Summary

Basically the first and second movie with Sam as Samantha Gender swap. Added some extra parts as well.
Chapter 1

Transformers redone:

Sam is Samantha. Starts out she is 17, first part of her junior year when she gets Bumblebee. Mikaela Banes is her friend. They have been friends for some time, though run in different social circles.

William Lennox is not married in this story.
Will go through first and second movie and a little beyond.

Samantha Witwicky sighed tiredly as she finished the final paragraph of her genealogy report. Why Mr. Hosney chose to make them complete such a detailed project this early in the school year she would never know, but as a Witwicky she refused to back down from a challenge. Then again as reports go this one was pretty basic. Choose a relative, research and write up a fifteen to twenty page paper on them and their accomplishments which would need to be posted to the class website and prepare a presentation for the class.

Much to her parents chagrin she had chosen her great-great grandfather Captain Archibald Witwicky, probably the most fascinating member of their clan. Sure he apparently went insane and ended up in an asylum, but before that he had done what many people in his time period couldn’t even contemplate. He explored the Arctic Circle.

So using that as a focal point for her paper she dug through the attic, pulled out his old maps and a diary along with his personal glasses, though why he kept a pair of broken glasses she would never know. Regardless they added a certain historical affect to her paper and the presentation she planned. Sam had no doubt that she would earn an A on this project which is exactly what she needed to uphold her deal with her dad.

Ron Witwicky had set forth a fairly reasonable deal. If she got A’s on 3 major projects and/or tests and earned $2000 on her own he would put forth the other $2000 to buy her a car. Granted $4000 wasn’t a lot for a car, but it would get her a decent used vehicle and she had no doubt she could get her friend Mikaela to help her fix it up if needed.

To date she had earned a little over $2000 from baby-sitting and other odd jobs she had performed around the neighborhood. Seriously, who knew that lawn work could prove so lucrative? The grades were a bit harder as the school year was only in the first nine weeks. Most teachers didn’t have them do projects or tests until the second quarter at least. Thankfully, or not depending on how one looked at it, this year the teachers decided to jump right in. She had already had a major test in science, which she aced, and a large project for her English class, which again she aced. Now she just needed to score high on this project and she would be driving her very own set of wheels in no time.

Proofreading the paper one last time, and checking that all of the photos uploaded properly she connected to the school web site and downloaded her project to Mr. Hosney’s class site. Then she printed a copy for herself and placed it with the items she planned to take into class with her for her presentation. Checking the bedside clock she sighed. Sam had worked through the entire afternoon again thus missing out on the joys of the ‘weekend’.

Chuckling to herself she muttered the old Witwicky motto. “No sacrifice. No victory.”
“SAMMY! You’re gonna be late if you don’t get moving!” Judy Witwicky’s voice echoed up the stairs causing Sam to move a bit faster.

“I’m coming!” Moving around she stuffed what she needed in her backpack, cursing the fact that her alarm chose to not work that morning. Hopping around as she tried to put her shoes on and barely missed stepping on Mojo as the small Chihuahua sat watching her. Huffing in annoyance she grabbed her bag and stumbled into the hall and down the stairs. In the kitchen she found her parents in their usual routine with her mother cooking breakfast watching the small TV and her father reading the paper.

“This is just awful.” Judy commented as she continued to watch the news. “Did you hear this Ron? Those poor soldiers.”

Sam paused to listen catching the last few words from Defense Secretary Keller. “We are dealing with a highly effective weapons system, one we have not come across before. But our thoughts and prayers are with those men who…”

“Judy you shouldn’t watch stuff like that you know how it upsets you.” Ron interrupted the broadcast breaking Sam’s attention.

“Of course it upsets me! This is important! What if we have another terrorist attack coming? What will you do then huh mister?”

Deciding to cut in before her parents could get into another one of their infamous ‘arguments’ she turned to her father. “So dad, can we go car shopping today?”

Ron turned to his daughter eyebrow cocked. “That confident are we?”

“I have $2000 and two A’s, and I know I’ll get an A on the genealogy project. I worked very hard on it and I turned it in early.” Sam argued. “Besides I’m a Witwicky, of course I’ll get an A.”

Ron chuckled pleased with that statement. “I see, alright I’ll pick you up after school and we can check some places out.”

“Thanks dad.”

“Honey, are you sure you want to wear that to school?” Turning to her mother Sam frowned. Looking down at her t-shirt and jeans she pouted.

“What’s wrong with how I look?”

“It’s just so frumpy. You’re a cute girl; you should wear things to show off your hot body.” Judy wiggled a bit in emphasis. “You’re only young once Sammy, flaunt it while you got it!”

“Hey, hey, hey! There will be no flaunting!” Ron stated resolutely. “She’s fine the way she is!”

“Oh Ron you’re such a party pooper! How’s our baby supposed to catch a guy if she doesn’t show what she’s got?”

“I’m not listening, I’m not listening.” Ron covered his ears trying to block such images out.

“Yeah…on that note, I’m going to school.” Chuckling Sam grabbed her lunch and kissed both of her
parents goodbye before making a break for it.

Thankfully the school was only a twenty-minute walk from her house so she managed to get there before the first bell. On the way to her locker she heard a voice calling out to her causing her to pause. Turning around she found her friend Mikaela Banes making her way over.

Sam sighed mentally as she took in the overly short skirt and skintight tank top that did nothing to hide the other girl’s form. Not that Sam blamed her, Mikaela had a great body, one every girl was generally jealous of, including Sam. Where Mikaela had bright blue eyes, long black hair, a perfectly slim and curvy body, Sam had dark brown eyes plain brown hair and a rather average form that one could classify as lean and athletic in comparison. Though they were about the same height Mikaela took the prize on bust size. Sometimes it amazed Sam that they were friends, though not terribly close by any stretch of the imagination, but friends all the same.

“Hey Sam! Thanks for your help with my trig homework Friday.”

“No problem Mik. How was your weekend?” The two exchanged pleasantries for a time before the bell rang and they had to split up.

It seemed to be a universal constant that when one wanted time to go fast it inevitably slowed down to a near crawl. By the time History class rolled around Sam was ready to pull her hair out. Thankfully she managed to get through that final block and give her presentation to the class. Personally she thought it went very well, and Mr. Hosney apparently felt the same way considering he gave her an A. Extremely pleased she practically ran out of the classroom and to her locker to get what she needed to leave.

“Hey what’s the hurry?” Turning her head she found Mikaela watching her in amusement.

“I just completed my end of the bargain I have with my dad, so he’s going to take me car shopping today.” It took a lot to keep from jumping up and down in excitement. “Hey, since it’s going to be a used car can I get you to check it out for me? I mean you’re a guru with cars and I’m pretty much not.”

“Yeah, that’d be cool.” Mikaela’s eyes brightened at the prospect, happy that her friend trusted her knowledge in such things. “Just let me know when.”

“Cool! Gotta go or Dad might decide to renege on our deal!” Waving goodbye to the other girl she moved swiftly out of the school dodging other teens that lingered in the halls.

Much to her relief her father sat waiting in his little green convertible. Throwing her books in the back she handed him the confirmation of her grade before sliding into the passenger seat.

“Oh, I guess we’re getting you a car.” The declaration brought a cheer from Sam as they headed down the road. They had stopped at a few places yet couldn’t find a vehicle either of them liked in the price range they wanted. At one point Ron pulled into a Porsche dealership just to tease her earning a light smack to the arm for his trouble.

Their final stop for the day was Bolivia’s Car Lot, a rather run down looking place with the usual balloons and flags that such dealerships employed to catch peoples attention. At the rather pathetic looking man in a clown suite Sam raised a brow ready to question her father’s sanity for choosing such a place but she let it go and got out of the vehicle. Following her father over to a small grouping of vehicles she looked them over with a critical eye.

“Here’s a good one.” Ron smiled as he took in the look on Sam’s face.
“I don’t know dad…it doesn’t look…”

“It’s your first car; it doesn’t need to look pretty.”

“I was going to say safe.”

“Oh.” Ron paused to consider the car again, noting the rusty parts and slightly worn down tires. “Ok I’ll give you that…”

“Welcome to Bolivia’s.” They turned to find a tall black man with a colorful shirt walking towards them, his ‘sales’ smile at 100 watts. “Like the country only without the runs.” His chuckles died off as the joke fell flat. He looked to say more when his eye caught something and he turned to yell at another man sitting in the shade of the building. “Hey Manny!”

“What?”

“Get your cousin outta that clown costume. Havin’ that heat stroke again. Scarin’ the white folks.”

Sam exchanged a look with her father, both questioning the sanity of these people. In the background they could hear the clown remarking that his makeup was melting. The owner smiled winningly at them again. “I am Bobby B.. How may I help you this fine day?”

“My daughter’s looking to buy her first car.” Ron motioned towards Sam.

“So you came to see me?” The man pointed at himself importantly.

“Kinda had to.”

“That practically makes us family. Uncle Bobby B, baby, Uncle Bobby B.” He shook her hand vigorously. “Now as you are looking for your first vehicle let Uncle Bobby B give you some advice. A driver don’t pick the car. Mmm-mm. Cars pick the driver. It’s a mystical bond between man and machine…or in this case woman and machine.” He waited for them to nod in understanding before starting to lead them to another part of the car lot.

As she moved to follow Bobby B and her father one of the cars caught her eye. She paused in confusion, sure that the vehicle had not been there prior. Shaking it off she stepped towards it, taking in the faded yellow paint and black racing stripes up the center of the hood. There were dents and dings and a few rust spots spread along the body, but otherwise it looked rather sturdy. Peering inside via the rolled down window she noted the tan leather interior, somewhat worn but still adequate. A small air freshener in the shape of a bumblebee with the word ‘bee-otch’ written on it had her chuckling.

“What year is this one?” Her father’s voice startled her, as it was closer than before. She looked up noting that Bobby looked slightly confused but played it off well.

“Oh uh…I think it’s a 75 or 76. Manny! What year is this car?”

Sam ignored them and opened the door sliding easily into the driver seat, surprised at how comfortable it felt. Looking around she noted a basic radio and heating/cooling system on the car. Raising her hands to the steering wheel she let them run along the edge testing the feel of it. A slight glimmer on the wheel had her running her thumb along the center of it to wipe away the grime. It revealed a symbol she had not seen before which looked kind of like a face.

“I’ll let you have it for $5000.” Bobby’s voice caught her attention once more.
“No, no.” Ron argued back. “I’m not going over $4000.”

“And the door just closed.” Bobby stated dryly before leaning down through the passenger window. “Get out of the car.”

“Wait a minute.” Sam looked at him incredulously. “I thought you said, ‘the car chooses the driver’.” She moved when he started to shoo her from the vehicle.

“Yeah well sometimes they pick a driver with a cheap ass father.” He informed her curtly before turning to the Volkswagen beetle sitting next to the Camaro. “Now this car over here…”

Sam sighed at the obvious change in the conversation and closed the driver’s door of the Camaro. This in turn had the passenger side door of the Camaro opening and smacking against the driver door of the Volkswagen. The three of them stared silently for a moment before Bobby closed the door cautiously.

“See door closed. Now this car…”

Suddenly the radio in the Camaro blasted a shrill noise blowing out the windshields of just about every car in the lot around them. Sam slowly lowered her arms, eyes wide in disbelief as she looked to her father then Bobby. The latter stared in horror at the damage surrounding them as if unable to comprehend the incident.

He swallowed hard before holding one hand up showing four fingers, his voice cracking. “$4000!”
Ron chuckled as he watched his daughter pull out the car washing supplies later that afternoon. She had pulled into the driveway and immediately announced her intentions running upstairs to change into a bathing suit and shorts. Judy had greeted them at the door not too surprised to see how chipper her child was upon her return.

“Are you sure that’s a safe car.” Judy asked him for the tenth time after their return. “It just doesn’t look safe.”

“It’s fine Judy. It’s a 76, they built cars much sturdier back then.”

“But it looks so…grody.”

“It’s supposed to look that way. It’s her first car.” He advised as he turned back to his yard, working on finishing up the rest of his path. Judy rolled her eyes at him muttering under her breath about cheap skates.

Sam busied herself washing her new car, taking care to make sure she got all the grime and dirt off, even in the nooks and crannies. Once done with the outside she vacuumed the interior and used special leather cleaner for the seats and the consol.

Running a rag along the steering wheel one last time she grinned happily. “There. You may not be the brightest bell at the ball, but you’ll definitely turn heads. Now all that’s left is for my friend Mikaela to check you out mechanically and we’re good to go. Don’t worry she’s the best mechanic I know so you’ll be in good hands.”

Patting the wheel one last time she got out and cleaned up, placing the supplies back in the garage. With one last look at her new ‘baby’ she grinned happily and skipped up the steps into the house to shower and finish her homework.

Bumblebee nearly purred when his charge started washing his exterior. She used strong sure strokes and a cloth designed for removing even the toughest of dirt without scratching the paint. He hadn’t had a bath like that in eons. Oh yes, he was so glad Optimus had chosen him for this mission. By Primus she even vacuumed and cleaned his interior, the leather of his seats felt almost like new. He definitely liked this human.

For a time he was afraid he would never find her, but thankfully he caught a hit off the World Wide Web from the site her local school used. The photo of the glasses confirmed her identity. Luckily no Decepticons had locked onto her position first or there would be more trouble.

Now he needed to contact Optimus and the others to let them know he had found her and the glasses. Then he would need to continue protecting her and find a way to get her to give them the glasses. This would prove the most difficult of his tasks. From the information then had hacked during their research it showed that most humans would have an adverse reaction to alien life forms.

He waited until well after midnight before easing out of the driveway and heading off to a secure location to send his transmission.

The sound of a familiar engine revving had Sam sitting straight up in bed. Blinking at the clock she saw it was sometime after midnight. Cursing under her breath she slid out from under her warm covers and peeked out her window trying to find out the source of the noise. The scene of her vehicle slowly pulling from the driveway into the street and then leaving did not sit well with her.
“Son of a…” Yanking on her tennis shoes and grabbing her jacket she ran from the house and down towards the garage hopping on her old bike and taking off after the perpetrator. “Hey! That’s my car!” For a moment she considered calling the police then shook it off. She would follow the thieves and check out the situation. If she couldn’t get it back on her own she would get all the information she could on them and then call the police.

Somehow she managed to keep her vehicle in sight as she pumped her legs to get the bike moving. When the car finally pulls to a stop outside the old quarry Sam maneuvered herself behind the old rail cars, keeping low to not attract attention. Pulling out her cell phone she dialed Mikaela.

“…ring…ring…ring…rin…Hello?”

“Mik! It’s Sam! Someone stole my car!”

“Sam?” The sleep filled voice on the other end didn’t appear to follow the conversation.

“Someone stole my car! I followed them. We’re out at the old quarry past Montgomery Street.” Sam whispered hastily into the phone.

“Someone stole your car and you followed them?” The disbelief coloring her friend’s voice irked the other girl.

“I just got it!”

“That’s the stupidest…”

Sam didn’t hear the rest of Mikaela’s rant as her eyes followed the large form her car just turned into. It stood a good twenty-two to twenty-five feet in the air. One large limb lifted into the air shooting out a blue beam.

“Oh my god…”

“Sam? Sam!”

“Mik…my car…it just turned into a robot thingy…and stood up.” Sam stuttered into the phone. “My car’s a…robot thingy…”

A long sigh filled the other end. “Sam, are you drunk? It’s ok if you are, I’ll come and get you…’’

“No I’m not drunk!” She hissed into the phone. “I’m telling the truth. My car just turned into a robot!”

“Sam…go home and go to bed. You obviously need sleep. Call me tomorrow when you feel better…click…”

Sam stared in disbelief at her phone. “She hung up on me!” Huffing she turned back to the creature that was her car only to find it gone. Blinking she looked again but nothing presented itself. “Maybe I am hallucinating…” Pulling herself up she got back on her bike and made the long trek home wondering what had happened. Not once did she see the yellow Camaro slowly trailing her.
The next morning Sam stumbled down into the kitchen, grateful that it was Saturday and she didn’t have to go to school or function properly for that matter. As usual her mother was putting around the kitchen while her father drank his coffee and read the paper. Mumbling out a greeting that may or may not constitute a ‘good morning’ she plopped into her chair trying to work up the energy to get something to eat.

“Well good morning to you miss sleepy head.” Ron grinned over at her. “Did someone stay up too late reading again?”

Before she could even process a response her mother placed a plate of toast in front of her and a glass of water. “Hey Sammy, why don’t you run some errands for me today? It’ll give you a chance to drive your new car.” Judy urged her excitedly, knowing how much fun it was to drive a new vehicle.

“How can I when it got stolen last night?” She groaned dejectedly.

“Stolen?” Ron sat up alert. “What do you mean stolen?”

“I heard the engine rev last night and saw it pull out of the driveway. I tried to chase them but…I lost them.” She finished lamely still wondering if she even believed what she saw last night.

“But honey.” Judy frowned at her in confusion. “Your car’s in the driveway. See.” She pointed out the window and sure enough the Camaro sat right where she left it last night.

“But…I could have sworn…”

“Ah I know what this is. You’re worried about your first big responsibility.” Ron nodded assured in his answer. “I was the same way. I used to dream I crashed my car in the most stupid ways and had to tell my old man. Then I’d wake up and find out everything was just my imagination. But you don’t have to worry Sammy-girl; nothing bad is going to happen to the car. And if something does happen, we’ve got insurance.”

“I…uh guess.”

“So those errands?” Her mother smiled brightly.

“Huh? Oh yeah, sure.”

Not twenty minutes later she stood in front of her car, still unsure about the whole business of the night before. Shifting from foot to foot she tried to decide the next course of action.

“Well are you going or not?”

Turning to her mother, who carried several plants for her garden Sam nodded. “Uh yeah…but I think I’ll walk. Yeah walking’s good. Gives you lots of exercise.” She explained as she inched past the car trying to stay as far from it as possible. “I’ll uh see you later…” Once down the driveway she made a mad dash around the corner and down the street.

Judy turned to Ron in confusion. “But isn’t the point of having a car to drive it?”

“Eh, give her time.” He waved it off. “Probably just worried about wrecking it. At least we know
Judy rolled her eyes at her husband’s lack of concern over the matter and turned to her self appointed chore. Neither noticed the yellow Camaro slowly leaving the driveway in pursuit of its owner.

“I’m going insane. There’s no other explanation.” Sam muttered softly to herself as she made her way down the street towards the store. “Great-great gramps went bonkers, maybe it’s hereditary? I’m destined for the funny farm? But I know I saw…what did I see? Was it a robot? Maybe it was a food-induced hallucination. I did eat one of mom’s burritos…”

“Sam! Sam!...Samantha Witwicky!” The use of her full name broke her from her ponderings.

Blinking she looked up to find Mikaela standing in front of her. “Oh, hey Mik.”

“Hey yourself? You ok? You sounded freaked out when you called last night.” The other girl regarded her friend curiously. Sam could be weird at times but she had never flown off the handle like she had last night. “Did someone really steal your car?”

“I…thought so, but it was there this morning and…I don’t know…”

“Ok…” Mikaela frowned. “So you just went chasing after ghosts on your bike last night?”

“I…” Out of the corner of her eye she caught a familiar hue of yellow. Stopping she turned to look and sure enough her car was half way down the street. Only no one sat in the driver seat and it was inching forward. “I…got to go.”

“Wait? What? Sam!” Mikaela watched in more confusion as her friend took off at a dead run looking far more scared than she had ever seen her. Calling out to the friends she had been hanging out with earlier when she first spotted Sam she grabbed her purse and keys and made her way to her scooter. Something was up and she was going to find out what.

Sam just ran, letting her feet lead her to where she needed to go. Moving towards an old garage that was used as a storage area she allowed herself to slow and stop, chest heaving as she fought for breath. Straightening she searched frantically for any signs of the car that had followed her, hoping with all her might she had lost it. Turning to leave she ran right into the front of a vehicle her hands slamming down on the hood. Staring up in horror she felt some relief at seeing the black and white of a police vehicle.

“Thank god.” She breathed. “You’ve got to help me.” She pleaded to the man behind the wheel. “My car is chasing me. I know it sounds crazy but…” She paused when she noted that the man did not move to acknowledge her nor did he appear to be listening. “Sir?”

The engine revved and pushed forward throwing her to the ground.

“WHOA! Wait!” Somehow in her panic she was able to read the words ‘To Punish and Enslave’ etched on the side of the vehicle. Her heart dropped into her stomach at the sight. ‘Crap.’ Rolling over to her stomach she pushed up onto her feet and started running again, the cop car in hot pursuit. The car then reared up into the air and changed into a large robotic monster, its red eyes glaring down at her menacingly. Its hand swiped out knocking her down before it slammed into place above her.

“Are you Samantha Witwicky?” It demanded.

“I…uh…”
“Are you Samantha Witwicky?” It roared, bringing up one hand that had transformed into rotating
blades, which came dangerously close to her face.

“Ye…yes!”

“Where are the glasses?”

“Wha…I…”

“WHERE. ARE. THE GLASSES!!!!”

Suddenly her yellow Camaro launched into the air and transforming into the robot she had seen the
night before and slammed into the creature above her throwing it back. Scrambling she gained her
feet and ran onward her heart pounding. It was her mistake to look back as it caused her to slam into
Mikaela knocking her off her scooter as both crashed to the ground.

“What is your problem, Sam?”

“There’s a monster after me!” Sam flinched when she saw the form of the large dark robot stomping
towards them. “And here it comes!”

Mikaela gapped in horrified awe at the thing coming full speed in their direction. Sam grabbed her
hand and tugged her to her feet.

“Don’t just sit there! Run!”

The two girls took off towards the street only to have Sam’s Camaro pull up in front of them and
open the door. Deciding that her car hadn’t attempted to kill her thus earning bonus points, Sam dove
into the vehicle pulling Mikaela behind her. The door slammed and tires screeched as the vehicle tore
off away from the threatening robot. Both girls looked through the back window to see the creature
morph back into a police car and give chase.

“What in the hell is going on!” Mikaela demanded scared eyes locking on Sam.

“I have no idea. But at the moment I’m more concerned with getting away from the hostile robot.”

“Oh my god! We’re going to die!”

“What?” Turning her focus to what the other was looking at Sam screamed as they headed full speed
towards a wall only to veer off at the last second. Panting to catch her breath Sam threw her friend a
wary smile. “Good driver…”

Through the streets they raced as the Camaro did everything in its power to stay ahead of the police
car. A few times the other caught up enough to slam into the rear of the side of the vehicle knocking
the girls around more than they wanted. Without warning the Camaro veered to the left loosing the
other for just a moment. It took them to the power plant, skidding to a halt doors opening.

“I’m thinking that means get out.” Sam advised Mikaela both scrambling to comply.

Once clear of the vehicle it transformed into a robot waiting for the police car that came jetting down
the road. A slot on the top of the police car opened and a shiny object flew towards them, slamming
into Sam and knocking her down. At the same time the police car shifted into its robot form and
attacked their savior.

“Witwicky! Witwicky!” the little robot now attacking Sam screamed over and over, little arms
connected to rather sharp and dangerous objects slashing at her.

“Whoa! Mik help!” Sam struggled to get the thing off of her, pulling back when Mikaela grabbed the creature and forced it to let go of her friend.

“Get off you little creep!” Mikaela threw the robot away form them helping Sam back up to her feet. “What now?”

Sam searched the ground finding several pieces of scrap metal, on that especially looked like it would do the trick. Scooping it up she used the lessons on welding a bat she had learned from her mother to smash the tiny robot, knocking it back further. Mikaela caught on and grabbed another piece of metal, joining in the fray. With one deft swing Sam managed to disconnect the head from the body.

“Ha! Take that!”

Breathing heavily both females turned to the fight going on several meters away. Soon they only saw shadows dancing upon the large buildings. With trepidation they watched one fall and the other rise victorious, only they didn’t quite know which one. They watched silently as it climbed into their view only slightly relieved to see it was their savior.

“What is it?” Mikaela whispered.

“It’s a robot. See I told you my car turned into a robot!” Sam continued to watch said robot approaching. “Of course it’s obviously a super advanced robot. Probably Japanese.” She murmured as it came to stand before them in an imposing image. “Yeah, it’s definitely Japanese.” Slowly she started walking towards it, her curiosity getting the better of her.

“What are you doing?” Mikaela hissed trying to pull her friend back.

“I don’t think it wants to hurt us. He would’ve done that already.”

“Really?” The other drawled sarcastically. “Well, do you speak robot? Because they just had a giant droid death-match!”

“Well we’ll find out won’t we?” Sam gathered her courage and turned back to the robot in front of her. “Uh…hi. Can you talk?”

For a moment they heard the tune of a radio dial changing and words came out forming broken sentences. “XM Satellite One…Digital Cable brings you…Columbia Broadcasting System…”

“So you…talk through your radio?” Sam surmised.

The robot clapped his hands as the sound of applause came from his speakers. “Thank you, you’re beautiful! You’re wonderful, you’re wonderful.”

“So what was that last night? When you drove off?”

Lifting one arm to point towards the starry sky it answered. “Message from Starfleet, Captain…Throughout the inanimate vastness of space…And angels will rain down like visitors from Heaven! Hallelujah!”

“Visitors from heaven.” Mikaela frowned thoughtfully. “So, you’re like an alien?”

The robot pointed a finger at her nodding in agreement before he converted back into a Camaro. The
door swung open. “Any more questions you want to ask?”

Sam blinked. “Guess he wants us to get in the car.”

Mikaela scoffed incredulously at her friend. “And go where?”

“Don’t know.” Sam shrugged, eyes gleaming brightly as she turned to her friend. “But fifty years from now, when you’re looking back at your life, don’t you want to say you had the guts to get in the car?”

For a moment Mikaela considered not jumping in that vehicle, it was an alien after all. But the look in her friend’s eyes touched something deep inside her. So she proved that she had the guts to get in the car.
They had been sitting in the vehicle quietly for at least ten minutes just driving down the road, or at least their ‘escort’ was driving. Sam had taken the passenger seat while Mikaela squished in the middle.

“You know.” The latter ventured for a break in the silence. “He’s a pretty good driver.”

“Yeah…speaking of which why are you sitting there? Why not take the driver seat?”

“That would be weird.” She gave Sam a look. “He’s driving.”

“Ok, you got a point.”

The silence lingered a bit longer before Mikaela spoke again. “You know what I don’t understand?”

“What?”

“If he’s like, this super advanced robot, why does he transform into this piece-of-crap Camaro?”

The screeching of tires echoed loudly in the tunnel as the car slammed to a halt. The door suddenly popped open indicating that both girls should get out, which they did without question.

Once they were on the side of the tunnel the door closed once more and the car drove off the opposite direction they had come from.

“I think you hurt his feelings.” Sam admonished her friend. “He seems very sensitive.”

Mikaela grumbled but didn’t comment. Sam wondered what they should do when the Camaro came driving back looking brand new off the line.

“Wow…looks like someone got an overhaul.”

Once more the Camaro pulled up to them, somewhat smug for a car, and opened the door. Both girls climbed in, this time with Sam in the driver seat. Settled in the car took off to their destination.

It only took another fifteen minutes to arrive where the car obviously had in mind. It was an alley between several deserted buildings. Sam and Mikaela stepped out standing back to give the robot room to return to his normal form. Both girls looked around nervously wondering just why their savior had brought them there. It didn’t take long for the answer to arrive in the form of four other vehicles, a large GMC truck, a Porsche, a rescue vehicle and a large Mac truck.

They watched in amazement as they all transformed, the Mac Truck proving the largest of the robots. Mikaela looked around uneasily as they surrounded them while Sam focused on the obvious leader.

“Are you Samantha Jane Witwicky, descendent of Archibald Witwicky?”

“They know your name.” Mikaela whispered worriedly.

Sam just blinked. “Yeah.”

“My name is Optimus Prime. We are Autonomous Robotic Organisms from the planet Cybertron.”

“But you can call us Autobots for short.” The one beside him that had originally been the rescue
truck spoke up.

“What’s crackin’ little bitches?” The silver Cadillac greeted them, dancing around a bit before leaning on the hood of a random car. “This looks like a cool place to kick it.”

“My first lieutenant. Designation Jazz.” Optimus introduced.

“Where did he learn to speak like that?” Sam asked curiously. “In fact how do you know our language?”

“We have studied your world through the use of the World Wide Web.”

“That would do it.” She nodded in acceptance.

“My weapons specialist, Ironhide.” They turned to see the large robot behind them turn his arms into cannons and push them forward.

“You feeling lucky, punk?”

“Easy Ironhide.” The leader chided.

Retracting his guns the large bot shrugged. “Just kidding. I just wanted to show her my cannons.”

Sam smiled; he sounded like a little kid with a new toy. “They are quite impressive.”

Ironhide seemed pleased by that as he stuck his chest out a bit, standing taller.

Optimus shook his head fondly before motioning to the bot behind him. “Our medical officer, Ratchet.”

Ratchet eyed them, a thin blue light moving over their forms. “They appear to be healthy though a bit bruised.”

“We’re ok. But thank you for worrying.”

Optimus moved on. “You already know your guardian Bumblebee.”

The bot in question started dancing a bit, arms punching into the air in front of him. “Check on the rep, yep! Second to none!”

“Bumblebee? That certainly suits you.” Sam smiled. “So you’re my guardian? From what?”

“The Decepticons.” Optimus informed her seriously. “They are much like us however their way is not one of peace. They will stop at nothing to reach their goals.”

“Why are you here?” Mikaela finally found her voice.

“We are here looking for the All Spark. And we must find it before Megatron.”

“Mega-what?”

Optimus held his hand out projecting holographic images of his home planet and the war they lived through. “Our planet was once a powerful empire, peaceful and just, until we were betrayed by Megatron, leader of the Decepticons. All who defied them were destroyed. Our war finally consumed the planet, and the All Spark was lost to the stars. Megatron followed it too Earth, where Captain Witwicky found him…”
“My Grandfather.” Sam whispered in awe, eyes drinking in the images projected around them.

Prime nodded. “It was an accident that intertwined our fates. Megatron crash-landed before he could retrieve the Cube.” A picture of the Captain fiddling with Megatron’s gears causing a bright light to strike him. “He accidentally activated his navigation system. The coordinates to the Cube’s location on Earth were imprinted on his glasses.”

“How did you know about his glasses?” Sam frowned trying to think of how they could have found them.

“We ran upon your high school’s web site and your report on your grandfather which included a photo of the glasses.” He explained.

“Ah…”

“If the Decepticons find the All Spark, they will use its power to transform Earth’s machines and build a new army.” Ratchet warned severely.

“And the Human race will be extinguished. Samantha Witwicky, you hold the key to Earth’s survival.”

Mikaela leaned into Sam. “Please tell me that you have those glasses.”

“Oh I don’t think my parents are gonna like this…”
The group of vehicles turned onto the street leading to her house causing Sam to wonder how they would remain hidden. Thankfully she managed to talk them into stopping for the items her mother sent her out to collect earlier in the day. She certainly hadn’t wanted to explain why she forgot to pick up the items on her mother’s list. Once in the driveway she and Mikaela hopped out of Bumblebee, each taking a few bags.

“Ok, you guys stay here. I’ll run inside and grab the glasses as quick as I can.” Sam advised. “Just…don’t do anything…conspicuous.”

“Please hurry.” Optimus urged her.

Nodding, she led Mikaela to the back door not too surprised when her dad opened the door.

“So you finally decided to show up. We thought you had you know skipped the country or something.” His voice was light but she could sense the slight reprimand in it.

“I know I’m sorry. I ran in Mikaela and we got talking then I came back for my car, but I had forgotten to get the things mom wanted so we headed out and lost track of time.” Sam explained smoothly. Then she held up the bags and shifted so he could see Mikaela as well. “But hey! I got the goods. I get points for that right?”

“I suppose.” He nodded. “Though you are 3 minutes past your curfew.”

“Oh…uh….wow it really is later than I thought. I’m really sorry.”

“Yeah.” He nodded solemnly. “Your mom wanted me to ground you.”

“She did?”

“Yeah, but I talked her out of it.”

“Always looking out for me Dad, that’s why you’re the best.” She smiled widely; well aware she had her father around her little finger. If she really needed to she could play the Daddy card. “Is it ok if Mikaela comes in for a bit? We won’t bother you guys.”

“Sure, sure, come in.” He moved back allowing both girls in. “Hello Mikaela. How are you?”

“I’m good Mr. Witwicky. Sorry about keeping Sam out, but her car is just so cool.” Mikaela grinned, familiar with Sam’s parents.

“I helped her pick it out you know.” Ron grinned happily.

Sam just rolled her eyes, calling a greeting to her mother and setting the bags in the kitchen. Mikaela followed shortly after helping her put the items away before they stole up to her room.

“You check the left side and I’ll check the right.” Sam waved her friend over to her designated search area. “They should be in a small brown case.”

They had searched for a good five minutes when they heard a load crash and the ground shook the house and the power went out. Both paused before running towards the window. Vaguely Sam could hear her father yelling about earthquakes downstairs.
“What…” Sam gapped as she watched Ratchet try to stand up and off the power lines he had knocked down. The others were all roaming around the yard and not doing a good job of avoiding damaging the place. “This is NOT inconspicuous! Oh my god! You destroyed the fountain! And the path! Dad’s going to have a conniption!”

“Have you found the glasses?” Optimus maneuvered so that he could see into the room.

“No I haven’t! I’ll tell you when I do! Now go hide in the alley before my parents see you!” Sam hissed angrily.

“Please hurry!”

“I will as soon as you stop damaging the yard!”

He pulled back as the others ducked to avoid being caught by her father as he looked out the window to check the yard. Sam huffed irritably as she went back to searching, shooting Mikaela a look when the other girl giggled.

“I can’t find them? You?”

“I don’t see them over here.” Mikaela shrugged. “Where’d you have them last?”

“I had them for the project…My bag! Duh!” Sam moved towards the doorway calling out to her mother as she went. “Mom, where’s my backpack?”

“In the kitchen. Be careful the lights are out.” Came the reply.

Sam resisted the urge to roll her eyes at the obvious statement and refrained from commenting. Mikaela chuckled following close behind her friend. By the time they made it to the lower level the lights had returned making their search easier. It didn’t take long to find her bag and the glasses within. Stuffing them in her jean pocket she motioned Mikaela to head towards the front door.

“I’m going to take Mikaela home real quick. That’s fine right?” Sam asked her parents as they met up with them in the living room. “It’s too late for her to walk. I’ll come right back, promise.”

“I don’t know, after an earthquake there could be debris in the road ways. It’s dangerous.” Ron shook his head not happy about the idea at all.

“Why doesn’t Mikaela just stay here?” Judy asked. “It’s not a school night. You can take her back in the morning.”

“I really need to get home tonight.” Mikaela tried to persuade them.

“Yeah, and she doesn’t have anything with her so…”

Before anyone could say anything else the doorbell rang prompting Ron to answer it. He frowned as he found himself faced with several men in dark suites.

“Are you Ronald Wikity?” The first man stated.

“It’s Witwicky. Who are you?”

“We’re the government.” He announced as he pushed past Ron and into the house, the rest of the men following, spreading out to cover the area. Several carried equipment, moving around to check the house out. “Sector Seven.”
“Never heard of it.” Ron barked, upset that these people had invaded his home.

“Never will.” The man advised looking around the room, eyes settling on Sam and Mikaela. “I am Agent Simmons. We have reason to believe that members of this household are involved in a national security matter.”

“Ron there are people all over the lawn!” Judy clutched her bat tighter.

“National security?”

“That’s right national security.” He called out to those wondering around. “Get me a sample and some isotope readings. How are you doing young lady? You’re name Samantha?”

“Um…yes?” She shared a worried look with her father, both ignoring her mother’s rants about the people in their yard and house.

“Well then I need you to come with us.” Simmons started approaching her with a smile that made her more than slightly uncomfortable.


“Sir I am asking politely. Back off.”

“You’re not taking my daughter.”

“Really?” Simmons raised a brow looking more amused. “You gonna get rough with us?”

“No. But I am gonna call the cops because there’s something fishy going on around here.”

“Oh yeah. There is something a little fishy about you, your daughter, your little Taco Bell dog and this whole operation you got going on.” The agent drawled.

“What operation?” Ron demanded in disbelief. Judy joined them scooping up Mojo protectively.

“That is what we are going to find out.” Simmons advised before pausing as another agent came up to him sharing a whispered conversation. Sam shifted uneasily behind her parents. He looked shocked and excited all at once as he took the proffered equipment from the man and stepped towards them. “Young lady. Step forward for a moment please.”

Sam did as asked though not sure she really wanted to. Simmons scanned her with the strange device. It started beeping erratically. “14 red. Bingo!” He turned to the rest of the agents. “Tag ‘em and bag ‘em.”

Suddenly the agents descended upon them separating them individually and handcuffing them before dragging them from the house. Sam struggled but the grip on her arms was too strong. As they were led outside to different cars she heard her mother threatening bodily harm if anyone hurt her dog while her father ordered her not to say anything until they got a lawyer. The agents split them up with her parents in one vehicle and Mikaela and herself in the other.

About five minutes into their impromptu trip Simmons started speaking. “So, Samantha Witwicky.” He let his words draw out in an almost sarcastic tone. “You did a genealogy project on your great-great grandfather Archibald Witwicky.” He turned to her holding up a palm pilot with a photo of her grandfather’s glasses and another of a paper with symbols on it her grandfather had drawn. “Do these look familiar?”
“Well, yes. But how is this a matter of national security? It’s a high school history project?” She asked incredulously though a part of her told her that these men knew more than they let on.

“Mr. Witwicky’s findings are of some…value to us and the sudden appearance of his name drew our attention.” He let a sly smirk form as he watched both girls. “Of course we heard a rather interesting conversation that peeked our attention…” He held up a recorder playing back the information.

“‘Mik! It’s Sam! Someone stole my car!’

‘Sam?’

‘Someone stole my car! I followed them. We’re out at the old quarry past Montgomery Street.’

‘Someone stole your car and you followed them?’

‘I just got it!’

‘That’s the stupidest…’

‘Oh my god…’

‘Sam? Sam!’

‘Mik…my car…it…it just turned into a robot thingy…and stood up. My car’s a…robot thingy…’

‘Sam, are you drunk? It’s ok if you are, I’ll come and get you…’

‘No I’m not drunk! I’m telling the truth. My car just turned into a robot!’”

“So your car is a…robot?” He emphasized the last word, turning off the recording.

“No…no that would be crazy. I was half asleep.” Sam stuttered trying to come up with something now that she knew what they were after. “Hell it could have been a dream. I mean I thought my car had been stolen but it was there the next morning…” Suddenly she sat up and glared. “And what gives you the right to tap into my cell phone conversations? That’s private!”

“Not for us they aren’t. So you thought your car was stolen but low and behold it came back.”

“Well yeah…”

“But not on it’s own.” Mikaela rushed to intercede. “Because cars don’t do that because that would be crazy.”

“Right…” Sam nodded enthusiastically breaking into nervous laughter with Mikaela, which was soon joined in by the agent.

Then without warning he stopped, facing deadly serious. “So what do you kids know about aliens?”


“Uh…it’s an urban legend.” Mikaela added.

Simmons obviously was not amused thrusting his badge into their faces. “You see this? This is a ‘Do whatever I want and get away with it’ badge.” He threatened, his tone growing menacing. “I’m gonna lock you up forever!”
Sam swallowed hard while Mikaela rolled her eyes. “Oh God. You know what?” She huffed with more than a little bit of attitude. “Don’t listen to him. He’s just pissy because he has to get back to guarding the mall.”

Simmons sneered at her. “You, in the training bra? Do not test me. Especially with your daddy’s parole coming up.”

“What?” Sam looked between the two noting the upset on Mikaela’s face. “Parole?”

“It’s nothing.” Mikaela tried to defend but the agent wouldn’t let her.

“Grand theft auto? That ain’t nothing?”

