyone's attention but only one really paid attention to it. Tap-Out nearly panicked when he didn't see Glyph anywhere. His spark nearly ruptured right then and there as he frantically looked around for her. "GLYPH! GLYPH!" He cried before flinching when he felt someone grab his shoulder plate. He snarled and reared back, ready to swing a fist at who grabbed him. He only barely managed to stop himself when he saw that it was just Breakdown.

"Come on! It's time to get out of here! Death's Head is getting ready to fire all it has to destroy this ship!" The large Transformer yelled before dragging Tap-Out as fast as he could to where everyone else was rushing to the open ramp, where Skyfire was waiting with his ramp hatch wide open.

"Glyph where is she?! I can't leave her...!" Tap-Out exclaimed, looking around as he ran with Breakdown, nearly fighting himself to not fight with the brawny Cybertronian.

Breakdown shook his head as he dragged Tap-Out right up to Skyfire and practically tossed him inside. "She's already on Death's Head! Just get on!" He exclaimed before diving in.

Everyone was on Skyfire and Terrorcons were trying to get on. But with the Seekers blocking the open ramp and firing all they had to keep the monsters at bay, there wasn't much luck.
-Starscream! Get the frag away from that ship! Now!- Lockdown snarled into the transmissions.

Starscream shot a fierce look towards Nightbird, Thundercracker and Silverbolt as they looked back at him. "Move!" He ordered before kicking off hard from the ground and swiftly transformed into his jet form, right with the others. With a blast of fire from their thrusters, all four Seekers blasted through the air right with Skyfire, retreating back towards Death's head at a fast pace.

It was not a moment too soon because once they were all cleared from between both ships, Death's Head's cannons and laser blasters and such lit up fast and lethal, speeding across the space field and slamming right into Sojourner's Passage.

The entire ship exploded into fire, smoke and scrap metal from all of the blasts fired from Death's Head.

Skyfire, with the Seekers surrounding him, flew straight back to Death's Head and right into the enormous ramp, waiting for them. He landed softly before opening his hatch ways, allowing everyone to un-board.

Skywarp was off to the side with Ratchet and the small femme, Glyph looking at the motionless Kup. The CMO was running scans all over the aged Cybertronian, trying to ignore a startled Optimus and Ironhide as they almost hovered, looking at Kup with surprise.

"How is he even alive, Ratchet? We were all aware of Kup being deactivated?!" The tall, noble Prime asked him.

"We can ask him later after I repair him, Optimus! Right now I already have my hands full here! I don't need you already demanding answers right now!" Ratchet grumbled as he made his final scan. He nodded to whatever he was seeing, looking almost satisfied.

"Ho-How...is he...?" Glyph asked, trying not to hover but not able to help it.

Ratchet shot her a look but when she cringed and stepped back uneasily, he sighed and relaxed as he looked softly at her. "He will be fine. He just has many breaks and gashes in his frame and even in his protoform. But I can seal those up in surgery. He isn't in any life threatening position other than he has low energon readings but I suppose that you all do after trying to survive on that blasted ship. What, were all of you starving?" He asked as he looked her over.

Timidly, Glyph slowly nodded, grimacing. "We...uh...we all used up the last energon rations six orns ago. We...pretty much were starving." She said meekly.

Everyone blinked at her in surprise before Rodimus shared a smile with Optimus, who nodded and the youngest Prime stepped over to her. "Come on. We have energon. We can get you refueled." He told her.

Glyph looked at him, her hands whirling around each other but her engine tanks rumbled from the thought of given energon. She, however, shook her head. "No-not yet. I...can I please wait for Tap-Out? He will be angry if I wander off without him." She told them.

"Is he...your sparkma..." Rodimus was asking.

Glyph's fans clicked on in embarrassment and she shook her head quickly. "No! He is just my friend! He...um...kind of appointed himself as my...bodyguard when everyone started dying. He and Kup has been protecting me ever since this whole thing started. We're...kind of close because of everything that we all have been through..." she was saying.
But it was when Skyfire entered Death's Head's loading dock, everyone went quiet and waited for the rescue team to un-board. But once they saw Smokescreen being supported by Prowl and even Bumblebee, Ratchet and Moonracer both raced forward with their medic kits out, ready to start treating him.

"What happened?!" Ratchet immediately demanded as he pulled his scanner out and started looking the young mech over.

"Don't worry about me! They're scratches! Worry about Sentinel!" Smokescreen blurted out as Prowl and Bumblebee helped him off of Skywarp.

"I am fi...!" Sentinel rumbled angrily, shooting the young mech a dark look while hugging his energon leaking arm close to his chassis.

Knockout came out from Skyfire, looking something fierce as he marched right up to Sentinel and roughly grabbed his arm, causing the Prime to yelp. "No, you're not! Maximum just told me! Let me see that arm! Now!" He snapped, his ruby optics flashing dangerously when Sentinel gave him a dark look. He raised his other servo and shifted it into what looked like a pretty nasty looking needle. "Do not make me put you under, Sentinel Prime! I swear to Primus that I will!"

"What happened?!" Ratchet demanded as he left Moonracer to go ahead and patch up Smokescreen, seeing he was in no danger at all.

"I am fine!" Sentinel barked now trying to move back away from both medics.

But it was Optimus who quickly was at his side, stopping him from moving away. "Sentinel, please just let them do their..." he was saying to his old friend.

Sentinel jerked away, now looking frantic. He tried backing away from everyone, who could only watch him in alarm and unease. He was starting to look desperate, even though they could hear his fast spinning rapidly to cool off his now obviously burning up frame. "I...I am fine, Op-Opti..." he tried to sound reassuring.

"He was bitten." Came Airachnid's voice from Skyfire. She was looking grave as she and an uneasy Maximum Wave wandered down the large shuttle's ramp, watching Sentinel with worry or serious debate. She shook her head when the Prime looked at her startled. "You're making it obvious, Sentinel, by not letting them see your wounds."

There was a deafening silence as optics snapped to Sentinel, who was frantically shook his head. "No...I..." he was saying.

The news hadn't been revealed at a worse moment because Lockdown had just barely walked in with Soundwave and the subunits. But hearing that from Airachnid, the pirate halted in alarm. "What?! What do you mean bitten?!" He snarled, his cannon now spinning into place.

"No, I am..." Sentinel tried again.

But Ratchet lashed out and grabbed the now startled Prime by the front of his armor and yanking him down to his optic level. "Don't give me that, Sentinel! Show me your arm right now or so help me, I will bash your helm in with my trustee wrench!" He snarled.

There was an unsettling pause as everyone looked at him in alarm. Sentinel gaped at him for a long moment before sighing and holding out his arm for Ratchet and Knockout.

Both medics hovered over the energon spilling wound, the red and silver mech carefully grabbing
spill rags from his subspace and mopped up the energon, ordering Sentinel to hold it under his arm so the energon could be soaked up into the rags. Ratchet took out what looked like a probe stick and held it over the deep gash in Sentinel's arm, lightly sending a red pulse of light into the broken and destroyed wires and protoframe pipes.

It took a moment of scanning before Ratchet's medical computer beeped and the CMO looked at the dreaded answer.

"..." Ratchet hummed before his shoulder plates slumped and his head dropped. "Sentinel, you are to be confined to your temporarily quarters, quarantined from everyone else." He said now gravely before looking at Knockout, who shared the grave but understanding look. "Knockout, all of the others' injuries are yours and Moonracer's to repair. I need to concentrate on Sentinel. I have to find a way to fix this. We will not let him..." He was saying.

"He has the fragging virus, don't he?!" Lockdown demanded his optics flashing.

Everyone glanced at him, seeing how tense he looked before looking at the new mech, Tap-Out as he steeled himself and started raising his cannon, aiming it right at the back of Sentinel's helm.

The reaction was immediate.

Cannons were drawn and snapping up to aim at Tap-Out as he approached the large blue Prime. Glyph gasped and found herself jumping to the nearest Cybertronian, terror and sorrow in her optics as she watched everyone turning their cannons onto her friend and bodyguard. That Cybertronian, however, happened to be Skywarp, making him look down at her in surprise before lightly placing a comforting servo across her back with a small smile.

"What do you think you're doing?!" Ironhide growled, aiming both of his cannons at Tap-Out.

The green mech shook his head, his faceplates full of dead seriousness as he trained his cannons onto Sentinel's face now, who drew back a little even as Ratchet and Knockout both turned to glare at the would be attacker. "He has been bitten! I am ending this before we end up like those monsters! Like he will end up!"

"Ta-Tap-Out, no." Glyph whimpered, clutching onto Skywarp, who glanced down at her in concern then back at her friend.

"You know what will happen!" Tap-Out exclaimed, glaring up at Sentinel. "He is going to die and then he will turn into one of those monsters and kill of us! It will be Sojourner's Passage all over again!"

Just then, a hook reached over and slapped its side down on Tap-Out's cannon, forcing him to lower it. "Ain't your call to make, Tap-Out. It's mine and the medics' call to make." Lockdown growled.

Tap-Out snarled as he swiveled around and glared hatefully at Lockdown, his cannon was now shoved into the slightly taller mech's face plates. "Lockdown! You selfish son of a glitch! So it really is...!" He was saying.

Lockdown, who had not even flinched, stood his ground, allowing Tap-Out to aim his cannons at him. He just glared back at him before shaking his head. "Tap-Out, just shut the frag up and listen!" He snapped making the former Elite Guard blink in surprise. "Now, I know that we don't got good history together! I remember you and Glyph, and Kup! I made a selfish mistake back then! And I am sorry for what I did! But right now we don't have time for making up on bad history! We gotta lot to fill you and Glyph up on. But for now, listen up!" He growled before he then pointed his hook at
Sentinel. "He has three orns, days, to live! And he gets the right to live those last days as he sees. When he does die, then we will shoot him in the helm to avoid him coming back as a Terrorcon! That is my rule when mechs or femmes gets bit! If I see ya aim your cannon at him again or if he ends up deactivated without him being the one to do it, I will hold you responsible for it! And then I will throw you off my ship!" He snapped.

Tap-Out shook his head growling. "It's better to...!" He was saying.

Lockdown narrowed his optics dangerously at him before jabbing his hook at him, under his sensory unit in the center of his face. "My ship, my rules! It is the Primes, the medics, and my saying on what happens with him! Don't like it, we can put you in the Brigg until we finish our business out here in the Dark regions and then drop you off at the first space station we come across!" He snapped.

Tap-Out blinked before slowly lowering his cannons and stepping back from him and the medics. He glanced uncertainly towards Glyph who was watching with terror but when she noticed him looking at her, she nodded slowly. The green mech vented softly before twirling his cannons away. "Fine. We'll do it your way then." He mumbled.

Lockdown nodded before looking up at Sentinel, whose head was lowered and he looked miserable as he clutched onto his upper injured arm while Ratchet was now wielding a medical patch across the damaged areas. "Sentinel." The pirate said gravely, making him look at him. "I am sorry, mech. You have three days before it happens. I want you to know that I won't have you killed for it. I will let you live out the last three orns in peace." He said surprising Tap-Out and Glyph with such softness to his tone.

Sentinel's optics dimmed in misery but he nodded. "Thank you, Lockdown. I appreciate it." He murmured softly.

Lockdown ventured deeply before looking around at everyone. His optics paused on Airachnid, who stepped closer, looking just as grim. "Legs, you mind helping Ratchet take care of the Prime? I know you ain't your false creator, but maybe you can find something to reverse it." He stated blankly.

Airachnid slowly shook her head, her legs twitching nervously. "There is only one way to reverse it, LD. And I don't have that source. If I can figure out what happened to Tarantulas' last experiment on Cybertron, the one Terrorcon that survived without actually being crazy or wild, I could create the antivirus with even it was just a corpse. But I don't know what happened to him. And we don't have time to go looking for him. I will try and help out as best as I can, to try and figure out the antivirus, but..." She stated before heaving a heavy vent. "He doesn't have that time. He's going to die before we can even figure it out."

Lockdown only nodded as he turned away from her. "That is all we can ask for. We need to get moving again. That explosion we caused might attract atten..."

Suddenly the entire ship shook, jerked and vibrated, making several stumble and cry out in alarm. Even some of the Cybertronians nearly went down to their knees from the ship jerking.

Lockdown, tensed up and wide optic'd, jerked around before slapping his coms system. "Derezz! What the frag was that?!" He received no answer. "Derezz?! Derezz? Answer, fraggit!" He snapped into the coms.

-Lo-Lockdown!- came Flo's voice over the large intercoms of the ship. -I think you better come to the main cockpit! Derezz is down! Something happened! He just collapsed! He isn't even moving! Izzy is trying to wake him up! But it's not working!-
Everyone tensed up in alarm.

Everyone knew what that would mean then, if Derezz really was down. It meant his mental barriers weren't up. And if they weren't up, the Quintessons could probably sense the intruders in their space system.
Everyone was in a frenzy now, at the news of Derezz being down. Lockdown was immediately rushing to the cockpit with the two Primes and Starscream hurrying after him. They all burst into a crowded main cockpit, yelling for everyone to get out of the way so they could see what had happened. Everyone in the path was quick to moving off to the side so Lockdown could get through and all looked alarmed.

In the middle of the room, Derezz was indeed on the ground, motionless. His optics, all five of them were off line and his appendages hung lifelessly around his frame. He wasn't moving at all. Izzy was next to him, pushing softly at one of his faces, and somewhat crying. "Dee! Wake up! Please! Please wake up!" She begged with an equally crying Flo and grave looking Jazz beside them.

Lockdown rushed over and dropped down beside his five faced friend and carefully placed his servo on top of him. "What happened?! Derezz! Wake up, slaggit!" He tried.

Jazz shook his head as he kept a hand wrapped around a distressed Florence, looking worried, himself. "We don't know! After you left the room and we started moving, Derezz just freaked out! His optics, all of 'em flashed and he fell to the ground! He's off line! We been trying to wake him up but he isn' responding! It's like he was attacked! But we didn't see anything!" He explained.

Lockdown growled, but it was no doubt that he was now worried. Everyone could see it. "I bet he has." He murmured before looking sharply around at everyone. "We need to move now! I need all of you repainted, immediately! I am betting that Derezz was attacked! The Quints must have sensed him and attacked his mental barriers! We need to get into position! Every Autobot and Decepticon who are going to be slaves needs to go to the Brigg after they're repainted! That means humans too!" He barked.

Everyone tensed up but nodded. It was just Glyph and Tap-Out who looked confused and alarmed with what was happening.

"What?! What's happening?!" The mech cried out now at Glyph's side to protect her if it needed done.

Lockdown looked at them and nodded as he pointed at them. "Slaves. No need to repaint them. The Quints probably don't know who they are. So they will be fine. But get the updated on what's going on." He ordered.

Again, both tensed up and looked around on high alert. "What?! What do you mean slaves?! We are not slaves! Who says we're slaves?! What kind of Cybertronians are you if you have slaves?!" Tap-Out growled in anger and panic.
Rodimus hurried over, having to raise his hands when the two looked at him in alarm and fiercely. He knew that they were just confused and worried about what was going on. No one had had time to let them know why they were even in the Dark Regions, heading towards Quintessa. The two new arrivals and even the old mech, Kup didn't know that they were even going to the dreaded planet. "Hold on, Tap-Out. It's okay. No one is going to hurt you. I swear. Let's get you both some energon and I'll inform you on everything that's going on." He reassured them.

Tap-Out and Glyph looked at each other uneasily before looking around at everyone else, who all gave them reassuring smiles and nods. "Okay. But what about Kup? He won't know what's going on when he wakes up." She was the one to say.

"That's the thing." Knockout spoke up while doing repairs on Smokescreen, who had Prowl and even Breakdown help him into the cockpit. "Ratchet is going to have to be working on fixing Sentinel's problem. And I need to get working on the injuries on Smokescreen." He then pointed at Tap-Out and Glyph. "Moonracer and I have to check those two out. I don't like the looks of that injury on Tap-Out. I want to check him over and make sure that gash in his side isn't infected." He stated.

Lockdown slowly nodded as he looked at him. "You and 'Racer just keep working on your patients. Ratchet too. You can be detailed last. But I want everyone else repainted now." He looked over at Sunstreaker, who straightened. "Sunshine," he ignored the snarl of rage from the sunny colored mech. "You're the painter, right? I'll have some of my pirates help you. But you need to get started on re-detailing everyone. And we need to move fast before we do get caught by the Quintessons." He stated.

Sunstreaker huffed before nodding and patting Sideswipe's shoulder plate. "Sides can help me too. He always helped me repaint myself when I became too scratched up. We have paint?" He asked sourly.

Lockdown nodded as he looked at some of his pirates, giving them the orders. "Retroracer can take you where we keep the touch up paint. Now let's get moving, now!" He barked.

All at once, everyone began moving as fast as they could, knowing they didn't have a lot of time to get things done. They needed to make it quick before they were caught.

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It was a frantic hour when everyone got started. The repainting and detailing was taking place in the rec center. Sunstreaker and Sideswipe and some of the pirates were working fast with many large containers of paint. A lot of them were not colors Sunstreaker liked in particular but he could work with them just fine. He and the others had already finished with some of the Autobots and Decepticons. They were just finishing up with Prowl, Barricade, Bumblebee and Ironhide, who all sprouted some new colors.

Prowl was now almost completely white with chrome blue paint sporting down his sides and door wings. His chevron between his cool blue optics was painted red with a thin yellow line running down the center. He was completely happy about it but he didn't complain.

Barricade was still mostly black but with dark chrome where the white used to be. His optics were still bloody red as ever, but like everyone else, his Decepticon emblem had been scrapped off from his frame, making him out to be a neutral.

Bumblebee was now reversed colored, black and yellow. It was like a complete opposite version of himself but instead of his baby blue optics, red lens had been fitted right over them, giving him
almost violet purple optics. It looked strange on him but he didn't quite look like himself any more and that was the goal.

Now as for Ironhide, he nearly blew a gasket when the detail team had conversed with each other about what color he should be and they came up with fiery red, to match his temper. The only reason why the Weapons Specialist wasn't completely freaking out because Optimus told him off for nearly blowing his temper out of the water.

"Yeah, well look at me, Hide! As if I'm happy about it either! I liked my blue and white frame! Now I look weird being red and orange and yellow!" Rodimus grumbled as he looked over his new paint job sourly.

"I don't want to hear any of you complaining! Look at me! I am like a twisted version of the American flag!" Starscream snarled as he looked over his newly painted, red, blue and white frame.

Everyone was grumbling about their new colors and lack of their emblems.

Arcee huffed sourly as she looked her new paint job of periwinkle pink and white over. "I look like a fragging soft little femme, who plays skip-de-loo." She grumbled.

Sunstreaker every one of those bots a dark look. "Enough complaining! You all look fine! I wouldn't have painted you all like that if you didn't look good! So shut up!" He snapped, aggravated that they were even complaining about the colors that he painted them. He HATED it when someone was so critical about his artwork.

Sideswipe snickered as he released Bumblebee from his detailing and motioned to the next victim...er...subject. It was to be Jazz. "Hey, Sunny, what do you think about Jazz?" He asked his twin.

"Can' I just keep my original silver color?" Jazz sighed miserably, shoulder plates slumped and head hanging low.

Sunstreaker shot him a look, shaking his head before putting a thoughtful look on his face. He looked Jazz over before slowly nodding. "White and black frame and helm with blue and red on the hood. He will look good with those colors." He called before beckoning over to Optimus, who sighed and made his way over. "Optimus, it will be easier if you just transform into your truck form. I can paint you better that way because of how big you are." He told him.

Optimus nodded as he then made the transformation. He just sat there, waiting for Sunstreaker to start. But it took a moment as the sunny colored mech circled him, looking him over thoughtfully.

And then grinned mischievously.

"Got it. I have the perfect image for you, Optimus. Since you have to be a pirate, we have to make you look really bad and evil like. So I think black, blue and very dark purple will work for you." Sunstreaker said before fetching for the paint colors. And then he dragged Optimus into an empty room, wanting it all to be a surprise for everyone else.

It was a long time before the door opened again and everyone was waiting to see what Sunstreaker had done. He only came out though, looking very smug.

"Hey, Sunstreaker! Where's Prime?" Lockdown called over as he entered the room, looking and admiring all of the newly painted mechs and femmes in the room, ignoring all of the returned sour looks he was getting.
Sunstreaker grinned before taking a bow as if presenting a show. "Everyone, allow me to present to you the biggest, meanest most ruthless Cybertronian ever to exist," he paused before practically sliding to the side with his arms stretched to the side at the door. "Nemesis Optimus Prime, the dreaded Leader of the Evil Autobots." He said with pride.

The door slid open again and revealed the towering now highly intimidating figure they all had ever seen. They all knew it was the Autobot Leader. Optimus almost looked like himself.

Keyword: almost.

Except for the fact that he was painted completely black with the once red flames now dark with vicious purple and deep blue etched around the flames. His once deep ocean blue optics were now a burning magma red, the color that once matched The Fallen's optics.

Everything in the entire room stopped what they were doing just to stare wide optic'd and eyed, jaw dropped at Optimus, who just stood tall and firm, and very imposing.

Whistling, Lockdown wandered over and circled Optimus, looking him over and nodding an approval. "Oh yeah. You're definitely good, Sunshine." He said smirking as he looked the Autobot Leader over. "I think this will work just fine. Not even I would frag with somebot who looks like this." He then faced Optimus, who was watching him with burning red optics. "Okay, Prime. Time for a little test. Give your meanest scariest threat."

Optimus grimaced before clearing his vocoder and tried. "Um...uh..." he tried to think.

The entire room exploded with hysterical laughter as mechs and femmes nearly fell over to hear such sheepish non-words escape from this severely imposing figure.

Lockdown snorted, his arms folded and he gave him an almost cruel smirk. "Try again, Prime. Try and sound mean, vile, vicious. Kind of like as if you were the Decepticon Leader instead of Megatron. Come on." He said over all of the laughter in the room.

Optimus slowly nodded before looking around at everyone laughing before he narrowed his vicious red optics. "SILENCE!" He growled loudly and in a deep sinister voice. "If I hear another peep from all of you, I'll beat you until your scrap metal!" He practically snarled.

The laughter went completely dead and everyone looked at him with unease and horror. They could not even believe that this was the kind, gentle, comforting Leader they all knew. They knew it was an act but still...it was terrifying.

Lockdown and Starscream both smirked as they looked Optimus over, nodding in approval. "Good. Now that I can believe. I don't even think the Quintessons would want to even be in the same room as you, Nemesis Prime." The pirate said with a dark chuckle.

Optimus looked back at him, smiling faintly, though it looked more like he was glaring at him. It even made Lockdown pause, grimacing in some form of intimidation. "Do you think it will work?"

"Oh, yeah. It'll work all right. If I didn't even know it was use, I'd be running out of this room right now and hiding in my quarters from you." Lockdown said with a tinge of unease in his tone. "You just kinda scared me now." He remarked chuckling now somewhat weakly.

"Sorry." Optimus said almost sheepishly.

Chuckling, Lockdown looked around at everyone who had been repainted. There were still a few who needed work ad he pointed at those ones. "I say you be red." He remarked.
"Huh?! But I was going to stick with being silver! How else will Sunriser know it's me when I see her! I can't change my color other wise she won't know me!" Sideswipe cried out in alarm. "I wasn't going to...!"

"Yeah, you are. You need to be repainted. And I think red is the best color for you. Your twin can stay yellow but add some black to your frame." Lockdown growled.

"What?! No way...!" Sunstreaker snarled.

It was now Optimus who turned a look onto the twins, making them cringe in alarm to see such intimidating optics fall on them. "Sideswipe, Sunstreaker, I know you probably don't want to do it but you must. It is for the sake of Sunriser, the Sparklings, Mikaela and the Dinobots. Please, just do what is asked of you. When this is all over, we can repaint our selves back to the colors we are suppose to be. But for now, just go with it." He told them.

Hearing those words stirred up determination in everyone. They all knew that this would have to have happened one way or another. It was for their loved ones.

"Okay, Optimus. For Sunriser and my sparkling." Sideswipe said firmly before looking at Sunstreaker and lifting both arms to give him better access. "Well, bro. Get painting."

Sunstreaker nodded just as determined and started on his twin brother.

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"So, that's why you're all out here. You weren't out here to rescue us but sparklings and your comrades." Glyph said as she sat on a crate with Tap-Out standing next to her, listening to the explanation that Skywarp and Elita One, who now sporting a new paint job of soft pink and silver all over her frame. It was honestly her old color from Cybertron but the detailing team couldn't think of any other colors that would suite her at all.

Elita One nodded as she smiled softly at the two new arrivals, who looked thoughtful and sympathetic for her. "Yes. It is a coincidence that we found you, but at least it worked out for all of us." She told the two.

Tap-Out slowly nodded before pausing to look at the group of humans now walking over, lead by Izzy and Flo. He placed a hand on one of the crates and began tapping his fingers against it. "Well, count us in. We will help out as much as we can to find your friends and sparklings. It's the least we can do after you saved us from that nightmare we were living in. Kup will say the same. He has always had..." he grimaced as it hit him. "But you already know about his honor, don't you?" He asked, still tapping his fingers.

Elita smiled at him and nodded. "I remember Kup very well. He was my creator's body guard, and even my own when I was very little." She said softly.

Tap-Out, still tapping his fingers, smiled almost in awe. "Oooh, is he going to surprised when he wakes up and finds you here, Lady Elita One." He said with a light spark.

Glyph giggled as she nodded, glancing up at Skywarp, who in turn, had not stopped watching her since they reenergized their selves and listened to the explanations. "He will be happy though! To know that Alpha Prime is still alive! I remember all the tales he used to tell me about serving with him!" She said merrily.

"Why are you tapping your fingers?" Izzy spoke up suddenly, looking at Tap-Out.
Tap-Out blinked, finally stopping his fingers and looked down at her in surprise. He paused looking back at his fingers before grimacing and drawing his hand away from the crate. "Sorry. It's kind...of a habit I have had since I was a sparkling just out from the Well. It's kind of how I got my name. Tap-Out." He said with a shrug. "If it's not me kicking some serious aft until my opponent taps out, it's me tapping my fingers. I used to tap 'em in a rhythm too, back at the Elite Academy. Annoyed a lot of downright serious military mechs and made several of the fun ones happy because I can literally make music with my tapping."

Izzy and the others smiled, shrugging. "I wasn't annoyed. It just...you were kind of doing a rhythm there. I thought you were trying to make music and all." The dark haired twin said grinning.

Tap-Out shrugged back, smiling before his head lift up and his optics lit up. Everyone noticed and turned to see what he was looking at and their eyes and optics landed on the new arrival in the room. Kup.

The old mech was finally awake and with Breakdown and Moonracer. He was looking around, almost cautiously as if expecting an attack any time soon but as soon as he turned watery blue optics onto the group, he looked surprised to see Elita One.

The Iaconian Princess of Cybertron smiled warmly before walking over towards him. "Kup, my creator's old friend. It is so good to see you." She said sweetly.

Kup gave a short weak laugh, holding his side with Breakdown supporting him before he started sinking down to one knee guard. He waved Breakdown off when the bulky mech made a move to catch him. "Lay off, mechling. I am just bowing down to a Prime's offspring." He grumbled.

Elita quickly swooped down, taking the old mech by the under arms and pulling him back up. "There is no need to do that, Kup. We are equal. I will not have any Cybertronian, any being bowing down to me, no matter my title." She said softly.

Kup smiled back and stood up on unsteady legs. "Still sweet as energon sweets, Little Ariel. You always were. Sweet tempered but can be fiery when provoked." He jerked his helm towards Moonracer. "She told me what happened back on Sojourner's. I thank ye greatly for taking care of me, Glyph and Tap-Out. I was almost afraid we would'a became one of those monsters in the end." He then frowned seriously. "Pinky lady here, also told me that one o' your Primes was hurt. That he got bit. Ya haven't gotten rid of 'em yet?" He asked seriously.

Elita One sighed but shook her head. "No, and we won't. You remember Sentinel Minor, don't you? The Minor who became Prime after my creator retired?" She asked.

Kup nodded as he jerked his helm towards Moonracer again. "She told me it was him. I remember him being a big, loud, boisterous oaf. He was the reason I retired from being Weapons Specialist and a Prime guard. Couldn't stand 'em." He remarked.

Elita One nodded, sorrowfully at the thought of Sentinel now dying for a second time. Only his fate seemed like it was going to be worse. "We don't want to kill him, Kup. He has the right to die peacefully. And when he does, we will deal with the after." She stated.

"He ain't gonna die peacefully, Lil' Princess," Kup said gravely. "He gonna be hurting as it comes down to it. Yer better off shooting 'em now just to be merciful. He is gonna wish ya had." He warned her.

Elita's optics dropped, sighing painfully. "None of us will make that choice for him, Kup. And no
one will. It is his choice and he hasn't said anything yet. We have two working on a solution right now. One of them is the adopted daughter of the mech who created the Terrorcons. If anyone can find a way, it's her."

Kup shook his head sighing. "Hope yer right, Lil' Princess. I might've not liked Sentinel but he don' deserve to die like that." He then straightened, looking firm. "Big mech, here," he motioned to Breakdown. "'Tol' me what yer'all doing. Count me in. Ain't gonna stand by and let a bunch of five faced freaks hurt a handful of sparklin's. I 'member those freaks. Bunch of cowards if'n ask me." He growled.

Everyone straightened at his words. The humans moved closer, looking surprised.

"You knew the Quintessons?!" Figs asked in alarm.

Kup frowned down at him before nodding. "Saw 'em when I was a younglin'. Scared me ta bits, honestly. Vile, nasty scrapheaps. I 'member when the Firs' Thirteen went up against 'em. Biggest bad battle I ever saw. Lotsa good mechs and femmes died fightin' in that war agains' the five facers." He frowned. "I also 'member seeing the five facers' leader, their whatsis call 'em? High Lord Quintess'n? He was a lot smaller than I thought 'em would be when I heard abou' 'em. I hear' rumors he was suppose ta be a real big thing, terrifying an' all. But he wasn'. He was actually smaller than some of the other five facers. Shocked the slag outta me, excuse mah words."

Sam and Trent frowned at one another, not believing what they were hearing. It seemed to be the same for everyone else because they even frowned in confusion.

"Wait, if the so called High Lord Quintesson was smaller than the other Quintessons, why was he leader than?" Epps asked frowning.

Kup shrugged before limping towards the wall, waving Breakdown off of him when he tried to support him. "Don' rightly know. Probably cause he was the first Quintess'n ever created by that pit spawned fool, Unicron. Or," he paused, now looking quite menacing. "Cause size don't mean anything. He might've been smaller than the other five facers, but he was one powerful son of a glitch. Had mental powers ya wouldn' believe. Alpha Prime was the strongest Telepath tha' ever existed, said to even rival Unicron, 'emself. But even he struggled agains' that High Lord Quintess'n, o' their's. He only beat 'em cause he managed to, and luckily might I add, outsmart the damn five facer. Fooled 'em with something that I don' know what. Whateve' he did, it hurt that five facer bad. It was how the Great War was won. Alpha Prime lashed wit' somethang in the powers of mentality and the Quints had no choice but to flee. Took their puny leader with 'em and that was it. Never did find out wha' happened ta the whole lot of 'em." He paused looking seriously at Elita One, who was listening with a thoughtful look. "Til now. Tha' true there's one on this ship righ' now?"

Elita slowly nodded as she glanced down at Izzy and Flo, who looked uneasy to know all of that and know that this old mech might try something against their disabled friend when he couldn't defend himself if attacked. "His name is Derezz. He...he has been quite helpful to us." She said looking back at Kup.

The old mech frowned, narrowing his optics in thought before slowly shaking his head. "Neva heard of a friendly Quint before. Ya sure he ain't playing ya?" He asked sourly.

Izzy scoffed but shook her head as she folded her arms, giving him a dark look. "Derezz is good! He would never hurt any of us. He has done a lot for all of us. He was keeping up mental barriers against his brothers to protect us." She said in Derezz's defense.

Kup huffed in amusement before frowning again and looking at Elita. "Wha' happened to 'em?" He
"He collapsed for some reason. None of us can figure out what happened to him. I believe our group's Telepath, Soundwave is trying to get into his processor right now, to find what happened to him. Maybe even to wake him from Stasis. So far, we haven't heard anything." Elita said gravely.

Slowly nodding, Kup cupped a hand around his lower face plates and thought for a moment. "Sounds like he might'a gotten into a mental figh' with the other five facers. Seen somethin' like that happen only once. Two Quinths back in the war were just staring at each other and then one just collapsed, optics flickering until they were completely off line. Alpha said that he took a quick look when it happened. Said they were fightin'. They had some kind'a disagreement."

"What happened to the Quintesson that collapsed?" Flo asked worried.

Kup shook his head. "Don' know. Never did ask. No Cybertronian really wanted to go socialize with the five facers when they were attackin' us." He said in a pointed way, making everyone grimace. "If ya worried I migh' attack ya Quint, don' be, Lil' Femme," he said optic'ing Flo. "I figh' fair. I never stab a mech in the back. Even a Quint." He snorted as a thought hit him. "Though, ya can' stab a Quintess'n in the back anyway. They don' got one."

Everyone couldn't help but laugh at the small joke he made. They all knew he was going to be a fun old mech to have around.

"Sides, if he is helping ya, I ain't gonna complain. Might watch 'em carefully. Jesta be sure he don' try anything. But if yer Prime now trusts 'em, then I don' have room to talk." Kup added, smiling. His optics then snapped wide open as if he saw something that caught him completely off guard. "What in the name of Primus?!"

Everyone frowned at his reaction before turning to see what it was that had him freezing like that only to freeze themselves; alarmed, awed and a little bit of fright.

Optimus had stepped into the room in his new full out color with Lockdown, Starscream, Soundwave and a few of the other newly painted mechs. Skywarp, however, took one look at Starscream's new paint job, snorted then fell to the ground laughing hysterically. He was literally rolling around on the ground, screeching with laughter.

Starscream gave his trine mate a dark look, knowing full well why he was laughing. He gave his newly red chassis, pristine white legs and arms and wings a nasty look, as well as his painted blue servos and peds. "Laugh it up, Skywarp! Just keep on laughing! You get to be repainted too!" He snarled viciously.

Immediately Skywarp stopped laughing with a deflated whine. "WHAAAAAAT?!" He cried from where he sat on the ground, wings held up high. "But I don't wanna!"

"Too bad! Thundercracker is already in the rec room being repainted! So go now!" Starscream barked, pointing to behind him down the corridor.

Skywarp whined again before drooping his head miserably. "Awwww! Scrap." He whimpered.

Glyph giggled, thinking his reaction was quite cute to be honest. She wandered over and lightly patted his arm, getting his attention. "It'll be okay, Skywarp! Just remember! You're doing it to save your niece! You want to see Slipstream again, right?" She asked him sweetly.

And neither noticed the bugged out optics and eyes or the chuckling Kup as they watched the pair. Tap-Out's jaw fell in shock as he listened, not believing it at all.
Skywarp flickered his wings before smiling brightly at Glyph and nodding. "Yeah! You're right! Thanks, Glyph! You're so awesome, you know that?" He asked before he looked up from her.

CRACK!

"SLAGGIT! SKYWARP! DON'T WARP EVERYWHERE YOU GO! DAMN IT! NOW I HAVE TO REPAIN THAT SPOT ON THUNDERCRACKER AGAIN!" came a familiar distant roar of Sunstreaker from down the corridor.

"I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO!" Skywarp's whine could be heard.

"SKYWARP, WILL YOU GET OFF ME?! YOU'RE CRUSHING MY PED!" Now came Thundercracker's roar.

Glyph burst into giggles, not still realizing that everyone was still gaping at her. She only noticed when she turned, smiling at everyone did her smile fade as she saw how many people were looking stunned. "What?" She asked innocently confused.

"SKYWARP, WILL YOU GET OFF ME?! YOU'RE CRUSHING MY PED!" Now came Thundercracker's roar.

Glyph raised an optic ridge at him before she caught on and scoffed as she folded her arms and stuck her hip joints out. "I like him. He's funny!" She said now glaring at him, daring him to say something any more.

"O-okay. Whatever." Tap-Out said now slightly weirded out.

"And kind of cute." Glyph added under breath, making optics snap back at her in alarm when they barely heard her.

"WHAAAAAT?!" Tap-Out practically squealed in alarm.

Kup chuckled, shaking his head before looking up at the imposing figure of Optimus Prime. "Ya know, Optimus. I wouldn'a known it was you if it weren' for yer frame and signature. Can't believe yer a Prime now. But then again..." He said in amusement.

Optimus smiled, though it creeped others out because it looked like he was glaring instead. "Kup, old friend, it's good to see you still alive. I had heard you had deactivated. I am so glad that the rumors were only just." He said offering his hand.

Kup snorted in humor as he took Optimus' hand and gave it a hearty shake. "Eh, ya thinkin' of the Kup tha' was in yer unit, ain't ya?" He received bewildered confused looks. "The Kup ya probably saw die was a shifter name Makeshift. I know 'bout 'em cause of Alpha. Threaten'd 'em once. He was a Decepticon spy turned rogue. Wanted somewhere ta belong, make 'emself useful. Not a bad mech, t' be honest. Just confused of his belonging. Too bad he died. Could'a used 'em. He was smart, if not stupid at the same time. Knew his stuff and how ta get around things. Shame." He said shaking his helm.

Optimus slowly nodded before looking at Soundwave, who stepped forward. "Soundwave has finished trying to find out what happened to Derezz." He said and everyone went dead quiet to listen. He just shook his head with a sigh. "He cannot get into Derezz's processor. Not with him in stasis. Apparent ally he has some very strong off line fire walls. Without Derezz being functional right now, we are blind."

Lockdown nodded as he gravely looked around at everyone. "Until Derezz can boot himself back
up, the only optics we have watching is Soundwave's. But by the time we even notice the Quintessons coming, it might be too late." He stated.

"So what do ya need?" Kup asked trying to get to the point.

The space pirate shook his head as he looked at the old mech. "Just what you all think. We need everyone who is going to be a slave in the Brigg now. That, and when the Quintessons show up, no one is to think about why we're there. No matter what happens, no matter what you see. The Quintessons will probably be scanning your minds when we meet up with them." He told them.

Everyone just nodded as they took in the information he was giving. It was to be expected really.

But then, optics lit up and all straightened when everyone saw Ratchet entering the room, looking stressed.

"Ratchet." Optimus greeted him.

Ratchet looked up at him and stalled, optics growing wide at the sight of Optimus' new paint job and red optics. He stared for a moment before grimacing and walking over to them. "Primus, Optimus. You look more intimidating than Megatron or even Galvatron ever did in their life time. It's really unsettling seeing you with red optics." He stated as he looked him over before shrugging. "Well, I get why though. I think that can probably fool anyone." He added.

Retracting his battle mask this time, Optimus showed everyone that he was smiling and not glaring when he noticed them drawing back in unease again. "Yes, courtesy of Sunstreaker's artistry." He said before sighing, knowing that wasn't the reason that Ratchet had even come out of Sentinel's quarantined quarters. "How is he?"

Sighing heavily, Ratchet shook his head, knowing exactly who Optimus was asking about. He dreaded telling them but they needed to know the terrible details of how the oldest Prime was doing. "Airachnid is with him right now. Sentinel's already starting to wear down. His entire frame is burning up so we have had to put coolant into him and even some cooling pads all over him to keep the overheating from getting worst." He paused glancing around at everyone, who were all hanging on his every word. "He...he has started purging energon from his tanks. He may have internal tearing in his frame now. He's not going to last too long. Whatever Airachnid needs to do to save him, she needs to work fast. Problem is, we don't have any resources for it. She even told me so. Sentinel is not going to last three orns. I am only guessing two in a half." He looked sorrowfully at Optimus, who lowered his optics, which were dimmed with sorrow to hear that his friend was pretty much dying. "I'm sorry to say, but we need to prepare for the worse, Optimus. We're going to lose Sentinel sooner than we want."

Optimus sighed, his shoulders falling a little to hear about that. He didn't want to lose his old friend but if things kept going the way that they were. Then they wouldn't have a choice. "Thank you, Ratchet. I am afraid you may be right. Can you just make him as comfortable as possible until he does shutdown?" He asked, softly.

"If that is going to do anything," Ratchet murmured but he nodded either way. "I will do all I can for Sentinel, Optimus. He has made a request from you though." He received a pained look from the Prime, who already had an idea of what Sentinel was talking about. "Yes, that. He has requested that when he does shut down, he wants you to be the one to shoot him before he comes back online as a Terrorcon. He refuses to become one of those monsters." He said sympathetically.

Slowly, Optimus nodded, looking as if the entire solar system was leaning right on top of him, weighing him down. "Let him know that I will do as he asks. I wish it wouldn't come to..." He was
Suddenly, Soundwave's helm shot up and he completely tensed his entire frame before jerking to look at Lockdown. He was fully aware of how everyone noticed and were now looking at him with unease and alarm. "Lockdown: We have a signal outside Death's Head." He spoke now tense and gravely. "A large warship has just entered the scanners reach and are approaching our ship."

Lockdown tensed, his slanted red optics flashing before he looked sharply at the large telepath. "Soundwave, can you put up mental barriers for now? I am betting it's the Quintessons. They've found us." He then looked sharply around at everyone in the room. His optics glowed as he opened all transmissions for everyone in the room and even on the ship to hear. "Slaves to the Brigg now! Drop whatever you are doing and get into cells! All pirates, on alert. That includes our new pirates." He said looking at Optimus to emphasize that, who nodded. "I wished we had more time to prepare. They came sooner than I thought they would have. But we have run out of time. We need to get into positions now."

"I can't leave my patient, not when he's dying, Lockdown." Ratchet said sternly.

Lockdown gave him an equal stern look but nodded all the same. "Then you and Airachnid stay with him, locked up in his quarters. Do not come out unless I give the order." He turned to look at Kup. "Pirate or slave?" He asked almost darkly.

Kup huffed before shaking his head as he pushed himself up to unsteady peds but he refused Breakdown's help when he wandered over to help support him. "Slave. I'll do better to pretending to be one. It'll give me the chance to protect Glyph and Tap-Out like I promised them that I would. Besides, look at me." He said with a dark chuckle, arms out in a presentation. "Can you really see me as a pirate?"

Chuckling darkly, Lockdown shook his head. "No, I can't." He looked seriously around at everyone that was slowly moving now. "Get moving, mechs and femmes! Slaves in the Brigg! Pirates, to your stations! Move it! We don't got all day!" He snapped.

And everyone moved faster.

It took only about ten minutes to get everything together like they had all planned out. The Autobots and Decepticons and humans who were pretending to be slaves were now crowded up into Brigg cells, not exactly enjoying it either. They were under guard by some of the pirates, who were quietly reminding them all of how to be slaves while fitting each and every one of the Cybertronians with stasis cuffs. The humans were instructed that they had to wear collars, not that any of them were happy to hear that. But they didn't have a choice on the matter. They were to pretend to be human slaves so they allowed the pirates to place very uncomfortable metal collars around their necks and they sat to wait for the scariest moment of their lives.

Lockdown was immediately heading straight to the main cockpit with Optimus and Breakdown in toll. He had both Izzy and Flo on his shoulders, instructing them to stay behind his helm as much as possible. He didn't need the Quintessons paying too much attention to them, even though he couldn't very well hide them either. He sent a silent transmission to the Prime to remind him that he was to act like a ruthless pirate and to not blow his cover at all. Upon entering the main cockpit, the pirate captain jabbed his hook towards one of the pirates under his command. "Open up the visual. Let's see who we have." He ordered.

"Yes, Captain!" The pirate barked sharply before following his orders.
It took only a moment for the large visual screen to light up on the target but when the image showed itself to everyone in the cockpit, a few vents were caught. Lockdown sent those who did it a calm look, pinging them to try and stay as calm as they could, even though it wouldn't help. He knew very well that a lot of sparks were spiking in unease right now. His own was one of them.

The ship that had approached Death's Head was a very large one in deed. It was more large in length that width, but still larger than Death's Head by far. It was almost a tubular shaped space craft. The head of the ship was very long and wide but narrow as if an aerial take off ramp for shuttles or even aerial beings. Triangular shaped thick plates were lined down the entire length, standing almost fifty feet high from being connected from the long fuselage of the ship. The larger part of the ship was in the aft part, looking more like enormous but very thick solar plates. Sharp looking pieces of metal were lined along the edges of the main part of the ship, and it took a little zooming in to see that they were all high powered cannons.

On the side of the ship there was an unfamiliar scrawl of symbols but none of the cockpit's occupants could read what it said.

But Lockdown lowered his head, narrowing his optics. "It's the Quintessons." He glanced side wards at Optimus, who was tense as ever as was everyone else. "Don't speak, don't draw attention to yourself. You are Nemesis, if they even bother asking. You're going to be my new Third in Command while Derezz is out. Whatever you do, don't think about why we're going to Quintessa. They'll probably try and scan your processor. I will do what I can to keep their attention on me. If you start to feel mental prodding in your processor, don't fight it. Let them take a look. Just don't give them the information of why you're here." He warned the Prime.

Optimus nodded as he lift his head and forced his processor to go completely blank other than the fact that he was thinking of how alarming that ship really was. He would do all he could not to blow their cover. It was for the sparklings, Sunriser, Mikaela and the Dinobots' sake after all.

"Captain, we're being hailed by the ship. Someone wants a word with us." The pirate at the communications station called over.

Lockdown stood up fully, his entire frame steeling itself for what was to come. "Open transmissions. Let's greet our new guests." He stated.

A moment later, the communications screen flashed on and it took everything that Optimus had not react to what he was even seeing. Or rather...who he was seeing! Lockdown, on the other hand, frowned and narrowed his optics at the human that was sitting before him. "Who the frag are you?!" Chris Moxen was saying.

Lockdown growled viciously before he shook his head. "I don't speak to lower life beings such as yourself! You are not worth my time! And it is obvious that you're not in charge of that Quintesson ship! So I suggest you put your masters on the line!" He snapped.
Chris' eyes flashed dangerously before he started turning to say something to someone off screen. "Fire up the...!" He was saying.

But a long golden appendage of metal claws trailed right into view and knocked against the human's shoulder to shush him. It was something that everyone on the Death's Head recognized by now because of Derezz. Then the screen shifted until it was on a large bulky mass of metal with vicious looking faces on all sides. The Quintesson was enormous in size, possibly bigger than Derezz. It was a silver and golden mass with black sharp spines on top of the entire mass. But the face facing Lockdown, vicious green optics glaring right back at him were in the face of a green, snarling face. It had sharp fangs revealed in the mouth, obviously for show. It looked more like an demonic Egyptian pharaoh to be honest. It almost sent a shudder running through Optimus just to see this vicious looking creature. He could see that the other faces were almost as snarly as this one, but in different colors and looked very much different than this face.

"I am Deliberata, Quintesson Commander upon this vessel, Guardian of this sector of Dark Regions. And you are trespassing upon space you have not been permitted to, Cybertronian. State your reasoning for intrusion and then prepare for capture." The Quintesson's deep, intimidating voice echoed from the beast of a Quintesson.

Lockdown kept his cool just fine, but he narrowed his optics before bowing low at the waist. "Commander Deliberata, I see. I have mistaken myself and our ship to be trespassing into the Dark Regions without permission. I will ask you to forgive..." He was saying.

The Quintesson's optics flashed brightly before he bobbed in the air, waving his claw like appendages. "I know you, Cybertronian. I recognize your signature and features." He gave a low, dark chuckle when Lockdown stiffened and looked back at him with a steeled look. "I am aware of your destination...Lockdown, was it not?" He continued on as if not noticing or caring that the space pirate had stiffened like that. "Yes, I see into your processor. The one Cybertronian Gladiator Slave that managed to escape from our prisons of Quintessa." The Quintesson went on before his green face flashed off and the face on his right, a vicious golden and gray face with sharp looking spikes were on top of the helm. The optics were golden, matching the face, which were now looking off somewhere else. He began making deep metallic clangs, which was a language that Optimus didn't recognize at all.

Lockdown tensed before looking around at everyone, sending a quick transmission to all of them. - Prepare yourselves! Don't fight it or it's going to hurt more!- He said through all transmissions and even into the Brigg so that they would know what was about to happen.

Before anyone could even understand what was about to happen, an electrifying beam shot from the large ship at such a speed that no one had time to prepare for the attack. The electrifying beam hit the head of Death's Head and jolts of static began rushing through the entire ship, zapping all Cybertronians. There were startled cries as each and every Cybertronian were shocked by whatever this attack was. The humans could only gasp as they felt static raising their hair but it seemed that electricity coursing through the ship didn't affect them like it did to all of the Cybertronians. It was just a small jolt running through them, causing them to cry out in alarm.

And before anyone knew it, all Cybertronians dropped to the ground, optics flickering and their systems flashing warning signs that they were about to go into forces recharge. Lockdown barely had time to catch himself and the girls on his shoulders as he stumbled down to his knee guards. "-So-CRACKLE-Son of a gli-gli-gli-ZAP!-glitch!" He managed to snarl in static out before he hit the ground with Izzy and Flo quickly jumping and rolling across the ground to avoid getting too banged up.
Every Cybertronian on Death's Head, no matter where they were, or who they were fell into darkness, leaving the humans to cry out to them in alarm. They had no idea what just happened but they knew it wasn't good.
It was a loud blaring alarm that assaulted everyone's audios that jolted every single Cybertronian out of the peaceful darkness of recharge. Yelps, screams and exclaims echoed off of walls as so many mechs and femmes jolted upward, on lining their optics to see what was going on.

Everyone took a good look around only to freeze to see that they were all in black steel cells with vicious purple energy beams over the opening.

"What the frag?!" Many exclaimed in shock as they slowly got to their peds and looked around.

"Where are we?! What happened?!"

"Why are we in prison cells?!"

"Everyone, just shut up!" Came Lockdown's roar of full rage from his cell. "I don't want to hear it!"

"Why don't all of you just be quiet?!" Came a human male's voice, making many freeze. That was a voice that mostly only the Autobots knew.

And sure enough, walking down a long corridor that split all of the cells from across each other, all Autobots gaped in shock to see the human that none of them ever wanted to see again.

It took everything that Sideswipe and Sunstreaker had not to snarl in rage and hate to see Dawn's ex-stepfather, Chris Moxen. That, and a quick ping from Optimus to all of his Autobots to keep calm and their silence.

The human was just walking down the hall, looking quite smug about his position and the fact that there were two brutish, beast like mechs walking behind him. They were enormous but no bigger than Ironhide or Kup. They were very bulky and painted dark purple and dark blue with black markings all over them. They all almost looked exactly alike. Their face plates were almost shark like and even had vents on the sides of their heavily spiked helms. Vicious red optics glared at each and every mech and femme they passed by.

Chris Moxen kept walking until he came to a cell with the humans, who were all together. He stopped there, hands folded behind his back and smirking darkly at Sam and Trent. "So, we meet again." He said darkly.

All humans but Figs glared at him, not believing what they were even seeing. They couldn't believe this. They couldn't believe HE was here!

"Moxen." It was Simmons who ground out his name even if he didn't mean to. It just couldn't be helped.

Chris Moxen smirked darkly as he looked at Simmons and slowly nodded. "Oh, I remember you. Agent Simmons, wasn't it?" He then leaned forward, but not too close to the energy beams keeping them trapped. "You are the fucker who had me arrested. And for what? A pathetic, little bitch!" His dark smirk spread when several of the Autobots snarled in rage, even when Lockdown shot them a warning look. It was no use though. "That's right. I said it." He then looked at Sam who glared harder at him. "Well, if it is Witicky. Sam, wasn't it?"

"Sam WITWICKY." Sam growled out from between his teeth.
Chris snorted before backing away. "I don't give a shit what your name is, to be honest." He motioned down the long corridor of cells, to some of the Autobots. "Did you really think that changing all of their colors would make a fucking difference? I recognized all of them. Your little plan failed, you little shit." He paused before swiftly turning and walking down the hall to stop right in front of Chromia's cell, glaring at her. "Especially you. You're the fucking bitch who nearly broke my arm just because I gave that bitch ex-step daughter a little tap on the face." He said sneering.

Chromia glared harder at him. But it was Sideswipe who snarled, catching Chris' attention.

Again, the vile human moved until he was standing in front of the twins, smirking at them. "And you. Oh, yeah. I remember you. Maybe not as a fucking giant robot but I do remember you." He sneered. "That fucking Corvette that the bitch brought home that day." He sneered.

Again, Sideswipe snarled, glaring hatefully at him. "Don't you dare talk about her like that!" He growled.

"Sides, stop! He is just goading you!" Prowl called over though he was glaring at the human too.

Chris snorted before he folded his hands behind his back again ad started pacing. "I am betting you all are wondering what the hell I am doing here, don't you?" He asked smugly.

"The fragging thought did cross our processors, Moxen." Ironhide growled glaring at him.

Chris chuckled but continued to pace back and forth in front of the cells, looking each and every one of them over. "Well, I guess I can inform you. You see, sometime after my unfortunate accident," he motioned to his scarred face and then shot a dark look towards Starscream when he chuckled, being the one responsible for those scars. "I was contacted by..."

"And what makes you think we give a frag about your story, human?" Lockdown growled from where he stood.

"You mother fucking piece...!" Chris was yelling in anger.

"Enough, Chris Moxen." Boomed the very voice that Lockdown remembered.

