Power Rangers GPX, part 1
by DChan87

Summary

Humanity is in trouble. An extraterrestrial force is preparing to attack. In the midst of all this, five young adults come to Tokyo for an internship opportunity. But what looks mundane may be the most fantastic and intense moment in their young lives. They have no idea of what comes next. They will become... Power Rangers.
A lone sergeant walked through the halls of the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. He carried with him a briefcase, and that was it. He was trying to find where his superior was. There was urgency about the place as the people, mostly military, scurried through the halls. Something had gone down recently. The sergeant, Sgt. Steven J. Grant, found the room where the man he was looking for was. He was in a meeting with several top officers of the United States Army. "Col. Greene, sir," said the Sergeant, saluting his superior.

"What is it?" The colonel asked. He was an African-American man in his 40s. His face was slender and his eyes showed his worry about the situation at hand. His suit was decorated with lapels, all of them military awards. He did not have his hat on, as he was in a meeting with other top officers.

"Sir," said the Sergeant. His tone was desperate, as if he was worried about the situation. "The invasion. It's begun."

Colonel Alan Greene, a veteran of 17 years in the United States Army, sighed. He looked at the other officers in the room, all of them being of higher rank than him. One of them, a General, nodded his head. "Begin the Operations," said Col. Greene. "I want the operatives in Tokyo in one month at least. I'll be going to Tokyo myself to oversee operations."

"Yes sir!" The sergeant replied. "By the way, have you decided yet?"

"Of course," said Col. Greene. "I decided some time ago. The operatives will be sent their messages
and they should arrive there in four-to-six weeks."

"Yes, sir!"

"All right then," said Col. Greene. "I assume there won't be any problems for the operatives to get to Tokyo?"

"No sir there won't be any problems."

"Good," said Col. Greene. "You're dismissed, Sergeant."

"Yes sir," said the sergeant. He left the briefcase on the table for the Colonel. The Colonel opened the briefcase and looked over its contents, several files of information regarding the 'operatives'.

"This 'Project' of yours better be successful," said one General.

"It will," said Col. Greene. "The operatives are among the best that we trained, so we know what they're capable of."

"I hope you're right," said the General. "I just hope the people who submitted it weren't crackpots."

"They weren't sir," said Col. Greene. "I assure you, the Project will be a success."

Friday, May 21st, 2010, Narita International Airport, Narita, Chiba, Japan

Two travelers stepped off an international flight from Los Angeles into the gate at Narita Airport in Narita, in the Chiba prefecture of Japan. Neither one was Japanese, both of them of European extraction. One of them had on a green track jacket while the other was also wearing a green suede jacket. The one wearing the green track jacket wore a Chicago Blackhaws hat, indicating he might be from the previously mentioned Midwestern city. The one in the track jacket looked 21, the other looked 24.

"Well, we're here," said the one on the right, with an American accent.

"It's about time!" The other one said in an Irish brogue. "I'm gonna have neck cramps for the next week that took so long!"

"We just came from LA," said the American. "It's not that bad."

"Especially after the visa issues," said the Irishman.

"Tell me about it," said the American. "Stupid vaccines. So this is Tokyo."

"Well, not exactly Tokyo," said the Irishman. "We're in the Chiba prefecture." The Irishman was also a bit bigger than the American, who looked like a baseball player. But so did the Irishman.

"I guess it's a beginner's mistake," said the American. He took off his hat and ran his hand through his finger-length hair. "So we came all this way with barely any knowledge of Japanese for an internship. This better be good."

At the same time, in a different gate, a young woman, also around the age of 20, stepped off her flight. She was not like the two young men who stepped off the plane; instead she seemed to be of South American extraction instead, with brown hair going down to her shoulder. She appeared to be about 5 feet and 5 inches tall, somewhat normal. She looked around the gate for a few seconds
before picking up her bag and departing for customs.

At the same time, but not at the airport, two people, a young man around the age of 21, and a young woman around the age of 18 rode on a bullet train into the 23 Special Wards of Tokyo. The two were native Japanese, coming inbound from Kyoto. The girl was looking out the window, while the young man read a book; an actual book, not a manga.

"We'll be arriving at our destination pretty soon, Miyazawa-han," pair's bodyguard said in Japanese.

"Thank you, Toji-san," said the young man. He looked at the girl on the train with him. She was still looking out the window, not because she was ignoring him, but because of the long train ride from their home in Kyoto. The young man simply let her be and went back to reading.

"Come on, let us in the country!" The American featured in the previous scene at shouted at the customs official.

"I'm not done looking at your passports!" The old customs official as he slowly looked over the passport.

"Irish customs is much better than this," the American said to his Irish co-traveler.

"You are Sean O'Callahan, right?" The customs official asked.

"That's me," said the American—I mean, Sean. "Are you going to let me in?"

"First, I need to check if that's who you really are," said the official. Sean let out a sigh of exasperation and banged his head on the counter. "Let's see here," said the official. "Brown hair... check. Brown eyes," Sean looked at the official. "Check. Okay..."

"I've never seen a customs official do this," said the co-traveler.

"Okay then!" The official said. "Your passports have been approved." Sean looked up at the official. "Sean O'Callahan, here's your American passport and Kevin O' Donner..."

"Yes?" Kevin asked. "And it's pronounced, 'O'Donnell."

"Are you two cousins?" said the official.

"What? No!" said Sean.

"We're not even related," said Kevin. "We're friends."

"Oh, okay," said the official. "I was wondering why he had a United States passport and he had an Irish——"

"GIVE US THE DAMN PASSPORTS!" Sean yelled. But then he realized he was in customs at an airport and it's quite possible a few kids might have heard him. "Heh, heh, sorry," he said. He felt like an idiot, and so did Kevin. When they were able to leave customs, they immediately went to the baggage claim to pick up their bags from the flight. It took a while, but Sean and Kevin were able to find their bags.

Meanwhile, the young lady, Maria Aparicio, was having less difficulty with her passport, which the official had no problems with. "No, I'm indifferent towards Hugo Chavez," she said to the curious official who had been examining her Venezuelan passport. She proceeded to the baggage claim as well, and it also took her a while to get her luggage, but she got it as well. After that, she went
outside to the pick-up area where she saw two young men discussing which hotel they were going to.

Walking around to get a better look at them, she looked them over. The tall one looked okay, but he was a bit old and she didn't find anything that really stuck out for her. The short one, in the green jacket and red hat with the Indian on it, looked pretty cute, and she could see he had some muscle on him, too. Listening without eavesdropping, she figured out that the tall one was named Kevin and he must be from England or something, the shorter one was named Sean, an American, and they were discussing hotels.

"I think it's this one," said Sean.

"No, it's that one," said Kevin.


"No, it's the Shinjuku Prince Hotel," said Kevin.

"Hola," she said to them both. They turned around in surprise.

"Um... hi," said Sean, blushing at how good looking Maria was. "What is it?"

"I might be able to help," she said. "May I see it?" She asked, regarding the piece of paper they were looking at. She looked it over and said, "I believe it is the Prince Park Tower."

"Isn't that the one near the Tokyo Tower?" Kevin asked.

"Yes, it is," she said.

"How do you know that?" Sean asked her.

"Because I looked it up on the internet," she replied.

"Duh," Sean said to himself.

"But I'm also staying there," she said.

"You are?" Sean asked. He looked at Kevin and said, "Hey, why don't ask her if she wants a ride?"

"Why?" Kevin said with a bit of suspicion on his tone.

"Why not?" Sean replied. "She's going to the same hotel we are, so we might as well kill two birds with one stone!" Kevin thought about it for a minute and then said,

"Senorita, why don't you ride with us? We won't do anything to you, just so you know, but it's just for convenience."

Maria thought about it for a few moments before saying, "Sure, why not? I'll ride with you."

"All righty then!" Sean exclaimed. "Let's go, shall we? I think I see our car."

A few minutes later, the trio was in the car that would take them from the airport to the hotel in the Minato ward of the 23 Special Wards. It was a limo, which was something neither of them was used to, so they were all conversing with each other in the car. "So let me get this straight: you two are friends?" She asked. "But Sean, you're American and Kevin, you're Irish. How did you—"
"My dad was born in Dublin and he used to take me there sometimes," said Sean. "Kev's dad was an old friend of my dad's and so we became friends, as well."

"Okay, nice life story," she said.

"Yeah," Kevin said. "So now we're going to ask you where you're from."

"I will, but Sean will need to tell me where he's from too," said Maria. "I know Kevin is from Dublin, but what about you, Sean?"

"Me?" Sean asked. "I'm from Chicago, Illinois. Now you answer the question."

"I'm from Caracas," she said.

"Where is that?" A very confused Sean asked. Really, he shouldn't have been and Maria seemed justifiably upset at his question.

"It's in Venezuela!" Maria angrily shouted. "It's only the capital of the blasted country!"

"Oh, sorry," said Sean. "What's it like? I've never been there."

"It's not too bad," she said. "There are some nasty slums, but the area I'm from what is essentially one of the middle-class areas of the city, so my family's pretty well-off."

"Cool," said Sean.

"So what are you doing in Japan?" She asked the both of them. "You don't look like anyone who would come to Japan for no reason."

"I'm coming here because I got an invite for an internship with the Miyazawa Group," said Sean.

"Same here," said Kevin.

"So did I," said Maria. "Wow, talk about coincidence, huh?"

"Yeah, I'd say so," said Sean. "So, what do you like to do, Maria?"

"I do yoga and meditation," she replied, "And Brazilian Jiu-jistu."

"Really?" Sean asked. "I think we have something in common, especially with the martial arts." Kevin silently laughed, as he realized Sean was hitting on Maria.

"We do?" asked Maria. "How?"

"Well, I've been taking karate since I was ten," said Sean. "I'm not even sure why I had to do that stuff, I was mainly focusing on hockey."

"Yep," said Sean, "Shotokan style."

"The Irish Defense Forces don't have anything like that," said Kevin. "But I took Jeet Kun Do and I also do MMA on the side."

"Really? That's amazing!" said Maria.

"So I guess we've all got a connection here," said Sean. "We're martial artists."

"Is that why you've been fighting those robots that have appeared lately?" Kevin asked
"Those things?" Sean asked. "I don't know, maybe. I can't be too sure what they are, but they're just annoying little tin men, I can take 'em easily."

"Cocky one, aren't we?" Maria asked.

So they're all here?" Col. Greene asked.

"Yes sir," said a soldier. "They're on their way to the city now."

"What about the others?" Col Greene asked.

"They're in the city right now," said the soldier. "They've just checked into the Prince Park Tower Hotel in the Minato Ward."

"Alright then," said the Colonel. "Have the invitations sent out once the other three check in, they should receive them tomorrow."

"Yes sir."

Tokyo amazed the three travelers. The twisted steel, combined with possibly postmodern, ancient and traditional Japanese architecture blended perfectly together in a seamless patchwork of 23 Special Wards that made up the Tokyo Metropolis. It was late afternoon, so the sun was beginning to set a little.

At the same time, people filled the sidewalks like a river, even on the crosswalk. Just imagine their amazement when they saw the crosswalk outside of Shibuya station! The neon signs, although they were not lit, were also adding to the experience, which Sean noted that Tokyo pulled the neon thing off better than his hometown of Chicago.

As any traveler who was just getting used to his new location, they were completely dumbstruck at the majesty of the place. The natives, of course, being used to this, simply went about their business. Anyways, it's extremely difficult to describe Tokyo. It's just... Tokyo. So we'll get back to the main story.

Sean, Kevin and Maria were still in the car, which was still in Minato when Sean caught something in his peripheral vision. "Hey, what is that?" He said, pointing at it. Kevin and Maria looked out the window, which was on the passenger's side (the left side of the car) and saw what looked to be...

"Robots!" Maria exclaimed.

"Looks like the ones that have been causing trouble," said Kevin.

"Let's take 'em," said Sean with a look that clearly said he was itching for a fight.

"Sean, what are you doing?" Kevin asked, trying to stop him.

"What does it look like?" Sean asked. "I'm gonna take 'em! Stop the car!" The driver stopped the car and Sean got out of the car to the protests of the Kevin and Maria. Kevin, knowing what he had to do, apologized to Maria and jumped out of the car, while telling the driver to stay put.

The ten robots advanced on the girls. Kaede, Hikaru and Kagome were scared to death. These robots were everywhere, it seemed! They could have defended themselves if they knew how to fight robots,
but they didn't even know any martial art at all.

The robots' terrifying faces, which almost resembled skulls, with two red eyes that pierced their souls. Their grey and black metal skin gleamed in the late afternoon sun, and their legs, which seemed to have boots, stepped in time like they were goose-stepping, advancing towards the girls, backing them even further into the alleyway.

"Are we going to die?" Keade asked with terror on her voice.

"I don't know," said Hikaru.

"Please let someone come to our aid!" Kagome shouted. They had heard stories of these merciless robots that seemed to come from nowhere to attack people. Where had they come from?

"We should run," said Kaede. The other two girls heard Kaede's suggestion, but couldn't do it.

"I'm too scared," said Kagome. "I can't!"

"Will somebody help us?" Hikaru called out to the world. But no one seemed to answer. All seemed lost for the trio of friends. The robots continued to advance on the trio, drawing their weapons, their mechanical noise scaring them even further. The leader's eyes glowed red, which scared the trio even more. It looked as though the girls would meet their end, when suddenly-

"Hey machine heads!" A call came from behind the robots. The robots stopped advancing on the girls and turned around to see two young men standing at the end of the alley. The one on the right was wearing a green track jacket and a baseball cap with his arms crossed, while the one on the left was also wearing a track jacket, but was not wearing a ball cap. "You do realize it's not nice to hurt anyone, especially girls?"

The robots simply began preparing to attack them. The one on the right, who was slightly bigger than Sean, cracked his knuckles, while Sean simply stood there. The robots changed their targets for the two at the end of the alley and advanced on them, this time much more quickly.

Sean and Kevin got into fighting stances, Sean in a southpaw, Kevin in an orthodox stance. The robots got closer, this time running at them, when Sean, in a perfectly time manner, brought his right leg up and delivered a swift and powerful roundhouse kick to the lead Swabot's head, then twisting around and delivering a reverse roundhouse kick to a different bot, knocking the both of them away and out of commission, with a loud and powerful kiai. After that, Sean got back into his fighting stance. The other robots had stopped after the leader and another one got hit. "COME ON, WHO WANTS SOME!?!" Sean asked. The robots attacked, and the fight was on.

In a swift, powerful, tornado of moves, Sean and Kevin laid waste to the robots. The air was filled with the noise of the two young adults' kiais and the sounds of the robots exploding at they were struck by the powerful attacks of Sean and Kevin. Anyone who was within earshot or seeing distance watched in awe as these two—dare I say—living weapons routed the robots almost with ease. The two fought with an intensity that amazed all those who were watching. The robots could barely stand a chance.

One tried to get Kevin from behind, but he grabbed the robot's arm, and in a swift move, threw the robot the ground, damaging the machinery inside, rendering it useless. Finally, all the robots were gone, and the two humans stood tall above the wreckage of the robots. The two got into a resting stance and let out a deep breath before taking a bow before them. And with that, the crowd burst into cheers. The two turned around again and bowed as well. Then the girls who they had saved ran up to the both of them and gave them big hugs.
"Arigato gozaimasu!!" They said to them. Too bad Sean and Kevin didn't speak a word of Japanese.

"I'm sorry, I don't know what you're saying," said Sean. The girls didn't understand either, though, and it just lent to even more confusion. "Um, we gotta go, okay, but, uh, you're welcome!" The two left to the cheers of the crowd. Sean couldn't help but soak up the cheers, much to his friend's chagrin.

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"Impressive," said Col. Greene after watching the footage of Sean and Kevin beating the Swabots, which had been taken from a security camera nearby.

"That's good form," said someone else.

"Motomiya," Col. Greene said to a soldier in the room. "Can you zoom in on those two for me?" The soldier did as was requested and zoomed the picture in on Sean and Kevin. Then he paused the video so the people in the room looked at them.

"They remind me of our trainees," said one of the soldiers in the room.

"Good then," said Col. Greene. "I look forward to meeting the candidates tomorrow. Have the invitations been sent?"

"Yes sir, they will receive them tomorrow morning."

"Good."

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"Not bad, huh?" Sean said as he got back in the car. "Not a bad little bit of fighting, if you say so."

"Whatever," Maria said. "You only had to fight ten robots, if you fought any more of them, you would have been beaten."

"Are you saying we got lucky?" Sean asked. "That's not luck, that's what 11 years of martial arts training and hockey can do!"

"I wasn't saying you got lucky," said Maria. "I'm just saying you should be grateful you only had to fight 10 robots instead of 50!"

"Whatever!" Sean replied. "A beat down is a beat down in my book."

"By the way, where do those things keep coming from?" Maria asked.

"I don't know," said Sean. "But I've been messing with them for about two weeks now and some people have even sent pictures where I'm on a wanted poster! HA!"

"I hope it doesn't go to your ego," said Maria.

"It has," said Kevin. "I should know, I'm his friend let me tell you; he's got a pretty big ego. I wouldn't call it Limbaugh-sized, though, but pretty big."

"Well then, that proves my point," said Maria. But then Kevin leaned to whisper in Maria's ear and said,

"Actually, he's really not a bad person. Once you get to know him, you'll find he really cares about
his friends and family. He's a gentle person at heart. Just give some time and you'll see."

Daisuke Miyazawa, the young man who was on the train bound from Kyoto, watched the footage of Sean and Kevin's fight with the Swabots on the news in his hotel room. His 18-year-old sister Hitomi watched as well. Daisuke was around 21. His hair was shorter than Sean's, and he seemed to have the same build as him, that is, the build of a second baseman. He was also around 5 feet, 10 inches. Hitomi, meanwhile, was much shorter than him, around maybe 5 feet 4 inches and had lighter skin, compared to her brother's. She had long, wavy hair that unlike her brother's hair—which was jet black—was sort of a hybrid between brown and black, which made her look a little bit like a J-pop singer. Of course, their mother wasn't too happy about that, because it sort of gave her unwanted attention. And unlike Sean, who parted his hair down the middle, Daisuke parted his hair on the right.

"He's good," Hitomi said in Japanese. "Do you think he's here for the same reason we are?"

"Maybe," her brother replied, also in Japanese. "If they are, then this should be interesting."

"I wonder where they're from." Hitomi asked.

"They might be European or American," said Daisuke.

"American?" Hitomi asked. Daisuke nodded. Hitomi shrugged and went back to reading.

"Come on, hurry up with those bags!" Sean said to the valet guy at the hotel. "And don't drop them, either!"

"Calm down," said Kevin. "It's not like we're in hurry or anything."

"Whatever, I just want to get to the room and take a shower, I smell like shite."

"Watch the language!" Kevin said. "There might be kids listening."

"Except they might not be able to understand us," said Sean. "So I can get away with that."

"Except they might know a little bit of English," said Kevin. "So you might not."

"Can you two quit arguing and come inside so we can check in?" Maria shouted.

"All right! All right! We'll be there!" Sean said, slightly slipping into an Irish accent as he said it. "I hate it when that happens," he said to Kevin as they entered the building.

After checking in, the three went to their rooms. Sean and Kevin were sharing a room, while Maria had her own room. Both were on the same part of the building, the Park Floor. Sean and Kevin again, had their own room. When they opened the door to their room, the sight of it floored them, and they both gave a simultaneous drawn-out "whoa."

"This is incredible!" Sean shouted. "Look at this! We're living in the lap of luxury tonight, Kevin my man!" He went around the room, seeing what was in it. "Look at this, we got a fridge! And an LCD T.V.! We'll be living like kings tonight Kevin!" The room's area was 409 sq. ft, with two rooms, a TV room and the bedroom, which had two beds. It also had a kitchen, with the previously mentioned refrigerator.
Of course, as this was only one kind of room, (listed on the website as the 'Park Suite Room' on the website) it worked for them anyway. "Kevin, check out this view of the city!" The view was spectacular. It had a view of the Tower, the park surrounding it and the surrounding city. It began to hit the two that they were in friggin' Tokyo! "Dude, I still can't believe we're here in Tokyo!"

"Neither can I!" Kevin said. "Hey, let's get something to eat."

"Okay, but first, I have to shower."

Even the restaurant they ate at amazed them. The place they ate at, the Brise Verte on the 33rd floor had a fantastic view of the city. And wouldn't you know it, Maria was there as well. "So do you like it here?" She said to them.

"Are you shittin' me?" Sean asked. "This place is awesome!"

"I'm glad you like it," said Maria. "By the way, what have you heard about the Gulf Oil Spill lately?"

"BP's incompetent," said Sean. "And I'm not sure what this has to do with the conversation."

"Then I guess I'll have to wonder where the Robots are coming from," she said.

"We don't know," said Sean.

"Maybe you should care," said Kevin.

"You don't care?" Maria. "But they keep popping up—"

"And I don't care!" Sean said, cutting her off. "All we do is beat the crap out of those things and that's it."

"Where?" asked Maria.

"A few of them appeared when I went to Michigan a couple months ago," Sean said. "They came near me and I just beat the shit out of them."

"They just came near you?" Asked Maria.

Sean nodded. "Yep!"

"But you don't care that innocent people are getting hurt or possibly killed?" Maria asked.

"We never said that," said Kevin.

"All we said was that we don't care where these things come from, we just beat them anyway."

"If there's anyone in trouble with them, we help them out," said Kevin.

"So I guess he really does care," she said to herself. "Of course, I also wonder why you two didn't invite me to beat up those robots."

"Because you objected when we got out of the car," said Sean. Maria sighed in exasperation when she realized he was right. "I forgot to tell you, but I was the captain of my junior hockey team."

"You really like hockey?" Maria asked. Sean nodded.
A bit later, Daisuke went down to the vending machines to get a snack for him and Hitomi. He really didn't marvel at the place, since he had been in the hotel a few times before when he and his family had gone to Tokyo, usually for some business-related reason. He found the vending machines and he noticed a young man, around his age, with a green track jacket, which he assumed to be from Roma Atletica. He was also wearing a baseball cap. The person also seemed to be American. He was struggling with the vending machine, and was starting to get agitated somewhat, coming close to hitting it.

"Come on, you stupid machine!" He said to the machine. He tried to hit it, but not with a punch to try and get it to work, but he seemed to have trouble. "Come on! Stupid machine, I-

"Careful, you don't want to break that," said Daisuke. The person turned around and looked at him with his brown eyes.

"Why not?" He asked.

"Because if you break it," he said. "You might have to pay for the damages."

"Whatever," he said. "I just want my damn pop!"

"Then try a different machine," said Daisuke. So, the American tried a different machine.

And wouldn't you know it, it worked. "All right!" The American shouted and pumped his fist.

But Daisuke seemed to recognize him. "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" He said. The American gave him a very confused look, as if he did not know what the hell was going on.

"I don't know," he said. "Have we met? Because the last time I checked, I've never been to this country!"

"I know I've seen you somewhere..." he looked at the American's face a little longer, which started to make him uncomfortable. "Wait, I know where I've seen you!" He said. The American looked at him in an intrigued manner. "I think I saw you on the news, beating a bunch of robots today."

The American thought about it for a few moments, then smiled in realization at what he was talking about. "Oh yeah," he said. "There were ten of 'em. They didn't stand a chance. Wait, how did you see me?"

"Some security camera caught you and your friend beating several robots."

"They did?" The American said. "Damn, I didn't know that. Well I guess since I'm a celebrity now, I might as well tell you who I am. My name's Sean, Sean O' Callahan."


"Okay then, since we're on the topic of pleasantries, Tá mé go bréá." Now it was Daisuke's turn to be confused. "It's Gaelic, dude," said Sean. "It means, 'I'm fine'."

"Oh, okay," said Daisuke. Daisuke got his snacks and got ready to go. But before he did, he asked, "So why are you here in Tokyo?"
"Me? I'm here because I got some e-mail from the Miyazawa Group over a month ago that that told me about an internship and simply included airline ticket information and hotel information and told me that it was all for free. I pretty much jumped at it, applied and here I am."

"Wait," said Daisuke, as he began to think. "That is my family's company."

"Oh, that's nice," said Sean. "My friend got one too, and I've also found out this girl from Venezuela got one, too."

"Then I wish you luck," said Daisuke. "My sister and I are here to participate in the internship recruitment."

"Your sister's here?" Sean asked.

"Yes, she is," said Daisuke. "Worry not, though. We will not be interviewing you, and this meeting will have no affect on your hiring prospects." Sean sighed in relief. "Are you in University?"

"Northern Illinois," Sean replied. "I'm majoring in anthropology, but I'm probably going to switch that with my journalism minor so I can go to law school, if I don't make it to the NHL."

"NHL?"

"Hockey," said Sean. "I've got plans! And since Wayne Gretzky said you miss all the shots you don't take, I'm not throwing away my shots!"

"You should be more cautious," said Daisuke. "Talk less, smile more and, as the phrase goes, 'fake it until you make it', because that passion will get you nowhere."

Sean visibly cringed, wanting to say something about it. He would rather be divisive than indecisive and wanted to ask Daisuke what he'd die for if he didn't stand for anything. But caution overruled him. "Forget it. I'm done." He walked away with his pop, leaving Daisuke to shrug.

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"So what took you?" Kevin asked as Sean re-entered the room.

"Got into a conversation with a dude from Kyoto," said Sean. "He's here to help with the internship recruitment."

"He is?" Kevin asked as he started to get up from one of the couches.

"Yeah, and he's here with his sister," said Sean. "He looks good, but he's indecisive."

"That's nice," said Kevin. "Come on and sit down, already. I found an English channel." Sean forgot about the recent events and sat down on the couch with the snacks he got from the vending machines. Even with the strange events going on, the matter with the internship didn't bother him too much.

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But the next morning, the pieces began to come together. Around 8:00 local time, the friends heard a knock on the door of their room. They ignored it at first, but it was persistent, knocking every two minutes for maybe a half an hour. Finally, Sean got up out of bed. He hated mornings, especially early ones, when his hair looked terrible. It's morning hair, alright? Anyway, he's just not a morning person. In his groggy state, but gradually waking up, Sean walked to the door of the room. "I'm
coming!" He said. The knocking continued until he opened the door. A hotel employee stood in the doorway. "What?" He said in an annoyed tone of voice.

"Are you Sean O'Callahan-san?" He said.

"Yeah," said Sean. "I'm him."

"And Kevin O'Donnell-san."

"He's still in bed," said Sean. "Can I take a message?"

"Here you go," said the employee, shoving the envelopes in Sean's hands. Then the employee walked away before Sean could say anything. The envelopes were simple, white envelopes which simply had the names 'Sean O' Callahan' and 'Kevin O' Donnell' in black ink. Sean went back into the bedroom part of the room and dropped the envelope with Kevin's name on the bed. Sean could not wait anymore and opened the envelope with his name on it. It read;

"To Mr. Sean E. O' Callahan-

You are to come to an undisclosed location at 1300 hours Tokyo time. The address has not been written in this letter, due to the possibility of anyone seeing this message. A ride has been provided for you and will pick you up at a designated time and place. The place is at the hotel you are staying at. The time will be given to you when you receive a text message telling you that your escort has arrived. If you do not come, there will be consequences.

Signed, Anonymous."

Sean put down the letter; a look of disbelief dominated his face. Now he was fully awake. What was going on? Who was this person? And why did it say there will be consequences?

"Sean?" Kevin asked. Apparently he had read his letter too, because he had the look Sean had on his face. "What do you think it means?"

"I don't know," said Sean. "But whatever it is, it's going to be one hell of a ride."

To Be Continued...
Start Your Engines, part 2

Power Rangers GPX, Episode 2: Start Your Engines, Part 2

:-::-: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers GPX, let's go! :-:--:

It was about 12:00 Tokyo time. For four hours, Sean and Kevin had been waiting nervously for
when the text message telling them the time the car will come and the tension was getting thicker by
the nanosecond. What was going on? Was this related to the robots? They hadn't thought about it at
first, but now the appearance of the robots, coupled with the e-mails they received was starting make
them think differently. Maybe since they received it around the same time the robots first showed up
there was a possible connection.

Maria, meanwhile, also waited nervously, trying to keep herself calm through meditation. But no
matter what she tried—tai chi, meditation, none of it seemed to calm her down. Way had that letter
come to her? And what was this address it was talking about? Her suspicions about the robots were
starting to become somewhat valid now, because of the internship offer she received two weeks ago,
which strangely coincided with the first sighting of the robots. She could only wonder for now.

Daisuke and Hitomi also waited nervously. And they too, were thinking about the appearance of the
robots and the e-mail they received two weeks ago. Daisuke thought about Sean's statements that he
received an E-mail around the same time Daisuke and Hitomi received theirs. Hitomi, though, was
more worried about her brother. Maybe he knew something she didn't know. "Brother?" She said.

"What is it, Hitomi?"

"What are you thinking about?"

"I'm just... thinking."

"Goddammit, this wait is pissing me off," said Sean.

"Easy Sean," said Kevin. He was trying to keep his friend calm, as usual. Being three years older
and a little more academic, Kevin was much more mature than the hot-blooded and hot-headed Sean,
but Kevin could be just as hot-blooded and hot-headed as Sean, even more at times.

"I wanna beat some robots," said Sean. "At least it's more relaxing than this!"

Kevin sighed at his friend. He was the same as always, itching for a fight. Or was he? Maybe he was
just commenting on how much easier it is to fight robots than it is to wait for a text message that
might contain your future in it!

"New reports of robot attacks have increased lately." the news program that was on TV caught their
attention from their previous thoughts. "UN Officials have no comment on the recent attacks.
Meanwhile, UFO sightings across the globe have increased over the past two weeks. The world
militaries will not say anything, but they say they will do their best to monitor these events."
Strange enough, all five people, Sean, Kevin, Daisuke, Maria and Hitomi were watching the news report. The slightly urgent tone of the report told them that there was indeed something going on. Although it seemed unlikely, it was possible that these UFO sighting and the sightings of the robots may have been connected.

Meanwhile, in space...

"Those stupid humans! Don't they realize they're being invaded?" A voice said in the black. The voice sounded like a big person.

"They're starting to catch on," said another voice. It belonged to a man, much more sinister. "Perhaps it will only be a matter of time before things get interesting."

"NO! I say we go down there and lay waste to EVERYTHING!"

"Calm down!" A much more sinister yet calm voice said; probably the leader. "We will destroy everything, but when the time is right. But once that time comes, the humans won't know what hit them!"

"Hmmm, that sounds fun," said another voice. It belonged to a woman, most likely. "I can't wait to destroy these miserable creatures."

"I can't wait either," one of the voices said. "It looks almost easy."

"But we should be cautious," one of the voices said. "They might be more of a challenge than we thought."

"Which is exactly why I look forward to it!" The more savage voice said.

"Relax! Very well then, we will send our first colonel down today. Now select a random city and send him there!"

"Yes, your highness," the voice paused for a few seconds. "The city of Tokyo, in the land known as 'Japan' has been chosen."

"Now then, it's time!"

It was around maybe 12:15 when Sean and Kevin got their text message. It had been quiet for some time, and their phones going off startled them like someone had come up behind them and popped a balloon. Luckily, they recovered fast enough to see what it was. The text message said; "The car will be at the front of your hotel at 1230 hours. Be ready."

"Are we going to go?" Kevin asked, some worry in his voice.

"Do we have any other choice?" Sean replied. The silence in the room was deafening. Their destinies were about to change, and they knew that. But how it would happen was the scariest part of the equation. "We're going to have to do this," said Sean. "If this turns out to be a life-changing experience, I don't want to have to look back 50 years from now and regret the fact that when I was given the chance for greatness, I didn't take it. I don't know what will happen, but I'm taking the plunge, anyway." Kevin looked at his American friend for a few moments and then nodded his head in agreement. The call had come for them. Now, they will answer it.

At about 12:25 Tokyo time, Sean and Kevin made their way to the front entrance of the Prince Park
Hotel. They were still nervous, and could feel goodness knows how many butterflies in their stomachs, probably a million. And they were also having second thoughts about what they were doing. The mystery of what exactly they were getting into was starting to catch up with the two and-

"What are you two doing here?" A voice said. The voice startled them, just like when they got the text message. It was Maria.

"We could ask you the same question," said Sean.

"Me? I got a text message telling me to be out here because some... wait, did the both of you get the same message?"

The two looked at each other, and then Kevin said, "What did your message say?"

"It said to be out here by 12:30." She said. "Why, did yours say something like that?"

"Yeah, it did," said Sean. "And we got some letters telling us we had to be at some location by 1:00."

"Wait, you too?" Maria asked. "I guess I wasn't the only one. I wonder if this has to do with that e-mail." The three were left to think about what was going on. Then another voice came.

"Sean O'Callahan, what are you doing here?" Daisuke said as he came down the steps.

"I could say the same thing to you," said Sean. "Let me guess, you got a letter and a text message, right?"

"Yeah, we did," said Daisuke. "Hitomi and I got the message around 12:15."

"So I'm guessing that's your sister," Sean said, pointing to Hitomi.

"Yes she is," said Daisuke. "Hitomi, this is Sean O'Callahan, the American we saw yesterday on the news."

"Hi," said Hitomi.

"Who's he?" said Maria, pointing to the guy next to Daisuke and Hitomi.

"Him? He's Toji-san, our bodyguard," Daisuke said.

"Must be rich," Sean whispered to Kevin.

"Who's he?" Hitomi asked, pointing to Kevin.

"I'm Kevin O'Donnell, Sean's friend," he said. "But I'm from Ireland, I'm not American. And she's Maria Aparicio from Venezuela," he said as he pointed to Maria.

"Hola," she said.

"So now that we're all introduced, I guess we can all try to find out what the hell is going on," said Sean. It didn't take long for that question to be answered, because soon enough, a black SUV pulled up to the driveway.

The company was silent. They wondered if this was the car that the text message mentioned. Just to be sure, Daisuke checked his watch. Sure enough, it was 12:30. The SUV had tinted windows, so seeing inside it was impossible. Then, the driver's side door opened and a man wearing a black suit
and tie, with black sunglasses stepped out of the car and approached the group.

"Let's see here..." He said, while looking over something. "Sean O'Callahan?"

"That's me," said Sean.

"Kevin O'Donnell?"

"Yeah," said Kevin.

"Maria Aparicio?"

"Si."

"Daisuke Miyazawa?"

"I'm here."

"Hitomi Miyazawa?"

"Hai."

"Could you all please come with me?" He said. The group looked at each other, now that they knew this was the car the message told them about. But they were a little hesitant to do so.

"Should we get in the car?" Hitomi asked.

"What if we don't?" Maria replied. "Will we regret it?"

"If this does turn out to be great," said Sean. "50 years from now, will you look back and have regrets if you didn't get in the car? Or will you be glad you did?" The rest of the group thought about their decision for a few moments before they all agreed.

"We'll come," said Daisuke.

"Good," said the agent. The group started to enter the car, but the agent said, "I'm sorry, but who is he?"


"I'm sorry, but he can't come with us," said the agent. "He doesn't have clearance."

"Go ahead," said Toji-san. "I'll wait here for you."

"Thank you, Toji-san," Hitomi said in Japanese. She did not regret getting in the car, but she did regret leaving Toji-san behind. But the others didn't seem to mind that much. They just wanted to know what would happen next.

The group got in the car and fastened their seat belts. They thought they were going to leave right then and there, but the agent said, "I'm sorry, but you'll have to put these on." In his hand were five blindfolds. Why he had them just made things even more confusing.

"How come?" Kevin asked.

"The place we're going to is a top-secret location," said the agent. "For now, you'll just have to wear these, because we're not sure whether or not you'll tell anyone about the location." Did they have any
"All right, we'll take them," said Daisuke. The agent handed them the blindfolds and all five of them put them on. For the next 30 minutes, all they would see was the blank blindness of the blindfolds, and a lingering sense of worry that made them all wonder just what the hell they were getting themselves into.

"Are we there yet? I'm starting to fall asleep back here!" Sean said in a very agitated tone of voice. They had been in the car for goodness-knows-how-long and they had no way of knowing where they were or what time it was because of the damn blindfolds. They could hear the car motor running, but they couldn't hear outside the car, either. "Hell, I think one of the girls has fallen asleep by now because I think I feel someone laying their head on my shoulder!"

"We'll be there soon enough, don't worry," said the agent.

"You said that a long time ago," Daisuke whispered to himself.

"Like I said, we'll be there soon," said the agent. The whole thing was starting to look less like a life-changing experience to one that was simply mediocre, and now they were starting to have regrets about coming. But the thing about the call to adventure is that it can seem mediocre at times. Sure enough, "We're here!" The agent said. The group wondered what was going on, wait, they've arrived? Where were they? And what was going on? "You can take off those blindfolds now," said the agent. The group removed the blindfolds and the scene before them stunned them.

They were in a room now, almost like a hangar or something. They didn't know what it was. So, they got out of the car, although Sean had some difficulty getting out because Hitomi Miyazawa was the girl who had laid her head on his shoulder, and he had to be gentle waking her up. The room, although mentioned to be like a hanger, was not an aircraft hanger, but much smaller. In fact, it might not even count as a hanger. It was in fact, more of a garage. "This way," said the agent. The group looked at each other and then followed him in to the next room.

The next room was much different, almost like a scene from some sci-fi TV show or something like that. The room was filled with computers and people scurrying about, doing their jobs. The next room was a bit bigger, though, having more floor space. Then the agent stopped to talk to someone else, who seemed to be wearing what looked like a military uniform. The agent and the woman, who had her hair in a bun, exchanged a few words, before the woman said, "Can you follow me, please?" Once again, the group followed her. This time, she led them to a different room where a man, who looked to be African-American, "Welcome!" Make that African-American. The man was dressed in the officers' uniform of the United States Army, which surprised them, since they're in Japan. The man seemed to be taller than all the members of the group, even Kevin. "My name is Colonel Alan Greene of the United States Army." That answers that question. "I suppose you're all wondering why you're here," he said.

"You bet your ass!" Sean said.

"Please, don't get upset," said Col. Greene. Sit down here and I'll tell you what's going on." The group sat down at the table that occupied the room while Col. Greene stood. "What you are about to hear is going to change your lives; whether or not you accept it is up to you, though."

"So what do you want from us?" Maria said.
"Please, be patient," said Col. Greene. "First, why don't we introduce ourselves? Like I said, my name's Col. Alan Greene, United States Army, I'm 45 years old, and I live in Arlington, Virginia. Also a member of the West Point class of 1987. I know some of you have already introduced yourselves, but let's just do it formally. Just tell us your name, where you're from, and what you do. We'll start here." He pointed to Daisuke.

"Konnichiwa," he said. "My name is Daisuke Miyazawa. I am 21 years old, from Kyoto. I attend the University of Kyoto and I am studying business. I want to run the Miyazawa company when I am older."

"Good, good," said Col. Greene. "You there." He pointed to Maria.

"Maria Gabriela Aparicio Rodriguez," she said. "I'm also 21 and I'm from Caracas, Venezuela. But I live in Rio de Janeiro and go to the State University of Rio de Janeiro. I want to be a teacher some day, preferably in a poor village in Colombia or Brazil."

"Ah, a teacher," said Col. Greene. "That's a very admirable profession. You there, Hitomi?"

"Yes. I am Hitomi Miyazawa," she said. "I am also from Kyoto, but I should be in school. I'm only 18 and I haven't graduated high school yet. And I want to be a mangaka when I get older. I really like watching anime, though."

"Good, good," said Col. Greene. "Sean?"

"What up? Name's Sean O'Callahan, and I'm a hockeyholic," he joked. "I'm 21, I'm from the South Side of Chicago neighborhood of Beverly, but I also play hockey for the Northern Illinois University DII club hockey team."

"And finally?"

"Hello, I'm Kevin O'Donnell," he said. "I'm from Dublin, I'm 25 years old, and I attend the postgraduate program at University College Dublin. I would also like to be a teacher."

"Perfect!" said Col. Greene. "Now, I bet you're wondering about those Swabots." No answer. "Then again, maybe not; but I'll explain anyways. And I'm not going to answer as to how we got your e-mail addresses and phone numbers at the moment." Kevin's question was shot down. "You see, 15 years ago, SETI picked up a signal from outer space. At first, they were ecstatic, and reported this to the press.

"However, they signal contained something even more sinister than they thought. It was a distress call from a far away planet." The group looked at each other. Was he trying to mess with them? "The signal stated that a great force had conquered and then destroyed the planet, and the last survivors were calling for help. But the signal cut off at some point. The United Nations panicked and asked what could be done if this threat ever reached Earth.

"A few scientists and military officials came up with some solutions, but the UN didn't like any of them. However, one proposal that came to their attention intrigued them. A scientist at MIT told them he had been working on an exoskeleton that could not only make a human almost invincible, but could also increase their abilities. The UN liked the proposal and the project was given the green light."

"So what does that have to do with us?" Sean asked impatiently.

"Be patient, I'm getting to that," said Col. Greene. "The scientists began working on the project in earnest, and the UN assigned a military officer, my predecessor, to oversee the project. But they
found out that in order for someone to use this armor, as they began calling it, they needed to be in top physical form. So, four years after the project was green-lighted, a number of candidates, ranging from the ages of 8 through 15, were selected. For the next 11 years, they went through rigorous training in martial arts, sharp shooting, strategy and other skills."

"And what does that have to do with us again?" Said Sean, a little more agitated.

"I said, be patient," said Col. Greene. "Do any of you remember having to take karate classes?"

"Yeah, I had to do karate three times a week," said Sean. "And then I got Kung fu. And some other stuff, too."

"I had to do that too!" Kevin said.

"So did I," Maria said.

"And me," said Daisuke.

"And me," said Hitomi. Now it was starting to hit them. They were among the candidates!

"What is this about?" Sean asked.

"I'm getting to that," said Col. Greene. "Recently, we received another signal, this one from a different source. This one was from the moon. It was the invaders. We had to get the Project started soon. So two weeks ago, we sent you all e-mails to have you come here to Tokyo."

"So that's what that was about!" Sean said.

"Exactly," said Col. Greene. "This force is poised to attack Earth. The only way to stop them is for the five of you to use the armor."

"What armor?" Hitomi asked.

"The armor is a special armor," Col. Greene said, ignoring Hitmoi. "The armor is a specially made armor that not only protects the user, but increases their abilities more than tenfold." Didn't they already go over this? The screen showed pictures of men wearing what looked like…

"Looks like spandex," said Sean. "The world's greatest armor is spandex? And why is he wearing a motorcycle helmet?"

"It's not spandex," said Col. Greene. "Those are prototype suits, the pictures were taken during the early development stages. By now, things are different."

"Whatever," Sean said. He was starting to get annoyed by this development and wanted out. But Col. Greene kept going.

"The armor is made of highly advanced nanotechnology. The armor can be stored in small spaces, and can be activated using a voice command. This is a voice recognition technique that:"

"I get it, the suits amazing!" Kevin said in a very annoyed tone. "Now can you tell us what this has to do with us?"

"I was going to get to that later, but since you're being impatient, I'll have to explain now," said an equally annoyed Col. Greene. "What we want you to do is to use this armor and fight the alien invaders as Power Rangers!"
"Power Rangers?!" Sean asked, laughing. "Are you kidding me? That's a friggin' TV Show! And the Rangers didn't fight in spandex, that's for sure!"

"It's not spandex!" Col. Greene barked. "What would happen if you said that to the person who made it?"

"Look, I don't care about this anymore," said Sean. The thing about the aliens, that was outlandish at first, but this? Don't insult my intelligence!"

Col. Greene sighed in exasperation. "You do know 'Power Rangers' is based off of a Japanese show, right?" Daisuke asked.

"Hey shut up, rich boy, I wasn't talking to you!" Sean snapped.

"Easy!" Col. Greene said, trying to control the situation.

"Don't tell me what I can and can't do!" Daisuke replied to Sean.

"ENOUGH!" Col. Greene yelled. The group stopped their argument and looked at him. "I don't want to force you to do something you don't want to do," said Col. Greene. "But the fate of the world is at stake here!"

"So what about the internships we were recruited for?" asked Maria.

"There was no internship," said Col. Greene. "It was just a way for us to bring you here." They all groaned. This was the last straw.

"Well Kevin and I can take on the robots on our own!" Sean said.

"There's more robots than you know of," said Col. Greene. "The fate of the world is at stake, and you're not going to accept this?"

"Like I said, this is ri-goddam-dicrous!" Sean said.

"I'm sorry," said Hitomi. "But have to agree with O'Callahan-san, I'm not sure if I can believe this."

"Neither can I," said Kevin.

"Or me." Maria said. Col. Greene's face turned from anger to disappointment as the group voiced their statements. He had no other choice. He had to let them go.

"You're free to go," said Col. Greene. "But first," he motioned to a soldier in the room who then left. A few second later, the soldier returned carrying what looked like a case. "Bit before you go, please take these." He opened the case up and showed the group the contents inside. Inside were five... things. They looked like bracelets, only bigger.

"What are they?" Sean asked.

"They're nothing that special," said Col. Greene. "But we would appreciate it if you could take them." The group took the bracelets, thinking they were nothing special. They had what looked like buttons on it. They were grey, with touches of red, green, blue, pink, and yellow. The group strapped the bracelets on their left wrists and marveled at them. They also had what looked like a circle on them. They were mostly rectangular shaped, but with a curve on the lower part of it. "By the way, if you need any help, just say 'GPX, Start it up', okay?"

"Sure," said Sean. "Come on Kevin, let's go." He, Kevin, Maria and Hitomi left the room, but
Daisuke stayed behind for some reason.

"You believe me, don't you?" Col. Greene asked.

"What color will I get?" Daisuke asked. "I was guaranteed a leadership position."

"You'll see," said Col. Greene.

"Hey rich boy, let's go!" Sean said. Daisuke bowed to Col. Greene and said,

"Thanks, anyway," and left. Col. Greene only stood there and watched the group leave the room.

The group once again had to wear blindfolds in the car. But this time, the agent said they could take them off whenever the agent told them they could and then they would be dropped off in Shibuya so the car could not be tracked. The group was allowed to take their blindfolds off when they were in Shibuya, and the agent told them he would let them off near the Hachiko statue, but in an alley so that no one would see the car. He also told them they would have money so that they could buy a subway ticket back to the Minato Ward. Finally, they were dropped off near the statue and the driver drove off. "Jeez," said Sean. "What a bunch of losers. Yeah, go ahead and rub our lot in life in our faces, jagovs."

With nothing else to do for the rest of the day, the group decided they would walk around for a while. But Sean and Daisuke didn't talk to each other. They decided they would look around for a place to eat, since they hadn't eaten in a while.

"Hi, don't believe we've been formally introduced," Hitomi said to Maria, which caught the Venezuelan off guard. "My name is Hitomi Miyazawa; do you want to be friends?"

Maria gawked at the suddenness randomness of Hitomi's request, but she smiled and said, "Sure, let's be friends."

"Okay, then! Hey, do you guys want to go the Omotesando Hills?" She said. The other members of the group looked at each other in confusion, not only because of the randomness of this, but because Sean, Kevin and Maria had no idea what the hell it was.

"Why do you want to go the mall?" Daisuke asked.

"I don't know," she said, trying to be cute. "I just thought we might find something to eat there!"

"No thanks," said Sean. "We're right near-what's this place called-Shibuya 109, maybe we'll find something." But his statement was cut off when an explosion rocked the place, sending cars and asphalt flying.

"Get down!" Daisuke said. The group did so, with Sean trying to protect Hitomi. Why he did it, he didn't know.

When the debris stopped flying, Sean got up and said, "What the hell was that?" He didn't have to look far for his answer, because there they were.

"Robots!" Kevin said.

"Lot's of 'em," said Sean.

"Well, what are we waiting for," said Daisuke. "Let's see what it is!"

"Right!" The group said in unison.
Just around the corner, a crowd of people could be seen running from an as-of-yet unknown force. It wasn't too long before a large force of robots appeared. They must have been the culprits of these attacks. But they were not the only force there. Standing tall was a strange-looking monster or something that seemed to be commanding the robots. "Swabots, it's time we laid waste to these pitiful creatures!" The monster said. The monster looked like a combination between a rhino and human, with Cyborg parts. His name was Rhinotaur. "ATTACK!" The Swabots rushed the people in the street, causing them to run as fast as they could. Just then-

"You will not!" A voice said from behind them.

"What?" Rhinotaur shouted. He and the Swabots turned around in an instant and saw five humans standing in the street, as if they wanted to fight him, and showing body language that they intended to do so. "What do you want, you filthy Terrans?"

"We will not let you destroy everything!" Daisuke said. "You will be defeated!" Sean wasn't too happy about Daisuke's futile attempt to be hot-blooded.

"You think you can stop us? HA! Don't make me laugh! Swabots, attack!" The Swabots charged at the group, ready to attack.

"Let's go!" Daisuke shouted.

"Right!" The group charged at the Swabots themselves and the two forces clashed midway.

Daisuke took on what appeared to be the lead Swabots. Daisuke gave one Swabot a side-kick, and then gave the next a front kick with the same leg. Both bots went down. Then he punched two more, sending them flying. The next one got landed a punch on Daisuke, but he flipped the bot over on to its back. These things just keep coming! He thought frantically. A Swabot came at him brandishing its sword, knocking him out of his thoughts. Daisuke dodged the attack and caught the Swabot's arm as it came down. Daisuke took a deep breath and sent a roundhouse kick at another Swabot's head, which knocked the robot's head off.

"YAAAA!" Sean gave a swift reverse roundhouse kick to a Swabot's head. With a swift turn, Sean gave another Swabot a side-kick, sending it flying back into another group of Swabots. But then he felt as though the wind had been knocked out of him. A Swabot had kicked him in the gut and caught him off guard. Sean doubled over in pain, but he recovered fast enough to block a punch by another Swabot and then punched it in its gut. The robot doubled over and Sean finished the job with an elbow to its back. But the Swabots had a massive numerical advantage, which he hadn't dealt with before.

Kevin punched his Swabot opponent right in its gut, possibly doing some damage internally. Another Swabot came at Kevin, but he ducked and the Swabot missed him, but hit the Swabot Kevin had just punched in the head. But Kevin's right arm was grabbed by another Swabot and wouldn't let go. Kevin kicked the 'bot and knocked it away, but another grabbed his left. The Swabots ganged up on Kevin and kicked him in the gut, knocking his breath out. These Swabots are different! He thought. They're not like the ones I'm used to!

The Swabot swung its club at Maria, but she ducked and rolled underneath the robot's arm. With a sweep kick, she knocked the robot on its back. Then she blocked another Swabot's attack, but a second Swabot kicked her in the back. Maria screamed in pain at the robot's attack and feel forward. A Swabot raised its sword above its head, preparing to strike, but Maria rolled out of the way, got up and kicked the sword out of the Swabot's hand before it could strike. She spun around and kicked the same 'bot again, knocking it to the ground. But a Swabot tripped her up and she fell to the ground.
The Swabot tried to bring its sword down on Hitomi, but she managed to dodge that. But another tried to assault her from the front, but she did a back flip and kicked the robot in its 'jaw'. The Swabots then attacked her with a coordinated attack, but she managed to fight a few of them off before a Swabot sweet kick knocked her off her feet. But she recovered quickly and blocked a Swabot kick with her right leg before getting back up and delivering a swift roundhouse kick that knocked the Swabot off its feet. But the Swabots were too much for her, and she couldn't hold on much longer before several Swabots got to her.

A Swabot knocked Sean off his feet and the next thing he knew he had a face full of asphalt. Sean growled in frustration as the Swabots closed in. Daisuke himself was taken down by several Swabots and Kevin was kicked from behind. The Swabots were too many for Sean to take on. Now all the members of the group were lying on the ground in defeat and the Swabots were leaving the scene. Worst of all, Rhinotaur was taunting them. "Is that the best you filthy humans can do? HA! You're pathetic!" Sean growled angrily and looked at Daisuke and said,

"Hey Miyazawa, you got any ideas?" But Daisuke stayed silent. He had been caught off guard too much by the Swabot attacks that he couldn't think of anything to do. "Miyazawa!" Sean yelled angrily. Again, Daisuke laid on the ground in shock at what happened. But Sean wasn't going to take this. "We're looking for guidance, leader-boy, come on!" But Daisuke said,

"I don't know what to do." That was the last straw. Sean could not take this while Daisuke, who seemed to be the leader, sat around and did nothing. If Daisuke wasn't going to take charge, then he would. But what would they do? Just then-

"Everyone, listen to me!" A voice came. The group looked around for the source of the voice. Then they saw where it was coming from. "You know those bracelets on your wrist-use them!" Col. Greene pleaded. Sean, even though he had been skeptical at first, knew desperate times called for desperate measures.

With this knowledge in mind, he got up off the street and stood up. Sean looked at the other people in the group and said, "Come on, get up! All of you!" The other members of the group looked at Sean in surprise at what he was doing. Wasn't Daisuke supposed to be leader? So what was Sean doing? "I said get up! NOW!" He yelled at the top of his voice.

"But what are we going to do?" Daisuke asked. "We don't have anything to throw against him!"

"We got something right here!" Sean said, showing them the bracelet. It was then that Daisuke's eyes widened in shock at Sean's realization of the bracelet. How did he know? "I may not have believed it before, but I'm desperate enough to try it! So GET THE FUCK UP NOW!" With Sean's encouragement, the other group members got up off the ground and gathered around Sean, from left to right, Maria, Daisuke, Sean, Kevin and Hitomi. "Hey you! Hey ugly!" Sean said to the monster.

The monster turned around and said, "Coming back for more?"

"That was just the first period!" Sean replied. "Now it's time for period 2!" Sean showed the monster the bracelet on his left wrist. "READY, GUYS?"

"READY!" In unison, the group yelled at the top of their lungs, "GPX! START IT UP!"

To be continued...
Start Your Engines, part 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Power Rangers GPX, Episode 3: Start Your Engines, Part 3

:-:-:-: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers GPX, let's GO! :-:-:-:

"That was just the first period!" Sean said. "Now it's time for period 2!" Sean showed the monster the bracelet on his left wrist. "READY, GUYS!?"

"READY!" In unison, the group yelled at the top of their lungs, "GPX! START IT UP!" The group pressed a pair of buttons on the bracelets, and then raised their fists to the sky. Suddenly, the area was filled with a blinding light. Rhinotaur was forced to look away from the scene, and so were the crowds of people that were still around. When Rhinotaur looked again, something was different.

"I don't feel different," said Sean. He felt the same, so what happened? Had he been cheated? But then he looked at his hands. "WOAH!" He said. He was wearing... something! In fact, everyone was wearing it! The suits seemed to be color-coded: Yellow, Green, Red, Blue, Pink.

"Listen," said Col. Greene. "This is the result of 'Project Ranger'. You now have suits that will increase your abilities more than tenfold and this robotic exo-skeleton will protect you!" The suits had white sections going from the collar down the shoulders and arms. They also went down the sides of the chest starting from the armpits, and the sides of the legs, with thin black lines on either side of the white ones.

On the arms, the stripes cut off just below the elbow on the forearm, where the gloves began. The wrist guard part of the gloves and the actual gloves themselves were white. The stripes on the legs stopped at the boots a bit below the knees. The boots were in there respective suit color. The gloves and boots had black rings like tires around them, at around where the gloves and boots started, just below the knees and elbows. The belt was black and had a holster for the weapon on the right side of the suit.

The helmets varied from suit to suit, but had the same base design, that included a black, opaque visor. A metal mouthpiece with three horizontal grills that stopped before they reached the edge of the guard was also included. Two wheel-like features were on the side of the helmets. On the front of the suit was a black symbol that looked like a wheel and the suit's number in a motion font in gold (1 for red, 2 for blue, 3 for green, 4 for yellow and 5 for pink).

"WOW!" Sean said. "I've never felt this incredible my whole life!" The feeling was like no feeling of euphoria he had ever felt in his life. It was almost like going on 10 roller coasters at once, it felt so good.

"This should be normal," said Col. Greene. "The first time you activate the suit, you should feel a sense of euphoria."

"I do!" Hitomi said. "It's the most wonderful feeling I've ever felt!"

"I love this!" Kevin said, balling his fists. "I want to kick some arse!"

"¡Muy, muy bueno!" Maria said. "¡Me encanta esta sensación!"
But Daisuke was silent. It wasn't because he hated the feeling of the suit; it was because he was in the green suit. Sean, meanwhile, was wearing red. Kevin was in blue, Maria in yellow and Hitomi in pink. The girls' suits also had skirts on them.

"What the hell are you!" Rhinotaur shouted.

"Who are we?" Sean said. "We're Power Rangers! GPX Red!"

"GPX Blue!" Kevin said.

"GPX Green!" Daisuke said.

"GPX Yellow!" Maria said.

"GPX Pink!" Hitomi shouted.

"Power Rangers! GPX!" The group posed and behind them, several explosions added to the spectacle.

"What the hell was that?" Kevin asked, referring to the explosions.

"Probably just for flair," said Sean.

"So you changed your costume, big deal!" Rhinotaur shouted.

"You sure about that?" Sean asked. "'Cuz now things are going to get interesting!"

"Swabots, ATTACK!" The Swabots charged at the group, with swords drawn.

"Rangers," said Col. Greene. "Your holster contains your primary weapon, the Octane Blaster. But it also has the capability of turning into the GP Saber, got it?"

"Got it!" Sean said. "All right guys; let's give these things a try. LET'S DO IT!"

"RIGHT!" The Rangers drew their Octane Blasters and charged the enemy Swabots, and the two groups met in the middle.

Sean delivered a roundhouse kick to an oncoming Swabot. The kick knocked the bot's head clean off. Then Sean kicked a Swabot behind him without his foot touching the ground. The Swabots closed in around Sean, but he drew his Octane Blaster-which looked like a combination between a fuel pump dispenser nozzle and a pistol for some reason-and shot a couple. The Swabots exploded in a spectacular display of sparks. Another Swabot came at Sean, but he flipped over the robot and shot it literally in the back with his Octane Blaster. In midair, Sean pulled a Matrix-like stunt and shot three Swabots in midair. When he landed, a Swabot came at him, but Sean held out his arm and clotheslined the Swabot, knocking it on its back. Another Swabot came at him and this one he gave reverse roundhouse kick, the robot fell to the ground in a twitching mess right there. Then Sean switched his Octane Blaster into a GP Saber and blocked an incoming Swabot sword, then punched the Swabot in the chest, knocking it back. "This thing is fuckin' awesome!" He said before going back to beating more Swabots.

An incoming Swabot brought its sword down on Kevin, but he spun around and then kicked the Swabot in the back. He then grabbed an incoming punch from a Swabot and flipped the bot on its back and then stomped on the robot's chest. But Kevin suddenly felt himself falling backwards as though a rug had been swept out from under him. Turns out a Swabot and managed to knock him off his feet with a sweep kick. But Kevin quickly managed to recover as soon as he hit the ground and
punched the Swabot he thought was responsible for the sweep kick. The robot flew backwards and struck three other Swabots, knocking them off their feet. Kevin blocked an incoming Swabot punch, and then kicked it too. A Swabot rushed in at Kevin, but he leaped and flipped over the 'Bot and kicked over another group of them after he got the right spot. Then he tornado-kicked three Swabots and side kicked another. "I love this!" He said. "This is better than a pint of Smithwick's!"

Daisuke slashed an incoming Swabot with his GP Saber. He had forgotten about the disappointment he felt earlier and was now concentrating on beating the Swabots and enjoying the euphoria of the suit. A Swabot brought it sword down on Daisuke, but he parried the attack and kicked the Swabot. He slashed at another Swabot, then spun around like a top and struck several Swabots in succession. He stopped long enough to let the robots fall to the ground and fall to pieces. A small, sharp feeling of pain in his back jolted him back into reality and he spun around and slashed the Swabot that attacked him. The Swabot fell to the ground twitching. Daisuke leapt into the air and kicked a Swabot in the head, then brought his Sonic Saber down on another Swabot, knocking it out of commission. Two Swabots charged Daisuke, but were met by a reverse roundhouse kick from Daisuke, then a sidekick. "I am unstoppable," he said. "You cannot defeat me!"

With two Swabots coming at her and three behind, Maria backflipped behind the Swabots, catching the both of them off guard. The Swabots looked for Maria before she kicked them both, knocking their heads off. Two more Swabots charged Maria, but she made a spin move and dodged the incoming Swabots. One tried to kick her, but she blocked the kick with her own leg, then reverse roundhouse kicking the same robot onto its back. Then in rapid-fire succession, kick, punch, kick, butterfly kick, chop. Five Swabots went down like flies. A Swabot's punch came for her, but she dodged the punch and just as quickly kicked the Swabot in its chest. Two Swabots brought their short swords down on her, but she blocked both swords with her left arm. From there, she kicked both robots and then spun around to counter an incoming Swabot attack, which she easily blocked and countered with a powerful punch. "This is incredible!" She said. "I love it!"

Hitomi backflipped five times, each time striking a Swabot in the 'chin'. A Swabot swung its sword at her, but she dodged the sword, and countered with a punch to the robot's gut. She acrobatically leaped over two Swabots, and then kicked one Swabot into the other. With three Swabots bearing down on her, she spun around and delivered three kicks in quick succession to each Swabot coming at her. Another Swabot attacked her, but she took care of it with a quick jab and a reverse roundhouse kick. Then she back-flipped over a car and kicked a Swabot away. A Swabot tried to give her an uppercut, but she dodged that, too and backflipped and kicked the robot's 'jaw'. Hitomi's acrobatic style caused the much more ground-based Swabots to become disoriented at her style of fighting. A Swabot again brought its sword down on her, which missed by a mile as she dodged easily and gave it a sidekick in its ribs. "Oooh! If only my mom could see this!" She said.

"Alright, ugly, it's your turn!" Sean said as the others gathered around him. They had beaten the Swabots and were now ready to confront Rhinotaur.

"You think you can defeat me?" Rhinotaur taunted. "You don't have what it takes!"

"You sure about that?" Sean asked.

"Take this!" Rhinotaur yelled. Panels on his bodies opened up and revealed several missiles. "FIRE!" The missiles were launched from Rhinotaur's body and the missiles exploded in front of the Rangers, sending them flying.

"Dammit!" Sean shouted. "Regroup, now!"

"Any ideas?" Kevin asked.
"Not exactly," said Sean. "But we could try encircling him."

"Let's try it," said Hitomi.

"Alright then," said Sean. "Encircle him and make sure he doesn't have a chance to escape. It might seem silly, but it might work. Got it?"

"Got it!" The Rangers circled Rhinotaur and prepared to attack. Sean went first, unleashing a barrage of kicks and punches at the monster. His aggressive style seemed to be working, as he had Rhinotaur on the defensive and struggling to fight back, even though most of Sean's attacks weren't hitting. However, something worked, because Sean managed to land a powerful uppercut on Rhinotaur, sending the monster flying backwards and sparks flying, too. That's when Kevin came in. Using a mixed martial arts-influenced style, Kevin punched Rhinotaur hard in rapid-fire succession, leaving him up to Daisuke.

Daisuke swung his Grand Prix Sword at Rhinotaur, spinning around several times to get more power into his swing. His final strike sent Rhinotaur flying backwards. Maria came next. She flew in, giving the monster an arial sidekick and then a reverse roundhouse kick, leaving him to Hitomi. Hitomi dodged the swing of Rhinotaur's arms by backflipping, before striking the monster with a swift kick; that left him open for Sean, who flew in and kicked Rhinotaur with a perfectly executed butterfly kick.

Rhinotaur staggered backwards, caught off guard by the Rangers' attacks. "You bastards got lucky!" The cyborg said.

"Keep talkin'!" Sean said.

"I'll show you! RAAAAAHH!" Rhinotaur fired a laser beam from his eyes at the Rangers, but the five of them dodged the blast before having to do it again. Now the Rangers were looking for ideas.

"What do we do know?" Daisuke asked, apparently trying to catch Sean off guard. But Sean kept his composure.

"He must have some kind of weakness," said Sean. "Colonel, is there anyway to scan him?"

"Your visor includes a built-in scan feature," said Col. Greene. "It might be able to pick up something."

"Got it!" Sean said. "Scan!" Sean examined Rhinotaur's body, looking for any abnormalities that might be a weakness. It seemed to be fruitless, until-"Wait, I've got one!" He said. "There's some circuitry that's been exposed. I'm not sure, but if we concentrate our fire on it, it might destroy him."

"Are you sure about that?" Daisuke asked. "What if you're wrong?"

"We won't know unless we try," said Sean. The Rangers lined up in front of Rhinotaur.

"Back for more?" He taunted. Sean stayed calm.

"Octane Blasters, ready!"

"Ready!" The Rangers drew their Octane Blasters-save for Daisuke, who just changed it from his Sonic Saber-and pointed them at Rhinotaur.

"You think your puny firearms can stop me?" Rhinotaur taunted. "Go ahead, make my day!"
"Aim! FIRE!" The Rangers fired their Octane Blasters at Rhinotaur, striking him in the spot that Sean identified using his scan. Sparks flew from the spot, apparently confirming the hypothesis that it was Rhinotaur's weak spot. The cyborg screamed as the blasters hit their mark. When they were done, the Rangers turned around and put their blasters in the holsters. Behind them, Rhinotaur fell to the ground, his body crackling with sparks, an unstable piece of machinery. When he hit the ground, he exploded in a spectacular display of pyrotechnics. As this happened, the Rangers posed in confident victory.

With their job done, the Rangers were ready to power down. "Power down!" the suits disappeared from their bodies in a flash of light, revealing their civilian guises. With the suits' powers gone for now, the group staggered, as they were still not used to the fantastic power of the suits. But that didn't matter. Today, they had saved Shibuya. And the crowd that watched them let them know of their appreciation of the Rangers' service, giving the group a round of applause and cheers.

When they got back to the base, the Rangers were again greeted with cheers and applause at their heroic deeds. The Rangers soaked in their moment, appreciating the appreciation. But then Col. Greene stood before them.

"Ten...HUT!" A soldier yelled. The group stood at attention. Eleven years of martial arts training and military discipline, go figure.

"At ease," said Col. Greene. The base staff got into an at ease stance. "That was impressive for your first fight. I think you've sent a wake-up call to the enemy, telling them that their path to conquest will not be easy. But you path to defeat them will not be easy, either." The Rangers silently groaned. "But, as time goes on, you will become better. And you will gain new weapons, too. But just remember: your old lives are over, know that. You can not go back to the way things were before you morphed for the first time, understood?" The Rangers nodded. "Good. Now then, I guess I'll try to answer some of your questions. Yes, Sean?"

"Yeah, I've got a question," said Sean. "I noticed that for some reason, the suits seemed to be designed after the Arsenal F.C. home shirt for some reason, including the pants having those stripes. Why is that?"

"Well, the person who designed the appearance of the suits was a fan of Arsenal FC," said Col. Greene. "He even admitted it."

"That explains it," said Sean.

"Any other questions?" Col. Greene asked. Kevin raised his hand. "Yes?"

"So what happens now?" He said.

"Now," said Col. Greene. "You're going to have to stay here in Japan." Sean, Kevin and Maria groaned in disappointment. They had been wanting to go home.

"I know, I know," said Col. Greene. "You might feel homesick. But since the enemy knows where you are, they might send more monsters after you, so you'll have to stay here; although if they ever send any other monsters anywhere else, we'll send you there. Yes, you?" He said to Hitomi.

"What are these new weapons you were talking about?" She said.

"You'll see," said Col. Greene. "Because there are currently no threats at the moment, you won't be able to see them. But Project Ranger is not just about the suits. When the time comes, you will have
the chance to use your arsenal. Yes, you?" He said to Maria.

"So now what happens?" She said.

"I can't answer that," said Col. Greene. "Not because I don't want to, but because I just don't know what will happen. So now questions are over. You five are dismissed." The soldier again called for attention. When given the ok, the group left the room. "Oh, by the way! I also lied about there being no internship. Aparicio, O'Callahan, and O'Donnell, you three start on Monday."

The three of them groaned, obviously unhappy about the situation and grumbled while they left the room. But Daisuke stayed in the room with Col. Greene. "Mr. Miyazawa, is there anything you'd like to discuss?" Col. Greene asked.

"Yes, there is," said Daisuke. What he didn't notice was Sean listening in on the conversation.

"WHAT! They destroyed Rhinotaur?" The biggest figure in the room shouted. "How is it that five insignificant humans were able to destroy one of our best soldiers!"

"I do not know Hercuron," said another voice; a woman. "But this seems interesting. We haven't had a challenge like this in years. I think I might enjoy this. What do you think, Eltar?"

"Perfect, Liaria!" The previously-mentioned Eltar said. "I've been wanting a challenge for a long time! This will be fun."

"Eltar!" Another voice came; the leader, apparently.

"My apologies, Emperor Rashon!" Eltar said.

"Apology accepted, Eltar," said Emperor Rashon. "This new challenge should be interesting. It will be much more interesting than our previous conquests."

"I agree!" Hercuron said.

"It might just be entertaining," said Liaria. "It will be much more interesting than those last conquests. Those were so easy they were dull!"

"It doesn't matter to me!" Hercuron said. "Any challenge sounds good!"

"Well then," said Rashon. "I guess our re-conquest will be interesting."

"That was so amazing!" Hitomi said as the group left the base. "I want to do it again!"

"Energetic little lady, isn't she?" Kevin whispered to Maria. Maria nodded her head in agreement. "Hey, Sean, hurry up!" He called to Sean who had drooped behind them.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm coming!" Sean said as he approached his Irish friend and the Venezuelan and Japanese ladies.

"What were you waiting for?" Kevin asked.

"I'm waitin' for Rich Boy Miyazawa," said Sean. "There are some things I need to discuss with him." Sure enough, Daisuke showed up and walked past the group. Sean intended to wait for a
While to confront Daisuke. When they were almost to the garage where the car that would take them back to Shibuya was waiting, Sean made his move. "Hey Rich Boy," he said to grab Daisuke's attention. "What were you and the Colonel discussin'?"

"Nothing of your concern," said Daisuke.

"I wasn't done talking to you, rich boy!" Sean said. "What were you and the Colonel talking about!"

"Sean!" Maria said, not wanting this to escalate any further.

"Well, rich boy? Are you mad that you're not Red Ranger?" Daisuke stopped in his tracks and looked back at the American. Apparently, Sean had hit something.

"That's none of your business, American," said Daisuke.

"Considering your attitude, it might be," he replied. "What is it?"

Daisuke knew he had to break his silence. Sean apparently knew too much about his knowledge of the situation. "I was guaranteed a leadership position in Project Ranger," he said. Kevin, Maria, and Hitomi looked at each other in shock. But Sean simply stood there with his arms crossed. "And then, I morph and find out I have the Green suit, while the American here gets the Red suit, instead."

"Oh, boo-frickin'-hoo!" Sean said. "We all suffer disappointments in life, so deal with it!"

"You don't understand!" Daisuke shouted, getting up in Sean's face. "My family was depending on me becoming a leader in this Project!"

"Oh, so you knew about this the whole time!" Sean said. The other Rangers looked on dumbfounded at this revelation. How the hell did Daisuke know about Project Ranger? "Did Hitomi know about this?"

"No, she had no knowledge of Project Ranger," said Daisuke.

"Okay, then," said Sean. "Well now that you told us, it would have been nice if you had warned us beforehand of what we were getting into!"

"Well I had to stay silent and play dumb!" Daisuke said. "That was part of the agreement!"

"So you think that because you made an agreement with the higher-ups in this Project that they would automatically give you a leadership position and one of the conditions was to stay silent about it? Well guess what, too bad!"

"I still don't understand why you were made leader!" Daisuke retorted.

"Well, gee, let me think, probably because they thought I was the right man for the job!" Sean replied. "You saw what happened against that monster! You panicked! And I took command in that instant! Heroes aren't chosen by agreements, rich boy," he said. "They're chosen and/or made in moments that test them. I took command because you thought you had it handed to you on a silver platter and you panicked when the pressure was on. So, the morpher gave me the Red suit." But then he changed his tone of voice. "Or, maybe it's simply because you picked the wrong morpher instead of the one that had the Red suit. Either way, I'm Red Ranger, so I'm in charge, GOT THAT!"

"You're not in charge of me," Daisuke said in a defiant tone of voice.

"What did you say?" Sean asked. His anger levels were reaching their peak. If Daisuke went any
further, Sean might deck the guy. Luckily, Hitomi intervened.

"Um, guys, why don't we stop fighting?" She said. "I know! Why don't we get something to eat?" Hitomi's strategy worked, as Sean's stomach growled in that instant.

"Come to think of it, we haven't even eaten yet," said Sean, his tone of voice changing. "Man, I'm so hungry I could eat whatever sumo guys eat!"

"You know, there are places you can get sumo food!" Hitomi said. "And I know a great place to get some! The man who owns it is a friend of my dad!"

"Sounds good to me," said Sean. He turned to Kevin. "Hey Kevin, does Sumo grub sound good to you?"

"Sounds great!" Kevin said. "I'm in!"

"Me too," said Maria.

"Well then, it's settled," said Hitomi. "We'll go to Godai-san's for lunch!"

[]

"Hitomi-chan!" The previously-mentioned Godai-san said in Japanese as Hitomi entered his restaurant.

"Godai-san, it's so good to see you!" Hitomi said in Japanese. As per Japanese etiquette, the two bowed to each other.

"Well, we know that they know each other," Sean said to Kevin. "At least that's clear."

"Godai-san, I want you to meet some people," said Hitomi. She switched to English so the rest of the group could understand what she was saying. "This is Sean O'Callahan, from America."

"What's up?"

"This is Kevin O'Donnell from Ireland,"

"Hi."

"And this is Maria Aparicio, from Venzuela."

"Hola."

"And you already know Daisuke, so I guess we're all introduced!" Hitomi said. Godai-san appeared to be sometime in his early to mid to late-40s, maybe somewhere in his 50s or 60s. He was a little heavy-set, probably around 250 lbs. And he had a smile that just screamed that he was friendly. And it wasn't a smile to cover some hidden and dark pain, either. It was a real smile that showed that he really was a friendly person. Of course, since Hitomi knew Godai-san, she'd probably know if he had some sort of hidden pain.

"I'm glad to meet you all," said Godai-san in english. "Any friend of Hitomi-chan is a friend of mine!"

"Well that's good," said Sean. "Can we get some food now? I'm starvin'!"

"My apologies," said Godai-san. "I'll get you a place to sit."
"So Sean-san," said Godai-san. Sean still wasn't used to Japanese honorifics. "Do you like baseball?"

"Well, I'm an American, so no, I don't like it," he said sarcastically. "Of course I do! But I'm a hockey player."

"Relax, Sean-san," said Godai-san.

"You'd think he'd know, since I am wearing a White Sox shirt," Sean said to Kevin.

"He's probably just trying to start a conversation," Kevin replied.

"What did you say?" Godai-san asked, since they were whispering.

"Nothing," said Sean.

"Kevin-san, were in Ireland are you from? Are you from the countryside?" Godai-san asked. It's an innocent question.

"No, I'm not," replied Kevin in an uninterested tone. He was waiting for the drinks. "I'm from Dublin."

"I'm sorry," said Godai-san. "I was only curious."

"No problem," said Kevin. "So Godai-san, how long have you known—what's your name—Hitomi for?"

"I've known her and Daisuke for most of their lives," said Godai-san. "Their mother knew my wife very well."

"So it's a family connection," said Maria.

"Exactly," said Godai-san. "Hitomi's the gentler, but energetic girl—"

"Who looks like a pop singer," said Sean.

"That too," said Godai-san, "While Daisuke is in a sense, more traditional. He's been raised to take over as the family patriarch. Hitomi was also meant to be groomed as a traditional bride, but when she was picked for this... thing when she was nine, things changed."

"He must be talking about Project Ranger," Sean said to Kevin.

"Daisuke was also chosen," said Godai-san. "He appeared to be wrapped up in—ah, your food's here!"

"Finally!" Sean said. The waiter-Godai-san's wife Hikari—brought the group their food, which is called chankonabe, a stew of chicken, fish, miso, or beef—and a lot of calories. How the hell do you think those sumo wrestlers got so big, anyway? The food also came with a side dish of rice or whatever the patrons wanted.

"Wow!" Said Hitmoi. "This looks so good! Shall we begin?"

"Itadakimasu!" Daisuke, Hitomi and Godai-san said. Sean, Kevin, and Maria, however, were confused about just what exactly the three of them said. Kevin looked at Sean, who simply shrugged at him as if to say, 'I don't know either'. But the three of them dug in anyway.
"Oh, man that was good!" Sean said after he finished his chankonabe. "I think I'm gonna be full for two days now!"

"No kiddin'!" Kevin said in response. "I don't think Grandma Deirdre ever made a stew like this!" Sean laughed at Kevin's comment. He was referring to his Irish grandmother Deirdre O'Donnell.

"I don't think she'd be too happy about that," Sean replied. "If she heard you saying someone else made a stew better than hers she'd be heartbroken."

"True that," said Kevin.

"So getting back to our discussion of Daisuke and Hitomi," Godai-san said. "I will have to ask you a few questions about yourselves."

"Why?" Sean asked. "If the discussion's about them, why talk to us?"

"Curiosity," said Godai-san. "What do you do, Sean?"

"I'm a student at the Northern Illinois University," said Sean. "I'm taking anthropology as a major and I guess I'll be interested in this place. Maybe I can write something about it. Apart from that, I'm a hockey player. I was captain of my junior hockey team until last year when I had to leave because I was too old." Daisuke glanced at Sean at the mention of the word "captain", which he never expected out of him.

"I'm also in university," said Kevin, "But I spent three years in the Irish Defense Forces. I just graduated from University College Dublin but I'm taking postgraduate classes at UCD. I'm studying literature."

"And Maria?" asked Godai-san.

"I'm also a university student," said Maria. "I'm currently at the Federal University of Rio De Janiero. I want to be a teacher."

"Wait, Rio?" Sean asked. "What the hell are you doing there? I thought you're from Venezuela?"

"I'd rather not talk about it," said Maria.

"You can talk about it with me," said Hitomi.

"Don't even think about it," said Maria. "I won't discuss it, not even with you."

"Oh, that's not a nice thing to say to a friend!" Hitomi said.

"We still don't know each other that well," said Maria.

"Well then, let's start getting to know each other!" Hitomi said. The two continued their conversation for the rest of their time there while the guys continued to converse amongst themselves.

"Traditional, huh?" Sean asked. "It's that why you're so damn silent?"

"That's none of your business," said Daisuke. "I come from one of the most powerful families in Japan. You should respect me."

"Well I don't!" Sean retorted.

"Could you please stop fighting?" Godai-san asked. Sean and Daisuke stopped. "Now then, let's
have a pleasant conversation."

"Well, that was good," Sean said as they left.

"I'll say," said Kevin.

"Come on, let's get back to the hotel," said Sean.

"But how are we going to get there?" Maria asked.

"Didn't they say they'd give us money for subway tickets?" Kevin added.

"I think they did," said Sean. "I guess we should use that money."

About 2 hours later (don't ask why) the Rangers returned to the hotel they were all staying at. Sean and Kevin were in their room, Daisuke and Hitomi were in theirs while Maria had her own. But it was here that the gravity of the situation hit them. As they looked over the city of Tokyo, including the Tower, Sean and Kevin realized what they were getting into. As Sean looked at his AcceleMorpher, he thought about what had happened earlier in the day. It was a pretty anti-climactic way to end a pretty crazy day. "Things are going to be different Kevin," he said.