“You…you know those cars my dad taught me how to fix up…” Mikaela seemed reluctant to say more but she didn’t want Simmons to have the satisfaction. “Well they weren’t always his.”

“He stole cars?” Sam blinked curiously. It would explain why she had never met the man.

“Well he couldn’t always afford a babysitter.” She shrugged. “So sometimes he had to bring me along.”

Sam nodded in understanding while Simmons continued on his rant. “She has her own juve record to prove it! She’s a criminal.” His eyes looked her up and down. “Criminals are hot!”

“Hey! That’s harassment!” Sam snapped at the man.

Still Simmons went on with his tangent about how it would be a shame if her father had to rot in jail the rest of his life and so on. Meanwhile the device he had used on Sam earlier started beeping at increasing levels. Suddenly something slammed into the car forcing it to spin out and come to an abrupt halt. It knocked against two large legs.

Sam flinched as a light shined brightly into the interior, pulling Mikaela down when she saw the gigantic hand coming toward the windows where it shoved inside and grabbed the roof, the other hand soon following. Both girls cried out as the vehicle was hauled into the air. It shook once before the roof could no longer support the weight of the bottom and broke off allowing the vehicle to crash back onto the ground.

The light flashed into their eyes making it hard to see. Cries of disbelief and panic filled the air until the blinding beam died out revealing Optimus in all his glory.

Sam leaned over towards Simmons. “You’re in trouble now.” She sing-songed gleefully. “Gentlemen, I want to introduce you to my friend. Optimus Prime.”

The deep robotic voice of the leader of the Autobots lashed out towards the agents that started to surround them weapons pointed up. “Taking the children was a BAD move. Autobots, relieve them of their weapons!”

Soon the others descended onto the scene. Ironhide had his weapons out just in case while the others used magnetic energy to call the guns to them rendering the agents defenseless. Once they stood surrounded with hands in the air Optimus kneeled down so he faced Simmons eye to eye.

Somewhat shakily Simmons waved his hand. “Hi there.”

“You don’t seem afraid.” Prime observed. “Are you not surprised to see us?”
“Look, there are certain…rules I have to abide by.” The man explained. “I’m not authorized to communicate with you except…to say I can’t communicate with you…”

Sam snorted at that sharing an amused look with Mikaela.

“Get out of the car.” If Prime sounded annoyed neither girl could blame him.

“Right…uh me? You want me to…” He stuttered not sure what to do but one load command of now had them all scrambling to follow it.

While the bots directed the members of Sector Seven off to one side Mikaela helped Sam out of her handcuffs.

“Why do they have to put these on so tight.” Sam complained with a pout as she rubbed her tender skin upon their release. “Did they make yours that tight too?”

“You…you’re not upset about what he said…” Mikaela broached meekly. “About my dad?”

“I admit it’s a surprise and slightly disconcerting.” Holding up a hand to forestall any further arguments she continued. “But I also figure I don’t have all the facts. You’re my friend Mikaela. I trust you. Besides every family has issues. Hell look at mine.”

Mikaela smiled in relief snorting a bit at the last statement and following Sam over to the agents.

Sam approached Simmons who apparently couldn’t stay quiet for more than a second the way he kept commenting on the big aliens and their big guns. Deciding to jump right in she crowded his space gaining his attention. “What is Sector Seven?”

“I ask the questions.” Snapped the man. “Not you, young lady!”

Annoyed Mikaela threw out one of her own. “How did you know about the aliens?”

“Where did you take my parents?” Sam pushed hoping their tag team effort would make the man tell them something.

“I am not at liberty to discuss…”

“Oh?” Sam reached into his pocket grabbing his badge.

“Hey! You touch me, that’s a federal offense.” Simmons barked, eyes narrowed as Sam ignored him and checked out his ID. “Oh, brave now, with her big alien friends over there.”

“Where’s Sector Seven?” She continued nonchalantly.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?”

Bumblebee apparently didn’t like his treatment of Sam as he popped his oil cap letting the top bounce off the offending agent’s head. Then a rather abundant steady stream of oil ran out dousing the human entirely.

“HEY! HEEEYYY!!!” Simmons protested.

“Bee.” Sam gasped in exasperation.

“Bumblebee, stop lubricating the man!” Prime scolded.
The bot followed his orders though he allowed a shrug as if to ask what he had done wrong. Mikaela laughed at the sight while Sam just shook her head fondly. Moving forward she directed all of the agents present to stand in a line and took their handcuffs, linking them all together before closing the final pair around Simmons' hands and a traffic sign.

“What you are doing is a federal offense.” He called after the girls as they walked away.

Sam ignored his words, just glad that she had dissuaded Mikaela from demanding the man stripe. Really, who wanted to see that? They walked over towards the Autobots when the telltale sound of choppers grew louder.

“Optimus!” Ironhide warned. “Incoming!”

“Roll out!” The group changed into their camouflage forms and made their way to safety. Prime remained in his true form, lowering his hand for Sam and Mikaela to climb on.

“Up you get.” He directed gently. Once situated on his shoulder the bot took off, though some of the copters had already tagged him. He ran down the streets and dodged past buildings all the while managing to avoid stepping on the cars below. He moved to the underbelly of one of the bridges, wedging himself up under the support beams and out of sight.

They watched silently as choppers passed by again and again, growing more nervous with each sighting. Optimus tried to calm them but during one pass he shifted just enough that Mikaela lost balance and fell. Sam lunged out grabbing her wrist, her other hand hanging onto one precarious edge.

“I got you Mik!”

“Sam! Don’t drop me!”

Unfortunately Mikaela kept flailing causing her to lose her grip as well as jarring Sam enough that she lost her own hold on Optimus. The two fell fast only the quick thinking of Optimus managed to slow their descent to give Bumblebee enough time to transform, his arms catching them mid-fall after they bounced off Optimus’ foot. Bumblebee turned so that he took the hit, his hands cushioning the girls as best he could.

Dazed Sam managed to scramble to her feet, checking on Mikaela first as she could see Bee standing up behind her. All too soon the copters swarmed around them, projecting hooks towards Bumblebee, catching the mech and holding him in place.

Sam screamed at the men to stop, to let Bee go but they did not listen. Cars surrounded them on all sides, men jumping out of them, hosing Bee down with what looked like fire extinguishers. Sam fought against the men holding her, working to push the others away from her friend. Sadly they overpowered her dragging her away from her guardian towards a car where Simmons stood waiting, a smug look gracing his features.

“Happy to see me again?” Sam glared up at him, still struggling to break free. “Put her in the car with her little criminal friend.”

With a heavy heart she slumped down in the seat, tears stinging her eyes as she thought about what they had planned for her friend. It didn’t take long at all for their transport to leave the scene. Sam turned in her seat as best she could with her hands captured behind her back, staring until she couldn’t see Bumblebee any longer.
The agents of Sector Seven drove the girls to a secure location, throwing them in a random room with no windows. They did provide blankets and some food, but neither felt up to eating at the moment. Instead they tried to sleep as best they could, though Sam couldn’t seem to close her eyes without seeing Bumblebee struggling against their captors.

Neither knew what time it was when agents came to collect them, leading them somewhat forcefully to an air mat where a copter waited for them. Both were strapped in and given headsets to protect their ears and allow communication with the others on board. To their surprise they didn’t take off immediately. Instead they had to wait for two other civilians, one female and the other male to be shown to the copter and strapped in as well. The female was pretty with blond hair and an Australian accent. The man was a slightly large black male with bottle rim glasses who looked more like an excited kid.

No one spoke for most of the trip after lift off. The silence slightly unnerving.

“So, what they get you for.” The blond woman who had introduced herself as Maggie asked conversationally, having grown bored with the silence and rather curious about the two teens.

“Oh…I bought a car.” Sam responded matter of factly. “Turned out to be an alien robot.” Shrugging at their startled looks she added. “Who knew?”

To their surprise the copters began their final destination approach checks upon sighting the Hoover Dam. Sam noted that at least two other copters followed them. All three set down on the tar mac. As they waited for the personnel to unstrap them she saw several military men spill out of one copter and a man who looked strikingly like the Defense Secretary emerging from another.

It didn’t take long for their release from the copters and for another group to be directing them to a set of large black SUVs. Once more Mikaela and Sam got sequestered with Maggie and Glenn, who had finally introduced himself. A short drive later had them dropped off at the main entrance of the Dam.

They didn’t have much time to look around as the agents herded them after defense secretary Keller’s entourage. Sam noted that the same group of soldiers they had seen earlier had lined up, saluting the man as he passed. He stopped to speak with them, though she couldn’t hear exactly what he said. Their ‘guide’ had made sure to keep them back a ways.

A quick motion from another man had their group moving forward, however Simmons waylaid Sam and Mikaela before they could join the rest.

“Hey Kid.” He greeted cordially. “I think we got off to a rocky start.” He placed a hand on her shoulder, a move she didn’t appreciate. “You must be hungry. You want a latte? A HoHo, a…”

“Where’s my car.” Sam cut him off, not wanting to hear more.

Another agent moved forward, his presence holding more authority given the way Simmons back down. “Ms. Witwicky. I need you to listen to me very carefully. People can die here.” He spoke directly and with purpose. “We need to know everything that you know. And we need to know it now.”

“Fine. Ok.” She nodded in agreement. “But I want assurances that my parents will be freed and I’ll get my car back.” At this she glared towards Simmons. “Every little bit of alien that he is.” She
barely registered Mikaela smirking at the now frowning agent but she didn’t care. Sam just wanted her family back, and that included Bumblebee. “And Mik’s juve record that you were so keen to bring up. How about we make that disappear.”

Simmons looked ready to burst but the other man simply nodded. “Come with me. We’ll talk about your car.”

It wasn’t a guarantee but she would take it. If worse came to worse she’d find a way to get Optimus and the others and help them free her guardian.

“Thanks Sam.” Mikaela whispered genuinely, touched that her friend would do that for her.

“Like I said. We’re friends.” Ignoring Simmons she pushed past him following the other man.

It didn’t take long to catch up to the other group. Their stares bothered Sam causing her to fidget. She always hated being the center of attention. Especially attention from several very good-looking men in uniform.

An arm slung over her shoulders bringing forth a flinch. “So chica.” She turned to find one of the soldiers smiling reassuringly at her. “How’d you get involved with this loco mess?”

“Fig.” Another soldier growled disapprovingly.

“Aw come on Capt. We know why the others are here.” Fig argued sweetly. “Sides, she looks rather nervous, I’m just trying to calm her down some.”

“It’s ok.” Sam flashed a shaky smile at the captain, trying hard not to blush as she took in his handsome features. Turning to Fig she answered his question. “My car. He’s an alien robot. But he’s a nice robot.” She added hastily. When Simmons passed them snorting at her comment she frowned and glared at the agent. “And I WILL be getting him back.”

Several of the soldiers noted the sudden steel in the young teen’s voice, surprised and pleased with this show. Simmons just sneered before waving them all to follow.

“Ok, you’re all here because each of you has had contact with the NBEs in some way.” He spoke as he walked, leading them to another section of the Dam.

“NBEs?” One of the soldiers asked.

“Non-biological extraterrestrials.” Simmons informed him. “Try to keep up with the acronyms.”

Turning he took them through a guarded doorway and down a deep tunnel which opened up into a large room. “What you are about to see is totally classified.”

The group continued on, eyes opening in amazement and awe as they took in the giant frozen form of a robot. Sam shared a frightened look with Mikaela. This thing was a good three feet taller than Optimus and it looked far more deadly.

“Dear God…” Keller breathed out. “What is this?”

“We think that when he made his approach over the North Pole our gravitation field screwed up his telemetry and crashed into the ice.” Agent Banachek explained as they walked closer. “Probably a few thousand years ago. We shipped him here to this facility in 1934.”

“We call him NBE-1” Simmons announced arrogantly.
“Um…not to be rude and correct you.” Sam spoke up softly, voice growing louder at Mikaela’s silent encouragement at her side. “But I think this is Megatron. According to Optimus he’s the leader of a really nasty group known as Decepticons.”

Banachek cocked his head to the side. “He’s been in cryo-stasis since 1935. Your great-great grandfather made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of mankind.”

Go gramps, Sam thought dryly. Listening as Simmons picked up the talk.

“Fact is, you’re looking at the source of the modern age. The microchip, lasers, cars, space flight: all reverse engineered by studying NBE-1.” He emphasized the name sneering at Sam. “That’s what we call IT!”

Somehow Sam choked back the urge to make a snide comment.

“And you didn’t think that the United States Military might need to know that you’re keeping a hostile alien robot frozen in the basement.” Keller asked sarcastically.

“Until these events we had no credible threat to national security.” Banachek defended.

“Well you got one now!” Keller shook his head in exasperation.

“So why Earth?” Captain Lennox quarried.

“It’s the All Spark.” Sam stated quietly.

“All Spark? What’s that.” Keller turned to her demanding an answer.

Flushing at the attention she tried to explain. “Um…Optimus said that they were looking for a cube-like object. It apparently is very important to them. Whoever has it would be very powerful. Which is why they didn’t want it to fall into Megatron’s hands or any Decepticon hands. He said Megatron came here looking for it on earth. Apparently he plans to use it to take over the universe.”

“You’re sure about that.” The question seemed rather loaded coming from Simmons.

“Yeah…” Sam studied him and Banachek, taking in their expression. “You guys know where it is, don’t you?”

The looks she got only confirmed her suspicion. Banachek gave only the slightest of nods before directing them to follow him. Sam allowed one last look at the Decepticon leader, her gut churning with dread. Something was going to happen. Soon.

The agents led them through another long series of tunnels and check points until they came upon a smaller room that allowed them a view of an immense area where a large cube, easily dominating the spacious cavern sat.

“This is our crown jewel.” Simmons advised.

“Carbon dating puts the cube here about 10,000 BC.” Banachek continued the lecture. “The first seven couldn’t find it until about 1913. They knew it was alien because of the matching hieroglyphics on the cube as well as NBE-1. President Hoover had the Dam built around it. Four football fields thick with concrete. A perfect way to hide its energy from being detected by anyone or…any alien species on the outside.”

“Wait back up.” Maggie spoke quietly. “You said the dam hides the cube’s energy. What kind
“Good question. We’ll show you.” Once more the group were led to another room within the vast maze of the Dam. Banachek motioned them all inside, the doors locking shut behind them.

“What’s that?” Epps eyed the scratches in the metal walls with trepidation. “Freddie Krueger been up in here or something?”

“No man Krueger’s got like four blades.” Glenn laughed. “That’s only three. That’s Wolverine!”

Fig started muttering in Spanish bringing Epps attention to him instead of Glenn. “Dude! English!”

“Anybody have any mechanical devices?” Simmons asked. “Blackberry, Key lock, cell phone?”

“I got a phone.” Glenn dug it out and tossed it to the man.

Taking the phone he started putting it in the box as the others placed safety glasses on, finding a position around the box to watch the demonstration.

“Oh. Nokia’s are real nasty.” He muttered placing the item in the center of the box. “You gotta respect the Japanese. They know the way of the samurai.”

“Nokia’s from Finland.” Maggie corrected.

“Yes, but he’s, you know, a little strange.” Keller shushed her. “He’s a little strange.”

Turning on the power Simmons explained the process. “We’re able to take the cube’s radiation and funnel it into that box.”

They watched as blue sparks shot into the phone allowing it to glow shortly before it became animated, transforming into a little bot. It started running around the glass box slamming against the sides. It had come right for Sam causing her to jump back in shock knocking against Lennox who stood behind her. He patted her shoulder reassuringly though even he looked freaked out.

As it continued its attempt to escape Simmons continued talking. “Mean little sucker eh?”

“That thing is freaky!” The others silently agreed with Maggie’s description.

“Sort of like an itty bitty energizer bunny from hell huh?” Sam thought Simmons was getting way too much enjoyment from this.

When the tiny bot proved it had weapons and started shooting rounds as well as a tiny missile around, the glass beginning to splinter, Simmons pushed a button forcing more energy into the creature, destroying it.

Moving away from the box and preparing to continue with the ‘tour’ they were interrupted by a series of explosions causing slight tremors to shake the light systems.

“Gentlemen.” Keller spoke calmly. “They know the cube is here.”

Banachek ran to one of the comm systems. “Status check! What’s going on?”

A voice from the other end rang out. “The NBE-1 hanger has lost power and the back up generators just aren’t going to cut it!”

Lennox moved forward addressing Banachek. “Do you have an arms room?”
“Come on.” He practically ran from the room the rest of them hurrying after. Alarms rang loudly as they raced to the arms chamber.

Once inside it didn’t take long for the soldiers to start gathering firearms and suiting up. Several members of Sector Seven’s security joining them. Sam stood to the side with Mikaela and the other civilians, letting them handle the gear. Her eyes grew wide at some of the weapons the soldiers chose to outfit the vehicles with.

Simmons started directing them to where certain ammunition rounds were and what they could use. Another tremor had the lights flickering. Sam had had enough. Moving over to Simmons she made her demand.

“You have to take me to my car!” Already the man started shaking his head ready to deny her. “No! You HAVE to take me to Bumblebee! He’s going to know what to do with the cube!”

“Your car…is confiscated.”

“Then unconfiscate it.” She shot back.

“We do not know what will happen if we let any of these things near that cube…well maybe you know but I don’t know.” He continued in his rambling manner.

“You just want to sit here and see what happens? He can help!”

“There are people’s lives at stake here young lady!” He raised his voice finger shaking at her in a condescending fashion.

Sam prepared to argue further only she didn’t have to as Captain Lennox grabbed Simmons roughly pushing him up against one of the assault vehicles. “Take her to her car.” Immediately the sector seven men drew their guns on the soldier only to have him smoothly point his own gun at the man closest to him, his own men already training their weapons on the rest of the security staff disarming any who tried to move. “Drop it.” Lennox warned the man in front of him, face as calm as ever.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa!” Banachek held his arms up trying to defuse the situation.

“Drop your weapon soldier.” Simmons tried to command. “There’s an alien war going on and you’re going to shoot me?”

“You know, we didn’t ask to be here.” Lennox reminded the other man.

“I am ordering you under S-Seven executive jurisdiction…”

“S-7 don’t exist!” Epps snapped.

“Right, and we don’t take orders from people that don’t exist.” Added Lennox.

“I’m gonna count to five, okay…”

Lennox swiftly moved his gun until it sat barrel down on Simmons’ chest right above the heart. “Well I’m gonna count to three.” The cocking of his gun echoed ominously through the room.

“Simmons.” Keller called out.

“Sir?”

“I’d do what he says.” The Secretary recommended. “Losing’s really not an option for these guys.”
Simmons seemed to consider that, his eyes moving from Keller to Lennox. “Alright. Ok. Hey, you want to lay the fate of the world on the kid’s Camaro? That’s cool.”

Sam sighed in relief as Lennox let Simmons up. Banachek waved a hand for them to follow him. Sam was hot on his heels, Mikaela not too far behind. It didn’t take long for them to make it to the room where they had Bumblebee captive. Already Sam could hear some of his cries of protest.

Rushing past the agents she practically jumped one of the technicians. “Stop it! You’ve got to stop! Let him go!”

Slowly but surely the others were warning the techs off and having them back away from the robot. Bumblebee turned from his prone position on the ground, blue eyes finding Sam. “You ok Bee? They didn’t hurt you, right?” Worried she stepped forward, not caring when Bumblebee lunged to his feet, his guns brought to the fore pointed at everyone in warning.

Hands up calming both the bot and the humans Sam yelled to her friend. “It’s ok. They’re ok… Mostly.” She shot a look at Simmons. “But you don’t have to worry about them any more. They won’t hurt you. I won’t let them. Please Bee calm down.”

Slowly but surely the bot calmed, his battle mask sliding from his face as he took in the small human female before him. He noted that she looked especially relieved to see him.

“That’s it. We’re all cool here, no body’s gonna shoot any body else.” Getting a nod from the bot and making sure all the humans had their weapons down she turned back to her friend. “Bumblebee! The cube, All Spark, whatever. It’s here! In this building. But so is Megatron.” Quickly she laid out the situation. “The rest of the Decepticons are on their way. We need you to help protect the cube. We’re going to take you to the All Spark ok?”

Nodding in acceptance the guardian waved a hand forward. “Lead on MacDuff.” The garbled response from his radio had her smiling widely.

With renewed hope they led the bot to the All Spark. Sam kept close to Bee, Mikaela following her lead as they watched him approach the massive cube with reverence then reach up and press along the edges. The humans gathered watched in stunned amazement as sections of the cube shifted and decompressed until it shrank into one small cube held in the bot’s hand. Once done he turned to Sam.

“Message from Starfleet captain… Let’s get to it.”

“He’s right.” Lennox stepped forward addressing the others. “If we stay here, we’re screwed with Megatron in the other hanger.” Though not really appropriate Sam felt vindicated when the soldier called the evil villain by his proper name and not that NBE-1 crap. “Mission City is 22 miles away. We’re going to sneak that cube out of here and hide it somewhere in the city.”

“Right.” Keller nodded, fully approving of the plan as they had no other. “Good!”

Turning to the Secretary of Defense Lennox continued. “But we cannot make a stand without the Air Force.”

Keller frowned in thought before turning to Simmons. “This place must have some sort of radio link.”

“Yes!” Simmons agreed, connecting the dots in his mind.

“Short wave, CV…”
“Right! Yes!”

“Sir.” Lennox addressed Keller again. “You’re going to have to find some way to get the word out to them…” Looking at his men and at the bot he gave the order to move out.

Bumblebee shifted back into a Camaro the cube safely place in his back seat. Mikaela ran to the passenger side while Sam moved towards the driver side. “Sam get in the car and follow us.” Lennox ordered he and his men running towards the other vehicles.

Sam turned to Mikaela as Bumblebee rolled out behind the soldiers. “Well this has turned into quite the adventure.”
Having a military escort proved convenient as no one bothered to pull them over for excessively breaking the speed limit. Then again the road didn't appear that heavily traveled. At the rate they went 22 miles would fly by in no time.

Just as they reached a long stretch Sam caught a flash in the distance. As it came closer she could make out the distinguished form of Optimus in his vehicle state. Ironhide, Jazz and Ratchet close behind.

“It’s Optimus.” She shared a relieved grin with her friend. They watched as the line passed them only to hit their brakes hard and complete a u-turn to follow them. The others moved to integrate within the military line up and add extra protection.

As they neared their destination the traffic grew heavier. Bumblebee weaved in and out expertly, Jazz on his six all the way. Ironhide and Optimus hung back. Soon loud sirens echoed in the air.

Looking through the rear view Sam paled dramatically. “It’s the psycho cop car!”

“They’re blocking him.” Mikaela cheered. The brief joy turned to fear as a large vehicle suddenly morphed in motion, moving even faster as it approached the others. Optimus took a page out of his book and did the same, turning abruptly to face the Decepticon head on. This move gave the rest of the caravan a chance to make it into the city unharmed.

Once in the city they let Lennox take the lead. He pulled the caravan to a stop, his men setting a parameter and popping green smoke around them on his order. Sam and Mikaela eased out of the car unsure of where to go. They watched as a fighter jet shot over them and through the skyline. Up ahead they heard Epps still trying to get a confirmation through the radio.

Ironhide morphed into his mech form in alarm. “It’s Starscream!”

“Please tell me you copy…” Epps nearly groaned into the radio.

“Move back!” Ironhide warned as he and the newly transformed Bumblebee moved towards a truck, holding it up to give them cover. “Take cover!”

“No, no, no, no…Move!” Lennox yelled.

“Back up! Back up!” Ironhide continued his own warnings.

“FALL BACK! FALL BACK!”

Giving one last warning shout Ironhide and Bumblebee braced for impact. Sam grabbed Mikaela moving towards one of the buildings only a short distance from Lennox and Epps. The explosion of the missile sent Ironhide and Bumblebee flying, and several people fell to the ground, smoke and debris everywhere.

Shaking her head to catch her barings Sam heard Lennox shouting in the background.

“What the hell was that?”

“What are you talking about?” Epps huffed.

“What do you mean, what am I talking about?” The man growled. “They shot at us!”
“F-22 pilots would never fly below buildings.” Epps told him like he should have known this. “That’s alien…that ain’t friendly!”

Scoffing at the other man the captain started calling out to make sure everyone was ok. Mikaela nodded at Sam as she helped the other up. Hearing a familiar robotic groan and the scraping of metal on concrete Sam spun around eyes wide in horror as she took in Bumblebee’s state.

“Oh God! Bee!” She ran to him as he crawled forward. “Your legs? Your legs! Ratchet! Oh God… You’re gonna be ok.” She started to assure the bot, though more for her own mind. “Please Bee, you gotta be ok…”

The sound of tank shells going off startled her and the soldiers. Several explosions littered the area as the men all ducked for cover. Sam moved towards her guardian, trying to pull him to the side and safety. Mikaela watched sadly, tears streaming down her own cheeks to match those of her friend’s. Eyes searching frantically for some kind of answer she noted a tow truck off to the side. Mind made up she ran over jimmying the door and busting the wires open, for once sincerely glad her father taught her such tricks.

Meanwhile Sam continued her efforts to help Bumblebee get to safety. The bot tried to push her away for her own protection. “No! I’m not gonna leave you!” Moving so that she stared directly at his blue eyes she said it again. “I won’t leave you Bumblebee!”

Touched at her loyalty to him Bumblebee gently pushed her back, his other hand extending forward to hand her the cube. He trusted her to keep it safe and tried to convey such thoughts with his eyes. Stunned Sam took the cube, trying to process exactly what he wanted. Emotions raged within her as she fought with what she wanted and what needed to be done.

Thankfully the decision was made for her as a tow truck skid to a stop beside them, Mikaela hopping out of the driver seat. “Sam! Help me with this.”

Grinning in understanding she did as asked, patting Bumblebee’s arm. “Hold on buddy! We’re gonna get out of this!”

Setting the cube to the side she helped Mikaela unhook the towlines and wrap them around Bee so that he could still sit up. They worked quickly and efficiently and had almost completed the task when Lennox and his men came running up to them.

“SAM! Where’s the cube?”

“Right here.” She pointed distractedly to the object in question.

The captain nodded in acceptance before moving further up the street eyes searching the skyline. He found what he was looking for and ran back to Sam grabbing her attention as Mikaela finished up with Bee.

“All right.” He took a breath before speaking, his hazel eyes locking on her deep brown ones. “I can’t leave my guys back there, so here, take this flare.” He pressed it into her right hand, then handed her the cube. “There’s a tall white building with statues on top. Go to the roof, set the flare…”

Sam shook her head, fear and uncertainty taking over. “But…I…”

“Signal the chopper, and…”

“Chopper?…What if…”
He grabbed her face carefully in his hands. “You’re a soldier now! All right. I need you to take this cube and get it into military hands while we hold them off, or a lot of people are gonna die.”

Sam took a deep breath and nodded. “Ok. Watch Bee and Mik.” She hopped down off the tow truck and shared one last look with her friend and guardian. “Be careful.”

Mikaela smiled at her friend. “No matter what happens. I’m really glad I got in that car with you.” Sam flashed her a watery smile then nodded solemnly to Bumblebee.

“You gotta go.” Lennox told Mikaela as he watched Sam run off in the direction he indicated. “I need you to go.”

“I’m going!” She huffed, clipping the last wire on Bumblebee and running towards the cabin of the truck, saying a silent prayer for her friend.
Sam ran as fast as her feet would take her. She could hear Ironhide and Ratchet following behind her, both working to deflect any missiles and debris thrown her way. Tripping over a destroyed section of the street she barely missed getting squished by Starscream, who landed and started firing at the two Autobots. Scrambling around them, head ducked to avoid any hazards she pushed herself forward.

Get to the building. Get to the building. The chant echoed over and over in her mind like a mantra to help her move forward. Pivoting left and right she worked to dodge the vehicles in the street, almost slamming into the hood of a jeep. Breathing heavily she ignored the angry yells of the people she jostled as she ran by. Just as she thought she had gotten clear of the fight Megatron himself slammed down onto the roadway behind her, the tremors from the impact shaking the ground.

“Come here girl! You have something I want.” The bot growled menacingly charging towards Sam.

Forcing her legs to move faster she somehow managed to make it into the building, just managing to turn and head towards the stairs. Focusing on putting one foot in front of the other she ascended the stairs, her muscles burning from the effort. A loud crash and flying glass particles had her ducking her head under one arm as the enemy bot entered the building. Not stopping she made it to the next level.

“I can smell you, girl!” Sam had just enough time to skid to a stop, one arm stretched out, fingers digging into the plaster of one wall, before the floor beneath her exploded and Megatron’s form burst through. His fingers reached out to catch hold of the young human, just shy of his target. His momentum was not enough to break completely through the floor allowing Sam some leeway. “Maggot!!”

Nodding to herself in encouragement she turned back to the stairs and continued her upward track. Reaching the top floor she had to then traverse an escape ladder to actually make it to the rooftop. It felt like forever for her to reach the rooftop. Looking around she verified that this was the building Lennox had told her to go to. Shifting the cube in her arms allowing her the ability to ignite the flare, which she tossed to the side of her position.

Squinting against the harsh sun she searched the skies for the helicopter, a feeling of elation flooding her when it lifted up from the side of the building. Running to the edge she leaned out as far as she dared trying to hand the cube over to the soldier reaching back.

A flash of metal moving fast around the buildings caught her eye. Eyes widening in alarm as the bot closed on their position she screamed out a warning to the soldiers. “WATCH OUT!”

It came too late as Starscream fired hitting the chopped in the side in a debilitating blow. Sam fell backwards trying to avoid getting hit by the blast and the chopper blades. Rolling along the rooftop she came to a stop pushing up to her knees as she took in the situation. “Oh god…oh god… What do I do?”

The distant roar of Megatron had her gaining her feet and running towards the statues on the far side of the roof. Just as she slid around the side of one the Decepticon leader broke through the rooftop searching for her.

“Oh hold on Sam!” Optimus called from a distance, his form running along various building tops to reach her.
One arm gripping the cube and the other clinging to the statue Sam closed her eyes tight praying that she didn’t fall. Already her foot had slipped along the precarious edge, sending her heart rate skyrocketing.

“Is it fear or courage that compels you, fleshling?” Megatron’s deep grating voice washed over her. Figuring it was a rhetorical question she decided to refrain from answering. “Give me the All Spark and you may live to be my pet.”

Sam choked out a terrified laugh. “Well since you put it that way. The answer’s going to be a HELL NO!”

“Oh…so unwise.” His tone softened to a deadly whisper. Then with a road he struck out, smashing that section of the roof. Sam screamed as the structure fell out from under her sending her plummeting to her death. Time seemed to slow down as she dropped through the air, her mind frozen in complete terror.

It sped back up to normal when her back hit the metal encased hands of Prime who had leapt forward and snatched her body from the air. “I got you, girl! Hold on to the cube!” Pushing off from his perch along the side of one building he bounced from wall to wall hoping to lessen the speed of their fall.

However Megatron had other plans as he careened into Prime’s back, both bots left tumbling to the road below. Sam cringed as she braced for impact not sure she would survive. Somehow though Optimus managed to disentangle them from Megatron and flipped to land on his back protecting Sam and the cube.

Not thirty feet from them Megatron worked on getting out of his own crater, sneering at the humans foolish enough to stick around and even going so far as to flick one of them away.

Painfully Sam rolled onto her side, using her free hand to push herself up. Brown eyes found the kind blue of Optimus’ optics. His features looked pained and tired, two things she had not equated with the proud leader before this.

“Sam.” His tone carried traces of awe and pride within the exhausted vocals. “You risked your life to protect the cube…”

Letting a tired smile pull at her lips she reiterated the Witwicky motto. “No sacrifice, no victory.”

Sitting up enough to where he could partially maneuver his body, Prime’s visage took on a serious look. “If I cannot defeat Megatron. You must push the cube into my chest. I will sacrifice myself to destroy it.” She wanted to protest but couldn’t find the words in the face of his request. Instead she nodded in acceptance, scrambling to her feet upon his order for her to get behind him.

Optimus climbed to his feet with weary determination. Turning to his enemy he steeled his resolve for the fight to come. “It’s you and me, Megatron.”

“No…I’m just me Prime!” The other bot sneered in distaste as he attacked the Autobot leader head on.

They two grappled for a time, neither quite getting the drop on the other.

“At the end of this day one shall stand.” Optimus declared. “And one shall fall!” He kicked out catching the Decepticon in the mid-drift knocking him back into the side of one building.

Pressing against the weakened foundation the bot regained his feet, throwing himself at the other in a
hard tackle, one hand shooting up to crash into Prime’s face. “You still fight for the weak!” Megatron mocked, latching onto the other’s shoulder and throwing him to the ground. “That is why you lose!”

Crouched down between several overturned cars Sam watched with baited breath as the two super forces battled it out. More than once she had to duck down or move in order to avoid taking damage from flying debris or the crushing weight of newly overturned cars. Finally she saw an opening; not bothering to think about it she darted out and away from the two robots. Her attempt was hindered by the dust and rubble covering the asphalt causing her to slip and slide.

Pain erupted once more in her side as she hit the pavement, twisting and turning in an effort to keep moving. Several loud explosions echoed down a side street that she could not see, followed shortly by the shouts of soldiers. The loud screech of jet engines lanced through the sky as they shot back and forth overhead.

Prime was down unable to get up at this point. For one desperate moment it looked like Megatron would win. Then the welcomed sound of missile fire hitting its target met her ears. Several made their mark, knocking Megatron to and fro, damaging his armor. Not able to let this advantage go she took off, not allowing herself to look back.

Megatron managed to shake off the hits and pursued the fleshling much like a predator chasing its meal. Optimus managed to catch his foot, tripping the giant mech and bringing him down. Sadly the impact caused the earth the shudder knocking Sam off her feet again.

‘I am really getting tired of falling to the ground.’ She thought in annoyance before fear wiped all thoughts from her mind.

Megatron now hovered over her form though she tried desperately to scoot away from him. His clawed hands creating deep fissures in the concrete as he crawled closer.

“My All Spark!!!”

“Sam!” Optimus now lay only a few feet form her. “Put the cube in my chest now! Sam!”

Rolling to her feet Sam looked towards Prime then back to Megatron. A crazy idea popped into her head. Something told her it would work. Trusting her instincts she darted under Megatron’s body directly under his chest.

“No Sam!”

Thrusting the cube upwards she willed it into Megatron’s chest watching as it dissolved and fused with the Decepticon burning through is circuits and spark. Vaguely she felt her hands burning from the flow of power but she ignored it Megatron jerked back in pain, his cries pain filled. Once the cube had completely disintegrated into the bot’s chest Sam fell back trying to see how the robot would fall in case she needed to move fast.

Sure enough the damage had finished Megatron off, his body slamming hard into the ground in the final death throws. Soldiers started to spill into the area circling the dying bot.

“You left me no choice brother.” Optimus chided sadly, as he watched his long time nemesis succumb to the cold grip of death. He then turned to Sam who leaned heavily against the frame of a random vehicle. “Sam. I owe you my life.” His tone took on a fond note as well as grateful. “We are in your debt.”

Sam couldn’t find the energy to refute his statement so she simply graced him with a tired smile,
which grew when a familiar tow truck, hauling Bumblebee pulled up next to her. Mikaela hopped out of the cab, grinning triumphantly at her friend. Looking to her guardian she made her way on weak legs to him, her hands finding one of his grateful he made it.

“Prime.” Ratchet called out sadly, holding out the remains of Jazz. “We couldn’t save him.”

“Oh Jazz.” Optimus took the body of his first lieutenant and friend. Looking to his remaining brothers he spoke. “We lost a great comrade but gained new ones. Thank you.” He addressed the soldiers that swarmed the area. “You honor us with your bravery.”

“Permission to speak sir.” The sudden sound coming from Bumblebee that actually came from his voice processor and not the radio startled Sam.

“Permission granted old friend.”

“Hey! You can speak now.” Sam grinned happily up at her friend.

Bumblebee spared her a fond look before addressing his leader once more. “I wish to stay with the girl.”

Optimus considered the request before nodding. “If that is her wish.”

Eyes bright Sam nodded enthusiastically. “As long as you don’t mind the garage, I’m good to go.” She chuckled when he gave a shrug of indifference.

Meanwhile Optimus leaned over the corpse of Megatron carefully removing a shard of the All Spark that had managed to survive the power transfer.

“I hate to break up the relief party.” Lennox called out. “But we need to get you guys out of here and allow for damage control to come in. We also have wounded that need to be seen too.”

No one argued as the clean up began.
chapter 10

Sam and Mikaela had planned on riding back in the tow truck, which they needed to pull Bumblebee. Ratchet had already confirmed that it would take longer to reconnect and fully repair the bot’s legs. They got all the wounded taken care of and handed over the major clean up to the local authorities and two squadrons of National Guard.

Lennox however decided it best to divide everyone who had come with them throughout the vehicles they had left and the remaining Autobots. They would then head back to the Hoover Dam and sector seven. While it too had sustained damage, they would have a better facility to harbor the robots for the time being, not to mention a better medical facility.

Fig agreed to drive the tow truck back with Mikaela while he and Epps road with Sam in Optimus. Epps sat in the passenger seat while Lennox took the driver seat, Sam between the two. It was partially because Lennox felt responsible for her after he sent her up to that rooftop to hand over the cube. She had done everything he asked and more, but the enemy had overwhelmed them. Still, if it hadn’t been for her they wouldn’t have won.

For her part if Sam hadn’t felt so tired she would probably feel embarrassed squished between the two soldiers. To pass the time Lennox and Epps asked Optimus various questions. Sam listened halfheartedly her eyes drooping heavily with the comforting vibrations of the truck. Soon they drifted close, her form sliding to the left until her head came to rest on Lennox’s shoulder. However by then she was oblivious to the world, content to sleep for the moment.

“The kid finally dropped.” Epps smirked at his friend and Captain, noting his slightly uncomfortable look. “Guess you make a good pillow.”

“Shut up.” Lennox snipped back without any real heat behind it. Instead he shifted just enough to make the girl more comfortable without waking her up.

“She will need to be checked over by Ratchet once we return to base.” Optimus advised them quietly. “As she was holding the All Spark during the release of energy there is no telling if she has incurred any lasting affects.”

“What do you mean lasting affects?” Lennox shared a worried look with Epps. “Like injuries or something?”

“I do not know. The All Spark was more than just a container of energy. It held all of the history of our people.” He explained. “We do not know how it would react with organisms such as humans. Your mental processors are vastly different from our own.”

“So your saying it could have affected her mind or some shit like that?” Epps frowned as he tried to understand what the robot was implying.

“Affirmative.”

“Well that’s not good.” Lennox sighed taking in the painfully young face resting against him. “For now we better just let her sleep. It may not even be an issue.”

The rest of the ride was completed in a companionable silence, the humans tired from their ordeals and Optimus lost in his own thoughts.

Upon arriving at the base the members of sector seven, headed by Simmons, directed the Autobots to
a large bay and moved the soldiers and civilians into the medical bay where five doctors and several nurses waited to treat them. Lennox felt bad about waking her, but neither he nor Epps were in any condition to carry her.

Sam blinked sleepily when someone nudged her, following whoever it was in a half-aware state. The whole trip became a blur of shadowy figures and random doors. Someone led her to a room that smelled like a clinic, leading her to sit on one of the many beds. Another person tried to ask her questions and checked over her injuries, but her exhausted mind just couldn’t focus enough to answer. Finally they just pushed her to lie down, a blanket drawn up over her for warmth and they allowed her to sleep.
“So unwise…” The hauntingly evil voice echoed in her mind.