Chris immediately shut up and then bowed down to one knee when the large mass of metal came floating over. Everyone in the cells gaped at the Quintessons size. He was by far larger than Derezz. A good two sizes larger and quite lethal looking.

Floating down past the cells, the Quintesson came to a stop right in front of Lockdown's cell, before whipping out one of his clawed appendages, smacking Chris and causing him to yelp. "Back to your post, human slave. You disgusting organic." He said in a blank way before turning to face Lockdown. "Cybertronian Gladiator Slave designated Lockdown, do you know why your ship was attacked and you and your fellow beings were taken captive?" He asked still blankly.

"No, but I got a feeling you're going to say anyway." Lockdown said smartly.
The Quintesson narrowed his golden face's optics at him before he wavered them around. "In deed. You presume truth. Your ship was a stolen Quintesson Battle ship that you acquired when you escaped from Quintessa currently fifteen years ago." He said still blank as ever. "The criminal offense you have performed is not acceptable."

"Criminal offense?! What criminal offense?! So I fragging stole the damn ship and escaped, big fragging deal!" Lockdown snapped.

The Quintesson rumbled in warning. "You are slave, Designated Lockdown. You have committed the crime of escaping enslavement, as well the murder of a Quintesson Judge, the crime of theft of a Quintesson Battle ship, and the theft of two human slaves, as well as conspiring with a traitor of the Quintesson Empire. Another crime of conspiracy to assisting Quintesson enemies has been added onto the long list of yours. You will be tried and the proper punishments will be installed when we arrive planet side."

Lockdown stiffened at the list of crimes that had been read out and he was fully aware of the curious, surprised looks he got when it was mentioned that he had killed a Quintesson. But it was the last crime that had him bristling. "What do you mean conspiring with Quintesson enemies?! What, you mean all of the slaves I was bringing to Quintessa to buy out the bounty on my head?! All of them," he threw his hook towards the other cells. "I was bringing them all to add onto your fragging empire, to free myself and the two humans I took fifteen fragging years ago!" He snarled.

The Autobots, Decepticons and the humans were tensed up as they listened to the argument that Lockdown was having with the Quintesson. But they were sure he was still working a deal to get them inside the slave numbers of the planet.

"Such notions will be noted and presented at your trial. But the crime of conspiracy deals with more than you assume." The Quintesson spoke blankly, his clawed appendages wavering. "You will be informed of such at your trial."

"Why don't you fragging tell me now, damn it?!" Lockdown snapped. "All of you Quintessons practically share the same processor! So I know you know what the verdict is going to be!"

The Quintesson bobbed and vibrated in the air before one of his other faces lit up as he turned his attention onto none other than Swindle where he was in a cell. "I shall state the source of information. The Quintesson empire knows who your supposed to be pirates and slaves are ad why you were bringing them to Quintessa, Designated Lockdown. And because the source has come forward, he will be freed of all charges and granted amnesty for being truthful."

Optics and eyes snapped wide open as they all looked at the red cyclops, who was looking quite nervous.

Lockdown began to growl viciously as he looked straight at Swindle, who cringed. "You! Swindle, what did you fragging do?!" He snarled angrily.

Swindle flinched but looked back at Lockdown with unease. "I...I warned you, Lockdown. I knew this was going to be a problem. I knew that bringing the Primes and his Autobots and the High Lord Protector and his Decepticons and their humans on board Death's Head was a big mistake." He stated weakly.

Lockdown and everyone else snarled in rage, knowing fully well that Swindle betrayed them. "SWINDLE! YOU FRAGGING PIECE OF SCRAP! YOU SOLD US OUT?!” Lockdown roared as he glared murderously at the red, one optic’d mech.
Swindle flinched again before glaring at Lockdown again. "Well, what did you expect what would happen, LD?! I warned you! You should have listened to me! You brought this upon yourself!" He yelled before jabbing a servo towards Optimus, who was glowering at him. "All because you sympathized for them! And your fragging human slaves!"

"They ARE NOT slaves! They are my humans! My sparklings! I swore to protect them! And now you have ruined that!" Lockdown snarled before jabbing his hook towards Swindle. "I swear, Swindle! I am going to rip your optic out with my hook when this is over!"

"It will never be over, Lockdown! Do you want to know why?! Because the Quintessons are the higher species now! They will take all solar systems over! They will rule all! I just picked the side that I know will win! I picked the winning side!" Swindle yelled back.

"Enough." The Quintesson spoke up still blank as ever.

"I AM GOING TO KILL YOU...ARGH!" Lockdown had been yelling when a powerful surge of electricity snapped out from the energy beams and struck him, causing him to fall to his knees from the surge.

"I repeat only once more with a warning. Enough." The Quintesson said still blank before he looked around at all Cybertronians in the cells. "I will inform all of future. When we arrive to Quintessa, all Cybertronians and humans will be judged and placed in slave units." He stated before chuckling darkly. "Your mission of invasion has failed. You are now the property of Quintessa."

And then he turned and hovered out of the prison chambers, leaving everyone feeling dishearten.

"Wait! What about me?! We had a deal!" Swindle called after him but was ignored.

Chuckling weakly but darkly, Lockdown fell to his side, weakened from the electric burns he now had all over his frame from being assaulted like he had been. "Don't you get it, Swindle?" He called weakly over, making him look over. "They fragging played you. You are a slave as much as we all are now. Fragging dumbaft."

Swindle looked horrified at his words but it still not lighten to know that he was as much as a captive as the ones he sold out. He was as trapped as all of the others were.

Later, it was listening to loud retches from down the cell blocks that had everyone grimacing but sympathizing for the one doing it. It was only a reminder that one of their own was in a grave situation.

To make things worse, Sentinel was in a cell alone. He was lying on the ground of the prison cell, shuddering and hacking up energon.

Many others couldn't help but look over towards him with concern, watching him suffer like he was doing now. They could see his frame was heated and he was looking very weak. Ratchet was cursing loudly as he paced back and forth, looking over at the Prime in anxiousness. He even yelled at the brutish mechs guarding the prisons to let him go help the dying mech. But they pretty much ignored him.

"Sentinel, are you still with us?" Optimus called over with worry.

Sentinel groaned and shuddered so violently that his entire frame rattled. He weakly lift a had to let the other Prime know he was. But he didn’t seem to be able to form words at all. His coloring even seemed to be lightening up, almost graying in some parts.
"Optimus, he doesn't have much longer! If I am correct, he has one more orn." Ratchet called over, heavily.

"Man, this fragging sucks! Hold on there, Sentinel! You can't give up!" Smokescreen called sounding frantic.

"This is my fault. If I had only been watching my back on that ship, he wouldn't have been bitten by those Terrorcons!" Maximum Wave said, sounding terrible as she had to watch and listen to Sentinel dying.

Soundwave leaned forward to look down the hall towards her and sent a comforting pulse through their bond to her. She sent him a weak smile back but didn't look any happier.

"Just hold on, Sent...!" Smokescreen was saying again.

"Will you just shut up, Smokescreen?!" Lockdown snarled from where he was sitting against the wall in his cell, hooked arm on his knee. "Quit trying to give him hope! He is going to die! Just face the facts already! He is gonna turn into a Terrorcon! So just deal with it now!"

Everyone looked over at him but didn't try and reprimand him for being so harsh. Except one.

"Lockdown, even if it is hopeless, it would be better than to just sit and wait for Sentinel to die." Prowl called over to him. "It will give him...

"What?! Give him what?!" Lockdown snapped now getting to his peds and stomping to the edge of his cell to glare down at Prowl. "Hope?! A peaceful end?! Guess what, kid?! There ain't no peaceful end at this point! For any of us! Look at him!" He threw a look towards Sentinel, who groaned and began purging energon again, much to many mechs and femmes' dismay. "He's dying! Painfully! Tap-Out had been right! We should've shot him when we learned he was bitten! And now we all have to sit and watch him die like that! Look! Now he's leaking energon from his optics! He is dying right now! And we can't do slag! So just shut up all of you!" He snarled angrily before going back to slam himself back down in the corner.

Everyone was taken aback by Lockdown's outburst but they said nothing. He said it harshly but...

Suddenly the prison block's doors swooshed open and that Quintesson was coming back in, making everyone stiffen as they watched him go. He was being led by one of the brutish mechs towards...

"No! Sentinel!" Smokescreen yelped. "Leave him alone, you five faced freak!"

The Quintesson ignored Smokescreen and some of the weak pleas that followed after him as he went straight to Sentinel's cell. His ruby red face lit up with burning red optics as he looked at Sentinel inside. He just hovered there for a moment before his optics flashed and the energy beams deactivated.

"What are you doing to him?!" Optimus called frantically. He was ignored, however.

The Quintesson hovered into the cell, towering over Sentinel, who weakly growled at him and tried to crawl away from the five faced tyrant. "St-stay away fro-from me...!" He growled.

Again, the Quintesson ignored him as he hovered closer before one of his claw appendages lift up to emit a thick, long needle from the center. He again, ignored the startled cries and angry shouts from everyone watching. He just lashed out with the needle at the flinching Prime and slammed the needle deep into the center of his chassis.
"No! What are you doing?!" Optimus cried in arm again.

"Leave him alone!" Elita screamed from her cell, optics wide when Sentinel let out a weak, pained cry from being stabbed by the needle.

The Quintesson said nothing as he just sent strange pulses through his long tentacle appendage before yanking it free when the blue Prime collapsed into a heap, possibly into forced recharge.

After a moment, the five faced monster turned away, reactivated the cell's energy beams and hovered right back out of the prison block, leaving everyone watching Sentinel's now motionless, almost lifeless form. They couldn't be sure what the Quintesson did to him. He wasn't moving, wasn't doing anything. He seemed to be in forced recharge but...

"Ratchet, can you scan him for life signs? Did that vile creature kill him?!" Elita asked frantically.

Ratchet looked sadly towards her, shaking his head. "These energy beams are blocking all of our systems, Elita. I can't activate my scanners here. Not without them in the way. We can only wait and see." He said sorrowfully.

"Everyone, try and get some recharge. I have a feeling we will need it when we get to Quintessa." Optimus said gravely.

Slowly, one by one, everyone settled in their cells, trying to relax their selves into recharge. It was no use in many's case. But they tried.

It was probably early morning when everyone started booting their selves up again. Many hadn't even recharged more than an hour. The prison cells' floors were too uncomfortable and all it did was strain joints.

They had all woken up, wishing their new terrible experience had been nothing but a dream but...it wasn't. They were all still trapped and were heading directly to Quintessa, but in a way they never wanted to.

"Ugh..." Everyone perked up when they heard Sentinel's groan and heads snapped up to look at him.

Surprisingly, the blue Prime was sitting up, rubbing his helm. He was just sitting there, still looming worn out but...he wasn't graying like before. In fact...he looked better!

"Sentinel, how are you feeling?" Ratchet called over.

Sentinel blinked in surprise as he lift his now shimmering blue optics to the medic before he groaned again and pushed his entire frame against the wall, looking quite perplexed. "I...I...I feel fine. Better. I don't...what the frag happened? What did that five faced freak do to me?!" He yelped now startled.

Optics and eyes flashed wide open before Airachnid hissed in shock. "That...you should be dead now!" She received a startled, offended look from Sentinel but she ignored it. "The Quintesson! He had the antivirus formula he must have injected you with it!" She said now slowly smiling.

Everyone perked up at the news and some even slowly smiled.

"Sentinel, are you sure you're feeling all right? Run a quick systems check!" Ratchet called, now sounding excited.

Sentinel frowned but nodded as his optics began flickering. He was silent for a long moment before they flashed brightly again. He looked up startled. "The virus! It's gone! It's no longer in my system!
"It has been eradicated!" He called now starting to laugh.

"Well, I'll be." Kup chuckled from his cell. "Looks like the Quintesson saved Sentinel."

"But how? How can he have the antivirus formula? He shouldn't be able to have it. And why would he..." Airachnid murmured confused.

"Perhaps it is because Sentinel is a Prime." Starscream spoke up, making everyone look at him in confusion. "Remember what Doubledealer said once? The Quintessons would love to have a collection of Primes for their empire? Sentinel being a Prime is more available to them than becoming a Terrorcon. They want to keep him as a Prime, not an undead warrior."

"Yes, but...how?" It was Glyph who called out.

"The Quintessons are highly advanced in technology and science. They probably just figured it all out." Lockdown grunted, sarcastically. "Who fragging cares?! Sentinel's fixed! Get over it!"

A few glanced at him impatiently while others ignored his remarks. Everyone was just happy that Sentinel was going to live. If there was only one good thing that came out of being captured by the Quintesson ship, that was it.

"Jazz," Optimus spoke up looking at his TIC, who leaned forward to look over at him. "Can you access your Sorcelling ability? I think it best if you shifted to Meister while the Quintesson had not noticed you yet."

Jazz frowned before turning away, his optics flickering before he grimaced and shook his head as he looked back. "Can't, OP. These energy beams are affecting my systems too. Would it really matter if I was Jazz or Meister or not?" He called back.

Optimus sighed before shaking his head. "Probably not. When they attacked Death's Head, the Quintesson probably noticed that it was you as Jazz and not Meister. Thank you for trying though." He stated and received a wave from his Third.

"So...what will happen after we get to Quintessa?" It was Spitfire who asked as she rubbed her middle where her sparkling was nestled.

Ratchet noticed and stiffened, optics widening. "That electric current! Did it harm any of the femmes who are carrying?! How are you all feeling?" He asked now worried and everyone stiffened.

"We're okay, Ratch." Spitfire said reassuringly.

Both Moonracer and Chromia nodded as they rubbed their own middles. "We are too. I don't think that stun impulser the Quintesson sent at us had any harmful effect to us. It just stunned us into recharge." The powder blue femme called.

Once they all heard that, everyone relaxed. That was all that mattered.

"Still, what will happen when we get to Quintessa?" Spitfire asked again.

Lockdown huffed again from his cell, sounding irritated. "We will be taken to the Quintesson courts and judged. More than likely we will be separated from each other and sent to slave stations or even the Gladiator pits to fight in the arenas." He said bitterly.

"Lockdown, what is wrong with you? You're starting to sound like you're giving..." Izzy called over, now completely worried.
Lockdown gave an aggravating sound as he shoved himself back to his peds and stormed to the opening of the cell. "Giving up?! Because I am! There is no way out of this! Swindle was right! There is no fragging end to this! I should'a seen it coming! I should have fragging listened to him and refuse to take this job! It was the only way of protecting myself and you girls! By taking this job, I put all of us in danger!"

"Lockdown! What you were doing was trying to help us when we needed your help." Prowl said looking at him calmly but in concern. "So what is really wrong?"

Lockdown glared over at him for a moment before he sighed and lowered his head and slumped a little. He looked worn out. "...it wasn't just Swindle," he growled the name, shooting the said mech a dark look, who cringed. "That fragged us over. It was me. I did this. The Quintesson Commander, Deliberata was the same Quintesson who caught me the first time. He recognized me. This...all of this is my fault. He caught us because he knew me. Of all fragging five facers to catch us, it just had to be him. Primus frag me." He said now wearily, something that no bot or the humans would ever hear him sound like.

There was a long silence as everyone looked at Lockdown with sorrow and sympathy. They knew that this wearing him down big time. They knew he was taking it too hard.

"Lockdown, sooner or later, you knew the Quintessons would have seen you and recognized you. It was unavoidable. So tell the real truth." Prowl said softly, looking at his 'brother' just as.

Lockdown's head lowered even further before he went back to his corner and sank down. "What I said to the Quint was the truth, Prowl. I was going to sell you out to the Quintessons, to buy mine, the girls' and Derezz's freedom." He stated miserably.

There were gasps and murmurs of rising anger.

"You were going to what?!!" Several demanded.

"Lockdown, you piece...!"

"Enough!" Optimus barked firmly shooting the mechs and femmes a warning look. He sighed heavily before looking at Lockdown's cell. "I understand, Lockdown. You were trying to save the girls. I will not hold any grudge against you and neither will anyone else." He added before shooting a few protesters a look when they tried.

"Sorry, Prime. But the fact is," Lockdown said wearily. "What I was about to do was low. Your people has every right to be mad at me. I was going to sell all of you to the Quintessons for my own gain."

"No, what you were doing is protecting the ones you cared about the most." Prowl spoke up softly. "You love the girls and even Derezz. You would do anything to protect them. And none of us has the right to question your actions."

Lockdown looked over at him before his red burning optics softened. "Thank you, Prowl. And I am sorry." He murmured.

Suddenly the doors to the prison whooshed open and the Quintesson was coming in, only he was not alone. It startled everyone to see a very number of those brutish Sharkticons with him. They were following him in lines but when he stopped at the first two cells, they kept on walking until each and everyone were standing in front of one of the cells.

By that time, everyone was standing up and glaring at them. If they could, they would activate their
weapons to fight what they knew was coming.

"New slaves of the Quintesson Empire, I inform you that we have arrived to the glorious planet that will be your home for the rest of your functioning." Dilberata spoke up, still blank as ever. "You will submit. You will follow the laws of Quintessa. You try and resist, you will be punished. As of now, you will be taken to Quintesson High Palace to be judged under the optics of the High Quintesson Council for the crimes all of you have performed against the Great Quintesson Empire. May the Great High Lord Quintesson Derodomontatus have mercy on you."

There were murmurs from everyone from his words, some of the pirates tensing up as if they were preparing their selves. It was no doubt that they were going to fight once those cell energy beams were down. Everyone could only watch and wait for what was to...

Suddenly there was a loud clang and the entire cell block began shaking and moving. All of the cells at least were moving, making everyone cry out in alarm. Everyone but Lockdown as he just remained sitting against the wall of his cell, watching wearily.

It came to a surprise as every cell began moving back out of the long corridor of the ship, into open air. Everyone, alarmed looked out from the energy beams to see what was going on and all were treated to a sight that took their breaths and air away from their lungs and vents.

All of the cells were connected to what looked like large alien cranes and large hover crafts. They were being controlled or driven by something that wasn't quite Quintesson. These mechanical alien beings looked almost like the five faced beings only they were built with only one face. They seemed to walk on their four long claw like appendages, or control the hover crafts with them. They were mostly green and gray colored with yellow optics.

There were several hover crafts connected to all of the cells, maneuvering them and the cells down from the large Quintesson ship and turning the cells around in the air.

And that treated everyone with the first look, or in Trent's, Lockdown's, and the Jacksons' case a second look at the enormous world of Quintessa.

Unfortunately it wasn't an exact look of Quintessa, more like a giant city made almost completely black alloy. There were huge structures of buildings practically molded right into the very ground itself, as if the city had grew from the planet instead of being built. There were low roads on the ground, all silver blue colored and full of activity of those living on this wretched planet. And then there were high roads, some lifted right above those roads, as if not to hold up the traffic of so many different kinds of Quintessons.

It seemed that the place they were all at was a ship yard, due to all of the Quintesson ships banked at large plate forms of the black alloyed planet. There was a black sky above the entire city filled with stars and unknown planets surrounding Quintessa. They seemed to be far off from the makeshift planet but they could at least be seen.

From a glance to the starry sky, everyone saw humongous black alloyed arches so far above the planet and they seemed to ring around the entire city.

There, they could see that the arches were the sources of light of the entire city that they were in. The light wasn't too bright for them but it looked more like it was the hour of twilight. It was somewhat dark but light enough for everyone to see perfectly of everything.

And it was quite cool.
Chills ran through the humans as their cell was being lowered from the large ship where they were set on what looked like a large train car. The vehicle that was at the front was a large, black and silver metal craft of some kind. It just hovered in midair with no wheels at all. Just what looked like a brilliant glowing blue wave of some kind under it, pushing towards the ground.

One by one, each and every cell was placed on the cars, lined exactly like a train line. Everyone could only look out at the energy beams of everything around them.

There were those strange Quintesson one facers everywhere, lined up in different places of the ship yard but there were also many of the brutish Sharkticons patrolling up and down the cars, leering and snapping their sharp fangs at the occupants inside the humans all flinched, horrified by them but some of the Cybertronians growled back, earning snarls and some snickers.

To many of their surprise, there were also large brawny looking creatures amongst the Sharkticons. They seemed to be made out of metal but...something was off about their faces. They all had what looked like long gas masks on with small mouths on the end, filled with needle like teeth. And their faces were scaly and organic looking. Their armor was dark tan, brown and black colored and seemed to be quite thick and heavy. But they moved around in it just fine, as if it didn't weigh them down at all.

"What the pit are those?" It was Sentinel who asked from his cell train car.

"Bailiffs."

Several of the Cybertronians who even were able to hear that voice jumped and everyone tried to look to see Derezz, since it was him who spoke.

"Dee! You're here?! Awake?!" Izzy called down the long line.

Derezz, also in a cell but one with many shackles, which were keeping his tentacles trapped in, as well as one hooked to each side of his frame, looked around with his green optics of his green face. "Yes, Izzy, I am. It seems I have failed my objective of protecting the ship." His green optics flash off and his golden face lit up, as if looking to the side where he knew Lockdown was to be. "I am so sorry, Lockdown, that I failed. My brethren discovered my mental blocks and began attacking them to see who had them up. They discovered me and fought with me. It was a number of six to one. I could not defeat them. I greatly apologize."

"Six to one?! Blasted, cowardly pitspawn!" Growled Kup from his cell having heard.

"Not your fault, Derezz. They caught you by surprise and ganged up on you." Lockdown called back.

"So, what are the Bailiffs? Aren't they Quintessons?" One of the others called, and it sounded like Bumblebee.

Derezz looked back at the huge armored beings walking around with long lethal sharp curved blades. "No, they are not. They are an organic species from a world at the edge of the Dark Regions. When we, the Quintessons, acquired their world, we found them. They are some kind of sub cavernous species, living in caverns and dark places. They live off strange gases so that is why they wear the masks. When we acquired them, we discovered them to be rather large but brutal creatures. They are very strong and powerful for organic beings. We gave them all that armor as a protection and now, they are the guards of the entire Quintesson Empire. I would not try and provoke them in a fight though. They have some kind of berserker rage ability that seems pump up every minute when they begin fighting. They are quite powerful and lethal." He explained.
"What about the one faced Quintessons?" Sam was the one to ask.

"Simple Quintesson Security Detail Officers. Most of the Quintessons are technically five faced but the one faced Quintessons are the most common. They are smaller than the rest of us and have more numbers but they are quite swift, faster than we are. We use them as Security of Quintessa. I would not underestimate them. While they are not as intelligent as you find in five faced Quintessons, they are downloaded strictly with the laws of Quintessa." Derezz told all of them. "For example, you break one simple law, the very moment you do, they will descend upon you and arrest you. When it comes to slaves, however, they beat them and then arrest them, acquiring them to take to the Judges."

"Jeezus..." Monique Epps spoke up.

Just before any more questions could be asked, the entire line of cars jerked, making the humans stumble against one another, and began moving at a twenty mile per hour of speed down the road.

"I must warn all of you." Derezz spoke up gravely. "When we face the High Quintesson Lord ad his Council, whatever you do, do not speak out of term unless they ask you to."

"Why?! Can't we defend ourselves for this ridiculous idea of slavery?!" Starscream growled at the very suggestion.

"If you speak when they are talking or if they don't give you permission to talk, you'll either be a) Beaten down into the ground by the Bailiffs, b) Zapped painfully by those stasis cuffs your wearing, or c) Judged immediately and sentenced." Lockdown spoke up grimly. "That happened to me the first time though. A, B and C. I back talked them and was zapped as a warning. Then I kept it going, and then beaten by a Bailiff and trust me, they might be organic, but they hit like a fragging car hits another car in a collision. You do not want to get hit by them." He shrugged. "And then they judged and sentenced me to the Gladiator pits. From what I know, you get sent there anyway and placed in a series of tests. It's kind of a way to figure out what your skills are and how strong you are. I doubt that the sparked femmes will be going in the Arenas. They won't risk the sparklings getting hurt. Sparklings and younglings are more valuable to them as slaves than gladiators."

For a long moment, everyone stayed quite. They knew that this was it. Somewhere on this planet of Quintessa, Sunriser, Mikaela, the Sparklings and the Dinobots were here.

Hopefully...they were okay.
The horrors that the Cybertronians and the humans saw on their way to their supposed judgment was not enough to put into words. They couldn't believe on what they saw as they passed down the streets of the Quintesson city.

As the train had gone its path, the Cybertronians and humans had seen many slaves of all kinds. Organic beings, Cybertronians, mechanical beings, and even humans walking down the streets being lead by Quintessons. There were even some slaves doing some work for the Quintessons. But what had the new imprisoned beings horrified was that one Cybertronian slave had stumbled from carrying some heavy looking objects for a Quintesson. He seemed to have been worn down to his gears because of how weary he looked.

And when he stumbled over his own tired peds, he dropped his load, which landed on the peds of one of the Bailiffs.

Roaring in rage, the Bailiff turned around, glared at the fallen Cybertronian before reeling back his large armored fist, slamming down into the poor bot's back struts. The screech that left the Cybertronian's vocoder was enough to leave chills down the Autobots, Decepticons and the humans' backs, forcing them to flinch in internal pain for the poor bot. It did not help that the Bailiff continued to slam his fists and even peds into the poor Cybertronian, earning more screeches of pain.

And the Quintesson Master of the Cybertronian just hovered there, watching and not looking like he cared that his slave was being beaten.

"No! Stop it!" It couldn't be helped that Rodimus cried as he rolled past. "Stop! You're going to deactivate...!"

"It ain't gonna do anything, Rod." Ironhide said sadly as they watched the enraged Bailiff grab the Cybertronian's helm and ripped it off, deactivating him. "Cause I think that was the point."

Everyone saw a few incidents just like that. A few Cybertronians beaten right off the streets, humans being whipped by zap whips; electrified whips that would shock the victim every time they were struck. The entire world of Quintessa was more twisted than they all had ever seen. Not even the Decepticons could be capable of such torture like the Quintessons were doing. They had preferred to just kill their victims in the past instead of drawing it out like the multi faced beings seemed to do.

Finally after seeing so much devastation, the prison train arrived at a glorified black palace in what seemed to be the center of the entire city. It was like a gothic like castle to be honest, enormous in size. The humans were more like ants to a human's doll house.

When the train came to a halt in front of the glorified palace, there were many Sharkticons and even the Bailiffs waiting for them. There was even a Quintesson waiting with them.
Again, it surprised every to see that he was a good deal bigger than Derezz. It seemed that all of the five facers were bigger than him.

But no one thought to ask their allied Quintesson about it, due to one of the large Bailiffs stepping forward with what looked like a controller of some kind. He pressed a cryptic looking button on it and all of the energy beams of the cells were deactivated.

That seemed to be enough for some of Lockdown's pirates. They snarled and bolted forward to attack.

"NO! STOP!" Lockdown roared at them now in a somewhat panic. He knew what would happen if they continued on to what they were about to do.

But the pirates did not either hear him or acknowledge his order as they charged out of the cells, heading forward to fight.

Suddenly, the large Quintesson before them flashed all optics in his frame, not looking worried whatsoever, even as the Sharkticons and the Bailiff tensed up, snarling right back at the pirates attacking.

Before anyone could figure it out, the attacking pirates, all of them, suddenly screamed in pain as they dropped right where they stood, some skidding across the ground. All of them were clutching their helms as if they had nasty head traumas. They writhed in pain, their optics flickering in their helms, threatening to go out.

"Judgment verdict," The large Quintesson spoke coldly, his optics lighting up brightly. "Deactivation."

"No!" Lockdown growled in horror and pain, even though it was no use.

The pirates who tried to attack screamed and roared in pain before there were several loud pops and crashes as their helms began smoking and sparking viciously their optics flashed like a light bulb burning out before they crashed to the ground, motionless.

It didn't need to be explained that all of them were dead.

Everyone who still stood in the cells looked on with horror or fear of what they just saw. They could only stare at the still, graying frames of the pirates. They couldn't believe this. The pirates, some of them who befriended the Autobots, Decepticons and humans on the journey to Quintessa. They were dead within only twenty seconds.

The Quintesson deactivated his four extra optics and looked coldly at all of the remaining Cybertronians and the humans. "Anyone else?" He asked simply.

No one replied but stood there silently, too afraid to react or say anything.

The Quintesson bobbed once before hovering back a little. "All new slaves, step out of the cells and form a line. Be warned that if you act in any negative way, you will suffer the same fate as those have." He stated, still cold as ice, motioning to the dead pirates.

Slowly, starting with the Primes, everyone stepped down from the prison cells and did what they were told. Some of the Cybertronians were a rattling, quivering mess as they stepped from their prison cells, forming a long line. The humans had a little bit of a harder time to getting down. It seemed to the Sharkticons that they were moving too slow because two snarled and marched over, sweeping a hand from behind them and shoved them all off the cart. Izzy, Flo, Sam, Trent, Anya,
Simmons, Epps, Monique, Figs and many of the Earth soldiers hit the ground painfully grunting as they practically landed on top of each other.

The Cybertronians tensed up and some even started forward to help their humans but several cannons and whirls of weapons charging and shoved at them held them back.

Surprisingly, the Quintesson did not react at all.

"Puta!" Figs growled angrily as he pushed himself back to his feet unsteadily because of his artificial leg. He reached down and helped Anya back to her feet.

The Sharkticon snarled and loomed over the Spanish human, raising his fist. He even started to bring it down on Figs, who quickly pushed Anya away so she could escape from being crushed.

But as if a switch had been flipped, the brutish mech halted, optics flashing in surprise.

No one was sure just what happened. They were sure it had been the Quintesson who might have ordered the Sharkticon to stop but when they looked over at him, they were surprised to see even his optics flashed in surprise and he was looking towards some mech else.

Following his vision trail, everyone stiffened to see Soundwave's visor was glowing maliciously. It was a sign that he was using his telepathy. "Desist." He growled, visor bright. "We will not resist if humans remain unharmed. If you do not comply, you will be facing me."

There was an unsettling pause as everyone practically held their breaths and vents as they looked between Soundwave and the Quintesson. They were sure this wouldn't bode well.

But finally, the Quintesson bobbed and made an amused sound. "A rivaling Telepath. Interesting." He spoke, sounding just. He then wavered a tentacle in the air, as if dismissing Soundwave's words. "Leave the humans unharmed." He ordered the Sharkticons and the Bailiff.

Looking somewhat uncertain, the mechanical and organic tyrannical guards stepped back from the humans, who formed their own line.

Once everyone just stood there, waiting for the instructions. The Quintesson waved a tentacle towards the Bailiff again and the large guard nodded raising the controller again and pressing a symbol.

To everyone's surprise, their stasis cuffs flashed and from the front of the line, which was Lockdown, an energy line snapped out and began connect all stasis cuffs together in a line. It became clear to all of them that it was a chain line that their cuffs formed. The humans were, however, un linked to the Cybertronians. They looked confused but nonetheless freed from the line. They didn't know what the deal was.

But it proved that they would not need to be linked with the Cybertronians because a Sharkticon walked forward with a large platform.

"Human slaves, step onto the platform." The Quintesson ordered but not as coldly as before.

The humans paused uncertainly, glancing directly at the girls, who in turn, looked to Lockdown and Derezz for what to do. Lockdown nodded and Derezz bobbed softly. "It will be all right. It will not harm you." The kind Quintesson reassured them all.

The larger Quintesson's optics flashed dangerously as he looked right at his 'traitorous' brother and growled. "You, traitor, will not speak." He practically snarled.
Derezz hummed softly but fell silent. The humans, however, did what Derezz told them to and stepped up onto the platform.

Once they were on, the Sharkticon reached over and tapped something on the control panel of the platform. The entire machine hummed before an energy wall formed all around the humans, trapping them inside.

The large Quintesson, then, bobbed before deactivating his current face and activating the one in the back. He then began going up the long slant, leading towards the palace. The Bailiff grunted at Lockdown, motioning to the Quintesson.

Nodding in understanding, Lockdown began walking and everyone behind him had no choice but follow when the energy line tugged at their cuffs. The humans' transport hovered to follow right alongside them. Everyone was led into the massive palace, which were full of slaves; alien and humans alike. They didn't seem to be like the slaves in the city, however. They were cleaner, unscarred, and even shinier.

And that was when Sideswipe cried out in alarm and nearly stumbling to a halt, forcing everyone to stop with him.

"SUNRISER!" Sideswipe cried in shock and relief.

Optics flashed from the others and jerked to where the red painted Autobot was looking only to freeze in their own shock and relief.

There she was.

The red, yellow, and orange colored femme had been walking down the hall, head held up high as if she was proud to be there. Her icy blue optics only lit up to acknowledge her name, turning onto the one who shouted it.

Sideswipe brightened to see her looking at him and almost rushed towards her. Problem was, he was still connected by the stasis cuffs and was jerked back. He had to step back when the Bailiffs immediately blocked his path, holding him back with their bladed spears. But other than that, all he could do was begin tugging at the cuffs, looking at his sparkmate with happiness, trying to reach out to her with their bond.

Only to hit a blank wall.

Sunriser, however, took one uncertain look at Sideswipe before frowning and looking to the Quintesson, who had activated his back face to glare at Sideswipe. But sensing her optics on him, he activated the face looking towards her. "Master Sevax." He spoke, bowing her head in respect.

"Continue on, Slave Sunriser." The Quintesson said right back.

Sideswipe and everyone else felt their hears and sparks fall with a certain dread. They didn't understand what was happening.

"Sunriser! It's me! Sideswipe!" Sideswipe said, his optics wide with happiness but growing dread.

Again, the sunrise colored femme looked back at him, frowning. She narrowed her optics in confusion before blinking when the Quintesson named Sevax reached up and, surprisingly, tapped her back with a tentacle, as if urging her on. She looked back at him before steeling herself and walking on, keeping her distance from the line.
Everyone could only gape in shock and horror as she walked right past Sideswipe, not sparing him another glance. They were so confused and horrified. Here she was, Sunriser, and she wasn't even acknowledging them. It was like...

"Oh, no." Derezz spoke up, from his spot in the line, dread already shining in his optics.

A few glanced at him, still reeling at the idea that Sunriser had pretty much just ignored them. Her friends and family. Sideswipe was now tugging at his cuffs, jerking to watch her go with a horrified, spark broken look. "Sunriser! Sunriser! DAWN! WAIT! IT'S ME! SIDES! YOUR SPARKMATE! DAWN!" He cried in a panic, stretching out his bond to her again.

*-*Inefficient connection-*-* came flashing back to him, adding onto his horror.

"It's no use, Sideswipe." Lockdown called back to him, gravely.

Sideswipe looked back at him, optics wide with shock and spark break. "Wh-what? Wh-why did she...?" He was asking.

"Silence!" The Quintesson, Sevax snapped, optics flashing dangerously. "If you speak out of term again, you will be submitted to a punishment. No speaking again. You will not be warned again."

Sideswipe sent him a scathing look and almost remarked but Sunstreaker quickly touched his shoulder plate with his cuffed hands and shook his head. He slumped a little but kept his mouth shut. It would do no good. He just didn't understand. Sunriser acted as if she didn't even know him. But...that couldn't be. He had reached out to her but his bond had been blocked. Why? How?

Once everyone quieted down, the Quintesson led them on down the halls.

"Psst. Sides, Jazz whispered from in front of Sideswipe, turning his head slightly to glance back at his fellow Autobot. "Word from Lockers. He knows your confused by Sunriser's reaction so he said to pass this on to ya."

Sideswipe frowned, still in pain but nodded for him to go on.

Jazz looked forward again after being growled at by a passing Sharkticon. He stayed quiet until the guard went on before leaning slightly back so that Sideswipe could hear him. "Lockers said something about Sunriser being derezzed." He whispered.

Sideswipe frowned in rightful confusion. He could only glance up to where Derezz was in the line, wondering what kind of word that was that matched his name. "Wh-what? What's that?" He whispered back.

Jazz shrugged, looking as confused. "Don' know. He said he can explain more if we all end up in the same place. He thinks we will. Said...Ow!" He yelped when another Sharkticon came right up after catching them talking and slapped the Autobot spy over the helm. "Okay! Okay! I'll zip it!"

The Sharkticon grunted once before moving on. No one again after that. They didn't want to risk getting caught and suffering a punishment by their guards. So no one out ward questioned why Sunriser had reacted like she had.

Finally, they came to a large set of black gold doors, which swept to the side for their entree and everyone gaped at what they saw.

The chamber they just entered was enormous with so many blinking optics watching them as they came in. There were so many Quintessons in the room; five faced, three faced, one faced, and even
some with two heads instead of one. They were lined through the entire chamber with three rows of platforms ringing around the room. There must have been a hundred Quintessons in those rows.

There were several of the Security Quintessons and Bailiffs circling the room and even standing before them, all heavily armed.

And before the Cybertronians and humans was one extra platform where seven very large Quintessons. They all looked alike, large in size and frames. But the one in the very center of the other six was the largest that all had seen. He was no doubt the Quintesson ruler by the pointed helm had on top of his entire frame. It looked more like a crown.

"What the..." Kup was whispering only to be hushed by Lockdown from in front of him.

The long line of Cybertronian prisoners were stopped just behind the prison platform of humans. They all just stared up at the seven Quintessons, knowing they were the ones to be looking at.

"Quintesson Judgment calls forward the criminals that conspired against the Quintesson Empire." The Quintesson Sevax spoke up as he moved forward to face the Quintesson High Lord. "It was Commander Deliberata who captured former Gladiator Slave designated Lockdown and has brought him back to Quintessa for punishment."

There was an unsettling silence before the so called Quintesson High Lord bobbed and flashed his optics towards Lockdown. "Quintesson High Lord, Derodomontatus recognizes former Gladiator Slave designated Lockdown." He spoke, his voice deeply gravel like and he leaned forward, his optics flashing mirthlessly. "Did you honestly think you could steal my former human slaves, escape and not be captured again, Lockdown?"

Lockdown glared up at him, his vents deep. "Hello to you too, Monty." He grumbled before he flinched heavily and cried out in pain when the Quintesson High Lord's optics flashed. He fell heavily to his knees, almost not able to catch himself from landing on his face.

"Insubordination will not be tolerated, Slave!" Deorodomontatus snarled, before his optics dimmed and left Lockdown alone. He just bobbed once before seeming to lift himself higher into the air. "Let the Judgment begin."

The seven Quintessons turned their attention to two Quintessons who had only one face upon a very large bulbous like head. They had bodies that seemed to be made out of pipes and wires with at least six tentacles serving as their feet and peds. They even had arms, which was odd to see for Quintessons.

A whispered word from Derezz told the Primes that they were the Inquisitors, or rather Prosecutors.

Slave designated Lockdown, you have been charged with escaping enslavement, stealing Quintesson High Lord Deorodomontatus' human slaves, the murder of a Quintesson Judge and the theft of a Quintesson Battle ship. Your type of criminal activities would ensure a deactivation of the first degree."

Both Izzy and Flo gasped and clutched onto one another with tears filling their eyes. The others could only glance worriedly and sympathetically at them before looking back at Lockdown, who was carefully getting back to his peds.

However, surprisingly, some of the Quintessons in the room roared in a dismissal to the seven Judges. They seemed to not agree with the sentence of deactivation. Some, however, roared approval before all went silent as if a quiet command had been given. It was almost eerie.
"Quintesson High Lord Derodomontatus approves of sentencing Gladiator Slave designated Lockdown to deactivation." The High Lord spoke and ignored the sudden sobs from the twins in the human prison platform. "All in favor." Four out of seven raised a tentacle while three did not. That made Derodomontatus frown in disapproval. "Opposed reasoning?" He spoke to one of the three.

One of the opposing Quintessons bobbed, turning on one of his faces that was looking at Derodomontatus. "Quintesson Judge Jolup reminds Quintesson High Lord Derodomontatus and fellow Quintesson Judges that Gladiator Slave Designated Lockdown popular among Quintesson Gladiator Arenas." He spoke, his voice surprisingly calm and softer than the others' was.

The Quintesson next to that one bobbed in agreement. "Quintesson Judge Ghyrik agrees with Quintesson Judge Jolup. If Quintesson Judges and Council take away Gladiator Slave designated Lockdown's life, I calculate a protest among Quintesson commoners. Quintesson Commoners would demand the return of Gladiator Lockdown to Arena." He spoke, his voice much harsher than the first.

The third Quintesson bobbed as if agreeing. "Quintesson Judge Sefirof agrees. Quintesson Commoners will be most pleased if we return Gladiator Slave Lockdown to arenas." He spoke up, his voice mostly devoid of anything.

Derodomontatus did not seem happy with the way he was flashing his optics. "Have you forgotten what Lockdown has done to Quintesson Judge Freyax? He murdered one of our own and that is punishable by deactivation." He scowled.

The three Quintessons turned their faces towards one another and seemed to talk to each other for a moment before they turned their attention back to Derodomontatus. "Sentence suggestion: Deactivation in arenas. If Gladiator Slave Lockdown survives trial run, he shall remain in Arenas until deactivation." The Quintesson, Jolup stated.

Lockdown growled, irritated that they were even talking about him as if he wasn't there. It was one of his biggest pet peeves and he didn't do so well with that. He, in fact, acted very negatively when it came to being ignored like that.

But as if reading his processor, Derodomontatus huffed before his optics flashed and it was obvious he was speaking privately to the other Quintessons.

For a long moment, and what seemed like an argument was going on, Derodomontatus finally bobbed up and down before he turned his attention back to Lockdown. "Gladiator Slave Lockdown, you are hereby sentenced to life in the Gladiator Arenas. You will be guarded to avoid another escape. If you make an attempt, you will be slowly deactivated. Your deactivation will take place in the arenas." He said dryly, still not quite happy.

"Yip. Pee." Lockdown remarked sarcastically. But he was ignored this time.

The Quintessons finally turned their attention onto the Autobots and Decepticons, who glowered but were nervous about what was about to happen to them.

"Cybertronian invaders, your crimes against the Quintesson Empire is above all concern. You came to invade Quintessa to steal what does not belong to you," One of the Prosecutors was saying only to end up pausing when there was a sudden wave of outraged scoffs. But thankfully, Optimus cleared his vocoder loudly, waving his cuffed hands to everyone in the line to keep calm and silent. The Autobots and Decepticons weren't happy but they respected Optimus greatly, so they kept silent. "To perform such acts is questionable to capture and enslavement or immediate deactivation. You came to Quintessa to conspire with a thief and a traitor, to destroy what is Quintesson law. The Quintesson
High Courts should find you guilty on all counts."

The Cybertronians were grumbling, wanting so much to just have out with it. But they knew that whatever they could say could be the possible end of their selves.

But then Optimus raised his hands to get their attention. "May I ask a question, Quintesson Judges?" He finally said, surprising everyone. All of the Quintessons looked at him but said nothing to even deny him. They just kept their attention on the black, purple and blue painted Prime. That seemed to an acknowledgement so Optimus bobbed his head into a nod. "Are we not allowed to defend ourselves in a trial like this?"

There was a stirring of murmurs within the entire room as Quintessons looked at one another.

The Quintesson High Lord Derodomontatus narrowed burning red optics from his red face but vibrated in negativity. "Lower life beings such as you have no right for anything but to serve the word and all life of Quintesson..."

And just for the hell of it, Optimus interrupted rather sternly. "All sentient beings have the right to choose for their selves." He spoke up, almost sharply.

The murmuring grew louder from surprise and slowly rising anger.

Derodomontatus growled but vibrated and shook. "That may be a Cybertronian way of thinking, Prime. We are Quintessons. Greater and more powerful beings than your own. We came before all of you. We are the greater beings and we say this. You are ours to command! You and your kind have to choice! You and every life form that came after us belongs to us!" He snarled viciously.

Optimus cocked his helm to the side, remaining calm. "So you say that any greater being that came before life shall rule all?" He asked simply, making the other Cybertronians frown in confusion. They knew he had a point to this somehow.

"Yes!" Derodomontatus barked sharply.

Optimus slowly nodded, his red colored optics twinkling in amusement. "Then by the order of Primus and Unicron, the Cybertronian Gods of Life and Death, Light and Darkness, you are theirs to command, Quintesson Judges. And they have asked me to deliver this message to all Quintesson life." He had said stern and proudly, even while the seven Quintesson Judges jerked as if alarmed at the names he just spoke. "Stop what you are doing, enslaving sentient beings and attacking and destroying other worlds just for your amusement. Release us and give back the ones you have stolen from Earth."

"HOW DARE YOU MENTION THOSE HYPOCRITICAL ENTITIES OF THE PITS?!!" Derodomontatus snarled, now completely enraged. His optics started flashing and Optimus managed a hiss, flinching as whatever had struck Lockdown before started on him.

But...it stopped just as it started.

Derodomontatus growled and flashed on one of his other faces to glare at the Quintesson next to him. "Quintesson Judge Jolup?! Explain?!" He growled.

The Quintesson stayed completely calm unlike his fellow five facer. He just looked right at Optimus. "You are mistaken to believe that the Cybertronian Gods, Primus and Unicon have any power over us, Quintessons, Optimus Prime." He said calmly.

"I do recall that it was Unicon who created your kind, Quintesson Judge." Optimus said just as
calmly. "In a way that he did, he made a mistake. He created you to wage wars against Primus and our kind. But he underestimated your kind. There was a war that created a deep hatred between our peoples, Quintesson Judges. A war that should have never started in the first place because it was brought upon by a seed of hate, anger, possibly fear, and definitely jealousy." He spoke, his words full of understanding and it definitely had everyone's attention. Even some of the Quintessons went completely silent from angry murmuring of before. "Lord Unicron made a mistake. A very grave one. But recently he has returned from a madness of his processor and he accepts what he did was wrong. Before we left our second home, he asked me to deliver this message to you. Stop what you are doing before you destroy your selves. He wants you to become something better than he first created you for. He doesn't want you to destroy and enslave all life like he once did.

"Quintesson Judges, all Quintessons are as equal as we are. As humans are. As all Sentient beings are. We should not be fighting in rage and hate. We should be living together in peace and harmony." Optimus said, his voice almost echoing off the very walls, leaving an imprint on processors and minds.

There was a resounding silence in the room, everyone staring at Optimus in almost awe.

But then Derodomontatus chuckled almost darkly. "Message from Primus and Unicron delivered," he merely said, pausing for a second. "And denied. You are obviously a Leader, Prime. You speak and act like one. You almost had us fooled of your enlightening speech. I know the perfect fate for you." He seemed to rise up in authority, yet there was a hint of maliciousness in his intent. "Quintesson High Lord Derodomontatus orders; Send Optimus Prime to the Derezziation Chamber.” He said sternly.

There was a sudden roar of approval of all of the Quintessons in the room and a sharp intake from Derezz. A few of the Cybertronians frowned in confusion as they glanced at him. They saw that his optics were almost wide with horror, and even Lockdown looked horrified.

"What?! What is that?!” Elita asked uneasy as she looked worriedly at Optimus. But no one answered her.

"As for the other slaves, take them to the slave chambers and prepare for testing protocols. We will see what their abilities are," Derodomontatus kept on speaking, ignoring all of the approved roars and the uneasy murmurs from the Cybertronians and humans. "We have it on record that there are Cybertronian femmes with sparks. Take all Cybertronian femmes to the Research Facilities for medical analysis and recording."

Now there were roars of rage from all of the Cybertronians and they began moving to defend the now startled femmes. Especially from the mated mechs. They roared as they tried to move to their mates to protect them. It was almost chaos as everyone were in a riot. Even Optimus tried to cover Elita as many Bailiffs moved forward with the Sharkticons to separate all of the femmes.

Suddenly there was a metallic thrumming and electric current snaps before all of the Autobot and Decepticon mechs jerked as electricity shot through their cuffs into heir frames, sending all of them crashing to their knees.

The femmes screamed in horror to see what was happening before they were seized by the Bailiffs and Sharkticons.

"No! Get your fragging hands off of me!" Chromia screeched as she was being pulled from the line. She and the other femmes struggled and thrashed as they were being dragged away towards the doors. "Ironhide!"
"Let go of me!" Stiletto screamed as she thrashed against her captors.

"No! Leave us alone!" Elita One snapped as she also struggled, looking towards Optimus, who was almost writhing from the painful currents streaming through his frame.

"Ni-zap!-Nightbird!" Starscream screamed, making everyone in the room flinch.

It was no use though.

The femmes were dragged away and the Bailiffs began grabbing the mechs, dragging them to their own fateful prisons. The humans were also lead away.

Derezz followed, unaffected by the electric currents, but paused to switch his face to the one in the back to glower at the Quintesson Judges and High Lord, who looked too smug. "One day." The kind Quintesson growled as he was lead away with the others. "One day, retribution will find all of you."

And they were out of the room.

"Derodomontatus, what of the traitor? His presence back on Quintessa is disconcerting. You know who he is. He will cause problems." The Quintesson next to the High Lord stated looking at his companion.

Derodomontatus snorted as he looked back. "The traitor will be no problem. He is Derezz. He doesn't even know his true origins. He can deactivate in the Arenas just like all of those fools. Then we will be rid of him for good so we can continue our rightful Empire." He stated before turning to the Bailiffs remaining. "Next criminal to be judged enter now."
It took a little bit of time, but all of the Cybertronian mechs and the humans were dragged down into what seemed to be the bowels of the city. The prison chambers seemed to be right under the city, itself. There was a facility that all of them were forced into where a band of Security Quintessons were waiting with one of the two headed Quintessons.

Who were arguing. And nursing what looked like a gash in one of his servos.

"I told you he would bite us, you idiot, if we tried touching that femme! But you didn't listen! Now we need to contact the Medical Quintessons and fix this!" The right head snapped at the left head.

"Oh be quiet, you fool! So he bit your hand! At least it wasn't mine!" The Left snapped back.

"Don't call me a fool, idiot! You are the idiot who said to reach for her! This is your...ow!" Right Head yelped when the left started slapping his face. "No fair! My hand is hurt! I can't hit...ow! Stop it!"

The entire group of Cybertronians and humans could only gape while the Bailiffs and Sharkticons groaned and shook their heads.

"Dude. It's like Mudflap and Skids all over." Jazz snorted in humor.

The two heads jerked at hearing Jazz and looked at them. Their bright yellow optics flashed before both grinned. "Ooooh! New slaves! Great! Hello, new slaves! I am...!" The left head was saying.

But the right quickly slammed his head side wards right into him to shush him. "No one cares who you are, Lefty!" He snapped before looking at the Cybertronians, looking them over. "Hmmm. Interesting lot you brought in this time." His optics fell on Lockdown and they brightened. "Lockdown! You're back!"

Lockdown tsked grumpily as he raised his cuffed servo and hook. "Didn't really have much of a choice, Righty." He grumbled.

The right head, Righty nodded with a tight smile. "That's too bad for you. But good for us. Everyone has been calling for you in the Arenas. They have been missing you of late. Well...they have been entertained with Grimwing, of course. But it isn't the same with you." He stated.

The left head, Lefty scowled. "Of course, we don't like him as much as we liked you. Nearly took a chunk outta our hand for trying to coax a human female slave from her cell so we could take her to the buy outs." He remarked dryly.

Lockdown rolled his optics, not caring. But everyone else looked interested. They remembered that
"Grimwing? A Predacon?" Skywarp perked up from his spot in the line.

Lefty and Righty looked at him and nodded brightly. He was definitely not what they all would have expected for Quintessons. "Yup!" The left head spoke up. "A Gryphon model. He isn't very friendly, of course. Those Predacons are like wild animals! Especially him! He is one of the best beast bots we have."

"Well, except that lot in Gladiator cell 304. Now they have a wild side. If it weren't for Sunriser, they probably would have..." Righty was saying.

Every Cybertronian and human jerked in surprise. Even Sludge had perked up at the sound of that.

"The Dinobots?! They are down here?!!" Some of the Autobots cried out.

The two heads drew back in surprise but bobbed. "Of course. I guess you probably know them. Brutal beasts. The only being that can control them is High Lord Derodomontatus' slave, Sunriser. Pretty thing. And sweet when she wants to be. She was down here this orn beginning. It seemed that some of the other gladiators tried picking something awful with that big guy, Grimlock." Righty then snickered. "Too bad he ripped them open something terrible. He is one mean beast bot. I am so surprised that Sunriser can keep a handle on him." He remarked.

Everyone wanted to keep asking questions but it was then a five faced Quintesson approached, looking something disgruntled. "Enough, Geminix. You have a duty to full fill and that is not speaking unimportant information to slaves." He growled.

The two heads bowed, looking shunned. "Yes, Commander Deliberata." They both said as one before looking at the slaves, not longer friendly like. "All new slaves are required a tracker and locking device. Please do not fight installment. Resisting installment protocols will result in punishment. Punishment is not pleasant. So please do not resist."

The two headed Quintesson got into the desk he was next to and pulled out what looked like a controller. He simply pointed at all of them and tapped a symbol.

It happened too fast but there was a series of clicks and all of the Cybertronians but Lockdown and Derezz flinched, jerking their cuffed hands and servos up in alarm while yelping. They all felt a sharp jab in their wrist joints, like a needle had just pricked them.

"What was that?!!" Several yelped.

The two headed Quintesson huffed as he put down the controller and picked up a datapad, observing it. "Systems check and tracker implantation." Righty spoke up as he and his left head looked at the information on the datapad. "Because of Lockdown's little breakout, we have had to start tracking all our slaves. Even the humans will end up with one by the time this orn is over. It keeps a tracker on all of you, makes us know where you are. It also checks your systems, records what you are, gives us energon readings, and all of that shebang."

"That and it has automatic insubordination protocols. If a slave acts up against one of us, you will be punished by an electric current activated by Quintesson controls." Lefty stated before his optics lit up. "Well, look here. We have some medics."