"How?"

"Well for one, we could get killed doing this," Sean said. Kevin choked. They could die? Obviously that was never addressed in Power Rangers-except in the Lost Galaxy season.

"I see what you mean," said Kevin.

"Kevin," Sean said. "We can't go back to the way things were. We have a duty now. And we have to fulfill it."

"Do you have any regrets, though?" Kevin asked. Sean answered, but it was not the answer that Kevin expected in a million years. Even though he knew Sean was hot-blooded, there was no way he expected Sean's answer.

"Not a damn one."

To be continued...

Chapter End Notes

Yes, the designs of the Ranger suits were inspired by the home kits for Arsenal F.C.; I just thought they'd look good. I guess it might be kind of difficult to imagine the Arsenal shirt in blue, green, yellow and pink, though. But I'm not a full-blown Gooner. I'm more of a Celtic fan. And the helmet is primarily based on the 'Kousoku Sentai Turboranger' helmets with some 'Operation Overdrive' elements thrown in.
The Zordonians Attack

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had been a week since the incident in Shibuya. Since then, rumors about the Rangers had spread like a wildfire in a dry prairie. Many people, who had not seen the Rangers, were skeptical of the reports. For them, the idea of people wearing brightly colored spandex and masks fighting monsters belonged in the realm of children's TV shows or comic books. It also didn't help one bit that nobody actually thought to capture the darn thing on camera! But for those who witnessed it, the experience was as real as it could get. Some people, when they heard about it, immediately thought of the United Nations and tried to ask any UN official about the Rangers. But any UN official would either not ask the question or coyly say, 'sure, we've heard of them'. And that would be it, usually.

The Rangers, however, didn't really care. They did their job, and that was enough. Although, in a sense, they did like the attention the rumors gave them. Since the Shibuya incident, they had moved out of their hotel and into a townhouse in a semi-suburban neighborhood that the UN provided them with in Tokyo. It had taken them a short time to move in, and what had impressed the Rangers the most was how the UN managed to move their stuff in so quickly, especially considering where it came from.

Right now Sean was letting loose on a punching bag outside the townhouses. It was a beautiful early June day out, not a cloud in the sky, and the temperature somewhere in the 70s. The bag itself began to come loose from the chain that held it to its post. Kevin must have been going to town on it earlier.

Sean kept letting loose, eventually weakening the chain severely. He then gave it a powerful reverse roundhouse kick with his right leg, letting out a powerful kiai. The chain broke and the bag fell to the ground, spilling its contents all over. "Damn, Kevin needs to be more careful with those things," he said to no one in particular. He then noticed a trio of ladies about his age across the street that was looking at him. No doubt because of what he did to the punching bag. He gave them a little wave and they reacted in an excited manner. Sean watched them leave and grabbed his towel, leaving the remnants of the punching bag behind.

He walked up the steps to the townhouse, inserting they key into the keyhole. But before he could go in, he noticed something on the ground. It was a brown, square package and had the words 'TO THE RANGERS' written on it; must have been from the UN. He picked it up and gave it a little look before noticing Maria walk up to their door, almost shoving him out of the way before she noticed the punching bag. "You need to be more careful with that," she said.

"Kevin did most of the work," he replied. "I just finished it off."

"That's what, 3 now?" Maria asked. "Why don't you just get a punching dummy?"

"That'll probably happen," Sean replied. That's when he noticed Maria was also carrying something, and it wasn't a square box, but a shopping bag. "What's that you got there?" he asked,

"Oh, this?" She said. "You want to see it?"

"Uh, sure," Sean replied. She reached into the bag for a moment before pulling the item out. Sean covered his mouth and reacted in bewilderment at what Maria pulled out. It was an itsy-bitsy-teeny-weeny yellow polka dot bikini. Sean covered his mouth in reaction and practically snorted. "Are you actually gonna wear that?" he said.
"Yeah, so?" She replied. "What's so bad about that?"

"I'm not sure if this is the country to wear something like that," he said. "Especially if you're gonna be sunbathing."

"I'm not sunbathing in this!" She replied. "I'm wearing this to the beach!" She said with an enthusiastic tone before going back into her house, leaving Sean standing in front of his door with a bewildered look on his face. He collected himself and shook his head. There was no way she'd wear that, although she'd probably look sexy...

A-HEM. Moving on. Sean and Maria went back into the townhouse, taking his shoes off as he went in. It was a combination Western-Japanese townhouse, mostly with elements of an American home, but with some Japanese features. The five bedrooms were on the second and third floors, and the kitchen and living room were obviously on the first. Sean walked over to the TV room and sat on one of the couches, setting the package on the coffee table before turning on the TV, looking for something to watch. But at one point, he got a whiff of himself. "BLEGH! I smell like shite!" He said to himself. "I need a shower!"

But the bathroom, which was on the second floor, he did not like. Particularly because there was no shower curtain and a dinky little faucet right near the bathtub. Like hell he was going to use that thing! But he needed a shower anyway, so he though he might as well use the showerhead anyway.

"Our forces are ready," said Eltar. "The re-conquest shall begin soon. Shall we announce our presence?"

"Hmmm, an interesting proposition, Eltar," said Rashon. "Liara, what do you think?"

"I think I agree with Eltar," said Liaria. "We should show them what'd they're dealing with."

"Well, Liara agrees," said Rashon. "Hercuron, what do you think?"

"Who cares?" He said. "I just want to SMASH something!"

"Well, now," said Rashon. "Hercuron seems to want to go down himself."

"In fact, why don't we all go down," said Eltar. "It would be fun."

"I agree with Eltar," said Liara. "It would be fun to go down there ourselves."

"I like the idea, Eltar," said Rashon. "Any differing opinions? Anyone? Then it's settled. We go down to Earth and attack the Terrans ourselves."

"But what about those 'Power Rangers' that took out Rhinotaur?" Liaria asked. "We may have to deal with them."

"Then why don't we deal with them directly?" Rashon asked.

"I like that idea," said Liara. "Where did they fight Rhinotaur?"

"In a city called 'Tokyo'," said Eltar. "That's probably where they're based."

"Then we will attack Tokyo," said Rashon. "Prepare to go down to the surface."

"Yes, my emperor!" Hercuron said.
"It will be done," said Eltar.

"I very much look forward to it," said Liaria.

"Good," said Rashon. "Those Terrans will finally realize how lucky they are we left."

Sean got out of the shower ten minutes later. He was wearing a bathrobe this time, since he didn't want to smell bad after wearing those sweaty clothes. As he walked to his room, he noticed that Daisuke was back and walking towards him. Since he had no intention of talking to the Rich Boy, who was wearing a green shirt, he kept his head down and walked past him. But Rich Boy had other ideas. "Did you use the furo?" He asked.

"If you mean that bathtub, then no," Sean replied. "Why?"

"It's polite to use it," said Daisuke. "In my family, no matter what, we always used it. In fact, it's what we do in Japan, to use the furo."

"There's also no way I'm using that dinky-ass faucet right near the tub," said Sean.

"Okay then," said Daisuke. "By the way, did you knock that punching bag down?"

"Yeah, I did," he replied. "So?"

"That's three already," said Daisuke. "You need to go easy on those."

"Then tell that to Kevin," Sean replied. "And maybe we should just get a training dummy."

"Well, for once I agree," said Daisuke. "But you should still be more careful."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Sean said as he walked to his room. "Oh, by the way, your sister got a new bikini. She's probably gonna look very sexy in it."

"WHAT! ?" Daisuke yelled, offended that anyone would talk about his sister like that.

"HAHAHAHAHAHA! I'm just joshin' you, Rich Boy!" Sean said. "Maria's the one with the bikini, not your sister." Daisuke could only stare bewildered as Sean went back into his room, still cackling after getting him so mad.

A few minutes later, Sean stepped out of his room, this time wearing a Chicago Blackhawks t-shirt and a pair of shorts. He was combing his hair, parting it down the middle. He went downstairs to see Kevin stuffing the fridge; must have gotten back from his grocery trip. "Did you get any apples?" He asked.

"Oh yeah," Kevin replied, tossing one to Sean. Kevin was wearing a Dublin GAA shirt, since their color was blue. Sean washed his apple under the sink while he asked,

"Do mind going easy on those punching bags? Rich Boy wasn't too happy when I knocked the third one off its chain." He said 'Rich Boy' even though Daisuke was in the kitchen with them and listening quite intently. In fact, he knew that Daisuke was there.

"Oh, sorry about that," said Kevin. "I didn't know I was doing so much damage."

Sean took a bite out of his apple and said with some apple in his mouth, "Well then start goin' easy. Although I guess we could get a punching dummy, which is what Maria suggested."
"Then I suppose I'll be more careful," said Kevin. "Oh by the way, did we get any mail?"

"Yeah, we got a package, probably from the UN," said Sean. "It's over on the coffee table." Sean then went over to the coffee table and picked the package up and brought it into the kitchen, placing it on the counter.

"What do you think is in it?" Kevin asked.

"I don't know," Sean said as he grabbed a box cutter. "Let's find out." With care, he cut the tape on the package. Once the tape was gone, he opened it up and took a look inside. Suddenly, he fell backwards. "YYYYAAAAAHAAAAH!" He fell on his ass as a green, ball-shaped… thing popped out of the box.

"Haro! Haro!" The thing said, bouncing up and down. It had two beady eyes that flashed somewhat. It was about 25% the side of a basketball and there were four circles on the side and it had a line all around it that looked like a mouth in front.

"That the hell is that thing!" Sean said.

"I don't know," said Kevin. "I've never seen it before."

"A Haro, kawaii!" A voice came from outside the kitchen. The three looked to see Maria and Hitomi enter the room. "It's a robot from a TV show called 'Gundam'."

"A robot from a TV show?" Sean said. "Okay, this is fucked up!"

"But what's it for?" Daisuke asked.

"There's an envelope in the package," said Kevin. "Maybe this will answer it." He opened the envelope, revealing a smaller packet, which looked like a packet for baseball cards and a letter. "It says, 'To the Rangers—this robot, called 'Haro' will be your assistant from now on. It will provide you with communications and access to information on your enemies'. Like that's gonna work. 'Also with you are your Access Cards. These will allow you to access your special weapons'."

"Special weapons?" Sean asked. "I like the sound of that already. I'm assuming those cards are in the packet."

"Only one way to find out," said Maria. Kevin opened to packet to reveal a set of cards that looked like hotel key cards. Five of them were red, blue, green, yellow and pink.

"Those colored cards must be for our 'special weapons'," said Kevin. "These gray ones must be for other things."

"Haro! Haro! The grey cards are for personal vehicles, Haro Haro." The little robot said. Sean wasn't too happy about the robot talking.

"I already don't like it," he said.

"I think it's cute," said Hitomi. "Don't mind what Sean says, Haro."

"Haro, Haro doesn't like me, Haro Haro," the robot said while bouncing up and down near Sean. The American wasn't too happy so he took his fist, and once the robot was at the right height, he batted it down, smashing it to the ground. "Haro, Haro, doesn't like me, Haro Haro."

"Hey, shut up, you stupid robot!" Sean yelled, clearly irritated by the robot.
"Sean, that's not nice!" Hitomi scolded him. "It's too cute to be treated like that."

"Sean doesn't like cute things," said Kevin. "And neither do I."

"You still need to be careful with that thing," Maria said as she picked it up. "That's most likely some very expensive machinery."

"Haro Haro, expensive machinery, expensive machinery—"

"I said shut up, you little piece of shit!" Sean said, clearly irritated. His irritation wouldn't last long, though. Suddenly, there was a siren and flashing red, which surprised the Rangers.

"What's going on?" Daisuke asked.

"I don't know!" Kevin replied. A screen began to rise from the counter near the package. The screen flickered a bit before the image of Col. Greene showed up.

"Rangers, there's an emergency," he said. "There seems to be an attack going on right now."

"Where?" said Sean.

"It's somewhere in Shinjuku," said Col. Greene. "Your Haro should be able to locate it in your Grand Prix cruiser."

"Oohhh!" Sean groaned. "Wait, GP cruiser?"

"There's a Hummer H2 outside waiting for you to use," said Col. Greene. "That's the Grand Prix cruiser."

"I think I saw it when I got back from grocery shopping," said Kevin.

"Then let's go!" said Sean. The Rangers rushed out of the house at that moment, followed by the Haro. Outside, there was indeed a Hummer H2 that must have arrived sometime before Kevin got back from the store.

"I call shotgun!" Kevin said. The Rangers piled into the Hummer, followed by the Haro—much to Sean's annoyance.

"Stupid robot!" He said. The Haro ignored him and went into position in what looked like a port to hold it in, and plugging into the Hummer's software.

"Haro haro, turn cruiser on, Haro Haro." Sean must have forgotten to turn it on. He fumbled for his Access Card before finding the one that said 'HUMV' on it, slipping it into a slot in the dashboard, then pressed a button where the keys would go. The engine roared to life and Sean smiled as the dashboard came to life too. Then the Haro's head opened up and a holographic map appeared. "Haro Haro, enemy located, enemy located enemy located. Shinjuku, Shinjuku."

"Well I guess the little bastard's good for something," said Sean. "Alright, let's go!"

The attack was going on near the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office building in Shinjuku. A swarm of Swabots descended upon the area, attacking anyone and anything in their path. The crowd of people in the area panicked and ran for cover and safety. But many people were struck down where they were, while some were chased down. But many people were able to escape. The JSDF soon arrived and set up to fight the Swabots. They did a decent job, but the sheer number of Swabots made it difficult for them to actually be effective until the tanks came in. Then they actually did a
"There's too many of them!" One soldier said.

"Don't let up!" He yelled. 'There is now way we're going to let them through!" A tank fired a shot at a bunch of Swabots. The round struck the 'bots, blowing them sky-high. But there were more of them coming.

"These things just keep coming!" The same soldier said.

"Hold your line! Hold your—" he was interrupted when he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around to see five young people all wearing clothes colored red, blue, green, pink and yellow. He felt it must have been the UN team.

The one wearing the Chicago Bulls t-shirt said, "We'll take it from here," showing his bracelet at the same time. The commander recognized the bracelet. They were the UN team.

"It's about time," he said. "We'll take care of the civvies, you handle them."

"Gladly," said the American. "Let's go!"

"Everyone, fall back, let's get the civilians out of here!" The commander said. The soldiers fell back and began to get the civilians out of the area while the Rangers lined up side by side to confront the Swabots.

"Hey bolt-brains!" Sean said to get their attention. It seemed to work, because they all turned to face the Rangers. "I suggest you stop right there or we'll send you to the scrap heap where you belong!" The Swabots turned their attention to the Rangers and prepared to attack. The Rangers, meanwhile, also prepared to fight. The Swabots were just about to begin their attack when suddenly—

"My my, how rude." The Swabots stopped dead in their tracks and stiffened on the spot. The Rangers looked at each other in confusion at what had just happened.

"Who are you!" Sean demanded. "Show yourself!"

"My, aren't we impatient?" The voice replied. "Very well, then." The Swabots opened up a hole to reveal four figures standing in front of the Rangers. The Rangers looked on in amazement at—

"Oh my gosh, it's the Black Moon Clan!" Hitomi said. The other Rangers gave her a look of annoyance.

"I'm not sure who this Black Moon Clan is," said their leader. He was a handsome man who appeared around the age of 19-23, with white hair and blue eyes. He wore a white suit and white pants that was complemented by a blue cape that went down to his ankles. The shirt included thorny designs. His hair was almost like Sean's, except it was parted on the right. Almost. He also had crystalline earrings. "But that's enough about that. I am Rashon, Ruler of the Zordonian Empire. And my associates and I are here to conquer this planet."

"Fat chance!" Sean snapped back.

"How rude," said Rashon, "It's not polite to insult royalty."

"Man, this guy's really starting to piss me off," said Sean. "What the hell do you want?"

"Again, so rude," said Rashon. "We are simply here to take back what was once ours—we
originated on Earth and now we have come to re-conquer it to be the jewel of our grand Empire."

"Yeah fat chance, asshole!" Sean shouted back.

"Now allow me to introduce my associates," he said. "To my left is my associate, Liaria." He pointed to a beautiful woman around his age, too. She had pink hair going down her back and a slim figure. She wore a sleeveless, little black dress with knee-high stiletto boots and opera-length gloves. She covered her face up with a fan.

"I'll bet she's a bitch," Maria said to herself.

"I don't like her," Hitomi said.

"To her left is Hercuron." He gestured to a very muscular man, also around 23. Unlike the others, though, he wasn't as good looking, but still very muscular. He had a sleeveless blue shirt on and his hair was in a buzz cut. He flexed his muscles as Rashon introduced him.

"He can pog mo thoin," said Kevin.

"And finally, to my right is my brother and second-in-command, Eltar." Eltar had green hair and a green, Chinese-esque shirt with white pants. Much like Rashon, he too was handsome and looked as if he was around the age of 17-23. He simply nodded when he was introduced.

"I don't like him," said Daisuke.

"Well now, now that we're all introduced," said Rashon. "It would only be polite to inquire as to who you are."

"Gladly," said Sean. "The name's Sean O'Callahan, from Chicago, Illinois, United States of America. To my right is my friend Kevin O'Donnell, from Dublin, Ireland. To his right is Hitomi Miyazawa from Kyoto, Japan. To my left is her brother, Daisuke Miyazawa, also from Kyoto. To his left is Maria Aparicio from Caracas, Venezuela. And we," he held up his hand, showing his AcceleMorpher to the Zordonians. "...Are your worst nightmare."

"Hm, so you have toys," said Rashon. "How interesting. Now then surrender or we will destroy you."

"Hey, shut up!" Sean yelled. "You're gonna regret that, cuz we're gonna kick your asses!"

"I'd like to see that," said Eltar.

"Oh, it is so on. READY!"

"Ready! GPX, Start it up!" There was a flash of light that temporarily blinded the Zordonians. When they looked again, they saw the Earthlings, but this time, they were in their Ranger suits.

"Well, this just got interesting," said Liara.

"This will give us an excellent challenge," said Eltar.

"Alright, this is gonna be the last time we do the roll call!" Sean said, "Because I already hate it. GPX, Red!"

Kevin: "GPX, Blue!"

Daisuke: "GPX, Green!"
Maria: "GPX, Amarillo!"

Hitomi: "GPX, Pink!"

All: "*Power Rangers! GPX!" There was an explosion behind them, which added to the effect of the moment. The Zordonians were mildly impressed.

"Well, so they're the Power Rangers," said Liaria. "This should be interesting."

"I concur," said Eltar.

"Grrr, these guys are really starting to piss me off!" Sean said angrily.

"Take it easy Red," said Col. Greene. "You should be able to access your persona weapons by pressing a button on your belt buckle. Is that understood?"

"Got it!" Sean said. He and the other Rangers pressed their belt buckle and their weapons materialized in front of them. "GT Sword!" It was a sword with a red-colored handle and a long blade. The handle was long enough for Sean to wield it with two hands.

Kevin: "Touring Cannon!" This was a good-sized weapon, which was car-shaped, but with a gun barrel in the front.

Daisuke: "Mountain Staff!" Daisuke's staff was simpler, being a green-colored *naginata*-like weapon.

Maria: "Haz Daggers!" Maria produced a pair of yellow-colored daggers.

Hitomi: "Am Bow!" Hitomi's weapon was a white-colored bow with a few bits of pink that complimented the white.

"My, so they have toys," Rashon said to himself. "Now, we don't want things to get out of hand here. I'll tell you what," he said as he stepped forward. "If you hand over your weapons and surrender, we may keep you alive when we re-claim our world. What do you say to that?" The civilians who were still in the area gasped at Rashon's sudden ultimatum. But Sean had other thoughts.

"Yeah, I got something to say to that!" he said. "Pog mo thoin!"

"What does 'pog mo thoin' mean?" Rashon said.

"It means kiss my ass!" Sean snapped. "You want something better? Here it is: you can have 'your' planet back OVER OUR DEAD BODIES!"

"Well, he's eager to fight," said Eltar.

"Fine then," Rashon said with some anger. "You have just doomed yourselves. Prepare to be destroyed." He and his associates also had some weapons materialize. Rashon had a sword and Eltar a staff. "Prepare to die."

"Bring it!" Sean shouted. "Let's go!"

"Right!" The Rangers charged the Zordonians who stood where they were. The two sides met and began fighting each other.

Sean fought Rashon. The two leaders squared off in the middle of the street, Sean using his GT
Saber and Rashon using his crystalline sword. The two weapons clashed as they struck, with the two fighters grunting and giving kiais all the while. Rashon hacked at Sean, which the Ranger blacked several times before going on the offensive. Rashon swung his sword at Sean, but he dodged it by jumping up in the air and flipping backwards. Sean then slashed at Rashon, but every slash of his was blocked by Rashon's weapon. "You think that will defeat me?" Rashon said.

"Not entirely," Sean replied as he roundhouse kicked him; even though he missed. Sean then tried to punch Rashon, but was caught off guard when Rashon flipped him over on his back. Sean didn't even have time to recover as Rashon grabbed him threw him against the side of a building, causing some civilians to run away. Sean slammed into the wall, and despite the suit being practically invincible, drew a groan of pain from him.

Kevin didn't fare so well, either. He probably should have just fought Hercuron without his cannon, since Hercuron kept on smashing him. "Come on, fight me!" He said. Kevin tried to get a shot off, but despite being much bigger than him, he was much faster than Kevin and dodged the shot before knocking the cannon out of his hands. Of course, now, it just meant Kevin could fight him with his own hands.

He tried to punch Hercuron in the chest, but the big guy didn't even wince. Even worse, Kevin felt the pain of actually trying to punch him. "My turn," Hercuron said sadistically. He tried to grab Kevin, but the Irishman got out of the way quickly, not intending to be beaten that easily. He managed to pick up his cannon and fired a shot at Hercuron. And this one actually hit! Too bad all it did was make him angry.

"Uh, oh," Kevin said as Hercuron charged him. The big guy grabbed Kevin, picked him up and brought him over his head while Kevin tried to struggle. Then he threw Kevin over to the same wall Sean had been thrown to. And much like Sean, he felt the pain. "This is not looking good," said Kevin.

"Tell me about it," Sean replied before getting up and going back to face Rashon.

Daisuke only fared slightly better. Despite being second-in-command, Eltar wasn't the best fighter; but only slightly. Even then, he was still beating Daisuke. Daisuke tried to use his staff to trip up Eltar, but he dodged said attack before attacking Daisuke with his crystalline sword. "You think a staff like that will work?" Eltar said.

"It should," Daisuke replied before charging Eltar. Eltar blocked several of Daisuke's attacks before, like Kevin and Hercuron, knocked Daisuke's staff out of his hands. Daisuke responded by drawing his Sonic Saber and attacked Eltar. Eltar blocked Daisuke's attacks, before attacking Daisuke himself, which the Japanese man could barely defend. Daisuke instead tried to turn the tables by roundhouse kicking Eltar. It seemed to be successful, if only slightly. But Eltar then held out his hand and a flash of light sent Daisuke back to the same wall where Sean and Kevin landed.

Hitomi and Maria, meanwhile, double-teamed Liaria. Maria attacked first, thrusting her daggers at Liaria, but the woman blocked them with her fan. Sure is an interesting choice of weaponry. Hitomi fired a few shots with her bow while Liaria was distracted. Too bad Liara noticed them and she dodged those arrows. "HOHOHOHOHOHO! You think that will stop me?" She said.

"I really don't like that laugh!" Maria said to Hitomi.

"Let's try to take her on separate sides," said Hitomi. 'You attack from the front, I'll attack from the rear."

"That might work," Maria said. "Let's try it." The two got into position, Maria in front of Liaria,
Hitomi behind. Liara looked at both of them as if they were cray.

"What are you thinking?" She said.

"Haz Daggers!" Maria charged Liaria and tried to swipe at her with her daggers, but Liaria dodged each and every one of them. While she was distracted, Hitomi fired her bow at her, but again, Liaria dodged them. She wasn't going to tolerate Hitomi anymore, she went straight for her.

"Come here, you little brat!" She said as she attacked Hitomi. She kicked Hitomi several times before finally sending her backwards. Maria rushed in, but like Hitomi, Liaria dispatched her quickly. "Is that the best you could do?" She said.

"This is not good!" Maria said to Hitomi. They tried to rush Liaria, but she used her fan to create a wind effect that slammed the two of them into a wall, but this one was not the same as the one Sean, Kevin and Daisuke had been slammed into.

"I grow tired of this!" Rashon said as the Rangers regrouped in the street. "We thought you'd be a challenge!"

"Any ideas?" Daisuke said to Sean.

"Unfortunately, no," Sean replied.

"Some leader you are," Daisuke said.

"Well if you were leader, we'd be dead by now!" Sean replied.

"Excuse me, but we've got more important things to worry about!" Maria said, interrupting them. The Zordonians had gathered in front of the Rangers.

"It is time to end this!" Rashon said. He held out his hand and a glowing energy formed in his hand. The Rangers recoiled, wondering what would happen. "Take THIS!" He launched his attack at the Rangers, which struck them. There was an explosion, and the attack sent the Rangers flying backwards, landing a good 20 feet away.

The civilians and military personnel looked on in shock. The Rangers had been defeated! After they stopped Rhinotaur! "Pathetic," said Eltar.

In the Command Room, Col. Greene and the rest of Project Ranger looked on in shock. They had not expected the Rangers to be this badly beaten! "Come on," said Col. Greene. But all they could see was the Rangers writhing in pain.

"We thought you'd be a challenge!" Rashon said. "I guess we were wrong. You and this planet of yours, will suffer the same fate; total destruction!" The people on the street gasped in shock at Rashon's threat. The Zordonians began to walk away, thinking it was over. Until they heard a voice says

"Where are you going?" It was Sean. The Red Ranger was slowly getting up, and his helmet had been knocked off. "We're not done here!"

"Oh yes, we are," said Rashon. "You're pathetic."

"Don't you dare turn your back on me!" Sean said. He was feeling battered, but that didn't matter right now. With the fate of Earth at stake, there was no way he was going to stop right now.
"Sean, what are you doing?" Daisuke said through as much pain as Sean. "You saw what happened, are you stupid or something?"

"Stupid? Me?" He said as he got onto his knees. "Hell, no, I'm not stupid, I'm just stubborn!" He was slow to get up, mostly due to the pain. But he was not giving up any time soon. "Hey! Where you going? This party's just begun!"

"I already told—impressive. You must be dealing with a lot of pain right now," Rashon said. Sean was still getting up. He smiled in defiance, as if Rashon's taunt was nothing. He staggered a bit before standing up.

"I'm not done," he said. "No fucking way."

"You're finished," said Rashon. "And we're leaving." He and the Zordonians began to leave again, but Sean would have none of it.

"Finished? Hell no!" He said. "We're not done yet!"

"You are," said Rashon. "Now give up, it's pointless."

"He's just stubborn," said Liaria. "A little attack will most likely kill him."

"I'm not done," said Sean. "Do you know who I am? I'm Sean O-fucking-Callahan, that's who I am! And when I say it's not over, then there's still some fighting to be done!"

"My, he's spirited," said Eltar. "Are you sure you want to keep fighting?"

"We're not done yet," said Sean. "Not by a long shot."

"Give it up, Terran!" Rashon said. "You're through!"

But Sean would have none of it; at all. "I told you! We're! NOT! DONE! YET!" He screamed, grabbing his sword. "Who the hell do you think I am?" With Sean's stubbornness, and possibly bravery, the Rangers began to get up. He was right; there was no way in hell they were going down that easily. Despite the pain, the Rangers stood up and gathered around Sean. Hitomi, meanwhile gave Sean his helmet, which he put back on his head. "Let's do this," he said.

"Fair enough," said Rashon. He drew his crystalline sword again, while Sean charged him. Rashon this time was caught off guard somewhat by the ferocity of Sean's attack. Rashon could definitely see a form in the Terran's attack. But what kind of form it was, he couldn't tell. It was certainly very aggressive.

Sean thrust his blade at Rashon to keep the humanoid on his heels. He hacked and slashed, trying to get a strike at least on Rashon's arms to let him know he was dangerous; or at least a punch on the cheek. That's when he and Rashon locked swords. "I'm impressed Terran," he said. "You're fighting quite well."

"I'm full of surprises," Sean replied before going back to fighting. Rashon managed to gain a slight upper hand when he knocked Sean's weapon out of his hand. But that advantage didn't last long when Sean roundhouse kicked Rashon's weapon out of his hands. Rashon was now forced to fight hand-to-hand. "Fair enough," he said before attacking Sean.

Meanwhile, the Rangers watched Sean and Rashon duke it out. Although Sean was fighting well, it was pretty much and evenly fought fight. But the Rangers were feeling left out. But that was going to change. "Hey, we can't let Sean have all the fun!" Kevin said. "Let's fight too!"
"Yeah!"

"I agree!" Daisuke said. The Rangers drew their Octane Blasters.

"Let's get 'em!" Kevin said. The Rangers charged the Zordonians, which did not catch them off guard. It did, however, surprise them, as they were barely ready when the Rangers attacked them. Kevin went back to Hercuron, Daisuke squared off with Eltar and Hitomi and Maria attacked Liara.

Kevin fired his Octane Blaster at Hercuron, trying to distract him or maybe even hit him. Hercuron withstood the blasts, since his was so big, but there were so many of them he couldn't get close to Kevin. And just earlier ha had been kicking his ass! Kevin took the opportunity and charged Hercuron with his Octane Blaster now turned into a GP Saber. He swung his sword at Hercuron to catch the big guy off guard. Hercuron blocked his attacks as much as he could, but they were becoming too much for him. Sooner or later, the Terran would get a good hit on him.

Daisuke swung his GP Saber at Eltar, trying to get a good hit on him. Eltar was also forced on the defense, since Daisuke was attacking him more aggressively than he was earlier. The two locked swords before Daisuke gave Eltar a vicious backhand that Eltar only barely managed to dodge, but could barely recover when Daisuke slashed at him again. "What's wrong, alien?" He asked. "You were doing so well earlier!" He side kicked at Eltar, but missed because Eltar jumped back a few feet. But even that wasn't enough, and Daisuke closed in on him.

Just like before, Hitomi and Maria double-teamed Liaria. And just like before, Maria attacked up close, while Hitomi preferred to stay a good distance away. Maria thrust her daggers at Liaria, trying—much like the other Rangers—to catch Liaria off guard. It appeared to be working, because Liaria couldn't fight back, she was blocking the attacks with her fan. Hitomi fired a shot at Liaria, which barely missed before another shot was fired. Liaria dodged again, but this left Maria with an opening to come in and attack, kicking and punching at Liaria. Then Hitomi flipped in, using her gymnastics-inspired techniques to land hits on Liaria.

Liaria did try to use her fan, but the girls dodged the attack before coming back in to get her. Liaria was surprised at how well they were fighting after they had been so badly beaten earlier. It must have been their determination.

Sean got several roundhouse kicks on Rashon. None of them hit, but it was becoming clear that his aggressiveness was working to keep Rashon at bay. Rashon couldn't even use his energy attack on Sean. Sean gave him a reverse roundhouse kick, but the attack was dodged. "You fight well," said Rashon. "But not well—" Rashon's attempted taunt was cut off when Sean actually landed a punch on Rashon's left cheek. Sean then went after Rashon again, giving him a roundhouse kick, which landed on Rashon's right cheek. Rashon staggered backwards and fell to the ground, clearly surprised that Sean had actually hit him!

Hercuron, meanwhile, was grabbed by Kevin and thrown to the ground with Kevin's judo move. The big guy could not believe the puny one had actually thrown him to the ground! This was impossible!

Eltar was kicked in the chest by Daisuke, which sent him backwards into the wall. Eltar winced in pain as he slammed into the wall, before a few pieces of debris it him.

But the best was Hitomi and Maria. After a few moments of intense fighting with Liaria, Maria found an opening and thrust her dagger at Liaria's face. Liaria tried to dodge but she got a glancing blow from Maria's dagger. Liaria stumbled, feeling her wound. "You bitch!" She said. "Look what you've done to my beautiful—" she couldn't finish her sentence, because Hitomi fired her bow at the right moment, and much like Maria's dagger, drew a glancing blow on Liaria's cheek. Liaria held her
cheeks in anger. Her face contorted in rage, and she glared at the two Rangers, saying, "You little brats! You've made me ugly!"

"Serves you right!" Maria taunted. "Come on Hitomi, let's finish this!"

"Right!" Hitomi said in response before charging Liaria.

Rashon, meanwhile, sat on the ground holding his cheeks. The fact that the Terran had actually hit him was still not registering with him. He watched as Sean walked up to him, unflinching. The Terran bent down and said calmly, "Welcome back to Earth... bitch."

Rashon had enough. He attacked Sean with his energy blast, but Sean braced himself and was only sent backwards a few feet. Rashon got up effortlessly as the other Zordonians gathered around him while the Rangers stood before them. "Looks like you underestimated us!" Kevin taunted.

"I suggest you get the hell out of here, or we're gonna have to get more serious!" Sean said.

Rashon growled in anger. He looked at his associates. All of them were not happy at their situation. They had been hit by these damn Terrans! No one had hit them before! "What do we do now?" Eltar asked.

"KILL THEM!" Liaria shouted, before exposing the scars on her cheek. It became obvious that these Rangers were serious and did not intend to back down. Although they had done so well earlier, the Zordonians had let their guard down, this much was clear.

"Fall back to the ship," said Rashon. "We've suffered a moral defeat."

"But Rashon—" Eltar tried to say, but Rashon cut him off.

"We fall back!" said Rashon. "Even though we lost morally, we still came close to killing them. Besides, there will be other times." The Zordonians, who were shocked at Rashon's words realized what he was talking about. They could kill the Rangers, just not today.

"I see what you're saying," said Eltar. "Then it's agreed. We fall back for now."

"You did well today, Power Rangers!" Rashon said. "But next time, you won't be so lucky!" The Zordonians and the Swabots disappeared in a flash of light, leaving the Rangers the only thing in the street.

"Power down!" In a flash of light, the Rangers' suits disappeared and much like before, they staggered at the loss of their suits. But then they smiled at each other.

"WAH-HOOO!" Kevin yelled. "We did it! Our first major victory!"

"Fuck yeah!" Sean replied. "It's a moral victory, but a victory none the less!" It was now late afternoon, and the sun was beginning to set.

"A moral victory never felt so good," said Maria. "And painful." She winced as the pain returned to her. The other Rangers felt the pain, too.

"I guess our adrenaline must have dulled the pain," said Hitomi. "But I still feel good about what happened."

"Yeah, now those aliens will think twice before they try to kill us," said Daisuke. The Rangers all smiled at each other through their respective pain while the people in the street cheered loudly. It was
a tough, hard fight that essentially ended in a stalemate, but it was a moral victory, nonetheless. And the Rangers would gladly take a moral victory any day.

In the Command Room, the people of Project Ranger cheered at the result of the fight while Col. Greene simply smiled. He was worried the Rangers would let this go to their heads, but since the Rangers did a good job, he would let that slide for now. Right now, he needed to celebrate.

"Grrr, those little bitches!" Liaria growled as she looked herself in the mirror. Her face was now flawed, with two scars running down her cheek. "They'll pay for this!"

"Liara, calm down," said Eltar. "They only managed to lay a few attacks on us, whereas we nearly killed them."

"Eltar has a point Liaria," said Rashon. He was sitting on his throne and drinking a glass of fine Zordonian wine; just what he needed to relax. "We'll let them have this moral victory. And I suggest you use your abilities to heal those wounds."

"But they defiled my beauty!" Liaria said. "They must pay!"

"Your vanity is confusing Liaria," said Hercuron. "But I nearly smashed that blue one! He's going to pay for what he did."

"In time Hercuron," Rashon said. "As of now we must re-assess our situation. From what it seems, this reclamation will not be as easy as we all thought it would be. Those 'Power Rangers' may not look like much, but they seem to be a threat. It seems we should not take them lightly" It was then that an officer Swabot—which was much more elaborate than the standard Swabot—rushed into the throne room of the ship. "What is it?" Rashon asked.

"A message, your highness," it said in its mechanical voice. Unlike the skull-like feature of the regular Swabots, this one had a more human face, and was colored red, unlike the dull-colored regular Swabots.

"From whom?" Rashon asked. He was interested by this new development.

"From the Four," it said. "They are on their way now and should be here soon." Rashon smiled, and then began chuckling, which broke into a full-blown evil laugh. The other people in the throne room smiled, too.

"Well now," said Rashon. "This is a very beneficial development. Things are just going to get harder for those so-called 'Power Rangers'!"

End chapter

Chapter End Notes

Apologies to Naoko Takeuchi. I think I ripped off the Black Moon Clan! HA!
Recovery

"Stupid ali—OW!" Sean winced as a UN doctor stitched up a wound on his left arm. The Rangers were being treated for injuries they suffered in their fight against the Zordonians. Kevin was being bandaged up, Daisuke was also being stitched up and Hitomi and Maria were in a different room for now so they could have some privacy while they were treated. The UN had run some tests on them earlier, and they saw no major or life-threatening injuries, major organ damage or broken bones. The only injuries they got were some bruising and a few gashes. The Rangers had essentially gotten lucky. But that's not the way Col. Greene saw it.

"Are you feeling okay, Rangers?" He asked as he came in with Hitomi and Maria.

"I think so," said Kevin. "I might need some Advil, though."

"Stupid stitches!" Sean said. "I hate getting them, but I always thought they numbed the area before stitching up the patient!" He said to the nurse on hand, as he could feel them stitching him up. The nurse gave him a dirty look, as if to say, 'then I'm not giving you any now'.

"Just relax Sean," said Kevin.

"Yeah, you're one to talk, you're not getting stitches!" Sean said. "By the way Colonel, you said these suits were invincible! Then how come we got these injuries?"

"Well, the way I see it, the suits did their job," he replied. Sean looked at him skeptically, as if that wasn't good enough.

"Oh really?" He said. "How so?"

"It's simple, really," Col. Greene said. "Had you not been wearing the suits, you surely would have been killed. But since you wore them, they protected you from serious injury."

"I don't get it," said Hitomi. "You said these suits were invincible, yet we got hurt anyway."

"Well to man-made weapons, they are invincible," said Col. Greene. "If someone fired a Howitzer at you, you would most likely survive if you were wearing the suit. And they won't protect you if you say, roll your ankle."

"And yet they hurt us big time," said Sean.

"Those were only minor injuries," said Col. Greene. "You were most likely hurt because of the Zordonians' weapons."

"But how the heck are they as powerful as a howitzer?" Maria asked.

"We're not sure," said Col. Greene. "We don't know the capabilities of the enemy. But for now, we'll have to say that the suits did their job anyway, because if you hadn't worn them, then it's likely you would have been KIA." Sean winced again when the nurse finished up her work on his stitches.

"You should still be able to fight with those stitches," said Col. Greene. "They're made of the same fiber that the Ranger suits are made of."

"You've been working on this stuff for 15 years?" Kevin asked.

"No, not fifteen," said Col. Greene. "I've only been working here for 10 years. This whole project
has been going on for over 50 years."

"FIFTY YEARS!" The Rangers all said in unison. They were not prepared to learn about how long it had been going for and the revelation pretty much stunned them.

"What, you didn't know?" Greene asked as if he was under the assumption the Rangers knew that little factoid.

"No, you never really told us," said Kevin. "The way you said it, it was as if he started around the time of that distress signal."

"Oh, then I apologize," said Col. Greene. "Well the project was started at Caltech in the late 1950s."

"The 1950s?" Sean asked. "Let me guess… WWII?"

"Sort of," said Greene. "Actually, it was after the Korean War that the project founder got to work on it. He had fought in Korea and was trying to discover a cloth that could not only keep the user warm in cold temperatures, but also protect them. He… took a while to invent that cloth. But the way to deploy it was what got him the most worked up."

"How?" Hitomi asked.

"I'm not entirely sure," Greene replied. "All I know is that it took him and the other members of the project nearly thirty years just to figure out the physics to fit the suit into a small storage space. Believe me, it's incredibly complicated."

"I guess it's best we leave it at that," Sean whispered to Hitomi, who nodded in agreement.

"So what about the suits?" Kevin asked.

"Good question," said Greene. "The developers, through initial testing, knew that they couldn't just use any natural materials like cotton or wool. They had to create their own materials."

"That sounds interesting," said Maria.

"Over time, they experimented with several different materials, trying to find out which one worked the best. That too, took them a while, all the way up to the mid-1980s," said Col. Greene. "But, they managed to find one material that met their specifications and could stand up to an atom bomb; although your suits most likely won't withstand an atom bomb."

"That sucks," said Kevin.

"So what is it?" Sean asked.

"I can't tell you exactly what it is, or what it is made of," said Col. Greene. "But I can tell you this: it is a self-assembling nano-fiber formed with an inter-cellular memory alloy."

"And it looks like spandex," said Kevin. The other Rangers stifled their laughs and Col. Greene rolled his eyes.

"It's not spandex," he said.

"Sorry," said Kevin.

"The physics I can't explain, but I can tell you how this was discovered," he said. "And it has to do with how you transform. After 30 years, the team came upon a breakthrough: A universal bio-
electric field; an unseen energy grid that connects the life-force of all living things. Harnessing this field allowed the team to develop your powers and the suits themselves."

"Bio-field?" Kevin asked. "Sounds like the Force."

"Sort of," said Col. Greene.

"Oh, so we're Jedi," said Sean. The rest of the group snickered at Sean's joke and Col. Greene just rolled his eyes again and shook his head.

"Not exactly," said Col. Greene.

"Oh, well," said Sean. He'd had his fun for now.

"But, it has found its uses other than the suits," said Col. Greene. "In fact, the stitches you're getting right now are made from a combination of that material and cotton." The Rangers looked at their stitches, and gave impressed looks. "The cotton is simply to weaken it enough to cut it. Otherwise, it should be able to handle anything. Although I do suggest you try not to exert yourselves too much, which is what the doctors recommended."

"Nice," said Sean.

"And yes, this material does seem improbable, even with the combination with cotton," said Col. Greene.

"So what's in it?" Hitomi asked.

"That's top secret, highly classified information," said Col. Greene. "Even I don't know what's in that material."

"Lousy excuse," said Kevin.

"But enough about the suits," said Col. Greene. The Rangers groaned in dismay. They wanted to know more about this stuff! "We need to de-brief you five about the enemy. I'll just be asking you some simple questions, okay?"

"Fine with me," said Maria.

"I'm good," Sean said.

"Go ahead," said Daisuke.

"Fine," Kevin added.
Hitomi finished by saying, "Okay."

"Very well then," Col. Greene said. He gestured to the door and ushered in a person with a camera and a tri-pod. The Rangers looked at in confusion.

"Um, why does he have a camera?" Hitomi asked.

"A fair question," said Co. Greene. "We need to record your de-briefing so our superiors at the UN know what it is we're facing. Because of some difficulties, we couldn't get any sound while monitoring your fight with the enemy, so we'll have to ask you about them."

"So get on with it!" Sean said.
"No need to be impatient," said Col. Greene. He gestured to the cameraman, who nodded back. When he put the camera on the tri-pod, he fidgeted around for a few seconds before a red light came on, signaling that the camera was recording. "Okay then," said Col. Greene. "Tell us what the name of your enemy was; both individually and as a group."

"They call themselves the Zordonian Empire," said Sean. "Their leader's name is Rashon. He's that white-haired pretty boy. And he packs a punch, too. Ow."

"Their second-in-command is named Eltar," said Daisuke. "He wears a green shirt and has green hair, too."

"The big guy's name is Hercuron," said Kevin. "He might be the physically strongest of the group, because not only was he absolutely ripped, he could lift large chunk of debris over his head like it was nothing. And me, as well."

"The woman's name is Liaria," said Maria.

"She's also tough," said Hitomi.

"Her weakness does seem to be her vanity, though," said Maria.

"And that fan of hers hurts a lot," said Hitomi.

"I see," said Col. Greene. "Anything else?"

"Yeah," said Sean. "I don't know how old those guys are, but they don't look a day over 21, they practically look our age. And they're very good looking, too."

"Save for Hercuron," said Kevin.

"I know," said Maria. "I'm not a lesbian, but damn, Liaria is atractiva como el infierno." The other Rangers gave her a glance before turning back to Col. Greene.

"And they resemble the Black Moon Clan from Sailor Moon," said Hitomi. Col. Greene looked at Hitomi in a confused way, as did the other Rangers—except Daisuke, who knew what she was talking about. "All except for Hercuron."

"Anything else?" asked Col. Greene.

"Yeah, they said they originated here on Earth," said Sean. There was a pause as Col. Greene tried to comprehend what Sean had just said. "I don't really know, either."

Col. Greene stayed silent for a moment, showing a look of thought on his face. The Rangers waited for him to speak, then he finally said, "All right, then. That's good enough for now. Head back to your townhouse and get some rest. You earned it, Rangers. Even though this was a Pyhrric victory, you five deserved it."

"Thank you Colonel," said Sean as he and the other Rangers saluted him. Col. Greene saluted back and began to walk out of the room before he stopped and turned around.

"Oh, by the way," he said. "Since some of you aren't too happy with the Haro, we've given you a second robot. One that we hope will be less annoying." With that, he walked out of the room, with the camera man in tow.

With him gone, the Rangers all looked at each other. None of them had anything to say, as they
really didn't know what exactly they wanted to do. This continued until Sean said, "Champagne, anyone?"

"Fine Champagne?" Maria asked.

"The finest we can afford," Said Sean.

"I like the sound of that," said Hitomi.

"Me too," Kevin added. "A little bubbly sounds nice right about now."

"Then it's settled," said Sean. "Some fine champagne or simply fine red wine."

:"--:--:

"To victory!" The five champagne glasses clinked together and the Rangers took a sip of their champagne.

"Aaahhh," Sean sighed. "Dom Pérignon, gotta love it!"

"I've never had champagne before," said Hitomi. "I kind of like it!"

"Just don't get addicted to it," said Kevin. "We can't afford too much of this!"

"But I suppose it's worth it!" Maria said.

"You can say that again," Kevin said as he took a sip of his champagne. He sighed after taking the sip, enjoying the taste of the liquor.

"So what happens after this?" said Daisuke. "The Zordonians might start—"

"Daisuke," Hitomi said, cutting him off. "Let's just enjoy this." She took a few more sips of the champagne before she started to feel woozy. Sean took a look at her and said,

"You're not a lightweight, are you?"

"Um, no, I'm not!" She said quickly, trying to deny it.

Sean gave her look that said that he didn't exactly buy her excuse. "No more for you," he said. Hitomi groaned. It was just as well, though, since her glass was almost empty. "Hey Mei!" He called and motioned to someone.

A red, female-looking robot with an odango hairstyle appeared to take Hitomi's champagne glass.

"Can you take care of this?" Sean said to the robot, whose name was Mei.

"Affirmative," it said in its mechanical voice and proceeded to pick up Hitomi's champagne glass.

"I already like that robot," said Sean.

"Is it because it's in the shape of a woman?" Daisuke asked cynically.

"No," Sean said. "It's because it's less annoying than that damn haro-thingy."

"I agree," said Maria. "It's also nice to get another chica here to balance everything out!" Sean and Kevin stifled their laughs, as did Hitomi. Daisuke simply shook his head. For him, he was more worried about the Zordonians' next plan. But since the Rangers wouldn't listen, it didn't matter.
After he was done with his champagne, Sean took a step outside. The sun was still in the sky, so there was still some daylight to enjoy. He wasn't coming out to smoke—he needed to lung capacity—but just to relax. Since it was early June, there was no doubt the sun was going to be out a lot longer.

Now it would have been quiet, had Sean not noticed a small boy around age five, playing on the sidewalk. He mostly ignored the kid, though, since it really didn't involve him, he just kept watching the cars come by. The kid was playing in front of the house to the right of the Ranger house. He was playing with a soccer ball on the sidewalk when suddenly the ball slipped from his hands and rolled to the other side of the street.

That's when the trouble happened. Sean could see a car coming from down on the left side of the street. The kid was getting ready to chase after the ball. As you can see, this is obviously a recipe for disaster. Sean sprung towards the kid as fast as he could, and grabbed the kid just as the car zipped past.

Shingo looked in confusion at the man who just grabbed him. Being a naive young boy, he didn't know that there was a car coming. Of course, he wasn't sure what was going on and why the brown-haired foreigner grabbed him. The foreigner then set him down and put up his index finger. He wanted him to stay still. He watched the old man run across the street and grabbed his ball before looking again and running back across, carrying his ball. Then the man came up and kneeled in front of him. Then he said something that he couldn't understand.

"You oughta be more careful," Sean said to the young boy. Sean then looked up in the townhouse's door and noticed a woman, probably the boy's mother come out, yelling. "It's okay," he said. "He's fine, no need to worry."

"Thank you," she said in broken English. She must have barely understood what he said. Then she said something to her son before he said,

"Arigatou."

"No problem," Sean replied. He watched the mother and her son walk back into the house, with the mother no doubt scolding her son and telling him to be more careful.

"Not bad," said a voice from behind him. Sean turned around and noticed Maria standing on the stoop and Daisuke, Kevin and Hitomi were watching from the window.

"You were watching the whole time, weren't you?" he said as he put his hands in his pocket.

"To be honest, that's pretty surprising what you did," she said. "All this time, I just thought you were an asshole."

Sean laughed and replied, "Well, not all the time. Although I'm guessing Rich Boy Miyazawa's surprised."

"Looks like it," she said after glancing at the window.

"You know, maybe next time, when I'm having a quiet moment," he said. "Maybe you should try not spying on me."

"We'll see about that," said Maria as Sean walked back up the steps and into the house.

Rashon sipped his Zordonian wine slowly. He liked to enjoy every minute of his wine, no matter
when he had it. Why not enjoy it? His violet eyes gazed at the red liquid in the glass, as if to wonder if there was a finer quality to life. Conquest could count, but that had gotten dull recently… until now. He shuddered when he remembered their battle.

"Your highness!" Rashon was jolted from his reverie in that moment. He spilled some of his wine and groaned in dismay.

"What is it?" He said with a hint of anger in his voice. "What do you want?"

"Sir, the Four are here!" The Swabot sergeant said. Rashon's feature changed from angry to relaxed in an instant.

"Send them in," he said to the Swabot. The robot bowed before him and the disappeared. Rashon smiled to himself. Well, at least there was a bright side to this development. Now the Rangers would have to deal with the Four; the four greatest generals in the Zordonian Empire. The Rangers would be in for a tough fight. He chuckled again, before taking a swig of his wine and said, "Eltar, Hercuron, Liaria, come to the throne room. Now."

A bright glow appeared in front of his throne and the three people he just called appeared in front of him. His friends Hercuron and Liaria, and his brother and second-in-command, Eltar bowed before him. "What is it, your highness?" Liaria asked.

"The Four are here," Rashon said. The three people in front of Rashon looked up at him.

"The Four?" Hercuron said. "They're coming?"

"They've just arrived," Rashon said. "They should be in the throne room soon."

"We'll gladly welcome them!" Said Liaria. "After all, they only are the best!"

"How should we welcome them, Emperor Rashon?" Eltar asked.

"Then get out of the way," Rashon said. "They should be teleporting into that very spot soon enough." The three heeded Rashon's words and scrambled out of the way, just in time to see four columns of light appear in the center of the long, wide rug that led up to the throne. The light soon disappeared and five figures appeared in front of the throne and kneeled before Rashon.

"Presenting the Four Generals!" An officer Swabot shouted. "First general, the Terror of Rohan, Phaedos!" The general stood from his spot. The general's blonde hair, which appeared to be slightly shorter than Sean's, and parted on the right, shone in the light of the throne room. His body type was much the same Rashon's, like an NFL kicker. He was also the same height, 5'11" and the same weight. And he appeared to be 18, compared to Rashon, who appeared 19. Phaedos opened his eyelids and revealed his green eyes. And much like Rashon, he was also handsome. He wore the standard officer's uniform in the Zordonian army. It was a variating royal blue to grey color, with red trim along the front, the bottom, the collar, and the side seams. His uniform had a single large gold button in the corner of the front flap. He wore brown, knee-high boots and a brown belt and white dress gloves with three darts on the back.

"It's a pleasure to see you, my Emperor," he said. "Or should I say, old friend."

"A pleasure to see you again, Phaedos," said Rashon.

"Presenting the second general!" The Swabot called again. "The Knight of Gondor, Kalderon!" The second general, who was kneeling to the right of Phaedos, stood up. He appeared to be Rashon's age. His long, brown hair flowed down his back and appeared like a European millionaire. He was
also youthful, appeared 19, much like Rashon. His complexion was only slightly more tanned than Phaedos'. And his body type was bigger, too, as he seemed to weigh 20 lbs more than Phaedos. His eyes opened, revealing his blue eyes. He also wore the same uniform as Phaedos, but with some color differences. His piping was yellow, instead. And his boots were black.

"It's good to see you, Rashon," he said. "I hope you have been fine lately."

"Save for a minor defeat, I am okay," Rashon said.

"Presenting the third general!" The Swabot said again. "The Victor of the Battle of Helmstar, Tirna!"

The third general rose. Unlike the other two, Tirna has a smaller build, much more feminine. And the general's face was feminine, too. The general's long blonde hair was tied in a ponytail. The general seemed to be the youngest, appearing maybe between 16 to 18 years old. The general's piping was green. The general also opened their eyes, revealing green eyes.

"Welcome Tirna," said Rashon.

"Thank you, your majesty," Tirna replied in a feminine-sounding voice.

"Now presenting the final and greatest general!" The Swabot said again. "The greatest of them all, Zentor!" Zentor took his cue to stand up. He was the oldest of the generals, appearing in his mid-20s. His uniform was slightly opened at the collar. His long, white hair flowed down his back, like Kalderon's, except his hair was straight, unlike Kalderon's wavy hair. He too, was handsome. Unlike the other generals, he wore a long, white cape that went down to his ankles. His piping was a very light blue. He opened his eyes to reveal ice-blue or silver-colored eyes. His complexion was more tanned than Kalderon's.

"Ah, a gathering of the Four cannot be complete without the greatest of them all!" Rashon said as he got up from his throne and descended down the steps to greet him.

"It is a pleasure, your highness," Zentor said. "Now then, what is it you need from us?"

"It is a problem we did not expect to come across," said Rashon. "It seems this planet gave us a surprise. But not right now, we must save this for our conference."

"It is agreed then," said Zentor. "But I must make one complaint. We are the ones who have fought the most and you are the one consuming the wine."

"Then I suppose I'll remedy that," he said. "I shall share my wine with all of you in our conference. Is that enjoyable to you?"

Zentor smiled lightly and said, "That will do."

Later, the Four, as well as Emperor Rashon, Liaria and Hercuron were sitting in a conference room. All 8 of them had glasses of fine Zordonian wine in front of them, and Rashon sat at the end of the table. The Four sat on either side of him, and Hercuron and Liaria also sat on each side, while Eltar sat at the other end. "Let's begin, shall we?" He said as he stood up. Eltar walked over to the nearest wall and said, "Here's the situation." Just then, a picture of the Earth appeared on the screen. "This is the planet Earth," he said. "This is our species' home world. According to our history, we originated here and had a powerful civilization before… rebellious inhabitants forced us to leave. Now humanity is the dominant species." AN image of humans appeared on screen,

"Their technology looks advanced," said Kalderon.

"Correct," said Eltar.
"I see," said Zentor.

"The society is well-advanced, but nowhere near as advanced as ours," said Eltar. "And instead of one planetary-wide government, it is instead separated into many territories known as 'countries'."

"Interesting," said Phaedos.

"Do they have a space force?" said Tirna.

"No, the planet does not have a space force," said Eltar. "They have exploration agencies, but no space military. Intelligence indicates that they're not advanced enough for space combat. Their terrestrial militaries, on the other hand, appear advanced enough to defeat our Swabots. But those are not our biggest concern."

"So then what is it?" Phaedos asked.

"Be patient, I am getting to that," Eltar replied. Another image appeared on the screen, this one of the D-Day invasions. "Human history is a bloody mosaic of war and conflict, much like many other planets. Although I must say, they are much less savage than other species we've conquered, as many shun the concept of war."

"The fools," said Zentor.

"But that is not our biggest concern," said Eltar. "These creatures may be one of our most difficult conquests yet."

"How so?" Zentor asked.

"Here's how," Eltar said. The picture changed to showing various United States army weapons. The Four as well as the others at the table gazed in amazement at the weapons and vehicles. "This is just one example," said Eltar. "This country, known as the United States of America, spends massive amounts of money on its military, much to some citizens' dismay. They are the most advanced country on this planet when it comes to military technology."

"So what you're saying is these Terrans won't be so easy?" said Phaedos.

"Correct," said Eltar. "But there is one group that we failed to notice. And it nearly cost us." Then the picture changed to that of the Rangers. Since they had not fought the Rangers, the Four tried to stifle their laughs at the ridiculous-looking costumes the Rangers wore.

"What is the meaning of this?" Zentor asked. "Those fools are that dangerous?"

"You are underestimating them," said Eltar. "They are not as weak as you think. We made the same mistake in thinking they were easy. We were wrong, even though they barely landed a blow on us."

"Then why did you retreat, Eltar?" Zentor said, with his voice getting angry.

"Because we were caught off guard by their tenacity," said Rashon as he took a sip of his wine.

"I would hardly call that a moral victory," said Zentor.

"You weren't there," said Eltar. "These 'Power Rangers' as they are called, not only came close to defeating us, but they defeated Rhinotaur, too."

"They what!?" Zentor yelled. "They killed Rhinotaur!?"
"Yes," said Eltar. "They are more dangerous than you realize. They are not to be taken lightly."

"Then who are they?" Kalderon asked.

"I am getting to that," said Eltar. The picture changed to one of Sean. "This is their apparent leader," said Eltar. "His name is Sean O’Callahan, and he was born in the city of 'Chicago' in the United States of America on the North American continent. He is the one who rallied the 'Power Rangers' to nearly defeat us. He wears the, as Terrans call it, 'Red' suit."

"I see," said Tirna.

"He is also skilled in two Terran martial arts, as well. He studies 'Shotokan karate' and plays a sport called 'ice hockey'."

"I see," said Zentor.

The picture then changed to one of Kevin. "This is his apparent second-in-command, Kevin O'Donnell. He is from the city known as Dublin in the country of Ireland on the European continent."

"Do you have information on him?" Phaedos asked.

"Yes, we do," said Eltar. "He served in the Irish Defense Forces for three Terran years. He is also well-trained in Terran martial arts, using the fighting style known as 'Mixed Martial Arts', Judo and Jeet Kun Do. He wears the 'Blue' suit."

The picture changed again, this one to Daisuke. "This one is Daisuke Miyazawa, from the city known as Kyoto. It is in the same country as the city of Tokyo, Japan. His suit is 'Green'."

"I see," said Kalderon. The picture changed again, this one to Maria.

"This is Maria Aparicio, from the city of Caracas, in Venezuela on the South American continent," said Eltar. "She is skilled in the Terran martial arts of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Tae Kon Do. Her suit is 'Yellow'."

"Hmm, she doesn't look too bad," said Phaedos.

The picture changed again, this one to Hitomi. "This one is Hitomi Miyazawa," Eltar said. "She is from the same city as Daisuke Miyazawa, because she is his sister, 3 years younger than him."

"Interesting," said Tirna.

"She has studied the martial arts of karate and integrates Terran gymnastics into her fighting style. She wears the 'Pink' suit." The screen changed again. "That is all on the Rangers themselves. All of them are in the age range of 18-24 Terran years."

"As a unit, they appear to be very dangerous. Which is why this threat must be neutralized before we begin our major operations," Eltar finished.

"I see," said Zentor. "So you think they are a threat?"

"Correct," said Eltar.

"Eltar's statement is no lie," said Rashon. "We let underestimated them and we were nearly defeated because of this. Do not, under any circumstances, make the same mistakes we did."

"It is unlike you to admit your mistakes Rashon," said Zentor. "If that is the case, then we must be
wary of them. Very well, we shall divert a small amount of our resources to combating these 'Power Rangers'."

"A smart choice Zentor," said Liaria. "But will that be enough to defeat them?"

"Your mouth will get you in trouble one day Liaria," Zentor replied.

Liaria laughed in her distinctive style. "You seem to think that is all I have," she said. "But these Rangers might not be defeated simply through sheer force."

"We shall see," said Phaedos. "I will face them myself first to see what these 'Power Rangers' are made of."

"Will you be taking one of the colonels?" Eltar asked.

"I might," Phaedos replied. "Of course, I might find something else to do down there. We might be able to find some weapons we could use against them."

"You talk big Phaedos," said Liraria. "But can you back those claims up?"

"I can and I will back those claims up," Phaedos said. Then he stood up and said, "I will attack and destroy them! They won't know what hit them!"

*To be continued*
Kevin stuck out his tongue out, trying to focus on the task at hand. He turned the steering wheel of his Zord, trying to dodge enemy fire. This was especially difficult, since not only was his Zord bunched together with the other Zords, they had to deal with the canyon of buildings that was Tokyo. "Scatter!" said a voice in his ear. Sean had ordered the Rangers to scatter so an incoming blast from the enemy monster would not hit all of them and take them out. "Hitomi! Maria! Circle around, and cut off his escape route!" He said. "Kevin, Rich Boy, you and I will attack from the front! Let's go!"

"Right!" The Rangers did as Sean ordered and prepared to attack. Maria and Hitomi drove their Zords behind the monster, leaving it without an escape route. Sean, Kevin and Daisuke then attacked from the front. "Kevin, head to the - and tr- - - him -!"

Kevin frantically checked his headset. "Sean, I can't hear you!" He said.

"I sa- - to the - and -t h-m -f!" Sean's voice phased in and out, and Kevin couldn't tell what Sean was saying. He began to sweat nervously. He wasn't panicking, having been in this kind of situation before in the Irish Defense Force, but this was still an unsettling problem. Now he was driving with very little chance at communication with Sean.

"Sean! Sean!" He called out. "What is i—" KABOOM! ! An explosion jolted Kevin in his Zord, rattling him around and the Zord went black. Then, he heard another voice.

"End simulation." Then the lights came on again and Kevin O’ Donnell removed his headset. Oh wait; there is one thing that was not mentioned: None of the Rangers were morphed, and this was simply a simulation and they were in the secret base for the United Nation's 'Project Ranger' underneath Tokyo, Japan.

"That was not a great performance, Rangers," Kevin heard over the intercom. The simulator opened up and Kevin could see Col. Alan Greene, the military commander of 'Project Ranger' standing outside his simulator. "O' Donnell, what happened in there? Why didn't you do as O' Callahan ordered?"

"Sorry Colonel," said the GPX Blue Power Ranger in his native Irish accent. "My headset was on the fritz, and I couldn't tell what he was saying."

"He was ordering you to go to the right and cut off the monster's route," Col. Greene said.

"But sir, I said I couldn't hear him!" Kevin said again. "It's not easy to follow commands when you can't hear what your commander is saying!"

"That's not much of an excuse, O' Donnell," Col. Greene said in response. "Your headset is not your problem."

"But it is the problem of the tech guys," Kevin replied. "I keep on getting the bad headsets."

"It's still your problem O'Donnell," Col. Greene replied. 'You should be able to figure out some way to communicate."

"Col. Greene sir," said another voice. Col. Greene turned around to see Sean O' Callahan, the GPX Red Ranger saluting him. "Sir, I can vouch for my friend. Even though I could clearly hear him on my headset, it was clear he couldn't hear me."
"I commend you for defending him," Col. Greene replied. "But that's not the point of this simulation."

"Then what is, Colonel?" Kevin asked with an annoyed tone on his voice; even though that's not really a good idea to say to your commanding officer. Even though Greene let it go; sort of.

"The point is that you may end up in a situation when you cannot communicate with each other," he said.

"Then what are we supposed to do, Colonel?" Sean asked.

"It's simple, O'Callahan," Col. Greene replied. "Improvise!" With that, he walked out of the simulator room, leaving the Rangers there to process Greene's words.

"It's not exactly easy," said another voice. This one belonged to Maria Aparicio, the GPX Yellow Ranger.

"You can say that again," said Kevin. "You okay, Kevin?" Sean asked.

"For once I agree with the American," said another voice. This one belonged to GPX Green Ranger Daisuke Miyazawa.

"I guess that's saying something," Sean replied. Their mutual grudges made it difficult to agree on anything.

"I'll say," said another voice, this one belonging to Daisuke's sister, Hitomi, the GPX Pink Ranger.

"Ah jeez, I'm beat," said Sean as he took a big yawn. "Come on, let's get back to the house, I think it's getting late."

"You're right," said Maria. "I need my beauty sleep."

"Damn, I forgot about that," said Kevin. "And I don't think we've eaten anything since noon. And what is it now, 9 at night?"

"Darn, pizza again," said Maria.

"Well, then, let's find an American or Italian-owned place," said Sean. "Japanese pizza sucks, I'd rather find a place owned by a Chicagoan or a New Yorker."

"I agree," said Hitomi. "That last place we had was awful."

"It will be hard to find a pizza place open this late that's American-owned in Tokyo," said Daisuke.

"Well, then we find one," said Sean. "Now let's do what Michael Jackson said and beat it."

Phaedos, the Terror of Rohan, and member of the Four, walked into the throne room for his Emperor, Rashon. Surely, he approached the throne of his Emperor and kneeled before him. "My Emperor," he said. "I am ready to descend to Earth and attack the Power Rangers."

Rashon listened to his words. Rashon looked at Phaedos with his violet eyes and said, "Are your forces ready?"

"Very much so," said Phaedos. "I plan to lure them out with a large-sized monster. In an even better
twist, they may not be able to fight it."

Rashon took a sip of his Zordonian red wine and smiled lightly. "Sounds like a good plan," he said. "Which monster do you plan on using?"

"I was thinking about using a cyborg monster," he replied. "Perhaps the Grunchor or the Kel monster?"

"The Kel monster would be more interesting," said Rashon. "Use that one, instead."

"I see," said Phaedos. "Very well then, I shall go down with the Kel monster!"

"And remember what Eltar and I have stressed," he said. "Do not make the same mistake we did. Do not underestimate the Power Rangers."

"Yes, your highness!" Phaedos bowed quickly and left the throne room. Rashon watched his general leave the throne room before taking another sip of his wine.

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The next morning, the Rangers were sitting down at the table. Sean was absent, but that wasn't a bad thing. He just wasn't around. The Rangers' robot assistant, Mei, helped Kevin out with some boxes of oranges. "Thank you, Mei," said Kevin.

"You're welcome," the robot replied. At that point, they could hear someone bounding down the steps before hearing Sean hooting and hollering in the living room. Naturally, they were pretty confused about what was going on until Sean ran into the kitchen.

"What's up with you?" Daisuke asked. "Did you win the lottery so your poor father could afford a saw?"

"Keep talkin'," Sean replied. "I'm excited because the Blackhawks just won the Stanley Cup!" The room went silent, making Sean wonder if he said something wrong. "Uh, hello?"

"Big deal!" Kevin said, raining on Sean's parade.

"Very funny," he said. "It's been 49 years, and we had a young team. It's a team that might win us some more Cups in the future."

"You were screaming about something good," said Maria. "I thought it was something else." Sean looked at Maria with an annoyed look on his face. Usually that look was reserved for Daisuke.

Daisuke was about to answer when suddenly, the Rangers heard that damn alarm again.

"Haro! Haro! Emergency! Haro! Haro!" A green-colored, ball-shaped robot began bouncing up and down near the table, flapping all the while.

"Man, I hate that thing!" Sean said, referring to the Haro. Mei, meanwhile, walked over to the kitchen counter and press a few buttons, making a screen pop up, revealing Col. Ala Greene.

"Rangers," he said. "There seems to be something descending towards Mt. Fuji. We need you to get here to the base ASAP!"

"Got it!" Sean replied. Greene didn't have to tell him twice. "Come on guys, let's move!"

"Right behind you!" Kevin said. The rest of the Rangers followed Sean outside to the Hummer H2-
"Alright, here's the situation," said Col. Greene. He pointed to a large screen in the small theater, like one would find a football team watching video in. The Rangers themselves and some of the base personnel watched Greene's explanation of what was going on. "The object was spotted several hours ago by an amateur astronomer." An image of the object appeared on screen. "Now what we know is that this thing is going far slower than an average meteorite. Usually, the average speed is somewhere between 11 to 72 km per second. This one is traveling much slower, indicating that it might be a controlled descent.

"Do you think it's Zordonian?" Hitomi asked.

"That's what we suspect it to be," said Col. Greene. "Now from what it looks like, this is a pretty large object. If so, then you may need to use your special weapons."

"Finally!" Kevin said eagerly. "I've wanted to use the Zords!"

"Now hold on, I'm getting to that," said Col. Greene. "As I said, the object appears to be approaching Mt. Fuji and the surrounding area. You'll have to get there in your weapons in order to investigate this."

"And if this thing turns out to be big?" Maria asked.

"Then that's when your Zords come in to play," he replied. The screen changed to an image of five vehicles. All of them were the same color as the Rangers; Red, Blue, Green, Yellow and Pink. "These are your Zords," he said. "Red's Zord is a standard GT Race Car, codenamed GT Racer."

"Nice," said Sean.

"Blue's is a Touring racing car. It is known as Touring Racer."

"Touring Racer?" said Kevin, displeased with the name of his Zord.

"Green's is a pick-up truck, called Mountain Hauler."

"Sounds good," said Daisuke.

"Yellow's Zord is a HazMat vehicle, called Haz Runner."

"Bueno," said Maria.

"And finally, Pink's is an ambulance, called Am Chaser."

"I like it," said Hitomi.

"Now then, I want you to know this: Your Zords can combine into a larger robot, called the 'Grand Prix Megazord'," said Col. Greene. "It is a powerful weapon, and a single slash from its sword can bring down an enemy. Briefing adjourned. I'll give you more information as we receive it. Good luck, Rangers."

"Thank you sir," said Sean. The Rangers got up from their seats and walked out of the theater. Once they were outside, they lined up next to Sean, with him in the middle. "Ready, guys!" he shouted.

"Ready! GPX! Start it up!" The Rangers pressed a button on their AcceleMorphers on their left wrist. There was a flash of light, and in an instant, the group was changed into their Ranger uniforms.
"Alright, let's go!" Sean said.

"Got it!"

The garage containing the Zords was massive. How in the world the UN was able to fit these things underneath Tokyo without being detected was simply astonishing. Instantly, each Ranger went to their respective Zords. Hitomi and Maria themselves ran to their respective Zords. Maria's Zord was a giant HazMat vehicle, while Hitomi's was essentially a giant Ambulance. Now Maria appeared to be confident, but Hitomi wasn't. "Um, Maria?" She said.

"What is it, *chica*?" She asked.

"To be honest, I've never driven a car before," she said. "I don't know if I'll do well enough or not!" Hitomi could not see Maria's face, but underneath her helmet, Maria had a look of surprise on her face.

"Why is this manifesting all of a sudden?" She asked. "You never seemed to have confidence issues before."

"I don't know," Hitomi replied. "I guess I'm just nervous.

"Don't worry *chica*," Maria replied. "You'll do fine. You've been trained to do this."

"I guess so," said Hitomi. "Maybe I'm just getting worked up over nothing."

"Come on you two, let's go!" Sean called out from his Zord. "We gotta get a move on, let's go!" Maria and Hitomi looked at each other and nodded quickly before climbing into their Zords. "Hey Maria, what where you and Hitomi talking about back there?" He asked through his helmet communicator.

"Oh, nothing," said Maria. "Just a little pep talk."

"Okay," said Sean. She wasn't going to elaborate at all. "Alright, is everybody ready?" He said again.

"Ready!" Kevin said.

"Affirmative!" Daisuke added.

"Ready!" Maria said.

"Okay!" Hitomi said.

"All righty then," said Sean. He produced a red card with a magnetic stripe on it. "Access Cards, ready!"

"Ready!"

"Let's go!" With that, the Rangers dropped into their respective Zords. The cockpits themselves were sort of small, but they were kind of cozy. Behind them, their respective colors lit up on a panel behind them. "Swipe Access cards!" A card swipe appeared on the instrument panels before the Rangers, to the right of each Zord's steering wheel.

"Got it!" The Rangers then swiped their Access cards and the massive engines of their GP Zords roared to life, louder than any auto race.
"I like the sound of that!" said Kevin.

"Alright guys, let's roll out!" Sean said again. The massive doors to the hangar opened up, revealing the Japanese countryside. The base must have been close to the Tokyo city limits. In the distance, Mt Fuji could be seen. "GT Racer, roll out!" A massive race-car like Zord, mostly colored red, rolled out of the massive garage.

"Touring Racer, roll out!" Kevin cried. A massive, touring car Zord, colored mostly blue, rolled out of the massive garage.

"Mountain Hauler, roll out!" Daisuke cried. A large, green-colored pick-up truck rolled out of the garage next.

"Haz Runner, roll out!" Maria said. A yellow-colored, massive HazMat truck rolled out of the garage.

"Am Chaser, roll out!" Hitomi said. A large, mostly white-colored ambulance rolled out of the garage, before the garage doors closer.

Back in the control room, Col. Greene watched the GP Zords move out of the garage. A large staff of controllers watched not only the Zords, but the object approaching Mt. Fuji. From what it looked like, the object was relatively large, but it wasn't moving fast enough to cause a massive impact once it landed. "Rangers," he said. "The object's trajectory has been calculated, and it appears to be headed for an area about 20 miles east of the base of Mt. Fuji."

"Roger!" said Sean. "All right guys, you heard the man!"

"So it means its 40 miles from Tokyo?" Kevin asked, just to be clear.

"Most likely," Sean replied. "Colonel, how hast can these things go?"

"Over 200 mph," Col. Greene replied. "And that's just the minimum."

"Nice!" Sean said. "All right guys, let's move!"

"Is the object on its way?" Phaedos asked a sergeant Swabot as he gazed at the peak of Mt. Fuji.

"It will be here shortly," the Swabot replied. "Also, we've noticed five large vehicles inbound to the mountain."

"Oh?" Phaedos asked, sounding intrigued. "Do you think it's the Power Rangers?"

"We suspect it may be," said the Swabot. "Early indications appear to be that they are large-scale versions of Terran automobiles, and that is all we know." 

"Monitor the situation," Phaedos said. "And if you do attack them, wait until they get here. I want to see these vehicles."

"Yes sir," the Swabot said as it bowed. Then it left Phaedos alone to ponder the situation.

"Well, this might be an interesting development."

"Five more minutes!" Sean called over the intercom. "Get ready!"

"Any sign of the object yet?" Maria asked.
"None yet," Col. Greene said over the radio. "It should land soon, so be on guard."

"You heard the man," said Sean. "Alright, 'V' formation, on the double!"

"Got it!" On Sean's order, all five Grand Prix Zords, which had at first been in a single-file line, shifted and settled into a 'V' formation, much like a flock of birds. The Zords stayed in that position for five more minutes, which is when Col. Greene contacted them again.

"The object is scheduled to impact at a low speed in 5 minutes!" He said over the radio again. "Be prepared!"

"Yes, sir!" Sean replied. "Alright, stop here!" The Zords then started to slow down before coming to a full stop, just outside a small village. The Rangers waited patiently for the object, finally noticing a round object in the sky above Mt. Fuji. "What's the trajectory?" Sean asked.

"It should land a mile from your current location," Col. Greene replied. "I suggest you stay where you are for now until it lands."

"Understood," Sean replied before switching off the radio. Then he switched to the intercom. "Hitomi," he said.

Hitomi was caught off guard by Sean's sudden statement. 'What is it?" She asked nervously, as if she had done something wrong.

"What were you and Maria talking about earlier?" He asked. Did he notice? Wait, of course he did, otherwise he wouldn't be asking! Hitomi swallowed nervously and took a deep breath before saying,

"Nothing, really."

"You sure?" He replied. "Because it took you a while to get to your Zords."

"I'm fine," Hitomi replied. "I'm trying to focus here."

Sean shook his head. Hitomi couldn't see him roll his eyes under his Ranger helmet, but it didn't matter anyway. What mattered now was whatever was coming.

"Impact in 2 minutes!" A voice on the radio said. This one was not Col. Greene, but it didn't matter anyway.

"Get ready!" Sean called. "Let's roll!" The Zords then began to move forward again, this time to meet whatever was in that meteor.

Phaedos watched the Zords with interest. These things were larger than any Terran vehicle, which meant that they were most likely going to stand up to the Kel monster. But the monster didn't matter to him, anyhow. Now all he needed to do was see just how good these Power Rangers were and then... well, let's not get too hasty here. "Prepare for battle," he said to a commanding Swabot. The Swabot bowed before running off.

"Impact in 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..." The voice on the headset slowly counted down the time until impact. By now, the Rangers were racing at full speed in their Zords, ready for the monster to get there. They saw a large, spherical object speed in front of them and crash land some distance away. "Impact!" The voice called. While a large object traveling at a high speed would no doubt rise a lot of dust, there was very little, mostly due to the slow speed the object must have been traveling at.
"On your guard guys!" Sean called over the radio. The Zords slowed down to a slower pace, mainly so they wouldn't make some mistake when examining the crater—if there was a crater. From what it looked like, there was none; just the large, meteor-like object.

"Why is there no crater?" Maria asked.

"It must have been the speed it was traveling at," said Kevin. "It looked pretty slow."

"Whatever it was," said Sean. "Stay on your guard."

"You keep saying that," said Daisuke. "We know what to do."

"I'm just saying it to remind everyone, Rich Boy!" Sean shot back. "I just—holy shit, it's moving!"

The large object suddenly shuddered, and began to expand, like a sponge. Then, something even stranger happened. The Rangers watched in amazement as the object changed from a ball shape into what looked like a big monster. "Holy shit, that's Godzilla!" Sean said. Daisuke's image appeared on the screen next to him.

"That's not Godzilla!" Daisuke shouted back. "Godzilla doesn't have a big unicorn horn on his head and he doesn't have hair!"

"Well, whatever it is, it looks dangerous!" Sean said. The lizard-like-thing raised its head and let out a loud roar that traveled across the terrain. It did indeed resemble Godzilla somewhat, but did not have the spikes on its back, and as stated previously, had a good-sized mane on its head and back, as well as a unicorn-like horn on its head. Also, its face was a lot more like a T-Rex head. "Godzilla's lawyers are gonna be mad about him!" Sean said.

"Focus, Red!" Col. Greene interrupted. "You've got more important things to worry about like that big monster in front of you!"

"Sorry, sir!" Sean replied. "Alright guys, let's get to work!"

"Right!"

"Right, just like we practiced, surround and attack!" The five GP Zords broke formation and began to surround the Godzilla-like-thing. The Haz Runner and Am Chaser circled around behind the monster while the Touring Racer and Mountain Hauler attacked from the side. The GT Racer attacked head-on. "Alright, let's see what this baby can do!" Sean said. He searched the dashboard, looking for anything interesting. That's when he noticed a joystick right next to the gear shift. "Oh, I like the looks of this!" He said. "Rangers! Is there a joystick near your steering wheel?"

"Yeah!" They said in unison.

"Give them a try," he said. "I'll go first!" Sean grabbed his joystick and pressed a button on his dashboard, causing a targeting computer to pop up in front of him. "Lock on!" The target zeroed in on the monster, and flashed red, indicating it was locked on. Sean then pressed a button on the joystick, causing a series of missiles to pop out of the car's side. Then, several missiles launched at the monster, striking it. The monster writhed in pain, and quickly turned to Sean.