Once more she saw the hand slam down breaking through the structure and destroying the firm foundation she had sought purchase on. The sensation of falling rapidly settled in her stomach with a queasy uneasiness one usually experienced on roller coasters only a hundred times worse. She watched as the hunckering form of Megatron hung over the edge red eyes glowing gleefully. No sound penetrated her ears, as the world seemed to pass her in mere seconds. In her mind she kept waiting for Optimus to catch her, but he never did. Her body twisted enough for her to see the pavement as it reached up to meet her…

Gasping harshly Sam sat up in the medical bed, chest heaving in an effort to catch her breathe and still the pounding beats of her heart. Tears slipped from her eyes unnoticed leaving tracks down her blood and dirt stained cheeks. Her whole body trembled from the aftershocks of fear and adrenaline induced by the nightmare.

It took several deep breaths on her part before she managed to calm herself enough to allow the rational part of her mind to take over. When it did the events of the past few days paraded through her mind like one of the slide shows her art teacher enjoyed torturing her students with. It all started with her purchase of her first car, which turned out to be an alien robot. From there the whole thing seemed to spiral out of control and comprehension. The last thing she clearly remembered was climbing up into Optimus’ cab to sit between Captain Lennox and Sergeant Epps, after that she couldn’t remember.

Taking stock of her surroundings she recognized the basic layout of a medical infirmary. Several beds lined up along the walls, most of them filled with sleeping soldiers. The bed to the right of her held a sleeping Mikaela, who had taken a shower from the looks of it. She noted the forms of Glen and Maggie as well. Most of the lights were off but a few lit up the area, dim enough to allow sight without bothering the slumbering patients.

Checking herself, Sam saw that someone had bandaged most of her wounds, but other than that had let her be. Looking around again she saw two nurses hanging out at the other end of the room, neither looking in her direction. Deciding that sleep would not come again and she had no desire to sit there with her current thoughts Sam slid carefully from the bed, wincing as tired muscles worked to support her. Cold seeped through the soles of her bare feet. She considered putting her shoes on, but as she could not immediately find them it was decidedly too much effort to bother with.

Silently she slipped out of the room pleased to find the hallways empty. Granted she had no idea what time it was, so it could be perfectly logical that no one hung around. For several minutes she just wandered the hallways, not quite knowing where to go.

Soon her feet led her back to the room the All Spark had once been housed in. Hovering near the tunnel entrance she watched as Ratchet moved around absently, working on Bumblebee’s legs. Said bot was sitting against one wall, his optics dimmed and several wires hooked up to him likely recharging his system.

Ironhide sat off a good ways tinkering with one of his cannons. Optimus however was nowhere to be seen. Leaning against the wall she just watched taking some comfort in the seemingly ordinary motions the Autobots followed. It grounded her in a way she desperately needed at the moment.

“You should be sleeping.” The soft voice by her ear had her jumping in fright. Twirling around to
face the person she found Lennox holding his hands up in surrender. “Sorry. Sorry, didn’t mean to scare you.”

“Well you did.” She informed him, one hand clutching at her chest. “But hey, good news, my heart’s working great. I’ll probably be able to stave off a heart attack for at least twenty years after all I’ve been through these past few days.”

“Always nice to have a silver lining.” He agreed, flashing a boyish grin. Taking careful stock of the teen in front of him he noticed the red look of her eyes and the way she hugged her arms close to her chest. “You doing ok?”

“I suppose. Not the best, but obviously better than some.” Sam allowed a wry grin to twist her lips, eyes sad as she looked at Lennox. “I’m not the only one who had a rough time the past few days. Are you and your men going to be ok?”

Considering her statement he gave a non-committal shrug. “Maybe. It’s a lot to take in and we’ve lost good friends and comrades. But we’re soldiers. It’s what we do.”

“Thank you.” Sam stated after a moment of silence. “You and your men supported me even though you had no reason to. I’m actually kind of surprised you took the word of a teenager against an ‘alleged’ expert.”

“You’re welcome.” He left it at that not really sure what else to say. Seeing as Sam didn’t push the subject he let it drop.

“Do you know where Optimus is?”

“He and SecDef, that’s the short call for Secretary of Defense.” He added at her confused look before continuing his explanation. “They’re still talking and hammering out some details. I have a feeling things are going to get interesting for my guys.”

Looking over at the man beside her Sam raised a curious brow. “Am I allowed to ask or is it a ‘need to know’ deal?”

“I’m sure it’s ‘need to know’.” He chuckled at her phrasing glad to see that she still had spirit. Will had seen older and more experienced men fall to the stress of lesser events. “Then again seeing as your Camaro happens to be on the team you just might fall into that category.”

“Is it bad of me to hope not? I’m already going to have one hell of a time explaining this to my parents.” A derisive snort escaped her. “That is assuming Simmons and Sector Seven release them.”

“What happened?” His face grew grim as she explained the events leading up to her and Mikaela’s ‘invitation’ to sector seven’s base of operations. His eyes took on a dark look as he promised to make sure they got sent home. From the tone of his voice it sounded like he would fight the Decepticons single handedly to do just that.

Once more silence settled around them, both shifting their gaze to the three robots out in the main room. It wasn’t long though before Will was coaxing her to follow him back to the medical ward for another few hours of sleep. As she followed the man she glanced back at Bumblebee’s slumbering form.

Like Mikaela, Sam was really glad she had the guts to get in the car.
chapter 12

Samantha Witwicky struggled with the items she attempted to pack into the large cardboard box in the garage. No matter how she manipulated the volleyballs and other various toys she thought the soldiers would like, it just would not all fit in the box. Huffing in defeat she turned a glare on her friend and guardian Bumblebee, who was not doing a very good job of hiding his own amusement given the purposely-projected laughter coming from his radio.

“Laugh it up Sparky.” She snipped, crossing her arms over her chest. “You’re the one that has to carry this with you.”

That had the bot falling silent, his blue optics wide in realization. Then he flopped down in full pout mode, arms and legs crossed and one metal lip stuck out further than the other.

Sam chuckled in retaliation. She could hardly believe that only a little over seven months had passed since she met Bumblebee and the other Autobots, members of an alien race that came to their planet searching for an ancient power source of their world. Only one school year passed since the battle in Mission City that had changed her life forever. And not a day went by that she wasn’t grateful for it.

Shortly after that fiasco it was decided that the Autobots would have asylum on Earth with the US military and their allies. Currently Optimus Prime and the remaining Autobots, including those that had arrived after their initial contact, resided on a military base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. They served with the now Major William Lennox, Epps, Fig and the rest of their squad and several new recruits. What they did Sam didn’t know, nor did she ask. Still she kept in contact with them, often sending care packages with Bumblebee when he had to report in, or just mailing them to one of the local bases to send over to the boys. Fig had especially liked the alligator-shaped cookies she sent especially for him. Epps had grumbled about that until Sam managed to get them mobile Basket Ball hoops for their recreation. (They had not been able to put in a permanent court and as they were a ‘Top Secret’ operation the upper brass didn’t think they needed such things.) She also sent other odds and ends to the soldiers she knew and occasionally big care packages for everyone to enjoy. In return she often found herself receiving several letters with various little knickknacks and photos of the guys and the bots.

Of all the correspondences she got she treasured the ones from Will the most. Sam had developed a severe crush on the then Captain upon their meeting and the days following the Mission City incident. As she got to know him more through their letters and the occasional Web Cam chat she found herself falling steadily in love.

She tried to tell herself over and over again that it was stupid and she should move on but her heart refused to listen, not even when she saw him and Mikaela kissing that time three months ago, which had left her in a funk for weeks. Finally she just accepted the fact that she would always care for him as more than a friend, but she could not act on those feelings. She couldn’t do that to Mikaela or to Will. If they wanted to be together then she would be happy for them, no matter how much it tore her up.

It was during that time that her friendship with Bumblebee really grew deeper. He didn’t question when she backed off from talking to the two of them as often as she had in the past, nor did he ask why she gave them false reasons for her actions. The bot’s support and loyalty helped her greatly since then. Sadly, he would be gone for at least two months for a scheduled maintenance and training mission. Direct orders from Optimus and Ratchet.

Why they couldn’t have done this during the school year while she was stuck in class most days she
didn’t know, but she also wouldn’t question it. While he was her friend and an adopted member of her family, he was also Optimus’ soldier and he had to follow orders.

“It’s so hard…to say goodbye… to yesterday…”

Shaking out of her thoughts she turned to her friend. “Don’t be so dramatic Bee. It’s only for two months. Then you’ll be back and we’ll have a few weeks to play before school starts.” She reassured the bot, who started to pull out the water works curtsey of his washer fluid. “Really? Seriously? You can’t cry about this!”

The crocodile tears stopped immediately as he looked at her hopefully. “Run Forrest. Run!”

“No, we cannot run from this. Ratchet would have a fit.” She admonished. “And he’d likely send Ironhide after both of us! You know how over-the-top he gets about punishments! That bot is crazy!”

Bumblebee’s shoulders slumped when he realized her point. He was stuck going to the base for two months. Not that he disliked seeing the others or visiting with them, but not for TWO months! Usually the longest he had to spend away from Sam was a week, week and a half tops! But he did need some work done, and it was time for a serious recharge. Normally he could get away with a quick intake of energon, but as he was still pretty young he tended to use more energy, especially when he and Sam went racing in the desert.

There was no way out of it; he would have to go to the base. He just hoped Sam would be ok without him. Since that incident with Mikaela and Lennox months ago she tended to draw away from others. He didn’t know why though, he knew the other two were not in what humans call a ‘relationship’. He feared that without him coaxing her out she would sequester herself in her house.

“Hey, cheer up.” Sam patted his arm. “You’ll get to see the new Autobots that arrived while you were here. Maybe there’ll be a cute girl Autobot. Besides it’s not like I’m going to be doing anything exciting. I’m mostly going to be researching colleges and scholarships, not to mention working on that project for my advanced Physics course next year.”

“It’s shake ‘n bake! And I helped!”

Sam laughed remembering the last time they worked together on one of her science experiments. “While that would be fun, Dad is still trying to lower his blood pressure from that last incident. Though the contractor did a great job fixing the wall.” She added, studying the newer section of the garage.

Garbled sounds that Sam had long ago identified with laughter escaped his vocal system. Sharing another conspiratorial smile she finished rounding up the things she wanted to send to the guys. “Alright that should do it. Just remember not to transform until after they got everything out. Don’t want you to have an incident like Ratchet did. Though why one of the guys had a squeaky toy to begin with is beyond me. Still wish they had taped it.” She muttered. “It would have been funny to see Ratchet squeak every time he moved and jumping because of it.”

Bumblebee nodded in agreement, imagining the event and the regal bot’s reaction. It certainly bordered on hilarious. Once Sam stepped back he transformed back into his Camaro form, which still gleamed from the recent wash and wax Sam had given him. The others will be jealous to see the type of treatment he gets from his human friend. Popping the trunk hatch he waited patiently for Sam to store the box of goodies inside.

“Ok that’s it.” She shut the trunk walking towards the driver door. “You want me to come or are you
good to go?”

“One is the loneliest number that you’ll ever know…”

Rolling her eyes she giggled. “Oh all right. I’ll come too, let me get my purse and let Mom and Dad know, ok?”

Bumblebee revved his engine in response. Running into the house she grabbed the necessary equipment for the trip, i.e. her purse, cell phone, money and a soda. Ron wasn’t too thrilled about her driving 2 hours to a base and having to take a cab back, but he agreed after Judy gave him a look and Sam used her patent puppy-dog eyes. He still swears that using such tactics was cheating.

Hopping in the driver seat to give the allusion that she was driving when Bee did the actual work, Sam strapped on her seatbelt and they took off for the Army base where they would meet up with a cargo plane headed to Diego Garcia. The whole two hours of their trip the girl and bot talked back and forth and generally acted silly.

Two hours seemed to fly by as they arrived at the gates to the base. Sam showed her pass, waving in greeting to the guard she recognized from previous encounters. The man just smiled and sent her on through, radioing ahead to let the plane know they had arrived. Bumblebee navigated the base towards the airfield where the plane was likely situated.

Sam looked around curiously, seeing groups of soldiers carrying out various duties. At the tarmac they found Bee’s ride, with several soldiers moving crates of supplies into the cargo bay. Stopping a good distance away so as not to interfere with traffic Bumblebee let Sam out. Not even three seconds out of the car and someone was swinging her up into a hug.

“Sammy!” The familiar voice of Fig had her relaxing in the hold. She laughed when he started spouting Spanish not knowing a single word he said.

“Fig! Seriously man, English! Ain’t nobody know that Spanish shit” Fig set her on her feet again as both turned to see Epps and a man Sam didn’t recognize walking up to them.

“Quit dissing my heritage!” He continued his argument once more in Spanish earning an annoyed eye roll from Epps.

“Glad to see you two still get along.” Sam grinned brightly, receiving a hug from Epps.

“Fig just needs to learn he’s wrong and everything will be fine.” Epps joked. “How are you doing Sammy?”

“Good. Bummed you guys are taking Bee for two months, but I’ll get through it as long as you promise to take good care of him.” She stared at both Fig and Epps with a look only women could perfect.

“Of course chica. Nothing but the best for the Bumblebee.” Fig told her.

“Tell me lies tell me sweet little lies…” Played out on Bee’s radio.

“That hurts man.”

Ignoring Fig, Epps turned to the man that Sam didn’t know. “This is Graham. He’s joined NEST from the UK.”

“Ma’am.” The soldier greeted her, his accent clear.
“Just Sam, or Sammy.” She shook his hand. “These goons aren’t giving you any trouble are they? ‘Cause if they are…”

“What are you gonna do about it?” Epps challenged playfully.

“Me? Nothing. I’d get Bee to handle it.” She advised him innocently.

“Float like a butterfly…Sting like a bee!” Floated into the air around them.

Graham watched the interaction the others had with the girl and the bot with curious amusement. From a few well placed inquiries, he knew that she was responsible for sending a lot of their ‘presents’ to help the soldiers enjoy their down time. Lennox’s original team had been the only ones to ever meet her before though, and their descriptions didn’t quite do the girl justice. Seeing her in person now he could understand why they felt protective and fond of her. There was something about her that just compelled you to like her.

“So what’d you get us?” Fig looked inside the car not finding anything.

“What makes you think I got you anything?” She raised a brow indignantly.

“Because you love us and you’re awesome like that.” Epps started moving towards the car. “It’s gotta be in the trunk…”

“God you guys are like children!” Sam huffed, hands on hips. “And yes I did, but you can’t see it till you get back to base. I heard about what happened with the water balloons.”

“That wasn’t our fault.” Epps protested Fig joining though in Spanish as usual.

“Oh really?”

“Actually.” Graham cut in, smirking at the scene. “According to scuttlebutt that event was due to actions on Major Lennox’s part.”

“The hell it was.” Said major came upon them at the tale end of their conversation. Flashing them a mock angry look he stopped a few feet from them with arms crossed over his chest looking rather imposing in his fatigues. “I would never allow such shenanigans.”

The group eyed him silently for a moment before Sam turned to Epps and Fig. “He totally started it, didn’t he?”

“You know it.”

“Si…”

“Hey! Whose side are you on?” Will pouted playfully breaking into a wide grin as he swept Sam up in a hug. “Good to see you Sammy-girl.”

“You too.” Sam had stiffened slightly when he first hugged her but relaxed quickly enough that he didn’t seem to notice. However she could not hide the slight blush from the other three standing there. “So when do you guys head out?”

“Soon actually.” Turning to the Camaro he patted the hood companionably. “You ready to go Bumblebee?”

“There’s no place like home...”
“You’ll be fine Bee. It’s only two months.”

“I will survive…”

Sam chuckled having dealt with all of his antics before. “Look, just behave. You do that and I promise I’ll have a nice surprise for you when you get back. Ok?”

“…Groovy…Well aren’t you the sweetest little thing…Gimme some sugar…”

“Hey…don’t get fresh.” Snickering she whacked Bumblebee lightly on the roof. “I’ll see you in two months. If you need anything just text me.”

“I will return victorious…”

“Right…You guys have fun.” She turned to the soldiers. “Oh, and if ANYTHING happens to Bee, I’ll know who to look for.” Watching them squirm under her gaze was quite rewarding but she decided to cut it short as they were on a schedule. “Seriously though you guys stay safe too. Don’t go looking for fights, plenty of them already come to you.”

“I heard that.” Epps snorted.

Leaning into the open window she grabbed her purse and keys, as Bee didn’t really need them. “Well then I’m off. Make sure to keep these soldier boys on their toes Bee.”

“Roger that Houston…”

“Great.” Epps rolled his eyes. “And I thought we had trouble with just the twins.”

“It was good seeing you guys.” She hugged Epps and Fig then surprisingly Graham as well. “It was nice meeting you. Good luck keeping this group in line.”

The Brit nodded, still somewhat shocked at her show of affection. However he didn’t miss the slight narrowing of Lennox’s eyes, neither did the other two given the way they smirked. Sam finally turned to the Major and gave him a brief hug as well.

“See you later Major.” Sam pulled back moving to leave only Will had other plans. With his hand still lingering on her lower back he started walking with her.

“I’ll walk you to the gate.” He offered, though it sounded more like a command. “Get everything on board, I’ll be back before lift off.” The soldiers knew better than to say anything and even Bumblebee stayed quiet for once.

Sam tried to protest but they were already walking back towards the main gate.

“So, your parents waiting for you?” Will tried to make basic conversation.

“No. I’m gonna call a cab.”

“Wha…No, you’re not doing that.” He immediately shot that down.

“Um…yes I am.”

“No, you’ll take my car.” He dug his keys out of his pocket and pushed them into her hand. “It’s just gonna be sitting here on base collecting dust. At least this way you have wheels since we’re confiscating your ride for the next couple months.”
“Will…”

“Please Sammy-girl. It'll make me feel better.” His eyes caught hers and she found she couldn’t deny his request, not like she could deny him anything if he asked.

“Fine. But remember you said that if you get a call that I wrecked it.” She warned playfully, poking him in the chest. When he didn’t return her smile she frowned. Studying his face she found he looked rather uncomfortable. “I’m just kidding. I really won’t crash it. Promise.”

“I know that.” He rolled his eyes a bit before taking a deep breath. He didn’t want to pry but he had this gut feeling that all was not well with Sam, especially where he and Mikaela were concerned. “Is everything alright?”

Sam blinked. “Yeah…As far as I know. Why?”

“I meant with you and Mikaela? She said you guys haven’t been hanging out as much and to be truthful you’ve been pretty distant with me the past few months as well.” He kept a close eye on her reaction but aside from a slight tightening around her eyes, which could simply be stress, she didn’t react. “You do know you can talk to either of us about anything right? Even if it’s something we’re doing that’s bothering you.”

“I know. But honestly there’s nothing wrong.” Giving him a rueful smile she tried to defuse his worries. “I really have been very busy. I’ve been accepted into the advanced program next year, which means AP courses and I already have work for some of those classes. Plus I have to start researching colleges and scholarships this summer. Once school starts up I won’t have a lot of time to get my resumes ready and sent off. I haven’t really had a lot of time for anyone aside from Bee, and that’s usually because he drives me everywhere…and helps me with my homework. Though Dad did ban him from assisting in my science projects…”

“Why?”

“There was an…incident…with the garage…it took a couple of weeks and a contractor to fix.” She explained sheepishly. “Personally I think he was over reacting. I mean it’s not like we blew up the entire building.”

Will just stared at her in disbelief trying to understand what she was saying; yet at the same time not wanting too. “Right…remind me not to let you two in the lab on base…”

Sam gave him a look. “Spoil sport. Anyways, I need to get going or Dad’s gonna freak. You guys have a good trip and be safe.”

“Yeah you too kid.” Will hugged her close one last time before forcing himself to let her go. He smiled at the startled look, which slowly turned into a shy smile in return her cheeks a bit redder than normal. He stood watching a bit longer as she walked to the parking lot to his car then slipping inside. He finally headed back to the airfield when she closed the door.

Will knew that a lot of what she said to him had been the truth. He didn’t doubt Sam had a lot going on school wise. The kid was smart, near genius level when she worked at it, but something told him that it wasn’t the complete truth. When he thought about it her attitude had changed almost three months ago, which was the last time he had seen her and Mikaela. They had just returned to the states for a month’s leave. He tried to think over everything that had happened but nothing in particular came to mind.

“So did you kiss her goodbye?” Epps teased when he met up with the other man. The rest of the
soldiers going with them were already inside the plane strapping in for take off.

“What? No.” Will frowned at the other in disapproval. “She’s 17, that means not legal. Besides I’m too old for her.”

“You trying to convince me or yourself?” Epps eyed him knowingly. “Besides, when we get back in two months she’ll be 18.”

“Doesn’t matter Epps. There’s no way she’s interested.”

“Really? Then why’d she start avoiding you and Mikaela after catching you two kissing?”

“What?”

“Our last leave. Mikaela planted a big one on you. Sammy saw it though she didn’t say anything.”

His friend reminded him. “And if you were worried about age why’d you start something with Mikaela?”

“I didn’t, we didn’t.” Will stuttered in disbelief mind reviewing that memory. “She was just thanking me for helping her out with something and got carried away, she even said so…”

“Really? Well Sammy don’t know that does she?” With that said Epps made his way into the plane calling back over his shoulder one last time. “Just so you know, there are a lot of guys that can’t wait for her to turn 18. A little food for thought.”

Will didn’t know what to say to that. However his friend had made his point, loud and clear.
Nearly a week had passed since Sam dropped Bumblebee off at the base. He had text messaged her once to let her know he was fine and they had made it. She had also received an email from Will and the guys verifying their arrival and thanking her for the “beach” kit she sent. A few photos came not even two days after they arrived, showing the squadron out on the beach, volleyball net in place and what looked like a rather vigorous game in process. They even had a few Autobots she hadn’t met yet playing the game. Others were enjoying the beach balls and water guns she had included. It made her happy that she could bring some joy into their lives, as hard as they worked.

In the meantime she had been very busy working on her physics project and her research into colleges. So far she had most of her project done, though she would have to complete the paper to go with it. She had spoken to Mikaela briefly in that time, however the other girl was working full time at a body shop fixing bikes to earn money and didn’t have a lot of time. After working all day long Sam doubted she had the energy to do anything else so she tried not to bother her friend much.

Mikaela didn’t take it that way. Instead she saw her friend avoiding her and decided to get to the root of the issue. She had a vague idea, especially after a brief email from Lennox, but she wanted to be sure. So she had marched over to Sam’s that Friday with a plan to force the other girl to dress up and go to a party one of the football players was throwing that afternoon. After all they both needed a break.

Pulling into the driveway on her bike she noticed the car sitting in the garage through the window. She would have to remember to ask Sam about that since she had not seen it before. Heading to the back door she knocked, smiling when Judy Witwicky answered.

“Mikaela!” The woman greeted happily. “Please tell me you’re here for Sam?”

“Um…yeah? Is something wrong?” It was rather unusual for Judy to say something like that.

“That girl has been cooped up in this house for far too long.” The woman explained as she led the other inside. “I know I wasn’t always thrilled about having an alien in the garage, but at least Bumblebee could talk her into going out from time to time. Now she just tinkers on that physics project and researches colleges.” Sighing tiredly she turned to the teen. “That sounds bad doesn’t it? There she is working hard for her educational future and I’d rather she was out partying and getting into trouble!”

“Well if it helps I’m going to make her come with me to a party today. Just a bunch of teenagers listening to music and being stupid.” Mikaela grinned mischievously.

“Really? Oh that’s wonderful!” Judy crowed happily. Pushing the girl towards the stairs she shooed her on up. “Go get her!”

Chuckling at the odd woman’s behavior Mikaela made the familiar trek to Sam’s room, knocking lightly. When no answer came she knocked again, pushing the door open to peek inside. What she found had her blinking in confusion.

Sam stood, blindfolded, in the center of her room throwing darts at a map of the US. Clearing her throat loudly she had to duck as Sam startled and misfired one of the darts.

“Hey watch it!”

“Sorry!” Sam quickly apologized ripping the blindfold off. “Mik? What are you doing here? I
"I have today off. What are you doing exactly?" Waving a hand towards the map with darts already sticking out of it she eyed her friend.

“Well…I couldn’t really decide what school I wanted to go to. So I figured why not let fate decide. But I’m not too big on fate, so I thought I’d meet in the middle. I throw five darts, whatever state and or city they land in I’ll research their schools and narrow it down to my top choice. That way I can cut down on my research.” She explained happily. “See, one dart hit Virginia, they have good schools there. Oh and Texas…”

“Uh huh…You need to get out.” Mikaela declared, throwing her helmet on the bed. “Your mom says you’ve been inside way too long working on the college stuff and your homework. Which by the way shouldn’t even exist. This is summer. You need to get out and have some fun.”

Looking around at all the stacks of papers and pamphlets Sam cringed. “Ok I see your point. But I figured I need to get a head start. There aren’t a lot of scholarships out there…and even fewer from some schools. Plus I think I know what I want to do, but I’m not really all that sure… As for the physics project, that is a huge grade, and could technically help me in my college application…”

“Right… We’re going to a party, so you need to go take a shower while I pick out an outfit for you.”

“But…”

“NOW!”

“Yes ma’am!” Sam darted into her ensuite bathroom closing the door to comply with Mikaela’s commands.

Shaking her head fondly at her friend’s antics Mikaela took in the room and all the obvious research her friend was putting into this. She saw that Sam had clearly organized it into sections, one dealing with scholarships, another set aside for colleges, and even those separated. Moving to her desk she saw the start of several different papers and applications. One had to admire Sam’s tenacity. When she put her mind to something she did it 150%.

Speaking of which she had some other snooping to do. Checking to see that the bathroom door was closed Mikaela snuck over to Sam’s bed. Like most girls she would keep her private items carefully hidden away either under the bed or in the bedside table, or if she really had it bad, inside her pillowcase. Checking the latter first she smiled triumphantly when her fingers brushed up against what felt like a photo. Snatching it out she looked down at a rather candid picture of Major William Lennox.

‘So that’s how it is.’ She thought gleefully. Her friend had a thing for the Major. She had it really bad too considering the worn state of the photo. She would simply have to set the record straight. Sure she had thought Lennox was sexy, but he wasn’t for her and she knew that. The kiss had really been a heat of the moment type deal. ‘But first we need to get you out of the house.’

With renewed determination she stuffed the photo back in place and headed towards Sam’s closet, specifically the back where she placed all the ‘racy’ clothes her mother and Mikaela had bought for Sam. Digging through the hangers she found a pair of shorts that would come to about mid thigh, allowing for some modesty but showing off Sam’s runner legs. Then she pulled out a plain white tank top and the black bikini Judy had picked up on a whim for her daughter. To Mikaela’s knowledge it had never been worn. Next she focused on the shoes, finding an adorable pair of sandals with just enough heel to finish the look.
Placing the chosen garments on the bed she pulled out her pack, digging through it for her make up. When the shower stopped she walked to the door and knocked. Sam peeked out a moment later, wrapped in a towel.

“Put these on. No arguments, no negotiations.” Throwing the clothes at the other she allowed her to close the door and get dressed.

“Uh…Mik, is there a reason I’m wearing a bathing suit.” Sam asked as she stepped out, the bikini in place and her shorts on. Mikaela nodded approvingly. Apparently Sam’s normal clothes hid a lot more than she thought.

“Yes, the party is up at the lake. People are likely going to be swimming.”

“Then can’t I wear my one-piece? I don’t feel comfortable in a bikini…”

“No. You look good and you need to show off a bit.” Mikaela argued.

“I doubt that…”

“Oh really?” Mikaela took out her cell phone and snapped a photo of Sam in her suit and shorts. Then she started searching her contacts for the person to send the photo to.

“What are you doing?”

“Getting an objective opinion on how you look.” Mikaela stated matter-of-factly, pushing the send button.

“What? Who are you sending that too? Mikaela!!”

(On Diego Garcia)

“…And why do we have to go through these reports? They’re boring man!” Epps bitched and moaned as he and Lennox read through the daily reports. “The others get to go to the beach why not us…”

“Because we’re the ones in charge.” Lennox reminded him dryly still focused on the mind numbing report in front of him.

“Hey Captain, you’re still cooped up in here?” Figs walked in with Harrison and Graham.

“It’s Major now.” Lennox reminded his friend and subordinate, a sly smirk on his face. “And somebody has to do the dirty work.”

Suddenly his cell phone beeped interrupting them. He went to reach for it where it sat on the table but Epps beat him to it. “Hey that’s mine!”

“Yeah well I’m confiscating it in the name of sanity. Mine.” He flipped it open checking the incoming signal. “Mikaela sent you a photo.” He threw a rather accusing look at his friend.

“What?”

“Let me see.” Fig leaned over Epps shoulder as he opened the file. Both of them froze, eyes wide in amazement. Fig started babbling in Spanish.

“Amen to that.” Epps agreed wholeheartedly.
“What is it?’ Lennox demanded, trying to grab his phone back.

“Apparently Sammy doesn’t think she looks good in a swimsuit so Mikaela sent us a photo asking for our ‘objective’ opinions.” Epps grinned evilly at Lennox as the man stilled his attempts. Tossing the phone to Harrison, Epps asked his opinion. “I’m going with a yes. What about you Jimmy?”

The man snatched the phone out of the air reviewing the photo carefully a long whistle escaping from his lips. ‘I’d say damn hot. But I think we should get the other guys’ opinions on this. What do you think Graham?” He showed the Brit the photo.

“How old is she?”

“Not old enough for any of you!” Lennox growled as he snatched the phone away. “And really you guys should be ashamed…Acting like a bunch of…” His voice trailed off as he got a good look at the photo on his phone. His eyes traced every curve and shape that he could, trying to memorize the picture.

“You need some time alone Major?” Fig asked playfully, knocking fists with Epps.

That seemed to break him from his trance. Looking up he frowned at them. “Shut up.”

(Back at the Witwicky residence.)

“I can’t believe you sent them a picture of me looking like this!” Sam grumped, pulling on her tank top angrily.

Mikaela rolled her eyes hiding her grin as Sam continued to complain. Her phone beeped alerting her to a response. Glancing at it she allowed her grin to turn smug. “Well apparently they appreciated it.” She held the phone up to her friend. “Will says you look good by the way.”

Sam paused in her rant, a blush growing over her features as she turned from Mikaela to hide it. “I’m sure he’s just being nice. Besides why are you sending your boyfriend photos of other girls? Isn’t that against some sort of girlfriend code or something?”

Mikaela studied her friend’s stiff posture and that fact that she still refused to look at her. “He’s not my boyfriend. We’ve never gone out and we never will.” Sam turned to her, eyes wide and shocked. “He’s not my type and I’m not his.”

“But…you guys were kissing and…”

“That was a one time thing. He pulled off one hell of a favor for me and I was so excited I just planted one on him.” Mikaela grinned saucily. “I mean yeah he’s hot and all, but he’s a bit too straight laced for me. Besides you like him and I don’t pouch from my friends.” Sam blushed again, eyes falling to the floor. “That’s why you backed off isn’t it? You thought we were going out so you grew distant to give us space to be together.”

Shrugging she turned to fiddle with her bag. “I figured if you two were happy I’d be ok…Besides it’s not like he’d ever think of me like that. I’m like a kid sister to him…”

Mikaela snorted. “Uh huh. So whose car is in the garage?” She decided to change the subject to calm the other girl down.

“Will’s. He wouldn’t let me take a cab back from the base when I dropped Bee off. So he’s letting me borrow his car till Bee gets back.” At Mikaela’s look she started defending herself. “I tried to say no, but he was worried and insisted. It’s not a big deal. Like I said he thinks of me as a sister.”
“Sam. Guys do not let their sisters drive their cars.” Mikaela chuckled at her friend’s naivety. “Now sit still, we aren’t finished just yet.”

Seeing Mikaela armed with various make-up products Sam backed away, arms raised to ward her off.
Sam sat off to the side watching as boys and girls, some she recognized from school, partied like teenagers were want too. More than a few had brought booze, and she swore she saw more than one joint passed around. Music blared for one of the cars parked by the lake, its speakers custom designed for high volume. Several teens were in the water playing around by tossing beach balls back and forth and splashing others. Mikaela sat talking to one of the football players that clearly had a thing for her.

She tried to join in and have fun, but Sam felt so uncomfortable around all these people. It didn’t help that she had seen war in all its horrible reality, something these teens hadn’t. She may have been innocent in some things, but not in the truth of the world and consequentially the truth of universe. As such she didn’t feel a connection with those that should be her peers.

“Samantha Witiky right?” A deep voice caught her attention.

She watched as Brendan Carter eased himself beside her a drink in his hand and what he obviously thought of as a suave smile on his face.

“It’s Witwicky actually.” She corrected absently. “You’re Brendan Carter? You play on the football team right?”

“That I do. Tight End Receiver.” He boasted proudly. “Never thought I’d see you at one of these things, you always seemed more…academic."

“Is that your nice way of saying Nerdy?” Sam grinned cheekily, pleased at his sheepish look.

Brendan chuckled. “Yeah well, you know what I mean.”

“It’s cool. Mikaela thought I needed to get out of the house. Apparently I’m supposed to be enjoying summer.” She explained.

“So are you? Enjoying summer as it were?” He asked, one hand waving absently to the party scene before them.

“It’s not bad. A little…” She paused as they watched two guys throwing a third into the water. “Different from what I’m used too. Definitely louder…”

“Yeah. Jake just upgraded his speaker system and wanted to show them off. Supposedly they’re top of the line. Cost him three grand.”

“For speakers?”

“Well they’re the best. Besides his parents are loaded so it doesn’t really matter.” He shrugged indifferently.

Sam chose not to comment on that. “So you enjoying your summer?”

They talked for a while much to Sam’s surprise. Before none of the guys at school had seemed interested. Of course she also wasn’t stupid and knew it had a lot to do with her current state of dress. As the party dragged on Sam started to get tired. Speaking with Brendan hadn’t been bad, but she was ready to leave. Searching for her friend she found Mikaela more than a little tipsy dancing with her current guy of choice.
“Hey Mik…Um I’m sort of ready to go…Is it ok if we leave now?”

“Aww Sam! We’re having so much fun.” Mikaela giggled as she stumbled against the jock, his arms wrapping around her waist. “Can’t we stay a little longer?”

“Yeah Sam.” The guy added. “It’s too early to leave.”

Frowning at the interruption Sam prepared to argue when Brendan came up behind her. “I can take you home. I’m ready to split this gig anyway.” He offered.

Sam didn’t really want to go with him but Mikaela patted her shoulder. “Isn’t that nice Sammy? He’ll take you home.”

Seeing as her friend obviously didn’t want to leave and Brendan had offered she nodded. “You’re sure?”

“Yeah, come on.” Both of them bid farewell to the other teens as Brendan led Sam over to a rather trumped up looking Mustang. Sliding into the passenger seat Sam tried to ignore the part of her that warned her that something wasn’t right.

The ride back was mostly in silence with Brendan turning the radio to a station that played mostly soft music. Sam frowned at that but said nothing. She tried some small talk but it seemed to fall flat after a little bit.

About twenty minutes into the hour ride back to the city Brendan pulled his car off the road pulling into a small out of the way side road. Turning off the motor he grinned broadly at Sam.

“Why’d you stop? Is there something wrong with the car?” Sam frowned at him, not liking the look in his eye.

“Nope. Just thought we needed some ‘quiet’ time.” He let one hand land on her knee gripping the skin tightly before letting his fingers wander up towards her shorts.

Sam jumped at the sensation, moving quickly to dislodge his hand. “Well I don’t really think that’s a good idea…”

Brendan ignored her, his other hand sliding around her neck and pulling her in for a kiss. He shifted the hand from her leg up to her arm in a bruising grip to turn her towards him. His lips crashed down on hers hard, demanding a response. Sam’s heart beat wildly in fear and anger, her arms coming up to fight against him, but Brendan had far more strength than she did.

“Stop…stop!” She protested once he released her mouth, his lips moving to her neck and shoulders. His hands roamed over her form, knocking her flailing hands away as if mere gnats. “No!” Sam moved her hands against his chest in an effort to push him away. Again he ignored her.

“Aw don’t be such a tease babe. You know you want it. Why else would a geek like you dress like this?” His hand moved to the inside of her thighs, his touch painful and demanding.

Having enough Sam brought one knee up into his side, striking a rib. When he pulled back in surprise she swung her right arm hard, fist connecting with his nose. Briefly she felt the cartilage give way and he fell back to the other side of the vehicle crying out in pain and cradling his now bleeding nose.

“What the fuck!” He snarled angrily at her. “You bitch! You broke my nose!”
“I told you to stop!” Sam glared at the boy moving fast to get out of the car when his hand lashed out towards her. She barely had enough time to scramble out, her purse falling to the ground just under the car. Pissed Brendan revved the engine and drove off the moment the door had closed behind Sam.

Breathing hard and shaking from fear Sam watched as the car lights fade from sight in the darkening twilight. She gathered her purse trying to focus on what needed to be done and not what had almost happened. Her knuckles stung from the impact and she could make out the beginnings of bruises on her hands and arms. Tears slid from the side of her eyes as she started to push the items back into her purse. However any hope she had about getting help relatively soon died the moment her hand made contact with her completely destroyed cell phone. It seemed one of the Mustang’s tires had crushed the device quite thoroughly.

Choking back an angry sob she let her frustration out by throwing the ruined phone to the ground and screaming in rage. After a few minutes spared to lament her horrid luck she finally accepted the inevitable and hauled her purse over her shoulder and started walking. At the very least she knew the direction that she needed to go.

Focusing on putting one foot in front of the other and pretending that she didn’t hurt where her would-be-rapist had touched her, Sam continued to move forward towards home. At least with the coming night she had some relief from the heat that usually permeated the air during this time of year. However the logical part of her mind reminded her that it also got extremely cold at night, and a tank top, shorts and bikini were not going to provide enough protection for her. Luckily the act of walking provided some warmth.

Though she knew not to hitch hike, especially after some of the lectures her father had given her over the years, she did plan on waving down a car to hopefully find someone with a cell phone to make a call for her. Yet so far she had not even seen the hint of headlights.

At least an hour had passed since she started walking and she began to wonder just how long it would take her to get home. The lake was a good hour away by car, walking would be much, much longer. It also seemed Brendan chose a route less traveled. It wouldn’t surprise her if he pulled this sort of thing before on other unsuspecting girls. Jerk.

The welcomed sound of an engine grew louder in her ears. Stopping she turned towards the way she had come, eyes searching the distant road. Soon a set of headlights crested the hill and Sam breathed a sigh of relief.

Moving as close to the side of the road as she dared she waved her arms trying to get the driver’s attention. Squinting to get a better idea of the vehicle she noted the black and white coloring and the lights sitting unused on top of the vehicle. For one irrational second terror overwhelmed her at memories of a very similar vehicle that had turned into a psychotic robot.

‘Don’t be silly Sam. There haven’t been any Decepticons in the area since that one time. It’s just a cop patrolling the area that’s all.’ Shaking her head at her own foolishness she flagged down the vehicle with renewed vigor.

The car started to slow down as it got closer much to Sam’s joy. She started smiling ready to greet the driver when she noticed that no one sat in the driver seat.

“Oh you’ve gotta be kidding me.” She hissed in despair, turning on her heal and breaking into a flat out run, kicking her shoes off in the process.

Behind her she heard the squeal of tires on asphalt as Barricade took off in pursuit. Dodging towards
the grassy hills she hoped the uneven surface would slow him down and allow her time to escape. Mid-chase the robot transformed, the sound very familiar to Sam after nearly a year with Bumblebee. A loud bang, similar to that of a gun, shot off causing her to duck in hopes of avoiding the bullet. Only Barricade had not fired a weapon but a net to capture her. The wire based mesh of the net hit her hard, sending her sprawling as the trap wrapped around her. She tried to struggle out of the net, but it seemed to grow more restricting with each movement until she couldn’t move at all.

Heart pounding in her ears she watched with baited breath as the robot walked calmly over to her, his red eyes flashing with satisfaction. He spoke in the strange Cybertronian language Bee and the others occasionally used, obviously sending a signal out.