Righty looked up with bright optics, looking directly at Ratchet and Knockout. He grinned before holding up his injured hand. "Would it prudent if I ask one of you to repair this?" He asked almost hopeful.
Ratchet huffed but held up his cuffed hands. "Can't with these in the...way?" He suddenly stopped talking in surprise when the two headed Quintesson grabbed the controller and pressed something.

The stasis cuffs on all of the Cybertronians suddenly clicked and deactivated, surprising all of them. They looked at their cuffs, still on their wrists but they weren't activated whatsoever.

"Uh...how do you know we won't act up?" Jazz asked frowning looking at the two heads.

Righty and Lefty snorted as they both looked at him. "Call it good faith, if you want. It will do you no good to act up. You would be a fool to do it. Once you do, you will be electrocuted and then probably beaten to deactivation by the Bailiffs." The right head said motioning to the Bailiffs, who growled, almost daring them to try it.

Ratchet huffed before getting his medical kit out and moving forward to the two headed being. "Let me see your hand." He stated and then looked it over. "Hmm. It's a simple cut. It will only take a soldering iron wield." He got into the kit and pulled out the right tool before getting to work.

It didn't take long at all.

By the time Ratchet was done, all the gash in the Quintesson's hand was a thin scar. It was perfectly and properly sealed.

"Wow! You're pretty good! Even our own medics aren't this good and they have high tech tools!" Lefty said brightly, admiring the repair. He then looked at his right head, who nodded with a grin. They both looked back at Ratchet and Knockout. "What about you? Are you a good medic?"

Knockout scoffed and placed a servo on his waist, shifting his weight. "Under Ratchet, I am the best. So, yes, I am." He remarked as if offended that they even questioned his medical abilities.

The two heads both nodded as if satisfied. "Good! We need some good medics for the Gladiators after they fight." Righty said before he and his left head looked back at the datapad and nodded. "Okay. Looks like the rest will have to go through the usual testing protocols. " He looked each and every Cybertronian over. "I think a lot of these Cybertronians will make good fights in the Arenas. The humans will be picked up by masters during the buy outs."

"Except for that one. He don't look stable enough." Lefty said looking at Figs, who now looked irritated. "I don't have high hopes for that one. He's malfunctioned." He added pointing at the human soldier's mechanical leg.

Figs swore angrily in Spanish but no one paid much attention to him.

"All right. Just take all of them to the cells. The testing can start tomorrow." Righty said waving at the Bailiffs and Sharkticons.

The Bailiffs and Sharkticons nodded before sharply prodding the Cybertronians to start walking. They didn't have much of a choice as they did what was expected of them.

The Cybertronians and humans were taken down a long ramp further into the facility, which lead to a large set of doors. They too sure what to expect when the doors opened. But when they did, everyone gasped in shock at what they saw.

A massive chamber full of rows and rows of cages and cells. There must have been hundreds of them, full of all kinds of alien beings and even humans. It was semi dark but lit enough for everyone to see fine.
Each cell was circled around the entire room in rows and even levels. It was like a giant prison block but with sentient beings. Each cell seemed to have berths for them. There was some distance between the cells but all energy beams and walls. Some were massive, some small. But nearly all were full.

The Bailiffs lead the Cybertronians and humans down the prison corridor to where some empty cells were.

Along the way, Lockdown paused for only a moment to look at a beast like bot who was laying on the ground. It was no doubt a Predacon. It was some kind of Griffin dragon hybrid. It was looking right at him with golden optics, watching as he was shoved towards a cell down from his own. It was almost odd though. The beast's wings were folded around its body, almost tight as if it was protecting something within his wings.

The Cybertronians were pushed into cells three for the smaller ones and two if they were about Ironhide's size. Skyfire and Sentinel ended up having their own.

As for the humans, the men were together in one cell while Monique, Izzy, Flo and Anya were separate right next to them.

Once they were settled in the cells, the Bailiffs and Sharkticons closed the cell doors and left them alone. They could only just stand there, watching them go while listening to silence within the prison block. The prisoners hardly made a noise at all.

But then Lockdown looked back at the Predacon, who looked back. "Well, if it isn't Grimwing. Saw what you did to Righty's servo. Nice." The space pirate snorted as he faced the beast.

The Predacon chuckled, raising his eagle like head and bobbed it. "He was trying to take a human female from my cell. I wasn't about to let them hurt her. She has been through enough already." He said, optics glancing down by his frame and wing before looking back at Lockdown. "I see they caught you again, Lockdown. Where are the girls?"

Izzy and Flo stepped up to the clear wall of their prison cell and waved, smiling. "Hi, Grimwing." The elder sister said.

The Predacon looked at them in surprise before seeming to smile. "Isabella, Florence, my. You have grown into fine human females. It sets my spark souring through the skies to see that you are well." He stated softly.

"How are you, Grimwing? Who do you have in there with you and how did she get in there with you?" Flo asked curiously, tilting her head this way and that to try and see into the Predacon's cell.

Grimwing shifted his wing slightly, as if considering not revealing his protected. But then he raised it slightly onto his back to reveal a very pretty dark haired young woman. "Her name is..." he started to say.

But it was Jazz who jumped up in shock, letting out a startled yelp. "MIKAELA!" He cried out, setting off a chain reaction down the cells.

The human jolted from where she had been resting against Grimwing's side, looking wildly around with wide, sleepy eyes. Then she saw Jazz. It took Mikaela a moment to recognize him from his different coloring but when she did, she scampered to her feet and over to the energy beams. "Jazz!" She cried out happily and emotionally.

"Mikaela?! Is that really you?!!"
Mikaela felt her heart skip a beat as she tried to look down the cells to see the owner of that voice. "Sam?! Yo-you're here?! Oh, my god! Sam!" She began crying happily before looking at everyone she recognized. "You all came!"

Everyone smiled at her, happy to see her. They had been afraid otherwise but there she was. She looked a little malnourished but well nonetheless.

"Mikaela! Thank Primus! I was so worried we would never find you!" Sam cried out, full of happy emotion. "I was so afraid I would have lost you! Are you okay?! Have they hurt you?"

Mikaela, with tears running down her face, smiled grandly, so happy to hear Sam's voice. "No, I'm okay! Grimwing, here, has been keeping them away from me! Primus, Sam! I was so scared I would never see you or everyone again! I love you so much!" She cried happily.

"It's okay, Mickey! We're here now! I love you too!" Sam said back, tears in his eyes as he gazed right back at her.

Mikaela just smiled as she looked lovingly back at him before her face fell as she looked at each and every Cybertronian. She noticed some missing. "Where is Optimus? And Elita One? Who all came?" She asked now worried.

Now everyone was sobered at the reminder. They weren't sure how to even say it.

"All of the femmes were taken to medical facilities to get some kind of medical treatment. And Optimus was taken from us, Mick." Epps called over. "Those damn five faced assholes ordered that he was taken to be something called derezzed."

Mikaela’s face fell in shock and fear, turning white to the mentioning of that. Even Grimwing lowered his head gravely. "N-no...no. Th-That's what happened to Dawn and the Din-Dinobots."

She whispered painfully.

Sideswipe straightened in his cell before looking over at Derezz in his cell. "Derezz, what is that? What is the Derezziation Chamber? And why does it match your name?" He asked uneasily.

Every optic and eye turned to the kind Quintesson, wondering the same thing. They all couldn't help but feel that the whole Derezziation chamber was a very bad thing. Especially when Mikaela was also looking horrified at the notion.

Derezz vented softly before turning one face to look at Sideswipe. "The Derezziation Chamber is a machine that we, the Quintessons use on many new automatronic beings when they fight too much. It...it is a reprogramming system. When one is put inside it, they are strapped in the center where the machine is activated." He spoke gravely. "It reprograms a Cybertronic being’s processor and everything about them. What happened with your mate, Sideswipe, was her memories, everything she knows of you and possibly everyone else, everything she knows of herself...it is all erased or stolen from her. She doesn't know who you are because she was derezzed."

Everyone looked at him in shock and horror.

"Wha-what do you mean she doesn't know us?! Sideswipe is her sparkmate! How could the Quintessons take that away?!!" Sunstreaker demanded.

Derezz vibrated. "They cannot take the spark bond away. But they can block it, store it deep inside her own processor. All of her memories of you have been taken from her. She saw you but she didn't know you. It is what will happen to Optimus Prime." He stated.
"A Prime?!" Grimwing suddenly demanded, optics flashing but he was ignored.

Mikaela let out a soft sob as she looked right at Sideswipe, who looked like he had just received news that Sunriser was dead. "I tr-tried reminding her, Sides! When she came back, I tried to jump start her memories of you! Of all of us but whatever they did to her, it was horrible! She knows your name only because I kept telling her about you! But the Quintessons...They kept coming back for her she has been derezzed three times because of me! I tried!" She sobbed.

"There can't be any possible way it would work on Optimus!" Sentinel exclaimed from his cell, optics wide with horror. "He is a Prime! Everything he is, his choices! They can't take that away from him!"

"Unfortunately, they can, Sentinel." Derezz said with a soft vent. "When we see Optimus Prime again, he will not be the same as you knew. He is going to be completely different. I do not know what the Quintesson Judges' intentions are with Optimus but I can guarantee this. He will not be the Optimus Prime you once knew." He told them gravely.

Everyone, completely troubled, lowered their heads, not believing this. They couldn't believe it. There couldn't be any possible way that this was happening.

"Mikaela, what about the sparklings? What happened to them? What about Sunriser and Sideswipe's sparkling?" Ratchet asked in great concern.

Mikaela looked tearfully at him then at Ironhide and then at Starscream. She looked as if she was about to crumble right then and there. Her knees even threatened to give out and Grimwing saw it. He raised one of his wings and slid it under her just as she started falling back to sit down.

"The...they...the sp-sparklings...they were...oh, Ratchet!" Mikaela burst into tears. "Sunriser went into labor two weeks ago, Ratchet! She sparked her sparkling right here in the prison block! Those monsters! They...they came and took them away for a whole day! When they came back, only Sunriser had came back and she had been derezzed a third time! The sparkling...! I don't know what they did to him! They just took him from her and she now doesn't even know she had a little mechling! The others...it was bad! Sunriser and the Dinobots staged a riot against the Sharkticons so that I could take them and escape!" She cried harder, now sitting on Grimwing's wing and curling into herself in pain. "I was caught! But the sp-sparklings! They're dead! The Sharkticons killed them!"

Everyone's sparks and hearts twisted in pain and horror. Starscream's wings had shot up high, quivering as he stared at her with painful angry optics. "Wh-what?! No! That can't...that can't be!" He practically shouted.

Mikaela looked at Ironhide, who crashed against the metal back wall, clutching his chassis as the words hit him. "I...I am so sorry, Ironhide, Starscream! I tried protecting them! I tried to save Slipstream, Sizzle and Triggerload! Omega and Beta! I tried...bu-but...they were...the Sharkticons...they...But...I am so sorry!" She sobbed even harder, wrapping her arms around herself and looking away from shame.

Ironhide, Sideswipe, and Starscream all made a pained keen, each before they fell and their knees hit the ground. They could feel their sparks shattering to even imagine that their sparklings, adopted or not, THEIR SPARKLINGS were gone. "No!" All three cried painfully.

Everyone just lowered their heads, feeling their sparks breaking from the news. They couldn't believe it. The sparklings were dead. Starscream then threw his head and wings back and shrieked in pain and suffering, making every being in the entire prison block flinch at the agonizing sound. It
was possibly the worse sound anyone had ever heard in their existence.

And it made all sparks and organic hearts weep to hear the agony and suffering in Starscream, Sideswipe and Ironhide. Even if they didn't even know them. Their sparks and hearts wept for the lost sparklings. To imagine the loss of off spring, it didn't set well in anyone.
It was dead silent, other than the soft murmurs that didn't even fill the prison block as the femmes were finding their selves lead to their cells. They were an annoyed lot, to be sure. But when they saw Starscream curled into himself with Thundercracker and Skywarp looking at him in worry, and then seeing Ironhide sitting against the wall, his helm held in his hands and legs drawn up to his chassis and Sideswipe being held by his twin brother, the femmes knew something was wrong.

Nighthbird tried sending a light ping to her mate but was alarmed to find that it was blocked. She was lead to his cell, however and let inside. She was immediately at his side, running her hands along his wings, which he trembled against. "Star, what is it?" She asked softly.

Chromia was immediately next to Ironhide, trying to reach through their bond, but was startled when there was no connection.

Elita after being put in her cell looked directly at Sentinel, who gave her a powerfully sympathetic look before looking away. She didn't understand. What happened...? Her optics fell on a very familiar face and she gasped, moving closer to the wall closer to her. "Mikaela!" She said pleased, making the other femmes perk up and smile when they saw their long lost human friend.

Mikaela gave all of them a sad smile as she remained curled against Grimwing's side, who was watching the femmes softly, knowing that three of them had to be the carriers of the lost sparklings. "Hey, everyone." She said softly.

Arcee smiled brightly to see her human ward, completely happy that she seemed all right. "Mikaela! You are here! Are you all right? Did the damn Quintessons...?" She was asking.

Mikaela looked down, her eyes watering again. "I am okay, physically. But mentally..." she trailed off.

"What happened?" Elita asked worriedly.

"El-Elita." Nighthbird spoke up, her voice now completely strained. She looked devastated as she curled against Starscream, her ruby optics now starting to trail optic fluid. She was now clutching onto the Decepticon Leader, almost desperately. It was obvious something was wrong.

Chromia was now sobbing against Ironhide, who had whispered the news to her. She was shaking her head, as if not believing what he had said. She, too, was looking desperate, shaking her head and
silently begging him that whatever he had said wasn't true.

"What?" Elita asked now feeling dread trailing to her spark.

There was a pained silence as no one wanted to break the news to her. She wouldn't have support like they did. Not until Optimus was returned to them. But they knew they couldn't hide it from her. She had to know.

Still, no one spoke for a long moment. Then Kup sighed heavily, looking at her. "Lil' Princess, we don' know how to break this to ya withou' Optimus being here. But...ya need to know." He said softly. "Yer human just delivered bad news abou' yer sparklings."

Elita and all of the femmes stiffened in alarm before looking at Mikaela, who lowered her head in deep sorrow and shame. Then the Lady Prime looked at Starscream and Nighthbird, who to one another as if they were each others' life lines. Her optics drifted to Ironhide and Chromia, who were holding each other tightly. And then to Sideswipe, who was sobbing against his brother, who was also crying softly as he held his brother as close to him as possible.

The Femme Leader's spark seized as she looked painfully at Kup, her head slowly shaking. She was getting the idea pretty fast and she didn't believe it. She couldn't believe it. "N-no. It's not possible. They aren't..." she said her voice starting to beak.

"I am so sorry, Elita. I tried to protect them. I did all I could. I am so sorry!" Mikaela sobbed harder against the Predacon.

Elita shook her head again before she jerked her head away and started searching for a connection to her twins. She had to know. She had to feel them...but she found nothing.

"Even if they were alive, you wouldn't be able to access the bonding connection." Derezz spoke up softly and gravely. "It's the trackers and locking devices they put in you. It blocks connections to others to avoid break out plans."

Elita felt her spark drop from her chassis, shattering as she let it settle in. "The-they have to be alive. They cannot be..." she was saying in pain.

Mikaela sniffed heavily but shook her head. "I saw them die, Elita. The Sh-Sharkticons...they were com-coming after us. Sun-Sunriser and the Di-Dinobots started acting up...so we cou-could escape. But...the Sha-Sharkticons...they caught me and went after the sparklings! I told them to go into the ventilations shaft! To escape! To hide! It's all my fault! I am so, so sorry! I...The Sharkticons! One of them...he shot into the vents and...there was an explosion! There's...The explosion...it..." she began explaining what happened, not leaving out the details. It was killing her having to break Elita's spark like this. But she had to know.

As it was, even they had explained to Elita and the other femmes of what the whole Derezziation Chamber was going to do to Optimus.

After the information had been given, Elita began trembling badly. Her entire frame just began shaking as she walked over to the cell wall and sank down, curling into herself. There were silent tears now running down her face, splashing onto her chassis. She ducked her head into her arms now, trying to hide her sorrow from everyone. She was silent but everyone knew that inside, she was screaming in agony and pain. They knew she was trying to keep her calm face but...her spark was screaming from the loss of her sparklings.

Everyone looked at her in pain, watching her tremble against the wall. She was alone in her cell,
with no one to hold her. Everyone wanted so desperately to go to her, to hold her. Even Lockdown as he bowed his head in grief and sympathy for her.

"I am so sorry, Elita." Mikaela whispered, painfully before turning and curling into Grimwing's side, who wrapped one of his wings around her like a blanket.

Elita One stayed silent, only screaming in her own processor and spark, begging Primacron to have mercy and let the news be false. She screamed for her twins; Omega and Beta. Her sparklings. The first sparklings to actually be sparked. Her first sparked. They...she dreaded admitting it.

They were gone.

It was quiet for a very long time as everyone grieved for the lost sparklings. Everyone could only listen to the agonized parents sobbing heavily together; while Elita was alone in her grief. They knew she needed Optimus right now. They knew he should be here, holding her and even grieving himself. But because of the cruelty of the Quintessons, that wasn't possible. And if Derezz was right about what he said about the whole Derezziation chamber, Optimus would probably never know that his twin sparklings were gone.

After a long time of sorrow, it had finally came down to it. It was still in the thoughts of everyone, if the sparklings' loss wasn't. But the question that had been asked before had not been answered.

"Der-Derezz," Rodimus spoke up, his voice still trembling from the pain and sympathy for the parents of the sparklings. "You never answered Sides' question. Why is the Derezziation Chamber like your name?" He asked finally.

Derezz turned one of his faces on, the one facing the youngest Prime. He was quiet for a moment before his frame seemed to sink as if guilt was weighing him down. He knew that the Cybertronians and the humans weren't going to like what he had to say. But...he wasn't going to hide it. "The Derezziation Chamber was named after myself because I built it. I created it." He said softly.

Everyone looked at him, almost ridiculously. They couldn't believe that he was the creator of such a terrible machine like that. He had invented a machine that tore memories and programmed personalities from bots.

"Why would you do such a thing?" Thundercracker asked, his tone hard.

Derezz vibrated softly, his tentacles shaking slightly from under his frame as if answering the question for him. "I was once just like my brethren, Thundercracker. Cold, sparkless, unforgiving and unforgivable. But it took Lockdown and the girls to show me that there is more to life than what we, the Quintessons, actually sees. I created the Derezziation Chamber to be cruel, just like the others. I didn't care about how other beings would feel to have their very sources of life torn from them." He sighed softly. "I do now. I regret sorely that I ever created such a terrible machine. And if I were given a chance, I would destroy it and break all of the memory crystals that store the memories, returning the stolen memories to their rightful owners."

Stares.

Everyone just stared at Derezz in surprise.

"You mean...Sun-Sunriser's memories can be returned to her?" Sideswipe asked, perking up a little from Sunstreaker's arms, looking at the five faced being.

Derezz wavered a little in the air, looking back at him. "Yes. But...not without difficulty. The Derezziation Chamber is constantly and heavily guarded. You would never get close to it. And
believe me, there has been attempts by some of the slaves who has had their memories taken away.
No one other than a Quintesson or a Bailiff can go near the chamber." As if he could read their
processors, seeing a few glance towards Jazz, who had even started leaning forward with the thought
of taking a new form to provide such a task. "It would never work. There are guardians unlike the
Security Quintessons and even the Bailiffs guarding the chamber. You would never get past their
sensory systems. They can scan through any system to detect any falsities. Only a Quintesson can get
to the chamber." He told them gravely. "And I highly doubt that they will even let me get close to it.
Not after I had become..." He trailed off, looking away from all now.

There was another unsettling silence around everyone. They all just fell into a silent pit of grief and
hopelessness. They wished there was something, anything that they could do about the situation they
were all in right now. They wished there was some kind of hope they could grasp onto. Anything
that could give them any hope.

But...right now...it seemed to not exist.

"What are we going to do now? Optimus is going to be derezzed, forgetting we even exist. The
spark..." Ratchet cut himself off, shuddering, knowing that talking about the sparklings right now
wasn't going to help whatsoever. It was just going to hurt everyone some more. "We are going to
become slave. So what can we even do?" He went on, gravely.

No one spoke for a moment before Rodimus' grief seemed to melt away and he looked up with a
steeled determination. He seemed to know what to say. He turned, looking around at everyone, who
had noticed his new resolve. "We fight." He remarked firmly, making everyone blink in surprise.
Even Elita One's head came up and turned to look at him with a shiny, wet face.

"That would be..." Derezz started to say.

Rodimus shook his head as he looked firmly at him, his entire frame seeming to blaze with
determination. "No. We will not let any of this stop us, Derezz. We will fight for what is right. We
will not give up and roll over like slaves that your kind wants us to. It is something that burns in our
very sparks and not even the Quintessons can take that away. They can try and derezz us as much as
they want. But as long as we have the fire of life burning into our sparks, we will not stop." He lift
his head higher, looking from one Cybertronian to the next and even to the humans, his fists balling
up tightly. "We owe all of that to the sparklings. To Sunriser. To the Dinobots. To Optimus. We owe
a good solid fight to the Quintessons for thinking that they could break us. We are Primus' children,
everyone. I say we make him proud by continuing to fight against the darkness that the Quintessons
are trying to bring. We are Cybertronians, everyone. Warriors who have been fighting a really bad
war for vorns and vorns. I say we stay as those warriors." He said, his voice full of pride as he
looked determined from each and every Cybertronian, who seemed to steel their selves with the same
determination. "I say we fight, no matter what happens. We fight for what these monsters did to the
sparklings. To Sunriser. To the Dinobots. To all of the sentient beings that are even trapped here."

Slowly, full of determined light in their optics, the Cybertronians and the humans nodded as they all
stood up. The words that Rodimus had just spoken were reaching their sparks and filling them with a
light that they usually on received from encouraging words from Optimus. They were seeing the
proud, noble leader now within Rodimus.

Even Elita One pushed herself to her peds, turning to face Rodimus, wiping her face free from the
optical fluids that had spilled. She stood tall and firm, optics now burning like blue flames within her.
"You're right, Rodimus Prime. We will fight. We will fight for our sparklings, for the right of
freedom of all sentient beings." She said steely.

"You're all fools." Grimwing spoke up, but sounding amused as he looked at each Cybertronians
with impressed optics. "You don't know what the Quintessons are capable of. They will break you."

Rodimus looked firmly over at the Predacon, shaking his head as he held up his head high. "No, Grimwing. They don't know what we're capable of. We didn't just fight a hundreds of vorns old war, ending it in peace only to have it ripped away from us again. We are Cybertronians. We are the children of Primus. We gave us the strength and fiery will to fight and defend what is right. We are not going to just lay back and let the Quintessons get away with what they have done. They want to break us, it's going to take a lot to extinguish the flames of our courage, will and power. We won't stop. We will fight."

Grimwing stared at him for a very unsettling moment before his golden optics seemed to twinkle in amusement. He slowly nodded his eagle/dragon like head as he lift his wings high upon his back as if proud. "Keep those words strong in your sparks then, Prime. Because you're going to need them for when they put you in the Arenas." He told them firmly.

Everyone just nodded as they listened to him. They would hold onto his warning with cautiousness and take them seriously when the time came.

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It was later in the day did the two headed Cybertronian, Geminix; known as Righty and Lefty came into the prisons and asked for the humans to cooperate with him as he tagged them with their tracking devices. None of them wanted to, but it was Elita One who gently told them to just allow it. The tracking devices were implanted into their wrists by a shot of a needle. They could see a dull glow right under their skin to let them know where it was. It wasn't a big piece of machinery but it sure left their arms a little sore as they adjusted to the thought of having something inside their skin.

Of course, it was a curious thought as the humans watched the two headed Quintesson as he implanted the devices into their arms. They had not missed a look of fascination in his optics.

"Hey, Geminix, right?" Epps asked from where he stood against the wall while Anya was received her tracker. He smiled faintly when both heads looked over at him, almost surprised that the human was even talking to him. "Can I ask ya something?"

"Uh...sure. I guess." Righty said, sounding confused as he lightly rubbed Anya's sore wrist before waving her back away from him.

Epps tilted his head, watching the two heads very carefully as they turned their attention onto Simmons next, who grumbled as he moved forward to get his tracker next. "Do you not like humans? Or Cybertronians? Is that why you even make us slaves and all?" He asked, sounding a little put off.

Both heads blinked before looking back at him almost surprised. But then it was Lefty who shook his head as he implanted Simmons' tracker then waved him off, finished with the humans. "No, it's not that. We actually find humans very fascinating. Cybertronians and any sentient life. We chose to become in charge of the slavery placings because there is no one else who can do it without harming them." He stated firmly.

Righty nodded as he stared at Epps. "Why do you ask?" He asked, now slightly suspicious.

Epps just raised his hands in his own defense but shrugged at the same time. "Just wondering. You seem to enjoy your job. I guess I was just trying to understand it." he told the heads.

Both Righty and Lefty stared at him for a long moment before stepping back and activating the cell's
energy beams again. "Let me put it this way, human. We enjoy working with slaves. We do this job because we are the only one who can do it without hurting any of the slaves. If someone else did our job, the slaves wouldn't be in good condition at all. Consider your selves lucky that it is us who take care of you and not Commander Sevax or Commander Deliberata. If it were their choice, all of the slaves would be beaten every single orn to break them. Maybe even destroyed." Righty stated and Lefty nodded in agreement.

"As it is, to be perfectly honest," Lefty spoke up, looking rather withdrawn. "If it were my choice, we wouldn't need slaves."

Everyone tensed up as they stared at him carefully.

"We would work with the slaves as equals. We don't like how the slaves are treated that much. But we are not in charge of what is said and done. The Quintesson High Lord and the Quintesson High Council are. So be very careful with whatever you do and say when it comes to them." Righty warned them before the two headed Quintesson turned heel and marched away, leaving everyone relaxing.

There was a long silence before everyone looked at one another, not smiling but not frowning either.

"You know, if we can play our cards right, we might just earn a new ally." Lockdown remarked in a quiet voice and everyone nodded in agreement.

The next orn, what seemed to be very early, everyone was woken to the sound of an alarm going off and the stomping of Sharkticons coming into the prison block. Everyone was sorely disappointed to see that Optimus had not been brought to the cells just yet. They were starting to wonder exactly what happened to him. They hoped that he was all right.

Elita had tried to look into her bond, trying to connect with him to find out what was going on with him. But she was disappointed to find a block in the way as well as *Inefficient connection* flashing at her. She was sure that he had been derezzed just like Sunriser had been. But she could only wonder exactly what his fate would have been.

Everyone turned their attention to the Sharkticons as they came right up their cells and activated the stasis cuffs still around their wrists. A very large one was standing at the prison block doors as the Cybertronians and humans were pulled from their cells, powerful arms folded across his wide chassis. "It's time for your testing protocols to begin, slaves!" He growled out, surprising all of them. They hadn't heard any of the Sharkticons speak yet and had been sure that none of them could. "You will all form a single line, much like how all of you came in. Any resistance, you will find your selves beaten down by us. You will follow us right to the Arena for testing. There, you will be given instructions by the newly instated Quintesson Commanding General. He will inform you of what you are going to do as well show you an example of what you are to do during testing. Any questions?"

No one spoke and that seemed to please the large Sharkticon before he turned swiftly and started to walk. All of the Sharkticons lined up alongside the Cybertronians began nudging all of them and the humans to start walking after the large Sharkticon Commander, who it was obviously titled.

It took a little bit of walking through darkened corridors and passing by steel doors, that seemed to more like isolated prison cells. There were rumbles and growls behind the doors, not allowing any of the Cybertronians see who or what was inside the cells. But a whisper from Lockdown told them that it was the Gladiator cells.
So everyone knew that behind one of these doors, the Dinobots were there. They knew that they had to be behind one of those doors. It was probably where they would end up if they were made into gladiators for the amusement of the Quintessons. They didn't really want to think about it very much. They just wanted to get all of this done and over with and returned to their cells so they could think of ways to escape the cells and start fighting back against the Quintessons.

Finally, the Cybertronians began hearing dulled rumbles now echoing off the walls, through the metal walls. It sounded like thunder was just right outside the walls of the corridors that they were traveling through. They could hear thunderous roars echoing all around them.

"What is that?" Arcee asked as she moved a little closer to Rodimus.

Lockdown narrowed his slanted optics as he looked around at the walls before looking forward to a large set of black iron doors decorated with strange symbols. "The Arena. What you're hearing is the cheers of Quintessons watching a fight going on." He said darkly as he straightened his entire frame. He paused to glance over his shoulder at everyone behind him. "Get ready. We're going into the Pit of nightmares. Be ready. Because they are going to make you fight to the death against something. Remember what I told you back on Death's Head." He told them gravely before looking forward again.

Everyone was tensed up but they kept looking forward, waiting to see what horrors lied behind those massive doors. They knew that they better prepare their selves for what they were about to step into. It wasn't going to be very good with whatever they saw or were forced to do behind those doors, in that Arena pit. But it was now all about survival. They had to do whatever it took to free their selves and seek the judgment to the Quintessons on what they had done to the sparklings, Sunriser, Optimus and the Dinobots. And just they approached the massive doors, everyone readied for what they were about to see.

However, when the doors did slowly roll away, showing them the massive circled arena that put the Earth's Rome Coliseum to shame. It was almost exactly like it, only so much bigger for all of the Quintessons that were in the many rows of seats, roaring and cheering for what was to come next.

But no one was paying attention to them.

Everyone; all Cybertronians and the humans were looking forward, their eyes and optics widening when they saw Him standing in the middle of the door way just outside the doors, waiting for their arrival. His back was to them. He just stood tall, proud, watching whatever was taking place in the arenas, watching several fighters in the very middle ripping each other apart for the entertainment of all of the Quintessons in the audience.

It surprised everyone to see him just standing there, un-cuffed, unguarded. He was just standing there as if on his own accord. But they knew him. Of course they knew him. But they could only wonder why he was even watching the slaughter of Cybertronian being ripped apart by Sharkticons in the middle of the arena. It wasn't like him to just stand there and doing nothing why the Cybertronian in the arena was fighting and losing his life against the brutal death machines. They knew he would have been trying to fight to save that Cybertronian.

But he wasn't moving.

"Optimus?" Elita asked, surprised as she and everyone looked at the tall, black and purple painted Cybertronian.

Optimus tilted his head as if looking over his shoulder before he turned around to face them, his hands now folding behind his back and looking at all of them with brilliant burning red optics. He
looked like Optimus but...something was completely off. He looked...colder.

"Welcome to the Quintesson Arena. The Beginning of the end until your deactivation." Optimus spoke, his voice very dark, however, so unlike his usual voice. He sounded so different. He was not the Optimus Prime they knew. He was somehow...so very much different. "I am Nemesis Prime."

Everyone could only gape in shock and alarm at what they once knew was Optimus Prime.
Everyone gaped in shock at Optimus, wondering if this was some kind of joke or trick he might have been pulling on them or the Quintessons. They really hoped it was the Quintessons he was trying to fool and not them. There couldn't be any way that he was really...a Quintesson pawn.

"Optimus? Is that really you?" It was Sentinel who asked worriedly.

The dark Prime turned cold red optics onto him and looked so blank. "I said my name is Nemesis Prime. Not Optimus." He spoke too cold and too convincing for it to be fake. "I am the Quintessons' appointed Commanding General. I am in charge of the Arenas and what will be your fate from here on out. You will not speak unless I give you permission to speak."

Everyone just gaped at him, wondering if he was serious. They weren't sure if they should test it out or not. But if it really was Optimus, he might just reprimand them. But...if it was who he claimed to be...

Lockdown caught one of his pirates' optics and lightly jerked his head towards the so called Nemesis Prime. It was a cruel thing to do, making him speak up when Nemesis Prime had just told them not to, but everyone wanted to know. So the pirate nodded and sneered at the dark Prime. "So what do you want from..." he asked smartly.

Suddenly, the pirate found himself grabbed viciously by the throat and lifted up into the air. He was so startled that all he could do was squeak in alarm while others around him jumped back, looking shocked. He could only look at the black and purple flamed mech in shock and fear as that large hand began to squeeze, making the pirate gasp and start kicking and grasping at the wrist connected to that hand.

"I said you will not speak unless I give you permission." Nemesis Prime growled viciously. "Do I have to make it clear what will happen if my orders are ignored?" The pirate could gasp and sputter as his throat was being crushed under the pressure. Nemesis Prime nodded sharply before simply dropping the mech to the ground and stepping back from him. He looked to the Sharkticon Commander. "We have our examples. Bring out the Terrorcon unit." He ordered in a harsh voice. And the mentioning of Terrorcons made everyone stiffen in alarm and fear.
The large Sharkticon nodded and turned to leave back through the Gladiator corridor, leaving all Cybertronians and the humans to watch their once proud, noble Prime start to pace in front of them.

It was that much obvious now. They all knew that this was not Optimus Prime. He was some mech different. Some mech possibly worse. There would be no way in the pits he would ever ask for Terrorcons, period. There was no way he would ever suggest Terrorcons be used against them. So there was no doubt that this was not the Optimus Prime they once knew.

"Now," Nemesis Prime spoke, his voice as cold as ever as he looked everyone over. "The Testing protocols are simple. You fight with everything you have. You will be carefully watched by the Quintesson Judges, the entire audience, and myself. Depending on how well you do will determined where you will be placed." He continued to pace in front of the line of Cybertronians before looking to a Sharkticon, who had a datapad. He reached out for it and was immediately given it. He said no word as he looked over the information on the datapad, his burning red optics narrowing as he read.

A few of the Cybertronians glanced at one another but some stopped to stare at Elita. They noted the pained look on her face, knowing this was hurting her to see her mate like this.

"I see there are sparked femmes." Nemesis Prime finally spoke coolly before he lift his optics and looked at the very ones who were sparked. "The sparked femmes will not participate in the testing. They are to sit aside." He ordered, waving to Sharkticons, who nodded and moved to the femmes who bore sparklings in their systems. "Take the female humans as well. They are useless in battle."

That had many offended, enraged scoffs from Izzy and Monique. The other two didn't bother to say anything. But they allowed their selves to be lead away from the groups, looking worriedly to the men and their Cybertronian friends.

"Now then," Nemesis Prime spoke up again before looking coldly at the remaining. "As I said, you will fight. Starting with the pirates. By order of the Quintessons, you are redeemed as the highest criminals. You will face off the Terrorcon unit and if you survive five megaclicks in battle with them, you live. But if not, I do not have to explain what will happen."

Just then, there were the sounds of ped steps and familiar growls from behind the entire group, making them all stiffen and slowly turn around. They turned to look at the nightmarish creatures they were expecting.

Only, they didn't expect this.

There were four of them. Four rather large, gleaming Cybertronians, who didn't exactly look normal. They looked more like they had been pieced together by Cybertronian parts. At least the largest one did. He looked more like a very large metallic Frankenstein. He looked as if he had been put together by spare parts; his coloring somewhat off and mismatched. But like all Terrorcons, he had poisonous purple optics and under lighting.

Each of them had tri splits in their chin plates, which one did open into a snarl, revealing a long vicious glossa with razor sharp fangs on it. They were no doubt Terrorcons. But something was different with these ones. They were looking right at all of the Cybertronians and not rushing to attack. With exception of one, a very large built one with a very round under belly; technically fat, the others looked calm and collected. It was that one that hissed and started moving forward, spreading its wide tri mouth and almost drooling. It looked almost like one of the Bailiffs, however; just without the organic features.

One of the other Terrorcons was very tall and slender framed. He was a rusted, pale yellow and gray with the vicious purple under lights. Unlike other three, his knee joints were angled back instead of
forward, almost like bird's legs. And he had two heads. One head was normal and on his pair of slender shoulders while the extra head was right below that one, almost right under the neck structure. And it was looking right at everyone. It was smaller than the one above it but almost as vicious looking. It was almost more like one of the two headed Quintessons, to be honest.

The last Terrorcon was quite as intimidating as the other three but...seemed more intimidating in a way. It looked more like a Sharkticon than Cybertronian. It looked like an undead version of one. But unlike the Sharkticons, he was taller, slender with strange very small wings or fins on his shoulder plates. There were also unusual round structures all over his back and two just below his wrists. He was a pale dead blue color with rusted gray spots all over his frame.

"Blot." Nemesis Prime said warningly.

Thinking it was the large, hungry looking Terrorcon he was speaking to, everyone cringed back as it was coming towards them, stretching its glossa towards them. But then the large Frankenstein Terrorcon snapped out a large servo and grabbed the fat Terrorcon by the back of his frame, holding him back.

"Hun-Gurr, do not attack unless you are ordered to." The Frankenstein Terrorcon shocked everyone by speaking. They had never ever heard a Terrorcon speak before. They had always believed that undead beings were unable to speak.

"Hu-Hun-Gurr...hun-grrrryyyy..." The gluttonous looking Terrorcon complained, giving a put out look at his fellow Terrorcon.

"Do not make me repeat myself." The Frankenstein Terrorcon growled deeply, giving a firm look at the fat one, who had cringed back as if afraid of him. It was no doubt that he was the leader of the entire group, and they listened to his every order.

Everyone, Cybertronians and humans just stared in shock.

Airachnid, however, stiffened, looking right at the Frankenstein Terrorcon with dawning in her optics. "You." She whispered making few look at her.

The Frankenstein Terrorcon looked back at her and stared blankly. But then he acknowledged her with his optics narrowing but in recognition. He seemed to know her. But instead of speaking to her, he turned back to Nemesis Prime. "So you're the new Gladiator General all of us were told about." He spoke, deeply.

"Your orders are to make an example of what is expected in the arenas." Nemesis Prime said right back, his tone dark before he raised a hand towards Lockdown's pirates. "Fight."

The pirates and everyone else stiffened in horror at what was going to happen. They knew what was coming. Especially when the Terrorcons turned their attention onto the pirates, who started cringing away in terror. They tried creeping behind the other Cybertronians, who did move into the way to shield them. Even Lockdown moved over, glaring fiercely at the Terrorcons to protect his pirates. But the Sharkticons started grabbing them and roughly pulling them back away from the pirates.

"No! Don't you fragging dare!" Lockdown snarled while other Sharkticons started shoving the pirates out towards the arena opening. He began struggling to get away from them, to protect his pirates, who were now backing away as the Terrorcons began moving towards them. "NO!"

The Terrorcons were now stalking the several pirates, pushing them more and more out towards the middle of the arena, which sent the audience in a frenzy when they saw them.
Roars of approval rose up from the stands of Quintessons, all cheering and applauding the Terrorcons.

"BLOT! BLOT! BLOT!"

"RIPPERSNAPPER! RIPPERSNAPPER!"

"TWINSTIKER! TWINSTRIKER! TWINSTRIKER!"

HUN-GURR! HUN-GURR! HUN-GURR!"

All of the Quintessons were chanting. They were calling out the Terrorcons' names, surprising all of the alarmed and fearful Cybertronians and humans, who were all struggling to go to their defense. The pirates, all still alive ten of them, were backing away, looking at the Terrorcons in fear.

The Frankenstein Terrorcon lashed out his arms, revealing two five foot, vicious purple energy blades from each fisted servo. He was followed by two of the others, both whipping their arms and energy blades slid out from their knuckle joints, like cat claws, one had five on each finger joint and the other had hooked blades. The shark looking did nothing but stand there. But from each of the holes in his frame sprouted out acid green energy whips. He truthfully looked like something crossed between a shark and a squid now.

However as he moved towards the pirates with the other Terrorcons, the energy whips trailed against the ground, leaving burning trails behind him. The whips were like acid, burning and melting the ground as he went.

"If you wish to live," The Terrorcon, Blot spoke loud enough for even the Cybertronians being held back from saving the pirates to hear. "Survive for five megaclicks against us."

The pirates stared wide optic'd at the Terrorcons, moving away from them, further into the arena. They didn't want to fight Terrorcons. They just wanted to escape. They just wanted to get away from these monsters.

Suddenly, the shark Terrorcon struck first. He whipped up an arm and one of his acid whips, which snapped in the air and slapped against one of the pirates across the face. The pirate screeched in pain, his face plates starting to sizzle and burn under his servos he had clapped over it. He didn't have much of a chance as the Shark whipped his other whip up and snapped it at the poor mech's neck. The acid whip sliced through it, sending the now deactivated mech down to the ground.

Immediately, the other three Terrorcons charged forward, now attacking. The surviving pirates scattered, moving in different directions, even with the Terrorcons following, slashing at them with their energy blades.

"No!" Elita One cried out, watching in horror as the pirates could do nothing but dodge the blades coming at them. She jerked around to look at Nemesis Prime before yanking away from the Sharkticon holding her back. She quickly moved away from him, even as he gave chase. But she turned a fierce look onto him, her burning icy blue glare stopping him immediately. "Don't touch me!" She said with all the power she had as a Prime's daughter before turning back to Nemesis Prime, who was watching her coldly. "You cannot do this, Optimus!"

"If I must say my name one more time..." Nemesis Prime was growling darkly.

Elita One, however, raised her cuffed hands and jabbed a finger near his face. "I don't care who you think you are! I get the idea, Optimus! You think you are someone called Nemesis Prime! But I know you! And I know you are still in there, under all of the fake memories that the Quintessons put
into your processor!" She growled at him sternly. "And if there is one thing I know most about the mech I am sparkmated to, it is he always let's a mech have a fair fight!" She ignored the glare that he gave her as she jerked her head towards the pirates, who were falling at the energy blades of the Terrorcons. "You want a fight, let them fight! Fairly!"

There was an intense moment between both and everyone watching them with wide optics.

But then Nemesis Prime leaned closer to Elita, bring his fiery red optics into her's. "I am not Optimus Prime any more, daughter of Alpha Prime." He said coldly. "He is gone and he is not coming back." Then he turned sharply from her surprised look. "Terrorcons!"

The Terrorcons paused from attacking the pirates, who were still trying to keep away from them.

Nemesis Prime nodded sharply as he looked mirthlessly t the injured pirates. "Enjoy your feast." He called over coldly.

"No!" Lockdown and some of the others cried out, looking at the Terrorcons and the pirates.

The Terrorcons hissed before turning back towards the pirates, the three looking to the Frankenstein one. They seemed to be asking him for permission instead of Nemesis Prime. Blot, the Frankenstein Terrorcon vented deeply before standing tall and firm and nodded. "Terrorcons, feast." He spoke deeply just standing there.

The other three roared and hissed before charging like wild animals, rushing towards the pirates, who yelped in fear and tried to run away from the three wild mechs.

But it did no good.

The three Terrorcons caught a hold of them, slicing at their legs with their blades and whips. The Quintesson audience went wild, roaring approval as they opened their triangular mouths and bit down hard into engeron lines.

The Cybertronian and humans watched in horror as the three monstrous mechs began draining the screeching pirates, quickly from one to the other. And the fourth, Blot just stood there, fists balled up before he turned swiftly and walked towards the awaiting prisoners and Sharkticons. His vicious purple gaze met Airachnid's for one brief moment, who was staring at him with realization. But then he tore his optics away and looked back at Nemesis Prime.

"You're not going to feed like your creations?" Nemesis Prime asked coldly raising an optic ridge.

The Frankenstein Terrorcon met his cold optics with his own before shaking his head. "Not hungry." He said coolly before looking back at the horrified Cybertronians and humans as they stared at the ravaging others. "Are they next up?"

"Not for you and your unit." Nemesis Prime said coldly before looking at Lockdown and the Autobots and Decepticons. "I think they can wait for their turn on being consumed by your unit." He looked right at Elita, who was shaking with anger. "Unless you would like now."

Elita glared at him, still trembling with anger by what he had ordered. She couldn't believe what the Quintessons had done to her sparkmate. This mech, this image of Optimus was an insult to her Prime. She swore deep in her spark she was going to get him back the way he was suppose to be. She was going to fight to her last vent of air that she was going to return Optimus to his true and former glory.

"We want to fight to Sharkticons." Starscream spoke up coldly. He was almost the only one who
was remaining calm about the whole thing.

"Starscream...?" Nightbird was asking.

Starscream glanced at the others and shook his head before looking at the dark Prime. "You want us to fight, we fight Sharkticons. And we do it with our weapons online." He growled.

Everyone just stared at him, stunned. They didn't know what his motives were, other than giving into the demands.

"Starscream, what are you saying?" Elita One asked frowning at him.

The Decepticon Leader merely glanced at her before looking back at Nemesis Prime. "Well? Deal or not?" He asked impatiently.

"You sound like you have a motive. Inquiry on why?" Nemesis Prime asked coolly.

Starscream smirked just coldly, his wings twitching almost anxiously. "Your Sharkticons attacked our sparklings and killed them, Prime. My little femme. Ironhide and Chromia's little mechs." His red optics hardened as he glanced at Elita. "Elita One's twins. They killed them and I think we have the right to payback what they did." He growled viciously.

There was a long silence as everyone took in Starscream's words before they slowly nodded in understanding. They knew what Starscream's point was now. And while they didn't like the idea of following a path of vengeance, they agreed.

"We fight the Sharkticons." Ironhide said, stiffening to his full height. And everyone nodded in agreement.

Nemesis Prime stared hard at them for a moment before he nodded sharply. He motioned to the Sharkticon leader, giving the silent order to deactivate the stasis cuffs when the first stepped forward. "Very well. We will deactivate the stasis cuffs so you can fight. But remember, if you act up against us, you will be punished. Who wants to volunteer to fight first?" He asked looking all of them over.

For a moment, no one spoke up.

But then Kup stepped forward, tilting his head this way and that to crack the joints. "Let an ol' pro show yeh how it's done, younglin's." He remarked as he walked towards the middle of the arena, ignoring the Terrorcons as they finished draining the pirates and were moving over to join their leader.

Nemesis Prime motioned to a few Sharkticons, who moved over to join Kup in the middle. The entire arena went wild, booing the old mech and cheering for the Sharkticons. It took a moment as the four Sharkticons surrounded Kup, who watched them carefully, not moving.

Then as if an alarm went off, the brutes snapped to action, moving to attack. They charged at an unmoving Kup, snapping blades out from their fists and swinging at him. They came very close to slicing at him.

Only then did Kup move. He snapped out his hand and grabbed the first Sharkticon by the wrist, yanking him forward as he slammed his other fist right into his face. He then, quick as lightning, spun around, whipping up and outward, slamming his frame into the other three Sharkticons, knocking them off balance to ground before throwing up his arm, shifting and transforming it into a very lethal cannon.
With a loud explosion, Kup fired and sent a large blast at the Sharkticons, offlining two of them instantly before whipping the cannon arm again and a large serrated blade right through the nozzle and swinging it as the other two clambered to their feet to attack again. The blade went through their chassis, through their spark chambers.

They were dead within the first one minute.

Kup yanked his blade free from both Sharkticons before whirling around and facing Nemesis Prime, smirking at him. "Is that all yeh got? I think you need t' upgrade the Sharkticons." He said as he sauntered over, twisting his bladed cannon back into his arm. He chuckled to see an impressed smirk on the Frankenstein Terrorcon's face. He wasn't the only one. Even some of the Cybertronians and Sharkticons were looking at him in surprise and awe. "I wasn' a Prime's Weapon Specialis' for no reason." He remarked.

"I think I will be the next judge of the Sharkticons." Ironhide grunted as he moved over to take his place in the middle of the Arena. The stasis cuffs on his wrists deactivated as the big black mech raised both hands and shifted his entire stance into a fighting stance. "Well, bring it!"

Four Sharkticons glanced at one another before roaring and charging at Ironhide. They raised their cannon arms and began firing.

With a swift ped not many had not seen and some who had, Ironhide dodged to the side, moving quickly as more blasts came at him. He practically danced right out of range from each blast before throwing himself forward into a barrel roll right up to the first Sharkticon and upper cutted him in the chin with his suddenly shifted cannon, which he fired off on impact.

The now decapitated Sharkticon's body flew up into the air while Ironhide whipped around and blasted the other three Sharkticons right in the chassis, sending them flying backwards and crashing to the ground.

"Peh!" Ironhide grunted before turning and marching over to his now smirking comrades. "You're right, Kup. They are pathetic. I fought tougher Decepticons than that."

Next went Bumblebee, not by choice right away. Nemesis Prime had decided that it was to be him who fought the Sharkticons next. And like Ironhide and Kup, he blew right through the three Sharticons that went up against him. He moved fast on his peds, mostly taking them out by his own hands, tearing them apart. He moved through the Sharkticons with swift peds and ripped through them. He didn't even have to try too hard, as he moved through them. He defeated them in five minutes, not as short as the two Weapons Specialists but he still care of them fast enough.

Next up was Starscream and the Seekers, all taking on ten Sharkticons at the same time. They were not allowed to fly, which pissed them off but they used their anger on the Sharkticons, ripping into them and blasting each and every one of them until they were smoldering piles of scrapped and melted metal. The Seekers worked together, fighting the Sharkticons.

All three, Starscream, Thundercracker and Skywarp mostly worked together, moving through the Sharkticons, almost dancing around them and smashing them into the ground or ripping them to pieces. Skywarp could not warp in the arena but he really didn't even need to have his special ability to smash the Sharkticons to pieces. He would leap up on and over his brothers' wings and come slamming his peds down on top of the brutish mechs.

Both Skyfire and Silverbolt were wings to wings, blades out and slicing through the Sharkticons that came at them. They, like the other Seekers, practically danced a dangerous dance full of blades and even some blaster fire, blowing the brutes to pieces and even slicing through them like they were
nothing. They defeated their Sharkticons with ease.

After them, Soundwave and his subunits worked together in perfect sync to bring down the Sharkticons they fought. Even little Ratbat fought against them, using a powerful high frequency pitch to deafen with Soundwave their audios while his brothers destroyed them. Frenzy, Rumble and Ravage ran through the Sharkticons, ripping at their peds, causing mostly a distraction to their Master. Laserbeak and Buzzsaw flew through the air, shooting the Sharkticons and even causing some damage to them. But it was the large Decepticon, using his telepathy and his many appendages to rip through the brutes.

By this time, the Quintesson audience were roaring and applauding their approval, enjoying the show they were seeing before them. The Quintesson Judges were not among them, however. Even while the Quintesson Judges Jolup andGlyphik looked on the fights with approval, High Lord Quintesson Derodomontatus did look amused whatsoever. He was actually looking very irritated and angry. It was obvious that he expected all of these Cybertronians would not be able to defeat their Sharkticons with ease like they were doing.

It did not take very long at all for Sludge to smash the Sharkticons down into the ground. He sure startled every Quintesson in the audience when he transformed into his dinosaur form to smash them. Even the Sharkticons had stalled in alarm to see what his other form was. It was their downfall. The Dinobot had taken advantage of their shock to attack and defeat them.

After the Dinobot, Jazz took down the Sharkticons, and stunning many by showing off on how speedy he was. He moved with such speed and grace, using his magnetizers to rip them apart. All the wild, he was blasting his playlist and sending a wink to Flo as he dodged and moved against the Sharkticons. Every one of his friends just laughed or shook their heads or rolled their optics and eyes as they kept watching him taking down the Sharkticons with speed and using his magnetizers. Either way, the Quintesson audience were enjoying.

After him, each of the femmes took their turns, minus the ones who were sparked. Chromia had tried to go in for a fight but Nemesis Prime wouldn't allow her to at all. He forced her to stay back and watch as Arcee, Elita One, Airachnid, Maximum Wave, Roulette, Stiletto and Glyph fought against the Sharkticons. It was easy for all of the femmes to fight, but Glyph was struggling a little. She could defend herself just fine. But when the Sharkticons attacked in a group, she had a hard time fighting two or three at the same time.

It was to her luck that the other femmes saw her struggling and they immediately were at her side, helping her fight back. They would immediately jump in to take on the Sharkticon that was giving her a hard time. They did have to admit it, though. Glyph might not have been the best fighter but she was pretty fast on her peds. She zipped through the Sharkticons, confusing them by running in between their legs and forcing them to either bend over to look through their legs to see where she went before they were struck down by the other femmes.

Nonetheless, they succeeded with taking out a whole handful of Sharkticons.

Then, everyone truly got to see how brutal Lockdown could be in a real fight when his turn came up. He took down the Sharkticons with too much ease, and eventually Nemesis Prime allowed Prowl to join him in battle. The two of them moved in strategist sync with each other, battling the brutish mechs. They worked together to move through the Sharkticons, using techniques that even amazed the Quintesson audience. They two worked very well together when they were fighting along side each other.

Prowl could easily distract the Sharkticons by firing at them, forcing their optics onto him before Lockdown was there, ripping through them with his servo and his hook. He almost had a Sharkticon
jump on his back at one time but it was then the Autobot SIC was there, ripping that Sharkticon back and throwing him across the arena with energon blasts following after him, deactivating him immediately with the blasts to the chassis.

Tap-out proved to be quite a warrior as he took on four Sharkticons on his own. While he was not as skilled as some of the other Cybertronians, receiving minor injuries, he was fast on his peds and quite strong. He preferred fighting hand to servos combat and took them down much like Bumblebee had. He showed off swift moves of punching and kicking at the brutes, knocking them in many directions before he was upon them, ripping their spark chambers open and destroying them.

Breakdown easily took down the Sharkticons with his brute strength, smashing them to bits with a large war hammer he had built into his frame. He had no problem whatsoever as he fought the brutish mechs. He had more brute strength than they did. He easily destroyed them, ending his match rather quickly and earning roars of approval from the Quintessons.