"I think that got its attention!" Maria said. "Let's try it, Hitomi!"

"Got it!" The two also pressed the button on their joystick, and just like Sean, their Zords fired missiles hidden in their chassis at the monster. The monster roared, and then swung its tail at Maria and Hitomi, but the two avoided the attack, backing up just in time before the tail struck them. "That was close!" Hitomi said.
"Rich Boy and I will take it from here!" Kevin said. The Touring Racer and Mountain Hauler also closed in before launching their missiles. The missiles hit the target, but it was becoming obvious that the missiles weren't exactly helping that much. "Oh shite," said the Irish Blue Ranger. "I think we've made him mad!"

"Then get the hell out of there!" Sean said, slipping into an Irish accent. Immediately, Kevin and Daisuke backed up their Zords while the monster brought its tail down on the spot where they were.

"Fools!" Phaedos said. "Their weapons won't harm the Kel monster!" Phaedos watched the Rangers and their Zords struggle against the Kel monster to no avail. The Rangers were helpless.

"Dammit!" Kevin yelled as he dodged an incoming blast from the monster. "You said that thing wasn't Godzilla, Rich Boy!" He shouted to Daisuke.

"It isn't Godzilla!" The Japanese Green Ranger replied as he maneuvered the Mountain Hauler around an incoming blast.

"Then why the hell is he breathing fire on us!" Kevin replied.

"I don't know, I can't answer that!" Daisuke shouted.

"Kevin! Rich Boy!" Sean, the American Red Ranger shouted. "Quit arguing and focus!"

"Sorry buddy!" Kevin replied. He fired another volley of missiles at the monster, this time aiming for the head. But the monster again used its breath weapon to destroy the missiles. Now Kevin was almost out of those.

"Dammit!" Sean angrily shouted. What was making the situation worse was that he had no way to get the Rangers into any formation right now, because the monster would attack them before they had a chance. "That's three fights we've been in, and we keep losing at the beginning! Hitomi! Maria! Do you two copy?"

"Loud and clear!" Maria, the Venezuelan Yellow Ranger shouted. "And we're having equal trouble here, too!"

"I'm fine!" Hitomi replied. The Japanese Pink Ranger maneuvered her Am Chaser around the monster. "Oh dear, this is scary." She said to herself.

"Hitomi, are you okay!" Sean said.

"I think so," said Hitomi.

"What's going on there!" He shouted back. "What's wrong! Hitomi!" First off, why was he so worried about her? Second, what the hell was wrong with Am Chaser?

"Maria," she said. "Remember when I said I was nervous?"

"Si," she replied. "I'm guessing you're scared now?"

"Very much!" Hitomi replied. "I'm not sure if I can handle this!"

"I'm sure you can!" Maria said. "Just believe in yourself, chica!" She maneuvered the Haz Runner around another blast from the monster.

"Right, I can do this," Hitomi said to herself. "I can do this!" She turned her steering wheel, maneuvering the Am Chaser towards the monster. Bad move. "Oh great, bad idea!"
"Hitomi!" Daisuke shouted. His sister was in the monster's firing path! And it was going to blast her!

"Hitomi!" Maria shouted. Her friend was going to die! She needed to move, now!

"Oh, no!" Hitomi turned her steering wheel just in time, avoiding the blast from the monster. She sighed in relief, knowing that she just dodged a massive bullet.

"Good driving Pink," said Sean, as he also let out a sigh of relief. "Alright Rangers, regroup!" The five Grand Prix Zords regrouped in front of the monster.

"So now what?" Kevin asked.

"I say we kick it up a notch, that's what!" Sean replied. "Time to bring 'em together!"

"FINALLY!" Kevin shouted. "I was waiting for you to say that!"

"Access cards, ready!" He shouted, producing an access card.

"Ready!" The other Rangers shouted, producing their cards.

"SWIPE!" The Rangers swiped their cards, causing some lights to start flashing, indicating the Megazord sequence had begun; now to deal with the big, ugly monster. "Harpoons, ready!" Sean shouted. The zords produced some missiles out of their chassis again, launching them again. This time, they had a cable attached to them that tied up the monster. "That oughta tie him up," said Sean.

"Alright, Megazords sequence, online!"

The five GP Zords gathered in front of the tied-up monster. From a distance, Phaedos watched with interest.

"Engage!" Sean ordered. The Haz Runner and Am Chaser executed a three-point turn and lined up side-by-side in front of the Mountain Hauler, the Haz Runner on the left and Am Chaser on the right. The Mountain Hauler's front split in two and a pair of short extensions popped out of the grill, before the Mountain Hauler joined with the two vehicles. Then, the Bus Racer split in two and drove up to each side of the Mountain Hauler.

Then a panel on each half tore off and exposed elbow joints, and out popped a pair of fists from the rear of the Touring Racer. The two halves joined with the Mountain Hauler on each side, forming what looked like arms. Now, it was GT Racer's turn. The Racer Zord drove up tot he truck bed of the Mountain Hauler, and using a ramp, drove into it and docked with the Zord. The large wing on the back retracted into the body. The lights on top of the Mountain Hauler slid back and folded down on top of the GT Racer. Now the large mass was complete.

"Fire rockets!" said a voice at mission control. Underneath the object, massive rockets fired, propelling the bulk upright. The Haz Runner and Am Chaser's cabs stayed still, forming feet for the large robot. The rear compartment of the GT Racer removed from the body, folding backwards, revealing a head. The eyes resembled goggles, and the face mask was solid. No mouth piece. A pair of wheel-like panels on the side completed it. Finally, the robot was upright. The Megazord let out some steam, ready to fight.

"Grand Prix Megazord, online!" The Rangers shouted inside the Megazord cockpit. They had some individual pods, like Indy Car cockpits, only wider. Kevin, Sean and Daisuke were lined up in the front, Maria and Hitomi in the back. The Rangers controlled the Megazord with steering wheels.

"Interesting," said Phaedos as he watched the Megazord transform.
The Haz Runner and Am Chaser form the right and left legs, respectively. The Touring Racer formed the arms. The Mountain Hauler made up a bulk of the body, and the GT Racer formed the rest of the body and the head. "Alright guys, let's see what this thing can do!" Sean said. The Megazord then got into a ready stance.

At that point, the Kel monster freed itself from its bindings. The monster roared, probably disoriented from the fall. "Let's get this sucker's attention!" Sean said. "Hey you!" He shouted at the monster. It got its attention, alright. "Hey ug-ly! You alien piece of shit, you can't beat us! You can't destroy anything if your life depended on it you worthless piece of crap!"

"Sean, what are you doing?" Maria asked with a slightly nervous tone.

"Simple," he replied. "I'm making it mad!" And it worked. The monster rushed the Megazord blindly, with the Megazord reacting by simply stepping aside, allowing the monster to run right past it.

"I guess there is a method to your madness," said Maria. "Watch it, he's getting up!" The monster recovered quickly, getting up off the ground and swinging its tail at the Grand Prix Megazord. The tail struck the Megazord twice, causing it to recoil. Inside the cockpit, the Rangers felt the attack.

"Stupid beast!" Sean shouted. The monster swung its tail again, but Sean would have none of it. "Grab the tail!" He shouted.

The Megazord grabbed the tail of the Kel monster, making it confused. Then, it began to spin around, holding on the the end of the tail all the while. Before long, it flung the monster like a hammer throw at a track and field event. The monster landed a good distance away, luckily missing a nearby village. No doubt the villagers were frightened to death about that.

"We have to get away from the villages," said Kevin. "Over there!" He pointed to a location a mile from where they were. The Megazord then went over to that location, far enough from any nearby villages. Enough room to fight.

"Hey ugly!" Sean shouted. It got the monster's attention again. "Come and get us!" The monster, now enraged, stood up and charged the Megazord. This time, the Megazord clotheslined the monster, sending it to the ground. The Megazord picked the monster up and flung it about half a mile away. "Come on, get up!" Sean shouted. The monster got up and slashed at the Megazord. The Megazord blocked the attack with its blue-colored arm.

"He's a strong one!" Hitomi said as the Megazord struggled to keep the monster at bay. Then the Megazord threw the Kel monster away, making it land a good distance from the Rangers.

"Our turn!" Sean said. The Megazord advanced on the Kel monster as it got up. The Megazord gave the monster a mighty punch to the head, causing it to fall backwards. "Man, this thing is weak!" He said.

"Exactly," said Phaedos as he watched.

"Alright, ugly!" Sean said. "Get up!" The monster again got up, this time letting out its breath attack at the Megazord. The Zord recoiled, as did the Rangers inside the cockpit. "Okay, that didn't work out as I had hoped!" Sean said.

"Rangers!" Col. Greene called over the radio. "We're sending you the Grand Prix Megazord Saber. It should help."

"Got it!" Sean said. "Send it!" In front of the Megazord there was a flash of light before a large
sword appeared in the ground. "Nice!" He said.

"Interesting," Phaedos commented.

"Will this work?" said Hitomi.

"I believe so," said Kevin. The Megazord picked up the sword in front of it and held it up. The monster roared and charged the Megazord but was met by a nasty slash from the Megazord before the Megazord again gave it a nasty backhanded slash, causing the monster to fall down.

"Time to finish this!" Sean shouted. "Grand Prix Megazord Strike, ready!"

"Ready!" The large sword began to glow, and a series of jets lifted the Megazord of the ground. "Grand Prix Megazord Strike!" Everyone said in unison. The Megazord then launched itself at the monster. "Checkered Flag!" The Megazord slashed at the monster with both hands on the sword. The sword cut right throw the monster, sending sparks flying. The Megazord stopped a few hundred yards away and posed in confident victory as the Kel monster fell to the ground and exploded spectacularly. "Yeah!" The Rangers celebrated inside the cockpit of the Megazord, hooting hollering and high-fiving each other.

"Great job Rangers," said Col. Greene. "You did good out there."

"Thank you sir!" Sean replied.

"Impressive," Phaedos said, watching the Rangers. "Now it's my turn." With that, he stepped out from his cover, about several hundred yards from the Grand Prix Megazord. Now out in the open, he lifted his hands to his mouth and called out, "Oh, Rangers! Come out to plaaayyy-aaaayyy!

To be continued
"Oh, Rangers! Come out and plaaayyyy-aaaayyyyy!" The voice cut into the Rangers' helmets inside the Grand Prix Megazord.

"Who said that!" Sean said in the Megazord cockpit. "Show yourself, now!"

"I think we can put him up on screen," said Maria. She pressed a few buttons and a picture of the guy calling them appeared on screen.

"Come out and plaaayyyy-aaaayyyyy!" The guy called again.

"Oh, so he wants to play, huh?" Sean said. It was obvious that he was itching for a fight now, even though the Rangers just destroyed the Kel monster. "Well then, let's grant his request!

"Do you think we can handle him?" Hitomi said, who was more than a little nervous about their new opponent, since the Rangers didn't know a thing about him. It's actually a smart statement, considering they've never seen this guy before. Not only that, they can't really see him that good on the monitor in front of them. But Kevin wasn't worried one bit.

"I think we can," Kevin replied. "Let's get him!"

"I'm right there with ya!" Sean replied. The two left their seats, followed by the other Rangers. Then all five of them leapt out of the Megazord, landing on the ground in front of their new opponent. The Rangers lined up side-by-side in this order: Kevin, Hitomi, Sean, Maria and Daisuke. In front of them was a guy with blonde hair wearing a military-style uniform. And it wasn't a US Army uniform at all. Well, Hitomi seemed to recognize him.

"Oh my gosh," said Hitomi. "That's Jadeite!" Once again, the Rangers groaned at Hitomi's comments again, especially Sean.

"No, that is not Jadeite!" Sean said sharply. "Just because he looks like the character from Sailor Moon does not mean that he is the same guy!"

"But he looks exactly like him," said Hitomi, trying to justify her words. "Even down to the uniform!"

"Excuse me!" The Jadeite look-a-like said, grabbing the Rangers' attention. "But I believe I called you out."

"Alright then," said Sean. "Alright Blondie, who are you, and what do you want from us?" He said as he pointed at him.

"Alright then," said Sean. "Alright Blondie, who are you, and what do you want from us?" He said as he pointed at him.

"Simple," the blondie replied. "I'm here to fight you!"

"Okay, that's obvious," said Sean. "Then who are you!"

"My name?" He said. "My name is Phaedos, The Terror of Rohan!"

"Rohan?" Sean whispered. "What the hell does this guy think he is, Lord of the Rings?"

The other Rangers snickered, which drew the ire of Phaedos.

"I am a member of the Four," he said, ignoring their snarky comments about Rohan. "We are the"
four greatest generals of the Zordonian Empire!"

"Oh, so you are Zordonian," Sean replied. "That answers that question."

"Now I must ask you something," he said. "Could you please introduce yourselves?"

Under his helmet, Sean made an annoyed face. That roll call? He hated it. "No! No roll call!" He said. Phaedos made a face of mock sadness.

"Oh, that's too bad," he said sarcastically. That just made Sean even angrier. "Because I was really looking forward to—"

"ALRIGHT!" Sean shouted, not wanting Phaedos to keep going. "We'll do it one last time! GPX, Red!" He shouted.

"GPX, Blue!" Kevin shouted.

"GPX, Green!" Daisuke shouted.

"GPX, Yellow!" Maria shouted.

"GPX, Pink!" Hitomi shouted.

"Power Rangers! GPX!" And like before, the Rangers posed and some explosions highlighted the moment. Phaedos laughed, making Sean even angrier.

"What the hell's so funny, pretty boy?" He asked with venom on his tone.

"That was… interesting," Phaedos replied. "Although now it's time I test your skills in battle!"

"Gladly!" Sean said. "I suggest you pray to whatever god you worship now, because we're gonna kick your ass!"

"My, you're spirited," said Phaedos. "Very well, then. SWABOTS!" Behind him, a platoon of Swabots appeared which caught the Rangers off guard—at first. The grey-and-black robots, with skull-like faces, encircled the Rangers, preparing to attack. But the Rangers were unfazed.

"Oh, a warm-up, huh?" Sean said. "Very well, then. GRAND PRIX WEAPONS!" The Rangers pressed their belt buckles and their respective Grand Prix Weapons materialized in front of them. Sean with his GT Sword, Kevin his Touring Cannon, Daisuke his Mountain Staff, Maria her Haz Daggers, and Hitomi her Am Bow. "Let's get 'em!" Sean shouted.

"Right!" The Rangers charged the Swabots, and the Swabots charged them, as well. The two forces met in the middle and began fighting.

Sean slashed at a Swabot, before slashing another one, grunting and letting out kiai after kiai. Another Swabot brought its sword down on him, but he dodged it easily and kicked it in the back, sending it tumbling into another mass of Swabot bodies. With a Matrix-type move, he dodged a Swabot Sword before flipping it over. And with a quick spin, he took out another group of Swabots. "Let's see what this baby can do!" he said referring to his GT Sword. "Colonel, any attacks?"

"GT Strike," said Col. Greene. "Give it a try, Red."

"Nice!" Sean said. "GT Strike, ready!" The sword's blade began to glow red, and the tires on his gloves and boots started spinning. Before long, the grooves began to glow red. "GT STRIKE!"

Then, Sean sped forward, a screeching sound adding to it. The Swabots recoiled, but Sean slashed
with a two-handed back-hand, being right-handed. Then Sean stopped and posed in confident victory as the Swabots behind him fell to the ground and exploded. "Fuck yeah!"

"Take this!" Kevin shouted as he fired his Touring Cannon. A swift kick to a Swabot on his 9:00 told the Swabots he wasn't distracted. He then pointed his good-sized, car-shaped, blue-colored cannon at a group of Swabots. "Take this, you piles of junk! I'm gonna send you to Tír na nÓg!" Kevin fired his cannon at the group, blasting away until the Swabots were mostly piles of circuitry. Then, he pointed it at another group, blasting them again. "Does this gun have any special attacks?" he asked Col. Greene.

"It's called Turbo Blast, Blue," Col. Greene replied.

"Sounds good!" Kevin replied. He pointed his cannon at another group of Swabots. "Turbo Blast, ready!" The Swabots recoiled, but there was no escape. "FIRE!" He pulled the trigger and a massive ball of energy was fired at the Swabots. Much like Sean, Kevin posed in confident victory after the Swabots themselves were destroyed.

Daisuke swung his green-colored, naginata-like staff at some Swabots. Using the pole-like weapon as a hook, he tripped up a Swabot before swinging it around and slashing at one, sending sparks flying. He blocked one attack from behind, then swung the Swabot around and stabbed the robot in its chest. Swinging his staff above his head, he brought it down on the Swabots, cutting several of them in the staff's path. "Any attacks?" he said to Col. Greene.


"Sounds redundant," Daisuke said. "But I'll give it a try." He held the weapon above his head and began to spin it around like a helicopter blade. Then he brought it down and began to spin himself. "Tornado Spin!" He called out before spinning around like the Tazmanian Devil and striking several Swabots in his path. Then he stopped and propped his staff up and posed in confident as the Swabots behind him exploded.

A quick block of a Swabot sword with her Haz Daggers and then a quick stab was enough for Maria to take out an attacking Swabot. With one dagger in her left hand she blocked another Swabot and stabbed the same one in the gut, kicking a Swabot that was behind her all the while. She tabbed two Swabots on her 3 and 9 o’clock sides respectively, then once again kicking a third in front of her. "Damn robots," she said to no one in particular. "Why can't they ever make them stronger? Colonel! Do I have any special abilities like Sean and Kevin?"

"The ability for the Haz Daggers is called 'Lightning Shot'," said Col. Greene. "Use it wisely, Yellow."

"¡Bueno!" she said in response. "¡Vamos, muchachos!" She said, gesturing for the Swabots to come to her. The Swabots took the bait and charged her. The blades on her yellow-colored daggers began to glow and sparkle with electricity. Then, she took one dagger by the blade, like a circus knife-thrower. "Lightning Shot!" She shouted as she threw the first one and then the second one. Each struck a Swabot in the chest and continued to sparkle until the Swabots exploded. "¡Mucho bueno!" She shouted as she too posed.

It's not exactly easy to use a bow when in close-quarter combat; which is what Hitomi had to deal with. No matter, a little gymnastics and some quick thinking allowed her to use her Am Bow both as a long-ranger weapon and as a melee weapon. She flipped backwards to avoid a Swabot sword, but landed in a crowd of them. No matter. She spun the wheels on the ends of her gauntlets and took out the Swabots with them. With another quick flip, she took out a couple Swabots with a good kick. "What can this bow do?" She asked, Col. Greene.
"Pink, your attack is called 'Energy Shot,'" he replied.

"Perfect!" She said as she notched an arrow into her bow. "Energy Shot, ready!" The arrow began to glow pink, alerting her Swabot opponents to the danger of the attack. The Swabots charged her, but she cried out, "Energy Shot!" And she fired at the Swabots. The pink-colored arrow sped through the air and cut through the crowd of Swabots. Much like the other Rangers, she turned around and posed in victory as the Swabots exploded.

"Alright pretty boy, it's your turn!" Sean shouted. The Rangers had successfully dispatched Phaedos's Swabots and now were ready to face him. The five of them lined up in front of Phaedos, ready to attack. Phaedos, however, was not worried in the least. And that made the Rangers slightly nervous.

"Well then," he said. "Give it your best shot! I await your attempts!"

"Do you think this is a good idea?" Kevin asked Sean. "We don't know what this guy's made of."

"I think we can take him," said Sean. "Easily."

"You sure?" Kevin asked.

"I'm positive!" Sean replied. "Now then, let's get 'im. LET'S GO!"

"Right!" They replied and following Sean's lead, charged Phaedos. Phaedos, meanwhile, stood his ground like Stonewall Jackson as the Rangers charged him, brandishing their weapons. His face showed a sinister smile. In his hand, a crystalline sword, much like Rashon's, materialized and he saluted the Rangers with it before getting into a fighting stance.

"COME ON!" Sean shouted as he got there first. The blade of Sean's GT Sword began to glow, and the wheels at the ends of his gauntlets and the tops of his boots began to spin, glowing red. His attack had begun. "GT STRIKE!" He shouted as he swung his glowing sword at Phaedos. Phaedos took his sword and with one swift move—blocked Sean's attack. "What!" He shouted.

Phaedos just smiled in a sinister manner. Underneath his visor, Sean's eyes widened just when Phaedos knocked him backwards using an energy blast or something. Sean flew back about 10 feet, landing on his backside in front of the Rangers. "Sean!" Kevin shouted once he landed. "You okay?"

"I'm okay," he replied as he groaned and got up. Phaedos, meanwhile, laughed at the Rangers.

"What was that?" He taunted.

"Fuck you!" Sean replied. "You're gonna get it!" Sean charged Phaedos again, but his anger had gotten the best of him. Phaedos smiled, as his plan had worked. Sean charged him again, yelling like a mad man and swung his sword at Phaedos, but it was again blocked by the general. Phaedos then threw Sean back before the Red Ranger charged him again. It was then that Phaedos gave Sean a nasty back hand, striking him in the chest and sending sparks flying.

Underneath his helmet, Sean's face showed a look of agony as he screamed in pain before landing on the ground.

Back at the base, the staff began to panic at Sean's agonized screams and groans. "Run a medical check!" Col. Greene shouted. Although his face showed one of calm, his tone had a hint of worry on his voice. A doctor near him looked over a computer screen before shaking his head.
"No major injuries," he said. "But he is in pain."

Sean, meanwhile, changed his expression from agonized to angry. He was too damn stubborn to lose to this pretty boy. No fucking way! "Interesting," Phaedos said as Sean got up again. "Rashon was right. You are stubborn." At that point, Phaedos raised his sword. "But also stupid."

"I'm not stupid," Sean said. "I just don't like losing." With the other Rangers watching, Sean charged Phaedos again, before swinging his sword at him. This time, Phaedos found it more difficult to land a strike on Sean, who would not go down with out a fight. Sean hacked and slashed at Phaedos, trying to keep the Zordonian general on his heels. Unfortunately, it didn't last long.

Once again, Phaedos landed a strike on Sean. But unlike before, he made sure the Red Ranger would go down, slashing at Sean multiple times. The Red Ranger screamed in pain. It felt like no pain he had ever felt. In his helmet, he could hear the medical staff at the base frantically trying to diagnose him. His face underneath the helmet was one of just pure agony. Finally, Phaedos landed the finishing blow, sending Sean flying backwards among a shower of sparks. Sean then landed about three feet in front of the Rangers. His suit was heavily damaged, showing the circuitry and wires of the robotic exoskeleton underneath the super-fiber.

"SEAN!" The Rangers shouted. Kevin, who was usually calm, had a face of pure rage underneath his helmet. Remember when it was said he was just as hot-blooded as Sean? Well, you're about to find out why.

"YOU BASTARD!" He shouted. "TLL FUCKING KILL YOU!" At that point, he dropped his Touring cannon and drew his Octane blaster before changing it into his Grand Prix sword. At that point, he charged Phaedos, also screaming like a mad man. Phaedos smiled again. This should be easy.

The swords of Phaedos and the Blue Ranger clashed. Kevin swung his GP Sword at Phaedos, but missed each time, or were just blocked or parried by the Zordonian general's crystal sword. How is he able to use that? Kevin thought to himself. But he didn't get much of a chance as a blast from Phaedos sent the Irish Blue Ranger flying backwards like Sean.

"I expected better from you!" Phaedos said, taunting him. "Surely, you can handle me!"

"We'll see about that!" Kevin shouted as he got up and charged Phaedos again. Much like before, he aggressively attacked Phaedos, trying to catch the Zordonian off guard. When that didn't work, he decided to fight him with hand-to-hand combat. Looking for an opening, He reverse-roundhouse kicked Phaedos, but the general blocked the attack and flipped Kevin on his back.

"Come on!" He shouted. Kevin got up again and charged Phaedos, but it was no use. Just like Sean, Kevin found himself on the wrong end of Phaedos's attacks, as the general hacked and slashed at Kevin's suit before he sent the finishing blow, sending him back several feet amongst a shower of sparks. And much like Sean, he had a look of agony on his face and a heavily damaged suit.

"Let's get him!" Maria shouted as she and Hitomi charged him. Phaedos shook his head at the Yellow and Pink Rangers coming at him. He swung his sword again, striking both Maria and Hitomi at the same time.

"I must commend you Rangers," he said. "You fight well and you refuse to—" At that point, he blocked an attack by Maria, who had gotten up while he was talking. "Impressive," he said as his blade locked with Maria's dagger. Using this opportunity, Maria thrust her dagger at Phaedos. The dagger did strike him, but only struck his jacket. "Well. You managed to lay a blow on me," he said sarcastically. He then swept Maria's feet out from under her, and then swung his sword at Maria.
"But you left yourself open for attack." Maria got up again, but like Sean and Kevin, was subject to the savage attack of Phaedos's sword, sending her backward, screaming in pain and her suit heavily damaged.

Hitomi didn't fair much better. With Phaedos distracted, she fired her bow at him, but the general dodged the attack before coming up to her. Underneath her helmet, her face showed a look of terror before Phaedos again subjected her to the same beatdown he had given her friends. Now there were four Power Rangers laying on the ground, writhing in agony and wearing damaged suits. All that was left was Daisuke. "Well, Green?" Phaedos said in a taunting voice. "Are you going to strike me?"

Daisuke raised his staff above his head and charged Phaedos. With the length of his staff, Daisuke was able to keep some distance between himself and the blonde-haired general. "Your teammates are all down," Phaedos said. "I would expect you to give up by now."

"I'm stubborn like the American," Daisuke replied.

"I see," Phaedos replied as he dodged some thrusts from Daisuke's naginata. He then swung his staff above his head and brought it down on Phaedos, but the general blocked the attack.

"Not bad," he said. He then thrust his sword at Daisuke, but the Japanese Green Ranger blocked his attacks. It seemed as if Daisuke would save the day.

But, that did not last. Phaedos managed to wrest Daisuke's weapon from his hands, then subjected Daisuke to the same beatdown he had given Sean, Kevin, Maria and Hitomi. And, much like them, Daisuke was sent backwards in a hail of sparks.

"This is pathetic!" Phaedos said. By now, the Rangers were all struggling to stand up; trying to handle the pain they had just received. What made matters worse was the heavily damaged suits. The helmets were fine; it was the suits that were the problem. There was exposed circuitry and wires all over. While there was no risk—at the moment—to the Rangers, the suit was still in bad shape.

Back at the base, Col. Greene was scrambling for a jet to get to the Rangers. "Get the Sonic Jet out there!" He shouted. "Hurry! Get them out of there, now!"

"It was launched two minutes ago!" A soldier shouted. "It should be there soon!"

"Then get it there faster!" He shouted. "Get the Rangers out of there!"

"And now, to finish this!" Phaedos shouted. He held his hand out and a ball of glowing energy began to manifest. Underneath their helmets, the Rangers' eyes all widened as Phaedos sent the ball of energy at them. There was a massive explosion, and the Rangers were sent flying again.

"Damn it!" Sean shouted in agony. Although he could hear that none of them were suffering major injuries, he was still in pain. And despite his stubborn streak, he knew they were beat. "We gotta get out of here," he said. The other Rangers looked at him as him he was crazy. "We need to retreat NOW!"

"Sean, what are you—" Maria was about to object, but the sound of a jet interrupted her. A red and black-colored jet swooped down and fired some rockets near Phaedos. Turns out they were smoke bombs and they created a smokescreen as it hovered above the Rangers and let down a rope ladder.

Phaedos, meanwhile, shielded himself from the smokescreen. In anger, he swung his sword and created a strong wind to blow the smoke away. Once the smoke was gone, his face changed to one of anger. They're gone! Suddenly, he could feel a strong wind on blowing on his and he looked up,
noticing a blue-colored figure walk into a Terran jet, before the door closed and the jet sped away to the east, towards the city of Tokyo. Phaedos watched in disappointment as his opponents fled the scene. Oh, well. He could kill them some other day.

"Fuck!" Sean shouted as he sat down on the couch in the Rangers' townhouse. After Sean was seen spitting out blood, the Rangers had been rushed to the infirmary in the base—turns out he was fine. In fact, all the Rangers had a escaped with no major injuries—save for Kevin, whose stitches on his left leg re-opened. So right now, after the Rangers had gone through some medical tests, they were back in their townhouse, still wearing their heavily-damaged Ranger suits—sans helmet—licking their proverbial wounds.

"Jeez," said Kevin. "That was brutal." There was no need for an exclamation point. The statement was just fine on its own.

"I'm gonna be sore for a week," said Hitomi.

"I think he nearly killed us," Maria said. Those words were enough to make the mood even sourer. The fact that they had just barely escaped death is not a thought they wanted to have on their minds right now. It's not really a good thing to be thinking about unless you just lived through D-Day.

"Jeez," said Kevin. "And what's worse is the suits are damaged."

"They're so damaged that we can't even morph out of them for two hours!" Sean said. That was surprising.

"How is it that these things are so damaged that we can't morph out of them?" Maria asked.

"I'm not sure," said Kevin. "But I think Col. Greene hinted we might not be able to use these suits again."

"Goddamit," Sean said. "We just start fighting and now it looks like we're done fighting before we even get started!" The statement was not exactly unfounded. The suits were heavily damaged, as mentioned so many times previously. While it's strange for a Power Rangers team to suffer such heavy damage, it certainly happened here.

"I'm not sure if it's stupid or not," said Hitomi. "Super Sentai never changed their suits after a few battles."

"Neither did Power Rangers," said Sean.

"Well if we do," said Maria. "Good riddance to this design. It's ugly." Her attempt to lighten up the mood helped only a little—when Daisuke interjected.

"And it wouldn't have happened if I had been in command," he said as he stood up from his seat. The other Rangers all looked at him in complete surprise. Sean especially, and he got angry.

"What'd you say?" he asked in a hostile tone as he stood up.

"You heard me American," he said, not even bothering with Sean's name—either his first or last name. "You saw what happened against Phaedos. I was the one who did the best against him. I should be the leader!"

"And you deserve props for that," Sean said. "But that doesn't mean you can say such mutinous things about me!" He got up and got in Daisuke's face, clearly angry.
"We wouldn't have gotten beat had we not rushed into battle without knowing our enemy's capabilities!" Daisuke shouted.

"So I make a mistake, big, fat, hairy, fucking, deal!" Sean replied. "We all make mistakes, I admit. I should have thought about what I was doing before fighting Phaedos. But that does not mean that we would have fared better if you were in charge!"

"How so?" Daisuke asked.

"You know how!" Sean shouted back. "Our first fight against the Rhino guy, you panicked and I took command! You can't lead, Rich Boy! Had you been in charge we would have been killed!"

"You don't know that!" Daisuke shouted back. "Like I said, we would have—"

"You're essentially saying the same thing," Sean said, interrupting him. "You don't know if we would have done better if you were the Red Ranger! And where the hell is this coming from!"

"It's been there," Daisuke replied. "It just got worse just today."

"Oh, I get it," Sean said. "You're still sore about not getting the Red Ranger suit! Face it Rich Boy, I'm the Red Ranger, you're not, so GET THE FUCK OVER IT!"

"I WILL NOT GET OVER IT!" Daisuke shouted back. "I was supposed to be the Red Ranger, not some American like you!"

"Life isn't always fair, asshole!" Sean replied. "I'm the hockey captain here, not you! I've had experience as a leader. You don't! All you have is the backing of a rich family and that's it! And yes, I made a mistake this one time! It will not happen again!"

"An athletic captain doesn't count! And besides, it would never have happened if the Project had done what they promised to do and made me Red Ranger!"

"Oh. Here we go again!" Sean said in a mocking tone of voice. "Like I said, get the fuck over it! It's in the past, this is the present."

"Guys, please, stop this," said Maria, who had her hand on her forehead. "We have to stop focusing on the past and start focusing on what our next move is going to be."

"Maria's right," said Kevin. "Can you two please stop fighting?"

"If Rich Boy is willing to," said Sean. "If not, I'm going out to be alone."

"Then I hate to disappoint," said Daisuke. "Because I won't—"

"Alright, that's it!" Sean shouted. Apparently, he had forgotten about the pain he was feeling. "I'm going out to be alone!" He said as he pressed on a little thing tucked behind his ear. At that point, his Ranger helmet re-materialized on his head and he stormed out the door, much to the protests of his teammates, save for Daisuke. Obviously he didn't care one bit. And he expected Hitomi not to, either.

Except he was wrong. Instead, Hitomi didn't want Sean to leave the team. It was a fair worry, after all. But what was also happening was a strange fascination with Sean. Nothing serious, though. "You're following him aren't you?" Daisuke said.

"Maybe," she replied. "I never said I wasn't."
"If you want to follow him, go ahead," said Maria. "We'll wait up for you."

"I'm not sure if you should," said Daisuke. "You should be loyal to the family."

"Family loyalty doesn't have anything to do with this situation," said Hitomi. With that, she also pressed the device behind her ear and her Ranger helmet also materialized. "I'm just worried about a friend." Maria smiled at Hitomi, and Kevin just shrugged. Obviously Maria approved, and Kevin just didn't care. Daisuke, meanwhile, wasn't happy. But, that didn't matter to her, as she walked outside the door and bounded the rest of the way to find Sean.

"She seems to have an independent streak," said Maria. "I think that's good."

Finding a needle in a haystack is one thing, but try finding a guy wearing red spandex in Tokyo. That's even harder. Hitomi had to search a good deal of rooftops in Tokyo just to find Sean. Why rooftops? Probably because it was the only thing she could think of. And it's the best place to be alone when you're still in your Ranger gear and you don't want any unwanted attention drawn to yourself.

It did indeed take some time, but she managed to locate a red figure sitting on a rooftop somewhere in the Shinjuku ward, not too far from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building. She shook her head, having found him and pressed the wheel-like feature on her helmet. That, in turn, made her helmet retract into the small device behind her ear. With her helmet now retracted, she walked over to where she thought Sean was sitting. Sure enough, she could see the battle-damaged spandex-like material that he was wearing. She got closer, and saw that he had his helmet off, too. She tried to stay silent, hoping he couldn't tell she was there. Well, she was wrong.

"I know you're there," he said suddenly said. His sudden words startled her, but only slightly. Just a little twitch, and that's it. She was about to leave, but he had other ideas. "You know, if you want to sit down, go ahead. I don't mind." So, she shrugged and sat down next to him. The wrapper of a candy bar was next to him, and he had his arms around his legs, as he didn't have much of a seat. "You know, it's kind of creepy to follow people around," he said.

"I just didn't want to see you make a fool of yourself," she replied. He snickered a little. The sun was setting, although it was behind them, as she could see her shadow. That must have been how he noticed her. She could also hear the sound of the late afternoon traffic, albeit somewhat quieter, mostly due to them being up pretty high.

"Are you going to say anything about Rich Boy?" He asked.

"Well, I wish you would not yell like that," she said.

"Is that all?" Sean asked.

"No," she replied. "I also wish you would not get so close to him like that. And that you would be less bossy."

"Have I really been that bossy?" Sean asked. "Or are you just making that up?"

"You have been kind of a control freak," she said.

"Oh yeah?" He asked. "Name one time."

"During the simulators," she said. "You like to grab the glory for yourself."

"I do not!" He replied. "Okay, maybe a little. Oh, speaking of which, what were you and Maria
"Well," she said, prolonging her word out as if she was thinking about what to say. "I kind of had some fears before. I was afraid I would not drive very well."

"Where the hell did that come from?" Sean asked. His face showed a look of confusion, as if this was never brought up before. Oh, wait. "You never mentioned you have confidence issues."

"Well, since our Red Ranger is so confident," she said. "It would seem kind of silly for a Ranger to have confidence issues."

"Still," he said. "You kind of caught me off guard with that."

"Your personality and my brother's really contrast," she said suddenly. Sean placed his face in his hand at the suddenness of the statement.

"Where the hell did that come from?" He asked. "That was probably the most random thing I've ever heard!"

"Sorry," she said. "But it is true. I mean, he is usually aloof, you are… not. He is usually stiff, you are… passionate."

"I think 'hot-blooded' is the term," Sean said. "I'm hot-blooded. It means I tend to get excited and angered pretty easily."

"You certainly have an anger problem," she said.

"I guess so," he said. There really wasn't much to argue about there; especially after Phaedos got him so angry. "I guess I need to work on my anger problems."

"So are you always like that?" She asked. "Are you, as Maria puts it, an 'asshole'?" Sean snickered again, at the randomness of the question.

"I don't know why she said that," he said. "Yes, I can be an asshole sometimes, but I'm really not that bad."

"Telling me you are not that bad and showing it are different things," she replied.

"Ah, jeez," he said. "Well, you saw the thing with the kid, didn't you?"

"Um, yeah," she said. "But that is only one time."

"Well, the reason I don't like him is because as you saw, he questioned my position as Red Ranger."

"Technically," she replied. "That means you are admitting you have a bossy streak," she said.

"Whatever," said Sean. "My point is, he acts as though only he deserves to be Red Ranger, even though I have more credentials, even though it was being captain of three different hockey teams and not the military. Has he served in the JSDF?"

"No," she said. "Only our grandfather served in the Imperial Japanese Army. No one else since him has served in the military."

"So your brother hasn't?" She shook her head, 'no'. "Okay, then. And I'm not sure who made that deal that he be Red Ranger."
"So you were play hockey?" She asked. "And you're captain?"

"Yep," he said. "Team's name is the Chicago Steel. It's a junior hockey team and I've been playing on the team through college."

"Is that why you do not like my brother?" She asked.

"Well, that, and my family was not the wealthiest in the world," he replied. "Sure, we could afford stuff and we lived in Beverly, which is a well-off neighborhood in Chicago, but we're not—how rich is your family?"

"We own a chain of department stores," she said. "We even own stock in several international department stores like Harrod's and Macy's." As soon as he heard that, Sean's eyes widened in complete shock. He stammered, trying to figure out just what to say.

"That is rich," he said. "We're not even close!"

"So what else do you think of my brother?" She asked.

"I think he's a spoiled brat," he replied, taking a bite out his candy bar.

"You know, some might say you feel something else about him," she said as she opened one of his candy bars.

"I don't know, I—oh, you're sick, you know that?" He quickly figured out just what she meant by 'something else'. She laughed, as she clearly got a reaction out of him. He just shook his head and muttered something under his breath.

"So do you hate me?" She asked. Not a bad question, really.

"No," he replied. "I kinda like you. Not romantically, but it's more like you're a nice girl; a lot nicer than him."

"I get that reaction, I guess," she said as she took a bite out her candy bar. "My brother also thinks you're stupid."

"I'm not stupid!" He replied. "I just never got to go to college. I got a 3.25 GPA in high school. And I can come up with some pretty good plans."

"Really?" She said. "What?"

"Well," Sean said. "Considering Phaedos most likely used that monster as a way to lure us to Mt Fuji, maybe we could set a trap for him."

"Do you have any plans now?" She asked.

"Unfortunately, no," he replied.

"I guess that is a way of looking at things," she said. As the sun continued to set, the two continued their little talk. As the conversation went on, Hitomi gained a new understanding of Sean—even though she gained one earlier—and she started to gain a strange attraction to him. Whether it was friendship or something else, she didn't know. But, it didn't feel bad, anyway.

"What is she doing that is taking so long?" Daisuke asked with some irritation on his voice. Maria and Kevin, however, didn't really seem to care.
"Don't worry about it," said Kevin. "As long as she's with Sean, she'll be fine."

"That's exactly what I'm worried about," Daisuke replied.

"Just relax," said Maria. "She had her reasons, and I'm sure they make sense to her at least."

"I don't want him doing anything to her, though," Daisuke said.

"You make him sound like a rapist," Kevin said. "He's not even close to that. He's got morals, you know."

"He'd better," said Daisuke. "Otherwise, I won't forgive him."


"This had better be good," Rashon replied. He took a sip of his Zordonian wine.

"I nearly succeeded in killing the Power Rangers," he said. Rashon did a spit-take, surprised at this sudden revelation.

"You what?" He said, still coughing.

"I nearly succeeded in killing the Power Rangers myself," he repeated.

"Why didn't you finish the job?" Rashon replied, thinking he had failed.

"Because they managed to escape," he replied. "They escaped aboard a high-speed Terran aircraft before I could give chase. Had the aircraft not arrived, I would have finished them off."

"Really," said Rashon. "Then why was the Kel monster defeated so easily?"

"That really didn't matter to me," Phaedos said with a smile on his face. Rashon thought about Phaedos's words until he came to realize something.

He smiled, and then began to laugh lightly. Phaedos's smile grew, as he knew his emperor had figured out his strategy. "So you lured them out with a relatively weak monster and then you nearly killed them?" Rashon asked. "I must admit Phaedos, it seems I have underestimated you, as well."

"It seems you have," Phaedos replied. But Rashon was not done.

"Still, that does not mean you do not have a 'longer leash' as these Terrans say," he said with a very stern look on his face. "If you fail me more, I will not be so easy on you. Is that clear?"

"As clear as you can be," Phaedos said as he bowed. With that, he pivoted around and walked out of the throne room, leaving Emperor Rashon behind. The Emperor took another look at his wine glass, lost in his thoughts. But he had just one more question.

"Phaedos!" He called. The general stopped in his tracks—he had not left the throne room just yet, actually—and turned around. "How is it that you were able to defeat them yet we could not?"

"It is simple," he said. "I did not underestimate them." And with that, he walked out of the throne room, this time leaving Rashon behind. The white-haired Zordonian emperor shook his head and took another sip of his wine.

"There's no other way around it," said Dr. Wilhelm Morris. Morris was with Col. Alan Green at the
UN base under Tokyo. He was an older man, close to 50 years old, despite being one of the scientific leaders of Project Ranger. "We'll need to change to suit."

"I was afraid of this," Col. Greene replied. "I know we're keeping the material, it's the fact we have to change the suit design that I'm not pleased about."

"The damage is too great," Dr. Morris replied. "There's no way they can handle the enemy in their state. They have to be replaced."

"I see," said Col. Greene. "I guess we have no other choice. We'll have to bring the Rangers here to see the new suits."

"I guess so," said Dr. Morris. "I just hope these can handle the enemy."

"We used a backup suit the last time," Col. Greene said. "These new ones shouldn't be too bad."

"I hope so," said Dr. Morris. "We can only hope."

End chapter
The New Suit

Being a Power Ranger isn't all it's cracked up to be. Well, that's the attitude after getting your ass handed to you just two days prior—which is exactly what the GPX Power Rangers were going through right now. Four days prior, they fought the Zordonian general Phaedos who whipped them like a rented mule and came close to killing them before they escaped. What's more, the suits were so heavily damaged that the engineers and designers with Project Ranger found they couldn't fix the suits, forcing them to go to a new suit. Now usually, neither Power Rangers nor Super Sentai does this, but this story is different. Of course, this may seem silly, but since the suit was so heavily damaged, it of course, as stated previously, had to be changed. It didn't really matter to the Rangers, though. To be honest, they thought the old suit design was ugly.

At the moment, the Rangers were at the UN base underneath Tokyo, waiting for the lead designers and engineers to call them into a lab to decide on their next suit design.

But first, Sean had to answer for his boneheaded mistakes earlier. He stood in front of the very unhappy Col. Greene and his desk. "You have anything to say, O'Callahan?"

"Am I in trouble?"

"No, but I do want to know where all the cookies went," said Col. Greene. "Of COURSE you're in trouble, O'Callahan!" He banged his fist on the desk, causing Sean to wince. "You almost got yourself and your team killed by trying to play hero!"

"I wanted to kick his ass!" Sean replied.

"That's not a good reason to be a superhero and you know it!" Greene replied. "I didn't fucking recruit you five to be a dumb fanboy's wet dream, you're supposed to save people!"

"Yes, sir," Sean said. "But why did you put me in charge?"

"I have my reasons," said Col. Greene. "For one thing, I wanted to pick the right leader; not the one the higher-ups wants. I mulled over you, Aparicio, O'Donnell—he probably would have been a good idea—but I landed on you. I don't know why. But I'm starting to doubt myself."

"Yes, sir," said Sean. "But I'm still the better idea."

"Maybe I should have Miyazawa in charge," said Greene.

"FUCK Miyazawa in charge," said Greene.

"Why not?" Greene asked. "He did better than all of you."

"So?" Sean replied. "He was SHIT. Why the hell do you think I took command that first time!?"

"He's a pretty good soldier," said Greene. "But he'd probably fuck up in his own way."

This made Sean angry, and he took in a deep, sharp breath while trying to prevent, then letting his anger show in his face. "What the fuck do you want, Greene!?" Sean roared.

"I want a fucking leader!" Greene replied.
"I can play the dumb soldier if you want, do you want it!?” Sean shot back. "What the fuck do you want!?”

"I don't want the dumb soldier who got here kissing ass!" Col. Greene snapped back. "I want the hockey captain who non-verbally told his coach he was full of shit with his play on the ice, and the kid who refused to take shit from the school bullies!"

"What about Rich Boy!?"

"What did I just say!?" Greene replied. "He's set for life! He's never questioned the status quo! He froze in that first attack! I want someone not set for life, will question the status quo and takes charge the same way he did on the ice! But I also want him to admit he's made mistakes!"

"Is that it!?" Sean replied. "You want me to admit I made a mistake? FINE! I FUCKED UP! Ya fuckin' happy now!?"

"Not quite!" Greene replied.

"WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT ME TO DO!?"

"I WANT YOU TO BE A LEADER!" Greene roared again. "You're dismissed, go wait with the others in the waiting room and think."

"Oh, fuck you!" Sean replied. He spun on his right heel and stormed out of the office. One would be excused for assuming that Col. Greene was angry that Sean insulted him, but he actually wasn't. Instead, he grinning and sat back down at his desk to get back to work before calling up Ban Ki-Moon to tell him that he made the right decision all along.

His anger dissipating, Sean re-joined the other Rangers in the waiting room, where he flopped down into the first chair he came across. Everyone else was silent. There was not a sense of nervousness, only annoyance. Not an annoyance that one would feel when dealing with a person who irritated you to no end, but one would feel during a fit of boredom. They had been waiting for what felt like an hour for their names to be called—even though it had really been about 15 minutes.

The room was mostly bland, like the waiting room at a doctor's office. There's nothing aesthetically special in here. Is being a Power Ranger really supposed to be this dull? It was even worse than the individual therapy sessions the UN made them take yesterday. It was more annoying than deadly. They just didn't like doing it. Of course, the UN said they did it so the Rangers wouldn't suffer any emotional breakdowns while fighting. Oops, we're getting off topic. We're supposed to be talking about the new suits.

"Ay dios mio, why do we have to wait so long?" Maria asked out of the blue.

"Don't ask me why," Kevin replied. The conversation was dropped, and the Rangers went back to the silence of waiting for the new suits. How long was this supposed to take? All they said was that it was going to take five minute, and now it was twenty.

"Fuck this," Sean said to himself as he got up and walked over to the door leading to the lab. "Hey! What the hell's going on in there!" He shouted.

"Yeah, what's taking so long?" Hitomi asked. Suddenly, the door to the lab opened, revealing their commanding officer, Col. Alan Greene. And he did not look pleased in the slightest.

"Will you please be more patient?" He said. He must have forgotten that the Rangers have been patient for 20 minutes.
"Um, we've been patient sir," Kevin replied. Col. Greene sighed and placed his face in his palm, shaking his head all the while.

"Look," he said. "We're kind of busy here. So if you could just relax and wait a little longer, that would be fine, okay?"

"You told us we would have to wait five minutes," said Maria. "I could have gone to the cafeteria and gotten a snack by now."

"Look, we'll have the suits ready soon, okay?" He said, just to get the Rangers to calm down. Now the Rangers were looking at each other, confused as hell. What did he just say?

"I thought you said we would be picking out the suits!" Kevin said.

"Change of plans," Col. Greene replied. "We could only get one suit online at the moment, so we went with that."

"You gotta be kidding me," said Sean. "Is that why you took our morphers?"

"Exactly," said Col. Greene. "Now please relax. And yes, you can go get a snack from the cafeteria—"
He stopped when the Rangers all abandoned their seats and dashed to the cafeteria to get some grub. He shook his head as he went back in the lab. They must have been really hungry.

About 20 minutes later, Col. Greene opened the door again to see the Rangers all munching on some snacks. The Colonel shook his head at the Rangers before they noticed he was there. "Did you just get back?"

"Yeah," said Sean. "Why?"

"Just come in," he said with an annoyed tone of voice. The Rangers followed, taking their snacks with them, save for Daisuke Miyazawa. Once inside the lab, they stopped and Col. Greene addressed them. "Okay, so I'm guessing you're tired of waiting for us to call you."

"You bet your arse!" Kevin replied.

"Calm down," Col. Greene replied. "Alright, look. Because of the severe damage your suits received, we were forced to use new suits and new morphers."

"New morphers?" Sean asked with a confused look on his face. "Why?"

"Well, technically not new morphers," Col. Greene replied. "It's more like your morphers were simply modified."

"So we still have the same ones?" Maria asked.

"Technically," he replied. "And since we could only get one suit model online, you won't be able to choose which suit model you want." The Rangers groaned in response, as they had hoped they could decide on the suit. Col. Greene then walked over to a table where a suitcase was sitting. "Your morphers technically are the same, but the engineers and designers added a little something extra." He opened the case up and displayed the new morphers to the rangers. There wasn't too much of a difference, save for a slot on the left side of the morpher.

"What's with the slot?" Sean asked.

"Those are for your AcceleKeys," he replied. The Rangers looked at him with confused faces, as
they didn't know what they were for. "In order to use your morphers, you have to insert the keys into —oh, grow up!" He said that because Sean, Kevin, Maria and Hitomi were snickering at what he said. Yes, he knew what they were thinking, and no, he was not pleased one bit. "You're in your twenties; this is no time for such crude humor."

"Sorry Colonel," said Sean. "It was just too funny."

"You're not Beavis and Butt-head," Col. Greene replied. "Be more mature about this. Anyway, you have to insert the key into the slot, like the ignition switch in your car. Also, the keys will be used in your zords and Grand Prix Cruiser." He gestured for another person, who brought a smaller case over to him. He opened that one up and displayed five objects with resembled Swiss army knives. There was a button on one end, and it got slightly narrower at the other end. "These are your Accelekeys," he said. The Rangers took the keys as well as their AcceleMorphers and put them on their left wrist.

"But I have a question," said Sean. "Isn't using a key a bad idea? What if we lose or forget it?"

"Then keep them with you at all times," Col. Greene replied. "We do have backups, but they're only to be used in an emergency."

Shea pressed the button on his one key and the key itself flipped out like a switchblade. "So that's how it works?" He asked.

"Correct," the Colonel replied. "Now you guys can—" In an instant, the Rangers cleared the room, no doubt leaving to get some proper lunch. "...Leave." The Colonel shook his head in response before talking with more engineers and designers.

Emperor Rashon sipped his Terran wine back on his ship. The white-haired Zordonian, who appeared 19 wasn't used to Terran wine, so he made a disgusted face at the taste of the wine. What blasphemy was this? How could the Terrans make such foul-tasting liquid! He cursed the Swabot who brought him this wine, which they claimed was the finest Terran wine they could get. He was going to dismantle those Swabots for bringing him such a terrible substance. Of course, it could just be that his love of Zordonian wine made him biased towards this Terran wine. It was a possibility.

But right now, his focus was broken when a column of light materialized in front of the throne, revealing his blonde-haired general Phaedos. Recently, Phaedos had nearly killed Earth's strike force the 'Power Rangers' before they made their escape. The general bowed before the white-clad emperor before speaking.

"My emperor," he said. "I am ready to go back down to Earth and attack the Power Rangers."

"Really?” Rashon asked. "What is your plan?"

"The same as last time my emperor," he said. "I will lure them out."

"That will not always work Phaedos," said Rashon. 'But for now I shall approve your plan. Will you take another large monster?"

"No, I will not," he replied. "Instead, I will take a smaller monster to attack them. They will not stand a chance."

"This had better not fail," said Rashon. "You are on a short leash, as the Terrans say. Your past failures have forced me to say this."
"I will not fail," Phaedos said. "I shall return victorious!" And with that, he disappeared, leaving Rashon alone. But Rashon was still skeptical about Phaedos's declaration he would win.

"You had better," he said menacingly.

"Why did we have to change our morphers, too?" Hitomi asked as the Rangers got some lunch at a fast-food place.

"Maybe we should have stayed longer so we could have found out," said Kevin. "But I was too hungry to stay."

"I guess we're lazy bums then," said Sean. If you're wondering how Sean, Kevin and Maria ordered their food, unless it's too obvious, here's how: Hitomi ordered for them. Daisuke wouldn't even talk to Sean. Fine with Sean, though, after Daisuke's mutinous—in his eyes, anyway—words that he should be Red Ranger instead of Sean.

That got the American infuriated. So mad that he left to be alone—even though Hitomi followed him. Of course, they had a good conversation. For the record, Daisuke was still mad at Sean's leadership mistake in which the Rangers were nearly killed. Even more, the Rangers actually had a hard time forgiving Sean for his little lapse in leadership. In fact, it's about to be mentioned.

"Considering how your little lapse in judgment nearly got us killed," Maria said. Sean sighed in exasperation, as he was getting tired of them bothering him about what he did.

"Jeez, can you give it a rest?" Sean said in response, essentially preventing Maria from finishing her complaint. "Can I please go for an hour without getting reminded about that? Who do you think you are, Rich Boy?"

"Will you stop calling me 'Rich Boy'?" Daisuke shouted in response. "Can't you at least call me 'Miyazawa'?"

"No!" Sean replied. "You know I don't like you one bit! Why the hell would I give you the dignity of calling you by any name when you don't even call me by my name?"

"Can we go back to complaining about how Sean royally screwed up?" Kevin asked. "Even though I'd rather not?" To be fair, Kevin is getting tired of not getting much screen time. "In fact, I hate to say it, because even though Sean deserves to get yelled at for screwing up, maybe we should stop?"

"Oh, all right," said Maria. "But he's on a short leash!"

"Well, we should be focusing more on when the Zordonians will attack again," Kevin said. "We can't really afford to be fighting amongst ourselves."

"He's right," said Sean. "As old Abe Lincoln once said, 'a house divided against itself cannot stand'."

"If we fight amongst ourselves, we can't fight against the Zordonians," said Kevin. "I say Sean gets one more chance." Said Ranger slammed his forehead on the table in response. One incident and they're already turning against him!

But Kevin was only being harsh because he knew his friend could take it. If not, Kevin could always be Red Ranger. Even he didn't think Daisuke could handle the stress of being Red Ranger. Apparently the whole world hated him.

"You don't have to be so melodramatic Sean," said Maria.
"You know, I thought these things bonded with our DNA," said Sean. "So technically, I'm gonna be Red Ranger for a long time."

"They did?" Kevin asked. "I didn't know that."

"Yeah, but we've got new suits," said Maria. "I'm not sure if our DNA is bonded with those suits; yet."

"Why do we even have to change suits?" Hitomi asked; even though the question has already been answered a few times before.

"Better yet, why do we need keys?" Sean asked. "Wouldn't that make things a little harder? Why not give us cell phones or something? Power Rangers Turbo had keys. Are they trying to rip it off?"

"Cell phones would be nice," said Hitomi. "I mean we could—" But the conversation ended when the Rangers heard a 'bang' sound that didn't seem too far away. "What was that?" Hitomi asked.

"Sounds like something's going on," said Kevin. "I say we go see what's going on."

"Good idea," said Sean. "Let's go!" With that, all five of them cleared the table to wherever the explosion came from. And to possibly show the Zordonians—if they were responsible—that they were still kicking.

"Don't destroy everything, Grond!" Phaedos said to the monster he was with. The monster looked like a bulky, humanoid werewolf/rabbit… thing. Yes, it was ugly, and yes, it smelled bad.

"Come on, Phaedos!" He yelled. "I wanna have some fun!"

"Then let the Swabots have some fun, too," Phaedos said.

"Oh, okay then!" Grond said. "Swabots, attack!" The Swabots obeyed the command and attacked the bystanders. The bystanders in turn tried to run, but many were too slow and suffered a horrible fate. Some tried to fight back, but they were no good either. Soon, the street had several bodies lying in street. Some Swabots attacked some cars, prompting the drivers to exit the vehicles pronto. It looked like nothing would stop them. But, as anyone would know, the heroes tend to be fashionably late.

And here they are now. A few minutes after the attack began, the Rangers showed up to find the chaos unfolding in front of them. Now was a good time to start fighting. "Alright guys, let's go!" Sean said.

"Right!" And with that, the Rangers charged the Swabots unmorphed.

Kevin took on about five Swabots. He spun around, reverse roundhouse kicking one before sweep-kicking another to the ground. He side kicked another Swabot before punching one in the face. A tornado kick later and all of his opponents were down. Expect for one, but he took care of that one with a judo throw. A quick punch later and the robot was out of commission.

Sean roundhouse kicked a Swabot in the head and then hook kicked another. He split leg kicked another two and then elbowed one that was trying to come up behind him. With an impressive spin move, he tornado kicked another pair. Then he punched another in the gut. Finally, he side kicked one, sending it into a larger group of Swabots.

Hitomi flipped over a half-dozen Swabots and then front kicked the one right in front of her. She then jumped in front of one and front kicked it in the chin. A Swabot tried to swing its sword at her
but she blocked it with an outer block and then side kicked the robot. With a swift move and a mighty *kiai*, she elbowed and then punched a Swabot behind her before split kicking another pair.

Maria cross blocked a Swabot and threw the 'bot off of her and kicked it in the chest. She dodged another Swabot punch and responded with a punch herself. With a grunt and a *kiaisi*, she then punched and elbowed a Swabot in front of and behind her. When two more Swabots came in, she flipped to avoid them and then roundhouse kicked one and reverse roundhouse kicked the other.

Daisuke rolled under a couple Swabot swords and then sweep kicked one near him. Once he got up, he blocked a Swabot punch and then tornado kicked the same Swabot with a loud yell. He charged another group and side kicked a Swabot, knocking it into a larger group. Then a Swabot tried to thrust its sword at his head, but he ducked and with a one-two punch, knocked the bot out.

"Alright wolf... rabbit... guy, you're next!" Sean shouted as the Rangers lined up in front of Grond. It was then that Phaedos turned around and noticed the Rangers in their civilian forms. He smiled in a venomous manner when he noticed the Rangers. The Rangers simply stood their ground, ready to fight.

"Well, now," he said, "If it isn't the Power Rangers. I thought I nearly killed you the last time we fought. You recover quickly!" The Rangers all looked at each other with confused looks on their faces. They had little clue that Phaedos knew their secret identities. "In case you're wondering, Rashon showed me what you look like."

"Whatever the reason," said Sean. "There's no way we're gonna let you run all over us again, Phaedos! You and your wolf guy are going down!"

"You talk big!" Phaedos replied. "Let's see how you handle Grond!" He said as he pointed to the wolf guy next to him.

"Fair enough," said Sean. "I guess it's time we kick things up a notch!" He showed his modified AcceleMorpher and then took the AcceleKey out. The other Rangers followed his lead, despite the fact that Sean was still on trial. "Ready!"

"READY! GPX, Start It Up!" The Rangers jammed the keys into the key slot on their morphers. A quick turn of the keys and there was a flash of red, blue, green, yellow and pink light before the Rangers appeared in their Ranger suits.

"Hey, this doesn't look too bad!" Sean said as he got a look at the new suits. Unlike the last suits, these had white torsos, giving them a sleeveless look, but with a colored collar. The gloves and boots were still the same color, white gauntlets and colored boots and they still had the wheels the end of the gloves and top of the boots. This time, there were two silver straps on the torso, like safety harnesses.

And there were broken lines like on a road going down the arms. The belt was still black and the Octane Blaster was still attached to it. The chest symbol was still the same, with the tire-and-number—the number in gold-combination. The helmets were also the same, looking like a combination of the *Operation Overdrive* and *Kousoku Sentai Turboranger* helmets. Sean was still red (1), Kevin was blue (2), Daisuke was green (3), Maria yellow (4), and Hitomi pink (5). The girls also had little skirts.

"At least it's not like the last one," said Maria.

"I like the fact we don't have the Arsenal outfits," said Kevin.
"Where did those come from?" Phaedos asked, confused about the new suits.

"You broke our last ones," said Sean. "Now we got new ones, no thanks to you!"

"Well then," said Phaedos. "I suppose it's time to put those suits to the test. Grond, get them!" With that, he disappeared, most likely getting out of the way.

"My pleasure!" The wolf-creature said. The monster howled and charged the Rangers. The Rangers, meanwhile, cried out and got into fighting stances and charged Grond. The combatants met in the middle. Sean went first, trying to land a few punches on the wolf monster. Grond blocked a few of them, but Sean gave it another shot this time roundhouse kicking Grond. Then Kevin came into try and draw Grond off so Sean could handle the monster. Grond growled and swung its arm at the two. The two quickly ducked. That left Grond open, though. At that moment, Maria came in and kicked Grond in the back of the head.

"Take that!" She shouted. Grond responded, though, by swinging its large paw at her. But this was blocked by Kevin, who grabbed the Monster's arm. Of course, this caused him to be knocked back a few feet.

"Agh!" He grunted before running back to take on Grond. By now, Daisuke and Hitomi had gotten in the act, attacking Grond with their GP sabers. In what seemed to be a perfectly choreographed dance like something out of a Broadway play, swung their sabers at the monster, trying to keep it on its heels. It was then that Grond felt three blasts in his back.

"What the hell was that?" Grond said as he turned around. He noticed Sean, Kevin and Maria all pointing their fuel pump nozzle-shaped Octane Blasters.

"You want more?" Sean asked. Grond did not answer, instead charging the Rangers. "Too late! FIRE!" The three of them fired their pistols at the monster, sending sparks flying. But this seemed to make Grond angrier.

"You Power Pukes!" He shouted. "I'm gonna rough you up big!" The monster growled and charged the three Western Rangers. All of them dodged quickly, not wanting to deal with the monster's possibly deadly head. But instead, the monster crashed into a nearby car, denting the vehicle severely.

"Freeze, monster!" Daisuke shouted as he pointed his blaster at the monster. He was going to fire, but at that moment, a few civilians found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, close to Grond. Daisuke kept his aim at the monster, close to the civilians. But Sean didn't want him to fire and risk collateral damage.

"Green!" He shouted. "Hold your fire, now!"

"No!" Daisuke shouted, ignoring Sean's order and keeping his gun trained on Grond. "If we don't get him now, we won't have a chance to get him!" For some reason, the civilians would not leave the area, and apparently Grond had figured out that the civilians were behind him.

"Go ahead, fire, I dare ya!" He shouted.

"Hold your fire!" Sean shouted even louder. "That's an order!"

"NO!" Daisuke shouted as he pulled the trigger. At that moment, Hitomi grabbed his arm, pulling the gun away from Grond. The shot was still fired, but this time it struck a car. Daisuke was not pleased with his sister. "Hitomi, what were you—"
"There were people there!" She shouted. "You could have at least waited for them to leave! And when Sean gives you an order, you follow it!"

"Forget it!" Sean shouted as his GT Sword materialized. "Kevin, Maria and I will take care of this! Ready!"

"Ready!" They shouted. At that point, the blade of Sean's sword began to glow red and Kevin and Maria pointed their blasters at Grond. This time, however, the civilians had left, leaving them with a clear shot.

"Aim!" Kevin shouted. "FIRE!" The Irishman and the Venezuelan woman fired their shots at Grond, and then Sean's tires on his boots began to spin.

"GT STRIKE!" Sean shouted as he sped towards Grond. When he reached the wolf monster, he swung his sword like a baseball bat, sending sparks flying. Sean then stopped behind him as Grond fell to the ground before a massive explosion filled the area. However, Kevin, Sean and Maria were not yet ready to celebrate, and neither were Daisuke and Hitomi. The reason was because Grond was getting up. And he was not happy one bit.

"Damn you, Rangers!" He shouted. "I'll be back!" The Rangers, not wanting to let Grond get away, charged at him, but the wolf monster disappeared before they could reach him. The Rangers reacted in frustration at letting the monster get away.

"DAMMIT!" Kevin shouted. With no monster to fight, there was no need to stay morphed for now.

"Power down!" There was a multi-colored glow and the Rangers' suits disappeared, revealing their civilian identities. A good look at their faces showed some very disappointed and/or frustrated looks on their faces.

"Grah!" Kevin growled in frustration as he punched his palm. "We let him get away!"

"I guess we have ourselves to blame for this," said Sean. At least he was admitting his mistakes.

"And we would not have if only—" Daisuke's words were instantly cut off when Sean walked right up to him with the most pissed-off face you've ever seen and decked him right then and there, sending Daisuke to the pavement holding his left cheek. "WHAT IN THE NAME IF AMATERASU WAS THAT ABOUT!" He shouted.

"I ordered you not to fire!" Sean shouted. "And yet YOU WENT AND DISOBEYED MY FUCKING ORDER!"

"Is that what you're angry about!" Daisuke shouted back, holding his cheek. He got up and advanced on Sean, but was held back by Hitomi. Sean himself was being held back by Maria and Kevin got in between the both of them.

"Hey, calm down!" Kevin shouted. "First off, Daisuke, when Sean gives you an order, you follow it! Second, Sean, don't hit him just because he disobeyed your order! This isn't hockey! Hell, you would've gotten 5-minute major if you were still with the Steel."

"He was pointing his blaster at civilians!" Sean shouted. "You do not shoot when there are civilians in the proximity of the line of fire, rich boy!"

"Had I shot him, we would have gotten him by now!" Daisuke shouted back as Hitomi tried to hold onto him.
"As if that would have made a difference," said Maria, trying to keep calm. "At any rate, we need to find out what our next move is." Hitomi and Maria continued to hold Sean and Daisuke back until the two calmed down and they let go of them. Sean wanted to deck Daisuke again, but he was trying to control his anger.

"So now what are we going to do?" Hitomi asked. "I mean, as long as we don't fight each other?"

"I think I might have a plan," said Sean. "But I'm not entirely sure it will work."

"A plan?" Daisuke said with a skeptical tone. "You have a plan?"

"A simple one, yes," Sean replied. "But it's a plan none the less." As Sean explained his plan, the Rangers gathered in a huddle to listen to it. But Phaedos, unbeknownst to them, was watching and listening to them from a good distance away. There was a menacing smile on his face, as if he was devising some plot.

"So, they're fighting with each other," he said to himself. "Maybe I can exploit this somehow." And with that, he disappeared, most likely to report back to Rashon. His emperor would be pleased about the plan.

"So did you get that?" Sean said as he finished up his plan. Kevin, Maria and Hitomi nodded their heads, while Daisuke stayed silent.

"Will it work?" He asked.

"I hope so," Sean replied. "If not, we can always wing it. Okay, now let's recap. First off, we need to lure him to the docks. Then…"

At the UN base, Col. Greene ran his hand through what little hair he had. With the Rangers recently beginning to fight each other, he was getting more exasperated about them more and more. They had more important issues to worry about than fighting each other! Perhaps he should have found the ones who would be most willing to work together instead of the ones who were constantly butting heads with each other. Sure, it was mainly O'Callahan and Miyazawa, but since all five of them were fighting with each other on occasion, it still made no difference.

"Sir!" One soldier said.

"What is it?" Col. Greene asked, wondering if it had to do with the misbehaving Rangers.

"Sir, O' Callahan said that he has a plan." Greene's eyes perked, as he was now interested.

"Really?" He asked. "What kind of plan?" This sounded interesting. So what did O' Callahan have up his sleeve? It had better be interesting.

"Well, it's kind of controversial," the corporal said. "He sent a message to the Zordonian general saying that…"

"What's your next order Phaedos?" Grond asked. He and Phaedos were in an old warehouse near the Tokyo Bay waters. Phaedos had just intercepted a radio transmission saying that there was some special weapons being imported into Tokyo at about 3:00 local time. Obviously, this sounded interesting. If they could get a hold of these weapons, then they could wreak havoc upon the city. No doubt this was a juicy target. Emperor Rashon would be pleased with him, no doubt!

"Get to the port," he said. "And find those weapons!"
"Yes, general!" Grond said. The wolf monster left the warehouse to intercept those weapons. Phaedos smiled smugly. Whoever sent that transmission would be sorry they ever revealed such a secret.

The Port of Tokyo was busy today. One dock worker removed his hard hat and sat down to have a sip of water. With the hot temps and hard work, staying dehydrated was no doubt a priority. The man was in his early forties, and looked as though he had been working on the docks for a few years. He wiped his brow, and then took another sip of water. He sighed again, getting ready to get back to work.

It was then that he noticed a strange-looking shadow behind him. And it did not look good one bit. He slowly turned around, hoping his eyes were playing tricks on him. He was wrong. When he turned around, he found he was staring at a wolf-like creature. "Boo!" The wolf said. At this point, the man screamed and ran away.

Grond laughed at the man. "What foolish creatures!" He said as he walked towards the ship. The other men all noticed him as well and ran away. Grond laughed, knowing this was going to be easy. He then pulled out a device that resembled a GPS locator. "Now, where is that thing?" A hologram popped out of the screen, showing a red dot on the map. No doubt it was the location of his target weapons.

"Ah-ha! Just 100 Terran yards away!" The wolf/rabbit-like monster walked towards the location, which was among a large number of other boxes. He searched longer, trying to find it. Then, he noticed a free-standing box, which the locator was pointing at. "Perfect!" He shouted. This was his target! He dropped the locator and walked over to the box, which was a Maersk box. "Well, now!" He said as he found it. "Let's see what's in here!" He opened the box and found—

"What!" There was nothing in there, but a red, beeping—"Grrrr, I've been tricked!"

"That's right!" Another voice shouted. Grond looked behind him and noticed the same five humans he had encountered earlier standing on top of some boxes. "I can't believe you fell for it!"

"You bastards!" He shouted. "I'm going to tear you limb from limb!"

"We'll see about that!" Sean replied as he displayed his AcceleMorpher. "Now it's time to kick your ass! Ready!"

"Ready! GPX! Start it up!" The Rangers jammed their AcceleKeys into their morphers and a bright light enveloped them before they reappeared in their Ranger gear. It was then that they leapt off the boxes and attacked Grond. Sean went first, attacking with his GT Sword. Sean attacked in his normal aggressive style, trying to keep Grond on his heels. He gave Grond a reverse roundhouse kick before letting Kevin take care of him.

Kevin swung his GP Sword at the monster before side kicking the monster over to Daisuke. The Japanese Green Ranger took his naginata-like Mountain Staff and swung it at Grond, forcing the wolf monster into Maria's waiting hands—figuratively speaking, of course. Maria stabbed at Grond, trying to catch the monster off guard, thrusting her daggers at it all the while. But Grond got away from her but ended up dealing with Hitomi and her Am Bow. The Pink Ranger fired a close-range shot, which Grond just barely dodged.

"Is that the best you got?" The wolf taunted.

"No!" Sean shouted as he came in again, swinging his GT Sword. This time, he managed to land a blow on Grond, giving him a nasty backhand swing at the abdomen, sending sparks flying. Kevin
came in next, using his GP Sword, also landing a blow on Grond. Now the Rangers had the advantage. Daisuke meanwhile, swung his Mountain Staff and also landed a blow on Grond. Maria came in next and thrust both of her daggers at Grond, also landing a pair of blows. It was then that Hitomi fired her Am Bow from behind. The arrow struck Grond, knocking him to the ground.

"GRRRR!" Grond growled deeply like any Wolf would. "You colored bastards!" He shouted. The Rangers gathered about 15 feet in front of him. "Is that all you got?"

"Colonel, can we combine our weapons?" Sean said as he contacted Col. Greene.

"Sorry Red," Col. Greene replied. "The engineers didn't think about that. But you do have a cannon you can use."

"Oh really?" Sean asked. "What?"

"The Nitro Cannon," he replied. "We're sending it to you right now!" Soon, the Rangers saw something teleport in front of them and then materialize into a cannon. For the record, the UN could teleport matter, just not organic matter. It's complicated. The cannon was large, big enough for all five Rangers to hold onto it.

"Alright, let's see how this works," said Sean. He got behind the cannon. Daisuke and Maria were on his left and Kevin and Hitomi were on his right. "Alright then, Nitro Cannon, ready!"

"Ready!" The cannon began to charge, and a red glow appeared in the barrel. "Aim!" A targeting computer appeared, one for Sean to lock on. Indeed he did, and got Grond in the cannon's crosshairs. Grond in return recoiled, but it didn't matter. He was dead meant, anyway. "FIRE!" At that moment, a large, ball of energy was fired at Grond. The wolf monster tried to run, but he was struck by the ball of light. In a shower of sparks, Grond fell to the ground, and exploded. The Rangers had won—but not yet.

"You think this is over?" Phaedos said as he watched from atop a column of boxes. "This has only just begun!" He threw a crystal ball-shaped object at the ground where Grond lay. It was then that there was another explosion. The Rangers recoiled before looking to see Grond grow big. Really big.

"Colonel!" Sean shouted. "I think it's Grand Prix Zord time!"

"We're sending them now," Col. Greene said. At that point, the Rangers could hear the sounds of massive engines in the distance. They ran over to the docks to see the Zords emerge from the water. Apparently, they were amphibious.

"Alright!" Sean said as he and the other Rangers jumped into the cockpits of their zords. "GT Racer, online!" Sean's zord was a large, red-colored GT race car.

"Touring Racer, ready to go!" Kevin shouted. His was a mostly blue-colored touring race car.

"Mountain Hauler, engage!" Daisuke shouted. His was a large, green-colored pick-up truck.

"Haz Runner, roll out!" Maria shouted as well. Haz Runner was a large, yellow-colored HazMat vehicle.

"Am Chaser, let's go!" Hitomi shouted. Hers was a mostly white-colored—save for some pink trimming—ambulance.

"Alright, AcceleKeys, ready!" Sean shouted. He and the other Rangers produced their AcceleKeys.
"Ready!" The Rangers then thrust their keys into the ignition and turned it on. The zords were ready to go.

"Alright, Grand Prix Megazord time!" Sean shouted. The zords then went to an island in the bay, one that was essentially uninhabited. It was there that the megazord was assembled.

Mountain Hauler joined with Touring Racer. The touring car split in two and rolled up to the rear wheels of the Mountain Hauler. A pair of panels adjusted, revealing elbows. At the same time, a pair of fists popped out of the back. The Touring Racer then joined with the Mountain Hauler, forming arms. Then the grill on the Mountain Hauler lifted up and the front of the truck split and a pair of extensions popped out. The Hauler then rolled up the rears of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner and joined with them.

The Haz Runner and Am Chaser formed legs. Then, the GT Racer rolled up the back of the Mountain Hauler and docked with it. The large lights on the top of the Mountain Hauler rolled back and folded down. Now the Megazord was ready. It was then that several rockets fire, propelling the megazord upright. The cabs of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner stayed put, forming feet. The Haz Runner formed the left leg and the Am Chaser the right. The rear compartment of the GT Racer folded back, revealing a head. The eyes resembled goggles, and the face mask was solid. No mouth piece. A pair of wheel-like panels on the side completed it. Finally, the robot was upright. The Megazord let out some steam, ready to fight.

"Grand Prix Megazord, online!" The Rangers shouted from the cockpit. They were in their Indy Car-style pods. The megazord then advanced on Grond.

"What's this?" Grond said in a booming deep voice. "Come on, let's go!"

"Bring it, ugly!" Sean shouted. Grond charged the megazord, which stood its ground. Grond crashed into the megazord like a defensive lineman crashing into an offensive lineman in an American football game. The megazord then threw Grond off and gave the wolf monster a punch right in the muzzle. Grond staggered back before charging back. This time, the megazord caught Grond and threw the monster into the bay. Grond got up and charged the megazord again, this time landing a blow on the megazord's head.

Inside the head, the Rangers were shaken up from the blow. Luckily, since they were wearing safety harnesses, they ended up okay. "That bastard!" Kevin shouted. "Let's give him a little something extra!"

"Good idea!" Said Sean. "Take this, you flea-infested freak!" The megazord punched Grond in the gut, making the monster double over in pain. Then the megazord elbowed Grond down and into the bay.

"You bastards!" Grond said as he got up. It wouldn't last, though.

"I think we have to finish this," Maria said. "We don't want to risk any damage to the city."

"Good idea," said Sean. "Grand Prix Megazord saber!" A sword appeared in front of the megazord, and the robot grabbed it. "Turbo jets!" Then, a series of jets on the soles of its feet lifted the megazord up and out of the water.

"Grand Prix Megazord Strike! Go!" At that, the megazord launched itself at Grond with the wolf monster trying to get out of the way. He could not and the megazord slashed at the wolf monster. "Checkered Flag!" The megazord stopped and posed in victory while Grond was consumed by a shower of sparks. The monster then fell to the ground and exploded. The Rangers had won. Inside
the megazord cockpit, the Rangers all celebrated, hooting and hollering at their victory.

"NO!" Phaedos shouted as he watched Grond explode. "I'll be back, Rangers! Just you watch me!" With that, he disappeared in a column of light to report back to Emperor Rashon.

"Not bad," said Kevin as the Rangers got back to their townhouse, unmorphed. Unlike the last time, the Rangers had succeeded in beating their opponent, without having to come from behind in order to do it. It may seem small, but anything like that can give anyone confidence. "And Sean, you're off the hook… for now."

"OH!" Sean groaned a la Homer Simpson. He thought he was completely off the hook.

"Hey, I kind of liked that plan," said Maria. "We managed to fool the Zordonians. Maybe we should try that more often."

"As long as we don't have to react," said Sean. "It's possible most of our fights are going to be reactionary fights."

"Eve still," said Hitomi. "We won this fight pretty well. So why aren't we celebrating more?"

"Because we don't want to get overconfident," said Kevin. "I think the reason we lost to Phaedos the first time was because we were overconfident, Sean especially."

"Oh, come on!" Sean said. "Can we get over that now?"

"We were nearly killed Sean," said Kevin. "But yes, we can let it go-unless you screw up again; but especially after you punched rich boy earlier, even though he may have deserved it. But that's still not the point!"

"I can't believe you're telling me how to behave," said Sean. "And maybe he should not have pointed that Octane blaster at those civvies!"

"Will you stop that?" Daisuke asked.

"Technically Sean's right," said Maria. "He gave you an order and you chose to disobey it. Worst yet, you threatened to shoot when there were civilians in the area. So both you and Sean are to blame for that little spat."

"And we need to watch out for any Zordonian manipulation," said Sean. "It's possible they may try to drive a wedge between us."

Back at the Zordonian ship, Phaedos teleported back into Emperor Rashon's throne room. His failure was on his mind this time, but so was his new plan to defeat the Rangers. If only Emperor Rashon would listen to him, though. The emperor was not seated at his throne this time. Instead, he was gazing out at the big blue globe that was giving him a headache—Earth. "Normally, we'd have conquered a planet by now," Rashon said with his back to Phaedos. "But this planet has been a pest—especially those Power Rangers."

"You knew?" Phaedos asked with a nervous tone. He was afraid his emperor would not go easy on him. His emperor turned around and faced Phaedos again.

"I watched your battle," he said. "Your monster was defeated easily and fooled by a relatively simple plot. How can you face me again?"