Suddenly the sound of a jet overhead alerted her to the arrival of another robot. Her mind flashed back to Mission City and the one they called Starscream. Again she heard the sounds of a bot transforming and seconds later two large robotic legs slammed into the earth next to Barricade. This was not Starscream, though he had a similar form, his body seemed sleeker, and his eyes far more menacing.

“Is this the fleshling?”

“Samantha Witwicky. And it looks like she’s without her annoying guardian.” Barricade answered.

“Did you scan her?”

“Not yet.” Then he turned to her, hand outstretched as a green light flared to life and connected with her body moving from head to toe. When the light touched her skin she could feel a strange tingling sensation. Looking down she gasped in awed disbelief at the strange glowing symbols on her skin.

“What?”

“It is confirmed. She has residue from the All Spark.” Barricade informed the other.

“That’s not possible!” Sam spoke up, too shocked to be scared. “Ratchet said it didn’t affect me!”

“Well either he was wrong or he didn’t want to scare you.” The new robot replied scathingly. “You fleshlings are rather weak after all.”

Sam just glared at him. “What do you want?”

“You are going to assist us with a little problem.” Barricade announced. “Thundercracker is going to take you. If you wish to live you will do as he says.”

She didn’t bother asking what would happen if she declined their ‘request’. No doubt they would kill her and possibly others she cared about. So she focused on the issue at hand. “What do you need my help for?”

“That is not your concern, you will simply do what we tell you girl.” Thundercracker bent down so that his eyes met hers. He definitely had a more threatening aura then Starscream. In fact it reminded her greatly of Megatron. Satisfied that the human would be quiet the Decepticon pulled back looking to Barricade. “You know what to do.”

With that he transformed back into a F-15 fighter jet, the cockpit open. Barricade reached for her, pulling her high into the air. Sam tried one last futile attempt to break away with no luck. The bot brought up one hand allowing the fingers to slide back within him and a single needle like device to come forth. Eyes wide with fear Sam trembled as he stabbed the needle into her shoulder, none-too-gently either. Not even seconds later her vision darkened around the edges until she was pulled
completely into unconsciousness.
Chapter 15

Sam groaned painfully as her body and brain decided to rejoin the land of the living. The throbbing behind her eyes didn’t lessen any as sunlight glared against her lids. In an attempt to stave off the pain she tried to roll over, hoping to hide her head under her pillow. Only her movements were restricted to a tiny space and she made contact with hard unyielding metal instead of her soft familiar bed.

Blinking she forced her eyes open, squinting against the glare from the glass above her. Looking around she saw the controls and features that made up the interior of a fighter jet. Confusion lasted for only a minute as the memories of the night before came rushing back to her mind.

Jerking at the realization she once more found her movements restricted. Looking down she took in the straps holding her in place and the larger than normal cuffs that kept her hands constricted in front of her.

“Oh god.” She moaned pitifully.

“Stop that incessant moving, fleshling. We have another hour before we arrive at our destination.” The voice came from the consol directly in front of her, confirming that her captor was Thundercracker.

“Where are we?” She would have tried to look out the window but she didn’t think she could the way she was strapped in. Also given the speed the jet flew at she was having trouble keeping her stomach in one place.

“We will be arriving in Russia at the northern point of Lake Baikal. From there we will traverse into the mountains and our destination.”

“Russia.” Her voice came out weak and uneven. “And…why are we going to Russia? I mean...I don’t even have my passport…”

“When we reach our destination you will know. Until then shut your trap.”

Knowing that he would say no more on the subject and she wasn’t exactly in a position to push it, Sam leaned back into the seat and tried to stay calm. Mentally she wondered how long it would take her parents to realize she was missing and piece together what happened. And even if they did, how would they find her without a way to trace her?

Deep in thought she formulated a plan of escape. Somehow she would give her captor the slip and find a phone.

XOXOXO

When Thundercracker finally landed Sam had no idea what time it was or where exactly they were. It looked like a small stripe of land that might have been used as an airstrip at one time in the past, but now laid barren and unused. The bot commanded her to exit the cockpit, the seatbelt retracting automatically, though the cuffs remained in place. It took some scrambling and awkward maneuvering but she managed. Stepping onto the cool ground on sore bare feet she moved a good twenty feet from the bot as it took its bipedal form.

Glaring down imperiously at the human Thundercracker reached out one hand allowing a chain of energy to connect to the cuffs holding her hands in place. Using that he tugged her along after him. It
would take a good two days for them to reach their destination. He would have flown, but the magnetic field was still active restricting his ability to land safely. As there were no other places closer for him to land in his alternate form this would have to do.

Sam fought to keep up with the giant bot in order to prevent being dragged, but after four hours of trailing him she started to lose the energy needed to stay upright, especially at the pace he had set. The terrain certainly didn’t help with the rocky ground and forested area. Her feet gathered more scrapes and bruises given their unprotected state. Her wrists were beginning to throb painfully, the skin rubbing raw from the metal of the cuffs. It was also colder in this region of the world, likely due to its location in the hemisphere and her outfit was not helping in the slightest.

Finally when it all became too much she called out to the bot. “Stop! Stop, I have to rest…I can’t…” Thundercracker growled as he turned on the human, his optics scanning her form and registering the truth of her words. Of course it only proved the weakness of these Earthlings, their forms so pitiful that they could not withstand an easy trek. He considered carrying her but was loath to do so. His system beeped alerting him to the change in body temperature of the human. It only figured that she couldn’t handle such temperatures. Irritated he knew they would need to stop for the night, as the temperature would only grow lower with the coming darkness. He couldn’t let her die too soon after all.

“Fine.” Moving to a better area he sat down allowing her to do what she would though keeping her within easy reach. “Rest human. But do it quietly.”

Sam considered dropping right there, however that would not prove beneficial for her survival. She knew from the darkening sky that night was falling. She would need someway to keep herself warm. Given her captor’s ‘friendly’ nature she highly doubted he thought to pack a blanket or food.

Calmly she listed off everything that she would need. First and foremost a fire to keep her warm. Thankfully there was plenty of wood around. Then she would need water. Sure she could go a long time without food, but water was essential.

Gathering up branches and some leaves she started constructing a pit for her fire. Making sure she had enough wood to last the night she set up the kindling. Using two rocks she tried again and again to make a flame, only it would not spark. Knowing she had no other choice she turned to the Decepticon watching her.

“Excuse me, Thundercracker? Could you possibly light this fire for me with a small laser strike? Nothing too big, just enough to get it going?” When he didn’t move she added. “Look you obviously need me alive for whatever…but I’ll freeze without a fire. I’m also going to need water.” The robot rolled his optics but pointed a finger in the direction of her fire pit and let a small laser fire, sparking the kindling into flames. He then opened a section of his storage unit pulling out three bottled waters. That he had known about when they planned this little abduction. Setting the bottles in front of her he turned to ignore her for the rest of the night. He certainly didn’t expect to hear her thank him.

“Thank you.” Sam told him honestly as she gathered up the bottles and moved over to the fire. Putting a few more pieces of wood onto the flame to keep it going she took a sip of the refreshing liquid happy at the relief it gave her sore throat. Sitting down tiredly she watched the flames trying to revise her plan.

Originally she had hoped to just trick the bot to looking away long enough to give her a chance to run. However, with the addition of the energy chain to the cuffs she knew that plan would no longer
work. Giving up for the moment as the physical and emotional stress from the past days’ ordeals swept over her she shut down her mind and focused solely on getting through the night.

The next morning Thundercracker had woken her with a hard jerk to her chain. For a moment she was disoriented and more than a little surprised that she had survived falling asleep in the wilderness, even with her ‘comrade’ nearby. Once she had taken care of business, a rather embarrassing task when one had to explain it to an alien robot, she once again trailed after the Decepticon.

This time he went slower, though if because he cared for her wellbeing or simply because the terrain grew more treacherous she didn’t care. More than once he had to carry her over the more dangerous sections of the path. Something he didn’t do gently at all. In fact her collection of bruises and cuts grew throughout the day’s toils. Wherever they were headed it obviously wasn’t near any towns.

After long hours of silently hiking behind the bot Thundercracker finally called a stop for the night. Too tired and sore to even bother moving another inch Sam just dropped right then and there. She didn’t even care about a fire at this point, too exhausted to worry about such things. Instead she curled up and drifted off to sleep wondering if there was anyway out of this.
“Major!” Turning to the soldier approaching Lennox nodded in acknowledgement. “Satellites picked up a radiation signature. It’s not responding to the Autobot signal.”

“Pull it up.” He motioned towards the main screen. Optimus Prime stood behind him, studying the images brought forth.

“Where is this location?” The large bot inquired.

“Just north of Lake Baikal in Russia.” Another soldier read out. “Signature is moving north east.”

“We got any closer images?” Lennox squinted as photos popped up showing a large robotic-like creature in still frames.

“Decepticon.” Ironhide growled out as he joined them in their recon. “Looks like one of the seekers.”

“Indeed. But why would he go to this region? It appears uninhabited…” Optimus mused.

“What can you tell me about the location?” Lennox turned to the men running the radar.

“Like Optimus said it’s basically uninhabited. There’s a small town about 100 clicks to the north. The maps doesn’t show anything else, but satellite imaging is marking what looks like an abandoned base.”

“Hmm… Might be a secret military location left over from the cold war.” Lennox thought out loud.

“Could it be possible this base may have something he is looking for?” Optimus posed the question.

Ironhide leaned closer to the photos on the screen. “It looks like he is using an energy chain to drag something.”

Lennox and Optimus both frowned at that and looked again at the screen.

“Guys can I get a clearer picture than this?”

“Yes Major.” Less than a minute later they were looking at more satellite images, this time with much better resolution.

“Thundercracker.” Ironhide hissed angrily.

“It appears that he is dragging a human. But why?” Optimus frowned thoughtfully. It was not like Decepticons to deal with humans aside from killing them indiscriminately. However this clearly was not the case.

“Try to get a close up on the human.” Lennox ordered the men then turned to the Autobots. “We’ll set up a basic strike force. We can drop in and surround them. Once we have them surrounded we’ll extract the civilian and trap the enemy…”

“Sir we have a visual.”

Lennox, Optimus and Ironhide all turned to the screen. Optimus hissed in surprise while Ironhide let out a curse. Lennox felt like the floor had dropped out from under him. The photo clearly showed the
captive’s arms encased in cuffs with the energy chain connected to them and pulling her onward. The female looked tired and definitely in need of medical attention given the number of cuts and bruises littering what skin they could see. But all of this is not what had Will fighting to keep control of his emotions.

“Someone will have to tell Bumblebee.” Ironhide whispered to Optimus.

“Yes, but we cannot let him go off on his own…”

Will ignored the two bots, his eyes still locked on the image in front of him. The picture that showed the civilian captive was clearly, undeniably Samantha Witwicky.

xoxoxo

Sam trotted along behind Thundercracker in an effort to keep up. Like the morning before he chose to give her a rather unsavory wake up call then proceed once she saw to her needs. Even though she had a regular supply of water her energy levels continued to drop. From the headache and flushed cheeks she would guess that she had gotten sick on this little incursion. If she was lucky it was just a cold, if not it could be an infection from any one of the numerous cuts she had garnered the past few days.

Thankfully the terrain had evened out some, though it still had a liberal amount of rocks that cut into her abused feet. If she got out of this alive she swore to soak her poor tootsies for at least a week. Once they healed she might even consider a massage or the very least a pedicure.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a harsh tug on the chain, which undermined her balance and sent her tumbling to the ground. She was dragged a good meter before she managed to get back up. Scowling at her captor she continued on trying to ignore the pain from her latest injuries.

The morning had dragged on into the late afternoon before the tree line opened up onto a large clearing. Thundercracker paused, his optics scanning the area for something. Sam took a moment to catch her breath then look around.

The area was huge, consisting of several old buildings and lots of space. From the overgrowth and disrepair she surmised it had not been used in a very long time. A few abandoned vehicles sat scattered here and there confirming this used to be a military base of some sort. From the faded symbols painted on the vehicles this base had operated when the Soviet Union was at its height of power.

“This way fleshling.” Thundercracker pulled on her restraints leading her towards one of the larger hangars.

Huffing in annoyance she complied trying to ignore the creepiness of the place. It reminded her of the perfect place for one of those horror movies Mikaela liked so much, especially now that the sun was beginning to set and the fading light cast an eerie glow over everything.

At the hanger Thundercracker easily pushed the large doors aside as if paper instead of steel. Beams of light shot out from his chest sweeping the area. Sam tried to stay outside, her gut telling her she wouldn’t like what she would find inside the hanger. Sadly she had no choice as the Decepticon pulled her forcibly into the building. The interior was just as poorly maintained as the exterior and Sam could see signs that animals had taken to visiting on occasion.

A harsh guttural command in Cybertronian had her stopping short. Squinting in the failing light she startled when she made out the form of a tank, the barrel pointed right at them. Thundercracker didn’t
seem surprised in the least and replied in kind, at which time the tank transformed into its own bipedal form.

Sam gulped as she now had two extremely large and imposing machines standing over her, neither one on her side. The two Decepticons exchanged words and the tank turned to her bending down to get a good look. It took all of what little courage she had left not to step away.

Apparently the bot was satisfied and pulled away, turning to lead them further inside. He raised an arm and lights flickered on, the brightness of the florescence making Sam flinch. Considering the state of the hanger she almost wished he hadn’t bothered with the lights.

All too soon she found herself standing between the two bots gazing at a machine that looked like a combination of alien and human technology pieced together.

“Once the device absorbs the All Spark residue from the fleshling the Energon Harvester will be operational.” The unidentified bot informed the other.

“Good. And the resources of this region will be adequate to provide the energon needed?”

“Yes, for a time. We will move it once we have stripped this region of its natural resources. There are several places on this planet that will be acceptable for our uses.”

‘That’s not good.’ Sam frowned as she listened to them. From what Bumblebee had told her Cybertronians used energon as their source of food. He never said where it came from or how it was gathered, but he did indicate that Decepticons had no problems stripping other planets of their resources to create their food. And now Earth was on the menu.

Suddenly the chain on her cuffs snapped freeing her from the bot. Thundercracker then pushed her towards the other bot who held out a small mechanical device that had Cybertronian symbols etched all along its surface.

“Um…I don’t think I want to hold that. In fact my mother told me not to handle things I don’t know the origin of so I’ll just be going…”

“You will do as you’re told fleshling. Take the device.” The bot thrust the item forward in a threatening manner.

“Ok…” Taking the device she held it as far from her as she could, slightly surprised at the weight of it. When nothing happened she fidgeted. “Uh…is it supposed to do something?”

The two bots stood up and started speaking in their language the conversation growing heated from the increased beeps and clacking sounds. Noticing that they seemed to be ignoring her for the moment she started to back away and too the side. When they still did not take notice of her she made a run for it, keeping close to the wall and slipping out a side door. Of course her absence didn’t remain unnoticed long considering the roar of anger echoing from the building.

Sam refused to look back instead she urged her legs to run as fast as possible. She ducked behind a section of lower buildings, scrambling for a hiding place. The earth shook from the force of impacts coming from the two bots running around searching for her.

“Get back here fleshling! There’s no where for you to go!”

“You are only prolonging your imminent death!” The other bellowed.

‘Oh yes, that’s gonna convince me.’ She thought sarcastically, crouching down between a group of
barrels. When one passed uncomfortably close she had to cover her mouth to try and control her breathing. For a heart stopping moment she thought it would detect her but it moved on. Letting out a sigh she relaxed enough to crawl from her spot and check the area.

With coast clear she tried to make a break for it towards the woods. It proved a mistake, as the bots were not as far away as she hoped. One of them crashed into the building she had been taking refuge behind, tearing through it and throwing debris in every direction, including hers.

She flinched and ducked, swerved and ran trying to avoid getting crushed. A missile slammed into the ground about 20 meters in front of her blocking off her escape. She barely had time to slide to a stop before the blast threw her back to the ground. Dazed she rolled to her side pushing up on her forearms. Another blast nearby had her throwing her arms over her head to protect herself. When the dust started to settle she looked over her shoulder watching as the tank bot came towards her.

Sam tried to get back up but she found she couldn’t move fast enough. Looking down she found her leg pinned down by a large portion of concrete. A sense of defeat filled her as she saw that giant hand coming ever closer to her.

Just when she thought it was all over the Decepticon reared back in pain as a blast slammed into it from behind. Then all hell broke loose.
(An hour earlier)

“Alright listen up!” Will Lennox called out to the men in the plane. “We’ll have to drop one mile outside of the target location. There is a large radiation signature in the area which the Autobots think means there’s more than one contact. We’re going to surround the abandoned base and neutralize the threat. We need to proceed with extra caution on this one. The target has a hostage. No one will fire until the hostage has been retrieved or otherwise ordered to do so. Ratchet and Sideswipe will be with Beta team taking the east quadrant. Optimus and Bumblebee will head up the alpha team on the southern front. Ironhide will lead the Delta team with the twins for the west and north. Take up position and do not move until the order is given. Any questions?”

“Sir, do we know who the civilian hostage is?” Fig called out. Both he and Epps had noticed their commander’s foul mood since the Intel had come in. Something was under his skin but he wouldn’t say what. They also noticed that Bumblebee’s attitude had soured greatly after a quick conversation with Prime.

Will didn’t want to say but he knew they would need to know. Shifting slightly he forced the words from his throat. “It’s Sammy.” That caught everyone’s attention. Even the men that had never met the girl knew about her and appreciated the gifts she often sent to the base. Those that did know her grew deadly serious.

“How in the hell did those Decepticon scumbags get Sammy?” Epps demanded.

“I don’t know ok.” Will snapped. “What I do know is that she’s a hostage for whatever reason. And we’re gonna get her back. That means everybody’s got to be on top of their game!” He let his gaze wander around meeting the serious gazes looking back at him. “Gear up! Drop in ten!”

The men worked in silence no one really sure what to say. Given the black look on his face, no one dared to engage the Major in conversation.

Before long their journey was over and the light turned green alerting them to the drop. The ramp dropped down and the men moved out. On the other plane the Autobots started their own descent into the wilderness surrounding the base. With efficiency born of long hours of training and years of combat experience the soldiers completed the jump. Once down they squads broke up and moved into position.

Will stood beside Epps as the other checked the area through binoculars. “Target one acquired headed towards the north side air hanger. Hostage is still in possession, some weird ass glowing chain hooked up to her.”

“Enemy sighted. Position status.” Will ordered through the radios.

“Beta team in position and holding.” Graham advised over the radio.

“Delta team in position and ready to engage.” Ironhide growled through the link.

“Hold position.” Will ordered, turning to use hand signals for his own team to spread out. Optimus sat behind him in vehicle form, Bumblebee next to him.

“Something’s going on in there Major.” Epps caught his attention.
“We’ve got movement coming out of the hanger.” Ironhide echoed over the radio.

Suddenly two large bots exploded from the hanger in pursuit.

“Get back here fleshling! There’s no where for you to go!”

“You are only prolonging your imminent death!”

“Shit Sam’s on the run. Alpha and Beta teams move in. Delta hold position. If you can grab Sam do so.” Will nearly yelled into the radio.

The soldiers crept closer guns at the ready. They could see the Decepticons searching around a smaller section of buildings. When they passed one section the radio crackled with Harrison reporting.

“This is Delta team, hostage spotted she’s making a run for the woods!”

Apparently they were not the only ones to notice as one of the bots roared suddenly crashing into a building and destroying it. Soon he followed it up with missile fire.

“Engage!” Will yelled over the comm.

“Autobots! Roll!” Optimus followed shortly and everyone moved. Bumblebee sped forward transforming mid motion and firing his plasma cannon at the Decepticon closing in on Sam. The volley made a direct hit knocking the other bot back and all hell broke loose.

The Decepticons twirled sending return fire. Explosions rang out as the other groups joined in. Bumblebee and Ironhide tag teamed the bot that had directly fired on Sam while Sideswipe and Optimus cornered the other one with the soldiers. Ratchet was dispatched to where Sam was pinned down according to the Intel, the twins serving as a defense line. For the most part the soldiers held back allowing the Autobots full run of the battle adding support fire where needed.
chapter 18

Sam kept her arms over her head as best she could praying that nothing else would fall on her. She tried to slip out from under the slab of concrete but it had her pinned effectively. The pain was starting to overwhelm her. Tears streamed down her face and she bit her lip to keep from screaming.

The next thing she knew hands, human hands were touching her shoulders and arms, a voice calling out to her.

“Samantha Witwicky? Are you Samantha? Talk to me.” The voice demanded.

“…Yes…” She gasped out.

Another set joined the first, though this one closer to her legs and examining the section where the slab had pinned her. “This is important. Can you feel your legs?”

“…Hurts…” She bit out, managing to turn tear filled eyes up to the soldier speaking to her.

“Ok, that’s a good thing. Now I need you to stay completely still for me. We’re going to move the slab.” He continued, all the while checking her pulse and flashing a light in her eyes to check her responses. “I know it hurts now but when we lift the slab it’s going to hurt even more. I need you to stay strong for me. Can you do that?”

Sam couldn’t quite answer so she nodded in stead, taking a deep breath.

“It will be alright Samantha.” The familiar voice of Ratchet reached her over the explosions and gunfire in the distance. “I am going to monitor your systems while we do this.”

Again she nodded, hands clenching against the device she still held.

“Ok. On three.” The man kneeling next to her advised. “One. Two…Three!”

On three, Ratchet lifted the slab and the soldiers pulled her free moving her over towards the tree line. Ratchet came by scanning her the entire time and talking with the humans working on her. The rest of the soldiers and two bots she had not seen before formed a perimeter around their position.

Sure enough when the slab was moved and her blood flow fully returned to her leg the pain tripled. Sam cringed against it but didn’t move as the soldier had asked. They worked fast to immobilize her leg. One moved to give her a shot of morphine but she stalled his hand.

“Wait…take this…” She passed him the device. “Said it was power source for…Energon Harvester…in…hanger…tell…Optimus…”

“Ok. I’ll tell him.” The medic assured her taking the proffered device and setting it aside. Then he completed administering the shot. It didn’t take long for her to succumb to the drugs, the exhaustion working in tandem with the pain medicine to send her to sleep.

Ratchet paused in his scans when he heard Sam speaking to the medic, his optics studying the device that she handed over. He could clearly read the Cybertronian script on the outer shell. A chill swept through him at the realization of what she held. Optimus would need to know immediately.
Ironhide laughed triumphantly as he finished off the Decepticon, Bumblebee close behind him. To his left he saw Sideswipe and Optimus walking towards him. Thundercracker had managed to take his alternate form and escape, though not unharmed.

“Report.” Optimus called out.

“Threat neutralized.” Ironhide informed him proudly.

“And the soldiers?” His blue optics turned down to Will.

“A few injuries but we lucked out this time. No casualties.” He told the bot. “Epps get on the line call the planes to land here, there’s enough room and Ironhide said the radiation field was off now. Optimus we need to move this scrap metal off the runway.”

“Understood. Ironhide, Sideswipe.” He moved with the others to drag the remains of the Decepticon to the side.

“Lady Samantha…”

“They’re bringing her now Bumblebee.” Will assured the bot and himself. “Medics have her, she’s in good hands.”

To try and keep his mind focused Lennox started dishing out orders for clean up and evac of the wounded. They pulled everyone to the side near the buildings as the planes dropped down and landed. During this the soldiers of Delta squad came forward with Sam strapped to a board, Ratchet and the twins close behind.

“How is she?” Will inquired as he moved over to the medic and Sam’s prone form.

“Her right leg is fractured, but it is a clean brake, which is surprising as it was crushed under a concrete slab. She has several lacerations, abrasions and bruising all over, especially to the undersides of her feet. She’s dehydrated though not dangerously so, and she’s showing signs of malnourishment. She has a mild fever that I believe is from infection due to her untreated wounds.” The medic ran over the list as quickly and succinctly as he could. He watched as Lennox nodded absently, his eyes focused on the sleeping teen. The medic really didn’t want to tell him this since he had heard how protective the Major was of the child but he needed to know. “Sir. There’s a bit more.”

Will shot his eyes to the man sharply at that tone. When the medic moved him off a little ways from the others he knew he wouldn’t like what he had to say. “The light isn’t the greatest but we did note some bruising on her arms and thighs that appear to have been caused by hands…human hands.”

Will blinked his mind blank as he tried to process those words. “What…”

“I can’t be a hundred percent sure until we speak to her, but given the age of those bruises I would say they were formed prior to her abduction.”

Shocked at this news and more than a little angry at the thought of anyone hurting Sam, Will tried to calm himself. “Ok. Don’t say anything to anyone else until we get the story from her.”

“Yes sir.” The medic then held out a strange metal object. “She also said this needed to be given to
Optimus. It’s something to do with an Energon Harvester. It sounded important.”

Taking the object Will nodded. “Alright. Get Sammy situated on the plane then see to the rest of the wounded.” The man nodded and moved to carry out his orders. Will watched him go, spotting Bumblebee kneeling protectively next to Sam’s body though still allowing room for the medics to work.

Knowing he had to complete this job before he could let himself focus on Sam he walked over to Optimus who was speaking with Ratchet and Ironhide.

“Optimus! Sam gave one of my medics a strange device.” He called up to the Autobot leader. “Said something about an Energon Harvester.”

“Yes, Ratchet was just informing me.”

“Energon Harvester? What the hell is that?” Epps asked coming up beside Lennox along with Fig and Graham.

“It is a device that is used to turn the natural resources of a planet into energon.” Ratchet started to explain. “It was once used to harvest energy from lifeless planets that would never be able to support life. However the Decepticons use it wherever they can. Likely the device in her hands is the power source to turn the machine on. However this one appears to be nearly depleted. It would take the energy of the All Spark to reactivate it.”

“Then why did they take Samantha hostage?” Ironhide groused. “She’s a mere human.”

“It is possible that they noticed the residual power the All Spark infused her with and hoped that it would leave her form and enter the device.” Optimus speculated. “In any case we need to find the device and destroy it before any more Decepticons try to utilize its power.”

“She said it’s in the hanger.” Lennox and the others followed Optimus, Ironhide and Ratchet to the hanger they had seen the Decepticons take Sam to earlier. Sure enough once inside they found the machine the Decepticons had obviously wanted to use.

“Hmm. It appears they have patched together human technology with an old version Energon Harvester to adapt it to this planet.” Ratchet surmised as he scanned the device.

“I take it that’s a bad thing?” Fig piped in.

“Oh yes. It would have stripped this region’s natural resources in a matter of weeks, leaving it barren and uninhabitable.”

“Good thing the battery’s dead.” Epps muttered, eyes taking in the huge machine.

“So what do we do with it?” Graham asked. “Should we dismantle it and take it back to base?”

“No.” Optimus shook his head. “It will be best if we destroy it. However we will retrieve the key components to return to base and assure it cannot be repaired.”

“We’ll leave it to you guys then.” Will nodded in understanding having the others pull back from the hanger and warning those outside to stand back.

Not even a minute later a loud series of explosions occurred, smoke billowing out of the hanger. They watched as the three bots calmly walked from the wreckage, each carrying a part of the machine.
“Alright. Let’s round everyone up and head out.” Lennox called to the soldiers. “Epps get on the line and tell base contacts have been engaged. One terminated another sent running. Advise hostage retrieved and we’re coming home.”

“On it.”
The steady thrum of an airplane engine and the sounds of people talking in low tones and occasional movement were the first sounds that penetrated the haze of her mind. Next came the pain reminding her of the events of the past few days. With a sharp gasp she came fully awake, jerking up as she did so. The feel of straps keeping her restrained had her struggling fiercely. When hands gripped her arms and legs trying to stop her the panic set in.

“Whoa, whoa! Calm down Sammy-girl!” The familiar voice of Will had her pausing in her struggles. “Calm down, you’re safe now, we got you.” Falling back bonelessly she gasped for breath, tears stinging her eyes. “It’s ok. You’re safe…”

When her vision cleared she was able to make out Will’s worried face, as well as a few others hovering around them. “Wh...where?...Wha…”

“You’re on a plane. We’re headed back to base.” He assured her in soothing tones, one of his hands gripping her shaking one. “You’re strapped down cause you were hurt and they wanted to make sure you didn’t damage anything vital. Now you need to go back to sleep. We’ve got several hours before we make it home and you need your rest. Doc say’s you’ve been pushed hard the past few days.” He used his free hand to fix the blanket she had dislodged earlier with her movements.

“Stay?”

“I’m not going anywhere Sammy-girl.” He promised, smoothing the hair back from her sweat slicked forehead.

“Bee?”

“He’s here too. Now you just close you eyes and rest ok. We’ll keep you safe.” He was pleased when she did as he said, her grip relaxing in his though not completely. Making himself comfortable he settled in for the rest of the long ride back to Diego Garcia. Will had been truthful when he told Sam he wasn’t going anywhere, and neither was she. After this little fiasco she would be on lock down at the base for as long as they could keep her there.
The next time Sam woke up she found herself on a rather comfortable bed in what was clearly a medical ward. Blinking away the sleep she took stock of her situation noting that her right lower leg was in a cast and elevated, she could feel several bandages wrapped all over her body, and an IV was hooked up to her left arm. Her entire body felt heavy and sluggish.

Movement to her right had her turning her head as best she could. Worried hazel eyes met her blurry brown pair.

“Hey there princess.” Will greeted quietly, mindful of the other patients still sleeping. “If you wanted to come visit us there are better ways than getting kidnapped.”

Sam chuckled only to have it turn into a slight hacking cough given the dryness of her throat. Will lifted her head gently, holding up a cup with a straw allowing her a drink of water.

“Thanks.” She rasped softly. “I'll try to remember not to play the ‘damsel-in-distress’ card in the future.”

“You do that. You’re damn lucky we caught the radiation signature off that Decepticon that took you and investigated further.” He scolded lightly, his hands holding her bandaged right hand. “Scared the hell out of me when we realized it was you he had.”

“Sorry.” The honest regret in that word had him shaking his head ruefully.

“Sammy what happened? How did those Decepticons get you?”

Sam closed her eyes at the memories knowing that she had to tell him. “Mikaela came to my house… god I don’t even know how many days ago. I know it was Friday though. She said I had to get out of the house so she was dragging me to a lake party some of the other kids were throwing. We were there for a couple of hours and dusk was coming. I didn’t want to stay any longer, but Mikaela did. One of the guys offered me a ride home since he was leaving too and I accepted. He seemed ok…” Will tightened his grip on her hand, his thumb rubbing her skin in a comforting manner. “About twenty minutes into the ride he pulled off a side road. He um…he tried to…” She gulped harshly eyes adverted. “Anyways, I told him to stop. He didn’t, so I broke his nose and got out of the car. He drove off and just my luck his car wheel ran over my cell phone so I couldn’t call anyone. With no other option I started walking.” She paused again to catch her breath. “Anyway I guess I had been walking about an hour. I had planned to flag a car down and ask them to call for help, but no one passed by. Then finally a car appeared. I started flagging it down. When it got close enough I realized no one was driving and ran for it. Barricade decided to chase after me and shot a net out catching me before I got too far. Then he’s calling in the cavalry, which happened to be Thundercracker. While I was lying there they scanned me and…symbols glowed across my skin. It looked like Cybertronian.” She shrugged haphazardly. “The Barricade drugged me with some kind of shot. The next thing I know I’m waking up in Thundercracker’s cockpit one hour outside Russia of all places. We landed, he hooked up that weird chain to the cuffs they put on me and dragged me towards that base for I guess three days? I know we were outside two nights. I got most of my bruises and cuts from the trek.” She snorted. “When we got to the base he dragged me into the hanger where the other Decepticon was waiting and they led me to the Energon Harvester. They said it would strip the resources from the land. They forced some device into my hands, though I don’t know why, nothing happened when I touched it. They started arguing so I made a break for it. Didn’t get too far. Then a concrete slab pins me down and there’s gunfire going off everywhere. You know the rest.”
Will sat silently processing everything she said. Taking a steadying breath he asked the next question. “Sam, I know this is hard but where exactly did that boy touch you.”

Wide brown eyes darted to him before quickly moving away, a deep flush of shame creeping over her cheeks. “Does it matter? He didn’t…you know…”

“Yes it matters.”

From the tone of his voice she knew he would not drop it. “He um…grabbed my neck and right upper arm. He also…um grabbed my left leg at the knee and…the um…inner thigh.” When she finished she was bright red and trying hard not to cry at the memory and the shame it brought.

“Hey…hey.” Will moved closer taking her face in his hands and turning her to him. “You didn’t do anything wrong Sammy. You just say the word and we’ll make him disappear. We can do that.” That brought a laugh out. “Thanks, but he’s not worth the trouble.”

“Yeah…well we still need his name for the report.” Will tried to look completely innocent about it.

“Then you probably should have asked for it before you threatened to get rid of him.” They shared a small grin before Sam grew serious. “So what’s wrong with me? Will I live doc?”

“Smart ass. Yeah you’ll live.” He sighed tiredly. “You’ve got a broken bone in your right leg. A lot of bruises and cuts obviously. In fact I think you’ll win the ‘most colorful injured’ contest this time around. Doc said you had a fever due to a minor infection hence the antibiotics.” He nodded to the IV drip. “You were also dehydrated and malnourished so you’ll be on vitamins for a while. We called your parents to let them know you’re here. They told us about finding your purse and cell phone. They wanted to come here to see you but given the base’s Top Secret, they can’t.”

“So when are you guys shipping me out.” She asked curiously.

“We’re not. You’re stuck here for sometime, especially since you were specifically targeted.” He gave her a silencing look when she made to protest. “At least until we figure out if you’re going to be a target again and Bumblebee’s done with his two month assignment here, then we’ll see about letting you go.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea? I mean we’re talking about a debilitated whiny teen here. I could drive you guys to drinking or something.” She tried to joke but he could see the worry in her eyes.

“I think we can survive. After all we’ve had to deal with Epps and Fig for months now.”

“Oh well in that case I should be a walk in the park.”

Will grinned brightly glad that she seemed able to banter so well after all she had been through. That was one of the things he really admired about the girl, she always found a way to smile through the tough times.

When Sam started to yawn Will pulled the covers around her telling her to go back to sleep and he would see her later. She tried to protest but they fell flat as her eyes closed and she drifted off.

Will sat there for a few minutes contemplating everything she had said, and a bit about what she had not said. Regardless she had once more survived one hell of an encounter with the Decepticons and it looked like she might have more in the future. Even if command didn’t agree he knew that she would need some kind of training and he knew several guys that would love to help him out with that.
Placing a gentle kiss on her slumbering head he finally left the medical ward plans forming in his mind.
Samantha spent the next several weeks at the base enjoying time with Bumblebee and the other Autobots and the soldiers. She mostly kept to the bots to keep out of everyone’s way and Bumblebee had a hard time letting her out of his sights. So much so that she often just slept in the passenger side seat, one leg propped up on the door after he rolled the window down. Sometimes if it was a nice night they would ride out to one of the lesser-used sections of the base, right near the beach and she would fall asleep to the sounds of the waves crashing against the shores.

Sadly she also spent plenty of time stuck with Ratchet and several of the base medics as they poked, prodded and otherwise assaulted her in the name of science. However they did at least discover that while she did have traces of All Spark energy it took another active Cybertronian source to awaken it. She also did not have enough of it to actually do anything. As far as Ratchet and the others could tell the symbols were imbedded in her skin and it was likely in her deep, deep subconscious she had some of the cube’s information stored but they could only speculate to that. Otherwise she was fine and clear to return home.

Only she wasn’t allowed to leave until Bumblebee could escort her and of course a few other bots would be coming to check out the area. They feared Barricade might still be lingering somewhere.

While on base she got to learn more about the newest members of the team. The twins were a riot, often leaving her in stitches with their antics. Sideswipe was more of a speed demon than Bumblebee and often tried to goad her friend into a race. Apparently he was waiting for another bot, Sunstreaker, who was just as addicted to speed as himself. About halfway through her stay three female bots landed and met up with the others. Though technically separate they chose to be referred to by their lead bot’s name, Acree. Sam rather liked them and their ways of keeping the others in line.

Sadly she could only do so much and with her mind as active as it is she grew bored embarrassingly easily. Bumblebee knew this, which is why he tried to keep her busy, but there was only so much one could do with a broken leg and limited mobility. So he took her to the base lab where she found several books for her enjoyment and Ironhide even let her take apart and re-assemble some of the equipment. That is until Lennox and the others found out. It was quite amusing to see their faces when they came across her rebuilding a P-90. It probably wouldn’t have bothered them half as much if they didn’t hear her and Ironhide discussing ways to make it more powerful and the fact that she was attempting said theories.

It could have ended up with her confined to quarters but one of the other officers suggested giving her books and small assignments to allow her something to do since she couldn’t go into the main computer room. That’s how she ended up learning about the various communication systems and devices the military used and a few computer programs. Ratchet saw this and decided to add to her ‘schooling’ and gave her a few lessons as well. He forced Bumblebee and the Twins to join them as they were the younger members of their group and needed more education. Regardless Sam enjoyed it all, learning more than she had even with her advanced classes.

Thankfully her leg healed on schedule and she was able to have the cast removed. Of course when that happened Will and the other guys deemed her ready for physical therapy. Only it was the military type. They had her running, doing calisthenics and learning the basics of self-defense. While she generally didn’t mind and actually considered it a good thing, some days she seriously thought they were trying to finish her off. Bumblebee was no help and he sometimes chased her during her runs to ‘encourage’ her. Yeah, it had conspiracy written all over it.

Finally though it was deemed safe enough for her to return home. Though she had three Autobots
and several soldiers escorting her. She had told Will that it’d be fine if she and Bee caught the next cargo plane back to the states but he just waved her off and stated they had to check for Barricade. Given his adamant stance she let it go, besides this way she could return his car.

Surprisingly most of the soldiers on base came out to see them off along with the Autobots that wouldn’t be making the journey. They wished her well and reminded her to keep sending toys for them. It got to the point where Will had to drag her to the plane, Bee following in their wake. Luckily the flight home wasn’t as bad as she had suspected, and she even got to learn some new card games.

Looking around at the various soldiers and the three giant robots she smiled softly to herself. It was nice to know so many people cared. Sure getting kidnapped by dangerous aliens sucked, but she wouldn’t trade her life for the world. Throwing a bright smile at Bee she mentally nodded. No she wouldn’t trade this for anything.


“Come on let’s go! All hands on deck!” Sam’s father yelled throughout the house far too early for her liking. “Frankie, Mojo out! Come on kiddo! We’re on a schedule.”

Sam sighed as she grabbed another box following her father out to the family car. “Why are you in such a hurry to get rid of me? You rented my room out didn’t you?” she arched a brow in accusation at her father.

“No, I have other plans for your room.” He snipped back a sly grin on his face. “And it rhymes with home theater.”

“Great dad… and where will I sleep during vacations?”

“The couch’s perfectly good.”

Sam snorted placing the box of clothing in the car. To think a year had passed already. She had survived an eventful summer, then a less eventful but equally grueling senior year of studies and plenty of social events that Mikalea dragged her too, often against her will. She still kept up with the guys in NEST and the other Autobots but they had been unusually busy the past few months and she didn’t want to overstep her bounds. She had to pull back a lot when some ‘politicians’ got worried about the possible ‘breech’ in secrecy. All bureaucratic bullshit in her opinion but what could she do? She supposed it was a miracle they hadn’t separated her from Bumblebee, even with the abduction last summer.

Leaving her dad to sort out the placement of the boxes in the vehicle she ran back for the rest of her stuff only to pause upon finding her mother practically sobbing in the living room.

“Look what I found.” She managed to get out between each sniffle and gasp, holding up a pair of tiny shoes. “It’s your little baby booties…”

“Mom.” Sam moved forward to comfort her. Apparently her mom had developed empty nest syndrome the moment they got her acceptance letter. She’d been going through the attic and various boxes pulling out things Sam dearly wished would disappear.