And even if he was a medic or not, Knockout was forced to fight but he did not complain much at all. He just stood there in the middle of four Sharkticons coming at him with charged weapons with disinterest before whipping out his electro rod and electrocuted some of them into stasis while the others he sliced to bits with his saws. He proved to be very graceful with his rod, maneuvering it all around him in a way that the humans could only know from high action martial artists movies. He moved with grace and an air of cockiness and over confidence that he could and would back up.

Only a few times he got into a scrape with a Sharkticon and became very fragged off when his frame was scratched by their claws. He screeched in rage before literally cutting out their spark chambers and throwing them into the other Sharkticons' faces as a distraction. He moved on quick peds, spinning his glowing electro rod like a baton and electrocuted the brutes into stasis or deactivation.

Smokescreen was forced to fight alone, probably to deactivate during this so called test. He and everyone was sure that was the whole point. But he blew the Quintesson's thoughts away about him deactivating. He may have struggled a little against three Sharkticons because of his still healing injuries but he moved just fine, blasting through them with his blast cannons and even moving quickly away from them when they attacked him. He mostly ignored the pain into his still healing leg and shoulder as he kept moving away from them. He defeated them with a few added injuries to his frame but none of them were severe.

And when he finished ripping the Sharkticons to pieces, like the others who had received injuries, Ratchet immediately began patching him up, since he wasn't going to fight because he was needed as a medic. It came as a surprise that Nemesis Prime even let him work on the injuries of his fellow Cybertronians.

Rodimus and Sentinel fought at the same time, taking down several Sharkticons. They worked together just fine as they fought, moving in sync as if they rehearsed the entire fight. They watched each other's backs, attacking Sharkticons that tried to get behind them. But in the end, they also beat their... 'test' with flying colors.

It was after the twins fought side by side did things go awry.

It was not that Sideswipe and Sunstreaker couldn't beat the Sharkticons. They actually beat them just fine, ripping into them. They moved together, using their combined skills to trash the brutish mechs. Sideswipe sliced through the Sharkticons, kicking them off hard towards Sunstreaker, who burned and melted into them with his fire rods. They moved in sync with each other like always, jumping on top of the brutes and slicing or burning them into pieces. They worked together, like always, to defeat their enemies.
And then Sideswipe looked up, as if sensing those optics on him.

He looked up and saw Sunriser standing in a high box where the Quintesson Judges were watching. He nearly stalled seeing her just standing there, watching him with a confused look. He felt his air leave his vents as he laid his optics on her, feeling his spark spike and reach for her through their locked bond but was disappointed when it did not connect.

"Sideswipe! Keep your optics on the task!" Ironhide snapped from the side lines.

Sideswipe looked just in time to see the last Sharkticon coming at him and he merely sliced through him with ease, cutting him in half. He stood up quickly with Sunstreaker, standing in the middle of fallen brutes and glared up at the Quintesson Judges, who did not look happy whatsoever. It was obvious they believed at least some of the Cybertronians would fall in battle against their Sharkticons.

But no. None of the Sharkticons could beat them.

Guessing their thoughts and motives, Sideswipe glared fiercely up at the Judges, raising a blade towards them. "THIS IS ALL YOU HAVE?! A BUNCH OF WEAK AFT TIN CAN'S TO FIGHT US!" He roared as he and Sunstreaker glared up at the five faced monsters. "DON'T MAKE US LAUGH, FIVE FACERS! GIVE US A REAL CHALLENGE! GIVE US YOUR STRONGEST FIGHTERS TO BEAT DOWN INTO SCRAP!"

There was a long pause through cheering and booing Quintesson voices as the Judges glowered down at the twins.

But then the so called High Lord, Derodomontatus waved an appendage towards Nemesis Prime, who seemed to receive the message. The dark Prime nodded and spoke to the Sharkticon Leader very quietly.

"What do you think they're up to?" Knockout asked the others as they stood by.

Lockdown glanced at him but looked at the Sharkticon Leader as he was going back into the Gladiator cell corridor. "Don't know. But if I'm right, they'll be bringing out a Gladiator. Pray to Primus it ain't Dreadwing or Skyquake, femmes and mechs. They will kill those two without caring about why they are even here." He remarked.

The Decepticons looked at him in surprise when he even said those names.

"Dreadwing and Skyquake are here?! Alive?!" Starscream asked in shock.

The Autobots and humans just frowned at him. They didn't seem to know who those two were.

"Who is Skyquake and Dreadwing? Decepticons?" Ironhide asked frowning.

Starscream grimaced as he looked back at them, shaking his head. "Let's put it this way, Bots. Remember how Soundwave was a loyal follower of Megatron?" He asked and received nods from his allies. "Well, as you recall, Soundwave became your ally when we were betrayed by Galvatron. Dreadwing and Skyquake are the definite definition of Megatron's most loyal followers. And they absolutely hate Autobots."

Everyone frowned at that. They got the idea that these two must have been pretty loyal to Megatron and hated Autobots. But if they could explain the new situation to the two, maybe it wouldn't be so bad.
"If we tell them the war is over and that you are leader now..." Elita One was saying.

Starscream shook his head, grimacing. "They...uh...don't exactly like me either, Elita. They actually hate me. And I doubt that they will try and help us. The megaclick they hear Megatron is dead and we helped get rid of him, I can guarantee you they won't like it. And while they do respect Soundwave, they're not going to like it that he is allies with you, Autobots." He told them.

"Why do they hate Autobots? I know you guys been at war but still it's over now." Sam asked frowning.

Sentinel now grimaced. "Aren't they the Seekers that tore up Darkhelm?" He asked cautiously. Starscream and the Decepticons grimaced but nodded and the large blue Prime nodded, slumping. "Okay. They were some of the prisoners there that was used in the underground Gladiator arena there."

"Uh..." Trent muttered confused.

"Trent, I think what they're not trying to say is Autobots set up that one." Rodimus said miserably. "I heard about that. Some Autobot guards at the prison rounded up some prisoners and forced them to fight to the death just to lower the prisoner numbers."

Now, everyone grimaced or looked stunned. They couldn't believe that Autobots would do that.

"Wh-why would Autobots do such a thing? Wasn't that counterproductive to what Optimus wanted?" Anya asked in horror.

Sentinel shook his head. "At that time, Optimus wasn't Prime yet. Alpha Prime was. He didn't know about it Kup found out. He shut it down pretty fast. But some time after I became Prime, Darkhelm was destroyed by two Seekers. We never learned who they were. But they trashed that place really bad with their Seekers." He remarked.

That was disturbing to hear. Autobots who were supposed to be good did something bad. It made everyone start to question the things they have done in their lives. It definitely had some of them thinking about it.

But before anyone could question any more on the whole thing, there was a loud crash of a heavy foot hitting the ground and a deafening roar exploded through the air, making everyone flinch and jump before whirling around to see the source.

And froze in shock.

The Sharkticon Leader had returned but obviously not alone. He had a few other burly Sharkticons with him, all holding what looked like large dog catcher poles. The loops at the end looked more like energon loops that pulsed around the neck of the one that had everyone gaping in shock.

Grimlock.

The large Dinobot was in his dinosaur form. He looked alright with the exception of new battle scars all over his frame. He looked like he had been in many battles. He was growling and snapping his jaws at the Sharkticons who kept him at bay with the catch poles. He was definitely not happy with them, whatsoever as he growled and snapped at them. They stayed well away from him, though.

"Grimlock?! Are you fragging kidding me?!" Sideswipe suddenly laughed as he rolled towards the Dinobot. "You want us to fight Grimlock?! You have got to be joking! Grimlock wouldn't hurt us! He knows us!"
Grimlock looked right at the twins, still growling before starting to stomp over to him. The Sharkticon Leader immediately let go of the stasis pole, deactivating it. His fellow Sharkticons did the same, quickly backing off.

Sideswipe snorted as he went right up to the Dinobot, raising his hand in greeting. "Hey, Grimlock! It's me, Sideswipe. How you doing, buddy?" He asked with a grin.

"Sideswipe, don't. Remember what Mikaela said. He was derezzed too. He might not..." Elita One said in warning.

Sideswipe shook his head as he raised his hand higher, as if pat Grimlock on the snout when he came right up to him. "Elita, like it was said when we first met Grimlock and the Dinobots. Sunriser practically adopted them. So did I. Grimlock would never hurt..." he was saying.

But then the Dinobot struck, cutting off his words very quickly.

Grimlock snarled right at Sideswipe before whipping his head hard and slamming it into him, sending the red painted mech flying.

"Sideswipe!" Sunstreaker and several of the Autobots cried out in shock and alarm.

Sideswipe went crashing and rolling across the ground with his own startled and pained cry. He stopped several feet away, quickly getting back to his wheels and looking at the T-Rex with alarm. Grimlock roared loudly sending the Quintesson audience wild as he began charging at Sideswipe. It was no doubt that he meant to attack and definitely harm him.

"Gr-Grimlock! It's me!" Sideswipe tried as he raised his hands to defend himself.

But Grimlock growled viciously, no recognition in his optics as he swung his tail at him like a whip.

Immediately Sideswipe ducked away from the tail, now quickly moving back to get away from the Dinobot. He couldn't believe this was happening. He knew in the beginning that he didn't get along with Grimlock and the Dinobots but after a while being around each other, they had become friends.

And now, it looked like the Quintessons ruined that.

Grimlock roared and charged at Sideswipe again, making way to attack him. He came close to him, snapping his jaws but this time, Sideswipe lashed out and grabbed the large T-Rex by the head, holding him tightly. "Grimlock! It's me, Sideswipe!"

It didn't work so well when the Dinobot made a quick transformation, transforming into his mech form and grabbing him by the neck, lifting him up. "Grimlock smash!" He growled, raising his other fist to swing.

Suddenly, Sunstreaker was there, slamming his entire frame into Grimlock's back and throwing him off balance and forcing him to let his twin brother go. He quickly grabbed a hold of Sideswipe and retreated away from the large mech as he whirled around, glaring at them. "Sides, we might not have a choice on this one! He doesn't know us!" He yelled over the roars of the audience.

Sideswipe shook his head as he looked at Grimlock as he charged at them. "We can't hurt him, Sunny! He is one of us, whether he knows it or not!" He yelled back.

Grimlock lashed out his arm and his large blade slid out, which he swung at the twins.

Both Sideswipe and Sunstreaker quickly dodged to the side, moving to avoid being slashed to bits.
They quickly began dodging his swiping blade, moving way before they shared a glance and nodded to one another. They knew they didn't have a choice. They had to fight. As one, they charged back at Grimlock, moving to grab him and restrain him.

But it seemed Grimlock wouldn't have that. He lift his other arm and blew fire at them. The flames shot at the twins, making them cry out in alarm as they began moving faster to escape the hot blaze.

"We have to help them! He's going to kill them!" Arcee exclaimed now starting forward. She wasn't the only one to start moving to go help the twins.

But the Sharkticons were immediately in the way, grabbing them and holding them back. Nemesis Prime went over to stand between them and the fight. "You will remain where you are. They asked for a challenge with our strongest Gladiator, they received it." He said coldly.

Elita One turned a hard but pained look. It hurt her to see her sparkmate like this. She wished could do anything to get him better, to make him Optimus again.

"ARGH!" Sideswipe and Sunstreaker cried out as the flames struck them from behind, smoldering the paint on their backs and melting the rubber of their wheels.

Grimlock struck out again with his arms and smashed it against their backs, sending them flying in different directions. He went after Sideswipe first where he laid, raising his large blade to send smashing down on him. Everyone watching flinched, turning away to avoid seeing the end of their friend's life, listening to Sunstreaker cry out in fear for his twin.

"GRIMLOCK! NO! STOP!" came that familiar scream, making optics quickly online in surprise and turn up to look at the owner up in the Quintesson Judges' VIP box.

Sunriser was looking between the near massacre of the two Autobot twins and High Lord Derodomontatus, almost pleadingly.

But nonetheless, at the sound of her voice, Grimlock had stopped from slashing Sideswipe in two pieces.

"Please, Master. You made the point clear to the two fools. Please don't kill them." Sunriser spoke up, looking at the five faced High Lord.

Derodomontatus growled at her before swinging one of his appendages and slapping it hard across her faceplates. "Silence, you foolish femme! How dare you make any requests for them!" He snapped.

Sunriser cried out from being struck as she staggered against the wall behind her.

And Grimlock snarled, now stomping forward, glaring viciously up at the Quintesson. But he stopped when Sunriser quickly raised a hand towards him, waving him off. Even some of the new imprisoned Cybertronians had growled, glaring up at Quintesson High Lord.

"You, Gladiator slave, Grimlock! Finish what you started with those two!" Derodomontatus demanded turning look down at the Dinobot.

But Grimlock snarled before twisting and shifting all of his weapons away. He stood there, looking defiant before looking over at Nemesis Prime then to Ratchet. "Grimlock allow medicbot to help enemy! Grimlock no attack enemy anymore!" He growled.

There was a pause in the audience before one of the Quintesson Judges, Jolup nodded, looking at
Nemesis Prime while speaking silently to a rather enraged Derodomontatus. "Allow one of the medics to tend to them. Take them back to their cells until we give the test results." He announced in a loud voice.

Nemesis Prime nodded before looking at Ratchet and Knockout, nodding to them. "Tend to your allies." He ordered, motioning to the Sharkticons to release the two.

Immediately Ratchet and Knockout were hurrying across the field to Sideswipe and Sunstreaker. They passed by Grimlock, who made no move to attack them at all but just watch them as they were at the twins' side in a matter of seconds. Scanning both of them, the medics could only find severe burns and few broken energon lines on them from the fire. They were satisfied with that.

Helping both to their wheels, Ratchet and Knockout led them back to the others, pausing to glance at Grimlock, who growled a little but nodded. "Thank you, Grimlock. You don't remember us, do you?" The elder medic asked.

Grimlock just growled but swung his head. "Me Grimlock don't know you. But me Grimlock know scent from somewhere. Me no know from where but me Grimlock do. We enemies or we no enemies?" He asked sounding confused.

Ratchet smiled faintly but he shook his head with Sideswipe. "We no enemies, Grimlock. We friends. And we came to save you, the Dinobots, Sunriser, Mikaela and the sparklings you were brought with. Looks like we failed that." He said softly.

Grimlock merely frowned at him before looking at the Sharkticons as they were coming to collect them. He growled viciously, making them cringe back. "Babybots not gone." He growled lowly before he started walk towards the Gladiators prison corridor opening.

The four Cybertronians just gaped at him in surprise, watching him go before they allowed the Sharkticons to take them. Everyone was collected and started to head back in. Elita, however, paused to look back at Nemesis Prime, meeting his gaze. She sighed softly, severely disappointed that he wasn't the same. She prayed that she would find a way to return him to his original state. She wanted Optimus back.

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Returning to the cells, everyone was placed back into their cells, though Sideswipe and Sunstreaker were separated and placed into cells with Ratchet and Knockout so they could treat their burns.

As for now, both of the twins were laying on their fronts while the two medics were trying to figure out a way how to treat their burns.

"How bad are they, Ratchet?" Elita asked from her cell.

Ratchet looked up from Sideswipe's burns but shook his head. "Severe burns. Grimlock burned through their paint and right into their armor. The armor is slightly warped and melted." He stated.

Knockout nodded as he finished scanning Sunstreaker's burned armor. "Same here. We could treat the burns if these fragging stasis cuffs were blocking off our nanites systems. So, Sunstreaker will have to wait until his personal repair system kicks in." He explained and Ratchet nodded in agreement.

Elita sighed as she sat down, her legs curled under her as she placed her helm into her hands. "I cannot believe this is happening." She said softly. "Optimus."
"Hey, Legs. That Terrorcon, Blot." Lockdown spoke up, looking at Airachnid. "You know him? You were acting like he did. He seemed to recognize you in a way."

Airachnid paused from answering as she glanced around at everyone looking at her. Then she nodded as she folded her arms. "Yes, I knew him. He was Tarantulas' little science experiment. The Terrorcon who could control himself." She nodded when everyone looked at her in surprise. "Yes, him. It is now no wonder how the Quintessons have the antivirus. They must have taken it from his CNA and created it."

"And why he didn't go crazy when Nemesis Prime said to start eating the pirates." Sentinel added in wonder.

Airachnid looked at him and nodded. "Probably. From what I can speculate, he is dangerous when he wants to be. The other Terrorcons with him are probably being experimented on, using him to keep them in control. They are energon hungry but he seems to control them just fine." She added her thoughts.

Everyone just thought about it in wonder. They distinctly remembered how calm and collected the Terrorcons had been until the last second, when Blot gave them permission to feast on the pirates. They wondered exactly how much control this Blot really had. Or wondered how he was in their control in the first place.

Everyone looked sadly at her, knowing she would not take this too well. They wished this hadn't happened either. None of them could even imagine what they were going to do without Optimus right now.

"Ratchet...tell them." Sideswipe said painfully as he propped himself up on his elbows only to be carefully pushed back down. He hissed a little in pain.

"You, don't move!" Ratchet growled at him before he looked up seriously at everyone. "Everyone, Grimlock said something very curious to us."

"What? What did he say?" Rodimus asked frowning.

"He said something about the babybots are not gone." Ratchet said and nodded when everyone stiffened in surprise. "I think he meant to tell us that perhaps the sparklings are not dead. You might have been right at first, Elita. The sparklings might just be alive."

Everyone could only stare at him, surprised but with newfound hope in their sparks. They needed to speak to Grimlock again, find out for sure. But if he knew anything about the sparklings, they needed to know.
"What do you mean the sparklings might be alive? Mikaela said they were gone." It was Grimwing, of all mechanical beings to say though sounding very hopeful.

Ratchet shook his head as he remained bent over Sideswipe. "Grimlock only said that the Babybots are not gone. He must know something about them. He must know where they are. We need to speak to him somehow. To know if they truly are gone, we need to find out what he knows about them. It's the only way we can settle our processors and sparks about the sparklings." He said frowning.

Everyone just glanced at one another, hope returning to their sparks. They knew they shouldn't get their hopes up just to be spark broken again but they needed as much hope as they could. If the sparklings were alive, it would give them that much more reason to fight even harder to get out of there and get back their freedom. They needed to know that if the sparklings were alive, they would do anything to find them, protect them and free all of them from the Quintessons so they could go home to Earth and Cybertron. They knew it was going to take a lot of hard work and Prowl and Izzy making the strategies of their escape plan but they knew in the end it would be worth it.

The problem was, how were they even going to be able to do that? How could they find a way to speak to Grimlock about the sparklings?

"Hey, Sideswipe." Lockdown suddenly spoke up looking away from everyone towards the large door of the prison block they were in. He had heard them whoosh open and had looked. He was only semi surprised to see who came through. "Better ask Docbot to help you up. Your girl is here."

Everyone, Sideswipe especially, perked up and looked towards the prison cell entrance to see the femme mentioned peering around the corner while speaking to one of the Sharkticons. Sunriser was indeed there, glancing curiously down the corridor at the Autobots and Decepticons. Why she was there, no one could really answer that. They could only wonder her reasoning of being there.

Sideswipe, against protests from Ratchet clambered up and looked past everyone, hopefully at her. "Sunriser." He vented in relief and happiness.

The Sharkticon Sunriser was talking to didn't look happy but he nodded to whatever she said and motioned her through. She nodded back and started walking down the corridor, in the middle of the entire hall way.

"Quintesson pet!" A few of the other prisoners growled as she passed them.

"Wretched femme!"

"Go back to your master, little Quintesson glitch!"

The Autobots and Decepticons and humans were frowning at all of the rude remarks that the other
prisoners were making. They didn't understand what was going on or why they were acting like that towards her. Sunriser ignored all of the jibs that some of the other prisoners were making at her as she just walked down the row, head up high as if proud. She made no glance to Lockdown or the other Cybertronians but she had paused to glance at Grimwing and Mikaela who were watching her warily. She stared back at them for a moment before going on to stop right in front of Ratchet and Sideswipe's cell, turning to face them.

Sideswipe let out a vent of air he hadn't realized he had been holding as he looked back towards her, meeting her optics. "Sunrise." He said in a vent before smiling. Sunriser frowned at him, tilting her head to the side. She looked so confused as she studied him. "How do you know me?" She finally asked.

Sideswipe blinked at her, frowning slightly before smiling sadly. He knew she didn't know him and it did hurt. But he had to try and do anything to help her. "It's me, Sunriser. I am your sparkmate, remember?" He asked softly.

Her optics lit up a little in surprise but then she frowned again and tilted her head up higher. "I don't think that's true. Master Derodomontatus said you might try and trick me into..." she was saying.

"No, that's not true. He's lying, Sunriser." Sideswipe said now pained.

Sideswipe steeled herself, now looking hard. "Enough. I am not going to be fooled by your lies. I don't why you're trying to trick me..."

"They're not lies, Dawn." It was now Starscream who spoke up, dully. He was looking impatient about the whole thing, and just as frustrated. "He is your sparkmate. You both are together because you loved each other. He saved you many times when you were a human."

Sunriser's face fell into a steely look. "Okay, now I know you're lying. I am not human nor have I ever been. I don't know you! And I am not falling for your lies." She then made an impatient sound when some of the Cybertronians started to protest to that and stepped back as she opened up a compartment in her arm, pulling out two vials. "Look! Do you want this or not?" She asked impatiently.

Ratchet sighed and nodded as he held out his hand but keeping it away from the energy beams. "Yes, thank you." He interrupted.

Sunriser looked at him, holding up the metal vials. "Nanites. For the burns. Quintesson Judge Master Jolup talked my Master into letting me bring this to you. Not to discuss who I am or who you think I am. Do you want them or not?" She asked impatiently.

Ratchet sighed and nodded as he held out his hand but keeping it away from the energy beams. "Yes, thank you." He told her.

Sunriser nodded sharply before she looked down the corridor, towards the Sharkticon standing there. She waved to him and he nodded back before touching a control consol on the wall. The energy beams separating the two imprisoned and Sunriser vanished and she stepped forward, watching both warily as she placed one vile into Ratchet's hand. She was quick to moving back and the beam was back into place, separating them once more.

After that, she went to stand in front of Knockout and Sunstreaker's cell, nodding to the Sharkticon. The energy wall between them fell off line and she started stepping forward to hand Knockout the vial full of nanites. And Knockout started rushing forward towards her, making everyone tense up or
cry out in alarm.

"Knockout?! What are you doing?!" Sideswipe yelped now tense as ever.

Knockout ignored him as he lashed out to grab Sunriser, who had tensed in her own alarm. He was not going to let a good opportunity go without doing something.

Suddenly, Sunriser was reacting. She moved fast, jumping into the air and spun quickly in a full circle, kicking out her leg. Her ped slammed into the center of his chassis, sending him flying back over Sunstreaker and against the wall with a loud crash.

"Oof!" The red and silver medic grunted as he collided with the wall and slid down it to the ground, scratching his paint in the process.

That is, until a sharp jolt of electricity began coursing through his frame and forcing a cry of pain out of him. He cried out in pain, curling into himself and grabbing at his wrist where the tracker and locking device was implanted. Sunstreaker had to leap back to avoid touching him and receiving any of the jolts.

Sunriser glared coldly at Knockout as he writhed in pain from being electrocuted before she tossed the metal vile onto one of the berths in the cell. "Idiot. What did you think attacking me would accomplish? You would still end up facing the Bailiffs and the Sharkticons." She growled as she stepped back and the energy beams were back up.

As soon as the beams were up, the locking device deactivated, leaving Knockout shuddering from the aftershock. "Had...t-to...try...at...least..." He stammered over his pained murmurs.

Sunriser rolled her optics before turning and starting to leave. She was done with them. If they were going to try and attack her, then she wouldn't be coming back if she could help it.

"Sunriser, wait!" Sideswipe called, now frantic again.

"No." Sunriser said coolly as she kept walking. "One of you tried to attack me. You think I'm going to listen to..."

"Sunriser, Knockout wouldn't have hurt you." Moonracer said from her cell with Arcee. She didn't like the thought that Sunriser thought her sparkmate would hurt her.

Sunriser huffed impatiently but shook her head. "Why wouldn't have he? I was standing in his way to escaping from the prison block, though he'd still have to face off the Bailiffs and the Sharkticons." She said dryly.

"Sunriser, before you go, can I ask you something?" Elita interrupted before anyone could try and start an argument.

"What is it?" Sunriser asked stopping in front of Elita One, her arms folded.

Elita smiled faintly at her, knowing that her younger friend was just irritated from being almost attacked by Knockout. She would have been too if it were her. "Sunriser, have you seen any sparklings around? Any at all?" She asked, fully aware of everyone tensing up in anxiousness.

Sunriser blinked in surprise, pondering the question before nodding. "Yes. There are a few. But most of them were sparked here on Quintessa when a few spark mates were brought in." She answered.

Now, everyone was more anxious to hear more.
"Were there any brought in recently? Like in the past month?" Nightbird asked her voice trembling a little now.

Sunriser looked over at her and shrugged. "Maybe. But I am not sure. I haven't heard anything about it." She then frowned, staring at Elita before her optics lit up and she glanced over at Mikaela still in Grimwing's cell, her mouth falling. She looked back at Elita in a dawning look. "The human, Mikaela said she came here with sparklings. They were killed by the...oh!" She now looked pained when she saw the pained looks on Elita's and others' faces as they looked away. "Oh, my...they were yours! They were your sparklings! I am so sorry!" She said ventlessly.

Elita smiled softly at her before shaking her head. "Thank you. However, they may not be gone as we all think. Grimlock said something to Ratchet and Sideswipe. He said something along the lines that the Babybots were not gone. He was talking about our sparklings," She told her. "He has given us a hint that they are still alive. And that is hope to us, Sunriser. Please, is there any way you could find out from him for us?"

Sunriser stared at her for a long moment before her optics softened and she nodded. "I can ask him. If he knows where your sparklings are, I will let you know. And quietly." She told her softly.

"Thank you so much, Sunriser." Elita said somewhat emotionally. The sunrise colored femme nodded before she turned away to leave. "Sunriser, one more question." The Lady Prime said quickly making the young femme look back at her. "What about a new sparked sparkling? A very new sparked mechling. He is probably only a few weeks old."

Again, everyone, Sideswipe especially, was anxious to hear the answer to. They all knew she could only be asking about Sunriser and Sideswipe's sparkling.

Sunriser blinked before her face lit up. "Oh, do you mean the new sparking that my Master has me looking after?" She asked ad noticed some of the new prisoners were stiffening in surprise. "Yes, I suppose that is the one. Master Derodomontatus is having me looking after a young mechling that was sparked here, in these very prison cells. I don't know the full details but his carrier supposedly died in sparking." Her optics saddened. "Poor thing."

"Wh-what...what is his name?" Sideswipe asked his voice now shaking as he looked at her with his spark racing in its chamber.

Sunriser looked over at him frowning before she shrugged. "He doesn't exactly have one. I don't think his carrier gave him a name." Her optics softened nonetheless as she turned away from them. "But I like to call him Nightbeat. You know," she cut herself looking at Sideswipe curiously, looking him over. She seemed confused about what she was thinking but it was a look of wonder in her optics. "He kind of looks like you, only a smaller version. He has wheels on his peds just like you." She then turned away from him, smiling faintly at Elita. "I will go speak to Grimlock, and find what he knows, no worries. I really do hope that your sparklings are alright." She told her before turning and walking away, heading for the Gladiator section.

Either way, everyone were half satisfied and full of hope again. They hoped that Sunriser would come back with good news.

Sideswipe was full of hope, more than the others. He now knew his sparkling's name. He and everyone was sure that this Nightbeat was his and Sunriser's. "Nightbeat." The red painted Frontliner whispered ventlessly. "His name is Nightbeat."

Everyone smiled softly over at him, knowing his spark was full at the moment and no one could blame him whatsoever.
Ratchet, smiling, gently touched Sideswipe's shoulder, lightly pushing him towards one of the berths in the cell. "Come on, you. Let's take care of those burns." He said softly.

Knockout nodded as he went over and scooped up the other vile before turning to Sunstreaker. "Yeah, you too." He stated now moving over to the sunny colored mech.

The two medics made the twins lay back down across the floor so they could start placing the nanites along the burned areas, while some were watching them or just sitting down to rest or wonder what was going to happen next. They were not sure where their futures were going to lead to. They knew the future was probably rather bleak for them.

Lockdown glanced down the prison cells to the one on the very end to see his traitorous pirate just curled up on his berth. He frowned darkly at Swindle, who had glanced up after sensing those optics on him. But when he met the Space Captain's optics, he turned his one optic away. He, unlike, all of the Cybertronians and the humans had escaped from being tested. He hadn't even left his prison cell, like the others had. No one had bothered to even ask why but at the moment, they didn't care. They just cared about the twins being repaired.

"You sure missed out on the massacre of our pirates, Swindle. I hope you're really happy that you're the one who survived and they didn't." Lockdown growled, glaring over at the red mech.

Swindle didn't bother to even look up at him but dimmed down his optic and curl his legs close to his chassis, looking quite dismayed. He wrapped his arms around his legs and rested his helm against his knee joints. "I didn't mean for any of this to happen, Lockdown." He murmured quietly. "But you have to admit that I was right."

Lockdown only growled and then spat energon fluids on the ground. "I don't have to admit anything, you traitorous glitch! My pirates are deactivated just because of you." He growled before going over to sink down on the berth and plan of many ways of how he wanted to tear Swindle into pieces.

Swindle didn't say anything after that, even when a few of the Autobots and Decepticons glanced hard over at him, not willing to forgive him any more than Lockdown was. He didn't seem to care though. He was just in a cloud of his own self-pity mode.

"Hey, Glyph. You doing okay in there?" Skywarp asked when he looked over to see the small femme curled up against a wall in her cell with Arcee and Moonracer.

Glyph looked up at the sound of his voice and smiled faintly as she rested her chin on her knee joints. "Yes, Skywarp. I am okay. How are you doing? The way you were fighting out there. That was amazing." She said brightly, not really registering a few snorts from the other Cybertronians that were listening.

Skywarp seemed to preen at her words and lift his wings up a little. "I am one of the best warrior Seekers, Glyph! We fight with everything we got when facing an enemy!" He said proudly.

Glyph giggled and nodded as she looked up at him before looking over when Tap-Out scoffed in his cell. "What?" She asked as if she was being accused.

At the same time, Skywarp had noticed Thundercracker staring at him with a raised optic ridge and a disapproving frown. He twisted his mouth a little, frowning right back. "What, TC? Why're you looking at me like that?" He asked irritably.

Thundercracker slowly shook his head, still looking disapproving. "Really, Skywarp? Really? A grounder? You are going for a grounder? First Starscream goes for a human who became a
Cybertronian and now you are going for an Autobot Grounder? Really?" He asked in a dull way.

Skywarp scowled, knowing exactly what his brother Seeker meant. "Hey! She's pretty! So what?" He asked irritably.

Thundercracker sighed, his wings slumping but he shook his head and sat down in a stiff manner. "I am not even going to argue about this whole thing. The last time I did that, I almost made a big mistake of tearing our trine a part. So do what you want, Warp. You like a Grounder, I don't care. I am not going to say slag about anything." He stated wearily.

"A Seeker, Glyph? He is so much bigger than you! And Seekers are..." Tap-Out was scolding Glyph.

Glyph frowned at him before turning her back to him, folding her arms. "I happen to find Seekers highly fascinating, Tap-Out. I always admired them! I used to watch them flying back on Cybertron. The grace in their flight, the amazing aerial flight patterns, their speed as they cut through the air..." She was saying.

"The way they took out Polyhex? You do remember how they helped destroy our home city-state, don't you?" Tap-Out asked irritably.

Glyph now slumped miserably at the reminder and stared at the ground.

"Hey, leave her alone already." Arcee remarked as she scowled at Tap-Out, moving over to Glyph and bending down next to her. "Look, Glyph. That was a long time ago. A lot of us lost our home city-states. But...so did the Seekers." She said quietly. "Vos was destroyed in a most horrendous way before Polyhex was. And it was all because of the greed in the Cybertronian Council. We all made mistakes that cost us everything." She then smiled softly. "Besides, you should see Cybertron now. Polyhex is being rebuilt by the Constructicons and even some Seekers. It looked really nice the last time I saw it." She told her.

Glyph smiled shyly up at Arcee, feeling slightly better. "Do you think we will ever go home again?" She asked in a small voice.

Arcee nodded smiling kindly at her. "Of course we will. Someday we will get out of here. We will go home with all of us. The sparklings too if they really are alive." She then nudged Glyph playfully. "So...Skywarp, huh?" She asked slyly.

Glyph's fans clicked on and she ducked her head shyly peering over to see Skywarp harassing Thundercracker. "He...he is really cute and funny. And I always kind of did have a crush on Seekers. They are so pretty when they fly. I always liked them." She said shyly to Arcee and eventually Moonracer as she ducked closer, smiling.

"Skywarp is kind of childish and immature though. Are you sure you like him?" Moonracer asked still smiling.

Glyph shrugged as she played with her fingers. "I am not sure. I haven't felt this way before for anyone. I am not even sure what to even call this emotion that I am feeling. The megaclick I saw him..." her fans whirled just a little louder now and her face plates seemed to heat up. "He kind of made my spark dance a little. Never felt that before. I'm not really sure what it means. It's not exactly scientific logic and something I'm unfamiliar with."

Both motorcycle sisters grinned at one another and nodded. They knew fully well where that one was going.
"Skywarp is really nice, Glyph. He might be a little childish and he does get into trouble with some pranks. He isn't the brightest Cybertronian alive but he is really nice and can protect you when you need it." Arcee stated with a light smile.

Glyph smiled back up. "Are you kidding me? He does pranks? I love pranks! I got into trouble sometimes at the Crystal City Science Academy for when some of the other students picked on me for being so small! I was quite a prankster back on Cybertron! And Skywarp is too smart! He has his teleporting ability! It takes a great knowledge of projectory and scientific numbers to even be able to warp anywhere. He has to know the distance or exact coordination's to where he is going to warp to! He is smarter than you might think!" She said brightly.

Both Arcee and Moonracer blinked in surprise before smiling and nodding to each other. "Oh yeah. They are going to go well with each other." The purple sister said brightly.

Glyph's fans spun louder and her face plates went pink as she ducked her head again.

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Walking down the corridor, Sunriser stiffly nodded to the Sharkticons that watched her go. She didn't particularly like them, especially after learning what some of them had done to some sparklings. But she knew if she didn't acknowledge them, they would stop her to harass her. She walked further down the corridor until she came to the door she was looking for. She paused, however, to see something she really didn't like. She froze, knowing what kind of being this was.

A small silver mechanical mouse like thing with sharp rows of fangs glistened up at her with those bright blue optics. It was gnawing on some metal pieces that looked to be Cybertronian remains, eating an half eaten arm like a piranha. But when it noticed her, it hissed and practically grinned up at her.

Sunriser cringed back, stepping away from the Scraplet. She knew she needed to get away from it as fast as she could before...

"It's all right." A deep rumble of a voice spoke up as a large mismatched mech stepped up and lowered his hand near the Scraplet, which turned around and looked up at the Frankenstein like Terrorcon before running up his arm towards his helm. "He won't hurt you."

Sunriser looked back at the Terrorcon, frowning. "You are so odd, Blot. You know very well those are pests." She said before cringing back when the Scraplet hissed at her.

Blot reached up to the Scraplet and trailed a large finger down its back to shush it before looking back at the femme before him, a faint smile on his disfigured face. "They are only pests by assumption, Sunriser. If you treat them well, feed them scrap metal, they wouldn't have to be called pests." He spoke in his deep gravelly voice. He then bent down and picked up the half chewed arm and held it up to the Scraplet.

Shaking her head, Sunriser couldn't hide the smile from her pretty faceplates. "I see another bites the rust. Who was this one?" She asked motioning to the arm.

Blot looked at her gravely with his violet optics and shook his head. "I did not get their designations. They came with those new slaves. Space pirates, I believe." He told her before nodding to the slightly open door behind him that led into one of the Gladiator cells. "I'd invite you in to talk more but the other three are finishing up on the last remaining pirates."

Sunriser flicked her optics towards the door, her face falling in slight sorrow and disgust. "I'd say no
thank you anyway, Blot. Your creations scare me. Especially Hun-Gurr. He won't stop staring at me whenever we are allowed to mingle." She said quietly.

Blot made an amused sound before he patted the scraplet again on the large audios as it continued gnawing on its meal. "Hun-Gurr will not harm you. Nor will the other two. They like you, Sunriser. You have been nothing but kind of us, if not a little afraid of us since you came here. Hun-Gurr only stares at you because he's watching over you. He doesn't like it when the Sharkticons keep picking on you when they get bored. Remember that last one that harassed you. Well..." He cut himself off with a dark chuckle. "Let's just say he won't be bothering you any more. Hun-Gurr saw to that."

Smiling faintly, Sunriser shook her head, looking back at him. "How is it you're so different, Blot? You're not like the other Terrorcons. They're monsters. But you..." she was saying.

"They are not monsters, Sunriser." Blot said frowning. "They just have not received the treatment as Rippersnapper, Hun-Gurr or Twinstriker has yet."

Sunriser frowned back at him and shook her head as she shifted her weight. "Blot, you know what I mean. They are not like they used to be. I know you said it was because of a virus but they still hurt and kill beings. They are not the same state of processor like you. How is it you're so different?" She asked curiously.

Blot merely shrugged his mismatched shoulders watching her. "I was a science experiment of a Cybertronian once. Deactivated once but brought back to life. I could not tell you exactly how the process goes. Only this, the virus I carry in my CNA is a part of the reason." He then looked away, his optics dimming. "I would not wish it upon anyone. I believe that is why I convinced Judge Jolup to start applying the antivirus coding into Terrorcons. The results to that happening, my unit." He said motioning to the Gladiator cell behind him. "They are slowly regaining their state of processor, however. Rippersnapper is the closest along to being anything like I am, as you will notice in time."

Sunriser nodded with a soft vent and smile. "I don't care what anybot says, Blot. You're more than meets the optic." She said before blinking in surprise as if something dawned on her.

Blot frowned, looking at her curiously. He didn't miss the look she now wore. "Something wrong?" He asked her, tilting his disfigured helm.

Sunriser blinked again before shaking her head and forcing a smile. "No. Nothing is wrong. I just...I can't help but think I've heard that before. From someone. I don't know who. But I feel that whoever said that was someone I knew well and cared for. Someone who was warm, caring, noble." She sighed and placed a fist at her helm's side as if she was getting a processor ache. "I don't know what is wrong with me."

Blot now frowned, looking somewhat drawn before he smiled faintly. He looked as if he understood what she meant. He didn't approve of it, but he saw no reason to question it. "I saw what you did in the Arena. Saving those two Cybertronians' lives. That was very brave of you to stand up against Derodomontatus. Brave but foolish. You know he is going to punish you for it later." He remarked.

Sunriser slumped, her optics shuttering miserably. "I know." She whispered.

"Sunriser, why did you do it anyway? Who are those Cybertronians? They seemed to know you." Blot said frowning curiously.

The sunrise colored femme shook her head frowning mostly to herself. "I don't know. I feel like I should know them. But I can't recall. The red one, the one who tried to pat Grimlock on his head, he swears he is suppose to be my sparkmate. But...there is no way that is possible. I have never seen
him before." She said sounding confused and emotional.

Blot's optics softened a little before he stepped closer to her and patted her on the back. "Why don't you speak to him some more. Perhaps...something is there. You just do not see it there." He stated.

Sunriser huffed but smiled. "I doubt that. I think he is very good looking and...he...well...I don't know. We will have to see." She then stepped away from him, towards the Dinobots' cell. "I have to speak to Grimlock about something. I don't want you to get into trouble for speaking to me. So I will see you later, okay?" She said waving to him before moving towards the large door that lead to the Dinobots.

Blot watched her go before venting softly. "The curse of being derezzed." He muttered before looking at the Scraplet, who looked back. "Follow her, my pet. I'd like to know what she has to speak to that primal bot of hers." He then placed his hand against the wall so that the scraplet could quickly sneak along the wall after Sunriser.

Sunriser had one of the Sharkticons open the Dinobots' door so she could visit them. They had been hesitant but she swore they would behave while she was there. And sure enough, as soon as the door opened, a large hand reached out and grabbed her, pulling her into the room. The Sharkticons had tensed up as they swung the door open to go to her air but stopped with chortles on what they saw before closing the door.

Sunriser was laughing as she was suddenly being assaulted by glossas and arms wrapping around her by all four mechs she called good friends. She was in the middle of a group hug and it was the one called Snarl who was licking her face plates.

"Okay, okay, guys! Stop it! I missed you too!" Sunriser laughed as she pushed at the large frames squeezing her in the middle.

"Swoop miss Sunriser! Why Sunriser no visit us more?" The smallest and flier of the group asked as he pulled away from the group hug.

Sunriser, finally being put down from Grimlock's large arms, smiled softly at her flier. "I wish I could, Swoop. But Master Derodomontatus won't let me. I could barely even come down here at all today. I only could because Jolup let me bring down some burn nanites for those two new guys that Grimlock beat up." She told them before frowning at Grimlock, who growled.

"Twinbots okay?" The large T-Rex asked looking down at her.

Sunriser nodded smiling again. "They will be. There is two medics with them. They will be okay later on." She frowned once more. "Speaking of which, Grimlock, did you tell them about the sparklings that are hiding with Dreadwing and Skyquake? They were asking about them." She said curiously.

Grimlock shook his head as he blinked back at her. "Grimlock no say where the babybots are. Grimlock only say they alive. Why them new slaves ask?" He asked in a grunt.

Sunriser shrugged. "I think those babybots belong to them. The new slaves think they are dead, Grimlock. They very sad. But I can't tell them that the two large Seekers are looking after them. If I do, the Sharkticons will probably go after them again." She said warily. "I wish there was a way to let them know that their Sparklings were safe."

The four Dinobots nuzzled Sunriser with their heads, knowing it was hurting a little that she couldn't tell the possible creators about their sparklings.
"Sunriser smart. Sunriser figure out way." Slag said nuzzling her.

Sunriser smiled softly at him before her optics narrowed in thought as she looked at Grimlock. "Grimlock, that red one, the one you burned. That was him. He was the mech from my memory purges. He was silver in the purges but it was him. I recognized his voice. Who is he? Why did I dream of him and why is he here now?" She asked confused.

Grimlock and the other Dinobots frowned in surprise but the largest shrugged. "Medicbot says they come for us and Babybots, Sunriser. Medicbot says they know us. Me Grimlock knows their smell. But me Grimlock no know them. That red bot really from Sunriser purge?" He asked in a light growl.

Sunriser smiled and nodded as she looked away from him. "Yes. I wonder who he is and what he is to me. He said that I was his sparkmate but...I just don't remember him." She said now sounding a little stressed.

The Dinobots growled but curled around her again for comfort. They didn't like it when she was upset.

"Me Grimlock no know Sunriser. But we Dinobots help Sunriser to find out. But bot better be worth Sunriser. We Dinobots not let bot be mate to Sunriser if bot is weak and no keep Sunriser safe." The large mech growled.

Sunriser smiled as she wrapped her arms around his large neck and hugged him. "Thank you, Grimlock. But we will have to see what happens." She then grimaced as if she heard someone she didn't want to hear. "I got to go, guys. Seems like Nightbeat woke up from his recharge hour and he needs to be taken care of." She told them.

The four Dinobots groaned but all embraced her together. They didn't like her being away from them when they could protect her. They didn't like it when she was around the Quintesson High Lord. They knew he was cruel to her. She never told them what punishments they put her through whenever she did something that he didn't like. But she didn't have to. They had noticed some of the dents in her frame sometimes when she came to visit them. They growled at the thought that she was probably getting beaten now and then.

Grimlock had nearly lost his self control when he had seen that wretched five faced monster hit her when she called to him from slicing that new slave, saving his life. He had wanted nothing more than to just storm up to that VIP box and rip Derodomontatus a part. But it was to that five facer's luck that Sunriser had stopped him.

"Sunriser be safe. Sunriser take care of Babybot." The T-Rex said, slightly growling.

Sunriser smiled as she nodded to him and rubbed his large head. "I will, Grimlock. Thank you. And you guys behave. Don't give them a reason to hurt you any more." She told them rubbing each of their helms as she started towards the door where the Sharkticons had opened for her.

"Dinobots tough. Dinobots can take it." Grimlock growled lightly.

"I know. But I'd rather you be careful, Grimlock. Love you, guys. See you tomorrow." Sunriser called to them as she left the Gladiator cell. And then she began her way out of the prison cells, trying to hide a smile from her face. She didn't know why she was always called to take care of Nightbeat but she loved doing it. She couldn't help but feel a connection to the new sparked sparkling. She didn't know what it was about him but she loved to take care of him and looked forward to every time she got to spend with him. She could only wonder why.
It was a very early orn when deafening alarms went off, echoing off of metal walls and causing many yelps, shouts and screams, as well as groans to echoe right with them. The Cybertronians and humans jumped from their recharge and looked blearily around; their eyes and optics blinded by bright light now shining in them.

"Whuzza...?" Jazz had yelped as he sat up and looked around in confusion. He dimmed his visor, grimacing as he held up a hand to block the blinding light.

"Whatthefrag?!" Ironhide roared before wrapping his arms around his cursing sparkmate to protect her blinded optics from the offending lights.

"Someone turn off the fucking lights! I can't fucking see!" Nightbird snarled as she rubbed her optics, not having too much luck. It was only when Starscream moved over to her, stretching out his wings until they cam clost touching the opposite walls did she stop. "Thank you, love." She murmured still bitter about being blinded.

Starscream nodded as he shuttered his own optics, trying to adjust his sight to the offending lights. "What is happening? Lockdown, do you know?" He called over to the space pirate.

There was no answer as others groaned as they tried to get their bearings of what was happening. Some managed to recalibrate their optics and looked around before freezing to see Nemesis Prime coming in with a handful of Sharkticons and Bailiffs.

The black and purple Prime walked right to the middle of the cells corridor before folding his hands behind his back with the Sharkticons and Bailiffs lined up beside him, some armed with shock rods and electro whips. It made all of the Cybertronians and the humans uneasy to see the weapons.

To all of the new prisoners' surprise, all of the cells in the block opened up and prisoners began stepping out and lining up in a straight line before the Prime, some looking uneasy as they looked at him. Even the Autobots and Decepticons and humans and the remaining two space Pirates, Lockdown and Swindle were surprised to see their cells opening.

Slowly, one by one the all lined up, unsure what was going on. It would have been easy to act up against the so called General and the Quintesson pawns but they all knew what would have happened if they did.

Once there was a long line of prisoners before him, Nemesis Prime nodded sharply before motioning to the largest Sharkticon, who slapped a control button on the wall. Again, to everyone's surprise, a large roll away door opened up, revealing a large energon converter and strange looking organic food piled up in lines like a buffet.

"All Cybertronians prisoners, in the order you are in starting from right to left and down, take one
cube of energon and move down to the end of the corridor where the two Bailiffs stand at the end of the block. Fuel your systems. All organic beings, form a line at the fueling line and take your fill." Nemesis Prime rumbled sternly. "You have ten megaclicks to fuel your selves. Be warned that if there are any disruptions, any fights break out, or any trouble at all, you will be reprimended and not pleasantly." He said in a warning voice.

As ordered, the very start of the long line of prisoners moved forwards and Cybertronians began moving to the energon converter, no one moving to cause any trouble at all.

As for the humans and a few organic beings began moving forward to the organic foods, forming a line.

Of course, seeing what the food looked like had many of the humans grimacing, with exception of Mikaela, Izzy and Flo, since they seemed to be used to abnormal space food.

There were strange purple vegetable looking orbs with wiggly spines and acid green steaming meat, as well as something they recognized from Archnia, the same drinks that Tarantulas and Airachnid had served the humans. The very sight of them made Epps gag and move away from as fast as he could with Monique right beside him.

"What the hell is this stuff?" Trent asked with a disgusted look as he eyed the spiky purple vegetables. He reached out and too one, feeling it and grimaced when it practically popped in his hand like a water balloon, leaving gross black juice trail down his arm. "Ew."

The other humans grimaced as they watched the former jock drop the squished food and try and wipe his hand on his black khakis.

"It's actually not too bad, guys." Mikaela said as she grabbed her own purple spiky fruit and then began picking out the green meat, placing them on a metal slab that represented a plate. "The purple organics are called biological purps and they actually taste like a cross of oranges and lemons. It looks gross and kind of taste gross by they have electrolytes in them and pump up your energy." She told them as she began to eat them, much to some grimacing humans' disgust.

"In deed. The meat is from an aquatic organic called Titanius. As Human Mikaela once said when she first tried it, it is like seafood." Someone spoke up from behind the humans.

Blinking in surprise, the humans turned to see who was speaking to them and were surprised to see a humanoid pair of beings there.

Both were almost identical with the exception of one being a male and one was a female. They were a good head taller than the humans but very slender in build. Their skin was both coral pink with very unusual green hair.

The male's hair was cut very short and looked more like moss on a rock. He tall and somewhat slender build, yet he had somewhat brawny arms hanging nearly down to his knees. He had what looked like golden veins all around his face and even on his arms, trailing out from under the open vest and strange black spandex pants he wore. His eyes were seaweed green and almost watery.

While the female's was long to her waist and it looked more like angel seaweed spilling down her back in waves. For someone so unusual looking, she was actually quite pretty. She also had golden veins showing in her skin and around the brightest and prettiest aqua colored eyes.

What made it very odd about them were three cuts in their necks. They almost looked like...gills, to be honest. It was very odd. And when the humans looked at their long, slender hands, they did see
webs between six fingers on each of their hands. They even had bare webbed feet with six clawed toes.

"I apologize for butting in." The female said in a senerade like voice, sounding as if she was almost like a siren. The way she spoke was so sweet yet seductive at the same time. "Hello, my name is Alana." She said motioning to herself then to her male companion, who were staring over at the Cybertronians with great interest. "This is my companion, Seaspray. We did not get to speak to you before. We saw you come in the orn before but it is unwise to speak to other prisoners without the Sharkticons becoming annoyed."

The humans gaped at the two, noting their appearence before all smiled in greeting. Fig, strangely, having the biggest grin as he looked the strange being over.

"Hi, Alana. Nice to meet you." Monique said politely before offering her hand to the strange looking female. She only received a puzzled look before Alana slowly stretched out her hand but not taking Monique's. "Oh, right. You're probably not even accustomed to a human kind of greeting, are you?" She added before taking Alana's hand and shaking it. "This is how humans greet others. It's called a hand shake. I'm Monique Epps. I am really curious on what kind of being you are? Where are you from?"

Alana only smiled and shrugged as her hand was released. "I am Tlalakan, aquatic people of a water planet in the Neptunian system." She answered sweetly.

Epps, who finally dared to try out the strange purple fruit thing and found himself enjoying it, placed his arm around her shoulders. "Name's Robert Epps. I'm Monique's husband, or rather mate." He said smiling warmly at the pair.

"Trent DeMarco."

"Sam Witwicky."

"Any."

"I'm Izzy. This is my twin, Flo." Izzy spoke up, just digging into eating the acid green meat while motioning to her sister, who waved shyly at the two strange beings.

"Reginald Simmons. Just call me Simmons." The former Sector Seven agent grumbled, still quite irritated about the whole thing that was happening to them.

And finally, Fig stepped forward, grinning at Alana as he took her hand next and made everyone grimaced or roll their eyes as he lift her hand and kissed the back of it. "And I am Jorge Figueroa. You can call me Fig, muchacha bonita." He said in a flirtatious way.

Alana smiled at him but did look confused. She obviously didn't understand what he had just said. Her companion, Seaspray, however, now glared at him, growling a bubbly sounding like growl. It almost sounded like he was trying to speak under water.

"God, Fig, you are such a dork!" Epps remarked rolling his eyes and slapping a hand to his face.

"Como?" Fig answered in Spanish sounding as if he was being accussed but he was grinning.

"Enough with the Spanish, dammit! No one but the Cybertronians can understand you when you speak in Spanish." Epps growled irritably.

Fig just kept grinning then began sprouting out words in spanish, speaking as if he was telling a
lecture. The only Spanish any one knew was espaniol, the word for Spanish.

Alana, however, frowned at the words coming from Fig before looking at her not so amused companion. "Seaspray, what is he saying?" She asked, shutting everyone up and looking curiously at the strange male Tlalakan.

Seapspray, still growling in a bubbly way, continued to glare at Fig, who grimaced and stepped back. "Nothing important." He spoke, his voice deep but vibrating as if he was speaking right off of water. There was a strange gurgle in his words, even though he spoke clearly. "Be warned, organic. Alana is my mate." He growled, making Fig raise his hands in defeat and grimace as he retreated back.

Alana frowned at him before rolling her eyes and smiling apologetic like to Fig. "I suppose you were speaking courting words to me in a strange human dialect. I apologize but he is correct. He is my mate." She said before slapping Seaspray across the chest when he growled again. "Desist, Seaspray. It's okay. He did not know." She said waringly.

"So...are those gills?" Sam asked curiously eyeing the slits on their necks.

Alana lightly touched her neck before smiling and nodding. "Yes. My planet is an aquatic planet. We normally live within the seas of Tlalakania." She said softly before motioning to Seaspray. "Of course, Seaspray was not of my planet until he crash landed in the seas."

The humans frowned at that, wondering what she meant.