"I have another plan," Phaedos replied. Rashon shook his head in response.
"Normally, I am patient," Rashon said. "It doesn't matter how long it takes for us to conquer a planet. As I said once before, this planet should be an interesting challenge. But your failures make me impatient with you. What plan do you have?"

"I observed the Rangers today," he said. "They seemed to be fighting amongst each other." Rashon's face changed from one of disappointment to one of intrigue.

"Go on," he said.

"I plan to exploit this," Phaedos said. "I will drive the Rangers apart! And then, I will annihilate them!"

Rashon sat down on his throne again. Phaedos's plan sounded interesting indeed. "I like this plan," Rashon said. "Very well, then. I will see how your plan works. You are dismissed!"

"Thank you, my emperor," Phaedos said as he bowed again and walked out the throne room. Rashon watched though, still concerned about Phaedos's plan.

"You had better not fail me," Rashon said. "Or I will have no more use for you."

End chapter
Boogie-Woogie Internship Blues

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Power Rangers GPX, episode 9: Boogie-Woogie Internship Blues

:-:--:: We're the best damn chance you've got, Pow-er Rang-gers G-P-X, let's go! :-:--:::

The Miyazawa Internship wasn't something that was made up to get the Rangers to Tokyo. In order to have a believable cover, they had to actually work the internship. Well, not Daisuke and Hitomi. Even though Hitomi had been taken out of school early, she was one of the Internship supervisors. She didn't need to have a degree. It was virtually guaranteed that she was going to have a big role with the company in the future.

Nepotism FTW!

Of course, that left the other three Rangers doing other work… separately. Kevin was in the Postgraduate internship, which meant he was separated from Sean and Maria.

They sat on opposite sides of their workstation at a computer typing and working away. Both were dressed in business clothes, which looking at them, it was obvious neither was particularly crazy about wearing. Even if they both looked good. Sean was wearing a white, buttoned shirt, dress pants and a Wisconsin Badgers tie. She was wearing a yellow, long-sleeved blouse with the sleeves rolled up to her elbow with a blue scarf and a knee-length, hip-hugging burgundy skirt. Yes, Sean could not keep his eyes off her.

Sean looked up from his PC and glanced over at Maria. She was still focused on her work and smacking her lips as if to make sure her lipstick was still applied. He rolled his eyes and minimized The Hockey News window he was reading.

He looked back at her again. She was undoubtedly hot. But really, did he even stand a chance with her? He chatted her up with those girls who obviously were not into him. And to think, hockey players are pretty popular with girls. Must only be the case for NCAA and NHL players. ACHA? Come on, he was being mocked by guys at Loyola for crying out loud!

He glanced over at her again and—wait, was she smiling at him!? He could see what she was doing. She was giving him an almost shit-eating smirk. Wait, what!?

He felt his face flush and he turned away. A quick glance saw her licking her finger and then making sizzling sounds. Is she playing with him!?

"Hello, O'Callahan?" he stiffened in his seat, and so did Maria. Daisuke, dressed in what could be described as a "Mad Men" suit, walked up to the both of them like the boss in "Office Space". "What is happening? I am going to need that you give me an update on how that press release is progressing."

"It's going great!" Sean replied. Waste of a journalism minor!

"Perfect," said Daisuke, "If you could make it ten more pages, and get that done by two, that would be greeeeeaaaat."

Sean seethed in silence. Sean may be the Red Ranger, but Daisuke was the boss. And he was going
to milk it for all it was worth. Why did he have to choose *Office Space* for movie night? Maria
snickered, but Daisuke caught wind of this. "Something funny, Aparicio?"

"No, sir," she replied just as nervously as he was.

"Well then, if you two are done flirting, I would appreciate it if you both *get back to work*,
mmmkay?" Daisuke turned, adjusted his jacket and left.

Maria looked over at Sean as he mouthed the words, *I hate his guts*. She shook her head and nodded
while rolling her eyes.

Good thing this was a *paid* internship with free housing and kinda-free food.

Lunch time came and both immediately stood up from their workspace and made a break for the
break room (no pun intended). Walking among the salarymen at the International headquarters of the
Miyazawa Group, it was painfully obvious that they were the proverbial fish out of water. They were
the only non-Japanese workers in the entire floor. There were other international workers, just not on
this one.

It was basically the best way to feel like a minority.

"Jesus Christ!" Sean gasped as he rolled up his shirt sleeves and went straight for the fridge.

"*Ay dios mio*, don't tell me about it!" Maria said while she removed her hair band, shaking out her
ponytail. Sean stared for a moment and looked back at his ham sandwich. Her yellow blouse shone
in the light and Sean noticed that her legs looked great in black stockings—oh, dear. "So, what
should we do after work?"

"I dunno," he said, removing the cap from his Pepsi bottle. "I was thinking about taking Kevin to a
baseball game."

"I want to go," she said while grabbing her sandwich. "Which team? Giants or Swallows?"

"Swallows," said Sean, "Giants are too much like the Yankees for my taste."

"Hey, my favorite team is like the Yankees," said Maria.

"Really, who's your team?" asked Sean.

"*Los Leones de Caracas,*" she replied, "Eighteen Venezuelan championships."

"Well excuuuuusse *me* for following MLB and not the Venezuelan League!"

"Sorry," Maria laughed at his comical indignance, "How are the White Sox doing?"

"They're actually playing pretty well," said Sean. "They'll play the Cubs in the first Crosstown Series
and now my buddy Marty, who's back from Madison, is teasing me about it because he's going to
the game on Sunday and told me the Cup is gonna be there. Lucky jagov. But then he's a Cubs fan
—who the fuck is a Cubs fan from the South Side? Traitor."

"Like someone from Caracas supporting *Los Navegantes del Magallanes*," said Maria.

"… Yyyyeah, kinda like that," he replied.

"Sorry," she replied, taking another bite out of her sandwich.
Sean sighed again and took a bite out of his. "I'll bet Rich Boy's trying to get back at me."

"I think so too," Maria replied. "I don't know what I did to him. Maybe he thinks I'm complicit in this charade."

"And the work he's giving me," said Sean, "I think he revels in making me write bad PR statements, among other bullshit."

"And I hate having to come up with business plans," she lamented. "And doing the boss's dirty work. Why can't they do that shit themselves?"

"Even worse, Rich Boy got the memo that Bill Lumbergh's the perfect role model for the way a boss acts," said Sean.

They both sighed, holding their sandwiches and drinks. Here they were; in another country, with an opportunity most college students would probably kill for, and they were already bitching about their jobs.

The realization hit them both and they snorted like little kids upon seeing something their parents didn't want them to see on TV. "Did you just—"

"Yes!" Maria laughed, interrupting Sean.

"Oh man, we are not cut out for the corporate world," Sean laughed. "Marketing internship." He scoffed.

"What are you two complaining about?" Both of them jumped as Kevin walked into the room, wearing a full suit and tie while shaking his head at them. "Gossiping employees won't last very long, you know."

"Sorry, Kev," Sean sighed again. Corporate sell-out, he thought. "How's it up there in corporate?"

"Brutal," Kevin sighed, "Mr. Miyazawa is a hard-arse, treating me like I'm a camel."

"At least he's complaining, too," said Maria.

"And unlike you two, I have to get back to work!" said Kevin.

"Then what the hell are you doing here!?" Sean asked.

"Making some tea," Kevin replied.

Sean rolled his eyes while Kevin made his tea. "He loves the stuff," he said to Maria.

"So what are you two doing?" asked Kevin.

"Bonding over baseball," said Sean.

Kevin glanced over at the two while they were talking again. He wondered what was going on between those two. Were they…

Nah!

--- PRGPX ---

Phaedos knew that Rashon would be skeptical of his new strategy. But that is only because it is a
new strategy and he had not yet used it in battle. But that did not matter. Phaedos knew he could get the job done with this separation strategy.

All he had to do was convince Rashon.

Despite what you're assuming, Rashon had yet to approve Phaedos's plan. Yes, Rashon said that he will see if it works, but then he changed his mind and wanted Phaedos to go into more detail. There were some issues that Rashon had found and wanted to discuss with Phaedos. He wanted the details. So Phaedos waited outside the Emperor's office, waiting to be let in. Knock! Knock! Knock!

"Who is it?" Rashon asked.

"It is I, Phaedos," he said.

"Enter!"

Phaedos opened the door and stepped inside, saluting Rashon.

"At ease," said Rashon. He sighed and looked at Phaedos for a moment, deep in thought. He opened his mouth and then closed it again. "Did you honestly think about this plan?" he finally asked.

"I have not yet put into action," said Phaedos, "But if I did, then I am certain it would succeed."

"Intelligence has discovered a problem," said Rashon, "We discovered from their files that the Green Ranger is the Red, Blue and Yellow Rangers' supervisor in their internship. If you intend to take advantage of the Green Ranger's anger at the Red Ranger, then you must take into consideration the fact that the Green Ranger can take it out by merely making the Red Ranger's life miserable!"

"I suspect otherwise," said Phaedos.

"Is that so?" asked Rashon.

"The Pink Ranger is also their supervisor, despite being younger than them," said Phaedos.

"Nepotism," Rashon groaned.

"How did you know?" asked Phaedos.

"It was an inspired guess," said Rashon. "Prove to me you know what you are doing!"

"The way those two fought when I was watching them means that this cannot be remedied with the Green Ranger being a horrible supervisor," said Phaedos, "This runs deep."

"Are you going to drive a wedge with the Red Ranger?" asked Rashon.

"If I must," Phaedos replied.

"Well then," said Rashon, "It appears you have thought this out. Very well, then. Take a monster and attack in the evening. I do not want the Green Ranger to end his fun. However, if your plan fails, then you will face the consequence."

--- Power Rangers GPX ---

The end of the day could not come sooner. As soon as it was 5 in the afternoon, Sean and Maria stopped what they were doing (after finishing their work) and got the hell out of there. The longer they had to deal with Miyazawa Lumbergh, the worse it would get. And they had the whole damn
Sean slung his backpack over his shoulders and Maria slung her purse over hers. They both nodded and began to rush out of the office without even so much as a word. It was the usual procedure for them, and management knew it. They already logged their hours, after all.

But right as they were about to leave, Maria caught something out of the corner of her eye. She quickly reached and grabbed a salaryman's hand that was aiming for a particularly bad place. She glared at the man, in such a way that if looks did indeed kill, she would have slaughtered the entire workstation he was at. "If you so much as touch me," she said, "I'll cut your fucking balls off."

"Y-yes!" the salaryman replied. Sean glanced over at a pair of Office Ladies who were really in to Maria's chastising. So were a couple of other salarymen.

"Honestly, the nerve of the guy!" said Sean. "Don't you have any shame, sir?"

"What's going on here?" Another voice asked. Hitomi walked into the office and saw what was going on. "What did he do?"

"This *puto* was about to touch me!" Maria replied. "I will not be treated like a fucking sex toy!"

"Honestly, what's wrong with people these days?" asked Sean.

Hitomi walked up to the man and promptly smacked him on the cheek. She said something very firmly in Japanese, causing the man to rise and bow in shame. She then pointed at the other workers.

"*Gomen nasai, minna*," he said.

"Should I accept his apology?" asked Maria.

"Rip his belt off," said Sean.

"That will not be necessary," said Hitomi, "I have already fired him. We do not tolerate sexual harassment in this workplace!"

"She's a better boss than Rich Boy," Sean laughed.

"I want to sue the bastard," Maria fumed.

"Which one? This idiot or Rich Boy?" asked Sean. Maria pointed at the idiot who touched her and Sean nodded.

"Also, please refrain from yelling and insulting management at work," said Hitomi, "Or else you would be fired, too."

"Oops," said Maria. She hastily walked over to Sean and grabbed his elbow, pulling him towards the door.

The two bowed and said, "*Gomen nasai, minna*," before leaving.

Maria sighed against the wall of the elevator while Sean leaned against another one. "You gonna file a report?" he asked.

"Absolutely," she replied.

"Good," he replied. He stood up from the wall he was leaning against and leaned next to her. He
started laughing, which kind of ticked her off.

"What's so funny?" she asked.

"Earler," he replied.

"Sexual harassment is no laughing matter," she replied.

"Not that part," he replied, "The part where you threatened to rip his balls off."

"Are you saying I overreacted?

He made a "little bit" gesture with his finger barely touching his thumb. "Of course, he definitely deserved the slap and to get canned."

"Agreed," she replied. "If I have to threaten every male employee in there, I'll do it."

"Nah, I think they learned their lesson," said Sean, "And I'll bet Hitomi will make 'em learn whether they want to or not."

"Good," said Maria, "I like her."

"Me too," he replied, "I kinda wish she was my sister."

"You have a sister."

"Bridge is older than me and married," he replied, "I meant like a little sister."

"You have a younger brother."

"My little brother is ten and a bastard," he replied. "And meanwhile, I may have been the victim of racism."

"What do you mean?"

"Some idiot told me to go back to my ranch," he said, "I've never been on a ranch in my fucking life! Well, since I'm a Murican, then goldurnit, Ah must be a rootin', tootin' cowboy from Texas! YEE-HA! Ugh, I hate being an outsider."

"And I'm a good-looking South American woman, so I must be easy," she said. They both sighed. "Good thing most of the people in this country are genuinely decent people."

"Yeah, can't say I don't feel welcomed," he said. "Wanna get some drinks or food?"

"Drinks and food."

"Perfect. Where do you want to go?"

"Godai-san's. He's a genuinely nice guy."

"His place is around here, isn't it?"

"I think it is."

"Then Godai-san's it is." He noticed the floor display and said, "Wait, we're supposed to be going down, why are we going up?"
The elevator stopped. It dinged and the doors opened. Kevin was standing right there. "Are you leaving already?" he asked.

"Goin' to Godai-san's," said Sean.

"Then I'm coming with you," Kevin said as he walked in. He stood off to the side, which sort of confused the other two. "Oh, don't mind me, I don't want to interrupt you two. But how was your day?"

"Work sucks," they said in unison, prompting them to look at each other and shrug.

"Can't wait till this internship is over," said Sean.

"Me neither," said Maria.

Minutes later they stepped out of the elevator. A door man bowed to them, which they returned.

It was early evening in Tokyo. The neon signs were starting to light up down the street, but were not in view since this was in Shinjuku, and not in sight of the shops and street vendors. But a wafting smell of food was certainly in the air. This was one of the moments where the three could forget the flaws and problems of their hosts and remind themselves that this is indeed a fantastic country to visit.

Now that he was out of the office, Sean reached into his backpack and put his Sox hat on, along with a pair of sunglasses. "Let's get moving," he said.

"Wait just a minute!"

He groaned and the three turned around to see Daisuke and Hitomi coming out of the office building. "Where do you think you three are going?" he asked.

"Godai-san's!" said Sean. "We're hungry!"

"Should you not be in work right now?" he asked.

"We just finished it!" Maria replied.

"Then you did a poor job!" Daisuke replied, "You should be staying after hours!"

"Bullshit!" Sean replied, "We had a shit ton of work that we just barely managed to finish by 5, and you want us to stay!? Fuck off!"

"What are you doing!?" Daisuke growled, "Insulting your supervisor could get you fired——"

"If we were in work," Sean replied, "Now that we're out, you're not the boss of me, I'm the boss of you!" He cackled, which made Daisuke growl again. "Besides, our contract says that staying after 5 is optional, and we're exercising that option!"

"If you're going to stand there fuming like that, we're not going to take you to Godai-san's," said Maria.

"You want to come with?" asked Sean.

>:::: PRGPX :::::

"Daisuke-san, why are you so unhappy?" asked Godai-san.
"Because of those three fools," Daisuke said while pointing at Sean, Maria and Kevin having some drinks and food—chicken teriyaki for Sean, shrimp tempura for Kevin and some salmon teriyaki for Maria—while laughing at some joke Kevin made.

"Will you please relax?" asked Godai-san. "What do you not like about them?"

"The way they act, they are disrespectful, they are ignorant of our ways—"

"They are new to this country," said Godai-san, "They don't even speak Japanese, and according to you, they only had a short time to prepare. They are not disrespectful, they are just new."

"But still, they are so—"

"Different? Is that wrong?" Godai-san interrupted again, "From what I have seen, they're trying. You can't expect someone to become an expert a month into their stay."

"Godai-san, Daisuke's just worried about them," said Hitomi, "But I like them!"

"I'm glad you do, Hitomi," he chuckled, giving her his warm smile.

"I suppose I am," said Daisuke, "But there is another problem. They seem to be reveling in their underclass pride."

"Please don't say that anymore," said Godai-san. Daisuke awkwardly looked at Godai-san and sighed. "Oi, Sean!" Godai-san called out.

"Yeah?"

"You play hockey, yes? What was your favorite goal?"

Sean eagerly laughed and clapped his hands. Oh, he must've had something good. "Favorite goal? Let's see here. USHL Western Conference Final, last game of the series against the Green Bay Gamblers. We were in OT. They had this guy named Ritchie Metoxen, they called him the 'Oneida Rocket'. He's Native American, Oneida, and he's faster than I am.

"He has the puck and he's sprinting down the ice and it looks like he's gonna score. Next thing I know, he loses the puck and I'm right there on the left wing. I take the puck and pass it around with my teammates. We get to the other end of the ice, my right winger passes it to me. I weave through the defense, put a backhander on net, BOOM! Game over, we're going to the Clark Cup Final, and the crowd explodes—"

KABOOM!

The explosion came from outside, but the shockwave still rattled the interior of Godai-san's restaurant. Godai-san got up and started instructing people to leave calmly.

That was the Rangers' cue.

They calmly got up from their seats and Sean took out some yen notes to stuff them in Godai-san's hands. "Just to be safe," he said before walking out of the restaurant.

The quintet ducked behind the restaurant and rolled up their sleeves for their morphers. "Ready!?"

Sean asked.

"READY!"
"GPX, START IT UP!"

A bright light erupted from the alleyway, followed by all five of the Rangers. They ran into the middle of the street to confront the Swabots. The Swabots, being an unstoppable object, didn't stop and met the unmovable objects in the Power Rangers. Naturally, they collided.

Sean threw a hard punch that smashed the faceplate of the first Swabot. He grabbed the next Swabot, flipped it on its back and kicked a Swabot onto the other one. He kneed another incoming Swabot, followed by a reverse roundhouse kick that knocked a pair of heads off. He blocked the punch of another Swabot. He countered with a kick to the Swabot's head, which knocked it clear off. He stuck both his arms out to clothesline a bunch of Swabots in front of him.

Kevin bent over and launched himself at the first Swabot, tackling it hard to the ground. He quickly got back up and blocked the strike of a Swabot Nasty Stick. He pulled the Swabot in and kneed it in the gut. When he remembered that wouldn't matter, he elbowed the Swabot's head off. He dodged a Swabot punch. He countered with a kick to its chest, which threw it back into a crowd of Swabots. He jumped over a Swabot and landed among the Swabots he'd just attacked.

Daisuke knocked a Swabot away, dodged another one and punched that Swabot. He elbowed a Swabot in the head, and kicked it to finish it off. He stepped out of the way of a Swabot and kicked it in the back hard enough to smash it to the pavement. He bristled when a Swabot grabbed him from behind, but he threw the Swabot forward to get rid of it. He swung around and punched a Swabot in the head, which also smashed the faceplate in.

Maria ran right into the fray. She punched a Swabot in the chest, picked it up and flipped it onto its back. She elbowed another Swabot and punched it. She bent down while a Swabot rushed her. He stood up and flipped it onto its back. She threw a punch that a Swabot blocked. But she kicked the Swabot and slammed it to the ground. She got on her hands and twirled to kick the Swabots like a top.

Hitomi ran to avoid the Swabots. But she grabbed onto a lamp post and began swinging from it. She let go to kick the Swabots hard enough to break them into several pieces. She got up and kicked one of them. It grabbed her leg, but she pulled it away and punched the Swabot away. She flipped out of the way and when she stopped, she ran back, jumped and kicked a Swabot hard in the chest which bowled several Swabots over. She threw an upper cut on one of the Swabots.

The monster appeared shortly after. It was a large, muscular deer (Boss Subtitles refer to it as Eikþyrnir, but we'll refer to it as eki-eki-patang ZOO PANG!). "That is one big deer," said Sean, "Can we pronounce its name?" No, Sean can't, that's why we're calling it Eki-eki.

Eki-eki stomped the ground and lowered its head. He charged the Rangers, but they all got out of the way. It stopped under the lights of one of the neon signs and turned on its feet pretty quickly. It charged the Rangers again. This time they didn't have enough time and it collided with Daisuke. "Why, how rude!" Eki-eki said as he ground Daisuke into the pavement. "Red didn't even bother to help you!"

Hitomi, however, did. She ran up and kneed the monster in the gut. Kevin tackled the monster hard. Sean ran up and kicked the monster in the snout as it was getting up. He threw another kick at the monster, but it caught his leg and ripped it out from under him. "Why did you not announce yourselves?" he asked.

"I thought we already did!" Sean replied, "What, are we supposed to remind you who we are while we stand around with a big target on our chest, begging to be attacked?"
"… Good point." Eki-eki threw Sean off, only to be caught by Maria.

Daisuke tried to sneak up on Eki-eki, but the deer monster blocked his punch and kicked him in the gut. He shoved Daisuke to the ground again. "Honestly, I'm just asking; why is the Red Ranger not trying to save you right now?"

The Red Ranger didn't need to save him. That job fell to Maria. She rushed in and delivered a hard side kick to Eki-eki's head.

Sean was right behind, putting Eki-eki into a headlock from behind. He pulled the stag monster off of Daisuke and slammed it to the ground. Eki-eki shoved Sean off of him and took a big swing at him. Kevin ducked underneath his arm and punched Eki-eki in the gut.

While Eki-eki was doubled over, Hitomi snuck up and kicked him in the back of the head. He didn't take too kindly to that, though. He lowered his head and rammed his antlers into her. Maria grabbed the stag monster's antlers and yanked him towards her, where she kneed him in the snout. Sean followed soon, kicking the monster in the snout.

Eki-eki threw a punch that Sean barely dodged. But Kevin ran up and countered with his own. Daisuke joined the fray, ducking under the monster and trying to literally sweep the monster off its feet. It wasn't a success unfortunately for him, but he managed to get out of the way when Eki-eki lunged for him.

Eki-eki lunged at Daisuke, grabbing his collar and throwing him back into the pavement. Daisuke coughed as he felt what must have been his lungs giving out a bit. Next thing he knew, Eki-eki was tackled by Kevin. He tried to grapple Eki-eki to the ground, but Eki-eki wasn't going anywhere.

However, Sean and Maria rushed in, tackling the monster hard. Sean punched Eki-eki in one-two-three, rapid-fire succession and kicked the stag monster over to Maria and she kicked Eki-eki in the jaw. As if the frustration of earlier was getting to her, she began to pummel the monster so hard that Sean thought she was going to draw blood.

At which point he picked Eki-eki up and threw a reverse roundhouse kick… that Eki-eki caught. Eki-eki flipped Sean on his back and raised his leg to stomp on Sean. Maria tackled Eki-eki hard. She gappled with Eki-eki, but he stood up and tossed her across the street. Sean got up. His boot wheels spun and he ran to catch her. Of course, her momentum and weight knocked him down.

"Wow, muchas gracias," she said.

"De nada," he replied.

Daisuke held onto Eki-eki as best he could. But even he could not stop Eki-eki from taking a big swipe at Hitomi. Hitomi caught Eki-eki's hand, and she held on for dear life. That was when Maria jumped into the fray, kicking Eki-eki hard and running over to Hitomi to see if she was alright. Sean threw a roundhouse kick at Eki-eki. But missed.

Hitomi and Maria threw their own kicks at Eki-eki, which knocked him down. The two fist-bumped and punched Eki-eki. "NICE!" said Sean.

Eki-eki angrily stumbled around while the Rangers regrouped. "I'll get you for this!" he said. Eki-eki stomped the ground and charged the Rangers. Sean and Kevin stepped in the way and grabbed Eki-eki's antlers to stop him in his tracks. Maria and Hitomi ran to each side and punched Eki-eki on both sides of the head.

"GRAH! DON'T DO THAT!" Eki-eki shouted. But Daisuke punched the stag monster in the gut
before jumping away. Sean rushed in, kicking Eki-eki in the head. This made Daisuke angrily push Sean out of the way, much to the latter's confusion.

"What the hell, man!?"

Eki-eki smiled evilly. Oh yes, he knew what was going on.

But Sean didn't take too kindly to this and he punched the stag monster under the chin. Eki-eki responded by shoving both of them out of the way. "GET OUT OF MY WAY!" he shouted.

"NITRO CANNON!" Sean shouted into his communicator. The Nitro Cannon materialized and the Rangers pointed it at Eki-eki. "READY!"

"AIM!" Maria shouted.

Eki-eki decided he was going out in a blaze of glory. He charged the Rangers, but Sean shouted "FIRE!"

He pulled the trigger. The red energy ball struck Eki-eki, making him scream in agony. He fell to the ground and exploded. The Rangers waited for a moment.

"Uh, isn't this the part of the episode where he grows ten stories?" asked Sean. He paused and waited…

Nothing.

"Okaaayyy," said Maria, "That was strange."

"What, the lack of growing or his reaction?" asked Kevin.

"Both," said Maria.

The sound of sirens made them run from the scene.

They emerged from the alley, adjusting their work clothes and noticing the clean-up efforts. Sean almost got scared when Godai-san ran up to him.

"You would not believe what just happened!" he said, "The Power Rangers just showed up and fought that monster!"

"They did?" Sean asked, barely even trying to sound surprised.

"It was nothing like those Sentai shows I watched as a boy," said Godai-san, "They didn't even announce themselves and they were gone before the police arrived."

"Among other things," Kevin muttered. "Do we still have to pay the check?"

"No, you're fine," said Godai-san, "Sean already paid."

"Thanks!" said Sean. "Come on, let's go, I need to get out of these clothes."

"Sean, aren't you forgetting something?" asked Kevin.

"Oh! Right!" Sean and the others turned and bowed to Godai-san.

"Arigatou gozamasu!" they all said. Godai-san bowed and let them leave… until they realized they
left their stuff in his restaurant.

But Phaedos watched them from above. He smiled malevolently as he recognized that his plan was already starting to work.

:-:--:--: Power Rangers GPX :-:--:

End chapter

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so how was that?

First, a couple of explanations: This is the one of the chapters from the reboot that I had to put into Part 1 in order to make it clear that they were, in fact, interning for the Miyazawa company. I just re-worked some of it.

Also, because Sean and Maria end up as a couple in the regular canon, I've sort of wondered how they'd become one, and thanks to this, there's a good reason: They bonded over baseball and bitched about work! Also, the scene with Sean and Maria in the break room was inspired by a shot from the Cowboy Bebop episode "Boogie Woogie Feng Shui" where Spike and Faye are having cigarettes and coffee against the evening sky. It was also the inspiration for the name of this episode.

But, whatever. Drop me a review!
Note: This next chapter is a brand-new chapter written specifically for the GPX Reboot and maybe the original Part 1.

Power Rangers GPX, episode 10: Sound Brawl

:-:-:-: We're the best chance for humanity, Pow-er Rang-gers G-P-X, let's go! :-:-:-:

None of them knew that Sean liked The Offspring. But there he was, singing "Why Don't You Get a Job" and dancing around like Mick Jagger at the company karaoke party. It just took one Asahi beer for him to loosen up and step up to the mic. Of course, he was off-key, but that didn't take away from the fact that he was having a good time.

Of course the middle finger directed at Daisuke (when he wasn't looking) when singing the title gave away the reason for this event. Sure, Sean may be off-key, but the message was not lost on Kevin and Maria (even if the song is about gold diggers of both sexes).

But then again, given the explicit and blatant nepotism mentioned in the previous episode…

"I suspect he is singing about me," Daisuke said while taking a sip of sake.

"Nepo-tiz, Nepo-tizm, Nepo-tiii-ism! Naaa, na that's how you got your job!" Sean sang.

"That suspicion has been confirmed," said Daisuke. He could not fire him, though. The Ranger contract prevents that from happening outside of work. And because this is outside of work, as evidenced by the White Sox jersey Sean was wearing.

"I think it's funny," said Hitomi.

"Nepo-tiz, Nepo-tizm, Nepo-tiii-ism! Naaa, na that's how you got your job!"

"I think I like this song," said Kevin. Maria, clad in a Brazil soccer jersey, chuckled and bobbed her head to the Caribbean beat.

"I like how he can get away with it," said Maria.

"Gooot it from your faaamily, I'll aaalllways say! Naaa, na, that's how you got your job!" Sean finished up. "Thank you, thankyaverymuch!" he said when he finished the song and jumped off the stage.

"I can write songs, do you want a full version of that?" asked Kevin.

"Gladly!" said Sean.

A co-worker walked up to Sean and patted him on the shoulder and whispered, "Arigatou," before walking off. Sean shrugged it off. But Kevin had an idea.

"At least we can get away with biting the hand tonight," he said. He checked his iPhone and said, "Let's get out of here, I don't want to sing again."

"And I do!" Maria shouted, pushing him out of the way. She ran up to the karaoke machine and began looking for a song. "No, no, no, NO, no—ah! Shakira! Me gusta!"
"Oh, I HATE Shakira!" Sean muttered. "Why the hell did they have to use her song for the World Cup, anyway?"

"Shut up," said Kevin.

"O'Donneru-san!" a co-worker said in heavily-accented, but understandable and grammatically-correct English, "Can you sing?"

"No, but I play the flute," Kevin replied. "Can you?"

"No," he replied, "That is why I am not up there."

"I don't blame you," Kevin replied.

Maria though, she looked like she was having a good time. Her singing ability might simply be considered "average", if anything. Still, Sean couldn't look away from her. Until she winked at him, that is. Then he looked away at a Yakult Swallows game that was on one of the TVs. Kevin barely noticed what had happened. He was too busy talking with some co-workers. "Thanks a lot," Sean muttered while watching the game.

When Maria was done, she jumped off the stage. Hitomi ran up to her and raised her hand. Maria high-fived the rich girl enthusiastically. "I still got it!" she said, licking her finger and touching her hip while making a sizzling sound.

"You're better than I am," said Hitomi.

"Oh, chica, don't say that! I'm sure if you try, you might sound better than you think."

"YOSHI!" Hitomi said, making a bicep-polishing gesture that made Maria a little uncomfortable, "I'm going to do it!" Without even saying anything to Maria, she ran past her and up onto the stage. Maria shrugged and went back to the bar to sit with Sean and Kevin.

"I think I like her a little more," she said. "I wish she was my sister."

"I already said that," said Sean.

"How are the Swallows doing?" asked Maria.

"Down 2-1 in the bottom of the 7th," said Sean, "And their pitcher needs get off the fucking mound. It's amazing he's been able to keep it this close."

"Ay dios mio, that was a horrible throw," Maria said after the pitcher threw juuuuuuuust a bit outside. "Get him out!"

"He throws worse than a soccer player," said Sean.

Maria snorted, as did Kevin. "What?" Sean asked.

"Is that what they're saying now?" asked Kevin.

"What? You can't say 'you throw like a girl' or 'you can't throw like a wuss' because the former is bullshit and the latter is slightly homophobic," said Sean, "Besides, have you seen soccer players try to throw?"

"That's the least favorite part of moving to Brazil for me," said Maria, "No baseball at all."
"And, when you go to Sox games like I do, you hear far more creative taunts, especially better than at that piss stain in Wrigleyville."

Again, Maria snickered while Kevin shook his head. "Piss stain? That's a baseball shrine in your country!" said Maria, "That dump in Valencia? That's a piss stain!"

"That piss stain in Wrigleyville actually smells of piss!" said Sean.

"Fluminense's stadium also smells of piss!" Maria shouted.

Sean paused and made a confused face before saying, "… Flamengo and Fluminense play in the same stadium."

Maria paused. Kevin could barely hold the snickering in. "It smells of piss when Fluminense plays there!" Maria snapped.

"Maria, you were supposed to be listening to my song!" Hitomi moaned over the loudspeaker. Sean, Kevin and Maria looked back at the stage to see Hitomi fuming.

"Oops," said Maria, "I'm so sorry, chica! I'll be right there!" She left the bar to go up on stage and sing a duet with Hitomi.

"What was that?" asked Kevin, "Were you two trying to one-up each other?"

"I have no idea," said Sean.

"I'll tell you what, that was the strangest sexual tension I have ever seen," said Kevin.

"It was not!" Sean replied. Kevin just laughed and went back to his drink.

"I was kidding," he said. Not. "By the way, how did you know those two teams play in the same stadium?"

"Wikipedia."

Kevin scoffed and rubbed his face while Sean turned his attention back to the baseball game on the screen. He felt Kevin's hand tap him on the shoulder and he looked behind to watch Maria and Hitomi singing a Shakira song. "Why couldn't they use the K'Naan song for the World Cup?" Sean asked no one in particular.

"OI! O'CALLAHAN!" Maria shouted, "Te gusta?"

"No me gusta Shakira!" Sean replied.

"Tu hablas español?" she asked. He held up his fingers like he was pinching the air, prompting her to laugh. "Not much, huh?"

"I'm a little rusty," he replied.

"You need to learn," said Maria.

"Not here," said Daisuke. Sean turned around whilst chugging his beer and giving him a suspicious look. "We have to leave, by the way."

"Oh come on, I wanted to watch the soccer game!" Sean whined.
"The games are too early in the morning for you to watch," said Daisuke, "And you have work tomorrow."

"You're no fun," Sean moaned. He felt Daisuke tug on his collar, which made him grab Daisuke's hand. "Don't fucking touch me like that, or I'll rip that hand off, Rich Boy."

"Then how about this? Can we please leave?" asked Daisuke.

"Not until I'm done," Sean replied. To do that, he chugged the rest of his beer. He stumbled when he got out of the chair, almost hitting his head on the floor. But those Ranger instincts kicked in to prevent him from doing so. "I'm good," he said with a burp.

The Rangers left the party early and got a ride back to their townhouse.

Sean and Maria had come to work the next day with minor hangovers. As a result, Daisuke gave them more work than should have been allowed.

Sean groaned while downing another ibuprofen tablet at around 12 noon and working on a blog about some shitty product the company was selling in Scotland. He'd never been to Scotland before, and even he knew there was a big difference between that and Ireland. This sucks!

Across from him, however, Maria looked like she had a bigger headache than he did. She could barely keep her eyes on the computer screen and kept looking down while sighing. "You okay?" he asked, his (admittedly) youthfully handsome face showing signs of concern.

"No," she said, "And I didn't even have that much to drink last night."

Sean reached into his backpack and pulled out his ibuprofen bottle. "Here, take one," he said.

"Gracias," she said as she took a pill.

"De nada."

"I hope Kevin doesn't have it as bad as we do," said Sean.

In fact, Kevin did not have it as bad as those two, but that's because he did not have as much to drink last night as Sean and Maria. The work, on the other hand, was giving him a headache. Mr. Miyazawa, the siblings' uncle—their father was in Kyoto—had a lot of phone calls he needed him to make and writing some e-mails, too.

He needed some tea and badly.

And with Daisuke lurking behind him, he felt even more pressure. Some tea would be nice right about now!

Daisuke leaned into the e-mail Kevin was drafting with a scowl. "What is that?" he asked.

"An e-mail," said Kevin.

"That does not look like my uncle's writing style," said Daisuke.

"Your uncle has thanked me," said Kevin, "I know my way with words."

"Daisuke!" His uncle walked out of his office. His uncle looked every bit the respectable
businessman he is, with bits of gray hair that made it look like salt and pepper. "I happen to like Kevin's work. And I would appreciate it if you not harass him."

"When did I become the villain?" Daisuke asked himself as he walked away.

"And that e-mail is..."

"For the Middle East branch that you asked me to write," said Kevin.

"Oh yes, that one," said Daisuke's uncle. "Keep up the good work."

"Thank you, Mr. Miyazawa!" Kevin replied.

"Hitomi?" Mr. Miyazawa turned to Hitomi and handed her a sheet of paper, "Could you take this down to Mr. O'Callahan and Ms. Aparicio?"

"What is it?" asked Hitomi.

"An assignment," said Mr. Miyazawa.

"Right away, Uncle," she replied. "Come along, O'Donnell." Kevin nodded and followed her.

They arrived at the office to find the workers looking at something that happened to be where Sean and Maria was sitting. And Sean had been unleashing a tirade at somebody. He was going on about how punk was not a fashion statement, but a state of mind and, "Oops."

"Why were you swearing?" asked Hitomi.

"Sorry, boss," he said.

"I'll let it slide," she said. "We have an assignment for you."

"What do you need us to do?" asked Maria.

"We need some blogs around our new products in the Middle East and Europe," said Hitomi, "I hope you two can whip something up."


Hitomi and Kevin left, leaving the two to themselves. Maria pulled out her cell phone and typed something on it, then passed it to Sean. Sean expected it to be work-related. To his surprised, the text read, "WHAT DO YOU THINK THE NEXT MONSTER WILL BE LIKE?"

He rolled his eyes and typed in a response to her. "KNOWING POWER RANGERS, PROBABLY MUSIC-THEMED," his message wrote.

::: Power Rangers GPX :::::

As if Sean was some reality warper (he's not) Phaedos had a thought while he was working. One of his lieutenants walked into his office and saluted. "What do you need, sir?"

"Do any cyborgs have audio abilities?" Phaedos asked. "Can they use sound as a weapon?"

"Yes, General Phaedos," said the lieutenant.

"Good," said Phaedos, "Contact Headquarters and request one of them."
"Yes, sir!"

:-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:  

It was such a relief to get out of those stuffy work clothes. Sean felt much more comfortable and relaxed not to be in a white-collared shirt and khakis, but a red T-shirt and cargo shorts. Mei, the robot, was making dinner—an idea that, knowing Futurama, was a bad idea—downstairs. Well, not exactly making dinner, more like starting dinner and then letting Hitomi finish. Out of all the Rangers, she was the one who had any cooking ability.

He left his door open but sat at his laptop and turned on his music. There was a new band he'd discovered, The Cherry Coke$, and they were like a Japanese Flogging Molly. Despite how certain people deride "Cultural Appropriation" (for all the wrong reasons), Sean liked the idea that a Japanese band integrated Celtic and Irish instruments and musical style into their music. He couldn't understand the lyrics, but loved the music.

It should also be noted that, judging by the sticker of a fist smashing a swastika, he hates white supremacists.

In the other room, however, Daisuke was meditating and unfortunately, Sean's loud, fast-paced punk was distracting. He had one too many days where this happened and he snapped. "OI! BAKA!" he shouted, storming over to Sean's room and forcing his way in. "TURN THAT DOWN!"

Sean was so surprised he fell out of his chair. It took him a second to process what was going on before he turned the music up just to spite Daisuke. He added an akanbe—basically that anime gesture where someone pulls down their lower eyelid and sticks out their tongue—combined with a middle finger on the other hand to stick it to Daisuke.

Daisuke added something about Sean being a "typical middle-class lout" and walked away. However, Sean couldn't help but feel that… it kinda hurt.

Still, he got back up and decided to take his laptop downstairs.

Kevin had returned from a run through the Todai campus and Maria was sitting on the couch, watching a Brazilian TV show. Mei, of course, was working on dinner while Hitomi watched.

Sean sat down next to Maria and it only took a second before he remembered he couldn't understand Portuguese. "So, um… what's going on here?" he asked.

"Antonio is telling Isabella that they cannot be together because they're in rival gangs," said Maria, "And she's telling him that's bullshit because they support the same club."

"… That's kind of weird."

"This show is weird," said Maria, "But it's good for a laugh."

"Just like Power Rangers," Sean laughed, earning a chuckle from her.

"We've had an entire episode and we still haven't discussed my musical tastes," Kevin muttered. "I like good music!"

"You refused to do the karaoke," Sean remarked.

"That's the worst reason I've ever heard," said Kevin.
"What does he like?" Maria asked.

"Eh, U2, Clancy Brothers, Thin Lizzy… and stuff you'll hear in Dublin on a Friday night," Sean replied.

"Why did you have to answer for me?" Kevin asked.

"I just did," Sean replied.

The conversation was interrupted, and ended, when their little alert system went off. The image screen rose in the countertop and the video of a woman, wearing an Italian flag on her shoulder, spoke. "There is a surge of energy by the Tokyo Dome," she said in an Italian accent. "Nothing has appeared yet, but it resembles teleportation energy."

"We're one our way!" said Sean, "Alright people, allons-Y!"

It took about five minutes for the morphed Rangers to arrive at Tokyo Dome City where a horde of Swabots was running amok. The Rangers, who'd eschewed the GP Cruiser, ran up to the marauding Swabots but did not attack. Instead, the Swabots noticed them and started the fight first.

The Swabots rushed up to Sean. He stood ready and once they were close enough, he kicked the lead one. They surrounded him, but he kicked them all aside. One rushed in. He ducked and tossed it aside. Another one tried to run in from the same direction. He kicked it. He wound up his fist and punched another one that dented its faceplate. Another tried to throw its arms around his body. He ducked forward, letting the enemy fly into the Swabots in front of him like they were bowling pins.

Kevin waited for the Swabots to reach him when he got down to business. He lunged and tackled the first Swabot that came to him, then threw it to the ground. He stood back up and kicked the next Swabot and elbowed the one that followed it. He grabbed the collars of two Swabots and smashed them together. He threw a punch that was blocked, but he followed that up with another punch to the one that blocked him and decapitated that Swabot with his fist.

Daisuke just slowly advanced on the Swabots while pointing the Mountain Staff at them. Once they reached him, he went to work, twirling and trusting the staff's blade at them. He whacked the head of one of them with the butt end of his staff, then swung the blade and too it out. He ran and leaped over a few more. When he landed, he spun the staff above his head and sliced them open. One of the Swabots tried to stab him. She blocked, then pushed it off and thrust the staff into it.

Maria rolled on the ground and pushed herself up, whereupon she spun on her hands, kicking at the Swabots until she jumped up, flipped and landed outside the fray. She ran up, punched and kicked at the Swabots, dancing like a samba, tango and flamenco star, taking them all down with speed, fury and precision. She spun and ducked under a Swabot's attack and kicked the Swabot into a crowd of them. Another Swabot ran up to her. She blocked and countered before tossing it away.

Hitomi cartwheeled through the mass of Swabots, letting them shoot each other. She stopped, spun and kicked a Swabot before ducking as an energy staff blast flew right past her head. One of the Swabots tried to stab her. She grabbed the staff, pulled it down and punched the Swabot in the visor. She got back up, still holding onto the staff. She reverse-roundhouse kicked the same Swabot, sending its head flying off, and finished that up by kicking another Swabot.

Now Sean was freed from the stupid Swabots and made a bee line for the monster. "LET'S GO, FUCKER!" he shouted. The monster, if it could be called that, was a robot with two large speakers
attached to its shoulders. Sean SHOULD have figured that this was not a good idea, but found out
the hard way when the robot began blasting a horrible sound from those speakers.

The sound, blasted at an incredibly high pitch AND volume, was painful on the Rangers' ears,
forcing them to cover their ears. Then the noise stopped. The monster collided with Sean first,
sending him flying into the crowd of his teammates. The monster kept going, smacking them aside
without so much as breaking a sweat (can toku monsters even break a sweat?).

The monster turned around. The Rangers got back up. Daisuke rushed the monster at full speed and
head-on. The monster blared its music at Daisuke. The Green Ranger fell to the ground, frantically
covering his ears. The blow to his chest and head knocked him to the ground.

The monster reached down and grabbed Daisuke by the collar. He tossed him afar, where he crashed
into the doors of the Dome.

But it also left him open for Sean to rabbit-punch him.

The monster growled at Sean's dirty punch. It reached up, grabbed Sean and slammed him into the
pavement. Kevin pounced on the monster, lifted him up and threw him to the ground, but the
monster landed on both feet. That meant it could counter with his own throw.

The monster turned to Sean lying prone on the ground. It was just about to attack when Maria
stepped between the two. The monster could not react in time to Maria's hard punch to his jaw. Sean
watched with a slight smile. "She's good," he said. He got up and ran around the monster. As the
monster tried to knock her down, he kicked it hard in the side to knock it away. When Maria was
visible, he gave her a thumb's up. She smiled too, and responded with one of her own.

But the monster wasn't done. He seemed to remember his ability after possibly forgetting about it and
let loose another pulse of noise that cause severe pain in the Rangers' ears. When they were down, he
took off.

"DAMMIT!" Sean pounded the pavement.

"Another failure," said Daisuke.

"SHUT UP, RICH BOY!"

"Will the both of you cut it out?" Maria asked. "You sound like a pair of fighting band mem—"

"That's it!" Sean interrupted.

"That's what?" Sean asked.

"I have an idea," he said.

"I'm listening," she said while impressed.

:-: PRGPX :-:.

The monster continued to wreak havoc across the district. Glass broke, plaster crumbled and steel
bent. People ran from all of this carnage and destruction. The monster was almost drunk on its own
power as it cackled all while making a mess of things. The Rangers were nowhere to be found so
why the fuck should he care?

Well, at the same time, the Rangers had gotten the Grand Prix Cruiser and some big speakers.
Rented the speakers from an electronics store that had not yet been touched by the monster's destruction. Hitomi and Daisuke had de-morphed to get this done.

"Are you sure this will work?" Maria asked, lowering her head down from the roof of the H2 at Sean in the driver's seat. She pulled up before Sean could answer back, but he climbed out of the SUV and held onto the roof.

"I never guaranteed it!" he replied. "I'm making this up as I go along!"

"I thought you were the strategist!" she replied.

"Again, I never said that!"

"Will you two cease this meaningless lover's quarrel!?" Kevin hissed while he pulled some wires out.

"We're not lovers!" they both shouted in unison.

"What?" Hitomi asked.

"Nothing, just teasing them," said Kevin. "Right, so you know the rest of the plan, right?"

"Yeah," said Sean. "Someone needs to lure the monster over to us. And then—"

"We will not have to worry about that," Daisuke said as he pointed at another street to the monster coming their way.

"SHIT!" Sean hissed. He got back in the driver's seat and fumbled with his iPhone to hook it up. Once it was hooked up, he realized just how big a music library he had when he couldn't find anything to use.

"HURRY UP!" Kevin shouted. However, he muttered something and jumped down. He grabbed the iPhone from Sean, removed his glove and pressed the shuffle function on it.

The sound of soft, melodic acoustic guitars started playing out of the speakers. The other Rangers looked around, first at each other, then at Sean, who shrugged. Daisuke shook his head and facepalmed, muttering something about how he was going to die because the Red Ranger was an idiot. Even the monster was confused, until he realized he had the Rangers right where he wanted them, so he charged right at them.

They got ready to defend when the music changed, replacing the acoustic guitars with loud electric guitars that changed to a heavy, thrash metal riff. The opening of the Metallica classic "Battery". As Sean headbanged to the music, the monster screamed and put his hands up to his ears as if either in pain, hatred of the music, or a bit of both.

"HOWDOYA LIKE THAT!?" Sean cackled. "FUCK YA! NOW GET IM!"

Hitomi leaped on top of the Cruiser, jumped through the air and tackled the monster to the ground. Maria followed seconds later, taking her Haz Daggers and stabbing the monster's speakers. Sparks erupted from the speakers, but Maria got out of the way in time to not suffer any damage. The monster angrily shoved the female Rangers off of him, got back up and seethed at the damage they had caused.

"Do you have any idea what you have DONE!?" he shouted. "I WENT THROUGH MONTHS OF MODIFICATIONS TO HAVE THOSE SPEAKERS INSTALLED!"
"TOO BAD!" Sean called. "Let's GET 'IM!"

The Rangers leaped off of the Cruiser to attack. Daisuke went first, kicking the monster's head, then danced out of the way to knee his side. Kevin followed up by kicking the monster's chest. The monster backhanded a counter. Kevin avoided it. He kicked the monster again. Maria and Hitomi leaped off of Kevin and Daisuke's shoulders, swinging their GP Swords at the monster, then kicking him at the same time. Sean was last, as he ran up, punched the monster with furious speed, then wound up his leg and reverse roundhouse kicked the monster away.

The crowd that had gathered cheered as the monster barrel rolled off to the side. The Rangers grabbed their blaster and shot him with two volleys.

"TIME TO END THIS!" Sean declared. "NITRO CANNON!"

The cannon materialized in the Rangers' hands. "READY! AIM!" The cannon locked on to the monster.

"FIRE!"

Sean pulled the trigger. The monster couldn't do anything against the blast of energy that struck him. He collapsed and exploded. The crowd cheered even louder.

:-:-:-: Power Rangers GPX :-:-:-:  
Rashon turned the screen off before looking up at Phaedos. Despite the obvious implications of the Emperor's glare, he didn't so much as blink. In fact, he was still rather confident. "I wonder how you can be so confident, Phaedos," said Rashon.

"A simple minor setback," said Phaedos. "I have begun to plant the seeds of doubt in the Green Ranger's mind."

"Did you?" Rashon asked, "Or are you lying to—forget it. I apologize for getting impatient with you. However, I would rather see a mercenary who does not lose their cool at the sound of human music."

"Understood, my Emperor," said Phaedos.

:-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:  
Flamenco music played from Maria's iPod speakers while she played with her 3DS as she sat on her bed. Hitomi was at the eMac, drawing something with her computer drawing pad. Her music played from her eMac. The combined J-Pop and Flamenco sounded… interesting. And it made Maria bob her head.

"Has anyone tried this crossover?" she asked.

"I don't know," Hitomi said without looking up from her drawing pad.

"This needs to happen," said Maria. "Latin and Japanese music sound like they'd be well-fit."

Hitomi was about to speak when Sean and Daisuke approached, with their conversation getting pretty loud. "… Still better than that old-person's nostalgia crap you listen to!" Sean teased.

"It is called 'enka'," said Daisuke. "And it has more musical merit than your trash."

"It's Metallica!" Sean replied.
"Will you two shut up and respect each other's' taste!?!" Maria snapped.

"Is that was this episode was about?" Sean asked. "Oh, right, I forgot about that. Eh, whatever."

"Sometimes, I wonder why I have to take orders from an idiot like you," Daisuke muttered.

"I'm not an idiot!" Sean replied. "I got into the University of Wisconsin—"

"That does not matter," said Daisuke.

"Why don't you shut up, Rich Boy?" Maria replied, much to Sean's surprise. "The music thing was his idea! Even if it was poorly-planned and he got lucky, it was a good idea."

"Why thank you!" Sean replied. Daisuke huffed, puffed and left. After watching him pass, Sean stole an admiring glance at Maria before leaving. She too got an admiring glance at him.

:\-\-\-\- Power Rangers GPX :\-\-\-\-:

End chapter
Maria's New Friend

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Power Rangers GPX episode 11: Maria's New Friend

:-:-:-: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers G-P-X, let's go! :-:-:-:

Maria liked to rollerblade the Bunkyo neighborhood on the rare day off.

The neighborhood's relatively quiet hustle and bustle was better than the rest of the city (she thought). A good place to calm down after Sean and Daisuke got into another argument. Those two were so pig-headed.

Whatever.

This wasn't the first time she rollerbladed to get used to a new city. She did it a couple of years ago when she'd first moved to Rio with her mom; the Brazilian city was strange for the Spanish-speaking Venezuelan. Her mother suggested that she explore the city to get a good feel for it, so she laced up her roller skates and skated around. By the end of the day, she'd made a couple of new acquaintances just by roller skating.

She felt she could do the same thing here. It made sense, why not do it? It felt good, after all. Not just the wind blowing in her hair, but the relaxing feeling it gave her. She literally sailed across the concrete sidewalks, although the people she skated past didn't look thrilled that she was going so fast. So she moved to the side. But she brushed an older woman. "Gomen nasai!" she said as she helped pick the older woman up. Said older woman wasn't visibly injured, so that was a relief. In fact, she looked pretty spry for her age. But she glared daggers at Maria and let loose a torrent of Japanese chiding her for… Well, Maria wasn't sure, but it obviously wasn't nice. And then she punctuated it with one word:

"Gaijin!"

She cringed and stopped. She didn't see other walkers chiding and shaming the person who shouted it, but it didn't matter. Her pained expression when she turned to look at the older woman was enough. "Bruja malvada," she said to herself. She also said "Bruxa má!" aloud.

"Nani?" the old woman heard her.

"¡Come mierda, bruja malvada!" she snapped. "Vai tomar no cu!"

The older woman must not have understood her words, but her tone, expression and gesture were easily understandable. The woman unleashed a torrent of words at her that she didn't understand. It made it easy for her to ignore the woman. So she pulled her right lower eyelid down with her right middle finger, stuck her tongue out and then skated off in a huff.

She skated until she stopped. It sounds redundant, but it's because she was bending over with both her hands on both thighs, catching her breath and sweat dripping off her chin. She poured some water into her mouth, but it quickly dried up. Tossing it in the recycling bin, she skated across the street—it was a one-way street off the main boulevard—to a mini-mart. The signs in the door cross out roller blades, shirt, shoes and pets. No shirt, no shoes, no service, no pets, no roller blades.
Removing the in-lines, she pulled her shoes out of her backpack, laced them up and went inside.
Under the annoyed, watchful eyes of the cashier, she picked up an Ito En Oi Ocha green tea bottle and a chocolate bar, finally taking it to the counter. The price made her stiffen and widen her eyes. The clerk looked up from her magazine, visibly annoyed at Maria. Sheepishly, she pulled her Banco do Brasil card out, slid it in the machine. Once it was finished, she walked away from the counter as another person walked into the store.

She collided with another person, knocking them over. "¡Ay dios mio! Gomen nasai!" she said with a deep blush and a bow.

The woman she ran into, who must have been around her age, stood up. After rubbing her arm, she nodded to Maria. "It's nothing," she said in perfect English, albeit with an unrecognizable accent.

"Ugh! FINALLY another person who speaks a language I know!" Maria sighed. "I mean—I'm really sorry, I didn't see you! Are you alright?"

"Perfectly alright," said the young, brown-haired woman about Maria's age. "I should have been more careful, too."

The clerk impatiently cleared her throat, interrupting the conversation. So Maria and the other woman stepped back outside to continue it. "What were you doing?" the woman asked.

"Just buying some chocolate and green tea," Maria replied. "By the way, I don't recognize your accent. Where are you from?"

"I'm from Sweden," the woman replied, moderately annoyed.

Maria blushed again. "Ay dios mio, I'm such an idiot," she said. "Sorry. And I forgot to introduce myself. My name's Maria Aparicio, from Caracas, Venezuela. What's your name?"

"I'm Miranda Petkovic, from Stockholm," the other woman said. "I usually attend Todai, but I'm staying here for the summer."

"I'm working an internship," Maria replied. "But I have the day off."

"Can I buy you a drink?" Miranda asked.

"Sure," said Maria.

The bartender handed both women their beer glasses—ale for Miranda and lager for Mari—and accepted Miranda's tip. "Arigatou," she said.

Miranda was rather fair-skinned, obvious considering her Slavic origin, and had the previously-mentioned brown hair that flowed down her back and covered her ears. It went along with a slender, petite form, like Maria's of the Venezuelan woman didn't have an athletic/toned body.

"So you just got 'promoted'?" Miranda asked.

"For lack of a better term," Maria laughed. "They last had me in the marketing department, before moving me to work with one of the buyers two days per week. I just got started on that yesterday."

"And you get paid?" Miranda asked.

Maria sipped some of her beer and nodded. "Of course," she said. "It was a big reason that tempted
me to come and interview for the position. I mean, I would've done other internships, but just the idea of getting paid sold me on it. Getting here was the hard part."

"How so?" Miranda asked.

Maria took another sip of beer. "Ay, I had to apply for a visa, get my shots, get a new passport that I didn't need in the end, pack all my stuff, blah, blah, blah. Next thing I knew, I was on a flight to Tokyo from Rio."

"Rio? I thought you were—"

"My mom had to move," said Maria. "She didn't want to stay in Venezuela anymore. Unfortunately, my dad decided to stay, since he'd just accepted a lucrative new job." Her expression turned sad at the mention of her father.

"What happened?" Miranda asked.

"I don't like talking about it," said Maria.

"Please tell me?" Miranda asked, making a puppy-dog pout.

Maria sighed in exasperation. She looked around the bar. The interior was dark for the time of day, except for the sunlight peeking in at the entrance that was so bright it obscured the outside sidewalk. There were maybe less than 10 people in the bar at the moment, and that would probably change once the work day ended and groups of salarymen will pour inside, making all sorts of noise and help the bar turn a profit for the night. But for now, it was a nice, quiet place to have a conversation.

"Well," Maria hesitated. "He… lost his job at a TV station. That's all I want to say right now."

"Darn," said Miranda.

"Now, why don't you tell me more about yourself?" Maria said.

"Well, I'd rather hear more about you," Miranda replied.

Maria rolled her eyes, shrugged and gulped some more beer. Asahi. "There really isn't much to say," said Maria.

"Liar," said Miranda. "I mean, obvious there's more than you want to admit."

"I actually had a stable upbringing and home life," said Maria, "Even after my parents divorced, but I got used to it."

"Divorced?" Miranda asked.

"You know, when mamis and papis don't love each other anymore and—"

"I get it," said Miranda. "So what are Venezuela and Brazil like?"

"MUY caliente," Maria replied in her native language before remembering that people outside the Americas didn't really bother to learn much Spanish unless they were going to Madrid or Barcelona for a Champions League match. "Hot, to say the least. What about Sweden?"

"Kall," Miranda replied, this mimicking the unhappy Maria. "Cold; very cold."

"I should have expected that," said Maria. "One of my friends has mentioned Sweden, before, don't
they like hockey?"

"Your friend, or—ah. Of course we love hockey. Why, do you?"

"NO," Maria insisted matter-of-factly. "It's boring."

"A shame," said Miranda. "You should give it a chance. Nothing's wrong with opening yourself to new experiences."

"Like the first time I went to a nude colony," Maria said to herself, but out loud enough for Miranda to hear and be surprised. "I don't know. It just sounds boring."

"You know what else might be new?" Miranda asked, "Taking me to see where you live."

"Um, well…" she trailed off, wanting to say 'yes', but the alarm bells in that part in the back of her mind loudly rang, nearly drowning Miranda's words out. "I don't know."

"Come on," said Miranda. That scent started to get stronger. "It'll be fun. You should take your new friend to your house. It's only polite."

"Alright," Maria finally said after a good time hesitating. "But you'll have to show me your place, too."

"Of course," Miranda said with a smile, a subtly sinister one.

:-:-:-: Power Rangers GPX :-:-:-:

They walked the whole way to the little side street the Rangers lived on. All the while, those alarm bells in Maria's head got louder and louder. She had to talk to Miranda to get them out of her head. She learned this was actually her first year at Todai, and she'd started it as an international exchange student, or simply the college equivalent of, from the University of Helsinki, and liked Tokyo so much, despite not knowing enough Japanese, to transfer to a full-time Todai student.

They walked up to the door, Maria unlocked it and let Miranda in. She deactivated the security system just in case, but had to remind those inner alarm bells that she would re-activate it when Miranda left.

After they both removed their shoes, both women went into the kitchen, where Maria offered Miranda another drink, a green tea that had been in the fridge longer than Maria had bought the one from earlier today.

And Miranda didn't seem to be crazy about showing her ears. But they talked for several hours. They only knew time was passing by the diminishing liquid levels in their bottles.

"How is it?" Maria asked.

"Good," said Miranda. "When will everyone be back?"

"Not much longer," Maria said, checking her watch. "Sean and Daisuke literally do not get along at all. It's like watching an American cartoon with the cat and mouse. Kevin is bueno. He prefers not to get into big problems like that. Hitomi's my favorite, but she could use a confidence boost."

"Sean and Daisuke don't sound like very good people," said Miranda. "I doubt I would want to talk to them."

The door burst open right on cue. Sean yelling something about Daisuke being the worst boss ever
was the first thing she heard. That, and Sean's work shoes making some rather impressive thumping sounds as he marched in, tore them off and dropped them in the foyer. "FUCK!"

"That's Sean alright," Maria said in an amused and sardonic tone like she'd known him for years. "What happened this time?"

"RICH BOY," he emphasized, "Made me do his uncle's dirty work and write a fuckin' English-language apology—a half-assed apology, I must add—for selling perfume with some bad ingredients in it! And I had to do it ten times over, with KEVIN, of all people, telling me my writing was shit!"

"You're a feckin' Journalism major!" Kevin retorted, "Write like one, ya eedjit!"

Crazy thing is, despite trashing him earlier, Maria was desperately trying to keep herself from laughing at his ranting and raving. "FRIENDS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SUPPORTIVE!" Sean shouted.

"Friends should be supportive, but true friends should also criticize," said Kevin. "Especially when you're doing something wrong, like have an alcohol problem. Speaking of which, you need to cut down on the beer."

"Oh, COME ON!" Sean moaned. "You can't equate writing with—Hey Maria, who's this?"

"Oh!" Maria lightly gasped. "I'm sorry. This is Miranda. I just met her today. She's from Sweden!"

"Sweden?" Sean asked, "Do you like hockey?"

"A bit," said Miranda. "You know, you could have let me introduce myself."

"Sorry," said Maria.

"Y'know, there's something about her I don't like, but she's a guest," said Sean. "Have you had anything to eat yet?"

"How long have I been here for?" Miranda asked. Maria checked her watch and was taken aback.

"It's 5:30," said Maria. "No wonder I was surprised you got home."

"Damn!" Miranda said. "I have to go!" She got up and walked away, patting Maria's shoulder. That same scent reached Maria's nostrils. She also heard Hitomi sniff it. "I don't like that Sean, and I think you shouldn't either," she whispered. Maria didn't answer, and Miranda walked out of the house.

"What did she say?" Daisuke asked.

"Nothing," said Maria.

"I heard something!" Sean said. "What was it?"

"None of your business!" Maria snapped, causing Sean to innocently gesture.

"The fuck did I do?" he asked.

Then they heard a scream so loud it came through the walls as a muffled one. They dropped what they were doing and ran out into the street.

A monster resembling a much more anthropomorphic Japanese macaque stood in the middle of the street, holding Miranda by the arms and throat. "Quiet, you!" the monster shouted at her screaming.
"Shut up and be the screaming damsel in distress so I can get the Power Rangers into the open, already!"

"HELP ME, MARIA!" Miranda shouted as the macaque monster leapt onto one of the buildings across the street from them and leapt across the rooftops.

"SHIT!" Sean shouted. "I know what he wants, so we'll give it to him! Allons-y!" He raced inside and the other Rangers followed.

They had not yet morphed when they got to the rooftop. They looked around, and saw no one in the street or the other rooftops. "READY!?" Sean shouted, rolling his dress shirt sleeve up. The tailor's not going to like this.

"READY!" was the reply.

"GPX, START IT UP!" The colored flash enveloped them, and they reappeared morphed.

"Alright, where's that fucker?" Sean asked, pressing a miniscule button on his helmet's side near the ear. The image in the visor changed to an infrared camera. While it picked up some of the building exhaust and the heat rising off of the concrete, a moving image moving towards the Todai campus and larger buildings could be seen. "THATAWAY!"

The Rangers leapt eastbound across the rooftops in hot pursuit. As you've probably guessed, their suits made this common superhero tactic more plausible. Lampshade hanging is coming soon. It mainly required a good running build-up and leap on their part and good timing. To be fair, Tokyo's a prime example of compact urban areas that allow this to happen.

Spreading out, they closed in on the monster. Hitomi and Kevin eventually caught up with him, a big surprise for the monster, and his shock got worse as they passed him, jumping on top of a slightly higher building. Summoning their weapons, they took aim. But Kevin growled while trying to keep the Touring Cannon steady. The monster was close before he knew it, and he shot the monster's feet. Hitomi also released her arrow that hit its head, stopping him right in his tracks and making him drop Miranda.

He picked her back up, but not before Maria caught up to him and threw a nasty right haymaker dead in the jaw.

"That's right! We just hopped on the roofs!" Sean cackled upon catching up to them. "We're fuckin' anime characters, now! Now, I'll give you three seconds to let the lady go! If not, we kick your ass!"

"I find it strange that the monster would be an ape carrying a white woman," said Kevin, "I wish it didn't remind me of bad, racist propaganda, but this feels more like a King Kong rip-off."

"That's probably because the baddies we're dealing with are racist," said Sean. "Still, wait—that's three seconds! Give her up! NOW!"

Mr. Macaque, whom I promise is not some racist caricature, pulled his lower eyelid down, and then spanked himself.

"Apes are gentle and kind!" said Maria, "YOU are not!" She lunged forward, priming her fist for a punch. It looked easy, especially with the macaque monster holding onto Miranda with both arms, but it's never easy. Mr. Macaque lifted his right leg to effortlessly catch Maria's fist and toss her onto the roof.

"Oh right, I forgot about prehensile feet," said Sean. "Okay, new strategy."
"Just shoot it again!" Kevin interjected. He shot the monster a couple of times. They missed, but they kept the monster on its toes (bleh) and left an opening that Maria took to run in brandishing her daggers.

"LIGHTNING BLADE!" she shouted, thrusting the daggers into the monkey's face. She missed the first one, but landed a couple of subsequent blows to send bolts of electricity through the monster. He screamed in pain and dropped Miranda onto the hot concrete.

Sean was next, summoning the GT Saber and swinging it at the monster. He ran up to it and got swatted away. He got back up, swung again, the monster reached out with his right foot, and the GT Saber's blade broke in two.

"ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME!?" he shouted, examining the break near the crossguard. "WHO THE FUCK MADE THIS THING!?"

Somewhere, a German blacksmith sneezed.

Daisuke was next to try his luck, wielding a new weapon that wasn't his Mountain Staff. Holding a katana, he swung the sword at the monster and laid 4 successive blows on the beast, throwing sparks around. Hitomi stayed off to the side, giving her brother cover.

Sean looked back at Daisuke's sword, and at his. Groaning, he threw the sword down and drew his Blaster, letting 3 shots off that hit the monster's head, much to Daisuke's visible unhappiness.

Maria had another chance, so she ran up to the creature and swung her daggers at the monster. The monster blocked the first and second strikes and pulled her wrists closer together. Maria struggled against the monsters strength, straining to separate her wrists.

She finally succeeded, but the monster almost fell on top of her before she realized why. Two more sparky explosions erupted from the creature. Sean and Kevin continued to shoot the monster, prompting Maria to kick the monster off of her.

"STOP HELPING ME!" she shouted. Sean raised his hands and backed off a little bit. Then he pointed to the monster grabbing Miranda with his left foot and tossing her to the roof's edge.

"NO YOU DON'T!" she shouted as she ran over to the edge and reached to grab Miranda. She barely missed. But Miranda grabbed onto a ledge with her left hand. It was not a great grip and she shouted

"HELP!"

"Don't worry!" Maria replied, bending over the roof's edge and reaching for Miranda's hand. "Don't worry, I'm here to save you!"

"Maria!?" Miranda shouted. "Is that you!?"

"Who's Maria!?" Maria replied. "I'm the Yellow Ranger, I'm here to save you, now grab on!"

Meanwhile Sean converted his Octane Blaster into the GP Saber and attacked the monster, getting in Daisuke's way in the process. The aforementioned Rich Boy growled and tried to nudge Sean out of the way. Sean stubbornly stood his ground, pushing back against Daisuke's shoulder and whacking the macaque monster.

But since both of them were too busy playing cock games, the monster grabbed their wrists and
kicked them both, forcing them to let their weapons go as they slid backwards. Hitomi rushed in, jumping over them and kicking the monster's snout. Both young men got back up after this and, while yelling at each other, ran up to the monster. Daisuke reached him first, punching his chest, but Sean was next, jumping over Daisuke and punched the monster looking like Superman.

Now Kevin moved closer. "OUT OF THE WAY!" he shouted. Sean, Daisuke and Hitomi jumped out of the way of Kevin's next shot. "TURBO SHOT!" His shot struck the monster, knocking him off the building's side. The other four Rangers ran over to the building's edge, which happened to be the same one Maria was trying to help Miranda on.

Miranda and the monster both precariously hung onto the façade. The monster had a better grip and started climbing up the façade. Sean, Kevin and Hitomi drew their weapons and shot the monster, trying to keep it from reaching Miranda. Maria glared at them. "I GOT THIS!" she shouted.

"You're welllcome!" Sean replied. "Jeez, what the hell!?"

Miranda's hair blew in the wind vortex at the building's top, giving Maria a slight view of her ears, but nothing much. The macaque monster swung up the building's side below her, grabbing her right foot and tearing it off the façade. Angrily, Miranda kicked the macaque monster's snout, making him slip on the façade.

Frustrated, the monster broke a window and swung inside. Screaming meant that he was making a mess of things.

"Kevin, stay here and help!" said Sean. "Hitomi, let's get inside!"

"Got it!" Kevin responded.

"Yoshi!" Hitomi replied. Sean and Hitomi broke off from the building's edge and ran into the roof entrance.

"Yellow, help!" Miranda cried out.

"Swing up and take my hand!" Maria replied.

Miranda tried swinging her hand up to take Maria's hand, but slipped. Frantically leaning over the edge, Kevin reached for Miranda's other hand, but his fruitless efforts only frustrated Maria more than it should have. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?!" she screamed.

"DO you want my help or not!?" Kevin replied.

"Forget it!" Maria reached down and grabbed the hand that still gripped the façade. Seeing this, Kevin ran around Maria's back and held onto her.

"Has anyone tried this in movies or TV before?" Kevin asked as he helped Maria pull Miranda up to safety.

"Don't do that again!" Maria shouted, angrily shoving Kevin away. "Are you alright, miss?"

"Yes, but I might be traumatized," said Miranda. "And are you sure your name isn't—"

"There's a door," said Kevin. "And you're welcome."

The monster burst through the roof and landed ten feet away from them, Sean, Hitomi and Daisuke following. Kevin sighed and said, "We're going to have to pay for the damage, aren't we?"
"MY SWORD'S BETTER THAN YOURS, RICH BOY!" Sean shouted.

"What is it with you Americans and your obsession with size?" Daisuke asked.

The macaque monster laid on the roof, rolling around in pain before getting up. He found the Rangers surrounding him, preparedly brandishing their weapons at him.

"Red, we should bring this to an end and quickly," said Kevin.

"By Jove, you're right!" Sean replied. He pointed at Miranda. "You; lady, whatever your name is. Might wanna get outta here."

"Gladly!" Miranda replied as she ran to the open door.

The macaque monster unhappily sighed. "Elbeth's not going to like this," he groaned. He lifted his wrist and pressed a button on his bracelet. The Rangers realized what was going on and rushed to stop him before he teleported away.

"Seriously? We just let him go like that?" Sean asked. "Well that was a letdown! Forget it, let's get out of here. Maria's obviously in a rotten mood for some reason and we've got to find her new friend."

Miranda got off the phone with Maria, a disgruntled expression on her face. Police had already flooded the scene, cordonning part of the building off and paramedics escorted the injured out. Eyewitnesses spoke to news crews. Even she had to talk to the police, who wanted to take her in, but she declined. They were polite about her declination, of course, and suggested she go home and rest. Her plans to meet with Maria and her friends kind of

She called a cab and took it to the meeting place, a coffee shop just across Hongo Dori from Todai’s campus. On the way there, she had time to think about what had happened, but didn't say anything to the cab driver, who clearly didn't like how she demanded to go to this one place when she first got in without so much as an 'onagai'.

She found them already waiting outside the café, called Kissa Rouault, at 6 Chome-1-14 Hongo. She knew she was close by the coffee's smell just a block away from the café. The place was already full, hence why Maria and her friends waited outside. But Maria got up and ran up to hug her.

"Are you alright?" Maria asked.

"I'm fine," said Miranda, "Thanks to the Power Rangers."

"Who?"

"You don't—forget it. Hello, everyone."

The others weakly replied with a 'hi'.

"You have no idea how fucking hard it was to find this place," Sean said without looking up from his iPhone.

"Be polite!" Maria snapped.

"HEY!"
"We wanted to grab a seat and a cuppa, but as you can see, the place is full," said Kevin. "Besides, we're going to a party at a coworker's flat later."

"Oh, a party?" Miranda replied. "May I come?"

"NO," said Sean.

"Please, Sean?" Maria asked, getting up in the American's grill and making him back off.

"I dunno," he flatly replied. "I don't really like her that much."

"Asshole," she muttered and walked away. Miranda walked back up to him.

"Please?" she asked. "May I please come?"

"NO," Sean insisted. "This is a coworker party."

"I think you should take me," she said, lifting her arm up and gently blowing on her wrist. That same scent filled Sean's nose and he blinked several times and shook his head.

"Uh, sure," he said. "It's at—" Miranda smiled, satisfied, as Sean told her the time and place and walked away. But Sean turned to Kevin and silently mouthed his confusion. "What the fuck just happened?"

A German co-worker named David held the party at his Shinjuku apartment, located within viewing distance of the Metropolitan Government Building's famous twin towers. Knowing there would be alcohol involved, the Rangers took a couple of cabs instead of driving there. Plus, the Grand Prix Cruiser would be a bit suspicious at the moment.

The party was business casual, so everyone showed up in casual button-down shirts and jeans (for the guys) and casual blouses and skirts (for the women). David, who was from Gelsenkirchen, better known as FC Schalke 04's hometown, greeted the group at his front door and ushered them in.

Many of Miyazawa's Tokyo headquarters' foreign employees were already there. There were less than 50 of them in the whole office.

David personally greeted and let them in. Sean and Hitomi went straight for the food, mostly crackers, meat, cheese, fruit, strudel, pretzels, chips and some rice balls. They could also smell something else cooking, which upon closer inspection turned out to be some of those little hot dogs wrapped up in bread, plus some more rice cooking on the table closest to the window.

"Oh, this is nice, Dave!" Sean said after swallowing some crackers and ham.

"Danke!" David replied. "There is also more food in the kitchen. I even have some German beer here; better than that terrible excuse for beer you Americans serve!"

Sean visibly didn't take kindly to it.

Everyone settled into the party, intermingling with their other coworkers. Sean found time to discuss hockey with a Swedish coworker, Kevin and David discussed literature, Daisuke and Hitomi were happy to meet with their family's company's employees, and Maria and Miranda talked with each other.

Hitomi was the one most visibly hurt by this, as she watched Maria and Miranda talk. So she walked
up to them. Then she backed off when Maria and Miranda laughed about something. Sean and Kevin both walked past and firmly, but not too hard, patted her back. Taking a deep breath and patting her own chest, she lifted her right leg and stepped forward. Getting close to Maria and Miranda, she cleared her throat. Daisuke shook his head out of the corner of her eye, but Sean shoved him away and gave her the thumbs-up.

"H-hello," she said weakly. "I'm sorry if I'm interrupting."

Maria and Miranda turned to her. "Hello?" the Swedish woman asked.

"I don't remember if I introduced myself, but I am Hitomi Miyazawa," she said. "Currently, I am one of the Miyazawa—"

"Hello," said Miranda. "A pleasure to meet you. My name's Miranda. Anyway, Maria, we should continue this conversation somewhere else."

"Let her speak," said Maria. "I like her."

"She looks innocent," said Miranda. "Although I can tell just from her legs shaking, that she's nervous."

"Please don't say that," said Hitomi. "I just thought that since you're Maria's friend, then we can be friends, too."

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen," said Hitomi.


"Excuse me," Hitomi said softly but firmly, "But take that back!"

"Hitomi!" Maria gasped. "Apologize right now!"

"I want an apology from her!" said Hitomi. "And Maria, I want to be friends with you!"

"I don't need any other friends!" Maria shouted. The other partygoers stopped their conversations and turned to look at the three women in question. With all those eyeballs staring at them, they certainly felt pretty awkward. As for Sean, Kevin and Daisuke, they all took deep breaths and sighed in unison. Kevin added something extra by facepalming.

"I want to be your friend!" Hitomi insisted. "In fact, I think I'd be a better friend than her, since I've heard nothing positive out of her!"

"Go Hitomi!" a random voice shouted, causing Sean, Kevin and Daisuke to simultaneously turn towards a guy named Irfan, an IT guy from Indonesia. He could feel the situation's awkwardness and sulked out of the picture, hiding behind his red plastic cup.

"Don't say that about my friend!" Maria shouted. "Listen, you've got no right to tell me what friends I should or shouldn't make! Go away, right now, brat! I'm never talking to you again!"

"You BITCH!" Hitomi shouted. The room gasped, save for Sean, Kevin and Daisuke.

"Fuck this, I'm leaving!" Maria huffed, grabbed her things and stormed out of the apartment faster than a lizard running up a tree. Next thing everyone knew, she'd left with Miranda in tow.
"Excuse me," Sean said as he followed her out of the apartment.

The party resumed as normal, save for Hitomi standing alone, about ready to cry before Kevin went over and wrapped his arm around her shoulders and glared at Daisuke for not doing the same. After helping her sit down at the kitchen table, he returned to the conversation he'd been having with David.

"I sincerely apologize," he said.

"Accepted," said David. "What were we talking about? Oh right, that product recall Sean had to write an apology for. What was the product?"

"It was a perfume sold exclusively in Japan," said Kevin. "It has a nice smell, but they found out yakuza members were using it illegally. Turns out some of the ingredients, when mixed, create some sort of drug that leaves the user open to suggestion, and the yakuza had been using that on certain people, so they had to recall it."

Concurrently, Sean picked up his pace after he left the apartment and found the stairwell Maria and Miranda had taken. Once he spotted them, he shouted, "MARIA!"

Both women stopped and turned towards him as he quickly climbed down the stairs. Maria turned and said something to Miranda, who went on ahead. "You have a lot of fucking nerve, you know that!?" he shouted. He got in front of her, blocking her from descending the staircase. "What the FUCK was that about!?!"

"Fuck off, gringo!" she snapped. "I've had a bad day!"

"And you just took it out on Hitomi!" he replied. "In fact, you just embarrassed all of us in front of our fucking coworkers! What the FUCK is wrong with you!?"

"Listen," she insisted, pointing her finger in his face. "I have HAD IT with you and the rest of this group here!"

"Oh, is that it!?!" he replied. "Then why don't you say that directly to us?"

"I've had enough of you, I've had enough of Rich Boy, and I've had it with this whole fucking country!" she replied. "I don't fucking belong here, I fucking HATE IT!"

"What the fuck is wrong with you!?!" he asked. "You've said nothing positive all fucking day! Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed!?"

"FUCK OFF," she declared, pushing him out of the way and storming down the steps.

"Hitomi was right!" he shouted. "You're being a real fucking BITCH!"

"DON'T CALL ME THAT, GRINGO!" she shouted back.

"MY MOM USES IT IN THAT CONTEXT ALL THE FUCKING TIME!" he shot back. "And you need to stop acting like one, or else—" she cut him off with a right hook to the left cheek. He didn't get another word out at her, because she stormed off again, leaving him behind to fume.

Outside, she couldn't find Miranda so she hailed a cab to take her back to the townhouse.

She didn't know that Miranda had been listening with great satisfaction. She waited out of sight until Maria was finally in the cab to take her back to Bunkyo. Reaching into her purse, she pulled a
perfume bottle and an earpiece out. Moving her hair, she placed the earpiece inside.

"General Phaedos," she said, "Phase 1 of the mission is complete. I know where they live, and I have sown discord.

::::: PRGPX ::::

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for the short Ranger battle, but there's a lot more to this than just the battle. I also apologize for taking so long to finally finish it. Hopefully this will bring a lot of things that occur later on into a new light.