Judy pulled her baby into a tight hug. “Oh my little baby girl. You can’t go.”

“Mom.” This time her voice held a hint of exasperation.

The older woman continued as if she hadn’t heard her. “You have to come home for every holiday. Even the little ones.” Her breath caught in her throat as she tried to control her tears. “Even Halloween.”

“Mom I can’t come home for Halloween.”

“Then will come to you. We’ll be in costume you’ll never know we’re there.” Let it not be said that Witwicky women weren’t stubborn.

Catching sight of her father she silently begged for his help. Ron rolled his eyes at his wife’s antics. “Will you let the kid breath, for crying out loud? Come on, go pack! There’s no way you’re packed for a month long trip.” He gestured her to go upstairs, clapping her hands when she didn’t move fast enough. “Come on! Chop, chop! Let’s go.”
Judy moved slowly to the stairs dragging her feet almost petulantly. Ron gave her a look.

“March young lady.” He punctuated this with a slap to her backside much to Sam’s horror.

“Dad!”

Judy grinned playfully at her husband leaning towards him. “I love it when you call me ‘young lady’. you dirty old man.”

“Mom!”

Ron sends her a look as he watches her go upstairs. “You ain’t seen nothing yet…”

“Oh my god!”

“What?”

“I’m scarred for life! Do you not see what you’re doing? It’s not a rap video dad!”

Shrugging it off he gave a lame explanation. “It’s like a coach thing.”

Sam placed her hands on her ears. “Not listening!”

When her father moved closer his face taking on a more serious look she lowered her hands.

“Look.” He started out slowly, his eyes slightly misty. “You know you’re mother and I are really proud of you. You’re the first Witwicky to ever go to college. Not to mention the scholarship you earned…” Sam tried hard not to grin, knowing how hard it was for her dad to get mushy.

“Now I’m crying again!” Judy’s voice called from upstairs startling the two. “This sucks!”

“You’re gonna be ok mom…” Sam called out reassuringly.

Ron continued. “It’s just gonna be…ya know hard for her to accept that her little girl’s all grown up.” His throat caught a bit. “Going out to handle the world on her own.”

“Don’t worry dad.” She hugged him tightly. “I’ll always need you and mom. I mean you guys have all the money.”

“Brat.” He snorted when she pulled away the two sharing a moment of mischief before they found the dogs on the couch, Mojo having a bit too much fun with Frankie. “Mojo! Stop that!” He shooed both dogs off the couch and outside. “You’re gonna see some of that in college too. Which reminds me you need to be extra careful.”

“What do you mean?” Sam grabbed one of the last of her boxes following her dad out to the car.

“I’m just saying there’s gonna be a lot of guys at college. And you being a girl you have to keep your guard up.”

“Dad…you do know the soldiers at NEST taught me self-defense right?” She smirked at him playfully.

“I’m just saying it doesn’t hurt to be vigilant. And some of them probably had ulterior motives for that.” He warned.

Sam was going to ask about that cryptic statement when her phone rang. Pulling it out while
balancing her box she checked the caller id. “Hey Mik. You gonna be able to stop by to see me off?”

“Yeah, I’m running a little behind, but I should be there.” Her best friend Mikaela Banes responded over the phone. “Works been rather busy recently.

“That’s good though right?” She handed off the last box before making her way to her room to see if there was anything else she wanted.

“Yeah I suppose. I just kind of wish I wasn’t stuck here ya know?”

“You could always try for college, or hey you could move out where I’m going. They have cheap apartments in the area. You and I could take the campus by storm!” Sam suggested cheerfully.

“Well that’s not gonna happen until I get my man-child father, fresh out of prison back on his feet.” From her tone Sam could tell said parent was in hearing distance.

The response of ‘I heard that’ followed by questions relating to motor parts just solidified that to Sam.

“Hey look on the bright side. He’s working.” Sam grinned at the huff that earned her from her friend. Moving into her closet she pulled out the shirt she had worn in Mission City. A slight ping of metal hitting wood caught her attention.

“True.” Mikaela sighed. “Trust you to find the bright side of any problem. Speaking of which have you spoken to Will lately?”

“No, he’s been really distant the last few months, especially after I graduated. I don’t know why.” She murmured as she glanced down at the object that had caught her attention. Frowning she bent down to pick it up.

“Maybe he’s been really busy.” Mikaela tried to make her friend feel better. Seriously she wanted to smack the dumb soldier. Sam had enough going on in her life without him making it difficult.

“Yeah I kinda figured.” Sam muttered distractedly, holding the shard up for her inspection. “Hey Mikaela…I think a shard of the cube was in my shirt…” Suddenly the light caught the tip and it felt like a sharp pain lodged into her eye and into her brain. Within seconds it was over but the shock from the tiny metal piece had Sam’s hands lighting up slightly with left over All-spark symbols. Blinking out of her daze she focused back on Mikaela who was calling her name. “Sorry what?”

“Are you ok?”

“Yeah I think so. Can you still come over?”

“Yeah I’ll be there in twenty.” The phone clicked off and Sam continued to stare at the tiny sliver. Moving to her desk she grabbed a small metal holding tube she used for the occasional science project. Carefully sliding the tube inside it she tried to figure out what to do with it.

It didn’t take too long for Mikaela to show up, pulling her bike on the side of the street just in front of the family’s mini van. Sam met her at the curb trying hard to ignore her parents’ bickering.

“What’s that about?” Mikaela nodded in the direction of the elder Witwickys.

“God only knows and I sure as hell don’t. I already had glimpses of their ‘relationship’ that have left me mentally scarred.” Sam huffed rolling her eyes as her mother threw a bag at her father before storming into the house. “And they think a month vacation in Paris is the perfect thing to get over me
leaving…”

“Well it is Paris.”

“Who’s side you on?” Sam nudged her friend playfully before pulling out the canister with the shard. “Hey can you keep this locked up? I don’t want to take it with me and leaving it here is not an option. I’d give it to Bee, but he’s been a bit pissy lately.”

“Still upset about you leaving, huh?”

“Understatement.” The two girls walked to the garage where they found the giant mech in his robot form sulking of all things. “Hey Bee, Mik’s here.”

The giant bot looked over his shoulder and gave a terse nod before turning back around.

“Come on Bee. We’ve talked about this.” Sam sighed. “It’s only for the first year. And I’ll be back for Christmas and summer. Then next year you can come with me if you want. But I bet you’ll have so much fun with the other Autobots you won’t want to.”

“Bye, bye love. Bye, bye happiness…”

“Bee.” Sam rolled her eyes while Mikaela giggled earning herself a glare. “Don’t encourage him.” Turning back to her robot friend she placed her hands on her hips. “Bee, look at me.” Once the blue optics were staring at her she continued. “You know very well that this was going to happen so stop acting like a sparkling! If I could change the rules I would, but colleges don’t allow freshmen to have cars, period end of sentence. I checked like twenty times. If it’ll make you feel better I’ll text and email you so we can still talk. And we can even meet up on weekends.”

“Do you so swear?”

“Every damn day.” She threw a quote back at him, smirking at his look.

Bumblebee shook his head at his human charge in fond amusement. She had certainly loosened up a bit more since knowing him, though he didn’t know if that was good. Vaguely he wondered what she would be like if she was around the twins more.

“Sam! We gotta go! Move it!” her dad’s bellow startled them all.

“Coming!” she called back before giving Bee a hug then running out behind Mikaela. “You be good Bee! I’ll talk to ya soon!”

Mikaela watched as her friend climbed in the car with her parents waving goodbye as they pulled out. It hurt to see her go, as she didn’t have many other female friends. But if anyone deserved college it was Sam. Climbing on her bike she got ready to head back home, never once noticing the small robotic toy truck in the distance.
chapter 24

Diego Garcia

Will rolled his shoulders as the plane’s descent ramp finally locked in place allowing himself and his men to disembark. Various Autobots exited the large planes in their alt forms so as not to startle anyone. The operation in Shanghai had not gone as well as it could have. He had a good feeling that he’d hear a lot about it from various political liaisons. Though they had gotten their targets a good portion of the city was destroyed and several men had been lost.

Like all leaders that was the hardest part of the job for him. With quick orders he had his men in clean up or the med bay as needed before turning out to salute the prepared coffins of his fallen comrades as they were loaded onto the planes to take them home.

It was during this process that he heard the incoming chopper that landed just outside the base. As the Major and leader of NEST he had the unfortunate duty of greeting whoever had shown up.

Moving quickly he met the incoming men at the gate, taking note of their suits and their general bureaucratic stances. He easily recognized their National security Adviser. So much for relaxing after the op.

“Director Galloway.” He greeted as politely as he could. “What an honor. I’d love to show you around, but you gotta be on the classified access list.”

“I am now.” The weasely little man snapped, pushing a piece of paper into Will’s chest. “Presidential order Major. I got a message for your classified space buddies.” The man didn’t even bother to wait for the soldier as he stormed towards the main hanger. “You guys made a mess of Shanghai!”

Once he managed to catch up to the man Will took control and showed him the main communications office in the Autobot’s hanger. He gave the men a brief overview of what they did there when another solider advised him that the link to General Morshire was up.

Excusing himself he made his way to up the tall scaffolding to the main view screen and camera links. He saluted the man staring back at him. “General.”

“Will.” The man nodded in return. “I saw the Shanghai op. We had a rough day.”

“Yes sir.” Will couldn’t certainly deny that, but he had information the general needed. “We have intel that I believe warrants an immediate debrief. Now with your permission, I can’t let you see him, but I would like you to hear from the leader of the Autobots.”

The general nodded. “Proceed.”

Down below him he watched as Optimus changed from his alt form to his bipedal robotic form. Even after several years working together it never ceased to amaze him. After several clicks, shifts and whirls the giant leader stood head and shoulder over Will, even though he was a good thirty feet in the air.

Epps watched from below coming up behind Galloway. He knew he didn’t have to be there but he wouldn’t leave his friend and commander alone with the bureaucrats. That was just cruel. Fig and Graham felt the same way from their own supportive presence.

Optimus turned towards the screen to address the human military leader though he made sure to keep
just out of sight of the cameras. “General, our alliance has countermanded six Decepticon incursions this year, each on a different continent. They are clearly searching the world for something. What that is we do not know. However last night’s encounter came with a warning.”

He started the replay of his recorder allowing the Decepticon’s voice to echo in the large room.

“The Fallen shall rise again.”


“Origin unknown.” Optimus admitted. “The only recorded history of our race was contained within the Allspark and lost with its destruction.”

“Excuse me.” Galloway’s voice echoes through the area catching their attention. Once he had the Autobot leader’s attention he started climbing up the stairs all the while speaking. “With this so-called Allspark destroyed, why hasn’t the enemy left the planet like you thought they would?”

Will turned back to the camera to explain to the general with a resigned air. “Director Galloway, our National Security Director. The president just made him liaison.” He couldn’t stop the eye roll at that, though he knew the general would likely agree.

He didn’t hear the general’s response to that as Galloway had finally made it to his position. Turning to the large robot he starts his ‘speech’. “After all the damage in Shanghai the president is hard pressed to say the job’s getting done. Now under the classified alien/autobot cooperation act, you agreed to share your intel with us but not your advancements in weaponry.”

Optimus eyed the small human. “We witnessed your human capacity for war. It would absolutely bring more harm than good.”

Like a true politician the man shot back a typical argument. “But who are you to judge what’s best for us?”

Will felt his ire rise. “With all due respect we’ve been fighting side by side with them for two years.”

“We’ve shed sweat blood and precious metals together.” Epps added from his position beside Optimus, looking extremely tiny next to him.

“Soldier, you’re paid to shoot, not talk.” The ever-arrogant man snipped.

“Don’t tempt me.” The soldier growled under his breath only to receive a quick warning to calm down from Optimus.

Galloway continued on. “And the newest members of your team, I understand they arrived here after you sent a message into space. An open invitation to come to Earth vetted by no one at the White House.”

“Let me stop you their Mr. Galloway.” General Morshire called out over the telecom link. “It was vetted right here and in my experience the judgment of both Major Lennox and his team has always been above reproach.”

“Well be that as it may, it is the opinion of our president that hen our national security is at stake, no one is above reproach.” He explained arrogantly. “Now what do we know…” he went on to describe the location of Megatron and the small sliver of the cube they had under lock down. “It appears obvious that the enemy is here for you.” He pointed in accusation at the robot. “Now if we ask you, will you leave peacefully?”
“Freedom is your right.” Optimus responded cordially. “If you make that request we will honor it, but before your president decides please ask him this. What if we leave and you are wrong?”

Galloway looked clearly like he swallowed something sour before turning and leaving the area. Will watched him for a moment before turning to Optimus.

“That’s a good question.” He nodded seriously.
After days in the car stuck with her parents Sam finally made it to college. How she managed to get into The University of Pennsylvania still amazed her, especially since she got a nice scholarship to help fund her education.

“Wow… Look at this!” Judy spun around as she took everything in. “I feel smarter already! Oh Ron. Can you smell it?”

“Yeah, smells like $40,000 a year.” He retorted.

“Hey! El cheapo!” Judy snapped back in irritation.

Sam just smirked moving to grab a box or two. Her parents shooed her on to her dorm and her room. Checking the slip of paper with her information once more she tried to locate her room. So far she wasn’t having the best of luck.

After getting turned around in an attempt to dodge other students she ran right into another person.

“Oh! Sorry, sorry.”

“No prob. My bad.”

She found herself looking at a young man maybe an inch or two taller than her, with extremely curly black hair and olive skin. He looked quite flabbergasted as he took her in.

“Um… Sam.” She held her hand out after shifting her box.

“Can I have you? Uh I mean can I help you…” He shook himself out of his stupor much to her amusement.

“Maybe you can…um?”

“Leo. Right, I’m Leo.”

“Leo. As I said I’m Sam. I’m looking for B35 but I seem to be lost…”

“B35? What a coincidence I’m in B34 right across the hall. We’re neighbors!” he grinned brightly as he led her down the hallway to her room. “So Sam… You like kittens?”

It didn’t take long to settle in, once she managed to get rid of Leo and see her parents off. That had been a wonderful experience given her mother decided to try brownies baked with reefer. She almost felt sorry for her dad.

Her roommate seemed distant and had pretty much told Sam to keep to her side of the room. A wonderful start to an entire year of schooling; unless they could switch after the first semester. She may have to look into that.

Once she had her side of the room set up she made her way to the college bookstore to grab some odds and ends. Most of the professors had sent their book lists before hand so she needed to pick them up. Some she would have to wait until she went to the first class and got the syllabus. Thankfully they had a few days for freshmen to acquaint themselves to the campus. She spent Saturday morning going through the books she did have and walking around the campus finding the buildings for her classes.
She managed to grab a quick lunch from one of the campus meal sites and took the rest of the afternoon to continue going through her books and email Mikaela to let her know she had made it fine. She also dropped a line to Bee so he wouldn’t get worried.

Thankfully her roommate apparently had friends elsewhere so she chose to spend her time with them off campus. It left her free to study in peace. She had left the door open to allow people to say hi and so that they knew that unlike her roommate she wouldn’t be unsocial. That’s how she ended up with Leo popping in sometime after dinner.

“Hey, me and the guys got word of a frat party tonight and I wanted to know if you wanted to tag along?” He asked, fidgeting slightly.

Sam frowned in thought. “I don’t know. Won’t I cramp your style?”

“Are you kidding?” Leo looked at her like she was nuts. “Coming in with a hot girl will only boost it!”

Sam blinked at the complement. A small voice in the back of her head sounding suspiciously like her mom and Mikaela told her to go and have fun. “Alright, but only as friends.” She warned the boy. “This is not a date.”

“That’s cool. I totally understand! Wouldn’t dream of it. Well I would but I’m cool with friends, unless you change your mind…”

Sam chuckled as she grabbed her purse and followed the boy out into the hall where she met his friends Fassbinder and Sharsky. From the way they spoke they were obviously techies, but she didn’t have a problem with that. However IF Fassbinder kept staring at her like that she just might have to hurt him.

The walk to the Frat house was fairly quick and from the looks of it several people had heard of the party. The music pounded through the air like a pulse of power. Sam looked unsure at first but decided to go with it as the boys all looked around with vast wonder and excitement, their eyes trailing the various females that walked by.

Snickering she shooed them off to have fun as she made her way inside for a drink. She was just passing one small area where a cake was set out when the visions started. Blinking rapidly she tried to figure out why such strange symbols were floating before her eyes, superimposing the world around her. As one finger came up to trace the symbols she was broken out of her strange trance by a tall male.

“Hey, you ok?”

Shaking her head to clear her thoughts she looked up at the guy with piercing blue eyes and sandy blond hair. “Um…yeah I’m fine. Just uh… little distracted is all…”

“I understand, there’s a lot of things going on around here.” He inched closer into her space almost too close.

Sam backed off putting some room between them. “Yeah… a lot going on…”

“Wanna dance? I like dancing.” He leaned forward again invading her space.

“Uh…”

“HEY!” The loud yell of one of the frat boys demanded everyone’s attention over the music. “Who
drove the freakin’ yellow Camaro? Huh? There’s a car on my lawn!”

Sam froze for one second before running out of the room and toward the main door. Pulling up short at a window she found Bumblebee out front in the bushes his alarm going full blast. Panicked she rushes out of the house and over to the driver side window.

“What are you doing here?” she hissed at the vehicle as she leaned in the window.

“Houston we have a problem.”

She started to ask what that meant when the same Frat guy called out to her.

“Freshman! Is that you’re car?”

Startled Sam looked up. “Uh… yeah a friend had it and was supposed to be taking it elsewhere. I’ll move it now. Sorry.”

The two guys apparently decided that harassing a girl wasn’t a good idea. “Yeah well try not to do it again.”

“No problem.” Sam assures them as she gets into the vehicle.

“Oh man! You have a car?” Leo came out of the party too curious about the situation to let it pass. “That’s so hot!”

“I don’t have time for this.” She muttered and started the engine pulling the car back and moving out.

“Alright Bee.” She stated once out of sight of the campus. “What is going on?”

“The boss wants ta have a word with ya.” Came over the radio.


“Debrief in one hour.”

“So basically I have to wait to speak to Optimus.” She acknowledged dryly. Settling into the seat she let Bee take her to where she would meet the leader of the Autobots. Hopefully she could get back before classes started.

Early in the morning just after dawn Bee pulled into one of the older cemeteries. Sam tried hard not to comment on the location. When Bee finally pulled over and let her out she found Optimus standing near one of the larger monuments in the area, allowing it to hide him.

Moving closer Sam greeted him. “Hey Optimus. What garners this need to see me before I have a chance to even start classes.”

“I’m sorry Sam.” He seemed genuinely remorse. “But the last fragment of the Allspark was stolen.”

“What? Like Decepticons stole it?” She frowned in worry.

Optimus nodded before continuing his explanation. “We placed it under human protection at your government’s request. But I am here for your help Sam. Because your leaders believe that we have brought vengeance on your planet. Perhaps they are right.” His features did their own parody of a sigh while Sam listened. “That is why they must be reminded by another human of the trust we share.”
“Ok… I can see what you mean, but I’m not sure how I can help. Optimus to humans I am a mere child. The leaders of this world would likely not bother listening to me.” She tried to explain to the larger creature.

“Something must be done. I fear there will soon be war. Your world must not share the same fate as Cybertron.” His words had a sense of finality to them. “Whole generations lost.”

“Look Optimus I want to help you. But again, I’m just a kid. The likelihood of them listening to me it quite small. I can try but I can’t guarantee it’ll do any good.”

“All we can ask is that you try.”

“Ok, but can it wait till like Saturday? I have to go through the first week of classes, my scholarship sort of requires it.” She looked up at him pleadingly. “Besides you guys will need time to get the bigwigs together anyway. Would that be alright?”

Optimus calculated his options. He did not see too much harm in waiting as she asked and it would be good to prepare the leaders of the world to speak to the girl. “Very well. I will have Bumblebee contact you when we have a time set.”

“Cool. Thanks Optimus. I’ll make sure to work on a speech for them. Lord knows the politicians love a good speech.” Smiling happily at the compromise she said her goodbyes and made her way back to Bumblebee to head back to school.

Optimus watched as the two drove off hoping that this would work.
Sam sat in the huge lecture hall watching as it filled up with hundreds of students. Though large classes never appealed to her she supposed this just proved she had gotten to college. Leo had kindly saved her a seat, though she sensed he had alternate reasons for doing such then simply as a friendly gesture. Especially given the way he seemed to puff out his chest when others looked their way.

Keeping her snickers to herself she watched as the professor came in, taking in his arrogant swagger and fairly cool-studious look he portrayed to the world. She had a feeling that she might not care for him, but as long as he didn’t give them crap information she’d survive. Within moments the class settled down.

“Space. Time.” He took a bite out of an apple before dropping it. “Gravity.”

“We are going on a journey together, you and I.”

His voice started to phase out as the same symbols she saw at the Frat house started to flash before her. Blinking she tried to focus on reality but she couldn’t seem to. Without her conscious decision she started flipping through her astrology book, the words and information easily flowing into her mind despite the speed at which she flipped through it. To her side Leo gave her strange looks and tried to get her attention as softly as he could but nothing could stop her.

Once done she felt an urge to speak up, but something in her knew she could not. No one would understand. The symbols wouldn’t stop even though she could at least control her urges. Shaking she stood up, grabbing her bag.

“What are you doing?” Leo hissed at her, confused.

“Young lady, I have not reached the climax of my lecture.” The teacher advised as he saw her moving down the room.

“I… I can’t breath. Gotta… gotta go…” She just managed to state as she all but ran for the door. The whole class watched her leave in surprise. Once the door slammed behind her the professor turned back to the rest of the class.

“Anyone else care to have some sort of a breakdown?”

As Sam raced back to her room, trying hard to navigate while avoiding people and strange floating symbols. Pulling her cell phone out she dialed Mikaela.

“Hey Sammy-girl? How’s college life. Met any hot guys yet?”

“Mik. Something just happened to me.” Sam blurted, voice taking on a slightly panicked tone.

“What you lost your virginity?”

“No, no, no. Stop laughing! This is serious!”

“Okay? What is it?”

“Remember when I told you about my great-great-grandfather Archibald Witwicky? Remember?” Rushing down a set of stairs she stumbled, dropping various papers and books. Scrambling to pick them up she continued. “Okay, remember? When he went on the Arctic mission, and… and he saw Megatron. Then Megatron zapped him, and he started seeing these crazy symbols. Right? Well, now
I’m seeing them too.” She couldn’t control the speed of her words as she managed to grab all of her things and continue on her way.

“Sam? Calm down. Just take a breath…”

“Calm down? I just read a 903-page astronomy book in 32.6 seconds.” She squeaked over the speaker. “I nearly had a meltdown in the middle of my class! I’m seeing symbols everywhere, ever since I…” Freezing in place Sam realized the reason for her new issue.

“Since what?” Mikaela urged, hoping her friend would calm down.

“Ever since I touched the Cube splinter.” Remembering just whom she gave the splinter to she continued. “Do you have it?”

“Yeah I have it?” Mikaela assured the other girl. “It’s in the shop safe. It’s fine.”

“Mikaela, do not touch it. Just don’t touch it.”

“I’m not going to touch it.” A heavy sigh came down the line. “Sam, it’s fine. It’s locked away and no one knows where it is.”

Sam closed her eyes in relief. “Ok, right. It’s fine. I’m over reacting…”

“Hold on…”

“Mik?” Sam paused listening to the sounds coming over the other end. She heard a yell and a scream and some bangs. “Mikaela! What’s going on? Mikaela!”

“Sam.”

“What the hell was that?” She practically screamed, her once slightly calmed nerves just broke again.

“I’ll tell you later, just not on an open phone line ok?” Sam blinked down at her cell. That did not sound good. “I’m gonna get on a plane right now and I’ll be there later this afternoon. Just be careful, Sam.”

“Okay. You too.” Closing the cell she realized she was in front of her dorm room door. Barging in she thanked whoever listened that her roommate was gone again. Grabbing some markers she started drawing various symbols that continued to flash before her eyes hoping to get it out of her head.
On Diego Garcia

Lennox looked over the shoulder of a few of the communication officers reading the various reports coming over the computers. Optimus had disappeared four days before and none of the Autobots were talking. Then two days ago the rest of them up and disappeared. Not a good sign in his book. Not like they could control when and where the bots went, but a heads-up would have been nice.

“Major!” Turning from his station he looked to the tech that called out. “Incoming SOS from the Autobots!”

Frowning he moved to the main screen followed by Epps, Figg and Graham.

Once there the tech continued, pointing to the radar screen. “Multiple Decepticon contacts in motion. Vicinity, eastern United States, sir.”

Will shared an uneasy look with the others. “As in how many?”

“Unclear sir.”

“Well get clear.” He growled the feeling of incoming trouble intensifying.

“The Autobots are on the move.” Graham advised. “Splitting into two teams, sir.”

Epps snapped the cell shut. “They’re not answering our calls.”

“They’re heading to New York and Philadelphia.” Another member informed him.

“Hey man… isn’t Sammy’s school in Philadelphia?” Figg inquired. The men all stopped and shared a telling look. Will knew he had to make a decision.

“All right, full weapons deployment!” He yelled out across the bay, the soldiers acting immediately. “Wheels up in twenty minutes!”

Turning to grab his own gear he followed his men out of the hanger. “Move it! Let’s go!”
Leo walked the halls of his dorm, pizza in hand. He hoped to check on Sam and see if she was ok. After what happened in astrology he doubted she had gone out to any other class. He’d heard about some freshman not able to handle classes, but usually it took at least a week or two, not one day.

He really hoped that was not the case. Sam had proven to be a pretty cool chick in his humble opinion and he wanted to try out this friendship thing with her.

“Hey freshman!”

He turned seeing a rather built dude coming his way. Great.

“Yeah?”

“You’re a friend of Samantha’s right? Where’s her dorm room?”

“Look I don’t think you’re her type. In fact I’m sure of it so…” The guy’s hand locked on his shoulder with a grip that felt more than crushing. “Or I could just show you to her room…”

“Thanks man.” The guy smiled though it didn’t look the least bit friendly.

When they came to the door Leo knocked but refused to leave, not trusting this guy in the least. “Sam you in?” He tried the door, knowing that if it was unlocked it meant Sam was in and her roommate wasn’t. It opened easily, but the sight that met them did not compute at first.

Sam stood on her bed drawing weird symbols all over the wall, or what little space she had left to work with. All over the rest of the room, whether on posters or the bare wall, various symbols in various media.

“Oh my god…”

“Hey!” Sam smiled as she turned to greet them, having only just noticed them. “Have you ever had a song stuck in your head? You can’t help but whistle or sing it ‘cause it repeats itself over and over and over like a broken record?”

“What the hell…” Leo gapped afraid that Sam had completely cracked. So much for a normal cool girl.

“Don’t freak out. No need to freak out. Easy to fix.” She waved at them. “Puzzle in my head now on the walls.” She pointed. “Everything’s good.” Suddenly she seemed to come back to herself. “Sorry you were saying?”

The guy that had dragged Leo with him suddenly grabbed the boy and pushed him out of the room, slamming the door closed and ignoring his protest.

“I knew there was something special about you.” He let a sly smile stretch over his face.

“Sorry?”

“And I know you know what happens when two people get together.” He stalked towards her cornering her against the wall by the bed. “They’re genuinely amazing in bed.”

Sam’s eyes grew wide. “What? Hold on! Boundaries!” She tried to protest as the boy pulled her
close and moved her to the horizontal surface.

“Come on Sam, we both have needs. You know it, I know it.” He cooed in her ear, kissing along her neck and cheek.

“Ok! Time out! Not happening!” Sam nearly yelled as she tried pushing the guy off of her. The guy only slammed her harder against the wall, his eyes turning a bright blue in color, his features shifting into robotic components.

“Oh god!”

Just then the door opened to Mikaela her greeting dying on her lips.

“Mik!”

Taking in the scene she reacted fast, rushing the strange robot and slamming it upside the head with the box she was carrying. The robot fell to the side allowing Sam to flee towards her friend. The door opened again to show Leo looking concerned, until he saw the robot like creature that kneeled on the bed.

Mikaela threw the box at it to distract it long enough for them to run away.

“What is that?” Leo cried as the girls rushed into the hall, pulling him along.

“Alien robot! Run!” Sam yelled back, leading the two away from the dorm.

“For real?”

“Just run!”

They managed to make it to the library, moving to a more secure area before ducking down to catch their breath.

“Oh my god! Oh my god!” Leo muttered, eyes wide in panic. “I can’t believe I just saw that…”

“Once again Sam you attract trouble to you.” Mikaela huffed.

“This is not my fault! Do you think I put a sign out saying ‘Hi? Alien robots please assault me?’ Really?” Sam frowned at her friend.

“Well your score card’s not looking too good for you.” Her friend snapped back.

“Dude did he probe you?” Leo turned to Sam, eyes worried. “Did he get anything in your mouth? Like an alien embryo for little alien babies?”

Sam looked utterly disgusted, her face growing pale at the thought. “What? Ew, no. Just stop!”

“Who are you?” Mikaela turned to the boy.

“I’m Leonardo Ponce De Leon Spitz. Okay? I’m the key to this.” He said with such certainty that both girls just stared at him in disbelief. “The aliens, they want me, ‘cause of my site.”

Silence settled between them for all of two seconds before the doors to the library exploded inward, the robot stalking towards them with deadly purpose.

“Shit! Run!” Sam managed to sprint down the stairs Mikaela and Leo behind her. They dodge the
mini-missiles that made quick work of the library. Clearing the doorway they headed to the parking lot back near the dorm.

Suddenly Mikaela veered to the side where a lone box sat, it moved as if something was trying to get out.

“Mikaela come on!”

“Hold this!” She pushed the box into Sam’s hands. The girl almost dropped it when it shook a tiny voice demanding to be let out coming from within.

“Get in the car!” Mikaela opened the door of the first vehicle they came to, Sam and Leo following suit. Using the skills her old man taught her she pulled the wires down and started to click them together hoping for a spark.

“You know how to hot wire a car?” Leo stared down at Mikaela. “God that is so hot!”

The vehicle’s engine flared to life prompting her to get in the driver seat and prepare to move. Sam looked up staring in fear as the robot came towards them once more.

“Drive, drive, drive!” Sam pushed back into the seat. “It’s coming! It’s right there!”

Slamming the gear into reverse she pulled out of the space at a high speed, then moved to go forward. But the robot jumped onto the vehicle, smashing the front glass with his hand trying to reach for Sam.

“Take this asshole!” Mikaela growled, gas to the metal crashing the front of the vehicle into a metal pole, crushing the robot between it and the vehicle.

Pulling away they dropped the wreckage of the bot and continued with their escape.

“Okay, so what else don’t I know?” Leo demanded from the back seat. “Since you guys forgot to mention some minor details!” His voice had taken on a hysterical edge that both girls could easily understand, but at the moment didn’t have time to worry about.

“That thing you saw back there.” Sam waved absently in the direction they had come. “That was the little baby…”

Her sentence got cut off when a large metal hook burst through the roof of the vehicle. With a sickening jolt the vehicle lifted into the air, spinning around violently. The teens screamed at the sensation.

The passenger door fell open causing Sam to descend from the vehicle. Frantically she scrambled to hold onto the sides of the car and the door, her legs flailing in the wind.

“SAM! HOLD ON!” Mikaela reached for her, hoping to help her friend.

“PULL ME UP!” Sam begged, her arms burning with the exertion.

In the back Leo was screaming like a girl, stating over and over that they were going to die. Somehow Mikaela managed to get Sam into the vehicle just before the bot that had them reached the building it wanted. Without warning it released the hook sending the vehicle careening through the roof of a large old building. Thankfully the airbags deployed managing to take some of the brunt of the impact. Then just as they realized the vehicle was upside down a large blade shot down the middle of the vehicle, slicing it cleanly in half.
Scrambling out of the vehicle Sam flinched as Starscream landed in front of them, growling menacingly at them, her in particular.

Following the bot with her eyes she found one of the most terrifying sights she could even imagine. Megatron glared at her from the lower level, his face easily meeting hers given his height.

“Come here girl.” His oily voice sent shivers of fear racing through her. “Closer.”

Sam edges closer, hoping that if she complied that he would spare Mikaela and Leo, because she knew he wouldn’t spare her. Behind her she could hear Leo swearing harshly.

“You remember me, don’t you?” The Decepticon leader asked rhetorically.

Sam had her hands up to show she had no weapons. “I did what you said, okay? Just leave them out of it.”

“Shut up!” The large bot snarled, hand slamming down on the concrete under her feet sending her flying through the air with a scream of fear.

She landed hard on a slab of concrete, pain wracking through her entire frame. She tried to move but Megatron’s arms somehow grabbed her arms and legs leaving her exposed to him.

“Yes. It feels good to grab your flesh.” Megatron leaned down towards the scared female, red eyes burning into her. “I am going to kill you slowly, painfully.” He drew the words out to make it worse. “But first, we have some delicate work to do.”

Sam squirmed trying to figure out what he meant when a smaller bot that looked like a crazed scientist crawled up onto her chest.

“Doctor, examine this alien specimen.”

That so did not sound good. Sam renewed her struggles with no luck.

“I’ll scan you. Let’s take a look at your face.” Even the things voice sounded like the typical mad villain from a horror movie. It seemed to consider her before pulling out a strange slug like creature.

“Yeah! Easy way or tough way?” Sam tried to keep her mouth closed but the creature thing started probing at her nose before crawling in.

Sam gagged and choked as the thing started to dig into her very brain. It seemed like forever before it finally exited through her mouth. Sam gasped for breath, her gag reflex working overtime at the thought of the creature in her head.

The doctor bot pulled the strange slug thing back into his form then projected two lights. One showed memories of her life; the other flashed the weird symbols that had invaded her brain.

“There they are.” Megatron sounded far too pleased. “Those symbols can lead us to the Energon source.”

The little bot jumped up and down. “We must have the brain on the table! Chop, chop!”

“Brain?” Sam squeaked. This definitely did not sound good to her. “What does he mean my brain?”

“Well, you have something on your mind.” The evil leader mused in dark amusement. “Something I need.”

The bot started manipulating the skin on her face and her lips. “Wait! I know you hate me and all,
but this is not a good idea. I mean, I need my brain.” She argued all the while trying to avoid the pokes and prods of the tiny doctor. “so let’s discuss this like civilized beings and…”

The doctor pulled out a spinning saw blade preparing to cut into her skull.

“Wait, wait, wait!”

Just as her life flashed before her eyes a huge form crashed through the ceiling sending debris down upon the Decepticons. Out of the corner of her eye she could see the blue and red of Optimus’ form as she scrambled out of Megatron’s loosened grip.

Soon plasma blasts flew in every direction as the opposing factions battled it out. Sam could hear Leo yelling for him and Mikaela to run, just as Bumblebee burst through the side wall, firing at Starscream to allow the two teens to escape. Sam threw the doctor away from her and sprinted to the door just out of the way, hoping that she could avoid dying here.

Sliding a bit in the gravel outside of the warehouse she found Optimus in his vehicle form pulling up, door open for her to jump in. Without hesitating she climbed into the truck, pulling the door shut behind her.

They took off tearing down the road away from the city.

“Where’s Mikaela and Leo?”

“Bumblebee has them.” Optimus informed her.

A loud rumbled of a jet caught her attention. Turning she found Megatron hot on their trail. “He’s coming!”

Optimus pulled out into a grouping of trees, turning in a way to let her out without injuring her while transforming at the same time.

“Hide, Sam!”

Not needing to be told twice, Sam ran towards some trees, trying to stay low and keep out of the way. Almost immediately Megatron and Starscream as well as a few she’d never seen before besieged Optimus. They fought hard, insults being traded back and forth.

Prime managed to destroy one of the Decepticons that had joined in the fray with a blazing sword. Only for Megatron to get the drop on him and toss him down into the dirt.

“There is another source of Energon on this planet.” The evil bot informed his once brother. “The girl can lead us to it!” He emphasized his point with a hard kick.

Sam cried out in warning as the evil bot brought a large tree down on her friend.

“Is the future of our race not worth a single human life?”

Optimus stood slowly before spinning around and grabbing the other bot, throwing him back with a hard hit. “You’ll never stop at one!” Brandishing his swords again he screamed at the other Decepticons that surrounded him. “I’ll take you all on!”

Sam ducked as more blasts littered the area, dirt and foliage falling all around her.

“Sam where are you?” At Optimus’ call she turned to find him only to see Megatron come up behind him, his own blade slamming home between his shoulder blades and out of his chest.
“NO!” Her scream seemed to echo.

“So weak.” Megatron sneered as he threw the dying body of Prime to the ground.

Sam watched in frozen horror as the great leader fell, his blue optics finding her own frightened brown eyes. “Sam… run…”

Unable to do anything but comply she darted off towards the roadway, praying for help as the Decepticons followed. Legs burning from prolonged running she felt immense relief as she caught sight of the road and the even more welcome sight of the other Autobots.

Ratchet and Ironhide transformed immediately as did a few others. The old weapons specialist giving the order to open fire.

Bumblebee pulled up, door open wide for Sam as she dove in. Mikaela and Leo pulling her in. The bot revved his engines, tires screaming as he fled the battlefield with his precious cargo.

As the battle faded away to a distant sound Sam let the tears fall, the adrenaline and shock finally setting in.
Sam didn’t really know where Bumblebee had brought them but she didn’t care either. The whole scene of Optimus fighting Megatron then seeing the blue of his eyes slowly dims until nothing showed through. Nausea rolled through her stomach.

Everything was wrong. This wasn’t how it was supposed to be. Yet it had happened and in a way it had been her fault. Granted she knew intellectually that she couldn’t have done anything against the Decepticons on her own, but maybe if she had just gone with Optimus then instead of asking him to wait? Maybe he’d be alive?

Why was this happening now? They had two years to revive Megatron so why now? Had the felt the piece of the Allspark she had touched? Or did they simply think she had information from the cube in her from her first experience with it? Hadn’t Ratchet said she had the residual energy but another source of cybertronian energy had to activate it?

Isn’t that what that piece of the spark had done? She certainly hadn’t been able to read any book within three seconds before touching it. But had that tiny sliver of metal had that much energy to cause such a change in her? Apparently it did. Otherwise she wouldn’t have symbols she barely recognize floating through her head. Even going back to Ratchet’s lessons she couldn’t recognize any of them.

The now familiar sounds of Leo muttering interrupted her thoughts. In the past hour Leo had been listening to news reports talking about the alien attacks and one even gave a speech. Something told her it had to do with her untimely escape. From the way she could hear Leo panicking she surmised she was right.

“You need to listen to this girl,” he called out frantically. “You gotta check this out!”

Like she hadn’t heard him the first twelve times. Pushing up to her feet she made her way back to Bumblebee and Mikaela trying hard to ignore Leo as he continued to panic watching the news feed on his smart phone.

“They have a picture of me! We’re dead girl,” he cried out, voice high with fear. “The FBI, CIA we are wanted fugitives now!”

Sam closed her eyes and concentrated on moving forward. She would not snap at Leo, it wasn’t his fault. She could control herself.

“Are you listening to me? This thing has blown up to a whole new level!” He waved his phone towards her as he dogged her steps.

So much for staying calm. Spinning on her heal she snatched his phone. “Give me this thing!” she asked waving the device back in his face. “They can track us with this.” Using her anger she threw the phone to the ground, stomping on it for extra measure.

“They can track us? Like, satellite tracks us?”

Sam rolled her eyes wondering how this guy could possibly not know that given his constant rants on conspiracies. Passing through one of the old fences she noted Mudflap and Skids hanging out in a semblance of guarding the area while Bee and Mikaela had taken up residence a few yards away.

“Okay, I’m not even with you guys,” Leo declared waving his arms frantically. “Technically, I’m
like a hostage. This is kidnapping…"

“Yo Leo!” One of the twins called out just as the kid passed, managing to frighten him.