"Huh? So...you're some kind of mermaid kind of person? Half humanoid, half fish?" Trent asked curiously. "And what do you mean he's not of your planet? Isn't he a fish person too?"

Seaspray snorted as he folded his large arms. "No, not fish person. Aquatic humanoids is to be the right term. And no, I am not Tlalakan. No originally, to be honest." He spared a glance towards the Cybertronians, some of the Autobots wandering over after noticing what was going on. "I actually used to be Cybertronian."

That nearly stopped all activity from the humans, Autobots and Decepticons when they caught those words and many optics swung around to look down at the smaller being in surprise.

"Huh?! What do you mean you were Cybertronian?!!" It was Starscream asked now wandering over with the others to get a better look at the strange male.

Seaspray and Alana both smiled as they glanced at one another then up at the many glowing red and blue optics watching them. "That's right. I was an Autobot once." He said proudly, making everyone gape in shock.

"Huh? I don't understand. How could you be Cybertronian and now you are organic? That is almost reversed of what happened to me, Kris, Maggie and Max." Nightbird said, scratching her helm.

Seaspray blinked up at her, quite curious. "Seems to me, we seem to have some interesting stories to tell one another." He looked up at Sentinel Prime, smiling. "You are Sentinel Prime, correct? You do not know me, Seaspray but I was once a part of your Mini-Bot tactician squad." He said looking up at the large blue Prime.

Sentinel just frowned, looking down at him, shaking head. "I am not familiar with your name, Seaspray." He said confused. "How is it that you were Cybertronian but are now organic?"

Seaspray didn't look offended at not being recognized but motioned to Alana, who smiled softly at
him. "I didn't think you would. My unit wasn't big like others were. As for how I am organic now, I was on a scouting mission for new sources for energon when my ship I was flying was lost to being struck by meteors. I crash landed in the oceans of Tlalakania and would have probably have rusted in the salt water if not for Alana. She saved my frame and took me to her people's mighty underwater city. Still would have rusted but the Tlalakans have this way of transformation sort of like ours. Except its some kind of organic watery transformation. They called it the Well of Transformation. A being washes in its waters and makes a transformation of the mind into a physical way. In other words, I became Tlalakan." He stated.

"That...that is just so weird sounding." Rodimus said blinking in an awkward manner.

Alana laughed as she looked up at the confused looks on the Cybertronians and the humans' faces. "It is true that it would be hard to explain in your terms. But tis true. Our people would call your transformation sequence magic. It is how our world works. By magic." She said laughing when a few eyes and optics bugged in shock and confusion.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! Magic?! As in abra kadabra alakazam magic? So if any one of us could pass through this well of Transformation and become Cybertronian or an aquatic person?" Epps asked confused but awed.

Alana and Seaspray shared a glance before smiling and nodding to him. "In some way. But there is only limit of the transformation. The first transformation of passing through the water is easy and you can become anything you imagine to be. The second time you pass becomes more difficult. But a third time, it does not work so well. Seaspray discovered that. That is why he is now Tlalakan. He cannot become Cybertronian again." She explained.

"Okay...I think my brain just turned inside out. I didn't understand that at all." Simmons said now completely confused and staring at Seaspray in a weirded out way.

Some of the others nodded in agreement but Alana and Seaspray both laughed, understanding their confusion. She was about to start explaining in a better way so they could understand but she was interrupted.

"Fueling time is invalid now!" Nemesis Prime called out making all heads jerk up and look at him. He was still just standing there, hands folded behind his back and looking serious. "All Cybertronians form one line and all organics form a seperate line. Now!" He barked.

There were a few groans but they were quickly disgunished when Nemesis Prime shot those a dark look. Everyone began to move to obey, not wanting to be punished by him.

Once the lines were form, Nemesis Prime began to walk along the long line, looking each and every one in the line over. "Most of you already know what is expected. But there are new slaves amongst you so I will explain. For those who do not know what will happen, you are expected to work among the city population or inside the mines deep within Quintessa. Any refusals or complaints will be reprimended into punishments or immediate deactivation." He stated.

There were a few sighs from the new Cybertronian prisoners but no one said anything. They didn't dare to.

"All slaves who know what you're doing, go with your Sharkticon handlers and get to work." Nemesis Prime ordered.

Alana and Seaspray looked to the humans, forcing their smiles and nodding their goodbyes before they moved over to a group of Sharkticons who were activating the stasis collars and leading them
out the doors of the prison block.

Mikaela, also, looked right at Sam, smiling sadly as she followed after them, knowing she had to go with that group.

The other Cybertronian prisoners' stasis cuffs also activated and were being lead by half of the other Sharkticons and Bailiffs towards the doors, some glancing back at the new arrivals.

Now it was just the Autobots, Decepticons, humans and the space pirates, Lockdown and Swindle with Nemesis Prime, who started pacing in front of them with his hands behind his back. He looked each and every one over before stopping at the front of the line, where it was Lockdown who stood.

"All of the able framed Cybertronians are to join all of the other Cybertronian slaves in the mines and construction sites. The sparked femmes are to report to the medical facilities for standard sparked check ups." He ignored the groan from Chromia. "The humans can go with the mine Cybertronians. Once you arrive, the Sharkticon Commander will inform you of what to do. Lockdown, you already know what is expected of the mines, so you can tell the rest the rules." Nemesis Prime said sternly before turning sharply and marching out with one Sharkticon and one Bailiff beside him.

All of the others ordered for all of them to start walking, though Elita One had paused to watch Nemesis Prime walk away with a heavy spark.

Lockdown was growling in dissatisfaction as they were all led down a long corridor full of doors. He had glanced dangerously at Swindle, who remained as far away from him as possible.

"Lockdown? What are we to expect out of this?" Elita One asked finally after a long moment of walking after the leading Sharkticons. "What exactly are the mines? And what are they looking for?"

Lockdown tore his murderous glare from Swindle and looked back at her. "They mine energon here. Apparently energon meteors come crashing on this wretched planet now and then and they collect them. I highly doubt the humans are going to go down in the mines where the meteors sink into. They will probably be collecting the stabilized energon crystals from whoever is doing all the digging and loading them up in the carts." He huffed irritably. "As it is, we're expected to work without causing problems. It is dangerous down in the mines as it is. The tunnels can be kind of unstable." He informed them.

Everyone nodded as they listened and took it all in. They knew they better be careful with what they would need to do.

As they approached the end of a corridor that lead outside, they were greeted by Quintesson Judge and a few of the Quintesson guards. The Judge they recognized as Judge Jolup and with him was Sunriser.

Immediately, Sideswipe perked up at the sight of her. He smiled faintly, even though his spark twisted in pain and misery in knowing that she wouldn't know him.

Sunriser met his optics with hers, frowning slightly but then she tore her optics away to look at Elita One, looking almost cautious. It was a look that Sideswipe knew pretty well. She was up to something. And even as he tried to stretch his spark out to connect with hers, he was disappointed to run into the block again.

"New slaves," The Quintesson Judge spoke up, getting all attention onto him. "I would like all femmes to come with me to report to the medical facilities."

All of the sparked or connected mechs growled as they inched closer to their mates, not wanting to
relinquish their mates to a Quintesson like Jolup. They certainly didn't want them away from them at all.

The Sharkticons snarled at their defiance and started forward to forcefully separate them but stopped immediately when, surprisingly, the Quintesson Judge held up a tenticle while sounding amused.

"They will not be harmed, Cybertronians. In simple supply of intell, they will be given a full examination of their frames and systems. We would like to ensure the sparklings are also in full activity and are not malfunctioned in anyway." Jolup stated.

"Do not take offense if we don't believe you. And pray, tell me why you want all of the femmes?" Starscream growled as he held onto Nightbird with Thundercracker hovering close as well. It came as no surprise that Skywarp was guarding Glyph with Tap-Out, who was glaring at the purple and black Seeker.

The Sharkticons growled again but the Quintesson still sounded amused, waving them away.

"No offense taken, Cybertronian Seeker." Jolup said surprisingly. "It is logical that you would be protective of the femmes. They are yours to protect, no matter what others may say. But I assure you, no harm will be done onto them. The reasoning be why all femmes are required full examination is to assure no harmful substances are in their systems. We want be assured there are no viruses or malfunctions are inside their frames. As it is, the majority of your femmes are mated to most of you. We want to be reassured that if any are sparked, they will receive proper medical assistance. As well as we will know what their capacities are for labor. If one femme is sparked with newsparks, we do not want any harm brought upon femme and sparklings." He said in a very formal tone.

Every one of the Cybertronians and humans could only stare at him in surprise. They weren't expecting him to actually answer the demanded questions. They had expected him to snarl and demand punishment for their insubordination.

It was Derezz, of all beings, who spoke up, sounding amused now. "It is all right. He means what he says. He does not want any harm done on the femmes. You can trust him." He spoke from where he hovered in the group.

No one was truly reassured but Elita One nodded as she stepped forward, pausing to pat Kup gently on the hand when he tried to stop her. "It will be all right, everyone. I am not sensing any hostility or deception in this one. I think he means it." She said sounding tired.

Jolup looked right at her, studying her for a moment before he made an amused sound. "You are Nemesis Prime's forgotten mate, are you not?" He asked blankly.

Elita frowned seriously at him, her optics narrowing a little. "I am Optimus prime's mate. And what your kind has done to him and all of our companions is unforgivable." She couldn't stop from growling.

Once again, the Sharkticons snarled at her but again, the Quintesson Judge silenced them with a look. "Yes." He spoke up, mostly in warning to them instead of Elita One, which came as a surprise to the Cybertronians and humans. "Yes, you are correct in that statement. Derezziation is not the answer to problems that arise, even I will admit it and I accept it. But while High Lord Derodomontatus is High Lord of Quintesson Empire, we have no say in the matter." He said firmly before motioning to the Sharkticons. "Cybertronian mechs and human slaves, go with the Sharkticons to begin labor. Cybertronian femmes, go with Sunriser to the medical facility." He received puzzled looks at the new orders but he ignored it. "Cybertronian slave, Elita One, come with me."
Elita One frowned with everyone else, wondering why the new order. They didn't know why the Quintesson Judge had suddenly changed the order. No one liked it and they didn't want Elita One to go with the Quintesson. But what other choice did they have?

For a moment, Elita One stared at Judge Jolup before slowly nodding to the others. She didn't know why the five facer wanted her to go with him but she didn't sense any hostility so she would humor him.

"Elita..." Kup began uneasily but seriously.

Elita One looked at him before shaking her head as she moved to go with the Quintesson. "It's all right, Kup. Just do what he says." She stated as she began walking alongside the five faced being.

Everyone watched her go with unease. They were worried. They knew that the last time Optimus had gone with the Quintessons, he came back Derezz and quite a tyrant. They hoped the same wouldn't happen to Elita One.

Sighing, everyone began doing exactly what Elita had ordered them to do, moving to go with their groups. The femmes tried to ease their mates as they were led away by Sunriser and Sharkticons while the mechs and humans went with their Sharkticon guards to go to work.

Elita One went with the Quintesson out of the prison blocks and was led outside into the city. She was surprised he was even allowing her to go into the city, even if she was with him. But she was also uneasy about what was happening. She knew what the possibilities of what Quintesson Judge Jolup wanted with her.

It also didn't help that some of the Bailiffs and the Quintesson guards were looking at her rather funny. Some of them were growling at the sight of her with the Judge.

"Soothe your self, Elita One." Jolup suddenly spoke up from hovering beside her. He flashed on the optics of the face facing her, looking right at her. "They will not harm you while with me. To their knowledge and all others, you now belong to me."

Elita One looked sharply at him, her frame tensing up. She didn't like the idea of being owned.

As if reading her thoughts, and probably doing so, Jolup bobbed as if confirming them. "I have claimed you as my slave, Elita One. But soothe your self. I will order you to do anything don't want to do without consenting with you first." He said reassuringly. "If I had not claimed you as my slave, you would be claimed by High Lord Derodomontatus. And that is what you do not want. He would force you as a breeder for future enslavement."

The Femme Commander growled, viciously. "You cannot force me to spark sparklings without my sparkmate. It would not work." She growled.

"I am at an understanding of that. He would use Nemesis Prime as the sire." Jolup stated softly. "Nemesis Prime may not be your mate as he should be but he is still your mate in frame. And it has been done before. Even when the sire was derezzed. In some way, I suppose I am protecting you from that fate."

Frowning, and slowly relaxing, Elita One stared at him. "I was under the impression that you were like Derodomontatus and all of the other Quintessons. That you cared about the Quintesson empire and about owning slaves. But I am not getting that feeling from you. Why is that?" She asked frowning.

The Quintesson chuckled as he turned his attention forward. "Do not mistake me for not caring for
the Quintesson Empire. I do wish for it to become the most powerful and largest civilization in all Solar systems." He paused for a moment. "But enslavement, perhaps not. I forsee a goal for a more...peaceful approach. It was the vision of my real Master and creator when we were defeated all those millenia ago."

Elita One stared at him for a long moment, her optics lighting up in realization. "Derodomontatus is not the First Quintesson, is he?" She asked catiously.

Now Jolup looked seriously at her, the air thick of just how serious he was. "Negative. He is not."

He said firmly.

"Who...?" The femme started.

"All will be revealed in but a short time. But for now, I must ask you to remain silent until we arrive to our destination." Jolup interrupted her.

Elita One slowly nodded as she took in his understandable order. She saw a few Quintessons staring at them, probably trying to listen in to their conversation. She was sure that slaves were meant to be seen and to serve than be heard. It still struck her odd that Jolup seemed to be...trying to help her. And perhaps the others. She felt it in her spark. It was like she was getting good vibes from this Quintesson.

Just like what she got from Derezz.

It took a little bit of travelling through the Quintesson city before the two seemed to arrive any where.

Jolup brought her to a very large black and silver building which was heavily guarded. There were many Quintesson guards and even Bailiffs there. They were lined outside the building, all around it.

But with them were the most odd looking but vicious beasts. They were organic beasts, like large lupine creatures, alien wolves. Their back legs were shorter than the ape like front legs, which were covered in sharp spine like hairs. Sharp talons were in each of the seven toed paws, looking like they could slice through hard metal.

As if the claws were not intimidating enough, the razor blade like fangs were in the maws of these beasts. They simply did look like razor blades sticking out of pitch black slimy gums of the beasts' mouths. Some of the fangs were stained red or even light green as if they had been eating engeron.

It did not take a lot for Elita One to figure out that these were vicious, brutal beasts, even while their nearly naked, gray skinned bodies had what looked like harnesses around them, being held like dogs on leashes by the Bailiffs.

"Beowulves of the Bailiffs' planet." Jolup suddenly spoke up from beside the femme, making her look wide optic'd at him. "They are as vicious as their handlers. They are used for hunting down escaped slaves who try to run and to guard the outside of the Derezziation Chamber."

Again, Elita One stiffened, looking at him in alarm. She picked that right up.

Jolup turned on the face looking at her while hovering closer to the large building. He only stopped when she did. "You are not meant to be here for Derezziation, Slave Elita One. It is not the reason I have brought you here. I only mean to show you a significant piece of its construction." He told her in a low voice.

Still, the femme was uneasy. She looked back up at the large building before slowly following the Quintesson towards it. She didn't like this, knowing that this was the place that beings came to forget...
everything important to them. This was where Optimus became Nemesis Prime.

The guards of the Derezziation chamber looked straight at Quintesson Judge Jolup and Elita One as they approached, having to keep a firm grip on the leashes of the Beowulves when they snarled at the Cybertronian femme, looking ready to charge and attack.

But it was sad to say, they yelped gurgly like when Jolup's optics, all of them flashed and he growled. The beasts immediately backed down, moving back to allow the two to pass. It was obvious the Quintesson used his telepathy to force them back. "Keep a better handling on them." The five facer growled at the guards, who bobbed their heads immediately at the order.

Then, Jolup led Elita up to massive doors in front of the building, which slid aside at their approach, revealing most darkness inside.

Together, both Quintesson and Cybertronian entered the dark building and brilliant lights flashed on, showing a very large chamber. It was massive in size and could rival the arena. It looked almost empty, except for rows upon rows full of what looked like a computer's database inside. There were flashing lights and symbols everywhere along the huge walls, like shelves of datapads and books.

But within the center of the room, there was a structure that had Elita One's attention immediately. It was like a large glass tube connected to a control panel and a large plateform. The tube ran up into the air, connecting a mass of a orb that took on what looked like a human brain. There were glowing wires and cords connected to it, as well as several cranes with claws for grabbing.

It was a terrifying but extraordinary sight that rattled Elita One's spark in her chassis.

Jolup hovered across the massive walkway that lead to the tube and control panel and Elita One had no choice but to follow, her optics taking in everything. He went straight to the control panel, his one pair of optics lighting up.

As if the large machine heard his silent order, it began to rumble and come to life. The large cerebral structure flashed brighter and a crane came to life, moving around the large chamber as if searching for something.

It seemed to find it as it reached into one of the alcoves of data and pulled out a flat piece of a device. It immediately dropped down from the row and pushed the flat device into the large brain like machine, which lit up.

Suddenly, all around the chamber, images flashed on and Elita One jumped at the holographical images of Unicron and Primus, as well as the Old Primes of Cybertron. She recognized her creator and carrier in the images as well as Magnus Prime. There was Nexus Prime and more mechs she recognized only in historical documents of Cybertron.

One of the mechs, a midnight black and blue and white star painted mech stood with the Primes. His optics were shining yellow, like twin sun stars glowing within his spiked and pointed, more like crowned helm. He looked almost like a King or perhaps a wizard from Earth fantasy novels or movies. He even bore a long staff with a brilliant white and blue glowing energon crystal at the end.

Elita One recognized this mech to be Vector Prime, the Space Time Bridge Guardian, who had gone missing from the history of Cybertron. No one knew his whereabouts but she was sure that her father and the other Primes did know.

More images appeared and she saw millions of Quintessons; five, three, two and one faced. There were so many, all roaring and cheering throughout the chamber. Echoing off the walls of the
And then she saw a small Quintesson amongst the many. He looked as if he was leading all of them. He was small compared to the other five faced Quintessons, so much smaller. She saw Derodomontatus, Jolup and the others hovering beside the small five facer.

She also saw the secret glares that Derodomontatus were sending to the smaller Quintesson but he seemed too subdued.

"The images before you are the memory defrags of The real High Lord Quintesson." Jolup spoke up from beside her, forcing her optics from the images to turn to him. "His name was Kledji. He was the First Quintesson and my true Master and Maker. My true leader."

Elita One frowned, taking it all in. She understood this now. The small Quintesson was the High Lord Quintesson, the First to ever be created by Unicron. She didn't understand why she was seeing his...her optics lit up and her vents caught. "Why is Lord Kledji's memories here? Was he Derezzed? What happened to him?" She asked now uneasily.

The air around Jolup grew thick of seriousness as he dipped a little, looking at her. He waved an appendage towards a new set of images, one that showed a great battle between Quintessons and the Cybertronian Primes. Elita One saw the Quintesson Kledji facing her very own father, Alpha Prime; their optics flashing at one another and both flinching as if they were physically being struck. They snarled at one another and even exchanged real blows of energon blasts as well as mental ones.

And then, Kledji seemed to fall from a mental blow from Alpha Prime.

The image showed the Quintesson judges gathering up the smaller Quintesson in their tentacles and fleeing from Cybertron. It showed them returning to Quintessa and it struck Elita One in shock to see Derodomontatus suddenly attacking Kledji with mentality powers.

It showed that there was infighting amongst the Quintessons but Derodomontatus seemed to be stronger. He defeated all of the other five facers, while gathering most of them as allies to turn against the real High Lord.

While all others sided with Derodomontatus, only two sided with Kledji but they did nothing to stop Derodomontatus and his followers from shoving the High Lord and First Quintesson inside this very chamber, inside the tube that led to the massive brain machine and rip the Quintesson's processor a part, revealing...

Elita One could not stop a gasp from herself as the tube opened to show Derezz of all Quintessons. She felt her spark spike in realization. "Derezz! He is the Quintesson High Lord! He is Unicron's first creation!" She gasped before looking at Jolup, who remained impassive. "Wh-what...wh-why...?"

"Kledji was betrayed by Derodomontatus and his followers. It was the power that he held, how strong he was that drove Derodomontatus. Out of all Quintessons, they are the most powerful telepaths. None of our kind could stand against them if we ever tried." Jolup stated firmly. "After your Primes defeated us, Kledji decided he was exhausted from trying to defeat your kind by force. He planned to confront the Gods, Primus and Unicron and their Cybertronians about a peace between them. However, once he told us about the plan, Derodomontatus struck while he was still weakened from the beating Alpha Prime gave him. He took over once Kledji became Derezz."

For a long moment, Elita One took it all in, letting it sink into her mind. She still didn't understand one thing. "Why are you entrusting me with this big secret? Did Derodomontatus tell you...?" She
was asking.

Jolup shivered and shook as if saying no. "Negative. He does not want anyone to know the truth behind Kledji. He is too consumed with his power as High Lord that he would have any destroyed if they tried to unseat him. Even with our own kind. It was the most particular reason why Derezz left Quintessa with Lockdown and his two humans in the beginning. Derezz saw the greed of power inside of Derodomontatus and even made a suggestion of how to change situations.

Derodomontatus believed Kledji was returning within Derezz and when our former and true Lord made an excuse to protect Lockdown and the girls, Derodomontatus wanted all of them destroyed. I am only informing you of the situation because I believe you and your Cybertronians brought Kledji back to us for a reason. It may not be positive that you brought him back because Derodomontatus plans to execute Derezz. He does not want him to remember his true origins, Elita One. If he was to have this memory crystal returned to him, Kledji would return as High Lord and a war would start on Quintessa. Quintesson against Quintesson. Face against face. Much energon and life fluids would spill upon the planet."

There was a pause as a single thought struck through Elita One.

Jolup sounded amused as he read it. "You ask why that shall be a problem, hm? Quintesson against Quintesson? I answer that with this, if Lord Kledji would return, and a war breaks out upon our world, he would be out numbered against Derodomontatus. He has been Derezz for so long that in the processors of our kind does not remember our original High Lord. He is forgotten by the Quintesson Empire. If he was to suddenly show himself, claiming to be the true High Lord of Quintessons, no one would believe him. He would ask your people for assistance to take back Quintesson. And while I would be amongst Lord Kledji's new Cybertronian allies, trying to make things as they should be, it would be a slaughter against us, Elita One. Derodomontatus' followers are too many. They would overwhelm us, destroy all." He said firmly.

The shiver that ran through Elita One was very visible as she had shuddered at the very idea. "So what do we do then? Do nothing? You just said Derodomontatus plans to kill Derezz. If he is the true leader, and he is our only hope, then we can't let that happen." She said sternly.

Jolup shook his entire frame as he raised one appendage to the control panel. He placed in a command before waiting as all images shut down and the claw crane brought down the memory crystal to between both conspirators. "No, we cannot allow Derezz's life to be extinguished." He then waved a clawed appendage to the memory crystal. "So as my temporarily slave, Elita One, I will order, no...ask you to keep this crystal safe on your frame. Derodomontatus does not remember it is here. And to be honest, I was suppose to destroy it long ago when Derezz was created. I did not because my loyalties lie with only the True High Lord of Quintessa. I ask you to do something in secret about reminding Quintessa of who our true master is."

"How am I supposed to do that?" Elita One asked frowning.

Jolup could have been smiling if he could. It was a certain feeling around him that the femme picked up coming from him. He did feel amused. "Not long ago," he began in an almost mysterious tone. "I was commanded to shut down a contract that was made with humans on Earth. They were weak with the power we gave them and they began spilling secrets that were against the contract made with our people. I was to destroy the minds of the humans, eradicating them and all evidence that we held with them."

Elita One's optics lit up and she could not stop an amused laugh from herself. "You were the one Soundwave fought when he entered Alexander Hollander's mind to interrogate him about the Director of The Department." She said more like stating it.
Jolup bobbed in the air, dipping as if he was making a bow. "I am. I have never met a more powerful telepathic creature other than my own High Lord than I did with your telepath. It has been millenia since I met a telepath who could strike myself in an empathic and mental battle. Your Telepath is the strongest I believe in existence other than Kledji and Alpha Prime. I believe with him as your instrument of mentality and with a spy master like Meister," he said with a chuckle. "You can reveal long forgotten secrets to Quintessa. Together, in the shadows, you and I can unravel what was wrong and knit it back into right." He stated then motioned to the memory crystal. "Take this and give it to your Telepath for safe keeping, Elita One. When the time is right, have him evade Derezz's processor and return the memories long forgotten."

Elita One, with her still cuffed hands, reached up and took the crystal before gently opening her subspace to hide it. "I still don't see how Jazz fits into this as Meister. What is his place in all of this?" She asked frowning slightly at the conspiring Quintesson.

Jolup was quiet for a moment as he activated the face away from her, facing the control panel to open a slot in it. It was to the femme's surprise that he pulled a vid datapad from the slot and offered it to her. "With this, I need you to have Meister sneak into the main palace of Quintessa. There is a control panel within the courts where you were judged. It holds the communications system of all of Quintessa. When this vid datapad is inserted into the panel, the copied memories of Kledji will be played on all marquiees, all communications grids, in all Quintesson processors. Once all of Quintessa sees the High Lord's memories, everything Derodomontatus has done, all his greed for power will be diminished. And then the true High Lord will return."

Elita One slowly nodded as she took the datapad from him and subspaced it. "I must ask you one more..." she was saying.

"I know what you will ask, Elita One." Jolup interrupted with a lightness. "The memory crystal of Optimus Prime is in deed within this chamber. So is your Sunriser's and your Dinobots' memories. They will remain here for now. When our plan of returning the memory of Kledji is finally revealed, I swear to all of Quintessa that I will set the memory crystals here and destroy the Derezziation Chamber in self destruction."

Elita One tensed, looking at him in ridicule.

Jolup chuckled, knowing how she was thinking. "The destruction of the Derezziation Chamber will return all stolen memories, Elita One. Once the crystals are destroyed, they have no choice but to return to their true owners. You will have your Optimus Prime returned. But not until you make due on your end of this bargain." He now spoke seriously. "You make Quintessa remember Kledji, I will return your Optimus Prime to you. Deal?"

For a moment, Elita One stared at him before she smiled slyly and offered her cuffed hands to him, which he slid one of his appendages into her palm so they could shake on it. "Deal. Still I just have to ask, won't Derodomontatus know what we're doing? Can't he see what is happening now?" She asked frowning.

Jolup shook his entire frame. "No. To even focus on what happens within the Derezziation Chamber, we are assaulted by all stolen memories here. We see only what is atound us. It is...I suppose you can say disorienting. We do not use our telepathy here inside the chamber. It can be too disconcerting. It gives us a terrible processorache. So we never read past these walls. He will probably try and read your processor but if you stay close to Derezz or Soundwave, he won't try it."

"Why?" Elita One asked frowning.

Jolup shook again. "Derodomontatus knows how strong both of the Telepaths are. If he tries to
assault your processor, your Telepath can easily divert the assault with his own. Derodomontatus is focusing more on him anyway, watching him in caution. He is concerned of how strong your Telepath is. He probably won't even spare your processor a glance with him watching Soundwave so carefully."

"So how am I suppose to give these to Soundwave and set Meister on his task if they're being watched?" Elita One asked skeptically.

Jolup chuckled rather quietly. "I am sure you will find a way to distract all attention. I heard from some thoughts that you are good at distraction." He said mysteriously. "As if you need a hint or an idea, Derodomontatus is not fond of loud noises. Or music."

Dawning came to Elita One. She knew what he meant now. And she smiled.

Suddenly the chamber's doors opened and two Sharkticons were there, making her tense up as she looked at them in surprise.

"I have had your unsparked femmes returned to the mines, Elita One slave." Jolup now said in coldness, as of putting on an act. "It is time for you to work your shift with your mechs and humans."

Elita One looked at him and flashed him a quick smile before she went to the sharkticons who would take her to the others. She knew in her spark that she could trust this Quintesson Judge. She just got a good feeling about him.
Elita One was returned to the other Cybertronians and the humans just as was said. She found herself with them in a more isolated part of the city, where it was wide open of buildings. Only a very large crater was in the planet's surface with large ramps leading down within the so called mine. There were so many beings of all kinds there, working, digging, rolling large energon crystals from within the crater. She saw humans helping loading the crystals upon large vehicle hover crafts, ready to be shipped out. It was very noisy of clicking, clacking, pounding and even small explosions deep within the mine.

The Sharkticons led the Femme commander straight to where her fellow Cybertronians were working, loading the energon on crafts. Everyone was in a long line, handing small and large crystals to each other and then it was Breakdown and Ironhide who were plopping them on the craft.

As Jolup had said before, the femmes who were not sparked were there, working right with them. None of them looked happy but they all perked up when they saw Elita One returning to them.

"Join the line and get to work." The Sharkticon next to her growled before he deactivated her cuffs and then he and his companion marched off.

Elita One watched him go before she turned and went to stand next to Soundwave. She received an inquiring look from him but she ignored it. She was pleased to see Jazz was right there with him. It would only mean she could hit two birds with one stone.

Now how was she going to do this though?

'Do what?' She suddenly heard a voice inside her processor.

Startled, the femme looked up at Soundwave who was retracting his visor so she would know that he was talking to her. She smiled faintly before looking around at Jazz as he handed her an energon crystal. She took it and passed it to Soundwave, making sure to brush her hand against his servo so she could pass along a quick thought. 'Jolup is good.' She quickly sent.

Soundwave frowned as he took the energon crystal and thoughts from her and passed them to Breakdown. He narrowed his optics for a slight moment before stretching out his telepathy all around both of them and reaching for the next crystal being passed to him from her. 'Speak your processor now. I have a block up. No five face will be able to penetrate your thoughts.' He said firmly.

Elita One nodded as she continued to work, all while sending everything she had just learned from Jolup. She saw only from a glance that the large mech's optics flashed in surprise as she showed him what Derezz really was. He hid it quickly with his visor falling back into place over his optics.
And then she showed him what she was hiding inside her subspace.

Soundwave hid a smug smile behind a weary grimace as he lifted a particular heavy energon crystal from Kup and Tap-Out and gave it to Breakdown and Ironhide. 'I see. Do you really think we can trust Jolup with this?' He asked Elita One telepathically.

Elita One could not stop a weary sigh from escaping her as she took an energon chunk from Nightbird this time and handed it to Soundwave. 'What choice do we really have, Soundwave? Jolup is offering hope. What can we do but take it? Besides, we are...friends with Derezz. And Jolup said that he wanted peace as Kledji. If we return the memories of him as High Lord Quintesson to his people then help him return as Kledji, we will be freed from this. He would help us. I think that was what my father meant before we left Earth and Cybertron. We are to trust Derezz. Alpha Prime probably doesn't know who Derezz is but...there is a chance that we can end all future wars. And make friends and allies out of a very powerful telepathic race. Like it or not, they are Unicron's children. They are our cousins. We have to end this family feud that has been brewing way too long.'

She thought to him.

Soundwave dipped his head, sending an agreeing pulse towards her. He let her know he agreed with her, but sent her a wind of cautiousness. Not that she needed to be reminded of that.

Work dragged on, and both conspired with one another, trying to think of any kind of plan that they could think of to help this whole thing to work. They knew they needed Jazz to disappear as Meister, to be able to sneak around amongst the Quintessons, and Elita One needed to find a way to give the original memory crystal to Soundwave. But they knew if they just out right did it, they would be caught and then her plan with Jolup would be for nothing.

It did not miss any of them during their planning and plotting that they could have Jazz sneak around, finding out more information about everything. The sparklings especially. It still left a dull ache in Elita One's spark to think her twins were gone. But there was still that faint hope inside of her.

Maybe they weren't.

But there was no possible way to know.

As the hard labor went on, everyone began to tire. They were all starting to wonder just how long they were going to keep working. It didn't help that fuel tanks and stomachs were starting to rumble and energon lines were sending low fuel warnings.

And as if on que, there was a bellow to stop working from the large Sharkticon commander as soon as a surprising guest just showed up with several Sharkticons and large energon converter crafts. There were even large tanks of those organic purple perps and Arachniadian drinks for the humans, much to Epps loud groaning.

The two headed Quintesson, Gemini; or rather Lefty and Righty according to Lockdown.

"All slaves, form a line for fueling hour! There will be no pushing or shoving or fighting!" Both heads yelled out for everyone to hear. "If those orders are ignored, you will be refused fueling and you may starve for all we care!"

Slowly one by one, many Cybertronians and organics began forming long lines to receive their share.

One each Autobot and Decepticon and the humans had theirs, they moved to sit in groups, seeing that all slaves seemed to be taking a break from working. They all sat wearily together, engulfing
their energon and food. Even Epps didn't complain as he drank the disgustingly but tasty bug juice from Planet Archnia.

Elita One glanced up when she noticed Sunriser coming over, ignoring the following optics of Sideswipe as she plopped down right next to the Femme Commander. "Greetings, Sunriser."

Sunriser spared a small smile at her, looking hesitant. "Helo, Elita One. How are you today?" She asked timidly. There was no doubt something was bothering her.

Elita One frowned slightly before smiling again. "I am well. I suppose. Something wrong?" She asked quietly, among the slight chatter going on around them.

Almost withdrawn, Sunriser looked around before leaning over. "There is something I have to tell you. But you have to be really quiet about it. Especially around the Sharkticons." She almost whispered.

Now Elita One was interested, her optics lighting up. She could almost feel her spark spiking in anticipation. What could it be, she wondered. "What is it?" She whispered softly back for only them to hear.

Sunriser looked right into Elita One's optics, almost hesitant and uneasy but determined. "I know where your sp..." she was saying.

"Again, Tap-Out?!" They were suddenly interrupted by a loud irritated growl from Breakdown.

Elita One and Sunriser looked up to see what was going on only to see the forlorn Tap-Out was once again, as he did on Death's Head, tapping a rhythm with his fingers against his knee. He was mostly ignoring all of the irritated looks he was getting as he tapped his fingers, beating them into an interesting tapping beat.

"Will you stop it?!" Now it was Starscream who grumbled.

Tap-Out just kept tapping his beat, his optics darkening in concentration and misery. "I told you. It makes me feel better. And Glyph likes it." He said, in a more shot at Skywarp, who scowled and making the small femme grimace.

"Tap-Out, it isn't going to work this time. It's just going to irritate everyone." Glyph said with a sigh as she glanced at the scowl on Skywarp's face.

Tap-Out scowled and kept tapping his fingers in beat and rhythm, much to somebots' annoyance. He didn't care. He had the urge to do it and so he was going to. He didn't know where the urge was coming from but it was starting to make him feel better. So he kept it up, ignoring the grumbles around him.

Tap. Tap. Tappity tap, tap tap, tap.

Elita One stared long and hard at Tap-Out's tapping fingers, her optics narrowing. She was starting to see something in the taps. She didn't know what it was but...there seemed to be something in them. She was feeling an urge. But...what...

Tap, tap, tap, tappity tap, tap, tap.

"Uh, uh, uh." Elita One suddenly heard a sweet voice. She was startled for a moment, as she looked around from where it had come from before realizing it had come from herself.
Tap, tap, tap, tappity tap, tap, tap.  

"Uh, uh, uh, uh-uh, uh, uh, uh." Elita One whispered, her voice starting to rise to match the beat of Tap-Out's tapping fingers. She was aware that Sunriser and a few others were now looking at her in surprise. She ignored them, however.

Tap, tap, tap.  

"Uh, uh, uh."  

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tappity, tap.  

"Uh, uh, uh, so slowly, so slowly." Elita One found herself suddenly singing softly to the beat of Tap-Out's little song he was creating. "Into hearts of those who need more than they get." Her optics lit up in dawning and a slow smile crept onto her pretty face. She got it. She had the idea of what to do in distracting all Sharkticons and perhaps even the Quintessons. It was like a sudden lightning bolt struck her.

Slowly, the femme commander pushed herself up to her peds, ignoring all startled looks now starting to fall upon her. She only looked over at Soundwave, smiling as his visor lit up in realization. He shared her secret smile before his shoulderplates shifted and the large speakers in them popped out, waiting for the que.

"Daylight deals a bad hand, to a woman who has laid too many bets." Elita One sang quietly and slowly as she trained her optics right onto Tap-Out, who didn't even seem to notice her at all.

Tap, tap, tap, tappity, tap, tap, tap, tap.  

"The mirror stares you in the face and says Baby, uh, uh, it won't work." Elita sang as she began to raise her voice, now making many start to look at her. She saw the Sharkticons even looking, but were dumbfounded on what was happening to do anything to stop her. "You say your prayers though you don't care. You sing and shake the hurt." She now drew out long and loud, making all in the area look over at her in surprise and alarm as she rose her voice louder and stronger. "Dance!" She blared out, now catching Tap-Out's attention.

There was awkward silence as everyone stared at her, wondering what exactly was going on with her. It was now so quiet they could almost hear a wind picking up.

"Elita, what are you doing?" Nightbird was the one to ask, almost accusingly.

A big sly smile formed on the Femme commander's face as she looked around at all of her fellow Cybertronians. She knew this just had to work, but she needed more voices, more noises. She needed every one of her Cybertronians to work with her to make as much noise as possible.

To get every one of the slaves to make loud noise.

Snapping her attention to Tap-Out, who was frowning in a weird way, his fingers hovering from any more tapping beats. She smirked at him. "Tap-Out, do that song again, louder. Soundwave, enhance Tap-Out's beat and send the lyrics and beat to the others." She looked around at the other femmes, beckoning them to stand, which they quickly did. "Everyone, I need you make loud noise. I have an idea and I need your help. We need a distraction." She told all of them, firmly. "Trust me. You know this song and where it came from. How Tap-Out does, beats me. But we need to be loud."

There was a pause as Soundwave sent the thoughts into the other Cybertronians' and even the humans' heads. No one knew the point of this but they got the idea. And all had to smile as they
glanced at each other. The femmes immediately went to stand next to their Femme Commander just as Soundwave blasted the music and Tap-Out began pounding his fingers against his thigh with a grin on his face.

"Boogie Wonderland! Uh, uh, uh! Dance!" All of the femmes sang at once with the music and together. "Boogie Wonderland."

Elita One turned sharply and climbed up on one of the energon supply crafts, standing on top of it to face all eyes and optics watching her. "Midnight creeps so slowly, into hearts of men who need more than they get!" She sang with the femmes serving as back up. She twisted and twirled on top of the energon to look at all of the beings, Sharkticons included, that began surrounding her and the others that involved their selves with dancing around the cart, all watching and listening with awe and surprise. "Daylight deals a bad hand to a woman who laid too many bets!"

Grinning at one another, Sideswipe, Sunstreaker, Bumblebee and Rodimus grabbed the craft, the Prime activating the hover engines so it would lift up off the ground. "The mirror stares you in the face!" They all joined in, jumping on each corner of the craft to slowly spin it for show.

"And says, Baby uh, uh, it don't work!" Elita One sang loud as she could while dancing to the beat of the music.

The femmes, all of them but Sunriser spun in a full circle and sang out. "You say your prayers though you don't care."

"You dance and shake off the hurt! Dance! Boogie Wonderland!" Elita picked up with them. "Dance! Dance! Dance!"

Immediately, everyone but a few of the Cybertronians jumped right in to sing and even stomp their feet hard and loud with Tap-Out's tapping beat. The ones who didn't join in only watched like all of the other slaves and the Sharkticons, who were staring too stunned at all of the loud noise all around them.

"Boogie Wonderland!" Elita and the femmes sang and danced.

Grinning, a certain Mexican human pushed through the dancing crowd and leapt up onto the craft with Elita One grinning down at him as he was shouting as he climbed up. "Check it out, check it out, check it out!" He said loudly before standing in front of everyone.

"Yo soy Fig senor! Mas cool latino 100% espaniol!" Fig sang in more of a rap while throwing out his arms to his sides. Epps Sam and Trent and some of the mechs jumped forward to serve as his backup, all grinning. "My brothers que!"

"Yeah!" The human said loudly.

"Loco me yamien una senorita! Me sienta como!" Fig rapped to the beat as he danced to the rhythm and beat with the men and mechs. "Flama la fiesta! Biala biala muchachita!" He jumped off the craft to stand in the middle of Epps and Sam, all dancing and stomping hard on the ground under their feet. "Mi corazon tiene dynamita! Boom! Exacto que como en el plato! Que mames! Sier tu papi senor! Booyaka, booyaka!"

Everyone laughed and leapt on dancing, even as Fig ended his singing in spanish and no one cared. Not even Epps, who hated the language. They all just high fived each other as the loud music, clapping, tapping and clapping got louder.

At this time, more slaves were smiling and now starting to join in with clapping and stomping to the
Surprisingly, even a few Sharkticons grinned a large mouthful of fangs and joined in, only to quickly stop when the large Sharkticon Commander shot them a dark look.

Elita and the femmes all lined up and were dancing in a long line in front of all of the mechs now. Even Sunriser had finally joined in with clapping and stomping to the beat of the music. She didn't even seem to mind as she found herself dancing in front of Sideswipe, who was grinning at her as he turned his back to her, yet kept looking over his shoulder at her, clapping loud and hard to the beat. She only smiled back, dancing close to him in the same sync as the other femmes.

"All the love in the world can't be gone!" All femmes, Cybertronian and human sang and danced near the mechs and men, all smiling and enjoying their selves. "Mumble!" Their voices, mixed with the mechs and even more in the entire area. "All the need to be loved can't be wrong! Mumble!"

Even as she sang over some voices, Flo had jumped and twirled in the air, blowing a kiss towards Jazz, who grinned over at her as he pretended to snatch the kiss out of the air and hold it close to his spark. Even Izzy was smiling at Prowl, who shocked everyone by joining in with the singing and dancing. He had a sly smile only for the young black haired twin as he stomped and clapped with all.

Glyph was dancing around Skywarp and smiling as he twirled above her, smiling back at her, even as Tap-Out watched them with a big smile on his face, not letting up on his loud taps at all.

"All the heart songs keep playing, and my heart keeps saying Boogie Wonderland!" All voices raised higher and louder with the music. "Wonderland!"

Everyone within the area was now singing and dancing and clapping to the music. Hardly no one was missing out. It was loud and in beat and echoing towards the city now. It would no doubt be heard by anyone in the city now.

Bit no one cared.

Elita One grinned as she spun around to look at everyone singing and dancing all around her. She saw the Sharkticons were now too occupied with each watching all of the stomping, dancing beings or in the large Sharkticon Commander's case, snapping at his fellow Sharkticons for starting to join in.

No one was even paying her any attention.

Grinning to herself Elita darted through the dancing crowd towards Soundwave, who already popped open his subspace compartment and reached out towards her.

Quick as a flash, the femme commander took out Derezz's memory crystal and handed it off to the large Decepticon. She nodded to him with gratitude and a sly smile before spinning towards to find Jazz. She needed to make this quick, while everyone was too occupied.

However, Elita froze a moment to see him but not alone. She frowned in surprise to see that two headed Quintesson, Gemini there, grabbing the sabortuer's arm and running a strange looking device over it until a red light flashed.

As if sensing her optics on them, Lefty and Righty looked straight at Elita One and smiled a smile, jerking their heads towards her, as if beckoning her over.

Quickly moving over, Elita One just watched the two heads as their body stepped back.
"Give him the datavid!" Righty had to shout over the loud music.

Elita One tensed in surprise.

"Jolup ordered us to help you! We're with you on this! You must be something big to entrust you with the truth!" Lefty shouted over the loud music and booming stomps. "We deactivated his tracker beacon! He is free to do his part!"

Elita smiled big before turning to a puzzled Jazz and taking out the datapad video clip from her subspace. She quickly leaned in towards him and began whispering to him of what he was to do.

And a big smile formed on Jazz's face as his visor lit up.

"Dance!" All femmes, Cybertronian, human and even many others sang loud.

"Mumble!" All males bellowed to the beat of the music.

"Boogie Wonderland! Mumble! Uh, uh! Dance!" The singing, dancing, stomping and clapping crowd shouted with the music.

Elita was finally there, back in front of everyone as she leapt onto Kup's shoulder plates, lifting her up for all to see as she threw her hand towards Tap-Out. "Boogie Wonderland! Uh, uh! Dance! Mumble!" She sang right with everyone. "Boogie Wonderland!"

"Tap-Out! Tap!" Elita sputtered as the music suddenly died and everyone in the crowd turned to look at the tapping mech as he got up on a hover craft and began tapping loud and hard.

"Tap, tap, tap, tapity, tap, tap, tap!"

Everyone in the crowd clapped and stomped to the same beat and rhythm as Tap-Out, trying to match him.

Grinning, Tap-Out tapped his fingers and even drummed his hands hard against the energon crystals, allowing Soundwave to amplify the sound.

Tap, tap, tap, tapity, tap, tap, tap!"

Again the entire crowd stomped and clapped hard to meet the tapping mech's taps, all grinning and enjoying their selves.

With a smug smile now on his face, Tap-Out began tapping rapidly, long and very fast, while raising his optic ridge at everyone in the crowd.

TA PTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAPPTAPTAPTAP!

Many optics and eyes snapped wide open in shock and awe on how fast Tap-Out was tapping, all knowing they would never be able to keep up with that. There was no possibly way to even copy all of that.

So therefore, there was a dead silent pause before the entire crowd, at once, just tapped a foot once.

Then laughs and cheers broke out, echoing out in the wide open area, bouncing off walls as the loud music boomed back out and everyone returned to stomping and clapping hard.

Some mechs, not known to the Autobots and Decepticons, even began spinning in a now wide open
clearing in the middle of the crowd before jumping and flipping in the air, landing on their peds.

A few femmes began running and doing flips across the clearing at once, giving an excellent show of acrobatics.

Even Glyph, herself, ran to the wide open clearing to begin spinning so rapidly in the center. She almost looked like a spinning ballerina, showing off her dancing moves before twisting her frame and leaping into the air right towards Skywarp, who laughed and caught her into his arms.

No one missed, or cared, that the small femme grabbed the Seeker's head and tapped her forward against his, making him grin and hug her close. Not even Tap-Out seemed to care as he just kept the lead of taping and stomping.

"Dance! Dance! Dance! Mumble! Dance!" The entire crowd practically sang and chanted.

Elita One smiled brightly when she saw Sunriser even dacing with an excited looking Sideswipe, both moving perfectly together. It was like they were bonded again, reading each other.

But when Sunriser saw Elita One looking at her, she quickly ducked away from Sideswipe, who frowned in surprise and watched her rush over to the Femme Commander.

"Elita One!" The young Technorganic shouted over the loud music and stomps, ducking close to her. "Elita! Seek out Dreadwing and Skyquake! They have them!"

Elita One looked at Sunriser with a frown, wondering what she was talking about. She didn't understand. Why? What did the two Seekers who hated Autobots have?

But before Elita could ask, it became very clear that the loud stomps and claps were starting to die away and fear was returning in the air. The music even slowly died until only a few taps and claps were left. But even those died and both femmes looked to see what happened.

And froze in surprise and fear.

Nemesis Prime stood on the out skirts of the crowd with the Quintesson Judges and many Bailiffs. None of them looked pleased.

Derodomontatus, actually, looked furious. His optics were flashing in rage as he glared at the entire crowd of slaves and even the Sharkticons. He was snarling and shaking with fury at what they had just stumbled upon.

When it was completely dead silent, the fake High Lord snarled out as he hovered closer to the terrified crowd. "WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?!" He roared.

No one spoke out of fear. Only murmurs rose as they were quivkly silenced.

The large Sharkticon Commander finall shoved through the crowd, knocking a few slaves out of the way as he went. He didn't care if any of them went crashing to the ground. He just scowled as he went straight to Derodomontatus and bowed down to his knee guards. "My High Lord!" He barked out before raising his servo and pointing straight at Tap-Out. "That new slave is the one who started it!"

Tap-Out froze in unease as he just stood there, stiff as a ramrod. There was fear in his optics as he just stared at the Quintessons and the Sharkticon Commander.

Everyone else, Elita One and Glyph especially looked at the mech in alarm and unease, knowing he
was in trouble. The smallest femme couldn't hide a whimper as she looked at her long time friend in worry, never minding the servo Skywatp placed on her shoulder.

Derodomontatus growled, glaring furiously at Tap-Out before bobbing. "Bring him forward." He ordered angrily.

There was an uproar of murmurs as two Sharkticons shoved through the crowd, who quickly parted for them. Only Kup and Breakdown quickly stood in the way to protect Tap-Out from them. But they were quickly subdued by electroshocks from their tracker devices, sending both grunting in pain to their knees.

Tap-Out was seized and yanked down from the energon craft and dragged through the crowd. He struggled some, now venting furiously in gear as he was shoved down to the ground in front of Derodomontatus, who glared down at him.

"It seems to me that you SLAVES need reminding what happens when you cause trouble!" The fake High Lord snarled out loud as he glared down at a fearful Tap-Out, who was fighting so hard not to show it. "Nemesis Prime, electrowhip him! Fifty lashings!"

Nemesis Prime nodded as he reached out to the Sharkticon Commander, who quickly relinquished a long rod that emitted long crackling energon whips.

There was now an very loud uproar from the Autobots and Decepticons as they started forward to stop the punishment from happening. They ended up on the ground as Kup and Breakdown did, crying out in pain as their trackers activated.

Tap-Out was seized again by the Sharkticons, forcing him to his peds and shoving him towards an empty hovercraft. One had pulled out chains, starting to bind him and to the craft.

"No!" Elita One screamed as she rushed forward, ignoring the cries from her fellows as she quickly moved to stand between Nemesis Prime and Tap-Out. She yanked away from a Sharkticon that tried to stop her as she raised her hands and glared defiantly at the Dark Prime as he growled at her. "It was me! It was me who started it! I told Tap-Out to do it! I started this!"

"Elita! No!" Several Autobots cried out.

Derodomontatus snarled as he hovered forward to meet Elita's glare. "You! You are such an uprising! How dare you try and protect this worthless scrap of a slave!" He snarled at her in rage.

Elita growled back at him, her optics flashing furiously. "Frag you, Monty! I protect him for what he did not start! It was my idea! I did it! You want to punish someone! Punish me! I will take the lashings!" She snapped furiously before turning shatply and going to cover Tap-Out's frame with her own, back facing Nemesis Prime.

There were shouts of protests from the allied Cybertronians and the humans, all fighting to move forward to protect Elita and Tap-Out, but once again they were stopped.

Nemesis Prime growled, standing over the Femme and the trembling mech. He looked to Derodomontatus, who snarled at Elita One's defiance. "High Lord?" He asked steely.

Derodomontatus looked at him before bobbing. "Fifty lashings to her for her defiance and ten to the mech!" He snapped.

"I will take it all!" Elita snarled as she turned a glare onto the vicious five facer.
Derodomontatus snarled back, glaring at her. "No, you will both be punished! Bind her as well!" He ordered and the Sharkticons moved as ordered. He looked sharply at Judge Jolup as he started forward as if to say something before glaring around at all protesting slaves. "I will order more lashings if there is another word!" He snapped.

"Everyone! Silence!" Elita called out as she was being forced against the craft beside Tap_Out.

Immediately, it was silenced but not without painful whimpers from all of her friends.

Elita One turned her head to glare up at Nemesis Prime as he stepped closer. She glared defiantly up at him, pain and anger in her optics. "I still love you, Optimus! Even after this!" She growled before reaching over with her bound arm to take Tap-Out's bound hand. She could feel him trembling in fear and it tore at her spark that this was going to happen to him too. "I am sorry, Tap." She whispered.

Tap-Out shook his head as he gave her small, weak smile before he suddenly lurched against the craft as soon as there was a crackling snap of the whip and felt a sharp bite at his back. He grunted in pain the first few times before he couldn't stop the cries of weak pain as the snaps continued nine more times.

Then it was Elita One's turn.

And it too twenty snaps of the whip to finally make her scream, forcing all who witnessed her punishment to flinch and cower at the sounds that came after.

A small, weak whisper into Elita's processor echoed, shielded from other Quintessons' telepathy. 'I am so sorry. I didn't mean for this.' She barely heard Jolup's pained voice in her processor.
Pain.

That was all Elita One felt, was pain. Her back felt like it was on fire. She couldn't hide the electronic sobs as her pain receptors flared again. She wouldn't say it wasn't worth it though.

After all, she was practically a substitute to being acting Prime, other than Sentinel and Rodimus. She was Optimus Prime's mate. She had to protect life. And protecting Tap-Out was an honor she would never give up. She had gotten the idea that it had been Jolup's influence to the show they had put on as a distraction. It all showed in his apology as she was being whipped. She sensed the guilt and shame in his words.

It had been rather odd, her punishment.

As Nemesis Prime continued to whip her, she had felt the snaps lessen in pain and aggression. She distinctly remembered hearing him hiss by the fortieth time. He had stopped hitting her so hard by then. It was like he was the one weakening by the strikes. Not her.

By the end of the beating, Derodomontatus ordered all slaves to be returned to their cells without any fuel or food. He ordered that Elita One to be placed in an isolated cell, which generally meant the Gladiator cells and without being repaired.

That definitely had the Autobots, Decepticons and humans roaring in rage.

But nonetheless, Elita was lying in her cell, curled up and in pain. She remembered a Sharkticon lifting her from the craft with such gentleness that she couldn't believe how gentle he was.

But glancing up at him and seeing hard but concerned optics, she felt a careful brush of a familiar energy against hers. She knew who it was, even when he didn't look like how he was supposed to. She couldn't bring herself to give him a smile, knowing it would ruin his cover. But she did whisper, "Make him pay."