Please drop a review!
With Friends Like Her

Power Rangers GPX episode 12: With Friends Like Her

:-:-:-: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers GPX, let's GO! :-:-:-:

The Rangers returned "home" at 11:30 after the party ended at 11. Maria had already gone to bed. The others just got ready for and went to bed.

They'd received an earful from Col. Greene after they left the party about their failure to eliminate the macaque monster earlier, in a raised-voice lecture that made it visible the man had done this before, and his comment about his kids didn't come as a surprise. Assuming he lived, Daisuke vowed never to forget the sight of Sean trying to tune the man's lecture out like he was his dad or mom or whatever, all while nursing bruised, but not swollen, left cheek. However, Col. Greene admonished the Japanese heir too, for not doing his part, which made Sean trollishly grin at him.

"I have received instructions from Col. Greene that you are to eliminate all targets," the red-colored, anime Chinese girl-like android Mei reminded Sean, while he brushed his teeth and he responded with a disgruntled expression.

"Haro, Haro, eliminate targets, Haro," the little copyright-infringing droid rolled past Sean's bare feet, only aggravating him worse, and he nudged it away from him. He would have kicked it if it probably didn't break every single bone in his foot if he tried.

He passed by Maria's door on the way to his room, and momentarily and hesitantly stopped in front of it. Then he raised his hand to the doorknob, but quickly changed his mind and he raised it to eye-level. "Can't believe I have to fucking do this," he muttered to himself before firmly knocking on her door. "Hey, Maria!" he called. "Sorry for yellin' at ya earlier. I was just kinda, mad, since you weren't being very nice. You also hurt Hitomi's feelings, so... think you can apologize to her? Also, my cheek still hurts, and I want an apology for that, too!"

"Go away, gringo!"

"Don't fucking call me that, bitch!" he snapped, immediately wincing at his poor choice of words. "Sorry, sorry! You're not a bitch. You're awesome! But don't call me a gringo! Especially since we're in a country where our views on race don't matter!"

"I said, fuck off!"

"Bah!" Sean scoffed as he turned away from the door and walked back to his room, muttering about how he didn't need to put up with that kind of bullshit.

He returned to his room, still plastered with hockey stuff, placed his iPhone on the nightstand next to his simple bed, and flopped face-first onto it. Pulling the covers over his head, he settled in and turned his light off, filling his room with complete darkness, except for the lights trying to peek in through the blindfolds. He rested under a small Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess poster.

The rest of the Ranger house shortly fell silent, too. Everyone had their little before-bedtime "rituals." Kevin read from Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. Daisuke also read a book, Miyamoto Musashi's famous The Book of Five Rings. Hitomi stayed up for a little while longer, drawing herself and Maria as Sailor Senshi, before getting disappointed, putting the brush down and going to bed in modest pink pajamas. Maria also went to sleep after staring up at the ceiling for what felt like an hour, feeling somewhere in her mind that she'd forgotten something.
An hour later, the Ranger house was dark, still and silent, save for the occasional creaking. The robots, Mei and Haro, also went to "sleep," which is just shutting off and recharge their batteries in a walk-in closet downstairs for several hours while they weren't needed.

A great big flash of light that would have immediately blinded a person engulfed the kitchen and quickly faded. Eleven silhouettes materialized. One of the outlines, noticeably bigger than the others, gestured to them and led them out of the kitchen and into the main foyer. The silhouette pointed at the stairs, and the ten others quietly marched up them. Soon they split up into five pairs, all going to different rooms. They paused outside the Rangers' bedroom doors.

The larger silhouette gestured to them before disappearing in the same flash of light. Then the smaller profiles quietly entered the Rangers' rooms. All five of them slept silently and peacefully. The silhouettes' red eyes momentarily glowed, revealing their appearance; Swabots.

Each of the Swabots in pairs aimed the sleeping Power Rangers. The Rangers would die, and they wouldn't even know it.

The Swabots in Sean's room, in particular, moved to the side in front of the window, blocking the light from coming in through the blinds. They aimed. Sean momentarily stirred. The Swabots paused.

Then his iPhone lit up, and the song "Chelsea Dagger" blared over his phone speakers. Confused, or at least as confused as robots could be, the Swabots paused. Sean immediately tried to throw his pillow over his head, but the song's persistence made him reach out, grab the iPhone and answer it.
"Hello?" he asked.

"Hello, Sean!" The voice of his mother, Klaudia Liebricht-O'Callahan called. "How are you?"

"It's two in the morning, mom!" he groggily groaned. "I got work in the morning!"

"Oh, okay, then I'll just make this quick!" said Klaudia. "I just wanted to say that I've missed you, Bridget still misses you in Orlando, and your father is doing fine."

"Yeah, thanks," he said with a little sarcasm tinge. His mother continued speaking while he yawned. Then he noticed the two figures in the room with him. He stared at them. Quietly, he reached for the AcceleMorpher on at his bedside and strapped it on his wrist, then grabbed the key.

"Sean, are you alright?" Klaudia asked when she noticed the silence on the other end.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he replied. "Can I get back to sleep… please?"

"Sure," said Klaudia. "I love you! Oh, and Julie says hi, too."

"Sure," he replied before hanging up. He noticed the figures aiming at him, then threw the covers off. "GPX, START IT UP!" he shouted before morphing. The Swabots didn't have a chance to shoot him. He punched the one closest to him, knocking its head off and a reverse roundhouse took care of the next.

"GUYS, WAKE UP!" he shouted into his communicator, "WE'VE GOT COMPANY!"

He could hear the sounds of morphing and crashing metal. The sounds ceased as soon as they started.

He de-morphed and ran out of his room. Kevin joined him first, then Daisuke, then Hitomi, then Maria, all de-morphed as well. "Jesus Christ, how the hell did they get in here?" he asked.
"I don't know," said Kevin. "The UN said the security system should be the best."

"Lotta good that did us," said Maria.

"Someone must've turned it off," said Kevin.

"Wasn't me!" Sean snapped.

"Me neither!" said Hitomi.

"Nor I!" Daisuke added.

"And it wasn't me, either," said Kevin. "Which means…" All four of them slowly turned to Maria, as she opened her mouth to yell, but quickly shut it.

"Ay Dios mio," she said. "But don't blame me!"

"Oh, we fuckin' will!" Sean replied.

"Well, how do you know it was me?" she asked.

"You were here first, so it was probably you," said Kevin.

"I should have known not to trust her," said Daisuke. "Never trust a Socialist."

"Social Democrat!" she replied. "But how do you really know? Shouldn't we ask the robots, first?"

"Good idea," said Sean. "They'll probably reach the same conclusion."

A bit later, "Records indicate it was Maria who turned off the security system," said Mei, the other copyright-infringing droid. "She used her PIN to deactivate the system." The other Rangers turned and glared at her again. Now knowing she had no other way out, Maria nervously grit her teeth, shifted her eyes, and tried to walk away. But she got visibly angrier, instead.

"And what are you going to do about it!?" she asked harshly.

"I dunno, but you do realize how badly you've fucked up, right?" Sean hissed through his clenched teeth.

"Kick her out of the team," said Daisuke. "We do not need her."

But Kevin pushed his way in between everyone else and separated them. "Enough," he said. "Calm down. We'll inform Col. Greene about it. Although I also think we should expel her." Maria hissed again.

"She made a mistake," said Hitomi. "We should forgive her."

"Bah!" Sean hissed.

:--:--: PRGPX :--:--:

"Well done, Agent Miranda," Rashon said in front of her. "I could not have expected our plans to go so smoothly."

"Thank you, Emperor!" she replied.

"General Phaedos, I must apologize; your suggestion worked."
"Intelligence pointed to the Yellow Ranger as the best target for our strategy in this case," Phaedos replied. "Her emotional issues made it so we could not pass down our opportunity."

"There is one issue," Rashon said as he stood up off the corner of his desk, "What happens if you get to close to the Yellow Ranger, Miranda?"

"I do not intend to let that happen," she replied. "I am a professional."

"Excellent," said Rashon. "Although it pains me to inform you that the attempt to kill the Rangers failed."

"A minor setback," said Phaedos.

"That may be," said Rashon, "But they will doubtlessly be more cautious from now on."

"Not to worry," said Miranda. "I still have the Yellow Ranger in my thrall."

"How?" Rashon asked.

"The Rangers' financial backer sells a perfume that contains drugs that can subtly leave a victim open to suggestion," said Miranda. "The substance affects the Amygdala, causing this effect, and has another side effect of making the victim angrier. I have used it on her."

"But the product has been recalled for that reason," said Phaedos.

"We will understandably need to move quicker," said Miranda. "Luckily I have one more bottle to be used only in emergencies."

"Excellent," said Rashon. "I knew I could trust you, Agent."

"Thank you, my glorious Emperor!" she replied with a salute. "One more thing, however."

"What is that?"

"Please do NOT send the monster without notifying me!" she said. "I was genuinely frightened!"

"Oh," said Rashon. "I apologize. But, since your performance was authentic, perhaps it is of no consequence."

"Thank you, Emperor," she mumbled under her breath. "Further orders?"

"Return to Tokyo," said Rashon. "Finish the job."

"Yes, sir!"

---: Power Rangers GPX ---:

Sean didn't get much sleep that night. Aside from dealing with waking up that early in the morning, his lifelong Beverly friend Marty called him 10 minutes after he got back to sleep, forcing Sean to remind him that he was in fucking Tokyo, in fucking Japan, in fucking Asia, three quarters of the way across the fucking planet, and it was 12 or something hours ahead of Chicago, and he needed to get some goddamn sleep!

That was why he had trouble staying awake at his desk at work the next morning. His new co-worker, a German dude from the Bavarian city of Munich, where his great-great-grandpa Hans Liebricht was from (and even told the nazis to go fuck themsZordonians before seeing the writing on
the wall and getting the hell out of Germany in 1925).

"Did you get drunk again?" his co-worker asked.

"No," Sean replied with an edgy tone.

"O'Carrahan-san!" The authoritative tone and voice not belonging to Rich Boy made Sean jolt up in his seat. Misaki Miyazawa, the COO of the Miyazawa Tokyo office, strode up to him. Fabian, the Bavarian co-worker, shrank in his chair. "Good work on the apology letter."

"Thank you, sir!" Sean replied.

"Also, why is Aparicio-san in such a foul mood?"

"I'm not… sure?" Sean replied.

"Her supervisor told me she was in a terrible mood today," said Mr. Miyazawa. "I thought there was something you could do about it."

*What the hell do you want me to do about it? I fuckin' tried!* He thought. "Maybe she's just in a bad mood, and she'll get better." This was turning a bad situation even worse.

"I need a better response from you," said Mr. Miyazawa. "Please, come with me. And before you ask, you are not in trouble; your friend might be."

*Shit*, Sean thought. He would have looked into the camera, but he wasn't in The Office. Instead, he made the same expression to the closest person in the office, Fabian.

Maria's primary supervisor in the buying department had a meeting with a Hoss Intropia brand rep in her office at that very moment. She translated for her supervisor, who kept insisting on selling the Intropia product, a sleeveless mini dress in this specific example, for a certain amount that cannot be listed right now because the Yen-to-Euro exchange rate has changed since 2010. But what can be said is that in 2016 the dress would cost well over ¥15,000. The head buyer wanted to sell the dress much more than what the Intropia rep was thinking.

Maria could see the Spanish rep's conflicting emotions in their face. But she was also amazed at the buyer's confidence. Who knew Hitomi had this much in her?

"I may be 18, but I am not a fool," she said, which Maria quickly translated for the Madrid-born Spaniard. Maria's grandfather was also Spanish, but he was from Seville. Like Sean's great-great-grandfather, hers left Spain to escape Senor Franco. Her other foreign-born grandparent, her maternal grandmother, was from Guadalajara in Mexico.

Wait, where were we? Oh, right.

Hitomi leaned back against her chair, crossing her arms and confident that she was doing well on the negotiation. She eagerly smiled at Maria, who responded by rolling her eyes. The *actual* lead buyer, standing off to the side, glared at Maria.

"Kawasaki-han?" Hitomi asked her supervisor. The two shortly conversed in Japanese. Hitomi didn't take whatever Kawasaki-han must've said very well because she frowned once she finished. However, some apparent encouragement picked her spirits up until they finally finished the meeting, and Hitomi politely saw the Intropia rep off.

To her surprise, her uncle escorted Sean, Kevin, and Daisuke into the room. Nodding at the lead
buyer, the uncle departed. Confused at first, the lead buyer raised an eyebrow, rolled her eyes, and walked out.

"Boy, this is a happy reunion, isn't it?" Kevin asked.

Almost immediately after the lead buyer stepped out, the door opened again and Col. Greene walked in, looking very cross, and crossing his arms like his mood. "Alright, start talking."

"Colonel, I don't know what it is," said Sean, "But Rich Boy probably started it."

"How could you five have such a bad security lapse?" Col. Greene asked without responding to Sean. Exasperated, he took his hat off while he rubbed his face and scalp.

Everyone remained silent, but turned their heads to Maria, still with the same angry expression she carried most of the day, which was similar to how she looked when she found out Brazilian *novelas* were infinitely inferior to the grand storytelling and drama of her homeland's soap operas.

"What?" she asked indignantly.

"So she has this new friend that none of us like," said Kevin. "We're willing to support her, but she's become particularly rude ever since this Miranda introduced herself."

"When?" Col. Greene asked.

"Yesterday," said Sean.

"So I'm to blame?" she asked.

"You… did… turn off the security system," Hitomi reminded her, causing Col. Greene to do a double-facepalm.

"You turned off the security system," he repeated. "Why?"

"Well, now they know where you live," said Col. Greene. "Which means you'll have to move. I swear, you guys are making this harder for me."

"Sorry," said Sean.

"Aparicio, who was this woman they're talking about?" Greene continued.

"Her name is Miranda, and she's from Sweden," she spat.

"I know what her name is, I want to know who she is," said Greene.

Maria rolled her eyes. "She's my friend, and she listens to me," she said as if it was obvious.

"But we're your friends too," said Hitomi.

"No, you're not," said Maria. "You're just another bunch of temps I'll forget once this is all over." Her voice started to break as she finished her talk. She paused, trying to regain her composure against tears welling in her eyes, an action that caught the others' attention. "I haven't had any real friends… GAH!" She huffed and stormed out of the room, leaving everyone behind and wondering what the hell was going on.

"That was unexpected," Col. Greene remarked. "Can someone go after her?"
Hitomi looked around, looking very visibly unhappy, before sighing and walking out the door. It only took a couple of seconds before she poked her head back in the office. "She's back at her desk," she said.

"Okay then," said Col. Greene. "Try to talk some sense into her, please."

"Why not you?" Sean asked.

"You five have caused enough stress this week," said Col. Greene. "I need some sake. Until next time," he saluted Sean, Kevin, and Daisuke, then re-donned his cap, turned around and left the office. But he heard Sean saying,

"Well, that was a waste of time!"

In a way, Col. Greene agreed, because deep down, he wanted the Rangers to take care of this shit on their own. And playing Mr. Exposition when it came to problems of infighting was just as annoying as taking time out of his work schedule to lecture them like they were teenagers with attitude.

However, he noticed Mr. Miyazawa standing outside the door and in between him and Hitomi and Maria, deep in conversation. Well, until Maria waved her away. "This would not have happened if you had followed the Matriarch's suggestions," he said, bringing him back to the present.

"Tell me something," Greene replied, "Is the Matriarch my superior?"

"No," said Mr. Miyazawa.

"Then get off my back," Greene replied. "I've got better things to worry about than some racist old hag telling me what to do."

"The Matriarch—"

"Is not in the military, nor a UN official," Greene interrupted. "I suggest that you—" he was interrupted when Sean, Kevin, and Daisuke left the office. But since they were there, "By the way, O'Callahan, I hear you wrote a pretty good recall notice."

"Um, thanks," said Sean.

"I have to mention that I had to edit it," Kevin interjected, making Sean crown and grumble under his breath. "He needs to—"

"Can you please give me credit?" Sean interrupted.

"What was the recall for?" Greene asked.

"Store brand perfume," said Sean. "Through some mistake, the stuff makes you get madder, and some crooks even used it for mind-control stuff."

"What does it smell like?" Col. Greene asked.

"Japanese lotus or something?" Sean replied.

This was all being said within Hitomi's earshot. As she listened carefully, her gaze flipped back and forth between the conversation and Maria, barely overhearing Col. Greene talking about some Swedish Major who would take his place in any situation.

"Maria?" she asked.
"What?" Maria asked with some hostility.

Hitomi paused. Thinking of a way to word her question correctly. "Miranda uses perfume, right?"

"Of course," said Maria. Hitomi rolled her eyes at herself, remembering a fragrance that came off of Miranda, but she couldn't quite put her finger on the actual scent.

"What does it smell like?"

"Lotus," Maria replied. "Why?"

"That's um, what our recalled perfume smells like," said Hitomi.

"Recall?" Maria asked, looking up from her desktop word doc.

Nodding, Hitomi answered, "It is because some bad people used it for mind control and stuff."

For the first time all day, Maria was visibly worried. "I was afraid that… Miranda was using it on you," Hitomi said.

"Why would she?" Maria asked. "What reason can you think?"

"I don't know," Hitomi sorrowfully admitted. "And I know I don't have any proof."

"Then why bring it up?" Maria asked.

"I'm just… worried," Hitomi replied. "I want to be your friend. Can I be your friend?"

Maria sighed, went back to work and ignored Hitomi, worsening the heiress's mood.

Eventually, Maria checked the time, stood up, gathered her things, and began to leave. "I'm meeting Miranda for lunch," she said.

"May I please go with you?" Hitomi asked.

"No, thank you," Maria replied, to Hitomi's sadness. She would meet Miranda at a café a few blocks away.

:-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:

Suzumiya Gonzo carefully backed his truck into the Miyazawa Tokyo flagship store's loading bay as he'd always done a couple of hundred times before, although this time was different. And "Gonzo" wasn't his birth name, but a nickname. But he'd used it for so long that not only did he forget where he got it from, but it was his name for all intents and purposes. That perfume he only heard about a couple of times would be today's pick-up. He would take it to the factory where it would be disposed of. A job was a job, so he didn't ask questions. And he IS an honest trucker before you ask. He's simply one of the common, working, Average Jous who help make Japan run.

"Gonzo!" a store employee called, walking up to his truck cab. "Sorry, we had to call you on such short notice."

"No problem," he replied. "Something wrong with the perfume?"

"Hai, some of the ingredients were bad," said the Miyazawa employee. "We're gonna start loading these bottles." He handed Gonzo a clipboard with paperwork.
He started working on it while the perfume began loading. After a minute, he opened the driver-side door and got out to watch the procedure. A forklift carried the boxes filled with the perfume from the loading dock into the trailer. He was reasonably sure he could get all the perfume boxes in his truck and still be under the weight limit.

Several minutes passed while the workers loaded the truck. Things were going smoothly. But that changed, as several robots jumped onto the top of his truck, and so did an anthropomorphic macaque.

"Heeeyyyy, are we interruptin' anything?" he asked. The robots jumped off the truck, attacking everyone. The workers screamed and ran away, so the macaque monster didn't chase them. He laughed haughtily as the area cleared of humans. "Alright you buckets of bolts, get to work on the double!"

Sean and Fabian were in the middle of a conversation with one of their native-born co-workers when Sean got the text alert.

"Okay, I'm going to lunch!" he announced while turning his computer monitor off.

"What!?" Fabian sputtered.

"Yeah, I'm just thought of a place nearby, so I'm gonna get lunch!" Seeing that Fabian and the other co-worker were still staring at him, he did a little send-off dance and song, all while being awkwardly stared at. Then he just opened the door and stepped out.

Maria walked into the café, found Miranda sitting at the opposite wall, and went straight over to her. The cafe still wasn't full for lunch, maybe 72% full, which allowed her to breeze right past the other patrons to sit at Miranda's table. Most of them ignored her, as they were too caught up in their conversations to focus on a brown woman, she guessed. She accidentally offended herself not only for calling herself brown, albeit Sordonian-deprecatingly, and for not seeing that people would be too busy to notice her. She expected to be ignored for her skin color in Rio or back home in Caracas, where people with her skin tone were the norm. But no matter where the location, either in South America or Asia, no one's going to give a shit when someone walks into a café.

"Maria!" Miranda happily called when she arrived at the table.

"Hola!" Maria answered. The two hugged and began to sit down.

That's when they heard a loud, shrill, piercing whistle interrupt everything. The other customers also were not pleased, but a cop walked in, shouting at everyone in Japanese. So Maria and Miranda couldn't understand him, but he gestured to the door, and they understood that correctly. It was evident that something was up.

"I think I should be going," said Maria.

Miranda urgently grabbed Maria's elbow as they walked out the door. "Let's go this way," she said, much to Maria's displeasure. Now Maria began to conclude that the others may have had a point about Miranda.
"Come on, you bolt-brains, get a move on!" the macaque monster shouted at his Swabots. Their teleportation devices had malfunctioned, forcing them to load the perfume on the truck manually. Impatient, the macaque monster looked around and felt relieved that the usual pests weren't here yet. With Miranda keeping the Yellow Ranger away, he was confident the Swabots could handle the still-green "superheroes" and allow them to finish their job. He certainly wasn't worried about the workers tied up on the loading dock.

"HURRY UP!" he shouted, "Or I'll rip your heads off, shove 'em down your necks, and then cut you in half like—"

"ONE BOOT SOLE SANDWICH ON THE HOUSE!"

The shout made the macaque monster spin around to meet a boot's sole coming right at him, and he didn't have time to dodge. The kick knocked him down, as his assailant flipped off of him and landed Iron Man-style on the top of the truck trailer. Three other Rangers joined the Red Ranger.

"What's so important about that perfume?" Sean asked. "I mean, there's nothing wrong with wanting to smell pretty or anything—"

"You stupid Rangers!" macaque growled. Then he noticed, "Where's the Yellow Ranger?"

"Who cares!?" Sean snapped. "We're here right now, and we're gonna kick your ass!"

"Swabots, get 'em!" macaque shouted.

On that order, the Swabots lunged for the truck. The Rangers leaped off the truck trailer and engaged the Swabots.

After getting used to fighting with a sword, Sean had to re-adjust to throwing kicks and punches. But he quickly re-adjusted after a two-second bit where he didn't land any blows. He punched one Swabot, then kicked another.

Kevin had little other trouble, as he powerfully punched the surrounding Swabots, denting them like doors in a car crash. He finished them off with also-powerful kicks, sending them flying into the facades of buildings surrounding the alleys, and then grabbed Sean to get to the loading dock.

"HOLD THEM OFF!" Sean hastily ordered.

Armed with his family's sword, Daisuke didn't need any more ordering, as he cut down Swabot after Swabot. The last Swabot he faced successfully parried his strike attempts, even forcing him back. But he feinted to the left and swiftly decapitated the Swabot.

That left Hitomi to take care of the remaining Swabots. However, that was difficult for her, as she was visibly nervous while fighting them off, with shaky punches and kicks. A whack from a Swabot almost brought her down, but she kept her footing and punched the Swabot.

This gave Sean and Kevin the opening they needed to reach the workers still tied up on the loading dock. Kevin held the macaque monster at bay while Sean cut the workers loose. That was easier said than done because Sean didn't have a sword or knife to use. He growled and cursed under his breath as he tried to tear the bindings off the workers' hands. Looking back, he saw Kevin was still busy with the macaque, and the Miyazawas had just joined the fray.

Finally, he used his gauntlet's tire cuffs to burn the knots off. It took a couple of harrowing moments, but he was able to free the workers. Even though he didn't speak the language, he gestured for them to get out of there, and they did.
Now that that was done, he turned around, and the macaque whacked him aside, and he crashed into the loading bay door. He wasn't physically hurt, but his ego was. But he could also see that things were not going smoothly. And there was a glaring truancy.

"Where the hell is Yellow!" he shouted.

"I don't know!" Kevin shouted back, blocking the macaque's punch.

"Miranda's taking care of her!" the macaque blabbed. The wheels clicked in Sean's mind, and he felt his stomach suddenly tighten.

"PINK!" he shouted, "Go find Yellow!"

"ME!?" Hitomi gasped.

"No, the Pink Panther," Sean replied. "OF COURSE YOU!"

Without hesitating, Hitomi broke off her fight with the macaque and ran off, using her suit's tracking system to locate Maria.

"Oh, no, you don't!" the macaque monster warned, only for Daisuke to physically hold him back. Daisuke couldn't hold macaque off forever, but he gave his sister enough time to make her getaway before the macaque broke free and the boys took off in pursuit.

:"-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:"

"Where are we going?" Maria asked as Miranda pulled her into another empty alley.

"Away from that… whatever is happening," Miranda answered.

"But I really should be going," said Maria. "My coworkers might be worried about me."

"You'll be fine," said Miranda. "I just want to get away from whatever's happening."

"Then let me call them," Maria objected.

Miranda did not argue, and she let Maria go. As Maria got her phone out, Miranda readied the perfume. She waited while Maria dialed the office's phone first, explaining the situation. Then she waited for her to call Daisuke, essentially her boss, before finally calling Hitomi.

The Pink Ranger was still trying to find her, but now she had an exact location. First, she needed to answer. "Hai, moshi-moshi," she answered.

"Hello, Hitomi," Maria said, "Sorry, I had to get away for a minute. I'm with Miranda."

"Stay there!" Hitomi begged, "I need to find you!" Then she hung up.

"I'm sorry," Miranda said. "I must have panicked."

"That's fine," said Maria.

"Would you like to smell my perfume?" Miranda asked. "You seem interested in it."

"Of course," Maria answered.

Turning to Miranda, she held her wrist out to her friend but was surprised when the other woman
sprayed some of it in her general direction. She felt a little strange but didn't think much of it.

"You need to ditch that Japanese girl," Miranda said, her demanding vocal tone not registering for some reason. "She looks like some immature little high-schooler. I'm your only friend."

"Wait. What?" Maria asked in disbelief. "I like Hitomi, what are you—" Miranda sprayed a little more perfume in Maria's direction.

"Don't you want a friend you can keep?" Miranda asked. "I've read your Facebook page, and I feel really bad for you. Why don't you tell me everything?"

"I mean, I guess I can," Maria answered. She tried to resist whatever was going on, but the perfume's scent was getting to her. Miranda was her only good friend. The rest of them didn't care about her, that's why they yelled at her this morning.

"Don't worry," said Miranda, you can trust me."

"I can… trust you," Maria reflexively repeated.

"Leave them." Miranda wrapped her arm around Maria's shoulder, keeping her close by. "I'm your only friend."

As this happened, Hitomi finally turned the corner onto the alley and found the scene unfolding. Her breath hitching in her throat, she struggled to call out to Maria, although reluctance to reveal Maria's secret identity to anyone listening combined with her nervousness. But she ignored her racing heart, swallowed, and cleared her throat. She opened her mouth. Nothing came out. But seeing Maria in the situation she was in upped the stakes. She took in a deep breath and yelled,

"LET HER GO!"

Both Maria and Miranda turned to the alley's opening to see Hitomi standing there. Maria was surprised, but Miranda was angry. "Hitomi?" Maria asked.

"What are you doing here?" Miranda growled. "I'm her friend."

"She's my friend," Miranda repeated.

"No, you're NOT!" Hitomi let her anger boil over. She lunged forward and punched Miranda's left cheek. Both young women fell aside.

Maria was shaken, but felt fine; Hitomi's haymaker had deliberately missed her. But now her head felt a little clearer, and it wasn't a concussion since it would feel a lot worse than getting knocked down. "Miranda, are you—What!"

Miranda gingerly held her swelling left cheek, cringed and tried to sit back up. But her hair was jostled out of the way, and she spat some green blood out.

Maria stared at her. Her expression quickly turned from shock to anger. "WHAT is going on!?!" she shouted.

"It's nothing. It's just a little quirk—"

"The perfume she's using has been recalled by ou—the Miyazawa company's stores because of its side-effects," Hitomi answered. "The subject is left open to suggestions."

"She's lying!" Miranda spat.
"No, YOU are!" Hitomi shouted. "You and the macaque were in league together! Maria, please, believe me!"

Maria looked from Hitomi, her face concealed by the helmet but doubtlessly pained, to Miranda's angry expression, and still holding the perfume bottle. Thinking for a split second, Maria finally connected the dots—how she felt strange, her behavior—and came to the right conclusion.

"You lied to me!" Maria spat, "And you tried to take advantage of me!"

Miranda's expression momentarily turned guilty, but she kept her anger up as Maria stood, walked to the perfume bottle and threw it against the wall. Pumping her fist, Hitomi took off running out of the alley towards the boys. Concluding that Miranda already knew her secret identity, Maria morphed in front of her, and followed Hitomi out of the alley, although not before lingering momentarily with an apologetic expression hidden by the helmet and visor. Now alone, Miranda sat back up, holding her cheek. She waited a couple of moments before contacting Rashon.

"This is Miranda. I failed my mission."

Then she stood up and followed them.

:-::-: Power Rangers GPX :-:--:

The boys chased, and occasionally confront, Macaque through the Tokyo streets. For a moment it looked like Macaque would get to Hitomi first, running on all four legs. But Daisuke summoned an extra burst of energy at that moment, overtook Macaque and blocked his route, before cutting him down, if only for a moment. But that moment was enough for Sean and Kevin also to overtake Macaque.

"Give it up!" Sean shouted. "And no monkey business!" That drew a groan from both Kevin and Daisuke. Sean grinned unapologetically.

The moment Daisuke gave them ended quickly, with the Macaque monster slashing its paw at them. Sean grabbed it and made a wish, but he'd only grabbed it for a microsecond. It only delayed the monkey's blow. But it gave Kevin an opening to move in. The Irishman socked Macaque with a left hook, knocking the monkey off balance. A right-legend roundhouse kick followed it up, but the monkey blocked the kicked and countered, shoving Kevin off his left foot.

Sean had already returned to his feet when this happened, so he took his opening to slam into the monkey, like he was hitting someone in hockey. But the monkey bounced away and made it to a street lamp so he could finally use his monkey abilities. He smacked his ass to taunt them but forgot they had guns and had to dodge a barrage of blaster fire.

But when he landed, he was on the boys in about a second, leaping over them, and using his hands, feet, and tail to not only grab their weapons out of their hands but kick them down. He bounded off and hung from legs on a street light. "How's that for monkeying around?!" he taunted them.

Growling, Sean got back up to lunge for the monkey, but Kevin held him back. "LEMME AT 'IM!"

"You want monkey business!?!" Macaque taunted, "I'll give you monkey business!" Hanging from one leg, he shot the boys using their own blasters. The boys screamed and leaped out of the way.

Then two shots, a blaster shot and an arrow rang out and struck Macaque, bringing him down. The boys turned around to find both girls coming their way.

"Will you guys quit monkeying around?" Maria asked. "What is with men and their needing
"Women's help, *chica*?"

"Men can't do anything without us!" Hitomi shouted, raising her bow above her head.

"I HEARD THAT!" Sean shouted. "MARIＡ!" This shout was happier, jubilant. Kevin ran over to Macaque to retrieve their weapons and tossed the blasters back to the guys.

Angered, Macaque screeched and charged the reunited Rangers. They jumped out of the way right before he got to them, and Sean side-kicked him. Next, Kevin used his GP Sword to slash him, and Daisuke did the same with his family's katana. Maria lunged forward, swiping at Macaque, but her attempts were blocked or missed. But Hitomi jumped on her shoulders, vaulted off of them, tumbled through the air and clotheslined Macaque from above.

Macaque was stunned, unable to comprehend how things had gone wrong. Still, he had some control over the situation and wasn't losing badly.

He noticed some gawkers had gathered on the near and far sidewalk. They took pictures. And there were also cars there. Seeing his chance, he grabbed the nearest compact coupe and wildly swung it at the Rangers. They ducked to avoid it. But Macaque let the car go. It flew towards the far sidewalk. The gawkers screamed and tried to run, and it crashed into the building's façade. Some red trickled down and limbs stuck out of the impact zone.

The sight froze the Rangers momentarily, and Macaque had his opening. Lunging forward, he bowled them over, swatting them all aside. He stopped, pivoted, picked Sean and Kevin up, and tossed them several yards into the near-side building façade. Hitomi jumped on top of him, with Maria following, and the two struck back, punching and kicking him. This lasted shortly, as Macaque grabbed Hitomi and threw her onto Maria, knocking them both down. Expertly catching Daisuke's Mountain Staff, he ripped the *naginata* from his hands and used it against him.

"I thought you'd all be harder," he said as he tossed another car into a group of bystanders. "You're not even trying to—AH!"

A blaster shot rang out. Then two more. Confused, the Rangers got back to their feet and confronted the Macaque. Only Maria turned to find the culprit, and only caught a fleeting glimpse of Miranda before she disappeared.

"We gotta end this," said Sean. "Let's get 'Im!"

Gathering the others around him, he pressed on his gauntlet. "NITRO CANNON!" he shouted. It materialized in front of the Rangers. Taking hold of it, they aimed it at the Macaque. "Ready! Aim! FIRE!" Sean pulled the trigger. The energy blast struck Macaque, knocked him down, and he exploded.

:-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:

Keeping her head down, Miranda stood in front of Rashon while he reviewed the skirmish footage. They were the only people in the room, except for the guards… guarding… from the outside, but they weren't actually in the room, and the door was closed. Severe displeasure never left his face once, and he only looked up from the footage to glare at her. She shrank each time. And it was so quiet that she could hear her heart beating if it were even quieter. But she kept up the appearance of discipline on the outside, even if both of them knew there wasn't much to say.

Still, she desperately wanted Rashon to say something because this was getting to be too much. "Were you the one who shot the genetic experiment?" he asked. No, not like that.
"No, sir," she replied.

He looked up at her. His gaze bore into her very soul. He didn't seem to believe her, although she came to that hypothesis by the way he didn't look up from the screen. He sucked in a breath and let out an extended sigh. "I am positive that is you," he said.

He was right, to be honest. After she saw what the Pink Ranger was willing to do to help the Yellow Ranger, she felt something change inside her. So she shot the macaque. It was only a matter of time before Rashon found out. And now that it looked like he did, her attitude changed.

"And if I did?" she asked.

"I would be disappointed," he replied, but in a very passive-aggressive way. "Remember that you serve Zordoniankind, and the Empire does not tolerate a nail that sticks up. Those that do must be hammered back into place. So I shall ask you again; did you shoot Macaque?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"I wanted to."

Rashon paused. "You cared for the Yellow Ranger."

"In a way."

"It is dangerous to get close to the humans," he said. "Perhaps this was not the right strategy."

"Not my problem," said Miranda.


Miranda waited for him to say more, but his silence spoke volumes. So she saluted, turned around, and walked away. As she walked away, Rashon stood up and drew his pistol, aiming it at her head. Stopping in front of the door, Miranda closed her eyes and smiled one last time. Then Rashon pulled the trigger.

:--:--: Power Rangers GPX :--:--:

"And then I had to leave Venezuela," Maria finished. "I've never gotten over it."

Still wearing her office clothes, she sat in between the other Rangers in the bar's corner booth, stroking a glass of wine and her hand on her forehead. Everyone else besides Hitomi had a glass of liquor in front of them. "So, for the final time, I'm sorry for acting like a bish these last two days. I'm just… I—I need some friends!"

Sitting next to her, Sean hiccupped. He found that he didn't get drunk that easily, but he'd already had a couple of glasses of brandy, a saucer of sake and a couple of beers. So he was feeling pretty drunk. "Thatsh usually not an excuse," he said. "But I guessh it's better than nothin'."

"I'm sorry, I didn't know what the perfume was doing to me," she said. "I'M SORRRRRYYYYYYYYY!" her quietness turned into a loud wail, and she glomped onto the bewildered Sean, drawing an amused reaction from Kevin, an indifferent one from Daisuke, and a surprised one from Hitomi. But Sean nearly spilled his Budweiser. "I DON'T WANT TO BE MEAN, I WANT TO BE A FRIEND, PLEASE DON'T HATE MEEEEEE!" She wailed like a
siren.

Sean didn't know what to do. He held onto his Budweiser while he looked around at everyone else, an awkward nervousness on his face. Kevin was the only one laughing. Maybe he knew this was a good time to, even though he clearly understood that Maria's apology was sincere. He was just entertained to see his friend trying to figure out what was going on.

"No, you know what? I get it, you're lonely, you wanted a friend and stuff, but you were kind of a bish," he said.

"I know, I know, and I said I was sorry!" she wailed again. "I almost got us killed! I'm so sorry! I'm going to do better. I'm going to be a better friend and person."

"Apology accepted," said Kevin. "Why don't you two kiss and make up?"

"Let's just do some karaoke," Hitomi interrupted.

"Ok, ok," Sean muttered, gingerly carrying his half-empty Budweiser out of the booth. But he turned to Maria and said, with a sincere grin, "I forgive you!"

Maria was drunk, but her heart melted at this sunshine boy.

But then she laughed at him as he drunkenly sang along to "Smells Like Teen Spirit." No offense to Mr. Cobain, but it's the perfect drunk karaoke song. It's the combination of Cobain's lyrics and incoherent off-key singing that makes it work. Sean made it better by raising his Budweiser to the sky and then tried to stage-dive. The stage was less than 6 inches tall, and no one else was around him. You probably know how this ended.

While Sean nursed a bruised ego, Maria took Hitomi's hand, dragged her up to the stage so they could sing along to Ricky Martin. Along the way, they stepped on Sean's back.

He should've been angry, and he was, but watching her perform with Hitomi and having a blast on stage made him smile back.

:-:-:-: PRGPX :-:-:-:

Maria hurried down the stairs, roller skates in hand. Today was Saturday, a day off, and she was feeling good. She would go roller-skating around the neighborhood, this time in a light mood, freed from Miranda's influence. With friends like her, who needed enemies? She opened the door and was about to sit down when she stopped. It didn't feel right to go out on her own this time. Sighing, she flopped her arms to the side and almost got hit by the door. She thought for a minute, before she got an idea, smiling. Re-entering the house, she put her roller skates down on the foyer, ran upstairs, went straight for Sean's room and knocked on the door.

"Come in!" She opened the door. He sat at his desk, looking at his laptop. "Maria?"

"I'm going skating, want to come with me?"

He looked at her blankly. "There isn't an ice rink anywhere nearby," he said.

"No, not that," she said. "Roller skating! I thought you'd like to do it, and I really wanted you to come along!"

"Alrighty, then!" he said excitedly, grabbing his inlines, pads and hockey helmet. He was already dressed when they reached the bottom of the stairs.
They donned their skates, and Maria took off first, shouting, "Catch me if you can!" He caught up to her quickly, and they both skating through the neighborhood.

:-:-:-: Power Rangers GPX :-:-:-:

End chapter
A few days after the battle with Grond, the Rangers were enjoying a day off. It was a Saturday, so there really wasn't much to do at the moment. But that didn't stop Venezuelan Yellow Ranger Maria Aparicio. She had her own plans today, and it involved a day on the town. Oh, dear. She had been meaning to see the sights in Tokyo since she got there, but she never really had the chance to do it so far. What with the days in training at the UN base and fights against the Zordonians. So today would be a good day to go out. But she didn't want to do it alone. A certain rich girl came to mind. "Hitomi!" She called out to said rich girl. "Where are you?"

"I'm right here," Hitomi said as she came out her room in the girls' townhouse. "What is it?"

"Well *chica*," she said. For those who don't know, *chica*, besides being the Spanish word for 'girl' is Maria's little pet name for Hitomi. "I was thinking you and I have a day out. A girl-date, if you will."

"A girl-date?" Hitomi asked with a confused look on her face. "Are you a lesbian?"

Maria sighed and rolled her eyes in response. "No, that's not what I meant," she said. "I meant we just have a day on the town, like friends, a girls' day out. I have no romantic interest in you, just friendship." Hitomi put her hand to her chin to think about it. But Maria had another little incentive. "We can go shopping in Ginza."

That got Hitomi's attention. "I like that!" She said. "We can go to my family's department store. I have a discount there for being the daughter of the CEO."

"¡Perfecto!" Maria said. "Why don't you get ready? I'll meet you in outside in 30 minutes. ¿Bueno?"

"Okay!" Hitomi replied. She ducked back into her bedroom to get ready while Maria went over to the guys' townhouse to wait for Hitomi.

Outside, it was a beautiful summer day. The temperature was right, there was not a cloud in the sky, and the sun shone brightly. Just like those days in Caracas—except it was usually in the 90s in June in Caracas. She was wearing a simple combination, a tank top with straps and shorts. She wondered what it was like in Chicago or Dublin this time of year, as well. Well, she would get that answer, when she saw Sean sitting at the kitchen table in the guys' townhouse. The brown-haired American noticed her and gave her a quick nod. "Hey Maria," he said.

"*Hola* Sean," she replied. She walked in to see Sean reading a newspaper and having a drink. Nothing alcoholic, though. If she wanted to, she could ask the Red Ranger to come with her—NOT! The Red Ranger himself wore a red t-shirt with a Native American head on it and the number '88' on the back.

"So who are you waiting for?" Sean asked.

"Hitomi," she replied. "So where are Kevin and Daisuke?"

"Kevin's visiting a friend in the Minato ward and rich boy's at a Sumo stable," said Sean. "I got no plans today."

"Well then, would you like to go out with Hitomi and I?" Maria asked. Sean just laughed.
"Nah, I'm not interested," he said. "Sounds like a girl thing."

"Oh well," said Maria. "You'll miss out on all the fun."

"I don't care," he replied.

"Suit yourself," she replied. "Hitomi and I are going to Ginza." Sean, knowing exactly what Ginza is, spat out his drink in sudden surprise. Maria could not help but laugh slightly at this, but she stopped before he recovered.

"Ginza!" He said. "You're going there?"

"So?" Maria asked.

"I'm not sure if we have enough money for you to be blowing it there!" He said again. For those who don't know, Ginza is an upscale shopping district in Tokyo. There are many expensive department stores and restaurants in that district. It's sort of like the Magnificent Mile or Rodeo Drive or Madison Avenue or Oxford Street of Tokyo. And it's also why Sean had his shocked reaction. That place is expensive! And for Sean saying it's too expensive, the Rangers are (obviously) earning a salary from the UN for their service.

"Oh, don't worry!" Maria replied. "One of Hitomi's family's department stores in in Ginza, so she'll get a discount."

"A discount?" Sean asked. "Really?"

"Si, really," Maria replied. "I think it'll come in handy."

"Sure," said Sean. "Just don't spend too much."

"Don't tell me that," said Maria. "We're probably using Hitomi's dinero."

"Oh dear," said Sean.

In his throne room, Rashon was, looking over some reports about recent military operations across the galaxy. None of them had anything to do with Earth, by the way, he knew about the situation first-hand, so there was no need to brief him. As usual, he had his glass of Zordonian wine, except in this case, it was empty, as he had finished it just a few moments ago.

It was then that a column of light materialized into his throne room. He looked up from his papers to see a woman appear in front of the throne. "Liaria," he said. "What is it?"

"I intend to go down to the surface, my Emperor," she said, keeping her eyes down. She raised her eyes to look at the Emperor. Rashon raised his eyebrow at her.

"What for?" He asked. "Do you intend to attack the Rangers?"

"If I meet them, I will," she said. "But that's not the real reason why."

"Oh? Then what is?" Rashon asked.

"SHOPPING!" Liaria said in a bright, cheery and enthusiastic tone. Rashon responded by groaning and facepalming at Liaria's announcement.

"Shopping?" Rashon asked. "Really, Liaria, why must you be so concerned with material goods?"
"Why not?" She replied. "This planet just has the best shopping of all the places we've attacked, why not have a little fun?"

"I'll never understand you," Rashon said. "Very well, but go in disguise. I don't want any problems."

"Don't worry," Liaria said. "I'm sure you'll send Phaedos down to fail again."

"I do plan to send him down when he comes up with an effective plan," Rashon said with hostility on his tone.

"Well, good luck with that," Liaria said without even considering what Rashon said. With that, she bowed and vanished from Rashon's sight. The white-haired, white-clad emperor just shook his head again and placed his face in his hand before going back back to his work. But a few moments later, another column of light materialized in the throne room, eventually revealing a blonde-haired young man.

"I was just talking about you," Rashon said.

"About what, my Emperor?" Phaedos asked as he bowed.

"Do you have a plan to defeat the Rangers?" Rashon asked.

"Yes," Phaedos said. "Have you heard of the Terran phrase 'divide and conquer'?"

"No, I don't feel I'm familiar with that," Rashon said. "What do you mean by that?"

"I plan on attacking the Rangers while they're separated," Phaedos said. "They seem to be less of a threat when working individually."

"Interesting," Rashon said. "I suppose I'll let you try this plan of yours."

"Thank you, my Emperor," Phaedos said as the column of light re-appeared and he disappeared. Rashon just watched silently before saying,

"Your plan had better work, Phaedos. For your sake."

"Ay. Dios. Mio." Maria stood slack-jawed in front of the Miyazawa department store in Ginza. And when the narration says 'slack-jawed', it's not an exaggeration. They stood in front of a large, marble-and-glass building. This housed the Miyazawa department store. "This place is huge! You family owns this?"

"And ones in Kyoto, Osaka, Sapporo and all over Japan," Hitomi said. "We even own shares in several other department store chains like Macy's."

"Tu es muy rico," Maria said.

"Do you want to go in?" Hitomi asked.

"Oh, right," Maria said. Hitomi gestured to the door and Maria entered the department store.

The store was even more grand indoors. The white marble filled the grand lobby, and the height of the store was even more evident. Maria had to lean her head all the way back just to see. "This is a department store!" She said in amazement.

"One of the oldest in Tokyo," Hitomi said. "And the second oldest branch after the one in Kyoto."
"Hello, Can—oh, Hitomi-san," a clerk had come up to them and noticed Hitomi. "How can I help you?"

"Hello," Hitomi said in return.

"Hola," Maria said. The clerk looked confused, most likely since she didn't speak Spanish. "Oh, sorry, I said hello. I guess you don't speak Spanish?"

"No, I don't," the clerk said. "But if you and Hitomi-san need anything, we'll be happy to help."

"As long as they have what I'm looking for I'm fine," Maria said. She seemed to be adjusting to the store already. "Where's the clothing department?"

"Second floor," Hitomi said. "What do you have in mind?"

"I'm not sure yet," Maria said. "I'll think of it once I see what there is."

"I can help you find it," the clerk said. "If you could just follow me."

The clerk led the pair to the second floor, where the large clothing department was. Once they got there, Maria led Hitomi around—which should be inverted—trying to find what she was looking for. Finally, she found it. "Here it is!" She said as she came to the capri pants. "I love these things!"

"But I thought everyone hates capri pants," Hitomi said. "Why do you want them?"

"Because I think I look good in them," Maria replied. "I know some people don't but I think I do. I especially like them on summer days."

"I think that men say they shouldn't wear them," Hitomi said.

"Well then, all the more for us!" Maria said in return. "If there's no manpris, then there's more capris for the mujeres!" She took a pair off the rack and said, "I'm going to try these!" She quickly ducked into a changing room for a few minutes while Hitomi waited outside. Well, she went into the changing room area, but she let Maria have her privacy. And so will we. "¡Muy muy bueno!" She shouted. "¡Me encanta!"

"What?" Hitomi asked.

"I love these things!" Maria shouted back in English. She opened the door and flaunted the capris she was wearing. "They're so comfortable! It's fantastic!"

"I'm glad you like them," Hitomi said.

"I think you need to find something too," Maria said. "Make yourself feel good."

"Feel good?" Hitomi asked. "Why?"

"Well, I'm afraid you have some confidence issues," Maria said. "A woman with confidence issues will have a hard time in life. Heck, anyone with confidence issues will have problems in life, man or woman."

"So what do you suggest?" Hitomi asked.

"Where are the shirts?" Maria asked.

"They're around the corner," the clerk replied. "Of course, you'll have to take those capris off."
"Oh, lo siento," Maria said as she went back in her changing stall. She came out wearing the jeans she had been wearing before and grabbed Hitomi by the arm and led her to where the shirts were.

"Shall I hold these for you?" The clerk asked, referring to the capris.

"Okay," Maria said. Maria then grabbed Hitomi by the arm, much to her surprise, and dragged her to the shirt section; which is really strange since Hitomi should know the store like the back of her hand.

"You know, I'm the one who should be leading you," Hitomi protested.

"Lo siento," the Venezuelan woman replied. She motioned for Hitomi to lead the way to the shirt section. Immediately, Maria began looking for some shirts to wear, before finding the tank tops. She flipped through them before settling on a yellow-colored one that piqued her interest. She took the shirt off the rack and showed it Hitomi. "What do you think?"

"It looks good," Hitomi said. "I think I should find one, too!" She too began looking for something else, looking more for something that seemed more feminine. She found a short-sleeved pink blouse that also piqued her interest. "I like this one!"

"Then let's try them out," Maria said as she walked over to the changing room and Hitomi followed.

Well, since they need their privacy, the narration will cut to the two stepping out of the changing rooms. "Ooh la la!" Maria said as she looked at herself in the mirror. "I look ¡Muy fantastico!"

"You look great!" Hitomi said as she got out. Maria's tanktop exposed her athletic build, which was making Hitomi somewhat envious. Maria of course, could read it on her face (it wasn't hidden, it was actually pretty plain on her face). In order to make Hitomi feel better, Maria complemented Hitomi.

"You don't look so bad yourself chica," she said.

"You think so?" Hitomi asked. Her blouse didn't show much off; but since Hitomi is a little more modest than Maria, it made sense.

"You have your own beauty," Maria said.

"I still wish I had your body," Hitomi said.

"Than get to work on it!" Maria said. "You don't get something like this sitting around. I'm actually an active woman, which is justified considering our line of work."

"I guess so," Hitomi asked. "My mom says I have confidence issues."

"I'd say she has a point," Maria said. "I mean, you were unsure of yourself when we first fought that Godzilla monster."

"What do you suggest?" Hitomi asked.

"It's like that old cliché," Maria said. "Just believe in yourself and you can do it. I might also have some other ways to help."

"That sounds good," Hitomi said; but now Hitomi had a different question. "Howcome you never wear skirts?"

Quite frankly, Maria was (justifiably) surprised at the complete randomness of the question. "Where did that come from?" She asked. Hitomi shrugged. "Well, since you asked, I'll tell you why. I'm not
going to wear a skirt because I know some pervert's going to look up my skirt when I fight! Wearing jeans prevents that."

Meanwhile, Liaria teleported into an alleyway not too far from the department store. Knowing the humans would most likely be suspicious of her, she snapped her fingers and instantly, a red jacket appeared and her opera gloves disappeared, as did the gems on her dress and her boots, which were now replaced with high heels. "Now then," she said. "Let's go." She stepped out of the alley and put some black-lens sunglasses on.

As she walked down the street ion her little strut, she noticed the men looking at her in a… special way. And the women didn't look very happy. Well, the ones with their significant others, of course. The ones without (or of a different taste, if you know what I mean) looked at her with the same amazed gaze as the men. Trying to figure out whether they were creeped out by it and who weren't. She chuckled to herself. "Humans are compulsory creatures," she said to herself. "I'm already enjoying myself." She walked over to the next block and found an interesting department store. "Miyazawa?" She said. "That looks interesting".

"...Ugh! I hate high heels!" Maria said as she and Hitomi walked past the high heeled shoes. "They make my back hurt so much I want to kill myself!"

"I agree," Hitomi said. "They make my feet hurt."

"So we've browsed through the shirts, we've tried on kimonos, we've gone through the shoes, what else is there?" Maria asked.

"The store has a pastry shop downstairs," Hitomi said. Maria's eyes widened and she seemed excited. "I thought you'd hate pastries!" Hitomi said. Now she was surprised.

"Why can't I?" Maria asked. "I have to watch my figure so much, I feel like indulging for once!"

"Okay," Hitomi said. "But I'm having some, too."

"Alright," Phaedos said. "The Rangers are separated. Do you know what to do?"

"Yes!" The monster said. "When do we start?"

"Soon," Phaedos said. "We need to wait until Liara draws out the female Rangers."

"¡Ay dios mio! ¡Me encanta!" Needless to say, Maria had found the pastries. In front of her sat a menagerie of various cakes, cookies, brownies, pies, mousses, croissants, and various other sweets made of chocolate, meringue, various fruits and other ingredients. Just looking at these made Maria's mouth water. She literally felt like a kid in a candy store. Hitomi herself was affected as well, and she looked through the glass pane covering these delightful goodies. Of course, Hitomi could pay for all this because as you know, she's rich; filthy rich.

"I don't know which one to try first!" Hitomi said with equal amounts of enthusiasm as Maria.

"How about that one?" Maria asked as she pointed to a chocolate cake. "I like it!"

"We'll take that one," Hitomi said as she pointed to the cake Maria was talking about. The clerk behind the counter bowed.

"Good choice, Miyazawa-sama," she said as she took the cake out of the display case. "This is one of our finest cakes."
"I'll bet!" Maria said. The clerk rang the cake up and handed the pastry (cut into two slices) to Maria and Hitomi and the two giddy ladies hurried over to the table, just as Liaria walked up to the counter. She too was amazed at the selection of pastries before her. "Wow!" She said. "Humans can make these things?" She marveled at the treats, and couldn't decide which one to try first. The large selection of goodies literally made her salivate just looking at the treats. Her reverie though, was interrupted when a clerk walked over to her.

"If I may make a suggestion," she said. "Our chocolate cake is our signature item."

Liaria's eyes shone stars. She had never had 'chocolate' before! This should be enjoyable. "I'll take a piece!" She said enthusiastically. The clerk rang the item up and Liaria paid for the item (yes, she had money) and enthusiastically walked over to a table and sat down.

Maria took the cut of chocolate cake with her fork and lifted it up to her mouth slowly; she wanted to savor the moment. She opened her mouth slowly and also slowly, put the cake in her mouth. The pastry hit her tongue and her eyes widened in surprise. It tasted so good! Her eyes rolled back and she began moaning at how delicious the cake tasted, licking the fork she had in her mouth as well. She really wanted to enjoy this. She continued moaning as she sucked on the fork before she swallowed it. "Oh my god!" She shouted in an enthusiastic manner. She would have done it again if she hadn't noticed Hitomi looking at her with a disturbed look on her face. "What's wrong?"

"Do you mind not eating that so… suggestively?" She asked.

"Why?" Maria asked.

"For one, you're creeping me out," Hitomi said. "And second, every person in the room is staring at you, especially the men!"

Maria took her eyes off Hitomi and looked around the room. Indeed, everyone was looking at her, and the men were even more interested. Maria was embarrassed, thinking she got a little too indulgent. "Sorry," she said in English. "It was so good!" The patrons however, seemed confused until Hitomi translated Maria's words. Quickly, the room stopped looking at her. And some of the patrons quickly got up and rushed to the counter, no doubt to buy some cake.

"I think you got a little too enthusiastic," Hitomi said. "Like that scene in When Harry Met Sally."

"At least this time it was that good," Maria said. She took a bite again and this time, she reacted more like a kid taking a bite out of a chocolate bar.

Liaria, having seen Maria (though not her face) was indeed surprised at Maria's… enthusiasm. Just how good was this stuff, anyhow? She took a piece of the cake and bit into it. And unlike Maria, she didn't eat her cake so… suggestively. "This is good!" She said out loud and began quickly eating the rest of the treat. Well, before she knew it, the cake was gone and she felt like a kid who lost his favorite toys. Don't worry, the kid metaphors are going to stop. She got up and walked over to the counter to get another cake when she looked over and saw a familiar face.

"Those little bitches!" She said to herself. She had indeed noticed Maria and Hitomi and her anger at the two overshadowed her desire for another cake. She remembered when they gave her the scars on her cheeks. It had taken some intense healing to get rid of those scars. Her vanity indeed confused the other Zordonians. She walked up to the two and slammed her fists down on the table, startling the two.

"Um, excuse me?" Maria asked as she looked up at the woman. "And what's with that outfit?" She
said with a laugh. "You look like an '80s woman!" Hitomi could be seen stifling a laugh.

"You little bitch!" The woman said in a hostile tone. "Don't you recognize me?"

"Well, I recognize that suit from every bad fashion in the 1980s," Maria said, making fun of her look. "And what's with the pink hair? Who do you think you are, Madonna?" The woman got angry enough that Maria could notice a vein popping on her forehead. But then the woman calmed down and took off her sunglasses before taking out a fan. She then used that fan to change her clothes instantly from her disguise and back into Liaria.

The patrons in the pastry shop all got up from their seats in terror at Liaria's sudden appearance and tried to back away. Hitomi and Maria, however, got up and got into fighting stances. "Liaria!" Maria said. "What do you want?"

"What do you think I want?" Liaria said. "I want to kill you two!"

"I guess I should have thought of that," Maria said.

"We're not actually going to fight her in here, are we?" Hitomi asked.

"Let's get out of here," Maria replied. Hitomi looked shocked at Maria's statement.

"What?" She asked. "Are you crazy?"

"No, what I mean is, we lure her out of the store and into the street!" Maria replied. "Then we fight!"

"Oh, I see," Hitomi said. The two backed away slightly when Liaria advanced on them.

"On the count of three, we grab the bags and run outside," Maria said. Hitomi nodded as the two shuffled to the bags holding their (purchased) merchandise. "One… two…" Hitomi and Maria shuffled forward again. Liraria raised up her fan, ready to strike. "THREE!"

In a quick move, the two grabbed their shopping bags and bolted out of the pastry shop leaving Liaria and the other patrons stunned. Well, Liaria was stunned for about a second. "Come back here, you little bitches!" She called as she ran out of the pastry shop. Her stiletto heels though, made it difficult to run as fast as the girls could.

Maria and Hitomi, meanwhile, were like blurs speeding through the store, trying not to bump into anyone or knock anything down and break it. The pastry shop was in the basement and they had just gotten up into the main floor and were headed for the exits. They eventually reached the white marble lobby and a clerk who was waiting for them.

"We're in a hurry and we really don't want to get in trouble!" Hitomi said as she handed the bags to the bewildered clerks as the two bolted out the door. Just seconds later, Liaria came running up behind the two.

Finally, Hitomi and Maria got outside and ran into a (surprisingly) clear Tokyo street and turned around and got into fighting stances as Liaria finally caught up to them. This scene indeed drew a crowd and gawkers who weren't expecting a movie to be shot about now. "I finally caught you two!" Liaria said. "Prepare to die!"

"You wish!" Maria said as she and Hitomi took their morphers out and put them on their wrists. "Do you have your key?" Maria whispered.

"Yeah," Hitomi replied. "Do you?"
"Of course," Maria said. The two reached for their keys and flipped the blade open. "Ready?" She said as she exposed her morpher.

"Ready!" Hitomi replied as she exposed her.

"GPX, Start it—" They were about to morph, but Liaria attacked them before they had the chance, forcing them to scatter.

"Don't even think about it!" Liaria said. "I'm going to kill you right here and—"

"Liaria!" A sudden voice interrupted Liaria's threat. Maria and Hitomi reacted in shock while Liaria did not look happy one bit.

"Phaedos," she said. "What do you want?"

Indeed, Phaedos had arrived, flanked by a scorpion-like monster and a phalanx of Swabots. "What do I want?" He asked in his smug tone. "I'm here to kill the Power Rangers!"

"I was here first!" Liaria snapped back. "Don't interrupt me! And just what are you up to?"

"My dear Liaria," he said as he walked up to her. "I am initiating a coordinated attack on the Rangers, trying to keep them separated so that they can't mount a counter attack. As of now, Swabots are engaging the male Rangers while I handle the female Rangers."

"Not unless I have anything to say!" Liaria snapped. "I was here first! I'm going to kill them myself!"

With the two villains distracted, Hitomi and Maria tried to take the opportunity to escape while the Liaria and Phaedos bickered. They slowly backed away, hoping that the two would not notice them. When they knew the two would not notice them, they turned around to escape…

… Only to find themselves facing another platoon of Swabots. "Aaah!"

"I suspected you two would try to escape!" Phaedos said. "So I brought some extra Swabots!"

"Dammit!" Maria said. The two Rangers were cornered not only by Phaedos, Liaria, the scorpion monster and the Swabots in front of them, but behind them. But Liaria was still not happy.

"I still want to kill them!" Liaria said. "I won't let you hog all the glory for yourself! I want to kill them for what they did to my face!"

"Who said you were to leave?" Phaedos said with a smirk. Liaria instantly got the message and smirked as well before turning around to face the Rangers.

"Prepare to die!" She said. She waved her fan at the two and some flames burst out of the fan and towards Maria and Hitomi, but the two dodged the fire blast. It did, however, get the civilians in the street to scatter.

"Well, at least we won't have to worry about the civilians," Hitomi said.

"Surrender now!" Phaedos said. "You're outnumbered!"

"You wish!" Maria shouted back. "Ready?"

"Ready!" Hitomi replied. The two exposed their AcceleMorphers.

"GPX, Start it up!" The two jammed their keys into the morphers and gave them a twist. There was a
flash of light and the two appeared in their Ranger suits, Maria in yellow and Hitomi in pink.

"Let's go!" Maria said.

"Got it!" Hitomi said. The two female Rangers then charged the enemies.

"Get them!" Phaedos shouted to his Swabot soldiers. The Swabots in turn charged Maria and Hitomi and engaged them.

In a swift move, Maria flipped over a Swabot captain as she attempted to reach Liaria. Hitomi followed suit, using her gymnastics-inspired style to take the Swabot down. Maria pressed her belt buckle and her Haz Daggers materialized before her. Hitomi also pressed her belt buckle and her Am Bow appeared as well. The two began working as a tandem, with Maria attacking the Swabots from up close and Hitomi attacking from a distance. Maria blacked a Swabot sword with one of her daggers before pivoting around, hacking at the same 'bot, trying to get at Liaria. Hitomi fired her bow, finishing the 'bot off.

The two cut a swath through the Swabots, trying to get to Liaria. Maria ducked underneath Swabot and rolled underneath it as well, before rising to her feet and stabbing the 'bot literally in the back. Hitomi meanwhile, leapt up in the air, and twisting her body around like a cat, fired an arrow at the Swabots. The arrow struck one and then exploded, taking several of them out. "Lightning Throw!" Maria called, throwing one Haz Dagger at a Swabot and throwing one at another. Bolts of electricity radiated from the daggers and zapped the robots. Hitomi, meanwhile, spun on her hands, kicking the Swabots around her.

With a clear path, Maria could finally get to Liaria and she charged forward. One Swabot did get in her way, but she took it out with a swift roundhouse kick to its midsection. With the path now clear, she charged the waiting Liaria—

… Only to find the crystal sword of Phaedos in her face. The new revelation indeed caught her off guard, but only for a second. Being a Ranger means you have to be ready for anything. "I suspect you're the most powerful female of the group," he said. "If that's true, then you should be able to handle this!" He then swung his crystal sword at Maria, prompting her to block the attack with her daggers.

"Maria!" Hitomi called. "Hold on, I'll be there!"

"Forget it!" Maria called back. "You take care of Liaria!"

"Okay!" Hitomi said as she aimed her bow at Liaria. She drew the string back and fired the arrow at Liaria, confident it would strike.

But Liaria waved her fan and Hitomi's arrow was literally blown away. "No way!" She said just as Liaria got in her face and kicked her in the midsection. Hitomi staggered back a few steps before she got her bow ready to fire again when Liaria came up and kicked the bow out of her hands.

"Not so hot without that bow of yours?" She asked as she grabbed Hitomi's hands.

"Not really," Hitomi said as she kneed the woman in the midsection, forcing her away from her. Hitomi then drew her Octane Blaster, which resembled a fuel pump nozzle head and turned it into a sword. "I still have this!"

"Very well, then!" She said as she closed her fan up. She charged Hitomi and attacked her, using the fan as a sword.
Meanwhile, Maria was having trouble with Phaedos. Previously, he had laid waste to Rangers like they were mere playthings. But Maria was still trying to hold on. With her dual wielding daggers, she fought off Phaedos' attacks with his crystal sword. Phaedos swung his sword down right at Maria, but she cross-blocked the attack using her daggers. "Impressive," Phaedos said. Maria threw Phaedos's sword and jumped back. She switched the dagger in her left hand and held it in a reverse style.

"I'm full of surprises," the Venezuelan woman said as she lunged at Phaedos, thrusting the dagger in her right hand and hacking with the dagger in the left. But although she had Phaedos on the defensive, she could not tell that Phaedos was merely toying with her.

"Not bad," he lied. He swung his sword at her again, striking her and sending her and sparks flying. She landed on her backside five feet away. "But not good enough!" He came in again and brought the crystal sword down on her; again, she cross-blocked with her daggers. "Good reflexes!" he said.

At that point, she took the opportunity to try and kick him in the groin. It was a dirty trick, but she had to do it to get him off of her. It worked, and he backed off, allowing her to get back up. She again went on the offensive, thrusting her dagger at Phaedos again, but her dodged each successive thrust.

And then, much her dismay, she noticed out of the corner of her eye, the scorpion monster trying to attack her. The scorpion monster swung its tail at her, forcing her to dodge. "Now that's not fair!" She said. "It's two against one!"

"All is fair in combat!" The anthropomorphic scorpion shouted. Maria groaned under her helmet and visor. The scorpion monster attacked her again, forcing her to duck for cover. She looked to Hitomi and noticed she was having trouble taking on Liaria. Although she hated to do it since she considered herself a strong woman, she found herself feeling the need to call for back up from the guys. This thought of course was dashed when Phaedos lunged at her, thrusting his crystal sword at her. Again she dodged, but she found herself with her back literally against the wall of the Miyazawa department store. Not a good sign.

"You're cornered!" Phaedos said. "Give it up!"

"Never!" Maria replied.

"Foolish girl," Phaedos said. He held out his hand and a ball of dark energy began to form. Maria took her chances and attacked Phaedos with her dagger, but the scorpion omster used its large claws to clasp her wrist and threw her to the side. Now she did have a chance to call the guys for help.

"Sean! Kevin! Daisuke! Come in!" She called into her wrist. "Hitomi and I are enga—Oh, shit!" The scorpion had swung its tail at her forcing her to evade. "Hitomi and I are engaging Phaedos, Liaria and a scorpion monster outside the Miyazawa department store in Ginza! We need back-up!"

"I can't!" Sean replied over the wrist communicator. "I'm busy!"

"Busy!" Maria called back. "How are you busy? We need help!"

"I'd love to but—ow!" It sounded serious. "I just walked out of the grocery store and some Swabots—AH—just attacked me—OOF! I called Kevin and Rich Boy, and they got Swabot problems, too!"

"Dammit!" Maria said. Just then, Phaedos swung his sword at her, forcing her to block. "Well, what can I do?"

"Just hold on!" Kevin called. "I'm close, so I'll try to get there!"
"You'd better!" Maria replied. She ducked when the scorpion monster swung its tail at her. But then things got worse when Phaedos kicked her in the gut, forcing her to drop her dagger in her left hand. But, thinking quickly, she pulled her Octane Blaster out and changed it into her Grand Prix sword.

"I must have underestimated you," Phaedos said. "You think quickly." He quickly found himself on the defensive again when Maria attacked him, swinging her GP sword and thrusting her dagger at the same time and even trying to kick him. "I saw you trying to call your friends!" He said. "Your efforts will fail! The three men are being attacked by three different Swabot units, forcing them to fight for themselves! Yes, I know how you work. You rely on teamwork to defeat your enemies, so we might as well take that strategy away!"

"Well until the guys get here, I can still handle you!" Maria replied when she locked her blades with him. "But now that you've told me your strategy, I have something else in mind!" She kicked him in the chest and turned around to get to Hitomi. But Phaedos could tell this was coming, and the scorpion monster got in her way.

"Do you think I'm that foolish?" Phaedos asked. "I know your trick, you won't fool me!"

"Crap!" Maria said to herself.

Hitomi was doing slightly better than Maria, but not by much. Liaria was not as good a fighter as Phaedos, but she was still a force to be reckoned with, especially with that fan of hers. As of now, she was keeping Hitomi on her heels using it for wind attacks or however that worked. Hitomi could attack, but it was only when Liaria was preparing another wind attack, but even then the window of opportunity was slim.

Hitomi took her chance and aimed her Octane Blaster at Liaria and with the window closing, fired. The shot hit Liaria's fan, knocking it out of her hand. "Yes!" The confidence-challenged lady said to herself. But that was replaced with a soft, "Uh-oh."

Liaria got angry and attacked her up-close. "You little bitch!" She shouted as she tried to punch her.

"I'm not little, I'm 18!" Hitomi replied as she blocked Liaria's punch.

"I thought you were 20!" Liaria replied as she tried to roundhouse kick Hitomi.

"Well, you're mistaken," Hitomi replied as she blocked the kick. But then, Liaria kneed Hitomi in the gut. The Pink Ranger staggered backwards clutching her gut in pain. That was a hard kick, almost as if it injured her internally. But she still felt fine enough to keep fighting. "Is that the best you could do?" She asked, getting a boost of confidence.

"No!" Liaria countered, kicking her. Hitomi got the boot in the face and was knocked back on to the curb.

Maria was starting lose her edge on Phaedos and the scorpion monster, however. Right now she had just gotten kicked in the gut by Phaedos and the scorpion monster just now slammed his tail into her back. Not only was she getting beat up physically, her ego was taking a beating as well. Something like this is not good for someone who considers themselves a strong woman. "Pathetic," Phaedos said. "This just goes to show women can't fight."

Her ego took another hit, but this time, the reaction was different. This time, the reaction was more of an angry reaction and she got up and charged Phaedos like a bull, crashing into him like a football player. Phaedos's face showed a look of surprise as she knocked into his gut and pushed him onto his backside. "Women can't fight, huh?" Maria responded as she got into a fighting stance.
"You got lucky," Phaedos said as he gripped his stomach. But then his face changed to a smirk as he looked behind Maria; the scorpion monster was raising its large tail and stinger and was preparing to sting Maria with that nasty barb of his. Maria noticed this and looked behind her to see the scorpion monster raise its tail. No matter what, seeing a big barb like that will frighten anyone, whether they're a strong or weak woman, or the toughest hardest criminal. Indeed, Maria was frightened, and the scorpion monster began to bring its tail down on her.

But then, the monster was knocked over by someone tackling it from above. With the threat of that gone, Maria moved to block Phaedos's sword strike with her Haz Dagger. She looked behind her to see the scorpion monster struggle to get up and the person who knocked it over get up. Under her helmet, she smiled at who it was. "It's about time you got here!"

"Better late than never!" Kevin replied. "Are you okay?"

"I'm doing fine," Maria replied. "I think Hitomi's okay. But I think you should morph now!"

"Gladly!" Kevin said as he pulled his key out. His AcceleMorpher was already on his wrist, so he didn't have to worry about it. "GPX! Start it up!" He called as he jammed the key into the morpher. A flash of blue light happened and when it faded, Kevin was in his Blue Ranger suit with the #2 on his chest. "I'll take Phaedos, you take care of this clown, okay?"

"Oh, okay." Maria said in a half-disappointed tone. "I was doing just fine," she said to herself as Kevin drew his GP sword and attacked Phaedos. She then walked over to the scorpion monster as the monster managed to get up. But it didn't stay up, because Maria punched him hard knocking him down again. "That's for trying to sneak up on me!" She shouted.

"Let's go, Phaedos!" The Irishman shouted. Phaedos obliged and lunged at Kevin, swinging his crystal sword at Kevin. Kevin blocked each successive strike, but Phaedos was gaining ground on the Blue Ranger before he stopped and got in a firm stance to hold his ground against Phaedos.

"Come on, Blue Ranger!" Phaedos said. "Do your worst!"

"Worst?" Kevin asked. "I only do good!" He threw Phaedos off and swung his sword at Phaedos but the Zordonian general turned the tables on Kevin, giving him a backhanded strike sending him back with a shower of sparks. Kevin's face showed clear agony but once he hit the ground he got back up immediately and attacked again.

He backhanded his sword against Phaedos, prompting the general to block it. Phaedos threw Kevin's sword off and brought his sword down. But Kevin braced himself and blocked the attack. Trying to get some momentum, he made the wheels on the rims of his boots spin. The sound of screeching tires and smoke filled the air as Kevin struggled to throw Phaedos off of him. Eventually, he succeeded, but only for a second before Phaedos again struck him a nasty backhand, this time sending him face-first onto the curb. "Gah!" Kevin groaned as Phaedos put his boot on his head, putting him in one nasty curb stomp. The pressure of Phaedos's boot on his helmet was enough to hurt. It felt like a vice grip it was so bad.

"Time to die!" Phaedos said as he raised his sword wit above his head. Kevin braced for impact when something appeared and slammed into Phaedos at full force and checked/slammed him into the wall like a hockey player. The red-colored object got off of Phaedos and got into a fighting stance.

"Am I late?" He asked.

"Dammit, Sean!" Kevin said. "Can't you please be on time?"
"Nothing's wrong with a dynamic entry, now is there?" Sean asked.

"Just morph and help me out!" Kevin said.

"Got it!" Sean replied. While Phaedos was still dazed, Sean took the opportunity to take out his AcceleKey. "GPX! Start it up!" Sean jammed the key into the morpher and transformed into the GPX Red Ranger with the #1 on his chest.

"Dammit!" Phaedos said. "How did you get here?"

"I took out the Swabots, duh!" Sean said. "Let's do this!" Sean pressed on his belt buckle and his GT Sword manifested in front of him.

"Well, what should I do?" Kevin asked.

"Give Hitomi some help!" Sean said as he locked blades with Phaedos.

"Got it!" Kevin said as he turned around to help Hitomi. However, he found himself facing some Swabots, much to his dismay.

Speaking of Hitomi, she was starting to lose against Liaria. Liaria was using her fan at the moment as a melee weapon, and she had knocked Hitomi's sword out of her hands and was beating her down. "How did you give me a scar the last time we fought?" Liaria asked. "You can't even land a blow on me!"

In response, Hitomi got up, flipped over her and tried to kick her when she landed, but Liaria dodged the first kick. The second kick, however, landed on her arm. "I underestimated you!" Liaria said.

"I'm full of surprises!" Hitomi replied. She again kicked at Liaria, trying to get the woman to falter somehow. But Liaria still had her weapon and struck Hitomi sending the youngest Ranger flying backwards. Now Hitomi can hold her own in a fight, she has shown this. But right now things were not looking good. Even though Sean and Phaedos were fighting and Kevin and Maria were fighting the scorpion monster and those aforementioned confidence issues were beginning to manifest right now; not exactly a good time to have those! In other words, things were getting bad for Hitomi.

"What's the matter?" Liaria asked. "Are you a coward?"

Well, that got the confidence issues to go away. She quickly flipped over Liaria, much to the pink-haired woman's surprise and kicked her in the back, sending her falling to the ground face first. "Damn you!" Liaria said.

"I'm not done yet!" Hitomi said.

"You are now!" Liaria countered. And with a swipe of her fan, she knocked Hitomi to the ground. "Now you die!" Liaria shouted as she raised her fan up to strike Hitomi down.

But she never got the chance, as suddenly, something struck her from behind. Liaria screamed as she fell forward and then looked behind her to see the GPX Green Ranger #3 twirl his staff weapon above his head and then get into a fighting stance. "Don't you dare harm my sister!"

"Daisuke!" Hitomi shouted.

"How dare you hit me!" Liaria shouted back at Daisuke. "I thought Earth gentlemen never hit ladies!"
"Unfortunately for you, you're not much of a lady!" Daisuke countered. "And besides, you tried to kill my sister!"

"Well, well, older brother cares!" Liaria snapped.

"About damn time Rich Boy got here!" Sean said when his blade was locked with Phaedos's sword. "Rich Boy, you take on the scorpion monster! Maria, help me out here!"

"Got it!" Maria said. She let go of the scorpion monster and ran over to Phaedos to help Sean.

"But what about Hitomi?" Daisuke asked.

"Don't worry, Kevin will help her!" Sean said. Daisuke was not happy that the Irishman was going to fight alongside Hitomi, but it was better than nothing.

"Understood," he said as Kevin flipped over the Swabots he was facing.

"FAUGH A BALLAGH, bitch!" He cried as he kicked at Liaria but missed.

"This is what you get for trying to double-team me!" Maria shouted as she thrust her dagger at Phaedos. Sean then came in and tried to stab Phaedos.

"Do you trust that Green Ranger?" Phaedos asked Sean.

"No, I don't!" Sean replied. "So I'm not going to listen to you!"

*That's fine, Phaedos thought. Because I'm sure the Green Ranger will listen to Scorpio!* Daisuke blocked a tail swipe from Scorpio with his naginata-like Mountain Staff. Each time Scorpio attacked him with his tail, he blocked it with the staff. "Why are you taking orders from him?"

Scorpio asked in his rough voice.

"I hate to, but he's superior!" Daisuke replied. "I'd rather be giving him orders."

"Then why don't you do something about it?" Scorpio asked. Daisuke's response was to thrust the Mountain Staff at him. "Come on, live a little!" Scorpio goaded. "Why don't you?"

Daisuke paused. He was seriously considering the monster's words. Across the street, Phaedos noticed Daisuke's hesitation and smirked. His plan was working. It would only be a matter of time until—

"Phaedos!" Eltar's voice was suddenly heard in his ear. "You and Liaria must retreat now!"

"I'm not done yet!" Phaedos replied as he blocked a swing of Sean's sword and Maria thrusting her dagger at him. He parried both attacks and went on the offensive/

"Your plan has failed!" Eltar countered. "The Rangers have regrouped and you're having trouble! Retreat now and let Scorpio handle them!"

"But I'm not done!" Phaedos replied. He blocked another attack from Sean.

"Who the hell are you talking to?" He asked.

"Phaedos, that's an order!" Eltar said. "Emperor Rashon has ordered you himself!" Phaedos stopped. He had no other choice. His emperor had given him an order and he must obey.
"Understood," he said as he stopped fighting. Sean and Maria took the opportunity to attack him, but he vanished before they could get to him. Liaria meanwhile, also disappeared, leaving Kevin and Hitomi without an opponent.

"Guys, let's take out Scorpio!" Sean said. "Regroup now!" The Rangers all gathered across from Scorpio.

"So now what do we do?" Kevin asked.

"We can't risk any property damage!" Sean said. "Let's just call the Nitro Cannon and finish him off right here!"

"Got it!" The other Rangers said, including Daisuke; although his was half-hearted.

"Colonel, we need the Nitro Cannon!" Sean said. The Nitro Cannon, an engine-shaped hand-held cannon (to be held by five hands) materialized in front of them and the Rangers held it up. "Alright, this is the kill shot!" Sean said. "Ready!" The cannon began to charge.

"Aim!" Maria said. The targeting computer raised up and locked onto Scorpio.

"FIRE!" Sean pulled the trigger and fired a blast at Scorpio. The monster could only put its hands up as the blast struck him, sending sparks flying. The monster then fell to the ground and exploded in a spectacular show. The Rangers rejoiced.

"Oo-RAH!" Sean yelled as he pumped his fist.

"Good work Rangers!" Col. Greene said over the communicators.

"Thanks, Colonel!" Maria said.

"Power down!" The Rangers said. The suits disappeared in a flash of light.

"So now what?" Kevin asked.

"I guess we just enjoy the rest of the day," Sean said.

"Ooh, that reminds me!" Maria said. She grabbed Hitomi's arm and said, "We left our merchandise in the store."

"Whatever," Sean said. "Just make sure you get out of there soon, I parked the GP Cruiser in a bad spot and I'm worried the Metro Police will tow it away."