“This thing’s gonna give me a heart attack, I swear,” he muttered angrily.

“That’s cause you is a wuss,” Skids informed him.

“You guys forced me into that car, right,” he continued on.

“I think he’s scared,” Mudflap stated wisely.

“Hey Mudflap, what are we gonna do with this shrimp taco?’

“Let’s pop a cap in his ass, throw him in the trunk and then nobody gonna know nothing, know what I mean,” he answered with a fairly accurate gangster dialect.

Leo turned to them in frustration. “Okay? I am right here and I can hear you,” he growled at them. “No one’s popping any caps in any asses, okay.” He glared at both bots. “I’ve had a hell of a day!”

“Why don’t you get a haircut,” one shot back.

“Go whine to your boyfriend,” the other added.

Deciding he’d get nowhere with the two he ran over towards Sam. “Listen, Sam. I know what I’m gonna do. I’m just going to go to the authorities and tell them the truth,” he stated in what he thought was a reasonable tone. “Like, I had nothing to do with this, so I’m not an accomplice.”

Turning to him Sam managed to keep from glaring too harshly. “No you’re not, but you’re in the middle of this anyway. I thought you wanted this? To handle the real deal. Clearly you prefer the illusion you spouted on your little website,” she snapped. “You want to run? Go ahead! No one’s stopping you! So stop complaining!”

Sam left him there with the twins as she went to bee and Mikaela. Leo was right about one thing; they had had a hell of a day.
chapter 30

Will could not believe how bad this day had turned out. They had been thirty minutes out on their flight when they were ordered to land at the nearest base. Unfortunately he couldn’t override the command as it came from the general.

Once on base one of the techs directed him and the others to the main office where the TV was broadcasting. The Decepticon bastards had taken out one of their carriers, killing thousands of people. And now they were demanding Sam, flashing her driver’s license across the screens for all to see.

All around him he could hear Figg, Epps and the others cursing and making rather unsavory statements about their enemies but he just couldn’t concentrate on them.

It appeared that his prayers for Sam to not be involved were ignored. His heart practically descended into the depths of his stomach the first time he saw her picture flashing across the screen. The only good thing was that the bad guys hadn’t gotten their hands on her. However, they also had no idea where Sam was currently, though he’d bet his salary Mikaela was with her.

The death of Optimus came as a harsh blow to an already low moral. He knew he should try to say something to his men, encourage them in this dark time. At the moment though all he could do was stare at the news, photos of Sam flashing across the screen. He knew that people would be demanding her capture; it was the nature of humans.

“Sir! The Autobots are inbound,” one random corporal announced. “They’ll be landing in ten.”

Will nodded his understanding and turned to go out to wait for them. Thoughts and plans whirled through his mind. Epps and Figg followed on his six, silent sentinels lending him their strength.

Two planes landed, the ramps opening to release the Autobots. He could see Ironhide and Ratchet but his eyes flew to the prone form of Optimus hanging from cables attached to a helicopter. It seemed wrong when the cables released letting the great leader’s body slam into the unyielding ground.

Suddenly several military trucks and personal surrounding the Autobots, troops spilling out and aiming at the bots.

“What is the meaning of this,” Ratchet demanded.

“You dare point your gun at me?” Ironhide growled angrily preparing his own guns. “You want a piece of me? I will tear you apart!”

Will knew they needed to defuse this right now. “Drop your weapons!” Unfortunately he was not the only one yelling. Which made for a more confusing situation.

One of the officers from the base walked up to Will. “Tell them to lower their weapons,” he ordered.

“Tell them first,” Will countered repeating it with more force the second time. “Tell them to lower their weapons.”

“Major,” the man huffed. “There’s nothing I can do. Talk to him.

Another hummer pulled up next to him and he saw the weasel Director Galloway slithering out. He
should have known the snake was involved somehow.

“Your NEST team is deactivated, Major,” he sneered with no little joy. “You are to cease anti-Decepticon operations and return to Diego Garcia pending further orders.”

Will stood his ground against the jackass. “No, we take orders directly from General Morshower. Sir,” he added belatedly.

“Well I’ll see your chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I will raise you a president of the United States.” The glint in his beady eyes told Will the man was enjoying his new power trip. “I have operational command now.” He drew himself up clearly feeling more important than he was. “An alien blood feud has been brought to our shores for which our soldiers are paying the price. The secret is out. This is now our war and we will win it as we always gave, with a coordinated military strategy.”

“This fool is terribly misinformed,” Ratchet stated.

It took a lot for Will not to snort in agreement. But he knew he needed to make a point. “You are going to need every asset that you’ve got.”

Galloway turned towards him with a patronizing look. “What we need is to draw up battle plans while we explore every possible diplomatic solution.”

His blood turned to ice at those words, nearly flinching when Epps voiced his thoughts.

“Like what? Handing over Sammy?”

“All options are being considered.” And damn if Will didn’t want to punch the arrogant ass right then and there. Somehow he managed to pull it together enough to try arguing further.

“Whatever the Decepticons are after this is just the start,” he advised. “There is no negotiating with them.”

“I am ordering you to stand down,” Galloway snarled, one hand flashing out to rip the patch from Lennox’s uniform. “You won’t be needing this anymore. Get your assets back to base!” Marching back to the hummer he just had to add insult to injury. “And take that pile of scrap metal back to Diego Garcia!”

Will was practically trembling from the stark rage burning through his veins.

“I really don’t like that dude,” Epps groused. Figg started spouting in Spanish, his tone clearly non-complementary. “Exactly,” Epps nodded. “He’s an asshole!”

Never had Will wanted to shoot a civilian so bad in his life. But somehow he managed to restrain himself and ordered everyone to the hanger. Silently he prayed for Sam to find the darkest safest hole to hide in while they tried to figure something out.

XOXOXO

“What will we do now that Optimus is gone,” Acree asked softly, the other two members of the motorbike unit rocking anxiously next to them.

Sunstreaker and Sideswipe said nothing but it was clear both of them were unsettled.

“We continue to do as we have always done,” Ratchet stated calmly. “We stay and help the humans.
We know the Decepticons are up to something and they will not stop, no matter what the humans think.”

“We should be out hunting them, not waiting here while those bureaucratic fools try to sweep this under the rug and possibly give Megatron exactly what he wants by handing over Sam,” Ironhide growled angrily. His weapons clicked and twirled with his impatience.

“If we do that they will see us as a threat,” Ratchet argued. “I agree that fool in the suit clearly has no idea of the situation we are all in. But the members of NEST are aware, and we will work it out with them. The important thing is Megatron did not get Sam. No doubt she and Bumblebee will be in contact with Will.”

“Normally I’d be relieved Sam’s with Bee,” Sideswipe stated casually. “But they also got the Twin Terrors with them. They’re problematic enough. None of them are all that experienced in covert ops.”

All of the bots shared understanding looks. It was not easy knowing that the three youngest of their kind were out there without them. They couldn’t reach them on the radio either.

“Regardless we have to put our trust in them until we hear more,” Ratchet sighed heavily.

“Once we do you better let us head out after them,” Ironhide snarled before storming off to another section of the base.
Sam sat staring into the small fire Mikaela had started in one of the abandoned barrels in the yard. She and Bee also sat around the fire no one really speaking.

“I just… I wish I had been able to do something more,” Sam stated suddenly sad eyes turning to her friend. “I’m so sorry Bee. If you hate me, I understand.”

“Young fella, you are the person I care about most in my life,” Bee informed her using some movie quote or another. “If there’s anything you need, I won’t be far away.”

“But… he’s dead because of me,” Sam cried out, guilt weighing her down. “He came here to protect me and he’s dead.”

“His sacrifice for us would not have been in vain. Hallelujah!” The words came over the radio again, this time from some gospel preacher.

“But what can we do,” she asked desperately. “Where can we go? All I have are these symbols in my mind. They resemble Cybertronian but nothing I recognize. You?”

“Sorry Boss.”

Mikaela frowned seeing Sam’s shoulders slump forward in defeat. Her eyes drifted to the other two robots with them. “What about you two? Either of you recognize these symbols?”

Mudflap and Skids frowned down at the few symbols that Sam had sketched into the dirt earlier.

“That’s old school, yo.”

“Yeah, that’s like some serious stuff, right there,” Skids added.

“So you can read it,” Sam asked hopefully.

“Read?” Mudflap looked uncomfortable.

“No we don’t really do much reading,” Skids finished for them both.

“There’s got to be someone who can read this,” Sam groused irritably pacing back and forth.

“Oh, look who came sashaying back,” Skids taunted juvenileley. Sam and the others turned to see Leo standing there nervously.

“Hair growing like a Chia Pet,” Mudflap joked, one hand poking at the curly mop. “Look at him.”

“I had a bit of a mild panic attack earlier,” Leo defended himself angrily swiping at the hand messing with his hair. “I think I’m allowed that considering what I’ve been through.”

“Still makes you a pussy.”

Shooting a glare at the two bot behind him. “Anyway I heard you have a problem.” He waved one hand towards the symbols etched in the dirt. “I think I know someone who can help.”

“Who?” Sam could only stare in disbelief at the boy. Honestly, despite his website and his conspiracy theories she didn’t really think there was anything Leo could possibly know that would
help.

“Robo Warrior.” He said it with such conviction that no one knew what to say just yet.

“Who,” Mikaela re-iterated the question, this time with more than a bit of sarcasm lacing the words.

“This guy, Robo Warrior,” he started to explain ignoring the incredulous look the two girls shared at the name. “Everything about anything alien, he’s supposed to know. One time we revenge-hacked his site and maybe I saw some of your alien drawings or whatever.” He gestured as he spoke indicating he clearly felt nervous still. “If anyone knows anything, it’s him.”

“Ok.” Though mentally she was seriously questioning her belief in this, she knew they had nothing to lose. “Where is he?”
It was closing in on eleven the next morning when Bee pulled up to their destination, Mudflap and Skids behind him.

“This is it,” Leo announced happily.

“A deli?” Sam shared a look with Mikaela who merely shrugged. Clearly she wasn’t expecting much either. “Right… good front.”

Leo obviously didn’t hear the tone in her voice because he quickly exited the vehicle before closing the door and looking at them seriously. He was taking this whole event way more seriously than anticipated.

“All right, you wait here. I’ll give you the go/no go signal. Be on the lookout because it’ll be subtle.”

Mikaela waited until the young man had gotten to the door of the shop before turning to Sam. “Seriously? This is the kind of people you meet at college?”

“Uh… yeah?” Sam shrugged unsure how to respond.

“So glad I didn’t go.”

“Hey now he’s not that bad,” Sam argued.

“Stupid is as stupid does,” Bee quoted over the radio.

“Hey now, that’s not nice.”

“Doesn’t mean he’s wrong,” Mikaela pointed out.

Since she couldn’t really argue Sam just sighed and looked out the window catching Leo through the glass of the deli waving his arms and making faces at them.

“That’s what he considers subtle,” Mikaela intoned wryly.

“Whatever, lets go get answers.”

The two slid out of the car and headed inside not sure what they were going to get. Leo met them immediately pointing accusingly at one of the men behind the counter.

“It’s him! It’s him! That’s the guy right there,” he declared. “That’s him!”

Sam’s step faltered just slightly as she took in the familiar lanky form and smarmy face. “No.” It came out more of a groan than not, “You’ve for to be kidding me.”

“All right,” former Agent Simmons belted out to the crowded store. “Meat store’s closed! Everybody out! Out right now!”

It took a bit for the people to clear out.

Meanwhile Leo was looking at Sam and Mikaela with something akin to betrayal. “Wait a minute. You know this guy?”
“Yeah, we’re old friends,” Mikaela spat mockingly.

“Old friends,” Simmons scoffed angrily. “You’re the case that shut down Sector Seven! Got the kibosh disbanded.” He ranted on, hands gesturing with each word. “No more security clearance, no retirement, no nothing.” He pointed an accusing finger at the girls. “All because of you and little criminal BFF.”

Before either could respond an old feminine voice called out from the back with demands. Simmons started ordering one of the other workers to help her out.

Mikaela smirked at the older man. “You live with your mom?”

“No, my mama lives with me,” he snapped back. “It’s a big difference.” Once he felt his message got across he turned back to Sam. “They got your face all over the news, alien girl.”

“I’m aware.”

“And the NBE one’s still kicking, huh?” His lips twisted in a sardonic smirk. “How did that happen? Don’t answer.” He held up a hand to silence her. “I don’t know what your hiding, but I don’t want anything to do with it. So goodbye. You never saw me. I got bagels to schmear. Vanish.”

Rolling her eyes Sam stepped forward trying to catch his arm. “Can you give me five seconds. Look, hold on please. I need your help.”

“Really? You need my help,” the man scoffed.

“Look, I have been losing my mind. Some little crab bot plunged some device deep into the soft tissue of my brain and started projecting little alien symbols like a personal home movie,” she snapped irritably. “And on top of that I’m a wanted fugitive, because some big bad alien wants me to be turned over to them. So I think that is a situation where one is in need of help.”

“Wait, wait,” the agent shushed her. “You said it projected images off your brain?”

“Yes,” she answered shortly starting to lose a bit of her temper.

“Meat locker! Now!” he twirled around leading them towards a back room. Leo looked absolutely torn between awe and loathing. Sam and Mikaela just shrugged and followed after the overly dramatic man, remembering very well his past antics. However, both could have done without having to walk past the pig carcasses.

Simmons stooped over and flipped a small carpet off of a section of the floor, one hand reaching down to grab a handle. He paused to eye the kids seriously. “What you are about to see it top secret.”

Pulling the hatch up he prepared to go down only to stop again. “Do not tell my mother.”

As they descended into the lower level Sam distinctly felt like she had entered an episode of Hoarders with more than a slight smattering of X-Files thrown in. It made her wonder if Section seven wasn’t shut down for another reason.

“Okay, files, files,” Simmons muttered to himself as he searched through what looked like an extremely random system. “We’re talking about symbols.” His hand snapped out and slapped Leo’s hand away from whatever object he was trying to manhandle. “Hey, still radioactive. Don’t touch.”

Mikaela sent Sam a meaningful look as the man continued his search finally pulling forth some old photos.
“Okay, Cube-brain,” he announced triumphantly. “Any of these look like the symbols you saw?”

Sam stared in a mixture of awe and disbelief as she studied the photos scattered before her. “Where did you get these?”

“Before I got fired, I poached S-7’s crown jewel,” he declared proudly. “Over 75 years of alien research, which points to one inescapable fact.” He pulled a few more photos and written reports all much older than anticipated. “The Transformers, they’ve been here a long, long time.” He shifted through the documents to pull out the ones he found made his point clearly. “how do I know? Archeologists found these unexplained markings in ancient ruins all over the world. China. Egypt. Greece. Shot in 1932.” He paused clearly for effect. Not that he needed to, Sam was already reeling from the information. “These the symbols you’re seeing in your head?”

“Yeah,” Sam breathed out not sure how to respond further.

“Same ones over here right? So tell me, how did they end up all drawing the same things,” he asked only to continue on without barely a pause. “Aliens. And I think some of them stayed. Check this out.” He started pulling out a file with a huge Classified stamp on it containing more photos of old cars, planes, even some ships. “Project Black Knife. Robots in disguise, hiding here all along. We detected radioactive signatures all across the country. I pleaded on my knees with S-7 to investigate it, but they said the readings were infinitesimal,” he scoffed. “That I was obsessed. Me. Can you believe that?”

“Yeah,” Sam drawled out uncertainly not really wanting to point out the truth to the man. He was helping afterall, sort of. Clearing her throat she pushed on. “Megatron said that there was another Energon source here.”

“On Earth. Another source,” he asked somewhat worriedly. “On Earth?”

“Yes,” she confirmed a bit forcefully. Really was she stuttering? “And that these symbols.” She waved to the photos. “Maps in my head, would lead him there.”

“You talk to your Autobot friends about this?”

“Apparently the source is before them,” she sighed heavily. “And the ones still with us don’t recognize the symbols.”

“So,” the man dragged out. “It comes before them?”

Why was he making her repeat herself? Taking a calming breath as losing her temper would really not be a good idea she nodded. “Correct.”

“Well, then were porked,” he stated with such surety that she was tempted to deck him. “Unless we can talk to a Decepticon. I mean, I’m not on speaking terms with them.”

Sam rubbed her eyes tiredly counting backwards from ten. Only Mikaela’s wry tone broke her from her homicidal thoughts.

“Actually… I am.” How she could look so smug yet so innocent at the same time remained a mystery to Sam.

Wait. What?
The metal box shook violently as the being inside demanded to be let out. It wasn’t all that big, so the bot inside had to be on the smaller side. Still, Sam teetered between disbelief and awe that Mikaela had managed to capture the thing. Then again her friend was pretty awesome.

“This is going to be a little bit sad,” Mikaela warned.

“Open it.” Sam waved at the box. They needed answer and fast so best to get this over with.

The second the lid opened the bot, a rather small thing on wheels, jumped out waving it’s arms at them threateningly.

“I will have so many Deceptions on your butt,” he, it (?) declared angrily.

However a quick yank to the metal chain Mikaela had so thoughtfully attached had it heeling pretty quick. “Hey, behave,” Mikaela growled domineeringly, to which, surprisingly enough, the bot obeyed.

“What is it,” Leo whispered to her, eyes wide as he stared at the living bot. “A Decepticon?”

“Yup.” She turned to her friend. “And you’re training him?”

“I’m trying to,” she admitted sheepishly. Sometimes Sam wondered about Mikaela’s fetish for dominance.

Simmons however was taking Mikaela’s net pet much harder. “I spent my whole adult life combing the planet for aliens, and you’re carrying around one in your purse like a little Chihuahua.”

Apparently said ‘Chihuahua’ took offense. “Do you want a thrown down, you pubic fro-head?”

Before Simmons could get into a shouting match with the bot Mikaela took over the interrogation. “Look, I’m sorry I torched your eye, but I won’t torch the other one okay? Just tell me what these symbols are,” she ‘requested’ nicely using her ‘I’m speaking to a little child’ voice. “Please.”

The bot folded his arms over his chest and tried to act like her voice and smile hadn’t affected him but his optics kept flickering to the photos scattered before him. “I know that…That’s the language of the Primes,” he announced with surprise. “I don’t read it, but these guys…” He pulled one of the photos closer in disbelief. “Where the frick did you find photos of these guys?”

“Who are they,” Sam queried excitement building now that they might actually get some answers.

“Seekers, pal. Oldest of the old.” He cocked his head as he studied a few more photos. “They’ve been here thousands of years, looking for something. I don’t know what.” He huffed in aggravation. “Nobody tells me nothing! But… they could translate those symbols for you.”

“And do you know where to find them,” Mikaela cajoled with a wide smile. The bot’s eyes flickered wider if possible and nodded happily for her. “Can you show us?”

“Yeah.” He turned to the large map Simmons had hanging on the wall, a laser beam hitting it immediately.

Leo walked over to it cautiously reading the place marked. “Looks like the closest one’s in Washington.”
“Well what are we waiting for,” Simmons demanded happily, grabbing various items around the room. “Let’s go!”

The man and Leo bounded out of the room. The girls paused to allow Mikaela to ‘persuade’ the Decepticon back into the box. Sam watched the whole process with more than a little trepidation.

Once Mikaela had secured the box and turned to her friend with a rather pleased look, she paused to see Sam staring at her warily.

“What?”

“You’re a little scary. Just so ya know.”

XOXOXO
“Smithsonian Air and Space Museum,” Simmons announced as if they could not read the sign. Bee had pulled into one of the closer spots, Mudflap and Skids in the spots next to him. “Land of dreams in there.”

Sam seriously wondered if the man ever shut up. Nearly the whole ride down, an agonizing three hour trip, he had gone on and on about all sorts of things. Mostly he was complaining about how Sam and Mikaela had ultimately destroyed his life, as if. Thankfully Leo kept him occupied with his questions and declarations of war. It appeared Simmons had attacked the young man’s website more than a few times.

The four piled out of Bee taking in the place. Simmons moved to the back where he threw a bag earlier. “All I ever wanted to be was an astronaut,” he continued on, turning to Leo with some of the extra clothing he brought. “Here hold these.”

Without warning the man ripped off his pants, much like a stripper showing off a horrendous pair of brief-thong underwear proudly promoting Section 7.

“What is that,” Sam couldn’t help but ask as she stared in horror at the scene before her. Seriously she might be scarred for life. The sick look on Mikaela’s face indicated she felt the same.

“What? I wear them when I’m in a funk,” the man stated blithely. Thankfully he pulled on his a pair of cargo pants and a flight jacket hiding the terrifying view before either girl could revisit their lunch. “So does Giambi, Jeter,” he continued on. “It’s a baseball thing.”

Raising his wrist up he looked at his watch. “Okay, watches synchronized, sharp mind and empty bladder.” He started walking towards the entrance with the other following behind him. From the looks of it the museum would only be open a little bit longer. “You get caught, demand and attorney and don’t say my name.”

The group slipped through security fairly easily then split up, Leo following behind Simmons almost like a puppy following it’s owner. Sam paused to watch them go before turning to her friend.

“Should those two really be alone together?”

“You want to go with them,” the other asked with a raised brow.

Sam shuddered at the thought. “No, lets look around.”

They did an initial sweep of the area looking for any clues marking the planes around them of possible alien origins. Unfortunately their time was running out. Sam and Mikaela managed to find places to hide before the place closed, easily slipping in place without notice. Sometimes being small and flexible was a benefit.

Sam waited patiently in the small space she had sequestered herself. It wasn’t the most comfortable but she’d had worse. Hell, the training regime Epps, Ironhide and Figg had put her through made this look like a vacation. Just the thought of them made her sad. She hadn’t seen them in a long time, or at least it seemed like it. Sure she wrote the guys but it wasn’t the same. Of course inevitably thinking of them brought her thoughts to Will.

All the emails or calls she had made to him were responded with cool politeness or he dodged them with some excuse or another. It didn’t happen gradually either. It was like the moment she turned
eighteen he suddenly decided he didn’t want to deal with her like a friend anymore. Of course she knew he was busy, it was hard not to with Figg complaining about the overtime, but it seemed like more than that. She missed the easy conversation they had.

Maybe… Maybe he had found someone? It would make sense. He was very handsome and really funny and sweet. Who wouldn’t fall for him? And if he did, he certainly wouldn’t want to be spending his time talking to a pathetic teen like her. Especially when it seemed they only really saw each other when she got in trouble.

Now here she was back in trouble. She wondered if the guys were going to yell at her when she saw them next. Epps would surely give her crap for getting caught by Decepticons and having the stupid crab thing go through her head.

Her hands brushed against the cylinder containing the shard Mikaela had given back to her earlier. It all came back to the damn cube. Part of her wished she’d never heard of aliens and she could go back to her normal boring life. Another part wondered why she’d been foolish enough to force the cube’s power into Megatron and ultimately through herself.

But she had, and you can’t change the past. At least not yet. Surely there was some secret section of the government working on it. Simmons probably knew, and Leo no doubt had a web page dedicated to it in his spare time.

Okay, she’d seriously been in this small space way too long if her thoughts were going in that direction. When was this place going to close? Simmons had said to wait for his signal, whatever that was. Would he be as ‘subtle’ as Leo had? Doubtful.

A loud whistle echoed through the air. Yup. Somehow Leo and Simmons were related.

Slipping from her hiding place she met up with Mikaela and Simmons. Mik immediately started releasing her ‘pet’ Decepticon, or Wheelie as he declared to them earlier, while Simmons pulled out some sort of reading device.

They started walking around unhindered, Simmons pointing the device at various planes to determine if they were in fact bots. Sam on the other hand used the shard, hoping it would lead them to what they needed.

It was Mikaela that noticed her ‘pet’ now in the form of a small truck moving fast through the museum. She grabbed onto Sam.

“Look, look! Follow him,” she directed pushing Sam after the bot. “He knows where he’s going.”

The two took off after Wheelie at a run, coming to a stop in front of an old stealth fighter plane, Simmons joining them seconds later.

“You got what I got,” he called out.

“Yeah. The Blackbird,” she stated. Glancing down she saw the plaque explaining the history of the old plane.

Wheelie transformed back into his natural form. “There he is,” he announced almost reverently. “This guy’s a legend, like Chairman of the Board!” He turned directly to Sam. “Yo, freshman, point the shard. And watch the magic happen.”

Not really sure she should, but more than slightly caught up in the moment, Sam did as told. The shard flew from the tongs she held it in connecting with the old metal. A wave of electricity wrapped
around the plane.

Sam and Mikaela ran forward trying to get an idea on the identity of the bot. As of yet Sam couldn’t see anything, but Mikaela had.

“Shit,” she cursed. “It’s a Decepticon!”

“Decepticon,” Simmons gasped in dismay. Waving off to the side he frantically called out to the others. “Behind the MiG now!”

The group rushed to safety to avoid the bot as the tell tale sounds of a transformation occurred. They managed to get under the MiG just as the bot finished transforming. It was tall, possibly taller than Optimus had been. But his features showed far more age, even going so far as to have what looked like a beard.

“What sort of hideous mausoleum is this,” the bot asked with more than a little offense in his tone. “Answer me, pawns and knaves!” He turned searching for them, or anyone really. “Show yourselves or suffer my infinite wrath! You little spinal-core-based organisms!” He turned only to knock into another plane and lose his footing slightly. “Bugger it! Behold the eternal glory of Jetfire,” he bellowed waving one arm about, pieces of metal falling as he did so. “Prepare for remote systems override!”

Wheelie cocked his head slightly. “I tell you, this guy did not age well.”

“I don’t think he’s gonna hurt us,” Mikaela added thoughtfully.

The group watched as the bot trampled over to the hanger doors, tapping it demandingly with a cane. “I command these doors to open.” Unsurprisingly nothing happened.

Apparently Jetfire fit into the category of elders who grew impatient when they were not obeyed as he tried to get his missiles to open the doors for him. “Fire! I said fire!” One managed to go off but did little more than singe one of the plane behind his. “Bollocks! Damn these worthless parts,” he groused using one giant arm to break through the hanger doors.

Sam scrambled to her feet running after the mumbling bot. Not her brightest idea as he was a Decepticon, but she needed answers. “Wait a second!”

“The museum is going to be very unhappy,” Simmons commented as they followed after Sam, but even he agreed they needed the bot. “We gotta catch that plane!”

Jetfire steadily made his way over the ground, passing various planes. Sam saw Bee skidding to a stop, Mudflap and Skids close by. They were all finally catching up to the plane.

“Right, I’m on a mission,” Jetfire announced, more to himself.

“Wait, wait, wait, wait,” Sam cried out hoping to catch the bot’s attention.

It finally worked as he swung around, red eyes glaring at her. “What do you want?”

“We just want to talk to you,” she promised hands raised in peace and to ward him off from getting too close. He could squish her with little effort afterall.

“I have no time to talk,” he told her indignantly. “I’m on a mission. I’m a mercenary doom-bringer!” Well that sounded good. “What planet am I on?”
Was it possible for bots to get alzheimer's?

“Earth.”

“Earth?” He leaned down closer to her level. “Terrible name for a planet. Might as well call it ‘Dirt’. Planet ‘Dirt’.” He paused for a moment as if remembering something. “Tell me, is that robot civil war still going on? Who’s winning?”

“The Decepticons,” she responded calmly. At least he was talking to them, so all was not lost.

“Pugh,” he spat angrily. “Well, I changed sides to the Autobots.”

Sam glanced at Mikaela unsure of this information, but hopeful none-the-less. “What do you mean, changed sides?”

“It’s a choice,” he sniffed in affront, taking on a defensive stance she’d often seen when her mom got riled about something. “It’s an intensely personal decision.” For a moment she thought he’d leave it there, but like many he had more to say about it. “So much negativity. Who wants to live a life filled with hate?”

“You mean you don’t have to work for those miserable freaking Decepticons,” Wheelies asked with a bit too much hope in Sam’s opinion.

Seriously, just how bad were they that even their own members were jumping ship. Clearly Megatron never heard of Employee satisfaction. Then again she doubted the megalomaniac really cared. He was a ‘fear me’ type of tyrant.

“If the Decepticons had their way,” Jetfire went on. “They’d destroy the whole universe!”

“Yeah, sounds like them,” Sam sighed. Off to the side she could see Wheelie holding onto Mikaela’s leg promising to be a good bot for her. Trying to shake that image from her mind, she focused on Jetfire. “So you’ve been here for a long time right?”

“My ancestors have been here for centuries,” he stated, pounding his cane against the ground to emphasize his point. “My father, he was a wheel. The first wheel! Do you know what he transformed into?”

“No…” Leo answered for them though all of them seemed a bit confused to this line of conversation.

“Nothing! But he did so with honor and dignity, damn it,” the bot bellowed. In fact he reminded Sam a lot of the old war horses who’d lived through the various wars and managed to get to their eighties or nineties. By this age they said and did whatever the hell they wanted. He was mumbling to himself again, clearly trying to leave.

“Hey! Maybe we can help each other,” Sam called out. “You know things I don’t and I know things you don’t.” She started to draw out symbols on the ground catching the old bot’s interest. “It comes in waves, these vivid symbols. They’re in my mind, all of this. And Megatron wants what’s in my mind.”

“He and someone called the Fallen,” Mikaela added helpfully.

“The Fallen,” Jetfire queried from where he’d kneeled to examine the drawings. “I know him. He left me here to rust! The original Decepticon.” His voice rumbled deeply. “He’s terrible to work for. It’s always apocalypse, chaos, crisis!” He waved his hands around wildly. Sam and the others had to step back so as to avoid being hit. Bee, Mudflap and Skids hovered nearby all three in their bot form
ready to protect the humans should it come to that.

Jetfire finally calmed enough to look further at the symbols. “These transcriptions, they were part of my mission… The Fallen’s search,” he muttered thoughtfully. “I remember now, for the Dagger’s Tip and the key…”

“Slow down,” Sam asked. “The Dagger’s Tip? The key? What are you talking about?”

The bot stood energy gathering around him. “No time to explain. Hold on, everybody!” All around the group sand and dirt swirled up like a vortex. Bee hunched over Sam and Mikaela protectively. The others floundered not sure what to do. “Stay still or you’ll die!”

With that last warning the energy around them felt like it imploded. In a blink the group was gone, only an empty field holding old planes remained.
Will leaned against his desk ‘watching’ the monitors in front of him. Only his mind was miles away. So much had happened in the last forty-eight hours it left his head spinning. And once more Sammy was right in the middle of it.

It had been over a year since she’d last been involved in any of the business between Autobots and Decepticons. He’d never been so happy that the bad guys had seemed to decide she was no longer an asset they needed to have. He figured she could finally have a normal life.

Sadly he knew that life would have to be without him.

It was hard when she finally turned eighteen and was technically legal. Even though he had at least a decade on her, he couldn’t help his feelings for her. Still, deep down he knew she deserved better. She was just starting out in life, heading off to college, and she didn’t need him holding her back. She needed to remain free to find herself and what she really wanted in life. He’d already had his wild youth, now it was her turn.

But it didn’t make it hurt any less, or keep thought of her from creeping through his mind. He’d managed to pull back, no write as much or call. With how busy they’d been he barely had time to do his paperwork, let alone answer emails. Still, many were the times he caught himself starting an email to her about his day, or asking her how she was, or even picking up the phone his fingers dialing the first digits of her number.

He had it bad.

It didn’t help that Figg and Epps kept giving him crap about it. They also kept a running commentary on just what Sam was getting up to now that she was in college, or more precisely, who. Not that his own imagination wasn’t running wild on that front, thank you very much. Still, he knew it was the right thing to back off.

Now though, now she was in trouble and he couldn’t get to her. He didn’t even know where she was. Some evil creep had demanded they hand her over, flashed her face all over the media, her parents can’t be found, and their government was considering handing over an innocent girl to clearly evil beings. Galloway was just begging to be decked, the little ferret.

“Scowling at the screens is not gonna do anything man,” Epps announced as he walked inside, Figg and Graham close behind.

“Any chatter?” He decided to push for something more productive then the usual ‘tease-the-major’ routine that had been happening for some time.

“Comms are clear Major,” Graham answered calmly. Trust the Brit to stay professional.

“Wouldn’t put it past those paper pushers to have blacked out our comm links though,” Figg added petulantly. “But even the bots haven’t heard anything, and they can pick up a lot more than our Ops guys.”

“Have they said anything about why Megatron was going after Sam,” Will inquired.

“Ratchet mentioned they got a call from Bumblebee,” Epps started off. “Apparently he picked up a Decepticon signature close to Sammy. They were on their way when Sam was attacked on campus. We managed to get some of the footage of that from the cameras around the school and the city.”
With a few quick taps he had the footage showing on the screen.

The group watched solemnly as Sam and Mikaela ran from a smaller bot, along with an unknown male. They ran into the library before busting out and grabbing a car. None of them had any doubt who hotwired it. Of course it turned into a high speed chase and at one point they lost all of them in the warehouse district. Will almost had a coronary when the chopper snagged the car and Sam almost fell to her death.

The next thing they see if Optimus crashing into one of the buildings, along with Bumblebee. Then there is a chase leading out of the city.

“That's it for the footage we have. The sight where Optimus engaged Megatron has been locked down, but we can't get any info on it, thanks to Galloway,” Epps explained, nearly spitting the man’s name at the end.

“From what Ironside told us, it appears the Decepticons used the shard fragment they stole to revive Megatron,” Graham reported. “Now they are after something, something Sam has information on, whether intentionally or unintentionally.”

“Maybe it’s something like the weird symbols that were glowing on her skin last year,” Figg suggested. “The bots did say they don’t know what the full affect of the cube was on Sammy. Maybe there’s something we missed.”

“Whatever it is we need to find her,” Will stated calmly, voice a bit colder than usual. “Definitely before Galloway and his goons do.”

“I still say we should shoot him,” Epps muttered petulantly, arms crossed to contain his anger.

Figg spouted something off in Spanish, but is face and posture indicated he agreed.

“If it wouldn’t get us in more trouble than we are in, I’d let you,” Will murmured softly. “And none of the bots have any idea what Megatron and the others could be up to? Or where Bumblebee took Sam? Wouldn’t they have some way of tracking him?”

“They say the kid turned off his beacon,” Epps huffed. “I know he’s been going through a rebellious stage, but come on.”

“The twins are with them though,” Graham reminded them.

“Please, those two are worse than Bee,” Figg snorted. “They always have their beacons turned off so they could get into trouble without anyone else knowing.”

“Alright, well keep an eye out for any and all mentions of Sam, Mikaela or any of the bots,” Will ordered. “I want everyone to be ready the moment we hear anything. Galloway may have pulled us off this, but we are the only team that really knows the enemy. If anyone’s gonna take them down, it’s gonna be us.”

There was a resounding ‘sir’ in agreement before the others left to spread the word. Will turned back to the screen, seeing another photo of Sam flashing across the screen.

“Hang in there Sammy-girl.”
Words couldn’t even begin to describe the strange vortex they passed through. It was so fast Sam wasn’t even sure of what she saw. However, she was very aware when they stopped. Mostly because they were several feet in the air, and gravity was taking hold again. The loud gunshot like sound to announce their arrival certainly didn’t help either. Thankfully when she landed it was in very soft sand, though it likely slid into places it shouldn’t be. Typical of sand really. It was one of the reasons she wasn’t crazy about the beach. No matter how hard you tried to shake it all off you still found some in some weird place in your stuff, your clothes or unmentionables.

Really though Sam was just glade they were back on land and out of… whatever that was. Or she was until the pain registered in her mind. Her whole left arm felt like it was on fire. Pulling it up quickly she noted it was not on fire, but her hand looked like it had been place over a live flame. Crackled flesh spider-webbed over the appendage, giving way to the raw reddish flesh beneath. The air managed to cause a stinging sensation, so at least most of her nerves were still intact.

Glancing around she took in the massive desert around them. Giant stone formation pushed up out of the landscaping to add some differentiation to the desolate place.

A rather angry set of beeps and random words notified her to Bee’s presence on her left. Pushing up carefully she turned to her friend.

“You okay Bee,” she called, as he was a slight distance from her.

“Aye, and if my grandmother had wheels she’d be a weapon,” the irritated tone of ‘Scotty’ came over his comms.

“Alright then…”

“Sam!” Mikaela’s voice had her moving to find the others.

“Mik!” She had to make it over a dune before she managed to catch sight of everyone else, but at least they were in one piece. “Where are we?”

It took some time for them all to come together. Leo kept muttering about Vegas, but Sam ignored him for the moment. Mikaela had taken one look at her hand and forced her to sit while she wrapped it as best she could with some scraps from Sam’s shirt. Simmons however had some words for their new friend.

“That really, really hurt,” he scolded the giant bot. “You’re just lucky I didn’t get hurt!” Sam and Mikaela shared a look at that but managed not to comment. Even Bee let out a tiny snicker on his end. “People could have gotten killed,” the man continued on. “And I... I would have gotten hurt…”

“I told you I was opening a space bridge,” Jetfire shot back petulantly. “It’s the fastest way to get to Egypt.”

That raised Sam’s hackles. “When did you… When did you tell us,” she demanded forcing herself to her feet again, allowing some of her anger to bleed through. “You didn’t tell us anything! And now we’re in Egypt! Why are we in Egypt?”

“Don’t get snippy with me, fleshling,” the bot snapped back plopping down on a boulder. It looked like his little spacebridge took more out of him than he wanted to admit. Well, good, he deserved it for jumping the gun like that. “You were duly informed!”
Taking a breath Sam tried to reign in her temper and push back the lingering pain in her throbbing hand. “Okay, let’s stop arguing and try to focus. Can you focus?” The bot’s optics narrowed a bit but he nodded all the same. “Can you please tell us why we are in Egypt, so we can have a little bit of a semblance of peace of mind?”

From the corner of her eyes she could see Simmons nodding and gesturing to her in full agreement. Leo was still standing there with his mouth open, eyes scanning the horizon. Poor boy was probably trying to come to terms with their sudden displacement to the other side of the Atlantic. Mikaela just stood next to her, cool as always. Clearly it was a testament to how often they were in these situations.

Jetfire cocked his head slightly before settling down even more. He reminded her of her grandfather when he was still alive and he was preparing to tell her about the ‘old days’.

“This planet was visits by our race once before,” he started off. “By our earliest ancestors millennia ago. They were on an exploratory mission to harvest Energon, the lifeblood of our race.” Seriously the bot had a gift for story telling. Even if the information wasn’t as interesting Sam had no doubt he’d be able to keep their attention. “Without it, we’ll all perish, oxidize and rust, like my wretched self!”

Sam’s eyes involuntarily went to Bee and the other Autobots. She didn’t want that to happen. Not to her friends, especially not to Bee. They were family.

“Do you have any idea what it’s like to slowly fall apart and die,” Jetfire asked, and Sam could see the younger bots shifting minutely, obviously disturbed by the other’s words.

“Let’s not get episodic, okay, old-timer,” Simmons cut in forcing the bot back on track. “Beginning, middle, end. Facts. Details. Condense. Plot. Tell it.” With each word he used his hands to emphasize what he wanted, but it was affected, as Jetfire continued.

“Somewhere buried in this desert, our ancestors built a great machine,” he stated. “It harvests Energon by destroying suns.”

That did not sound good. “Destroy suns,” she asked worriedly.

“You mean blow them up?” Looked like Leo was finally back in the game.

“Yes,” the bot confirmed much to Sam’s horror. “You see, in the beginning there were seven Primes, our original leaders. And they set out into the universe seeking distant suns to harvest.” He paused his voice dropping to show how important the next part was. “The Primes set out with one rule. Never destroy a planet with life.”

Sam and Mikaela glanced at each other, both thinking the same thing. If that was true, why was this machine here?