The Sharkticon disguised Jazz merely nodded with a hard look as he handed her off to another Sharkticon, who was under quiet orders of Jolup to be careful with her.

Now, Elita One laid in the Gladiator cell, completely alone and in pain, choking sobs breaking out of her. She questioned her sanity with how much pain she was in right now. She hated this.

And she absolutely hated Derodomontatus.

Elita couldn't wait for the day where he would fall. She really hoped to be there to see it. And most of all, she hoped it would be Derezz, or rather Kledji who would do it. It would be like spitting in that fake High Lord monster's faces.
Just then, there was a gentle tap against the cell door before it slowly opened.

Weakly, Elita looked up, whimpering in pain as she looked to see who was entering only to freeze to see a Seeker she wasn't familiar with. Especially the size of him.

The Seeker was enormous, much bigger than Starscream or any of his Seekers. He could almost take up the entire cell she was in if it wasn't so big for her. He was dark in colors and did have blood red optics, which fell on her in the corner.

Taking one look at the femme, the Seeker grimaced and hissed as if he was the one in pain. Or disgusted, Elita couldn't tell for sure.

"Great. It just had to be an Autobot, didn't it?" The Seeker gruffed in a deep voice.

Elita One shifted to sit up, only to hiss and cry in pain as her back flared. She curled into herself against the ground again, sobs breaking out from the pain. She felt her whole frame shudder and tremble as she choked on her pain.

Suddenly she heard movement and felt a servo placed on her shoulder away from the torn metal slices in her back. She flinched from the touch and looked weakly up to see the large dark blue Seeker now bent down beside her, his optics taking in the sight. She saw a hard, hateful look as he glared at the gashes and knew it wasn't at her but at who had done this to her.

"Fragging pits. You must've slagged off those fragging five facers to get these." The Seeker rumbled before looking at her. "I was sent in here by Judge Ghyrik to tend to you. Though, I did question why he asked me to keep it a secret fails me. I know that fragger, Derodomontatus' work when I see it."

"Wh-who...who are..." Elita asked in a trembling voice.

The Seeker reached into a compartment in his chassis, bringing out a medical kit and started to pull out tubes of nanites for the gashes as well as a buffer rag to clean up the energon spilling from the wounds. "My name is Dreadwing."

Elita jolted in surprise only to cry out in pain as she looked wide optic'd up at him. "Dre-Dreadwing?" She whimpered painfully.

Dreadwing looked at her skeptically before bringing out a mild sedative for her pain. "I see my name perceives me, Autobot femme. Be lucky I have a sore spot for femmes otherwise I wouldn't be doing this. Now don't move. The sedative will numb the pain but not completely." He grunted as he injected the fluid into her systems and then began wiping her energon from her back. "Your destination?"

"El-Elita One." Elita whimpered out and then hissed when she felt those servos flinch against her back. She looked weakly up to see him staring at her, now surprised.

"The Princess of the Primes, herself?!" Dreadwing growled, still alarmed.

Elita gave a weak smile. "Yo-you can walk away if you want. I will not hold it against you, Dreadwing." She received only a disgusted grunt from the large mech before feeling him returning to his work. "Dre-Dreadwing...I feel that you must know...the wa-war is over. It no longer exists." She whispered weakly.

Dreadwing flicked darkening red optics at her, still cleaning the energon off of her back. "Let me guess. You fragging Autobots won, which is why you're still alive?" He growled darkly.
Elita weakly shook her head, smiling. "No. No one did. You have missed a lot. The lines between Autobot and Decepticon are one now. We now live in peace together. Back on Cybertron and a small organic planet called Earth." She told him.

Now Dreadwing frowned at her, pausing in his work of repairing her. "Cybertron? Last time I saw home, it was dead, Princess." He growled.

Smiling weakly but warmly, Elita One shook her head as she just sat there, bent over her legs. "Cybertron has been returned of life, Dreadwing. Our Gods, Primus and Unicron are reunited in peace and we, the Cybertronians are guardians and protectors of life now." She paused grimacing. She knew she shouldn't say it because of how loyal this mech had been to Megatron. But..."Megatron is deactivated." She whispered.

Now Dreadwing was looking at her with a dark look, almost in warning. She knew she had better be careful with her words. "Maybe you should start telling me everything you know, femme." He growled. "And then I will decide if I should either finish repairing you or scrap you."

Elita drew back uneasily but sighed softly as she collected her thoughts. She wished she could just send him a data log of everything. But with the tracker device in the way, she couldn't.

So, after rearranging herself in a more comfortable seating, she began to tell him a shorter version of everything. She told him of the ending battles on Cybertron and then explained about Earth and the rising of Megatron. She was careful of telling Dreadwing of how Megatron fell in battle against Optimus, but didn't leave it out. She was only too grateful that it seemed Dreadwing was respectful enough to let her continue on explaining without hostility, other than growling and glaring at her.

He growl very loud when Elita mentioned that Starscream was now leader but still kept his words to himself.

But when she mentioned the fact that sparklings were finally created after so long, he went completely quiet, listening with narrowed optics. He didn't growl at anything she said after that but went straight back to work on her back. She took that as a good sign. And finally she finished with why she and her Cybertronians and the humans they made friends with were there.

At that time, the large Seeker was dead silent, finished with repairing her and leaning against the wall, sitting across from her.

"Optimus is now Nemesis Prime, Sunriser is a Technorganic who doesn't even know her mate or that she has a sparkling and we're trapped as slaves. With no hope." Elita One finished, a sob in her vocoder. "And my twins, my pre-precious babies are..."

"Alive." Dreadwing interrupted suddenly.

Elita looked up with wide, startled optics, her spark nearly stalling. "Wh-what?" She asked shakily.

Dreadwing lift his optics and looked right at her, surprisingly softer than before. He looked so gentle now, not so cold and stoic as he had come in with. He merely stared at her before popping open his chassis compartment and reaching in very gently near his spark chamber.

Slowly, he pulled out a small bundle of sleeping metal and a squeaky gasp escaped from the femme. He held Beta.

"Be-Beta!" Elita One gasped, energon tears now streaming down her face as she shakily got to her knees and reached for your youngest. She paused for a moment to look up at the Seeker but he
nodded as he held out the small femme.

Gently, Elita took Beta into her arms and held her close, her spark whirling in excitement, pain but happiness. She shook and shuddered as she held her daughter close, sobbing nearly uncontrollably. "Ho-how..." she whispered as she pressed the sleeping sparkling close to her before looking worriedly at the Seeker. "O-Omega...the others...are they...?"

"Safe with my twin brother, Skyquake in our cell, two cells down." Dreadwing spoke gently as he nodded to one side of the room. "The young mechling, Omega had some nasty burns on his back but he is healing fine. Skyquake has been watching over him mostly. They're all in recharge right now. And I'd take ya to them if I could. But they're safer with us. None of the Sharkticons dare to come into our cell to start trouble. Don't matter if we are slaves or not. We proved to be very forceful and violent towards them. They and the fragging five facers don't know we have them. We been hiding the sparklings ever since they came literally falling into our servos."

Elita, still sobbing, hugged her little femme close, tears trailing down her face plates and even splashing on Beta, who stirred a little before curling back against her mother. She looked back at Dreadwing, who smiled faintly back at her. "Th-thank you, Dreadwing. Thank you so much. You have given us hope again." She whispered before ducking her head to gently place her helm against Beta's sleeping face.

"Sparklings are the world's future, Princess." Dreadwing spoke softly, watching Beta recharge. "No matter what the reason behind the slagging war, no matter who is bad or who is good, no matter if we like the enemy or not, sparklings are something we protect with iron fists and warm sparks. It has been an honor granted to me and Quake to protecting the little ones."

Elita smiled softly as she ran a gentle hand across Beta's fore helm, trailing it down the cherub like face of her little femme. "It's an honor I am terrified of asking you to keep, Dreadwing." She said, now twisting again with pain as she looked down at her femmeling. "She won't be safe with me. She will be in danger if she stays with me."

Dreadwing nodded as he continued to watch the two femmes, mother and sparkling. "I will protect her and Omega and the other sparklings with my life, Elita One. Skyquake too. We will never let anyone hurt them." He whispered back before holding out his servos again for Beta. "I must return to my cell. It is getting very late and the night guard will be looking in the next breem."

Elita shakily nodded as she bent down over Beta and Cyber kissed her on the forehelm before gently setting her little femme back into Dreadwing's servos. She watched with pain as he gently placed Beta back inside his chassis, close to his strongly protected spark chamber. "When...if the time comes, will you and Skyquake stand with us?"

Dreadwing looked at her with serious debate and nodded his helm. "It will be honor to fight alongside a warrior mother such as yourself, Princess of the Primes. For freedom and for the sparklings." He then smirked almost evilly. "And I can guarantee you his, when that battle breaks out, you are going to see the likes of a battle that you never seen before when Quake and I get going."

"So I hear." Elita One said smiling at him. "After what you two did at Darkhelm, I never ever wanted to face you in battle."

Dreadwing grinned at her as he carefully climbed to a crouch over her, offering his servo to his forehelm in a respectful gesture. "And you will never will, Princess." He remarked before he stood up and walked to the door, shoving it open so it would nearly miss a Sharkticon standing there. He growled at the sight of it, even as it raised its servos, backing up. "So, a spy, eh?"
"Nah, mech. I ain't a spy." The familiar voice spoke up backing away from the large Seeker, reaching for him.

"Dreadwing, that one is mine." Elita spoke up, immediately for Jazz's sake. She was only too glad that the large Seeker had immediately listened and stopped reaching for her disguised friend.

Dreadwing merely nodded as he turned to look at her, dipping his head respectfully before he pushed past Jazz and walked away.

"Sooooo...what was he doing here?" Jazz asked looking at Elita One in the cell. He was quite an intimidating as a Sharkticon but it didn't work so much with the femme knowing who he was.

Elita smiled faintly as she turned her back so he could see what Dreadwing had done. "He was helping me." She turned back to him frowning. "You're going to blow your cover, Jazz. What are you doing here? Have you...?" She was asking.

The Sharkticon disguised Jazz shook his head as he patted his wide chassis. "Not yet. That afpipe, Monty was in there ranting and raving. I have'na wait til later. I came down as soon as I could when I heard a big aft Seeker was in here. Wanted ta make sure ya were okay." He told her.

Elita smiled gently at him as she very carefully placed her back against the wall of her cell and curled her knees close to her chassis. She couldn't tell him about the sparklings yet. She would wait until the time was right for letting the others know. It was for her sparklings and the others' safety. "I think I will be okay now. Dreadwing is going to help us. He and his twin brother. I think...things are finally falling into place for the good of it. We're building an army here, gaining more allies. Now we can only hope that when the time comes, we will win this battle." She said softly.

Jazz smiled a large fang filled grin, seeing a new change in her. He liked to see that look on her. A slight change of happiness in such a dark world like this. "Don't ya worry, 'Lita. When it happens, we gonna set the world on fire and watch Derodomontatus burn. If'n Derezz is who we think he is, and he remembers us after we return his memories, he gonna make Monty pay." He said reassuringly.

"I know." Elita One said smiling as she looked up at him. "Jazz, while you're out there, after you plug in that datavid into the Quintesson mainframe and blow Derodomontatus' falsities out of the sky, do some research. Check things out and see what Quintessons are saying. Start making us some allies. You're the only one who can do it." She said in a quiet voice.

Jazz grinned at her before saluting her with one servo to his helm before slowly closing the door. He would do what he could.

However, turning away from the now closed cell, he stiffened with brightened optics and turned to see a large mismatched and heavily scarred Terrorcon standing there, against the dark corridor wall. He narrowed his Sharkticon optics at the one called Blot, who smirked as he kept his very large scarred arms folded over his chassis.

"We're in." The Terrorcon grunted in dark amusement.

Jazz, the Sharkticon, only blinked in confusion and surprise as he stared at the Terrorcon Leader. He knew the Terrorcon probably had been snooping and heard things. But to actually throw himself and his Terrorcons into the mix, the Autobot spy had to smirk and nod in understanding.

In the usual slave prison cells, it was so quiet.

Everyone was not in recharge as they should have been. They were all too wound up to sleep. They
couldn't sleep after what they had seen Nemesis Prime do to Elita One and Tap-Out, who was in a cell all by himself, hissing in pain as he laid on his front. He couldn't lay on his back without it burning painfully.

Everyone could only glance at him in pity, knowing they couldn't do anything to help him. They wished they could do something but with him in a cell alone, they couldn't.

It had come as a surprise that Sunriser was locked in the cells with them, in with Maximum Wave and Ratbat, who hadn't wanted to be away from her. She was currently holding him close to her chassis as he sobbed and squeaked against her. She did her best to soothe him but he was just too traumatized after seeing such violence against Elita One.

"Shhh. It's all right, sweetspark. It will be okay." Maximum Wave said softly. "Try and get some recharge."

Ratbat squeaked and shook his bat like head against her chassis. "I ca-can't, mommy. I don't want to see that bad stuff in my purges again." He squeaked.

Max sighed softly before looking around at everyone, seeing their grief and pain, probably thinking the very same thing. She knew that none of them would be able to sleep so easily either. She frowned pitifully before looking at Soundwave, who was watching her and his youngest softly. "Handsome, play our song."

Soundwave looked at her, questionably. They had many songs. "Which one?" He asked softly.

Maximum Wave smiled softly at him, knowing exactly what one she wanted. She knew it was a powerful song that might help everyone and possibly bring up their spirits, give them hope. "The one we wrote together." She said simply.

Soundwave smiled just as softly in understanding. He popped open his speakers and began playing a familiar soft melody that most his subunits, Barricade, Roulette, and Prowl knew. They even smiled softly at the reminder of how they knew this song.

"Just when you think," Max began to sing softly. "Hope is lost. And giving up, is all you got. Blue turns black, your confidence is cracked." She paused to trail a soothing hand down Ratbat's back. "There seems to be no turning back from here."

A few of the others either looked over at her or dipped their heads down low, as if feeling the weight of those words.

"Sometimes there isn't an obvious explanation. The holiest of stars can feel the strongest palpitations." Max continued to sing, before she smiled and lift Ratbat's head to look him right in the optics. "That's when you can build a bridge of light. That's what turns the wrong so right. That's when you can't give up the fight. That's when night time turns into day. That's when loneliness goes away. That's why you gotta be strong tonight. Only love can build us a bridge of light."

Pushing herself to her peds, and holding Ratbat close to her chassis, Max turned to start looking around at everyone. She paused to look right at Grimwing, who was watching and listening with a blank look on his dragon eagle like face. "When your feet are made of stone, and you're convinced that you're all alone." She then looked around at everyone smiling at all faintly. "Look at the stars, instead of the dark. You'll find your heart shines like the sun."

Turning around to look straight at Lockdown, who still looked quite grumpy and was sparing Swindle a hateful glare now and then.
"Let's not let our anger get us lost." Maximum Wave sang, making him look right at her, frowning in surprise. But she had turned away to look over at Sentinel Prime next, who straightened. "And the need to be right comes with too high a cost."

It was at this time that the young subunits climbed down from Soundwave's lap and began joining in to singing with her. They were not the only one to join in. Even Roulette began to sing with them and Max.

"That's when love can build a bridge of light. That's what turns the wrong so right. That's when you know it's worth the fight. That's when love turns night time into day. That's when loneliness goes away. That's when you gotta be strong tonight. Cause only love can build us a bridge of light." They all sang.

There seemed to be a break in the song, leaving only Soundwave playing quite the powerful melody for everyone as Max hugged Ratbat close to herself. Everyone was slowly smiling, letting Max's lyrics sink into their minds and processor and it was filling their hearts and sparks with such warmth. That meant everyone in the prison cell. Every slave trapped in their cells were listening and feeling warmth running through them because of the song being sang to them.

"Sunriser," Sideswipe spoke up from beside Maximum Wave's and Sunriser's cell, making the pretty sunrise colored femme look over at him with a frown. He was looking almost pleadingly with her now, smiling faintly. "Sunrise, I wish could remember me. Is there anything? Anything at all?"

Sunriser sighed, shaking her head at him with a weary look. "I am sorry. But there is nothing. I just don't know you." She said before turning away from him.

Sideswipe flinched at her words, knowing she didn't mean to be cold about it. He knew it wasn't her fault. But it still made his spark fall.

Hearing that, however, Max looked at the red painted Autobot warrior and went over to kneel in front of him, inches away from the energon wall, forcing him to look sorrowfully up at her.

"Deep breath. Take it on the chin." Max continued to sing softly and smiling at him as if encouraging him before placing a hand on Sunriser's shoulder. She met the younger femme's optics with her own, still smiling softly. "But don't forget to let love back in."

Sunriser just blinked in surprise at her but felt awed by those words.

Turning away from her, Max stood up again, still holding Ratbat close to her and she sang right along with the subunits the chorus of the song again. But this time, everyone was surprised to hear many voices starting to join in. Nearly everyone in the prison block was singing Maximum Wave and Soundwave's song with her and the subunits.

"That's when love can build a bridge of light. That's what turns the wrong all right. That's when you can't give up the fight." The voices raised, echoing off the walls of the prison block, even making a few Sharkticons peer into the block with a look of surprise and awe at the sweet sounding song. "That's when loneliness goes away. That's when love turns night time into day. That's why you gotta be strong tonight. Cause only love can build us a bridge of light."

The voices trailed away as the music started to die in a very soft melody, leaving Maximum Wave to finish it.

"Only love can build us a bridge of light." Max sang as she cuddled a yawning Ratbat close, whose optics began to shutter close. "Of light." She sang softly, now rocking her little subunit. "Of light."
She finished before going to sit down on the berth with a now sleeping Ratbat in her arms.

Everyone smiled as they looked at her, watching her. And even some began closing their eyes and optics, feeling peace settling them so they could recharge and sleep. They felt only peace and hope from Max and Soundwave's song, their hearts and sparks now settled.

However, no one had noticed an extra pair of burning red optics watching from the shadows, not even the Sharkticons noticed him in the dark as they let out soft sighs of peace and content escape from them.

Silently, Nemesis Prime's own sigh drifted before he frowned and touched his chassis over his spark, looking down with a frown of confusion. He had heard the singing while passing through and had been fully intended to put an end to it immediately.

But then he heard the words that had been sung. And all he could do was stand in the shadows and listen.

Even after the song ended, Nemesis Prime couldn't find it in himself to reveal himself to the slaves, to punish them, the femme for making noise when Derodomontatus demanded silence. He could only just stand there, watching all of the new Cybertronian slaves and the humans, pit! All of the slaves smile at one another, looking peaceful and caring with one another. A few of the couples were even holding one another in a loving way.

The sight twisted his spark, making him frown. He couldn't figure out why his spark felt so...warm. But he decided he liked the feeling. He didn't know why but...he thought of that femme he had been ordered to lash that orn.

It was, to be honest, the hardest thing he found himself have done.

While he had been lashing her, Nemesis Prime remembered his spark twisting in pain. It hadn't liked him doing that to her. He remembered hearing it shriek at him, he remembered a powerful voice deep inside of him, his own, demanding him to stop.

But it was Derodomontatus who ordered him to go on. He couldn't deny his Master of his orders. His spark had tried but he couldn't stop himself.

"General Commander." A deep thick voice spoke up and the Dark Prime looked at who spoke. It was the Sharkticon Commander of the Prisons. "Do you wish for ring you the Cybertronian femme for making trouble? For punishment?"

Nemesis Prime frowned deeply before looking at the femme called Maximum Wave, who was holding the youngling close to her chassis as he recharged. He knew he should punish her for singing. He knew Derodomontatus would demand for it.

But..."No." Nemesis Prime found himself say as he continued to watch Maximum Wave comfort her youngling and the others in their cells. "Leave her. We shall grant her and them this one night." He said before turning and walking away.

And he meant it.

It was so late in the evening and it was dead quiet in the Quintesson Palace. No one was out and about but recharging in their quarters.

No one but one.
The single Sharkticon disguised Jazz silently made his way down the dimly lit halls towards the one place he hoped never to set ped in again. He had a mission. He knew Elita One was counting on him. He had to get this datavid working in the main Communications grid. He had to blow the entire story of Derezz out into the air, reminding all Quintessons who their true leader was.

Jazz, going under the Sharkticon name Snapjaws, made his way down the corridor that he and all of the others had been taking down to be judged. He had a steeled determined look upon his face. He was looking forward to doing this.

He couldn't wait to see the look on Derodomontatus's faces when his cover was blown of treachery. Eh...not that he could see much. The five facers didn't seem to have any kind of different expressions on their faces as it was.

Finally coming to the large doors of the court rooms, Jazz silently pushed past and looked around the terribly empty chamber. He smirked a shark like grin as he pushed further into the room, looking around for the communications main grid.

But it seemed that the many years of growing peace had finally caught up to him. He made the one mistake that he should have always remembered.

Check your corners for enemies.

Jazz started to push into the room, making his way towards the high pedestal where the Judges had been hovering the first day and then froze, optics snapping wide open when he felt a sharp tip of a blade touch the back of his large shark like head. "Frag." He cursed.

"Make a sound of alarm and you become space food for scraplets." Came a long distant memory of a guttural voice.

Jazz started at the voice before raising his servos. He knew that voice. But it couldn't be! There was no way!

"Turn around, Sharkticon." The deep growling voice demanded as the blade pressed into his metal neck in warning.

Slowly Jazz turned and looked up at the very large rusted silver mech who held the serrated blade in his sharp tipped servos. His optics only grew wider in shock as he found himself looking at the face of a mech who was supposed to be dead. "You!" Was all he could whisper in his shock.

And the mech grinned, recognizing Jazz's voice. "Yes, me." Was his only answer.
Something woke Elita One from recharge, jerking her from her memory purges of being back on Earth and Cybertron with her beloved Optimus and her sparklings. She had been dreaming of happiness with her family and loved friends.

She had been so happy, laughing, singing to her twins, enjoying life. She enjoyed being in those dreams of peace and life. She had almost thought it real.

But then...a sound made her jolt from recharge.

Someone shifting their feet.

Onlining her optics, Elita One found herself on her side, facing the door. She must have shifted to lying down in the middle of the night. She didn't remember doing it but at least she wasn't in pain any more. So that hadn't been...

Her optics lit up in surprise when she found herself looking at a pair of towering black and purple flamed legs. She jerked her head up, pushing herself to sitting up to look into the burning red optics of Nemesis Prime, who was just standing there, watching her.

Elita One couldn't deny that her spark went wild to see the face of her mate, even with burning red optics. She was so happy to see him, even with the reminder of a dull sting on her back of what he had done to her the orn before.

"I see you either have fast repairing systems or someone came in here to tend to you." Nemesis Prime finally spoke up after a long period of silence.

Elita merely glanced back at her back before looking back at him with a frown. "Does it matter?" She asked surprising herself of how cold she sounded.

Nemesis Prime stared at her for another moment before shaking his head. "No. I suppose not. It isn't like I care either way." He said in a blank way.

"How long have you been standing there?" Elita asked frowning.

Nemesis Prime grimaced at that question as he glanced at his chronometer. He seemed embarrassed now. "Honestly? Twenty breems." And then chuckled when Elita stared at him in alarm. "I don't usually just stare at femmes when they're recharging. But you...I couldn't really help myself." He said but not without uncertainty. "I am beginning to question myself, something I have not done in a long time if ever. At least to my knowledge. You seem to think I am someone that I don't recall being. Why is that?"

Elita One smiled faintly as she took in his words before she slowly stood but not without wincing from dull pain in her back. She only stopped in surprise when a black hand came into her path of
vision and she looked up to see Nemesis Prime offering to help her to her peds. She smiled after a/moment and took his hand, allowing his help.

It did not go un noticed by either that an electric tingle passed through both of them. She knew what
it meant, he did not.

"Opt...Nemesis, you know about the Derezziation Chamber and what it does, don't you?" Elota
asked as she turned to face him.

Nemesis Prime frowned before slowly nodding. "I do not question is functions. But I do have a
general idea. I am aware that it reprograms slaves into behaving." He stated firmly and full of belief.

Elita One smiled sadly up at him, shaking her head. She figured that would be something he would
say. "Yes and no. It reprograms beings, Cybertronian, mechanic, maybe organic but I have yet to
know how that process is done." She paused. "Nemesis, you are not who the Quintessons say you
are. You are my spark mate, my Optimus Prime. Derodomontatus had you derezzed when we
arrived. We came here together, Optimus. To save our sparklings Beta and Omega, our twins, our
children. The Quintessons stole them from us. They stole Sunriser from Sideswipe. She was with
spark. The newest sparkling, Nightbeat, the one she looks after. It...he is their sparkling. According
to Sunriser, he looks just like Sideswipe. The Dinobots, Grimlock and his fellows, the Dinobot that
was with us, Sludge, he is their brother."

"I cannot fathom to believe you when all I know is from my own memories, femme." Nemesis Prime
said blankly.

"Memories that the Quintessons put into you, Optimus." Elota said smiling sadly. "But if you want
some form of proof, look at Nightbeat. Go see him and compare him to Sunriser and Sideswipe. Go
see our..." she paused grimacing in pain and fear. She had sworn she would never tell anyone what
she had learned. But...it was a risk she was going to take and prayed to Primacron that it wouldn't
back fire. "Go see our sparklings. They are in hiding with...with the Seeker twins, Dreadwing and
Skyquake. But please, Optimus. Please, I beg of you. Do not endanger our children by reporting
them." She said full of emotion.

There was a long pause as Nemesis Prime stared at her. He seemed to be calculating her words,
letting them run through his processor before he tilted his head and looked away. "I take my leave. I
am being summoned. You are to return to the other slave prison corridor. Come. I will escort you."
He told her, motioning to the door.

Elita slowly nodded before walking forward. She, however, paused in front of him. "May I...try
something that may convince you who I am?" She asked uncertainly.

Nemesis Prime frowned but nodded. He was curious of what she might do to convince him.

Smiling faintly, Elita stepped closer to him, completely facing him. She looked him right into the
optics before standing on her ped tips and slowly reached a hand towards his face plates. She was
only satisfied when he made no move to back away from her but watched her curiously.

Again, smiling, the femme touched the side of his face, lightly touching him before trailing her hand
to behind his neck joints and lightly pulling him down closer to her face plates. She felt him hesitate
for a moment before he allowed her to pull him close.

And then she lightly touched forhelms with his.

Because her optics were still online, she saw the look on Nemesis Prime's face perfectly and she
couldn't hide the satisfaction of seeing how bright his optics had gotten from surprise and a thrill of excitement. She had seen him stiffen before her as she Cyber kissed him.

It was mostly because of the pleasant zing that shot through both of them, straight down their back struts to their peds and shot straight back up. And because of how fast their sparks whirled to life within their spark chambers.

Nemesis Prime was the first to break away, looking at her with surprise and she smiled faintly at him, stepping back.

For a long moment, there was only silence between them, both staring at one another.

"General Commander." Someone called out to Nemesis Prime, making both jerk around to see the large Sharkticon Commander of the prison approaching rather quickly.

Elita One ducked her head down, stepping further back from her once spark mate, looking almost shy that someone had broken the spell of the moment. She honestly didn't care that someone might have witnessed their moment together but she was sure he did.

And sure enough, Nemesis Prime growled, shooting her a look before standing up completely straight and formidable as before. "What do you need, Commander?" He asked coldly.

The Sharkticon made no glance towards Elita One at all as he swiftly approached the two. "You are being summoned to High Lord Derodomontatus! Something happened last night cycle! Reports say there was a break in the Derezziation Chamber! It has been destroyed, sir!" He said loudly.

Elita One's head snapped up, her optics widening at the blunt news. She was surprised that the Sharkticon would even say that in front of her. But to think that the Derezziation chamber had been destroyed...did Jolup really do it? But if it had been destroyed...when was Optimus going to be normal again then? Was he slowly remembering then? What about Sunriser and the Dinobots? Did they remember anything now? How long did it take for them to remember?

"Take her back to the other slaves." Nemesis Prime spoke coldly motioning to Elita One. "I will report to our High Lord immediately.

The Sharkticon nodded as he reached for Elita One at all as he swiftly approached the two. "You are being summoned to High Lord Derodomontatus! Something happened last night cycle! Reports say there was a break in the Derezziation Chamber! It has been destroyed, sir!" He said loudly.

Elita One's head snapped up, her optics widening at the blunt news. She was surprised that the Sharkticon would even say that in front of her. But to think that the Derezziation chamber had been destroyed...did Jolup really do it? But if it had been destroyed...when was Optimus going to be normal again then? Was he slowly remembering then? What about Sunriser and the Dinobots? Did they remember anything now? How long did it take for them to remember?

"Take her back to the other slaves." Nemesis Prime spoke coldly motioning to Elita One. "I will report to our High Lord immediately.

The Sharkticon nodded as he reached for Elita One and roughly grabbed her arm, jostling her back a little. She hissed a little in pain.

It was right then Nemesis Prime snapped out his hand and grabbed the Sharkticon's wrist in a very tight grip, making him flinch and was forced to let her go. "Do not hurt her any more than she already is." The dark Prime growled, glaring at the Sharkticon. "She will go with you without you touching her. Touch her again and I will take your large head as a trophy." Then he practically threw the Sharkticon's arm away from him.

Shakily, the Sharkticon nodded as he turned swiftly and started to walk. He paused only for a moment to make sure Elita was following him and when he saw her starting to following, he kept going.

Elota One had paused to meet Nemesis Prime's optics, seeing him watching her. She smiled at him, her spark whirling happily that he had protected her from harm. There was a piece of Optimus she knew and saw. She wasn't sure how long it would take for him to remember but she hoped it was soon. And then she followed the Sharkticon, looking forward to see the others and how they were faring.

Nemesis Prime watched her go before starting to march down the corridor. He knew he better get to
High Lord Derodomontatus immediately and find out what was happening...

He stopped in front of a Gladiator door, two cells down from where Elita had been kept.

Nemesis Prime looked right at it, frowning. The gears in his processor were running perfectly, making him think about what that femme had said. He stared for a very long moment before stepping close to the door, turning his helm to the side so he could gently press his audio to it.

There was nothing to hear though. It was so difficult to...

And then there came a gentle but very dull coo from within the cell. It sounded deep but soft at the same time as if one of the Seekers in there was humming a soft song.

A soft, quiet keen was heard then.

"...know, I know, li...one. It hurts...you need to refuel..." Nemesis Prime heard the deep voice of Dreadwing speak softly. "...his burns, Quake?"

"...healing fine. He will still be...ain but...scarring on his back...Omega, you need ener...Fuel, little one." Another deep but soft voice spoke up.

And then there was a much younger, high pitched voice that spoke up, keening and sobbing. "...my momma and dadda!...are they?! I want my momma and dadda!"

There was a soft whirl that had Nemesis Prime's optics lighting up and surprising himself of how soft his spark was thrumming now. He felt the sudden urge to barge into that room to see what the Seekers had in there. He felt the urge to scoop up that sparkling he knew that was in there and hold him close to his spark, soothing the sobbing whirls.

"...dweamed of momma...Ega! I kno...coming...Daddy will come...!" A very young femme's spoke up as if to comfort the other's.

Beta." Nemesis Prime suddenly thought, his optics dimming a little. He didn't know why he thought that name or why his spark was suddenly going wild in his chassis but...

"Beta's rywght, Omega!" A new very young mechling's voice spoke up. "Aun' Lita will come! And Unc'a Oppy will beat up the bad guys! My daddy and mommy will come!" The voice spoke clearly because of how loud he was saying it.

"Shhhhh, Siz...you cannot be so...ud! Omega...fuel, little one. You will heal...ter if you do..." The voice of Skyquake spoke up again.

"I can...mommy and daddy..." Another femmeling's voice picked up. "They're here! I can feel them!"

"Slipstre...n't yell...are here, they probably can't get to yo...et...without those bad guys every...for now...fuel your selves...if they come, we will help..." Dreadwing's muffled words came through.

At that time, Nemesis Prime pulled away from the door and started walking away. He was mystified by what Elita One had told him and what he heard in Dreadwing and Skyquake's cell. He knew there were sparklings in there with the two.

He also knew he should report them. He should tell Derodomontatus about them. The two dreaded Seeker Twins were too dangerous...no, that wasn't right. The Seekers, Dreadwing and Skyquake had been protecting the sparklings.
Omega. Beta.

The words formed in Nemesis Prime’s processor again, startling him. He didn't know how he knew it was them but he somehow did. He felt his spark pulling back to that room, wanting him to go to the sparklings he was going to have to report...

Again, no.

The memory of Elita One begging him to not report her sparklings to Derodomontatus came back. Her words. The frightened look in her optics.

Nemesis Prime frowned, thinking of her again ad what was hidden in the Seeker Twins’ cell. He knew he should tell the High Lord. He should have the sparklings taken away from Dreadwing and Skyquake. But...her words came back to him.

He couldn't do it. He couldn't find it in himself to do it.

So Nemesis Prime took the thought of the sparklings and pushed it deep down inside his processor, in a far corner where he was sure that no one, not Derodomontatus would find the thought. He would abide by Elita One's request. He would not report the sparklings.

Reaching the Derezziation Chamber, where it was reported that High Lord Derodomontatus was with the other Judges, Nemesis Prime found himself, once again eavsdropping. It was all because Derodomontatus was yelling in fury.

"...at this! The Derezziation chamber has been torn apart! The memory crystals are gone! Stolen! More than half of the memory crystals have been destroyed and several of the slaves have remembered what we stolen from them!" Derodomontatus was roaring in rage from within the chamber.

"There must be an explanation, Derodomontatus! How did the vandals even best the Beowulves and Bailiffs without even raising the alarm! We have thirty dead Beowulves, creatures that no Cybertronian should have been able to destroy without a sheer number of their own! Unless there was one who had great talants for..."

"I KNOW THAT, Ghyrik!" Derodomontatus snarled. "WE MUST HAVE INTRUDERS! THERE IS NO POSSIBLE WAY THAT A SLAVE DID THIS! WE EITHER HAVE INVADERS OR SOMEONE OF OUR OWN HAS BETRAYED US!"

Dead silence for a moment.

"What are you saying...?" One of the other Quintesson Judges were asking.

"I am speaking of you, JOLUP! DID YOU THINK I WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN THE ORDER I GAVE YOU TO DESTROY KLEDJI'S MEMORY CRYSTAL?! AND NOW LOOK WHAT HAS HAPPENED! HIS MEMORIES ARE PLAYING ACROSS THE CITY ON THE COMMUNICATIONS GRID!"

Nemesis Prime frowned as he listened to the fight before he looked up and around for a marquee and found quite a surprising thing playing across the large screen. What normally was blank unless there were news to be reported, such as slave auctions or even off world news to be delivered, several images were playing.

It was like watching a vid. The images of the Quintesson Judges were on the screen and they seemed to be fighting a massive war with surprise, surprise, Cybertronians.
The Judges were being led by a much smaller Quintesson. He was too small to be frank. But...he barked orders in the memories, pointed to Cybertronians for his Quintessons to attack.

Then the images changed.

The small Quintesson was battling a golden and silver Cybertronian, Alpha Prime, and he lost.

The memories changed again and the small Quintesson was being attacked by none other than Derodomontatus, himself.

And then...

Nemesis Prime's optics widened to see the small Quintesson had been derezzed in this very chamber. He had been forced into Derezziation and forced to be reprogrammed. But...why would Derodomontatus do that to one of his own kind? What purpose...

"YOU ARE A TRAITOR, JOLUP! I TOLD YOU TO DESTROY KLEDJI'S MEMORIES...!"

Derodomontatus was yelling.

"Destroying the memory crystal would have reversed what you have done, Derodomontatus!" Jolup yelled right back. "You know very well that if the memory crystal would have been destroyed Kledji's memories would have returned! You would be facing trials of your own treachery long ago and you would not be High Lord any longer! We would have peace with the Cybertronians if that would be his wish! And it was his wish! I did not destroy the memory crystal because that would mean for Kledji's return!"

"Jolup is correct, Derodomontatus!" Ghyrik bellowed out, cutting off the outraged reply from the false High Lord. "If we do not want Kledji returning as High Lord and destroying all we have done for the Quintesson Empire, we cannot destroy the crystal! But what we do need to do is find who has destroyed the Derezziation controls and who stole the memory crystals of Kledji and Optimus Prime!"

Nemesis Prime jolted, his optics widening at that outburst. He hadn't been expecting that one whatsoever. His thoughts immediately went to Elita One and her words.

"My slave's memory crystals are gone as well! We cannot allow her memories to return any more than Kledji's and Optimus Prime's! She knows the truth of that wretched sparkling of hers as well the truth of myself! If she was to be returned of her memories, she can reveal the truth!" Derodomontatus exclaimed.

"Then what should we do, Derodomontatus? We do not know who destroyed the Derezziation Chamber or who has the memory crystals." The voice of Sevax asked.

There was a long pause as no one spoke, probably thinking of the solutions.

"There is only one solution to this then." Derodomontatus said coldly. "The Quintesson Empire will know of Kledji now. The datavid in the Communications grid has been viewed and questions are being asked. To avoid Kledji being risen, we must destroy him. We may as well as rid our selves of all assets that will be our undoing. The execution of Derezz, Sunriser and the Dinobots must be done by this om's end. We will also destroy the Prime Princess." He growled. "I know she has something to do with this. I can sense it. Her uprising yesterorn is starting to make the other slaves defy us. They are starting to question their selves, wondering if they can do the same. All uprisers will be extinguished! TONIGHT! At om's end!"

"Derodomontatus, surely we can..." Jolup started saying sounding uneasy.
"Jolup! Question me again and you will join them at their demise! I may as well order your destruction! I know you still question my Lordship! I know your empathy of Kledji's return! You think I mistaking your empathy of excitement when that traitor, Derezz was returned?! If you do not wish to be deactivated, you will be the one to order the uprisers' destruction!" Derodomontatus growled.

"What of Optimus Prime then? If he remembers who he is, he will act. What do we do with Nemesis?" Sevax asked.

"He will join them. We will set he Terrorcons on him. We cannot afford having him any longer in our collection if his memory crystal is missing." Derodomontatus growled.

"It will be difficult to rid of him, Derodomontatus. If he suspects our treachery, he can undo us." Ghyrik spoke up cautiously.

"Have your forgotten that even he can fall at my power, Ghyrik?! I am the most powerful among us! I will see to him myself!" Derodomontatus growled.

With that being heard, Nemesis Prime let out a very quiet growl as he stepped away from the doors and started to trail down the stairs. He had heard enough. He knew he needed to act soon.

If not for his own sake, but for Elita One's and her companions. And seemingly, the REAL Quintesson High Lord's sake.

Being returned to the prison cells, Elita One was happy to see her friends all excited to see her. They had immediately started asking her what happened, who had repaired her back; courtesy of Ratchet, Knockout and Moonracer, how she was feeling, all those of questions.

Of course, sparing a glance to Tap-Out, seeing how he hadn't even been repaired, Elita One's spark sank.

"Tap-Out, I am so sorry. Your pain is my fault." The Femme Commander stated sorrowfully as she gazed down the cells at him.

Tap-Out, still lying on his front, shook his head as he hissed in pain. "Don't be, Elita One. I'm not. What we did yesterorn, I am not sorry at all. What we did was show all of them," he pushed himself up to his knees, motioning to all of the cells in the prison. "We showed all of them that even in the darkest hours, we can still have a good time. We can still defy evil. Spit right in it's face and fight."

"There has already been some talk of a rebellion, Elita One." Grimwing spoke up, sitting up on his hind legs from his cell, his wings twitching. "The slaves have been talking about what you did yesterorn. They want you as their leader, to lead them to fighting back. You and your band of Cybertronians and humans."

Elita blinked in surprise, slowly shaking her head. "I couldn't. It may be too dangerous." She said uneasily.

"Slag that, Elita. You can. And we're already in danger as slaves to the five facers. They kill off slaves every orn." Chromia spoke up firmly. "You are Optimus' mate. You're our leader right now. You, Sentinel, Rodimus. Those two have been talking all night about it. Prowl and Izzy thinks they can come up with a good steady plan."

"Elita," Flo spoke up, sounding frightened as she met the Femme Commander's optics. "Whe-where is Jazz? We haven't seen him all night? He went missing during the dance off yesterday. Soundwave says he knows what he is doing but he won't tell us."
Elita smiled faintly, looking to Soundwave, who dipped his head apologetically. She just shook her head at him before looking at Flo. "He's fine, Flo. I saw him last night. He is doing what he does best. He is Meister, after all." She nodded when several optics and eyes lit up. "We can't tell you who he is posing as without compromising us. But for now, I will assure you, he is gathering us allies as we speak."

Lockdown grunted, leaning against the bare wall of his cell, arms folded. "Allies? What allies?" He grunted. "I highly doubt we can get a bunch of frightened slaves..."

"Quintesson allies, Lockdown." Elita One interrupted him, startling all.

"Wha-what? But the Quintessons would never help us! They hate us! They just want slaves!" It was Spitfire who spoke up.

Elita shook her head as she shared a glance with Soundwave. "Not all of them, Spitfire. One of the Judges, maybe two, are on our side. I can't say their names without giving them away. And Gem...Lefty and Righty, they're with us too. They deactivated Jazz's tracker device so he can do the sneaking around. That's why he hasn't been caught yet." She paused, carefully. "We also now are allies with Dreadwing and Skyquake."

That got startled murmurs going. Starscream being the loudest in his shock. "What?! No, that can't be...those two hate me! They hate Autobots! How can they...!" He was saying.

"Not any more. Dreadwing was the one who tended to me last night. He repaired my back and we got talking. He knows about the end of the war. He knows Megatron is dead. I won't say he was happy about it but he swore to help us. And what he decides, Skyquake will decide. If there is a fight, they will stand with us. As it is," Elita One said firmly.

No one spoke for a moment, taking in the shocking news. They couldn't believe this. They were finding everything was turning around everywhere they went.

"Sunriser," Elita One called over to the young femme, getting her attention. "Do you remember anything about us? About Sideswipe?"

Sunriser frowned, looking up at her before glancing at the hopeful look on Sideswipe's face. She sighed, hating to do this but she shook her head. "No. I don't. I am sorry." She said gravely.

"Why are you asking again? She already said she couldn't remember, so why?" Lockdown asked frowning looking at Elita One.

Elita sighed, shaking her own head. "Nemesis Prime was with me this morning. We were talking and a Sharkticon showed up saying the Derezziation Chamber was destroyed." She nodded when everyone perked up at that bit of a surprise. "I was told that once the Derezziation Chamber was destroyed, everyone who was derezzed would get their memories back. Maybe it takes some time for them to return." She said, hopefully.

"Nope. That's wrong." Lockdown said frowning looking away. "The memories don't come back when the Chamber is destroyed. They come back when the memory crystals are destroyed. And," he turned to look at Elita One, raising an optic ridge. "They come back immediately. Your girl there," he nodded to Sunriser, who was looking quite surprised. "She don't remember anything yet because her memory crystal ain't gone. And I'm betting a hunka load of energon that goes for Nemesis Prime too. Otherwise, OP would be busting right in here right about now, saving our afts..." he was saying.

Suddenly there was a startling sound of blasts and booms, making everyone cry out in surprise and
heads jerked around to look at the entrance of the prison block. They could hear sounds of battle
going on just outside and all wondered what was going on.

Just as murmurs started up, there was a loud bang against the prison doors and they crumbled like tin
just a Sharkticon came crashing through.

Startled yells rose up and all slaves were on their feet, looking shocked at the fallen Sharkticon with a
massive hole in his chassis.

"No way that worked!" Lockdown said alarmed, stepping closer to his cell wall to see what
happened.

But just as he spoke, the prison entrance was filled with the terrifying but impressive frame of
Nemesis Prime. There was energon coated and dripping from his frame, showing his proof of the
battle he had just been in. He had his flaming red and orange energon blade out, crackling madly
with energy.

In his other hand, he held a mass of metal that once was a Sharkticon.

"Uh-uh. No way that worked. That cannot be Optimus Prime! I am never that accurate!" Lockdown
added in his shock while the others murmured in surprise at the sight before them.

Nemesis Prime chuckled darkly as he dropped the Sharkticon and slammed a fist against the manual
override for the cell doors, deactivating the energon walls. "I am not. I am still Nemesis Prime. And
we need to get moving!" He snapped now bursting forward, stopping in front of Elita One's cell.
"You were right. I am Optimus Prime. But I have no knowledge of it."

Elita One and the others quickly stepped out of their cells, while most of the other slaves stayed in,
fearful of leaving them. "What made you come to that conclusion?" She asked, smiling excitedly.

Nemesis Prime shook his head as he looked right at her. "Derodomontatus was shooting off his
mouth when I arrived at the Derezziation Chamber! I heard enough to put the pieces together,
myself! Someone destroyed the Chamber bit stole the memory crystals of Optimus Prime, Sunriser
and the Dinobots! I do not know who has them but the false High Lord is blaming you! He plans to
destroy all of you and Kledji this orn to make an example of any future rebellions against them!" He
told her before seizing her hand, startling her as he turned back the way he had come. He pulled her
after him, swishing his blade for the others to follow. "We need to get out and off Quintessa
immediately if we wish to survive!"

Immediately, yet uneasily, everyone made to follow him, moving as quick as they could. They didn't
know what was going on but...

Suddenly, Nemesis and Elita halted as they looked forward, down the hall they were going to escape
down. They had just looked up, hearing a loud panicking squeal and chirring sound.

It was the Quintesson Judges, Bailiffs and a pack of Sharkticons blocking their way, all glaring. One
of the Bailiffs had a small bundle of writhing metal in his hands and it was obvious that it was a tiny
sparkling.

"No!" Sunriser gasped, now starting to push past everyone but was held back by Sideswipe and
Sunstreaker. There was fear and panic in her optics as she looked at the small sparkling. "Nightbeat!
No! Don't hurt him!" She begged.

Everyone stiffened as they looked at the small silver sparkling with fear and worry.
The sparkling chirred loud, still wriggling around in the Bailiff's hands but when he heard Sunriser's voice, he turned bright blue optics onto her and reached for her, whirling in panic and fear.

"Did you honestly think we would not realize where you were going when we picked up your thoughts, Nemesis Prime?" Derodomontatus asked coldly as he looked directly at the black and purple Prime, who, keeping Elita One behind him for protection.

"Fragging five facer!" Nemesis Prime growled, raising his blade. He started to step forward but halted when the Bailiff with the sparkling raised him, using one hand to grab at the writhing legs and tiny wheels on his peds. It was obvious threat that he would tear the small being in two if the Prime moved again. "Coward!"

"You obviously know what will happen if you step forward again, Nemesis Prime. Surrender now and I will let the sparkling live." Derodomonatatus growled. "Do not comply, and there will be two pieces of him."

Sunriser was sobbing now, her frame wrapped in Sideswipe's arms, who looked just as terrified and worried as she did as he looked helpless at his sparkling for the first time. This was not how he wanted to meet his little Nightbeat for the first time, being forced to submit and die. He had wanted to find a way to rescue his mechling, save him from the enslavement.

Nemesis Prime growled before flicking his optics down to Elita One, who sadly nodded as she dropped her shoulders. He growled again before tossing down his blade and dipping his head down.

Suddenly, searing pain struck through the Dark Prime, making roar out in pain as he dropped down to his knees to clutch his head. He heard Elita One and the others cry out as they were too assaulted by electric shocks running through their frames, forcing them down. The humans and organics were the only ones still standing, looking around at their friends and loved ones with fear and worry.

"Did you honestly think because we derezzed you and made you Nemesis Prime that we took your tracker device out as well?" Derodomontatus spoke up colder as he deactivated the devices again, leaving the Cybertronians there to panting and venting in pain. "Bailiff Commander, have all of these fools chained, subdued and taken to the Arena. It is time for them to be punished for the last time."

The Bailiff who held Little Nightbeat nodded sharply before shoving the squealing and writhing sparkling into another's hands while moving forward with several of his fellow Bailiffs and Sharkticons.

Only one Sharkticon in the far back glared at what was happening, forcing himself to think of nothing. But in Snapjaws', Jazz's spark, he swore he was going to get them out of this.

Alive.
The Arena was full of roaring cheers and boos as a long line of Cybertronains and organics were brought out of the slave corridors. Massive amounts of Quintessons were there to witness the executions, which was bluntly stated to be. Nemesis Prime, The Autobots, Decepticons, the two Space Pirates, Sunriser, the Dinobots; which was the first time anyone saw them with exception of Grimlock, Grimwing, the humans and even Seaspray and Alana had been dragged into the middle of the entire Arena, where they were forced to their knees.

The last to come out was Derezz, all chained and carted in like a feral beast. Heavy energon, electrified wires and chains kept him in the middle of a floating platform but unlike everyone else, he looked still and calm.

Sharkticons and Bailiffs stood around them, holding lethal looking blaster cannons, which Lockdown did have to explain were rust blasters. He told them that one hit from one of those would make their frames rust and disintegrate until they deactivated. They were lethal weapons against mechanical beings. It was probably how everyone was going to die.

The Quintesson Judges were up in their VIP box, though, almost all looked cold and stoic like while one looked forlorn. Jolup was not happy whatsoever. He wanted to help them but he wasn't strong enough against Derodomontatus.

From a side glance, Airachnid had seen them first, seeing all four lethal Terrorcons standing in the wide Gladiator door way, watching the proceedings. She frowned, seeing Blot just standing there, arms folded and leaning against the massive door frame as if it were the most casual thing he could do. The spiderfemme frowned when she saw a skittering flashing of silver and large blue optics on his shoulder.

'Is that...?' She thought to herself before zeroing her gaze on what it was before her optics snapped wide open. 'Why the frag would he have a scraplet on his shoulder?!

The Terrorcon leader watched as all of the Autobots, Decepticons, the two space pirates, and the organics were forced to their knees, awaiting execution. He looked blank about the whole issue. But then he turned his mismatched helm and spoke ever so softly to the scraplet, which chirped and whirled before skittering down his frame and rushing into the darkness of the Gladiator corridor.

For a long while, everything was just deafening with the roars of approval from the Quintesson hordes in the audience. It seemed that almost the entire city had packed in tight to watch the
executions.

Finally after a while, Derodomontatus rose higher and waved his appendages in the air and it suddenly silenced, almost deafeningly silence. "All of Quintesson Empire, we have come forward to witness the executions of rebellions and traitors!" The false High Lord boomed in announcement. "We come forward to witness the execution of those who mean us travesty and dysfunction! These criminals came to our brilliant world to put an end to our great Empire! To take away all of our rights and our way of power! For their rebellious crimes, I, High Lord Derodomontatus, demand sentence of deactivation!"

A roar of approval echoed through the entire arena as all Quintessons roared and cheered. Some, however, booed. But they were ignored.

"Starting with the biggest traitor of them all." Derodomontatus added coldly before his side face flashed on and he jabbed one of his sharp pointed appendages to one.

It became very clear of who he was speaking about and it startled all, Quintessons, Cybertronians, and organics alike when none other than Judge Jolup jerked in the air and suddenly roared in pain as he fell from hovering, his four clawed appendages now twitching and jerking as if he was being assaulted.

"No! What is happening?!!" Elita asked, watching g on with horror and realization.

"Derodomontatus is telepathically attacking Jolup!" Derezz called out, sounding extremely surprised as he looked up with bright optics.

"Why?! Why is he attacking Jolup?! I thought that they were together on this...!" Nightbird asked startled.

Elita One shook her head, looking up at the twitching mass that was Jolup, watching him roar out in pain and his appendages writhe like snakes. "It was because he as helping us. He was trying to bring back his real High Lord for peace between worlds." She said softly, sorrow thick in her tone.

Derodomontatus finally stopped, leaving Jolup twitching viciously next to him. "If you think I am fool enough to think you were truly with our Quintesson cause, Jolup, I must correct you." He said coldly, hovering over his fellow five faced being, even while there were quiet, surprised murmurs in the audience from their fellow Quintessons. "You have betrayed me by consorting with that Cybertronian femme. I will find Kledji's memory crystal and destroy it after Kledji, himself falls into rust. I do not know who you may have given it to, but I will destroy it. And I will leave you last to deactivate, watching as your fellow rebels rust into dust."

Jolup's optics flickered as he twitched but he managed a weakened growl. "Long...live...Kledji...even if...I was gone...he will still rein triumph of...over you..." he managed to say, still twitching.

Below, back with the large group of awaiting prisoners, everyone was trying to think of how to get out of this. Prowl and Izzy were whispering to one another, trying to come up with a quick and easy plan of how to get out of this alive.

But even as it seemed to be going nowhere, Izzy's eyes flashed open as she thought of something and jerked her head to look at the most unlikely mech. "Swindle!" She hissed, catching the mech in question's attention as well as Lockdown, who growled at the interaction between his young human and their traitor. "Swindle, do what you do best!"
Swindle blinked at her with his one optic, confused. "Huh? What are you...?" He was saying.

Izzy grinned, jerking her head towards the Sharkticons. "Make a deal. Swindle us some new allies." She hissed up at the red one optic mech.

Again, Swindle blinked as he looked at the Sharkticons then back at Izzy, then he looked up at the Quintesson Judges. He looked discontent for a moment, as if questioning Izzy's sanity. But then his optic lit up and a sly smile formed on his faceplates before he jerked his head back towards one of the Sharkticon commanders. "Right." He murmured before whistling lowly to get the Sharkticon's attention. "Hey, Sharkticon Commander."