"Oh, we're not leaving just yet," Hitomi said. "We still have to get manicures and pedicures!"

"WHAT!" Kevin shouted. "You're not even done!"

"Nope!" Maria said. "Hitomi, ¡vamos!" With that, she and Hitomi rushed into the department store, leaving the men behind with comically bewildered faces.

"Women," Sean said as he shook his head. Kevin nodded his head in agreement.

On board the Zordonian ship, Phaedos teleported back into a room outside of Emperor Rashon's throne room; Liaria teleported in a few seconds later. Phaedos had a disappointed look on his face, but there was also confidence in his eyes. Liaria though, did not look happy about having her fight with Hitomi cut off. "Damn it! I was so close to finishing her, too!"
"You were not," Phaedos replied. "The Blue and Pink Rangers nearly had you defeated."

"What do you s—"

"General Phaedos!" A captain Swabot called out, interrupting her. "Emperor Rashon wishes to speak with you right now!"

"Then I shall meet with him," he said. The Swabot captain bowed and left the room.

"What are you going to tell him?" Liaria asked.

"I will tell him my plan is working perfectly," he said as he left for the throne room. Liaria only watched, wondering what he was talking about.

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Knock! Knock! Knock! "Come in!" Maria and Hitomi opened the door to Sean's room after he invited them in. The room was filled with Chicago Bears, Bulls, Blackhawks paraphernalia and White Sox paraphernalia as well, even a Blues Brothers poster. Sean was sitting at his desk next to the door and looking at the girls. "Maria, Hitomi," he said. "I heard you guys did good against Phaedos. I'm impressed!"

"How?" Maria asked. "Are you impressed because we're girls?"

"No," Sean said. "What I mean is you were able to fight him so well especially after he kicked our asses kicked the first time we fought him. You two were also able to hold him and Liaria off until Kevin, Rich Boy and I got there; that's even more impressive!"

"I guess we should be happy," Maria said. "But that's not why we're here."

"Then what is it?" He asked.

"We got you something at the department store!" Hitomi said. She then pulled out a white paper bag and handed it to Sean.

"What's that?" He asked as he took the bag from Hitomi.

"Open it!" Maria said. Sean did so and pulled out the chocolate cake from the department store.

"Cake?" Sean asked.

"Just eat it!" Maria said. Sean jumped a little and grabbed the fork and cut a bite off. He lifted the fork up to his mouth and took a bite. Instantly, his eyes widened and his face showed that he liked the stuff.

"This is fantastic!" He said. "No wonder you asked me to try this!"

"I'm glad you like it!" Hitomi said. "That chocolate cake is the Miyazawa department store specialty!"

"I can see why!" Sean said. "Thanks!"

"You're welcome!" Maria said as she and Hitomi closed the door. Outside, they gave each other a high-five and walked away.

Phaedos walked up to his emperor's throne slowly. He did not want to seem nervous or arrogant in
front of the emperor. It was a long walk, but eventually, he reached the throne and kneeled down before it. "My emperor," he said. "What do you want?"

"You failed me again Phaedos," Rashon said. "Normally, I am a patient man, but your recent failures have forced me to be impatient with you. Is there any reason why I shouldn't kill you right here and now?"

"Yes," Phaedos said. "I have begun to sow the seeds of discourse among the Rangers." Rashon lifted his eyebrow in interest.

"Go on," he said.

"The Green Ranger has shown contempt for the Red Ranger, who is the apparent leader," he said. "My monster Scorpio asked him why he takes orders from someone he holds contempt for. It is only a matter of time, given the right treatment, that he will begin to mutiny."

"The Green Ranger?" Rashon asked. "Why must you focus on him?"

"Because of all the Rangers, he shows the most potential for mutiny," he said. "I looked at his files, and supposedly, he was promised the Red suit, but the current Red Ranger got the position."

"So you plan to manipulate the Green Ranger?" Rashon asked. He smiled and sat back in his throne. "Impressive," he said. "I look forward to seeing the results. I suppose a few failures won't matter if you can get the desired results. Proceed with your plan."

"Thank you my emperor," Phaedos said as he bowed again and left the throne room. Rashon smiled to himself. The Rangers were going to find out their worst enemy was their own.
A Hot Time in the Old Town

Power Rangers GPX episode 12: A Hot Time in the Old Town

:-: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers G-P-X, let's go! :-::

Evenings in Tokyo are a unique experience. The vast metropolis has many bars, clubs, restaurants and other attractions. Karaoke boxes are popular among young and old, and are popular hang-out spots. Host clubs and bars are also popular, as well as the world's oldest profession. But otherwise, most Tokyo nightlife is family-friendly, especially baseball teams like the Youmiuri Giants and the Yakult Swallows.

But we're not talking about Tokyo nightlife. Rainbow Bridge, which connects the Tokyo mainland with the Odaiba ward was busy as usual this evening. A salaryman, who was more concerned about getting home to his family than drinking with his buddies, drove on the bridge. The sun was partially in his eyes, and he squinted to try and keep it out of his eyes. But soon, he was forced to stop when he noticed something flying past him.

"YAAAAAAAHHHHHH!" CRASH! Suddenly, a person wearing blue-colored spandex with a white torso giving it a vest-like appearance crashed into a van driving on the left side of the street (or right, depending on which side of the street one is on), smashing a large dent into it. "Fuck!" He said in English with an Irish accent.

"Kevin, you okay?" A person wearing red spandex and the same white torso as the other person called out.

"I'm fine," Kevin O'Donnell replied, holding the side of his helmet with his white glove.

"Come on, get up!" Red Ranger Sean O'Callahan called. His chest symbol was a gold-colored number 1. Also there was Green Ranger Daisuke Miyazawa (#3), Yellow Ranger Maria Aparicio (#4), and Pink Ranger Hitomi Miyazawa (#5). All five were engaged with a large, jester-themed anthropomorphic rabbit monster called Jesthare. Their fight had caused an unintentional traffic jam just now and sent many people running from their cars. The Rangers probably preferred to fight on the lower level.

"HEE HEE HEE HEE!" The jester rabbit laughed in a high-pitched voice. "Stupid Rangers, you can't beat me!"

"GRAH!" Maria growled. "I am really getting tired of this thing!"

"You and me both!" Daisuke said. Maria and Daisuke both fired with their Ocatane blasters at Jesthare. But when the blasts struck the rabbit, it disappeared in a puff of smoke. "What!" Maria said. "Where'd it go?"

"I'll try to find him on the scanner," Sean said. Pressing onto his helmet, he activated his visor scanner to find Jesthare. He looked around, trying to find the rabbit, but he couldn't. But eventually, he did. "Maria! Rich Boy! Behind you!"

Maria and Daisuke turned around and pointed their blasters at Jesthare and fired. Sean's pinpointing turned out to be correct, as Jesthare phased back into visibility and was blasted ten feet backwards. "Oh, my!" It said. "That hurt!" Then Sean came up to him and grabbed him by the collar, pulling him up and punching Jesthare in the snout. "Ouch!" It said.
"Shut up!" Sean said, pulling his Octane blaster out and firing. But the monster hopped around, dodging Sean's blasts. "Dammit! Rich boy, get 'im!"

"Got it!" Daisuke replied to Sean's order. Daisuke pressed his flat-topped pentagon shaped belt buckle and his Mountain Staff, a naginata-like weapon materialized in front of him. He grabbed it and took a swing at Jesthare, knocking him down. With the rabbit down, Daisuke pointed the Mountain Staff in Jesthare's face, keeping him on the ground. But Jesthare had something up his sleeve.

"Why are you taking orders from him?" He asked in his deceptively goofy voice. "I thought you hated him!"

"Scorpio tried to use that on me yesterday," Daisuke replied. "Don't think I'll fall for it."

"But I thought you wanted to be Red Ranger!" Jesthare retorted. Daisuke paused again. Jesthare was getting to him. "Don't you want to lead this group?"

"Silence!" Daisuke replied. But really, Jesthare's words were starting to get to his head. Daisuke stayed still for a few moments, which got his teammates agitated.

"Daisuke, what are you doing?" Kevin asked. "Come on, finish him, will you?"

"Daisuke, please!" Hitomi called. "Finish him!"

"Rich Boy, finish him!" Sean shouted. "That's an order!"

Daisuke stayed silent for a few more seconds. Jesthare's words had affected him. "You aren't going to take that order, are you?" He asked. "He wasn't an officer; he wasn't even in the army, just a hockey player! Are you going to let a hockey player boss you around? He's got an ego the size of Texas!" Daisuke again stayed silent. "You're pathetic!" Daisuke got angry underneath his helmet. He was really considering disobeying Sean. But his dawdling was really getting on the other Rangers' nerves.

"Too long!" Kevin said, pressing his belt buckle. His Touring Cannon, a car-shaped rifle cannon appeared in his hands and he fired at Jesthare. The blast struck Jesthare, sending him flying. Daisuke looked behind him at Kevin. "You took too long!" Kevin said as he charged Jesthare.

"Next time, obey my order!" Sean said as he too, charged Jesthare and Maria and Hitomi charged him, too. Daisuke was left brooding at Sean's words. How dare he! But he shelved that though and charged Jesthare again.

"You're a big meanie!" Jesthare shouted.

"Shut UP!" Sean reverse roundhouse kicked Jesthare, sending him over to Kevin, who fired a shot from his Touring Cannon into Jesthare's back. Sparks flew from Jesthare's back and he staggered forward a few steps. That's when Daisuke came in and swung his Mountain Staff at Jesthare, striking him several times and leaving him to Maria.

"Lightning Throw!" She called as she threw both of her Haz Daggers at him. The daggers hit their target and electrocuted Jesthare. Then Hitomi drew her bow and aimed at Jesthare. She drew the string back and fired at Jesthare. The arrow struck him and sent him flying backwards about 20 feet. The next thing he knew, Sean had caught up to him and grabbed him by the collar.

"Have you had enough?" He asked.
"Never!" Jesthare replied.

"Fair enough," Sean replied. The next thing Jesthare knew, Sean had picked him up by the collar and slammed him into the ground.

"Nice!" Kevin exclaimed.

"I'll say it again, have you had enough?" Sean asked.

"Fuck you!" The large rabbit retorted.

"Fair enough," Sean said as he backed away. "Nitro Cannon!" The engine-like cannon materialized in front of the Rangers and all five got a hold of it. "READY!" The turbines began to spin and the barrel began to glow.

"Aim!" Maria called. The targeting computer rose up and locked onto Jesthare—who had gotten back into the middle of the street.

"Oh crap!" Jesthare said.

"FIRE!" A ball of energy fired from the cannon and hit Jesthare, sending him flying backwards and off of the bridge into Tokyo bay. The Rangers celebrated, thinking they had taken him out.

"Ooo-RAH!" Sean said.

"There we go!" Maria shouted. But their celebrations did not last when a crystal ball fell to the Earth and splashed into the water where Jesthare fell. There was an explosion and the Rangers reacted as Jesthare began to grow to enormous size.

"Oh, you have gotta be kidding me!" Sean said. Soon, Jesthare was too big for them. "Oh man, I didn't want to do this," Sean said. "But we got no other choice. Colonel! We need the Grand Prix Zords!"

"Understood!" Col. Greene said. "The Grand Prix Zords are on their way!"

"Let's go!" Sean said. The Rangers looked to the bay and saw the Grand Prix Zords emerging from the waters of the bay. Jesthare noticed and tried to attack them, but their missile systems activated and fired a volley at him, knocking him into the water. Nice!" Sean said. "Let's go!" He and the other Rangers leapt off the bridge and landed on their zords. A crowd of people who had gotten out of their cars gathered on the side of the bridge. "GT Racer, online!" Sean said as he fell into his cockpit. His zord was a large, red-colored GT race car.

"Touring Racer, ready to go!" Kevin said. His was a large, blue-colored touring race car.

"Mountain Hauler, engage!" Daisuke cried. His was a massive green-colored pick-up truck.

"Haz Runner, roll out!" Maria called. Hers was a yellow-colored HazMat vehicle.

"Am Chaser, let's go!" Hitomi said. The Am Chaser was a large white, pink-trimmed ambulance.

"AcceleKeys, ready!" Sean said. He and the other Rangers pulled out their AcceleKeys.

"READY!" The rest shouted. They then jammed the keys in the key slots near the steering wheel and gave them a turn. A series of lights lit up indicating their activation.

"Initiate Grand Prix Megazord docking sequence," Sean said. "NOW!" The zords then went to an
island in the bay, one of the old Edo-era batteries. It was there that the megazord was assembled.

Mountain Hauler joined with Touring Racer. The touring car split in two and rolled up to the rear wheels of the Mountain Hauler. A pair of panels adjusted, revealing elbows. At the same time, a pair of fists popped out of the back. The Touring Racer then joined with the Mountain Hauler, forming arms. Then the grill on the Mountain Hauler lifted up and the front of the truck split and a pair of extensions popped out. The Hauler then rolled up the rears of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner and joined with them.

The Haz Runner and Am Chaser formed legs. Then, the GT Racer rolled up the back of the Mountain Hauler and docked with it. The large lights on the top of the Mountain Hauler rolled back and folded down. Now the Megazord was ready. It was then that several rockets fire, propelling the megazord upright. The cabs of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner stayed put, forming feet. The Haz Runner formed the left leg and the Am Chaser the right. The rear compartment of the GT Racer folded back, revealing a head. The eyes resembled goggles, and the face mask was solid. No mouth piece. A pair of wheel-like panels on the side completed it. Finally, the robot was upright. The Megazord let out some steam, ready to fight.

"Grand Prix Megazord, online!" The Rangers shouted from the cockpit. They were in their Indy Car-style pods. The megazord then advanced on Jesthare.

"Come on!" Jesthare called out in a deep, booming voice. Jesthare charged the megazord, slamming into it like an offensive lineman. But the megazord braced itself and held Jesthare. Jesthare then backed off and resorted to its wacky rabbit persona and began jumping around like a mad rabbit.

"Come back here, you screwy wabbit!" Sean said, unable to resist an Elmer Fudd imitation. The megazord tried to follow Jesthare, but every time the rabbit hit the ground, it caused a small earthquake, knocking the megazord off balance and causing trouble for the people on shore.

"Fuck!" Maria said. "We have to stop him!"

"Come here!" Sean said. The megazord reached out and grabbed Jesthare, then threw the rabbit over itself and onto an artificial island (not Odaiba). A dazed Jesthare got up just in time to see the megazord charge and ram into him like a football player. Jesthare fell to the ground, dazed.

"Sacked!" Sean said. Jesthare got up again, but again found the megazord attacking it, this time a fist from the megazord. The fist connected with Jesthare's jaw and was so powerful it literally sent Jesthare flying about half a kilometer away.

"Hot damn!" Kevin said. "That's the best dalgurn punch I've ever seen in my life!" He said in a fake Southeast United States accent.

"Let's finish this!" Sean said. "Grand Prix Megazord saber!" The large sword materialized in front of the megazord on the same battery it stood on. The megazord grabbed the sword and the eyes under the visor flashed. It was time to finish this fight. "Turbo jets!"

Some jets on the soles of the megazord's feet fired and lifted the megazord above the ground and Jesthare, who had gotten up, recoiled at the sight of the megazord getting ready to finish him off. "Uh-oh!"

"Grand Prix Megazord Strike! Go!" At that point, the megazord launched forward at the jester rabbit, its jets propelling it. Jesthare fired some eye beams (which it should have used earlier) at the megazord, but they were no use as the megazord approached. The megazord slashed at him and then stopped just in front of Rainbow Bridge. "Checkered Flag!" The megazord stopped and posed in victory while Jesthare was consumed in a shower of sparks.
"I guess the joke's over!" Jesterhre said as he fell into the bay and exploded. The Rangers had won. Inside the cockpit, the Rangers celebrated, hooting and hollering, along with Sean's 'oorahs'. On the bridge, the spectators were cheering as well. Since there was little property damage (save for the busted up van) there was no need to boo them. Even a Fuji TV news crew was on the scene. Inside the megazord cockpit, the Rangers lapped it up.

"That's right, we're heroes, love us!" Sean said in jest.

"I think our public adores us," Kevin said.

"Oh yeah," Maria said as well.

"Might as well enjoy it," Sean said. "Come on; let's go greet our adoring public!" The Rangers then exited the cockpit, which was in the head to greet the public. Once they got outside, the crowd roared, and the Rangers soaked it up, save for Daisuke who preferred to watch. Sean, of course, soaked it up the most, bowing several times and encouraging the crowd to yell several times. As he was watching this, Daisuke actually began to consider Jesterhre's words that Sean had an ego the size of Texas. It currently seemed that way. "By the way, what time is it?" Sean asked.

"I think it's 7:15," Maria said, looking the HUD in her visor. "Why do you ask?"

"I dunno, I was just curious!" Sean replied. "Actually, I think we could just walk around for a bit. How does that sound?"

Everyone murmured their response and then they heard the police sirens approaching.

"Then what the heck are we waiting for?" Hitomi said. "We gotta leave, now!" The Rangers scrambled into the megazord cockpit and fired it up again. The megazord then split up and the zords left the scene.

:::PRGPX:::

On the Zordonian ship, Phaedos silently brooded in the ship's library. The Terror of Rohan, as he was called, should have been able to defeat five measly humans easily. But things were not going the way he expected them to; which is why he planned to break the Ranger team up. Since the Green Ranger was the one who had the most anger at the Red Ranger, he felt he could use him to break them up. Whether or not Jesterhre had tried to convince him tonight was another problem. He could not listen in on the battle and thus had no way of knowing if his plan was succeeding. But since Emperor Rashon knew about his plan, he would be more patient. But right now he wasn't sure if the emperor was angry at him or not. He needed to come up with a way to set his plan into motion and really break the Rangers up.

Suddenly, a whirlwind of cherry blossom petals appeared. Phaedos did not flinch, as he knew what was going on. A feminine person appeared where the petals were. "Tirna," he said. "What do you want?"

The feminine general laughed. "Nothing." Tirna said. " Aren't you getting tired of failing constantly?" Tirna's comments earned a glare from Phaedos. "Oh, did I make you upset?"

"I'm not in the mood Tirna," the blonde-haired general said. "I'm trying to determine how to break the Rangers up."

"Which is why you're targeting the Green Ranger?" Tirna asked. "What's so special about him?"

"According to files we hacked from the Terrans' United Nations database, he was promised a
position of leadership within the Rangers. But instead the leadership position went to the American Sean O'Callahan. Supposedly, he's bitter about losing that position."

"Really?" Tirna asked. "And how did you come across that?"

"Therapy sessions," Phaedos replied. "Their therapist put his notes in the database. What a fool!"

"I'll say," Tirna said. "So what are you planning?"

"By making him question why he's letting O'Callahan lead the group," Phaedos said. "Whether or not it will work is another question."


"Watch it," Phaedos said with venom on his voice.

"Oh my," Tirna said. "I made you angry!"

"Obviously," Phaedos said. "Don't make me kill you."

"I've really made you angry!" Tirna said. "Can't you focus your anger on the Rangers instead?"

"I want the Rangers to focus their anger on themselves," Phaedos said. "I know that Daisuke Miyazawa, the Green Ranger, is angry at O'Callahan, I've seen it myself and read it. Not only that, he appears to have his little sister wrapped around his little finger."

"That's a harsh thing to say!" Tirna said.

"However, it appears she's become somewhat independent despite her confidence issues," Phaedos said.

"Don't you think these Rangers deserve some privacy?" Tirna asked.

"I don't know everything about them," he replied. "All I know is what I've seen on their therapy session, that's it. But my hunch is, that if the Green Ranger leaves, his sister will follow, forcing the other three Rangers to fight without them. And judging from our fight yesterday, they're weaker when their numbers are below four."

"You just told about your plan!" Tirna said. "Your arrogance will be your downfall!" Phaedos perked up instantly.

"Epics?" He asked. Then his frown turned into his characteristic smirk. "Of course!"

"Of course what?" Tirna asked. "Are you just going to kill them?"

"No, Tirna," he replied. "What I mean is, you just pointed out the Green Ranger's fatal flaw; his arrogance and honor! Thank you, Tirna."

"For what?" The feminine general asked.

"For helping me complete my plan to defeat the Rangers!" he said with his smirk. "They won't know what hit them!"

A night on the town was in order.
The sun set on the city and people came out in droves, filling the sidewalks, streets, alleys, side streets, avenues and boulevards. Bunkyo was no exception, especially Tokyo Dome City, but our heroes were nowhere near the tourist trap, preferring to mill about with the locals. Walking along the sidewalk on the northbound, left side of Chuo Dori, a main road in Ueno, they looked up and down at the selection of stores and restaurants beckoning them to come in to spend money.

Sean in particular stared with wide open eyes and mouth at the selection, craning his neck so much that he had to rub it. He walked in the middle of the group; Hitomi and Maria happily chatted in front of him and Daisuke and Kevin walked along without saying a word.

Something finally caught Sean's attention and he ran up to a restaurant displaying numerous selections of plastic food, a usual tactic by Japanese restaurants to draw in customers. It works for foreigners because then the language barrier isn't a problem. This restaurant's selection happened to be very high-end, which drew Sean's attention. That is, until he caught a glimpse of the prices. He winced and adjusted his red Blackhawks hat at the sight of it.

He stared at the plastic food in the window a little longer, clearly aggravating one of the restaurant's employees enough to yell at him. Sean could hardly understand him, but he didn't need to. The man's angry tone was more than enough. And one word in particular that Sean understood cut deep: *gaijin*.

It made him back off and cross his arms in an attempt to shrink. "I hate that word," he said like a little kid who wanted to go home.

Kevin waited for him.

"Are we s'pposed to learn something from this?" he asked. "Because I'm not getting it."

Kevin tugged on his blue Leinster Rugby shirt. Daisuke stood next to him, his expression full of visible smugness.

"It makes me happy seeing you get your comeuppance, *gaijin*," he said.

"Fuck off," Sean replied.

"As if that's supposed to help," said Kevin. "Imagine if you were in America and he said that to you."

Sean groaned, threw his head back, facepalmed and rubbed his face before walking off to find Hitomi and Maria deep in conversation until Maria caught a glimpse of him.

"What happened?" she asked. "Anything good happen with Rich Boy?"

Sean shook his head. Maria and Hitomi continued on with their conversation while Daisuke tuned out. Hitomi momentarily went back to her phone, a Fujitsu F-01A with a chibi Sailor Moon phone charm, then back up at Maria. People walked past them on the crowded sidewalk like they were water flowing around a rock in the middle of a stream. And three of them stuck out like those rocks in this monochromatic stream in Bunkyo. That is, until Kevin walked away, towards a boba tea shop nearby, leaving the other 4 alone to all look at their cell phones.

Well, for a while, until Maria had a different question.

"Daisuke, why did you hesitate against Jesthare?" She asked. Daisuke stayed silent longer, refusing to talk to her. "Come on!" She said again. "You hesitated to kill him and then you ignored Sean's order. What is going on with you?" Daisuke was still silent. Frustrated by his stubbornness, Maria stopped trying to get his attention. Hitomi, however, was not going to stop.
"Daisuke, why did you stop?" She asked. Again, Daisuke refused to answer. "What's with him?"
Hitomi asked. Maria shrugged. "So what happened again?"

"Well, anyway, the girls and I were in Rio and we went to the beach when we see the absolute worst
bikini set you'll ever…" Daisuke tuned out again.

Kevin walked up to them carrying a plastic boba tea cup. "So has Rich Boy been ignoring you?" He
asked. Sean sniggered.

"Unfortunately," Maria said. "He just stands there while Hitomi and I make snide comments about
him." This time Daisuke was listening and he gave Maria a dirty look. "I guess he was listening."

"By the way," Sean said. "The visas came today." Maria and Hitomi stopped laughing and looked at
Sean. "And no, I'm not talking about the credit cards, I'm already with Visa." The other Rangers
nodded in understanding.

"Are we really going through with this?" Maria asked.

"Yeah," Kevin said. "I like this place, but it's too much for me. I need to get somewhere familiar."

"Same here," said Sean. "Besides, I'm getting tired of being called gaijin every day. And yes,
Hitomi's and Rich Boy's visas got here too."

"Speaking of us," Hitomi said, pointing at a TV. The other Rangers looked and laughed a little.
There they were, fighting Jesthare. And they looked so good doing it, too.

"I guess we were being recorded," Kevin said. "I hope they got my good side!"

"Looks like they got mine," Sean said.

"Oh damn, I don't get enough screen time," Maria said. "Oh well, my time is the best."

"What are they saying?" Kevin asked. It was on NHK, a native Japanese station, so they couldn't
understand a word the reporter was saying. Luckily Hitomi was there to help.

"He's saying that the Power Rangers caused a scene, but since we were able to minimize property
damage and put on a show, the cops will forgive us," she said. The three Western Rangers laughed.

"Damn, I'm not sure of Chicago police would do that," Sean said. "They'd probably arrest our asses
anyway."

"Why'd you tune out there and not enjoy everything? And why did you stop against Jesthare?"

"That is none of your business," Daisuke said.

"Testy!" Maria said. Daisuke gave her a look, too. "Relax, muchacho," she said again. "You just
need to relax more." Daisuke just ignored her, though.

"Hell-LOOOOOO! Earth to Rich Boy!" Sean waved his hand in front of Daisuke's face to break
him out of his apparent trance. It worked, because Daisuke turned to glare at him.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"He speaks!" Sean remarked. "The great Miyazawa Daisuke has been cured of his muteness, or
whatever it's called!"
Some girls who must have overheard them stopped in place to get a look. They gasped and started murmuring, then called someone on their phones.

"What's the matter? Your jimmies get rustled, Rich Boy?" Sean said with a smug tone and grin.

"Be quiet," said Daisuke.

"That's it?" the visibly-disappointed Sean asked as Daisuke walked away. Only for him to be swarmed by girls. They fawned over him.

"The brooding bad boy angle strikes again," said Maria. "Except he's rich." Sean had to stop himself from laughing. "I'd show them a better time, IF they were into it."

"Yeah, karaoke would be better!" said Kevin. He laughed at first, then his face turned to visible realization, and he turned to look at the smug Maria with his eyes wide open. "You said you weren't gay—Oooooohhhh!"

"Huh?" Sean asked. Kevin leaned into Sean's ear and whispered something. Sean's only reaction was to raise an eyebrow and make a sound like a 'huh' in the back of his mouth. "Just like my mom."

"Does that mean we should find a gay bar?" Kevin asked.

"I've been to a couple," said Sean. "Never got hit on. I'm actually kind of insulted!" He laughed. "Whatever. They had nice atmospheres and the patrons were pretty friendly. And yeah, they knew I was firmly hetero, and were cool with me."

"I… didn't know you were that tolerant," said Maria.

"You'd be surprised," said Sean.

Daisuke had already ripped himself away from the fawning fangirls with Hitomi's help. Some of those girls whispered to each other in scandalous fashion. Overhearing this, Hitomi let go of him, her expression showing her visible discomfort with the whispers. Noticing this, Kevin gestured to them to keep walking, and so they did, brushing past the girls, but not before Sean tried to hit on two or three with lame hockey pick-up lines that didn't work because of the language barrier and their obvious and visible disinterest in him.

Not one to let it get to him, Sean followed the group while quietly singing/humming a tune to himself.

"Late last night, while we were all in bed
Miss O'Leary left a lantern in her shed
When the cow tipped it over,
She winked her eye and said,
'It'll be a hot time in the old town tonight."

Sean's humorously dark but innocent song seemed to make Daisuke cringe just a bit. It got worse as Sean repeated the song a couple times over until Daisuke finally spun around and grabbed Sean. Maria, Hitomi and Kevin instantly separated both of them, drawing more states from the crowd.

"Was it something I said?" Sean asked.

"Grrr," Daisuke's growl emanated deep in his throat. "My grandmother lived through a Tokyo firebombing, did you know that?"

"That song was about the Chicago Fire of 1871," Sean corrected him.
Daisuke did look like he felt foolish and backed off. But he kept his eyes cast on the sidewalk. "She has told me vividly about the horrors that night. She saw people burned alive. That, as well as the Bomb and our humiliating surrender has caused her never to forgive the Americans."

"We're really sorry," said Maria, placing her hand on Sean as he looked incredibly guilty.

"However, let us not kid ourselves," said Kevin. "No one in war is truly good or evil. But the Japanese military did horrendous things to other Asians and Americans. That's why the Koreans and Chinese still hate you. And I don't blame them."

"And yet she still believes we were humiliated," said Daisuke. "She especially hates Article 9."

"Sounds some bitter old hag," said Sean.

"Article 9?" Maria asked.

"The part in the Japanese Constitution where they renounce war," said Sean. "The one they adopted after we beat their ass in the War. It's actually a good constitution. Could use some amendments to grant more civil and political rights, though."

"Ooohhhhhhh!" said Maria. "Now that I think about it, it is a good idea! If there's one country that should renounce war, Japan makes a lot of sense."

"Need I remind O'Callahan that his country is not as fairy tale-good as he wishes?" Daisuke asked, making Sean squirm in his shoes and look up to Kevin for help, but the Irishman looked away, whistling all the while.

"Oh, I know America's not perfect," said Sean. "You should see my Facebook page! But I think you've got something to say to me. Come on, say it, Rich Boy!"

"Very well then, I will!" Daisuke replied. "You are an arrogant, self-centered, lazy, snively gaijin with an inflated sense of his own self-worth in the world, no chance of making it to your precious 'NHL', does not know what his real place in the world as a middle-class white lout is, despite the fact that I have told you repeatedly, stole what was rightfully mine, almost got us killed and—"

"Aaahhh, SHADDAP!" Sean snapped. "Are you making any sense, you entitled, racist rich bastard?"

"YOU EVIL AMERICAN!"

"You spoiled brat!"

"I have a pedigree and a background you will never have!"

"What's wrong with being common? Hell, I may not be from a blue-collar background, but it's the attitude that's important!"

"You come from a land of impurity!"

"I'm a young guy from a young land! You're an old guy in a young body hanging on to outdated 'tradition' while the world enters a new era! And it's guys like me who'll lead the way!"

"Punk rock, especially Celtic punk, is just noise, the worst form of music there is, and ice hockey is the worst sport on the planet!"

"YOU TAKE THAT BACK, YOU BAD-TASTE-HAVING SON OF A—" They grabbed for
each other again, only for the other three to separate them.

"How about this," Hitomi said, "There is no black and white in the world, only grey."

"I'll take that," said Sean.

"Does that work, brother?" Hitomi asked.

"Of course," Daisuke said before turning and walking away.

"Now it's a cold time in the old town," said Maria.

I need a beer," said Sean. "I hear there's an Irish-style pub around here."

"NO," said Maria. "We're having drinks with the locals!"

At the UN underground base, US Army Col. Alan Greene, commander of Project Ranger, looked over some important paperwork that needed to be done. It concerned the progress of not only the Rangers, but the scientific side of the Project, like the development of new weapons for the Rangers. He didn't want to do it right now, but with a strict deadline, he had no other choice. The Joint Chiefs would have his head if he didn't report back like he was supposed to, and they'd think he was hiding something. He yawned, since it was so late at night. But his paperwork was interrupted when he was paged. "What is it?" He asked.

"Colonel Greene," Dr. Wilhelm Morris said. "There's something you should see."

"Is it an emergency?" The African-American colonel asked.

"No," Dr. Morris replied. "At least we think so."

"Is it important?" He asked.

"Yes," Dr. Morris said. Col. Greene sighed and put his pen down and picked his hat up and put it on as he left his office. He wondered what was so important and just why Dr. Morris called him. Of course, Dr. Morris did seem to have a worried tone on his voice so it must have been important to him. Finally, he reached Dr. Morris's work area.

"What is it?" He asked in a half-hearted tone.

"We're detecting some energy in the area surrounding Mt. Fuji," Dr. Morris said. "It seems Zordonian."

Col. Greene nodded his head in understanding. "Okay then," he said. "Since this doesn't seem to be an emergency, I'll talk to them tomorrow."

The next morning, the Rangers were gathered in the living room. Sean was putting up a large board and placed a map on the board. "One throw," he said as he handed a switchblade knife to Maria. "Only one shot. Whatever you hit, then that's final, okay?"

"Okay," Maria said. She lined up a few feet in front of the board and aimed the knife at the paper. After a warm-up she threw the knife at the paper. The knife tumbled a few times in the air before hitting the paper. Sean walked over to the paper and examined it, before nodding his head.
"Alright," he said. "The decision's final. Rich Boy, do you think you can find us something there?"

"Give me an hour on the phone and I'll find it in 20 minutes, negotiate in another 20, and finish in 10," he said.

"Nice," Sean said. "I guess he's good for something after all." Daisuke rolled his eyes in response.

"I'll also provide us with the other necessities," he said. Sean nodded his head.

"Are we going to tell Col. Greene?" Hitomi asked. "What if he says we can't go? We still have the job, after all."

"Tell me what?" The Rangers were startled by Col. Greene's sudden introduction.

"Col. Greene, sir!" Sean said as he stood at attention and saluted. The other Rangers hurried to take the paper down from the board while Greene wasn't looking. Col. Greene saluted back.

"At ease," he said. Sean spread his legs in an at ease stance. "What's going on here?"

"Maria's just showing us her knife-throwing skills," Sean said. "We prepared." He pointed to some pads that they had set up in case Maria missed. The paper was off the board and hidden.

"Interesting," Col. Greene said. "I also heard you made the news last night."

"Yes sir, we did," Sean said. "We also at a little concert last night."

"Interesting," Greene said. "I assume you're wondering why I'm here."

"Yes sir," Sean said.

"Well, we picked up some strange energy coming from the area surrounding Mt. Fuji," said Col. Greene. "We're not entirely sure what it is, but we need you to go and investigate."

"Should we leave today?" Sean asked.

"Well, we don't think it's an emergency, so no," Greene replied.

"Then we'll leave tomorrow," said Sean.

"Good luck," Col. Greene replied as he saluted Sean. Sean responded with a salute of his own as Col. Green turned around and left. Sean turned around and said to the Rangers,

"Who's up for a road trip?"

End chapter
The Calm Before The Storm

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Power Rangers GPX, episode 13: The Calm Before the Storm

It's a beautiful sunny day in the Japanese countryside. The sun is shining and the temperature is in the 70s Fahrenheit. On the Chuo Expressway, cars sped along, either headed to Mt. Fuji or to the Tokyo metropolis. But none of these cars are going to be focused on. Instead, we turn our attention to a red-colored Hummer H2 traveling in a westbound direction headed for the Mt. Fuji. Soon, the Hummer pulled off and went to a rest stop on the expressway. The H2 pulled up to the rest stop as all four doors opened. A young man, around the age of 21 stepped out of the car on the right side, the driver's side.

Sean took off his Chicago Blackhawks cap, running his hand through his thick brown hair that was parted in the middle before putting his ball cap back on. His eyes were covered by his sunglasses, but a look at face showed he was a little tired. "Man," he said. "I'm just not used to driving not only on the right side of the car, but driving on the left side of the road for more than an hour!"

"And most of that hour was spent in Tokyo," said Kevin. "But if you want to, I could drive for a while and you can sit on the side you should be driving on."

"I'm not sure if you're joking or not," Sean replied. His body type was more akin to an MLB second baseman or a tennis player compared to Kevin's body type of a small rugby player. But even though he seemed small, that didn't mean he was a pushover, especially since he's a hockey player.

Maria stepped out of the back seat of the Hummer. "I'm hungry," she said. "Do they have any Gansito here?" She asked, referring to the popular Mexican snack cake.

"I doubt it," Sean said. "I'm not sure if that stuff is popular in Japan."

"Probably not," Kevin said. "Just get a Hershey bar or something."

"Or get some pocky," Daisuke said as he got out. "But it feels nice to get out and stretch."

"I'll say!" Kevin replied. "I need to take care of some other business, too."

"So do I!" said Hitomi. She seemed a little more urgent. "I gotta go now!"

"Well then, get moving!" Sean said "We gotta get to Godai-san's inn soon!" Taking his advice, Hitomi rushed into the rest area, as did Kevin. Maria and Daisuke followed, but only to get supplies while Sean waited by the Hummer. He rummaged around, looking for something in the cabin. A green, ball-shaped robot sat on the driver's console.

A few minutes later, the group was back on the road with Sean behind the wheel and his iPod hooked up to the stereo. A familiar song was playing and Maria and Hitomi were seat-dancing to the song in the backseat, much to Daisuke's slight annoyance. Sean and Kevin, who sat in the front seat, ignored them with Kevin looking out the shotgun side window.
"Hey now, you're an All Star  
Get your game on, go play  
Hey now, you're a rock star  
Get the show on, get paid."

"Why are we listening to this song again?" Sean asked.

"We wanted to listen to it!" Maria said from the back seat. Sean rolled his eyes before drawing his attention back to the road. "Well it wouldn't be so bad if this trip didn't take longer than it's supposed to!"

"We can blame the Tokyo traffic," Sean said. "And we can thank that stupid robotic basketball." He pointed to the haro in the console. "This thing gives just the shittiest directions imaginable!"

"Don't be so mean!" Hitomi said from the back seat. "It's cute!"

"That's not much of a good excuse," Sean said. "Kevin, just find a song on there, this one's almost over. Look for 'Good Old Hockey Game'."

"I don't think the others like hockey as much as you do," Kevin replied as he searched through Sean's iPod.

"Yeah, why do we have to listen to a hockey song?" Hitomi asked. "I don't even like hockey!"

"Well, I do!" Sean said. "So Kevin, if you'd please be so kind to put the song on."

"I found it," Kevin replied. "I'll put it on." Kevin pressed the button on the iPod and the song began to play. And much to Sean's displeasure, he could see Hitomi and Maria trying not to laugh at the song’s lyrics.

"What the hell are you two laughing at?" He asked with indignation on his voice.

"Is this supposed to be some kind of anthem or something?" Maria asked. "Because I think the lyrics are just ridiculous."

"Look, it's a hockey anthem," Sean replied.

"It's a bad one," Maria said. "I'll take a Venezuelan baseball song any day over this."

"Look, I like baseball too, but we're listening to this," Sean replied. "If you want me to, I'll put on 'Centerfield', is that good enough for you?"

"Good enough," Maria replied. As they spoke, the characteristic peak of Mt. Fuji could be seen rising from the horizon.

About 20 minutes later, the Rangers pulled into a parking lot near shrine that was near their destination. Daisuke had asked Sean to pull in here. "How come?" Sean asked.

"I need to visit the shrine," he said. "I have to pray."

"Oh, right," Sean said. "Whatever." Daisuke opened the door and got out of the Humvee before walking up the steps to the shrine. The Rangers waited until Daisuke was out of sight to get out of the car. "So that damn Haro thing can detect energy?" Sean asked as he pulled out a map.
"That's what Col. Greene said," Kevin replied. "We just need to activate it."

"That shouldn't be too hard," Hitomi said as she took the Haro out of the console. She pressed a few buttons on the Haro. The basketball-shaped and sized robot's eyes began to flash several times, indicating that it was working. The other Rangers watched with interest.

"Haro, haro, large amount of energy detected, haro haro."

"Dang," Sean said. "That's actually impressive. Where is it?"

"Haro, haro, 1000 meters west, haro, haro," the Haro said. The Rangers looked to the west, in the direction of the forest.

"So a kilometer west of us," Sean said. "Can you give me the coordinates?" He pulled out a pen and prepared to write it down. The Haro printed out the coordinates and Sean, using a GPS locator, put an 'X' on the map. "All right," he said. "That's one location."

"Are there any others?" Maria asked. The green-colored robot again began to beep and flash, looking for a location.

"Haro, haro, large amount of energy detected," the Haro said.

"Where?" Sean asked.

"Haro, haro, 500 meters to the east, haro, haro," the Haro said. The Rangers looked to the east. What they found out surprised them.

"The shrine?" Maria asked. "There?"

"We should probably check it out right now," Sean said as he wrote down the coordinates the haro had printed out and made an 'X' on the map. "Let's go."

There's a spike alright," Sean said, looking at some data that the Haro had printed out. The quartet was outside the torii of the shrine. Some shrine maidens inside the shrine were looking at them as they tended to the shrine. The shrine was on top of a small hill, which got the Rangers tired walking up the steps. "When that damn robot said 500 meters, I think it forgot the steps!" He said through clenched teeth.

"Oh well," Kevin said. He didn't seem as angry as Sean. "At least we got to see a shrine! Or is it a temple?"

"Buddhism has temples," Hitomi said. "Shinto has shrines."

"Well, that clears it up," Maria said.

"Yeah, this isn't bad," Sean said. "It feels nice to get out of Tokyo and see some Japanese culture."

"Besides the stuff on TV," Kevin said.

"That's pop culture," Sean said. "I meant stuff like this." He gestured to the shrine.

"Oh, right," Kevin said. "I say we take a look."

"I'm with you," Sean replied. "Let's check it out." The Ranger quartet stepped inside the torii and
looked around at the shrine. A shrine maiden, or *miko*, as Hitomi straightened out, walked up to them and offered some assistance. The other Rangers politely declined her offer. Sean and Maria pulled out cameras and began taking pictures of the shrine.

"I'm going to put these on Facebook," Maria said. "My *amigas* will love them!"

"What are you three doing here!" An angry voice called out. The three Western Rangers looked to see a fuming Daisuke.

"We're just taking a manual tour," Kevin said. "We're fascinated."

"You don't belong here!" Daisuke shouted. Naturally, this offended Sean, Maria and Kevin, and even Hitomi.

"What the fuck, Rich Boy?" Sean said in anger. "That *miko* didn't mind us; why the fuck are you getting all mad at us?"

"Yeah, relax!" Kevin said. "You're not the priest here, why are you telling us what to do?"

"Excuse me sir," the same *miko* said. "I would ask if you not be so rude to visitors. Since you are not the priest, you must be respectful to others."

"See?" Maria said. "Your viewpoint is pretty unpopular." Daisuke put his hand on his forehead. Clearly his outburst had caused some trouble. "I know he's been a jerk at times, but this is new," she whispered to Sean.

"I know," he said. "Well anyway, we had another reason to come here," he said to Daisuke, who looked interested. "The damn haro detected some energy in this area and we went to check it out."

"So we may have to investigate this shrine," Daisuke said. Sean nodded his head, which Daisuke understood. "Very well then; I suppose I must apologize for my outburst."

"You bet your ass!" All three Western Rangers replied in unison. Daisuke sighed in exasperation.

"Oh, *finally* we're here!" Sean said, stretching his limbs out after getting out of the Humvee once the Rangers arrived at Godai-san's inn. The other Rangers also stretched once they got out of the vehicle. In all, the trip had lasted over four hours to get to Godai-san's inn, despite the fact that the trip is supposed to take two hours. In front of them stood a large façade of Godai-san's *ryokan*, or Japanese inn. In case any of you have forgotten, Godai-san is an older friend of Hitomi's who owns a restaurant in Tokyo.

"I can't wait to soak in the hot spring!" Maria said enthusiastically. "It'll feel great!" While Maria rambled on about the hot spring, Sean and Kevin began unloading the GP Cruiser.

"I'm guessing you guys will be glad I have connections!" Hitomi said.

"Oh yeah!" Maria replied. At that point, they saw Godai-san, a man in his early to mid-late forties and close to 250 lbs. standing in the doorway of the inn. Hitomi's face brightened up and she ran up to greet him. She gave him a big hug and he returned. The round-faced man smiled at her, a smile that showed no inner demons or pain. In other words, he was just a happy-go-lucky guy.

"It's good to see you, Hitomi-chan!" He said. He let go and went up to the Rangers' Grand Prix Cruiser. "Can I help you?" He asked.
"Yeah," Sean replied. "We've got some heavy lifting to do and we need some help with this stuff. I appreciate the offer."

"No problem," Godai-san said as he picked up a suitcase. It must have been Maria's since it was yellow—and bigger than the others.

"Did you have to take all of that?" Kevin asked her.

"Yes," she replied deadpan. Kevin rolled his eyes in response as Godai-san picked up Maria's suitcase. He could hear Kevin complain to Maria about taking so much stuff to an inn if they were only going to be there for a couple days.

"Is she always like that?" Godai-san asked.

"She tends to annoy Kevin like that," Sean replied. "She just likes to get on his nerves."

"Does she have feelings for him?" Godai-san asked. "My wife would joke with me like that when we were courting."

"No," Sean replied. "She does that with her friends."

"Oh," Godai-san said. "By the way, take your shoes off as you enter." 

"Don't worry," Sean replied. "I know it's courteous to take the shoes off here, so I'll do it."

"Good," said Godai-san. "I hope you enjoy your stay."

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"I like it!" Sean said, getting a look out of his room on the second floor of the inn. It included a fantastic view of Mt. Fuji in the distance and the rest of Aokigahara. Of course, he had heard of the forest's reputation, but that wasn't on his mind right now. Right now he was just enjoying the view. "You don't get a view like this in Illinois," he said.

"You don't?" A feminine voice asked from behind. He turned around to see Maria walk into the room.

"Well, for the most part," he said. "In places like Chicago, it's just a concrete and steel jungle. In places like Southern Illinois, however, you might get a good view but I haven't really been down that far."

"That stinks," Maria said as she walked up to the window. "I had to live with this kind of view my whole life in Caracas. Not that I'm complaining, anyway."

"I wouldn't expect that," Sean said. "L.A. sort of has a view like this, but it's not close."

"Oh well," said Maria.

"We've got to plan our attack for tomorrow," Sean said as he left the window. "The damn haro found one more sources of energy and I got the coordinates on the map. Now we've got to find out what we're going to do."

"Got it," she said as she followed him out of the room. They went downstairs where Kevin, Hitomi and Daisuke were waiting for them in the parlor. They were seated at the table.

"Great, we're all here," Sean said. He and Maria sat down on the tatami mats. "Let's get started." He
took out the map and pointed at the "x's". "These are the locations the haro detected the energy. And thus, these are the locations we're going to scout out. The first one is about 1500 meters west of the shrine we visited today. The other location is of course the shrine. The final location is about 1500 meters east of the shrine in Aokigahara. So from what we can determine, the energy spikes are within a 3000 meter diameter and a 1500 meter radius of the shrine. Or so I can tell."

"So what's the plan?" Kevin asked.

"From what I can tell, there might be just 3 locations, but I could be wrong," Sean replied. "From what the haro indicated, the shrine is the only location where there is only a single concentration of energy. The haro has implied that there might be more, but I'm not entirely sure, so we'll have to check."

"So what do we do?" Maria asked.

"The research team at the base gave us some energy detectors," Sean said. "If we detect separate energy concentrations, then we split up and find them. But since we're already splitting up, that shouldn't matter too much."

"So what's the rest of the plan?" Daisuke asked.

"Well like I said, we split up," Sean replied. "One pair will take the location to the west of the shrine. The other pair will take the location to the east of the shrine and by elimination one will take the shrine itself."

"So how do we determine who takes the shrine?" Hitomi asked.

"Oh, it's easy," Sean said. "Not it!" He said as he touched his nose.

"Not it!" Kevin said as well, touching his nose.

"Not it!" Maria said right away, touching her nose.

"Not it!" Hitomi said, touching her nose. That of course, left out Daisuke who didn't say 'not it' or touch his nose in time.

"Ah, damn," he muttered.


"So how do we determine our partners?" Hitomi asked.

"Spin the bottle?" Sean asked. It seemed as if he hadn't taken that into question.

"No," Kevin said. "Why don't we draw straws?"

"How is that going to work?" Sean asked. "Who's going to draw the straws and who's going to have their names on them?"

"Good point," Kevin replied. "Let's just decide tomorrow. I don't want to get into too much tonight."

"Ah well," Sean said. "Then let's just relax tonight."

"Oh, that reminds me," Hitomi said, holding up her hands. She then got up and ran over to a closet near them. Kevin looked at Sean who replied with a shrug. Hitomi grabbed something from the closet and brought a suitcase over to the table. She opened it up and showed the contents to the other
"What the heck are these?" Sean asked.

"These are yukata," Hitomi replied. "My family's company also makes textiles like these so I ordered them for us a while ago." She took a red one out. "Sean, this one is for you." She handed it to Sean and the confused American took a gander at it.

"Okay…" he really wasn't sure what to think about it until he got a look at the right sleeve. "Hey, it's got the flag on it!" He said, pointing to the American flag that had been sewn into the material. "Let's see…" He unfurled the yukata and got a look at it. The fabric was covered with hockey designs, Chicago references and even the Chicago Blackhawks and Steel logos. "I like it!" he said.

"Kevin, this one is for you," she said, handing a blue one to Kevin. Kevin checked the sleeve, and saw the green-white-orange Irish tricolor on the sleeve.

"I never thought I'd see the tricolor on blue!" He said as a joke. He checked the pattern on the yukata and noticed several four-leaf clovers and Celtic designs/knot work as well as an image of a Gaelic football player and even Dublin GAA. "How did she know I like Gaelic football?" He asked.

"I've seen you wear that shirt," Hitomi replied.

"Oh," said Kevin. By now Maria was expecting her yellow yukata to be filled with Venezuelan references. Sure enough, from the Venezuelan flag on the right sleeve to the Venezuelan orchid patterns and even baseball (which made Sean slightly envious) prints.

"¡Muy beuno!" She said. Hitomi took out Daisuke's green and her pink yukata. They were more traditional, save for the Japanese flag on the sleeves. Daisuke's just had the crest of the Miyazawa family on the left breast and Hitomi's was covered in sakura prints.

"They did a pretty good job on them," Sean said. "I just wonder how long it took to make them."

"Why don't you try them on?" Hitomi asked.

"No thanks," Sean replied. "I gotta practice my hockey game." He got up and left, with Kevin following.

"I have got to see this," Maria said as she got up as well, leaving Hitomi and Daisuke alone at the table. Well, not for long.

"I think I'll go too," Hitomi said, leaving Daisuke alone. It was fine with him, but he decided to follow anyway.

Sean tightened the straps on his inline skates/roller blades, trying to make sure they were tight enough for his feet. He still wore his t-shirt and ball cap and his shorts. On his side was a hockey stick. Kevin was setting up a hockey goal in the parking lot, which was for the most part empty, save for the Grand Prix Cruiser. But that had been moved. Hitomi, Maria, Godai-san and Daisuke were watching on the front steps of the inn as Sean finished up with his skates and put his gloves on. He tested the ground with his skates and got up, grabbing his hockey stick at the same time. Kevin tossed Sean a ball to use as a puck and Sean put it on the ground. He began circling the ball like a vulture before taking the ball with his stick and skating towards the net.
He dribbled the ball on his stick and moved from side to side as if he was trying to deceive an unseen goalie. He got closer and closer before finally getting close enough to take a shot. With just a flick of the wrist, he shot the ball into the net, past the fake goaltender that was set up in the net.

Goadi-san, Hitomi and Maria applauded Sean, who gave them a slight wave. "Impressive!" Godai-san said.

"Not bad," said Maria.

"Pathetic!" Daisuke said firmly. This got Sean's attention.

"I'd like to see you try," said Sean. Daisuke flipped him off and went back inside.

Later on, the Rangers actually decided to try on their new yukatas that Hitomi had given them. They weren't bad, really. Maria thought she looked pretty good in hers, especially since she had let her hair down. The Rangers and Godai-san were having a special dinner that Godai-san's wife Hikari had made for them. They weren't anyone to refuse a free meal, so they all agreed to eat. They even had everyone's favorite; apples and a Smithwick's for Kevin. "Thanks," Sean said as he took a bite out a Red Delicious apple.

"You're welcome," Godai-san said. "I must say though, your skills at this... 'Hockey' are impressive. Where did you learn it?"

"My dad played a game called hurling in Ireland," Sean said. "When he came to the States, he found out the game of ice hockey had some similarities to hurling, so he came to like the game. So, since he was into it, I got into it and I like it anyway."

"But you also seem to like baseball," Maria said. "Don't you?"

"Why, who's your favorite team?" Sean asked.

"Los Leones de Caracas," Maria said. "They play in the Venezuelan League."

"Like I said before, I'm a White Sox fan," Sean said. "Actually though, even though I'm a hockey player, I did teach Kev how to play baseball."

"You did!" Maria asked. "I thought he like Gaelic football."

"I play both sports," Kevin replied.

"Yeah, but I also have a funny hockey story," Sean said. "There's a dude I played against named Ritchie Metoxen; REALLY good player, exceptionally fast. They call him the 'Oneida Rocket' for a reason. The other reason is because he's an Oneida Indian. So anyway, we were playing against each other in the Clark Cup playoffs. It was in overtime and the deciding game of our series; next goal gets us to the finals. He's got the puck and racing to the net and I chase after him. I got the puck."

"What do you do?" Godai-san asked.

"I scored," Sean replied. "You should've seen the look on his face in the hand-shake line!"

"Is that all?" Daisuke asked.

"It was funny to me!" Sean snapped.
"That doesn't sound funny," said Maria.

"Then I have another one," Kevin said. "I pulled this prank on someone when I was in school. He and I would sometimes pull pranks on each other, so one time after he put a whoopee cushion under my chair I got back at him. I retaliated by putting rotten eggs in his room. The next day I found out that he had to buy new sheets!" Sean, Maria and Hitomi all snickered before breaking into a full laugh.

"How is that funny?" Hikari asked.

"Well first off, nobody got hurt," Sean said. "Second, the implications make it funnier!"

"I don't think Hikari-san thinks it's funny," Hitomi said. "But I have one!"

"No otaku shit," Sean said.

"It doesn't have anything to do with that," Hitomi said. "I was at this same inn last year with some friends. We decided to play a trick on her one time by having this boy she had a crush on walk in on her while she was in the hot spring."

"I hope there's something funny in there," Maria said.

"Oh there is," Hitomi said. "We switched the sign for the men's spring with the women's spring so that she would go in the men's spring while no one was in there. Then we switched it back up and had the boy she had a crush on go in next. Then when they saw each other, their reactions were priceless!" Godai-san and Hikari burst out laughing, probably since they knew what happened. Sean, Maria and Kevin however, were still kind of confused.

"You should have been there," Hikari said. "It would have been funnier."

"I'll bet," Sean said sarcastically.

"By the way, have you three been to a festival?" Godai-san asked. Sean, Kevin and Maria looked at each other in a confused way. They decided to answer to the best of their ability.

"No," said Sean. 'You mean like Ozzfest?"

"I went to Carnival one time in Rio De Janeiro," Maria replied. "I think that counts."

"No, not those!" Godai-san replied. "Have you ever been to a matsuri?" The three Western Rangers looked at each other, as if trying to confirm what Godai-san asked. All three shook their heads at each other.

"No," Sean replied. "We're not Japanese so we've never really done that... whatever you're talking about."

"Well, the local shrine is holding a festival tonight," Godai-san said. "It really doesn't have much to do with the Shinto religion though; it's more of a community festival."

"Oh, like a town fair," Sean said. "I've been to those."

"It's sort of like a block party," Godai-san replied. I believe it starts at 8:00, so you have some time."

"To do what?" Kevin asked.

"Just relax," Godai-san replied.
"Hey Rich Boy!" Sean said to a meditating Daisuke. "We're thinking about going -"

"No," said Daisuke

"Alrighty then!" Sean said. "Maria, Kevin, Hitomi, ¡vamos!"

"Where are you going?" Daisuke asked.

"To the festival!" Sean replied. "And you're not coming!"

"Sorry brother," Hitomi said as she left the room, leaving Daisuke behind.

"Where are you four going?" Godai-san asked as the four of them came into the lobby to put on their shoes. They were still wearing their yukata.

"To the festival," Sean replied. "Rich Boy ain't coming with."

"Well then let me come with you," Godai-san said. "Hikari and I will be glad to show you where it is."

"Thank you Godai-san," Hitomi said.

"You're welcome," Godai-san said. "But why are you leaving Daisuke behind?"

"He didn't want to come," said Sean. "His loss."

Going to a matsuri turned out to be a fantastic stress killer. The Rangers wandered around the festival, taking in the sights, sounds and smell. There was a man selling fried carp and hawking the product. The smell was familiar to Sean, who had smelled this kind of thing back home. Maria like it so much that she bought one. Kevin found a ring-toss game (that was not what he expected) and gave it a try. He did win something, but it was a Hello Kitty doll that he gave to Hitomi (nothing romantic, he didn't want it).

Maria and Hitomi found a goldfish-catching game where they were given paper paddles to catch the goldfish. Hitomi managed to catch one while Maria's paper kept breaking. Of course, Hitomi also caught another for Maria. Maria was also fascinated by the cat statues that seemed to be waving at people. Hitomi said these were called 'maneki neko'. Maria then left Hitomi (they agreed to split up) to explore most of the festival. Again, the sights and sounds of the festival provided a way for her to relax, especially with the Rangers' operation tomorrow.

She happened across Sean haggling with a man selling dango. Apparently, Sean was having big trouble with him. The vendor was too frustrating.

"Just give it up!" Maria said. "Besides, there's another dango vendor around here who speaks English."

"Well then I guess that can work," Sean replied. "By the way, are you stalking me? You came up to me earlier in the day."

"I'm no stalker," Maria replied. "I just happened to find you."

"Fair enough," Sean replied. They managed to find this dango vendor that Maria was talking about
and Sean was able to get his mitarashi dango. Now they could enjoy themselves.

"So do you think that energy might be dangerous?" Maria asked. She felt it didn't hurt to speculate.

"Probably not," Sean replied. "But the UN wanted us to check it out and we have to follow orders. Of course, it might be a trap."

"Why do you think it's a trap?" She asked.

"I've watched enough action shows and movies to know that something minor can really be a trap," Sean replied. He then kept his voice down so no one would hear him. "We'll have to be on guard. That's why I think we should investigate while morphed tomorrow."

"I see," Maria said, keeping her voice low as well. "Hey, where's chica?" She asked, referring to Hitomi.

"I dunno," Sean replied. "But she can handle herself if she gets into trouble."

"I see your point," Maria replied. "You know, I thought your hockey skills were impressive."

"Even though I know you don't follow that sport?" Sean asked, knowing the Venezuelan obsession with beisbol. Maria laughed, knowing what Sean was talking about. "Te prefiero beisbol."

"Si," she replied. "Yo prefiero beisbol."

"Eh, me gusta beisbol," Sean replied. "Pero me encantan hockey de sobre hielo."

"Ah, si si," she replied. "¿Que es tu equipo favorito de hockey?"

"Los Blackhawks de Chicago," Sean replied. "¿Y tu equipo favorito es Los Leones de Caracas?"

"¡Si! Tu es correcto." Maria said. "Me gusta hablo con tu."

"¡Soy encantado!" Sean replied. "Y soy gusta hablo con tu."

"Gracias," she replied with a big smile on her face. From a distance, Hitomi was watching them. She had a look of disappointment on her face at how Sean and Maria were acting so friendly with each other. She wished that she was in Maria's place instead. Kevin, meanwhile, ignored them; he was playing the goldfish game.

That is, until Hitomi bumped into him. He looked up to tell her off at first, but he saw her sad expression. So he temporarily halted the game, stood up and touched her shoulder. "What do you think about Sean?" he asked.

"I think he's amazing!" said Hitomi. "He doesn't care what people think about him, he doesn't take anything from anyone and he just... I don't know! I wish I was like him, then I could..."

"Do you know who he is?" Kevin asked. "We know he likes hockey; he needs to shut up about it. But what else does he like, and what is he like?"

"Well, um..." Hitomi paused, muttering something under her breath. Kevin closed his eyes and tightened his lips. He looked back up at Sean and Maria. They were laughing about something. And they looked at each other in such a way as to make Kevin raise his eyebrow.

but he looked back at Hitomi and sighed. She worriedly looked up at him. He opened his mouth, but closed it.
He concluded that Hitomi, while her admiration for Sean was genuine, was only in love with the idea of him, and not him.

"Let's get you some dango," he said while turning her away from Sean and Maria.

I wish we could have stayed longer," Kevin said as the Rangers returned to the inn. Godai-san had dragged them away from the festival much to their disappointment. Kevin was just about to win his fish-dipping game when Godai-san had arrived and told them they had to leave. Godai-san replied to their protests by saying that he had some patrons at the inn (Daisuke had called him about it) and he needed to attend to them, which required the Rangers to come with.

"You should have asked me," Hitomi replied. "I would have got you another fish." She held up two bags of goldfish, both of which she had won.

"You are giving me one of those, right?" Maria asked.

"Sure!" Hitomi replied. Apparently, despite seeing Maria and Sean together, she didn't forget her friendship with Maria. "You do know how to care for one, right?"

"I have a fish in Caracas," Maria replied. "I can handle it."

"Okay then!" Hitomi said.

"Hey Kev," Sean said. "You want to soak in the hot spring?"

"Nah," Kevin replied. "I'll just take a regular shower."

"Your loss," Sean replied.

"I'll probably take a bath later," Maria said.

"Hitomi," Daisuke said, "I noticed you looking at O'Carrahan. Why?" He was speaking Japanese, and Sean couldn't understand him until he heard the Japanese pronunciation of his name.

"What?" Hitomi asked, blushing.

"I want you to stay away from O'Carrahan as best you can," he said. "I do not wish to see him hurt you."

"Brother, he likes me," she objected. "I am no longer a child!"

Daisuke huffed and grasped his sister's shoulders, while she continued staring at him with a mixture of defiance and confusion. "That is not the point," he said. "What is going on with you and O'Carrahan?"

She looked at Daisuke, at Sean, then back to Daisuke. remembering the conversation she already had with Kevin, she said, "How i feel about him is none of your business."

"You cannot possibly love him," he scoffed, pulling her closer. "What does he represent to you? Some abstract concept of what you assume to be freedom?"

As they talked, Sean listened, but could not understand them for the life of him and was just about to go off on his own way when Daisuke stopped and turned to glare at Sean while Kevin walked up behind Sean.
"Do not say it," said Daisuke.

"Say what?" Sean asked.

"Whatever it is you are thinking."

"What do you think I'm thinking?"

"Something bad."

"How do you know it's bad?"

"It is written all over your face."

"What's written all over my face?"

"Whatever it is you're thinking and are going to say."

"What do you think I was going to say?"

"You were going to ask if I have incestual feelings for my sis—" Daisuke froze, aware of the Look Sean was giving him, and the awkward stares from Kevin and Hitomi, and the way Maria was about to burst out laughing.

"Rich Boy, how dare you!" Sean incredulously teased. "Get your mind out of the gutter!"

Maria guffawed like The Joker, ignoring Daisuke's glare and Hitomi's confusion. Totally embarrassed, Kevin tried to pull the collar of his yukata up to hide his embarrassment and walked away.

"That was inappropriate," Daisuke huffed.

"Sorry about that," said Sean. "Let's never speak of that again, shall we?"

"For once, I agree," Daisuke growled.

"I thought it was funny," Hitomi chuckled. "No, brother, you may not kiss me."

Embarrassed, Daisuke huffed off, muttering something about anime. That left Hitomi and Maria, with Sean in the middle. Maria grinned at Hitomi, walked up to her and wrapped an arm around her shoulders to lead her away, while talking about something else entirely, leaving Sean behind.

"Whatever," Sean said in response as he headed for the onsen.

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Sean gingerly lowered himself into the hot water. After cleaning himself according to inn rules, he was soaking in the hot spring wearing nothing but a towel (ladies, control yourselves). He was whistling the A-Team theme (it had got stuck in his head) as he soaked in the hot spring. It felt like a Jacuzzi except there were no jets that were blowing into his back. That and the water temperature was natural instead of artificial. He let out a sigh, thinking about how the team was going to split up tomorrow. With the way things were going, he was considering splitting the team up with him investigating alongside Maria. But he had also noticed Hitomi looking at the two and he thought it would be a better idea if she worked with Maria.

"Hola muchacho," a voice came to his left. He looked over there and he froze in surprise.
"GAAAHHH! What the hell are you doing in here?" He shouted in surprise.

Maria looked at him strangely. Like Sean, she was only wearing a towel and her hair in a bun. She looked at him strangely, as if he was crazy. 'Why did you react like that?' She asked. "Are you angry that I'm here?"

"No, it's more like I'm surprised!" Sean replied. "What are you doing in here; this is the men's spring!"

"No, it's not," Maria shot back. "This is the mixed-gender spring." Sean looked at her confused. "There's three springs; one for women, one for men and a mixed spring."

"Well, I didn't know that!" Sean replied.

"Well I did," Maria replied. "Besides, I brought some beer with me." She held up a pair of beer bottles, which Sean considered.

"All right," he said. "You can get in." He closed his eyes and looked away as he heard the water splash only slightly as Maria entered the water. He looked again in time to see Maria sitting next to him, which made him blush redder than a ripe tomato. Maria reacted by laughing.

"Relax," she said. "It's not bad."

"How can you say that?" Sean replied.

"To be honest, I'm kind of a nudist," she replied. That was new. "So I don't really get too worked up hanging out this way." Sean sighed in response.

"Hand me the beer," he said. She handed the beer bottle to him and he took the cap off before taking a sip, as did Maria. "This is nice," he said.

"I know," she said. "It's calming."

"I suppose so," he said taking another sip of beer.

"So I was talking with Hitomi earlier," Maria said. Sean directed his gaze at Maria. "She said the reason Daisuke acts the way he does is because their family puts a lot of pressure on him to succeed. So when he found out he was Green Ranger, he felt he let his family down."

"He still needs to relax," Sean replied. "By the way, I noticed Hitomi looking at us earlier at the festival. She seemed upset. Maybe she thinks your friendship is in trouble."

"If that's true, then I don't want her to think that way," Maria said. "Apparently, I'm the only true friend she has." She took another sip of beer.

"You know, I think I'll have you two work together tomorrow," Sean said. Maria looked at him. "If it will help your friendship; I don't want anything to harm it."

"That sounds nice," Maria said. She scooted closer to Sean, causing his body to stiffen in discomfort before relaxing. He could have sworn it felt better with her close to him. "Like I said before, I enjoy talking to you," she said. "Daisuke may not see it, but you're a nice person. I guess Kevin was right."

"Of course he's right," Sean replied. "You saw me save the kid, right?"

"Yes," she replied. "I didn't think that counted though." She was being sarcastic, and it seemed to work, as Sean sighed in exasperation. "I was just joking," she said.
"Right," he replied. She took another sip of her beer and for some reason, Sean felt like doing something. He lifted his left arm and was about to drape it over her shoulders when—

"Hey you two," Kevin said, startling Sean. "You mind if we join you?" Hitomi accompanied him, and she seemed to be looking at Sean. His face showed one of surprise, while Maria did not. "What were you two doing?" Kevin asked.

"Nothing," Sea said as he put his arm back in the water. "No, we don't mind, do we Maria?"

"No," she replied, smiling at the two. Kevin got in the water and Hitomi followed him. Sean mentally snapped his fingers, thinking that his chance with Maria was blown. Well now he might as well play leader again.

"So I was thinking about how we're going to investigate tomorrow," Sean said. "I was thinking about having Maria and Hitomi investigate the eastern location while Kevin and I investigate the western location. Is that good with you guys?"

"Sounds good to me," Kevin replied.

"I like it," Hitomi said.

"Bueno," Maria said.

"Then it's settled," Sean said. "By the way, it's possible we're walking into a trap tomorrow, so we'll have to morph. Is that clear?"

"Very clear," Kevin replied.

"Clear as day," Hitomi said.

"I gotcha," Maria said.

Sean nodded his head. The Rangers understood him perfectly. "Now then, we got one more chance to relax, so let's just chill here." And the four of them talked for most of the night. As they talked, they found themselves gaining a deeper sense of friendship; and for Sean and Maria, maybe something more.

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End chapter

Chapter End Notes

So, the rating is staying 'T'. The reason is because Maria and Sean are not exposed, being covered up by the water. If I do full nudity, I'll make the rating 'M', but that's not going to happen.

Anyway, this chapter did mean something. It's setting up the final arc for Part I, and things are going to get hairy with the next chapter. I just needed two breather chapters before things got messy; and it's gonna get messy.
Don't Go In the Woods

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Power Rangers GPX Episode 14: Don't Go In the Woods

:--:--: We're the best damn chance you've got, Power Rangers GPX, let's GO! :--:--:

The shrine parking lot was quiet. It was a slow day for any worshippers—of course, anyone who wanted to could come to the local shrine, anyhow. But, today, it was quiet. The only sounds in the area were the sounds of local wildlife. The sound of Swallows could be heard in the forest nearby, despite the name of the forest: Aokigahara. This forest is notorious in Japan for its location for many suicides, leading some people to believe it's haunted. Whether this is true or not is anybody's guess.

For the local *mikos*, there were reports of strange sights in the forest. Some people had said they'd seen ghouls in the woods, which made the *mikos* concerned. Some had seen *oni* in there, which was even more concerning. The priest had told them to stay away from the forest for now until they performed their exorcisms. The *miko* named Sakura was concerned about the delay in the exorcism. "Are you sure that delaying the exorcism is a good idea?" She asked him nervously. He looked at her with an assuring look; or at least the best he could give.

"Yes, I am sure," he said. The *miko* Sakura nodded in response before returning to her work of sweeping the shrine grounds.

Luckily for them, though, they were getting some help; even if it was kind of unintentional.

A red-colored Hummer H2 pulled into the shrine parking lot. A flock of birds flew away; it was possible that had nothing to do with its appearance, of course. The engine idled for a few moments before the engine was killed. "We're here!" Sean said as he got out of the Hummer.

"We sure are," Kevin said as he stepped out of the passenger's side.

The doors in the back opened. The first one to step out was Daisuke. "So when do we begin?" He asked.

The next person to step out was Maria. "Not yet," she said.

Hitomi came out last. "But we are soon," she said.

"Correct," said Sean. "Hey Kev, do you think you can help me get the equipment out?"

"Sure," said Kevin. Daisuke, wearing green, also came around and helped.

"So Daisuke Miyazawa decides to help," said Maria. "I thought I'd never see the day."

"Sarcasm will get you nowhere, Aparicio," Daisuke said. Sean shook his head in response. "Hitomi, is the haro ready?".

"Yes, brother," Hitomi replied. Hitomi reached into the H2 and pulled out a green, basketball-shaped-and-sized robot. She, too, was from Kyoto.

"Do we really need that?" Sean asked. "We've got the equipment we need."
"I just felt like asking," Daisuke replied. Sean shook his head and unloaded the last box from the H2 before closing the back.

That's when he pulled out a device from his pocket and strapped it to his arm. The others did this, as well. "Alright, here's the plan," he said. "Kevin and I will search the forest back here," he pointed behind himself, to the west. "Rich Boy," he was referring to Daisuke, a nickname Daisuke hated, "Will take the shrine. Maria and Hitomi are to take the forest to the east. Is that clear?" The Red Ranger asked.

"You got it," Kevin, the Blue Ranger, replied.

"Loud and clear," Daisuke, the Green Ranger, replied.

"Perfecto," Maria, the Yellow Ranger, said.

"Okay," Hitomi, the Pink Ranger, said.

"Nice," Sean said. "Alright, get out your AcceleKeys." The Rangers reached into their pockets and pulled something out: a key that flipped out like a switchblade. All five lined up in front of the H2 like this: Kevin, Hitomi, Sean, Maria, and Daisuke. "Alright," Sean said. "It's morphin' time! READY!"

"READY!" The others said, showing their AcceleMorphers, then they all said in unison,

"GPX, START IT UP!" The Rangers did a little arm choreography before jamming the keys into the keyholes in the sides of the AcceleMorphers and turning the key. There was a blinding flash of multi-colored light before all five re-appeared in their Ranger suits.

Now it was time to get to work. Sean opened the boxes and pulled out some devices to give to each Ranger. "These are our energy detectors," he said. "They'll pinpoint each location with a red dot, okay? Now then, are there any questions…?" No one answered. "Outstanding! Move out!"

"Got it!" Maria and Hitomi said. They got into a ready position, and the tires on their boots and gloves began to spin, and bands of yellow and pink began to glow. Then, the two took off towards the east with the sounds of screeching and engines accompanying them. Then Sean and Kevin got into position as their tires began to spin as well with red and blue in their tires. Then they took off to the west, screeching tire sounds and all. This left Daisuke to walk to the shrine.

However, unbeknownst to all of them, they were being watched from above. A figure hovered over the shrine, a smirk on his face. His plans were already starting to work. Now all he needed was for the Green one to be alone. Phaedos chuckled to himself. The Zordonian general felt his time was right. "Better watch out Rangers," he said. "You're going to find out that not all is right in this forest."

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Sean and Kevin skidded to a stop in the forest, their 'tires' screeching and throwing dirt around. "Keep a sharp eye out," Sean said as he scanned the area; with his eyes, not equipment. "We might be walking into a bushwhack."

"Got it," Kevin replied. The two drew their Octane Blasters from their belts to be safe. Sean looked at the energy detector, trying to locate the energy source. The forest was thick, so they had to be careful where they were going. The occasional sign popped up, but because it was in Japanese, they couldn't read a word of it. But they did suspect this had something to do with the sheer number of suicides in this forest.
The sounds of woodland creatures were heard in the distance. A deer stuck its head up to look at the two before dashing off into the forest. Sean could see what looked like an owl staring at them before turning away. For some reason, the atmosphere in the woods was giving him the creeps.

It felt like some negative feeling in the pit of his stomach. He felt as though something (other than an owl) was watching him, and he kept checking around to make sure he wasn't paranoid. He certainly didn't believe in ghosts, but he certainly thought something was not right with this forest. Just what in the hell did the Zordonians think when they set this possible trap? Then again, it was probably pretty smart. Of course, Swabots could be hiding among the trees, so he had to watch out for them.

The forest was pretty much the confirmation of why he got scared during *The Blair Witch Project*. Its pure creepiness, combined with the actual reputation the forest had, made him nervous. He half expected him and Kevin to come across a suicide scene at any moment now. He thought he heard a sound, turning around to look at where the sound was coming from. Kevin, of course, noticed this and wondered if his friend was alright. "Hey Sean, what's wrong?"

"I thought I heard something," Sean replied, finding nothing of note. "Either this place is haunted, or it's just giving me the creeps."

"Might be the latter," Kevin said. "I seriously doubt this place is haunted."

"Probably," said Sean. He rechecked the scanner, getting a hold of himself. They didn't seem to be near it yet. This was ridiculous. Kevin himself was getting bored, so he decided to taunt Sean.

"So you and Maria were in the hot springs last night," he said. Under his visor, Sean glanced at him before looking back at his energy scanner. "And you two were naked."

"Alright, what the fuck are you getting at?" Sean asked, getting agitated.

"Nothing really," Kevin replied. Sean didn't believe him one bit, and from under his helmet and visor gave him a dirty look. "Are you two… you know…"

"Dude, shut the fuck up!" Sean shouted, hitting Kevin on the arm. He certainly got just what Kevin was trying to get at, and he was not pleased one bit. Kevin was trying not to laugh, which annoyed Sean big time. "Dude, you're 23!" He said. "That's shit you do when you're a teenager, not when you're 23!"

"Sorry!" Kevin said, trying not to laugh. "I couldn't resist one bit!" Sean groaned in exasperation and continued walking. He did have to give Kevin credit, though; it did take his mind off of the forest's creepiness and got him focused back on the real world. Instead of focusing on the wood, he was focusing more on energy.

"This place plays mind games with you," he said. "And it's not the trees doing it. It's the atmosphere."

"Right," Kevin said. "I got you." Then he said, "I wonder how the girls are doing."

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"I hate this place," said Maria. "It feels so… wrong!"

"Is that the best description you could come up with?" Hitomi asked.

"Unfortunately, yes," Maria replied. "Then I guess a better way to describe this place would be simply, 'creepy.'"
"That I can understand," Hitomi said. They, too, were nervous in the forest. Hitomi knew about the place since she and her friends used to tell each other ghost stories about the area. Maria was in no mood for ghost stories right now, since they still had to find that energy signal. Again, like Sean, Maria and Hitomi were nervous in the forest. The foreboding feeling was like a J-horror movie that Hitomi had seen and an American horror movie that Maria had seen. Both would have to be on their guard.

"Is this place haunted?" Maria asked.

"I hear it is," Hitomi said. "But I'm not sure."

"I would prefer it if you were," Maria said. They needed to get their minds off of this sense of nervousness. Luckily, Hitomi had an excellent way to do it.

"Do you wonder if ghosts can have sex?" Maria stifled a laugh in her throat, caught off guard by the suddenness and frankness of Hitomi's question.

"I don't know!" She said while laughing. "Where did you think of that?"

"I needed to break the nervousness!" Hitomi replied.

"I think it worked chica," Maria said, trying to control her laughter. "But I think I'd rather talk about something else."

"Okay then," said Hitomi. "Well, if you weren't born today, what would you do? Would you want to be a samurai?"

Maria laughed. "Probably," she said. "Or I'd be a soldier in my ancestor Simon Bolivar's army."

"Who's he?" Hitomi asked.

"He's the liberator of most of South America," Maria replied. "I consider him the George Washington of the continent."

"Wow," said Hitomi. "Is he really your ancestor?"

"More like an uncle," Maria replied. "I don't think I'm a direct descendant unless I find some evidence linking me directly to him."

"Okay," said Hitomi. Now usually, Hitomi has control over her mouth, but her lips moved, and her voice reverberated without her control when she said, "What do you think about Sean?"

"¡¿QUE!?" Maria shouted. Hitomi realized just what she had said, and under her visor, she was surprised that had even come out of her mouth. "Oh, um, I think he's alright. I like his smile; it's like sunshine. But he seriously needs an attitude adjustment." She neglected to mention how she walked in on Sean in the hot spring because she liked his company, and wanted to see him naked. She also didn't mention a dream she had, where she rode Sean like she was a cowgirl, making him mewl and beg for it like an uke in those trashy yaoi fics she liked. Blushing, she hemmed and hawed, making Hitomi blush, too.

"Um, forget I said it!" Hitomi said, walking away from the shocked Maria. The Venezuelan Yellow Ranger was left wholly stunned that those words came out of Hitomi's mouth just now. Why did she ask about Sean? Maria didn't... oh, dear.

"Hitomi, wait!" Maria said as she ran after the Pink Ranger. But she didn't have to go very far.
Hitomi had stopped after a few hundred feet but remained among the twisted, mangled trees. But she stood still in front of a tent. Judging from the tent's haggard appearance, it had been there for some time, maybe a month or more. Maria followed Hitomi up to the tent, carefully reached for the opening flap, and opened it.

There was a decomposing corpse in there.

But Maria wasn't scared. The corpse of a young man about their age looked peaceful. He still wore a t-shirt, jeans, and trainers, but it was hard to tell whom it might have been. "That poor man," Maria said softly. "I don't know why I'm not afraid, but... this is so sad and tragic."

"I know," said Hitomi. "I wish someone could have helped him." She clapped her hands together in prayer, and Maria did the same, also making a sign of the Cross.

Daisuke's trip to the shrine didn't warrant the use of his boot and glove wheels; he just walked. Of course, it did feel like a lot of stairs, but he had done this many times before when going to a shrine to pray. It wasn't too bad. Besides, he had more important things to worry about, like this strange energy. Getting to the top didn't take long, and he went inside. Of course, going dressed in a suit like that will always draw unwanted attention, and several people who were there were staring at him.

"Is he here for a Super Sentai filming?" One asked.

"He doesn't look like it," the other one replied.