“Until one of them tried to defy this rule.” Oh, that answers that. “And his name forevermore was the Fallen.” Holding up a hand he projected a holographic image of their enemy. They watched silently as the story played out following Jetfire’s narrative. “He despised the human race and he wanted to kill you all by turning on that machine. The only way to activate it is with the legendary key called the Matrix of Leadership.” These words were said with a reverence Sam did not think the other would have. It reminded her of religious people when they spoke of ‘relics’ of the church.

“A great battle took place over the possession of the Matrix. The Fallen was stronger than his brothers, so they had no choice but to steal and hide it from him. In the ultimate sacrifice, they gave their lives to seal the Matrix away in a tomb made of their own bodies, a tomb we cannot find.”
Bee, Mudflap, Skids and Wheelie all looked upon Jetfire completely entranced in this story. None of them had heard of this legend of their people. Ratchet and Optimus had tried to teach the younger ones the history of their people, but they only went back so far. Wheelie had heard of the Fallen, but the Decepticons spoke of him in hushed tones, too afraid to really say more. Then again if the guy was strong enough to beat six other Primes he could understand why the others would tread on the cautious side.

“Somewhere, buried in this desert, that deadly machine remains. The Fallen knows where it is and if he finds the tomb of the primes, your world will be no more,” Jetfire spoke with surety.

“Okay, so how do we stop him,” Mikaela asked calmly. There had to be a way.

“Only a Prime can defeat the Fallen,” the bot informed them as if it was common knowledge.

Sam felt her heart sink. “Optimus Prime?”

“So you’ve met a Prime?” Jetfire leaned in closer to her like an excited kid. “Why, you must have met a great descendant. Is he alive, here on this planet?”

“He… he sacrificed himself,” Sam stated around the lump in her throat. “To save me.”

“So he’s dead,” Jetfire muttered in disappointment. “Without a Prime, it’s impossible. No one else could stop the Fallen.”

Sam’s mind raced. She wouldn’t accept that this was all for nothing. That Optimus died for nothing. They had to stop the Fallen from finding the Matrix and powering the machine… Wait a second.

“So,” Sam drawled out trying to form her thought into words. “The same energy that’s gonna be used to reactivate the machine… Could that energy somehow be used to reactivate Optimus and bring him back to life?”

The others shifted around her, hope starting to flare to life.

Jetfire rubbed at his metallic beard. “It was never designed for that purpose, but it’s an energy like no other.”

“So, can you get us to the matric before the Decepticons get to me?”

Jetfire leaned down, face pushing into her space. “Follow your mind,” he nearly bellowed, one hand tapping against his head. “Your map, your symbols. What you carved in the sand, it’s your clue.”

Part of Sam wanted to reiterate that she couldn’t ‘follow’ her map as she couldn’t read the damn thing. Luckily she didn’t have to mention that part. “When the dawn alights the Dagger’s Tip, Three kings will reveal the doorway! Find the doorway.” One great hand made a shooing motion. “Go! Go now! That was my mission. It’s your mission now!” He swept his hand out again pushing them towards the younger bots, who were already changing into their car forms. “Go before the Decepticons find me and find you!”

The four of them piled into Bumblebee making a fast getaway from the place. Now they just needed to figure out what the hell the ‘clue’ actually meant.
chapter 37

Sam drove as Simmons used his cell phone to make a few calls. She seriously hoped he had one hell of a plan or the roaming fees would suck. Leo and Mikaela were in the back, but neither had said anything for some time. She knew Mikaela was probably rest, but hopefully Leo wasn’t having a melt down. Though she supposed a silent meltdown was better than the alternative.

Mudflap and Skids followed along behind them, Wheelie in one or the other, she hadn’t really paid much attention. It surprised her a bit as the tiny bot seemed scarily attached to Mikaela. It made her wonder if all Decepticons had such masochistic tendencies, which would totally explain a lot.

“Okay,” Simmons’ voice broke her from her thoughts. “Here’s what my CIA contact says.” Name dropping much? “Ancient Sumerians used to call the Gulf of Aqaba the ‘Dagger’s Tip’.”

“So that would be the same Dagger’s Tip Jetfire was telling us about?”

“It’s part of the Red Sea,” the man continued. “It divides Egypt and Jordan like the tip of a blade. 29.5 degrees north, 35 east.” He held up his cell to show her how he got the coordinates. “Here it is.”

Maybe she should give him a gold star or something? The man seemed to thrive on personal verification. Wow, clearly she was tired if her thoughts were this bitchy. Shaking her head slightly she ran through what they needed to do. Hopefully if they found this key thing it would be able to revive Optimus. It was a long shot, but it had to be powerful for a group of Primes to make such a sacrifice to keep it hidden.

“First thing we’ve got to do is get Optimus to the Dagger’s Tip,” she stated with as much conviction as she could. It was a logical first step. They just needed to put their plan in motion and get NEST to bring him to them. Trying to find the key then get back to the states would be too much of a risk.

“How are you gonna get him halfway across the world,” Leo asked incredulously. Granted he had a point, but he didn’t know the people she knew.

“I’m gonna make a call,” she informed him as if it was the most obvious answer.

Sadly though it wasn’t. Would Will even do as she asked? Part of her believed he and the others would come in a heart beat. However, this was asking a lot. She was an international fugitive. Asking them to help her was putting their careers and even worse, their lives at stake. Yet, there was no one else she trusted more to come to her rescue. If anything they could relay the information to the Autobots, they would come if there was any chance at saving their leader and friend. And they had to save him; she had to save him. The guilt of his death still weighed heavily on her mind.

Logically she knew she hadn’t been at fault. Megatron had simply taken the opportunity given him. But the image of the energy blade crashing through Optimus’ chest was burned into her mind like a horror film that refused to stop playing.

“There’s a town up ahead,” Mikaela announced suddenly. “We might be able to find a phone there or something.”

“Why can’t we just use his cell,” Leo demanded point ting to his ‘arch nemesis’.

“Because it’s traceable idiot,” Simmons snapped. “And the batteries too low.”

“If it’s traceable why’d you call your contact,” the youth argued, clearly pleased to have put the older
man on the spot.

“Because this contact is a trusted friend who wouldn’t have the ability to trace it, nor would they even know I’m involved in this little mission,” he spoke as if talking to a young child. “There would be no need to trace the call. But if I started making calls to NEST that would be a different story.”

“So your… contact is used to you calling up and asking about random places in the world,” Mikaela queried, her eyes catching Sam’s in the rear view sharing a smirk.

“I may be known to inquire about various bits of obscure information from time to time.” The admittance sounded like it pained him, which only made it more amusing.

Sam might have commented had they not reached the outskirts of the town. Following some back roads she pulled over behind a section of buildings. One they had vacated the cars the three Autobots transformed.

“Man, I was getting tired,” Skids whined as he stretched out.

“At least you didn’t have this little pain in the ass messing with your radio,” Mudflap grumbled, waving Wheelie from one giant hand.

“Well if you dunderheads had actual taste in music I wouldn’t have to interfere,” the other snapped.

“Okay, okay. I know it’s been a long few days.” Sam stepped in trying to keep a fight from erupting. They didn’t need to alert everyone to their position after all. “Please keep the fighting for later. Right now we need to find a phone.”

They made a plan to split up to search for a working phone. They hadn’t been apart for three minutes when Leo came running back around the corner of one building.

“We got cops!” The group ducked quickly behind a set of buildings away from the street only to see a police vehicle pass by on a what appeared to be a routine patrol. “I can’t got to prison guys,” Leo moaned behind them. Sam just shot him a look to shut up while Mikaela rolled her eyes.

“Sam, we need to lay low,” Mikaela whispered to her. “If any one catches us we’re dead.”

So they made sure to keep close to the buildings and stay as far from the main roads as possible. Not the easiest feat with three giant robots in their main forms. It didn’t help that Skids and Mudflap were trying to ‘out ninja’ each other, whatever that meant. Poor Bee looked like he wanted nothing better than to smack both of them upside their servers. Apparently they were not his first choice of companions for such a mission. Then again, beggars can’t be choosers.

It took a good hour of searching, and can she say this place was hot? Seriously, growing up in Nevada did not prepare her for the ridiculous temperature this region of the world suffered. Finally they found a phone.

“Okay, you guys keep watch I’m gonna call Will,” Sam advised.

“Who’s Will,” Leo asked in confusion.

“That’s a bad idea kid,” Simmons told her at the same time. “You’re on the Worldwide Wanted list. Try calling his base, they will track you here in seconds.” He snapped his fingers to make his point. “The CIA is all over the place!”

Sam stopped to consider his words. As much as it pained her he was right. They no doubt had voice
recognition and the moment she got on the phone they’d have her. The same would got for Leo and Mikaela, since they were known ‘accomplices’. However… there was one of their group that they didn’t know about, and he was prone to making strange calls.

“You’re gonna call,” she told Simmons confidently.

It took a bit not to smile at the look that came over his face as the words processed.

“Okay. That’s a good idea.” He didn’t have to sound so surprised. She did have them every now and again. “I mean, I just had mu mind on other things. Like winding up in an Egyptian prison. Not a good place to be, just so you know.”

“I’ll take your word for it. Call.”

XOXOXO

Will watched with barely repressed anger as Optimus’ corpse was loaded onto one of the cargo planes. The members of NEST were in charge of that at least, since the other servicemen that piss-ant Galloway had brought with him wouldn’t be nearly as respectful.

“So we’re shipping him back to base,” Epps muttered from where he came up next to Will. His whole posture spoke of his own anger at the situation. “This is such a mistake.”

Will didn’t say anything because there was nothing he could say. That was one of the things that sucked about the military. The bureaucratic idiots who had never even been to boot camp, let alone know anything about a real battle had the ability to order them around and they couldn’t do anything about it. Thankfully it was rare they stuck their noses where it wasn’t wanted, as the General tended to head them off quickly. But this time they were all stuck, even the General. This time the president was involved first hand and too much was at stake. Yet the ones making the decisions had never been in the mix of things so they didn’t truly understand the whole picture, they just assumed they did. Worse, they refused to listen to those that actually did know the true stakes.

“Major Lennox?” the two turned to find one of the support men waiting patiently to be acknowledged. “Phone call.”

Sharing a look with his friend, Will moved to take the call. Hopefully it wasn’t more bureaucrats demanding things they had no understanding of.

XOXOXO

“Lennox,” Simmons greeted happily. Sam perked up knowing Will was on the phone. Mikaela smirked at her, which only brought forth a pout. Okay, so she was still crushing hard, that was no reason to tease her. “I’m with the kid. The kid.”

Seriously? This was how he made a ‘coded’ call?

“You know the one with the attitude?” Excuse you? She didn’t have an ‘attitude’ thank you very much. She couldn’t help getting annoyed when in such situations. “We need the truck. The truck. We got a possible resurrection going on over here.”

Wow. And he was one of the high level operatives. Huh.

“You’re not gonna believe where we are. Code Tut, as in King Tutankhamen. Back of the dollar bill.” No doubt they got it considering how not subtle he was being. “Coordinates for airdrop. 29.5 north, 34.88 east. Write it down. Write it!”
Yes, because their not highly trained soldiers who can remember such things.

“Gotta go! The heat’s coming.” He hung it up the phone. Well that won’t worry them one bit.

Okay, she needed to get away from Simmons, he brought out way too much of her sarcasm. Sure enough though there was another police car coming towards them. So the group ducked out of sight once more. Being on the run was not like they made it out to be in movies. It was in no way exciting and adventurous. Instead it was nerve wracking and exceptionally irritating.

She just hoped Will would believe them and bring Optimus. Their world depended on it.

XOXOX

“Coordinates, 29.5 north, 34.88 east,” the analyst read off to them. “Tip of the Red Sea. Gulf of Aqaba.”

“Egypt,” Epps huffed in shock. “Are you serious?”

Will felt a small sense of relief knowing that Sam was indeed alive and not in enemy hands. The rest of him felt angry and worried that she was in Egypt of all places, with Simmons of all people doing god knows what. The only good thing was he had no doubt Bumblebee was with her along with Mikaela. But what the hell was she doing in Egypt?

And a resurrection? Was it possible? Had she found a way to bring Optimus back? It seemed too good to be true, but hadn’t Sammy done the impossible before? And in all truthfulness they needed the big guy, especially with Megatron alive and kicking again.

“Even if we figure a way to get the big man over there,” Epps whispered fervently into his ear. “How is S… the kid supposed to bring him back to life?”

“Look, I don’t know,” Will admitted freely. “But this is the first semblance of a plan we’ve gotten aside from the ‘hand-the-girl-over-to-the-bad-guys’. We all know how that one will work. We’ve gotta believe that S… she’s found a way. We gotta trust her.”

Epps studied him for a moment and when it looked like he might argue further he just slumped. “Hell man, you’re right. Sammy-girl hasn’t let us down yet. Besides, better to be out there doing something than following these bullshit orders we got now.”

Will clapped him on the shoulder. “Get the men together. We got a mission to prepare for.”
Sam sighed from where she leaned against Bumblebee in their corner of the ancient building they were currently squatting in. After the call they had made their way further through Egypt towards the Dagger’s Point. Hopefully they would figure out the riddle Jetfire had given them in time to meet up with Will and the rest of the team. And hopefully they would have the ability to revive Optimus like she had promised.

Letting her head fall back she looked up into the curious blue optics of her best friend.

“What a ride the last few days have been huh Bee?”

“I’m on the Highway to Hell…” Rang out softly form his radio, keeping the conversation between them instead of drifting to the rest of the group who were camped out further in. “I’m with ya till the end of the line.”

Sam chuckled a bit. “Thanks Bee. I’m glad I have you with me through this. Especially with all the close calls.” The most recent had been the check point they’d gone through. How they’d managed that was a miracle and finding probably the one person in Egypt who liked new Yorkers. It seemed at least some things went their way, but when it came to the end game, could they do this? Could they beat such odds? “You really think we got a shot at this?”

“There is always hope,” he put forth, optics bright in their belief. “We… are… family… Loyalty. Honor. A willing heart. I can ask for no more than that.”

Sam gave him a wane smile, standing up as she did so. Patting him on his overly large knee she started heading out. “I pray it’ll be enough. I’m gonna get some air if anyone’s looking for me.”

“Aye, Aye captain.”

Sam climbed the scaffolding that stood outside the building looking towards the pyramids. The sky was clear allowing the stars to shine bright. This side of the world didn’t have many lights from the city blocking the clarity of the night sky. It was breathtaking and normally Sam would have enjoyed it but her mind was full of too many what ifs.

“Bee said you were out here. Probably over thinking this whole thing a bit too much,” Mikaela stated wryly in way of announcing her presence. She clamored up to join her taking in the view. “Wow. That is a sight.”

“Yeah,” Sam replied halfheartedly.

“Bet you’d rather I was Will,” Mikaela murmured mischievously. “Sharing a romantic night.”

Snorting Sam shook her head. “Maybe once, but I doubt he’d be up for it. He’s barely spoken to me in the last year and most of his correspondence is distant at best. Age gap aside perhaps we’re too different…”

“That’s bullshit and you know it,” Mikaela growled. Of course she had noticed the distance between the two, but she and many of the guys knew those two were good for each other. “Maybe he’s giving you space to be young for a little while. Ever think of that? I mean the man is so noble it’s almost depressing. Likely thinks HE’S too old for you.” She flicked Sam’s head lightly. “Honestly you’re both too good for each other’s sake.”
“That doesn’t make any sense,” Sam argued.

“Sure it does. You both try so hard to give the other what you ‘think’ they want or need, you both forget to make yourselves happy,” she explained. “The strange thing is being together WOULD make you both happy. Seriously, it’s getting to the point me and the guys are going to have an intervention at some point. Maybe lock you both in a room until you both wake up and admit your feelings.”

“Yes, I’m sure that’s the answer,” Sam drawled sarcastically. “After this I doubt he’ll be willing to ‘work things out’. I mean, I’m asking the man to risk his career and the lives of his men on something that we haven’t even found yet! And if we find it we don’t know it’ll work, or how it’s supposed to work!” She buried her head in her knee hands pulling at her hair. “All I seem to do is bring him trouble. How is that the basis of a good relationship?”

“Uh, the man’s a soldier. They thrive on trouble,” Mikaela pointed out snippily. “And there is more to your relationship than trouble. I mean, you kept in touch between the ‘trouble’ and you guys are sickeningly cute together when you think no one is looking. Truthfully there is a solid basis there, you both just seem to blind to see it. And you need to have more faith. I’ve seen you do some pretty weird things Sam. This.” She gestured randomly to indicate their whole ‘quest’. “Is not the strangest, nor the most unbelievable. Seriously, you have an ALIEN as your car and friend. You’ll find a way to get this to work out. You’re stubborn like that.” Sam turned her head a bit to look over at her friend, a tearful smile flashing slightly. Mikaela ruffled her hair gently. “What you need to do is relax. I mean, really, we’re sitting in Egypt, underneath the moon and the stars and the three most beautiful pyramids on the plant! Take it in and enjoy the moment!”

“Pyramids,” Sam whispered popping up to look more closely at the scene in front of her. The line of the three pyramids and a startlingly similar grouping of stars catching her attention. “Pyramids and Stars…”

“Sam?”

“We need to get the others,” she announced moving to go down into the building the others slept in, a confused Mikaela following on her heals. She ran into the room noting the others were asleep. “Simmons! Leo! Wake up!”

The men startled awake and the bots joined them as well, all looking confused as Sam ran up to them.

“Listen, astronomy class, page 47,” She turned to Leo. “Remember the class?”

“No,” he snapped irritably from being woken up in such a fashion. “I was only in college for two days. Remember that?”

Sam rolled her eyes but ignored the statement. “Here. Get up,” she ordered pulling at his arm. “Up!”

“What is she talking about,” Simmons asked Mikaela but the girl could only shrug, not really sure either. All of them were dragged over to a large balcony looking out over the pyramids and the night sky.

“Okay, see the pyramids? Now look at the sky,” she directed. “You see those three stars? And you see how the last one touches the horizon?” Sam looked at them for confirmation before continuing. “That’s Orion’s belt, but it’s also called the Three Kings. And the reason for that is the three Egyptian kings who built the pyramids of Giza built them to mirror those stars. So it’s like an arrow staring us straight in the face.”
Simmons walked to the edge studying the stars and the landscape. “They all point due east, towards Jordan,” he stated factually, clearly trying to remember his geology classes. “The mountains of Petra.”

“So what now,” Leo asked, feeling a new excitement building at the information.

“Now we move to where that star points,” Simmons advised with a smirk.

Sam let out a breath of relief. They were finally getting to where they needed to be. With any luck the Matrix will be in Petra and they would have the way to save Optimus and stop the Decepticons.
Will leaned back against the bulkhead of the plane’s interior trying not to count down to when they could get rid of Galloway. The man was currently shuffling through a multitude of papers next to him. He had refused to stay behind when Will had his men load up Optimus and the others for their ‘flight home’. Apparently the man didn’t trust them.

So he’d had Epps and Figg run interference while he had a quick word with the pilots. Everyone else were told to keep the true nature of their ‘gear-up’ on the down low so as not to alert the government goon of the true nature of their voyage. It was tough, given that the men and the bots were practically dancing with pre-combat energy. Thankfully Galloway was too self-absorbed to really notice the difference.

He, himself, had issues containing his own nervous energy. He was putting a lot of faith in Sam and this crazy idea. He seriously hoped it came through. Part of him knew they wouldn’t win against the Decepticons without Optimus. They would try, but their enemy vastly outnumbered them, something the government and those in charge seemed to not realize.

* We’ve had an engine malfunction. * The pilot calmly stated over the intercom.

That’s our queue, Will thought as he ‘woke up’. “What?”

* We’re gonna have to divert to SOCCENT. *

Galloway looked around in panic, while the soldiers just roused themselves from their sleep and started preparing. This was exactly what Will hoped for.

* Flight master, let’s lighten the load and prepare for bailout. *

“All right, team, grab your chutes,” Will called out to the soldiers. Not that he really needed to as everyone was preparing for the jump anyway, but it helped with their guest.

“All right. Wait a minute. Wait a minute,” he demanded far more suspiciously than before. “You’re behind this, aren’t you?”
Will stood up and looked at him like he was nuts. “What are you talking about? You heard the pilot. These guys don’t mess around.” The whole time he was finalizing the fit of the chute. “This is just standard procedure. I’m just following orders to the letter,” he added as he pulled the last straps tight, knowing it would hurt. “Isn’t that what you said?”

Over Galloway’s back he could see Epps and Figg trying hard not to laugh.

“You just signed a death warrant on your career, Major,” Galloway blustered angrily.

Will tried hard not to snort. The man clearly had no idea what was going on. Right on schedule the plane tilted dangerously making it almost too hard to stand. He glanced at the suit watching as the man paled dramatically as fear returned. Perfect.

“What was that,” he cried out. “What was that?”

“That’s not good,” Will stated with a fake worried tone. At least he hoped it came off worried considering he was trying very hard not to blow the plan. Granted he was totally remembering this moment fondly for years to come. “Come on.” He began pulling the man towards the rear where the cargo doors were opening to let the out. “Right this way!”

“I can’t jump out of an airplane,” the man continued on in his protests as Will dragged him towards the front of the line. “I have an ulcer! No! No!”

“Come on. It’s okay,” Will called back to him in a somewhat reassuring voice. Honestly the man was annoying.

“I really can’t do this,” the man cried out. Dear god was he actually shedding tears? Will tried very hard not to roll his eyes as he forced the man to face him and went through the equipment again to make sure it was right. Always double check your equipment. “What are you doing…”

“Come here,” he ordered as he pulled the man close.

“Why aren’t you wearing a chute?”

“Because I have to secure the VIPs first,” he stated as if the man should have known this. “Okay, I want you to listen very carefully and memorize everything I say.” Will was yelling to be heard over the roar of the engines and the howling wind. He made sure to use his hands to emphasize his words. “Every chute has a GPS tracker so you can be found by Search and Rescue,” he explained, holding the item so the man could see it. Clearly he wasn’t really listening, too freaked out to pay close attention. Oh well. “Right next to that’s a fabric webbing called a bridle, which holds a pin that keeps the main container closed.” He pulled back to consider the shaking man. “Are you listening?”

“I can’t hear what…”

Will whacked the man’s head lightly. “Stop that!”

“All right, all right!”

“All right,” Will agreed once the man’s attention was on him again. He maneuvered them just enough that the man was close to the edge. “When the pilot chute inflates into the air it pulls the pin and opens the main. Red’s your back up.” He pointed to the red pull. “Blue’s your primary.” He pointed that one out as well. “I want you to pull the blue. I need you to pull it really hard,” he explained showing the man the motion he would use.

As predicted the man was so paniced he went ahead and pulled the blue pin launching the chute.
“Not now, we’re on the plane you dumb-ass,” Will admonished him. Not that it mattered, within seconds the chute opened and the air pulled the stunned man off the plane and into the air. Will checked to make sure the chute opened fully to allow the man a safe flight. Satisfied he made his way back inside to grab his own gear and chute for their deployment.

“He say goodbye,” Epps asked casually, trying just as hard to fight a smile.

“No,” Will muttered with fake insult. “He didn’t even say goodbye.”

XOXOXO

“General, we’re loaded and ready,” the man over the screen informed him.

Nodding in agreement the Morshower gave his answer, “You give us the go, and we’ll be ready to press in five minutes.”

“Excellent.”

A young private came running in interrupting the conversation. “Sir, you need to see this now.”

He placed a letter from Lennox with a set of coordinates and a basic tone of ‘sorry we left without orders, but we’re not really sorry’. The general didn’t usually accept such things from his men, but Lennox was one of his better soldiers. He didn’t go against orders without a damn good reason.

“Have we checked the coordinates,” he asked.

“Egypt sir,” his aide confirmed for him. “They’re air dropping in.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” the chief of staff muttered in disbelief.

“He knows something,” Morshower stated solemnly. “We need to be ready to back him up if this thing goes hot.”

“Copy that.”

He wrapped up his meeting and headed out to the main ops room to get an update on the location of his boys. His chief of staff joined him a few minutes later.

“CIA just got a hit on the girl,” he mentioned almost casually. “One hundred miles from the location on that little note there.”

Morshower didn’t show his thoughts on the matter, merely increased his speed. “It’s getting hotter.”
It was by mid morning that they reached the point where the stars had hit the ground last night. Thankfully they had Bumblebee mark the coordinates otherwise they would have been terribly lost. As it was Leo and Simmons still fought over the accuracy of the directions. She and Mikaela were seriously considering holding a coup and tossing them out of the car. Bee would totally be on their side.

It didn’t come to that, though it was close. Instead they found a large building carved into the very walls of the mountain. The beauty of it took Sam’s breath away. Seeing such sights was always a dream of hers, granted not in such circumstances, but how many people got to say they saw such ancient feats of architecture?

“It’s gotta be around here somewhere,” Simmons stated as he moved towards the entrance. Sam shook out of her thoughts and headed inside. She had a mission, she could let herself get distracted.

“You see the size of this,” Mikaela asked as they passed through the gigantic doorway. Sam could only nod, eyes wide as she took in the faded wall murals and carved inner architecture.

“Amazing…” She drifted towards one wall where the paint was a little better seen, noting the faded symbols similar to the ones floating in her mind. “Look at that!”

“It’s here somewhere,” Simmons repeated, also scanning the admittedly empty room.

“Yeah,” Leo demanded sarcastically. “Why? ‘Cause we’re trusting grandpa Blackbird who doesn’t even know what planet he’s on?”

Sam and Mikaela shared a look; he did have a point.

“In his defense,” Simmons pointed out heading to the opening. “This is the biggest doorway I’ve ever seen in my entire life.”

“Okay. Well that’s great,” Leo continued voice growing even more derisive. “Let me do a quick search.” He turned around in an exaggerated motion. “Nope. Nothing here. Ever cross your minds that archeologists have been here before? They would have found something, but nothing is here!”

Sam felt her shoulders droop. It did seem like they had come on a wild goose chase. No! It had to be here. It was just hidden. Really, who would put something like giant robots in the open? Maybe it was buried, or there was a secret room, or…

Mikaela stood next to her, one hand gripping her shoulder in sympathy. In the background she could hear Simmons and Leo continuing to bicker, but she had blocked their words.

“It’s not over,” she whispered desperately to her friend.

“It is over,” Mikaela murmured back, eyes full of sadness. “It’s done.”

Sam shook her head in denial. She knew deep in her heart that it was here. It had to be.

“Why are we still listening to this little punk anyway,” Skids demanded irritably, one giant hand motioning towards Sam. She could see Bee getting in a defensive position. “I mean, what has she ever done for us except ding my rims?”
“Killed Megatron,” Mudflap defended her. “How about that?”

“Well, she didn’t get the job done, did she? ‘Cause he’s back now…”

“Are you scared,” Mudflap mocked his twin.

“Scared,” Skids squawked angrily pushing at his twin. “Scared of your ugly face!”

“I’m ugly,” Mudflap shouted back slamming one hand into the other bot. “We’re twins genius!”

Needless to say it devolved much like any sibling fight into a wrestling match. Normally this is not a problem. However, two giant robots going at it in a small room with small very fragile humans was not the best option.

Sam and the others dodged as best they could, especially when Skids threw his twin into one of the walls, coming dangerously close to squashing them with his heavy frame. That had been the end of it for Bumblebee, who grabbed both of the bots by their necks, one in each hand.

“Come on, Bumblebee!”

“Bumblebee, listen…”

He did neither, instead he slammed their two heads together before tossing them both right out of the ruins. Sam didn’t feel particularly bad for them, as they had brought it on themselves.

“Sam!” Mikaela’s cry caught her attention and she looked to where the other was pointing at the wall.

When the twins were fighting they had broken a small section, only it was just a dent like one would expect. Instead there seemed to be air coming from behind it, meaning there was another chamber. Sam pulled at some of the debris, the others standing behind her to get a look. When enough of the wall had come down they saw a sculptural like form covered in carvings.

“Oh my god,” Mikaela muttered beside her. “The symbols!”

Sam felt a current of relief and excitement sweep through her. She was right. They were going to be able to pull this off. Standing up she pushed everyone back. “Bee! Can you shoot it?”

“Let’s rock and roll.” Bee charged up his blaster allowing the others to scramble out of the way before letting off one concentrated shot into the center of the hole. It exploded allowing a larger section of the wall to open up revealing the bodies of the robots in a perfect circle around some kind of artifact.

“Oh my god,” Simmons muttered in awe.

“The tomb of the Primes,” Mikaela added just as shocked.

But Sam ignored them all, her eyes on the small silver object the bodies had been guarding. It was sleek and sharp just like most things from Cybertron. There was a small glow coming from the center. This was it, this was what she was looking for.

“The Matrix,” she murmured full of hope and relief. Just as she reached out to grab it the impossible happened. The Matrix crumbled into dust taking with it her heart.

“No,” she gasped in disbelief. “No!”
“Thousands of years, turned to dust,” Simmons intoned from behind her. Had Sam not been so upset at the turn of events she might have actually found the energy to hit him.

“This isn’t how it’s supposed to end,” she declared angrily.

The loud sound of planes crossing overhead echoed in the ruins.

“Hear that,” Simmons asked almost rhetorically. “US Air Force! C-17s!”

Sam ignored him as he fled the room, Leo close on his heels. Instead she could only look at the pile of dust sitting so innocently before her.

“You can’t bring him back, Sam,” Mikaela advised her in a comforting voice. Only it had the opposite effect. “There’s nothing left.”

That did it. “We didn’t just go through everything we went through for no reason,” she growled. “To just have it end like this!” No, they didn’t. They were meant to find the Matrix. And while it may not be whole anymore there were still pieces of it here. She pulled her shoe off and her sock scooping up the remains of the Matrix into it. “There IS a reason that we are here. The voice and the symbols in my head led us here for a purpose. Everyone’s after me because of what I know, and what I know is that this is going to work!”

“How do you know it’s going to work?” Her friend was clearly skeptical about it all and likely thought that Sam was crazy. Well, she wasn’t that far off at the moment, but she knew this was right.

“Because I believe,” she stated assuredly, eyes fierce with determination. “I have too.”
The main force touched down just outside of the small village. The bots were also in position. Will looked out getting a basic run down of the area before starting to call out orders.

“Remember these are friendlies,” he advised his men as they took position in the township. Already a group was moving the civilians out of the way to safety as they had no idea if the Decepticons would be coming to this little party.

“Cover Optimus!”

Ensuring the tarps were being set he then turned to the vantage points.

“Secure the village. Get those cases down here,” he demanded directing his men in quick succinct measures. “I need snipers and Stingers up high.”

He moved over the Epps who stood ready, also watching as the men set into place. “So we just dropped off ten tons of dead robot in the middle of nowhere,” he stated dryly.

“Yeah.” Will wondered why they were back to this conversation. It’s not like they haven’t had it a hundred times before.

“I really hope Sammy-girl knows what she’s doing.”

“Yeah,” he sighed this time. “Me too.”

More than anything though, Will hoped Sam was safe. However, he knew he wouldn’t be satisfied until she was in his sights and more specifically in his arms. At least then all the scenarios running through his mind as to what could be happening to her would finally stop.

“She’s gonna be okay, Major,” Figg spoke quietly from his right, easily interpreting his frown. “Sammy’s way too touch to be defeated easily. She’ll be here, and she’ll be fine.”

Will couldn’t find it in himself to say anything but he nodded all the same.

“Got a visual,” Graham called out from his spot keeping watch. “Yellow team! Four clicks!”

A wave of relief swept through him. “Pop flares!”

Xxx

“That’s them right there,” Sam stated from her position at bumblebee’s wheel. “See the flare?”

“Right over there,” Simmons pointed out excitedly.

Unfortunately they were not the only ones who noticed. Soon they had several missals from the air raining down on them. Sam managed to maneuver Bee around the explosions and avoid any direct hits. They skid and slid across the dirt roads, plumes of dust following in their wake.

“Oh god. Please God! Please,” Leo started crying out in the back clearly having a panic attack.

Sam almost rolled her eyes, but she couldn’t exactly blame the guy. This wasn’t the most ideal situation, still he really needed to shut up.
“Leo, stop freaking out!” Mikaela obviously agreed with her. “Stop freaking out!”

However, Leo was a bit too far into his hysterics and couldn’t seem to stop.

“Shut this guy up,” Simmons demanded having no sympathy for the boy.

Sam didn’t bother responding paying more attention to the road and avoiding their imminent demise.

“Please just let me live, just let me live.”

“Shut up and let her drive,” Mikaela ordered. Yes, because that will do the trick. Even if she had a Decepticon pet now she doubted even Mikaela could get Leo to shut up.

“All right that’s it,” Simmons cried in exasperation. Sam just glimpsed him leaning over the seat towards the back but she didn’t catch what happened. It was only after she heard Leo gurgling, followed by silence and Simmons returning to his seat with a Taser, that she truly understood.

“Was that necessary,” she asked dryly.

“I can’t take that guy anymore,” he replied.

They turned into an industrial site, where it appeared they were digging or hauling rocks given the large piles of dirt and debris. They just barely managed to avoid the Decepticon that dropped from the sky, changing forms to fire on them at close range. Sam thought it might have been Star Scream from what she remembered of the bot.

The blasts caused even more plumes of dust to dance in the air providing ample coverage for their vehicles. She didn’t really need Simmons yelling in her ear to hide in the dust, she had already gotten the memo thank you. However she knew they could not keep this up forever. Pulling on the few lessons the guys had practically thrust down her throat during her stay at the base she pulled Bee up to a stop behind one of the giant dirt hills to provide them some cover.

“We’ve got to split up,” she explained as she got out of the vehicle, the others following in short order, even the slightly shocked Leo. “Bumblebee, you’ve got to act as a decoy and lead the Decepticons away.”

“Roger that.”

“I’m gonna make a run for Optimus.”

Simmons stood in front of her looking resolute. “I’ll help draw fire with Huey and Dewey there,” he told her. “You get to those soldiers.”

“Thank you.” They shared a nod before Sam was off and running Mikaela hot on her heels. All she could think about was reaching Optimus with the remains of the Matrix.

Xxx

Epps watched the plane that circled their area with trepidation. Will stood next to him waiting for the verdict.

“That thing’s got alien tattoos all over it,” Epps reported warily. “That ain’t Air Force.”

Will cursed in his mind trying to think of contingencies when a loud sound rolled over the Comm links leaving static in its wake.

“What the hell was that,” he demanded.
“Anyone copy,” Epps asked over the radio link.

“Anyone there?” Will tried for himself only getting static in return. “Who’s up?”

“Radio’s down,” someone yelled out.

“It’s dead,” Will snarled as he ripped the radio from his ear. “Comms are down.”

“EMP burst,” Epps stated unhelpfully. “I see how this day is going in the godforsaken desert.”

“You and me both, jefe,” Figg muttered hoisting his gun up into a ready position.

“Alright,” Will snapped irritated with the situation and the comments not helping. “Barnes, keep trying to get the radio back up. Graham, keep a lookout for our targets.”

Xxx

With a tired sigh General Morshower turned to the room at large where several people were working to locate their men. “Well, that was out good friend, Galloway,” he announced sarcastically. “He’s less than pleased.”

His aide and chief of staff shared uneasy looks knowing that tone very well.

“How is it,” the general continued his voice clearly showing his displeasure. “That we can’t reach our men, but he can reach me from some random Egyptian desert?”

Xxx

“Still nothing,” Epps informed Will.

Going over his options Will came to a decision. “Right, go burn an SOS,” he ordered some of his sergeants. “Let the eye in the sky know we need some help.”

“Yes sir.”

“Okay, boys, old school time,” Figg chirped happily.

“Pop some flares,” Will called out after them again. “So Sammy can find us!”

Epps caught up to Figg watching as the men prepared the sign for the SOS.

“Odds still the same on Sammy admitting her feelings first,” Epps intoned quietly.

“Still three to one,” Figg replied. “Though after this with the way the major is acting, it might flip.”

Epps slipped the other man a five. “Major cracks first.”

Xxx

Sam cleared one more hill coming to a stop to catch her breath Mikaela next to her. If she made it through this she would seriously need to revamp her exercise program. She felt like she’d run the marathon already. Of course the sand certainly didn’t help matters. Give her a flat road any day.

Eyes squinting she took in the small village in the distance, the thick ropes of smoke in an off color signaling the location of the soldiers.

“Look, there it is,” Sam pointed out to her friend, who was equally winded. Maybe they could do a
workout buddy program? “We got a couple of miles…”

“Oh, good,” Mikaela snarked tiredly. “I hadn’t thought we’d run enough already.”

Sam grinned cheekily at her friend. Leave it to Mikaela to bring attitude to any situation.

“After this, I vote we eat everything we’ve ever wanted but always thought was too fattening.”

“You’re on.”

With renewed purpose they continued on.
chapter 42

General Morshower led the way into the central control room annoyance clear in his stature.

“Lennox’s team has the latest in quantum crypto gear. Can somebody tell me why we can’t establish simple radio contact.” His voice raised on the last words to enunciate his frustration with this fact.

“We’re hailing them on every frequency and mode in the book, sir,” one soldier responded.

“Our satellites in the area have gone blind,” another answered. “We’re working it, sir.”

“Damn it,” he muttered mind rushing over ever possible battle plan. “Something’s not right. It doesn’t add up.” He looked back up to the men in his command. “Contact the Jordanians, see what assets they’ve got in the area,” he ordered intensely. “And get Egypt’s General Salam. Ask his to clear some USV overflights in Egyptian airspace. We need assist in confirming visuals NOW.”

Xxx

They had just made the city limits. Of course now they had to navigate through it. Sam slowed down taking in the sights for land marks.

“We’ve got a mile still that way.”

“You totally owe me some major ice cream for this Sam,” Mikaela panted next to her.

“Come on, you love this,” Sam teased as she lead the other through another random ruin that seemed to liter the city, rich in the history of its people. “Who else do you know would take you to exotic places you’ve never even heard of, let alone wanted to go.”

“You’re not my type Sam,” she replied blithely.

“That hurts.” Sam patted her chest where her heart was. “Right here.”

“Sure that’s not from all the running we’ve been doing?”

“Fair enough.”

The two continued on maneuvering through pillars and past random homes. Loud noises from overhead had Sam glancing up in time to see a burning fire ball racing towards the ground. That could not be good.

Xxx

“We’ve got incoming!”

Will and his men scrambled to more defensive positions as several enemy contacts crashed down into the desert between the main city and the small outcropping they were squatting in.

“We got a whole lot of fight coming our way,” Will called out to his guys. This only proved that whatever Sam had stumbled upon was big and could actually work. The Decepticons would never attack them in such a place without a reason.

“How many?”
“About thirteen of them,” Graham notified him.

“This ain’t good,” Epps complained pacing in agitation. “This ain’t good.”

Will couldn’t argue with him as he took in the large and dangerous forms preparing to engage with his forces as well as searching for Sam. This meant she was close. He had to get to her first. Nothing would happen to her if he could help it. And if they made it through all of this, he was gonna kill her.

“We are about to get our asses whupped,” Epps groused angrily as more Decepticons joined the fun.

Will directed a group up to a slightly higher position to give them the sight line to their enemies. Ironhide, Sideswipe and Acree were with them. He could already see Ironhide itching for a fight, not that it took much.

“All right,” he called out getting everyone’s attention. “Those Decepticons are searching for Sam. Whatever she had, she thinks it can bring Optimus back to life.” At this he motioned towards the prone form of said bot. “So our mission is to find Sam and get her to Optimus.”

The soldiers and bots all nodded to show they understood.

“Okay, we’re going to draw fire from the left flank,” he directed. “I need a scout team.”

Already men were up and running to do his bidding, Ironhide joining them.

“I’m leading,” the giant war bot announced brokering no argument.

“Go up through the middle with Acree and Ironhide,” Will added, not that it was really necessary. The guys knew to follow Ironhide when he got like this. The bot would also prove the best cover for engagements. “When you see the precious cargo I want you to pop green smoke and come back through those pillars. We’ll have the ambush set. All right.” He looked around finding everyone understood his orders. “Let’s go! Move out!”