The burly Sharkticon grunted as he looked over at the red mech, growling. "What do you want, slave?" He growled as he glared at Swindle.

Swindle merely shrugged his shoulder plates as he looked innocently up at the large shark faced mech. "I bet it's kind of rough, you know. Being a pawn of that." He jerked his helm towards Derodomontatus. He held up his cuffed servos when the Sharkticon growled warningly at him. "Hey, hey, hear me out, my good, strong, powerful mech. So what's it like, being ordered around by that? By a being who'd rather destroy his own kind than to give in to a few measly requests."

The Sharkticon growled down at Swindle before bending over him, baring his many rows of sharp fangs. "What is the point you're trying to make, slave?" He growled.

"Do you get paid creds for doing all of Derodomontatus's dirty work?" Swindle asked smoothly and smirked when the Sharkticon looked startled. "I bet you don't. I bet you do everything your ordered to, without even thinking about it. Creds, money, power. The Quintesson High Lord doesn't even pay the one powerful beings he has in his service, refusing to bend to your whims, Sharkticon. It sounds to me...if he don't pay you, you're more a slave than I am. You work hard, do hard labor without even seeking the benefits." He said almost slyly.

The Sharkticon was growling, but now uncertainly. "We're a part of the Quintesson Empire! We're just important as they are!" He growled.

Swindle smirked, nodding. "Oh, I am sure, Great Sharkticon Commander. But I still question the fact, what do you get out of doing their bidding? So far, I see no profit in what you do. You do all of the hard work, all of the back strut bending work and you get nothing more than just more snarling orders to do more. Now," he paused, tilting his head, still looking innocent of the matter. "If I was your partner, I'd share the wealth and power I make with you by...let's say..."

"Make it good and solid, Swind. He ain't stupid." Lockdown suddenly murmured from where he was.

Swindle didn't acknowledge him but he did nod as he dipped his helm down, optic still on the Sharkticon. "Twenty five percent of sharings. You and your Sharkticons go into business with me, and you actually get paid and you can do whatever you want with your ownings." He said firmly.

The Sharkticon narrowed his optics at him as he dipped closer to the one optic. He glared furiously at him, his metal mouth curling into a snarl. "Fifty." He growled.

Swindle grinned, shaking his head. "Thirty." He added right back.

"Forty five." The Sharkticon growled almost in warning at him.

Grinning smugly, Swindle raised his servo, palm up. "Deal...partner?" He asked in a quiet voice.
The Sharkticon growled at his offered hand before he reached over and slapped his large one into the smaller bot's servo. "Deal. What do you want us to do?" He growled in a low voice.

"Enough of this!" Derodomontatus snapped after a while of continuously torturing Jolup, turning his attention onto the crowd below. He barely missed the large Sharkticon Commander straightening up from talking to Swindle. "Begin the execution! Execute one of them sparked femmes first! The blue one! We shall show all slaves what will happen if they ever try and rebel against us again! We will destroy without mercy if it means making a point to be crossed!"

There was an uproar of cheers from Quintessons and a roar of outrage from the Cybertronians as one of the Bailiffs pushed through them to seize Chromia from a roaring Ironhide.

"YOU SON OF GLITCH! HOW DARE YOU TRY AND KILL A SPARKED FEMME!" Many of the Autobots and Decepticons roared struggling to break free to save Chromia as she was pulled and dragged through the fighting crowd to the front of everyone.

"Let me go, fragger!" Chromia spat and screeched as she thrashed to break free from the Bailiff who had a painfully tight hold of her arm.

"CHROMIA! NO!" Ironhide roared along with Arcee and Moonracer, only to hiss and cry out in pain as a few electric shocks shot through their frames.

Chromia was shoved down to the ground, which she spun around to glare up at the Bailiff, freezing to see one of the large rust cannons shoved into her face. She drew back, rage and fear in her optics. She knew this was it. She was going to die, along with her and Ironhide's third sparkling. She glanced over at Ironhide, who was struggling and still fighting to get to his peds, even while he was being electrocuted by the tracker device in his system. She met his wide, raged but terrified optics with her own. 'I love you, Ironhide.' She sent through their bond, knowing it was only going to be blocked.

Then she closed her optics, turning to face the rust cannon as the Bailiff started to charge it, ready to fire.

BOOOOOM!

The thunderous sound of a loud and obviously large cannon blasted in the air, making everyone jump and flinch as the sound snapped at them. Even Chromia had flinched, cringing as she waited for pain.

But it didn't come.

There were only startled murmurs in the air before there was a thud and clang.

Chromia flinched at the sound before shuttering her optics open and she was startled to see that she hadn't been shot. She was still alive and in whole. She only saw the Bailiff now, dropping the rust cannon and looking startled at the large hole now in his chassis. Black fluid like oil mixed with unusual orange fluid was spilling out from the deadly wound onto the Arena floor. The Bailiff's life fluid, his blood.

"What?! What is this?!" Derodomontatus exclaimed before he turned with a jerk to look right at the direction where the blast had come from. He was not alone in the action.

It was at the Gladiator corridor entrance where the blast had come from. There was a cloud of smoke still lingering from whatever had been shot, making it difficult to even see into the darkened hall way.
But a moment later, something very small pushed through the smoke, walking until gasps of alarm and shocked murmurs sounded through the entire audience and even in the arena. No one could believe their optics as they looked at the small being glaring right at the shocked and dying Bailiff.

Tiny fists balled up, the little bot let out a growl as he glared right at the being that suddenly fell to his knees then onto his face, still spilling his life's blood.

"Leave my momma 'lone!" Sizzle snapped furiously.

"SIZZLE!" Chromia and Ironhide both exclaimed in complete shock.

All Cybertronians and humans in the arena gaped at the long lost sparkling with alarm and shock, not believing what they were seeing. They couldn't believe their optics and eyes.

"Sizzle...?" Moonracer whispered her optics brightening.

Especially when a few more lumps of metal pushed through the smoke and joined Sizzle to glaring at the Bailiffs surrounding their family.

Nightbird gasped sharply as she suddenly snatched a startled Starscream's arm when she saw her little, fearsome femme, Slipstream standing directly beside Sizzle. "Slipstream!" She cried out, full of emotion.

Elita One had to smile when she saw all of them together, standing firm and proud. It made her spark sour to see Omega and Beta side by side with little glaring Triggerload right in front of them. She felt energon fluid shimmering in her optics as she desperately tried to reach for her twins through their bond.

And was startled when she felt them reach back.

"What?" Elita One asked, her voice full of shock but happiness as she felt Omega and Beta reach for her energy through their own, happiness and delight at being able to feel her again.

Still, all of the missing sparklings glared defiantly at what was happening before them. They stood together before tilting their heads up when Derodomontatus roared in anger and shock.

"SPARKLINGS?! IMPOSSIBLE! SPARKLINGS DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO DESTROY A BAILIFF!" The fake High Lord roared before swiping his tentacle in the air at the other Bailiffs. "DESTROY THEM! THEY ARE THEIR OFFSPRING! LET THEIR SIRES AND CARRIERS WATCH THEIR DEMISE!"

"NO!" Elita One and all of the other parents screamed, now struggling harder to get to their peds and rush to save the sparklings.

Two Bailiffs walked towards the still glaring Sparklings, who all never flinched but growled and bared their denta at them. They raised their rust cannons, ready to fire at the small defying botlings.

"Our fwends won't let yooo hurt us." It was Beta who spoke full of bravery and defiance as she took Omega's hand into own as well as Triggerload's.

The Bailiffs never flinched as they moved closer to the,, getting ready to take the shot before freezing and then scampering backwards in alarm and fear at what had just appeared behind the sparklings, skittering onto their backs and chattering angrily up a them.

There was a burst of startled, alarmed cries at the sight of Scraplets crawling all over the unflinching
sparklings. Mostly from the Cybertronians, who knew exactly what Scraplets liked to ravage and devour. They were sure that if the Bailiffs didn't kill the five sparklings, the Scraplets would eat them.

But amongst the Cybertronians, only Sunriser smiled, dawning in her optics. "They will be fine."
She suddenly spoke up, startling everyone around her.

"FINE?! THOSE ARE SCRAPLETS, SUNRISER! THEY ARE GOING TO EAT...!"
Starscream was screeching only to halt his own words when he looked back at the sight before his optics, mouth falling open in shock.

The Scraplets hadn't moved at all to even nibble on the sparklings. They usually would have already been scouring frames, eating them down through their frames by now.

But they didn't.

Instead, the Scraplets were baring razor sharp fangs at the Bailiffs, clutching to the Sparklings, who still did not flinch from their presence. One Scraplet, the one on Slipstream chattered madly like a chipmunk before nuzzling, NUZZLING Slipstream, who in returned smiled and giggled as it rubbed is overly large head against hers. She even had begun scratching it behind its huge round audios.

"What the...? Are those scraplets actually protecting them?!
Knockout yelped in shock.

As if they heard the question, the scraplets all turned their big blue optics onto the Bailiffs and snarled as one at them, forcing them to scurry back in shock and fear.

"THOSE ARE ONLY PESTS! DESTROY THEM!" Derodomontatus roared angrily.

The Bailiffs shakily looked up at him, looking uneasy at his orders. They didn't want to go near the scraplets, because of what they could do. But shakily they raised their rust cannons at the snarling little beings, ready to fire.

Suddenly there was a crack of whip before an acid green tendril of poisonous energy snapped out against the Bailiff's hand, wrapping around his arm and the cannon, which began to sizzle and burn like acid against metal. The Bailiff shrieked in fear in pain as he began writhing to be released but he couldn't break free. Another snapping acid green whip flicked out, wrapping around the other Bailiff's neck, causing him to shriek and thrash against the whip like energy.

Everyone watching could only just stare in shock as the one who owned those whips stepped out from the darkness and they were shocked to see the Terrorcon, Rippersnapper walk out.

And right behind him, Blot, Twinstriker and Hun-Gurr walked out, all growling, their tri mouths split in a threatening manner. All of them were snapping their fangs and deadly glossa at the Bailiffs as they stood almost protectively around the sparklings and Scraplets, raising their deadly energy weapons.

"Touch the sparklings and you get bit." Blot growled, his servo blades raised.

"What are you doing, Terrorcons?! How dare you betray me?! I should...!"
Derodomontatus was snarling in absolute rage.

Blot turned his violet colored optics up to look at him in a dangerous way. "We ain't with you, Monty. We're with him." He said motioning to behind him and his Terrorcons at the Sharkticon that just barely came walking out, startling everyone.
Especially as his image began shifting and reforming until it was Jazz who stood there right next to Blot, helm held up high.

"Jazz!" Flo and several cried out happily.

Jazz smirked as he raised both of his arms, shifting them into his magnetizers and cannons. "Time ta pay the pip'a, Monty!" He shouted as he raised his weapons. "Let them go now and we won' kill ya!"

Derodomontatus growled and snarled as he glared down at them before he snapped his attention to all Bailiffs and Sharkticons. "DESTROY THEM ALL! NOW!" He bellowed.

The Bailiffs in the arena roared as they snapped their fists into the air before charging at the small group in the door way of the prison. They raised their electro spears and cannons, charging them to fire.

Just then, a pair of loud booming thuds came rushing out of the Gladiator corridor and blasts began firing at the Bailiffs, startling them as two very large Seekers came running out, cannons and large blades raised in the air. Dreadwing's large cannon was smoking as if it had been fired and it took only a moment to realize that he had been the one to fire at the Bailiff that was bound to execute Chromia. It must have been him who shot and killed the Bailiff.

Behind them, a flood of Cybertronians, alien beings and organics came running out, all armed with weapons.

"ATTACK! FIGHT FOR YOUR FREEDOM AND FOR LIBERTY!" Dreadwing roared as he met Bailiffs head on, swinging his blade and slashing into them.

It turned into complete chaos as a mighty battle broke out all around the Arena. Beings of all kinds began attacking and fighting the many Bailiffs and even Quintesson guards that came rushing in to fight back. The Arena was in an uproar of sound as Quintessons roared in shock and alarm, watching what was happening in front of them.

Derodomontatus snarled in rage before switching face to the other Judges. "We are under siege! Begin attacking back, telepathically! Bailiffs, Sharkticons, destroy all of them! Kill the Primes and the Princess of Primes!" He roared now concentrating on some of the now attacking slaves who fought for freedom. He paused for only a moment to look to the side before chuckling darkly.

If only he could smile, it would be evil.

"We have to fight! We can't just sit here doing nothing but watch!" Rodimus yelled over the now battle ridden Arena. He yelped when Bailiffs began to come at him and the others, weapons raised. "Slag!"

The Bailiff came at him, spear raised and swinging at him in his weaponless and helpless state, roaring as he began to attack.

Just before the Bailiff could strike, a large Sharkticon was there, snapping his massive jaws around the mechanical wannabe's arm, snapping it into two, sending black oil and orange alien blood spilling across the ground.

Everyone looked around, startled to see the Sharkticons now attacking the Bailiffs, joining in the battle against the Quintessons. They were actually now protecting the Cybertronians, fighting and now destroying Bailiffs. Many could only look on with surprise and awe as the Sharkticons began attacking fiercely and succeeding with beating some of the Bailiffs.
"What can I say?" Swindle spoke up smugly as he forced himself to his peds and shrugged. "I am the best swindler and dealer of all universes."

Lockdown smirked as he pushed himself to stand, along with everyone else. "And for that, I won't kill ya, Swindle. Not anymore. Now how do you reckon we get out of these?" He asked, holding up the stasis cuffed hook and servo.

"Allow me to rectify that, my good friend." A pair of voices spoke up. Everyone turned to see Blot walking over with Gemini, who had spoke as he raised a device. The two headed Quintesson smirked double at the space bounty pirate as he pressed a button on the device. There was a shrill beep before the stasis cuffs deactivated. "Stasis cuffs deactivated and tracker devices deactivated. You may arm your selves and begin fighting back with everything you have." It was Righty who spoke.

Everyone smirked as they looked around at one another before all at once, they ripped the cuffs from their wrists and their weapons began whirling to life. All at once, the Cybertronians snapped into action and began firing at the many Bailiffs and Quintesson guards all around them.

Surprisingly, even in the heat of battle, even the scraplets were attacking Bailiffs and Quintesson guards. They buzzed right through them, chewing rapidly into their circuitry and eating away until even their sparks were consumed by the little beasts. It was un-nerving to say but Sideswipe was all too glad that the little monsters were on his and his family's side. He watched some eat away a Bailiff until only a very small organic looking creature laid dead in the center of metal shards.

"Man, that thing looks like Gollum from Lord of the Rings." The red painted Front Liner said snickering. And then he heard a shrieking chirrup, forcing his head up to see where it was coming from. He felt his spark seize when he saw Derodomontatus holding up the little sparkling, Nightbeat over the balcony, looking ready to drop him in the thrashing, snarling battle below. If the fall didn't kill him, the battle below surely would. "No." The front liner whispered.

And then Derodomontatus let Nightbeat fall.

"NO!" Sideswipe yelled before bolting forward.

Never in his life, even for Sunriser, or rather Dawn, had Sideswipe moved so fast. He sped through the battling mass, diving, rolling so fast between Cybertronians and Bailiffs, optics trained only on the shrieking sparkling falling towards his doom.

It didn't seem like Sideswipe would make it though. He sped as fast as he could until he was nearly taken out by a Bailiff swinging his spear at him.

Schnink!

Immediately Sideswipe's ten foot blade was out and swinging at the Bailiff, slicing right through the spear and owner, ignoring the oil and energon that practically coated his frame as he zipped right through the two halves of his fallen enemy.

Suddenly, something collided with Sideswipe from behind, startling him as he felt claws wrap around his mid chassis and he was lifted from the ground.

"Whoa!" Sideswipe yelped before looking up as he felt something above him. He was startled to see the Predacon, Grimwing holding onto him, wings flapping rapidly and optics trained on the falling sparkling.

"Catch him as we pass under him!" Grimwing roared before jerking and spinning around with
Sideswipe tucked close to his body frame and facing upward.

Sideswipe was almost too startled to react but seeing Nightbeat suddenly right there, falling towards him, he reacted more quicker than he thought he would. He threw both hands out, deactivating his blades and caught the falling sparkling, pulling him close to his chassis in protection as Grimwing swung around again and dove for the more clear section of the Arena.

A writhing, crying sparkling struggled in Sideswipe's hands and arms, shrieking and whirling in fear. He didn't know who had him but his little spark felt like it was spazzing out from the sheer fear of the unknown.

"Shhhh! It's okay, Nightbeat. I got you!" Sideswipe said soothingly as Grimwing dropped down carefully with them both and released the front liner on his wheels. He wasted no time to bundle the writhing, terrified sparkling into his arms and made him look up at him. "Nightbeat, it's okay. It's okay. Shhhhh."

Slowly, Nightbeat stopped thrashing in his arms and looked up at Sideswipe, right blue optics blinking watery up at him.

Feeling his spark lighten, Sideswipe smiled as he began rocking the small sparkling, rolling back and forth on his wheels as he looked down at his sparkling. He saw that Sunriser hadn't been kidding that Nightbeat looked like him. He looked so much like him, actually. He was like a tiny, chibi-ish version of Sideswipe. But it seemed like that he definitely had Sunriser's optics. They matched hers perfectly.

"Hey." Sideswipe whispered, fully aware of Grimwing standing guard over them both. He didn't mind whatsoever. He just smiled down at his sparkling, his little mechling, rocking him softly as he looked him right in the optics. "Hi, little mech. It's me. Do you know who I am?"

Nightbeat blinked ever so innocently up at him before a small smile formed on his face and he reached up with tiny hands towards his face.

Smiling, Sideswipe raised him up until he felt the tiny hands lightly pawing at his face plates. He felt his spark nearly explode in happiness when he heard the familiar chirrup of the sparkling language. He barely remembered that word in Sparklingese but he knew it with his spark.

Nightbeat was calling him daddy.

"That's right, my little Nightbeat. It's me." Sideswipe said his voice bursting with happiness as he felt his spark reach out to the tiny little being's and felt the innocent touch of energy. He could feel his sparkling through the bond.

From the side, pushing through the battling mass, Sunriser had seen what happened with Nightbeat and had nearly had a spark rupture from watching what would have happened to Nightbeat if Sideswipe wouldn't have made it. But then Sideswipe and Grimwing had worked together and made a fantastic rescue for the Sparkling.

Once they landed, Sunriser was booking it towards them. She just wasn't prepared for the sight she would see, but in a good way. She saw Sideswipe holding Nightbeat in such a precious way, as if he really the sparkling's sire. It warmed her spark and she knew right then and there, he was who he said he was. Even without...

Suddenly the memories came rushing at her, making her gasp and look wide optic'd at the ground. She saw herself as a human named Dawn Adams. She saw her miserable time with an evil stepfather
named Chris Moxen. She saw herself meeting Sideswipe on Earth, in Krispy Kreme and falling in love with him. She saw herself becoming involved with the Autobots and the Decepticons. She remembered her wedding and being shot by her own father and then being reborn as Sunriser. She remembered being sparked by Sides and then the war against Unicron. And then being kidnapped by the Quintessons.

And she remembered having Nightbeat, in the prison cells. She remembered screaming as he was ripped from her arms from the Quintessons and was dragged to the Derezziation Chamber to be forced to forget her baby. She did remember taking care of him, with only the knowledge that he had no carrier or sire; the fake Quintesson High Lord telling her that they had died. She remembered caring for him, and even loving him as if he was her own, when truly, he was.

Still, she remembered Sideswipe and how desperately she missed him.

"Sideswipe." Sunriser whispered, her optics brightening as she gazed at him. She felt her spark reaching out towards him and swirl when he reacted, looking up sharply. She smiled brightly when he looked at her, surprised. "SIDES!" She cried happily before rushing at him.

Sideswipe brightened when he felt Sunriser's spark reaching out to him and smiled brightly when he saw her coming over to him. He managed to shuffle Nightbeat to the other side before catching his spark mate in his free arm, holding her close to him. He turned his head just in time to Cyber kiss her.

And did the sparks fly at that point for both of them. It was like a first kiss for them all over again.

Pulling away first, Sunriser looked lovingly up at Sides, smiling with optic fluid in her optics. "I remember everything now. I know you. And Nightbeat." She said emotionally as she looked down at her sparkling, lovingly. She gently took Nightbeat from his sire and held him close. "My sparkling, our baby. Oh, Night. You always knew who I was, even when I didn't, didn't you?" She cooed at the sparkling, who giggled and practically hugged her face as she rubbed it against him.

Sideswipe smiled as he held both of them, embracing them. He swore he was never going to let them go again.

Of course seeing a small silver Scraplet skitter up and around Sunriser's shoulder, he stiffened and stepped back, growling threateningly at it. He was not going to let this pest eat his mate and sparkling.

Sunriser frowned, glancing at the little scraplet that was just sitting on her shoulder before quickly raising a hand to stop Sideswipe from knocking it off her. "Sides, wait!" She said quickly.

"But that's a scraplet! It's a pest! It eats our kind!" Sideswipe said with a slight growl.

Smiling, Sunriser used her free hand to scratch the little 'pest's' ears, which purred and nuzzled her. "They were labeled pests, Sides. But they really aren't. If we don't hunt them and just feed them, they wouldn't hunt us. I learned that from Blot, who is just like them. Terrorcons are labeled as pests but they really aren't. Only few are safe like him, but if we let him handle them, they will be safe. Isn't that right, little scraplet?" She said cooing at the little bot.

The scraplet purred again as it nuzzled her before hopping down to Nightbeat and nuzzled him next.

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The scraplet purred again as it nuzzled her before hopping down to Nightbeat and nuzzled him next.

Only then, did Sideswipe relax and smile. He understood it by just seeing it. "Well, I'll be. I guess that's another thing I have learned." He said smiling before leaning in towards the scraplet as it looked at him. "Hey, thank you for your help. But I got this."

The scraplet purred at him before jumping down and joining his horde of scraplets to attack more
Quintesson guards.

Standing near the sparklings, guarding them from any danger, Jazz smiled as he brushed his hands free from any crystal remains from the memory crystal he had just crushed. He watched as Sunriser and Sideswipe and their sparkling was reunited. He was only too happy to be a part of their reunion. "That's one." Jazz said smiling as he pulled out four more crystals and looked over at the thrashing, fighting Dinobots that fought alongside their missing brother, Sludge. He dropped the crystals onto the ground and stomped down hard, shattering them. Then Jazz watched as the four Dinobots stiffened, their optics flashing as they immediately were returned of their memories before really jumping in to stop now Beowulves from attacking. It seemed that Derodomontatus was starting to get desperate if he called put the vicious organic alien wolves. "There's four. Now for the big show."

Jazz looked over to find Nemesis Prime and Elita One thrashing Bailiffs and Beowulves while helping Lockdown guard Derezz, seeing how he was still trapped in his cage and quite defenseless. Near them, he saw Prowl fighting Bailiffs and Quintesson guards with Izzy and Flo right under him, using him as cover. It was more than likely he told them to for their protection.

"All right, big guy!" Jazz finally spoke into his comm to his secret partner he allied with the night before. "Ya got Optimus' crystal in servo! You break it!"

-Not yet, Jazz. First, I am going to make my appearance.- A gravelly voice came back.

"Okay, whatev'a. But make it quick. Looks like the Quints are getting impatient." Jazz said back when he noticed the Quintesson Judges now joining in, attacking telepathically. He saw Derodomontatus, himself, making way towards Nemesis Prime and Elita One, his target probably being Derezz.

Sure enough, while fighting Bailiffs and Beowulves, Nemesis Prime let out a pained yell, sinking down to his knees. He was being terribly assaulted from within. He felt waves of sharp pain coursing through his processor as an energy as if blades were stabbing in every nerve in his frame. "Optimus!" Elita One cried before she too cried out in pain, as did Lockdown. They both fell to their knees, clutching their helms in pain.

Barely looking up, Nemesis turned a painful glare onto Derodomontatus as he approached them, looking very lethal and angry. The Dark Prime growled in between a cry of pain, hateful of the vicious five facer. "Dero...urg! Derodomontatus!" He snarled in pain.

Derodomontatus just glared back as he approached, sending more and more vicious waves of vicious energy into all three protecting his target. "You, Cybertronians, are a force of irritations! I have had enough of your insolence and interference! You will not stop me from destroying the one who would be in my way!" He snarled as he turned his attention onto Derezz, who glowered at him. "You will die here now!" He added as he pulled back all energy to attack the true High Lord.

Suddenly, there was a loud crashing thud behind Derodomontatus, making the five facer stiffen and flash on his back face to see who and what just landed behind him.

Only to get a clawed and spiked ped right in the face, sending the fake High Lord spinning away from Nemesis and Elita.

Elita One looked up, only to freeze with shock at who she saw. She couldn't believe her optics. There was no way what, or rather who she was seeing was truly there. It couldn't be true.
But nonetheless, that largely built, powerful frame of rust silver and burning red optics stood up straight and full of pride, smirking in the direction of where Derodomontatus crashed against one of the Arena walls, spinning and thrashing to upright himself to see who just attacked him like that.

Not so surprisingly, though, one of Derodomontatus' faces was completely smashed, no doubt destroyed from getting kicked like a human soccer ball. It was sparking and completely useless at this point.

Derodomontatus turned to snarl, somewhat painfully at the attacker. "HOW DARE YOU, YOU PITIFUL CYBERTRONIAN! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU...!" He was roaring.

"The name that you shall always remember from now on of your existence is Megatron, foolish five facer! And I am High Lord Protector of Primacron, who sent me as a message to you!" The large former tyrant growled as he stood tall, his voice booming over the Arena, startling some of the Decepticons, if not all of them, into looking shocked at their former leader. "You are done here!" Megatron added, grinning at him as he raised two servos, one full of a nasty serrated blade.

And the other, Optimus Prime's memory crystal, which he threw down hard against the ground so it would shatter on impact.
The Final Stand

Chapter Notes

Songs Best Used:
Superhero-Simon Curtis
Under Pressure-Pink and the Rhythm Nation
Some Nights-Fun
The Last Stand-Two Steps From Hell
Orion-Two Steps From Hell
A Final Hope-Audiomachine

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The shattering of the memory crystal was almost deafening throughout the entire Arena. Almost everyone heard it and saw it, but it was mostly Megatron that everyone was gaping at until they realized they were still in a battle with Beowulves, who kept attacking, not caring of what was happening around them.

Everyone was forced to return to fighting and protecting their selves and loved ones.

With Elita One and Lockdown still guarding Derezz, they watched in an almost awestruck manner as Nemesis Prime suddenly stopped writhing from telepathic pain and slowly lift his head to look straight at Derodomontatus.

His optics were no longer flaming red but calm, cool blue, narrowed in serious debate as Optimus Prime slowly rose to his peds, standing up tall and full of pride. "Derodomontatus, you have done serious wrong here. Megatron is right. It ends here." He spoke in his usual calm but serious way. He only just barely glanced side wards at the smirking towering figure next to him, both standing side by side. "Megatron." He greeted. "Do I even dare ask?"

Megatron grinned as he looked back at his once nemesis, nodding his spiky helm. "Primacron released my spark from the Other Realms, back into my newly repaired shell of a frame. I am clear processed, Optimus, my old friend. I am no longer bound to the maddening virus that Unicron even downloaded into my systems. Truth be told, I would be Megatronus again. But it seems Megatron has a better ring to than my original name. I like it more." He stated.

Optimus hummed in amusement. "I see, my old friend and brother. So you are clear of mind then. How did you know we were in trouble? And how did you get here? I am sure the Quintessons would have picked up a stranger's ship when you entered their system." He said frowning again.

Again, Megatron grinned before tossing his servo over his shoulder in a casual way. "All questions really can be answered by one Prime, Optimus. The ONLY Prime that can see through the telepathy of the Quintessons. Him." He said simply.

Blinking, Optimus turned slightly to see who or what Megatron was talking about only to see a figure standing on top of the Arena walls, looking down. "What?" He asked in surprise, turning fully now to see the figure better.

The mech, the freakishly tall, powerful built mech standing on the Arena, watching all was dark in
color, almost as if he was darkest reaches of space, itself. He had many shimmering white splotches, like distant stars all over his frame. And he held a very long staff in one hand, nestled directly beside him.

But as if sensing optics on him, a pair of blue moon optics turned to meet Optimus'.

From where he stood so far below the Prime, Optimus felt the signature of another Prime. He had never seen this mech before but he knew the name just by meeting those optics. "Vector Prime, the Guardian Prime of Space and Time." He murmured softly before dipping his head in respect of one of the oldest Cybertronians alive. "I was unaware of his existence. I thought he was lost to all." He added to Megatron.

Megatron clapped a servo against Optimus' shoulder, smiling. "That is what we all thought of Primus and Unicron, remember, brother? He has always been standing watch over all of us. In the deepest reaches of space and time. No one knew if he truly existed, Optimus. Truth be told, he has always been there with us since the war broke out between us. He actually has been guiding us all the entire time. He is the one who directed the All Spark to Earth, because he knew that was the place the war would break. It was him who directed the All Spark energy back to Elita One and to your Autobots on Cybertron. The energy would have never made it to Cybertron as fast as it did. Vector Prime opened a Time and Space Bridge directly to her to let the All Spark energy affect her and those who came back like they did. It was is all him. He was the one who made the Space Bridges stable for your to fight against Unicron and Galvatron. It was his steady hand that guided you and your Autobots. He was there the entire time." He explained.

Even as Optimus dipped his head in respect to the older Prime, he saw a slight incline of the Prime Guardian's mouth before the nod of respect was returned.

Suddenly, an explosion made everyone in the battle flinch and jump and they all looked up to see a Quintesson battleship now floating into view, now firing smaller blasts at the rebels fighting against them.

"Looks like Commander Sevax decided to join Derodomontatus then." Megatron growled, glaring up at the ship as blasts tore apart some of the other Cybertronian slaves and nearly clipping some fighting humans.

Optimus felt his vents stall in horror as he watched a young Cybertronian he did not know be blasted into pieces. "We must stop that ship! It could destroy us all if we don't." He said urgently, now stepping forward as if he could do something.

But Megatron reached out without even looking at him and placed a servo on his shoulder. "Do not worry. Did you honestly think I did not plan this to happen? We have our own power air cover." He said before thrusting his blade into the air. "Attack, Predacons!" He roared, his voice echoing off everything.

Many who heard him, froze, the one Predacon next to Sunriser, Sideswipe and Nightbeat having the most affect. His head had snapped up, wings tense as he looked up at the sky.

And sure, there was a commanding roar just out of view before a very large serpentine beast flew into view, diving straight for the ship. All around the huge dragon like mech, many beings of mythical frames dove for the ship, fire blasting from their mouths and blasts from cannons in their sides.

"Predaking?! But I thought he wasn't going to come to Quintessa!" Elita One said in surprise as she watched the large dragon blew massive waves of fire towards the battleship.
Megatron chuckled as he glanced over at her. "I can be very persuasive when I truly want to be, Elita One." He simply said in amusement. "And all I said to him was he was a coward for abandoning one of his own for his own frame. He really wasn't happy about that and was determined to prove me wrong."

"My king." Grimwing spoke in reverence from where he stood, looking at the horde of Predacons that were attacking the ship.

"I guess you were right, Grimwing." Sunriser said as she caressed his side with her hand. She shared a smile with Sideswipe and the Predacon. "Your king did come for you."

Grimwing looked at her, his wings twitching in excitement now. He was yearning to join his kind in battle bit did not want to leave the family of three unguarded.

Sideswipe, smiled, as if guessing his anxiety, and nodded as he placed a hand on the Predacon's back, rubbing it gently. "Go, Grimwing. You protected my mate and sparkling as best as you could long enough. Go, join yours." He told him.

Grimwing smiled back before bumping Sideswipe with his wing before leaping into the air with a terrifying loud shriek and flew fast into the air to join his King and their kind in battle. As he flew into the masses of beasts, the Gryphon beast met the large dragon's flaming golden optics. They both smiled pleasantly and in respect of one another before they let out a roar of a battle cry and dove towards the ship with their masses.

It did not help whatsoever, that another Quintesson battle ship showed up and began blasting Predacons out of the air. It was firing rapid blasts, shooting some of them down.

Predaking snarled, whirling around to glare right at the cockpit, seeing a Quintesson Commander in the seat and a human next to him.

Suddenly there was a resounding blast and the battleship rocked viciously as it was struck by the blast. Everyone looked up to see the large ship that had just approached. They were pleased to see it because it was a Cybertronian ship.

It was The Ark.

Optimus Prime and the others smiled brightly and full of relief to see it.

"The Ark! What is it doing here?! I thought it was back at the Alpha Beta Space Station!" Sunstreaker cried out happily.

"It must have been when Lockdown was going to leave us at the Equinox Beta Space Port." Prowl said smiling as he looked up at it. "We called for help but then Lockdown changed his processor to help us. We never called them back to cancel."

Optimus nodded with a proud smile. He heard a light ping from The Ark and opened transmissions to receive word. "Hello, Blaster. I am so glad to hear from you." He said proudly.

-Yeah, we were wondering what was going on when we arrived Equinox Beta Space port and you weren't there. We were starting to think something bad happened.- Blaster replied. -It was confirmed when we received a transmission from Cybertron, from Primacron that he was sending reinforcements because you guys disappeared from his visions. Boy, were we all shocked when Megatron stepped through the Space Time Bridge.-

Optimus Prime chuckled, glancing at the smirk on Megatron's face. "Yes, he quite surprised us as
well." He said in amusement.

-If it wasn't for The Primes being with him, we would have opened fire on him.- Mirage's voice came over the line.

Optimus blinked in surprise. "The Primes?" He asked.

-We are here as well, without the exception of Magnus Prime and Nexus Prime. They stayed back with Primacron to watch over Earth and Cybertron.- Now came Alpha Prime's voice.

Optimus and Elita shared enthusiastic smiles as they were pleased to hear Alpha's voice. They figured that even Solace Prime was there. And they were never more happy to hear from them than they were now. They could hear in the background of the Vehicon Leader, Steve barking orders to continue firing upon the Quintesson battleship, taking command of the situation of battle.

It did not go un-shown that everyone forgot Derodomontatus. He had taken advantage of everyone's distraction to gather up a powerful telepathic strike and blast it out like a sonic wave.

Every Cybertronian and mechanical being in the Arena's range felt it and no one went unsuffered.

Several shrieked, falling to their knees, clutching their heads in pain, writhing at the internal pain that coursed through their systems. Cybertronians and organics all alike. It only grew tenfold when Derodomontatus' followers joined in with the attacks. It was like a tight pressure in their heads, crushing, banging painfully and growing worse. Even Gemini and the Sharkticons were suffering. Even the Bailiffs and the Beowulves howled in pain.

Only few did not suffer.

Derezz, two Quintesson Judges, Trent, Soundwave and the Prime watching overall still stood, looking around in alarm and worry at all being assaulted.

"I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO TAKE AWAY MY POWER AND EMPIRE!"
Derodomontatus roared as he pressed painful telepathy into all around him.

"AHHHH! SOU-SOUNDBAVE! DO IT! DO IT NOW! RELEASE THE MEMORIES!" Elita One cried as she writhed, clutching her helm from the pain.

Soundwave shot her a quick glance before opening his subspace compartment and pulling out the memory crystal he had hidden there. He growled, tentacles wavering in the air as he curled them protectively around his subunits and Maximum Wave, even though they were crying out in pain. "DERODOMONTATUS!" He roared.

Derodomontatus flashed on his face that was facing him, glaring mirthlessly. "WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOU PITIFUL...!" He was snarling only to halt in alarm to see what was in his servos. "No..."

Soundwave glared fiercely at him, visor burning in resolution as he held up the crystal higher above his head, one tentacle pulling back like a scorpion's tail. "Now, you will be the one to suffer." He growled in a low voice that was almost hard to hear but Derodomontatus heard it nonetheless due to the large telepath pushing the words telepathically.

And the tentacle snapped forwards, striking the memory crystal viciously until it shattered and fell around him.

There was a low sonic boom in the air and surprisingly, a wave of energy blew past all around
Soundwave. It was like a powerful gust of wind blowing right through the frames until it swirled all around the caged Derezz.

The Quintesson, in question, flashed on all five pairs of his optics, all blindingly bright. His entire frame was stiff, the four clawed appendages not even moving in a twitch like before. It was like he completely stalled, but did not offline because of his brightly lit optics. The light grew brighter until he was practically engulfed in it.

Suddenly, Derezz moved, his main pair of optics flashing brightly while the others died down. He looked slightly different now that the light had died. There was a short, sharp point directly on top of his helm, as if it had grown there. It was like a small crown, like Derodomontatus'.

"DERODOMONTATUS!" A deep, but powerful voice boomed from Derezz, startling all around him. It certainly halted all Quintessons from attacking any more. The cage around him shimmered before falling offline completely, allowing the Quintesson to hover out, glaring at the false High Lord.

It surprised all Cybertronians, humans and alien beings to see a pair of mismatched optics were now lit. One was a golden hue and the other, brilliant white silver, and all of the pairs of optics were the same.

Derodomontatus snarled as he hovered backwards away from the true High Lord. "No! You cannot...you are not Kledji! You are not the High Lord! I am! I am High Lord! And I will not allow you to interfere with my power!" He roared back as he concentrated on a telepathic attack, sending it flying at the Quintesson High Lord.

It struck Derezz, or rather, Kledji, making him flinch back, growling in pain before he turned his own telepathy and locked it right on Derodomontatus.

Upon impact of the mixed telepathy, there was a vibrating boom and a clear wall of energy shimmered into view around both of them. They were no doubt locked in a heated battle of telepathy, both frames shaking and growling as they glared at one another.

But to everyone's shock, Derezz, or Kledji hissed, starting to sink down as three of the other Quintesson Judges hovered right into the bubble of telepathic energy and Derodomontatus chuckled darkly as he pressed closer the True High Lord.

"What's happening?" Elita One asked in alarm.

Megatron snarled in irritation and anger as he stood by Optimus and the Femme Commander, shaking his head. "By the looks of it, Derodomontatus and his minions are gaining up on Lord Kledji! COWARDS!" He snarled in disgust.

-Derodomontatus and his three following Judges are using this as their advantage! Your friend, Derezz has only just remembered his true self! It has been so long since he even used the full potential of his power! He is still weakened from the memory transfer!- Alpha Prime said quickly through the transmissions. -They are going to rip Kledji's processor apart!-

Everyone stiffened at that news. They knew if that if Kledji failed to beat them back, it would be their greatest loss in two different ways.

One, Kledji was the True High Lord and the only hope of peace between Cybertron and Quintessa. Two, as Derezz, he had become very close friends with a lot of the Autobots and Decepticons.
"We have to do something! He is our friend! We have to help him!" Trent cried out from where he stood.

-We cannot interfere! Trying to get past that telepathy shield would rip our processors and minds a part. There is a great force of telepathy at work down there!- came Solace Prime's voice through the transmission. -Only a powerful telepath can enter!-

Immediately optics and eyes widened in realization before snapping to the only powerful telepath they knew.

Soundwave had straightened completely to his full height before he released Maximum Wave and his subunits, now storming forward. He paused only for a moment when his sparkmate clutched onto his arm.

"Soundwave, be careful. Come back to us whole." Max told him with a smile.

Soundwave smiled back s he gently caressed Maximum Wave's face with one of his appendages before turning stonily towards the telepathic battle. He rose mental barriers as he lumbered towards it, full of determination.

And then he passed right through the mental barrier, wincing at the pressure of the telepathy that came crashing and rolling over his frame. He had to curl his long, powerful arms around himself, bracing himself before turning his burning visor onto the shaking, vibrating Quintessons locked in battle.

Narrowing his optics under his visor, Soundwave pressed into the heat of telepathy, his processor snapping wide open and full of blackness as he entered the mind of battles.

There was nothing of the outside world now that he saw. Only darkness surrounding him and even the Quintessons. He heard and felt the sonic booms of mind attacks all around him and eventually, with his inner processor's optics, he saw Derodomontatus and his three followers attacking Kledji, who was almost completely down on a sightless ground. He was being crushed by the telepathic colors of power.

Vicious red energy from Derodomontatus and his followers were pressing against Kledji, crushing him down and making it so hard for him to be able to get back up.

Optics narrowing again, Soundwave pulled in his own telepathic energy before snapping them out like snapping whips at the four Quintessons attacking Kledji. The energy snapped against them hard and fast causing all four to roar in pain and stop their assault on the High Lord.

"You!" Derodomintatus snarled at the sight of Soundwave. "How dare you interfere...!"

Soundwave growled as he sent tendrils of mental power to swirl around Kledji so he could gather himself. He turned a glare back to Derodomontatus and his followers, still growling. "The fact that you are attacking one with three others is cowardice. It shows how despicable you are. I will interfere until you make it fair." He said firmly.

Derodomontatus just growled before snapping his appendages at Soundwave, barking at his other three fellows to attack him.

Immediately, the three Quintessons began moving towards the large Cybertronian, spreading out so they could circle him. They waved their appendages around, sending testing mental waves at him,
probably trying to find a weak spot in his defenses.

Soundwave smirked inwardly at those actions, dipping his head down. He wished them luck, due to them needing it. He had worked with Derezz on Death's Head, training in the mentality so he knew fairly well what was about to happen. He knew by memory how the Quintessons would act and then attack him.

And so he waited, deflecting the energy attacks away from him. He knew it was a matter of seconds before the first would strike out harder...

Suddenly, the one not in his general direction struck out, now pushing his telepathy in a strong wave towards the large telepath's direction. It almost worked if Soundwave's guard had not been up.

Soundwave immediately had his guard turned towards that one, a mental shield blocking the attack before another shot up when one of the other two shot an energy wave at him. He easily blocked both before whipping up another block as the third attacked. He now had all three pressing at his blocks, trying to force their way in.

Mental energy curled inwards towards Soundwave before he blew it out again in a powerful push towards the three, sending vicious tendrils striking out at the Quintessons.

Like snapping whips, Soundwave's mental tendrils struck all three, striking at their very cores. All three snarled in pain before drawing back, almost cowering. They had not expected such power behind this Cybertronian's telepathy. They were surprised by his ability, skill and power and much like cowards they usually were, all three backed down, not wanting to feel those mental whips again.

With Derodomontatus and Kledji, the two Quintessons were circling one another, appendages wavering all around them as each growled and glared.

"You should have stayed away, Kledji. You should have just remained as Derezz, in your exile. But no. You just had to come crawling back." Derodomontatus growled as he sent a few testing snaps of mental energy at his enemy.

Kledji, in all purpose possible, deflected the telepathic snaps easily as he glared right back. "Derodomontatus, you have betrayed me first hand. You could not be pleased with my decision to sought out peace with the Cybertronians. Did you not learn anything from that dark war we fought against The Primes? The resistance of the Cybertronian will was strong. They valued freedom when we tried to enslave them, to eradicate them." He growled back, keeping his defenses up.

"THEY WERE SPAWN OF PRIMUS! WE WERE OF UNICRON! IF YOU REMEMBER RIGHT, IT WAS YOU WHO DECIDED TO TURN AGAINST HIM! IT WAS YOU WHO WHISPERED AND REMINDED HIM OF HIS GREED AGAINST PRIMUS! IT WAS YOU WHO CONVINCED HIM TO CREATE HIS OWN PRIME! I ONLY BUT FOLLOWED YOUR WISHES AND ORDERS! I STOOD BESIDE YOU, AS DID ALL THAT YOU CREATED TO CREATE THE MOST POWERFUL CIVILIZATION! WE SHOULD BE THE RULERS OF ALL UNIVERSES!" Derodomontatus roared as he finally began snapping out telepathic attacks at his former High Lord.

Kledji put up all defenses and tried to hold up his mental barriers as his former subordinate continued to batter against them, meaning him harm and destruction. He could only shake his entire frame, as if shaking his head. "You have learned nothing then." He simply said, surprisingly calm as he was being attacked.

"LEARN WHAT?! WHAT WAS THERE TO LEARN?!" Derodomontatus snarled.
Kledji looked at the other Quintesson, almost sympathetic of his confusion and rage. "The battle between myself and Alpha showed me something we never realized, Derodomonatus. It was Alpha Prime who showed me as we battled for domination." He paused, keeping the mental shields up. "It was Life. Primus was offering us a peaceful life, even if we were abominations of Unicron. Even though we were created from jealousy, hate and anger." He said softly. "He offered me, through Alpha Prime, peace and life. He forgave me for trying to destroy his creations. He wanted us to co-exist."

Derodomontatus paused in his attacks, as if surprised before unfurling hatred and rage bubbled hot red all around him. All five pairs of optics flashed on as he uncurled his telepathy, shooting it to surround Kledji to crush against his defenses. "We are the Superiors! We should be the rulers of the Gods! We are more powerful! They should bow down to us!" He snarled hatefully, now pressing all energy against Kledji's shields.

Again, Kledji shook his frame, remaining irritatingly calm for being attacked. "You have become blinded with all of Unicron's rage, hate and greed, Derodomonatus. The power you stole from me that was granted from our Creator God has left you empty of spark." He said almost sorrowfully. "I will give you one last chance, Derodomonatus. End your hate and greed. Surrender to peace and light and allow me to take my place as true High Lord so I can put things to right."

"NEVER! I AM THE TRUE HIGH LORD! NOT YOU! AND WHEN I FINISH YOU, I WILL LEAD THE QUINTESSON EMPIRE TO ALL CORNERS OF THE UNIVERSE AND TAKE EVERYTHING WE SHALL RULE! I WILL DESTROY THAT PITIFUL WORLD OF CYBERTRON AS THOSE DISGUSTING PARASITES THAT THE GODS PROTECT! I WILL BE THE MOST POWERFUL AND FEARED HIGH LORD ANY SPECIES OF SENTIENCE HAS COME TO SEE! THEY ARE NOTHING AND SOON, I WILL MAKE ALL WHO REBELS AGAINST ME BE SO!" Derodomonatus roared now pouring hate and malice of all sorts into his telepathic attacks on Kledji, finding a weak point in the shields.

Kledji hissed a little as he felt poisonous energy seeking through his defenses, burning like invisible acid against his own. "You really have been poisoned from greed and hate. And you wish to spread that poison so to consume all." He suddenly grew serious and firm, keeping his shields up, even though small tendrils were lashing through his barriers. "It is you who should be called the Chaos Bringer, not Unicron. You wish for an apocalypse upon all life and sentience. To consume all and become the gluttonous eater of life." He shook, now preparing himself with a cocoon of telepathy swirling around him like a twister of visible energy. "I will forever regret this day, Derodomonatus, for failing you. I regret feeding you your jealousy of power and anger of corrupted greed of creation. I failed to realize too late that we are equal with sentient life and it was you who suffered the most. I apologize with the deepest of my ember that I left you hurt, betrayed by myself."

"SHUT UP AND JUST DIE, KLEDJI!" Derodomonatus snarled as he pressed harder against the High Lord's telepathic shields, now starting to break it down with all of his rage, hate and poisonous envy.

Kledji's optics, all five pairs, flashed brilliantly of gold and silver, as he curled in his telepathic energy, preparing for the ill sated attack. "Derodomonatus, it is my fault that things have become so dark for all Quintessons and even yourself. I regret this moment but I cannot allow you to extinguish treasured life and the peace that the Quintesson Civilization deserves. I am deeply sorry."

And he suddenly dropped his defenses and let go of all telepathic energy he withheld.

The energy shot out of Kledji like an solar flare, spitting out in an explosive cloud until it consumed Derodomonatus.
There was a hateful, pained screech of five voices of baritone as Derodomontatus was engulfed by a surprisingly peaceful wave of energy. Brilliant white and silver strings of visible energy swirled around him, making it impossible for Soundwave and the three Quintessons to see the five faced frame in the center.

A blinding silver white light forced all to shutter their optics closed as they watched the energy become so brilliant that they were completely blinded.

And then...it went completely silent.

A gentle force of energy that Soundwave or the three Quintessons touched them, pushing against them and it took only but a moment to realize that they were being urged to leave the telepathic battlefield. It was obviously Kledji, due to him speaking to them, requesting them to back out.

Not really wanting to face what caused all of the white out of the processors, the three Quintessons were quick to retreat.

Soundwave hesitated, peering curiously at Kledji as he hovered near a great white cloud of energy that was where Derodomontatus had been.

"It is well, Soundwave. There is just something I must face alone. I greatly thank you for your assistance and I desire to keep the friendship you have created with Derezz. I am now forever in your debt of gratitude for helping me." Kledji spoke through telepathic thoughts. "But for now, I must face this part of the telepathic battle alone."

Soundwave nodded in understanding as he began retreating from the telepathic field. It went dark for a moment as he closed off his telepathy before rebooting his optics behind his visor, rather quickly when he heard an explosion.

Looking around, Soundwave was treated to a horrible sight. He saw that even while he battled in the telepathic field, the battle outside had not stopped. He saw a lot of Cybertronians, Quintessons and Predacons were deactivated and his fellow Cybertronians were still fighting against Quintessons. They were still alive and fighting but not without injuries.

But they were starting to wear down.

The whole lot of remaining Cybertronians; All of the Autobots, Decepticons, Sharkticons, slaves, and organics were practically pushed into a corner of the Arena with the Quintessons keeping there, attacking fiercely.

Even at that point, Vector Prime had joined in the battle. He was standing side by side with Optimus, Sentinel and Rodimus with Megatron hacking away viciously at any Quintesson that attacked in close range. Soundwave saw that even the ancient but well skilled Kup was down to one knee, energon flowing down his side from a gash that a Quintesson had placed on him. Elita One, Glyph and Tap-Out were standing by him, with Skywarp close by, protecting the injured old mech.

All were fighting bravely but wearily. The Predacons were losing numbers fast from the Quintesson battleships but it made it much easier to survive with The Ark defending them and putting a good offense on them at the same time. Even Vehicon fliers were out in the air now, helping the Predacons.

It was a sure fierce battle but even with strong numbers of free mecha and slaves, they were starting to lose.
Suddenly there was a shriek among all of the fights that caught Soundwave's attention. He also felt a nasty tug at his spark, a threatening notion that one of his subunits, one of his children was dangerously injured.

Whipping his head around, the large telepath found Maximum Wave in a far corner, surrounded by all of his subunits.

All but one.

His oldest, Ravage.

No, Ravage was in Maximum Wave's arms, spilling too much energon to be healthy. His side was sparking madly from a large chunk, making it look like something big bite out of him.

And judging by the Beowulves pressing down on his family, it was no doubt to Soundwave that was what happened.

Soundwave immediately reacted, charging at the Beowulves with a loud roar of rage with his many glowing appendages thrashing out at the organic pack. He caught some of them in his grasp and took the opportunity to rip them in two while others were thrown hard away across the arena.

It was like Soundwave was pissed off bull, charging full head into the pack of Beowulves and throwing them in many directions. He roared as he ripped and threw the wild alien wolves in many directions before there was none left.

Once that was done, Soundwave was immediately at Maximum Wave's side, gathering his oldest into his many arms and holding him close.

The cyberpanther was twitching and whining in pain, his optic flickering threateningly.

"Ravage!" Soundwave crowed in pain, feeling the flickering bond to his oldest creation. He knew that Ravage did not have much time left before his spark extinguished. "Ravage, stay with us."

Ravage lift his head and looked up at him with a flickering optic. "Cre-ZAP-Creator..." he whimpered and shook. "I...*crackle*...I am so-sorry...I wasn't st-strong enough...I wasn't..."

Soundwave whirled in pain as he pulled him closer and tight to his chassis, his glowing appendages wrapping around the feline. "No, you are strong enough. And you're not leaving us. You are staying right with us!" He demanded.

Ravage gave a pitiful low whine as his frame twitched. "I...I can't...I feel my systems...*ZAP!*...shut-shutting down...I...don't want to leave...I want to live...I want...Creator!" He groaned weakly, his optic flickering madly now. He was starting to see white static and warning alerts popping up on his HUD.

Soundwave hissed as he felt Ravage staring to shake and rattle. He tightened his grip on the oldest subunit, pulling him up to his faceplates and pressing his forehelm against the flickering optic. "Ravage...my oldest sparkling...do not desist. Stay." He whispered, painfully.

"...*crackle!*...Creator...I wa-want...them to...know now...I want the...tru-truth...to be known...war...over...let them...know...let him...know...that...my spark...was...his..." Ravage whispered before his frame twitched and then went still.

Soundwave felt the flicker of pain in his spark as the bond began to break. He felt the stabbing pain and he was sure that the other subunits felt it too. He heard Frenzy screech and cry as he leapt into
Maximum Wave's arms, who was sobbing with the bird twins on her shoulders, pressing ever so close to her. Rumble and Ratbat both moved close to their creator and pressing shaking frames against him.

There was a maddening, painful silence other than the whirling and clicking sobs of the subunits and Max.

Soundwave off lined his optics and pressed his face into Ravage's now still frame. His spark was throbbing in such pain and grief and yet, he remained silent. The only proof of his pain and grief of the loss of his oldest was his frame shaking.

"Soun-Soundwave..." Maximum cried softly as she moved closer to him, still clutching onto Frenzy. She pressed her frame against his wide back and wrapped her free arm around him, clutching onto him. "I am so sorry, Handsome. I am so, so sorry."

Soundwave only shook his frame as he held Ravage's frame tightly against him before his other appendages curled around himself, Maximum Wave and his creations.

It was only when he heard threatening growls approaching did he online his optics and turned a burning glare onto Beowulves now stalking towards him and his family. He growled viciously and was slowly joined by his mate and creations, all glaring threateningly at the six Beowulves now surrounding them.