Daisuke ignored them and got a look at his energy detector. The red light on the HUD in his visor alerted him to the presence of the energy. Just what he was looking for. It was in one of the shrine buildings, and he decided to go in. However, a miko blocked his entrance.

"I'm sorry," she said. "But we are having that place cleaned. I would appreciate it if you do not go in there."

"It will only take a few moments," Daisuke replied. "Please."

"Very well," the miko said. "You have permission." She bowed to Daisuke, and he did as well before he went in.

The building was dingy, dusty (if that's even possible), and cobwebs were everywhere. It was pretty obvious why it was getting cleaned. But that wasn't the big part. As Daisuke entered, he smelled something wafting in the shrine. He blinked multiple times while he swayed, trying to keep his balance when he heard the door slam shut. He turned around and saw something that made his jaw drop inside his helmet.

"Well, well, well, look what we have here…"

"It's in here somewhere," said Sean as he and Kevin closed in on the location of the energy. Sean was on his guard, ready for anything if there was a surprise attack by any Swabots or some other Zordonian trickery. A red dot was flashing in the visor's HUD, and it was getting stronger and closer. "We're right on target," said Sean. Kevin had his Touring Cannon out, ready in case of attack. The two crept slowly, hoping not to fall into any trap. Sean searched for any signs of attack. Finally, the red dot on their HUD began flashing wildly, telling them they were there. "Its right around this corner," said Sean, smiling under his visor.
"Nice," Kevin replied. The two turned the corner to find…

"It's a flashing red light," Sean said with a tone of slight disappointment. A box with a flashing red light was standing next to a tree and appeared to be giving off the energy.

"Well, there's no doubt about it," Kevin said, checking his energy detector. "It says so right here. Oh well, it was just a false alarm." But Sean thought otherwise, and he ended up hearing something.

"It's a bushwhack!" He said as he turned around, drawing his Octane Blaster. He fired the fuel pump nozzle-shaped gun at an invisible enemy, but as soon as he hit it, the assailant flew backward, landing on its back.

"Is that a ninja?" Kevin asked.

"No, it's a Swabot," Sean replied. Sure enough, dozens of Swabots appeared, dressed in ninja garb. "They've been tracking us!" Sean said in anger.

"How do you know that?" Kevin replied.

"These guys are lousy ninjas," Sean replied. "They made some noise and were terrible at stealth."

"Whatever," Kevin said, aiming his Touring Cannon. "I prefer to do things the old-fashioned way!" He fired at the Swabots, taking several out. Now the battle was on. Kevin kept shooting, trying to keep the Swabots at bay, while Sean fired some shots.

Meanwhile, Maria and Hitomi had figured out that the energy was a trap as well, and were fighting off some ninja Swabots. Maria hacked at a couple with her Haz Daggers, stabbing one. She then round-house kicked the Swabot, knocking it into several others. She took a swipe at another, cutting its 'throat' and stabbing it again. With another Swabot coming up behind, Maria kicked it in the gut, knocking it into a tree. "Lightning Throw!" She threw her daggers at a pair of Swabots, striking them, and embedding them into them. Bolts of electricity shot out of the daggers, electrocuting all of them.

Hitomi meanwhile, preferred to fight from a distance, firing her Am Bow at a line of Swabots. The arrow blasted through all of them, making them explode. Then she flipped over backward when a Swabot tried to attack her with its sword, but she managed to get a shot from her bow at the Swabot, which surprisingly hit the target. Instead of landing on the ground, she kicked another Swabot, knocking it into its squad. Then she stood on her hands with her legs out, spinning in those hands and kicking the Swabots with each revolution.

"¡Vamos, muchachos!" Maria shouted, taking a break from kicking Swabot behind. The Swabots took her up on her challenge and fell right into her trap. A mine exploded, sending them flying in all directions. "Hahahahahaha!" Maria was pleased with this development.

"How did you get that mine there?" Hitomi asked.

"I just threw it there," Maria replied. She then stabbed a Swabot, and the ripped out its circuitry. With a spin, she threw her daggers at two more Swabots, again taking them down. Suddenly, she elbowed a Swabot that had tried to sneak up on her. "Don't do that again," she said before nonchalantly kicked one trying to get her from the side. She hacked and stabbed at more Swabots, this time trying to cut a path. "Let's get out of here!" She shouted.

"Right!" Hitomi replied as she fired a shot from her Am Bow. She too left, following Maria. Now
they would have made a clean break, had the ground not suddenly shook. The two were knocked to
the ground because of this sudden earthquake.

"What was that?" Maria asked, getting up from the ground.

"That was no natural quake!" Hitomi replied. "I've been through real ones; this is not one of them!"
The ground shook again, and the Swabots left the scene.

"I have a very bad feeling about this," Maria said. Suddenly, the HUD in her visor alerted her to an
incoming object. "Hitomi, we've got incoming at 6:00!" She said.

"Got it!" Hitomi said, turning around. Maria, too, got into position, getting her daggers ready. The
Swabots had left, and it was just them waiting for whatever was coming.

"Steady," said Maria. Hitomi kept her fingers on the arrow, still notched in the drawstring of the
bow. Maria had the dagger in her right hand in a standard way and the one in the left in reverse. The
sounds continued, as it became clear something was approaching them. Maria's eyes began to widen
as she watched whatever it was approaching. She looked up at whatever it was, her jaw dropping in
the helmet. "Holy—"

"Phaedos," Daisuke growled.

The Zordonian general stood on the other side of the shrine, holding his hands up like he wanted to
surrender. "Argh, Green Ranger? Curses, my plan is foiled!"

"Your sense of sarcasm is terrible," said Daisuke.

"I'm disappointed you think that," said Phaedos. "But now that you've discovered me, I will have to
kill you."

"I will fight you," Daisuke replied.

"To be honest, I'd rather be fighting a leader, not a follower," Phaedos taunted, drawing his sword,
while Daisuke simultaneously drew his blaster and changed it into the GP Saber. Then Phaedos
lunged forward, swinging downwards. Daisuke blocked, parried, and countered with a forehanded
swing.

"But you are fighting me, not that vulgar manchild playing superhero," Daisuke replied, trying to
sound confident, but Phaedos could detect the resentment in his tone.

"But you're still following him!" Phaedos responded, thrusting the tip of his sword at Daisuke.
Dodging, Daisuke jumped backward to the side a few feet, raised his sword above his head, and
swung downward. Phaedos effortlessly blocked it.

"It's sad, really," Phaedos continued. "I dug into your family history. You've got quite the pedigree,
kid." He pushed Daisuke's sword away and kicked him in the stomach. Daisuke doubled over, and
Phaedos kneed him in the stomach. But Daisuke caught his leg and pulled, tripping Phaedos up.
With Phaedos on the ground and rubbing his head, Daisuke pointed his blade downwards and thrust.
Phaedos rolled out of the way, and the only dent the sword made was a circular hole in the floor. He
would have to pay for this, sadly.

"I still have my family business to run," Daisuke shot back. "But thank you for recognizing my
family's heritage."
"You're welcome," Phaedos said, spreading his arms out and bowing. Daisuke took the opportunity
to lunge at Phaedos, only for Phaedos to step aside, spin on his left foot, reverse roundhouse kick
Daisuke, and to send him sprawling face-first onto the floor in front of the shrine altar.

"This is a sacred place," Daisuke groaned. "We should take this outside."

"Not yet," said Phaedos. "I'm just taking out my frustration, that someone distantly related to
Miyamoto Musashi and Oda Nobunaga, the best fighter humanity has to offer... has to be a
subordinate of some nameless twat whose only famous ancestor is Charlemagne? Killing a man who
dishonored his family like you will feel empty."

"SHUT UP!" Daisuke roared.

Phaedos grinned. "NOW I'm getting to him," he said under his breath.

Meanwhile, Sean swung his GT Sword at several Swabots, screaming like a madman. Sean had
gone into a controlled battle rage, behaving almost like an ancient Celtic warrior or a Norse
berserker, or even a raging Samurai. He swung again, taking more out, before thrusting the sword
into another. The shells of spent Swabots littered the ground, sparks flying from Sean's damage. "GT STRIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIE!!" He shouted, the blade of his sword glowing. He sped forward, before taking
a big cut at the Swabots, destroying the lot of them.

Kevin meanwhile, was firing his Touring Cannon in front of the device that lured them there. Kevin
stayed calm instead of letting loose as Sean had. Kevin fired his cannon at a Swabot that was
sneaking up on Sean, making it explode. He fired several shots in succession, taking out other
Swabots. One Swabot got close, but Kevin roundhouse kicked the robot away from him. He shot the
robot again, sending sparks flying. "Turbo Blast!" He shouted. The Cannon began charging before
firing a blast at the Swabots, causing mass devastation for the bots. "Hey, calm down, will you?" He
asked.

"Sorry, dude," Sean replied, calming down. "I kinda got a little carried away there."

"You looked like Cu Chulainn," Kevin replied. He fired his cannon again, while Sean finished off
the rest of the Swabots. They were about to stop when Sean's HUD picked something up on his little
radar.

"I got something!" The Red Ranger said, getting into a defensive stance. Kevin did as well, aiming
his cannon. The two waited before four ghostly figures approached them. They had the same white
burial kimonos and stringy, disheveled hair that Daisuke was dealing with. "What the hell is going on
here?" Sean said.

"They look like ghosts," Kevin replied.

"Whatever, I'm killing them anyway," Sean replied. "GT STRIKE!" he sped towards them, swinging
his glowing blade. But the blade passed right through the ghosts. "What the fuck!" Sean shouted.

Kevin, too, fired his Cannon, but they also passed through. "Dammit!" Kevin shouted.

"What the hell are these things, Banshees?" Sean asked. He looked to see Kevin shrugging at him.
Sean had a confused look on his face underneath his helmet. "Dude, what's wrong?"

"Did you have to mention them?" Kevin asked.
"Dude, you're not afraid of banshees, are you?" Sean asked. Kevin seemed hesitant to ask, which made Sean come to a strange conclusion. "You weren't scared by Darby O'Gill, were you?"

"I was four years old!" Kevin replied.

"I can't believe it!" Sean said, laughing. "You were scared by that movie!"

"Can we discuss this later?" Kevin asked, pointing behind Sean. He looked behind to see the ghosts attack him, to which he quickly dodged. Already the situation was making him angry.

"Dammit!" Sean said. "What are we going to do about these—oh, shit!" Several Swabots had shown up and began attacking, forcing the two to fight back. Sean took some of them out while Kevin fought the ghosts the best he could. Sean tried to think about what to do, while at the same time fighting off several Swabots.

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Hitomi quickly jumped out of the way using her gymnastics skills to dodge a big, nasty club that a red ogre-like "Stupid oni!" She shouted. Make that an oni, which had attacked Maria and Hitomi. It was practically 15 feet tall, which made their fight very difficult (that's almost an understatement). Any attempt by maria to stab its body failed, since its hide was so thick. The oni swung its club at Maria, who quickly rolled out of the way. The oni swung its club down again, which Hitomi again dodged, rolling out of the way, and the club threw some dirt in the air, making a dent in the ground.

"Hitomi, cover me!" She said.

"Got it!" Hitomi replied. Hitomi fired a show from her bow at the oni's head while Maria ducked over to the oni's back. Hitomi continued firing her bow, trying to keep the oni distracted. It seemed to work because the oni did not notice Maria climb up a tree behind it. It bellowed and swung at Hitomi, but she managed to dodge it. Maria continued climbing the tree before walking on a branch. Maria waited for a moment, waiting for the right opportunity. Finally, she got it and jumped on to the oni's back.

Instantly, the ogre reacted to Maria. The monster began flailing around, trying to get to the Venezuelan Yellow Ranger. She held on for dear life, trying to thrust the dagger into the oni. Cutting its neck was not going to work, so the best chance was to stab its neck. But the oni flailed around again, avoiding some arrows from Hitomi. Maria found the right opportunity and raised the Haz Dagger in her right hand, thrusting it into the back of the oni's neck.

Instantly, the ogre roared in pain at Maria's stabbing. It tried to swipe at her, but she held on using the dagger as a way to hang on. Hitomi fired a shot at the oni's head, making it whip its head, dragging Maria along for the ride. Maria just barely held on though, since she had a death grip on the ogre's neck, as well as the dagger in the beast's neck.

This thing needed to be stopped, Maria thought. She began jerking the dagger around like a joystick, trying to get some results. Too bad the ogre wasn't going down. "I don't get it!" She said. "The blade should be in the spinal cord!"

"Keep trying!" Hitomi replied, firing another shot. Maria continued trying to get something to work. There was something wrong since the damn oni should be dead by now. That's when she yanked the dagger out of the oni's neck and got a look at the substance on the blade. Maria stared at the liquid before her eyes widened in realization at the substance on the blade.

"That's not blood," she said. "That's oil!" She thrust the dagger back into the beast's neck again, and
a small number of sparks flew from the 'wound.' Now Maria knew what was going on. "This thing isn't real!" She said. "It's a robot!"

"A robot!" Hitomi shouted.

"It must be Zordonian!" Maria said again.

"But why would they use Earth oil in their robots?" Hitomi asked.

"I don't—WHOA!" Maria was thrown from the oni's neck towards the tree where they'd found the device. Hitomi watched before seeing in complete shock, Maria disappearing in a flash of blue light.

"MARIA!" She shouted. With her best friend missing, Hitomi's confidence issues resurfaced. She began shaking, and her aim suffered for it as the arrow missed by a mile. The oni smirked as it advanced on Hitomi, the Pink Ranger shaking in her boots. She was terrified since her confidence had left her big time. However, this would not last long as the same blue light suddenly flashed.

As the Swabot reacted to the strike of his blade, Sean drew the blade of the GT Sword out of the robot's chest, sending sparks flying. The robot fell to the ground, partially exploding. Then Sean spun around and swung his sword at another Swabot, also taking it out. Sean was fighting with less intensity than before, but it was still very intense. He swung the sword like a baseball bat at another sword, also taking the Swabot out. Then with a downward swing, he took out the fourth Swabot, finishing up that batch of Swabots.

Then, he dived out of the way of a fireball thrown by one of the ghost-like things. "Grraah!" his frustration was starting to build, as evidenced by his clenched teeth and angry look under his visor. "I HATE these things! I can't even fucking hit them!"

"Let me try!" Kevin said, aiming his Touring Cannon at the ghost things. The blast, though, passed right through them. But it did get them to notice him, as they threw their will o' the-wisp stuff at them. Kevin dived out of the way. He thought about shooting at them, but he realized the futility of the effort, so he just started shooting the incoming Swabots. Most of his shots hit, destroying the Swabots.

"GT STRIKE!" Sean shouted, swinging his GT Sword at the Swabots. Again, the batch of Swabots was utterly destroyed. Too bad more were on their way. "These things just keep coming!" Sean growled.

"Hold on," Kevin said, aiming his Touring Cannon at the Swabots. "I got this!" He began charging his cannon while Sean kept fighting the other Swabots, so Sean had his back to him. This is going to be bad. Before Kevin could get a shot off, a ghost thing threw its fireball at him, or more specifically at the ground near him. KABOOM! The ensuing explosion sent Kevin flying backward. "YYYYYAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH! OOF!" Kevin hit the tree where the device they found earlier was and slid down before suddenly disappearing in a flash of blue light.

Naturally, Sean heard the explosion and looked around to find Kevin. "Kevin?" He said. The Blue Ranger was nowhere to be seen, which frustrated him. "Dammit Kevin, this isn't funny, you're gonna leave me alone like this?" Sean quickly looked on both sides of him, as Swabots surrounded him. "Oh, great," he said.

Suddenly, there was a flash of blue light again. Sean turned around to see what just happened before something appeared out of the device. "WHHHHHHHOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" A yellow figure
suddenly flew out of the device and crashed into Sean, knocking him on his back.

"OOF!" As he landed, his helmet came off somehow, and his face showed a look of minor pain. "That's not good," he said. He pulled his head up to get a look at who had landed on him. "What the—Maria!"

"Sean?" The Yellow Ranger said as she looked at him. She hadn't lost her helmet, but her face showed equal surprise as Sean.

"What the hell are you doing here? !" He said.

"I don't know!" She replied. "I was fighting along with Hitomi, and this happened!" Just then, she recognized them very awkward situation they were in: she was on top of and straddling him. "Oh!" She said, quickly getting off. Sean casually got up and grabbed his helmet.

"Looks like we've got work to do," he said. Then he held his helmet above his head in a dignified manner and said, "Back to action!"

"How'd you get here?" Hitomi asked as she fired her Am Bow.

"I don't know!" Kevin replied, firing his shot at the oni. The shot barely missed, but it was close enough to hit the horn on the oni's head; well, at least one of them anyway. It made the oni mad though, and it charged at the two, then swinging its Big, Nasty Club at the both of them. The two ducked, and the BNC instead struck the trees, breaking the trunks and sending splinters flying. Kevin fired again, this time hitting the oni. Instead, though, it made the beast angry, and it swung its BNC back at the two, swinging downwards. The BNC made a dent in the ground, sending dirt flying. The oni bellowed at the two, who both fired a shot at the beast. "I hope Sean is doing okay," said Kevin.

"Same for Maria," replied Hitomi.

"GT STRIKE!" Sean used his main attack again on several Swabots, destroying all of them. His helmet was back on since he had put it back on while we had cut away. He fought with another ninja Swabot, blocking each sword strike from the robot, and then parried one and stabbed it in the gut. He swung his sword downwards again, taking out two more of them.

Maria meanwhile kicked a Swabot in its chest, knocking it into a group of them. She dodged a fireball from the ghosts again, which was starting to get her frustrated. "Why can't I hit that thing?" She said. She hacked and stabbed at another pair of Swabots, taking them both out. She flipped over and landed on another Swabot, feet first, and then used her primary attack. "Lightning Throw!" She threw the Haz Daggers at the Swabots, taking them out.

"There's got to be a way to—wait!" Sean remembered the device at the tree. "That's it!" he ran over to the device but ran into more Swabots. "Oh, come on!" he dodged an attack from a Swabot and punched an incoming bot in the gut. Then he spun around, and reverse-roundhouse kicked another. Then he grabbed another and threw it into the tree that the device sat under. "OUT OF MY WAY!" He shouted. He ducked, avoiding a Swabot strike, and then swung his sword at it, cutting the robot into two. Then Sean jumped up and began running on top of the robots, leaving Maria in amazement.

Then she remembered that she had her battle. She ducked, and then kicked the Swabot in its chin, knocking it backward. She wasn't going to let Sean hog all the glory here. She spun around, slashing
"I AM NOT HIS SUBORDINATE!" Daisuke roared. "HE IS UNFIT FOR THE POSITION!"

"Then tell him what you really think!" Phaedos replied as he blocked another attempted strike. "Tell him how pathetic he is, and that he is unfit to command someone as worthy as you, remind him that he almost got you killed once!"

"GET BACK HERE!" Daisuke roared, charging full bore at Phaedos, before swinging his sword, locking blades with Phaedos's. "I... I..."

"You can do it, Daisuke," said Phaedos. "Redeem yourself. Tell him you will not follow his orders anymore. You are better than him in every way. You ARE his work supervisor, after all."

"Yes," he said. "You're right."

Phaedos smirked. It was working.

"DIE!" Sean swung his sword at the Swabots again. He was getting angrier, as the Swabots were multiplying and trying to overwhelm him and Maria. But the two were not going down without a fight and were laying waste to the Swabot hordes. Sean punched a Swabot head off and then kicked another head off.

Maria threw both of her daggers at Swabots and then took them out. She slashed at more Swabots, sending oil spurting. She, too, was fighting like a woman possessed. She was not going to die here and least until she could get to that damn device. That's when she finally had enough and drew her Octane Blaster. "Fuck this!" She said as she fired a pair of shots at the device.

The shots hit the device, sending sparks flying and (kind of) destroyed it. The Swabots suddenly stopped and fell to the ground, and the ghosts disappeared. She sighed, relieved, glad that the intense fighting had stopped. Sean and Maria looked around, examining the Swabot wreckage. The wrecked Swabots took up nearly the entire clearing, and it was difficult to walk around. "Should have tried that before," Sean said, "Even though those devices don't control most Swabots. So what do we do now?"
"It looks like we might be able to teleport," said Maria. "At least I think that's what happened."

"Let's give it a try," said Sean. He walked over to the device, noticing that the light was still on. "Might as well try," he said. He held his hand out to the light to see if it worked. Sure enough, he disappeared in a flash of blue light. Maria shrugged, holding her hand out, and she too disappeared in a flash of blue light.

Back at the shrine, the miko Sakura had been sweeping the grounds when she heard the fighting going on inside the haiden. Gasping, she dropped the broom and ran to the shrine's shamusho, its administrative office. She found the priest doing some mundane paperwork, but frantically told him about what she had heard coming from the haiden. Remembering Daisuke's appearance earlier, the priest dropped his pen, stood up, and ran outside. "Call the police!" he shouted, and she ran off to find one.

Minutes later, a police officer that happened to be driving by ran up the steps, onto the shrine grounds. The priest told the cop about the sounds of a fight coming from inside the haiden. The cop pulled his pistol and made his way to the haiden. Cursing the fact that there was no backup for 5 kilometers, he waited outside the haiden's door. There were sounds of a fight; specifically, two men. Worried that something could break, he kicked the door in and pointed his service pistol and the two combatants, Daisuke and Phaedos.

"POLICE! FREEZE!"

Seeing he was caught, Phaedos pushed Daisuke away from him. Before teleporting away, he said, "Next time, I'll fight someone with honor!" With that, he disappeared.

"What was that?" the police officer asked, quaking in his boots.

Daisuke stood up and turned around, ignoring the priest, but turned to the police officer. "I am with the United Nations," he said. "Thank you, officer, but you are not needed here." With the job done, he walked out of the building. Under his visor, his eyes narrowed, as he knew what he had to do; he was going to defy Sean.

"How did you two get here?" Kevin asked, noticing Sean and Maria arrived on the scene.

"Teleportation," Sean replied. He dove to avoid an attack from the BNC. He used his hockey stick weapon to hit the oni in the head. It hit the ogre in the forehead, knocking it back. Maria, meanwhile, had gone to the back of the oni and was preparing to attack. Instantly, she stabbed the ogre in the leg, making it roar in pain. Hitomi fired a shot from her bow, hitting it in the head. Kevin then fired from his Touring Cannon. "Turbo Blast!" The blast hit the oni in the chest, exposing some of the circuitry. As soon as all four Rangers gathered, they had begun to overpower the oni. But Daisuke was still not there, much to Sean's annoyance.

"Where the hell is Rich Boy!" He shouted. "Oh well, no matter." He had more important things to worry about. He switched his stick with the GT Sword and sped towards the oni. He jumped up, getting ready to swing. The blade began to glow red. "GT STRIKE!" He swung, instantly cutting the oni's head off. The oni robot fell backward, hitting the ground and causing a small earthquake. It was done.

"That was fast," said Kevin. "I didn't even get enough time to fight it."
"Let's get out of here," said Sean. "I've had enough of this place." The Rangers left, a little disappointed with the anti-climactic end to this intense fight.

But it wasn't done. A few minutes later, Phaedos showed up, holding a crystal ball. "We'll see about that," he said as he threw the ball at the oni robot. The ball exploded as the robot began reassembling itself. Its eyes flashed red, indicating it was still alive.

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"I wish I had more time to fight that thing," Kevin said as the Rangers returned to the GP Cruiser.

"Too bad," Sean replied. "We're running out of time in this episode anyway." Yes, Sean just broke the fourth wall.

Suddenly, the ground began to shake again. "What's going on?" Maria asked.

"I don't know!" Kevin said. Suddenly, the HUD in their visors alerted them to something behind them.

"Oh, you have GOT to be kidding me!" Sean said. All four Rangers looked behind them to see the oni robot grow to a massive size. "Oh, COME ON!" He shouted. "Oh, well. Col. Greene, we need the Grand Prix Zords!"

"They're on their way," Col. Greene replied.

"Do you think you can use the remote control on the Mountain Hauler?" He asked. "Rich Boy is nowhere to be seen!"

"Will do," Col. Greene replied. "Your Zords are here!" Sure enough, all five Zords appeared, firing cables at the oni to hold it in place.

"I wonder where they come from," Sean said. "Let's go!" Sean jumped in the air, followed by the other three Rangers. "GT Racer, GT Racer, online!" Sean said as he fell into his cockpit. His zord was a large, red-colored GT race car.

"Touring Racer, ready to go!" Kevin said. His was a large, blue-colored touring race car.

"Haz Runner, roll out!" Maria called. Hers was a yellow-colored HazMat vehicle.

"Am Chaser, let's go!" Hitomi said. The Am Chaser was a large, white, pink-trimmed ambulance. The other Zord, the Mountain Hauler, a green-colored pick-up truck, was controlled by remote control.

"AcceleKeys, ready!" Sean said. He and the other Rangers pulled out their AcceleKeys.

"READY!" The rest shouted. They then jammed the keys in the key slots near the steering wheel and gave them a turn. A series of lights lit up, indicating their activation.

"Initiate Grand Prix Megazord docking sequence," Sean said. "NOW!"

Mountain Hauler joined with Touring Racer. The touring car split in two and rolled up to the rear wheels of the Mountain Hauler. A pair of panels adjusted, revealing elbows. At the same time, a pair of fists popped out of the back. The Touring Racer then joined with the Mountain Hauler, forming arms. Then the grill on the Mountain Hauler lifted, and the front of the truck split and a pair of extensions popped out. The Hauler then rolled up the rear wheels of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner and
The Haz Runner and Am Chaser formed legs. Then, the GT Racer rolled up the back of the Mountain Hauler and docked with it. The large lights on the top of the Mountain Hauler rolled back and folded down. Now the Megazord was ready. It was then that several rockets fired, propelling the Megazord upright. The cabs of the Am Chaser and Haz Runner stayed put, forming feet. The Haz Runner formed the left leg and the Am Chaser the right. The rear compartment of the GT Racer folded back, revealing a head. The eyes resembled goggles, and the face mask was solid. No mouthpiece. A pair of wheel-like panels on the side completed it. Finally, the robot was upright. The Megazord let out some steam, ready to fight.

"Grand Prix Megazord, online!" The Rangers shouted in the cockpit, seated in Indy-car styled pods. The Megazord advanced on the oni and engaged the beast. The oni swung its BNC at the Megazord, hitting the mecha in the gut. Instantly, the Rangers could feel the impact in the cockpit. Luckily for them, they were wearing seatbelts.

"No major damage!" Kevin said, looking at the damage report.

"Well, that's good," Sean said, gripping the steering wheel in his pod. The Rangers tried to keep the Megazord balanced as the oni prepared to swing again. "Catch that thing!" Sean shouted.

"I'm on it," Maria replied, adjusting some of the controls in her pod. Then she turned the steering wheel as the oni swung its BNC. The Megazord caught the BNC and held on for dear life.

Outside, Daisuke got a look at the Megazord engaged in combat with the oni. Instantly, he became angry, and he clenched his fists. It only seemed to confirm to him that the Rangers did not care about him, especially Sean. He was going to beat him so bad.

"Grrrrr!" Sean was not happy with what was going on. "COME ON!" He shouted, getting into hot-blooded mode. "THROW IT OFF!"

"Got it!" Maria said. Maria turned the steering wheel again, as the arms of the Megazord threw the BNC off and then wound up its punch and decked the oni, hard. The Rangers cheered in response. The Megazord then kicked the oni in the gut. As the ogre doubled over, the Megazord elbowed it in the back, sending it crashing into the forest. The ogre got up, dazed at what was going on.

The Megazord went right on the offensive, punching the oni in the face. It must have it angry, though, and it charged the Megazord like a linebacker. But the Megazord threw it down to the ground. "It's time to finish this!" Sean said. "Grand Prix Megazord Saber!" The large sword materialized in front of the Megazord. The Megazord grabbed the sword, and the eyes under the visor flashed. It was time to finish this fight. "Turbo jets!"

The jets on the soles of the feet of the Megazord fired, lifting it off of the ground. The oni could only recoil in fear. "Grand Prix Megazord Strike! Go!" At that moment, the Megazord launched itself at the oni, its jets propelling it. Then as it got to the ogre, it swung the sword, striking the oni. Sparks began to fly, as the oni flailed around. The Megazord stopped and posed in confident victory. "Checkered Flag!" The oni then fell to the ground and exploded spectacularly. Inside the cockpit, the Rangers reacted, hooting and hollering.

"Oorah!" Sean shouted.

"Not bad," Kevin said as the Rangers walked back to the Grand Prix Cruiser. They had de-morphed
and were feeling pretty confident. "Another Zordonian threat neutralized!"

"Yeah, but now we have to write a report to the UN," Sean replied. "If you ask me, though, that was too easy."

"Ho, so?" Maria asked. "We were swarmed by Swabots."

"I'm talking about that trap," Sean replied. "It was so damn obvious. By the way, where the hell is Rich Boy?" Right on cue, Daisuke appeared, also de-morphed. "There he is!" Sean said, preparing to get in. "Come on. We've gotta go. By the way, where the hell were you?" Sean had meant it as a casual question, but it was practically an insult to Daisuke.

"Don't talk to me like that!" He said. Instantly, Sean froze and looked at Daisuke. His eyes had hidden anger at Daisuke's defiance.

"What did you say?" He asked, his voice showing hints of anger. Kevin knew Sean was going to burst.

"I said, don't talk to me like that!" Daisuke replied. "And you do not order me around, lower-class fool!"

"Excuse me?" Sean asked, his voice starting to have anger on it. Sensing this, Kevin firmly but softly grabbed Sean's shoulder, and his friend took a couple of deep breaths.

"You heard me!" Daisuke replied. "Why are you ordering me around? You are just a nobody." Hitomi put her hands on both sides of her head. What was he doing?

"What the fuck does that have anything to do, Rich Boy?" Sean asked. "Come on, we didn't find anything important. We're going back to the inn."

"SILENCE!" Daisuke said, getting up to Sean's face. The American was visibly bewildered, but kept his composure and didn't back down,

"I was wondering where the hell you were," Sean said. "You should have met up with us!"

"I was busy," Daisuke said. "Now, please, get out of my way."

"No, you don't!" Sean replied. "You didn't show up to fight the big monster. Might be a good idea to follow orders."

"NO!" Daisuke shouted back. "You will not order me around."

"What was that?" Sean asked.

"I will not obey someone like you," Daisuke replied. "Especially since I am better than you in every way, and I am your supervisor."

"Someone like, wait, what?" Sean was confused at Daisuke's comment. "Wait, you're using the supervisor shit out of—Whatever, I don't care, you will obey my orders, got it?"

"I will not take orders from you anymore," Daisuke said defiantly. Hitomi was trying to restrain him, and Sean had enough.

"Oh, no, you don't!" Sean shouted, getting into hot-blooded mode. "I dunno what your problem is right now, but it's getting out of hand, NOW GET IN THE FUCKING CAR!" But the next thing Sean saw was Daisuke's fist, and he had barely any time to react, as the fist struck him on the left
cheek. Instantly, Sean felt the blow and fell to the ground. Kevin and Maria watched in shock while Hitomi tried to restrain Daisuke. Kevin and Maria went to help Sean, who was still on the ground, holding his cheek. "You hit me! WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT FOR!"

"YOU LISTEN TO ME!" Daisuke shouted. "I was supposed to be Red Ranger, not you! I will not take orders from some damn fool!"

"Then why did you punch me?" Sean asked.

"Payback for what you did to me earlier!" Daisuke replied. "I have had enough of you! I am leaving this team and fighting the Zordonians on my own!"

"Brother, what are you doing?" Hitomi asked. She ran up to Daisuke to try to stop him. "That was uncalled for!"

"Yeah, tell him, Hitomi!" Maria cheered. "What the hell is wrong with you, Rich Boy?! You've endangered us too many times!"

"Hitomi, you are coming with me," Daisuke said forcefully. Something must have triggered in Hitomi's mind because she suddenly became subservient to Daisuke.

"Yes, brother," she said. The other Rangers were shocked at this.

"Hitomi, what are you doing?" Maria said getting up to confront her. "Don't do this!"

"I have to," Hitomi replied. "I must be loyal to my family. So I must follow my brother."

"It doesn't have to be like this chica," Maria said. "Please, don't do this!"

"How can she suddenly be so spineless?" Kevin asked. "She was never like this before!"

"I thought you were independent!" Maria said, just as confused as Kevin. She grabbed Hitomi on the shoulders, trying to get her to think.

"I'm sorry," said Hitomi. "But, I must be loyal to Daisuke."

"Hitomi, please!" Maria said. "We love you; we don't want you to make some rash mistake." But Hitomi brushed Maria's hands off her shoulders, shocking the Venezuelan woman.

"I'm sorry," she said. "But family loyalty comes first." With that, she turned around and followed her brother as they left. The three remaining Rangers were left in the parking lot staring at the two. Maria had a look of shocked sadness, Kevin a look of confusion and Sean, one of anger.

"Well then, FUCK YOU!" He shouted. "WE'LL DO JUST FUCKING FINE WITHOUT YOU RICH BOY! AND THEN YOUR'E GONNA COME CRAWLING BACK TO US!" But neither he nor Hitomi stopped. The Rangers watched the two walk into the distance.

A few feet in the air, Phaedos watched with his trademark smirk on his face. His plan had worked perfectly, and now the Rangers were beginning to fall apart. He had successfully used Daisuke's upbringing against them, and now the Rangers were on the brink of collapse. All that was left was to do what any villain would do; he began to chuckle. "Hmhmmhm, hahahahahahaha," then, he threw his head back and began to laugh. "HA-HAHAHAHAHAHA! HA-HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

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End chapter
Chapter End Notes

And so, Phaedos indulges himself with an evil laugh.

And, the final arc has begun! What will happen next? Stay tuned to find out!
When they returned, Godai-san eagerly awaited Hitomi-chan getting out of the Hummer they were driving. The red-colored SUV pulled into the parking lot of the inn that Godai-san owned. At first, he sent them his trademark smile, but that quickly changed when the doors opened. Instead of Hitomi running out to greet him, no one rushed out. Instead, Kev O'Donnell in stepped out of the drivers' side door. He went to the back as he helped Maria Aparicio assist Sean O'Callahan getting out of the backseat. What he saw shocked him. The American was holding an ice pack to his left cheek, which looked kind of swollen from the distance he could see. He was also wincing in pain. He couldn't see his face from the distance he was at, but he could clearly tell the American was in pain.

Sean was cursing someone, but who it was he could not tell; he couldn't hear him, anyway. But since Hitomi and Daisuke were not in the car, he could tell something was wrong. Immediately he dropped the broom he was using and ran over to Sean. "What happened to him?" He asked, his voice filled with concern.

"THAT RICH BASTARD FUCKING PUNCHED ME!" Sean shouted, his voice filled with anger and hatred.

"Who punched you?" Godai-san asked, wondering if he was talking about Daisuke.

"RICH BOY MIYAZAWA, THAT'S WHO!" Sean shouted back. Godai-san reacted with a (justifiably) shocked face. He had no idea Daisuke could do something like that.

"Daisuke did this?" Godai-san asked. Kevin and Maria nodded in response. "How did this happen?"

"It's a long story," said Kevin. "But do you have any ice?"

"Yes, we do," Godai-san replied. "I'll get Hikari, she'll get you some ice." Godai-san quickly ran into the inn calling for his wife. Sean shrugged off Maria's arm as the three of them followed him in.

Once they got in, Godai-san's wife Hikari rushed into the foyer. She was a beautiful woman, especially for her age. She took one look at Sean and she rushed back into the kitchen. "She must know her injuries," said Kevin. A few minutes later, Hikari came into the foyer, holding an ice pack, which she gave to Sean.

"Thank you," he said calmly, taking the first ice pack off. Instantly, Godai-san and Hikari got a look at Sean's cheek, noticing that it didn't look good. The cheek was swollen, but thanks to the ice Sean had put on it earlier, it wasn't as bad as they had feared.

"Just keep that ice on there," said Hikari. "The swelling should go down. By the way, who did this to you?"

"I forgot to tell you," Godai-san said. "He said that Daisuke punched him." Hikari gasped and put
her hands to her mouth in shock as Sean, Kevin and Maria walked past and into the parlor.

"Daisuke did this?" Hikari said. "But why?"

"I don't know," Godai-san replied. "I'll ask them." He walked into the parlor where the three were seated at the table and seemed to be talking about something. He couldn't exactly tell what they were talking about, but he heard the word 'Daisuke' and he suspected they were talking about him. It was then that they noticed him and stopped talking, save for some whispering. "May I ask what happened?" He asked.

"Well," said Sean, his voice trailing off slightly. "Rich Boy and I got into an argument and he punched me and convinced Hitomi to walk off with him." Godai-san could tell Sean wasn't telling the whole truth, but he let it go anyway.

"Really?" Godai-san asked. "What kind of argument?"

"You don't want to know," Kevin replied.

"So where did they go?" Godai-san asked. His voice had a tone of worry. He didn't want Hitomi to get hurt in any way.

"I don't know," the Irishman replied. Godai-san could tell Kevin was being honest, at least. "We didn't try to follow them and we have no way of knowing where they are."

"I see," Godai-san said, his face showing concern for the both of them. Being the person he is, not having any hidden pain, it was clear that he was not hiding anything.

"They'll probably turn up somewhere," said Maria. The Venezuelan woman did her best to be confident, but even she had worry in her voice. Her friendship with Hitomi was the reason for this worry.

"I guess so," Godai-san said. "I guess I'll leave you all alone for now."

"Thanks, Godai-san," said Kevin. Godai-san left the room, leaving the Rangers alone.

"Oh man," said Sean. "What the hell are we going to do now?" The Red Ranger had a tone of worry on his voice, as if he was worried the team was on the brink of collapse.

"We move onwards," replied Kevin. The Blue Ranger had no intention of breaking up the team, apparently. Sean sighed, glad that his friend was dedicated to the cause.

"I agree," Maria added. "We have to focus on Phaedos' next move. He's got to be behind this." The Zordonian General had been a pain in the ass, and his smug demeanor angered the Rangers. It wasn't a stretch to assume that the General was behind the trap.

"I still can't believe Rich Boy did that," Sean said, clenching his fist. "I know he was mad at me, but I didn't think that he would do this!" He was referring to Green Ranger Daisuke's split from the team just 30 minutes prior. His sister Hitomi, the Pink Ranger obeyed her brother and followed him in leaving the team.

"How could Hitomi just act like a doormat there?" Maria asked. "I thought she was gaining ground in her confidence!"

"It must be something cultural," said Sean. "I still want to beat that bastard senseless."
"To be honest, I do think you deserved to get yelled at," Kevin replied. Sean banged his head on the table. "But getting punched like that was kind of harsh."

"Kind of?" Sean asked. "More like over the fucking line!"

"Right," said Kevin. Sean shook his head, still holding the ice pack to his cheek. How he was able to talk so coherently was another story.

But unbeknownst to them, someone was listening to them.

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"Impressive, Phaedos," Rashon said, after Phaedos returned to the Zordonian ship. "I thought your plan wouldn't work, but I have been proven wrong."

"Thank you, my Emperor," Phaedos replied, bowing his head. Off to the side, Liaria could be seen glaring at the general, while Eltar and Hercuron just watched. "The Green one was easy. The anger he felt was easy to manipulate and direct at the Red Ranger. It was especially easy when I used his beliefs to convince him."

"Very good," Rashon said, taking a sip of his Zordonian wine. "What is your next plan?"

"I plan to attack," he replied. "I shall draw the remaining Rangers out and crush them!"

"Interesting," said Rashon. "Very well then, move on with your plan. I expect nothing but success!"

"Thank you, my Emperor!" Phaedos said. "I shall be victorious!"

"Don't let your victory get to your head, Phaedos," said Eltar. Phaedos looked to him and glared at him.

"Why shouldn't I be proud of my victory?" Phaedos replied, annoyance on his tone.

"I'm saying if you become arrogant, they will make you regret it," Eltar said, clarifying his words. Phaedos stood up, a smirk on his face.

"Why should I worry?" He asked. "They're reeling from their split. They should be easy to defeat."

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Later that night…

Sean was having a hard time sleeping. It was mainly that he let the team break up that was getting to him. No Red Ranger that he knew of had to deal with the team splitting down the seams. Leo Corbett didn't have to deal with a rebellious Damon. Cole Evans, in all his terrible character-ness, just had to deal with a veteran who didn't think he could handle the job and the same with Wes Collins. The fact that he had let this happen was making him irritated. All those Reds had a solid team, and they didn't let them split. He was probably the first Red Ranger (in fiction and reality) to have his team split up.

He shifted in his futon, trying to find a comfortable position and forget about his royally massive fuck-up. He muttered to himself, no doubt cursing the situation. He winced as he lay on his left cheek, which was still hurting. It wasn't as bad as it was when he got hit, but it still hurt. Well, his temper got to him and he started thrashing around, grabbing his pillow. "Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, FUCK!" As he was cursing, he grabbed his pillow and slammed it on the tatami in the room he was
in. Then, when he finished, he laid back down on the pillow. He checked the yukata (the one Hitomi had given him) for wrinkles. There were none.

He took some deep breaths, trying to calm down, but his anger got to him again. "DAMMIT!" He banged his hands on the tatami, almost breaking them; considering the martial arts training he had, he had to keep his strength in check. It wasn't a stretch to assume that Daiuske had been holding back earlier. He hadn't broken his jaw, so that's a good indication. Again, thinking about getting decked infuriated him. "FUCK!"

"Sean!" A voice said, cutting through the darkened room. Sean sat up on his futon to see what looked like Maria poking her head in the door. She too, was wearing her yukata. "Can you please not curse so loud like that?"

"Sorry," Sean replied as he fell back on the futon. Maria walked into the room, much to Sean's surprise. Of course, in reality, she'd probably be sleeping in the same room with him and Kevin, but they requested separate rooms; privacy reasons.

"Are you still upset?" Maria asked. "Well, considering you woke me up with your swearing, I guess that's a 'yes'."

"Duh," he replied, shifting onto his right side. She walked over to his futon and sat down. He didn't seem too happy about it, though. "Um, can I get some privacy?"

"I want to talk," she replied. "I'm worried about you." Sean sighed in annoyance. But he didn't find her annoying; he just wanted to be left alone to brood. "I won't judge. I'll just listen.

"You know, you're acting like you just broke up with him," she cracked. Okay, that was over the line.

"You have got to be kidding me," he replied. "I fucking hate that bastard, and I've hated him for weeks. But I'm not happy that the team broke up. No Red Ranger has had to deal with this!"

"Oh, so that's what eating you," she said. "You're the first Red Ranger to have such a dubious distinction."

"Yeah, and I should have seen it coming," he replied. "If I had, I would have asked him to be removed a long time ago."

"You can't predict these things," she replied, stroking his left cheek. He glanced at her, wondering what she was doing, but he simply took a deep breath. He winced when she stroked too hard. "Sorry."

"That bastard," he muttered. "If he comes back, I'm going to punch him, break his jaw and send his rich, spoiled ass home. I mean, who the fuck is he to say that he deserves to be Red Ranger? I'm Red Ranger, end of fucking story!" He had sat up by then and was let loose a tirade against Daisuke. "He thinks he should be Red Ranger? Bullshit! He panicked, I took over, and I'm more fucking qualified. What does he have? His rich family's backing, that's it! I wish that I had gotten rid—"

"Calm down," she said, putting her hand on his shoulder. "Don't let it get to you. You know what I think? I mean, I'm not a psychiatrist or whatever, but I think you're afraid; afraid of failing." He stared at her in the darkness, then sighed and ran his hand through his messy hair. She calmly rubbed his back. "It's okay to be afraid of failing. It's natural; you're only human. In fact, I think you envy him, too. You're not rich, are you?"

"I don't think of myself that way," he said. "My dad's a blue-collar guy, but my mom lives in Lincoln
"You know, if this were a book," she said, "I'd interpret you two representing two completely different things; you represent the youth and ambition of America, he represents the old ways of Japan... ay dios mio, I'm full of shit!" Her conclusion made him laugh, but not out loud. He stifled it as best he could, but it got out.

"You're not full of shit," he said. "Quit beating yourself up!"

"After how I've acted?" Maria asked. "You're right, I've been a bitch."

"Yeah, can't argue with that," he said. Then he scoffed. "Not what I meant."

"I know," she said. "My mom keeps telling me I should be the kind of person I either want to be friends with or fall in love with. She kind of changed the advice every now and then. But... this place is so strange, and I don't know why, but I need to guard myself, and next thing I knew, I've been acting out and stuff... I don't know what's wrong with me."

"You're scared, too," he said. "I guess you're trying to hide that by being so rude."

"I think you might be right," she said, pulling her knees up to her chest. "And now I'm afraid for Hitomi. I hope she's okay."

"I thought we were talking about you," he said.

"Did you see her?" Maria replied. "That girl's been through a lot, I can tell. And I want her to be happy. Preferably with another girl—"

"Oh, stop!" he said, playfully shoving her while she cackled.

"You know, I envy Rich Boy, too," she said. "Just because my dad was a TV station manager doesn't mean we were rich. And my mom's a teacher, and when she and I moved to Brazil, we were worried we'd end up in the favelas. I'm a mongrel, too; my grandfather's from Seville, and my grandma's from Mexico. Just because I'm related to Bolivar it doesn't mean I'm rich. And, I think Hitomi deserves a better older sibling than him. I love her; not romantically, of course, but in a platonic way."

"Yeah, I can see that," he said.

"We'll get through this," she said. "I know we will. It'll be difficult, but I think we've got what it takes. When we moved to Rio, my mom said that feeling sorry for ourselves wasn't going to work. We had to go out and face the world head-on. I loved her never-give-up attitude. I wish I could be like her."

"Yeah, same with my dad," he said. "He told me that after divorcing my mom, he fell on hard times. But, he kept going. I wanted to be like him so much. And thanks for the talk, Maria."

"You're welcome," she said, leaning in to hug him. "And you know what? I think you're a great Red Ranger. I wouldn't have followed just anyone into battle, but I don't know what it is about you. But you're a better leader than you give yourself credit for."

"Thanks," he said.
The next day, the Western Rangers were doing their best to stay alert, but relaxed at the same time. Maria was watching TV, while Sean and Kevin were playing catch with a baseball out side. Sean explained that he taught the game to Kevin himself (of course, Maria also wondered how Sean could be good at ice hockey and baseball). Sean's cheek was looking less swollen, and he was feeling better. The pain had subsided and he had taken the ice off his cheek. Hikari had checked the cheek (she's a nurse) and judged that it had gotten better since the previous day.

It was a cloudless day, prompting Sean to wear his White Sox cap and a pair of sunglasses. It was also enough that Maria had the shoji open to let the sunlight in the room. Maria could tell that Sean was feeling a little better after yesterday, even after that kiss she gave him last night; she had told Kevin and he had teased Sean about it. It was better than being reminded about yesterday's events. It was then that Maria watched Hikari come into the room and stand in the doorway.

"Okay you two, it's lunchtime!" Hikari said from the doorway. Sean and Kevin stopped what they were doing and came in the room. Hikari had left several dishes including steamed rice and grilled fish. Sean and Kevin sat down at the low table where the food was and picked up some of their food.

"Thanks Hikari," Sean said as he took a bite of his chicken teriyaki.

"You're welcome," she replied as she bowed before leaving the room.

"I gotta tell you," said Kevin. "She and Godai-san make some good stuff."

"You can say that again," said Maria. "My grandma made good food, but these two blow her out of the water… sorry grandma."

"You'd better be sorry," said Sean. He was chuckling about it, as if he thought it was funny. Well, it was kind of funny.

"By the way, did you tell Col. Greene about Daisuke and Hitomi?" Maria asked. Sean raised his hands and dropped them in frustration. He must not have liked it because A) he still didn't want to talk about it and B) something must have happened.

"No," he replied. "He already knew."

"Hoo boy," said Kevin. "I guess you don't want to tell us about that."

"You can probably figure that out for yourself," he replied. "Rich Boy, that selfish bastard!"

"Okay, this is clearly making you mad," said Maria. "Let's not focus on that. What are we going to do about Phaedos?"

"If that blond bastard shows up again, we take him out," Sean replied. "It's that obvious."

"That's it?" Kevin asked. "That's way too obvious."

"Actually, it's more than that," Sean replied. "We're at a disadvantage numerically. With the exception of the time Maria and Hitomi fought off Phaedos, Liaria, that scorpion monster and Rich Boy, Kevin and I had to fight off those Swabots, we're at a big disadvantage when our numbers get to around 3. That's the problem. I have a feeling the Zordonians know about this disadvantage and will try to exploit it."

"Do you think it was Zordonian intervention that got Daisuke to split?" Maria asked.

"It's possible," Sean replied. "I know Rich Boy was a selfish, spoiled prick, but I'm not leaving that
"You're just taking the opportunity to insult him, aren't you?" Kevin asked.

"I always insulted him whether I was around him or not," Sean replied.

"Oh right," said Maria.

"Look guys," Sean said suddenly, placing his hand on the table. "We have to stay together. I don't want this team breaking up, otherwise we could lose and we could all die." Sean had a very nervous tone on his voice, as if he was desperate to keep the Rangers together. Kevin wasn't sure if he already had this conversation, but he felt the need to be included.

"Don't worry," he said. "I have no intention of splitting. I know the stakes myself and quite frankly, I feel safer in a team than individually. And Sean's right, if we break up we're nowhere near as strong a force as we are with all five, so we're going to have to stay together." Sean looked at his beat friend with a face that could be described as slightly surprised. However, a reassuring look from Kevin got Sean to rethink his friend's words.

"I'm staying too," said Maria. "I'm staying for the exact reasons the both of you said." Sean looked at Kevin then at Maria. His nervousness seemed to decrease as he looked at the faces of his fellow Rangers and friends. Then he nodded his head.

"Very well then," he said. "We're still in business. We're gonna give Phaedos one hell of a wake-up if he shows his face again. We have too much to fight for. We are going to get through this."

"I'm with you Sean," said Kevin.

"Same here," said Maria.

"Good," Sean said again. "Now let's finish lunch!"

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Phaedos smirked as his forces positioned themselves around the village. The village, filled with old Japanese architecture, had no idea that they were being set up for attack. The people went about their daily business, not noticing the Swabots gathering in the nooks and crannies of the village. Instead, they focused more on where they were going. A fish monger shouted to the passers-by of his selection and prices. A rice seller haggled with a young mother who was trying to get the rice for a lower amount than he was arguing for.

Fools, he thought. He signaled to the commanding Swabot, The Swabot's eyes flashed red and began ordering its troops. Phaedos smirked again. This will draw the Power Rangers out, he thought. He signaled again. The Swabots' eyes all began to flash and they jumped out of their nooks and crannies. The villagers were shocked at what was going on, and possibly more curious than scared. Then the Swabots began attacking. Now they figured out what was going on. Screams filled the air as the villagers fled the attacking Swabots. The Swabots chased some down, while attacking other places. The fish monger found his fish stand overturned and the rice seller's rice spilled on the ground. As Phaedos watched the chaos, he again broke into an evil laugh.

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At the same time, the Rangers heard the beeping of their morphers. They were done with lunch, but now they had trouble. They froze at the sound, wondering just what it could be. There was no evidence either Godai-san or Hikari were listening, so they were pretty much in the clear right now.
Of course, the problem was what Col. Greene was calling them about. Sean pressed on the "TALK" button on the morpher and lifted it up to talk. "What is it, Colonel?"

"Rangers," he said. "There are Swabots attacking a nearby village. It seems Phaedos is on the offensive. Get over there now and stop him!"

"We're on it!" Sean replied. "Let's go!" The Rangers got up from the table and rushed out of the room. It didn't matter if they were being rude, they had a job to do and they needed to do it now. They quickly made it to the foyer and put their shoes on in a rushed, yet methodical manner. At first, they thought they were in the clear when they heard a sudden voice.

"Where are you going?" The voice asked. The Rangers froze, thinking their cover had been blown. Godai-san was standing behind them, as if he was trying to stop them.

"Um," Sean drew the word out, trying to figure out what to say. He didn't want to alert Godai-san to the emergency at hand, but he needed something to say. Maria and Kevin also looked to be searching for an excuse. However, Sean found something and decided to try that. "We're going to climb Mt. Fuji!" He said. Kevin and Maria nodded their heads in response. "We're not going all the way to the top, but we're going to climb part of it!"

"All right," said Godai-san. "I won't keep you then." With that, he turned around and left. Sean, Maria and Kevin sighed in relief.

"I thought he wouldn't buy that," Sean said as he finished tying his shoes. With that done, the Rangers rushed out to the Grand Prix Cruiser. Sean jammed his AcceleKey into the key slot. The H2 roared to life, as did the Haro.

"Haro, haro, enemy detected, enemy detected," it said, its eyes flashing. Sean nodded his head, accepting the haro's role. With that, he drove the Grand Prix Cruiser out of the parking lot and to the village. But as Sean drove the GP Cruiser, he heard in his head a desperate-sounding tune like something from the Black Hawk Down soundtrack.

As the attack continued, the Swabots got more aggressive. They began looting the shops and destroying the buildings. The villagers tried to escape; many did, while some did not. A particularly horrific image was a man being dragged away by three Swabots to what fate was unknown, but was not something one would want to think about. A young mother cradled her crying baby and tried to run, with several skull-faced Swabots in pursuit. The fish monger hid from the carnage, hoping that the attack would blow over.

On one of the buildings, Phaedos watched with a vicious smile on his face. This was no smirk. This was the smile of a villain. The scene below him was pleasing to him, and he was waiting for the Rangers to show up. Then that's when things would get interesting. Sure enough, the sounds of an engine could he heard and he looked to see the red Hummer H2 approach. "Right on time," he said. The Rangers had arrived.

The Grand Prix Cruiser screeched to a halt and Sean killed the engine before removing his AcceleKey. "Let's go!" He said, opening the door.

"Right!" Kevin and Maria said in unison as they too exited the Cruiser. They rushed into battle not blindly, but in determination. They would stop this attack no matter what.

The Rangers, however, did not notice the news crew that was setting up as they fought.
Back at the inn, Godai-san finished cleaning up the guests' lunch. They had eaten all the food, but they had forgotten to thank him and Hikari for the food. But then again, they had eaten all of it, so it was good enough for him. But he did think they were in too much of a hurry to get to Mt. Fuji. It was only 1:00, it wasn't closing time. But still, he felt like they had just come up with the plan and just decided to go at the last moment. But it didn't matter to him. All that mattered was that they clearly enjoyed the food.

Well, that is until Hikari rushed into the room. "Yuusuke!" She said, using his given name; Godai is his family name, so his full name is Yuusuke Godai. She had a terrified look on her face, one that gave him a worried look on his.

"What is it?" He asked.

"The nearby village is under attack!" She said. Instantly, Godai-san's eyes widened in shock as he heard this.

"What?" He said. "The village is under attack?"

"Turn the television on!" She said. Godai-san hurriedly picked up the remote and turned the television on. He tried to find a channel where there might be coverage of the attack. Finally, he found one where the coverage was showing footage of the attack.

Sean, Kevin and Maria lined up in front of Phaedos. They had fought off the first wave of Swabots and now stood in front of the Zordonian general and the force of Swabots. The Rangers were panting lightly, tired from their fight with the Swabots earlier. However, once they morphed and the adrenaline started flowing again, the fatigue would disappear. Phaedos had a smirk on his face, confident he would win. "I applaud you, Rangers," he said almost sarcastically. "You managed to handle my Swabots quite easily."

"Shove it, you blond bastard!" Sean snapped. "I can't wait to wipe that smug look off your face!"

"That's harsh," Phaedos replied, "Especially since you're two Rangers short."

"We can still handle you," Kevin replied. "We can do anything when we're united."

"Really?" Phaedos asked. "That 'unity' talk won't win you battles."

"We're a force to be reckoned with as a team," Maria replied. "We won't go down easily."

"We'll see about that," Phaedos said again. "Swabots!" He shouted. The Swabots' eyes began to glow and they prepared to attack. The Rangers responded by taking out their AcceleKeys.

"I think it's time to morph," said Sean. He held up his AcceleMorpher on his left wrist. "READY!"

"READY!" The other two replied, also holding up their morphers. They flipped open their AcceleKeys and did a short choreography with their arms while shouting,

"GPX, START IT UP!" With that, they jammed the Keys into their morphers and gave them a turn. There was a flash of light as they morphed into their Ranger forms; Sean in Red, Maria in Yellow and Kevin in Blue.
"Very well then," said Pheados. "SWABOTS!" The Swabots prepared to attack, their eyes glowing read.

Meanwhile, Sean reached his hand over to Maria. At first she was confused, but when she saw him reach for Kevin, she got the idea of what he was thinking about. She instantly grabbed his right hand while Kevin grabbed Sean's left. In this act of holding hands, they were showing their unity and their resolve to never back down. It may have seemed cheesy, but it worked.

"How cute," Phaedos said. "ATTACK!" The Swabots charged the Rangers in response. The Rangers, meanwhile, slowly walked towards the Swabots, refusing to break their chains. They began walking a little faster, before starting to jog, still holding hands. Then they broke into a full run and broke the chains, summoning their weapons; Sean's GT Sword, Kevin's Touring Cannon and Maria's Haz Daggers. They yelled in a collective battle cry as they charged the Swabots before meeting the enemy at the halfway point and began fighting the Swabots.

Sean swung his sword, spinning around at the same time. The sword hit a trio of Swabots, taking them out in a shower of sparks. Then he side kicked one that was trying to come from behind him. With a swift roundhouse kick, he took out the same Swabot. Then he turned around and punched one in the gut. He swung his sword down on the same Swabot, destroying it. After cocking his left arm under his shoulder, he gave a Swabot an upper-cut to the gut, and then stabbed it in the back when it doubled over. Even though the sword was still in the Swabot's body, he was able to kick another one in the gut. He fought on not giving an inch; if he did, then the Swabots would overwhelm him. He was not going to let that happen.

Kevin, meanwhile, kept his distance, firing his Touring Cannon. It was a safer strategy, but it was mainly since he was using his Touring Cannon; he had no reason to get close and personal for that. But he still had to get physical if any of the Swabots got close enough. He shot one in the gut, which blasted through the Swabot and through several others. One did get close, swinging its Swabot sword at his head. He ducked to avoid the strike and pointed the cannon in the Swabot's gut. With a pull of the trigger, the robot was blown away. Then he kicked one in its gut. He grabbed his Octane Blaster, a fuel-pump nozzle-shaped pistol and fired both the pistol and the cannon at the same time. There was no way he was going to stop fighting, not for one second.

As a Swabot swung its sword at her, Maria leaped over the Swabot in an acrobatic style and fired her Octane Blaster at the same Swabot. When she landed, she had to move quickly to bend over forward as a Swabot tried to get her from behind. The HUD in her visor, however, alerted her to its presence and she ducked forward just in time. The Swabot landed in front of her twitching. Another Swabot came in swinging its sword at her, but she blocked it using a cross block with her Haz Dagger and Grand Prix Sword (the Octane Blaster turned into a sword). She threw the sword off and stabbed the Swabot with her sword and slashed it with her dagger. Then she spun around like a tornado, striking several Swabots. Like Sean and Kevin, if she let up for a moment, she would be overwhelmed. That was not going to happen.

Eventually, the Rangers dispatched the Swabots and faced off against Phaedos himself. "Impressive," he said.

"Fuck you, Phaedos!" Sean replied. "Damn, that felt good!"

"Well then," Phaedos replied, somewhat indignant by Sean's insult. "I was hoping for a more respectable fight, but your insult has made me think otherwise."

"Oh, I really hate you, you blond bastard!" Sean replied. "So there's no respect coming from me or us!"
"Exactly," exclaimed Kevin.

"Oh well," Phaedos said. "Let's go." His crystal sword materialized, but the Rangers did not charge him like he expected.

"Let's not get him individually," said Sean. "We're going to have to take him as a team."

"Got it," said Kevin.

"Understood," said Maria. The three then rushed towards Phaedos, not breaking their line. But Kevin and Maria then broke off and flanked Phaedos on the right and left, surrounding him. He was confused until he noticed Sean swinging his GT Sword at him, which he dodged instantly; the fight had begun. Immediately, Phaedos had to dodge a shot from Kevin's Touring Cannon and found himself having to dodge a strike from Maria using the GP Saber. Sean then came in again, thrusting his GT Sword at Phaedos.

It was then that Phaedos got a good idea of their strategy: they were trying to keep him on his toes and make sure he can't escape. This was confirmed when Kevin tried to shoot him from the back, which hit him. Phaedos was surprised that the Rangers actually hit him, but was even more surprised when Sean landed a punch on his left cheek. Phaedos gritted his teeth in anger and holding his cheek, but he did not have time to worry about that because Maria thrust her dagger at him.

Suddenly, Phaedos leaped in the air, leaving the Rangers on the ground. He landed on a roof, as if to taunt the Rangers. "I have the high ground!" He just so happened to taunt.

The Rangers had responded by leaping up onto the same rooftop. Again, they surrounded him and prepared to attack. Which Ranger was going to attack Phaedos first was the question. That was answered when Kevin fired a shot from his Touring Cannon at Phaedos, who dodged the shot, but had to deal with Maria thrusting her dagger at him. Sean then swung his sword down at him, which he blocked. The two began a short sword fight before Sean jumped out of the way for Kevin to shoot Phaedos with his Touring Cannon. Eventually, Phaedos was forced to jump back off the roof. To say he was mad was an understatement.

The Rangers followed him down, again going on the offensive. "Not so big are you now?" Sean asked. To be honest, this was tempting fate. Of course, he wasn't really thinking about that.

"You're getting lucky," he said. Just then, Kevin shot him in the back. Phaedos lurched forward as Sean pointed the tip of his blade in his face.

"Lucky my ass," Sean replied. Phaedos swung his sword as Sean, knocking his sword out of the way. But Sean went back on the offensive, thrusting his sword at Phaedos's face. Phaedos dodged the attack in a Matrix-like move, though, only for Maria to thrust her Haz Dagger in Phaedos's face. Phaedos tried to respond, but Sean swung a backhanded sword strike like a baseball bat at him. Phaedos was forced to jump back and avoid the Rangers, but they kept coming at him. They clearly had a strategy to beat him, which is strength in numbers. He could not call the Zordonian ship for help, but it was more of a matter of pride; he was not going to call for backup.

For the Rangers, it felt like they actually had a chance to make a statement to the Zordonians. Sure, they had managed to land blows on them in their first battle, but this was even juicier and it was done with only 3 Rangers. They didn't need Daisuke and Hitomi! They could beat them on their own! Sean kept swinging his sword at Phaedos, trying to get the general off balance. With Kevin and Maria on the sides, there was a chance. Kevin fired his Touring Cannon, and Maria thrust with her daggers; they were winning.
But not for long. "ENOUGH!" Phaedos shouted. Suddenly he stopped, which confused the Rangers. At first, they were unsure what to do, but then Maria thrust her Haz Dagger at the general, but she was suddenly blocked without a sweat.

"Huh?" She asked.

"I've had enough of this," Phaedos said menacingly.

"And we haven't," Sean replied. "Take THIS!" He swung the GT Saber down on Phaedos, but it was blocked by Phaedos's sword. Normally, Sean would not have been surprised, but one look at Phaedos's facial expression told him something else. "Oh, shit."

"I have been holding back," Phaedos said. "But no more!" Before Sean could react, he felt a massive blow to his gut. His eyes popped out of his sockets (not literally) and his jaw dropped in shock pain. It felt like the worst pain imaginable. It felt as if the wind had been knocked out of him. He gasped several times before falling down to the ground clutching his gut in intense pain.

"SEAN!" Kevin and Maria shouted. Instantly, Kevin aimed his Touring Cannon at Phaedos, but the Cannon was knocked out of his hands. He could only watch as Phaedos side kicked him in the chest. The force of the Phaedos's strike sent him flying backwards into the façade of a nearby building. He felt the blow in the back and screamed in pain. He slid back down on to the ground, feeling the effects of the blow.

Maria herself had very little time to react. Suddenly, Phaedos was in front of her. She tried to defend herself, but Phaedos grabbed her arms. Knowing she could try to kick him, he pushed her down on her knees. "Women shouldn't fight," he said. "They're weak creatures."

"Fuck you!" She replied. But she didn't have much of a chance, as he picked her up, punched her in the helmet and also sent her flying into a nearby building.

"You bastard!" Sean said as he got up, still holding his stomach.

"You're persistent, aren't you?" Phaedos asked.

"I'm a stubborn bastard," Sean replied. "I'm not quitting."

"You should!" Phaedos warned. He cocked his arm and punched him right where the eye would be. Sean was knocked to the ground, groaning in pain. Phaedos then kicked him in the chest. Again, Sean screamed in pain. He didn't have much of a chance again, when Phaedos picked him up by the collar. Then the carnage began.

In what was almost like a one-man gang beat down, Phaedos hammered the poor Ranger nearly to death. It seemed like he was determined to make Sean suffer as much as possible. All Sean could do was to try and defend himself, but even that wasn't enough. Sean's screams of agony filled the air until finally Phaedos backhanded him, sending him flying backwards into a building. Sean then collapsed into the middle of the street. "Pathetic," said Phaedos. "You're bodies are like your rag dolls." It was then that he grabbed Kevin's arm after the Blue Ranger tried to attack him.

"Don't do that again," he said, giving Kevin the most evil glare imaginable. Then he threw Kevin onto the ground on his back. The Irishman screamed again. Kevin's face contorted and he watched Phaedos pick him up and subject him to the same beat down he had given to Sean. Kevin's agonized screams filled the air, as the civilians who were fleeing Phaedos's army just earlier watched in horror. The worst part was they could do nothing; this vulgar display of power was too much. Finally, Phaedos threw Kevin like a rag doll into the same building Sean had been thrown into.
Seeing all this, Maria tried to make a break for safety. There was no other way, she had to leave. But then, she felt her collar being grabbed, no doubt by Phaedos. The HUD in her visor flashed an 'ALERT' warning as Phaedos dragged her into the village again. He then grabbed her front collar. She struggled to escape, knowing what was coming for her. But it was no use. Phaedos began pounding the Yellow Ranger in an incredibly violent manner. Her screams filled the air, just like the other Rangers as she was subjected to Phaedos's beating. Finally, he threw her too into a building.

"Pathetic," he said with venom on his tone. The Rangers were struggling to get up, determined to fight to the death. "What is it about you humans?" He asked. "I beat you severely and yet you keep getting up. Pathetic."

"We're not going to stop!" Sean replied. His voice was filled with agony and he struggled to stand up. "You can break our bones, you can crush our heads, you can pound our bodies, but you cannot break our spirit!"

"Oh, I will break your spirit!" Phaedos said. "And you have no other choice!" Suddenly, he began charging energy in his hands. The Rangers watched in horror.

"Somebody save them!" Hikari screamed hysterically. Her hands were over her face, which showed a look of terror.

"I don't think anyone can help them," said Godai-san. "They're in this alone. No one else can withstand that kind of beating and survive like that."

"NO!" She screamed. There was a flash of light on the screen as she said that. Something was definitely wrong.

"DIE, RANGERS!" He shouted. His hand held a ball of dark energy with he sent at them. The Rangers could do nothing, only watch in terror. Their eyes bulged in horror as they watched the ball come near them. They did their best to block the energy, but it was too late. It struck the three, causing a tremendous explosion and sending them flying backwards several yards. Their screams again filled the air, quite possibly the most agonized, horrific scream imaginable. They finally landed about 20 yards away. There was a flash of light before their suits disappeared, leaving them in their civilian forms.

Their painful moans made them sound like zombies. They were bruised and battered, several bruises covering their body. Sean looked up, a small amount of blood coming out of the corner of his mouth. He glared as best he could through the painful look on his face at Phaedos. Again, he did his best to stand up. His legs were weakened, but since he was able to stand, he deduced he did not have a broken leg.

"You're finished," said Phaedos. "I'm done with you." With that, he turned around, and walked away from the scene.

"Hey, where you going?" Sean called out weakly. "We're… not…" the pain was getting to him. He could not stand much longer and felt as if he needed to collapse. "Done… yyyyyeeeeett…" He watched Phaedos teleport away before collapsing to his knees. His vision was starting to get black. He felt woozy and could not keep his eyes open. His vision faded as he watched the ground come closer.
The Rangers were defeated. They were broken, battered and beat. They were in so much pain they could barely move. However, a red light on their morphers began to flash and beep. Soon, the Grand Prix Cruiser rolled up, no doubt on auto drive. Kevin looked up just in time to see the Hummer approach.

"We have to help them," said Hikari. She was quickly gathering a first aid kit to bring to the Rangers. Godai-san was following her around, trying to convince her otherwise.

"But we don't know if that man is still there!" He said, following his wife. "It could still be dangerous!"

"I don't care!" She replied. "They need medical attention, fast!"

"But I'm not sure if we even know those three," he said. He still didn't know Sean, Kevin, Daisuke, Maria and Hitomi were Power Rangers. "They're probably strangers or filming a movie."

"That was too real to be a movie," she replied. "Besides, I have to treat strangers all the time at work."

"There's no talking you out of this, is there?" He asked, seemingly giving up.

"No," she replied. She walked out of the door just to see the trio's H2 pull into the parking lot. "Huh, I didn't know those three had come back." But something was wrong. There seemed to be little movement in the H2, which made her worried. Godai-san caught up to her and noticed the H2 as well. Suddenly, the right-hand (driver's side) door opened. They weren't sure what was going on until they saw a beaten Kevin come out, barely clinging to life.

"Help… us…" he said weakly before collapsing onto the blacktop. Hikari was beyond shocked.

"OH, MY GODS!" She screamed as she ran over to the H2. She first checked on Kevin. He was barely alive, but he was still breathing. His body was covered in bruises, making it clear what he had been through. "What happened? Kevin, what happened?" Kevin simply groaned. Godai-san caught up to her again, and opened the left-hand (passenger's side) door and he too gasped in shock. Hikari looked up and screamed as well. Sean was unconscious, slumped forward in his seat and Maria was in the back seat lying down. "We have to get them to the hospital!" She said. "NOW!"

His face showed absolute terror. His palms were sweaty. He wanted to run, but he couldn't. The man in front of Shingo stood over him, an evil smirk on his face. Behind him, his mother was being held down by strange robots. She struggled to get up and get them off, but she could not. "Run!" She called out frantically. "Please, RUN!"

"Shut her up!" Phaedos said. The Swabots taped her mouth and continued to hold her down. Phaedos had broken into this Tokyo house and was about to take the boy; the same boy Sean had saved from a car in episode 5. Shingo wanted to run, but he was so paralyzed with fear that his legs refused to obey him. "You're coming with me," Phaedos said as he reached for Shingo.

"NOOOOO!"

End chapter
Chapter End Notes

Wow. That is the darkest chapter I have written so far. And yes, it has been planned. There are two chapters remaining in Part 1. What will happen to the Rangers and the boy, Shingo? Tune in to Episode 14!

Reviews would be very much appreciated, PLEASE! This thing has been going for 13 chapters, I need reviews!
It was miraculous how they survived. When they were taken to the hospital, Godai-san and Hikari had expected them to either be close to death or suffering from severe injuries. Instead, they had gotten by with mere bruises. Sure, they had been pounded severely, but their injuries were minor. A series of tests, X-rays, CT Scans and what have you had determined they had not suffered any broken bones, concussions, or serious organ damage. The only major injury was a broken rib suffered by Sean and Kevin; each. A day of bed rest in the hospital later and they were out of the hospital.

But that was only physically. In reality, Sean, Kevin and Maria had their spirits broken by Phaedos's beating. And although they had been released from the hospital earlier, they had barely moved from the table in the room. Kevin had his head on the table and Maria was leaning back against the wall. Sean, however, was the worst. He was in an apathetic state and lying on the tatami mats. 

Their bodies were covered in bandages, and they even had ice on them. Underneath the bandages were goodness-knows-how-many bruises, a pair of broken ribs, possibly other broken bones and injuries and three broken prides. They were also filled with painkillers, mainly vicodin and ibuprofen. Sean only broke his apathetic to vehemently refuse any morphine, saying that he had of soldiers getting addicted to heroin after getting shot up with morphine. It took some time, but eventually, they were given vicodyn and Advil instead.

Hikari walked into the room to see the three sitting/lying there practically feeling sorry for themselves. The nurse looked at all of them and shook her head. They were pathetic. Well, not pathetic enough to soil themselves, anyway, but more of a mental pathetic. "Come on," she said. "You can't mope around all day. You survived whatever happened to you that should make you happy." There was no response from the trio. She shook her head and walked out of the room. "Fine, then."

"It's not our fault," Kevin weakly said in his Irish accent. "We had our arses kicked."

"Stupid alien," said Sean. His voice was weak and in a monotone. "I wonder what will happen when the Zordonians take over."

"They'll probably let us off easily," said Maria. "Or they'll let us leave the planet."

"They'll probably do that," said Sean. "I'd rather have that happen."

"Or keep us as slaves," said Maria.

"That's even worse," Kevin replied.

"Then again they might kill us," Maria said flatly. It was as if she just didn't care anymore.

"That'll probably happen," Sean replied.

"Have you had any luck with them?" Godai-san asked when she got into the kitchen. Her voice was
filled with frustration at the three, especially since they wouldn't say anything about what happened to them. To be fair, telling her they're Power Rangers who are spiritually broken after a terrible beating by an alien general is not exactly a good story; they don't really want to expose their secrets.

"Maybe they're traumatized," said Godai-san. "I mean, they were badly injured. Whatever happened to them must have affected them severely."

"I guess I should consider that," Hikari said. "But what happened to them?"

"Maybe they were in an accident of some kind?" Godai-san asked.

"Then how did they drive here?" Hikari countered. "Kevin looked as though he could barely stay alive when they got here."

"He's a tough customer," said Godai-san. It didn't work for Hikari, though.

"You saw them," she replied. "You don't get those kinds of injuries in any kind of accident I could think of."

"Maybe they fell down the slope," Godai-san replied.

"How?" She asked. "You and I have walked up that slope many times before, and nothing's happened before." Did the narration mention that Hikari's a smart woman?

"Accidents happen there all the time," Godai-san replied. "It's possible they must have slipped up on the slope."

"Oh, right," she said. "I forgot that happens." She remembered she's treated some people who have had accidents on the slope on Mt Fuji. "But, I'm going to have to find out from them what happened." With that, she left the kitchen and walked back into the room where the Rangers were.

They saw her come in and gave her a quick glance before going back to feeling sorry for themselves. "You three were climbing Mt. Fuji, right?" She asked. "How did you suffer those injuries? And don't lie to me!"

Too bad she just set them up.

"We slipped," said Kevin, his voice still monotone.

"Really, how?" She countered.

"We slipped on rocks," said Maria. "Those things are slippery."

Hikari sighed to herself in exasperation. They weren't that clumsy, were they? "How big were those rocks?" She asked, trying to get them to slip up. Again, she was just setting them up to lie more easily.

"Not very big," said Kevin. "But they were slippery."

Again, Hikari sighed in exasperation. But then again, their answers were plausible, despite the fact they weren't really talking. Really, she's not going to get very many answers out of them, anyway. They were going to keep their mouths shut about the fact they were beaten to a bloody pulp by an alien. Then again…

"We got the crap beat out of us by some alien," said Maria, trying that kind of confession. "We're the Power Rangers and we got beat by an alien general." Sure enough…
"Really?" Hikari asked. "I don't believe you. You must have slipped." Bingo. "Be more careful on that mountain, okay?" She asked.

"Sure," said Sean, still staring up at the ceiling, his voice monotone. Hikari took the opportunity to leave the room, leaving the Rangers alone. "So what now?" He asked as he stared up at the ceiling a little more.

"Let's just quit being Rangers," said Maria. "We lost, anyway."

Meanwhile, at the Zordonian ship...

"Phaedos, I commend you on your victory over the Rangers," said Emperor Rashon. "But did you have to bring this infernal racket with you?" Phaedos was reporting to his Emperor after kidnapping the boy named Shingo, who Sean saved from getting hit by a car in episode 5. The boy was bawling his eyes out and causing pain for the Zordonians who had no idea how to stop a 3 or 4-year-old kid from crying.

"It's part of my plan my Emperor," he replied. "I had to kidnap him for it to move on."

"If you ask me, you should have kidnapped someone else!" Liaria shouted. She was very annoyed with Shingo and was at the end of her rope. "SHUT UP, YOU LITTLE BRAT!" She shouted at Shingo's cage. The kid looked at her with a terrified look on his face before crying again, even louder this time.

"Watch it Liaria," Tirna said in an almost mocking tone. Liaria responded by turning around to glare at the feminine general. "You don't want to upset your mother, now do you?"

"QUIET, TIRNA!" She shouted back, which Tirna replied to only by chuckling.

"I think I'm going to have a headache," said Zentor, the senior general holding his head.

"Will you two stop?" Eltar asked, stepping forward. The two kept glaring at each other, implying some kind of history. "Anyway, I have a more plausible reason."

"What reason is that?" Zentor asked.

"On Zordon, children are given ESP devices, so they can express themselves before they can begin communicating through speech. They don't have that on Earth, so children express their distress through crying. The boy is quite clearly terrified and is expressing it the only way he knows how, by crying."

"What are you saying, Eltar?" Hercuron asked.

"I'm saying that the boy should be left alone for now until Phaedos finishes his plan," said Eltar. "The boy should be allowed to calm down, so he should be placed in the nursery for now."

"Fair enough," said Rashon. "Have the boy taken to the nursery until Phaedos finishes his plans."

"That won't be necessary," Phaedos suddenly said. Rashon looked at him with a rare look of surprise.

"What do you mean?" Rashon asked in confusion.

"I plan to use the boy to lure out the Japanese Rangers," he replied. "Hercuron and I will go down to
fight them."

"YES!" Hercuron shouted in the background.

"What about the other three?" Eltar asked.

"They won't be of any concern," said Phaedos. "They are either dead, severely injured or broken.
They will not be there to help their friends."

"Very well then," said Rashon. "I hope you know what you're doing. But remember; if you fail me
again, I will not go easy on you like I have been."

"Don't worry," said Phaedos. "That won't be necessary. Those Japanese Rangers will be cut down
before they can fight back."

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Things weren't better for the Rangers around lunch time. They were still lethargic and barely touched
their food, which they loved so much just days ago. It had taken them nearly an hour to actually get
halfway through their food and now they were only ¾ done. Sean slowly lifted his teriyaki chicken
up to his mouth and slowly bit into the meat. After about a minute of chewing, he swallowed the
chicken before stopping again. That's when he collapsed back onto the floor and went back to staring
at the ceiling.

Apparently, even eating was uninteresting.

"I can't eat anymore," said Kevin, his plate not even clear. He slumped back against the wall, barely
even caring.

"Neither can I," Maria said, dropping her chopsticks before falling backwards on the floor.

After a minute, Godai-san came into the room. When he got a look at the table, he sighed in
exasperation at how they had not eaten everything. "What is wrong with you?" He asked. "Just days
ago, you were doing fine, but now… what happened? Was that accident really that bad?"

"We're just not in the mood," said Maria. Godai-san was not happy, and he left the room. Well, he
was about to when something began to appear in the cloudless sky. "What is that?" He asked. Kevin,
Sean and Maria looked outside to see a figure appear in the sky.

It was Phaedos.