The soldiers moved as one unit with a shout of ‘Oorah’!

Xxx

Sam peaked out from behind one wall watching as Star Scream flew by on the outskirts of the city. Checking the way she moved forward.

“Sam!” Glancing back she found Mikaela opening the door of one of the houses waving her to follow. They slipped into the home closing the door firmly behind them.

“I don’t think they saw us,” Sam whispered.

Looking around she noted the simple furniture and thrown rugs, as well as the large glass bottle window shaped like a star. If she wasn’t running for her life, it would be really cool to see.

The tell tale sound of a robot walking by had them both ducking by the window, the opaque glass keeping them from being seen. Both of them let their eyes drift to the ceiling even though they could not see anything out of it. When the bot passed Sam turned to her friend, seeing the same terror she felt reflected in her eyes.

“Okay, here’s what we’re going to do,” she explained as calmly as she could. One of the things the guys told her was the best way to stay calm in a bad situation was to focus on one thing. “Once it’s
clear, we run for Optimus as fast as we can okay?”

Mikaela eyed her for a moment. “What if it doesn’t work Sam?”

“It’s gonna work,” she assured her friend, keeping her voice steady.

“What if it doesn’t,” she pressed.

Sam looked away not wanting to voice her own insecurities about this whole thing. Thinking of everything they had been through since this all happened, she had to believe, to hope that it would do what she thought it would. Locking eyes with her friend again she made sure to show all of the certainty she did feel. “It’s gonna work.”

The groaning of the building materials around them had both jumping apart and looking to the windows in fear. More Decepticons were outside searching for them no doubt. Sam searched for a way to see outside as all of the windows were too high up. Carefully she pulled out what looked like an old sword of some kind peeking through the opening it made. She could barely make out the legs of multiple bots scrounging around the area. When the building shook she backed off trying to catch her balance, glancing towards Mikaela who looked utterly terrified. Sam wasn’t too far behind her actually.

Turning back to her eyehole she noted a small thing climbing through it. Carefully she picked it up noting it was an insect like bot, with a small dish on it. She tore it apart hoping the others had not picked up its signal.

The large hand crashing through the roof stated otherwise. Sam fell back just barely missing getting trapped. Mikaela grabbed her to pull her along and both fell through the door when the hand came through a second time.

Sam scrambled to her feet grabbing Mikaela. The two ran dodging the bots that were swiping at them. The barely missed getting squashed by another as they ran up a set of stairs to the roof of a building. They barely managed to stop before falling off the edge.

“Crap!” Gauging the distance she motioned to Mikaela. “Get ready to jump! Now!” The two threw themselves the distance hoping to make it, of course just in that second one of the bots fired causing the roof they were standing on to explode, the force of it pushing them further than anticipated. Mikaela went right over the other side of the building they had landed on, Sam following shortly after.

Painfully she stood trying to ignore the soreness in her side and legs. Stupid bots and their stupid guns. Mikaela didn’t look any better, but they couldn’t stop, not now. Darting between buildings they managed to lose their trackers for the moment, their small statures assisting in this. Coming to a stop behind one of the walls with a rather large hole in the middle she saw smoke and white flashes indicating gun fire that their soldiers used.

“Looks like we’ve got less than a mile,” she breathed out heavily. “But I don’t think the soldiers know where we are.”

“I imagine they’re a bit busy with the evil bots trying to kill everyone,” Mikaela snapped.

Sam decided it was best not to respond given the negative feelings Mikaela was projecting at the moment. But what could one expect when running away from giant killer robots?

That is a question she has asked way too often in her life.
Dodge, run, duck, run some more. It was almost a very boring pattern, except for you know, the whole life and death aspect of it. The Decepticons were all throughout the city now and Sam and Mikaela were working hard to stay ahead of them, or at least not get caught. Her heart was pounding and her blood racing as she pushed forward trying to get to the soldiers and Will. She knew he would be there waiting, so she just needed to get to him.

They had just made it down another sand hill, managing not to trip or slide down it when she heard familiar voices calling to her. Looking in that direction she saw her worst nightmare. Her mother and father were running towards her calling her name over and over.

No. No, no, no, no, NO! This cannot be happening! They were supposed to be safe on their vacation!

“Sam! Sam!”

“Dad,” she yelled back coming to a stop.

It proved to be her mistake. One of the Decepticons jumped over the building landing right between her parents and her. Mikaela was knocked into wall. Sam rolled to the side to avoid getting squished coming to her feet she raised her arms in defense.

“Wait! Wait,” she demanded, fear growing as the bot pointed its blasters at her parents. “Don’t hurt them!”

“Run Sam! I want you to run,” her father cried out, motioning her to go. “Run!”

“Dad, no! They don’t want you,” she called back. “They want me!”

The bot struck the ground between them coming dangerously close to harming her parents.

“Wait!”

Its face finally turned towards her, the mouth somewhat deformed as oil leaked from it. “Samantha Witwicky,” it identified her threateningly.

“Don’t hurt them,” she ordered again pulling forth the sock with the Matrix dust. “This is what you want. You don’t want to hurt them.”

The whole time her parents were demanding her to leave, to run. But she couldn’t, she wouldn’t. This was her fight not theirs and she wouldn’t let them come to harm because of her.

A sharp familiar whistle caught her attention. Turning slightly she caught the familiar yellow painted leg through the doorway of one of the buildings. Relief and hope swept through her.

“I know what you want,” she continued, buying Bee some time. “And I know that you need me because I know about the Matrix.”

“Don’t do it Sam!” Her father’s yells were starting to get to her.

“Please dad.” She tried to convey the need for him to trust her through her eyes, but he was having none of it.
“They’re going to kill us all anyway,” he spat out.

Well yeah, she knew that. But they had a chance to get away. “Here’s what you want, right here…”

Just as the Decepticon was getting ready to hit her with its blaster she yelled out for her friend. Bumblebee launched himself from the top of the building onto the other bot. The two traded blows, their arms and legs slamming into the ground. Sam and the other humans tried to avoid getting hit, working their way to each other as safely as they could.

Bee managed to drive pile the other bot, pushing its face into the sand only for a smaller, cat like bot to jump on his back. It took some flexing but bee managed to snatch the cat off his back and ripped it apart, its spine going one way the rest of it the other. Rather gross, but Sam wouldn’t feel bad for the evil creature. Bee then used the spine as a whip to knock the other bot back into the ground as it tried to get up.

Keeping an eye on the fight she crawled to her parents and Mikaela.

“Mom! Dad! Are you guys okay!” Her father pulled her mother along with him as they curled up next to an old car, trying to avoid any debris.

Finally Bee came out victorious just as she knew he would. The two shared a look of pride, before her father was trying to pull her along with him and her mother. Mikaela just stumbled after them, trying to keep her head down.

“I don’t know what is going on,” her father yelled. “But we’ve got to move! There’s a way out of here!” They tried to move down one street only for blaster fire to stop them and push them back.

“Against the wall,” her father ordered, pushing her mother along with them. “Against the wall!”

They were stuck, with more fire blasts erupting around them. Sam remembered seeing old films or documentaries about war zones and people would imagine what it would feel like to be there. She really wished she didn’t have such first hand experience.

This was not going to work though. She had to get her parents to safety away from the fighting, perhaps Mikaela too. She’d already asked too much from her friend. But she needed to get to Optimus.

“BEE!” She looked back to where they had come from. “Bumblebee!”

He appeared from around a building, keeping an eye out for the enemy. “I need you to get them somewhere safe alright?” The bot nodded in understanding. She turned to her parents. “You’ve got to get in the car and get to safety.”

“Absolutely not,” her father snapped. “This is not up for discussion! You’re my daughter!”

“I know dad,” Sam argued.

“You’re my daughter!”

“Dad…”

“We’ll all go together!”

“Listen,” she tried again.

“We’re all going together!”
“Daddy! Stop okay,” she demanded, forcing him to listen to her. She looked to her mother before turning back to her dad. “Get in the car. He’s gonna get you to safety. You don’t stop, you don’t hide. You run. You hear what I’m saying? You run. I will find you when you’re safe.”

“No,” he father denied, refusing to listen.

“You have to let me go dad,” Sam told him seriously.

“No…”

“You have to let me go,” Sam reiterated with emphasis.

“Ron,” her mother joined in, her voice sad but strong. “Let her go Ron.”

Her father looked ready to cry for the first time that she could remember. He grabbed onto her face. “You come back! Come back.”

Sam only nodded before hugging him tight and then pushing him after her mother. She hadn’t said anything because deep down she knew she couldn’t promise to do as he wanted. Instead she turned to her friend.

“Go with my parents,” Sam told her.

“No,” Mikaela shot back. “I’ve come this far with you Sam. I’m not turning back now. Someone has to make sure you don’t screw up.”

Sam studied her friend’s face seeing the determination and pure stubbornness just daring Sam to try and get her to leave. A small smile stretched over her lips.

“Did I ever tell you I’m glad you got in the car with me,” she asked quietly.

“Don’t you ever forget it,” Mikaela warned with a smile of her own.

The two darted off, continuing their quest.

Xxx

All around the city the bots and soldiers continued to fight. Two helicopters made their way in but were not ready for such a battle. In minutes they were down. One inside the city near the allies, the other off towards the pyramids. It was the second one that Simmons and Leo came upon.

“You okay, soldier,” Simmons called out as he approached the down chopper. Thankfully the fuel tank was intact and the chopper had not caught fire. “We’re gonna help you, soldier.” Turning to Leo he motioned him forward. “Let’s get these wounded clear of the bird.”

Leo nodded running forward. This he could do, especially after watching the twins trying to fight that gigantic bot, only to get torn up. “Stay still,” he told the first one, trying to find a way to get him out. “Stay still. Don’t move.”

Simmons moved to the pilot. “You alright young man? You have a radio?”

The pilot nodded, though he was more than slightly dazed. He still managed to hand the radio over to Simmons. Once verifying the pilot and co-pilot would be fine he moved to go deal with the bots on the pyramid. Someone had to do something as the main force were preoccupied in the city. He had a vague idea of what he could do. He only hoped it worked.
“Hey kid,” he called out to Leo, clapping his hand with the young man’s once he turned to him. “It’s been nice knowing you. Remember what I did for my country.” Leo looked like he would protest but Simmons pushed on. “This is my moment.”

He then turned and walked towards the pyramid to face his destiny.

“You’re crazy!”

xxx

“ETA to station, two minutes,” the drone pilot called out to the general.

“Put it on the main screen,” Morshower ordered.

“Sir, yes sir.”

They watched as the drone picked up the images of the battle. The smoke and blasts were clear on the screen ahead of them. The general grimaced in realization.

“Shit, it’s a trick.” Turning to the others he started belting out commands. “Commence operation Firestorm. Send everyone! Get those marines on the ground.”

The Chief of Staff was already on the comm issuing orders. “Roll in strike packages…”

On the other side of the room his Aide was also on the comm. “Task Force Ripper, execute lightning.”

Xxx

Sam and Mikaela managed to duck behind a wall before another strike hit. When she peaked out she saw Acree rolling thorugh.

“Spotted Sam,” the female bot announced.

“Sam,” Ironhide called out, close behind Acree. He was shooting randomly at the enemy forces.

“Ironhide,” Sam called out to get his attention.

Another Acree rolled up next to the spot they were hiding by. “Follow us to the pillars,” she instructed. “We’ll get you to Optimus.”

Only she didn’t have a chance to finish as a random blast struck her in the side blowing her back. More blasts rained down on the area and a few of the Decepticons tried to engage Ironhide in hand to hand.

“Get out Sam,” the old war-bot demanded as he crushed the arm of one of the enemy combatants. “Get to the pillars!”

Sam watched as he threw another opponent into was wall, blasting him close range. Apparently Ironhide had this. Turning to Mikaela she nodded and they continued on, trusting the Autobots to keep their back safe.
Simmons reached the bottom of the pyramid, watching as the giant bot was trying to scale the side of it. Suddenly it made sense as to why the Decepticons had a bot that could suck up debris.

“Oh, God,” he muttered in realization. “This is it. The pyramid’s built right over the machine.” He moved closer trying to gauge where the evil bot was to his position.

“If they turn that machine on,” he continued in his analysis. “No more sun.”

He moved to the corner of the ruins, pushing himself up onto the first block. “Not on my watch,” he declared using the words to help propel him up the side. “Not on my watch!”

He managed to get halfway up before he could put his plan into action. Checking the radio he found a frequency to connect to, knowing it was one of their ships.

“USS Stennis. Identify yourself,” the voice on the other end stated after the call finally picked up.

“Were the hell are you,” Simmons demanded. “Watching the weather channel? Sports center? I dream of Jeannie or something! We’ve got 300 satellites up there. Where the hell are all our men?”

Seriously was everyone but him taking a vacation day? How could they not know their own men were in the fight for their lives, for their world, with evil bots? It should have been obvious with all the weapons fire!

“Identify yourself,” the voice repeated.

“What is your name, sailor,” Simmons demanded irritated with this fool.

“Wilder,” came the curt reply. “Captain of the USS John C. Stennis aircraft carrier.”

Huh… he managed to get the top dog on the first call. “Okay… Captain Wilder,” he continued on. “This is Agent Seymour Simmons of Sector Seven. There is the mother of all non-biological getting ready to blow up our sun.” At this he glanced back to the bot working hard to destroy a historical landmark and uncover the machine. “Do you want to have a thrown-down about my lack of clearance or do you want to help save a gazillion lives?”

For a moment he thought the Captain would hang up but he didn’t.

“All right Agent Simmons,” he stated calmly. “I’m listening.”

That is more like it! “Five clicks west of the Gulf, we’ve got ourselves an alien remodeling a pyramid. Our one hope is a prototype weapon called a rail gun,” he explained slowly. “Shoots a steel projectile at Mach 7.”

“That’s classified.”

Seriously? This jackass was going to tell HIM about classified? HIM? Then again it would explain the annoyed looks he always got when he used that word. But he’d get back to that later. Right now they had bigger issues.

“Don’t talk to me about classified,” he growled over the radio. “Now, if you’ve got a battleship in the Gulf, which I know you do, you tell them to Ready. That. Weapon!”
He listened intently to the radio and could barely make out the captain ordering his men to contact the USS KIDD. He allowed a grin to cross his features. Now they had a chance!

Xxx

Sam was definitely not sure about this plan to run towards Will’s team. Blasts were going off everywhere, gun fire echoed loudly through the town. Sand and dust was flying making it hard to see, and the amount of screaming would probably haunt her dreams for years to come. As if she didn’t have enough issues from her previous adventures.

Ahead of them she could make out Will yelling out orders and men moving to obey. Mikaela was right on her heals as they ran through the pillars to their destination. She could just barely make out a large tarp covered shape in the distance.

Behind them she could hear the angry yells from the Decepticons and more than once had to change course to avoid a blast. Dirt caked her and streams of sweat ran down her skin. Yet she pushed it all from her mind, focusing on Will’s form as he stepped out from behind an old wall, arms gesturing to them frantically.

“Come on! Come on,” he yelled, the stress of the situation clearly audible. “Get in here!”

Just as she and Mikaela pulled level with the wall, he grabbed her arm and practically swung her into the corner. She fell to her knees from the momentum, breathing hard.

“Well look who showed up,” Epps teased from his position returning fire to the enemy.

Before she could respond Will ducked down in front of her, his eyes catching hers in a fierce look. “You better have a good reason for us to be here.”

The tone of it made her heart hurt just a little bit. Did he think she would have called him without having a good reason? Her face must have showed his thoughts because his eyes softened just slightly as he leaned closer.

“Tell me the plan Sam,” he whispered as best he could given the situation. “Simmons was rather vague and I’d have rather extracted you guys than start a gun fight.”

Sam felt relief at this. “I need to get this to Optimus.” She showed him her sock filled with Matrix dust. “It contains something that should be able to bring him back. Is that him?”

“Yes, that’s him,” Will confirmed. Part of him felt skeptical about whatever was in the sock. “I need to get to him right now,” Sam told him as a feeling of urgency hit her. It was strange considering the anxiety she had felt running through an active war zone, but this was different. A part of her KNEW she needed to get to Optimus NOW.

“Not with an air strike coming,” Will argued vehemently. “I’m not going to let you risk getting blown up!” The look she sent him had him frowning, but before either could rebut the telltale sound of a large machine, far too close to their position sounded. Will motioned for her to remain silent, then started pushing her and Mikaela back towards the corner. “Back, back, back, back.”

Sam felt her heart pound as the insect like Decepticon crawled along the top edge of the wall they were hiding behind. She edged as close to the wall as she could, Will right next to her, moving to put her behind him. Mikaela and Epps were on the other wall, looking equally worried. Sam prayed the machine didn’t detect them, they were SO close!

A loud crash rattled the ground and a familiar voice cried out. “Stick the landing!” Suddenly the
insect Decepticon was yanked from the top of the wall and was receiving a rather thorough beat down from their newest friend.

“Behold the glory of Jetfire,” the bot cried out triumphantly. “Let me show you how we brought the pain in my day!”

though Sam couldn’t exactly see what was happening, the sounds were clear enough. Suddenly another explosion rocked the area, forcing them to duck down for cover, dirt and dust showering down on them. The old robot landed hard against their building muttering about his age.

Will allowed it to settle for a minute before he was drawing the girls close locking eyes with them to make sure they understood what he was about to say. “We’re gonna make a break through the B’s on my command, okay?” Even though both nodded in agreement he clearly thought Sam was not listening as he pointed at her in particular. Rude. “You guys stick with me, you understand? You stay on my ass!”

Sam really wanted to say something sarcastic but managed to refrain. He had risked his life and his career to come here, so really she could listen to him without giving him flack, for now. Later he would SO get an earful!

Will positioned himself while Epps threw one of his smoke canisters, smoke starting to rise only a few hundred feet from them. He knelt next to Will in a ready position, checking that the girls were right behind them.

“I hope these F-16s got good aim,” he muttered, likely expecting the girls not to hear him.

“Yeah,” Will asked distractedly as he eyed their route. “Why’s that?

“I told them to hit the orange smoke,” Epps admitted dryly, much like one speaking of the weather.

Will paused turning his head to eye the now ominous smoke. “ You mean that orange smoke?”

“It wasn’t my best toss, okay?”

Will dropped his head in exasperation while Sam and Mikaela shared a worried look. Sam tried to give Mikaela an encouraging smile but she doubted her friend bought it from the look she sent her way.

“RUN!”

At Will’s command they darted out from their hiding place running as fast as they could. Soon explosions were going off behind them, only adding to Sam’s need to run faster. The adrenalin was coursing through her veins pushing her onward. Her focus narrowed to the covered form only yards in front of her. The noises around her dimmed as she forced her legs onwards, knowing she had to get to Prime.

The next thing she knew she was flying through the air, having been thrown when the ground under her feet exploded. Her body flipped and heat seared her, though she didn’t register the pain from those burns as her back hit the ground with enough force to knock the air from her lungs. Vaguely she heard Will and Mikaela yelling her name, but her ears were ringing horribly. Her eyes started to blur as figures surrounded her. It was almost as if she was not even in her body when she felt the hands and compressions.

All around her people were yelling but she could only hear one voice clearly.
“Sammy, Sammy girl,” Will cried into her ear, voice commanding. “Don’t you dare give up! Don’t you dare close your eyes! Sammy! I need you to stay with me,” his voice was right next to her ear, tugging at her heart. She wanted so bad to obey him but something was calling her. “Sammy, please, listen to my voice. I need you to stay with me… I love you…”
When Sam opened her eyes, she was in a strange place. It seemed like a void of some sort, dark colors swirling all around her. There was rock beneath her feet but she didn’t recognize it.

“Where am I? Am I dead?” The questions echoed around her, indicating the location was vast.

“We have been watching you a long, long time,” a voice spoke from the darkness, before multiple shadows started to appear around her.

Well that’s not creepy.

“You have fought for Optimus, our last descendant,” another added.

“With courage and sacrifice,” again another spoke.

“The virtue of a leader.”

“A leader worthy of our secret.”

One of them leaned forward, its face clear for her to see. One giant hand came forward and the dust of the matrix started swirling from her sock, coming together to reform. Her eyes widened as a perfect Matrix sat before her, hope swelling within. “The Matrix of Leadership is not found. It is earned.”

Cautiously she reached forward to take the proffered Matrix.

“Return now to Optimus. Merge the Matrix with his spark. It is, and always has been, your destiny.”

Light seemed to glow around the Primes, brighter and brighter until it blinded Sam and she was forced to protect her eyes. A strange ringing sound blared in her ears growing louder and louder. Until like a rope snapped it all stopped and her eyes snapped open, her chest heaving for air she had not realized she needed.

“Sam!” Will was next to her immediately. Vaguely she could hear Mikaela crying in the background where Epps held her back. Will’s hazel eyes stared into hers with sheer relief. “Thank god, Sam you scared the crap out of me!”

Sam reached up one trembling hand fingers brushing against his dirty cheek, a small smile tugging at her lips. “I love you too,” she whispered, enjoying the slight widening of his eyes and the very adorable redness taking over his cheeks, though she knew he would deny it.

Blinking she turned her head to the side, taking in the fully formed Matrix. She started to sit up but Will tried to pushed her back.

“Whoa, whoa, you just almost died, you need to stay still,” he chided her.

Sam rolled her eyes and forced her way up, grabbing his hand and leaning her forehead against his. “I’m okay. I know what I have to do. You have to let me do it.”

Will looked like he wanted to argue, much like her dad, but as a soldier he understood better than most. So, he gave her space watching as she slowly stood, grabbing the strange metal object that had seemed to just appear beside her. Slowly she made her way to Optimus, her movements stilted due to her injuries. The wind blew off the tarp allowing Sam access to Optimus’ chest as she crawled up,
trying to be careful of the jagged metal edges from his original wound. Raising the Matrix high she slammed it down into his chest cavity, knowing from her lessons that this was where the sparks laid. A pulse of pure energy exploded through the area, throwing Sam back to the ground away from the bot. Will was next to her, pulling her back to keep her from being further injured. The sound of metal shifting and sand settling had her looking up to find Optimus standing tall before her, his blue optics regarding her calmly.

“Girl, you returned for me,” he stated softly. Never had Sam been so glad to hear his voice.

“A living Prime,” Jetfire gasped somewhere behind her. “I don’t believe it.”

Sam felt relieved. They could do this, they could win now that Optimus was back.

So of course, the bad guys just had to step in. Damn it! Didn’t they know not to ruin a good moment! The Fallen had smashed into Optimus throwing him down and shoving his hand into the Prime’s chest.

“NO,” Sam screamed in defiance, Will grabbing her around her waist to keep her from running forward.

“My Matrix,” the being hissed maliciously before jetting off, the force of his departure throwing back humans and bots alike.

Optimus was groaning in pain, his spark still shining, but clearly strained.

“No, Optimus! You have to get up! You have to fight,” Sam yelled furiously from where Will was holding her in place. She ignored his own yells, ordering men into position and making military calls for this event. Instead she focused solely on the bot she had gone halfway around the world to save. “You can do this Optimus! You can stop him! Get up Prime!”

“He’s turning on the machine,” one of the soldiers announced, causing them to turn to see the top of the pyramid glowing as the Matrix settled into place.

“You’ve got to stop him,” Sam cried again. “Optimus!”

It hurt to see the larger than life Autobot brought down low again. She could see him struggling to get up, while others continued to fight around them. The lingering Decepticons had sensed the new weakness and were working to capitalize on it. The bastards! Will was calling out for the men to engage the enemy on the pyramid, Epps relaying the information through the radio to the various armed forces trying to assist them. Sam only had eyes for her friend.

“All my Decepticon life, I never did a thing worth doing,” Jetfire stated as he ambled closer to Optimus, ignoring the way Ironhide and Ratchet locked their guns on him. “Until now.” The bot kneeled down looking at the last Prime. “Optimus, take my parts and you will have a power you’ve never known.” Already the old bot was pulling at his spark to thrust it at Optimus. “Fulfill your destiny!”

Ratchet wasn’t going to lose this opportunity as he started working to fix Prime with the parts offered so willingly. Already he was calling out instructions to his comrades. “Jolt! Electrify! Transplant those afterburners!”

In a flurry the parts seemed to disappear from Jetfire and adhere to Optimus’ form. Some of the metal fused on old wounds to close them while other parts slid on like an exoskeleton to give the bot more mobility.
With Jetfire’s wings and his thrusters in place, new fire burned through the Prime, his eyes bright.

“Let’s roll!”
chapter 46

Sam covered her face as the bot shot off like… well like a jet. He flew straight towards the pyramid taking out the Fallen and dragging him down to the ground. After that she lost sight of the battle. A body slammed into her, arms wrapping around her tightly. From the dark locks she knew it was Mikaela.

Her friend pulled back, eyes red and puffy from crying. She punched Sam in the arm, which was quite painful. “You bitch! Don’t do that to me!”

“Ow! I’m sorry,” Sam cried pitifully, trying to dodge Mikaela’s next swing. “I didn’t mean to!”

Mikaela stopped, sniffling with renewed tears. “You died Sam! You died and I couldn’t do anything.”

“I’m sorry Mik,” she whispered, wrapping her friend up in a hug that was vigorously returned. They stood like that for a long second before a loud explosion startled them.

Turning they found the top of the pyramid busting into flames, taking some of the lower levels with it. The machine would never be able to threaten their world again. Already most of the enemy combatants were running away, or so it seemed from what Ironhide was yelling. Really that bot should watch his language.

“Alright you two,” Epps called marching over to them, a few of the others with him. “Time to get your asses over to the medics, now. Both of you are getting checked out then your asses are grounded.”

“You’re not my dad,” Mikaela sassed playfully.

“Be glad for that, I’d have whooped your ass for all your back talk,” he shot back.

Sam rolled her eyes but agreed to do as he said, the pain from her injuries starting to come back full force. It really is amazing how much one can ignore when adrenalin is going strong. Now she felt like a mountain had fallen on her.

Will had disappeared, no doubt having to go do his job instead of babysitting her. She missed having him around though and really hoped they would be able to talk. There were some things they both needed to say in a less death-induced setting.

Reaching the tent, the medics had set up for the wounded, Sam barely managed to hold her footing as her mother and father slammed into her. Really, what was it with the people she knew and loved believing that they needed to collide with her full force when she was clearly injured? Didn’t they know it hurt? Or was this some sort of punishment for her questionable choices and actions? Yeah, that was probably it.

“Oh my baby,” her mom sobbed as she held her close, kissing her all along her face.

Her dad wasn’t doing much better, though he did hold his emotions in a bit more. He stood beside them, his arms around both of his girls clearly trying to make sure they were in fact still there. Mikaela had been directed to one of the medics who was giving her a cursory check over. Another had to cajole her parents to letting her go to even attempt looking over Sam.

Within an hour thing had calmed down significantly. Simmons and Leo rolled in with the Twins,
most of the wounded had been seen to and the few deaths they had suffered were being accounted for. The clean up around the town itself would take much longer, and already soldiers from this country were starting to pour in. Ratchet had managed to corral Optimus and Ironhide, his two most stubborn patients and was working to patch them up. The rest of the bots had already been tended to.

Sam sat on her cot, clearly positioned in such a way to keep anyone but the NEST soldiers from having access to her. For which she was grateful. Last she heard she was wanted internationally. Hopefully the people in charge would remove that little warrant and let her go back to her life.

Though could she really go back after all of this? It was easier before when she was just in high school and things remained localized in the States. Now though she would be known internationally. Would she be forced to appear before the UN? Would she be tried for the multiple crimes she committed? It’s not like she entered these foreign countries legally.

“Hey, stop thinking so hard.”

She jumped a bit when a bottle of water was placed in front of her. Looking up she found Will gracing her with a slight smile.

“Kind of hard not to,” she admitted, taking the water gratefully. “I’m in a lot of trouble.”

“True,” he agreed with far too much cheer in her opinion, settling on the cot next to her. Thank god Mikaela managed to get her parents to go get something to eat in the temporary mess tent the boys had set up. “But I think they’ll give you a break considering you helped save the entire world and all.”

She snorted. “Yeah, I’m sure they’ll just ignore the multitude of property damage and broken laws.”

“Oh, you’ll get an earful, probably some kind of probation,” he told her frankly. “But the military minds around the world all agree the Fallen wasn’t going to simply leave us be. He was going to find that machine no matter what and use it. It wasn’t like you caused this on purpose; the Decepticons came after you not the other way around.”

“Is it really over,” she asked softly.

“Yeah. Prime confirmed the Fallen’s destruction. There are other Decepticons out there,” he admitted grudgingly. “Looks like Megatron and his main lackey got away, so we still have to keep on the look out. Course, Hide wants to go hunting. He thinks we got the upper hand.”

“Of course he does,” Sam chuckled wryly. “I think he would honestly cry if he didn’t have something to shoot.”

“Well he’s old and set in his ways,” Will pointed out.

The two of them sat there for a long moment, a sense of awkwardness settling over them. Neither could quite look at the other.

“So…” Sam let the word linger trying to find something to say. Figuring she’d just plow ahead she pushed on. “Are we going to talk about it?”

“Kinda hoping not to,” he informed her matter-of-factly.

“Well… you can’t unsay it,” she told him. “And I won’t let you even try to pretend you didn’t say what you said or that I didn’t say what I said. So, we’ll have to speak about it sometime. Though I can agree now might not be the best time…”
“Major! DefSec is on the COM,” one of his soldiers called out catching their attention.

“Yeah, it’s gonna be nuts for a while,” he told her sheepishly. He looked almost boyish as he glanced at her. “I’ve gotta take that. He’s kind of my boss, you know…”

“Yeah, and the Generals are likely going to want to talk…” She shifted nervously. “We’ll talk later. And no take backs,” she warned him as he started making his way out of the med tent.

Will just smiled that little grin of his, the one that often left her stomach fluttering. She watched him go until his form disappeared out the tent. Sighing, she turned to go sit down again, her body already reminding her that she had several injuries. When she turned she found Mikaela and her parents all watching her, her best friend and mother with rather sly smiles and her father more than a bit confused.

“What did he say that he can’t unsay,” her father demanded. “Why are you turning red?”

“Ron,” her mother chided, forcing her father away, after sending a wink at her little girl. “It’s nothing for you to worry about.”

“You winked at her! Why did you wink at her,” he blustered? “I think I do need to worry!”

Sam knew there was going to be another conversation in her future. When she looked at Mikaela for support her friend just smirked.

“What? Shut up!” Honestly, she needed more subtle friends!

“I did not say anything,” she informed pertly, one brow raised imperiously.

“Whatever.”

“But now that you’re asking,” she drawled.

“I wasn’t!”

“What DID major hottie say,” she continued, ignoring Sam’s outburst.

“None of your business,” Sam huffed, crossing her arms and glaring at her friend. “It’s private.”

Mikaela just gave her a look, when another friend had to add their two cents.

“We ‘ave vays of making you talk.” the German accented line drifted through the tent.

Turning she found Bee kneeling down and peering into the tent, his eyes glowing with mischief.

“Arg!”
Returning to collage and ‘normal’ life was a surreal experience. She did in fact have to go through several meetings, with all of the higher ups in the military and the UN. Had she been a political major before she would have switched studies after this this fun filled adventure. Far too many headaches had plagued her these past weeks, and she was pretty sure she was developing an ulcer from listening to all the ridiculous arguments and sheer double talk every last politician subjected her to. She knew government was shady after her first dealing with Sector 7, now she knew all branches had issue. Never had she met so many self-important people who liked to hear themselves talk, because they certainly never said anything of value. And those that did have important messages hid the words in long winded diatribes.

Worst of all, Optimus still wanted her to be the liaison between the Autobots and the Governments. She was going to need to buy stock in Tylenol.

Returning to school had been a relief, until she saw the looks everyone gave her. She’d forgotten for a moment how her face and personal information had been pasted all over the world in the Fallen’s attempt to find her. Great. Several guys and even some girls tried to cozy up to her because she was famous and knew alien robots. Every geek and nerd on campus nearly worshiped her, which left her feeling more than a little dirty. Thankfully, Leo headed most of them off, becoming their ‘supreme leader’ or something like that. As long as they left her a long she didn’t care.

It took months but finally the hype calmed down and her routine became comfortable and people started to forget her fame. Fame truly was a fickle thing. Thank Prime.

Mikaela returned home to a very worried father. She called every week to shoot the breeze and share gossip. Her father in the background constantly checking on her. Wheelie had followed her home as well, enjoying working in the garage far more than a Decepticon probably should. In fact, sometimes she could hear the bot and Mik’s dad arguing in the background about proper motorcycle parts. It was kind of cute.

Simmons had been re-drafted into the intelligence agencies, his knowledge about the alien robots too valuable to drop now that he’d proven his crazy theories actually had some weight.

Her parents returned home, her mother enjoying some of the attention from the other wives in the area, her dad trying to forget it ever happened. They planned to have a month-long trip to Hawaii, since their Paris trip was ruined. Hopefully, they’d be left alone this time. Sam’s father was still complaining about the wasted money. At least the school had not dropped her scholarship. Not that it took long for her to catch up in her courses in any case.

As for the Bots and NEST, they had returned to their main base and continued working to find the runaway Decepticons and make sure they did not do anything else to threaten the earth. Optimus had thanked her personally for saving his life, but she’d told him it seemed only fair given how many time’s he’d saved her.

The best part of the deal was that Bee got to come to school with her. General Morshower had made it mandatory that she have a security detail, and who best to do so than Bumblebee. He would also sever as her driver when her presence was requested for any meetings, given her liaison position.
The only person she had not heard much from was Will. She was beginning to think maybe she had misheard him. She had been dying at the time, and he hadn’t said it again. Part of her was ready to call him up and demand answers. However, the bigger part was scared to do so, thinking the truth may not be what she wants to hear.

The months passed quickly, as they tended to do when one was busy learning and keeping up with the demands of a full schedule. Winter break had been a welcome treat, even if she and Bee had to drive back home all on their own. Pennsylvania to California is not a small haul. Thankfully, Bee made the drive all the more fun with his random trivia games and gossip mill. She knew he deserved to go out more instead of being stuck waiting on her while she completed her course, but did he have to go park in front of local beauty salons and coffee shops eavesdropping on everyone? Let’s not forget how he trolls Leo and his tech friends, constantly hacking their computers and radios.

Ok actually that last one was pretty damn funny, especially when they got so excited and started running in the halls in their PJs.

Now though, she had three weeks of freedom to relax, catch up on some sleep and eat food that didn’t taste like it’d been processed in a cardboard factory. Gourmet rated cafeterias her ass!

She’d been home all of two days before her mom had kicked her out, telling her to go get some fresh air. Seeing some of the looks she was sending to her father had her running faster than ever.

Seriously! What was with this second honeymoon faze? Aren’t old married people supposed to not be doing those things?

Bee drove her to the point, parking in their usual spot. It was a great view, high enough to look over the town and most of the valley. Even though it was winter, the temperature here was nice and only required long sleeves.

She was sitting on the hood watching the clouds drift by enjoying the quiet. She missed the simple quiet. At school there was always something going on and people being loud. Here, she could just lay back and let her mind drift.

Or she could have until the large truck pulled up beside Bee. She huffed and turned her head to see who had decided to ruin her peace and quiet, only to see Will hoping out of Hide. She popped up in surprise.

“Heard you were back in town,” he greeted, moving to stand in front of her, though leaving some room.

“Yeah, mom would go spare if I didn’t come home for Christmas,” she replied slowly, not really sure what to say. “Long time no see, stranger.”

“Yeah.” He shuffled his feet a bit. “Things have been more hectic than I’d like at base. We’ve been revamping some of the tech and broadening our search areas. We’ve also had to deal with a lot of the militaries around the world, we normally don’t just to coordinate our efforts against the Decepticons. Apparently having a common enemy has made them realize we’re all human and should work together,” he stated dryly. Clearly, he was remembering all the times they gave him and his team shit for doing their jobs to protect the world.

“That or they just want a chance to play with the big cool robots,” she drawled.

“That too,” he chuckled. “Some scientists tried to see if they could ‘examine’ some of the bots. It did not end well.”
Sam looked at him then glanced at Hide, who had yet to change out of his truck form, which was unusual for the older bot. “Someone on time out again?”

“Oh yeah…”

The loud grumbling roar of the engine had both of them snickering.

“To be fair we’re both on probation,” Will admitted ruefully. “Galloway wasn’t too happy with me, so I’ve had to deal with that to…” At her confused look he waved her off. “Some pencil pusher that’s not really important no matter what he thinks.”

Sam snorted. “Sounds like most of the people I’ve had to deal with lately.”

Silence passed between them, though not nearly as awkward as it could be.

“So, I’m pretty sure last time we saw each other, you said something about a talk,” he stated unsurely, one hand rubbing through his hair.

“I did,” she agreed. “Since it’s been so long, I started to have doubts about what I heard?”

He glanced away before looking at her, his eyes serious and dark. “You heard right. I do love you.” Sam’s breath caught in her throat, her heart beating fast. “I started falling not long after meeting you. But Sam, you’re so young. I’ve got over ten years on you. You deserve to find a guy closer to your age…”

“I may be physically younger than you but mentally I think I’m winning on maturity,” she countered ruefully. “I’ve never really liked guys my own age. They don’t get me, and few would ever understand what I’ve been through. And then I fell in love with an Army Captain that soon became a Major and every guy I ever met after has never measured up.” She reached out and grabbed his hands, pulling him closer. “Age is just a number, Will. I care more about the person and I’d rather have a mature partner, well semi-mature,” she corrected, snickering when he shot her an offended look. “Than someone my age, who couldn’t keep up with me. It may not be conventional for our society, but let’s face it, our lives lost all normalcy the moment a bunch of giant ass robots dropped into it.”

“The guys kept telling me that, but my thick head couldn’t get it to process…”

“What changed?”

“You almost left me,” he whispered, pain flashing in his eyes. One hand drifted up to trace along her cheek. “You were on the run from the enemy and I couldn’t get to you. Worse our own people were considering turning you over if you were caught. Then finally I make it so I can help you and I had to watch you die.” He took a moment to compose himself. “All I could think of was I never told you what you meant to me. That I would never see you again and I couldn’t stand that. I don’t want a world without you in it.”

“Well, Major Lennox, I’m not too fond of the thought of a world without you either. And I’m not inclined to let you get away again.”

He snorted, his eyes shining with humor. He leaned forward, his forehead against hers, looking deep into her eyes. “In that case, what do you say to an official date, Miss Witwicky?”

Sam grinned back, but before she could answer someone else did it for her.

“Let’s talk about sex, baby. Let’s talk about you and me…”
Her face turned bright red. “BEE!”

Apparently Hide wouldn’t let his younger counterpart be the only one to ‘voice’ their opinion.

“I’m asking you baby to get it on with me, ooh, ooh, ooh!”

“Hide,” Will growled, his own cheeks slightly red.

“I wanna sex you up.”

“Oh my god,” Sam groaned, letting her head fall onto Will’s chest.

“Been wishin’ for you, Ooh, Ooh. Tryna’ do what lovers do. Ooooh, Oooh!”

“They’re not gonna stop are they,” Will huffed in exasperation.

“And I—eee-I will Always love you—oooo”

“Nope.”

Will used on hand to lift her chin so she would be looking back at him. Both of them tried to ignore the on-going battle of ‘love song lyrics’ in the background.

“I love you Samantha Witwicky,” he whispered with feeling.

“I love you William Lennox,” she replied back just as softly.

Then he leaned down and kissed her, his lips sure and strong. Sam wrapped her arms around his shoulders and held him closer. However, neither of them could stop their laughter when Bee released the voice of Samuel L. Jackson.

“Well, it’s about damn time!”

Xoxoxo

The end.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you everyone for reading this story. I hope you enjoyed it. I have not really seen the rest of the movies, so will not be continuing the story. If someone wants to pick it up from here, you are more than welcome. Thanks again!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!