"Get the fuck away from us, you beasts!" Maximum Wave snarled as she pulled slightly away from Soundwave and raised a burning cannon blaster to aim at the beasts.

The Beowulves snarled and crouched low to the ground, looking ready to spring into an attack on the family unit. The closest one was inching forward, baring rows of sharp crooked, energon and blood stained fangs.

Suddenly there was a dull vibration in the air as Soundwave's visor flashed dangerously before a visible wave of energy exploded outward from him and around his mate and creations, striking the Beowulves.

It could not be heard by human ears but a very shrill whistle, enhancing by invisible sound struck the Beowulves' pointed ears and sent each and every one of them yelping and yipping as they jerked back and began writhing on the ground. Some of them began rubbing their heads against the arena floor, scrubbing them as if to stop the shrill sound. Some of their ears even began to leak orange blood, pooling and smearing against the floor.

It took Maximum only a moment to realize that it was Soundwave who was responsible and she knew she shouldn't have been surprised.

Just then, a heavy hammer slammed down on one of the Beowulves, crushing it before the slender form of Solace Prime landed in a crouch next to it, gripping the long handle.

Soundwave immediately turned off his shrill sonic blast so it would not assault her next. He just watched as she and Alpha Prime began thrashing the remaining Beowulves until they no longer breathed.

Then the ancient pair approached him and his family, looking grave and sorrowful when they saw Ravage's still frame.

Alpha Prime dipped down in front of Soundwave, meeting his visor with his golden gaze as he slowly reached towards the feline. "Soundwave, I am sorry. May I see her closely? Perhaps wish her
He asked softly.

It did not go un-noticed what he said and Maximum Wave's head snapped up as she looked at Soundwave in surprise. "She?!!" She asked in alarm.

Slowly, Soundwave dipped his head into a nod as he loosened his grip on Ravage so that Alpha Prime could see the feline. He, instead, looked straight at Maximum Wave, his visor sliding up to reveal his pained, slightly wet optics. "Ravage...it was her decision to go into the pretense of a mech. For protection of herself in the beginnings of the war. We were planning to reveal her true nature when all battles ceased." He spoke ever so softly.

Maximum Wave stared in shock, the words piercing her mind as she took it all in. She noticed that even the other subunits were looking stunned, so even they had not known. "Ravage...he's a she?! She is a female?!" She asked startled.

Soundwave slowly nodded as he looked sorrowfully back at the feline in his arms, watching as Alpha Prime slowly caressed his eldest's head, trailing his hand down to her chassis where her spark chamber was hidden within. "Ravage sparked femme. When the war on Cybertron, we knew it was a danger to her to known as femme. She asked me to remodel her frame into a mech's. It was her choice. But her spark...it is white like a femme's spark." He whispered weakly.

Maximum Wave's optics dimmed in great stress and sadness before she moved forward quickly and wrapped her arms around him, hugging him tightly. "Oh, Soundwave, why didn't you tell me?" She asked her voice thick of emotion.

Soundwave turned his head so he could press it against hers in his grief. "Ravage's choice. She wanted none to know the truth until all battles and wars were over." He spoke softly.

"I understand." Maximum Wave said softly as she pressed her head against his. She paused, her optics slowly lighting up. "She was talking about Cheetor, wasn't she? That he had her spark, doesn't he?"

Again, Soundwave slowly nodded as he looked into her optics. "Ravage's spark yearned for Autobot Cheetor's spark shortly before war ended on Earth. She did not want him to know in understanding of how he would take it. It would be...awkward." he said grimacing.

Maximum Wave couldn't help but laugh and cry at the same time, fresh optical fluid now running down from her optics. "I bet. For Cheetor to find out that his new best friend was actually a girl and she had the hots for him..." her voice trailed off with a soft sob. "Oh...Cheetor. This is going to kill him. What are we going to say to him when we return to Earth and Cybertron?"

"Well, for one, you won't have to say anything." Alpha Prime said now chuckling as he held his hand against Ravage's chassis.

Both Soundwave and Maximum Wave snapped their optics onto the old Prime in surprise and confusion. They didn't understand. What did he mean? And why was he...smiling?!

Alpha Prime smiled softly at the grieving pair before turning to look at Solace as she stepped closer, her enormous hammer resting on her shoulder. "Solace, my love. You know what I speak of." He then gently wrapped his arms around Ravage, looking softly and encouraging to Soundwave. "Soundwave, you must look deeper into Ravage's frame. Her spark is still there. Barely flickering. She is fighting to stay inside her terribly damaged frame. You must let go. Solace can fix her. She can save your daughter." He said softly.
Alarmed, Soundwave turned his attention back to his eldest's frame and looked hard and closely into her systems.

And sure enough, he felt the lightest of flicker of life still there.

Barely lit, the spark still was flickering but slowly starting to die. Ravage's spark was indeed fighting to stay connected in the spark chamber. It was latching onto everything and anything, trying so hard not to become detached.

Immediately, Soundwave pulled his arms back from Ravage, relinquishing her to Alpha Prime. "Save her, please, my oldest Prime." He begged softly.

Alpha Prime smiled and nodded as he tightened his hold onto Ravage and turned towards Solace as she hefted up her forge. He gently set Ravage's frame back down on the ground and moved back to give his mate some room. "Do it, love. Recreate and repair life as you do," He spoke firmly as he stood tall and proud.

Solace Prime smirked as she hefted her hammer high above her head. "With pleasure, love." She said strongly before giving her jammer a mighty swing and bringing it down hard on Ravage.

An loud boom and an explosion of light blinded Soundwave, Maximum Wave and the subunits and even everyone in the arena. All flinched at the sound and brilliance of the light, stopping all battles. All optics turned to see what was happening only to flinch at the brilliant light. Some even had to raise their arms to shield their optics and eyes because of how bright it was.

All they saw was a great bright white light surrounding Solace Prime and her forge of creation.

A resonating vibration echoed in the air, bouncing off arena walls and a gentle humming lullaby filled the air. It was so gentle and reassuring, so soft and full of hope. It felt like the gentle melody of song began touching sparks and even organic hearts.

All could feel a presenting touch of life in the air. It was almost sacred and soothing. Everyone, Cybertronian, Organic and even Quintesson could feel a great work happening.

And then, slowly, the light died, showing Solace Prime lifting her hammer with ease and settling it onto her shoulder once again, a gentle smile on her face.

"Rise, sparkling. Open your optics and see what has been renewed and recreated." The Femme Prime spoke ever so softly yet firmly.

The frame of Ravage, which was surprising different now, remained still.

Everyone looking could see that the feline of a Cyberpanther was still dark in color but more like dark silver with black markings and perhaps even spots ran across her frame. They could see that Ravage was more slender and not so largely bulky as before. And now, instead of one optic, there were two narrow shaped optics, though they were still dark of being off line.

However, slowly, dim red appeared in the optics and slowly flicked like new embers, turning almost golden red as they lit up. They were literately like flames within her helm.

Slowly, Ravage lift her head and looked around, confused before she looked over at Soundwave. "Creator?" She rasped out, halting in surprise at the sound of her own, very female voice.

Nonetheless, everyone who heard her speak blinked in surprise.
"Dude, why does Ravage sound like a girl?" Sam asked in alarm.

From beside him, Mikaela slowly smirked as she let it click inside her head. "Because she is a girl, Sam. That explains why I caught Ravage staring at Cheetor a few times." She said grinning.

"WHAAAAAAAT?!" Sideswipe, Sunstreaker, Rodimus and even Skywarp screeched in shock.

"NO WAY! RAVAGE ISN'T A GIRL! WE ONLY SAW HIM AS A GUY! HE HAS BEEN A MECH SINCE...!" It was Ramjet who yelped.

"Ravage," Soundwave spoke softly, smiling as he leaned forward, arms outstretched and glowing appendages gently gathering up Ravage, pulling her closer to his chassis. He felt the bond between them returning, strong as ever. "My beautiful femme."


Several gaped in surprise at that confirmation. No one had seen that coming. At. All.

Ravage softened before curling her head under his, purring and twitching her tail back and forth. "Creator." She hummed back.

"Sister!" The other subunits cried out in excitement as they swarmed around her and Soundwave, throwing arms and wings around her in happiness. "Don't ever do that again, big sister! You scared us!" Frenzy added, slightly angry.

Smiling, Ravage bumped her head against him. "I am sorry, Frenz. I will never do that again. I swear. I won't leave my little brothers." She looked up at Maximum Wave as she moved closer and gently placed her hand against her head. "Mom?"

"I always wanted a daughter. I am so glad to have one now." Max said lovingly, scratching Ravage's ears, who purred in contentment.

"ENOUGH! WHO CARES ABOUT A CYBERTRONIAN FEMME! DESTROY THEM ALL!"
It was Quintesson Sevax who roared now preparing to attack again.

"NO! I DEMAND ALL QUINTESSONS TO STOP!" A booming voice echoed off the walls of the arena, ceasing all actions to restart the fighting.

Every head and face jerked around to see Kledji moving again. And beside him, Derodomontatus was also moving, blinking his optics and looking too innocent for being a five faced tyrant.

Kledji hovered higher, his gold and silver optics flashing as he looked proud and tall. "I am High Lord Kledji, First created Quintesson and true ruler of Quintessons! And I have enough of the bloodshed, energon spilling war that we have brought between our people!" He continued to rise until he was seen by all. "Enough, my great people. I have had enough."

There were murmurs amongst the Quintessons as they looked confused of what was going on. They didn't understand. Sure, they heard the news of Kledji's return and some remembered him. But it surely couldn't be him, the True High Lord, could it?

Kledji activated all pairs of optics so he could look upon all. "My fellow Quintessons, it has been so many vorns since you knew me. So many vorns when you received word that I had been deactivated in the war against Cybertron's Primes. But what you have received was lies, untruth. It was Derodomontatus who sent you the falsities. All because he disagreed with my decision to sought out peace. I am old, my Quintessons. I grow weary of the hate, jealousy and fear we were created from. I
know that most of you feel the same.

"My great Empire of Quintessons, as my time as Quintesson Derezz, I have learned a great deal and seen much. I have known nothing of my true origins. I have seen what the Cybertronians are capable of. The humans and all of sentient life as well!" Kledji spoke deeply before turning his optics onto Lockdown, who smirked up at him. "My greatest and closest ally is Cybertronian. He and his humans have shown me nothing but kindness and care. I will not condemn his race no longer. I will not condemn the God who created us. Our true creator. I seek only peace now. And life."

Slowly, Kledji came back down to settle in front of the Primes who were now all lined next to each other and offered one of his appendages to Alpha Prime, who smiled softly at him.

"Great Primes, I extend a friendship and alliance to you, a long overdue notion. Will you accept?"

Alpha Prime shared a smile with the others, waiting for them to answer first. One by one, starting with Optimus and leading to end with Sentinel to nod their approval, the old Prime turned back to Kledji and took the claw into his hand. "Let there be peace between us. Between all sentient beings. Mechanic to organic. Let us settle our differences and co-exist like we should as life." He said proudly.

Kledji bobbed in agreement before turning all optics onto his kind, looking stern. "Will all of Quintessa accept my return and my decision? Will all continue to follow my rule as High Lord? Or will the madness of hate continue?" He asked sternly.

There were only murmurs for a moment before starting with Quintesson Judges Jolup, Ghyrik and the double headed, Gemini, dipped their frames low to the ground as if bowing.

Only then, did all Quintessons; Judges, Guards, triple heads, Sharkticons, and even Bailiffs deactivated their weapons and bowed down to Kledji.

A sudden burst of cheers exploded from the Cybertronians and moved onto organics and even Predacons as they landed from flight. Predaking had landed before Kledji, looking into his optics.

"Predaking, my creation, I am so deeply sorry for what I tried to do to you and your kind." Kledji spoke deeply before offering his clawed appendage to him. "Will you ever forgive my foolishness?"

Predaking was silent for a long moment, his head held high and wings flared out before they folded against his back. He dipped his head and pressed his spiked head against the claw. "It seems we were all foolish. As long as my Predacons remain free, I forgive you and ask all I have done wrong against to forgive me." He rumbled.

Kledji would have smiled if he could as he gently caressed the dragon's forehelm. "You will be forever be free of my charge, my emberling. May you rule your Predacons with peace in your fiery spark and rule life better than what I planned with you."

There was another explosion of sound as Cybertronians, Quintessons and organics roared in cheers and triumph. They joined together in approval of loud sound and even shared handshakes, smiles and nods of respect.

It had taken a very long time and there was still much to do to achieve full trust and peace between them. It would take a lot of hard work and determination. But the long lasting war between Quintessons and Cybertronians and even organics was finally over.

Now there would be hard working peace to grow. And they were all determined to do it together, like it should have been.
Author's Notice:

Yes, readers. I went there.

I made Ravage a femme and to be honest, I did not plan on doing that twist. It just worked its way in the story. That, and because I got thinking about future pairings and realized that Cheetor wasn't really going to have a pairing. So my wild imagination kind of shoved the notion that Ravage was a femme. Hope no one minds.

All right, before all of you or some of you ask about Derodomontatus, it will be revealed in the next chapter of why he is still alive.

The next chapter will be the last chapter of Set The Universe On Fire.

But not the end of the story.
It took a whole week and then some for everyone to prepare for the return back to Earth and Cybertron. Everyone was looking forward to going home together. There was too much to prepare for the return.

There was that, and the fact that the Cybertronians were helping Lord Kledji put things right for Quintessa.

There was too much instability in the Quintesson population. Most of the Quintessons hadn't been too thrilled about the fact that Kledji was ordering the releasing of slaves. He simply did not want enslavement to poison his new future. There had been some fights and protests with the release of all slaves, but in the end, Kledji put his foot, or rather clawed appendage down.

There would be no enslavements.

Slaves now freed, many of them were being shipped back to their home planets on Quintesson battleships. And every single one were happy.

Surprisingly, though, Alana and Seaspray had made the decision to remain with the Cybertronians still on Quintessa. The Ocean Princess, as Seaspray had explained to his former companions, wanted to spend some time getting to know new races and requested that she and her mate returned to Earth and Cybertron so she could study new civilizations.

Everyone agreed warmly, wanting to know more about their new alien friends as well.

It surprised everyone though that Alpha and Solus Prime invited Blot and his Terrorcons to join them home, as well. They had expected the four to stay on Quintessa with some of the Cybertronians and organics that had decided to remain with Kledji and his Quintesson Empire to continue building relationships with them.

Of course, quite a few had been uneasy about the idea that The Terrorcons would be on the same ship as them, as well even going back to Cybertron. They knew that no Cybertronian had forgotten the true horror stories of Terrorcons. They knew that this would be an impending disaster once they got back to Cybertron. Mechs and femmes would probably panic.

But Alpha Prime gently told everyone the reasoning why he wanted Blot and the Terrorcons to return with them. He simply said that Blot did hold the antivirus of the Terrorcon virus and with the Terrorcon Leader's permission, they wanted to study the coding. There was just no real idea of how
many Terrorcons there might be out in the universe, and if they could, they should do something about them. They should instead of immediately executing the Terrorcons, they should at least give them a chance to become more like Blot and his three companions. To find a piece of sanity they had lost so long ago.

Slowly, but surely, everyone agreed, especially when Sunriser made the stand with the Terrorcons. She made it very clear that she was friends with Blot and she wouldn't let anyone even attempt to harm him or his Terrorcons.

And because Sideswipe had given up fighting her about stuff like that long ago, he agreed with her.

So, even the Terrorcons would be joining them on the journey back to Cybertron.

Nonetheless, no one could really forget that fated day and all that happened when the war finally ended. They all could only think of what transpired and still couldn't fathom completely of the results of the day.

Especially when Derodomonatus was still alive and sitting right beside Kledji. Just thinking about it had many scratching their heads in confusion. And they think about it, frequently.

A Week ago, that Fateful day-

Even as cheers echoed off the arena walls, it did not go unnoticed that some approached Derodomonatus, growling and glaring. The freed Cybertronian slaves, organic slaves and even the Sharkticons being the ones to make the threatening approach.

But Kledji slowly moved in between them and the slowly backing Quintesson behind him. "He is no threat any more, my friends." He announced to them.

"Frag that, Dee." Lockdown growled, stepping closer, ignoring a few hisses from the others to watch it. "He is a threat. He tried to kill us all. He tried to kill you. Why haven't ya gotten rid of him yet?"

While a few Quintessons did hiss at the manner that the gruff Space Pirate was speaking to their Quintesson High Lord, Kledji made a soft, amused sound as he moved closer to Lockdown and softly placed a clawed appendage onto his shoulder. "Because he is not Derodomonatus any longer, Lockdown, my great friend."

Everyone blinked in surprise and murmured to one another.

"Huh?" Lockdown grunted in confusion.

Kledji activated his back face to look softly at the not Derodomonatus Quintesson. "His name is now Monty, Lockdown. I have wiped his memories of being Derodomonatus. He no longer wishes ill of other beings." He paused as Monty moved closer, now looking passive. "Of course, he is aware of what I have done. I will not hide that truth. I am fed up with lies and the idea of Derezziation techniques. I did tell him Derodomonatus' history." He said and everyone stiffened.

Derodomonatus, or rather, Monty, bobbed slowly as if dipping his entire frame in respect. "Yes, he derezzed me of my Derodomonatus persona. But by telling me of what I have done as Derodomonatus, I must say I am ashamed of my actions." He spoke, his voice the same as Derodomonatus'. But more...soft and gentle. "I have agreed to work off the crimes of my past and I will do what I can to gain trust of Quintessons, Cybertronians and organics alike. I know it may take a long time for me to gain that trust again, but I do hope it is worth it in the end."
It couldn't be helped that some of the others smiled warmly, feeling truth in his words. They saw the point Kledji made of being honest to Monty. It just wasn't right to lie, even with a malicious past like Derodomontatus. He had the right to know what he had done wrong.

And now, as Monty, he was willing to right the wrongs.

After that day, medics worked on the injured, saved those who were nearly deactivated. No one deactivated that wasn't already.

There were ceremonies for those who did deactivate. Every one who fell that day was named and honored and grieved. Not one went un-announced. No one was forgotten for what they had done.

The rebuilding of damaged structures of the Quintesson city had begun with Cybertronians and Quintessons working together, as well as the repair of The Ark, Death's Head and other Quintesson battleships. It wouldn't be long before they would be ready for their journeys though.

During that time, a few questions had been asked that had some wondering.

One of the questions had been from Soundwave to Alpha Prime. He had asked the Ancient Prime why he had not taken part in the telepathic battle with Derodomontatus and his followers.

Alpha Prime smiled softly at the large Cybertronian when he had asked. "I could have joined in the fight, my dear friend. But I am afraid to say my telepathy is not as strong as it used to be. With age, one grows weaker and because of my millions of vorns are behind me, I am not S powerful as I used to be. The battle of telepathy was yours to do, Soundwave. Call it...a test of some sort if you want. It was a test to see how strong you have become. Because of your friendship with Derezz, and the practice that both of you had done while journeying to Quintessa, you have truly become a powerful and strong willed telepath." He explained.

Soundwave frowned at the news but shook his head. "Alpha Prime, you are the strongest telepath of Cybertron. A Prime. I could never surely beat a Prime in telepathy." He stated.

Smiling, Alpha Prime patted the large Decepticon on his shoulder. "But you did, Soundwave. You surpassed me and are equal with Kledji, if not a little stronger. And there is no shame in admitting that you are better than a Prime. And I am proud of you for being so. As long as you use your telepathy in the right way, to help others, that is all that matters." He told him.

Soundwave only smiled and swore that he would uphold that promise.

It was really awkward, however, when Starscream and Megatron came face to face in the aftermath of the battle. Everyone had expected the Seeker to immediately try and kill the former Warlord right then and there.

But instead, looking quite sheepish and uncomfortable, Starscream shuffled his wings, looking everywhere but Megatron. He looked like he didn't want to say anything to his former leader and abuser.

But then he surprised everyone by saying, "Thank you. For coming to help us." He said firmly, fully aware of the bewildered stares he was getting. "I am still Leader of the Decepticons though." He murmured mostly to himself.

A few groaned or rolled their optics and eyes. "Ah, I knew there was a catch to him speaking to Megatron." Barricade muttered and watched to see the former tyrant's reaction.

Megatron chuckled as he shook his head. "No, you're not." And everyone stiffened, knowing that
would cause trouble. Especially when Starscream tensed up and started growling. "You are High Lord Protector of the Primes. There are no fractions any more, Starscream. No Decepticons, no Autobots. Only Cybertronians." Megatron finished.

Starscream considered his words for a moment before he nodded formly. "You're right." He looked at his wings at the Decepticon sigil still there before reaching over and patting it. "Looks like I will need a new paint job. This red, white and blue paint job..."

"I like the red, white and blue paint job, Star." Nightbird suddenly spoke up as she was hugging Slipstream close to her chassis. "Leave it." She added firmly.

Starscream smirked as he lowered his servo. "Yes, dear. I still think it need touch ups. A new design at least. Sunstreaker, Knockout, would you do the honors to removing my sigil and any who wishes the same?" He asked the two vain Cybertronians.

Both Sunstreaker and Knockout smirked at one another and nodded at once. They definitely would do just that. And some of the Decepticons even agreed to remove their insignis.

As for a few more questions, a few others had asked why they should even prepare the ships to travel back to Cybertron and Earth. Why not have Vector Prime open a Bridge for them?

There were two answers to that, however.

One being, some of the others wanted to take the slow route because they wanted to spend much time with each other as possible.

Prowl and Izzy for one. Jazz and Flo for another. Prowl and Lockdown, again.

The space pirate had offered his ship as a vessel to return to Cybertron and Earth. He did not have the intention to stay here, however and that did put some pressure on some of the Autobots and humans; namely the two newest couples, Jazz and Flo and Prowl and Izzy. The girls wanted to stay with Lockdown bit they were also wanting to stay with their new beaus.

It definotely had them feeling conflicted about the whole thing.

Either way, when before the day finally came to part from Quintessa, it had been quite they night and all Cybertronians and organics decided to celebrate with the Quintessons the only way they knew how to celebrate.

They threw a party.

Of course they had Kledji's permission. He had given it rather enthusiastically, after seeing one of their parties as Derezz. He knew how exciting they could be. He even offered the newly constructed Arena, which would be used for other uses than a fighting arena, as the source of the party.

So, with Jazz, Flo, Blaster and Soundwave as the party planners, loud booming and exciting music was echoing throughout the entire city and everyone was enjoying their selves. Most of the Quintessons remained outside the dancing, partying mass of Cybertronians and organics. They weren't too sure what to expect as they watched everyone else dancing to the highly energetic music. But few were amongst the Cybertronians, having been dragged into the masses.

Kledji, being one, after Izzy and Flo had begged him to dance with them. He joined them, chuckling and letting them dance around him, though they had a hold of one of his appendages as if dancing with them. Prowl and Jazz were standing off to the side, watching them with smiles and laughing as they watched Lockdown as he found himself dragged into dancing with Airachnid.
Those who were not dancing were watching others dance or watching with the reunited parents with their sparklings, sparks and hearts full of happiness to see such love, relief and happiness of them being together again.

There was much happiness to see Sunriser and Sideswipe with Nightbeat. The two new parents were introducing their little mechling to his Uncle Sunstreaker, Aunt Stilletto, and of course, Grandpa Ratchet, who did not care at all for the teasing remarks he had gotten from the twins and a fair few others. He did not mind at all as he looked warmly and lovingly at the sparkling that he held in his arms.

And of course, it was very amusing to all to see all of the Dinobots being reunited.

The moment Grimlock, Swoop, Slag and Snarl saw Sludge, all of them swarmed him and engulfed their long lost now found brother in the middle of a metal crushing embrace. They were so happy he was revived and with them.

Even Sunriser was so happy to finally meet him when she was dragged by Swoop over to him.

And happier when the large mech wrapped his arms around her, embracing her. He welcomed her warmly and even swore to protect her family and follow her like his brothers.

A few others, mostly a couple of the Autobots and some of the Decepticons were staring at Ravage as she sat with Soundwave, Max and Ratbat, her other brothers on the dance floor.

And she wasn't taking it well that they were staring at her, knowing fully well it was just that they were un-nerved from learning her deepest kept secret.

"Sooooo...you're a girl." It was Barricade who said as he was one of those who stared.

Ravage growled, her audial points flattening against her head and her backstruts arching in annoyance. "Yes. I am. So what? Do all of you have a problem with me being a femme?" She asked with a growl only to pause when Maximum Wave gently ran her fingers down her back to calm her.

Immediately, everyone shook their heads, not wanting to be clawed and mauled by her, nor upset Soundwave, who was glowering at them.

"It's just kind of weird. All this time, while we were fighting you and then fighting alongside you, we thought you were a mech. And now all of a sudden, you're a femme." It was Bumblebee who tried to smooth out the situation. "It's just weird."

"Yeah, well get over it now." Ravage mumbled.

Spitfire shrugged, smiling as she rubbed her midsection where her sparkling was nestled and developing inside her. "I think I understand though. At the time, earlier in the war, femmes were targeted and so were sparklings. A lot of femmes were killed, so it was plenty dangerous to be one. Ravage was protecting herself to being targeted." She said leaning against Bumblebee.

Ravage smiled up at her, nodding. She was just glad that someone got it.

"Pits, even if you just told us the truth, no one would have been stupid enough to target you, Ravage." Barricade remarked chuckling. "Cause if they did, Soundwave would have been all over their afts. And everyone should know not to mess with him or you, subunits."

Everyone nodded in agreement. They all knew that was the truth.
"Tell you what, though. I can't wait to see the look on Cheetor's face when he finds out. That is going to hilarious." Bumblebee said laughing. "He always said to me and Spitfire that it was too bad that you weren't a femme. I think he was starting to like you too, Ravage. He was just freaked out that he attracted to another mech, or so he thinks. It will be a big relief to find out that you're a femme." He told her.

Ravage dipped her head, shyly and happily to hear that Cheetor might have actually liked her. It definitely had her spark swirling happily to think about it.

"Everyone, may I have your attention?" Everyone heard Kledji's voice boom as the music died. And when all went quiet and looked at the Quintesson High Lord with his Judges beside him, the High Lord continued with a noble sounding voice. "I want to thank everyone here for this wonderful night. With all of us together, as one, Quintessons, Cybertronians, humans and other organics, we celebrate this wonderful night of peace. It would never have happened if the Primes and their Cybertronians and humans had never come to rescue their little ones. They came here and changed everything for us. For the good. From this day on, we shall forever honor the Cybertronians and the friendship we now have with them."

There were cheers and applause from Cybertronians, Quintessons and organics.

Kledji then motioned to Optimus, who smiled and stepped forward. "Optimus Prime has requested to say something to everyone. Listen well to the Prime." He stated before hovering back.

Optimus waited as some noise quieted down before smiling at all and raising his head high. "I am glad we are all together now. Together in peace. We have been at war for so long that was time it finally ended. We all deserve to co-exist together in peace, no longer in hate or fear. I wish that Kledji's were true, but he was wrong about one thing." There were now surprised looks and murmurs but no one interrupted. "I wish I could take credit for the change between all of us, but I cannot. None of this would have happened if it were not for our human allies." Optimus motioned to the humans, then to Spitfire, who smiled as she leaned against Bumblebee. "If not for Spitfire. That was the beginning of everything changing. Spitfire betrayed us, but...she did it for her love for Bumblebee. She made friends with a Decepticon, changing his perspective of how things were."

Spitfire shared a glance with Starscream and both smiled at one another.

"Our humans, when we met them, made a huge difference to our lives. It was their will power, their understanding, their hearts that made a difference. It only changed even more when we met Dawn Jade Adams." Optimus continued smiling over at Sunriser, who smiled back. "It was actually because of her things changed drastically. She fell in love with a very good sparked mech, became apart of our lives and our sparks. It is because of her that we can have peace. Spitfire and the humans were beginning but it was her who was the true piece to our puzzle of how to fix things between our kinds." He took a step towards Sunriser, placing a hand onto her shoulder. "Dawn, Sunriser, you were truly the Dawn of a new age. You were exactly what Primus said you were. Because of your heart, your spark, your kindness and love, we are together. You made friends of a Decepticon just as Spitfire had. You brought Cybertronians together. It was you who made the choices that would lead to this. To be honest, you are the very heart of this family of Cybertronians and humans and even Quintessons now."

Turning from her, Optimus smiled as he looked around at everyone, Cybertronian, Quintesson, organic. "I must also give credit to the bravest of us all, who saved us from a grave deactivation. The ones we came to save in the first place, who also brought old enemies together as friends.' His optics fell onto each of the sparklings, smiling. "Our children, our sparklings came out, unarmed, unprepared to fight for our lives even though they have no experience, no skills and are too young to
fight. But they came to our defense, with great courage in their sparks. It was them who are the heroes of this chapter. Even while they had been the ones who were in danger and we came to save them, it was them who saved us. They, along with Sunriser, brought all of us together. To fight, to learn, to live in peace." He spoke in such a peaceful way. "It is to Sunriser, to Spitfire, to our sparklings that we all have finally found our reason for peace and prosperity for life. It is to them, I, Optimus Prime," he then slowly got down to one knee and bowed his head in respect. "I will bow down to them, showing them the respect and love they deserve as true heroes."

Everyone smiled and even followed suit. Even Quintessons dipped down, all optics and eyes on Sunriser and the sparklings.

"All right, enough of this mushy gushy stuff! Let's just par-tay!" Jazz exclaimed cheerfully as he blasted out energetic music and everyone laughed as they did just that. He lead everyone into dancing, dancing with Flo in his hand.

The celebration was exciting and everyone enjoyed their time, talking and getting to know one another, forming new bonds. Some even had their chances to sing during the party. Maximum Wave had really gotten everyone going as she sang about raising glasses and energon cubes in celebration. And every time she said "Raise your glass", everyone did while dancing and laughing.

"So," Optimus, Prowl and Jazz looked up when Lockdown spoke as he approached with his own energon cube. "I kind of made a decision here." He recieved questioning smiles from the three. "I decided to want to set up a more permanent shop somewhere. I mean I plan on still doing my business in bounty hunting and trading and even shipping passengers around space, but I need a good place to settle down as a home. Especially if Legs and I are gonna get serious with our relationship." The space pirate said smirking at the three. "Somewhere...I can call a home. Got any ideas of what would be a good home for me, my mate and my girls? Somewhere nice? Peaceful? Good for the girls to get some fresh air, a golden sun on their skin, and be with the ones they fell in love with?" He asked sounding as if hinting something.

Together, as one, Prowl and Jazz smiled or grinned as they shared a glance with Optimus, who grinned proudly at Lockdown.

"I am sure we know of one place, my friend." The Prime said proudly.

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One month later...

Cybertronian-Human Alliance Base, Grand Canyon, USA, Earth-Time:0200 hours/2:00 a.m.

Everything was rather quiet in the morning at the Cybertronian-Human Alliance base. Not many were awake at Two in the morning. Most were still sleeping their night away, waiting for the morning to come.

But those who were awake, namely a certain paranoid, safety obsessed Security Chief named Red Alert who was calmly reading a datapad with downloaded human books and keeping an optic on the solar reading screen and communications.

It had been a long couple of months, though not at all unpleasant.

Peace was growing between both worlds, Earth and Cybertron. Humans were getting to know their new neighbors very well and were liking the Cybertronians more and more, all because of Primacron and the Primes.
There had been many times that the dual God had walked on Earth, speaking to humans and answering questions they might have had. He immediately had said no to several who had asked if the human race should praise and worship him when they found out he was a God. He did not want them worshipping him. He wanted them to treat him as if he were anyone else, not bowing down to him or offering gifts, unless they were flowers.

He liked flowers a lot.

As it was, things were changing greatly and rapidly. Quite a few Cybertronians were now making a lot of human friends, some even becoming Guardians to families. Some were even becoming transportation for them. Seekers and aerials had volunteered to help transport humans to long destinations.

The Cybertronians and humans were now interacting with each other and learning more and more about each other.

Wars were now ending because of the Cybertronians. Great illnesses were now finding cures because of the advanced technology. A cure to cancer had been found in the short year and people were being treated and cured from it.

With past two months since The Ark had departed, much had already changed. Trust had been found. Lives were saved and being protected.

Still, everyone was worried.

When Primacron had announced not too long ago that something was wrong, and a new Prime had revealed himself as Vector Prime, everyone was worried for those who left for a long distanced planet to saved their lost loved ones.

It had not helped whatsoever when Primacron also brought Megatron back to life and allowed him to go with the three Primes to find their lost companions. No one had been at ease about the situation at all. No one trusted Megatron.

So they were worried if they would ever hear from their companions again if Megatron was going after them.

But a month had passed, no one had heard anything. They had not had a single report come in since The Ark had left. It had all, even the Dual God worried. He was worried because he had not even heard anything. Or even seen anything from meditations he did to try and stretch his connections to his Cybertronians.

Everyone could only hope and pray that their loved ones were safe.

Soon, however, they got their answer.

Red Alert had been on duty, reading his data pad when he received a beeping message coming from Cybertron. He immediately answered the incoming message and looked to see Primacron now smiling at him through the screen. "My Lords Primacron, any news?" He asked hopefully.

The Dual God smiled more and nodded. "No word from the crew but I have caught their signatures entering the Solar System. There are three ships approaching Earth and Cybertron. I believe one of them is The Ark. They have returned." He said proudly.

Red Alert grinned excitedly and nodded as he swung his peds to the ground and he stood up. "I will alert the families immediately then! Red Alert, ou...wait!" He paused now frowning. "Three ships?
What two ships are with The Ark?! Are they dangerous?! What if it is the Quintessons?! What if they’re trying to fool us?! What if...?!” He was now asking rapidly in fear.

Primacron smiled before sending a soothing pulse through his bond to all Cybertronians to the paranoid Autobot. "Red, if it were the Quintessons here in hostility, I would be worried. But I sense our companions aboard the ships. It is all right." He said softly.

Red Alert calmed and smiled as he nodded. "You're right. I apologize for my foolish behavior, My Lords." He said sheepishly.

Primacron just shook his head as he smiled. "Do not worry, Red Alert. All will be well." He said softly before pausing. "Even if there are Quintessons with the ships. Primacron out." He said hurriedly before disconnecting.

Red Alert stiffened in horror, staring at the blackened screen with only a squeak.

On Cybertron...

"That was mean, Unicron. He probably glitched out by your teasing words." Primus' amused voice spoke through the Dual God that they were now.

The voice of Unicron chuckled from the vocoder as the Dual God shook his head. "Well if he didn't make it so easy to tease him, I wouldn't have done it." He said with a laugh before growing serious. "You know they have to be warned though. They will panic if they see the Quintessons with our children."

The Dual God nodded as he tilted his head to the side. "Yes but you could have done it a better way. You really didn't need to make him panic like that." The Light God stated.

Unicron's booming laughter came from the dual being. "What's the fun in that?! I am the God of Chaos, am I not? It was fun and it will be funner when they find out about the peace between us." He laughed.

Primacron just rolled his optics, it being Primus being responsible but even he could not help but chuckle. It would be amusing.

The announcement had been given, the families of the humans and Cybertronians went to Cybertron so they could be there but no one was eased by the knowledge of Quintessons arriving. They wondered what could have happened that would bring them to Cybertron.

So it was no surprise when Cybertronians and human soldiers were armed and waiting anxiously for what could be a fight. It was the Iacon Space Ship station that everyone was waiting at and watching as three ships approached for docking.

"So, you think there will be a fight?" Cliffjumper asked Ultra Magnus and Strika as they waited.

Ultra Magnus shrugged as he watched the ships carefully. "I don't think so, Cliff. If the Quintessons were here to fight, they would have brought a fleet and started attacking by now." He stated.

It still didn't relax anyone as they watched The Ark, Death's Head and the Quintesson ship docked. They waited as the ramps finally lowered and revealed...everyone let out sighs of relief when they saw Optimus Prime, all in his red and blue glory came walking down the ramp, leading everyone out of the Ark.

Cheers and happy looks broke out when they saw the Prime twins in his and Elita One's arms. The
Cybertronians and humans cheered, cried and laughed happily to see Sunriser next to Sideswipe and the Dinobots behind them.

In her arms, to many's surprise and relief was her sparkling, Nightbeat.

Immediately many rushed forward to greet their long missed companions.

"Dawn!" Eliza cried happily as she ran forward, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Sunriser handed off Nightbeat to Sideswipe so she could scoop up her mother and embrace her happily. It was such a happy reunion and everyone was so happy to see their families returned.

However, when some saw a suspiciously shy looking Ravage hovering behind Soundwave, looking anxious as he optic'd Cheetor as he came running, they knew something was wrong. The Cybertronians had noticed Ravage's new look but no one questioned it.

"Hey, Ravage! I am so glad you're back! I missed you, mech! It has been so boring...! Hey, Rav, you okay? What's wrong, mech?" Cheetor asked as he slowed down seeing Ravage cringing back behind Maximum Wave.

Ravage looked shyly up at Soundwave, who smiled and nodded. The feline vented softly before stepping closer to the yellow and black Maximal and smiled. "Nothing is wrong, Cheetor. I just..." She cut herself off when Cheetor and many others gaped in shock when they heard her voice.

"DUDE! RAVAGE SOUNDS LIKE A FEMME!" Cliffjumper exclaimed in between being shocked and laughing his aft, thinking it was a joke. "What happened?! You finally upgraded to your adult frame and it went wrong?" He laughed.

A few of the Cybertronians coming off the ships grimaced while Soundwave and his family glared at the Autobot. They knew that Cliffjumper was making a joke but still.

Ravage growled shooting him a dark look and bristling. "THAT'S BECAUSE I AM A FEMME, HALF WIT!" She snarled, cutting off Cliffjumper's laugh immediatly.

Many stared at Ravage in shock, Cheetor included.

Taking a deep breath, Ravage turned back to Cheetor and smiled shyly. "I...I wanted to tell you before. But...it just seemed...not the best time. I thought you might be weirded out." She said meekly.

Cheetor continued to gape in shock before his optics brightened. "You're a femme." He said still stunned and received a nod. He then grinned and stepped closer. "That's a relief! I was starting to wonder if something was wrong was wrong with me! I thought I have been gay or something because I always liked you!" He said brightly then winced. "Not that is a bad thing. There isn't anything wrong with..."

Smiling brightly, Ravage jerked forward, purring as she bumped her head against Cheetor's. "I like you too, Cheetor." She said happily.

A few cat calls were sounded and a few cheered as they watched the two felines purr and rubb heads like affectate cats. Some still looked bewildered to even learn that Ravage was even a femme.

But the sight of the crew coming off of Death's Head had everyone stiffening and forgetting immediately. Especially when one was a Quintesson and four were obviously Terrorcons.

"Terrorcons!?!" Ultra Magnus exclaimed in alarm and he, with severa others, had their cannons up.
"Wait! No, no! Don't do that!" Jazz called out as some of the Cybertronians from the ship moved into the way to protect Blot and his Terrorcons. "They're no danger!"

"What?! But those are...!" Cliffjumper was yelling in alarm.

But even Optimus stepped in the way and everyone had no choice but to lower their weapons. "Blot, why don't you and your Terrorcons to everyone?" He asked smiling to the large Frankenstein like being.

Blot nodded as he looked around at the wide surprised but fearful Cybertronians and humans. "My designation is Blot. I am the leader of my Terrorcons. I was the experiment of the Cybertronian scientist, Codex." He said firmly before motioning to the shark-octopus like Terrorcon next to him.

"I am Rippersnapper, Blot's second in command." Rippersnapper spoke in a soft voice, surprising more.

"Me...Hun-Gurr." The large Terrorcon rumbled, splitting his trimouth a part only to snap it shut again when some humans squawked in surprise.

"We are Twinstriker." The two headed Terrorcon spoke up.

Suddenly a small silver being skittered up from behind Blot and there were several shouts of alarm as many jumped back to see the scraplet.

"This is Scrap. He's fine." Blot said with a chuckle as he trailed a servo along the little bot's back.

"Bu-bit that's a scraplet! They eat our kind!" Strika said alarmed.

It was Sunriser who smiled as she went over to Blot and shocked many as she scratched the large audios of the Scraplet. "They're only pests by assumption, Strika. Scraplets are actually much like cats. They hunt when starving. But if you actually feed them like pets, they are harmless." She said softly as the Scraplet purred, rubbing its head against her hand.

Sideswipe grinned as he glanced over his shoulder as another scraplet came skittering up over his shoulder plates. "Yeah, they're actually pretty cool once you tame them. This one Sunriser and I call Glitch." He said now rubbing the scraplet's head, who twittered and clicked.

"Yoooooou are the one who named him Glitch, Sides. You didn't even like him." Sunriser laughed as she looked at their new pet Scraplet. "The name just stuck with him. He adores Nightbeat though. Sides and caught him snuggling with our sparkling many times. Blot says they're actually really gentle if we treat them right." She said as she petted Glitch.

"Blot has an antivirus formula in his CNA that will allow Terrorcons to become more docile than they used to be." Optimus stated as he looked at Primacron and the Primes who remained. "He has generously agreed to be used to create the antivirus so we can deal with any more Terrorcons that may be out there."

Primacron smiled proudly and nodded his approval to Optimus before looking over at who else was coming off the ship. He was not surprised when there was a hushed silence of shock and fear when Cybertronians and humans saw a Quintesson coming down from Death's Head.

"What is that Quintesson doing here?!!" One Cybertronian exclaimed in shock, anger and fear.

But all other murmurs and shouts were silenced when the Dual God held up a hand and walked forward to meet Lord Kledji. "Kledji." It was Unicron's voice who spoke above both.
Kledji hovered right before Primacron before dipping low and dimming his optics. "My master, my mentor, my creator," he spoke softly. "I have to returned to Cybertronian in acts of peace. I deeply apologize for the Great Wars between our people. I came here in hopes to repair the broken relations between sentient beings. If you wish to have me punished for all crimes against Cybertron and sentients, I will take the punishment without complaint."

There were many who were surprised but Primacron was not one. He, instead, laid a hand on the Quintesson High Lord's frame with a gentle smile. "That will not be necessary, my creation." Unicron spoke again. "It was I, Unicron, who should ask for forgiveness. I have wronged you, Kledji. You and your Quintessons. I created you out of hate, anger and greed, to use you as a tool to wage war against my brother and Cybertron. I have seen the error of my ways and that includes your Quintessons. I only wish for you to live in peace. To be like the Cybertronians, full of peace, life and protection for all of life. Will you ever forgive, my precious creation?"

Kledji would have smiled if he could but he instead he pushed the feeling of love and peace towards the Gods. "As High Lord Quintesson, Kledji, I accept your apology and ask for mine. From this day forward, all of the Quintesson Empire will serve as Guardians of Sentient life. Will you accept?" He asked proudly.

Primacron and many others smiled proudly and one by one, each and every being there nodded their approval. "We accept the peace you have brought to us, Lord Kledji. Now, why do you not show us your surprise?" The Dual God spoke in both voices of Light and Darkness.

Kledji hummed and vibrated before turning on his back face to look at the Quintesson ship, waving an appendage.

There was a loud rumble and a large ramp lowered, emitting so many humans from within. So many humans, so many missing Cybertronians stepped down, lead by more Quintessons and Sharkticons. They showed no threat at all but marched down the ramp, escorting the freed slaves to Cybertronian ground.

There was a burst of cheers as people saw familiar faces as they came down.

"I am proud of what you have done, my creations." Primacron spoke loudly over applause and cheers. "May we all seek peace and prosperity from now on. Living in peace together and building this universe into a bright new future."

There were more applause and cheers at his words.

"Enough of this!" Maximum Wave suddenly burst out, silencing all in surprise as she leapt up on a platform. "This calls for a celebration! And it starts right now! Hit it, Handsome! Five! Four! Five, four, three, two! Sentient beings of the worlds unite! Strength in numbers, we can get it right! One Time!" She sang enthusiastically.

Everyone laughed as they watched her and a few others started singing and dancing to the rather familiar song and many couldn't help but join in.

"We are a part of the greatest sentient nation!"

Maximum Wave bobbed her head to the sound of the music as she began to dance in front of everyone and even then, others joined in. "With music by my side, to break the other line. Let's work to improve our way of life!" She sang happily, bobbing to the melody. Many Cybertronians and humans and even some of the Sharkticons joined in dancing and singing the song, having the access to web to look up the lyrics of the song that Maximum Wave was singing and even enjoying it. "This
is the test, no struggle, no progress, lend a servo to help a sentient being to do their best."

"Let's dance, let's should, shake your body down to the ground!" Everyone in the general area sang and dance to the booming music that Soundwave was blasting from his speakers. "Let's dance, let's shout, shake your body down to the ground!"

"Let's dance, let's shoooooouuuuut!" It was Rumble's voice who squawked, ruining the music a little before wincing when everyone flinched and gave him a look and even muttered, "Sorry!"

The music suddenly changed as it came as a surprise that Barricade, of all mechs, had asked Soundwave through a private comm to change the beat of the music while pulling his human son, Jake into the middle of the group. "Lift your head up, cause you're a star." He said as he pushed Jake gently with a servo. "Be strong, boy, you know who you are!" And then shockingly, he started rapping. "Papa said knock them out!"

Jake grinned as he began bobbing to the rapping music before singing, "Yeah, I'm gonna knock them out!"

"Papa said knock them out, come on!" Barricade laughed while everyone around him and Jake were bobbing and cheering for them.

Then Jake swung around and began dancing in a retro sort of way as he began to rap along the music that Soundwave was blasting. "Don't call it a comeback, I've been here for years, rockin' ma peers! Putting suckers in fear! I'm gonna take this itty-bitty world by storm! And I'm just getting warm!" He finished.

Suddenly the music changed to a familiar sound of Justin Timberlake's Sexy Back and surprising to all, it was all of the sparklings who took the middle of the group, all bobbing to the music. "We're brin'ing sparklin's back!" All of the sparklings sang, making everyone laugh and cheer as they looked at the small bots. "Them other beings don' know how to act! Yeah!" All of them sang before it was Sizzle who took over, waving his hand in the air.

"Kick it to the chorus!" He sang making everyone laugh.

"Who'is yo' sparklin!" The femmelings sang.

"Shake yo' tail pipes!" Sizzle sang with Omega and everyone cheered louder.

"Who's yo' sparklin!" The femmelings sang, giggling with Omega, Triggerload and Sizzle. "Watch ya self!" he had added.

Everyone laughed as they watched the sparklings jumping up and down and even Sunriser had put Nightbeat down so he could join them to enjoying their selves.

"We are a part of the Sentient Nation!" The adult Cybertronians began singing again and the song just continued with everyone enjoying their selves. "Oh, oh, oh!" Maximum Wave sang as she and the femmes moved to one side of the area and the mechs moved over to the other side before they all began dancing in line towards one another, mate to mate, couple to couple. "Ain't nobody! Loves me better! Makes me happy! Makes me feel that way! Ain't no body! Ain't no body! Loves me better! Better than you!" Maximum sang as she came close to a smirking Soundwave, as did all of the other couples. The song had came to a slow pace as she leaned in close to him, and leaned her forehead against his. "Nobodie's better than you." She sang softly.

Suddenly there came a new beat, making everyone look over to see Cheetor and Ravage now dancing side by side in perfect sync and everyone grinned at the sight of them together. They were
definitely in perfect sync with one another and it was no doubt that they were going to be perfect together.

Maximum Wave grinned before she kept on singing. "Do your thing! Make my body sing!" She sang while everyone else sang, "We are a part of the Sentient Nation! Chick-a do your thing! Do your thing!" Then Maximum made everyone laugh as she began making some interesting noises and the sparklings copied her noises, even as she blew a raspberry. They did it too, raising more laughter all around the singing and dancing mass of Cybertronians and humans.

Even as the song continued, a certain sight had caught a few's optics and eyes and Jazz grinned as he reached over at nudged Lockdown and Optimus, making them tear their optics away from the dancing mass before he pointed off to the side. "Hey, check it out. Lookie what Prowl's doing!"

Frowning, Lockdown and Optimus looked off to the side to see that Prowl had Izzy in his hand and he was speaking to her, while surprisingly, moving his door wings. Their optics lit up in surprise and glee when they recognized what he was doing.

While everyone had been preoccupied, Prowl had picked a surprised Izzy up and moved over to where they could still hear the music but it was quieter. The black and white and purple mech looked rather anxious about something and it made Izzy smile in question up at him, wondering what was going on. "Isabella...there is something...I would like to ask you." The former Autobot Second In Command said before grimacing as he spread his door wings out wide on his back. "Or rather...show you."

"Okay. What's that?" Izzy asked, smiling to humor Prowl.

Clearing his vocodor, Prowl glanced away somewhat nervously before he looked firmly at Izzy and began moving his door wings to the beat of the music. They would flutter, then move up and down and then side to side before circling.

Izzy smiled as she watched them, quite in awe that they were moving like that. She didn't get what Prowl was doing but anyone who was watching gasped and giggled as they watched them. The door wings, honestly, looked like a bird fluttering its wings. And it made others laugh as they watched anxiously for the reaction. "What are you doing?" She asked curiously.

Prowl grimaced, now looking down but continued to flutter his door wings. He knew she probably wouldn't have understood a traditional Praxian door wing dance but he hoped she might catch on. He just kept fluttering and rotating his door wings while looking deeply into her eyes.

"Hey! Izzy! That's a Praxian Door Wing Mating Dance! He's asking you to become his sparkmate! Basically, he's asking you to marry him!" Smokescreen suddenly shouted over the loud music, making Prowl shoot him a look while his fans clicked on full blast.

Izzy's eyes brightened and a bright smile snapped into place on her face. She felt her heart flutter right along with Prowl before she stood up and began to moving and sway to the beat of the music, trying to copy the same movement as Prowl's door wings. "Of course I will, Prowl! I love you!" She said happily.

A big smile formed on Prowl's face before he brought Izzy up close to his forehead and lightly tapped her forehead with his chevron.

All around them, people; Cybertronians, humans and others began to cheer for Prowl and Izzy, even those who didn't really know what exactly was going on. They didn't know the full story of what happened in space but they got the idea that Prowl had finally found someone to share his spark
with. And no one could deny it, that Prowl really deserved such a thing. They would openly admit that he deserved to find someone special and it seemed that he did.

As the celebration of the new found peace continued, Primacron glanced to the side at Vector Prime as he approached the Dual God with a smile on his face. The Dual God’s smile faded just a little before he looked back at all of his celebrating children and the humans and alien beings that had come with them to visit Cybertron. "You didn't tell them, did you? About the tear?" He said softly to the Space and Time Guardian.

Vector Prime looked at him before slowly shaking his head. "No. I believe that can wait for some time being, My Lords. They still have twenty years before the Space and Time tear opens up. But even I can't tell them the outcome of that. I cannot see into the future like Alpha Prime can. I can only see what is happening in the other Time Dimentions." He said softly.

Primacron lowered his head, optics dimming as if saddened by something. "How is the Dimention I have asked you to watch many eons and eons ago?" It was Primus' voice he asked.

Vector Prime grew serious and grave before slowly shaking his head. He didn't really want to break the news to the Dual God of how THAT dimention was doing. He knew it wouldn't be very welcoming news to hear the outcome of that world was doing. "It's not good. I believe it is that Dimention that will connect with this one, My Lords. They...they are not doing so well. It seems...that things are becoming very dark in that dimention. The shattered paradox is becoming more and more lethal. The dark ones are...destroying everything. I fear that if they learn about the Space and Time tear in the dimentional gateways, they may try and cross over to this plane." He stated.

"And what of our little intruder into that dimention? How is Sean McCourie doing over in that dimention?" Primacron asked sounding almost afraid to even ask.

Again, Vector Prime shook his head, still grave. "He...he is well, my Lords. For now. But I fear for your former human messenger that you have transformed and sent to that Space and Time Dimention. That dimention is too dark for his heart...for his spark. He will do well to protect himself but...I fear that the Dark Ones will...find out what he really is and where he is from. As I have mentioned, we have time to prepare our Cybertronians and humans for what is to come. But..." He was saying.

"You fear they won't be ready for what they're about to face in twenty years, are you?" Primacron asked softly and wearily.

Vector Prime nodded slowly. "To face their dark selves, My Lords, that is going to be the hardest challenge they will ever face. You know that it might...cause more harm than good to interfere with that dimention." he stated firmly.

Primacron nodded slowly before smiling as he looked over all of the celebration with soft opics. "If anyone can make a difference, Vector Prime, it is all of them. They are the ones who can make a difference and change the balance of light and darkness in that Dark Shattered dimention. The Opposites of that dimention will need their help. It is the only way to make things right for that world." He stated before looking back at Vector Prime. "Return to the Space and Time plane and keep a steady watch. We will warn our Cybertronians and humans and sentient beings that will make that terrible journey in twenty years to come. In the mean time...they deserve at least some peace and quiet until it is time for them to take up that mantle again." He stated.

Vector Prime nodded and bowed to the Dual God before he stepped backwards just as a swirling mass of energy and wind picked up behind him. He was swallowed up into the Space and Time
bridge, leaving all to celebrate.

Primacron merely sighed but forced a smile. He didn't want to do this to his Cybertronians and humans but at least they would have twenty years of peace before they would need to pick up arms again and fight for what was right. But in the mean time, he would allow them to enjoy their peace and quiet.

Until twenty years were up...

Chapter End Notes

To be continued in the fifth and final saga, The Shattered Paradox

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