"Attention!" The hologram said in its bellowing voice. "Attention, Green and Pink Rangers! I have a
message for you." Suddenly, the image changed to that of Shingo struggling against the bars of the
cage he was being held in. "Come to the coordinates 35 degrees, 22' 12.67" North , 133 degrees
33'15" East in 1 hour, or I shall punish this boy! I want you to come alone! If you do not show up,
then not only will I kill the boy, this will happen!" Suddenly, the image changed to images of fire,
death and destruction. The trees in the area were burning, and the cities burned like they did in World
War II. Godai-san instantly recognized this and his face showed absolute horror. He's a brave man,
but he could not stand to watch anymore as he left the room.

Suddenly, the images ended and Phaedos was left. "Those are just previews," he said. "If you do not
show up, I will make it happen!" Then he began laughing evilly as the hologram began to fade.

[[[[]]]]
At the Miyazawa family vacation mansion on the other side of the mountain, Daisuke, the Green Ranger watched the hologram fade in anger. The general not only dared to kidnap a child, but he had the gall to threaten to raze the country if they did not arrive. Well, he would get his wish. "Hitomi!" He called to his sister.

"Yes, brother?" Hitomi asked monotonously as if in a trance. She walked up to him from the room that she was in.

"We're going to Mt. Fuji. We're going to stop Phaedos," he said. "Get ready. We're going to those exact coordinates."

"Yes, brother," she replied.

Phaedos, Hercuron and a force of Swabots were waiting at the designated location. It was a field a few miles to the west of Mt. Fuji near the Jinba no Taki waterfalls. Since it was just past 12:00 noon on a late June day, the sky was cloudless and there was a slight breeze blowing, with the temperature in the 70s. The cone of the great mountain could be seen in the background to the west. But as you know, they were not here to enjoy the day. They were waiting for Daisuke and Hitomi to show up. Phaedos had his signature smirk while Hercuron was getting antsy, since he really wanted to pound the Rangers. In impatience, he hit one of the Swabots, knocking its head off of the body.

"Calm down Hercuron," said Phaedos. "We are not in any particular rush."

"I only want to SMASH something!" Hercuron replied. "This waiting is making me annoyed!"

"They'll be here soon," said Phaedos. "The hour is almost up. The Miyazawas are not ones to miss a deadline."

"I hope not!" Hercuron practically bellowed. Phaedos again turned to look at the other Zordonian and said,

"Don't worry they'll—speak of the devil!" As he was talking, he got a glimpse of two figures walking towards him, one wearing green, and the other wearing pink. There was no doubt in his mind that they were the Miyazawa Rangers. Her turned back and smirked at the two. Daisuke was on the right and Hitomi was on his right side. The two stopped about 20 yards from Phaedos, Hercuron and the Swabots they brought with them. For a few moments, it was silent and tense, like the showdown scene in an old Western movie—even though it's in Japan. "It's about time you showed up," said Phaedos. "My associate Hercuron was getting impatient." Hercuron cracked his knuckles as Phaedos said that.

"We are not ones to miss a deadline," said Daisuke. "Besides, not only have you threatened to hurt a young boy, you have threatened our entire country. For this, we cannot forgive you."

"Oh, that sounds like a threat," Phaedos said sarcastically. "I hope you won't hurt me!"

"Sarcasm will get you nowhere," said Daisuke. "Where is the boy?"

"Not so fast," Phaedos replied. "First, you'll have to get past the Swabots." Daisuke growled under his breath and clenched his fists at his side. This was not a good development for him. "By the way, do you recognize this location?"

"No, I do not," replied Daisuke.
"Well then you should," Phaedos replied, "Because this is the same field where I subjected you to your first defeat!" Daisuke's eyes widened in shock as Phaedos threw his head back and laughed evilly.

"Dammit," he said. "No matter; we will defeat you and your ilk. Are you ready, Hitomi?" He held up his AcceleMorpher as he said this.

"I am ready brother," she replied flatly.

"GPX, Start it up!" They shouted as they jammed their AcceleKeys into their morphers. There was a flash of light and in an instant, they were in their Ranger suits. Daisuke, being the Green Ranger, was number 3 while Hitomi, the Pink Ranger, was #5.

"Now then," said Daisuke. "Let us introduce ourselves. Mountain Green!"

"Ambulance Pink!" Hitomi said as well, doing a little dance.

"Kosouku Sentai..." Daisuke said, again posing.

"Raceman!" They both posed Sentai style as two explosions, green and pink, went off behind them. They thought it would be effective, but instead, Phaedos was laughing.

"Ha ha ha, impressive!" He said mockingly. "Did you plan that out yourselves?"

"It won't matter once you're defeated," said Daisuke. "We will defeat you."

"Fair enough," said Phaedos. He snapped his fingers and the Swabots came to life, their eyes flashing red. "GET THEM!" At the general's command, the mass of Swabots rushed forward to attack the two Rangers.

"KIYA!" The siblings shouted before charging in as well. Daisuke pressed the flat-topped pentagon-shaped belt buckle and his weapon, the Mountain Staff, a green, naginata-like weapon materialized before him. Hitomi, meanwhile, just drew her Octane Blaster and converted it into a Grand Prix Sword. The two met the mass in the middle and the fight began.

With Swabots all around him, Daisuke was at a minor disadvantage. It says 'minor' because Daisuke was armed with his Mountain Staff. Using said staff, he blocked several Swabot attacks. Then he swiftly swung the staff below the knees of each 'Bot, sweeping them off the ground. Then he swiftly turned around, kicking a Swabot's head off. He quickly ducked to avoid a Swabot sword, but then stabbed the robot in the gut with his Mountain Staff. He then threw the robot into a crowd of Swabots, knocking them all down. They began to close in, but a swing of the Mountain Staff kept them at bay. This was followed up by a side kick with the right leg to an incoming robot. "Tornado Spin!" At that moment, he began to spin around, swinging his Mountain Staff at the same time. He turned into a green-colored tornado and began attacking the Swabots. And like a tornado, he left a trail of trash in his wake. "This is too easy," he said to himself. He really shouldn't have said that.

Meanwhile, Hitomi had a little tougher time, but not by much. She was currently in a sword fight with one Swabot, parrying all of its attacks before swiping at it to take it out. Then, even though she had a sword in her hands, she flipped over several times like a gymnast, dodging several Swabot attacks at the same time. No Swabot could land a finger on her. Then she stopped and just before they could get a hit on her, she rolled forward. The Swabots that were about to get her collided with each other, taking themselves out. With a swift one-two punch, she took out another pair of Swabots, hitting one in the chest and the other in the head. She blocked a punch and countered with a front kick to the groin of the attacking Swabot. Then she surprised a Swabot when she grabbed it by the
collar and threw it against another Swabot, the both of them shattering into several pieces.

"This is boring!" Hercuron said as he watched Daisuke and Hitomi fighting the Swabots. Phaedos himself seemed more concerned with something else, though. He was taking glee in the two Rangers' battle, and was less concerned with Hercuron. "PHAEDOS!" He shouted.

"What is it?" Phaedos asked.

"This is boring!" Hercuron said. "When can I join in?"

"What are you talking about?" Phaedos asked, almost condescending in tone. Hercuron was understandably annoyed at this.

"I want to fight too!" He said. "What will Emperor Rashon say if he finds out you were preventing me from fighting the Rangers!"

"Hercuron old friend," Phaedos said again. "Who said I was stopping you?" Hercuron seemed to actually consider Phaedos's words before a disturbing smile spread across his face. The brute was going to fight.

"YES!" He shouted savagely. The blue-clad, fuzzy haired strongman flexed his muscles in anticipation. He was undoubtedly ready to fight. But whom he was going to fight was the question. He had his eyes on Daisuke, but not in a lustful way; well, more like a lust for destruction, but not lust for Daisuke. In other words, he just wanted to beat the crap out of Daisuke. He punched his hand in eagerness. "I'll take the green one," he said.

"Go for it," Phaedos replied. With that, Hercuron sauntered over to Daisuke's position.

Daisuke continued fighting, ducking to avoid an incoming Swabot. The Swabot tripped over him and fell to the ground, bursting into sparks. He quickly lunged to punch an incoming robot in its gut and punched another one in the face. He was doing a little better than the other Rangers, but not by much—not that he noticed it, anyway. He swung his Mountain Staff down on another Swabot before rushing forward to take out two more Swabots that were blocking his path. He was fighting his way over to Phaedos to confront the general.

But he would never get to him.

Suddenly, he noticed Swabots in front of him being thrown in the air like dolls. The other Swabots that were fighting him froze in their tracks before getting out of the way. Once they had cleared, they were no longer being thrown around. But now Daisuke had a much bigger problem on his hands.

Hercuron.

"I'm going to enjoy this!" He said as he cracked his knuckles.

"Oh, no," Daisuke said to himself. Suddenly, Hercuron cocked his right arm before bringing it down on Daisuke. Daisuke quickly dodged, but when Hercuron's fist struck the ground, it not only made a small crater, but caused the ground to shake with it. It didn't take long for Daisuke to recognize he was in BIG trouble.

"BROTHER!" Hitomi called out as she fought off several Swabots.

"Don't worry Hitomi!" He called back. "I can handle him!"

"Okay!" Hitomi replied before going back to fighting the Swabots. She round house kicked one in
the side of the head, knocking it down to ground. Then she side kicked another Swabot with the same leg.

"You little coward!" Hercuron shouted to Daisuke. It was clear that the young man was having trouble fighting the Zordonian strongman. But he wasn't going to give up that easily. With his Mountain Staff he was able to keep Hercuron at bay. With a thrust of the *naginata*-like weapon he managed to force Hercuron to backtrack. "Dammit!" He said.

"I'm no coward now, am I?" He asked. Again, he thrust the Staff's blade at Hercuron, keeping him at bay. Hercuron was growing agitated however, and he was planning to knock that stick out of Daisuke's hands. He quickly tried to grab Daisuke's staff, but he lifted it above his head. "Tornado Spin!" He spun the Mountain Staff above his head like the blades of a helicopter. Soon, he too, began spinning like a top. With his attack begun, he spun towards Hercuron.

Big mistake.

"Now I've got you!" He shouted as he prepared to punch him. As soon as Daisuke got close enough, Hercuron wound up and punched Daisuke. The attack ended and Daisuke was sent flying about 20 yards away.

"BROTHER!" Hitomi shouted in terror. Some distance away, Phaedos was laughing at Daisuke's misfortune.

"Get up, Green Ranger!" Hercuron shouted as he approached Daisuke.

Daisuke himself was still dazed; surprised that Hercuron had hit him in his Tornado Spin. He wasn't hurting too bad but he needed to get up *fast*, because Hercuron was getting closer. He stumbled over to his Mountain Staff, which to his relief, was still intact. He picked it up and pointed it at Hercuron.

Meanwhile, Hitomi fought valiantly against the Swabots, who just kept coming and coming. Of course, now that she noticed Daisuke was in trouble, she had to try to get to him in order to help him. But right now, the Swabots where causing her problems. She round-house kicked a Swabot sword out of its hand to block it, then twisted and reverse round-house kicked the same Swabot. Then she flipped over several Swabots to try and get to Daisuke. Unfortunately for her, she ended up in another swarm of Swabots, which she was forced to fight again.

When one Swabot knocked her off her feet, she was swarmed by the Swabots, who picked her up and roughly threw her a few feet away. That's not a nice way to treat a lady. She landed with a small thud, but got back up. However, something was different. Her head was strangely clear and she had little idea what was going on. Well, she knew what she was doing there; it's just that in the flight, she hit her head, so she was kind of dizzy. But there was also something different.

But that would have to wait, as a Swabot suddenly rushed into attack her and out of reflex, she blocked the attack with her GP Sword. She grabbed onto the blade in order to hold in place while the Swabot tried to press down, but she pushed it off and slashed at it. With the adrenaline flowing, she went back to action taking out a Swabot with a swipe of her GP Sword, then spun around, took out another one, and then flipped over several more. She quickly changed the sword back into the Octane Blaster, firing several shots at the Swabots.

When she landed, she looked to see Daisuke fighting Hercuron and having trouble. Now prior to this, she would have instantly shot Hercuron. But for some reason she froze in her tracks when she saw this happening. Why? Well, remember when the narration said she had confidence problems? Well, that's what happened. Those confidence issues had resurfaced in the wrong place, the wrong time and for all the wrong reasons. She should not have had that lapse and it cost her when a Swabot
kicked her in the gut.

Daisuke, meanwhile, was losing; badly. Hercuron's strength had caught up to the Green Ranger and with Hitomi getting beat up, Daisuke had to deal with Hercuron's attacks himself. What was worse, Hercuron did not seem to be holding back one bit. His lack of screen time had made him want to smash a Ranger even more. Hercuron again punched the ground, making a small crater where his fist hit. Several craters littered the field where the two were fighting.

"STAY STILL, RANGER!" Hercuron bellowed.

"No!" Daisuke replied. Hercuron's response was a fist that almost hit him in the face. Daisuke countered with a roundhouse kick, which Hercuron blocked.

"Pathetic!" Hercuron said. He punched Daisuke again, sending him flying backwards. Daisuke groaned when he landed, clearly feeling the pain.

"HA HA HA! This is too good!" Phaedos said. Hercuron joined in with the laughter.

"Should I finish him?" Hercuron asked.

"You don't have to," said Phaedos. "Have fun with him as long as you want." Hercuron sneered at Phaedos's words. Of course, he was distracted and didn't see Daisuke get up to try and escape to help his sister.

"You little bastard!" Hercuron shouted. Daisuke of course noticed this and started running.

"HITOMI!" He shouted. The girl turned her head to see her brother being chased by Hercuron before getting hit in the back. "NO!" Daisuke stopped and watched his sister being beaten by the Swabots. He did not notice Hercuron sneak up behind him.

Of course, Hitomi's beating did not last long, as she began to fight back. She round house kicked one, and then ducked to avoid a Swabot punch. Of course, this wouldn't last. She got distracted by Daisuke's plight right in the middle of the fight. "Daisuke, hold on!" She said, her confidence coming back. But then, she was punched in the gut by a Swabot, and then kicked out of the swarm by another. She landed several feet away and got back up. Determined to not be beaten so easily, she prepped for the Swabots.

But then she saw Phaedos.

"Thank you for exposing your position!" He said as he charged up his attack. Hitomi had no chance as Phaedos hurled the black ball of energy at her. It exploded and she was sent flying backwards, screaming.

"HITOMIIIII!"

Daisuke really needed to help his sister. But since he was tangled with Hercuron, there was no option. Hitomi meanwhile, was lying on the ground, dazed and de-morphed. Things were not looking good, especially when Hercuron wound up and punched Daisuke in the face. Like his sister, he was sent flying backwards and landed right next to her as he too, de-morphed.

The Miyazawa siblings were defeated. The two were lying on the ground, groaning in pain. It wasn't as bad as the pain the other Rangers were dealing with, but it still hurt like hell. Across from them, Phaedos and Hercuron were laughing evilly.

"You were easy!" Phaedos laughed. "The other Rangers were a challenge compared to you!"
"What do you mean?" Daisuke asked as he sat up. "What other Rangers?"

"Dear, you're ridiculous," said Phaedos, "Those Rangers from America, Venezuela and Ireland."

"You mean Sean, Kevin and Maria?" Hitomi asked. Daisuke looked at her with a surprised look on his face. Apparently something was wrong.

"Of course!" Phaedos replied.

"What happened to them?" Hitomi asked. Her face was full of fear; fear for her friends.

"They're either dead, severely injured or too broken to fight again," said Phaedos. Hercuron broke out into laughter while the Swabots began laughing… or whatever that sound they were making was. Hitomi was full of despair, putting her face in her hands. In anger, she pounded the ground with her fist before stopping. "If you're trying to be dramatic, you're failing miserably," said Phaedos.

"Will you shut up?" Daisuke asked.

"No!" Phaedos shouted.

"Daisuke, do you have any ideas?" Hitomi asked. Daisuke was silent. Either he was thinking about what to do or he had no idea what was going on. From the look on his face, he had lost all rational thought. In the words of Ray Venkman on *Ghostbusters*, he had gone bye-bye. "Daisuke!" She shouted again, trying to get his attention; still no answer. Finally, her responded; but not in the way she had hoped.

"I… don't know what to do," he said quietly. That was the last straw for Hitomi. It must have been a short straw.

"You STINK!" She shouted. Daisuke looked at her with a shocked look on his face.

"Hitomi, what are you talking about?" He asked.

"Brother, Sean was right!" She replied. "You can't lead! Every time you try to lead, you panic and things just get worse! Not only that, you're a selfish jerk!"

"Hitomi!" He shouted. "What has gotten into you?"

"I've seen what Sean was talking about!" Hitomi replied. "I wish I had never followed you!"

"Hitomi, this is crazy talk!" He replied. "What's going on? Listen to me. You're coming with me!"

"No, you listen to me!" She replied. He recoiled in utter shock yet again as she delivered her rant. "I'm tired of you always telling me what to do! I don't care about family loyalty anymore, I want to be like Maria and be my own, independent woman! For once, I am not going to do what you tell me! We should never have split with the others! We need them!"

"We don't need them!" He replied. "If we need them, then our dignity as Japanese citizens is gone!"

"DON'T BRING NATIONALISM INTO THIS!" She shouted back, utterly shocking him. "Nationalism has no place here! The Zordonians are a bigger threat than 'Japanese dignity' or whatever you're talking about!"

"Hitomi, what are you—"

"I don't want to be part of something if I can't be with my friends!" She said. Phaedos was trying not
to laugh. Apparently, he thought it was funny. "Sean, Kevin and Maria were my friends! And you took that away! I know this is going to sound wrong but… I HATE YOU! YOU'RE A SELFISH, SPOILED, JERK!" Daisuke was in utter shock at his sister's comments. Unfortunately, though, she was right. He had acted selfishly. "Your selfishness nearly got us killed, could have killed Sean, Kevin and Maria, and possibly doomed the planet!" Hitomi was not done, apparently.

"Well done, well done!" Phaedos said as he clapped mockingly. "Well, now that little speech is over, I guess I should have you executed!" Hitomi recoiled in utter shock. Three Swabots stepped forward holding rifles in their hands. Hitomi froze again. It was a really bad time for those confidence issues to come back up, as if the writer wanted them to come up… bastard. "With you two out of the way, I'll be rid of my pain!"

"Can't you spare us?" Hitomi asked. The Swabots had reached them and had pointed their weapons at them. "Let me think…" he said sarcastically. "NO!"

"You're just going to kill us like that?" Hitomi asked. "Don't we get any last requests?"

"I've seen enough of your popular culture to recognize that by doing that, you're only trying to delay the opponent long enough for your friends to come in and save you," he said. "So, no! Even though your friends are most likely not going to help you! And don't try to run, either. I've seen enough of your Earth popular culture to recognize that the heroes will try to escape in these situations, so I've ordered the Swabots to shoot automatically if you try to escape!"

"You stink!" Hitomi shouted. Isn't this scene supposed to be dramatic?

"Just kill them!" Phaedos shouted. The Swabots pointed their rifles at the two. Hitomi's face turned to a panicked one. Her confidence issues had popped up again and she didn't think once to try and fight back. Well, they were restrained by those Swabots, so that was out of the question.

"No…" she said calmly.

Daisuke was still gone; shocked at his sister's comments to him and that he had no idea what to do. "READY!" Phaedos shouted. "AIM!" The Swabots aimed their rifles at the two. Had her hands not been bound and paralyzed with fear, she would have done something. Instead, she watched the Swabots prepare to fire. Her head was filled with millions of thoughts and twenty different prayers to Amaterasu.

No… it can't end like this! I don't want to die! Please, Amaterasu, help me! She clenched her eyes together and waited for the inevitable.

"FIRE!"

Hitomi braced for her death, thinking the Swabots were going to shoot…

To be continued…
"Just kill them!" Phaedos shouted. The Swabots pointed their rifles at the two. Hitomi's face turned to a panicked one. Her confidence issues had popped up again, and she didn't think once to try and fight back. Well, they were held down by those Swabots, so that was out of the question.

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"FIRE!"

Hitomi braced for her death, thinking the Swabots were going to shoot…

Only it never came.

"WHAT!" Suddenly, she looked to see someone come in literally out of nowhere and kicked the middle Swobot in the face, knocking it off. Then another person came in and took out the other one on the right and then someone attacked the one on the left. Hitomi watched in complete awe at the scene, wondering if her prayers were answered. Then, the three figures leaped out of the way. The Swabots, specifically the ones that were about to shoot them, fell in a heap of wreckage. The trio that saved the two landed several yards away to the left, landing in a kneeling, crouched position with their backs to both parties.

"What was that!" Phaedos shouted. The attackers did not respond, staying in their position. They had an air of familiarity for Hitomi, but not much of one. "Who are you!"

Again, silence. "Cowards!" He shouted. "You show up here to stop an execution, and you won't show your faces? You are such cowards!"

"You really want to know?" The one in the middle asked.

"Yes, I do want to know!" Phaedos replied. "Unveil yourself!"

"Okay, then!" The middle one replied. Instantly, all three rose slowly and dramatically. At first, Phaedos was smirking, thinking he had won. Instead, the three did not waiver one bit, rising slowly until they were standing straight up and standing proudly. Hitomi was confused, naturally. She didn't know who these people were, despite their air of familiarity. "You really want to know?" The middle one asked again.
"YES!" Phaedos shouted, his voice filled with impatience. "Reveal yourself, NOW!"

"Alrighty then!" At first, Phaedos had a victorious smirk on his face at the three who interrupted the execution, but that changed once he got a look at the people as they pivoted around one by one. His face changed to one of complete shock.

Hitomi, meanwhile, reacted differently. As the three turned around to show their faces to Phaedos, her smile got wider and wider, ecstatic that they had come. "Kevin! Sean! Maria!"

Indeed, the three western Rangers had arrived on the scene to save their friends. They stared down Phaedos with intense, badass looks on their faces. Their fists clenched, and they did not look like they were going to take Phaedos's crap anymore. Their mere presence shocked Phaedos and his Swabots.

"I can't believe it!" Phaedos said, utterly shocked beyond belief. "I thought you were dead!"

"You can't kill us that easily!" Sean replied, clenching his fist. "Now, we're here for payback!"

"You should at least be broken!" Phaedos said.

"We were," said Kevin.

"But we found our courage to fight again," Maria added.

"And now we're back," Sean continued. "Not just to kick your ass, but to save our friends!" Hitomi was practically crying. Not tears of sadness, but tears of joy. They had come to help! She was so thrilled there were no words to describe it. She just had to hug them.

"Maria! Kevin! Sean!" She shouted as she got up and ran over to the three.

"¡Chica!" Maria exclaimed as Hitomi ran into her. The two hugged, and Sean and Kevin joined in the group hug. It was indeed a heartfelt reunion for these four, as they had become closest over this story. That ended, however, when Hitomi touched Maria in the wrong way. "Ouch!" She said. "Take it easy, will you?"

"Sorry," she said as she pulled away. "I didn't know I was—oh, my!" Indeed, she had gotten a look at the three.

They were (still) bruised up pretty badly, with all three of them sporting black eyes. Hitomi saw they were bandaged up, and Sean's left arm was wrapped up in bandages itself. The bruises had gotten a little better, but it was clear that they were still hurting a bit from what Phaedos did. "Phaedos did all this?" Hitomi asked, purely for confirmation.

"Unfortunately, yes," Sean replied. "Thanks to him, we're pumped full of fucking painkillers, and Hikari's trying to make sure we don't get addicted to those things."

"He thought you were dead!" Hitomi said. "And I did too!"

"As Sean said, he can't kill us that easily," Kevin confidently said.

"But shouldn't you be in the hospital?" Hitomi asked—which is the likely reaction many readers will have (even though we saw the western Rangers in the previous episode).

"The injuries weren't too bad," Maria replied. "But, they still hurt."

"Although Kevin and I do have a broken rib each," Sean replied. "So it hurts!"
"But it's a minor fracture," said Kevin. "We can handle them."

"I hope so," said Hitomi. It was then that Daisuke, still a little out of it, walked up to the group. Sean naturally noticed this. He wound up his arm…

…and punched Daisuke in the face.

"WHAT WAS THAT FOR?" Daisuke shouted, apparently out of la-la land. Instantly, Sean grabbed him by the collar and pulled him up off the ground. The look on Sean's face was one of just absolute anger.

"That's what you get for punching me last week!" Sean shouted back. "Your little mutiny nearly got us all killed, you and your sister included!"

"That's still no reason to punch me!" Daisuke shouted.

"It's a perfectly good reason!" Sean replied. "Your little glory-hound crap caused this split and depleted our strength!"

"Is that all?" Daisuke asked.

"Yeah, you're a nationalist bastard!" Sean replied.

"I already yelled at him for that," said Hitomi. Sean, Kevin, and Maria all turned their heads at her.

"Wow!" Maria said. "That's impressive, chica!"

"Are you all turning against me?" Daisuke asked.

"I'm more impressed that she had the confidence to say something like that," said Maria. "But yeah, you have been a jerk over the past month, much less than Sean, and he's a pretty big jerk himself." Sean gave her a dirty look, but at least she was insulting Rich Boy. He then took the opportunity to let go of Daisuke.

"Listen, Rich Boy," he said. "I already told you before, heroes aren't selected by committee, they're made in times of need. You didn't get that through your head the last time, so I might as well remind you.

"But, you know what? I'm sorry."

Daisuke stared at him, blankly. "What?"

"I let this whole Power Ranger thing get to my head," Sean answered. "And I forgot how to be a leader. I'm sorry for letting you all down. And I'm sorry for antagonizing you as much as you antagonized me. You're more wrong, but I'm not blameless, not in the least." He held his hand out to Daisuke, for him to shake. Daisuke gazed at the hand, then back to Sean, stone-faced. Then he took the hand.

"Apology accepted. You didn't have to hit me, though," Daisuke replied. Both he and Sean laughed, and Maria smiled at both of them.

"To be honest, I was holding back," Sean replied. "We need to save our wrath for that blond-haired bastard."

"He's right," said Kevin. "We can't fight amongst ourselves. Our enemy is across that field, and he stands with the might of an empire. But we have something that he does not have."
"What is that?" Daisuke asked. Hitomi, however, knew exactly what Kevin was talking about. She smiled lightly, confusing her brother. But soon, she spoke up.

"It's a concept you and I know about brother," she said. "Nakama; although we are, for the most part, unrelated, our bond is like that of a family, maybe even more."

"Like a band of brothers," said Sean.

"And sisters," Maria cut in.

"And sisters, sorry," Sean replied. "Like the speech in Henry V. We few, we—"

"Save it, Sean," said Maria. "Save it for when we're facing Phaedos."

"Are you done yet?" Phaedos called out. Sean turned around and glared at Phaedos before turning back to the group.

"We might as well get to work," he said. "I'm going to say the speech, anyway. 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers'."

"And sisters," said Maria.

"And sisters," Sean corrected. "'For he to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.'"

"And sister," said Maria.

"Sure," Sean said. He continued. "Ah, fuck it. I lost my train of thought. We're in this together! We got one shot at this, let's TAKE IT! Now let's KICK SOME ASS!"

"YEAH!" At that point, the Rangers dispersed and lined up with Mt. Fuji in the background, facing against Phaedos and the Swabots, from left to right: Daisuke, Hitomi, Sean, Maria, and Kevin. They stood their ground, never wavering, like an old army right before the big battle. Their heads held high, and their hands at their sides told their enemy they were ready. The determined looks on their faces showed their enemy; they were not going to go down so quickly. But Phaedos didn't care.

"Are you ready for your death?" He asked.

"HELL NO!" Sean shouted. "You can't beat us! We have something much stronger than your force of arms! It's a force that you will never know! Although you may have beaten us physically, there's one thing you can't destroy; OUR SPIRIT!"

"Whatever!" Phaedos said. "It's just a silly concept and a silly speech, too!"

"Don't underestimate that power," said Sean. "For it will bring about your downfall! You may have tried to break these bonds, but they'll never disintegrate, and now WE'RE GONNA MAKE YOU PAY!"

"Really?" Phaedos asked. "I'd like to see you try, humans!"

"You're not going to get under my skin this time," Sean replied. "We're not like ordinary humans! We're POWER RANGERS! We don't quit,"

"We don't surrender," said Kevin.

"And most—" Maria started.
"Importantly—" Daisuke and Hitomi said as well.

"WE DON'T LOSE!" They all said in unison.

"We'll see about that!" Phaedos replied.

"Haven't you been listening?" Sean asked, starting to get hot-blooded. "You can't beat us! We're gonna make you wish you hadn't messed with us!"

"Talking and doing are two separate things!" Phaedos countered. "You have yet to beat me!"

"AND THAT ENDS TODAY!" Sean shouted. "WE'RE MORE THAN A TEAM! WE'RE LIKE FAMILY!"

"HAHAHA!" Phaedos laughed. "That just sounds ridiculous!"

"I DON'T FUCKING CARE!" Sean shouted. "OUR SPIRIT BURNS LIKE A THOUSAND SUNS! And you can't turn it off!"

"What are you saying?" Phaedos asked.

"What I'm saying is this," Sean calmed down for a moment and got right back up again. "THAT YOU'RE GOING DOWN!"

"What are you going to do?" Phaedos asked.

"We're going to kick your ass and send you back to whatever depths of space you came from with your tail between your legs!" said Maria. Sean gave her a fist bump in response.

"HA!" Phaedos laughed.

"Let it be clear; this time, we will not let up. You made a bad move in trying to break us up. Phaedos. And although I hate Rich Boy, he's still a part of this team. If we stand together, nothing can beat us! This is where we make our stand; where we tell you Zordonian bastards, we will not go quietly; where we beat you bastards and send you back to whatever slime you came from! We're Power Rangers! We don't quit, we don't surrender, and most importantly, WE DON'T LOSE! This is our battle, this is our fight, and THIS IS OUR TIME! AND WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT AND WIN THIS BATTLE!"

"Is that all?" Phaedos asked.

"No," said Sean. "There's still one thing we have to do." He held up his left arm to display his morpher. The other Rangers followed suit and then took their right arms, holding their AcceleKeys and crossed them like an x. For some reason, Phaedos looked shocked. "READY!"

"READY!" And with a little choreography, they said in unison,

Sean: "G!"
Kevin: "P!"
Daisuke: "X!"
Maria: "START!"
Hitomi: "IT!"
All: "UP!" They jammed their keys into the AcceleMorphers, and in a flash of bright multi-colored light, all five morphed into their Ranger suits. Phaedos growled and clenched his fist in anger.

Sean: "GPX… RED!"

Kevin: "GPX… BLUE!"

Daisuke: "GPX… GREEN!"

Maria: "GPX… YELLOW!"

Hitomi: "GPX… PINK!"

Sean: "Do the impossible! See the invisible!"

All: "POWER RANGERS! GPX!" (Ka-boom!) The Rangers posed, and several explosions put an exclamation point on their intro. "WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK WE ARE?"

For some reason, Phaedos was furious, clenching his right fist. Hercuron, despite his temper, if he didn't get to smash anything, was worried at Phaedos's reaction. But that would be temporary. "GET THEM!" Phaedos shouted to his Swabots. Instantly, the Swabots charged the Rangers en masse.

Instead of just charging the Swabots, Sean reached over to Maria and grabbed her hand. Maria did the same with Kevin. Sean then reached over to Hitomi, who was confused at first before realizing what he intended to do. She, too, grabbed his hand and grabbed her brother's hand. The Rangers sauntered towards the approaching Swabots, hand in hand, not breaking. Their show of unity wasn't impressing Phaedos one bit, but that didn't matter to them. They kept sauntering towards the Swabots, who kept charging.

As they got closer, they began to walk faster and faster, walking quickly and then started to jog. Then they broke their little chain and charged the Swabots head-on, screaming like madmen. They pressed their belt buckles and their weapons—the GT Sword, the Touring Cannon, the Mountain Staff, the Haz Daggers, and the Am Bow—materialized before them. They grabbed their weapons just as they met the Swabots.

Sean started by jumping over the wall of Swabots. When he landed among them, he started hacking and slashing at the Swabots, cutting them up like ribbons. He reverse-roundhouse kicked a Swabot in the head, decapitating it, then he punched another one completely smashing the robot's chest. Next, he jumped in the air to avoid a Swabot strike and bicycle-kicked the Swabot to take it out. He ducked, avoiding a Swabot sword and countered with an uppercut that sent the attacking Swabot flying.

Without missing a beat, he side-kicked a Swabot that had tried to come up behind him and utterly destroyed it. He roundhouse kicked another one, also decapitated it and elbowed one that had tried to sneak up on him in the chest. Then, he swung the GT Sword at another Swabot to cut it completely in half. Next, he punched a Swabot in the chin, sending it flying into a crowd of Swabots behind him. He grabbed another Swabot's head and tore it off its neck. Again, he punched a Swabot in the chest to completely smash it into tiny pieces. Unlike last time, Sean was energized and was fighting his ass off.

"TURBO BLAST!" Kevin fired his Touring Cannon's special attack at a crowd of Swabots. When the blast hit the Swabots, it caused a massive explosion that destroyed a host of Swabots. The next thing he was charge right into a crowd of Swabots, jump up and land in front of the Swabots almost like a professional wrestler. Dropping his cannon, he wound up his right arm and punched the first
Swabot near him to decapitate the damn thing. Next, he kicked a Swabot in the chest, smashing the robot.

Then he grabbed one Swabot head and smashed it with his bare hands! Suddenly, a Swabot came in to stab him, but he dodged the attack and counted by grabbing the robot's arm and snapping it in two. He quickly turned around and kick-blocked a Swabot that had tried to sneak up on him a couple of times before spinning around and kicking it in the head. Swabots kept coming, but Kevin held his own, beating them all to a pulp of scrap metal.

As the Swabots charged him, Daisuke knocked each one of them to the side. With the Mountain Staff, he could sweep every one of them to the side. He thrust the blade of the naginata-like weapon into a Swabot. He impaled it on the blade, and Daisuke swung the staff above his head, throwing it at a crowd of Swabots. If only the Swabots didn't crowd together like that. Anyway, Daisuke hook kicked a Swabot, knocking it down and then literally swept several Swabots off their feet using the blade of the Mountain Staff.

Then he thrust it into an oncoming Swabot right in the neck. Next, he swung the staff and clotheslined a pair of them. "TORNADO SPIN!" He began to spin around like a top. A green tornado appeared, and Daisuke took out numerous Swabots with little effort before stopping. The Swabots he attacked fell to the ground in piles of scrap metal. Indeed, Daisuke had recovered from earlier and was intent on fighting.

The Swabots she was fighting could not defend against Maria when she threw her daggers. Although she held onto them most of the time when she did throw them, it was difficult for them to fight back. She hacked with the left hand, held in a reverse style, against a Swabot that attempted to attack her from behind. Alerted to the attacker by her in-helmet system, she spun around and slashed at the Swabot with her left hand. The hack decapitated the Swabot, although it didn't surprise her; she was too into her battle to be surprised.

She leaped up in the air, flipped over a couple of Swabots and using one's shoulder as a pedestal, kicked a couple in the heads, decapitating the both of them before decapitating the one she was standing on. When she got back onto the ground, she side kicked a Swabot in the chest, destroying the robot. She blocked a Swabot with a cross-block, threw the Swabot off, and stabbed it in the chest with her daggers. She was intent on fighting; no vast numbers of Swabots were going to stop her.

Hitomi flipped over backward multiple times like a gymnast. No Swabot could touch her since gymnastics weren't exactly something they were programmed to fight. She then vaulted into the air flipping over backward several times before notching an arrow in her bowstring and fired the arrow at the Swabots. It hit its mark, right in the middle of a Swabot chest. Bolts discharged, and nearby Swabots were zapped by the bolts, frying their circuitry.

She got on both hands and began to spin on those hands. Her legs turned with her, and they kicked the Swabots around. When she finished, she got back up on her feet. She roundhouse kicked one, decapitating it. Then she sweep-kicked another. With that Swabot down, she elbowed it in the chest, taking it out. Her next move was to jump up, backflip over and dodge two Swabots that had tried to get her. The Swabots collided in a shower of sparks. She had undergone instant character development and had gained a shitload of confidence.

"PHAAAEEDOOOSSSSS!!" Sean shouted as he fought against some Swabots. "YOU'RE DEAD, YOU BASTARD!" He leaped up in the air, flipped over, and charged Phaedos. He held the blade of the GT Sword up, ready to strike. Phaedos, meanwhile, reached out, and his crystalline sword materialized in front of him. Sean reached the Zordonian general, and the two enemies' swords clashed.
"Come back for more?" Phaedos asked smugly.

"No, I'm just here for payback!" Sean replied, throwing Phaedos' sword off of him. He stabbed at the Zordonian general. The general dodged each attack, his smirk still adorning his face. Naturally, Sean was not happy about it. "Dammit!"

"Take THIS!" Phaedos shouted. A ball of energy appeared in his hand. Sean knew what was coming, and when the general launched it at him, he dodged the ball easily. "Don't you get it?" He asked. "I'M INVINCIBLE!"

"Bullshit!" Sean replied.

"Phaedos, what about me?" Hercuron asked, still not part of the battle. "What should I do?"

"Take out the Blue one!" Phaedos replied, his blade locked with Sean's. Hercuron cracked his knuckles and charged at Kevin.

Kevin dodged a Swabot sword before he noticed Hercuron coming at him like a charging rhino. Kevin dropped his cannon and drew his fuel pump, nozzle-shaped Octane Blaster, converting it into the Grand Prix Sword.

"YOU LITTLE BASTARD!" Hercuron called. Kevin stood his ground as the Zordonian brute charged him. The Zordonian was right on top of him when Kevin stepped to the side to easily dodge the Zordonian. Naturally, he missed the Ranger.

"Weren't expecting that now, were you?" Kevin asked as Hercuron recovered.

"YOU LITTLE RUNT!" Hercuron angrily shouted. The thing about these kinds of guys is that you know how to push their buttons. Last time they fought, Hercuron got angry at Kevin's agility. Naturally, he'd get mad if he used that today.

"Come on!" Kevin replied, giving him a 'bring it' gesture. Hercuron got up, sauntered over to Kevin, and swung his fist at Kevin. Kevin dodged the attack easily, countering with a roundhouse kick.

Meanwhile, Daisuke fought primarily by himself. Sean and Kevin didn't need him unless either one of them needed him. He blocked an attack with the non-blade end of the staff. Then he countered with the blade of the staff. Getting his hands on it as his ancestors would have, he thrust the blade at the oncoming Swabot, piercing its skin and destroying its circuitry. Then he side-kicked another Swabot, this one coming from behind him. With a mighty swing of the staff, he brought half a dozen of Swabots down.

"Let's take 'em chica!" Maria said while getting into a ready stance. Hitomi was on her right, also prepared to go.

"Okay!" Hitomi replied. "BRING IT!" The Swabots charged the two, and both of them kiai'ed as the 'bots charged them. The two began to engage the Swabots once they reached them.

The two began to work together. Maria swiped at one Swabot with her dagger, and Hitomi came in and finished it off. Then Maria kicked one in the back over to Hitomi. She, in turn, kneed the Swabot in the gut. Then the two turned their attention to what looked like a sergeant Swabot, much more potent than most Swabots. But, they didn't fear it. The Swabot swung its sword down at the two, but they managed to dodge it. "Ready, chica?" Maria asked.

"Ready!" Hitomi replied. The two then stabbed the Swabot in the gut, Maria with her Haz Daggers and Hitomi with the Grand Prix Sword.
As Sean battled, he had summoned his Slap Shot Stick and was letting loose at Phaedos. Unfortunately, the shots weren't hitting, but they were keeping the Zordonian at bay… for a while, anyway.

"Foolish human!" Phaedos shouted as he charged Sean. Sean didn't have much time to react, but that's what reflexes are for. He blocked Phaedos's attack with the GT Sword, albeit with some difficulty. The general was far stronger than him and was pressing down on the Ranger. "Humans are weak," he said. "They live such short lives, and they are crushed, easily. How can you possibly defeat me?"

"By fighting hard, that's how!" Sean replied, throwing Phaedos's weapon off. He swung at Phaedos, but Phaedos dodged. Then Phaedos punched Sean right in the gut, sending him flying. "OW!"

"See?" Phaedos said as he sauntered over to Sean. Sean immediately got back up and blocked Phaedos's attack. "Impressive."

"You keep saying that, and I'm going to think you're trying to throw me off," Sean replied before throwing Phaedos off.

"You're not as stupid as you let on!" Phaedos said, kicking him in the chest. Sean backed off again before Phaedos gave him a mighty punch that sent him flying backward.

Daisuke didn't have much of a choice, but he found himself fighting Hercuron along with Kevin. Hercuron had gone over to Daisuke, bringing Kevin with him. The Zordonian brute threw Kevin over to the scene, knocking down several Swabots.

"How's it going?" Kevin asked as he got up.

"Not too bad," Daisuke replied. "You?"

"Could be better." He stood up as Hercuron reached the two.

"I'm going to have fun with you two!" He said sadistically. The two immediately ducked out of the way as Hercuron brought his fist down on the two. He missed, but he didn't miss a Swabot. His fist completely pulverized the bot. "GRAAH!"

"Missed us!" Kevin taunted. Hercuron angrily swung his arm at Kevin but missed by a long shot. "You don't frighten me, Zordonian pig-dog! I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster, and your father smelt of elderberries!" Hercuron, not getting the joke, just stood there confused.

"Why did you say that?" Daisuke asked.

"I always wanted to try that," Kevin replied.

"Ah," said Daisuke. Then, he saw Hercuron. "Oh, SH—"

Maria kicked a Swabot with a high kick in the head, knocking it back. An arrow from Hitomi's bow finished it off. "Great work!" Maria shouted.

"Thanks!" Hitomi said. She punched a Swabot that was about to attack her right in the face.

"Nice," said Maria. She thrust a dagger into a Swabot. Hitomi backed into her, and the two fought off Swabot after Swabot, all the while back-to-back. Hitomi used her bow while Maria used her Octane Blaster. But that was until any Swabots came near. Maria stabbed it with both daggers and
then, using one of the daggers, ripped out the circuitry right out of the robot's chest. Hitomi was impressed.

"That was awesome!"

"Obviously."

Phaedos sauntered over to Sean, who was writhing on the ground holding his right side. His helmet was off, and his face contorted in pain. "Fuuucck," he said. He struggled to get up, still holding his side. It wasn't good enough, and he fell on his back.

"See?" Phaedos asked. "You're such fragile creatures."

"That's 'cause you broke my fucking rib!" Sean replied. "Fuck!"

"When? Now?" Phaedos asked.

"No, earlier!" Sean snapped. "I landed wrong, no thanks to you!"

"Well now," Phaedos said. "It looks like you won't be able to do much when I kill you." Phaedos raised his sword and prepared to bring it down on Sean. Sean, who was on his side, reacted quickly and grabbed the GT Sword just as Phaedos swung it down on him.

CLANG!

Both blades met when Sean blocked Phaedos's sword. "Impressive!" Phaedos said, pushing down on Sean's sword. Sean struggled to keep the sword up, but Phaedos's strength was starting to overwhelm him. The crossed blades got closer and closer to him, and he got worried. The blades got within an inch of his face, and he shut his eyes and clenched his teeth.

"GRAAAAHHHH!" With little effort, Sean threw Pheados's blade off of him. Phaedos was knocked back by force.

"Where did that come from!" Phaedos asked as Sean got up. He slumped over, and his hair covered his face.

"I've had enough of you," Sean said in a low voice. "You are a smug, egotistical prick. You disrespect us. You disrespect our planet; you fight dirty. I don't care how good you are. You are a fucking piece of SHIT!" The adrenaline began flowing, and Sean could feel the pain going. He raised his head and looked at Phaedos. "THIS ENDS NOW!"

He turned to the others. "LET'S FINISH THEM!"

"Interesting!" said Phaedos. "But it's not good enough. DIE!" He wound up his arm to punch Sean, who did the same thing. He got close to Sean and was about to connect, but Sean did it first. He hit Phaedos right in the chest, and Phaedos was sent flying backward about 20 feet away. Sean, naturally, was amazed, but he walked over to his helmet, picked it up and raised it above his head.

"Back to action!"

Energized by Sean's words, Kevin punched Hercuron in the face and did damage to the Zordonian brute. Hercuron stumbled back, holding his cheek as Kevin began to feel his adrenaline flowing. Daisuke also felt energized and punched Hercuron square in the jaw.

"What's going on?" Daisuke asked.
"We make our stand, that's what!" Kevin answered.

"That won't help you!" Hercuron shouted. "Now, DIE!"

"HOW YOU DOING, HITOMI?" Maria asked after she punched a Swabot so hard it instantly fell apart.

"I don't know!" said Hitomi. "I can't describe it!" She drew an arrow in her bow and shot a Swabot straight through the head and several other Swabots.

Sean and Phaedos were embroiled in their battle. It had devolved into a hand-to-hand struggle instead of the sword fight that had been happening earlier. Both combatants fought with incredible intensity and speed that it was hard to tell what they were throwing.

But since we have a narrator, it won't matter. Sean blocked a punch from Phaedos and replied with an elbow in the chest, forcing Phaedos back. Sean roundhouse kicked Phaedos, but that was blocked, and Phaedos flipped him on his back. Sean quickly got back up and dodged a punch from Phaedos, kicking him in the back. Phaedos wasn't panicking, but he didn't have reason to be. "You know that boy?" Phaedos asked. "I can still have him killed."

"That's a problem," said Sean.

Speaking of Shingo, he could hear the fighting going on, but he had no idea what was going on. He was locked in a cage that gave him some room to walk around. But he was some distance from, and out of sight of, the battlefield. He was guarded by several Swabots, some of whom had their guns trained on him. Phaedos had thought this out. However, he had not thought out what happened next.

Then something came from nowhere and attacked the Swabots, before turning his or her attention to the Swabots with their guns trained on Shingo. Those Swabots didn't stand a chance either, and they were quickly taken out. Shingo watched with awe as his savior walked towards him. 'Who are you?"

He asked.

"A friend."

Meanwhile, Sean was struggling against Phaedos. He was trying to keep Phaedos from pushing him down on the ground, their hands interlocked in combat. His legs were spread in a power stance, meant to hold his ground. Unfortunately, it wasn't working too well.

"See?" Phaedos asked. "I'm stronger than you! You can't beat me!"

"I'm still planning on it," Sean replied.

"That boy you came to rescue won't be rescued," he said.

"By us," Sean replied.

"What?" Phaedos said, his face showing surprise. "What do you mean?"

"You'll see," Sean replied. Sure enough,

"SEAN!" A voice called out. Phaedos looked behind him and what he saw made his blood boil; Shingo was out of his cage, and a man was carrying him away. "Boy Scout's out of the woods!"

"Thank you, Joker!" Sean replied.
"The kid's out!" said Daisuke. "Wait, who's that with him?" He wasn't sure, but Hitomi recognized him instantly.

"Oh, my… TOJI-SAN!"

"Toji-san?" Daisuke shouted as he dodged a kick from Hercuron.

"You… TRICKED ME!" Phaedos shouted. "This was just a distraction?"

"Not exactly," said Sean. "But now—" Suddenly, Sean overpowered Phaedos and threw the Zordonian general to the ground. He cracked his knuckles and walked up to Phaedos. "Oh, I'm going to enjoy this!"

Kevin quickly blocked Hercuron's kick. Daisuke helped out by side-kicking Hercuron in the back, knocking him down. Hercuron got back up to fight Kevin, but the Irishman grabbed his arm and threw him to the ground. Then he began pounding away at Hercuron like an MMA fighter does when his opponent is down. Hercuron kicked him off, but Daisuke came right in, thrusting the blade of the Mountain Staff down. However, Hercuron rolled out of the way, and Daisuke's blade got stuck in the ground. It would have been bad for Daisuke had Kevin not come in and grabbed Hercuron, giving the Green Ranger enough time to pull the blade out.

Daisuke thrust the blunt end of the Staff into Hercuron's gut. With the suit giving him extra strength, the thrust did its job and knocked the wind out of Hercuron.

Meanwhile, Maria was pulverizing Swabots left and right. Her fists were weapons, and they were deadly—to Swabots, at least. She thrust her elbow into the chest of one Swabot, making a big dent in it before kicking one that came right in front of her. Hitomi was doing just as good, firing her bow left and right, taking out target after target. She even used the bow itself as a melee weapon, whacking Swabots that did come near her.

"How's it going back there?" Maria asked as she tore the circuitry of one Swabot right out of its head.

"AWESOME!" Hitomi shouted in her genki style.

"That's good," said Maria as she tossed a Swabot into a group of them.

Sean's fight with Phaedos had turned into a beatdown. Not Phaedos on Sean, but Sean on Phaedos. To say Sean hated doing it would be a total lie. He was enjoying this. It didn't make his cruel. It was just that he hated Phaedos so much that kicking the Zordonian general's ass was felt so damn good. Of course, Phaedos was fighting back. Phaedos threw a punch at Sean, which he dodged.

"Come on, Phaedos, I thought you were better than me!" Sean shouted.

"You little bastard!" Phaedos shouted, kicking Sean in the gut. Sean recovered and side-kicked him in the chest. "It seems I underestimated you," he said.

"Ya think?" Sean asked.

"Sarcasm will get nowhere!" Phaedos shouted, materializing his crystal sword. Sean reacted quickly, running over to the GT Sword, picking it up.

"PREPARE TO DIE, RED RANGER!" Phaedos shouted as he ran over to Sean.

"GT STRIKE!" Sean's blade glowed red, and he zoomed forward, the tires on his boots and
gauntlets spinning. The two met, and Sean swung a backhander, striking Phaedos and sending sparks flying.

"Take… THIS!" Kevin cried, throwing a punch at Hercuron. The brute had no time to react, and Kevin's fist connected, sending Hercuron flying backward, only to be met by Daisuke, who kicked him in the back. The brute landed a good 20 feet away.

Maria thrust her dagger into an attacking Swabot, the blade of her dagger, and her arm stuck out of the robot's body. She quickly withdrew. "Lightning THROW!" She threw her daggers at other Swabots, and the robots were all zapped.

Hitomi drew the bow back and fired a shot right through the head of an attacking Swabot. The arrow zipped through several Swabots, all of them falling like dominoes.

Sean skidded to a stop, his hockey instincts kicking in, and he stopped like a hockey player. However, his helmet came off as he finished. He got a look in front of him, Phaedos erupting in a shower of sparks and screaming painfully. Sean stood up, turned around, did a *chiburi*, and posed in confident victory as Phaedos fell to the ground in a massive explosion.

However, Phaedos was not dead; angry, but not dead. His green blood was trickling out of his mouth, ever-so-slightly. The Zordonian general stood up, his eyes filled with rage. "You will regret this, Red Ranger!" Phaedos shouted.

"Like I haven't heard *that* before!" Sean replied.

"You'll regret that as well!"

"PHAEDOS!" Eltar called. Phaedos froze, much to Sean's confusion. The Terran did not hear what was going on. "Retreat, now!"

"NO!" He shouted. "I will not!"

"DO IT!" Eltar called. "Emperor Rashon orders it himself!" Phaedos froze. There was no way he would disobey his emperor, so he decided to retreat.

"I will be back, Red Ranger!" He said as he teleported away. Hercuron did the same, just as Kevin and Daisuke were about to finish him off, the same with the Swabot horde that had surrounded Maria and Hitomi.

Back at the control room in the UN base, the room had erupted in celebration. Staff cheered, clapped, hooted, hollered, hugged, kissed, whatever. It was a moment of pure joy. Col. Greene, usually not an emotional man, could not help but get in the celebration as he popped a bottle of champagne.

Sean sighed in relief and collapsed onto his knees in exhaustion. The effects of the suit's power-up had worn off, and now he was trying to catch his breath. However, that wouldn't last.

"YyyyyyEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!" He jumped up and threw his arms in the air.

"SEAN!" The other Rangers called as they ran over to him. Their helmets had come off, and their faces overcome with pure joy. He, too, ran over to them, and the team reacted as if they had just won the World Series, getting into one big, energetic group hug, which Toji-san and Shingo also got into.
The emotional euphoria of the moment replaced the adrenaline-fueled euphoria that they had experienced earlier, but it still felt good. For Daisuke and Hitomi, it was an especially sweet reunion with Toji-san.

"TOJI-SAN!" Hitomi shouted as she hugged Toji-san along with Daisuke. "It feels so good to see you again!"

"Same with you, Hitomi," Toji-san replied. The Japanese siblings and their bodyguard were joined by the western Rangers as well. The moment had calmed down a little, but it still felt so good.

Suddenly, the thin blade of Sean's sword began to crack, and it bizarrely broke in two. "Oh, man!" He moaned. "My sword's broken!"

"Must be shoddy craftsmanship," said Daisuke. This was something Sean could agree with.

"Obviously," he said.

"Who cares?" Kevin asked. "WE WON!"

"¡VIVAMOS LOS RANGERS!"

"¡VIVAMOS!" Sean and Kevin shouted.

Little Shingo was confused, but still enjoying the moment. That's when Kevin picked the kid up and placed him on Sean's shoulder. Now Shingo enjoyed the moment and shouted in Spanish as best he could. "¡Vivamo!"

"I think you're going to have to try harder," Maria said.

"Come on," said Sean. "Let's head back to Godai-san's inn. Hikari's worried sick about us." With that, the Rangers headed back to the Grand Prix Cruiser and by extension, the inn.

Meanwhile, Phaedos teleported back into Rashon's throne room. Although he wasn't concerned too much (he was concerned, just not as much as he should be), the mood in the throne room was. The other generals and the other Zordonians had concerned look on their faces. Phaedos ignored them and concentrated on the Emperor. "My Emperor!" he said, bowing his head. "I'm sorry for my loss today. It will not happen next—" When he looked up at the emperor, he realized the gravity of the situation he was it.

The Emperor was glaring at him, his head resting on his hand. "You failed me on Cthulhu," he said. "You failed me on Utapau, you failed me on Lum, you failed me on Jurai, and now you fail me on Earth. Why should I give you 'next time'?"

"I-I-I'm sorry, my Emperor!" Phaedos quivered. "I'll get better! I'll crush the Rangers! Please, forgive me and give me another chance!" His voice was no longer the smug voice it had been. It was full of pure terror.

"No, Phaedos," Rashon replied. "There won't be a second time." He rose, and as he did this, he said, "You have failed me for the last time." His voice sounded calm, but Phaedos knew that belied something sinister.

"No, please, don't!" He begged. "DON'T KILL ME!" Phaedos's eyes glowed purple as he raised his arm. His body was glowing with dark energy that made Phaedos stand up and try to back away.
Suddenly, a bolt of black energy shot out of his hand and consumed Phaedos.

When the light faded, the other generals and Zordonians gasped in shock as they saw what had become of Phaedos: He was encased in ice, his look of terror frozen for eternity. "Let this be a lesson to all of you!" Rashon called out. "I may be patient, but I do not tolerate constant failure! Kalderon!"

"Yes, my Emperor?" Kalderon asked, bowing before Rashon.

"You must defeat the Rangers," said Rashon. "Can you do it?"

"Phaedos was a fool," said Kalderon. "I won't repeat those failures."

"You had better," said Rashon. "For your sake."

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End chapter
“TO VICTORY!” Three champagne flutes, a sake saucer and a glass of apple juice clinked together before the arms holding them retracted and downed the drinks.

"Victory champagne always tastes best!” Sean said as he slammed his flute on the table.

"How do we know it was victory though?" Daisuke asked as he put his sake saucer down.

"Are you kidding me?" Sean asked. "We sent them running with their tail between their legs! I doubt they're gonna treat us lightly now!"

"We showed them how we do it on Earth!" said Kevin. "Even Godai-san knew they weren't going to mess with us!"

A few hours earlier, the Rangers pulled up to Godai-san's inn in the Grand Prix Cruiser to the cheers of Godai-san and Hikari. It turns out as Sean, Kevin and Maria were leaving to save Daisuke and Hitomi, Hikari had found out they were the Power Rangers and let them go to do their duty. There was a big group hug and reunion, especially for Hitomi, Godai-san and Hikari. Little Shingo was brought out and greeted warmly by Hikari and promised some food and a nice bed. It made the kid feel better and more relaxed after the terror he felt earlier. And now the Rangers were celebrating their defeat of Phaedos (in their yukatas) and just enjoying themselves after a stressful week. Sean, Kevin and Maria were drinking champagne, Daisuke some sake, and Hitomi, since she was underage, some apple juice.

"That arrogant prick sure got what was coming to him!" Maria added, "Another good fight and a fantastic plan by Sean!"

"Plan?" Daisuke asked. "Actually, now that she says that, how did you get a hold of Toji-san?"

"Hitomi left her cell phone behind," said Sean. He handed Hitomi's phone over to her, leaving the girl embarrassed. "We had Godai-san read the kanji for us and we were able to get a hold of him. We were surprised to find out he lives in this area not too far from the inn."

"So your plan was to distract Phaedos and have Toji save the boy?" Daisuke asked. "I'm… actually impressed."

"I'm good and you know it," Sean said as he took a sip of his champagne. "And by the way, we found you because we were able to lock on to your morphers on GPS and followed them to your location."

"I suppose that I owe you all an apology for my behavior," Daisuke said in an apologetic tone.

"Obviously!" said Kevin. "You insulted us at the shrine, you refused to acknowledge ethnic issues in Japan, you acted like a jerk and you nearly got us all killed. It's not 'suppose' you owe us an apology, you do owe us an apology!"
"Then I am truly—" He got up and bowed before Sean, Kevin, Maria and Hitomi. "Sorry for my behavior. It was wrong and I realize this. I hope you all forgive me."

"I don't forgive you," said Sean. Daisuke looked at him with a shocked look on his face. In Japan, saying that an act is 'unforgivable' is pretty much the equivalent of throwing down the gauntlet in the West. But, Sean was not done. "However, because you mean what you say then I will accept your apology."

"Thank you," Daisuke said as he sat down.

"I still don't like you, you know," Sean said.

"I know that," Daisuke replied.

"Well, looks like you two are on the way to making up," said Maria. "Sort of."

"But Phaedos said you were 'broken'." Daisuke said. "What did he mean?"

Sean put down his champagne flute and gulped the liquid down. "We were emotionally broken," he said. "You already know we were beaten severely by Phaedos after you mutinied, so we don't have to go over that. But he crushed our spirits and we felt like we couldn't do anything. The fire was out and it wasn't coming back."

"Until someone gave us a pep talk," said Kevin.

"Who? Godai-san?" Hitomi asked.

"He tried," said Sean. "But someone else did." Daisuke and Hitomi looked at each other. Sean got up and walked over to a closet. "What I'm about to show you will change your perceptions of reality. Also, you must never talk about this. Am I clear?"

"Perfectly," said Daisuke. "Now what is it?"

"The Zordonians proved we're not alone in the universe," Sean said, grabbing the door. "But we're not alone period." He opened the closet and exposed a rock.

"A rock?" Daisuke asked. "That's it?"

"No," said Sean. "Tommy!" He said to the rock. Suddenly, the rock began to glow a blinding light filled the room. The Rangers shielded their eyes before the light faded. When they light was gone they looked to the area of the closet and what they saw made their jaws drop.

Standing in front of them was a man close to his 30s with Dark, spiky hair. He was dressed in green, and wearing glasses. The fact that he came out of nowhere was surprising itself, but when he spoke, everything changed. "Good evening," he said.

"Who are you?" Hitomi asked.

"My name is Dr. Tommy Oliver," the mystery man said. "And I am a Power Ranger."

Daisuke and Hitomi looked on in shock. "A Power Ranger?" Daisuke asked, still trying to wrap his head around the situation. "You're a Power Ranger? But Power Rangers didn't exist in this world until we came along!"

"Exactly," Tommy said. "In this world."
"So, you mean…"

"Correct," Tommy said. "There are countless alternate universes out there. The one I come from has multiple Power Ranger teams across hundreds of years. I was one of the first on my Earth."

"Okay, my head hurts," said Daisuke. "So, you gave these Rangers a pep talk."

"Pretty much, yeah," said Tommy. "I actually met Sean a few weeks ago after you fought the scorpion monster." That's Episode 9, for those of you who don't remember. "I've been monitoring your situation for some time now. I became concerned after Phaedos beat Sean, Kevin and Maria, so I contacted them through the stone, or should I say, the Morphing Grid."

"MORPHING GRID?" Hitomi and Daisuke shouted in unison.

"It's how you're able to morph," said Tommy. "All Power Rangers are connected to it and it gives you your powers. It also allows us to look at other Ranger teams and see across the multiverse to see other Ranger teams."

"So you encouraged them?" Daisuke asked.

"Yeah," Tommy replied. "I even told them the phrase you used earlier."

"Power Rangers don't quit," Sean said. "Neither do they surrender and most importantly, they don't lose. Because if we do, then we all die." Guys, we're better than the best of the best. We're Earth's first, last, and only line of defense against the Zordonians. This is what we were trained for. This is our destiny. I say we not only embrace it, we have hot, sweaty sex with it." The other Rangers—Tomy included—at first snickered, but broke out laughing.

"That's an… interesting analogy," said Kevin.

"But it's still an important one," said Tommy. "You have to embrace this. It won't be easy, but the world needs you. You have to defeat the Zordonians. It may take a while, but the job has to be done."

"You can count on us Tommy," said Sean. Tommy nodded and the rock began to glow again until he disappeared, heading back to his own universe. "Alright, let's PARTY!"

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A while later, Sean relaxed in the hot springs. The adrenaline that flowed through his system earlier in the day had gotten him jazzed up and a bath in the hot water was what he needed to relax. It was a nice June night, close to around 10:00, since it was fully dark out, except for the lights illuminating the spring. His bandages had to be taken off so they wouldn't get wet. He would have to have them re-applied by Hikari once he got out. The water also helped dull the pain he was still feeling. After some examinations by Hikari, she diagnosed that his rib wasn't in danger of puncturing his lung and he simply aggravated the rib.

"Mind if I join you?" A voice jolted him out of his thoughts. Just like a few days earlier, Maria had walked in.

"Oh great, did I get into the mixed spring again?" He asked.

"Yep," she replied. "Do you mind if I…" she pointed to her towel. Sean shook his head but averted his eyes as he heard her take the towel off and step in the water. "You can look now," she said. He looked and immediately blushed when he noticed she was sitting right next to him.
"How did you get into that stuff, anyway?" Sean asked.

"During my time in Brazil my friends would take me to some beaches and resorts," she said. "I was reluctant at first, but I found I actually liked it."

"Oh right," he said. "I forgot you've lived in Brazil for three years. Did you bring beer this time?"

"Brought two," she said, handing a bottle to him. "So how long have you been in here for?"

"Three minutes before you showed up," he replied. He twisted the cap off of the beer bottle and took a sip. "I'm going to miss this country once we leave," he said. "I can't speak or read Japanese, but I feel like I've come to like it."

"Yeah," said Maria. "The people here are fantastic, Daisuke aside. His type is probably a minority."

"A pretty vocal one though," said Sean.

"Do you think the Zordonians will come after us in the new place?" Maria asked.

"They'll probably have to regroup but I can guess they're going to try and hit us again," he replied.

"Do you think our new home will love us?" She asked.

"Hopefully," he replied. "I can't make assumptions or guarantees about that."

"I suppose you're right," she said. "I never asked, were the Steel actually successful?"

He chuckled for a second. "We won the Clark Cup in 2009, which is the USHL's championship. I had to leave after that season because I was going to turn 21 in a few months so I signed with a semi-pro team in Chicago. I didn't sign with any NHL teams because my dad wants me to finish college. But with this situation we're in, I'm not sure what's going to happen. I just want to get into the NHL!"

"But you don't look like a hockey player," she said. "Aren't they supposed to be big?"

"You should see Patrick Kane," said Sean. "He's about as big as I am."

"You sounded stressed about being in the NHL," she said.

"I want to play pro hockey," he said. "It's been my dream. I mean, I'm embracing being a Power Ranger but…"

"You had dreams before becoming one." He nodded his head. He then took a sip of his beer and reclined on the rocks, looking at the stars above. "Then I guess winning this war would be a good incentive for you to get back to pursuing your dream."

At first he was confused, but then he began laughing. "I guess so!" He said. "Let's beat those guys so we can pursue our dreams." He held up his bottle as a toast. She clinked the bottle as well.

"To dreams," she said. "I guess my dream is to go back home."

"Must suck being in your position," said Sean.

"It does," she replied. "Kiss me."

"PSSSSHHTTTTTTTT! WHAT!" The randomness of that request or demand so flustered him that he not
only spat his drink out he almost spilled the beer. His face was red as a cherry.

"I said 'kiss me'," she said again. He figured it must have been the alcohol they'd been drinking all night because she hadn't asked for that before. "Just do it!"

"A little demanding, aren't we?" He said.

"Okay then," she replied. "Can you please kiss me?" Not that it helped much, anyway. Sean was still pretty flustered.

"Hoo boy," he said, trying to get out of kissing her.

"It won't hurt," she said. "I just want to see how good you are… you have kissed someone, haven't you?"

"… No."

Maria instantly burst our laughing. "And some say men are not virgins! HA!"

"Except for you!"

"That one didn't count!"

"So…" Sean desperately searched for a way to change the subject. He found it with the events of earlier in the evening. "Hitomi and Rich Boy certainly looked surprised when they saw Tommy."

"They would be, too," she replied. "So was I when he first appeared to us. 'Get your ass in gear! You're Power Rangers, not Marines!' Classic. Anyway, about that kiss."

"There's no way you're going to forget about that, is there?" Sean asked.

"Nope," she replied.

Sean mentally decided to do it. Might as well get it over with. He took a deep breath, closed his eyes and leaned in. Maria also closed her eyes and leaned in as well and the two met somewhere in the middle.

Surprisingly, it felt nice and Sean was able to relax a little bit. Despite her athletic build and muscles, she still had soft lips, which were kind of surprising. He never really got an idea of that last time. They deepened the kiss, slipping their tongues in their mouth and it seemed to be getting more heated.

"UGH!" Until they broke up. "Your breath smells like alcohol!" Sean said, quickly breaking away.

"So does yours!" Maria replied.

"Oy vey, the heat's starting to get to me," he said, rising out of the water. "Let's get out of here."

"I'm with you," she replied, grabbing her towel and wrapping it around herself. "Oh, by the way, let's not tell anyone about that kiss."

"Gladly."

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"So how's Shingo doing?" Kevin asked. He, Sean, Hitomi and Maria were watching TV after the
American and Venezuelan got out of the hot spring. Daisuke was meditating off somewhere.

"Hikari put him to bed," said Sean. "She called his mom earlier and told her he was safe. And I think he likes it here."

"Yeah, Hikari's been spoiling him," said Maria. "I hope he doesn't start thinking she's his mama."

"Probably not," said Hitomi. "He sounded really happy to talk to his mom."

"That's good," said Kevin. "The kid's been through a lot these past few days. He needs some spoiling."

"Just wait till he's older," said Sean. "Then the therapy bills will start coming."

"Sean, that's not nice," said Maria.

"Fine then," he said. "He'll probably be fine."

They stayed for two more days. The Rangers finally got the chance to (at least partially) climb Mt. Fuji, getting pretty high up the mountain before coming back down. Little Shingo seemed fine, despite the traumatic experience of the earlier kidnapping. The trip culminated with a great dinner that Hikari cooked up the night before the Rangers and Shingo would head back to Tokyo. It was probably the best dinner they had their entire time in Japan (for Sean, Kevin and Maria, that is).

The next day, they packed up the Grand Prix Cruiser to leave for Tokyo. It was difficult, but they managed to find a way to get Shingo into the Hummer. Godai-san, Hikari and Toji-san would stay at the inn. Toji-san would leave for Kyoto a while later. It was a heartfelt good-bye for Hitomi.

"Good bye Godai-san," she said as she gave the man a big hug.

"Good-bye Hitomi-chan," he replied back. The two broke off their hug and Sean came over and shook his hand.

"Thanks for letting us stay here," he said. "It's a fantastic place, I want to come back sometime."

"You're welcome to anytime," Godai-san said with his infectious smile. Naturally it spread to Sean. Kevin, too walked up and shook Godai-san's hand, as did Maria.

"Muchas gracias, señor," she said. Godai-san was at first confused until Sean whispered in his ear what it meant. Then he had a good idea what she said.

"You're welcome," he replied.

"Now then," Hikari said to Shingo. "You and your mommy can come over any time you want. Do you like that?"

Shingo enthusiastically nodded his head. "Yeah!"

"Okay then," Hikari said. "Go on now, you need to get home to your mommy."

"Okay. Thanks Mrs. Godai!" He said as he ran away.

"What do you think they were saying?" Sean asked as he got into the drivers' seat.
"They were just saying good bye," said Daisuke.

"Oh, okay," said Sean. "All right, see you later!" He called out to Hikari and Godai-san.

"Take care!" Hikari called out. Sean started the engine while everyone else bade her and Godai-san goodbye. Sean then drove out of the parking lot and bound for Tokyo.

Returning to the metropolis that is Tokyo after spending over a week in the Japanese countryside was a bit of a shock. Granted, it was a pretty hectic week, but it was still relocating from the country to the city. Hell, it was hard for them just to find their townhouse, but little Shingo was able to help, since his house was right next to theirs.

That was their first stop. Sean led Shingo up to the door and let Shingo ring the bell. Then his mother opened the door. Her face looked shocked at first, but then she began to cry; not tears of sadness, but tears of pure joy and relief that her son was alive. Instantly, she grabbed Shingo and gave him the biggest hug imaginable. Sean could not help but smile as the two reunited.

"Thank you," she said in English. "I was so worried about him, I'm glad he's okay."

"Don't mention it," Sean replied. "It's my job to be the hero."

"If there's anyway I can repay you," she said. "Just tell me."

"There's nothing you need to do," Sean replied. "It's fine. Hey, can you give me a high five?" He asked to Shingo. The boy gave him the high-five and Sean ruffled his hair before walking back to the townhouse.

But just before walking in, he noticed a white envelope in the mailbox. As he walked in the townhouse, he opened the envelope and took a look.

"Teeennn… HUT!" The base staff instantly stood at attention, the Rangers included. Col. Greene walked in the room, his head held high. "PRESENT ARMS!" The base staff saluted the Colonel as he walked in, which the Colonel returned. He walked up to the Rangers and saluted back to Sean.

"At ease," he said. The base staff shifted their stance to a more relaxed stance. He stayed silent for a few moments before speaking. "I just want to say how proud I am of all of you. You fought with heart, with intensity, and most importantly, as a team. You showed our enemy what Earth is made of and now they know they're in for a much tougher fight than they anticipated.

However, your mission is not done. They will come after you. They now recognize you for the threat you are and will come after you with everything they have. But, I have confidence that you can meet them like you did this past month."

"Thank you sir," Sean replied.

"By the way, how are you feeling?" Col. Greene pointed at the bandages on Sean, Kevin and Maria's arms and faces.

"Not too bad," Sean replied. "Rib still hurts, though."

"I see," said Col. Greene. "Well, like I said, job well done. Tokyo is safe thanks to you and will be
safe."


"What is it?" Col. Greene asked.

"We don't intend to stay in Tokyo any longer." Col. Greene looked shocked at Sean. Sean, meanwhile, stayed firm.

"You're leaving?" Col. Greene asked. "When were you going to tell me?"

"Just now," he replied. Col. Greene let out a breath.

"All right then," said Col. Greene. "Where are you going?"

"Orlando, Florida," said Sean.

"And how did you decide on that?" asked Col. Greene.

"Remember when you came in on Maria displaying her knife-throwing skills?" Col. Greene nodded. "We were actually deciding where to go. We had a map up on a board and had Maria throw a knife at the map to decide where we're going. The knife hit Orlando."

"And I can't convince you to stay," he said without asking. It was as if he knew the answer.

"Yep," said Sean. "Kevin, Maria, Rich Boy and Hitomi have already gotten their visas."

"I see," said Col. Greene. "What else?"

"We want partial separation from the UN," said Sean. "But I guess that's probably not going to happen."

"No," said Col. Greene. "Well, I must say that I won't be staying either. I have to return to Washington to report back to my superiors."

"Gothca," said Sean.

"Do you have anything to say to the other Rangers?" Col. Greene asked.

"I do have something to say to Rich Boy," said Sean. He turned around and faced Daisuke, his face not waivered. "Rich Boy, you're an asshole."

"I was expecting that," Daisuke said.

"Okay," said Sean.

"But I won't be a Ranger anymore."

"WHAT?" Sean turned around and looked shocked at Daisuke.

"Brother, what are you saying?" Hitomi asked, grabbing Daisuke's sleeve.

"I said I'm not continuing as Green Ranger," he said.

"But you're one of our best fighters!" said Sean. "I must admit, you're a hell of our fighter, and this came right the fuck out of nowhere!"
"My behavior this past week has told me that I have failed as a Ranger," he said. "I put myself ahead of the team, and I was only thinking about my own status instead of focusing on the real threat. As a Ranger, I'm a failure. I have to give up my position." The other Rangers were silent and completely shocked. This was not something they were expecting.

Col. Greene, however, simply nodded his head. "Very well. You made an honorable decision. It's not popular, but what's done is done. We'll find a replacement for you as soon as possible."

"Thank you," Daisuke said as he bowed to Col. Greene. Then, he removed his AcceleMorpher and handed it to Col. Greene, as well as the AcceleKey. Col. Greene accepted the two and Daisuke saluted him.

"There's still one more thing," said Sean. "You said you were promised the Red Ranger position. Why am I Red Ranger?"

"Because I had no idea about the deal between the Miyazawas and Project Ranger," said Col. Greene. This earned a quick look from the other Rangers. "I've only been military commander for a short time. The Miyazawa-Project Ranger deal happened before I got here and thus I had no idea about the deal and no one bothered to tell me. So when Miyazawa told me he was promised a position in leadership, I just played along."

"I see," said Daisuke. "So this was your decision?"

"From the first time I saw O' Callahan fight," said Col. Greene. "Watching some of his hockey games was also a factor," Daisuke sighed in exasperation while Sean had a smug look on his face. "O' Callahan came across as a natural leader and I felt that he would be a great choice for Red Ranger, and by extension, leader of the team. It seems I was right."

"So Sean's staying Red Ranger?" Maria asked.

"The morphers have bonded to your DNA," he said. "There's no going back, unless you give the powers up like Miyazawa."

"Okay," said Kevin.

"Well," said Col. Greene. "I guess I must say good luck to all of you in Orlando. I assume Miyazawa's going too?"

"My family wants to make a deal with the Disney Company," said Daisuke. "I might as well get into the family business."

"Okay then," said Col. Greene. "Anything else?"

"Yeah," said Sean. "My sword broke and I need a new one."

"Very well," said Col. Greene. "Any ideas as to the design?"

"I have a pretty good idea," Sean said with a grin on his face.

"Very well then," said Col. Greene. "I suppose I'll also have your other weapons redesigned. Any other questions?" None of the Rangers replied, so he left it there. "Then I wish all of you the best of luck. Dismissed!" He walked out was the base staff saluted.
"Should we take Mei?" Hitomi asked. The Rangers were packing their things up to leave for Orlando. Most of the stuff in the houses was packed into boxes and ready to be shipped to Florida. The UN would handle the shipping under the guise of the US Postal Service. Other than that, the Rangers would take their stuff themselves. Hitomi was referring to Mei, the robot the UN had given them.

"Probably not," said Kevin. "It's pretty much a giveaway—"

"Of what?" Maria asked. "I say we bring her."

"Well, my sister and her husband live in Orlando," said Sean. "They'll probably help us out."

"There is that," said Kevin. "So we won't need the robot."

"The Haro is coming with us," said Hitomi, much to Sean's displeasure.

"That thing may have helped us find you but I still don't like it," he said. "We shoul—what the?"

The room was suddenly engulfed in a bright light that blinded them for a moment. When the light faded they looked to see what just happened. And what they saw was not something they wanted to see.

"RASHON!" The Zordonian Emperor himself was standing in their living room, staring them down. His white cape fluttered slightly, as there was a breeze. He stared down the Rangers, and they stared him down too.

"I have to congratulate you Terrans," he said. "You defeated one of my generals."

"Save it!" Sean shouted. "I'm going to kick your ass!" Sean launched himself at Rashon, ready to give him a nasty punch. Unfortunately, he was unmorphed and headed right for Rashon. Rashon just held out his hand and using some telekinesis or something like that forced Sean back like he was nothing. Sean crashed among his teammates. He was dazed as they helped him up.

"I thought you were smart," he said. "Anyway, I must congratulate all of you for—where's the Green Ranger?" Daisuke had already moved out, which is why the other four Rangers were packing up.

"He left the team," said Maria. "But that's not the point, what the hell are you doing in our house and why didn't you attack us earlier?"

"That is none of your concern!" Rashon shot back. "As for why we didn't attack you, Zordonian rules of engagement forbid us from attacking a foe in their own home."

"Well, he's honorable you got to give him that," said Kevin. "So what do you want?"

"I want to congratulate you on defeating Phaedos," he said.

"Defeated?" Sean asked. "He's not coming back?"

"No," said Rashon. "He's a little cold right now." Hitomi, who watches Sailor Moon, knew what Rashon was talking about.

"Just like Jadeite," she said under her breath.

"So now what?" Sean asked. The other Rangers helped him up and he held onto his right side, where his injured rib was.
"Now you'll have to face one of our other generals," said Rashon. "There are four of our generals, three more to defeat."

"In order?" Sean asked in dismay. "Why can't we just kill you right now and get it over with?"

"Because if you try that I'll kill you before you even transform," he replied. Kevin gulped in fear.

"Fair enough," said Sean. "We'll kill them just like we sorta killed Phaedos."

"We shall see," said Rashon. "I'd like to—" Suddenly, he paused and he took a look at the boxes the Rangers had packed already. "What's going on here?"

"We're cleaning up," Sean lied. "This place is a mess; we need to straighten it up."

"No you're not!" Rashon replied, seeing right through his ruse. "You're moving! Where are you going?"

"Like we're going to tell you!" Kevin said.

"You're going to have to find us," said Sean. "Are you up for a wild goose chase? There are 6 billion humans on this planet. Good luck."

"We shall see," Rashon said as he teleported out. Again, the Rangers were blinded by the light before it faded. The festive mood of the Rangers had dimmed slightly. Three more generals; this ought to be fun.

"Sean?" Maria asked. He turned around and looked at them.

"We're in for a tough fight," he said. "But I think we can take them. Want to know why?" They stayed silent, allowing Sean to finish.

"We're Power Rangers."

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End chapter, end of Part 1.

Chapter End Notes

And Part 1 is finally over! I first published this on FF.net in 2009, re-posted it in 2010 and I've been working on the GPX universe ever since. And to be honest, I don't regret it. I've had fun doing this, and there's more to come in Part 2. In Part 2, the Rangers face Kalderon, the second Zordonian General (based on Nephrite of Sailor Moon), gain a new Ranger and find a new ally… or something like that.

As for the name GPX, here's what it stands for: Grand PriX. It comes from anime series like IGPX (Immortal Grand Prix) and Future GPX Cyber Formula (Future Grand Prix Cyber Formula). But, the name Grand Prix Megazord should have given that away.

As for the Morphing Grid, since it's my story I decided to expand the powers of the Morphing Grid, allowing Rangers across the multiverse to talk to each other and even teleport to other universes. If you don't like that, then too bad, it's my story.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!